



MAYOR
Verne E. Rupright

CITY PLANNER
Tina Crawford

WASILLA PLANNING COMMISSION

Patrick Brown, Seat A
Daniel Kelly Jr., Seat B
Steven DeHart, Seat C
Doug Miller, Seat D
Glenda Ledford, Seat E
Clark Buswell, Seat F
Robert Webb, Seat G

**CITY OF WASILLA
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA
WASILLA CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Wasilla City Hall, 290 E. Herning Avenue, Wasilla, AK 99654 / 907-373-9020 phone

REGULAR MEETING

7 P.M.

JULY 10, 2012

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. ROLL CALL
- III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
- V. REPORTS
 - A. City Deputy Administrator
 - B. City Public Works Director
 - C. City Attorney
 - D. City Planner
- VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION *(five minutes per person, for items not scheduled for public hearing)*
- VII. CONSENT AGENDA
 - A. Minutes of June 26, 2012, regular meeting.
- VIII. NEW BUSINESS *(five minutes per person)*
 - A. Committee of the Whole
 1. Downtown Area Plan discussion.

- IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
- X. COMMUNICATIONS
 - A. Permit Information
 - B. Enforcement Log
- XI. AUDIENCE COMMENTS (*five minutes per person*)
- XII. STAFF COMMENTS
- XIII. COMMISSION COMMENTS
- XIV. ADJOURNMENT

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Wasilla Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, June 26, 2012, in Council Chambers of City Hall, Wasilla, Alaska by A.C. Buswell, III, Chairman.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners present and establishing a quorum were:

- Mr. Daniel Kelly, Jr., Seat B
- Mr. Doug Miller, Seat D
- Ms. Glenda Ledford, Seat E
- Mr. Clark Buswell, Seat F
- Mr. Robert Webb, Seat G

Commissioners excused and absent were:

- Mr. Patrick Brown, Seat A
- Mr. Steven DeHart, Seat C

Staff in attendance were:

- Mr. Archie Giddings, Public Work Director
- Ms. Tina Crawford, City Planner
- Ms. Sandi Connolly, Public Works Clerk

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- A. Mr. Giddings led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

GENERAL CONSENT: The agenda was approved as presented.

V. REPORTS

A. City Deputy Administrator
No report given.

B. City Public Works Director
Mr. Giddings stated that:

- at the last City Council meeting an ordinance was on the Agenda to be introduced that would increase the sales tax by one percent; half of a percent

would be for Capital Improvement Projects and the other half percent would go to operating costs. Administration asked to have the ordinance introduced but some questions from City Council has postponed the ordinance;

- starting on July 9th, and every Monday until the end of the month, Administration and the City Council will meet at 5:00 PM to discuss the issues so they can come to an agreement;
- August 10th is the deadline to approve items to be on the October ballot; and
- the City will advertise the bid for the airport road project and due to the short construction season they may not be able to get the paving done this year.

Commissioner Kelly asked about the land transfer for Lake Lucille Park from the Borough.

Mr. Giddings stated that the City is in the final stages of the land transfer for both Lake Lucille Park and the library.

C. City Attorney
No report given.

D. City Planner
No report given.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (*five minutes per person, for items not scheduled for public hearing*)

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes of June 12, 2012, meeting.

GENERAL CONSENT: Minutes were approved as presented.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS (*five minutes per person*)

A. Public Hearing

1. **Resolution Serial No. 12-12:** Recommending that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) and the MSB School District involve the residents of the Iditaway Park Subdivision throughout the design process for the proposed elementary school on the parcels abutting the subdivision to the north (Parcel ID #2388000T00A & 17N01W03C021) to minimize negative impacts on the subdivision.

a. City Staff:

Ms. Crawford stated that this resolution was requested by Garvan Bucaria at the last meeting for the residents in the Iditaway Park Subdivision.

b. Applicant

c. Private person supporting or opposing the proposal
Chair Buswell opened the public hearing on Resolution Serial No. 12-12.

Mr. David Nyberg, who lives on Carpenter Circle, stated that he doesn't object to the school development but has concerns about connecting Carpenter Circle to the high school and how it will affect the traffic.

With no one else present to speak, Chair Buswell closed the public hearing for Resolution Serial No. 12-12.

d. Applicant
No additional comments were provided by the applicant.

MOTION: Commissioner Kelly moved to approved Resolution Serial No. 12-12, as presented.

[CLERK'S NOTE: Commissioner Miller noted Garvan Bucaria's name was spelled incorrectly and Resolution Serial No. 12-12 was corrected]

VOTE: The motion moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 12-12, as presented, passed unanimously.

B. Committee of the Whole

MOTION: Commissioner Ledford moved to enter into the Committee of the Whole at 7:15 PM.

VOTE: The motion to enter into the Committee of the Whole passed unanimously.

Entered into the Committee of the Whole to discuss the following item:

1. Downtown Area Plan discussion.

MOTION: Commissioner Kelly moved to exit the Committee of the Whole at 8:14 PM.

VOTE: The motion to exit the Committee of the Whole passed unanimously.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

XI. COMMUNICATIONS

No statements made regarding the following items.

- A. Permit Information
- B. Enforcement Log

XII. AUDIENCE COMMENTS

No audience comments.

XIII. STAFF COMMENTS

No staff comments.

XIV. COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Chair Buswell thanked everyone for attending tonight’s meeting and stated that he believes this was a productive meeting regarding the Downtown Area Plan.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

The regular meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

ATTEST:

A.C. BUSWELL, III, Chairman

TAHIRIH REVET, Planning Clerk

Adopted by the Wasilla Planning Commission -, 2012.



CITY OF WASILLA

• Planning Office •
290 East Herning Avenue • Wasilla • Alaska • 99654-7091
• Telephone 907-373-9020 •

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 3, 2012
TO: Wasilla Planning Commission
FROM: Tina Crawford, AICP, City Planner
RE: Downtown Area Plan Discussion Packet

Attached to this memo is a copy of the Downtown discussion notes and summary page that was discussed during the Committee of the Whole (COW) at the June 26, 2012 Planning Commission meeting. During that discussion, the Commission requested that staff schedule another COW discussion for July 10, 2012 to further discuss the proposed Downtown Area Plan. Staff was also directed to prepare the following information for the July 10 meeting, which is also included in this packet:

- Downtown Area Boundary Maps – 6 options
- Rough draft of Downtown Area Plan document – **Note:** *Changes will be made to text to remove references to the South Wasilla and Airport plans. Final plan will also have updated cover, Acknowledgment page, Table of Contents, and Mayor's page.*

Staff is requesting that the Commission review these materials and provide additional input and suggested revisions/updates at the July 10, 2012 meeting.

PAGE

INTENTIONALLY

LEFT

BLANK

DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN DISCUSSION NOTES

Comments from Previous Pc Meeting:

- Support for western theme
- Recommendation that museum and historical buildings be moved to airport to allow additional growth in downtown or leave them and allow growth to continue to develop in small lot manner.

Staff Recommended Revisions:

- Downtown Area Plan needs to clearly identify the boundaries of the overall downtown covered by the Plan. It should also reference that there are distinct areas of the downtown that will be subject to different rules/overlay districts. The areas south of the Parks Highway are currently not considered part of the downtown and will probably have different requirements than the area north of the highway. Also, the “downtown core” may need more stringent requirements than the areas to the east and west of the “core”.
- Include following objectives from Comprehensive Plan:
 - Protect property values by assuring type of future land uses and quality of surrounding development
 - Prevent commercial and semi-industrial uses in neighborhoods (RR zoning)
 - Appropriate buffers between residential and commercial and more intense developments
 - Ensure compatible mix of uses
- Remove references to VPA location in downtown – moving to old movie theater
- Include information that Post Office may move outside of downtown area
- Update projected costs for objectives
- Eliminate any references to “required” themes for buildings. Use basic design principles of form-based codes to require architecturally interesting buildings by requiring fenestration, a minimum amount of windows in buildings, require buildings to be built at edge of sidewalk instead of 25’ setback, etc. This gives developer the ability to be creative but still meet minimum standards.
- Pg. 28 – Delete recommendation for “Gateway Committee”. Add their responsibilities to the Downtown Revitalization Committee.
- Pg. 28 – Delete Objective X – Create an educational program through a public-private partnership to promote Downtown’s identity and theme.
- Pg. 33 (11x17 sheet) – Consider revising or deleting Objective VIII – Provide financing incentives for mixed use development such as credit assurance, equity investment in the project, or soft second loans to developers.
- Pg. 35 – Third bullet under “Circulation” – Remove the reference to relocating the railroad south of the City
- Pg. 35 – Fourth bullet under “Circulation” – Update status of Main Street couplet
- Pg. 41 – Reconsider language for Issue #5, Objective I – Work with the Alaska Railroad to evaluate and assess crossing safety, eliminate at-grade crossings, and realign track facilities.
- Pg. 41 – Delete Issue #6, Objective I since covered in Parks Master Plan objectives – Inventory existing trails in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Pg. 45 – Delete Objective IV – Evaluate school expansion capacity on school campuses.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – DOWNTOWN AREA OVERVIEW:

- Protect property values to give assurance of types of future land uses and quality of surrounding development
- Prevent commercial and semi-commercial development in RR neighborhoods
- Ensure compatible mixed-use development
- Provide appropriate buffers
- Multi-story, mixed use buildings
- Sidewalks on both sides of street with no building setback
- Crosswalks
- Covered Walkways
- Main Street Couplet
- Parking in rear of buildings
- On-street parking
 - Traffic calming
 - Support businesses
- Landscaped areas at major intersections
- Street lights at pedestrian scale
- Overlay zone with design standards
- Enhance City's visual appearance and identity (CP – Community Assets)
- Revitalize downtown (CP – Economic Vitality)

DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN – OVERVIEW:

- **Concepts:**
 - Swanson as new “Main Street”
 - DT serves as community gathering place/crossroads
 - Identify ways to allow development/redevelopment of small lots
 - Revise MSB platting regs to make it easier to combine lots
 - Reduce front setbacks
 - Reduce parking requirements
 - Develop on-street parking and municipal lots
 - Needs to be aesthetically pleasing
 - Enhanced landscaping
 - Enhanced architectural design
 - Needs to be pedestrian friendly
 - Connectivity from retail to parks and parks to parks
 - Mixed-use buildings
 - Increased office buildings
 - DT as center of civic and education services supported by mixed-use development
 - Centralized parking
 - Promote in-fill development, especially mixed-use
 - Create zoning overlay – utilize form-based code guidelines
 - Identify DT boundary
- **Week-long charrette (late September 2009):**
 - Meetings with City officials and business leaders
 - Walking tours
 - Three evening meetings/workshops for public input
 - Issues identified in charrette
 - Traffic stacking on Main Street
 - Poor pedestrian connectivity
 - No downtown “identity” – looks like strip center – no personality
 - Appearance detracts from development potential
 - Limited public gathering places
 - Identify downtown boundaries
 - Need downtown park as gathering place/green area

DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN SUMMARY

LAND USE

Issues/Concerns

- Poor traffic flow
- Limited parking
- Lack of trails and connectivity between businesses
 - Auto-oriented design
- Lack of downtown identity/unattractive appearance
- Outgrown facilities
 - Library
 - Post Office

Recommendations

- Create Downtown Overlay District
 - Develop design standards
 - Promote infill development
 - Mixed use
 - Revise Land Development Code
 - Form-based codes
 - Enable development of small lots
- Streamline re-platting process
- City land acquisition to enable future development

SEE “ISSUE/GOAL/OBJECTIVE” TABLE FOR ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Recommendations

- Develop Economic Incentives
 - Tax abatements/deferrals – work with Borough
 - Density increases
 - Expedited permit processing
- Create a Business Improvement District (BID) – pg. 24 of 90
- Create a Tax Increment Finance District (TIF) – pg. 24 of 90
- Create public/private partnerships
- Increased intergovernmental coordination
- Identify funding sources
- Utilize municipal funds for parking facility
- Establish a Gateway Committee
 - Wayfinding
 - Gateway entrances
 - Theme
- Implement marketing programs to promote downtown
- Support revitalization efforts
- Improve “transparency” of public records and information
- Increase public relations
 - PSAs
 - Newspaper
 - Mailings
 - Website

SEE “ISSUE/GOAL/OBJECTIVE” TABLE FOR ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN SUMMARY

TRANSPORTATION

Issues/Concerns

- Poor traffic flow through downtown
- Limited multi-modal transport options
- Heavy traffic on Parks Highway
- Unsafe and inconvenient for pedestrians
- Limited parking
- Limited/No public transit

Recommendations

- Identify traffic improvements appropriate for Wasilla
- Improve accessibility to civic services and heavy-traffic uses
- Ensure multi-modal facilities are climate sensitive
- Improve pedestrian access
- Expand public transit options, if feasible
- Pursue public/private partnership to create parking garage
- Incorporate parking garages into design standards
- Integrate public transit and pedestrian access with downtown parking areas
- Improve appearance of parking areas

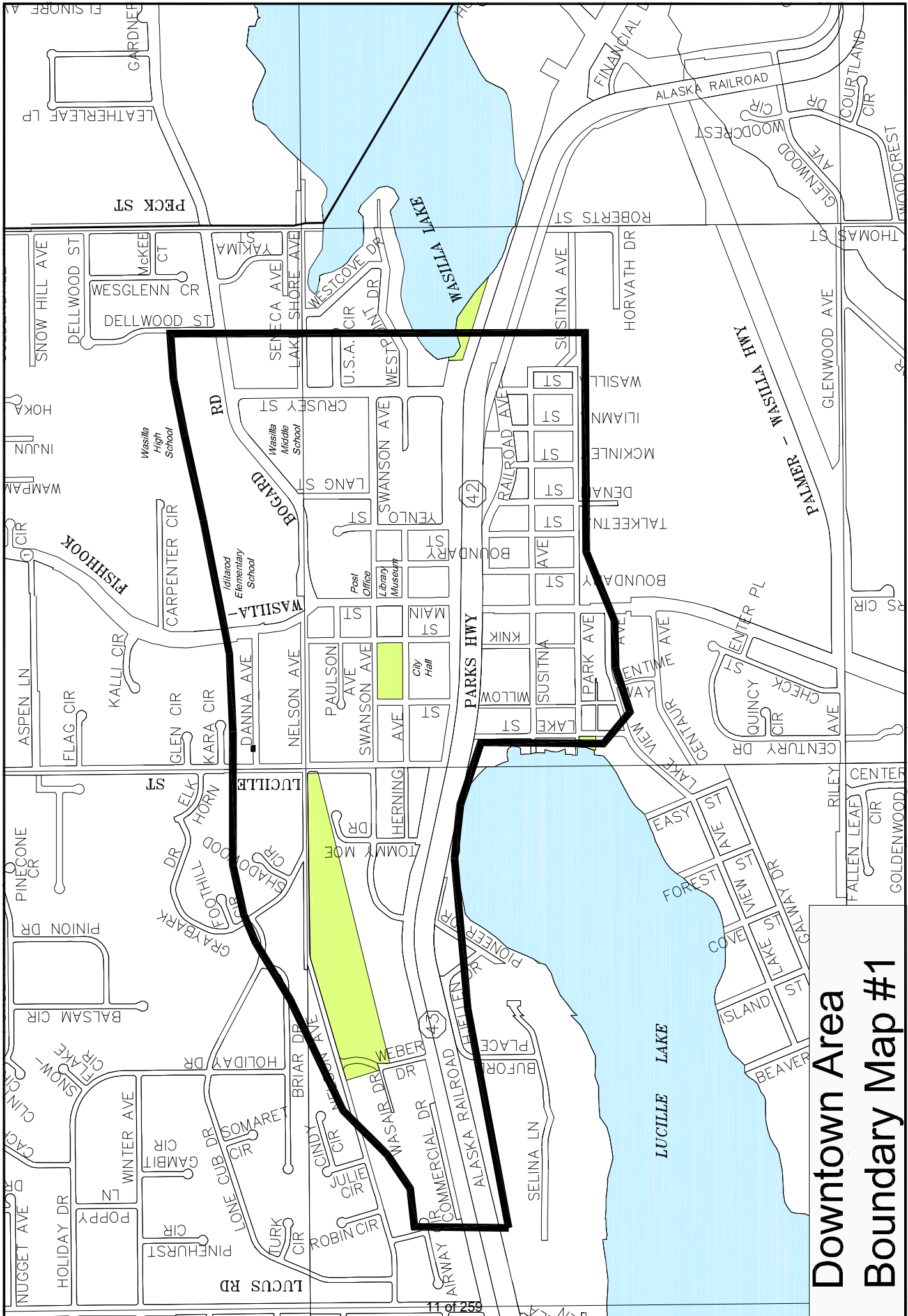
SEE "ISSUE/GOAL/OBJECTIVE" TABLE FOR ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

Recommendations

- Encourage businesses to self-audit accessibility
- Prepare utilities inventory
 - Identify current and future level of service needs
 - Implement action items in Sewer and Water master plans
- Prepare public facilities inventory
 - ADA compliance audit
 - Prioritize actions to address deficiencies
 - Prioritize actions to upgrade facilities to accommodate growing population
 - Implement action items in Trails and Parks master plans
 - Create partnerships to fund and acquire additional land/upgrades to public facilities

SEE "ISSUE/GOAL/OBJECTIVE" TABLE FOR ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS



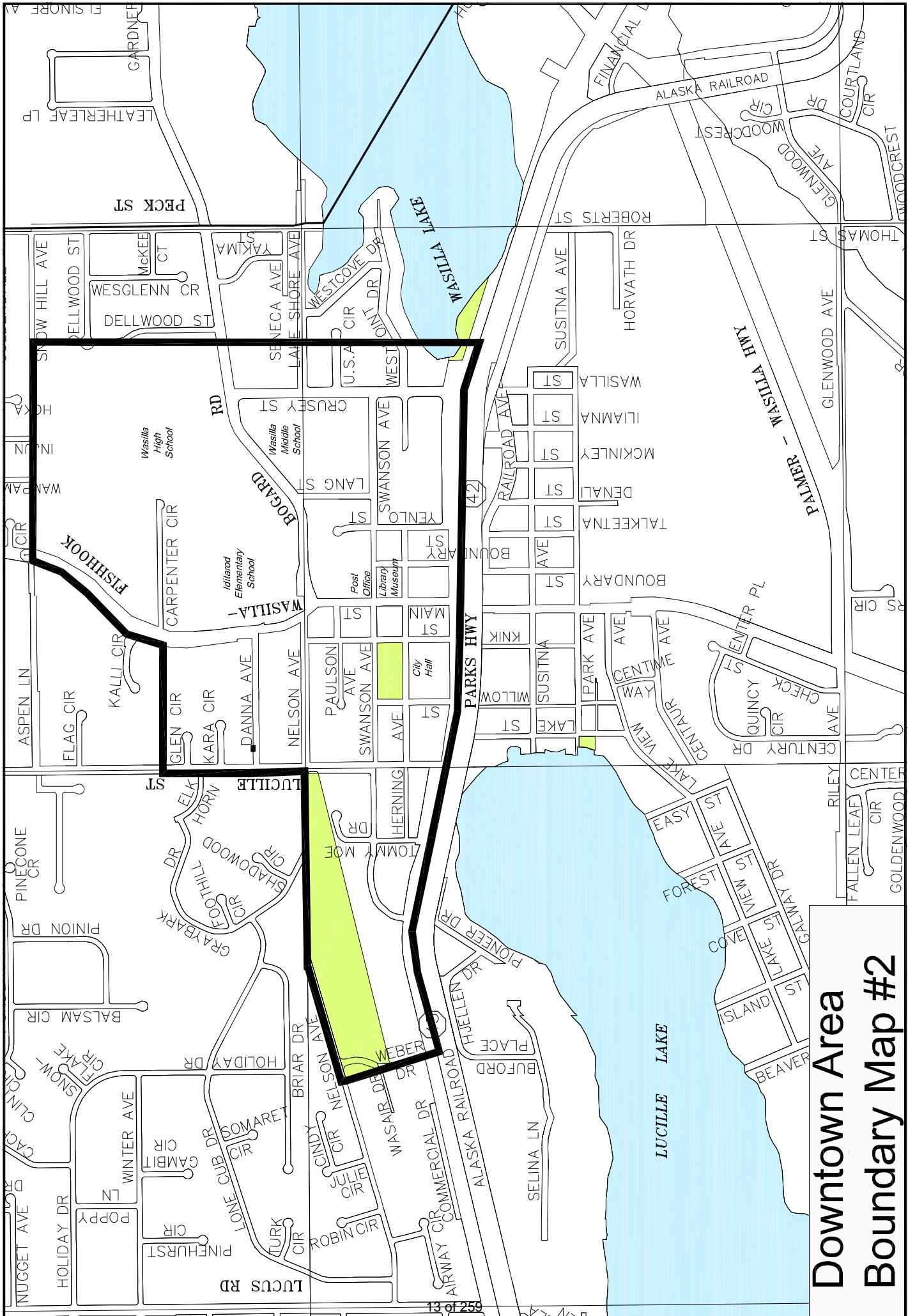
Downtown Area Boundary Map #1

PAGE

INTENTIONALLY

LEFT

BLANK



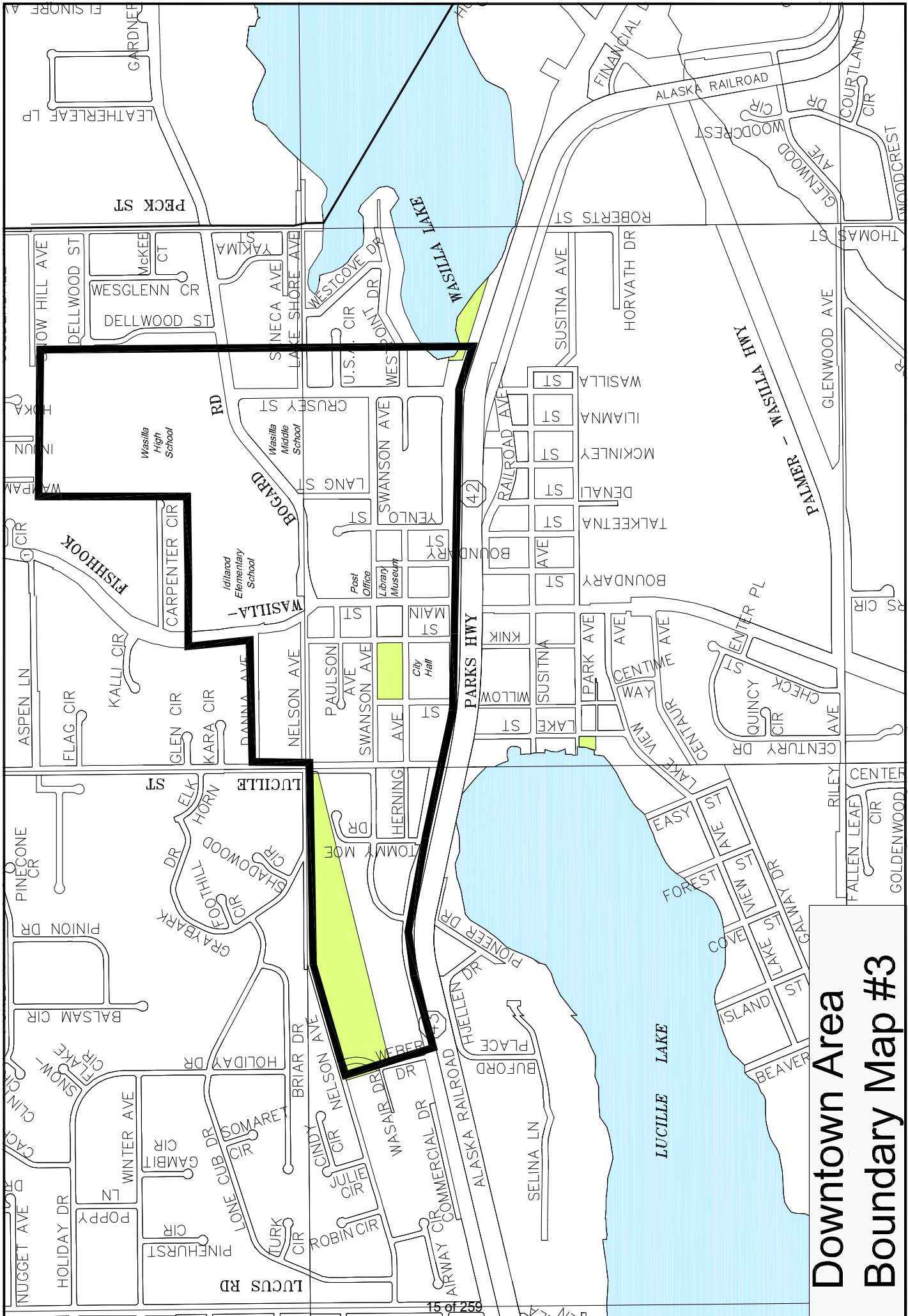
**Downtown Area
Boundary Map #2**

PAGE

INTENTIONALLY

LEFT

BLANK



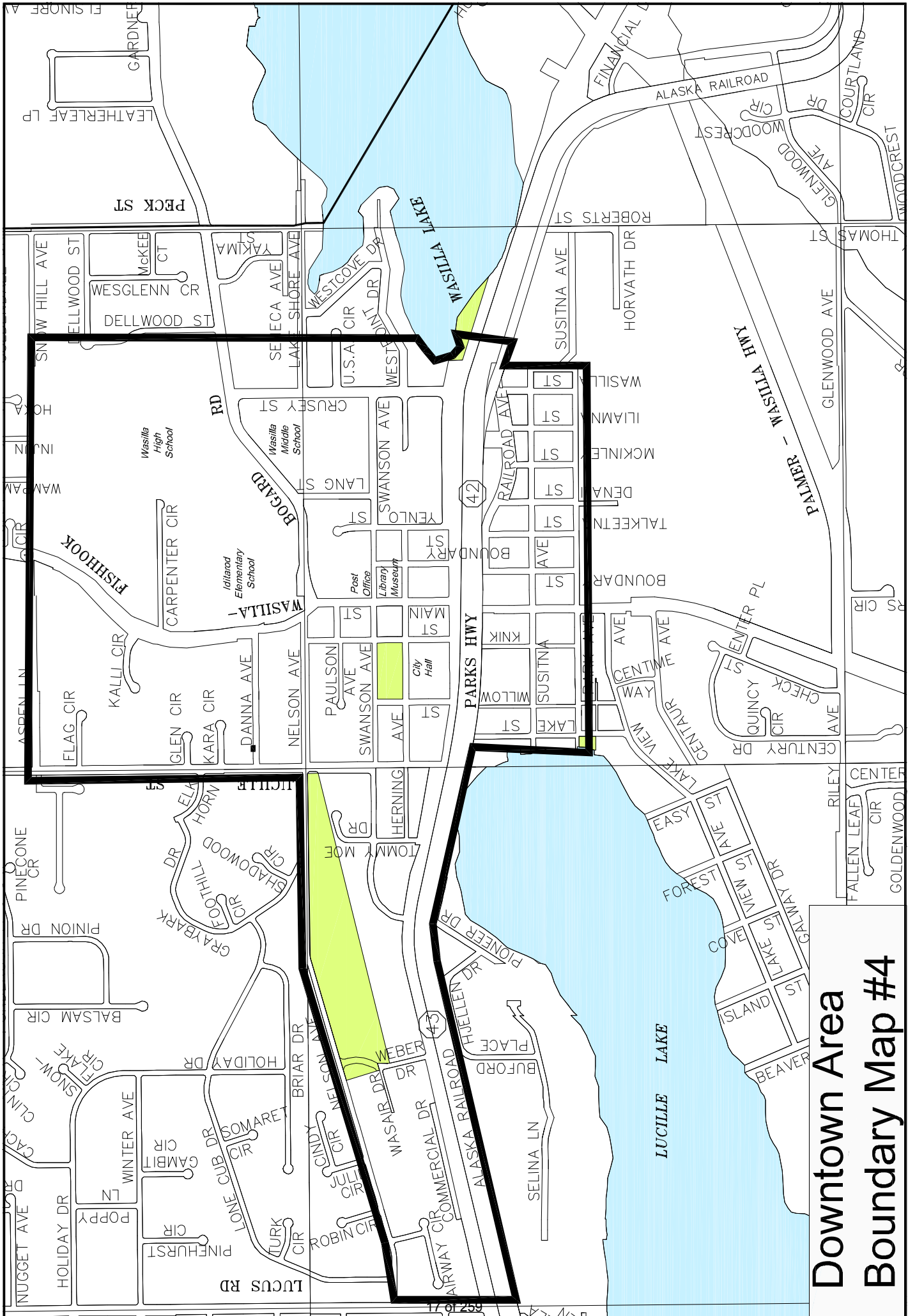
**Downtown Area
Boundary Map #3**

PAGE

INTENTIONALLY

LEFT

BLANK



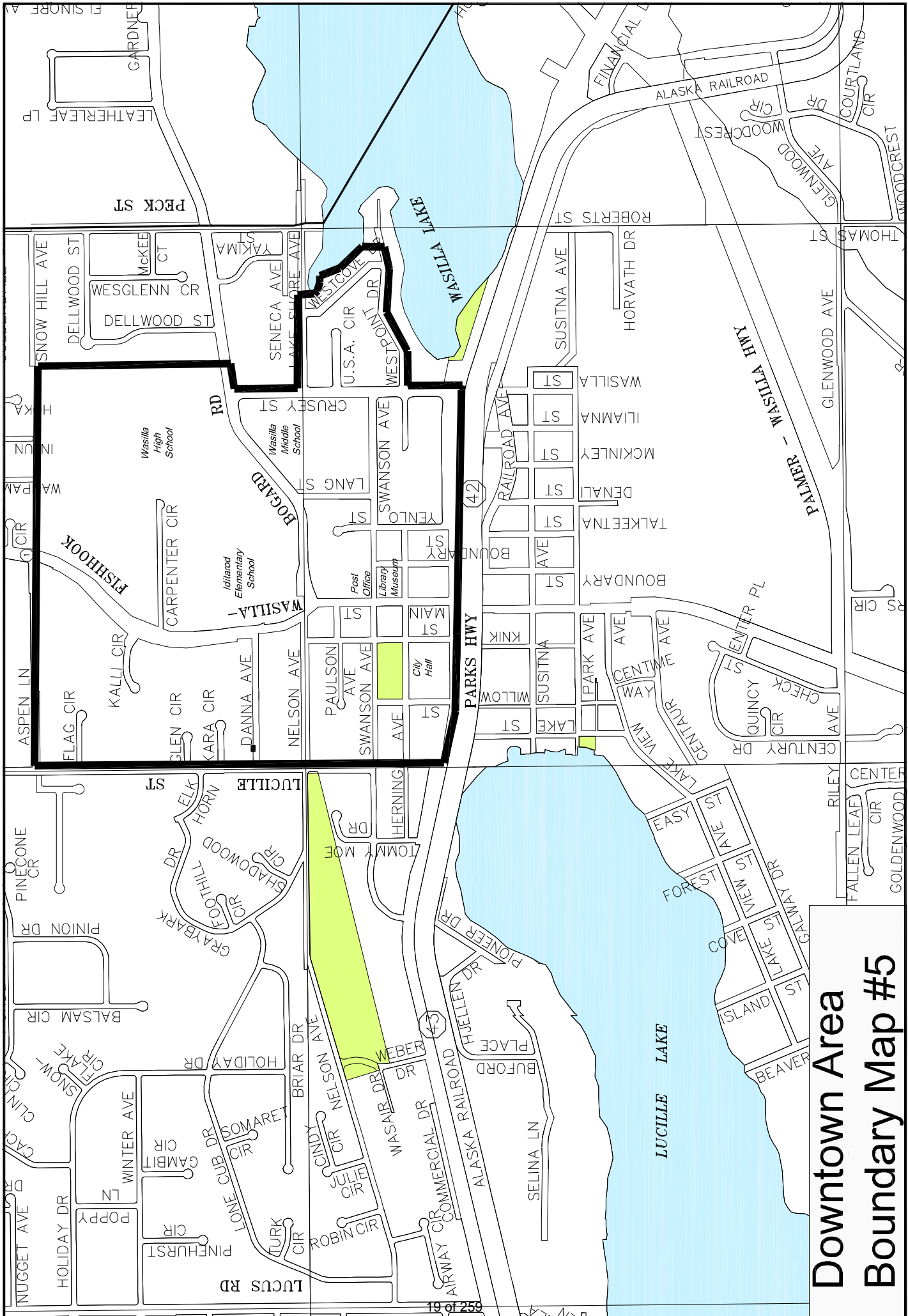
**Downtown Area
Boundary Map #4**

PAGE

INTENTIONALLY

LEFT

BLANK



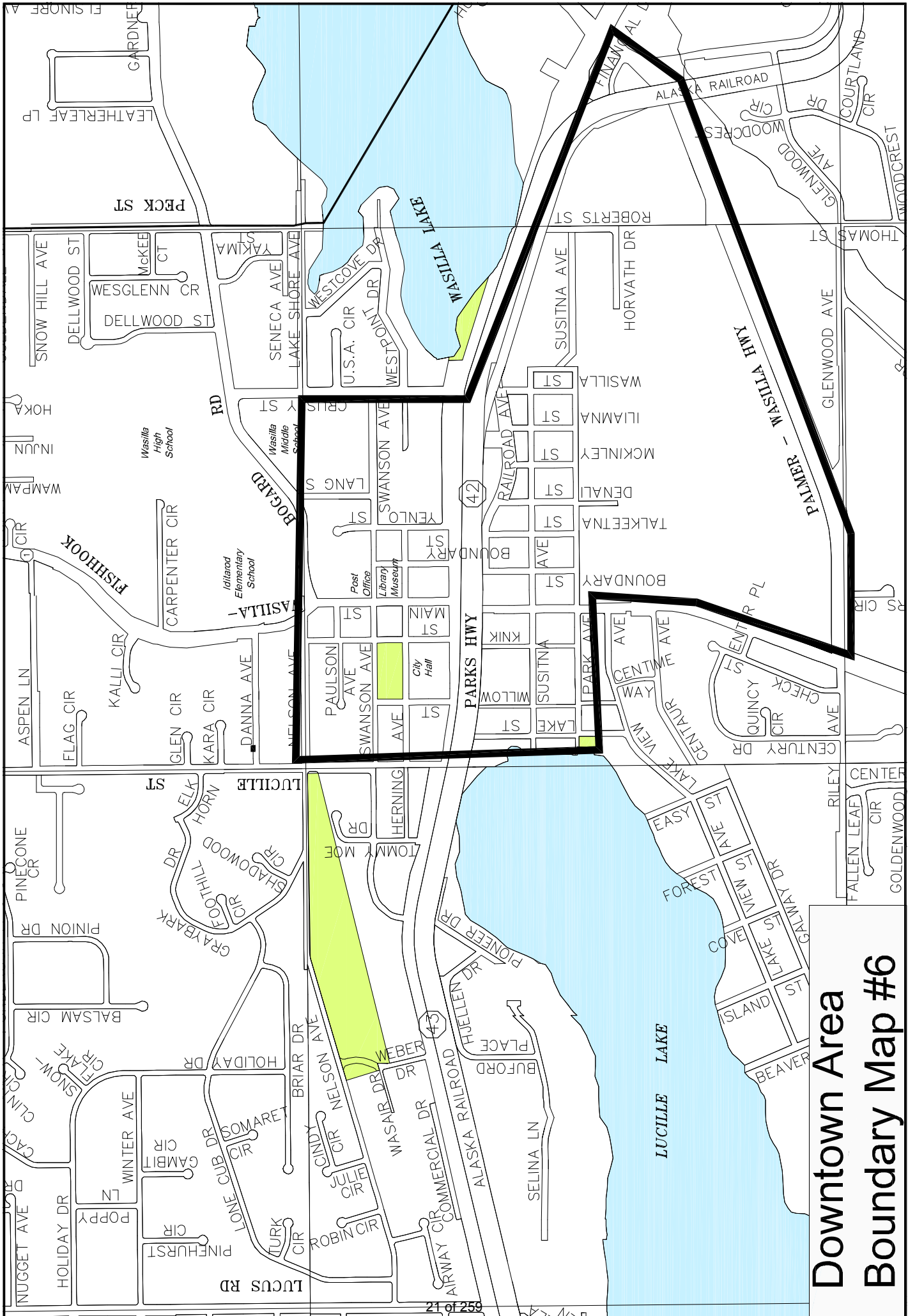
**Downtown Area
Boundary Map #5**

PAGE

INTENTIONALLY

LEFT

BLANK



**Downtown Area
Boundary Map #6**

PAGE

INTENTIONALLY

LEFT

BLANK

INTRODUCTION

THE 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 (MATI) 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

THE 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.

2 VISION: WHAT IS A VISION?

IN A COMMUNITY PLAN, a vision is a positive outcome or an ultimate condition that a community desires to move toward. It is also both a process of stakeholder involvement and a product of the plan. 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.

HOW WILL A VISION HELP OUR COMMUNITY?

The vision should inspire and motivate the community to achieve their picture of the future and function as a filter for future development. When new development is proposed, 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?”*

HOW WAS THE VISION DEVELOPED?

Shared values and ideas are the foundation for developing a community vision (Figure 4). A community’s values dictate what should be reinforced in a community and what should be fixed. Individuals had many different great ideas for what the City should work towards. For instance, if a community values arts and culture, they may work to establish a premier performing arts center or an annual summer festival showcasing and celebrating the arts.

In the process of defining the vision, citizens were asked to think about some of the following questions:

If you could make these areas the way you want them, what would they look like?

What community assets will the areas include?

On their days off, where will residents go and what will they do in these areas?

What amenities need to be located within the community to improve and enhance the quality of life?

How do I picture these areas in 15 years?

Although different opinions exist about what the future holds for the three planning areas, common ground can be found. Unequivocally, the public participation process and the school project revealed that residents are passionate about their community and want to enhance the assets that contribute to the extraordinary quality of life they enjoy.

The visions developed look 15 years to the future and represent the efforts of a cross section of residents and other stakeholders in Wasilla. The visions are based on common themes that flow throughout Wasilla as a whole and provide reference points for implementation.

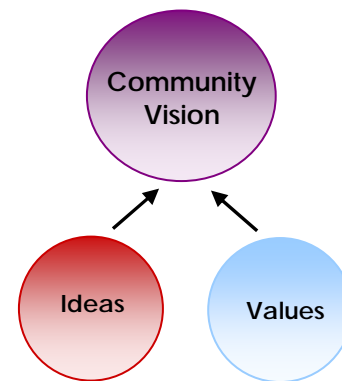
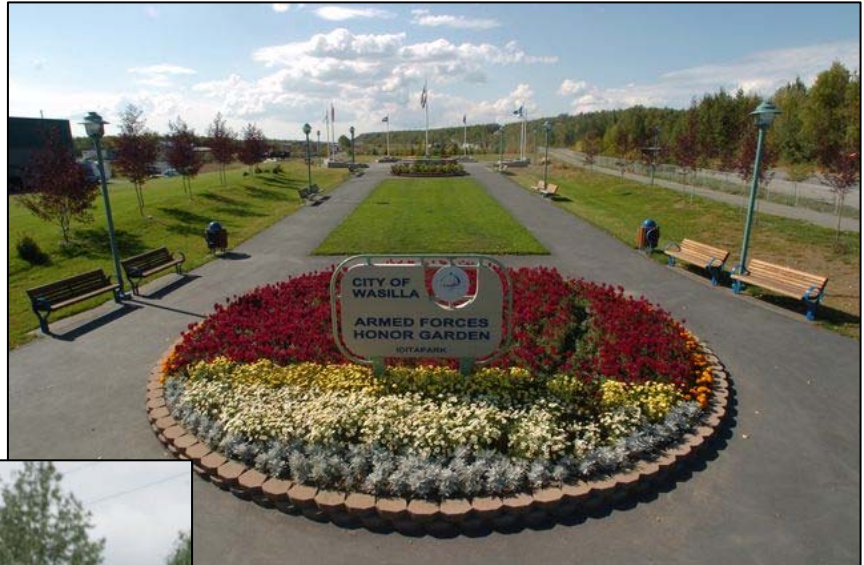


Figure 4 Community Vision

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.



*Above: Honor Garden and Circle of Honor
 Left: Family at 4th of July Parade
 Courtesy City of Wasilla*

❖ COMMUNITY CHARACTER ❖

Growth will be promoted that provides services to residents, encourages young families to establish roots in the community, and offers a comfortable environment for retirees. Downtown will be aesthetically appealing to residents and visitors, and will be a place where all come to shop, dine, work, and live. Pragmatic design standards that are pedestrian-oriented will complement the quality of life provided by the small town atmosphere and natural environment of Alaska.



*Above: Mat-Su Regional Outpatient Center
Left: Meta Rose Square
Courtesy City of Wasilla*

❖ RECOMMENDED LAND USES ❖

Developers will be encouraged to build here with mutually beneficial incentives. Small lots that now pose challenges to development will be combined with adjacent lots or zoning changes will be made that will make development more practical. New development will integrate open space in design. Downtown will be distinguished by pedestrian-oriented design and developed cross streets offering shopping and services as well as increased connectivity to parks, multi-use trails, and Wasilla and Lucille lakes. Additional parks, trails, greenbelts, and cultural and community facilities will be encouraged and supported. Mixed use that accommodates and benefits both young and old will be promoted to provide increased services for residents and contribute to aesthetics. Downtown Wasilla will continue to serve as the cultural center of the community, featuring a library and performing arts venues. The history of Wasilla's beginnings will be preserved to enrich the lives of residents and visitors.

❖ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ❖

Downtown will become a center for public and education services and be recognized as a prime location for successful businesses, government offices, and educational institutions. Nodes of mixed use development will contribute to business growth by offering a variety of commercial services in the same buildings where residents can live and work. These improvements to Downtown will attract more businesses providing additional professional employment opportunities and alternatives for residents, fostering greater economic sustainability.



Yenlo Square Phase I: Yenlo Arms

❖ GROWTH ❖

Downtown will be a proud centerpiece of the community that provides user-friendly full service amenities for residents and visitors such as shopping, dining, and cultural community centers. As the community continues to expand, Downtown will serve as an anchor. Growth will be directed towards infill opportunities in Downtown.

❖ TRANSPORTATION ❖

Downtown will have improved traffic flow with well-planned transportation upgrades, new transportation corridors, parking areas, pedestrian-oriented sidewalk connections, and convenient multi-modal and public transit options to ease traffic congestion.

CHARRETTE SNAPSHOT

During the mini-charrette, the public communicated many ideas and desires for the future of Wasilla, which are categorized in the following box.

- **Common Ideas** are dominant ideas repeated by several participants not only at the charrette, but also throughout the planning process. In the case of Downtown, these may include items that will take sustained effort by public and private parties to implement than the planning timeframe of this document due to a variety of reasons such as land ownership patterns and available funding.
- **Unique Ideas** are individual ideas that may be technically feasible, but they may take longer to implement within the planning timeframe of this document due to a variety of reasons such as land ownership patterns and available funding.
- **Other Highlights** are ideas that were shared by many participants at the charrette and could likely be implemented earlier within the planning timeframe of this document.

Common Ideas

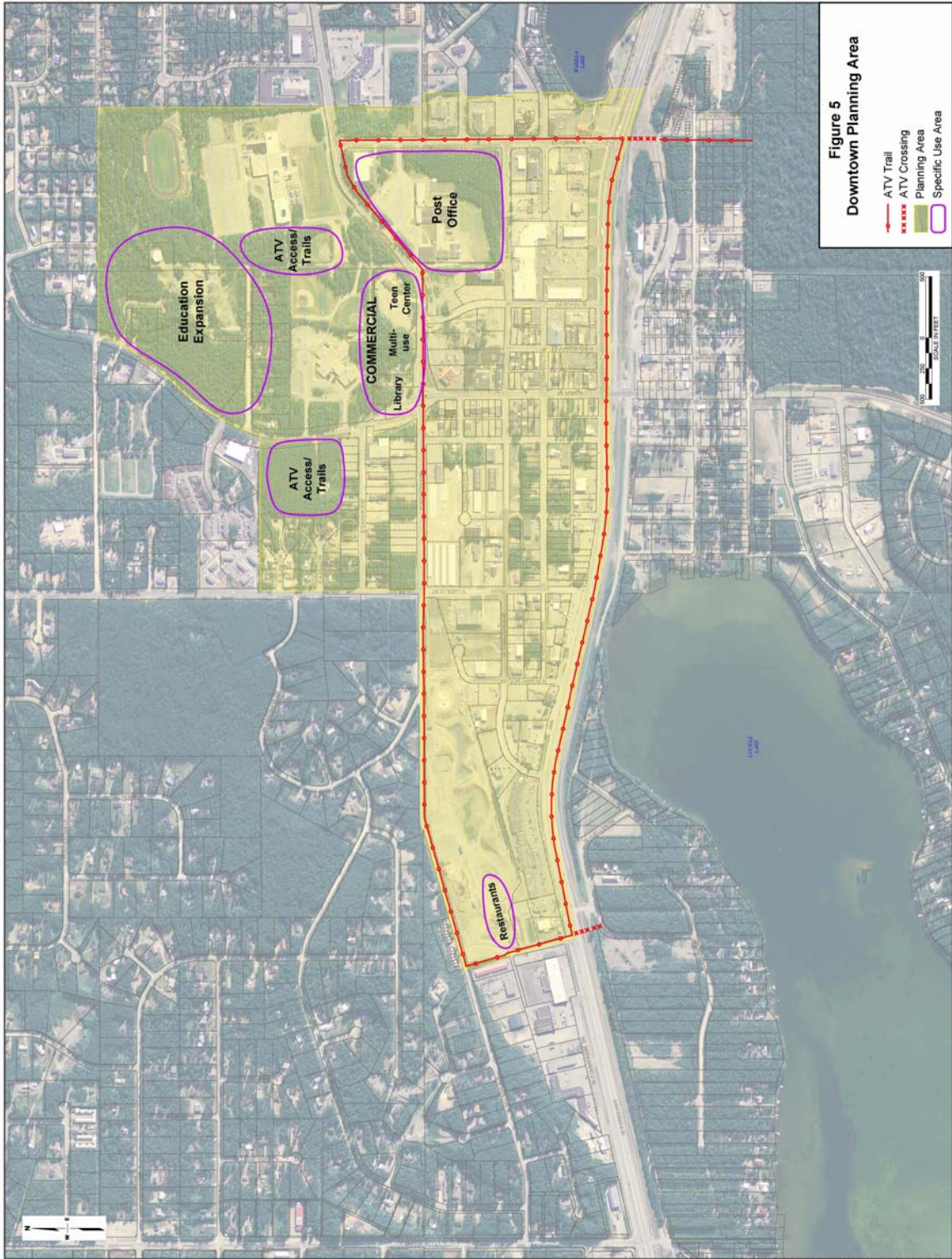
- Government offices
- Expanded library and post office

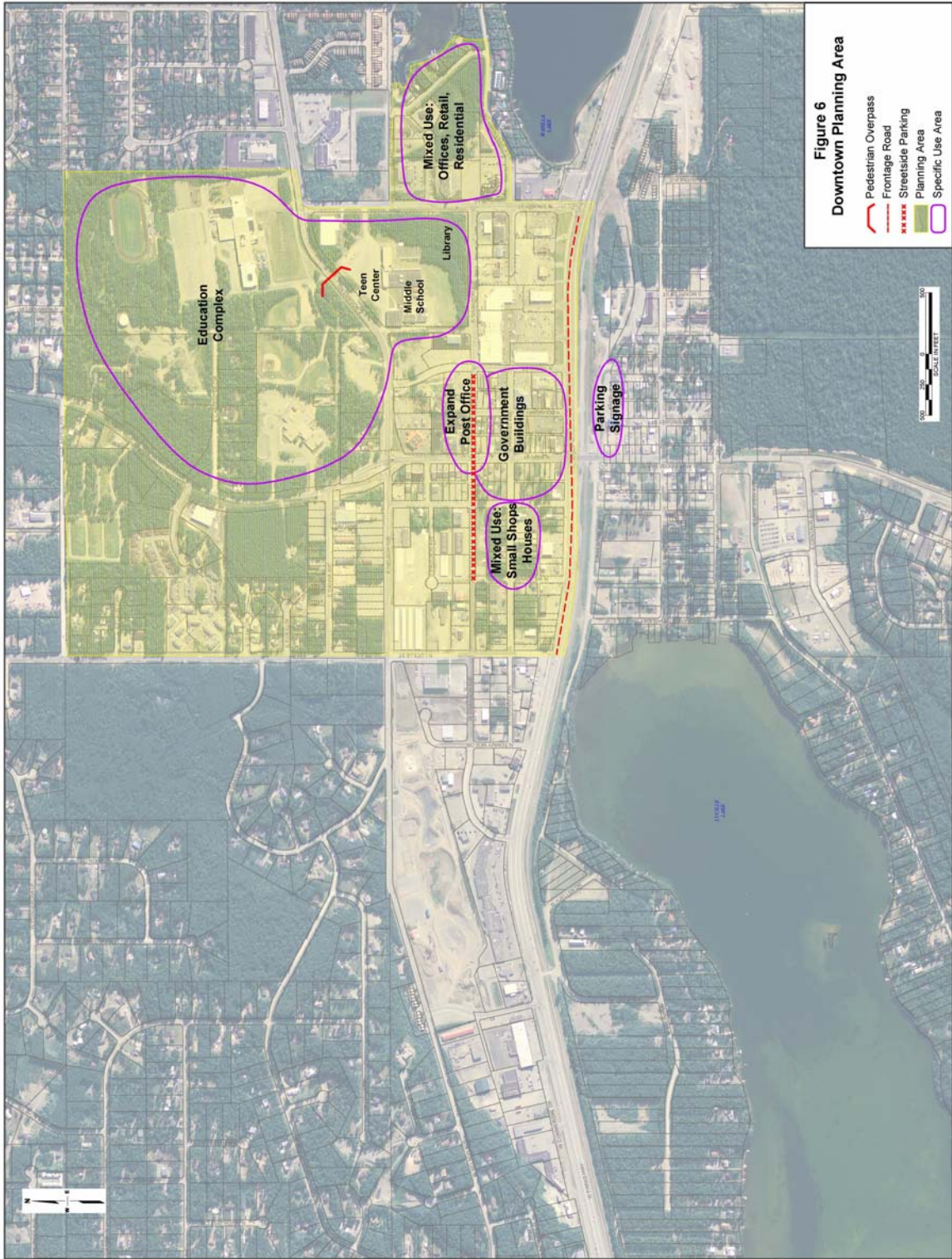
Unique Ideas

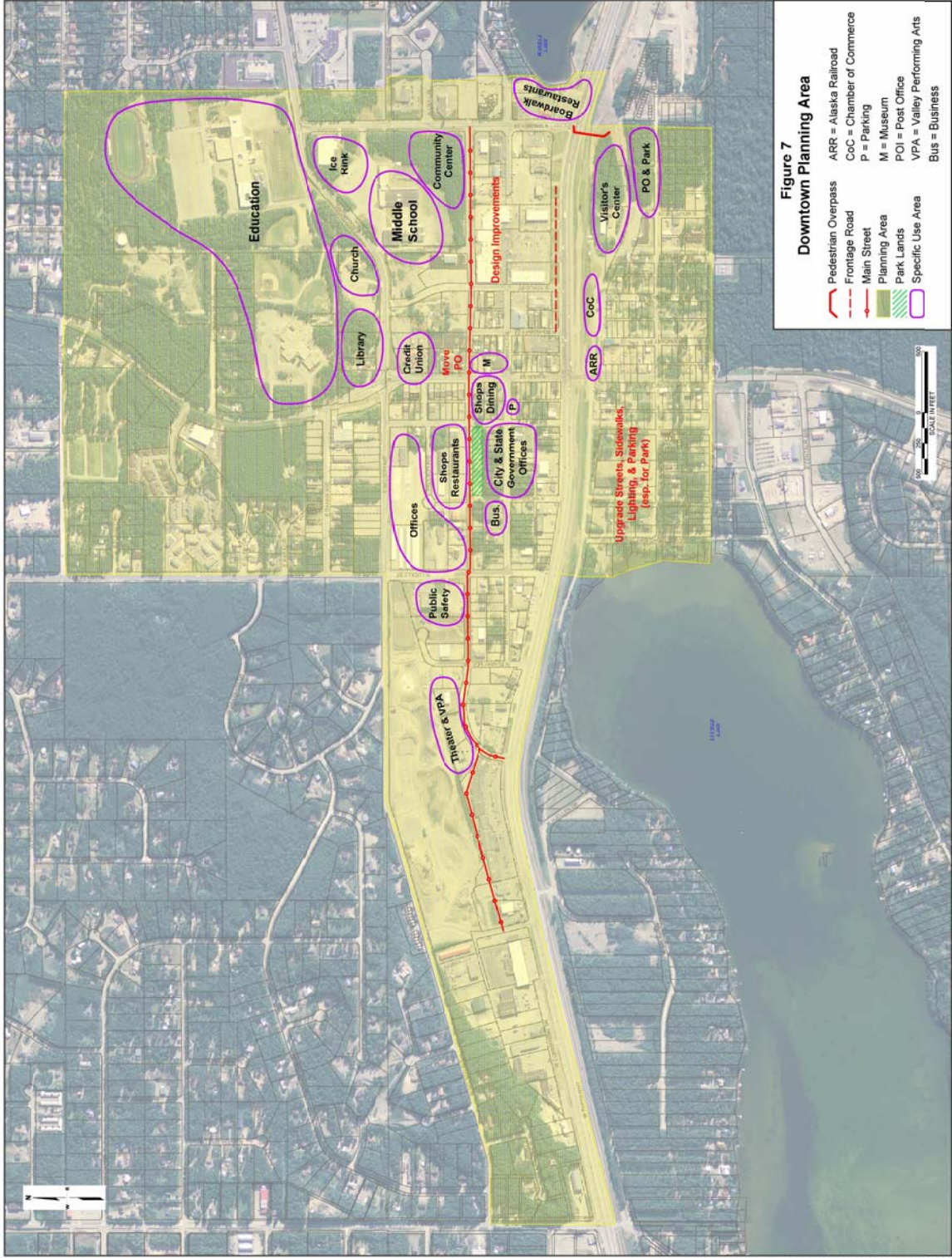
- College campus
- ATV trail around downtown
- Boardwalk and restaurants on west end of Wasilla Lake
- Frontage road

Other Highlights

- Mixed use areas
- Expanded education complex with facilities and services located nearby
- Upgrade streets, sidewalks, lighting and parking
- Pedestrian overpasses on busy streets
- Community Center
- Teen Center







3 ISSUES, GOALS, & OBJECTIVES

Area Snapshots: Downtown

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

Assets (*Strengths*)

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

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

Location: Centrally located

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

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

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

Challenges (*Weaknesses*)

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

Parking: Limited availability; no parking with a Downtown atmosphere

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

Parks & Trails: Parks not connected; lack of trails

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

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



Wasilla Post Office



Wasilla Library



Retail, restaurant, and office spaces in Downtown Wasilla

Issues, Goals, & Objectives

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

WHAT DO THESE TERMS MEAN?

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

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

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

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

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

Schedules for Completion

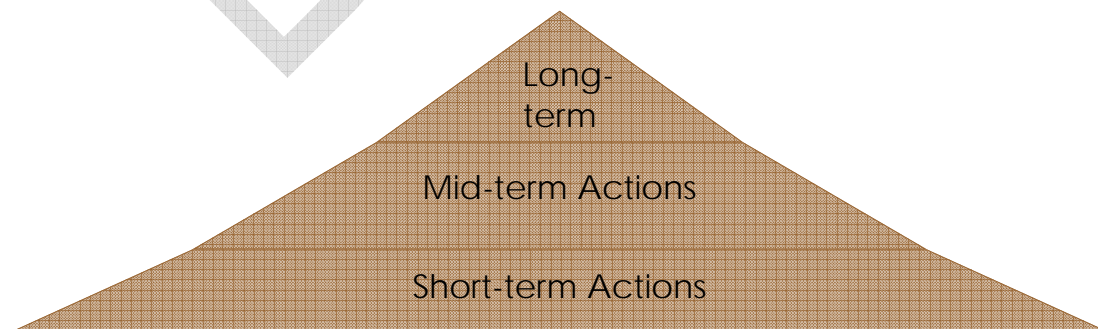
Each implementation item is tied to a timeframe defined as on-going, or short-, mid-, or long-term. The planning timeframe for this plan is 15 years.

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

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

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

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



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

Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Downtown		
Short-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning Department City of Wasilla Planning Commission Wasilla City Council Gateway Committee*
Mid-term	<\$100,000	Downtown Revitalization Committee* Public-Private Partnerships* Mat-Su Convention and Visitor's Bureau
Short-term	<\$100,000	Civic Groups (including art and history)
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
Long-term	<\$100,000	
Long-term	<\$100,000	
Long-term	<\$100,000	
On-going	<\$100,000	
Mid-term	<\$100,000	
*Indicates an entity recommended to be established but not yet in existence		

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

DRAFT

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

DRAFT

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

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

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

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

DRAFT

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

DRAFT

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

Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Downtown		
Long-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments
On-going	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning Commission Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Public-Private Partnerships* Downtown Revitalization Committee*
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	Downtown Businesses State Legislators
Short-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission Wasilla City Council
On-going	\$100,000 - \$500,000	Public-Private Partnerships* Downtown Businesses
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
On-going	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	City of Wasilla Planning and Public Works Departments City of Wasilla Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission
On-going	<\$100,000	Wasilla City Council MASCOT Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
On-going	<\$100,000	Public-Private Partnerships* Downtown Businesses
Long-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
On-going	>\$500,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Long-term	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	

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

ISSUE	GOAL	OBJECTIVE(S)/POLICY(IES)
Transportation and Connectivity (TC)		
<i>5. Local residents feel that Wasilla railroad crossings are inconvenient and unsafe.</i>	<i>A. Improve railroad crossing efficiency and safety.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>i. Work with the Alaska Railroad to evaluate and assess crossing safety, eliminate at-grade crossings, and realign track facilities.</i> <i>ii. Improve signage, striping, and crossing markers.</i> <i>iii. Work with the Alaska Railroad to provide public education outreach.</i>
<i>6. An integrated trail system is needed to connect areas of Wasilla and destinations outside Wasilla.</i>	<i>A. Provide a multi-use trail system that promotes connectivity within Wasilla and multi-modal circulation.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>i. Inventory existing trails in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.</i> <i>ii. Explore options for land acquisition, easements, and partnerships.</i> <i>iii. Provide incentives for developers to include space and/or reserve easements for public plazas, parks, and trails.</i> <i>iv. Investigate funding sources such as those through SAFETEA-LU/National Recreation Trails Program and other partnerships to implement methods and action items, which include acquisition of rights-of-way and funding trails.</i> <i>v. Create multi-modal linkages, for example, car to parking to trails; centralized parking, bus, bike path.</i>
<i>Text in italics indicates an issue, goal, or objective is common throughout all three planning areas.</i>		

DRAFT

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

DRAFT

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

DRAFT

Schedule	Cost	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Downtown		
Mid-term	<\$100,000	City of Wasilla City of Wasilla Planning Commission Wasilla City Council Public-Private Partnerships* Downtown Businesses Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and other state agencies
Short-term	<\$100,000	
Mid-term	\$100,000 - \$500,000	
On-going	<\$100,000	
Short-term	<\$100,000	
On-going	<\$100,000	
On-going	<\$100,000	
*Indicates an entity recommended to be established but not yet in existence		

DRAFT

4 PLAN ELEMENTS

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

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

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



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

LAND USE

OVERVIEW

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

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

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

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

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

Residential

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

Retail

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

Hospitality / Cultural Entertainment

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

Office

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

Education

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

Recreation

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

DOWNTOWN LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

DESIGN STANDARDS

Cohesive design and architecture firmly establish an area identity.

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

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

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

INFILL

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

ZONING

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

Form-Based Codes

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

Zoning Revision

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

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

Overlay Zoning Districts

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

PLATTING AUTHORITY

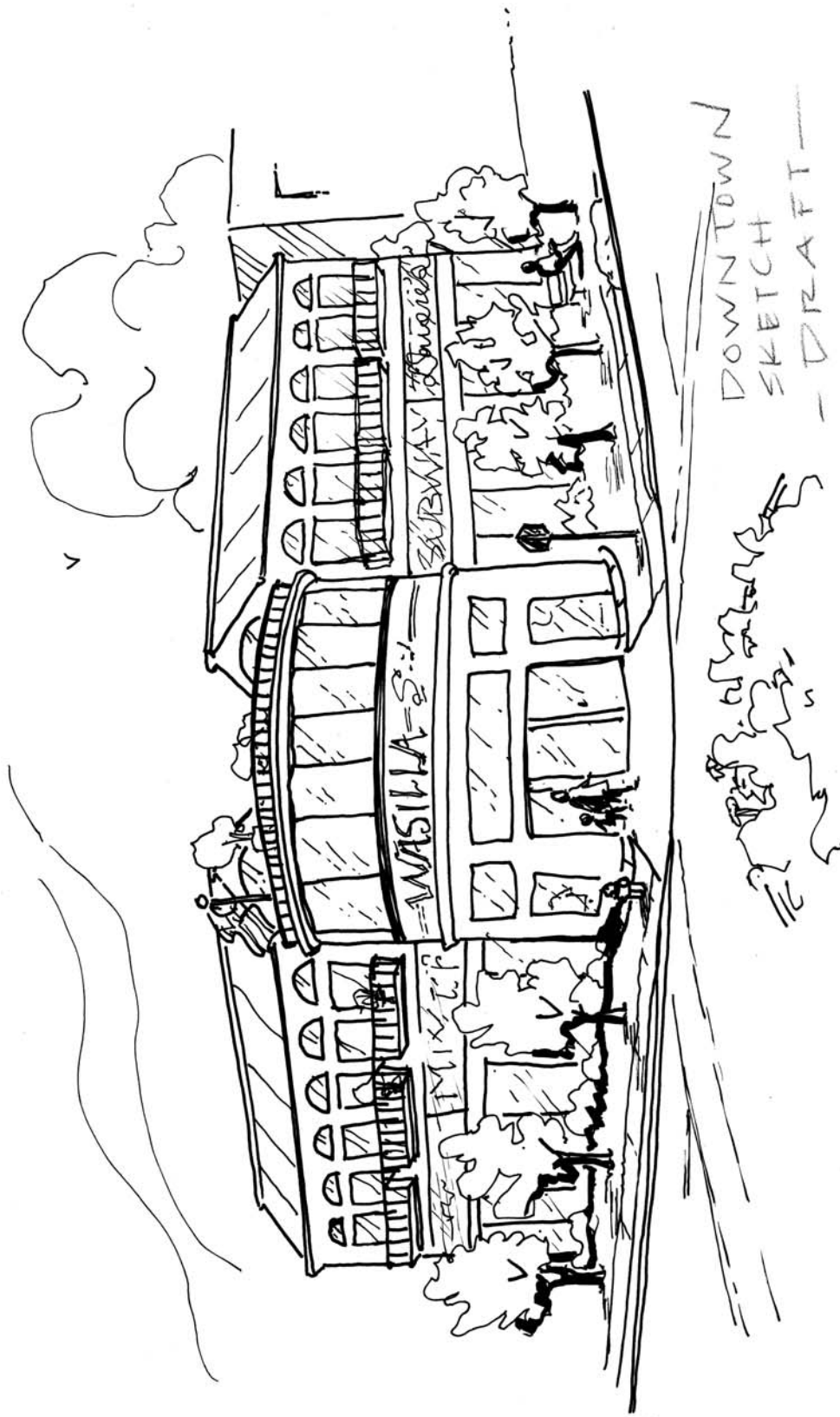
Platting configures parcels of land, either dividing or consolidating them.

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

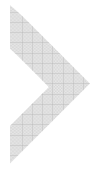
LAND BANK

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

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



DOWNTOWN
SKETCH
- DRAFT -



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

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

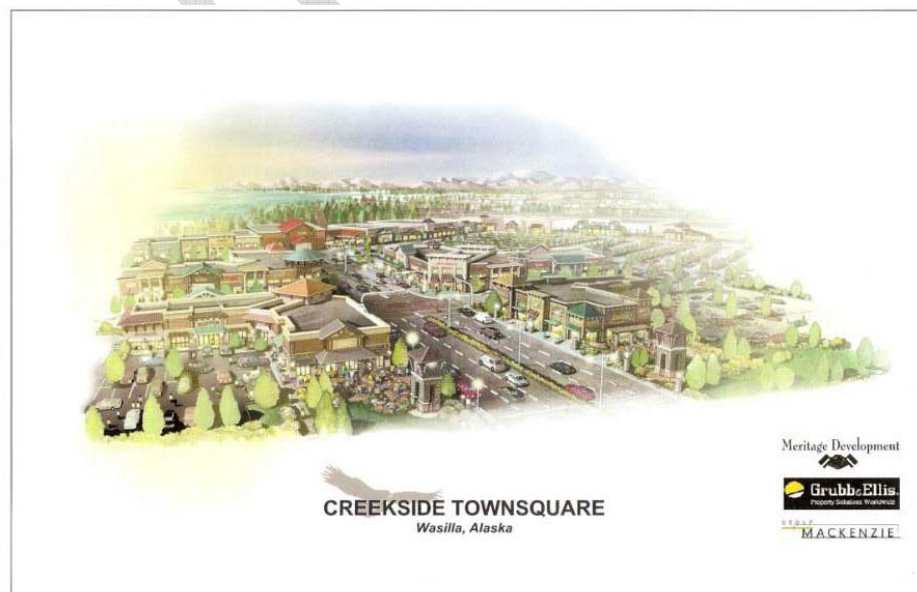
Offering a variety of commercial services in a core Downtown district where residents can live and work will contribute to additional business development in the area. The City, landowners, business community, and local citizens will need to work together to achieve the community vision for the Downtown.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

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

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

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

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



The Creekside Townsquare designed for Wasilla near Downtown.

Residential

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

Retail & Hospitality

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

Office

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

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

DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

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

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS OR PROGRAMS

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

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

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

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION & SUPPORT

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

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

Transportation and Circulation

Overview

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

Planning Considerations

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

Circulation

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

Connectivity & Accessibility

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

Parking

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

DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION GOALS

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

Recommendations

PLANNING

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

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

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

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

CLIMATE SENSITIVE DESIGN

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

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

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

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

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

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

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

continuous shuttle running a Downtown circuit during busy times.

PARKING

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

- **Consideration should** be given to ***climate*** when designing multi-modal transportation linkages. For instance, bike routes can be designed to be seasonal; pedestrian malls and connections between sidewalks can be designed to be easily maintained in winter; creative winter options such as skating corridors, outdoor fires, and dogsled ‘taxis’ are all possible.
- **Pedestrian access** has proven to be a key consideration in other cities attempting to foster vibrant Downtown areas. While careful attention must be given to traffic flow to and from Downtown, as well as through and into it for users in vehicles, prioritizing pedestrian access within the heart of Downtown will encourage less vehicle use within Downtown, and can be beneficial for businesses as well. Specific measures include: easily maintained sidewalks; clearly marked pedestrian crossings; overpasses and crosswalks with push-button stoplight controls in places where walking to a street corner would be inconveniently lengthy for pedestrians.
- **Periodically evaluate** expanding public transportation options. Feasibility studies should be coordinated with MASCOT.
- **Make small** increases in service between popular destinations such as hospitals, Downtown, the MUSC; or a continuous shuttle running a Downtown circuit during busy times.
- **Consider a** public-private partnership to fund municipal parking lots and multi-level parking facilities.
- Consider including integrated parking garages into designs standards.

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

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

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

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

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

Public Facilities and Utilities

Overview

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

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

Planning Considerations

Public Facilities

Accessibility

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

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

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

Universal Design Definition:

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

1: Principle One: Equitable Use

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

2: Principle Two: Flexibility in Use

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

3: Principle Three: Simple and Intuitive

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

4. Principle Four: Perceptible Information

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

5: Principle Five: Tolerance for Error

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

6: Principle Six: Low Physical Effort

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

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

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

Copyright © 1997 NC State University, The Center for Universal Design.

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

Capacity

- Are the current facilities meeting the needs of the public? City Hall will not hold all the offices and functions that the City would ideally house there,

and the building is in need of repairs. The library, too, is felt to be too small for current use, let alone increasing use in a growing community. The Post Office continues to be overcrowded, and contributes to Downtown traffic congestion.

Utilities

Connectivity

- Downtown utilities service the entire Downtown area.

Capacity

- Downtown utilities are currently adequate to meet needs. There are plans for expanding the sewage system, however, this would apply to

areas not currently serviced; Downtown would remain on the STEP system. Concerns have been identified with the City's water supplies in relation to back-up and emergency provisions, rather than capacity (City of Wasilla 2001) These are discussed in Appendix A.

DOWNTOWN PUBLIC FACILITY& UTILITIES GOALS

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

Recommendations

UNIVERSAL DESIGN/BARRIER-FREE ACCESS

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

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

UTILITIES INVENTORY/PLANNING

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

plans such as the Sewer Master Plan, and the Water Systems Facilities Master Plan and update in prescribed regular intervals.

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

- Prioritize actions for meeting future level of service needs.
- Implement action items in utility

FACILITIES INVENTORY/PLANNING

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

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

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

PARTNERSHIPS

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

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

5 IMPLEMENTATION

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

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

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

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS AND MECHANISMS

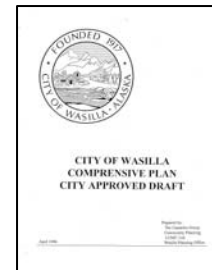
Implementing the Wasilla Area Plans can be accomplished through changes to existing regulations and practices, and through development of new management tools and procedures. The recommendations listed below are initial suggestions that will require more detailed consideration by the City and its implementation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

Existing Tools and Mechanisms – City of Wasilla

City of Wasilla

Comprehensive Plan

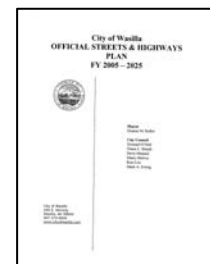
The first step in implementing the Wasilla Area Plans is to adopt this document as an amendment to the 1996 comprehensive plan. Adoption will allow the Wasilla Planning Commission, Wasilla City Council, and City staff to use and cite the document as a basis for making decisions, such as identifying capital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



City of Wasilla Official

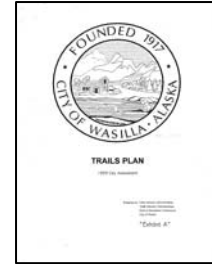
Streets & Highways Plan

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



Wasilla Parks & Recreation Commission

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



Economic Development Department

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

City of Wasilla Land Development Code

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Taxes, Fees, & Other Economic Incentives

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

Existing Tools and Mechanisms – Mat-Su Borough

Platting Actions

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

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

Mat-Su School District

The School District is responsible for locating, planning, and constructing new school facilities, and for programming improvements to existing facilities. There

are a number of recommendations in Section 3 of this plan that should be considered by the School District.

Taxes, Fees, & Other Economic Incentives

The Mat-Su Borough can provide a number of economic development incentives, including tax deferrals and abatements, issuing revenue bonds and

providing fast track permitting. The City of Wasilla and the Mat-Su Borough should discuss potential uses of these tools to promote plan implementation.

Existing Tools and Mechanisms – State of Alaska

Transportation Capital Project Programming

State funding for major transportation projects is programmed through the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and is usually guided by

recommendations from the City on their transportation priorities. The City should work with state transportation planners to incorporate plan recommendations into transportation priorities.

Property & Facility Investments & Decision

The State of Alaska makes decisions on the location and leasing of state office buildings, disposition and use of state properties. The City should work with state

facility planners to incorporate plan recommendations into facility decision-making.

New Tools and Mechanisms – City of Wasilla

Downtown Business Improvement District/Redevelopment Authority

Establishment of a Downtown business improvement district and/or Redevelopment Authority can provide a means of encouraging infill development and sharing the cost of infrastructure improvements. It can also help the City promote catalytic development projects such as public office buildings and mixed use development complexes, and organize special events that bring people Downtown.

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

Municipal Land Bank & Revenue Bonds

Municipal Land Bank programs are used to acquire lands for a variety of public purposes, including lot acquisition and consolidation for public facilities or resale to private parties for development. Resale could be used to encourage mixed use and higher density residential development. Options for initial funding of land acquisition include an investment of general revenue funds, use of revenue bonds similar to those used by utilities, and state and federal grants. Ultimately, sale of lands under the program would cover the majority of program costs.

Gateway Committee

Some communities form citizen committees to help develop community branding and tools for “wayfinding” – directing residents and visitors to community events, attractions, and facilities. This could be accomplished as a subcommittee to the Wasilla Chamber of Commerce, or as a special committee of the Parks and Recreation Commission or Planning Commission.

South Wasilla Heights Policy Advisory Committee

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

Actions and Responsibilities

Actions

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

Responsibilities

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

Annual Review

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

Annual Review Goals

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

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

Progress Report

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

DRAFT

DRAFT

This page intentionally left blank.

6

FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS AND POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

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

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

DRAFT

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

PROGRAM	AGENCY	ACTION	RESTRICTIONS	CONTACT	AMOUNT	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
Rural Business Opportunity Grants	USDA Rural Development	Grants may be used for these purposes: 1) to identify and analyze business opportunities that use local resources, 2) to establish business support centers or otherwise support creation of new businesses, 3) for economic development planning, 4) to pay reasonable fees and charges for professional services necessary to conduct the technical assistance, training or planning functions, and 5) to identify, train and provide technical assistance to existing or prospective entrepreneurs.	Grants are available to rural areas other than a city or town with a population of greater than 50,000. Eligible organizations include rural public bodies; rural non-profit corporations; rural Indian tribes on federal reservations and other federally recognized tribal groups; and cooperatives with members that are primarily rural residents.	Dean Stewart USDA Rural Development 800 W. Evergreen, Suite 201 Palmer, AK 99645 (907) 761-7722 (907) 761-7793 (fax) dean.stewart@ak.usda.gov http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/rboxe.htm	The maximum grant for a project serving a single state is \$50,000.	N/A	Business owners, non-profit corporations, Indian tribes, and rural cooperatives.
Community Facility Loans and Grants	USDA Rural Development	Loans for public entities in rural areas to construct, repair, improve or expand community facilities for health care, public safety and public services.	Applicants must be unable to obtain needed funds from other sources at reasonable rates and terms; have legal capacity to borrow and repay loans; be financially sound and able to manage the facility effectively. Available for communities with populations less than 10,000. Interest rates on loans vary. Grants are available to public entities such as municipalities, counties, and special-purpose districts, as well as non-profit corporations and tribal governments.	Frank Muncy or Dean Stewart (907) 745-2176 http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/ulpl/s7.0.A/7.0.10.BENAVID=BUSINESS_DEVELOPMENT&parentnav=RURAL_DEVELOPMENT&nativp=RL	Alaska's FY97 allotment was \$750,000 for direct loans and \$750,000 in loan guarantees. Grants up to 75% of development cost. Loans repayable over 40 years.	N/A	City of Wasilla
Water and Waste Disposal Loans and Grants	USDA Rural Development	Loan and grant funds to construct, repair, improve or expand water or sewer systems, storm sewer facilities, sanitary landfills, incinerators, and necessary equipment.	Public entities such as cities, boroughs, federally recognized Alaska Native Village entities and non-profit corporations are eligible. Applicants must be unable to obtain funds from other sources at reasonable rates and terms. The maximum term for all loans is 40 years; however, no repayment period will exceed state statutes or the useful life of the facility.	Dean Stewart USDA Rural Development 800 W. Evergreen, Suite 201 Palmer, AK 99645 (907) 761-7722 (907) 761-7793 (fax) dean.stewart@ak.usda.gov http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/pubs/pal1806.pdf	Grants are made, in some instances, for up to 75% of eligible project costs.	N/A	City of Wasilla

PROGRAM	AGENCY	ACTION	RESTRICTIONS	CONTACT	AMOUNT	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
Airport Improvement Program	Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)	Provides funding to improve the safety, capacity, security and environmental concerns of public use airports. Grants are provided to public agencies and certain private owners.	Eligibility is based on type of sponsor and type of activity that needs funding. Does not include improvements to hangers, terminals or non-aviation development. Eligible airports must be included in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems.	James Lomen Airports Program Specialist U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) FAA 222 W. 8th Ave, Room #36A Anchorage, AK 99513 (907) 271-5816 http://www.faa.gov/airports-airtraffic/airports/regional_guide/dance/alaskan/aip/	For large and medium primary hub airports, the grant covers 75% of eligible costs (or 80% for noise program implementation). For small primary, reliever, and general aviation airports, the grant covers 95% of eligible costs.	N/A	City of Wasilla (note: the City is already receiving these grants)
Major Capital Investments Program (New Starts and Small Starts)	Federal Transit Administration (FTA)	Provides capital assistance for three primary activities: new and replacement buses and facilities, modernization of existing rail systems, and new fixed guide way systems (New Starts).	Eligible recipients for capital investment funds are public bodies and agencies (transit authorities and other state and local public bodies and agencies thereof) including states, municipalities, other political subdivisions of states; public agencies and instrumentalities of one or more states; and certain public corporations, boards, and commissions established under state law.	Office of Program Management (202) 366-4020 http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3590.html	Funding match is 80% federal, 20% local.	Application deadlines are posted in Federal Register	City of Wasilla MASCOI
Rural and Small Urban Areas	FTA	Provides formula funding to states for supporting public transportation in areas of less than 50,000 population.	Eligible recipients are state and local governments, non-profit organizations (including Indian tribes and groups), and public transit operators.	Office of Program Management (202) 366-4020 http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3555.html	Federal share maximum is 80% (90% in some cases) The maximum federal share for operating assistance is 50% of the net operating costs. The local share is 50%, which shall come from an undistributed cash surplus, a replacement or depreciation cash fund or reserve, or new capital.	Contact Bruce Wells at the Alaska Department of Transportation (ADOT) for local application information (907) 465-6991	City of Wasilla

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

PROGRAM	AGENCY	ACTION	RESTRICTIONS	CONTACT	AMOUNT	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
STATE							
Mini-Grants Assistance Program	Department of Commerce, Community, & Economic Development; DCCED; USDA Forest Service; Denali Commission	Competitive grants to fund economic development projects that support business or community development activities. Mini-grant program funding is a combination of the USDA Forest Service Community Assistance program and Denali Commission funds, appropriated for the program.	Eligible applicants include municipalities, tribal governments, and non-profit organizations applying on behalf of a community that has a population of 10,000 or less. Community consensus for proposed projects is a key element in funding consideration.	Jill Davis, Grants Administrator, DCCED, Division of Community Advocacy 211 Cushman St. Fairbanks, AK 99701-4639 (907) 451-2717 (907) 451-2742 (fax) Jill.Davis@commerce.state.ak.us http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/grt/minigrant.htm	Maximum \$30,000 per community per fiscal year	Funding for current year is uncertain. Website will be updated when/if funding is allocated.	City of Wasilla
Municipal Water, Sewerage and Solid Waste Matching Grant Program	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), Division of Facility Construction and Operation	Provides grants for water, wastewater, and solid waste processing facilities. Funding amount available is limited to 100% of eligible costs. Funding does not cover operation, maintenance, repair, or construction of storm sewer systems.	Alaska municipalities are eligible. Application is made through an online questionnaire.	Mike Lewis (907) 269-7616 mburns@envicon.state.ak.us http://www.dce.state.ak.us/water/minigrant/index.htm	Contact Mike Lewis for more information.	Contact Mike Lewis for more information.	City of Wasilla
Rural Energy Programs	DCCED, Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA), Alaska Energy Authority (AEA)	Two types of grants: 1) to continue activities, procurement of materials, and equipment that would be used to prevent power plant related emergencies and disasters statewide; 2) provides follow-on funding for correction of hazards that are existing or pose a possible threat to life, health and safety in rural communities. Wherever possible, funds will be used to leverage local matching funds.	Inquire with AIDEA	Kris Noonan Program Manager (907) 269-4697 knoonan@aiden.org	Contact Kris Noonan for more information.	Contact Kris Noonan for more information.	City of Wasilla
Small Business Economic Development Loan Program	AIDEA	To provide private sector employment by financing the start-up and expansion of businesses that will create significant long-term employment.	Companies must be a small business as defined by the Small Business Administration (SBA). Applicants are required to match loan funds with cash or other private, non-public financing.	Division of Investments (907) 465-2510	Maximum loan amount is \$300,000.	N/A	Small businesses

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

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

PROGRAM	AGENCY	ACTION	RESTRICTIONS	CONTACT	AMOUNT	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants	DNR, DPOR, National Park Service (NPS)	Provides partial funding for the acquisition of outdoor recreation lands and/or development of outdoor recreation facilities. 50% local match is required. DNR provides notification of program availability.	For acquisition and development money, the state, cities and federally recognized Tribes are eligible. Qualifying criteria include: 1) Project type must be identified as a community priority in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. 2) Applicant must have authority to provide outdoor recreation services on public lands. 3) If development project, land must be owned by sponsor. 4) All past compliance problems must be solved. 5) Applicant must have current Section 504 Self-Evaluation and Transit Plan, or be willing to prepare one prior to receiving grant. 6) Project development must be accessible to persons with disabilities. 7) Federal share requested must be between \$100,000 and \$500,000.	Kristy Gray Alaska State Parks 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1380 Anchorage AK 99501-3561 (907) 269-8692 (907) 269-8907 (fax) Kristy_Gray@dnr.state.ak.us http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/grants/lwcf.htm	For the FY'06 funding cycle, applications of no less than \$100,000 and no more than \$500,000 federal share were accepted.	Federal FY'08 grant program will be tentatively available in March 2008. It is expected that a grant round will be in the spring. When funding becomes available, all governmental entities listed in the Municipal Officials Directory will be notified via letter.	City of Wasilla
PRIVATE							
Rasmuson Foundation	Rasmuson Foundation	Two award levels are available: Tier 1 awards are for capital projects and Tier 2 awards are for start-up of innovative projects that address issues of broad community or statewide significance. Capital projects are defined as furnishings, buildings, audio and video equipment, books, medical equipment, computers, art supplies, sports equipment, musical instruments, vehicles, etc.	Alaskan organizations that have received 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service and are classified as "not a private foundation" under section 509(a) of the U.S. Code are eligible.	Rasmuson Foundation 301 W. Northern Lights Blvd. Suite 400 Anchorage, AK 99503 (907) 297-2700 (877) 366-2700 (907) 297-2770 (fax) rasmusonfdn@rasmuson.org http://www.rasmuson.org/ind-ex.html	Tier 1 awards: less than \$25,000 Tier 2 awards: exceeding \$25,000	N/A	City of Wasilla other organizations

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

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

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

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

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

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.

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: _____

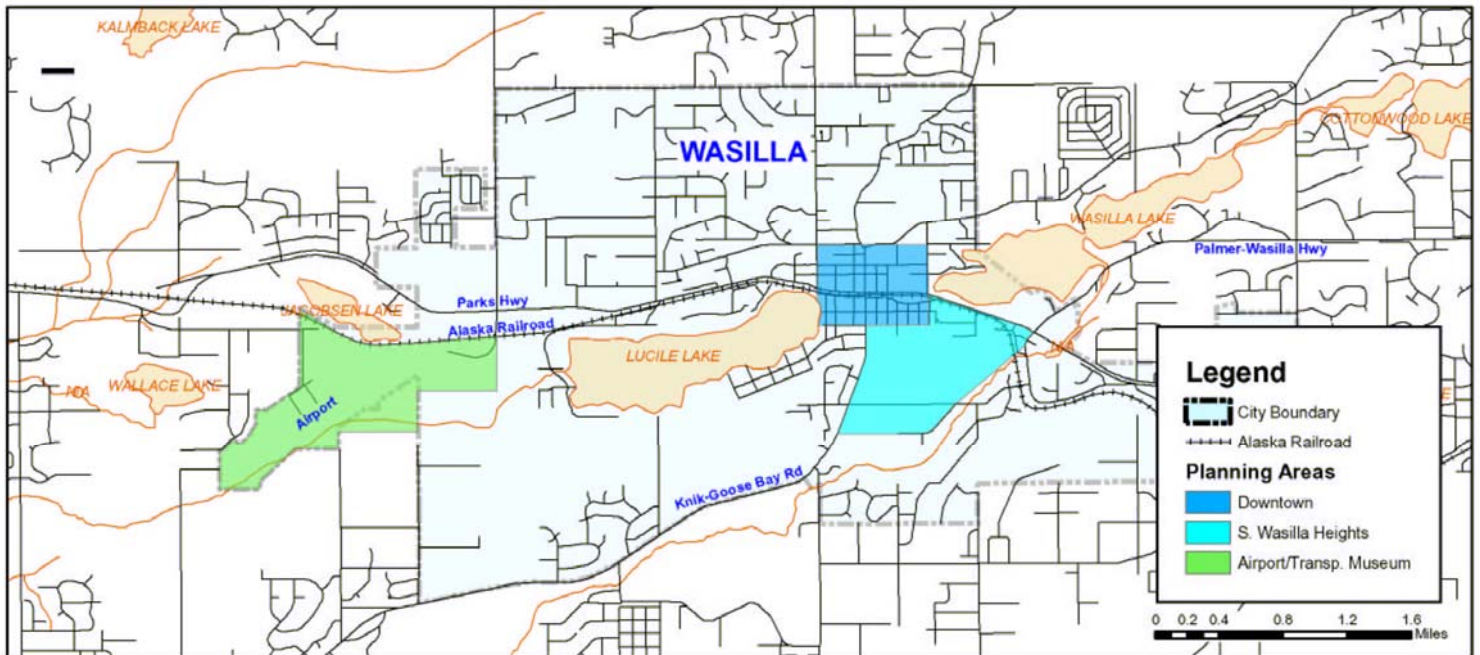
E-mail: _____

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.

STRENGTHS: DOWNTOWN

Historical Features	Parks & Open Space	Location	Municipal Services & Infrastructure	Shopping & Services	Economic & Development Potential	Other
Historical buildings	Wasilla Lake Park, even if on the other side of Crusey Street	Centrally located	Local government, police department, and fire department	Variety of small businesses	High traffic count (good for business)	Growing media attention and visibility
Historical area – Dorothy Page, Herring/Teeland, etc.	Lake recreation	Geographic center of the universe	Post office	Useful small businesses with loyal customers	Economic growth	Some sidewalks
Holds a lot of historic process	Iditapark is well planned and appeals to a variety of interests		Library	Access to a variety of (small & large) businesses and services	Available land to develop	Something for teenagers to do and place to hang out
Historic/culture	Park with amphitheater and skate park		City services	Diverse small businesses		Not presently an "old" downtown
Historical value	Wonderland Park		Water system, sewer system, power	Parking lot location for multiple shopping stores		Wide open to new ideas
Dorothy Page Museum	Parks, lakes, greenbelts, and open areas		City gives small rebate for sewer hookup for residential	Centralized shopping and services; can fill need for all family members		Area members are open to enhancement
				Destination for services, people desire to go there		Railroad

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			Lack of trails	Not well planned	Move post office	
The non-Parks Highway east-west connections are only partially set up for commercial through streets	No parking and access	Access to library museums, parks, post office	Difficult for pedestrian movement	Nunley Park is in the wrong area	Lack of "want to be there" feel	Library is too small and outdated	Limited hours/days to Dorothy Page Museum
	A parking garage would be excellent, centrally located in downtown area, close to historic town site	Connectivity of businesses and services			Can't identify feeling or place which is "downtown"	Historic buildings are taking prime real estate	
Lack of parking outside of Carr's, D&A Grocery, and around Crusey Street		Too spread out; must move your car for every stop			Unattractive, uninviting, dirty	The old museum is taking up prime real estate; the museum should be moved to a site near the Transportation Museum	Level playing field for downtown businesses
					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., Soluang, 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							
Iditapark 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				

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.

DOWNTOWN: STRENGTHS			
Facilities	Shopping & Services	Connectivity	Miscellaneous
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			

DOWNTOWN: WEAKNESSES				
Transportation	Access / Parking	Facilities	Boundaries	Miscellaneous
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				

DOWNTOWN: WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN WASILLA THAT MAKES THIS AREA SPECIAL AND UNIQUE?		
Facilities	Social Aspects	Miscellaneous
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 th 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	

DOWNTOWN: ARE THERE SPECIFIC PLACES WITHIN THIS AREA THAT ARE SPECIAL TO YOU AND THAT YOU LIKE TO TAKE OUT-OF-TOWN VISITORS?			
Facilities	Shops/Services	Events	Parks
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

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

DOWNTOWN: WHERE ARE THE PUBLIC PLACES IN THIS AREA WHERE PEOPLE CAN MEET TO DISCUSS COMMUNITY ISSUES?			
Facilities	Shops/Services	Parks/Open Areas	Miscellaneous
Library	Teeland building/Valley Bistro	Iditapark (e.g. pavilion at Wonderland Park and summertime amphitheatre)	Historic townsite
City Hall	Area churches	Snider Park	Farmer's Market
Fire Station	VFW	Wasilla Lake	
Schools			

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

DOWNTOWN: WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE PLANNING PRIORITIES IN THIS AREA?				
Access	Transportation	Regulatory	Facilities	Miscellaneous
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	

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.

DOWNTOWN: STRENGTHS	
Transportation	Area
Major street lights to control and flow traffic	Consolidated service area

DOWNTOWN: WEAKNESSES			
Traffic	Infrastructure	Recreation	Access / Parking
Vehicle traffic	Narrow streets	Bicycle paths	No parking
	Roads		No sidewalks
			Miscellaneous
			Funding
			Area is undefined

DOWNTOWN: WHAT DRAWS YOU TO THIS AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT/BUILDING?	
Identity / Atmosphere	Facilities
Small town feeling	Library
Slower pace (well, it was)	Post Office
More room between houses	Museum
	Park (e.g., park on Nelson and Lucille)
	Shopping
	Carrs / shopping area

DOWNTOWN: WHAT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST IN THIS AREA THAT ARE NOT TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF?	
Land	Access
Combine smaller lots into larger parcels	Needs sidewalks
	Downtown not tooting their own horn
	Small specialty stores
	Mark phone poles with signs showing what is downtown
	Movie theatre (something for people to do)
	Get community involvement to solicit Post Office to relocate to a larger building and use existing building for the library or something else

DOWNTOWN: WHAT CAN THE CITY DO TO PROMOTE GOOD DEVELOPMENT IN THIS AREA?				
Regulations	Building Standards	Infrastructure	Parks / Open Space	Miscellaneous
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

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

DOWNTOWN: WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE PLANNING PRIORITIES IN THIS AREA?			
Connectivity	Transportation	Funding	Miscellaneous
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

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)

**CITY OF WASILLA AREA PLANS FOCUS GROUP
BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY
Wasilla City Hall
Saturday, January 27, 2007
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.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)...

- an improved, more organized city with a reputation for attractive planned development; a city that has a more positive reputation than it does currently.
- more of a tourist attraction, particularly the airport and transportation area. However, access to develop the area as a tourist attraction is a primary concern.
- a city with a museum that draws all the tourists that travel to Alaska. The Museum of Alaska Transportation Industry (MATI) contains many things that appeal to the older demographic, which is probably the majority of the tourists.
- a home; let it grow.
- a cultural center.
- a city where transportation helps people and businesses function better.
- a city where transportation positively contributes to development.
- with a state office building.

- with a high speed transportation corridor.
- with the Iditarod and a hotel(s) in the Airport and Transportation Museum area.
- with an expanded airport that is the focal point of the entire Matanuska-Susitna Valley.
- with a variety of transportation options that can residents and tourists anywhere.
- a community that is proactive to transportation.
- a city that is supportive of commuter rail.
- a sustainable community that includes not only services, but a variety of professional employment options.

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.

DOWNTOWN: STRENGTHS		
Location	Shops / Services	Miscellaneous
Natural government locations	Variety of services	Small town name recognition within rest of state
		Compact
Hometown of Gov. Palin		Exists

DOWNTOWN: WEAKNESSES				
Traffic	Safety	Shops / Services	Access / Parking	Miscellaneous
Bottleneck traffic because this area provides the only north/south road on this side of the Valley	Dangerous railroad crossing in town center	Lacks good mix of shopping and dining	Lacks parking for available services	Lacks character
Summer tourists add to existing traffic congestion			Over-abundance of access to services	
Disjointed traffic flow			Lack of sidewalks	

DOWNTOWN: WHAT DRAWS BUSINESSES TO THIS AREA?			
Access	Traffic	Shops / Services	Miscellaneous
Better access (maybe a two-way frontage road and RR)	High visibility in high traffic area	Close proximity to like businesses	Property values
	High traffic flow draws small businesses (which need traffic in lieu of advertising)		Opportunity for building
	Parks Highway goes directly through town so travelers have access to businesses; but traffic congestion goes hand-in-hand with this		

DOWNTOWN: WHAT SHOULD COMMUNITY LEADERS BE MINDFUL OF? WHAT WOULD PROMOTE BUSINESS GROWTH IN THIS AREA?	
Identity / Atmosphere	Miscellaneous
Area identity	Small businesses need traffic control

DOWNTOWN: WHAT WOULD INHIBIT BUSINESS GROWTH IN THIS AREA?		
Access	Traffic	Property
Off the highway	Traffic flow	Lot size and block size are too small
		High market price of property
		Water drainage
		Infrastructure

DOWNTOWN: WHAT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST THAT ARE NOT TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF IN THIS AREA?
Miscellaneous
Public relations plan or other promotion for downtown assets

DOWNTOWN: WHERE ARE THE PUBLIC PLACES IN THIS AREA WHERE PEOPLE CAN MEET TO DISCUSS COMMUNITY ISSUES?	
Parks/Open Space	Facilities/Services
Iditapark	Lake Lucille Inn

DOWNTOWN: WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE PLANNING PRIORITIES IN THIS AREA?	
Transportation	Safety
Traffic congestion	Unsafe railroad crossings
	Infrastructure congestion

Wasilla Area Plans Charrette

Saturday, March 31, 2007

Multi-Use Sports Complex

Summary

As part of the Wasilla Areas Planning Project, the City of Wasilla and URS Corporation conducted a planning charrette with three separate sessions to identify visions and goals for each the three planning areas: Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and the Airport and Transportation Museum area. The sessions were advertised in the *Frontiersman* and *Anchorage Daily News*, and publicized on local radio. The charrette brought together interested members of the public, key stakeholders, city planners, and planning team members. Attendees included a broad mix of city residents, including property owners, real estate and land developers, retirees, and students. Some Visioning Committee members and focus group participants also attended.

The charrette was divided into two hour sessions to focus on each planning area. Each session began with a brief presentation that summarized the purpose of the area plans, role of the Visioning Committee, and purpose of the focus groups. The planning team provided a brief synopsis of Visioning Committee and focus group comments to date regarding the planning area strengths and weaknesses and the stakeholders' ideas for area planning priorities.

Each two hour session was divided into three separate exercises: state a vision of a development emphasis, identify preferred land uses that support the development emphasis, and draw recommended spatial locations of preferred land uses on the map. The map exercise was a collaborative group activity. The groups then reported out and presented their map results to the rest of the participants.

The planning team recorded development vision concepts and potential land use elements. Many ideas were shared, with detailed suggestions for potential development. Participants were then asked to take part in a mapping exercise to transcribe their visions and preferred land uses onto maps of the planning areas.

The planning team has synthesized the charrette proceedings: a table of vision themes, list of potential land uses, and narrative conclusions were developed for each planning area. Several suggestions for goals and objectives were woven through the visions and potential land uses. The planning team will build upon the information provided to date to develop goals, objectives, and specific implementation action items. The implementation tables will be developed to pursue opportunities, overcome obstacles, and encourage development within preferred vision. The draft tables and land use maps will be presented and reviewed at the next public meeting, to be held on Tuesday, May 1, 2007.

DOWNTOWN: Vision*

Community Character / Lifestyle	Infrastructure / Transportation	Services	Connectivity	Assets	Regulation / Building Restraints
Pedestrian friendly with mix of community-centered services (e.g., restaurants and shops; should be able to spend the afternoon downtown)	The city should involve and coordinate with the Borough and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities	Expand the library	Sidewalks, ATV and bike paths should be developed	Encourage use of current facilities and services	Parcels are too little and incentives should be developed to vacate lot line and develop small lots
Enhance and maintain the community atmosphere	New streets should be required to include sidewalks	Locate government buildings downtown, with historic character—not high-rises	Three schools outside the core downtown area need to be connected to downtown area and library	Build on the current assets—lakes, Cottonwood Creek, railroad, road	Develop creative non-mall mixed use
Incorporate “Alaska heritage” into design	Opportunity to get from outlying areas into downtown area (transportation options)		Trail connectivity; provide trail access throughout town		Zoning codes should be developed that have foresight; accommodate future growth
Future designs address healthy lifestyle issues; encourage walking	Many problems stem from transportation; start with transportation and work backwards from that		Pedestrian overpass on the Parks Highway is needed		Be aware of geologic hazards and constraints
Keep it friendly (i.e., don’t go too industrial)	Land for parking area should be set aside by the City (this would be developed by City)				Railroad needs to move in order to distribute growth
Design standards should include green parking lots and landscape minimums	Mini bus				Implement regulations to maintain the community character (e.g., consider the impacts of the proposed Knik Arm Bridge)
Aesthetics should be maintained	Street lights				
Keep historical vision	Frontage and thru roads				
	Improve streets				

* Area development emphasis suggestions are organized by theme in each column; there is no intended correlation across rows

Downtown should include the following land uses:

- Large library
- Government office buildings
- Meeting spaces
- Teen center (near library and located among other fun, interesting services; promote it)
- Restaurants
- Road upgrades that include ATV trails and bike trails
- Parking area
- Multi-use meeting facilities: Trade shows (e.g., craft shows)
- Mixed retail/office space
- Movie theatre
- Co-locate tourist information center and museum

Analysis and Synthesis for Downtown:

Based on the mapping exercise and prior comments from the Visioning Committee and focus groups, the boundaries for the Downtown planning area should be adjusted. Nearly all participants have expressed that the planning boundaries of Downtown should change. The mapping exercise during the charrette clearly illustrated that people identify the downtown core of Wasilla encompassing the Iditapark, the western shoreline of Wasilla Lake, and the schools north of the current downtown boundary. It was also clear during the mapping exercise that participants did not envision much, if any, development related to the Downtown to occur south of the Parks Highway.

The Parks Highway divides the community; such a large transportation corridor does not lend to developing a downtown identity. The area to the north of the highway has the majority of the facilities and attractions that people associate with the Downtown. Few connections were identified between services and facilities on the north and south sides of the highway. The City may wish to reconsider the planning area boundaries; the area to the south of the highway could be combined with the South Wasilla Heights planning area.

If we were to move forward with redesigning the planning area boundaries, the southern boundary for the Downtown planning area could be the Parks Highway, from North Weber Drive to the western shore of Wasilla Lake. The western boundary would zigzag from North Weber Drive to West Nelson Avenue and North Lucille Street. The northern border could follow lot lines from North Lucille Street (just north of East Glen Circle) to the Wasilla-Fishhook Road and continue east on Aspen Avenue. The eastern border would not neatly follow a road, but rather lot lines that are west of East Dellwood Street between Aspen Avenue and the Parks Highway.

Some participants envisioned Swanson Avenue being developed and shaped into a “main street,” and that the Parks Highway become more of a bypass. Also, any new commercial development should be accompanied with planned and adequate parking. The land use visions of the participants are not drastically different from current zoning. However, there are some areas in direct conflict including the area by Wasilla-Fishhook Road and Aspen Avenue. A part of this area is currently zoned for rural residential, and participants envision this area as one where the schools can expand. Also, there are areas that were identified for recreational use that are currently zoned commercial. In addition to zoning conflicts, there may be land ownership conflicts that would also have to be addressed.

**WASILLA AREA PLANS PUBLIC MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 1, 2007
WASILLA CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Purpose

The City of Wasilla and URS Corporation organized a public meeting to review the products of the planning process to date and solicit further comments to incorporate in the draft area plans. The public meeting was advertised in the *Frontiersman* and the *Anchorage Daily News*, and noticed at the City Council Chambers. In addition, the *Anchorage Daily News* published an article on the planning process the Friday prior to the meeting. Members of the Visioning Committee, participants in the focus groups and charrette, and interested members of the public attended the meeting.

As participants arrived, they were able to view suggested land use maps that were developed from a mapping exercise during the charrette. Participants in the charrette illustrated their visions for growth and preferred land uses on maps for each planning area. Three maps of suggested land uses were developed for Downtown and South Wasilla Heights; and two maps were developed for the Airport and Transportation Museum area.

Next, a brief presentation provided an overview of the area plans and the key topics that will be addressed in the plans. The public participation steps in the process as well as the significance and results of each step were also explained, including the Visioning Committee, the focus groups, the charrette, the school project, and the public meeting that night.

After the presentation, there was a question and answer session. The participants were encouraged to share comments and/or ask questions about the process to date and the maps with suggested land uses in each area developed at the charrette. Following this, participants were invited to study the suggested land use maps further and provide written comments identifying what they like and dislike about each. Blank maps of each area were also provided for participants to draw new ideas on. Several participants requested that maps be mailed to them so they could make suggestions and/or give friends and neighbors an additional opportunity to comment also.

Summary of Comments

Question and Answer Session

As the plan progresses and the City of Wasilla identifies specific parcels of land for future development, can the City purchase those parcels and charge rent for a different use until the City can develop the parcel(s) for its identified use?

Currently, the planning team is identifying and reviewing tools and implementation methods that can be used to attain the community vision for each of the three areas. Funding will often be an issue and potential obstacle for scenarios like this. However, this is the “out-of-the-box” thinking that should be presented to the City Council. The City Council may be reluctant to advise spending tax dollars this way, but if the idea

originates with the citizens and citizens are supportive of it, then the City Council may see opportunities like this differently. Ideas like this should be shared throughout the remainder of the process, as well as after adoption of the plans.

Will goals and objectives that are identified in these plans be executed? For instance, there has been a lot of talk throughout the years about an expanded/new library, yet it does not appear to be going anywhere. Will this happen with these plans?

The library issues are being addressed, and an architect has been hired. Regarding these area plans, it will be important to establish priorities. These plans are a roadmap for the future of the three areas. Wasilla is developing two factors that are necessary to achieve the goals identified in the plans: continued public support and enthusiasm demonstrated to the Planning Commission and City Council, coupled with suitable and realistic implementation mechanisms. Plans often fail because of lack of specificity regarding responsibilities for implementing actions identified in the plan. Completing basic and straightforward tasks early on help achieve larger successes in the long-term.

Written Comment Session (maps are attached at the end for more detail)

Downtown (D1)

Note: ATV crossings were suggested on this map at the Parks Highway and Crusey Street, and at the Parks Highway and Wasair Drive.

Things I LIKE about the suggested land uses	Things I do NOT LIKE about the suggested land uses
Nothing identified	ATV crossings should be located only at current at-grade railroad crossings. There should be no new crossings of the railroad in the core area.

Downtown (D2)

Note: There were no suggested changes to the location of historical buildings on this map.

Things I LIKE about the suggested land uses	Things I do NOT LIKE about the suggested land uses
I second keeping historical buildings left where they are for a place to go to “see” old Wasilla.	Nothing identified
Keep current City Hall building where it is as it is—a historic building.	

Downtown (D3)

Note: There were no suggested changes to the location of historical buildings on this map. It was suggested that the post office move across the Parks Highway to a lot by Iliamna Street and Susitna Avenue. City and state government offices were suggested to be located between Knik Avenue and Willow Street, off of Herning Avenue.

Things I LIKE about the suggested land uses	Things I do NOT LIKE about the suggested land uses
Leaving museum and historic park where they are.	Nothing identified
Yes, post office needs to be moved.	
Current City Hall building should remain where it is as one of the historic buildings in the original Wasilla downtown area.	

South Wasilla Heights (S1)

Note: On this map, it was suggested that the library and post office relocate to the southeast portion of this planning area on the Palmer-Wasilla Highway. A middle school was suggested across the highway from the library.

Things I LIKE about the suggested land uses	Things I do NOT LIKE about the suggested land uses
I like the post office where you have it.	I think the library should be closer to schools—so students can walk to it after school.

South Wasilla Heights (S2)

Things I LIKE about the suggested land uses	Things I do NOT LIKE about the suggested land uses
Nothing identified	Nothing identified

South Wasilla Heights (S3)

Note: On this map, the railroad depot building was located south of the Parks Highway on Railroad Avenue. An overpass was suggested over the railroad across from Crusey Street. Box Stores were suggested in the southern portion of this planning area. The suggested location for the museum is adjacent to a visitor center south of the Parks Highway on Railroad Avenue. An area for restaurants was illustrated in the central west portion of this planning area off the Knik-Goosebay Road.

Things I LIKE about the suggested land uses	Things I do NOT LIKE about the suggested land uses
Railroad depot should stay where it is for historic reasons.	Be careful to route pedestrian trails/off-road vehicles through <u>current</u> crossings.
This is a perfect site for a tall restaurant offering views of the Talkeetna Mountains, the Alaska Range, and Denali.	No more box stores.
	Do not move the museum to the spot indicated—unless this is a different museum.
	Railroad depot is probably not located properly—check with the City—they have a plan to move.

Airport and Transportation Museum Area (A1)

Note: The Airport and Transportation Museum area is south of the Parks Highway and no portion of the area's boundaries are adjacent to the highway. Restaurants were suggested in the southeast portion of this planning area.

Things I LIKE about the suggested land uses	Things I do NOT LIKE about the suggested land uses
Nothing identified	Restaurants need to be close to the Parks Highway.

Airport and Transportation Museum Area (A2)

Note: On this map, a bike path was suggested to skirt the northern boundary of this planning area.

Things I LIKE about the suggested land uses	Things I do NOT LIKE about the suggested land uses
Very good. Needs to be merged with A1.	Nothing identified
Tie proposed bike path into existing bike path on the Parks Highway.	

Blank Maps and General Comments

DOWNTOWN

Parking is suggested at the corner of West Herning Avenue and Lucille Street.

An existing plan identifies the Synder Road railroad crossing is unsafe and should be closed. Alternative access should be provided. Access could be rerouted from Pioneer Drive located at the northeast end of Lucille Lake through Hallea Lane located at the northwest end of Lucille Lake. There is a utility easement adjacent to Lucas Road that

crosses the Parks Highway and ties into Selina Lane that could provide alternate access across the railroad.

Need walkability in downtown area to get around better; make it a more pleasurable experience.

Move the old fire station (now used as a repair shop) and make it corner parking for the museum and historic park and small shops in the area.

Perhaps use the (existing) post office for a library.

Once vacated, the post office building should be reused for something compatible with schools and historic area.

When the new library is built, have the “old” library building become part of the museum for use of 1) art display, 2) historic research, and 3) possible small meeting area.

Some streets in downtown area should be one way and accommodate heavy traffic use.

Wonderland Park is a great asset to the City. There should be signage on the Parks Highway indicating where it is

There should be a walking/skate corridor between Wonderland Park and the schools.

SOUTH WASILLA HEIGHTS

A tall (elevated) restaurant that offers views of Denali is suggested in the area west of the Home Depot.

AIRPORT AND TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM AREA

An existing plan identifies a railroad maintenance facility next to the transportation museum. This facility could also support commuter rail.

An existing plan identifies a potential multi-modal facility supporting Park’n’Ride west of Church Road and north of Aviation Avenue in the northeast corner of the Airport and Transportation Museum area.

There is an existing plan that identifies there should be grade separated crossings with a tight diamond interchange at the Church Road railroad crossing and at the intersection of Church Road and the Parks Highway. These improvements would be funded through the Highway Safety Improvement Program.

Is there any place in this area where a commuter rail station might be? Maybe down off Glenwood by Old Matanuska Road.

THROUGHOUT WASILLA

Move forward with the plan that the railroad would not relocate and elevate track through Wasilla.

Plan for access across the tracks during a 2-year construction period of elevating the tracks.

Review the Downtown Couplet Study.

The City may have concepts identified if the railroad right-of-way was vacated.

Appendix C – School Project

The Wasilla Area Plans will assist to shape the community as today's high school students become part of the workforce and local leadership. A curriculum was developed, which supported the existing curriculum and education objectives for the school district, to engage youth in the planning process. This appendix includes the curriculum and summary notes from the sessions with the high school students.

Almost all of the groups drew the boundary of Downtown to include more area than original boundaries. Iditapark was often included, as were the school campuses.

The students illustrated a strong desire for centrally located urban amenities. They tended to locate facilities and services that are important to teens near the high school. Such amenities included a Department of Motor Vehicles office, driver's education center, gas station, shopping mall, public transportation routes, movie theatre, pool/water park, teen center, athletic club/YMCA.

While some of the students' ideas may be viewed as naive or dismissed as impractical, many of the suggestions directly contributed to development of the community's vision for Downtown. The sessions generated practical learning opportunities; the students are engaged in the planning process and are looking forward to the review and implementation processes. We would like to acknowledge the students of Wasilla High School, teacher Sandy Aschenbrenner, and Principal Dwight Probasco for their contributions to the Wasilla Area Plans. We regret that the busy school year limited their participation to the Downtown portion of the plan.

Common Ideas

- Paint Ball Park
- Water park
- Bike paths
- Golf
- Concert hall
- Ferry transportation on Lucille Lake
- Strip mall
- Food Courts
- ATV park/trails
- Amusement park (in SWH)
- Movie /drive-in theatre
- Pedestrian oriented development and sidewalks

Other Highlights

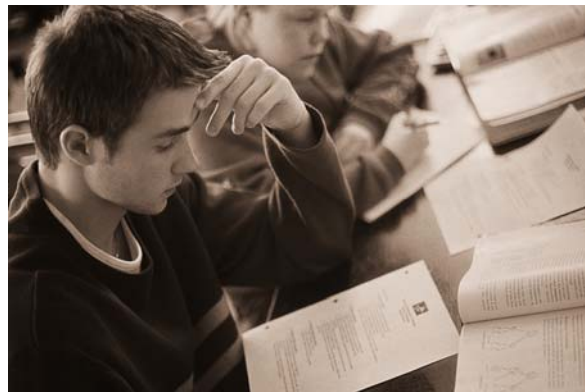
- Underpass along Parks Highway in the Downtown area
- A better Alaska Club/YMCA
- Dirt bike track
- Parks Highway through downtown as toll
- Skate shop next to the skate park
- Hotel
- Town Square (with fountain)
- College campus
- Incorporate snowboard activities in the winter into the skate park
- Homeless center
- Schools primarily stay where they are, but be expanded

Specific Stores to Encourage Locating in Wasilla

- Sonic
- Olive Garden
- Zumies
- Torrid
- Hello Kitty Store
- Domino's
- Dairy Queen
- Pizza Hut
- Hollister
- AE
- Cabela's
- Starbuck's
- Ice cream shop
- Digital Cup
- Krispy Kreme
- Abercrombie and Fitch

Wasilla Youth Involvement Project:

Activities to Engage Youth in Visioning the Future



Produced for
City of Wasilla,
Community and Economic Development Department,
Planning Commission, and City Council

Prepared by
URS Corporation
2700 Gambell Street, Suite 200
Anchorage, AK 99503-2835
Heather M. Coulehan, principal author

November 2006

April Brehm
Jon Isaacs
Joan Kluwe

This page intentionally left blank.

WASILLA YOUTH INVOLVEMENT PROJECT:

Activities to Engage Youth in Visioning the Future

**Produced for the City of Wasilla
Community and Economic Development Department,
Planning Commission, and City Council**

**Produced by URS Corp.
2700 Gambell
Anchorage, AK 99503
Heather M. Coulehan, principal author**

**April Brehm
Jon Isaacs
Joan Kluwe**

November 2006

Wasilla Youth Involvement Project

Table of Contents

Section One Introduction to Wasilla Youth Involvement Project

Section Two Activity Objectives & Standards

Section Three Lesson Plans

Section Four Supporting Materials

Developmental Assets

Map of Planning Locations

Discussion & Essay Questions

Excerpts from the 1996 Comprehensive Plan (Chapters 1 & 2)

Graph Handouts

Section 1

This page intentionally left blank.

Wasilla Youth Involvement Project: Activities to Engage Youth in Visioning the Future

"Mat-Su Borough School District develops citizens for a global society by inspiring students to learn, achieve, and care."

-Mat-Su Borough School District website

City of Wasilla Area Plans

The City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan, approved in April 1996, has guided development in Wasilla for the past 10 years. Currently, the City of Wasilla is developing Area Plans to guide development in three areas of the community, specifically Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and the Airport and Transportation Museum areas. The plans will define a vision for each area and help to guide decisions for future growth and development. Community input is needed regarding existing and future growth for these portions of the city. 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.

Because these area plans will be affecting changes in Wasilla as today's high school students become part of the workforce and local leadership, the City is very interested in engaging youth in the planning process. The planning team would like to work with the school district to involve high students in a manner that supports existing curriculum and education objectives. The goals of the Wasilla Youth Involvement Project include:

1. Increase students' awareness of their role in local government.
2. Raise students' knowledge of community planning and its role in local government.
3. Incorporate students' visions for their community into the Area Plans.
4. Promote a sense of community and commitment to the well being of Wasilla.

Mat-Su Borough School District Priorities and Standards

The Wasilla Youth Involvement Project supports two of the Mat-Su School Board priorities for the 2006-07 school year. The project activities directly explore ways to best plan for the future and also promote high instructional standards based on the knowledge and skills students will need in the future.

All of the project activities support selected Alaska State Content Standards and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Performance Standards. Project activities can increase students' proficiency in:

- English/Language Arts (Reading and Writing)
- Geography
- Government & Citizenship
- Mathematics
- Science
- Employability

The table in Section Two specifies the objectives for each activity, as well as the state content standards and the NCLB performance standards the activity supports. The project activities make learning relevant and meaningful as students learn about and contribute to a local government process that directly affects their lives.

Developmental Assets

The fourth goal of the Wasilla Youth Involvement Project is to promote a sense of community and commitment to the well being of the community. The project promotes a sense of community by building key developmental assets in youth. Assets are building blocks in children's lives that help them grow up strong, capable, and caring.

The State of Alaska is a leader in the national youth developmental asset movement. The Alaska Initiative for Community Engagement (Alaska ICE) is the community outreach component of the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB). Alaska ICE compliments the AASB mission by giving Alaskans the information, tools, and assistance to work together and engage in shared responsibility for preparing Alaska's youth for the future. Section Four includes more information on developmental assets and Alaska ICE.

By involving youth in the community planning process, Wasilla will be building specific developmental assets in youth. These assets include:

- **Community values youth** (asset #7): Youth believes that community adults value young people.
- **Youth have useful roles** (asset #8): Youth are taught and given useful roles in community life.
- **High expectations** (asset #16): Parents, community members, and teachers encourage youth to do well.
- **Equality and social justice** (asset #27): Youth respects self and others; places high value on sharing and cooperation.
- **Responsibility** (asset #30): Youth accepts and takes personal responsibility.

- **Personal power** (asset #37): Youth feels in control over “many things that happen to me”
- **Positive view of personal future** (asset #40): Youth is optimistic about his or her personal future.

The project demonstrates to youth in a very concrete way that the city values them and their ideas, and encourages youth to take an active role in local government to shape the future. The project reinforces the high expectations the community has for youth as they accept their responsibility in creating a positive future for all residents of Wasilla.

Wasilla Youth Involvement Project Activities

The Wasilla Youth Involvement Project targets high school students and includes the choice of nine activities. The lesson plan for each activity can be found in Section Three and provides teachers with detailed instructions for facilitating the activity. In addition, the planning team is available to assist with implementing all of the project activities. The activities include:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Activity 1 | Introduction to the Community Planning Process |
| Activity 2 | Reading Technical Material: Background for Community Planning |
| Activity 3 | Using Socioeconomic Data for Community Planning |
| Activity 4 | Reading Technical Material: Understanding the Issues in Wasilla |
| Activity 5 | Recognizing Wasilla’s Strengths, Resources, & Major Issues |
| Activity 6 | Small Group Activity: Identifying Challenges and Solutions |
| Activity 7 | Focus Group: A Classic Community Planning Method |
| Activity 8 | Individual Writing Project: My Vision for the Future |
| Activity 9 | Student Vision Public Awareness Campaign |

Activities 1 - 4 are background or foundation activities. They prepare students for participating in a community planning activity. The community planning activity occurs in Activities 5 - 8. These activities are different formats in which to facilitate community planning - in a small group format, in a focus group setting, or through an individual writing project. Activity 9 celebrates student contributions to the community planning process and to the vision of the future for Wasilla.

Implementing the Project Activities

Each activity has a suggested time, but can either be lengthened or shortened depending on classroom needs. The activities can be facilitated as stand alone activities or can be paired with others to create a unit or theme. Activities 2, 3, 4, and 8 could

lend themselves well to homework assignments. Following are a few ideas for pairing the activities:

Comprehensive:

- Activity 1
- Activity 2 (homework)
- Activity 3
- Activity 4 (homework)
- Activity 5
- Choice of Activity 6 or 7
- Activity 8 (homework)

Intermediate

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Activity 1 | Activity 1 |
| Activity 3 | Activity 5 |
| Activity 5 | Choice of Activity 6 or 7 |
| Choice of Activity 6, 7, or 8 | Activity 8 (homework) |

Brief

- Activity 1
- Activity 7

The intent of the Wasilla Youth Involvement Project is certainly not to create additional work for school personnel, but rather to provide meaningful learning opportunities in which students can apply what they learn in class to real life. Planning team members can be a resource for teachers implementing project activities. With prior arrangements, team members can:

- Act as guest speakers in classrooms;
- Co-teach lessons with the classroom teacher;
- Teach the lessons;
- Facilitate focus groups; or,
- Provide project summaries and other ideas for the publicity campaign.

Citizens of a Global Society

Wasilla is a fairly young community. Children under age 19 comprise 36% of the population. It is these youth who will be the citizens of a global society as they become the community leaders and residents affected by the Wasilla Area Plans. The Wasilla Youth Involvement Project will help youth build the academic proficiency they will need to take on these roles and will help youth become strong, capable, and caring adults committed to the future of their community.

Section 2

This page intentionally left blank.

Wasilla Youth Involvement Project Objectives & Standards

Objectives	State Content Standards	NCLB Performance Standards
Activity 1: An Introduction to the Community Planning Process		
<p>Explain the purpose and process of community planning.</p> <p>Recognize current community planning efforts in Wasilla.</p> <p>Identify the three areas targeted for current planning efforts.</p> <p>Understand students' role in planning efforts.</p>	<p>Geography: A, B, D, E, F</p> <p>Government: E, G</p>	
Activity 2: Reading Technical Material - Background for Wasilla Community Planning		
<p>Read technical material in a public planning document.</p> <p>Understand the background information necessary to community planning.</p> <p>Read about the history, geology, soils, topography, drainage, climate, and wildlife of Wasilla.</p>	<p>English: B, D</p> <p>Geography: E, F</p> <p>Government: E</p> <p>Science: C, D, F</p>	<p>Reading: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.7, 4.9</p> <p>Science: C2, D2</p>
Activity 3: Using Socioeconomic Data for Community Planning		
<p>Explain how socioeconomic data is important in community planning.</p> <p>Use socioeconomic data to create and discuss graphs.</p> <p>Recognize how students fit into the socioeconomic data.</p>	<p>Math: A, C, E</p> <p>Geography: A, B, D, F</p> <p>Government: E, G</p> <p>Employability: B</p>	<p>Math: 6.4.1, 7.4.1, 8.4.2, 10.4.1</p>
Activity 4: Reading Technical Material - Understanding the Issues in Wasilla		
<p>Read technical material in a public planning document.</p> <p>Understand the major planning issues and strategies discussed in the Comprehensive Plan.</p> <p>Examine these issues and strategies in relation to the Area Plans.</p>	<p>English: B, D</p> <p>Geography: E, F, D</p> <p>Government: E, G</p>	<p>Reading: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.7, 4.9</p>
Activity 5: Recognizing Wasilla's Strengths, Resources & Major Issues		
<p>Recognize the community's strengths and resources.</p> <p>Identify the major issues for each targeted planning area.</p> <p>Understand the relevance to students' lives.</p>	<p>Geography: E, F, D</p> <p>Government: E, G</p>	

Objectives	State Content Standards	NCLB Performance Standards
Activity 6: Small Group Activity - Identifying Challenges & Solutions		
<p>Participate in a community planning activity. Identify two major issues that could be addressed in the Area Plans. Identify strengths and resources that could be used to address the issues. Identify solutions to the issues and who would implement the solutions.</p>	<p>English: C, D, E Geography: F Government: E, G</p>	
Activity 7: Focus Group - A Classic Community Planning Method		
<p>Participate in a community planning activity. Identify major issues that could be addressed in the Area Plans. Identify strengths and resources that could be used to address the issues. Identify solutions to the issues and who would implement the solutions.</p>	<p>English: D, E Geography: F Government: E, G</p>	
Activity 8: Individual Writing Project - My Vision for the Future		
<p>Strengthen writing skills as part of a community planning activity. Identify major issues that could be addressed in the Area Plans. Identify strengths and resources that could be used to address the issues. Identify solutions to the issues and who would implement the solutions.</p>	<p>English: A, B, D Geography: F Government: E, G</p>	<p>Writing: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3</p>
Activity 9: Student Vision Public Awareness Campaign		
<p>Show students that the community values their ideas. Reinforce that students have an important role in the community and in local government. Educate students who did not participate in activities about community planning. Engage parents and other adults in student learning. Promote parent and school cooperation. Help students understand and respect the perspectives of others.</p>	<p>English: A Geography: F Government: E</p>	

Alaska State Content Standards Wasilla Youth Involvement Project

Geography

- A. A student should be able to make and use maps, globes, and graphs to gather, analyze, and report spatial (geographic) information. (Activities 1, 3)
- B. A student should be able to utilize, analyze, and explain information about the human and physical features of places, regions. (Activities 1, 3)
- D. A student should be able to interpret spatial characteristics of human systems, including migration, movement, interactions of cultures, economic activities, settlement patterns, and political units in the state, nation, and world. (Activities 1, 3, 4, 5)
- E. A student should understand and be able to evaluate how humans and physical environments interact. (Activities 1, 2, 4, 5)
- F. A student should be able to use geography to understand the world by interpreting the past, knowing the present, and preparing for the future. (Activities 1 - 9)

Government & Citizenship

- E. A student should have the knowledge and skills necessary to participate effectively as an informed and responsible citizen. (Activities 1 - 9)
- G. A student should understand the impact of economic choices and be able to participate effectively in the local, state, national, and global economies. (Activities 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

English/Language Arts

- A. A student should be able to speak and write well for a variety of purposes and audiences. (Activities 8, 9)
- B. A student should be a competent and thoughtful reader, listener, and viewer of literature, technical materials and a variety of other information. (Activities 2, 4, 8)
- C. A student should be able to identify and select from multiple strategies in order to complete projects independently and cooperatively. (Activity 6)
- D. A student should be able to think logically and reflectively in order to present and explain positions based on relevant and reliable information. (Activities 2, 4, 6, 7, 8)
- E. A student should understand and respect the perspectives of others in order to communicate effectively. (Activities 6, 7)

Science

- C. A student should understand and be able to apply the concepts, models, theories, facts, evidence, systems, and processes of life science. (Activity 2)
- D. A student should understand and be able to apply the concepts, models, theories, facts, evidence, and systems of earth and space sciences. (Activity 2)
- F. A student should understand the dynamic relationship among scientific, cultural, social, and personal perspectives. (Activity 2)

State Content Standards, continued

Mathematics

- A. A student should understand mathematical facts, concepts, principles and theories. (Activity 3)
- C. A student should understand and be able to form and use appropriate methods to define and explain mathematical relationships. (Activity 3)
- E. A student should be able to apply mathematical concepts and processes to situations within and outside of school. (Activity 3)

Employability

- B. A student should be able to identify career interests and plan for career options. (Activity 3)

No Child Left Behind Performance Standards Wasilla Youth Involvement Project

Reading

- 4.1 Students apply knowledge of syntax, roots, and word origins, and use context clues and reference materials to determine the meaning of new words and to comprehend text. (Activities 1, 4)
- 4.2 Students summarize information or ideas from a text and make connections between summarized information or sets of ideas and related topics or information. (Activities 1, 4)
- 4.3 (a) Students identify and assess the validity, accuracy, and adequacy of evidence that supports an author's main ideas (b) Students critique the power, logic, reasonableness, and audience appeal of arguments advanced in public documents. (Activities 1, 4)
- 4.7 Students express and support assertions, with evidence from the text or experience, about the effectiveness of a text. (Activities 1, 4)
- 4.9 Students analyze the effects of cultural and historical influences on texts. (Activities 1, 4)

Science

- C2 Students develop an understanding of the structure, function, behavior, development, life cycles, and diversity of living organisms. (Activity 2)
- D2 Students develop an understanding of the origins, ongoing processes, and forces that shape the structure, composition, and physical history of the Earth. (Activity 2)

Performance Standards, continued

Writing

- 4.1 Students write a coherent composition with a thesis statement that is supported with evidence, well-developed paragraphs, transitions, and a conclusion. (Activity 8)
- 4.2 Students demonstrate understanding of elements of discourse when completing expressive, persuasive, research-based, informational, or analytic writing assignments. (Activity 8)
- 4.3 Students use the conventions of standard English independently and consistently including grammar, sentence structure, paragraph structure, punctuation, spelling, and usage. (Activity 8)

Math

- 6.4.1 Students analyze and draw inferences from a wide variety of data sources that summarize data: construct graphical displays with and without technology. (Activity 3)
- 7.4.1 Students recognize and formulate mathematical problems from within and outside the field of mathematics. (Activity 3)
- 8.4.2 Students use numerical, graphic, and symbolic representations to support oral and written communication about math ideas. (Activity 3)
- 10.4.2 Students apply mathematical skills and processes to global issues. (Activity 3)

This page intentionally left blank.

Section 3

This page intentionally left blank.

ACTIVITY 1

Introduction to the Community Planning Process

This page intentionally left blank.

ACTIVITY 1

An Introduction to the Community Planning Process

SUGGESTED TIME: 50 minutes

OBJECTIVES

- Explain the purpose and process of community planning.
- Recognize current community planning efforts in Wasilla.
- Identify the three areas targeted for current planning efforts.
- Understand students' role in community planning efforts.

CONTENT STANDARDS

Geography: A, B, D, E, F

Government: E, G

MATERIALS

Map of Area Plan Locations (handout)

PREPARATION

1. Copy the map handout for each student.

LESSON PLAN

Plans in Our Lives (10 minutes)

1. Go-Around

Ask each student to name one thing that she or he needs to make a plan for in life. Answers might include things like saving money for college, buying something expensive like a car, etc. Give an example of something you made a plan for to start to the go-around.

2. Discussion

Ask students the following question and write their answers on the board. If you were planning a birthday party for a friend, what kinds of things would you need to include in your plan (resources, materials, people, money, etc.)?

Understanding the Community Planning Process (15 minutes)

1. Mini-Lecture

Just like planning for a birthday party, the community planning process is a way to look into the future and think about how to get there. Why does a community like Wasilla need community plans? State law says that communities need plans to guide land management and many federal and state agencies require an approved plan before they give out grants and funds.

The Wasilla Comprehensive Plan was approved in April 1996. A comprehensive plan is a way to look into the future and think about how to get there. The word “comprehensive” means to look at the big picture. A comprehensive plan shows community needs and sets priorities. It is an opportunity for people in the community to say what is important and to identify actions that need to be taken.

The City of Wasilla is currently in the process of developing three additional plans. These are Area Plans that will guide development in three specific areas of the city – Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and the Airport and Transportation Museum area.

2. Discussion

Ask students the following question and write their answers on the board in a column next to their ideas about planning a birthday party. What kinds of things do communities need to include in their plans when they are preparing for the future? How do these things compare to the list of things to consider when planning a birthday party?

3. Mini-Lecture

Wasilla’s most valuable assets today may be location and available space. As Wasilla continues to grow, Area Plans are needed to maintain the value and utility of Wasilla’s many assets, while creating new opportunities. 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 people to Wasilla.

The City of Wasilla has identified three specific areas where existing and future growth need guidance from the community. The city is developing Area Plans for Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and the Airport and Transportation Museum area. The City has formed a Vision Steering Team to guide and review the planning process. The team is composed of community residents who will work to represent all stakeholders' interests.

As a high school student, you are a stakeholder too! When you enter the workforce and become part of the local leadership, these Area Plans will be in effect. Because these plans will affect you, the Vision Steering Team wants to hear your concerns about the community and your ideas for solutions. You have a different, and equally as important, viewpoint than adults in the community.

Wasilla Area Plans (20 minutes)

1. Map of Wasilla

Distribute the map of the three planning areas.

Downtown – This 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.

Air 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.

2. Discussion

Facilitate a discussion about community planning using the following questions:

- Where do you live in relation to the three areas identified for planning?

- When do you go to the three identified areas? How do you and your family use these areas?
- What do you think “mixed use” means? What does “commercial and residential development” mean? What does “industrial section” mean?
- Why do you think these three areas have been identified for community planning?
- Why should you give your input? Why is it important for the City to hear from high school students?

ACTIVITY 2

Reading Technical Material: Background for
Community Planning

This page intentionally left blank.

ACTIVITY 2

Reading Technical Material: Background for Wasilla Community Planning

SUGGESTED TIME: 50 - 75 minutes (or as homework assignment)

OBJECTIVES

- Read technical material in a public planning document.
- Understand the background information necessary to community planning.
- Read about the history, geology, soils, topography, drainage, climate, and wildlife of Wasilla.

CONTENT STANDARDS

English: B, D
Geography: E, F
Government: E
Science: C, D, F

NCLB PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Reading: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.7, 4.9
Science: C2, D2

MATERIALS

Excerpt from the *Comprehensive Plan*, Chapter 2: Background for Planning (pp 22-32)
Map of Area Plan Locations (handout)
Chapter 2 Discussion Questions

PREPARATION

1. Copy Chapter 2, map, and discussion questions for each student.

LESSON PLAN

Reading to Understand the Community (30 - 55 minutes)

1. Reading Technical Material

One of the first steps in the community planning process is to learn as much as possible about the location and setting of the community. You must know about the history, geology, topography, climate, and wildlife of the community. These are all issues that effect community planning in different ways.

Read *Chapter 2: Background for Planning* (pages 22-32) from the Comprehensive Plan. Reading this information will help you understand some of the things that need to be considered in developing the Area Plans for Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and the Airport and Transportation Museum area.

Discussing Wasilla & Community Planning (20 minutes)

1. Discussion

Distribute the Map of Area Plan Locations and facilitate a discussion based on the following questions:

- Develop a timeline describing Wasilla's history. How much of this history did you already know? What was new information to you?
- What would you say were the two most important factors in the development of Wasilla?
- How do the three planning areas fit into Wasilla's history?
- What soil types does Wasilla have? Which ones are good for development? Why?
- What do you think the soil is like in the three areas targeted for planning?
- How do topography and drainage effect community development?
- What are the topography and drainage like in the areas targeted for planning?
- How does knowing about the community's climate and wildlife help in community planning?

ACTIVITY 3

Using Socioeconomic Data for Community Planning

This page intentionally left blank.

ACTIVITY 3

Using Socioeconomic Data for Community Planning

SUGGESTED TIME: 50-75 minutes (or as homework assignment)

OBJECTIVES

- Explain how socioeconomic data is important in community planning.
- Use socioeconomic data to create and discuss graphs.
- Recognize how students fit into the socioeconomic data.

CONTENT STANDARDS

Math: A, C, E
Geography: A, B, D, F
Government: E, G
Employability: B

NCLB PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Math: 6.4.1, 7.4.1, 8.4.2, 10.4.1

MATERIALS

Map of Area Plan Locations
Wasilla Census History (data handout)
Blank column graph
Wasilla Census History Column Graph
Wasilla's Population by Age (data handout)
Blank pie chart
Population by Age Pie Chart
Employment by Industry (data handout)
Blank bar graph
Employment by Industry Bar Graph
Wasilla Land Use (data handout)
Wasilla Land Use Pie Chart
Graph Discussion Questions

PREPARATION

1. Decide if you will have students create graphs based on the data or if you will just discuss the pre-made graphs.
2. Decide if you will use all four graphs or only selected ones.
3. Copy handouts for students.

LESSON PLAN

Understanding Socioeconomic Data (20 - 45 minutes)

1. Mini-Lecture

Understanding the local economy and population is another important step in the community planning process. Looking at socioeconomic data, or data about the economy and population, of Wasilla can help guide planning efforts.

2. Creating Socioeconomic Graphs

Have students create all of the following graphs or have students create only selected graphs. If time is limited, distribute the completed charts and graphs and then proceed to the discussion questions.

Column Graph: Wasilla's Population History

Distribute the "Wasilla Census Population History" data handout and the blank column graph sheet. Instruct students to create a column graph that shows how Wasilla's population has increased since 1930.

Pie Chart: Wasilla's Population by Age

Distribute the "Wasilla Population by Age" data handout and the blank pie chart sheet. Instruct students to (1) calculate the percentage of population for each age category and (2) create a pie chart showing the Wasilla population by age.

Bar Graph: Employment by Industry

Distribute the "Employment by Industry" data handout and the blank bar graph sheet. Instruct students to create a bar graph showing Wasilla employment by industry.

Pie Chart: Wasilla Land Use

Distribute the "Wasilla Land Use" data handout and the blank pie chart sheet. Instruct students to (1) calculate the percentage of land use for each category and (2) create a pie chart showing Wasilla land use.

How Socioeconomic Data Influences Community Planning (30 minutes)

1. Discussion: Wasilla's Population History

- What does the column graph tell us?
- Why do you think Wasilla's population has been increasing, especially since 1980?
- What do you think Wasilla's population will be in 2010?
- How are people, land, and government affected when population increases?
- Distribute the Map of Area Plan Locations. How will population increase affect the three areas targeted for community planning (Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and Airport and Transportation Museum)?

2. Discussion: Wasilla's Population by Age

- What does this graph tell us?
- What age group has the highest percentage of people? Second highest? Third?
- How will having a young population affect Wasilla?
- How does age influence community planning?
- What does this mean for you as one of the young people?

3. Discussion: Employment by Industry

- What does this graph tell us?
- What industry employs the most people?
- In 1996, 38% of the Wasilla population commuted to Anchorage or the North Slope. What industries do you think people would need to commute for?
- Do you think 38% still commutes or do you think the percentage is higher or lower today? Why?
- How does employment affect community planning?
- Which of these industries interest you in terms of a career? What would you need to do to prepare for this career?

4. Discussion: Wasilla Land Use

- What does this graph tell us?
- What type of land use do you think is most common in each of the three areas targeted for planning (Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and Airport and Transportation Museum)?
- How does type of land use affect community planning?
- The data in this chart is from 1991. How do you think land use has changed since this data was collected? Why?

This page intentionally left blank.

ACTIVITY 4

Reading Technical Material: Understanding
the Issues in Wasilla

This page intentionally left blank.

ACTIVITY 4

Reading Technical Material: Understanding the Community Planning Issues

SUGGESTED TIME: 50-75 minutes (or as homework assignment)

OBJECTIVES

- Read technical material in a public planning document.
- Understand the major planning issues and strategies discussed in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Examine these issues and strategies in relation to the Area Plans.

CONTENT STANDARDS

English: B, D
Geography: E, F, D
Government: E, G

NCLB PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Reading: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.7, 4.9

MATERIALS

Excerpt from the *Comprehensive Plan*, Chapter 1: Summary & strategies (pp 4-21)
Map of Area Plan Locations
Chapter 1 Discussion Questions

PREPARATION

1. Copy Chapter 1, the map, and discussion questions for each student.

LESSON PLAN

Reading to Understand the Issues (30 - 55 minutes)

1. Reading Technical Material

The Comprehensive Plan, approved in 1996, focuses on four areas for planning. The plan identifies goals and strategies for each area. The planning areas include:

- Land Use
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Facilities and Services
- Transportation

Read *Chapter 1: Summary & Strategies* (pages 4-21) from the Comprehensive Plan. This chapter discusses Land Use, Parks and Recreation, Public Facilities and Services, and Transportation. Reading this information will help you understand the issues involved in developing the Area Plans for Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and the Airport and Transportation Museum area.

Discussing the Issues (20 minutes)

1. Discussion

- Why does Wasilla need a Comprehensive Plan?
- The 2% sales tax accounts for what percentage of the city's budget?
- What are some of the improvements that occurred between 1992 and 1996?
- What are some of the economic challenges that have faced Wasilla between 1992 and 1996?
- What strategies are recommended to expand tourism?
- What is the issue with snow machines?
- What kind of events and land use trends may affect the community?
- What land use goals are included in the Plan?
- Which goals and/or strategies in the Parks and Recreation Plan are most interesting to you? Why?
- Which public facilities and services do you use most often? Have you seen any of the changes in these facilities or services that were recommended in the Plan?
- What transportation issues do you think are most important? Why?
- What has changed over the last 10 years since the Comprehensive Plan was approved? What has stayed the same?
- What are new issues that Wasilla is facing today?
- Distribute the Map of Area Plan Locations. Which of the issues identified in the Comprehensive Plan will affect each of the planning areas?

ACTIVITY 5

Recognizing Wasilla's Strengths, Resources,
& Major Issues

This page intentionally left blank.

ACTIVITY 5

Recognizing Wasilla's Strengths, Resources, & Major Issues

SUGGESTED TIME: 50 minutes

OBJECTIVES

- Recognize Wasilla's strengths and resources.
- Identify the major issues for each targeted planning area.
- Understand the relevance of these issues to students' lives.

CONTENT STANDARDS

Geography: E, F, D

Government: E, G

MATERIALS

Flip chart paper, tape, & markers

Map of Area Plan Locations

PREPARATION

None

LESSON PLAN

Identifying Wasilla's Strength's and Resources (25 minutes)

1. Go-Around

Invite each student to share what she or he likes best about living in Wasilla. What are students proud of about living in Wasilla?

2. Brainstorm

Ask the class to list the strengths and resources (organizations, services, money, activities, etc.) of Wasilla. Record all answers on the board or on flip chart paper for use in another activity.

Identifying Wasilla's Major Issues (25 minutes)

1. Go-Around

Invite each student to share one regret she or he has about living in Wasilla. What do students wish were different about Wasilla?

2. Brainstorm

Divide the board into three columns (or use three pieces of flip chart paper). Label each column with one of the three planning areas – Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and Airport and Transportation Museum. Distribute the map.

Have students identify the major issues, challenges or needs for each area. Record their answers for use in another activity.

3. Discussion

- Which issues are of most concern to you and/or your family? Why?
- Which issues do you think need to take priority? Why?

*** After this activity, please give the planning team the brainstorming ideas from the class. The planning team will review the students' ideas to include them in the Area Plans.**

ACTIVITY 6

Small Group Activity: Identifying Challenges
and Solutions

This page intentionally left blank.

ACTIVITY 6

Small Group Activity: Identifying Challenges and Solutions

SUGGESTED TIME: 50-75 minutes

OBJECTIVES

- Participate in a community planning activity.
- Identify two major issues that could be addressed in the Area Plans.
- Identify strengths and resources that could be used to address the issues.
- Identify solutions to the issues and who would implement the solutions.

CONTENT STANDARDS

English: C, D, E

Geography: F

Government: E, G

MATERIALS

Strengths, resources, and major issues brainstorming lists from activity 5

Flip chart paper & markers

Map of Area Plan Locations

PREPARATION

None

LESSON PLAN

Small Group Project: Visioning Our Community (30 - 55 minutes)

1. Small Group Work

Divide the class into small groups of three or four students. Explain to the small groups that they are going to participate in a community planning activity. They are actually going to come up with ideas that their community could use to address the challenges identified in Activity 5. The planning team will review their ideas to be included in the Area Plans.

Small groups should look at all of the major issues and challenges the class listed in Activity 5 and decide on the two issues they feel are most important in their own community. Give each small group two pieces of flip chart paper. Instruct the groups to divide each paper into three columns with the following headings:

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Community Strengths and Resources	Community Challenge or Issue	Solutions: What can be done to solve the problem? Who could implement this solution?

Step 1: Groups should write one of their community challenges in **column 2** on each piece of flip chart.

Step 2: Groups should answer two questions for each challenge they picked. “What can be done to solve this problem?” and “Who would implement the solution?” Emphasize that their suggestions must be realistic ideas that could actually be implemented in their community. Students can use words and/or drawings to describe their ideas. Groups should write their solution ideas in **column 3**.

Step 3: Groups should look at the list of community strengths and resources from the brainstorming list in Activity 5. For each challenge and solution they picked, groups should write down in **column 1** the strengths and resources their community could use to address the challenge.

Sharing the Vision (20 minutes)

1. Go-Around

Invite each group to share one challenge and one solution from their visioning session.

2. Discussion

- What similarities did you see among the groups, in terms of their ideas on challenges and solutions?
- What differences did you see?
- How do you feel about the future of your community? Why?

*** After this activity, please give the planning team the brainstorming ideas from each small group. The planning team will review the students’ ideas to include them in the Area Plans.**

ACTIVITY 7

Focus Group: A Classic Community Planning
Method

This page intentionally left blank.

ACTIVITY 7

Focus Group: A Classic Community Planning Method

SUGGESTED TIME: 75 minutes

OBJECTIVES

- Participate in a community planning activity.
- Identify major issues that could be addressed in the Area Plans.
- Identify strengths and resources that could be used to address the issues.
- Identify solutions to the issues and who would implement the solutions.

CONTENT STANDARDS

English: D, E

Geography: F

Government: E, G

MATERIALS

Flip chart paper, tape, & markers

Map of Area Plan Locations

PREPARATION

1. Decide who will facilitate the focus group. Planning team members, teachers, or students themselves, can facilitate the focus group.
2. Training students as facilitators is an opportunity to empower young people with the knowledge and skills to be active leaders in the community planning process. Planning team members could meet with identified student leaders prior to the focus group to brief them about the Area Plans and to provide training on group facilitation.

LESSON PLAN

Community Strengths and Resources (30 minutes)

1. Go-Around and Brainstorm

Have the group finish this sentence, “The best thing about living in Wasilla is...” Record all answers on flip chart paper. Continue brainstorming a list of community strengths and resources.

Community Challenges, Weaknesses and Solutions (30 minutes)

1. Go-Around and Brainstorm

Ask the participants to finish this sentence, “What I regret about living in Wasilla is...” Generate a list of community challenges and weaknesses students think should be addressed in each Area Plan (Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and the Airport and Transportation Museum area). Record their ideas on flip chart paper so the whole group can see and remember the ideas.

For each issue, discuss solutions and who would be responsible for implementing the solution.

Vision for the Community (15 minutes)

1. Image for the Future

Give each participant a sheet of blank paper and tell them to think about one issue or challenge mentioned in the discussion that is most interesting to them. How could the community solve this challenge? Ask students to write a word or phrase or to draw a symbol that illustrates their vision for the future of their community.

2. Go-Around

When participants are finished with their image, invite each person to share their vision.

*** After this activity, please give the planning team the brainstorming ideas. The planning team will review the students’ ideas to include them in the Area Plans.**

ACTIVITY 8

Individual Writing Project: My Vision for the
Future

This page intentionally left blank.

ACTIVITY 8

Individual Writing Project: My Vision for the Future

SUGGESTED TIME: 75 minutes (or as homework assignment)

OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen writing skills as part of a community planning activity.
- Identify major issues that could be addressed in the Area Plans.
- Identify strengths and resources that could be used to address the issues.
- Identify solutions to the issues and who would implement the solutions.

CONTENT STANDARDS

English: A, B, D
Geography: F
Government: E, G

NCLB PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Writing: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3

MATERIALS

Strengths, resources, and major issues brainstorming lists from activity 5
Map of Area Plan Locations
Essay Questions

PREPARATION

None

LESSON PLAN

My Vision for the Future (10 minutes)

1. Mini-Lecture

Explain to the students that they will be working on a three-page assignment to describe their own vision for the future of their community. The first parts of the assignment will be a detailed essay about how the community can address their challenges. The last part of the assignment will be creating a drawing or symbol to illustrate their dreams for the future of their community.

2. Choosing an Issue

Instruct students to choose one challenge or weakness that is most interesting to them, from either class brainstorming or from the Comprehensive Plan. Students should answer these questions about the issue they chose:

- How would you describe this challenge to someone not from your community?
- Why is this issue interesting to you?
- How could Wasilla use its strengths and resources to deal with this challenge?
- Who would be responsible for implementing these ideas?

Writing about My Vision (50 minutes)

1. Essay

Students will be writing a four part essay about their vision for the community.

Part 1: Describe your community's strengths and resources. What do you like about living in your community? What is unique and special about your community?

Part 2: Define or describe your chosen challenge or weakness in detail. Explain your hopes, fears or concerns about the issue. How would you describe this issue to someone not from your community? Who or what is impacting or affecting this issue today? Why is this issue interesting to you?

Part 3: State how your community could use its resources and strengths to deal with this challenge. Who would be responsible for implementing these ideas?

Part 4: Create a symbol, drawing or abstract form to represent your hopes and dreams for the future of your community. Reassure students that it is okay if they can't draw well - a very simple symbol or an abstract form would be great!

Sharing the Vision (15 minutes)

1. Go-Around

Invite each student to share one of their solutions or their drawing from the "My Vision for the Future" essay assignment.

*** After this activity, please give the planning team the student essays. The planning team will review the students' ideas to include them in the Area Plans.**

ACTIVITY 9

Student Vision Public Awareness Campaign

This page intentionally left blank.

ACTIVITY 9

Student Vision Public Awareness Campaign

GOALS

- Show students that the community values their ideas.
- Reinforce that students have an important role in the community and in local government.
- Educate students who did not participate in activities about community planning.
- Engage parents and other adults in student learning.
- Promote parent and school cooperation.
- Help students understand and respect the perspectives of others.

CONTENT STANDARDS

English: A
Geography: F
Government: E

MATERIALS

Student work (essays, group projects, focus group notes or student-drawn images)

ACTIVITIES

Student Project Display

Display the small group project (activity 6) and the “My Vision of the Future” essays (activity 8) in schools, the district office, or other places in the community to educate students who did not participate in the project.

Parent Newsletter

Include students’ artwork and visioning ideas in parent newsletters or other school publications to engage parents and families in the project.

Website

Include the students' visioning ideas on the Mat-Su district website. Students' ideas support and compliment the statement on the website, *"Mat-Su Borough School District develops citizens for a global society by inspiring students to learn, achieve, and care."*

Speaking on the Issues

Describe students' vision of the future in the Mayor's and/or Vision Steering Team comments to highlight the valuable role youth have in the future of the community.

Community Events

Report on the Wasilla Youth Involvement Project at community events to encourage continued discussions by youth and elders on the future of the community.

Section 4

This page intentionally left blank.

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

This page intentionally left blank.

Developmental Assets

List of 40 developmental assets from pp 10-12 in *Helping Kids Succeed Alaskan Style*;

see also

Search Institute website: <http://www.search-institute.org/assets/40Assets.pdf>

and

Alaska ICE website: <http://www.alaskaice.org> for information regarding the Assets Framework and the Alaska ICE Mission

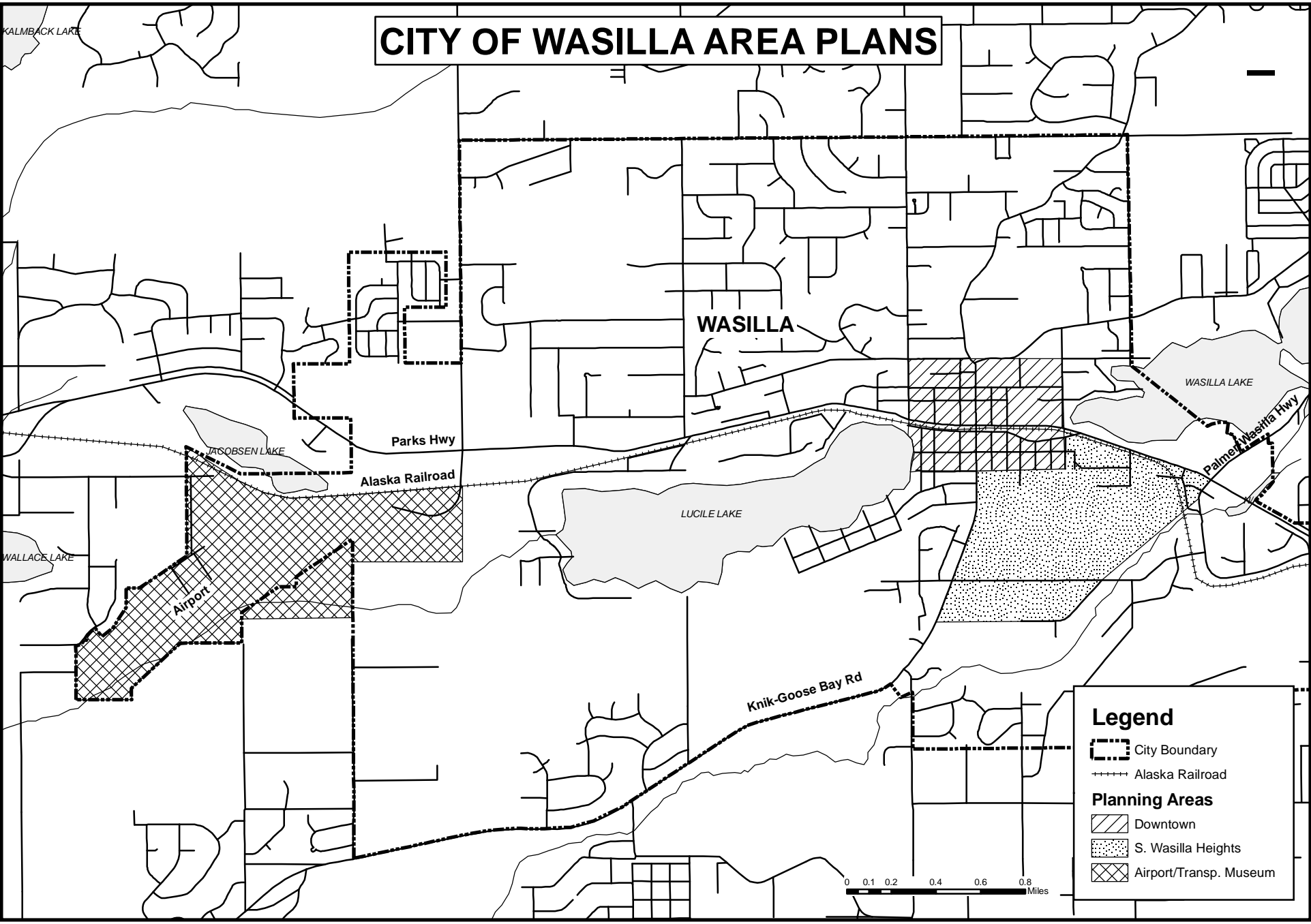
This page intentionally left blank.

MAP OF PLANNING LOCATIONS

(Activities 1-8)

This page intentionally left blank.

CITY OF WASILLA AREA PLANS



This page intentionally left blank.

DISCUSSION & ESSAY QUESTIONS

(Activities 2, 3, 4, & 8)

This page intentionally left blank.

Reading Technical Material: Background for Wasilla Community Planning

Read *Chapter 2: Background for Planning* (pages 22-32) from the Comprehensive Plan. Reading this information will help you understand some of the things that need to be considered in developing the Area Plans for Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and the Airport and Transportation Museum area.

1. Develop a timeline describing Wasilla's history. How much of this history did you already know? What was new information to you?
2. What would you say were the two most important factors in the development of Wasilla?
3. How do the three planning areas fit into Wasilla's history?
4. What soil types does Wasilla have? Which ones are good for development? Why?
5. What do you think the soil is like in the three areas targeted for planning?
6. How do topography and drainage effect community development?
7. What are the topography and drainage like in the areas targeted for planning?
8. How does knowing about the community's climate and wildlife help in community planning?

Using Socioeconomic Data for Community Planning

1. Discussion: Wasilla's Population History

- What does the column graph tell us?
- Why do you think Wasilla's population has been increasing, especially since 1980?
- What do you think Wasilla's population will be in 2010?
- How are people, land, and government affected when population increases?
- How will population increase affect the three areas targeted for community planning (Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and Airport and Transportation Museum)? Refer to the map of Area Plan Locations.

2. Discussion: Wasilla's Population by Age

- What does this graph tell us?
- What age group has the highest percentage of people? Second highest? Third?
- How will having a young population affect Wasilla?
- How does age influence community planning?
- What does this mean for you as one of the young people?

3. Discussion: Employment by Industry

- What does this graph tell us?
- What industry employs the most people?
- In 1996, 38% of the Wasilla population commuted to Anchorage or the North Slope. What industries do you think people would need to commute for?
- Do you think 38% still commutes or do you think the percentage is higher or lower today? Why?
- How does employment affect community planning?
- Which of these industries interest you in terms of a career? What would you need to do to prepare for this career?

4. Discussion: Wasilla Land Use

- What does this graph tell us?
- What type of land use do you think is most common in each of the three areas targeted for planning (Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and Airport and Transportation Museum)?
- How does type of land use affect community planning?
- The data in this chart is from 1991. How do you think land use has changed since this data was collected? Why?

Reading Technical Material: Understanding the Community Planning Issues

Read *Chapter 1: Summary & Strategies* (pages 4-21) from the Comprehensive Plan. This chapter discusses Land Use, Parks and Recreation, Public Facilities and Services, and Transportation. Reading this information will help you understand the issues involved in developing the Area Plans for Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and the Airport and Transportation Museum area.

1. Why does Wasilla need a Comprehensive Plan?
2. The 2% sales tax accounts for what percentage of the city's budget?
3. What are some of the improvements that occurred between 1992 and 1996?
4. What are some of the economic challenges that have faced Wasilla between 1992 and 1996?
5. What strategies are recommended to expand tourism?
6. What is the issue with snow machines?
7. What kind of events and land use trends may affect the community?
8. What land use goals are included in the Plan?
9. Which goals and/or strategies in the Parks and Recreation Plan are most interesting to you? Why?
10. Which public facilities and services do you use most often? Have you seen any of the changes in these facilities or services that were recommended in the Plan?
11. What transportation issues do you think are most important? Why?
12. What has changed over the last 10 years since the Comprehensive Plan was approved? What has stayed the same?
13. What are new issues that Wasilla is facing today?
14. Which of the issues identified in the Comprehensive Plan will affect each of the planning areas?

My Vision for the Future Essay

Part 1: Describe your community's strengths and resources. What do you like about living in your community? What is unique and special about your community?

Part 2: Define or describe your chosen challenge or weakness in detail. Explain your hopes, fears or concerns about the issue. How would you describe this issue to someone not from your community? Who or what is impacting or affecting this issue today? Why is this issue interesting to you?

Part 3: State how your community could use its resources and strengths to deal with this challenge. Who would be responsible for implementing these ideas?

Part 4: Create a symbol, drawing or abstract form to represent your hopes and dreams for the future of your community. It is okay if you can't draw well - a very simple symbol or an abstract form would be great!

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

(Activities 2 & 4)

This page intentionally left blank.



**CITY OF WASILLA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
CITY APPROVED DRAFT**

April 1996

Prepared by:
The Canelos Group
Community Planning
LCMF, Ltd.
Wasilla Planning Office

Chapter 1 Summary & Strategies

This document is the City of Wasilla's Comprehensive Plan. It is designed to serve as a guide for citizens and civic decision makers concerning land use, growth, development and enhancement of the quality of life for residents and visitors to the community. The plan contains important background information on the community's history, natural environment and economy.

Wasilla's citizens are in the midst of long term city building. Located in the heart of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the City has grown ten-fold over the past 30 years. Wasilla is the dominant trade, retail and service center for the Valley, as well as a major suburban locality for the Anchorage metropolitan area. The population is relatively young and active. The area offers the best of Alaska: it has relatively affordable land, housing, small-town living and spectacular scenery.

The community features paved streets, water and sewer utilities, public buildings and schools, a variety of residential areas, recreational opportunities and a large business district. Wasilla is also a winter community, and all plans for the town should recognize the importance of living and working in a winter environment.

This plan contains the following major elements:

- ◆ Chapter 1, Summary and Strategies
- ◆ Chapter 2, Background for Planning
- ◆ Chapter 3, Economy and Population
- ◆ Chapter 4, Land Use Plan
- ◆ Chapter 5, Parks and Recreation Plan
- ◆ Chapter 6, Public Facilities and Services
- ◆ Chapter 7, Transportation Plan

The remainder of this chapter summarizes the major goals, policies, themes and recommendations contained within this plan. Goals (the long-term end towards which programs or activities are ultimately directed) are shown in bold text, while policies (the way in which programs and activities are conducted to achieve an identified goal) or city positions are shown with check marks.

Chapter 2, Background for Planning

Wasilla's setting offers what many consider to be the best of Alaska: extensive forests, numerous lakes and streams, abundant wildlife and spectacular mountain scenery. Wasilla is a "winter city" with lengthy periods of inclement conditions. This chapter

summarizes Wasilla's important environmental conditions and history, and provides important background for comprehensive planning.

Chapter 3, Economy and Population

The economy of Wasilla has evolved dramatically since the last Comprehensive Plan update was approved in 1992. Local voters approved a 2% sales tax which now accounts for over 75% of the operational city budget of \$6,089,160 for FY 1996. Local property tax rates have dropped by more than half from 4.2 mills in FY 1993 to 1.7 mills for FY 1995 and 1996. Several miles of local streets have been paved and improved, and work continues on local bike paths and amenities. A new police force was established, and recently completed its second year on the job. The first major national retailer to discover the Valley, Wal Mart, opened with great fanfare inside the city limits. The State of Alaska completed the four lane upgrade from the junction of the Glenn and Parks Highway across the Palmer Hay Flats to Anchorage. Land use permits are up, and more small businesses are opening branches in Wasilla. The local fire service area has an improved rating, lowering costs for fire insurance. Valley school enrollments and overall population are at all time highs.

All is not good news, however. Several major proposed economic development projects in the Valley, including the capital move initiative, coal mining at Wishbone Hill, and short-term development of Port MacKenzie, are on hold for the foreseeable future. The Valley is even more dependent on Anchorage for steady employment, and at least 38% of valley workers must commute to Anchorage or the North Slope for employment. ARCO Alaska and other oil companies have undertaken substantial reductions in force. State budget gaps continue without easy solutions. Diversification of the economy remains an important, but elusive goal.

The message for Wasilla remains the same as in the 1992 plan: the more self-sufficient the community can become in terms of revenue generation, and the more efficient local government can become, the more assured the future will be.

The City should continue its strong support of an educated workforce as the underpinning of Wasilla's private sector economy. By continuing to serve as the retail and service center of the Valley, Wasilla should continue to grow, and have the resources to improve the area's quality of life.

Tourism is growing in importance. To help increase tourism to Wasilla, the City should:

- ◆ Support improved access to the community through highway improvement projects and more frequent rail passenger service.
- ◆ Strongly support local efforts to landscape and beautify Wasilla. Amend the Wasilla Development Code to include provisions for landscaping and winter city design.

Wasilla Comprehensive Plan

- ◆ Encourage the Borough to require landscaping and removal of unsightly buildings, including the building packages of national chains of fast food franchises, filling stations, retail and warehouse groups whose trademark is gaudy and not in keeping with the standards for building and sign design set forth in the Wasilla Development Code.
- ◆ Continue to expand the Iditarod Days Festival associated with the Iditarod sled dog race re-start;
- ◆ Co-sponsor an annual spring visitor industry/tourism conference with the MSCVB, Chambers, Palmer, State Parks and private industry. The conference could debrief the past season, looking at successes and problem areas to be corrected.
- ◆ Install new Wasilla entry signs on the Parks Highway and major roads. Continue to work to upgrade parking and pedestrian amenities in the museum and historic block area
- ◆ Work closely with the MSCVB, the Chamber of Commerce and the Borough on joint planning for tourism and visitor promotions
- ◆ Continue to publicize the historic connections between Knik, Wasilla and the Hatcher Pass Mining Districts
- ◆ Provide for visitor-related information and displays as part of the master plan for the old airport
- ◆ Include visitor information and amenities at the airport
- ◆ Work with DOT&PF to install appropriate signs marking the crossing of the Iditarod Trail at the Parks Highway.

The issue of whether or how snow machines should be allowed to operate within the City needs to be resolved. Wasilla should seek acceptable ways to encourage people on their snow machines to come into town, without endangering pedestrians and vehicle traffic. If Wasilla wants to pursue working to include snow machines as part of its winter recreation attractions, the City should take the following steps:

- ◆ Work with the borough and state to accommodate registered snowmachine access on designated streets.
- ◆ Encourage snowmachine users and clubs to join together to develop a connecting trail system to public lands in the area. It is especially important that this be done soon before the addition of landowners makes the job of acquiring access more difficult.

- ◆ Develop rules and a means of enforcement for clean, quiet and safe operation of snow machines within the city.
- ◆ Work with the borough to open parks in the area for winter use. A cooperative agreement could provide funds for the maintenance needed.

This chapter offers five population forecasts. The most likely scenario is based upon an annual growth rate of 3.5%. This mid-level case assumes continued business and residential growth in the Valley, relatively stable oil prices, and the gradual expansion of city boundaries. Under this scenario, Wasilla's population would rise from 4,028 to 7,735 people by 2010.

Chapter 4, Land Use Plan

The land use plan is a guide for current and future land use and development decisions affecting the City of Wasilla. The plan's objective is to anticipate and respond to development trends, respect natural site characteristics, and reflect the community's attitudes about future growth. The plan assigns all land areas in the city to appropriate land use categories, based upon existing and emerging patterns of development, transportation access, availability of utilities and other sound planning principles.

The chapter includes discussions of existing land use, growth trends, and objectives for residential, commercial, industrial, and park sites. Not every future land use problem or concern can be predicted. However, a fairly accurate prediction of short term issues can be made and long term goals can be stated to provide guidance for the Planning Commission and Council.

Over the past decade, Wasilla has witnessed a number of important events that shape land use. These include:

- ◆ The economic recession of the mid to late 1980's;
- ◆ The gradual recovery of the Valley economy during the 1990's;
- ◆ Development of a new city owned airport, and closure of the old downtown airfield;
- ◆ Significant improvements to the Glenn Highway between Anchorage and the junction of the Parks Highway;
- ◆ The arrival of a national discount store to Alaska: Wal-Mart;
- ◆ Voter approval of a city 2% sales tax;
- ◆ Voter approval of a city Police Department;
- ◆ The growth of new businesses in Wasilla, gradually filling in the downtown area
- ◆ Rapidly increasing summer tourism
- ◆ Moving the official start of the Iditarod to Wasilla (the ceremonial start remains in Anchorage)

Wasilla Comprehensive Plan

The Land Use Plan and recommended strategies attempt to guide civic decision making over a 10-20 year period. However, if the 1992 plan is any guide, this current document will need to be frequently revisited and revised. Wasilla continues to change rapidly. Here is a listing of events and land use trends which may affect the community:

- ◆ The passage and reaffirmation of the Sales Tax and Police Force were fundamental turning points in Wasilla's growth and development. They will continue to contribute to local government and the quality of life in Wasilla.
- ◆ Traffic congestion will continue to increase, although DOT&PF will make major improvements to the George Parks Highway and other state maintained arterials and collectors in the Valley.
- ◆ Commercial growth should continue in the Valley, sometimes in unpredictable ways. The arrival of major discount stores (such as Wal Mart) to Alaska was not widely forecast, for example.
- ◆ Builders and developers favor home construction in what's locally known as "the golden triangle" bordered by the Palmer-Wasilla Highway, the Parks Highway and Trunk Road. This burgeoning area of the central Valley has relatively easy access to major highways for the commute to Anchorage or the short trip into Wasilla. This "core area" of the Valley can be expected to continue to grow.
- ◆ DOT&PF plans to improve the Parks Highway and extend the Palmer-Wasilla Highway to Knik-Goose Bay Road, provides opportunities for Wasilla to encourage development south of the railroad tracks. Widening the physical aspect of the commercial area is a long-standing community goal.
- ◆ Several unincorporated areas of the Valley will likely consider and apply for municipal status over the coming years. Talkeetna and Memory Lakes are considering such a move.
- ◆ The old Wasilla Airport will be gradually developed into the focus of Wasilla's public amenities.
- ◆ Long-term, Wasilla and Palmer may consider expanding their boundaries to meet at Trunk Road, or to even combine their forces in a new mega-city encompassing much of the populated area of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.
- ◆ Long-term, the Knik Arm Crossing may again come to life, prompting significant shifts and land use patterns and development.
- ◆ Municipal boundaries will gradually expand, both by request and necessity. The City will be much larger in 20 years.

Goal: Encourage growth and development that promotes the economy, protects the environment and improves the quality of life. The City should do everything it can to encourage economic development, while protecting and enhancing the small town atmosphere and semi rural way of life.

- ◆ The R-1 residential area should be expanded in those areas which actively, by 100 percent vote, seek protection for exclusively residential use.
- ◆ The city should allow for conversion of some of the Intermediate zoned land to other uses.
- ◆ Change the Creekside Estates District to R-1 or Intermediate. The present Creekside Estates District is an anomaly, and allows for modular homes as a major development permit.
- ◆ The city should consider ways to encourage the development of starter homes in the city to meet these needs. The city should help the expanding service sector work-force, and first time homeowners to find a wider range of housing options.
- ◆ The City should continue its strong support of active senior housing programs and organizations.
- ◆ Facilitate the upgrading and in-filling of commercial uses throughout the western downtown area to more fully utilize existing development. The redevelopment of the old airport site should help revitalize this area. This will help create a more vital downtown, and promote a cost effective distribution system for water, sewer and other utilities.
- ◆ Designate land adjoining the airport and railroad for future industrial purposes.
- ◆ Changing zoning designation, with 100 percent support of the landowners, between the Parks Highway and Mission Hills Subdivision, from Intermediate to R-1 or Industrial. Lands between the Parks Highway and Mission Hills Subdivision are presently zoned Intermediate.
- ◆ Wasilla should seek to diversify its economic base, but should not expend significant city funds to develop a speculative industrial park.
- ◆ New industrial areas may be added in the intermediate zone if separated from existing residential uses and do not significantly interfere with adjacent known potential residential development.

Goal: Encourage growth and development in appropriate areas south of the Alaska Railroad to create geographic balance in the downtown area.

A long standing community goal has been to expand commercial development south of the Alaska Railroad line and the Parks Highway. ADOT&PF's plans to extend the Palmer-Wasilla Highway westward to Knik-Goose Bay Road. This offers opportunities for the City to encourage commercial expansion in this area. Other areas with high potential are the Palmer-Wasilla Highway and the Knik-Goose Bay Road corridors. These well traveled routes are experiencing expanding commercial uses along the right-of-way.

- ◆ The Land Use District north of Glenwood Avenue is zoned Core Area. This will facilitate commercial expansion south of the Parks Highway.
- ◆ Extend the Core Area zone along Hallea Lane and the area surrounding Lake Lucille Lodge, in recognition of this area as an important waterfront commercial area. The Lake Lucille Lodge may be expanded in the near future. Since the Waterfront Core District does not allow lodges, this is a conforming pre-existing use.
- ◆ Support programs to extend the Palmer-Wasilla Highway, Church Road and similar projects which provide improved access south of the railroad.
- ◆ Over the next twenty years, the City should focus on developing and improving several key public parcels. These include:
 - the 30 acre old airport site
 - the City's downtown historic area
 - the new airport site
 - recreational opportunities along Wasilla Lake and Lake Lucille
 - the Smith Ballfields
 - the Bumpus Ballfield

Goal: Carry out land use regulations and planning that is equitable, cost-effective and responsive to the needs of the public.

- ◆ The Planning Commission and City Council should continue to strive for maximum public involvement in all phases of the decision-making process.
- ◆ The City should go "on line" with computer-accessible public notices advertisements, agendas, minutes and other important city documents.
- ◆ Rewriting the Wasilla Development Code is a key step in the assumption of planning powers from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.
- ◆ The city should work with the Borough to ensure that newly platted areas are compatible with potential urban services such as bike trails, street lights and sewer and water.

Goal: Improve the appearance of Wasilla for the benefit of residents and visitors.

- ◆ Wasilla should continue to work closely with local volunteer and civic organizations such as the local garden clubs, service clubs and the Historical Society to establish and carry out programs to beautify the downtown area.
- ◆ The Parks Highway should receive special attention as a landscape corridor. Locally crafted wooden signs welcoming visitors to Wasilla should replace or augment the present regulation metal signage along the highway.
- ◆ The Iditarod Trail crossing of the Parks Highway should receive special attention with a suitable sign and markings.
- ◆ The wooded corridor west of the downtown along the Parks Highway should be protected as development increases in the area.
- ◆ City codes should require landscaping from new development.
- ◆ The city should initiate a program to encourage landscaping by existing development.

Goal: Expand municipal boundaries cautiously as required to provide cost effective government services to the maximum number of people.

The city should adopt the following guidelines to assure that annexation, need for in-fill and the provision of services are kept in balance. The City should:

- ◆ Prepare it's own analysis of the fiscal impacts to revenues and expenditures from all annexation proposals.
- ◆ Require paving city maintained streets inside the 1994 city limits through the use of local improvement districts.
- ◆ Ensure that developed areas proposed for annexation have a high percentage of Occupied lots.
- ◆ Complete infrastructure consisting of paving, sewer, water, storm drainage, sidewalks and street lights in areas proposed for annexation.
- ◆ Balance the inclusion of new residential areas with new commercial areas. A high ratio of commercial property value over residential property value should be maintained.
- ◆ The city should work with the Borough to ensure that adjoining areas are platted and developed in a manner that will preserve their rural character, and not make

the provision of infrastructure such as roads, sewer and water prohibitively expensive.

Chapter 5, Parks and Recreation Plan

Wasilla's park and recreation program is working hard to catch up with rapid population growth and demand for services over the past decade. Officially, most parks and recreation services have historically been provided by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Many services within Wasilla, however, have been delegated to the City under contract. A major challenge facing Wasilla and other borough communities is the lack of funding to support and maintain existing parks and programs.

Park and recreation powers are held by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough under state law. After several years of declining funding and upkeep of local parks, however, the City of Wasilla approached the borough requesting a delegation of park and recreation powers. The Borough passed Ordinance No. 93-027 in 1993 authorizing an Inter-Governmental Cooperation Agreement for parks and recreational activities within the City of Wasilla.

The FY 95 Parks and Recreation Services Agreement provides for the City to operate, maintain and improve Newcomb (Wasilla Lake), Nunley and Carter Parks. In return, the Borough agrees to compensate the City \$10,000. The three named parks are the only park facilities in town recognized by the Borough in this agreement.

Goal: Involve the community in creating a public common and recreation preserve within the City at the old airport site.

Goal: Develop a comprehensive public parks and greenway Master Plan.

Wasilla has an extraordinary opportunity to reshape and define the character and quality of its urban center. The City has obtained title to the old 30-acre Wasilla airport site from the State of Alaska. With the opening of the new airport at Jacobsen Lake, this downtown site is now available for other public uses.

- ◆ Carry out a phased, conceptual plan which includes the following major elements:
 - Public ownership
 - A greenway within the city
 - Beginning of the Iditarod sled dog race
 - Wasilla Wonderland Community playground
 - Fully functioning in winter and summer
 - Visitor information
 - Greenhouse, rose garden and botanical garden

- Circuit trails with lights
- Event fields, picnic areas and informal sport areas
- Parking on the periphery
- Utilities and limited snow storage.

The City should take several steps in the near-term (1-3 years) to institutionalize the development of this public use area in a cost-effective manner. The City should:

- ◆ designate a lead department or official within the administration to take overall responsibility for carrying out an adopted master plan;
- ◆ Establish several recreational uses during 1995 at minimum cost. For example, a number of the concrete slabs remaining from the former hangars can be converted into half-court basketball areas and similar uses. Sand lot volleyball could be provided;
- ◆ Coordinate the planting of the site to accelerate the "greening up" transformation of the area from industrial/airport to greenbelt/public open space. The community could be invited to participate in a number of volunteer or memorial tree plantings throughout the site;
- ◆ Work closely with the Iditarod Committee and the Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities to design and place permanent trail signage both on-site and on the Parks Highway. The race is a significant Alaskan and national event, and should be suitably recognized;
- ◆ Continue the support given to Valley Performing Arts, including provision of space for parking on the edge of the site. This parking will provide parking for park users during summer months when VPA is inactive;
- ◆ Forming a permanent "Friends of the Wasilla Greenbelt Master Plan" organization to coordinate civic involvement and development of the property following an adopted master plan. Development should be funded through a combination of public and private funds;
- ◆ Begin programming each facility and activity. At this stage, architectural and preliminary engineering can be done to determine square footage, capacities, utility design and cost estimates. Design themes should also be adopted, so that all structures relate well to the site, and to each other.

Goal: Provide organizations and programs to meet current and future recreational needs.

- ◆ Continue community beautification efforts.

Wasilla Comprehensive Plan

- ◆ Enthusiastically support youth and adult sports and recreation organizations and programs.

Goal: Acquire, develop and maintain suitable parkland for current and future needs.

Successful park programs balance the continuing need to maintain existing facilities with a long-term vision of acquiring and developing lands to meet growing demand. The Wasilla Parks and Recreation Commission projects a significant shortfall in park property in the near future. The City currently has a number of important opportunities to greatly improve the size and quality of parks within the community.

- ◆ Acquire and develop an 80 acre parcel owned by the State of Alaska adjacent to the Smith Ballfields.
- ◆ Expand recreational opportunities at the Bumpus Ballfields to include all segments of the population.
- ◆ Acquire and develop the wooded peninsula known as Green Acres Park for future public access to Wasilla Lake.
- ◆ Expand Carter Park on Lake Lucille.

Goal: Acquire, develop and maintain suitable facilities and improvements for current and future recreational needs.

- ◆ Continue to support the Wasilla Wonderland Community Playground Project
- ◆ Craft and install suitable gateway and directional signs throughout the community.
- ◆ Continue development of a citywide trails system.
- ◆ Support development of a tournament-capable sports field complex.
- ◆ Find a suitable site for equestrian and rodeo corrals and facilities.
- ◆ Support construction of a new public library.
- ◆ Support construction of a multi-purpose community center.
- ◆ Long-term, the feasibility of a "full-facility" recreation center

Chapter 6, Public Facilities and Services

Goal: Successfully support the need to carry out cost-effective, basic governmental services with bold and visionary planning to prepare Wasilla for the future.

Water and Sewer System

The City should seek federal funding to fund construction of a more conventional sewage treatment plant, such as a granular recirculating filter system. Once this is accomplished, the City can do major expansions to the system, most likely eastward along the Parks Highway commercial corridor.

Surface Water Drainage

- ◆ Surface water drainage studies need to be updated, and the City needs to address construction of a surface/storm water drainage system.

Public Safety. The Police Department currently occupies two former classrooms in the original 1934 school building at the rear of City Hall. These facilities are expensive to maintain and are not designed for efficient law enforcement administration. A major need for the Police Department in the coming years will be to have suitable housing in a public safety building.

- ◆ One option would be to construct a new Public Safety Building for both the Police Department and portions of the Wasilla Lakes Fire Service Area personnel and equipment. The plan recommends that a suitable location for this facility be identified on existing City lands, if possible, or on land to be acquired if necessary.
- ◆ The plan recommends relocating the downtown fire station elsewhere in the core area. One option is to construct a joint Public Safety Building at the eastern edge of the old airport site on Lucille. This option is shown in the conceptual Master Plan for the old airport site. Use of the old airport site for structural development may depend on a follow-up planning process to focus solely on the old airport site.

Public Library. Wasilla Public Library is the fourth busiest library in Alaska. Only Juneau, Fairbanks and Anchorage have more activity. To resolve these problems, the plan recommends the City pursue one of these two options:

- ◆ If the Post Office facility becomes available, the City should conduct a feasibility and cost study to determine whether the library could cost-effectively relocate across Swanson Road into this structure. Remodeling this facility could provide a new library very near the current location in the downtown core. The facility

would have increased parking, and an elevated pedestrian crossing would provide safe access between the library and museum/historic area. The library would remain close to the museum, taking advantage of many common programs and constituents.

- ◆ A second option, shown as part of the conceptual Wasilla Greenbelt Master Plan (Figure 5-1) is to construct a new library as a major element of the new Iditarod Greenbelt area at the old airport site.

Conceptually, Figure 5-1 shows a new two-story structure with about 16,100 square feet. The library would be located adjacent to a new Community Center. Together, these facilities would have about 200 parking spaces and be located on the citywide trails system. The proposed site is about one mile from existing schools and is conveniently located for most residents. This proposal is based upon the evolution of prior plans including the 1992 Comprehensive Plan and the more recent Iditarod Park plan which was not adopted by the City Council. Use of the site will depend on a follow-up planning process to specify areas on the old airport.

Museum and Townsite Park. The Dorothy Page Museum and Visitor Center, together with the historic block, provide significant economic, educational and cultural benefits to Wasilla. The area lacks suitable zoning protection, has limited parking, and incompatible land uses within the historic area. The plan recommends:

- ◆ Designating the area as public/institutional lands to better protect these activities and facilities from conflicting uses and activities.
- ◆ Vacating Boundary Street between Herning and Swanson Avenues to provide additional room and site flexibility.
- ◆ Relocating the library and the fire station to other locations, and expand museum/historic functions to take advantage of these facilities
- ◆ Purchasing or otherwise acquiring private property within the historic block area

Post Office. With recent growth and development in the community, the main facility located at the corner of Swanson and Main Street has become overcrowded and the cause of considerable traffic congestion in the downtown area. The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) estimates that site selection for a replacement facility will take place in 1996. Construction would begin in 1997 or 1998.

- ◆ The plan supports a potential new site for the Post Office along the Knik-Goose-Bay Road corridor, near the Glenwood intersection. This site would be the most beneficial to the overall development of the city. The new Post Office would establish a new and significant traffic generator on the south side of the Parks Highway. This should, in turn, encourage commercial development in this area.

Snow Removal Although relatively expensive, a snow removal program would benefit the community in several ways. Besides improving vehicular and pedestrian traffic, the hauling of snow from the core area will reduce storm water drainage problems in the spring, and make it easier for people to shop and conduct business downtown.

- ◆ The City should initiate a snow removal program which keeps downtown roadways and sidewalks clear of snow.

Going On-line. Municipalities across the country are discovering the benefits of going on-line with many city services. Some municipal systems are simple read-only bulletin boards, such as notices of upcoming meetings and hearings, agendas, detailed city budgets, procurement announcements, job openings and voice telephone numbers. Some city bulletin boards go a step further and allow messages and comments on specific items. Still others are more elaborate with access to ordinances, resolutions, plans and the city code that are sorted by subject or keyword and access to other sites. Systems can also feature electronic mail to connect residents with city departments, employees and elected representatives.

- ◆ Wasilla should install a basic on-line system to provide better access for the community to its local government.

City Hall. The current facility, while adequate for administrative and police functions, is housed in a 60-year old former school. Maintenance, energy and repair costs are expensive, and the building is less and less suited to the operations of modern city government.

- ◆ Long-term, the City should begin to plan for a new City Hall.
- ◆ A new City Hall should remain in the downtown area, north of the Parks Highway and probably located between Lucille Street, Nelson Road/Bogard Road and Crusey Street.

Chapter 7 Transportation Plan

The Transportation Plan identifies and evaluates ongoing and proposed state, borough and local projects for road and highway improvements, including pedestrian and bicycle amenities. The plan focuses on continuing with an aggressive local road improvement program, while supporting regional and state efforts to build a transportation infrastructure to meet current and future needs.

Past improvements to Wasilla's road and highway system have stimulated community growth and development, contributed to economic diversification, and encouraged more people to relocate to the Valley and to Wasilla. Additional improvements are essential, however, to ensure that traffic flows efficiently and safely through the city, to upgrade

local streets to uniform standards, to contribute to the community's quality of life, and to keep pace with population growth and economic development.

Goal: Develop and maintain a transportation system that meets the current and future needs of Wasilla and the Matanuska Valley.

The successful development, operation and maintenance of the Wasilla area transportation network depends upon a creative and cooperative strategy between the public, City of Wasilla, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and all affected highway users.

- ◆ The City should continue to work closely with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the DOT&PF to develop and execute a visionary, regional strategy for transportation improvements.
- ◆ Design standards and level of service standards for arterials and collectors should be coordinated at the borough level in various stages of discussion or implementation. The area's transportation system is still "catching up" with land use, population, traffic pressures and growth patterns. Improvements should be designed to enhance traffic flow, help prevent accidents and maintain or improve access to businesses and private property.

Goal: Improve the safety and traffic carrying capacity of the area's arterial and major collector systems.

- ◆ State and Borough planning should reflect the priorities, constraints and concerns expressed in this Comprehensive Plan.
- ◆ All modifications to arterial or collector routes within Wasilla and the surrounding area should include provision for sidewalks or pathways at the time of construction or upgrade.
- ◆ The City supports the following state projects:
- ◆ Main Street and Bogard Road Intersection Improvements. DOT&PF is currently designing major improvements to the intersection of Bogard Road, Main Street and Nelson Avenue. Design is set for completion by August 1996 with construction scheduled for 1997. The goal is to create a safe, 4-way intersection, either through conventional design, or perhaps with a "round-about" scheme. The City supports this upgrade as a local priority, and looks forward to commenting formally once a design is presented to the public.

Two pathways are also part of this project: the first proceeds from the intersection along Bogard Road to Peck Street; the other runs along the west side of Crusey from Swanson Avenue to the Parks Highway. The City supports these pathway extensions and are part of its overall city pathway plan. In

addition the City supports a below grade pedestrian crossing between Wasilla High School and Wasilla Middle School as part of the related pathway development.

- ◆ Palmer-Wasilla Highway Bike path. DOT&PF is planning long-range construction of a separated pathway along the length of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway. About \$1.5 million is available for construction of the first segment, beginning at the Parks Highway. Construction is scheduled for FY 1996.
- ◆ Church Road. DOT&PF is currently designing major upgrades to Church Road between the Parks Highway and Spruce Avenue. This \$3.4 million project will include paving of the roadway, and construction of a pathway. Construction is set for 1997. This project should resolve serious safety problems and is fully supported by the City.
- ◆ The City takes the following position concerning DOT&PF plans to reconstruct the Parks Highway, MP 37-44:

Crusey Street to Seward Meridian: This phase should be completed on an accelerated schedule. The approved design must successfully move traffic safely through town, while not unduly compromising safe and convenient access to businesses and commercial establishments. Given available information, the City supports a four lane design, with a two-way left turn lane system. Frontage roads would add to the design, provided direct access to most property is not unduly restricted. The City passed resolutions No. WR94-45 and WR96-02 supporting the five lane concept through Wasilla. In addition, the separated pathway should include an under-crossing near Cottonwood Creek.

Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension. This phase should also move ahead on an accelerated schedule. The opportunity for commuting traffic to avoid downtown Wasilla by directly reaching Knik-Goose Bay Road should help alleviate traffic congestion. In addition, this project facilitates Wasilla's strategy to encourage expansion of the downtown area south of the railroad tracks. Highway designers should consider options which permit full development and access of surrounding property near the Parks Highway intersection. The City does not support the creation of a limited access interstate highway through the heart of Wasilla.

- ◆ The City urges a more comprehensive examination of highway and road options and alternative transportation options, including a serious investigation of constructing a by-pass highway at some point in the future.

Over the past two decades, the Wasilla business sector has grown to the point where a by-pass is not likely to harm Wasilla's retail and commercial sector. The City supports a cooperative effort with the Borough and DOT&PF to examine the bypass option when it becomes feasible and prudent to do so.

Wasilla Comprehensive Plan

- ◆ The City supports the following projects sponsored by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough:
- ◆ Intersection Improvements: Wasilla Fishhook/Bogard/Nelson, Bogard Road/Crusey Street, Peck Street and Wasilla-Fishhook
- ◆ Trunk Road
- ◆ Seward Meridian Road
- ◆ Bogard Road – The Seldon Road extension east to Bogard Road was supported by City Resolution WR94-43.
- ◆ Church Road – Resolutions WR94-44 and WR95-28 lists this project as the city's highest priority on their state recommended list.
- ◆ DOT&PF should include upgrading Wasilla-Fishhook Road from Glenwood to Schrock Road as a priority in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan.

The City supports the development of a pedestrian crossing along Bogard road to connect the Wasilla High School and Junior High School campuses and across Wasilla Fishhook Road in front of Iditarod Elementary School.

Eliminating dangerous curves and improving driving conditions is important for public safety. From Glenwood Avenue to Lakeview Avenue, the two-lane roadway could be widened to a rural three-lane roadway with a striped median designated for two-way left turns.

Goal: Maintain and improve the system of collectors and local streets to serve present and future needs.

Because of rapid growth in Wasilla and the lack of funding to improve local streets and collectors, many serious instances of gaps, poor alignment and substandard roadways exist in the City. These problems need to be recognized and remedied if the transportation needs of the area are to be effectively met.

- ◆ Decisions to improve collectors and local roads should be consistent with the Land Use Plan.
- ◆ The City should continue its aggressive program to bring all collectors and local streets up to standard, including paving. The City should continue to encourage the formation of Local Improvement District's (LID's) to fund one-third the cost of local street improvements. The City should continue to fund 100% of improvements to collector streets.

- ◆ The City should work diligently to carry out projects identified on the Wasilla Road Projects Short List (FY 96) and Deferred List FY 96/FY 97. These are identified in Chapter 7.

Goal: Create a citywide and regional system of pathways and trails to provide for alternative methods of transportation, improve public safety and enhance quality of life for residents and visitors.

- ◆ The bicycle, pedestrian and winter trails proposed in the Parks & Recreation element and the Transportation element should be recognized and supported for their value as part of the local transportation system.
- ◆ The City should work diligently to carry out projects identified on the
- ◆ The City should design and construct a trail linking the city's three major public spaces: the proposed Wasilla Greenbelt Master Plan (including the old Wasilla Airport and Nunley Park), the Dorothy Page Museum and historic building district, and Newcomb Park.
- ◆ Continue to seek acceptable solutions to accommodate snow machine activities within Wasilla without endangering pedestrians and vehicles or the quality of life in neighborhoods.

Goal: Encourage the development of alternative transportation means.

- ◆ Wasilla should support recurring efforts to initiate commuter bus or rail service between Wasilla and Anchorage.
- ◆ The Comprehensive Plan supports replacing the railroad crossing being eliminated with the new overpass near Rocky Ridge Road with a new railroad crossing for the extension of Church Street south to the airport.
- ◆ Wasilla should continue to market the advantages of the airport, together with carrying out airport projects on the Short List (FY 96) and Deferred List FY96/FY97

Chapter 2

Background for Planning

Location and Setting

Wasilla's setting offers what many consider to be the best of Alaska: extensive forests, numerous lakes and streams, abundant wildlife and spectacular mountain scenery. The City is located near the center of the Matanuska Susitna Borough in the heart of south-central Alaska. The Borough encompasses about 23,000 square miles, including much of the drainage of the Susitna and Matanuska Rivers. Wasilla lies south of the Talkeetna Mountains, about 12 miles north of Knik Arm on Cook Inlet. The City is located only 30 air miles NNE of Anchorage, alongside the Alaska Railroad main line and the George Parks Highway. Driving time between Wasilla and Anchorage is about one hour, depending on the time of year and weather conditions. The highway and railroad connect Anchorage and Fairbanks, with the Denali National Park and preserve lying about halfway between these two urban areas.

Figures 1 and 2 depict Wasilla's regional and local setting and location.

The Wasilla area owes its varied setting to the glacial forces that shaped the area during the end of the last ice age. The broad Susitna River valley is the landward extension of Cook Inlet which was formed by an underlying trough of poorly consolidated rocks from the Tertiary age. Several glacial advances and retreats left a complex system of hills, ridges, lakes and lowlands that define the topography of today. Landforms in and around Wasilla consist of undulating ridges of glacial till and flat benches of sand and gravel out-wash.

Cottonwood Creek, Lucille Creek and several smaller streams traverse the Wasilla area. Two large lakes, Lucille and Wasilla, are partially or wholly within the city limits.

History

Understanding Wasilla's development patterns provides insights for updating the comprehensive plan. The townsite was named after Chief Wasilla, a local Dena'ina chief and shaman who died in 1907 (there are many variant spellings of his name; however, the chief having received a rudimentary education, reportedly spelled his name Visilla). Numerous lakes and streams surrounding Visilla's residence provided ample fishing for indigenous populations, thereby becoming a popular wintering ground for small semi-permanent native villages.

Native trails crisscrossed the area, some connected with distant hunting grounds in the Susitna Valley and Talkeetna Mountains, while others linked with the Ahtna people, north of the Matanuska River. These trails also served as trade networks between remote villages. During the Russian American fur trade local native populations prospered until the small pox epidemic struck many villages, causing area-wide abandonment of homes in the mid-19th Century. Surviving populations deserted many remote villages, congregating into larger population centers closer to trading posts in the Upper Cook Inlet.

Continuing to lead a subsistence lifestyle, native communities again began to prosper during the American fur trade. This is especially true of Chief Wasilla who maintained a subsistence diet, while accruing numerous trade items through the American Commercial Company. Chief Wasilla harbored his extended family in a village not too far from the current townsite of Wasilla. His village, which once stood adjacent to Cottonwood Creek, was called "Benteh," meaning a Place Among the Lakes.

Gold strikes on Willow Creek in the late 19th Century not only increased traffic along existing trails but helped to create numerous new ones. Native populations from Wasilla area moved to the trading posts at Knik on the west side of Knik Arm to participate in the gold rush; many worked as guides or haulers for the gold miners. Knik was established in the late 19th Century as a trading post and commercial center for gold miners plying the Susitna River and its tributaries for gold. Establishment of the Iditarod Trail in 1908 added to the importance of Knik's link with distant gold mines. By 1914 Knik had grown to encompass several businesses including a newspaper office and schoolhouse.

Wasilla's Euro-American history began in 1916 when the Alaska Engineering Commission (AEC) selected construction of a work camp at the intersection of the proposed railroad with the Carle Wagon gold mining trail (now known as Wasilla-Fishhook Road). The road, connected Knik with the Willow Creek mines in the Talkeetna Mountains. Resembling a tent town, the camp harbored railroad men engaged in surveying, clearing and establishing the rail line right-of-way through Wasilla which eventually would connect the open port of Seward with Fairbanks. The first business opened in 1916 when Mrs. Small, catering to railroad construction workers, operated a modest restaurant.

Wasilla was established on well-drained lands in a beautiful setting between two lakes. After platting the townsite on June 20, 1917, from the railroad platform in Wasilla, the AEC sold townsite lots by auction. Spelling the demise of Knik, several traders from Knik bought Wasilla lots and re-established their businesses in the new townsite. It did not take long before additional trails fanned out to the mines making Wasilla the new gateway to the gold mines. The Iditarod trail also became connected with the new townsite bringing both gold and traffic to Wasilla Depot for rail transportation to Seward.

Reportedly the first building in Wasilla was constructed by Harry Shough who freighted for the mines. It later served as Wasilla's public library between 1942 and 1950, before being replaced. Many early businesses which were moved from Knik have long since been replaced by newer commercial entities. Some of the earliest buildings constructed in 1917, however, can be found today behind the Dorothy Page Museum located in the Old Wasilla Townsite. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places is the Heming/Teeland/Mead Store which served as a commercial dry goods store in Wasilla for over 65 years before closing its doors. Teeland's Country Store, evoking memories of a forgotten era has been rehabilitated by the Dorothy Page Museum. Other buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places include Wasilla's first elementary school, the Dorothy Page Museum (former Community Hall) and Wasilla Depot. There are several other buildings such as the Thorpe log cabin located on Main Street and the Tryck house on Knik which help recall Wasilla's early days.

Over 400 homesteaders were registered in the Valley prior to the First World War. The number fell back during the war years but grew again in the twenties. The Alaska Railroad sponsored a program to bring farm settlers to the area in 1929, but the most successful effort occurred in the midst of the Great Depression in 1935. That year the Federal Emergency relief Administration sponsored 202 families to the Valley via steamship and rail. The townsite of Palmer was established to serve the needs of farm families in the eastern part of the valley. Since many of the Colonists were closer to Wasilla they went there to shop and established an economic trend which continues today.

1940 was a high water mark for pre-war Wasilla. Many of the farm families were well established, mining operations were thriving and the development of Fort Richardson and Elmendorf Field brought the first boom to the area. World War II abruptly ended the boom by closing the mines and draining labor from the farms and businesses. The influx of military personnel to Alaska brought a wider knowledge of the area, however, and many chose to stay or return after their enlistment. Wasilla's role as the main distribution center for the mining industry in the Valley ended.

In 1947 the government released 45,000 acres for homesteading, this land had been held in reserve for the farm project. Many former military people took the opportunity to homestead the area.

The discovery of oil in Cook Inlet and the Kenai Peninsula in the mid-1950's assured statehood for Alaska and brought increased development to upper Cook Inlet. As road conditions and access improved between Anchorage and the Valley, the Wasilla area gradually became important as an area for recreational and second home development.

Construction of the George Parks Highway through Wasilla in the early 1970's provided direct access to and from Anchorage. This development enabled workers and their families to live in the Wasilla area, and commute to the city. Support and service industries began to expand to meet the needs of new residents.

Alaska experienced a boom in the late 1960's and 1970's with the discovery of oil on the North Slope and construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. Oil field and construction workers found the environment and climate in the Wasilla area to their liking and hundreds of subdivisions were approved as an additional influx of people came to the Valley to live. Regional government, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, was established in 1964 by the state under the Mandatory Borough Act. During this period farming declined and the area became more dependent on the statewide and Anchorage economic situation.

The George Parks Highway, completed in October 1971, passes by the entrance to Denali National Park and links Anchorage and Fairbanks, the main population centers of the state. The Parks Highway is heavily used throughout the year by tourists and resident Alaskans. Increased traffic and a rapidly-expanding population encouraged the development of strip malls, services and a variety of retail businesses along the highway in the Wasilla area. The characteristic strip development, that marks the area, was solidified during this period.

The City of Wasilla was incorporated in 1974 as a second class city under Alaska statutes. In 1984, the City upgraded to first class status. By the mid 1970's, Wasilla had become the commercial and retail center of the Borough. Wasilla is referred to as a "bedroom community", because of its easy access to Anchorage.

During the late 1970's, Wasilla became a focus of public debate, as the state considered whether to relocate Alaska's capital city from Juneau to an undeveloped site between Wasilla and Willow. Settler's Bay and many other subdivisions were developed in anticipation of the capital move. Although the move was defeated in public votes, real estate speculation and development continued through the mid 1980's.

The years from 1980 to 1986 witnessed the period of most rapid growth for Wasilla and the Matanuska- Susitna Borough. State oil money fueled a real estate boom, and the Valley's population expanded as housing prices in Anchorage escalated. During these years, both Wasilla and the Borough grew two to three times faster than Anchorage.

Economic booms are often followed by periods of bust, or economic adjustment. During the late 1980's the economy in Wasilla had its "adjustment". Like most Alaska communities, Wasilla is extremely vulnerable to economic forces beyond its control. Real property values in Wasilla peaked in 1986 at \$333 million. At the bottom of the recession in 1990, real property values had plummeted by almost half, bottoming out at approximately \$170 million. Business failures were high and both the City and Valley lost population. Many homes in Wasilla and the outlying area were left empty as banks and state financial institutions foreclosed on overdue mortgages. Much of the newly developed commercial area along the Parks Highway became empty store fronts and office space.

During 1992, Wasilla voters passed a 2% local sales tax, and also approved formation of a local Police Department. Wal-mart established the first national discount store in the Wasilla in 1993. Currently, Wasilla enjoys an improving economic situation, rebounding real estate prices, continuing retail activity and a growing population. Many local schools face record student enrollments, and the State has recently completed construction of a new airport for the community.

While the commercial and residential development patterns have obscured much of the frontier town setting, many people are still attracted to the Valley and to Wasilla as a desirable place to live and raise families. Attractions include a small town atmosphere, the area's natural amenities, a manageable commute to Anchorage and affordable housing.

Geology and Soils

During glacial times much of the Susitna River valley lowland was a glacial lake. Large chunks of ice left stranded formed many small depressions in the area. This lake and the deposition of glacial silts and clays played an important part in the make up of the soils of the area.

Most of the soils in the area are generally well suited for development and provide good sources of sand, gravel and topsoil. Finding good road-fill, gravel and building sites is generally not a problem. Some areas remain poorly drained, however, and pose limitations for septic systems. The deposition of silt, clay and organic muck in old lakes and depressions means that some areas have soil conditions which change substantially in a short distance.

Wasilla's city limits do not encompass known reserves of minerals such as silver, gold or copper. However, deep deposits of gravel in the city do provide a ready source of material for construction.

The U.S. Soil Conservation Service has mapped seven soil associations in and around Wasilla. The general lay of the land and the vegetation it supports are good clues to soil types. Although the primary concern for soil suitability has been septic systems frost heaving, slopes and high water tables can also affect development. In many areas a community water system is necessary to protect the health of local residents. Minimal investigation such as digging or an engineering analysis of any site prior to planning for development is a wise decision.

Two soil types, the Homestead and the Knik, predominate in the Wasilla area. Both of these soils are well suited to most types of development. Small localized pockets of compacted silt and depressions, however, contribute to problems with drainage and frost heave, especially in the Homestead series.

The **Homestead** series is common in the Wasilla area especially north of the Parks Highway from the west end of Lake Lucille. Homestead soils are shallow, well-drained silty soils over loose sand and gravel. They have formed on broad out-wash plains and gravel moraines and run from nearly flat terrain to steep areas. These soils generally support forests of paper birch, white spruce and aspen. The understory often supports low growing shrubs and a thin blanket of moss.

Homestead soils are found along Church Road north of the Parks Highway and throughout the Mission Hills subdivision. This soil type has good suitability for septic systems, but excessive drainage ability can lead to contamination of nearby well water. Building is occasionally restricted by boulders and cobble stones, and some localized problems can occur with frost heaving. Low depressions in this series typically have considerably poorer capabilities for development.

The **Knik** series is the other major soil type in the area. It includes most of the downtown area, north and south of Lake Lucille and Wasilla Lake. Except along streams, lakes and in depressions this is the soil and surficial geology most suited for land development.

Knik soils are shallow, well-drained and silty, overlaying coarse, gravelly material, although scattered areas of poorly drained soils are also included. The soils are extensive over a broad range of slopes from flat to steep escarpments. Native vegetation includes forests of paper birch, white spruce and quaking aspen. Many areas have been cleared for pasture or crops.

Soils in this association can support a variety of construction activities such as buildings and roads. Septic systems are usually not a problem as long as the lot size is big enough to keep adequate separation between wells and drain fields. The wetter areas in this series are subject to frost heaving.

The remaining soil associations in the immediate Wasilla area have severe limitations for development. Extensive site work will be necessary to use these areas. Figure 3, Soil

Limitations for Development, shows areas generally unsuited for development without special precautions.

The **Coal Creek** series consists of dark colored, poorly drained soils that formed in moderately deep silty material over compacted, fine-textured sediments. These soils occur in nearly level to gently sloping stream valleys, on the border of muskegs and in small depressions. They are sometimes characterized by hillside seeps. The vegetation on these soils is most commonly sparse forests of paper birch, white spruce and black spruce with undergrowth of alder, willow, grasses and horsetail. This soil unit is found in small areas north and west of the downtown area (see Figure 3) and is unsuitable for building due to poor drainage and slope.

The *Jacobsen* series is a very poorly drained, very stony silt loam found in broad depressions. It is usually covered with a thick mat of sphagnum moss and supports scattered stands of willow and stunted black spruce. The type is found west of Lake Lucille, south of the railroad, about even with Church Road. These soils are nearly undevelopable owing to their high water table and stony condition.

The *Salamatof* and *Slikok* soils require extensive work and should remain undeveloped. Found within low areas of the Knik series, they consist of poorly drained, peat, muck and silty sediments in shallow depressions throughout the eastern side of the city. High water tables, often at or just below the surface, are characteristic of these soils. Vegetation consists of sparse bog birch, willow and stunted black spruce. The banks of Cottonwood Creek south of Wasilla Lake have the greatest concentrations of these soils.

Finally, the *Wasilla* series consists of somewhat poorly drained soils with layers of sand and compacted finer material. They do not have the high organic content of the Slikok series. These soils are not extensive in the local area and are most commonly found southeast of Lake Lucille along the Knik-Goose Bay Road.

Topography and Drainage

Topography in the City of Wasilla varies from about 300 feet to 500 feet above sea level. Generally, terrain gradually rises from south to north. The downtown area is relatively level.

Hills and varying terrain present excellent opportunities for planning a better community. For example, the hilly terrain north of Wasilla High School offers excellent potential for expansion of cross-country ski trails.

Figure 4, Steep Slopes, shows areas of the community which have slopes exceeding 30 degrees. These areas should remain undeveloped, unless care is taken during construction to prevent erosion and the collapse of hillsides.

Views looking southeast and south from the Parks Highway towards Pioneer Peak and the Palmer Hay Flats are striking and should be protected. In addition the Talkeetna Mountains can be seen from many points in the city, with Government Peak at 4,781 feet being the most prominent.

The Wasilla area is blessed with several large lakes and two substantial streams (See figure 5, Drainage and Wetlands). *Wasilla Lake* is partially within the eastern city limits along the Parks Highway. At 387 acres, it is one of the largest lakes in Southcentral Alaska which is easily accessible from a main highway.

Wasilla Lake is part of the Cottonwood Creek drainage system which begins northeast of Wasilla and eventually discharges into Knik Arm about 15 miles to the south. Several lakes are interconnected along this drainage and Wasilla Lake is the largest and last major lake. It is a popular recreation area for both local residents, and for people traveling the highway to other destinations. The lake has limited public and private access points for swimming and boating, however. The Mat-Su Resort has the only boat launch on the lake and it is outside Wasilla's corporate limits. Fishing is very popular year-round and the lake is stocked with silver salmon by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to help support recreational fishing.

The overall water quality of Wasilla Lake appears to be good and is considered safe for human contact and the lake's aquatic life. No water quality testing program is done on a regular basis but water samples taken by the State and City several years ago did not indicate any problems. The patterns of circulation and natural flushing contribute to stable water quality.

Cottonwood Creek is a very popular salmon fishing stream, although fishing is closed within the city limits. Several species of salmon pass through or use Wasilla Lake as a spawning ground. The average rate of flow for Cottonwood Creek is about 16 cubic feet per second near the outfall from Wasilla Lake. However, average flows are occasionally grossly exceeded during heavy rains especially during spring and fall months. Residential development along the banks of the creek south of Wasilla has sometimes experienced flooding.

Lake Lucille is about the same size as Wasilla Lake (362 acres). However, even though Lake Lucille and Wasilla Lake are in close proximity, they are part of two separate drainages and have very different characteristics. Lake Lucille is very shallow with an average depth of only five and a half feet. The lake's primary source of water is springs in the lake bed. No significant creek leads into it and only a small creek drains it. Lucille Creek is a low flow stream that drains Lake Lucille into Big Lake. Flushing action and water circulation through the lake is slow. In the last few years Lake Lucille has become quite eutrophic and has experienced fish kills during the winter months. The shores of Lake Lucille are developed with many residences on individual water systems. The city sewer service was provided to virtually all lake side development in 1987. Shallow lakes surrounded by development such as this often have problems with water quality. While city water quality testing has not revealed any problem with sewage contamination, the lake should be tested on a regular basis.

Groundwater supplies are abundant in the area, although the quality can vary significantly in a short distance. Much of the core area of the city has a central water system and several subdivisions have private water systems. Many homes in the surrounding area, however still rely on individual wells for their water supply. Most of these wells are shallow with depths of less than 100 feet. Static water levels in many of these wells is around 30 feet below the surface. The coarse gravel underlying the city provides a large aquifer even in the winter when infiltration is very low. Some wells are

drilled much deeper and suggest that another aquifer exists still lower down closer to bedrock. Water from these wells is usually of good quality and moderately hard, although iron concentrations are high some localized areas.

Climate

Wasilla's climate is transitional between the extremes of Interior Alaska and the wet maritime conditions found along the coastal areas.

Wasilla is less than 10 miles from Knik Arm and about 75 miles from Prince William Sound. The proximity to the coast means that summer temperatures are more moderate than those in the Interior. The Alaska Range, Chugach and Talkeetna Mountains also protect Wasilla from the extreme cold of the Interior winter and serve to break up strong storm fronts.

This combination of location and topography gives Wasilla a less severe climate than other nearby communities. Wasilla tends to be warmer in the summer with fewer clouds and less rain than communities further south along Cook Inlet such as Homer. Although generally protected from the Matanuska and Knik winds which blow more than 60 miles per hour from 16 to 25 days each year, buildings in the community occasionally suffer wind damage.

Wasilla averages only about 18 inches of precipitation per year, including about 59 inches of snowfall (see Figure 6). Moreover, thaws during the winter months can decrease snow cover to a few inches. However significant variations from these averages do occur. For example the late 1980's witnessed several intense rain storms that brought Wasilla's yearly precipitation totals to over 25 inches.

Sunrise and sunset are only 5.5 hours apart on December 21st. Spring breakup usually is underway by late March or the first week in April. The longest day of the year, June 21, brings 19.5 hours of daylight.

Mean temperatures are shown in Figure 7. Mean monthly high temperatures in Wasilla range from about 22 degrees in December and January to 69 degrees in July. The frost-free period in spring and summer averages 115 days, with the first frost usually arriving by September 1st.

The long hours of daylight means that many crops and plants grow rapidly during the growing season. The record low for the City was -50 degrees in January 1947. The years from 1945 to 1948 were a period of extreme cold and contain the low records for ten months. The highest recorded temperature was 90 degrees in 1969.

Fish and Wildlife

Moose are abundant in the Wasilla area and use a large variety of habitats, including stream valleys, lowlands and south-facing foothills. They forage among a variety of woody and herbaceous plants associated with early successional stages and woodland fringe areas.

Moose populations are cyclical with periodic low and high numbers. Summer range in the mountains north of Wasilla is critical for breeding and calf production. The winter range is mainly within lowland and stream bank areas that support preferred browse such as willow, birch and aspen. Mature successional forests found in undeveloped areas of the city are not particularly suitable for providing the large nutritional demands of these animals. Natural predators are wolves and bears but the largest number of moose are lost due to human conflicts.

Moose are most visible during the winter months when snow forces them out of remote areas and onto the road system and into subdivisions. Especially dangerous for all concerned are moose-vehicle accidents. The large number of commuters, widely separated residential units and long hours of darkness during the seasons when the moose leave the higher elevations pose a significant seasonal traffic hazard to Wasilla residents. According to ADF&G, between 20 and 50 moose are hit each year in the immediate Wasilla area.

A significant number of moose are also killed in railroad accidents each winter. Moose using the snow-free tracks are often hit by trains. Efforts have been made to reduce the winter kill by the railroad. Nevertheless, despite damage to vehicles, summer gardens and ornamental plantings, the presence of moose is considered a desirable attraction of the area.

Both black and brown bear are found in the Wasilla area with black bear being the more abundant. In the spring when bears emerge from hibernation they feed mainly on new green vegetation and carrion. In early summer bear take newborn moose.

Spawning salmon draw bears to nearby streams to take advantage of this readily available food source. Berries become an important food item in the fall as the bears go on an eating binge to put on food reserves for the winter. Black bear are sociable and opportunistic, resulting in increased human-black bear encounters and incidents. Some black bear have discovered the excellent source of food found in residential garbage cans. The growth of rural subdivisions in the Wasilla area has provided an excellent source of food for black bear, especially in the spring and fall.

Brown bear have not adapted to human habitation as well as black bear. Browns prefer to stay in the higher elevations and do not come into contact with humans as often as their black bear cousins.

Small game and furbearers are also abundant. Even within the city limits it is not unusual to find fox, rabbit, coyote, mink, weasel, muskrat and beaver. In the past these small game and furbearing animals supported many local residents with income and food. The importance of small game as income has declined as most people now have other, more conventional, occupations. These small animals are presently important as an ingredient which adds to the local quality of life and as a component of the city's ambience.

The streams and lakes in Wasilla contain a large variety of fish. Fishing is a year-round activity, especially on Wasilla Lake. Freshwater fish include rainbow trout, landlocked coho, and whitefish. Non-game species such as sticklebacks, suckers and sculpins are common in both lakes and the two streams. Lake Lucille has experienced some winter die-offs due to lack of oxygen.

Anadromous fish are an important part of the Wasilla area's natural ecosystem. All five species of Pacific salmon are present. King, Coho, Sockeye, Pink and Chum salmon pass through the city streams and lakes each year. Steelhead, Dolly Varden and a few cutthroat trout are also present. Cottonwood Creek and Lucille Creek provide important habitat for migration, spawning and rearing of anadromous fish. Deep pools within the streams and Cottonwood Lake provide winter habitat for juvenile salmon. Anadromous fish are very sensitive to siltation and deterioration of water quality. Spawning areas and juvenile fish are especially sensitive to changes in the water quality associated with urbanization.

Given the environmental importance of protecting shorelines against urban development and potential pollution, the Borough has established 75 foot minimum setback requirements for construction near lakes and streams. The City also operates a sewage collection and treatment system which prevents untreated waste from entering Lake Lucille and Wasilla Lake, at least within the city limits.

GRAPH HANDOUTS

(Activity 3)

This page intentionally left blank.

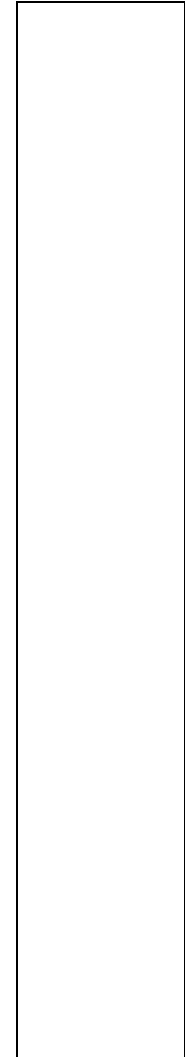
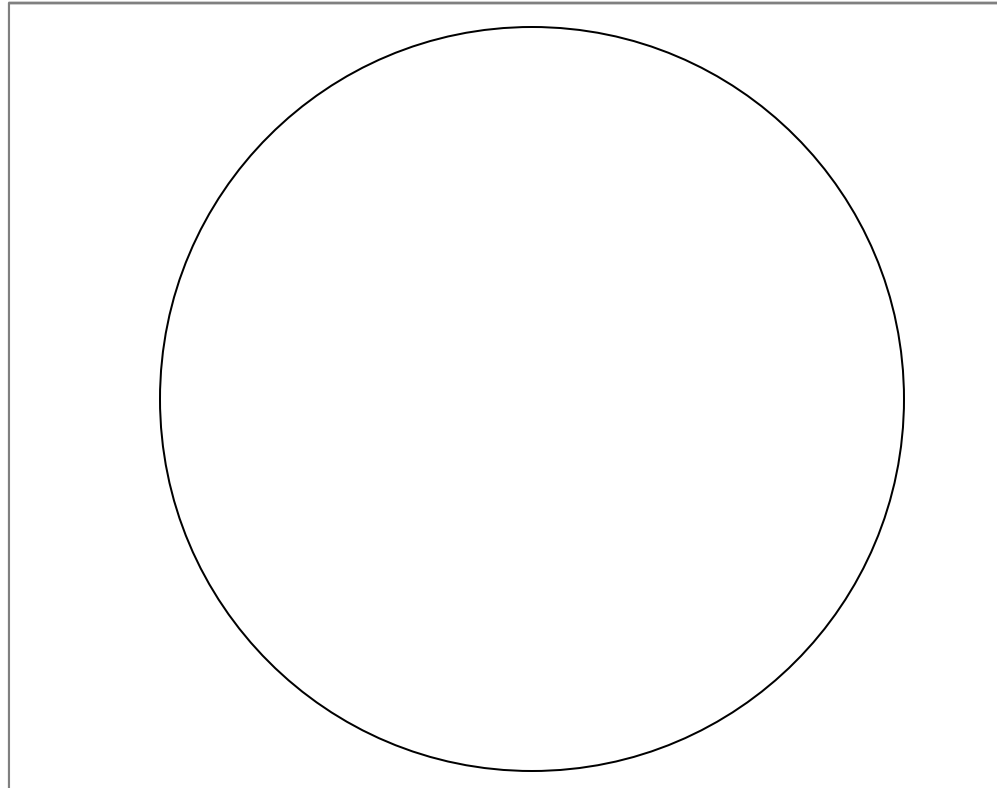
Wasilla Population History

Population

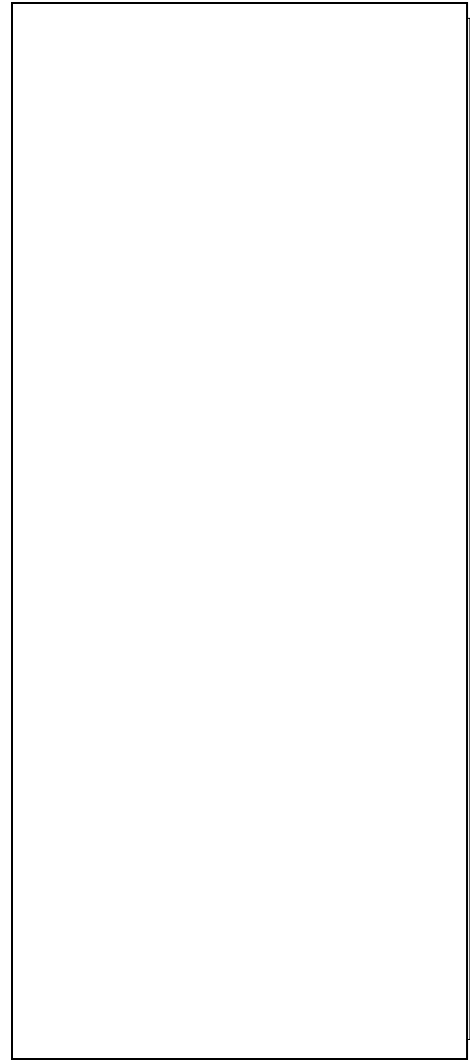
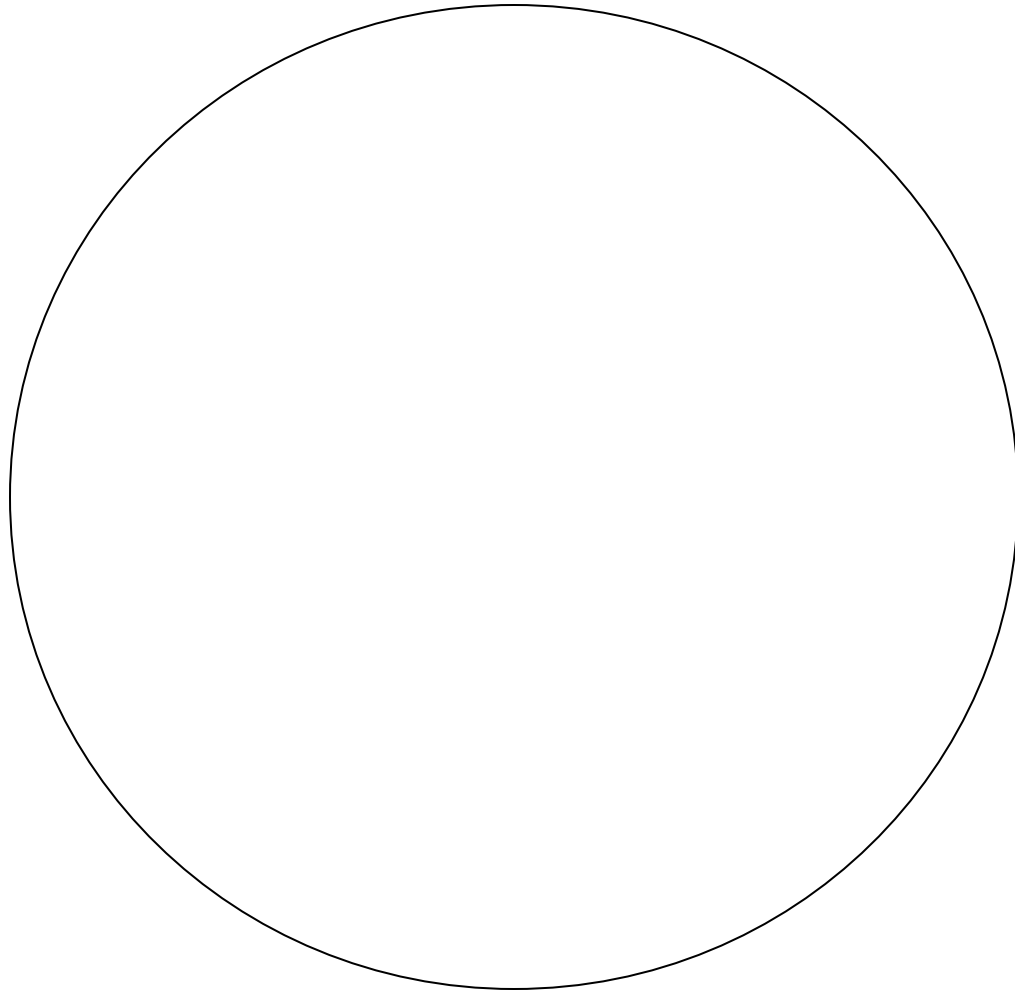


Years

Wasilla Population by Age 2000



Wasilla Land Use 1991



Wasilla Employment by Industry

Industry

Number of Employees

Wasilla Socioeconomic Data Sheet

Wasilla Employment by Industry (2000 Census Data)

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining	96
Construction	254
Manufacturing	66
Wholesale Trade	40
Retail Trade	387
Transportation, warehousing & Utilities	196
Information	67
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	104
Professional, Administrative, & Waste Management	109
Education, Health & Social Services	525
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, & Hospitality	181
Other Services	157
Public Administration	261

Wasilla Land Use 1991 (1996 Comprehensive Plan)

Single Family	1091 acres
Multi-Family	77
Mobile Homes	2
Commercial	198
Industrial	150
Airport	386
Public Lands (e.g. parks, schools)	340
Semi-Public (e.g. churches)	55
Lakes & Streams	750
Vacant Land (includes roads)	4311

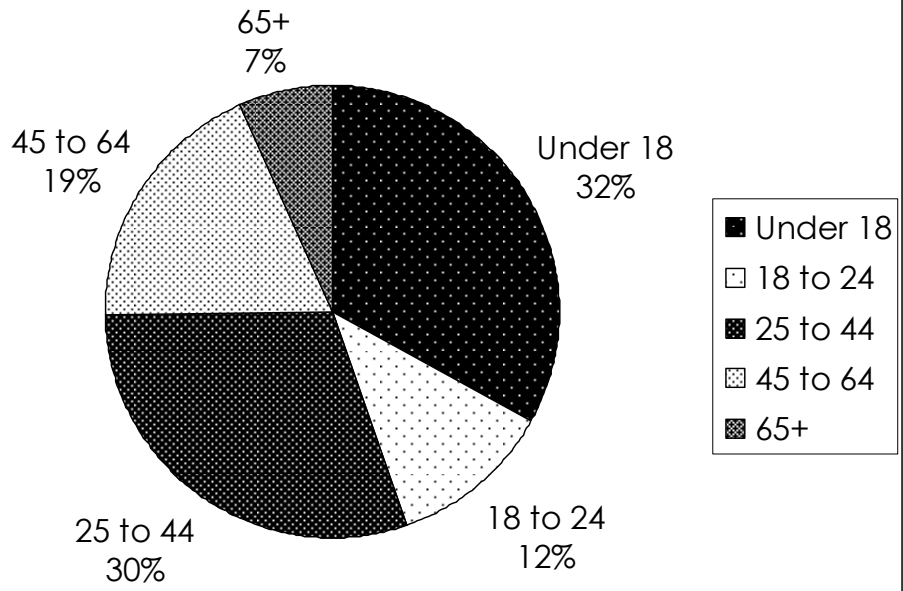
Wasilla Population History (2000 Census Data)

1900	0
1910	0
1920	0
1930	51
1940	96
1950	97
1960	112
1970	300
1980	1559
1990	4028
2000	5469

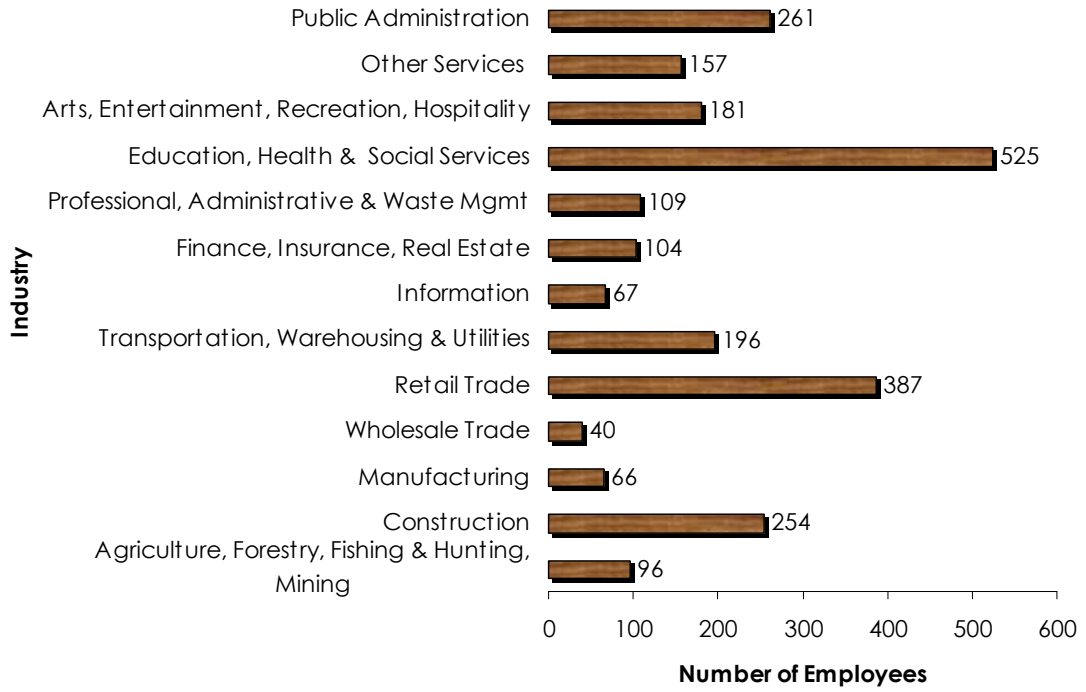
Wasilla Population by Age (2000 Census Data)

Under 18	1837
18 to 24	656
25 to 44	1681
44 to 64	1037
Over 65	369

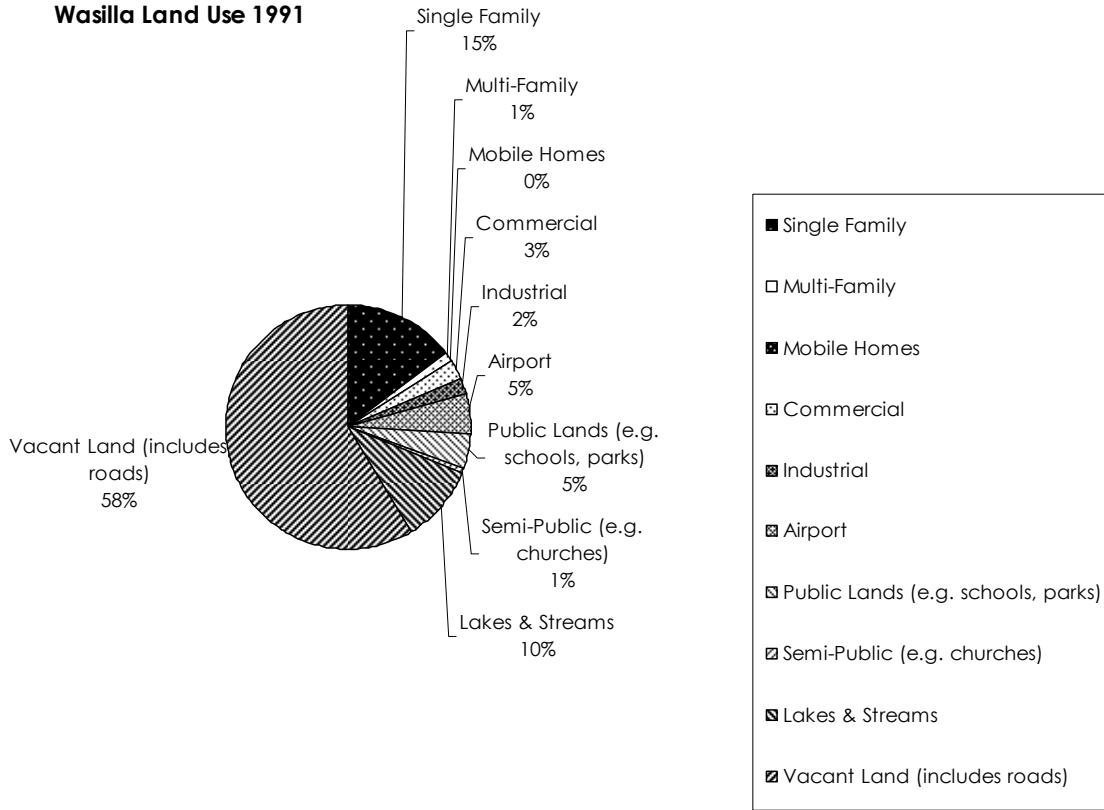
City of Wasilla Population by Age 2000



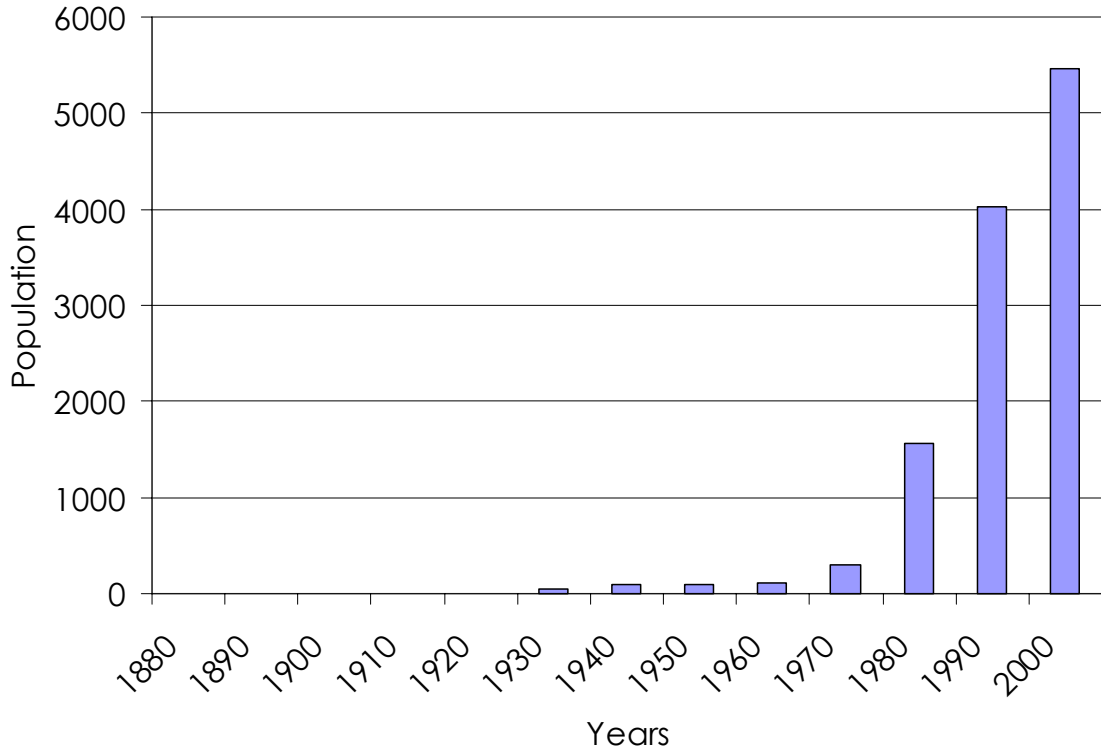
Wasilla Employment by Industry



Wasilla Land Use 1991



Wasilla Population



WASILLA HIGH SCHOOL

MAY 2007

Joan Kluwe met with two of Sandy Aschenbrenner's classes at Wasilla High School on Wednesday, May 16, 2007 to discuss the students' visions for the Downtown area of Wasilla. The 7:30am class was mostly Freshmen and the 11:36am class was mostly Juniors. An overview of the Wasilla Area Planning Process was provided, followed by a discussion of land uses. The students brainstormed ideas for potential land uses in the Downtown area, predominantly focusing on commercial and public uses. Transportation issues were also identified and discussed.

The classes were divided into groups of approximately 5 students and each group was provided a map of the Downtown area. They were asked to identify locations for suggested land uses and to identify boundaries for the Wasilla Downtown. The sessions concluded with the students brainstorming the strengths and weaknesses of Wasilla.

These notes summarize the suggested developments or land uses in Downtown Wasilla, as well as the students' perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the community.

Suggested Developments/Uses for Downtown Wasilla:

Commercial

- Businesses, few homes
- Small local businesses; no chains
- Few restaurants, but have local cafes
- Restaurants such as Olive Garden, Dairy Queen, Sonic, and local restaurants
- Shopping mall
- Toy stores
- Skate shop
- Clothing stores, including Abercrombie and Fitch
- Starbucks
- Tanning salon
- Game/computer store
- Apple store
- Bookstore
- Teen club
- Clubs/social settings for adults
- Theaters: movie, drive-in, performing arts
- Arcade
- Amusement park
- Water park
- Paintball park

Public

- Keep parks and green space
- Develop winter parks, expand beyond summer uses
- Bike paths/sidewalks
- Beautification/landscaping
- Increase space between buildings/uses
- Downtown courthouse
- Bigger library
- Schools, especially a new high school
- Concert area
- Town square
- Nature walk
- Parks
- Museum
- Fountain
- Playground
- Climbing structure
- Frisbee golf
- Stadium
- YMCA

Transportation

- Improve traffic and parking
- Centralized parking and green space
- Need to be more pedestrian-friendly, you can't walk through downtown Wasilla
- Winter access and convenience for parking
- Public transportation

Strengths—What Students Like About Wasilla:

- It's not like Anchorage
- Lots of space
- I'm not bugged by authorities here; the community is less strict than other places
- Safe
- Quiet – no sirens
- Less strict
- Not lots of cars
- Not cluttered together
- Open
- Nature
- Don't get lost
- Family owned business
- Some modern conveniences/services here

- Skate park (could be better, but it's better than none)
- Environment – calm
- Lakes
- Close together, but not crowded
- Nicely placed
- IHOP
- 4-wheeler paths
- Not too crowded
- Laid back/relaxed

Weaknesses—What Students Dislike About Wasilla:

- Old houses that are run-down
- The community is unorganized (referred to geographic layout)
- Need better roads that are paved
- Sloppy/dirty
- Reputation of the community
- Drugs
- Need better zoning
- “Valley trash”
- People think Wasilla is uncivilized or rough around the edges
- Hicktown
- Nothing to do
- Boring
- Need more daycare
- Increase fire safety service
- People are not polite
- Middle and high school should be farther apart
- Get rid of train tracks
- Have high school open campus
- Need new, bigger schools
- Need better restaurants
- Bad road conditions
- Parks underpasses
- Improve Knik/Parks Highway intersection
- Need more activities for teens
- Need a bus/trolley/public transportation

[Home](#)

[Local News](#)

[Sports](#)

[Opinion](#)

[Subscribe](#)



[Home](#)

Wasilla seeks planning input



[News](#)

High school students get to weigh in on how city should look

- [Local News](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Opinion](#)

May 18, 2007

By Will Elliott/Frontiersman

[Sports](#)

WASILLA - A monorail, a greenbelt, a mega-mall, a casino. Wasilla High School students have been asked by city planners to design their community's future, and their visions may be surprising.

[Features](#)

- [Valley Life](#)
- [Bullseye](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [Police Beat](#)

The city of Wasilla has commissioned a study to determine what residents want Wasilla to look like in 20 years. URS Corporation, a global design and engineering firm, will conduct the process and draft plans this summer. The plans will guide development in three key Wasilla areas: near the sports complex, near the Home Depot store, and in the Wasilla downtown area.

[Classifieds](#)

- [Place an Ad](#)

URS environmental scientist Joan Kluwe met with Sandy Aschenbrenner's fifth-hour Law Related Studies class at Wasilla High Wednesday to gather suggestions from the students for the future of downtown. That area has been provisionally defined by URS as a rectangle extending from Wasilla Middle School to a point a few blocks west of Main Street, and a few blocks south of the Parks Highway. URS has already met with other classes at the school, as well as focus groups and community boards. They will unveil the finished plans this fall.

[Info Desk](#)

- [2007 Summer](#)

[Visitors Guide](#)

- [About Us](#)
- [Subscribe](#)

According to Kluwe, in 20 years, some estimates expect Wasilla to surpass Anchorage in size. "We need to plan today if we want to make things happen tomorrow," Kluwe said. "These plans have a 10 to 20 year outlook, so it's important to get the opinions of young people."



Those opinions varied wildly Wednesday.

[Archives](#)

Some students focused mainly on commercial options, such as which franchises to welcome and how big to build new shopping centers. For many, the all-inclusiveness of modern mega-malls simplified planning, as shopping, restaurants and entertainment could all be integrated in a few mammoth buildings. Others favored a more exurban model, in which chain stores, franchises and their attendant parking lots would spread out across downtown.

[City of Palmer](#)

- [Borough Web site](#)

Other students hoped to see more family-owned businesses and green space in the Wasilla metro area, and suggested bike paths, parking garages, and a city square to encourage walking and reduce traffic.

URS was also interested in how students felt about living in the wider Valley.

PERMIT INFORMATION 2012										STATUS/ ZONE
DATE	PERMIT	TYPE	SQ FTG	LEGAL	SUBD	NAME	STREET			
ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL										
01/05/12	A12-01	CELL TOWER		2864B01L007A	CAREFREE ACS SUB	AT&T MOBILITY	1461 W SEW MER PKY			C
01/10/12	A12-02	TENANT SPACE		1108B02L044	WASILLA ARPRT HTS	MCGINTY, CHRIS	935 W COMMERCIAL DR			C
02/01/12	A12-03	COMM < 10,000 SQ FT	7,027	4653000L010	CREEKSIDE PLAZA	WASILLA AUTO ZONE	1621 E FINANCIAL DR			C
01/27/12	A12-04	ACCESSORY USE		4359000L004A	LAKE LUCILLE LODGE	SECURED GOLD BUYERS	1300 LAKE LUCILLE DR			C
01/25/12	A12-05	COFFEE SHOP	1,320	1108B02L045	WASILLA ARPRT HTS	CARROWAY, NANCY	897 W COMMERCIAL DR			C
01/27/12	A12-06	SFD & ACC USE	295	1039B05L005	LAKE VIEW ADD #1	CARNEY, TED	1001 S FOREST ST			R-1
01/30/12	A12-07	DAY CARE		5674B03L004	SILVERLEAF EST.	ROGERS, JARED & NICOLE	2080 N ASHFORD BLVD			RR
02/01/12	A12-08	CELL TOWER		4805B01L003A	OVERLOOK BUS PARK	AT&T MOBILITY	2251 E PARKS HWY			C
02/09/12	A12-09	COMM, CAR SALES		106B05L018	WASILLA TWNST	BEST DEAL AUTO	160 E SWANSON AVE			C
02/09/12	A12-10	TENANT SPACE		5682B03L003C-1	MTN VLG PLZ	BROWN JUG	2451 E SUN MTN AVE			C
02/09/12	A12-11	TENANT SPACE		5797000L002A	IDITAPARCEL ADDN 1	BROWN JUG	509 W PARKS HWY			C
02/13/12	A12-12	TENANT SPACE	1,070	4061B01L001A-1	CAREFREE ACS SUB	WILKINS, CHRIS	1265 SEWARD MERIDIAN			C
05/01/12	A12-13	SFD / GARAGE	6,566	5868B04L004	SILVERLEAF EST PH V	THOMASON, ROBERT	2051 N ASHFORD BLVD			RR
02/29/12	A12-14	TENANT SPACE	1,500	5797000L002A	IDITAPARCEL ADDN 1	POWELL, JANA	527 E PARK HWY			C
02/29/12	A12-15	COMM< 10,000 SQ FT		1073000L010	OLSON EXT REV	MING TZE OHEIN	1875 PAL/WAS HWY			C
04/09/12	A12-16	ADD TO OFF	480	2398B01L002	KOHRING SUB	MERTIN, SHAWN	1101 N LUCILLE ST			RR
03/06/12	A12-17	CELL TOWER		1113B02L013	WASILLA ACRES	DSC TOWER SUB, LLC	630 N SOUTHWAY			RR
03/13/12	A12-18	COMM < 10,000 SQ FT	1,200	2638B07L003A	WASILLA TWNST	PAYNE, TYAN	344 MAIN ST			C
03/14/12	A12-19	TENANT SPACE		1046000T005-1	OLSON	CHERI'S CLOSET	1451 E PARKS HWY			C
04/09/12	A12-20	TENANT SPACE		1550B01L001	CRESTE FORIS	HENN, CAROLINE	1450 CRESTE FORIS ST			C

04/12/12	A12-21	TENANT SPACE	1,728	9108000U001	WASILLA CENTER CONDO	DONEY, CARMELA	705 S KNIK GOOSE BAY	C
04/12/12	A12-22	TENANT SPACE	250	1010B01L006	CARTER	GAINES, RACHEL	220 E PARK AVE	C
PENDING	A12-23	TENANT SPACE	864	9108000U001	WASILLA CENTER CONDO	GIOVANNI, ANTHONY	705 S KNIK GOOSE BAY	C
04/24/12	A12-24	TUP-TENT SALE		17N01W13A006		LITHIA CJD OF ANCH	1350 S SEWARD MERIDIAN	C
04/24/12	A12-25	SFD	2,224	5945B03L009	MEADOW RIDGE PH 2	SELWAY CORP	543 N PINE RIDGE LP	R-1
04/24/12	A12-26	SFD	2,087	5945B03L002	MEADOW RIDGE PH 2	SELWAY CORP	771 N PINE RIDGE LP	R-1
04/26/12	A12-27	TENANT SPACE	1,200	2638B07L003A	WASILLA TWNST	LEDFORD, GLENDA	344 N MAIL ST	C
04/30/12	A12-28	TENANT SPACE	367	7041B04L003A	WASILLA TWNST	MILLINE, CHERYL	165 E PARKS HWY	C
05/01/12	A12-29	COMM< 10,000 SQ FT		5568B02L018A	PARKS MANOR RSB	HAPPY DAWN'S THRIFT SHOP	700 N WASILLA-FISHHOOK RD	C
05/02/12	A12-30	TUP		2705000L0014A-1	SNIDER #4 RSB	CHEPOS	731 W PARKS HWY	C
PENDING	A12-31	COMM< 10,000 SQ FT	5,568	1048B01L015, 16,17,18	PARKS MANOR	FAMILY CENTER SERVICES OF AK	277, 291, 301, 317 E DANNA AVE	C
05/04/12	A12-32	OFFICE	169	1046000T007-2	OLSON TRACT	SUSTAINABLE DESIGN	1365 E PARKS HWY	C
05/07/12	A12-33	COMM< 10,000 SQ FT	480	4229B01L001A	WASILLA TWNST	MARTIN, RANDALL	212 N BOUNDARY ST	C
05/08/12	A12-34	SIGN		17N01W12D007		EMMI, ERNIE & JOHN	3100 E PARKS HWY	C
05/07/12	A12-35	TENANT SPACE	1,500	5797000L002A	IDITAPARCEL ADDN 1	OUTDOORS & MORE TRIPLETS INC DBA LOCALS	527 W PARKS HWY	C
05/08/12	A12-36	COMM< 10,000 SQ FT	6,000	17N01W12D007			3100 E PARKS HWY	C
05/14/12	A12-37	SFD	2,000	6791B01L074	PRIMROSE POINTE	PAVLUS, IGOR	230 RIVERDANCE	RR
05/07/12	A12-38	SIGN		4653000L010	CREEKSIDE PLAZA	DENALI FOODS/FRANCHISE OF TACO BELL	1621 E FINANCIAL DR	C
05/24/12	A12-39	TENANT SPACE	3,900	1056B02L019 & L020	SNIDER #3	HARRELL, BEN	340 N LUCILLE ST	C
05/23/12	A12-40	SFD	2,080	1342B02L007	HAPPY MTN	GREENSTREET, DARREL	3200 TAMARAK	R-1
05/23/12	A12-41	SFD	2,090	1342B02L006	HAPPY MTN	GREENSTREET, DARREL	3166 TAMARAK	R-1
05/23/12	A12-42	SFD	2,178	1342B01L002	HAPPY MTN	GREENSTREET, DARREL	3033 TAMARAK	R-1
05/23/12	A12-43	ADD - GARAGE	900	2333B04L013C	TERRACE MNR	KINCANNAN, JEFF	570 PONDEROSA LP	R-1
05/24/12	A12-44	COMM < 10,000 SQ FT		7027000L001	DISCOVERY HILLS	NORTHERN ENCLOSURES	1446 W MYSTERY AVE	I
05/30/12	A12-45							RR

05/30/12	A12-46	TUP-HAVEN	1056B02L019	SNIDER #3	MCCANN, GERI	340 N LUCILLE ST	C
05/30/12	A12-47	TENANT SPACE	2,040	WASILLA WOODS	WILLIAMS, PIA	1201 N LUCILLE ST	C
PENDING	A12-48	SIGN	260	ROCK CENTER PH I	SOUTHCENTRAL FOUND	1001 KNKIK-GOOSE BAY	C
06/04/12	A12-49	TUP-RELAY FOR LIFE	2095000T00A-1	WASILLA JR & SR HS	ENGBRETSEN, ANDREA	701 E BOGARD RD	C
06/11/12	A12-50	TUP - AK SALES & SVC VALLEY	17N01W13A006		AK SALES & SERVICE VALLEY	1350 S SEWARD MERIDIAN	C
06/05/12	A12-51	TENANT SPACE	7011B6B0000	FLOYD 2010	STUDIO 9/QUDELL	741 E SUSITNA AVE	C
06/26/12	A12-52	TUP - LITHIA OF ANC	17N01W13A006		LITHIA CSD OF ANCHORAGE	1350 S SEWARD MERIDIAN	C
07/03/12	A12-53	TENANT SPACE	2523B01L001A	NELSON FRED RSB	MAT SU MEDICAL LAB	224 N YENLO ST	C
USE PERMITS							
PENDING	U12-01	4-PLEX	4,200	RICHMOND HILLS I	PAVLUS, DMITRY	930 E OLD MATANUSKA	C
CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS							
06/12/12	C12-01	COMM > 10,000 SQ FT	10,400	OVERLOOK BUSINESS PK	GUMLEY, ANDREW	2341 E SUN MTN AVE	C
PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD)							
REZONE							
PENDING	R12-01	RR - C	10 AC	PIONEER BLUFF	NIESEN, GREG & LENORA		RR
LEGAL NON-CONFORMING USE							
SHORELINE SETBACK							
AMNESTY							
VARIANCE							
03/27/12	V12-01	SIDE SET BACK	6791B01L067	PRIMROSE POINTE	FENDICH, VIKTOR	251 RIVERDANCE	RR
05/22/12	V12-02	SIGN	2398B01L002	KOHRING	MERTIN, SHAWN	1101 N LUCILLE ST	RR



Code Compliance Log

April 2012



DATE	COMPL. DISP. SELF	NAME/ADDRESS	INF. CON.	LTR. ISS?	CASE STATUS	NOTES	
4/2/2012	S	113 W Herning		N	N	Security check	12-19889
4/3/2012	FUP	1200 Pinecone		Y	N	RAL dog	12-18294 verbal warning
4/3/2012	D	780 Rosewood		Y	N	RAL dog	12-20070 impound
4/4/2012	C	881 Goldendale		Y	N	RAL dog	12-20245 verbal warning
4/4/2012	D	Lowes		Y	N	RAL dog	12-20246 impound
4/5/2012	D	700 Shadowood		Y	N	RAL dog	12-20408 unable to locate
4/6/2012	FUP	Kenai Supply		N	N	RAL dog	12-17526 unable to catch
4/5/2012	C	1800 Dorothea		Y	N	RAL cat	12-20762 provide live trap
4/10/2012	D	Wasilla High School		Y	N	Dog bite	12-21537 unfounded
4/10/2012	D	1401 Courtland		Y	N	RAL dog	12-21561 verbal warning
4/10/2012	D	Bailey & Lake Lucille		N	N	Assist patrol	12-21566
4/10/2012	FUP	Wasilla Concrete		N	N	RAL dog	12-17526 unable to catch
4/11/2012	FUP	Wasilla Concrete		N	N	RAL dog	12-17526 unable to catch
4/12/2012	FUP	Wasilla Concrete		N	N	RAL dog	12-17526 unable to catch
4/12/2012	FUP	468 Ravenswood		Y	N	Dog bite	12-18164
4/13/2012	D	Peck & Snohomish		N	N	RAL dog	12-22199 unable to locate
4/13/2012	D	Wonderland Park		Y	N	RAL dog	12-22220 verbal warning
4/13/2012	S	Wonderland Park		Y	N	ATV violation	12-22247 verbal warning
4/13/2012	D	Tommy Moe		Y	Y	Parking complaints	12-22259 unfounded
4/16/2012	S	Herning & Willow		Y	N	ATV violation	12-23180 verbal warning
4/17/2012	S	Target		Y	N	HCP parking violation	12-23295 verbal warning
4/17/2012	D	Iditarod Elementary		Y	N	Vehicle on bike path	12-23320 unable to locate
4/17/2012	S	MUSC		N	N	Facility/security check	12-23338
4/17/2012	S	Carrs		Y	N	HCP parking violation- misuse	12-23370 citation
4/17/2012	D	Carrs		Y	N	Shoplift	12-23374 citation
4/17/2012	D	1001 Snohomish		Y	N	Rabbit problem	12-23379
4/17/2012	S	Nelson & Lucille		N	N	Abandoned vehicle in ROW	12-23382 48 hour red tag
4/18/2012	S	Carrs		Y	N	ATV violation	12-23557 verbal warning
4/18/2012	S	Wonderland Park		N	N	Facility/security check	12-23563
4/18/2012	D	AK USA		Y	N	RAL dog	12-23594 verbal warning
4/19/2012	PAT	17470 Maud		Y	N	Assist patrol with stolen bike	12-23740
4/19/2012	D	1201 Melanie		Y	N	Trash complaint	12-23753 verbal warning
4/19/2012	S	Wonderland Park		N	N	Facility/security check	12-23794



Code Compliance Log

April 2012

DATE	COMPL. DISP. SELF	NAME/ADDRESS	INF. CON.	LTR. ISS?	CASE STATUS	NOTES	
4/19/2012	S	Carrs		Y	N	HCP parking violation	12-23796 citation
4/19/2012	S	Wonderland Park		Y	N	ATV violation	12-23824 verbal warning
4/23/2012	FUP	965 Wilder		Y	N	Dog bite	12-24557 report 12-630
4/23/2012	S	Nelson & Knik		Y	N	ATV violation	12-24907 verbal warning
4/23/2012	S	Winter & Pinehurst		Y	N	ATV violation	12-24947 verbal warning
4/23/2012	S	Charter College		Y	N	HCP parking violation	12-24952 verbal warning
4/23/2012	D	Peck & WFH		N	N	ATV violation	12-24953 unable to locate
4/24/2012	S	North Country Estates		N	N	ATV complaints	12-25077 extra patrol
4/24/2012	S	Lake Lucille Park		N	N	Facility/security check	12-25087
4/24/2012	PAT	Taco Bell		N	N	Assist patrol with DUI impound	12-25111
4/24/2012	S	Value Village		Y	N	HCP parking violation	12-25130 citation
4/24/2012	D	1575 Fanciful		Y	N	RAL dog	12-25624 verbal warning
4/25/2012	C	Wasilla Airport		N	N	Misuse of dumpster complaint	12-25249 unfounded
4/25/2012	D	Susitna & Wasilla		N	N	DOA cat	12-25265 disposal
4/25/2012	C	MUSC		Y	N	Illegal dumping	12-25287 citation
4/25/2012	S	Carrs		Y	N	HCP parking violation	12-25312 verbal warning
4/25/2012	D	1052 Dellwood		Y	N	RAL dog	12-25124 verbal warning
4/25/2012	FUP	1575 Fanciful		Y	N	RAL dog	12-25624 verbal warning
4/25/2012	S	Cache & Crestwood		Y	N	ATV violation	12-25362 verbal warning
4/26/2012	S	Lake Lucille Park		N	N	Facility/security check	12-25475
4/26/2012	D	Parks & Weber		N	N	RAL dog	12-25474 unable to locate
4/26/2012	C	North Country Estates		N	N	ATV complaints	12-25482 extra patrol
4/26/2012	D	Dellwood & Peck		N	N	RAL dog	12-25484 unable to locate
4/26/2012	D	Lucille & Forest		N	N	ATV violation	12-25498 unable to locate
4/27/2012	D	210 E Spruce		Y	N	Dog welfare check	12-25655
4/27/2012	C	925 Gambit		Y	N	Trash complaint	12-25729 verbal warning
4/30/2012	C	302 Pioneer		N	N	Illegal dumping	12-26509 no suspect info
4/30/2012	S	Parks & Church		N	N	Abandoned vehicle in ROW	12-26541 48 hour red tag
4/30/2012	C	210 E Spruce		Y	N	Animal complaint	12-26489 unfounded
4/30/2012	FUP	1780 Neil Cir		Y	N	Dog bite	12-26137 accidental
4/30/2012	S	North Country Estates		N	N	ATV complaints	12-26589 extra patrol
4/30/2012	S	Lake Lucille Park		N	N	Facility/security check	12-26593