



MAYOR
Verne E. Rupright

CITY PLANNER
Tina Crawford

WASILLA PLANNING COMMISSION

Patrick Brown, Seat A
Daniel Kelly Jr., Seat B
Jessica Dean, Seat C
Vacant, Seat D
Glenda Ledford, Seat E
William Green, Seat F
Jesse Sumner, 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.

JANUARY 8, 2013

- 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 December 4, 2012, special meeting
 - B. Minutes of December 11, 2012, regular meeting

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

A. Public Hearing

1. **Resolution Serial No. 13-01:** Approving Administrative Approval A12-103 and Use Permit number U12-05 to allow Matanuska Electric Association (MEA) to construct new 80 feet tall 115 kV double circuit transmission lines extending from the new Eklutna generation station to the Herning substation. The proposed transmission lines within the Wasilla City limits are generally located within the right-of-way along the north side of the Parks Highway extending west into the City Limits from the east to and then crossing to the south side of the Parks Highway at the east end of the Creekside Plaza shopping center and then extending westerly behind the shopping center and adjoining properties and then crossing to the north side of the Palmer-Wasilla highway extension right-of-way at the light at Home Depot and continuing southwest along the north side of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway extension right-of-way to approximately Glenwood Avenue and then heading north to the existing Herning substation.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

X. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Planning Commission meeting calendar for 2013
- B. Permit Information
- C. Enforcement Log

XI. AUDIENCE COMMENTS

XII. STAFF COMMENTS

XIII. COMMISSION COMMENTS

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

REGULAR MEETING

7 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Wasilla Planning Commission was called to order at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, December 4, 2012, in Council Chambers of City Hall, Wasilla, Alaska by Doug Miller, Chairman.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners present and establishing a quorum were:

- Mr. Patrick Brown, Seat A (*via phone*)
- Mr. Daniel Kelly, Jr., Seat B
- Ms. Jessica Dean, Seat C
- Mr. Doug Miller, Seat D
- Ms. Glenda Ledford, Seat E
- Vacant, Seat F
- Vacant, Seat G

Staff in attendance were:

- Mr. Archie Giddings, Public Work Director
- Ms. Tina Crawford, City Planner
- Ms. Tahirih Revet, Planning Clerk

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A. Commissioner Ledford led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

GENERAL CONSENT: The agenda was approved as presented.

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

A. Discussion

1. ADOT&PF presentation regarding the Knik-Goose Bay (KGB) Road Reconstruction Project. (Project proposed to add two or more additional lanes to KGB Road beginning at Centaur Avenue and continuing south to Vine Road along with other roadway improvements.)

Jerry Welsh, Project Manager for ADOT&PF, provided a presentation on the Knik-Goose Bay Road Reconstruction.

Commissioner Kelly stated:

- his concerns of a four lane divided highway instead of a five lane highway may not have adequate truck lanes or bus route stops.

- he would like to see the other designs designations and season adjustments in the traffic model program that the ADOT&PF used for their current designs.

Mr. Darrin Dorn asked why the KGB upgrade didn't extend past Settler's Bay.

Mr. David Post stated the reason for it was the designation for Vine Road was on the Alaska Highway System designation put it in a different category and changed the funding for the upgrade on KGB, but also stated that it would be a good idea to revisit the decision since the funding categories have changed.

Commissioner Ledford asked if the Knik Bridge is constructed would it change the classification of KGB road.

Mr. Post stated KGB is at its highest designated class so the designation would not change.

Mr. Giddings asked if the design of the reconstruction on KGB is going to be a six lane road.

Mr. Welsh stated yes it is being looked at in the future but will start out as a four lane road.

Ms. Crawford asked if the considerations were more canned that were used in the build-out?

Mr. Welsh stated yes they are canned, straight forward and very simplistic approach, and they don't use modeling for build-out projections.

Mr. Giddings stated he believed the undeveloped lots from Fairview Loop into Wasilla will be commercial and would like the ADOT&PF to build out the roads with adequate access.

Mr. Welsh stated he has data on a right turn in, right turn out of properties shows they don't limit traffic or slow it down.

Commissioner Miller stated his concerns with not having collectors along KGB.

XI. AUDIENCE COMMENTS

No audience comments.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The regular meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

ATTEST:

DOUG MILLER, Chairman

TAHIRIH REVET, Planning Clerk

Adopted by the Wasilla Planning Commission -, 2012.

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REGULAR MEETING

7 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Wasilla Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, December 11, 2012, in Council Chambers of City Hall, Wasilla, Alaska by Doug Miller, Chairman.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners present and establishing a quorum were:

- Mr. Patrick Brown, Seat A
- Mr. Daniel Kelly, Jr., Seat B
- Ms. Jessica Dean, Seat C
- Mr. Doug Miller, Seat D
- Ms. Glenda Ledford, Seat E
- Vacant, Seat F
- Vacant, Seat G

Staff in attendance were:

- Mr. Archie Giddings, Public Work Director
- Ms. Tina Crawford, City Planner
- Ms. Tahirih Revet, Planning Clerk

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A. Commissioner - 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
No report given.

C. City Attorney
No report given.

D. City Planner

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

No public participation.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes of November 13, 2012, meeting.

GENERAL CONSENT: Minutes were approved as presented.

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

A. Public Hearing

1. **Resolution Serial No. 12-19:** Approving Use Permit Number U12-04 to allow a cattery at a personal residence in the Rural Residential (RR) zoning district, located on Lot 1, Block 8, Wasilla Estates Subdivision, generally located on east of Lucus Road on Holiday Drive.

- a. City Staff
- b. Applicant
- c. Private person supporting or opposing the proposal
- d. Applicant

2. **Resolution Serial No. 12-20:** In support of the Alaska Department of Transportation's purpose and need to improve Knik-Goose Bay Road.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No unfinished business.

X. COMMUNICATIONS

No statements made regarding the following items.

- A. Permit Information
- B. Enforcement Log

XI. AUDIENCE COMMENTS

No audience comments.

XII. STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Giddings thanked Mr. O'Brien for providing the presentation.

XIII. COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Commissioner Kelly

Commissioner Brown

Commissioner Ledford

Commissioner Dean

Chair Miller

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The regular meeting adjourned at - PM.

ATTEST:

DOUG MILLER, Chairman

TAHIRIH REVET, Planning Clerk

Adopted by the Wasilla Planning Commission -, 2012.

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**WASILLA PLANNING COMMISSION
RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. 13-01**

A RESOLUTION OF THE WASILLA PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVING ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL A12-103 AND USE PERMIT NUMBER UP12-05 TO ALLOW MATANUSKA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION (MEA) TO CONSTRUCT NEW 80 FEET TALL 115 KV DOUBLE CIRCUIT TRANSMISSION LINES EXTENDING FROM THE NEW EKLUTNA GENERATION STATION TO THE HERNING SUBSTATION. THE PROPOSED TRANSMISSION LINES WITHIN THE WASILLA CITY LIMITS ARE GENERALLY LOCATED WITHIN THE RIGHT-OF-WAY ALONG THE NORTH SIDE OF THE PARKS HIGHWAY EXTENDING WEST INTO THE CITY LIMITS FROM THE EAST TO AND THEN CROSSING TO THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE PARKS HIGHWAY AT THE EAST END OF THE CREEKSIDE PLAZA SHOPPING CENTER AND THEN EXTENDING WESTERLY BEHIND THE SHOPPING CENTER AND ADJOINING PROPERTIES AND THEN CROSSING TO THE NORTH SIDE OF THE PALMER-WASILLA HIGHWAY EXTENSION RIGHT-OF-WAY AT THE LIGHT AT HOME DEPOT AND CONTINUING SOUTHWEST ALONG THE NORTH SIDE OF THE PALMER-WASILLA HIGHWAY EXTENSION RIGHT-OF-WAY TO APPROXIMATELY GLENWOOD AVENUE AND THEN HEADING NORTH TO THE EXISTING HERNING SUBSTATION.

WHEREAS, the Matanuska Electric Association (MEA), submitted two applications, Administrative Approval A12-103 and Use Permit Number U12-05, requesting approval to construct new 80 feet tall 115 kV double circuit transmission lines, with a 100 feet wide right-of-way easement, within the city limits as described above and shown on the attached maps to the City Planning Department on November 27, 2012; and

WHEREAS, the City of Wasilla has the authority to execute powers that have been granted to it through legislative action and voter mandate, which include planning, taxation and assessments, economic development, police, roads, airport, utilities (water and sewer), and parks, recreation, museum and library; and

WHEREAS, the City of Wasilla has a Mission Statement that states that the City is to "...provide optimum service levels to the public as cost effectively as possible to ensure a stable and thriving economy, promote a healthy community, provide a safe environment and a quality lifestyle, and promote maximum citizen participation in government"; and

WHEREAS, the City of Wasilla annually adopts long-range goals that are adopted as part of the City's budget that reflect the City's commitment to provide the highest level of public service while tackling the complex issues that the City must address to preserve and enhance the quality of life for current and future residents of Wasilla and for visitors to this community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Wasilla adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan in 2011 that contains policy statements, goals, objectives, actions, standards, and maps that are intended to guide the decision-making of the City's elected officials, commissions, and staff regarding future development and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the City of Wasilla adopted a Land Development Code (Title 16) in 1996 to implement the City Comprehensive Plan and to ensure that future development and growth in the City is consistent with the values of its residents, identify and avoid, mitigate, or prohibit the negative impacts of growth, and to ensure that development is of the proper type, design, and location; and

WHEREAS, the application included a narrative that addresses the criteria listed in WMC 16.16.050; and

WHEREAS, the applicant submitted a request that the Planning Commission waive the site plan requirements of WMC 16.08.015 as allowed in subsection(D)(2) with the recommendations of the Public Works Director and the City Planner.

WHEREAS, the City Planner elevated the applicant's request to the Planning Commission per WMC 16.12.040 and 16.16.020; and

WHEREAS, the public hearing date and time was publicly advertised; and

WHEREAS, the Wasilla Planning Office mailed notices for the Planning Commission Public Hearing to property owners within 1,200 radial feet of the subject property and to applicable agencies; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on this request on January 8, 2013; and

WHEREAS, the Wasilla Planning Commission deliberated on this request taking into account the information submitted by the applicant, evaluation and recommendations of staff contained in the staff report, the information included in the January 8, 2013 meeting packet for this application (submitted as part of the public record), public testimony - both written and verbal comments, the City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code (Title 16), Mission Statement, and the City Council's goals and initiatives for fiscal year 2013-2014, and other pertinent information brought before them; and

WHEREAS, the Wasilla Planning Commission acknowledges the need for transmission of power between the Eklutna Generation Station to the Herning (Wasilla) substation in order to provide power to accommodate future growth and to provide reliable power to the surrounding areas.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Wasilla Planning Commission has determined that the construction of 80 feet tall 115 kV double circuit overhead transmission lines along the proposed route through the City is not consistent with the vision for the City as outlined in the City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan, Land

Development Code (Title 16), Mission Statement, and the City Council's goals and initiatives for fiscal year 2013-2014 since it will have a detrimental effect on the visual appearance and scenic resources along the proposed route and will negatively impact existing and potential commercial development on commercially-zoned properties due to the required right-of-way easements on private property and the visual impact of the tall structures along the business frontage; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Wasilla Planning Commission hereby approves Administrative Approval A12-103 and Use Permit Number U12-05 with the adopted Findings of Fact, attached as Exhibit A and incorporated herein, with the following conditions:

1. The transmission lines must be installed underground; and
2. The underground transmission lines must be installed within the corridor shown on the drawings dated December 7, 2012, attached as Exhibit B.

ADOPTED by the Wasilla Planning Commission on -, 2013.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Daniel Kelly, Jr., Vice-Chairman

Tina Crawford, AICP, City Planner

EXHIBIT A
Wasilla Planning Commission Resolution 13-01

FINDINGS OF FACT – Section 16.16.050, General Approval Criteria

16.16.050 *An administrative approval, use permit, elevated administrative approval, elevated use permit or conditional use may be granted if the following general approval criteria and any applicable specific approval criteria of Section 16.16.060 are complied with. The burden of proof is on the applicant to show that the proposed use meets these criteria and applicable specific criteria for approval. An approval shall include a written finding that the proposed use can occur consistent with the comprehensive plan, harmoniously with other activities allowed in the district and will not disrupt the character of the neighborhood. Such findings and conditions of approval shall be in writing and become part of the record and the case file.*

16.16.050(1)&(5) *Neighbors/Neighborhoods. Due deference has been given to the neighborhood plan or comments and recommendations from a neighborhood with an approved neighborhood plan.*

Finding: There are no approved neighborhood plans for neighborhoods along the proposed transmission line route nor does the route propose to go through established neighborhoods. However, numerous comments have been received from affected property owners and residents of the City expressing concerns about the proposed transmission lines and the impact on the affected property owners, the residents, and the City as a whole.

The Applicant stated in their response to this criteria that, “MEA’s consultants met with the public agency officials and conducted an open house and public hearing to identify an optimal alignment that was the most cost effective route with the least impact to adjacent property owners and did not interfere...” However, based on the language in the reports provided by the applicant in their permit application, the decision regarding the route was made prior to the open house or public hearing.

Specifically, Page 1, Paragraph 5, of the Executive Summary of the ***Analysis of Five Routing Options and Selection of Preferred Route*** report dated July 2012 states the following:

“This study concludes that the Parks Highway is the recommended routing option.”

Additionally, the ***Analysis of Parks Highway Corridor Option to Determine Optimal Alignment***, states that this report is the second phase in the route analysis, that the first phase concluded that the Parks Highway corridor was the preferred route option, and that the Parks Highway corridor was recommended for further study.

MEA also stated that they selected the proposed corridor since the highways already created a significant impact on the City. Although the highway has an impact on the City, the City does not want to intensify the negative impacts.

16.16.050(2) ***Plans. The proposal is substantially consistent with the city comprehensive plan and other city adopted plans.***

Finding: **This criterion is not met.** The proposed route is not substantially consistent with the City Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code, Mission Statement, or City Council Goals and Initiatives.

The over-arching vision outlined in the Comprehensive Plan is to take the necessary steps to ensure the City remains region's major commercial center, maintain the quality of life for the residents, and enhance the visual attractiveness of the community.

Specifically, the proposed transmission lines are inconsistent with the following purpose statement, goals, objectives, and/or actions and other policy statements within the Comprehensive Plan (copies of the applicable sections are included in the staff report packet of information):

Plan Purpose and Organization

This Comprehensive Plan ("Plan") is intended to guide the decision-making of the City's elected officials, commissions, and staff regarding future development and community quality of life. It provides a flexible, forward-thinking road map for action, with findings and goals that address important community elements. The expected useful life of this Plan is ten years, 2011 through 2021, which could be extended with regular updates.

Chapter 4 – Land Use

4.2 Desired Future Conditions

In the future, enhanced Land Use procedures and practices contribute significant benefit to the community as it continues to grow:

- *Property owners' rights are respected and land use decisions are made in a clear, predictable and fair process.*

- A successful balance of land uses is achieved in the community, supporting both fiscal and quality of life values.

4.4 Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Goal 1. Provide balanced land use patterns that support the community's future growth.

Goal 2. Encourage development opportunities that support the City's role as a regional commercial center.

Objective 2.1. Encourage expansion of the City's commercial major areas to accommodate regional demands.

Chapter 6 – Community Assets

6.2 Desired Future Conditions

- Wasilla's Public Facilities are attractive, safe, functional and provide value to the community.
- Adequate water, sewer and utility networks serve residents and new growth, including economic enterprise and commercial uses.
- Recreation and parks are cost-effectively run and enhance local health and quality of life.
- A regionally linked network of trails serves diverse users safely and enjoyably.
- Historic, cultural and educational assets are enhanced for residents and visitors.
- Natural and scenic resources are preserved and maintained for the future.
- Wasilla enjoys an enhanced community character and identity.

6.3 Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Goal 4. Preserve and enhance the City's unique community assets.

Objective 4.2 Enhance the City's visual appearance and identity.

Action 4.2.1 Identify landmarks and features of visual interest to residents and visitors, and explore opportunities for enhancing access to them and/or framing views for the public (e.g. scenic overlooks, pullouts, site development that maintains and/or incorporates views.)

Action 4.2.2 Work to tap community pride and owners' self interest in enhancing properties along the Parks Highway by partnering with the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations on community beautification and cleanup efforts.

Action 4.2.3 Collaborate with ADOT&PF to identify ways to preserve landscaping along state roadways and minimize dust pollution from winter maintenance.

Chapter 7 – Economic Vitality

7.2 Desired Future Conditions

- *The City's economy in the future is more diverse and vibrant. The region's commercial and service sectors provide competitive products keeping regional dollars in the local economy.*
- *The City attracts additional residents and visitors. The population grows, as does the City's tourism sector. The already high quality of life, in addition to a revitalized Downtown and enhanced community image, make the City a desirable place to live, visit, and play.*

7.3 Goals, Objectives and Actions

Goal 1. *Continue to promote and enhance the City's future as the region's major center for commerce, services, visitor hospitality, culture and arts, transportation and industry.*

Objective 1.1 *Adopt policies and programs that will ensure that the City remains the preferred place in the Valley for shopping, services, employment, arts, entertainment, sports, and culture.*

Action 1.1.1 *Develop a strategic economic plan that considers how to secure Wasilla's future as the leading commercial center given its location and proximity to growing population nodes, particularly Knik/Fairview.*

Objective 1.2 *Develop a plan to creating a more diverse economic base that will attract a wider range of employment opportunities.*

Action 1.2.1 *Identify ways to ensure that the City continues to support appropriate development.*

Objective 1.3 *Encourage the development of new anchor developments, facilities, and attractions that generate economic activity.*

Action 1.3.1 *Support community initiatives to strengthen the City as a regional center of art, culture, and education (e.g. Valley Performing Arts expansion, new Wasilla Library, new Sports Dome).*

Action 1.3.2 *Promote opportunities for creating a destination hotel, restaurant, timeshare and convention center in areas such the multi-modal transit center and the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry and Wasilla Heights.*

Action 1.3.3 *Promote and support new activities, festivals, and recreational opportunities that encourage visitors and tourists to visit the City (e.g., fishing derbies, new mining history display, winter festival, etc.).*

- Objective 1.4** *Promote the City as a base for Valley recreation and a “Gateway to Adventure.”*
- Action 1.4.1** *Partner with the Mat-Su Convention and Visitors Bureau and Wasilla Chamber of Commerce and other recreation-oriented interests to promote the City’s visitor hospitality services and location as the gateway to recreational opportunities.*
- Action 1.4.2** *Identify opportunities for tourist attractions within the City.*

- Goal 2.** *Diversify the economic base and attract new employment generators.*
- Objective 2.1** *Continue to expand the City airport and encourage development of adjacent economic generators on City-owned land.*
- Action 2.1.1** *Identify ways to attract new product manufacturing and assembly plants, including focused on producing specialty items using local resources.*
- Action 2.1.2** *Seeks funds to be used for capital improvements that serve as an incentive to attract new employers to the City.*
- Objective 2.2** *Encourage employment opportunities within the City to reduce commuting to Anchorage for jobs.*
- Action 2.2.1** *Reach out to commercial, financial, and government entities headquartered in Anchorage and Palmer and promote local branch Wasilla offices, both to provide better services directly in MSB’s population growth center, and to allow commuting employees the option of working in their community.*

It is also substantially inconsistent with the City Land Development Code. Section 16.040.010 states that the Code’s purpose is:

- A. To achieve the goals and objectives, and implement the policies, of the Wasilla comprehensive plan;*
- B. To ensure that future growth and development in the city is in accord with the values of its residents;*
- C. To identify and secure, for present and future residents, the beneficial impacts of growth;*
- D. To ensure public involvement in permitting, planning and zoning decisions;*
- E. To identify and avoid, mitigate or prohibit the negative impacts of growth; and*
- F. To ensure that future growth is of the proper type, design and location, and is served by a proper range of public services and facilities.*

The proposed centerline of the transmission lines is within the right-of-way of two of the main commercial corridors within the City – the Parks Highway and the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension. The existing businesses along these roadways are some of the largest sales tax generators within the City. Additionally, this area has the most potential for additional commercial development since there are several large commercially zoned properties. These commercial properties are extremely important to the future growth and development of the City since the City’s entire budget is based on the collection of sales tax. Existing and future sales tax dollars allow the City to improve the quality of life, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the City. It is vital that any development in the City provide a positive impact to the City. This is further supported by the City’s Mission Statement below:

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

Additionally, MEA right-of-way easement vegetation removal policy is inconsistent with the landscaping requirements in WMC 16.33 for commercially developed properties. The proposed easements will encroach onto privately-owned commercial properties that have their required perimeter landscaping installed within the easement boundaries. Removal of the perimeter landscaping would cause the business to be out of compliance with the City Code and would be subject to fines. The only way to eliminate this conflict is to either amend the City’s landscaping regulations or require the commercial property owners to place the required landscaping outside the easement. This will further reduce the square footage of commercial properties that is available for development.

The Wasilla City Council also adopts goals and initiatives annually that identify the priorities for the year that reflect the City’s commitment to provide the highest level of public service while preserving and enhancing the quality of life for current and future residents of the City and visitors to the community. Two goals that specifically apply to this request are listed below and the complete list of goals identified for Fiscal Year 2013 and Fiscal Year 2014 are also included in this packet:

“Preserve and enhance the quality of life for current and future residents of Wasilla and for visitors to this community.”

“Encourage a strong and diverse economic base in the City of Wasilla.”

MEA’s response to this criterion argues that the increased availability and reliability of power for commercial development outweighs all of the other the policies, goals, and objectives of the City that address preserving and enhancing the visual attractiveness of the City, preserving and enhancing the natural and scenic resources, encouraging the development of additional commercial businesses that will ensure Wasilla remains the region’s major commercial center, and providing a high quality of life to the City residents.

16.16.050(3) *Special Uses. The proposal is substantially consistent with the specific approval criteria of Section 16.16.060.*

Finding: This criterion is not applicable since there are no specific approval criteria for utility facilities.

16.16.050(4) *Reviewing Parties. Due deference has been given to the comments and recommendations of reviewing parties.*

Finding: The City mailed 710 notices to neighboring property owners within a 1200’ radius from the proposed centerline of the transmission lines. In response to the notices, City staff received numerous comments in opposition to the proposed 80 feet tall transmission lines from business owners and City residents. Copies of their comments are included in this packet. Any additional comments received after the compilation of the packet will be provided at the public hearing and can be addressed at that time.

16.16.050(6) *Fire Safety and Emergency Access. The proposal shall not pose a fire danger as determined by the State Fire Marshal or the fire chief of the district in which the proposed use is located. Adequate access for emergency and police vehicles must be provided.*

Finding: This criterion is met since no comments were received from the Borough Fire Chief expressing concerns about a potential fire danger for the proposed transmission lines.

16.16.050(7) *Traffic. The proposed use shall not overload the street system with traffic or result in unsafe streets or dangers to pedestrians...*

Finding: This criterion is not applicable since the proposed transmission lines will not generate any additional traffic on the City's street system.

16.16.050(8) Dimensional Standards. The dimensional requirements of Section 16.24.010 are met.

Finding: This criterion is not applicable since Section 16.24.010 does not contain any specific dimensional requirements for utility facilities. However, it should be noted that buildings in the Commercial zoning district may not exceed 35' in height without conditional use approval by the Planning Commission. Although this section of code does not include height restrictions for utility facilities, the fact that the code regulates buildings over 35' implies that it has been determined that taller uses could have a negative impact on the surrounding area and need public input before approval.

16.24.050(9) Parking. The parking, loading areas, and snow storage sites for the proposed development shall be adequate, safe and properly designed. The developer may be required to install acceptable lighting at pedestrian or vehicular access points.

Finding: This criterion is not applicable since parking is not required for utility facilities.

16.16.050(10) Utilities. The proposed use shall be adequately served by water, sewer, electricity, on-site water or sewer systems and other utilities.

Finding: This criterion is not applicable since the proposed use is a utility facility.

16.16.050(11) Drainage. The proposed use shall provide for the control of runoff during and after construction. All roads and parking areas shall be designed to alleviate runoff into public streets, adjoining lots and protect rivers lakes and streams from pollution. Uses may be required to provide for the conservation of natural features such as drainage basins and watersheds, and land stability.

Finding: **This criterion is not met.** Although the proposed transmission lines should not create runoff during or after construction, the site plan shows the proposed transmission lines crossing Cottonwood Creek and, according to the Borough's comments, will cross properties within a flood zone.

Also, the City's Land Development Code prohibits the clearing of native vegetation and/or installation of any footings within 75 feet of the mean high-water mark of a water course or water body, including lakes, streams, and rivers. Since the applicant's permit application or site plan did not address this issue, staff is unable to determine whether there will be negative impacts to these areas. However, it is assumed that there will be negative impacts since they are proposing a 100 feet wide right-of-way easement with all vegetation removed within the easement. This proposal will require clearing in areas that are within wetlands and also within 75 feet of the mean high-water mark of water bodies, which is prohibited by the City Code.

NOTE: MEA did not address this criterion in their application packet.

16.16.050(12) *Large Developments. Residential development of more than four units or non-residential development of more than ten thousand (10,000) square feet gross floor area may be required to provide a site plan showing measures to be taken for the preservation of open space, sensitive areas and other natural features; provision of common signage; provision for landscaping and provisions for safe and effective circulation of vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles. Nonresidential large developments must be located with frontage on one of the following class of streets: interstate, minor arterial, major collector or commercial.*

Finding: This criterion is not applicable since this is not a large lot development.

16.16.050(13) *Peak Use. The proposed use shall not result in significantly different peak use characteristics than surrounding uses or other uses allowed in the district.*

Finding: This criterion is met. The proposed transmission lines will not result in significantly different peak use characteristics than surrounding uses or other uses allowed in the district.

16.16.050(14) *Off-Site Impacts. The proposal shall not significantly impact surrounding properties with excessive noise, fumes or odors, glare, smoke, light, vibration, dust, litter, or interference in any radio or television receivers off the premises, or cause significant line voltage fluctuation off the premises. Radio transmitters and any electronic communications equipment regulated by the Federal Communications Commission is specifically excluded from regulation by this section. Welding, operation of electrical appliances or power tools, or similar*

activities that cause off site impacts as described above are specifically regulated by this subsection. Buffering may be required to ameliorate impacts between residential and nonresidential uses. The owner of the property upon which the buffer is constructed is responsible for the maintenance of the buffer in a condition that will meet the intent of these criteria.

Finding: This criterion is met since the proposed transmission lines will not create excessive noise, fumes or odors, glare, smoke, light, vibration, dust, litter, interference with radio or television receivers, or cause significant line voltage fluctuation off the premises.

16.16.050(15) Landscaping. The proposed use shall be designed in a manner that minimizes the removal of trees and vegetative cover, and shall conform to the standards in this title concerning the provision and maintenance of landscaping, and any landscaping plan that is required for the proposed use under this title. The approval authority also may condition approval on the provision of the following:

a. A fenced storage area for common use, adequate to store boats, trailers, snowmobiles, recreational vehicles and similar items.

b. Adequately sized, located and screened trash receptacles and areas.

Finding: **This criterion is not met.** MEA's requirement for a 100 feet wide right-of-way easement that is cleared of vegetation, shrubs, or trees is inconsistent with the City's required landscaping for commercially zoned properties.

Based on MEA's rules and regulations for vegetation with the right-of-way easement, the right-of-way for an overhead transmission line must be cleared of any trees, shrubs, and other vegetation. The proposed rights-of-way shown on the site plan will encroach onto privately-owned commercially developed and/or commercially-zoned properties along the Parks Highway and the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension. MEA's rules will require clearing of any landscaping, trees, and vegetation that is within 50 feet of either side of the centerline of the proposed transmission lines. These regulations are reflected in MEA's rules and regulations, their brochure entitled, **The Right Landscaping for the Right Place**, and on their website at www.mea.coop (copies of this information is included in this packet.)

In MEA's response to this criterion, they stated that "MEA will construct and maintain the project in compliance with WMC 16.33.030(F) and 16.33.030(I). However, their utility easement

policy prohibits landscaping within the easement. This is inconsistent with the landscaping regulations in WMC 16.33 and 16.24.040(D)(4).

Recently, there have been two instances within the City that clearly show the conflict between MEA right-of-way vegetation regulations and the City landscaping regulations. The first is the recent area-wide right-of-way clearing of the MEA easements within the city limits. During this clean-up, numerous trees were removed that were within the MEA easements on commercial properties. Some of the trees were significantly shorter than the existing transmission lines and were a type of tree that could be maintained at a height that would not interfere with the transmission lines. Other trees were not under the transmission lines but only within the easement. The second example was when a representative for a newly constructed commercial business and City staff member were advised by a MEA representative that landscaping consisting of shrubs, rocks, and decorative fencing within the MEA easement was not allowed, even though removing it would cause the business to be out of compliance with the City's landscaping regulations.

16.16.050(16) *Walkways, Sidewalks and Bike Paths. Pedestrian walkways or bicycle paths may be required where necessary to provide reasonable circulation or access to schools, playgrounds, shopping areas, transportation or other community facilities. Improvements must be constructed to standards adopted by the engineer.*

Finding: This criterion is not applicable to a utility facility.

16.16.050(17) *Water, Sewage and Drainage Systems. If a proposed use is within five hundred (500) feet of an existing, adequate public water system, the developer may be required to construct a distribution system and the connection to the public system. A developer may be required to increase the size of existing public water, sewer or drainage lines or to install a distribution system within the development. The commission may require any or all parts of such installation to be oversized. The developer must submit to the engineer an acceptable plan that shows that if within ten (10) years an increase in capacity will be required to serve other areas how these needs will be met by oversized facilities. When installation of oversized facilities is required, the developer shall install such facilities at their own expense. The developer shall be reimbursed the amount determined by the engineer to be the difference in cost between the installed cost of the oversized utility lines and the*

installed cost of the utility lines adequate to serve both the development concerned and all other land to be served by the lines which is owned or under the control of the developer, provided the developer may not be required to install facilities unless funds for such oversizing have been appropriated for the purpose by the city and there is a sufficient unencumbered balance in the balance in the appropriation. No reimbursement may be made unless the developer has entered into such agreement with the city, including conveyances of personal property including lines, lift stations and valves and conveyances of land or rights in land, as the city determines may be necessary to ensure complete control by the city of its sewer, drainage and water lines when they are extended to serve the property of the developer. Notwithstanding the requirement that the developer construct improvements to existing systems, the commission may elect to accomplish the design or construction, or both, of improvements to be made to existing public systems. In such a case, the commission may require advance payment to the city of the estimated cost of work to be accomplished by the city. The developer shall reimburse the city for all expenses of such design or construction not paid in advance. A public system is adequate if, in the judgment of the engineer, it is feasible for the developer to make improvements to the public system which will provide the increased capacity necessary to serve the existing users and the new development at the same level as is being provided to the existing users. Prior to approval of a use for which a community water system is required, the developer must submit evidence showing that there is available a satisfactory source of water. A source of water is satisfactory only if it can be shown that the proposed source will produce water sufficient in quality and quantity to supply the development. The water system and the connection between such distribution systems and the source must be sized and constructed to meet fire flow and hydrant requirements for fire protection and that the developer has obtained or can obtain a water appropriation permit or certificate for the water from the state. The system must be built to city specifications available from the engineer.

Finding: This criterion is not applicable since water, sewage, and drainage systems are not required for utility facilities.

16.16.050(18) ***Historic Resources. The proposed use shall not adversely impact any historic resource prior to the assessment of that resource by the city.***

Finding: The MSB Cultural Resources Office did not submit any comments. However, MEA should contact them prior to any clearing or construction.

16.16.050(19) *Appearance. The proposed use may be required to blend in with the general neighborhood appearance and architecture. Building spacing, setbacks, lot coverage, and height must be designed to provide adequate provisions for natural light and air.*

Finding: **This criterion is not met.** The proposed 80 feet tall transmission lines with the 100 feet wide right-of-way easement cleared of vegetation will cause significant visual impact on the scenic views along the proposed route and will decrease the attractiveness of the corridor if the vegetation is removed within the required utility right-of-way easements.

Currently, no transmission lines are located along the right-of-way for the Parks Highway, Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension, and abutting frontage roads, with the exception of a short section on the north side of the Parks Highway on the southern property line of the Target shopping center. In fact, the majority of the commercial businesses or shopping centers within the City do not have above-ground utilities on their site or in the right-of-way abutting their property lines. This includes Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Lowe's, Ford, Sportsman's Warehouse, Fred Meyer, The Valley Cinema, Sears, Creekside Plaza shopping center, and others. This shows a clear desire on the part of business owners within the City to have underground utilities, even though they typically pay the cost to bury them. In addition to the visual impact on commercial properties, MEA's desired right-of-way easement on private commercially-zoned properties will impact the developable square footage on these commercially priced and taxed properties.

MEA's response to this criterion is that "a transmission line is typically compatible with commercial development..." However, as indicated above, the businesses within the city limits have chosen to have a more attractive "curb appeal" by placing the utilities underground. Also, the proposed transmission lines will be 45 feet taller than any building/structure permitted within the city limits.

16.16.050(20) *Open Space and Facilities. The applicant may be required to dedicate land for open space drainage, utilities, access, parks or playgrounds. Any dedication required by the city must be based on a written finding that the area is necessary for public use or safety and the dedication is in compliance with adopted municipal plans and policy. The city finding shall conclude*

that a direct connection exists between the development and the need for the provision of the dedication...

Finding: This criterion is not applicable for a utility facility.

16.16.050(21) *Winter Hassles. The proposed use shall not significantly increase the impact on the surrounding area from glaciation or drifting snow.*

Finding: This criterion is met since the proposed use will not significantly increase the impact on the surrounding area from glaciations or drifting snow.

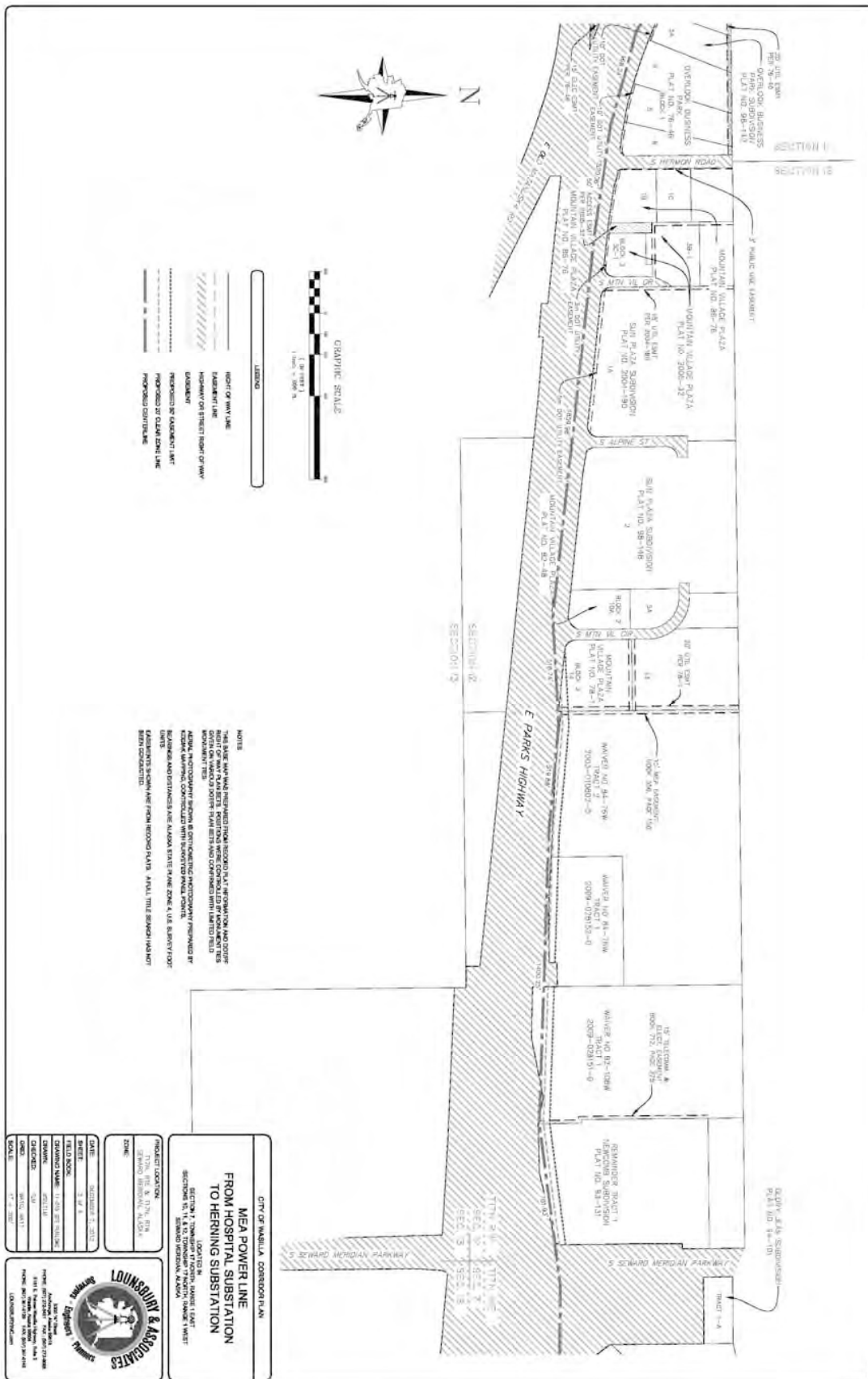


Exhibit B
Resolution Serial No. 13-01

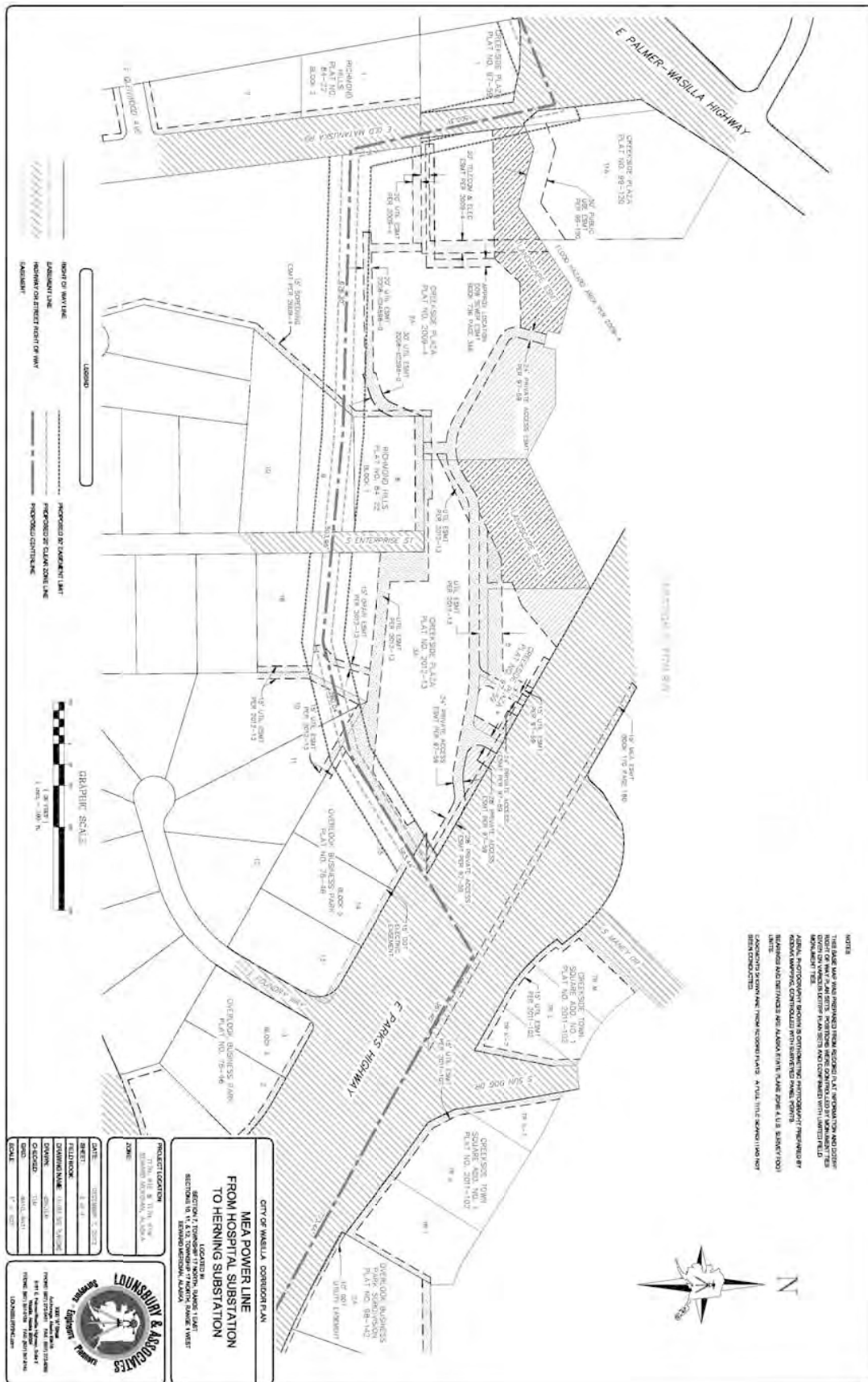


Exhibit B
Resolution Serial No. 13-01

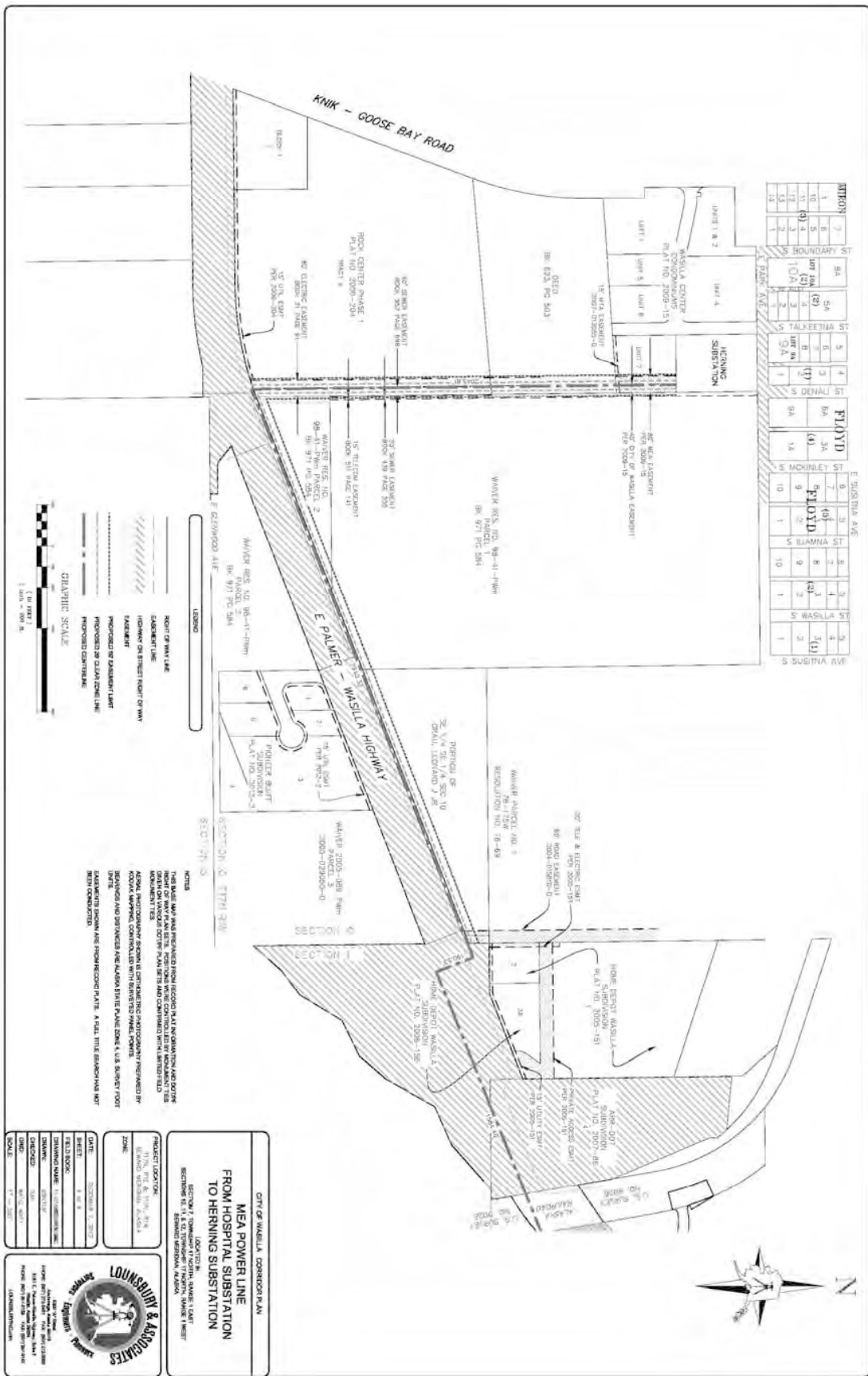
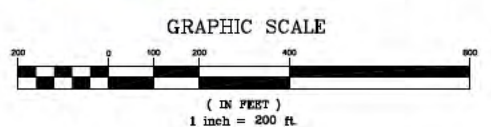
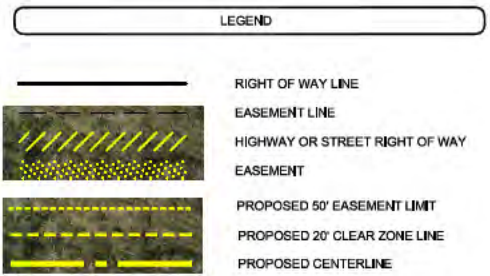
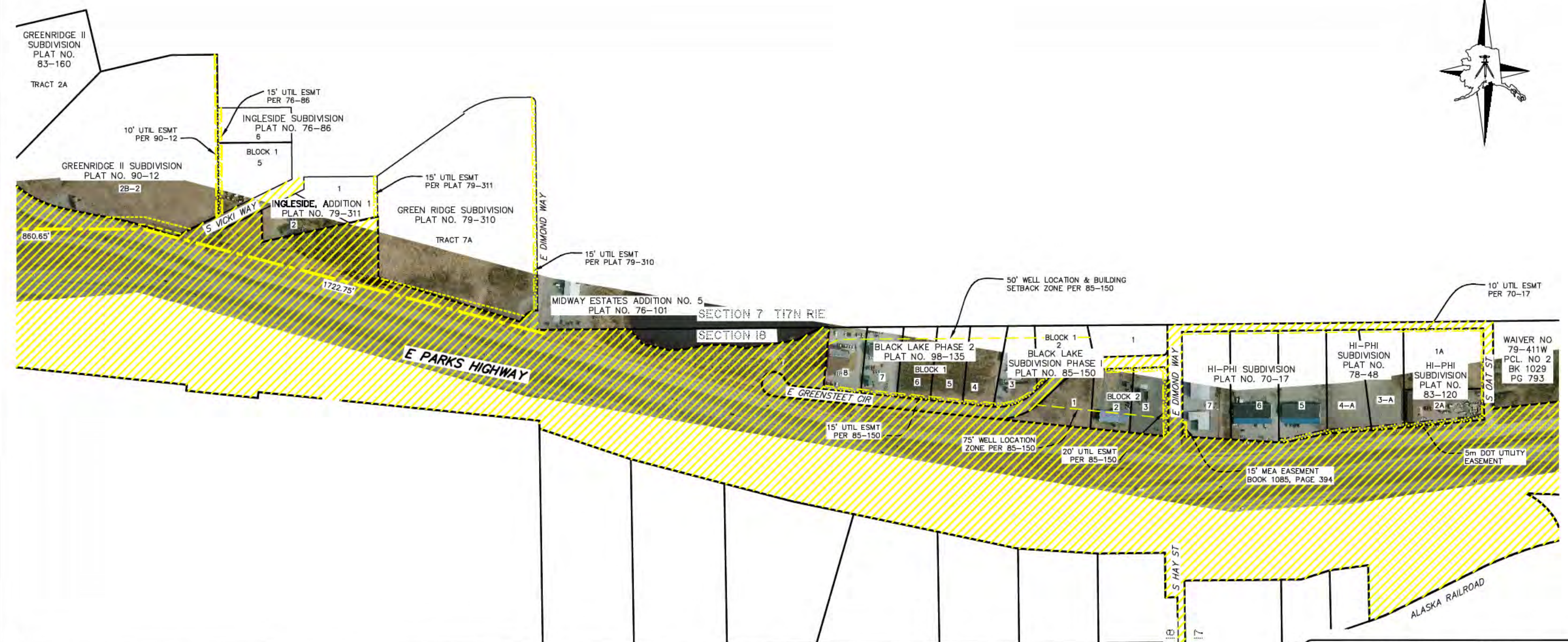


Exhibit B
 Resolution Serial No. 13-01



NOTES

THIS BASE MAP WAS PREPARED FROM RECORD PLAT INFORMATION AND DOT/PF RIGHT OF WAY PLAN SETS. POSITIONS WERE CONTROLLED BY MONUMENT TIES GIVEN ON VARIOUS DOT/PF PLAN SETS AND CONFIRMED WITH LIMITED FIELD MONUMENT TIES.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY SHOWN IS ORTHOMETRIC PHOTOGRAPHY PREPARED BY KODIAK MAPPING, CONTROLLED WITH SURVEYED PANEL POINTS.

BEARINGS AND DISTANCES ARE ALASKA STATE PLANE ZONE 4, U.S. SURVEY FOOT UNITS.

EASEMENTS SHOWN ARE FROM RECORD PLATS. A FULL TITLE SEARCH HAS NOT BEEN CONDUCTED.

CITY OF WASILLA CORRIDOR PLAN

MEA POWER LINE FROM HOSPITAL SUBSTATION TO HERNING SUBSTATION

LOCATED IN SECTION 7, T17N, R1E & T17N, R1W SEWARD MERIDIAN, ALASKA

PROJECT LOCATION:
T17N, R1E & T17N, R1W SEWARD MERIDIAN, ALASKA

ZONE:

DATE: DECEMBER 7, 2012

SHEET: 1 of 4

FIELD BOOK:

DRAWING NAME: 11-015 SITE PLANDWG

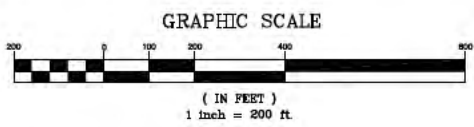
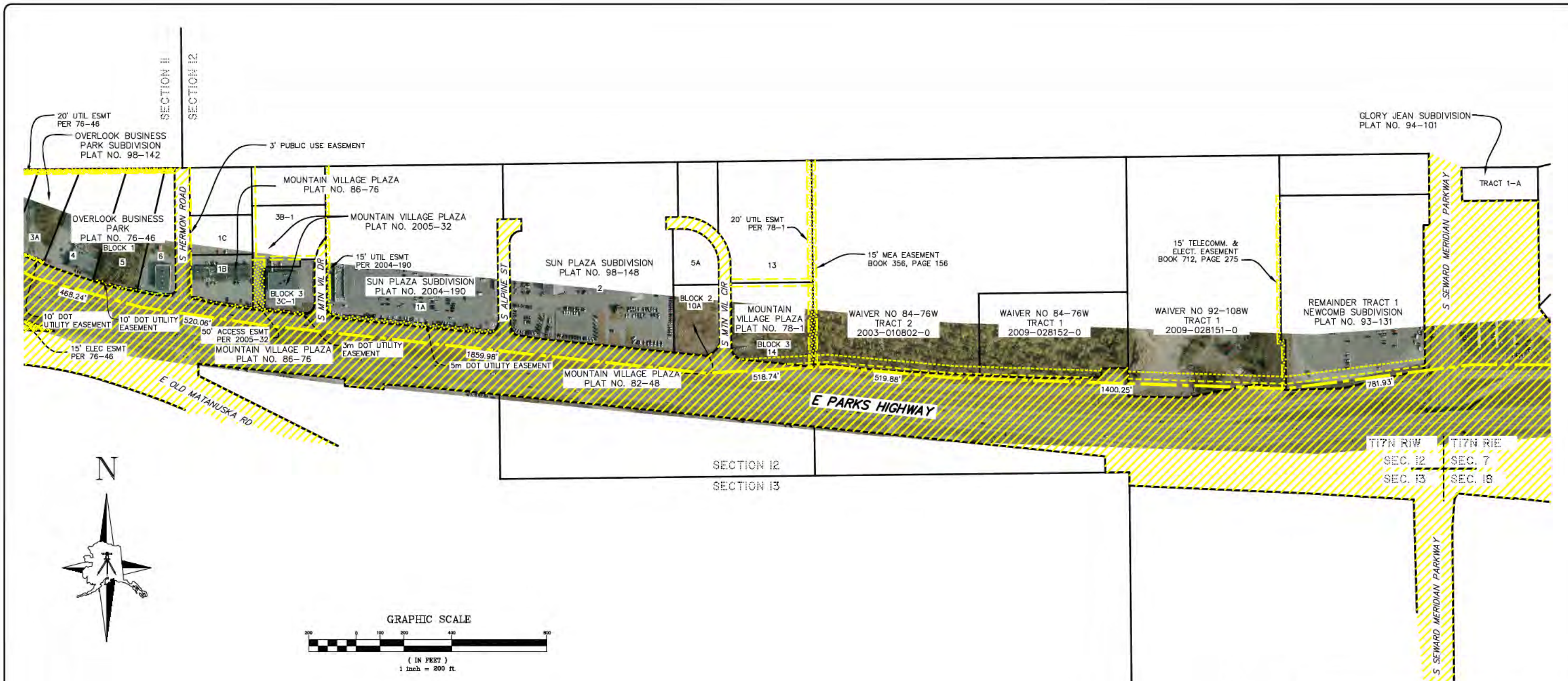
DRAWN: dSN,TLM

CHECKED: TLM

GRID: WA10, WA11

SCALE: 1" = 200'

5300 "A" Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99518
PHONE: (907) 272-6451 FAX: (907) 272-6086
3161 E. Palm-Wood Highway, Suite 2
Wasilla, Alaska 99684
PHONE: (907) 381-8125 FAX: (907) 381-4140
LOUNSBURYINC.com



LEGEND

	RIGHT OF WAY LINE
	EASEMENT LINE
	HIGHWAY OR STREET RIGHT OF WAY
	EASEMENT
	PROPOSED 50' EASEMENT LIMIT
	PROPOSED 20' CLEAR ZONE LINE
	PROPOSED CENTERLINE

NOTES

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EASEMENTS SHOWN ARE FROM RECORD PLATS. A FULL TITLE SEARCH HAS NOT BEEN CONDUCTED.

CITY OF WASILLA CORRIDOR PLAN

**MEA POWER LINE
FROM HOSPITAL SUBSTATION
TO HERNING SUBSTATION**

LOCATED IN
SECTION 7, TOWNSHIP 17 NORTH, RANGE 1 EAST
SECTIONS 10, 11, & 12, TOWNSHIP 17 NORTH, RANGE 1 WEST
SEWARD MERIDIAN, ALASKA

PROJECT LOCATION:
T17N, R1E & T17N, R1W
SEWARD MERIDIAN, ALASKA

ZONE:

DATE: DECEMBER 7, 2012

SHEET: 2 of 4

FIELD BOOK:

DRAWING NAME: 11-015 SITE PLANNING

DRAWN: dSN,TLM

CHECKED: TLM

GRID: WA10, WA11

SCALE: 1" = 200'

5300 "A" Street
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PHONE: (907) 272-6451 FAX: (907) 272-6055
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Wasilla, Alaska 99684
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LOUNSBURYINC.com

NOTES

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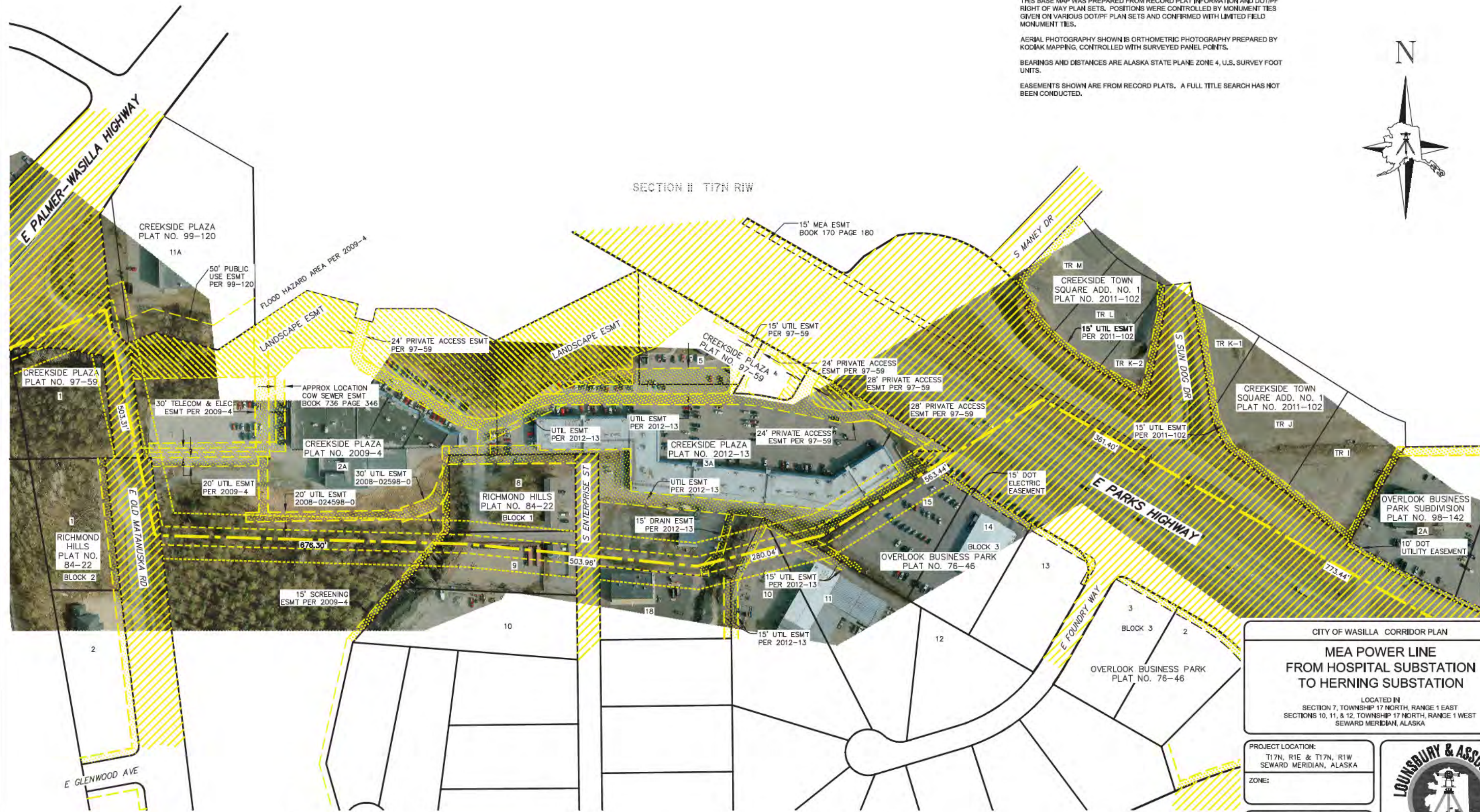
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY SHOWN IS ORTHOMETRIC PHOTOGRAPHY PREPARED BY KODIAK MAPPING, CONTROLLED WITH SURVEYED PANEL POINTS.

BEARINGS AND DISTANCES ARE ALASKA STATE PLANE ZONE 4, U.S. SURVEY FOOT UNITS.

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SECTION II T17N R1W



CITY OF WASILLA CORRIDOR PLAN

MEA POWER LINE FROM HOSPITAL SUBSTATION TO HERNING SUBSTATION

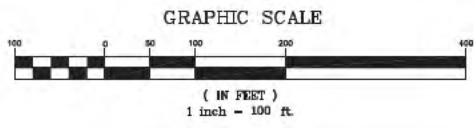
LOCATED IN SECTION 7, TOWNSHIP 17 NORTH, RANGE 1 EAST SECTIONS 10, 11, & 12, TOWNSHIP 17 NORTH, RANGE 1 WEST SEWARD MERIDIAN, ALASKA

PROJECT LOCATION:
T17N, R1E & T17N, R1W
SEWARD MERIDIAN, ALASKA

ZONE:

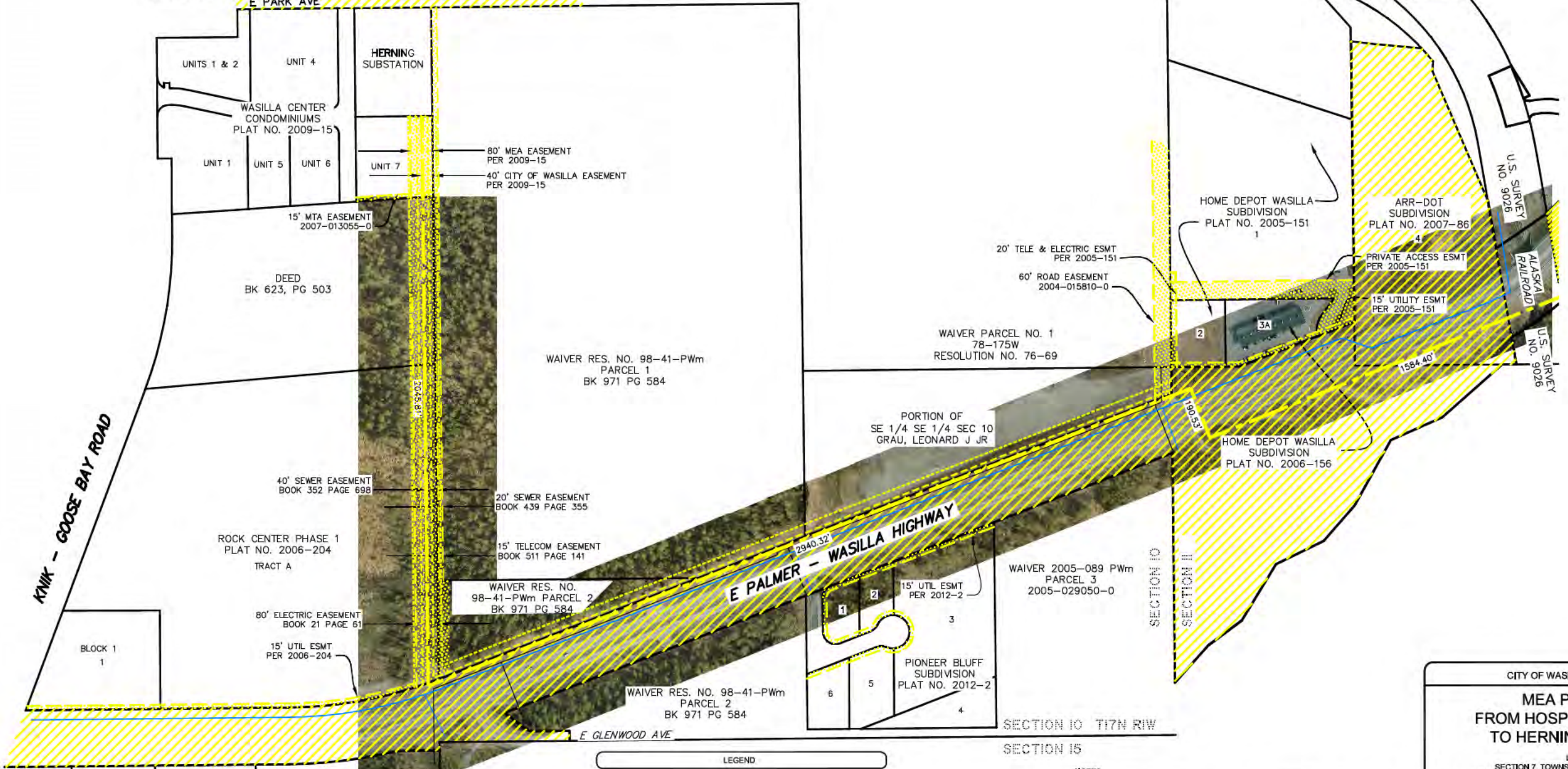
DATE: DECEMBER 7, 2012
SHEET: 3 of 4
FIELD BOOK:
DRAWING NAME: 11-015 SITE PLAN/DWG
DRAWN: dSN,TLM
CHECKED: TLM
GRID: WA10, WA11
SCALE: 1" = 100'

5300 "A" Street
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PHONE: (907) 272-6451 FAX: (907) 272-6065
3181 E. Palmer-Wasilla Highway, Suite 2
Wasilla, Alaska 99594
PHONE: (907) 357-4129 FAX: (907) 357-9140
LOUNSBURYINC.com

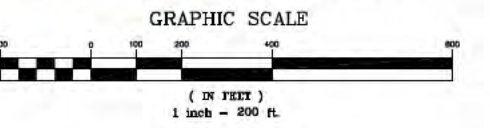
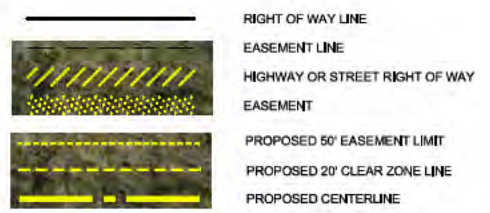




MIRON		S BOUNDARY ST		S TALKKEENA ST		S DENALI ST		FLOYD		S MCKINLEY ST		S ILLIAMNA ST		S WASILLA ST		S SUSITNA AVE	
1	7	8A	5A	5	4	6A	3A	6	5	6	5	6	5	6	5	6	5
10	6	LOT 10A (2)	(2)	6	3	(4)	(4)	7	(3)	7	4	7	4	7	4	7	4
11	(4)	10A	4	7	(1)	9A	1A	8	8	8	(2)	8	(2)	8	(2)	8	(2)
12	3		3	8	(1)			9	2	9	2	9	2	9	2	9	2
13	2		2	LOT 9A	1			10	1	10	1	10	1	10	1	10	1
14	1		1														



LEGEND



NOTES

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CITY OF WASILLA CORRIDOR PLAN

MEA POWER LINE FROM HOSPITAL SUBSTATION TO HERNING SUBSTATION

LOCATED IN SECTION 7, TOWNSHIP 17 NORTH, RANGE 1 EAST SECTIONS 10, 11, & 12, TOWNSHIP 17 NORTH, RANGE 1 WEST SEWARD MERIDIAN, ALASKA

PROJECT LOCATION:
T17N, R1E & T17N, R1W SEWARD MERIDIAN, ALASKA

ZONE:

DATE: DECEMBER 7, 2012

SHEET: 4 of 4

FIELD BOOK:

DRAWING NAME: 11-0156828RENEWING

DRAWN: dSN,TLM

CHECKED: TLM

GRID: WA10, WA11

SCALE: 1" = 200'

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Wasilla, Alaska 99654
PHONE: (907) 351-6129 FAX: (907) 351-6140
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George Parks Highway

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South Hermon Road

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East Palmer-Wasilla Highway

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East Palmer-Wasilla Highway

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East Palmer-Wasilla Highway

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Matanuska Electric Association (MEA) is proposing to construct 80 feet tall transmission lines along the Parks Highway and the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension, two of the City's major commercial corridors, that includes a 100 feet wide right-of-way easement that must be cleared of vegetation. In order to construct the transmission lines, MEA is required to submit the appropriate permit applications to the City Planning Department and obtain approval from the Wasilla Planning Commission.

In order to determine if the proposed use complies with the applicable City regulations, staff reviewed the following policy statements, goals, objectives, actions, standards, and maps:

- City of Wasilla Mission Statement
- Wasilla City Council Goals and Initiatives for Fiscal Years 2013 and 2014
- City of Wasilla 2011 Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map
- City of Wasilla Land Development Code (Title 16) and Zoning Map

Since the City of Wasilla became a first-class city in 1984, one of the goals was to be able to create a vision for the city and take a direct role in shaping the City's future growth and development. This included approving a sales tax to provide the necessary services for a high quality of life for the residents and adopting regulations to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the residents. This is reflected in the City's Mission Statement below:

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

The State of Alaska requires the Boroughs or Cities with planning powers to adopt a comprehensive plan that guides the physical, social, and economic development and to adopt land use regulations that implement the policy statements, goals, standards, and maps within the comprehensive plan. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough delegated planning authority to the City of Wasilla in 1986.

The current version of the City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan ("Plan") was updated and adopted in 2011 to reflect the tremendous changes in the city and re-evaluate the needs, issues and opportunities of the City (previous Plan adopted in 1996). The updated Plan's stated purpose is to "guide the decision-making of the City's elected officials, commissions, and staff regarding future development and quality of life. The overall goal of the Plan is to preserve and protect the quality of life for the residents and to prevent/minimize the negative impacts of future development and growth.

The Plan is implemented through the City's Land Development Code ("Code"), which was originally adopted in 1996. This stated purpose of this Code is to achieve the goals, objectives, and policies in the Plan, ensure that future development and growth in the City is consistent with the values of its residents, identify and avoid, mitigate, or prohibit the negative impacts of growth, and to ensure that development is of the proper type, design, and location.

As part of implementing the Comprehensive Plan, the Wasilla City Council annually adopts goals and initiatives identifying the priorities for the year that reflect the City's commitment to provide the highest level of public service while preserving and enhancing the quality of life for current and future residents of the City and visitors to the community. Two goals that specifically apply to this request are listed below and the complete list of goals identified for Fiscal Year 2013 and Fiscal Year 2014 are also included in this packet:

“Preserve and enhance the quality of life for current and future residents of Wasilla and for visitors to this community.”

“Encourage a strong and diverse economic base in the City of Wasilla.”

Key Issues

The City operates solely on sales tax generated from commercial businesses (mainly retail), including tourist dollars. Any impact to these dollars directly affects the services that the City is able to provide to the residents. In order to maintain the current service levels, have the ability to improve/enhance existing services, and provide additional services and amenities to the City residents, additional sales tax revenue is necessary.

The proposed transmission lines will have the following negative impacts to the City:

- The requirement for right-of-way easements, which prohibits the installation of attractive landscaping along the roadway and reduces the developable square footage of valuable, high-priced commercial real estate, will impact the current commercial businesses and the potential development of vacant commercial properties along the proposed route. This directly affects the amount of sales tax generated in this area.
- Impacts to the quality of life for residents includes:
 - Visual aesthetics and beautification of the community
 - Sales tax dollars provide funding for parks, libraries, trails, road improvements, street lighting, sidewalks, etc. Sources of additional sales tax are necessary in order to maintain the current service levels and also to improve and enhance the existing services.
- Decrease in visual attractiveness of community may impact tourism since the Parks Highway is the main route through Wasilla and to the rest of Alaska. Tourists come to Alaska to view the beauty and wildlife – not 80 feet tall transmission lines that obscure the scenic mountain vistas.

After reviewing all of the above, it is clear that the project as currently designed and located is not consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code, Mission Statement or the Goals and Initiatives for Fiscal Year 2013 and 2014. The over-arching theme of all of these policies is that citizens want an attractive community to live, work, and shop in that offers a high quality of life. They also want the City to continue to serve as the regional commercial center for the Valley and continue to attract new businesses and employment opportunities. In order to accomplish this, the City needs to ensure that the remaining available commercial properties are suitable for development and allow the business owner to maximize every available square foot of the commercially priced and taxed property. It is also extremely important to the residents that the scenic beauty and visual appearance of the City is maintained and enhanced.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL PERMIT #A12-103 AND USE PERMIT #U12-05 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM CITY STAFF

Listed below are City Staff's comments and questions regarding the information submitted by the Applicant in their permit application cover letters, responses to the general approval criteria, and the two reports that contain the analysis of the proposed routes for the transmission lines for Administrative Approval Permit #A12-103 and Use Permit #U12-05:

CITY STAFF'S GENERAL COMMENTS:

- Allowing MEA to construct 80 feet tall structures with four levels of transmission lines will create a visual blight on the City of Wasilla. These lines will be there forever.
- There are other alternatives available. The City provided comments to MEA during the public hearing required by the MSB and also met with MEA on at least two separate occasions to discuss alternative routes. However, when MEA submitted the permits to the City, the route was basically the same as the preferred route shown at the open house in October. The only change was to move the transmission lines from the south side to the north side of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension.
- The majority of the proposed transmission line route from the Eklutna Generation Station to the Hospital substation will not be located on the Glenn Highway right-of-way but will be located on land east of the highway. However, the route from the Hospital substation to the Herning substation is proposed to be located within the highway right-of-way.
- The majority of the large commercial businesses or shopping centers within the City do not have above-ground utilities on their site or in the right-of-way abutting their property lines. This includes Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Lowe's, Ford, Sportsman's Warehouse, Fred Meyer, The Valley Cinema, Sears, Creekside Plaza shopping center, and others.
- There are currently no transmission lines along the Parks Highway beginning at Seward-Meridian and extending west into the city limits until New Maney Drive where they cross the Parks Highway from the north side to the south side. Then they begin again at east property line of Target and extend to the west property line of Target. There is also a short stretch of transmission lines on the south side of the Parks Highway directly in front of Bailey Furniture and Auto Zone. The remainder of the Parks highway from Palmer-Wasilla Highway west to Main Street does not have any transmission lines along the highway except for a short stretch on the south side that extends through the gravel pit area. There are no overhead transmission lines along the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension within the proposed transmission line route.

- The tallest structures currently located along the Parks Highway and the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension are the street lights that are approximately 34 feet tall. Additionally, within the city limits, signs are not allowed to exceed 25 feet tall and buildings must be 35 feet tall or less unless approved by the Planning Commission. The tallest sign within the city limits is the Mug Shot Saloon sign, which is approximately 35 feet tall and is a legal non-conforming sign. Also, there are only a few cell towers within the city limits and most are approximately 100-120 tall and each cell tower is required to submit an individual permit application, which is elevated to the Planning Commission to determine if the tower is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code.
- The proposed route through the City is only approximately three miles in length.
- Although they are requesting a permit and not a variance, the Planning Commission should not accept the argument of "pecuniary hardship or inconvenience" as the reason for approving the request. The negative impact to the visual aesthetics and scenic vistas along the proposed route is enormous. Additionally, the requirement for right-of-way easements and large 80 feet tall transmission lines along the property lines of large vacant commercial tracts within the City will negatively impact the ability to attract commercial businesses to this area. In addition to the visual blight and blocking of scenic vistas (especially from the P-W Hwy. Ext.), the proposed 50 feet wide right-of-way easement on private commercial property will take away the use of valuable commercial real estate.
- MEA did not involve the public or solicit input until AFTER the studies identified the preferred routes. Why didn't they solicit input earlier (see process set up for Sammamish-Juanity 115 kV transmission line project in attached Fact Sheets.)
- The Parks Highway and the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension are two of the City's primary commercial corridors – they have Commercial zoning and Commercial future land use designations.
- MEA did not provide any information to the City identifying the approximate costs for the alternative routes initially proposed by the City.
- MEA ignored comments provided by the City and the public at the public hearing in October except for one comment from the new church located within the Pioneer Bluff Subdivision that fronts on the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension asking that the lines be moved to the north side of the highway.
- Planning Commission should continue the Public Hearing until MEA provide sufficient information and details for an informed decision.

CITY STAFF'S ISSUES, CONCERNS, AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THE PROJECT:

1. What type of transmission line is proposed? Will the transmission lines have a distribution underbuild?

STAFF RESPONSE: *MEA needs to provide specific design drawings showing the actual height and type of transmission poles that are proposed for the project (including guy wire locations.)*

MEA did not provide a drawing showing the type of transmission pole that would be used for the project in the permit application materials. The only drawing available was the one that was provided at the MEA Open House required by the MSB. The type of transmission lines are only mentioned in a few places in the reports. No information was available on the MEA websites, the cover letter for the permit applications, the permit application, or the general approval criteria for the permit applications. The only drawing available was the one that MEA displayed at the MEA Open House as part of the MSB approval process.

2. Why is a 100 feet wide right-of-way easement required with no vegetation other than grass?

STAFF RESPONSE: *MEA did not provide any justification for the 100 feet wide easement.*

Other transmission line easements in Alaska (e.g. Chugiak and Knik-Goose Bay Road area) and throughout the United States only have a 40-50 feet total right-of-way width cleared of vegetation (see examples in packet.)

3. How were the right-of-way acquisition costs calculated that are shown in MEA's analysis reports?

STAFF RESPONSE: *MEA needs to provide this information.*

4. If the Parks/P-W route is chosen, why are additional easements needed from property owners? Can't maintenance of the transmission lines occur within the existing highway rights-of-way versus privately-owned commercial properties?

STAFF RESPONSE: *MEA needs to provide this information.*

5. Why should vegetation/trees be prohibited and/or removed from the private property easements?

STAFF RESPONSE: *MEA did not provide any justification for the need to restrict all vegetation, except grass, from the entire 100 feet wide right-of-way width.*

Staff found numerous photos from other communities, including Anchorage, that have landscaping (including trees, boulders, shrubs, flowers, etc.) directly underneath and next to the transmission lines (see photos and information in packet.)

6. Will the poles be rust-colored or galvanized?

STAFF RESPONSE: *MEA needs to provide this information.*

7. Other than costs, why not bury the transmission lines? Although there is a higher initial cost, maintenance should be less, especially since the high winds won't affect the lines.

STAFF RESPONSE: *MEA needs to provide this information.*

8. What is the cost to run the entire length underground?

STAFF RESPONSE: *MEA needs to provide this information to the City.*

Staff was unable to find information in the reports included in the permit application packets that evaluated the cost of installing underground utilities.

9. Why not run transmission lines behind large commercial parcels on the Parks Highway and the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension?

STAFF RESPONSE: *MEA needs to provide this information.*

The City met with MEA after the Public Hearing (required by the Borough) and proposed numerous additional routes that would have less impact on the visual corridor and prevent loss of use of valuable commercial real estate along the roadways. However, MEA chose to submit the permit applications showing the Parks Highway Route Option that was presented at the Open House. The only change to the route was to relocate the transmission lines from the southern right-of-way to the northern right-of-way of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension.

10. The MEA website (www.mea.coop) does not contain information regarding the proposed 80 feet tall transmission lines or the proposed route. This information is only available on a separate website for the Eklutna Generation Station (www.eklutnagenerationstation.com), which contains all of the information that was provided at the Open House required by the Borough.

STAFF RESPONSE: MEA needs to provide this information.

MEA states in their City permit application materials that they have taken steps to ensure that the public and MEA Co-op members are aware of this project. However, information regarding the proposed 80 feet tall transmission lines is not included on the www.mea.coop website and there are not links on that site to the Eklutna Generation Station website. Also, the Eklutna Generation Station website doesn't list the City Planning Commission meeting under "Upcoming Dates" – it indicates that there are no upcoming events (copies of the web pages are included in the packet.)

11. What is MEA's current policy regarding vegetation within the utility right-of-way easement?

STAFF RESPONSE: MEA currently requires all vegetation and obstructions to be kept out of the transmission line right-of-way easements (see brochure and MEA website information included in packet.) This includes shrubs, flower, decorative rocks and fencing, and trees, regardless of height.

12. Does this project require this height and type of transmission line structures mainly to sell and/or transfer power to neighboring utilities?

STAFF RESPONSE: MEA needs to provide this information.

One of the posters at the MEA Open House listed this as one of the reasons that MEA needs the transmission line from the Eklutna Generation Station to the Hospital and Hering substations.

CITY STAFF'S QUESTIONS/COMMENTS REGARDING MEA'S COVER LETTER FOR PERMIT APPLICATION #A12-103 AND #U12-05:

1. Requests that the Planning Commission only consider and approve a transmission line corridor plan without reviewing the proposed design. They suggested that it is appropriate for this level of review and approval to be done by the City Public Works Director.

STAFF RESPONSE: This request is inconsistent with the City's Mission Statement, Comprehensive Plan, and Land Development Code.

These City policies and codes promote and encourage maximum citizen awareness and involvement in the planning processes and government for the City. This includes permit approvals by the Planning Commission. MEA's proposal to have the design review completed after the Planning Commission public hearing and that the review and approval only be completed by the Public Works Director takes away the Planning

Commission's authority to make land use decisions for developments within the City limits and also the public's right to participate in the decision-making process.

2. The map submitted by MEA with the permit applications to the City show the centerline of transmission lines as only a "best approximation...subject to approval by permitting agencies..."

STAFF RESPONSE: Information in MEA's permit application packet states that the ADOT/PF must approve utility permit and may have concerns with some portions of the proposed route.

MEA should obtain approval from ADOT/PF prior to submitting permit applications for review and approval by the Planning Commission. Once the Planning Commission approves a route, any later changes to the approved route would require MEA to submit a revised permit application and route for review and approval by the Planning Commission.

3. The application packet references a 20 feet clear zone for electrical safety and 50 feet easement from centerline of transmission lines.

STAFF RESPONSE: MEA need to clarify the difference between the 20 feet clear zone and the additional 30 feet that makes up the 50 feet right-of-way easement for each side of the centerline of the proposed transmission lines.

Many utility easements throughout the lower 48 and Alaska have much smaller easements cleared of vegetation – 70-80 feet total easements are common (see examples in packet). Also, many other easements, even in Anchorage, have landscaping and trees within the easements (see vegetation brochure from the Omaha Public Power District in Omaha, Nebraska and Northeast Utilities in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

4. MEA proposes a 100 feet wide ROW easement (50 feet on each side of centerline).

STAFF RESPONSE: MEA needs to provide written documentation indicating that this width is required by federal, state, or other applicable regulations. Many other similar transmission lines have significantly narrower easements (see #3 comment above).

5. MEA states that sufficient public notification to property owners and public has been done.

STAFF RESPONSE: MEA stated that they sent out letters to property owners within 300 feet of the recommended route, the Wasilla Planning Department, Gateway Community Council, South Lakes Community Council, and the Knik-Fairview Community Council.

However, they did not send one to the Mayor, City Council, or Planning Commission. This short notice prevented the adoption of a resolution from the City Council or Planning Commission regarding the proposed route for the portion outside the city limits. The timing of the application submittal to the City and the holiday meeting schedule, made it impossible for the City Council to schedule and adopt a resolution to provide formal comments to the Planning Commission.

Additionally, the letters did not state that the height of the transmission lines would be 80 feet tall along the proposed route. Additionally, the letters were mailed exactly 15 days prior to the meeting, which is the Borough minimum requirement. Also, MEA indicated to the Borough that they would run three (3) ads in the *Frontiersman*, staff only found two that were published on 9/23 & 9/25/12 for the Open House and two were published for the Public Hearing on 10/7 & 10/9/12. This only provided a maximum of four (4) days notice prior to the meeting dates.

6. MEA states that MEA coop members have been continuously informed regarding the status of this project.

STAFF RESPONSE: No information regarding the transmission lines is currently on the MEA website, www.mea.coop, nor was there any information in the 2012 newsletters sent to the coop members informing them of the proposed transmission lines nor the scheduled Open House and Public Hearing. The only article was regarding the new Eklutna Generation Station plant and that it would provide power to "...MEA's roughly 4,000 miles of transmission and distribution lines..."(Cover of March/April 2012/Issue 2 edition of Power Lines.) It failed to mention that new 80 feet tall 115 kV double-circuit transmission lines with distribution underbuild would be constructed through two of the City's main view corridors – the Parks Highway and the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension.

7. MEA stated that they "...do not believe design level detail required by the site plan or an expensive video rendering are necessary or reasonable at this stage of the process for the P&Z, property owners and the public to make a determination on an approved corridor."

STAFF RESPONSE: It is vital that the Planning Commission, the residents, and property owners know the full extent of the impact of the proposed transmission lines on the scenic vistas and the visual appearance along these corridors (Parks Hwy. & P-W Hwy. Ext.) along with the impacts to the

commercial properties from the easements that MEA wants to acquire along the proposed route. To help visualize the impact, staff requested that MEA provide either street-level photographs or a video of the route with the transmission lines superimposed on them (see email dated 11/19/12). We have asked cell tower companies to provide this to us with their permit applications and they have readily provided the information. NOTE: Since MEA would not provide photo-simulations, City staff prepared several photographs that are included in this packet.

CITY STAFF'S QUESTIONS/COMMENTS REGARDING MEA'S ROUTE ANALYSIS REPORTS SUBMITTED WITH #A12-103 AND #U12-05:

ANALYSIS OF FIVE ROUTING OPTIONS AND SELECTION OF PREFERRED ROUTE – DATED JULY 2012

1. This study states that MEA established 100 feet as the easement width for the 115 kV double circuit transmission line. (Pg. 1, Paragraph 1)

STAFF RESPONSE: MEA did not provide any documentation indicating that the 100 feet easement is required by federal, state, or local regulations. Other similar transmission lines in Alaska and several locations in other states appear to only have a 40-50 total easement width (see photo examples in packet). A narrower easement width would reduce the easement acquisition costs.

2. The description of the proposed transmission lines varies in this study. (Pg. 1, Paragraph 1)

STAFF RESPONSE: MEA needs to clarify the design type.

Portions of the study reference a distribution underbuild in addition to the 80 feet tall 115 kV double circuit transmission lines but other areas of the study omit the distribution underbuilding.

3. Only five routes were analyzed as part of the MEA study. (Pg. 1, Paragraph 2)

STAFF RESPONSE: MEA needs to provide information on why additional routes were not considered. City staff and several Borough and City residents provided suggestions for alternative routes during the MEA Open House and/or Public Hearing comment period. The alternative routes had less visual impact along the roadways and were a shorter distance than the Alaska Railroad Route Option and the Southern Route Option in the study. Also, the study did not analyze the option for underground transmission lines. MEA should have solicited input from the City of Wasilla or Matanuska-Susitna Borough residents prior to selecting and completing the analysis of the five route options included in this study.

4. The rating criteria includes: (1) Cost, (2) Ability to strengthen MEA's transmission grid, (3) Minimize public controversy, and (4) Schedule to energize (Pg. 1, Paragraph 3)

STAFF RESPONSE: *Criterion 3 lists one of the route selection criteria as, "...minimizing public controversy." However, the proposed Parks Highway Route Option has caused significant controversy among the residents and property owners along this route. At the MEA public hearing, the majority of the individuals who provided comments were in opposition to the proposed route. Also, all of the comments received in response to the public notice for MEA's request for City permits are opposed the route or expressed concerns.*

5. This study states that after analyzing the five routes, MEA met with several review agencies, including the City of Wasilla, and that the City of Wasilla supported the Parks Highway Route Option. (Pg. 1, Paragraph 5 & Pg. 18)

STAFF RESPONSE: *It is unclear whether MEA is indicating that the review agencies agreed that the Parks Highway Route Option was superior to the other options or if MEA made this determination based on the results of the meetings of the review agencies and the study analysis. The City of Wasilla did not provide any written or formal comments to MEA regarding the proposed routes. A City staff member had one informal conversation with MEA last summer but was only provided a brief overview of the project that did not include specific design information (e.g. structure type/design, right-of-way vegetation clearing, etc.)*

6. The Parks Highway Route Option is identified in this study as the recommended routing option. (Pg. 1, Paragraph 5)

STAFF RESPONSE: *The study was completed in July 2012, which is prior to MEA's September 27, 2012 Open House and the October 11, 2012 Public Hearing required by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough for the portion of the route within the Borough. Based on the language in the study, MEA already had a route chosen before seeking public input for the Borough process AND before submitting an application to the City of Wasilla.*

7. There are numerous references throughout this study regarding meetings between MEA and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT/PF) regarding the five routes. It also states that ADOT/PF prefers the Parks Highway routing option. (Pgs. 4, 5, 7, 8, 18, and 19)

STAFF RESPONSE: MEA did not provide any documentation from the ADOT/PF indicating that they preferred the Parks Highway option. Additionally, MEA has not obtained right-of-way permits from ADOT/PF for the proposed corridor route.

8. The Southern Route Option extends significantly south of the Parks Highway and MEA states that the route is difficult since it crosses the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge, the Ranch Subdivision, and wetlands/flood zone areas. (Pgs. 11-12)

STAFF RESPONSE: MEA should have considered a southern route that did not extend so far to the south. The southern route could have been a combination of the Southern Route, the Alaska Railroad Route, and other portions following existing transmission or section line easements, which would have less impact on the Hay Flats and other wetland areas.

The analysis of this route implies that permits would be difficult or impossible to obtain. However, MEA did not provide written documentation that permits could not be obtained through any or all of these areas – just that it would require approval by several agencies. Also, the study states that the construction component is not cost effective based on an assumption that MEA would need to acquire expensive easements through the Ranch Subdivision. However, according to the Alaska Railroad website, land acquisition for their South Wasilla Rail Line Relocation project to straighten the existing curve by extending the railroad through the Ranch and Sweeping Vistas subdivisions would be completed in 2012 (copies of Alaska Railroad information is included in packet.) Since the Alaska Railroad already has easements through the subdivision, this should make the Southern Route Option less expensive and problematic. Note: The concern that the Railroad has not obtained the easements through these subdivisions is also included in the Alaska Railroad Route Option on pages 15-16.

9. This study identifies the Parks Highway Route Option as the preferred option and states that the ADOT/PF met with MEA on several occasions and supported this option. It further states that the City of Wasilla and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough staff supported this option after being “briefed” on the project alternatives. (Pg. 18, Paragraph 4)

STAFF RESPONSE: MEA did not provide any written documentation from AKDOT/PF, the Borough, or the City of Wasilla indicating that this route is their preferred option. The City of Wasilla did not review or give approval of the proposed route or the 80 feet tall transmission line structures. The review for Permit #A12-103 and U12-05 is the first opportunity for the City to comment on the portion of the proposed route within the City limits. The only written comments from the City to MEA were provided by the City

Mayor at the MEA Public Hearing on October 11, 2012. His written comments and testimony both expressed opposition to the proposed route and design (copy of letter is included in packet.)

10. Dryden & LaRue presented their preliminary findings to MEA on April 16, 2012 (see page 20 of this study.) Their findings indicated that the Parks Highway is the recommended route option and identified the remaining tasks needed to complete the project. This included: (1) Preparing comprehensive routing plan drawings and narrative that will show pole placement, guy anchor placement, and property boundaries, (2) Identifying the necessary easements/rights-of-way for the route and the required guy anchors, and (3) Identifying all land use and environmental permits for the project.

STAFF RESPONSE: Dryden & LaRue presented their recommended route to MEA in April 2012, which was way in advance of the MEA Open House and Public Hearing in September/October 2012. The Borough's purpose for requiring an Open House and Public Hearing is to allow the public to review the proposed routes and provide input. However, based on the information above and other places within this study, MEA had already chosen the Parks Highway as the preferred route. Also, Dryden & LaRue indicated that one of the tasks is to prepare comprehensive routing plan drawings and narratives. However, MEA did not include them in the permit application for review by the City Planning Commission. NOTE: Permit approval from the City of Wasilla was not listed as a requirement. City staff advised MEA of this requirement after attending the Open House in September 2012.

11. This study includes the Borough's public involvement process requirements for Essential Service Utilities – MSB Code Chapter 17.05. (Pgs. 21-22).

STAFF RESPONSE: The Borough's utility ordinance does not apply to properties located within the city limits.

However, the City does not believe that MEA met the minimum requirements of the Borough's public involvement process. Specifically, Section 17.05.040(B)(2) requires that a minimum of one public meeting and on public hearing be held in an area central to the area impacted by the proposed action. Although the Borough process only applies to the portion of the project within the Borough that is east of the city limits (the portion between the Eklutna Generation Station and Seward-Meridian Highway), MEA held the Open House and Public Hearing at the Curtis D. Menard Memorial Sports Center, which is on the western edge of the City boundary. Additionally, MEA was required to provide information on their website, mail notifications, and place three ads in the Frontiersman and the Anchorage Daily News. However, MEA did not post information on their website, www.MEA.coop – they created a separate website, www.

Eklutnagenerationstation.com (EGS), that contained the project studies and the other information presented at the Open House and Public Hearing. The MEA.coop website did not, and still does not, have a link to the EGS website or any information regarding the proposed 80 feet tall transmission line route along the Parks Highway and the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension. This information was also excluded from the mailed notifications and the Frontiersman ads (see copies included in packet.) Additionally, staff was only able to find two ads in the Frontiersman for the Open House (9/23 & 25) and Public Hearing (10/7 & 10/9). The ads only provided four days' notice prior to the meetings.

ANALYSIS OF PARKS HIGHWAY CORRIDOR OPTION TO DETERMINE OPTIMAL ALIGNMENT – DATED AUGUST 2012

1. This study states that the first phase concluded that the Parks Highway corridor is the preferred option and that this study is the "...second phase in the route analysis..." (Pg. 1)

STAFF RESPONSE: As stated above, these studies and recommendations were made prior to the Open House and Public Hearing required by the Borough and prior to the City of Wasilla public hearings for the permit approvals.

2. Staff's has questions regarding information in this study that were previously identified in Staff's comments/questions throughout this document.



STAFF REPORT

Case #: U12-04 and A12-103
Prepared by: Planning Staff
Meeting Date: January 8, 2013

I. SUMMARY FACTS:

Applicant: Matanuska Electric Association (MEA)

Proposal: Construction of new 80 feet tall 115 kV double circuit transmission line, with a 100 feet wide right-of-way easement, extending from the new Eklutna generation station to the Herning substation located on S. Denali Street in the City of Wasilla.

Location: A corridor extending west from Seward-Meridian Highway on the north side of the Parks Highway and then crossing to the south side of the Parks Highway behind Creekside Plaza shopping center and then across to the north side of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension and then west along the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension to just east of Glenwood Avenue and then north to the existing Herning substation (see transmission line corridor on attached drawings dated December 7, 2012.)

Parcel Size: N/A

Existing Zoning Commercial and R-2, Residential Districts

Comprehensive Plan: Generally Commercial and Business

Surrounding Land Uses: North: Commercial
South: Commercial
East: Commercial
West: Commercial

II. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval with condition that transmission lines be placed underground.

III. ELEVATION OF PERMIT DECISION

16.12.040 Elevation.

The planner may elevate any use permit decision to the planning commission at any time between the acceptance of the application and the close of the decision period. The elevation must be based on a written finding that the permit decision satisfies one or more of the following criteria:

A. The proposed use could have significant negative effects on or conflict with existing land uses adjoining the site in a manner or to a degree that warrants consideration by the commission;

B. The proposed use could have significant negative impacts on the utility system, traffic flow or city-provided services;

C. The proposed use could conflict with adopted city policies or raises a particular issue or set of issues in a manner or to a degree that warrants consideration by the commission;

D. A written request for elevation has been received from an official reviewing party. To be valid an objection from a reviewing party must cite conflict(s) with city policy or unusual negative impacts from the proposed use;

E. A request to elevate has been received from two or more members of the commission. The planner must determine that the request from the commission member satisfies one or more of the criteria above. (Prior code § 16.43.406)

Staff Finding: Staff is elevating this request to the Planning Commission for their review based on Subsections A and C above.

16.16.020 Procedure for elevations.

Once a permit approval has been elevated for review (see Section 16.12.040), the following procedures apply:

A. Public Notice. If the planners' approval is elevated the planner shall:
1. Place the application on the agenda of the next available meeting of the commission;

2. Publish the agenda item in a newspaper of general circulation or place a public service announcement on radio or television. The published notice must set out the time, date and place of the hearing, the name of the applicant the address or general location of the property and subject or nature of the action;

3. Within five days of elevation issue a public hearing notice;

4. Mail or electronically transfer a copy of the public hearing notice to the applicant, the commission members, the neighborhood association if the neighborhood has an approved neighborhood plan and to appropriate reviewing parties;

5. The public hearing notice shall be sent to the owners of property, as listed on the Matanuska-Susitna Borough property tax rolls, located within a minimum of one thousand two hundred (1,200) feet of the lot lines of the development. The public notice shall be posted in city hall and on the site. Staff will allow a minimum of ten (10) days (fourteen (14) calendar days) from the date of public notice mailing before scheduling a public hearing on the request before the planning commission.

B. Decision. The commission shall review the planners draft recommendation, and may hear comment(s) from reviewing parties, the applicant and the public. The commission shall decide either to deny, approve or approve with conditions, or the commission may with concurrence of the applicant return the approval to the planner for further review as a new use permit application. (Prior code § 16.43.502)

IV. COMPLIANCE WITH WMC 16.16.050 – GENERAL APPROVAL CRITERIA

16.16.050 An administrative approval, use permit, elevated administrative approval, elevated use permit or conditional use may be granted if the following general approval criteria and any applicable specific approval criteria of Section 16.16.060 are complied with. The burden of proof is on the applicant to show that the proposed use meets these criteria and applicable specific criteria for approval. An approval shall include a written finding that the proposed use can occur consistent with the comprehensive plan, harmoniously with other activities allowed in the district and will not disrupt the character of the neighborhood. Such findings and conditions of approval shall be in writing and become part of the record and the case file.

16.16.050(1)&(5) Neighbors/Neighborhoods. Due deference has been given to the neighborhood plan or comments and recommendations from a neighborhood with an approved neighborhood plan.

Staff Finding: There are no approved neighborhood plans for neighborhoods along the proposed transmission line route nor does the route propose to go through established neighborhoods. However, numerous comments have been received from affected property owners and residents of the City expressing concerns about the proposed transmission lines and the impact on the affected property owners, the residents, and the City as a whole.

The Applicant stated in their response to this criteria that, “MEA’s consultants met with the public agency officials and conducted an open house and public hearing to identify an optimal alignment that was the most cost effective route with the least impact to adjacent property owners and did not interfere...” However, based on the language in the reports provided by the applicant in their permit application, the decision regarding the route was made prior to the open house or public hearing.

Specifically, Page 1, Paragraph 5, of the Executive Summary of the ***Analysis of Five Routing Options and Selection of Preferred Route*** report dated July 2012 states the following:

“This study concludes that the Parks Highway is the recommended routing option.”

Additionally, the ***Analysis of Parks Highway Corridor Option to Determine Optimal Alignment***, states that this report is the second phase in the route analysis, that the first phase concluded that the Parks Highway corridor was the preferred route option, and that the Parks Highway corridor was recommended for further study.

MEA also stated that they selected the proposed corridor since the highways already created a significant impact on the City. Although the highway has an impact on the City, the City does not want to intensify the negative impacts.

16.16.050(2) ***Plans. The proposal is substantially consistent with the city comprehensive plan and other city adopted plans.***

Staff Finding: **This criterion is not met.** The proposed route is not substantially consistent with the City Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code, Mission Statement, or City Council Goals and Initiatives.

The over-arching vision outlined in the Comprehensive Plan is to take the necessary steps to ensure the City remains region’s major commercial center, maintain the quality of life for the residents, and enhance the visual attractiveness of the community.

Specifically, the proposed transmission lines are inconsistent with the following purpose statement, goals, objectives, and/or actions and other policy statements within the Comprehensive Plan (copies of the applicable sections are included in the staff report packet of information):

Plan Purpose and Organization

This Comprehensive Plan (“Plan”) is intended to guide the decision-making of the City’s elected officials, commissions, and staff regarding future development and community quality of life. It provides a flexible, forward-thinking road map for action, with findings and goals that address important community elements. The expected useful life of this Plan is ten years, 2011 through 2021, which could be extended with regular updates.

Chapter 4 – Land Use

4.2 Desired Future Conditions

In the future, enhanced Land Use procedures and practices contribute significant benefit to the community as it continues to grow:

- *Property owners' rights are respected and land use decisions are made in a clear, predictable and fair process.*
- *A successful balance of land uses is achieved in the community, supporting both fiscal and quality of life values.*

4.4 Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Goal 1. *Provide balanced land use patterns that support the community's future growth.*

Goal 2. *Encourage development opportunities that support the City's role as a regional commercial center.*

Objective 2.1. *Encourage expansion of the City's commercial major areas to accommodate regional demands.*

Chapter 6 – Community Assets

6.2 Desired Future Conditions

- *Wasilla's Public Facilities are attractive, safe, functional and provide value to the community.*
- *Adequate water, sewer and utility networks serve residents and new growth, including economic enterprise and commercial uses.*
- *Recreation and parks are cost-effectively run and enhance local health and quality of life.*
- *A regionally linked network of trails serves diverse users safely and enjoyably.*
- *Historic, cultural and educational assets are enhanced for residents and visitors.*
- *Natural and scenic resources are preserved and maintained for the future.*
- *Wasilla enjoys an enhanced community character and identity.*

6.3 Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Goal 4. *Preserve and enhance the City's unique community assets.*

Objective 4.2 *Enhance the City's visual appearance and identity.*

Action 4.2.1 *Identify landmarks and features of visual interest to residents and visitors, and explore opportunities for enhancing access to them and/or framing views for the public (e.g. scenic overlooks, pullouts, site development that maintains and/or incorporates views.)*

Action 4.2.2 *Work to tap community pride and owners' self interest in enhancing properties along the Parks Highway by partnering with the Chamber of*

Commerce and other organizations on community beatification and cleanup efforts.

Action 4.2.3 Collaborate with ADOT&PF to identify ways to preserve landscaping along state roadways and minimize dust pollution from winter maintenance.

Chapter 7 – Economic Vitality

7.2 Desired Future Conditions

- *The City's economy in the future is more diverse and vibrant. The region's commercial and service sectors provide competitive products keeping regional dollars in the local economy.*
- *The City attracts additional residents and visitors. The population grows, as does the City's tourism sector. The already high quality of life, in addition to a revitalized Downtown and enhanced community image, make the City a desirable place to live, visit, and play.*

7.3 Goals, Objectives and Actions

Goal 1. *Continue to promote and enhance the City's future as the region's major center for commerce, services, visitor hospitality, culture and arts, transportation and industry.*

Objective 1.1 *Adopt policies and programs that will ensure that the City remains the preferred place in the Valley for shopping, services, employment, arts, entertainment, sports, and culture.*

Action 1.1.1 *Develop a strategic economic plan that considers how to secure Wasilla's future as the leading commercial center given its location and proximity to growing population nodes, particularly Knik/Fairview.*

Objective 1.2 *Develop a plan to creating a more diverse economic base that will attract a wider range of employment opportunities.*

Action 1.2.1 *Identify ways to ensure that the City continues to support appropriate development.*

Objective 1.3 *Encourage the development of new anchor developments, facilities, and attractions that generate economic activity.*

Action 1.3.1 *Support community initiatives to strengthen the City as a regional center of art, culture, and education (e.g. Valley Performing Arts expansion, new Wasilla Library, new Sports Dome).*

- Action 1.3.2** *Promote opportunities for creating a destination hotel, restaurant, timeshare and convention center in areas such the multi-modal transit center and the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry and Wasilla Heights.*
- Action 1.3.3** *Promote and support new activities, festivals, and recreational opportunities that encourage visitors and tourists to visit the City (e.g., fishing derbies, new mining history display, winter festival, etc.).*
- Objective 1.4** *Promote the City as a base for Valley recreation and a “Gateway to Adventure.”*
- Action 1.4.1** *Partner with the Mat-Su Convention and Visitors Bureau and Wasilla Chamber of Commerce and other recreation-oriented interests to promote the City’s visitor hospitality services and location as the gateway to recreational opportunities.*
- Action 1.4.2** *Identify opportunities for tourist attractions within the City.*

- Goal 2.** *Diversify the economic base and attract new employment generators.*
- Objective 2.1** *Continue to expand the City airport and encourage development of adjacent economic generators on City-owned land.*
- Action 2.1.1** *Identify ways to attract new product manufacturing and assembly plants, including focused on producing specialty items using local resources.*
- Action 2.1.2** *Seeks funds to be used for capital improvements that serve as an incentive to attract new employers to the City.*
- Objective 2.2** *Encourage employment opportunities within the City to reduce commuting to Anchorage for jobs.*
- Action 2.2.1** *Reach out to commercial, financial, and government entities headquartered in Anchorage and Palmer and promote local branch Wasilla offices, both to provide better services directly in MSB’s population growth center, and to allow commuting employees the option of working in their community.*

It is also substantially inconsistent with the City Land Development Code. Section 16.040.010 states that the Code’s purpose is:

- A. To achieve the goals and objectives, and implement the policies, of the Wasilla comprehensive plan;*
- B. To ensure that future growth and development in the city is in accord with the values of its residents;*

- C. To identify and secure, for present and future residents, the beneficial impacts of growth;*
- D. To ensure public involvement in permitting, planning and zoning decisions;*
- E. To identify and avoid, mitigate or prohibit the negative impacts of growth; and*
- F. To ensure that future growth is of the proper type, design and location, and is served by a proper range of public services and facilities.*

The proposed centerline of the transmission lines is within the right-of-way of two of the main commercial corridors within the City – the Parks Highway and the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension. The existing businesses along these roadways are some of the largest sales tax generators within the City. Additionally, this area has the most potential for additional commercial development since there are several large commercially zoned properties. These commercial properties are extremely important to the future growth and development of the City since the City's entire budget is based on the collection of sales tax. Existing and future sales tax dollars allow the City to improve the quality of life, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the City. It is vital that any development in the City provide a positive impact to the City. This is further supported by the City's Mission Statement below:

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

Additionally, MEA right-of-way easement vegetation removal policy is inconsistent with the landscaping requirements in WMC 16.33 for commercially developed properties. The proposed easements will encroach onto privately-owned commercial properties that have their required perimeter landscaping installed within the easement boundaries. Removal of the perimeter landscaping would cause the business to be out of compliance with the City Code and would be subject to fines. The only way to eliminate this conflict is to either amend the City's landscaping regulations or require the commercial property owners to place the required landscaping outside the easement. This will further reduce the square footage of commercial properties that is available for development.

The Wasilla City Council also adopts goals and initiatives annually that identify the priorities for the year that reflect the City's commitment to provide the highest level of public service while preserving and enhancing the quality of life for current and future

residents of the City and visitors to the community. Two goals that specifically apply to this request are listed below and the complete list of goals identified for Fiscal Year 2013 and Fiscal Year 2014 are also included in this packet:

“Preserve and enhance the quality of life for current and future residents of Wasilla and for visitors to this community.”

“Encourage a strong and diverse economic base in the City of Wasilla.”

MEA’s response to this criterion argues that the increased availability and reliability of power for commercial development outweighs all of the other the policies, goals, and objectives of the City that address preserving and enhancing the visual attractiveness of the City, preserving and enhancing the natural and scenic resources, encouraging the development of additional commercial businesses that will ensure Wasilla remains the region’s major commercial center, and providing a high quality of life to the City residents.

16.16.050(3) *Special Uses. The proposal is substantially consistent with the specific approval criteria of Section 16.16.060.*

Staff Finding: This criterion is not applicable since there are no specific approval criteria for utility facilities.

16.16.050(4) *Reviewing Parties. Due deference has been given to the comments and recommendations of reviewing parties.*

Staff Finding: The City mailed 710 notices to neighboring property owners within a 1200’ radius from the proposed centerline of the transmission lines. In response to the notices, City staff received numerous comments in opposition to the proposed 80 feet tall transmission lines from business owners and City residents. Copies of their comments are included in this packet. Any additional comments received after the compilation of the packet will be provided at the public hearing and can be addressed at that time.

16.16.050(6) *Fire Safety and Emergency Access. The proposal shall not pose a fire danger as determined by the State Fire Marshal or the fire chief of the district in which the proposed use is located. Adequate access for emergency and police vehicles must be provided.*

Staff Finding: This criterion is met since no comments were received from the Borough Fire Chief expressing concerns about a potential fire danger for the proposed transmission lines.

16.16.050(7) ***Traffic. The proposed use shall not overload the street system with traffic or result in unsafe streets or dangers to pedestrians...***

Staff Finding: This criterion is not applicable since the proposed transmission lines will not generate any additional traffic on the City's street system.

16.16.050(8) ***Dimensional Standards. The dimensional requirements of Section 16.24.010 are met.***

Staff Finding: This criterion is not applicable since Section 16.24.010 does not contain any specific dimensional requirements for utility facilities. However, it should be noted that buildings in the Commercial zoning district may not exceed 35' in height without conditional use approval by the Planning Commission. Although this section of code does not include height restrictions for utility facilities, the fact that the code regulates buildings over 35' implies that it has been determined that taller uses could have a negative impact on the surrounding area and need public input before approval.

16.24.050(9) ***Parking. The parking, loading areas, and snow storage sites for the proposed development shall be adequate, safe and properly designed. The developer may be required to install acceptable lighting at pedestrian or vehicular access points.***

Staff Finding: This criterion is not applicable since parking is not required for utility facilities.

16.16.050(10) ***Utilities. The proposed use shall be adequately served by water, sewer, electricity, on-site water or sewer systems and other utilities.***

Staff Finding: This criterion is not applicable since the proposed use is a utility facility.

16.16.050(11) ***Drainage. The proposed use shall provide for the control of runoff during and after construction. All roads and parking areas shall be designed to alleviate runoff into public streets, adjoining lots and protect rivers lakes and streams from pollution. Uses may be required to provide for the conservation of natural features such as drainage basins and watersheds, and land stability.***

Staff Finding: **This criterion is not met.** Although the proposed transmission lines should not create runoff during or after construction, the site plan shows the proposed transmission lines crossing Cottonwood Creek and, according to the Borough's comments, will cross properties within a flood zone.

Also, the City's Land Development Code prohibits the clearing of native vegetation and/or installation of any footings within 75 feet of the mean high-water mark of a water course or water body, including lakes, streams, and rivers. Since the applicant's permit application or site plan did not address this issue, staff is unable to determine whether there will be negative impacts to these areas. However, it is assumed that there will be negative impacts since they are proposing a 100 feet wide right-of-way easement with all vegetation removed within the easement. This proposal will require clearing in areas that are within wetlands and also within 75 feet of the mean high-water mark of water bodies, which is prohibited by the City Code.

NOTE: MEA did not address this criterion in their application packet.

16.16.050(12) *Large Developments. Residential development of more than four units or non-residential development of more than ten thousand (10,000) square feet gross floor area may be required to provide a site plan showing measures to be taken for the preservation of open space, sensitive areas and other natural features; provision of common signage; provision for landscaping and provisions for safe and effective circulation of vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles. Nonresidential large developments must be located with frontage on one of the following class of streets: interstate, minor arterial, major collector or commercial.*

Staff Finding: This criterion is not applicable since this is not a large lot development.

16.16.050(13) *Peak Use. The proposed use shall not result in significantly different peak use characteristics than surrounding uses or other uses allowed in the district.*

Staff Finding: This criterion is met. The proposed transmission lines will not result in significantly different peak use characteristics than surrounding uses or other uses allowed in the district.

16.16.050(14)

Off-Site Impacts. *The proposal shall not significantly impact surrounding properties with excessive noise, fumes or odors, glare, smoke, light, vibration, dust, litter, or interference in any radio or television receivers off the premises, or cause significant line voltage fluctuation off the premises. Radio transmitters and any electronic communications equipment regulated by the Federal Communications Commission is specifically excluded from regulation by this section. Welding, operation of electrical appliances or power tools, or similar activities that cause off site impacts as described above are specifically regulated by this subsection. Buffering may be required to ameliorate impacts between residential and nonresidential uses. The owner of the property upon which the buffer is constructed is responsible for the maintenance of the buffer in a condition that will meet the intent of these criteria.*

Staff Finding:

This criterion is met since the proposed transmission lines will not create excessive noise, fumes or odors, glare, smoke, light, vibration, dust, litter, interference with radio or television receivers, or cause significant line voltage fluctuation off the premises.

16.16.050(15)

Landscaping. *The proposed use shall be designed in a manner that minimizes the removal of trees and vegetative cover, and shall conform to the standards in this title concerning the provision and maintenance of landscaping, and any landscaping plan that is required for the proposed use under this title. The approval authority also may condition approval on the provision of the following:*

- a. *A fenced storage area for common use, adequate to store boats, trailers, snowmobiles, recreational vehicles and similar items.*
- b. *Adequately sized, located and screened trash receptacles and areas.*

Staff Finding:

This criterion is not met. MEA's requirement for a 100 feet wide right-of-way easement that is cleared of vegetation, shrubs, or trees is inconsistent with the City's required landscaping for commercially zoned properties.

Based on MEA's rules and regulations for vegetation with the right-of-way easement, the right-of-way for an overhead transmission line must be cleared of any trees, shrubs, and other vegetation. The proposed rights-of-way shown on the site plan will encroach onto privately-owned commercially developed and/or commercially-zoned properties along the Parks Highway and the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension. MEA's rules will require clearing of any landscaping, trees, and vegetation that is within 50 feet of either side of the centerline of the proposed transmission lines. These

regulations are reflected in MEA's rules and regulations, their brochure entitled, ***The Right Landscaping for the Right Place***, and on their website at www.mea.coop (copies of this information is included in this packet.)

In MEA's response to this criterion, they stated that "MEA will construct and maintain the project in compliance with WMC 16.33.030(F) and 16.33.030(I). However, their utility easement policy prohibits landscaping within the easement. This is inconsistent with the landscaping regulations in WMC 16.33 and 16.24.040(D)(4).

Recently, there have been two instances within the City that clearly show the conflict between MEA right-of-way vegetation regulations and the City landscaping regulations. The first is the recent area-wide right-of-way clearing of the MEA easements within the city limits. During this clean-up, numerous trees were removed that were within the MEA easements on commercial properties. Some of the trees were significantly shorter than the existing transmission lines and were a type of tree that could be maintained at a height that would not interfere with the transmission lines. Other trees were not under the transmission lines but only within the easement. The second example was when a representative for a newly constructed commercial business and City staff member were advised by a MEA representative that landscaping consisting of shrubs, rocks, and decorative fencing within the MEA easement was not allowed, even though removing it would cause the business to be out of compliance with the City's landscaping regulations.

16.16.050(16) ***Walkways, Sidewalks and Bike Paths. Pedestrian walkways or bicycle paths may be required where necessary to provide reasonable circulation or access to schools, playgrounds, shopping areas, transportation or other community facilities. Improvements must be constructed to standards adopted by the engineer.***

Staff Finding: This criterion is not applicable to a utility facility.

16.16.050(17) ***Water, Sewage and Drainage Systems. If a proposed use is within five hundred (500) feet of an existing, adequate public water system, the developer may be required to construct a distribution system and the connection to the public system. A developer may be required to increase the size of existing public water, sewer or drainage lines or to install a distribution system within the development. The commission may require any or all parts of such installation to be oversized. The developer must submit to the engineer an acceptable plan that***

shows that if within ten (10) years an increase in capacity will be required to serve other areas how these needs will be met by oversized facilities. When installation of oversized facilities is required, the developer shall install such facilities at their own expense. The developer shall be reimbursed the amount determined by the engineer to be the difference in cost between the installed cost of the oversized utility lines and the installed cost of the utility lines adequate to serve both the development concerned and all other land to be served by the lines which is owned or under the control of the developer, provided the developer may not be required to install facilities unless funds for such oversizing have been appropriated for the purpose by the city and there is a sufficient unencumbered balance in the balance in the appropriation. No reimbursement may be made unless the developer has entered into such agreement with the city, including conveyances of personal property including lines, lift stations and valves and conveyances of land or rights in land, as the city determines may be necessary to ensure complete control by the city of its sewer, drainage and water lines when they are extended to serve the property of the developer. Notwithstanding the requirement that the developer construct improvements to existing systems, the commission may elect to accomplish the design or construction, or both, of improvements to be made to existing public systems. In such a case, the commission may require advance payment to the city of the estimated cost of work to be accomplished by the city. The developer shall reimburse the city for all expenses of such design or construction not paid in advance. A public system is adequate if, in the judgment of the engineer, it is feasible for the developer to make improvements to the public system which will provide the increased capacity necessary to serve the existing users and the new development at the same level as is being provided to the existing users. Prior to approval of a use for which a community water system is required, the developer must submit evidence showing that there is available a satisfactory source of water. A source of water is satisfactory only if it can be shown that the proposed source will produce water sufficient in quality and quantity to supply the development. The water system and the connection between such distribution systems and the source must be sized and constructed to meet fire flow and hydrant requirements for fire protection and that the developer has obtained or can obtain a water appropriation permit or certificate for the water from the state. The system must be built to city specifications available from the engineer.

Staff Finding: This criterion is not applicable since water, sewage, and drainage systems are not required for utility facilities.

16.16.050(18) *Historic Resources. The proposed use shall not adversely impact any historic resource prior to the assessment of that resource by the city.*

Staff Finding: The MSB Cultural Resources Office did not submit any comments. However, MEA should contact them prior to any clearing or construction.

16.16.050(19) *Appearance. The proposed use may be required to blend in with the general neighborhood appearance and architecture. Building spacing, setbacks, lot coverage, and height must be designed to provide adequate provisions for natural light and air.*

Staff Finding: **This criterion is not met.** The proposed 80 feet tall transmission lines with the 100 feet wide right-of-way easement cleared of vegetation will cause significant visual impact on the scenic views along the proposed route and will decrease the attractiveness of the corridor if the vegetation is removed within the required utility right-of-way easements.

Currently, no transmission lines are located along the right-of-way for the Parks Highway, Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension, and abutting frontage roads, with the exception of a short section on the north side of the Parks Highway on the southern property line of the Target shopping center. In fact, the majority of the commercial businesses or shopping centers within the City do not have above-ground utilities on their site or in the right-of-way abutting their property lines. This includes Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Lowe's, Ford, Sportsman's Warehouse, Fred Meyer, The Valley Cinema, Sears, Creekside Plaza shopping center, and others. This shows a clear desire on the part of business owners within the City to have underground utilities, even though they typically pay the cost to bury them. In addition to the visual impact on commercial properties, MEA's desired right-of-way easement on private commercially-zoned properties will impact the developable square footage on these commercially priced and taxed properties.

MEA's response to this criterion is that "a transmission line is typically compatible with commercial development..." However, as indicated above, the businesses within the city limits have chosen to have a more attractive "curb appeal" by placing the utilities underground. Also, the proposed transmission lines will be 45 feet taller than any building/structure permitted within the city limits.

16.16.050(20) Open Space and Facilities. The applicant may be required to dedicate land for open space drainage, utilities, access, parks or playgrounds. Any dedication required by the city must be based on a written finding that the area is necessary for public use or safety and the dedication is in compliance with adopted municipal plans and policy. The city finding shall conclude that a direct connection exists between the development and the need for the provision of the dedication...

Staff Finding: This criterion is not applicable for a utility facility.

16.16.050(21) *Winter Hassles. The proposed use shall not significantly increase the impact on the surrounding area from glaciation or drifting snow.*

Staff Finding: This criterion is met since the proposed use will not significantly increase the impact on the surrounding area from glaciations or drifting snow.

V. FINDINGS

Process Findings:

Application: Planning staff has determined that the application along with supporting data is complete and submission requirements were met in a timely manner.

Public Notice: All public noticing requirements of WMC 16.16.040(B) have been met. Public notices were mailed on December 14 and 17, 2012, allowing for the proper number of days in which to comment in accordance with 16.16.040, and an advertisement for the hearing ran in the December 23, 25 & 30, 2012 and January 1, 2013 editions of the Frontiersman.

Comment Period: The written comment period was appropriately given and comments received by mail have been included in the packet. Any comments received after distribution of the January 8, 2013 packet will be provided at the meeting.

Public Hearing: The public hearing is scheduled in compliance with the requirements of WMC 16.16.040(D).

Decision: Draft Findings of Fact are included as Exhibit A in the attached Planning Commission Resolution Serial No. 13-01 supporting the Commission's decision in compliance with WMC 16.16.040(6).

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the information above and other information included in the public hearing packet, staff finds that the proposed 80 feet tall transmission lines with a 100 feet right-of-way easement cleared of vegetation is not consistent with the vision for the City, which is included in the policies, goals, objectives, statements, and actions in the City's Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code, Mission Statement, or City Council Goals and Initiatives. As proposed, the transmission lines will have a detrimental effect on the visual appearance and scenic resources along the proposed route and will negatively impact existing and potential commercial development on commercially-zoned properties due to the reduction in developable square footage from the 100 feet wide right-of-way easement and the visual impact of the tall transmission lines along the business frontage.

Therefore, staff offers the following two options for the Planning Commission to consider. The first option is the one that staff believes is consistent with the purpose and intent of the City Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code, Mission Statement, and other City policies. The second option provides the applicant with additional time to propose alternative routes and/or designs for the transmission lines for review and consideration by the Planning Commission at future public hearing.

OPTION 1: Approve proposed transmission line route with the following conditions:

1. The lines must be installed underground; and
2. The underground utilities must be installed within the corridor shown on the drawings dated December 7, 2012, attached as Exhibit B to Resolution Serial No. 13-01.

OPTION 2: Continue the public hearing to the February 12, 2013 Planning Commission meeting. This will allow sufficient time for the Planning Commission and all interested/affected parties to review the materials and information provided by the applicant, staff, and the public. It also allows the applicant time to provide any additional information requested or determined necessary by the Planning Commission at the January 8, 2013 public hearing to decide whether the proposed route is in the best interests of the City and is substantially consistent with the City Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code.

In addition to information requested by the Planning Commission, staff recommends that the Planning Commission require the applicant to provide the following information to the City Planning Department for review and inclusion in the staff findings and recommendation and the February 12, 2013 meeting packet. All new information would need to be provided to the Planning Department no later than January 25, 2013 to allow all sufficient time for review by the Planning Commission and any interested/affected parties.

1. Photographs and/or videos taken at the street-view level superimposing the proposed transmission poles and lines to provide a clear visual representation of the impact to the scenic vistas from these roadways and the aesthetic appearance of the city. At a minimum, these should include 360° views of the proposed route along the affected portions of the Parks Highway and the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension.
2. Documents visually identifying the areas and the amount of vegetation that will be removed by MEA to provide the requested 100 feet wide right-of-way easement for the transmission lines.
3. Copy of MEA Decisional Document to be submitted to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Note: MEA's response to Criterion 16.16.050(5) above states that they will provide this to the City and that it will "...incorporate the written analysis of the City's proposed alternatives and comments..." However, we have not received the document and don't know what they are referring to when they mention a written analysis from the City.



CITY OF WASILLA

• Planning Office •

290 East Herning Avenue • Wasilla • Alaska • 99654-7091

• Telephone 907-373-9020 •

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 3, 2013

TO: Wasilla Planning Commission

FROM: Archie Giddings, Public Works Director
Tina Crawford, AICP, City Planner

RE: MEA Request for Waiver of Site Plan Requirements for Administrative
Approval #A12-103 and Use Permit #U12-05 Proposed MEA
Transmission Lines with the City of Wasilla

As part of the application submittal for the permits referenced above, MEA is requesting that the Planning Commission waive the site plan requirements in Section 16.08.015. Pursuant to Section 16.08.015(D)(2) of the Wasilla Municipal Code, the Planning Commission may waive the site plan requirements for permit applications after considering the recommendations of the Public Works Director and the City Planner.

Staff supports that Applicant's request that the Planning Commission to waive the following site requirements since these requirements are intended for review of one parcel not an area-wide utility project:

WMC 16.08.015 – Site Plan – As-Built Survey

- C. *Submit site plan on either 8 ½" x 11" or 8 ½" x 14" paper at a scale of 1:50 or less;*
3. *Describe all property corners;*
4. *Identify all easements of record, including any that do not appear on the recorded plat for the property but would be identified in a title report;*
5. *Show setbacks required in Section 16.24.030;*
8. *Show the location and horizontal dimensions of all existing and proposed permanent structures and temporary structures over 120 square feet, including the distance from the nearest lot lines;*
9. *Show the location of all existing and proposed vehicular access points;*
10. *Show the location and dimensions of existing and proposed parking...;*
11. *Show the parking lot lighting layout...;*
12. *Show existing and proposed pedestrian and vehicular access and on-site circulation improvements, including roadways, driving aisles, sidewalks, trails, paths, curbs and gutters, catch basins and culverts;*
13. *Show drainage patterns...;*
14. *Provide a landscape plan showing proposed landscaping*

However, staff does not support the Applicant's request to delegate the authority to approve the design plans, which includes the height of the power poles, the type of power pole structure, the actual placement locations of the power poles (including poles with guy wires), etc. The Planning Commission's power and responsibility to review and approve land use permits is granted by the State of Alaska and the Wasilla City Council. Delegating the Planning Commission's authority to any staff member for this type of review is not consistent with the State Statutes, the City Comprehensive Plan, City Land Development Code, or City Mission Statement.

All of the City's codes and policies clearly state that it is the City's goal to have maximum public participation in the decision-making process for new development within the City – especially projects that have the potential for significant impacts on the City residents and their quality of life. The Wasilla City Council adopted specific guidelines regarding the duties and authority of the Planning Commission in the City Code and the City Land Development Code as indicated below:

WMC 2.60.010 – Establish, duties and compensation. (of the Planning Commission)

(B) The commission shall:

- (6) Hear and decide all permit applications that require a public hearing, including but not limited to applications for variances, rezones, and other procedures that may be required by the land development code;*

WMC 16.16.010 – Planning commission approvals.

Approvals by the commission are intended to address uses and issues of community wide importance and are therefore subject to a broader public process and higher standards than approvals by the planner.

WMC 16.16.030 – Approval required.

All conditional uses and elevated approvals must receive approval by the commission prior to commencement. In all applications for an approval, the burden of proof shall be on the developer to prove, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the criteria set forth in this title are met.

Conducting public hearings to allow City residents and affected parties to provide input to the Planning Commission about large-scale projects is one of the main responsibilities of the Planning Commission, as shown above. Additionally, the staff report for the two referenced permits contains findings that the proposed 80 feet tall transmission lines are not consistent with the City's codes, ordinances, and other land use policies.

Therefore, staff does not agree that the Planning Commission should waive the requirement for the design requirements for a site plan and that the Applicant must still submit information that sufficiently addresses the site plan requirements in WMC 16.08.015(C) below:

1. Information in the title block showing the name and address of the firm that prepared the plan and the scale of the plan;
2. A north arrow
6. The location and dimensions of existing and proposed utility facilities.
7. The location of all lakes, streams and potential wetlands within 75 feet of any existing or proposed structure.

Tahirih Revet

From: Ronald Baird <orlb@alaska.net>
Sent: Monday, December 31, 2012 3:11 PM
To: Planning
Subject: Public Comment Case No. U12-05 and A12-103
Attachments: PWL01121231 EMB Planning Office a1.PDF; Pole Structure.pdf

Attached is a letter and exhibit setting out my comments on behalf of Gloria Powell on the above-referenced case concerning MEA's proposed transmission line.

Ronald L. Baird
907-565-8818

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December 31, 2012

Via email to planning@ci.wasilla.ak.us and U.S. Mail

Planning Office
City of Wasilla
290 E. Herning Ave.
Wasilla, AK 99654

Subject: Application for Use Permit Approval by Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. ("MEA") for a 115 kV double circuit transmission line and Waiver of Site Plan Submittal
Planning Case: U12-05&A12-103

To Whom It May Concern:

I represent Gloria M. Powell, trustee of the Leo J. Demers Testamentary Trust, who is the owner of property on East Palmer-Wasilla Highway described as Lot 2, Home Depot Wasilla Subdivision, Plat 2005-151. The corridor map attached to the public notice of the hearing on the above-referenced application shows the proposed transmission line crossing East Palmer-Wasilla Highway immediately to the south of my client's property. My client requests denial of this application for the reasons set forth in this letter.

1. MEA's Route Selection Process Was Fatally Flawed And Preempted City Planning Processes. The application submitted by MEA was apparently accompanied by a Draft Preliminary Report dated July 2012 discussing the route selection process. Though all of the identified routes terminate in the City of Wasilla, incredibly the study never mentions the City's Comprehensive Plan adopted June 13, 2011 at all. Instead of framing its comparison of routes in terms of the policies and values expressed in the City's plan, MEA's study imposed its own criteria which are woefully inadequate and incomplete. For example, the study claims the routes were evaluated in terms of "minimize public controversy." On the other hand, MEA now belatedly in its application recognizes that the City's plan has an objective of improving the appearance of the business district along the Parks Highway. But this objective was not considered in evaluating the routes. It is likely that a thorough review of the Plan would reveal other relevant criteria for evaluating the routes. But until MEA in good faith considers the Plan in its initial route evaluation process, the result is a flawed process which preempts City planning.

While the Plan does provide relevant review criteria, it is true that neither the Plan nor the City's zoning approval process specifically address the routing of linear facilities like this transmission line. The City should consider delaying approval of the route of the facility until more specific planning is complete and perhaps additional ordinances are enacted.

2. MEA's Route Selection Process Is Incomplete. In addition to being substantively flawed, MEA's route selection process was procedurally not complete at the time of its application to the City nor as of the deadline for public written comment on that application. The planning file indicates that the City's planning staff was consulted about the project and proposed some alternative routes after July, 2012, the date of the draft route study filed with the application. What these routes were and what consideration MEA gave to them is unknown but critically relevant to the application. The planning file also indicates that a parallel, more elaborate review process for the routing of this line is underway under ordinances of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. That process requires solicitation of public comment and then written consideration of that comment in a decisional document. The later is not complete and is required if MEA's selection is to be found to be in good faith, the result of considering all relevant information, and therefore rational.

3. The Application Lacks An Explanation And Drawing Of Typical Pole Heights And Pole Designs Or A Least A Depiction Of The Range Of Possibilities Being Considered. MEA's application seeks approval of a route only and waiver of the requirement of a site plan. City Code of Ordinances §16.08.015(D) does authorize waiver of the site plan but provides no guidance for the standards to be used in granting such waivers. Accordingly, the Commission should proceed cautiously in granting such a waiver since routine waivers completely undermine the requirement.

Critical to the evaluation of the impacts of this facility, most importantly its visual impact, are the height and design of the poles which will support the lines. The impact of a metal "H" structure such as the one shown on MEA's letterhead and a single wood pole is dramatically different. The height and design is in turn driven by the number of conductors the poles will support and whether they will also carry distribution lines. While MEA might reasonably be excused from a parcel by parcel depiction of what the facility will look like, the question of pole height and design should not be left to some later administrative review process without formal public input.

Planning Office
December 31, 2012
Page 3 of 3

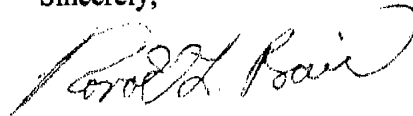
Failure to address pole height and design in a public process recently resulted in a wholly inappropriate design for the transmission line recently constructed along Northern Lights Boulevard in Anchorage. A picture of that pole type is enclosed.

4. The Necessity and Location of the Line Along and Crossing East Palmer-Wasilla Highway Is Unexplained.

The route map filed by MEA with its application shows the line proceeding along East Palmer-Wasilla Highway on the south side of the street, then crossing to the north side of the street, and then continuing down the north side of the street. Why the line must proceed along East Palmer-Wasilla Highway is not explained nor whether any alternatives to this micro-routing were examined. The is a development corridor and the impact of the line on this development has not been addressed. The crossing of the highway immediately in front of my client's property is similarly unexplained. MEA should not be allowed to supply a justification, if one exists, at the "eleventh hour" in the City's process when my client does not have adequate opportunity to evaluate it.

In summary, MEA's route selection process is flawed and incomplete. Its application lacks critical information and consideration of relevant factors and alternatives. The application should be denied.

Sincerely,



Ronald L. Baird

Enclosure

cc: Gloria Powell

RLB:rlb - Powell121230 Ltr to Planning

Google

Address **East Northern Lights Boulevard**

Address is approximate



December 31, 2012

Tina Crawford, City Planner
City of Wasilla
290 E Herning Ave.
Wasilla, AK

Re: 17N01W10 Parcels D9 & D10

Ms. Crawford,

As an impacted Landowner, I wish to express my opposition to the proposed MEA Transmission Line "Optimal Route" from the Hospital Substation to the Herning Substation along the Parks Hwy and the Palmer-Wasilla Hwy Extension.

I own highway frontage property along both sides of the Palmer-Wasilla Hwy Extension just west of the Home Depot stoplight. As of this date, no one from MEA has contacted me regarding acquiring an easement across the front of my property. Because of the negative visual and functional impact, I would be unwilling to grant an easement.



Leonard J. Grau, Jr, Owner

1231 E Glenwood Ave.
Wasilla, AK 99654

RECEIVED

JAN 2 2013

Planning Office
City of Wasilla

Tahirih Revet

From: Richard Besse <besse@mtaonline.net>
Sent: Monday, December 31, 2012 5:17 PM
To: Planning
Cc: Sam Kehler
Subject: Case U12-05 & A12-103
Attachments: Wasilla Planning Commission - MEA-Use Permit.pdf

To whom this may concern:

We would like the attached comments included in the meeting packet for the January 8, 2013 Planning Commission Meeting.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Richard Besse

- NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR USE PERMIT -

DATE: December 13, 2012 CASE: U12-05 & A12-103
APPLICANT (S): Matanuska Electric Association

REQUEST: Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. (MEA) is requesting approval to construct a new 115 kV double circuit transmission line from its new Eklutna Generation Station to its Herning Substation located at the south end of South Denali Street south of East Susitna Avenue in Wasilla. The proposed transmission lines will be approximately 80 feet tall and are proposed to be located within the right-of-way along the north side of the Parks Highway extending west into the city limits from the east to and then crossing to the south side of the Parks Highway at the east end of the Creekside Plaza Shopping Center and then extending westerly behind the shopping center and adjoining properties and then crossing to the north side of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension right-of-way at the light at Home Depot and continuing southwest along the north side of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension right-of-way to approximately Glenwood Avenue and then heading north to the existing Herning substation.

The City Planner has elevated the request for Use Permit under the provisions of WMC 16.12.040. You are being notified of this proposed action in accordance with Chapter 16.16.020.

A public hearing will be held on **January 8, 2013** at 7:00 PM in the City Council Chambers. Comments may be submitted in writing by filling in the spaces provided below and mailing to: City of Wasilla, Planning Office, 290 E. Herning Ave., Wasilla, AK 99654. If there is not enough room below, please attach a separate piece of paper. You may also fax your comments to (907) 373-9021 or email them to planning@ci.wasilla.ak.us. Your written comments on this project must reach the Planning Office on or before **December 31, 2012** in order for them to be included in the meeting packet. Comments received after that date will be provided to the Planning Commission at the meeting.

Anyone wishing to review the application for this case is encouraged to contact the Planning Office for additional information.

Name Alaska Club Partners, LLC
Address 5201 E Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK. 99507
Lot 2A Block _____ Subdivision Creekside Plaza

Comments: See Attached



CITY OF WASILLA
PLANNING OFFICE
290 E HERNING AVE
WASILLA, AK 99654
PHONE 373-9020 FAX 373-9021

6865000L002A
ALASKA CLUB PARTNERS LLC
5201 E TUDOR RD
ANCHORAGE, AK 99507

12/14/2012
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FIRST CLASS

PUBLIC NOTICE

BESSE ENGINEERING
1890 Jaime Marie Circle
WASILLA, ALASKA 99654
907-357-4257

December 31, 2012

City of Wasilla
Planning Office
290 E. Herning Ave.
Wasilla, Alaska 99654
Via planning@ci.wasilla.ak.us

Re: Matanuska Electric Association Use Permit Application
Case U12-05 & A12-103

Planning Commission Members:

On behalf of The Alaska Club Partners, LLC, we object to the proposed alignment of the 115 kV double circuit transmission line across the middle of Lot 2A, Creekside Plaza.

The construction of a huge electrical transmission line thru the heart of the business district in Wasilla is not in the community's best interest. We understand the need to increase the capacity of the electricity to continue the growth of the community. There are other routes to the south of Wasilla for the transmission line which are much less obtrusive to the visual impact of the current proposed location.

The proposed alignment would cross our property approximately mid-lot in an east west direction. The construction of the transmission line would essentially subdivide our property. The un-intended subdivision of the property would greatly impact our plans to expand our facility and would certainly affect the value of our asset.

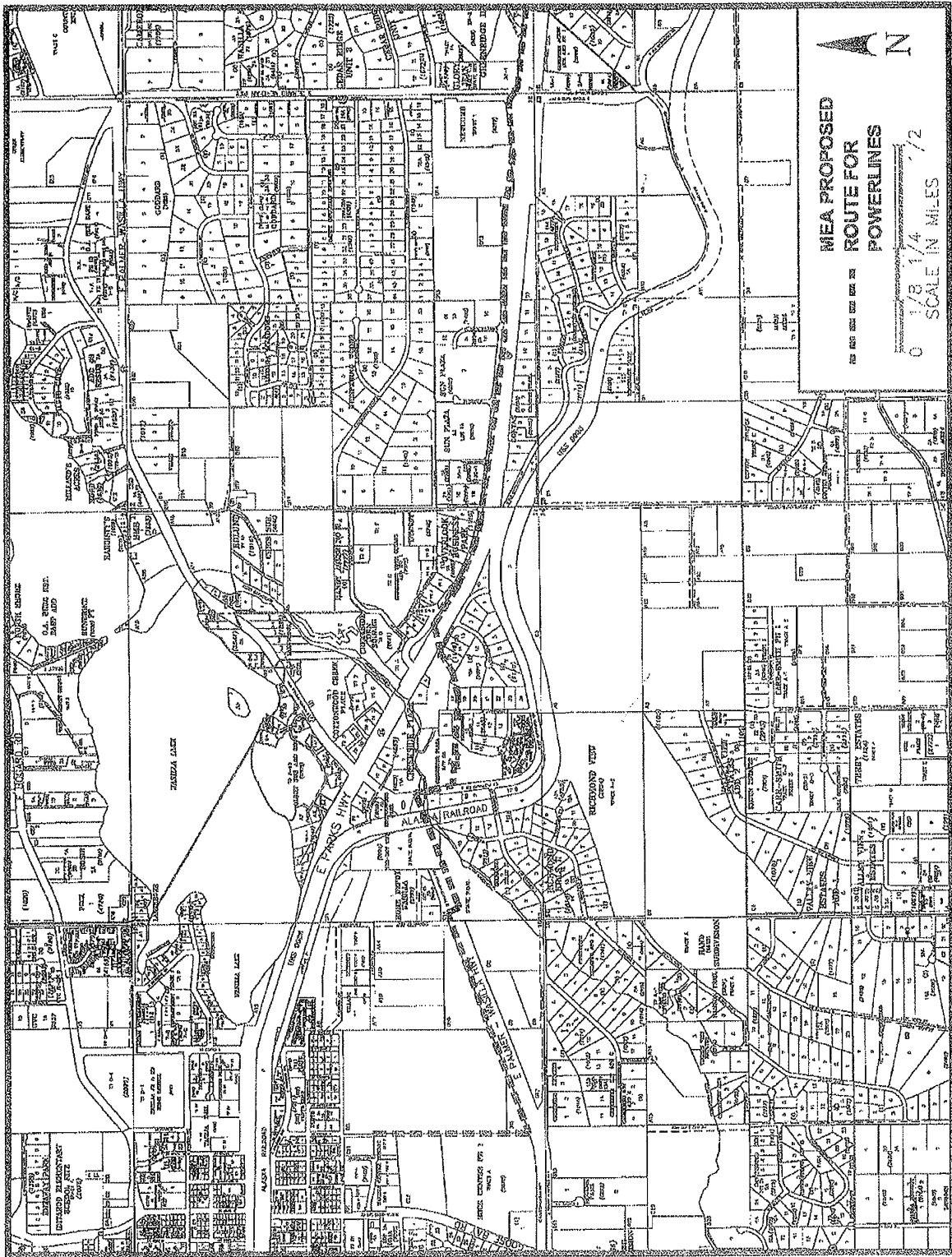
We would appreciate if you would reject the alignment chosen by MEA for the transmission line. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,
BESSE ENGINEERING



Richard L. Besse, P.E.

Cc: Mr. Sam Kehler, Alaska Club Partners, LLC



Tahirih Revet

From: Bob Andres <rjtrout1@me.com>
Sent: Friday, December 28, 2012 11:03 AM
To: Planning
Subject: mea proposal Towers and Transmission Line

To Whom it may concern,

We are strongly opposed of the MEA transmission lines and towers to be in front of our business. It's hard to believe that this eye sore is the best route and would benefit anyone's business. Why would anyone think this would be a great look for Wasilla.

Let me know what I can do to stop this.

Best Regards,

Robert J. Andres
Windbreak Cafe

**The Pedersen Family Limited Partnership
P.O. Box 871
Marysville, CA 95901
530-742-3500**

December 20, 2012

City of Wasilla
290 E. Herning Ave.
Wasilla, AK 99654-7091

Re: Case No. U12-05 and AR-103

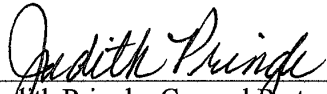
Regarding proposed Matanuska Electric Association transmission lines with 80 foot towers running across the back of Creekside Plaza, within a few feet of our shopping center building and along the edge within 20 feet of a new youth activity building on Lot 19, on the south edge of a four-plex and The Alaska Club.

The impact of this transmission line in this location would be devastating as well as a potentially dangerous situation and would end up in a lawsuit if pursued by Matanuska Electric Association.

I have enclosed a copy of the proposed map showing an alternative route crossing Parks Highway at the Old Matanuska Road running along the south side on the road or on the Railroad Road right of way all the way to the intersection of Cottonwood Creek.

It is not possible for me to attend the meeting on January 8th but I want you to know if this route is approved there will be a lawsuit.

Sincerely,



Judith Pringle, General Partner
The Pedersen Family Limited Partnership

CC:
Matanuska Electric Association
The Alaska Club
Paul Minnick
Ashburn & Mason

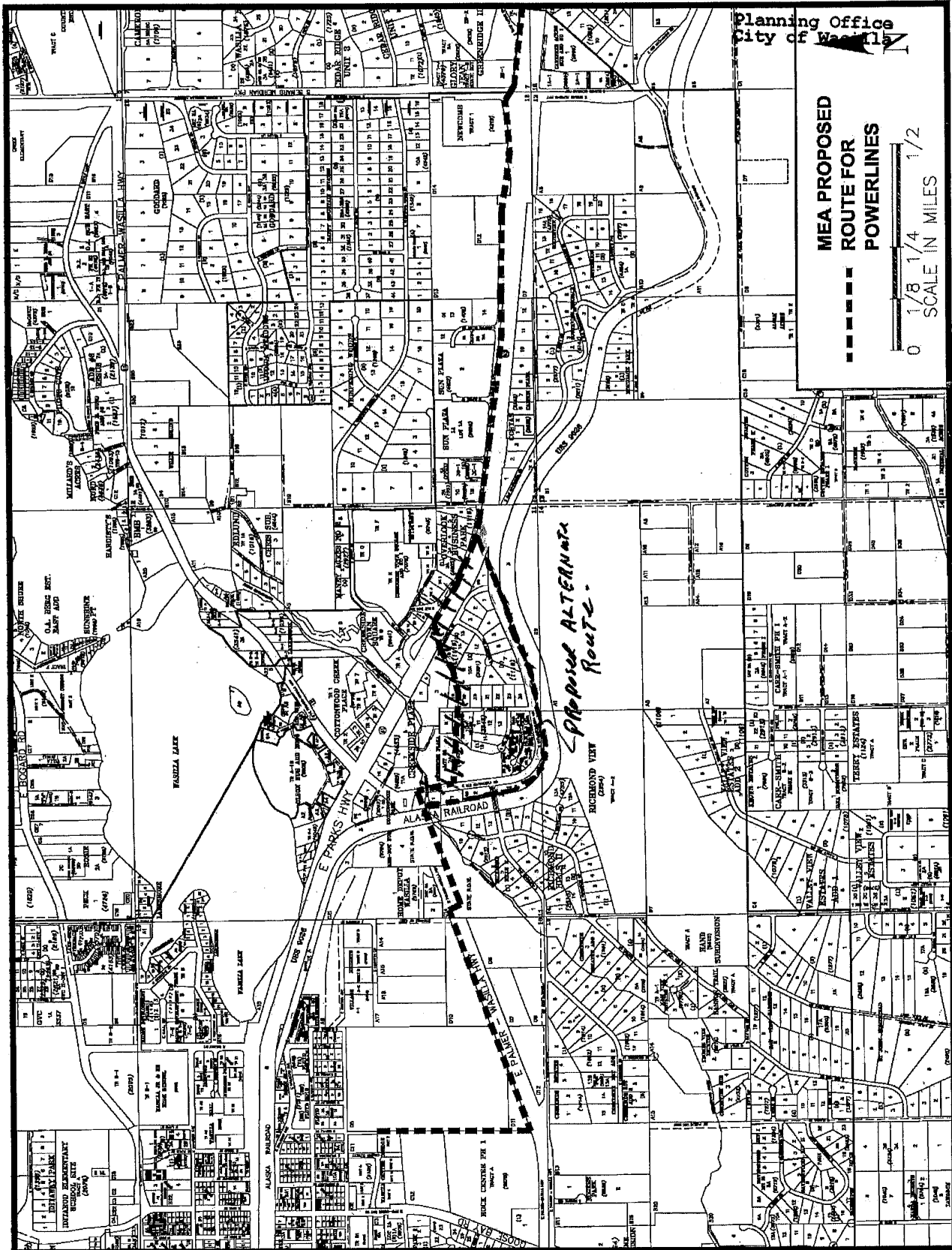
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DEC 28 2012

Planning Office
City of Wasilla

RECEIVED

DEC 28 2012



- NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR USE PERMIT -

DATE: **December 13, 2012** CASE: **U12-05 & A12-103**

APPLICANT (S): **Matanuska Electric Association**

REQUEST: Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. (MEA) is requesting approval to construct a new 115 kV double circuit transmission line from its new Eklutna Generation Station to its Herning Substation located at the south end of South Denali Street south of East Susitna Avenue in Wasilla. The proposed transmission lines will be approximately 80 feet tall and are proposed to be located within the right-of-way along the north side of the Parks Highway extending west into the city limits from the east to and then crossing to the south side of the Parks Highway at the east end of the Creekside Plaza Shopping Center and then extending westerly behind the shopping center and adjoining properties and then crossing to the north side of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension right-of-way at the light at Home Depot and continuing southwest along the north side of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension right-of-way to approximately Glenwood Avenue and then heading north to the existing Herning substation.

The City Planner has elevated the request for Use Permit under the provisions of WMC 16.12.040. You are being notified of this proposed action in accordance with Chapter 16.16.020.

A public hearing will be held on **January 8, 2013** at **7:00 PM** in the City Council Chambers. Comments may be submitted in writing by filling in the spaces provided below and mailing to: City of Wasilla, Planning Office, 290 E. Herning Ave., Wasilla, AK 99654. If there is not enough room below, please attach a separate piece of paper. You may also fax your comments to (907) 373-9021 or email them to planning@ci.wasilla.ak.us. Your written comments on this project must reach the Planning Office on or before **December 31, 2012** in order for them to be included in the meeting packet. Comments received after that date will be provided to the Planning Commission at the meeting.

Anyone wishing to review the application for this case is encouraged to contact the Planning Office for additional information.

Name _____
Address _____
Lot _____ Block _____ Subdivision _____

Comments: _____



CITY OF WASILLA
PLANNING OFFICE
290 E HERNING AVE
WASILLA, AK 99654
PHONE 373-9020 FAX 373-9021

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PEDERSEN FAM LTD PRTRNSHP
PO BOX 871
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MARYSVILLE, CA 95901-0871

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ZIP 99654
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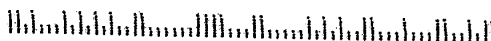
RECEIVED

DEC 28 2012

Planning Office
City of Wasilla

PUBLIC NOTICE

9590130024 8005



- NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR USE PERMIT -

DATE: December 13, 2012

CASE: U12-05 & A12-103

APPLICANT (S): Matanuska Electric Association

REQUEST: Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. (MEA) is requesting approval to construct a new 115 kV double circuit transmission line from its new Eklutna Generation Station to Its Herning Substation located at the south end of South Denali Street south of East Susitna Avenue in Wasilla. The proposed transmission lines will be approximately 80 feet tall and are proposed to be located within the right-of-way along the north side of the Parks Highway extending west into the city limits from the east to and then crossing to the south side of the Parks Highway at the east end of the Creekside Plaza Shopping Center and then extending westerly behind the shopping center and adjoining properties and then crossing to the north side of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension right-of-way at the light at Home Depot and continuing southwest along the north side of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension right-of-way to approximately Glenwood Avenue and then heading north to the existing Herning substation.

The City Planner has elevated the request for Use Permit under the provisions of WMC 16.12.040. You are being notified of this proposed action in accordance with Chapter 16.16.020.

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Anyone wishing to review the application for this case is encouraged to contact the Planning Office for additional information.

Name Robert Coulter
Address 4201 South Santana Dr Wasilla AK 99654
Lot 3 Block 3 Subdivision Sundance Chateau

Comments: Topic/issue: night sky - dark star filled sky - city light pollution
occurs gradually; eg. AK Sales & Service on Parks Hwy; Any Eklutna Site and
substation light is downward only, correct color, minimal effect to night sky PLEASE!!!



CITY OF WASILLA
PLANNING OFFICE
290 E HERNING AVE
WASILLA, AK 99654
PHONE 373-9020 FAX 373-9021

9043000U028
COULTER ROBERT M & JANICE F
4201 S SANTANA DR
WASILLA, AK 99654-0729

12/13/2012
US POSTAGE \$00.45



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PUBLIC NOTICE

Tahirih Revet

From: Susan Lee <Susan.Lee@matsugov.us>
Sent: Friday, December 21, 2012 11:03 AM
To: Planning
Subject: MEA comments
Attachments: SKMBT_C65412122110570.pdf

Please see attached comments from Code Compliance.

Also, MEA has been going through the public participation process for this project, per the requirements of MSB 17.03 – Essential Services. The MSB is waiting for MEA to submit their decisional document to us for review.

Susan Lee

- NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR USE PERMIT -

DATE: December 17, 2012 **CASE:** U12-05 & A12-103
APPLICANT (S): Matanuska Electric Association

REQUEST: Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. (MEA) is requesting approval to construct a new 115 kV double circuit transmission line from its new Eklutna Generation Station to its Herring Substation located at the south end of South Denali Street south of East Susitna Avenue in Wasilla. The proposed transmission lines will be approximately 80 feet tall and are proposed to be located within the right-of-way along the north side of the Parks Highway extending west into the city limits from the east to and then crossing to the south side of the Parks Highway at the east end of the Creekside Plaza Shopping Center and then extending westerly behind the shopping center and adjoining properties and then crossing to the north side of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension right-of-way at the light at Home Depot and continuing southwest along the north side of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension right-of-way to approximately Glenwood Avenue and then heading north to the existing Herring substation.

The City Planner has elevated the request for Use Permit under the provisions of WMC 16.12.040. You are being notified of this proposed action in accordance with Chapter 16.16.020.

A public hearing will be held on January 8, 2013 at 7:00 PM in the City Council Chambers. Comments may be submitted in writing by filling in the spaces provided below and mailing to: City of Wasilla, Planning Office, 290 E. Herring Ave., Wasilla, AK 99654. If there is not enough room below, please attach a separate piece of paper. You may also fax your comments to (907) 373-9021 or email them to planning@ci.wasilla.ak.us. Your written comments on this project must reach the Planning Office on or before December 31, 2012 in order for them to be included in the meeting packet. Comments received after that date will be provided to the Planning Commission at the meeting.

Anyone wishing to review the application for this case is encouraged to contact the Planning Office for additional information.

Name _____ Matanuska - Susitna Borough
Code Compliance
Address _____ **DEC 19 2012**
Lot _____ Block _____ Subdivision _____ Received

Comments:
FIRM # 8085 X A Zone
A portion of this project crosses an A zone
and would require a Flood Hazard Development
Permit. Please call our Permit Center at 459822
12/20/12 *(Signature)*



CITY OF WASILLA
PLANNING OFFICE
290 E. HERNING AVE
WASILLA, AK 99654
PHONE 373-9020 FAX 373-9021

Susan Lee
350 E. Dahlia Ave.
Palmer, AK 99645

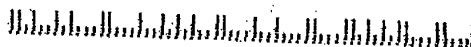
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Matanuska - Susitna Borough
DEC 19 2012
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PUBLIC NOTICE

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Tahirih Revet

From: John Murphy <jrm.alaska@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 19, 2012 5:52 PM
To: Planning
Cc: Jim Lindeman; Jim Palin; Nick Markus; Ned Imlach; Bill Wimmer; Arlene Murphy; Ford Family; Steve Colligan; Steve Dehardt; Jan
Subject: MEA Use Permit 80 foot towers and transmission lines on the Parks Highway.

I am writing in opposition to the proposed route for the 115 kV double circuitry transmission line. This line is proposed to be 80 feet tall and be located in the right of way along the North Side of the Parks Highway.

While this line will be in a direct line of sight from our neighborhood, blocking the view of the mountains, of equal importance, is the fact is it will be in view of everyone traveling the Parks Highway!

Wasilla has enough problems with the strip malls and traffic without having 80 ft. tall power lines along the highway.

This route can be just as easily located along the railroad or further away and be out of sight from nearly everyone.

Please do not approve this route. It will clutter the beautiful mountain views we have all along the highway. Alaska is known for its beauty, and this is going to simply make Wasilla look like the lower 48.

Public hearing Jan 8, 2013, 7:00 pm in the City Council Chambers.

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THANK YOU! For deleting my e-mail address or any other e-mail addresses from this message if you plan to forward it. **PLEASE** use **BCC:** for any and **ALL** e-mailings, **INSTEAD** of **Cc:** or **To:** If you help keep our addresses private, we might be able to cut down on computer identity theft.

Tahirih Revet

From: Crockett, Scott - NRCS, Wasilla, AK <scott.crockett@ak.usda.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 19, 2012 12:06 AM
To: Planning
Subject: OPPOSED: Matanuska Electric Assoc. Case U12-05 & A12-103

We STRONGLY oppose MEA's request to construct new power lines along the Parks Highway. Nothing could be more unsightly than 80 foot metal towers and hanging wires impinging on our majestic views of the surrounding mountains. We understand that growth and progress require infrastructure, but building gigantic power poles along the sole travel artery through the community is poor planning at best and irresponsible at worst. Is "Industrial Clutter" the image we want to project to tourists and visitors to "wild and natural" Alaska?!? Is "Rust Belt" the moniker we want for Wasilla?!? No!!! It's a big valley - run the transmission lines further away from the highway. We travel the Parks Highway every day and the scenery is the best part of the trip. The mountains are iconic, and we don't want tall metal structures to mar the view. Wasilla already suffers from a lack of conscientious city planning, with strip malls and willy-nilly building without regard for aesthetics or greenbelt. Please don't plunk big steel poles in front of the most attractive views we have.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

James and Melinda Crockett
Wasilla

Sent from my iPad

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- NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR USE PERMIT -

DATE: December 13, 2012
APPLICANT (S): Matanuska Electric Association

CASE: U12-05 & A12-103

REQUEST: Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. (MEA) is requesting approval to construct a new 115 kV double circuit transmission line from its new Eklutna Generation Station to its Herning Substation located at the south end of South Denali Street south of East Susitna Avenue in Wasilla. The proposed transmission lines will be approximately 80 feet tall and are proposed to be located within the right-of-way along the north side of the Parks Highway extending west into the city limits from the east to and then crossing to the south side of the Parks Highway at the east end of the Creekside Plaza Shopping Center and then extending westerly behind the shopping center and adjoining properties and then crossing to the north side of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension right-of-way at the light at Home Depot and continuing southwest along the north side of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension right-of-way to approximately Glenwood Avenue and then heading north to the existing Herning substation.

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Anyone wishing to review the application for this case is encouraged to contact the Planning Office for additional information.

Name Tim BORER
Address 2870 MARIANN'S PL
Lot 11 Block _____ Subdivision WHISPERING WOODS

Comments:
I REALLY THINK THAT THERE IS A MORE SUITABLE MEANS OF TRANSFERRING THIS ENERGY TO OUR AREA IE. BELOW GROUND CABLE. IF WE CAN USE CABLE TO SPAN ENJET. SURELY WE CAN LAY ONE TO WASILLA



CITY OF WASILLA
PLANNING OFFICE
290 E HERNING AVE
WASILLA, AK 99654
PHONE 373-9020 FAX 373-9021

1248B02L011
BORER TIMOTHY J
2870 E MARIANN'S PL
WASILLA, AK 99654

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