

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

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

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

Planned Improvements/Development

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

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

Wastewater Treatment Facility

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

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

Planned Improvements/Development

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

Water Service System

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

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

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

In 2001, deficiencies that were identified included the following:

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

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

Planned Improvements/Development

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

Storm Drains

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

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

Solid Waste

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

Parks and Recreation

Existing Conditions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

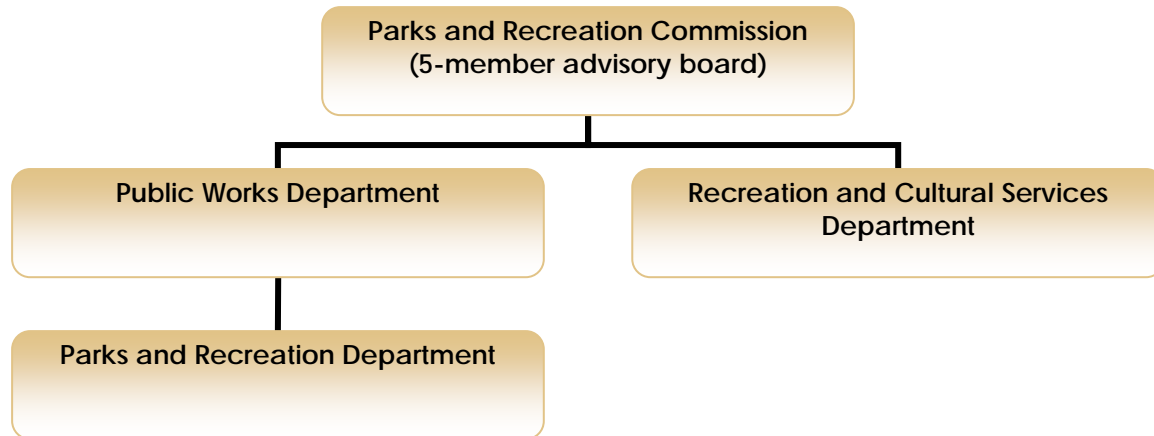


Figure A7. Parks and Recreation Organization

City of Wasilla Parks Recreation Facilities

Bumpus Recreation Complex

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

Carter Park

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

Iditapark

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

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

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

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

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

Nunley Park

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

Newcomb Park

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

Mat-Su Borough Recreation Facilities within Wasilla

Fritzler Complex

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

Smith Ball Fields

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

Brett Memorial Ice Arena

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

Lake Lucille Campground

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

Wasilla Swimming Pool

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

Other Private Parks

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

Applicable Plans

City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan (1996)

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

City of Wasilla Trails Plan (1999)

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

Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2008 anticipated)

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

Implications for Development

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

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

Land Use

Applicable Ordinances and Codes

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

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

Zoning Districts

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

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

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

Landscaping Standards

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

Applicable Plans

City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan (1996)

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

City of Wasilla Trails Plan (1999)

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

Wasilla Sewer Master Plan (1999)

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

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

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

Wasilla Airport Master Plan (2002)

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

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

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

Mat-Su Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2006)

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

Wasilla Main Street Traffic Study (2006)

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

City of Wasilla Hazard Mitigation Plan (2004)

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

Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2008 anticipated)

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

Existing Land Use and Spatial Distribution

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

Table A9. Wasilla Land Ownership

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

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

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

Table A10. Wasilla Land Use

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

Source: City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan (1996)

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

Transportation

Highway and Road Systems

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

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

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

Railroad

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

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

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

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

Airport

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

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

Public Transportation

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

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

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

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

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

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

Economic Development

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Municipal Finance

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

Mission Statement

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

Major Issues

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

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

Revenue and Expenses

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

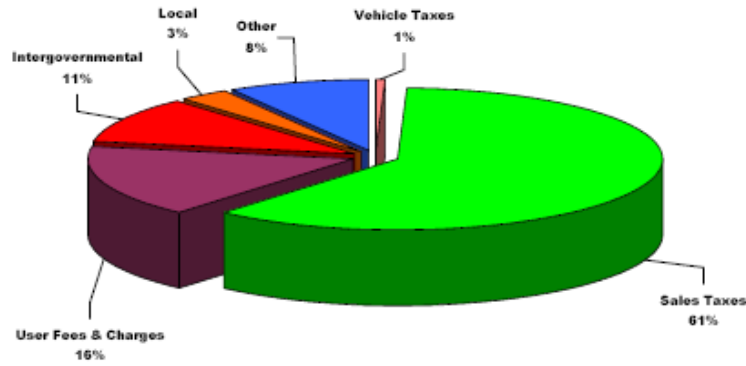


Figure A8. OPERATING EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN BY CATEGORY (ALL FUNDS) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

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

City of Wasilla Historical and Projected Revenue Sources

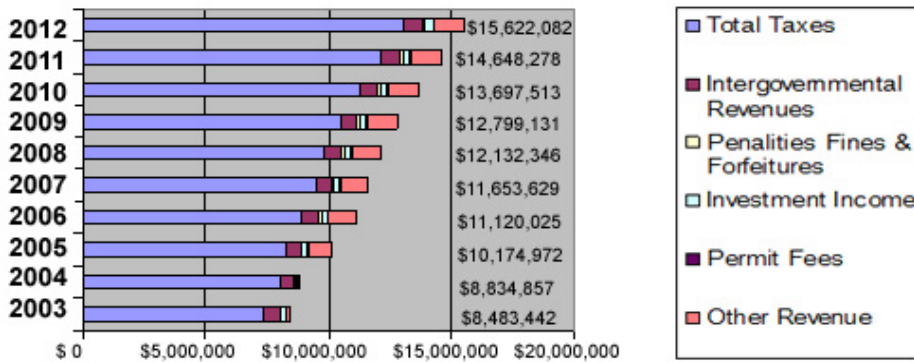


Figure A9. Historical and Projected Revenue Sources

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

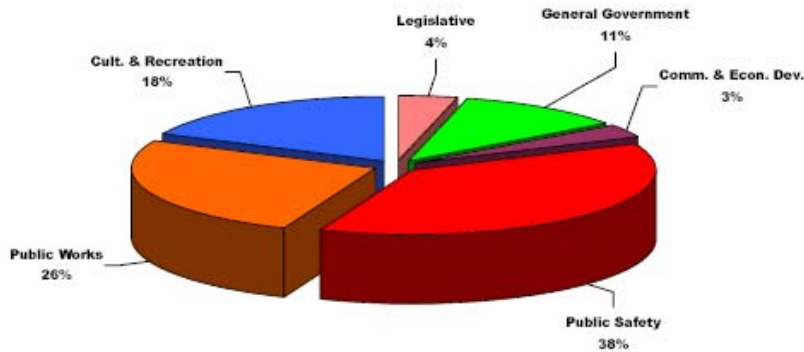


Figure A10. Operating Expenditure Breakdown by Category (All Funds) for Fiscal Year 2007.

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

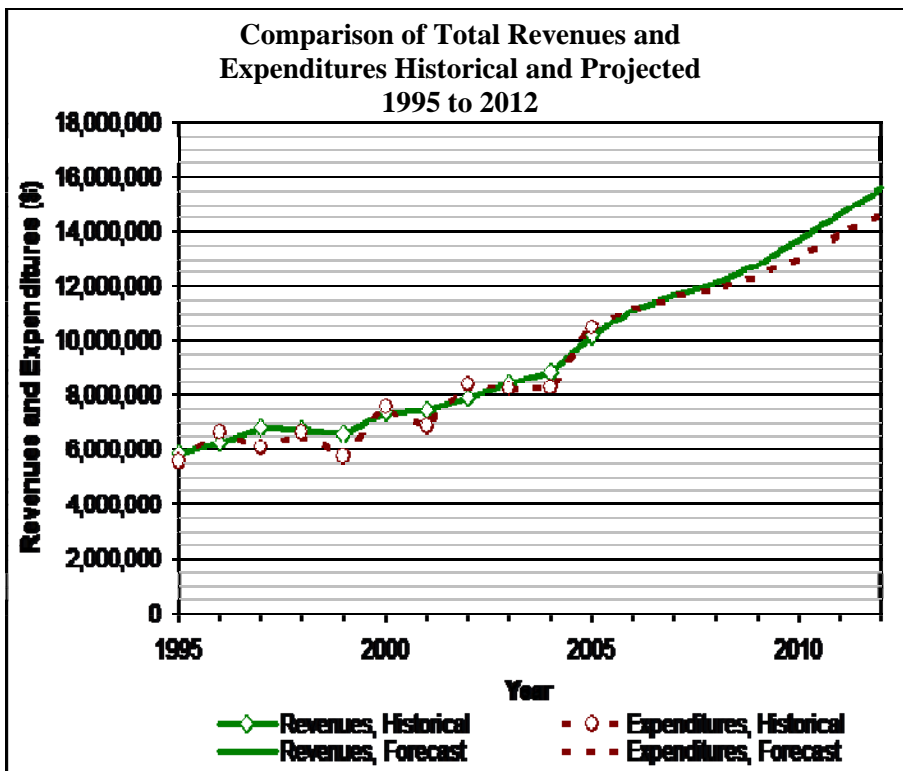


Figure A11. Comparison of Total Revenues and Expenditures

References and Further Sources of Information

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

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

Planned Improvements

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

Yenlo Square

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

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

Creekside Town Square

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

Retail and Commercial Development

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

City Water and Wastewater

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

Wasilla Municipal Airport

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

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

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Appendix B Public Involvement

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

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

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

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



Wasilla Area Plans

September 2006

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

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

Why are area plans needed?

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

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



Wasilla residents enjoy the local parks and open space.

Where are the three planning areas?

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

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

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

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

What will the plans do?

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

Key topics to be addressed include:

- Growth
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Community Character

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

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

Who can participate in the process?

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

We also plan to directly involve the City's high

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

When are the opportunities for public participation?

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

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

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



Business development continues to grow in Wasilla.



Wasilla Area Plans

August 2006

SHARE YOUR COMMENTS, IDEAS, AND QUESTIONS


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

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

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

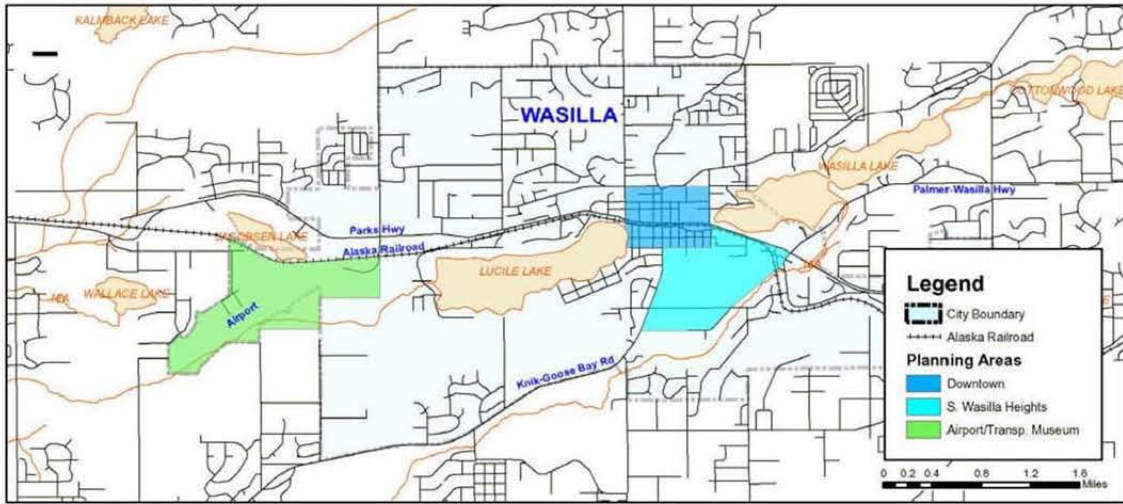
Comments or questions for the planning team:

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

<input type="checkbox"/> Please keep me informed of opportunities to participate in the planning process. 	
Name:	_____
Address:	_____ _____
E-mail:	_____
Telephone:	_____
I am most interested in:	<input type="checkbox"/> Downtown <input type="checkbox"/> South Wasilla Heights <input type="checkbox"/> Airport and Transportation Museum

Place
stamp
here

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



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

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WASILLA AREA PLANS

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

In Attendance:

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

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

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

Purpose:

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

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

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

Introductions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Questions and Comments from the Committee:

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

What are the procedures for annexation?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Closing Remarks and Comments:

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

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

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

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

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

The planning team identified its next steps as:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Purpose

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

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

INTRODUCTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DOWNTOWN: ARE THERE SPECIFIC PLACES WITHIN THIS AREA THAT YOU AVOID AND DO NOT LIKE TO TAKE OUT-OF-TOWN VISITORS?

Facilities	Shops/Services	General Areas
Library	Pawn shops	Parks Highway through town (treeless)
	Storage sheds	Main Street (too congested)
	The bars	Downtown traffic
		Williwaw subdivision (not in current boundaries).
		Areas with limited parking

DOWNTOWN: WHERE ARE THE PUBLIC PLACES IN THIS AREA WHERE PEOPLE CAN MEET TO DISCUSS COMMUNITY ISSUES?

Facilities	Shops/Services	Parks/Open Areas	Miscellaneous
Library	Teeland building/Valley Bistro	Iditapark (e.g. pavilion at Wonderland Park and summertime amphitheatre)	Historic townsite
City Hall	Area churches	Snider Park	Farmer's Market
Fire Station	VFW	Wasilla Lake	
Schools			

DOWNTOWN: WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE ROLES OF PARKS, ARTS, HISTORY, ETC. IN THIS AREA?

Parks	Arts (i.e., Valley Performing Arts)	All
Recreation opportunities	Activities for the community	Gathering places
Relaxation and fun	Entertainment	
Family-oriented	Growth and development for our youth	
Positive place to be		

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

CLOSING REMARKS AND COMMENTS

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

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

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

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

The planning team identified its next steps as:

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

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

Purpose

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

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

INTRODUCTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

Additional comments that were shared include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DOWNTOWN: SHOULD SPECIFIC PARTS OF THIS AREA BE OFF-LIMITS TO DEVELOPMENT?	
Nothing identified	

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

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

CLOSING REMARKS AND COMMENTS

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

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

There is a lack of an art district in Wasilla.

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

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

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

The planning team identified its next steps as:

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

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

Purpose

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

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

INTRODUCTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wasilla Area Plans Charrette

Saturday, March 31, 2007

Multi-Use Sports Complex

Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Downtown should include the following land uses:

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

Analysis and Synthesis for Downtown:

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

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

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

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

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

Purpose

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

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

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

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

Summary of Comments

Question and Answer Session

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

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

remainder of the process, as well as after adoption of the plans.

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

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

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

Downtown (D1)

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

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

Downtown (D2)

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

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

Downtown (D3)

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

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

Blank Maps and General Comments

DOWNTOWN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THROUGHOUT WASILLA

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

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

Review the Downtown Couplet Study.

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

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Appendix C – School Project

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

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

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

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

Common Ideas

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

Other Highlights

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

Specific Stores to Encourage Locating in Wasilla

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

Wasilla Youth Involvement Project:

Activities to Engage Youth in Visioning the Future



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

Prepared by
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November 2006

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WASILLA YOUTH INVOLVEMENT PROJECT:
**Activities to Engage Youth in Visioning
the Future**

Produced for the City of Wasilla
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November 2006

Wasilla Youth Involvement Project

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Section Three	Lesson Plans
Section Four	Supporting Materials
	Developmental Assets
	Map of Planning Locations
	Discussion & Essay Questions
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	Graph Handouts

Section 1

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

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

-Mat-Su Borough School District website

City of Wasilla Area Plans

The City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan, approved in April 1996, has guided development in Wasilla for the past 10 years. Currently, the City of Wasilla is developing Area Plans to guide development in three areas of the community, specifically Downtown, South Wasilla Heights, and the Airport and Transportation Museum areas. The plans will define a vision for each area and help to guide decisions for future growth and development. Community input is needed regarding existing and future growth for these portions of the city. The City has formed a Vision Steering Team to guide and review the planning process. The team is composed of community residents from various stakeholder groups who will work to represent all interests in the process.

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

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

Mat-Su Borough School District Priorities and Standards

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

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

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

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

Developmental Assets

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wasilla Youth Involvement Project Activities

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

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

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

Implementing the Project Activities

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

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

Comprehensive:

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

Intermediate

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

Brief

- Activity 1
- Activity 7

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

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

Citizens of a Global Society

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

Section 2

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Wasilla Youth Involvement Project Objectives & Standards

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

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

Alaska State Content Standards Wasilla Youth Involvement Project

Geography

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

Government & Citizenship

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

English/Language Arts

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

Science

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

State Content Standards, continued

Mathematics

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

Employability

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

No Child Left Behind Performance Standards Wasilla Youth Involvement Project

Reading

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

Science

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

Performance Standards, continued

Writing

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

Math

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

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Section 3

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ACTIVITY 1

Introduction to the Community Planning Process

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ACTIVITY 1

An Introduction to the Community Planning Process

SUGGESTED TIME: 50 minutes

OBJECTIVES

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

CONTENT STANDARDS

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

MATERIALS

Map of Area Plan Locations (handout)

PREPARATION

1. Copy the map handout for each student.

LESSON PLAN

Plans in Our Lives (10 minutes)

1. Go-Around

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

2. Discussion

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

Understanding the Community Planning Process (15 minutes)

1. Mini-Lecture

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

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

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

2. Discussion

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

3. Mini-Lecture

Wasilla’s most valuable assets today may be location and available space. As Wasilla continues to grow, Area Plans are needed to maintain the value and utility of Wasilla’s many assets, while creating new opportunities. With continuing growth, the attributes that originally drew today’s residents to the area could be

transformed as additional land is developed. Early planning and citizen involvement is crucial to maintaining the quality of life that drew people to Wasilla.

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

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

Wasilla Area Plans (20 minutes)

1. Map of Wasilla

Distribute the map of the three planning areas.

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

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

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

2. Discussion

Facilitate a discussion about community planning using the following questions:

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

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

ACTIVITY 2

Reading Technical Material: Background for
Community Planning

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