

# Matanuska-Susitna Borough Strategic Plan

FY 2024 - 2029

March 22, 2023



## INTRODUCTION

The FY 2024 - 2029 Strategic Plan is the result of a Special Meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly held on March 11, 2023. The purpose of the plan is to more closely align the Borough's operations with the Assembly's priorities by providing focused direction to Borough staff and establishing major objectives with measurable outcomes.

The plan contains three focus areas:

1. Economic growth and diversification;
2. Delivering high quality services; and
3. Managing growth.

The intent of the planning effort is to meet annually and revisit objectives associated with each focus area. The items listed in each area are considered objectives over the next five years and allow Borough administration to develop annual objectives in support of each strategic objective and align resources to support attaining these goals.

Near the beginning of each calendar year, Borough administration will publish an annual performance report. The report will focus on the implementation status of the strategic plan.



### VISION

The greatest community in Alaska to live, work  
and play



### MISSION

To efficiently and effectively deliver responsive  
services to the public and to cultivate  
opportunities for commercial enterprise to  
prosper



### VALUES

Accountability; Customer Focus; Dedication;  
Integrity; Responsiveness; Teamwork

# FRAMEWORK

The following framework was developed to represent the three focus areas on the left, key objectives in the center gray-shaded area, and strategic outcomes in the black-shaded block. This graphic is informed by the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis depicted in Figure 2.

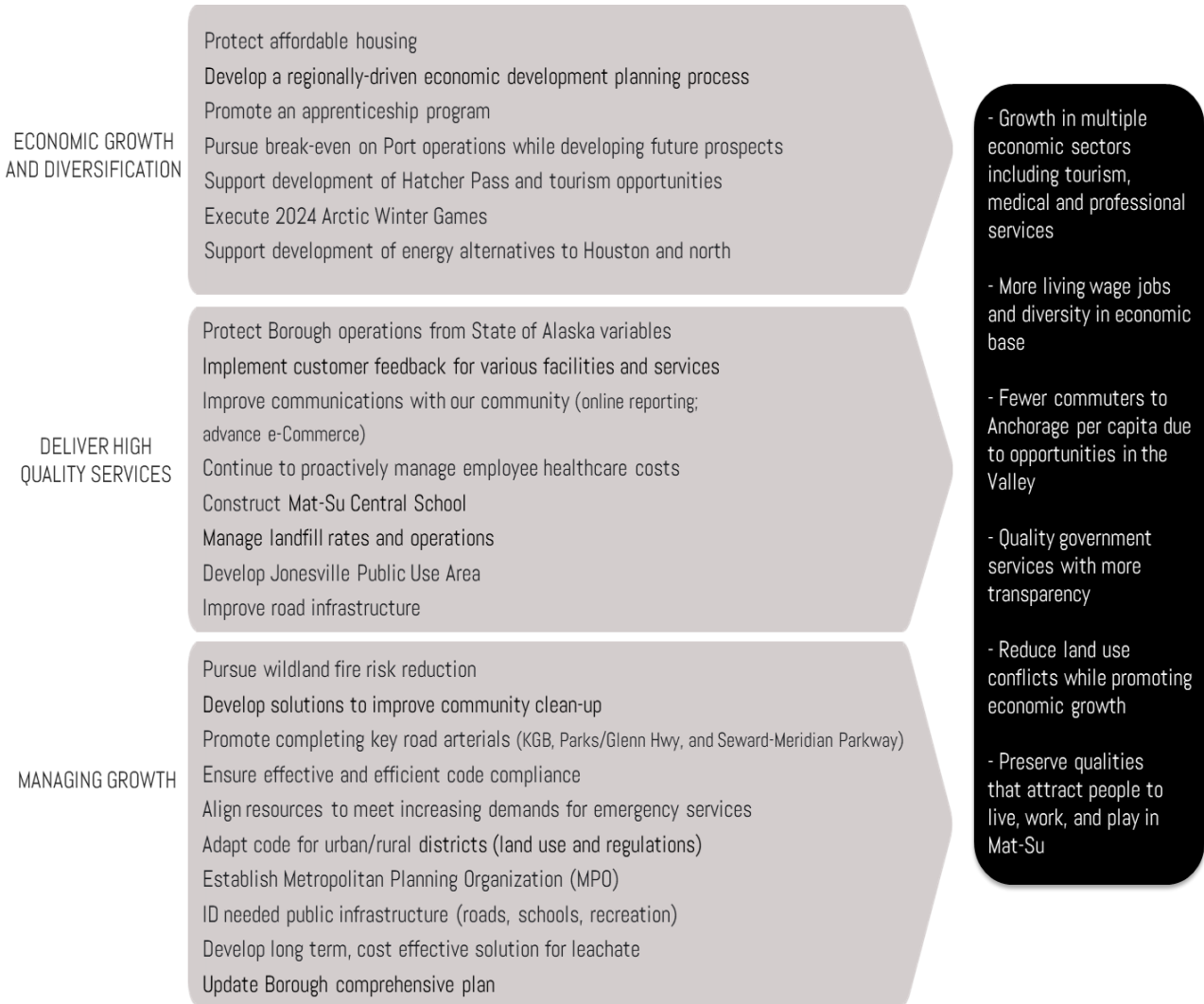


Figure 1. Strategic Plan Framework

## DELIVER HIGH QUALITY SERVICES

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Growing population</li><li>○ Professional workforce that currently commutes into Anchorage but would rather work in the Valley</li><li>○ Skilled labor pool</li><li>○ Growing healthcare sector</li><li>○ Available developable land</li><li>○ Natural beauty</li><li>○ Outdoor recreation</li><li>○ Agricultural sector</li><li>○ Affordable housing</li><li>○ Engaged communities</li><li>○ Natural resources</li><li>○ Lifestyle choice (rural vs. urban)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Reliance on jobs outside Mat-Su</li><li>○ Lower wages</li><li>○ Few major private sector employers</li><li>○ Small professional and business services sector</li><li>○ Stressed road infrastructure</li><li>○ High healthcare costs</li><li>○ High energy costs</li><li>○ Tourists passing through the Valley without spending</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Expansion of professional and technical services</li><li>○ Improving infrastructure and connectivity</li><li>○ Port MacKenzie</li><li>○ Increased efforts in tourism</li><li>○ Services for aging population</li><li>○ Expanding healthcare and education sectors</li><li>○ Dedicated commercial and industrial space</li><li>○ Expanded recreation and outdoor opportunities</li><li>○ Young professionals and military veterans and retirees</li><li>○ Remote work and Internet based businesses (online connectivity)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Unmanaged growth</li><li>○ Declining State and Federal funding</li><li>○ Declining statewide oil and gas production</li><li>○ Decline in fisheries</li><li>○ Increased land use conflicts</li><li>○ Recurring disasters</li><li>○ Wildfires</li><li>○ Mistrust of government</li><li>○ Cook Inlet gas supply</li></ul>

Figure 2. SWOT Analysis

## ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DIVERSIFICATION

1. Protect affordable housing.
  - a. Continue to keep the barrier to entry low for new homeowners and renters by continuing to improve Borough processes and code associated with multi-family and subdivision developments (Planning Department).
  - b. Sustain a self-administered Local Improvement District (LID) program allowing homeowners to make capital improvements (Finance Department).
2. Develop a regionally-driven economic development planning process and evaluate forming an organization.
  - a. Report on various economic development indicators (Administration).
  - b. Continue to improve and maintain public infrastructure (roads, public safety, schools, and recreation) (Administration).
  - c. Support cities in the use of technology to offer economic opportunities which attract businesses and workers. (Administration / Information Technology).
  - d. Participate with cities on the development of a regional economic development strategy (Administration).
3. Apprenticeship Program. Work with partners in education to enhance apprenticeship opportunities and improve skilled labor workforce (Administration).
4. Pursue break-even on Port operations while developing future prospects (Port).
  - a. Develop business that aligns with regional needs.
  - b. Complete key infrastructure improvements to improve Port capabilities including a roll-on/roll-off ramp and cargo handling.
  - c. Explore a port economic development zone to incentivize private investment.
5. Support development of Hatcher Pass and tourism opportunities.
  - a. Support development of the Skeetawk ski area (Community Development).
  - b. Maintain and develop tourism-related infrastructure such as boat ramps, parks, trails, pools, and ice rinks (Community Development).
6. 2024 Arctic Winter Games. Establish partnerships, complete event planning, and host a successful competition (Multiple Departments).
7. Support development of lower cost energy alternatives to Houston and north.

### STRATEGIC RESULTS

- Progressive growth in multiple economic sectors
- Increased living wage jobs and diversity in economic base
- Fewer commuters to Anchorage per capita due to opportunities in the Valley

## **DELIVER HIGH QUALITY SERVICES**

1. Protect Borough operations from State of Alaska variables such as school bond debt reimbursement (reduce dependence on State funding).
2. Improve communications with our community (finances, online reporting; e-Commerce).
  - a. Evaluate improvements to the Borough website (Information Technology).
  - b. Refine e-Commerce offerings and optimize for consumer use (Information Technology).
  - c. Improve financial reporting including: automating reporting; developing formatted reports for public use; and continuing to achieve Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) reporting excellence awards (Finance Department).
  - d. Publish annual performance report (Administration).
  - e. Continue to publish annual Citizen's Financial Report (Popular Annual Financial Reporting – PAFR) (Finance Department).
  - f. Continue to explore opportunities to expand the Problem Reporter application (e.g. junk/trash, potholes, etc.) (Multiple Departments).
3. Continue to proactively manage the cost of labor and employee healthcare costs and leverage cost containment strategies (Human Resources).
4. Implement customer feedback for various facilities and services (Information Technology and Community Development).
5. Construct Mat-Su Central School (Public Works).
6. Develop, construct, and manage Jonesville Public Use Area (Community Development).
7. Improve road infrastructure.
  - a. Develop recurring infrastructure packages for consideration and explore grant opportunities to reduce local funding burden (Public Works).
  - b. Continue to improve road maintenance contracts, oversight, condition assessments, and start-up inventories (Public Works).
8. Manage landfill rates and operations.
  - a. Develop options for future cell development that reduce costs and lessen the impact of landfill operations on the surrounding community (Public Works).
  - b. Consider alternatives for extending cell life expectancy (Public Works).

### **STRATEGIC RESULT**

- Quality government services while improving transparency

## MANAGING GROWTH

1. Pursue wildland fire risk reduction within the Borough.
  - a. Conduct seasonal public education campaigns to raise awareness (Department of Emergency Services and Public Affairs).
  - b. Advance completion of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) for high risk areas (Department of Emergency Services).
  - c. Mitigate Borough high risk areas and coordinate fuel reduction measures with State of Alaska (Community Development Department).
  - d. Pursue funding opportunities to assist landowners with wildland fire risk reduction (Department of Emergency Services and Community Development Department).
2. Promote completing key road arterials (KGB, Parks and Glenn Highway widening, and Seward-Meridian Parkway) (Administration).
3. Ensure timely, effective, and efficient permitting and enforcement by coordinating resources to address specific problems (i.e. strategic enforcement) leading to responsible ownership and compliance (Planning Department).
4. Continue to align resources to meet increasing demands for emergency services (Department of Emergency Services).
  - a. Design and construct new joint fire/EMS facility in Palmer area with an emphasis on EMS training.
  - b. Design and construct new joint fire/EMS station in Willow area.
5. Adapt code for urban/rural districts to better meet land use needs.
  - a. Establish a new core area boundary based on the 2020 census data and prepare for a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit (Planning Department).
  - b. Continue to modify code in order to address the growing number of land use conflicts caused by population growth (Planning Department).
6. Establish Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) (Planning).
7. Identify needed public infrastructure.
  - a. Identify land for future Borough facilities (e.g. fire station, school, recreation, etc.) (Planning and Community Development Departments).
  - b. Identify opportunities for procuring key rights-of-way for future road corridors (Planning and Public Works Departments).

## **MANAGING GROWTH**

- c. Develop long term, cost effective solution for leachate (Public Works).
8. Update Borough comprehensive plan (Planning).

### **STRATEGIC RESULTS**

- Reduced land use conflicts while promoting economic growth
- Preservation of qualities that attract people to live, work, and play in the Mat-Su