

Asset Management Plan for Borough-Owned Land in the Butte Area

May 2007



Acknowledgement

Thank you to everyone who participated in this planning effort, and especially the residents who attended meetings, submitted comments and helped to make this a better plan.

Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Asset Management Plan for Borough Owned Land in the Butte Area

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1. Introduction

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Community Development Department is devoted to building strong local communities and improving the lives of residents in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley. In addition to ensuring economic wellbeing for citizens, the Borough works to protect community resources and values and address community needs and interests through a variety of public services and facilities. Meeting these multiple objectives requires balancing development with conservation. It also demands planning to inform and guide present day decisions in the context of long term goals. This plan is for borough-owned land only. It is not to be applied to privately-owned land in the Butte Area.

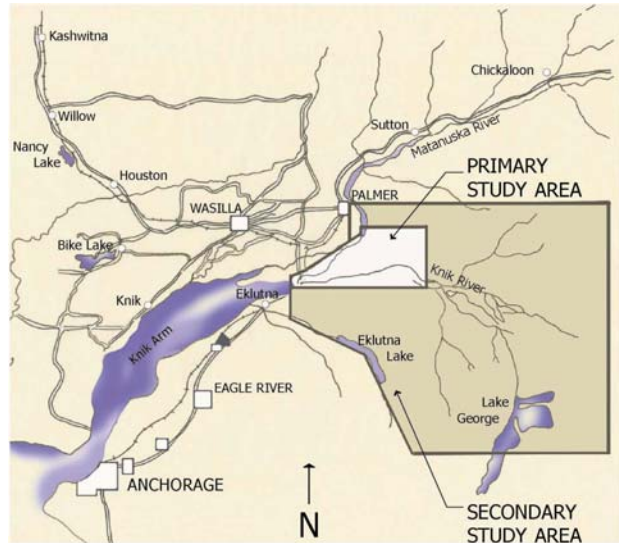
Asset Management Plans are one tool the Borough is using to build strong communities. These plans provide a framework for making decisions about the use, development, and protection of resources that are owned by the Borough. The goal is to develop a community-based vision for each area where the Borough owns land and complete a step-by-step plan for implementing that vision through appropriate development of Borough-owned land.

Asset Management Plans articulate community values and long-term goals and in this way ensure that land and resource development, use, and management decisions occur in a way that will benefit those they most affect – the local community and its residents.

Study Area

This asset management plan is for the over 2,268 acres of Borough-owned land within the Butte area. The Butte area is one of the most scenic in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley. Named for the Bodenbug Butte, a prominent rock outcropping and familiar landmark, this community features striking views of Pioneer Peak and the Chugach Mountains. The Butte is also characterized by access to abundant outdoor recreation, rural historic farm settings, a backdrop to the Chugach Mountains and by recreation access contained by glacial rivers, mountain trails and the Knik Glacier (see the Butte Vicinity Map, above).

The Butte Area is unincorporated and is located south of Palmer in the Borough, between mile 9



Map 1 - Butte Vicinity

and mile 16 of the Old Glenn Highway. The community lies at the foot of Bodenbug Butte, east of the Matanuska River, 42 miles north of Anchorage. The 2005 Census estimates the population of the Butte Area to be 3,101. Butte is a largely rural settlement of over 1,170 households with the majority of its residents employed in the Palmer/Wasilla area or Anchorage. Farming and wholesale distribution of farm products are the main industry while a few small businesses serve local needs.

The Matanuska-Susitna Valley is one of the fastest growing areas in Alaska. The population of the Borough has doubled every ten years for the last two decades, and this rapid rate of growth is only expected to continue. Although the Butte area has not grown as fast as other population centers under the jurisdiction of the Borough, it is nevertheless experiencing growth-related change. In addition to a gradual loss of farmland, open space, trails, and wilderness access, the quiet, safe, scenic setting residents once took for granted is being undermined by increasing incidents of trash-dumping, vandalism, reckless and lawless activities.

Purpose of Study

This plan will guide the management of roughly 2,268 acres of Borough-owned land in the Butte Community Council area. The Plan was created

in cooperation with the Butte Community Council and local residents, as well as the Alaska State Troopers, the Eklutna Native Corporation, the Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District, and the State Department of Natural Resources. Input from these stakeholders revealed a strong community preference for protecting public access to outdoor recreation areas, improving public safety, and promoting tourism for the benefit of local businesses and the economy. The Butte Area Management Plan represents a vision of these community values and reinforces them through specific strategies and actions to be carried out on Borough-owned land.

Summary of Process & Plan Contents

The Butte Asset Management Plan was developed through a series of evaluative steps designed to understand the borough's Butte area land resources, and the social, economic, and environmental factors affecting these properties. The plan is divided into four chapters of findings that will help guide Borough action regarding its land:

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the report, outlines the scope, and provides an overview of the process used to develop the plan.

Chapter 2 – Borough Land Suitability and Context

The second chapter provides an overview of natural systems, cultural resources and a regional landscape context, including lands adjacent to the Borough-owned parcels, and major roads and facilities in the area. Chapter 2 also presents information about growth trends in the Butte Community Council area and addresses demographic, employment, income, taxes, education statistics, as well as information about household size and the number of housing units in the Butte.

The demographic information is compared with statistics for the Borough, the Municipality of Anchorage and the State of Alaska. The Chapter concludes with a population forecast and presents, from a purely economic standpoint, the type of development most likely to occur and succeed in the Butte.

Chapter 3 – Public Input to the Planning Process

This chapter summarizes the extensive public input gathered in preparation of this plan. The public participation process included stakeholder interviews, community workshops, meetings with a recreation and trail subcommittee, agency meetings, the release of a draft plan for public review, and the revision of that plan based on public comments.

Chapter 4 – Policy for the Use of Borough Land

The final chapter establishes a direction for use of Borough-owned lands within the Butte Area. This chapter includes, for each parcel, background information on uses and issues, a description of community concerns, land use designations and management intent and guidelines.

Appendices

Three appendices are included at the end of the plan, and briefly described below:

Appendix A provides generalized land ownership in the Butte area.

Appendix B discusses community-wide considerations for Borough land in the Butte. This supplemental information was used in the development of the plan, including broad goals and strategies and development options.

Appendix C contains copies of recommendations and actions by Borough Advisory Boards, the Planning Commission, and the Borough Assembly.

2. Borough Land Suitability & Context

The information and analyses in this chapter form a context for understanding the individual Borough-owned parcels that were reviewed and help in determining what types of land uses are suitable for those parcels.

Specifically, generalized information is presented on natural features, existing land use patterns and conditions on the landscape that affect the Borough's options for use of its parcels. The natural resources information covered in this chapter is generalized for the entire area, but findings and recommendations, presented in Chapter 4, apply only to the Borough's roughly 6,000 acres, consisting of seven sites (see Map 2, page 4).

Land Planning Process

An integrated land use planning model was used that balances the natural characteristic of the land with those needs and desires of the people residing in the Butte Area. This approach recognizes that each region has its own distinct set of natural resources and unique natural features that can support a variety of competing land uses.

Nature is understood as an interactive process that represents a relative range of values, providing opportunity for human use – but also revealing constraints, limitations and even prohibition to certain uses. The process recognizes that these distinct land characteristics can have multiple uses from farming to residential, from hunting to bird watching, and from hiking to ATV off-roading.

Understanding the nature of systems and how they interact is only half of the process, the second part is to develop an understanding of the social goals, community desires and public desire towards the land and to develop responsible alternative land uses to balance economical, social and physical benefits to the community in a fiscally responsible way.

Regional Context

The Matanuska-Susitna Valley is a vast glacial valley dotted with lakes and wetlands and



drained by two major rivers – the Matanuska and the Susitna. The Butte area community lies at the furthest eastern edge of this valley tucked against the Chugach Range and separated from the rest of the valley by the Matanuska River to the north and the Knik River to the south.

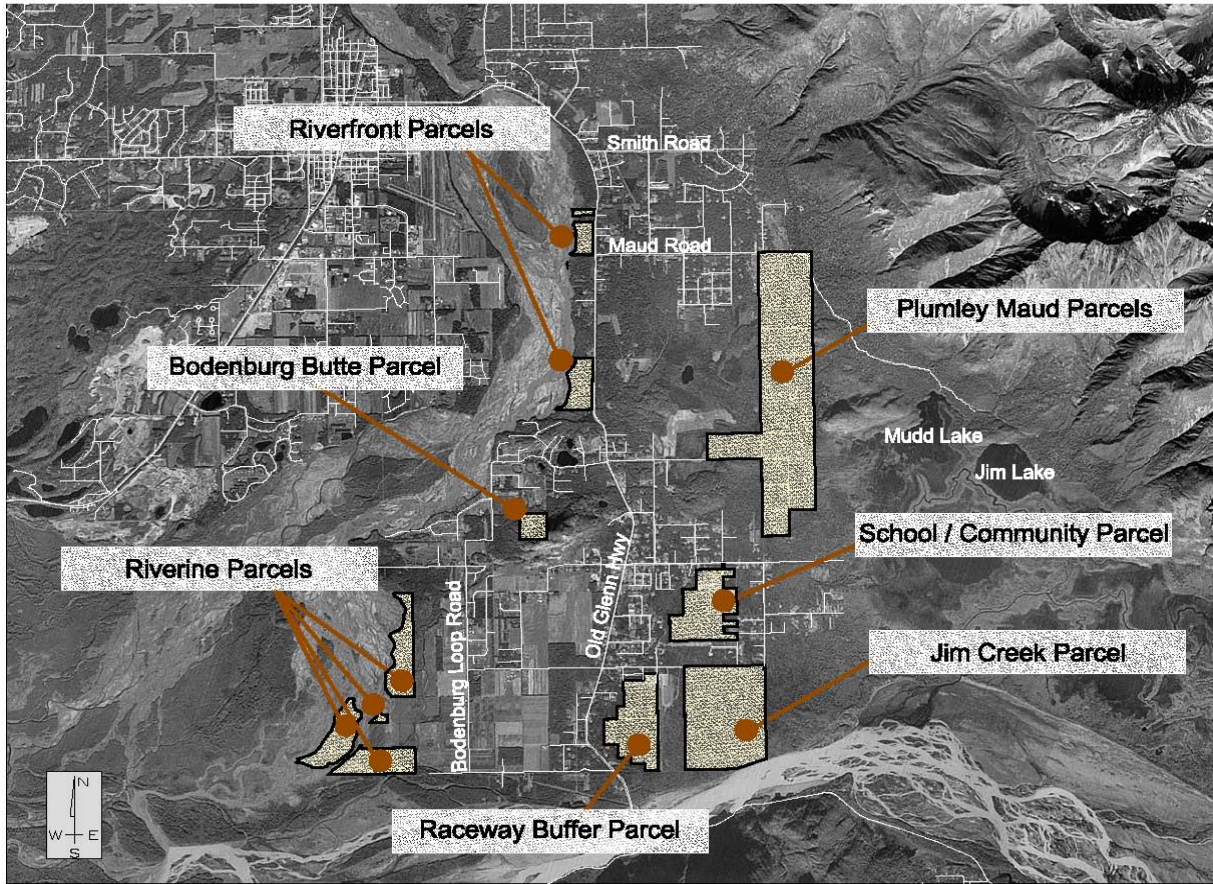
The Butte area is a peninsula-like wedge of land at the confluence of these two rivers where they drain into the northern tip of Cook Inlet at Knik Arm. Situated in the shadow of towering Pioneer Peak and within view of the Talkeetna range to the north, the Butte is one of the most scenic areas in the Borough. Another scenic landscape feature is Bodenbug Butte, namesake for the community and an important part of local identity.

Finally, the Butte study area sits within the boundary of a larger surrounding region including Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla, the entire Matanuska- Susitna Valley, and state forest recreation areas which are accessible from the Butte.

Geology

Approximately 30,000 years ago, the Knik and Matanuska Glaciers advanced down what are now the Matanuska and Knik River valleys. When these glaciers retreated, they left behind U-shaped valleys and a topography dominated by moraines, drumlin fields, eskers, outwash plains, and kettles.

In addition to glacial deposits, stream and terrace gravels are prevalent as are lakes and swamps. Bedrock is largely buried under thick layers of glacial and fluvial sediment but is exposed or at shallow depth in essentially all



areas identified as low ridges or hills. The Bodenbutte is an example of one of the several prominent outcroppings left behind by glaciers.

Much of the Butte area is located on the floodplains and drainage basins of the Knik and Matanuska Rivers. The steep peaks of the Chugach and Talkeetna Mountains bound the area to the north, east and south. Appendix B, Map 1 shows the geology of the Butte.

Geological Implications for Development

The lower lying regions with alluvial and glacial deposits provide the greatest potential for development. Pockets of exposed bedrock (such as the Butte) limit the potential for most residential and commercial development due to poor drainage and limits on septic systems but support a range of recreational and wildlife uses. Extensive floodplain and wetland areas are also unsuitable for development as well as several areas which include relic permafrost.

Vegetation

The results of all of the previous natural forces at work provide the various vegetation types found in the Butte range from the spruce-hardwood forests found at lower elevation areas and river corridors to mixed forests at mid-range elevations. Tall shrubs, low brush, muskeg-bog mosaics, and a variety of tundra vegetation types are found at higher elevations and on steep slopes. See Appendix B, Map 5.

In general, the forest vegetation that grows along the river corridors is bottomland spruce-poplar, a tall and relatively dense forest system comprising of white spruce, cottonwood, and balsam poplar. Beyond the river are lowland spruce-hardwood forests, which range from dense to open stands of evergreen and deciduous trees. Black spruce and areas with permafrost are found in poorly drained areas.

Wetlands occur in poorly drained areas on the eastern side of the Butte area between the steeply rising slopes of the Chugach to the north, and the Knik River to the south. Shrubs, berry bushes, grasses and sedges grow here,



along with black spruce. Large patches of cotton grass tussocks may also exist in these wet areas.

Implications for Development

Forest resources provided some of the first industry for the region providing logs for homes and railroad construction. While early logging was a primary use of these resources the existing forest has limited value and is under threat from Spruce Bark Beetle infestation. Agricultural and the crops associated with the farms found in the region are the main economic resource for the area today.

Recreational use is an important purpose for the forested land in the region. These areas provide areas for hiking, nature study, hunting and fishing and are an attraction for residents and visitors to the area.

Fish and wildlife are one of the most important resources dependent on the vegetation of the region. Development of forested areas and degradation of wetlands and stream corridors have an adverse impact on these resources. These resources are valuable for a variety of recreational activities from fishing, hunting, bird watching and enjoyment of wildlife attracting tourism to the area.

Land Ownership

The Generalized Land Ownership Map (see Appendix A) illustrates the various ownership classifications for the Butte area. The largest portion of land within the Butte area is under ownership of the State of Alaska. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is responsible for the management of these lands.

These lands are to the east and south of the major settlement areas and are comprised of open space, forest, mountains and glaciers. The Eklutna Corporation and the Mental Health Trust Authority are other important major land owners in the area with lands that lie to the east between Borough and DNR owned land. These parcels represent important recreation access points between the Butte area and state owned lands.

The Borough has ownership of roughly 2,268 acres of land within the area as shown on the land use map. These lands are primarily open space and utilized for outdoor recreation and buffer lands between land uses, although some are used or could be used for public facility development.

Cultural Resources

The early settlers of the Butte area were the Athabascan Dena'ina Indians who traveled through the area on their way to the Copper River and later established a village in the Bodenburg area. The Bodenburg Butte is named after John Bodenburg who first homesteaded there in 1917. Today, the Butte is a rural area with few major developments and limited in cultural resources. Public facilities include major roads, secondary roads, and an airstrip. Butte has one elementary school, a library, a post office, a general store and gas station, and a fire station.

Agricultural and historical resources are closely linked, with many farms retaining buildings dating back to the early 1930's and the colony farm times. Today, some of the better known agricultural facilities are the U-Pick farm, the organic farms and the reindeer farm which attract out of town visitors, support the Butte area economy and help retain open spaces.

Approximately 3,100 residents live within the boundaries of the Butte Community Council area today. The Butte is relatively rural in character but is located within a region that is not only the most populated, but also the most agriculturally developed in Alaska.

Across the Matanuska River from The Butte, via the Old Glenn Highway, is the City of Palmer with a population of 4,200. Wasilla has a population of 5,791 and lies 20 miles west of Palmer via the Palmer-Wasilla Highway. Anchorage is Alaska's largest city and is located approximately 42 miles south of the Butte area via the Glenn Highway.

The Old Glenn Highway is the Butte's major thoroughfare. The Highway runs north-south through the center of town and connects the community to neighboring services and facilities. This access provides an important link to larger commercial and population centers and enables the Butte to retain its rural character without giving up easy access to modern conveniences.

Demographic Trends in the Butte Area

The Borough was one of the fastest growing areas in Alaska from 1990 to 2000. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Borough population was 39,683 people in 1990 and 59,322 people in 2000, resulting in a compounded growth rate of 4.1% a year. By comparison, the statewide annual growth rate was 1.3% and Anchorage's annual growth rate was 1.4% per year for the same ten-year period (Alaska Economic Trends, 2003).

Wasilla and Palmer contribute to this growth trend by offering a reasonable commuting distance to Anchorage, affordable housing, and a rural lifestyle. Road improvements on the Glenn Highway also provide quicker and safer access routes, increasing the number of commuters who live in the area and work in Anchorage.

The Butte Community Council boundary corresponds to the Butte Census Designated Place. BCDP population in 2000 was 2,561 persons. At this level, the BDCP comprised approximately 4.3% of total Borough population. The BCDP population growth rate (2.3%), while higher than Anchorage's or the state's, was just over half the rate experienced by the Borough itself. Most Borough growth was concentrated west of the BCDP, along major access corridors between Wasilla and Anchorage, such as the Meadow Lakes CDP.

Table 1 (page 8) summarizes the population characteristics for the Butte, the Borough, the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA), and the State of Alaska.

Employment and Employment Industries

The employment growth rate within the BCDP was comparable to the MOA's rate and statewide averages at 1.4 % growth per year for the civilian work force. Private employment growth in the area, which averaged 3.8 % growth per year, was twice the growth rate seen in the MOA and statewide figures. However, the BCDP lagged behind the Borough's private

employment growth rate of 5.9 % which is unusually high for Alaska.

In comparison to the State of Alaska, the BCDP has a higher percentage of working residents employed in industries such as agriculture, forestry, mining, construction, manufacturing, transportation, finance, and professional services. It has a lower percentage of working residents in areas such as the arts, education, health services, and social services. The remaining categories are roughly comparable.

Income

Butte household incomes reported for Census 2000 were higher than averages for the Borough, the MOA, and the State of Alaska. The average BCDP annual household income was \$55,573 per year, over \$4,300 more than the average Borough amount of \$51,221. Average annual growth rates (in constant dollars, year 2000) for household incomes were 0.5 % per year between 1990 and 2000, while the Borough, MOA, and the State reported negative growth rates during the same period.

Per capita income in the BCDP averaged \$22,522 in the year 2000, growing at 0.6% per year from 1990 to 2000. This growth rate was greater than the Borough's growth rate of 0.4 % or the MOA and statewide averages of 0.1 % per year (in constant year 2000 dollars).

Household Size

The Butte had 884 total households in 2000 with 672 family units. Average household size was 2.89 people, compared to 2.99 in 1990 and is in line with the Borough rate but is significantly higher than the MOA or the State in general. The number of housing units grew by 2.6 % per year on average, from 1990 to 2000, well above the MOA rate of 0.6 % average per year or the statewide rate of 1.6 % per year. The Borough reported a 2.7 % housing growth per year.



Table 1. Selected Population Characteristics for Butte, Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Municipality of Anchorage and the State of Alaska.

Population Characteristic	Butte CDP	MSB	MOA	Alaska
Population Growth 1990-2000	2.3%	4.1%	1.4%	1.3%
Employment				
Civilian Force Growth	1.4%	4.6%	1.2%	1.4%
Unemployed Percent 2000	8.9%	10.3%	6.8%	9%
Private Employment Growth	3.8%	5.9%	1.7%	1.9%
Government Employment Growth	0.7%	2.1%	0.0%	0.4%
Employment Industry 1990				
Agriculture, Forestry and Mining	8.1%	5.7%	6.2%	4.9%
Construction	8.7%	11.4%	5.7%	7.3%
Manufacturing	6.9%	2.4%	3.6%	3.3%
Wholesale Trade	3.0%	2.4%	4.0%	2.6%
Retail Trade	11.2%	12.5%	16.7%	11.6%
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	14.3%	8.2%	11.4%	8.9%
Information Services	2.1%	3.9%	2.2%	2.7%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	6.4%	3.7%	6.4%	4.6%
Professional, Scientific and Administrative	9.6%	6.6%	9.4%	7.6%
Educational, Health and Social Services	10.5%	21.3%	14.5%	21.7%
Arts, Entertainment and Travel	4.9%	8.2%	7.7%	8.6%
Other Services	5.3%	5.4%	5.3%	5.6%
Public Administration	11.2%	7.9%	11.8%	10.7%
Income				
Median Household Income 2000	\$55,573	\$51,221	\$55,546	\$51,571
Median Household Growth % 1990-2000	0.50%	-0.10%	-0.10%	-0.20%
Median Family Income 2000	\$58,796	\$56,939	\$64,883	\$59,036
Median Family Growth % 1990-2000	0%	-0.10%	0.20%	0%
Per Capita Income 2000	\$22,522	\$21,105	\$25,287	\$22,660
Per Capita % 1990-2000	0.62%	0.40%	0.10%	0.10%
Individuals below poverty Level 2000	241	6419	18,685	57,602
Poverty Level percent 2000	9.4%	11.0%	7.2%	11.0%
Housing 2000				
Total Households	884	20,556	94,822	221,600
Total Family Units	672	15,057	64,131	152,237
Household Size	2.89	2.84	2.67	2.74
Total Housing Units Growth 1990-2000	2.6%	2.7%	0.6%	1.6%
Housing Unit Types				
1 Unit Undetached	2.4%	3.0%	1.7%	2.1%
Mobile Homes	-0.1%	-1.5%	2.4%	-3.2
Median Housing Value 2000	\$126,500	\$125,800	\$160,700	\$144,200
Median Housing Value 1990		\$120,105		
Education 2000				
HS Graduates	87.2%	88.1%	90.3%	88.3%
Bachelor's Degree	14.9%	18.3%	28.9%	24.7%

Taxes

The Borough property tax rate rose then declined over the past 15 years. The 2007 approved area-wide mill rate is 9.644. This rate is down from 12.50 mills in 2000 and 15.78 in 1995, but is up slightly from the 1990 mill rate of 9.20.

In 2007, Butte property owners will also pay 0.35 mills for non-area-wide taxes. They will also pay an additional 2.18 mills for fire service and 2.27 for road service. These additional levies are slightly higher than the average rate paid in other service areas. The combined mill rate for property owners in the Butte for 2007 is 14.455 which equates to approximately \$1,445 per year for each \$100,000 of assessed value.

Education

Formal educational attainment in the BCDP at the college level is significantly lower than the attainment rates for the Borough, MOA, or State of Alaska. Within the BCDP, 14.9% of the population has a bachelor's degree compared to the MOA's rate of 28.9% and the State's rate of 24.7%. The Borough has a college degree attainment rate of 18.3%.

The percent of the BCDP population with at least a high school education is comparable to the Borough and statewide averages of 87% to 88% attainment rates but is slightly lower than the attainment level for the MOA.

State and Federal monies primarily fund education in the Borough. Local receipts pay for less than 2% of overall school funding. In the MSB's proposed 2004 budget, total school receipts were divided as follows: \$82 million from Federal sources (78.1%), \$21 million from State sources (20%), and \$2 million from local sources (1.9%).

Butte Population Forecasts

Population forecasts cited here are based on a report titled "Economic Projections for Alaska and the Southern Railbelt, 2000-2025" by Scott Goldsmith, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Alaska, Anchorage. As a part of the Borough, the BCDP follows general population growth patterns for the Mat-Su Valley.

The Butte area experienced slower growth than the Matanuska-Susitna Borough from 1990 to 2000. If this lag continues, actual values will be less than those displayed. In addition, these forecasts do not include impacts of major residential or commercial development in the Butte area, projects that could significantly alter these numbers. Assuming a 15-year planning horizon, the Butte's population in the year 2018



could range between a low of 4,000 residents to a high of 5,400. The base case projection is 4,400 people.

Economic Trends

Current economic development in the Butte area is tied to residential services and limited agricultural production, such as vegetables, flowers, and herbs. There are also gas stations, small stores, and limited fast food offerings. Most residents travel to Palmer, Wasilla, Eagle River or Anchorage for major shopping trips, specialty services, and employment.

Growth projections over the next 15 years indicate an increase of approximately 1,000 to 1,500 more residents in the Butte area. Borough land that may be developed in the Butte area will most likely be those parcels that occur along the Old Glenn Highway or at entrances to recreational sites.

Typical commercial development includes fast-food outlets offering pizza and burgers, service stations for vehicle fuel and lubrication, laundry facilities, and possibly small restaurants for family type dining. An aggressive recreation program could add specialty stores for recreational vehicles, sports fishing, and river outings.

Land Use

The Generalized Land Use Map in Appendix A illustrates the current utilization of the Butte area lands both in Borough ownership and those in private ownership. Historic development started with farming along the lower valley floor due to rich deposits of topsoil and as part of the New Deal resettlement program of the 1930's.

The dominant land use today is for residential development which has occurred mostly in the middle elevation areas on forested lands and in more recent times on traditional land used for farming. A commercial core has developed along the Old Glenn Highway between Palmer and the Knik River. This has occurred in a strip development pattern with the highest concentrations at the major east-west intersections of the Old Glenn Highway.

Areas that have not developed are used for a variety of recreational uses on both public and private lands. The largest block of land is the land to the east which was designated as the Knik River Public Use Area in September 2006. Other large land ownership which is being used as public recreation lands without permission includes those lands owned by the Eklutna Native Association (see Land Ownership Map in Appendix A) as well as some larger private land owners. Borough land is used for recreational purposes including trail use and other outdoor recreation activities.

3. Public Involvement and Plan Review

To make wise choices regarding use of Borough land in the Butte Community Council area requires understanding and incorporating local views. This first part of this summarizes key issues and values as expressed by Butte community members.

The second portion of this chapter summarizes the public comments on the draft plan.

Public Involvement

Butte Residents' issues and views, outlined below, are placed into general categories of core values but there has been no effort in this chapter to edit or prioritize any idea over others. Points of public agreement, along with findings from Chapter 2 about each parcel's suitability, feed directly into the plan's recommendations in Chapter 4. Recommendations are applicable only to Borough-owned land.

Methodology

The window for public involvement to date extended from early 2003 until late mid 2006. Steps in the process are summarized below.

Stakeholder interviews

The Butte Community Council provided the consulting team with a list of local 'stakeholders' to interview. In March, 2003, the people listed below were interviewed. This step provided an initial sense of the range of community opinions and issues facing the Butte.

Mark Simpson; Nick Fidler; Kenny Barber; Bruce Bunch; Shelly Weiland McGinn & Susan Minturn; Craig Saunders; Dick Barlow; Elaine & Mike Shields; Marty & Agnes Quass; Robert Howard & Gregory Nisson; Gordon Aklestad; Otto Binder & Danny Whatley; Earl Lackey; and, River Bean.

Community Workshops - #1 and #2

Two public workshops were held in the evening on Tuesday, May 6 and Thursday, May 8, 2003, at the Butte Elementary School. 43 people attended on the first night and 26 people on the second. On Tuesday the group discussed current



uses and issues in the Butte area as a whole, and described their vision for the Butte 20 years from today. On the second evening, participants offered specific land use recommendations for the Borough-owned parcels in the Butte Community Council Area.

Agency Meetings

A series of meetings were held with representatives from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of Mining, Land & Water Management, the Eklutna Native Corporation, as well as with local law enforcement representatives from the Alaska State Troopers.

Community Recreation and Trails Committee

A series of meetings were held with local residents who represented a variety of outdoor recreational and trail related interest groups including both non-motorized and motorized uses. The purpose of these meetings was to help identify issues and concerns related to outdoor access and trail use in the area.

Community Workshop - #3

An additional public workshop was held on March 17, 2004 at the Butte Elementary School. This meeting was in a workshop format to review initial recommendations and to help determine the final desired public designation of Borough-owned land in the area. The results of this workshop were incorporated into a public review draft of a Butte Asset Management Plan that was circulated for community review.

Draft Report Public Comments & 2005 Revisions

In May 2004 a public review draft version of this plan was released for community review. Comments were received until late October 2004. Many comments were submitted, including several petitions containing 100's of names. The plan was extensively edited to reflect these comments and concerns. A summary of the public comments and changes made are described later in this chapter under "Summary of Comments on Draft Plan."

Because of the extensive changes made to the original draft plan, a revised plan was again sent out for public review from January through April 2006. Ten comments were received and again some changes were made to the plan that are reflected in this version of the plan. A summary of these public comments and the changes that were made are also described later in this chapter under "Summary of Comments on Draft Plan."

During both public reviews, all property owners were notified by postcard about the plan being available for review on the Borough's web site or by coming into the Borough Offices to pick one up. Notification was also made with display ads.

Out of Scope Issues

During the public involvement process, a number of comments were received outside the scope of this plan. These included residents' concerns relating to land owned and managed by the DNR and the Eklutna Native Corporation. The only way the Borough can address these is through a joint use agreement voluntarily entered into by all parties. Also, public input about actions for private lands adjacent to Borough-owned land is out of the scope of this plan.

Core Values - What We Heard the Community Say

What makes the Butte special? What issues are most important? Below is a summary of what we heard during the public process, along with a few representative quotes from local residents.

1. Strong Love For This Area – Local residents highly value the area's natural beauty and its access to outdoor recreation. Words commonly used by residents to describe what they like about the Butte include:



"We have moose, bear, lynx, eagles and wolves – everything at our back door. It is quiet, peaceful, and serene -- you can hear the trees on a normal day."

"Lots of public land."

"Green."

"Dark night sky."

"Not much wind, not much traffic."

"Freedom."

2. Great People/Good Neighbors – Words used in interviews to describe Butte residents:

"Tolerant."

"Quiet; leave each other alone."

"Good folks, responsible for the most part."

"Independent; self-reliant."

3. Access to Outdoors – Retain and improve trails and the option for motorized and non-motorized areas.

4. Rural Character and Lifestyle - Low density housing – maintain pattern of large lots, abundant open space.

"I'd like to see rules on minimum lot sizes – to keep the rural feeling lots should be at least an acre."

5. Freedom from Rules - Residents like freedom from restrictions; also want more respect for impacts of private use on neighbors.

"Enforce existing laws, don't create new ones."

"I like the lack of rules. People making rules have good intentions, but they get carried away."

"By and large people are well behaved – it's only a few who cause all the problems."



Issues and Problems Identified By the Community

A number of issues and concerns were expressed by members of the community that participated in both the stakeholder interviews as well as in the public workshops. These are described following.

Dumping, Car Burning, Environmental Impacts

Dumping and car burning were cited by many as major problems; also mentioned were concerns about damage to wetlands, habitat areas and ground water.

"I've got a real problem with how people are trashing the place. People think it's cool to come up here and make a mess because they think nobody cares."

"I was on community council for 12 years and helped clean up the river 12 times. One year we hauled off 260 cars."

"I hate seeing motorized vehicles circling the edges of lakes and wetlands – soon there will be a complete loop from Jim Lake to Knik River."

"I used to see families swimming at the dunes by Jim Creek, but not anymore – there are too many hooligans, too much trash and broken glass."

Shooting

While many people interviewed are gun owners and enjoy target practice as well as hunting, reckless shooting was identified as a real hazard. The main problem area is across the Knik River towards south side residences.

"I'm running out of patience. You don't know if you are being shot at. On some days I feel like I'm living in a war zone."

"Transformer and lights were shot out along road; the local road service area must pay increased costs."

"Closing areas down the Knik River just shifted the problems up here."

Fire Hazard

Some people are concerned about fire hazard in the area.

"Fire danger is a big risk. The fire at Kerttula homestead went up quick, 100 plus barrels of petroleum. I don't mind people coming up here, but they need to follow the rules."

"All those dead spruce trees, with only one way in and out and steep slopes – it's a great place for rapid fire."

Lack of Local Law Enforcement

People believe that shooting, dumping, car burning is often out of control and beyond local efforts to solve. People are frustrated by the ineffectiveness of local enforcement in dealing with these problems. Several noted, however, that when special efforts were made, for example, when Troopers or Fish and Game officers spent time in the area, it made a real difference.

"People here like to be left alone and not bothered. It takes a lot to get us riled up, but we are losing our patience."

"We need to change the attitude of law enforcement agencies - currently they tend to think 'it's the Butte – their concerns don't matter.' We have a reputation as a place where troopers don't need to waste their time trying to enforce rules."

Some people offered suggestions about how the need for law enforcement might be addressed but all agreed there are no simple solutions.

"We call the troopers regularly but they do not respond – they are overworked and have too large an area to cover. Troopers are nice and respectful when they do get there."

"I don't support community patrols because they have no enforcement power and are a liability issue – if people witness a crime they should report it and it should be dealt with by police."

"Wintertime is the worst time of year for problems because it is more accessible and there are fewer people using the area. Fish & Game is out during the summer, which offers more enforcement."

Responses were divided about the source of lawless behavior and problems. Some feel most problems come from a few local residents; others from people from outside the community.

"98% of residents are good folks, but there's a troublesome 2% minority."

"Most out-of-towners are fine, but some come here because the area has a reputation that draws crazy people who think they can do what ever they want and not get caught."

Frustration with the Political Process

Many are frustrated with and disappointed in the Borough for not responding to calls to clean-up major dumping and hazards.

"We call the Borough, tell them to do something about [the trash], but they don't do anything, even when they know who dumped the trash."

"I hauled out 32 cars with my own equipment and the Borough would not supply anywhere to dump them."

Many people also expressed criticism of the Borough because of the way they perceive the Borough dealing with land disposal in the area.

"I don't like the 'quiet land deals'."

"The Borough doesn't take recreation or habitat values into account when they decide to sell land."

"Code enforcement is weak – It's a 'buyer beware' place. People buy lots in August and then find out they're in a puddle of ice."

Lack of Dedicated Funding

Some feel the region needs a better way to generate revenue to cover public services.

"Heavy uses like snow-machines should pay user fees. We shouldn't be taxing low income people."

"Population growth and new subdivisions do not pay their share of taxes. A new family with 2.5 kids costs Borough schools \$9,000 per kid, for a total annual cost of \$24,000. Property taxes do not come close. We need more industry and commercial development to help cover the load."



Trail Issues

Butte is a trail using community. Nearly everyone interviewed uses and supports maintaining and improving trails. There is broad support for trails for snow-machines and ATVs, but also a desire that in some areas motorized trail use needs to be controlled or limited. Comments below regarding trails include views expressed by the general public, plus recommendations by local Trails and Recreation Sub-Committee, and the Butte Trails Committee.

Comments by the General Public

"There are not enough dedicated trails for snow machines and 4-wheelers -- trails are not connected. We need to dedicate trails for motorized use with access to gas stations as an alternative to cars."

"We need winter trails and hardened summer trails for 4-wheelers. There are too many snow-machines and 4-wheelers on the road."

Some non-ATV users said that they don't object to all ATV use – just unsafe, disrespectful riders.

They suggest having separate trails designated for motorized and non-motorized use.

"I'm not against 4-wheeling but some are unsafe and they want to go everywhere."

“Noise pollution and dust in the air from ATVs along the sand dunes is a big problem. I don’t object to ATVs if they stay on the trail.”

“The bike trail is overloaded with kids on motorized vehicles with no helmets.”

Trails and Recreation Sub-Committee - summary of trail related issues

Old Glenn Highway concerns:

- Motorized vs. non-motorized traffic conflicts (possibly have one side motorized and the other side non-motorized)
- Seasonal restrictions (motorized traffic will need to run same direction as highway traffic during winter months to avoid headlight glare)
- DOT highway upgrade (work with DOT to allow motorized trail use along highway right-of-way)
- Speed limits
- Dust and noise concerns

North-South trail system:

- Connection between south end of Plumley-Maud with trailheads for Jim Creek and Sexton trail
- Use of trails south of Butte Elementary and solid waste transfer site (concern over

Borough gating trail to eliminate garbage dumping; gate to prevent vehicles but still allow ATVs)

- Construction of bridge over McRoberts Creek on Plumley-Maud trail

Jim Creek Access:

- Need for larger trailhead easement
- Need to preserve motorized access to Mud, Jim and Swan lakes

Management Alternatives:

- User fees
- Installation of gates and restroom facilities
- Need for on-site presence with enforcement authority
- Concessionaire could provide on-site deterrence at trail heads
- Need for much education and pressure from responsible users and groups
- Work with Borough, DNR and Eklutna for multi-agency management

General:

- Trash cleanup days
- Make Rippy Trail (and extensions) along base of mountains non-motorized to protect wetlands



Butte Trails Committee/Butte Community Council

A formal Butte Trails Committee has been established by the Butte Community Council. It is made up of citizens who represent the community, represent all the user groups, and are willing to make a commitment of time and energy for at least three years to see projects through.

The Butte Community Council and the Butte Trails Committee passed several resolutions regarding the trails. These include:

1. Right of way from Plumley Road to Sullivan Road off Caudell Road.
2. Preserve and connect trail system from Maud Road to Sullivan Road Trailheads (the Plumley Maud Trail), allowing a 200 foot minimum easement for the trail.
3. Public access on the trail from Brimar Road trailhead around Burkholder Lake to join trails in the SW quarter of section 18. This access runs through the private property of O'Connor and Goodrich. It will be located on the existing section line however, between sections 11 and 12 running North and South.
4. Repurchase trailhead access to Jim Creek off RS #2477 trail.
5. Dedicate Sexton Trail and trailhead parking area at the Pavilion (coordinate with the State on State Portion).
6. Obtain easement for a trail from the Knik River Bridge to Jim Creek (will cross Mental Health land).
7. Dedicate trail along the south side of Maud Road and the south side of Plumley Road.
8. Dedicate trail along the south side of Sullivan Road.
9. Dedicate the Morgan Horse trail from Huntley Road to Maud Road.
10. Dedicate trails from Plant Materials Center, Our Road and Republican Road to Ezi Slough.
11. Access at end of Doc McKinley Road to the Matanuska River.
12. Right of Way from Matanuska Bridge on Westside of river all the way down the old Matanuska.

Messy Neighbors

Some people are frustrated with living near places that they consider to be eyesores.

“Too many properties along the Old Glenn look like junk yards. When people come into the community they see those kinds of places and it makes them think nobody cares about this place, and it invites anything-goes behavior.”

Lack of Local Jobs

Some people expressed concern that the local economy won't support future generations.

“There are no businesses and no work for locals who grew up here. We need some form of local economic development, not just projects for the port and Hatcher Pass.”

Specific Problem Locations – Need for Solutions

Many people identified specific problem locations where there is a high incidence of lawless activities and 'partying.' Areas mentioned include:

“Jim Creek area North shore of the Knik River to Friday Creek; from Sullivan Road parking lot or straight from the Knik River bridge; and trespass use on Eklutna Native Corporation Lands.”

“The extension of the road along the Rippy Trail in the Jim Lake area in the 1990's caused major access problems because there was no plan for management of the area. From the first year there was dumping, trashed vehicles. The trails board resigned over lack of Borough planning.”



Actions Suggested By the Community

1. Guide Growth

Most people stated that they weren't against growth, and most realize that it is probably going to happen anyway – but many felt strongly that it should be guided.

"I'm not anti-growth, but we need to have a plan. I'm from the old school, religious – I believe man should be a steward, 'take care of the earth.'"

"It's getting too crowded – you don't want to feel like you're living in a town, with a bunch of small lots."

"Clean It Up! "Butte-ify the Butte!"

"Maybe the dump should be free – they have free days and it must cost more to pick up junk and drag to the dump than to allow free dumping."

"Dump needs to have security to prohibit dumping of hazardous materials."

"Allow people to party as long as they clean up their mess."

"Enforce rules against illegal dumping. The Borough proposed seizing the permanent fund check of the last registered owner [of dumped cars]– but this didn't fly."

2. Increase Law Enforcement

Most people wanted increased law enforcement. Some specific suggestions include:

"Increase trooper patrol and trooper response time; add a night patrol for summer."

"Don't just push bad activities to new locations."

"Provide better education so people know what they can, can't do."

"Pay higher taxes for better enforcement - I'd guess about half of voters would support this."

"Get the community more involved. South Knik Council is talking to Mt. View

community patrol to see how to do it. They plan on going out and taking license plates and other information – the fear is that someone is going to get hurt."

"More uniformed officers in the area. When we had the troopers during the two-year period it was much better."

"Urge users to report on other people misbehaving - or risk losing rights."

"Don't switch ADF&G brown shirts for troopers."

"Troopers alone aren't going to solve the problems. Solutions might be to make areas more visible or put more people in homes into lower Jim Creek area, then people wouldn't be so inclined to break the law."

3. Establish a Shooting Range

Most stakeholders interviewed who were concerned about problems with shooting suggested that a shooting range be built for target practice.

"Need areas where there is no shooting."

"Put in a shooting range along the dunes behind the north shore of the Knik."

4. Improve Jim Creek Area

- Provide a parking lot at Jim Creek with well defined boundaries – limit the number of vehicular access points to one.
- Connect trails so that snow machines and ATVs can access areas without traveling on roadways – "trails should go from the Butte all the way to Nome."
- Put a road all the way to Jim Creek with parking visible to the users. Limit access to one road.
- Improve Sullivan Road access to river. Too many trails in the area for motorized use, need only one direct access to river and then trail to glacier.
- Maintain multiple use – ski, snowmachine, ATV's.
- Day of week restrictions like Eklutna don't work, what if a guy works on those days open to ATV's?





- Limit motorized use on wetlands – they are being crossed and damaged. Airboat use is increasing all the way up Jim Creek.
- Need to have some non-motorized trails for horseback riding, hiking, quiet areas. Separate system Wolverine Lake to Glacier.
- Set up a trash haul-out system.

5. Improve Jim Lake Area

- Provide a campground before you reach Jim Lake, with gate access and supervision.
- Limit summer motorized use at Jim Lake – the area is close to being circled with a motorized access from both sides. This is a world-class canoe destination quiet area, the only one left in the Knik basin.
- Provide a boat launch for canoes / small motor-boats.
- Identify and protect wildlife corridors – they're extremely important.
- Set up a trash haul-out system.
- Close the road to motorized access till a management plan is in place with some controls
- Work out trail width issues – RS#2477's are set by law at 100', some people want to have them reduced to just 60.

6. Increase Use by Legitimate Recreation Users

- "Work with ATV users and the National Rifle Association (NRA), they could be our allies. Don't want to stop legitimate uses, just manage them better." • Increase tourism use will help – commercial operators can help keep an eye on things.
- Charge a fee to pay for services – parking, trail fee, user fee.
- Find ways to reduce impacts, not to stop activities: e.g. partying on Rippy trail – establish designated places to shoot, to sight rifles. Put in dumpsters; send an

occasional trooper out there to enforce the rules.

7. Guide Land Management Decisions

People voiced suggestions regarding the need for planning areas for particular amount and types of development. At the same time, most of those interviewed are hesitant to call for zoning. Suggested land use policies for residential uses included:

- Set minimum lot sizes (many residents have animals, need space).
- Like lack of restrictions, but may need to do something so one use doesn't damage neighbors.
- Need to plan for community wells and services for long term growth.
- No major subdivisions with lots of small lots – large development would impact water reserves.

"This is a great place to see the northern lights – it's protected from light pollution. An 800-lot subdivision could take away our dark night skies, as well as damaging air and water quality."

"I can't say I'm happy about prospect of someone building a house next door to ours, right in middle of good view, or putting in a septic system up hill from our house. But it's their right, not fair to say no to them."

8. Retain Land for Recreation and Community Services

- Retain lands for recreation, also for public facilities (school, police).
- If larger subdivisions take place, need to make sure that project includes trails open to all users.

"We need a bike trail along Old Glenn for people to walk and bike – not motorized. Also need to have another place for ATV's to play."

- Make a canoe loop between Jim and Mud Lake
- Develop a land-use plan for Swan Lake Recreation Area and the Butte Area.
- Establish a 40-acre community park.

9. Clean up the Area

"Restrictions on commercial uses, junk yards in the middle of residential neighborhoods – "ruins place for everybody".

"Ok to have some rules about what you can have on your property – limit junk yards next to residents – Conditional use permits or



special use district, but need a way to enforce.”

10. Improve Coordination among Major Landowners

- Get landowners together – BLM, DNR, Borough and others to manage the land.
- Need to coordinate land management among different agencies, different user groups: create multi-use recreation facilities: RV and camping, wilderness camping, trails, etc.
- Against zoning – but landowners should have some sense of privacy and protection from neighbors. Maybe a special use designation is needed for road services, public safety, and animal control.
- The local government needs to pay attention to the Susitna Plan for land management.

11. Promote Local Economic Development

Mixed views were offered about the desirability of new jobs and businesses in the Butte. Some feel Butte should remain largely a bedroom community; others thought the community should become more self-sufficient.

Tourism was one common theme:

“Butte has become a ‘no-man’s-land’ - but it’s an incredibly beautiful place, and could be a major recreation and tourism center.” “We need tours to the glacier and a salmon-spawning viewing platform at Bodenbug Creek.”

“Jim Lake needs improved trails to make it accessible like a state park.”

“The Jim Creek/Knik River area could be turned into something spectacular, but right now it’s so dangerous that I don’t go down there or let my kids play there. Eklutna Lake is a nice model.”

Specific Comments on the Use of Borough Owned Land

Residents recommend the following for Borough Land:

1. Public Use Areas

A high priority is to keep it public – reserve areas for public facilities, trails, recreation, schools, libraries, fire station, police, parks. Most residents interviewed believe that trails need to be protected with multiple uses maintained in most areas. Some trails could be dedicated to motorized and non-motorized use:

“Keep areas open to ATVs that have been used that way forever – don’t try to restrict. I used to take 4-wheelers to areas further to south, but now I don’t like parking my trailer there for fear of getting torched. I don’t like having to drive on roads.”

A few don’t want to see Borough land to be turned into park land – “too many parks already.” Others want to see more parkland and tourism-related development:

“Borough land on Knik in river area should be kept for wildlife.”

“Area should be developed as a destination – would like to see more tours going up to the glacier.”

“If anyone wanted to put in a lodge – Metal Creek would be the place for it.”

2. Guided Growth

Many said that growth is inevitable in the area and they would like to have input in how this happens. While many feel that some residential development is acceptable they are concerned about:



- Increase in property values and therefore taxes.
- Increased density - prefer large lots over small lot subdivisions "its fields, not woods."

Many would like to see the Borough handle the sale and use of their lands differently. For example, several people felt that local property owners should be given the first opportunity to buy land that the Borough puts up for sale.

"I don't think the Borough should be sitting on the land – 5-acre lots are best."

"Give local property owners notice or first chance to purchase. The present system requires a person wanting to buy land to get an appraisal, make an offer and then the Borough advertises to deal to others who want to participate. The notices don't reach everyone, especially local landowners."

"No more back-room deals. The Borough should provide notice for development or sale of lands to local residents. They need to improve the process so it's equitable to all – no more behind-closed-door deals to friends and special interests."

- Need to establish development buffers, balance land for public needs and revenues.

3. Establish Shooting range

Several people felt that developing a shooting range will help with some of the problem with shooting. One person interviewed suggested the area along the dunes behind the north shore of the Knik for a shooting range.

4. User Fees and Permits

People suggested charging user fees to generate revenues for improved local management. Possible activities proposed for user fees included:

- Parking
- ATV tax
- Summer fishing – Little Su and Willow
- Woodcutting
- Camping at the Pavilion on Sullivan Rd and at the Knik River bar just past Knik River Bridge
- RV parking fee



Summary of Comments on Draft Plans

Two extensive rounds of public review of the plan were held. The first was in mid-2004 and the second in early 2006. All landowners within the Butte Community Council boundary were notified with direct mailings affording them the opportunity to review and comments on both drafts. The plan was also made available on the borough's web site and notices were placed in the "Frontiersman" newspaper.

First Public Review

From May through October 2004, the public had an opportunity to review a draft of the plan. A significant amount of letters, petitions and emails were submitted to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and Land Design North during this period.

Comments came from a number of individuals, businesses and organizations – both locals and non-locals, the Butte Community Council, Pioneer Mountain Properties and organizations such as Butte United for Trail Traveling Edification (BUTTE), Friends of Mat-Su (FoMS), and Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance (which includes the Alaska ATV Club, Alaska Boating Association, Personal Watercraft Club of Alaska, Alaska Extreme Four wheelers, and Alaska State Snowmobile Association).

The Butte Community Council wrote a resolution titled, 'A Resolution of the Butte Community Council Proclaiming our Right to Traditional use of Public Lands'. They believed that motorized conveyances, and other lawful uses, should not be restricted (gates across trails or conversion of multiple use trails to non-motorized trails) and that no Butte Area resident should pay a fee of any sort.

A petition formulated by Butte United for Trail Traveling Edification, title "Legalize Freedom", gathered 201 signatures of people who opposed the 1,000 lb. weight restriction on trails.

In general, comments about the plan addressed the following topics:

- Controlling or limiting motorized trail use
- Destruction to trails & wetlands from motorized vehicles
- User restrictions (user fees, gates)
- MSB parcels allocated for residential development
- Plan restrictions on private property
- Impact of plan-recommended actions on private property
- Location of shooting/target range
- Community Involvement
- Enforcement
- Commercial development
- Map accuracy
- Partnership with the State & Eklutna Inc.

Below is a brief summary of the main points raised on each topic:

- **Controlling or limiting motorized trail use**
– In addition to the Butte Community Council and Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance, several residents were opposed to the plan's suggestions that some trails be designated for non-motorized use. The "BUTTE" organizations petition, signed by 201 people, also opposed such restrictions, specifically the 1,000 lb. weight limit on trails. The Jim Creek area is of specific concern. Many believe motorized access to this area should be guaranteed forever. One ATV proponent pointed out that fuel taxes paid by ATV users contribute towards road and trail maintenance. The tax does exist and it is used for specific grant projects, however no monies have ever been spent for any trails affected by this plan to-date.
- **Destruction to trails & wetlands from motorized vehicles** – With the exception of the Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance, many who commented on the plan believe this is one of the most important subjects covered in the document and have expressed their concerns about the destruction of trails and wetlands by motorized vehicles, and propose restrictions on where motorized trail use should be permitted. Some have even provided photos showing the damage.



- **User restrictions (user fees, gates)**
– The Butte Community Council and the Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance were opposed to the plan's recommendations for user fees of any sort and gates across trails that would limit access.
- **MSB parcels allocated for residential development** – Several people commented on this topic, most opposing the plan's recommendations towards selling certain Borough parcels to private developers, even if an "open space" subdivision were to be built. They wanted to see all Borough land preserved and kept as public greenbelts, recreation or for future public facilities. The Plumley-Maud area drew the most specific comments with residents and groups opposed to any development on the Borough land because of moose migration, an anadromous stream and it being a critical buffer zone for the wetlands. One person who commented wanted to see the Borough wait until developable land is in short supply and the value of land is increased.
- **Plan restrictions on private property**
– A number of residents believed that the plan has regulations and mapping that control the use of private property, and that these should all be removed. The general sentiment expressed that this plan should not in any way be construed as a comprehensive plan for the Butte, with the ability to control or restrict use of private land.
- **Impact of plan-recommended actions on private property** – Several people commented on specific trails identified by the plan that, in their view, would impact their home. Specific concerns are the location of the Brimar Road trailhead and the proposed trail along the east side of

- Caudill, both of which would worsen existing trespass problems.

- **Location of shooting/target range** – Many residents believe a shooting/ target range is desperately needed in the Borough generally, and specifically to relieve pressure on the Butte. People commenting proposed areas that are far from residential areas, wetlands and other sensitive habitat. Some residents disagreed with the possible locations presented in the plan because of safety, noise and trash issues. One resident believes another facility is not needed.

- **Community involvement** – The Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance believed the 20 (of the 2,900 Butte residents) people interviewed at the beginning of the process played too large a role in the conclusions drawn in the plan and that more residents should have been interviewed. Another resident believed that the community involvement needed to include more than the Community Council and that the trails committee needed to include non-motorized users.

- **Enforcement** – Friends of Mat-Su and several residents would like to see stronger law enforcement in the area, and therefore concur with the strategies proposed in the plan and encourage the Borough to pursue them.

- **Commercial development** – One resident was concerned with the potential of inappropriate commercial development on Borough lands, such as gravel pit operations. Currently, gravel pits have a negative impact on property values.

- **Map accuracy** – One resident disputed the accuracy of the maps, specifically the soil classifications.

- **Partnership with the State & Eklutna Inc.** – One resident believed a partnership with the State and Eklutna for the management of the Jim/Mud Lake area should be formed.

Many individual letters were received in support of the draft plan. Specific plan elements identified as positive include user restrictions, such as limiting types of uses, hours of use and user fees on Borough land.



Plan supporters typically site concerns with destruction of wetlands and wildlife habitat due to the current unrestricted use. “Unlawful shooting, partying and destruction of habitat by thoughtless use of ATVs” has become disturbing to many. There is a mixture of responses as to which trails should be designated non-motorized, but a number of residents are in favor of some non-motorized trails. Many of these people also support the strategies proposed in the plan towards stronger law enforcement in the area.

Second Public Review

From January through April 2006, the public was given a second opportunity to review the plan and to comment on the extensive changes that were made to the draft plan as a result of the earlier public comments that were received.

During this second comment period, ten comments were received from a variety of individuals. In general these comments addressed the following topics:

- Borough land suitability and context
- Need to retain open space
- Community character, community life styles, places to gather
- Tourism and commercial recreational opportunities
- Residential land sales
- Inaccurate mapping
- Increased road and trail access, and related parking
- Cooperative management agreements
- General support for plan
- Specific comments on management intent of parcels and land-use classifications

Below is a brief summary of the main points raised and how they were addressed in the plan:

Borough Land Suitability – Comments were made about the general geology and vegetation on the Borough owned parcels. The plan was amended to reflect that some of the Borough parcels do have extensive areas of bedrock, thick layers of glacial and fluvial sediment, extensive floodplain and wetland areas, areas of extensive and on-going erosion, and relic permafrost. Staff also conducted on-site field visits to some of these parcels to confirm the information.

As a result of these comments, review of more recent resource mapping, and field investigations, some of the proposed management intent, mainly dealing with land sales, were changed. Proposed land use classifications were also changed to reflect long-term retention of most of the Borough land in public ownership. Some small pieces of land are to be classified as land bank to be retained in undeveloped public ownership until a need exists for possible public facilities or other uses.

Retain Open Space and Public Recreation Areas – As described above, management intent and land use classifications have been changed to reflect this goal.

Community Character – References to the sale of Borough land for commercial and residential development were strongly opposed as being inconsistent with the community's desires, particularly with the amount of private land that is available for such uses in the area. Based on the land suitability and communities desires, the management intent and land classifications have been changed to reflect public retention both over the short and long-term versus possible land disposals.

Promote Tourism and Commercial Recreational Opportunities – References to subdivision sales on Borough land have been deleted as being inconsistent with this goal as well as other community goals as reflected previously.

Residential Land Sales – Based on the physical characteristics of some of the land that was proposed for possible land sales and the community goals, all references to residential and commercial land sales have been deleted.

Inaccurate Maps – In the original draft plan maps were provided on geology, topography and elevation, hydrology, soils, and vegetation. As pointed out by several reviewers the maps were of such poor detail and inaccurate as to be

useless for planning or information purposes on which to base decisions. These maps have been deleted from the plan.

Increased Road and Trail Access, and Related Parking – Concern was expressed over the cost to develop and maintain increased access and parking. The Greater Butte RSA (#26) opposed any attempt to include these under their umbrella of responsibilities. Changes were made throughout the plan to reflect this concern.

Cooperative Management – Several comments were made encouraging cooperative management agreements with adjacent private property owners, but mainly with the state Department of Natural Resources, the Mental Health Land Trust, and Eklutna Native Corporation. Additions have been made to reflect this as appropriate throughout the plan.

General Support for the Plan – Many of the commenter's, while have specific concerns with portions of the plan, supported the plans overall approach, intent and recommendations. Like the earlier draft, people continued to be concerned with the destruction of wetlands and wildlife habitat due to the current unrestricted use and the need for stronger and consistent law enforcement. This plan is to determine the highest and best use of the Borough land in the Butte area – not actions dealing with on-the-ground management. However, changes were made throughout the plan to reflect the need to address these concerns.

Specific Comments on Parcels

Parcel 1A – Jim Creek: objections were raised about the use of this parcel for motorized activities because of activities that carry over onto private land. This parcel has a history of both motorized and non-motorized uses and these uses need to be addressed. However, the overall intent of retaining this parcel in public ownership and classified as public recreation is not changed by these uses. This plan does not deal with perceived or real management issues; rather the plan determines the highest and best overall use for the parcels. Management of this parcel, along with the adjacent state land within the Knik River Public Use Area is being addressed in the management plan for that area.

Parcel 4 – Plumley – Maud: several comments were made about the original land use options.

Changes were made to reflect the limited physical characteristics of this parcel, to delete future residential land sales, preserve the option for future public facilities on a small portion of the site and protect the parcels existing open space and public recreation character.

Parcel 4 C and 4 D; further research of site soils, terrain information, recent flooding events and a field investigation revealed marginal soils, high water tables and the existence of lens permafrost made these areas unsuitable for disposal, these sub-areas were eliminated and combined with sub-area 4 A to be retained in public ownership,

Parcel 7 – (Wetlands) Riverine Parcel; due to the history of erosion from the Matanuska River and the lack of extensive wetlands, commenter's suggested that the name of this parcel be changed from wetlands parcel to riverine parcel. This change was made and the recommended classification was changed from wetlands to reserved use/open space.

4. Policy for Borough Land

The purpose of this plan is to establish policy for the future use and management of individual parcels of Borough land within the Butte Community Council area. These individual parcels, however, are like pieces of material in a quilt – to decide the best way to use them requires understanding the pattern of the whole area.

Therefore, this section begins with two sets of information that provide a context for decisions on the management of Borough land: broad community goals, and Borough-wide, Matanuska-Susitna Borough land use policy.

Butte Community Goals

This section presents broad goals for the future of the Butte, based on the common threads in comments from Butte community members. Quotations are from statements made by area residents. This information is only used as a means to make better decisions about the uses of Borough land. These goals and strategies are not adopted policy for the community as a whole, and do not have regulatory authority. They are presented here to better explain the framework that shaped decisions regarding Borough property. Appendix C offers more discussion about these goals and strategies.

COMMUNITY GOAL 1. Retain and Improve Recreation, Connected Open Space

The great natural beauty of the region coupled with the strong community desire for recreation and access to outdoor recreation are two keys to the community's quality of life. Borough land should be used to support this goal, for example, by creating a network of open space and connecting trails. This strategy can meet the recreation need of local residents while attracting visitors to the region to enhance economic development opportunities. It is important to develop facilities that are enjoyed first and foremost by local residents and then by visitors.



Strategies:

- Identify and reserve a safe, community-wide, multi-use public trail system.
- Plan the trail system to provide links to residences, schools, shopping areas, and recreation (the ideal: “a trail system from the Butte all the way to Nome”).
- Preserve trail corridors and open space Borough land is ever sold in the future.
- Designate specific recreation areas for some activities (shooting, motocross).
- Support the planning effort for State land in the Knik River Public Use Area and work cooperatively with the State in managing the entire area including the important access points located on Borough land.

COMMUNITY GOAL 2. Better Law Enforcement - Reduce Trash, Unsafe Shooting and Vandalism

Community members want a reduction in trash, unsafe shooting, burning and vandalism in the Butte area. The Butte Community Council is actively working with the State Troopers and the Borough to develop an enforcement policy for existing rules and regulations within the area. The need is to enforce existing rules, not create new ones.

Strategies:

- Clean up garbage and junk cars. Enforce laws when dumpers can be identified.

- Enforce laws that prohibit reckless, dangerous behavior.
- Provide better user education (e.g., signs and brochures).
- Improve management of recreation areas:
 - Better define entry and parking areas
 - Provide on-site “hosts” to explain rules and provide oversight (similar to the Deshka River program).

COMMUNITY GOAL 3. Community Character, Community Life, Places to Gather

There is a strong desire to maintain a Butte as a place with a strong sense of community, a distinctive rural character, and a solid connection to the land. Use of Borough land can support this goal in several ways, as outlined below.

Strategies:

- Reserve Borough land to meet need for future public facilities
- Encourage development of a center for town (with community facilities such as a Post Office or library, diner and a community meeting place)
- Use the location of trails, trailheads and parking to guide recreation use so it does not reduce neighborhood quality of life
- Continue to encourage volunteer-based, clean-up and other community events

COMMUNITY GOAL 4. Promote Economic Development

The community voiced a strong desire for improved local job and business opportunities. The need for major shopping is not a concern for local residents, however, there is a desire for more opportunities for locally owned and operated tourism businesses, along with some new local services such as restaurant, coffee shop, or day care. The right uses of Borough land can help meet this goal, for example, through supporting improved recreation facilities.

Strategies:

- Provide a world-class trail system and access to public land as a means of supporting locally-based tourism businesses and to increase property values
- Allow for tourism businesses to operate on Borough land, particularly locally owned and operated businesses



- Do not actively seek large-scale commercial development
- Improve the atmosphere for local small business development by improving the appearance of areas such as the Jim Lake Borough parcel and the entry to Butte
- Better enforce laws such as shooting and trespass to improve neighborhood quality of life; work to revitalize neighborhoods

COMMUNITY GOAL 5. Transportation Improvements

The community wants improvements in local transportation facilities, including a better trail system and, in some areas, improved roads and parking. Many communities have taken advantage of federal, state, and local funds to help develop transportation-related projects that meet a broad range of community needs.

Strategies:

- Plan trails on Borough land to link to new community trails & walkways along roadways, for both motorized & non-motorized uses
- Improve transit links to the core area
- Plan and develop transportation in a way that does not place a significant impact on the Road Service Area and other public resources

COMMUNITY GOAL 6. Community-Based Decisions

Provide for more local community-based involvement in decisions affecting the future of Butte. The Borough should work with the Community Council to establish a range of public

services and opportunities that are responsive to the community as a whole as well as the needs of individual neighborhoods and user groups.

Strategies:

- Continue the process started through this plan to encourage the Borough to be more responsive to community needs.
- Increase local involvement in decisions for disposing of Borough land:
 - Establish a clear process
 - Require decisions to respond to approved community plans
 - Actively seek community and planning staff opinion as part of pre-disposal planning process
- Partner with Borough and other large landowners to manage the area’s assets.
- Provide consistent, equitable public processes for development approval.
- Support community efforts to create greater capacity for local control, local self-governance.

Borough Land and Natural Resource Management Goals

In addition to local concerns, the Borough must manage land considering the interests of all Borough residents. Whenever possible, the Borough seeks creative solutions to simultaneously address local and Borough-wide community needs. These needs include retaining open space land for public recreation use, protecting natural resources like watersheds, enabling economic development, and providing space for public facilities such as libraries, community centers or schools.

To help achieve this balance between different local and Borough-wide interests, the Borough has established the goals presented below. To a great extent, these goals follow the direction established by the Susitna Area Plan, approved in 1985.

Borough Goal 1: Develop Public Facilities

One of the principal functions of Borough owned land is to meet the growing demand for public facilities such as schools, libraries, community centers, fire stations and other public facilities.

Management Guidelines

- Adequate public land shall be reserved to meet the present and future needs of residents of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough for public facilities.

Borough Goal 2: Fostering Economic Development and Creating Local Jobs

In an effort to promote economic vitality in the region, the Borough initiates economic development projects designed to stimulate growth and local business opportunities.

Management Guidelines

- The Borough shall utilize public land to encourage the development of local based businesses and the development of jobs for local residents.
- Economic development shall consider the impacts to existing residential and commercial development and shall not reduce the current level of service both in quantity and quality to Borough residents.

Borough Goal 3: Retain and Encourage Outdoor Access

One of the most important community values to local residents is access to trails and recreation areas. The Borough Recreational Trails Plan provides a focus for these activities and directs priorities, which include mapping, surveying, acquiring rights-of-way, trailhead parking, and trail connections.

Management Guidelines

- The Borough shall reserve or dedicate adequate public rights-of-way and access into and through existing Borough land along traditional trails and pathways.



- The Borough shall further encourage the connection of neighborhoods to schools, parks, and local businesses to promote multiple modes of transportation through a linked network of trails and pathways.

Borough Goal 4: Develop and Maintain Public Parks, Public Recreation Areas and Open Space

Parks and open spaces serve a number of important functions in a community. They support leisure and cultural activities, provide economic and environmental benefits, and help to retain a dimension of the natural environment within community and regional landscapes. Through the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Asset Management Plan the Borough has identified the need to preserve community values and character.

Management Guidelines

- The Borough shall provide a framework for adequate open space and indoor and outdoor recreational facilities to meet the needs of Borough residents as well as visitors.
- The Borough shall provide quality recreational opportunities as close to home as possible, that meet locally defined needs as established through community involvement.
- The Borough shall retain the openness, scenic quality and historic character that makes the Borough a desirable place to live, and
- The Borough shall minimize the cost of recreational development through multiple facility use and coordinating uses by various recreational groups.

Borough Goal 5: Promote Tourism and Commercial Recreation Opportunities

The Borough is concerned with providing recreation space, facilities, and access not only for local residents but also for tourists and the economic benefit they represent for the Matanuska-Susitna Valley. Tourism is vital to the local economy of rural towns, but has the potential to adversely impact community character and locally owned businesses. By creating a plan before impacts occur, the Borough can direct tourism-related growth in a way that results in benefits for the community.



Management Guidelines

- The Borough shall promote responsible economic development for appropriate recreational activities.
- The Borough shall enter into private-public and public-public partnerships to promote the development of public facilities that can be enjoyed by both residents of the area as well as visitors.

Borough Goal 6: Promote Responsible Development of Natural Resources

Some Borough-owned land has the potential for generating income from natural resources. The sale of material (such as gravel and sand) and timber can provide a substantial source of revenue. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is known for its fertile farmland and recognized around the world for some of the largest produce grown in the world. Agricultural land is important not only for preserving the unique character of the region, but also for generating income to help the Borough achieve its community development objectives.

Management Guidelines

- The Borough shall promote the responsible development of its land for appropriate natural resource uses that do not adversely impact the local residential or commercial community.

Borough Goal 7: Encourage Conservation and Restoration

Stream bank and wetland protection projects are an important part of the Community Development Department's project portfolio. These projects are designed to restore riparian habitat and stabilize damaged stream banks

using natural materials. The Borough developed a wetland-banking and mitigation program to increase wetland protection and offset anticipated wetland impacts occurring as a result of development.

Management Guidelines

- The Borough shall maintain in public ownership and protect the habitat values of sufficient suitable land and water to provide for the habitat needs of fish and wildlife resources necessary to maintain or enhance public use and economic benefit.
- The Borough shall ensure access to public land and water where appropriate to promote or enhance responsible public use and enjoyment of fish and wildlife resources.
- The Borough shall contribute to the economic diversity of the region by protecting the fish and wildlife and habitats that contribute directly and indirectly to local, regional and borough wide economies.
- The Borough shall form a cooperative management partnership with other land owners and agencies when possible and feasible.

Land Use Classification System

The following are some of the “MSB’s Land Classifications” for Borough land per section 23.05.100 of the Borough Code that are applicable to the Butte Area. For the most part these classifications are broad in nature and may be suitable for a variety of uses. Where defined in subsequent plans such as the Borough Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, there are clear guidelines for number of facilities and acres of land for specific land use classifications.

1. Agriculture Lands are those lands which, because of soils, location, physical or climatic features, or adjacent development, are presently or potentially valuable for the production of agricultural crops.

2. Forest Management Lands are those lands, which, because of physical, climatic and vegetative conditions, are presently or potentially valuable for the production of timber and other forest products. Forest management shall emphasize the multiple use concept.



3. Land Bank Lands – are those lands for which specific long-term uses have not yet been determined but, in the near term, will be retained in Borough ownership and managed for multiple use.

4. Material Lands are those lands which are chiefly valuable for earth materials, including but not limited to, sand, gravel, soil, peat, moss, sphagnum, stone, pumice, cinders and clay.

5. Private Recreation Lands are those lands, which because of location, physical features or adjacent development, are presently or potentially valuable as outdoor recreational areas and may be best utilized by private development.

6. Public Recreation Lands are those lands which, because of location, physical features or adjacent development, are presently or potentially valuable to the public as natural or developed recreation or historic areas. This includes the following categories as defined by the Borough Parks, Recreation and Open Space Management Plan which is a portion of the Borough Comprehensive Plan:

Park Areas

- Neighborhood/School Parks are intended to provide areas for both passive and active recreation for people of all ages. They serve a 1 to 5 mile radius and serve a population of up to 10,000. Sizes range from 5 to 40 acres with 5 acres recommended per 1,000 population. The Butte’s current population should support a 12-acre park with growth



potential for 20 years to have a need for a 20-acre park within a central location of the Butte area.

- Community/Sports Parks are intended to serve a larger population of 5,000 to 20,000 within a radius of 5 to 15 miles. They vary in size from 40 to 100 acres and provide a wide range of activities and facilities such as multiple sports fields, picnic grounds and shelters. Growth in the Butte area could warrant one Community Sports Park of 40 acres that would serve the Butte, Knik and Lazy Mountain Council areas.
- Regional Parks are intended to serve all residents within a one-hour drive and visitors to the area. They vary in size from 100 to 200 acres and have a mixture of natural areas and developed special facilities such as camping, boating, nature centers, equestrian centers, or motorized sports areas. The Butte area has several areas that warrant consideration as regional parks including the Knik River Jim Creek Area as well as the Mud and Jim Lake area currently owned by the State and should be managed by DNR to be consistent with the above

Public Open Space Areas

- Conservation Areas are upland, wetland or water areas, which serve a variety of public purposes from low impact recreation, view shed protection and wildlife habitat. These lands are valued for their natural functions such as storm water retention, erosion control, flood control, water and air quality, fish and wildlife habitat and visual buffering of land uses.

- Recreation Corridors and Trails are linear parks, which follow developed recreation facilities such as trails and natural features such as streams and shorelines. They provide connections between public facilities, parks, schools, commercial development and homes. The width should be established to protect the resource and the surrounding land uses from conflicts.

Recreation Facilities

- Recreation Facilities are athletic fields, playgrounds and other facilities that support recreational activities. Standards for athletic facilities indicate that the Butte area should have 1 soccer, 1 softball, 1 Little League and 1 baseball field per 3,000 population. Factoring in growth potential for the next twenty years and the recreation demand for surrounding communities, the Butte area could require an additional field in each sport by 2020.
- Highway Oriented Facilities are pullouts, interpretive or informational signs, waysides and campgrounds. Coordination with ADOT&PF with highway upgrades to the Old Glenn Highway including Scenic Byway designation should encourage the development of facilities along the Old Glenn Highway.
- Tourism Oriented Facilities are those facilities developed for the traveling and recreating public that can provide local economic benefits to the community. These are mainly provided for by the private sector including food, fuel, lodging, supplies and guide services.

7. Reserve Use Lands are those lands, which have been transferred, assigned, or designated for present or future public use, or for use by a government or quasi-government agency, or for future development of new town sites or for future expansion of existing public uses.

8. Residential Lands are those lands, which, because of location, physical features, or adjacent development, are presently or potentially valuable for either single family or multifamily dwellings.

9. Watershed Lands are those lands that may be forested out a high or moderate relief which will direct water to low lying areas covered or saturated by surface or groundwater sufficient to normally support vegetation found in areas such as riparian, swamps, marshes, bogs, estuaries, and similar areas.

10. Wetland Bank Lands – are lands which, because of location and physical features, are presently or potentially valuable for wetland mitigation banking.

Parcel Specific Management Intent and Land Use Classifications

This section sets out land use policy for each of the seven Borough owned parcels in the Butte Community Council Area. Collectively these areas make up roughly 2,268 acres. These policies are intended to accommodate both community and borough needs, and to consider

each parcel's unique characteristics and uses. For each parcel, the section provides the following information:

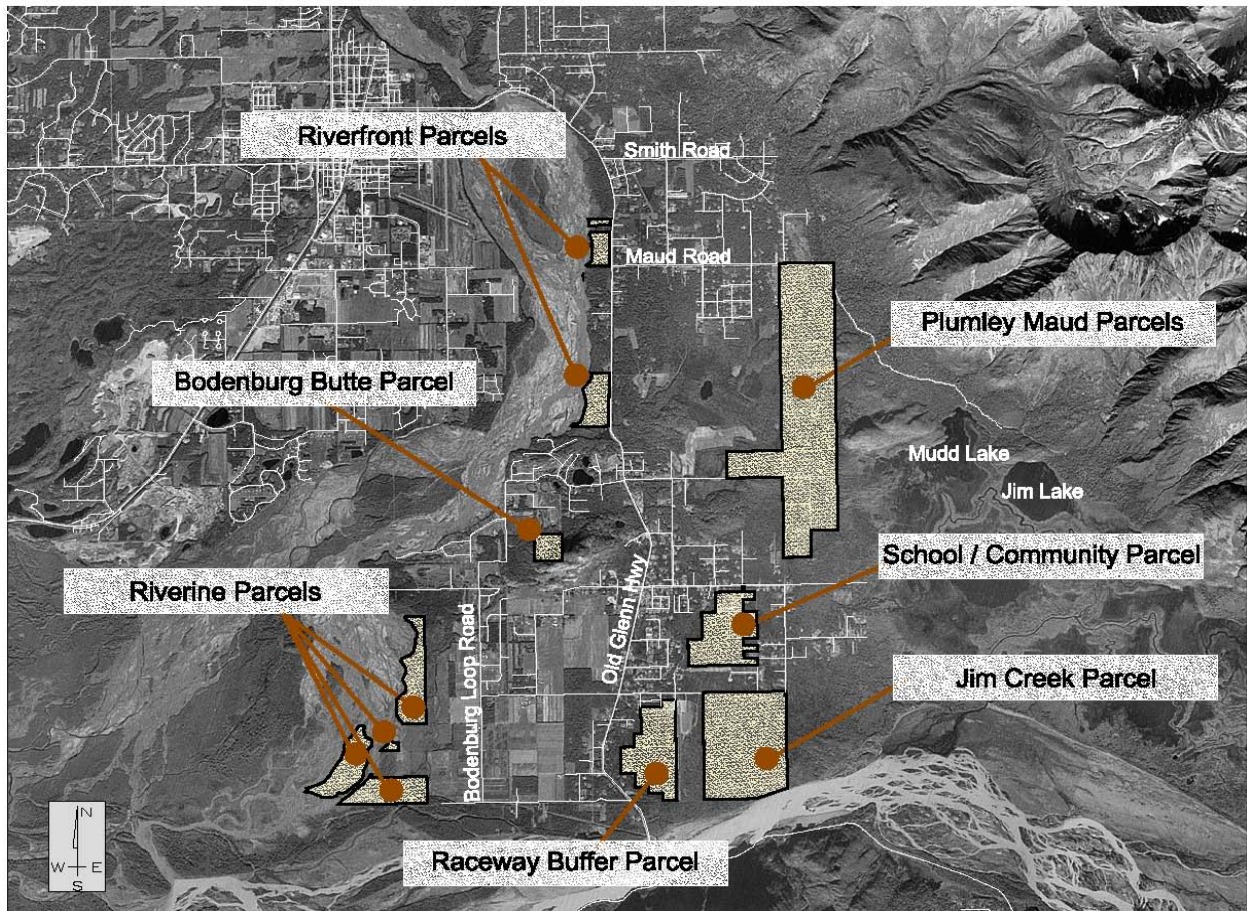
- an overview of each individual parcel's physical characteristics, current and potential uses
- a summary of comments collected from community comments and suggestions for the future classification and use of each parcel
- specific management intent, land use designation and management guidelines.

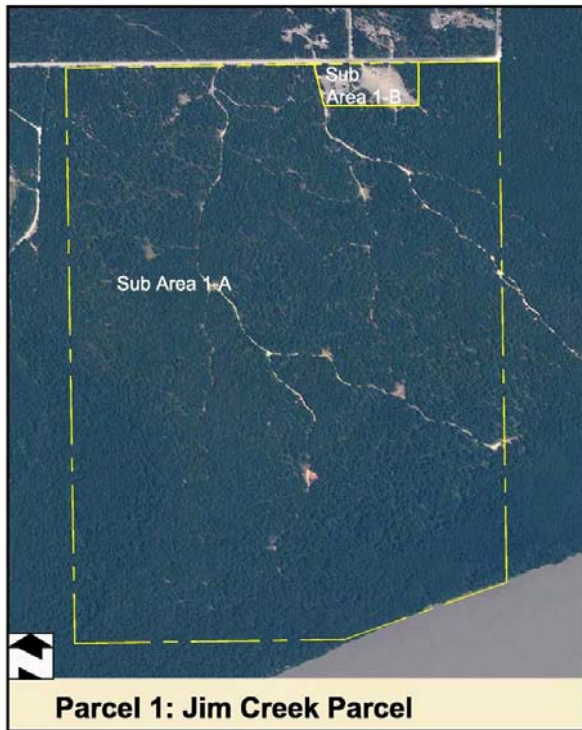
The map below shows the general location for each of the major parcels. Individual land use maps are provided for each of the seven parcels owned by the Borough.

SITE 1: JIM CREEK PARCEL

Current Use and Condition

The Jim Creek parcel is a 471-acre tract bounded by the Knik River to the south and Sullivan Road





to the north. The parcel is largely forested over alluvial fan gravel deposits from the Knik River. The soils and growing conditions for this area are well suited to the growth of spruce trees. Early use of this area was for forestry management and many of the trails now in use were developed as logging roads. Adjacent land uses include private residences to the north, the raceway to the west, and Eklutna and DNR Mental Health Trust Land owned land to the east.

Access to the Knik River and the Knik Glacier are possible from this parcel via two designated trails, the Sexton Trail and the Jim Creek Trail. The property is a popular destination for four-wheeler and off-road activity, which has been allowed to continue unregulated; over time many other minor trails have been established along old logging roads and now wind their way through the property. In addition, some motorized vehicles go off-trail and there are issues of reckless driving.

Privately owned land in wooded residential areas north of the parcel is also being accessed. Use of the Jim Creek parcel often results in noise, dust and activity that impacts nearby residents

and creates safety concerns with such activities as car burning, shooting, partying, setting bonfires, trash dumping, and the destruction of

natural resources, historic sites, and public property.

Public Issues and Concerns

Residents are concerned about inappropriate use of motorized vehicles and other unlawful activities on this parcel. Many residents are owners and users of ATVs and other motorized vehicles and they do not wish to prohibit motorized vehicles, rather they want to encourage more responsible motorized use and put an end to activities that threaten their peace and safety.

Land Use Options

Butte area residents agreed that the Jim Creek parcel should be retained by the Borough for purposes of recreation, open space, and public facilities development and forest resources management. Suggested uses, activities and facilities citizens felt would be appropriate for this parcel include:

- Allow both motorized and non-motorized use
- Motocross track
- Shooting range
- Access to trails, Knik River and Knik Glacier
- Camping
- Designated and monitored parking areas and trailheads

Citizens believe the current unrestricted use for the Jim Creek parcel is a concern and some additional development and improvements are needed. For example:

- Improve trail signage to better direct trail access and designate what trails are motor or non-motorized
- Maintain trails to prevent widening
- Improve trails to funnel traffic along designated routes (for example the Sexton trail)
- Year-round, full-time law enforcement presence
- Trash pick up and disposal
- Restroom facilities at the Knik River bar near bridge
- User fees to pay for improved parking and camping areas
- Controlled access points

Management Intent

This parcel will be retained in Borough ownership and managed primarily as public recreation land

for access to the Knik River, Knik Glacier, local trails and recreation activities. Public safety and security, and maintenance of the quality of adjoining neighborhoods, shall be included as primary concerns of any development planned for the area. Maintaining the motorized trail access and multi-use areas shall also continue with the development of at least one safe multi-use reduced speed or non-motorized trail through the area provided. A year round motorized use area should be developed along with a multi-use trail with proper controls and enforcement to ensure public safety. Commercial recreation ventures will be encouraged to provide rental and sales of outdoor recreational equipment and related services. Improved parking and camping facilities should be provided. A public-private partnership should be developed between Borough and DNR to cooperatively manage the resources upriver from the site that are impacted by recreational use. Secondary use could be limited forestry management in keeping with the primary recreation interest of the area.

Land Use Classification

The entire site should be classified as Public Recreation Land – with the following two sub area management intents.

Site 1-A: Public Recreation

The primary area should be developed for motorized recreation off-road vehicle including local off-road motorized vehicle training and learning area as well as a regional access point to Knik River and Knik Glacier. When developed, adjacent private property must be protected and any use on the parcel should be consistent with the Knik River Public Use Area which is also adjacent to this property.

Site 1-B: Public Recreation Land – Commercial Recreation Use

A 25-acre parcel adjacent to the entry parking area should be reserved to promote private-public partnership opportunities. Permitted uses shall include concessionaire services related to both non-motorized and motorized off-road vehicle area including rental of equipment, guide services, fuel, food and related facilities. The area should link concession contracts to maintenance and security of the area, including collection of user fees, on-site caretaker and

maintenance. Ownership should be retained by Borough with long-term lease options for the potential commercial vendor site.

Management Guidelines and Actions

The Borough will develop the site using the following guidelines:

- Develop cooperative agreement partnerships with DNR and Mental Health Land Trust.
- Develop amenities at access points and funnel use through these points for multi-use trails.
- Provide an on-site volunteer caretaker or long-term visitor center to reduce vandalism and lawless behavior.
- Develop a Master Plan for the designation of trails and the development of permanent facilities.
- Reserve an area adjacent to the entry and parking lot area to promote private-public partnership opportunities.
- Identify public-private partnership with local user groups and motorized off-road clubs and service providers to assist in management and maintenance of the area.

SITE 2: BUFFER PARCEL

Current Use and Condition

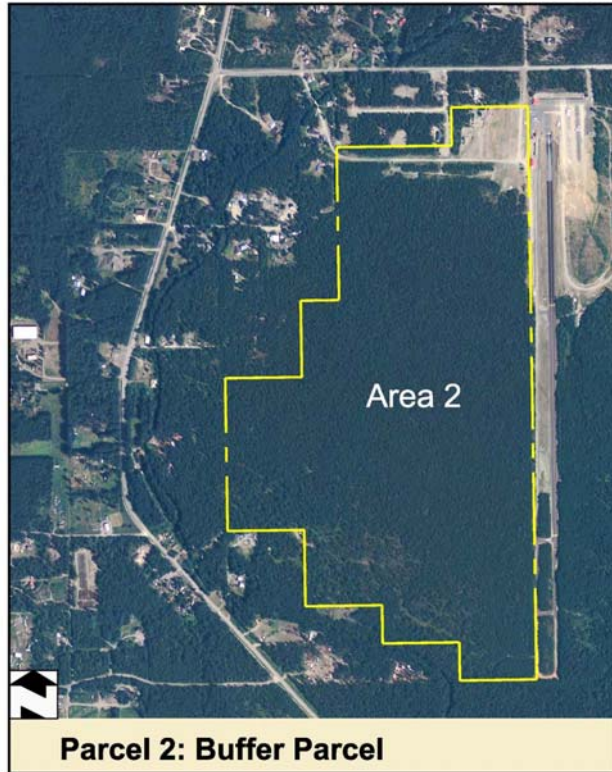
The Buffer parcel comprises approximately 210 acres immediately west of the raceway, east of the Old Glenn Highway and just north of the bridge where the Old Glenn Highway crosses Knik River. As its name suggests, this parcel serves as a buffer between residential areas and the raceway.

The parcel is a forested area with numerous trails. A section of Bodenbug Creek runs through the property. It is designated for non-motorized use and is a popular site for passive

recreation. It is used almost exclusively by Butte residents for walking, bicycling, running, equestrian, skjoring, and passive activities such as bird watching. There are no formal trails or access points leading into the area.

Public Issues and Concerns

Butte area residents agreed that this parcel should be retained for recreation, open space, and as a visual and noise buffer. It should be designated for non-motorized use only.



Land Use Options

Residents believe that this parcel has remained non-motorized because it is inaccessible to motorized use. They wish to maintain trails in a manner that makes access difficult for anything other than pedestrian, horse, bicycle, and ski use. Residents – especially those who live adjacent or near to this parcel – seem to agree that it should be kept as a noise buffer and with minimal improvements. Possible improvements might include educational signage, signage that clearly designates this area for non-motorized use only, and physical barriers to discourage access by motorized vehicles.

Management Intent

This parcel will be retained in Borough ownership and managed primarily as public recreation land to provide for recreation, open space, and as a visual and noise buffer. It shall be designated for non-motorized use only.

Land Use Classification

The entire site is will be classified as Public Recreation Lands. The area shall be reserved for

non-motorized trail and recreation access as well as sound and visual buffer for residential use from the racetrack. There may be a need to link trail system with north-south non-motorized trail along the Old Glenn Highway.

Management Guidelines and Actions

The Borough will manage the site using the following guidelines:

- Development of a connecting non-motorized trail should proceed only at such time as demand for such development is sufficient.
- The area shall be designated for non-motorized use.
- Permitted development should include soft surface trails, interpretive signage and related amenities such as benches.

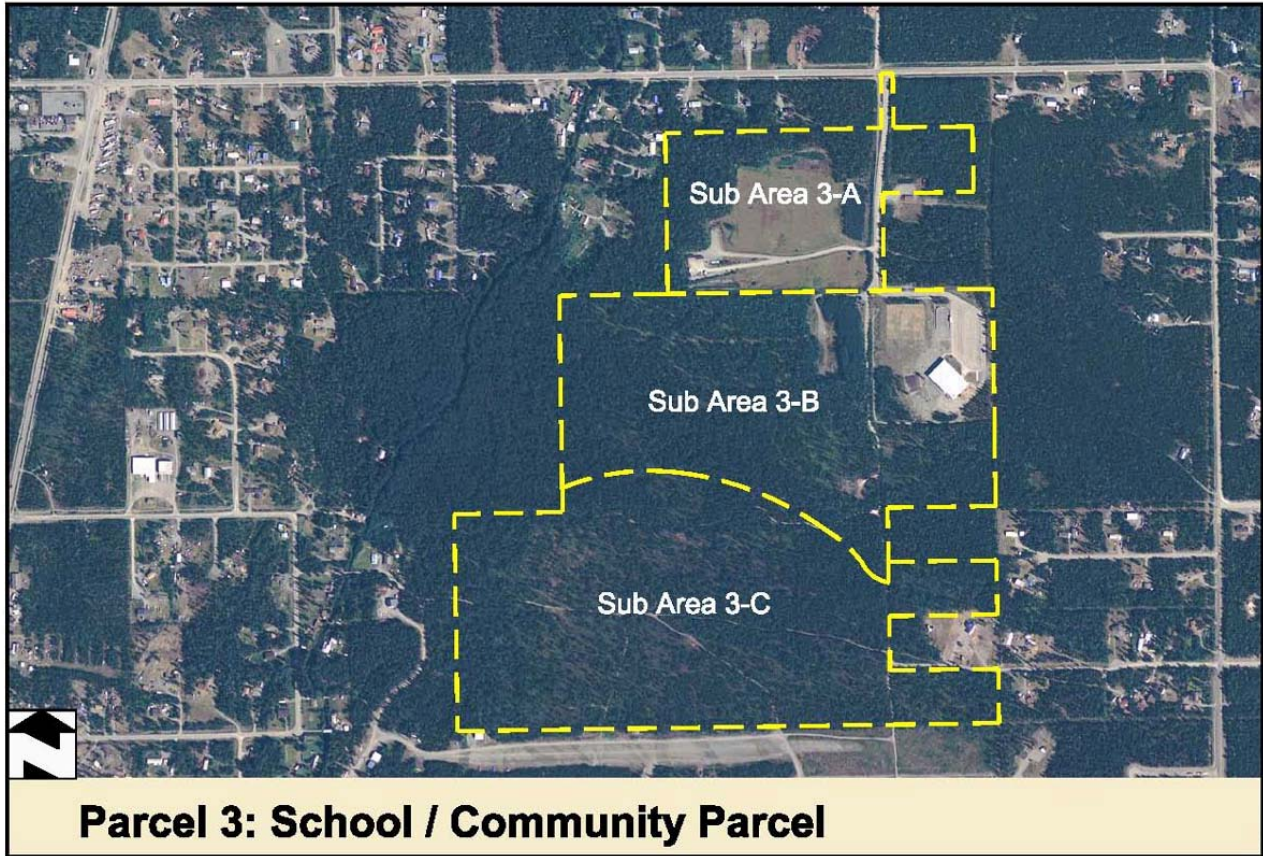
Site 3: SCHOOL/COMMUNITY PARCEL

Current Use and Condition

The 206-acre school/community parcel is located one mile east of Old Glenn Highway and a few blocks north of the Jim Creek and the Raceway Buffer parcels. This parcel is the site of the Butte Elementary School, as well as a Community Council building, current refuse transfer site, and trails used by cross-country skiers in the winter and four-wheelers in the summer. Adjacent land is largely residential, although land immediately to the west of this parcel is vacant, and a small airstrip runs nearly the full length of the parcel's southern boundary. The School/Community parcel is a fairly level site with well-drained soils that would be suitable for development. Undeveloped areas are open and forested. The elementary school is sited atop a closed landfill that is presently being monitored.

Public Issues and Concerns

Butte Elementary School is currently close to capacity and as the community grows an additional or new school will be necessary. A major trail runs north south through this property and provides an important off-road link between the Plumley-Maud trail and the Jim Creek area.



Land Use Options

Most Butte residents expressed a preference for retaining this parcel in Borough ownership because they felt there is relatively little remaining public land in the Butte. This tract should be used now and in the future to support various community uses. Not only is there a desire to preserve an existing trail link, but also the community felt that this would be an ideal site for additional school and community facilities. The site is centrally located, making it good for public uses and facilities, including ball fields, youth-oriented programs, a community center, library, or other facility that may be necessary as the area population continues to grow.

A few people suggested that portions of the parcel might be sold. Motivations included increasing private ownership north of Jim Creek and hence acting as further deterrent to lawless behavior, and placing more land on the tax rolls. There is also some desire to sell land adjacent to the airstrip for development. There was some

discussion about allowing commercial development in this area to help it move towards being more like a true community center, with a mix of civic, shopping, food and other uses. Views were mixed, with some people saying commercial development should stay on the highway. There is also a concern that the Borough should not compete with private landowners adjacent to the site.

Management Intent

This parcel will be retained in Borough ownership for the long term and managed for future public facilities such as school expansion, community center, library and community-park. Trail access within the parcel should be retained and trail connections through the parcel reserved and enhanced to connect to surrounding recreation areas and neighborhoods.

Land Use Classification

The site will be classified into three distinct land use classifications;

Site 3-A Public Recreation

The northern portion of the site is designated as Public Recreation Land. The 40 acres owned by the Community Council could include a future public facility site and community-park with interior trails and link to exterior trail system. Continue land transfer operations and utilize area to buffer surrounding residential use.

Site 3-B: Reserved use - Public Facilities

Reserve elementary school expansion site and develop joint school-park facilities including ball fields, soccer fields, playground and community park area.

Site 3-C: Land Bank

Retain in public ownership in the near term (5-10 years). If a land disposal is supported in the future, utilize an Open Space Subdivision concept for residential development along airstrip, which allows for residential development and reservation of lands to remain in public ownership for trails and other public uses. Maintain minimum 100-foot greenbelt open space and trail corridor through site with public connections to Borough wide trail system.

Management Guidelines and Actions

The Borough should develop the site using the guidelines outlined in this report including:

- Design of public facilities to promote joint use and create community gathering areas
- Establish joint use agreement with school district for the development of shared park-school facilities
- Utilize Open Space subdivision design if land is subdivided in the future.
- Maintain a significant percentage of total land area of subdivision as recreation and open space (at least 25%)
- Open space corridor and trail easement shall be no less than 100 feet

Site 4: PLUMLEY-MAUD PARCEL

Current Uses and Conditions

At 909 acres, the Plumley-Maud parcel is the largest of the Borough-owned parcels in the area. The parcel is a linear corridor 1/2 mile wide which extends south from Maud Road 2 3/4 miles to near Plumley Road. It is parallel to and 1.5 miles east of the Old Glenn Highway. This area is adjacent to Sunrise Trails Subdivision, a

Parcel 4: Plumley-Maud Parcel



300-lot subdivision on private land to the west. Residential land borders the northwest section of the parcel, including a private airstrip.

The Plumley-Maud parcel serves as the only public corridor providing north-south trail access and a buffer between areas of all private land to the east and west. The Plumley-Maud trail runs

north-south through the middle of this parcel. The Burnt Butte Trail connects to the Plumley-Maud Trail east to Maud Road Extension.

The Plumley-Mud parcel's primary existing use is for trails and trail access to surrounding open space. Eklutna Native Corporation land buffers this parcel to the east and is along the dedicated Rippy Trail access to State land, which is popular for recreational use including Mud and Jim Lakes. The Rippy trail has been improved to allow full vehicular access to Jim Lake. The trails receive regular motorized and non-motorized use, mostly by local residents both as a recreational destination and as a route to points east. Expanding recreational use of the State land east of this site has begun to change the nature of the site. This area, which is located below the mountains and includes Mud, Jim Lake and a series of other lakes and wetlands, is characterized by thin soils over bedrock and a substantial wetland system. The wetlands provide valuable habitat for waterfowl, wildlife and fish. These in turn are valuable economic resources for hunting, wildlife viewing and tourism. The Plumley-Maud parcel is located at the outer edge of this area, and is increasingly being impacted by the growing use from local residents as well as visitors to the region. The expanding use and related impacts are so significant that the legislature recently created the Knik River Public Use Area that includes this area adjacent to the borough owned land.

The area is characterized by a mix of low hills, rock outcrops, and flatter, low-lying and wetland terrain. Large portions of the site are wetlands, hills and ridges of rock, permafrost, or within the McRoberts Creek floodplain, thus is generally not suitable for development.

McRoberts Creek is a salmon-spawning stream that crosses through both the north and south portions of the parcel. McRoberts Creek has a history of regular flooding and channel changes which seriously affect the northern portion of the property. Recent geotechnical investigations on adjacent properties have confirmed the presence of extensive areas of relic permafrost and are likely to occur within the subject parcel. Expanding use and related impacts are so significant to warrant a special study area that should be established under cooperative

management of DNR, Eklutna Inc., and the Borough.

Land Use Options

Most residents felt that this site should be retained in Borough ownership. The primary concern was for retaining ample trail corridors to allow continued access to recreation land along both sides of the parcel. The Plumley-Maud Trail is the main multi-use north south trail in the region and provides critical access for local residents. Some of the trail corridor is located in wet or bog areas, which restricts travel during part of the year. Adequate land should be retained to permit rerouting of the trail as necessary. Community recommendations for management goals and specific uses are listed below.

- Maintain the trails within the area, including the Plumley-Maud trail that runs north-south through the parcel, and several smaller east-west trails that link neighborhoods to the west with the Jim Lake area and points east.
- Maintain the majority of the area as public open space so residents throughout the community can have ready access to a large, attractive block of largely undeveloped land. Several people argued that the area had exceptional wildlife values, and that these values were being harmed by ATV use.
- Although the far northern end of this parcel is subject to partial flooding from McRoberts Creek, the option to use portions for future public facilities should be retained.
- To use the far northern end of the parcel for future public facilities. For example, as more residences are built in the area, this portion of the site might be needed for a future elementary school or fire station.
- The possibility of a campground at the north end of the site was discussed. There was general agreement that this northern portion of the Jim, Mud lakes area could use a campground area. One option, somewhat preferred, was to put the campground to the eastern end of the Rippy Trail. The alternative location, at the top of the Plumley Maude parcel was judged less desirable as it would lead to more impacts on surrounding residential areas, was not as close to the recreational attractions further east, and would tend to promote more non-residential use of local community ATV trails.

Management Intent

This parcel will be generally retained in Borough ownership and managed for recreational use and continued trail access through the site as well as for public open space. The Plumley-Maud Trail is the major north-south connection for residents of the area and link to significant trails to the north and to the south. Trail connections to surrounding recreation areas and neighborhoods should be developed.

Land Use Classification

This parcel has two distinct sub-parcels with the following sub-classifications.

Site 4-A: Public Recreation

This parcel will be retained in Borough ownership for the long term for open space, public recreation and conservation. Critical areas to retain are corridors along both sides of the Plumley-Maud trail and along McRoberts Creek, land along the parcel's western boundary that abuts residential development, and environmentally sensitive areas including land identified as wetland or exposed bedrock. These areas shall be reserved for public recreation with the primary land use recreational access and open space. Multi-use trail access for both motorized and non-motorized use shall be permitted to continue through the corridor. Trail improvements and related development such as trail heads, kiosks, and signage are encouraged. Several wetland areas and stream crossings will require boardwalks, trail improvement or relocation and in some case bridging to improve access to the area, and reduce impacts of trail use.

Site 4-B: Land Bank – Public Recreation

The northern portions of the parcel generally has well drained sandy soils. Should be retained in public ownership for public facilities, including a possible camping area. However, the area is susceptible to periodic flooding. McRoberts Creek regularly shifts course, glaciates its banks during high water. Portions of this area have been inundated several times over the last few years. Seasonal high ground water have also been observed. Any development would require containment of McRoberts Creek and account for potential high ground water levels.

Management Guidelines and Actions

If the parcel is developed in the future the Borough should develop the parcel with the following guidelines:

- Develop joint cooperative management agreement with DNR and Eklutna Inc. for management of recreation and development issues related to the larger region along the Rippy Trail
- Design public facilities to promote joint use and create community gathering areas
- Identify public-private partnership with local user groups and motorized off-road clubs and service providers to assist in management and maintenance of the area
- Work with local land owners to develop open space trail corridors to the west that link with the Old Glenn Highway.

SITE 5: RIVERFRONT PARCEL

Current Uses and Conditions

The 105-acre Riverfront parcel is a long narrow strip of land located between the Old Glenn Hwy and the Matanuska River. At its narrowest stretch the parcel is limited to a steep, eroding bank that has been reinforced as a dike for the river. The northern and southern ends of the parcel are forested, and numerous trails run through the property. A motocross facility is located on the private land that is located adjacent to the parcel. Other adjacent land uses are residential.

Public Issues and Concerns

This parcel is considered a valuable flood-control site that supports a community dike system. It is also considered important for access, not only for trails but also to view salmon spawning in the Matanuska River. There are some concerns about conflicts between motorized and non-motorized use of trails and the possibility that the two types of uses could be separated with two parallel running trails. The motocross facility on private land was also mentioned as an area that can be used for legal motorized (ATV) activities.

Land Use Options

Most residents oppose selling this parcel unless the land sales were contingent on restricting uses that could cause degradation to the dike system. Some residents saw opportunities to



use this parcel to expand the motocross facility while other residents expressed concern over increased noise. Public preference was for this parcel to be retained in Borough ownership and used for both motorized and non-motorized trail access, for flood control, and for tourism and recreation, specifically salmon and other wildlife viewing.

Some other proposals for the use of this land included:

- Allow some part of this parcel to be added to the Glenn Highway right-of-way to provide opportunities for improved road safety (currently there is a dangerous curve and lack of a pull-off area to view salmon spawning). Other ideas included:
- Improve salmon viewing (including safer street crossing and parking);
- Develop a boardwalk and path that connects north and south (as part of highway upgrades) with separated motorized and non-motorized.
- Place the pedestrian/bike/ski access along the dike and on a boardwalk, and motorized along the road and below the top of the dike;
- Benches along the small lake for wildlife watching. However, some indicated that the area west of the dike is frequently waterlogged and that it may not be suitable for improvements other than a floating or raised boardwalk.

Management Intent

The site will be retained in borough ownership. The primary use of this site is to provide flood control. Secondary uses include maintaining public access to the river.

Land Use Classification

This parcel should be classified as Public Recreation with two distinct sub-parcels with the following management:

Site 5-A

Manage as a recreation corridor and conservation area. Improve trail access for both motorized and non-motorized use with a link to Palmer and to a Borough wide trail system. Develop wildlife viewing opportunities. Examine options for and develop trailhead access points.

Site 5-B

Manage as a recreation corridor and conservation area and reserve for future public recreational facilities. Permitted uses include water related development including a fish overlook, boardwalk, interpretive center, trails, kiosks, picnic areas, and signage.

Management Guidelines and Actions

The Borough should develop the site using the guidelines outlined in this report including:

- Designate trails in the Borough Trail Plan.
- Funnel access to areas with amenities for multi-use trails, user fees for parking.
- Identify public-private partnership with local user groups to assist in management and maintenance of the area.

SITE 6: BODENBURG BUTTE PARCEL

Current Use and Conditions

The Butte parcel comprises a mix of state, Mental Health Trust, and 40 acres of Borough owned land. A trail affords access to the top of the Bodenbug Butte. This parcel is not only centrally located, near the (to the west) and the

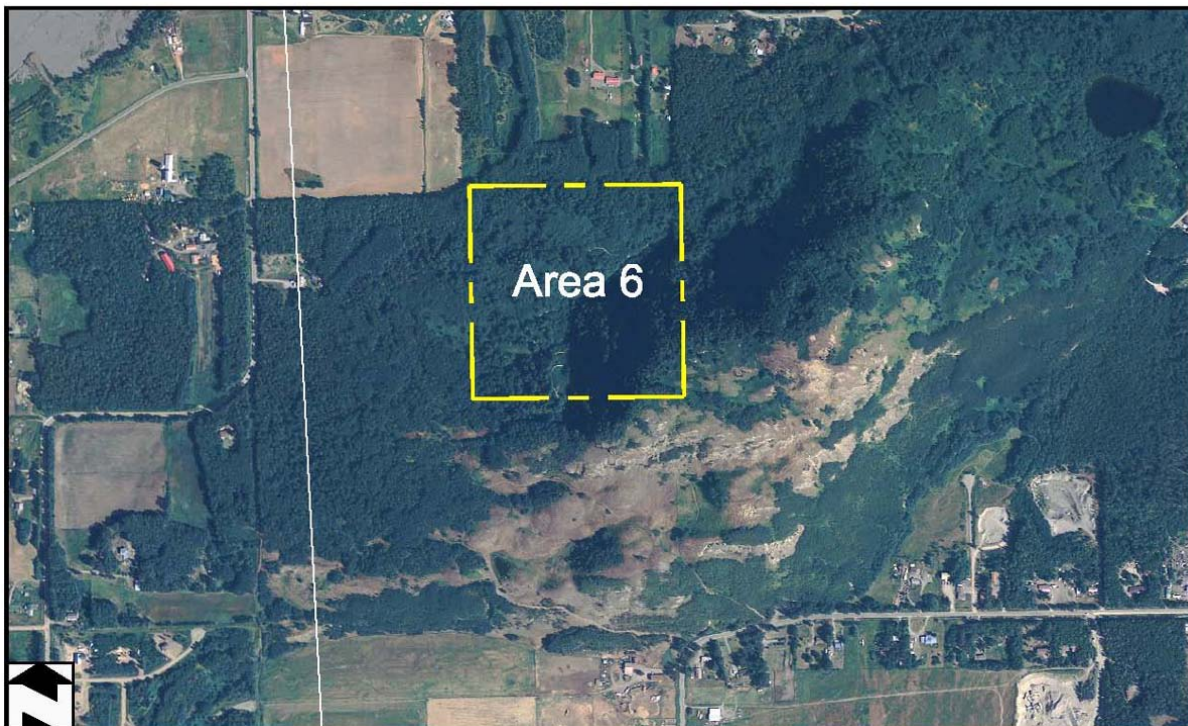
Knik River (to the south). This low-lying land falls in the river floodplain and is considered a wetland area although not all the land in this area is wetlands. It is not developable, but is important habitat for wildlife as well as potential for resource extraction for gravel and forestry management. A State experimental farm and Alaska Plant Material Center is located just east of the parcel. Current access to multi-use trails is along road corridors and across some private lands.

Public Issues and Concerns

There are few controversial issues surrounding the use of this parcel. Likewise, all residents agreed how the parcel should be used in the future. The main concern was for development of improved access points that limited trespass issues on private land.

Land Use Options

All residents agreed that this parcel should be retained in Borough ownership as open space. Although the parcel is not developable, it is possible that the northern edge of the parcel could be used for agricultural purposes. Other uses might include hunting,



Parcel 6: Bodenbug Butte Parcel

horseback riding, skiing and other recreational use after use as natural resource extraction of river gravels and forestry. Some of the area could be used for wetland banking to mitigate developed land at other sites around the Borough.

While a few improvements for this parcel were proposed by people attending various public meetings, there was strong opposition by a majority of people who were present. For example, “put a rifle range in because it is far from houses” was countered by “the lead from the spent shells would pose an environmental problem”; or “develop public access via Republican Road on southeast side of parcel” which was countered by “improved public access would spread problems like burning cars, poaching even further.

Management Intent

The site will be retained to maintain wetland, watershed and public recreation opportunities.

Land Use Classification

This site should be classified: Wetland Bank/ Public Recreation Land. Improve trail access for multi-use and wildlife viewing opportunities. Look at trailhead access points.

Management Guidelines and Actions

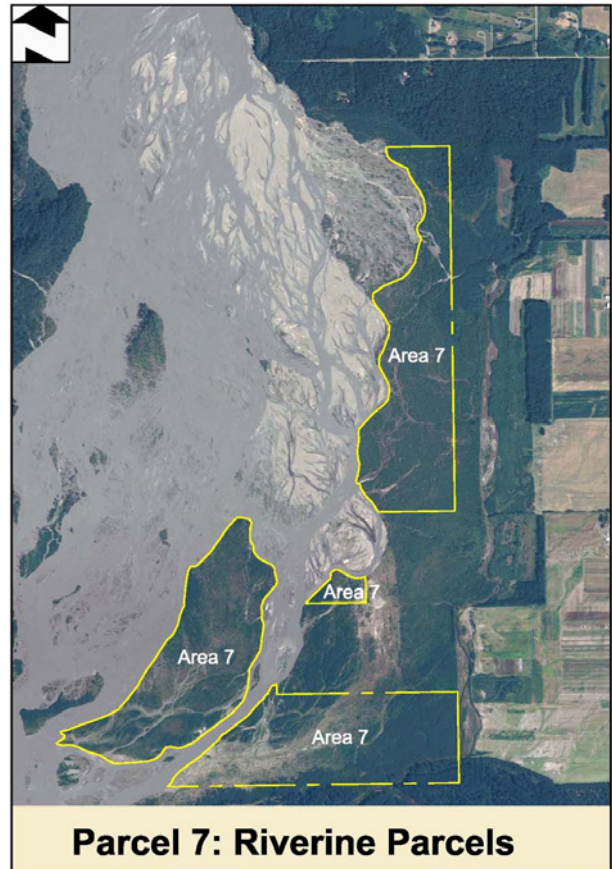
The Borough should manage the site using the guidelines outlined in Chapter 4 of this report including:

- Utilize controlled access for multi-use trails and trail head.
- Work with local landowners to reduce trespass and to develop ROW where possible.
- Identify public-private partnership with local user groups to assist in management and maintenance of the area.

SITE 7: RIVERINE PARCEL

Current Uses and Conditions

The Riverine parcels comprise 327 acres and consist of 4 individual sub-parcels all closely located to each other. The separation from each other is because of physical characteristics (Matanuska River) or different land ownership (state). The parcels are located along the Matanuska River (to the west) and the Knik River



(to the south). A State experimental farm and the Alaska Plant Material Center are located between two of the sub-parcels (on the southern end).

This low-lying land lies in the Matanuska River floodplain and is subject to extensive erosion on almost an annual basis. None of the sub-parcels are developable, but they are all important habitat for wildlife as well as potential for resource extraction for gravel and forestry management.

Public Issues and Concerns

There are few controversial issues surrounding the use of these parcels or sub-parcels. Likewise, all residents agreed how the parcels should be used in the future. The main concern was for development of improved access points that would limit trespass issues on private land as is currently the case.

Land Use Options

All residents agreed that this parcel should be retained in Borough ownership as open space and a flood zone. Although none of the sub-

parcel are developable, it is possible that the northern edge of the parcel could be used for limited agricultural purposes. Other uses might include hunting, horseback riding, skiing, and other recreational use after use as natural resource extraction of river gravels and forestry.

While a few improvements for this parcel were proposed by people attending various public meetings and submitting written comments, there was strong opposition by a majority of people who were present or submitted comments. For example, "put in a rifle range because it is far from houses" was countered by "the lead from the spent shells would pose an environmental problem"; or "develop public access via Republican Road on southeast side of parcel" was countered by "improved public access would spread problems like burning cars, poaching and even further."

Management Intent

The entire parcel will be retained to maintain open space, public recreation and resource management. Improve trail access for multi-use and wildlife viewing opportunities. Look at trailhead access points and find ways to maintain them other than by the Greater Butte Road Service Area.

Land Use Classification

Reserved Use - Open Space / Public Recreation / Resource Management

Management Guidelines and Actions

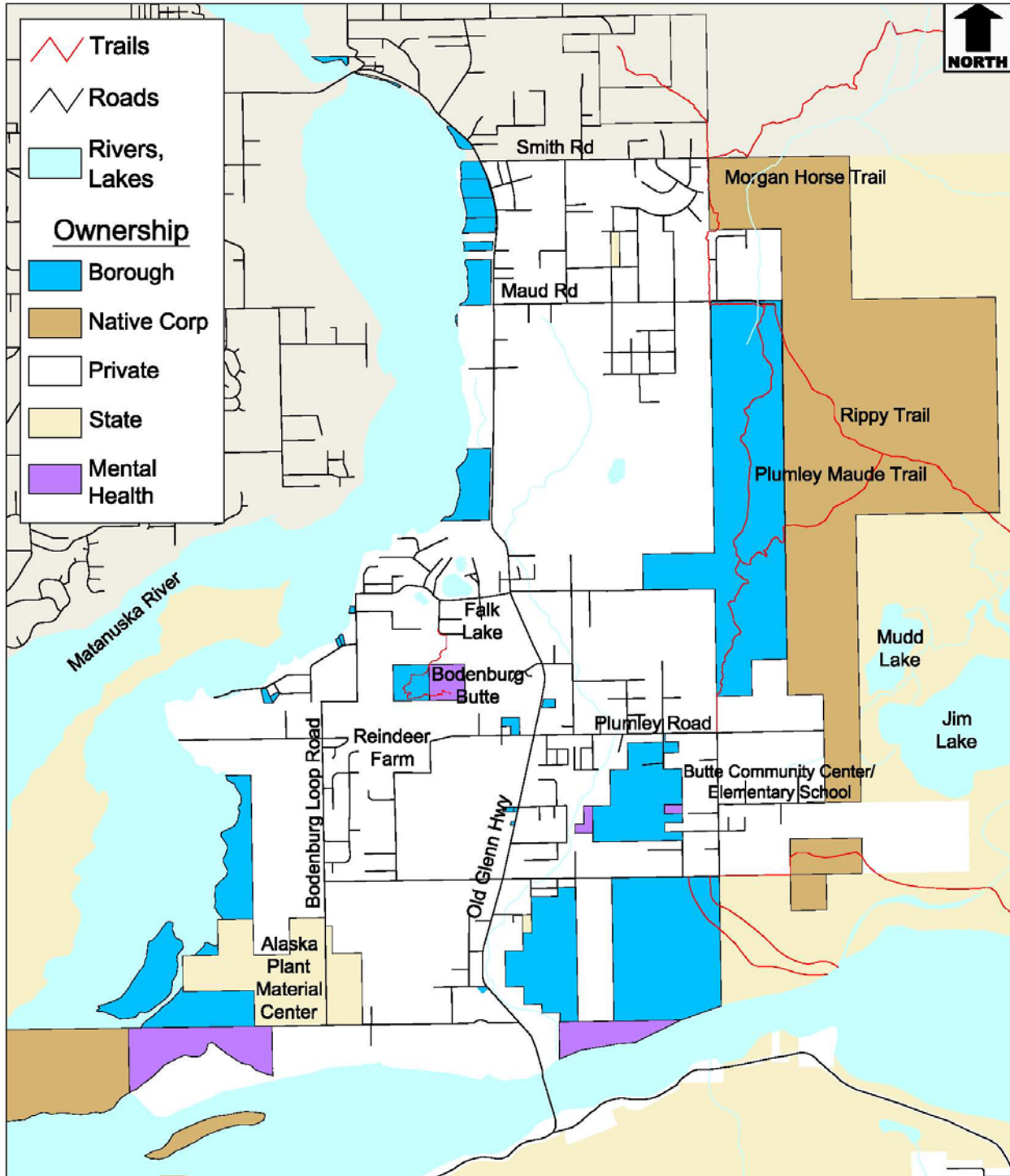
The Borough should manage the parcel using the

guidelines outlined in this Chapter including:

- Recognizing the land is in the Matanuska River floodplain and is subject to severe erosion
- Utilize controlled access for multi-use trails and trail heads
- Work with local landowners to reduce trespass and develop rights-of-ways where possible

Identify public-private partnerships with local user groups to assist in management and maintenance of the area.

Appendix A. Land Ownership



Appendix B. Context for Decisions on Use of Borough Land

INTRODUCTION

The Borough held a series of public meetings and workshops to guide the decisions made in this plan. Members of the community brought forward many good ideas during these meetings. These included recommendations specific to the use of Borough land, and also suggestions on broader community issues affecting use of Borough property. For example, many people offered recommendations about trails on Borough land, and then went on to suggest ways to link these trails to a broader community trail system.

The purpose of this appendix is to capture and present this set of broader public ideas about the future of the Butte. This information is valuable because it provides the context for decisions on Borough land, which is needed for making good decisions about how these areas should be managed.

In addition, this information provides a starting point for the community to think about what kind of community Butte might become in the future.

It is important to note that these ideas do not have any regulatory status – these are suggestions from members of the Butte community. This information helped guide decisions about Borough property and provides preliminary ideas about the future of the rest of the community. This appendix is not a plan for the Butte.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ABOUT GROWTH & CHANGE IN THE BUTTE

Life in the Butte area is changing. Concerns about these changes came out over and over again from the people who participated in the planning process. The qualities that attracted people to settle the area include a rural lifestyle, great trails and access to nature, quiet neighborhoods with great schools and little traffic, a safe place to raise a family among caring neighbors, and a private lifestyle with freedom from traditional rules and regulations associated with larger urban areas.



According to the large majority of Butte residents who participated in this planning process, increasing growth in the Butte area, lack of local law enforcement and a general atmosphere of “anything goes” are eroding these traditional values. While most recreational users who come to the area behave in reasonable ways, the area attracts some users who are creating real problems.

These include open spaces being cluttered and polluted by junk and trash dumping, vandals who burn cars along trails and riverbanks, and uncontrolled shooting that in some areas goes on through all hours of the night and day. Community members said the increase in vandalism threatens their traditions of privacy, neighborliness, and sensible behavior and safety on trails and in backwoods areas. Hikers who leave their cars unattended for a day may return to find them trashed. People worry a late night bonfire could turn tragic and ignite the spruce beetle killed forest that lines much of the valley floor.

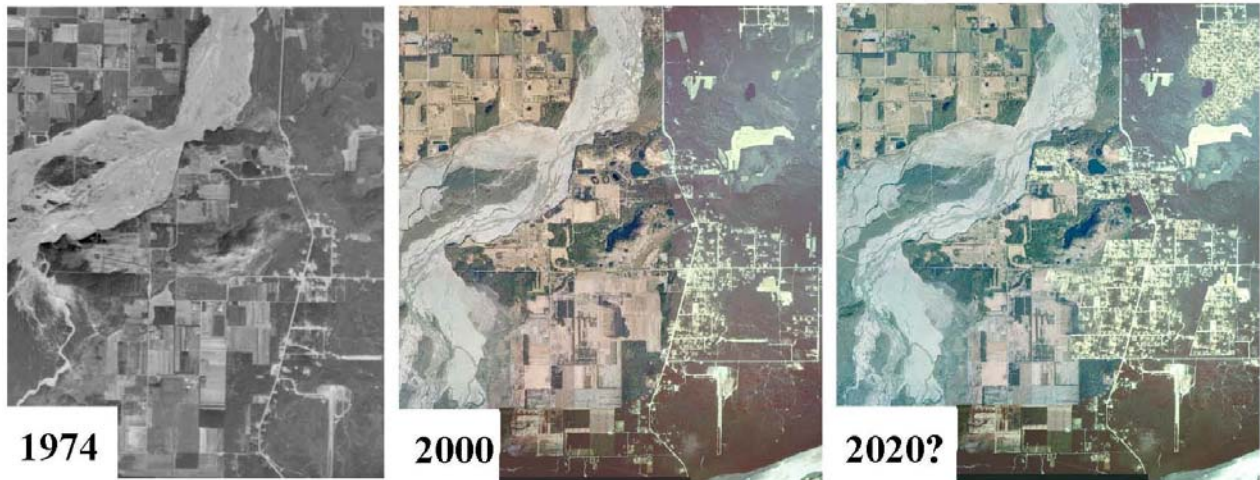
The Butte, like much of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, is undergoing transformation. In the past thirty years, the population of the Borough doubled every

decade. Although the Butte has not grown as fast as the rest of the Borough, what was a quiet rural farming community of a few hundred in the 1970’s has grown to a population of 2,500 people. At the same time, the Butte has become a destination for recreation for the nearly 400,000 people who now live within an hour’s drive.

This growth trend is anticipated to continue over the next several decades. If the present growth rate continues, by 2010 the Butte could have a population of over 4,000, and by 2020 nearly 6,000 residents, according to projections by the Institute of Social and Economic Research (see “Growth Trends” section of this plan). This rate of growth can be supported as the Butte has an abundant supply of private developable land, much of it now in farming or forest (see build out map). The rate of growth may actually increase, due to the community’s strategic location near Palmer and Wasilla and just 45 minutes from jobs in Anchorage.

ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF GROWTH

As individuals and as a community, Butte residents and landowners have an



Butte Area Build Out Mapping

The maps above illustrate the growth in the Butte area over the last 30 years. At the present rate of development the Butte area could have 6,000 residences by 2020 and has the land base to support a total of 8,000 residents using the present development standards of well and septic on individual lots (as shown in the build out map to the far right). It is expected that the growth areas will concentrate on existing farm and forested land reducing public access to open space, recreational trails, and resulting in loss of historic farm land in the area.

opportunity to influence the future of the Butte Area. One of the critical issues facing the citizens in the Butte Area is the best use of the Borough-owned parcels which is the subject of this "Asset Management Plan for Borough Land in the Butte Area". Each potential land use, including open space, residential development, commercial development, or industrial development, has intrinsic values, costs and revenues associated with it.

This section of the appendix provides general background information on issues linked to growth in different land use categories, and summarizes community views regarding these different types of land use.

Residential Development

Residents expressed a range of views about residential growth. One set of views urged guiding residential growth to maintain the area's rural character, for example, requiring a relatively large minimum lot size. Another set of views, which came out on a range of topics, suggested there should not be any effort to guide or manage residential uses. Butte is an unincorporated community and has few residential land use controls. The main rule affecting residential development is the Borough standard limiting lot size based on the capacity of the soils to support septic and well. A lot must be at least 40,000 square feet if it relies on onsite water and septic systems, and have at least 20,000 square feet of soils with good drainage. The difference in the character of residential areas in Palmer and Wasilla reflects these rules. Most of Palmer, which has a community water and sewer system, is relatively compact. Wasilla, in contrast, is characterized by larger lots spread over a larger area. As pressures for residential growth increase, Butte will need to consider the style of development that best fits with community goals.

Residential development brings a range of impacts. It allows more people to enjoy the area and can strengthen the local community. Growth increases population to a threshold that brings new local economic

development opportunities. As local population grows demand increases for local private goods and services, and for local public services, such as fire protection, parks, trails and schools. Residential development can also lead to traffic congestion and crowding at recreational areas. Residential growth can also impact the community's traditional rural character, for example leading to the loss of traditional farms, forested areas and public access to recreation and outdoors.

Commercial and Industrial Development

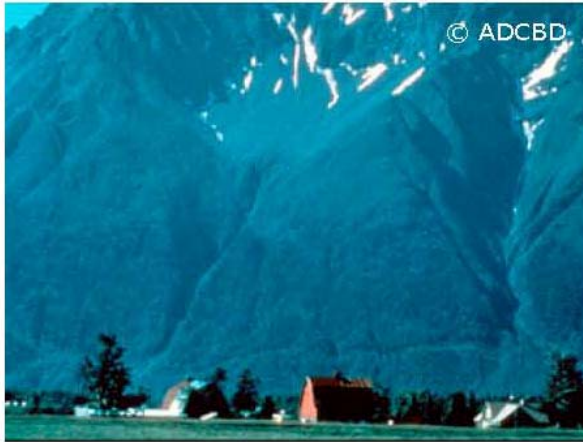
The Butte currently has limited commercial and industrial development, and input from the community indicates that most residents are happy that way. As population grows, the area will likely generate more demand for these uses, particularly for local-serving retail.

The effects of commercial and industrial use on the local community vary depending on the kind of use and the way it is managed. Some commercial development such as auto-wrecking yards can be unsightly and have the potential to be an environmental nuisance; the same use can be largely benign if it is in the right location and is screened from adjoining roads and residential areas. Large commercial development such as a big-box store can change an area's character, increase traffic, and affect other local business. Jobs associated with these types of development tend to be low-wage and low-skill.

Commercial, industrial, office and institutional development can bring higher paying jobs for skilled workers. Like other kinds of growth, these activities can negatively affect the environment and consume open space. Industrial development can also bring increased truck traffic to local roads and affect adjoining residential property values.

Open Space/Recreation

Butte residents made clear their enthusiasm for outdoor recreation, trails, and presence and accessibility of



undeveloped natural open space. Open space generally brings long-term positive benefits to a community, but these benefits are conditioned on the fit between the type of use and the desires of the town and of surrounding property owners. Residential properties adjacent to open space are often valued at five to fifteen percent more than the same properties without immediate access to trails or open space. Undeveloped properties adjoining, or even within close proximity, to open space also enjoy a boost in value. These value boosts can then translate into increased capital gains for homeowners and lower tax rates and higher tax revenues for municipalities.

These gains, however, are not assured and not all types of open-space are created equal. For example, open-space that is inaccessible will provide less benefit than readily accessible open-space. The open-space must also be open for uses compatible with the desires of local residents. For example, an open-space area with an ATV accessible trail running right next to residential development could lead to lower property values if the noise associated with such activities was unacceptable to local landowners. Parcels adjacent to ATV trails may also be a benefit to homeowners who like ATV travel.

Similarly, open-space where use regulations were not enforced or parcels associated with vandalism and crime could have the same negative effect. For open space to have the most benefit for users and local property owners its use must be

compatible with local preferences and enforcement of use regulations must be consistent.

Costs of Public Services to Support Development

Population and residential growth will increase demands for public services, especially for local schools. The existing Butte Elementary School has some room to grow but does not have the capacity to absorb a doubling of the population. Recent evidence in the Borough shows the public is hesitant to support funding needed to develop new schools, even where communities are rapidly growing and existing facilities are overcrowded.

Different land uses produce different levels of public revenues vs. requirements for public services. Several studies by organizations such as the American Farm Land Trust have shown that residential development generally costs more in taxes than it raises in property tax revenue. A study in Anchorage found that for every \$1.00 new residential property paid in property taxes, the local municipality had to spend between \$1.30-\$1.70. Other studies have found that new residences can require \$1.46-\$1.75 in services for each \$1.00 generated in property tax revenue. The same studies as cited above found that commercial and industrial parcels demand somewhere between \$0.20 and \$0.80 in services for every \$1.00 generated in new tax revenue.

A basic challenge for the Borough as a whole, including the Butte, is to find ways to meet the costs of services requested by the public. Where property taxes from residential development do not cover the cost of school and other Borough services, growth creates a steadily increasing gap between public needs and public revenues. The results can be a forced reduction in Borough services: crowded classrooms with fewer qualified teachers, less parks, and cuts in fire and library services. The alternative is to raise taxes to maintain the current levels of services or instigate land

use controls such as development impact fees. These are not popular choices.

There are three service areas that exist in the Butte: fire, roads, and erosion control (Circle View and Stampede Estates). The Butte Area is also part of the Borough's area wide service area. The table below gives the service areas along with the Area wide fund and mil rates.

Table 2: 2006 Butte Mil Rate

Service Area	Mil Rate
Erosion Control (Circle View and Stampede Estates)	2.89
Fire Service Area	2.18
Road Service Area	2.27
Non Area-wide	0.351
Area-wide Fund	9.644

VISION FOR THE FUTURE – SIX GOALS

“These days, no place stays special by accident.”

As part of the public workshops and meetings associated with this plan, Butte Area residents have begun to identify their “Vision for the Future.” After the first community workshop, the consulting team prepared a summary of what the community had said on this topic, and further refined this summary with participants at the second community workshop. The key suggestions coming from those discussions are presented in the remainder of this Appendix.

Discussions at community workshops and interviews with local residents show that a shared vision for the Butte is emerging. Residents would like the Butte to stay much like it is today, but cleaned up and safer. They want a low-density rural lifestyle with access to safe open space and recreational areas. They want a town center with

community facilities, like the post office, library and diners with places to meet friends and neighbors. Most want the area to remain largely residential, but there is a desire for more local employment opportunities close to home with shorter commute times. They want to improve the appearance along the Old Glenn Highway and reduce junk yards and trash. They want laws enforced. These are not unreasonable dreams.

As explained in the introduction, the primary purpose of this appendix is to present a community “vision” for the future of the Butte, to provide a context for decisions on use of Borough-owned land. The “vision” is summarized above and fleshed out in the six broad goals below. While all these suggestions were widely supported at the workshops, more discussions are needed to determine if these goals and actions can be carried out in a way that is acceptable to the community as a whole.

Community Goals for the Butte

1. Retain areas for Recreation and Connected Open Space
2. Prioritize Law Enforcement and Public Safety
3. Encourage and Promote Community Life
4. Promote Economic Development
5. Leverage investments in Transportation Improvements
6. Encourage Community involvement in the process

IMMEDIATE ACTION PLAN

Prior to discussing the six goals listed above, this section outlines a set of near term steps that the community could take that would address near-term challenges and opportunities.

1. Establish a Recreation and Trails Subcommittee to review existing trails on Borough-owned land, and continuing through to other parts of the community. Identify key trails and make recommendations for trail dedications, easements, types of use,

trail heads and an area wide trails system.

2. Promote Enforcement: Continue working with key land owners including the Borough, the State and Eklutna Native Corporation. Work with the State Troopers, local volunteers and other agencies to increase on-site law enforcement presence to deter continued misuse of the area. (see more in Goal 2)
3. Promote Education: Produce and provide public information educational materials on the Butte and the surrounding area. Messages should encourage responsible and respectful recreation use and focus on improving safety and minimizing litter and dumping. Specific actions could include:
 - Prepare a trails and recreation map and brochure
 - Develop consistent, trail and entry signs – for safety, education, interpretation
 - Add information to the Convention and Visitor’s Bureau (CVB) website
4. Vandalism: Take actions to reduce vandalism and unlawful behavior. Improve parking and trailheads and use natural barriers to guide amount and type of use.
5. Form a cooperative partnership with the Borough, state and where possible Eklutna Inc. for joint management of DNR land at Jim Creek and Jim Lake.

**GOAL 1:
RETAIN AREAS FOR RECREATION &
CONNECTED OPEN SPACE**

Butte and surrounding areas offer great natural beauty, and the community has a strong interest in recreation and access to outdoor recreation. Actions are needed to make the most of these resources and community desires. The Borough can utilize its properties as the backbone for a network of public open space and connecting trails. Leveraging Borough-owned land for public use, the Borough can

meet the recreation needs of local residents while attracting visitors to the region to enhance economic development opportunities. It is important to develop facilities that are enjoyed first and foremost by local residents and then by visitors. There is a wide range of actions that can be encouraged to take advantage of the natural character of the area and the cultural history of the region. These are outlined below.

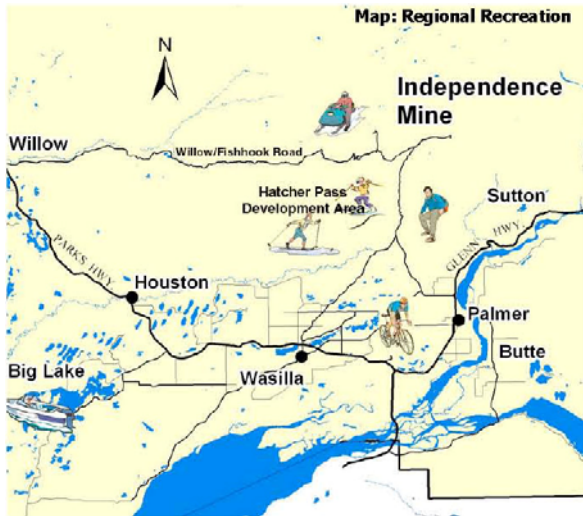
1. Regional Recreation & Tourism Plan

Work with the Borough, state and federal land owners, Eklutna Inc. and the local tourist bureaus to develop a regional tourism plan for the entire Borough and a Butte Area recreation and tourism plan to attract and encourage outdoor recreation use of the area. The lack of good trail information with clear signage and directions to places and attractions is a limiting factor in tourism growth. The plan should consider the historic farm community as well as existing and potential tourism attractions. The primary goal should be improving recreation facilities to benefit residents and at the same time create more reasons for tourist to spend time and money in the area. Current recreation and tourism resources, some of which have the potential to be much expanded and improved, are listed below:

- Bodenbug Farm Loop Tour
- Farm Museum and Historic Exhibit
- Jim and Mud Lake Nature Trail
- Reindeer Farm
- Bodenbug Butte Loop trail
- Salmon Viewing Area
- Knik River Glacier Tours
- Race Track
- Equestrian Center
- Nature Center/Visitor Center
- Wilderness Lodge and Camping

2. Trail system connected to the community

Maintain and improve a system of public, multi-use trails. Retain trail easements, secure access easements for existing trails, purchase new easements where necessary to make trail connections. Develop a linked trail system between major public facilities



such as schools, parks, and tourist venues as well as neighborhoods and shopping areas. The system should consider multiuse needs and provide for both motorized and non-motorized trails where use is the heaviest.

- Old Glenn Bike Trail upgrade as part of the road improvement project
 - Regional Loop Trail – Palmer to Butte as part of the Recreational Trails Plan
 - Plumley/Maud North-South Trail
 - Jim and Mud Lake Nature Trail
 - Bodenburg Butte Loop trail
 - Knik River Motorized Use Area
 - Equestrian Trails
 - East–West Butte to Butte Trail – links from the wetlands at the confluence of the Matanuska and Knik Rivers through Bodenburg Butte to Mud Lake
- Jim Creek/Knik River Motorized Use Area – promote safe motorized use between Knik River Bridge and the Knik Glacier. Guide use and provide controlled parking with a possible on-site caretaker to monitor use and reduce impacts of recreation related activities.
 - Shooting Area – development of a designated shooting range with trained staff to provide gun safety was an important item to the community. Finding a suitable location may be difficult to water quality and residential impacts.
 - Motocross Area – expand local motorized area
 - Bodenburg Historic Farm Loop – work with local farmers to help preserve working farms and maintain the character of the area. Promote u-pick vegetable farms and other tourist destination areas such as farm museum and historic exhibits (see more in goals that follow).
 - Upper Knik River/Lake George – Explore options for special designation with the National Park Service.
 - Jim and Mud Lake Primitive Area – Encourage uses that maintain the health of the natural ecosystem for birding, wildlife viewing, hiking and canoeing during the summer. Consider development of a public campground and on-site caretaker in partnership with Eklutna, Inc.
 - Salmon Viewing Area – provide parking and viewing platform for Bodenburg Creek.
 - Nature Trail and Wetland Area – Develop wetland wildlife viewing area at the confluence of the Matanuska and Knik Rivers.

3. Designate Special Use Areas on Public Land

Explore ways to maximize recreation and trail use in the area, while protecting the underlying quality of the natural setting. In general encourage multi-use activities in the majority of the area but recognize that some activities are best suited for specific areas and should be separated from other user groups. Legislation establishing a new “Knik River Public Use Area” is now being discussed in the legislature (HB307). Specific community recommendations on managing and improving recreation are listed below:

4. Establish Amenities in Heavy-Use Areas

Guide use of Jim Creek/Knik River through entry areas at the Pavilion and at the Knik River bar. Trailheads should include amenities such as parking, trash collection, restrooms, a fee station for day and overnight use and an on-site caretaker. Manage access at the most accessible, heavily used areas to reduce vandalism and

unlawful behavior. Improve parking and trailheads and use natural barriers to guide amount and type of use.

- Jim Creek/Knik River Access: Manage the area for multi-use with an emphasis on safe family off road ATV motorized recreation. Use the location of trails, parking fees and increased enforcement of existing laws to help control impacts of recreation use. Consider use of parking fees, a caretaker on-site, and reduced points of access to further assist with the security of the area. Providing a safe and secure, paid parking area for legitimate users, this approach can provide funding to support a full-time caretaker. A longterm solution might include a visitor/information center or other on-site management.
- Mud/Jim Lake Access: This area is the extension of the Rippy trail/road with access off of Maud Road. The area passes through Borough ownership along the north portion of the access way, then through Eklutna Corporation land to Mud Lake and then finally crosses onto State land managed by the State Department of Natural Resources. The road access ends at Jim Lake and on-road vehicles are stopped just beyond this area due to a stream crossing. Issues include increased motorized use beyond Jim Lake by ATV, which is eroding the trail during summer use as well as degrading natural resources that provide critical habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife. This trail travels between the low-lying wetlands to the west and the steep bedrock slopes of the Chugach Range to the east. The lack of facilities and enforcement has left the area open to unlawful behavior. There is increased vandalism including trash dumping, junk cars, burning and random target practice towards trail use areas.

Because of the mixed ownership of the area between Borough, Eklutna and DNR any alternatives must involve a partnership between the three organizations. Potential options to improve and maintain the quality

of recreation opportunities include some mix or all of the following:

- Develop day use facilities at Jim Lake area with parking, camping area, trail head signage and an on-site caretaker.
- Use parking fees and increased presence by local volunteers and enforcement agencies to improve security, and reduce problems related to vandalism and trash. User fees should focus on services used by visitors such as camping and parking.
- A boat launch for canoes and day use picnic area can be developed adjacent to the lake.
- Provide for toilets and trash bin (bear proof) at the trailhead with daily monitoring by enforcement agent (this could be a steward program like the Deshka to State Park Ranger) and local volunteer groups.
- Partner with Eklutna for long term recreational facility development, including, for example, development of day use and boat launch and parking trail head at Mud Lake. This area provides for the potential for a future RV campground, visitor center, lodge and shooting range with concessionaire operations for sales and rental services.

5. Education program

Develop an area wide education and interpretive program to encourage safety, good trail etiquette and an understanding of the area's natural and cultural history. Promote the area through signage, brochures, educational programs, video and other means. Some work is already underway through the Butte Community Council. Specific possibilities include:

- Video promoting the beauty of the Butte
- Educational sessions with local police
- School gun safety education program
- Brochure on public safety in the area
- Trail signage
- Interpretive signage
- Trail map and special use areas

6. Borough and DNR Partnership

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources have conducted a series of meetings to discuss issues related to the Jim Creek and the Knik River Area and the Mud and Jim Lake Area. They have agreed to work together over the next year to explore and where appropriate implement the items listed below.

The Alaska DNR and the Borough are working together to implement the Knik River Public Use Area which was adopted by the Alaska Legislature in 2006. While DNR is responsible for developing a plan for this area, the Borough recognizes that some Borough owned parcels, particularly the Jim Creek parcel, are important for access to the area and will consider a joint use management agreement that clearly identifies roles, responsibilities and authority for developing and managing recreation uses. The Borough and DNR will work with Eklutna Inc. to solicit their involvement in this effort.

GOAL 2. LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Petty crime, vandalism, illegal shooting and the dumping of junk, trash and derelict vehicles has dramatically increased in the Butte area, primarily in the Jim Creek-Swan Lake areas. The intent of this goal is to eliminate these problems, which, for many people, have come to represent the primary image of the Butte. Over the past years, the Butte Community Council has been working with the State Police and the Borough to develop an enforcement policy for existing rules and regulations within the area. Many community members emphasized the primary need is to enforce existing rules, not create new ones.

1. Strategy: Cooperative Partnership Agreement

The Community Council is working cooperatively together with the Borough, State Troopers and Fish and Wildlife Protection, State DNR, Eklutna, and the US

Army and Air Force to develop a joint memorandum of agreement for long term enforcement and management in the Butte. Additional partners might include BLM and National Parks (see example from Moab, Utah). Initial meetings identified a range of actions, including some of the following:

- Alaska State Troopers and Fish and Wildlife Protection– the Alaska State Trooper presence has a large impact on reducing vandalism, illegal dumping of junk and trash and other negative actions. The Borough is working with the Alaska Department of Safety to establish a satellite office in the Butte area at the Butte Ambulance station to increase their presence.
- State Park Ranger – look at Eklutna model
- Borough Law Enforcement – The Borough will need to examine long range needs for public safety of the entire Borough
- Borough Ranger program
- Borough Stewards like at the Deshka River
- Cadet Program – look at Wasilla as a model
- Community Patrol – look at Anchorage’s Mountain View neighborhood for a model. Community patrol should not be considered without some formal oversight by the Alaska Department of Public Safety.

2. Infrastructure that Promotes Management and User Responsibility

While most of the actions needed to improve public safety fall out of the range of land use and infrastructure planning, some of these decisions would encourage responsible behavior and simplify management. Possible actions, to be undertaken by the Borough in partnership with other public agencies, include:

- In the Jim Creek and Mud/Jim Lake areas, use amenities like improved trails and secured parking to funnel access to more defined points,

- Increase visitor services and onsite management in areas such as Plumley-Maud area and Jim Creek, for example establish a campground with a caretaker.
- Investigate options to establish a site for shooting range - this may not be viable for the area due to conflicts with residential areas and environmentally sensitive areas.

3. Strategy: Safety Rules, Regulations & Education

Continue with targeted education at recreation users, including youth and high risk user groups.

- Initiate a gun safety program, in partnership with the NRA and MSB School District.
- Work with ATV groups to educate users.
- Provide signage to encourage appropriate user behavior.
- Continue and expand clean up programs.
- Work with Army and Air force to educate people who recreate in the Butte.

GOAL 3: COMMUNITY LIFE

The Butte is a place where you can count on your neighbors. There is a strong desire to maintain this sense of neighborliness, the community's distinct small town character, and the rural lifestyle with a connection to the land. Informed community planning can help sustain and strengthen these values.

Small towns all over the U.S. are working "to maintain a sense of community". Actions range from events, to improvements to schools, to land use policies and programs to improve downtowns such as the National Historic Trust's Main Street Program.

Outlined under this goal are strategies Butte residents suggested as ways to reinforce community life, and several examples of strategies used successfully in other communities. Several of these approaches, such as strategies for open space subdivisions and creating a town

center, are linked closely do decisions on use of Borough land.

1. Festivals and Special Events

The existing spring clean up is an excellent example of building community support and should be continued. Events and festivals should be considered around historic and cultural events special to the area. This can include races, carnivals, farmers' markets, and school events.

2. Cluster Public Facilities to Help Create a "town commons"

The Borough owns a large parcel in the vicinity of the elementary school. This offers the possibility to integrate other community facilities in the area, such as a library, community recreation center, fire station and ball fields, playground, picnic area, family open space, ball fields and trail system that links to surrounding trails. This integration of school and community facilities can be referred to as a village green, or town commons. This land use pattern reflects back to New England villages where farming was an important livelihood and the village commons provided a community focal point and gathering area. This development pattern may well fit with the community values in the Butte.

These public uses can also serve as "anchors" for adjoining private development – including local-serving retail such as a convenience store, video rental or even a book store or bakery. In addition, in a traditional village green, houses are grouped around the commons area. The Borough in the recent past has already sold some of its lands for residential development near the school.

3. Maintain rural atmosphere through open space and cluster residential design:

Future subdivision development on Borough-owned land provides the opportunity for design that conserves open space and maintains trail connections. Conventional one-acre subdivision lots will not provide the long-term rural feel desired by Butte residents. With this conventional

land use pattern, once developable land is fully built out, farmland will be lost, open space will be fragmented, trails will be cut off and wildlife habitat will be segmented. Open space and recreation areas have been shown to enhance the property values of adjacent residential development, according to reports by the Trust for Public Land (1999).

Outlined below are a range of ideas suggested by community members for guiding land development to help maintain open space and support community character.

- Define and retain in public ownership key open space and trails. In the long term, the preservation of these assets protects and enhances the property values and increases potential revenues to the Borough.
- Adopt a limited large lot subdivision standard (e.g., 2-5 acres/lot) for future development in the Butte area.
- Develop "Open Space Subdivision" guidelines to encourage design that preserves open space and access through property. Encourage appropriate development through incentives as opposed to regulations.
- Investigate options to retain key farms in agriculture use. One option is to work through groups like the local Great Land Trust or national farmland trusts to purchase development rights from willing owners.
- Develop rural design standards for subdivisions

GOAL 4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The need for major shopping is not a primary concern for local residents. As one person said "If you need to shop, Palmer is close enough." Although there is no desire for big commercial development, many residents expressed a desire for better local convenience services such as a restaurant, coffee shop, and child care. A secondary economic concern is in creating jobs closer to home to reduce commuter drive time and increase time with families, and to provide more opportunities for local

employment, especially for young people. A number of people cited locally owned and operated tourism businesses as being a good fit with the community.

Another benefit of commercial and industrial development is the capacity to increase property tax revenues to cover the cost of public services such as schools and fire protection. As noted above, property tax revenues from commercial and industrial development are net revenue generators; revenues typically exceed the costs of public services required by such development. The Borough should look to dispose of land with high commercial potential for commercial and civic uses that enhance both a town center and village commons land use and transportation system. Disposing of certain highly developable lands, makes it more possible for the Borough to retain land in public ownership that has high environmental and open space/recreational values.

1. Location of Commercial Development - Town Center/Village Transportation Nodes

Commercial development follows different patterns in different communities. Palmer generally has a concentrated commercial pattern, with a central grid of commercial streets. In contrast, Wasilla's development is spread out over several miles along the Parks Highway. In the future, Butte residents and businesses should consider if as a community they wish to influence the pattern of commercial development. One option is to encourage commercial development to concentrate in a set of well designed commercial and retail "village nodes", with landscaping and attractive shops and businesses close enough together to make it practical to walk between stores. The intent of a village transportation node is to take advantage of the traffic system to encourage clusters of small businesses that meet local demand and provide local goods and services such as child care, quick stop (milk and dairy), and gas. Locations might correspond with key intersections that provide good visibility for locally owned visitor industries

such as bike rental, outdoor and wilderness outfitters, fuel and food.

2. Recreation and Tourism-Oriented Economic Development

A potential opportunity for economic development is to encourage locally based tourism and recreation-oriented service businesses to responsibly take advantage of the natural surroundings and recreation resources in the Butte area. There are already established patterns of hiking, mountain biking, canoeing, kayaking, boating, fishing, and hunting in the lakes and trails in the Butte Area. The Institute of Sustainable Recreation and Tourism can provide resources for generating viable small business ideas for recreation and tourism. The boat and bicycle rental and guided tour operation on Eklutna Lake perhaps provides some insight to the scale of operation feasible for areas in Butte. Establishing a visitor center on Borough-owned land near a town center transportation node could attract visitor interest in the Butte area.

3. Neighborhood and Commercial Revitalization

The Butte Area through the Borough could work with Department of Community and Economic Development through HUD's Community Development Block Grant program to establish a neighborhood revitalization strategy to leverage monies for economic development. The recent purchase of a mobile home park in the area provides an opportunity to apply for Home



Investment Partnership program monies for affordable housing development. Housing is important in generating the activity and demand needed for local small business development.

The Borough working cooperatively with Butte Area residents could encourage public investment to support creation of a town center through economic development incentives. The National Main Street Center of the National Trust for Historic Preservation can be tapped into to strengthen Butte's existing economic base while expanding it to meet new opportunities.

4. Agricultural Opportunities

As farm fields give way to residential and commercial development and the number of historic farms and farmers continues to decline, communities across the country are discovering ways to offset these trends. Responding to a growing demand for locally grown, organic, and specialty produce and the desire of many people to reconnect with the land, farmer's markets, community supported agriculture, and specialty farming are becoming increasingly popular. These programs provide a means to help farmers stay in business, thereby encouraging farmland retention on the edge of towns.

Many of these same national trends are at work in the Butte region where farming traditions date back to the Colony farm program from the 1930's. This program brought many of the first settlers to the area and is still an active part of the community economy today. Butte residents indicated a strong preference for the local farms at public meetings through their stated desire for larger lots, rural lifestyle and support of continuation of local farms. Support of continued agriculture is a logical economic development strategy, and an important component of maintaining the area's rural character. There are a number of farm related opportunities that can be considered, some that are already in place. These are described in more detail below:

Organic Farming

The Butte area and surrounding region is one of the largest suppliers of a growing local-based farm produce industry, offering both U-pick, contract grown and direct sale to markets and grocery chains throughout the region. These locally owned family farms provide jobs, contribute to the tax base, preserve valuable private open space and maintain the area's rich tradition of farming. The State Division of Agriculture identified Alaskan based organic farming as contributing \$350,000 to \$400,000 annually to the state's economy and as an existing, valid niche for agriculture.

Farmer's Markets

Farmer's markets provide city residents with a reason to support farmland retention and an opportunity for farmers to build cooperation with local towns. Traditionally, most farmer markets sold directly to the public and were lively places that provided both town and country people with an opportunity to visit as well as conduct business. There has been a strong resurgence in local farmer markets over the past thirty years such as the one in Anchorage during the summer months. More famous markets include Pike Place Market in Seattle and Granville Island Farmer's Market in Vancouver, B.C. that demonstrate the economic opportunities to local growers as well as the strong tourism draw associated with large markets.

Historic Farm Tours and Exhibits

The development of tourism related farms and exhibits should be encouraged to help build a stable local economy that provides the least amount of impact to the area. The Butte Reindeer Farm is an example of a long-standing local based tourism related business that contributes to the local economy while using local resources. Helping establish markets and local interest for local based agricultural businesses should be a first step. The development of a local trails and tour map is a good start. This map could depict local areas of interest while promoting responsible use of the surrounding trail system, offering a positive approach to building a niche

tourism industry that combines both agriculture and outdoor recreation opportunities. Another opportunity is an historic farm loop drive with wayside exhibits that provide information about historic farms and events in the Butte area.

5. Small Business Incubator

The small business incubator offers small Alaska communities such as the Butte an innovative way to stimulate local economic growth and diversify its economic base. The small business incubator is a physical facility offering low cost rental space for new ventures or young struggling businesses. Technical and financial assistance are vital components of the small business incubator. Technical assistance comes in the form of accounting, business plans, market analyses, insurance, regulations, product development, and information about equity and debt financing. These services are usually offered to small business incubator tenant firms at little or no cost. Relationships with the University of Alaska Small Business Development Center is one option for provides technical assistance resources. A small business incubator also commonly offers shared administrative services on a fee-for-use basis. Finally, the small business incubator offers financing through small business revolving loan funds through the Small Business Administration (SBA).

Small business incubators can be initiated by a wide range of entities: local or Borough entities, non-profit agencies, banks, universities and community colleges. The small business incubator is what's known as a local development corporation. By its very definition, an SBA local development corporation must ensure the involvement of the community in taking responsibility for its own economic viability.

GOAL 5: TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLANNING

Most public funding for transportation improvements in Alaska comes from the federal government. Communities compete for a portion of a fixed statewide total budget through a process managed by the State Department of Transportation. Many communities have taken advantage of these funds to help develop transportation related projects that meet a broad range of community needs. Anchorage's 5th and 6th Avenue improvements provided pedestrian amenities to the downtown core. The Old Glenn Highway project will be eligible for both State and Federal funding sources.

Possible transportation improvement strategies for the Butte include:

- Provide trails and walkways for pedestrians and non-motorized use.
- Improve roads to include pedestrian walkways and trails.
- Designate the Old Glenn Highway as a Scenic Highway as part of the Glenn Highway designation.
- Clean up and screen areas – development of fencing and visual buffers between land uses.

GOAL 6: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Communities like the Butte need to decide for themselves what kind of future they want, and what actions, if any, they will take to try to make that vision real. As an unincorporated area, the Butte currently must rely on cooperation with the Borough, the State of Alaska and other entities to shape its future. These entities control decisions on land use, roads and trails, public facilities and other elements that will have a major influence on the kind of community Butte will be in 10 or 20 years.

Outlined below are suggestions for giving the Butte the best opportunity to affect these decisions and have a strong voice in its future:

- Provide for more community involvement in decisions by the Borough, State and other government entities, particularly related to land sales.
- Take actions to make sure that the community has a meaningful role in any important projects or programs proposed for the community.
- The community should develop a clearer vision for the future. This appendix can be used as a start. This vision can be used as reference point as the community makes decisions on important decisions affecting transportation, land use and community facilities.



Moab, Utah CASE STUDY

Southern Utah is famous for its red-rock canyons, natural arches, and twisted rock formations that seem to change color with each movement of the sun. Utah's rugged appearance, however, belies a fragility common to arid landscapes. The area has vast areas under federal ownership of the National Parks, Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service. In the 1980's, the area's largest community, Moab (pop. 5,000) began a nationwide campaign to attract tourists. The effort was an overwhelming success, and today Moab is a mecca for mountain bikers, four-wheeldrive enthusiasts, hikers, and river rafters from around the world. Spring break is an especially busy time when Moab hosts a jeep safari during which more than 10,000 four-wheel-drive enthusiasts converge on the town.

"We went fishing for a little tourism and hooked a great white shark," says a local commissioner on the City Council. At one point on an Easter weekend in 1993, tents dotted the landscape around Moab as if a great army were bivouacking. Residents had to wait until midnight to avoid hour-long waits in checkout lines. Columns of four-wheel-drive vehicles and mountain bikes tied up traffic, blocked roads, and raced across the terrain. A conflict between four-wheelers and mountain bikers erupted into a full-fl edged riot. Rioters uprooted centuries-old pinion and juniper trees and burned them in bonfires. At a nearby archeological site, a group tore the roof beams out of an ancient cliff dwelling so they could build a fire to roast hot dogs.

The only good thing about the riot was that it happened to coincide with a meeting of federal land managers in Moab. Officials saw firsthand the problems that result when land managers don't cooperate on issues that span jurisdictional boundaries. Their solution was the Canyon County Partnership, an alliance of commissioners from four countries, federal officials from the BLM, US Forest Service, and National Parks, and officials from three different state agencies. The partnership's mission is to protect the region's natural ecosystems, while furthering local and regional objectives. The partnership shares information and works together to assure that individual decisions make collective sense for the land and the community.

Much of the Partnership's work focuses on controlling the damaging side effects of heavy recreational use. To prevent future problems the Partnership got help from AmeriCorps, a national service program that provides work for young adults. A 10-person AmeriCorps crew installed toilets and waste bins and closed off unauthorized trails and roads. AmeriCorps is also restoring denuded areas and educating mountain bikers and four-wheelers about the importance of staying on roads and trails. To offset the cost of their projects, AmeriCorps is collecting entrance fees from some areas all of which goes into a county fund that supports on-the-ground improvements and law enforcement. The Partnership continues to work together to improve land management decisions throughout the region.

Source: From Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities, page 98 to 100.

Deshka River Stewards Program CASE STUDY

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough owns 10,000 acres along the lower 11 miles of the Deshka River that it manages for recreational access. The State of Alaska has transferred some management responsibilities to the Borough through an Interagency Land Management Agreement (ILMA). Under the ILMA, the Borough is authorized to manage the State land at the Deshka River's mouth and provide a consistent management approach to the area.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and Division of Fish and Wildlife Protection have cabin sites just outside the Borough boundary at approximately river mile 2, and a fish weir at mile 7, but both agencies provide only a limited management presence on behalf of the state.

Since 1988 the Borough has incrementally increased its management of the land and now operates a successful river stewardship program that provides a 24-hour educational presence on the river for the summer fishing season. Paid river stewards issue camping permits, collect refuse and provide emergency assistance to recreational boaters. The stewards' presence helps to minimize user conflicts, control overcrowding, and reduce the potential for environmental damage, although they lack the authority to enforce regulations which is sometimes a problem. Overall, this program provides a very effective, round-the-clock presence on the river ensuring a high-percentage of voluntary compliance, which is supported by the users. The stewardship program is popular with river users, but requires Borough funding to operate.



Open Space Subdivisions CASE STUDY

The concept of an open space subdivision is to encourage developers to retain a portion of a subdivision for open space and recreation uses, and in exchange be permitted to develop smaller lots than otherwise would be possible. The result is a subdivision with the same number of lots as a conventional subdivision, but with all the lots enjoying the value of access to greenbelts, trails and/or special features like lakes or streams have smaller.

One specific model approach to open space subdivision design is summarized as follows: Open Space Planning will preserve 40 percent of the total area as common public open space. The Developer will follow the guidelines below.

Step 1: Identify areas that are unbuildable due to steep slopes, streams, designated wetlands, floodplain zones or other regulatory limitations (this is now required and is used to reduce the overall build out of the subdivision).

Step 2: Identify secondary open space areas that would be desirable for recreation, conservation, trails etc. This would include lakes and stream buffers of 100 feet, rock outcrops, ridgelines, traditional agricultural elements, mature trees, or historic features.

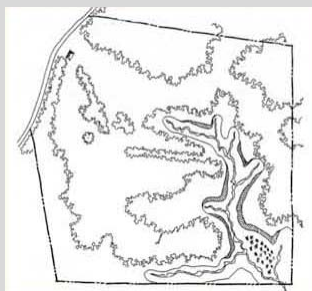
Step 3: Identify development zones - the remaining areas would be the land most desirable for development that minimize conflicts with open space areas. This includes good soils for foundation and septic, good views, etc.

Step 4: Lay out the permitted development that shows the by right conventional subdivision based on 40,000 SF lot size and minimum width standards. This will provide the number of units allowable minus any land from item 1 that would normally not allow development under the existing system.

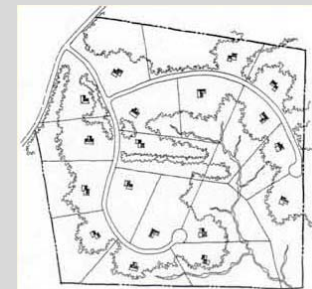
Step 5: Lay out the open space subdivision - using a set of design guidelines (lot build areas, well/septic setbacks/ etc.). The developer is permitted to develop the same number of lots as in the standard subdivision, the resulting 40 percent open space will provide for both active recreation needs as well as a connected system of trails and greenbelts for recreation.



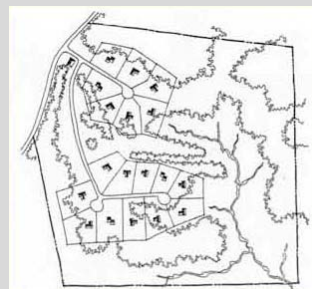
STEP 1 and 2
Identify primary and Secondary Open Space Zones



STEP 3 Development Zones



STEP 4 Conventional Layout



STEP 5 Open Space Subdivision Design

Preserving Historic Farms CASE STUDY “Purchase of Development Rights”

The loss of farmland and open space throughout the country has become a very important issue in recent years. As more and more land becomes developed, an increasing number of tools have been created to preserve the land that remains. One of the tools that has captured the imagination of planners, elected officials and others is the purchase of development rights (PDR). Currently 18 states have active PDR programs.



We may consider the ownership of land to be the possession of a “bundle of rights” associated with that land. These rights include the right to possess, use, modify, develop, lease or sell the land. The right to develop a piece of land for residential, commercial, or industrial purpose is also a right within the bundle. The purchase of development rights involves the sale of that right while leaving all the remaining rights before.

PDR is a voluntary program where a land trust or some other agency usually linked to local government, makes an offer to a landowner to buy the development rights on the parcel. The landowner is free to turn down the offer, or to try to negotiate a higher price. Once an agreement is made, a permanent deed restriction is placed on the property which restricts the type of activities that may take place on the land in perpetuity. In this way, a legally binding guarantee is achieved to ensure that the parcel will remain agricultural or as open space forever.

Farmlands and open spaces tend to convert to other uses where the value associated with current uses is substantially lower than the value that land has for development. The difference between the overall market value and the agricultural value is the value offered to landowners who want to keep the land as agricultural and still enjoy the economic benefits accrued from selling.

A benefit of PDR is that it makes it much easier for one farmer to pass the farm on to an heir interested in continuing to farm. Once the development rights have been separated from the land, the value of the parcel typically declines to agricultural values, with inheritance taxes (and property taxes) reflecting this. The most successful PDR programs are those that preserve large contiguous areas as opposed to selecting individual parcels piecemeal.

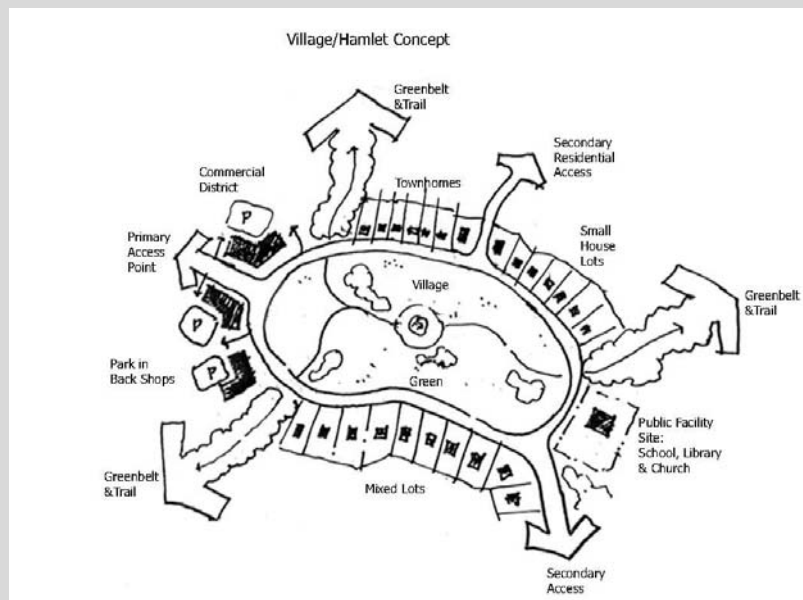
Source: Ohio State University, 2003.

Commercial Nodes CASE STUDY

While the need for major shopping is not a primary concern for local residents, in the future the community may want to encourage commercial development to concentrate in a handful of commercial nodes along the Old Glenn Highway at major intersections. These areas should be developed to minimize impacts to traffic along the main road and to encourage local residents to be able to park in a central location and walk among a mix of shops, public facilities, local businesses and residential units.

There are a number of examples of commercial development along highways that have been designed to fit the rural character of the area and to contribute to the quality of life of local residents while also being economically successful. One of the earliest examples of car-oriented development was the Queen's Byway built in the 1920's, but it remains viable because it continued the traditional "streetline" of shop fronts and accommodated all parking in the rear or at curbside. Successful retail centers share some common traits. They incorporate older traditional buildings, used vernacular building styles and materials, contain a mix of uses including some residential units above shops, and are pedestrian friendly.

The Winslow Green (see diagram below) is located on Bainbridge Island in Washington and is a highly successful mixed-use development on a 2.5-acre site. It combines 20,000 square feet of retail commercial space on the ground level with 34 two-bedroom residential condominiums on the second two floors. Dwellings contain approximately 1,100 square feet and many include attached garages at the rear. The project was designed to provide a formal landscaped open square or common and is the site of the community's Christmas tree, plus numerous sales, bazaars, and other activities throughout the year.



Recreational Community Development CASE STUDY

The design for the gateway hamlet of Ausable Forks in the Adirondack Park Regional Plan of upstate New York is illustrated below and to the lower left in the two diagrams on this page. The population of the community is 1,500 with fishing and tourism as important components of the local economy. The plan stressed the need for attracting environmentally appropriate industries as well as expanding tourism.

Because this is a major gateway to the region, entrance functions became important elements of the design. An information center was placed on an easily accessible location in an attractive public park setting. Included are tree plantings, decorative paving, and pedestrian links to surrounding businesses. One of the most critical elements of the design is the separation of vehicle from pedestrian circulation. Vehicular access and ample traffic flow is maintained with provision made for the dominant visitor experience to be on foot.

Key elements that were considered during the planning phase included special sensitivity to the local natural or cultural resources of the area. This tourism planning principal represents the importance of protecting resources at the same time as developing them for tourism. A high volume of visitor use is experienced each year without damaging the local resources that they come to visit. Another principal is to develop facilities that local residents can enjoy year-round and that visitors can share. This ensures that the facilities are well used and meet local needs first.



Appendix C. Advisory Boards and Planning Commission Recommendations and Assembly Adoption

- **Parks Recreation and Trails Advisory Board**
- **Real Property Asset Management Board**
- **Planning Commission**
- **Assembly**

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD**

RESOLUTION 07-08

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDING THAT THE BOROUGH ASSEMBLY ADOPT THE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR BOROUGH OWNED LAND IN THE BUTTE AREA, AND TO CLASSIFY APPROXIMATELY 2,268 ACRES OF BOROUGH-OWNED LAND AS RECOMMENDED IN THE PLAN.

WHEREAS, there are 2,268 acres of borough-owned land in the Butte area; and

WHEREAS, the Community Development Department worked cooperatively with contractors, the Butte Community Council, local residents, Alaska State Troopers, the Eklutna Native Corporation, the Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District, and the State Department of Natural Resources to develop a management plan for borough-owned land in the Butte area; and

WHEREAS; the Butte Asset Management Plan was developed through a series of evaluative steps designed to understand the borough's Butte area land resources, as well as the social, economic, and environmental factors affecting these properties; and

WHEREAS, the public participation and involvement process began in March 2003 and included stakeholder interviews, community workshops, meetings with recreation and trail committees, release of a draft plan with a

6-month review period, and a revised draft plan with a 4-month review period; and

WHEREAS, all property owners in the Butte area were notified by mail about the planning process and the availability of draft plan documents for their review and comments; and

WHEREAS, the result of this public involvement process and planning effort is an asset management plan for borough land in the Butte area that addresses the social, economic, and environmental factors that affect the Butte area.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Parks, Recreation and Trails Advisory Board recommends that the Borough Assembly adopt the Asset Management Plan for borough-owned land in the Butte Area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Parks, Recreation and Trails Advisory Board recommends that the borough-owned parcels described in the plan be classified according to the recommendations in the plan:

Parcel 1-A	463 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 1-B	8 acres	Public Recreation / Commercial
Parcel 2	210 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 3A	35 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 3B	77 acres	Reserved Use - Public Facilities
Parcel 3C	94 acres	Land Bank
Parcel 4A	862 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 4B	47 acres	Land Bank - Public Recreation
Parcel 5A	35 acres	Public Recreation

Parcel 5B 70 acres Public Recreation
Parcel 6 40 acres Wetland Bank / Public Recreation
Parcel 7 327 acres Reserved Use - Open Space / Public
 Recreation / Resource Management.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Parks, Recreation and
Trails Advisory Board this 26th Day of March 2007.



MARY P. ANDERSON, Chairman

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
REAL PROPERTY ASSET MANAGEMENT BOARD

RESOLUTION 07-06

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH REAL PROPERTY ASSET MANAGEMENT BOARD RECOMMENDING THAT THE BOROUGH ASSEMBLY ADOPT THE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR BOROUGH-OWNED LAND IN THE BUTTE AREA, AND TO CLASSIFY APPROXIMATELY 2,268 ACRES OF BOROUGH OWNED LAND AS RECOMMENDED IN THE PLAN.

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WHEREAS, the result of this public involvement process and planning effort is an asset management plan for borough land in the Butte area that addresses the social, economic, and economic factors that affect the Butte area.


NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Real Property Asset Management Board recommends that the Borough Assembly adopt the Asset Management Plan for borough-owned land in the Butte Area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Real Property Asset Management Board recommends that the borough-owned parcels described in the plan be classified according to the recommendations in the plan:

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Parcel 3A	35 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 3B	77 acres	Reserved Use - Public Facilities
Parcel 3C	94 acres	Land Bank
Parcel 4A	862 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 4B	47 acres	Land Bank - Public Recreation
Parcel 5A	35 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 5B	70 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 6	40 acres	Wetland Bank / Public Recreation

Parcel 7 327 acres Reserved Use - Open Space / Public
Recreation / Resource Management.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Real Property Asset
Management this 11th day of April 2007.


BISHOP T. BUCKLE, Chairman

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION 07-23

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDING THAT THE BOROUGH ASSEMBLY ADOPT THE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR BOROUGH OWNED LAND IN THE BUTTE AREA, AND TO CLASSIFY APPROXIMATELY 2,268 ACRES OF BOROUGH OWNED LAND AS RECOMMENDED IN THE PLAN.

WHEREAS, there are 2,268 acres of Borough owned land in the Butte area; and

WHEREAS, the Community Development Department worked cooperatively with contractors, the Butte Community Council, local residents, Alaska State Troopers, the Eklutna Native Corporation, the Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District, and the State Department of Natural Resources to develop a management plan for borough owned land in the Butte area; and

WHEREAS; the Asset Management Plan for Borough Owned Land in the Butte Area was developed through a series of evaluative steps designed to understand the borough's Butte area land resources, as well as the social, economic, and environmental factors affecting these properties; and

WHEREAS, the public participation and involvement process began in March 2003 and included stakeholder interviews, community workshops, meetings with recreation and trail committees, release of a draft plan with a six month review period, and a revised draft plan with a four month review period; and

WHEREAS, all property owners in the Butte area were notified by mail about the planning process and the availability of draft plan documents for their review and comments; and

WHEREAS, the result of this public involvement process and planning effort is an asset management plan for borough land in the Butte area that addresses the social, economic, and economic factors that affect the Butte area; and

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Parks, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Board passed Resolution Serial No. 07-08 recommending that the Borough Assembly adopt the Asset Management Plan for Borough Owned Land in the Butte Area and classify the land as recommended in the plan; and

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Real Property Asset Management Board passed Resolution Serial No. 07-06 recommending that the Borough Assembly adopt the Asset Management Plan for Borough Owned Land in the Butte Area and classify the land as recommended in the plan.

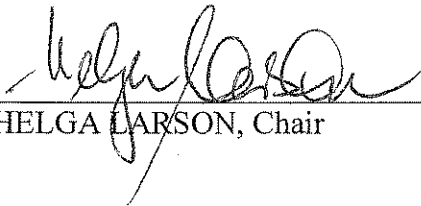
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission recommends that the Borough Assembly adopt the Asset Management Plan for Borough Owned Land in the Butte Area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Matanuska-Susitna Planning Commission recommends that the borough owned parcels described in the plan be classified according to the recommendations in the plan:

Parcel 1-A	463 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 1-B	8 acres	Public Recreation/Commercial
Parcel 2	210 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 3A	35 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 3B	77 acres	Reserved Use – Public Facilities
Parcel 3C	94 acres	Land Bank
Parcel 4A	862 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 4B	47 acres	Land Bank – Public Recreation
Parcel 5A	35 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 5B	70 acres	Public Recreation

Parcel 6	40 acres	Wetland Bank/Public Recreation
Parcel 7	327 acres	Reserved Use - Open Space/Public Recreation/Resource Management.

ADOPTED, by the Matanuska-Susitna Planning Commission this 16th day of April, 2007.



HELGA LARSON, Chair

ATTEST:



PRISCILLA M. GOFF, Planning Clerk

(SEAL)

NON-CODE ORDINANCE

By: Borough Manager
Introduced: 05/01/07
Public Hearing: 05/15/07
Adopted: 05/15/07

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
ORDINANCE SERIAL NO. 07-060**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY ADOPTING THE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR BOROUGH-OWNED LAND IN THE BUTTE AREA, AND TO CLASSIFY APPROXIMATELY 2,268 ACRES OF BOROUGH-OWNED LAND AS RECOMMENDED IN THE PLAN.

WHEREAS, there are approximately 2,268 acres of borough-owned land in the Butte area; and

WHEREAS, the community development department worked cooperatively with contractors, Butte Community Council, local residents, Alaska State Troopers, Eklutna Native Corporation, Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District, and the state Department of Natural Resources to develop a management plan for borough owned land in the Butte area; and

WHEREAS, the Asset Management Plan for borough-Owned Land in the Butte Area was developed through a series of evaluative steps designed to understand the borough's Butte area land and natural resources; and

WHEREAS, all property owners in the Butte area were notified by mail about the planning process and the availability of draft plan documents for their review; and

WHEREAS, the result of this public involvement process and planning effort is an asset management plan for borough land in the Butte area that addresses the social, economic, and environmental factors that affect the Butte area; and

WHEREAS, the borough's Parks, Recreation and Trails Advisory Board, the Real Property Asset Management Board, and the Planning Commission have recommended adoption of the plan and the recommended land use classifications.

BE IT ENACTED:

Section 1. Classification. This is a non-code ordinance.

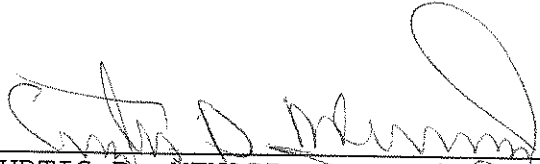
Section 2. Adoption of the asset management plan for borough-owned land in the Butte area. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly hereby adopts the Asset Management Plan for borough-Owned Land in the Butte area, dated May 2007.

Section 3. Land use classifications. The following land as described in the Asset Management Plan for Borough Owned Land in the Butte area be classified according to the recommendations in the plan:

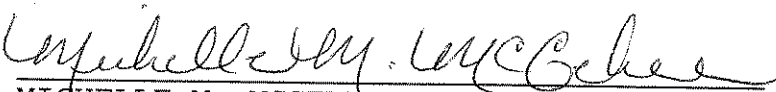
Parcel 1-A	463 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 1-B	8 acres	Public Recreation/Commercial
Parcel 2	210 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 3A	35 acres	Public Recreation
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Parcel 4A	862 acres	Public Recreation
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Parcel 5A	35 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 5B	70 acres	Public Recreation
Parcel 6	40 acres	Wetland Bank/Public Recreation
Parcel 7	327 acres	Reserved Use - Open Space / Public Recreation /Resource Management.

Section 4. Effective date. This ordinance shall take effect upon adoption by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly this 15 day
of May, 2007.


CURTIS D. MENARD, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:


MICHELLE M. MCGEHEE, CMC, Borough Clerk

(SEAL)

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: Woods, Allen, Church, Kvalheim, Bettine, Wells,
and Kluberton