

PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN



Parks, Recreation & Open Space Component of the Asset
Management Plan

Chapter 8 - Goals and objectives

Chapter 9 - Strategic Action Plan

Assembly Adopted, June 2001

Prepared for
The Matanuska-Susitna Borough's
Department of Community Development
by Land Design North

CODE ORDINANCE

By: J. Duffy
Introduced: 06/05/01
Public Hearing: 06/19/01
Adopted: 06/19/01

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
ORDINANCE SERIAL NO. 01-078**

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING MSB 15.24.030(B)(1), THE PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH BY CHANGING THE PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE SUB-ELEMENT OF THE PLAN.

BE IT ENACTED:

Section 1. Classification. This ordinance is of a general and permanent nature and shall become a part of the borough code.

Section 2. Amendment of paragraph. The public facilities element of the comprehensive plan adopted by Ordinance Serial No. 84-44 is amended by substituting for the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space sub-element of that plan a new sub-element plan entitled "Matanuska-Susitna Borough Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan" dated June 19, 2001. (The codifier is instructed to add this ordinance to the legislative history identified in MSB 15.24.030(B)(1).)

Section 3. Effective date. This ordinance shall take effect upon adoption by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly this 19
day of June, 2001.



TIMOTHY L. ANDERSON, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:



SANDRA A. DILLION, Borough Clerk

(SEAL)

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Component of the Asset Management Plan

I. Introduction

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough's Asset Management Plan is intended to provide management guidance and direction for all Borough-owned land and natural resources. This Parks, Recreation and Open Space chapter of the Plan focuses on select Borough assets that, arguably, are the most visible, and are the most enjoyed by the public. Borough residents place a high value on the open spaces, spectacular views, recreational areas and facilities, trails, and the community parks, fields and playgrounds that enhance their life. Residents' freedom of access to a wide variety of recreational activities, a rural lifestyle, and local community activities characterize why many people choose to live in the Borough.



The purpose of this chapter is to provide appropriate management guidance for the Borough's recreation and leisure time resources so that future generations will have these same opportunities and benefits, and that the Borough will effectively meet residents' parks, recreation and open space needs of the future.

The function of the parks and open space system in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough is to provide for a range of leisure and cultural activities, and to retain a dimension of the natural environment within community and regional landscapes. Parks, recreation areas and facilities combined with natural open spaces are tools for building and preserving community values and character.

Planning for the future becomes increasingly important as population growth puts pressures on finite amounts of land and increases the need for recreational facilities. Because of an abundance of raw land for sale in the valley and the Borough's proximity to employment, it has experienced the fastest growth in the State over the past ten years. This growth is projected to continue. It is in the public's interest to dedicate appropriate lands for parks and open spaces, and to designate trail routes before population growth and economic expansion make this less feasible. Also, it is important to plan ahead to meet future facility needs, and also to consider the geographic distribution and spatial relationships of parks, recreation facilities, open space, trails and other leisure-specific land uses within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Together, two comprehensive planning documents have been developed that outline concrete actions that the Borough can take to develop, maintain and protect residents' recreational resources over the long term. These include the Borough's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan and the Borough-Wide Recreational Trails Plan. The emphasis of these

two inter-related plans is to provide residents with a largely unified system of parks, open systems, trails and natural corridors. Such an integrated system will ideally meet residents' recreational needs close to home, while providing connections to major parks, educational facilities, and open spaces.

Of note, these plans develop concrete recommendations, in the form of Strategic Actions, that the Borough can implement immediately and over twenty years, in order to meet resident-defined goals for the future of the Borough's parks, recreational facilities, open spaces and trails. These goals are based on recent public input, and are a refinement of the seven original goals found in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space component of the 1984 Comprehensive Plan (See **Table vi** at the end of this chapter).

Borough Allocations and Acquisitions

The Mat-Su has sufficient land assets to meet a variety of present and future needs, ranging from economic development, to protection of social and recreational values, to conservation of natural areas as stream corridors, wetlands, mountain slopes and woodlands for a variety of leisure uses. This chapter of the Asset Management Plan recognizes how the needs for parks, recreation facilities, open spaces and



trails fit within the broader picture of Borough land considerations, and the need for balance and accountability. Therefore, the designation of lands in this chapter approaches allocations and acquisitions on the following basis.

- **Parks**, whether serving neighborhoods or greater segments of population, are planned according to specific standards. The acreage allocations for parks are directly related to the population of an area. Therefore, Borough allocations and acquisitions are planned to meet location-specific, quantifiable needs on an equitable basis.
- **Open space system allocations** are based on environmental, social and recreational values which are not necessarily tied to population. Acquisition of parks, recreation and open space lands will vary from retention of existing Borough land assets, transfer of State or Federal lands, to fee simple purchase, or dedication of easements through the platting process. Emphasis will be made on the voluntary and cooperative transfer of parks, recreation, open space and trails to the Parks and Open Space system.

The overall designation of lands depicted in the two maps following this chapter, the **Regional Parks and Open Space Concept Map** and the **Central Area* Parks and Open Space Concept Map**, is meant to provide a general direction to the development of the Borough's open space and park programs in terms of acquisition, development and related land use decision-making. Neither this plan, nor the maps are meant to specifically exclude compatible uses in areas identified as parks and open space, nor do they constitute a dedication of these areas for park use as specified by Borough Ordinances.

*As used in this plan, the term "Central Area" depicts a more densely populated area defined by the natural boundaries of the Little Susitna River, Chugach Mountains and Cook Inlet

II. The Mat-Su Parks, Recreation and Open Space System: The Next 20 years

This section covers the basic elements of the Borough's parks, recreation and open space system, and provides a synopsis of findings that are covered comprehensively in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan and in the Borough-Wide Recreational Trails Plan. Specifically, elements are covered under three main headings, as outlined in **Table i**, and include program descriptions, issues and recommendations.

A. Parks and Recreational Areas

Program Description

Traditionally viewed as passive nature-oriented areas, many parks today also serve a major

function of providing active recreational opportunities for people of all ages. The urban and rural park systems are composed of properties that vary in size, location, function, service area and development. Parks provide broad benefits that contribute to the quality of life, build community pride, promote economic growth, attract new work force, promote tourism, conserve natural areas and improve social interaction.

Park land need is primarily based upon a series of recreational area standards. The acreage allocations for parks are directly related to the population of an area. Standards for parks were developed in the early 1970's by the National Recreation and Park Association. The Borough has employed standards since the 1983 Comprehensive Plan. This chapter provides for an update of these standards to directly correspond to the unique site and population characteristics found in the Borough. The analysis and projections of future park land needs are based on these revised standards.

The standards divide parks into three groups based on the areas that they serve: 1) those that serve one neighborhood or Elementary School Service Area which includes local play areas and neighborhood/school park; 2) those which serve several neighborhoods or Middle School Service Area which would include the community/athletic parks; and 3) those that serve the entire Borough which include regional parks (See **Table ii** for a listing of the park standards utilized in the Borough). Following is a brief description of each park type:

Local Play Areas. Intended to serve specific groups depending on population character and needs of immediate neighborhood. May serve children, senior citizens, or all age groups. Located in areas of high density and urban setting where dwelling units exceed 8 per acre.

Table i. Basic Elements of this Plan (defined in Chapter Four).

A. Parks and Recreational Areas

- Local Play Areas
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Regional Parks

B. Facilities and Activities

- Recreational Facilities and Activities
- Highway Oriented Recreational Facilities
- Tourism Facilities and Activities

C. Public Open Space

- Recreation Corridors
- Conservation Areas
- Outstanding Natural Areas
- Remote Areas

Table ii. Parks Standard per Population

<u>Park Type</u> <u>Acres</u>	<u>Acres /</u> <u>1000 people</u>	<u>Size</u> <u>Range</u>	<u>Population</u> <u>Served</u>	<u>Service</u> <u>Area</u>
Local Play Areas	.25-.5 acre	.25-1 acre	1,000-2,500	1 mile radius
Neighborhood Parks	5 acres	5-40 acres	2,500-5,000	1-5 mile radius
Community/Athletic Parks	10 acres	40-100 acres	5,000-20,000	5-15 mile radius
Regional Parks	20 acres	100-200 acres	10,000-50,000	1 hour drive

Neighborhood/School Parks. Intended to provide areas for both passive and active recreation for people of all ages. Usually serve a 1 to 5 mile radius and population ranging from 1000 to 10,000 people. Size ranges from 5 to 40 acres. Locations as part of an Elementary School/Park concept are preferred (see **Illustration 1**, page vi).

Community/Athletic Parks. Intended to provide for more structured and organized recreational activities for people of all ages. Usually serve a 5 to 15 mile radius and population ranging from 5,000 to 20,000 people. Size range from 40 to 100 acres. They provide for a wider range of activities and facilities than can be provided in a single neighborhood park. Locations next to secondary school sites are preferred.

Regional Parks. Intended to serve all residents of the Borough as well as visitors to the area within a one hour drive of the population served. Varying in size from 100 to 200 acres, these parks generally have a mixture of natural areas and developed special facilities. Such facilities may include camping, boating, nature centers, equestrian centers, mushing, cross-country skiing, or motorized sports.

These standards are valuable as the basis for Borough parks planning for the following reasons:

- Standards provide a systematic means to approach park acquisition and development;
- Application of standards help to promote the equal distribution of park land and recreation facilities from one community to another; and
- Standards help to maintain a balanced system of parks, providing a wide range of recreational opportunities.

Issues

The development of a comprehensive parks plan requires the allocation of resources to meet the direct demand of the local populations to be served. The Borough’s rapidly growing population presents a series of challenges that include:

- **Population Disbursement.** The Borough is characterized by scattered development with few population centers spread over a vast geographic region.



- Population Density.** This dispersed development pattern is further complicated by the relatively low density of housing stock, in most areas one housing unit is located on 1 to 5 acre lots or greater. Establishing parks and recreational facilities close to home is very difficult as well as expensive.
- Lack of Physical Planning and Zoning Guidelines.** The continuation of the disbursement of low density housing development will continue without the guidance of general land use guidelines making the prediction and delivery of parks and recreational facilities more difficult.

- Currently there is limited access to school facilities.

The Parks component provides an opportunity to address the above issues in a comprehensive way and to provide a framework for the future shaping of land use patterns in the Borough. It would appear at first that the Borough has a substantial amount of park acreage with which to accommodate future population needs. However, it is important to note the location, ownership and function of most of the park land available.

Currently, there are over 354,000 acres of parks and open space in the Borough. This reflects the ability of the Borough, City of Wasilla, City of Palmer, City of Houston, the Alaska State Recreation Areas and private organizations to cumulatively meet the needs of Borough residents. The greatest portion of this acreage is represented within the Alaska State Recreation Areas; large regional parks that total over 352,000 acres. Of the 1,220 acres of park land and open space owned by the Borough over 500 acres are located in regional parks that include the Matanuska River Park, Lake Lucille Park and Little-Su Campground. A summary of all

Table iii. Parks Standards, as applied to the Borough currently and in the year 2020.

Park Type	Standard Acres per 1000 population	Existing Park Acres	2000 Recommendations		2020 Recommendations	
			Goal	Over/Under	Goal	Over/Under
Neighborhood Parks	5 acres	135	273	(-138)	414	(-279)
Community/Athletic Parks	10 acres	97	546	(-449)	827	(-730)
Regional Parks*						
Central Urban Area	20 acres	726	1,091	(-365)	1,654	(-928)
Rural Areas	20 acres	<u>352,817</u>	<u>1,091</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,654</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Borough		354,322	3,001	350,515	4590	348,953

*Includes Borough, State and local park lands



the publically- accessible parks and open space available within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, under multiple management, by park type classification is provided in **Table iii**.

In regard to park land needs Borough-wide, there is an ample amount of large regional park land to meet the current and future population needs of the Borough if the State Recreational lands are included in the inventory. When looking at the geographic distribution of regional park land, the “central area”, where the largest population lives, lacks a sufficient amount of park land to meet current or future needs.

In addition, the neighborhood and community/athletic park land, which is the foundation of the local park system, fails to meet current levels of demand. This shortage is projected to grow over the next twenty years

as the population increases and existing undeveloped lands are lost to residential and commercial expansion. By using the park standards, current and projected park land needs are identified for the Borough. Priorities are established in order to focus on near-term park land acquisition in areas where current needs are greatest.

Recommendations

The Borough park program should undertake further park land acquisition and development commensurate with current and projected population growth. The focus of park land acquisition will be at the following levels:

Local Play Areas. These areas should be provided as the need arises through the platting and dedication of a portion of high density subdivisions. This should occur at densities of 8 units per acre or greater with the developer setting aside developable lands and the Borough providing capital funds to develop the facilities.

Neighborhood/School Parks. The utilization of the existing elementary school sites should

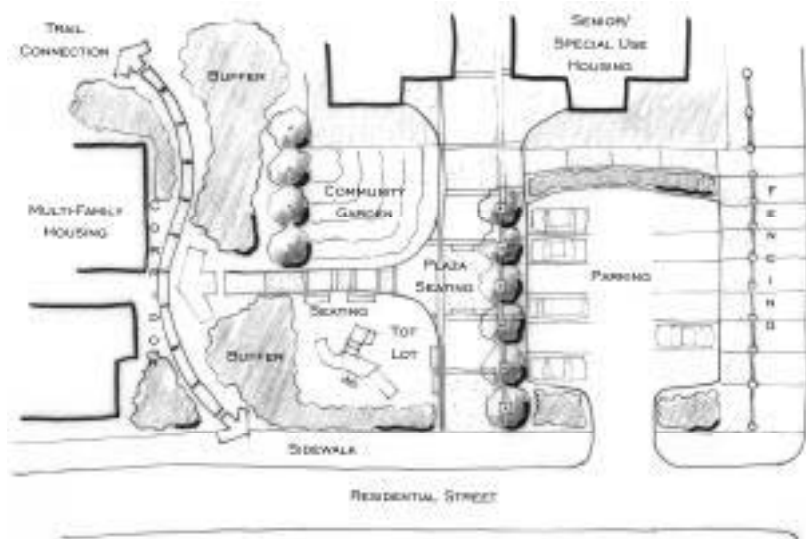


Illustration 1: Local Play Areas serve special interest populations

proceed through the development of joint use management and development agreements between the Borough and the School District. To meet local needs, upgrades to existing facilities and/or development of new community-oriented facilities should be the first priority. Establishment of space standards for future elementary school sites should be set to meet future demands. In areas where new development exceeds 2 units per acre, additional lands should be required to be set aside as part of the subdivision platting process.

Community/Athletic Parks. Expansion of the existing community/athletic parks should be the highest priority for meeting expanded athletic field needs. The continued development of joint secondary sites for school/park use should also continue with the

development of use agreements between the Borough and the School District. The Borough will need to identify at least three additional community/athletic park sites in the immediate future to meet growth in the central region. Areas for new community/athletic parks should be required to be set aside as part of the subdivision platting process for large tract subdivisions such as has happened at the Alcantra site (see concept in **Illustration 2**). Development of recreational facilities at the Alcantra site should continue and the Borough should identify new sites in Big Lake and Palmer.

Regional Parks. The Borough should focus development on regional parks close to the central region that meet special recreational needs that are not now being provided for

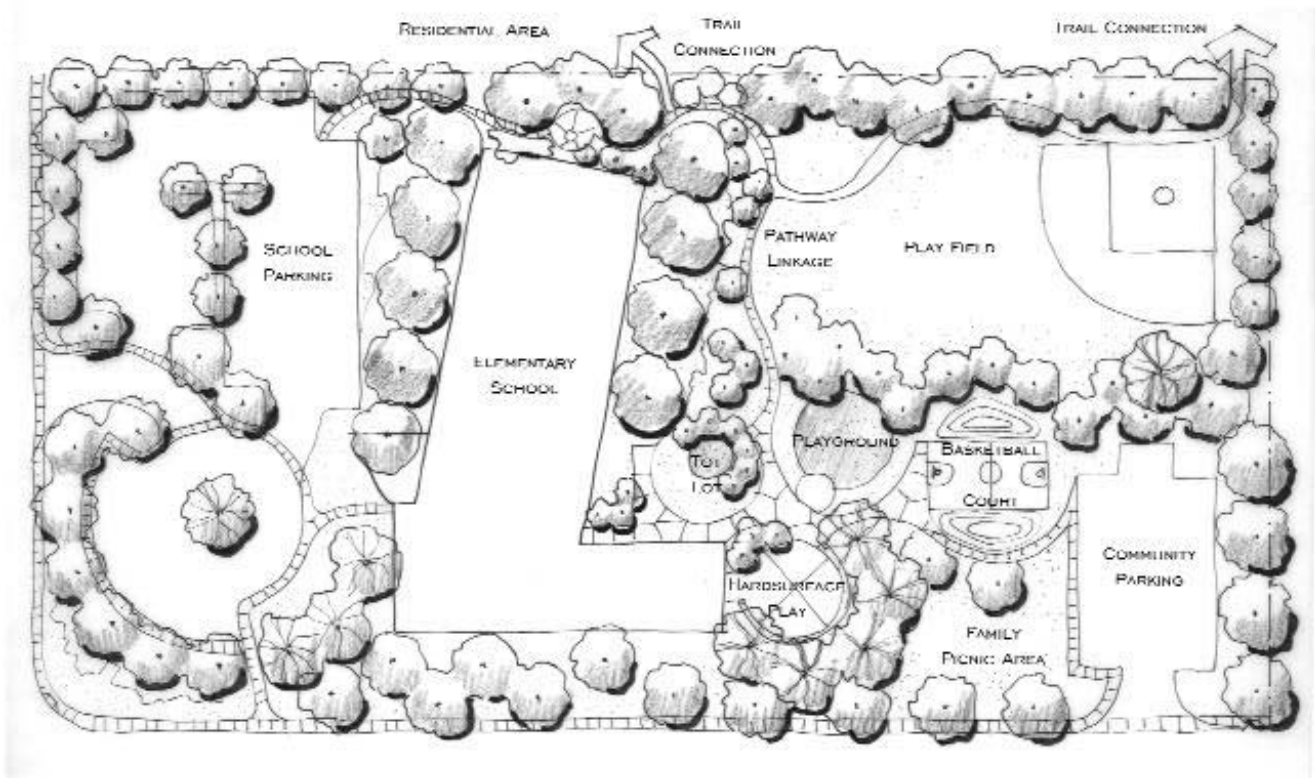


Illustration 2: Elementary School/ Neighborhood Park combined facility concept plan.

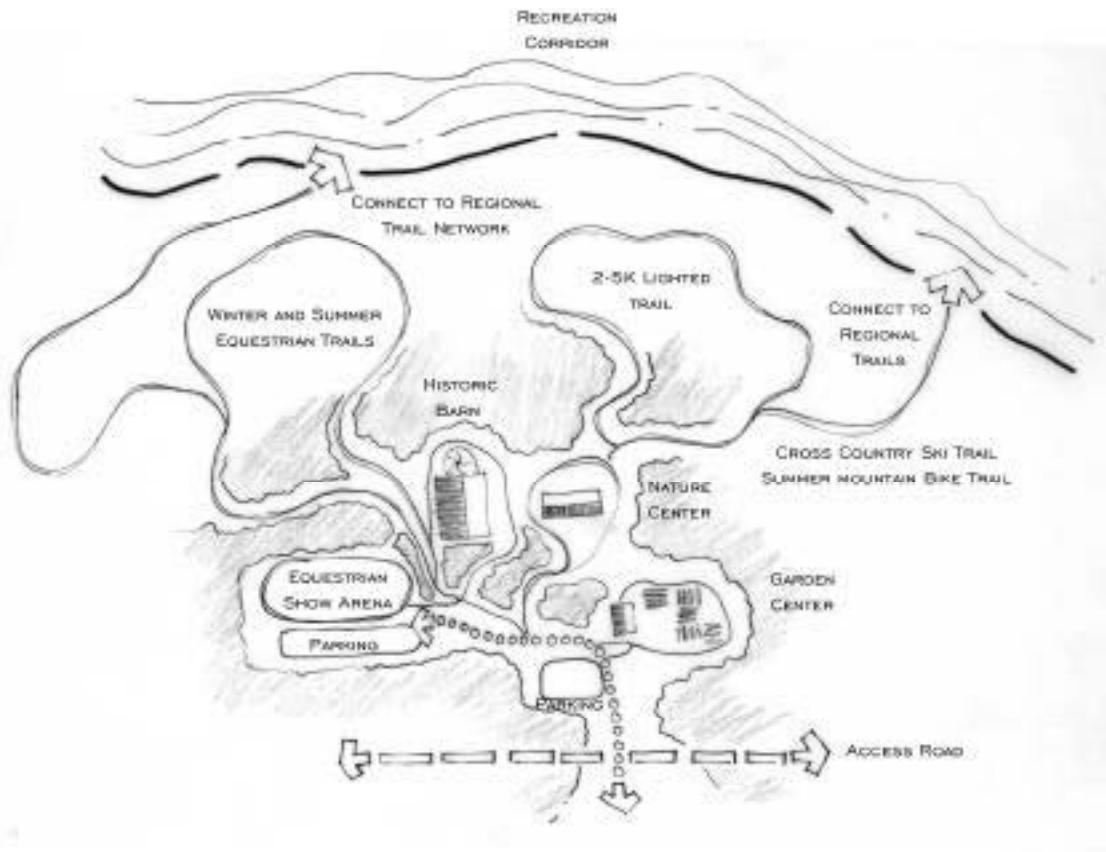


Illustration 3: Regional Park Non-Motorized Special Use Area Concept.

within the State Parks system. This should include the development of large special use areas for dog mushing, skiing, equestrian, snow machines, ATV and other activities. Where appropriate, the parks should provide for multiple-use activities as well as traditional passive recreational pursuits (camping, picnicking, hiking and nature watching). These parks should also provide ample links to locally-based commercial services in order to provide increased economic opportunity. Large tract speculative development offered by the Borough should have requirements for regional parks within the development requirements. Immediate priority areas include the Aurora Dog Mushing Area, Hatcher Pass Ski Area and the Crevasse Moraine/Keppler Bradley Area. The location and acquisition of these new park lands will require a number of strategies and policies that include the following:

- Use of public lands now owned by the Borough that are critically located to serve existing or future park needs and/or that have valuable natural features and conservation values;
- Regional and community/athletic parks should be located so as to provide links with open space and recreational corridors, and be sited so as to not disturb existing and future residential development;
- Existing open space corridors and areas should be utilized for recreational facilities where environmentally suitable and appropriately located;
- New sites should, in part, be provided for by public dedication and subdivision platting process as part of large subdivision development (as experienced at the Alcantra site). The Borough should adopt requirements for subdivisions to provide for



new school and park areas that are based on the number of housing units (density) and acres to be developed. These lands should also provide a balance of developable and undevelopable lands;

- Set and use space standards in school site acquisitions for joint uses; and
- Identify State, Federal or privately-owned lands that provide critical recreation

opportunities (trails, natural features) that can be acquired through positive means such as land trades, right-of-way agreements, and or fee simple purchases.

Use of these strategies will result in a well-balanced, equitably distributed park system that will provide recreation opportunities accessible for all age groups for years to come.

B. Facilities & Activities

Program Description

This includes the outdoor and indoor facilities that are located within parks and public lands that provide structures for recreational and leisure time activities. Facility needs are in part based upon a series of recreational facility standards much like the standards for park lands. The analysis and projections of future recreational facilities needs are in part based on these standards (See **Table iv** for a listing of revised recreational facilities standards for use in the Borough). Following is a brief description of each facility type:

Recreational Facilities and Activities. This includes actively used athletic fields, playgrounds, trails, ice rinks, swimming pools, gyms etc. Activities refer to recreational pursuits such as hiking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, bird watching, etc.

Highway-Oriented Recreational Facilities. This refers to recreational facilities such as pull-outs, interpretive or informational signs, waysides, interpretive walks and campgrounds. No standards apply.

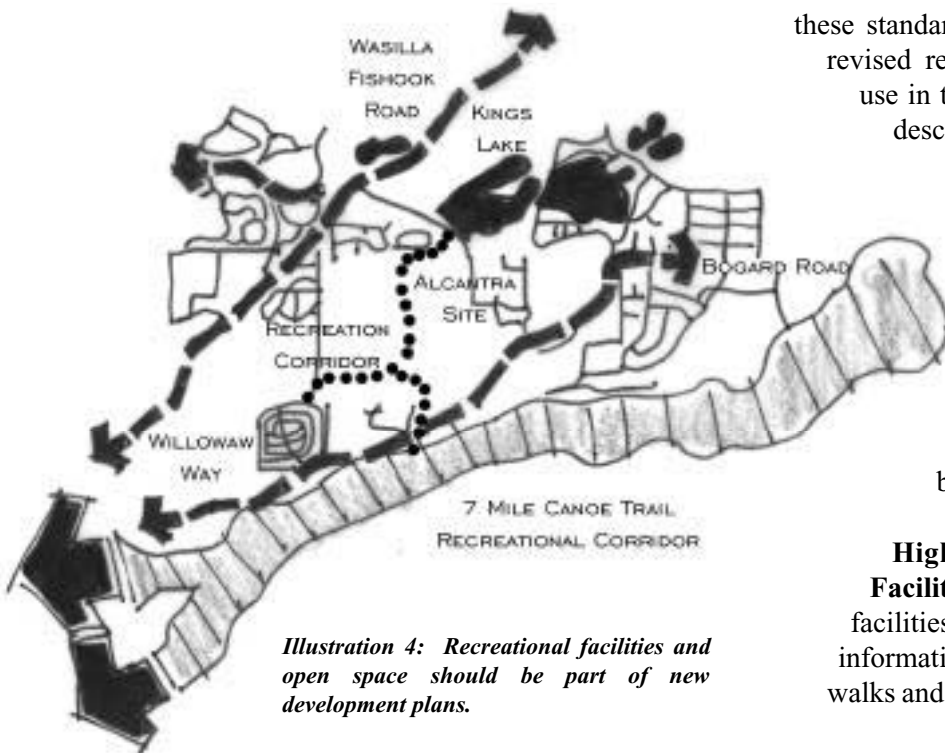


Illustration 4: Recreational facilities and open space should be part of new development plans.

Table iv. Parks Standard per Population

Activity	Number of Facilities per population	Space Requirements	Service Radius or Location
Little League	1 per 3000	1.5 acres	5-15 mile radius
Senior League	1 per 5000	3.0-4.0 acres	5-15 mile radius
Softball	1 per 3000	1.5-2.0 acres	5-15 mile radius
Soccer	1 per 3000	2.0 acres	5-15 mile radius
Ice Arena	1 per 35000	3.0-4.0 acres	1 hour driving time
Swimming Pool	1 per 25000	1.0-2.0 acres	1 hour driving time
Multi-Purpose Gym	1 per 7000	10,000 s.f.	15 mile driving time
Golf Courses	1 per 50,000	120 acres	1 hour driving time
Shooting Range	1 per 25,000	30 acres	1 hour driving time

Tourism-Oriented Facilities and Activities serve the traveling and recreating public. The tourism industry generally provides these facilities and activities. No standards apply.

Issues

Participation levels in all forms of recreation are extremely high within the Borough. Facilities have not kept pace with the increases in population and the increases in user demand. Existing facilities are over used and under-maintained. Few new facilities have been developed during the last 10 years of rapid growth. Many existing school facilities are gated and unavailable for use by the general public except in a few locations.

Recommendations

The Borough should expand its utilization of Borough School District facilities and provide further assistance to local communities, non-

profit and for-profit organizations to develop new facilities and services in order to meet growing demand on Borough-owned lands. The focus of facility development will be in the following areas:

Athletic Fields. By concentrating development on Community/Athletic Parks (see the conceptual diagram in **Illustration 5**) the Borough can begin to meet the organized athletic needs of the residents. Through public/private partnerships a total of 30-40 new athletic fields should be developed over the next 20 years (see current opportunities, **Table v**).

Community School Use. By development of a joint-use agreement between the Borough and the School District, additional existing gyms, assembly rooms, community centers, classrooms for education and athletic fields will be made available to residents.

Ice Arena. The existing arena will need to add a second sheet of ice or a new two rink facility will need to be developed to meet growing

demand. Upgrades to existing rinks at Talkeetna and Sutton should be undertaken. In addition a covered outdoor rink should be considered for the Houston, Big Lake or Su-Valley High School area to serve rural communities and to extend the outdoor season.

Swimming Pools. Upgrades to the two existing pools should be undertaken. Future needs for an additional pool should be a long term consideration.

Shooting Range. The additional development of rifle and archery ranges should be met

through private development with possible location on Borough land. Public safety education is a major issue to be addressed.

Tourism. The Borough should continue to promote the growth of tourism primarily through the development of high quality parks and recreational facilities and the promotion of economic development nodes to encourage locally-based recreation oriented businesses and services.

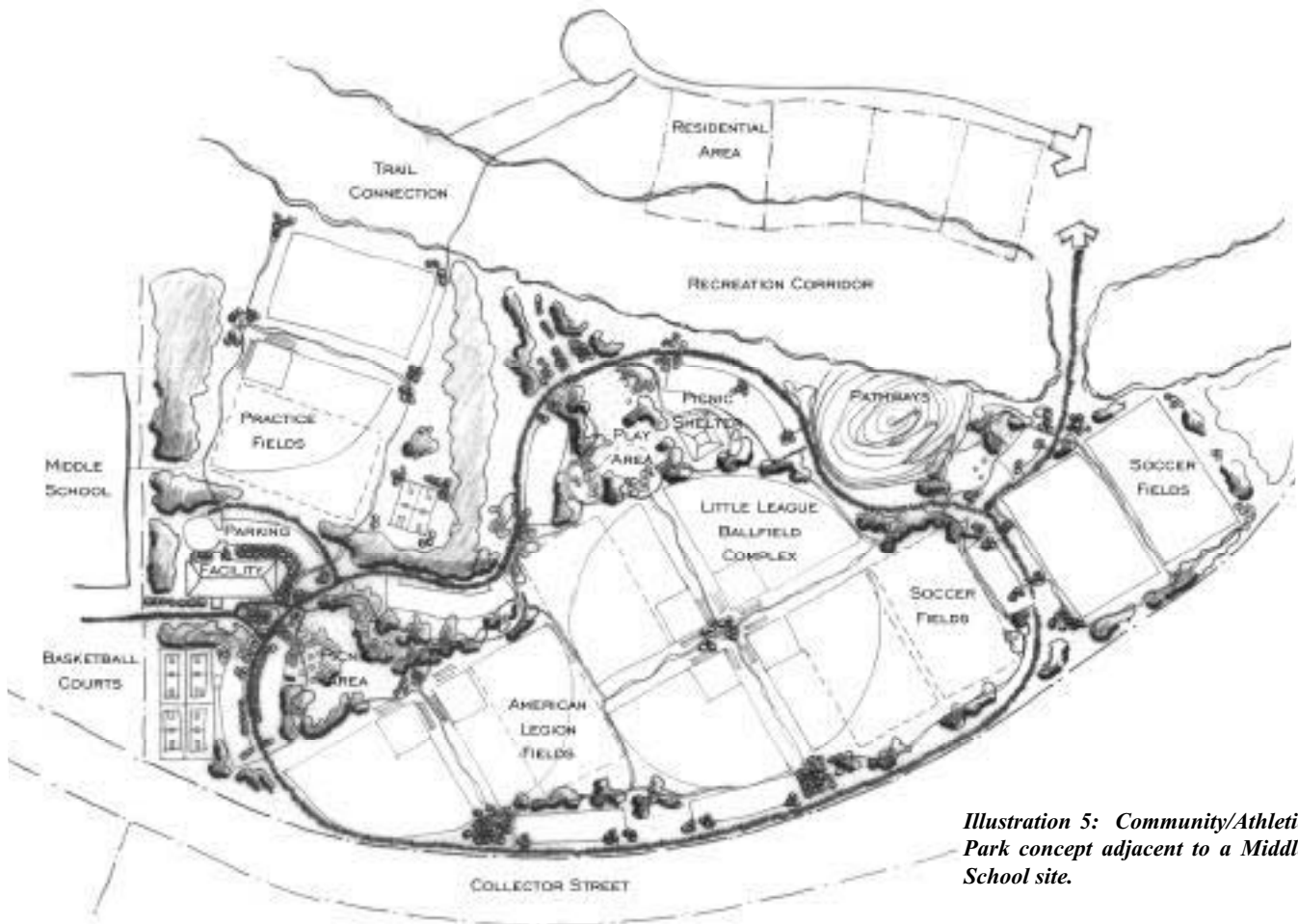


Illustration 5: Community/Athletic Park concept adjacent to a Middle School site.

Table v. Key Athletic Field Development Opportunities

- Bumpus Recreation Area existing facility has plans for a total of 8 additional fields for soccer, little league baseball, football, rugby, basketball and tennis.
- Smith Recreation Area has room for expansion of 4 additional fields.
- Alcantra/Teeland Middle School/Ron Larson Elementary School: This project will include the construction of four regulation size soccer fields, four little league baseball fields, four tennis courts, two basketball courts, picnic areas, playground areas, storage, concession and restroom facilities, extension of the paved trail system and two parking lots for a total capacity of 170 vehicles.
- Big Lake has plans for new Little League and soccer fields possibly associated with the new library site.
- Palmer needs a site for additional multi-use athletic fields to replace or supplement the private Hay Fields that are now used for soccer.
- Houston High School and Middle School should develop new fields.
- Upgrades to Sherrod or identification of replacement softball fields and conversion of Sherrod to Little League or youth softball to minimize impacts to the local elementary schools.

C. Public Open Space & Corridors

Program Description

Public open space and natural corridors within the Borough preserve something of the natural setting, contribute to privacy, lessen sound and glare, screen unsightly views, protect watersheds, floodplains and other fragile environments, and at the same time provide a setting for active recreation. While the Borough



has an abundant supply of seemingly endless open space, over time, development pressures along lakes, streams, mountain ridges and other highly desirable locations can erode access opportunities for a wide segment of the population.

Recreational corridors and open spaces can help define the physical form of communities by contributing to their memorable character and by creating unique neighborhood settings. They contribute to a high quality of life. Residents in the Borough, unlike most Americans, within minutes of their homes can walk, run, ski, ride bikes, horses, dogsleds, and in some areas use motorized ATV's and snowmachines, in a spectacular natural setting without conflicts with automobile traffic. Natural corridors are abundant in the Borough and can be used to link many of the regional parks and schools.

Public open spaces and corridors provide the opportunity to preserve special places, quiet woods, wetlands, steep slopes, and wildlife habitats for public enjoyment in their natural



state. Open space and corridors are especially valued when they are easily accessible from residential neighborhoods. Residents of adjacent housing developments can take advantage of increased recreation opportunity and transportation alternatives. A major objective of this overall Plan is to join neighborhoods to park lands and schools through open space corridors that complement the overall land use plan.

Corridors are valuable for many reasons. They:

- Accommodate trails as alternative forms of transportation and recreation facilities;
- Conserve natural features;
- Serve as buffers between different types of land uses;
- Lend definition to neighborhoods;
- Provide links between residential areas, educational facilities and existing park lands; and

- to provide recreation opportunities close to home, minimizing time and physical barriers to participation.

Issues

In order to establish an integrated natural corridor system along the Borough's waterways and mountain slopes, immediate action and the allocation of considerable resources will be required. Streams, rivers, lakes and upper elevations have long been a popular area for residential development. Many of the Borough's residential neighborhoods have been established along streams and floodplains. Traditionally, casual recreational use access has been easily accommodated across private undeveloped lands. This option is rapidly disappearing, particularly for linear trail activities. People find that their usual hiking, dog mushing, horseback riding, skiing or snowmachine trails are blocked by new residential subdivisions. Suitable recreation land should be reserved before presently vacant land is fully developed.

The preservation of natural corridors can also address a host of water-related issues. The urbanization of the Borough's central area can put strain on the area's hydrologic system by increasing demand for water, changing ground water flow patterns, and increasing surface runoff. The protection of stream courses and wetlands can help protect against this and can

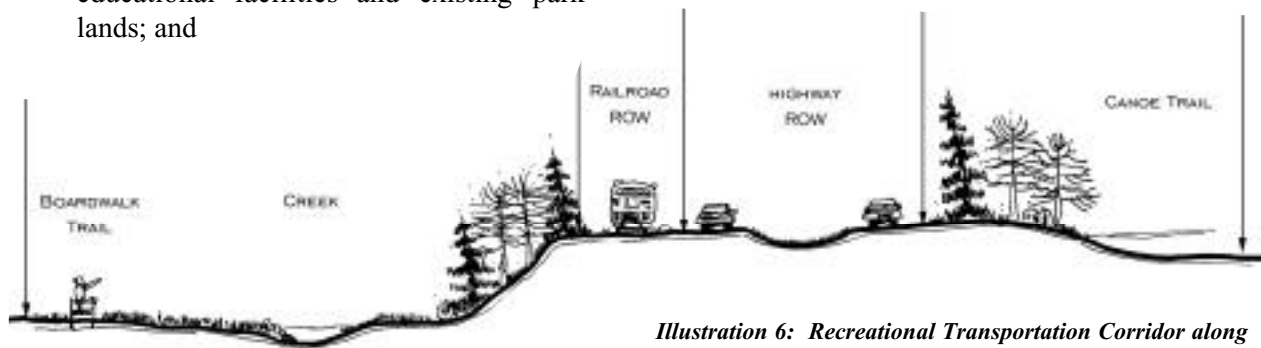


Illustration 6: Recreational Transportation Corridor along railroad and road rights-of-way with natural buffer zones.

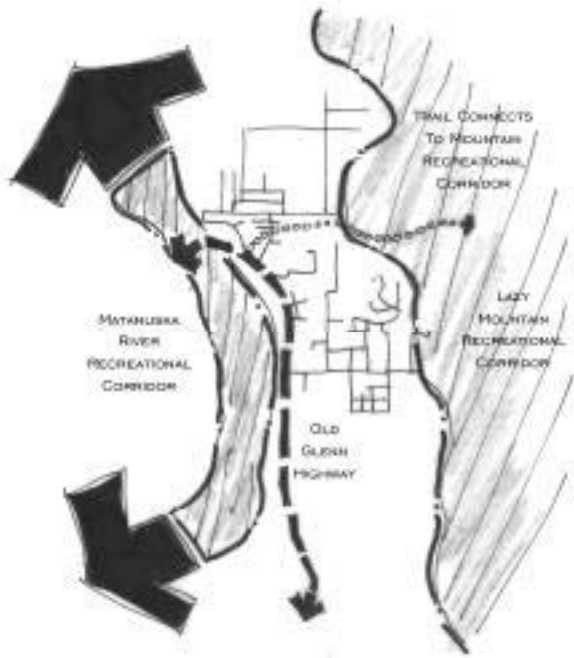


Illustration 7: Natural Corridors concept along Mat-Su River and Lazy Mountain.

conserve water quality, wildlife habitat and protect against flooding. Recreation is often the only appropriate use of stream corridors and wetlands that are unsuitable for other land uses. The Borough should adopt the policy of establishing stream corridors and wetlands as open space with residential development surrounding them.

Additionally, steep slopes and geological hazard areas can be utilized for recreation while at the same time, remaining undeveloped to preserve public safety. The preservation of steep slopes reduces surface erosion, limits hazards from slide-related activities and provides wildlife habitat. The Borough should adopt the policy of establishing corridors along steep slopes at elevations that are not suitable for development.

Finally, recreational and transportation corridors along major roadways and along the

railroad can encourage multi-modal forms of transportation. Trails along existing highways with scenic byway designation expand transportation opportunities and make the system eligible for transportation funding.

Recommendations

An integrated network of parks and public facilities, linked through a system of recreational corridors and open space along the Borough's rivers, streams and steep slopes, should be a high priority. Establishing a system that incorporates these major natural features will provide a wide variety of year-round recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors. These natural areas are also critical to supporting the variety of wildlife that support active hunting and fishing opportunities in the Borough.

The scenic qualities offered by the Borough's natural setting are a tremendous asset for tourism, and also preserve the quality of life that most residents value in the Borough. The Borough could well-serve the future of this asset by establishing Scenic-Byway Corridors along major highways and along the Alaska Railroad right-of-way where gaps appear. These corridors often provide spectacular scenery and at the same time, critical links between population centers, shops, schools and parks for a variety of recreational uses.

A network of natural and transportation corridors for the Borough to establish have been sketched at a conceptual level. Two circular loop trail systems serve as the basis for a physical framework that links parks, schools, neighborhoods and local businesses. These Loops, including a Central Region 75 mile loop and a Borough-wide 150 mile loop are described and sketched on the following two pages in **Illustrations 8 and 9**.

Central Region 75 Mile Loop

The Borough's central area should develop a linked trail system with trail heads by utilizing stream corridors or other natural undevelopable lands in a network of linear parks and/or open spaces. The areas strong physical boundaries as well as its abundant scenic, historical, and cultural features provide the foundation for the community loop. The physical boundaries are dramatic, forming clearly definable edges along all sides. Where gaps appear due to urban development or private ownership every effort should be made to fill these gaps through voluntary and cooperative means.

Key corridors and open spaces include the following:

- Little Susitna River Corridor
- Iron Dog Trail / Big Lake Recreational Corridor
- Knik Arm / Palmer Hay Flats Corridor
- Matanuska River Recreational Corridor
- Aurora Dog Mushing Race Track
- Hatcher Pass Ski Area
- Crevasse Moraine/Kepler Bradley Trail system.
- Historic Farm Site

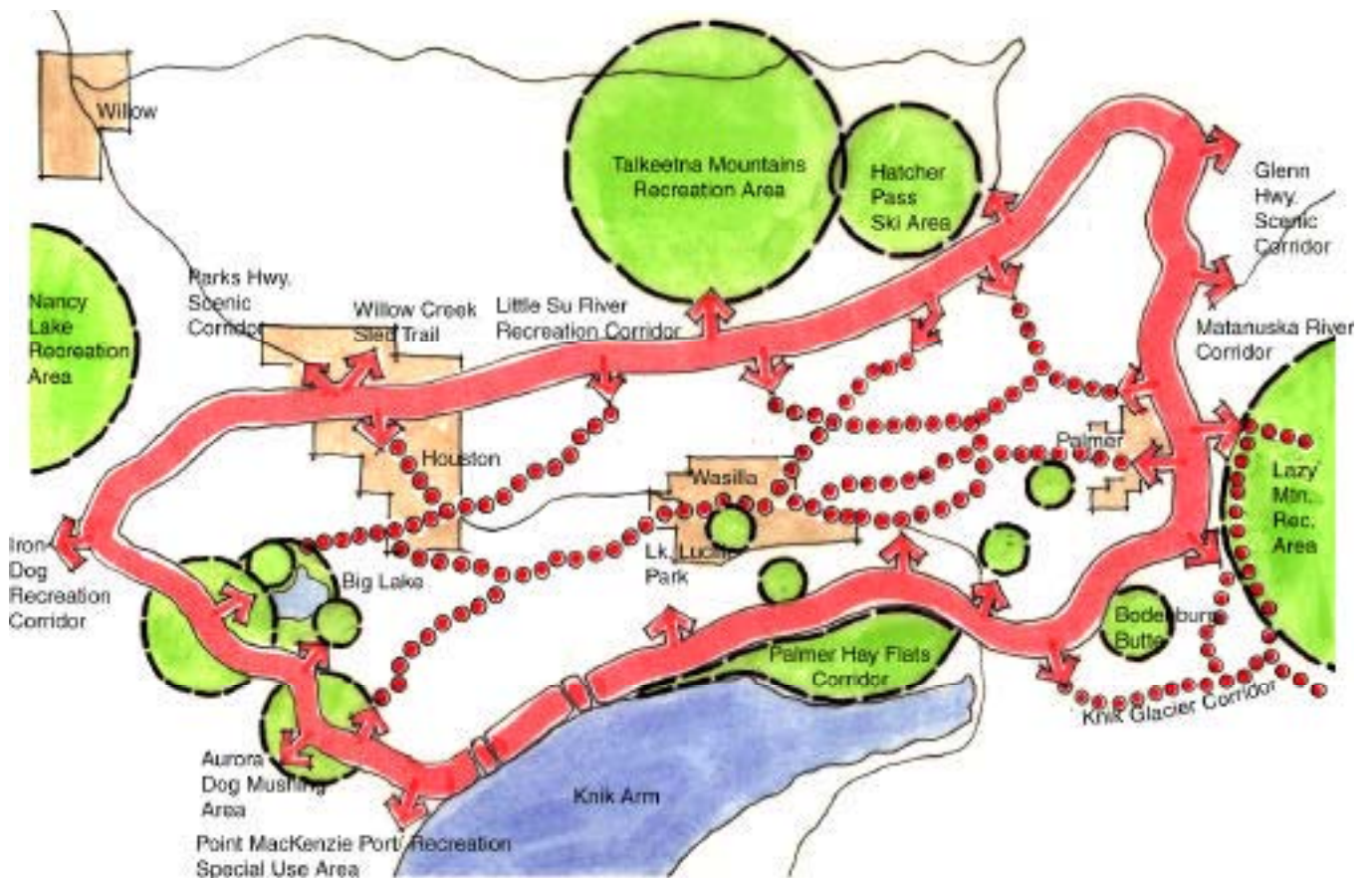


Illustration 8: 75 Mile Inner Loop Corridor System

150 Mile Regional Outer Loop

In the Borough's rural areas, emphasis should be placed on a loop that encompasses trails, both motorized and non-motorized, that connect communities with the larger open-space system of state and federal parks, and major points of interest that are easily accessible to the road system. Trail heads should be located in these key locations. The Borough Recreational Trails Plan should be used to help identify and prioritize such trails. Secondary trails can be used to connect to the loop and to provide alternative forms of travel within and between rural communities, business areas, schools and public facilities. Each individual community will need to define the character and extent of these local networks. Economic opportunities for tourism development related to these networks should

be emphasized.

Key corridors and open space areas include the following:

- Hatcher Pass Scenic Byway / Willow Creek Recreational Corridor
- Susitna River Recreational Corridor
- Iditarod Trail Recreational Corridor
- Kroto Creek, Moose Creek and Deshka Recreational River Corridor
- Parks Highway Scenic Byway
- Petersville Road Scenic Byway
- Lake Creek Recreational Corridor
- Talkeetna Mountains
- Nelchina Public Use Area
- Peters Creek Multiple use subunit
- Lake Creek Multiple use subunit
- Kroto-Kahiltna Multiple use subunit
- Lower Susitna – Yentna public use area
- Hatcher Pass Management Unit
- Susitna Flats State Game Refuge
- Goose Bay State Game Refuge
- Point MacKenzie Industrial Port/Park Site

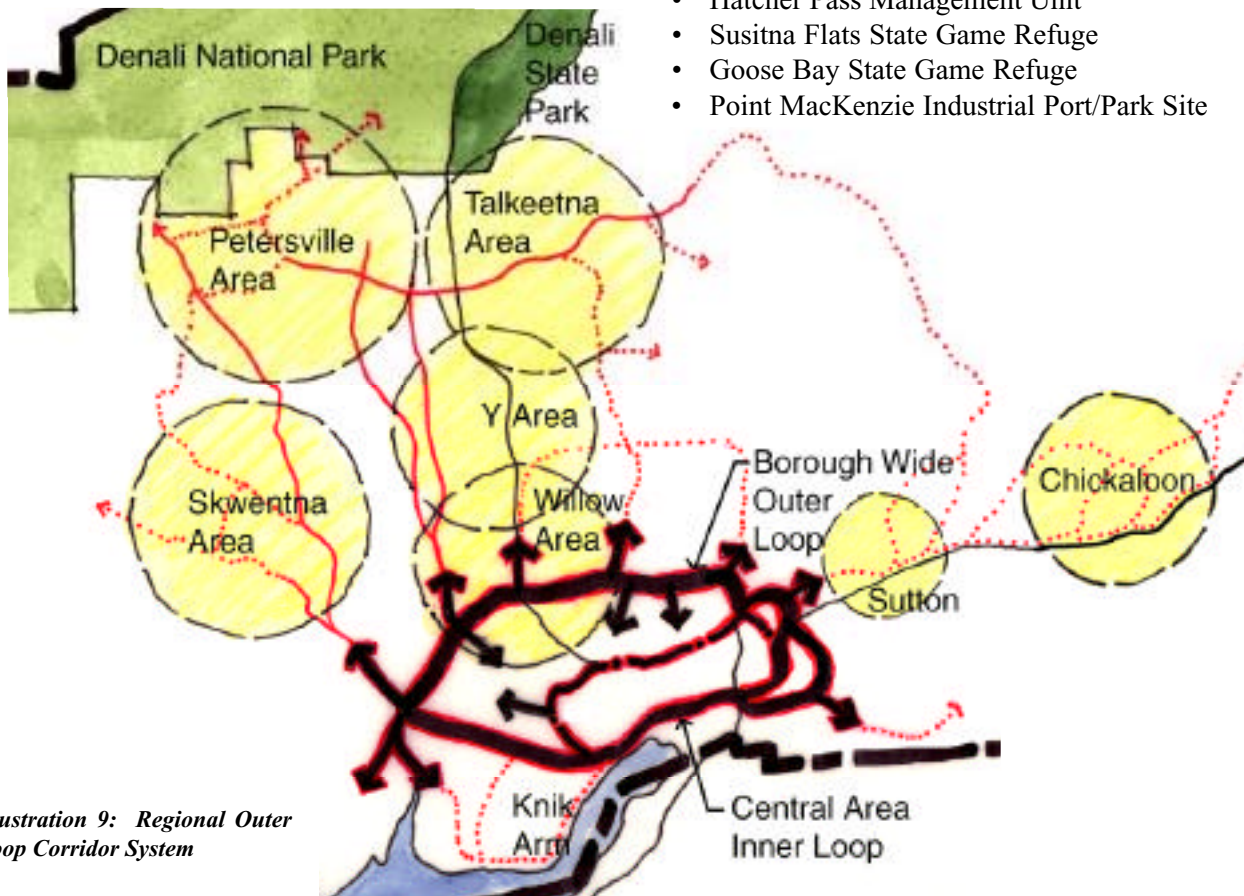


Illustration 9: Regional Outer Loop Corridor System

These recommendations are based on the premise that corridors should be reserved before areas are developed, thereby avoiding costly and difficult acquisitions in built-up areas. Within road corridors, every effort should be made to take advantage of Federal Highway Funds for enhancements as roads are improved and upgraded. New residential developments, parks and natural corridors are ideally planned for at the same time in order to maximize the benefit to new residents. Those areas that have already been settled along existing corridors will require additional time to address, being careful to respect individual property rights and privacy issues, while seeking to establish a well-linked system.

D. Trails

Program Description

Recreation related to trail use is one of the most predominant and popular activities in the Borough. Trails present the opportunity to serve two basic functions in the Borough. First they are a recreational activity that provides residents with the means to enjoy the Borough's scenic outdoors. In addition, trails can also become an integral part of the total transportation system, providing mobility and accessibility by various modes of travel.

Details of the Borough's trails are contained in the Borough-Wide Trails Plan adopted in 2000 and in the Comprehensive Development Plan for Trails adopted in 1984. The two documents, along with the individual community Comprehensive Plans provide a detailed inventory of existing and proposed trail routes.

The trail plans identify trails that serve a variety of modes for traveling throughout the Borough by means other than automobile. The Trails Plan identifies the general location for trail development and the types of uses associated with the development.

Issues

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is a vast community of outdoor enthusiasts who want trails to host variety of summer and winter-time activities. Some uses are compatible on the same trail facility (walking and bicycling), while others are not (horseback, dogsled and snowmobiles). Some trails require special facilities for a specific group of users (tracked trails for cross country skiing, set tracks for dog mushing), while for safety reasons other trails must be located away from heavily populated areas (snowmachine and ATV trails). Because trails serve a variety of users, they vary in design, locational, and aesthetic characteristics. Major issues center on specific route or site

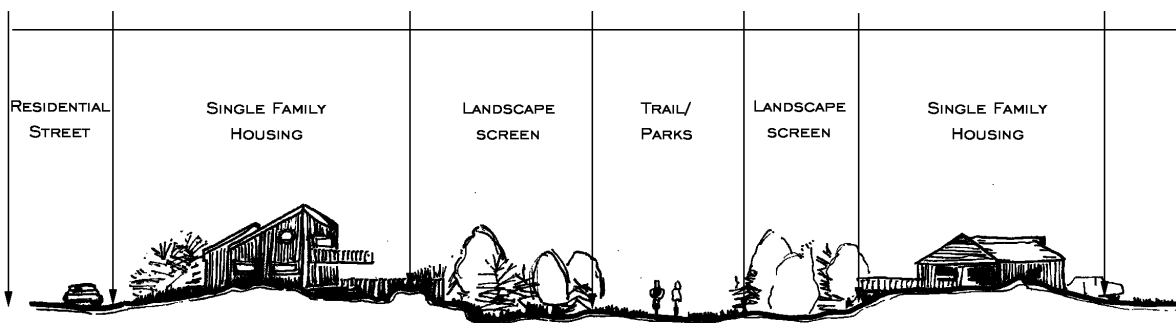


Illustration 10: Recreational Corridor concept between residential areas with links to schools and parks.

selections, impacts on surrounding areas, seasonal use, public/private ownership and the shared or single use of facilities.

A number of existing trails have segments that are located on private lands. Dedicated and recorded trail easements have not been established for most of the trails now used by Borough residents. Sidewalks and bicycle trails are limited and there are no designated equestrian, ATV, or snowmachine routes. New development continues to close off access to traditionally-used trails that cross private land. Access along roadsides for motorized use is becoming less safe as more intersections and road crossings are developed and traffic levels grow.

Recommendations

The Borough-Wide Trails Plan identifies the general location of various trails and the different types of existing uses. It has not

identified a separated trails system for compatible and non-compatible trail uses. Nor has it identified specific design requirements and administrative procedures necessary to implement the proposed non-motorized and motorized trail network. The Borough should develop a formal implementation strategy that identifies both a regional network of non-motorized and motorized trails that are linked through a series of connector systems along recreational corridors to activity areas and desired destination.

Key elements of Borough-Wide Trails Implementation Strategy should focus on the following:

- Cooperation between various local, State and Federal agencies and user groups;
- Selection of specific trail routes that will integrate into a larger trail system;
- Determination of route selection criteria;
- Determination of the most appropriate

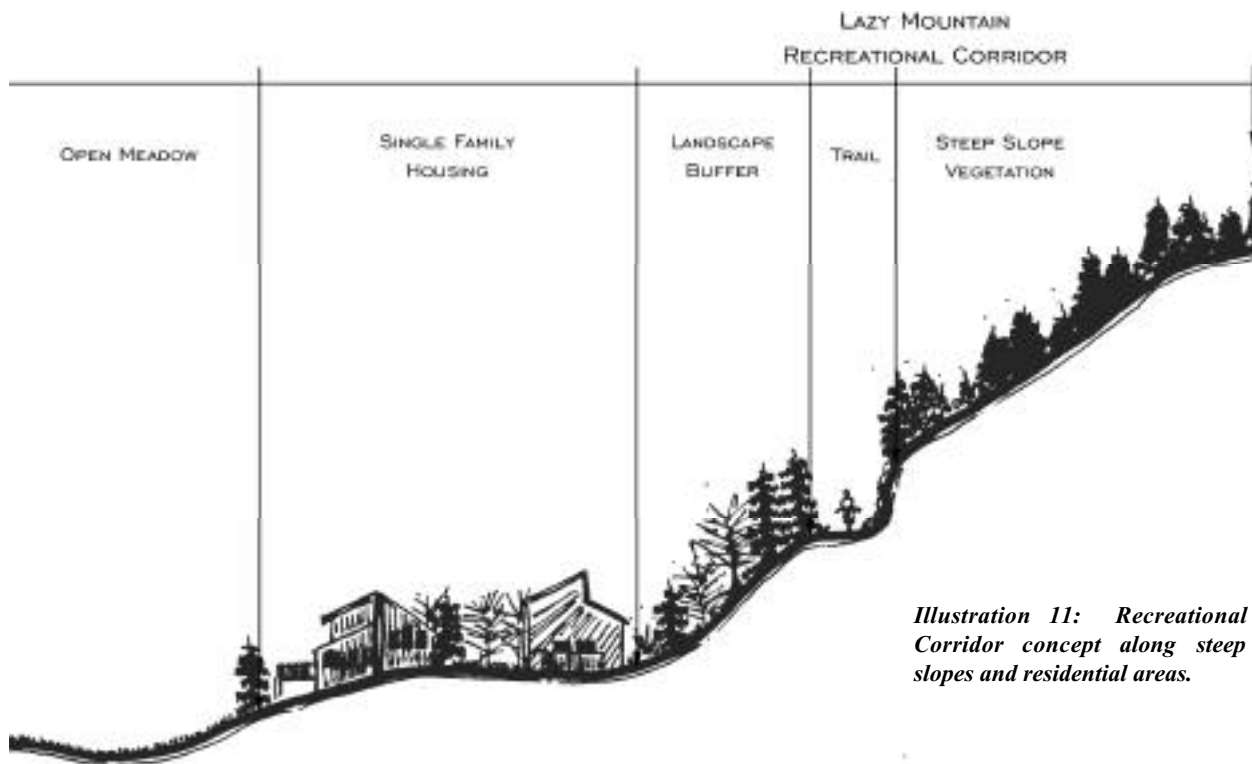


Illustration 11: Recreational Corridor concept along steep slopes and residential areas.

acquisition technique and policies to deal with private ownership issues;

- Identification of suitable and practical trail heads to facilitate and encourage trail use.
- Determination of design guidelines and trail compatibility classifications; and
- Preparation of a financial implementation strategy for trail and trailhead development.

The primary focus of the implementation strategy for trails should be on development of an area-wide recreational corridor and open space system that will link major recreation facilities, schools and neighborhoods together as outlined in the Open Space section of this Plan. Trails that are located along these designated natural corridors should be considered as a high priority and given careful consideration for acquisition and development. Development should begin with the 75 mile Central Area Trail Corridor and with the development of secondary loop trail systems that link the central area with the surrounding rural communities.

Another important component of the Borough Wide Trails Plan is the provision to develop bike trails along transportation corridors including major roads and highways as part of the overall transportation plan. These non-motorized circulation systems are to be incorporated where feasible, as part of highway improvements and major new road projects. It is intended that this general policy will be implemented in the development of multi-modal transportation projects providing access to principal trip generation sites, including schools and parks.

In addition, Borough policy shall also continue to focus on the development of motorized use areas that do not conflict with residential areas and established non-motorized uses. Implementation will require the cooperative

agreement and management of nearby State and Federal lands and rights-of-way. Motorized use areas require large, open spaces that are generally located away from major population centers. Trails linking these use areas will need to be carefully sited to reduce conflicts with residential and non-motorized activities and to insure the safety of trail users and minimize user conflicts.

The Trails Plan should be the basis for identifying and refining specific route locations. The establishment of trail easements and rights-of-way access should be considered the highest priority for those trails found to meet the trail selection criteria. The reservation of easements as part of the subdivision plats should be required for all land developed in the Borough.

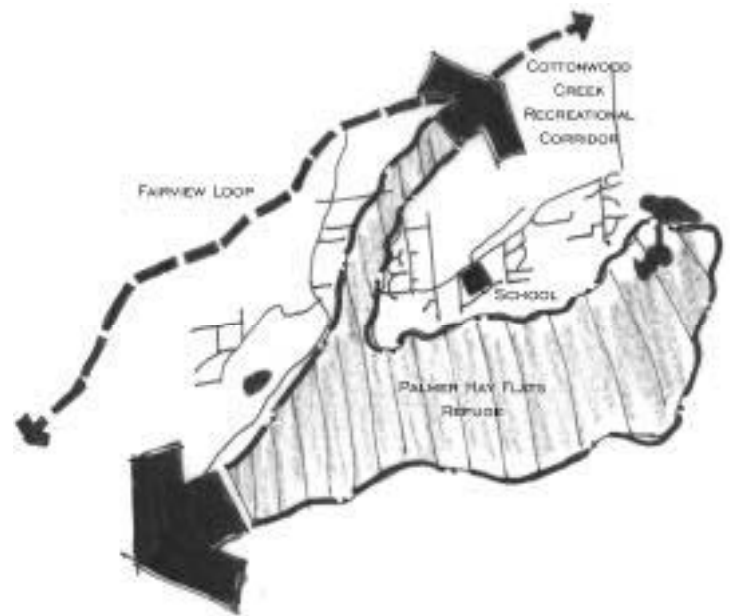


Illustration 12: Palmer Hay flats Corridor Concept.



In addition, the use of appropriate utility and roadway rights-of-way (present and future) should be addressed.

III. Strategic Actions Summary

This Parks, Recreation and Open Space Component of the Borough's Asset Management Plan has addressed how the Borough can optimize its opportunities and best meet residents' recreational needs. Implementation of this Component, consistent with the larger Plan, begins with "Six Strategic Actions".

The Six Strategic Actions presented below outline the first steps for the Borough to take in the near term. These are time sensitive, both in terms of protecting future opportunities, and in terms of developing a successful track-record and foundation for future actions.

- **Strategic Action Number One:** *Adopt the Recreation, Parks and Open Space Framework Plan.*
- **Strategic Action Number Two:** *Implement the Parks Bond \$4.25 million package.*
- **Strategic Action Number Three:** *Establish a joint committee between the Borough and the School District and key*

community members to develop a joint use agreement and funding strategy.

- **Strategic Action Number Four:** *Establish community based volunteer participation in all aspects of the Borough's recreational programs.*
- **Strategic Action Number Five:** *Establish Clear Finance Procedures.*
- **Strategic Action Number Six:** *Hire additional full and part time staff to implement the Plan.*

These Strategic Actions are accomplished through actions within the four categories listed below, which can be likened to the four legs of a table. Efforts need to be made in all of these categories simultaneously, and in a balanced approach in order "for the table to stand".

1. Land Base / Physical Framework. These are actions to secure the land allocations and acquisitions needed to help develop an inter-related network of facilities, parks, trails and corridors.

2. Projects. Actions to develop, improve, upgrade, maintain, plan and design facilities and specific sites.

3. Policy. Plan adoption, development of procedures, regulations and practices.

4. Administration. Building of the Borough Parks and Recreation Department includes identification of sustainable funding, effective use of staff and volunteers, an implementation timeline, and accountability to the public. Through the complimentary, incremental, and balanced implementation of Strategic Actions under each of these categories, the Borough will be able to maximize use of its' available resources for the fullest effect.

Chapter Eight:

Goals & Objectives

8.1 Overview

Eleven goals, expressed and widely endorsed by residents, have been identified as the basis for future action and decision-making regarding the Borough's parks, recreational resources, and open spaces. These goals, are the product of a comprehensive, and on-going public process (see Chapter 3) and are originally based on the seven goals found in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space component of the 1984 Comprehensive Plan.

The eleven community-based goals, presented with specific objectives and actions in this chapter, provide a framework for future Borough efforts. The goals help define objectives and actions for the Borough to work toward over the next twenty years until this Plan is updated.

Because this chapter focuses on ways to fulfill residents' needs and meet broad public goals over the longer-term, the recommendations are designed to be comprehensive, and yet flexible. This chapter is intended to be used as an ever-evolving check list from which to determine appropriate strategic actions and near-term priorities. Borough staff should be able to periodically measure their completed actions against this check list, and also assess how residents' wishes and needs can be translated into objectives and actions.

Implementation of the specific actions and

recommendations presented in this chapter will require incremental strategic planning and follow-through on a one to five year basis. The most immediate actions and priorities (2001 - 2005) for implementation are presented in Chapter Nine's Strategic Action Plan.

8.2 Recommendations

There is strong public support for maintaining and improving Borough parks, recreational facilities, and open spaces in order to protect residents' quality of life. Public support, however, is defined around residents' key concerns and priorities. As stated in the introduction, eleven goals have been identified as the basis for future action and decision-making regarding the Borough's parks, recreational resources and open spaces.

The implementation of each general goal requires the identification of more specific means to achieving success. Therefore, under each goal, specific objectives are defined that are defensible, measurable and achievable. Additionally, concrete actions and steps are defined as the basis for implementation of the objectives. Actions presented are a direct reflection of public goals.

Together, these goals, objectives and actions provide a framework for the Borough to work toward effective implementation of the overall Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. To succeed, specific tasks will need to be identified as individual projects are moved forward. Again, this chapter provides a specific framework for action, and is intended to be used as a check list towards implementation of the overall Plan.

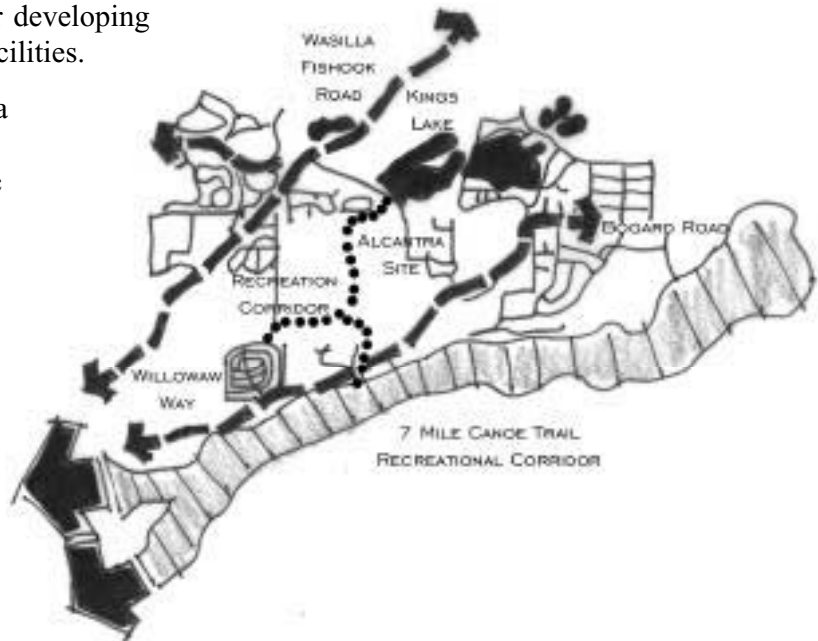
GOAL 1: To provide a framework for adequate open space and indoor and outdoor recreational facilities to meet the needs of Borough residents as well as visitors.

Objective 1.1. Provide for new park development through the wise use of public land.

Action 1.1.1. Adopt the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan as a component of the Mat-Su Borough's Asset Management Plan.

Action 1.1.2. Adopt park standards and design guidelines for parks, facilities, open space and trails that meet the specific safety and performance criteria of user groups, and that provide a clear model for developing local parks and recreational facilities.

Action 1.1.3. Establish criteria that require (not suggest) that development set aside specific lands suitable for recreation based on a formula of total acres developed (size) and units per acre (density). This should be proactively and cooperatively achieved by involving the development community in the process.



Objective 1.2. Expand the use of school facilities to meet local recreation and park needs.

Action 1.2.1. Expand the Community School Program, as appropriate, in rural and suburban locations. While school facilities are primarily for the use of children, during and after school, they also should be utilized to meet community recreation needs.

Action 1.2.2. Utilize elementary school sites to meet the need for neighborhood parks.

Action 1.2.3. Utilize middle school sites to meet some of the need for community athletic fields and parks.



Objective 1.3. Ensure that the maintenance of existing facilities and services are given a high priority.

Action 1.3.1. Adopt a formal policy for on-going maintenance of existing facilities and a funding strategy to ensure implementation.



Goal Number 2: To provide quality recreational opportunities as close to home as possible, that meet locally-defined needs as established through community involvement.

Objective 2.1. Encourage participation at the local level for the planning, management and operation of meeting locally-based recreational needs.

Action 2.1.1. Improve communications between local communities and the Borough about local concerns and needs. Work with Community Councils, the cities, and the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Board to implement.



Objective 2.2. Build a sound volunteer base.

Action 2.2.1. Provide coordination and support to encourage volunteer efforts.

Action 2.2.2. Establish a recognition program and give out awards.

Action 2.2.3. Address issues related to volunteer liability requirements, and concerns such as funding, applicable regulations and technical support.



Goal Number 3. To maximize both winter and summer recreation opportunities by development of facilities that foster year-round use.

Objective 3.1. Provide for continued and expanded indoor recreational opportunities.



Action 3.1.1. Program new indoor facilities, specifically including an ice arena and an indoor swimming pool, in the later years of the Borough's 20-Year Capital Improvement Plan. (Note: The development of community centers, museums, historic preservation and cultural facilities will be addressed under the Public Facilities section of the Asset Management Plan.)

Objective 3.2. Provide upgrades to existing indoor and outdoor recreational facilities.

Action 3.2.1. Upgrade and repair the two indoor swimming pools

Action 3.2.2. Upgrade and repair the Brett Memorial Recreational Facility

Action 3.2.3. Upgrade and repair the Sutton and Talkeetna outdoor skating rinks.

Goal Number 4: To retain the openness, scenic quality and historic character that makes the Matanuska-Susitna Borough a desirable place to live.

Objective 4.1. Provide usable, publicly-owned open space that meets a variety of recreational needs.

Action 4.1.1. Identify future growth areas and reserve available public lands suitable for schools, community facilities, parks and recreational corridor for existing and future needs.

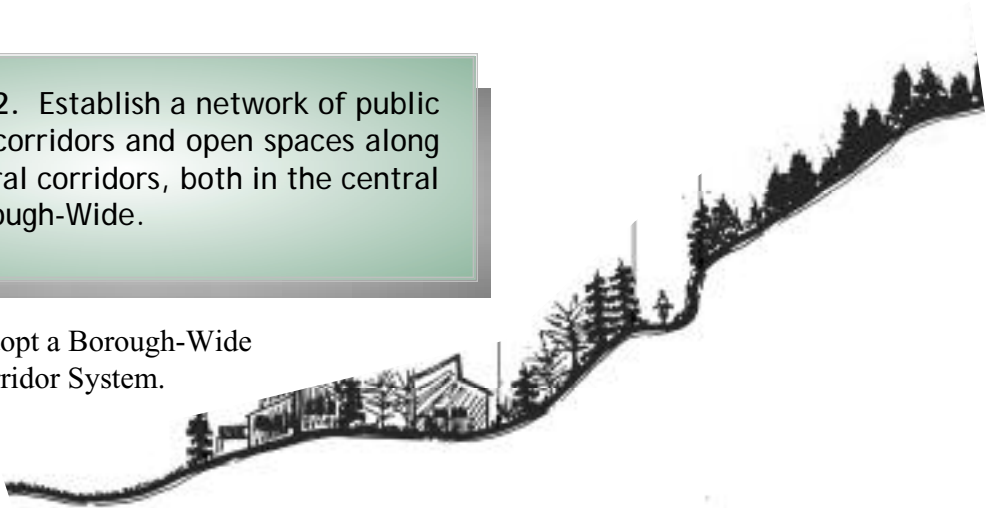
Action 4.1.2. Set aside or reserve public lands that are suitable for public facilities, schools, parks and corridors and adopt as part of an open space system.

Action 4.1.3. Large private land holdings (farms and youth encampment areas) should be considered as part of the open space areas for visual relief as well as recreational opportunities, but only with permission of the land owners.



Objective 4.2. Establish a network of public recreational corridors and open spaces along existing natural corridors, both in the central area and Borough-Wide.

Action 4.2.1. Adopt a Borough-Wide Recreational Corridor System.



Objective 4.3. Preserve and protect visual corridors and areas of unique scenic value.



Action 4.3.1. Inventory outstanding natural areas and designate Scenic Corridors in key locations. Other appropriate measures and community-wide standards for protection and use should be identified.

Action 4.3.2. Support appropriate state, or federal governmental agency actions to designate natural and recreational destinations.

Action 4.3.3. Participate in ADOT&PF and MSBDPW road planning to ensure scenic corridors and trail access are included in design guidelines.

Objective 4.4. Preserve and protect historic and cultural symbols of the Borough including farms and mines.



Action 4.4.1. Establish a cultural/historic land management policy and development practices and standards for Borough-owned lands.

Action 4.4.2. Work with local and national organizations to acquire development rights to appropriate areas.

Goal Number 5. To minimize costs of recreational development through multiple use facility and coordinating uses by various recreational groups.

Objective 5.1. Combine park, recreation and community facilities with school sites in order to best serve residents of the area and reduce duplication of services.

Action 5.1.1. Joint-use agreements will need to be established that insure that schools are open to the public and that funding for operations and facility development is available through the Community Development Department. (Coordinate with Action 1.2.1.)

Action 5.1.2. Inventory all existing playgrounds using the ASTM/CPSC Playground Audit Guide based on ASTM standard F1487 from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Establish an improvement policy that gives a funding priority to schools that have safety and access needs, and second funding priority for new equipment, and improvements to the play experience.



Objective 5.2. Identify effective funding strategies.

Action 5.2.1. Initiate bond funding for Phase One (FY 2002-2004) parks, recreation and open space development.

Action 5.2.2. Develop a parks and recreation funding strategy for upgrades to existing playground facilities based on safety needs, accessibility and community needs.

Action 5.2.3. Establish annual budget procedures based on delivery of services.

Goal Number 6. To promote economic opportunities through recreational development that benefits both residents and visitors to the Borough.

Objective 6.1. Promote and encourage tourism activities as primarily the private sector's responsibility. The Borough should continue to encourage the tourist industry through the development of high quality recreational facilities for local residents that can be enjoyed by visitors.



Action 6.1.1. Provide support for local organizations that seek to promote year-round recreation opportunities.

Action 6.1.2. Develop tournament quality athletic fields.

Action 6.1.3. Establish regional multi-use areas.

Action 6.1.4. Establish a linked regional trail system around the central area with connections to rural communities and recreational sites.

Action 6.1.5. Combine trailheads and waysides. Joint trailheads / waysides should be identified and developed along the Glenn and Parks Highways and should connect with trails identified in the Borough Trails Plan.

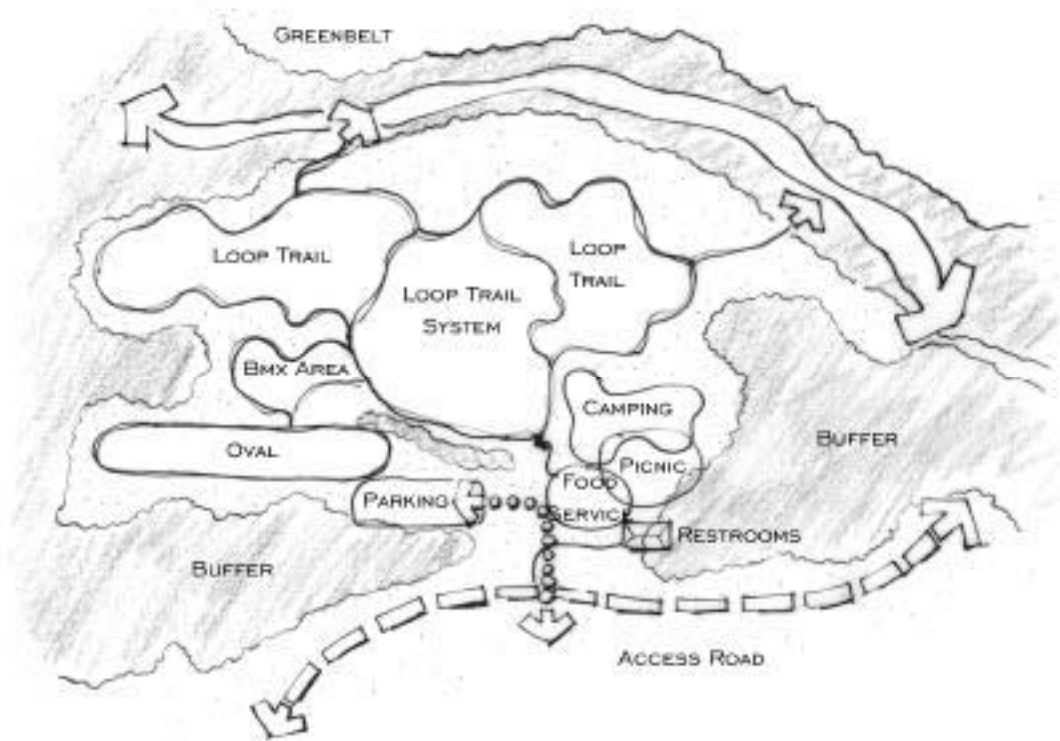
Action 6.1.6. Establish a Borough-wide coordinated signage and wayfinding system.



Objective 6.2. Promote private and public partnerships in the development and operation of recreation facilities.

Action 6.2.1. The Borough should encourage the development of private local businesses within and around athletic and regional park areas that promote lodging, camping, food, beverage and related services.

Action 6.2.2. Where decision-making is required, the Borough should balance the economic opportunities with the concerns of local residents.



Goal Number 7. To create a non-motorized oriented system of parks and recreational corridors linking open spaces and residential neighborhoods, and existing and proposed parklands and school sites.

Objective 7.1. Establish connections between parks, especially regional and community/athletic parks, along an open space corridor system.

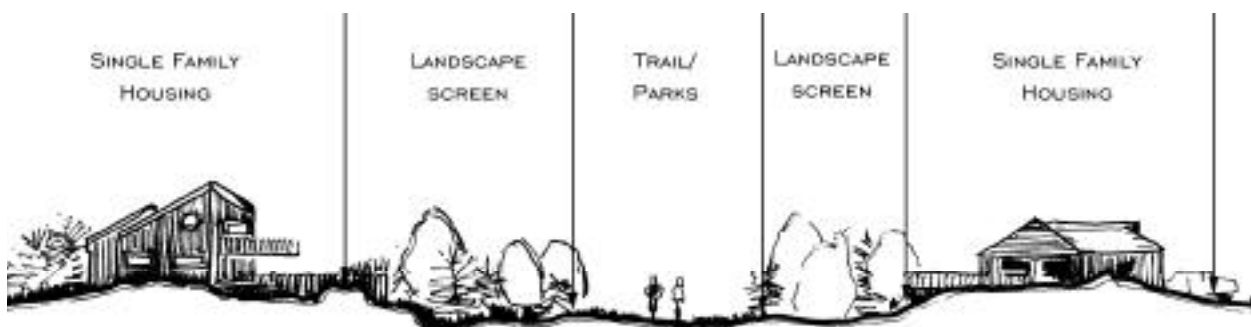
Action 7.1.1. Adopt a Borough-Wide Recreational Corridor System.

Action 7.1.2. Establish land disposal and development practices for Borough-owned land and seek to promote and protect linkages as part of the asset management plan.

Objective 7.2. Encourage development and implementation of the Borough-Wide Recreational Trails Plan.

Action 7.2.1. Encourage the development of paved separated trails along Borough roads.

Action 7.2.2. Encourage the establishment of trail corridors and greenways.



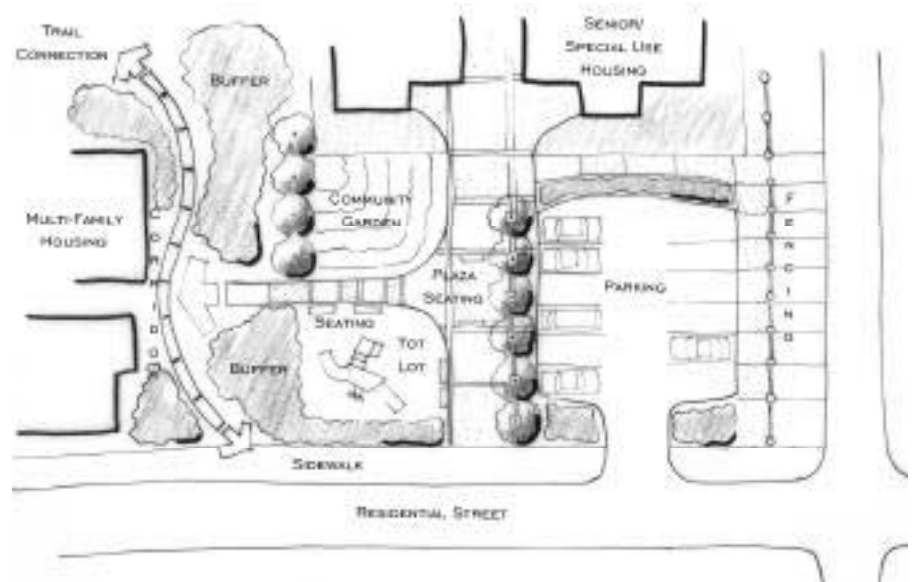
Goal Number 8. To establish a system of parks, from the neighborhood to regional level, to serve all segments of the Borough.

Objective 8.1. Provide local play areas only in areas of high-residential density greater than 8 units per acre.

Action 8.1.1. It is recommended that the Borough not accept any additional small (2 acres or less) parcels of land for park use.

Action 8.1.2. Where local play areas do exist the Borough should upgrade facilities to meet safety and access standards.

Action 8.1.3. Identify multi-family housing and senior housing areas with a density of greater than 8 units per acre in need of playground and open space amenities. New development in these areas should require the inclusion of suitable land for local play areas as part of the cost of development, while the Borough should fund the construction and maintenance of park facilities.



Objective 8.2. Meet the present need for neighborhood parks through adoption of the neighborhood-park school concept. The existing elementary school sites will meet local recreation needs with appropriate access and upgrades.

Action 8.2.1. Joint use agreements need to be established that insure the schools are open to the public and that funding for operations and facility development is through the Community Development Department.

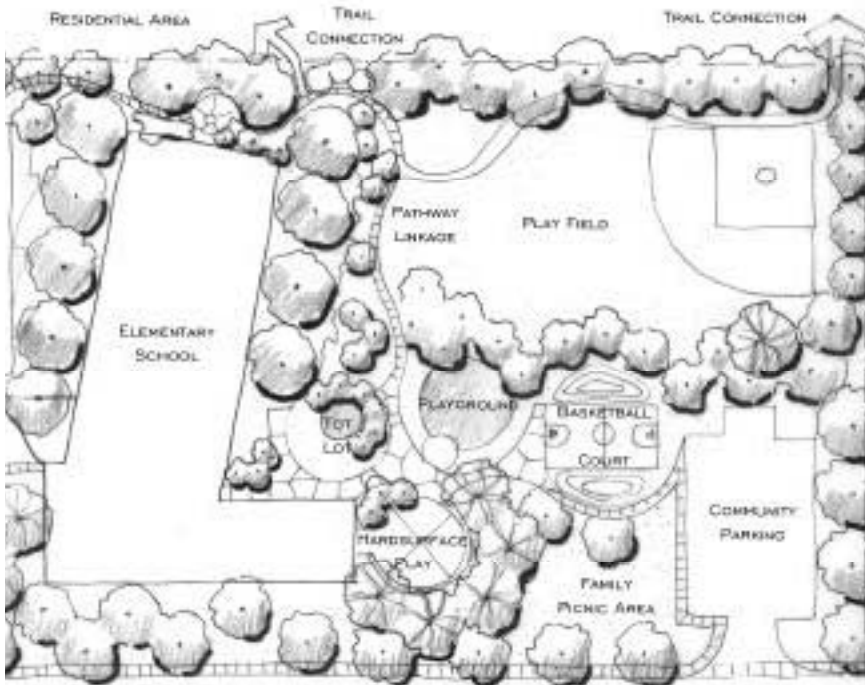
Action 8.2.2. Inventory all existing playgrounds and establish an improvement policy.

Action 8.2.3. Establish a funding strategy with the school district and implement upgrades.

Action 8.2.4. Future school sites should be planned to meet increased neighborhood park and recreation needs as the population grows and new schools are needed.



Action 8.2.5. The Borough should develop new neighborhood parks only where density exceeds 2 dwelling units per acre and where existing school sites can not meet this need. These sites should be developed within a 5 mile radius of the population to be served.



Objective 8.3. Meet the need for organized recreational activities and community-wide events through the development of community and athletic parks. Facilities should include tournament quality athletic complexes that provide for a mix of recreational facilities including 8-12 athletic fields, playgrounds, picnic areas, parking, restrooms, trails and camping.

Action 8.3.1. The Borough should continue to develop existing community/athletic park sites by the year 2020 to meet local recreation demands.

- (a) Continue development of the Alcantra Athletic Complex and Park facilities.
- (b) Continue development of the Houston Middle School and High School athletic facilities for public use.

Action 8.3.2. The Borough should develop new community/athletic park sites by the year 2020 to meet local recreation demands.

- (a) Encourage development of existing community/athletic parks (see 10.3)
- (b) Begin site selection process for new facilities in the Central Area, and specifically in Palmer and Big Lake.

Action 8.3.3. The middle school sites should be utilized to meet a portion of the athletic field needs with appropriate upgrades to the existing facilities.

- (a) Assist local cities and communities to continue to develop locally owned facilities such as Bumpus Ballfields, Smith Fields and Talkeetna Softball Field.



Objective 8.4. The Borough should provide for additional regional park land that can be developed to meet needs for local recreation that are not currently being met by State Parks.

Action 8.4.1. The Borough should continue to make improvements and manage the three existing Regional Parks now under their ownership including; Matanuska River Park, Lake Lucille Park and Little Susitna River Campground.

Action 8.4.2. Establish new regional parks that focus on special user groups that are then linked to the Borough's corridor and open space system.

(a) Establish a regional park around the existing Aurora Dog Mushing Race Track just south of Big Lake.

(b) Establish a regional park around the proposed Hatcher Pass Ski Area with the proposed downhill ski area and winter recreation facilities.

(c) Establish a regional park around the existing Crevasse Moraine Trail system with links to the university and Kepler Bradley State Parks utilizing State lands where appropriate. Work to resolve issues related to the expansion of the borough land fill.

(d) Identify future potential areas for development of outdoor education, cross-country skiing, equestrian, snow machine, ATV and other non motorized or motorized uses.



Goal Number 9. To provide for implementation of the Borough-Wide Recreational Trail Plan.

Objective 9.1. The Borough should develop an implementation strategy that continues to update the Borough-Wide Recreational Trails Plan, and that identifies a regional trail system that begins to provide for critical links along the identified Open Space corridor.

Action 9.1.1. Encourage the development of a regional trail network that includes a central area loop and has Borough-Wide connections to rural loops.

(a) Combine the 1984 and 2000 Borough Wide Recreational Trails plan into a single plan and digitized map. Include CIP and TRAAK projects as well as community plans.

(b) Provide a full-time Trails Coordinator position to implement trail adoption, development and management.

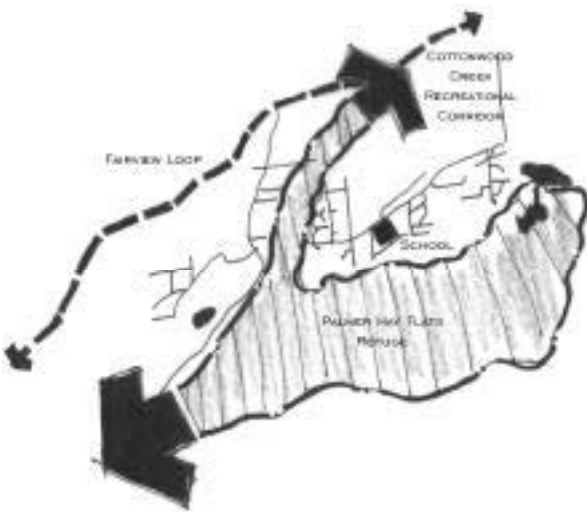
(c) Select specific trail routes that will integrate into a larger trail system by using an established route selection criteria.

(d) Establish acquisition technique for each segment of trail.

Action 9.1.2. Prepare a financial implementation strategy that will assist the Borough in obtaining the necessary funds to implement the plan.

Action 9.1.3. Seek the cooperation of local, State and Federal agencies that provide recreation in the Borough.

Action 9.1.4. Encourage support for the plan by the public and property owners.



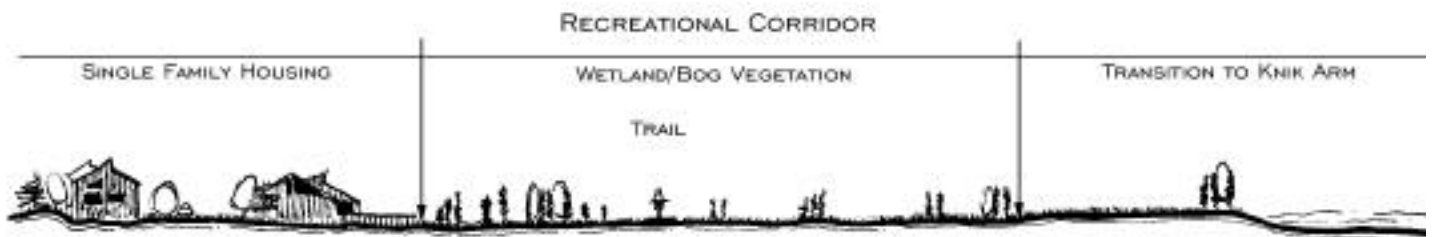
Objective 9.2. To establish a Borough-Wide system of trails that permit travel by several means other than automobile.

Action 9.2.1. Emphasis should be placed on construction of multiple-use paved and non-paved trails alongside many of the area's collector and arterial routes to establish a basic trail network. This should largely be done in connection with improvements to roads.

- (a) Generally, footpaths and pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails should become cross-country ski trails in the winter.
- (b) A conservative approach should be taken to multiple use of trails that allows pedestrians and bicycles or pedestrians and horses to share trails, but that disallows motorized and non-motorized shared use. This will be safer, expose the Borough to fewer liability issues, and will be easier to administer.
- (c) The Borough Parks, Recreation and Trails Advisory Board, in conjunction with the Borough Transportation Advisory Board, should pursue a fair and appropriate trails designation process with representatives of all motorized and non-motorized user groups, neighborhood representatives and community councils.
- (d) A Borough wide trail classification system should be developed. A single trail classification will not meet the diversity of the users and the multiple access issues required for all types of trails. There is a wide variety of user groups and modes of transportation available.
- (e) Encourage the ongoing efforts of the Borough to address trail conflict issues, address trail ownership, acquisition and development.
- (f) Encourage the development of a multi-use trails system so that a wide spectrum of trail user needs are met.
- (g) Encourage safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities between residences, schools and recreation areas through new routes.

Action 9.2.2. Pedestrian and other non-vehicular access should be provided through subdivisions, linking up where possible to adjacent subdivisions, stream corridors, or existing trails.

Action 9.2.3. Trails identified in the Recreational Trails Plan should be protected with appropriate easements or rights-of-way and designated uses.



Objective 9.3. To provide separate use areas for motorized and non-motorized recreational activities.



Action 9.3.1. Identify the potential for regional activity centers for non-motorized and motorized recreation activity use. Activity centers for motorized use include winter snowmachine and summer ATV trails, motocross tracks, oval summer and winter race area and other appropriate commercial related facilities. The areas should be located away from populated areas to avoid noise conflicts but within reasonable driving distances and linked by a network of motorized trails.

(a) The Borough needs to establish site selection criteria and other related issues connected with establishing motorized and non-motorized recreation facilities in the Borough.



(b) Identify potential areas suitable for outdoor education, hiking, cross country skiing, and other compatible non-motorized use.

(c) Work with the Alaska State Fair board to identify potential recreational opportunities to share use of some facilities, particularly for dog and equestrian activities.

Goal Number 10. To provide for the continual upgrade and development of indoor and outdoor facilities to serve all segments of the Borough.

Objective 10.1. Make the maintenance of existing facilities and services the highest priority of the Borough.

Action 10.1.1. Adopt a formal policy for ongoing maintenance of existing facilities and a funding strategy to ensure implementation and to hire seasonal staffing as required.

Objective 10.2. Expand the Community School Program, as appropriate, in rural and suburban locations. While school facilities are primarily for the use of children during and after school, they should also be utilized to meet community recreation needs. Special consideration should be given in cases where local needs for indoor recreational facilities (e.g., for basketball, volleyball, soccer, and exercise) can not be met economically using any other method.

Action 10.2.1. A joint-use agreement between the Borough School District and the Borough should be developed, and adequate funding secured that allows the Community Development Department to run and staff Community School programs as the opportunity and need arise.



Objective 10.3. Provide for expanded tournament quality athletic fields by consolidating heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities at larger and fewer sites strategically located.



Action 10.3.1. Continue to implement the Bumpus Recreation Area Master Plan to include development of a total of 8-10 additional fields for soccer, little league baseball, football, rugby, basketball and tennis.

Action 10.3.2. Continue expansion of the Smith Recreation Area with 4 additional fields.

Action 10.3.3. Continue development of new facilities associated with Alcantra, Teeland Middle School, and Ron Larson

Elementary School. This project will include the construction of four regulation size soccer fields, four little league baseball fields, four tennis courts, two basketball courts, picnic areas, playground areas, storage, concession and restroom facilities, extension of the paved trail system and two parking lots for a total capacity of 170 vehicles.

Action 10.3.4. Identify a potential new site in Big Lake for new Little League, softball and soccer fields, possibly associated with the new library site or the existing elementary school site.

Action 10.3.5. Identify new sites to meet Palmer's need for additional multi-use athletic fields to replace or supplement the private Hay Fields that are now used for soccer. Provide upgrades to Sherrod softball fields and/or identify a replacement softball field, possibly off Bogard Road near Alcantra and/or conversion of Sherrod to Little League or youth softball.

Action 10.3.6. Continue to develop existing and new facilities at Houston High School and Middle School.

Objective 10.4. As the population grows, a new pool should be given consideration. The need for a new pool must be weighed against the market demand to support the additional costs.

Action 10.4.1. A new indoor swimming pool should be programmed in the later years of the Borough's 20-year Capital Improvement Plan. The likely location is the northern region, possible at the Houston High School.

Objective 10.5. Meet the community need for additional indoor ice skating facilities.

Action 10.5.1. Provide repairs and code upgrades to the existing Brett Memorial Recreational Facility.

Action 10.5.2. Work with existing communities, especially Sutton and Talkeetna to upgrade outside ice skating facilities.

Action 10.5.3. Coordinate with the cities of Palmer and Wasilla to identify potential sites and build new ice skating facilities.

Objective 10.6. The need for additional rifle ranges can continue to be met through private clubs with the Borough providing land for non-profit development.

Action 10.6.1. Provide assistance to organizations to develop ranges.

Action 10.6.2. Promote rifle safety programs to encourage safe use of firearms for recreational use.

Recreational Corridors and Open Space

Goal Number 11. To establish an integrated open space and corridor system throughout the borough based upon existing open space patterns, and lands which are ecologically valuable and least suitable for development for the following purposes:

- a. *To accommodate trails and recreation facilities;*
- b. *To protect streams and natural areas;*
- c. *To provide public access to lakes, streams and the coast line;*
- d. *To provide buffers between residential areas and incompatible land uses;*
- e. *To provide linkage between residential areas, parks, schools and major areas of public activity;*
- f. *To protect wetlands and other ecologically sensitive areas not suitable for development.*

Objective 11.1. Provide for directed growth by establishing a system of Recreational Corridors and an open space system along natural geographical features and trail corridors along road and rail rights-of-way.

Action 11.1.1. Trails should be located within a larger open space system that connects communities, state and federal parks, major points of interest and are easily accessible to the road system.

Action 11.1.2. The development of linear parks or recreational corridors provides an alternative for a non-roadway trail system that links the major communities with schools and major recreation facilities.

Action 11.1.3. Where gaps appear due to urban development or private ownership, every effort should be made to fill these gaps through the purchase of right-of-way, land trades or letters of agreement.

Objective 11.2. To dedicate land for parks and open space, protect fragile land, protect against natural hazards such as floods or slides, and protect water quality.



Action 11.2.1. Utilize stream corridors or other natural undevelopable land to create a linked network of linear parks and/or open space areas.

- (a) Establish Corridors along the major streams and rivers in the area including the Matanuska River, Knik River, Little Susitna River, Wasilla Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Lucille Creek and Meadow Creek.

Action 11.2.2. Protect outstanding and appropriate natural areas.

Action 11.2.3. Corridors should be provided by subdividers affected by non-vehicular access, identified trail, stream or shoreline requirements.

Action 11.2.4. Preserve existing recreational access by formalizing and dedicating rights-of-way where possible in all parts of the Borough.

Objective 11.3. Identify additional public lands along the proposed recreational corridors, and open space system, to meet future expansion needs for travel to public facilities, schools, parks and recreation facilities.

Action 11.3.1. Establish Recreational Corridors along the major streams and rivers in the area.

Action 11.3.2. Establish connections and protection policies for the Crevasse Moraine trail network and link to the university and Kepler Bradley State Park.

Action 11.3.3. Establish open space preserves along the surrounding ranges of the Talkeetna Mountains and the Chugach Mountains where necessary. Include trailhead access to existing trails and develop year round recreational potential of the areas.



Objective 11.4. Maintain and improve public access to lakes, streams and rivers.

Action 11.4.1. Establish links to Bodenbug Butte to Recreational Corridors and work to protect the area for future access.

Action 11.4.2. Establish trail links to the Knik Glacier.

Action 11.4.3. Work to establish permanent dedicated trail easements that connect the areas unique open space and regional parks to schools and neighborhoods.

Action 11.4.4. Develop new trail heads and public access to public lands.

Action 11.4.5. In conjunction with local land owners and land managers, develop specific action plans for lake and stream access. They are often destination points that require both active and passive management.

8.3 Conclusion

Borough residents place a high value on the open spaces, spectacular views, recreational areas and facilities, trails, the community parks, fields and playgrounds that enhance their life. Residents' freedom of access to a wide variety of recreational activities, a rural lifestyle, and local community activities characterize why many people choose to live in the Borough. The goals, objectives and actions presented above will help ensure that future generations have these same opportunities and benefits, and that the Borough will cost-effectively meet residents' parks, recreation and open space needs of the future.

The challenge facing the Borough is that of where to begin implementation, given the breadth and magnitude of the goals, objectives and overlap of the actions presented above. In order to achieve this twenty-year plan, the Borough needs to begin taking the right steps at the right time, and maximize its resources. For instance, given growth rates in the Borough, land allocations and acquisitions conducted now, will be easier than if done when pressures and costs on land and other resources are higher. Also, in order to meet future facility needs, the Borough needs to keep up with current needs and find creative solutions (such as using local schools as community recreational facilities).

Following are "Guiding Principals for Action" (**Table 8-1**), and "Development Strategies" (**Table 8-2**) that help summarize the spirit, if not the letter of the recommendations put forth in this Plan. These should be kept in mind, and used in reference with the Strategic Action Plan (2001-2005) to keep the Borough mindful of what it is striving to accomplish.

Table 8-1. Guiding Principles for Borough Action

Provide for the wise use of Borough owned land. The Borough must utilize our land assets to promote the community health and economic well being through adoption of a sound land disposal policy that recognizes that certain lands are best suited for parks, recreation and open space.

Promote public parks, recreation and open space as local community building blocks. Park recreation areas and schools are some of the most valuable assets the Borough has in building local community identity. Local control over the direction and management of these facilities must be encouraged.

Recognize and accommodate the regional diversity of the Borough. The large geographic dispersal of the population presents challenges for the equitable delivery of recreational services and facilities. Locally-based planning along with a sound volunteer base promotes regional diversity while allowing for reasonable growth.

Promote the multiple use of facilities. One of the Boroughs chief advantages is the basic infrastructure provided in the quality schools strategically located close to population centers. These schools represent a substantial investment of community assets and should be utilized beyond the school day to meet local recreation needs for outdoor parks and indoor facilities.

Promote economic opportunities through sound development practices. To accommodate the rapid population growth, multiple forms of funding must be developed that include both taxes, bonding, grants, private/public partnerships and user fees.

Guiding Principles (continued)

Promote an integrated system of parks, public facilities, schools and neighborhoods linked by trails and corridors. The greatest strength of the Borough is the immediate access to vast expanses of wilderness and open space. The ability to access these areas, and to protect the most ecologically valuable lands in the process will preserve the quality of life enjoyed by so many in the Borough.

Encourage a variety of modes and forms of transportation. Trails and access to the outdoors is one of the highest priorities for many of the Borough residents. Providing for multiple forms of transportation other than by automobile, including non-motorized and motorized use, should address safety issues and local concerns while balancing the needs of recreational users.



Table 8-2. Mat-Su Parks, Recreation & Open Space Development Strategies

Maintain Existing Facilities and Services:

Maintenance of existing facilities and programs must be the Borough's highest priority.

Promote Community Involvement: Participation at the local level is one of the key elements desired by residents and can significantly improve outcomes.

Park-school Combinations: The park-school concept should serve as the basis for a comprehensive system of community and neighborhood parks, particularly in rural areas.

Community Schools: The existing system of Community Schools should be expanded, especially in the rural areas.

Community Parks and Athletic Complexes: The community/athletic park concept should serve as the model for developing multi-field complexes to meet organized athletic and local needs.

New Regional Park Development: The Borough should concentrate on developing new regional parks which serve user groups not now served by State or Federal Parks (i.e., equestrians).

Indoor Recreation: The focus should be on maintaining existing service levels and on providing for additional ice skating facilities.

Establish Corridors: The Borough should establish a network of community wide corridors and open spaces along existing natural corridors.

Regional Trail Network: The Borough should develop an implementation strategy for the Borough Wide Trails Plan that identifies a regional trail system and begin to provide for critical links along the identified Open Space Corridors.

Promote Tourism: The private sector should be the leader on tourism development, however, the Borough should continue to encourage the tourism industry to participate in the expansion of summer and winter recreational opportunities for tourists.

Chapter Nine: Strategic Action Plan

9.1 Overview

Matanuska-Susitna Borough's parks, recreation and open space system can preserve community values and protect residents' quality of life. It can specifically provide space for a range of recreational and cultural activities, and retain a dimension of the natural environment within community and regional landscapes. Securing the future of this system becomes increasingly important as population growth puts pressures on finite amounts of land and increases the need for recreational facilities.

This chapter identifies the strategic actions the Borough should take in the next five years to begin the successful implementation of this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan in order to ensure that the overall system can meet the stated goals of the residents well into the future. Full implementation, however, is a major undertaking. The last time the Borough addressed these comprehensive issues was in the 1984 Plan when the population was under 30,000 and dispersed throughout the region. Today, rapid growth concentrated in the central area, an expanding population, and the failure to develop the facilities to keep up with past growth has left the Borough in a position of catching up to meet resident's needs.

Fortunately, the Borough is in a strong position to begin this task. The strong public support voiced by a wide cross-section of



residents for the 2000 Parks and Recreation Bond package for upgrades and new development in the amount of \$4,250,000 are a solid basis for immediate action. It is with this mandate that the Borough can begin to implement this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. The following "Strategic Action Plan" outlines a strategic and realistic approach to beginning implementation of the first phase (5 years) of the Plan. This Strategic Action Plan should be updated as necessary every five years in order for the Borough to continue moving toward full implementation, as outlined in Chapter 8.

9.2 Strategic Actions

Steps for the Borough to take in the next five years are critical, both in terms of protecting future opportunities, and in terms of developing a successful track-record and foundation for future action. The "Seven Strategic Actions" presented in this Chapter

Table 9-1. Strategic Actions

One - Adopt the Recreation, Parks and Open Space Framework Plan

Two - Implement the Parks Bond \$4.25 million package.

Three - Establish a joint committee between the Borough and the School District and key community members to develop a joint-use agreement and funding strategy.

Four - Establish community-based volunteer participation in all aspects of the Borough's recreational programs.

Five - Finance the implementation of the plan on a sustainable basis.

Six - Staff to implement the plan.

Seven - Adopt a Code of Ordinance for management of recreation areas.

(see **Table 9-1**) are directly taken from the comprehensive recommendations presented in Chapter 8. What makes specific actions "strategic" is the fact that they meet a number of criteria that makes their implementation more feasible and/or necessary in the next five years, including:

- Attracts broad community support
- Are sound, defensible and achievable
- Meet measurable goals, objectives and have clearly definable milestones
- Can be accomplished with available manpower and funding

Strategic Actions are presented within four categories listed below, which can be likened to

the four legs of a table. Efforts need to be made in all of these categories simultaneously, and in a balanced approach in order "for the table to stand".

1. Land Base / Physical Framework.

These are actions to secure the land allocations and acquisitions needed to help develop an inter-related network of facilities, parks, trails and corridors.

2. Projects. Actions to develop, improve, upgrade, maintain, plan and design facilities and specific sites.

3. Policy. Plan adoption, development of procedures, regulations and practices.

4. Administration. Build the Boroughs' Parks and Recreation Division, including identification of sustainable funding, effective use of staff and volunteers, an implementation timeline, and accountability to the public.

Through the complementary, incremental, and balanced implementation of Strategic Actions under each of these categories, the Borough will be able to maximize use of the available resources for the fullest effect.

9.3 Land Base / Physical Framework

In order to achieve an integrated system of parks, public facilities, schools, and neighborhoods linked by trails and recreational corridors, a first priority of the Borough must be to designate a general direction in terms of acquisition, development and related land use decision-making. A "Physical Framework" for this system is presented in two conceptual maps found after the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Component of the Asset Management Plan, or found in Appendix E:

- Borough-Wide Parks, Recreation and Open Space Physical Framework (**Map 13**)
- Central Area Parks, Recreation and Open Space Physical Framework (**Map 14**)

Planning and securing specific corridors that make this framework possible is a key priority before growth limits the options. The first step is to obtain public feedback, and begin the process of securing the support necessary for the acquisition and transfer of land. Moreover, neither this plan nor the maps are meant to specifically exclude

Table 9-2. Borough Land Allocations & Acquisition Criteria

Parks

Whether serving neighborhoods or greater segments of population, the acreage allocations for parks should be directly related to the population of an area. Therefore, Borough allocations and acquisitions are planned to meet location-specific, quantifiable needs on an equitable basis.

Open Space

Open space allocations (trails, recreational corridors, campgrounds, etc.) are based on environmental, social and recreational values which are not necessarily tied to population. Acquisition will vary from retention of existing Borough assets, to transfer of State or Federal lands, or to fee simple purchase to dedication of easements through the platting process. Emphasis will be made on the voluntary and cooperative transfer of parks, recreation, open space and trails to the Parks and Open Space system.

compatible uses in areas identified as parks and open space, nor do they constitute a dedication of these areas for park use as specified in the Borough Charter.

Applicable Strategic Action:

Adopt the Recreation, Parks and Open Space Framework Plan (Number One)

Adoption of an integrated network of parks and public facilities linked through a system of recreational corridors and open space along the Borough's rivers, streams, steep slopes and transportation corridors should be one of the highest priorities for the Borough. This network of natural and transportation corridors can begin to form the physical framework for linking parks, schools, neighborhoods and shops together. The concept is built around two circular loop trail systems that includes a Central Region 75 mile loop and a Borough-wide 150 mile loop.

Central Region 75 Mile Loop

Key recreational corridors and open spaces include some of the following:

- Little Susitna River Corridor
- Iron Dog Trail / Big Lake Recreational

Corridor, Aurora Dog Mushing Race Track

- Knik Arm / Palmer Hay Flats Corridor
- Matanuska River Recreational Corridor
- Hatcher Pass Ski Area
- Crevasse Moraine/Keppler Bradley Trail system.
- Historic Farm Site

150 Mile Regional Outer Loop

Key recreational corridors and open spaces include some of the following:

- Hatcher Pass Scenic Byway / Willow Creek Recreational Corridor
- Susitna River Recreational Corridor
- Iditarod Trail Recreational Corridor
- Kroto Creek, Moose Creek and Deshka Recreational River Corridor
- Parks Highway Scenic Byway

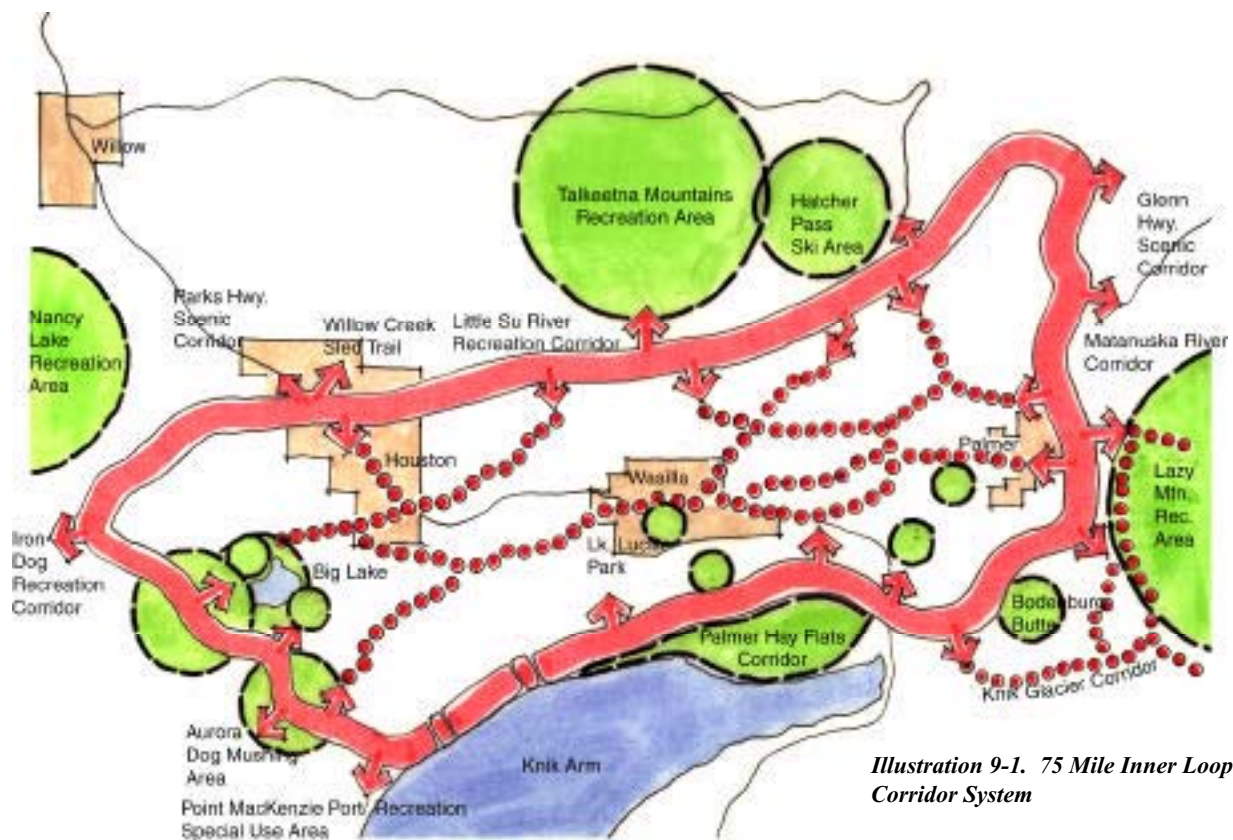


Illustration 9-1. 75 Mile Inner Loop Corridor System

- Petersville Road Scenic Byway
- Lake Creek Recreational Corridor
- Talkeetna Mountains
- Nelchina Public Use Area
- Peters Creek Multiple use subunit
- Lake Creek Multiple use subunit
- Kroto-Kahiltna Multiple use subunit
- Lower Susitna – Yentna public use area

9.4 Projects

Physical projects provide for the upgrade of existing recreational facilities and the development of new facilities, to meet growing Borough needs. To be successful, these projects must be planned, designed, built or upgraded to meet community standards. This requires an orderly process and a substantial investment of time and money.

Planning and Design. To promote orderly and sound development, projects must be planned and designed to provide detailed direction for future land use decisions, park development and facility layout. Steps can include:

- In house staff positions, full or part time, to provide expertise on issues such as trails, park planning, project management, engineering and architectural issues.
- Outside consultants to provide for specific skills such as land acquisition, park design, engineering and architectural services.
- Volunteer assistance at the community level such as local trail planning layout by nordic-ski club members.

Physical Projects. This can include simple upgrades to existing buildings or park

maintenance or construction of large scale projects. Specific steps can include:

- Use of in-house labor to provide general maintenance and upgrades to facilities
- Use of contract labor for more skilled maintenance and large scale projects
- Use of volunteer labor for trail improvements and other locally-based projects.

Applicable Strategic Action:

Implement the Parks Bond \$4.25 million package (Number Two).

Key projects include the following:

- a Upgrades to borough pools, ice rinks and other indoor facilities;
- b. Trail maintenance and development;
- c. Upgrades to playgrounds and parks;
- d. Continue development of Alcantra Recreational Facilities;
- e. New Big Lake and Palmer/Central area ball fields;
- f. Lake and river access projects;

Specific actions should include the following steps:

1. A full-time trails coordinator position to review and implement proposed trail projects.
2. A full-time project manager to oversee the design, construction and maintenance of the bond projects.
3. Meet and work with local volunteer organizations to develop private/public

partnerships to upgrade and build new facilities as appropriate.

4. Prepare and issue individual Request for Proposals for Architectural and Engineering services to prepare bid documents, and construction oversight for new facilities and upgrades where needed. Many of the projects can be done by existing staff.
5. Issue construction bid documents and award

9.5 Policy

These are the public policies and procedures that the Borough government must undertake to ensure the implementation of the broad goals and objectives. Steps include:

- Plan adoption of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space component of the Asset Management Plan.
- Revision of Borough Ordinances and Codes to reflect plan updates.
- Development and land disposal requirements for dedicated parks, public facilities and trails.
- Joint-Use Agreements with schools, government, and private organizations.
- Volunteer participation including community planning and liability issues.

Applicable Strategic Actions:

Adopt the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, including the recreational corridor/open space framework concept (Number One).

Establish a joint committee between the Borough and the School District and key community members to develop a joint use

agreement and funding strategy (Number Three).

Establish community-based volunteer participation in all aspects of the Borough's recreational programs (Number Four). This should include the following key steps:

1. Establish Private/Public partnerships to assist in development of new recreational facilities including methods to involve volunteers in the construction and maintenance of new facilities.
2. Establish community grants for the planning of new facilities as well as matching grants for local based construction projects that meet the broad goals of the plan.
3. Work with local developers, realtors, businesses, the Borough Planning Department and local governments to establish development guidelines and land transfer policies that require key components of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space plan be incorporated in new development of Borough owned lands.

9.6 Administration

This is one of the most critical components of a successful implementation strategy, yet it is often one of the most overlooked. To be successful, the Borough must have the physical tools to begin implementation of this broad plan. These tools include the manpower (staff) and the funding required to manage, direct, plan, build, maintain and operate recreational facilities.

Applicable Strategic Action:

Finance the implementation of the plan on a sustainable basis (Number Five).

Under the leadership of the Borough Director of Community Development and with the cooperation of the Borough Mayor, Borough Manager, Assembly, Planning Commission, Parks, Recreation and Trails Advisory Board, Community Councils and other organizations establish a system for facilitating and financing key catalytic improvements as outlined. Recommended financing tools include:

- Establish clearly defined annual budgets that are based on the cost to provide recreational services per population served.
- Focus initial development on bond related projects.
- Continue with existing services based on property tax structure.
- Capital Improvement Projects.
- Grants and other forms of funding including Transportation Equity Act (TEA) 21 funding.
- Develop an appropriate user-fee schedule to cover major annual operations costs.

Applicable Strategic Action:

Staff (Number Six).

The existing Borough is under staffed in the Parks and Recreation Division and will require additional manpower to implement the Plan and meet current recreation demands.

Maintenance Staff. The highest priority for the Borough is to maintain facilities we already have. The Borough has one full-time staff member and a second part-time staff member to take care of all the existing facilities and parks. This is inadequate beyond simple stop-gap measures. The bond program calls for a number of maintenance and safety upgrade projects. Some of the maintenance projects will be handled completely by Borough staff or through volunteers, while other projects will require professional licensed contractors. The following are needed for in-house management of the Bond projects.

- Hire a full time trails coordinator
- Utilize a project manager to oversee some of the bond construction projects.
- Continue to hire part time seasonal staff to assist in implementation of maintenance projects and work with volunteers.

Applicable Strategic Action:

Bond Implementation (Number Two)

Identify potential design and construction projects and hire professional Architectural & Engineering services to assist in development of plans, specifications and bid documents. This can include the following design packages:

- Playground, regional parks and lake access improvement design services;
- Upgrades to pools and ice rinks;
- Upgrade to existing and development of new athletic facilities;

- Trails implementation and development planning and design services;

The approval of the \$4.25 million bond provides a tremendous opportunity, but it will also require staff to implement upgrades to existing facilities and to manage design and construction of larger projects. The intent is not to increase the Borough staff, however, the increase in work load will demand the addition of specific tasks that must be done by some one. **Table 9-3** that follows on page 143 provides a preliminary budget for the bond projects.

Project Time Line

A five-year planning window has been used as the basis for implementation of these strategic actions. The existing bond package will be required to be spent within three years of the public sale of the bond. With this in mind a general implementation time line is suggested on page 144.

Applicable Strategic Action:

Adopt a code of ordinances for the management of recreation areas (Number Seven).

The Borough has very few written and enforceable rules on how its recreational, open space and trails are to be managed. As the population continues to grow, demands on these areas will intensify. It is important that reasonable regulations be adopted through a public process and that, once adopted, are enforceable.

Areas that should be addressed, include, but are limited to:

- Fees
- Uses of alcohol
- Motorized, Non-Motorized, Equestrian
- Off road vehicles
- Fire arm discharge
- Trapping
- Seasonal restrictions

Not all recreation, open space and trails will be, or should be managed the same. basic health and safety issues for all these public areas needs to be addressed. Where possible, this should be done during the land classification process.

Table 9-3. Borough Bond Preliminary Budget**Projects for in-house management and construction**

<u>Project</u>	<u>Primary Responsibility</u>	<u>Cost Estimate</u>
Playground Equipment	In-house Mat-River Park Lake Lucille Park Little-Su River Campground Talkeetna Townsite Park Willow Community Center Fish Creek Park Palmer, Trapper Creek and Sutton Neighborhoods	\$265,000
Alcantra Athletic Complex	Contractor	985,000
Trans-Borough Trails Network	In-house/Contractor/Volunteers	500,000
Palmer Area Ballfields	In-house/Contractor/Volunteers	400,000
Regional Park Improvements	In-house/Contractor/Volunteers	340,000
Big Lake Baseball and Soccer Fields	In-house/Contractor/Volunteers	140,000
Deshka River	In-house/Contractor	250,000
Trail Maintenance and Development	In-house/Contractor/Volunteers	300,000
Talkeetna Outdoor Skating Rink	In-house/Contractor/Volunteers	50,000
Sutton Outdoor Skating Rink	In-house/Contractor/Volunteers	<u>50,000</u>
Total Cost		\$3,280,000

Projects requiring professional E&A services

<u>Project</u>	<u>Primary Responsibility</u>	<u>Cost Estimate</u>
Palmer and Wasilla Pool Upgrades	Contractor	\$335,000
Brett Memorial Recreation Facility	Contractor	480,000
Lake Louise Boat Launch and Day Use Area	In-house/Contractor	80,000
Big Lake Park and Boat Ramp	In-house/Contractor	<u>75,000</u>
Total Cost		\$970,000
Total Combined Bond Cost		\$4,250,000

**Table vi: Goals, Objectives, Policies:
Parks, Recreation Open Space Plan**

Goals	Policies	Short-Term Objectives 0-5 Years	Long-Term Objectives 5-20 Years
General Goals - Parks, Recreation & Open Space			
1.) To provide a framework for adequate open space and indoor and outdoor recreational facilities to meet the needs of Borough residents as well as visitors.	<p>Development of parklands shall proceed as rapidly as possible within the constraints of capital budgeting and maintenance.</p> <p>The Borough shall adopt standards for parks, recreation, greenbelts and open space.</p> <p>The Borough shall adopt design guidelines for parks, recreation, greenbelts and open space.</p>	<p>Adopt Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan</p> <p>Provide repairs and upgrades to existing indoor and outdoor facilities.</p> <p>To develop conceptual Master Plans for each community and for all parkland as it is acquired.</p>	<p>Provide for new Park Development through wise use of public lands</p> <p>Expand the use of school facilities to meet local recreational needs.</p> <p>Develop new community/athletic and regional parks to meet recreational needs.</p>
2.) To provide quality recreational opportunities as close to home as possible, that meet local community needs established through local based community involvement.	<p>Base recreational development on local based community decisions.</p>	<p>Improve communications between local communities and the borough to address local concerns and needs</p> <p>Encourage Volunteers through training and recognition</p>	<p>Encourage Community Involvement in planning, managing and operations of local based recreational needs</p> <p>Build a sound volunteer base</p>
3.) To maximize both winter and summer recreation opportunities by development of facilities that foster year round use.	<p>Encourage the year round use of all recreational facilities in the Borough.</p>	<p>Provide upgrades to existing indoor recreation facilities.</p>	<p>Provide for Indoor Recreation Opportunities through expansion of Community Schools.</p>
4.) To retain the openness, scenic quality and historic character that makes the Matanuska-Susitna Borough a desirable place to live.	<p>Neighborhood Park/School, Community/Athletic, Regional parkland and Open Space will be acquired in anticipation of population growth and community development.</p> <p>Establish criteria for selecting and disposal of critical lands for public use.</p>	<p>Establish land disposal policy for Borough owned lands.</p> <p>To establish Land Disposal and Development Practices for Borough owned lands.</p>	<p>To provide usable, public owned open space that meet a variety of recreational uses</p> <p>To require new development to set aside park and open space lands to meet recreation demand.</p>

**Table vi: Goals, Objectives, Policies:
Parks, Recreation Open Space Plan**

Goals	Policies	Short-Term Objectives 0-5 Years	Long-Term Objectives 5-20 Years
<p>5.) To minimize costs of recreational development through multiple facility use and coordinating uses by various recreational groups.</p>	<p>The Borough and the School District shall to the extent practicable, develop joint park/school facility areas in order to provide both educational and recreation services.</p>	<p>Develop a joint use agreement between the Borough Schools and Parks and Recreation for use of school facilities with Parks assisting in funding</p>	<p>To combine park, recreation and community facilities with school sites in order to best serve residents of the area and reduce costs.</p>
	<p>The Borough should utilize a number of funding sources that include bonding, user fees, property tax, tourism sales tax, federal matching funds and grants and endowments.</p>	<p>Initiate bond funding for phase one Parks, Recreation and Open Space Development</p>	<p>To develop multiple funding strategies to provide a strong base for parks, recreation and open space development.</p>
<p>6.) To promote economic opportunities through recreational development that benefits both residents and visitors to the borough.</p>	<p>Encourage the economic benefits of Tourism through the development of public/private partnerships.</p>	<p>Promote and Encourage Tourism related development.</p>	<p>Encourage economic benefits of recreation by developing facilities for local residents that can be enjoyed by visitors.</p>
<p>7.) To create a multi-use system of parks and corridors linking open spaces and residential neighborhoods and existing and proposed parklands and school sites.</p>	<p>Promote alternative forms of both motorized and non-motorized transportation corridors and alternative funding sources.</p>	<p>Promote development of the Borough Wide Recreational Trails Plan. Identify trail routes linking schools, neighborhoods, and public facilities.</p>	<p>To promote the development of Regional Destination-Special Use Parks</p>
<p>8.) To establish a system of parks, from the neighborhood to regional level, to serve all segments of the Borough.</p>	<p>The Borough will establish, develop, manage and maintain a balanced system of parks, recreational corridors, and trails for year-round use.</p>	<p>Neighborhood parks will be provided through the Elementary School-Park Concept.</p>	<p>To develop School/Park Neighborhood and Community/Athletic parks with facilities to meet the needs of citizens.</p>
	<p>Existing Elementary School playgrounds will be developed to meet local neighborhood park needs.</p>	<p>Continue development of athletic fields at Alcantra, and begin site selection process for Big Lake and Palmer.</p>	<p>Community/Athletic parks will be developed to meet organized sports and recreation needs with tournament quality fields.</p>
		<p>State Parks and National Parks will continue to meet the Regional Park needs of Borough Residents.</p>	<p>To promote the development of Regional Parks that meet the needs of specialized recreational activities.</p>

Table vi: Goals, Objectives, Policies: Parks, Recreation Open Space Plan

Goals	Policies	Short-Term Objectives 0-5 Years	Long-Term Objectives 5-20 Years
Trails			
<p>9.) To provide for implementation of the Borough Wide Trail Plan.</p>	<p>The paved trail system will be developed in conjunction with road improvements whenever appropriate.</p> <p>Trails shall establish easement acquisition and dedication of trail right-of-way. Construction of trails will follow as rapidly as possible.</p> <p>The borough will utilize regional parks to meet special use needs for both motorized and non-motorized year round recreation access.</p>	<p>To combine the two existing Borough Wide Trails plans into one document and prioritize trails for development that fit within the recommended Recreational Corridor Loop System.</p> <p>Adopt the Recreational Corridor System and continue development and upgrades to trails along this system and establish routes that connect with existing trails.</p> <p>To develop master plans for Regional Special Use Parks to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Crevasse Moraine Trails 2. Aurora Dog Mushing 3. Hatcher Pass Winter Snowmachine 	<p>To establish a Borough wide system of trails to permit travel by several means other than automobile.</p> <p>Encourage the development of a Regional Trail Network that includes a Central Area Loop as well as Borough wide connections to Rural Loops.</p> <p>To provide separate use areas for motorized and non-motorized recreational activities.</p>
Recreation Facilities			
<p>10.) To provide for the continual upgrade and development of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities to serve all segments of the Borough.</p>	<p>To provide for a formal maintenance and development policy for Borough Facilities.</p>	<p>Provide upgrades to existing swimming pools and ice arena utilizing bond funding.</p> <p>Identify potential for additional sheet of ice and/or a covered outdoor ice</p> <p>Establish Community School and Parks joint agreement</p> <p>Continue development of outdoor athletic fields at Alcantra, Bumpus, Houston and Big Lake</p>	<p>To provide for the continued utilization of School Facilities for Pools, Gyms and classrooms to meet the indoor recreation needs of the Borough residents.</p> <p>To establish tournament quality athletic fields to meet the needs of the local residents as well as increase the ability to host state wide athletic events.</p>

Table vi: Goals, Objectives, Policies: Parks, Recreation Open Space Plan

Goals	Policies	Short-Term Objectives 0-5 Years	Long-Term Objectives 5-20 Years
Recreational Corridors and Open Space			
<p>11.) To establish an integrated open space and corridor system throughout the borough based upon existing open space patterns and lands which are ecologically valuable and least suitable for development for the following purposes:</p> <p>a. To accommodate trails and recreation facilities;</p> <p>b. To protect streams, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive natural areas;</p> <p>c. To provide public easement access to and along lakes, streams and the coast line;</p> <p>d. To provide buffers between residential areas and incompatible land uses;</p> <p>e. To provide linkage between residential areas, parks, schools and major areas of public activity;</p> <p>f. To protect wetlands, natural hazard areas and other ecologically sensitive areas not suitable for development.</p>	<p>Corridors and open spaces will be designated to provide a continuous bicycle, pedestrian and where possible, equestrian access linked system to schools, parks and residential neighborhoods.</p> <p>Corridors and open spaces should be planned in an integral process with new housing and commercial development.</p> <p>Corridors and open spaces should be equally available to all Borough residents.</p> <p>Provide for public access to all lakes, streams and rivers in the Borough.</p> <p>Private Developers should be required to set aside lands for corridors and open space as part of the platting process.</p>	<p>To update the Borough Wide Trails Plan to reflect plans for the open space-corridor system.</p> <p>To establish a regional open space network around the central area.</p> <p>To establish year round corridors along major streams and rivers to connect the central area to rural communities.</p> <p>To establish the 75 mile inner loop corridor system</p> <p>To establish the 150 mile outer loop corridor</p>	<p>Provide for directed growth by establishing a system of Recreational Corridors and Open Space along natural and transportation corridors.</p> <p>To set aside critical habitat and wetlands as open space.</p> <p>Acquire land along steep slopes and mountainous areas as it becomes available.</p> <p>To improve lake access by acquiring land as it becomes available.</p> <p>To acquire land on both sides of all of the rivers and streams within the Borough as it becomes available.</p> <p>Establish Open Space Corridors along geologic hazard areas, areas of steep slopes, and marginal land for parks, recreation and open space.</p>

PROJECT TIME LINE - STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION
 DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
 DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



SCHEDULE	2001												2002				2003	2004	2005	
MONTHS	DEC.	JAN.	FEB.	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER			



POLICY

STRATEGIC ACTION NO. 1
 ADOPT THE PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN

PARKS, RECREATION & TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD ADOPT DRAFT PLAN DECEMBER 14, 2000
 PUBLIC REVIEW DEC. 15TH TO FEB. 15TH

PLANNING COMMISSION ADOPT FINAL PLAN APRIL/MAY 2001

BOROUGH ASSEMBLY ADOPT FINAL PLAN MAY/JUNE 2001



ADMINISTRATION

STRATEGIC ACTION NO. 5
 ESTABLISH CLEAR FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

ADOPT MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES (MBO) IMPLEMENT ANNUAL BUDGET & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PROGRAM ON AN ANNUAL BASIS

STRATEGIC ACTION NO. 6
 FULL & PART-TIME STAFF MEMBERS

POSITIONS
 1.) FULL TIME TRAILS COORDINATOR
 2.) BOND PROJECT MANAGER



PROJECTS

STRATEGIC ACTION NO. 2
 IMPLEMENT THE \$4.25 MILLION PARKS BOND PACKAGE

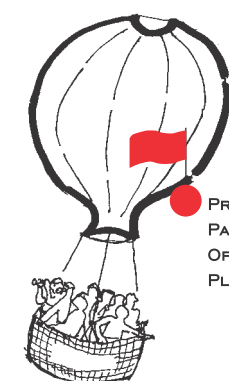
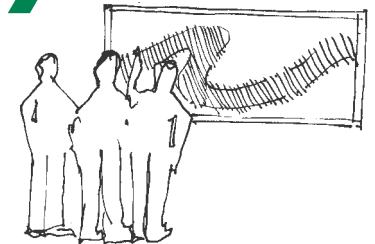
REVIEW BOND PROJECT LIST ESTABLISH A&E PACKAGES FOR RFP ADVERTISEMENT

AWARD NTP FOR DESIGN SERVICES DESIGN PACKETS FOR PROJECTS

ADVERTISE A&E REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS 30 DAY ADVERTISEMENT PERIOD

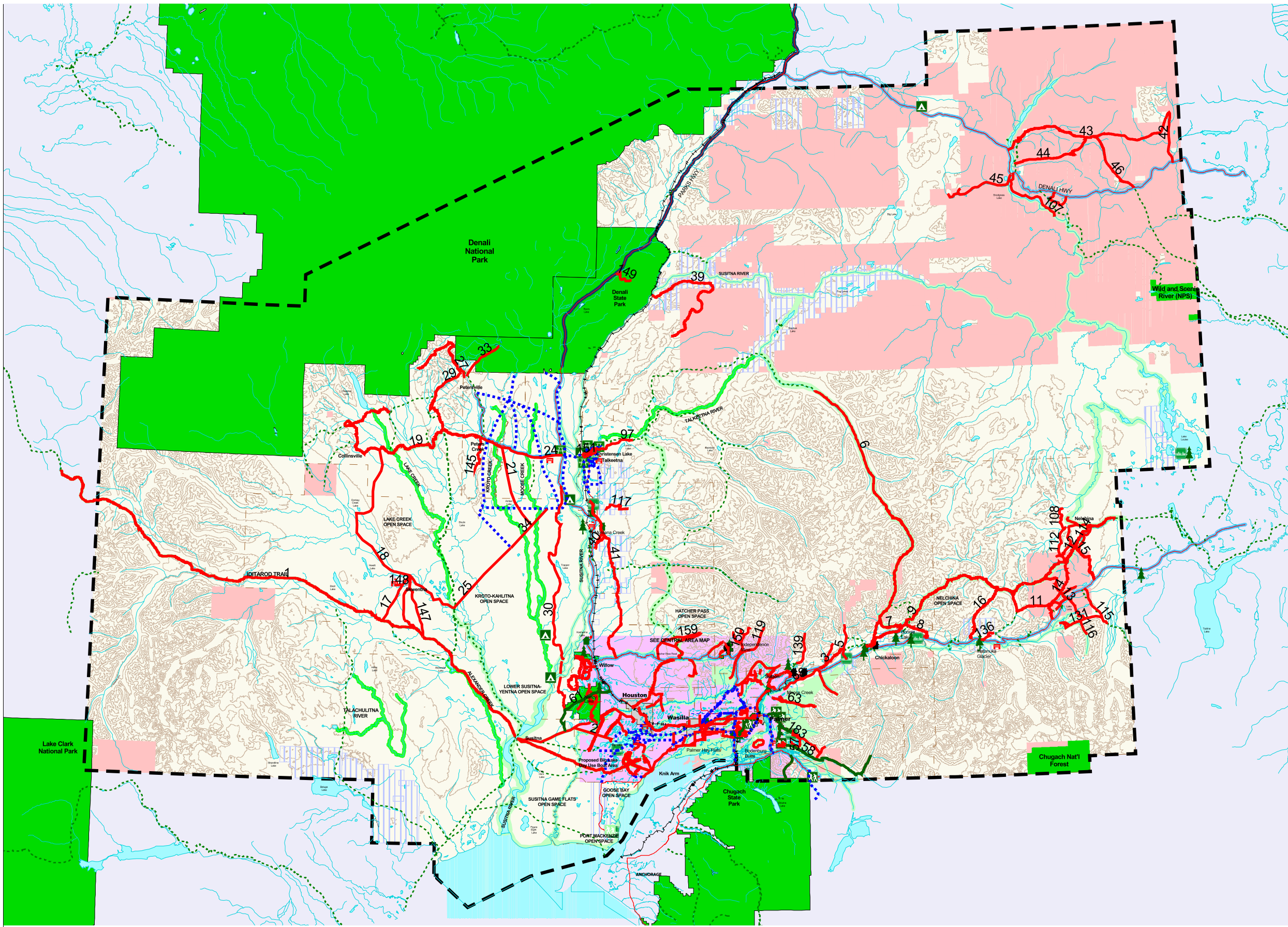
INTERVIEW & SELECT A&E FIRMS & NEGOTIATE DESIGN FEES

PROJECT	2001	2002	2003
1.) LAKE ACCESS, PLAYGROUND UPGRADES AND PARK IMPROVEMENTS	PLAYGROUND & REGIONAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS	CONDUCT SITE DEVELOPMENT FOR LAKE ACCESS PROJECTS	CONSTRUCT LAKE ACCESS PROJECTS COMPLETE PLAYGROUND/PARK UPGRADES
2.) ICE RINK & POOL IMPROVEMENTS	TALKEETNA & SUTTON ICE RINK IMPROVEMENTS	DESIGN FOR BRETT MEMORIAL FACILITY & DESIGN FOR POOL IMPROVEMENTS	CONSTRUCT ICE RINK UPGRADES CONSTRUCT POOL UPGRADES
3.) ATHLETIC FIELD IMPROVEMENTS	ALCANTRA FIELDS SUMMER ON GOING	CONDUCT SITE SELECTION AND MASTER PLAN FOR PALMER & BIG LAKE BALL FIELDS	CONSTRUCTION OF BIG LAKE BALL FIELDS - ON GOING LAND ACQUISITION FOR LITTLE LEAGUE & SOFTBALL FIELDS - ON GOING
4.) TRAIL PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT	TRAIL MAINTENANCE & UPGRADES ON GOING	TRANS BOROUGH TRAIL NETWORK PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ON GOING	



STRATEGIC MILESTONE

SCHEDULE	2001												2002				2003	2004	2005	
MONTHS	DEC.	JAN.	FEB.	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER			



OPEN SPACE CONCEPT BOROUGH WIDE

LEGEND

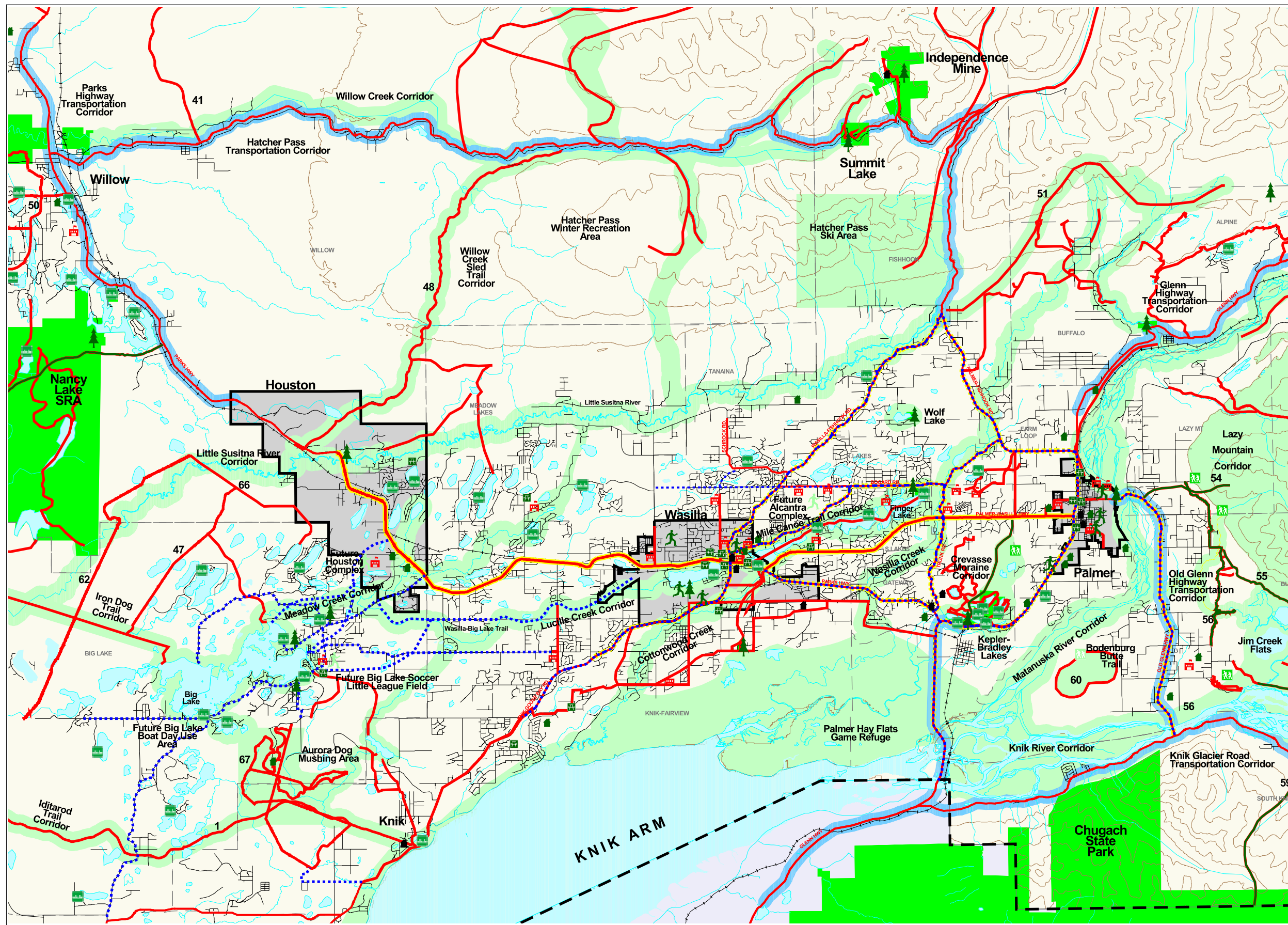
- Potential Recreation Corridor/
Open Space
- Potential Scenic Byway
Transportation Corridor
- Existing Scenic Byway
Transportation Corridor
- Existing Dedicated Trails
- Existing Trails
(Identified in MSB Plans)
- Proposed Trails
(Identified in MSB Plans)
- Existing Trails
(Not Identified in MSB Plans)
- ▲ State & Regional Parks
- Local Play Areas, Neighborhood
Parks, Community Parks
- ▲ Trailhead
- ▲ Open Space
- Schools
- Recreation Facilities
(Community/Senior Centers;
Gyms; Fields)
- Cultural, Historical, Highway
Oriented & Tourism Facilities
- Lake Access Point
- Mat-Su Towns
- Lakes
- BLM
- Native Corp.
- Highways and Primary Roads
- Rivers and Streams
- Community Council Boundary
- Borough Boundary
- State Parks / Regional Parks/
National Forests/ Scenic Rivers

Proposed Existing

0 5 10 Miles

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MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH : PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN



OPEN SPACE CONCEPT CENTRAL AREA

LEGEND

- Potential Recreation Corridor/
Open Space
- Potential Scenic Byway
Transportation Corridor
- Existing Dedicated Trails
- Existing Trails
(Identified in MSB Plans)
- Proposed Trails
(Identified in MSB Plans)
- Existing Separated Roadside Trails
- Proposed Separated Roadside Trails

Proposed Existing

- State & Regional Parks
- Athletic Fields
- Local Play Areas, Neighborhood
Parks, Community Parks
- Trailhead
- Schools
- Recreation Facilities
(Community/Senior Centers;
Gyms; Fields)
- Cultural, Historical, Highway
Oriented & Tourism Facilities
- Boat Launch (Lake Access)
- Contours - 1000' interval
- Highways and Primary Roads
- Secondary Roads
- Borough boundary
- Lakes
- Rivers and Streams
- Railroad
- State Parks

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MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH : PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN