



Denali Borough Land Use and Economic Development Plan



Approved by the Assembly January 10, 2018

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This plan was prepared by Chris Beck and Anna Brawley, consultants with Agnew::Beck Consulting, in collaboration with Borough staff and community members.

Introduction

Background

In recent years, a number of local residents and business owners have spoken up about the need for better planning in the Denali Borough. At the same time, a number of borough residents and land and business owners have made clear their desire to avoid too much government and the continuing need to protect private property rights.

The borough assembly concluded that before moving into any serious discussion of land use rules and regulations, the borough should work with the full community to develop a vision and goals for the borough, exploring these important questions:

- How has the borough economy and population been changing, and what is the future likely to look like?
- What are key challenges and opportunities facing the borough?
- What is our vision for the future, where do we want to be in 20 years?
- What general goals and strategies should we adopt to lead us towards that future?

This draft plan is the result of work to date: it was developed out of a continuing dialogue with residents, businesses and landowners around the borough, with respect for the validity of support for and skepticism about planning, land use regulations, and attempts to guide the future of the borough. The final product needs to reflect a consensus developed in the community, and inform future work aimed at achieving this shared vision for the borough.

A Starting Place: Denali Borough Planning Principles

Below are general principles followed in developing this draft plan, with the objective of addressing the challenges and opportunities of future growth and change in the borough.

Work from the bottom up | Understand issues and options from the ground up. Build plans and policies based on values and priorities of residents, landowners, businesses and visitors.

Start with agreement on goals and objectives | Recognize that any specific implementation regulation or policy should only be taken up after a process that creates widely shared agreement around goals and the general strategies to achieve those goals.

Respect different needs for different communities | Different communities within the borough have different geographies, land use patterns, economies, philosophies and current issues that impact quality of life. The goals and the policy tools in this plan can and must respect these differences.

It's the economy | There are many motivations and directions for local planning. This plan focuses on economic development and land use, for three reasons: first, because these intertwined issues are critical as Alaska enters a time of profound economic and fiscal challenges; second, because the borough is experiencing the accelerating impacts of growth and change; and third, because these two topics, particularly outdoor recreation and tourism, are subjects a borough and its businesses and partners can directly affect.

Follow the right process | This project has aimed to be inclusive and transparent, with the goal of developing widely understood and widely supported goals and strategies. The process offered different ways for people to express their views, and more than just traditional public meetings. And to sustain community interest, the process has worked to move along at a steady pace with a clear resolution at the end.

Planning Process – How You Can Stay Involved

This plan builds on several years of community discussions and other planning work in the borough: the Denali Borough Comprehensive Plan (2015), the Healy Transportation and Pedestrian Safety Plan (2016), initial study and planning for management of borough-owned lands, and ongoing dialogue about the future of the borough and what residents want for their communities.

In February 2017, the Denali Borough hired Agnew::Beck Consulting to assist with the first planning phase, including providing an overview of current economic and demographic trends, leading the public engagement process, working with an advisory team of community leaders, and drafting a plan that reflects community input. The project was introduced at the March 21, 2017 Planning Commission meeting, with an invitation to join the advisory team for this process. Agnew::Beck also conducted background research on statewide and regional tourism trends, and interviewed several business, agency and community leaders to better understand the region and current issues.

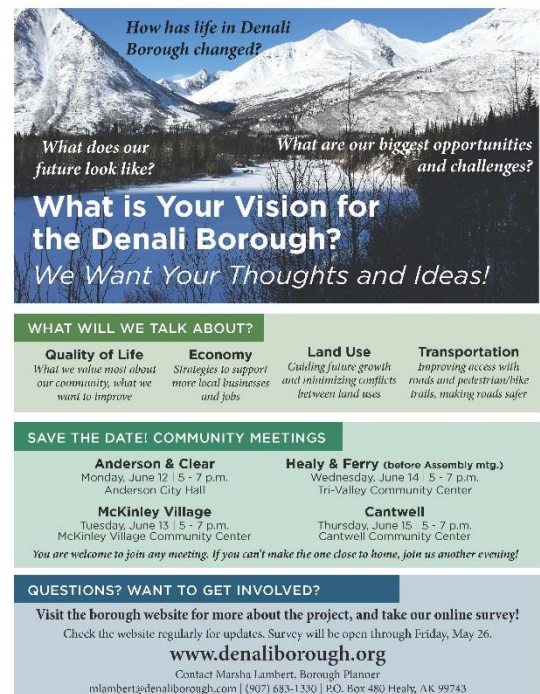
Public engagement began with a survey of residents in spring 2017, available online and in hardcopy, asking what community members like best about living in Denali Borough, what they want the future to look like in the borough, what issues or opportunities they would like the borough to address. Survey results were shared with the community in May and June. See the Appendix for access to this and other background documents.

Agnew::Beck facilitated a series of community workshops on June 12-15, 2017, in Anderson, Healy, McKinley Village and Cantwell. Participants learned about current trends and issues in the borough, shared their thoughts and ideas about three key topics to be featured in the plan (land use, transportation and economic development), and discussed local priorities. Over 100 people attended one or more of the community meetings, representing the borough from Anderson and Kobe Road to Cantwell and the Denali Highway. Themes and emerging ideas from these meetings were also shared with the advisory team at their second meeting on June 15, 2017.

We want to hear your views!

Based on the input shared through these steps, Agnew::Beck worked closely with borough staff to prepare a public review draft plan. Options for sharing feedback included:

- Submitting written comments, by mail or by email to the Land Planner
- Attending public hearings with the Denali Borough Planning Commission and Borough Assembly at their monthly meetings.



The flyer features a scenic background of snow-capped mountains and a river. The main heading asks, "What is Your Vision for the Denali Borough?" and "We Want Your Thoughts and Ideas!". Below this, it lists four key topics for discussion: Quality of Life, Economy, Land Use, and Transportation. It also provides a schedule for four community meetings: Anderson & Clear (Monday, June 12), McKinley Village (Tuesday, June 13), Healy & Ferry (Wednesday, June 14), and Cantwell (Thursday, June 15). The flyer concludes with the website www.denaliborough.org and contact information for Marsha Lambert, Borough Planner.

Public Workshops Flyer, May 2017

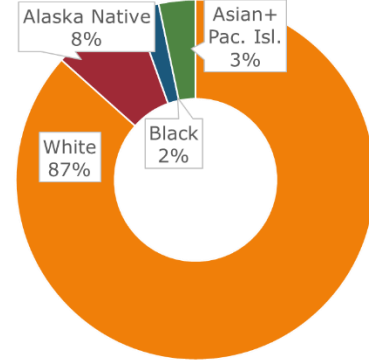
Current Trends

Note: In addition to the information below, more about trends in land use, transportation and economic development can be found in Appendix 1 of this plan.

Population

The Denali Borough has approximately 1,800 year-round residents, increasing more than threefold during the summer season to provide labor for the tourism sector. Several residents began as seasonal and have decided to call Denali Borough their year-round home; others have expressed an interest in living in the borough permanently, but struggle to find suitable housing and sustainable income. About 1 in 3 households is a person who lives alone, and 1 in 4 is a family with school-age or young children. Workers are highly skilled and educated, with two-thirds of residents having completed at least some college, and median household income is among the highest in Alaska, \$81,544 in 2016.

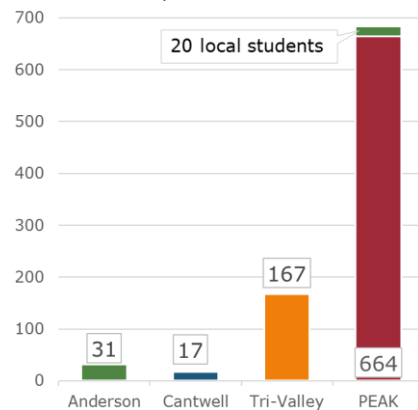
Denali Borough Population by Race, 2016



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Overall, the permanent resident population in the borough is flat, and the population is aging: the number of seniors has grown significantly, from 3% of the population in 2000 to 11% in 2016, and median age is 42.2, compared with 34.7 in Alaska overall. Healy has seen the greatest growth in residents, while outlying areas have seen the greatest decline.

School Enrollment, Academic Year 2016-2017



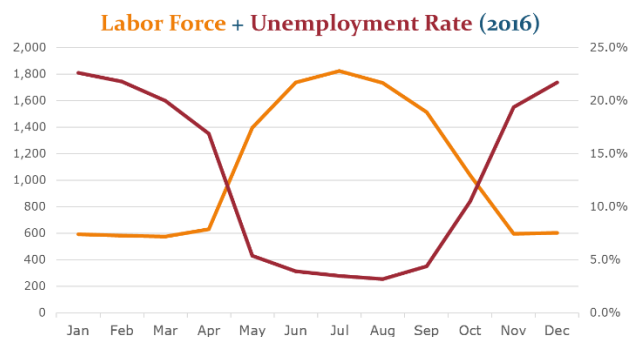
Source: Denali Borough School District

Enrollment in the Denali Borough School District is similarly flat, with each of the borough's three schools below capacity. There has been significant growth in the Denali PEAK correspondence school program, with most of its 664 students living outside the borough. There are currently 235 local students enrolled Denali Borough School District.

Economy

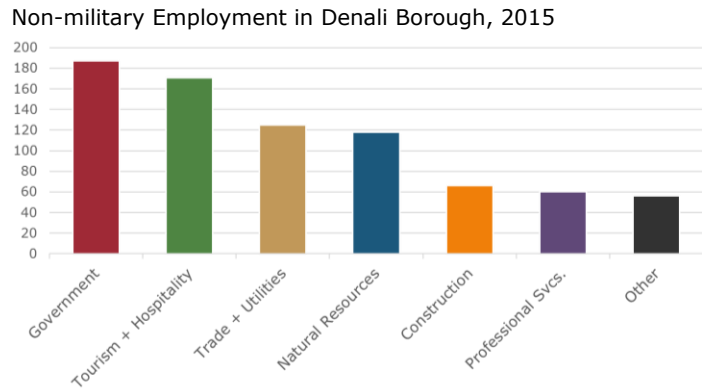
The borough's economy can be seen as a three legged stool. Two legs – resource development and military spending – provide a small but important set of year-round, well paid jobs. The third leg is tourism economy, which supports another small but appreciated set of year round jobs, but is dominated by a wave of summer season jobs and businesses.

Monthly Labor Participation and Unemployment Rate, 2016



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Tourism activity is centered on exploring Denali National Park and the surrounding wilderness landscape. The largest share of jobs is tied to package travel offered by cruise operators like Holland America Princess; also important are locally-owned lodging and tour companies and short-term vacation home rentals like VRBO, Airbnb. While tourism activity concentrates between May and September, an increasing number of visitors are coming to enjoy Denali Borough during winter and shoulder seasons, creating new business opportunities such as snow machine tours, cross country skiing, and aurora viewing.



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Major year-round employers include:

- Usibelli Coal Mine
- Denali National Park
- Air Nat'l Guard (Clear AFS)
- Alaska Railroad
- State of Alaska
- Golden Valley Electric (GVEA)
- Denali Borough office and School District
- Holland America Princess

Clear AFS



Source: Wikipedia.com

Dragline at Usibelli Mine



Source: Usibelli Inc.

Usibelli Coal Mine has long been an economic anchor in Healy.

The company employs 110 people, but has seen reduced coal production with less overseas demand and may continue to scale back in the future. Clear Air Force Station has a permanent workforce of 300, with the large majority living on base or commuting to work for multi-day shifts from Fairbanks, Mat Su or Anchorage. Clear is also currently undergoing \$1 billion in system upgrades, with up to 400 additional workers on base during the construction phase. To date, economic impacts of this project in the adjoining community of Anderson have been limited, in part because workers believe their housing needs are better met on base, in Fairbanks or other larger AK metro areas. In the past Anderson housed many Clear personnel but both population and the quality of housing have declined over recent decades.

Housing

Housing is a persistent challenge in the borough. Several factors contribute summer housing shortages and limited opportunities for new or potential residents to find a home or property. Most land in populated areas or accessible by existing roads is owned by public agencies, or is privately owned but not likely to be available on the market in the foreseeable future. Much of the Tri-Valley Subdivision in Healy is owned by Alaska Railroad, with long-term land leases to businesses and residents who live or operate establishments within the subdivision.

Housing for seasonal workers is especially tight in the summer. There are few available rentals in the community, and while many homeowners have benefited from offering part or

all of their home as a vacation rental, conversion of summer housing to short-term rentals has further reduced the summer housing supply. Several tourist businesses have secured temporary employee housing or trailers for their workers, but limited location options for new housing has caused friction with neighboring residents and concern about new growth.

Holland America Princess Employee Housing, Healy



Source: Agnew::Beck

Summer Employee Housing, McKinley Village



Source: Agnew::Beck

Borough Administration

Denali Borough is a Home Rule borough, formed by charter in 1990 and governed by the Borough Assembly, with administrative powers granted to the Mayor. The borough levies two taxes: a 7% overnight accommodations (bed) tax on short-term rentals, and a severance tax on extracted materials such as coal, gravel and limestone. Additionally, the borough receives revenue from the U.S. Department of Interior as a payment in lieu of taxes (PILT); grant funding from the State of Alaska and other sources; and income from two enterprise operations, the borough landfill and borough land management.

Borough responsibilities include:

- Education (Denali Borough School District)
- Landfill and solid waste management, including a transfer station
- Land management for borough-owned lands
- Platting and subdivision review and approval
- General administration of Borough affairs & interests
- Other office services: copy, fax, passport, notary

Denali Borough Revenue and Expenditures, FY 2016 Actual

Revenue		Expenditures	
	FY16		FY16
Taxes	\$3,503,040	Assembly	\$459,941
<i>Bed Tax</i>	\$3,431,826	Mayor & Administration	\$843,374
<i>Severance Tax</i>	\$71,214	School District Funding	\$2,306,896
PILT (U.S. DOI)	\$320,755	Reserve Fund Deposits	\$427,591
State Grants	\$544,088	Enterprise Expenditures	\$589,123
Enterprise Income	\$583,368	<i>Solid Waste</i>	\$425,835
<i>Solid Waste</i>	\$581,251	<i>Land Management</i>	\$163,288
<i>Land Management</i>	\$2,117	Other Expenditures	\$15,847
Other Income	\$37,164	TOTAL	\$4,642,772
TOTAL	\$4,988,415		

Source: Denali Borough Annual Budget

The borough has adopted limited local government powers and does not levy a broad-based tax on residents or property owners; expanding or amending borough powers would require approval by a vote of all borough residents. While the borough does not provide a wide range of municipal services, the borough works closely with other agencies and private businesses who serve area residents and visitors, including the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Alaska Railroad, National Park Service, U.S. Air National Guard, and the City of Anderson, the borough's only incorporated community.

Vision and Values

Throughout the planning process, borough residents considered three important questions:

1. How has the Denali Borough changed in recent years?
2. What makes the borough a special place to live, work or visit?
3. What is our vision for Denali Borough: what do we want to be in the next 20 years?

The answers on these topics will continue to evolve, as the future brings new challenges and opportunities. As a first step, this plan's community vision, values and goals provide a basis for a shared understanding about what is most important to the community.

Vision

Residents, businesses and landowners work together so the Denali Borough remains a spectacular natural environment and a caring community, together providing a great place to live, make a living and raise a family, and a rewarding, unique destination for visitors.

Community Values

Natural world | Continuing access and daily enjoyment of the natural world and wildness is at the heart of life in the Borough, and the basis for our economy, and our fiscal health.

Rural, small-town community | In addition to the natural environment, we like living in the borough where there is a strong sense of community, where people care about and help one another (even if they don't see eye to eye on every issue).

Entrepreneurial spirit | Many residents have taken advantage of opportunities in the borough to build successful businesses, often starting out of their homes. We should continue to foster a business-friendly climate, support home-based businesses, and promote new economic opportunities that are compatible with life and commerce in the borough.

Grow, but grow right | Denali Borough is a special place. And much of what we have today – access to the outdoors, a strong sense of community, limited rules and regulations – we want to keep into the future. But to be an even better place to live, work and play, we need to grow, to provide more good jobs, encourage more year-round communities, and provide more local services for residents, businesses, and visitors. We need to work together to encourage the right kind of growth, growth that brings widespread local benefits, but helps us hold onto what is unique and special about the Borough.

Balance | We value our freedom to use our land as we please and to enjoy access to wide open wild places. At the same time, we recognize that no rules means no protection against negative impacts or conflicting uses.

Personal responsibility | We value our self-reliance, and see the need to take more responsibility to plan for and pay for the services and amenities we desire.

"It's a ripe moment. We want to see the borough grow up and be a place where we can put down roots."

- June 2017 meeting participant

"If change will happen either way, we want some say in it."

- June 2017 meeting participant

"Great places to live, work and visit rarely happen by accident: successful communities guide growth through a shared vision."

- Ed McMahon, 1997

Designing for Community Workshop Presenter

Goals Summary

Below is a listing of the goals in the three policy categories addressed in this plan. Each goal is fleshed out on the following pages, followed by a separate section presenting “possible next steps” to reach these goals.

Land Use

- Find the balance between protecting the freedoms that come with land ownership while protecting the values and quality of life on adjoining lands.
- Support quality, sustainable front country recreation & tourism.
- Expand the housing supply.
- Encourage clustering of commercial activity to maintain an attractive highway corridor & provide compact, convenient activity and service centers.
- Smart use of Borough-owned land.

Transportation

- Support effective, easy to use, connected transportation options that benefit everyone who lives in, works in or visits Denali Borough.
- Explore opportunities to build bike and pedestrian infrastructure along highways and major roads.
- Document existing trails in the borough and seek opportunities to reserve and improve popular trails.
- Explore options for developing a regional airport.

Economic and Fiscal Health

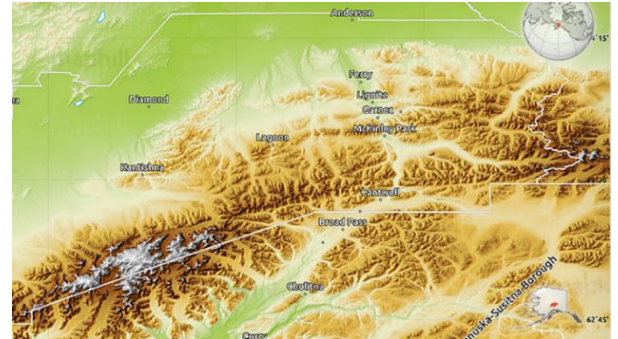
- Balance economic, fiscal, community & environmental health.
- Encourage expansion of the tourism industry by increasing fall, winter, and spring travel.
- Create/sustain great places to live (as an economic strategy).
- Encourage more housing opportunities.
- Encourage expansion of local commercial development so more borough resident spending stays local.
- Goal: Maintain a local voice about the gas pipeline, Clear AFS, and coal production.
- Borough Fiscal Health – Match borough revenues with anticipated growing demands for Borough services.

At right: Cantwell public work session; one in a series of well attended public work sessions used to understand issues and develop the goals and strategies in this plan



Issues, Challenges & Opportunities

A spectacular, diverse landscape with distinct communities - Most of the borough is remote, wild and held in public ownership, including the 70% of the borough located within Denali National Park and Preserve. The human footprint in this 12,000 square mile area concentrates in a corridor along the Parks Highway, the home of 1,800 year-round residents in a handful of small settlements.



Important land use issues and themes in the borough include:

Outdoors & Natural Resources



The borough's economy, fiscal health, and quality of life builds around a combination of coal and power generation, and ready access to the attractive, largely unspoiled natural environment. Borough, state and federal land policy will be help determine the future in these valuable resources.

Pride and Pleasure in Community Life



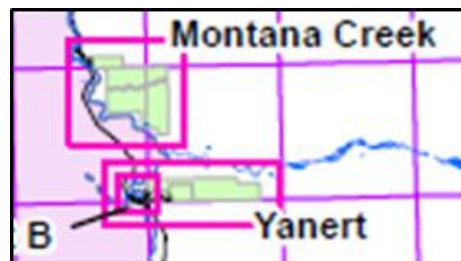
Survey results make clear people treasure the small town, friendly character in the borough. Growth can degrade these qualities, or alternatively help sustain them, for example, through helping to increase support and funding for existing and desired new community facilities.

Changing Character of Towns, of Neighborhoods



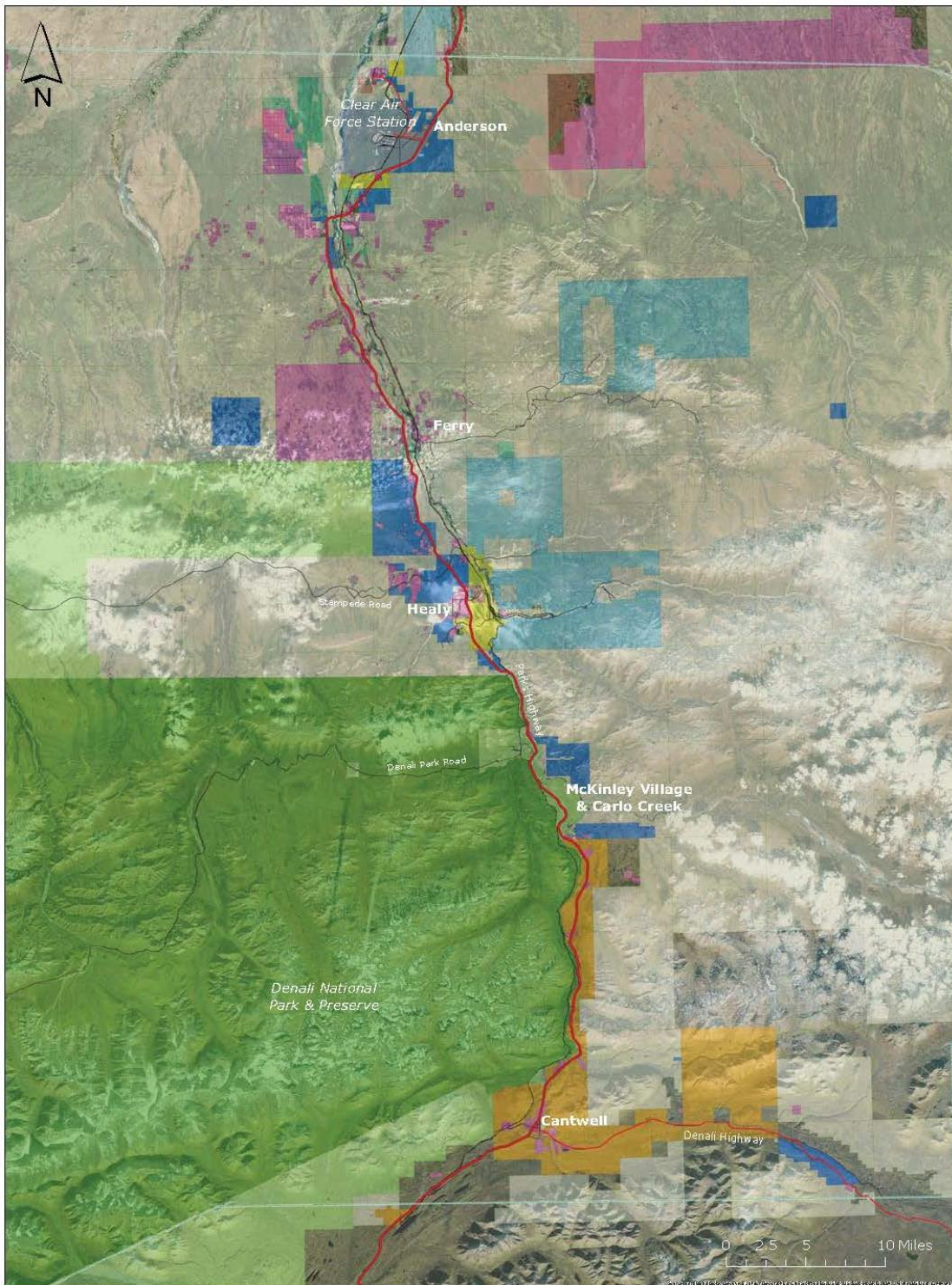
New uses are changing the character of some locations, with particular impact in traditionally residential areas. Some residents see these changes as disruptive, and hope rules might be created to protect neighborhood quality.

Management of Borough- Owned Lands



The borough has received just less than 50,000 acres of lands the through state Municipal Entitlement program. A recently approved plan and Borough code sets out goals and policies for the use of these lands, including identifying areas for future disposal and for retention in borough ownership for a range of public uses.

Map of Denali Borough Land Ownership, August 2017



Denali Borough: Land Ownership

Produced for the Denali Borough by Agnew :: Beck, August 2017
 Data Sources: State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Denali Borough, ESRI (basemap)



Legend

- George Parks Highway
- State Highway
- Other Major Road
- Alaska Railroad
- Borough Boundary
- Clear Air Force Station
- Denali National Park
- Denali Wilderness
- Private Land
- Ahtna, Incorporated
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
- Denali Borough
- Alaska Railroad Corporation
- City of Anderson
- University of Alaska
- Other State Land

Land Use Goals

"Doing nothing is not an option. Failure to act will result in erosion of our regional character, quality of life, and independence. Through planning and involving individuals of the Denali Borough, we can maintain and improve the qualities we like about this region."

"Ensure that the Denali Borough 'Bill of Rights' guides land use regulation functions to protect private real property rights." (Extracts from the 2009/2015 Borough Comprehensive Plan)

Goal: Find the balance between protecting the freedoms that come with land ownership while protecting the values and quality of life on adjoining lands.

New types and intensities of land uses are popping up around the Borough including new employee housing areas, motor coach parking, and commercial activities. This is likely to continue. Concern about the resulting impacts on residential areas was a driver for this plan. To maintain the positive character of neighborhoods and other areas, explore options for "a few good rules." The intent is balance: policies that maintain what people like about their rural neighborhoods while not creating excessive, intrusive limitations on land use freedoms.



Cluster of recently-constructed employee cabins in a residential area, Healy

Goal: Support quality, sustainable front country recreation & tourism

"We had a great time at Denali National Park – one day we floated the Nenana, one day we walked the Triple Lakes Trail, another day we hung out at our lodge and read and played games, and one day we had a wonderful trip on the bus into Eielson – it was great trip!"

2017 National Park visitor

Recreation and tourism activities are growing in the borough. While the wonders of the interior of Denali National Park will remain the fundamental regional draw, a growing portion of visitor and resident activities will happen in "frontcountry" locations (see sidebar). Reasons for this evolution include NPS constraints on the rate of growth in vehicles driving the park road, and strong visitor interest in enjoyable day use activities on the Park's periphery. The Borough needs to work with partners to help provide an array of high quality frontcountry experiences, and thereby sustain and grow visitation to the borough and associated bed tax revenues that support schools and other local services.

Frontcountry? "Frontcountry" describes outdoor areas at the outer, more accessible portions of places like Denali N.P. Denali frontcountry offers popular activities mostly not available deeper into the Park, including developed facilities like lodging, food, and entertainment; and activities like guided river floats, horseback/ATV rides, trail hiking and biking, and flightseeing. Around the world, tourism trends show these kinds of activities (for example, an all-day hike followed by a good meal, shower and a dry bed) are what appeals the largest share of the travel market.



Goal: Expand the housing supply

"It's really hard to find a place to live, or to buy in the borough" June '17 workshops

Many people expressed the strong desire for more housing options in the borough. Housing demand is growing with increases in seasonal residents and seasonal employees, as more housing is converted to vacation rentals, and as more people with seasonal jobs wish they could live in the borough, but can't find an affordable place to rent or buy. The Borough should undertake a range of actions to help expand housing options.

Goal: Encourage clustering of commercial activity to maintain an attractive highway corridor & provide compact, convenient activity and service centers.

"We are a tourism-based economy, and tourism pays for our schools, most of our jobs. That gives us some strong motivations to keep this place nice. We don't want to kill that golden goose."

- June workshop participant

"The #1 activity of visitors throughout the world, even in Alaska, is strolling (exploring, shopping, dining, and relaxing) in a Main Street pedestrian friendly setting." - U.S. Travel



Commercial strip development in Wasilla

The default pattern for commercial uses in Alaska and around the United States is multi-unit strip development along highways and major roads. This can help connect consumers and businesses, but the result is that almost all travel is by car. This in turn creates large parking areas, large signs, a tendency towards congestion, and a visual character that few people find appealing. To avoid a continuous corridor of strip development, the Borough should work with landowners along the highway and explore options to do what most U.S. communities and more in Alaska are trying to do: take active steps to cluster commercial development and manage signage. Creating attractive, clustered, walkable mixed use areas could benefit businesses, tourists, residents, employees and the natural environment. Making this happen requires stitching together many different elements and partners.

Goal: Smart use of Borough-owned land

The borough owns just under 50,000 acres of land, which provides the opportunity to use this land to support some of the goals outlined here. Given the preponderance of public lands within the borough, borough owned lands can provide opportunity for land sales and other uses supporting development that may not otherwise be available. In 2015, the

Talkeetna Spur Road Corridor Management

In the 1990s, Talkeetna experienced dramatic growth in tourism. This led to the completion of a widely-supported "community and tourism plan," setting goals and strategies to support growth and maintain community character.

This plan set the stage for the first zoning code in Talkeetna. One key part of the code was a basic set of rules for maintaining the mostly-natural appearance of Talkeetna Spur Road, limiting the size of signs, and requiring that a buffer of vegetation be retained along some highway frontages. These rules were supported by people who initially didn't want any regulations, but who came to believe that guiding growth was in their economic interest, and because the rules largely codified what were already seen by the community as sensible building, signage and land use practices.

Borough Assembly approved a general approach for the use of borough-owned land “Recommendations for an Improved Land Management System”, and in October 2017 the Assembly approved an updated Title 4 of the Borough code specifying specific regulatory policies and processes to implement the goals.

Possible Next Steps to Reach Land Use Goals

Goal: Find the balance between protecting the freedoms that come with land ownership while protecting the values and quality of life on adjoining lands.

Possible Next Steps: Explore options for limited rules that could reduce impacts of development on neighboring properties, particularly in and near residential neighborhoods. Options include:

- **Basic dimensional standards** such as building setbacks from property lines or building height limits, with the option, for more intensive uses (e.g. gravel pits, junk yards) to require larger setbacks and safety and visual screening buffers and/or fencing
- **Basic rules on allowed uses** in portions of borough that are primarily residential. This could be like the rules that currently exist in the Tri-Valley Subdivision, where some uses are not permitted, including junk yards, gravel pits, large scale employee accommodations or overnight rentals (unless the owner lives on-site).
- **A borough-wide conditional use process**, applying only to the largest, most potentially disruptive uses, such as auto wrecking yards, batch plants, heavy industrial uses, “adult entertainment,” jails, or large scale tourist accommodations or gravel operations. All other uses would be by-right, and not subject to any review or approvals (other than the simple dimensional standards referenced above). The conditional use permit process gives borough residents and leadership the opportunity to review large scale projects and set conditions, such as access, or hours of operation, that reduce potential off-site impacts

Goal: Expand the housing supply

Possible Next Steps: Strategies to explore include improving land access and selling borough owned land. New approaches to Borough land sales may be needed if the goal is meeting housing demand for local residents. The Assembly approved report, “Recommendations for an Improved Land Management System” (November 2015), identifies specific leading candidates for sales of borough-owned land. *See also last goal below*

Goal: Support quality, sustainable “front country” recreation & tourism

Possible Next Steps: Work with partners like the State and the Park Service to improve the tourism and recreation opportunities, the activities that are the foundation of the borough economy. Aim for improvements that simultaneously benefit visitors, residents and businesses. Possible actions include:

- Work with NPS, Ahtna, the State and user groups to improve accessible “frontcountry” experiences, such as trails to and through existing/planned commercial, lodging and residential areas. Make it easy for people to get into attractive natural places – by foot, bike or in the winter by skis, dogsled or snow machine – without needing a car.
- Provide opportunities for different types of trail use, including motorized and non-motorized users.
- Work with Ahtna so whoever directs visitors to explore the borough informs these people of the requirement to get a permit to hike or camp on Ahtna property.

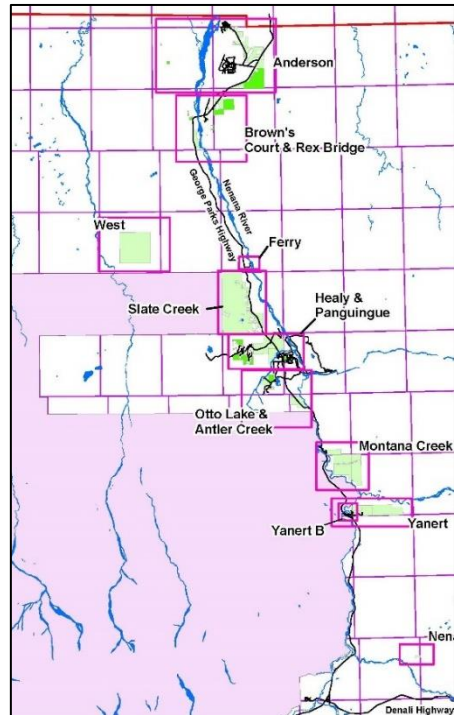
Goal: Encourage clustering of commercial activity to maintain an attractive highway corridor and provide compact, convenient activity and service centers.

Possible Next Steps: Investigate options for rules on commercial signs and highway buffers as a means to maintain highway corridor visual quality. The simple, successful rules adopted along the Talkeetna Spur Road are one example to consider.

Encourage clustering of commercial activities in compact, walkable places where visitors and residents to shop, dine, stay, recreate and live. The long discussed vision for a Healy Town Center is one option. Compact commercial cores can make it easier for local entrepreneurs to establish successful businesses, and help spending stay local.

Some strategies to create compact centers include:

- Conversations, encouragement and partnerships with large landowners and developers. Examples in Healy include the Alaska Railroad and Usibelli who have land, resources and perhaps economic incentives to create successful developments; and with major employers like Holland America Princess, who want options for seasonal and year round housing that a town center could provide.
- Infrastructure improvements, particularly water and/or sewer, which allow denser development than would be allowed with private systems.
- “Civic anchors”, for example, for a possible Healy towncenter, a recreation center, a relocated post office, upgraded borough offices.



Excerpt from Borough Land Management Plan (2015)

Goal: Smart use of Borough-owned land

Possible Next Steps: Two recent Borough Assembly actions set out a good framework for next steps: *Recommendations for an Improved Land Management System (2015)*, and the updated Title 4 of Borough code covering policies and processes for borough-owned land. Actions outlined in these documents include:

- Develop the “annual work plan for disposal, leasing and/or exchange” (DMC 4.10.020)
- Complete management plans on select priority parcels, following guidelines specified in DMC 4.10.010. Priorities could be management plans that set the stage for land sales on the Yanert and Healy/Panguingue borough-owned parcels.
- Work with current users and operators to improve management of commercial uses on lands retained in borough ownership, for example uses on the Otto Lake & Antler Creek parcels.



Conceptual drawing of Healy Town Center (1999)

Transportation

Opportunities to Build on Existing Plans

There are several relevant transportation planning efforts happening already in the borough, and future opportunities for the borough to work together with the agencies who manage or provide transportation within the borough:

The **Denali Borough Comprehensive Plan** (2015) identifies several transportation improvements the Borough has communicated to the Alaska Legislature and Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF). Some of these projects have been completed or are now included in long-term state transportation plans.

The **Healy Transportation and Pedestrian Safety Plan** (2016) was developed through the work of a committee, community meetings, a resident survey, and other input and includes identification of transportation safety concerns in Healy, a prioritized list of safety improvements, and strategies that the Borough can pursue to implement the plan. While this plan focused specifically on roads and intersections in Healy, the planning process and big-picture goals of this effort provide a model for other communities in the borough to make their own transportation safety plans.

The National Park Service creates its own plans as part of park management: there are three important **Denali Park Transportation & Trails Plans** that communicate the transportation goals for the Park:

- The **Vehicle Management Plan** (adopted 2012) guides all policies for vehicles within the Park, including private cars and commercial buses. The three main policies:
 - Slow the growth of allowed vehicles within the Park in the next 20 years, to protect wildlife habitat.
 - Shift future recreation demand toward “front country” activities, providing more opportunities to experience the Park at the Park’s outer periphery.
 - Respond to increasing shoulder season and winter demand by providing more or better amenities outside of the summer.
- The **Park Trails Strategy** is currently being developed, and identifies new trails within or connecting to the Park, such as connecting the existing Oxbow and Triple Lake trails near the Park Entrance.
- The **Denali Park Long Range Transportation Plan**, currently out in draft for public review, presents policies on long-term transportation improvements such as a shuttle system that connects the Park with other nearby destinations.
- **Other transportation plans** affecting the Borough, include the State of Alaska Long Range Transportation Plan and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.

At a Glance: Healy Transportation and Pedestrian Safety Plan

Developed by the Healy Transportation and Pedestrian Safety Ad-hoc Committee, approved by the Borough Assembly in August 2016

Overall Goal: Prevent vehicle-pedestrian related accidents and conflicts in a growing community.

Goal Area 1: Infrastructure.

Establish safe pedestrian & traffic routes in the community of Healy.

Goal Area 2: Education. Promote a culture of safety and mutual respect between motorized and non-motorized user groups.

Priority Streets and Intersections:

- Parks Highway, Mile 247 - 251.2
- Healy Spur & Hilltop Road
- Suntrana, Coal & School Road
- Stampede & Lignite Road
- Dry Creek & Lester Rd Bridges

Strategies to promote safety:

- Safety education for the public
- Signage for speed limits and pedestrian crossings
- Multi-use paths, turn lanes, wider shoulders on DOT roads
- Trails and safe crossings for students at Tri-Valley School

Transportation Goals

Goal: Support effective, easy to use, connected transportation options that benefit everyone who lives in, works in or visits Denali Borough.

Transportation is a system with many parts, each helping to move people and freight from one place to another. This broader approach to transportation, focusing on overall mobility rather than only on private vehicles and truck freight, is common in federal, state and local transportation policies. It is important to connect individual transportation systems (roads, trails, bike and pedestrian safety, transit, etc.) and create new opportunities for easily and



safely moving from one to the other: for example, taking a shuttle to a commercial center and walking between shops, or driving to a trailhead to bike, ski, or ride a snowmachine into the wilderness.

All transportation infrastructure within the borough is currently managed by state and federal agencies or private businesses. However, there are opportunities for the borough to support improvements to the region's transportation systems (roads, trails, pedestrian safety, railroad and aviation) by working actively with the entities who currently operate the transportation network:

- Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), who maintains highways and major roads in the borough.
- National Park Service, who manages the Denali Park Road, oversees the contracted bus and shuttle system within the Denali National Park & Preserve, develops and maintains connections into and trails within the Park.
- Alaska Railroad Corporation, who transports passengers and freight along the Railbelt, including transporting many of Denali's annual visitors directly into the Park.
- Private transportation operators including Doyon-Aramark Joint Venture, Holland America Princess, and other businesses who bring visitors to and from Denali, provide transportation into the Park, and the Denali Dine shuttle to local tourist destinations.

While each entity has a limited scope of transportation services, and conducts its own planning or decision-making processes about where and how to provide them, adopted plans and borough advocacy can influence future projects and investments toward infrastructure and services in ways that benefit residents, visitors, and businesses. Bringing together key transportation providers can begin productive dialogues about shared interests and goals, and build or strengthen relationships between these organizations.

One innovative local transportation solution is the Dine Denali shuttle, a service that brings passengers to popular destinations around the Park and in Healy. The service has one-day and multi-ride passes, designated routes and stops, and a regular schedule with pickup and drop-off times. Stops include each of the participating restaurants, and other destinations such as the Wilderness Access Center and train station in the Park. The shuttle helps summer visitors get around, and helps local businesses attract customers.



Dine Denali Shuttle

Goal: Explore opportunities to build bike and pedestrian infrastructure along highways and major roads.

Borough residents have expressed a desire for a bike and pedestrian pathway along the highway and other roads within the borough for many years. The borough is not currently in a position to construct and maintain a bike and pedestrian pathway along any road within the borough. We can however, actively advocated for opportunities that may become available, through collaboration and communication with other agencies and organizations working on projects within the borough. Where federal money is used to for transportation projects, the State is obliged to take seriously the policies of approved local plans. The borough produces an annual Needs List that identifies the community’s priority transportation projects, which is incorporated into Alaska’s Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). The Comprehensive Plan also identifies several specific improvements to borough roads, some of which have been completed or are included in the STIP Needs List.

Specific 2017 community priorities include:

- Areawide: Multi-use pathway along large sections of the Parks Highway from Anderson to Cantwell.
- Anderson: Turning lane at Parks Highway Mile 285 Anderson Road intersection, northbound and southbound lanes.
- Kobe Road: Expand parking area to improve access for landowners, school buses and recreational users.
- McKinley Village: new, safer pedestrian and vehicle movements – combined with a new NPS trailhead, will create a valuable new “frontcountry” gateway, to the Oxbow and Triple Lakes Trails
- Healy: Multiple projects
 - Multi-use pathway along Healy Spur Road, from Parks Highway to School Road.
 - Upgrade Dry Creek Slough Bridge to include sufficient width for a separated pedestrian path, or develop a culvert
 - Relocate Bison Gulch parking area to the west side of Parks Highway, closer to the trailhead to Mt. Healy.
 - Frontage road on the west side of Parks Highway, south from the Hilltop Road intersection, to minimize direct driveway access to the highway.
 - Turning lane at Parks Highway Mile 251 Stampede and Lignite Road intersection, northbound and southbound lanes.
 - Turning lane at Parks Highway Mile 253, at location of proposed Healy Solid Waste Transfer Station, northbound and southbound lanes.
- Cantwell: Turning lane at Parks Highway Mile 210 Denali Highway intersection, northbound and southbound lanes.

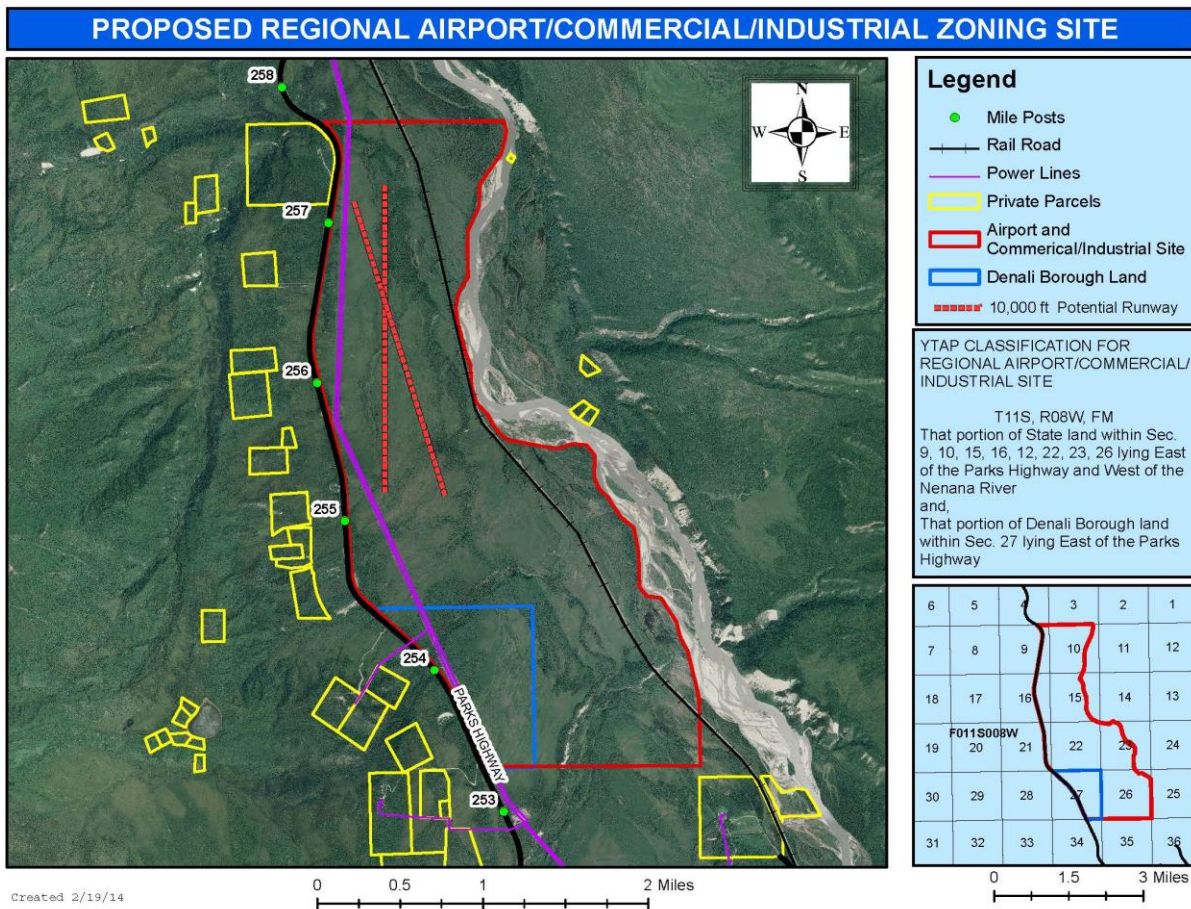
Goal: Document existing trails in the borough and seek opportunities to reserve and improve popular trails.

There are likely hundreds of miles of trails within the borough, from historic but typically unimproved routes, some of which are identified under “RS 2477” laws, to maintained trails on the periphery of the Park, to informal trails that cross public and private lands throughout the area. There is desire among residents to develop a more organized trail system in the Denali Borough. The first step to organize a regional trail system is to

document current trails and determine issues and concerns for each trail, including physical condition, typical users and patterns of use (seasonal variation, motorized and non-motorized), and legal status or level of current protection as a publicly accessible route. Residents can support this effort by contributing their knowledge about existing trails they are familiar with. By documenting and identifying trails that are, or could become, public trails, additional steps can be considered to improve or enhance some of these trails.

Goal: Explore options for developing a regional airport.

A new/improved airport could serve multiple functions, including allowing for reliable, year round emergency medical flights, and providing more opportunities for charter or even scheduled commercial flights for visitors and residents. The Planning Commission identified a possible area for a regional airport (see map below). This goal is outlined in greater detail in the Borough Comprehensive Plan (2015).



Possible Next Steps to Reach Transportation Goals

Goal: Support effective, easy to use, connected transportation options that benefit everyone who lives in, works in or visits Denali Borough.

Possible Next Steps:

Convene transportation providers as a leadership team. Bringing together key transportation providers can begin productive dialogues about shared interests and goals, build or strengthen relationships between these organizations, and discuss issues or concerns that each has about the system as it exists today. In the future, a transportation leadership team could be champions for specific projects or changes to existing services that would improve the transportation system overall. This leadership team does not have to have formal status, and in fact, can rise up around specific planning windows, such as Denali National Park's Trails and Long Range Transportation plans.

Develop a specific, borough approved transportation plan. The borough can have more influence over decisions by other transportation partners if the recommendations for highest priority projects are included in a widely supported, Assembly-approved plan for the area as a whole. One recent example is the fact that no pedestrian pathways were included as part of the upgrades to the Parks Highway. An approved borough plan that calls for such improvements greatly increases the odds that these pathways could have been included as part of planned road projects.

Goal: Explore opportunities to build bike and pedestrian infrastructure along highways and major roads.

Possible Next Steps:

Build on the work of the Healy Transportation and Pedestrian Safety Plan. In addition to identifying specific community projects, the HTAPS Plan provides an excellent framework, planning process and set of broad goals that other communities in the borough could use to develop their own list of local priorities. The HTAPS Plan acknowledges that some strategies are easier and cheaper than others, but the process led to other strategies that did not require significant investment, such as educational brochures about road safety and identification of needed signage. Other communities could use this process and the foundational work already in the HTAPS Plan to consider creative transportation solutions.

Goal: Document existing trails in the borough and seek opportunities to improve popular trails.

Possible Next Steps:

Explore options for public or private construction and maintenance of trails. Some trails, such as those within the Park, already have secure long-term maintenance. Others, particularly informal trails that cross undeveloped wilderness lands, may have little to no maintenance unless local residents or volunteers have assumed basic upkeep or occasional repairs. While a borough-wide, borough-sponsored trails maintenance plan is not feasible in the near term, the borough may be able to serve as a catalyst to spark a privately-managed effort. Possible specific actions include:

- Gather prospective partners to discuss trails issues, options and needs: the NPS Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program may be a good candidate to support and help coordinate this effort.
- Urge partners to form an informal trails organization, to take the lead on trail based actions. Given the importance of trails to visitors, possible partners include local businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, the Park Service (Denali National Park and NPS Rivers and Trails Conservation program), local non-profits and trails users.

Explore creative ways to fund and manage trail construction and maintenance. Examples:

- Occasional, trail focused volunteer based community events, such as a ski race or trail run, that includes volunteer trail maintenance and/or fundraising
- A particularly effective method, used in Mat-Su Borough, is offering small (e.g. <\$5000) competitive annual grants to trail user groups and unincorporated communities, to leverage local funds and in-kind services
- A leap forward, but one worth considering, is creating property tax base, local recreation/transportation improvement districts. These districts use a small increment of property tax revenues for specific locally driven projects. Decisions are made by a volunteer based, locally elected service area board. The result is highly efficient, locally controlled funding for locally identified priorities.

Collaborate with the National Park Service on development of future trail connections. NPS is in process of developing new trail connections and opportunities for access into the Park, especially in the “front country” to serve a wide variety of users. The Borough should be an active participant in the planning process, advising on priority trail connections that align with future residential or commercial developments, connect with existing informal trails, or explore new access points from other public lands.

Review existing subdivision code and consider revisions to promote trail connections. Subdivision and platting rules can partially determine future transportation options and long term maintenance needs. In addition to setting aside easements and rights of way for roads and utilities, a subdivision plat can reserve trails within the subdivision and/or connecting with trail networks outside the subdivision, to provide valuable recreational access between properties for residents, make longer-distance travel feasible if subdivisions are connected together, and protect against trespass on private property in other areas not designated as trails. While designated trails may not be appropriate for all subdivisions, revisions to the subdivision code could provide guidelines and, where appropriate, minimum requirements such as aligning a trail easement with an existing trail or section line easement.

Goal: Explore options to develop a regional airport.

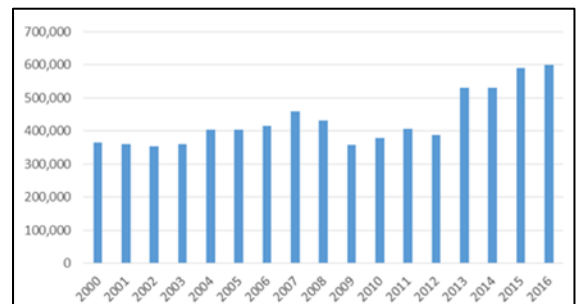
Possible Next Steps: Further steps are needed evaluate the characteristics of this site, and other issues and options around possible creation and operation of a new regional airport. This goal is outlined in greater detail in the Borough Comprehensive Plan (2015).

Economic and Fiscal Health

Issues, Challenges & Opportunities

Diverse & Stable: the borough has a healthier economy than most Alaskan places, based on “three legs”: tourism, state and federal spending and coal and power generation. Leading employers include:

- Denali National Park: about 300 employees, more than two thirds are seasonal.
- Denali School District: about 100 jobs
- Coal: Usibelli coal provides about 120 good paying, year-round jobs.
- GVEA: Operation of Golden Valley Electric’s plant provides 40 jobs (60 at peak operation); and several jobs at the Eva Creek Wind power operation.
- Small but growing year-round commercial services, including a new Three Bears grocery store in Healy
- Clear AFS: about 400 jobs, permanent and contract employees. Most live on base or commute from Fairbanks or Mat Su.



Denali National Park Visitation, 2000- 2016

Highly Seasonal: Unemployment swings from Alaska’s lowest to its highest, from 3,656 jobs in August to 856 jobs in January.

Tourism and Outdoor Recreation are the Foundation: Access to spectacular natural landscapes (mostly undeveloped, publicly owned lands) drive most of the borough economy.

- Tourism businesses have been consistently adding capacity in recent years, leading to construction, on average, of about 1 new hotel per year.
- Denali National Park visitors spend \$600 million per year, supporting 2,500 local, mostly summer jobs.
- Visits to Denali in the fall, winter and spring are growing, from nearly zero 20 years ago to about 1,500 per month in the heart of winter in recent years.
- “Out-the-backdoor” access to wild lands, including hiking, skiing, snowmachining, and scenic views, is a major reason people live in the borough.

Future Growth: Encourage? Resist? Accept and Guide?

While starting from a strong economic foundation, borough residents, businesses and leaders will need to face changes, challenges and opportunities in coming years. Examples:

- *Shifting Trends in Tourism?* The Park Service will slow growth of vehicles in the park and steer future demand to more accessible places and non-peak season.
- *State and Federal Spending?* Continuing expansion of the missile defense role for Clear AFS; changes in federal park maintenance budgets, changes in State funding for schools and roads, the largest revenue source for both services.
- *LNG Pipeline Wildcard?* The proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) pipeline would likely pass through the Borough, creating construction jobs and potentially substantial new local revenues.

Bed tax pays the bills

- In 2016, the borough collected \$3.5 million in bed tax, about 2/3 of borough revenue.
- Other revenue and expenditures: mining severance tax, fees associated with solid waste service, federal payments.
- The Borough government is lean: services include schools, solid waste, land management, administration.
- School district funding makes up 2/3 of borough expenditures.

Economic and Fiscal Health Goals

"This is a great place, but we're struggling to offer a "three-generation economy": a place where parents, children and grandchildren all can have reasonable prospects for both a good life and a decent living." June '17 workshops

Goal: Balance Economic, Fiscal, Community & Environmental Health

"We need 'calculated growth' – ways to grow, to create more year round jobs, more housing, more services, but in a way that holds onto what makes this place special." June '17 Workshops

Finding the right approach to growth was a continuing theme of the project. Community feedback reflected a mix of views about the benefits and the problems growth could bring. The emerging goal – for many people but not everyone – was to find ways to grow that can diversify and strengthen our local economy and at the same time to protect and enhance the qualities that make the borough a great place for us to live and others to visit.

Goal: Encourage expansion of the tourism industry by increasing fall, winter, and spring travel.

While tourism is the borough's primary economic sector, currently almost all that activity concentrates in 100 days of summer, generating relatively few jobs that pay a year-round, living wage. Building on the growing interest in winter and spring season travel, the borough and its partners should work to expand non-summer tourism. (See Land Use chapter for more about front country recreation and discussion of town centers).

Goal: Create/sustain great places to live (as an economic strategy).

Feedback from the community shows most residents chose to live in the borough for its quality of life, including access to the outdoors and the freedoms that come with few people and few rules, and at the same time great schools and a number of good jobs. Sustaining and improving that package can support manageable economic growth, aiming to attract residents who help create demand for desired new commercial and public services, provide more people to support community and volunteer-driven activities, and fill the classrooms of underutilized schools. (See below for more information about housing).

Goal: Encourage more housing opportunities.

"The last four houses sold in Healy all were converted to vacation rentals – you can rent them for \$400, \$500, \$600 per night"

A consistent challenge coming from borough residents, and a critical strategy for supporting some additional growth, is the need for more housing, both seasonally and year-round. The lack of housing opportunities holds back growth and is a particular barrier for young people and young families hoping to make a life in the borough. (See Land Use chapter for more discussion of housing strategies).

Goal: Encourage expansion of local commercial development so more borough resident spending stays local.

Denali Borough residents spend the majority of their income outside of Denali Borough. Because we lack many of the basic services and amenities, the opportunity to keep money circulating in the local economy is very limited. The more we encourage beneficial types and places for growth, the more services and amenities will be available locally, and the more residents can choose to spend locally.

Goal: Maintain a local voice about the gas pipeline, Clear AFS, and coal production.

The borough should continue to monitor issues and options regarding these huge, but very difficult to predict or influence economic activities. The specific goal is to steer these options, if they come to pass, to maximize local benefits, and minimizes local problems.

Goal: Borough Fiscal Health: Match borough revenues with anticipated growing demands for Borough services.

"It's time for us to grow up as a borough, to embrace the idea of personal responsibility, and start paying for the services we use, we want." June 2017 workshop

The Borough currently is fiscally sound, relying largely on bed tax revenues to provide a limited array of local services, primarily schools. Going forward, the borough should be ready to explore new fiscal strategies, in part to respond to expected reduction in state funding for schools and road maintenance, and also to improve options to link growing demands for services, with growing revenues to provide those services. Recent additions to borough responsibilities include managing the nearly 50,000 acres of Municipal Land Entitlements transferred to Borough ownership and, most recently, official transfer of management responsibility from Alaska Department of Natural Resources to the Borough for rights of way in previous state land sales.

Possible Next Steps to Reach Economic and Fiscal Goals

Three Primary Goals:

- **Balance Economic, Fiscal, Community & Environmental Health**
- **Create/sustain great places to live (as an economic strategy)**
- **Encourage expansion of local commercial development so more borough resident spending stays local.**

Possible Next Steps: The possible way to pursue each of these three broad goals are essentially all the goals and strategies in this plan, from ideas about expanding housing, to adopting land use rules like those exist today in the Tri-Valley subdivision, to options for improving roads and trails, to promoting frontcountry and winter tourism. The guiding theme in all these policies is to accept and even encourage growth, building a more year-round economy, but doing so in a managed way, aiming at the balance point in the cartoon graphic below:



Goal: Encourage expansion of the tourism industry by increasing fall, winter, and spring travel.

Possible Next Steps: With coordination and communication with local operators, service providers, the Park Service and other partners, the borough could encourage a beneficial swell in fall, winter, and springtime tourism. Experience shows most non-summer visitors are seeking one to two night visits to our area to experience sled dog activities, snow machine recreation, cross-country skiing, northern lights viewing, or just to experience the spectacular landscape. Options to expand non-summer visitation include:

- Expanding in-park winter opportunities, e.g., winter dog sled and ski tours.
- Continuing to keep the park plowed.
- Expanding front-country motorized and non-motorized trail systems.

- Expand commercial services during fall, winter and spring. Even more than summer visitors, winter travelers will seek out a comfortable place to stay in an interesting setting, with options for good food and convenient access to outdoor fun.
- Few out of state visitors understand how cold and wild Alaska winters can be. Steps are needed to increase resources to keep visitors safe and warm, including strategies from safety and preparation education, to having safety cabins in the backcountry.
- Good marketing is important: some local businesses and tourism operators have already increased marketing for their services, enticing more people to visit the area and offering more options for local activities.

Goal: Encourage more housing opportunities.

Possible Next Steps: Borough housing supply is squeezed by multiple forces, including limited private land and pressure for vacation rentals and employee housing. Options to address this issue include sales of borough land (see land use section), creating the option for well-designed higher density housing, especially if offered in an attractive setting like the proposed town centers, and incentives to put vacant land on the market.

Goal: Maintain a local voice about the gas pipeline, Clear AFS, and coal production.

Possible Next Steps: Influencing these topics is difficult. Possible helpful actions include:

- Clear AFS: Continue to work with the new base commander, the City of Anderson, the Alaska congressional delegation, and other partners to expand the benefits to the borough of the over-\$400 million construction project now underway on the base.
- LNG Pipeline: continue to participate in planning for this project, including identifying possible future pipeline routes in future land planning
- Coal Production: if/when requested by Usibelli, support for renewed coal exports.

Goal: Borough Fiscal Health: Match borough revenues with anticipated growing demands for Borough services.

Possible Next Steps: No one likes taxes, but borough growth and declining state support likely means the borough will need to find new funding to support desired public services. The state's \$3.5 billion annual operating deficit has and likely will continue to lead to reduced state funding for local services, for example, funding for schools, capital projects, and revenue sharing (already down 50% from previous highs). The State of Alaska likely will be reducing spending on services traditionally provided by the State, such as road maintenance and State Troopers. The State Department of Natural Resources recently transferred responsibility to manage easements and rights of way on past state land sales to the borough. This is a significant new burden the borough now must shoulder.

Examples of specific services people desire but may require new funding include:

- Maintaining high quality local schools.
- Local health services.
- Road construction and maintenance.
- Working with the state, the Park Service and other partners, improved "frontcountry" recreation facilities like trails and day use facilities.
- Community facilities/towncenter projects, such as a recreation center.
- More active land management, on borough owned municipal entitlement lands, on lands and rights of way transferred to the borough, and perhaps on private lands.

If and when these pressures grow, much more discussion with public will be needed to determine if new local revenue generation is justified, what form this might take, and ways to ensure the real benefits that might result.

Appendices

The following documents are available as appendices. Visit the Denali Borough website (www.denaliborough.org) or request copies from the Borough office.

Appendix 1

Three background documents, prepared as part of this planning process, summarizing current trends, issues and opportunities, corresponding with the three plan chapters:

- a) Land Use & Neighborhoods
- b) Transportation Safety & Access
- c) Healthy Local Economy

Appendix 2

Borough and community maps depicting current (2017) land ownership of major parcels.

- a) Denali Borough, Parks Highway Corridor and primary communities
- b) City of Anderson and Clear Air Force Station
- c) Healy Area
- d) McKinley Village and Denali Park Entrance
- e) Cantwell and Western Denali Highway

Appendix 3

Community-wide online survey, developed and launched in spring 2017 as part of public engagement process for this planning process.

- a) Summary of survey results, key themes and selected quotes
- b) Tables of all survey results
- c) Print version of survey questions

Appendix 4

Other materials used in the 2017 public engagement and planning process

- a) Presentation to Planning Commission and Advisory Team Meeting (March 21, 2017)
- b) Flyer advertising planning process and June public workshops (May 2017)
- c) Presentation from June public workshops & summary of themes (June 12-15, 2017)
- d) Posters shared at June public workshops
 - o Summarized issues and opportunities on land use, transportation and economic development (included above)
 - o Community survey results (included above)
 - o Visual summaries of borough demographic and fiscal trends
 - o Case studies of gateway communities near other National Parks

Appendix 5

Memo to Denali Borough from Agnew::Beck Consulting outlining recommended land use planning process (Fall 2016)

Appendix 6

Excerpt, "4: Goals for Borough Owned Lands," *Borough Land Management Plan* (2015)

Appendix 7

Guidelines for a Successful Town Center

Attract people with the right mix of uses.

- Meet basic, regular commercial needs of residents and visitors, such as groceries, a coffee shop and/or bakery, complimentary wi-fi, barbershops or beauty salons, gifts.
- Concentrate potential users within and near the center: housing, lodging, office, and civic uses like a post office or community recreation facility.
- Create other reasons to visit: “five star” attractions, such as a visitor center, small museum, destination playground.

Tame the automobile.

- Provide for mobility, a balanced mix of convenient and safe vehicular, transit, trail and sidewalk access.
- Provide good parking, in a way that doesn’t hinder walkability.
- Provide essential “urban” infrastructure, such as shared sewer and water services, which allows buildings to be close together, key for walkability.

Concentrate uses and create good places to walk.

- Create “critical mass” by concentrating uses: one rule of thumb is people will comfortably stroll in a main street setting, generally not more than ¼ mile.
- Provide the ingredients that create good walking: sidewalks, with clustered buildings with doors and windows close to the street.

Provide reasons to linger: pleasures of place & people.

“What attracts people most, it would appear, is other people.” William Whyte

- Invest in comfortable public space, places that invite “public life,” including generous seating, small gathering places, and shelter from the elements.
- Sensory delights: trees, views, flowers, and the smell of fresh baked bread.
- Sense of place: links to history, buildings that reflect the climate and traditions, festivals or special events that draw people into the area.

Pictured at right: the Three Bears grocery store, under construction fall 2017, an example of the types of the scale of changes – welcomed or not – that will likely continue in the Denali Borough

