

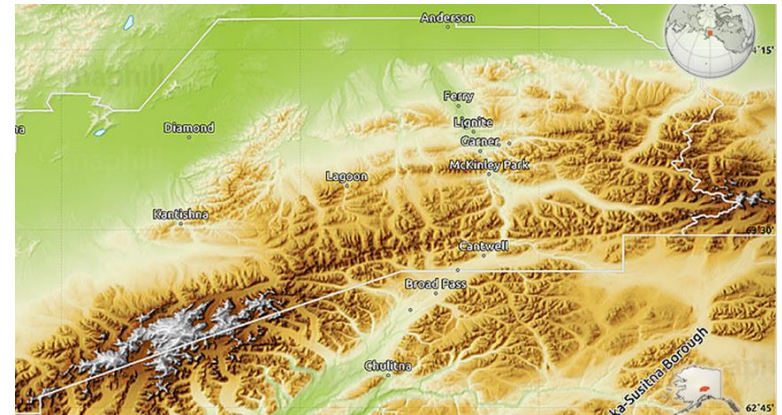
# Land Use & Neighborhoods

## Spectacular, diverse landscape with distinct communities

Most of the borough is remote, wild and held in public ownership: **70%** of the borough is 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: Anderson on the north is linked to the adjoining Clear AFS. At the borough's southern end is Cantwell, home to the Native Village of Cantwell. In between are three primary settlements: Healy, which started as a coal town; the seasonal park entry lodging and commercial area known as Nenana Canyon, and McKinley Village.

These three share connections to the flow of visitors into the Park, but each has its own unique character.



## Land Uses, Trends and Issues

The description of land use in the borough combines many elements that have changed little over the years—mountains, rivers, wildlife. At the same time, other elements have changed greatly and are likely to continue to evolve.

-  Important Wild & Natural Landscapes
-  Pride & Pleasure in Community Life
-  Changing Character of Neighborhoods & Towns
-  Management of Borough-Owned Lands



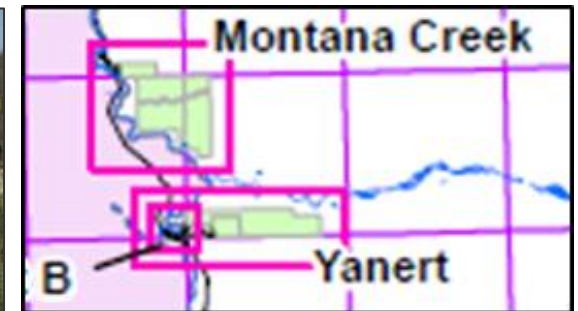
The borough's economy, fiscal health, and quality of life builds around access to a wide range of attractive, untouched wilderness environments. Variations in land policies will help determine the future in these valued places.



Survey results make clear people treasure the small town, friendly in the borough. Growth can degrade these benefits, or alternatively, help sustain them, for example, through helping to pay for new community facilities.



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



The borough has received almost **50,000** acres of land through the state Municipal Entitlement program. A recently-adopted 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.

# Land Use & Neighborhoods

## Future Issues, Opportunities & Choices

The existing Borough Comprehensive Plan and the interviews and survey associated with this update highlight a range of land use issues, goals and choices. Highlights are presented below.

Neighborhood Character



Environment, Economy & Quality of Life

Housing Supply



Managing Land Use



### Protect Neighborhood Character

Few borough residents want strict, or even any, rules on use of private land. At the same time, residential neighborhoods have seen some big changes recently, including new employee housing, motorcoach parking, and commercial activities.

- Should the borough overall, or individual areas, have policies to reduce off-site impacts of land uses, e.g., setbacks, buffers, or other policies?
- Should there be rules separating potentially incompatible land uses, such as separating industrial uses or gravel pits from adjoining homes?



### Increase Housing Supply

Many voices expressed desire for more housing options, for year round residents as well as seasonal employees. How best to respond to this need?

- Improve access to and sell borough-owned land? or land held by the Alaska Mental Health Trust, the Alaska Railroad, the State of Alaska?
- Work to find neighborhood-compatible locations for seasonal workers?
- Create incentives to bring more existing private land onto the market. Improved access is one option; another more controversial option would be to a property tax, giving owners a motivation to no "sit on" land indefinitely.



### Environment, Economy & Quality of Life

Land use policies can have big impacts on all these topics. Options to discuss:

- Strategies to guide growth and improve appearance & walkability of some areas, like the Park entrance? Create a Healy town center? The picture at right is a concept from a previous plan.
- Strategies to improve recreational opportunities for residents and visitors? Example: a trails plan, more "front-country" recreation on public lands?
- Strategies to protect views along the Parks Highway? to protect natural landscapes (e.g., setbacks from streams, rules on off trail vehicles)?



### Manage Land Use?

Two extracts from the Comp. Plan:

**"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."**

One option to bridge the gap between those who want no growth, and those who want no regulation or management, is shown below:



Currently all land is zoned unrestricted except the around the landfill which is zoned industrial. Any plan for more land use rules needs to be realistic about the capacity of the borough to enforce them.



**"The #1 activity of visitors throughout the world (including Alaska) is shopping, dining and entertainment in a pedestrian friendly setting."**  
- US Travel Assoc.

DENALI DESIGNING FOR COMMUNITY  
HEALY TOWNCENTER