

# Transportation, Access & Safety

Transportation options, or modes, provide mobility (getting from one place to another) and access to important destinations. There are many modes of transportation in the Denali Borough, from freight trucks on the Parks Highway to shuttle buses to recreational trails.

## Current Transportation Modes & Infrastructure



### Road System

- George Parks Highway: Main corridor through the borough, connecting all communities with Fairbanks, Mat-Su and Anchorage.
- Denali Highway: Mainly unpaved, connects Cantwell and Paxson
- Most major roads are state owned and maintained



### Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety

- Informal multi-use trails developed along existing rights of way on Parks Highway and major roads
- Safety concerns along busy Parks highway and Healy intersections
- Multi-use path, signal intersection recently built along Parks Hwy. at Nenana Canyon



### Alaska Railroad

- Connects the borough to the Railbelt at the Park (passengers) and Usibelli Coal Mine (freight)
- **1 in 5** visitors to Denali Park arrive by train (95,906 in 2015)
- Coal transported to Fairbanks, or in the past south to Seward for export.



### Denali Park Road

- **92** mi from Park entrance to Kantishna mining district
- Buses operated by Doyon/Aramark Joint Venture or private lodges, primarily within the park
- Vehicle access limited past Mile 15 (Savage River) except with permit



### Aviation

- **6** main airports, including facilities at Clear and within the Park
- **3** main airstrips, and numerous smaller airstrips or helipads
- Primarily uses: tourism (flight-seeing, transport to remote areas), private & recreation use, remote emergency & fire services



### Motorized Uses

- Many people use ATVs and snowmachines to travel in the borough or access remote lands
- Informal trails within right of way along Parks Hwy. and main roads
- Motorized use is restricted within the Park and on some public lands
- Some conflicts with other users



### Road Maintenance & Construction

- Borough has no road powers
- Highways and major roads in the borough maintained by Alaska DOT&PF year-round
- Other roads and subdivisions maintained privately by residents



### Recreational Trails

- Many informal trails, no formal network established or maintained
- Park trails maintained by NPS
- RS 2477 corridors preserve public access, with others pending
- Some trespass issues; Ahtna allows trail use with a permit

## How do people get around?

A 2015 survey conducted by the Healy Transportation and Pedestrian Safety Ad-hoc Committee found that residents travel around in different ways:

**97%** car, truck or van

**78%** walk or jog

**55%** bicycle

**43%** ATV & 4-wheeler

## Busy Parks Highway Corridor

The Parks Highway serves 1,000 to 3,000 vehicles daily, with the highest concentration around the Park entrance and Healy Spur/Hilltop Rd. intersection.

## Average vehicles per day (2015)

Road	Vehicles/Day
Parks Hwy., north of Park	2,600
Parks Hwy., south of Park	2,000
Parks Hwy., Healy area	1,800
Healy Spur Rd.	1,000
Healy School Rd.	830
Otto Lake Rd.	560
Clear Rd.	480
Hilltop Rd.	330

Nenana Canyon intersection, Parks Highway



# Transportation, Access & Safety

## Existing Plans

### 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
- Focused on Healy (Parks Hwy mi 247 to 251.2, Healy Spur, Otto Lake, Hilltop, Stampede/Lignite)

#### Overall Goal:

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

**Goal 1: Infrastructure.** Establish safe traffic and pedestrian routes within the community of Healy.

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

#### Strategies to promote safety:

- Multi-use paths, turn lanes, wider shoulders on DOT roads
- Speed limit and pedestrian crossing signage
- Trails or safe crossings for students at Tri-Valley School

### Denali Park Transportation & Trails Planning

#### Vehicle Management Plan

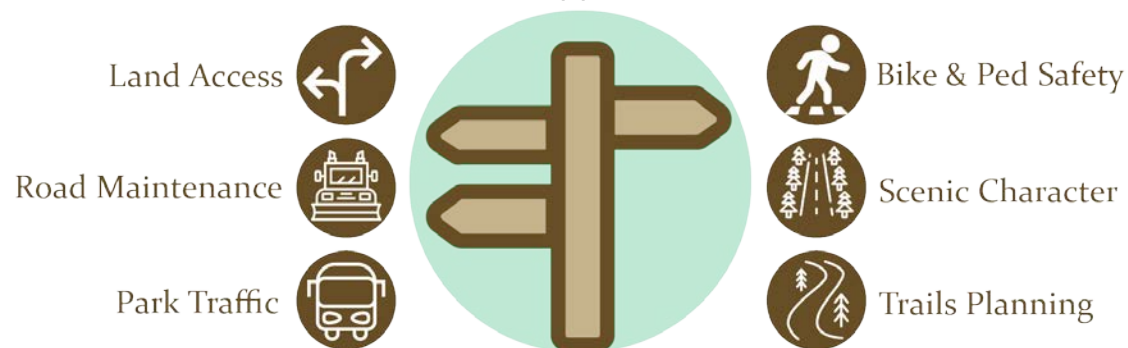
- Adopted 2012
- Slower growth of vehicles allowed within the Park over the next two decades
- Shift future recreation demand from Park Road to "front country" activities at Park entrance and accessible areas
- Respond to increasing shoulder-season/winter demand

#### Trails Strategy & Long Range Transportation Plan

- Planning in progress, summer 2017
- Possible trail routes along Parks Highway, additional access points to the Park from the north or south, connecting existing Oxbow & Triple Lakes trails
- Possible future shuttle system for improved access into the Park or travel between destinations within the Park
- Develop or expand partnerships to improve visitor amenities and services within and around the Park

## Where Do We Want to Go?

### Issues & Opportunities



<p><b>Land Access</b></p> <p><i>What are the priorities?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved access for future sales of Borough land for residential uses?</li> <li>• Access to areas adjoining existing development (e.g., Montana Creek area?)</li> <li>• Access to remote lands</li> </ul>	<p><b>Bike &amp; Pedestrian Safety</b></p> <p><i>What options to address growing pedestrian traffic?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-use trails on roads</li> <li>• Improvements at key intersections (with DOT)</li> <li>• Planned developments to create attractive, practical, safe walkable places</li> </ul>
<p><b>Road Maintenance</b></p> <p>State funding likely to decline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Should the Borough explore options to adopt road powers for local needs?</i></li> <li>• <i>Should residents/land owners have the option for Road Service Areas, where there is local support?</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Trails Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document formal and informal trail network</li> <li>• Set priorities &amp; processes for preserving high value public trails</li> <li>• Public private partnerships for maintenance, events, education, signage</li> </ul>
<p><b>Park Traffic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support more front country development, activities</li> <li>• Connect trails within and outside the park</li> <li>• Promote shuttle, circulation plan, better access to most popular destinations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Scenic Character</b></p> <p><i>Given the importance of tourism, what actions to maintain visual quality of the Parks Hwy corridor?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign ordinance?</li> <li>• Keep vegetation as buffers?</li> <li>• Restrict development?</li> </ul>