

Point MacKenzie Community Comprehensive Plan



Adopted July 2011

**Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Planning and Land Use Department**

CODE ORDINANCE

By: Borough Manager
Introduced: 04/19/11
Public Hearing: 05/03/11
Postponed to 07/19/11: 05/03/11
Amended: 07/19/11
Adopted: 07/19/11

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
ORDINANCE SERIAL NO. 11-052**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY AMENDING
MSB 15.24.030 ADOPTING THE POINT MACKENZIE COMMUNITY
COMPREHENSIVE 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.

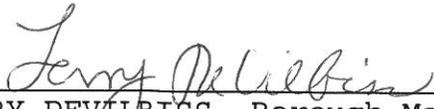
Section 2. Adoption of Plan. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly hereby adopts the Point MacKenzie Community Comprehensive Plan 2011.

Section 3. Amendment of section. MSB 15.24.030(B) is hereby amended to read as follows:

(29) Point MacKenzie Community Comprehensive Plan, adopted 2011. (ORD. 11-052 dated July 19, 2011),

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

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly this
19 day of July, 2011.



LARRY DEVILBISS, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:



LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

(SEAL)

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: Keogh, Woods, Arvin, Ewing, Bettine,
Colver, and Halter

Acknowledgements

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Point MacKenzie Community Comprehensive Plan

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1) INTRODUCTION

The Point MacKenzie Community Comprehensive Plan does not include the Port MacKenzie Industrial District. The Port MacKenzie Industrial District is included in the Port MacKenzie Master Plan and the MSB Coastal Management Plan with the appended Area Meriting Special Attention.

This plan is the result of a local planning effort for the rapidly changing Point MacKenzie community. The team that developed this plan urges the community to update the plan in three to five years to ensure the plan continues to reflect the needs and desires of the area's residents and property owners.

Nothing in this plan dictates what can be done on private property. The plan contains aspirational goals to help the community shape its future. The plan does not contain regulations restricting property rights.

Community Vision Statement

The Point MacKenzie community is a sparsely developed agricultural region. Providing for conscientious, environmentally sound development is a goal of this community.

Development of Point MacKenzie's infrastructure including major transportation routes, public utilities, and services is to be achieved for both the betterment of the community, the region, and the state of Alaska.

Potentially the most productive area in the entire borough will be the Point MacKenzie Area, which includes the Port MacKenzie and the medium security prison. The resulting overflow of business, and the corresponding influx of people, will require more of absolutely everything you can think of to fill the responsibility to people: schools, housing, safety and health issues are only a tip of the planning sheet.

Scope and Purpose

The Point MacKenzie Community Comprehensive Plan is an official public document that provides the framework for long-range decision-making in the community. The Plan serves to guide the community's growth and development through the year 2030, by addressing the multitude of issues facing the community, ranging from land use to economic development to public facilities and beyond. Borough and state officials can use the document to make policy decisions that effectively provide a coordinated approach for future growth. Thus, by setting a course of action to guide the community's development over the next twenty years, the community and its residents are much more likely to realize desired outcomes.

Alaska Statutes Title 29.40.030 requires that the assembly of a second-class borough adopt a comprehensive plan by ordinance. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough was incorporated as a second-class borough in 1964. Alaska Statute defines a comprehensive plan as "a compilation

for policy statements, goals, standards, and maps for guiding the physical, social, and economic development, both private and public,” of an area. The comprehensive plan may include, but is not limited to statements of policies, goals, standards, a land use plan, a community facilities plan, and recommendations for implementation of the comprehensive plan.

Matanuska-Susitna borough Title 15.24.030 requires the borough assembly to prepare comprehensive plans designed to:

- Promote safety for vehicular and pedestrian traffic, prevent congestion and preserve the function of roads;
- Secure safety from fire, flood, pollution, and other dangers;
- Promote health and general welfare;
- Provide for orderly development with a range of population densities, in harmony with the ability to provide services efficiently, while avoiding overcrowding of population;
- Provide adequate light and air;
- Preserve the natural resources;
- Preserve property values;
- Promote economic development; and
- Facilitate adequate provision for transportation, water, waste disposal, schools, recreation, and other public requirements. Moreover, each community can reap other benefits from developing and implementing a comprehensive plan. These can include:
 - Predictability for future development and preservation;
 - Vision for quality of life and economic health;
 - Qualification for state and federal funding;
 - Direction for related government actions and activities (such as regulations, capital improvements, and programs);
 - Public involvement and information;
 - Integration of different kinds of community planning (for example, land use and transportation);

A comprehensive plan provides coordinated goals, policies, maps, and strategies regarding the community’s development, investment, and quality of life. It takes a broad, not necessarily detailed, perspective for a twenty-year period and incorporates future needs for population and employment growth. The purpose of planning is to provide the residents, property owners, elected leaders and other members of the community the ability to make effective decisions about the needs and goals of their community.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Plan, it is not intended that policies and maps contained in the Plan will be used to restrict private land development which would not otherwise be restricted. Private land development plans will be evaluated on a case by case basis, with Borough decisions, if required, to be based on guidance provided by the Plan as well as other relevant information.

Project Area

The Community Comprehensive Plan project area consists of 157 square miles, defined by the Point MacKenzie Community Council Boundary (see “Land Ownership” map on page 7). It

includes the last few miles of the Knik-Goose Bay Road and the entire length of the Point MacKenzie Road. The community is bounded on the west by the Little Susitna River and on the south and east by the Knik Arm. The Big Lake and Knik-Fairview Community Councils define the northern boundary.

Who Prepared This Plan?

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough helped the community of Point MacKenzie to prepare this plan by providing technical assistance, background information, and staff support.¹

A planning team was formed with a broad range of community representation (i.e. residents, property owners, local business owners, etc.).

Planning team members made the following commitments:

- Will make the voluntary commitment of time to be available for meetings during the planning effort;
- Will consider compromises that will help manage conflict between competing segments of the community;
- Will listen to and consider testimony from the public and other government agencies as it affects the comprehensive plan;
- Will commit to develop a comprehensive plan that will represent the entire planning area;
- Will commit to distribute accurate information to other community members and clarify misunderstandings.

Link to Previous and Current Plans, to State and Borough Policy

- This Community Comprehensive Plan serves as an update to Point MacKenzie's portion of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Comprehensive Plan.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Comprehensive Plan (1970) refers to the community as the MacKenzie Point region. A breakthrough at the time was a private firm's plan to construct a totally designed community on the Point, connected to Anchorage by an aerial tramway. The community on the point was to be entirely interconnected, with enclosed walkways, shopping malls, and moving sidewalks. The community was designed to be automobile-independent. The firm estimated the community would consist of 20,000 people by 1975.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Comprehensive Plan was amended in 2005 to update the section addressing Borough-wide growth and development issues.

Other major planning documents affecting the Point MacKenzie planning area are listed below.

Matanuska-Susitna Borough

- Coastal Management Plan

The Point MacKenzie planning area is located within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Coastal Management District

- Long Range Transportation Plan
- Public Facilities Plan

¹ MSB Planning Commission Resolution 07-47

- Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan
- Recreational Trails Plan, and
- Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority Historic Preservation Plan
- Asset Management Plan: Natural Resource Management Units (To be adopted by the Assembly)

Level of Authority

Even though comprehensive plans include priorities and recommendations for action, they are not manuals dictating detailed implementation of community goals. A comprehensive plan sets out general goals and objectives. On almost all subjects addressed by the plan, more detailed implementation actions are required before any specific action called for in the plan takes place. Several examples of this are listed below.

A comprehensive plan is a vision for community's future with milestones and guidelines to help the residents realize the vision. The comprehensive plan is not a step towards becoming an incorporated city. The plan cannot require anyone to change the way private property is used.

Benefits of a Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan requires a significant investment of community time and community resources. Some of the benefits of a comprehensive plan that justify this investment are outlined below:

1. *Funding* – The plan allows the community to prioritize projects. Once documented in the plan, the community has much better odds of getting the resources needed to carry out these projects, both with agencies and grant-giving foundations. Many funding organizations will not fund projects until a community has an adopted plan.
2. *Influence* – An approved Comprehensive Plan allows Point MacKenzie to speak with a unified voice to agencies and other interests from outside the community, thereby gaining more influence over decisions affecting the community.
3. *Thinking Ahead* – The Comprehensive Plan process provides the chance to take actions on issues before they become problems. For example, setting aside public land for public facilities, trails or a road, rather than waiting until the need is urgent, land costs are prohibitive, or land is unavailable.
4. *Information & Agreement* – The process of developing a Comprehensive Plan provides opportunities for productive public debate about issues of community-wide significance, and a forum for building community-wide agreement.

Point MacKenzie Community Council



This map is solely for informational purposes only. The information shown on this map is not intended to be used as a basis for any legal action or claim. The information on this map is not intended to be used as a basis for any legal action or claim. The information on this map is not intended to be used as a basis for any legal action or claim.

MSB Information Technology Dept./GIS
March 21, 2011

The Importance of Community Input

The value of a comprehensive plan is based on capturing and conveying community wishes. Involving community members in the process, building consensus among them, and incorporating these ideas into the plan is the cornerstone of the planning process.²

To this end, the Point MacKenzie Community Comprehensive Plan process incorporates multiple opportunities for public involvement. The community has been asked both to help provide important background information and to prepare, review and comment on plan drafts.

Summary of Community Input Used to Develop This Plan

Comprehensive Plans are involved processes. Often they take a year (sometimes more) from beginning stages to final draft and approval. MSB's Assembly recognizes that public involvement and knowledge of community desires are key to a successful Comprehensive Plan.

A. Coordination and discussions with the Point MacKenzie Planning Team

A voluntary group of residents who are approved by the MSB Planning Commission – the community Planning Team – helped immensely in obtaining local input by coordinating meetings, working to involve residents and major interest groups and gathering information. These volunteers were crucial in creating, refining and clarifying the community's goals and strategies to implement these goals. By the conclusion of this process, 31 Planning Team meetings will have been held.

B. Release of Draft Comp Plan for community review

In December 2009, the first draft of the Community Comprehensive Plan was completed and released for public review and comment. In September this revised draft was completed and again released for public comment. Drafts of the Community Comprehensive Plan were dispersed to the Point MacKenzie General Store, emailed to Planning Team members and made available online at www.matsugov.us/planning.

C. Formal review, revision and adoption of this Community Comprehensive Plan

After the public comments phase, the Point MacKenzie Planning Team again reviewed and revised the draft Community Comprehensive Plan. The team approved the revised plan on December 8th, 2010 and passed it on to the Point MacKenzie Community Council for the next level of approval. Once the Community Comprehensive Plan was approved at the local level, the Matanuska-Susitna



Borough's Planning Commission reviewed and approved the plan. Finally, the Borough Assembly reviewed and approved the Community Comprehensive Plan, making it formally and legally adopted. Once formally adopted, a Borough code ordinance adopting the plan was completed. This code ordinance adopting the plan is included after the title page.

² MSB Planning Commission Resolution 06-56

Once adopted, it is the responsibility of the Point MacKenzie Community Council to work on implementing the Community Comprehensive Plan. The Council will work with others in the community and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough to take steps to accomplish the goals of this plan. Since comprehensive plans are long-term (typically 20-year) planning documents, they are typically reviewed and updated every five years to identify successes and changes in implementing the plan. Changes to the Community Comprehensive Plan require local approval as well as review and approval by the Borough Planning Commission and Assembly.

The Community Comprehensive Plan will only be of value to Point MacKenzie if it helps the community to achieve specific objectives, and to help the MSB and other government agencies meet priority needs.

2) HISTORY OF THE POINT MACKENZIE AREA

Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina, an Alaska Native people have traditionally carried seasonal subsistence activities that cover the Skwentna, Yentna, Chulitna, Susitna, Talkeetna, and Matanuska river drainages. Activities included a broad base of both inland and coastal resources, but the primary focus was on the annual salmon runs. Initial EuroAmerican settlers in the region arrived to participate in fur trapping and trading, and many of them adopted features of the Dena'ina subsistence lifestyle.

Gold was reported around 1896 in the Miller and Canyon Creek area of the Susitna River drainage. This was followed in 1897 by an influx of several hundred gold miners who landed at Tyonek and traveled the Susitna River and its tributaries, including Willow Creek, to look for claims. In the late nineteenth century economic endeavors changed from trapping, selling and buying furs to prospecting for gold.

Most of the commercial companies emphasized outfitting and freighting supplies to gold claims. Knik, established on the west side of Knik Arm in the late nineteenth century, served as the hub for supplies being taken up the Susitna River. In 1915 Knik had the largest population in Upper Cook Inlet. It flourished with the development of commercial fishing and processing, mining, and homesteading until it was bypassed by the newly constructed railroad, built in 1917. A network of subsistence-related trails in the Point Mackenzie area was improved upon during the local gold rush.

Farms existed in the Knik area as early as 1887. The first agricultural efforts in the region were made by miners in order to supplement their incomes when mining failed to sustain them, and by some roadhouse managers. Roadhouses were first built in the 1890s along trails to the gold fields. Owners and managers often raised vegetables and hay to feed travelers and horses. Later, Knik area homesteaders raised vegetables for the miners and grains for the horses.

By 1940, the Matanuska River Valley was a stable agricultural community. Most of the growth in the 1940s and 1950s took place in the valley, where in the 1940s most farmers produced milk (over 40% of farm production) and potatoes (over 30%). Dairy and vegetable farming provided goods for local markets from 118 tracts of cultivated land. In 1940 Fort Richardson army base was constructed, opening a new market for valley farmers. Within ten years, farm production in

Alaska had doubled, with milk accounting for 49% of farm production and potatoes accounting for 25%. In Alaska, the number of dairy farms increased from nine in 1940 to more than 38 in 1959.

Knik was a center of trade and commerce until construction of the railroad, and was a hub of cross-country trails radiating from the community. At that time, attention shifted to the townsite in Wasilla, and most of the EuroAmericans moved to Wasilla. Knik was the site of one of the first schools in the Matanuska-Susitna region.

The potential for a boom in the Point MacKenzie area was highlighted nearly 40 years ago in the 1970 borough-wide comprehensive plan. Heralded as a breakthrough at the time, a private firm proposed to construct a totally designed community on the Point. The community was going to be connected to Anchorage via aerial tram and would be vehicle-free. The firm projected that 20,000 people would be living on the Point of Point MacKenzie by 1975. The “designed community” was independent of a Knik Arm Crossing, relying on a 100-person tram for movement of people to and from Anchorage. Planning to accommodate the future boom is necessary despite the fact that the year-round population of the Point MacKenzie community is under 300. Highlighting this need is development of a connection to Anchorage, through ferry service and the Knik Arm Crossing. Access to the community has never been easier, now that the Point MacKenzie Road is paved and additional road improvement projects are schedule for the near future.

Population

The Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development Division of Community and Regional Affairs estimated that 273 people resided in the Point MacKenzie community in 2009.

The most recent U.S. Census was completed in 2000. Nearly ten years ago, there were 111 people, 39 households, and 26 families residing in the Point MacKenzie area. The population density was 0.8/mi². There were 98 housing units at an average density of 0.7/mi². Of the 39 occupied households in 2000, about a quarter of them included children under the age of 18, and over half included married couples living together. Around 12 of the 39 occupied household were reported as non-families. The average household had fewer than three residents. The mid-point of Point MacKenzie household income was \$23,250, and the median income for a family was \$69,688. About one out of five residents were living below the poverty line.

3) LAND USE

Overview

This chapter has been significantly modified following the community review and comment period. The revised land use section is expected to be enhanced as the community becomes more familiar with the growth patterns that develop following adoption of the plan, Port development projects, and opening of the Goose Creek Correctional Center.

Land Use Goals

The following land use goals are not presented in order of priority.

1. Promote the development of a variety of mixed-use residential/commercial/business areas.
2. Encourage development of a town center, to include a site for a library, health clinic, a service station, school sites, post office, community center, grocery store, café, hotel, police station, and multi-family development;
3. Encourage expansion of public and commercial services.
4. Encourage clean-up and development of the former Nike site.
5. Encourage the routing of any major “linear” infrastructure project to locate away from any existing or planned commercial or residential areas.

Context: Land Use in Point MacKenzie & Surrounding Areas

Land Use in Point MacKenzie

Land use in the community of Point MacKenzie today, closely corresponds to its specific geographical features, history of homesteading, its road system, access to the Little Susitna River, and its proximity to the Knik Arm of Cook Inlet. Land use in the area is a mix of public recreation uses and wildlife habitat on borough and State lands, residential uses, industrial uses, commercial enterprises, aviation uses, forestry, agriculture, and mineral resource development. Two very distinct areas with very different land use characters exist within the community, one inland and the other at Port MacKenzie. The Point MacKenzie Port District contains its own assortment of industrial and commercial uses. Issues in the Port District are sufficiently distinct and complex that this plan merely references the Port MacKenzie Master Plan and the Area Meriting Special Attention Plan.

The current land use distribution is largely a result of subdivision for recreational residential development.

Large blocks of land have remained undeveloped awaiting feasible development or use plans by private and public landowners.

Recreation is one of the area’s land uses. The planning area includes State parks and refuges, such as the Susitna Flats State Game Refuge (SGR), Little Susitna State Recreation River, and Goose Bay SGR. Land in the area is also commonly used for both sport and subsistence hunting and fishing.

Point MacKenzie’s pattern of development is also greatly influenced by physical constraints. Steep slopes, bluff and shoreline erosion, and wetland areas make development of many parcels costly, difficult or even unfeasible. Nevertheless, such areas can have great value for the community as a whole. Natural drainage ways and slopes can form an integrated open space network which supports the areas that may be developed more intensively.

Land Use Goals & Objectives

GOAL 1: Promote the development of mixed-use residential/commercial/business areas.

Objective A: Encourage business/commerce areas.

Objective B: Encourage development along the Point MacKenzie Road and major collectors/thoroughfares.

Objective C: Encourage and accommodate commercial land uses and allow new types of commercial activities to take place.

Strategy 1: Anticipate the growth in white-collar business activities and clean industries.

Strategy 2: Target high tech industries or professional/web-based activities.

GOAL 2: Encourage development of town centers. The town centers should include sites for a library, health clinic, post office, service station, school sites, community center, grocery store, café, hotel, police station, and multi-family development.

Objective A: Create a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use town center, to include places to meet friends and neighbors, venues for events and community meetings, a farmers market, commercial services like a bank, Post Office, grocery, restaurants; provide sufficient utilities to support higher density development.

Strategy 1: Work with the Borough to appropriately dispose of land in the community.

Strategy 2: Make efficient use of infrastructure, support a healthy local economy.

Strategy 3: Develop a town center master plan.

Objective B: Encourage development of efficient energy sources in the community.

GOAL 3: Encourage expansion of public and commercial services.

Strategy 1: Provide for mixed residential and commercial development.

GOAL 4: Encourage clean-up and development of the former Nike site.

The Anchorage Nike Site Bay, commonly referred to as the Goose Bay Nike Site, was used from about 1959 to 30 July 1979. The land was acquired by the Air Force (withdrawn from Bureau of Land Management) on 16 Oct 1956. It was transferred to the Army on 8 Oct 1957. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers documents indicate the control area was a correctional center owned by the state of Alaska; the launcher site has remained abandoned since it transferred to the University of

Alaska. Some level of hydrocarbon contamination resulting from previous site activities may persist at the site. The site contains developable land at the end of the Knik Goose Bay Road.

Objective 1: Encourage the current owners of the former Nike site to remediate and redevelop it for the following potential future uses:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| i. School or university; | iv. Industrial Park; |
| ii. Mixed use residential area; | v. Park; or a |
| iii. Business center; | vi. Regional airport. |

Strategy 1: Encourage the State, the Mental Health Trust, and the University of Alaska to pursue EPA Brownfield Program grant funding for assessment and cleanup of the site.

Brownfields are property where redevelopment or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties protects the environment, reduces blight, and takes development pressures off green spaces and working lands.

GOAL 5: Encourage the routing of any major “linear” infrastructure project to locate away from any existing or planned commercial or residential areas unless doing so will clearly result in unreasonable land use outcomes or conflicts.

Limited available public land for development in the Point MacKenzie community will result in a majority of the development occurring along Point MacKenzie Road. Every effort should be made to retain the open nature and natural beauty of this corridor.

Objective 1: New “linear” projects should locate along existing easements and right-of-ways.

4) HAZARD MITIGATION

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough recently finalized its Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) to meet requirements of the Hazard Mitigation Act of 2000. The plan is intended as a guide for reducing losses, both human and economic, due to natural disasters. The document follows the required processes of identification of hazards, mapping the potentially impacted areas, tallying risks and vulnerabilities, and presenting mitigation strategies.

The primary goals of the plan are:

- Minimize injuries and loss of life;
- Minimize damages;
- Facilitate post-disaster restoration of public services; and
- Promote economic development.

To attain the goals, the MSB HMP will include measures to:

- Save lives and reduce injuries;
- Prevent or reduce property damage;
- Reduce economic losses;
- Minimize social dislocation and stress;
- Maintain critical facilities in functional order;
- Protect infrastructure from damage; and
- Protect legal liability of government and public officials.

Potential disasters in the Point MacKenzie area identified by the planning team include:

- Wildfire;
- Volcanic eruption;
- Earthquake;
- Communication blackout;
- Road and Bridge interruptions; and
- Accidents resulting in hazardous materials release.

Strategies to implement the goals of the MSB HMP:

- Designate an emergency shelter in the Point MacKenzie area;
 - Ensure the shelter is provisioned and capable of providing shelter during an emergency.
- Identify and develop fire breaks and fire escapes and pursue funding to maintain;
- Encourage residents to plan on being self-sufficient during a disaster; and
- Encourage building defensible spaces with fire resistant vegetation and landscaping.

Hazard Mitigation Recommendations:

- Work with MSB emergency services to ensure the community is prepared to respond to any of these disasters;
- Work with MSB emergency services to identify appropriate hazard mitigation measures and a cost/benefit analysis of each measure; and
- Identify opportunities for funding to implement hazard mitigation measures for potential natural disasters.

5) RECREATION

Overview

Residents in Point MacKenzie enjoy the many amenities the area offers, such as the quiet rural atmosphere; clean air and water; easy accessibility to public land, lakes and rivers; trails and recreational opportunities; and abundance of wildlife. Retaining and protecting these amenities and their connectivity is foremost in the minds of residents. In order to provide this protection, it is important to identify the existing features and offer suggestions for methods to retain them.

This chapter addresses parks and public recreation sites, trails and public access, and green infrastructure, and the interconnectivity of wildlife corridors, recreational trails, forests,

wetlands, waterways, parks, open spaces, and other natural areas. The community recognizes the need for green infrastructure.

Parks and Public Recreation Sites

320-Acre Multi-Use Recreation Area

A 320-acre parcel of borough land planned to be a multi-use recreation site is located about one mile down Point MacKenzie Road from the junction with Burma Road next to the Goose Bay State Game Refuge. The borough is seeking community input on the potential future recreation uses of the property once the timber and gravel extraction have taken place.

Point MacKenzie community suggestions include:

- Shooting range/ archery range/ field course (with ski trails for biathlon-type activities);
- Horse trails (possible joint use with mountain bicycles?);
- Picnic areas;
- Ski/running trails mountain biking;
- Motocross/snowmachine loop racing (in the southern half only);
- Kayaking/canoeing on the lake. Access to the lake is steep from the Pt MacKenzie Road side;
- Camping areas (tents and RVs) overnight;
- A park with benches, at least the northern half with the lake;
- Bunny hill/sledding hill like Russian Jack Springs;
- Radio controlled vehicle operations; and
- Frisbee golf course.

Little Susitna Public Use Facility

Little Susitna Public Use Facility offers camping and boating access approximately 28 miles south of Wasilla. This beautiful campground/boat launch lies within the Susitna Flats State Game Refuge on the pristine Little Susitna River. The river is famous for its world-class sport fishing. Predominate fish species include Chinook and Coho salmon. Other species of salmon are present in addition to trout and char. The area is heavily forested with spruce and birch. This is not an Alaska State Park unit.

Special Projects: Host/caretaker of entire facility, monitor visitor use, general campground management, firewood and decal sales, janitorial maintenance and other duties as assigned.

Amenities: Subsistence payment which may include propane cost, generator/fuel, uniform jackets/hats, free camping and cellular phone.

Season: 5/15 - 9/15

Susitna Flats State Game Refuge

The Susitna Flats State Game Refuge (SGR) was created to ensure the protection of fish and wildlife populations. The refuge provides essential habitat for migrating waterfowl, moose, bear,

and salmon. The Susitna Flats SGR was also created for public use of fish and wildlife and their habitat, especially waterfowl, moose, and bear as well as public recreation [Susitna Flats State Game Refuge Management Plan (1988)]. The Susitna River drainage is one of the top salmon producing areas in the state. Each year approximately 10 percent of the waterfowl harvest in the state occurs on Susitna Flats, with about 15,000 ducks and over 500 geese taken. Many hunters land float planes on one of the numerous lakes on the flats. Other hunters cross the inlet by boat to enjoy their hunt. The Susitna Flats State Game Refuge Management Plan (1988).

Goose Bay State Game Refuge

Located in Upper Cook Inlet on the west side of Knik Arm across from Anchorage, Goose Bay State Game Refuge features a wetlands complex drained by Goose Creek. The Point MacKenzie Road borders the northern and western boundaries of the refuge. Access to the refuge is found at several points along the "Old Burma Road" at the end of Knik/Goose Bay Road. Boat access can be gained by crossing Knik Arm and traveling up Goose Creek. An un-maintained boat ramp located just to the east of the refuge can be reached off of the Knik/Goose Bay Road. In the fall, the wetlands complex provides a good waterfowl hunting area for local hunters. Off-road use of motorized vehicles is restricted in the refuge. Check with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game office in Palmer or Anchorage to learn more about motorized vehicle restrictions. Currently there are no developed public access points or public use facilities in the refuge.

Public Recreation Recommendations:

- Manage the refuges for the protection, preservation, and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat and populations.
- Manage the refuges to protect, maintain, and enhance public use of fish and wildlife and their habitat and general recreation in a high quality environment.
- Protect private land and interests near lakes, trails, and rivers.
- Retain borough-owned public recreation lands for watershed and mature forest habitats for breeding avian species.³
- Encourage public trail marking and trail maintenance to ensure trails remain usable and sustainable for all trail users.

Trails and Public Access

Many residents and visitors enjoy access to world class recreational opportunities literally “right out the back door” of Point MacKenzie. However, easy access to the back country can also have a negative impact, by increasing the potential for private property trespass, vandalism, illegal trash dumping and trail degradation. Access to public land takes place via a variety of roads, trails and trail heads, some of which are legally established, and some of which are not. Some have been identified as year round, and some can be used only seasonally. Winter motorized use has less of a negative impact on the trails than summer motorized use. Many of the existing trails crossing private land have no dedicated public access.

³ Assembly Resolution 07-002

Trail users are responsible for ensuring the trail they're on is a public trail and not on private property.

In 2000 the borough adopted the MSB Recreational Trails Plan. The MSB recreational trails planning process began in 1995 through an extensive planning and public involvement process.

Trails in and around the Point MacKenzie area that were included in the 2000 plan are the Figure Eight Lake Loop Trail, the Pipeline Trail, and the Flathorn Lake Trails (See the trails map on page 19). At the time of this plan update, the trails plan is also undergoing an update, and additional trails could be nominated to be included in the trails plan.

Trail and Access Recommendations

- Add appropriate signage listing user rules and guidelines.
- Establish a public access adoption program where organizations or individuals can volunteer to monitor sites, pick up trash, and advise users of the rules and guidelines.
- Encourage development of paths along public roads.
- Solicit input from the Point MacKenzie Community Council, the public, private property owners, and trail users on trail concerns and issues.
- The community and the borough should work to identify financial incentives, such as tax deductions or other measures that may encourage property owners to dedicate a trail.

Specific Trail Recommendations:

Flathorn Lake Trail (winter trail)

Flathorn Lake Trail is approximately 21 miles long and traverses the vast wetlands of the Susitna Game Refuge and the rolling hills of the Fish Creek watershed. The trail allows snowmachiners, dog mushers and skiers to travel from the Point MacKenzie area to the Susitna River. The trail crosses the Little Susitna River, through a maze of frozen swamps and ponds, along Fish Creek, across Flathorn Lake before heading north to Susitna Station, where it makes connections with the Iditarod Trail and the Iron Dog Trail.

Recommendation:

- Encourage the state to develop and maintain a wayside including a dedicated trailhead, public restrooms, and trash receptacles at the Flathorn Lake Trailhead.

Pipeline (winter trail)

The Pipeline Trail is a multi-use winter trail that follows the large gas pipeline corridor toward the lower Susitna River Basin from Point MacKenzie area. The trail has been surveyed and an easement reserved to the Susitna River. The Borough collects fees for parking at the maintained trailhead north of Ayrshire Road that provides access to this trail.

Recommendation:

- Encourage the expansion of the parking area at the trailhead.
- Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

Figure Eight Loop Trail (winter trail)

Figure Eight Loop Trail is a multi-use winter trail system west of the Point Mackenzie area.

Recommendations:

- Support efforts to maintain the trail.

6) WATER QUALITY AND WATERSHED PROTECTION

The population of our community and the borough relies on surface and ground water for drinking water, magnifying the importance of watershed protection. The community supports enforcement of the clean water act.

The Point MacKenzie Community Council boundary includes a portion of the Little Susitna River Watershed, a portion of the Fish Creek Watershed, and all of an unnamed watershed. Assessments of these watersheds were not available during the drafting of this plan. The Little Susitna River and Fish Creek watersheds are not completely contained within the Point MacKenzie Community and are affected by activities and development policies of neighboring and up-gradient communities.

The Little Susitna River Watershed includes areas of the Big Lake, Meadow Lakes, and Willow Community Councils. The Fish Creek Watershed includes areas of the Big Lake, Meadow Lakes, Willow, Fishhook Tanaina, South Lakes, and Kink-Fairview Community Councils. These nearby communities are encouraged to adopt and implement the goals presented in this chapter to help protect the water resources of the Point MacKenzie Community, as well as their own.

A number of voluntary and regulatory strategies can be used to preserve and restore watershed resources.

Effective management of watersheds will require the community's recognition of it as a complex issue. Communities typically include a cursory inventory of water bodies and wetlands with a comprehensive plan. To be effective, watershed issues must receive more serious attention as a part of land use planning. The current resources should be analyzed with respect to the expected pressure for development in coming years. Based on this information, planners can work with the public to establish goals, objectives, and policies for the plan, and then suggest alternative, more suitable locations for expected growth or qualitative changes in the types of growth allowed. Less direct, comprehensive plans also may identify areas where development and redevelopment can be encouraged. Borough lands south of the Goose Bay State Game Refuge and the wildlife corridor are significant drainages for both the Goose Bay and Susitna Flats State Game Refuges.

7) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Overview

This section provides an overview of the local economy. Contained within are general goals for guiding and improving economic development opportunities in Point MacKenzie, while maintaining Point MacKenzie's attractive natural features and unique character.

Residents of Point MacKenzie expect substantial expansion of local economic opportunities. These new job opportunities will likely complement Port- and rail-related development as well as provide prison support services, and serve Anchorage commuters. Such growth will help the community establish and maintain needed public services, in particular, a school, a community center, a library, expanded utility infrastructure, and an interconnected road network. At the same time, residents want to balance the benefits of economic development with the equally important goal of sustaining what attracted residents to the area in the first place. These qualities include rural character, knowing your neighbors, ready access to nearby hunting and fishing, farming, and making a living from local resources.

Maintaining Point MacKenzie's environmental quality and rural character is the community's long term economic development strategy. Consequently the community has a vested interest in resource development and its impacts.

Primary options for local resource development include timber harvests, natural gas extraction, sand and gravel extraction and agriculture. Most such developments are managed under federal, state or borough regulations. Established regulations include:

- State of Alaska Forest Practices Act;
- MSB sand and gravel extraction ordinance;
- State and Federal water quality and wetland regulations; and
- Federal and State oil and gas production regulations.

Economic Development Goals

1. Encourage development that will benefit the Point MacKenzie community.

Local Economy

Point MacKenzie, like many areas within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, has a limited range of jobs and business activity. Many people who earn a living in Point MacKenzie do so through seasonal or part-time work, home-based businesses, and agriculture. A significant portion of local residents commute out of the area, or are retired.

Many residents work in nearby areas, for example, Wasilla, Palmer, or Anchorage. When a connection between Anchorage and Point MacKenzie is established, Point MacKenzie will become a major gateway to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Businesses currently located in Point MacKenzie include: several farms, a general store and restaurant, and a small sawmill. Local craftspeople operate a variety of small-scale cottage businesses.

By Alaskan standards, Point MacKenzie has a relatively generous set of lands with agricultural potential. Agricultural parcels were granted in the 1980's, and a number of area farms are still operating. Local agricultural activities include dairy, large game animals, hay, and vegetables. The Goose Creek Correctional Center and operation of the Port have the largest immediate impact in Point MacKenzie. Prison-related and Anchorage connection changes on the community's horizon are:

- Goose Creek Correctional Center is projected to employ about 350 people when it opens in 2012.
- Expansion of Port facilities and businesses including Alaska Railroad expansion into the Port District.
- Tourism due to an Anchorage connection – An Anchorage connection may profoundly increase the numbers of tourists visiting and passing through Point MacKenzie.
- The number of “out-of-area” snowmachine visitors have been increasing and the number of people using the Little Susitna River landing continues to grow.

GOAL 1: Encourage development that will benefit the Point MacKenzie community.

To create stable economy and job market, Point MacKenzie residents want a balanced economy; one that avoids over reliance on any one sector, seasonal lulls, and dependence on out-of-area resources.

8) TRANSPORTATION

Overview

Transportation involves the different methods used to move people, animals, and goods from one place to another. Transportation consists of infrastructure and vehicles. Infrastructure includes roads, bridges, trails, waterways, airways, railways, marine ferry docks, as well as facilities like ports, airports and bus stations. Transportation modes include planes, trains, automobiles, ferries, watercraft, all-terrain vehicles, snowmachines, skis, bicycles, horses and pedestrians and pipelines.

Vehicular access to Point MacKenzie is from the Knik Goose Bay Road to the Point MacKenzie Road. Road maintenance is performed by both the State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and the Borough. The transportation goals of this plan focus on maintaining current transportation facilities in Point MacKenzie, and improving and upgrading existing roads and trails. The MSB's “Transportation Construction Manual” provides further information about road design criteria and guidelines.

In addition to the roads and trails in the area, a ferry and a railroad spur connection to the Port are being developed.

Transportation Goals (Note: order of goals does not reflect priority)

GOAL 1: Reserve routes, and as the need arises, design and build an interconnected system of secondary roads;

Objective A: Improve access to existing neighborhoods.

Objective B: Provide a second means of access for emergencies and significant natural disasters that may block or sever the existing single-access route.

1. Improve Burma Road.
2. Obtain right-of-way along the length of Cameo Drive.
3. Connection to Anchorage.

Objective C: Add these roads to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's Official Streets and Highways Plan in order to ensure that appropriate easements are reserved.

GOAL 2: Encourage construction of helipads at all existing and future Fire/EMS facilities.

GOAL 3: Encourage development of a rail siding to support local agriculture.

The Port MacKenzie rail extension project will create a rail link between the Port and the Alaska Railroad, providing Port customers/shippers efficient rail transportation between the Port and Interior Alaska. The rail line will travel north from the port facility and connect to the existing rail system at a point between Meadow Lakes and north of Willow.

Specifically, the project will:

- Provide transportation via rail for the development of minerals and other natural resources.
- Provide an alternative for transporting materials and equipment for large construction projects.
- Provide transportation for petrochemical, fuel, cement, and semi-containers.

The project size and significance to transportation in the area are expected to have additional positive effects both locally and regionally. Some of these secondary project benefits could include:

- Increase in employment and support for the tax base for communities benefiting from newly stimulated natural resource development and rail freight activity.
- An opportunity for future development of rail passenger service to the western Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

9) PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Overview

The borough adopted a borough-wide Public Facilities Plan in 1984 with a partial revision in 1987. At the time of this Point MacKenzie Community Comprehensive Plan, in 2008, the Borough Public Facilities Plan is once again being updated.

Current facilities include an EMS building. Some public facilities are located in nearby communities and shared with a larger population. These include a senior center, a State Trooper sub-station, a health clinic, and middle and high schools, all located in the city of Wasilla. Public services in the Point MacKenzie area include emergency medical services provided by a volunteer team; electrical power service provided by Matanuska Electric Association (MEA); and telephone service provided by Matanuska Telephone Association (MTA).

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough, as part of Knik Road Service Area, #17, provides road maintenance in the Point MacKenzie area. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough also provides emergency medical services. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough also serves as the area's planning authority.

Water and sewer provision is provided through individual well and septic systems. According to US Census data, 15% of Point MacKenzie households lack complete plumbing.

Three-phase electric lines have been extended 11 miles down the Point MacKenzie Road.

Landline telephone service extends down Point MacKenzie Road. Telephone service is available in outlying areas through a fixed wireless service. Eleven percent of households in Point MacKenzie lack phone service. Point MacKenzie residents have access to dial-up internet service, and limited high-speed internet access. Voice and Internet service are unreliable, particularly during bad weather, because the system relies on a tower relay connection to the ground station in Eagle River, rather than a fixed landline.

Public Services & Facilities Goals

The following public facilities and services goals are not presented in order of priority.

GOAL 1: Identify, designate, and reserve public land parcels for future public facility development.

The Point MacKenzie community needs to work closely with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Community Development Department and the Emergency Services Department to identify and designate land for future development of schools, a community center building, and a library.

- Objective A:** Reserve land:
- For emergency services;
 - For a solid waste transfer site;
 - For new schools;
 - For a library; and
 - For new parks and playgrounds.

GOAL 2: Improve and expand fire and emergency services.

The Point MacKenzie community is very large and sparsely populated part of the borough. There are currently zones without coverage in the Point MacKenzie area.

Current Facilities:

Station 6-4, 18297 Pt. Mackenzie RD

- Main complex with water and septic
- Training classroom
- Storage shed and 6,000 gal. water tank with well, 225 gallons per minute flow rate

Objective A: Continue to train and support the volunteer EMS team.

GOAL 3: Designate an area for an agricultural products processing plant to help area farmers process and sell products.

10) IMPLEMENTATION

Overview

The implementation chapter serves as a prioritized, master “to do” list for the community to reach its desired future. When done well, the implementation element can ensure that the completed plan is a useful community planning guide. If done poorly, the plan will likely be just another document that sits on the proverbial shelf.

The implementation chapter of a comprehensive plan is a compilation of programs and specific actions to be completed in a stated sequence, including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, official maps, or subdivision ordinances, to implement the objectives, policies, plans and programs contained in the plan. The chapter describes how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan, and shall include a mechanism to measure the progress toward achieving all aspects of the comprehensive plan.

Alaska Statute 29.40.030 defines a Comprehensive Plan as:

(a) The comprehensive plan is a compilation of policy statements, goals, standards, and maps for guiding the physical, social, and economic development, both private and public, of the first or second class borough, and may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- (1) statements of policies, goals, and standards;*
- (2) a land use plan;*
- (3) a community facilities plan;*
- (4) a transportation plan; and*
- (5) recommendations for implementation of the comprehensive plan.*

This chapter includes information, goals and strategies for increasing the community’s capacity to control its future and to accomplish comprehensive plan goals and projects. Examples of approaches include gaining a better understanding of funding options and finding ways to partner with the Borough, the state and other established governing bodies.

Implementation Priority Goals

Potential Priority Scale:

- Priority 1 = Immediate (2011)
- Priority 2 = Short Term (2011-2013)
- Priority 3 = Mid Term (2013-2016)
- Priority 4 = Long Range (2016-2025)
- Priority 5 = Future Considerations (2025+)

Table 1: Recommended Implementation Actions

Category	Recommended Program or Action	Implementation Timeframe	Responsibility
Further Planning Efforts	Update this Comprehensive Plan.	2014-2016	Community Council, Borough, Public
Transportation	Incorporate recommendations from local comprehensive plans into the Borough Long and Short Range Transportation Plans.	2011-2016 (annually)	Borough, Planning and Land Use Dept.
Public Facilities and Services	Continue to work with residents on improving fire and EMS service delivery.	2011-2016	Borough Emergency Service Dept.
	Identify and designate borough land for a school site, a library.	2011-2016	Borough Planning and Land Use and Community Development Dept.
	Draft a development plan for the 320-acre parcel identified as a multi-use recreation site.	2012	Borough Community Development Dept.
Economic Development	Ensure that local utilities and other infrastructure improvements are developed in a way that will increase economic opportunities.	2011-2025	MEA, MTA, Chugach Electric, Borough Planning and Land Use and Community Development Dept.
Hazard Mitigation	Work with MSB emergency services to identify appropriate hazard mitigation measures and a cost/benefit analysis of each measure.	2015	Borough Emergency Service Dept. and Community Council
Recreation	Establish a recreation and trails committee in the community to pursue public trail signage, maintenance and funding.	2012	Community Council
	Encourage the expansion of the parking at the trailhead for Pipeline Trail.	2017	Borough Community Development Dept.
	Protect private land and interests near public use areas including lakes, trails, and rivers. Installation of signage illustrating public land and guidelines for its use.	2012-2015	Borough Community Development Dept.. Community Council

Plan Monitoring, Amendments, and Update

The Borough should regularly evaluate its progress towards achieving the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan, and amend and update the Plan as appropriate. This section suggests recommended criteria and procedures for using, monitoring, amending, and updating the Plan.

Plan Monitoring and Use

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough should constantly evaluate its decisions on private development proposals, public investments, regulations, incentives, and other actions against the recommendations of this *Community Comprehensive Plan*. The recommendations and time-frames suggested in Table 1 above should provide a good starting point for budgeting and work program planning.

The Point MacKenzie Planning Team was formed to provide technical assistance and input throughout the community comprehensive planning process. Once the Plan was adopted, the

Team was released. Former Planning Team members may continue to work with their community council to review Borough and local decisions on development proposals against the recommendations of this *Plan*. These actions will help keep this *Community Comprehensive Plan* a “living document.”

This Plan will be used to guide local and Borough decisions on future development requests. Before submitting a formal application for subdivision approval to the Borough, the Borough urges petitioners to first:

- Review the recommendations of this community comprehensive plan.
- Review zoning, subdivision, and other land development regulations.
- Meet with Borough staff to learn about the process.

Plan Amendments and Update

A comprehensive plan is intended to be a long-range planning document, guiding growth development over 20 years and longer. It is a constantly changing document that helps to guide the long-range goals and strategies of the Point MacKenzie Community. Recognizing that change is constant, a comprehensive plan needs to be open to change in two ways.

First, there is need for a process to make amendments to specific plan elements. This can be done through a process requiring approval by the Borough Planning Commission and Assembly.

Second, is the need for a periodic update process – typically done every five years. The Point MacKenzie Community Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed after five years by the Point MacKenzie Community Council to determine which actions have been accomplished and which actions should be focused on during the following years. Over time, these revisions to the comprehensive plan will help to document the accomplishments made and the new priorities that surface.

When significant amendments are required, the Community Council will want to reflect upon the accomplishments of the preceding years and, again, plan for the next 20 years by taking on a public participation process to gain community-wide input on the update to the Point MacKenzie Community Comprehensive Plan. Upon updating the comprehensive plan to address anticipated growth and change over the following 20 years, an ordinance will again be required to legally adopt the plan under Borough code.

Although not required, one way of documenting a community’s accomplishments is to produce a summary of those accomplishments every five years. This approach improves future funding opportunities by documenting past successes.

Borough comprehensive planning policy requires that the same basic process be used to amend, add to, or update this Plan as it was used to initially adopt the Plan. This does not mean that new vision statements are needed or the former Planning Team needs to be reformed. It does mean that the procedures defined in the most recent Planning Commission Resolution that provides guidelines for the development or update of community based comprehensive plans needs to be followed. The guidelines are available on the borough planning division website

(www.matsugov.us/planning) and include public hearings at the Planning Commission and Assembly.

Implementation Goal

GOAL 1: Explore options for better communications within the community, as well as between the community and outside interests.

Communities are stronger when it is easy for everyone to be involved and to be aware of important community issues. It is also helpful to set up systems that make it simple for community members to communicate effectively with entities like the Borough and the State Legislature. Small Alaskan communities deal with these issues in a variety of ways; some options are listed below.

Objective A: Develop community website – a place to post meeting announcements, summaries of community council meetings and public notices about projects affecting the area

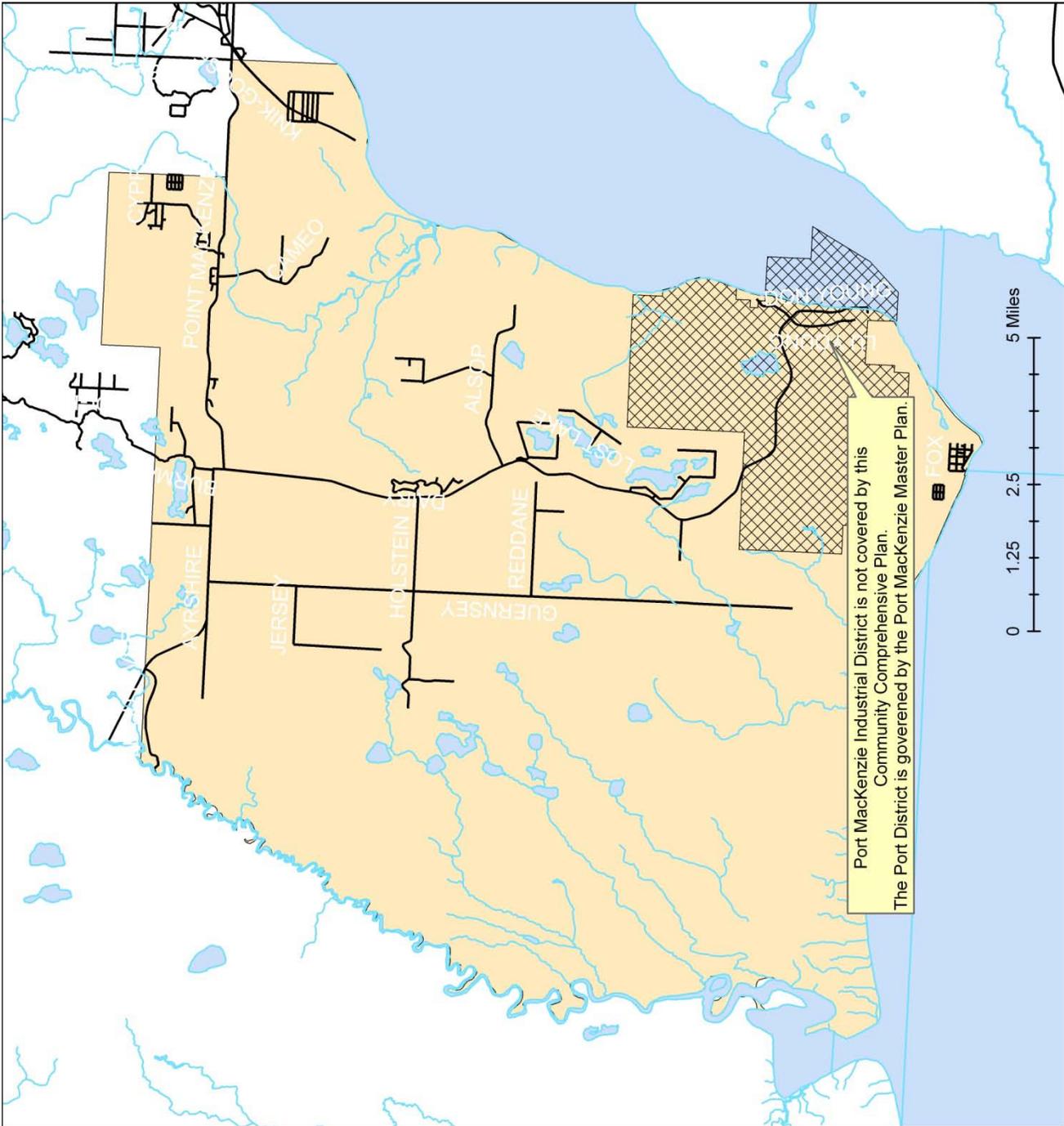
Objective B: Develop a community bulletin board.

Table 2: Borough Resolutions of Significance Affecting the Point MacKenzie Community

Title	Description
Planning Commission Resolution 06-056, 12/18/2006	Designates a site for the prison and states concerns raised by the community need to be addressed during the design, construction, and operation of the prison, including protection of watershed and wildlife corridors between Goose Bay and Susitna Flats State Game Refuges.
Assembly Resolution 07-002 1/16/2007	Designates a site for the prison and states concerns raised by the community needs to be addressed during the design, construction, and operation of the prison, including protection of watershed and wildlife corridors between Goose Bay and Susitna Flats State Game Refuges.

**Point MacKenzie
Community Council**

-  Port_Boundary
-  PtMaccommounBndy



Port MacKenzie Industrial District is not covered by this
Community Comprehensive Plan.
The Port District is governed by the Port MacKenzie Master Plan.

