

# Crime in the Mat-Su Borough

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## A Report of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Police Powers

January 2005





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*MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH MAYOR'S  
BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE ON POLICE POWERS*

**Diane LoRusso, Co-Chair  
Chair**

**Cynthia Payne, Co-**

**Ted Cox**

**Doyle Currier**

**Ole Larson  
(AST)**

**Major Joseph Masters**

**Gerald Rexrode**

**Mike Sears**

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Mayor, Assembly, and staff commend the task force for their dedication and hard work in assisting the Borough with this vital service to the community.



**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH**

**Planning and Land Use Department**

350 East Dahlia Avenue • Palmer, AK 99645

Phone (907) 745-9850 • Fax (907) 745-9876

# 1 *Executive Summary*

## **Introduction**

The Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Borough may exercise police protection, with all of its incidental powers, only with approval by the voters. Due to increasing concern expressed by Borough residents regarding crime, vandalism, and criminal mischief, the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Police Powers was established by Assembly resolution in August, 2003. It was composed of members from the private sector, the public sector, public safety, crime victims, a member with legislative experience, and the general public. The task force was directed to analyze and summarize the incidence of crime within the Borough, review the various ways that increased police services may be provided, review the results of the Borough's surveys on police protection, estimate the costs of providing police protection, and develop a set of recommendations for consideration by the Borough Assembly.

## **Background**

The task force completed a variety of research including a review of Core Area and non-Core Area surveys on crime; an examination of police staffing levels and costs; consideration of public comments and testimony; consultation with law enforcement, corrections, and judicial experts; and an analysis of local crime data.

The task force reviewed the results of crime and crime prevention surveys which were prepared for the Borough and distributed to a sampling of residents in August, 2003. Residents were asked about victimization, perceptions of the current level of police protection, and preferences for supplementing the current level of police protection.

Task force members also prepared and distributed a questionnaire to nine municipal police departments within Alaska to establish a baseline range of costs and services for the provision of additional police services within the Borough. The municipalities were questioned about population, service area size, staffing levels, equipment costs, training costs, types of services, and total operating budget.

Students and other members of the public attended numerous task force meetings, providing insight and perspective. The task force invited a number of guest panelists to a round-table discussion of crime-related challenges, trends, and solutions in the Borough. Guest panelists included Ray Michaelson, Director of the Mat-Su Youth Facility; Pat Beegle, Supervisor of the Point MacKenzie Rehabilitation Facility; Don Savage, Wasilla Chief of Police; George Boatwright, Palmer Chief of Police; Peter Ashman, former presiding District Court judge, and Lisa-Albert Konecky, Program Coordinator of the Mat-Su Youth Court.

The Alaska Department of Public Safety (AKDPS) provided the task force with data of all reported non-traffic related offenses in the Borough between the years of 1999 and 2003. Task force members analyzed and organized the data by offense codes, crime category and "beat" area. Using the data, they created a series of charts showing the annual incidence of high-impact crimes within the Borough. The task force also coordinated with the AKDPS to create the first geographic depiction of "beat" areas in the Borough. These tools will give the Borough and the State Troopers the ability to create a "crime map" or visual depiction of the geographic distribution of crime in the Borough.

## **Summary of Findings**

The survey results indicated that residents perceive crime as serious and victimization as high. The majority of survey respondents indicated support for Borough-sponsored public safety services and a willingness to pay for nightly drive-by patrols. Survey respondents were asked to rank their preference for the provision of additional police services by the Troopers, the Borough, cities, or private contractors. Contracting with the Troopers received the greatest support (27%), followed by creating a Borough Sheriff or Police Department (24%), contracting with either Palmer or Wasilla police (17%), and contracting with a private security firm (10%).

Public concerns expressed during task force meetings included perceived increases in crime and criminal mischief and the lack of adequate police response time in outlying areas. All of the public testimony received during task force meetings supported the Borough's adoption of police powers and provision of police services.

Panelist testimony is summarized as follows: the most prevalent problems in the Mat-Su area are alcohol and

drug abuse, domestic violence, child abuse, and sexual abuse. While juvenile crime has decreased, violent crimes tend to be more extreme. Property crimes are often not immediately discovered in recreational areas, and are not considered priorities when there are more immediate needs. There is a need for increased resources in the Borough dedicated to programs emphasizing prevention, early intervention and treatment.

Alaska Department of Public Safety statistics revealed that Borough-wide service calls for domestic violence, burglary, larceny, vandalism, vehicle theft, and assault increased between 1999 and 2003. **Calls for assault, domestic violence, robbery, homicide, kidnapping, and vehicle theft doubled over the same five year period, and burglary and larceny calls increased by over 50 percent.**

Results of the task force's survey of municipal police departments within Alaska indicated an average cost of \$100,000 per patrol officer including support staff. Cost estimates provided by the Alaska Department of Public Safety indicated a cost of \$187,000 per patrol officer for the first year including support personnel, equipment and training, and \$137,000 per year thereafter.

### **Conclusion**

After months of discussion, analysis, and careful consideration, the task force concluded that the borough should adopt police powers and contract with the State Troopers for the provision of additional police services. Local control, improved services, increased police presence, reduced crime rates, peace of mind for residents, rapid response times, and the ability to seek grant funding were some of the benefits considered by the task force in making their recommendations. Task force members considered a number of possible options for increased police services including the creation of a new law enforcement agency and contracting with local police departments and/or the State Troopers. Task force members also explored the feasibility of establishing a Borough Sheriff's Office, and discussed the provision of police protection by service areas. However, the Borough Attorney's Office advised that an elected sheriff position would not be feasible under the current structure of the Borough government, and that the provision of police services by service area could result in future problems, as evidenced by the Anchorage Hillside debate.

The Alaska State Troopers currently have 50 full-time patrol officers and the Palmer and Wasilla Police Departments have 12 and 19 full-time patrol officers respectively, totaling 81 officers in the Mat-Su Borough. According to the most recent International Chiefs of Police statistics, the average staffing ratio is 2.5 officers per 1000 population. In raw numbers, that suggests that the entire Mat-Su Borough should have approximately 162 police officers serving the population. Outside of the cities of Palmer and Wasilla, Mat-Su Borough residents receive the services of approximately .86 officers per 1000 population. Approximately twice the number of patrol officers would be needed to reach the average staffing ratio for the current Borough population, not taking into consideration the special demographic and geographic attributes of the Borough.

Source: Greater Wasilla Chamber of Commerce Governmental Affairs Committee

### **Recommendations**

By Resolution 04-01, the task force recommended that the Borough

- adopt police powers and contract with the state troopers for the provision of additional police services;
- support ancillary measures such as wellness courts and COPS in Schools;
- establish a centralized neighborhood watch office;
- collaborate with community groups to develop and fund programs that emphasize prevention, education, intervention, and treatment.

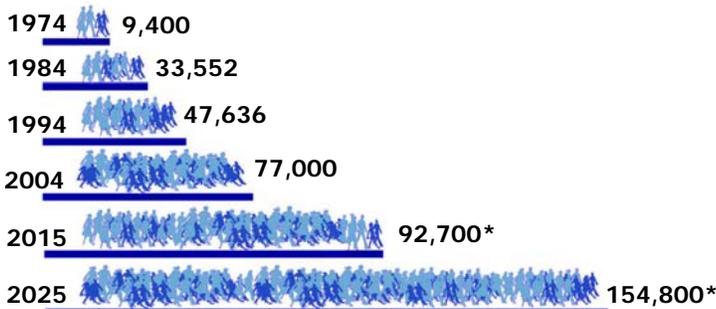
The task force asked that the Borough consider their research and recommendations in preparing an action plan for the potential adoption of police powers and provision of police services.

## 2 Public Safety Within the Mat-Su Borough

The Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Borough lies in the heart of south central Alaska, encompassing more than 25,000 square miles of rolling low lands, mountains, lakes, rivers and streams. The Borough includes portions of the Alaska Range to the northwest, portions of the Chugach Mountains to the southeast, and essentially the entire Talkeetna and Clearwater Ranges in its interior. The Municipality of Anchorage, Upper Cook Inlet, and Knik Arm delineate the Borough's southern border.

The Borough is the fastest growing region in Alaska and the 47th fastest growing county in the nation. Its population has doubled in the last 20 years. According to the Institute of Research and Economic Development, the Mat-Su Borough will grow three times faster than the statewide average, and by 2025 it will have more than twice the population and employment that it has today, around 155,000 people and 31,000 jobs.

### Mat-Su Borough Popula-



\*Projected population based on ISER figures

Accelerated growth strains public infrastructure and contributes to increases in traffic, cost of living, housing costs, land use conflicts, and public safety needs including police and fire protection. Borough communities are spread out over a large geographical area, contributing to longer police response times as responders try to keep up with increasing calls in outlying areas.

### CITY SERVICES

The Cities of Palmer, Wasilla, and Houston provide police services within the municipalities, and the Village of Chickaloon participates in the Peace Officer Program. The City of Houston began implementing



Alaska Dept. of Public Safety



Mat-Su Borough Planning Dept.

police protection in November 2004. The Palmer and Wasilla police departments have 12 and 19 full-time patrol officers respectively.

### BOROUGH SERVICES

For the Borough to adopt police powers and seek grant funds for police services, an area-wide vote of the people is required. The Borough Code Compliance Division currently enforces the borough code of ordinances, and the Borough supports a number of public safety and human services programs including Citizens Corps, Mat-Su Youth Court and the Boys and Girls Club.

### STATE SERVICES

The Division of Alaska State Troopers is charged with enforcement of all criminal and traffic laws of the State of Alaska, with an emphasis in areas not covered by a local police unit. Identification and apprehension of violators and the prevention of crimes and traffic violations are their main tasks. *Source: AK Dept of Public Safety.*

The Alaska State Troopers currently have 50 full-time patrol officers in the Borough. The Troopers reported to the task force that staffing has not increased in proportion to population growth, and that the troopers were behind schedule on approximately 900 cases in the Borough as of June, 2004.

### FEDERAL SERVICES

Palmer, Chickaloon, and Wasilla participate in Neighborhood Watch, a program being revived by the Federal Justice Bureau to promote neighbors helping neighbors for security and to fight against crime in the community. The program is also supported by the Alaska State

# 3 *Crime Surveys*

In August 2003, Dittman Research Corporation prepared a questionnaire for the Mat-Su Borough designed to measure the opinions of residents in the Core Planning Area regarding crime and crime prevention. (The Core Area is the unincorporated populated region between the cities of Palmer and Wasilla.) This questionnaire was sent to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the South and North Lakes Community Councils for mail-out distribution. One hundred forty-eight residents responded to the survey, and their views and opinions were recorded on a strictly confidential basis. The Core Area survey was supplemented by a similar survey conducted by the Borough of non-Core Area residents. The Borough survey used the same questions as the Core Area survey. The following is a summary of the sur-

## **Survey on Crime and Crime Prevention - Summary of Findings**

- It's clear that the crime situation in the Borough is considered "serious" (61%)
- Victimization is high--nearly three out of four respondents (71%) said they personally know of someone who had been a victim of crime in the Borough, and over half (55%) said they or close family members had been victims.
- Nightly drive-by patrols are widely believed to deter crime (58%), and a similar number of respondents (53%) would be willing to pay at least \$5 per month to help fund night-time patrols.
- A substantial majority of respondents (61%) said they would be interested in subscribing to some form of Borough-sponsored public safety services involving drive-by patrols and centrally monitored alarm systems.
- Centrally monitored security systems are widely believed to deter burglars (71%) and make homes safer (67%), and over half (52%) reported they would be willing to pay at least \$5 per month to cover the costs of a centrally monitored alarm system.
- The level of police protection now provided by the State Troopers is generally considered to be "poor or very poor" (52%).
- A majority (53%) of respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay for nightly drive-by patrols. 22% of respondents would be willing to pay \$5 per month, 13% would be willing to pay \$10 per month, 4% would be willing to pay \$15 per month, 7% would be willing to pay \$20 per month, and 7% would be willing to pay \$25 per month. 38% of respondents indicated that they would not be willing to pay for nightly drive-by patrols, and 9% were unsure.
- For the provision of additional police protection, contracting with the Troopers received the greatest support (27%), followed by creating a Borough Sheriff or Police Department, (24%), contracting with either Palmer or Wasilla police (17%), and contracting with a private security firm (10%).
- The results of the question regarding the Borough's adoption of police powers were non-conclusive.



*Alaska Dept. of Public Safety*

## 4 *Panelist Discussions*

Local law enforcement, judicial, and corrections experts attended task force meetings to discuss their experiences, concerns and observations related to crime in the Mat-Su Borough. The following selections are paraphrased from their discussions:

### **Ray Michaelson, Director, Mat-Su Youth Facility**

Current trends include a spike in domestic violence against parents as well as kids, marijuana in schools, felony assaults, and weapons assaults. Juveniles tend to have a very short memory, and longer response times can negate their sense of responsibility, erode their relationship with the community and contribute to a lack of respect. It is critical to get young people's attention immediately and for intervention to take place very soon after the crime. Currently this is only happening with the most serious responses, while others can take months to process. This is difficult due to a general lack of resources that the Valley has.

Until the troopers have the resources they need, they will not be able to deal with the problem and provide police reports immediately. Resources have never kept up with population growth and crime rate. Property crimes are not discovered until later in recreational areas, and are not priorities when there are more immediate needs such as DWI offenses. To adequately do the job, there is a need for more police, more reporting, more resources for investigation, and quicker response time.

### **George Boatwright, Palmer Chief of Police**

The Youth Court in Anchorage was very effective in making sure kids followed through on sentencing, and it arranged community service opportunities for them. The recidivism rate was less than 3 percent, and the kids were tried, defended, and prosecuted by peers. Many kids who went through the program became involved by working in it later. A wide variety of activities are needed; the Boys and Girls Club is one of the biggest single things that the community has going for young people.

### **Lisa Albert-Konecky, Program Coordinator, Mat-Su Youth Court**

The Mat-Su Youth Court only deals with first-time offenders, about 25 percent of the referrals that come to probation officers. They only deal with misdemeanors. Referrals were 127 in 1997 and 136 this year. Over 50 percent of first time offenses are shoplifting. Next is criminal mischief, followed by marijuana cases at school. Probation reduces felony marijuana cases at school to a misdemeanor so they can be tried in Youth Court. First time alcohol offenders go before Judge Zwink, who refers approximately 80-90 cases to Youth Court per year. Mat-Su Youth Court is experiencing budget cuts. This year, the governor's drug and violence prevention program was cut completely.

Awareness is going up. Most of the kids coming to Youth Court just had a stupid day. The court is the first point of contact for intake, like regular probation officers. The recidivism rate for criminal referral is under 10 percent, because once was enough, and because many of them have families who care to a certain degree. We tell them, if you're going through Youth Court, you must be in school. Student members are getting quite the education. It's a good program, letting teenagers have a say in what's going on. Peers can be harder on offenders than adults, and are creative with sentencing. Trooper cases tend to be late, sometimes 6 months old, though that is not the norm. Still, we would like to see things happening faster. Sometimes we don't see the kid for a month after the offense.

There is a strong group of homeschoolers involved in the Mat-Su Youth Court. Burchell and Pathways are doing an excellent job: kids are in activities, taking college classes, and involved in family business; parents are involved.

### **Don Savage, Wasilla Chief of Police**

We are seeing more extremes in violent crime with a total disregard for human rights or even the perpetrator's own self-protection. There is a population that is extremely dangerous. There are increasing numbers of "homeless and aimless" juveniles in the Mat-Su area, starting at the age of 12-13, who are living in the woods or "couch surfing," and not going to school. Sex abuse, child abuse and neglect issues are keeping kids out of school. Statistically the Mat-Su area has the highest incidence of sex abuse per capita in the state. The vast majority of offenders are not in the cities, and some people choose to live across an invisible dividing line, which allows them to receive government services but have very little interference. Mandatory reporting by schools and medical staff often identifies the problem. Kids who are sexually abused are showing up as homeless and aimless juveniles or substance

### **Patrick Beegle, Supervisor, Point MacKenzie Rehabilitation Facility**

The biggest issue for public safety in corrections is that prisons are swamped. Beds are over capacity. 800 inmates from Alaska are being housed in Arizona in a contract facility. There is a big push for halfway houses, which places a burden on field probation officers. Incarcerating people is not the answer. We tend to turn into warehouse facilities. There is a lack of interaction, a lack of accountability and an increasing lack of respect for authority.

### **Peter Ashman, Former Presiding District Court Judge**

The main problems in the Valley are child abuse and neglect and alcohol abuse. Drugs play a role, but it tends to be overblown because there is federal money for drug programs but no money to deal with child abuse and neglect. The population of the Valley has a different relationship with drugs; kids are getting drugs from their parents. Engage their parents, and early. Kids require attention, and expectations are not coming from homes. Deal with child abuse and neglect and domestic violence when the kids are young. Children living in violent and unpredictable situations can suffer permanent neurological change by the age of three, so the time for intervention is limited. We don't have a baseline for crime reporting because there are children and women who don't report. Victims of domestic violence don't tend to be assertive.

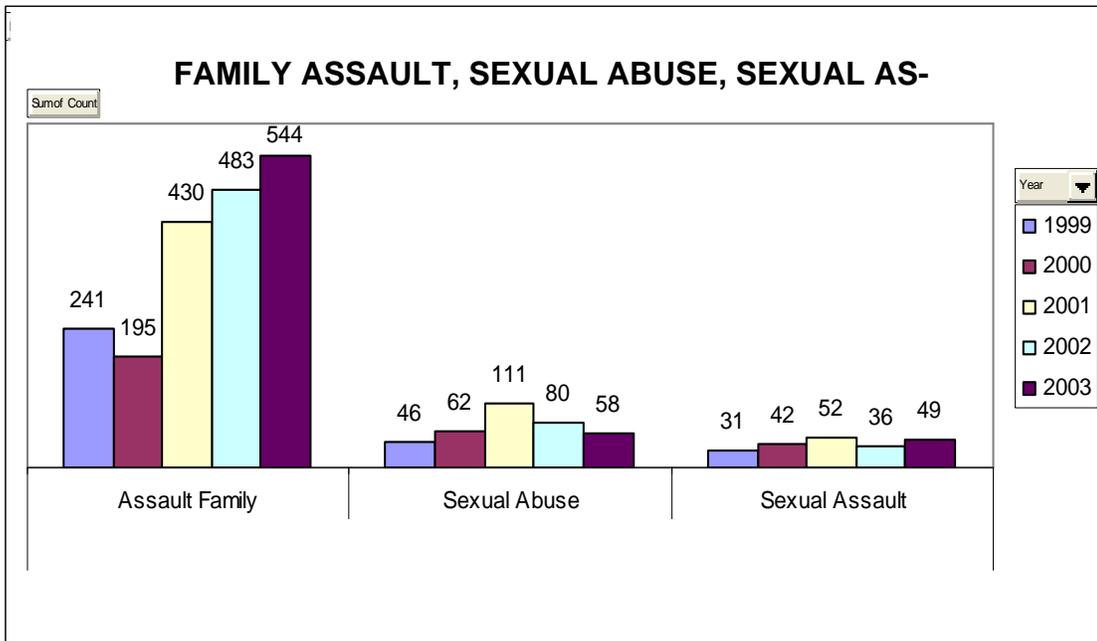
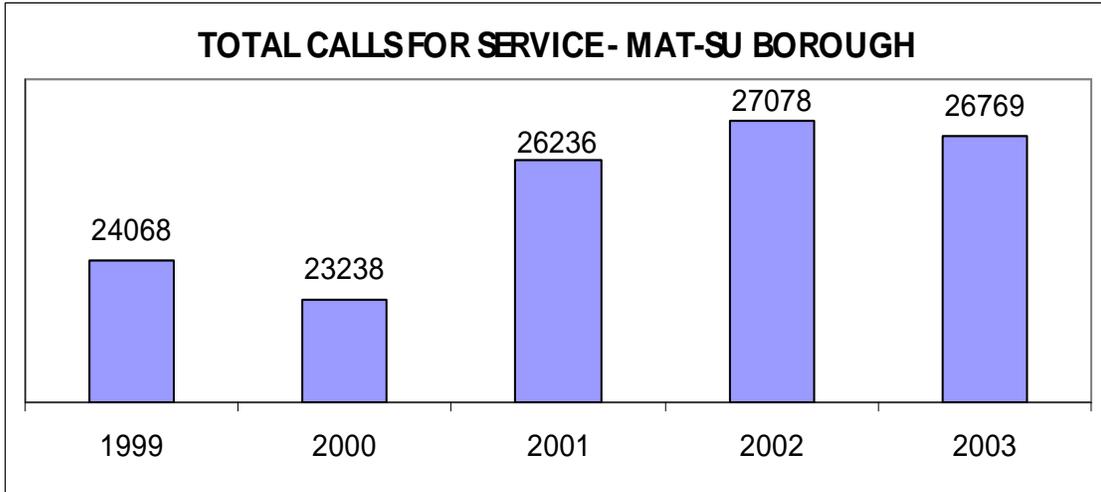
95% of the cases in district court are related to alcohol. Multiple DWIs are being committed by a small percentage of offenders. We need to give attention to changing people's behavior. Alcoholism is a disease of relapse; build a system that supports people through the relapse process, like DWI courts. That's the way people recover. In Anchorage, a group of downtown merchants formed a coalition for alcohol courts. Businesses have more power at the legislative level for enacting change.

Serious violent felons usually have a juvenile rap sheet. Early intervention is the key. There is a hidden criminal population in domestic violence situations. These situations are a breeding ground for other crimes. There's a reason that kids don't go home. All resources can't substitute for a parent, an uncle, Job Corps. Attention is the only thing that matters. Money should be spent on probation officers, supervision for domestic violence, educational programs, more recognition programs. Criminals do not think the way you do – they lack a level of ethical development. You are not going to scare them, not with negative consequences. Create an atmosphere for change.

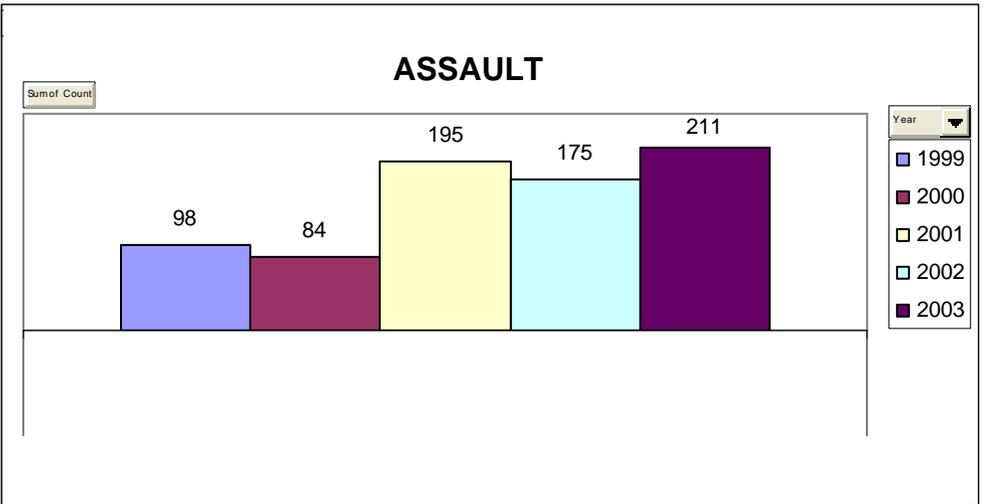
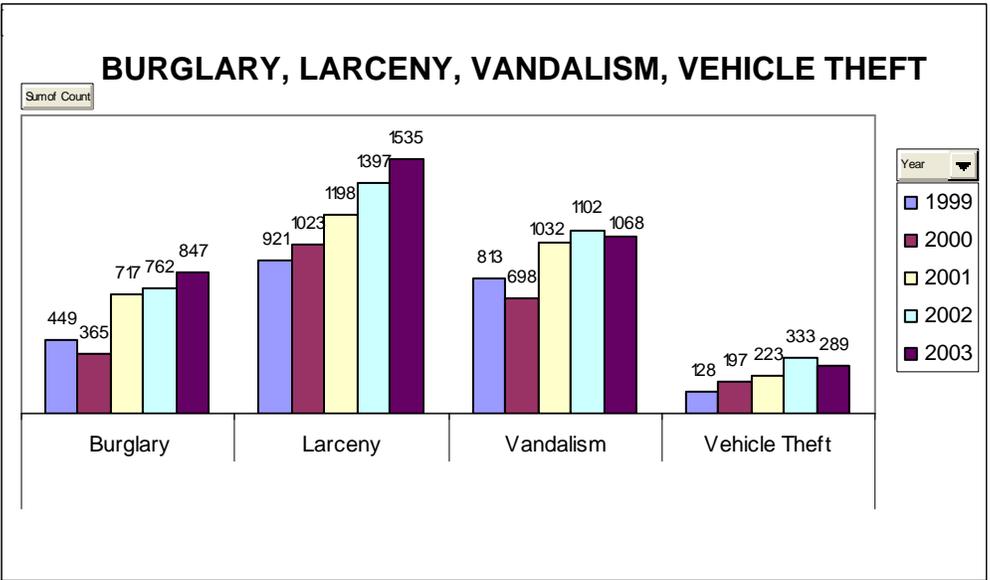
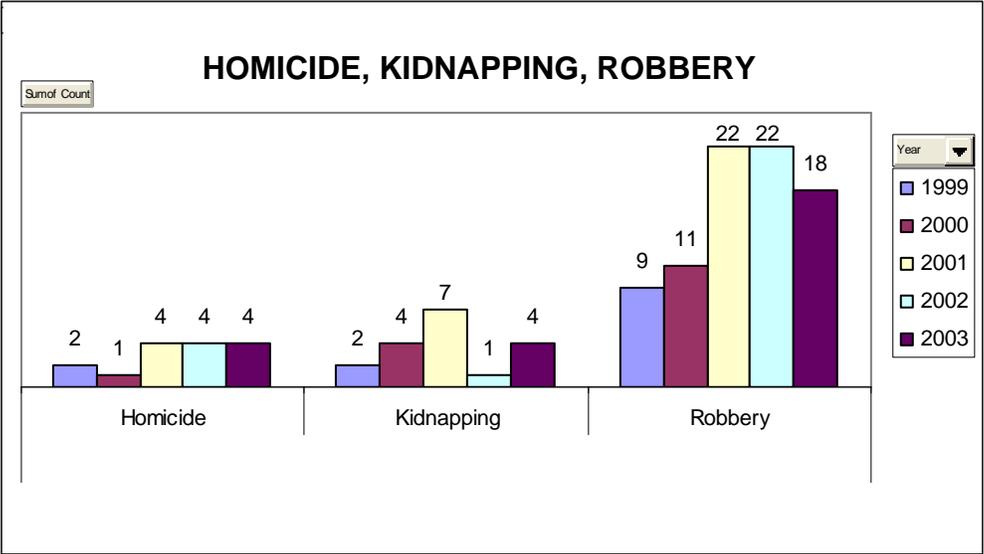
Think about what is creating the perception of crime: a few kids, a few repeat drunk drivers. Focus on developing DWI courts, drug courts. Look at programs that are working: foster grandparents for women and children. Someone caring is of incalculable value. Supporting the family is the big key. Families are overwhelmed emotionally and financially. There are many parents who commute. Cast around for things that are working, and support what works.

# 5 Reported Crimes

To gain a better understanding of the borough-wide volume, distribution, and growth of crime, the task force asked the Alaska Department of Public Safety for a data extraction of all reported non-traffic related offenses over a five year period, including the cities of Palmer and Wasilla. Task force members analyzed and sorted the data, and charted crimes which they felt had the greatest impact on borough residents.



*Note: the anomaly for assaults within the family during the years 1999 and 2000 is most likely due to a change in the reporting methods.*



Source data: Alaska Department of Public Safety

# 6 Alcohol and Motor Vehicles

Drunk driving is a major public safety concern in the Borough as well as the state. The following charts illustrate the time of day and frequency of alcohol-related driving arrests along with other motor vehicle crimes in the Mat-Su Borough.



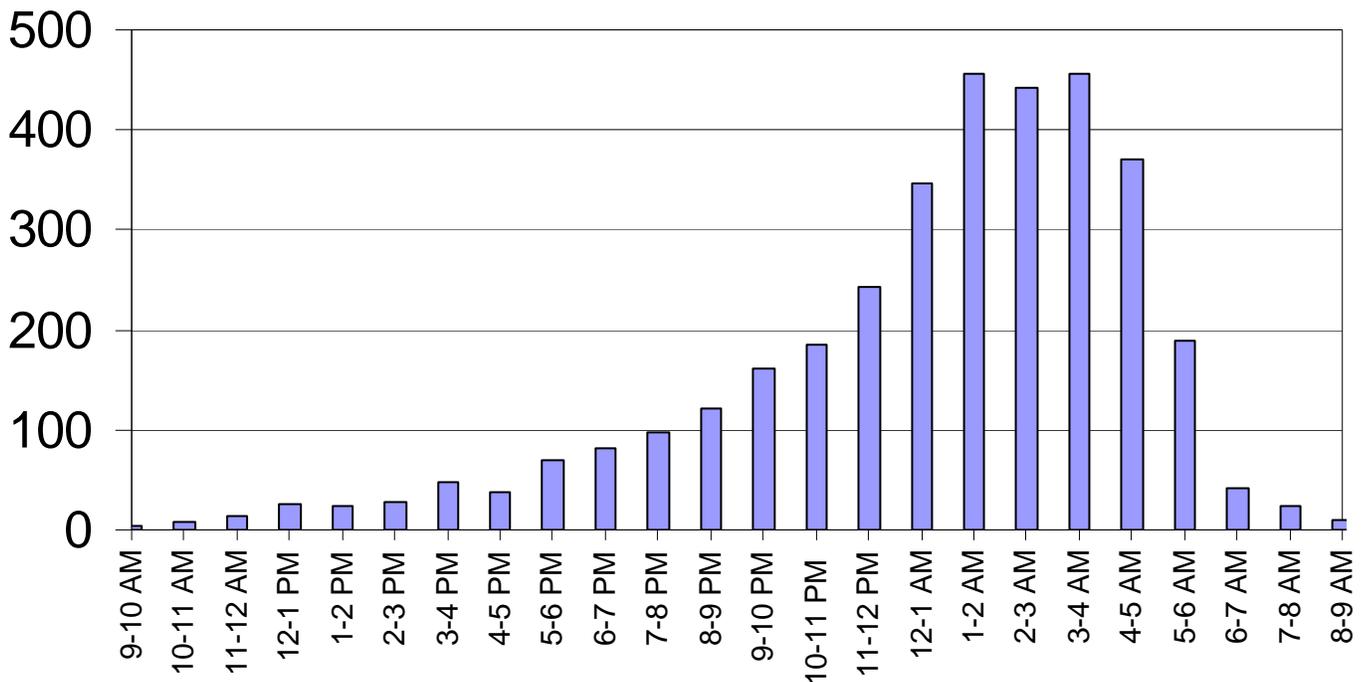
Alaska Department of Public

## Alaska Impaired Driving Statistics

- Statewide, in 2002, there were 5,356 DUI offenses
- 39% of total DUIs were repeat offenders. (2,097)
- 20% were second offenses (1,065)
- 10% were third offenses (535)
- 5% were fourth offenses (267)
- In 2003, there were 95 fatalities of which 38 involved alcohol (40%)
- In 2002, there were 88 fatalities of which 38 involved alcohol (43%)
- In 2001, there were 89 fatalities of which 42 involved alcohol (48%)
- Youthful drivers (those under the age of 21) represent an average of 14% of the drinking drivers in fatal collisions, but make up only 6.4% of the state's licensed drivers.

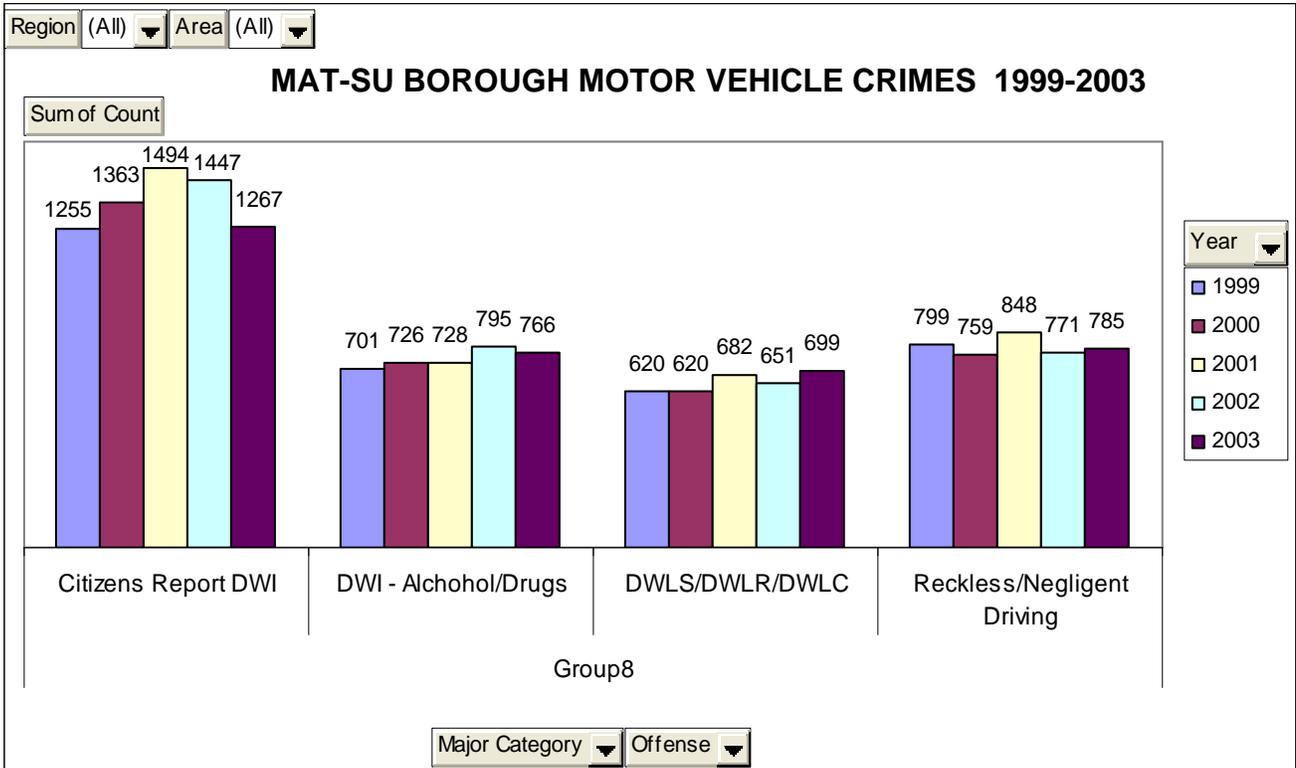
Source: Alaska Highway Safety Office

### MAT-SU BOROUGH ALCOHOL-RELATED DRIVING ARRESTS 1992-2002



Source Data: Alaska Department of Public Safety

Chart created by Sandra Petal, MSB Planning Dept.



Source Data: Alaska Department of Public Safety

### Mandatory Penalties - DUI, Refusal, DUI-CMV\*

FIRST OFFENSE		Misdemeanor	
Minimum jail time:		72 consecutive hours	
Minimum fine:		\$1,500	
Cost of imprisonment:		\$270**	
License Revocation:		1 year	
Surcharge		\$75	
SECOND OFFENSE		Misdemeanor	
Minimum jail time:		20 days	
Minimum fine:		\$3,000	
Cost of imprisonment:		\$1,000**	
License Revocation:		1 year	
Surcharge		\$75	
THIRD OFFENSE		Misdemeanor	Felony***
Minimum jail time:		60 days	120 days
Minimum fine:		\$4,000	\$10,000
Cost of imprisonment:		\$1,000**	N/A
License Revocation:		3 years	Life
Surcharge		75	100

Source: Alaska Court System 2002

\* Commercial Vehicle

\*\*This amount is subject to change by regulation

\*\*\*Third or subsequent DUI or Refusal convictions may be misdemeanors or felonies, depending on when the prior offenses occurred.

# 7 Domestic Violence

Violence or abuse is a pattern of behavior used to establish power and control over another person through fear and intimidation, often including the threat or actual use of violence. Abuse of family members can take many forms, including emotional abuse, economic abuse, sexual abuse, using children, threats, intimidation, isolation, and a variety of other behaviors used to maintain fear, intimidation and power. Alaska is among five states with the highest levels of domestic violence on a per capita basis.

According to the State of Alaska Department of Public Safety, in 1991, fifty percent of female murder victims were killed by their husbands or boyfriends. The Alaska State Troopers reported that 67 percent of all homicides that they investigated during 1995 were related to domestic violence.

Because of the potential threat to victims, domestic violence calls are the number one priority for law enforcement officers in the Borough. Every call results in a mandatory arrest to ensure the victim's safety, and each victim is offered medical assistance and an opportunity for shelter outside the home. The victim may ask the officer to request an emergency protective order on his or her behalf. Domestic violence protective orders, sometimes called restraining orders, are court orders that prohibit an abuser from threatening to commit or committing domestic violence against a victim.

Living in rural areas presents special challenges for victims of domestic violence. Poverty, lack of public transportation systems, shortages of health care providers, under-insurance or lack of health insurance, and decreased access to many resources, such as advanced education, job opportunities and adequate child care, all make it more difficult to escape abusive relationships. The increased availability of weapons such as firearms and knives also increases both the risks and lethality of domestic attacks upon victims.

In Alaska, for legal purposes, domestic violence can only occur between people with a "household" relationship and is conduct resulting in the following crimes: assault, burglary, criminal trespass, criminal mischief, terroristic threatening, violating a domestic violence order, or harassment. Parents or guardians can request protective orders on behalf of their child. The abuser must have committed a crime of domestic violence against the child, and the child must have a household relationship with the abuser.

*Source: Rural Report on Domestic Violence; Alaska Department of Public Safety; Alaska Court System*

## CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse or neglect exists when parents or other adult guardians hurt or endanger children in their care, physically or mentally, or fail to protect them from such harm. Throughout the United States every year, hundreds of children, especially the youngest and most vulnerable (those under age 5), are killed by abuse, and thousands more are seriously hurt. Among those who survive, many spend the rest of their lives with severe physical and mental disabilities.

Neglect was the most frequent type of substantiated child abuse in Alaska in the late 1990s. From fiscal year 1996 through 2000, DFYS found evidence that an annual average of about 9 in 1,000 Alaskan children had been neglected, 4 per 1,000 children had been physically abused, and between 1 and 2 per 1,000 had been sexually abused.

The production of methamphetamine in illegal clandestine laboratories is a significant problem across the Mat-Su area. Mat-Su Borough Emergency Services personnel have special protocols for treating children found at these sites. These children have tended to be at greater risk for toxicity and abuse than the normal population and may experience more profound health issues (physical and behavioral.)

*Source: Kids Count 2001 Children in Danger; Alaska State Troopers Statewide Drug Enforcement Unit 2002 Drug Report*



# 8 *The Cost of Crime*

Task Force members and the public expressed concern about crime's social and economic impacts on our communities and its effect on the quality of our lives. A Butte resident reported that in her community, small things are being ignored because of a lack of resources, and are not being reported; people get away with a little thing one day and move on to a bigger thing the next day; this wears on productivity, sleep, peace of mind, and enjoyment of life.



Mat-Su Borough Planning Dept.

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC COSTS TO VICTIMS AND THE COMMUNITY

Victim Services   Criminal Justice System   Fear of Crime   Lost Work Days  
 Lost School Days   Lost Housework   Medical Care   Mental Health Care  
 Deterrence   Fear of Crime   Death   Justice Costs  
 Incarcerated Offender Costs   Precautionary Expenditures/Efforts

<b>TOTAL COST OF VIOLENT CRIME IN ALASKA 1995 (in 1997 dollars)</b>					
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Rape</b>	<b>Assault</b>	<b>Robbery</b>	<b>Murder</b>	<b>Total</b>
Medical Spending	\$6,600,000	\$21,900,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,600,000	\$31,300,000
Mental Health	\$29,300,000	\$3,900,000	\$200,000	\$500,000	\$33,900,000
Victim Work Loss	\$19,100,000	\$32,200,000	\$2,000,000	\$66,100,000	\$119,400,000
Public Programs	\$600,000	\$2,800,000	\$400,000	\$100,000	\$3,900,000
Property Damage	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,700,000	\$8,000	\$3,708,000
Criminal Justice Processing	\$700,000	\$2,500,000	\$500,000	\$400,000	\$4,100,000
Legal Defense	\$100,000	\$300,000	\$40,000	\$30,000	\$470,000
Sanctioning	\$3,300,000	\$18,500,000	\$4,000,000	\$5,100,000	\$30,900,000
Prisoner Work Loss	\$2,600,000	\$6,500,000	\$1,520,000	\$1,600,000	\$12,220,000
<b>Total Monetary</b>	<b>\$63,300,000</b>	<b>\$89,600,000</b>	<b>\$11,560,000</b>	<b>\$75,438,000</b>	<b>\$239,898,000</b>
Quality of Life	\$710,800,000	\$267,700,000	\$12,400,000	\$125,800,000	\$1,116,700,000
<b>Total Comprehensive</b>	<b>\$774,100,000</b>	<b>\$357,300,000</b>	<b>\$23,960,000</b>	<b>\$201,238,000</b>	<b>\$1,356,598,000</b>

Source : Economics and Data Analysis Resource Center

Note: Police-reported robbery and assault were adjusted to account for underreporting using the rates in the National Crime Survey. Police reported rape was adjusted to account for underreporting using TR Miller, DG Kilpatrick, and HS Resnick, "Incidence of Rape, Abuse and Child Neglect," Working Paper, NPSRI, 1994. Police-reported case counts are from the Uniform Crime Reports, 1996, US Department of Justice.

# 9 Building a Supportive Community

The task force considered a wealth of observations and suggestions from the public and guest panelists for improving conditions contributing to crime in the Mat-Su Borough. These were instrumental in the task force's recommendations for the Borough to support wellness courts and COPS in Schools, establish a centralized neighborhood watch office, and collaborate with community groups to develop and fund programs that emphasize prevention, education, intervention, and treatment.



Mat-Su Borough Planning Dept.

*“Promote a foster grandparent program to help women and children”*

*“If resources are there for the little things, the big things tend to take care of themselves”*

*“Supporting the family is the big key. Families are overwhelmed emotionally and financially”*

*“Good police services will cost more: being in schools, on the trails, as an informal presence”*

*“It is critical to get young people’s attention immediately, and for intervention to take place very soon after the crime.”*

*“Money should be spent on probation officers, supervision for domestic violence, educational programs, and more recognition programs”*

*“Elevate a community awareness program”*

*“Use diversion programs like wellness courts, drug courts, and alcohol courts – go to a treatment program, face the judge once a week, and have short immediate consequences”*

*“A police in schools program would be a good bang for the buck, because it covers prevention, intervention, treatment, and response”*

*“Consider a “one-stop shop” for drug, alcohol and mental health-related issues, where clients are screened and routed for services”*

*“Get DWI offenders into treatment programs on the night of arrest”*

*“Point MacKenzie should be an alcohol treatment facility”*

*“Consider probation night school for kids who have been suspended”*

*“Alternative courts put the onus back on the community, and communities who accept responsibility generally have positive results”*

# 10 *Prevention and Intervention*

## **Wellness Courts**

As part of an effort to alleviate recidivism and reduce the overall number of misdemeanor offenses, Palmer District Court will introduce the Coordinated Resources Project (CRP), a dual-diagnosis mental disorders court, or “therapeutic” court, in January 2005. The target population for this court will be misdemeanor offenders with a mental illness and substance-abuse problems. The court will be based on the Anchorage CRP model and will focus on treatment and rehabilitation.

*Source: Frontiersman, December 14, 2004*

## **Neighborhood Watch Programs**

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is promoting the Neighborhood Watch Program and the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. These are two of the five programs under the Citizen Corps umbrella within the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Domestic Preparedness. The goal of Citizen Corps is to strengthen the spirit of volunteerism by bringing together our emergency responders, law enforcement, and emergency managers with citizens in response to shared threats, be they earthquakes, floods, or acts of terrorism.

Neighborhood Watch promotes neighbors helping neighbors for security and to fight against crime in the community. Neighborhoods participating in the program are identified by “Neighborhood Crime Watch” signs that let everyone know that trained eyes are watching out for the safety of residents and their property. Palmer, Chickaloon, and Wasilla participate in the Neighborhood Watch program, supported by the Alaska State Troopers and the Mat-Su Borough.

## **COPS in Schools**

COPS in Schools (CIS) is a federal grant program designed to help law enforcement agencies hire new, additional school resource officers to engage in community policing in and around primary and secondary schools. CIS provides an incentive for law enforcement agencies to build collaborative partnerships with the school community and to use community policing efforts to combat school violence. Trained, sworn law enforcement officers (SROs) serve in a variety of roles, including law enforcement officer, law-related educator, problem-solver, and community liaison. The SROs funded through the COPS in Schools program teach classes in crime prevention, substance abuse awareness, and gang resistance. SROs monitor and assist troubled students through mentoring programs and promote personal and social responsibility by encouraging participation in community service activities. SROs continue to build upon the respect and understanding between law enforcement and the school communities. These officers also identify physical changes in the environment that could reduce crime in and around primary and secondary schools, and help develop school policies that address criminal activity and school safety.

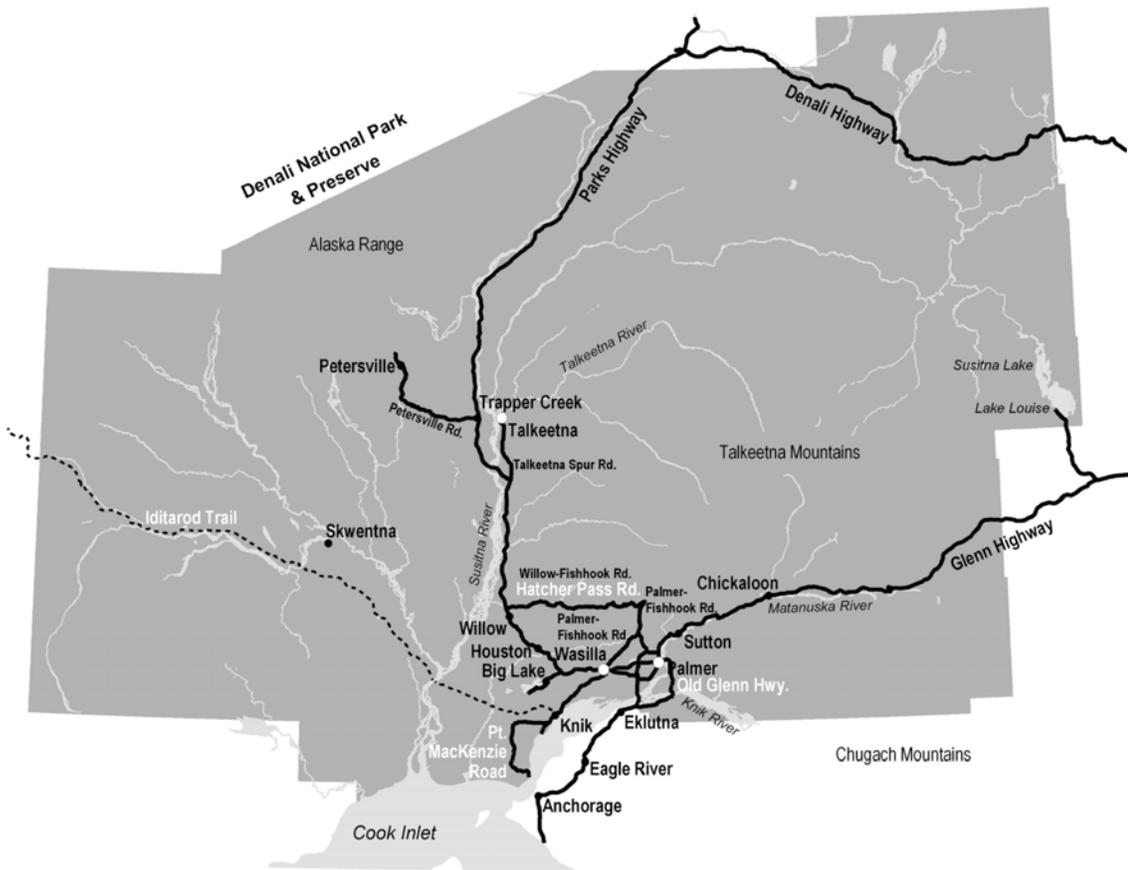
*Source: U.S. Department of Justice*

# 11 Future Actions

This action plan was not discussed during committee meetings. Its purpose is to provide a prospective course of action to implement the committee's recommendations. It is anticipated that this plan will be added to and or modified upon further Mat-Su Borough (MSB) and community review.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS	REQUIRED STEPS	INVOLVED ENTITIES	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
<b>Adopt police powers and contract with State Troopers for additional police services.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Involvement</li> <li>• Assembly resolution and ballot measure</li> <li>• Initiate process with State Troopers</li> <li>• Crime distribution analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSB</li> <li>• State Troopers</li> <li>• Community Councils</li> <li>• Borough Municipalities</li> <li>• Tribal Governments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sales tax</li> <li>• Grant funding</li> <li>• Property taxes</li> <li>• General fund</li> </ul>
<b>Support ancillary measures such as Wellness Court and COPS in Schools.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinated Resources Project Court (currently underway)</li> <li>• Seek grant funds (police powers required)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alaska Court System</li> <li>• Public and Private Schools</li> <li>• MSB</li> <li>• State Troopers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant funding</li> <li>• MSB partnership with Alaska Court System</li> </ul>
<b>Establish a centralized Neighborhood Watch Office.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with MSB Citizens Corps efforts</li> <li>• Encourage community council involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dept. of Homeland Security</li> <li>• MSB</li> <li>• Community Councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal funding</li> <li>• Local voluntary efforts</li> </ul>
<b>Develop and fund programs that emphasize prevention, education, intervention, and treatment.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with MSB Human Services funding efforts</li> <li>• Partner with existing social services agencies, schools, tribes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSB</li> <li>• Community Councils</li> <li>• Borough Municipalities</li> <li>• Public and Private Schools</li> <li>• Tribal Governments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant funding</li> <li>• Research other funding options</li> </ul>

*MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH*  
*VICINITY MAP*



*MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH*

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH  
MAYOR'S BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE ON POLICE POWERS  
RESOLUTION NO. 04-01

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH MAYOR'S BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE ON POLICE POWERS RECOMMENDING THE BOROUGH'S ADOPTION OF AREA-WIDE POLICE POWERS

WHEREAS, the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Police Powers has completed a preliminary study of crime-related issues within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough; and

WHEREAS, study methodology included the review of a Core Area Survey on Crime and Crime Prevention, the consideration of public comments and concerns; the compilation and graphing of borough-wide crime statistics; the analysis of local, state, and national crime studies and reports; and discussions with local law enforcement, incarceration, and judicial experts; and

WHEREAS, a substantial majority of survey respondents indicated support for borough-sponsored public safety services; and

WHEREAS, public testimony at task force meetings indicated perceived increases in criminal activity and a need for additional police protection; and

WHEREAS, the analysis of five years of Matanuska-Susitna Borough crime statistics indicated an increase in reported cases of assault, burglary, larceny, vehicle theft, homicide, and cases involving domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, studies reviewed by the task force indicated that sexual assault and domestic violence rates per capita in Alaska were significantly higher than the national average; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska State Troopers reported that Trooper staffing levels have not increased in proportion to population growth, and that the Troopers are behind schedule on approximately 900 cases in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough; and

WHEREAS, major local problems reported in discussions with law enforcement, judicial, and incarceration professionals included upward trends in domestic violence, alcohol and drug related crimes, and the severity of juvenile crime; and

WHEREAS, concerns about the lack of immediate consequences for juvenile offenders, under-reporting by victims of domestic violence, an overloaded judicial system, overcrowding in prisons, and reductions in state funding for intervention and treatment programs were also addressed; and

WHEREAS, the same professionals conveyed that there is a need for additional police, quicker response times, additional probation officers, and increased resources dedicated to programs emphasizing prevention, early intervention and treatment; and

WHEREAS, through a survey and discussions, the task force examined the potential costs and benefits of several options including implementing a borough police force, contracting with the Alaska State Troopers, and contracting or combining forces with the Cities of Palmer and Wasilla.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Police Powers hereby recommends that the borough adopts police powers and contracts with the state troopers for the provision of additional police services;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force recommends that the borough supports ancillary measures such as wellness courts and COPS in Schools; establishes a centralized neighborhood watch office; and collaborates with community groups to develop and fund programs that emphasize prevention, education, intervention, and treatment.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Police Powers this 16th day of June, 2004.

  
Diane Lorusso, Co-Chair

ATTEST:

  
Cynthia Payne, Co-Chair

