

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Historical Preservation Commission Agenda

Edna DeVries, Mayor

Andrew Schweisthal
Kevin Toothaker
Jake Anders
Fran Seager-Boss
Janet Kincaid
Angela Wade
Vacantss

Gerrit Verbeek – Staff



Michael Brown, Borough Manager

PLANNING & LAND USE DEPARTMENT
Alex Strawn, Planning & Land Use Director
Kim Sollien, Planning Services Manager
Fred Wagner, Platting Officer

November 17, 2022
REGULAR MEETING
6:00 p.m.

Ways to participate in the Historical Preservation Commission meetings:

TELEPHONIC TESTIMONY:

Join on your computer or mobile app

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 907-290-7880,,663363082#](#) United States, Anchorage

Phone Conference ID: 663 363 082#

- State your name for the record, spell your last name and provide your testimony.

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM
- III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
- IV. LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

"The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Historical Preservation Commission acknowledge that we are meeting on traditional lands of the Dene people, and we are grateful for their continued stewardship of the land, fish, and wildlife throughout time immemorial."

- V. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - A. Approval of 8/11/22 HPC Minutes

- B. Approval of 11/17/22 HPC Minutes

VII. ELECTIONS

VIII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (*three minutes per person, for items not scheduled for public hearing*)

IX. HISTORICAL SOCIETY/MUSEUM UPDATES

X. STAFF/AGENCY REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS

- A. Historic Preservation Plan Phase II Update
- B. Other Grants Update
- C. Archive Organization Project Update

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

XII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Drafting A Letter to the Board of Economic Development Regarding Potential Removal of Railroad Tracks in Downtown Palmer
- B. Discussion of References and Resources for Contractor Use in the Historic Preservation Plan
- C. Discussion of a Strategy for Public Outreach During Phase II of the Historic Preservation Plan Update

XIII. MEMBER COMMENTS

XIV. NEXT MEETING DATE:

- A. Next Regular Meeting – May 11th, 2023

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Disabled persons needing reasonable accommodation in order to participate at a Historical Preservation Commission Meeting should contact the borough ADA Coordinator at 861-8432 at least one week in advance of the meeting.

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Historical Preservation Commission Minutes

Edna DeVries, Mayor

Andrew Schweisthal
Kevin Toothaker
Deborah Burlinski
Jake Anders
Fran Seager-Boss
Janet Kincaid
Angela Wade

Adam Bradway – Staff



Michael Brown, Borough Manager

PLANNING & LAND USE DEPARTMENT
Alex Strawn, Planning & Land Use Director
Kim Sollien, Planning Services Manager
Fred Wagner, Platting Officer

August 11, 2022 REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm

II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Members Present: Andrew Schweisthal
Kevin Toothaker
Deborah Burlinski
Jake Anders
Janet Kincaid
Angela Wade
Fran Seager-Boss – arrived at 6:10 pm

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Angela Wade made a motion to approve the agenda, second Andrew Schweisthal

Vote: All in favor

IV. LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Read by Jake Anders

V. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Andrew Schweisthal

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. May 12, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion (Main): Angela Wade made a motion to approve the May 12, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes, second Andrew Schweisthal

There was discussion to make an amendment to the member comments, adjusting Deorah Burlinski's comments to read: "... including our underground archaeological history dating back at least 14,000 years."

Motion (Amended): Andrew Schweisthal made a motion to accept the amendment as discussed, Kevin Toothaker second

Vote (Amended): All in favor

Vote (Main): All in favor

A. June 8, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes

Motion: Deborah Burlinski made a motion to approve the June 8, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes, second Kevin Toothaker

Vote: All in favor

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There were no additional audience members present

VIII. HISTORICAL SOCIETY/MUSEUM UPDATES

There were no Historical Society/museum updates

IX. STAFF/AGENCY REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS

Adam Bradway introduced and thanked MSB Planning Division Admin, Maija DiSalvo, for HPC administrative support. He also introduced Gerrit Verbeek, MSB Planner II, who will be taking over more of the responsibilities of HPC moving forward.

A. HPC Code Change Recap

- i. Code change was passed, and Assemblymember Sumner did not put forward the motion to amend. Watched the recording of the Assembly Meeting, noting questions about historic preservation in general, how it affects development, and the HPC's role.

B. Historic Preservation Plan Update

- i. The update of the HPP creates a great educational opportunity, and will be a reflection of the borough's role in historic preservation. The MSB allocated approximately \$40K towards the project, and the CLG grant would be up to \$50K.

C. CLG Grant Opportunity

- i. Application is due Aug 26, and a final draft of the plan must be completed by Dec 15, 2023. With the tight timeline, the HPC will need to use the Nov and Feb meetings to work on project goals and public outreach strategy, with the potential of creating sub-committees to meet more frequently.

D. Archival Organization Update

- i. A records technician has begun the scanning of photos and newspaper clippings, etc and moving these into the MSB records management database.

X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

XI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Resolution 22-02:** A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION SUPPORTING THE SUBMITTAL OF A GRANT APPLICATION BY THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH TO REHABILITATE TWO BUILDINGS LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES AS PART OF THE REBANCHEK HISTORIC FARMSTEAD.

Motion: Janet Kincaid made a motion to approve the resolution as written, second Andrew Schweisthal

Fran Seager-Boss recused herself from voting because of involvement with this application.

There was discussion on whether this would affect the larger pool of grant funds, and if it would in turn change the ability for MSB to receive grant funding for the Historic Preservation Plan Update. Staff confirmed with the office of history and archaeology that preservation plans are prioritized for grant funding, so it should not interfere.

Vote: All in favor

XII. MEMBER COMMENTS

Andrew Schweisthal: Would like to see the momentum continue with adding historic buildings to the National Register, and anticipates putting more time into this going forward.

Kevin Toothaker: No comment

Deborah Burlinski: My term ends at the end of the year and I have served for almost 10 years. Not going to renew as I've retired from

my business and travel a lot. The work is still important though, and may still attend meetings. I still have time for volunteer work and have considered setting up a non-profit. I have enjoyed serving with you all and have a friend, Ginger, who has put in an application. Putting through this ORD is the best thing we have moved forward, and working with Assembly the way we did was a great step.

Jake Anders: Watching the Assembly video made me think about internal views within the commission. In order to be beneficial to long-range goals and to the overall product, it will be important to present a unified mission of furthering historic preservation to the Assembly and to the public. The HPC will, and should have, robust internal discussions. Once we leave internal sphere, it is very important to be “the commission” working towards the betterment of the borough and historic preservation within the borough

Fran Seager-Boss: Thank you to Deb for support of the HPC through some rough times. We appreciate all you’ve done on the commission.

Janet Kincaid: No comment

Angela Wade: No comment

XIII. NEXT MEETING DATE:

A. Next Regular Meeting: November 10, 2022 – 6:00 pm

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Janet Kincaid made a motion to adjourn, second Andrew Schweisthal.
Meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm

Jake Anders, Chair

Date

Adam Bradway, Planner II

Date

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Historical Preservation Commission Minutes

Edna DeVries, Mayor

Andrew Schweisthal
Kevin Toothaker
Deborah Burlinski
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Fran Seager-Boss
Janet Kincaid
Angela Wade

Adam Bradway – Staff



Michael Brown, Borough Manager

PLANNING & LAND USE DEPARTMENT
Alex Strawn, Planning & Land Use Director
Kim Sollien, Planning Services Manager
Fred Wagner, Platting Officer

August 11, 2022 REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 6:07 pm

II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Members Present: Kevin Toothaker
Deborah Burlinski
Jake Anders
Fran Seager-Boss
Angela Wade

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Deb Burlinski made a motion to approve the agenda, second Angie Wade

Vote: All in favor

IV. LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Read (no note of leader)

V. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited (no note of leader)

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. August 11, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion (Main): Kevin Toothaker made a motion to approve the August 11, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes, second Jake Anders

It was then noted that Gerrit Verbeek had neglected to include the August 11th, 2022 minutes in the packet, and therefore approval would be delayed until February 2023 meeting.

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Dennis (Denny) Hamman, on the Palmer Historical Society board, requested that the Historical Preservation Commission consider writing a letter opposing the Board of Economic Development proposal to remove the railroad tracks in downtown Palmer.

Angie Wade noted that railroad construction is associated with the introduction of contagious disease and loss of sovereignty by the indigenous populations of the Matanuska Valley. She expressed the opinion that, while railroad construction may not be universally embraced as a purely positive development, it is a key event in regional history.

Fran Seager-Boss noted that restoration of the tracks to transportation service could boost cultural tourism to downtown Palmer. She suggested that individual HPC members should submit letters of support or opposition privately, that the HPC should not take an explicit stance, but should communicate the potential impact of removing on cultural preservation and tourism.

Motion: Fran Seager-Boss made a motion for staff to draft an educational letter for consideration at the next HPC meeting, second Kevin Toothaker.

Vote: All in favor

VIII. HISTORICAL SOCIETY/MUSEUM UPDATES

There were no Historical Society/museum updates

IX. STAFF/AGENCY REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS

A. Historic Preservation Plan Phase II Update

- i. Staff notified HPC members that a CLG Grant had been submitted to the State of Alaska for completion of the Historic Preservation Plan, with grant awards to be announced in December.

- B. Archive Organization Project Update
 - i. Staff notified HPC members of ongoing archive organization work, including the digitization of slides. Angie Wade noted that Chickaloon Native Village was also working on records digitization and suggested Chickaloon may be able to provide expertise or assistance if requested.

X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
None

XI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Amending 8/11/22 HPC Minutes
Delayed until February 2023
- B. A Resolution of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Historical Preservation Commission Recognizing the Service of Deborah Burlinski

Motion: Jake Anders made a motion to approve the resolution as written, second Fran Seager-Boss

Vote: All in favor

- C. Discussion of a List of Historic Themes for Inclusion in the Historic Preservation Plan

Angie Wade recommended the replacement of “Athabaskan” with “Dene” as a preferred term throughout the list of themes.

Angie Wade recommended the removal of time periods (e.g. “AD 1500 to Present”) from all themes.

Under Archaeological and Indigenous Traditions in MSB, Angie Wade recommended the grouping of “Proto-Dene,” “Ahtna” and “Dena’ina” themes as sub-themes under the theme “Dene People”; the revision of “Alutiiq Interaction” to “Alutiiq”; and the re-ordering of themes related to archaeological tool traditions to appear below themes related to Dene and Alutiiq peoples.

All above recommendations were supported by HPC members.

Motion: Kevin Toothaker made a motion to approve the list of historical themes as amended for use in the Historic Preservation Plan, second Deb Burlinski

Vote: All in favor

D. Discussion of Formal Condolences for Community Members

Fran Seager-Boss commented on the risk of accidentally overlooking a worthy community member, and the precedent of the HPC celebrating local contributors such as flowers for Joey Shaginoff.

Motion (Main): Deb Burlinski made a motion for the HPC to acknowledge contributors and consider issuing formal condolences for deceased community members, “if brought to our attention,” second Jake Anders.

Motion (Amended): Fran Seager-Boss made a motion to amend the policy to allow for “condolences or recognition,” to allow for recognition of community members still living, second Jake Anders.

Vote: All in favor.

Action Item: Staff + Jake Anders to write and mail a card to the family of Joseph Homme.

XII. MEMBER COMMENTS
None.

XIII. NEXT MEETING DATE:

A. Next Regular Meeting: February 9th, 2023 – 6:00 pm

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Jake Anders made a motion to adjourn, second Kevin Toothaker.
Meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm

Jake Anders, Chair

Date

Adam Bradway, Planner II

Date

MSB Staff Report: Historic Preservation Plan Phase II Update

Last updated Feb. 1, 2023

- ☐ CLG Grant submitted 8/26/2022
- ☐ CLG Grant awarded 12/19/2022
- ☐ RFP for Contractor Selection is currently open, closing 2/6/2023
- ☐ Assembly acceptance and appropriation of grant money anticipated at General Meeting, 2/7/2023
- ☐ Expected that a contractor will be selected by HPC meeting on 2/9/2023

- ☐ 'Objective Sections' References for Contractor
 - True North Sustainable Development Solutions, *Matanuska-Susitna Borough Historic Preservation Plan Phase I Desktop Review And Recommendations For Phase II* (Wasilla, Alaska: True North Sustainable Development Solutions, 2021).
 - Matanuska-Susitna Borough, *National Heritage Area Designation Application* (Palmer, Alaska: Matanuska-Susitna Borough, 2012).
 - Matanuska-Susitna Borough, *"Historic Preservation Planning, Phase I Public Input Survey Results"* (unpublished manuscript, 2020).
 - *Matanuska-Susitna Borough Data*, distributed by U.S. Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov/all?g=0500000US02170>.
 - McDowell Group, *Matanuska-Susitna Borough Tourism Infrastructure Needs Study* (Anchorage, Alaska: McDowell Group, 2008).
 - McDowell Group, *Economic Impact of the Visitor Industry in the Mat-Su Borough* (Anchorage, Alaska: McDowell Group, 2017). <https://www.alaskatia.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/Mat-Su-Visitor-Impacts-Draft-10.23.17-REVISED.pdf>.
 - McKinley Research Group, *Mat-Su Sustainable Tourism Master Plan* (Anchorage, Alaska: McKinley Research Group, 2022). https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/mat-su/Final_Mat_Su_STMP_Main_Report_7_28_22_04b28a13-4f11-401f-a4b9-d35f3f182305.pdf.
 - Levesque Law Group, *The Potential Effects of the Willow Area Community Historic Preservation Plan on Private Economic and Public Development* (Anchorage, Alaska: McDowell Group, 2012).

- ☐ Next steps
 - Public outreach plan to finalize 'subjective sections' (goals, priorities, strategies)
 - Vignette / One-Pager inclusions + strategies

MSB Staff Report: Other Grants Update

Last updated Feb. 1, 2022

- A \$50k CLG grant for revitalization work on the Rebarchek Colony Farm prepared by Fran Seager-Boss and Lamarr Anderson, and submitted by the MSB, was also successfully awarded
- The same project also received another \$25k grant
- As mentioned at the last meeting, the MSB Planning Div. supports submitting a CLG grant in the upcoming cycle to fund archaeological work in 2024

- **[Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant](#)**

This grant awards from \$200k - \$750k to a prime grantee such as the Borough, to be redistributed through a subgrant process on work which revitalizes historic buildings as a means to boost rural economies. Revitalizing a downtown historic district, or the work to turn Kennecott into a mixed area of restored buildings + businesses + stabilized ruins, are examples of the type of work this program targets. We were notified of this opportunity in mid-December, with a deadline on February 7. An initial request for interest resulted in 15 candidate projects around the MSB (some of which are unlikely to qualify for this specific grant). After speaking with NPS (the grantor) and OHA, and reviewing the application, MSB has concluded it cannot submit a competitive application for this cycle. The application asks for detailed site descriptions and cost estimates for example projects, and we are just learning about the areas of the MSB which would not qualify for this grant based on their new Urbanized status under the 2020 Census. We are still reviewing the amount of work required for the MSB to create and administer the subgrant process. If we are confident we can handle the administrative burden, I believe I can get internal approval to apply for this grant in its next cycle.

MSB Staff Report: Archive Organization Project Update

Last updated Nov. 3, 2022

No new work has been done on slide digitization since the last meeting.

No new work has been done to receive digital copies of photos transferred to the Palmer Museum ca. 2016 to fulfill MSB records retention requirements. I contacted Sam Dinges in December and he was happy to help, but announced his transition to Alaska Trails the same week and this got put on hold.

In 2016 the MSB transferred copies of 321 audio cassettes of oral history interviews to UAF's Oral History program. The program has digitized those tracks as Collection 2016-16 and will send us a hard drive with them this spring to fulfill our records retention requirements. They have not published the tracks online because release forms in the '60s-'80s did not envision the internet, but encourage us (MSB/HPC) to contact the individuals or descendants if we would like to pursue that.

The original printing plates of Knik, Matanuska, Susitna: A Visual History of the Valleys (MSB, 1987) at being scanned by L&B Color Printing (Wasilla) and should be available in early February.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

PHASE ONE REPORT – COMMUNITY OUTREACH

INVESTING IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLANNING IN THE MAT-SU BOROUGH

What preservation is and why it's important

History tells a story. Preserving our heritage ensures these stories live on into the future. With guidance from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation Planning, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) is engaging in a systematic and community-led process to develop a vision, goals, and priorities for the preservation of our cultural resources. Investing in historic preservation planning, enables strategic use of resources and provides our community with a clear path to retain and grow our region's shared identity.

Why we're doing this plan

The importance of historic preservation for MSB is a direct reflection of the value our citizens place on preservation. A voter initiative prioritizing historic preservation led MSB to create a Historical Preservation Commission (www.matsugov.us/boards/hpc) in 1982. In 1987, the Mat-Su Borough was the first in Alaska to enter the certified local government (CLG) program and become an active partner in the Federal Historic Preservation Program. Our original historic preservation plan (HPP) was also adopted in that year. Through an extensive process of surveying and inventorying historic sites, MSB has built a solid foundation for historic preservation going forward.

However, it's likely that the Mat-Su region of 2020 would be unrecognizable in some respects to those who developed the 1987 HPP. With the fastest growing population in Alaska for many years and significant developments in our economy, in tourism in particular,



TOM BOL/MAT-SU CVB

Visitors enjoy the historic town site at the Wasilla Museum and Visitor Center in downtown Wasilla.

the Borough's historic preservation needs and priorities have changed. With continued support from the local community, and with consideration to rapid population growth in the region, we are working to create an HPP that better protects our cultural resources and relays our historic stories for residents and visitors alike.

What happens next

This Phase I plan summarizes and synthesizes recent HPP planning efforts and recommends next steps for completion of the update. The final HPP will serve as a strategic action plan to coordinate MSB and volunteer efforts to protect, preserve, and share our history.

As the Mat-Su region develops, so too will our historic preservation needs and priorities. Our aim moving forward is to update the HPP every 10 years to ensure its continued relevance.

What we're living through is going to be something people want to know about 100 years from now.

— SUE DEYOE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TALKEETNA HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM



TOM BOL/MAT-SU CVB

The historic depot in downtown Palmer, now revitalized as a community building.

PHASE 1 PLANNING EFFORTS

MSB contracted with Information Insights to coordinate and facilitate public meetings and develop the Phase 1 report based on input from the general public and stakeholders representing tribal organizations, local government, interest groups, museums, and historical sites. The purpose of this community engagement was to develop a vision, goals, and priorities for the historic preservation plan. This process was split into stages, each allowing opportunities to gather and refine input and identify gaps in involvement for further engagement as the project advanced.

Phase 1 started in late February, 2020 with in-person public and stakeholder meetings planned throughout the year. However by mid-March, it was clear that stakeholder and public engagement would need to take place entirely remotely due to COVID-19. Original plans and timelines were adjusted to creatively and quickly transition the planning effort to an entirely virtual process. Our first adaptation was to conduct in-depth, one-on-one stakeholder interviews. These led to a deeper understanding of emerging themes and interests at the outset of Phase 1, providing a springboard for activities throughout the process.

Virtual engagement was achieved through use of multiple communications tools, including the MSB website (www.matsugov.us/projects/historic-preservation-plan-update-2020), social media and email outreach, electronic flyers, online surveys, and online stakeholder and community meetings via Zoom.

Information Insights and MSB designed the remote meetings to encourage active participation by using

best practices for virtual engagement. Participants were encouraged to join by video if able, and facilitators moderated the discussion and employed break out rooms to give everyone the chance to speak. Community members joined from across the Mat-Su Borough, an area roughly the size of West Virginia. The opportunity to convene stakeholders in this way was a silver lining of the remote engagement process. In all, about 50 stakeholders and members of the public actively participated in Phase I.

Stakeholder interviews: March to May 2020

Stakeholder interviews were not part of the original plan. When Phase 1 shifted to an entirely remote process, it was clear a deeper level of engagement was needed at the beginning to cultivate and maintain interest in the process. Informal feedback underscored the value of these discussions for the stakeholders themselves. Several interviewees shared that having the focused hour to reflect on and discuss the history and future of historic preservation in the Mat-Su region was restorative during a stressful time. Themes collected in the interviews also provided valuable content and focus for subsequent online meetings.

Ten hour-long interviews were scheduled and conducted with stakeholders of varied backgrounds, interests, and perspectives. During interviews, stakeholders were asked to share and discuss:

- Histories in the MSB they are most familiar with (including historic themes or sites);
- Histories they believe to be well-represented in planning, preservation, and education throughout the Borough, and those underrepresented;
- Challenges that prevent us from fully realizing the potential of historic preservation in the Borough.

Interviewees:

- **Alpine Historical Society**, Nancy Dryden, President
- **Chickaloon Village Traditional Council**, Jessica Winnestaffer, Environmental Stewardship Director
- **Knik Tribal Council**, invited
- **Palmer Historical Society**, Sheri Hamming, President
- **Palmer Museum of History and Art**, Sam Dinges, Executive Director
- **Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Center**, Bonnie Quill, President/CEO

- ▶ **Mat-Su Historical Preservation Commission**, Fran Seager-Boss
- ▶ **Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry**, Sherry Jackson, Executive Director
- ▶ **Talkeetna Historical Society and Museum**, Sue Deyoe, Executive Director
- ▶ **Wasilla Museum and Visitor Center**, Bethany Buckingham Follett, Curator
- ▶ **Wasilla-Knik Historical Society**, Linda Frey, Co-Secretary
- ▶ **Willow Historical and Wildlife Foundation**, Madeline Gocke, President

As a result of these interviews, Phase 1 started with deepened engagement from key stakeholders.

The following themes emerged from the interviews. These prominent themes were used to inform the first stakeholder meeting and the first draft of the vision, mission, goals, and objectives for the MSB HPP.

Why is historic preservation in the MSB important?

- ▶ **It promotes a deeper understanding of and connection to the region.** History tells a story. It creates a sense of place and connects people to each other and to the land through shared understanding and experience. This fosters a sense of collective identity and stewardship.
- ▶ **History gives our past a future.** What we're living through is going to be something that people want to know about 100 years from now. We will face adversity and come through it as others did before us. We will have our own stories to tell.
- ▶ **Healing happens through understanding and acknowledgment of shared history.** Understanding histories—pre-contact and post-contact—is part of a healing process for Tribal citizens, and an important part of the healing process for the community as a whole to help move beyond stereotypes/preconceptions.

What people, places, stories, and events are important to the Borough's history?

- ▶ **Natural history; Arrival of people 14,000 years ago; Alaska Native heritage and continued**

culture (Denai'na, Ahtna, potentially Alutiiq); **transportation** (River travel, Iditarod Trail, mushing, railroad); **mining** (gold, coal), **smallpox**; **Russian in-migration**; **agriculture** (homesteading, colony, Matanuska Experiment Farm), and **numerous site-specific histories** across the region.

Which historic contexts are well represented in the MSB?

- ▶ Palmer, especially the colony history
- ▶ Talkeetna
- ▶ Agriculture
- ▶ Iditarod and dog mushing
- ▶ Historic buildings

Which historic contexts are underrepresented?

- ▶ Indigenous histories
- ▶ Colony history throughout MSB, not just Palmer
- ▶ Pre-Colony history in Palmer
- ▶ Homesteading

Summer schedules in Alaska make it difficult to organize well-attended meetings, particularly online. Phase 1 engagement activities paused during June and July, resuming in early Fall 2020.

Stakeholder Survey: September 2020

Although interviewees were included and encouraged to also fill out the survey, the primary purpose of the stakeholder survey was to hear from a larger group of identified HPP stakeholders. Qualitative analysis of the survey data provided a more well-rounded understanding of stakeholder interests than interviews alone, supporting design of an effective stakeholder meeting framework and identification of emerging themes.

The survey requested information on stakeholders' familiarity with historic preservation planning as a concept and with previous preservation planning efforts in the MSB. It asked about stakeholder priorities for historic preservation planning, which histories are generally well-represented across the region, and which may have been neglected or de-emphasized.

Themes from the stakeholder survey have been integrated with the themes from interviews listed above. These were collated and shared with the full stakeholder group prior to the first stakeholder meeting.

When people talk about history, they sometimes shy away from adversity. I see history as a gem with many facets, and in order to get that brilliance you have to have all the facets show. It doesn't mean they're all wonderful or shiny, but all together they make that brilliant gem that you see.

In order to appreciate one's heritage, history's very important. You have to know what went before you to know what's ahead. If we don't have any elements left from the past, it doesn't give future generations a tangible bridge to that history.

— FRAN SEAGER-BOSS, MSB HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION



Stakeholder and Public Meetings: October to November 2020

Stakeholder Meeting #1 – October 1, 2020

The goal of the first full stakeholder meeting was to develop a vision to guide historic preservation in the MSB. Nineteen people participated, representing the Chickaloon Village Traditional Council, Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance, Knik Tribe, Mat-Su Borough, Mat-Su Convention and Visitors Bureau, MSB Historical Preservation Commission, Native Village of Eklutna, Palmer Museum, the State Historic Preservation Office, Talkeetna Historical Society and Museum, Wasilla Knik Historical Society, Wasilla Museum and Visitor Center, and Willow Historical and Wildlife Foundation.

During the two-hour online meeting, participants engaged in a series of historical visioning/brainstorming exercises. The opening meeting prompt encouraged participants to ground their thinking in their particular interest, but then to think more broadly about how their interest connects to a shared future:

Bring to mind a specific history—whether a historic theme, site, or regional history—you are passionate about in the Mat-Su Borough. Try to be specific: a story, place, feature that carries meaning for you. Imagine that it's 10 years from now. Think about this specific history you care about, and what successful preservation of this history looks like to you.

Write down 3 words to describe what that's like.

Stakeholders shared these three words in breakout

rooms and with the full group. The need for broader education, cultural recognition and celebration, and preservation of specific sites emerged as themes, which were later integrated into the draft vision, mission, goals, and objectives. Stakeholders also discussed specific needs within the region and their ideas for historic preservation activities, including continued coordination of stakeholders and innovative ideas for public education (see *Next Steps for the HPP*, p.8).

In October 2020, Information Insights and MSB drafted Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives based on stakeholder engagement to date, including interview, survey, and stakeholder meeting themes distilled into categories.

Public Meeting: November 2, 2020

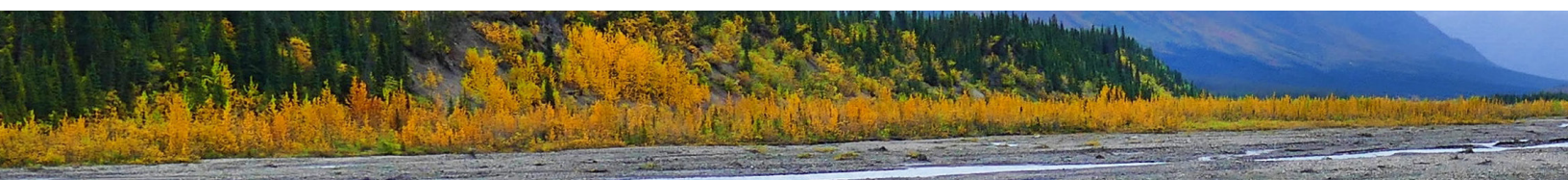
A public meeting and a second stakeholder meeting were held in November via Zoom to review the draft vision, mission, and goals and provide additional input.

The public meeting started with a presentation on what historic preservation is and HPP activities needed to update the 1987 plan, followed by an overview and discussion of the draft vision, mission, and goals. Attendance at the public session was small, so a public survey was subsequently designed to invite additional input.

Stakeholder Meeting #2 – November 9, 2020

The final stakeholder meeting walked through each section of the draft vision, mission, goals, and objectives, and encouraged stakeholders to identify action items needed to achieve the objectives. Discussion prompts asked stakeholders to identify what resonated for them, what was confusing, and what was missing.

Stakeholders were generally aligned and supportive of the vision, mission, and goals. Participants made few edits to the vision and mission, and agreed with the draft goals. Robust discussion followed review of each objective, generating additional action steps and suggestions for rephrasing. Overall, there was general agreement on objectives, with some suggested edits, and interest in continuing to develop action steps.



Eighteen people participated, representing the Alpine Historical Society, Chickaloon Native Village, Friends of State Parks, Glacier View Community Association, Knik Tribe, Mat-Su Borough, MSB Historical Preservation Commission, Native Village of Eklutna, Palmer Historical Society, Palmer Museum, State Historic Preservation Office, Talkeetna Historical Society, and the Willow Historical and Wildlife Foundation.

Public survey: November to December 2020

This online survey provided additional opportunity for public input during Phase 1 beyond the public meeting. Distribution methods included MSB and partner Facebook pages, stakeholder emails, and emails to community groups with distribution lists, such as community councils and Chambers of Commerce. Eighteen people participated.

The survey asked respondents to evaluate and give feedback on the draft HPP vision: *Across Alaska's Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the rich, interconnected history of the region is preserved, accessible, and celebrated. Shared understanding and experience of the Borough's unique history connects people to each other and to the land, creating a sense of place.* Response to the vision was positive or neutral, with no negative responses.

The draft HPP mission also generated exclusively positive and neutral responses: *To protect, share, and celebrate the cultures, histories, and special places of the Mat-Su Borough.*

Respondents were asked to rank the draft goals in order of importance. The intent was not to remove any of the goals, but to understand perceived importance and priority. Based on public survey input, these three goals were prioritized:

- ▶ Elevate Alaska Native presence and histories across the region,
- ▶ Support existing and emerging historic preservation efforts, promote collaboration, and share resources, and
- ▶ Identify and preserve cultural resources and landscapes.

Participants emphasized Native representation in particular. One respondent wrote: *"There needs to be an acknowledgement of the Native People who have lived here for thousands of years."*



KNIK TRIBAL COUNCIL

The oldest known cultural feature in Upper Knik Arm is an early Dena'ina site, ca. 1100 AD, revealed by a series of cultural depressions like the one Alfred Theodore of Knik Tribe stands in. Inset: A large Dena'ina cache pit provides another clue to the region's early history.

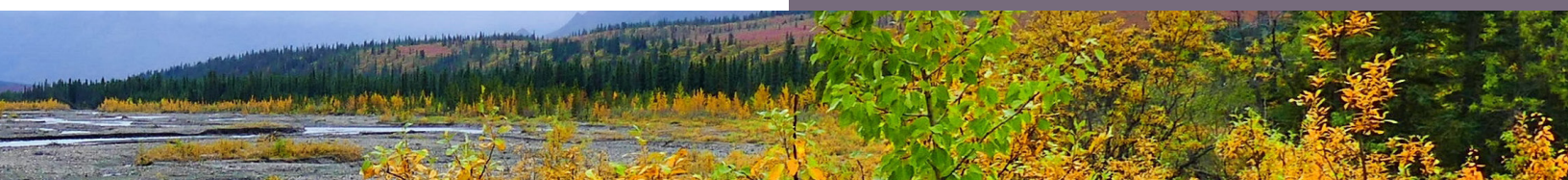


TOM BOL/MAT-SU CVB

Visitors learn about local Athabaskan culture at the Alpine Historical Park in Sutton-Alpine. The six-acre site also includes exhibits on coal mining and early road construction in the Mat-Su Valley.

Anything that happens to the land influences the people.... There are hundreds of Ahtna place names that have been passed down through oral history over generations. The maps we have represent how the land was used and how people related to it for thousands of years.

— JESSICA WINNESTAFFER, ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR, CHICKALOON TRIBAL COUNCIL



A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE MSB HPP

Draft Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives to Guide Historic Preservation Planning

The Phase 1 Mat-Su historic preservation planning process was guided by local expertise and input, building buy-in along the way to ensure the community's unique desires, strengths, and capacities are reflected in the final plan. Public meetings provided stakeholders and the general public with opportunities to learn about ongoing preservation planning efforts and to help define the vision, mission, goals, and objectives that will shape those efforts going forward.

The HPP Vision will broadly define what success looks like for historic preservation across the Mat-Su Borough for the next 10 years and into the future:

A vision statement is a forward-thinking statement that provides guidance on the purpose and characteristics of a world we want to build in fulfillment of our mission.

Mission defines how this vision is achieved.

Goals provide a broad framework to achieve the vision. Goals broadly define what we must achieve in order to fulfill our vision and our mission. Each goal represents a subset of objectives and action steps specifying how it will be fulfilled.

Objectives provide benchmarks for fulfilling each goal, in line with the guidance provided by the mission and vision.

VISION

Across Alaska's Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the rich, interconnected history of the region is preserved, accessible, and celebrated.

Shared understanding and experience of the Borough's unique history connects people to each other and to the land, creating a sense of place.

MISSION

To protect, share, and celebrate the cultures, histories, and special places of the Mat-Su Borough.

GOALS

1. Elevate Alaska Native presence and histories across the region.
2. Support existing and emerging historic preservation efforts, promote collaboration, and share resources.
3. Identify and preserve cultural resources and landscapes.
4. Improve and coordinate community engagement and education to increase public awareness of the Mat-Su Borough's cultural resources.
5. Connect historic preservation with regional and local planning.

OBJECTIVES

Below each goal are specific objectives and examples of action steps developed during stakeholder conversations. Measurable outcomes and action items for each objective will be developed in Phase II.

GOAL 1: Elevate Alaska Native presence and histories across the region

- Engage Indigenous leadership in developing and fulfilling objectives within this goal.
- Recognize Indigenous peoples and heritage through the renaming of places.
- Represent Indigenous lands and significant sites on maps. **Example action item:**
Display historic and prehistoric Indigenous land use, including trails, fishing, and hunting sites, on maps.
- Conduct land management, planning and historic preservation activities in partnership with Tribes.
- Incorporate land acknowledgments in public meetings and gatherings.
- Celebrate Indigenous heritage and support Alaska Native language, cultural education, and activities.

GOAL 2: Support existing and emerging historic preservation efforts, promote collaboration, and share resources

- Centralize and improve preservation and usability of archival resources. **Example action item:**
Catalogue MSB-related historical resources housed in collections across the state.
- Grow collaboration and partnering within the preservation community. **Example action item:**
Foster increased collaboration between local historic preservation groups and MSB.
- Support information and resource sharing in historic preservation. **Example action items:**
1) Identify and share examples of what is working in MSB historic preservation (e.g., pedestrian experiences in Palmer and Talkeetna. 2) Create collaborative educational opportunities to improve technical preservation knowledge in MSB communities.
- Promote existing funding sources and preservation incentives. **Example action item:**
Reinstate ability to apply for bed tax grant funding.
- Explore new funding sources and preservation incentives.

GOAL 3: Identify and preserve cultural resources and landscapes

- Maintain and update historic contexts.

- Inventory known cultural resources.
- Identify and inventory undocumented cultural resources.
- Encourage appropriate treatment of cultural resources.
- Conserve land to preserve the historic character of sites within the region.

GOAL 4: Improve and coordinate community engagement and education to increase public awareness of the Mat-Su Borough's cultural resources

- Elevate local histories in K-12 education, in and outside the classroom. **Example action items:**
1) Include MSB histories in K-12 curricula. 2) Build on existing Tribal educational resources, such as the Knik Tribe's cultural exchange grants for fostering school outreach. 3) Identify creative opportunities and tactics to elevate regional history, such as an inter-school competition during historic preservation week.
- Support and create opportunities for tourists to connect with MSB history. **Example action item:**
Contact tourism companies to promote Mat-Su museums, cultural centers, historic sites, and other opportunities.
- Expand and coordinate promotion of historic preservation across the Borough.
- Use technological solutions to create centralized educational resources. **Example action item:**
Create an online multimedia resource.
- Create volunteer opportunities to support historic preservation efforts.

GOAL 5: Connect historic preservation with regional and local planning

- Include preservation in land use planning and land management efforts.
- Regularly update preservation planning documents.
- Advocate for additional funding allotments for planning and cultural resource management.
- Establish historic preservation guidelines for unincorporated areas of the MSB. **Example action item:**
Establish a local register of historic properties.

NEXT STEPS FOR THE HPP

This Phase I report is intended to serve as a springboard for Phase II of the MSB historic preservation planning process. Guided by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation Planning, Phase II will be led by the Borough Planning Department with input and approval from the MSB Historical Preservation Commission (HPC) and additional stakeholder and public engagement.

Building on Phase I, this next phase of the planning process will:

- ▶ **Establish historic contexts.** A historic context is an overarching theme used in historic preservation planning: "Information about historic properties representing aspects of history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture must be collected and organized to define these relationships. This organizational framework is called a "historic context." – National Park Service. **Actions:**
 - *Coordinate with community members and historic preservation stakeholders to gather key histories of the region to inform the historic context framework.*
 - *Reach consensus with key stakeholders on the framework.*
 - *Work with the HPC to adopt historic contexts for the region. Once adopted, as per the Secretary of Interior's planning standards, a goal for each historic context will need to be defined with community involvement.*
- ▶ **Adopt the Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives.** Reach consensus with historic preservation planning stakeholders to recommend adoption of this strategic framework to guide planning. **Action:**
 - *Convene multiple stakeholder sessions to review and approve the vision, mission, goals, and objectives for the MSB HPP.*
- ▶ **Define action steps.** Building on the objectives and actions identified during Phase 1, identify additional actions to strengthen preservation planning and implementation efforts prior to formal adoption of the plan. **Actions:**
 - *Organize Tribal-specific stakeholder group*



Talkeetna then and now
(ca. 1949 and 2016).

INSET: ROLLIE OSTERMICK

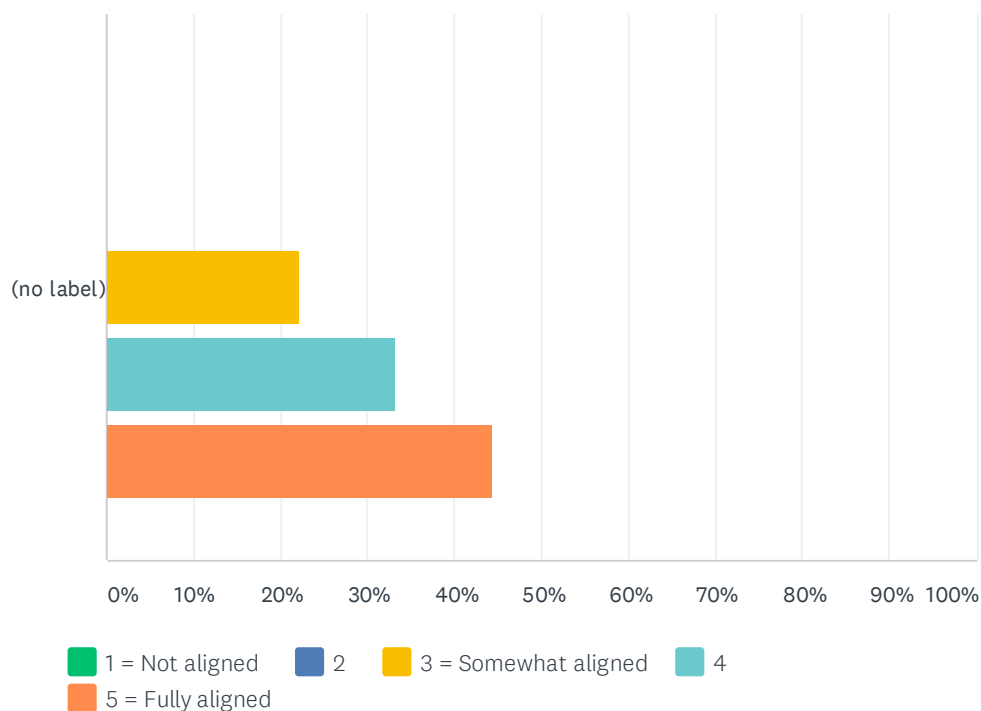
sessions to support meaningful dialogue and input throughout planning efforts.

- *Develop an on-going historic preservation working group to grow momentum, share knowledge, and identify collaboration opportunities across the MSB.*
- *Identify opportunities for culture sharing, celebration, education and promotion, historic preservation trainings, volunteer opportunities, and shared resources throughout historic preservation dialogues.*
- *Identify opportunities to connect historic preservation with regional and local planning.*
- ▶ **Create the plan.** Using the national standards and HPP elements approved by stakeholders, draft an updated HPP to guide MSB preservation activities for at least the next 10 years. **Actions:**
 - *Identify a lead to coordinate HPP development.*
 - *Develop strategic, actionable steps for realizing goals and objectives through a public involvement process.*
 - *Prioritize historic context goals according to the overarching HPP vision, mission, and goals.*
- ▶ **Implement the plan.** Develop next steps and work plans to support historic preservation activities in line with the overall HPP vision and framework. **Actions:**
 - *Adopt the HPP.*
 - *Coordinate tracking and implementation of action items via the HPC.*

Q7 We are going to ask for your feedback on the MSB Historic Preservation Planning Vision statement. A vision statement is a forward-thinking statement that provides guidance on the purpose and characteristics of a world we want to build in fulfillment of our mission.

Draft Vision: Across Alaska's Matanuska Susitna Borough, the rich, interconnected history of the region is preserved, accessible, and celebrated. Shared understanding and experience of the Borough's unique history connects people to each other and to the land, creating a sense of place. How well does this vision align with your perspective on MSB historic preservation?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



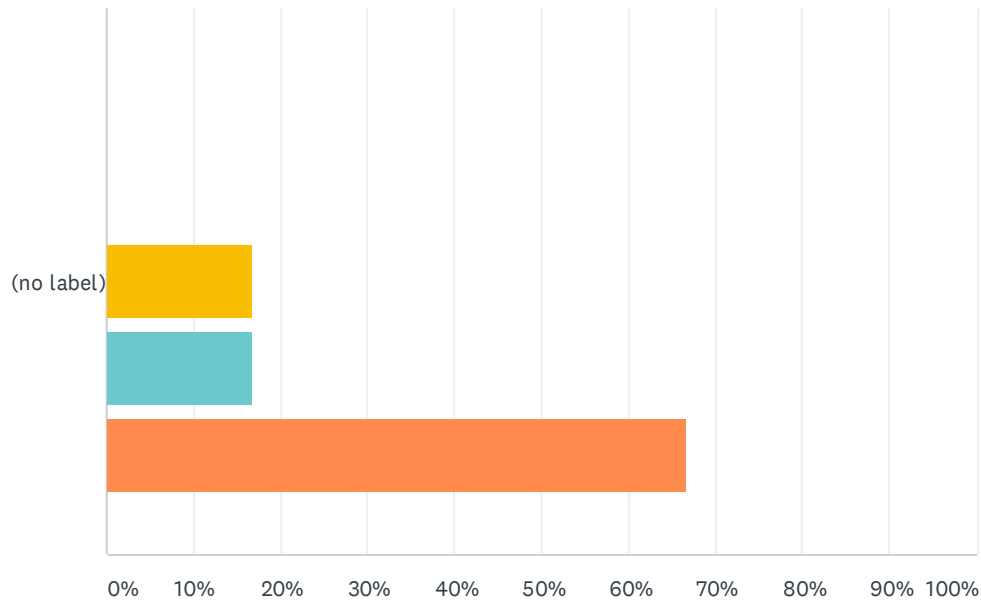
| | 1 = NOT ALIGNED | 2 | 3 = SOMEWHAT ALIGNED | 4 | 5 = FULLY ALIGNED | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|------------|-----------------|------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------|------------------|
| (no label) | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 22.22% 4 | 33.33% 6 | 44.44% 8 | 18 | 4.22 |

Mat-Su Borough Historic Preservation Planning Public Input Survey

| # | WHAT IS MISSING? WHAT NEEDS CLARIFICATION? SHARE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS HERE. | DATE |
|---|--|---------------------|
| 1 | I agree with the idea but sentences are awkward. Using fewer words and simpler sentences will make it more readable. | 11/30/2020 10:27 AM |
| 2 | I'm not well versed in all the aspects of the Mat-Su Valley, however I find it troubling that the green belt system is in danger of being lost to mine gravel. Isn't that the core of what the Valley is all about? And why has the squabbling regarding trail use been allowed? Multi use trails are just that, multi use! Why are specific groups, (mountain bike) trying to remove equestrians from the trails. Part of preserving the history of the Valley is not allowing it to become like Anchorage. | 11/27/2020 8:05 PM |
| 3 | I think to general. Really doesn't say what the vision statement is going to do. | 11/23/2020 12:47 PM |
| 4 | There needs to be an acknowledgement of the Native People who have lived here for thousands of years. Even the photo for the meeting/questionnaire omits them. You need to stop perpetuating the myth that nothing was here until White people showed up. | 11/20/2020 11:47 PM |
| 5 | Education to the public | 11/19/2020 9:54 PM |
| 6 | I think you need clarification on what needs to be preserved. Physical structures? Land? Information? Etc..... | 11/19/2020 11:26 AM |
| 7 | unique history and prehistory | 11/19/2020 9:42 AM |
| 8 | Add something about the vastness of the borough. "...interconnected history of the vast region..." or something like that. Its a huge area, which contains a variety of situations and individual stories. | 11/19/2020 8:05 AM |
| 9 | Sounds like mumbo jumbo feel good stuff | 11/18/2020 7:48 PM |

Q8 We are going to ask for your feedback on the MSB Historic Preservation Planning Mission statement. A mission statement focuses on today. It describes what you do, whom you do it for, and the benefit that it provides. Draft Mission: To protect, share, and celebrate the cultures, histories, and special places of the Mat-Su Borough. How well does this mission express the purpose of historic preservation planning in the MSB?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



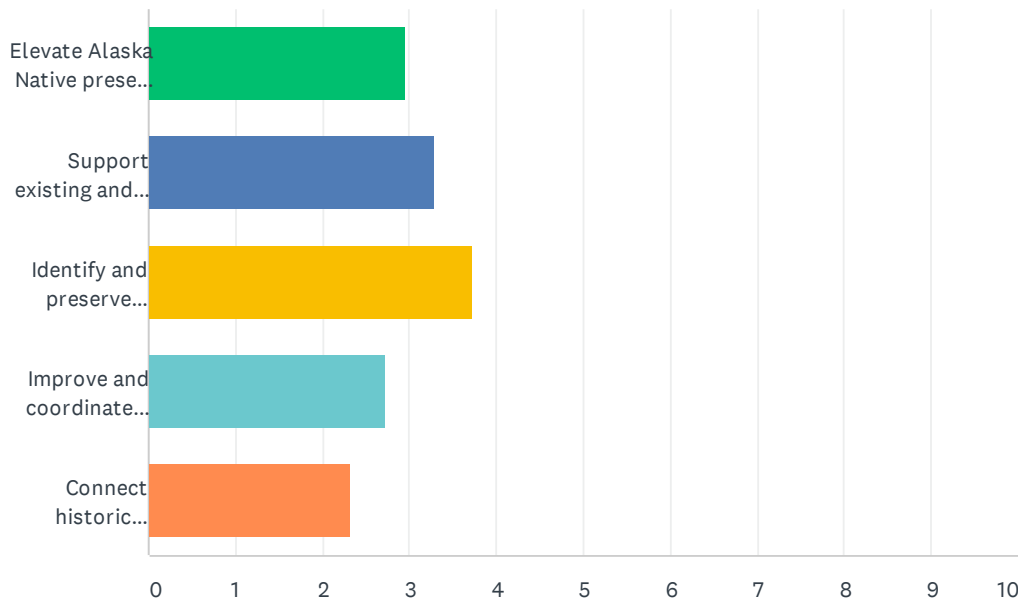
■ 1 = Not well, missing core components
 ■ 2
 ■ 3 = Somewhat well
 ■ 4
 ■ 5 = Very well

| | 1 = NOT WELL, MISSING CORE COMPONENTS | 2 | 3 = SOMEWHAT WELL | 4 | 5 = VERY WELL | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|------------|---------------------------------------|-------|-------------------|--------|---------------|-------|------------------|
| (no label) | 0.00% | 0.00% | 16.67% | 16.67% | 66.67% | 18 | 4.50 |
| | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 12 | | |

| # | PLEASE SHARE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS HERE. | DATE |
|---|---|---------------------|
| 1 | Simple and aligns with the ideas of the vision. | 11/30/2020 10:27 AM |
| 2 | Preserving all aspects of history is definitely key! | 11/27/2020 8:05 PM |
| 3 | still the same as previous. States a little more, how, when , why are basic components. | 11/23/2020 12:47 PM |
| 4 | "special places" seems vague, and therefore hard to quantify. | 11/20/2020 11:47 PM |
| 5 | I think you need to include structures. "Place" can refer to an area. But I do think physical structure preservation is so important, and this has been so badly managed throughout Alaska. | 11/19/2020 11:26 AM |

Q9 We are going to ask for your feedback on the MSB Historic Preservation Planning Goals. Goals broadly define what we must achieve in order to fulfill our vision and our mission. Each goal represents a subset of objectives and action steps specifying how it will be fulfilled. We have identified five goals to guide historic preservation planning across the Borough. Please rank these five goals in order of importance to you. (Top of the list = most important) Note: our intent is not to remove any of these goals, but to understand perceived importance and priority.

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | TOTAL | SCORE |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------|-------|
| Elevate Alaska Native presence and histories across the region | 38.89% 7 | 0.00% 0 | 16.67% 3 | 5.56% 1 | 38.89% 7 | 18 | 2.94 |
| Support existing and emerging historic preservation efforts, promote collaboration, and share resources | 16.67% 3 | 33.33% 6 | 22.22% 4 | 16.67% 3 | 11.11% 2 | 18 | 3.28 |
| Identify and preserve cultural resources and landscapes | 22.22% 4 | 38.89% 7 | 33.33% 6 | 0.00% 0 | 5.56% 1 | 18 | 3.72 |
| Improve and coordinate community engagement and education to increase public awareness of the Mat Su Borough's cultural resources | 11.11% 2 | 27.78% 5 | 11.11% 2 | 22.22% 4 | 27.78% 5 | 18 | 2.72 |
| Connect historic preservation with regional and local planning | 11.11% 2 | 0.00% 0 | 16.67% 3 | 55.56% 10 | 16.67% 3 | 18 | 2.33 |

Q10 Share any additional comments on the above goals here.

Answered: 7 Skipped: 11

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|---|---|---------------------|
| 1 | All are important. | 11/30/2020 10:27 AM |
| 2 | this survey was very hard to read as the text is a very light gray. | 11/23/2020 12:47 PM |
| 3 | As part of community engagement and education, past disparities and difficult histories involving Native and non-Native communities should be acknowledged and shared. | 11/19/2020 7:09 PM |
| 4 | The first two I ranked I feel are the most critical. The other three I believe have equal importance, but was forced to rank. | 11/19/2020 11:26 AM |
| 5 | I think the borough is the organization to keep the inventory, but considering its limited financial resources, other groups need to coordinate implementation of the goals and objectives. | 11/19/2020 8:05 AM |
| 6 | Inventory of existing historic properties and farms/homesteads | 11/19/2020 7:09 AM |
| 7 | Just curious on process. | 11/18/2020 7:48 PM |

Q11 Is there anything else you would like to add about historic preservation in the Mat-Su Borough?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 11

| # | RESPONSES | DATE |
|---|---|---------------------|
| 1 | Bring history to where people are going in addition to history destinations such as museums. That is, more historical interpretation at parks, trails, businesses, etc, where feasible. | 11/30/2020 10:27 AM |
| 2 | It's definitely needed! | 11/27/2020 8:05 PM |
| 3 | When historic preservation occurs, it is not easily apparent to the public. Historic districts and centers should be established. They should be mapped and there should be events or other things that draw people to these places. | 11/19/2020 11:26 AM |
| 4 | Create a method that allows for historic properties to be documented before any subdivision activity. The borough had an ordinance that allowed for volunteer participation of land owners. Perhaps it could be re implemented and some kind of incentive be offered to allow for the survey. | 11/19/2020 9:42 AM |
| 5 | Great job! Thanks! | 11/19/2020 8:05 AM |
| 6 | Create special zoning to limit impact if possible to remaining historical tracks of land / properties | 11/19/2020 7:09 AM |
| 7 | Not at this time | 11/18/2020 7:48 PM |

Ahtna Snowshoes

ca. 1890



“The snow was now about 20 inches deep, but very light which made hard traveling as snowshoes would sink clear down to bottom at each step.

The native Indian shoes were best, being much longer and with finer mesh giving better support.”

– Basil Austin describing Ahtna snowshoes, 1898 in *The Diary of a Ninety-Eighter*, p.87



THE SNOWSHOE MAKER.

J. L.
GORDON

Dene Metalworking 19th Century



"Dene daggers, in copper and steel, show both heat treatment and stress hardening as methods for controlling strength and edge-hardness of tools.



Dene copper arrowtips, awls, and other tools show an equally expert technology.



Their use of metals was the most sophisticated that we have seen in North America. Their crafts require deeper study, as does their everyday life."

-John Witthoft and Frances Eyman, Penn Museum

