



Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

2012 Project Status Update

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Introduction

The most recent "Mat-Su Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy" (CEDS) was completed to Economic Development Administration (EDA) requirements and is dated December 2008. In addition a "CEDS Project Status *Update*" was completed and delivered in 2010 to meet EDA CEDS funding requirements for 2010.

After discussions with the EDA representatives, it was determined that a "2012 CEDS Project Status Update," (*this document*), could be completed to meet the EDA CEDS funding requirements for a June 13, 2013 EDA funding Grant Application Package. By June 30, 2013, an entirely new 2013 CEDS will be completed and delivered per EDA requirements.

The purpose of the "CEDS Project Status Update" is to report on the progress made towards the goals and objectives set forth in the CEDS 2008 plan. Accordingly, this document is organized according to the nine goal areas set forth in the 2008 CEDS, and the objectives presented under each goal. This document restates what the goals and objectives are, and then addresses the progress made toward accomplishing each particular goal or objective. In many cases, specific tasks are also referenced. The document provides a general overview of the progress being made to accomplish the 2008 CEDS goals. The goals and objectives identified reflect the input from the citizens of the Borough as well as the professional staff.

In addition, the reader will notice references in this document to the Mat-Su Borough "Economic Development Strategic Plan" or EDSP. In 2010, with involvement TIP Strategies and over 180 business and government stakeholders, the Borough developed this detailed strategic action plan. The EDSP is currently in the execution phase and will be fully integrated into the 2013 CEDS due in June 2013.

Goal 1: Establish an Industrial Sector to Provide Employment and Tax Base

Objective 1: Continued development and expansion of Port MacKenzie as an industrial port and manufacturing area.

Task 1: Work on identified port infrastructures needs.

- **Gas Utilities**

Gas utilities are installed as far as the Goose Bay Correctional Facility, which is nine miles away from the Port. Installation of the gas utilities to the prison was completed in 2011. The design, engineering, and reservation of rights-of-way to take a gas line the rest of the way from the prison to the Port are also complete.

- **Upgrade and pave last 1.5 miles of Port MacKenzie Road**

In 2012, the slope of the last 1.5 miles of the Port MacKenzie Road was modified to a more gradual slope and the road bed prepared for paving. Paving is expected to be completed in 2014 after the new road bed has settled.

- **Operate year round ferry between Anchorage and Port MacKenzie**

The Borough is attempting to sell the recently constructed ferry since it is too expensive to operate and maintain given its limited vehicle capacity. In addition, permitting obstacles and costs make the ferry landings unfeasible.

- **Complete rail extension from Port MacKenzie to the Alaska Railroad mainline near the Parks Highway**

The final EIS for the 32-mile rail extension from Houston to Port MacKenzie has been completed and project legal challenges have been resolved. The majority of the project funding, \$171 million, has been provided by the State of Alaska and it is expected that the remaining funding, \$101.5 million, will be provided during the 2014 and 2015 legislative sessions. The Borough and Alaska Railroad completed work on a 100-car rail loop bed during 2011.

Construction has begun on much of the rail extension rail bed and the project is expected to be completed by 2017. Currently 116 people are working on the rail extension and over 200 people will be working as the project progresses.

- **Add 7.86 acres to barge dock**

The Borough completed the barge dock expansion project during 2011. High mast lights were installed around the expanded dock area in 2013. The Borough received \$3 million from the Economic Development Administration to double the size of the existing barge dock. These funds were matched by \$1.1 million of materials provided by the Borough.

- **Expand the deep-draft dock**

A permit for the Phase I deep-draft dock expansion has been received. Additional permits for construction of a second deep draft dock have also been applied for and received. The Borough is working with other partners on planning a new bulk commodities conveyor system from the rail loop to the deep draft dock and a bulk commodities stacker/loader. The provision of a larger conveyor and bulk commodities loader is extremely critical to the Port meeting its export potential.

Task 2: Assist in identification and contact of potential Industrial Users for the Port.

- Several potential industrial users have expressed interest in the Port and held meetings with the Borough regarding uses, such as sea lift module construction, tank farm siting, coal export, aggregate mineral export, forest product exports from the Borough and Interior Alaska, as well as possible cement manufacturing and export.

Two new Port users have signed leases. A fuel importer/distributor, who will distribute fuel to the Borough region has prepared a 7 acre lease site for fuel storage tanks and has surveyed and engineered a pipeline route from the new tank farm area down to the barge dock.

Fuel tanks and pipeline construction is expected in 2014. The second lease to a barge and truck transport operation that has worked on preparing their storage and transport site. A third new lease is expected to be let to a, aggregate materials manufacture, storage, and transfer company.

Other new or expected Port uses include importing the cable for the Fire Island wind farm project, exporting a test shipment of coal to Japan, importing Valley Sawmill logs from Kodiak, importing/ transferring heavy machinery construction materials and supplies for the new mine at the Fort Knox gold mine, and future forest product exports to China.

Goal 2: Develop Infrastructure to Support Economic Development

Objective 1: Construction of railroad extension to service port.

Task 1: Support Environmental Impact Statement Development.

- The Federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) Environmental Impact Statement Final Draft was published on March 16, 2010 and the STB made a final decision approving a rail extension route and its construction. The decision and EIS have been successfully defended in court. The rail extension is being built with expected completion in 2017.

Task 2: Work with Congressional delegation, legislators, etc. to obtain funding sources for rail extension.

- The Borough and Alaska Railroad, supported by a business coalition, have successfully received \$171 million, or 62% of the funding, from the State of Alaska for rail extension construction.

- The Borough will continue to work with the Legislature to obtain the remaining \$101.5 million of funding during the 2014 and 2015 legislative sessions.

Task 3: Help expand coalition of communities and businesses supporting rail extension.

- The Borough has worked, and is working, with government and business leaders throughout Alaska, to build a coalition support base. This coalition has been established. The project also has the Governor's support. The coalition is working with the Borough to obtain final funding.

Objective 2: Improvement of road infrastructure to meet population growth and support economic development

Task 1: Support improvement of East-West and North-South transportation network in the core area.

- **Trunk Road realignment:** The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOTPF) began construction on Phase 1 of the realignment (Palmer-Wasilla Highway to the Parks Highway) in 2009, and completed the road segment in 2011. Construction of the Phase 2 road segment (Palmer-Wasilla Highway and Palmer Fishhook Road) began in the spring of 2011 and will be completed in 2014.
- **Seward-Meridian Extension:** Construction of Phase 1 between the Parks Highway and the Palmer-Wasilla Highway began in spring of 2011 and was completed in the fall of 2012. Right-of-way (ROW) acquisition for Phase 2, between Palmer-Wasilla Highway and Seldon Road is ongoing. ADOT&PF is seeking funding for construction of Phase 2.
- **Parks Highway Upgrade:** Lucas Road to Big Lake –Project has been broken down into three segments with the first segment, Lucas Road to Church Road going to construction in fall of 2013.

- Phase 2, Church Road to Pittman Road is currently in design, with ROW acquisition in progress. Construction of Phase 2 is expected in fall of 2014. Phase 3, from Pittman Road to Big Lake Road, is in design with ROW acquisition beginning in summer of 2013 and construction in summer of 2016.
- **Bogard Road East Extension to Glenn Highway:** The Borough has completed design and right-of-way acquisition with construction funding obtained to build Phase 1 from Colony Way to the Glenn Highway. The Borough will be seeking funding for Phase 2 construction, between Colony Way and 49th State Street, during the 2013-14 State legislative session.

Task 2: Road Safety Improvements, such as upgrading the Palmer-Wasilla Highway to four lanes, the South Hemmer Road extension, the upgrade of the Glenn Highway to Palmer to four lanes, and Knik Goose Bay Road reconstruction.

- ADOT&PF is currently designing Highway Safety funded project that will upgrade the Palmer-Wasilla Highway from a two-lane to a three-lane highway.
- ADOT&PF is currently designing and purchasing ROW for a four-lane upgrade of the Glenn Highway from the Parks Highway/Glenn Highway interchange to Palmer. Construction is expected in fall of 2015.
- The **upgrade** of Knik-Goose Bay Road to a 4-6 lane highway is currently being taken through a reconnaissance phase by ADOT&PF with full design expected to start in spring of 2014.

Task 3: Support road infrastructure needed to connect Port MacKenzie and the Knik Arm Bridge to the Parks Highway.

- The final earthwork phase of the Point MacKenzie Road upgrade was completed in spring of 2013 with paving of the final 1.5 miles expected in spring of 2014.

- The Alaska Department of Transportation completed a reconnaissance effort on Burma Road to finish right-of-way acquisition, and upgrade the road to a two-lane paved highway from the intersection with Point MacKenzie Road to South Big Lake Road.
- The Borough has also completed right-of-way acquisition for the South Big Lake Road realignment which will straighten the road and provide a paved two-lane highway from Burma Road to Jade Lake. Construction is expected in fall of 2013.
- Planning/Reconnaissance efforts are currently under way through the Big Lake Community Impact Assessment study being completed by the Borough. The purpose of this study is to determine the best route for a Big Lake Road bypass of downtown Big Lake from Ayrshire Road north to the Parks Highway.

Task 4: Support Hatcher Pass related (AKA Willow Fishhook) road improvements.

- Design and engineering work continues for the portion of Hatcher Pass Road that begins on the Palmer side of the Pass just south of Independence Mine Road (MP 18) and continues over the Pass to Lucky Shot Mine Road (MP 25). ROW acquisition funding will be available in 2014 with construction expected in 2015.
- An environmental document has been produced for the next segment of the Hatcher Pass Road from Lucky Shot Mine Road (MP 25) to near Milepost 49.

Task 5: Support list of road improvement projects set forth in 2008 CEDS (page 45).

- Trunk Road Realignment and Widening - See briefing paragraph above.
- Seward Meridian Parkway Widening and Extension - See briefing paragraph above.

- Bogard Road Extension East - See briefing paragraph above.
- Lucille Street Upgrade - The Borough completed reconnaissance work in 2009.
- Environmental permitting phase has begun for improvements in the area of the intersection with Seldon Road.
- Knik Goose Bay Road (4-lane) - Reconnaissance work has begun. Several new traffic signals have been installed to provide breaks in the traffic as a stop-gap measure until road can be upgraded to a 4-lane road.
- Parks Highway - Lucas Road (Wasilla) to Big Lake - See briefing paragraph above.
- Glenn Highway Widening to four lanes, Parks Highway to Palmer - See briefing paragraph above.
- Port MacKenzie Rail Extension - See information presented above.

Objective 3: Assist public education regarding construction and staffing of new prison facility.

The Borough completed construction of the new prison in 2012. The prison opened in 2012 and will be fully staffed with 371 employees and fully operational by the end of 2013. Community groups and businesses have been kept up-to-date as the project progressed.

Goal 3: Establish anchor attractions and infrastructure for tourism development. Encourage development of ski and recreation facilities at Hatcher Pass.

Objective 1: Encourage development of ski and recreation area facilities and historic mine site at Hatcher Pass.

The Borough has constructed the Phase 1 Nordic ski trails, the access road, and the parking lot on the south side of the Hatcher Pass recreation area. Construction of Phase II that includes paving the ski trail parking lot and access road, and building the ski lodge will be completed by the end of summer 2013.

Task: Promote and coordinate development of the Hatcher Pass Ski and Recreation Area Development.

- Borough has obtained equitable title from the State of Alaska to 3,300 acres of land within the Government Peak sub-unit of the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area, designated as the Government Peak Recreation Area.
- The "Hatcher Pass – Government Peak Unit Asset Management & Development Plan" was developed by the MSB and adopted by the Assembly in 2012.

This document provides a general direction for the phased development of the numerous trails, skiing areas, and other recreational facilities in the Government Peak Management Unit. This Plan also provides management intent and management guidelines that are more specific to these developments than that provided by the 2010 Alaska, Hatcher Pass Management Plan.

- In the summer of 2012, the Borough, with the assistance of the volunteers from the Mat-Su Ski Club, completed construction of approximately 2/3 of the Nordic ski/hiking trails proposed for Phase 1. The ski trails opened to the public in December 2012 and are maintained by the Ski Club.
- Construction began in 2012 on a new mile long access road and parking lot for the newly established recreation trails, and was temporarily open during the winter of 2012-2013 for skiers and snowshoers to reach the trailhead. Construction completion is expected in summer 2013.
- Construction of a roughly 2,000 square foot chalet-style building with restrooms and a waiting area for transit is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2013. So far, a new water well has been drilled and geotechnical investigations completed. The architect recently began the design and design completion is expected this summer.

Objective 2: Promote construction of a new visitor's center on south side of Denali National Park.

Task 1: Development of Master Interpretive Plan.

The Master Interpretive Plan is complete. Furthermore, the University of Alaska's Center for Economic Development was contracted to develop a Feasibility Report for the South Denali Visitor Center Complex. This report consists of a Feasibility Study and an Economic Impacts report.

Task 2: Special Land Use Districts (SPUD).

Update of the Denali State Park Special Land Use District, MSB 17.17, is on hold, pending finalization of funding and plan phase revisions. This pause is a result of the revised park development plan and funding.

Objective 3: Identify tourism infrastructure needs and work to provide funding for such needs.

In a push to catch up with tremendous growth, Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly members presented transportation and tourism infrastructure projects as priorities to the Mat-Su legislative delegation in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Task: Support efforts to fund Borough Tourism Infrastructure Needs Study recommendations.

- The Borough is using bed tax money to fund infrastructure projects. The Mat-Su Convention and Visitors Bureau has obtained scenic byways funding and Borough funding to complete the South Gateway Study. The study has been completed and possible sites evaluated for a new Gateway Visitors Center on the south side of the Borough.

Objective 4: Improve and establish infrastructure needed to stimulate tourism development.

Task 1: Support key tourism road development or upgrade projects.

- Approximately \$300,000 per year in bed tax funds are allocated for other tourism infrastructure projects throughout the Borough.

These funds have installed restrooms at popular destinations such as Jim Creek, Talkeetna Park, Moose Creek and Crevasse Moraine; improved trails/trailheads at Crevasse Moraine, Zero Lake; and completed Master Plans for four (4) recreation/tourism destinations; and Borough-wide winter trails grooming. In FY 2014, another restroom will be added at Meadow Lakes recreation area, Nordic ski trails will be improved in Talkeetna, a master plan will be completed for the Sunshine Creek Recreation Area and improvement will be made to Lazy Mountain Recreation Area. Trails construction work will be done at the Butte, Hatcher Pass, the Core Area Greenbelt, and Eska Creek Falls.

Task 2: Work with snow machine groups and the MSCVB, the Borough and cities to dedicate snow machine trails.

- Every year, progress is made towards securing legal easements for hundreds of miles of winter trails, for both motorized and non-motorized uses, throughout the Borough.

Task 3: Support development of tourism destination niche program. Borough efforts include.

- Trailhead/trails program - \$270,000 is being used for trailhead and wayside improvements, as stated above.
- Stillwater fishing capital of the world effort - Tape of Stillwater fishing by a professional TV fishing personality has been funded, completed and broadcast, and the Borough has developed and distributed a Stillwater Fishing brochure.
- Adventure Tourism - Borough has begun talks with tourism industry regarding promotion of adventure tourism in South Central Alaska.

Goal 4: Retain and Expand Existing Businesses

Objective 1 & 2: Provide a forum for the exchange of information about the Borough's economic development activities, and encourage the start-up of new businesses, as well as retention and expansion of existing businesses.

Objective 1: In 2010, the Borough contracted with TIP Strategies from Austin, Texas, to complete an Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP). As part of this planning effort, TIP Strategies and Borough representatives held committee, focus groups, and interview meetings. The Borough conducted surveys and interviews of over 180 business representatives across the Borough to identify business needs and business assistance strategies to be implemented. These efforts provided a constructive forum for input to the Borough.

In February 2012, under the direction of the Borough, the MSB Economic Development Advisory Council was formed. This body met bi-weekly throughout 2012 and monthly during 2013. The Advisory Council has been instrumental in guiding Borough policy as well as building trust among many stakeholders that participate in the Borough's economy.

Objective 2 Update: The retention and expansion of existing businesses was identified by the EDSP as a key priority. As a result, the following actions have been taken:

- An inventory of existing businesses has been stored in an online database made directly available to all of EDSP partners. Data for Borough commercial properties is in the process of being prepared and will soon be available on the Borough website.

- The Borough partnered with the Mat-Su Resource Conservation and Development Council to administer a “Barriers to Business” survey to identify the issues that are most relevant to businesses in our area.
- Based on the analysis of the survey data, business visitations will be scheduled to begin in 2013 to help businesses better understand current challenges.

Task 1: Assist in an annual economic development conference for the Mat-Su, gather information about opportunities, trends and market conditions of use to local businesses.

- The Economic Development Plan Roll-out lunch served this purpose in 2010. As part of the Economic Development Plan, the Borough holds quarterly meetings with business and community representatives to meet this need.

Task 2: Work with the Chambers of Commerce and the Small Business Development Center to market the Borough to new businesses and industries.

- EDSP specifically addresses the tasks needed for this program. As stated above, the Borough is working with their EDSP partners to attract new businesses and satellite offices from outside the Mat-Su.

Task 3: Support the funding and efforts of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to assist new businesses and expand existing businesses.

- The Borough is no longer providing \$50,000 towards SBDC annual expenses. Due to budget cuts, the Borough Assembly cut funds budgeted for supporting SBDC operations in 2011.

Task 4: Support the continuous efforts to expand local businesses, assist new businesses, and encourage entrepreneurs.

- The Borough EDSP sets forth recommendations for this effort. A copy of the EDSP is provided as part of this submission.

Task 5: Publicly encourage local population to support local businesses, and local businesses to support each other.

- The Borough Economic Development Department has included this theme in speeches to all Borough Chambers of Commerce.

Objective 3: Encourage development of a small business incubator facility within the Borough.

Task: Continue to support funding for and construction of an Agricultural Processing and Product Development Center.

- This center will greatly expand use of and demand for local agricultural products, as well as stimulate new local businesses to process, manufacture, and market such products. The Borough let a \$250,000 contract to engineer and design the facility. The facility design was completed in 2011. The Borough is continuing to pursue funding for construction of the project. The Borough has a contracted employee dedicated to working on this and other agricultural projects. Furthermore, the Borough is experiencing a surge in the amount of agricultural entrepreneurship making this project very timely.

Goal 5: Increase Education and Workforce Development Opportunities

Objective 1: Support the Borough Assembly's priority of expanding the Mat-Su College into a four-year college.

A key college expansion effort has been the creation of a paramedics program. The new Mat-Su College Paramedic Program, funded by the Borough, has been fully operational since 2012. Four full year classes of paramedics training have been completed with maximum student participation each year. In 2011, state funds were used to expand paramedics' classrooms and facilities at the college. The Borough continues to pay the Paramedics professor's salary of \$90,000.

Task 1: Communicate the economic benefits of expanding the Mat-Su College to University of Alaska officials and state and local government representatives through position statements, informational brochures, and public forums.

- The Borough Economic Development Department and members of the Economic Development Advisory Council (EDAC) communicate such benefits on an on-going basis. A Borough economic development workgroup has been formed and is dedicated to a business and education partnership including Mat-Su College. The Borough Economic Development Director and two other members of the EDAC are members of the Mat-Su College Advisory Board.

Task 2: Support state and local efforts to obtain funding for Mat-Su College program expansion and inclusion of Valley Center for the Arts and Learning (VCAL) at Mat-Su College in the University budget.

- The Borough worked with UAA, the Mat-Su College, the community, and legislators to obtain more than \$20 million from the State for the auditorium part of VCAL. This 800-seat auditorium is designed and being built. No other auditorium in the Borough seats over 300 people.

Objective 2 & 3: Encourage public/private partnerships to assist with workforce development and support local workforce training efforts.

The Borough EDSP specifically addresses such partnerships. Based upon input from local workforce development people, the plan emphasizes the need to expand apprenticeship programs. A Borough economic development workgroup has been formed and is dedicated to a business and education partnership. The Borough Economic Development Director, and two other members of the Economic Development Advisory Council are members of the Mat-Su College Advisory Board.

Goal 6: Plan and Provide for Public Facility Sites, Construction of Facilities, and Use of Such Sites and Facilities, to Meet the Needs of a Growing Population

Objective 1: Encourage and support efforts to provide new schools.

The South Palmer (aka Machentanz) Elementary School has been completed and opened for use during the 2009-2010 school year. The Susitna Junior/Senior High School has been completed and students began attending the new school at the beginning of 2010. Land has been acquired for the expansion of Academy Charter School, a new Iditarod Elementary School, and Knik Goose Bay (KGB) Road Junior/Senior High School which is scheduled to open in Fall 2015. The new KGB Elementary School is planned to be located adjacent to the KGB Jr/ Sr High site. The Borough has completed seven new schools between 2001 and 2010. In addition, a school expansion completed in 2013 and two new school openings are anticipated in the 2015/2016 school year. Location has not yet been determined for an additional elementary school site in the Springer Loop area of Palmer.

Objective 2: The Regional Resource Recovery and Training Park (recycling center) progress.

During the summer of 2010, the Borough completed the new recycling center and held a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by over 100 people including a representative of International Paper, Inc. The project was funded by EDA, the State of Alaska, the Borough, and a private foundation. Recently the Recycling Center received funding from the Borough and EDA for a new larger bailer.

Goal 7: Increase Commercial and Industrial Development to Broaden the Tax Base so the Borough does not rely as Heavily on Residential Properties

Objective 1: Encourage more industrial activity in the Port District at Port MacKenzie.

Several potential industrial users have expressed interest in the Port and held meetings with the Borough regarding uses, such as sea lift module construction, tank farm construction, coal export, aggregate mineral export, timber exports from the Interior, a gas extraction plant, and possible cement manufacturing and export.

Since the 2012 “CEDS Project Status Update,” the Borough has leased land to two new users, a fuel import and distribution company and a bulk commodities transport company. The Borough worked with the fuel company to develop the lease site. As part of this effort, the Borough also completed professional valuations of select land and office space at the Port to help support future leases. Another new lease is expected in the near future with an aggregate materials manufacturer and exporter.

Task: Support the Port Commission in encouraging new businesses to locate in the Port District and existing ones to expand their operations.

- The Borough has expanded efforts to market the Port. The Borough Port Director completed over 20 presentations in 2012 to companies, legislators, and community/industry groups. The presentations also included radio interviews. The Borough Economic Development Director completed more than 15 presentations last year to companies, legislators, and community/industry groups. He also presented at the Resource Development Conference and the Alaska Miners Conference in 2012.

Objective 2: Encourage economic diversification efforts that will increase the non-residential development tax base, help pay for growth related public facilities, and ease some of the homeowner tax burden.

- This objective and a plan to achieve it are addressed in the new EDSP. The plan sets forth numerous measures to help attract new businesses and provide for a diversified business base. These measures include: identifying additional industrial development areas; a positive image campaign for Mat-Su businesses; an outreach effort to locate satellite land/office space for Anchorage businesses in the Borough; and a business development advisory board. An inventory of Anchorage businesses will be stored in an online database (Executive Pulse) and made available to project partners. Data for Borough commercial properties is in the process of being prepared and will soon be available.

Goal 8: Support Natural Resource Based Opportunities: Agriculture, Forestry, Mining, Oil and Gas, Agricultural Processing Plant and Sport Fishing

Objective 1: Support development of value-added agricultural product processing.

The Borough has completed a \$250,000 final design and engineering plan for an agricultural product processing center. The Mat-Su Resource and Development Council continues to support farmer's market organizations and local marketing efforts with funds and coordination help. The Borough Economic Development Department has actively encouraged purchase of local agricultural products and emphasized economic benefit considerations. A new dairy, Havemeister Dairy, has developed to replace the Mat-Su Creamery. A large Borough Agricultural work group promotes agricultural enterprise and projects.

Objective 2: Advance development of a forest products industry to generate employment, encourage harvest and processing of renewable resources.

The Borough Forest Management Plan has been completed and adopted. It provides direction for the use of Borough resources to accomplish value-added forestry. Recent forestry projects include setting aside forest lands to provide wood on a sustainable basis for the wood burning boiler heating the Susitna Valley High School, opening areas for personal use harvest, and a timber sale to provide for forest product exports to China.

Objective 3: Support development of mining and oil and gas resources.

Work is currently halted on transportation infrastructure to assist the development of the Sutton coal field due to permit issues. The Port MacKenzie Rail Extension that will greatly improve the economics for transport of export bulk minerals from the Borough and Interior Alaska is being built and should be finished by 2017. The Borough, Alaska Railroad, State, and private partners are studying development of a minerals/coal conveyor from the rail extension to tidewater and a stacker loader to provide for effective export of minerals and coal.

Goal 9: Work to Maintain High Environmental Standards for Water Quality

Objective 1: Work towards protection of water resources by controlling erosion, improper sewage disposal, and sedimentation.

- The Borough formed a Wastewater and Septage Advisory Board and is in the process of acquiring a site suitable for regional wastewater and septage treatment in the Palmer-Wasilla area.

- Five new rain gardens were completed this year at Wasilla Middle School, Machetanz Elementary, Sutton Library, Spring Creek Farm and the Plant Materials Center. Two rain gardens that were installed in 2011 at Iditapark in Wasilla were expanded to provide more water drainage capacity. AQUA kids, a CBS television show, filmed the planting of the Spring Creek Farm rain garden with Trailside Discovery Camp campers. The show will run on CBS in the fall.
- The Borough has submitted a draft Borough-wide Storm Water Management Plan for public review in April of 2013. The Storm Water Management Plan is being written to meet the requirements of the Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System permit.
- The EPA grant for Wetlands Program Development, which started on January 1, 2010, was completed on March 31, 2013. Major accomplishments of the project were the development and adoption of the first MSB Wetlands Management Plan, four wetlands publications and a new website with comprehensive wetlands information. Two Wetlands Trainings were held geared specifically to developers, surveyors, realtors and utilities working with land development. Wetland presentations were also presented to the Mat-Su Business Alliance, Valley Board of Realtors and the Association of Civil Engineers.