



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Office of the Borough Manager

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 22, 2023
TO: Mayor and Assembly
FROM: Michael Brown, Borough Manager
RE: Manager's Weekly Post

Public Affairs Media Flyover:

School District

- Mat-Su parents say ongoing bus driver strike has led to lost income and carpool complications
Alaska Public Media
- Anger, frustration from parents and striking bus drivers at MSBSD school board meeting
Frontiersman

Fisheries

- Shrinking Salmon
Craig Medred

Assessments

- MSB Finance Director Cheyenne Heindel talks all things assessment
Big Cabbage Radio
- Mat-Su Homeowners see significant increase in assessed value
Alaska News Source

Palmer Library

- Palmer Library suffers roof collapse
Alaska News Source
- Palmer Library director heartbroken over roof collapse
Alaska News Source

MSB GIS Services

- Mat-Su Borough to collect Aerial Imagery
KTNA

MSB Facebook top posts

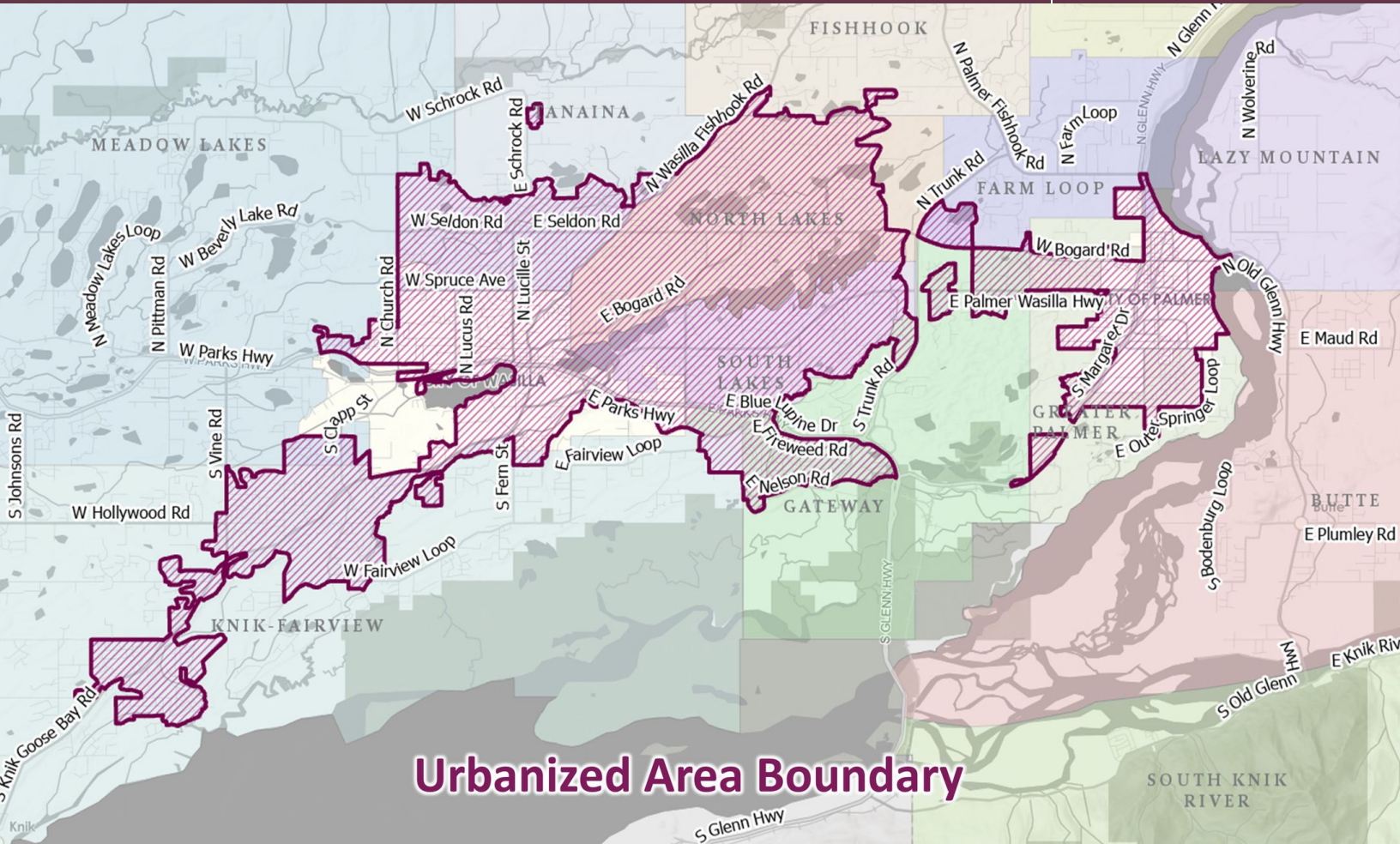
- EOC Training post and photo gallery (12,804 reached)
- FEMA roof snow load info-graphic (21,278 reached)
- Houston High School Save the date Ribbon Cutting Ceremony (7,684 reached)
- NOAA Mat-Su Valley 7-day forecast (6,951 reached)

Urban Area Designation: Attached is a flyer that explains more detail about how this designation affects the Borough.

The Wasilla, Knik-Fairview, North Lakes Urban Area



On December 28th, 2022, the U.S. Census Bureau designated a portion of the greater core area of the Mat-Su Borough (MSB) as an Urban Area (UA) based on population and housing density. The Census Bureau defines an “urbanized area” as an area with at least 50,000 total people and at least 1,000 people per square mile in population density.



Urbanized Area Boundary

MSB Planning Staff has been in the pre-planning stages of multiple projects for over a year, anticipating the organizational and regulatory changes associated with a growing and urbanizing community.

The Urbanized Area (UA) designation requires that the Borough and cities of Palmer and Wasilla change their approach to planning and land use regulation, specific transportation and environmental planning. With this designation, the governments within the UA boundary will need to form a Metropolitan Planning Organization to cooperatively plan for transportation infrastructure needs and develop Stormwater Management Program to better protect water quality resources during storm events, snow melt season and during construction.





Making sure our transportation infrastructure meets the needs and demands of our growing community is extremely important.

Urban Area Designation: Transportation

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Making sure our transportation infrastructure meets the needs and demands of our growing community is extremely important. Most activities like getting to work, school, or to the grocery store require a transportation network that is interconnected, safe, and ideally supports all modes of transportation. When communities grow and municipal boundaries begin to overlap, better coordination is required.

In 1962, the Federal Government developed a new set of transportation planning tools and requirements for communities that reached the Urban Area (UA) density with a population greater than 50,000. Once a community reaches this threshold, they are required to form Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO). The MPO, by design, helps municipalities work together across jurisdictions to plan for transportation infrastructure within the UA and to ensure that federal-aid for transportation projects within the MPO boundary results from a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process.



Since 2020, the Planning Division has facilitated a pre-MPO working group made up of representatives of the Borough, the State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, the City of Wasilla, the City of Palmer, Knik Tribe, Chickaloon Native Village, and multimodal advocates to prepare for the development of our MPO, MatSu Valley Planning for Transportation (MVP). Now that the UA has been officially designated, we have one year to form our MPO and stand up our new 501 (c)3 organization. Fortunately, a lot of work has been done to prepare us and we hope to submit our Operating Agreement to the Governor's office in March 2023.

Once the MPO is designated by the Governor, the MPO will develop a long-range plan called a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) with a 20-year time horizon, and a short-range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that includes a prioritized, fiscally constrained project list with a 4-year time horizon. MVP for Transportation will likely receive \$6 – 10 million annually to complete these projects.

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www.mvppmpo.com

Urban Area Designation: Stormwater Management

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Unmitigated growth and urbanization can create growing pains in a community, including strains on fresh water supplies, sanitary waste disposal issues, and increased flooding. Development changes the landscape by creating impervious surfaces like roads, roofs, and parking lots. An increase in impervious surfaces can increase the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff and has the potential to transport pollutants to local waters. Below the surface, failing on-site septic systems or improper floor drains can directly contaminate groundwater. These sources of water pollution can be detrimental to the environment, impact wildlife and fish populations, and harm human health.

Recognizing that development and human activity can negatively impact water quality, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mandates that local governments formally manage stormwater in urban areas. Administered by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit allows operators of storm drainage systems to discharge stormwater to local waterbodies. This MS4 Permit requires developing and implementing a Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) designed to prevent and mitigate the negative impacts of stormwater runoff on the environment and public health. Management practices include land use regulations, public education, and other tools to reduce harmful pollutants from reaching our rivers, lakes, and streams.



The MSB has partnered with MS4 operators in the region to prepare for the upcoming regulations. Potential permittees/co-permittees include the Mat-Su Borough, the City of Wasilla, the City of Palmer, and the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (ADOT&PF). Over the next year, the permittees will develop the required SWMP document, formalize the intergovernmental agreements, and apply for the MS4 Permit. In addition to the MS4 operators and stakeholders, the public will contribute to developing and implementing the SWMP.