



BIG LAKE

Matanuska Susitna Borough Jordan Lake Parcel Master Plan

*Planning for 44 acres of
Mat-Su Borough Land in Big Lake*

*Produced for:
Matanuska Susitna Borough
Big Lake Community
Alaska Department of Fish and Game*

by Land Design North

Assembly Adopted April 2004



MSB Jordan Lake Parcel Master Plan

Planning for 44 acres of Mat-Su Borough Land in Big Lake

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NON-CODE ORDINANCE

By: Borough Manager
Introduced: 04/06/04
Public Hearing: 04/20/04
Adopted: 04/20/04

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
ORDINANCE SERIAL NO. 04-071**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY ADOPTING THE JORDAN LAKE PARCEL MANAGEMENT PLAN WHICH IS LOCATED IN THE BIG LAKE AREA.

WHEREAS, in May 2002 the Borough obtained an undeveloped 44-acre parcel of land in the center of the Big Lake Community; and

WHEREAS, the new Big Lake Library is located on a portion of this tract of land; and

WHEREAS, the Borough in August 2002 obtained a \$25,000 grant from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for constructing walkways and viewing areas, informational kiosks, and to provide for forest rehabilitation for portions of the property that were impacted by the Miller's Reach Fire; and

WHEREAS, the borough has heard various ideas on how this tract of land should be used; and

WHEREAS, before beginning any additional projects on this land, the borough in September 2002 contracted with Land Design North to complete a management plan for the area; and

WHEREAS, the development of this plan involved extensive community input using a community questionnaire, a citizen's advisory group that included a wide variety of private and public interest groups, a community newsletter, and an open house; and

WHEREAS, the plan has now been completed; and

WHEREAS, the plan provides for a phased approach for enhancing natural areas, providing for educational opportunities and provides some community development areas for such things as a community center; and

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Parks, Recreation and Trails Advisory Board, on September 23, 2003, recommended that the planning commission and assembly adopt the Jordan Lake Parcel Management Plan that will guide the use and development of this valuable tract of borough-owned land; and

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission, on January 19, 2004, recommended that the assembly adopt the Jordan Lake Parcel Management Plan.

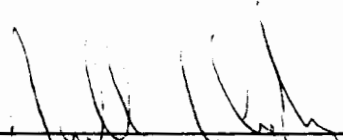
BE IT ENACTED:

Section 1. Classification. This is a non-code ordinance.

Section 2. Approval of plan. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly does hereby adopt the Jordan Lake Parcel Management Plan.

Section 3. Effective date. This ordinance shall take effect upon adoption by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly this 20 day
of April, 2004.



TIMOTHY L. ANDERSON, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:



SANDRA A. DILLON, CMC, Borough Clerk

(SEAL)

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: Bush, Colberg, Kvalheim, Simpson, Colver,
and Vehrs

1. Introduction

In May 2001, The Matanuska-Susitna Borough purchased an undeveloped 44-acre parcel in the center of Big Lake (see **Map 1**). The land is intended to be a resource for the growing community, and is consistent with many of the borough’s goals adopted in the 2000 *Borough Asset Management Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space*.

The site was acquired by the Borough with the support of a number of Big Lake residents and the Big Lake Community Council. In the years leading up to the site acquisition, there was a clear mandate from the community, library staff, volunteers, and advocates that Big Lake needed a new, larger library. With the acquisition of the site, Big Lake had its opportunity to both build its new library and to locate an important attraction in the heart of the core area and Big Lake’s commercial center.

The borough land can provide opportunities for community facility development, recreation, wildlife habitat, and youth education. The “Jordan Lake parcel”, as referred to in this report, can enhance Big Lake as a place to live and visit for generations to come.



The Jordan Lake parcel is home to Big Lake’s Library



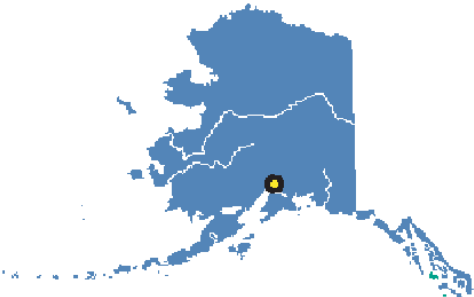
The borough’s parcel is off of South Big Lake Drive where other public facilities are located

A. The Planning Process

This document provides a framework for the use and management of the Borough’s 44-acre Jordan Lake parcel into the future. It also provides a guide for residents and the Borough to work together to enhance Big Lake as a community.

The scope of this effort was to work with Big Lake residents to determine goals and a general vision for the future of the parcel and conduct a site analysis of the site and surrounding features. Integrating the outcome of these two processes—one focused on the site, and the other involving residents—forms the basic framework for the borough’s Jordan Lake Parcel Master Plan.

Land Design North, an Alaskan landscape architecture and planning company, completed the work as a contractor to the Borough working with community members through a process that included a community questionnaire, a Citizens Advisory Group, an open house, and a newsletter.



Map 1 - Big Lake Vicinity

-  Big Lake Community Council Boundaries
-  Big Lake Core Area





The Jordan Lake Master Plan preserves the natural qualities of the site, while making improvements like trails that enhance community use

B. The Jordan Lake Master Plan

Big Lake’s community members said they desired that the Jordan Lake parcel become a special community and natural place in the heart of town that residents of all ages and with varying interests can enjoy.

The **Jordan Lake Parcel Master Plan** was developed to help the borough and community act on this vision. Implementation of the Master Plan will result in an enhanced site, and a community center. These will integrate and connect with surrounding public facilities, shopping and the residential core area.

The plan locates all the projects planned for the site into the future. For the Library vicinity, this includes new gravel paths, sidewalks, and landscaping, and space reserved for a future Library expansion and/or community center. From the Library back to Jordan Lake, a soft trail, small bridge, viewing platforms, an outdoor classroom-amphitheater, and related projects are described and located.

The plan was developed around **Big Lake’s Shared Community Goals** both for the

site and for the future of the core area and community overall. These include:

Jordan Lake Site Goals

- 1 - Enhance Natural areas and extend nature into the community
- 2 - Create Community Spaces and opportunities to bring people together
- 3 - Develop Youth Opportunities linked to the library and school programs

Big Lake Community Goals

- 1 - Foster a Sense of Community
- 2 - Develop a Strong Business Core
- 3 - Enhance the Small Town / Rural Feel
- 4 - Maintain Ability to Recreate “Right out your Back Door”
- 5 - Preserve Natural Character and Resources
- 6 - Encourage Tourism that Benefits the Local Economy
- 7 - Create Youth Opportunities
- 8 - Improve Locally-Based Governance

A **Strategic Action Plan** goes with the master plan. It has three phases that stage projects



The Strategic Action Plan stages actions to take full advantage of volunteers and available funding



Phase One will focus on helping residents to enjoy the site's natural features by developing trails, overlooks and an outdoor classroom/amphitheater

over time to match funding and volunteer capacity:

Phase One 2003-2005 – "Enhanced Natural" Stage

In Phase One, the most basic site improvements are constructed to enhance the natural character of the site and to provide a framework for all future enhancements. Phase One projects include a trail, bridge, and viewing platforms from the Library area to Jordan Lake, and will be developed starting this summer. The effort will take place with combined Borough funding, a \$25,000 grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and labor from AmeriCorp volunteers.

A handful of Phase One projects will require more volunteer work and time, like creating



Phase Two focuses on landscaping and amenities that make the site more attractive and usable

interpretive boards and an educational program for youth to go with the new trail, and educating residents to not snowmobile and ATV on the site.

Phase Two, 2005 to 2010 – "Community Park" Stage

With the basic infrastructure in place, in Phase Two the emphasis is on landscaping, garden development, community gathering spaces and building new amenities that make the site into a community park or a village green space. At this stage, the parcel becomes a platform for community events and programs and begins to provide an attraction for visitors. Additionally, fund raising and planning for an expanded Library and/or Community Center will be underway.



Phase Three will focus on developing a multi-Purpose Community Center like Willow's that provides year-round meeting, learning, and play opportunities

Phase Three, Long Term – "Community Center" Stage

In Phase Three, full build-out of the Jordan Lake Parcel Master Plan is completed. The Library is expanded, and/or a community center is constructed. At this stage, the parcel becomes the center of community life, while still providing nature walks and wildlife habitat. The primary project, community facility development, is dependent on a successful fund raising campaign, and at certain scales will depend on the availability on water and sewer service because of the site limitations.



Palmer’s showy garden and connected open space in the center of town integrates well with neighboring businesses and public facilities

C. Integrating the Jordan Lake Parcel with the Community Core

While different phases of the site master plan move forward, community projects in Big Lake’s core area can connect and integrate the site into the community core. These are described in the Strategic Action Plan and include:

- A. Maximize Community Facility Resources
- B. South Big Lake Streetscape Improvements
- C. Enhance Core Area Business
- D. Formalize and enhance the Big Lake’s Trail System

Implementing the Strategic Actions, both at the site level, and at the community level will require coordination and action. To achieve

this, the plan recommends developing a **“Friends of Jordan Lake Coalition”** to bring Big Lake residents and organizations together.

The coalition can both implement projects that require volunteer work and oversight, and can work on longer-term goals. An organization like this will be key to helping Big Lake achieve its goal of creating a Community Center. The Big Lake Community Council, the Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, and the Big Lake Lions Club can help form the coalition and bring residents together in order to make visible progress on Jordan Lake projects.

The Jordan Lake parcel can become an enduring and special part of Big Lake’s community center and a springboard for building a stronger community and more enjoyable place to live and visit. It is up to residents—who know Big Lake is special, and who want to keep it that way—to work together with the Borough and make it happen.



At the Alaska Botanical Garden, a coalition of volunteers plans, builds and carea for site projects like this wildflower-lined trail



The Jordan Lake parcel is undeveloped except for the new Big Lake Library

2. The Site

The planning study area is the Mat-Su Borough's Jordan Lake 44-acre parcel (see **Map 2**, study area). The east edge of the property consists of approximately 1,300 feet of frontage on South Big Lake Road. The other sides are bounded by largely undeveloped private property with a mix of commercial and residential uses. The site contains half of Jordan Lake and a lot of wetlands.

The site is well-located in relation to public facilities, with the library on the northwest corner of the site, and the public school, post office, and public safety complex within one mile. The East Lake shopping center is the closest commercial location, with additional commercial activity found north and east on S. Big Lake Road. The study area encompasses about half of Jordan Lake, a small spring-fed lake that drains into Big Lake.

Although the scope of this study is the borough-owned parcel, it is important to explore how the site fits into the bigger context of Big Lake as a whole. This is important because the Borough parcel is centrally located in what the Big Lake Comprehensive Plan calls the "Community Core Area". This area, on the east end of

Big Lake where businesses and community facilities are more concentrated, is where the community desires to "encourage development" in order to achieve an active town center. **Map 3** shows a 5 and 15-minute walking radius from the Jordan Lake site, which illustrates how the Jordan Lake parcel's central location, and future development, can play a role in encouraging town center growth.

A. Physical and Community Context

Big Lake has a water surface of approximately 3,025 acres. The surrounding land has rolling hills and lowlands formed by the relatively recent retreat of glaciers. Of the Big Lake area's 131.9 square miles of land, 12.9 square miles is water. The abundance of freshwater lakes, streams, muskegs, meadows and wooded hills, fish and wildlife, and a range of recreation opportunities and state parks "right out the back door" makes Big Lake a special place to live and visit.

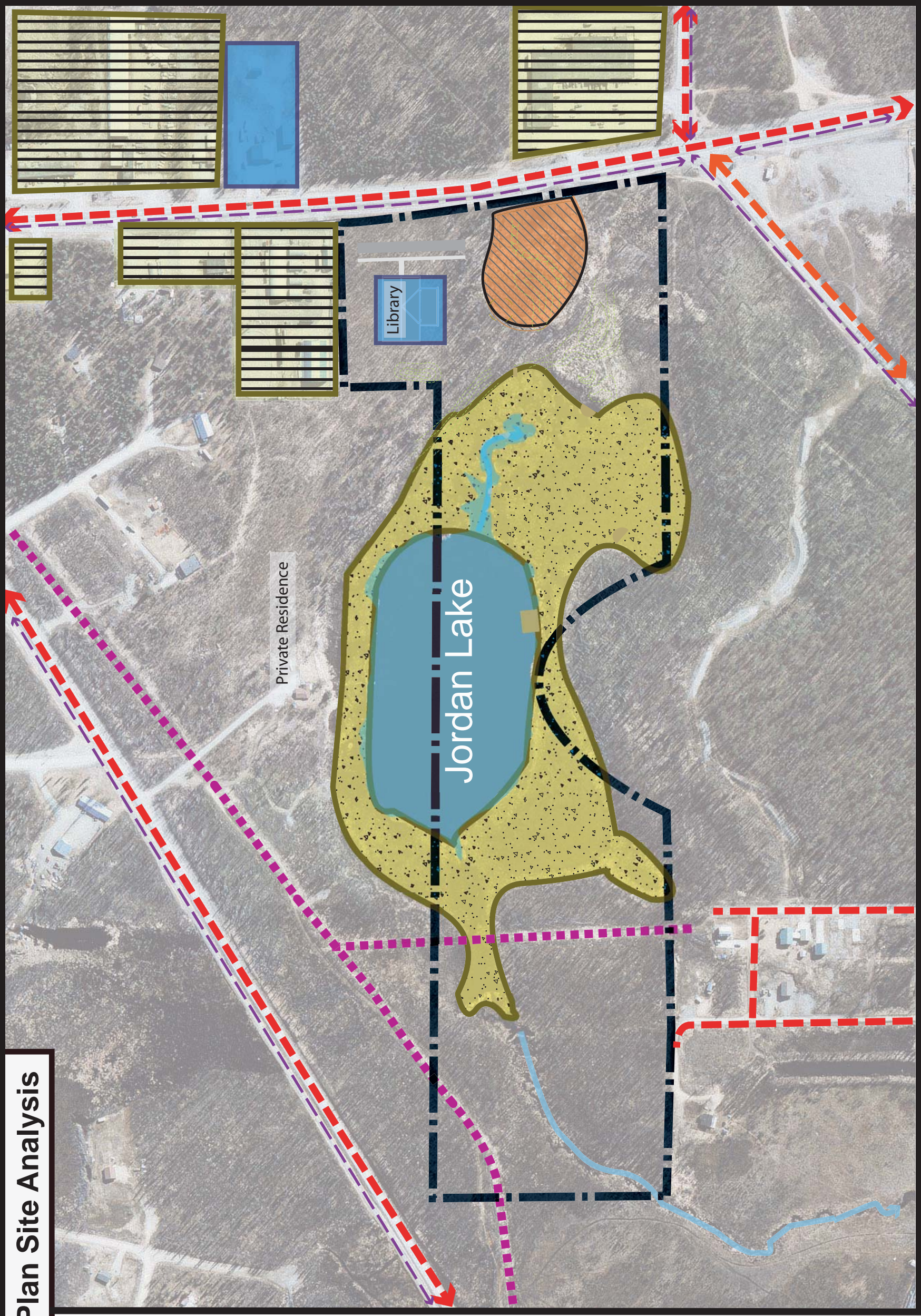
Big Lake has grown as a residential community and as a recreational destination serving Matanuska-Susitna Valley and Anchorage residents. According to the 2000 census there were 2,635 permanent residents in Big Lake. A 2002 estimate by a state demographer puts the current population at 2,826.¹ Neither of these










Big Lake and other natural features are great for recreation and wildlife

Jordan Lake Master Plan Site Analysis

Map 2



GENERAL SITE ANALYSIS

-  Wetland (Approximate)
-  Gravel Pit
-  Public
-  Commercial / Industrial
-  Road Circulation
-  Multipurpose Trails Proposed in the 1996 Big Lake Comprehensive Plan
-  Existing Dirt Path



SCALE: 1" = 200'-0"







BIG LAKE CORE AREA MAP 3

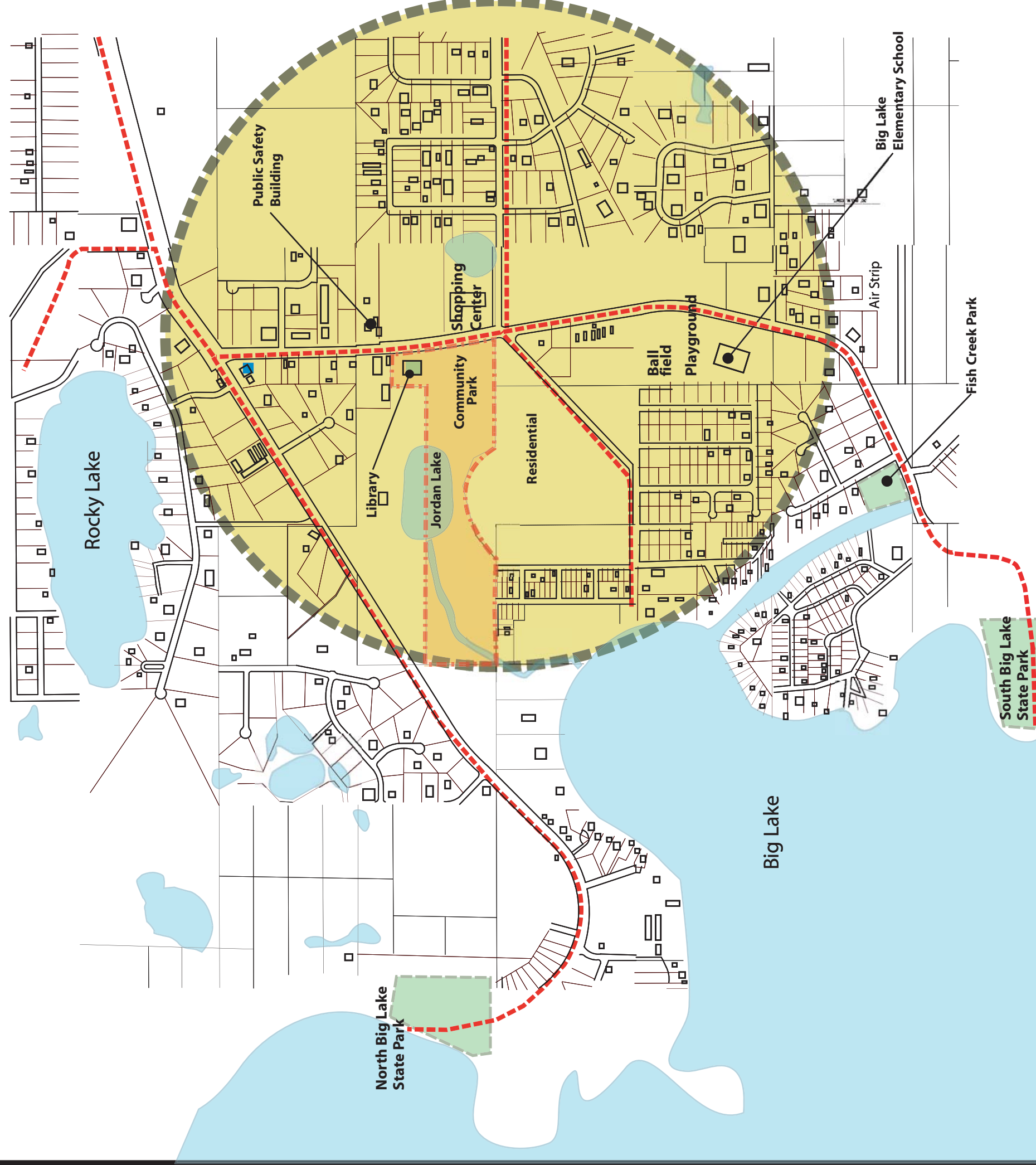


NORTH



Land Use

-  Multipurpose Trails in the 1996 Big Lake Comprehensive Plan
-  Study Area
-  Jordan Lake Site
-  Existing Buildings



numbers represents the overall population, which includes weekenders and seasonal residents, who own 48% of total housing units. Interestingly, once Big Lake residents move in they appear to stay nearly twice as long as the Borough and State-wide average (in the Big Lake planning area 31.9% of housing units have been occupied by the same people since prior to 1980).²

The community of Big Lake is unincorporated, and is part of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The growing community has a Big Lake Community Council which is recognized by the borough, and civic groups and residents who volunteer to make the community a better place. The 1996 Big Lake Community Comprehensive Plan represents how volunteerism and cooperation currently are the basis for governing the community.

The Big Lake Citizen’s Advisory Committee created the 1996 Big Lake Community Comprehensive Plan with the assistance of the Mat-Su Borough. The document was intended as a guide for future growth and development of the community. The plan calls for the recognition of Big Lake’s potential to develop a highly-diversified year round recreational economy. Another key goal of the plan is that any future development should be compatible with the maintenance and conservation of the natural environment.

To support this vision, the plan focuses on three components: Land Use; Public Facilities; and Transportation, each with its own set of goals and recommendations. A number of the plan’s recommendations that provide background to this study are listed in **Table 1** on the following page. The plan envisions that Big Lake will remain primarily a residential and recreational community and it calls for economic diversification in such a way that is compatible with its current economic base of recreation and tourism. Acting on the Big



A semi-rural lifestyle and low housing costs attract residents to the Valley. Wasilla from 1974 (above) to 2000 (below) grew from about Big Lake’s size to what it is today.



Lake Comprehensive Plan and implementing the Jordan Lake Parcel Master Plan are both intended to enhance and maintain Big Lake’s quality of life and rural context—qualities that are very important to residents.

To date, low housing costs, the semi-rural lifestyle, and a one hour commute to Anchorage have supported growth in the Mat-Su Valley and Big Lake. Current population trends for Big Lake are not the highest in the Borough, but this could potentially change if the Knik Arm Crossing is constructed. Additionally, an improved Parks Highway to Port MacKenzie through Big Lake may bring growth and changes to the area. This makes the Jordan Lake Parcel potentially even more valuable as a community and open space in the heart of Big Lake.

Table 1. Recommendations from 1996 Big Lake Comprehensive Plan

LAND USE

In General:

“Encourage development of the community core area as the location of most community services, the principal shopping area, and the highest density housing area.”

“Appropriate public facilities should be directed to the community core area.”

“To protect the natural environment in land use development.”

Waterfowl Habitat and Shoreline:

“Identify habitat areas and protect them with bouys or signage.”

“Encourage separation of motorized activity from shorelines of waterbodies as determined appropriate by individual management plans and post official signs.”

Residential:

“Consider area-wide land use regulations within the planning area to address adult-oriented businesses, group homes, medical waste incinerators and other activities that would be objectionable in residential areas.”

Commercial:

“Encourage most non-recreationally oriented commercial development to locate within the community core area.”

Public Lands and Facilities:

“Identify key public lands within the planning area that should be reserved for important community purposes including public access, airport expansion, etc.”

“Identify through the Parks and Recreation Plan those public lands with water frontage that should be reserved and classified for public recreational purposes including access to water bodies.”

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Parks and Recreation in General:

“A thorough inventory of all park, recreation, and open space resources within the Big Lake planning area should be done, i.e., recreation sites, conservation areas, recreation corridors, park and open space dedications in subdivision plats, etc.”

Conservation and Outstanding Natural Areas:

“Easements to lakes and streams within the Big Lake planning area should be inventoried and analyzed for the feasibility of providing physical access.”

Recreational Facilities and Activities:

“A thorough analysis of recreational needs-activities as well as facilities-should be done in order to determine amounts and locations of lands to be dedicated for those uses.”



The library and its septic system were difficult to locate because of site drainage challenges

B. Natural Features

(See Open Space Framework Map 4)

The Borough's Jordan Lake site encompasses 44-acres of land in the core area of the town of Big Lake. This east end of the site is easily accessible from South Big Lake, and it is located within short walking distance of a number of public facilities. Currently, the only development on the site is the Big Lake Library, which was dedicated in 2002. Additional development along South Big Lake Road is desired, but will be limited to some extent by drainage and soils (unless local water and sewer service are provided at some point in the future).

Prior to library construction a geotechnical analysis of the site found that of the 21-acres

under study, only 3.5 acres "may be suitable for development using conventional methods and without excessive site modifications". Although the drainage and soils present challenges for development, the overall habitat quality of the site is high with a few exceptions.

Excluding the water bodies (lake and creek) the majority of the parcel is vegetated with a mix of wetland, uplands, old forest and new forest. The site possesses rich wildlife habitat, particularly in the undisturbed wetlands. This area supports a beaver family, muskrats, and moose as well as for over 20 species of migratory and non-migratory birds. Sandhill Cranes, swans, resident loons and grebes represent some of the bird species found on the site according to a Mat-Su Birding Association's, 2003 site bird inventory.

The overall vegetative diversity makes a varied landscape for people and animals alike, with opportunities for human use, maintaining habitat integrity, nature education, and discussion of and community issues. For example, the new forest that grew on the site after the 1996 fire can become a platform for teaching about vegetative succession, and forest fire prevention.




The fire damage on the site provides an educational opportunity

BIG LAKE CORE AREA NATURAL FEATURE OPEN SPACE MAP 4











Natural Systems

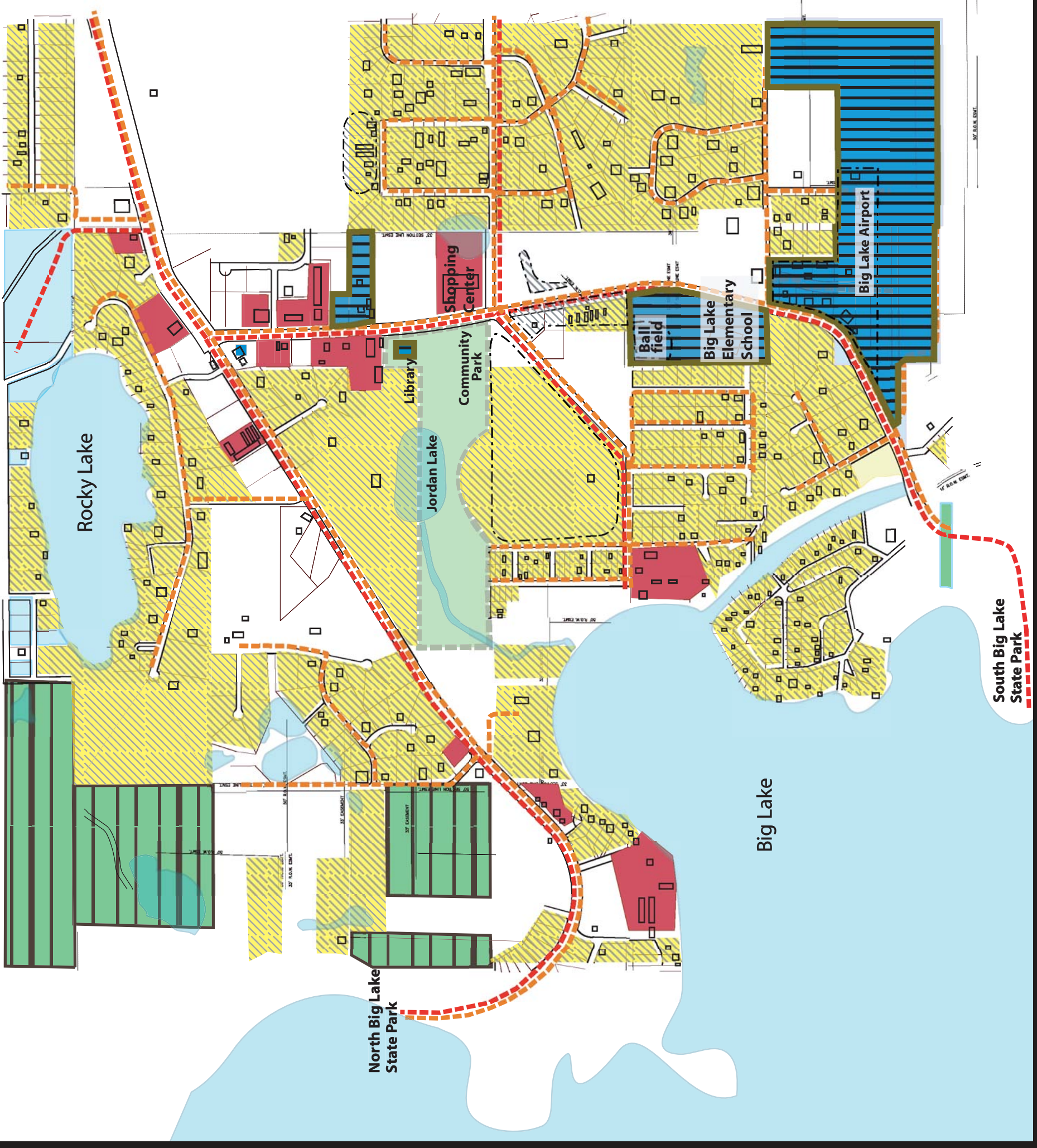
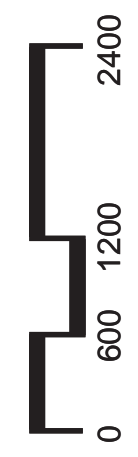
-  Water Bodies and Streams
-  Spruce Forest
-  Wetland Bog-Drainage Flow
-  Upland Forest
-  Site Boundary
-  Multipurpose Trails Proposed in the 1996 Big Lake Comprehensive Plan



BIG LAKE CORE AREA COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK MAP 5

EXISTING PATTERNS

-  Multipurpose Trails Proposed in the 1996 Big Lake Comprehensive Plan
-  Roads
-  Site Boundary
-  Public Facilities
-  Public Open Space
-  Commercial
-  Residential/ Mixed Use
-  Building



C. Cultural Features

(See Community Framework Map 5)

The borough's Jordan Lake parcel sits within an area of emergent development. Roadways and trails link the site directly and indirectly to nearby residences, public facilities, and commercial buildings. Primary among these are South Big Lake Road to the east, Lodge Road to the south and West, and Northside Drive to the north. Existing paths and trails cross the site at different points, thus further linking the parcel to adjacent areas and uses.

The site is well located in relation to public facilities, with the library on the northwest corner of the site, and the public school, post office, and public safety complex within a ½ mile. The East Lake Mall is the closest commercial location, with additional commercial activity found north and east on S. Big Lake Road. A number of residential properties border the site.

Recreational activity in the area includes motorized sports (snow machining and 4-wheeling) that take advantage of the creek bed and unofficial dirt trails. Other trail users include hikers, skiers, and birdwatchers. These trails connect users to adjacent unofficial trails. The site has road and trail access to Big Lake, a major recreational area. The eastern edge of the site borders the proposed multipurpose trail that will extend from South Big Lake Road to the end of Lodge Road.

3. Site Opportunities and Constraints

The Jordan Lake parcel represents a major opportunity for Big Lake. The physical site's location and access, and the existing attraction of the Library make it obvious that



Access to Jordan Lake using soft walking paths and a boardwalk is a priority project for residents

the parcel is well-located to help build more of a town center feel in the heart of Big Lake's Community Core Area.

The following categories of opportunities are consistent with this goal, and with what residents' have said they desire for the future. However, each opportunity is possible within limits. Physical constraints, funding limitations, prioritization and community choice will drive how these opportunities play out.

- **Community Facilities Development:** A small portion of the site, on the upland portion adjacent to South Big Lake, can support additional development. Whether this means a library expansion, or community center construction depends on funding and community will; the size and location of development on the other hand will depend on soils, water table, and septic requirements.
- **Event, gathering and play spaces:** The upland area of the site, and perhaps even areas on the far west and south end of the site can remain in a more natural state, or they can be re-graded and strategically cleared to carve out spaces for community



Boardwalks could enable residents and visitors an opportunity to get out by Jordan Lake and enjoy the views

use. Event staging and activity areas, small gathering spots, outdoor classroom and reading areas and play spaces are all opportunities that are compatible with the physical characteristics of the site.

- **Landscaping and Amenities:** Given the highly visible position of the parcel off South Big Lake Road, an important opportunity is the addition of landscaping and amenities that both residents and visitors enjoy. The eastern edge of the parcel is in the heart of what residents hope will become more of a town center. Making the area look attractive, visually cohesive and providing amenities like sidewalks, a visitor kiosk, viewing platforms and gardens are suited to both with the physical nature and the community desires for the site. However, aesthetically and environmentally, it would be best if these improvements are placed in already disturbed areas, or only cause minimum disturbance to the existing vegetation and habitat.
- **Recreation:** To some extent, residents are already enjoying the Jordan Lake parcel for recreation. Trail and “soft” recreation uses like walking, bird watching, and cross-country skiing are obvious

opportunities that the site physically supports. Trails and boardwalks could connect the library area on the east to the usable land on the western edge of the site. Additional trail developments on this area could link the site to Big Lake. Enhanced trail opportunities will require improvements and possible bridges, in addition to wetland permits and careful placement and design, to minimize the disturbance to vegetation and habitat.

- **Open Space and Nature Education:** The Jordan Lake site’s varied landforms and habitats make a rich landscape for both wildlife use and human interest. The existing vegetation on the site can provide green space in the heart of Big Lake, even if the area experiences significant growth and development. The site’s pond, wetlands, stream, and the bluff areas that provide views to Big Lake and Mt. Susitna are scenic assets that can be enjoyed with minimum impact as open space.

Additionally, the varied ecological zones and wildlife habitat found on the site could serve as an educational resource for area residents and tourists. Walking along boardwalks adjacent to the wetlands or viewing the area from overlooks could provide students of all ages an occasion to learn about the value of habitat, or the



The site has nature and science learning opportunities

impact of fire on forest regeneration, or about local species and other educational opportunities. Wildlife education, and a pocket of community open space in the heart of town can help the community to retain its special natural qualities, even as it faces development pressures in the Big Lake core area.

A. Public Input

The public involvement effort began in late 2002 with the establishment of a **Citizens Advisory Group (CAG)**. The CAG helped to set the course for the project, and provided background to help get the planning effort underway.

A **Big Lake Community Questionnaire** was developed in cooperation with the borough and CAG members, and was distributed widely at key locations and was also available on-line at the borough's website and at the community open house. The questionnaire was distributed with an **informational newsletter** that described the planning effort, showed a map of the subject area, and invited residents to participate in the planning process by filling out the questionnaire and coming to the open house.

On February 24th a community open house was held at the Big Lake Elementary School to present site findings and talk about what we had heard so far from CAG members and returned questionnaires. In April, after the questionnaire and open house input were summarized, a final CAG meeting was held to present the community input and site analyses, and to discuss alternatives that could serve as a basis for the final master plan. This meeting was open to the public, and three alternative concepts were presented. CAG members and the public participants liked elements and projects of all three alternatives, and discussed



Residents feel like already, the library is becoming the heart of the community

ways of integrating all three alternatives into one final master plan in a phased approach. The plan presented in this document, and the projects listed in the Strategic Action Plan represent agreement between CAG and community members' both at this meeting, and through the entire public process.

Key Issues and Opportunities

Early in the project, residents from a cross-section of Big Lake were invited to participate in a Citizens Advisory Group. At the group's first meeting, participants were asked to identify the issues and opportunities that would be critical to a successful plan. The following four statements represent what they agreed were the key issues and opportunities for the borough parcel.

- **Heart of the Community.** The heart of the community is the library and the adjacent commercial district along South Big Lake Road. The Master Plan must look at both the 44-acre site adjacent to the library as well as the core area.
- **Community Center.** A community center that helps bring the local residents together is an important need.

- **Open space.** Open spaces provide an important value and contribute to the quality of life for residents. They can host trails and walkways to help connect residents with their school, library, shops and other facilities.
- **Costs.** Improvements must balance development and maintenance costs with the community’s ability and desire to fund improvements.



Residents want enhanced natural spaces

B. Big Lake Residents’ Shared Values

Through the Citizens Advisory Group, a community questionnaire, and an open house, residents were asked to describe what they wanted to see happen, and/or not happen on the Jordan Lake site, and also what their hopes and concerns were for the future of Big Lake.

The process elicited a large range of ideas, residents in large measure focused their comments around shared values, goals and concerns. These “shared goals” became the basis for developing alternatives and the final master plan, and helped validate community priorities.

Jordan Lake Site Goals

1 - Enhance Natural Spaces for Community Use – Residents recognize that Big Lake will continue to grow and develop, and that the natural assets of the borough’s Jordan Lake parcel will become more valuable over time. They recognize the site’s development limitations given the soils and wetlands, and at the same time agree on what is special about the site: the open space, the views, the vegetation and the wildlife. Enhancing the

site for community use, while preserving the natural character of the site was a strongly held community desire.

2 - Create Community Spaces – Residents said that they want to enhance Big Lake as a community. Many participants feel like now is the time to work on bringing the community together, and that community spaces will help build cohesion. The library has demonstrated how the site can improve community life; residents are ready for more of the same, just as soon as it can be funded. Eventually, they would like to see a community center and/or the library expanded. In the meantime, they agree that the Jordan Lake site should have improved community spaces that can be enjoyed by all of Big Lake’s residents, regardless of interests or age, like boardwalks and trails, an outdoor amphitheater/classroom, and gathering, picnic and sitting spaces.

3 - Develop Youth Opportunities – Big Lake’s youth are an important part of the community’s future. Parents, library and school staff, and even residents without kids agreed that local kids need more opportunities, and that the Jordan Lake site can provide some of these. Education and training, recreation and activities, and volunteer opportunities are all possible through this parcel and should be a priority.

Big Lake Community Goals

Big Lake residents expressed a broader level of goals when asked about the Big Lake Core Area. These “Community Goals” are important because they focus on both integrating the parcel into the larger community, and on achieving larger community building goals through the Jordan Lake site.

Following is a description of each of the broader community goals that we heard residents describe.



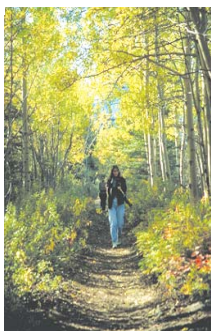
1 - Foster a Sense of Community – Residents said that they enjoy living in Big Lake and feel a strong connection to the community. Many suggested that they would like to see a stronger sense of community emerge to bring together neighbors who live independent lives scattered around the lake. They hope that the Jordan Lake site will foster more opportunities for working and playing together, and will become part of an enhanced town center that strengthens community identity.



2 - Develop a Strong Business Core – Residents would like to see a stronger business district in the core area that better attracts tourists and residents, and that keeps money circulating in Big Lake. More than half of the residents who answered the project questionnaire work in the Big Lake area, and they expressed a desire to enhance the market identity of the community and strengthen local business opportunities.



3 - Enhance the Small Town / Rural Feel – A number of Big Lake residents said that they live in Big Lake because they can enjoy recreation and wilderness while living in a small town, close to services. Some are concerned that the Knik Arm crossing and/or the Port MacKenzie access could change the rural character of the area and several said that they do not want to become another Wasilla. Developing the Jordan Lake parcel into a community center, and maintaining open space many believe will help maintain the small town feel of Big Lake as change occurs.



4 - Maintain the Ability to Recreate “Right out your Back Door” – Big Lake’s residents love to be outdoors, and love be able to snowmachine, watch birds, and recreate in many different ways directly from their back door. A number of residents want to make sure that as more development takes place in the area that traditional trail access is preserved. They would love to see the Jordan Lake site help provide recreational access, especially by hosting trail access that can get residents out to bigger trail systems.



5 - Preserve Natural Character and Resources – We heard from residents that Big Lake is, and should remain a residential and tourism-oriented community. In order to achieve this, residents expressed concern that open space, wildlife habitat, and fishing resources need to be preserved. Retaining the natural character of the Jordan Lake site and enhancing its value to wildlife can help with this goal.



6 - Encourage Tourism that Benefits the Local Economy – Year round, Big Lake’s residents share their abundant recreational and natural resources with visitors. Attracting more tourism, and especially tourists who will spend more time and money in town is desired by a number of residents. Some residents hope that creating a board walk and viewing platforms in the heart of town, along with interpretive signs, a self-guided walking tour, and potentially a visitor kiosk will attract visitors to stop, and then after visiting the Jordan Lake site, to shop in the area businesses



7 - Create Youth Opportunities – This community wide-goal is also a site goal (see page 16). Residents expressed a strong desire to improve the community in ways that benefit the youth. Improved play opportunities, including playground improvements at the school, and new play fields potentially on the Rodda land, were strongly desired. Creating learning and work opportunities was also a priority. The Jordan Lake site, especially with the Library and if a community center is developed, can help provide numerous outdoor and indoor opportunities for Big Lake’s youth.



8 - Improve Locally-Based Governance – Residents commented that they want to see Big Lake improve its governance through residents working together better. Suggestions included holding more public forums, improved communications between residents and government, chances to vote on options available to the community, more law enforcement, and finding ways to make government more caring. Some residents hoped that working on the Jordan Lake site would create opportunities for building trust and community capacity to work cohesively toward community goals.

4. The Plan

Achieving these goals, both at the site and the community level will take time. The conceptual Jordan Lake Master Plan, along with the Big Lake Core Area Framework Plan outlined below were developed to support progress on these goals. The Strategic Action Plan helps break the concept plans into phased projects, that while ambitious, are achievable over time.

A. Site Alternatives

Based on public input, and with the site and community goals in mind, three alternative development scenarios were presented for Jordan lake for further refinement. These included:

Alternate One: “Enhanced Natural”

Approach – This alternative integrated fairly basic site improvements like soft paths, boardwalk where needed, and a few clearings and amenities to enhance the natural character of the site, and make the site more usable to the community and visitors while reserving space for a library expansion and/or community center when funds became available. This alternative could realistically be developed given borough funding and volunteer capacity.

Alternate Two: “Community Park”

Approach – This alternative took the projects of Alternative One, and added new projects and a strong emphasis on landscaping, garden development, and more amenities that could make the site into more of a community park or a village green. It also reserved space for a library expansion and/or community center in case funds were available. This alternative would stretch borough funding and volunteer capacity, but could possible be developed in phases.

Alternate Three: “Community Center”

Approach - Alternative Three incorporated all the projects of Alternatives One and Two and added in a Community Center and/or library extension. Given the capital and ongoing maintenance and operations expenses of new facility development, this alternative would take a significant community effort to implement, and may not be feasible, except at a reduced scale.

B. Jordan Lake Site Master Plan

The alternatives were evaluated by the CAG and residents against a set of criteria to develop a single preferred Master Development Plan. The Master Plan uses a combination of the most desirable features of all three concepts in a phased development approach. The Borough’s Jordan Lake Parcel Master Plan has three phases that allow the community to build over time, as resources are available, each phase building on the last:

Phase One 2003-2005 – “Enhanced Natural” Stage (See Map 6)

The emphasis on Phase One are projects that are community based, achievable with limited resources and volunteer labor, and projects that focus on the natural qualities of the site with an emphasis on outdoor



Phase One projects enhance the natural aspects of the site

**BIG LAKE
MASTER PLAN MAP 6
SUMMER 2003**



MBY 2003



NORTH



Beaver Lodge

Lake

Approximate Property Line

Wetland
Marsh

Library

South Big Lake Road

3.1 Reading Area-
Benches

3.2 Lawn Area-
Thin Existing Tree
Cover

4.1 Gravel

Remove Dead
Trees, Grade, and
Plant Wildflowers

Locate Potential
Welcome Sign

Previous Gravel
Pit Area-Potential
Future Parking.
Clean up and
Remove Brush

3.3 Outdoor
Classroom

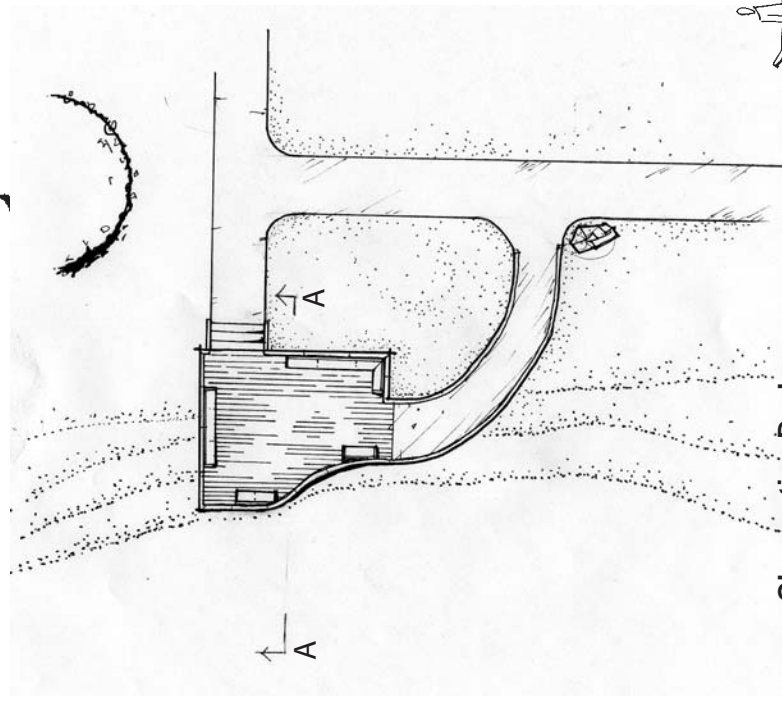
2.0 Nature Trail/
Boardwalk
(ADA Walk)

Thin
Existing
Trees -
Wildflower
Area

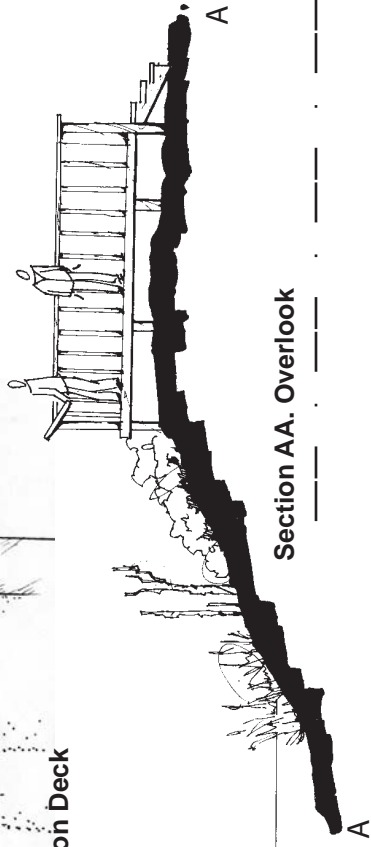
2.2 Overlook Deck
Interpretive Sign A

Observation Deck
Interpretive Sign A

2.2 Interpretive
Node



Observation Deck



Section AA. Overlook

Approximate Property Line

education. Key is integration of the site with the Big Lake Library and Elementary School outdoor education curriculum and reading programs. During this phase most basic site improvements are constructed to enhance the natural character of Jordan Lake and surrounding wetlands, to provide a framework for all future enhancements, and to make the site more usable to the community and visitors.

Key Projects:

Phase One, Project 1 - Friends of Jordan Lake Coalition

Description: The most important first step that Big Lake can take to create the sense of community that people have said is important, is to create a community-based coalition with representatives of major civic organizations and interested residents. The group's leadership and volunteer efforts will help get projects done, and build capacity for implementing the Jordan Lake Parcel Master Plan, including fund raising and planning for a future Big Lake Community Center.

The framework for this organization can be found in the three major community groups now providing services to Big Lake; the Community Council, Chamber of Commerce and the Big Lake Lions Club. Together with the AmeriCorps volunteers and the Borough staff with these service groups can begin to build the grass roots effort necessary through the following key actions.

Implementation of the master plan requires creating a coalition of everyone who cares to who will work together, step by step, to make the Jordan Lake Parcel a special community place. This "Friends of Jordan Lake Coalition" can have any name, but its key roles would be as follows:



Volunteer investment in the projects has many rewards

- Bring attention to the Jordan Lake parcel and build community involvement and pride by showcasing progress at each step.
- Provide the leadership to make projects happen and work with the borough to coordinate resources and volunteers.
- Keep focused on what is specific and do-able on this site, with the goal of eventually building a community center. Although the end goal is very ambitious, learning to work together on shared projects and goals focuses communities, and can be very powerful.
- Add value to the borough's efforts and investments: make possible a range of events, programs, activities and volunteer projects that will not happen without extra effort and leadership. Especially, work with teachers, the library and the community to create youth opportunities.
- Use and steward the property. Activity on the new trails will help safeguard the investment and users' safety. Spending time walking in the woods, or reading outdoors will help residents to better understand and appreciate the site, and will attract more

users. Also, trash pick-up and volunteer maintenance go a long way in making any facility more attractive and usable.

Strategic Actions:

1.1 Kick-Off Work Day Event - Bring the residents and organizations of Big Lake together at a press conference, pancake feed, and/or picnic to thank the AmeriCorp Volunteers and to publicize the kick-off of Phase One over the summer of 2003. Combine this with a work day event at Jordan Lake, the library or the elementary school.

1.2 Start-Up, Membership Development and Capacity Building - Create a “Friends of Jordan Lake” coalition to help guide site project implementation and create community capacity to achieve common goals, such as developing a Big Lake Community Center.

1.3 Community Center CIP Nomination - Work with Big Lake Community Council to nominate a Big Lake Community Center and/or library expansion as a Borough “Capital Improvement Project” using the borough procedures developed by the assembly.

1.4 Develop Essential Partnerships - Work with the Borough and other potential supporters and funding sources to maximize opportunities on the Jordan Lake site.

Phase One, Project 2 - Jordan Lake Nature Trail and Overlook

Description: Develop a trail from the library down to the edge of the wetlands with bridges, boardwalks, and viewing areas where appropriate. Along the trail develop amenities and interpretive features to enhance the trail.

Strategic Actions:

2.1 Soft Trail, Boardwalk & Viewing Areas - Provide an enjoyable walking experience from South Big Lake Road to the site’s

natural bluff and overlook areas minimizing the impact on wildlife, Jordan Lake, and the wetlands. Where required, install boardwalk and/or a bridge. Provide viewing platforms.

2.2 Flora & Fauna Interpretive Signage - Educate residents about the natural systems, plants, wildfire cycle, wildlife and natural resources on-site. Interpretive signs should include an overlook viewshed interpretive panel with lake and beaver lodge in the foreground and Mt. Susitna and the larger Alaska landscape as a backdrop. Other signs along the trail and at small view areas should incorporate the school outdoor education curriculum and library reading program into the sites natural history.

2.3 Self-guided Walking Tour - Help site users to more fully appreciate the wildlife, history, natural systems, and site context.

2.4 Benches and Park Amenities - Enhance Jordan Lake and bird viewing opportunities by creating comfortable sitting areas, and promote ownership of the trail and project by securing local funding and sponsorship for each bench.



When donors contribute for benches, bricks and other site improvements, they feel ownership

Phase One, Project 3 - Site Landscape Improvements

Description: Improve the parcel to be more aesthetic and usable. Create multi-use outdoor spaces that can be used for community events, youth education, play and picnicking, etc.

Strategic Actions:

3.1 Community Plaza / Outdoor Reading Room and Pedestrian Connections to the Library - Develop a small plaza with benches connected by a soft trail to the library to create a small community gathering spot and space for reading and other activities.

3.2 Landscape Improvements - Expand the green lawn space surrounding the Community Plaza with strategic clearing (while showcasing attractive mature trees like the 2 “gateway” spruce trees) and new plantings. Limit removal of stumps and other evidence of the Miller’s Reach fire to reduce initial site costs and to integrate into the overall site educational program.

3.3 Outdoor Classroom and Amphitheater - Enhance existing slopes to create an outdoor gathering space adjacent to the trail that



An outdoor amphitheater and classroom can take advantage of existing slopes

supports a range of events, performance options, and outdoor learning opportunities. Initial development should include a grassy slope for sitting, reading and watching wildlife.

Phase One, Project 4 - Nature Education and Wildlife-Oriented Enhancements

Description: Enhance use of the site and the new trail system and provide learning opportunities about nature and wildlife through educational efforts, site enhancements, programs and activities.

Strategic Actions:

4.1 Wildlife habitat improvements - Use only native plantings to attract wildlife and reduce erosion.

4.2 Non-Motorized Use Education - Develop signage and/or education that discourages motorized uses on the new trails and create “choke points” to reduce the access for motorized vehicles into the south portion of the site.

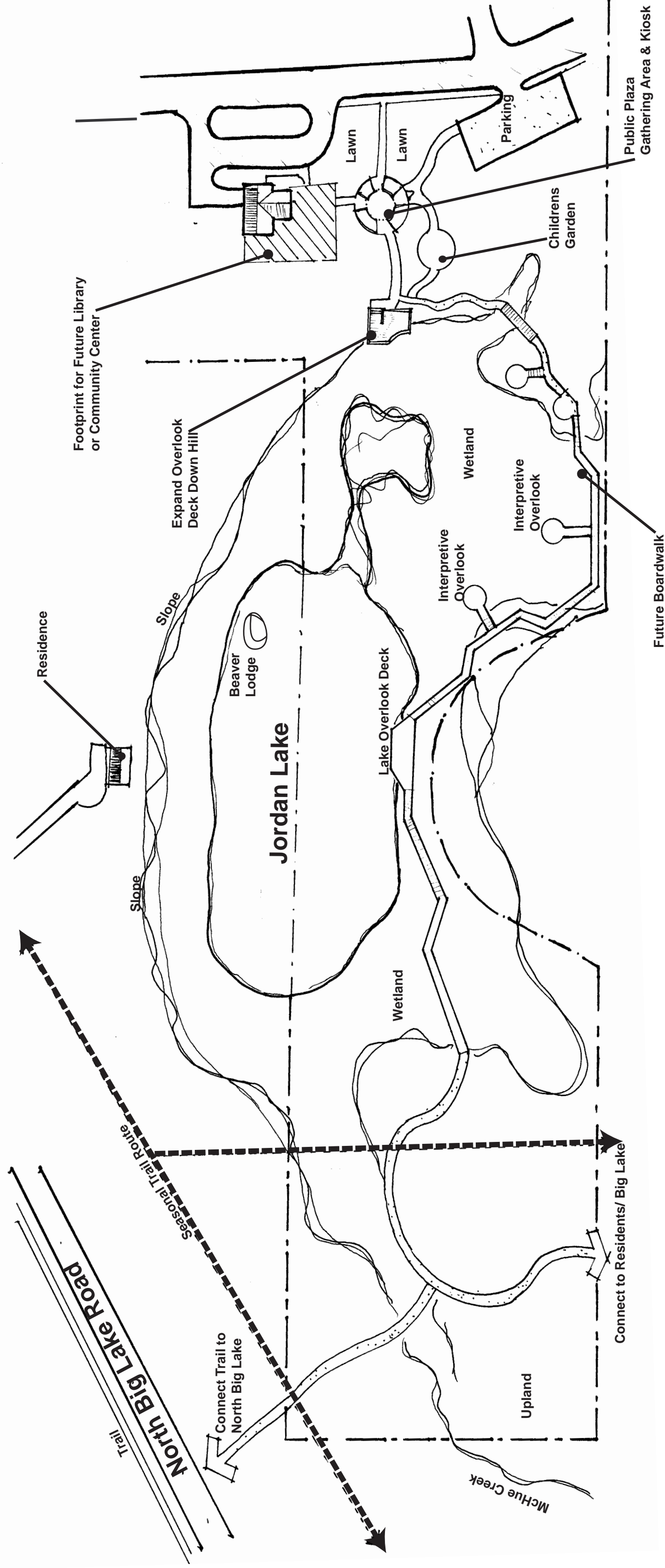
4.3 Develop A Site-based Youth Environmental Education Program - Use the Jordan Lake parcel as a resource for teaching about wildlife, natural systems, environmental concepts, and local issues (e.g., wildfire impacts and safety, watershed health).

4.4 Jordan Lake Site Outdoor Youth Activities - Maximize use of the Jordan Lake site as a platform for organized youth programs, events and activities and use youth volunteers (Cub Scout, etc.) where possible for site improvement projects.

BIG LAKE MASTER PLAN

PHASE 2 & 3 MAP 7

SUMMER 2003





Phase Two emphasizes making multi-use outdoor spaces, and adding landscaping, gardens, and other improvements

Phase Two, 2005 to 2010 - "Community Park" Stage (See Map 7)

Phase two places an emphasis on expanding the sites natural educational opportunities and in developing the larger community oriented facilities. This includes some formal landscaping, a children's garden, and building new amenities that make the site into a community park or a village green space and a usable space for outdoor events. At this stage, fund raising and planning for an expanded library and/or community center should be underway.

Projects:

Phase Two, Project 1 - Site Amenities and Enhancements

Description: Building on improvements from Phase One, extend the trail, boardwalk and

develop new amenities and gardens that make the eastern edge of site near the library and trail entrance more like a community park or village green.

Strategic Actions:

1.1 Children's Garden Development -

Create flower and ornamental garden spaces to add interest and color, and to attract butterflies and birds that are built around the library and elementary school programs. One approach would be to take popular children's literature and identify all the plants that are mentioned in the books and create an interactive reading garden (for example, New York's Central Park has Shakespeare Garden growing only plants mentioned in the writings of Shakespeare).

1.2 Access and Recreational Improvements

- Extend the on-site trail system and sidewalks to improve access and recreation opportunities. Expand the central plaza area to allow larger community events. Provide brick paving with donor names to create a sense of ownership and community fund raising. Add paved connections between the library and the shopping center and create an overflow parking area in the lower southwest corner of the site.

1.3 Wetland Boardwalk - Extend the on-site trail system further into the Jordan Lake pond and wetlands with elevated boardwalks and viewing platforms that conform to ADF&G light penetrating construction standards.

1.4 Site Landscaping and Amenities

- Expand the lawn area surrounding the plaza and entrance to the park and provide additional seating and reading areas for visitors.



An informational kiosk on the site could encourage visitors to spend more time in the core area

Phase Two, Project 2 - Visitor Kiosk

Description: Create a small visitor kiosk with information about local services, businesses, the community, recreational areas, and the Jordan Lake Parcel. Provide parking and restrooms in conjunction with the library, and provide access along a path to the business area across South Big Lake Road.

Strategic Actions:

2.1. Visitor Interpretive Kiosk - Enhance community identity by inviting recreational home owners and independent travelers to stop in the core area to get local business information, walk on the boardwalk, see Denali and wildlife, and see what is special about Big Lake

Phase Two, Project 3 - Community Center / Library Expansion Planning and Funding Campaign

Description: Through the Friends of Jordan Lake Coalition or some other format begin to focus more on the planning and funding required for construction of a community center and/or library expansion in Phase

Three. With the project already placed in the borough's Capital Improvements Program in Phase I, now is the time to refine the vision, develop a purpose and need, develop a united front of community support and work on relationships with potential funders.

Strategic Actions:

3.1 Develop Purpose and Need - Determine the goals, purpose and need for a Community Center and/or Library Expansion and determine size options given the site drainage and septic system limitations.

One requirement that may preclude further expansion is the development of a core area water and or septic system to allow expanded community growth for the Library site as well as the entire Big Lake community.

3.2 Funding Campaign - Continue to work with Mat-Su Borough's Capital Improvement Program toward library expansion and/or community center funding and initiate other fundraising as needed. At this point, with two years of work on the Jordan Lake site completed, the community will be in a better position to demonstrate their need, vision, and capacity for cooperative effort to potential funders.

Phase Three, Long Term - "Community Center" (See Map 7)

In Phase Three, full build-out of the Jordan Lake Parcel Master Plan is completed. The Library is expanded, and/or a community center is constructed. At this stage, the parcel becomes the center of community life, while still providing nature walks and wildlife habitat and new and extended trail access and connections are developed.



Phase Three will focus on developing a multi-Purpose Community Center like Willow's that provides year-round meeting, learning, and play opportunities

Phase Three, Project 1 - Construction of Community Center and/or Library Extension

Description: Construct multi-purpose community facility space based on available funding, a space needs assessment, and septic and soil considerations. This can be built as either rooms off of the library or as a center that adjoins the library in order to not duplicate operational costs where possible.

Strategic Actions:

1.1 Build Community Facility

Alternative A - Library Expansion including construction of “community rooms” off of existing Big Lake Library.

Alternative B - Build new stand alone Community Center and rebuild Library parking lot.

Phase Three, Project 2 - Improve Trails and Access

Description: Extend the site’s trail system through the site to the north to link key areas of the community where possible to provide access at a community center hub. Make better use of the western edge of the site by providing access that does not encourage trespass or environmental damage to the sensitive stream bank.

Strategic Actions:

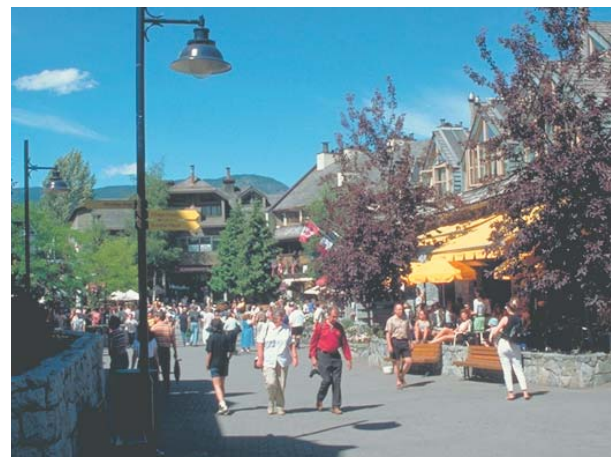
2.1 McHugh Creek Area Trail connections and Crossing - Create a safe all-season passage for pedestrians by the beaver-dam over the creek to the north and allow the east-west link to work year round.

2.2 Develop Community-Wide Trail connections - Enhance trail and sidewalk access from the site to the core business area, residential areas, and community facilities.

C. Big Lake “Core Area Framework Plan”

(See Map 8)

The Core Area Framework Plan sketches out ways to make the Jordan Lake Parcel the heart of Big Lake by connecting and integrating it into a more vibrant community center. The plan consists of the following recommended actions. It also illustrates the conceptual framework plan that expands the Big Lake community goals and objectives established in the public process. See the strategic action plan table that concludes this document for time line and implementation ideas.






Vibrant town centers attract both residents and tourists, and are great places to walk. Simple improvements to go with the Master Plan can make Big Lake’s core area a bigger attraction.

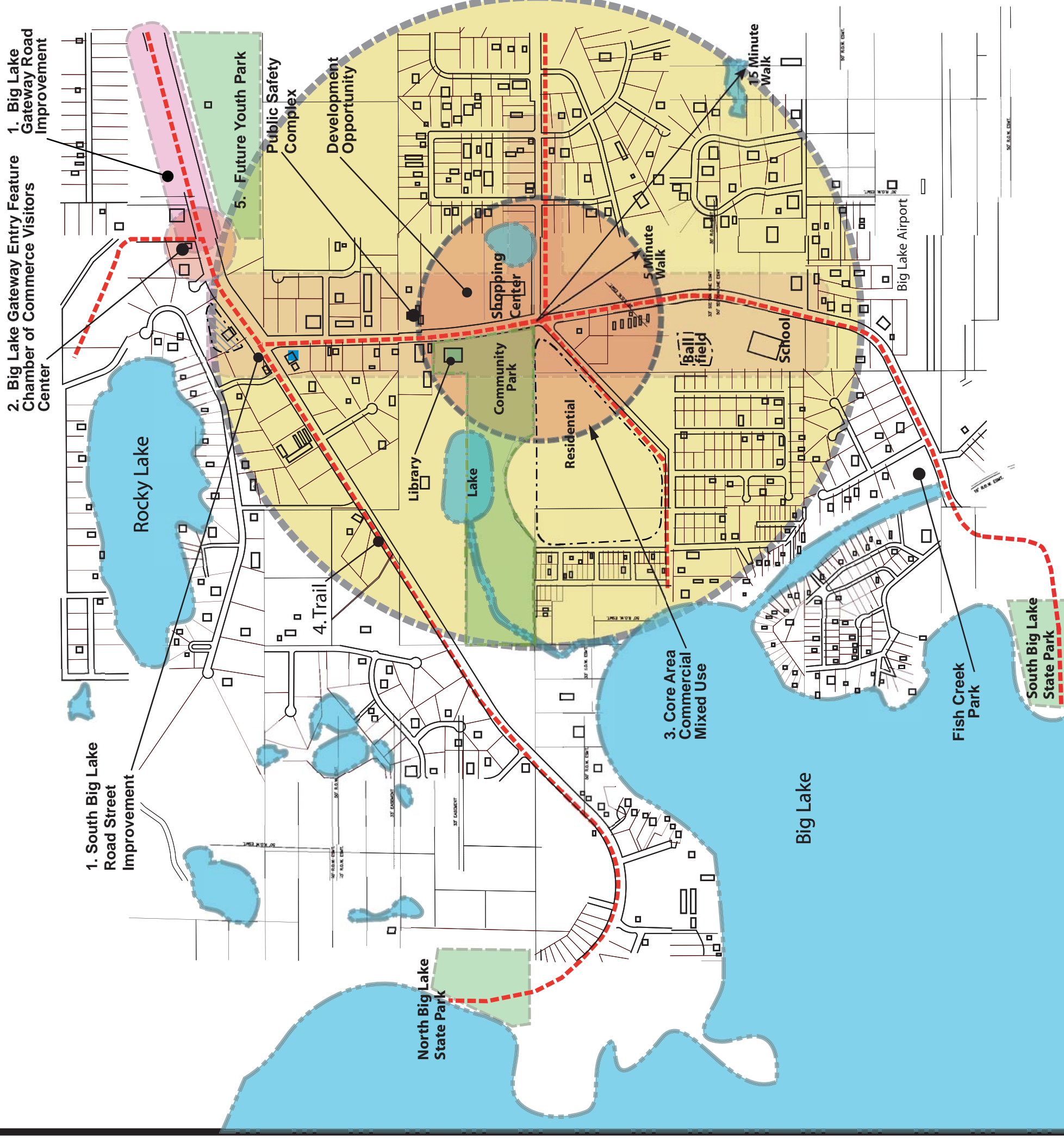
BIG LAKE CORE AREA FRAMEWORK MAP 8

Potential Projects

1. South Big Lake streetscape
2. Gateway Entrance
3. Enhance Core Area
4. Trail System
5. Future Youth Park

Legend

-  Multipurpose Trails in the 1996 Big Lake Comprehensive Plan
-  5 Minute Core Business Area
-  5-15 Minute Walking Radius



1. Maximize Community Facility Resources

Description: Maximize use of existing facilities, and coordinate all future community facility development. Research ways to design, build and manage community facilities in order to allow multi-use, reduce maintenance, have sustainable facility overhead costs and coordinate in order to best serve the community. Use public facilities to promote community development and to frame important community spaces.

Actions can include:

- Jordan Lake Site Master Plan Implementation, e.g. plan and funding strategy for construction of a Community Center
- Develop a Community Schools program with volunteers to gain maximum use of existing facilities while planning for a community center. Much of the facilities desired for a community center is available at the elementary school. These features should be used in the interim through special events and community programs to foster a sense of community in Big Lake.

2. South Big Lake Streetscape

Description: From the “Y” intersection along South Big Lake Road in the core area to South Big Lake State Park improve the state right-of-way with landscaping and pedestrian oriented features to create a sense of arrival and “small town feel” in the core area through public investments in the state right-of-way.

Actions can include:

- Create a “gateway” of some kind at the “Y” intersection of South Big Lake Road and North Shore Drive using attractive landscaping, a welcome to Big Lake sign, and possibly a visitors center linked to the Chamber of Commerce with a pull-off and rest room facility

- Road and sidewalk improvements – provide sidewalk or bike paths along both sides of the road with landscape buffers to reduce pedestrian and vehicle conflicts
- Tree and shrub planting to achieve continuity and rural small-town feel- decorative fencing and/or plantings along parking lots to make the area attractive and pedestrian friendly and to screen cars from the street view

3. Enhance Core Area Business

Description: Help build on the existing business center in Big Lake’s core area with visual enhancements that provide more cohesion and invite more business from residents and tourists.

Actions can include:

- Encourage business development and enhancements in core area
- Voluntary Design Guidelines for Businesses in Core Area to promote Town Center Development such as a sign plan
- Low Interest loans / grants for business improvements such as façade and parking lot landscape

4. Formalize and enhance the Big Lake’s Trail System

Description: Work to protect existing trails and create new trail links. Residents expressed a desire for developing a non-motorized trail system in the center of town that connects the Jordan Lake site with community facilities, shopping, residential areas and Big Lake. As growth and development happen, trails without legal easements can go away. A coordinated approach building on the 1996 Big Lake Comprehensive Plan proposed trail system and the Jordan Lake Master Plan will provide a great beginning.

Actions can include:

- Ensure that motorized and non-motorized trail access is protected and enhanced so that residents can recreate “right from their back door”
- Document all traditional recreational trails and obtain legal easements to ensure use into the future
- Preserve and enhance the trail network while developing key links into a “hub” in the core area
- Develop a system of trails along wildlife corridors and trails that can be used for educational and recreational purposes

Other strategic actions should also be worked on by the community after brainstorming about which are the most needed and cost effective actions:

5. Make Big Lake a “Recreation Gateway for Visitors”

Description: Encourage independent travelers and recreational property owners to spend time and money in the core area.

6. Make Big Lake a Great Place for Youth

Description: Improve public facilities and properties to enhance youth opportunities.



Community action and borough support are key to implementing this plan

7. Protect Watershed Health

Description: Protect important wildlife habitat on public land to support watershed health.

5. Phased Implementation

The matrix over the next several pages outlines a **Strategic Action Plan** that phases projects over time to match funding and volunteer resources. Each project in the Strategic Action plan helps the community fulfill its goals, either on the site, and/or at the larger community level.

The yellow section lists the projects that make up the **Jordan Lake Parcel Master Plan** by its three phases. Notes on the approximate schedule for implementation, cost and who might help make the project a reality are provided. The section following in blue list recommendations that form the basis of the **Core Area Framework Plan** previously described in chapter four. Again, notes on implementation are provided.

Now is the time to begin implementation. The borough will provide some funding and support, but clearly this plan can only succeed with the continued involvement and leadership of the residents. A Friends of Jordan Lake Coalition will strengthen the community’s capacity to come together and make common projects and goals happen. No matter what the future brings—a Knik Arm Crossing, a Port MacKenzie access route through Big Lake, funding leads for a Big Lake Community Center—working together to fulfill this plan can and will make the community of Big Lake better and stronger.

MSB Jordan Lake Parcel Master Plan Strategic Actions

Based on Community shared goals for the Jordan Lake Site:
 Site Goal 1: Enhance Natural Spaces for Community Use
 Site Goal 2: Create Community Spaces
 Site Goal 3: Develop Youth Opportunities

MSB Jordan Lake Site

Phase One, 2003 to 2004 - "Enhanced Natural" Stage

#	Project	Action	Goals	Cost & Timing	Sponsors/Funding	
1. Friends of Jordan Lake Coalition						
1.1	Kick-Off Event Purpose: Bring the residents and organizations of Big Lake together to thank the AmeriCorp Volunteers and to publicize the kick-off of Phase One	Work day or picnic	✓	✓	Summer 2003	Mat-Su Borough (MSB), AmeriCorps, Big Lake Community Council, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Big Lake Lions Club, possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" committee
1.2	Start-Up, Membership Development and Capacity Building Purpose: Create a "Friends of Jordan Lake" coalition to help guide site project implementation and create community capacity to achieve common goals, such as developing a Big Lake Community Center	Create a coalition	✓	✓	Ongoing	Residents of Big Lake, Big Lake Community Council, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Big Lake Lions Club and other organizations
1.3	Community Center CIP Nomination Purpose: Work with Big Lake Community Council to nominate a Big Lake Community Center and/or library expansion as a borough "Capital Improvement Project" using the procedures developed by the assembly.	Nominate community center for CIP funding	✓	✓	Summer and Fall 2003	MSB, Friends of Jordan Lake Coalition, Big Lake Community Council
1.4	Develop Essential Partnerships Purpose: Work with the Borough and other potential supporters and funding sources to maximize opportunities on the Jordan Lake site	Work with key interests	✓	✓	Ongoing	Friends of Jordan Lake Coalition, Big Lake Community Council, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Big Lake Lions Club, MSB, State of Alaska, Senator Ted Stevens
2. Jordan Lake Access Trail and Related Projects						
2.1	Soft Trail, Boardwalk & Viewing Areas Purpose: Provide an enjoyable walking experience from South Big Lake Road to the site's natural bluff and overlook areas minimizing the impact on wildlife, Jordan lake, and the wetlands. Where required, install a boardwalk and/or bridge. Provide viewing platforms.	AmeriCorps volunteer project	✓	✓	\$ 25,000 Summer 2003	MSB, AmeriCorps, Big Lake Community Council, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Big Lake Lions Club, possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" committee
2.2	Flora & Fauna Interpretive Signage Purpose: Educate residents about the natural systems, plants, wildlife and natural resources on-site	Develop and install signs	✓	✓	\$3,000 2003-2004	Big Lake Library, Big Lake Elementary School, Mat-Su Birders, possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" committee
2.3	Self-guided Walking Tour Purpose: Help site users to more fully appreciate the wildlife, history, natural systems, and site context	Brochure	✓		2003-2004	Chamber of Commerce (businesses advertisements); possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" committee

Jordan Lake Master Plan

Strategic Action Projects, page 1

2.4	Park Benches Purpose: Enhance Jordan Lake and bird viewing opportunities by creating comfortable siting areas	Obtain funds to install benches	✓	✓	✓	\$400 per bench 2003-2004	Big Lake Community Council; Big Lake Chamber of Commerce; Big Lake Lions Club (donor plaques)
3. Site Landscape Improvements							
3.1	Community Plaza / Outdoor Reading Room and pedestrian connections to the Library Purpose: Develop a small plaza with benches that is connected by soft trail to the Library to provide a small paved community gathering spot and space for reading and other activities.		✓	✓	✓	\$30,000 Summer 2004	MSB, Big Lake Community Council, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Big Lake Lions Club, possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" committee and fundraising
3.2	Landscape Improvements Purpose: Expand the green lawn space surrounding the Community Plaza with strategic clearing (while showcasing attractive mature trees like the 2 "gateway" spruce trees) and new plantings		✓	✓	✓	\$15,000 Summer 2004	MSB, Big Lake Community Council, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Big Lake Lions Club, possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" committee and fundraising
3.3	Outdoor Classroom and Amphitheater Purpose: Enhance existing slopes to create an outdoor gathering space adjacent to the trail that supports a range of events and performance options	Develop a simple, low-maintenance space	✓	✓	✓	\$15,000 Summer 2003	MSB, Big Lake Community Council, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Big Lake Lions Club, possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" committee and fundraising
4. Nature Education and Wildlife-Oriented Enhancements							
4.1	Wildlife habitat improvements Purpose: Use plantings to attract wildlife and reduce erosion	Install native plantings	✓	✓	✓	\$1,000	Possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" committee Mat-Su Birders; Chamber of Commerce and members (e.g. Lakes Way Greenhouse)
4.2	Non-Motorized Use Education Purpose: Develop signage and/or education that discourages motorized uses on the new trails since most of Big Lake has motorized access, and community members desired a quiet place for taking classes of kids, for wildlife viewing, and for non-motorized recreation	Signs, brochure, and education	✓	✓	✓	\$1,000	Possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" committee (resources: Jay Nolfi; Jody Simpson; Bill O'Hara's, Community Council President (Winter Safety Clinic); Tim McGhan)
4.3	Develop site-based Youth Environmental Education Program Purpose: Use the Jordan Lake parcel as a resource for teaching about plants and animals, natural systems, environmental concepts, and local issues (e.g., wildfire impacts and safety, watershed health)	Develop curriculum & materials & seek funding to help a program develop	✓	✓	✓	Voluntary, supported by existing school funding and grants 2003 Fall	Big Lake Library, Big Lake Elementary School, Mat-Su Birders, possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" coalition
4.4	Jordan Lake Site Outdoor Youth Activities Purpose: Maximize use of the Jordan Lake site as a platform for organized youth programs, events and activities and use Youth volunteers (Cub Scout, etc.) where possible for site improvement projects	Plan on-site youth activities	✓	✓	✓	Voluntary, supported by existing groups 2003 Fall	MSB, Big Lake Library, Big Lake Elementary School, Big Lake Community Council, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Big Lake Lions Club, possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" coalition and fundraising

MSB Jordan Lake Site

Phase Two, 2005 to 2010 - "Community Park"

#	Project	Action	Goals	Cost & Timing	Sponsors/Funding		
1. Site Amenities and Enhancements							
1.1	Garden Development Purpose: Create flower garden spaces to add interest and color, and to attract butterflies and birds	Plan and build garden areas	✓	✓	✓	\$10,000 2005-2007	MSB, Big Lake Community Council, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Big Lake Lions Club, possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" coalition
1.2	Access and Recreational Improvements Purpose: Extend on-site trail system and sidewalks to improve access and recreation opportunities	Extend trails and sidewalks	✓	✓	✓	\$15,000 2005-2010	MSB, Big Lake Community Council, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Big Lake Lions Club, possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" coalition
1.3	Wetland Boardwalk Purpose: Create a light-penetrating boardwalk along the wetland's edge with views of Jordan Lake	Plan and build facility	✓	✓	✓	\$20,000 2005-2007	MSB, Big Lake Community Council, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Big Lake Lions Club, possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" coalition
2. Visitor Kiosk							
2.1	Visitor Interpretive Kiosk Purpose: Enhance community identity by inviting recreational home owners and independent travelers to stop in the core area to get local business information, walk on the boardwalk, see Denali and wildlife, and see what is special about Big Lake	Create a small kiosk with information for visitors			✓	\$3,000 2005	MSB, Possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" coalition, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Big Lake Community Council, Big Lake Lions Club
3. Community Center / Library Expansion Planning and Funding Campaign							
3.1	Develop Purpose and Need Purpose: Determine the goals, purpose and need for a community center and/or library expansion and determine size options given the site drainage and septic system limitations	Develop plan	✓	✓	✓	_____ 2005	MSB, Possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" coalition, Big Lake Community Council, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Big Lake Lions Club
3.2	Funding Campaign Purpose: Continue to work with Mat-Su Borough's Capital Improvement Program toward library expansion and/or community center funding and initiate other fundraising as needed. At this point, with two years of work on the Jordan Lake site completed, the community will be in a better position to demonstrate their need, vision, and capacity for cooperative effort to potential funders.	Start a fundraising campaign		✓		_____	MSB, Possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" coalition, Big Lake Community Council, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Big Lake Lions Club, State of Alaska, Senator Ted Stevens, Non-Profit Foundations

MSB Jordan Lake Site

Phase Three, Long Term - "Community Center"

#	Project	Action	Goals	Cost & Timing	Sponsors/Funding	
1. Construction of Community Center and/or Library Extension						
1.1	Build Community Facility: <u>Alternative A</u> Library Expansion including construction of "community rooms" off of existing Big Lake Library <u>Alternative B</u> Build new stand alone Community Center and rebuild Library parking lot	Construct facility and new parking	✓	✓	\$1 million 2010 \$ 3-5 million 2012	Study the range of approaches and potential costs, benefits and funding sources: Alternative A Library Expansion including construction of "community rooms" off of existing Big Lake Library Alternative B Build new stand alone Community Center and rebuild Library parking lot
			✓	✓		
2. Improve Trails and Access						
2.1	McHugh Creek Area Trail connections and Crossing Purpose: Create a safe all-season passage for pedestrians by the beaver-dam over the creek	Build bridge over creek outflow	✓	✓	\$50,000	MSB, Big Lake Community Council, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Big Lake Lions Club, possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" committee
2.2	Develop Community-Wide Trail connections Purpose: Enhance access from the site to the core business area, residential areas, and community facilities	Enhance the site's trail system and links to	✓	✓		MSB, Big Lake Community Council, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Big Lake Lions Club, possible "Friends of Jordan Lake" committee, State of Alaska

Big Lake Core Area Strategic Actions

- Based on residents' shared goals:
- Goal 1: Foster a Sense of Community
 - Goal 2: Develop a Strong Business Core
 - Goal 3: Enhance the Small Town / Rural Feel
 - Goal 4: Maintain Ability to Recreate "Right out your Back Door"
 - Goal 5: Preserve Natural Character and Resources
 - Goal 6: Encourage Tourism that Benefits the Local Economy
 - Goal 7: Create Youth Opportunities
 - Goal 8: Improve Locally-Based Governance

Big Lake Core Area

PROJECTS		COMMUNITY GOALS Supported by Project Actions								Schedule	Cost	Sponsors - Funding	
#	Project	Action	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8			
1	Maximize Community Facility Resources Purpose: Maximize use of existing facilities, and design and build new community spaces to be multi-use, low-maintenance, with sustainable facility overhead costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jordan Lake Site Master Plan Implementation, e.g.: develop a plan and funding strategy for construction of a Community Center • Improve the local Community Schools program with volunteers to gain maximum use of existing facilities while planning for a community center 	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing	Volunteer-based with school and library staff support	Possible "Friends of Jordan Lake", Big Lake Elementary, Big Lake Library
			✓		✓		✓		✓	✓			
2 (Map 8)	South Big Lake Streetscape Purpose: Create a sense of arrival and "small town feel" in the core area through public investments in the state right-of-way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a "gateway" of some kind at the "Y" intersection of South Big Lake Road and North Shore Drive using landscaping a sign and possibly a visitor's center. • Road and sidewalk improvements • Tree and shrub planting to achieve continuity and rural small-town feel • Decorative fencing and/or plantings along parking lots to make the area attractive and pedestrian friendly 	✓	✓	✓			✓			2008	\$125,000	ADOT&PF, Federal, MSB
3	Enhance Core Area Business Purpose: Encourage business development and enhancements in core area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary Design Guidelines for Businesses in Core Area to promote Town Center Development • Low Interest loans / grants for business improvements such as façade and parking 	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	Ongoing	Volunteer-based and/or available grants and programs	Big Lake Chamber, State of Alaska, MSB.

