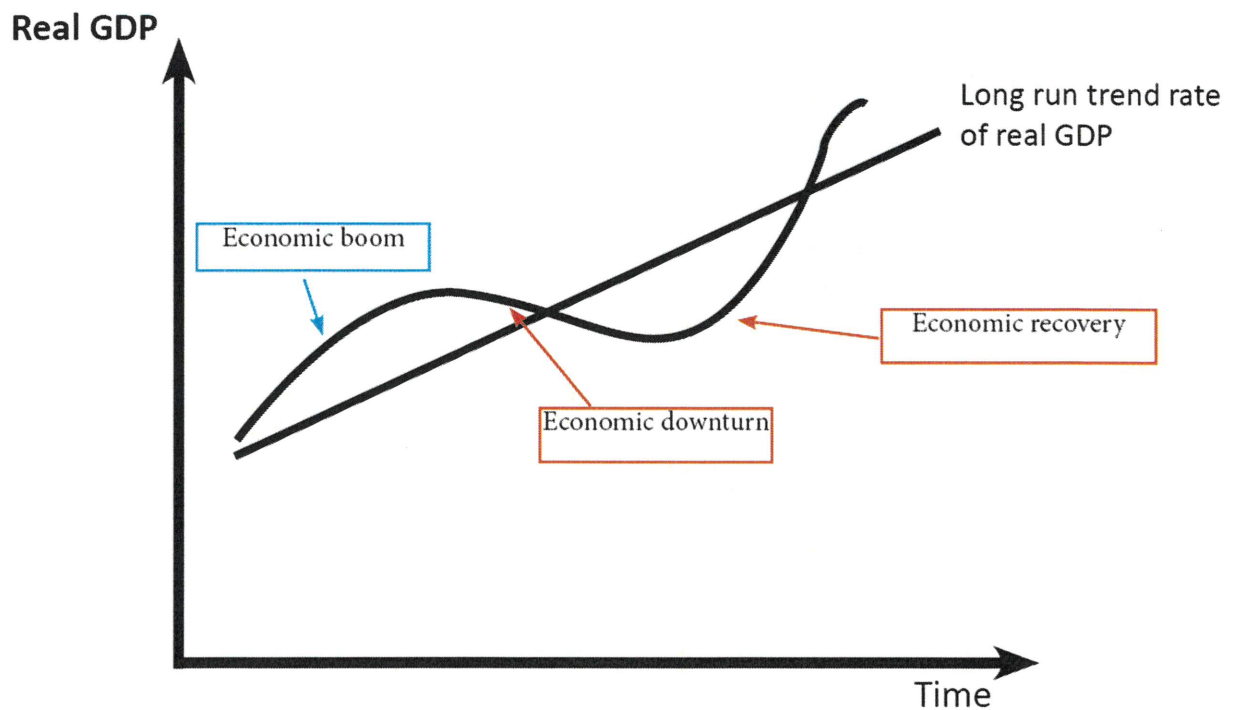




City of Palmer
Board of Economic Development

February 16, 2022



**BOARD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 16, 2022 6 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
231 W. EVERGREEN AVENUE, PALMER
www.palmerak.org**



CHAIRMAN Dusty Silva
BOARD MEMBER Christopher Chappel
BOARD MEMBER Barbara Hunt
BOARD MEMBER Lorie Koppenberg
BOARD MEMBER Ronalee Moses
BOARD MEMBER Peter Christopher
BOARD MEMBER Janet Kincaid

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS:
CITY MANAGER – John Moosey

AGENDA

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Pledge of Allegiance
- D. Organization of the Board
 - 1. Election of Chairperson
 - 2. Election of Vice Chairperson
- E. Approval of Agenda
- F. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings
 - 1. Regular Meeting of November 1, 2021
 - 2. Regular Meeting of January 17, 2022
- G. Reports
 - 1. Manager/Staff Report
- H. Audience Participation
- I. Unfinished Business
 - 1. Committee of the Whole: Discuss IM 22-003, Railroad Tracks and more effective use of that area, including Farmers Market, Community Stage area and parking (note: action may be taken by the board following the committee of the whole)
- J. New Business
 - 1. Committee of the Whole: Discuss IM-22-005, Downtown Parking (note: action may be taken by the board following the committee of the whole)
- K. Board Member Comments
- L. Adjournment



Minutes

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Unfinished Business

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**CITY OF PALMER
BOARD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
INFORMATION MEMORANDUM 22-003**

Substitute for 21-003

SUBJECT: Railroad Tracks Utilization

AGENDA OF: February 16, 2022
January 17, 2022
January 4, 2021
November 1, 2021

January 3 Update

Included in the packet is BED Resolution No. 21-001 that was passed and submitted to the City Council for consideration of improvements that would promote economic development in the city. Also provided are past studies that support railroad right of way improvements that improve the quality of life in Palmer. Excerpts from the Area Wide Plan and the Palmer Urban Revitalization are included to show efforts that have been made to increase the utility of the corridor. Both studies can be found at <https://www.palmerak.org/community-development/page/economic-development>. Support for railroad improvements can also be found in the Palmer Comprehensive Plan and the University of Washington plan.

The city has applied to the Alaska Railroad to renew the Permit for Grow Palmer and Shane Woods Trail. If there any supplemental requests, now would be the time to approach the railroad.

The Parks and Recreational Advisory Board will be getting an update to the BED's progress on the railroad discussion at their January 6 meeting. The Parks and Recreational Advisory Board has not actively participated in the railroad discussion and will be presented similar information. A joint meeting should be considered if the BED wishes to pursue improvements further.

A strategic plan will help guide discussion and should include:

- Railroad corridor concept for elements/improvements
- Comprehensive approach to parking and circulation
- Preservation of historically important items, concepts, or architectural features
- Pre-approved specialty features the community members or groups can purchase or install
- Discussion and involvement of Planning and Zoning, Parks and Recreational Advisory Board
- Alaska Railroad concurrence

Archived information

Upon completion of the Downtown Palmer Brownfield Area-Wide Plan approval by the Mat-Su

Borough and the Department of Environmental Protection, the BED should begin discussion about the economic and community impact of the railroad corridor in Palmer.

November 1 Update

The BED at the July meeting passed a resolution for the Palmer City Council recommending they consider implementation of elements of the Brownfield Area Wide Plan. The Resolution encouraged the city to pursue development and beautification of land within the railroad corridor for public use and enjoyment, now. The BED recognized when Resolution 21-001 was passed that the Alaska Railroad will retain within their existing leases with the city the right to rehabilitate the tracks and utilize them whenever they desire. Further, anything placed in the right of way would need to be relocated with no obligation to preserve or protect by the Alaska Railroad.

The question for the BED is should we pursue a strategy that will encourage development within the railroad right of way that benefits residents and visitors today?

Resolution No. 21-001

A Resolution of the Palmer Board of Economic Development Recommending City Council Implement Elements of the Brownfield Area Wide Plan to Support the Development of a Coordinated Marketing Strategy for Downtown Palmer

WHEREAS, the purpose of the city of Palmer Board of Economic Development is to provide research, public input and disseminate information to the City Council to evaluate economic development opportunities and strategies; and

WHEREAS, unique local events, tourism and recreational opportunities have a significant impact on the Palmer quality of life and economy; and

WHEREAS, Palmer has invested heavily in the infrastructure, including the Community Center (Depot), MTA Events Center, Visitor Information Center, Palmer Airport, parks, bike paths, pedestrian access and downtown beautification projects; and

WHEREAS, Palmer serves as the hometown to many surrounding neighborhoods and communities acting as the gateway to endless Alaskan experiences and activities; and

WHEREAS, in 2019 a Brownfield Area Wide Planning Study was conducted for downtown Palmer which outlined improvements that could enhance the connectivity and economic opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the Palmer Comprehensive Plan identifies the Matanuska Maid Complex as a development priority and Palmer City Council legislative priorities identify trails, parks and acquisition of the "Palmer Water Tower"; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Economic Development supports implementation of an authentic coordinated destination marketing strategy to further the goals of the City Council of enhanced economic development, including;

1. Have a strong coordinated internet and social media presence.
2. Visitor Information Center contract is consistent with goals of a coordinated marketing strategy, established by City Council.
3. Coordination should occur between entities promoting Palmer tourism and local businesses, i.e., City of Palmer, Greater Palmer Chamber of Commerce, Palmer Museum of History and Art, Mat-Su Convention & Visitor Bureau and local hospitality businesses.
4. Create a branding strategy for placement of signage at major highway entrances identifying Palmer's historical importance, access to recreation and events, and identifying signage for the gateway to the designated Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway.

NOW THEREFORE IT FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED the Board of Economic Development identifies these projects as a priority, as supported by past community studies, that support community values and the enrichment of life in Palmer.

1. Plan and implement downtown parking improvements on Colony and Valley Way.
2. Complete a feasibility analysis for East/West vehicular connectivity.
3. Pursue development and beautification of land within the railroad corridor for public use and enjoyment, now.
4. Develop and implement an outdoor venue for community events in the railroad corridor.
5. Complete non-motorized connectivity between Auklet and Old Glenn Highway.
6. Develop and implement a plan for city property on the Matanuska River for local usage and tourism.

Passed and approved by the Board of Economic Development of the City of Palmer, Alaska, this 12th day of July 2021.

Dusty Silva, Chairperson

Brad Hanson, Director Community Development



(Source: Adrien Ochoa | Unsplash)

CONCEPTUAL PLAN

The final conceptual plan for the East Downtown Palmer study area depicts the long-range vision for redevelopment on the catalyst site and the adjacent railway corridor in terms of future land uses, open space areas, and building locations. Redevelopment, community gathering space, and adaptive reuse are the common themes in the conceptual plan. The conceptual plan calls for future new mixed-use infill buildings and several outdoor gathering areas. The conceptual plan establishes opportunities for the adaptive reuse of the area's heritage structures and to repurpose them for new tenants and community landmarks. The following summarizes the conceptual plan elements within the catalyst site and the railway corridor.

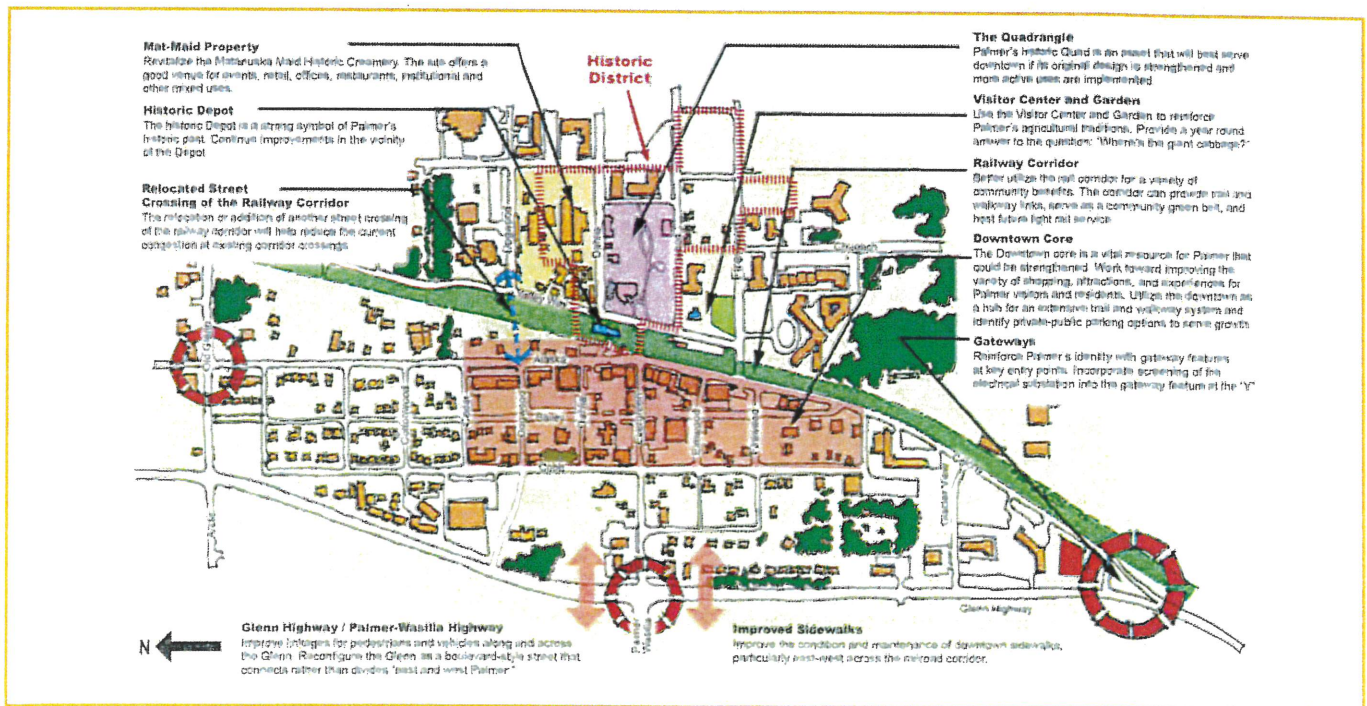
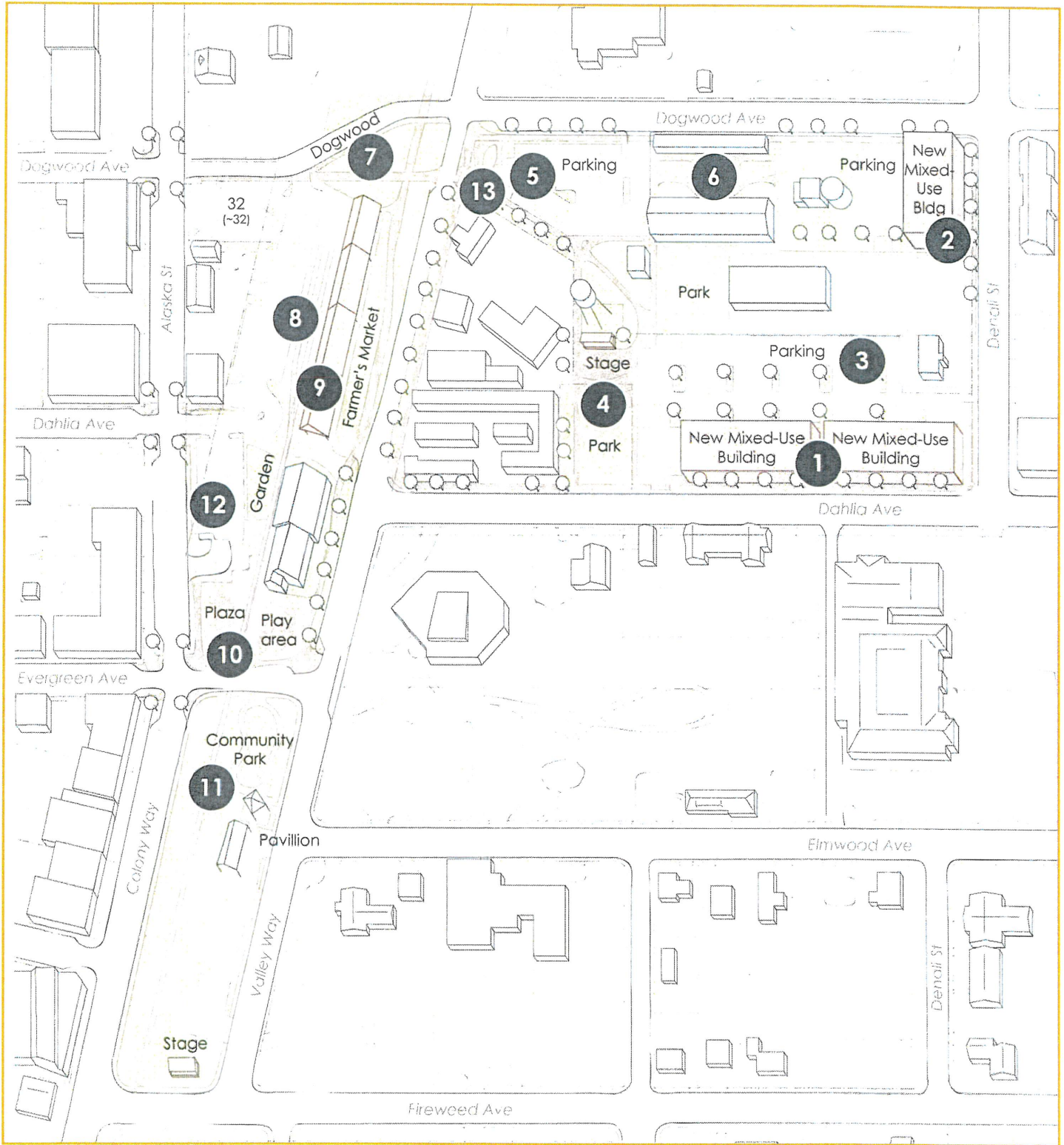


FIGURE ES-3 - PALMER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: DOWNTOWN OPPORTUNITIES MAP

Top: Example of a coffeehouse, a local venue for social gathering



LEGEND

- # Conceptual Plan Project Reference Number (See Table ES-1)
- Adaptive Reuse of existing structures
- New Infill Structures
- Enhanced Open Space Areas

FIGURE ES-4 - CONCEPTUAL PLAN: EAST DOWNTOWN PALMER AWP CATALYST SITE AND RAILWAY CORRIDOR

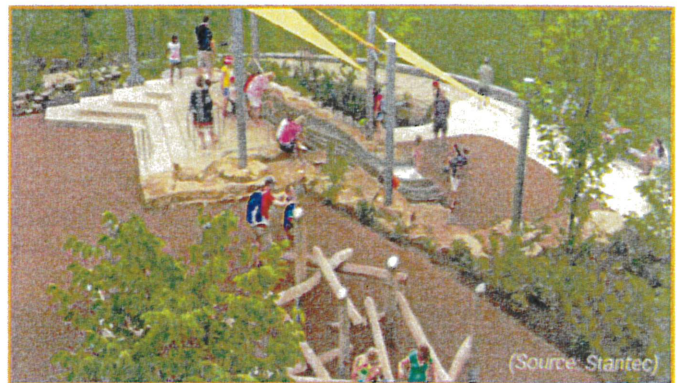
See Table ES-1 for the corresponding Conceptual Plan Project List (Source: Stantec)

Railway Corridor and Historic Depot

The community envisions that the Historic Depot and the railway corridor would remain as Palmer's signature civic gathering space and the City's "central park". This vision supports site improvements that create additional spaces for recreation and public gatherings.

- **Plaza and Play Area:** A new play area is planned at the corner of Evergreen Avenue and S. Valley Way. The plaza and play area would activate the areas alongside the Historic Depot.
- **Farmer's Market:** The City would facilitate the development of a new Farmer's Market pavilion within the railway corridor north of the Historic Depot. The pavilion would provide covered space for market functions during harvest times and civic gatherings during off seasons. The adjacent railroad tracks would remain in place to support occasional rail access.
- **Dogwood Avenue:** The City would study the feasibility to connect Dogwood Avenue through the railway corridor and would create a new roadway access between the Downtown Core and East Downtown Palmer. The street extensions design/strategy should achieve a no-net-loss of on-street parking in the downtown area. There is the opportunity to design the new Dogwood Avenue segment as a "festival street" that can be periodically closed to vehicular traffic to support community events.

- **Community Park:** The City would maintain and enhance the community park space within the railway corridor south of Evergreen Avenue. This may include landscape enhancements and additional trail/sidewalk linkages. A stage is planned at the south end of the railway corridor near Fireweed Avenue. The stage would support periodic performances and civic events.



Top Left: Example of a public stage structure in a community park
Lower Left: Example of a play area in a downtown linear park
(Cincinnati, OH)



Above: Example of a public Farmer's Market building (Olympia, WA)

Palmer Revitalization Project Development Plan

1.0 Introduction

This report provides a Development Plan with specific, implementable community design and development recommendations for the enhancement of Palmer's historic railroad corridor. The Development Plan identifies the vision and values to be achieved in Palmer over the next five years or more. The plan is based on a thorough public involvement process led by a Citizen's Advisory Group (CAG) and includes an action-oriented implementation strategy, which recommends both public and private sector initiatives. The plan must be viewed as a flexible document that can evolve over time in response to changing conditions and funding opportunities.

In times of rapid growth in the Palmer area, the vision for a Palmer "Rail-with-Trail" corridor set forth in this report is timely, realistic, and achievable. Palmer is ideally suited for the development portrayed in this plan that creates strong physical and visual linkages to the historic Palmer Railroad Depot at its heart, to core area businesses, surrounding neighborhoods, and community facilities including the Palmer Library and the Alaska State Fair. The rail-trail open space corridor is the backbone of the plan and provides an opportunity for the City to establish a policy of community-focused public access through the heart of Palmer.

The public improvements recommended in this plan will contribute significantly to the enhancements of downtown Palmer as a place to live and do business by helping to establish a fresh image and market identity for the area. These improvements will serve as a powerful catalyst to encourage private investment in downtown Palmer.

1.1 Background

The Palmer Rail-with-Trail project has been an important concept to the residents for more than a decade. The Palmer Comprehensive Plan identified the corridor for public use and development as did as the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Trails Plan and the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. The Parks, Arts, Recreation, Culture and Sports (PARCS) group commissioned two studies (1997 & 1998) in cooperation with Andrews University Division of Architecture that identified development opportunities along the railroad corridor. The Chamber of Commerce, the City Council, local businesses and residents overwhelmingly support the project.

In April of 2002, the City of Palmer began the formal planning process by selecting the consulting team of Lounsbury and Associates (Lounsbury) with Land Design North (LDN) as lead planners for the project. As part of this process a Citizens Advisory Group was formed by the City of Palmer to guide the consulting team through the planning process. The CAG is composed of representatives from the City of Palmer, the Chamber of Commerce, and various Palmer residents and business owners.

1.2 Study Process

Over the past six months, the CAG and the consultant team of Lounsbury and LDN have conducted an intensive effort to prepare a Development Plan for the Palmer Rail with Trail Corridor. Throughout the planning process, particular emphasis has been placed on the need to build a consensus-based plan—a plan that can win the support of a broad range of community interests.

The CAG met at key intervals in the planning process to set objectives, discuss alternatives and share ideas. The consultant team conducted interviews with city officials, business people, property owners, the Alaska Railroad and others interested in the future of Palmer. Additional input from area businesses and residents was obtained through a series of open houses and workshops to identify opportunities, constraints and key development issues related to the project.

A thorough physical assessment of the study area was conducted, along with a review of previous plans and existing information. A complete Scoping Summary Report was developed in July, 2002, which summarized the public process and site assessment for the area. The scoping assessment process served as the basis for a series of route alternatives that were presented to the CAG for selection of a final preferred route and provide for the development alternatives outlined in this report.

The Palmer Urban Revitalization Project is intended to contribute to the quality of life in Palmer by improving recreation and economic opportunities along the Alaska Railroad right-of-way from the Alaska State Fairgrounds to the Matanuska River. The development plan is intended to identify key projects and funding needs for the Citizen's Advisory Group and Palmer City Council for the next five years. Included as part of the plan are design guidelines, plan drawings and a detailed phasing plan that begin to illustrate each of the proposed actions outlined below as well as an implementation strategy with sufficient detail for carrying out the work.

Based on public input and agreement, the Development Plan presented in Section 3.0 provides a framework for decisions to be made over the next five years. The plan focuses on the railroad right-of-way corridor through Palmer and seeks to enhance mountain views, and connections to businesses, local government, parks, schools and surrounding neighborhoods. The plan illustrates proposed public improvements (trails, sidewalks, streetscape, lighting, and public gathering areas and amenities) as well as private investment opportunities. The Strategic Action Plan presented in Section 5.0 outlines key initial projects that have been identified as part of the first phase of development.

2.0 Assessment and Concept Development

2.1 The Study Area

The Palmer Rail with Trail Corridor is contained within the boundaries of the Alaska Railroad ROW, which runs north through Palmer. The 2.5 mile corridor starts at the Alaska State Fairgrounds near Springer Loop Road and terminates to the north at the Matanuska River overlook. The railroad ROW is 200' wide with significant roadway encroachments permitted along much of its length.

This project will develop approximately 60 acres of currently under-utilized Alaska Railroad land from the Fairgrounds to the Matanuska River. The primary element of the project is a pedestrian "rail-with-trail", or pedestrian/bike path adjacent to existing railroad tracks. The trail and other improvements will enhance the ribbon of open space through Palmer while at the same time preserving the opportunity for future railroad service, which may include day tour passenger service as well as the potential for freight services to northern communities.

2.2 Regional Context

The City of Palmer lies at the center of the historic Matanuska-Susitna Borough farming district. Formerly, the rail corridor through Palmer provided a link to coal deposits at Sutton to the north and transported the pioneers who made up the Matanuska Farming Experiment in the 1930's. The Alaska State Fairgrounds form the southern terminus of the corridor and the Matanuska River forms the northern boundary. The heart of the project is the historic Palmer railroad depot and the surrounding downtown core area shops.

Residential areas surround the study area to the north and through much of the core area. The southern portion is primarily industrial in character. The Palmer vicinity, as well as the surrounding "Core Area" of the Borough to Wasilla, is a rapidly-growing residential community with much of the employment centers located in Anchorage. The primary access to Palmer is via the Glenn Highway linking Palmer to Anchorage, 45 miles to the south and to the north access to the Trans-Alaskan Highway to Canada. The Palmer-Wasilla Highway links Palmer to Wasilla to the west as well as interior Alaska communities to the north.

2.3 Existing Development Patterns and Zones

The Palmer Rail-with-Trail vicinity contains a variety of existing uses: commercial, retail, industrial, institutional and residential. It also has significant open areas of undeveloped land.

The historic railroad depot is the centerpiece of the study area located at the heart of the downtown core business district. To the west is Alaska Way, an established commercial-retail corridor with a mixture of older buildings, primarily two-story and single-story with

no particular architectural style. Gaps between buildings exist along the avenue. The eastern side through the downtown core is open along the railroad corridor with panoramic views to the mountains. The businesses and shops on Alaska Way provide a mixture of long-established uses and a variety of services. To the east lie the public library, community park, police station, visitor center, Borough offices, senior center and senior housing as well as the vacant, historic Mat-Maid properties.

The southern end of the study area is occupied by the Alaska State Fairgrounds and bounded by industrial lands to the east and the Glenn Highway to the west. Where Colony Way intersects the Glenn Highway, the character of the western edge becomes commercial in nature and is backed by residential development. Senior housing and community services are located along the eastern boundary of the project. To the north of the downtown core, Alaska Way and Valley Way border the project and the character is predominantly a mix of residential and commercial to Arctic Avenue, and then residential from Arctic Avenue to the northern terminus at the Matanuska River.

Development zones have been identified along the corridor based on observation of the surrounding land uses and the potential for the area to support specific types of activities related to the use of the trail corridor such as active recreation and commercial opportunities. These include the five following zones (See Development Zone Map 1):

- **Industrial Zone –Inner Springer Loop Road to Industrial Way.** The primary design characteristics along this section should focus on the safe movement of pedestrians between the rail and road corridor and at major road crossings. Secondary concerns include improving the storm drainage systems and maintaining a vegetative buffer along the eastern boundary to screen the industrial areas from the trail. Landscape treatment for this zone should primarily consist of grasses and low shrubs that do not obstruct the critical sight lines. Entry signage and wayfinding signs should be located at the beginning of the project.
- **Gateway Zone – Glenn Highway Intersection with Colony Way to Bailey Street.** The primary characteristics of this zone are a mix of strip commercial shopping along the western boundary with a continuation of the industrial zone to the east that is screened by existing trees. The primary design characteristic along this section should be to welcome visitors to Palmer and provide a “gateway” into the community. Trail safety should insure compatibility with active rail corridor and include barrier fencing and screening.
- **Core Area Zone – Bailey Street to Dahlia Avenue.** The primary design characteristic along this section should focus on pedestrian movement and connections between shops, offices, governmental services, senior housing and visitor facilities. As the heart of the project, particular attention will need to be spent on the depot and surrounding area. The separation of the active trail users (bikers, skateboarders, in-line skaters, etc.) from the walkers, strollers and shoppers could be accomplished by developing two separate trails. Safety concerns should focus on development of safe pedestrian crossings between the east and west side of the tracks.

The active railroad track may need to be separated with barrier fencing similar to urban transit rail depots if rail activity increases.

- **Transition Zone – Dahlia Avenue to East Arctic Avenue.** The primary design characteristic along this section should provide a focus on active recreational facilities and special events. This section is bounded to a great extent by commercial and governmental activities and has the largest open space along the corridor. Outdoor concerts, open fields for special events such as Colony Days, skateboard parks, exercise par-course, basketball and tennis are some of the opportunities that could be located safely within this area. There are a few residential areas to the west and east that will need to have privacy screening, low fencing and other considerations to reduce trail incursions onto their property.
- **Residential Zone – East Arctic Avenue to the Matanuska River.** The primary design characteristic along this section should focus on family recreational enjoyment along the length of the trail. The development of destination amenities along this section should be minimal with the focus on the trail overlook and terminus at the Matanuska River. The privacy of residential areas should be protected with landscape plantings, fencing, a road crossing at Caribou Avenue, and by limiting the development of areas to gather for active play. Small seating areas and low scale lighting should be the focus along this section. Safety concerns will focus on the major road crossing at Arctic Avenue and with secondary crossings at Eagle and Caribou Avenues.

2.4 Objectives

Based on public input and an analysis of existing conditions, the CAG formulated broad community objectives to guide the planning process. These are summarized below:

- Maximize the railroad corridor as a resource for public enjoyment and as a unifying element with strong linkages to encourage pedestrian circulation.
- The heart of the project is the historic Alaska Railroad Depot and should be the “crown jewel” of Palmer.
- Preserve and enhance the railroad operations within Palmer.
- Use historic themes of the Colony period and Alaska Railroad as design elements to promote a distinct image for Palmer.
- The trail should be designed first and foremost for the residents of Palmer.
- Involve the community in the process to increase a sense of ownership and community pride.
- Provide facilities that are safe, inviting and easily maintained.

- Design multi-use spaces where possible to encourage a mix of activities and events.
- Provide amenities that include a variety of experiences and opportunities for all.
- Enhance the economic opportunities and promote downtown businesses by creating a positive climate for existing businesses and encourage new employment-generating uses.
- Provide convenient access and parking within the trail corridor.
- Respect the surrounding residential neighborhood character. Accommodate a complementary mixture of uses where appropriate.

2.5 Alternative Trail Route Options

From the issues and opportunities explored in the CAG work sessions and the public open houses, a series of alternative route options were prepared and discussed. These alternatives displayed varying locations for the trail in relationship to the Alaska Railroad right-of-way and main track centerline and will vary depending on which development zone they are located within (see Map 8 in the July 2002 project Scoping Report for more detail). The alternative routing options that have been developed for the corridor include the following:

1. West route orientation maintaining the trail along the west side of the railroad main line where possible,
2. East route orientation maintaining the trail along the east side of the railroad main line where possible.
3. Meandering trail between both sides of the centerline of the railroad main line where possible.

2.6 Preferred Trail Route Option

Based on a work session with city staff, the CAG and meetings with representatives of the Alaska Railroad, a preferred trail route was identified. This was accomplished by combining features of several of the alternatives so that the trail corridor switches back and forth from the east to the west side through specific zones. This preferred routing concept provided the basis for the development plan but will require additional modifications to secure final approval from the Alaska Railroad. The preferred trail routing as identified by the City of Palmer and the CAG includes the following locations through each zone:

- **Industrial Zone (Springer Loop to Industrial Way)** – The CAG agrees that the east side of the track will provide the safest trail location. The trail will be set in the outer 30 feet of the right-of-way at a minimum of 50 feet from the track centerline and will meander slightly between 50 and 70 feet to preserve a natural tree barrier along the

2. Commercial Drive trail crossing with trail stop signs located at both junctions. Special consideration needs to be given to the elevation change as the trail approaches the road crossing which is elevated to provide ample sight line for trail users.
3. A gateway entry sign located at the railroad spur track approach to the airport that provides location map and entry feature to the trail.

3.2 Gateway Zone – Glenn Highway Intersection with Colony Way to Bailey

This segment starts at Colony Way's south end at the Y intersection to the Glenn Highway and provides for the development of a focal landscape gateway to welcome visitors to Palmer. It also continues the trail north to downtown. The trail segment will run along the east side of the railroad track centerline until it reaches the extension line of Industrial Way. There it will cross the tracks with an at grade crossing and continue along the west side along Colony Way joining the existing path to Evergreen Street. An alternative trail option would maintain the trail along the east side of the rail centerline from Industrial Way to Evergreen Street to avoid the crossing.

Key elements include a 10-foot wide trail section, an at-grade crossing of the Alaska Railroad with safety features including barrier fencing, grading and drainage. Site improvements include pedestrian scale lighting to match downtown along Colony Way, gateway features such as signage, flags, banners, a new focal point landscape entrance feature, new landscape and an automatic irrigation system. Specific elements include

1. Gateway Entry Feature and Sign should be located on the east side of the Glenn Highway at the approach to Colony Way. A low wall with a "Welcome to Palmer" sign with accent lighting and landscape provides a sense of arrival to the community.
2. Screening of MEA Power Station should be located between the access road from the Glenn Highway and provide a visual screen to the existing MEA electrical station. Care should be taken to preserve visual sight lines for vehicle traffic through the area. This may not be required as MEA has indicated a desire to relocate the power station to the east side of the track.
3. Colony Way Gateway Streetscape Improvements should be developed along both sides of the street extending to the downtown core area. Features should include decorative street lights with banners to match those in the downtown area. Street trees should be located at 30-40 foot intervals along the street to help frame views into town.

3.3 Core Area Development – Bailey Street to Cottonwood Avenue

The heart of Palmer, as identified by the community and CAG members, is the historic Alaska Railroad Depot with its adjacent downtown businesses that serve the local community. Key design considerations in this zone include linking the depot to the downtown shops and surrounding residential, senior housing and public facilities with

safe and attractive pedestrian walkways. Development is framed around saving all the existing transportation routes and limiting impacts to the surrounding parking, roads and access points. A number of development opportunities exist for both public and private development within this zone.

Because of the high level of pedestrian traffic and the potential for conflicts, two trails are recommended for this area. A pedestrian-only promenade should be developed along the west side of the track centerline utilizing the existing sidewalk along S. Colony Way that provides seating, wide sidewalks, decorative lighting and amenities. A secondary bike/active pathway should be developed to allow a mix of trail traffic along the east side of the railroad centerline. Together these two trails will provide access to facilities on both sides of the track and link the community together.

Specific elements of the plan include:

Alaska Depot Improvements -The Alaska Railroad Depot is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places and as such is accorded special design considerations and limitations. The depot interior has recently undergone major renovations, and the Alaska Railroad has permitted existing uses within the proposed development boundaries. Design features will replicate and restore the original intent and functions of the depot and surrounding area. The connecting plaza should be improved with new connections to the historic rail engine display and to downtown shops. A formal paved platform area should replace the asphalt drive on the west side of the depot and a new parking lot should be added to the north end of the depot with access to South Valley Way. Removable bollards could be used to limit auto access to emergencies and special events. The existing parking lot occupies an important location between downtown and the depot, and in addition to parking, it could potentially be used for staging community events. Additional parking could be located directly to the north along the west side of the ROW and behind the businesses along South Colony Way.

South Colony Way & Alaska Way Promenade Improvement -The primary business street in Palmer is the historic South Colony Way with shops, businesses and food and beverage services along the western side and a pedestrian sidewalk (asphalt from Evergreen south) with landscape along the eastern edge of the street up to the tracks. The western curb line is approximately the right-of-way edge for the Alaska Railroad, but the project boundaries should encompass the sidewalks fronting the local shops to create a unified design theme. A unified streetscape is integral to community life because it provides safe and comfortable pedestrian connections, street lighting, banners, street trees, specialty accent lighting, quiet setting areas and an opportunity to walk, stroll, shop, meet friends or just watch people. South Colony Way provides an opportunity to restore the small town atmosphere and make the area a hub for local residents.

Loading Dock Relocation and East Side Improvements - The loading dock on the east side of the depot should be removed and relocated to a location closer to the users of this facility. A preferred location is at the MEA yard just south of Fireweed Avenue with a second possible location on city land near the airport spur line. Removal of the dock will

open up the east side of the track and allow for better connections to be made to the library, visitor center, borough offices, city park, senior center and the Pioneer Home as well as to the surrounding residential areas. The parking lot and picnic shelters can be enhanced with improved connections, paving and landscape screening and a new parking lot can be developed to the north side of the depot. The removal of the spur track along the eastern side of the Depot will permit an active trail link for bypass of the downtown area by bikers and other active trail users.

Potential Spur Removal - The spur track to the historic Matanuska Maid plant has not been used for a number of years. The city recently met with the current owners of the plant to discuss possible future use of the spur and to explore this option, but found that the owners have compelling reasons to leave the spur, although they are willing to continue talks with the city.

Pedestrian Crosswalks and Bulb-Outs should be developed to improve safety at South Valley Way and Alaska Street crossings at Evergreen, Fireweed, and Cottonwood Avenues. The crossings should utilize specialty pavement to clearly indicate to vehicles the pedestrian zone. Bulb-outs should be used at Evergreen to improve pedestrian safety.

Trail Head Kiosk and Interpretive Signage should be developed in connection with the central plaza area that provides orientation to the entire trail segments and general information on the history of the area and opportunities to take side trips to local businesses and points of interest.

Outdoor Theatre & Band Shell - The opportunity exists to develop an outdoor performance and seating area north of the depot in the approximate vicinity of the existing loading dock. The existing timber wall and grass slopes can be designed to accommodate seating using timber or concrete steps and a raised platform with band shell should be oriented to block the north winds. Overflow seating on top can be developed on a large grass lawn area that can also serve as a special event staging area.

Community Gardens could potentially be located in either plan adjacent to the Pioneer Home to the east of the track center line. This area provides a clear view from downtown and the entry roads into Palmer providing a sense of arrival and connection to the past farming in the valley. By locating it close to the Pioneer Home and other senior services elderly residents can conveniently visit the area on foot and continue to garden or provide oversight to novice gardeners. In addition to community garden plots the area could also house a small green house and garden shop and serve as the Farmer's Market headquarters. Additional elements include:

- A small parking lot can be located adjacent to the garden entry for 8-10 vehicles.
- Mix of beds with some raised for ADA accessibility
- Raised timber edging
- Decorative fencing
- Seating on benches and on seating walls that could also act as walls for raised beds

different, there is a good deal of overlap. Based on common priorities, a phase one plan and construction budget was developed.

Exhibit 1

Zone Rank	CAG Project Ranking	Public Project Ranking
1	Gateway Zone 1. Screening MEA Power Station 2. Gateway Entry Feature 3. Colony Way Streetscape Improvements 4. Trail Construction 5. East side trail	Core Area Downtown Zone 1. Promenade on west side 2. East side trail 3. Ice Skating 4. Depot Improvements 5. Parking Lot expansion north of the depot
2	Core Area Downtown Zone - Depot Improvements - Railroad Platform - Ice Skating - Trail-head Kiosk and Signage - Pave Colony Way extension - East side trail - Promenade on west side	Gateway 1. Screening MEA Power Station 2. East side trail 3. Gateway Entry Feature 4. Rest Area and Interpretive Kiosk
3	Industrial Zone 1. Trail Construction 2. Trail landscape and Signage 3. Security Fencing and lighting 4. Springer Loop Crossing	Transitional Zone 1. Trail Construction 2. Active play area (basketball/skateboard) 3. Upgrade South Valley Way 4. Picnic shelters 5. Outdoor theater / bandshell
4	Transitional Zone 1. Trail Construction 2. Picnic Shelters 3. Active play area (basketball/skateboard) 4. Rest Area, Kiosk and Signage 5. Upgrade South Valley Way	Residential Zone - River Overlook - Trail - Public restrooms - Eagle Street Trail Head and Parking
5	Residential Zone - River Overlook - Trail - Public restrooms - Interpretive signage	Industrial Zone - Trail landscape and Signage - Trail Construction - Springer Loop Crossing

Beyond phase one, the City of Palmer can use the community priorities presented above and select projects for development as funding becomes available. As the Development Plan is implemented project by project, the City should also keep the overarching goals of the effort in mind, and especially those identified as most important by the public at the final open house:

- Develop the rail corridor into a unifying element of the community
- Involve the youth in developing the project
- Enhance Economic opportunities and promote downtown business

5.2 Strategic Action Plan Phase One Projects 2003-2004:

The heart of Palmer, as identified by the community and CAG members, is the historic Alaska Railroad Depot and the adjacent downtown businesses that serve the local community. The development of the first segments of the trail north from the depot to the Matanuska River are also included in phase one development. We believe that this mix of projects should be the first focus of redevelopment in Palmer. They have wide community support as well as the support of the Alaska Railroad, which is working with the City to develop a Trail Permit. Most importantly, improvements to this area will have the greatest impact on economics and community character providing an immediate benefit to the city.

The matrix in Exhibit 2 on the attached pages provides a detailed listing of the priorities for all early action priority projects in the Strategic Action Plan. The matrix lists phase one projects, actions required, estimated costs and schedules. The Strategic Action Plan Map in Exhibit 3 following this page shows general project locations by their number. Following is a description of each of the projects recommended for development as part of Phase One construction for the 2003 and 2004 season.

Gateway Entry Feature and Sign should be located on the east side of the Glenn Highway at the approach to Colony Way. A low wall with a "Welcome to Palmer" sign with accent lighting and landscape to provide a sense of arrival to the community.

South Alaska Way Promenade - The primary business street in Palmer is the historic South Alaska Way with shops, businesses and food and beverage services along the western side and a pedestrian sidewalk with landscape along the eastern edge of the street up to the tracks. A unified streetscape is integral to community life because it provides safe and comfortable pedestrian connections, street lighting, banners, street trees, specialty accent lighting, quiet setting areas, bulb outs at Evergreen, pedestrian cross walks will provide an opportunity to walk, stroll, shop, meet friends or just watch people. South Alaska Way provides an opportunity to restore the small town atmosphere and make the area a hub for local residents.

Alaska Depot Improvements -The Alaska Railroad Depot is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places and as such is accorded special design considerations and limitations. The depot interior has recently undergone major renovations, and the Alaska Railroad has permitted existing uses within the proposed development boundaries. Design features will replicate and restore the original intent and functions of the depot and surrounding area. The existing plaza should be improved with new connections to the historic rail engine display and to downtown shops.

Railroad Depot Platform and Pedestrian Crossing - A formal paved platform area should replace the asphalt drive on the west side of the depot with pedestrian track crossing at the entrance to the depot. Removable bollards can be used to limit auto access to emergencies and special events.

Trail Head Kiosk and Interpretive Signage should be developed in connection with the central plaza area that provides orientation to the entire trail segments and general information on the history of the area and opportunities to take side trips to local businesses and points of interest.

Parking Lot Expansion – North of the depot a new parking lot should be developed for up to 40 vehicles with pavement and emergency access to the depot.

Trail from Depot north to Arctic Avenue - A 10-foot paved path should meander through the area with access to surrounding neighborhoods. The trail should utilize the existing railroad bed where possible and lower the grade at Blueberry.

Colony Way Gateway Streetscape Improvements should be developed along both sides of the street extending to the downtown core area. Features should include decorative street lights with banners to match those in the downtown area. Street trees should be located at 30-40 foot intervals along the street to help frame views into town.

Trail from Arctic Avenue to the Matanuska River - The primary design characteristic along this section should focus on enhancing family recreational enjoyment along the length of the trail. Improvements include a 10 foot meandering trail, grading and drainage improvements, pedestrian crossings at Caribou and Eagle Avenues, low level lighting features, amenities such as benches, information signage, new landscape and an irrigation system.

Matanuska River Overlook - An overlook can be located at the terminus of the trail and serve as a trailhead north towards Sutton. The area should provide for ADA access to an elevated platform with benches, interpretive signage and telescopes for viewing. Trail head map and general information should also be located in this vicinity.

Eagle Avenue Crossing and Trail Head Parking should be developed at the northern terminus of the trail project. Parking can be provided for 4-6 vehicles.

5.3 Conclusions

The Palmer Revitalization Plan is ambitious and its implementation will require the full energy of the CAG, Palmer Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, local government and the entire community. Yet the vision is also incremental; there are a number of small, moderate-cost projects that will bring immediate benefit while paving the way for the more long-term investments. These important early action projects will demonstrate to the community and to potential investors that real progress is being made.

The planning process has focused the attention of public and private sector leaders on the future of Palmer. The current level of enthusiasm and momentum must be maintained and put into a systematic and continuing program of implementation. The first steps should include:

- Official adoption of the Development Plan by the CAG, the City Manager and by the Palmer City Council as the framework for future decisions regarding development in Palmer.
- Unofficial adoption of the Development Plan by the Palmer Chamber of Commerce, Rotary and other relevant organizations that can lend support for the development process.
- Authorization of Phase One Design and Development to prepare construction drawings for initial public investment to begin construction during the 2003 season.

This is an exciting time for the community of Palmer and the basic commitment to reclaim the railroad corridor as a primary development opportunity will benefit the entire community. The right decisions will come from a shared vision and the cooperation of all parties who hold responsibility for making that vision a reality.

Specific Design Guidelines

The specific design guidelines provide the basic description for individual components of the overall Development Plan. Copies of catalogue cut sheets are included in the master document provided to the City that shows individual design elements.

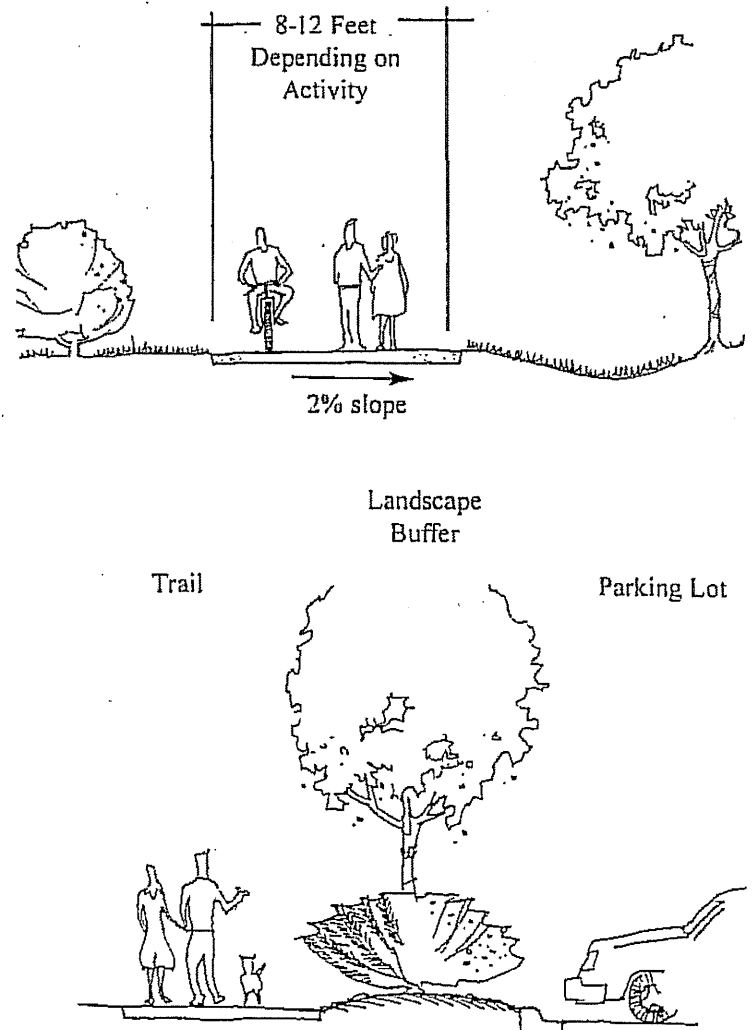
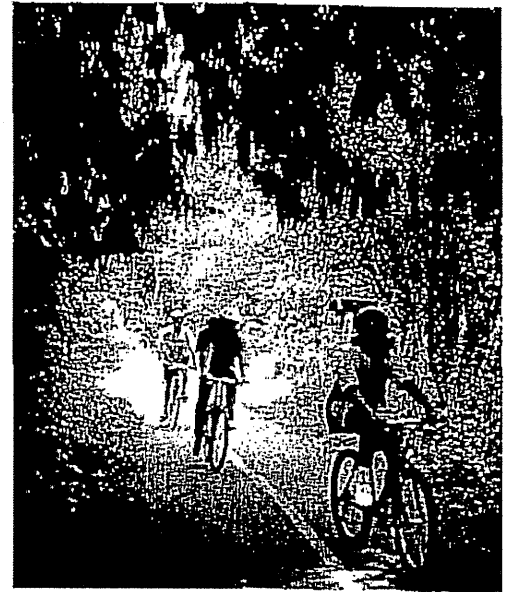
Circulation

This design element addresses issues related to the safe and efficient movement through project boundaries.

Trail Design - The trail should include safety features such as fencing at active trail crossings, signage, textured paving, lighting and plantings. The trail should have a positive cross slope (2%) for drainage purposes. Along most sections of the project, the trail width should be 8 to 10 feet. In areas where there is higher pedestrian traffic and where emergency vehicles should be accommodated, the trail width should be a minimum of 10 to 12' wide.

Paving - The trail shall have asphalt as its main material, except in designated locations (plazas, intersections, crosswalks, or pedestrian streets) where concrete bands, textured pavement, concrete pavers or other specialty paving may be preferred. A change in the texture of the paving shall be used on the trail before all crossings, whether they are road crossings or rail crossings.

Parking - The plan seeks to improve the existing parking situation by either building new spaces or enhancing existing ones. The improved parking shall have asphalt paving and meet ADA specifications. All parking areas shall have clear, visible signage as to where the entrance is located and have a well defined direction of flow through the parking area. The parking area shall be easily seen by pedestrian and vehicular traffic. These improved or new parking areas shall have a clear separation between pedestrian and vehicular circulation, through the use of curb stops, curbing, bollards, planting decorative fencing or light fixtures. All parking shall be planned in locations that serve a high-use area such as an outdoor pavilion, the downtown business district, or the train depot.



Signage

Signage shall be an integral element to trail development and have a common theme that matches the overall design concept of the trail and the other landscape amenities along the trail. The sign types follow these general guidelines:

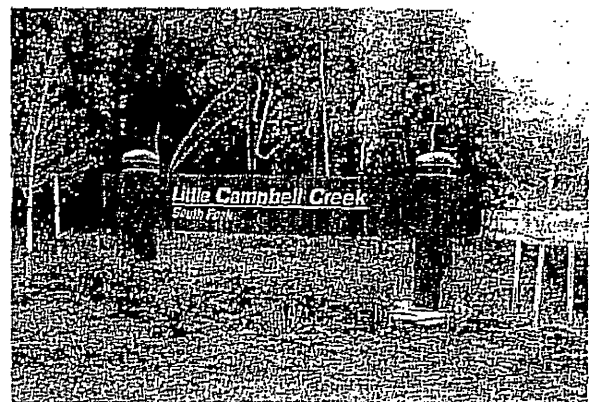
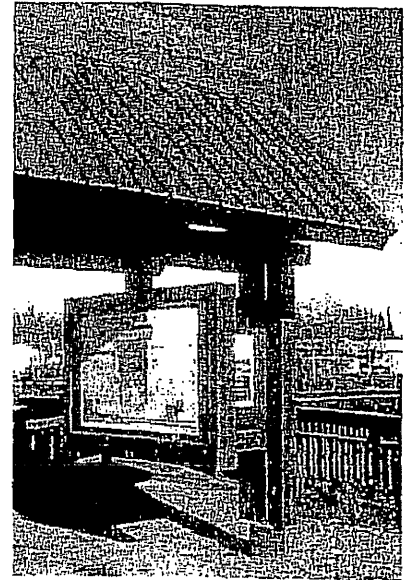
Kiosks shall give wayfinding cues to the users along the trail and offer an opportunity for posting notices for events.

The trail mileposts measure the distance of the trail and should be two sided and have mileage on both sides of the sign, indicating the milepost for trail users going in either direction. These mileposts shall have a consistent theme and be reminiscent of railroad switching posts.

Historic signs shall link the place to a time by featuring some of the historic events that occurred on or near the corridor. These types of signs shall occur in areas of more highly concentrated pedestrians, at outdoor gathering areas and at points of historic interest.

Interpretive signs shall be incorporated at special locations along the trail. Some of these locations may include the Depot area, overlooks, outdoor gathering areas, and other areas of greater visibility and higher pedestrian use.

Gateway signage that announces thresholds into different zones shall be located at the beginning and end of the trail. As the trail moves into these areas of higher pedestrian use, these gateway signs may be used to accentuate the overall change in the character of the trail. For example, a gateway into another zone may give the trail user a visual cue in terms of slowing down on the trail.



Landscape

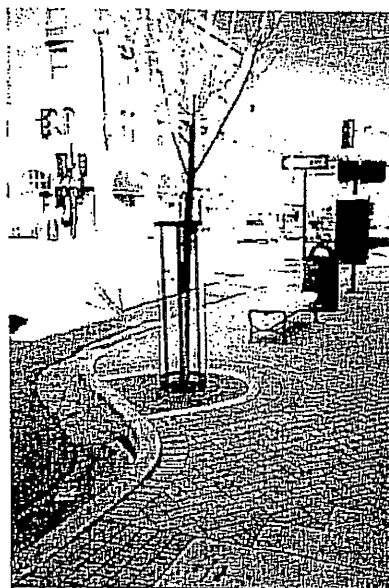
The overall landscape theme places importance on safety, preservation, quality of life, aesthetics and low-maintenance. We recommend the following when considering existing and proposed landscape plantings along the trail:

Preserve existing trees where deemed appropriate or beneficial for vegetative screens or focal points.

Existing and proposed vegetative screens and barriers should be set back far enough from the trail to preserve adequate sight visibility into potential hiding places. For deciduous trees, place plants at least 5 to 6 feet from the trail's edge, while evergreen trees require a distance of at least 8 to 10 feet from the trail.

Preserve sight lines at critical points with low plantings and grasses that do not compromise sight triangles or sight distance lines for pedestrians, bikers and drivers.

Low-maintenance plantings: A low-maintenance landscape means that plants are selected for hardiness and wind resistance. For this reason, there tends to be greater consideration given to native plants; however, the overall planting scheme should include non-natives as well as ornamental plantings in order to allow for variation in color, texture, and function. The Palmer Plant Material Center serves as a local resource for appropriate plants that would provide shade, screening, seasonal color, allow for low maintenance and reflect a history of the farming community.



Landscape as Unifying Element

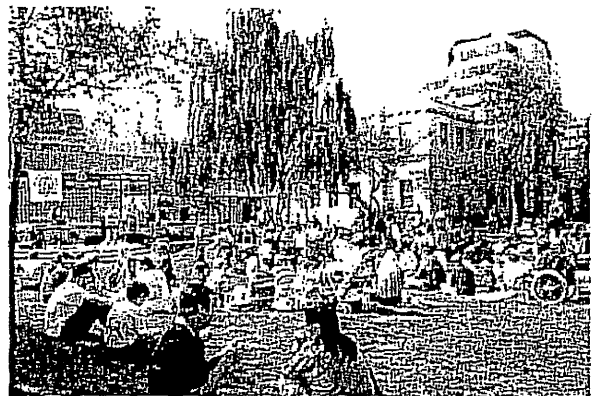
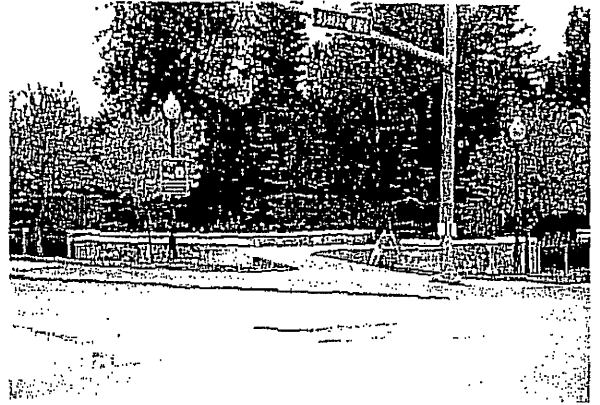
The landscape plantings shall function as another unifying element that enhances the gateways, nodes and corridors. Plant features can offer year-round interest to the landscape, and certain types of plantings can contribute to the experience in different ways.

Street Tree Plantings provide a transparent but distinct edge to the significant passageways. Providing adequate growing space for street trees ensures healthy life for this important landscape element.

Gateway Plantings mark key entry points into Palmer and along the trail. These areas shall feature ornamental plantings such as flowering trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals.

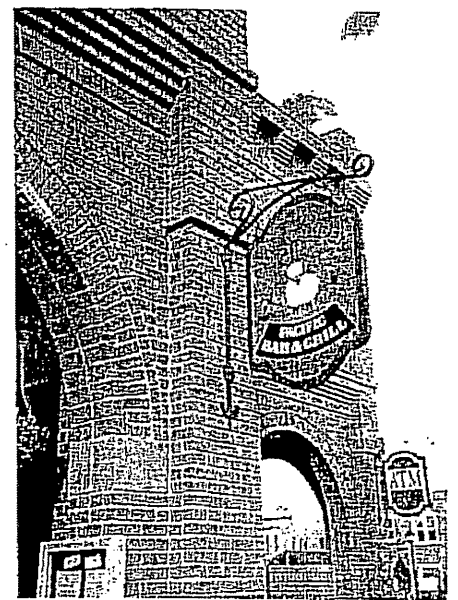
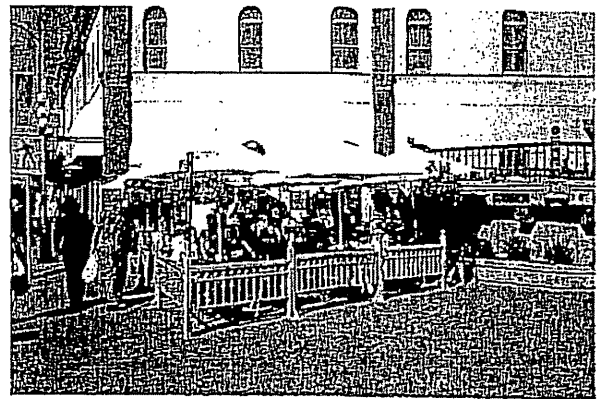
Focal Point Plantings bring attention to special areas of interest along the trail, such as the depot area, rest areas, pedestrian nodes and at overlooks. These areas shall include ornamental plantings, like flowering trees and shrubs, as well as provide the area with some seasonal color through the use of perennials and annuals displayed in planting beds or planters.

Open areas of lawn, native grasses and wildflowers allow for recreational activities on the manicured lawns to passive viewing of the native vegetation. The seed mix would vary for each zone so that areas of active recreation or passive use of greenspace would have manicured lawns whereas other areas may have a combination of seed mixes that would include mown lawns along with native grasses.



Architectural Features and Elements

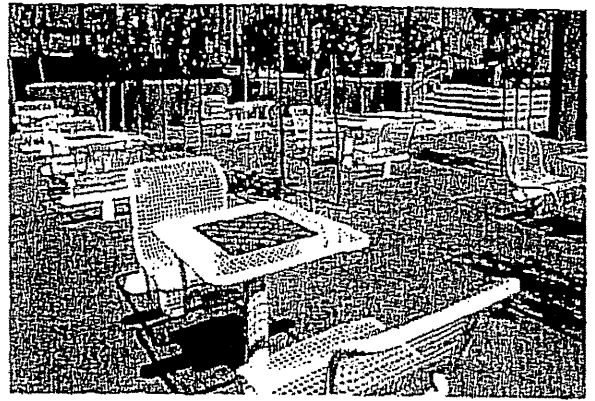
These features and elements should respond to Palmer's historic and civic character. Two themes from which to draw design elements include the historical Matanuska farms and the Alaska Railroad, each of which has played a significant part in Palmer's development. Both of these themes could be used to gain design ideas on forms, colors and patterns for specialty features, signage and pavement. These visual design references to Palmer's past pay tribute to the key forces in its development while playing an integral part in the initiative to make the rail corridor and its adjacent urban connections a vital part of the city's future.



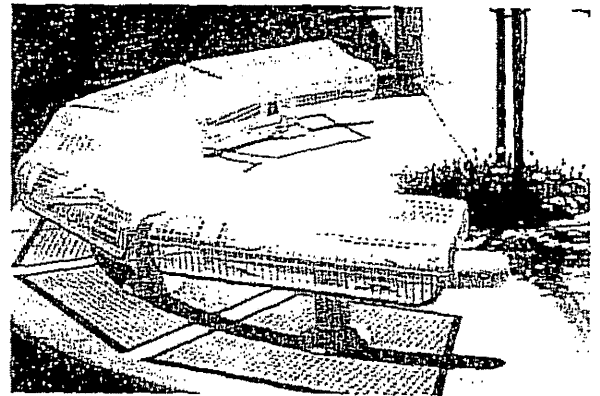
Specialty Features

Site features may vary depending on specific use, e.g. the Depot, but overall they work to unify the entire corridor experience. These elements are durable and aesthetic, and they provide a permanence and level of detail to the pedestrian that adds cohesion to the entire design. The ADA guidelines should be applied to these specialty features when appropriate. The different types of specialty features include:

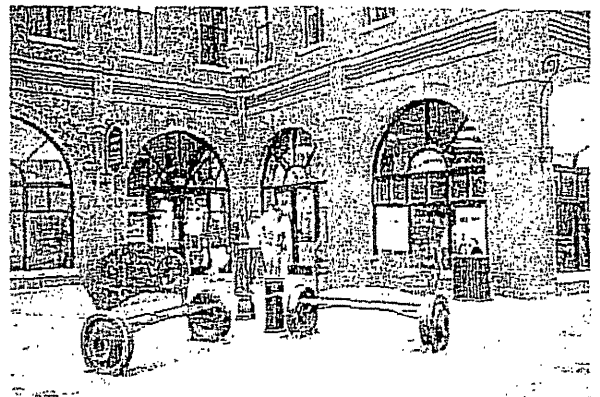
Tables- Gaming tables (e.g. chess, checkers) invite pedestrians to pause and play while in close proximity to other activity. This feature would be most appropriate adjacent to outdoor gathering spaces, the Depot area, and near the downtown business district.



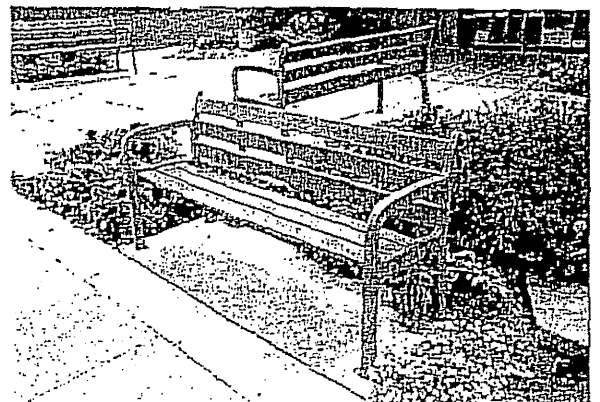
Benches- These features should accommodate the trail user the entire length of the trail. The quantity of benches in each zone along the trail will vary. They will be provided to a lesser extent at the beginning and the end of the trail, while as the trail enters the core of Palmer, there will be more opportunities for seating.



Trash/Ash Receptacles- They shall carry the same basic theme throughout the whole trail, as well as be provided in convenient places for the trail users. These receptacles shall be a combination feature that could be mounted on a street bollard to reinforce this idea of tying these features together.

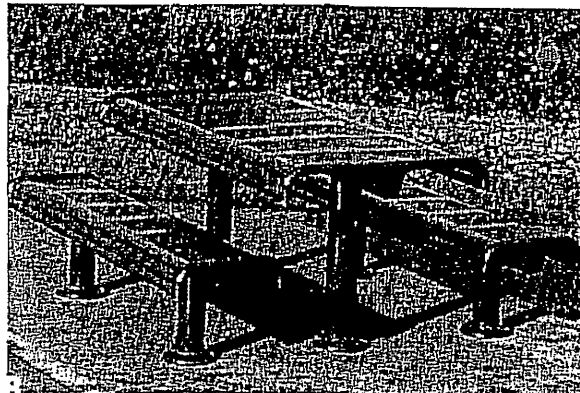


Rest Areas - These areas shall accommodate the trail user with a resting point or a place to sit down and relax. These spaces will be off the main trail but adjacent to it. They will be sporadically placed along the fringes of the project, while areas of higher pedestrian use, such as the downtown area, will receive a higher concentration of these resting areas. They will be located in order to take advantage of a nice view

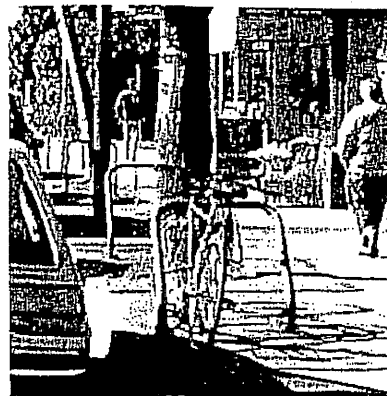


or have a pleasantly landscaped backdrop to them.

Picnic Tables- These features shall be incorporated in areas of outdoor gathering spaces, near active and passive recreation areas, and directly adjacent to any picnic shelters or structures.



Bicycle Racks and Shelters- The project seeks to encourage alternative modes of transportation for work and leisure by providing for safe and attractive opportunities for parking and storing a bicycle.



Public Art - The entire corridor is an invitation for artistic expression. Public art provides a potential site design opportunity that could add interest and enhance the sense of community. It also makes way for local artists and local materials to be used for projects, some of which could celebrate local history and themes, such as the farming legacy.



Safety/Crossings

Pedestrian Crosswalks at Road Crossings:

Pedestrian safety requires certain measures that facilitate safe movement across roadways.

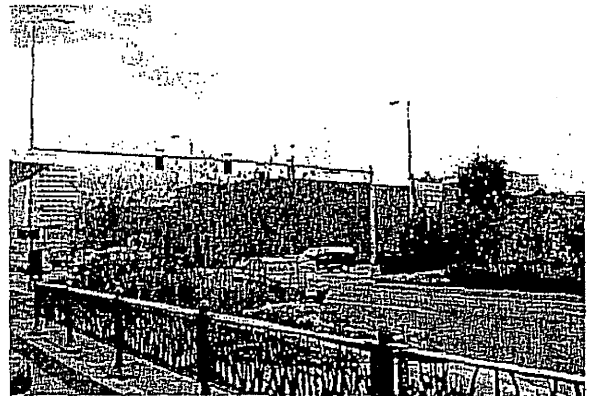
Crosswalks shall meet ADA specifications in terms of slope (12:1) at curb cuts and textured surfacing. They shall also be at-grade and perpendicular to roadways, unless otherwise noted for a particular zone.

Active Railroad Barrier Features and Rail Crossings

All railroad crossings should provide an at-grade crossing of the tracks by utilizing the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) specifications. Landscape amenities at road or railroad crossings vary depending on location and zone. In general, the following guidelines are recommended:

All crossings of the road and railroad tracks shall be at-grade and perpendicular with the tracks.

Fencing: A fence should be used to channel trail users to crossings. In areas of low pedestrian activity, the use of warning signage may supplement barrier measures such as fencing and grade changes. When this type of fencing is necessary for public safety, decorative fencing shall be incorporated with a theme that relates to the overall trail's design concept.





New Business

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**CITY OF PALMER
BOARD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
INFORMATION MEMORANDUM 22-005**

SUBJECT: Downtown Parking

AGENDA OF: February 16, 2022

Board Member Koppenberg requested a discussion for downtown parking be placed on the agenda. Presented are city of Palmer Parking requirements, Central Business District Requirements and city provided parking lots with a spreadsheet outlining the number of spaces.

Chapter 17.64 PARKING AND LOADING

Sections:

- 17.64.005 Intent.
- 17.64.015 General provisions.
- 17.64.021 Parking lot design standards.
- 17.64.031 Parking spaces required.
- 17.64.035 Off-site parking.
- 17.64.041 Shared use parking.
- 17.64.050 Central business district.
- 17.64.060 Off-street loading.
- 17.64.070 Development plan requirements.
- 17.64.080 Landscaping requirements.

17.64.005 Intent.

The intent of this chapter is to promote the safety, convenience, comfort and common welfare of the public by providing minimum standards to regulate vehicle parking in a safe and efficient manner, to avoid the unnecessary congestion and interference with public rights-of-way, to reduce traffic hazards, and to provide safe operation of traffic circulation. (Ord. 06-017 § 3, 2006; Ord. 05-036 § 4, 2005)

17.64.015 General provisions.

A. Permanently maintained parking facilities for the use of occupants, employees and patrons of buildings shall be provided for all new buildings at the time of construction.

B. Outside the central business district, free parking shall be required for any addition or enlargement of an existing building and for any change in the use of any building that would result in additional parking space being required. The number of parking spaces shall be that specified in this chapter unless it is demonstrated to the zoning administrator that the addition or enlargement of the existing building or the change in the use of any proposed building will not increase parking demand or reduce the total number of pre-existing required parking spaces and that the amount of proposed off-street parking is within 90 percent of the total requirement for all proposed uses and structures, including the enlargement of the existing building.

C. The intended use of all parking spaces required in this chapter is the temporary use by operable vehicles. Parking spaces shall not be used for the storage of delivery vehicles or trailers, motor homes, campers, dumpsters or other objects.

D. No existing parking area and no parking area provided for the purpose of complying with the provisions of this title shall, after January 17, 1978, be relinquished or reduced in any manner below the requirements established in this title. (Ord. 21-006 § 3, 2021; Ord. 06-017 § 3, 2006; Ord. 05-036 § 6, 2005)

17.64.021 Parking lot design standards.

A. Standard parking stalls shall be a minimum of nine feet in width and 20 feet in length.

B. Parking lots with 90-degree parking stalls shall have a minimum aisle width of 25 feet.

C. All parking areas, except for single- and two-family dwellings, shall be designed so no parking space requires the backing of a vehicle into public rights-of-way, except for alleys in the central business district, or across a sidewalk.

D. Turning and maneuvering space shall be located entirely on private property. Vehicles backing into central business district alleys or departing single- and two-family dwellings are exempt from this requirement.

E. Ingress and egress to parking facilities shall be designed to maintain adequate sight distance and safety.

F. A secured wheel bumper to prevent encroachment of vehicles on pedestrian, bicycle or traffic routes shall be provided in parking stalls which are perpendicular to building fronts or abut property lines. This requirement does not apply when a fence or sight-obscuring landscaping occupies the same property line of the parking area or to single-family and two-family residences. The bumper shall not be less than six inches high.

G. No wall, post, guardrail or other obstruction that will restrict car door opening shall be permitted within five feet of the centerline of a parking space.

H. Parking lots shall be designed to avoid erosion damage to grading and surrounding landscaping.

I. Accessible parking for persons with disabilities shall be designed in accordance with the Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities for Americans with Disabilities Act.

1. An access aisle shall be provided of not less than five feet in width for each space, except accessible parking spaces may share a common access aisle.
2. Accessible space shall be designated by the international symbol of accessibility.
3. Accessible spaces shall be located near building entrances and have an unobstructed route to accessible entrances and along a path at least 36 inches in width without going behind parked cars.
4. One in every eight accessible spaces, but not less than one, shall be served by an access aisle with a width of at least eight feet and shall be designated "van accessible."

Total Parking Spaces in Lot	Minimum Required Accessible Spaces
1 – 25	1
26 – 50	2
51 – 75	3
76 – 100	4
101 – 150	5
151 – 200	6
201 – 300	7
301 – 400	8
401 – 500	9
501 – 1,000	2 percent of total spaces

J. Prior to approval by the city for use, all parking facilities within the city shall be permanently surfaced with a suitable gravel base or paved with concrete or asphalt compound.

K. Parking facilities which adjoin the side of a lot in residential districts shall be separated from the residential district by a fence or sight-obscuring landscaping. Fences shall be six feet in height; landscaping shall not be less than four feet. The fence or landscaping shall be maintained in good condition and shall comply with the requirements of PMC 17.60.070.

L. All parking areas in nonresidential use districts and parking areas which serve nonresidential uses shall have lighting which meets the level of illumination, uniformity ratios and minimum lumen intensities specified in the illumination guidelines set by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America. The lighting system shall be

designed to prevent glare to motorists on public rights-of-way and shall be arranged to reflect the light away from adjoining premises and streets.

M. Signage or other provisions designating parking lot layout shall be required if the city determines that the layout is not apparent to the general public. (Ord. 17-014 § 3, 2017; Ord. 07-032 § 3, 2007; Ord. 06-017 § 3, 2006; Ord. 05-036 § 8, 2005)

17.64.031 Parking spaces required.

A. The following minimum number of free parking spaces shall be provided for all structures and uses. For uses not specifically identified in this section, the requirement for free off-street parking shall be the same as for the use duly determined by the zoning administrator to be the most similar.

Use	Parking Requirement
Airport use	One parking space for each 1,600 square feet of gross floor area
Automobile service stations, repair garages	Four parking spaces for each vehicle repair bay, plus three parking spaces
Churches, auditoriums, theaters and other similar places of assembly	One parking space for every four seats in the principal auditorium or assembly room
Dance hall, bowling alley or skating rink	One parking space for each 400 square feet of gross floor area
Hospitals, nursing, convalescent homes	One parking space for each three beds based on maximum capacity
Hotel	One parking space for each two guest rooms
Laundromat	One parking space for each 250 square feet of gross floor area
Manufacturing uses; industrial, research, testing, processing, assembling, all industries	One parking space for each 500 square feet of gross floor area, plus one parking space for each 300 square feet of office gross floor area
Medical offices and clinic	One parking space for each 300 square feet of gross floor area
Mortuary	One parking space for each four seats in the principal seating area
Motel	One parking space for each guest room
Post office	One parking space for each 100 square feet of gross floor area

Use	Parking Requirement
Professional, offices, financial institutions	One parking space for each 300 square feet of gross floor area
Residences, multifamily	One and one-half parking spaces for each one-bedroom unit; two parking spaces for two-bedroom units; two and one-half parking spaces for each three-bedroom unit, plus one guest parking space for each five units
Residences, single-family and two-family	Two parking spaces per dwelling unit up to 1,800 square feet and three parking spaces for each dwelling unit over 1,800 square feet
Restaurants and bars	One parking space for each four seats based on maximum seating capacity
Retail space, under 1,000 square feet	One parking space for each 500 square feet of gross floor area
Retail space, over 1,001 square feet	One parking space for each 350 square feet of gross floor area
Retail space, for furniture, large appliances, carpets or similar use	One parking space for each 500 square feet of gross floor area
Retail, shopping center	One parking space for each 350 square feet of gross leasable space
Rooming houses or boardinghouses	One parking space for every two guestrooms
Schools – Elementary	Two parking spaces for each classroom
Schools – Middle	Three parking spaces for each classroom
Schools – Senior high	One parking space for every three students based on the proposed building capacity at the time of initial construction
Self-storage facilities	One parking space for each 2,000 square feet of gross floor area, plus one parking space for each 300 square feet of gross floor area used

Use	Parking Requirement
	for offices
Swimming pools	One parking space for every four persons based on pool capacity
Warehouses, storage and wholesale businesses	One parking space for each 2,000 square feet of gross floor area, plus one parking space for each 300 square feet of gross floor area used for offices, or a minimum of three, whichever is greater

B. Calculation of Amounts of Required Parking.

1. Unless a specific use is listed above, the required number of parking spaces shall be the sum of the combination of uses on the lot.
2. If the calculation of required spaces results in a fraction of a parking space, the number shall be rounded up to the nearest whole number. (Ord. 21-006 § 4, 2021; Ord. 06-017 § 3, 2006; Ord. 05-036 § 10, 2005)

17.64.035 Off-site parking.

A. All parking spaces provided shall be on the subject lot with the main building they serve, except that the commission, by conditional use, may permit the parking spaces to be on an abutting lot or any lot within 300 feet of the building if it determines that it is impracticable to provide parking on the subject lot.

1. Effective March 27, 2001, if the commission permits parking spaces to be on a lot other than the subject lot, then the commission, as a matter of law, shall require at a minimum the following conditions: that the off-site lot be made subject to duly recorded enforceable covenants running with the land reasonably acceptable to the city, which covenants:
 - a. Burden the off-site lot to the extent necessary to provide adequate incremental parking for the benefit of the subject lot;
 - b. Make the city a third-party beneficiary of the covenants;
 - c. Prohibit the termination, amendment, or subordination of the covenants without council approval; and
 - d. Have a priority position prior to any deed of trust, mortgage or other encumbrance that can foreclose out the covenants.
2. The required priority position of the covenants may be obtained by due subordination of any existing encumbrance.
3. Upon the recording of the covenants, the owner of the subject lot must reimburse the city for obtaining a title policy on the off-site lot showing the covenants have the required priority position.
4. The owner of the subject lot shall post and maintain signs on the subject lot and on the off-site lot informing the public of the off-site parking relationship between the off-site lot and the subject lot.
5. If through change of use of the subject lot or otherwise the off-site parking is no longer required or if the extent of such requirement is significantly reduced, then the city, upon the written request duly signed by both the owner of the subject lot and the owner of the off-site lot and delivered to the city manager, shall in due course and after council action allow the termination or amendment of the covenants to meet the then-current requirements for parking for the subject property. (Ord. 06-017 § 3, 2006; Ord. 05-036 § 11, 2005)

17.64.041 Shared use parking.

Joint use of off-street parking facilities within 600 feet may be permitted by the commission subject to the following conditions:

- A. The off-street parking requirements for buildings of limited uses, for example churches, auditoriums, clubs, or lodges, may be supplied through the use of off-street parking facilities provided for other uses, for example, business offices, retail stores, and manufacturing or wholesale buildings whose operations are not normally conducted during the same hours.
- B. Off-street parking space designated for joint use shall meet all other requirements as set out in this chapter.
- C. Sufficient evidence shall be presented to the commission to demonstrate that there will be no substantial conflict in the principal operating hours of the use or structures for which the joint use is proposed.
- D. The owner of the parcel seeking a shared parking agreement has adequate area on the lot or within 300 feet of the lot which could be used for parking in the event it is no longer possible to obtain shared parking.
- E. The use of off-street parking space for joint use shall be subject to the prior approval of the commission. (Ord. 06-017 § 3, 2006; Ord. 05-036 § 13, 2005)

17.64.050 Central business district.

In order to encourage economic growth in the downtown core and permit the redevelopment of property to its highest commercial use, parking requirements may be waived after review by the city council. It is the intent of this clause to provide as much off-street parking as practical while allowing commercial development in the core area. The central business district is described as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of the Palmer/Wasilla Highway & the Glenn Highway centerlines, then north along the centerline of the Glenn Highway, then east to the northwest corner of parcel 18N02E32 Lot D9, then east along the north side of parcels 18N02E32 Lot D9, Tract B, Colony Fair, 18N02E32 Lot D8, 18N02E32 Lot D7, then north along the west side of parcel Tract A-1, Colony Fair RSB T/A & C, then east along the north side of said parcel to the centerline of S. Cobb St., then north along the centerline of S. Cobb St., to the centerline of W. Blueberry Ave., then east along the centerline of W. Blueberry Ave., then southeast to the centerline of E. Blueberry Ave., then east along the centerline of E. Blueberry Ave., then crossing over S. Colony Way to continue east along the centerline of E. Blueberry Ave., to the centerline of S. Denali St., then south along the centerline of S. Denali St., to the centerline of E. Cottonwood Ave., then east along the centerline of E. Cottonwood Ave., to the centerline of S. Gulkana St., then south along the centerline of S. Gulkana St., to the southeast corner of Tract A, Arbor Estates, then west along the south property line of Tract A to Lot 4, Block 2, Arbor Estates, then south to the southeast corner of Lot 4, Block 2, Arbor Estates, then west along the south property lines of Lots 4, 3, 2, and 1, Block 2, Arbor Estates, then west to the junction of S. Eklutna & E. Fern Ave., then west along the centerline of E. Fern Ave., to the centerline of S. Chugach St., then north along the centerline of S. Chugach St., to the centerline of E. Fireweed Ave., then west along the centerline of E. Fireweed Ave., to the centerline of S. Colony Way, then south along the centerline of S. Colony Way, then west to the southeast corner of parcel 17N02E04 Lot B4, then west along the south side of said parcel, to the centerline of S. Cobb St., then north along the centerline of S. Cobb St., to the centerline of W. Fern Ave., then west along the centerline of W. Fern Ave., to the centerline of S. Dimond St., then north along the centerline of S. Dimond St., to the centerline of W. Elmwood Ave., then west along the centerline of W. Elmwood Ave., to the junction of W. Elmwood and the Glenn Highway, then north along the centerline of the Glenn Highway to the point of beginning.

- A. The following minimum number of parking spaces shall be provided for all structures and uses in the central business district only. For uses not specifically identified in this section, the requirement for parking shall be the same as for the use duly determined by the zoning administrator to be the most similar.

Use	Parking Requirement
Churches, auditoriums, theaters and other similar places of assembly	One parking space for every five seats in the principal auditorium or assembly room

Use	Parking Requirement
Dance hall, bowling alley or skating rink	One parking space for each 500 square feet of gross floor area
Hospitals, nursing, convalescent homes	One parking space for each four beds based on maximum capacity
Hotel	One parking space for each three guest rooms
Laundromat	One parking space for each 350 square feet of gross floor area
Medical offices and clinics	One parking space for each 400 square feet of gross floor area
Mortuary	One parking space for each five seats in the principal seating area
Professional, offices, financial institutions	One parking space for each 400 square feet of gross floor area
Residences, multifamily	One parking space per dwelling unit.
Residences, single-family and two-family	Two parking spaces per dwelling unit.
Restaurants and bars	One parking space for each five seats based on maximum seating capacity
Retail space, all types	One parking space for each 500 square feet of gross floor area

B. No required existing parking spaces in the downtown district shall be relinquished as a result of this section.

C. In areas with designated public on-street parking, each 25 feet in front of a lot will be counted towards the parking requirement for the lot.

D. *Repealed by Ord. 21-006.*

E. *Repealed by Ord. 21-006.*

F. To promote growth in the central business district, the city council may waive the fee-in-lieu fees. (Ord. 21-006 § 5, 2021; Ord. 16-015 § 4, 2016; Ord. 06-017 § 3, 2006; Ord. 05-036 § 14, 2005)

17.64.060 Off-street loading.

A. All uses involving the receipt of or distribution of materials or merchandise by vehicles shall provide and maintain sufficient off-street loading space on the premises so as not to obstruct the freedom of traffic movement on public rights-of-way.

B. On the same lot or premises with every building structure or part thereof erected and occupied for commercial, manufacturing or industrial use, or other uses similarly involving the receipt of or distribution of materials or merchandise by vehicles, there shall be provided and permanently maintained adequate space for standing of

vehicles and unloading services in such manner as not to obstruct the freedom of traffic movement upon public rights-of-way. The space shall not be less than 15 feet wide by 25 feet long with a 14-foot height clearance and shall have access to an alley or street. (Ord. 06-017 § 3, 2006; Ord. 05-036 § 16, 2005)

17.64.070 Development plan requirements.

Plans for all parking and loading areas shall accompany the building plans when the application for a building permit is made. Such plans shall show the following:

- A. Area of the lot involved;
- B. Layout and dimensions of each parking space;
- C. Entrance and exit to the parking area and the direction of traffic;
- D. Widths of all curb cuts, entrances, exits and driveways serving each parking or loading area;
- E. Lighting plan (see item in parking lot standards);
- F. Landscaping (see PMC 17.64.080). (Ord. 06-017 § 3, 2006; Ord. 05-036 § 17, 2005)

17.64.080 Landscaping requirements.

A. All parking lots shall have landscaping as required by this section, except those parking lots for single-family and two-family dwellings.

B. All required parking lots of five spaces or more shall provide a landscape buffer at least five feet in width along any property line adjacent to a street, except for those in the airport commercial, airport industrial, airport mixed use, business park, and industrial districts where they do not border a residential district.

C. For parking lots containing less than five spaces, an area equal to at least five percent of the parking lot shall be in landscaping which is visible to the street, except in the airport commercial, airport industrial, airport mixed use, business park, and industrial districts.

D. For parking lots containing five or more spaces, an area equal to at least 10 percent of the parking area shall be in landscaping which is visible to the street, except in the airport commercial, airport industrial, airport mixed use, business park, and industrial districts.

1. Any interior landscaping planter counted towards the percentage requirement must have a minimum five-foot-wide area exclusive of any vehicle overhang. Only low-level shrubs, ground cover and grass shall be used in vehicle overhang areas.

2. Any landscaping between the building and the parking lot counted towards the percentage requirement must have a minimum five-foot-wide area exclusive of any vehicle overhang. Only low-level shrubs, ground cover, and grass shall be used in vehicle overhang areas.

E. No parking lot shall contain 45 or more contiguous parking spaces without a curbed planting area. Interior landscaping planters shall be dispersed throughout the entire parking lot area. Parking lots in the industrial and business park zoning districts may be exempt from interior landscaping requirements. Applications may be submitted to the commission requesting substitution of interior landscaping in exchange for common use area(s) for employees, such as a picnic or exercise area. (Ord. 21-006 § 7, 2021; Ord. 06-017 § 3, 2006; Ord. 05-036 § 18, 2005)

The Palmer Municipal Code is current through Ordinance 21-016, passed September 28, 2021.

Chapter 17.30 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

Sections:

- 17.30.010 Intent.
- 17.30.020 Permitted uses.
- 17.30.021 Compatibility of use not defined.
- 17.30.022 Appeal of compatibility of use.
- 17.30.028 Accessory uses.
- 17.30.030 Conditional uses.
- 17.30.040 Prohibited uses.
- 17.30.050 General provisions.

17.30.010 Intent.

The intent of this chapter is to establish consistent procedures and standards for the traditional downtown in the city of Palmer that is unique or requires additional consideration due to their character, historical importance or importance to the town's economic well-being. The overlay districts will assist Palmer to promote and protect the public health, safety, comfort, character, convenience and general welfare in the central business district (CBD) overlay zone while meeting the goals established in the comprehensive plan. (Ord. 21-001 § 4, 2021)

17.30.020 Permitted uses.

Permitted principal uses in the central business district (CBD) are as follows:

- A. All uses as defined in the Palmer use matrix in PMC 17.28.020.
- B. One single-family dwelling per lot can have an accessory dwelling unit as an accessory use within the CBD. (Ord. 21-001 § 4, 2021)

17.30.021 Compatibility of use not defined.

Where a proposed use is not specifically identified or it is unclear as to whether the use is allowed in a particular zone, the zoning administrator may find the use is similar to another use that is permitted, allowed conditionally, or prohibited in the central business district and apply the code accordingly. Land use rulings requiring discretion on the part of the zoning administrator shall be confirmed by the planning and zoning commission at the next regular meeting that allows due public notice. (Ord. 21-001 § 4, 2021)

17.30.022 Appeal of compatibility of use.

In the event the petitioner disagrees with the confirmation of the planning and zoning commission they may appeal to the Palmer city council for final city evaluation. Any subsequent appeal shall be made to the superior court for the state of Alaska, in Palmer, Alaska. (Ord. 21-001 § 4, 2021)

17.30.028 Accessory uses.

Accessory uses in the central business district are as follows:

- A. Dwelling units in conjunction with and accessory to the permitted use.
- B. Uses customarily incidental to the permitted use.
- C. Storage buildings shall comply with development standards as follows:
 - 1. *Building Permits.* The building and any accessory structures, such as add-on canopies, stairs and decks, shall comply with building codes. Trailer-type stands that are raised off wheels shall require building permits for adequate tie-downs and be skirted with similar materials as principal siding.
 - 2. *Signage.* All signs will meet the requirements of PMC Title 14.

3. *Setbacks.* All structures shall be set back per the requirements of the Palmer Municipal Code. Structures, signs and parking and maneuvering areas shall not obstruct sight distance.
4. *Site Plan.* Comply with site plan standards in this title.
5. *Size Limitations.* May not exceed 400 square feet.
6. Placement shall be in rear of primary structure or use. (Ord. 21-001 § 4, 2021)

17.30.030 Conditional uses.

The following conditional uses are allowed in the CBD upon the granting of a conditional use permit, in accordance with the provisions of PMC 17.28.020, and include one of the following:

- A. Propane and butane service;
- B. Car washes;
- C. Crematory;
- D. Welding service and supplies;
- E. Mental health facility;
- F. Residential care facility. (Ord. 21-001 § 4, 2021)

17.30.040 Prohibited uses.

- A. Land uses as defined in the Palmer use matrix in PMC 17.28.020.
- B. Conex building unless the following is met:
 1. Screened with six-foot solid cedar fence when placed abutting a residential use.
 2. Sided with siding of similar material as that of primary structure on lot.
 3. Sided or screened when abutting a nonresidential use.
 4. Placement shall be in rear of primary structure.
 5. Size limitations shall not exceed 200 square feet.
- C. Parking or storage of heavy equipment, such as tractors, graders or trucks.
- D. Temporary buildings except when the development standards meet the following criteria:
 1. Sites with on-site parking and/or drive-up facilities will require an approved driveway approach with adequate sight distance per PMC 17.62.020(E).
 2. Stands with drive-up windows require three 18-foot-long queuing spaces per window. Fewer spaces may be approved by the zoning administrator; provided, a plan is submitted showing the site has sufficient overflow areas so traffic will not block streets, sidewalks or parking lot circulation aisles.
 3. Parking shall meet the minimum requirements of Chapter 17.64 PMC.
 4. The temporary building and any accessory structures, such as add-on canopies, stairs and decks, shall comply with building codes. Trailer-type stands that are raised off wheels shall require building permits for adequate tie-downs and be skirted with similar materials as principal siding.

5. Meet all applicable licensing.
6. All signs shall meet the requirements of PMC Title 14.
7. All structures shall meet the setback requirements of this title. Structures, signs, parking and maneuvering areas shall not obstruct sight distance.
8. Compliance with site plan standards of this title.
9. Size limitations may not exceed 700 square feet. (Ord. 21-001 § 4, 2021)

17.30.050 General provisions.

A. *Applicability.*

1. The overlay district is created as a special area to be superimposed on the underlying districts by approval of the city council as appropriate.
2. Boundaries of the overlay district are shown on the zoning map but may be modified from time to time by the city of Palmer.
3. Land use standards provided herein are intended to supplement those permitted in the general commercial and limited commercial districts and in most cases may be more restrictive than those of the underlying commercial zoning district.
4. Underlying uses of residential districts shall prevail. Wherever there exists a conflict between the requirements of the underlying commercial zoning and those of the overlay district, the requirements for the overlay district shall prevail.
5. The central business district is defined as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway and the Glenn Highway centerlines; north along the centerline of the Glenn Highway; east to the northwest corner of parcel 18N02E32 Lot D9; east along the north side of parcels 18N02E32 Lot D9, Tract B, Colony Fair, 18N02E32 Lot D8, 18N02E32 Lot D7; north along the west side of parcel Tract A-1, Colony Fair RSB T/A and C; east along the north side of said parcel to the centerline of S. Cobb Street; north along the centerline of S. Cobb Street to the centerline of W. Blueberry Avenue; east along the centerline of W. Blueberry Avenue; southeast to the centerline of E. Blueberry Avenue; east along the centerline of E. Blueberry Avenue; crossing over S. Colony Way to continue east along the centerline of E. Blueberry Avenue to the centerline of S. Denali Street; south along the centerline of S. Denali Street to the centerline of E. Cottonwood Avenue; east along the centerline of E. Cottonwood Avenue to the centerline of S. Gulkana Street; south along the centerline of S. Gulkana Street to the southeast corner of Tract A, Arbor Estates; west along the south property line of Tract A to Lot 4, Block 2, Arbor Estates; south to the southeast corner of Lot 4, Block 2, Arbor Estates; west along the south property lines of Lots 4, 3, 2, and 1, Block 2, Arbor Estates; west to the junction of S. Eklutna and E. Fern Avenue; west along the centerline of E. Fern Avenue to the centerline of S. Chugach Street; north along the centerline of S. Chugach Street to the centerline of E. Fireweed Avenue; west along the centerline of E. Fireweed Avenue to the centerline of S. Colony Way; south along the centerline of S. Colony Way; west to the southeast corner of parcel 17N02E04 Lot B4; west along the south side of said parcel, to the centerline of S. Cobb Street; north along the centerline of S. Cobb Street to the centerline of W. Fern Avenue; west along the centerline of W. Fern Avenue to the centerline of S. Dimond Street; north along the centerline of S. Dimond Street to the centerline of W. Elmwood Avenue; west along the centerline of W. Elmwood Avenue to the junction of W. Elmwood and the Glenn Highway; north along the centerline of the Glenn Highway to the point of beginning.

B. *District Boundaries – Zoning Map.* The planning and zoning commission shall recommend the boundaries of the overlay districts as part of their establishment. Such boundaries shall be delineated on the zoning map with the identifying name(s).

C. *Lot, Yard, Setback and Open Space Requirements.* All lot, yard, setback and open space requirements established by an underlying zoning district shall apply unless alternate standards are provided by the overlay district(s).

D. *Parking.* Parking in this overlay district shall be in accordance with provisions of Chapter 17.64 PMC. (Ord. 21-001 § 4, 2021)

The Palmer Municipal Code is current through Ordinance 21-016, passed September 28, 2021.

Disclaimer: The city clerk's office has the official version of the Palmer Municipal Code. Users should contact the city clerk's office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

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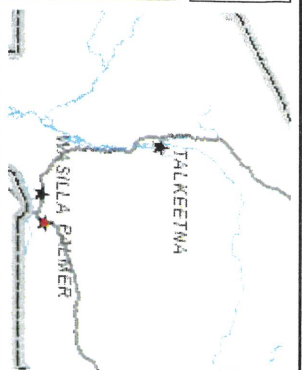


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Legend

- Road Mileposts
- Roads
 - Highway
 - Major Road
 - Medium Road
 - Minor Road
 - Ramp
 - Primitive Road
 - Private Road
 - Not Constructed
- + Alaska Railroad
- Mat-Su Borough Boundary
- Incorporated Cities
- Address Numbers
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- Government Lot Lines
- ROW and Easements
 - ROW Road
 - ROW RR
 - ROW Easement
- Section line easement
- Lakes and Rivers
- Streams
- 100 year Flood Zone
- Section Lines

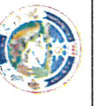
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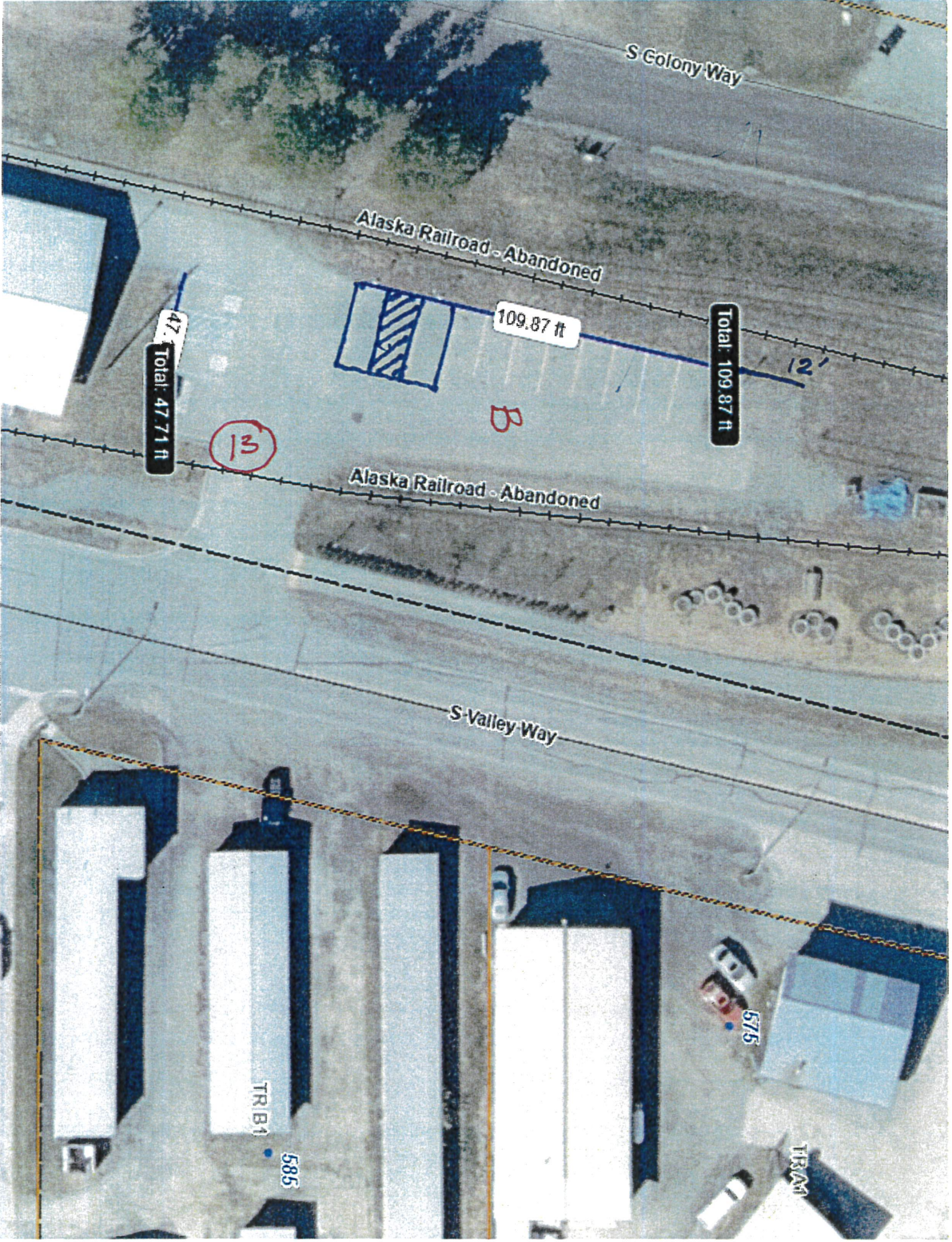
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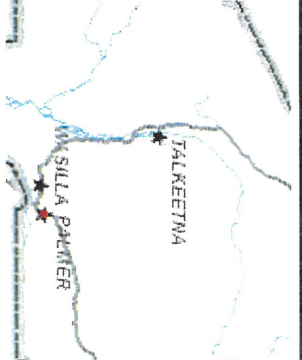


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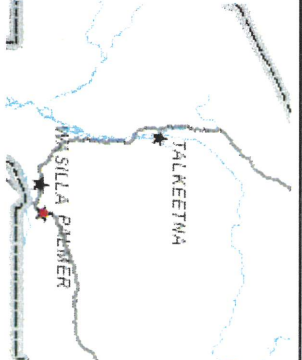
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- ▭ Incorporated Cities
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- ▭ Parcels
- Government Lot Lines
- ROW and Easements
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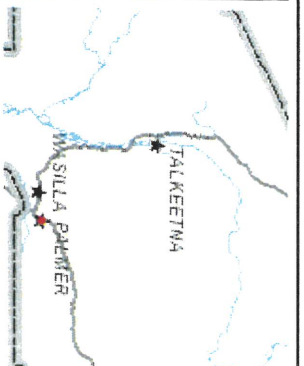
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- Alaska Railroad
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- Incorporated Cities
- Address Numbers
- Parcels
- Government Lot Lines
- ROW and Easements
 - ROW Road
 - ROW RR
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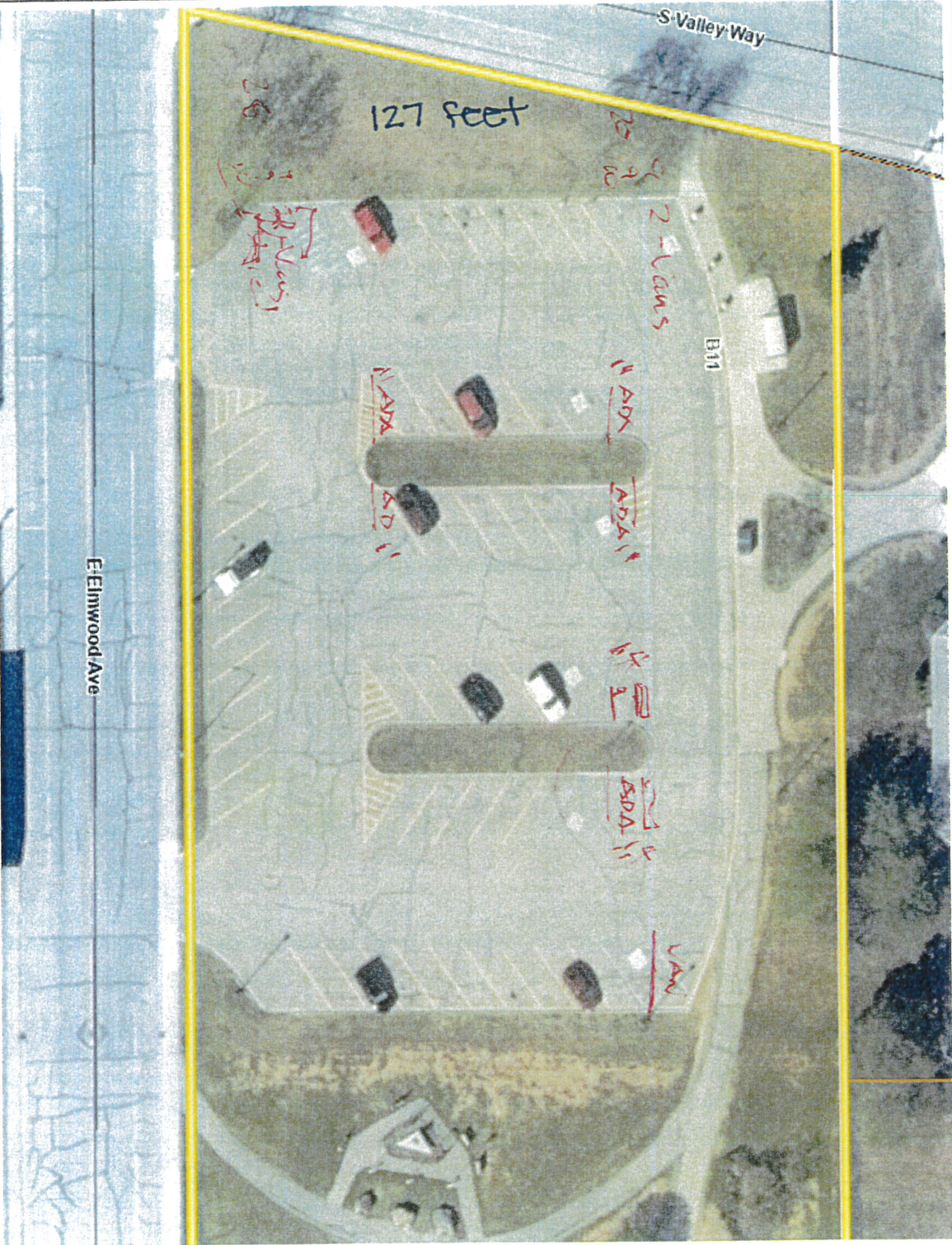
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ADA = 14' Width
Van = 17'

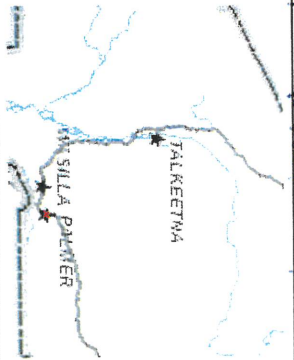


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Downtown Palmer Parking

<u>Location</u>	<u>Existing Parking</u>	<u>ADA</u>	<u>Existing Total</u>	<u>Proposed Parking</u>	<u>ADA</u>	<u>Total Proposed</u>
Library	48	8	56	54	11	65
Depot (Alaska)	23	3	26	24	2	26
Depot (Colony)	11	2	13	9	4	13
Pavilion	23	3	26	23	3	26
Visitors Center	7	2	9	7	2	9
Total Parking	112	18	130	117	22	139
Updated 1/2022						