

SUBJECT: A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY TO WAIVE THE APPLICATION AND LAND USE PERMIT FEES FOR THE TALKEETNA COMMUNITY COUNCIL'S SKATE PARK PROPOSAL (MSB007068).

AGENDA OF: January 21, 2025

Assembly Action:

Approved under the consent agenda 01/21/25 - EMW

AGENDA ACTION REQUESTED: Present to the Assembly for consideration.

Route To	Signatures
Originator	<div>1 2 / 3 0 / 2 0 2 4</div> <div>X C h r i s t i a n M u n a r</div> <div>S i g n e d b y : C h r i s t i a n M u n a r</div>
Division Manager	<div>Recoverable Signature</div> <div>X J o e M e t z g e r</div> <div>S i g n e d b y : J o e M e t z g e r</div>
Department Director	<div>1 / 2 / 2 0 2 5</div> <div>X J i l l i a n M o r r i s s e y</div> <div>S i g n e d b y : J i l l i a n M o r r i s s e y</div>
Finance Director	<div>1 / 6 / 2 0 2 5</div> <div>X C h e y e n n e H e i n d e l</div> <div>S i g n e d b y : C h e y e n n e H e i n d e l</div>
Borough Attorney	<div>1 / 6 / 2 0 2 5</div> <div>X N i c h o l a s S p i r o p o u l o s</div> <div>S i g n e d b y : N i c h o l a s S p i r o p o u l o s</div>
Borough Manager	<div>1 / 7 / 2 0 2 5</div> <div>X M i c h a e l B r o w n</div> <div>S i g n e d b y : M i c h a e l B r o w n</div>
Borough Clerk	<div>1 / 1 0 / 2 0 2 5</div> <div>X E s t e l l e W i e s e f o r</div> <div>S i g n e d b y : E s t e l l e W i e s e</div>

ATTACHMENT (S) : Resolution Serial No. 25-003 (2 pp)
 Skate Park Proposal (9 pp)
 Map (1 pp)
 FISCAL NOTE X Yes No

SUMMARY STATEMENT: The Matanuska-Susitna Borough has a long-standing tradition of supporting organizations that utilize Borough-owned land and facilities to provide recreational opportunities and community services. Many of these organizations, including the Talkeetna Community Council, Inc., are 501 (c) (3) non-profits that contribute significantly to the well-being of our residents in Talkeetna.

The Talkeetna Community Council, Inc. has submitted a proposal to develop a skate park at the site of the former Talkeetna Library. Staff requests that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly waive the application and land use permit fees associated with this proposal.


RECOMMENDATION OF ADMINISTRATION: Respectfully request approval of the request to waive the fees for the above-mentioned specified entity.

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

FISCAL NOTE

Agenda Date: January 21, 2025

SUBJECT: A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY TO WAIVE THE APPLICATION AND LAND USE PERMIT FEES FOR THE TALKEETNA COMMUNITY COUNCIL'S SKATE PARK PROPOSAL (MSB007068).

FISCAL ACTION (TO BE COMPLETED BY FINANCE)	FISCAL IMPACT YES NO
AMOUNT REQUESTED *	FUNDING SOURCE Land use and permit fees
FROM ACCOUNT # 203.000.000 3xx.xxx	PROJECT
TO ACCOUNT:	PROJECT #
VERIFIED BY:  R e c o v e r a b l e S i g n a t u r e X L i e s e l W e i l a n d Signed by: Liesel Weiland	

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES:

(Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
Personnel Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land/Structures						
Grants, Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING						

CAPITAL						
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REVENUE		*				→
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FUNDING:

(Thousands of Dollars)

General Fund						
State/Federal Funds						
Other		*				→
TOTAL		*				→

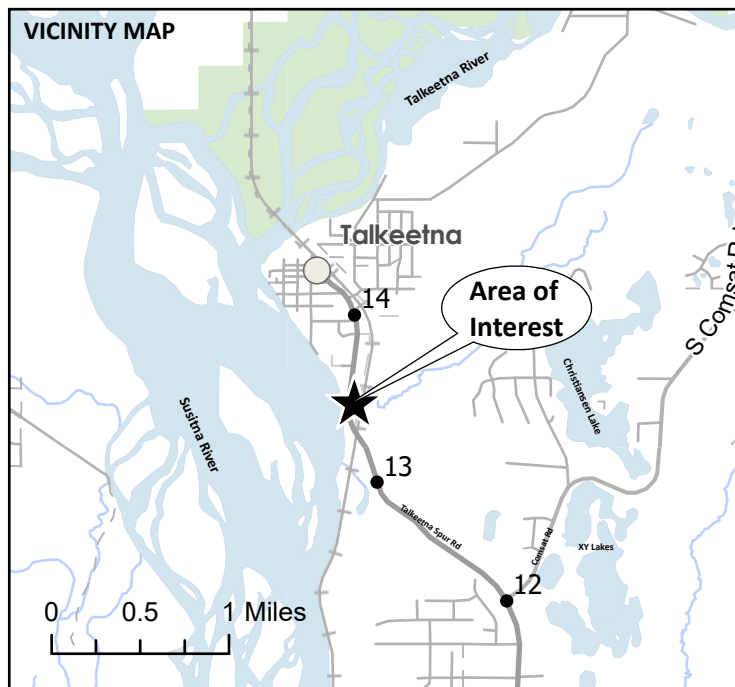
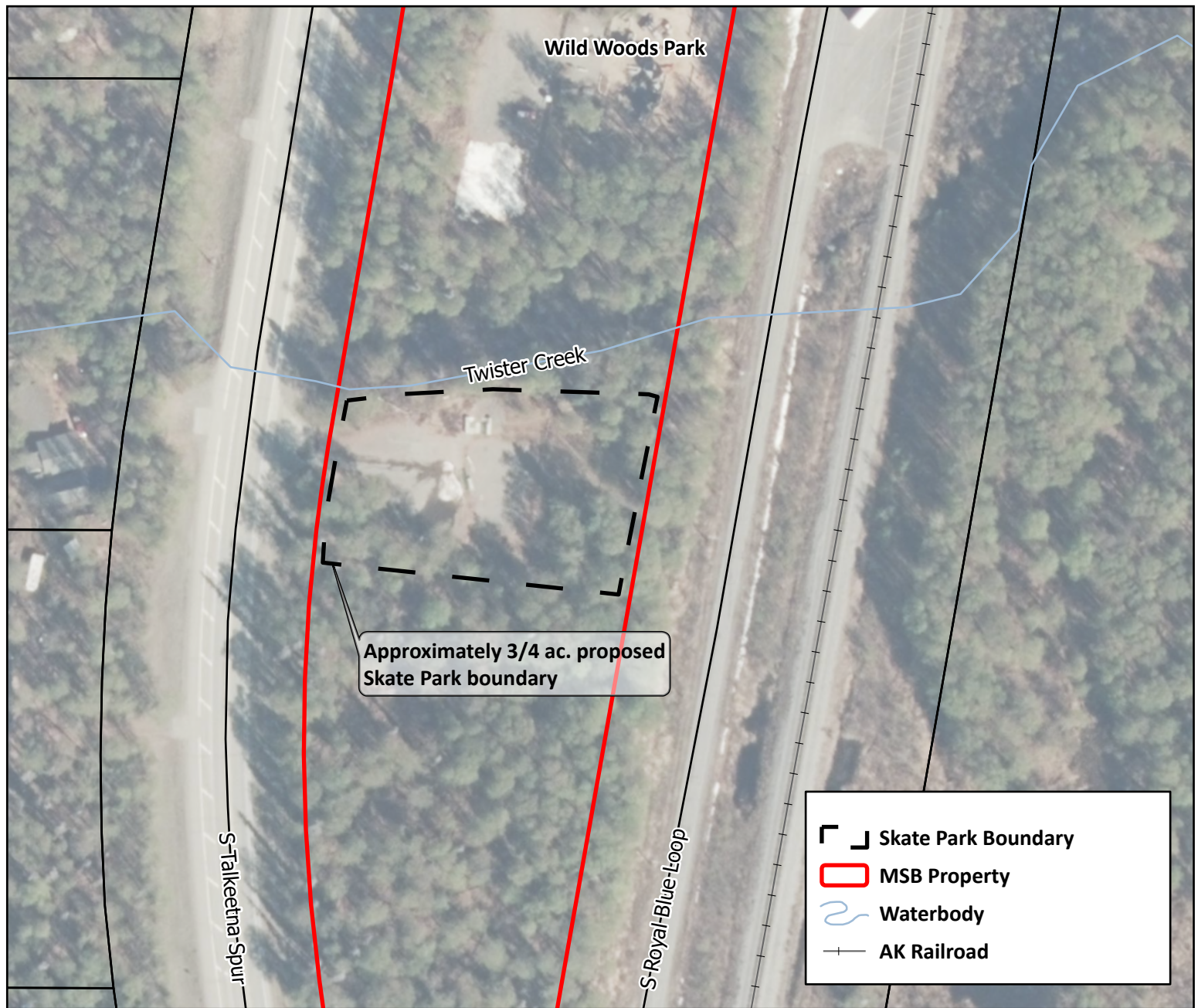
POSITIONS:

Full-Time						
Part-Time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary) * \$1,500 the first year, then \$500 annually until completion of the skate park.

APPROVED BY:	<div>1 / 6 / 2 0 2 5</div> <div>X C h e y e n n e H e i n d e l</div>
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Signed by: Cheyenne Heindel

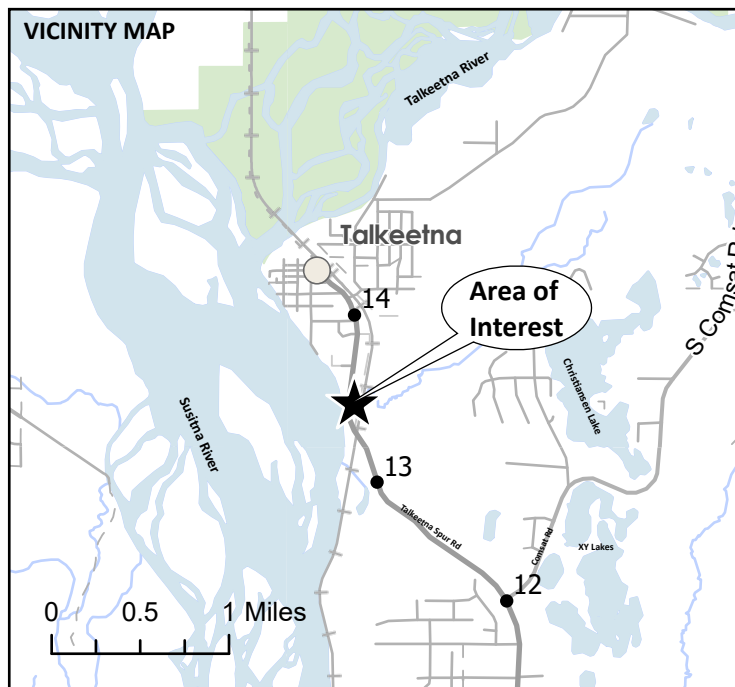
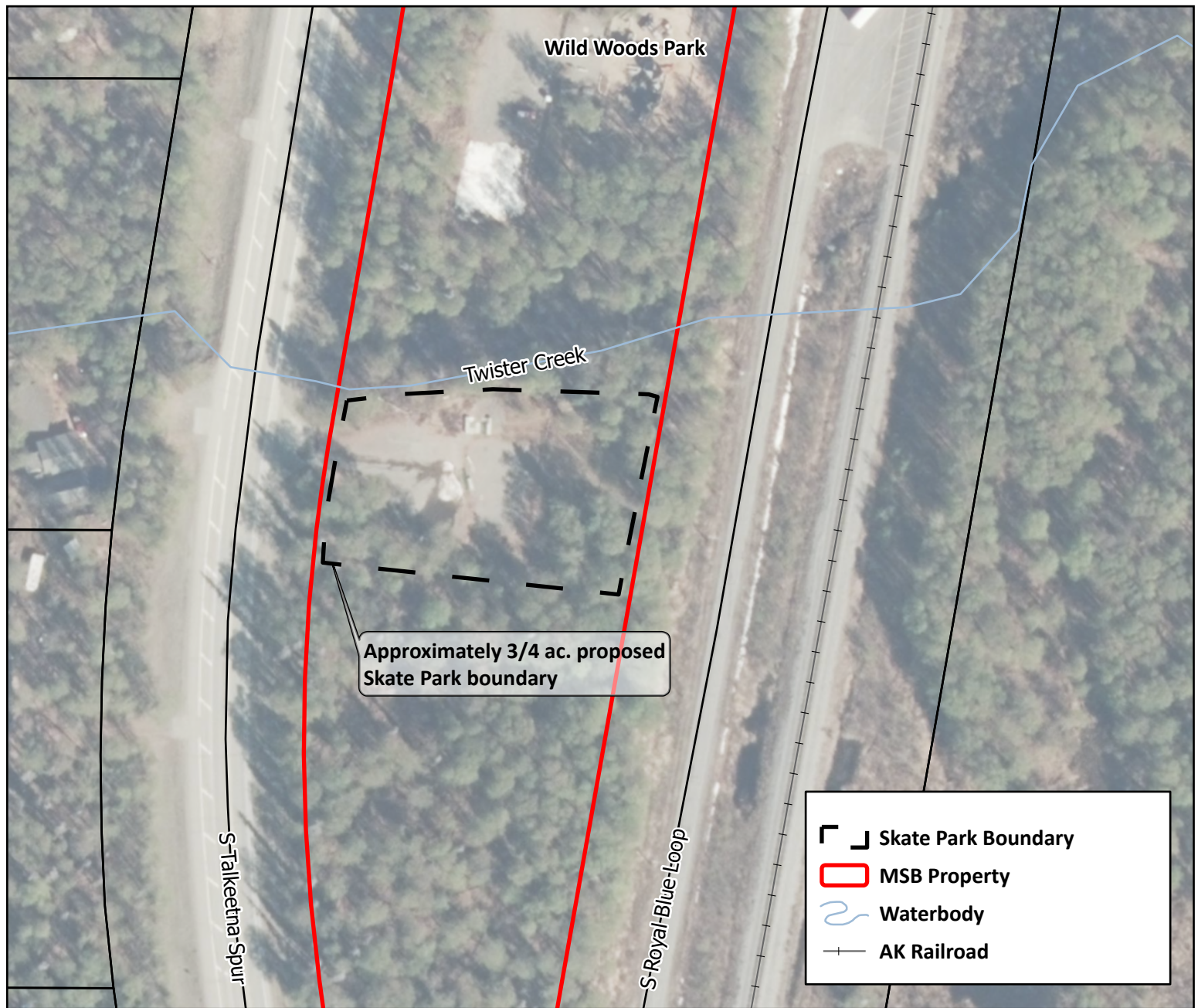


Former Talkeetna Library Proposed Skate Park Area

MSB Tax Account: 5499000T00A



Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Land and Resource Management Division



Former Talkeetna Library Proposed Skate Park Area

MSB Tax Account: 5499000T00A



Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Land and Resource Management Division



Talkeetna Community Council, Inc.



Conceptual Design: Talkeetna Skate Park 2025

Summary:

We are applying to renew our proposal to build a skate park on the site of the former Talkeetna Library, a now vacant lot adjacent to Wildwoods Park, the community playground. This proposal, initially approved in 2016, has already seen significant progress, including preliminary design work, community engagement, and strong donor support.

With an engaged board, a committed group of volunteers, and widespread community backing, we are eager to move forward. The proposed Talkeetna Skate Park will provide expanded outdoor recreation for youth and young adults while also becoming a unique attraction that enhances Talkeetna's appeal as a family-friendly tourist destination. Our goal is to have the park completed and open for use by the summer of 2025, creating a vibrant, lasting community resource.

Introduction:

My name is Caitlin Palmer; I am co-owner of Alaska Mountaineering School, LLC, which has a 28-year history in community and adventure sports development. I've also served as Talkeetna and Su Valley schools' PTA president and have supported local youth by providing annual scholarships for outdoor recreation programs. I am honored to be in a leadership position for this project, initially started by Lisa Shelby, our former elementary and high school principal, who has been instrumental in its development. As a 31-year Talkeetna community member with deep roots in Talkeetna, I am excited to continue the effort to build a skate park on the Talkeetna Library site.

The need for expanded opportunities for healthy risk-taking and outdoor gathering spaces for our youth is something I've seen firsthand. Building on the success of the grassroots initiative that led to the creation of Wildwoods Park, the community is once again coming together to support this new project. While our primary focus is on providing a dedicated space for youth, we also recognize the value a skate park would bring to adults, including seasonal workers and tourists visiting our community. This project will provide a vibrant, healthy space for local youth and enhance Talkeetna's appeal as a family-friendly destination. We are committed to seeing this project through and look forward to completing it by the summer of 2025.

Benefits to the Borough:

We believe a skate park is a highly viable and beneficial use of this Borough property for several reasons:

- 1. Proximity to Existing Playground Makes the Site Ideal for Families**

Located right next to the community playground, the skate park would complement the existing recreational space, making it a prime location for families to visit and enjoy. This proximity would attract more families, benefiting residents and visitors alike.

- 2. Environmental Considerations Are Manageable**

While the property has known groundwater and soil contamination issues, these do not pose significant barriers to the proposed skate park. Siting 2021 Site Investigating reports: [Division of Spill Prevention and Response \(alaska.gov\)](https://www.alaska.gov/DivisionofSpillPreventionandResponse) We are confident that the site can be remediated appropriately, and these environmental concerns will not prevent the successful development of the park.

- 3. Not Suitable for Commercial Development**

The location is not ideal for commercial development, as it is removed from downtown Talkeetna. The proposed skate park would be a much more fitting use of this space, providing a community-focused recreational facility and is

conveniently located adjacent to the existing playground and a short walk from the elementary school with playing fields.

4. High Visibility Enhances Safety

One of the most critical factors for a successful skate park is visibility. This site offers excellent visibility from surrounding areas already attractive to youth, contributing to the park's safety by ensuring it remains an open and monitored space. This would help reduce the likelihood of vandalism and encourage positive park use by local youth and visitors.

5. Utilizing Existing Infrastructure Reduces Costs

The property already includes a paved apron and parking lot, which can be incorporated into the skate park design. This reduces the overall construction costs and makes the project more cost-effective.

6. Minimal Long-Term Costs for the Borough

The cost to the Borough for the land and project development is greatly reduced, if not entirely minimized, due to the use of existing infrastructure and minimal environmental remediation needs. We ask the Borough to assist with routine trash, snow removal, and standard public space services.

7. Seasonal Amenities and Maintenance

We request that the Borough provide seasonal facilities, such as porta-potties or pit toilets, similar to what is currently offered at the nearby playground. In addition, the Skate Park Committee is committed to taking on future maintenance responsibilities, including annual concrete sealing, clean-up, and upkeep of the park. Successful examples in Wasilla, Anchorage, and Palmer, Alaska, show that such community-driven maintenance models work effectively and can keep parks in excellent condition for years to come.

Benefits to the Community of Talkeetna:

A skate park is a highly beneficial and viable use of this Borough property for several key reasons:

1. Expands Outdoor Recreation for Locals and Tourists

Talkeetna is known for its natural beauty and outdoor activities, and a skate park would complement this by offering a unique recreational option. It would serve the local population and tourists and seasonal workers who flock to our community in the summer. Talkeetna is already a destination for families, and a skate park would increase our appeal as a family-friendly vacation spot.

2. Direct Impact on Local Youth

With 111 students aged 5-11 at Talkeetna Elementary, 211 students aged 12-18 at Su Valley Jr./Sr. Our rapidly growing community has dozens of homeschooled students, and we anticipate most of the park's users will be youth. Skateparks

support a low economic barrier activity for all in our community to use in the spring, summer, and after school. The skate park would serve as a dedicated space for our young people, helping them stay active, engaged, and off the streets. Skateboarding, scootering, and BMX biking are age-inclusive activities, meaning the park will attract kids, teens, and adults—creating a multi-generational, inclusive community space.

3. Safe and Visible Gathering Place

Aside from the schools and playground, there are few designated, safe public spaces for youth to gather and engage in physical activities. A skate park would provide a visible, easily accessible area where kids can meet, socialize, and get involved in a positive, healthy activity. This visibility is critical in offering a safe alternative to less suitable hangout spots, such as busy streets or areas where skateboarding is prohibited.

4. Promotes Healthy, Safe Risk-Taking

Skateboarding, scootering, and BMX biking are active, adrenaline-driven sports that teach valuable balance, perseverance, and coordination skills. These activities allow youth to practice healthy risk-taking, an essential aspect of personal growth. Moreover, skate parks are designed with safety in mind, significantly reducing the risk of injury compared to street skating in areas with heavy traffic.

5. Supports Talkeetna's Core Values

Talkeetna has a long tradition of valuing outdoor activity and physical fitness. A skate park would perfectly align with our community's values by providing additional opportunities for healthy outdoor activities. It would also complement our existing recreational spaces, expanding options for both youth and adults.

6. Reduces Risk of Injury

Research has shown that having access to designated skate parks reduces the risk of injuries related to skateboarding. Statistics indicate that youth who use skate parks are less likely to suffer serious injuries than those who skateboard in high-traffic areas. This park would provide a safer environment for riders, keeping them off the streets and away from potential hazards, such as traffic or restricted areas like the ranger station, library, or schools.

Site Safety and Environmental Considerations:

The 2021 Site Investigation Report indicated the presence of contaminants on the property. However, these contaminants were either non-detectable or in concentrations below ADEC (Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation) cleanup levels. While these findings suggest the site is generally safe for development, we want to ensure the property is entirely suitable for the skate park project. No digging into the ground will be planned to provide a healthy work and eventual recreation place.

Given this, we are committed to continuing discussions with the Borough to confirm the site's safety for its intended use. The existing concrete slab on the property could serve as a helpful mitigation tool, providing additional protection during construction and future park use. This approach could help manage residual environmental concerns while reducing construction costs and minimizing disruption.

We are dedicated to working collaboratively with the Borough and any relevant agencies to ensure that all environmental considerations are properly addressed and that the site is safe for the community and future generations. We will continue to monitor and evaluate the property's suitability as we proceed with the project.

This proposed site is within the 100-year floodplain area, and the SkatePark committee will submit any further MSB permit requirements when the Talkeetna SkatePark Committee receives a complete and engineered plan from Grindline, Inc. (plans expected early January 2025). We will work with the MSB to ensure the park complies with all MBS floodplain building requirements.

Resources and Budget:

The Talkeetna Community Council has consistently supported this project and created a Skate Park Committee under its supervision in 2015, and we continue to operate under its 501(c)(3) status for fundraising and planning purposes. The skatepark committee boasts a dedicated board of 9 active members and a newsletter distribution list of 42 engaged supporters. Our building project budget is estimated to be between \$300,000 and \$350,000, with early fundraising success to cover planning expenses. In recent weeks, we have raised over \$7,000 from 103 donors, and we plan to continue reaching out to local businesses, community foundations, regional corporations, and nonprofits focused on funding rural skateparks to help us meet our goal.

Our funding strategy will include grant applications and grassroots fundraising efforts to ensure the project's completion and ongoing maintenance. We are confident that we can secure all necessary funds for the skate park through these channels at no cost to the Borough.

The Skate Park Committee is committed to raising all funds required for the construction and will be responsible for securing donations, grants, and sponsorships. Notably, the Borough would maintain ownership of the land, ensuring the property remains an asset for the community. The Borough's role would primarily involve providing routine services such as trash pick-up, snow removal, and seasonal restroom facilities (such as port-a-potties), similar to what is provided at the nearby playground.

The Skate Park Committee will take full responsibility for the skate park's maintenance and upkeep, ensuring that it remains a safe and viable recreational space for public use. This includes annual maintenance, safety checks, and general care of the park. This shared model has been successful in other communities such as, Wasilla, Anchorage, and Palmer, where volunteer-led committees have managed skate parks efficiently and effectively.

Timeline and Plan:

We seek written approval from the Borough for a 20+ year land use agreement that this property will be used as a skate park. This formal approval is essential to allow us to move forward with more considerable fundraising efforts, as it will provide the financial certainty necessary to secure significant commitments. We request this approval as soon as possible to maintain momentum in our fundraising campaign.

Once the property is designated for this use, we will proceed with the following steps, which include collaborating with a professional skate park designer and builder. This team will guide us through the design, construction, and implementation phases, ensuring the park meets the highest standards of quality and safety.

To ensure the park design reflects the community's needs and desires, we have already sought public input through online surveys, two school presentations, and a public scoping meeting on November 11, 2024, attended by 40 community members. These efforts are part of our commitment to a community-driven design process. We will continue to gather feedback to ensure the final design aligns with the community's vision.

As part of our planning, we will adhere to SPUD guidelines to minimize environmental impacts during construction. We are also committed to designing the park to complement the aesthetic of the nearby playground, ensuring that the new skate park enhances the overall recreational space in a cohesive and inviting way.

Of note, the proposed skatepark plan will include amenities such as parking and benches. The initial park build would be approximately 4500 sq feet and would not require tree cutting.

We anticipate breaking ground in the Spring of 2025 and opening the park for public use in late Summer 2025. This timeline allows for thorough planning, community engagement, and careful execution to ensure the skate park becomes a lasting and positive addition to Talkeetna.

Endorsements and Community Support:

This project has received broad and enthusiastic support from a wide range of community organizations and leaders. We are proud to have the endorsement of the Talkeetna Community Council, Talkeetna Elementary School, Su-Valley Jr. Sr. High School, the Talkeetna Chamber of Commerce, the Upper Susitna Senior Center, the Talkeetna Bachelor Society, and the Jessica Stevens Community Health Foundation.

In addition, many local youth have shown their strong support for the project by attending our recent public presentations, and there is significant backing from parents and volunteers who are eager to see this initiative come to fruition. The skate park will not only provide much-needed recreational opportunities for Talkeetna's youth, it will also positively impact our community's tourism industry, attracting visitors looking for family-friendly activities.

We also have the backing of local educational leaders, including the former and current principal(s) of Talkeetna Elementary School and the Su Valley Jr./Sr. High School, which are committed to expanding healthy, outdoor opportunities for our young people.

Thank you for considering this vital project. We are excited about the opportunity to move forward and await your response. Please let us know if you need any additional information or if there are any questions we can address.

Sincerely,

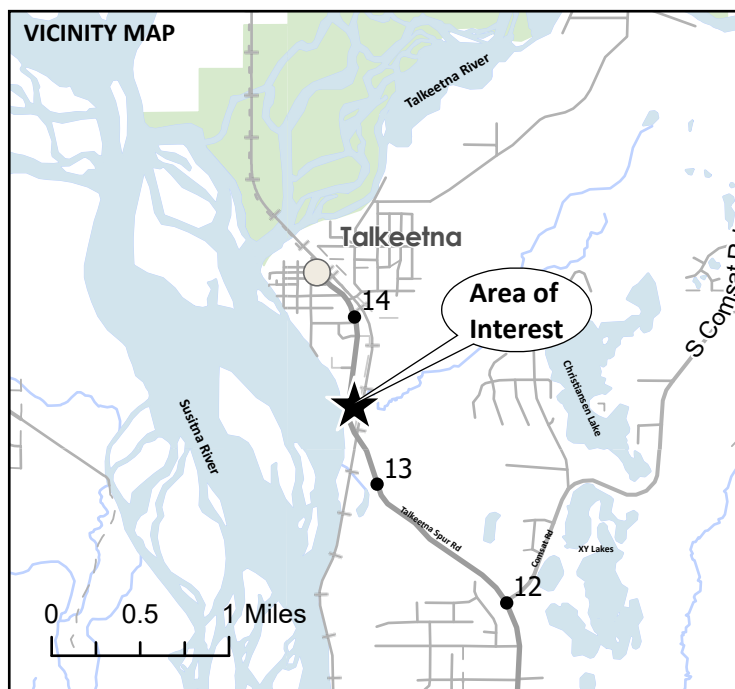
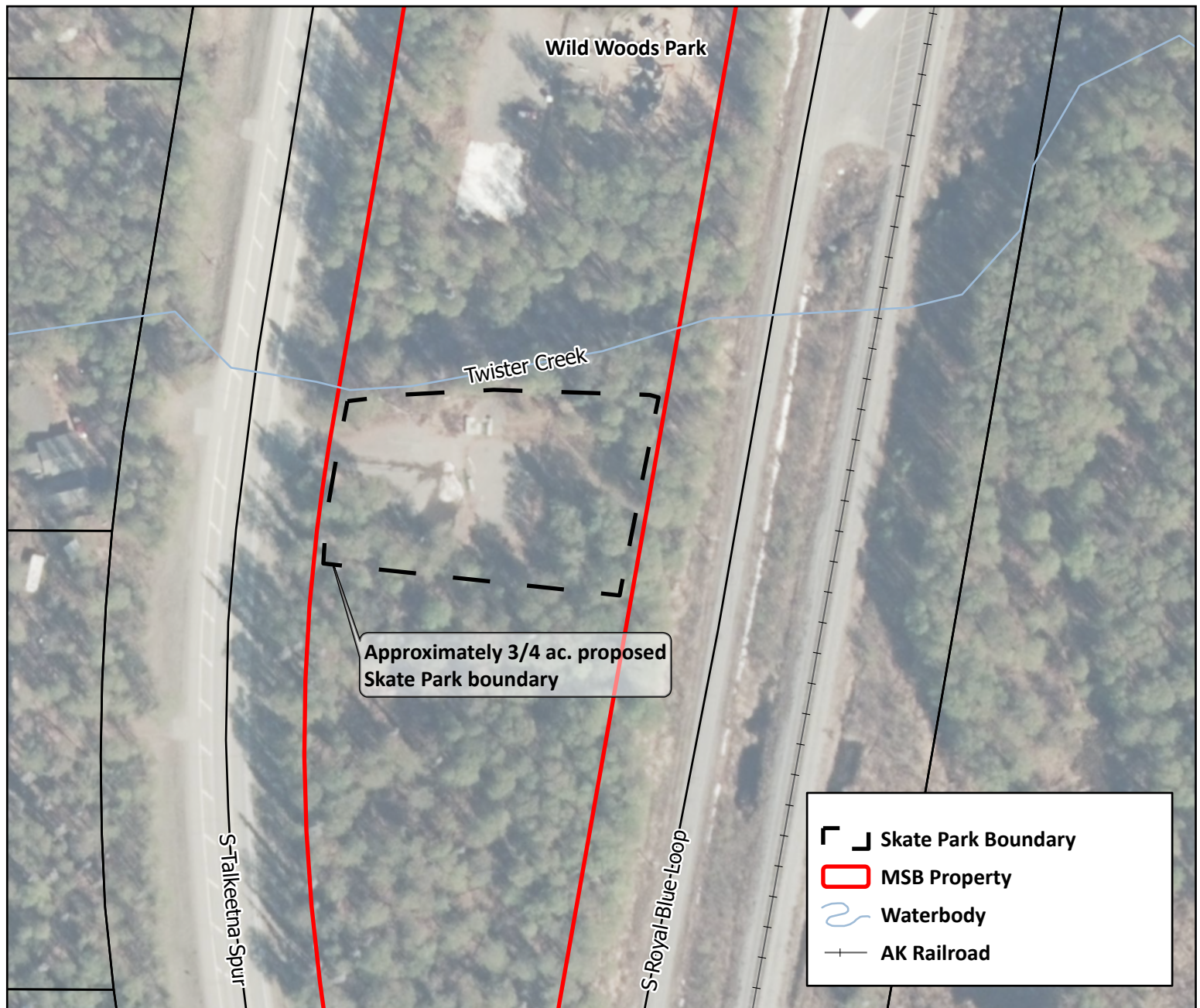
The Talkeetna Skate Park Committee

Committee Contact Information:

Caitlin Palmer
Board Chair, Talkeetna Skatepark
PO Box 566 Talkeetna, AK 99676
caitlinpalmer89@gmail.com
907.841.1394



Please get me off the
streets of Talkeetna &
into a skate park!



Former Talkeetna Library Proposed Skate Park Area

MSB Tax Account: 5499000T00A



Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Land and Resource Management Division

IM 25-004
RS 25-003