

**SUBJECT:** INFORMING THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY OF THE INTENT OF ADMINISTRATION TO UPDATE THE LAND MANAGEMENT DIVISION POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL TO ALLOW PRIVATE PROPERTY OWNERS TO CLEAR TREES ON ADJACENT BOROUGH LAND TO REDUCE FIRE DANGER AND REMOVE HAZARD TREES.

**AGENDA OF:** December 1, 2020

**ASSEMBLY ACTION:**

*Presented to The Assembly 12-1-20*  
*(Signature)*

**MANAGER RECOMMENDATION:** For information only.

**APPROVED BY GEORGE HAYS, ACTING BOROUGH MANAGER:**

*(Signature)*

| Route To: | Department/Individual          | Initials            | Remarks |
|-----------|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------|
|           | Originator                     | <i>EK</i>           |         |
|           | Community Development Director | <i>SP</i>           |         |
|           | Finance Director               | <i>CK</i>           |         |
|           | Borough Attorney               | <i>AS</i>           |         |
|           | Borough Clerk                  | <i>BSDA for JRM</i> |         |

**ATTACHMENT(S):** Draft Firewise and Hazard Tree Policy Notice (1 pp)

**SUMMARY STATEMENT:**

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Community Development Department, Land and Resource Management Division is proposing to adopt an amendment to their Policy and Procedures Manual, Part 31 - Generally Allowed Uses, that would allow private property owners to thin vegetation within 100 feet of structures to reduce fire hazard. The proposed policy amendment would also allow private property owners to remove standing trees from adjacent vacant borough property that pose a direct threat of damaging private property by falling, such as beetle-kill spruce along fence lines, driveways, or near buildings. Felled spruce trees must be removed from the forest. The wood may not be sold or bartered and is only available for personal use.



## MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

### Community Development Department

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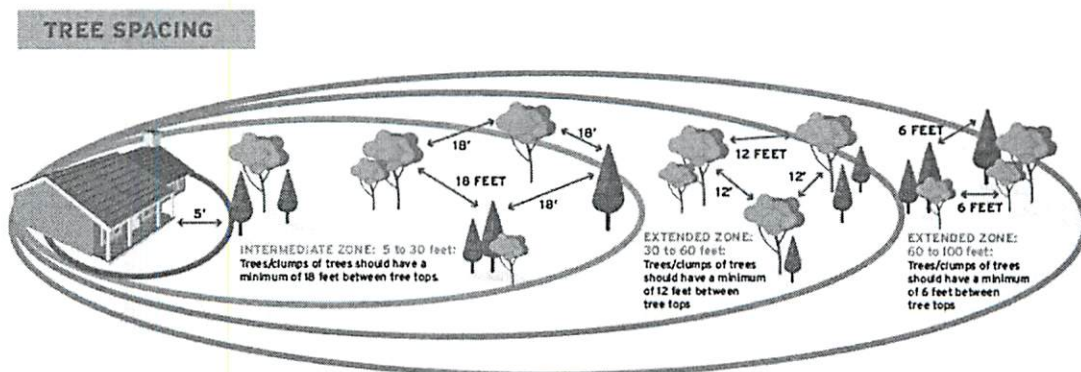
### Property Owner FireWise and Hazard Tree Removal on Adjacent Vacant Borough Land

The Matanuska Susitna Borough is a neighboring landowner to many private property owners. The Borough encourages property owners to FireWise their properties and encourages landowners to take proactive steps for the removal of hazard trees including beetle-killed spruce. FireWise is a cooperative effort among local, state, federal, and private agencies and organizations to promote fire safety in the wildland/urban interface.

The Borough is considering a policy to allow property owners to limb, brush, and thin vegetation on vacant borough land within 100 feet of private structures as part of overall FireWise measures without requiring special permission from the Land and Resource Management Division. The Borough is also considering a policy to allow property owners to remove standing trees from vacant borough land that pose a direct threat of damaging private property by falling, such as beetle kill spruce along fence lines, driveways, or near buildings, without requiring special permission from the Land and Resource Management Division. It will be the responsibility of the landowner to verify they are operating on eligible, vacant borough-owned land. Visit [www.matsugov.us/resources](http://www.matsugov.us/resources) to learn more.

Spruce trees must be removed from the forest and borough property. Any trees removed from borough land may only be utilized for non-commercial purposes and may not be sold or bartered. Forest debris may not be left on or along existing trails.

These policies would be incorporated into the Community Development Policy and Procedures Manual, Part 31, Generally Allowed Uses, as approved by Assembly Resolution and in accordance with MSB 23.05.020(C).



The diagram illustrates the FireWise vegetation thinning guidelines

Questions can be directed to [lmb@matsugov.us](mailto:lmb@matsugov.us) or 861-7869.

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