

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY APPROVING THE LAND CLASSIFICATION OF A BOROUGH-OWNED PROPERTY (TAX ID 20N04W08A001) NEAR MILEPOST 77 OF THE PARKS HIGHWAY AS RESERVED USE LAND FOR THE PURPOSE OF A SHOOTING RANGE. (MSB008308)

AGENDA OF: August 4, 2026

ASSEMBLY ACTION:

AGENDA ACTION REQUESTED: Introduce and set for public hearing.

Route To	Signatures
Originator	7 / 2 0 / 2 0 2 6 X P e t e r B u r t o n S i g n e d b y : P e t e r B u r t o n
Land & Resource Manager	7 / 2 0 / 2 0 2 6 X J o e M e t z g e r S i g n e d b y : J o e M e t z g e r
Community Development Director	7 / 2 1 / 2 0 2 6 X M i c h a e l B r o w n S i g n e d b y : M i c h a e l B r o w n
Finance Director	7 / 2 1 / 2 0 2 6 X C h e y e n n e H e i n d e l S i g n e d b y : C h e y e n n e H e i n d e l
Borough Attorney	7 / 2 1 / 2 0 2 6 X N i c h o l a s S p i r o p o u l o s 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
Borough Manager	7 / 2 1 / 2 0 2 6 X M i c h a e l B r o w n S i g n e d b y : M i c h a e l B r o w n
Borough Clerk	7 / 2 2 / 2 0 2 6 X L o n n i e M c K e e S i g n e d b y : L o n n i e M c K e e

ATTACHMENT (S) : Map (1 pp)
 Best Interest Finding (3 pp)
 Public Comment (9 pp)
 Planning Commission Resolution 26-16(2 pp)
 Ordinance Serial No. 26-092 (2 pp)

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

This ordinance is at the request of Assemblymember Bernier.

The Land and Resource Management Division(LRMD) has identified a Borough-owned parcel for classification as Reserved Use - Shooting Range.

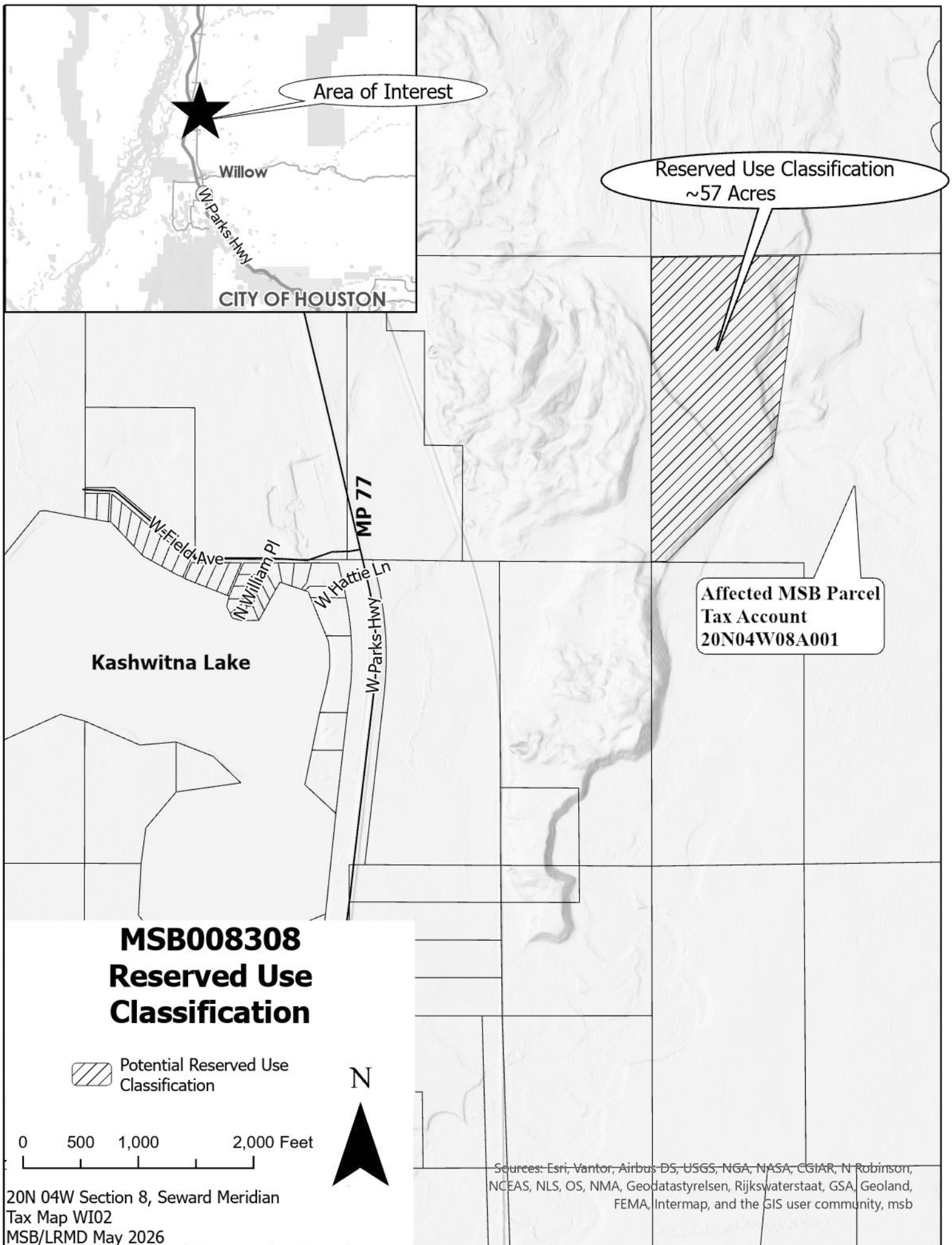
The 564-acre subject parcel, being Tax ID 20N04W08A001, is located approximately a mile East of Parks Hwy mile post 77. LRMD proposes to classify a portion of this parcel as Reserved Use Lands for future potential development as a shooting range.

An inter-department review was conducted, and public notice has been completed in accordance with MSB 23.05.025. There are no objections from inter-department review. There are four individuals and two agency responses to public noticing.

The Planning Commission adopted Resolution Serial No. 26-16 on July 20, 2026, recommending Assembly approval of this land classification.

RECOMMENDATION OF ADMINISTRATION:

Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly approval of the land classification as set forth in the attached Best Interest Finding and Ordinance Serial No. 26-092.



BEST INTEREST FINDING
For the
Classification of Borough-owned Land

I. Summary of Proposed Action

In response to Assembly direction, the MSB Land & Resource Management Division (LRMD) has identified a Borough-owned parcel for classification as Reserved Use - Shooting Range.

The 564-acre subject parcel, being Tax ID 20N04W08A001, is located approximately a mile East of Parks Hwy mile post 77. LRMD proposes to classify a portion of this parcel as Reserved Use Lands for future potential development as a shooting range. A vicinity map is attached to assist with the location of the parcel.

II. Property Site Factors

- A. Location:** The subject parcel (Tax ID 20N04W08A001) does not have road access, but is located approximately a mile East of Parks Hwy mile post 77. The subject parcel is located in the Willow Area Community Organization, Inc. boundary.
- B. Legal Descriptions:** N1/2, SE ¼, and E ¼ SW 1/4 of Township 20N, Range 04W, Section 8, Seward Meridian.
- C. Land Status:** Acquired by Patent 5012, Book 211, Page 55, 4/22/1980, Palmer Recording District.
- D. Restrictions:**
1. Land Classification – Currently Classified as Resource Management, General Purpose, and Watershed
 2. Land Use Plans – The property lies within the boundaries of the Willow Area Community Comprehensive Plan. The plan does not identify specific designations, restrictions, or development objectives for this parcel.
 3. Title Restrictions – State of Alaska reserved all oil, gas, and mineral rights.
 4. Covenants – None
 5. Zoning – None
 6. Easements & Other Reservations – None
- E. Current Land Use:** The current or near future use of the land includes Timber Harvest and the Kashwitna East Gravel Lease
- F. Surrounding Land Use:** Surrounding properties are primarily undeveloped public land. Adjacent Parcel to North is privately owned.

G. Existing Infrastructure: None

H. Soils & Terrain: The majority of the parcel is composed of Nancy silt loam.

I. Resources: Geotech indicates gravel resources on parcel.

J. Assessment: The 2026 assessed value of the entire 564-acre parcel is \$167,700.

III. Review and Comments

The parcel has undergone departmental review. Such review includes historical data, topography, access, adopted Borough plans, desirability of location, land value, and highest and best use of land. Inter-department review revealed no objection to the proposed classification.

Public notice was conducted in accordance with MSB 23.05.025. Public comments were received from four individuals and two agency responses in response to the public notice. Two of the public comments were in support of a shooting range at this location, and two were opposed. Public comment is attached to this document.

On July 20, 2026, the Planning Commission unanimously approved Resolution No. 26-16 recommending the Assembly approve of an ordinance classifying a portion of land located in tax account 20N04W08A001 as Reserved Use Lands for the purpose of a future shooting range facility.

IV. Analysis & Discussion

In 2006, the parcel was classified as Watershed by Ordinance Serial No. 06-189. In 2022 the parcel was reclassified by Ordinance Serial No. 22-074 as Resource Management, General Purpose, and Watershed for future development of a material site, future land use, and water quality protection. LRMD proposes to classify an approximately 57-acre portion of the parcel as Reserved Use Land – Shooting Range within the area that will be used as a material site.

Classification of Borough lands for reserved use is consistent with the Borough's Policy to create an asset management plan. Classification of this land will inform the public that this land could be the location for a future shooting range. The land classification will require Assembly approval.

The classification for the parcel is a portion of the parent parcel. Surveying and subdividing the parcel by a plat or waiver subdivision prior to development may be desirable but is not required while the Borough owns the parent parcels.

V. Administrative Recommendation

The Community Development Department, Land & Resource Management Division respectfully requests Assembly review of the classification of a portion of Tax ID 20N04W08A001 as Reserved Use Land – Shooting Range as shown on the attached Vicinity Map.

MSB 23.05.100(A)(13) defines “Reserved Use Lands” are those lands which have been transferred assigned, or designated for present or future public use, or for use by a government or quasi-government agency, or for future development of new town sites, or for future expansion of existing public uses.

Authority: Classify land MSB 23.05.005, 23.05.100

Peter Burton

From: Land Management
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2026 4:49 PM
To: Peter Burton
Subject: FW: MSB008308

-----Original Message-----

From: Richard Lyon <lyonr33@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2026 4:42 PM
To: Land Management <lmb@matsugov.us>
Subject: MSB008308

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

A shooting range at this location is an excellent idea and I fully support moving forward.

Thanks,

Richard Lyon
907-302-1691
4727 N Baron Street Unit 3
Wasilla, AK 99654

Peter Burton

From: Sarah Thomas
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2026 12:59 PM
To: Peter Burton
Subject: Fw:

~Sarah Thomas
Administrative Specialist
Recreation & Library Services

Matanuska-Susitna Borough
350 E Dahlia Ave
Palmer, AK 99645
(907) 861-7631

From: CHARLES BOHLING <bohlingak@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2026 5:08 PM
To: Land Management <LMB@matsugov.us>
Subject:

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

In reference to MSB008308, IE; shooting range at mile 77 Parks Highway.

I am in favor of this. I would like to suggest that when the shooting bench area is built, it not be done as it was on Maud Road. That inconvenient, muddy, puddle-mess of a shooting range. This time, pave under the benches instead of making the lowest point of the range under the benches. Water flows where? To the lowest point. Also don't make people drag all their shooting gear up and down hill. Not all of us are young, and we endure over six months of ice and snow. It is down right hazardess. Get some expert range help before spending whatever funds you will have. By the way, I have emailed about the conditions of Maud Range a number of times but never received a reply.

Thanks for hearing me out.

Charles Bohling

Peter Burton

From: Land Management
Sent: Monday, June 8, 2026 9:10 AM
To: Peter Burton
Subject: FW: MSB008308

Categories: Red Category

From: Jesse Griffin <griffinjesse131@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2026 7:13 PM
To: Land Management <LMB@matsugov.us>
Subject: MSB008308

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

I just read the thing on the burrow page Saying that there has been a proposal for future shooting range. I personally would see it better as a spot for a future fire station/training grounds for the upper to sit in the area i think it would be better suited being between Willow and caswell.

To: Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Land & Resource Management Division
350 E. Dahlia Ave
Palmer, AK 99645

(re) Proposed Shooting Range - MP 77 Parks Hwy
MSB008308

- My husband and I are strongly opposed to placing an unregulated shooting range at MP 77 on the Parks Highway.
- It is a dangerous and unnecessary use of those lands. There is a terrific regulated gun range less than 18 miles north; the Upper Susitna Shooters.
- An unregulated range at MP 77 would quickly turn into a garbage/trashed out area with shells, targets and household trash.
- In addition it's a dangerous scenario with folks shooting at all hours of the day/night. Perhaps inebriated. Not a good idea!!
- Like I've stated, as landowners in the MSB my husband and I strongly oppose developing a shooting range near MP 77 of the Parks Highway.

Brook Jacobs & Susan Wick

Peter Burton

From: Sarah Thomas
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2026 3:00 PM
To: Peter Burton
Subject: Fw: MSB008308 - Proposed Shooting Range
Attachments: MP 190 - 195 Diagnostic Team Study.pdf

~Sarah Thomas
Administrative Specialist
Recreation & Library Services

Matanuska-Susitna Borough
350 E Dahlia Ave
Palmer, AK 99645
(907) 861-7631

From: Kate Dueber <DueberK@akrr.com>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2026 2:24 PM
To: Land Management <LMB@matsugov.us>
Cc: Jon Roder <RoderJ@akrr.com>; jmulhaney@colaska.com <jmulhaney@colaska.com>
Subject: MSB008308 - Proposed Shooting Range

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]
To Whom It May Concern:

ARRC has reviewed the proposed reclassification of the Mat-Su Borough-owned parcel for future development as a shooting range at MP 77 of the Parks Highway and has the following comments:

Currently, there is no public crossing of the ARRC ROW in the vicinity of this parcel from the Parks Highway. The closest public crossing to the north is Kashwitna Trail (Kichatna Ln) near Parks Hwy MP 83, and the closest to the south is Willow Fishhook Rd, near Parks Hwy MP 71.

There is a private crossing permitted to Colaska near Parks Hwy MP 77.5, which is not currently available for public use. If the Matanuska Susitna Borough is interested in this becoming a public crossing to support access to the proposed shooting range or for other public uses, then the appropriate permittee for the crossing is the Matanuska Susitna Borough. This is consistent with a Diagnostic Team Study conducted in 1996 that recommended a public crossing at this location permitted to MSB (attached). Depending on the expected use, the Diagnostic Team Study may need to be updated to account for the change in traffic expected.

ARRC appreciates the opportunity to comment on this proposed reclassification. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at this email address.

Thanks,

DIAGNOSTIC TEAM REPORT Vicinity of ARRC Milepost 193

The Diagnostic Team assembled at the private road crossing at ARRC milepost 193.54 on August 15, 1996. Members of the team included the following:

Mr. Ron Martindale, State of Alaska DOT/PF
Mr. Jim Swing, Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Mr. Roy Thomas, Alaska Railroad Corporation

Also present at the meeting were:

Mr. and Mrs. Ted Berry, private land owners
Mr. Richard Butcher, Alaska Pacific Powder Co., crossing permittee milepost 193.54
Mr. Dan Lommel, Alaska Railroad Corporation

Unable to attend:

Mr. Travis Chapman, private land owner

Background:

An at-grade road crossing of the Alaska Railroad was requested by Mr. Travis Chapman, a private land owner, in June of 1996 to be located on the east-west 1/16th Section Line in the SW 1/4 of Section 6, T20N, R4W, Seward Meridian. Mr. Chapman would access this road crossing from the Parks Highway utilizing a 50-ft road and utility easement he established previously while subdividing a larger land holding. Mr. Chapman originally approached the Alaska Railroad in September of 1979 regarding a road crossing at this same location. At that time, the Railroad had no objection to construction of the crossing, and in September of 1980 advised Mr. Chapman of the anticipated cost. The road crossing was never installed.

In accordance with the Alaska Policy on Railroad/Highway Crossings, revised September 1988, a Diagnostic Team was assembled to perform an evaluation of the proposed crossing area. The evaluation process focuses on planning in an effort to minimize the need for new at-grade road crossings. All new crossings require Diagnostic Team approval. The on-site evaluation considered land ownership, proximity to existing crossings, proximity to the Parks Highway, track alignment and grade, siding extension and track maintenance concerns, geographic restrictions and adjacent landowner concerns.

Discussion/Findings:

The Diagnostic Team made a hi-rail inspection both north and south from the existing road crossing at ARRC milepost 193.54. The inspection area was geographically bounded on the south end by the Little Willow Creek drainage. The ARRC bridge over Little Willow Creek is at milepost 190.50. The north end inspection was bounded by a large wetland area both east and west of the tracks beginning at ARRC milepost 194.4.

Recommendations:

- 1) Allow construction of a new public road crossing along the south Section 6 boundary line.

This is a desirable location with respect to the Parks Highway and Railroad alignments. The track is near the highway, tangent with mild grade, and without obstructing geographic features. The Borough possesses a clear section line easement. The location is suitable for the anticipated future development and access requirements for State, Borough, and private lands east of the railroad tracks in this area. Crossing site triangles for an assumed vehicle speed of 30 mph extend beyond the Railroad's Right-of-Way onto adjacent private land. If site triangle easements cannot be obtained, the crossing must be protected utilizing stop sign traffic control. The Borough has expressed concerns regarding the initial cost of constructing the crossing. This cost may need to be borne by the party or parties requesting or using the crossing.

- 2) Eventual closing of the existing road crossing at milepost 193.54.

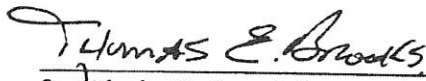
The existing road crossing at milepost 193.54 is used by Alaska Pacific Powder Co. in their rail to storage to distribution operation. Their property will be accessible from the proposed new crossing along the south Section 6 line. In recognition of the nature of their operation, the crossing may remain open until deemed necessary to close by the ARRC, or until any of the following:

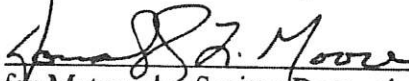
Cease or change the nature of their operation.
Subdivide or sell their land holding.

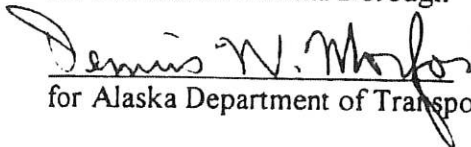
- 3) Allow no additional road crossings in the area considered by the Diagnostic Team north of the Sections 7-18 line. It is apparent that crossing issues will inevitably surface in the vicinity of Little Willow Creek, ARRC milepost 190.5, where notable development and land subdividing has occurred without consideration to legal land access. A new crossing along the south Section 6 line will have only minimal immediate effect on improving the Railroad trespass problem at Little Willow Creek but will serve to stop that situation from spreading northward and may play a role in the eventual solution to gaining land access in that area.

Written by: Roy Thomas, Alaska Railroad Corporation

APPROVED:


for Alaska Railroad Corporation


for Matanuska-Susitna Borough


for Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Peter Burton

From: Sarah Thomas
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2026 1:50 PM
To: Peter Burton
Subject: Fw: MSB008308 comments
Attachments: MSB notice of future shooting range.pdf

~Sarah Thomas
Administrative Specialist
Recreation & Library Services

Matanuska-Susitna Borough
350 E Dahlia Ave
Palmer, AK 99645
(907) 861-7631

From: Cabrera, Corina C (DNR) <corina.cabrera@alaska.gov>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2026 1:33 PM
To: Land Management <LMB@matsugov.us>
Subject: MSB008308 comments

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]
Good afternoon,

The Department of Natural Resources, Southcentral Regional Land Office (SCRO) would like to provide the following comment(s) for this project:

Permitting Section:

Easements Section:

An authorization from this office may be required. If applicable, please submit your request to dnr.scro.alaska.gov

Leasing Section:

Additionally, SCRO thanks you for the opportunity to review this proposal and to let us know if you have any follow-up questions.

Cheers,

Corina Cabrera

Natural Resource Technician II
Southcentral Regional Land Office
Division of Mining, Land, and Water
Alaska Department of Natural Resources
550 W 7th Ave. Ste 900C | Anchorage, AK 99501

By: P. Burton
Public Hearing: July 20, 2026
Action:

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 26-16**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF AN ORDINANCE CLASSIFYING A PORTION OF 20N04W08A001 AS RESERVED USE LAND FOR THE PURPOSE OF A SHOOTING RANGE (MSB008308).

WHEREAS, a portion of tax parcel 20N04W08A001, is proposed for land classification for purpose of reserving land for a future shooting range site; and

WHEREAS, the attached Best Interest Finding provides information specific to the parcel to include proposed purpose, land classification, map, and public comments; and

WHEREAS, a Borough inter-departmental review was conducted, along with a 30-day public notice in accordance with Title 23 and Land and Resource Management Policy and Procedures adopted by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough; and

WHEREAS, through land classification, the parcel identified for specific future purpose which cannot be changed without Assembly approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission hereby recommends Assembly approval of

land classification for a portion of tax parcel 20N04W08A001, as
"Reserved Use Lands - Shooting Range" for purpose of future
shooting range facility.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission
this - day of -, 2026.

Richard Allen, Chair

ATTEST:

Lacie Olivieri, Planning Clerk

(SEAL)

YES:

NO: