

## LAND USE PLAN

The residents of Sutton have made a decision to live in the area not as a matter of convenience, but of choice. Sutton's population resides in the planning area despite the lack of natural gas and other utilities, the lack of commercial amenities provided in a more urban environment, and often despite the need to work far from their residence. From 1990 to 2008, the population grew from 308 individuals to approximately 1,318 residents. The overriding attraction of this area includes its incredibly scenic views, quiet atmosphere, low traffic volumes, clean environment and outdoor recreation opportunities. The desire of this community to preserve these qualities is readily evident in its vocal and widespread opposition to a major electrical transmission intertie proposed first in the late eighties and then again in the mid nineties. Recent issues, such as the proposed Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline, coal exploration and mining leases, subdivisions of large parcels for dense housing developments, coal bed methane, and concerns about water quality and availability prompted the update to the Sutton Comprehensive Plan.



*Granite Peak; photo provided by Jessica Dryden-Winnestaffer*

It is the desire of the community to preserve the residential qualities that have made Sutton such an attractive place to live, yet not to diminish the viability of attracting the amenities and development that are desirable to the community.

## GENERAL GOALS

The community, through a public planning process, has chosen not to promote new regulations for those land uses that, individually, have low or moderate impact on identified desirable residential qualities. Any proposed land use restrictions focus on future development that would

be most detrimental to the qualities the Sutton community wants to preserve. It is not the desire of the community to “change the rules” for those businesses that are already established.

**Recommendation:**

- **The planning team has recommended regulating only those land uses that, individually, are potentially most detrimental to the area’s high quality of life.**
- **Existing development should not be subject to a change in the regulations and should have “grandfather privileges.”**
- **Protect air, water, wildlife and land quality while reducing impacts to nearby properties from traffic, noise, pollution, lighting, etc.**
- **Protect recreation opportunities and enhance the quality of life for Sutton residents.**
- **Ensure future development is compatible with adjacent properties.**

**LAND OWNERSHIP**

**PUBLIC LANDS**

Public lands (which include Matanuska-Susitna Borough, State of Alaska, and Federal lands) represent approximately 51\* percent of the land in the Sutton boundaries, or 11,872 acres (18.5 square miles).

[\* Sutton CC Boundary is 23,415 acres in size. Private land=43 percent, public land=51 percent, remaining percentages fall into the categories of ROW or water bodies.]



*“Mountain View in Summer” provided by Wendy Zake at <http://visitalaska.wordpress.com/sutton>*

**Recommendations:**

- **As infrastructure needs and demands increase throughout the area, consider expanding the planning area to accommodate this growth. Many individuals gain access to recreational areas and properties through the Sutton area.**
- **Changes in land classifications and designations, proposed sales, and platting actions should be closely examined. The Sutton Community Council and residents should be alerted by federal, state, and Borough agencies when these actions occur.**
- **Retain State of Alaska lands within the Matanuska-Susitna Valley Moose Range as public recreational and wildlife habitat lands (Susitna Area Plan, page 372).**
- **Ensure that natural resource development occurs consistent with the recommendations in this chapter.**

**Table A: Public Lands**

<b>Lot Size (Acres)</b>	<i>Number of Lots</i>	<b>Percent of Lots</b>	<b>Improved Lots</b>	<b>% of Improved Lots</b>
>160	20	19%	0	0%
160 to >100	14	14%	0	0%
100 to >40	12	12%	1	8%
40 to >20	10	10%	0	0%
20 to >10	6	6%	1	17%
10 to >5	6	6%	1	17%
5 to >2	11	11%	5	45%
2 to >1	4	4%	1	25%
1 to >0	19	18%	4	21%
	<b>102</b>		<b>13</b>	

Source: May 2007, MSB GIS Department.

### PRIVATE LANDS

Privately owned lands (which include Alaska Mental Health Trust and Alaska Native corporation lands) represent approximately 43\* percent of the land in the Sutton boundaries, or 9,974 acres (15.6 square miles). Table B shows a summary of privately owned lot size and improvement status in Sutton. [\*Sutton CC Boundary is 23,415 acres in size. Private land=43 percent, public land=51 percent, remaining percentages fall into the categories of ROW or water bodies.]

**Table B: Private Lands**

<b>Lot Size (Acres)</b>	<b>Number of Lots</b>	<b>Percent of Lots</b>	<b>Improved Lots</b>	<b>% of Improved Lots</b>
>160	5	0%	0	0%
160 to >100	12	1%	7	58%
100 to >40	29	3%	10	34%
40 to >20	75	8%	43	57%
20 to >10	52	6%	31	60%
10 to >5	86	9%	51	59%
5 to >2	130	14%	85	65%
2 to >1	161	17%	71	44%
1 to >0	391	42%	132	34%
	<b>941</b>		<b>430</b>	