

# Public Participation Plan for Kenai Peninsula Borough Unit 395 Land Planning Project

## Project Overview

The Kenai Peninsula Borough is a public landowner that acquires land through a State of Alaska municipal entitlement land grant, conducts land planning, administers resource management, authorizes land uses, holds land for public purposes, and operates land disposal programs. The Kenai Peninsula Borough's Land Management Division works closely with communities through local advisory planning commissions and gains approval for plans and land management actions through the borough's planning commission and assembly governance. KPB recently acquired management authority of a 1,000-acre block of land, commonly known as "Unit 395" or "Juneau Bench" that is bisected by the new Sterling Highway MP 45-60 project and contains a USDA Forest Service Roadway known as West Juneau Road. West Juneau Road originates at the Sterling Highway ("Old Sterling Highway" or "Town Road"). The DOT highway project plans for several features that will impact the functionality of the borough's land unit. The land contains areas with high value development potential; resources including gravel and timber; important watershed, wildlife corridor, and recreation features; and has the potential to contribute positively to the Cooper Landing community. A multi-disciplinary approach to inventory and land planning on unit 395 is intended to guide management actions that optimize land resources to serve a suite of community functions which are economically, socially, and environmentally productive.

## Project purpose

The Unit 395 Land Planning project is to inventory resources, features, values, and land use objectives alongside community vision, constraints, and economical approaches to synthesize and document in the form of: descriptive or prescriptive land plans, maps, diagrams, schedules, reports, and recommendations regarding the Kenai Peninsula Borough's management opportunities and actions involving multiple resources, multiple objectives, and multiple timescales.

## Project scope

The Unit 395 Land Planning project is intended to inventory resources, features, values, and land use objectives alongside community vision, constraints, and economical approaches to land use development, and to also synthesize and document those findings, in forms useful for planning borough management policies, practices, actions (including subsequent civil contracting), for near term and long-term layout, management, and development of the 1,000-acre land unit.

There are 10 tasks proposed to accomplish this work:

- Existing plan review
- Information and map data gathering
- Soils data gathering
- Access assessment with public input
- Affordable housing report
- Public engagement

## Unit 395 Land Planning Project – Public Participation Plan

- Planning, map, and reporting products
- Cost estimations and cost-benefit analyses
- Draft review and public governance approval-revision process
- Publication of plan documents

### Vision and goals

A vision and goals for Unit 395's development that reflect the needs and desires of the local community will be developed through close collaboration between the Cooper Landing Advisory Planning Commission, KPB Land Management and Planning staff, and the consultant team, guided by feedback from the public.

### PPP purpose and guiding principles

The purpose of the Public Participation Plan (PPP) is to lay out a broad outreach and engagement strategy that will ensure equitable access to the planning process and the inclusion of diverse perspectives in the plan.

## Outreach and engagement strategies

### Stakeholder groups

#### Identification

The preliminary stakeholder list below was developed through discussions with KPB staff, research, and inquiries with local community members. The list is not exhaustive and will be updated throughout the project as additional stakeholders are identified.

#### Communication and outreach

Clear, consistent, and targeted communication and outreach is imperative to the success of this project. communication will be concise and accessible and rely heavily on graphics and visualizations to communicate plan goals, strategies, and benefits to the widest range of residents.

Outreach to stakeholders will begin with an email blast announcing the project and requesting distribution through their respective communication channels to their constituents and members. Throughout the project, stakeholders will be notified of public meetings, input opportunities, draft documents, and other project events.

### Stakeholder list

1. Kenai Peninsula Borough & Elected officials
  - Cooper Landing Advisory Planning commission
  - Planning Commission
  - Assembly
  - Donald E. Gilman Kenai River Center
  - State Senate District D
  - State House District 7
  - State House District 8
2. Agencies
  - USFS

- USFWS
- DOT&PF
- ADF&G
- 3. Businesses
  - Retail
  - Food & lodging
  - Services
  - Transportation
- 4. Non-profits/NGOs/Associations
  - Kenai Watershed Forum
  - Chambers of commerce
  - Kenai River Professional Guide Association
  - Cooper Landing Emergency Services
  - Cooper Landing Senior Citizens Corporation

### Public participation

We envision using a variety of methods and tools to engage the public and gather broad public input. The following tools and techniques will guide our outreach methodology, with adjustments made as needed.

### Comment map

An interactive online comment map will be used to gather location-specific input on potential issues, uses, and concerns across the study area. Additionally, map users can ‘like’ or ‘dislike’ other users’ comments. This feature helps us understand which comments have the broadest support. The map can be linked from a project website or a QR code that can be posted at key locations around the community.

### Public meetings

In-person public events will be used several times throughout the project to solicit ideas, vet alternatives and recommendations, and gather personal stories. Event details will be developed as the project progresses, but the following list summarizes proposed dates and general types of meetings.

- Vision and values workshop – September 2022
- Access alternatives workshop – November 2022
- Draft Plan review – February 2023
- Planning Commission review – March 2023
- KPB Assembly meeting – May 2023
- Potential Cooper Landing venues
  - Community Hall
  - Senior center

### One-on-one interviews

Conducting one-on-one interviews with stakeholders serves several purposes, including:

- Capture stories – what has the community meant to residents and how have they seen it change over time; what makes Cooper Landing special to them

## Unit 395 Land Planning Project – Public Participation Plan

- Build project awareness – educate stakeholders on the scope of the project and what the deliverables are; foster community discussions on the project and how to be involved
- Understand community values – what does development mean to residents and how can it be accomplished in alignment with local values; what does the community envision for the future of Cooper Landing and how can Unit 395 support that vision

### Project website

A simple, easy-to-read, stand-alone website will serve as a clearinghouse for project updates, documents, and contact information. The website can also link to the online comment map and KPB departments.

Alternatively, the project webpage could be constructed within the KPB's current website. Further discussions will help determine the best choice for the project.

### Social media

We'll leverage KPB social media channels to advertise public meetings and draft documents, as well as educate the public on the project's scope and schedule.

### Flyers and posters

Hanging flyers or posters at key locations around Cooper Landing will help inform the public about upcoming events, opportunities for input, and other online resources. Potential locations for flyers or posters include:

- Wildman's
- Senior Center
- Community Hall
- Cooper Landing Grocery
- Boat Launch (Sportsman's Landing + Cooper Landing)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Post office
- KPB offices

### Local newspaper

The Cooper Landing Community Crier will be used to advertise meetings and other engagement events.

## Evaluation of Efforts

As the project progresses, we'll monitor our public engagement efforts to confirm that we are reaching a broad cross section of the population and soliciting input from a diverse range of stakeholders. If public input appears low, we will revisit our methods proposed above and identify new ways to engage the public.

## Public Participation Schedule

The most intense public participation will be conducted between September 2022 and December 2022, with the governmental review and approval process to follow in early 2023.