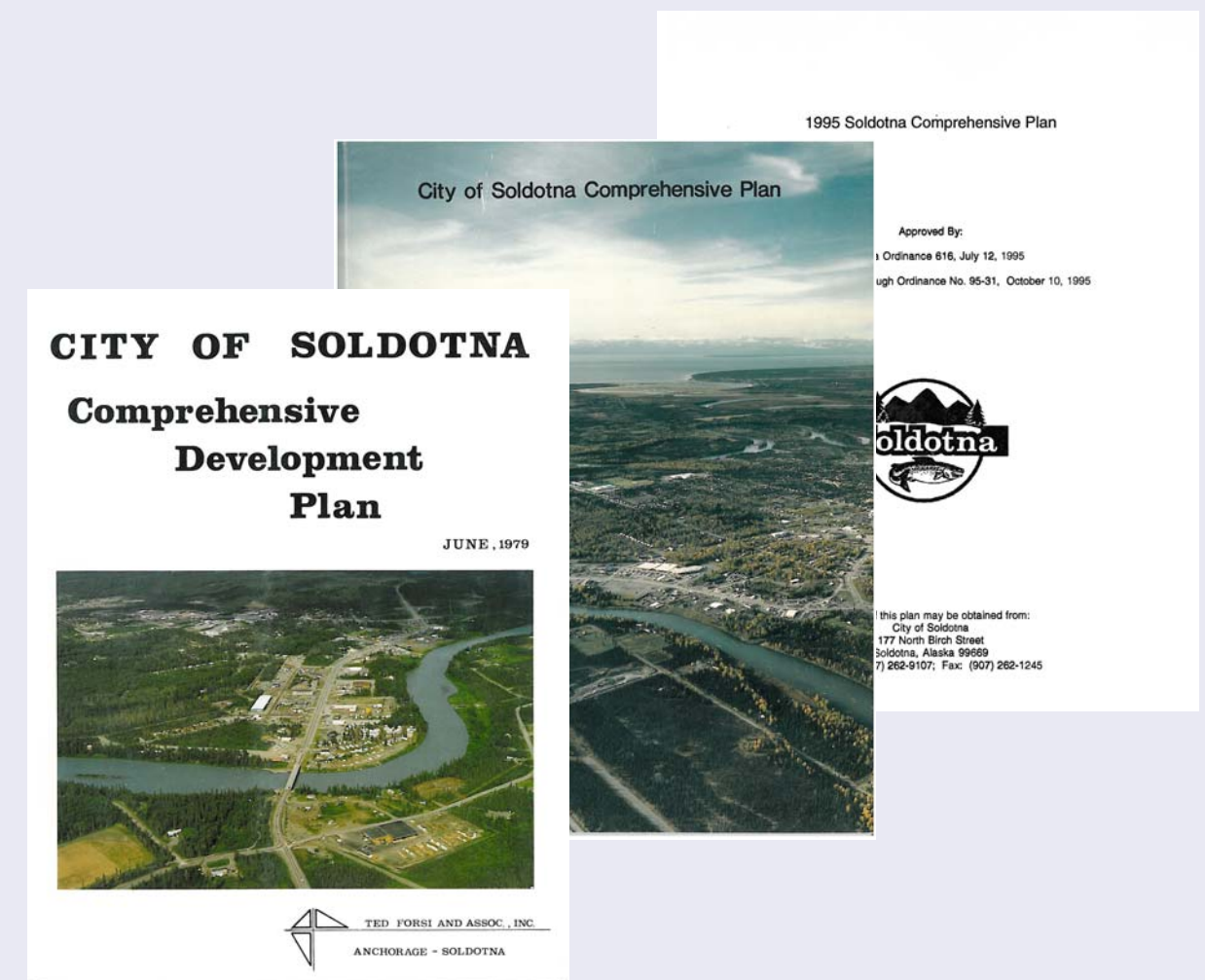


## WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

*A comprehensive plan is a guide for making decisions about community growth and development. It embodies the hopes, dreams, and goals that a community holds for itself, and how the community desires to develop physically, economically, and socially.*

A Comprehensive Plan is a tool to:

- ☞ Create a shared vision for our community;
- ☞ Prioritize important concerns;
- ☞ Protect valuable resources; and
- ☞ Guide development in an orderly and predictable manner.



*Without a plan, you have very little control over how your community grows and changes.*

## IDENTIFY A SHARED COMMUNITY VISION

*One of the first tasks in the comprehensive planning process is determining the Community's Vision. The vision statement should reflect shared values identified by the public. It is a statement that identifies what is unique and important to the community, and the values it holds. A vision statement helps define the direction to proceed.*

- ☞ Tell us what you envision Soldotna could become in the next 20 years.
- ☞ Use your imagination to create the most positive possible future Soldotna.
- ☞ Once written, a vision statement helps to define the direction in which to proceed.

### **Soldotna – Caring for the River and Each Other**

Soldotna – Where the Kenai River flows through a vital community which provides a safe, friendly home. We are a community where citizens take pride and responsibility for their extraordinary quality of life, visitors feel welcome and aspire to return. Citizens express their historic values through attractive, unique architecture and landscaping. The river is nurtured and, in return, is the heart of healthy, compelling surroundings. The community is noted as a highly prized location.

*Community Vision Statement from the 1995 Soldotna Comprehensive Plan.*



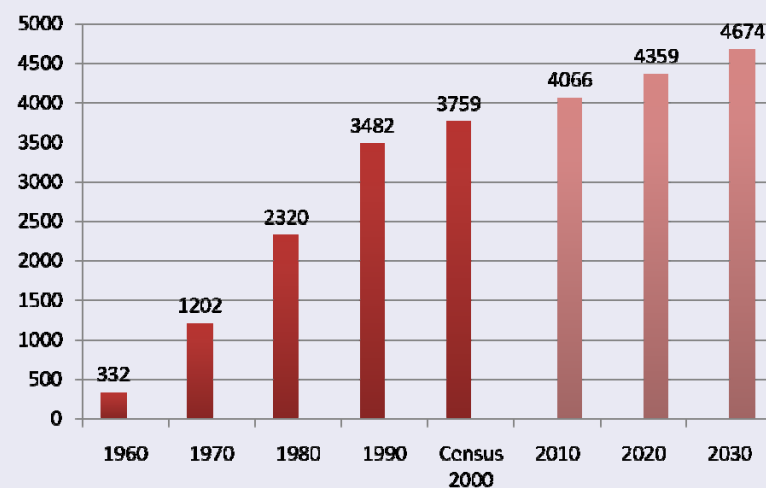
## STRENGTHS

- ☞ Relatively prosperous and stable population (*Census 2000*)
  - Median age is 34.9
    - Younger than U.S. (35.3)
    - Younger than KPB (36.3)
    - Older than Alaska (32.6)
  - Lowest poverty in KPB (6.6%)
  - Highest household income in KPB (\$48,420)
  - Per capita income in KPB (\$21,740)
  
- ☞ Population growth is slow and steady (projection based on growth rate (2000-2007))

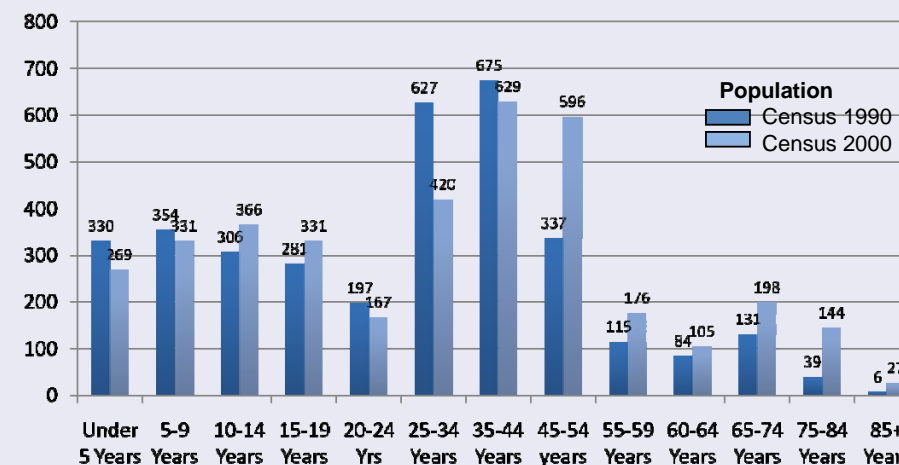
## ISSUES

- ☞ Soldotna's population (3,982) is 29% of the greater Soldotna Economic Impact Area (EIA) (13,892) in 2007.
  
- ☞ Average annual population growth rate is 0.7%, from 2000-2007 (Highest KPB growth is outside the cities and many cities are losing population).
  
- ☞ Population is aging:
  - Growth: 35+ years
  - Loss: 0-34 age bracket

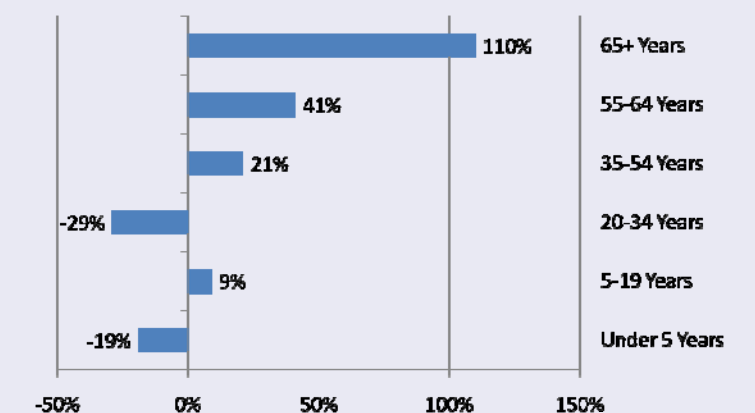
Soldotna Population Growth (1980-2030)



Change of Soldotna Population by Age Group (Census 1990-Census 2000)



Percentage Change of Soldotna Population by Age Group (Census 1990-Census 2000)



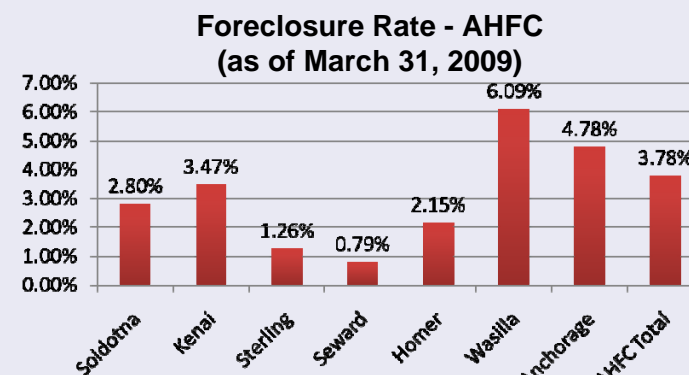
(Source U.S. Census Bureau)

## STRENGTHS

- ☞ Healthy economy
- ☞ In 2008 Soldotna had:
  - 8% of the KPB population
  - 25% of the KPB taxable sales
  - 15% of the KPB gross sales
  - Taxable sales 48% higher than Kenai
  - Gross sales 30% lower than Kenai
  - 21% of the KPB construction value within cities
- ☞ Slow/steady increase in total assessed property values
  - 2004: 4.1%, 2005: 6.2%, 2006: 8.0%, 2007: 11%

☞ Highest average value of new homes in 2007 on KPB-\$291,647

☞ Relatively low foreclosure rate

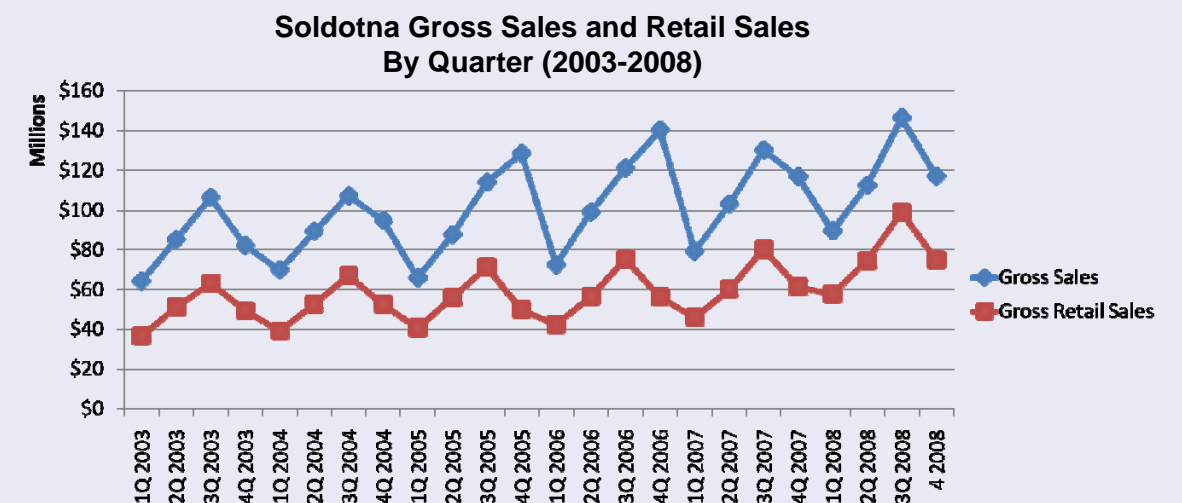


☞ Employment by primarily stable employers: greater than 50% in education/health & social services, retail, tourism

☞ 5 of the Top 10 KPB Employers are headquartered in Soldotna (KPB School Dist., Cen. Peninsula Gen. Hospital, KPB, Frontier Com. Services, Fred Meyer)

## ISSUES

- ☞ Tourism sales (as defined by KPB - Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Guiding, Accommodation) in 2008, were a small percentage of total taxable sales (3%)
  - Lower than Seward (33%)
  - Lower than Homer (13%)
- ☞ Quarterly sales show summer peaks



☞ Loss of big box stores to Kenai (Lowe's and Walmart)

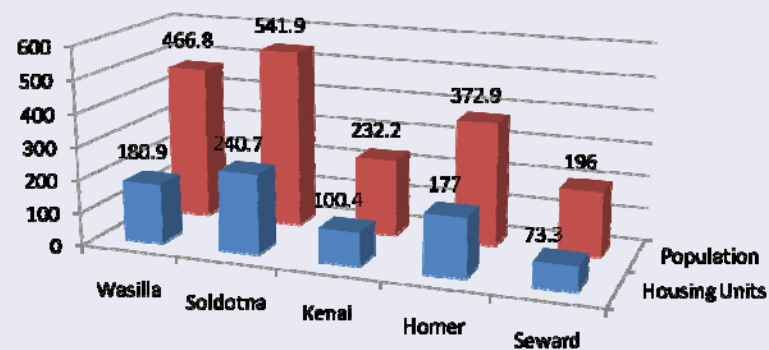
☞ Soldotna's share of KPB tourism

	Lodging	Food
Establishments	21%	26%
Receipts	13%	32%
Payroll	13%	30%
Paid Employees	24%	31%

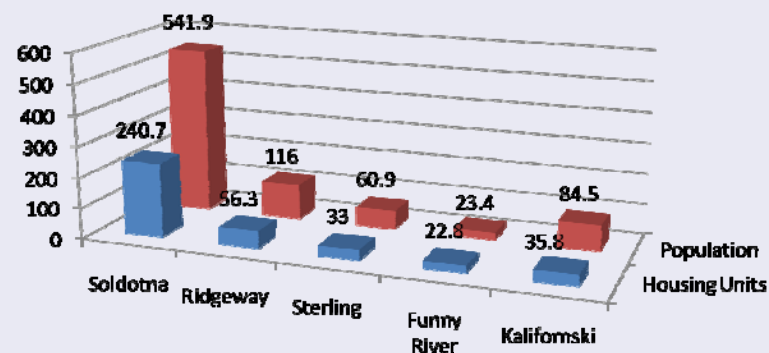
## STRENGTHS

- ☞ Kenai River Overlay District
- ☞ Park land along the river
- ☞ Vacant commercial land is available

Population/Housing Density Soldotna vs Other Cities  
Per square mile of land (2000)



Population/Housing Density Greater Soldotna Area  
Per square mile of land (2000)

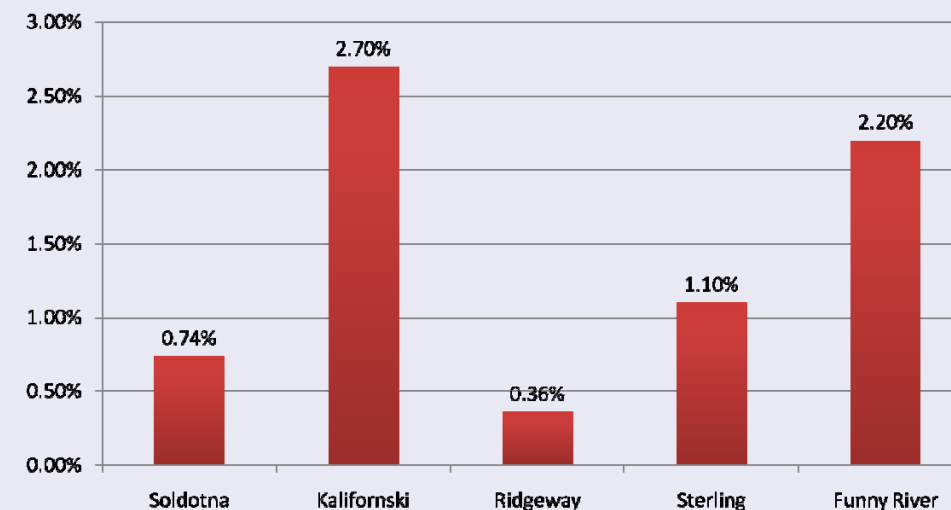


Population and housing unit density is per square mile of land area.  
Data from Census 2000

## ISSUES

- ☞ High density of population and housing for KPB
- ☞ Increased development outside the city limits
- ☞ No Control over development outside the city limits
- ☞ Vacant commercial available land is not large enough to support large commercial development (big box stores)
- ☞ Industrial land is all City owned or on the river

Population change of the greater Soldotna EIA area  
(2000-2007)



## STRENGTHS

- ☞ The Kenai River
  - Major community asset
  - Economic engine
  
- ☞ Kenai River Protection
  - KPBA (21.18) – Anadromous Stream Habitat Protection Area
    - 50' Kenai River development setback
    - No significant removal of vegetation or fuel storage within FEMA "flood hazard area"
  - The Kenai River Overlay district – Soldotna Title 17
    - Encompasses land within 100' of River
    - Development requires Planning Commission Review and Conditional Use Permit.
  - Kenai National Wildlife Refuge
  - The Kenai River Center – Agencies working together to protect the Kenai Peninsula, its watersheds, and its fish and wildlife resources
    - Alaska State Parks
    - Kenai Peninsula Borough
    - AK Dept. Fish & Game
    - US Environmental Protection Agency
    - Kenai Watershed Forum

## ISSUES

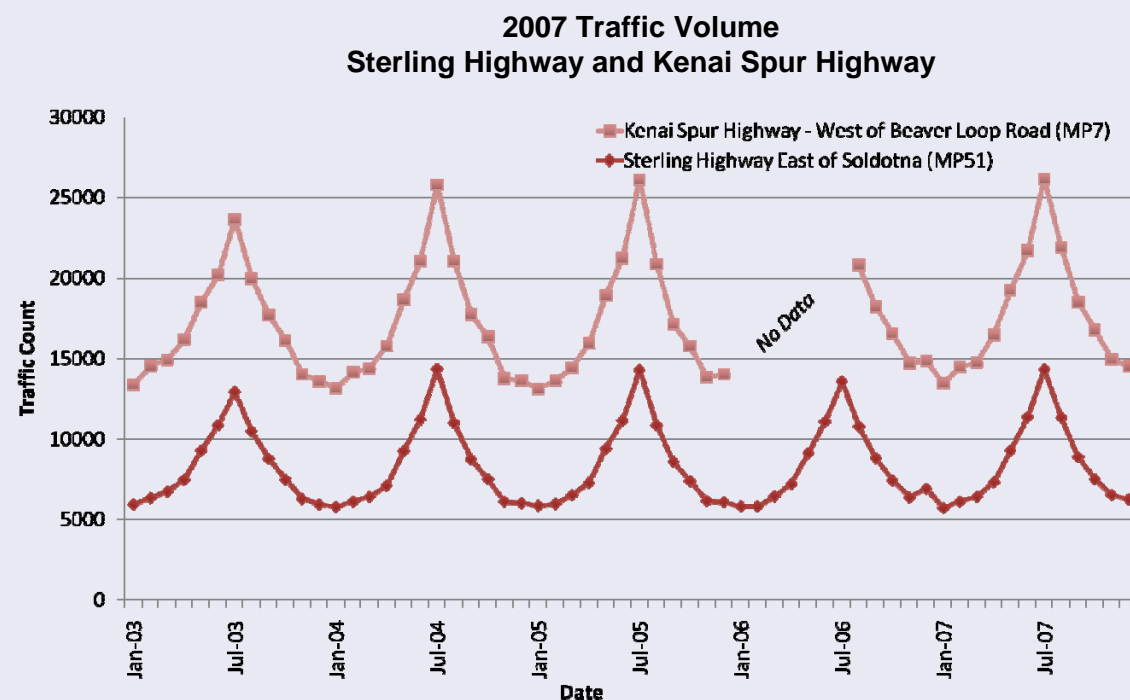
- ☞ The Kenai River
  - Water quality
  - Bank erosion
  - Bank trampling
  - Inadequate tourism infrastructure
  - Unsuccessful bank restoration
  - Flooding (seasonal, glacial outburst, ice dams)
  
- ☞ Wetlands
  - Some of the City's remaining vacant residential land is limited by wetlands (particularly east of Kenai Spur Hwy).
  
- ☞ Floodplains
  - 2002 fall flooding
  - 2007 ice jam flooding
  
- ☞ Coastal Zones
  - Soldotna falls within the coastal zone

## STRENGTHS

- ☞ Easy access to/from Soldotna on state highways
- ☞ Key areas are within walking distance
- ☞ Roads and Trails Master Plan and 2001 Traffic Study.

## ISSUES

- ☞ Traffic Volume
  - Highest annual volume of traffic in Soldotna is on the Sterling Highway/Binkley (2007: 19247)
  - This compares to the Old Seward Highway and at some of the busier intersections; ie: Dimond Blvd. (2007: 19043)
- ☞ Between 1998-2004 there have been seven automobile accidents involving pedestrians in the vicinity of Soldotna on the Sterling or Kenai Spur Highway
- ☞ State highways currently used for local access, reduces safety and capacity
- ☞ Bridge over Kenai River at College Dr.
- ☞ Seasonal traffic congestion
- ☞ Irregular ROW through highway “main streets”
- ☞ Pedestrian amenities lacking



## STATUS

### Water Capacity

- 3.3 million gallons per day capacity
- Using 800,000 to 1.2 MGD per day
- Operating at 24%-36% capacity
- 1200 service connections (3036)
- Serves 3036 people (2.53 average household size)
- 36 miles of distribution
- Four Class A ground water wells
- Parks have 5 seasonal water wells

### Wastewater

- 1.2 million gallons per day plant capacity (permitted for 1.02 mil. gallons)
- Operating at 75% capacity for wastewater treatment
- Maximum capacity for 3800 people
- 34 miles of collection
- 1160 sewer service connections
- Serves 2935 people (2.53 average household size)
- Primary treatment – filter solids
- Secondary treatment – extended aeration activated sludge process
- Treated effluent discharged into the Kenai River
- Dewatered sludge disposal in the borough landfill

## ISSUES

- Utility service is not available to the entire Soldotna population

- Utility service is provided to customers outside the city limits.

- Commercial water/sewer rates are high compared to Kenai

### Average Monthly Cost to Customers

#### Residential Unmetered Service

SOLDOTNA		Water	Sewer
Residential			\$12.40-\$29.62    \$7.02-\$18.90
Commercial			\$71.93-\$121.49    \$40.03-\$69.50
KENAI			
Residential		\$13.78	\$40.35
Commercial			\$40.74-\$102.56    \$13.98-\$35.27
SEWARD			
Residential			\$43.11
Commercial		\$25.63-\$34.17	\$43.11
		\$44.42 +	

#### HOMER