

# Lake and Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan

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## Port Heiden Community Action Plan

Port Heiden is located at the mouth of the Meshik River on the north side of the Alaska Peninsula, near the Aniakchak National Preserve and Monument. Like many Lake and Peninsula communities it is both a traditional Alutiiq community with a culture based on fishing and subsistence, and, at the same time, a community with many links to the modern world.

### **Community Strengths and Successes.**

Community successes include the Port Heiden community building and the community's ability to get the contract for an extensive local remediation program. This has created a substantial, albeit temporary, set of well-paid jobs in the community. Port Heiden also has a strong village council and local school, both which provide programs that have contributed to the community's high graduation rate. The community also successfully obtained a VPSO (Village Public Safety Officer).

### **Community Recommendations**

**Population and Education.** Port Heiden is home to just over 100 people. Population has decreased somewhat over the last twelve years, but student numbers have grown in the last two years.

Table 1. Port Heiden Population and School Enrollment 1990-2012

PORT HEIDEN	1990	2000	2010	2011	2012
Total Population	119	119	102	101	
School enrollment (K-12)	-	30	24	23	28

Sources: US Census Bureau (1990, 2000, 2010 populations), 2011 DCCED Commissioner Certified population estimate, community estimates (2012 population), Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (1990, 2000, 2010, 2011, 2012 school enrollment).

**Housing.** Residents identified a lack of affordable, quality housing, particularly for young families and elders. Census data shows available units but many are seasonal and some may be in sub-standard condition. Many families have one or more additional families in their home. Cabins and bed and breakfasts are rented out to itinerant workers. HUD recently built six houses, but the community still needs about 25 additional housing units. Multi-unit housing is desired for young people who are having trouble finding/starting their own homes. Residents have expressed dissatisfaction with the way HUD and NAHASDA programs are carried out, noting inconsistency in what is promised and what is delivered. These programs are also not adequately serving low-income, elders, and disabled community members. The community also notes that homeowner assistance and education should cover home maintenance as well as purchasing.

**Energy.** Fuel prices are high, driving up the cost of living. Port Heiden Utilities is currently upgrading the community's electric system. Upgrades will better accommodate potential renewable energy systems. Port Heiden is pursuing several renewable energy options, including burning Peat moss, training in geothermal systems through the Alaska Energy Authority, and tidal energy. The Lake and Peninsula Borough has conducted a wind study

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that indicates a favorable wind regime in and is actively prusing funds for a wind turbine. Training has been funded through Indian General Assistance Program (IGAP) grants. Port Heiden is also pursuing bulk fuel purchases with other communities. They have expressed interest in getting Borough support make these purchases more economically feasible.

Table 2. Port Heiden Energy Prices 2002-2010

PORT HEIDEN	2002	2010
Cost of fuel (per gallon)	No data	\$4.88
Cost of electricity (per kWh) <i>average residential rate before PCE</i>	No data	75.0 cents

Source: Alaska Energy Authority PCE calculations

Note: Fuel prices reflect price paid by utilities; these may differ from retail heating oil, gasoline, diesel and other fuel prices. Comprehensive current data on retail fuel prices for all the Lake and Peninsula communities are not available. The Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED) produces information on gasoline and heating fuel prices in select communities around Alaska. The most recent (July 2012) DCCED data includes three Lake and Peninsula communities:

- Chignik Bay: gasoline \$4.93/gallon; heating oil \$5.06/gallon (up 20 percent since January 2012)
- Kokhanok: gasoline \$8.00/ gallon; heating oil \$7.86/gallon
- Nondalton: gasoline \$7.79/ gallon (up 18 percent since January2012); heating oil \$6.59/gallon

**Economy.** The Port Heiden remediation projects are currently employing the majority of residents (estimated 70-80 residents in 2011) and will continue for an estimated 30 years. This steady work is drawing people from other communities and accounts for the recent increase in the number of school students. Employees work from April to November, and many people are choosing to stay in the village over the winter.

Apart from the remediation projects, commercial fishing and government jobs provide the majority of cash income in Port Heiden. In 2010, 11 residents held commercial fishing permits, down from 17 in 2000. Permits were lost from local families when older generations passed on and their children did not want to fish (during time when prices were very low). Many young people have their own set net sites, but it is a significant challenge under current conditions to produce a quality product that the market will accept and this has produced a barrier to participation in the fishery.

Table 3. Port Heiden Commercial Fishing Permits 2000-2010

PORT HEIDEN	2000	2010
Number of residents holding commercial fishing permits	17	11

Source: NOAA (2000) DCCED (2010)

There is a strong desire for Board of Fisheries action to enable greater participation of local residents of Port Heiden in the local fisheries. Salmon used to be flown fresh directly out

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from Port Heiden. In the month of July fish are intercepted offshore by Area M fishing boats, reducing the numbers of fish entering Inner Port Heiden. Subsistence fishing has been greatly reduced in recent years; this is attributed partly to the Area M fishery and partly to a failure to adequately document and report subsistence catches to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. At the last Board of Fisheries meeting residents unsuccessfully tried to get the opportunity for more local participation. Additionally the community would like to find a way to provide much improved escapement count information that ADF&G would use to better manage the local run. The community would also like to implement a habitat control program to address a beaver dam problem.

With a fish tax, residents could benefit from the Area M fishery. Commercial fishing could be a more stable, lucrative industry for local residents with:

- Increased access to ownership of limited entry permits.
- A local fish processing plant.
- Greater opportunities for local residents to participate in local commercial fisheries
- A City fish tax.

The tourism industry also has some economic development potential for the area. About 2,000 people come to see the Aniakchak volcano each year, but only about 60 pass through Port Heiden. Ideas for increasing the number of visitors that stop in Port Heiden include:

- Creating attractions:
  - Adventure travel tours (e.g., hiking, four-wheeling tours).
  - Birding and wildlife viewing facilities/excursions.
  - Natural history excursions (dinosaur tracks, historic hiking trails)
- Marketing attractions:
  - airport facility, sign at the airport, visitor guide or kiosk telling people they can rest and learn about the people in Port Heiden
- Getting visitor infrastructure in place:
  - Build cabins for visitor use
  - Create a washeteria (bath, shower, rest area) for visitors
  - Get needed permits + licenses

Potential challenges include wilderness safety concerns (e.g., bear and wolf safety) and the desire for year-round jobs, not just seasonal jobs.

Another important economic development strategy identified by Port Heiden residents includes increasing access to training and education to meet local service needs, such as:

- Vocational education for trade certification
- Training for value-added processing
- EMT-specific training from BBAHC
- Heavy equipment training
- Small business development training

This could be accomplished through existing regional institutions and programs (e.g., SAVEC, BBAHC). Residents also indicated that they would benefit from an increase in online education.

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**Community Health + Wellness, Governance.** The community also desires to improve health and wellness through new events and facilities. Port Heiden residents would like to see more community/cultural get-togethers, and increased facilities for adult and youth recreational use. Ideas include: a daycare facility, playground, more centralized trails, and increased access to gym facilities. The school gym is only available for public use three nights each week during the school year and not at all during the summer. The community envisions a year-round gym/multi-purpose facility, with the following features:

- a place to work out (not just play basketball at night)
- options for other recreational activities
- option for specialized classes, like a woodshop or pottery

Port Heiden's existing health services include the Port Heiden Clinic, a health aide, and the Port Heiden Volunteer EMS for emergency services. Additional needs cited were increased mental health services and an additional clinic PA or doctor to help serve regional health needs, since the community is beginning to function as a more of a hub to residents and commercial fisherman that work in and/or visit the lower peninsula.

Port Heiden is an incorporated second class city. There is reasonably good cooperation within the community between the tribe, corporation and city council; and also between the community the region, school district and teachers. The village corporation has a cooperative agreement with the Air Force for the remediation project that is working well and providing jobs for Port Heiden and other Bristol Bay communities. Survey comments indicate that more communication between the borough and communities would be helpful:

- "An annual meeting isn't enough."
- "Things in the village change rapidly."

### **Priority Goals and Strategies**

Comments from surveys and community meetings indicate that the highest priorities for Port Heiden are: providing adequate housing for community members, increasing recreation amenities, addressing the high costs of energy, and maintaining a local economy. Though all inter-related, specific economic development goals include creating and sustaining long-term jobs, providing the education needed for those jobs, increasing local control over managing fishing (subsistence and commercial), making transportation improvements (e.g., lower Alaska Peninsula road), and developing tourism.

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PRIORITIES	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME + NOTES
Goal: Provide adequate housing for community members.		
Construct multi-unit housing for young people, low-income, elders, and disabled community members.	City, Tribe, BBHA	Ongoing, near term priority. Explore options for owner equity (cash and/or “sweat equity”).
Include home maintenance in homeowner assistance and education programs.	City, Tribe, BBHA	Ongoing
Goal: Increase recreation amenities.		
Organize community/cultural get-togethers.	City, Tribe	Ongoing
Develop more centrally-located trails.	City, Tribe	2013-2023
Increase access to school gym.	City, Tribe, LPSD	2013
Create a multi-purpose recreation center: fitness center, daycare, playground, activity rooms for specialized classes (e.g., woodshop, pottery).	City, Tribe Partner with LPSD?	2013-2023
Goal: Address the high costs of energy.		
Make buildings (existing and new) as energy-efficient as possible.	City, Tribe, AHFC, Cold Climate Housing Research Center	Ongoing
Continue to explore renewable energy options (e.g., Peat moss, geothermal, tidal).	City, Tribe, AEA	Ongoing
Pursue bulk fuel purchases with other communities.	City, Tribe. Partner with Borough	2013
Goal: Create and sustain long-term jobs.		
Increase access to training and education to meet local service needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocational education for trade certification</li> <li>• Training for value-added processing</li> <li>• EMT-specific training (BBAHC)</li> <li>• Heavy equipment training</li> <li>• Small business development training</li> <li>• Develop or take advantage of online education programs.</li> </ul>	City, Tribe Partner with LPSD, SAVEC, BBAHC, University, Alaska Small Business Development Center	Ongoing
Increase local control over managing fishing (subsistence and commercial). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase access to ownership of limited entry permits.</li> </ul>	City, Tribe, Borough Work with BBEDC, ADF&G	Ongoing

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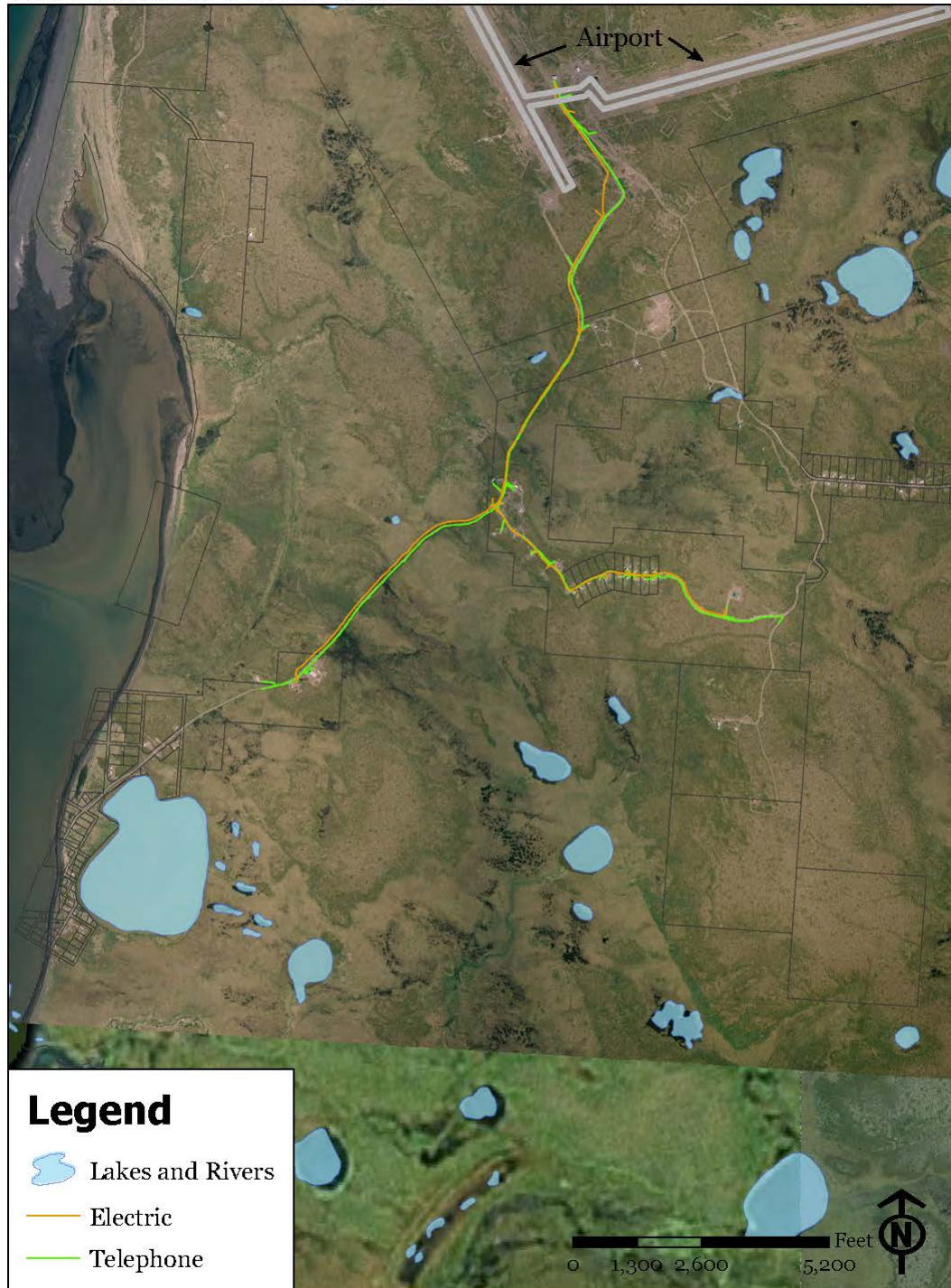
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore developing a local fish processing plant.</li> <li>• Consider instituting a City fish tax.</li> <li>• Document and report subsistence harvest to ADF&amp;G.</li> </ul>		
<p>Support construction of the lower Alaska Peninsula Road (will increase access for trade, tourism, and lower shipping costs for freight, fuel, etc.)</p>	<p>City, Tribe working with Borough and DOT/PF.</p>	<p>Next 10-20 years</p>
<p>Develop tourism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop tourist attractions, such as adventure travel tours (e.g., hiking, four-wheeling tours), birding and wildlife viewing facilities/excursions, and natural history excursions (dinosaur tracks, historic hiking trails).</li> <li>• Market tourist attractions (e.g., sign at the airport, visitor guide or kiosk)</li> <li>• Establish visitor infrastructure: Build cabins for visitor use, Create a washeteria (bath, shower, rest area) for visitors, obtain needed permits and licenses.</li> </ul>	<p>City, Tribe Partner with NPS, guiding and tour businesses.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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## Port Heiden Public Facilities and Services Inventory

SERVICE/FACILITY	PROVIDER	CURRENT FACILITIES	ISSUES/NOTES/NEEDS
Transportation & Infrastructure			
Airport	State	5,000 and a 4,000 foot crosswind lighted gravel runway	
Boat Landing		Natural boat harbor, no dock. Boat haul out and marine storage available.	
Maintenance Equipment	City	Multiple dozers, backhoes, a grader, and loader.	
Electricity	Port Heiden Utilities (City of Port Heiden)	One generator (100 kW)	Wind study completed.
Bulk Fuel		LPSD 15,000 gal City 467,500 gal Village Council 55,000 gal AK DOT 5,000 gal Airport 3,000 gal Total capacity = 545,500 gal	
Water/Sewer	City	Septic pumping services	
Solid Waste	City	Class 3 landfill	
Communications	Phone: ACS GCI; Internet: GCI		
Services & Facilities			
Fire & EMS	Fire Department, two trained firefighters, clinic and volunteers provide EMS	Code Red Unit, Ambulance	
Police	Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO), State Trooper (Iliamna)	City holding cell	
Postal Service	USPS	Post Office	
Community Center	City	City offices	
Village Council	Native Village of Port Heiden	Village Office (in City, Village, and Clinic building)	
City Council	City of Port Heiden	City Office (in City, Village, and Clinic building)	
Health Clinic	BBAHC	Port Heiden Clinic	
School	LPSD	School building	

## Port Heiden Public Facilities



Scale: 1:33,000  
Projection: NAD 1983 Albers Alaska  
Data Layers: Lake and Peninsula Borough GIS data layers and  
Alaska Division of Community and Regional Affairs Community Profiles Aerial Photos