



Community Conditions

Chapter III consists of two elements. The first element presents the community conditions and demographics. The second element is the presentation of the economy of the region and local travel patterns. Where appropriate, maps and tables are used to demonstrate pertinent information regarding the characteristics being discussed.

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Study Area Location

The study area is shown in Figure III-1. The Seward area is located in the south-central portion of Alaska. The area is part of the Kenai Peninsula Borough. The study area—which is south of Anchorage—is along the Gulf of Alaska and is relatively isolated from the rest of the borough. The study area includes the communities of Seward, Lowell Point, Bear Creek, and Primrose. Since there are very few census block groups within the study area, the region was divided into Transit Analysis Zones (TAZs). The TAZs allow for planning to be done on a smaller scale. Figure III-2 shows the TAZs that were used for demographic analysis and planning purposes.

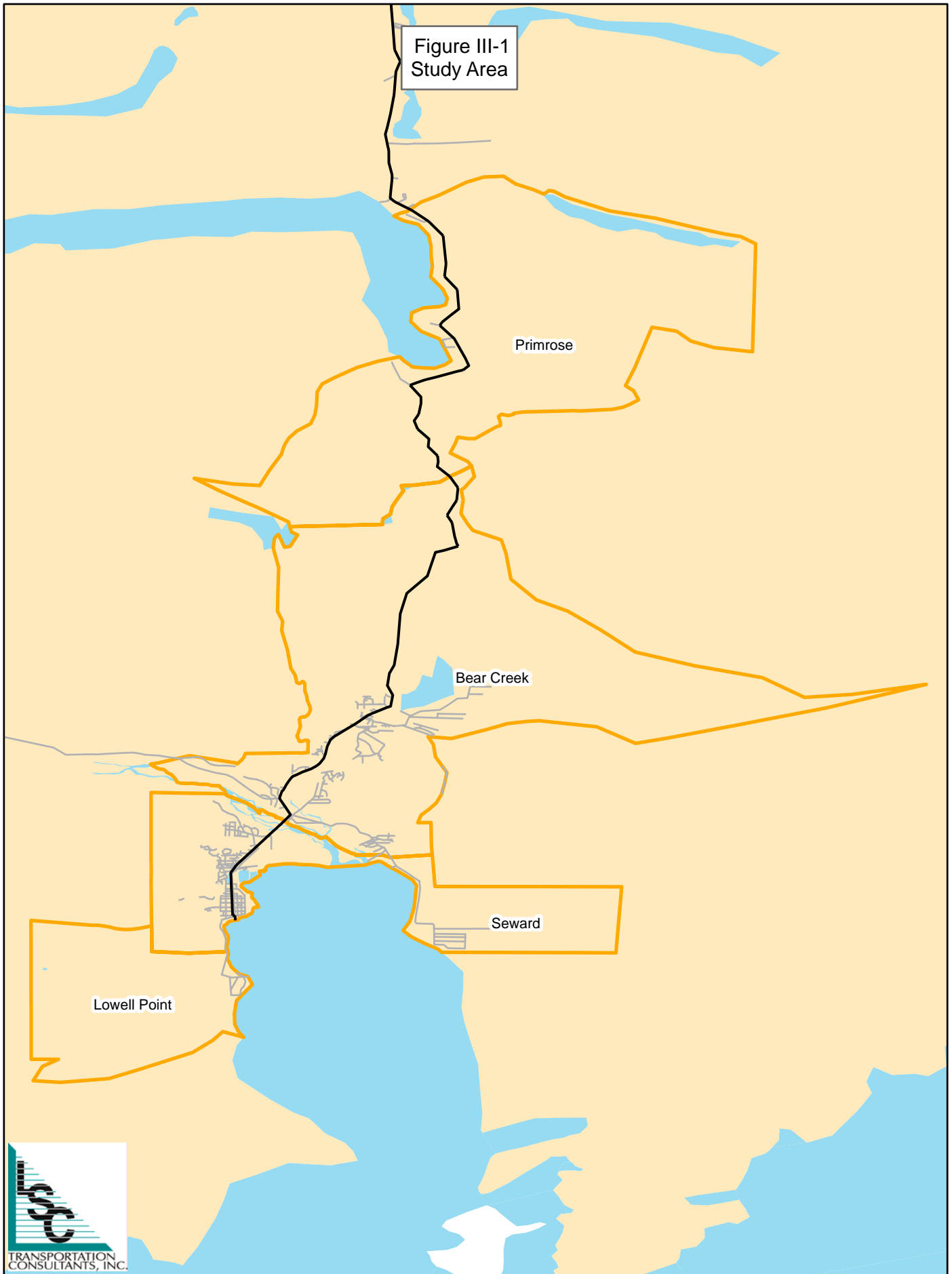
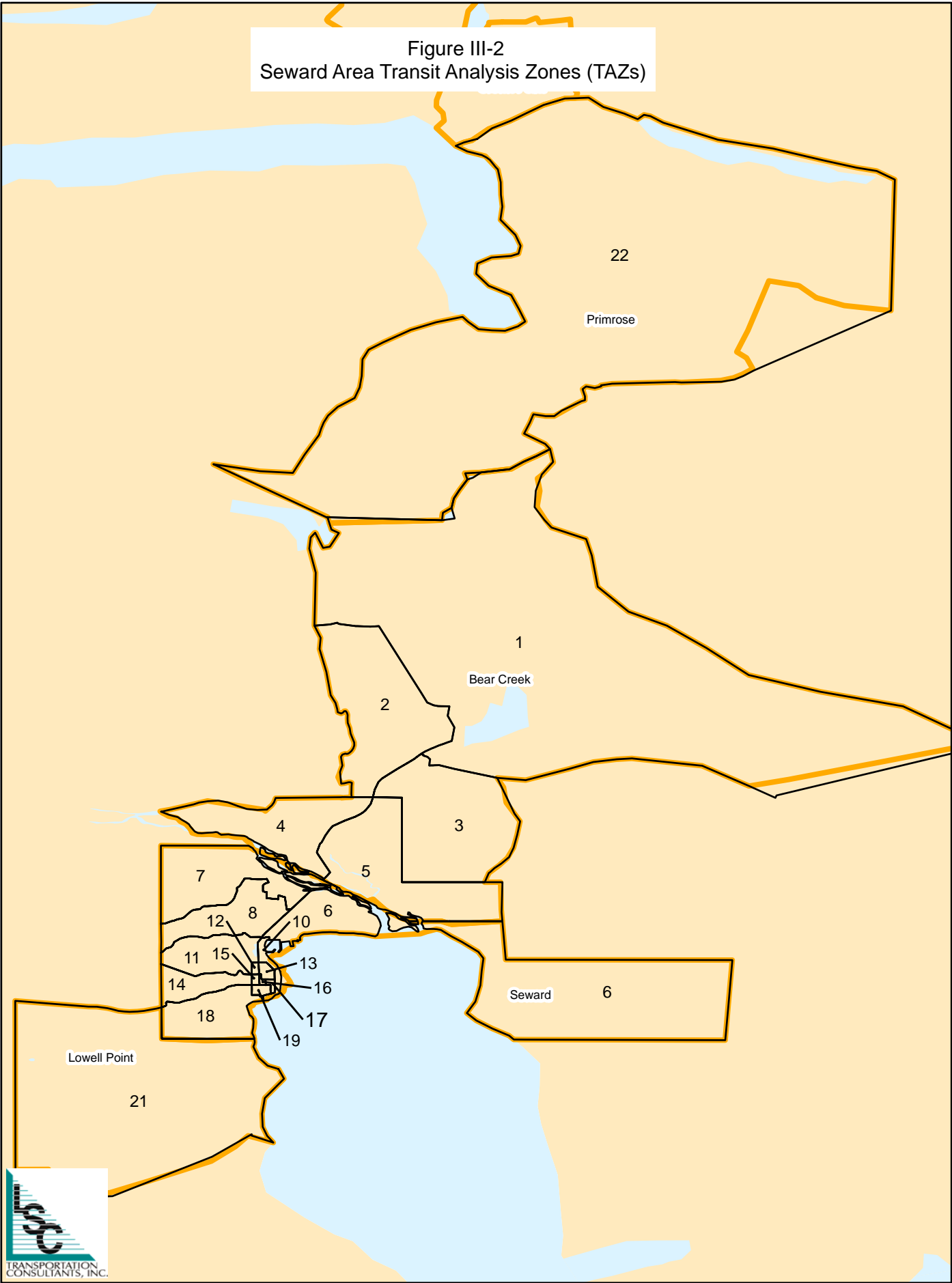


Figure III-2
Seward Area Transit Analysis Zones (TAZs)




STUDY AREA DEMOGRAPHICS








2010 Population

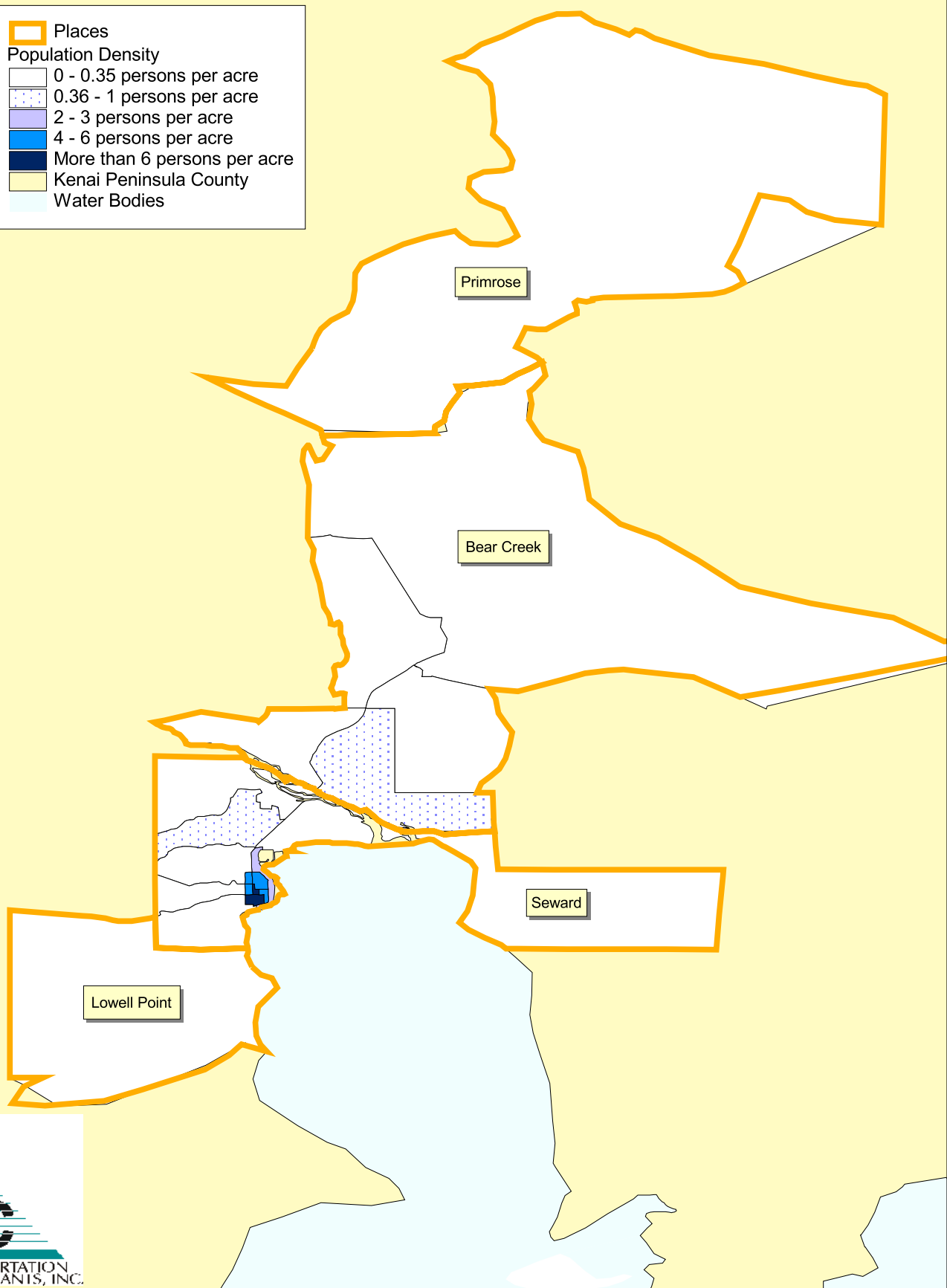
The estimated 2010 US Census population for the study area is 4,581. Figure III-3 shows the 2010 population density for the study area by TAZ. The figure shows that the majority of the population is centered around Seward. The population densities are more disperse the further out from the core they are, with population becoming sparse in Lowell Point, Primrose, and Bear Creek.

Figure III-3
2010 Estimated Population Density

 Places

Population Density

-  0 - 0.35 persons per acre
-  0.36 - 1 persons per acre
-  2 - 3 persons per acre
-  4 - 6 persons per acre
-  More than 6 persons per acre
-  Kenai Peninsula County
-  Water Bodies



Population Projections 2020

Table III-1 shows the population projections by TAZ for the study area. The table presents data from 2000 census counts, as well as projections for current and future population. Estimates for 2020 data were gathered using the borough projections provided by the Alaska Department of Labor. In total, the borough is predicted to grow by 7.9 percent over the next 10 years. This is a slightly higher rate than over the next 20 years, where an annual growth rate of 0.67 percent is projected. These projections should be seen as estimates, as many outlying factors can influence future population projections, including economic factors.

Table III-1 Seward Population Projections							
Borough	Place	Census Tract	Census Block Group	Transit Analysis Zones	2000	2010	2020
Kenai	Seward	13	2	6	526	477	515
				7	192	174	188
				8	729	661	713
				10	130	118	127
				11	115	104	113
				12	56	51	55
				13	242	219	237
				14	116	105	113
				15	75	68	73
				16	132	120	129
	17	104	94	102			
	18	169	153	165			
	19	244	221	239			
	Bear Creek	13	1	1	300	317	342
				2	258	272	294
				3	261	275	297
				4	220	232	251
				5	709	748	807
	Lowell Point	13	1	21	92	97	105
	Primrose	3	1	22	93	73	79
	TOTAL				4,763	4,581	4,943

Source: US Census, 2000; Alaska DOLWD.

Transit-Dependent Population Characteristics

This section provides information on the individuals considered by the transportation profession to be dependent upon public transit. In general, these population

characteristics preclude most such individuals from driving, leaving carpooling and public transit as the only motorized forms of available transportation.

The four types of limitations that preclude people from driving are physical limitations, financial limitations, legal limitations, and self-imposed limitations. Physical limitations may include everything from permanent disabilities such as frailty due to age, blindness, paralysis, or developmental disabilities to temporary disabilities such as acute illnesses and head injuries. Financial limitations essentially include those persons unable to purchase or rent their own vehicle. Legal limitations refer to such limitations as persons who are too young to drive (generally under age 16). Self-imposed limitations refer to those people who choose not to own or drive a vehicle (some or all of the time) for reasons other than those listed in the first three categories.

The US Census is generally capable of providing information about the first three categories of limitation. The fourth category of limitation is currently recognized as representing a relatively small portion of transit ridership, particularly in smaller cities. Table III-2 presents the region's US Census statistics regarding the elderly population, mobility-limited population, below-poverty population, and zero-vehicle households. These data are important to various methods of transit demand estimation.

**Table III-2
2010 Estimated General Population Characteristics
Seward Area**

Borough	Place	Census Tract	Census Block Group	Transit Analysis Zones	Land Area (acres)	Total Population Estimated 2010	Total Households Estimated 2010		Total Zero-Vehicle Households Estimated 2010		Total Mobility Limited Estimated 2010		Total Elderly 60 & Over Estimated 2010		Total Below Poverty Estimated 2010			
							#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
																	#	%
Kenai	Seward	13	2	6	5104.0	477	155	22	14.5%	22	4.6%	51	10.7%	40	8.4%			
				7	1301.8	174	56	8	14.5%	8	4.6%	19	10.7%	15	8.4%			
				8	814.1	661	214	31	14.5%	31	4.6%	71	10.7%	56	8.4%			
				10	93.4	118	38	6	14.5%	5	4.6%	13	10.7%	10	8.4%			
				11	637.4	104	34	5	14.5%	5	4.6%	11	10.7%	9	8.4%			
				12	16.6	51	16	2	14.5%	2	4.6%	5	10.7%	4	8.4%			
				13	42.9	219	71	10	14.5%	10	4.6%	23	10.7%	19	8.4%			
				14	383.4	105	34	5	14.5%	5	4.6%	11	10.7%	9	8.4%			
				15	15.4	68	22	3	14.5%	3	4.6%	7	10.7%	6	8.4%			
				16	9.0	120	39	6	14.5%	6	4.6%	13	10.7%	10	8.4%			
				17	17.3	94	31	4	14.5%	4	4.6%	10	10.7%	8	8.4%			
				18	789.8	153	50	7	14.5%	7	4.6%	16	10.7%	13	8.4%			
				19	36.5	221	72	10	14.5%	10	4.6%	24	10.7%	19	8.4%			
				Bear Creek	13	1	1	18752.0	317	124	5	4.2%	9	2.9%	19	5.9%	20	6.4%
							2	2535.0	272	107	4	4.2%	8	2.9%	16	5.9%	17	6.4%
							3	2437.1	275	108	4	4.2%	8	2.9%	16	5.9%	18	6.4%
							4	1428.5	232	91	4	4.2%	7	2.9%	14	5.9%	15	6.4%
							5	2089.6	748	293	12	4.2%	22	2.9%	44	5.9%	48	6.4%
				Lowell Point	13	1	21	7536.6	97	38	2	4.2%	3	2.9%	6	5.9%	6	6.4%
	Primrose	3	1	22	24614.4	73	31	1	3.2%	3	4.1%	11	15.1%	3	4.1%			
Totals					68,655	4,581	1,623	153	9.4%	179	3.9%	400	8.7%	343	7.5%			

Source: 2000 Census, NPA Data Services, Inc., LSC 2006.

Elderly Population

The elderly represent a significant number of the national transit-dependent population and represent approximately 8.7 percent of the total population in the study area. Figure III-4 illustrates the distribution of the elderly (age 60 or higher) in the region. The highest density of elderly population is in downtown Seward. The density of elderly persons becomes more dispersed as the location becomes more distant from downtown.

Mobility-Limited Population

Mobility-limited individuals also represent a large portion of the transit-dependent population. Nationwide, approximately 10 percent of the population has some form of mobility impairment, although this is typically much lower in rural areas. Approximately four percent of the population of the Seward area has some type of mobility limitation. Figure III-5 shows the mobility-limited population density. The greatest density of the mobility-limited population is in the downtown area of Seward.

Figure III-4
2010 Estimated Density of Elderly Persons

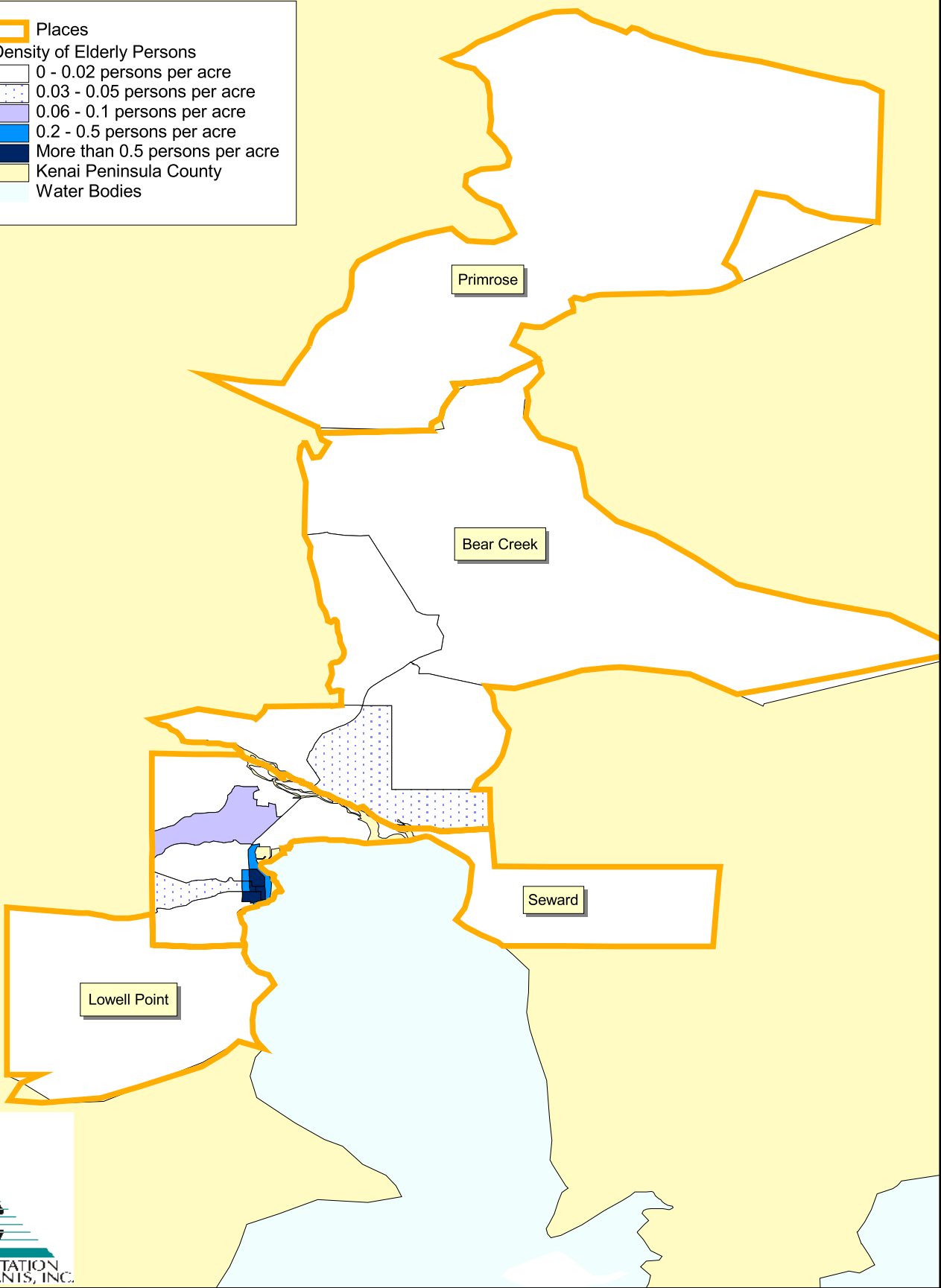
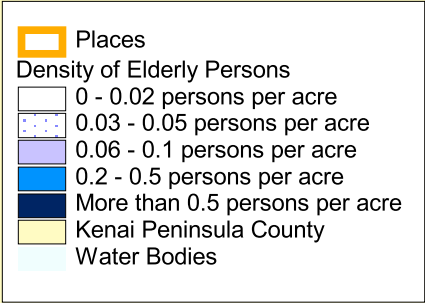
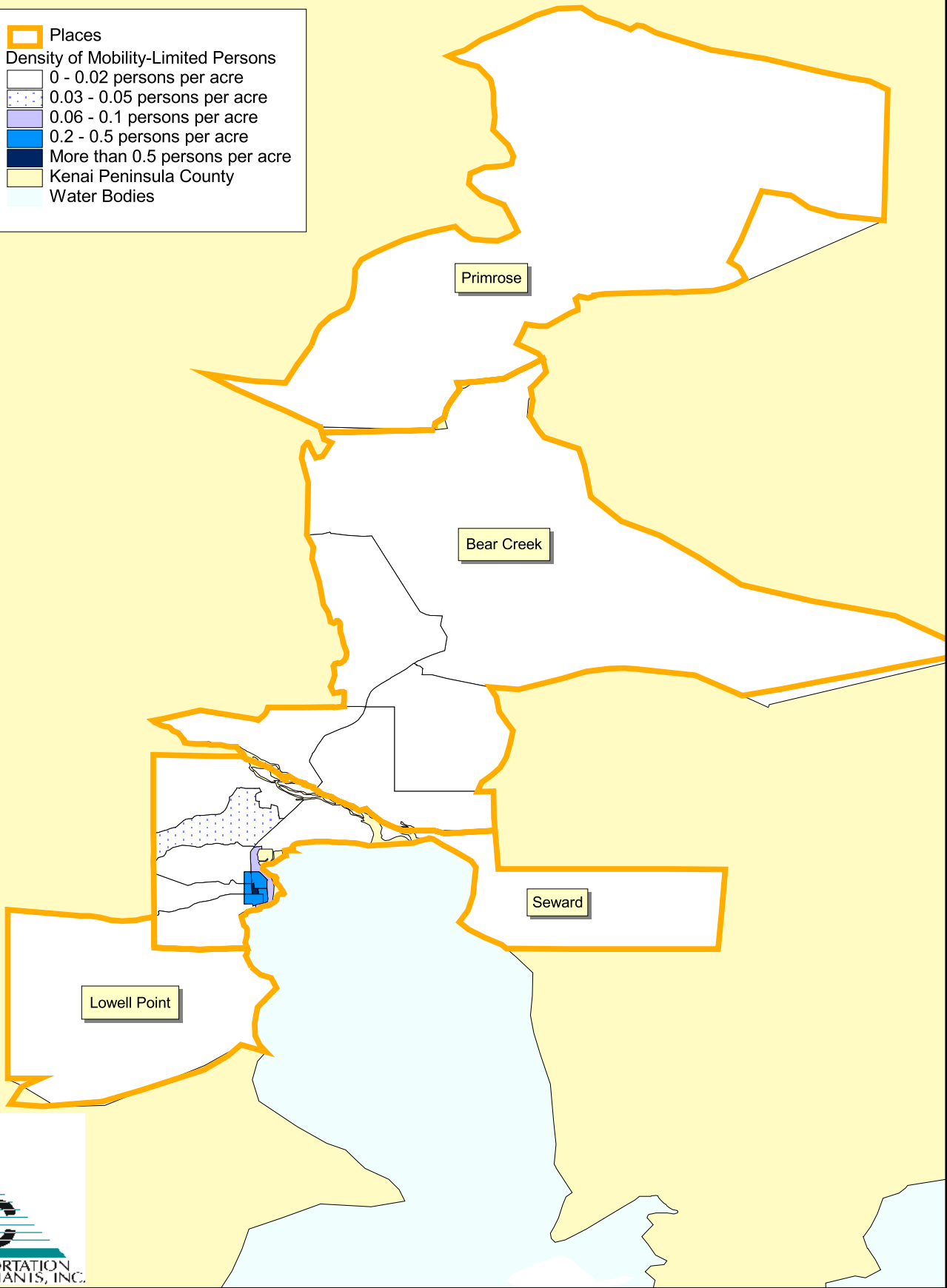


Figure III-5
2010 Estimated Density of Mobility-Limited Persons

Places
 Density of Mobility-Limited Persons
 0 - 0.02 persons per acre
 0.03 - 0.05 persons per acre
 0.06 - 0.1 persons per acre
 0.2 - 0.5 persons per acre
 More than 0.5 persons per acre
 Kenai Peninsula County
 Water Bodies



Low-Income Population

The low-income population tends to depend upon transit to a greater extent than the wealthy population or those with a high level of disposable income. The distribution of the below-poverty population is shown in Figure III-6. The highest densities of below-poverty population are in downtown Seward and in northwest Seward. Approximately 7.5 percent (343 individuals) of the population of the Seward region can be considered low income.

Zero-Vehicle Households

People who do not own or have access to a private vehicle are also considered transit-dependent. Approximately 8.6 percent (153) of the region's households reported no vehicle available for use. The density of zero-vehicle households for the region is shown in Figure III-7. The highest percentage of zero-vehicle households is located in the central part of downtown Seward. There are slightly less dense populations of individuals without access to a vehicle to the north of downtown Seward.

Figure III-6
2010 Estimated Density of Low-Income Persons

Places
 Density of Low-Income Persons
 0 - 0.02 persons per acre
 0.03 - 0.05 persons per acre
 0.06 - 0.1 persons per acre
 0.2 - 0.5 persons per acre
 More than 0.5 persons per acre
 Kenai Peninsula County
 Water Bodies

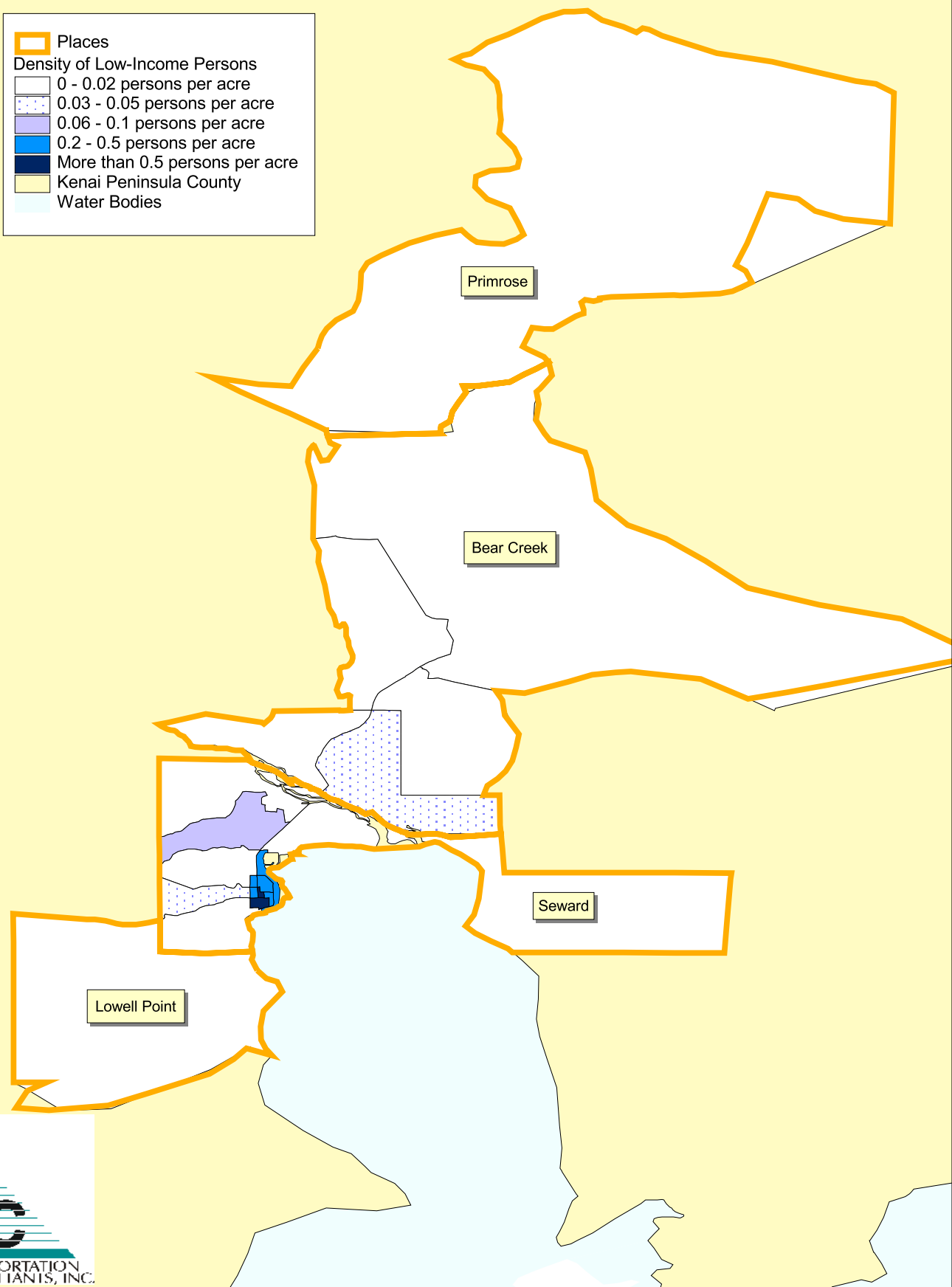
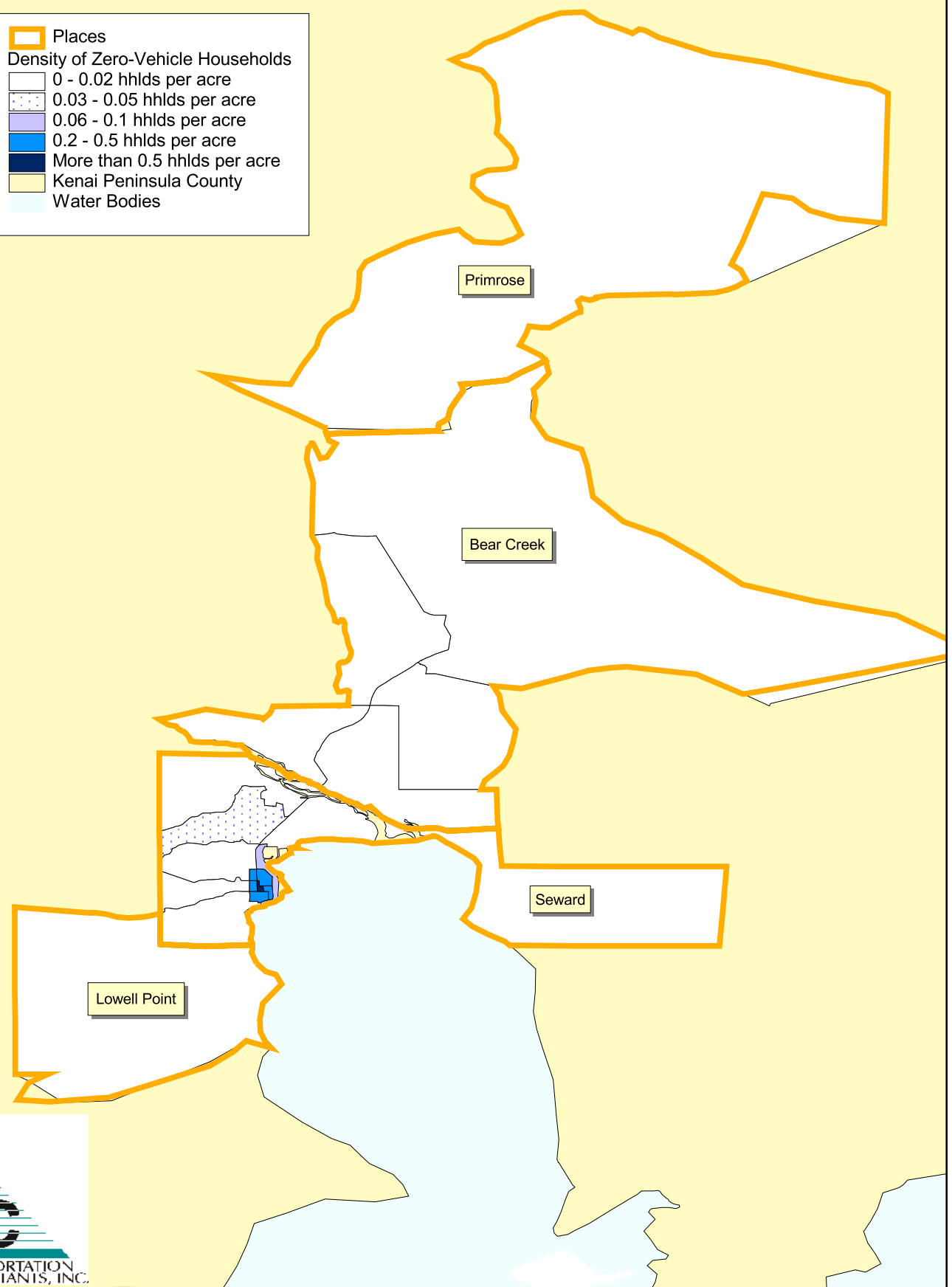


Figure III-7
2010 Estimated Density of Zero-Vehicle Households

Places
 Density of Zero-Vehicle Households
 0 - 0.02 hhlds per acre
 0.03 - 0.05 hhlds per acre
 0.06 - 0.1 hhlds per acre
 0.2 - 0.5 hhlds per acre
 More than 0.5 hhlds per acre
 Kenai Peninsula County
 Water Bodies



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS

According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, the borough has a civilian labor force of 25,276 with 2,228 unemployed. The region has a current unemployment rate of 8.8 percent, matching the rate of the state. As the region's population increases over the next 25 years, all sectors of the economy will be affected. As population and employment increase, the amount of economic activity within the borough will most likely also increase. This will improve the purchasing power of the whole region. The increase in income may create a greater demand on the transportation system within the region.

Historic Unemployment Rates

The amount of unemployment in the Kenai Peninsula Borough has varied substantially between 1990 and 2009, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data. Table III-3 shows the data organized by year for the borough. The highest unemployment rate over the past 20 years was in 1992, when unemployment was 15 percent. Conversely, the lowest unemployment for the borough was experienced during 2007, with 7.7 percent. Overall, unemployment is trending down compared to the previous decade. During the 1990s unemployment averaged 12.3 percent annually, while in the 2000s unemployment averaged only 8.6 percent of the working age population.

Table III-3 Historic Unemployment Data	
1990	11.7%
1991	13.0%
1992	15.0%
1993	12.8%
1994	12.3%
1995	11.9%
1996	13.4%
1997	12.2%
1998	10.3%
1999	10.6%
2000	8.0%
2001	7.9%
2002	9.4%
2003	10.0%
2004	9.5%
2005	8.8%
2006	8.1%
2007	7.7%
2008	8.2%
2009	8.8%

Employment Sectors

Table III-4 shows the available US Census information on the region’s employment sectors. This information is at the borough subdivision level due to the lack of reliable data available at smaller distinctions. The borough is split between the Kenai-Cook Inlet subdivision and the Seward subdivision. Table III-4 shows employment by sector for the Seward subdivision.

Educational, health, and social services make up the largest sector in the Seward area, accounting for 18.5 percent of employment. The next highest industry sectors are arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services (16.3 percent) and public administration (13.7 percent).

Employment Sector	Male	Female	Total	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing/hunting, and mining	128	45	173	7.3%
Construction	131	30	161	6.8%
Manufacturing	94	21	115	4.9%
Wholesale trade	26	17	43	1.8%
Retail trade	100	100	200	8.5%
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	166	53	219	9.3%
Information	27	7	34	1.4%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental/leasing	23	24	47	2.0%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	65	55	120	5.1%
Educational, health, and social services	135	302	437	18.5%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	193	192	385	16.3%
Other services (except public administration)	51	48	99	4.2%
Public administration	203	120	323	13.7%

Major Employers

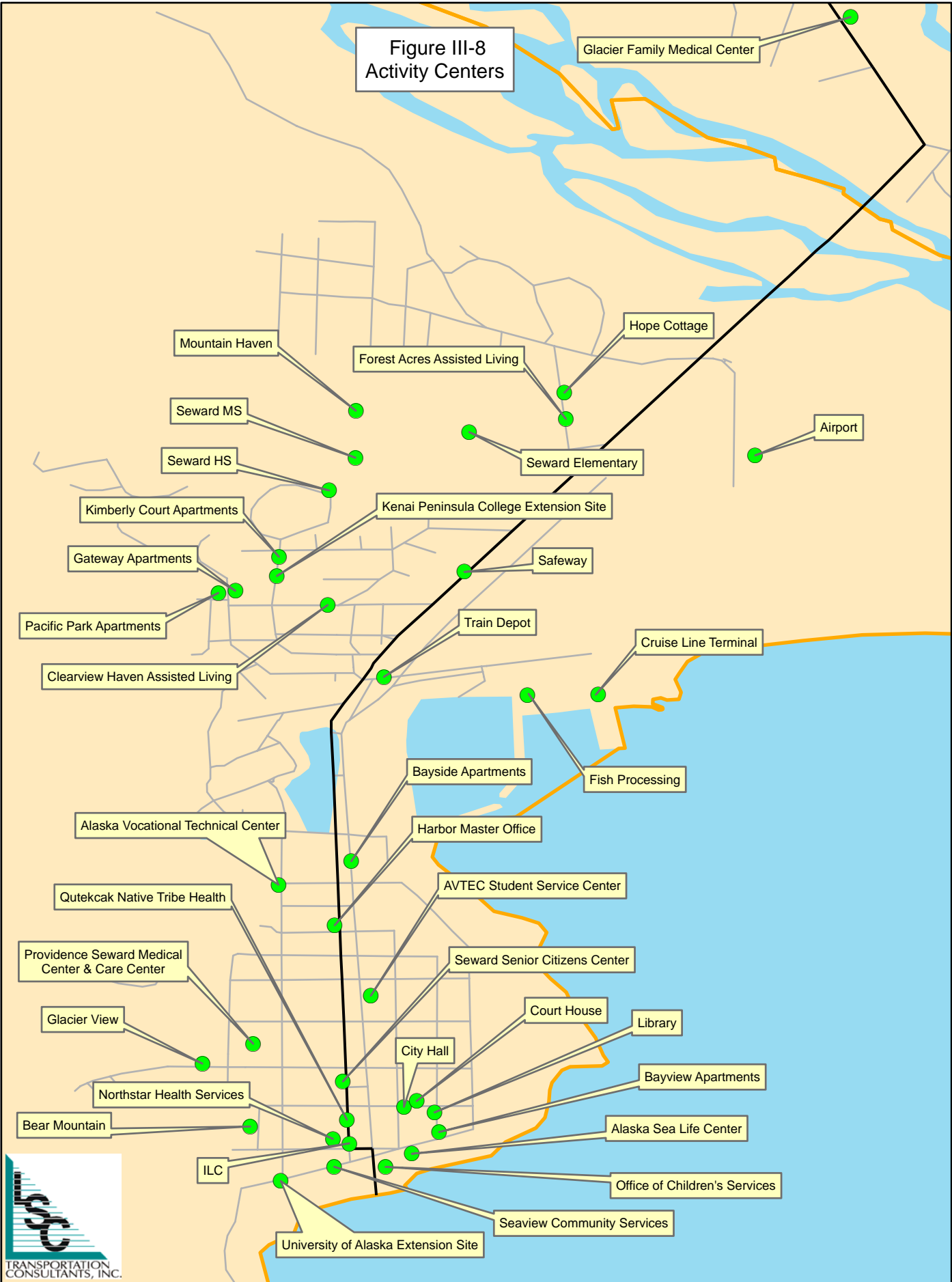
Table III-5 reflects the 25 largest employers in the borough. Information was retrieved from the Alaska Department of Labor at the lowest distinction available. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is the largest employer with 1,287 employees. This exemplifies the fact that education, health, and social services are the largest industrial sectors in the region. Following the school district, the state government (977), the Central Peninsula General Hospital (571), and the federal government (416) employ the most individuals within the borough. It should be noted that only six of the top employers have a presence in Seward. Safeway, the University of Alaska extension site, Job Ready, Icicle Seafoods, Spenards Builders Supply, and the Seward Association for Advanced Mariners all have locations within the study area.

Table III-5 Kenai Peninsula Borough Largest Employers	
Business	Employees
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	1,287
State Government	977
Central Peninsula General Hospital	571
Federal Government	416
Carrs/Safeway	412
Kenai Peninsula Borough	402
Frontier Community Services	312
Alaska Petroleum Contractors	307
South Peninsula Hospital	271
Fred Meyer	260
University Of Alaska	216
Tesoro Alaska	185
Chevron Usa	157
South Peninsula Behavioral Health Services	141
Agrium Us	141
Peak Oilfield Services	138
Homer Electric Association	136
Seward Association For Advanced Mariners	133
Katch A Mac	133
Home Depot	129
Job Ready	128
Spenard Builders Supply	128
Icicle Seafoods	125
Homer, City Of	124
Kenaitze Indian Tribe	124
<i>Source: Alaska Department of Labor.</i>	

Activity Centers

Figure III-8 shows the activity centers in the Seward area. The map shows the various government, residential, recreational, and retail centers in the area. Some of the major activity centers on the map include City Hall, the library, educational centers, and medical facilities. The majority of the activity centers are located downtown—more specifically, the southern portion of downtown Seward. Some of the activity centers that are slightly further away from downtown include the public schools and Glacier Family Medical Center.

Figure III-8
Activity Centers



TRAVEL PATTERNS

Work Transportation Mode

The 2000 US Census yields information useful to this study regarding the means of transportation to and from work for the region’s residents. Table III-6 shows the number of people in the Seward subdivision’s workforce and their modes of travel. These data were tabulated for employees 16 years of age and older who were at work when the US Census questionnaire was completed. The majority of the region’s workforce drives alone to work (1,432 people or 62.2 percent). Carpooling (16.5 percent) and walking (10.1 percent) are the next modes of choice. Only 0.7 percent of employees reported using public transit (bus, streetcar, ferryboat, and taxi) as their mode of choice for work. Approximately 6.3 percent of individuals reported working from home.

Table III-6 Journey to Work		
	Number	Percent
Drove alone	1,432	62.2%
Carpooled	380	16.5%
Bus or trolley bus	5	0.2%
Streetcar or trolley car	4	0.2%
Taxicab	6	0.3%
Motorcycle	3	0.1%
Bicycle	17	0.7%
Walked	233	10.1%
Other means	77	3.3%
Worked at home	144	6.3%
<i>Source: US Census, 2000.</i>		

Table III-7 shows that the average commute time for residents of Seward was roughly 16 minutes. The most frequent response was five to nine minutes, with 30.1 percent of the respondents. Individuals taking between 10 and 14 minutes to commute to work represent 27.7 percent of residents, while workers commuting less than five minutes represent another 14.7 percent of residents. A total of 3.2 percent of Seward area workers have commutes of 90 minutes or more.

Table III-7 Commute Times		
	Number	Percent
Less than 5 minutes	318	14.7%
5 to 9 minutes	649	30.1%
10 to 14 minutes	597	27.7%
15 to 19 minutes	271	12.6%
20 to 24 minutes	92	4.3%
25 to 29 minutes	36	1.7%
30 to 34 minutes	51	2.4%
35 to 39 minutes	10	0.5%
40 to 44 minutes	11	0.5%
45 to 59 minutes	33	1.5%
60 to 89 minutes	21	1.0%
90 or more minutes	68	3.2%
<i>Source: US Census, 2000.</i>		

Commute Patterns

The county-to-county commute patterns presented in Table III-8 show that the majority of individuals living in the Kenai Peninsula Borough also work in the borough. About 93 percent of the borough’s residents also work within the borough. Approximately four percent of workers reported traveling to the North Slope Borough for employment, while two percent reported going to Anchorage for work.

Table III-8 Worker Flow Patterns in Kenai Peninsula Borough		
Area of Work	Kenai Peninsula Borough Residents	
	#	%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	18,312	93%
North Slope Borough AK	755	4%
Anchorage Municipality	317	2%
Northwest Arctic Borough AK	46	<1%
Valdez-Cordova Census Area AK	33	<1%
Aleutians West Census Area AK	28	<1%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough AK	28	<1%
Out of State	72	<1%
<i>Source: 2000 US Census of County-to-County worker flow files.</i>		