



2022-2026 Fairbanks North Star Borough Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Land Use, Housing, & Environment Summary – **DRAFT**

Includes: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats | Targets | Goals | Strategies & Actions | Relevant Plans

Relevant planning efforts to build from: Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (in progress), FNSB Land Suitability Analysis (in progress), [FNSB Downtown Plan](#) (in progress), [FNSB Comprehensive Roads Plan](#) (in progress), [FNSB Salcha-Badger Road Area Plan](#) (2019), [FNSB Eielson Regional Growth Plan](#) (2018), [City of North Pole Strategic Plan](#) (2016), [North Pole Land Use Plan](#) (2010), [FNSB Comprehensive Plan](#) (2005)

Strengths *Internal attributes that contribute to success*

Land Use & Utilities

- Natural gas expansion
- New central recycling center opened in late 2020
- The FNSB has community-driven land use plans guiding land use decisions and development
- Recent FNSB zoning changes that reduce barriers for small businesses, including recent changes to cannabis zoning policies

Housing

- Increased military presence – infrastructure, personnel, and their families
- FNSB has high rates of home ownership
- Local, regional, state, and federal partners have been collaborating closely to find solutions to shared challenges such as housing
- Skilled local construction labor force

Environment

- Aurora’s wood kiln producing dry firewood
- Chena River Lakes Flood Control Project
- FNSB’s Air Quality Division and the installation of robust air quality monitoring and education tools

Opportunities *External forces that contribute to success*

Land Use & Utilities

- Department of Defense resources and funding to support base growth and expansion
- Military Facility Zone designation by the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Housing

- Military Facility Zone designation by the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Weaknesses *Internal barriers to success*

Land Use & Utilities

- Deteriorated properties (e.g., Polaris Building)
- Development constraints in certain areas, including extensive wetlands and floodplains
- Lack of land use code enforcement
- Limited options for recycling and few transfer sites
- Limited undeveloped land that is serviced by public water, wastewater, and other infrastructure
- Low density land use patterns, which can make provision of public services prohibitive

Housing

- Appraisal process that does not account for quality and location of build (e.g., energy efficient), access to services (e.g., located within road service area)
- Potential shortage of affordable and quality housing, especially for incoming military families
- Labor shortage

Environment

- Air quality issues
- Groundwater contamination

Threats *External forces that could be barriers to success*

Land Use & Utilities

- Climate change impacts on infrastructure

Housing

- Ongoing supply chain disruptions due to the pandemic and workforce shortages impacting construction industry
- High costs of construction supplies

Environment

- Natural hazards such as wildfires and floods
- Ongoing designation as an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) nonattainment area due to air quality, and impacts on new developments

Land Use, Housing, & Environment Goals – long term improvements & changes we want to see in 5 years or more



1. FNSB has a healthy housing market with enough affordable, quality housing to meet current and anticipated housing needs.
2. Land use planning tools are used to maintain an appropriate balance between protecting freedoms while guiding development and growth.
3. FNSB residents have clean air, land, and water.

Strategies & Actions – the activities we will implement over the next 5 years to accomplish goals & targets and who will lead them	Lead
<p>1. Construct Appropriate Housing – Construct quality, affordable housing to meet community needs. (Goal 1)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Conduct housing needs assessment and plans for annual updates. b. Continue to collaborate closely on housing needs for incoming military families; this requires transparent and real-time communications between local, regional, and federal/military partners on current and anticipated needs, gaps, and changes. c. Ensure new housing meets minimum quality requirements, including energy efficiency. d. Strategically plan for road and utility expansions to align with new housing construction plans. e. Establish tax incentives to strategically encourage new housing. 	
<p>2. Implement Land Use Plans – Implement land use recommendations from regional and subarea plans. (Goal 2)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Implement current and planned subareas plans, including the Salcha-Badger Road Area Plan, Fairbanks Downtown Plan, and City of North Pole Comprehensive Strategic Plan. b. Implement land use recommendations in the Eielson Regional Growth Plan, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Improve standards and processes affecting building quality for residential, commercial, and other uses. ii. Update and improve the FNSB comprehensive land use categories and map. iii. Improve existing FNSB, borough-wide zoning code. iv. Improve planning tools to respond to natural environmental constraints and opportunities. v. Develop an active monitoring process to assess needs and track progress on land use goals. 	
<p>3. Sustain a Healthy Environment – Address air and water quality challenges. (Goal 3)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Address water quality issues and expand water lines to residents impacted by water contamination from sulfolane, Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), and other pollutants. b. Continue to take steps to improve air quality with a focus on reducing PM_{2.5}. 	
<p>4. Expand Utilities – Implement improvements to water, wastewater, and solid waste utilities, as identified in the Eielson Regional Growth Plan. (Goals 1, 2)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Integrate planning for land use, transportation, and utilities. b. Identify and implement funding strategies for expanding water and wastewater service areas and distribution systems. c. Use utility and land use planning to support air quality solutions. 	
<p>5. Review Land Use Policies – Review FNSB land use policies to ensure they are responsive to industry needs. (Goal 2)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish policies to protect farmland. b. Ensure policies are compatible with evolving telecommunication infrastructure demands. 	



Interior Alaska Economic Summit, February 22-23, 2022

Land Use, Housing, & Environment Breakout: Discussion Summary (02-23-22)

To view results from the other sessions, visit <https://fnsbcds.com/> (results will be posted by March 11th)

This document compiles feedback and notes from the breakout session. The other tools that were used to guide the discussion include:

- An economic cluster/influencer one-pager that identified a preliminary SWOT analysis, goals, strategies, actions, and measures of success
- A worksheet identifying a proposed economic vision statement and guiding questions for each of the activities. The guiding questions have been copied into this document for reference. The feedback on the economic vision statement was compiled separately and will be released by March 11th.

Participants *(alphabetical by first name, based on sign in sheet)*

First	Last	Affiliation	Email
Alyssa	Quintyne	The Alaska Center / Solarize Fairbanks	alyssa@akcenter.org
Bryana	Garcia-DeLaCruz	Thread	bdelacruz@thrivalaska.com
Jomo	Stewart	Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation	jstewart@investfairbanks.com
Joni	Simpson	Fairbanks North Star Borough School District	joni.simpson@k12northstar.org
Julie	Luddington	Fairbanks North Star Borough School District	julie.luddington@k12northstar.org
Juliet	Shepherd	Shepherd et. al	julietsshepherd@gmail.com
Mike	Craft		mikecraft@akwind.net
Stacie	Dublin	thread Resource & Referral	sdublin@thivalaska.com
Terry	Chapin	University of Alaska Fairbanks	terry.chapin@alaska.edu

Facilitated by Shelly Wade, Agnew::Beck Consulting

RSVPs: 28 participants

Feedback on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Guiding Questions:

1. What did we get right?
2. What's missing?
3. What would you change?
4. What's the most important item in each quadrant?

Discussion Notes:

Color Key: Blue = proposed revision | red = proposed deletion | green = proposed addition

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise: last housing bullet, there is a strong developer community but not enough • Add: AHFC energy rebate • Add: strong training program • Add: FNSB's wood changeout program (oil to gas) • Add: UAF's environmental work • Add: Cold Climate Housing Research Center • Add: intact environment • Add: cheap land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise: last bullet under housing should be broader – not just military families • Add: local saw mills for individuals to make their own homes • Add: No cooperative housing • Add: No indoor air quality measurements (NO₂, CO₂) • Add: Lack of affordable and quality housing • Add: high taxes for utilities • Add: powerful coal lobby • Add: short building season • Add: no funding for energy rebate program anymore w/AHFC • Add: lack of affordable housing for income-disadvantaged people, seniors • Add: no energy policy • Add: no plan for renewables; where can we put them? • Add: Native allotments of land, difficulty of transforming into private/buildable land • Add: high proportion of old and/or ill-built housing stock • Add: low density developments are not intersectional to communities of color • Add: the community is not walkable • Add: few public community spaces • Add: lack of environmental mitigation plans (both short term and long term) • Add: expensive building materials • Add: natural gas inaccessibility • Add: lack of intersectionality in policy • Add: military households receive funds for housing, local households do not; competition for supply
Opportunities	Threats

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add: cooperative housing for our workforce • Add: average rent is \$1,300 • Add: welcome any Alaskans • Add: increase density; provide opportunities for businesses to develop in neighborhoods, in-fill • Add: Diversify locations of renewable energy, install them in more places • Add: Solar arrays • Add: high efficiency building • Add: increased collaboration between utilities • Add: on bill financing to do energy improvements • Add: C-PACE including new bill • Add: Alaska Gasline • Add: infrastructure bill • Add: community zoning engagement • Add: rent limitations (e.g., rent can be no more than a certain percent above the landlord's mortgage) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise: add to natural hazards list: winds, snow storms, pollen • Revise: separate supply chain disruptions and workforce shortages into separate bullets • Add: indoor air quality policies and guidelines • Add: draft cabins & sanitization • Add: Natural gas expansion • Add: Barging, supply chain issues, labor shortages • Add: aging workforce
---	---

Comments on past plans:

- Add to the plans listed on the front page: 1991 roads plan
- What are viewed as the positive results of the previous plans? Outcomes?
- Process of planning is valuable

Goals, Strategies, Actions Discussion Questions

Guiding Questions:

1. What did we get right?
2. What would you change?
3. What's missing?
4. Who will lead each of the strategies? What do you see as you/your organization's role?
5. Which of the strategies is most important for us to focus on over the next year?

Discussion Notes:

- Goals
 - Revise: Goal #1 to include, "connected to appropriate utilities"
 - Revise: Goal #3 should mention indoor air quality and monitoring
- Strategy 1: Construct Appropriate Housing
 - Revise: revise the strategy to include existing housing
 - Revise the strategy to include efficient, accessible
 - Revise: revise the strategy to also encourage home ownership
 - Revise: action b should be expanded to not just focus on military
 - Revise action c to include affordable, diverse resources
 - Add: we need cooperative housing; support legislation for these types of communities
 - Add: encourage homeownership to the strategy wording
 - Add: retire unsuitable inventory

- Add: infrastructure bill is looking for “creative solutions” for affordable housing – how to leverage here?
- Strategy 2: Implement Land Use Plans
 - Revise: change first word of action b from “implement” to “fund”
 - Add: make it easier to understand building codes, requirements, permitting; use of multimedia approach. Make sure people can use the community planning division, work more closely with the community and developers during zoning permit planning and revisions; intersectionality and inclusion in community planning
 - Add: focus on walkable cities, invest in public transit, invest in community spaces (free, family-friendly, inclusive)
- Strategy 3: Sustain a Healthy Environment
 - Revise: strategy b, address enforcement?
 - Add: replenish state programs in support of residential structure retrofits
 - Add: waste biosolids – construct a plan for a composting program
 - Add: action focusing on crisis mitigation and climate change action
 - Add: action that addresses pesticide spraying
 - Add: address indoor
- Strategy 4: Explore Utilities
 - Revise: change strategy wording from “implement” to “fund”
 - Revise strategy to include diversification of energy sources and energy affordability
 - Add: include references to natural gas and Solarize Fairbanks
 - Add: CPAC in the Interior
 - Add: increased quality of maintenance for current utilities
 - Add: break up the coal lobby and monopoly to make room for renewable grid; fossil fuel should be a backup
 - Add: make solar and other renewables more affordable for home installation
 - Add: more micro-reactors
- Strategy 5: Review Land Use Policies
 - Revise: action a, farmland protection – now what?
 - Add: improve disclosure/communication of zoning policies & land use to owners/users
- General/Other (may be transferred to other focus areas)
 - Add: tie early education and workforce programs (like those at Hutchinson High School) to further education/trainings
 - Add: thread and childcare assistance qualifications for homeowners; BAH effects on eligibility
 - Add: actions that are equitable for all demographics; caution towards weighed partnerships