



# Fairbanks North Star Borough Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Final Draft

September 1, 2022  
FNSB Assembly Work Session

# The Project Team



## FNSB Economic Development Commission

Mayor Bryce Ward\* · Abigail Riggs · Frank Tomaszewski\*  
Kristan Kelly\* · Mark Billingsley · Paul Robinson · Renee Linton ·  
Russell Talvi ·

**Past Members:** Deb Hickok, Matt Cooper\*, Mike Meeks (in memoriam),  
Mindy O'Neall\*

- = also serves on the FNSB Assembly

**Project Manager:** Brittany Smart

### Contracting Team:

Shelly Wade, AICP  
Molly Mylius



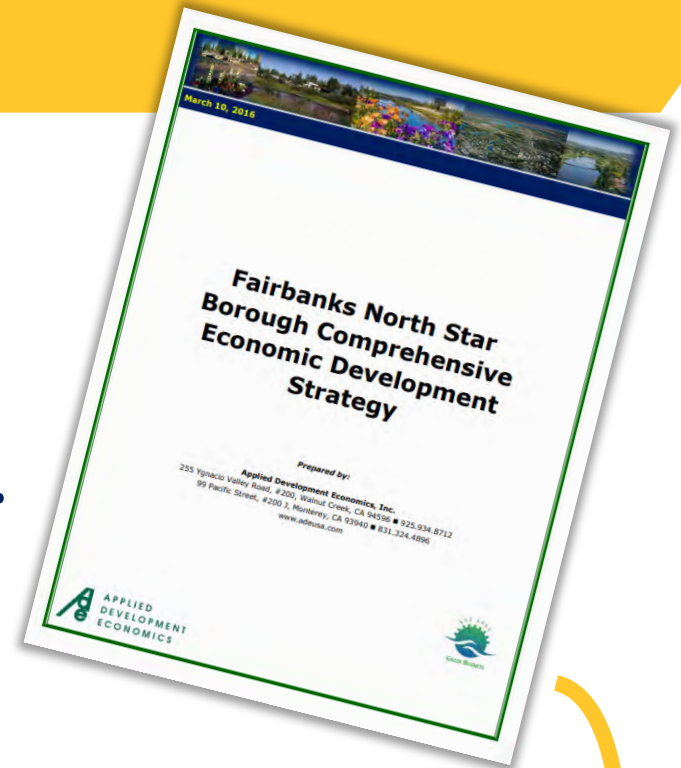
Supporting team  
members:



# CEDS Purpose & Structure

# Project Purpose

Develop a new Five-Year FNSB Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).



CEDS must go through a robust update every five years, with shorter, less intensive annual updates.



# What is a CEDS?



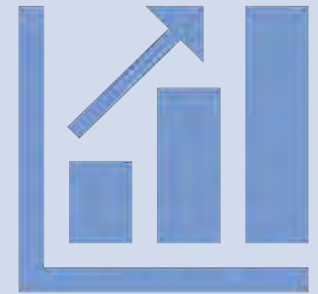
A **locally-based, regionally driven** economic development **roadmap** that guides government and community action.



Brings the **private and public sector together** to develop a regional strategy and action plan

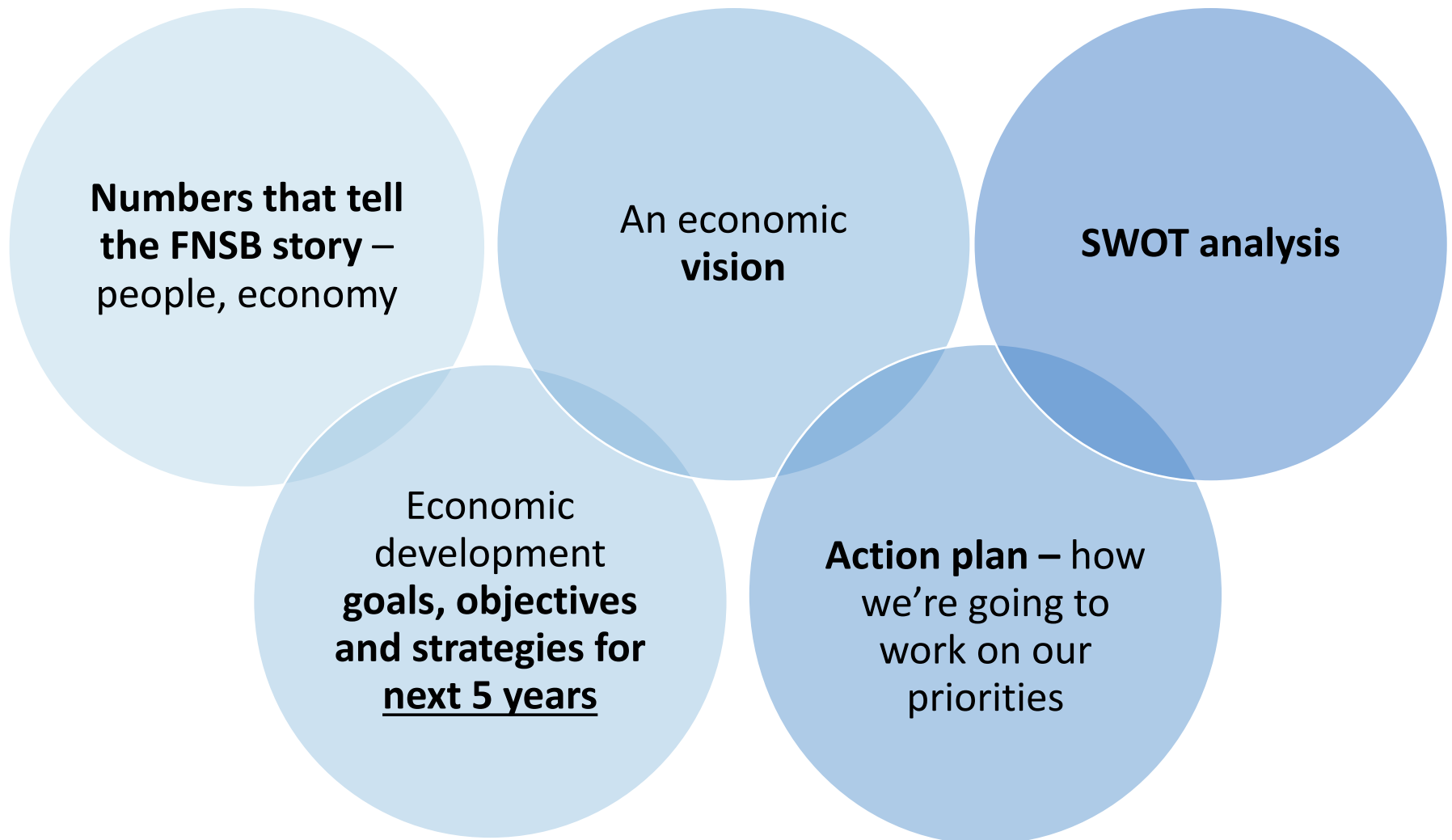


Robust update **every five years** with less intensive annual updates



Makes recommendations **to support business, create more and better paying jobs, improve quality of life, and increase resilience**

# What does a CEDS include?



# CEDS Focus Areas

## Industry Clusters

*economic drivers*

Agriculture

Energy

Forestry

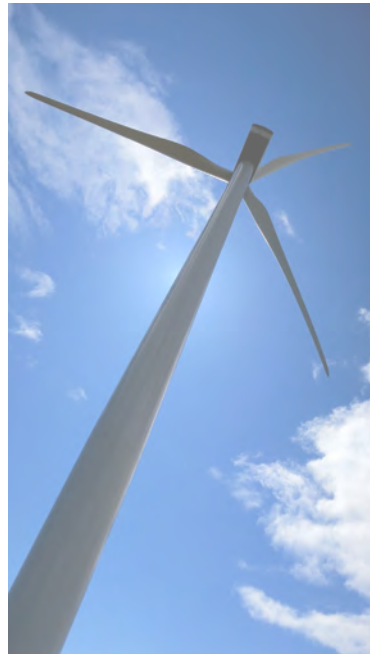
Health Care

Mining

Military

Research & Innovation

Tourism



## Community Influencers

*supportive economic foundations*

Business Development & Entrepreneurship

Communications

Education & Workforce Development

Recreation, Retail, & Entertainment

Other (Land Use, Housing, Environment,  
Transportation)

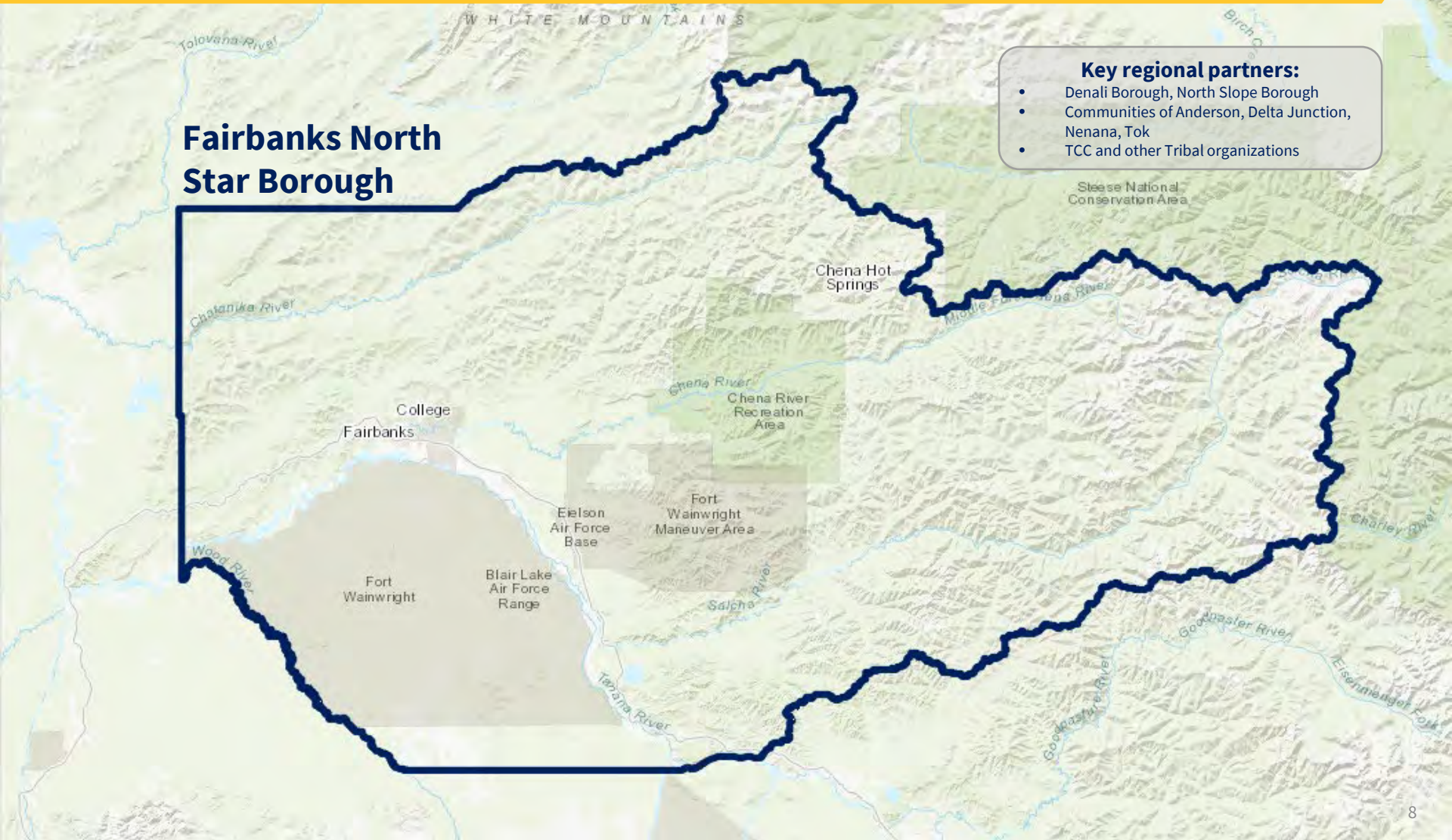




# Project Area

## Fairbanks North Star Borough

- Key regional partners:**
- Denali Borough, North Slope Borough
  - Communities of Anderson, Delta Junction, Nenana, Tok
  - TCC and other Tribal organizations





# Project Timeline

## **Spring - Fall 2021**

### ***Discover and Listen***

- Compiled data on the people, economy, and more.
- Reviewed relevant background documents.
- Launched project website.
- Hosted booths at community events.

## **Winter 2021 - 2022**

### ***Draft and Review***

- Held small group discussions and sector specific roundtables.
- Conducted over 20 interviews with EDC members, industry experts, and other key stakeholders.
- Hosted the Interior Alaska Economic Summit.

## **Summer - Fall 2022**

### ***Finalize and Activate***

- May 2022: draft CEDS released for public comment period.
- June 2022: updated CEDS to reflect comments, released final draft.
- Summer/Fall 2022: present the CEDS for adoption to the FNSB Planning Commission and the FNSB Assembly.



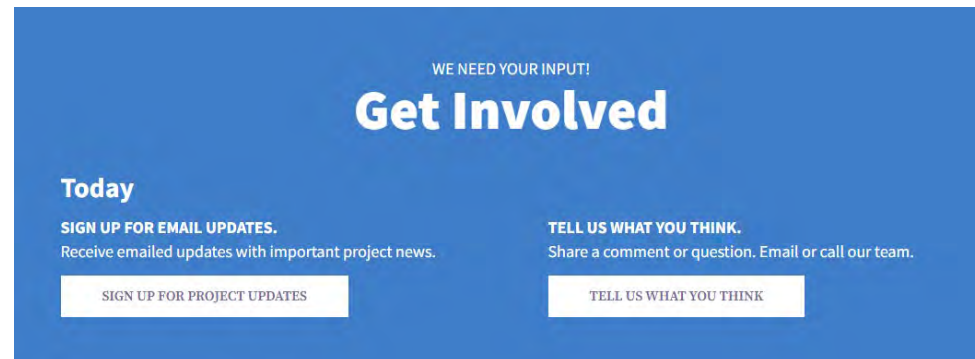
# Public Engagement

# Website & Newsletters

- Project Information (updated regularly)
- Sign up for emailed project updates
- Comment Form
- Contact Info
- Project Schedule
- Resources



[fnsbceds.com](https://fnsbceds.com)



# E-Newsletters

- Sign up available:
  - Website
  - Public engagement activities
- Over 500 contacts
- 7 newsletters sent

## Appendix G: Outreach Materials



### Newsletters

- FNSB CEDS: Comment Deadline this Friday (June 10)! (6/8/22)
- FNSB CEDS – 2 weeks left to review the draft! (5/26/22)
- It's Here! Draft FNSB CEDS ready for you! (5/6/22)
- Interior Alaska Economic Summit, Feb. 22-23, 2022 Results (3/9/22)
- Interior Alaska Economic Summit: Next Week! Read On For Details... (2/18/22)
- Interior Alaska Economic Summit, Feb. 22-23, 2022 – Check out the Preliminary At-a-Glance Agenda (1/21/22)
- Save the Date: Interior Alaska Economic Summit, Feb. 22-23, 2022 (12/22/21)



### **Save the Date** **2022 Interior Alaska Economic Summit**

February 22-23, 2022

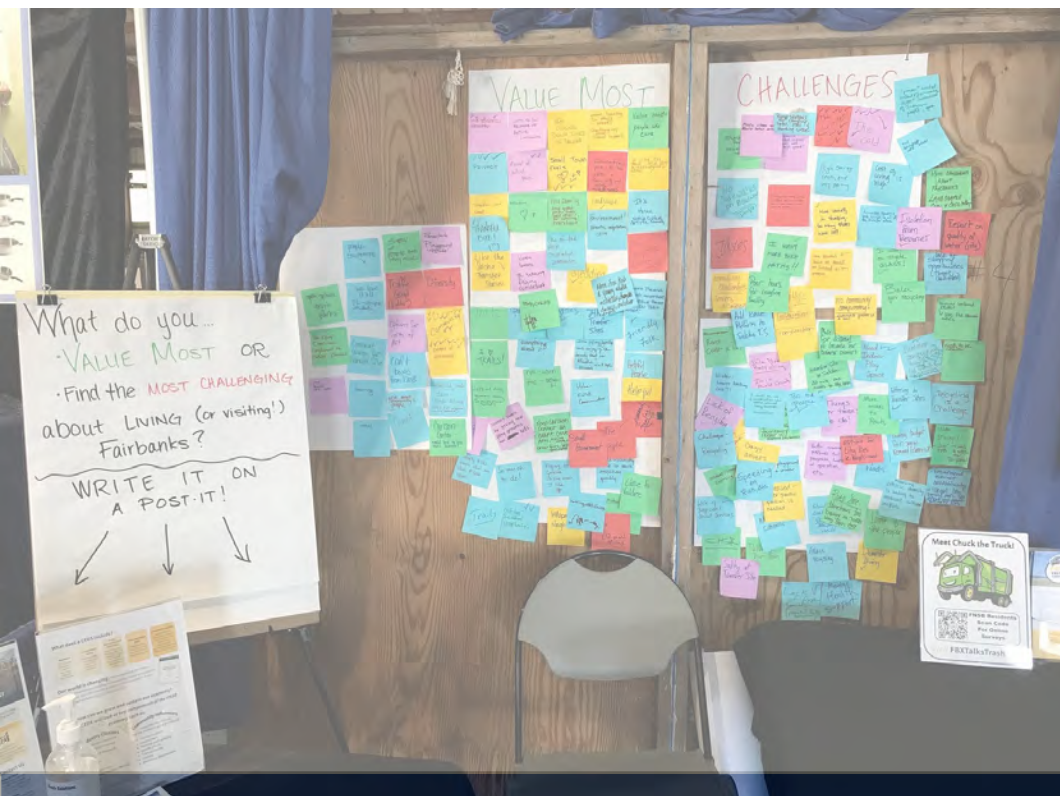
*Westmark Fairbanks Hotel & Conference Center*

The 2022 Interior Alaska Economic Summit will bring regional community, business, and industry leaders together to collaborate on economic opportunities as we work towards a **stronger, more resilient Interior Alaska economy.**

[Click HERE to RSVP today!](#)

# Community Events (2021)

- Midnight Sun Festival
- Golden Days Street Fair
- Tanana Valley State Fair



*“What do you value most about living in Fairbanks?”*

*“What do you find is the most challenging about living in Fairbanks?”*



# Roundtables & Interviews – examples

- Agriculture
- Child Care
- Communications
- Education & Workforce Development
- Energy
- Forestry
- Health Care
- Mining
- Research & Innovation
- Tourism
- UAF Student Government



# Public Presentations

- FNSB Economic Development Commission meetings
- FNSB Planning Commission
- Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Fairbanks Board of Realtors
- City of Fairbanks
- City of North Pole
- Interior Delegation



# Interior Alaska Economic Summit

February 22<sup>nd</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> 2022

## 2022 Interior Alaska Economic Summit

The 2022 Interior Alaska Economic Summit will bring regional community, business, and industry leaders together to collaborate on economic opportunities as we work towards a stronger, more resilient Interior Alaska economy. The Summit is **free** and will be held at the Westmark in Fairbanks.

- 2 days
- 6 breakout sessions
- 13 topics
- 75+ participants

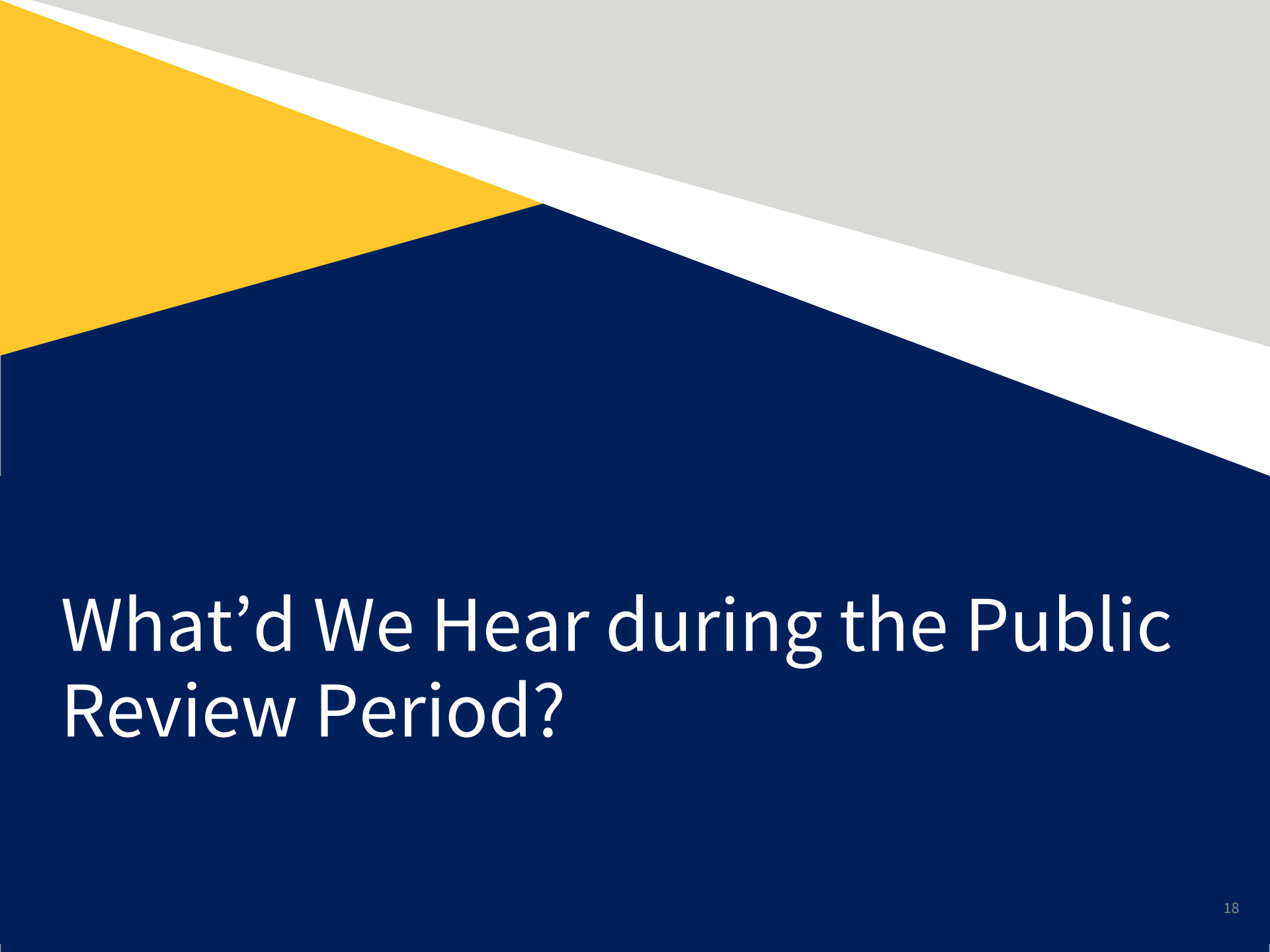




# Public Review Draft Outreach

- 3 emails sent to mailing list (over 500 contacts)
- Targeted industry/cluster emails to all sectors
- Work session from Explore Fairbanks Board of Directors
- Targeted phone calls to key partners, including Tribal contacts, FNSB School District
- Spotlited at Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce luncheon
- Announced on the Fairbanks North Star Borough home page
- Posted on social media
- Daily News-Miner coverage





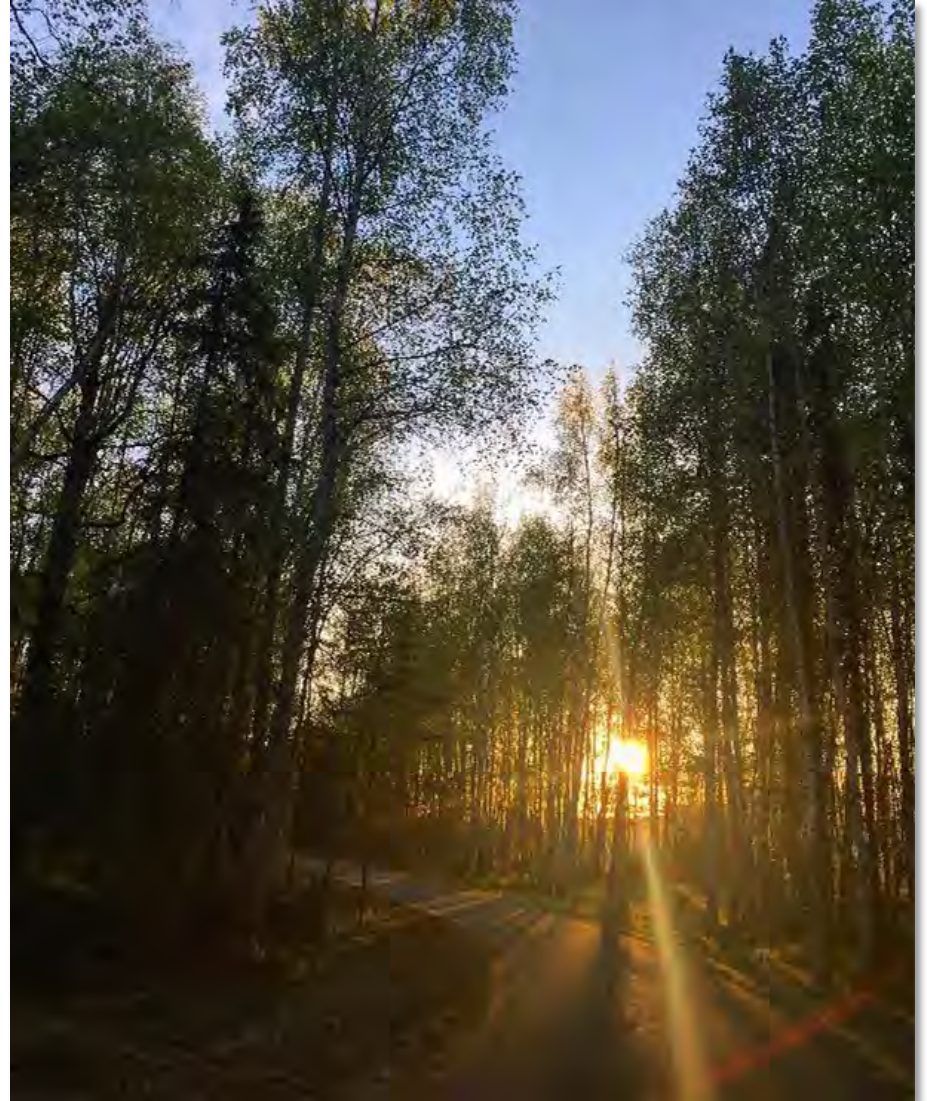
# What'd We Hear during the Public Review Period?



# Community & Partner Response – Overall

**70+** individual or organizations commenters,

resulting in **500+** specific comments



# Overall Comments – Positive!

I see your draft CEDS update is posted online, congratulations on a very comprehensive document!

Sums up many of the issues facing the FNSB for a prosperous, healthy community in the next five years.

The 2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is very thorough and ambitious. If all the Strategies and Actions were accomplished in the next five years, Fairbanks would be an incredible place!

I'm very impressed with the May revision of the FNSB Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. You and the contract team have done a nice job of incorporating community input.

The draft is clear and concise in an easy-to-read format. Each section is well highlighted and outlined with strategies and actions that are well organized and realistic.

# Overall Comments – Improvements

- **General Concerns**
  - Climate adaptation underrepresented
  - Equity/sector and group representation
  - Volume of actions/need for prioritization and connection to other planning efforts
- **Cross-Sector Concerns**
  - Access to affordable/quality child care
  - Available workforce
  - Supply chain constraints
- **Most Commented Sectors**
  - Agriculture
  - Energy
  - Mining
  - Military
- **Demonstration of Plan Ownership!!!**
  - Volunteering as lead or support organization to implement action plan



# Comment Tracking

- Posted on project website: [fnsbceds.com](https://fnsbceds.com)  
[Appendix K: Public Comment Summary](#)
- Transparency & accountability

FNSBC CEDS - Public Comment Database, May-June 2022			
Organization/Coalition Comments (sorted by focus area)			
Group	Focus Area	Comment	How Addressed
Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition	Agriculture	Missing: Agriculture: safeguards to prioritize local growers and communities and incentivize small scale ecological farming, not industrial agricultural practices	Expanded action a under Support Farmers to mention ecological farming practices.
Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition	Agriculture	We would like to offer additional action steps. Please feel free to reach out for additional details or clarification: Agriculture Strategy #1: Promote Local – Promote locally grown agriculture products. f. Expand access to traditional land owners in developing farming lands across the Interior e. Support and expand community gardening initiatives  Agriculture Strategy #2: Recruit Workers – Educate, train, and support new farmers and agricultural workers. e. Support Stone Soup Cafe training programs and community garden infrastructure  Agriculture Strategy #5: Food Security – Increase local food storage capacity. c. Uplift the the importance of subsistence hunting and promote traditional food storage methodologies d. Identify and protect lands and waters that are particularly important for subsistence	Proposed strategy 1 action f added as a future idea for consideration  Added community gardening initiative action.  Added Stone Soup Café to the list of supporters in the action plan Strategy 4 action a.  Added a subsistence action to Strategy #5.

All comments received a response; not all recommendations were incorporated (e.g., edit was too specific, or inconsistent with other input)

# Edits: Mining Examples

## Edit we did make

### Request:

Gold is not a critical mineral and a small portion (10-15%) is used for industry, mostly electronics. Gold is not needed for renewable energy development.

### Response:

Removed this action: "b. Launch a public relations campaign around how minerals (including rare earth minerals) are required to manufacture essentials such as smart phones, renewables, and electric vehicles."

## Edit we did not make

### Request:

Comments to remove the mining section altogether, and/or drastically cut back on mining-related activities.

### Response:

No change; mining is a past and present part of the Interior Alaska economy. As such, the mining industry has a proportionate place in this regional economic development plan, including related strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The CEDS considers the role mining (and other) existing and emerging sectors play in the FNSB economy today, including the businesses and individuals employed in this industry. The mining recommendations in the CEDS include actions that encourage responsible stewardship, community engagement, and environmental protections.



# General Comments – Resolution

- Climate change adaptation added throughout
  - Now featured in half the sector summaries
- Ensured cross-sector topics were connected throughout
- Expanded summary background appendix to include poverty rates by population and distribution of household income
- Strategies are presented in order of importance by sector
  - Many top priorities include capital projects
  - FNSB will further analyze a subset of the capital projects for economic impact and funding opportunities

Figure 14: Poverty Rates by Select Socioeconomic Characteristics, 2019

	Fairbanks North Star Borough	Municipality of Anchorage	Kenai Peninsula Borough	Matanuska-Susitna Borough
<b>Total Poverty Level</b>	8.00%	9.00%	12.10%	10.30%
<b>BY AGE</b>				
Under 18 years	10.20%	13.10%	15.20%	12.20%
18 to 64 years	7.60%	8.10%	12.40%	10.00%
65 years and over	5.00%	5.50%	6.70%	7.20%
<b>BY SEX</b>				
Male	6.80%	8.40%	11.50%	9.70%
Female	9.30%	9.70%	12.70%	10.90%
<b>BY RACE</b>				
White	6.90%	5.50%	11.10%	9.90%
Black or African American	8.30%	16.10%	21.80%	13.70%
American Indian & Alaska Native	13.30%	21.20%	20.90%	12.90%
Asian	5.50%	13.20%	12.80%	13.60%
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander	8.20%	21.80%	3.50%	29.60%
Some other race	5.50%	13.30%	3.90%	5.90%
Two or more races	14.50%	9.80%	15.80%	11.10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community.



# Final CEDS

# Final Economic Vision



FNSB is the economic hub for Interior Alaska and the gateway to Alaska's Arctic, where dreams and opportunities thrive for everyone.

# Overarching Goals

## Strength

FNSB is home to a diverse and prosperous economy with strong local, regional, and global connections

## Resilience

FNSB residents have reliable, equitable, affordable access to essentials such as housing, food and energy supplies

## Prosperity

Current and future FNSB residents enjoy a high quality of life, livable wages, a healthy environment, and access to recreation

## Excellence

FNSB is home to strong education and research institutions supporting Alaska communities and the private sector



# Sector Summaries

2022-2027 Fairbanks North Star Borough Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

## Agriculture Summary

### Strengths Internal attributes that contribute to success

#### Natural Resources & Environment

- Access to forests, spaces for foraging (e.g., mushrooms)
- Alaska is a worldwide peony supplier
- High quality agricultural lands in the region
- Farmland provides ecosystem services
- Businesses, Organizations, & Government

#### Education & Workforce

- Fairbanks has seen growth in sales, and farm employment
- Farmer's markets
- University of Alaska Fairbanks Experiment Farm
- Regional farmers using innovation

#### Funding & Markets

- Locally grown foods avoid quality issues associated with WIC
- WIC is accepted at farmer's market produce available to everyone

#### Infrastructure

- FNSB has rail, road, and airport
- movement of equipment, supplies
- Community gardens

### Opportunities External factors

#### Natural Resources & Environment

- The growing season is lengthening and improved technology
- Businesses, Organizations, & Government
- Alaska approved by US Dept of Agriculture (USDA) to produce industrial hemp
- Alaska has the highest percentage of farmland in the country (2017 Census)
- Co-op model could be brought to Fairbanks

#### Funding & Markets

- Legalization of cannabis and hemp
- Infrastructure
- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

#### Infrastructure

- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

#### Infrastructure

- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

#### Infrastructure

- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

#### Infrastructure

- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

#### Infrastructure

- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

#### Infrastructure

- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

#### Infrastructure

- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

#### Infrastructure

- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

#### Infrastructure

- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

#### Infrastructure

- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

#### Infrastructure

- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

#### Infrastructure

- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

#### Infrastructure

- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

#### Infrastructure

- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

#### Infrastructure

- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

#### Infrastructure

- Waste heat could be used to grow crops

### Weaknesses Internal barriers to success

#### Natural Resources & Environment

- Limited value-added processing of agricultural products
- Short growing season (by number of days)
- Lack of available and affordable farmlands
- Businesses, Organizations, & Government
- The State of Alaska has a history of unsuccessful

### Where We Are

### What measurements can we use to track progress? Where do we want to be in 5 years?

### Targets

274 Farms  
(2017)

Farms - Total number of farms in Interior Alaska  
Out of 990 total in the state; increase of 26% from 2012

300 farms  
(2022), 330  
farms (2027)

\$10.4 M  
(2017)

Sales - Total market value of agricultural products sold from Interior Alaska  
Up 14% from 2012; approximately 80% comes from crops, 20% from livestock/poultry

\$11.4 M (2022),  
\$12.6 M (2027)

285 Jobs  
(2019)

Employment - Total number of full-time and part-time employment in the agriculture industry in FNSB; many of these jobs are seasonal  
Farm employment in FNSB increased 31% between 2014 and 2019

315 Jobs  
(2027)

30 Members  
(2022)

Golden Heart Grown - Total businesses participating in the Golden Heart Grown program, which helps distinguish and promote goods produced in Interior Alaska

40 Members  
(2027)

Sources: Farms and Sales data from the USDA, Census of Agriculture, 2017; Interior Alaska includes the Fairbanks North Star Borough, Denali Borough, Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area and Southeast Fairbanks Census Area; Employment data comes from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Total Full-Time and Part-Time Employment by Industry. The USDA Census of Agriculture is only conducted every 5 years



"It's as much on the consumer as it is on the producer to increase agriculture production. If farmers sold out by noon every day at the farmer's market, they would grow more."

"Alaska leads the nation in new farms. It's important to support farmers markets and farm stands. Those are the viable sales venues, rather than getting products in grocery stores."



### Agriculture Objectives - Long term improvements and changes we want to see in five years or more



- Interior Alaska is a thriving agricultural hub, producing high quality goods that are consumed locally and exported to other Alaska communities and beyond.



- Achieve greater food security in Interior Alaska by increasing production, distribution, processing, and storage of locally grown products.

"The disparity between the agricultural value and retail value of land has never been as great as it is now."

"A lot of states allow volunteer work on farms, but in Alaska, volunteers aren't covered by worker's compensation."

"Farmers need more access to training and start-up funds for basic infrastructure like fences and watering."

"One goal should be to increase food storage capacity in case of an emergency."

### Strategies & Actions - Activities we will implement over the next five years to accomplish objectives & targets. See Chapter 3 for a detailed action plan.

Icon Key: Capital Project Military-related

#### 1. Increase Food Security - Increase local food production (Objective 2)

- Establish a community cooperative program
- Support the creation of food forests, permaculture, and other sustainable practices
- Protect subsistence resources and practices

#### 2. Support Farmers - Existing and new farmers need tools and resources to succeed and grow. (Objective 1)

- Better connect farmers to existing training and resources
- Increase access to start-up funds and financing, and start up equipment, establish tax incentives for food insecure areas and/or households
- Support infrastructure, programming, and marketing for Fairbanks Experiment Farm Long-Range Plan
- Support emerging industries such as food processing, value-added products, and food distribution
- Improve collaboration between farmers and processors to make progress on shared objectives
- Expand 4H and Future Farmers of America
- Advocate for changes in State statutes
- Connect local meat/fish processors with farmers

- Support and expand community gardening initiatives, including greenhouses.

#### 3. Promote Local Agriculture - Promote locally grown agriculture products. (Objectives 1, 2)

- Encourage residents to buy local, including expanding the Golden Heart Grown program, Fairbanks First, distribution of the Interior Agriculture Directory, and Buy Alaska.
- Encourage event organizers, restaurants, and schools to increase reliance on locally grown foods.
- Expand education and awareness around local farmer's markets.
- Promote community supported agriculture.
- Establish farmer's markets on military bases.
- Strengthen social media campaigns around locally grown products, including identifying influencers.
- Better promote the ability to use special supplemental nutrition program (SNAP) and (WIC) resources at farmer's markets.

#### 4. Recruit Workers - Educate, train, and support new farmers and agricultural workers. (Objectives 1, 2)

- Support the establishment of a statewide farming training/certification program.
- Advocate for the removal of state-level barriers so volunteer farm workers can be covered by worker's compensation insurance.
- Increase agricultural education at all levels of schooling, including hands-on learning experiences and adding high school coursework on farming, canning, and preserving.
- Support creation of a farmer's certification program.

#### 5. Protect Farmland - Establish and implement land use policies that protect farmland. (Objectives 1, 2)

- Put agricultural lands into agricultural trust lands.
- Designate new agricultural areas and prepare land sales of state and FNSB land for agricultural uses.

### Other Relevant Resources

- 2020 Long-Range Plan for the UAF Fairbanks Experiment Farm. University of Alaska Fairbanks Institute of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Extension. 2020. [View here.](#)
- Interior Agriculture Directory. Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation. 2021. [View here.](#)





# Agriculture

## Objectives

- Interior Alaska is a thriving agricultural hub, producing high quality goods that are consumed locally and exported to other Alaska communities and beyond.
- Achieve greater food security in Interior Alaska by increasing production, distribution, processing, and storage of locally grown products.

## Strategies

1. Increase Food Security
2. Support Farmers
3. Promote Local Agriculture
4. Recruit Workers
5. Protect Farmland



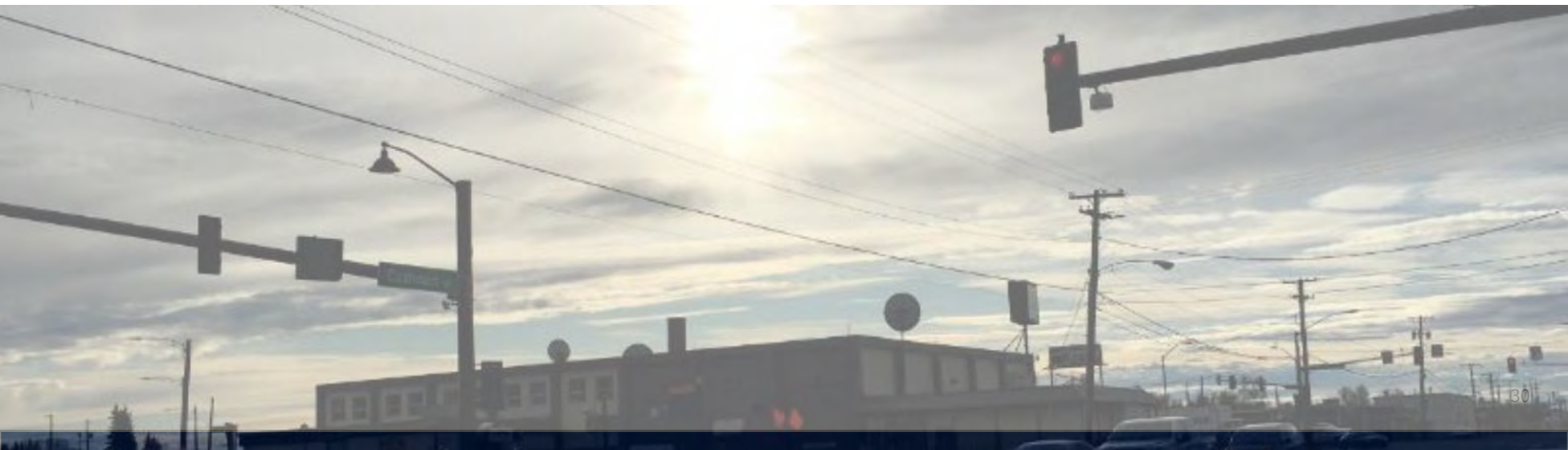
# Energy

## Objectives

- Interior Alaska will have access to low-cost energy through its diversified, sustainable, reliable energy portfolio
- Interior Alaska will be a hub for piloting innovative, adaptive, resilient solutions to climate change impacts and unique cold climate energy challenges.

## Strategies

1. Plan for Renewables
2. Increase Energy Efficiency
3. Promote Energy Innovation
4. Develop a Resilient Power Grid
5. Expand Natural Gas Infrastructure
6. Increase Collaboration



# Military

## Objectives

- Interior Alaska becomes a base of choice among enlisted service members, veterans, and their families.
- Interior Alaska is the premier location for national and international Arctic defense and training.

## Strategies

1. Strengthen Arctic Defense and Training
2. Sustain FNSB as a Location of Choice
3. Protect the Environment

*Photo Credit: SSgt Danielle Sukhlall, courtesy of Defense Visual Information Distribution Service*





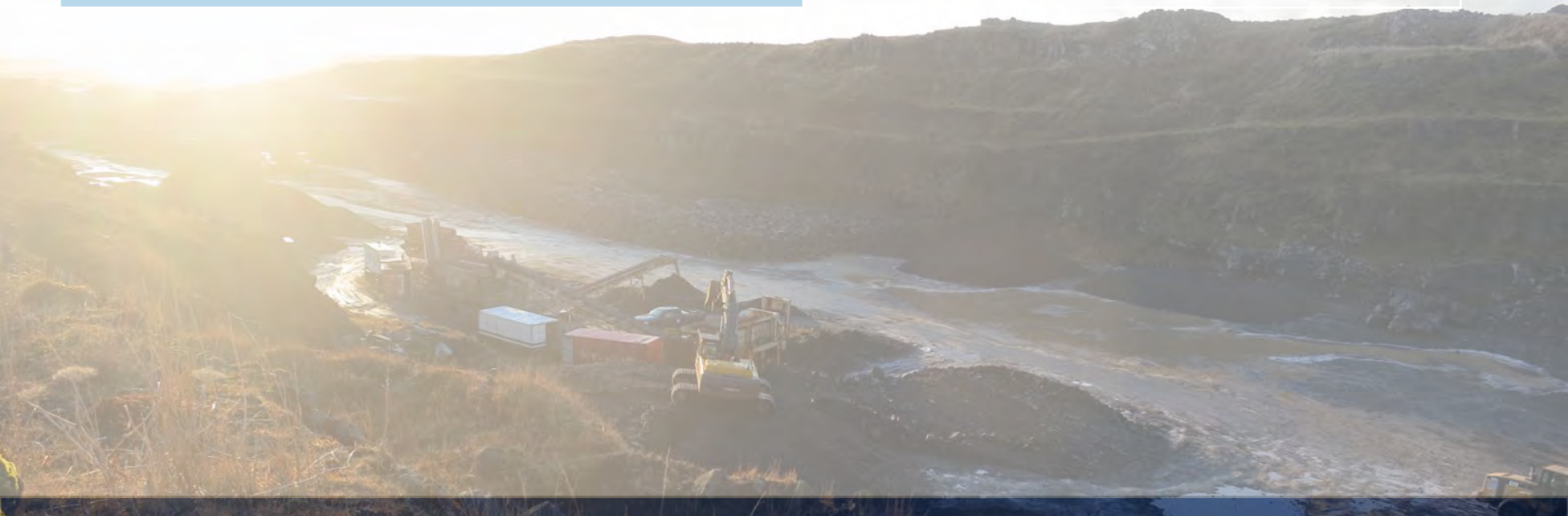
# Mining

## Objectives

- Interior Alaska's abundant mineral resources are a mechanism supporting a thriving, responsible, modern mining industry and local communities.
- FNSB residents and local and regional leaders have an understanding of mining, including the industry's economic importance, environmental stewardship, and employment opportunities.

## Strategies

1. Prioritize Workforce Development
2. Increase Production and Value-Added Processing
3. Ensure Fair Policies
4. Expand Outreach Efforts





# What's Next?



# Next Steps – Adoption

June 20 – Final Draft Released – *complete*

June 28 – Economic Development Commission – *complete*

- Recommendation to the Assembly

July 28 – FNSB Assembly Introduction – *complete*

- Refer to Planning Commission

August 23 – Planning Commission – *complete*

- Recommendation to the Assembly; administrative change to review/adopt CEDS as document separate from the FNSB Comprehensive Plan

September 8 – FNSB Assembly Adoption

- Public Hearing

# Capital Projects – Economic Impact Analysis

## **Why do this?**

- The analysis provides critical information on potential jobs and revenue/business that will be generated by a proposed project
- Results are used by CODEL, Interior Delegation, funding partners, etc., in informing request for partner and funding support for priority projects

# Capital Projects – Economic Impact

- Economic Impact Modeling
  - 3 projects completed (on website), 4 additional projects (TBD)
- Prioritization determined by:
  - Amount of input
  - Available data (\$)
  - Lead/partner identified
- Tool to inform CODEL, Interior Delegation, funding partners, etc.
- Provides information on potential jobs and revenue/business generated
- CEDS process demonstrates projects:
  - Fit into an overall plan/vision for the community
  - Public support

Project	Minimum Requirements		Is there a clear lead for implementation?	Does the project address a time sensitive need?
	Project Costs Available	One-Time Capital Investment		
C. Arctic Emergency Services Center of Excellence	✓	✓	University of Alaska Fairbanks	✓

# Implementation & Annual Updates

- Usability through Design
  - Standalone sections
- Measure Success
  - Each section includes metrics and targets
  - Community Research Quarterly
  - Interactive dashboards – *in progress*
- Economic Summits
  - Analyze progress
  - Note items completed
  - Update goals & strategies
  - Review & update targets



Where We Are (2019 as pre-pandemic baseline)	What measurements can we use to track progress? Where do we want to be in 5 years?	2027 Targets
5,991	<b>Jobs</b> – FNSB residents employed in leisure & hospitality 10% of total workforce in 2019; this sector saw the greatest losses in 2020	6,290
\$70.5 Million	<b>Visitor Spending</b> – Hotel/motel annual room receipts Increased 8% from 2016 to 2019, then declined 55% between 2019 and 2020	\$80 Million
\$143 Million	<b>Wages</b> – Annual wages to FNSB residents employed in leisure & hospitality Only 4% of total wages, indicating these jobs pay less than other industries	\$150 Million
596,066	<b>Passengers</b> – Fairbanks International Airport passenger arrivals 2020 passenger arrivals were half the 2019 number	625,869

# Thank you!



**Brittany Smart**  
FNSB Project Manager  
[brittany.smart@fnsb.gov](mailto:brittany.smart@fnsb.gov)  
907-459-1302



**Shelly Wade, AICP**  
Agnew::Beck Consulting  
Project Manager  
[shelly@agnewbeck.com](mailto:shelly@agnewbeck.com)  
907-242-5326