



Fairbanks North Star Borough Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Final Draft

June 28, 2022

Economic Development Commission

Reminder: 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**.
- Identifies **projects and makes recommendations to:**

Secure and support businesses

Create more and better paying jobs

Improve quality of life

Increase resilience to changes, threats

The Community Has Shown Up!

*In over a decade of economic development and CEDS planning experience across Alaska and the Lower 48, **I have never seen the level of engagement we've had with the FNSB community and their partners.** The community has shown up!*

*At every step of the process, a diverse group of residents, businesses, and community leaders have provided valuable feedback to the FNSB CEDS and the Borough / Interior AK's economic future. **Never has our team seen the level of commitment to action and economic resiliency, with almost every industry, non-profit, and agency partner volunteering to lead CEDS actions.***

*No doubt, this level of dedication and community pride will be key to ensuring **the community's vision as the economic hub for Interior Alaska and the gateway to Alaska's Arctic, where dreams and opportunities thrive for everyone.***

Shelly Wade, AICP

Principal::Owner, Agnew::Beck Consulting

FNSB CEDS Consultant Team (and proud NPHS & UAF Graduate 😊)

THANK YOU, FNSB Community & Partners!!!

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

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 (5/6/22 – 6/10/22). **70 responses were received with a combined total of over 500 specific comments.**
- June 2022: updated the CEDS to reflect comments, with final draft released last week.
- Summer/Fall 2022: present the CEDS for adoption to the FNSB Planning Commission and the FNSB Assembly.

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





Public Review Draft (May 2022):

Key Themes & Takeaways from Community Response

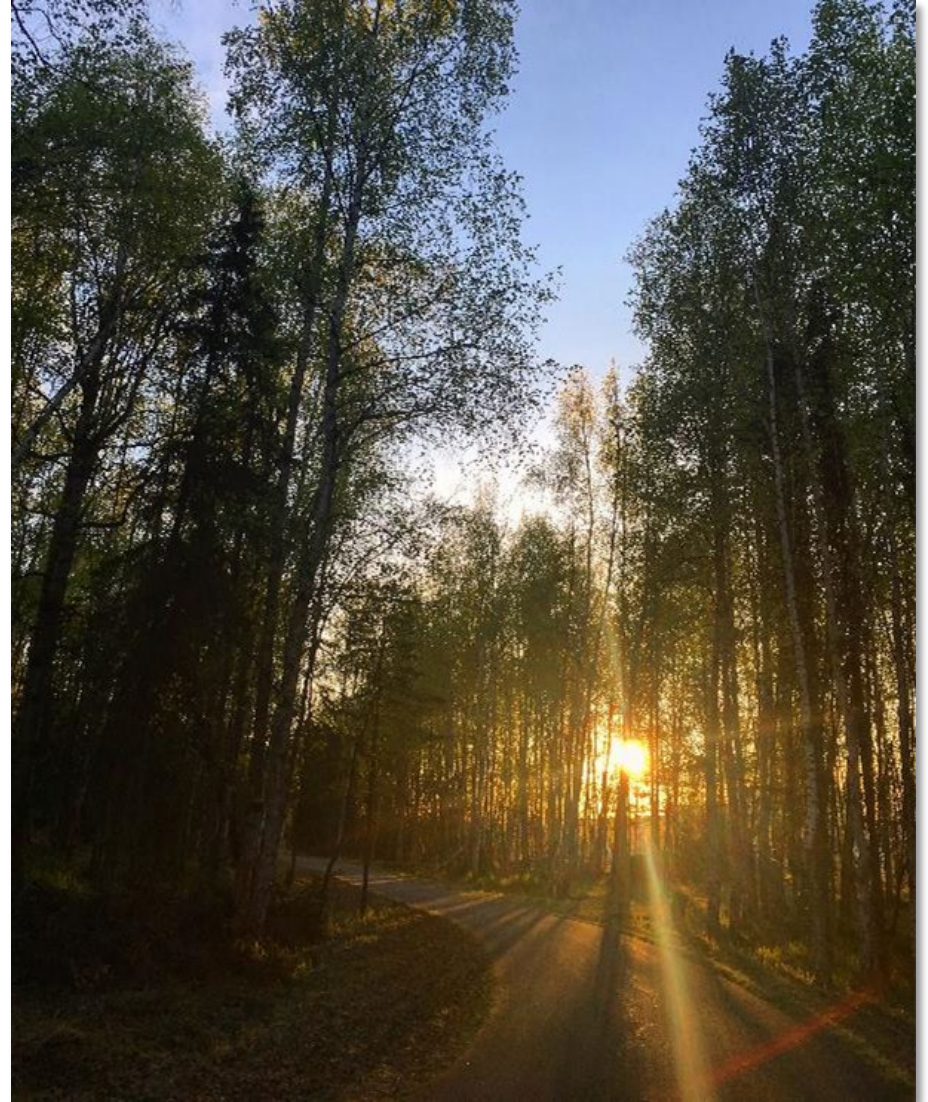
Final Draft (June 2022):

How Community Input is Addressed

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
- Transparency & accountability

Appendix K: Public Comment Summary

group/coalition comments presented first, sorted by focus area, followed by individual/business comments by focus area

FNSBC CEDS - Public Comment Database, May-June 2022			
Organization/Coalition Comments (sorted by focus area)			
Group	Focus Area	Comment	Proposed Resolution
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	<p>We would like to offer additional action steps. Please feel free to reach out for additional details or clarification:</p> <p>Agriculture Strategy #1: Promote Local – Promote locally grown agriculture products.</p> <p>f. Expand access to traditional land owners in developing farming lands across the Interior</p> <p>e. Support and expand community gardening initiatives</p> <p>Agriculture Strategy #2: Recruit Workers – Educate, train, and support new farmers and agricultural workers.</p> <p>e. Support Stone Soup Cafe training programs and community garden infrastructure</p> <p>Agriculture Strategy #5: Food Security – Increase local food storage capacity.</p> <p>c. Uplift the the importance of subsistence hunting and promote traditional food storage methodologies</p> <p>d. Identify and protect lands and waters that are particularly important for subsistence</p>	<p>Proposed strategy 1 action f added as a future idea for consideration</p> <p>Added community gardening initiative action.</p> <p>Added Stone Soup Café to the list of supporters in the action plan</p> <p>Strategy 4 action a.</p> <p>Added a subsistence action to Strategy #5.</p>

Appendix K: Public Comment Summary

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.

Responses to Common Themes

Tribal Engagement

At the start and throughout the CEDS process, the project team has engaged Tribal leaders from the FNSB area/Interior Alaska, including Tanana Chiefs Conference, Doyon, [Limited](#), Denakkanaaga, Inc., Doyon Foundation, Fairbanks Native Association, and other Alaska Native groups in the FNSB. Tribal leaders and Alaska Native organization leaders and representatives were also invited and participated in the February 2022 Interior Alaska Economic Summit. The contracted project team, Agnew::Beck Consulting, was also the primary contractor for the recently finalized [2022 - 2026 TCC CEDS & Economic Recovery Plan](#); there was robust engagement through that parallel and related process. Ultimately, Tribal representatives and leaders participated in or contributed to health care, energy, communications, and education and workforce development topics. In addition, calls were made to Tribal representatives during the public comment period to ensure key Alaska Native organizations were aware and had the opportunity to comment on the draft CEDS.

Renewable Energy

The energy chapter/focus area includes a renewable energy strategy and related actions; there are also renewable energy actions/projects within other energy strategies, such as the recommendation to add battery storage to the power grid to better position utilities to integrate more renewable energy sources. For easier access and to reflect the importance of energy innovation and renewable energy, related strategies are now listed at the top of the full suite of energy strategies. Additionally, given input on the importance and opportunity, weatherization and energy efficiency has been elevated from an action to strategy.

Natural Gas

For over a decade (see [Interior Energy Project](#) as one reference) increased access to supply and the overall expansion of natural gas has been consistently identified as a community priority and strategy, resulting in tangible investment, infrastructure, and employment opportunities in the FNSB. Through previous and existing plans and studies, natural gas is known to be a cleaner burning fuel than coal or oil, and is one of many solutions, including the implementation of renewable energies, that will result in improved air quality in the FNSB. The CEDS recommends pursuing a balanced and realistic portfolio of energy solutions in FNSB over the next five years, including a combination of natural gas and renewable energy solutions.

Responses to Common Themes

Public Input

Since the CEDS process began in the Spring of 2021, we have received extensive feedback from the community. Pages 5 and 6 of the May 6th Public Review Draft of the CEDS detail the public process, including in-person opportunities with “FNSB CEDS Booths” at the 2021 Midnight Sun Festival, Golden Days Street Fair, and the Tanana Valley State Fair. In February 2022, FNSB and project partners hosted an in-person Economic Summit (results available on the project website: fnsbceds.com), as well as several meetings (all open to the public) with the FNSB Economic Development Commission (EDC) and roundtables with sector partners and leaders. The CEDS also builds from previous and parallel planning efforts in the FNSB/Interior AK that did and continue to include robust community and other stakeholder engagement. Examples include: FNSB Eielson Air Force Base Regional Growth Plan (complete), FNSB Salcha-Badger Road Area Plan (complete), FNSB COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan (complete), Pioneer Park Master Plan (complete), FNSB Downtown Plan (in progress), FNSB Comprehensive Roads Plan (in progress), FNSB Comprehensive Trails Plan (in progress), FNSB Climate Action Plan (in progress), Tanana Chiefs Conference Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Economic Recovery Plan (complete), and many more plans and studies initiated and supported by FNSB leaders and partners.

Interface with Other Planning Efforts

There are several community planning processes happening parallel to the FNSB CEDS effort, including the FNSB Downtown Plan, FNSB Comprehensive Roads Plan, FNSB Comprehensive Trails Plan, FNSB Climate Action Plan, with some overlapping and/or matching timelines. FNSB staff and all contracting teams have worked together to share information and public input across projects. For example, Roads, Trails, and CEDS teams collaborated on a booth at the Tanana Valley State Fair in 2021, and in May 2022, Roads and Trails teams held joint open houses. This coordination and consistent communication among teams, including sharing and discussing draft plans, has ensured robust and comprehensive community input on all topics, and where there are overlapping areas of concern, these are adequately addressed.

Nuclear

The CEDS does not advocate for broad installation of nuclear, but does acknowledge the proposed microreactor on Eielson Air Force Base, and identifies the need for safe installation.

Responses to Common Themes

Increase Renewable Energy Target

The renewable energy generation target of 25% by 2030 is proposed in pending Clean Energy Standard legislation and was established with participation from GVEA and the other Railbelt Electric Utilities.

Lack of Action Plans in the “Other” Section

While these items are all needed to support a healthy economy, there are other planning efforts underway that cover these topics in more depth. To avoid duplication, this CEDS does not identify detailed action plans for these focus areas, and instead references these related plans and offers broad support for implementation of identified actions in referenced plans.

Support for the Economic Vision



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

Refinement of 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)



- Added “Military” cluster
- Revised cluster title from “Visitor Industry” to “Tourism”
- Added “Retail” to “Recreation & Entertainment” influencer



Most Commented Sector-Specific Changes to Community/Partner Feedback

General Responses

- Added climate change adaptation throughout (now featured in half the sector summaries)
- Ensured cross-sector topics were connected throughout, including child care and workforce development

- Expanded summary background appendix to include poverty rates by population (see table) and distribution of household income

Figure 14: Poverty Rates by Select Socioeconomic Characteristics, 2019

	Fairbanks North Star Borough	Municipality of Anchorage	Kenai Peninsula Borough	Matanuska-Susitna Borough	Alaska
Total Poverty Level	8.00%	9.00%	12.10%	10.30%	10.70%
BY AGE					
Under 18 years	10.20%	13.10%	15.20%	12.20%	14.80%
18 to 64 years	7.60%	8.10%	12.40%	10.00%	9.90%
65 years and over	5.00%	5.50%	6.70%	7.20%	5.90%
BY SEX					
Male	6.80%	8.40%	11.50%	9.70%	10.10%
Female	9.30%	9.70%	12.70%	10.90%	11.30%
BY RACE					
White	6.90%	5.50%	11.10%	9.90%	7.20%
Black or African American	8.30%	16.10%	21.80%	13.70%	14.20%
American Indian & Alaska Native	13.30%	21.20%	20.90%	12.90%	24.00%
Asian	5.50%	13.20%	12.80%	13.60%	10.70%
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander	8.20%	21.80%	3.50%	29.60%	20.60%
Some other race	5.50%	13.30%	3.90%	5.90%	10.10%
Two or more races	14.50%	9.80%	15.80%	11.10%	11.60%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Prioritization



- Within each sector, strategies are presented in order of importance.
- Many of the “top priority” strategies, or those presented as #1 and #2 by sector, include capital project priorities or actions identified as “potential priority projects”
- Through CEDS implementation, FNSB will further analyze a subset of these potential priority projects for economic impact (revenue and job creation) and funding opportunities.

Example from Agriculture

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 storage capacity and support subsistence activities. *(Objective 2)*
 - a. Establish a community cooperative processing center and storage facility. 
 - b. Support the creation of food forests, prioritizing areas with higher food insecurity. 
 - c. Protect subsistence resources and preserve subsistence use of lands and waters.

Agriculture – Example Edits

Reordered strategies:

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

Community Response:

Subsistence needs to be better reflected. Food security and supporting farmers should be top priorities in this section. Various changes recommended to the action plan.

Final Draft Change:

Added subsistence throughout. Reorganized section to align with priorities. Updated action plan.

Added “The Island: Fairbanks Food Hub” as the lead for a community cooperative processing center and cold storage facility.



Energy

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

Reworded objective: Interior Alaska will be a hub for piloting innovative, adaptive, resilient solutions to **climate change impacts and** unique cold climate energy challenges.

Community Response:

More focus on renewable energy, with more ambitious targets. Some comments with opposition to natural gas and nuclear expansion.

Final Draft Change:

Reorganized strategies to align with priorities, including elevating energy efficiency from an action to a strategy. Added climate change to the objectives and throughout the section. Did not change 5-year renewable energy targets.



Military

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

Community Response:
Request to add military as a standalone sector, not just using symbology throughout other sections.

Final Draft Change:
Created new section, acknowledging that additional work will be needed in future updates.

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

Research & Innovation

- 1. Enhance Research Institutions** – Position UAF and other Interior Alaska institutions as global leaders in research and innovation. (Objective 1)
 - a. Achieve Tier 1 Research University status for UAF.
 - b. Establish Fairbanks International Airport as an unmanned aircraft system hub.

Retained military-related icons for actions in other sectors

Ed & Workforce Development



- 3. Remove Barriers to Employment** – Address barriers to employment. (Objectives 1, 2)
 - a. Remove barriers obtain occupational licenses, including in health care; this could include establishing a nurse licensure compact.
 - b. Coordinate with the Department of Defense (DoD) to supplement existing information sharing with Air Force and Army families before they arrive in the area.
 - c. Encourage FNSB-located Job Centers, workforce development program representatives and large employers to participate in welcoming programs.
 - d. Prior to departure, conduct debrief/departure interviews or focus groups with military families regarding experience with FNSB employment and workforce development.
 - e. Expand access to affordable child care services for military households.
 - f. Better promote the rideshare program to help DoD household members commute to job centers.

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

Mining

1. **Ensure Fair Policies**
2. Expand Outreach Efforts
3. Prioritize Workforce Development
4. Increase Production and Value-Added Processing
5. **Removed** this action: "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."
6. Made **clarifying edits** to the SWOT, such as changing "Active mining at Fort Knox is expected to end in 2027" to "Active mining at Fort Knox is permitted until 2027."

Community Response:

Concern of impacts to neighborhoods, communities, and environment.

Final Draft Change:

Reorganized strategies to align with priorities, including adding "fair policies" to #1. Refined language to ensure balanced approach and clarity.

Ideas for Future Consideration – *Some Examples*

- **General:** Expand use of diversity measures to better identify and address economy disparities in wealth, resources, and ownership
- **Agriculture:** Offer tax reductions for fuel use in agriculture
- **Energy:** Explore development and export of hydrogen
- **Forestry:** Purchase a biochar reactor and make it available to rent
- **Health Care:** create a greenhouse gas monitoring program
- **Mining:** Establish Fairbanks as a center for critical & rare earth ore development and processing
- **Small Business Development & Entrepreneurship:** Evaluate need for a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) in Interior AK
- **Other:** Conduct a climate vulnerability assessment
- And more...

Community Response:

Suggestions & recommendations not fully vetted by data and the stakeholder outreach process.

Final Draft Change:

Created new appendix, with ideas to be considered in future updates.




What's Next?

Next Steps – Adoption & Implementation!

June 20 – Final Draft Released

June 28 – Economic Development Commission

➤ Recommendation to the Assembly 

July 28 – FNSB Assembly Introduction

➤ Refer to Planning Commission

TBD – Planning Commission

➤ Recommendation to the Assembly 

TBD – FNSB Assembly Adoption

➤ Public Hearing 

*Comp Plan
Or
Not to Comp Plan?*

That is the question...

*Administration is
recommending to NOT
adopt the CEDS as an
element of the FNSB
Regional
Comprehensive Plan*

Capital Projects – Economic Impact Analysis

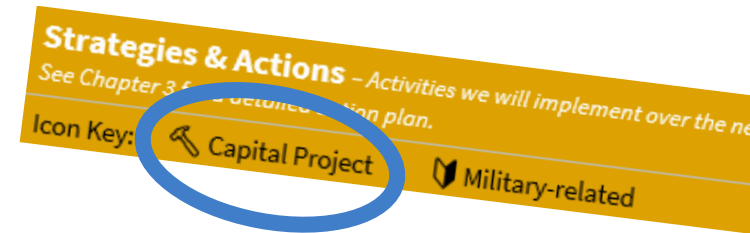
Why do this?

- The analysis provides critical information on potential jobs and revenue/business that will be generated by a proposed project:
 - 3 projects completed (on project website)
 - Interior Gas Utility Phase 2 Analysis
 - Pearl Creek Water Expansion Infrastructure Analysis
 - Polaris Demolition Analysis
 - 3 to 5 additional “priority projects” will be analyzed (TBD)
- 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 Analysis

What's next?

- Prioritize 5 additional projects – those projects that:
 - Supported by the CEDS – vision, goals, community/partner input and data!
 - Urgent – need to happen immediately to meet communitywide need
 - Have detailed information on projected costs and timing
 - Have an identified lead, someone/organization that will champion and see project through



Example ideas in current CEDS:

- Community cold storage and processing facility
- North Star Community Recreation Center
- KC-135 Basing at Eielson Air Force Base

Action Plans

The action plans consider existing and anticipated resources and provide direction to FNSB leadership, staff, regional organizations, businesses, and partners.

Capital Project: Identifies whether the action includes an infrastructure or facility component. This is especially relevant considering the extensive current and anticipated federal funding opportunities available that could support implementation of capital projects.

Lead: The lead organization responsible for the action.

Support: Partners, allies, and other entities that can support implementation.

Example (from Energy action plan)

Capital Project?	Action	Lead	Support	Estimated Resources	Target Completion
✓	a. Invest in electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure. Learn more about current efforts at the Alaska Energy Authority (AEA)'s Alaska Electric Vehicle Working Group page here .	Alaska Energy Authority	Golden Valley Electric Association, Alaska Electric Vehicle Association, UAF Alaska Center for Energy and Power, FNSB, Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition, state agencies, electric vehicle drivers and industry representatives	EV fast-charging network phase 1: \$1.52 M (Kenai Peninsula to Fairbanks)	Phase 1: Summer 2022

Actions: Near-term steps that organizations, businesses, and partners can take to help move a strategy forward.

Estimated Resources: Estimated costs to implement the action steps over the next five years, when identified.

Target Completion: Estimated year when the action will be complete.

Implementation & Annual Updates

- Encourage Usability through Design
 - Standalone sections & readability
- Measure Success
 - Each section includes metrics and targets
 - Community Research Quarterly – fnsb.gov/crq
 - Interactive dashboards – *in progress*
- Conduct Economic Summits



Analyze progress

- Note items completed & CELEBRATE – let community/partners know!
- Update goals, strategies & actions
- 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	Jobs – FNSB residents employed in leisure & hospitality <i>10% of total workforce in 2019; this sector saw the greatest losses in 2020</i>	6,290
\$70.5 Million	Visitor Spending – Hotel/motel annual room receipts <i>Increased 8% from 2016 to 2019, then declined 55% between 2019 and 2020</i>	\$80 Million
\$143 Million	Wages – Annual wages to FNSB residents employed in leisure & hospitality <i>Only 4% of total wages, indicating these jobs pay less than other industries</i>	\$150 Million
596,066	Passengers – Fairbanks International Airport passenger arrivals <i>2020 passenger arrivals were half the 2019 number</i>	625,869

Thank you!



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