Yuken-Kuskokwim Region

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

2018 – 2023

Prepared for the Yuken-Kuskokwim Region with funding from the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration
Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the Y-K residents, communities, businesses, organizations and other local, state and federal partners who contributed to this 2018-2023 Y-K Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update, including Y-K Region CEDS survey respondents.

Key contributors include:

**Y-K Region CEDS Committee**

NOTE: consider adding additional CEDS Committee members during CEDS implementation, to potentially include municipal, tribal and village corporation representatives.

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<td>Clarence Daniel</td>
<td>AVCP Transportation</td>
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<td>William Naneng</td>
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<td>Jon Cochrane</td>
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<td>Jennifer Williams</td>
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**Regional Partners Core Planning Group**

- Vivian Korthuis, Association of Village Council Presidents
- Brent Latham, Association of Village Council Presidents
- Roberta Charles, Association of Village Council Presidents
- Donna Bach, Calista Corporation
- Jennifer Williams, Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association
The CEDS was developed by Y-K regional partners, communities, tribes, businesses and residents, with the assistance of Agnew::Beck Consulting.
List of Acronyms

A+P  Airframe and power plant
ADF+G  Alaska Department of Fish and Game
AEA  Alaska Energy Authority
AHFC  Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
AIDEA  Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority
AVCP  Association of Village Council Presidents
ANSEP  Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program
ANTHC  Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
AVCP RHA  Association of Village Council Presidents Regional Housing Authority
AVEC  Alaska Village Electric Cooperative
AVTEC  Alaska Vocational Technical Center
BBNA  Bristol Bay Native Association
BIA  Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLM  Bureau of Land Management
CDQ  Community Development Quota
CEDS  Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
CEMAI  Calista Energy Management Assistance Initiative
CVRF  Coastal Villages Region Fund
DCCED  Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
DOE  U.S. Department of Energy
DOLWD  Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development
DOT+PF  Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
EDA  Economic Development Administration
EIS  Environmental Impact Statement
FAA  Federal Aviation Administration
FEMA  Federal Emergency Management Agency
GED  General education diplomas
IGAP  Indian Environmental General Assistance Program
IRS  Internal Revenue Service
IRT  Innovation Readiness & Training
LEO  Local Environmental Observer (ANTHC program)
LNG  Liquified natural gas
MSA  Middle School Academy (ANSEP program)
NEPA  National Environmental Policy Act
PCE  Power Cost Equalization
PFD  Permanent Fund Dividend
RHA  Regional Housing Authority
STEM  science, technology, engineering and math
SWOT  Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TANF  Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TERO  Tribal Employment Rights Ordinances
TIGER  Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (federal grant opportunity)
UAF  University of Alaska Fairbanks
USACE  U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA  U.S. Department of Agriculture
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Y-K Region Economic Vision
A strong, innovative, self-reliant Yukon-Kuskokwim economy supported by our resilient culture and regional collaboration.

Y-K Region Economic Development Goals and Strategies

Goal A – Grow Our Own: Develop an educated and well-trained regional workforce and group of future leaders
1. Encourage businesses, communities and organizations to engage youth earlier and more often: bring young residents to conferences, meet with them in classrooms, invite to board meetings; encourage them to vision for their future and engage them in career conversations earlier.
2. Connect regional corporations with local school districts on a regular basis to inform school boards of workforce needs and increase recruitment of local graduates.
3. Improve college readiness of local students by supporting Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) pre-college components (middle and high school).
4. Grow the local aviation workforce.
5. Work with children and youth, potentially ages three to 25, to develop basic skills to operate within workplace culture.
6. Identify and meet training needs for local people to be prepared to work during construction and operation of Donlin Gold mine.

Goal B – Address Critical Housing Needs
7. Expand regional water and sewer infrastructure projects; allow regional housing authorities to be eligible for water and sewer infrastructure funds to help offset installation costs for new homes.
8. Construct 3,000 homes in the Y-K region to address the housing shortage.
9. Support local lumber, sawmill, and home manufacturing efforts such as a truss manufacturing plant to reduce the cost of building materials and increase local employment opportunities.
10. Develop programs to educate residents and local agencies on how to finance a new home.

Goal C – Support and Grow Local Business Development and Entrepreneurship
11. Conduct finance, business basics, and life management skills education in communities to help residents understand credit, loans, insurance and banking opportunities, starting with youth in junior and senior high schools, and including young and older adults.
12. Collectively invest in regional community and economic development.
13. Promote farm-to-table and seafood-to-table commercial and export opportunities for locally grown and harvested goods, including value-added processing.
14. Establish a tanning operations company or factory in the region to process harvested furs for export, local use and arts/crafts.
**Goal D – Expand and Improve Regional Communications, Energy and Transportation Infrastructure**

15. Construct the Yukon-Kuskokwim Freight Corridor (connect communities along the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers via a 44-mile overland route).
16. Construct the Lower Yukon River Regional Port Development Project in Emmonak.
17. Implement needed upgrades at airports around the region, including resurfacing, taxiways, airport lighting and other infrastructure.
18. Bring natural gas from Cook Inlet to the region, either in bulk shipments or via pipeline.
19. Increase connectivity in the region by connecting Bethel to other parts of the state via a fiber optic telecommunications cable.
20. Construct a gravel pit at Pilcher Mountain, along with a road and port for exporting gravel.
21. Complete upgrades to the City of Bethel dock.

**Goal E – Improve the Health, Wellness and Safety of the Region’s People and Communities**

23. Improve success of those reentering communities from correctional facilities by providing treatment for addictions, increasing education, job training, and life skills, to increase workforce and improve public safety.
24. Address substance abuse challenges (including alcohol, opioids and methamphetamine) through increased programs and treatment options.
25. Replace village health clinics, including replacements in Kongiganak, Quinhagak, and Akiachak, and clinic expansion in Kwigillingok.
26. Continue to support YKHC’s clinic and hospital expansion, including identifying funding to meet YKHC staffing needs.
27. Design and construct a Regional Family Services Center.
28. Expand the Yukon-Kuskokwim Qavartarvik Hostel, YKHC’s lodging facility for patients.

**Goal F – Create Resilient and Prepared Communities**

29. Establish a Western Alaska Emergency Response Center in Bethel.
30. Participate in Adapt Y-K action planning to identify community-supported responses to climate change to protect natural resources for subsistence and environmental integrity.

**Goal G – Cultivate Regional Coordination and Planning**

(no priority strategies associated with this goal, but this CEDS effort, and the associated infrastructure priorities developed Fall 2017, is a clear demonstration of regional coordination and planning happening today)

**Goal H – Protect Natural Resource Harvests and Subsistence**

(see strategy #30)