



Yukon Kuskokwim

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

January 17, 2024
Transportation
Working Group Meeting

Welcome



Land Acknowledgement

We recognize, honor, and respect the traditional stewards of these lands, waters, and communities.

We acknowledge all past, present, and future Indigenous leaders of the Alaska lands where we live and work.



Introductions (*invited participants*)

Arctic Infrastructure Development Center	City of Marshall
Alaska Department of Military and Veteran Affairs	Coastal Villages Region Fund
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities	Denali Commission
Alaska Federation of Natives	Donlin Gold
Alaska Municipal League	DOWL Engineering
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium	Federal Highway Administration, Office of Tribal Transportation
Alaska University Transportation Center	Native Village of Napaimute
Association of Village Council Presidents, Community Development	Office of US Senator Lisa Murkowski
Association of Village Council Presidents, Transportation	The Kuskokwim Corporation
Bethel Search and Rescue	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Bureau of Indian Affairs, Transportation	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Calista Corporation	Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association
City of Emmonak	Yukon Kuskokwim Regional Tribal Government
And others!	

What three words come to mind when you think about the future of transportation in the YK?

Share aloud, or write in the chat!



Today's Meeting Objectives

- Introduce the purpose and process of the YK CEDS.
- Share 2020/2021 YK CEDS Transportation Strategy and Actions.
- Share what we've learned so far.
- Discuss the challenges, opportunities, and solutions to transportation needs of the YK Region, and priority topics for collaboration.

General Meeting Guidelines

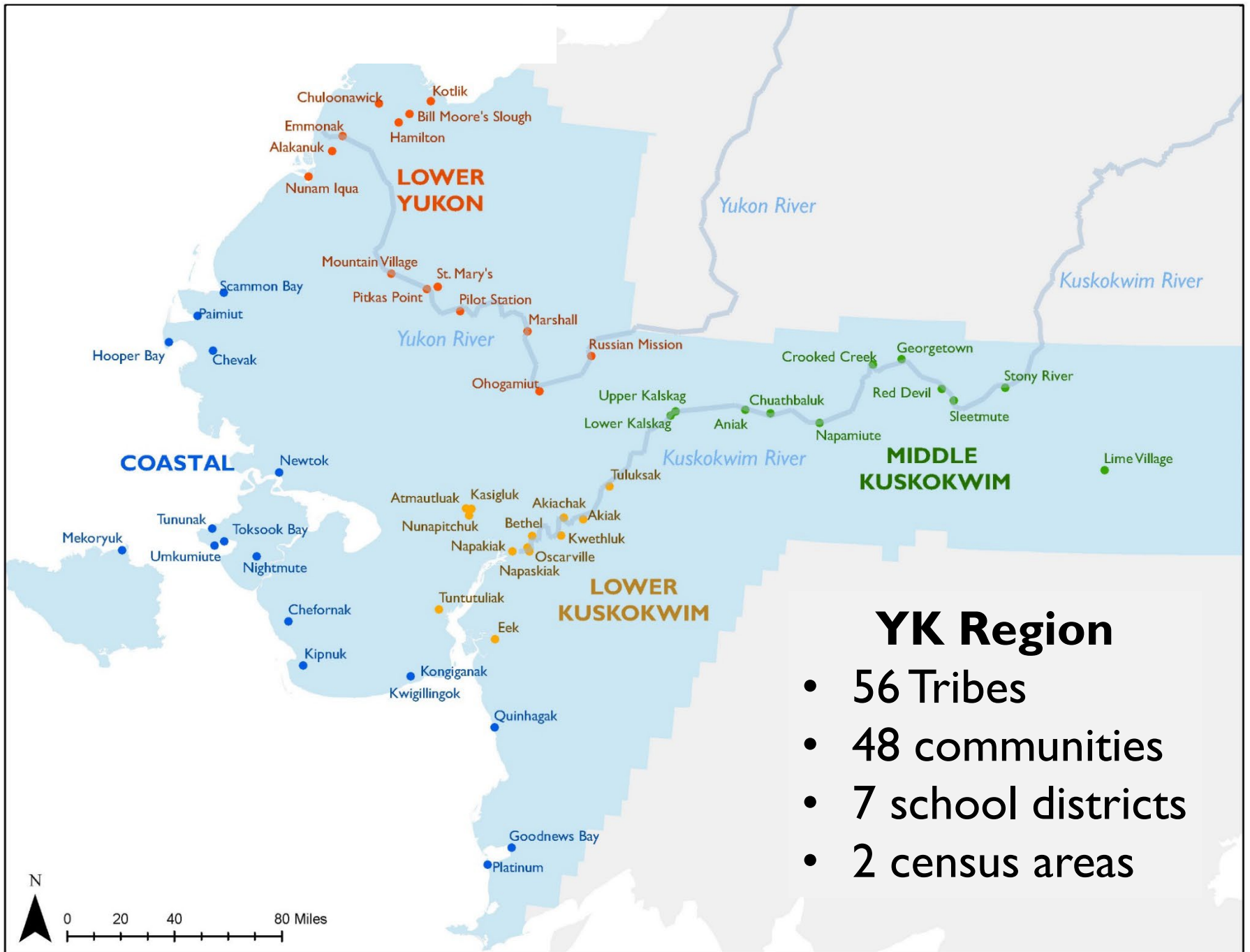
- Be clear and specific.
- Think creatively and strategically.
- Please use your mute button when not talking.
- Repeat your name every time you speak, if we have folks joining over the phone.



We'd love to see you! We are hoping for this to be an interactive meeting. Please turn your video on if your bandwidth allows.

Review Purpose and Process of YK CEDS





YK Region

- 56 Tribes
- 48 communities
- 7 school districts
- 2 census areas

What is a CEDS?

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

A document that identifies ways to

support businesses

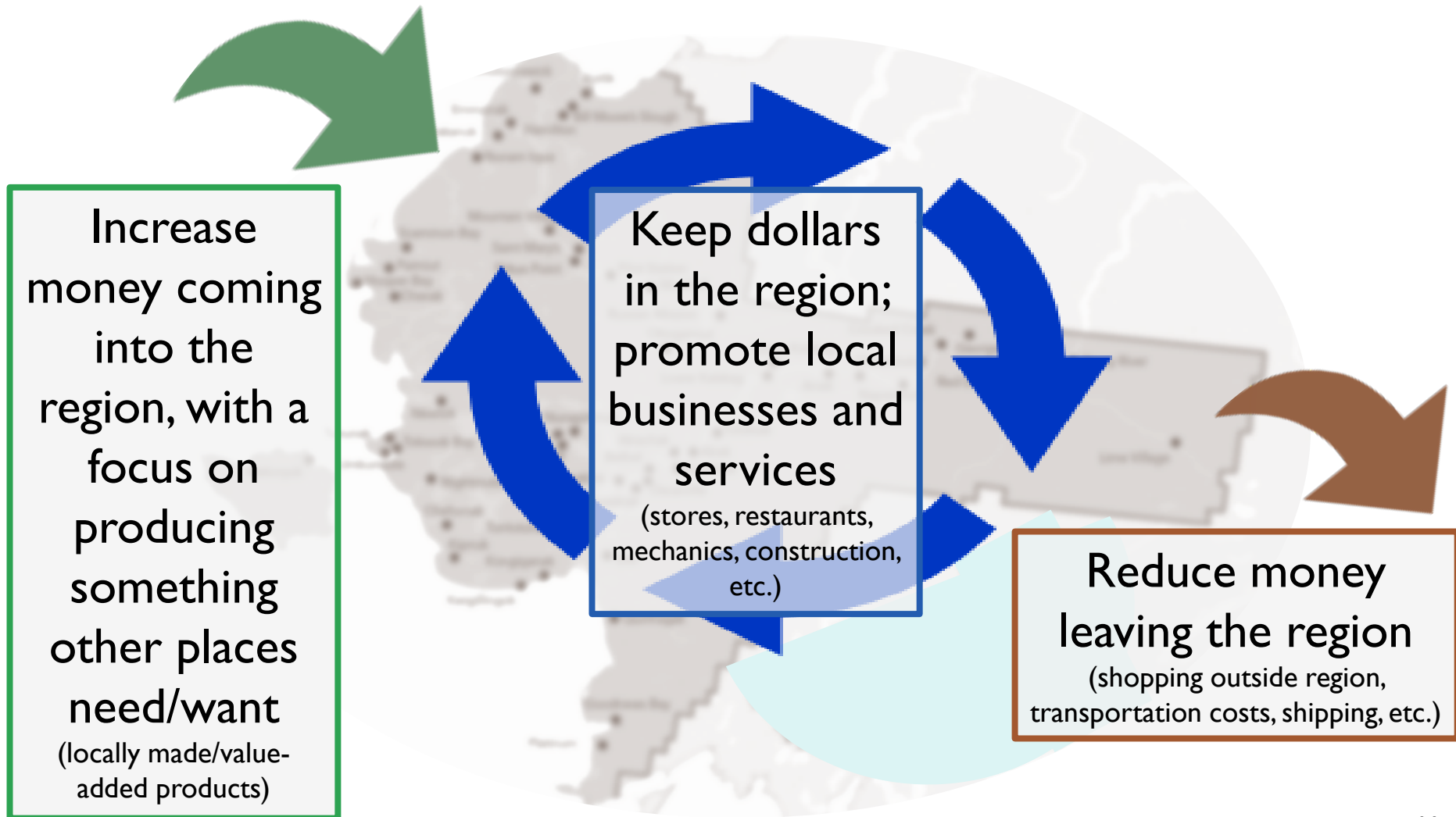
create more jobs

improve quality of life and

increase resilience to

changes and threats

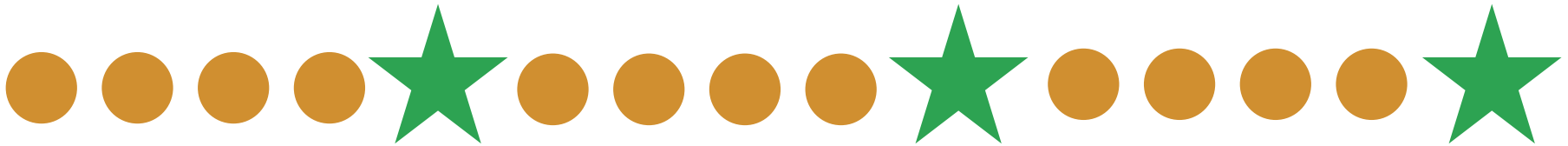
How do we build a strong regional economy?



Five-Year Update

CEDS must go through a robust update every five years, with shorter updates annually.

The five-year update was last completed in 2018.



- This current process is a 5-Year Update – 2024 – 2029 CEDS.
- Process and actions are shared by communities, partners in the region.

Who is leading this process?

YK Communities, Tribes,
Residents, Partners

YK CEDS Committee

YK CEDS Working Groups

Housing/Water & Sewer Infrastructure | Food Security |
Energy | Education and Workforce Development | Transportation
| Business Development & Entrepreneurship | Communications

*Funded by
the
Association
of Village
Council
Presidents
(AVCP)*

Roles and Responsibilities

YK CEDS Committee

Represents the main economic interests of the YK Region.

- Balances personal, community, and regionwide interests.
- Offers guidance, knowledge and implementation support for the YK CEDS.
- Assists with engagement and outreach.

YK CEDS Working Groups

Offer expertise and experience around specific focus areas.

For the focus area:

- Discuss progress made, propose solutions, and prioritize next steps.
- Guide data collection and help identify regional targets that can be used to track progress.
- Support collaborative efforts to implement CEDS recommendations with YK Tribes, communities, businesses, and organizations.

YK CEDS Committee Membership

Organization	Representative(s)
Alaska Village Electric Cooperative	Bill Stamm, Anna Sattler
Association of Village Council Presidents	Clarence Daniel, Diane Atti
AVCP Regional Housing Authority	Peter Evon
Bethel Community Services Foundation	Michelle DeWitt
Bethel Native Corporation	Ana Hoffman
Calista	Miranda Strong & others on the Government Relations Team
City of Bethel	Alan Lanning, Lori Strickler
Native Village of Napaimute	Mark Leary
Nuvista	Sean Glasheen, Bertha Prince
Orutsararmiut Native Council	Brian Henry
The Kuskokwim Corporation	Andrea Gusty, Will Hartman, Jonathan Samuelson
Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation	Christopher Beltzer
Yupit Piciryarait Cultural Center	Marybeth Whalen
Yuut Elitnaurviat	Tiffany Tony and Mike Hoffman
<i>Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program</i>	<i>Invited</i>

Schedule and Process

Summer and
Fall 2023

- Kickoff process
- Conduct interviews
- Launch community assessment tool

Fall 2023
/Winter 2023-
2024

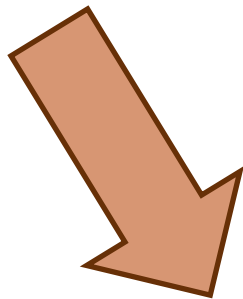
- Collect economic, population data
- Convene working groups
- Host YK Work Session

Spring 2024

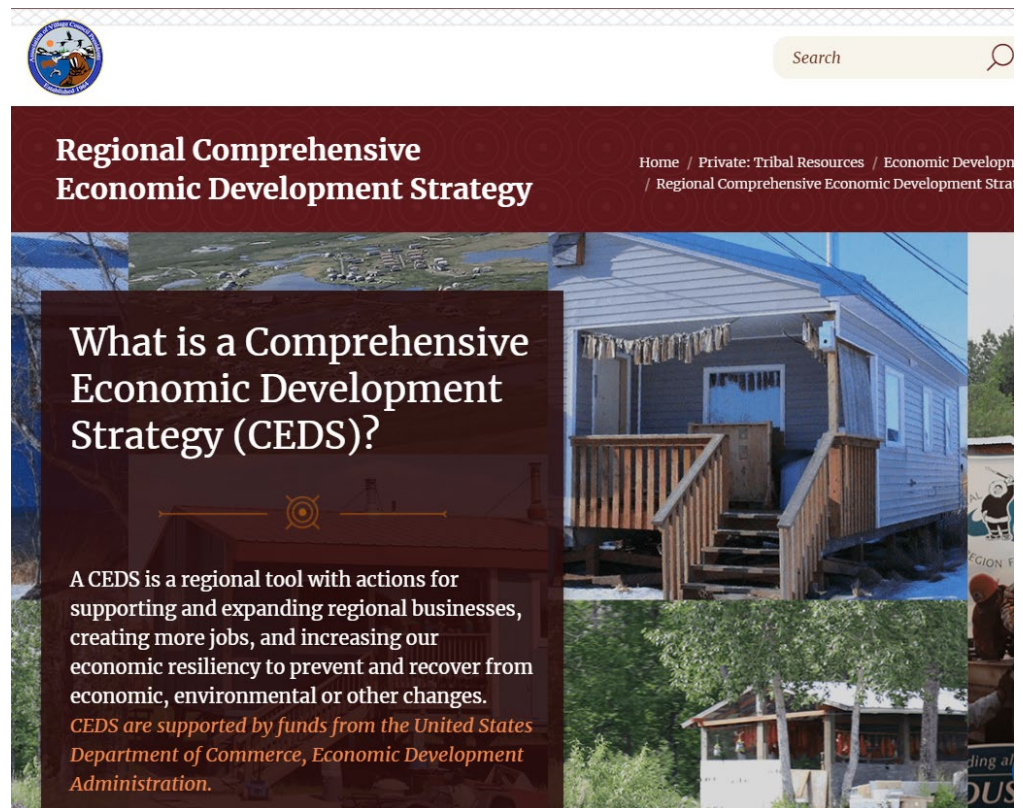
- Develop draft and final YK CEDS Five-Year Update

Learn More about the CEDS and Past YK Work Sessions

Review past YK CEDS updates and previous YK work session summaries on the AVCP website:



<https://tinyurl.com/ykceds>



Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Home / Private: Tribal Resources / Economic Development / Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy




What is a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)?

A CEDS is a regional tool with actions for supporting and expanding regional businesses, creating more jobs, and increasing our economic resiliency to prevent and recover from economic, environmental or other changes.

CEDS are supported by funds from the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration.

Community Assessment Tool

Purpose: Learn individual priorities of YK communities and support solutions for communities' needs.

TOPIC IMPORTANT: Please complete Questions #1, 2, and 3 for each topic.	1. What is your top community priority or project for this topic? <i>This should be the project you want to make progress on over the next year.</i>	2. What are you doing currently or what steps have you taken to address that priority project?	3. What is the biggest barrier to making progress on your top priority project?
A. Housing  <i>This topic may include issues about new housing, overcrowding, housing costs, and others.</i>			
B. Water-Sewer  <i>This topic may include issues about water, sewer, washeteria, and related issues.</i>			
C. Food Security  <i>This topic may include grocery costs, food storage, subsistence, greenhouse opportunities, and other food related issues.</i>			

Deadline:
 February 9, 2024

Review and Discuss Past YK CEDS Transportation Recommendations



Priority Strategy from 2021 Update

Transportation

STRATEGY 10: Prioritize and implement regional transportation projects (e.g., Kuskokwim River ice road, winter trails).

- 10-A.** Secure funding for ongoing Kuskokwim Ice Road construction and maintenance.
- 10-B.** Construct trails as identified in winter trails plan.
- 10-C.** Adopt winter trail design standards and universal color coding for trail marking. Educate regional residents on the color system.
- 10-D.** Develop a gravel pit at Pilcher Mountain with a road and port for exporting the gravel.
- 10-E.** Develop a Lower Yukon River Regional Port in Emmonak.
- 10-F.** Establish a Western Alaska Emergency Response Center in Bethel.

Priority Strategy from 2021 Update

10-A. Secure funding for ongoing Kuskokwim Ice Road construction and maintenance.

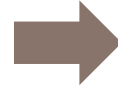
10-B. Construct trails as identified in winter trails plan.

10-C. Adopt winter trail design standards and universal color coding for trail marking. Educate regional residents on the color system.

10-D. Develop a gravel pit at Pilcher Mountain with a road and port for exporting the gravel.

10-E. Develop a Lower Yukon River Regional Port in Emmonak.

10-F. Establish a Western Alaska Emergency Response Center in Bethel.



Update

- State has provided funding the last two years with help of funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

Ryan Anderson, P.E.
Commissioner

www.DOT.Alaska.Gov

STATE OF ALASKA



Department of Transportation
and Public Facilities

Juneau, Alaska

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 24, 2022

Contact: Shannon McCarthy, (907) 269-0448, shannon.mccarthy@alaska.gov

Press Release: 22-0010

State of Alaska Funds Kuskokwim Area Winter Ice Road
Ice roads are unique transportation links moving goods & services in rural Alaska.

TRANSPORTATION

**Here's what it takes to
build Alaska's highways of
ice**

*Frozen rivers are vital transportation routes for
communities outside the state's traditional road system.*

Priority Strategy from 2021 Update

10-A. Secure funding for ongoing Kuskokwim Ice Road construction and maintenance.

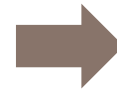
10-B. Construct trails as identified in winter trails plan.

10-C. Adopt winter trail design standards and universal color coding for trail marking. Educate regional residents on the color system.

10-D. Develop a gravel pit at Pilcher Mountain with a road and port for exporting the gravel.

10-E. Develop a Lower Yukon River Regional Port in Emmonak.

10-F. Establish a Western Alaska Emergency Response Center in Bethel.



Update

- A regionwide winter trails plan from Platinum to Nunam Iqua was kicked off in 2022 (estimated 5-years to complete). Includes acquiring easements/right of way and installing tripod stations.

Priority Strategy from 2021 Update

10-A. Secure funding for ongoing Kuskokwim Ice Road construction and maintenance.

10-B. Construct trails as identified in winter trails plan.

10-C. Adopt winter trail design standards and universal color coding for trail marking. Educate regional residents on the color system.

10-D. Develop a gravel pit at Pilcher Mountain with a road and port for exporting the gravel.

10-E. Develop a Lower Yukon River Regional Port in Emmonak.

10-F. Establish a Western Alaska Emergency Response Center in Bethel.

Update

- According to High Country News articles, markers have doubled in price from \$16 two years ago to \$32 in 2023.
- In recent years, the state contributed 4,000 uniform trail markers.

Priority Strategy from 2021 Update

10-A. Secure funding for ongoing Kuskokwim Ice Road construction and maintenance.

10-B. Construct trails as identified in winter trails plan.

10-C. Adopt winter trail design standards and universal color coding for trail marking. Educate regional residents on the color system.

10-D. Develop a gravel pit at Pilcher Mountain with a road and port for exporting the gravel.

10-E. Develop a Lower Yukon River Regional Port in Emmonak.

10-F. Establish a Western Alaska Emergency Response Center in Bethel.

Update

- In July 2021 Calista Corporation received \$721,000 from BIA's Energy and Mineral Development Program toward the development of the Pilcher Quarry project.
- As of fall 2023, the Pilcher Mountain quarry was supplying material to St. Mary's, Russian Mission, and Marshall.

Lands in Focus: Local Gravel

Presented by Calista Land & Natural Resources Department

Storyknife, September/October 2023 edition



Gravel from Calista's Pilcher Mountain quarry was used this summer for emergency repairs to the Russian Mission runway that was damaged by spring flooding. Photo courtesy Brice Inc.

Priority Strategy from 2021 Update

10-A. Secure funding for ongoing Kuskokwim Ice Road construction and maintenance.

10-B. Construct trails as identified in winter trails plan.

10-C. Adopt winter trail design standards and universal color coding for trail marking. Educate regional residents on the color system.

10-D. Develop a gravel pit at Pilcher Mountain with a road and port for exporting the gravel.

10-E. Develop a Lower Yukon River Regional Port in Emmonak.

10-F. Establish a Western Alaska Emergency Response Center in Bethel.

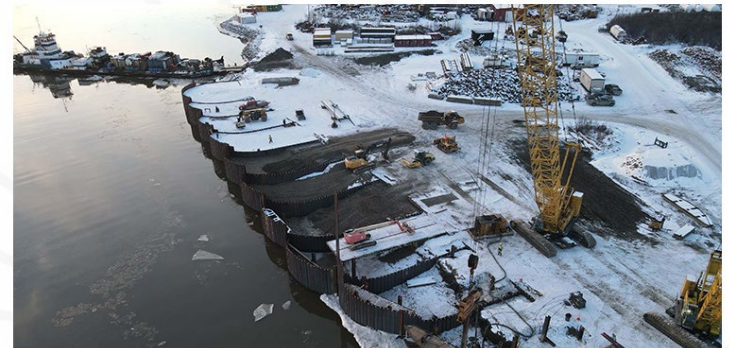
Update

- The City of Emmonak hoped to have a grand opening and dedication for the new regional port at the end of summer 2023.
- Fundraising is underway to build a terminal to support port operations and purchase equipment.
<https://www.calistacorp.com/news/wts-emmonak-port/>

Weathering The Storm

Emmonak Overcomes Hurdles to Build New Port

Storyknife, May/June 2023 edition, and 2022 Annual Report



The Emmonak port project includes a dock to receive ocean and river barges and a ramp that will be available to the community 24/7 as a boat launch. The project will be completed in 2023.

Priority Strategy from 2021 Update

10-A. Secure funding for ongoing Kuskokwim Ice Road construction and maintenance.

10-B. Construct trails as identified in winter trails plan.

10-C. Adopt winter trail design standards and universal color coding for trail marking. Educate regional residents on the color system.

10-D. Develop a gravel pit at Pilcher Mountain with a road and port for exporting the gravel.

10-E. Develop a Lower Yukon River Regional Port in Emmonak.

10-F. Establish a Western Alaska Emergency Response Center in Bethel.



Update

- Pandemic made it clear this is a need, especially important when no beds in the hospital are available.
- As of March 2022, project was still just conceptual, mostly with Bethel Search and Rescue.
- Alaska National Guard continues resource deployment to Bethel as necessary.
- Alaska DOT&PF planning to host a SAR training for Bethel SAR end of February 2023.

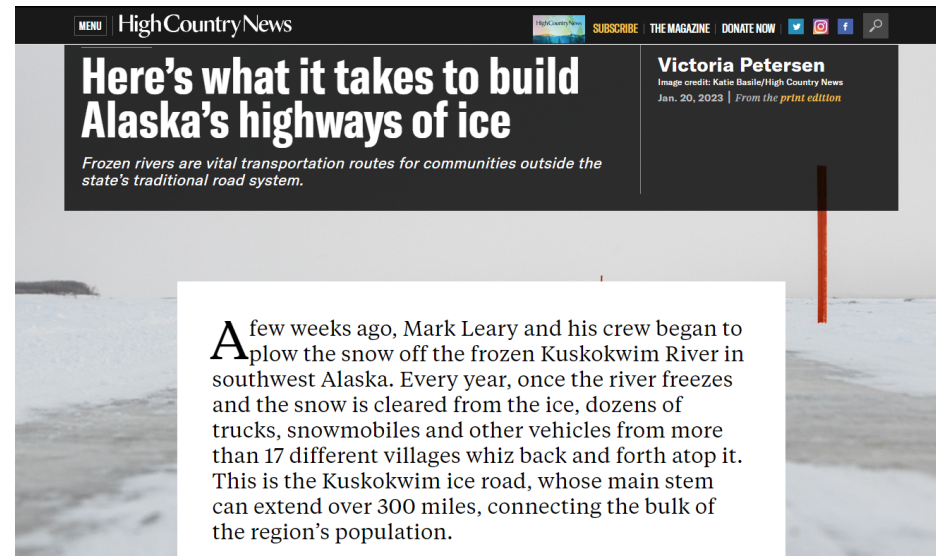
What We Have Learned So Far



Challenges

- Climate change is affecting reliability and safety of transportation routes and impacting infrastructure. *
- High cost of fuel affects subsistence activities and travel. *
- High cost of fuel results in higher travel and freight costs. *
- Cost of maintaining ice road has increased with cost of fuel and materials.

* = emerging as theme in
Community Assessment Tool



Opportunities

- Increasing recognition of ice road as a critical regional transportation route.
- Improved connectivity in the region can make rural travel safer.
- Disaster declaration funding bringing opportunities for improvement.
- Regional representation on the U.S. DOT Advisory Committee on Transportation Equity.

Funding – Some Examples

State:

- Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities. Example: Winter Trails funding. Tribes can apply for up to \$50,000 for trail marking. Can be used to pay searcher, workers, or purchase supplies.

Federal

- Federal Highway Administration, Office of Tribal Transportation
- Bureau of Indian Affairs, Tribal Transportation Program Funds
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska District
- Economic Development Administration

Other

- Denali Commission

Transportation Data Indicators – some ideas

- Reduction in annual winter travel fatalities
- Reduction in annual search and rescue missions
- Private funding invested in ice road and winter trail projects
 - Miles of winter trails marked
- Number of tripod stations installed
- Other quality of life impacts: measuring improved access to subsistence, services, communities
- **What other ideas do you have?**

Priority Topics and Emerging Solutions



Identifying Solutions

Strategy: Prioritize and implement regional transportation projects.

Guiding Questions

1. What additional solutions can help us meet the transportation needs of the YK region?
2. How can we better collaborate around transportation needs in the YK?
3. Which of these topics should we focus on at the YK Work Session next month?

Who else should be a part of this regional transportation discussion?


Arctic Infrastructure Development Center	City of Marshall
Alaska Department of Military and Veteran Affairs	Coastal Villages Region Fund
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities	Denali Commission
Alaska Federation of Natives	Donlin Gold
Alaska Municipal League	DOWL Engineering
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium	Federal Highway Administration, Office of Tribal Transportation
Alaska University Transportation Center	Native Village of Napaimute
Association of Village Council Presidents, Community Development	Office of US Senator Lisa Murkowski
Association of Village Council Presidents, Transportation	The Kuskokwim Corporation
Bethel Search and Rescue	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Bureau of Indian Affairs, Transportation	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Calista Corporation	Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association
City of Emmonak	Yukon Kuskokwim Regional Tribal Government
And others!	

Wrap Up



Upcoming YK CEDS Work Session

- **When:** February 6-7, 2024
- **Where:** At the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center in Bethel (*also a virtual option*)
- **Purpose:** Convene people from around the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta and develop solutions to regional economic challenges.



Yukon Kuskokwim
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

February 6 & 7, 2024: YK CEDS Work Session At-A-Glance Agenda – Working Draft
Yupitt Piciryarait Cultural Center; Bethel, Alaska & Via Zoom (details forthcoming)
We encourage and hope you can attend in-person! All are welcome!

Overview








Join partners and stakeholders from the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta to celebrate our collective strengths, potential opportunities, and to **identify our economic development priorities for the next five years.**

The 2024 YK CEDS Work Session will:

- ✓ Bring together community, Tribal, regional, state, and federal partners.
- ✓ Focus on creating solutions and actions that build the YK's economic resilience.

You can make it? Great! Important info:

- ✓ There is no cost to attend.
- ✓ Please RSVP to Diane and Molly the three items below – this will help us plan accordingly!
 1. Which session(s) do you anticipate attending?
 2. Will you join in person or virtually?
 3. Will you join us for lunch on one or more days? (**IMPORTANT:** lunch will be provided for those in

-  Housing, Water & Sewer Infrastructure
-  Communications
-  Transportation
-  Food Security
-  Business Development & Entrepreneurship
-  Energy
-  Education & Workforce Development

Upcoming YK CEDS Working Groups

Topic	Next meeting
Housing and Water-Sewer Infrastructure	Held October 12, 2023
Energy	Held December 13, 2023
Food Security	Held December 14, 2023
Transportation	TODAY
Communications	Coming up this afternoon
Education and Workforce Development	Will be held after Work Session
Business Development and Entrepreneurship	Will be held after Work Session

Next Steps

- Share notes from today.
- Continue to promote and distribute the Community Assessment Tool.
- Convene additional Working Groups.
- Come together for the YK Work Session in February.
- Prepare the draft and final CEDS.

Closing Comments & Questions

Ideas or questions? Contact us.

Diane Atti

Economic Development Manager
Association of Village Council Presidents

907-588-2278

datti@avcp.org

Molly Mylius

Project Manager
Agnew::Beck Consulting

907-782-8787

molly@agnewbeck.com