

# Housing and Water-Sewer Infrastructure Summary: Work Session Draft – February 2024



Where We Are Today	What data indicators can we monitor to track progress? Where do we want to be in 5 years?	Where We Aim to Be in 2028
<b>8,326 housing units</b>	<b>Units:</b> Number of total housing units. <sup>1</sup>	<b>11,000 housing units</b>
<b>14 communities</b>	<b>Water-Sewer Analysis:</b> Number of unserved/underserved communities who have an in-progress or completed Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) for water and sewer systems. <sup>2</sup>	All unserved/underserved communities have a completed analysis
<b>26 communities</b>	<b>Piped Communities:</b> Number of communities who have piped water and sewer available in public facilities AND residents' homes. <sup>2</sup>	All YK communities have piped water and sewer
Bethel Census Area: 59% Kusilvak Census Area 70.9%	<b>Homeownership Rate:</b> Number of residents who own their own home. <sup>3</sup>	Need to identify
Bethel Census Area: 70.7% Kusilvak Census Area: 73.8%	<b>Complete Plumbing Facilities Rate:</b> Percent of occupied units with water-sewer infrastructure. <sup>3</sup>	Need to identify
<b>40% of homes</b>	<b>Overcrowded Homes:</b> Percent of occupied unities considered overcrowded. <sup>4</sup> Overcrowding is defined as “homes that are too small for the number of tenants...and are mostly due to households taking in family members who would otherwise be homeless.”	Need to identify

Sources: <sup>1</sup>[United States Census Bureau](#) | <sup>2</sup>ANTHC Data | <sup>3</sup>2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Average | <sup>4</sup>[2018 Statewide Housing Assessment Part 1 – Executive Summary](#)

## Housing and Water-Sewer Objectives (adapted from previous CEDS)

1. Construct 3,000 housing units in the YK region.
2. All YK homes have access to clean water through piped or hauled water systems.

## Housing and Water-Sewer Infrastructure Strategic Direction: Potential Strategies and Actions

### **Proposed Strategy A: Construct new housing and rehabilitate aging housing.**

1. Support local lumber, sawmill, and home manufacturing efforts (e.g., a truss manufacturing plant). This will also reduce the cost of building materials and increase local employment opportunities.
2. Support individuals and communities in securing equipment and training needed to level homes.
3. Create master plans for communities showing lots and phases for future development to tie into existing sewer and water infrastructure most effectively; combine this work with collaborative engagement alongside Native allottees.
4. Update the Association of Village Council Presidents Regional Housing Authority (AVCP RHA) Housing Needs Assessment (last conducted in 2018).

### **Proposed Strategy B: Identify and invest in appropriate water-sewer technologies to meet the unique needs of communities and households.**

5. Install piped water-sewer infrastructure in underserved and unserved communities.
6. Install household-level systems in communities to meet the gaps where piped water-sewer systems may not be feasible for all homes.
7. Identify and implement improvements to the RUBA program.
8. Invest in renewable energy generation to bring water-sewer fuel costs down.

### **Proposed Strategy C: Increase collaboration and remove funding barriers for housing and water-sewer projects can more easily happen in parallel.**

9. Expand on the success of existing programs (Coastal Villages Region Fund tiny house program; TKC's Harvest to Housing program, ONC/ NeighborWorks/ Cook Inlet Housing Authority projects) and replicate in other YK communities.
10. Advocate for regional housing authorities to be eligible for water and sewer infrastructure funds to help offset installation costs for new homes.
11. Expand private and community-based financing options for housing projects.
12. Meet with Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) about Category D funding to discuss how to move forward given challenges of restricted lands in many villages.
13. Align housing and water-sewer pre-design survey work to occur at the same time.

### **Proposed Strategy D: Build the local workforce capacity and local infrastructure needed to support and sustain water-sewer systems.**

14. See education and workforce development recommendations.

### **Other Potential Actions**

15. Provide home ownership financial education and home maintenance education to position YK residents to apply for a mortgage, purchase, and maintain homes.
16. Develop home relocation plan for communities threatened by river erosion and other climate impacts/natural disasters. Plan for relocating homes in locations that are adjacent to existing sewer and water infrastructure so the reconnect cost is economically feasible.
17. Increase Tribal member access to land.
18. Develop emergency housing/shelter.

### **Guiding Questions for YK CEDS Work Session Breakouts**

1. What strategies or actions are missing?
2. Which strategies and actions are the most important to achieve first and over the next five years?
3. How can we collaborate to make progress?

# Other Relevant Resources and Potential Funding Sources

## Relevant Resources

- The Unmet Needs of Environmentally Threatened Alaska Native Villages: Assessment and Recommendations. Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. January 2024. [View here.](#)
- Alaska Housing Assessment: Statewide Housing Summary. Alaska Housing Finance Corporation. January 2018. [View Part I Executive Summary here.](#) [View Part II Housing Characteristics here.](#)
- Housing Needs Infographic: AVCP (Bethel Region). Association of Village Council Presidents, Regional Housing Authority and Cold Climate Housing Research Center. 2018. [View here.](#)

## Potential Funding Sources

- Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants. US Department of Agriculture, Rural Development- Alaska. [View here.](#)
- Grants for Rural and Native Alaskan Villages. US Department of Agriculture, Rural Development- Alaska. [View here.](#)
- Single Family Housing Direct Home Loans. US Department of Agriculture, Rural Development- Alaska. [View here.](#)

Strengths and Opportunities	Weaknesses and Threats
<i>Internal and external factors that contribute to our success in this focus area</i>	<i>Internal and external factors that are barriers to our success in this focus area</i>
<div><b>Overall</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organizations are working together in the region more to develop and construct housing and water-sewer projects.</li></ul><b>Housing</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Federal funding such as the Housing Preservation Grants and Mutual Self-Help Housing Technical Assistance Grants to help with home repairs and construction.</li><li>• An increasing number of organizations (Orutsararmiut Native Council [ONC], NeighborWorks, Cook Inlet Housing Authority, the Rural Alaska Community Action Program [RurAL CAP], The Kuskokwim Corporation [TKC]) are constructing housing.</li><li>• Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) has supported weatherization upgrades in the region, reducing commercial and residential energy costs.</li></ul><b>Water-Sewer</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Addressed persistent issues of low Rural Utility Business Advisor (RUBA) scores impacting State of Alaska community fund procurement for water/wastewater sewer facilities.</li><li>• ANTHC and Indian Health Service (HIS) collaboration to expedite water-sewer projects alongside housing construction.</li><li>• ANTHC completed and continues to support planning efforts for major water and sewer projects.</li><li>• The Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative program under ANTHC helps build capacity for communities to support and sustain water-sewer systems.</li><li>• TKC has successfully helped their communities address low RUBA scores.</li><li>• Innovations in rural water-sewer technology.</li><li>• Renewable energy can decrease water-sewer costs.</li></ul></div>	<div><b>Overall</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High construction, shipping, and material costs.</li><li>• Lack of capacity, technical assistance, and training for ongoing maintenance, operations, and relevant data collection.</li><li>• Permafrost thaw and shoreline erosion continue to negatively impact housing and water sewer infrastructure.</li><li>• Natural disaster infrastructure damages and response.</li></ul><b>Housing</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of available and affordable housing.</li><li>• Limited funding for constructing new housing.</li><li>• The existing housing stock needs repair, with some housing needing full replacement due to the extent of damages.</li><li>• Many communities lack sufficient land for new housing, including limitations of building within a wildlife refuge.</li></ul><b>Water-Sewer</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Federal agency requirements are not always appropriate or realistic when applied in rural Alaska.</li></ul></div>