

YK Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Housing and Water-Sewer Infrastructure Work Session Meeting Notes

10:00 pm – 12:00 pm, Tuesday, February 6, 2024 [Link to meeting recording](#)

Attendees (alphabetized by organization)

Attendee Name	Organization
Mary Ayunerak	Alakanuk Tribal Council
Marilyn Stanislaus	Alakanuk Tribal Council
Heather Cavanaugh	Alaska Communications System
Tammy Helms *	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Carrie Bohan *	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Village Safe Water Program
Stosh Hoffman	Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Adison Spafford *	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Ben White *	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Christina McElwee	Alaska Logistics
Cody Uhlig *	Alaska Native Tribal Health Authority
Ryan Beckett *	Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Jenni Harrison	Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Henry Combs	Association of Village Council Presidents
Clarence Daniel *	Association of Village Council Presidents
John McIntyre *	Association of Village Council Presidents
John Tobeluk *	Association of Village Council Presidents
Christine Brink	Association of Village Council Presidents, Regional Housing Authority
Gage Hoffman	Association of Village Council Presidents, Regional Housing Authority
Walter Jim	Association of Village Council Presidents, Regional Housing Authority
Tonia Baklanova	Calista Corporation
Brenda Pacarro *	Calista Corporation
Miranda Strong *	Calista Corporation
Pauline Boratko *	City of Bethel
Lee Foley	City of Bethel
Tracy Pleasant	City of Quinhagak
Stacey Fritz	Cold Climate Housing Research Center
Ray Daniel *	CRW Engineering Group
Erik O'Brien	Denali Commission
Colleen Laroux *	Donlin Gold
LaQuita Chmielowski	DOWL Engineering
Kate Silber *	DOWL Engineering
Jenifer Nelson	GCI, Inc.

Attendee Name	Organization
George Guy	Kwethluk Inc.
Richard G Berezkin	Kwethluk IRA Council
Tim Meyers	Meyer's Farm
Jack Hébert	National Renewable Energy Laboratory
Vanessa Stevens	National Renewable Energy Laboratory
Martin Andrew	Organized Village of Kwethluk
Calvin Cockroft *	Orutsararmiut Native Council
Jeff Evon *	Orutsararmiut Native Council
Amy O'Brien	Orutsararmiut Native Council
Bob Marquez *	Rural Alaska Community Action Program
Will Hartman	The Kuskokwim Corporation
Archie Andrew	Tuntutuliak Community Services Association
Ann Fischer	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Science
Brett Nelson	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Science
Tania Jimmie	Yukon Kuskokwim Regional Tribal Government
Patty Murphy	Yukon Kuskokwim Regional Tribal Government
Lenore Fox *	

*Starred attendees participated in the work session virtually while unmarked attendees participated in person.

Each breakout session featured a specific focus area summary document to guide the discussion. This summary document was used as a baseline and will be updated for the future CEDS document based on Work Session attendee feedback. To view the draft focus area summaries referenced in the breakout sessions, visit the YK CEDS page [here](#).

Data Indicators Discussion Highlights

- Catalogue existing projects or projects queued up so there is consistent data on where projects are happening and their status.
- The 3,000 units objective is not realistic; should develop something that feels ambitious but still achievable within 5 years.

Objectives, Strategies, and Actions Discussion

What strategies or actions are missing?

*Starred items are noted as a proposed priority.

- **Strategy A: Construct new housing and rehabilitate aging housing.**
 - Make land available for infrastructure and housing, as well as accounting for roads/access to housing and infrastructure.
 - Need land to have housing.
 - Make sure access requirements happen before building.

- Provide communities with assistance with law and requirements in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA).
- Explore regional corporation long term lease solutions for accessing land for housing. *
- Evaluate housing models; what about current housing systems is and isn't working? *
- Expand and provide resources for community members of all ages to learn how to buy a house, how to transition from rent to owning, how to get a loan, and the importance of good credit. *
- Construct a truss plant in Bethel.*
- Support communities in planning for expansion. Does the region need a regional infrastructure plan?
- When feasible, construct new housing to include self-sufficient energy systems.
- Develop policies and best practices for community relocation.
- Make sure power infrastructure will meet the needs of new infrastructure and housing.
- Determine best practices for when to condemn a house that's beyond rehabilitation; develop more rehabilitation strategies to prevent current stock from falling into disrepair.
- Develop maintenance assistance and rent-to-own programs.
- AVCP RHA has hired new grant writers.
- Make tasks manageable and achievable. "The easy things have been picked away" – need new investment to make a dent in the need.
- Need more investment in leveling homes around the region that are being damaged by permafrost.
- Invest in housing weatherization. Bring household costs down by reducing power demand.
- **Strategy B: Identify and invest in appropriate water-sewer technologies to meet the unique needs of communities and households.**
 - Focus on climate resiliency and disaster recovery of housing and water-sewer systems. *
 - Conduct needs assessments to identify highest priority needs. *
 - Design systems that can be built faster and more easily.
 - Proactively update equipment in water treatment plant.
 - Communities should have autonomy in helping select the type of system that will work for them. It is not one size fits all.
 - Increase education about rural infrastructure challenges in other parts of the state. "There are technical and tactical divides between rural and urban Alaska. Our communities have outages all the time, our pipes freeze and things come to a standstill. And it is not in the news."
- **Strategy C: Increase collaboration and remove funding barriers for housing and water-sewer projects so they can more easily happen in parallel.**
 - Cut costs or raise new funding for housing and infrastructure projects. *
 - Strengthen partnerships with organizations in the same field. Do stakeholder mapping or make a comprehensive network list. "A lot is happening but it is disjointed." Fund partnership coordinators at regional organizations. *
 - Share successes, but also failures. It is helpful to know what has been tried and does NOT work.
 - Hold quarterly regional meetings to share progress.
 - AVCP RHA is looking at hosting an annual housing conference.

- **Strategy D: Build the local workforce capacity and local infrastructure needed to support and sustain water-sewer systems.**
 - Build local capacity, especially for grant writing and management. *
 - Train planners for communities and work on retention of local workers. Reduce reliance on contractors. *
 - Train for preventive maintenance workers. *
 - Develop process/program to help reinstate and keep trades licenses active and current.

How can we collaborate to make progress?

- USDA can help communities that want to relocated existing infrastructure to a new site.
- Add NREL to the list of resources on the summary.