

YK Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Bringing it All Together (Closing Session) Meeting Notes

3:45 pm – 5:00 pm, Wednesday, February 7, 2024

[Link to meeting recording.](#)

What is one key takeaway for each focus area?

Names of the focus areas were displayed on posters around the room. Participants were invited to write one key takeaway from each focus area they participated in on the posters. A similar activity was held with online participants. When there was agreement with a statement, this is indicated with an asterisk (*).

Housing, Water-Sewer Infrastructure

- The importance of land and permissions. **
- Utilize local resources to reduce cost. **
- Homes need to be moveable.
- Partnerships and networking stretches budgets and funding dollars.
- Need stable infrastructure in addition to support homes.
- Healthy homes.
- Health and public safety.
- Housing security is connected to all other issues.
- Need 3,000 new homes = need a faster building system that still requires local labor.
- Explore construction that can be prefabricated indoors in the winter.
- Affordable, energy efficient and healthy home must be developed through teamwork and applied research.
- Excited to hear about the Regional Housing Authority's investment in this session. Refreshing, they were interested in creative approaches to bringing housing to the YK Region.
- Having a water-sewer contact by village.
 - Understanding the status of each community's water-sewer systems is really important. For non-piped villages: Village Safe Water. For piped villages: Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative.
 - More information will improve collaboration, especially since Tribes are receiving funds for water-sewer (e.g. via disaster recovery). Need to involve utility providers, housing authorities, etc.
 - Who? -> Could be a Tribal administrator, but doesn't have to be; "someone in the know". Important for both giving and receiving information.
- Need for Tribes to understand who provides what assistance/service – the housing authority, ANTHC, etc.

Connectivity

- As we get access to the world we need to be ready for the world to have access to us.
- Develop the YK Regional Broadband Plan – who will lead it? Many suggestions mentioned in the breakout.

Transportation

- Landing docks and staging areas.
- Need redundancy during shoulder seasons (break up and freeze times) so we are not solely relying on air – intertie communities together so it cuts flights and time.
- Adopt winter trails already in your area and work together to connect them all together. Connect a network and create the foundation for the future.
- Working with Alaska Airlines to increase the number of Bethel flights. Also benefits for cargo.

Food Security

- A few farmers, not everyone a gardener.
- Subsistence advocacy (political access).
- Importance of including access to traditional foods in the conversation (berries, animals, and other plants).
- Advocacy and policies to ensure subsistence foods are protected.

Business Development and Entrepreneurship

- Best in the West.
- Bethel might need a big coffee shop/low-pressure public meeting space.
- Support for business administration, not just identifying needs and opportunities.
- Opportunities for shared workspaces.

Energy

- Move all the studies into action – “villages/Tribes are studied out”. **
- We need transitional energy to begin utilizing clean, renewable energy sources. *
- Measuring reduction on fossil fuels; increase alternative energy sources (solar, wind, etc.).
- Regional energy plan.
- Energy efficiency first.

Education and Workforce Development

- Big diversity of strategies that can help with this. *
- Identify key industries and provide youth outreach and guidance and support for youth pursuing those careers.
- What are the cultural and economic workforce needs of communities?
- Revise benefits to meet the needs of the workforce in the region.
- Need to develop work ethic at a young age.
- Issues with work times not unique to the YK Region.