



Anchorage NARRATIVE

Live.
Work.
Play.

APPROVED by AEDC Board of Directors on October 4, 2011

“One of the best cities for riding out the recession.” – Business Week Magazine

INTRODUCTION

By 2025, Anchorage will be the #1 city in America to live, work and play.

As Alaskans, we are proud of our state. We know that as the largest state in the nation we have more to offer. Our economy is stable, our workforce is strong and opportunities are plentiful. Not to mention our mountains are bigger, our trails are longer and we share one common idea, we love where we live.

Anchorage is a young and growing city with a place for all ages where you can live close to work, make a competitive salary and have a plethora of options for entertainment and outdoor activities. There are many things that make this state an amazing place to call home; however to be the #1 city in the nation to live, work and play, we must continually improve and invest.

Anchorage's narrative for Live. Work. Play. gives a detailed aspirational look at what it will be when it is the #1 city to live, work and play in 2025.

LIVE.

Employment

Anchorage is a thriving community and business hub for most of the state of Alaska. It boasts the ability to weather economic recessions and its residents account for nearly half of the total statewide population. Anchorage provides a **diversified spectrum of employment opportunities** with a wide range of benefits and workplace amenities. Major employment sectors include; oil and gas, healthcare, leisure/hospitality, wholesale/retail trade, business/professional services, transportation, civil construction, government, telecommunications, fishing, mining, timber, publishing, banking, insurance and manufacturing.

Education

Residents of Anchorage have **wide access to job training resources** including access to the **Alaska Job Center Network** which offers variety of job training services to help Alaskans qualify to obtain high-demand jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency. Training services are available to eligible youths, adults and dislocated workers and offers a variety of services to help jobseekers **determine the job or career that is right for them**. Services include workshops; networking, labor market information, resource rooms, career counseling, aptitude/skill/interest assessments, short term training, apprenticeships, on the job training, educational and job training services, individual training account development, case management support and supportive services to help participants while in training.

In 2025, Anchorage's youngest have safe, stimulating, early learning opportunities where **every child starting school is ready to learn and succeed**. Children are proficient readers by 4th grade. The community actively supports youth to stay on track and make positive choices for today and the future. Youth **graduate on-time** and successfully **begin careers** and/or **complete post-secondary education**.

The options are many, including a state wide university system, private colleges and access to trade training opportunities that attract students from near and far - adding to the diverse population already thriving in Anchorage.

Diversity

Resources, jobs, adventure, discovery, all are interwoven with the fabric of ethnicities to make Anchorage an **urban melting pot**. As part of the Pacific Rim you would expect to find a large population of Southeast Asian, Polynesians, Koreans, Hmong and Filipinos but Anchorage has become the destination for Hispanics and

African Sudanese. The number of individual cultures **relocating to Anchorage** is constantly growing and changing. Adding to the mix are the Native Alaskans whose growing population raises awareness of these ancient but modern peoples. The descendants and children of Alaskan pioneers also offer their distinct perspective to Anchorage as well as those new to Alaska. With so many cultures and the diversity of the population, Anchorage offers a mixture of religions - giving spiritual freedom to its residents to practice what speaks to them. **People come, see, participate and stay.** People are making a **new life**, a **new family** and a **new vision** for themselves that is changing the way Anchorage looks and feels. As a young and growing city, there is something for every age and individual amongst the diverse communities.

Cost of Living

Anchorage is a place where the cost of living is supported by **quality of life and opportunity for well-paying jobs**. The cost of living is **competitive** with other parts of the country and Anchorage residents enjoy a good quality of life with **affordable services** such as housing, health care, transportation, utilities, and food. Opportunities for low or no-cost recreation and entertainment abound.

Health & Safety

Anchorage is home to the **state's largest, growing number health care providers**, offering comprehensive care for all ages. Alaska's largest city offers the complete spectrum of **quality, cost effective care** which rivals the resources of larger markets around the country. Anchorage's health care providers adhere to **national quality standards** as set by nationally recognized accreditation organizations and providers invest in the most recent technology such as robotic surgery, electronic health record systems and telemedicine. Anchorage boasts a wide range of providers including four general hospitals, a children's hospital, a trauma center, and a specialty hospital for long-term acute care. Physicians practice in such areas as oncology, neuroscience, cardiology, pediatrics, neonatology, orthopedics, mental health, substance abuse rehabilitation, diagnostic imaging, senior care, naturopathic medicine, acupuncture and long-term care.

Anchorage is a **safe city** that boasts **low crime rates** and a **high safety record**. The community focuses on creating safe places for everyone in all aspects of live, work and play.

Housing & Neighborhoods

Anchorage neighborhoods offer **safe and well-planned** residential areas to a **variety of housing and income levels**. These neighborhoods provide quiet retreats with easy access to goods and services. Each neighborhood takes advantage of its geographical assets, whether with hillside, urban or suburban areas, to offer the best of Alaska living to residents. Commercial zones are accessible, easy to navigate and offer a thought-out land use and design strategy. Intra-city **transportation is easily found and efficient**. Neighborhoods are home to a **diverse array of people** of different ages, ethnic backgrounds and places of origin. Housing is varied and eclectic in nature and Anchorage homes are distinct in aesthetic and traditional design. High quality, cost effective housing as well as homes offering opulent living are found around all areas of Anchorage.

Connections

Anchorage is engaging its citizens in social, governmental and future planning activities that affect the entire city and individual neighborhoods. **Citizen led decisions** connect people and involve them in the actual management of the city on all levels of government. Boards & commissions steer government and non-government organizations insuring that all are involved in **building confidence in Anchorage's future and pride in its residents**. There is a small degree of separation from a single citizen being able to access any person in business or government. **Anchorage is still a city that if you don't know who to call you probably know someone who knows someone.**

WORK.

Business

By 2025, the face of business has changed, with technological advancements empowering a new workforce, employees and businesses can **operate from anywhere**. With these advancements, we take advantage of this new technology by adapting, implementing and educating the business community and workforce. We operate faster and continue to push barriers like travel time and access to physical goods. Alaska's geographic setting is in-between established wealth in Europe, mega corporations in the Americas, and new global players in Asia and the orient. The growing business community in Anchorage continues to attract diverse businesses in all sectors by offering competitive tax incentives to companies all over the world.

Transportation

Anchorage has one of the **world's largest cargo airports** at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport. **Competitive fees** and **access to jet fuel** grow the hub in state, enticing a new generation of fuel-efficient aircraft to maximize savings with a stop-over in one of the busiest airports in the region.

In a new global economy, the world is flat. Educated businessmen of the American East compete with young upstarts in Mumbai. Shaving a few hours off a flight is the **new competitive edge**, and Anchorage stands to benefit. Its prime position couldn't be better -- flanked by two continents that appreciate in-person relationships more than any other.

Thanks to an active department of transportation, **commute times are decreasing** in many areas due to **smart spending**. Our **easy access** to extended bike trails link the city to its limits, and virtually every resident has a chance to enjoy our parks and greenery by commuting by bike or foot.

Career Opportunities

In a work environment, it's not just about whether a city is workable but whether it's lovable. It's more than just a job; it's where you want to be. Anchorage offers a **quality of life** that no other place can. With an active non-profit sector in Anchorage, **citizens have a voice** in a politically disconnected Lower 48. While many cite our high relocation costs as a weakness, that same caveat gives citizens a signal to broadcast in a world growing of noise. Issues can be solved and solutions can be heard, providing **attractive opportunities** to both the business community and their work force. Additionally, Anchorage is a big fish in a small pond. Our voice extends to the state level, which is able to provide greater access to funding and resources. Citizens can be a part of change. While many non-scientific metrics have grown in importance as individuals become more mobile, the need for **low crime**, **easy commutes**, and a **good income** have lost no value in the standing of how a city is measured.

Jobs

In addition, our economy still has a **stable foundation** from both the oil and gas industries as well as government. Thus, our consistent business environment offers a **lower un-employment rate**, while household **incomes** and **standard of living** continue to be some of the **highest in the country**, thanks in part to a growing and resilient health care industry.

Workforce Development

Another key to low unemployment lies in our city's **active involvement of our youth**. With ample recreational equipment and one of the **largest general aviation fleets** in the world, Anchorage is able to satisfy its kinesthetic needs through **engaging career programs** in the Anchorage School District. Programs like these enable a budding private sector to integrate with public services and present opportunities to develop new skills. Young professionals stay in Alaska because the opportunities are endless, allowing for an experienced workforce with roots that understand this unique place.

Economy

As a new intellectual property industry begins to take hold in Anchorage, our economy **transforms from an oil based economy to an information based economy**, which is the envy of many regions dependent on dwindling natural resources. The keys to our new success lay in a smart, bi-partisan government that understands the value of our **minimal tax scheme**. A rash of new companies located here are able to take advantage of a "head start" granted by a legacy of oil and gas production. We're truly building a bridge to the future.

Entrepreneurship

When the Great Recession hit the United States, Alaska seized the opportunity to proclaim "this is our chance." We spurred **entrepreneurial growth** and **promoted our high standard of living**. In return, new businesses popped up in Anchorage and entrepreneurs received support from the community to continue to succeed and grow. We told our tourists, previously advertised to "visit and leave," to "stay and live in the State you have enjoyed so much."

PLAY.

Arts & Culture

Arts and culture are an intrinsic part of a thriving community. They connect, provoke, inspire and provide communities a unique way to communicate and reflect the rugged beauty of our city and state. **Quality of life and economic vitality** are greatly affected by the breadth and depth of arts and culture.

To be the #1 community to play, Anchorage must have a **fully supported and diverse arts and cultural environment**. Success will be measured by high levels of **participation and support** from artists and patrons and investment from the public and private sectors. Arts and culture benefit the entire community. The effects will be seen, felt, and heard in everyday life by the majority of Anchorage residents. **Arts and culture are vital in Anchorage.**

Recreation

Recreation is an essential part of living in Anchorage. We define our **sense of place** through our recreation pursuits. Whether fishing along streams, hiking in our mountains, or playing in our fields we live a "big, wild life". Our **homes are within a short distance of trails** that provide a natural outdoor experience. We celebrate those who excel at athletic activity and nurture athletic activity by all our residents. We **participate** in the very sporting events in which we are spectators. We skate, we ski, we run. We fly, we fish, we hunt. Our recreation leagues have waiting lists of residents yearning to play. Our running and skiing races have **participants by the thousands**. Virtually every household has at least one fishing rod, a pair of binoculars, and several pairs of well-worn gardening gloves.

Our recreation serves **all ages**. Our **youth develop an appreciation of nature**, an understanding of the importance of **teamwork**, and a **healthy lifestyle**. Anchorage youth learn that striving for the top of the ridge is not only a goal, but an adventure. Our younger adults are active in the outdoors and nurture that very lifestyle in our children through **mentoring or coaching**. Our adults provide leadership to fund recreation projects, extend trails, and pass our recreation bond propositions.

This is Anchorage, a city where our **citizens live the lifestyle that others can only watch on television**. We are a winter city, and while our summers are short on the calendar, our **summer days are long and light-filled**. Even though our winters are dark, we take advantage of the light we do have by filling our days with outdoor activities like downhill skiing, snow machining and snow ball fights. We immerse ourselves in the mountains on our skyline. We walk and play on the trails and in green fields surrounded by forests and along streams. We are proud to host **wildlife** worth watching, and we watch in awe as individuals or in groups. We **participate in organized recreation** in numbers that other communities can only envy. Our children are fit, our young adults are coaches and organizers, and our older adults provide direction to our city to become the fit community befitting our setting. We **PLAY**, and define ourselves in doing so. **Recreation is king in Anchorage.**

Entertainment

Anchorage is a community where residents of all ages comment not about the lack of entertainment opportunities, but about the **abundance of choice**. Residents have opportunities to entertain themselves with a night out in a restaurant, club, or bar and have opportunity for entertainment to come to them at home via **current and emerging technologies**.

Anchorage has sufficient **public and private investment in infrastructure** so that entertainment opportunities can flourish and be accessible and affordable. Whether it's for a concert, shopping, dining out, athletic event, or other activity, venues are diverse in size and capacity to attract and build a loyal customer base.

Anchorage's **diverse population of cultures** naturally offers a large number of restaurant selections. From fine dining to fast food, Anchorage is a contender for a top "play" city. Thai food, Hawaiian food, Greek food, Mediterranean food – Anchorage has it all and it's only minutes away.

Anchorage has the reputation as a place for **entertainment opportunity**. Performers, athletic teams, and purveyors of entertainment see Anchorage as a place to play and invest as opposed to a locale too far away to visit. Entertainment options are so broad and diverse that residents are able to find something to do at **any hour of the day, any day of the week**. Residents choose to remain in Anchorage to spend their disposable income instead of traveling out of state. Anchorage is recognized as an entertainment destination by other statewide communities and by tourists and people visiting the community.

Anchorage employs creative artisans, and we are a **top community for artist inspiration** and art-loving patrons. We celebrate the arts – be they internationally recognized, festival level sales, or unique and culturally relevant Alaska Native arts. **Entertainment thrives in Anchorage.**

SUMMARY

In the year 2025, Anchorage is the city where everyone wants to live. This young and growing city is a melting pot of all ages, ethnicities and cultures that has a diversified economy, strong workforce, with high quality health care and education. There is an abundance of choice for entertainment and something to do at any hour of the day, any day of the week. By 2025, Anchorage is the #1 city in America to live, work and play.