

LIVE. WORK. PLAY.



ASPIRATIONAL NARRATIVE 2015 REVISION



WHY DO YOU LIVE IN ANCHORAGE?



INTRODUCTION

The Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) has a bold vision: to make Anchorage the #1 city in America. AEDC strives for this goal through a grassroots movement called Live. Work. Play. (LWP). The rationale for such a vision goes beyond the traditional economic development model and responds to a shift in paradigm – people are no longer going where the jobs are, instead people are going to places they want to live and jobs are going where they are. LWP works to foster the city’s economic development through supporting community re-development efforts through strategic partnerships, a focused approach toward identifying and addressing the issues and a rigorous data-driven evaluation of the progress.

The LWP vision was adopted by the AEDC Board of Directors in 2010. To set the target and measure progress towards achieving it, an aspirational grass-roots narrative was developed, along with a set of 30-plus quantitative metrics to measure each element of Live, Work and Play. The narrative was formed in 2010, after surveying the community with two questions: *Why do you live in Anchorage? Why would you leave Anchorage?* This original survey resulted in 750 responses.

LWP has grown from 35 supporters in 2010 to more than 200 in 2015, working on over 40 different projects with a shared objective. In 2015, AEDC announced the re-launch of our Live. Work. Play. initiative survey, in an effort to get a new pulse on Anchorage and check that our narrative is still on-point. The survey was composed of two main questions:

The survey closed on August 31, 2015, with over 1,250 responses. The LWP Narrative Review Committee, made up of over 30 community members from a diverse array of backgrounds, was convened to review all the submissions and make any needed revisions to the Narrative, the results of which are presented here.

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 with a wide range of benefits, workplace amenities and opportunities for career growth.

EDUCATION

Residents of Anchorage have wide access to job training resources, including access to the Alaska Job Center Network. This network offers a variety of job training services to help Alaskans qualify to obtain high-demand jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency. A wide variety of services are available to help individuals 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, apprenticeships, on the job training, educational and job training services, case management support and other support services to help participants while in training.

In 2025, Anchorage's youngest have safe, stimulating, culturally-relevant, 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 are ready to begin careers and/or complete post-secondary education.

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

DIVERSITY

The mosaic of ethnicities, cultures, gender identities, sexual orientations, ages, religions and abilities are interwoven into education, resources, jobs, adventure and discovery. Local government, educational institutions and civic and business leaders are active participants in fostering an inclusive community. People feel safe, are engaged and stay in Anchorage. As a growing city, there is something for everyone.

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 affordable services such as housing, health care, transportation, utilities and food. Opportunities for low or no-cost recreation, arts and cultural events and entertainment abound.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Anchorage is home to the state's largest number of 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 allowing Alaska residents to stay in state for health care. 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 is a safe city that boasts low crime rates and a high safety record. The city embraces community policing with law enforcement and the community connected through a system of open communication and trust. Police officers build lasting relationships with residents, all residents are open to discussing neighborhood issues with police officers and the community has access to timely and accurate criminal information and statistics. The collaborative process of community policing leads to a safe, healthy environment for everyone in all aspects of live, work and play.

HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Anchorage neighborhoods are safe and well-planned, offering a variety of housing models that are inclusive of our diverse population. Neighborhoods are a mix of everything from quiet retreats, with easy access to goods and services, to vibrant high density living in the heart of downtown and midtown. Each neighborhood takes advantage of its geographical assets and is designed to offer the best of Alaska living to residents. Housing is varied and eclectic in nature with a mix of traditional, modern and distinct designs. Commercial zones are accessible, easy to navigate and offer a thought-out land use and design strategy. Intra-city transportation is easily found, affordable and efficient.

CONNECTIONS

Anchorage engages individuals in social, governmental and future planning activities that affect the entire city and individual neighborhoods. Community led decisions connect people and involve them in the actual management of the city on all levels of government. Boards and commissions guide government and non-government organizations insuring that all are involved in building confidence in Anchorage's future and pride in its residents. 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. Businesses take advantage by adapting to new and advancing technology and by implementing and educating the business community and workforce. Transitioning military troops and dependents stationed in Alaska are an asset to the workforce. We operate faster and continue to push barriers like travel time and access to physical goods. Alaska's geographic setting is in-between Europe, the Americas and global players in Asia. The growing business community in Anchorage continues to attract diverse businesses in all sectors by offering competitive tax incentives to companies and industries all over the world. Anchorage offers a unique quality of life.

Anchorage businesses are thriving in a state that boasts a sustainable budget and broad tax base. The local economy is diverse and growing with innovative new industries taking advantage of robust venture capital and a vigorous entrepreneur community. We have differentiated ourselves as a global leader in Arctic expansion and innovation, increasing business opportunities in this sector.

COMMUTING

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 aircrafts to maximize savings with a stop-over in one of the Arctic's busiest airports. The tourism industry continues to grow and thrive with Alaska as a year around destination.

For employees who commute to work, short distances are highly attractive compared to other cities. Easy access to extended bike trails allows residents the opportunity to bike or walk to work, as well as enjoy our parks and wilderness areas.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The Alaska economy has diversified from primarily oil and gas industries and government infrastructure jobs to include the retail sector, year-round tourism, transportation and shipping, medical and education sector jobs. Our business environment offers a low unemployment rate, while household incomes and standard of living continue to be the highest in the country, thanks in part to a growing and resilient affordable health care system.

Anchorage businesses are invested in our community and in employees by offering educational opportunities for career growth and development for workers. Anchorage businesses have adopted a forward thinking culture with innovative retention programs, childcare options and flexibility that retains a highly skilled workforce.

Anchorage has a vibrant university district which offers educational opportunities for everyone, including post high school and non-traditional students. With a collaborative synergy, the main medical district is located in the same district (U-Med) as several university institutions allowing for cross-educational and career opportunities. Alaska's largest native corporations are headquartered in Anchorage, offering employment and educational opportunities. The Anchorage School District offers engaging career programs for its students, creating a trained future workforce. Young professionals stay in Alaska because the opportunities are endless, allowing for an experienced workforce with roots that understand this unique place.

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 recreational 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 vast parks and extensive trails that offer a natural outdoor experience within city limits, while the edges of our city border wild, untamed forests and rugged mountain ranges.

Indeed, our trail system is so advanced that almost anyone in the city could commute by bike to work and ride those same trails for recreation. Nature is an intimate part of our cityscape and we encounter wildlife in all its forms in the vast number of parks, large and small, in our city.

Love of the outdoors is a fundamental part of the makeup of our community and its members. Outdoor recreation is not reserved for the few, but is a standard household activity in which every individual, young and old, participates. Anchorage is a place where almost every household has a fishing rod, some hiking boots and camping gear. Our residents regularly share experiences that outdoor enthusiasts elsewhere can only dream about. We skate, we ski, we run. We fly, we fish, we hunt. Our running and skiing races have participants by the thousands. We celebrate those who excel at athletic activity and nurture athletic and outdoor activities by all our residents. Not only do we relish the chance to watch the many unique sports events our city offers, we take full advantage of those activities ourselves. Our youth develop an appreciation of nature, while learning the importance of living a healthy lifestyle.

Anchorage is a winter city. As a host of the Arctic Winter Games and the U.S. nomination for the 1992 Winter Olympics, Anchorage knows how to play in the snow. Every year our city gathers downtown to commemorate the start of the Iditarod and revel with friends and neighbors at the Fur Rendezvous winter festival.

We celebrate the darkness of our winters with the same enthusiasm as we take advantage of the light in the summers. The runners, bikers and walkers who enjoy our network of trails in the summer are joined by skiers in the winter months, aided by well-lit paths that criss-cross our city and our hillsides. We take advantage of every winter activity at our disposal, including downhill and cross-country skiing and snowmachining. In all seasons, we immerse ourselves in the mountains on our skyline. We walk and play on the trails and in the 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 PLAY, and define ourselves in doing so. Recreation is king in Anchorage.

ENTERTAINMENT

Our community enjoys an abundance of entertainment options.

As the entertainment hub of Alaska; Anchorage provides many great opportunities for entertainers to share their gift with locals and visitors. From intimate concert venues to roaring stadium crowds, Anchorage really performs. Indeed, Anchorage is known as a place of high-quality performances with a robust musical and performing arts scene to encourage new and local talent. We are a place that fosters artistic talent both within a thriving community of musicians and performers and in support from the entire community. Anchorage is recognized as an entertainment destination by other communities in the state and by visitors to Alaska.

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, as well as enjoy large concerts at our state-of-the-art venues.

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.

From fine dining to gourmet food trucks, Anchorage is a culinary contender. Anchorage's culturally diverse population brings the unique flavors and traditions of their homelands to our city for all to share. Our local ingredients are world renowned. From wild caught Alaska Salmon to fresh Matanuska Valley produce, Anchorage dining is truly exceptional.

In towns and villages across the state; Alaskans are creating beautiful works of art and Anchorage is their showcase. Anchorage is a gathering place where our creative people shine. Our independent galleries, world class museums and festivals celebrate our culture and present it to the world for all to appreciate.

SUMMARY

In the year 2025, Anchorage is the city where everyone wants to live. This young and growing city is an inclusive, welcoming community with a diversified economy, strong workforce, and availability of high quality health care and education. There is an abundance of choice for entertainment and outdoor recreation with 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.



AEDC
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Development Corporation

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AEDC MISSION

To grow a prosperous, sustainable and diverse economy

AEDC VISION

By 2025, Anchorage is the #1 city in America to Live, Work and Play.



AEDC is a private non-profit corporation (IRS code 501(c)(6)), operating since 1987. It exists to encourage growth and diversity in the Anchorage economy, promote a favorable business climate and improve the standard of living of Anchorage residents. Funding sources for the corporation are private contributions, municipal and state grants and contracts.

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