

# CHOOSE ANCHORAGE

## A FRAMEWORK FOR REVITALIZATION

COMMISSIONED BY ANCHORAGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TIP Strategies, Inc. (TIP), would like to thank the individuals and organizations who contributed to this planning process. TIP is especially grateful to the project steering committee for their guidance throughout the engagement.

**Dave Cavitt**

Furniture Enterprises of Alaska

**Matthew Clarkson**

Chugach Electric Association

**Gretchen Fauske**

University of Alaska Center for Economic Development

**Mark Filipenko**

Bond Filipenko Commercial Properties

**Carol Gore**

Cook Inlet Housing Authority

**Michael Huston**

Northrim Bank

**Michelle Klouda**

RIM Architects

**Jacob Lyon**

Premier Alaska Tours

**Joy Merriner**

BDO

**Michael Prozeralik**

KPB Architects

**Ryan Schmittinger**

Weidner Apartment Homes

**Brendyn Shiflea**

Chugiak-Eagle River Chamber of Commerce

**Tabetha Toloff**

Cook Inlet Tribal Council

**Ethan Tyler**

CIRI

**Billy Wailand**

GCI

**Gwen Welch**

Chugach Commercial Holdings

**Sonya Wellman**

Rasmuson Foundation

**Paula Willman**

ConocoPhillips

**Lon Wilson**

The Wilson Agency

**Shanna Zuspan**

Agnew::Beck Consulting

## Consulting Team



**TIP Strategies, Inc.**, is a privately held Austin-based firm providing consulting and advisory services to public and private sector clients. Established in 1995, the firm's core competencies are strategic planning for economic development, talent strategies, organizational development, resiliency planning, and equity initiatives.

## Contact

TIP Strategies

13492 N Hwy 183, Suite 120-254, Austin, TX 78750

PH: +1 512 3439113

[www.tipstrategies.com](http://www.tipstrategies.com)

## Project Contributors

Jeff Marcell, Senior Partner

Alex Cooke, SVP, Consulting Services

Alexis Angelo, Consultant

# CONTENTS

- Introduction.....1
  - Background .....2
  - Approach .....2
  - The Challenge .....3
  - Plan Framework.....4
  - Moving Forward .....5
- Action Plan.....9
  - Goal 1. Business Vitality..... 10
  - Goal 2. Talent ..... 13
  - Goal 3. Quality of Place ..... 17
  - Goal 4. Infrastructure..... 21
- Appendices ..... 24
  - Appendix A. Planning Context ..... 25
  - Appendix B. Market Opportunities..... 32
  - Appendix C. SWOT Analysis..... 45
  - Appendix D. Anchorage Delegation Report: IEDC Annual Conference in Oklahoma City..... 47

Image Credits: Images featured on section dividers were provided courtesy of the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation. The cover image was purchased by TIP Strategies from Adobe Stock. Other images were sourced as noted.





# INTRODUCTION



## BACKGROUND

Anchorage is at an economic crossroads. The city, which is the center of commerce, services, and logistics for the state of Alaska, faces several economic challenges that it must decisively address and overcome. The COVID-19 pandemic has only served to accelerate some worrying trends that have been building for years. In response, local stakeholders and organizations have embarked on multiple planning initiatives to identify challenges and propose solutions. As part of these coordinated efforts, the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) secured a grant from the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) to develop an economic industry and workforce cluster analysis for the city. AEDC engaged TIP Strategies (TIP) to lead the analysis and planning effort. While the focus of the grant is examining primary industry clusters and connecting them to workforce needs, Anchorage cannot ignore major structural issues that affect industry and workforce growth. Examples include population loss, lack of affordable housing, and downtown stagnation. With these issues in mind, the consulting team worked with local stakeholders to design a comprehensive strategic plan that builds on data analysis, community input, and the findings and recommendations of other aligned efforts.

## APPROACH

*Choose Anchorage: A Framework for Revitalization* is the result of an 11-month planning process that engaged numerous individuals and organizations in the community. The effort was coordinated through AEDC and guided by a volunteer 20-member steering committee. The planning process was conducted in three phases: discovery, opportunity, and implementation.

**DISCOVERY.** The TIP team conducted over 30 interviews and 13 roundtable discussions with economic development stakeholders in Anchorage. Stakeholder outreach included the use of an online polling tool (Mentimeter) during some meetings to inform the prioritization of AEDC's economic development programs. Important constituencies were engaged during this process, including the following.

- ▶ The AEDC Board of Directors
- ▶ The Visit Anchorage Board of Directors
- ▶ Business and industry representatives
- ▶ City officials
- ▶ Entrepreneurs
- ▶ Education and workforce development officials
- ▶ Minority and women-owned business leaders
- ▶ Real estate developers

**OPPORTUNITY.** Insights from the stakeholder input were supplemented by comprehensive quantitative analyses. Appendix A provides the planning context in the form of two economic analyses that cover demographic, economic, and workforce trends. These analyses were delivered to AEDC as interactive data visualizations along with publicly accessible links to the data to allow for in-depth exploration. Drawing on this work, TIP and the steering committee identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), a summary of which is presented in Appendix C, and guiding principles for the strategic plan. In addition, TIP analyzed the Anchorage region's sectoral foundations, including a compilation of regional assets, an analysis of the composition and demographics of the workforce, and a review of global investment patterns to identify potential targets, or market opportunities, for consideration. These market opportunities are profiled in Appendix B. Also included is a

summary of a visit to Oklahoma City by a delegation of Anchorage leaders while attending the 2022 International Economic Development Council (IEDC) annual conference. The delegation was able to see and hear firsthand how Oklahoma City has been transformed by a series of major public investments in the community, which aligns with several recommendations in this plan.

**IMPLEMENTATION.** In the final stage of the project, the consulting team incorporated the input, data analysis, and TIP members' experience working with regions across the country to develop the action plan. Along with the *Choose Anchorage* document, an Excel-based implementation matrix was provided to AEDC. The matrix outlines a proposed timeline for carrying out each of the strategies and actions and suggests potential organizations to help support implementation. In addition to setting priorities, the matrix will serve as a working resource for AEDC and its partners to track activities and report progress over the coming years.

Finally, *Choose Anchorage* incorporates the findings and recommendations of two other coinciding sets of analyses and recommendations. The American Institute of Architects' (AIA) design assistance team visited Anchorage and met with local stakeholders to inform a set of recommendations on downtown revitalization in a report titled *Connect, Catalyze, & Cultivate Anchorage*. The report offers several ideas related to housing, parking, economic activation, transportation, and financial structures. This plan incorporates some of these recommendations as well as suggestions made by Roger Brooks in his 2022 "Destination Assessment" of Anchorage related to enhancing the city's amenities and attractiveness for both visitors and residents.

## THE CHALLENGE

Bounded by the Cook Inlet and the Chugach Mountains, Anchorage is situated in one of the most beautiful settings in the world. Within a boundary area of roughly 2,000 square miles, the city is home to scenic parks and trails, an upscale ski resort, top-tier restaurants, and unique cultural and arts amenities. It is a popular destination for visitors and adventure seekers from around the globe. It is strategically located along the Pacific Rim and near the increasingly important Arctic region.

Despite its many assets and amenities, Anchorage faces multiple economic challenges that threaten its long-term prosperity. Chief among them is the ongoing decline in the city's population due to outmigration. For the past 11 years, more people have moved out of Anchorage than have moved in. And for the past eight years, the migration effect has been large enough to trigger overall population decline. Moreover, Anchorage's "natural" growth (the difference between births and deaths) has been cut in half since 2014. Certainly, the COVID-19 pandemic is having an impact on this trajectory, but the trend was already well underway before the pandemic.

The loss of population has constrained employment growth. Anchorage eased through the Great Recession in 2007–2009 with relatively little negative impact on job growth and even experienced modest employment gains until 2012. By 2014, however, the US had not only recovered all of its lost jobs, but it had also caught up to Anchorage. Since then, job performance in Anchorage has diverged sharply from national patterns. As of 2021, the national job base was 4.7 percent larger than it had been in 2007. By contrast, Anchorage's job base was 8.8 percent smaller. The consequences of declines in population and job growth are clear. The city's employment base, which peaked at 183,000 in 2012, now hovers near 160,000.

These issues are exacerbated by Anchorage's structural barriers. Its geographic isolation and dependence on imports result in higher costs for consumer goods, housing, food, and building materials. The higher cost of living translates to higher wage rates in a labor market that is already starved for workers. This situation makes Anchorage uncompetitive for labor-intensive manufacturing operations. Mitigating the challenges associated with Alaska's geographic location requires creativity and the adoption of emerging technologies in areas such as food production and housing construction.

Alaska is admired for the rugged individualism and can-do attitude of its people. Both qualities have helped the state's economy to grow and prosper even when faced with difficult conditions. The interconnectedness of today's economy, however, favors regions that can address complex problems collaboratively. Shared problems require shared solutions. In other words, addressing Anchorage's problems in a sustainable way will require collective action rather than a go-it-alone approach. On this note, community stakeholders pointed to a disappointing track record of collaboration and long-term planning.

## PLAN FRAMEWORK

While these are difficult challenges, Anchorage has the essential ingredients for building a vibrant, resilient, and prosperous economy. *Choose Anchorage: A Framework for Revitalization* offers a blueprint for AEDC and its partners to overcome barriers and seize opportunities.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles reflect tenets broadly shared by the community. In the context of this strategic plan, they are a set of statements expressing the economic development values and priorities in Anchorage. These principles were crafted through input from stakeholders throughout the planning process. The guiding principles also serve as a foundation for the plan, as all the strategies and actions identified should tie to at least one of the principles.

**Collaborative**—*Build and enhance partnerships across the community to advance economic opportunity for all.*

This strategic plan is reliant on collaborative efforts among various Anchorage stakeholders. Success means leveraging existing partnerships, such as the Alliance to Activate Anchorage (AAA) comprised of AEDC, Visit Anchorage, the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, and the Anchorage Downtown Partnership, as well as strengthening and building partnerships with city- and state-level efforts and creating a business alliance to offer private sector support to the plan's implementation.

**Inclusive**—*Seek to understand perspectives from a spectrum of ages, races, ethnicities, and geographies in and around Anchorage.*

To successfully address issues, such as population loss, workforce constraints, and limited entrepreneurship growth, Anchorage must intentionally include all populations and geographies in the plan's implementation. Existing leadership should represent the incredibly diverse population of Anchorage, including members of the Alaska Native population, young professionals, and residents in some of the most diverse ZIP Codes in the country.

**Diversifying**—*Maximize market opportunities to widen the Anchorage economic base.*

Economic diversification has been a goal in Anchorage for many years. While energy, tourism, defense, and transportation and logistics will continue to be economic engines for Anchorage, the city should identify emerging and nontraditional market opportunities for new sources of investment, jobs, and talent.

**Sustainable**—*Build alliances and initiatives that endure over the long term.*

In many stakeholder interviews and roundtables, the word "provisional" came up as a descriptor of economic and workforce development initiatives across Anchorage. For example, education and workforce organizations



commented that partnerships between entities are typically short-term and not sustained beyond a specific funding opportunity. Efforts to build a prosperous future must be carried out by collaborative partnerships that will withstand time and administrations.

**Actionable**—*Embrace this plan as a blueprint to guide Anchorage's collaborative growth over the next several years.*

*Choose Anchorage* is not a report or a study. While it is based on substantial data analysis, at its core it is a plan for action. The planning process intentionally engaged a diverse group of stakeholders to ensure the goals, strategies, and actions are implementable. Bringing the plan to fruition will require continued engagement of a cross-section of organizations and individuals. It should be treated as a living document that can flex with changing economic conditions and new opportunities.

## GOALS

This plan consists of four major goals that build on one another: (1) driving new business investment and strengthening the existing business base, (2) deepening the pipeline of skilled talent, (3) enhancing the city's quality of place, and (4) investing in vital infrastructure. Based on input from stakeholder engagement and competitive analyses, the set of strategies and actions identified under each goal is meant to provide community partners with a roadmap to collectively strengthen Anchorage's economic vitality over the next five years and beyond.

1. **Business Vitality:** Create a dynamic and diverse business base that drives higher levels of new investment and job creation.
2. **Talent:** Build a robust talent pool with skills that meet the needs of current and future employers to foster a more resilient and diversified economic base.
3. **Quality of Place:** Invest in Anchorage's quality of place to help reverse current migration trends and support the retention and attraction of young people.
4. **Infrastructure:** Leverage existing assets in a sustainable manner and invest in critical infrastructure to shape quality places that are attractive to business and talent.

In addition to more traditional economic development issues, such as business retention and expansion, workforce development, and infrastructure investment, the plan addresses community development issues, such as housing affordability and people experiencing chronic homelessness. These issues were routinely referenced as major challenges that impact Anchorage's economic vitality. The consulting team has, therefore, included potential strategies that could be incorporated into ongoing community efforts to address them.

## MOVING FORWARD

*Choose Anchorage* is an ambitious initiative. It is not feasible for any one organization to lead and coordinate implementation of such a wide-ranging effort in such a large region. For this reason, an implementation coalition consisting of multiple organizations and leaders will be required to organize and champion the strategy. As the city's chief economic development organization, AEDC will have a central role in coordinating the implementation effort. However, AEDC lacks the resources, staff, and expertise to do it all. Other organizations and individuals will have to step up and champion specific goals and strategies. Even with a concerted, collaborative approach, successful implementation will require a long-term commitment to seeing the plan through.

Perhaps the most significant ingredient for success will be the active participant of Anchorage’s business community in the plan’s implementation. Private sector involvement is a hallmark of successful economic development initiatives in communities throughout the US. Figure 1 highlights selected examples where the private sector has played a central role in economic development.

**FIGURE 1. SELECTED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS WITH PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT**

ORGANIZATION	PRIVATE-SECTOR ROLE
<p><b>Delaware Business Roundtable</b>  <a href="http://dbrt.org">dbrt.org</a></p>	<p>Created in 1981, the non-partisan Delaware Business Roundtable (Roundtable) is a statewide volunteer group of CEOs that promotes economic development through job creation, legislative advocacy, entrepreneurship, and support for public education. Collectively, the Roundtable companies employ over 75,000 people throughout Delaware.</p> <p>In 2015, the Roundtable commissioned TIP Strategies to prepare a statewide strategy for economic growth and prosperity. The resulting <i>Delaware Growth Agenda</i>, released the following year, offered a set of long-term strategic recommendations to guide the state’s economic development program sustainably over the next five years. The plan laid out wide-ranging recommendations to enable Delaware to strengthen its competitive position and encourage a “re-set” of economic development in the state. The most significant of these recommendations was the creation of a public-private partnership to deliver economic development programs and services. The Delaware Prosperity Partnership (DPP) was formally created by the Delaware General Assembly in July 2017. Since 2018 DPP has supported 45 projects, created nearly 5,000 new jobs, retained over 2,000 jobs, and generated \$1.4 billion in capital investments.</p>
<p><b>Northwest Indiana Ignite the Region</b>  <a href="http://nwiforum.org/economic-initiative">nwiforum.org/economic-initiative</a></p>	<p>In 2017, multiple organizations and communities in Northwest Indiana launched an ambitious effort to develop the first economic development strategic plan for the seven-county region. Over 60 investors contributed to the development, launch, and implementation of the strategy. TIP was engaged in February 2018 to facilitate the planning process and to develop the planning documents. Over the course of eight months, a broad coalition of regional partners and business leaders came together to guide and inform the initiative. The end product—<i>Ignite the Region: A Regional Strategy for Economic Transformation</i>—was presented to the region in September 2018 during a public rollout. <i>Ignite the Region</i> was also submitted to the US Economic Development Administration as the region’s official Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). <i>Ignite the Region</i> served as a foundation for the region to pursue and win \$50 million in state funding via the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI), a statewide competitive grant process administered by the Indiana Economic Development Council.</p> <p>Implementation teams were organized around the five pillars of the plan: (1) entrepreneurship and innovation, (2) business development and marketing, (3) infrastructure, (4) placemaking, and (5) talent. With the region’s economic development organization, The Northwest Indiana Forum, serving as the facilitator, the teams meet monthly to lead the implementation of strategies for each pillar. All five implementation teams come together quarterly to report progress and coordinate resources. Annual update luncheons are held to inform investors and stakeholders on progress and celebrate successes.</p>

Continued, next page.

FIGURE 1. SELECTED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS WITH PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT (CONTINUED)

ORGANIZATION	PRIVATE-SECTOR ROLE
<b>Austin Area Research Organization</b> <a href="http://aaroregion.com">aaroregion.com</a>	<p>The Austin Area Research Organization (AARO) was founded in 1980 by a group of local CEOs who foresaw a need to better manage the future growth of Austin. Worried about the influence of politics and elected leaders' tendency towards myopic planning, AARO has always been a nonpartisan, nonprofit, volunteer organization. Currently, there are 110 business and civic leaders from Travis, Williamson, Hays, Bastrop, Burnet, and Caldwell Counties that seek solutions to the region's long-term economic and social challenges.</p> <p>Since its founding, AARO has played an integral role in major development projects that helped to make Austin the city it is today. Notable efforts include garnering support for construction of critical highway and utility infrastructure, enacting a property tax to fund Austin Community College, securing increased funding for regional connectivity and mobility, improving K-12 education, and expanding affordable housing.</p>
<b>Detroit CEO Group</b>	<p>Created in 2016, the CEO Group is an employer-led workforce development partnership working to cultivate prosperity in the 11-county southeast region of Michigan. Comprised of 22 CEOs from the Metro Detroit area, including Ford and General Motors, the CEO Group supplements development efforts of the regional chamber, other local economic development organizations, and Business Leaders for Michigan (the state's business roundtable). Initial focus areas included contributing to business attraction and expansion efforts, developing a single point of contact for domestic and international businesses interested in locating in the area, and conducting regional marketing efforts. Currently, the CEO Group is ready to begin on its newest project, improving the region's workforce development systems and addressing barriers to employment, like access to childcare and transportation.</p> <p>The group has worked on a variety of issues, including advocating for legislation that allocated \$1 billion for a new fund to boost the state's business attraction efforts by supporting the development of investment-ready sites and offering more competitive incentive packages. Recognizing the importance of public spaces from an economic and quality-of-life perspective, the CEO Group has also promoted the city's green space planning, including helping to leverage \$100 million from the state to support construction of the Joe Louis Greenway, a nearly 30-mile-long trail connecting neighborhoods throughout the city to the riverfront, to each other, and to larger state and regional trail systems.</p>
<b>Greater MSP Partnership</b> <a href="http://greatermsp.org">greatermsp.org</a>	<p>Greater MSP (MSP) is the sole public-private organization serving the 15-county Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul region. Consisting of 4,500 people representing 350 businesses, localities, universities, and philanthropic institutions, MSP enhances regional competitiveness and inclusive economic growth through job creation, capital investment, and strategic initiatives. There are six interdependent initiatives that prioritize talent and entrepreneurship in particular ways: tech talent attraction and retention (Make It. MSP.); startup and innovation (Forge North); enhanced air service (Regional Air Services Partnership); equitable career path development (ConnexMSP); and sustainable agricultural innovation (MBOLD).</p> <p>Through MSP's business-centered strategies, regional leaders accomplished more than 100 different projects in 2021 alone. This activity created or retained 1,400 local jobs, generated \$320 million in capital investment in new and expanded business locations, and engaged 31 major corporations in a review of their startup partnership practices.</p>

Continued, next page.



FIGURE 1. SELECTED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS WITH PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT (CONTINUED)

ORGANIZATION	PRIVATE-SECTOR ROLE
<p><b>Greater Houston Partnership</b>  <a href="http://www.houston.org/about">www.houston.org/about</a></p>	<p>The Greater Houston Partnership (GHP) serves the 12-county Greater Houston area and was formed through a merger of the Greater Houston Chamber of Commerce, the Houston Economic Development Council, and the Houston World Trade Association in 1989. It promotes economic development, foreign trade and investment, and pro-business government policies by convening the region's key stakeholders to create solutions that work for industry, workers, and educators alike. GHP represents 900 companies and organizations, accounting for one-fifth of all jobs in Houston.</p> <p>GHP is the primary business advocate for the region, lobbying for sound public policy at all levels of government, while centering business needs in each of its programs and initiatives. Through the Greater Houston HUB (Higher Ed United with Business) Initiative, GHP convenes academic and industry leaders to sustainably build a talent pipeline for area businesses. UpSkill Houston (UH) is an employer-led program focused on creating pathways to quality careers in Houston that require skills beyond high school, but less than a four-year college degree. A few notable outcomes of UH are increased enrollment in petrochemical courses at community colleges (more than double in the last five years) and a 42 percent increase in completion rates for degrees and technical training programs. In addition, the initiative has helped more than 1,000 members of the military who are separating from service find quality employment.</p>
<p><b>Columbus Partnership</b>  <a href="http://columbuspartnership.com">columbuspartnership.com</a></p>	<p>Established in 2002, the Columbus Partnership is a nonprofit, membership-based organization serving the 11-county Columbus area in Central Ohio. The Partnership is composed of CEOs from the region's leading businesses and institutions, with current membership totaling more than 70, up from just 8 at its inception. Convening leaders from member organizations, the Partnership seeks to make the Columbus area the most prosperous region in the US by advancing economic development via smart mobility, public policy, education, leadership development, philanthropy, community branding, and downtown development.</p> <p>Smart Columbus is the Partnership's innovation organization co-led with the City of Columbus. Smart Columbus was founded in 2016 to utilize \$50 million in grant awards toward technology, transportation, and environmental developments. Specifically, the initiative aims to reduce commute times and car dependency through increased public and electric transportation. One Columbus is the Partnership's economic development arm focused on attracting capital investment, business expansion, and job creation. Throughout the region, representatives from the Partnership sit on development committees, providing business-led input on a myriad of projects. Ohio Excels is a Partnership-led initiative that seeks to continuously improve the state's educational system, ensuring that curriculums are meeting the needs of employers by communicating the business perspective and prioritizing sound policy.</p>

Source(s): TIP Strategies, Inc., research.



# ACTION PLAN

## Goal 1. Business Vitality

*Create a dynamic and diverse business base that drives higher levels of new investment and job creation.*

As the state's largest city, Anchorage is the economic epicenter of Alaska. It is the services and logistical hub for much of the economic activity in the state. As such, a growing and vibrant economy in Anchorage is vital for Alaska's overall economic success. However, over the past several years economic growth in Anchorage has suffered from stagnant employment trends, population loss, and volatility within its main industry sectors.

Overcoming these conditions requires an economic development strategy that builds on existing assets and strengths while also taking advantage of emerging trends and opportunities. It is unrealistic to expect that business recruitment will alone lead to economic prosperity. Underlying structural challenges related to geographic location, climate, production costs, land availability, and external supply chain dependency limit Anchorage's ability to recruit large-scale manufacturing or research and development facilities. However, the city does have assets and advantages on which to build a more vibrant, diverse, and sustainable economic base.

First and foremost, AEDC and its economic development partners must do more to support existing businesses. This should be accomplished by establishing a robust business retention and expansion (BRE) program. Research from the US government has shown that the bulk of job flows result from the expansions and contractions of existing businesses.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the project steering committee and the board of directors of both AEDC and Visit Anchorage ranked BRE as the highest priority economic development role for AEDC. Recognizing this need, AEDC is creating a new full-time BRE position to lead the organization's efforts in supporting existing Anchorage businesses.

Anchorage should continue building a diverse and sustainable economic base by continuing to foster growth within emerging market opportunities that positively affect employment, wages, innovation, and entrepreneurship. The market opportunities (air hub operations, ocean bounty, base camp hospitality, alternative construction, energy futures, and statewide and regional services) were identified by assessing existing local and regional assets, stakeholder input, data analysis, and national trends. These sectors do not encompass all industries with potential for growth and development in Anchorage. For example, Alaska is well positioned as an innovative testing location for advanced air mobility technologies, including electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft in remote areas. The Pacific Spaceport Complex—Alaska, on Kodiak Island, also presents Anchorage with opportunities to attract business and technical activities of companies involved in launch operations from the facility.

While still nascent, Anchorage's growing entrepreneurship ecosystem offers a base on which to build long-term economic diversity and vitality. Continuing to build an interconnected network of resources (technical and financial) and expanding access points is critical. Anchorage should position itself as a destination for entrepreneurs seeking to test and deploy innovative technologies in Alaska's unique geography and environment. Improving the entrepreneurial culture in Anchorage through education and telling success stories is also fundamental.

Finally, AEDC does an outstanding job of publishing regular reports on the status of the Anchorage economy, including a monthly employment report, quarterly consumer optimism and jobs intelligence reports, and annual economic forecast and outlook reports. In addition to these publications, AEDC and its research partners should fuse data and information gathered from BRE efforts with existing economic research to create business intelligence products focused on emerging markets and other important industries.

<sup>1</sup> [Small Business Administration and Job Creation](#). Congressional Research Service. June 23, 2021.



## STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS







### 1.1. Strengthen AEDC's business retention and expansion efforts.

- 1.1.1.** Establish an existing business visitation program. Document the overall needs of local businesses, their challenges to operating successfully, and their potential to remain and/or expand in Anchorage.
- ▶ Procure a customer relationship management (CRM) software program (e.g., Salesforce) for managing a database of existing businesses in Anchorage.
  - ▶ Establish an annual goal of 100 in-person and virtual business visitations.
  - ▶ Prioritize businesses, using criteria such as employer size, employer growth rates, and target industries.
  - ▶ Work with local partners, such as the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce to identify businesses as targets for outreach.
  - ▶ Include AEDC's workforce/talent staff member on business visits to employers who have specific workforce challenges. Also consider including representatives from higher education institutions and technical education programs if needed.
  - ▶ Create a brief set of standard questions that capture a base set of information and metrics that are then entered into AEDC's CRM database (e.g., employment growth/contraction over the past year, future hiring plans, site/facility expansion plans, industry trends, primary domestic and foreign markets served, and supply chain needs).
  - ▶ Increase efforts to reach out to minority and women-owned firms.
  - ▶ Establish relationships with major employers headquartered outside of Anchorage by taking periodic trips to meet in person with executives.
- 1.1.2.** Act as a concierge to priority businesses to help them navigate city and state regulatory and permitting processes.
- 1.1.3.** Create a recognizable profile of the BRE program within the Anchorage business community.
- ▶ Establish an identifiable brand name for the program that resonates within the business community. Creating a unique brand name will make the program more recognizable within the business community and will hopefully result in greater participation. The Charleston County Business Concierge Program, in South Carolina, is an example of such a branded program.
  - ▶ Conduct routine follow-up with existing businesses that AEDC has assisted to document outcomes and to collect information for communicating success stories.
  - ▶ Create a quarterly BRE report that highlights the program's activities, summarizes discernable trends, and communicates local business success stories. Include examples of assistance with permitting, workforce training needs, or infrastructure challenges.
  - ▶ Feature testimonials from business executives assisted by AEDC on its website, in reports, and in social media.

### 1.2. Focus diversification efforts on emerging market opportunities.

See Figure 2 for a brief summary of the market opportunities and Appendix B for more detailed information.

FIGURE 2. EMERGING MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

	<b>Air Hub Operations</b> Anchorage lies along a heavily trafficked air cargo route between Asia and North America. The city can evolve from a refueling stop into a thriving international transshipment location. The city is also well positioned to support new international air passenger routes.
	<b>Ocean Bounty</b> The Cook Inlet—and the Gulf of Alaska, beyond—represents a sustainable ocean bounty, from fisheries to offshore energy.
	<b>Base Camp Hospitality</b> A city's image shapes its economy. When the world thinks of Anchorage, it should picture a gateway to majestic scenery and national parks. Anchorage can become the world's base camp for the Alaska Long Trail.
	<b>Energy Futures</b> The future of energy production will be multi-sourced. Fossil fuels will be supplemented and gradually replaced by a range of evolving technologies involving waves, wind, and geothermal energy. Anchorage can be an epicenter for new energy development projects in Alaska.
	<b>Statewide and Regional Services</b> Anchorage has been and will remain a robust statewide hub for healthcare, education, and a range of professional services. Anchorage's base of foundational services is a critical asset for all Alaskans.
	<b>Alternative Construction</b> With limited housing and expensive, imported construction materials, Anchorage needs a different path. Demonstration projects and construction partnerships with 3D printing firms are options worth pursuing. See Appendix B for a description of a feasibility study to build 3D printed homes in rural Alaska.

### 1.3. Continue expanding and deepening the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Anchorage.

- 1.3.1. Create an online clearinghouse of entrepreneurship resources in Anchorage.
- 1.3.2. Work with Launch Alaska to market and position Anchorage and Alaska as a world-class proving ground for new technologies in emerging sectors, such as advanced air mobility and renewable energy.
- 1.3.3. Encourage local and regional organizations to design reverse-pitch competitions to engage large employers and public entities in south central Alaska with needs for innovation.
  - ▶ Invite local small businesses and entrepreneurs to propose innovative solutions for challenges through reverse-pitch competitions. Businesses and public sector entities have their challenges addressed while entrepreneurs benefit from potentially winning contracts, establishing connections, and increasing awareness about their startups.
  - ▶ Help the city solve issues, like people experiencing homelessness, healthcare costs, sustainability, affordable housing, and other community challenges through social entrepreneurship—another area where this approach could be beneficial.

- 1.3.4.** Create youth entrepreneurship and information technology (IT) education programs at the K–12 level to foster a culture of technology innovation and entrepreneurial spirit. Entrepreneurship and IT education is especially important for helping the city’s low-income and underserved youth to develop skills and knowledge that will support their future success and benefit their communities. The National Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education provides resources and technical assistance for entrepreneurial education ([www.entre-ed.org](http://www.entre-ed.org)).
- 1.3.5.** Tell entrepreneurial success stories. An important component of building an entrepreneurial culture is making residents aware of how entrepreneurship can help to drive the economy. This message is best communicated by raising awareness of business success stories, both internally and in external target markets.
- ▶ Utilize social media aggressively to publicize successes.
  - ▶ Market success stories through existing entrepreneurship networks and investors such as 49th State Angel Fund, Launch Alaska, and the Anchorage Community Land Trust.
  - ▶ Highlight the impressive number of successful women entrepreneurs in the community.

#### **1.4. Serve as a source of business intelligence to support Anchorage’s efforts to diversify into emerging market sectors.**

- 1.4.1.** Synthesize information and intelligence gathered from BRE visits with existing economic research organizations in Alaska into industry-specific research products.
- 1.4.2.** Conduct research and analysis of the portfolios for the target industries, including venture capital and innovation funding, supply chains, and talent needs to understand industry nuances and competitor markets.
- 1.4.3.** Develop a new branded business and industry intelligence report that offers a deeper examination of emerging trends within the Anchorage region’s economy and target industries.

## **Goal 2. Talent**

*Build a robust talent pool with skills that meet the needs of current and future employers to foster a more resilient and diversified economic base.*

Anchorage has experienced stagnant population levels for the past few decades. This, combined with a widening gap between a declining supply of trained workers and the increase demand for them, poses a clear challenge for the Anchorage market. Talent availability is the number one site selection factor for business location decisions.<sup>2</sup> A skilled workforce is required for business development and growth, but Anchorage struggles with providing sustained workforce development solutions, whether through a workforce development board, meeting employers’ workforce training needs in higher education offerings, or retaining and advancing existing young professionals into leadership roles.

Competitive communities must demonstrate a commitment to building a pipeline of talent. Demonstrating this commitment means putting in place education and training programs to meet both current and future demand. There must be an emphasis on talent development, including connecting community members to existing pipelines through local education providers in ways that are accessible and affordable. Existing efforts, such as

<sup>2</sup> Alexandra Segers. “35th Annual Survey of Corporate Executives Commentary: Change in Site Selection Priorities and Plans over the Short and Long Term.” *Area Development* (Q1 2021).



Nine Star Education and Employment Services and Students2Startups should continue to feature prominently in the community's talent strategy to fill high-demand positions.

Input from Anchorage education and workforce development partners indicated that Anchorage has an unstructured and unsustainable workforce system. While there is a statewide workforce board, it is tasked with meeting the workforce needs of significantly different populations, ranging from small rural communities to Anchorage as the largest and most urban metropolitan area in the state. When asked to describe the existing workforce system in Anchorage, participants responded, "There is no system." Partners recounted that relationships between workforce development partners are usually short-term and driven by grant dollars. When the grant dollars expire, so do the relationships between workforce development partners. This leaves the community vulnerable to not forming lasting relationships with employers and an inability to steadily meet those employers' workforce needs. In order to achieve this, a regional workforce board that serves as a clearinghouse and convener of employer workforce needs is necessary.

In addition to preparing the workforce for high-demand positions, the community must also prioritize attracting and retaining potential and existing talent among young professionals. While Anchorage has an extremely ethnically and racially diverse population, feedback from young professionals in this planning process revealed that there is a perception of two Anchorage existing, one of the haves and one of the have-nots. To engage the diverse young professional population, trust-building efforts are required, rather than gatekeeping. Young professionals shared that one of the motivators for living and working in Anchorage is the opportunity to be "a big fish in a small pond" but for that driver to remain, the old guard leadership in Anchorage must be prepared to share and pass on responsibility to the next generation.

## STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

### 2.1. Develop an independent regional workforce development board covering the Anchorage area.

This formal group of community leaders serving the Anchorage region will identify the needs of the local job market, oversee one-stop career centers, and work to coordinate and align workforce development initiatives across partners in the region.

- 2.1.1. Identify the businesses, local elected officials, labor, economic development representatives, educators, and community leaders necessary for membership to foster high-growth career opportunities and meet the needs of the Anchorage regional economy.
- 2.1.2. Create a workforce development board plan that establishes funding priorities for the Anchorage area, focused on a broad range of worker issues that consider wages, job mobility, access, and equity.
  - Include a strong vision and strategies to create a robust, user-friendly, seamless workforce system.
- 2.1.3. Analyze data and work with local businesses to understand what skills are most in demand and foster the necessary education and credential programs for the region.
- 2.1.4. Convene industry and education partners in real time to impact the skilling and reskilling of Anchorage's workforce and put people on career pathways that provide self-sufficiency.
- 2.1.5. Use outcome data to advise employers, policy makers, and communities about what approaches are successful.

## 2.2. Expand partnerships in leading sectors to build awareness of career opportunities in the region and offer education and training.

- 2.2.1. Develop industry-led, community-supported healthcare partnerships that strengthen Anchorage's regional economy and connect community members to jobs in the healthcare industry.
  - ▶ Launch a healthcare specific workforce survey to distribute to area healthcare-related businesses to understand their demands for talent, skills required of workers, and challenges to meet the workforce needs.
  - ▶ Support higher education institutions in pursuing new expedited degree programs. Advocate with local higher education institutions at the state level to ensure programs that help serve as future pipelines for filling employment gaps in high-demand sectors, such as healthcare are available.
  - ▶ Advocate for more practitioners to serve as instructors at training and higher education institutions.
- 2.2.2. Create a manufacturing sector partnership through the Alaska Manufacturing Extension Program (Alaska MEP) at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) Business Enterprise Institute.
  - ▶ Grow learning opportunities, such as paid internships and apprenticeship programs, to raise awareness of the region's manufacturing career pathways, especially among young students and those from underserved communities.
- 2.2.3. Establish career and technical education programs focused on dining and hospitality occupations to support the tourism sector.
- 2.2.4. Ensure Anchorage is producing a world-class talent pipeline for current and future employers by continuing to improve educational outcomes for K–12 students.
- 2.2.5. Support local efforts to educate, inform, and expose Anchorage high school students about high-skill, high-wage career opportunities that do not necessarily require a four-year college degree.

## 2.3. Promote Anchorage's value proposition for talent.

- 2.3.1. Build consensus on Anchorage's value proposition for talent attraction and retention and develop clear, consistent messaging.
  - ▶ Utilize data to understand Anchorage's target market, such as mid-career level professionals currently residing in the Pacific Northwest who are graduates of Alaskan universities.
- 2.3.2. Leverage the brand recognition of the Big Wild Life tourism campaign to attract talent and highlight Anchorage's recreational amenities.
- 2.3.3. Develop shareable content to encourage promotion across social media platforms.
  - ▶ Create Google Alerts to track free positive media, such as community rankings, which can be shared.
  - ▶ Spotlight the diversity of Anchorage and inclusivity initiatives.

## 2.4. Leverage the existing and future regional veterans' community to support talent demand and career opportunities.

- 2.4.1. Design a program to help veterans and military families find employment in the region.
- 2.4.2. Conduct a veterans inventory for soldiers transitioning from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) to civilian life, with the support of regional economic development and workforce partners and publicize the findings. See the brief overview in the adjacent text box.
- 2.4.3. Communicate with spouses of service members and separating service members about jobs or industry developments that may be of interest.
- 2.4.4. Work with employers and area nonprofits to provide veterans and military families with support to help them reacclimate to the workplace after a deployment, cope with deployments, locate needed services, and other such support services.

## 2.5. Expand support systems for Anchorage's young professionals to retain talent and grow a future community leadership pipeline.

- 2.5.1. Develop an ambassador program for Anchorage. Ambassadors should include young and mid-career professional residents who chose to stay in Anchorage, relocated to Anchorage, or chose to return to Anchorage. Ensure that ambassadors reflect the diverse population of Anchorage.
- 2.5.2. Host networking events with content specifically developed for mid-career level professionals, including community stewardship and volunteer opportunities to connect new residents with the community.
- 2.5.3. Spotlight existing young professional groups such as the Alaska Native Professional Association and the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals Group.

### Fort Hood Region Veterans Inventory Initiative

In 2006, the city of Killeen, Texas, and the Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce (GKCC) partnered with TIP Strategies to craft a regional plan (named Operation Economic Transformation) that would reduce the region's military-related economic dependency while simultaneously building on the region's growth opportunities associated with Fort Hood. One outcome of this plan was the creation of the Fort Hood Region Veterans Inventory Initiative (FHRVII) survey, which continues to be administered on a quarterly basis. FHRVII captures information from soldiers who are about to separate from the military. The survey asks questions about their educational levels, skills, postseparation career plans for them and their spouses, and suggestions to improve the area's quality of place. Once compiled, the results are sent to local partners so they can highlight the incoming talent pool for economic development marketing and in responding to investment request for proposals. Inspired by GKCC's efforts, Joint Base San Antonio began its own survey in 2018, modeled after the FHRVII, and recently completed its third assessment.

Source(s): [www.hotda.org/veterans-inventory-initiative](http://www.hotda.org/veterans-inventory-initiative).

## Goal 3. Quality of Place

*Invest in Anchorage's quality of place to help reverse current migration trends and support the retention and attraction of young people.*

The notion of quality of place means viewing local assets in terms of their ability to meet the needs of existing residents, as well as visitors, newcomers, and potential future residents. Under this framework, amenities have a dual role: as a benefit for residents and as a means to entice others to the area. The concept of placemaking refers to the process of creating and shaping quality places through a series of intentional investments and actions. Anchorage is home to a range of assets and natural amenities. These include institutions such as JBER, University of Alaska Anchorage, Alaska Pacific University, and various healthcare providers. Assets also include Anchorage's many outdoor recreation opportunities from the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail to the Chugach State Park and year-round adventure activities in and around the city. Throughout this process, stakeholders who relocated to Anchorage from the Lower 48 shared time and time again that their main motivator for choosing Anchorage was centered on the quality of life and many outdoor recreational options right in their backyard.

Competition for talent is increasing around the globe, prompting communities to bolster efforts to create and advertise recreational amenities, showcase their unique identity, and update their resources. All these efforts help to create a sense of place that makes a community more attractive to prospective residents and entices people to stay in a community. But challenges must be overcome if Anchorage is going to grow its population, especially among a younger workforce. Anchorage suffers from high housing costs, directly impacting the ability to offer local workforce housing and in turn attract and retain needed workforce for area industries. Additionally, Anchorage is blighted with perceptions of having an unsafe downtown and a large population of people experiencing homelessness. And while Anchorage has a myriad of recreational offerings, the city is often perceived as a gateway to the rest of the state rather than a base camp for tourists.

In 2022, Northern Compass Group, a contractor supporting the Roadmap to a Vital and Safe Anchorage (RVSA) planning initiative, hired the American Institute of Architects (AIA) to make downtown revitalization recommendations. *Choose Anchorage* incorporates some of these recommendations as well as suggestions made by Roger Brooks in his 2022 "Destination Assessment" of Anchorage. With further emphasis on additional quality of place efforts, Anchorage can grow its downtown attractions, enhance community appeal, and begin to resolve its housing challenges.

## STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

### 3.1. Increase the number of housing units, owner and rental, across the spectrum of affordability and density.

#### 3.1.1. Ensure workforce and affordable housing is available for Anchorage's population.

- ▶ Preserve existing housing by offering financial assistance for repairs or retrofitting to maintain affordable housing.
- ▶ Identify opportunities for adaptive reuse of existing buildings that can be converted into multiunit housing and preserve existing structures and utility connections.
- ▶ Improve the development review process to decrease costs for those committed to building workforce housing.

#### 3.1.2. Leverage existing land banks and trusts (Heritage Land Bank, Girdwood Land Trust, and Anchorage Community Land Trust) to target renovation and redevelopment of homes and neighborhoods.

- ▶ Inventory city-owned vacant, abandoned, or tax-delinquent properties.
- ▶ Acquire land strategically in underdeveloped areas so that it might be purchased at a relatively lower price and preserved for future development of affordable housing.
- ▶ Focus on acquiring land in areas that have the necessary infrastructure, including water, sewer, electricity, and roads.
- ▶ Give special redevelopment attention to historically under-resourced communities. Establish different standards for infill housing development to ensure older neighborhoods are not at a disadvantage for redevelopment.

**3.1.3.** Develop new and align existing policies and programs to support additional housing.

- ▶ Establish a regularly occurring housing solutions forum to begin developing a knowledge base of housing opportunities and funding strategies.
- ▶ Work with regional partners and stakeholders to identify barriers to housing development and determine best practices to mitigate those hindrances.
- ▶ Utilize opportunities for infill and redevelopment of existing buildings and sites to encourage housing development downtown.

**3.1.4.** Create a housing strike fund to offer low-cost loans to affordable housing developers with money from private investors, nonprofits, and community partners as a way to help developers leverage additional funding sources. Affordable housing strike funds provide flexible, below-market financing to fund the preservation of existing affordable multifamily housing. See, for example, the Austin Housing Conservancy, <https://www.austinhousingconservancy.com/the-fund/>.

- ▶ Identify private entities with an interest in and financial ability to participate in a strike fund.
- ▶ Establish a managing organization and board for the strike fund.

**3.1.5.** Offer options for direct financial support to homeowners, buyers, and multifamily unit owners, encouraging advantageous housing and mortgage programs as part of employee benefits package.

- ▶ Work with area employers to incentivize homeownership in Anchorage.
- ▶ Contact local bankers and mortgage lenders about the possibility of creating mortgage programs for public sector employees (e.g., teachers, public health employees, and key maintenance staff).
- ▶ Preserve existing housing by offering financial assistance for repairs or retrofitting to maintain affordable housing.

## **3.2. Elevate downtown revitalization opportunities (including redevelopment, infill, and adaptive reuse).**

**3.2.1.** Create a unique Community Land Trust 501(c)(3) that is specifically focused on encouraging investments that are advantageous to the economic development of downtown Anchorage, such as mixed-use or retail spaces and housing units with attractive façades that promote downtown interests.

**3.2.2.** Promote downtown redevelopment projects that enhance business growth, such as storefront revitalization.

**3.2.3.** Connect, catalyze, and cultivate downtown housing and support services (as recommended by AIA) to increase downtown vibrancy.

- ▶ Eliminate the minimum lot size for residential and mixed-use developments in downtown.



- ▶ Allow and encourage mixed-use in every zoning district.
- ▶ Use the same standards for nonresidential uses and residential uses, lowering the cost for housing.
- ▶ Privatize residential parking requirements in downtown, as recommended by the AIA report, since the private sector will provide enough parking to meet market needs.
- ▶ Streamline and speed up the review process for downtown housing, specifically provide one-stop shopping for permit and all other government review and support.
- ▶ Increase downtown housing support services (e.g., grocery stores, pharmacies) as the number of downtown residential units increases.

**3.2.4. Activate public spaces and provide equitable access to amenities, including trails and public art installments.**

- ▶ Connect Anchorage's world-class trail system to downtown (e.g., Russian Jack Trail System) and adequately maintain each year.
- ▶ Expand and refine urban trail systems to adapt to different users.
- ▶ Interconnect state and urban trail systems, allowing for direct access to Chugach State Park.
- ▶ Initiate murals and other art installments in underutilized downtown spaces, such as excess surface parking lots.

**3.3. Leverage the presence of Anchorage's recreational assets through marketing opportunities.**

- 3.3.1.** Improve Anchorage's image as a destination, drive more visitors to the city, increase visitor spending and the tax base, and raise the profile of the city, changing perceptions internally and externally.
- 3.3.2.** Support the Visit Anchorage organization in efforts to leverage what different entities are doing in the community and to creatively tackle attracting and retaining individuals to Anchorage.
- 3.3.3.** Promote the full inventory of Anchorage's tourism offerings, categorized by special interests, such as outdoor recreation, historic tourism, arts, festivals, events, and opportunities by season, on all stakeholder promotional platforms, not just the Visit Anchorage site.

**3.4. Support and advocate for creative strategies for addressing people experiencing homelessness in Anchorage through the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness.**

- 3.4.1.** Develop preventative programming and solutions to preempt possible people experiencing chronic homelessness.
  - ▶ Address lack of multifamily zoning policies by expanding the types of zoning districts and building types allowed within existing neighborhoods.
  - ▶ Prioritize development of affordable housing (see strategy 3.1)
  - ▶ Align strategic planning efforts, task force initiatives, and planning committees across all system partners, including the city, the faith community, philanthropic organizations, and business sectors.
- 3.4.2.** Create intervention programming to support people experiencing chronic homelessness where they are.
  - ▶ Develop rapid rehousing opportunities to bridge any existing system gaps for people experiencing homelessness.

- ▶ Increase access to emergency rental assistance by providing direct-to-tenant rental assistance distributed on the city-government level to increase access to funds.
- ▶ Institute sobriety center and mental health support as alternatives to incarceration.

**3.4.3.** Refine systems for long-term support offered to people facing chronic homelessness to ensure holistic wellness.

- ▶ Expand the supply of permanent supportive housing to meet the current total system gap.
- ▶ Leverage person-centered, housing-focused case management with enhanced training in evidence-based best practices (e.g., trauma-informed care, critical time intervention, motivational interviewing, and housing first strategies).
- ▶ Expand crisis housing response to include a navigation/engagement center for the most vulnerable unsheltered people who require specialized services to address mental illness, substance use disorders, chronic health conditions, and prolonged social dislocation.

**3.4.4.** Identify barriers that make it challenging for underrepresented populations to access high-paying jobs in Anchorage's target sectors.

- ▶ Collaborate with local and regional nonprofits in gathering information about what challenges residents are facing.
- ▶ Disaggregate social and economic indicators by race and income levels to show how vulnerable populations are faring in comparison to other segments of the population.

### **3.5. Develop and promote Anchorage's identity (districts, wayfinding, beautification, activation).**

**3.5.1.** Increase the livability, safety, and walkability in downtown Anchorage by prioritizing pedestrian and accessible pathways.

**3.5.2.** Leverage recent Indigenous placemaking efforts by the Dena'ina people to bring their culture to the built environment in and around Anchorage.

**3.5.3.** Expand the services offered by the Anchorage Downtown Partnership's Ambassadors program, based on the Centro Ambassadors in San Antonio, Texas (<https://centrosanantonio.org/the-centro-ambassadors/>), to welcome visitors and residents downtown by working to make everyone feel like part of the community.

- ▶ Provide maintenance, landscaping, and hospitality services in downtown Anchorage.
- ▶ Form strategic partnerships with public and nonprofit homelessness service providers to meet the most urgent needs (e.g., food, personal hygiene, and shelter) of people experiencing homelessness in downtown Anchorage.

**3.5.4.** Implement recent recommendations related to the Roger Brooks "Destination Assessment".

- ▶ Identify Anchorage's districts and designate them each with unique markers (e.g., decorative crosswalks, pole banners, and trailheads).
- ▶ Improve wayfinding for vehicular roads and trails.
- ▶ Expand downtown beautification efforts by utilizing strategy 3.5.3., encouraging window displays from local businesses, adding planters and landscaping, and incorporating more sidewalk seating.

- ▶ Install blade signs downtown to embrace a more pedestrian-friendly environment. These signs are mounted perpendicularly so they project outward from the wall, making them easier for pedestrians to view.
- ▶ Activate downtown spaces by creating programming and gathering areas where individuals can congregate.

## Goal 4. Infrastructure

*Leverage existing assets in a sustainable manner and invest in critical infrastructure to shape quality places that are attractive to business and talent.*

Anchorage's ability to attract and retain investment and talent is significantly influenced by the quality and availability of community infrastructure. However, critical infrastructure is more than just roads and water, it is an interconnected system that encompasses airports, seaports, industrial sites, housing, broadband, trails, bike lanes, etc. In many respects, the infrastructure in Anchorage is a competitive advantage. Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport (TSAIA) and the Port of Alaska are the state's most important transportation assets and connect Anchorage to significant domestic and international markets.

For the port, ensuring that ongoing infrastructure improvements are fully funded is vital for economic growth and security. In its current condition, the port is vulnerable to a natural disaster that could potentially sever a crucial supply line for food and supplies for the entire state. TSAIA is a focal point for international air logistics in the Pacific Rim. About 90 percent of all trans-Pacific cargo flights stop for fuel in Anchorage. However, positioning the airport for cargo transfer operations has had limited success in the past. Recent investments by major international carriers, such as FedEx and the new Alaska Pacific Air-to-Sea Service (Alaska PASS) initiative, offer new promise for expanded cargo operations. Continuing to work with developers for new site development of cargo facilities will be instrumental for future success.

Enhancing other aspects of Anchorage's infrastructure is just as vital for long-term economic prosperity. This includes extending utilities to support new residential development and improving all modes of transportation infrastructure in the city.

Funding the expansion and improvements to infrastructure and quality-of-place amenities is a critical need. The city has traditionally been reticent to make substantial public investments in the community. However, Anchorage is now at an inflection point. Economic growth remains stagnant, and the population is declining. Now is the time for the city to invest in its future. Faced with similar circumstances three decades ago, the people of Oklahoma City chose to make a \$350 million investment in downtown revitalization through their Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) initiative. Moreover, the economic return on that initial investment has convinced the citizens of Oklahoma City to commit even greater resources (\$2.7 billion) over the past 30 years to community needs, such as education, quality of life, and neighborhoods.<sup>3</sup> An analysis by RegionTrack released in 2019 found the impact of Oklahoma City's investments in MAPS totals more than \$7 billion. The Oklahoma City MAPS example was referenced in the AIA report as a potential model for making a catalyst investment in downtown Anchorage. Additionally, in September 2022, AEDC led a delegation of Anchorage leaders to Oklahoma City to attend the International Economic Development Council annual meeting and to meet with Oklahoma City economic development officials to hear firsthand how MAPS has transformed their city. Anchorage should learn from Oklahoma City's success and commit to its own public investment strategy. A summary of the delegation's trip to Oklahoma City is provided in Appendix D.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.okc.gov/government/maps-3/maps-history>

## STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

### 4.1. Secure full funding for the reconstruction of dock facilities at the Port of Alaska.

- 4.1.1. Continue advocacy efforts to the state of Alaska and the federal government to provide funding.

### 4.2. Facilitate the development of Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport as a hub for international air cargo operations and passenger flights.

- 4.2.1. Work with developers to construct new air cargo transshipment facilities. The development of cold storage facilities for perishable goods is a natural fit for Anchorage.
- 4.2.2. Consider offering incentives (e.g., fuel subsidy) to international air cargo carriers for establishing air cargo transfer operations at the airport.
- 4.2.3. Continue meeting with Asian air cargo carriers to convince them of the benefits of transferring cargo in Anchorage and of the Alaska PASS concept.
- 4.2.4. Pursue federal funding for a year-long demonstration project of Alaska PASS.

### 4.3. Work with private developers to provide the infrastructure needed to support new housing construction.

- 4.3.1. Extend water, wastewater, electrical, gas, and broadband utilities to greenfield sites targeted for new residential construction.

### 4.4. Strengthen the city's transportation network to improve safety, encourage walking and bicycling, activate streets, and encourage economic activity.

- 4.4.1. Implement the recommendations of the AIA report and the Roger Brooks "Destination Assessment" for improving the city's transportation modes.
- 4.4.2. Ensure roadways, pedestrian paths, and medians are maintained regularly and consistently, regardless of city or state ownership.

### 4.5. Design a public investment strategy to spur private investment and talent retention/attraction in Anchorage.

- 4.5.1. Develop a MAPS Anchorage initiative to generate additional private investment in downtown Anchorage and surrounding areas by using public, private, and philanthropic funding to demonstrate collaborative interest in redevelopment.
  - ▶ Convene leaders from the city, AEDC, and other stakeholders to evaluate the possible structure and funding mechanisms for a MAPS Anchorage initiative.
  - ▶ Launch a public call for project ideas once the funding structure is determined. Through an online public portal, allow the public to submit project ideas, including details such as project location, focus area, project type (capital or programming), description, anticipated outcomes, stakeholders, estimated timeline, budget, and sustainability plan.
  - ▶ Establish a leadership group made up of the parties involved in the funding process to review and refine the publicly proposed projects.

- ▶ Convene this group over a series of study sessions to evaluate and prioritize projects for possible funding.
- ▶ Schedule an election once the refined projects are announced to the public, to allow residents to vote on a temporary sales tax that would last approximately eight years to cover a portion of the MAPS funding.
- ▶ Create a MAPS Anchorage office to execute the planning, scoping, budgeting, and implementing of the MAPS projects over the duration of the timeline.
- ▶ Appoint a citizen's advisory board, who report to the leadership group, to oversee the program and submit recommendations to MAPS leadership. The board will be supported by resident subcommittees to oversee and provide recommendations to the board on MAPS-funded projects.
- ▶ Submit the MAPS implementation plan for approval by the MAPS leadership group.
- ▶ Include the program scope, project scheduling, and project budgeting in the plan as researched, created, and provided by the MAPS office.
- ▶ Develop a strategic investment plan to support long-term sustainable funding of MAPS Anchorage projects.





# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A. PLANNING CONTEXT

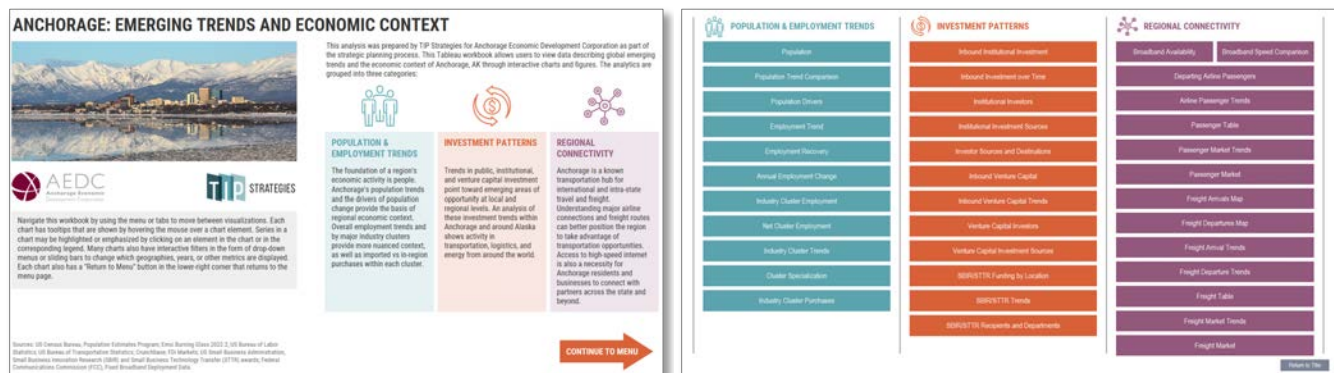
Boom-and-bust cycles are typical of economies dependent on natural resources. Eventually, however, these cyclical patterns wind down. When they do, forward-looking areas are more successful at transitioning to new economic drivers. It is easy to forget that San Francisco—a region now inextricably linked with technological innovation and home to a wide base of industries—came of age in a gold rush. Denver, Portland, and Houston are other examples of places at various stages of diversifying away from their early roots in extractive activities. Cities that miss the opportunity to make this leap often do so out of complacency. The first step toward collective action is acknowledgment of the economic forces at work.

To develop a better understanding of these forces, TIP conducted two deep data dives, one into demographic and economic trends, the other into workforce trends. These analyses were delivered to AEDC as interactive data visualizations along with publicly accessible links to the data to allow for in-depth exploration.

**Anchorage: Emerging Trends and Economic Context.** This review of economic and demographic trends relevant to Anchorage was organized into the following categories.

- ▶ **Population and Employment Trends.** The foundation of a region's economic activity is people. Anchorage's population trends and the drivers of population change provide the basis of regional economic context. Overall employment patterns and trends by major industry cluster provide more nuanced context, as well as imported versus in-region purchases within each cluster.
- ▶ **Investment Patterns.** Trends in public, institutional, and venture capital investment point toward emerging areas of opportunity at local and regional levels. An analysis of these investment trends within Anchorage and around Alaska shows activity in transportation, logistics, and energy from around the world.
- ▶ **Regional Connectivity.** Anchorage is a known transportation hub for international and intra-state travel and freight. Understanding major airline connections and freight routes can better position the region to take advantage of transportation opportunities. Access to high-speed internet is also a necessity for Anchorage residents and businesses to connect with partners across the state and beyond.

FIGURE 3. EMERGING TRENDS AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT DATA VISUALIZATION



Source(s): Screen capture of interactive data visualization created by TIP Strategies, Inc., and available [via Tableau public](#).

**Anchorage: Workforce Pipeline Analysis.** A look at the mobility of the Anchorage workforce, this analysis was grouped under three categories.

- ▶ **Occupation and Program Trends.** Matching the region's talent to the needs of employers is key to understanding the workforce pipeline. This analysis compares trends in occupational employment and higher education credentials awarded in Anchorage to highlight the existing flow of local talent.
- ▶ **Worker Migration.** Anchorage's economic activity rises and falls in step with its subarctic climate, as do workers who migrate to and from the region for job opportunities. To better understand where workers tend to come from or depart to, this analysis shows the movement of US workers to and from the Anchorage metro area as they change jobs.
- ▶ **Regional Commuting Patterns.** At the local level, understanding the movement of employed residents as they commute to work can reveal key employment centers and transportation corridors. This set of analyses compares those who live in Anchorage to those who work in the city to understand the net flow of workers in various ways, as well as showing detailed maps comparing where people live versus work.

**FIGURE 4. WORKFORCE PIPELINE ANALYSIS DATA VISUALIZATION**

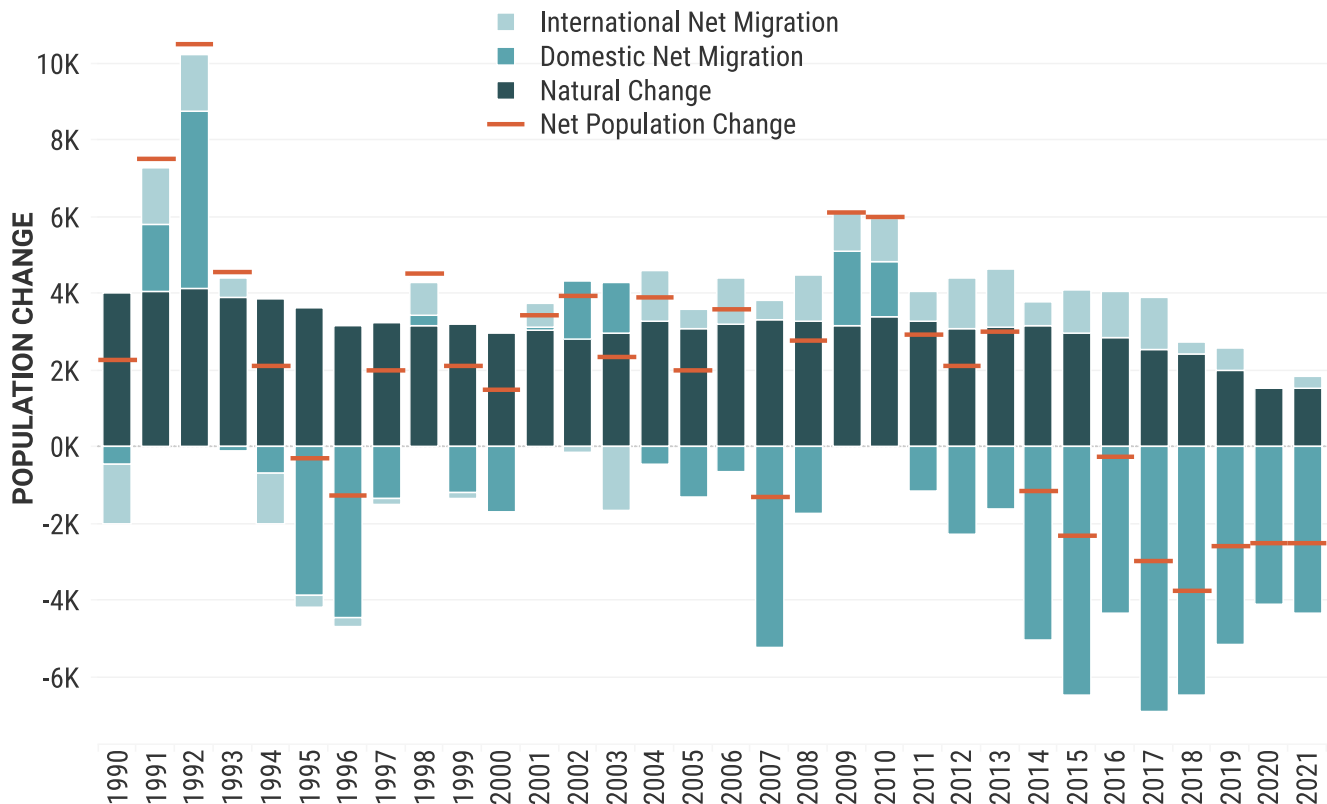


Source(s): Screen capture of interactive data visualization created by TIP Strategies, Inc., and available [via Tableau public](https://public.tableau.com/v/#!/vizhome/AnchorageWorkforcePipelineAnalysis/AnchorageWorkforcePipelineAnalysis).

Despite covering more than 50 individual variables, with an exponential number of possible queries that can be made into the data, these two analyses yielded several succinct takeaways, which are presented in this section. Coupled with a review of prior and current planning initiatives and insights gained from stakeholder outreach activities, these findings shaped the plan framework.

## The municipality's population is slipping.

FIGURE 5. DRIVERS OF POPULATION CHANGE: MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE, ALASKA



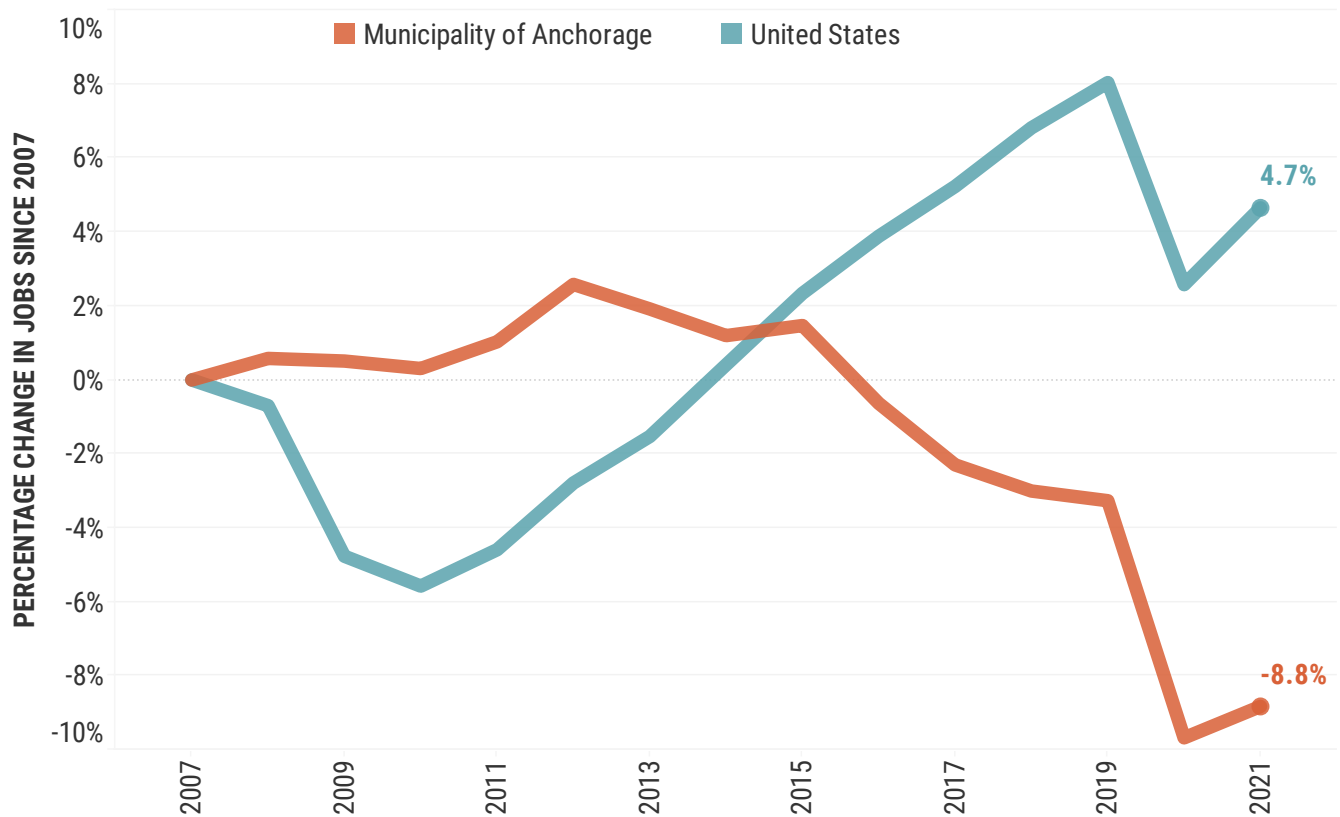
Source(s): US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program; Moody's Analytics; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): "Natural Change" is the difference between annual births and deaths. Total population change includes a residual (a change in population that cannot be attributed to any specific demographic component). Residual change is not shown in the chart but is included in the net population change shown by the red bars. The 2010 and 2020 components are estimated based on a 12-month projection of the second quarter (the period between the US Census and the mid-year estimate) that is not seasonally adjusted.

Anchorage's growth has followed the ups and downs of the oil and gas industry over the decades. In the past, the occasional downturns were often short-lived, and the ensuing recoveries provided a welcome reset to previous upward growth patterns. In recent years, that familiar boom-and-bust pattern has unraveled. The municipality's "natural" growth (the difference between births and deaths) has been cut in half since 2014. Certainly, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on this trajectory, but the trend was already well underway before anyone ever heard of COVID-19. And an even greater demographic impact comes from outmigration. For the past 11 years, more people have moved out of the Municipality of Anchorage than moved in, and for the past eight years, the migration effect has been large enough to trigger overall population decline.

## Population loss constrains workforce growth.

FIGURE 6. EMPLOYMENT CHANGE SINCE 2007



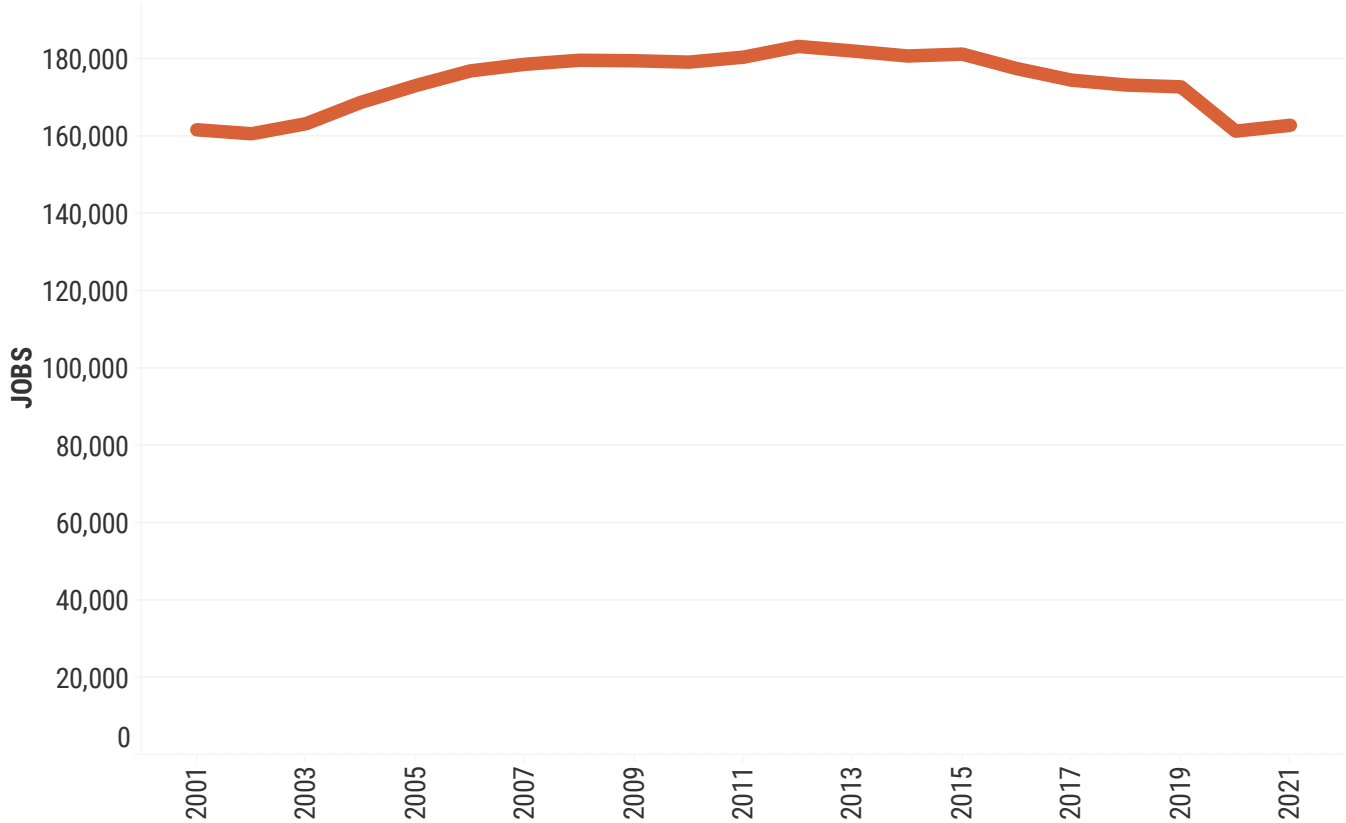
Source(s): US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); Emsi Burning Glass 2022.2—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Anchorage eased through the Great Recession in 2007–2009 with relatively little negative impact on job growth. By 2014, however, the US had not only recovered all of its lost jobs, but it had also caught up to Anchorage. Since then, job performance in the Municipality of Anchorage has diverged sharply from national patterns. As of 2021, the national job base was 4.7 percent larger than it had been in 2007. By contrast, the municipality was 8.8 percent smaller. Is population declining because jobs have declined? Or conversely, did the job base sink as residents left the municipality? Either way, the effect is the same. A smaller population today cuts into the workforce available for existing or prospective employers.



## *A smaller workforce keeps the municipality's job base flat.*

FIGURE 7. MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

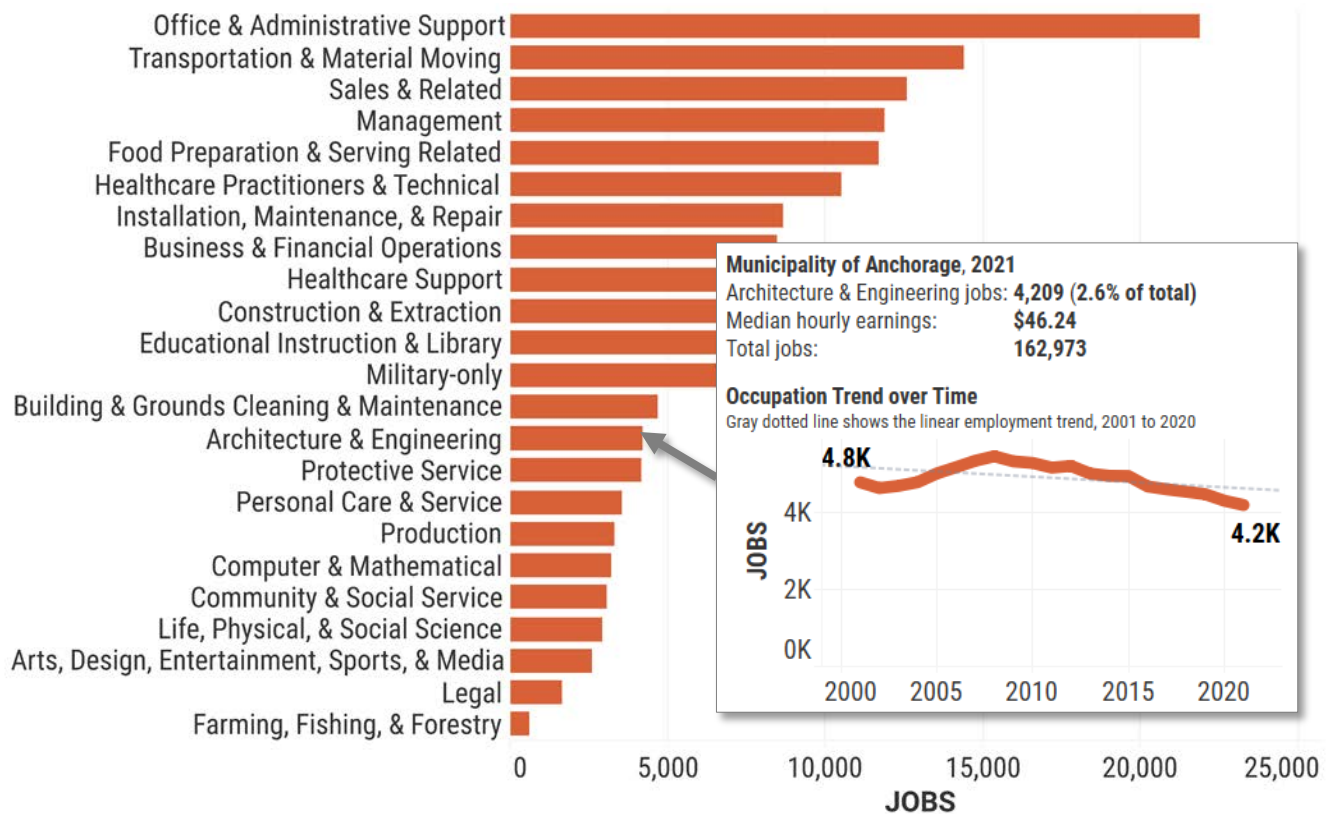


Source(s): BLS; Emsi Burning Glass 2022.2—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.

The consequences of declines in population and job growth are clear. The municipality's employment base, which peaked at 183,000 in 2012, now hovers near 160,000. Pumping that number back up won't be easy without workers to fill jobs. Retaining and attracting residents will pose an even greater challenge in the absence of affordable housing options.

## Without opportunity, skilled workers will be incentivized to withdraw.

FIGURE 8. MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP, 2021



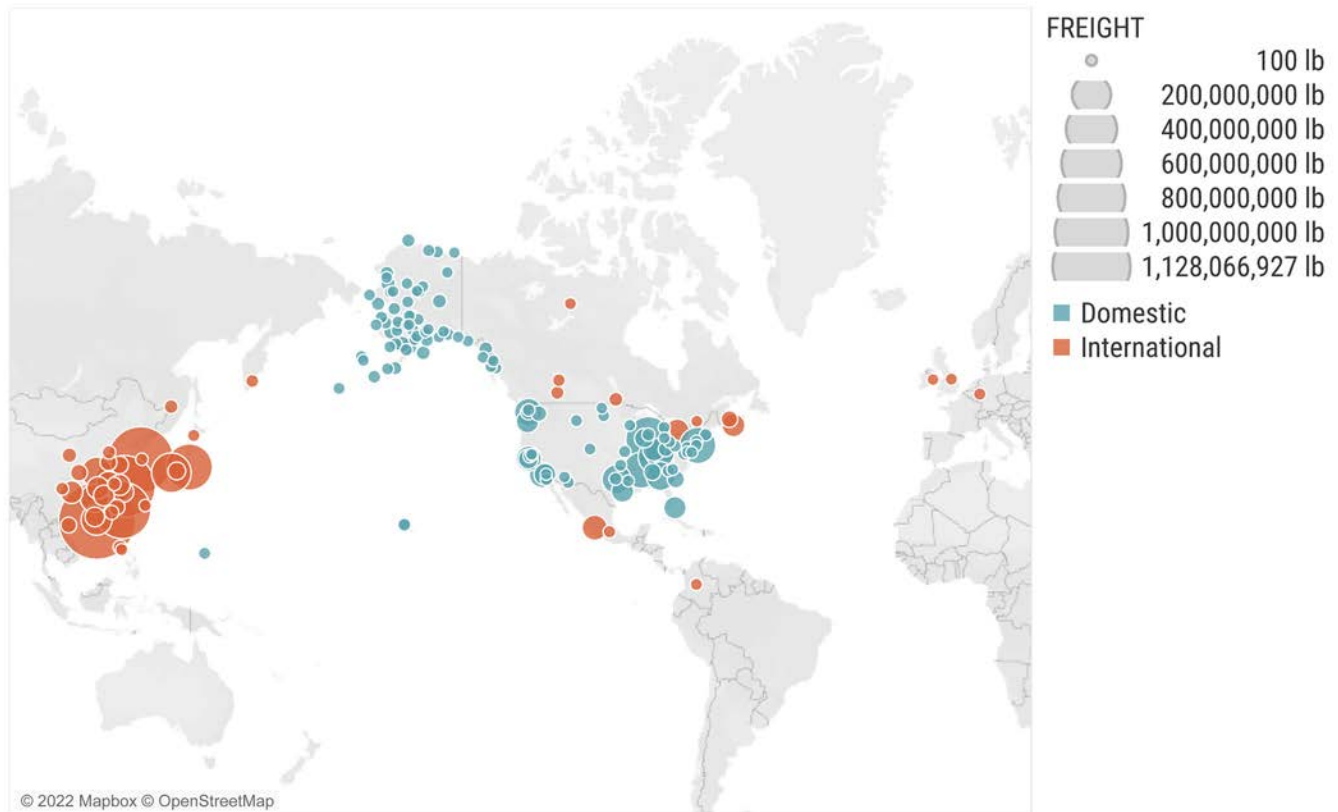
Source(s): BLS; Emsi Burning Glass 2022.2—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.

At an occupational level, the demographic and economic trends in the Municipality of Anchorage over the past two decades have had mixed results. Healthcare professions have experienced explosive growth over this period, but other trades have been less robust. Transportation-related professions have remained relatively flat, despite bustling activity at the port and airport. One risk embedded in a demographic decline is that a critical mass of skilled workers, faced with fewer opportunities, may choose to withdraw, opting for retirement or perhaps relocation elsewhere. One skilled occupational group that deserves attention is employed engineers. Their numbers in the municipality have been slipping for several years, tracking closely with population decline. As an occupational group, they represent a relatively small part of the economy, but a critical skilled group with widely applicable skills often sought by prospective employers.

## Locational assets in the twenty-first century will be different than in the past.

FIGURE 9. 2020 AIR FREIGHT ARRIVALS TO ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

Total freight volume for domestic and international origins



Source(s): US Bureau of Transportation Statistics, T-100 Segment Reports for All Carriers; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): Only includes scheduled cargo flights, nonscheduled civilian cargo flights, and origins with at least 100 annual pounds of freight.

The arced flight path from East Asia to North America passes through Anchorage. In 2020, a pandemic year when many airports were struggling, 14 different airlines landed cargo at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport that totaled at least 100 million pounds each. In addition to US-based carriers, those 14 airlines included cargo carriers with home bases in Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan. And those are just the larger carriers. Dozens more carriers ran freight operations through the airport in smaller volumes. Most planes stopped just to refuel, but the presence of so many different carriers flying freight in and out of the airport signals an economic opportunity that remains largely untapped.

## APPENDIX B. MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

To understand Anchorage's market opportunities, TIP conducted an extensive look at the region's sectoral foundations. This work included a compilation of regional assets, an analysis of the composition and demographics of the workforce, and a review of global investment patterns. The result highlighted potential targets, or market opportunities, for consideration.

### APPROACH AND PROFILES

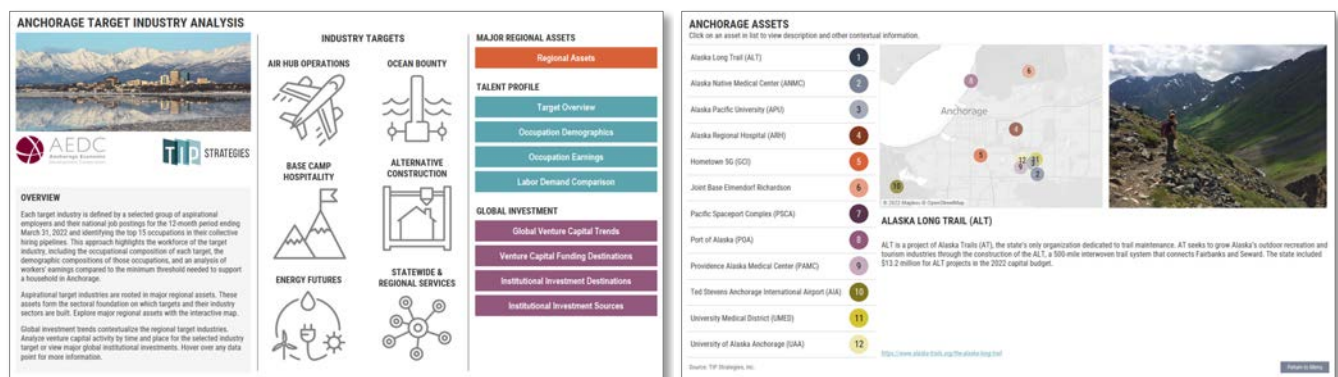
The accepted framework for target industry analysis has traditionally relied on historical patterns of industry growth and concentration. But such methods reveal little about local workforce capacity and general preparedness for prospective investors, especially in the modern era when technology and industry definitions are fluid and rapidly evolving.

By using job postings to reframe target industries from the employer's perspective, rather than simply through the lens of historical government statistics, TIP's targeting methodology is more responsive to today's workforce environment. Once a short list of national employers representative of the desired sector is identified, TIP analyzes their collective US job postings from the most recent 12-month period. Carefully selected samples of recent job postings are used to identify a target's most sought-after occupations and specialized skills in (near) real-time. This approach differs from an industry-occupation staffing matrix, which can be dated and somewhat opaque as to where hiring demands are tightest. Using interactive "what if" tools, the local region's workforce readiness for targeted investments is assessed. This approach is devised to prompt strategic questions about the alignment of the region's talent pipeline with the current needs of employers.

Using an equity lens, TIP's analysis also documents patterns of occupational participation by race, ethnicity, gender, and age. Living wage thresholds are also considered for a mix of family household situations. This approach equips the local region with the information needed to plan for an inclusive, target-ready workforce.

A profile for each market opportunity is presented in this section. The profile connects the opportunity to Anchorage's existing related assets, highlights the area's potential to capture this opportunity, and provides detail on the occupations identified through the job posting analytics.

FIGURE 10. TARGET INDUSTRY ANALYSIS VISUALIZATION



Source(s): Screen capture of interactive data visualization created by TIP Strategies, Inc.

## AIR HUB OPERATIONS

EXISTING ASSETS	ANCHORAGE'S POTENTIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Anchorage lies along a heavily trafficked trans-Pacific air cargo route between Asia and North America.</li> <li>▶ Cargo carriers already operating at the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport include the two largest private air freight carriers in the US (FedEx and UPS) as well as major East Asian carriers like Cathay Pacific, Korean Air, China Airlines, EVA Air, and Nippon Cargo Airlines.</li> <li>▶ In addition to commercial air freight services, the municipality's Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson is a substantial handler of military cargo.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Despite locational advantages, Anchorage's role in air cargo is more akin to a bustling refueling stop than a logistics hub for global transshipments.</li> <li>▶ The growth of trans-Pacific trade, the efficiencies of hub-and-spoke transportation networks, and the recent emergence of global supply chain bottlenecks all point to a potentially greater role for Anchorage in the movement of global air freight.</li> <li>▶ Better intermodal sea-to-air cargo logistics in Anchorage would also benefit the state's seafood producers.</li> </ul>

**FIGURE 11. ANCHORAGE EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS IN TOP OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO AIR HUB OPERATIONS**

Sorted by the occupation's share of national job postings in the target in 2021

Occupation	Share of Postings*	2016	2021	Percent Change	Median Hourly Earnings
Compliance Officers	16.3%	417	440	5.5%	\$36.69
Cargo & Freight Agents	12.1%	270	214	-20.7%	\$18.89
Customer Service Representatives	3.8%	2,419	2,373	-1.9%	\$18.55
Brokerage Clerks	3.4%	59	32	-45.8%	\$26.55
Human Resources Specialists	3.0%	757	825	9.0%	\$30.85
Accountants & Auditors	3.0%	1,617	1,430	-11.6%	\$36.35
Laborers & Material Movers, Hand	2.7%	2,403	2,744	14.2%	\$16.44
First-Line Supervisors of Transportation Workers	2.7%	394	504	27.9%	\$28.91
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	2.7%	1,688	1,727	2.3%	\$21.59
General & Operations Managers	2.3%	3,494	3,568	2.1%	\$51.34
Transportation, Storage, & Distribution Managers	1.9%	407	617	51.6%	\$45.74
Sales Managers	1.9%	388	394	1.5%	\$37.04
Sales Reps, Non-Technical and Scientific Products	1.9%	1,356	915	-32.5%	\$26.12
Civil Engineers	1.5%	858	991	15.5%	\$47.57
Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	1.5%	1,276	1,417	11.1%	\$17.41
<b>Anchorage Total</b>		<b>205,951</b>	<b>194,520</b>	<b>-5.6%</b>	<b>\$23.78</b>

\*Share of national job postings in 2021 among selected employers typical of this sector: Alliance Aviation Services, Northern Pacific Airways, Bollore Logistics, and Kintetsu World Express. The top 15 occupations shown account for 60.6 percent of national job postings for this group of employers.

Source(s): BLS; Emsi Burning Glass 2022.2—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): Median hourly earnings are for Anchorage and are in 2021 USD. The color of each cell in this and the following tables represents how the metric for the selected occupation compares to the regional Total. **Redder** cells indicate values that are less than regional levels. **Bluer** cells indicate values that are greater than regional levels.



## OCEAN BOUNTY

EXISTING ASSETS	ANCHORAGE'S POTENTIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Alaska produces more than half the fish caught in waters off the coast of the United States, with an average wholesale value of nearly \$4.5 billion a year. Alaska's fisheries are among the best-managed, most sustainable in the world. Alaska resources provide jobs and a stable food supply for the nation, while supporting a traditional way of life for Alaska Native and local fishing communities."<sup>4</sup></li> <li>The sustainable bounty that lies in the Gulf of Alaska is, for Anchorage, a great renewable resource, well managed and regulated for future generations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nutrition and food preferences in western countries, including the US, are shifting toward healthier diets, of which seafood is a staple. Demand is growing. Alaska's thriving air cargo traffic, however, has not fully captured the market potential for Gulf of Alaska seafood.</li> <li>Missing is the infrastructure of modern cold storage and rapid sea-to-air intermodal connections direct to the world's major fish markets in Tokyo, Boston, and other nonstop locations.</li> <li>The richness of the Cook Inlet and the Gulf of Alaska offer other economic opportunities, including marine and climatic research, and emerging energy technologies, such as wave capture.</li> </ul>

**FIGURE 12. ANCHORAGE EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS IN TOP OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO OCEAN BOUNTY**

Sorted by the occupation's share of national job postings in the target in 2021

Occupation	Share of Postings*	2016	2021	Percent Change	Median Hourly Earnings
Operations Research Analysts	4.8%	129	104	-19.4%	\$29.93
Electrical Engineers	4.2%	301	311	3.3%	\$54.02
Natural Sciences Managers	4.0%	222	266	19.8%	\$56.25
First-Line Supervisors, Production & Operations	3.4%	258	255	-1.2%	\$36.81
Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	2.9%	3,764	2,351	-37.5%	\$20.91
Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	2.4%	371	351	-5.4%	\$31.72
Customer Service Representatives	2.1%	2,419	2,373	-1.9%	\$18.55
Human Resources Specialists	2.1%	757	825	9.0%	\$30.85
Sailors & Marine Oilers	1.9%	176	109	-38.1%	\$24.72
Mechanical Engineers	1.9%	327	410	25.4%	\$49.81
Logisticians	1.9%	230	393	70.9%	\$45.49
Photographic & Processing Machine Operators	1.9%	53	5	-90.6%	
Slaughterers & Meat Packers	1.6%	5	5	0.0%	
Marketing Managers	1.6%	205	251	22.4%	\$43.23
Management Analysts	1.6%	684	571	-16.5%	\$45.08
<b>Anchorage Total</b>		<b>205,951</b>	<b>194,520</b>	<b>-5.6%</b>	<b>\$23.78</b>

\*Share of national job postings in 2021 among selected employers typical of this sector: Mowi, Westward Seafood, Gorton's, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. The top 15 occupations shown account for 38.1 percent of national job postings for this group of employers.

Source(s): BLS; Emsi Burning Glass 2022.2—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): Median hourly earnings are for Anchorage and are in 2021 USD. An occupation with five jobs indicates an estimation that there are fewer than ten jobs in the region in that occupation. These occupations may also have insufficient data on earnings.

<sup>4</sup> NOAA Fisheries. <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/alaska>.

## BASE CAMP HOSPITALITY

EXISTING ASSETS	ANCHORAGE'S POTENTIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ To the outside world, Anchorage's image is shaped by its surroundings—Denali, majestic national parks, pristine wildlife. These are the lures that draw tourists to Anchorage and beyond.</li> <li>▶ Anchorage has access to world-class outdoor sporting sites for mountain biking, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, running, hiking, snowshoeing, and kayaking. The sites for such activities include the Kincaid Park, Hillside Park, Hilltop Ski Area, Girdwood, Chugach State Park, Arctic Valley, Alyeska Resort, Eagle River Nature Center, Far North Bicentennial Park, and miles of robust urban trails.</li> <li>▶ Plans to build the Alaska Long Trail, a 500-mile interconnected trail system from Seward to Fairbanks, are under development and will eventually become the West Coast equivalent of the famed Appalachian Trail.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Anchorage's remoteness can become its advantage. Visitors seeking to hike the Alaska Long Trail will need to be outfitted, prepped, and (for an unfortunate few) rescued. Anchorage will inevitably be the base for most of those services.</li> <li>▶ The potential for a cluster of add-on services—including accommodations and food, tours and guides, gear and equipment, education and coaching—is extensive.</li> </ul>

**FIGURE 13. ANCHORAGE EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS IN TOP OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO BASE CAMP HOSPITALITY**  
Sorted by the occupation's share of national job postings in the target in 2021

Occupation	Share of Postings*	2016	2021	Percent Change	Median Hourly Earnings
Retail Salespersons	17.3%	6,726	6,148	-8.6%	\$14.61
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	9.3%	1,688	1,727	2.3%	\$21.59
Hotel, Motel, & Resort Desk Clerks	4.3%	325	642	97.5%	\$11.87
First-Line Supervisors of Food Prep & Services	3.5%	1,074	968	-9.9%	\$16.40
Marketing Managers	3.4%	205	251	22.4%	\$43.23
Merchandise Displayers & Window Trimmers	2.5%	177	255	44.1%	\$17.37
Public Relations & Fundraising Managers	2.4%	117	151	29.1%	\$40.98
Preschool Teachers	2.2%	569	663	16.5%	\$13.92
Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	2.1%	1,724	1,309	-24.1%	\$13.85
Human Resources Specialists	2.1%	757	825	9.0%	\$30.85
Software Developers, Analysts, & Testers	1.9%	415	374	-9.9%	\$47.20
General & Operations Managers	1.8%	3,494	3,568	2.1%	\$51.34
Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	1.6%	371	351	-5.4%	\$31.72
Occupational Health & Safety Specialists	1.6%	218	213	-2.3%	\$38.54
Editors	1.6%	117	66	-43.6%	\$25.76
<b>Anchorage Total</b>		<b>205,951</b>	<b>194,520</b>	<b>-5.6%</b>	<b>\$23.78</b>

\*Share of national job postings in 2021 among selected employers typical of this sector: Outside Brands, Hostelling International USA, Patagonia, National Geographic. The top 15 occupations shown account for 57.5 percent of national job postings for this group of employers. Source(s): BLS; Emsi Burning Glass 2022.2—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc. Note(s): Median hourly earnings are for Anchorage and are in 2021 USD.

## ENERGY FUTURES

EXISTING ASSETS	ANCHORAGE'S POTENTIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alaska's economy in the late twentieth century was built on fossil fuels.</li> <li>The physical infrastructure, technology, and job skills for fossil fuel extraction and transport already exist in Anchorage.</li> <li>The order signed by Governor Mike Dunleavy on September 30, 2022, creating the state Office of Energy Innovation will help position Alaska in this sector.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obituaries for the fossil fuel industry may indeed be premature, yet the future of energy production will be multisourced, nonetheless.</li> <li>Fossil fuels will be supplemented and gradually replaced by a range of evolving technologies involving wave, wind, and geothermal energy.</li> <li>Some of these new technologies, especially geothermal, can align to some extent with existing fossil fuel infrastructure, equipment, and skilled labor.</li> <li>Anchorage can be an epicenter for new energy development projects focusing on sustainable options that step beyond fossil fuels.</li> </ul>

**FIGURE 14. ANCHORAGE EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS IN TOP OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO ENERGY FUTURES**

Sorted by the occupation's share of national job postings in the target in 2021

Occupation	Share of Postings*	2016	2021	Percent Change	Median Hourly Earnings
Power Plant Operators	4.7%	93	176	89.2%	\$44.71
Financial Managers	4.1%	553	864	56.2%	\$50.69
First-Line Supervisors, Construction & Extraction	3.3%	699	956	36.8%	\$40.54
Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	2.8%	1,719	1,651	-4.0%	\$23.21
Industrial Engineering Technicians	2.8%	22	5	-77.3%	
Buyers & Purchasing Agents	2.7%	544	408	-25.0%	\$35.53
Production, Planning, & Expediting Clerks	2.5%	375	394	5.1%	\$25.13
Accountants & Auditors	2.5%	1,617	1,430	-11.6%	\$36.35
Control & Valve Installers & Repairers	2.2%	35	40	14.3%	\$38.08
Construction Laborers	2.2%	1,609	1,686	4.8%	\$23.41
Electrical Engineers	1.9%	301	311	3.3%	\$54.02
Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	1.9%	3,764	2,351	-37.5%	\$20.91
General & Operations Managers	1.7%	3,494	3,568	2.1%	\$51.34
Geoscientists, Except Hydrologists & Geographers	1.7%	267	230	-13.9%	\$49.43
Occupational Health & Safety Specialists	1.7%	218	213	-2.3%	\$38.54
<b>Anchorage Total</b>		<b>205,951</b>	<b>194,520</b>	<b>-5.6%</b>	<b>\$23.78</b>

\*Share of national job postings in 2021 among selected employers typical of this sector: Broad Reach Power, ZincFive, Ormat Technologies, Energy Vault, Ocean Power Technologies, Dandelion Energy. The top 15 occupations shown account for 38.5 percent of national job postings for this group of employers.

Source(s): BLS; Emsi Burning Glass 2022.2—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): Median hourly earnings are for Anchorage and are in 2021 USD. An occupation with five jobs indicates an estimation that there are fewer than ten jobs in the region in that occupation. These occupations may also have insufficient data on earnings.

## STATEWIDE AND REGIONAL SERVICES

EXISTING ASSETS	ANCHORAGE'S POTENTIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Providing services for sparse populations can be challenging.</li> <li>▶ Anchorage has been and will remain a robust statewide hub for healthcare, education, and a range of professional services.</li> <li>▶ Anchorage's base of foundational services is a critical asset for all Alaskans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Even with advances in telemedicine and remote learning, core human services, like higher education and healthcare, cannot be easily delivered to remote areas. The base for these services will have to be clustered in denser population centers, like Anchorage.</li> <li>▶ The same is true for a wide range of professional and outsourced services, including accounting, law, engineering, logistics, and consulting.</li> <li>▶ Anchorage can remain the primary services hub for the entire state.</li> </ul>

**FIGURE 15. ANCHORAGE EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS IN TOP OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO STATEWIDE AND REGIONAL SERVICES**

Sorted by the occupation's share of national job postings in the target in 2021

Occupation	Share of Postings*	2016	2021	Percent Change	Median Hourly Earnings
Registered Nurses	27.8%	3,825	4,426	15.7%	\$44.93
Postsecondary Teachers	3.9%	1,349	1,061	-21.3%	\$37.84
Office Clerks, General	2.8%	3,850	3,564	-7.4%	\$20.77
Medical & Health Services Managers	2.0%	569	684	20.2%	\$47.55
Nurse Practitioners	1.9%	223	391	75.3%	\$59.18
Nursing Assistants	1.9%	1,133	1,094	-3.4%	\$18.90
Security Guards	1.7%	1,230	1,342	9.1%	\$19.11
Education Administrators, Postsecondary	1.5%	101	78	-22.8%	\$70.31
Clinical Laboratory Technologists & Technicians	1.4%	390	433	11.0%	\$32.64
Surgical Technologists	1.4%	106	201	89.6%	\$32.89
Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	1.2%	3,764	2,351	-37.5%	\$20.91
Operations Research Analysts	1.1%	129	104	-19.4%	\$29.93
Human Resources Specialists	1.0%	757	825	9.0%	\$30.85
Cardiovascular Technologists & Technicians	1.0%	108	218	101.9%	\$28.93
Career Counselors & Advisors	0.8%	403	391	-3.0%	\$31.02
<b>Anchorage Total</b>		<b>205,951</b>	<b>194,520</b>	<b>-5.6%</b>	<b>\$23.78</b>

\*Share of job postings in 2021 among existing local employers typical of this sector: University of Alaska, Alaska Pacific University, Providence Alaska Medical Center, Alaska Native Medical Center, GCI Communication Corp, Alaska Regional Hospital, Colaska, Alaska Railroad, Coastal Villages Region Fund, First National Bank Alaska, Denali Universal Services. The top 15 occupations shown account for 51.4 percent of national job postings for this group of employers.

Source(s): BLS; Emsi Burning Glass 2022.2—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): Median hourly earnings are for Anchorage and are in 2021 USD.



## ALTERNATIVE CONSTRUCTION

EXISTING ASSETS	ANCHORAGE'S POTENTIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available, affordable housing is a national problem, but Anchorage faces an even more daunting challenge than peers in the Lower 48. Importing construction materials causes local building costs to increase.</li> <li>Other target sectors covered in this report begin with existing assets to be nurtured. When it comes to housing construction, Anchorage has few options.</li> <li>Viable solutions to seemingly intractable problems require risk and creativity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additive manufacturing is a technology that has emerged as an unusual solution for supply-constrained markets in areas as unique as 3D-printed organs.</li> <li>One area where additive manufacturing is emerging as a solution is housing construction. A handful of startup 3D printers around the US have unveiled demonstration projects for quick, efficient, and inexpensive on-site printing of new homes.</li> <li>The potential of this technology is gaining ground, with national homebuilders like Lennar beginning to experiment with partnerships to 3D-print entire neighborhoods.</li> <li>For Anchorage, the potential is ripe to become a poster community for attracting projects and partnerships with 3D printers.</li> </ul>

**FIGURE 16. ANCHORAGE EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS IN TOP OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO ALTERNATIVE CONSTRUCTION**  
Sorted by the occupation's share of national job postings in the target in 2021

Occupation	Share of Postings*	2016	2021	Percent Change	Median Hourly Earnings
Software Developers, Analysts, & Testers	11.0%	415	374	-9.9%	\$47.20
Marketing Managers	6.7%	205	251	22.4%	\$43.23
Industrial Engineers	5.6%	64	92	43.8%	\$56.10
Mechanical Engineers	5.4%	327	410	25.4%	\$49.81
Computer User Support Specialists	4.7%	539	490	-9.1%	\$28.52
Materials Engineers	3.4%	15	28	86.7%	\$45.67
Sales Reps, Non-Technical and Scientific Products	3.2%	1,356	915	-32.5%	\$26.12
Sales Managers	2.4%	388	394	1.5%	\$37.04
Electrical Engineers	2.2%	301	311	3.3%	\$54.02
Financial Managers	2.2%	553	864	56.2%	\$50.69
Sales Reps, Technical and Scientific Products	1.9%	478	458	-4.2%	\$33.09
First-Line Supervisors, Office & Administrative	1.9%	2,064	2,316	12.2%	\$30.91
Logisticians	1.7%	230	393	70.9%	\$45.49
Human Resources Specialists	1.7%	757	825	9.0%	\$30.85
Transportation, Storage, & Distribution Managers	1.3%	407	617	51.6%	\$45.74
<b>Anchorage Total</b>		<b>205,951</b>	<b>194,520</b>	<b>-5.6%</b>	<b>\$23.78</b>

\*Share of national job postings in 2021 among selected employers typical of this sector: Markforged, Mighty Buildings, Velo3D. The top 15 occupations shown account for 55.4 percent of national job postings for this group of employers.

Source(s): BLS; Emsi Burning Glass 2022.2—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): Median hourly earnings are for Anchorage and are in 2021 USD.

## 3D-PRINTED HOMES IN RURAL ALASKA

Like the rest of the nation, Alaska lacks enough affordable housing to meet the current demand. However, the situation is more pronounced in the state where unique challenges present themselves, resulting in exponentially higher construction costs. Transporting materials is more expensive because of the remote geography, aging infrastructure, and lack of skilled labor. Compounding these factors is a short construction season due to the harsh climate.

In response to the state's housing crisis, the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation published a feasibility report on 3D-printed housing construction, exploring the technology's potential to meet rural Alaska's housing needs. Also known as rapid manufacturing, rapid prototyping, additive manufacturing, and digital manufacturing, 3D-construction components are made by adding, or building up, material to form an object. Components can be made from various materials, but this study looked specifically at concrete printed homes.

The report concluded that additive manufacturing is a viable option for increasing affordable housing stock in rural Alaska. 3D-printed homes would reduce the cost of construction by half and build up to 10 times more houses than conventional construction. Further, the price to build the exterior of a house (foundation, walls, and roof), using 3D printing, is an average of \$12.97 per square foot, compared to \$51.38 per square foot using traditional methods. A subsequent phase is required to stress-test the materials over multiple seasons before planning can begin.

### Website

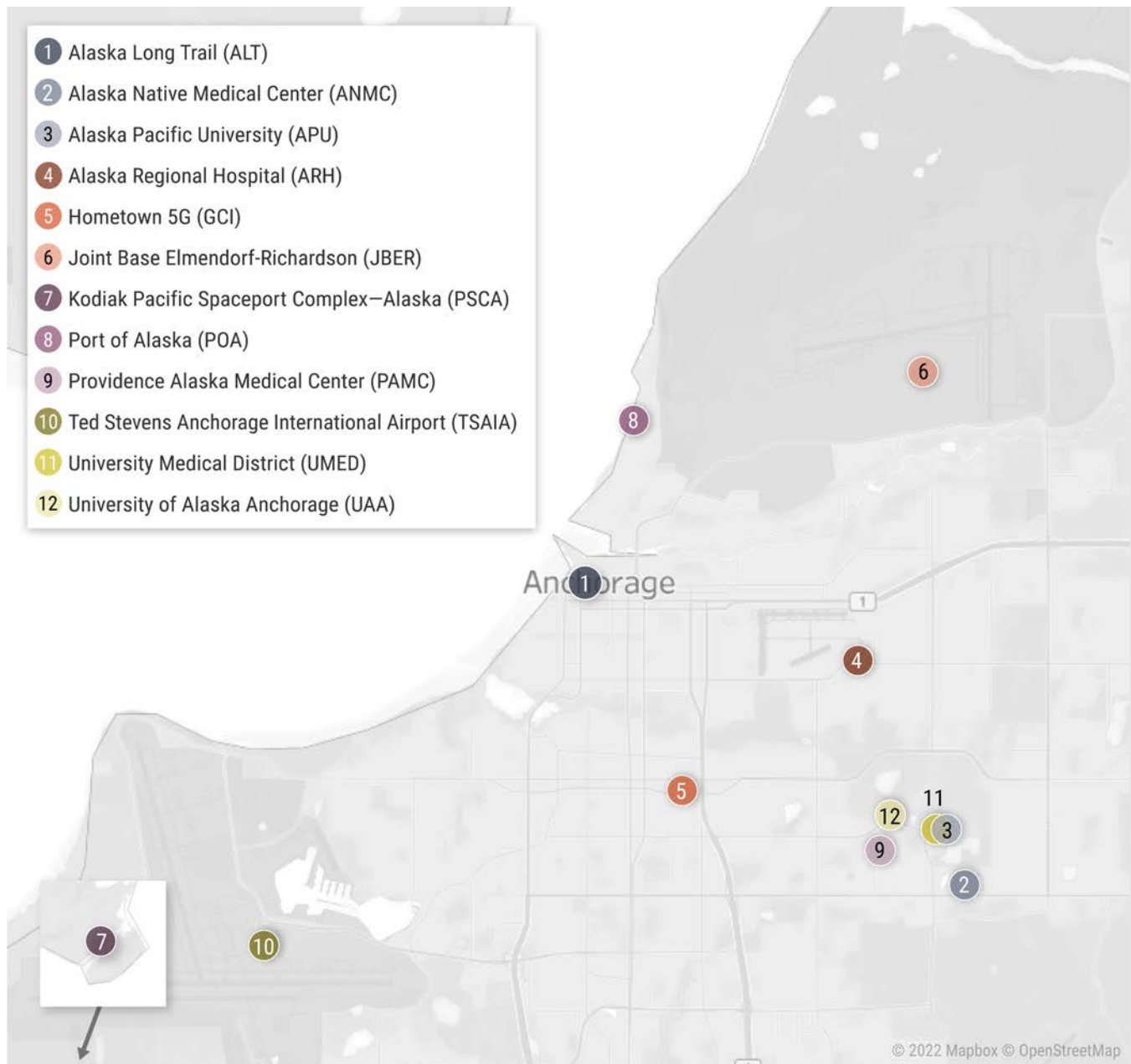
[www.ahfc.us/application/files/9016/2913/7446/3D\\_Printed\\_Home\\_Feasibility\\_Study\\_FINAL\\_2021\\_AHFC\\_Branded.pdf](http://www.ahfc.us/application/files/9016/2913/7446/3D_Printed_Home_Feasibility_Study_FINAL_2021_AHFC_Branded.pdf)



## REGIONAL ASSETS

Anchorage boasts numerous assets that can support a regional diversification strategy. To provide context for the analysis of market opportunities, TIP compiled a brief summary of the most significant of these assets.

FIGURE 17. MAJOR REGIONAL ASSETS



Source(s): TIP Strategies, Inc., research.

Note(s): Kodiak Pacific Spaceport Complex—Alaska (PSCA) is not located within Anchorage's city limits.

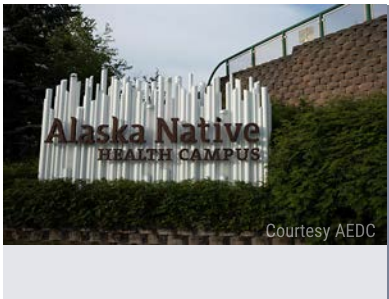
## 1 Alaska Long Trail (ALT)



Alaska Long Train is a project of Alaska Trails (AT), the state's only organization dedicated to trail maintenance. AT seeks to grow Alaska's outdoor recreation and tourism industries through the construction of the ALT, a 500-mile interwoven trail system that connects Fairbanks and Seward. The state included \$13.2 million for ALT projects in the 2022 capital budget.

Website: [www.alaska-trails.org/the-alaska-long-trail](http://www.alaska-trails.org/the-alaska-long-trail)

## 2 Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC)



ANMC is a nonprofit health center located in Anchorage and was established in 1997. It is owned and managed by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and the Southcentral Foundation as codified in Public Law 105-83. A Joint Operating Board oversees the continuity of health services provided by the center. ANMC provides telehealth services to Alaska Native community clinics through its membership in the Alaska Federal Health Care Access Network.

Website: [www.anmc.org](http://www.anmc.org)

## 3 Alaska Pacific University (APU)

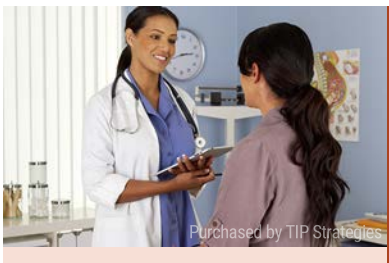


APU is a private Methodist university founded in 1957 as the state's first liberal arts college. APU offers associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees across 34 academic programs. In 2016, prompted by financial shortfalls, APU partnered with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), the nation's largest tribal health organization, to initiate the multiyear process to become a tribal college. Together, ANTHC and APU are developing academic and cultural programming focused on the needs of Alaska Natives and the state.

In 2021, the number of donors grew 45 percent from the year before, totaling more than 500 individuals and equaling \$3.1 million in donations and support. APU's net revenue for the same year was \$5.9 million.

Website: [www.alaskapacific.edu](http://www.alaskapacific.edu)

## 4 Alaska Regional Hospital (ARH)



Alaska Regional Hospital is a private hospital located in Anchorage. It is operated by HCA Healthcare, an American for-profit operator of healthcare facilities based in Nashville, Tennessee. ARH opened in 1963 as Anchorage Presbyterian Hospital before joining HCA in 1994 in order to access advanced medical resources. ARH employs 1,000 people and a medical staff of more than 550 independent practitioners.

Website: [www.alaskaregional.com](http://www.alaskaregional.com)

## 5 Hometown 5G (GCI)



Hometown 5G (GCI) offers telecommunications services in Alaska. In 2020, GCI launched Alaska's first 5G network, Hometown 5G, in partnership with Swedish telecommunications company, Ericsson. The Hometown 5G project is based in Anchorage and has generated tens of millions of dollars in investment in the local economy. It is foundational in the city's transition to becoming a smart city.

In June 2022, third-party research found that the Hometown 5G network is more than twice as fast as AT&T's. Due to the success of Hometown 5G, the project has recently expanded to Mat-Su Valley, 35 miles north of Anchorage.

Website: [www.gci.com/small-business/products/mobile/small-business-5g](http://www.gci.com/small-business/products/mobile/small-business-5g)

## 6 Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson



Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson was established in 2010 after Fort Richardson and Elmendorf Air Force Base were realigned. It is home to four squadrons and has a workforce of nearly 5,000 military and civilian personnel who manage \$12.4 billion in infrastructure over 79,000 acres, oversee the shipments of 53,000 tons of cargo, and provide healthcare for 20 percent of the Anchorage population. The military community in the city represents more than 10 percent of the population.

Website: [www.jber.jb.mil](http://www.jber.jb.mil)

## 7 Kodiak Pacific Spaceport Complex—Alaska (PSCA)



Located on Kodiak Island, the Pacific Spaceport Complex opened in 1998. It is owned and operated by the Alaska Aerospace Corporation, which was established by the state to develop a high technology aerospace industry. To date, PSCA has launched 30 small- and light-lift vertical rockets, mostly for the federal government, and is the first US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) spaceport not located on a federal range.

Since 2015, PSCA has not received state or federal funding and must operate from earned revenue, which fosters a culture of innovation and customer satisfaction. Local economic benefits for Anchorage include high-wage job opportunities, indirect job creation, and purchases of products and services from local businesses.

Website: [akaerospace.com/spaceports](http://akaerospace.com/spaceports)

## 8 Port of Alaska (POA)



Public Domain

Owned and operated by the Municipality of Anchorage, the Port of Alaska in Anchorage is the state's main inbound cargo-handling facility. It serves the city, state, and nation. POA opened in 1961 and was originally named Port of Anchorage to support regional economic development but, in 2017, the Anchorage Assembly changed the name to the current version to better market the port's true scope of service.

The POA has three functions: to support commerce, national defense, and state and federal disaster response-and-recovery efforts. POA is adjacent to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson and is also a designated US Commercial Strategic Seaport to support Department of Defense missions. In 2019, the POA saw \$14 billion in commercial activity in Alaska.

Website: [www.portofalaska.com](http://www.portofalaska.com)

## 9 Providence Alaska Medical Center (PAMC)



Wonderlane via Wikimedia Commons (CC BY 2.0)

The Providence hospital system spans five western states, and the Providence Alaska Medical Center is one of six Providence hospitals in Alaska. PAMC opened in 1937 and is the state's largest hospital by revenue and number of beds. It is also the largest private employer in Alaska, totaling more than 2,000 employees. Statewide, Providence had a \$70 million community benefit in 2020 in the form of strategic partnerships, health education and research, and subsidized, free, or discounted care for those in need. In the same year, PAMC set aside \$3 million to assist local nonprofits in providing shelter for Anchorage's population that was unhoused.

Website: [www.providence.org/locations/ak/alaska-medical-center](http://www.providence.org/locations/ak/alaska-medical-center)

## 10 Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport (TSAIA)



Wonderlane via Wikimedia Commons (CC BY 2.0)

Constructed in 1951, TSAIA is the third busiest airport in the country and fourth largest globally by cargo traffic as of 2020. A 2019 report funded by the FAA found that the aviation industry in Alaska accounted for more than 35,000 jobs statewide and generated \$3.8 billion annually. In Anchorage, 10 percent of jobs are directly attributable to TSAIA.

To ameliorate the supply chain backlog in fall of 2021, AIA (in conjunction with the AEDC, Matson, and Saltchuk) proposed the Alaska Pacific Air-to-Sea Service (Alaska PASS) initiative, which is set to begin once cargo owners and logisticians have been identified. TSAIA has hundreds of tenants, including FedEx, with plans to expand their operations and facilities at TSAIA in response to the 14 percent increase in air cargo volume in 2021. The US Department of Transportation allows all Alaskan airports to act as a transfer point for cargo between different aircraft of the same foreign air carrier without applying for special permission. In 2020, TSAIA applied for a parallel authority permitting international passenger traffic to pass through.

Website: [dot.alaska.gov/anc](http://dot.alaska.gov/anc)



## 11 University Medical District (UMED)



The University Medical District is in Anchorage and includes 10 organizations from the academic, medical, and public sectors. The district has a steering committee, the UMED District Steering Team, comprised of representatives from each participating organization. The Steering Team partners with legislators and various community councils. One of the main objectives identified in Anchorage's 2018 comprehensive economic development strategy is to develop an innovation district within UMED to encourage entrepreneurship.

Website:

<https://www.muni.org/departments/ocpd/planning/publications/pages/umed-districtplanupdate.aspx>

## 12 University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA)



Established as a community college system in 1954, the University of Alaska incorporated as a statewide college network in 1962. University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) was created in 1987 and has since become the largest university by enrollment in the system with 12 colleges and four community campuses. Serving 15,000 full- and part-time students across all locations, UAA accounts for nearly two-thirds of all university students.

UAA's Business Enterprise Institute hosts the Center for Economic Development (CED), which advances economic diversity through entrepreneurship, community building, and actionable policy. CED is one of 52 university centers designated by the US Economic Development Administration.

A 2021 study found that UAA research activities generated an additional \$242 million dollars for the state the year before. Further, for every state-funded dollar a researcher receives, \$5.60 in external funding is created. The economic impact is calculated from number of jobs supported, total payroll produced, and business sales generated in the state by research dollars.

Website: [www.uaa.alaska.edu](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu)

Source(s): TIP Strategies, Inc., research.

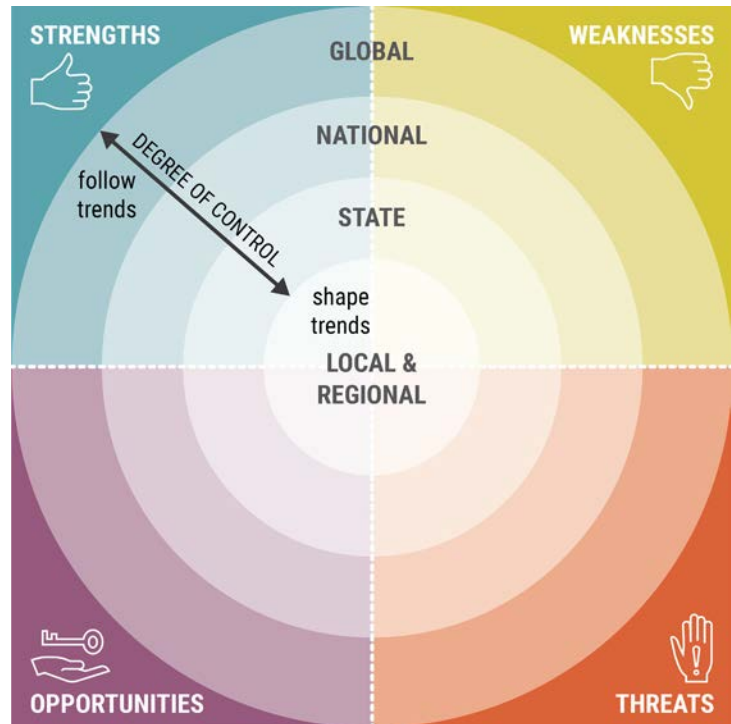
## APPENDIX C. SWOT ANALYSIS

During the project's discovery phase, TIP gathered qualitative input from stakeholders concerning local economic development issues and conducted quantitative data analyses to understand Anchorage's competitive position in the region. The results informed the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis. In compiling the analysis, consideration is given to the degree of control to which the region can address the issues (as illustrated in Figure 18).

The four components of a SWOT analysis can be defined as follows:

- ▶ **Strengths:** Assets and resources that can be built on to grow, strengthen, and diversify the local/regional economy.
- ▶ **Weaknesses:** Liabilities and barriers to economic development that could limit economic growth potential.
- ▶ **Opportunities:** Competitive advantages and positive trends that hold significant potential for the attraction of new businesses, investments, and skilled workers.
- ▶ **Threats:** Unfavorable factors and trends (often external) that could negatively affect the local/regional economy.

FIGURE 18. SWOT OVERVIEW



Source(s): TIP Strategies, Inc.

FIGURE 19. ANCHORAGE SWOT

### Strengths

- Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport.
- Port of Alaska.
- JBER's growing importance to national security.
- Healthcare and higher education assets.
- Highly diverse population (especially K-12).
- Outdoor recreation lifestyles, assets, and amenities.
- Hub for all of Alaska's critical needs (medical, supplies, and retail).
- Strategic global geographic location (especially for just-in-time model).
- Influx of visitors (in-state, independent, and cruise).
- Emerging entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Small-medium manufacturers connected to tourism.
- Strong network of partners through Alliance to Activate Anchorage.





## Weaknesses

- Lackluster growth (loss of population, stagnant employment growth, and low housing starts).
- Paucity of available and workforce housing options.
- Downtown appeal (perception of crime, people experiencing homelessness, and unmaintained public spaces).
- Limited developable land and redevelopment opportunities.
- Undiversified economy and lack of community knowledge about area and industries beyond oil and gas.
- Dependence on imports.
- Outdoor resources and tourism infrastructure are underfunded or underpromoted.
- Difficult environment for large manufacturers (scaling challenges, external supply chains, and high costs).
- Lack culture of planning and collaboration (individualistic).
- Passageway for tourists and not a destination.
- Health challenges (healthcare costs, childcare, mental health, and substance abuse).
- Population diversity in Anchorage isn't reflected within businesses and organizations.
- Large opportunity youth (ages 16–24 unemployed/underemployed) population (especially among females).



## Opportunities

- Position Anchorage as a global multimodal logistics center.
- Establish a talent attraction initiative that leverages tourism marketing.
- Develop an independent regional workforce board covering Anchorage.
- Expand workforce housing development.
- Increase workplace learning opportunities (apprenticeships, internships, and shadowing).
- Continue growing fast-track demand-driven training certifications at UAA.
- Leverage the Alliance to Activate Anchorage group to affect transformational change.
- Improve and develop access points for entrepreneurial support (clearinghouse of resources).
- Leverage and grow unique strengths in Arctic research.
- Amplify the findings and suggestions from Roger Brooks and AIA to build a roadmap.
- Promote and support minority and women-owned small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Launch an economic development education campaign.
- Invest in young Anchorage residents (leverage Alaska Native Professional Association and the Young Professionals Group).
- Establish a manufacturing association.
- Foster intentional diverse, equitable, and inclusive representation on local boards.



## Threats

- Ongoing population loss cripples the economic base.
- Inability to maintain long-term initiatives across changes in administrations.
- Continued supply chain challenges (especially construction materials).
- Volatility of energy markets.
- Infrastructure age and vulnerability at the Port of Alaska.
- Impact of global inflation on already high cost of living.
- Pessimism about the economic future of Anchorage.
- Lack of leadership opportunities for the next generation of Anchorage leaders.

# APPENDIX D. ANCHORAGE DELEGATION REPORT: IEDC ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN OKLAHOMA CITY

## INTRODUCTION

In September of 2022, the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) organized a delegation of 25 Anchorage-based professionals and business leaders to attend the International Economic Development Conference (IEDC) in Oklahoma City (OKC), Oklahoma. This delegation included board members and staff of AEDC, Visit Anchorage, Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, and Anchorage Downtown Partnership, and staff of the Anchorage Community Development Authority, the mayor's office, and the University of Alaska's Center for Economic Research. These organizations are passionate about Anchorage's success and have concerns about several trends in Anchorage's economy, most notably the net population loss of over 15,000 working-age (16–64) adults in the past decade.

Oklahoma City is viewed nationally by economic development professionals as one of the remarkable success stories of the past 30 years. In the late 1980s, OKC was a city that was in severe economic decline and experiencing massive outmigration. After losing an economically vital bid to become an American Airlines hub, the city decided it wasn't going to "let a good crisis go to waste." Instead, business leaders, city officials, and community members came together to reinvest in themselves. OKC is now a highly successful city for tourism, technology, resource development, logistics, and a growing workforce. They changed the trajectory of their city in the face of difficult challenges, much like Anchorage is facing in 2022.

The intent of organizing such a large delegation was to observe firsthand the results of a community-driven reinvestment strategy and the over \$5 billion in private sector investments that have resulted from the public-private partnerships that OKC has engaged in. The purpose of this trip was to observe the remarkable transformation and obtain actionable strategies for consideration that could help Anchorage reverse its trend of net outmigration and population decline.

## IEDC CONFERENCE AND OKC TOURS

Throughout the entire conference, OKC leaders shared their experience designing and creating the Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) program, which they credit most of their economic revival and ongoing success to. The MAPS concept was introduced in the 1990s as capital investment initiatives to improve the quality of life, funded by a series of temporary one-penny sales taxes. There have been four iterations of MAPS, which have always gone to the citizens of OKC for a vote prior to being implemented. The most recent MAPS program passed with a staggering 72 percent of the vote, demonstrating how much the residents of OKC value this program that has created such tangible benefits for their city.

The IEDC conference's main program included tracks for leadership development, fostering talent, supporting economic opportunity, economic transformation, and promoting the economic development profession. The conference also included several tours around the city to highlight the effect that their redevelopment efforts have had on economic prosperity.

In the East Side Story—23rd Street Development tour, the delegation was introduced to OKC's northeast quadrant and home to many of OKC's lower-income families. The tour emphasized that the area's formerly vibrant commercial districts were in decline and the area had become a food desert. The tour showcased the success story that brought together multiple developers and partners to breathe life back into the area's retail offerings

through a tour of EastPoint, which includes a healthcare center, medical research firm, nonprofit grocery, fitness center, bar, art gallery and event space, bookstore, optometrist, pizzeria, and coffee shop. Lastly, attendees toured a full-service Homeland grocery development that included tax incremental financing, a social impact loan, a bank co-op loan, and new market tax credits.

In the OKC Historic Neighborhood and Redevelopment Story tour, the delegation observed a vibrant neighborhood undergoing redevelopment in Paseo, a Spanish colonial-styled neighborhood with an arts focus; the Plaza District, a hip center of food, musical theater, and shopping; Capitol Hill, a historic main street with a Latin flair; and Midtown, a center for housing, healthcare, and entertainment.

In the OKC Innovation District tour, attendees toured properties that were collectively named the Association of University Research Parks' Outstanding Innovation District of the Year in 2021. This Innovation District is a 1.3-square-mile ecosystem of collaboration, innovation, and economic growth centered on the OU Health Sciences Center, an academic health center and research complex. Beyond academia, healthcare, and bioscience, the area includes organizations spanning Oklahoma's diverse sectors of aerospace and unmanned systems, specialized manufacturing, technology, and energy. The tour included health and energy research facilities and an overview of Convergence, a 400,000-square-foot development under construction that will bring together laboratories, office space, a hotel, retail space, and a proposed Innovation Hall funded by public investment.

In addition to tours organized by the conference, delegation members explored downtown MAPS projects on their own, which allowed them to observe the private development that occurred with publicly funded projects. For example, the group toured the Bricktown Canal district, which was a warehousing district that had once been a magnet for crime but now has a bustling mile-long canal with shops, restaurants, and activities for people to enjoy. The \$23M public investment spurred over \$100M in new private investments in the area. Another example is the expansive 70-acre Scissortail Park, which features many public amenities, like a dog park, playground, splash pad, café, and event pavilion that was bustling at all hours of the day. This park was surrounded by several new private developments, such as restaurants and a particularly major infrastructure project, which was a 17-story, \$235M Omni Hotel that connected directly to the city's convention center, establishing OKC as a prominent conference destination.

## MAPS MEETING WITH OKC LEADERSHIP

As a finale to an already highly informative and inspiring conference, AEDC facilitated a meeting between the Anchorage delegation and four members of OKC leadership that were either key architects of the original MAPS or were responsible for their ongoing successful implementation. In that session, Anchorage learned the reason for the original MAPS project, which organizations were involved in the vision development, and how they accomplished such a large initiative.

In the late 1980s, OKC's economy was depressed, residents were watching their young talent migrate out of the city, and the leadership was determined to find a solution that would turn the trajectory of their city around. To attract new investment, OKC bid on a proposal to house an American Airlines maintenance hub. Ultimately, the city lost the bid because airline employees did not find OKC to be an attractive place to live. This disappointing experience helped OKC leaders realize they were at a crisis point and they refused to let the crisis go to waste. So instead, they mobilized with a solution, leading to the proposal of quality-of-life projects of the original MAPS program.

The original MAPS vision originated from the business community with significant support from the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, city government officials, and civic-minded citizens that formed a Citizen's Advisory Board (CAB). These entities worked together to formulate the structure of the funding, decide which projects would be pursued, poll residents to determine support, communicate the vision and put the vote to the people.

This initial ballot initiative passed with 54 percent of the vote and has since been repeated three more times with voter approvals increasing to 72 percent in the most recent MAPS 4 project.

The original MAPS program targeted quality-of-life investments and included a ballpark, canal district, convention center, music hall, downtown library, and a public trolley system. The next MAPS program was deemed “MAPS for Kids” and it allocated money improvements to every public school serving students in OKC, including 70 new or renovated buildings. In MAPS 3, OKC expanded its investments in quality-of-life projects, which resulted in a new event center, a large public park, a state-of-the-art river sport facility, senior health and wellness centers, and other improvements to trails and sidewalks. OKC is currently in the process of raising funds for MAPS 4 that will encompass an expansive 16 projects that were generated through a citizen input process, deciding on projects for parks, youth centers, senior wellness centers, an animal shelter, people experiencing homelessness, and other socially related purposes.

The OKC leadership group that met with the Anchorage delegation attributed their decades-long success story to a culture of nonpartisanship, an aligned business community, full transparency at every step of the process, an engaged CAB, a strong city-manger form of government that reduced political friction, and a zero-debt policy where projects didn’t start until the entirety of funding was collected.

## ANCHORAGE DELEGATION DEBRIEF

After the conference, AEDC facilitated a dialogue between all attendees that focused on collecting feedback about the following questions.

1. What was the one thing you learned, saw, or experienced in Oklahoma City that got you the most excited?
2. What one concern did you come away with from your learning experience in Oklahoma City?
3. Based on what you learned from OKC, what key element are we missing in Anchorage if we are going to try a similar business-led “MAPS” initiative in Anchorage?
4. Is there anything on your mind that you want to share not already covered in previous comments?

When asked what excited the delegation the most, or what they were impressed with, the participants said they were impressed by a strong vision with a mechanism to accomplish that vision, the city’s nonpartisan approach to problem-solving and the community’s long-lasting sense of pride and ownership in their public investments. The delegation shared various stories about how they would speak to restaurant servers, cab drivers, and other local residents that would refer to the MAPS project as “our project” and use statements like “We did this” as opposed to the traditional language heard in most cities, which is “The city/state/government did this.” The display of this language demonstrates that leaderships had buy-in from the start and the project administrators remained transparent and stayed true to their commitments, further enforcing the trust that the citizens had in their leaders. Additionally, the delegation felt it was wise of OKC to recognize that what was good for residents, would also spur additional tourism and economic growth, which is exactly what happened.

As the delegation discussed concerns they had about a similar vision and approach working in Anchorage, the resounding realization was that Anchorage is not unified in the way that OKC is. The delegation observed that politics are polarized, it would be difficult to get the community to agree on a common set of projects to invest in, and the citizen’s trust in city government is low. Several members noted that one of the apparent reasons for OKC’s success was the leaders’ complete transparency with the CAB and broader public and Anchorage does not have a history of doing this effectively, citing the recent alcohol tax as an example of the public not understanding where funds are being allocated after they were collected. While it seemed that all of the delegation held this opinion of the current state of Anchorage, several mused that the business community could rise to the level of leadership to solve this problem, but it felt daunting to embark on a quest for unity among Anchorage citizens,

political leadership, and business leaders. Lastly, the delegation felt that OKC's strategy of not breaking ground on infrastructure projects until 100 percent of the funding was collected could be a threat to continued engagement and trust in the MAPS process due to a potential lack of patience from residents who would not see immediate results from their public investments.

After discussing the most exciting and concerning parts of OKC's approach, the delegation talked about which key elements Anchorage was missing that could hinder progress on a similar set of initiatives. The first missing element was a strong city-manager form of government that allowed the business community, represented by the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, to lead the dialogue and subsequent initiatives. Second, Anchorage does not have an existing sales tax, like OKC did, which the delegation assumed would mean Anchorage would have a more difficult time using that mechanism to fund a public investment strategy. Although Anchorage is lacking in those two key elements, the delegation agreed that Anchorage was a much younger city than OKC was when it needed to reinvent itself, so Anchorage would be starting its reinvestment strategy at a more advantageous point because the city has not deteriorated to the point that OKC had by the late 1980s. However, while this starting point could be seen as an advantage, the delegation also observed that Anchorage citizens did not have as much of a sense of urgency because Anchorage's decline in population and economic activity was not necessarily apparent to them in their day-to-day lives. For this reason, the delegation felt it was crucial to impart urgency in citizens without feeding into fears or further divisiveness, with the goal of helping them understand Anchorage's outmigration problem and the associated solutions that are available to the city.

Lastly, the group discussed miscellaneous observations, suggestions, and thoughts in a round-robin fashion. The resounding feeling was that OKC was a vibrant city that was fun to visit, and its redevelopment strategy was incredibly impressive and inspiring. The delegation emphasized that Anchorage is also an incredible city with phenomenal assets that should be further capitalized on and that Anchorage has the potential to be world class using strategic, intentional reinvestment in quality-of-place projects. The concept of first focusing on making Anchorage a place that residents loved to live in was met with enthusiasm and the determination that tourism and many other economic activities would follow, just like it had in OKC. Other members noted that not everyone was going to agree with every initiative, and that was okay because it was important to keep the broader goal of continual improvement in mind and not to let the perfect be the enemy of the good.





# Leadership Committee



**Chris Swalling**



**Michelle Klouda**



**Mike Huston**



**Mark Begich**



**Dave Cavitt**



**Dan Newman**



**Jen Motyka**



**Marilyn Romano**



**John Rense**



**Shane Durand**



**Jacob Lyon**



**AEDC**  
**Anchorage Economic**  
Development Corporation





**AEDC**  
**Anchorage Economic**  
Development Corporation

## **OUR STAFF**



**Bill Popp**

President & CEO

[wpopp@aedcweb.com](mailto:wpopp@aedcweb.com)



**Jenna Wright**

Vice President

[jwright@aedcweb.com](mailto:jwright@aedcweb.com)



**Ashley Ebnet**

Development Manager

[aebnet@aedcweb.com](mailto:aebnet@aedcweb.com)



**Drew Cason**

Workforce Development

[dcason@aedcweb.com](mailto:dcason@aedcweb.com)

**510 L STREET, SUITE 603, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, 99501**  
**WWW.AEDCWEB.COM - 907-258-3700**



**AEDC**  
Anchorage Economic  
Development Corporation

# CHOOSE ANCHORAGE

Choose Anchorage is AEDC's framework for revitalization that includes a comprehensive action plan focused on improving four interconnected aspects of Anchorage:



## Talent

Build a robust talent pool with skills that meet the needs of current and future employers to foster a more resilient and diversified economic base.



## Business Vitality

Create a dynamic and diverse business base that drives higher levels of new investment and job creation.



## Quality of Place

Invest in Anchorage's quality of place to help reverse current migration trends and support the retention and attraction of young people.



## Infrastructure

Leverage existing assets in a sustainable manner and invest in critical Infrastructure to shape quality places that are attractive to business and talent.

## BECOME AN INVESTOR TODAY!

By joining AEDC, your business has a voice to influence the direction of our Economy.

- ✓ Free Notary Service
- ✓ Start-Up Resources
- ✓ Discounts on Events
- ✓ Referrals & Networking
- ✓ Early Access to Reports
- ✓ Exclusive Sponsorships
- ✓ Recognition at our Events
- ✓ Board Room Access (Seats 16)
- ✓ Company Profile on Website
- ✓ Business Assistance & Coaching
- ✓ Eligibility to Serve on Councils



[www.aedcweb.com](http://www.aedcweb.com) - 907-258-3700

Join Here!