

To: Crystal Nygard, Deputy Administrator, City of Wasilla
From: Donna Logan, McKinley Research Group
Date: November 22, 2022
Re: Wasilla CEDS: Steering Committee Meeting #1 Notes

Below is a summary of the first Wasilla CEDS Steering Committee meeting held on Monday, November 21, 2022, 2:00-3:30 pm, at Wasilla City Hall.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER ATTENDEES

- Jessica Viera, Wasilla Chamber of Commerce
- Jeremiah Benson, Commercial Real Estate
- Terry Ellis, Commercial Real Estate
- Doug Miller, Wasilla Resident
- Mike Brown, Mat-Su Borough

PROJECT TEAM MEMBER ATTENDEES

- Crystal Nygard, City of Wasilla
- Donna Logan, McKinley Research Group
- Holly Spoth-Torres, Huddle AK

AGENDA

- Introductions
- Role and Expectations of CEDS Steering Committee
- Brief Overview of the CEDS Process
- Preliminary SWOT Findings and Committee Input
- Discussion of Vision Content
- Next Steps and Meeting Schedule

DISCUSSION ITEM SUMMARY - PRELIMINARY SWOT FINDINGS COMMITTEE INPUT

Donna Logan shared a preliminary high-level summary of the SWOT exercise held at the Wasilla Economic Summit on November 2, 2022. Members were asked to offer feedback on the summary.

Strengths: Committee agreed with preliminary analysis of strengths and suggested adding that Wasilla is the commercial trade center or 'hub' of the Mat-Su Borough.

Weaknesses: Committee agreed with the preliminary analysis of weaknesses and suggested adding the following:

- Wasilla lacks a mechanism to adequately fund infrastructure needs.
- Current code is restrictive and may be prohibiting commercial development.
- There isn't the right infrastructure in place to enable development.
- The transportation system needs more north-south routes to improve connectivity.

Opportunities: Committee suggested adding the following:

- There are opportunities for industrial properties in Wasilla.
- Wasilla should consider enticements for development.

Threats: Committee suggested adding the following:

- High energy costs
- High health care costs

DISCUSSION ITEM SUMMARY – CEDS VISION

Committee members were asked to respond to the questions: *Where do you envision Wasilla in the next 10-20 years?*

Responses included:

- Wasilla is home to innovators, creators, and manufacturers.
- Value added economy
- There is more industrial fabrication.
- People make things in Wasilla.
- Wasilla is home to emerging and innovative industry.
- Wasilla has a high-end professional services area.
- There is a tech district.
- Connectivity between communities.
- Public Transportation
- There are a variety of transportation options.

- Functioning transportation infrastructure
- Walkability
- Access to all outdoor recreation opportunities
- Thriving economy, amenities, but not without the outdoors and scenery.
- Wasilla has a variety of living-wage and high-paying jobs.
- Wasilla has quality and affordable housing.
- Wasilla is safe, walkable, and values the outdoors.
- Wasilla is the economic hub of the region.
- Independent thinkers
- We don't compromise our values
- Educated
- Pioneer mindset
- High standards
- High value/quality

The next Committee meeting will be scheduled for late February/early March. At that meeting, Committee members will be offering input on the CEDS vision statement, goals, and strategic action.