

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

NIKISKI, ALASKA



Piecing the Future Together

Prepared by:

North Peninsula Community Council

dba. Nikiski Community Council

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<http://www.nikiskicc.com/>

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I. HISTORY & PURPOSE

In May of 2000, interested North Peninsula residents met to discuss the possibility of revitalizing the North Peninsula Community Council (NPCC) which was formed in the mid 1990's in an effort to provide input and guidance to the Kenai Peninsula Borough on issues associated with the North Peninsula area.

Subsequent meetings of the NPCC defined the focus of the newly revitalized Council as providing community leadership and input into the development of a long-range community/economic development plan for the area. Existing NPCC By-laws were revised to reflect their new mission and the Council received their approved Alaska State Articles of Incorporation (Domestic Non-profit Corporation) in September of 2000.

In July of 2000, the NPCC and North Peninsula Chamber of Commerce successfully requested and secured financial assistance through the USDA Forest Service's Economic Recovery Program for the formation of a Nikiski Community Action Team and the subsequent development and preparation of a Community Action Plan.

In an effort to gather public input into the development of the Community Action Plan, the NPCC staffed an informational booth at the Nikiski Days "Fun in the Sun" community event and successfully distributed and completed 128 survey questionnaire's developed to gather information from the general public concerning North Peninsula issues, concerns, likes, and dislikes.

In addition to the "Fun in the Sun" survey, public input into the development of this plan was gathered at the North Peninsula Economic Outlook Forum which was held in March of 2001 and organized jointly by the NPCC, North Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development District (EDD), Kenai Peninsula Borough Community & Economic Development Division (CEDD), and the Kenai Peninsula Resource Conservation and Development District (KPRC&D). The community sponsored event attracted over 60 local residents and provided a forum for citizens to discuss and prioritize community issues and opportunities.

In December of 2000, the NPCC utilized technical assistance from the KPRC&D to prepare an application to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to obtain their 501 (c)(3) non-profit status. In April of 2001, the IRS determined that the NPCC was exempt from federal income tax under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code and granted the Council an advanced five-year ruling period. In August, 2005 the North Peninsula Community Council received IRS status as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation.

In November, 2012 this action plan was revisited and revised by concerned community members. The overall development and preparation of this Action Plan represents a commitment from within the community to establish goals and objectives and implement specific action items and projects related to the recovery and diversification of the economic base of Nikiski, Alaska.

II. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF AREA

Location & Climate:

The unincorporated area of Nikiski is located on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula approximately nine miles north of the City of Kenai. The unincorporated area of Salamatof, also represented by the NPCC, is located immediately north of the city of Kenai and south of Nikiski. The two areas encompass 69.6 square miles of land. Winter temperatures range from 7 to 43 degrees F, with summer temperatures varying from 45 to 65 degrees F. Average annual precipitation is 22 inches. Average annual snowfall is 87 inches.

History, Culture, & Demographics:

Traditionally in Kenaitze Indian territory, the area was homesteaded in the 1940's and grew with the discovery of oil on the Kenai Peninsula in 1957. By 1964, oil related industries located in the North Peninsula Area included Shell, Mobil, Exxon, Union Oil Company of California, Phillips 66, Chevron, and Tesoro. By 2012, most all of the original oil companies have sold out to smaller independent oil companies.

2012 date lists the population of the Nikiski area at 4,648. Alaskan Natives represent 7.72% of the population. Since 2000, the population has grown 6.26%. There are 1,689 households. The unemployment rate is 8.9% with anticipated job growth of 4%. The per capita income is \$26,452, and household income of \$61,291. The median home costs \$173,500.

Economy & Transportation:

Nikiski is where numerous oil companies explore and produce crude oil and natural gas from both on-shore production facilities and off-shore production platforms. Tesoro operates a refinery processing Alaska oil into gasoline and jet fuel. Homer Electric Cooperative operates a natural gas-fired heat recovery steam electrical generator station, and recently purchased Bernice Lake Power Station. Timber, commercial and sport fishing, government, retail businesses and tourism related services also provide employment opportunities. Fifty-five residents currently hold commercial fishing permits. Numerous industrial and oil & gas service companies support the Nikiski area infrastructure with a diverse work force, including on-shore and off-shore services. Port Nikiski, aka OSK dock, services offshore drilling platforms and currently there are two private airstrips in the area. Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC) operates a shore-side berth/construction yard at the previously known Rig Tenders Dock. The Sterling Highway provides access to Anchorage and the nearby City of Kenai offers an airport and docking facilities.

Recent decommissioned industrial facilities include the Agrium ammonia-urea plants, which operated for approximately 45 years, and the British Petroleum gas-to-liquids test facility, which operated for approximately 8 years. With new discoveries of Cook Inlet

natural gas, or the terminus of an in-state gas pipeline these facilities and other new ventures can bring jobs to the community.

Public Facilities & Services:

Private groups, the State of Alaska, and KPB-formed service areas organizations providing public services in the Nikiski area include the Nikiski Fire Department, Nikiski Senior Center, North Peninsula Recreation Service Area, and the North Peninsula Community Council. Nikiski is an unincorporated community and contains no official form of government. There are two schools in the North Peninsula area, the Nikiski Middle/Senior High School and the Nikiski-North Star Elementary school, attended by approximately 700 students. The Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation own and manage the 3,460-acre Captain Cook State Recreation Area. The North Peninsula Recreation Service Area offers a variety of recreational opportunities at the indoor pool facility, outdoor hockey rink, cross-country trails, outdoor playground, ball fields, and recreation community center. The State of Alaska maintains a Department of Transportation Maintenance station for year-round operations.

III. NIKISKI VISION STATEMENT

To assist in the development of a long-range vision statement, the NPCC, utilizing citizen responses obtained from their community survey, regular membership meetings, and action plan forums, developed the following list of positive attributes related to living in the North Peninsula Area:

1. Small town, rural atmosphere
2. Parks, swimming pool, & other recreational opportunities
3. Great schools and great teachers
4. High quality of life
5. Friendliness of the people
6. Community spirit
7. Lakes, scenery, & wildlife
8. Oil and gas industries
9. Fishing industries
10. Services areas including fire protection, senior centers/housing, and recreation
11. Quality small businesses
12. Churches who care and provide for the needy

The organization's mission statement: Building a better community for tomorrow by pulling together for a clean community, strong families, job opportunities, better roads, a safe community, development, and wise use of local resources.

The Corporation is organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The purpose(s) of the Corporation is to:

1. Promote, maintain and enhance a well balanced quality of life for all citizens recognized, but not limited to those that reside in the boundaries outlined in Article 2 in the Bylaws.
2. Plan and implement community based programs and activities that will assist in the direction outlined in Article 3 (A) in the Bylaws.
3. Improve and encourage communication between the citizens (outlined in Article 2) and local, state, and federal units of government
4. Support and encourage community involvement in civic matters in the area as outlined in Article 2.

IV. COMMUNITY ISSUES AND CONCERNS

The NPCC identified various community related issues and concerns through the responses received from the 2000 Nikiski Days "Fun in the Sun" survey questionnaire. Information received from the 128 completed questionnaires indicated the following top ten community concerns:

1. Lack of road service/maintenance and poor road conditions
2. Abandoned vehicles and buildings
3. Crime and drug problems
4. Lack of trash and litter clean-up
5. Lack of activities for children and young adults
6. Lack of police protection
7. Chemical plant pollution and other possible dangers
8. Undeserved North Peninsula Area reputation
9. Lack of a strong business community
10. Lack of basic services

During the March 2001 North Peninsula Economic Outlook Forum the NPCC facilitated a visioning exercise where participants were asked the question "What is the North Peninsula Area Like in the Year 2010?" Of the approximately 70 responses received during the brainstorming session, the forum attendees were then asked to prioritize and select their top three response items. The following specific issues/opportunities were identified as high priority items by the 60 forum participants:

1. Gas pipeline development
2. Removal of abandoned buildings and vehicles
3. Deep water port development
4. Preserve the area's lifestyle

The November, 2012 action plan forum prompted the participants to respond to "What bugs you about Nikiski?", and generated the following list of answers similar to prior years' responses.

1. Unsightly junk cars, abandoned buildings, trash sites with old appliances
2. Unseen level of poverty
3. The independent spirit produces no accomplishments

4. There is a bad reputation associated with Nikiski “North Roaders”
5. Lack of law enforcement, slow emergency response times
6. Community drug problems
7. Lack of bike paths
8. Narrow roads, dangerous intersections, no turning lanes
9. Concerns for groundwater safety and ADEC contamination enforcement
10. Needs for family-orientated outdoor recreation sites
11. Land zoning concerns

V. COMMUNITY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION ITEMS

Based on public input (survey results, planning forum, & monthly meetings), the following goals, objectives, and specific action items have been established by the NPCC to promote community development and strengthen economic recovery and diversification of the North Peninsula Area. It should be noted that the following list has not been prioritized. Project prioritization will occur as annual project plans are prepared and submitted to potential funding sources.

GOAL A: PROMOTE THE CLEAN-UP AND BEAUTIFICATION OF THE NORTH PENINSULA AREA

Objective 1 - Coordinate activities, strengthen existing efforts, and develop new and innovative approaches for community beautification.

Action Items:

- 1) Establish a North Peninsula Beautification Program that includes awards, rewards, incentives, etc., to promote community beautification awareness. Elements of the program to include:
 - a) Nikiski Winter Night Lights award program
 - b) Summer garden/curb appeal award program
 - c) Annual community clean-up events, to include focus areas.
 - d) Promote the use of fences, murals, natural vegetation, and other innovative methods for beautification efforts
- 2) Establish and fund a junk vehicle program that support resident efforts to properly dispose of decommissioned and unwanted vehicles. Elements of the program to include:
 - a. A system for residents to identify vehicles for removal and disposal
 - b) Investigate and collaborate with the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) and local businesses for the collection, transport, decontamination, and metal scrap recycling of vehicles.
 - c) Work with local State and KPB authorities for the collection of abandoned vehicles in road and public right-of-ways.
- 3) Investigate and develop the program elements for the collection and disposal of appliances.

- 4) Investigate and develop options for personal building property demolition and disposal.
- 5) Explore zoning, property tax incentives, and/or other local ordinance options related to the reduction of abandoned vehicles, appliances, and buildings, and beautification improvement efforts
- 6) Promote the enforcement of existing laws and regulations with respect to abandoned vehicles, appliances, and buildings

GOAL B: PROTECT, PRESERVE, AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE NORTH PENINSULA AREA

Objective 1 - Facilitate the completion of local community facility expansion, construction, and renovation projects.

Action Items:

- 1) Endorse the development of the North Peninsula Recreation Community Center as an emergency response shelter.
- 2) Endorse the expansion of the Nikiski Senior Housing Center to meet growing needs of the community.

Objective 2 - Develop recreational facilities in a manner that protects and preserves the area's scenic resources and rural life style.

Action Items:

- 1) Seek appropriate funding sources to plan, design, and construct an all-season North Peninsula multi-purpose trail system
- 2) Encourage the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation to implement improvements to the Captain Cook State Recreation Area (Stormy Lake swimming beach, Swanson River boardwalks or platforms, etc.)
- 3) Expand the areas recreational potential by promoting the development of winter recreational activities including snowmachining and x-country skiing (community events/races, etc.)
- 4) Explore opportunities for the development of visitor friendly facilities and amenities, including the development of family campgrounds, a North Peninsula Visitor Center, area recreational maps, visitor signage, recreational vehicle dump station, etc.
- 5) Seek property and funding for an Inlet public viewing park that has beach access.

Objective 3 - Expand the area's educational opportunities.

Action Items:

- 1) Work with the Kenai Peninsula School District and area industry and small business leaders to explore alternatives for the implementation of a local work force development youth oriented training program
- 2) Investigate opportunities for a public computer education center.

GOAL C: PROMOTE THE MAINTENANCE, IMPROVEMENT, AND EXPANSION OF THE NORTH PENINSULA AREA TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Objective 1 - Develop a long-term plan for residential and industrial traffic patterns, highway improvements, and potential new highway corridors identified in the 2003 Nikiski Road Traffic Study.

Action Items:

- 1) Work with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) for maintaining hazard-free roads and establishing a network call system for reporting and eliminating road hazards
- 2) Promote the desired traffic routes for industrial and residential users and traffic study recommendations for the existing road system
- 3) Promote a pedestrian path system adjacent to the existing roadways

GOAL D: SUPPORT AND PROMOTE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT RELATED PROJECTS THAT PROVIDE DIRECT ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO THE RESIDENTS OF THE NORTH PENINSULA AREA

Objective 1 - Promote the North Peninsula Area as the terminus for the proposed natural gas pipeline project.

Action Items:

- 1) Work with the Kenai Peninsula Borough for establishing a corridor through the community for the proposed North Slope natural gas pipeline project
- 2) Identify potential industrial quality sites for construction of a North Slope natural gas liquification plant
- 3) Educate the community on the social, economic, and environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of a North Slope natural gas plant

Objective 2 - Explore the development of a deep water port/cargo hub facility in the North Peninsula Area.

Action Items:

- 1) Determine community and political support for deep water port project
- 2) Identify possible deep water port and support facility sites for construction of an international container ship terminal
- 3) Educate the community on the social, economic, and environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of a deep water port capable of handling international cargo and cruise ship operations

Objective 3 - Support and promote small business development and expansion in the North Peninsula Area.

Action Items:

- 1) Explore the development of new value-added timber products and industries utilizing the area's beetle kill spruce (particleboard, furniture, etc.)
- 2) Explore opportunities for value-added specialty seafood production

Objective 4 - Support and promote tidal power in the North Peninsula Area.

Action Items:

- 1) Identify tidal power infrastructure needs
- 2) Support tidal power concepts

GOAL E: PROMOTE THE SAFETY AND HEALTH OF THE AREA'S RESIDENTS

Objective 1 – Increase law enforcement presence in the North Peninsula area.

Action Items:

- 1) Explore alternatives with the Alaska Department of Public Safety to increase law enforcement presence in the North Peninsula area
 - a) Investigate options for a trooper office in Nikiski
- 2) Promote funding and pursue the presence of School Resource Officers (SRO) at the Nikiski Middle/High school as a way to improve safety and improved response times.

- 3) Promote implementation of a public safety program utilizing community watch programs

Objective 2 – Develop long-term options for promoting safety and health

Action Items:

1. Promote the implementation of medical, dental, and vision services in the North Peninsula Area
2. Develop a land use plan that identifies heavy industrial land use corridors

VI. FUTURE COMMUNITY/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The NPCC will utilize this long-term Action Plan to seek and secure future sources of local, state, federal and private foundation technical and financial assistance to promote community development and to foster the recovery and diversification of the economic base of the North Peninsula Area.

It is the intent of the NPCC to meet on a regular basis to review potential action items outlined in this plan and develop, where appropriate, project cost estimates and funding applications to meet the goals and objectives as stated. Continued assistance to the NPCC in the implementation of specific action items outlined in this plan will be provided by those resources available to the NPCC.