



# Fairbanks North Star Borough Downtown Fairbanks Plan

Planning Commission Work Session

August 10, 2021

# Project Overview

# The Project Team

**Downtown Working Group, Residents, Businesses, Policymakers, Partners**

**Local Planning Partners:**  
FAST Planning, City of Fairbanks, Downtown Association of Fairbanks



**Melissa Kellner**  
FNSB Project Manager

**Shelly Wade, AICP**  
Contractor Project Manager,  
Planning, Facilitation, Public Involvement Lead

**Shanna Zuspan, AICP**  
Housing Expert, Research & Analysis Lead

**Michelle Humphrey**  
Census Expert, Research & Analysis

**Aubrey Wieber**  
Project Support

**Molly Mylius**  
Public Involvement Support,  
Research & Analysis, Document Production

**Inger Deede**  
Graphic Design

**Jon Papendieck**  
Web Design

**Patrick Cotter, AICP**  
Public Safety and Mapping Lead, Infrastructure, Environment, Transportation Advisor

**Teresa Whitney**  
GIS Analyst

*Dena'inaq etnen'aaq' gheshtnu  
ch'q'u yeshdu.*

*We live and work on the land of the  
Dena'ina.*

Translation by J. Isaak and S. Shaginoff-Stuart



**Prime/Lead Contractor**



**Subcontractor**

# Project Purpose

Create a replacement document for Vision Fairbanks:

**Provide guidance and direction  
without being overly precise**



**Improve navigability and  
access to businesses**

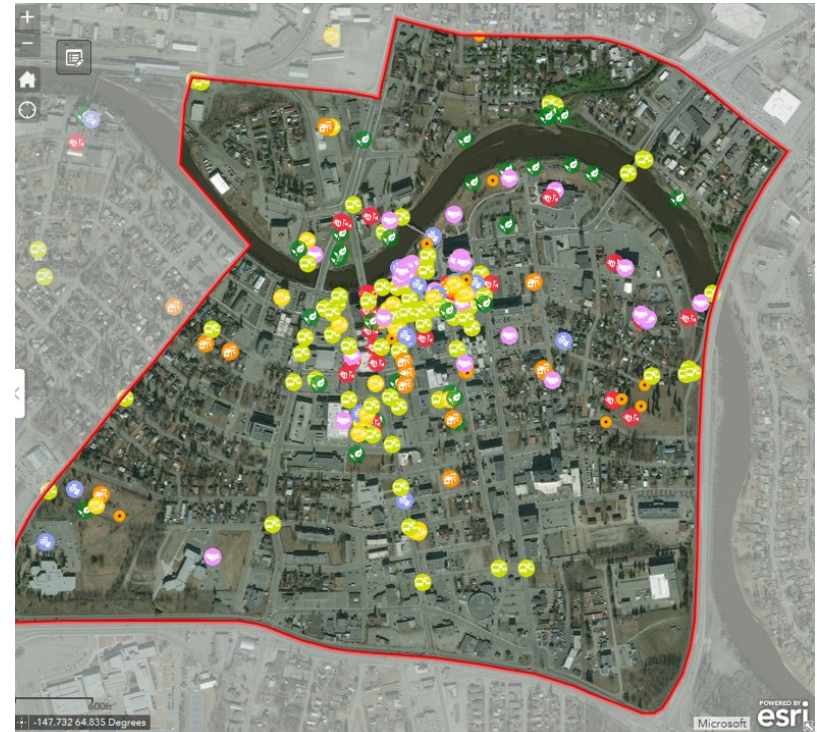


**Create a more livable  
downtown with a thriving  
business community**

# Project Geography

## **Downtown Fairbanks** *from 2017-2018 interactive comment map*

<https://fnsb.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=19af0c3c1b37481baf3b1f475ac9ec22>



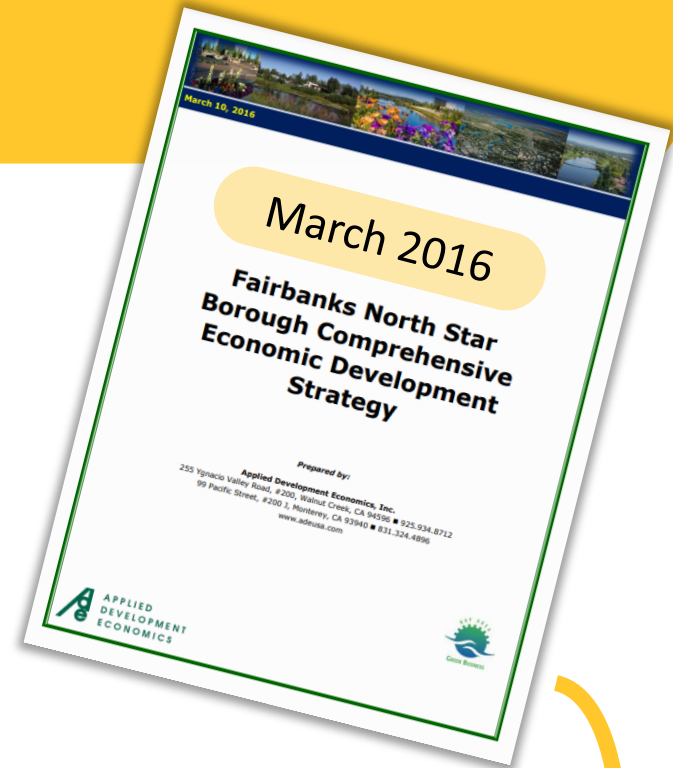




# **A Stronger, More Resilient Economy: *An Update to the FNSB Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy***

# Project Purpose

To develop an updated Five-Year FNSB Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).



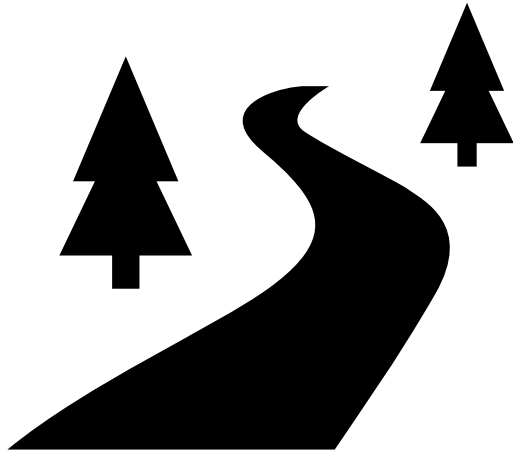
CEDS must go through a robust update every five years, with shorter, less intensive updates annually.





# CEDS Purpose

A CEDS is a locally-based, regionally-driven economic development planning document that guides local government and community action.



It serves as a road map to economy resilience and prosperity.

# What does a CEDS do?

- Brings the private and public sector together to develop a regional strategy and action plan.
- Serves as a road map to economic resilience and prosperity.
- Identifies projects and makes recommendations to:

Secure and support businesses

Create more and better paying jobs

Improve quality of life

Increase resilience to changes, threats

# Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

## Recently Completed Activities

- Round table conversations with:
  - May 26<sup>th</sup>: Mining representatives
  - June 18<sup>th</sup>: Energy representatives
  - June 22<sup>nd</sup>: Agriculture representatives
- Economic Development Commissioner interviews also underway
- July 13<sup>th</sup>: Presentation at the Chamber's General Membership Luncheon
- July 24<sup>th</sup>: Booth at Golden Days
- July 30<sup>th</sup> – August 8<sup>th</sup>: State Fair (*part of joint project booth highlighting various FNSB projects underway*)
- Additional roundtable and sector-specific conversations



# Future CEDS Public Involvement Strategies

*What | Why | When*



**Community Open Houses**  
(September 2021)



**Economic Summit**  
(early 2022)



**Work Sessions**  
(Economic Development,  
Planning Commissions)

A **2-to-3-day event** bringing together regional and sector-specific leaders for focused conversations on priorities

# Project Schedule – PI & CEDS Components

	2021									2022						
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	→
<b>Project Website</b>																
<b>Stakeholder Interviews</b>																
<b>Interactive Discussions</b>																
<b>Community Events</b>																
<b>Community Discussions</b>																
<b>Economic Summit</b>																
<b>E-Newsletters</b>																
<b>Social Media</b>																
<b>Public Notices, News &amp; Radio</b>																
<b>Key Phases</b>	<i>Project Kickoff</i>		<i>Research &amp; Events</i>		<i>Community Discussions</i>		<i>Draft Vision &amp; Goals</i>		<i>Economic Summit</i>		<i>Public Review Draft</i>			<i>Final CEDS</i>		→

Adoption



# Learn More on Our Website



## 2021 Fairbanks North Star Borough Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update

[PURPOSE](#)   [WHAT IS INCLUDED?](#)   [TOPICS](#)   [PROJECT TEAM](#)   [GET INVOLVED](#)   [SCHEDULE](#)   [RESOURCES](#)   [CONTACT US](#)

*A Stronger, More Resilient Economy.*

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

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

SAFER. BETTER CONNECTED.

*2021 Fairbanks North Star Borough*

# COMPREHENSIVE ROADS PLAN



[PURPOSE](#)

[ABOUT THE PLAN](#)

[1991 PLAN REVIEW](#)

[PROJECT TEAM](#)

[GET INVOLVED](#)

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# Survey

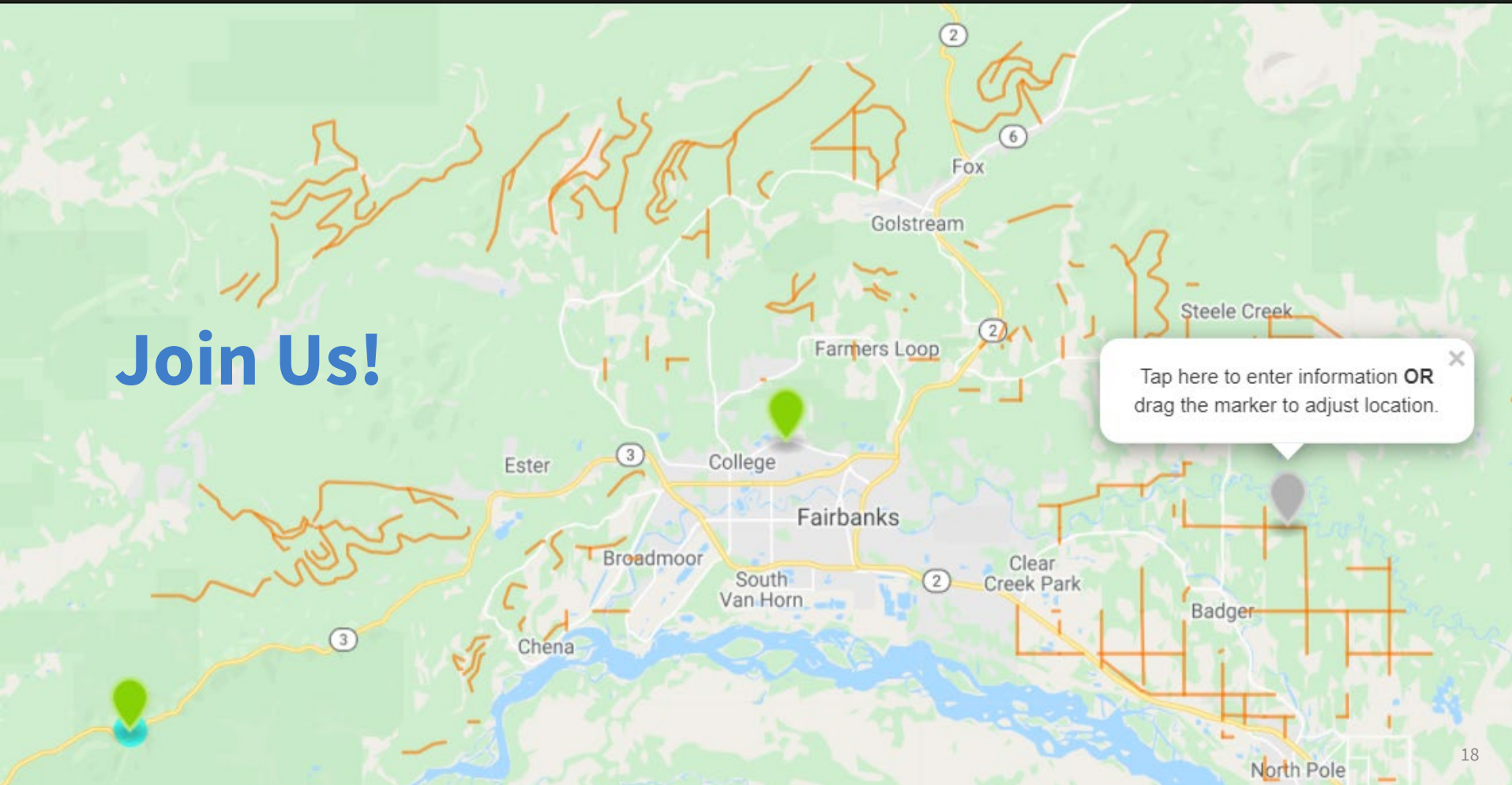
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FNSBRoadsPlan>



# Comment Map LIVE DEMO: [www.mapfeeder.net/comment/fnsb](http://www.mapfeeder.net/comment/fnsb)

## Fairbanks North Star Borough Comprehensive Roads Plan Comment Map

Join Us!





# Where We've Been

# Downtown Plan Working Group

**THANK YOU** – *Since the process was initiated in 2018, the Working Group:*

- **Met** approximately **19 times**.
- Contributed substantially to:
  - **A Downtown Fairbanks vision statement.**
  - **Nearly complete draft chapters** of the plan: **land use, transportation and parking** – goals, strategies drafted, revised and approved by Working Group and Community Planning Staff.
  - **Early draft** of **housing** chapter.
- Assisted with and participated in **community outreach** – surveys, meetings and other activities.

# Downtown Plan Vision Statement

## **Fairbanks values a downtown that...**

- 1) ... is a vibrant, year-round destination for social and cultural activities and entertainment;
- 2) ... provides a safe, welcoming and accessible environment;
- 3) ... supports economic growth and investment;
- 4) ... embraces its long history and diverse cultures;
- 5) ... provides a variety of housing options;
- 6) ... celebrates the Chena River as a focal point of the community.

## **Downtown Plan Working Group Members**

- Sabrina Binkley
- Jerry Cleworth
- Jackson Fox
- Deb Hickok
- John Jackovich

- Chris Miller
- Brenda Riley
- Doug Sims
- Sue Sprinkle
- Buki Wright

# Prior Work by FNSB Community Planning Department

## Community Outreach

- **September 2018 Kickoff** – over 546 map-based combined comments and 200 others from community members
- **Online survey** – 889 responses and 2,435 comments
- **Interactive online map** which received 266 comments
- Public input on the project via **Facebook** and a **project website**
- **Many other outreach activities** – UAF, high school social studies classes, monthly street fair and other downtown locations

# Prior Work by Community Planning Department

## Emerging Themes from Earlier Community Outreach

### Housing

- Desire for more rental apartments, condos for sale and affordable housing; mixed use; housing over offices/retail

### Commerce

- Specific business recommendations: grocery store

### Transportation & Parking

- Parking is not in the right locations
- More on-street parking, public surface lot parking is needed
- Bike and pedestrian amenities are good but could be better

### Natural Environment

- Riverbank restoration, enhancement and maintenance

### Culture

- Love the festivals and special events
- More restaurants, bars and entertainment options are needed

# Prior Work by Agnew::Beck

## Between May 2020 and February 2021:

1. Completed a **data analysis – “benchmarking”** – to evaluate downtown Fairbanks to comparable communities.
2. Interviewed **downtown business owners**.
3. Interviewed **Downtown Working Group** members.



# Benchmarking

- Downtowns are often the oldest part of a city and **in need of reinvestment.**
- To better understand key trends in Fairbanks, we **compared the downtown to thriving downtowns** in other cities.
- The comparable communities used are of **similar size and have inclement winters.**

# Key Factors We Analyzed

- Population by Age and Group
- Race/Ethnicity
- Household Size and Characteristics
- Household Income
- Gross Rent
- Vehicle Ownership
- Owner and Renter Occupancy
- Year Structure Built
- Units in Structure
- Number of Bedrooms
- Occupied Units

# Household Size and Characteristics

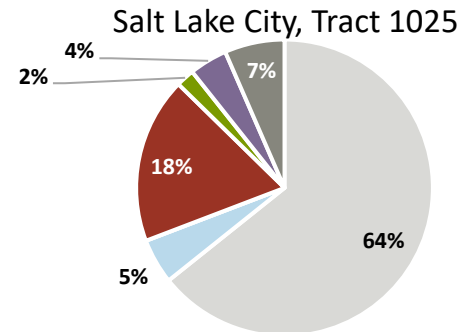
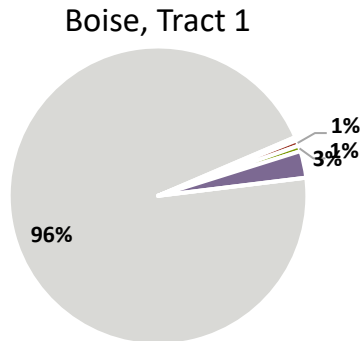
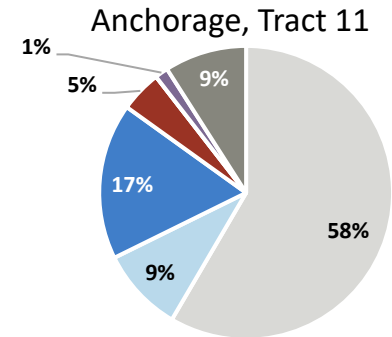
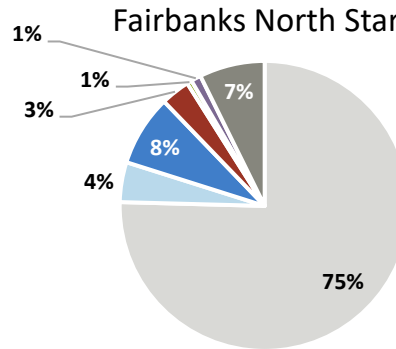
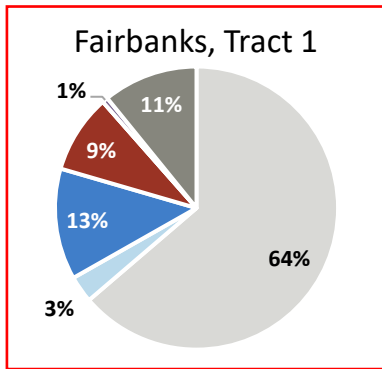
**Downtown Fairbanks has a higher share of households with one or more person 60 years or older**

Household Characteristics	Fairbanks, Tract 1	Fairbanks North Star Borough	Anchorage, Tract 11	Boise, Tract 1	Salt Lake City, Tract 1025
Total households	725	36,188	394	2,420	2,290
Average household size	1.48	2.62	1.49	1.5	1.62
Households with one or more people under 18 years	12.6%	34.2%	6.3%	10.2%	11.8%
Households with one or more people 60 years and over	41.7%	29.3%	31.2%	25.2%	16.3%
Householder living alone	73.7%	25.2%	61.9%	70.5%	60.2%

Source: 2019 ACS 5-Year Survey

# Race/Ethnicity

## Downtown Fairbanks is more diverse than FNSB as a whole

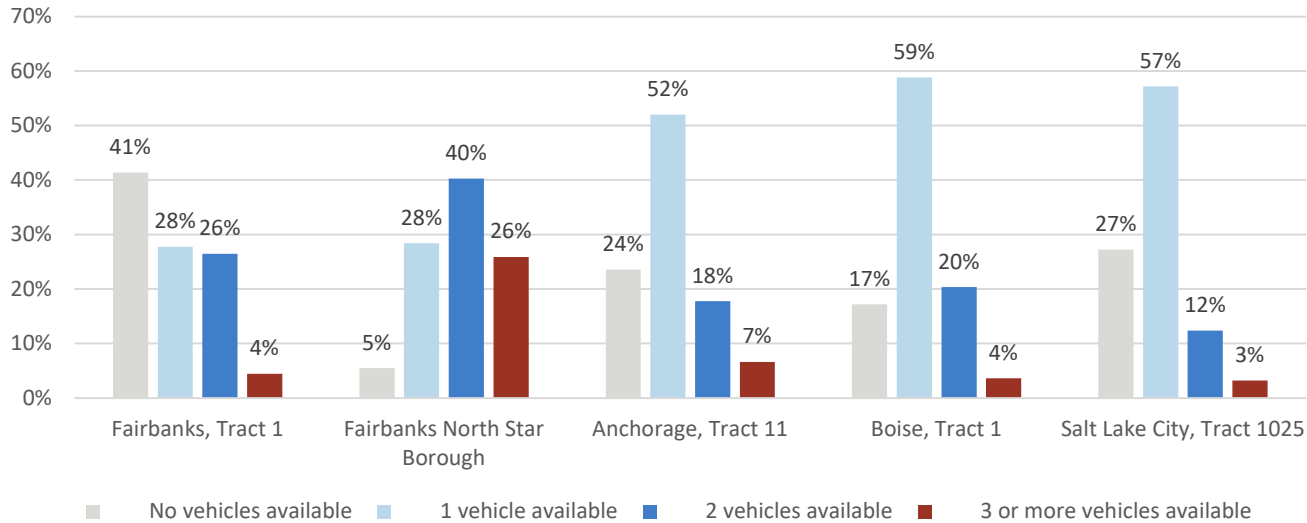


- White alone
- American Indian and Alaska Native alone
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone
- Two or more races

- Black or African American alone
- Asian alone
- Some other race alone

# Vehicle Ownership

**Downtown Fairbanks has the highest percentage of households without a vehicle**

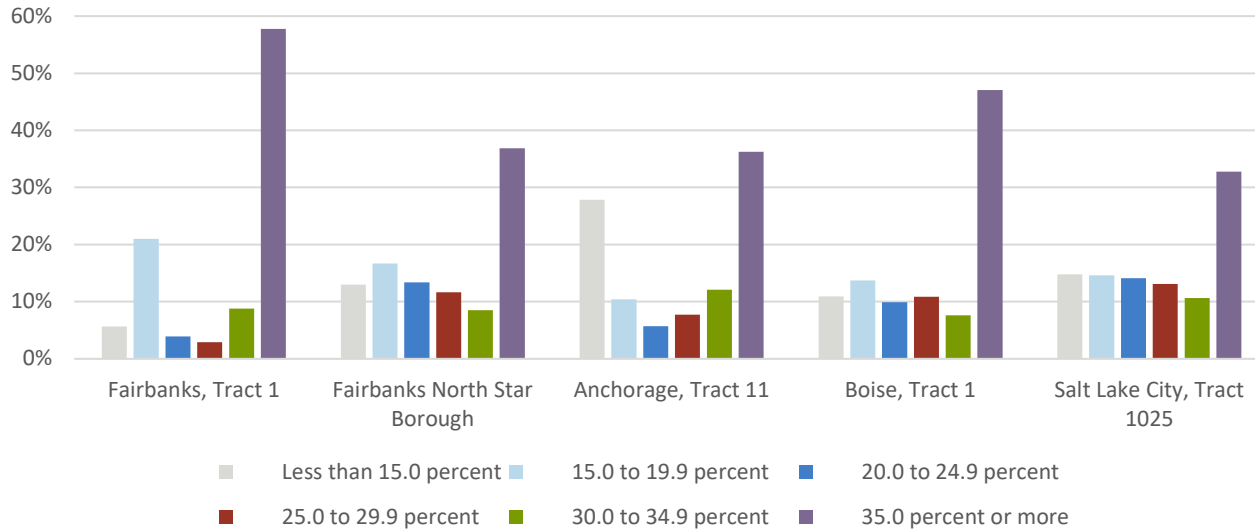


	Fairbanks, Tract 1	Fairbanks North Star Borough	Anchorage, Tract 11	Boise, Tract 1	Salt Lake City, Tract 1025
<b>Vehicles Available</b>					
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	725	36188	394	2420	2290
<b>No vehicles available</b>	300	1978	93	416	624
<b>1 vehicle available</b>	201	10277	205	1424	1309
<b>2 vehicles available</b>	192	14571	70	492	283
<b>3 or more vehicles available</b>	32	9362	26	88	74

Source: 2019 ACS 5-Year Survey

# Gross Rent as a Percent of Household Income

## Over half of rental housing in downtown Fairbanks is cost burdened



Gross Rent as a % of Household Income	Fairbanks, Tract 1	Fairbanks North Star Borough	Anchorage, Tract 11	Boise, Tract 1	Salt Lake City, Tract 1025
Occupied units paying rent	514	13,920	298	1,899	1,916
Less than 15.0 percent	29	1,808	83	207	283
15.0 to 19.9 percent	108	2,321	31	260	280
20.0 to 24.9 percent	20	1,863	17	188	270
25.0 to 29.9 percent	15	1,617	23	206	251
30.0 to 34.9 percent	45	1,183	36	144	204
35.0 percent or more	297	5,128	108	894	628
Not computed	10	946	5	86	91

# Downtown Business Owner Interviews

**15 downtown business owners and managers were interviewed and offered specific recommendations to improve downtown.**



# Strengths

- City center
- Public spaces
- Walkability
- Representation
- Improvements
- Historic
- Camaraderie



# Strengths

*“We are happy with where things are at. **We like being downtown** and do not have any plans to move anytime soon.”*

*“Downtown Fairbanks is continually changing but doesn’t necessarily seem to grow. Almost like the little plant growing up through the concrete. **There is a tenacity that keeps it here.**”*

*“I really like the community; **we all look out for each other here.** There are lots of family-owned businesses. We support each other by patronizing each other’s shops, we know and look out for one another.”*



# Challenges

- Parking
- Navigation
- Policy
- Visitors
- Aesthetics
- Maintenance
- Non-Motorized Transportation
- Homelessness
- Public Restrooms
- Permitting

# Challenges

*“There have been some good improvements, but there is still a **lack of character downtown**. The roads are managed by a mix of state, city and FAST partners and there is **not one plan or organization working to make sure everything matches** and has the same theme.”*

*“Customers **can’t find a place to park** and when they do, they don’t know the rules, get a ticket and **proclaim they are never coming downtown again.**”*

*“I recognize space is a challenge – **the roads are small, the parking is limited, the sidewalks are narrow**. I do not want to eliminate any of that, so **it is really important to make sure designs are cohesive with clear signage**. Not just paint on the roadway that is covered much of the year.”*

# Business Owner Recommendations

- Increase **wayfinding to parking opportunities** through increased signage and possibly virtual tools.
- Consider how **proposed changes will impact the flow of traffic** in and out of the garages.
- **Recruit a grocery store** to open in the downtown area.
- **Demolish and/or rehabilitate vacant and dilapidated buildings.**
- Use the Downtown Association and the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce to **communicate with the business community.**



# Moving Forward to Finalization

# Working Group Recommendations

## Desired Downtown Plan

- The plan should be **simple**, offering broad guidelines and goals for downtown's future.
- The plan should offer a **clear purpose** and be constructed to directly achieve that purpose.
- Downtown Fairbanks includes a diverse mix of business owners, residents and other constituents. The plan should **reflect this diversity** and be **broadly appealing** to all stakeholders.
- The plan should include a **succinct, short executive summary** highlighting the key topics and plan goals.



# Project Work Plan

<i>What</i> Deliverable	<i>Why</i> Objective	<i>How</i> Method	<i>When</i> Draft Deadline FNSB Review Final Completion	<i>Who</i> Lead Support
Work Plan	Establish process, roles, key deliverables, and schedule	Build from proposal, RFP, and kickoff conversation	August 2, 2021 August 16, 2021 August 23, 2021	Shelly Molly, Aubrey
Project Website	Establish a place for sharing project information, draft products, and soliciting input	The website will be easily navigable, mobile-friendly and use the FNSB Branding & Style Guide	August 13, 2021 August 31, 2021 Ongoing	Jon, Shelly, Molly, Aubrey
Public Safety Heat Map	Identify high-incidence areas and recurring public safety events to inform strategies to make downtown safer	Compile public safety data and use ArcGIS's Kernel Density tool to create a heat map of incidents	October 15, 2021 October 29, 2021 November 5, 2021	Patrick Teresa
Public Safety Strategies	Create a set of goals, strategies and actions to improve public safety downtown	Analyze the data to identify patterns in location and crime type to identify causes of and solutions to crime	December 10, 2021 January 14, 2022 January 21, 2022	Patrick Teresa
Draft Remaining Plan Chapters	Build off the work already completed by the FNSB Community Planning Department to finish the Downtown Plan	Use relevant background, land use and public safety data to create a set of goals, strategies and action tasks for Economic Development, Housing and Quality of Life chapters	March 11, 2022 March 25, 2022 April 1, 2022	Shelly Molly, Shanna, Michelle, Aubrey
Review and Refine Staff-Created Chapters	Ensure the final public review draft is accurate, up-to-date and formatted consistently	Review and edit the staff-created draft plan chapters on land use, transportation and parking.	March 11, 2022 March 25, 2022 April 1, 2022	Shelly Molly, Shanna, Michelle, Aubrey
Outreach for Public Review Draft	Collect public and stakeholder input to create a final plan that reflects community wants and needs	Engage stakeholders, including in the downtown community and Downtown Working Group, through two community visits	April 1, 2022 June 4, 2022 June 18, 2022	Shelly, Molly, Aubrey
Develop Final Plan	Complete a comprehensive plan to guide development and policy in downtown Fairbanks	Integrate feedback from the public review period to develop a plan that fits community needs	June 30, 2022 July 15, 2022 July 22, 2022	Shelly Molly, Patrick, Aubrey
Support Adoption Process	Support FNSB staff through the Planning Commission and Assembly approval process	Prepare presentations and materials for public hearings, including travel to Fairbanks if necessary	Fall, 2022 TBD TBD	Shelly, Molly Patrick, Aubrey



# Task 1: Work Plan

**July – August 2021**

- Build from the project proposal and RFP to **establish a process, roles, key deliverables and a schedule** to guide the process.

# Task 2: Project Website

**August – ongoing**

- Build an **easily navigable, mobile-friendly website.**
- Create a place to **share project information, draft products, contact information and ways to provide input.**

# Task 3: Public Safety Heat Map

**October – November 2021**

- Use public safety data to create a **heat map of incidents** in the downtown area.
- Identify **areas of reoccurring public safety events** to inform strategies for a safer downtown.

# Task 4: Public Safety Strategies

**December 2021 – January 2022**

- **Prepare a written analysis of public safety concerns and issues.**
- **Create a list of goals, strategies and actions to improve public safety downtown.**

# Task 5: Draft Remaining Chapters

**March – April 2022**

- Prepare chapters that cover **economic development, housing and quality of life.**
- Survey larger multi-family apartment developments to **determine the share of seniors** living in each building.
- Further analyze the **connection between household income and vehicle ownership.**

# Task 6: Refine FNSB Chapters

**March – April 2022**

- **Review and edit the existing draft plan chapters on **land use, transportation and parking**.**
- **Compile the content into a **succinct public review draft**.**
- **Prepare a **short, graphic-oriented executive summary**.**

# Task 7: Outreach for Public Review Draft

**April – June 2022**

- **Initiate public outreach** of the draft Downtown Fairbanks Plan.
- **Facilitate a final meeting with the Downtown Working Group** to review the draft.
- **Host a community meeting** to share the draft plan.

# Task 8: Develop Final Plan

**June – July 2022**

- Hold a work session to **consider public and stakeholder feedback.**
- **Identify any necessary changes** to the draft plan.
- Produce a **visually clean and graphically interesting final plan.**



# Task 9: Support Adoption Process

**Fall 2022**

- **Provide Borough staff the support needed to shepherd the final plan through the adoption process.**

# Downtown Plan Working Group

## Roles

- **Work productively** with other Working Group members, project staff and partners, **even when there are differences of opinion.**
- Participate in **one virtual or in-person work session** to **review the draft plan** prior to public release.
- **Representing the plan** in the community/public conversations.

# FNSB Planning Commission

**There are 3 presentations planned for the Planning Commission.**

*The Planning Commission's role in the project is to:*

- Participate in project presentations and work sessions.
- Review draft materials and help make sure what is presented aligns and is consistent with FNSB policies and codes.
- Review the final Downtown Plan and support plan adoption.
- Support Downtown Plan implementation.
- Support public involvement efforts.

# Discussion

- What comments, questions, concerns do you have about what has happened, where we are today, what is planned?
- What elements/issues do you want to see addressed in the Downtown Plan?



# Next Steps & Wrap-Up



COMING SOON!

[www.DowntownFBX2040.com](http://www.DowntownFBX2040.com)

# Thank you!

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