

## DRAFT Econ Development Committee Objectives for the CEDS

(Discussion and prioritization will occur during Mid-Session Summit in CEDS workshop 2PM Thursday)

Objectives outside the sectors of focus:

### **Education Objective: Partner with University of Alaska Southeast and K-12 school districts to build career pathways and meet employer needs for a skilled workforce.**

Quality education and workforce training is critical to the development of a strong economy. Southeast Alaska has an insufficient pool of skilled employees with professional and technical degrees to support the business sector. Workforce development and support of career and technical education are included throughout this plan in the maritime, health care, mining, seafood, and timber sections. In addition to these efforts, support continued development of K-12 and post-secondary education opportunities and pathways in the region. Retain students in state after graduation. Develop short courses to update skills in partnership with UAS. Increase arts, cultural studies, and local language courses. Ensure UAS has certifications to meet local workforce needs. Create mentorships. Develop and retain top talent. Support scholarships and grants from municipalities for UAS.

### **Housing Objective: Support sustainable development of housing.**

Throughout Southeast Alaska there is a lack of affordability and choice in housing. Homes are aging and have mold and rot issues. Lack of housing and high housing costs is a deterrent to economic growth making it difficult to attract or retain employees. Increased access to housing - including to low- and moderate-income citizens (including support for down-payments) - creates more livable, more economically competitive, and more resilient communities. Southeast Conference supports the development of new housing stock, targeted housing for an aging population, and an increase in the diversity of housing choices in the region. This includes fair market housing options for homeownership and private market rental, subsidized rentals through rental assistance or vouchers, public housing, and housing for seniors, veterans, the homeless, and other special needs populations.

### **Disaster Relief and Planning Objective: Support Disaster Preparation and Relief Efforts**

After the devastating landslides in Haines in 2020, disaster preparation efforts should be a cornerstone of planning procedures going forward. Consider common natural disasters in the region and appropriate planning procedures to mitigate these events. Advocate for disaster relief resources and funding for areas affected by natural disasters. Support the development of a disaster relief task force in the wake of events. Protect the economic vitality of areas affected by natural disasters. Ensure the safety of the residents in Southeast communities through robust disaster alert systems.

### **Food Security Objective: Increase supply, demand and equitable access and distribution of local foods and regional food system opportunities.**

Acknowledge the inextricable connection between customary and traditional food access, long-term economic prosperity, stewardship of healthy lands and waters, and community

health and well-being. Acknowledgments to the original caretakers of these lands that created the balance and harmony of the ecosystems still intact today despite contemporary management systems. Respect the key role of local food harvesting practices for household food security for indigenous and non-indigenous peoples of Southeast Alaska. Involve appropriate tribal leadership and community perspectives in conversations and decisions around regional food security and food sovereignty. Implement policies that provide economic incentives for prioritizing and localizing the Southeast food system at the regional and community levels. Conduct comprehensive community food system assessments whose indicators are created by community leadership in order to clearly identify needs, resources, and priorities for bolstering local and regional food systems. The assessments include but are not limited to economic opportunities in local food production, processing, and equitable distribution of cultivated and traditional foods, food waste, recovery, and composting for local soil production. Build educational opportunities in schools and in communities for respectful wild food harvest skills learning based on shared values principles established by long-time Southeast Alaska harvesters. Provide regional and local opportunities for networking, education, and skill development related to local food production, processing, and entrepreneurship. Identify underutilized already-developed municipal lands be converted into urban farms, high tunnels, and greenhouses, and provide incentives for local farmers and composters. Invest in local and regional value-added food production and processing of local foods that also supports agritourism, and Alaska Native sea otter stewardship, management, and food security programs.

**Communications Objective: Improved access in Southeast Alaska.**

Broadband access fosters business development and expansion, provides options for telecommuting and microbusiness, and offers equal access to education opportunities across Southeast Alaska. Remote work accessibility has become increasingly utilized in the growing world economy – its importance highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prioritizing developing fiber, satellite, and other technologies as they become available to provide geographically diverse pathways granting remote internet access to become a more viable option for communities in Southeast Alaska. After the natural and unnatural disasters learned in 2020, the importance of communications and reliable multi-point-of-failure pathways are attractive to investors, businesses, and families looking to stay connected to the world, even through a network disrupting event. Equitable access to educational opportunities offers local populations to improve their education while remaining in their own communities in Southeast Alaska, marketing a greater return on investment in workforce education. By supporting expansion of high-speed internet and cellular network coverage, the region can continue be competitive, develop more robust commerce and ecommerce opportunities, support the economic development of smaller communities looking to expand or emerge into the local and global marketplaces, and support access to education.

**Arts Objective: Increase the recognition of Southeast Alaska’s thriving Northwest Coast arts economy.**

The arts have played a meaningful role in the economy of our region for thousands of years. The totems (history poles), canoes, masks, regalia, and architecture of Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian are as much a reflection of our area’s many cultures, ancestries, collective histories, and identities as they are works of art. It is this rich cultural identities and regional art heritages that sets Southeast Alaska art and artists apart from other art communities. Altogether artists, arts organizations, and audiences spend an estimate \$60 million annually in Southeast Alaska. In the Southeast Alaska Business Climate Survey, 49% of all business leaders said that arts in the region acts as a benefit or significantly benefits their businesses. Results from the Southeast Alaska 2020 SWOT Analysis found that cultural tourism in collaboration with Alaska Native entities is a top opportunity and strength. Expand opportunities for Alaska Native and Northwest Coast artists to perpetuate the ancient art practices of the Indigenous culture of the area. Cultural and heritage tourism strategies are being adopted by visitor industry sectors with support efforts by community arts organizations to make Southeast Alaska the Northwest Coast Native Arts Capital of the world. The Sealaska Heritage Institute’s Art’s Campus is expected to be completed in Fall 2021. Continue to build on this effort. Support Buy Alaska Native initiatives, the Alaska Native Arts Programs, Silver Hand Program, and Buy Alaska program.

**Research Objective: Attract science and research jobs to Southeast Alaska.**

Science and innovation create critical commerce that can contribute to the economic health of our region. Southeast Alaska has a robust array of research facilities relative to its population including the federal research labs (NOAA/NMFS, USFS RD) state labs (UAF SFOS, UAS, ADFG) and nonprofit/private labs. Bring more fisheries science and management jobs to the region. Move the NOAA “Alaska Fisheries Science Center” jobs from Seattle to Alaska. Bring the UAF fisheries jobs to Southeast Alaska.

**Cultural Wellness Objective: Support the development of activities and infrastructure that promotes cultural wellness and multicultural wellness**

Support the creation, expansion and collaboration of cultural programs and developments that elevate indigenous communities as leaders in the Indigenous and Cultural Heritage Tourism Industry of Alaska. Support efforts to construct infrastructures that will highlight and promote Southeast Alaska’s many indigenous cultures, which also provides opportunities for education, economic development, social services, and cultural/multi-cultural gatherings. Support the efforts to expand cultural growth and wellness and support the implementation of activities and community involvement that promotes cultural healing, education and understanding, including language programs. Support economic efforts to elevate indigenous communities and encourage all businesses to implement Southeast Traditional Tribal Values as the standard of business excellence of the region, and support Sealaska Heritage Institute, and all other ANCSA established foundations in the region, in carrying out their mission and goals for cultural preservation. Support the acknowledgements and activities that identify all landscapes and waterways in Alaska are first and foremost the homelands and ancestral homelands to the many vibrant and living cultures throughout every area and community, and every visited place

in Alaska. Note: Southeast Traditional Tribal Values Our Way of Life includes the following: Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of our Ancestors; Respect for Self, Elders and Others; Respect for Nature and Property; Patience; Pride in Family, Clan and Tradition is found in Love, Loyalty and Generosity; Be Strong in Mind, Body and Spirit; Humor; Hold Each Other Up; Listen Well and with Respect; Speak with Care; We are Stewards of the Air, Land and Sea; Reverence for Our Creator; Live in Peace and Harmony; and Be Strong and Have Courage.

#### **Child Care Objective: Increase Child Care Capacity in Southeast Alaska**

Studies show conclusively that high quality early childhood education provides a significant return on investment for communities. In Southeast Alaska there is an inadequate supply of affordable, high quality preschool and childcare. Work across the region to expand childcare capacity. Policies to solve the dual problem of low childcare worker pay and issues of access and affordability to high-quality care, should be considered at all levels of government, including the following: Long-term dedicated funding for childcare worker wage subsidies and job-based benefits should be included in all future budgets. Demographics show childcare workers to be paid on average 40% less in median income than other workers. As with any other industry or occupation, paying living wages and providing necessary benefits is essential to attract and retain the best workers. Possible solutions should be at the scale of the problem and include strategies such as income-based subsidies so parents pay no more than 10% of income on childcare costs; or the public provision of high-quality childcare for children ages birth-5 years.

#### **Solid Waste Objective: Support Regional Solid Waste Management Solutions**

In the early 2000s incinerators closed and landfills reached capacity across the region. Many communities began to ship municipal solid waste by barge to landfills in Washington. Recently, concerns over fire risks have threatened the viability of shipping of solid waste to the lower-48. This has led to the development of mitigation strategies: 1 ) Develop best practices solutions for baling and compacting solid waste for shipping waste. 2) Increase utilization of regional recycling and composting programs and increase use of commercial burn units. 3) Communicate the importance of waste sorting to citizens in communities who ship their waste. 4) Procure equipment to manage increasing amounts of trash tires. 5) Create partnerships to share equipment, such as balers and shredders, across communities in the region.

#### **Marketing Objective: Market Southeast Alaska as a region for product development.**

Developing marketing material to market Southeast Alaska as a whole. Attract residents to the region as an incredible place to live and work; promote our regionally manufactured local products (art, seafood, beer, wood, ships, handicrafts, etc.); promote our region as a visitor destination; and promote our culture and history. Work to maintain Southeast Alaska's competitive edge by working with local, statewide, and Tribal leadership to create coordinated marketing campaigns.

**Military Objective: Support Coast Guard and military operations and new vessel homeporting opportunities**

Develop regional strategies to maintain and grow the Coast Guard presence in the region. Southeast Alaska is a strategic location for military facilities and training. Ketchikan’s Back Island currently hosts a Navy sonar testing facility providing an opportunity to attract additional military missions and long-term presence. Work to position Southeast to compete for new and expanded military operations. Work to homeport new Coast Guard and Navy vessels in the region. Utilize the Ketchikan Shipyard for military vessels maintenance needs. Identify public infrastructure needs and recommend opportunities for local, regional, and state partnerships that lead to the retention and expansion of military installations and missions.

**Telework Objective: Promoting the Remote Workforce in Southeast Alaska**

Remote work is going to be seen as a much more viable option after the pandemic. In order to capture this market and its economic benefits, Southeast Alaska should not only welcome remote workers, but develop programs, research opportunities, and foster environments where they will thrive.

**PFAS Objective: Address the Emerging PFAS Issue**

Concentrations of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) have been found in the groundwater in Southeast Alaska communities around airports, such as Gustavus and Yakutat. A firefighting foam containing PFAS required by the FAA until recently was used during practice drills at state-owned airports. PFAS are a group of man-made chemicals that are very persistent in the environment and in the human body – meaning they don’t break down and they can accumulate over time. There is evidence that exposure to PFAS can lead to adverse human health effects. Assess options for long-term solution to provide clean drinking water to Southeast Alaska communities with PFAS contamination.

**Increase Light Manufacturing Production Efforts in Southeast Alaska and Support Domestic and International Trade**

Golden ring of value-added. Encourage people to do manufacturing in region. Identify what is happening out of state.