

To: Lisa Von Bargaen  
From: Lamar Cotten, EDC Consultant Staff  
Re: Valdez EDC-2016 Report

Per your request, please find a summary of key 2016 EDC tasks and projects. Please a note: Some of issues have been on-going since the inception of the EDC will continue to be on its agenda in the future.

### Background

1. EDC Charter Scope calls for the accomplishment of Three Project Goals. They are:

A. Development of Economic Diversification Strategy. EDC commission developed eight broad Initiatives. (*See Valdez Economic Vision and Initiatives-Attached*). They include:

- a. Promote Housing affordability and availability;
- b. Enhance Senior and Developmental Disability Services and Opportunities;
- c. Downtown Beautification and Redevelopment;
- d. Improve Marine-Related Facilities and Industries;
- e. Link and Expand College Programs to Existing and New Industries;
- f. Reduce Energy Cost and Increase Access to Power;
- g. Recreation and Tourism; and
- h. Increase Arctic and Water related Training Programs.

This document serves as a platform for issues to be identified and analyzed by the EDC as possible approaches to economic diversification. It's a working draft document which over time will include new ideas and discard others.

- B. Develop strategy method of implementation (organization structure). EDC conducted six focus groups with approximately 20 local business owners concerning organization structure and overview as well as review of 4-5 other community efforts to address this.
  - C. Develop transition plan from interim measures to strategy implementation. EDC evaluated the options of a private sector or city employee. It recommended staff would be a local full-time city employee.
2. Oversee and manage three milestone studies related to economic diversification. They included:
- A. Year Round Mountain Recreation Site Feasibility Study. EDC developed a RFP for the study. Six respondents submitted proposals. A team of six reviewers met and recommended SEGroup/McDowell to complete the study. The study was completed late last year.
  - B. Socio-Economic Baseline Indicator Data and On-Line Business Survey. EDC developed a RFP for the study. Seven respondents provided proposals. A teams of five reviewers met and recommended Sheinberg & Assoc. The project was in large part completed in 2015. The consultant completed an update for 206 and the findings were presented at the first Valdez Business Luncheon. A number of baseline indicators will be integrated into future similar work for tracking purposes.
  - C. Local Visitors Statistics Data Collection. EDC developed a RFP for the study. Six firms provided proposals. A team of five reviewers met and recommended McDowell. This first ever year around visitors analysis was completed late last year. A

number of baseline indicators will be integrated into future similar work for tracking purposes.

Follow Through Efforts on Valdez Economic Vision and Initiatives.

- A. Overall Housing Needs. Attended housing conference and met with various Housing Funders and developers including, state, federal, non-profit. Worked with City staff to advance draft RFP for city housing needs study. Met with private developers on possible future projects. Reviewed and analyzed housing needs for the special needs community.
- B. Downtown Beautification and Redevelopment. Conducted a joint meeting with the Mayor's Beautification Taskforce and general public on zoning and enforcement issues. Such issues were advance to the city.
- C. Improve Marine-Related Facilities and Industries. EDC held join meeting with P&H Commission on marine support industries and in turn local education training opportunities. EDC staff followed-up with a series of meetings with CIP/Harbor staff on possible marine support industry needs study. The Commission has met with representatives from Edison Chouest regarding possible partnerships, including marine repair and shipyard facilities. City staff continues to work this item with Edison Chouest.
- D. Link and Expand College Programs to existing and new industries. We have had a series of meeting with PWS College. To date no formal action has been taken with the exception of possible use of PWS College campus for the UAA-SBA business classes.
- E. Reduce Energy Cost and Increase Access to power. To date we have put on hold work on this task.
- F. Recreation/Tourism. EDC investigated four different Alaska community approaches to Branding. Provided city staff a draft

RFP based on the successful efforts by the City of Petersburg. Worked with tour operators and select local tourism business owners via focus groups and surveys on quality of service challenges and solution options. Worked with select business owners on findings. Held public meetings and business workshop on tourism and quality of life opportunities linked to the use of the American Disability Act (ADA).

G. Increase Arctic and water related Training Program. Presently, EDC has put on hold any efforts on this matter. However, the Commission will monitor new federal policies linked to Arctic on and off-shore drilling.

#### Other EDC Projects

1. Business Luncheon. EDC has established a monthly business luncheon with guest speakers. To date presenters have included.
  - a. Barbara Sheinburg-Socio-Economic Baseline Indicators Data Collection and On-line business survey.
  - b. Dennis Ragsdale and Staff-City CIP update
  - c. Doug Toelle-Fairbanks ADA Advocate
  - d. Julie Nolen-UAA-SBA
  - e. Claire Humber-SE Group-Year Around Recreation Site Feasibility Study

Luncheon attendance has been between 20-50 residents. EDC expects to continue program throughout 2017

2. Promotion of training for existing and new businesses. Both the SoA-Business Retention and Expansion Program and the UAA-SBA presenters provided an overview of their respective programs. EDC is strongly recommending Valdez contract with the UAA-SBA program.

3. The EDC has been working to develop a recommendation to Council regarding potential improvements to the procurement code improving “buy local” priorities. The Commission and staff will be working with the Procurement Committee to finalize some joint recommendations to the Council.