Municipal Clerk's Office
Amended and Approved
Date: December 17, 2019

Submitted by: Anchorage Assembly
Prepared by: Municipal Clerk's Office
For reading: December 17, 2019

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
AR No. 2019-436, As Amended

A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY ESTABLISHING AND ADOPTING THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY'S VISION AND GOALS FOR 2019-2021.

WHEREAS, in 2017, the Anchorage Assembly began exploring the need to define its vision; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, the Anchorage Assembly met at a series of three strategic visioning sessions to develop a cohesive vision and articulable goals for challenges facing the Municipality of Anchorage; and

WHEREAS, throughout 2019, the Anchorage Assembly Members and the Chair worked diligently to draft a strategic vision and goal document; and

NOW, THEREFORE, THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY ESTABLISHES AND ADOPTS THE ATTACHED ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY VISION AND GOALS FOR 2019-2021.

This resolution shall be effective immediately upon passage and approval by the Assembly.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this 17th day of December, 2019.

Chair

ATTEST:

Municipal Clerk

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

ASSEMBLY PRIORITIES

2019 - 2021

THE 2019 MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY MEMBERS: IN THE FRONT ROW, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, ARE SUZANNE LAFRANCE, CHRISTOPHER CONSTANT, AUSTIN QUINN-DAVIDSON, AND JOHN WEDDLETON. IN THE BACK ROW, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, ARE FORREST DUNBAR, PETE PETERSEN, KAMERON PEREZ-VERDIA, MEG ZALETEL, FRED DYSON, FELIX RIVERA, AND CRYSTAL KENNEDY.

Introduction

As the legislative branch of the Municipality of Anchorage, the Anchorage Assembly is charged with setting policy for the Municipality. One can see this as framing the box of policy parameters and priorities. The executive branch, the Mayor and the administration, fills in the box, many times in consultation with the Assembly. The following pages outline the Assembly's vision and goals for the big boxes of Homelessness, Quality of Life, Public Safety, and Economic Development.

For each one of these pillars, we outline a goal, give historical context, summarize a variety of strategic sessions held by the Assembly and the Foraker Group CEO Laurie Wolf as facilitator, enumerate key questions to explore, define our role, detail short and long-term goals, list community partners, and lastly, quantify how the Assembly will be accountable to the public.

The Assembly began exploring the need to better define our vision in 2017 with the efforts of Assembly Members Eric Croft and Fred Dyson. In 2019, under the guidance of Assembly Chair Felix Rivera, the Assembly hired Laurie Wolf to facilitate a series of three strategic visioning meetings to better define our goals for years 2019-2021.

As with any true strategic plan, this should be viewed as a "living document," subject to change and future expansion. Assembly Members should consider extrapolating parts of this priorities document to fit the needs of their own districts, as this document is meant to reflect the priorities for the entire Municipality, from Peters Creek to Portage.

As always, the Assembly appreciates any feedback you may have. You can find personal Assembly member contacts at www.muni.org or you can email all Assembly members at wwmas@muni.org.

Communications

Homelessness

Quality of Life

Public Safety

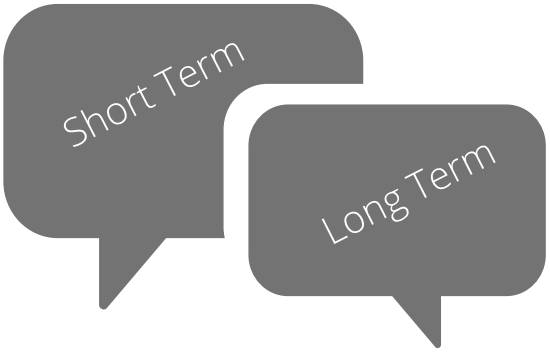
Economic Development

COMMUNICATIONS

In order to better inform the public about the work in each of these pillars, the Assembly must use all avenues of communication available to it. In 2013, the Assembly created a Citizens Task Force to assist in determining best practices for the Assembly process to make it as transparent and easy-to-follow as possible, including ways to make Assembly meetings approachable and intelligible for first timers. The following outlines goals the Assembly has to expand its communication outreach so as many people within the Municipality of Anchorage are as informed as possible about the going-ons of their government.

Short Term Goals

- Hire a full-time public engagement officer and/or consultant to do the following engagement activities:
  - Create and maintain a scrolling agenda for Assembly meetings to keep the public informed
  - Work on a newsletter format for Assembly members
  - Social media outreach
  - Fact sheets on various ordinances or topics as appropriate
  - Press releases on agendas, town halls, ordinances, etc.
- Create an auto reply to wwmas emails that contains individual district information contacts and refers to the member's information page.
- Circulate the "What's Ahead", a list of future Assembly meetings, as well as Assembly agendas via the Federation of Community Councils (FCC) and publish it via the Clerk's social media outreach.
- Utilize FCC email lists as a form of public communication and outreach



Long Term Goals

- Work on an overhaul of the website to focus on public ease of access to information, i.e. a public portal that provides residents a tool to select topics of interest and to receive notifications of meeting dates, agendas, minutes, and other records as they become available.
- Create an electronic method for providing public notice to community councils, applicants, and the public at large.

HOMELESSNESS

The goal of the Assembly is clear on this issue – homelessness will be a brief and one-time event for most who experience it. We must reduce homelessness and the impacts on our community while addressing the barriers that provide true solutions which end the cycle and provide for active engagement with the community at large.

Homelessness has been an intractable and ever-present problem in the Municipality of Anchorage for decades. In 2014, the Anchorage Assembly responded to this issue by creating the Ad Hoc Committee on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, whose goal was to explore mental health, substance misuse, shelter options, public safety, and broader community impacts of the crisis surrounding the increased use of illicit substances. This committee eventually evolved into what is today the Assembly Committee on Homelessness. Policy resolutions, public forums, ordinances, and budget amendments are just a few of the items the committee has tackled in the last several years. One such resolution passed by the Assembly was to ensure distribution of services for homelessness more equitably across the Municipality.

As part of the committee's duties, it has worked closely with the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness to provide input on Anchored Home, a 3-year update to the Community Plan to End Homelessness. The plan lays out 4 major pillars – 1) **prevention and diversion**, 2) **housing and support system**, 3) **public health and safety**, 4) **advocacy and funding** – for which the Municipality and Assembly are directly responsible for spearheading efforts in public health and safety. Other partners in the Anchored Home Plan include United Way, the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness, and the Homelessness Leadership Council.

From the beginning of our visioning, the Assembly unanimously chose homelessness and housing as one of the most pressing issues facing our Municipality today. When asked what members wanted to tackle, ideas ran the gamut, from day labor programs, to housing incentives and tax abatements, to increasing shelter options, to providing mental health and substance misuse treatment.

To move forward with this goal, the Assembly has lingering questions we must resolve:

- What are the barriers to transitioning those experiencing homelessness from illegal encampments to some form of housing and independent living?
- How will the Anchored Home partners be accountable to the community and engage the community in these efforts?
- What will be the relationship between the Municipality of Anchorage and the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness?
- What are the gaps in the continuum of care?
- What's working and what isn't?

The Assembly and the Committee on Homelessness' role in this endeavor is to convene, lead on public policy, and leverage local, state, and federal funding.

Short Term Goals

- Formal engagement with the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness by having an Assembly Member on their board.
- Better coordinate efforts to communicate and educate our community members concerned about homelessness.
- Find tangible ways community members can engage and assist the Municipality and the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness in our efforts.
- Secure funding for the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness to increase capacity to do its job.

Long Term Goals

- Compile and analyze housing data and craft policy to assist in filling housing gaps.
- Engage in a wholistic approach between all Anchored Home partners to data strategies.
- Identify solutions to mental health and substance misuse issues.
- Analyze and fund the creation of a day center.

HOMELESSNESS CONTINUED...

The Assembly will need to engage a variety of partners, including business, faith communities, service providers, Alaska Native communities, Community Councils, health providers, the State of Alaska, federal agencies, people experiencing homelessness, and others.

We must ensure the public is confident in our efforts and trusts the public process moving forward. Our accountability to the public is of utmost importance.

How we'll be accountable:

- Reduction in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness
- Reduction in the number of individuals who come back into homelessness
- Reduction in the number of encampments in our public spaces
- Change in public perception of homelessness
- Number of public forums to discuss homelessness

QUALITY OF LIFE

A roadmap has been laid out for us on improving quality of life, which informs our goal. The Assembly will work to increase funding for public and alternative transit options and ensure the Municipality is safe and accessible so all our residents can experience everything our city has to offer.

We all want the Municipality of Anchorage to be a great place to live, work, and play. That's why the Assembly passed our 2040 Land Use Plan to help provide policy direction to the Municipality's efforts on housing, land use, and development. Most recently, we've used the fiscal power of tax incentives and tax breaks to encourage development of necessary community infrastructure. All these efforts have led to a Municipality that is more multi-modal, transit friendly, and accessible to all our residents.

The Assembly also understands that our changing climate provides difficulties to our quality of life, for example, air quality during wildfires in the summer of 2019 affected thousands in Anchorage. On a positive note, our growing diversity and celebration of such diversity is a strength we must foster. That's why the Municipality of Anchorage has taken the lead on creating the Climate Action Plan and the Welcoming Anchorage initiative.

These efforts could not have been successful without the work of organizations dedicated to making the Municipality a destination city, including the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, Visit Anchorage, Anchorage Downtown Partnership, Anchorage Community Development Authority, Chugiak-Eagle River Chamber of Commerce, JBER, and other business and community organizations which have a stake to ensure people want to come and stay in our city.

The launch of the Live. Work. Play campaign in 2010 helped ground the community's vision of who we wanted to be as the Municipality of Anchorage. This campaign led to initiatives around creative placemaking, community safety, diversity in housing, an inclusive and vibrant economy, trails and transit, and a focus on workforce development.

Part of this work led to a survey conducted in 2015 so all parties involved could understand what people were looking for in the Municipality. The survey results showed that residents of the Municipality of Anchorage want to live in a place where educational opportunities are many, we are inclusive to all, employment opportunities are plentiful, crime rates are low, housing options are varied and eclectic, we are connected to each other, on the leading edge of technology, we have extensive access to trails, a diversified economy, a vibrant downtown, midtown, and University District, expanded artistic and cultural opportunities, entertainment is ongoing, dining options are plentiful, and high quality healthcare is available and affordable.

QUALITY OF LIFE CONTINUED...

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Much of the ideas discussed at the Assembly during our visioning mirrored these desires and centered around improving walkability, public transportation infrastructure, promoting an outdoor adventure economy, and ensuring housing supply meets the needs of our community.

To move forward on this goal, we must explore some lingering questions:

- How many people are leaving the Municipality?
- Why are people leaving?
- Is Anchorage affordable? Why or why not?
- Can residents find housing that fits their needs?
- Given all the numerous categories that pertain to quality of life, where are the gaps?

Unlike many of our other priority areas, the role of the Assembly is to convene, facilitate discussion, and most importantly to enact policy solutions. The comprehensive plan, land use and other plans, including work done by the organizations involved in the Live. Work. Play campaign inform and lead our efforts.

Short Term Goals

- Align and staff Municipal Boards and Commissions to focus on quality of life issues.
- Create overarching commission on quality of life which would provide guidance to Assembly and Municipality.
- Focus on community safety and health.

Long Term Goals

- Housing options and Variety increased.
- Increase public transit and multi-modal options to include South Anchorage and Eagle River.
- Change paradigm of how we build our infrastructure through updates in AMATS project scoring.
- Increase amenities identified as key factors in quality of life (parks, trails, art, etc).

As stated earlier, a host of organizations have taken the lead in the Municipality of Anchorage on these issues. They continue to do so and the Municipality should align its efforts to support this work. These partners include the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, Visit Anchorage, Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, Community Councils, Public Transportation Department, Parks and Recreation Department, the Anchorage Community Development Authority, Chugiak-Eagle River Chamber of Commerce, JBER, and others.

The Municipality of Anchorage plays a key factor in ensuring our quality of life and should be accountable to these measures.

How we'll be accountable:

- Is crime going down?
- Are more trails being developed?
- is public transit expanding?
- Are our public spaces being activated more often?
- Are people able to find the right type of housing for their needs?
- Are young families staying in the Municipality of Anchorage?

PUBLIC SAFETY

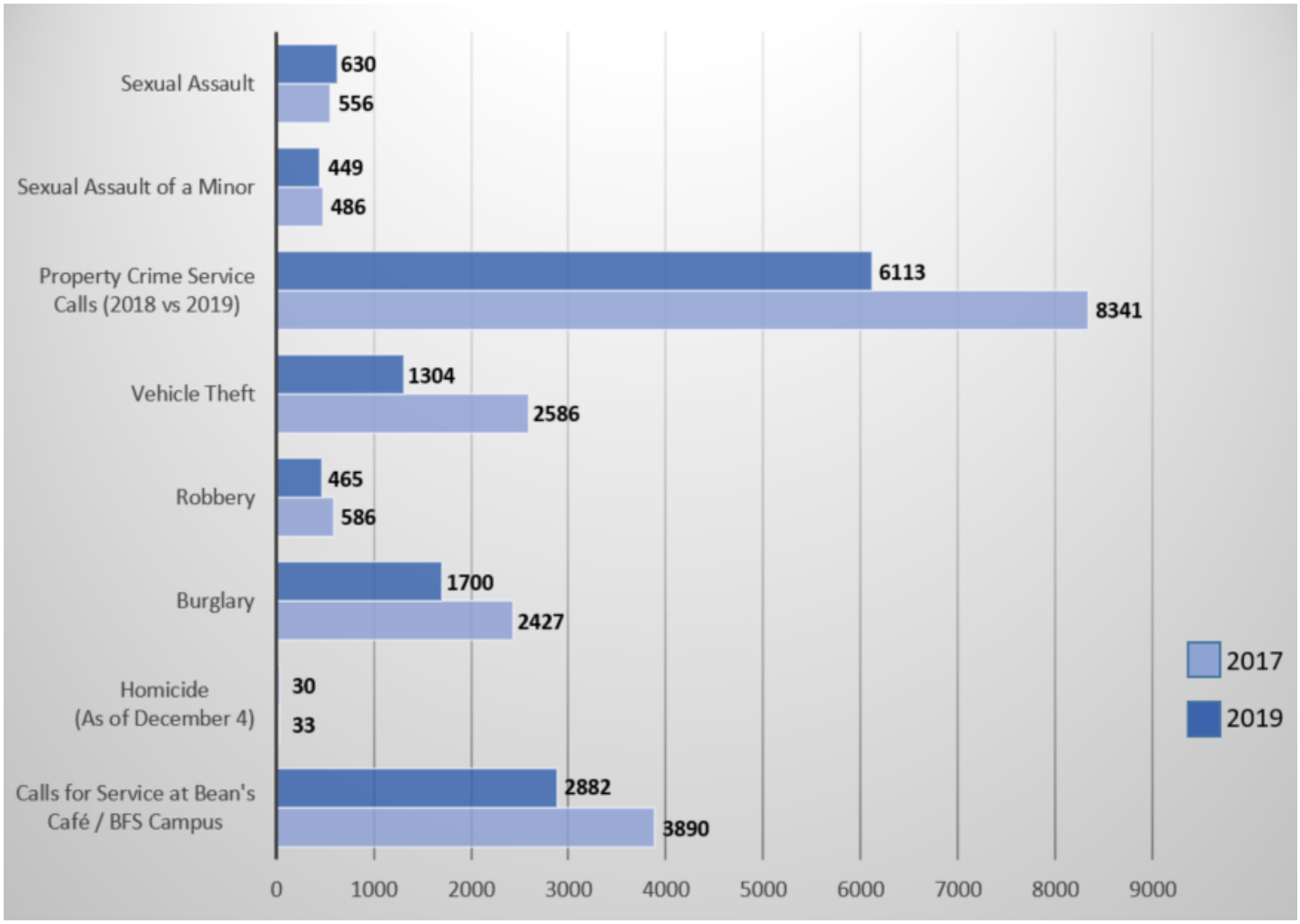
The Assembly has a clear mission when it comes to the safety of the residents in the Municipality. We must continue to support our first responders and public health professionals while addressing the gaps in our non-sworn staff and treatment programs for substance misuse and mental health, while working to reduce violent crimes in our city.

Public Safety is a top priority for the Assembly. Unfortunately, much of our current predicaments stem from a decrease in the police force. The Assembly has continued to support funding police and fire academies, which has led to the hiring of over 100 police officers and 17 firefighters. Ordinance and Resolutions have been passed to close loopholes and tighten laws.

But in the end, what matters most is whether people feel safe or not. What we hear from many of our constituents is that they do not feel safe letting their children walk on our trails and play in our parks. To be fair to all the voices we hear, there is also a part of the public which feels safe in the Municipality, regardless of what they see on social media and hear on the news.

CRIME BY NUMBERS

2017 vs 2019 totals through October unless otherwise specified:



PUBLIC SAFETY CONTINUED...

This negative perception of public safety in the Municipality, and the knowledge that we have made significant progress in the last few years, led much of our discussion during the visioning. The Assembly spent significant time discussing the intersections between childhood trauma, road safety, traffic calming, the opioid crisis, and mental health. APD and AFD are one of many different Municipal Departments which work on these issues, as well as a multitude of non-profit partners in the community we work with.

Because of this complexity, the ideas suggested by the members varied from increased substance misuse and mental health treatment, to ensuring our road projects meet the complete streets standard, to funding work to support trauma-informed solutions to ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) among our youth, to the more traditional ideas like increasing both sworn and non-sworn staff.

To make progress on this goal, we must explore certain unknowns:

- What is the gap in our non-sworn staff?
- How many units of treatment are needed in the State of Alaska and the Municipality of Anchorage specifically?
- Are any specific crime patterns on the rise?
- Are any specific crime patterns on the decline?
- What role will the State of Alaska be playing in this work?
- What is the actual public perception of public safety?
- What prevention measures can we take to residents do not engage in crime?
- What role does the federal government play?

The Assembly and the Public Safety Committee's role in this issue is two-fold – to approve public policy solutions to the variety of issues which cause public safety concerns and to fund said solutions.

Short Term Goals

- Increase number dispatchers to allow for shorter 911 and 311 call times.
- Conduct public perception poll to better understand feelings on public safety.
- Explore gaps in prosecution and other non-sworn staff.

Long Term Goals

- Ensure consistent use and safety of our public spaces – because when we use our spaces, we drive out bad behavior.
- Fill remaining gaps in non-sworn staff.
- Continue to support police and fire academies to right-size our first responders.
- Consider solutions to mental health and substance misuse issues.

The Assembly will need to work with a variety of partners on these issues, including the State Department of Public Safety, APD, AFD, Municipal Prosecutor's Office, Anchorage Legislative Caucus, domestic violence and sexual assault organizations, behavioral health and substance misuse professionals, the Alaska Court System, Partners for Progress, UAA Justice Center, the Alaska Native Community, Anchorage Youth Court, FBI, the variety of federal partners, JBER, Community Councils, and others.

The Assembly can be accountable to the people through our reporting of metrics and data provided by our public safety and public health professionals.

How we'll be accountable:

- Reduction in violent crime
- Fewer preventable accidents
- Reduction in property crime
- More follow up on crime reports
- Shorter call time on 311 and 911
- Perception of public safety improves - people feel safer
- Reduction in pedestrian / bicyclist accidents

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Municipality plays a key role in the level of economic development in the Municipality of Anchorage. The Assembly will work to identify barriers, enact policies to foster an opportunity-rich and more equitable playing field, and encourage the growth of development and business creation.

When it comes to ways we can promote economic development, the Assembly has focused on construction and used the levers of tax incentives, tax breaks, and worked to fix perceived land use and building codes issues which hamper development. The Assembly has also worked to support initiatives around fair contracting, led policy discussions surrounding the Port of Alaska, and more. Outside of our efforts, the Municipality has also made our contracting processes more open and transparent to small businesses, with the Muncipality's Purchasing Department hosting trainings and open houses to engage the community and eliminate barriers to contracting with the Municipality.

The efforts of the Municipality are just a small part of the work being done by a variety of organizations to encourage growth in business, tourism, and construction. The Small Business Administration, Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, The Business Boutique, Visit Anchorage, the Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau, Building Owners and Managers Association, among many other groups have worked hard to ensure an economy that allows local, small businesses and entrepreneurs to thrive.

Since the 1980s, the economy of the Municipality has diversified extensively. We are now the largest economic sector in the state and our economic diversity has largely buffered us from the biggest impacts of state recessions in the past, fulfilling our role as a statewide hub. Our largest economic sectors include transportation, oil and gas, military, tourism, healthcare, among others.

Still, we have a while to go to change the perception that the Municipality of Anchorage isn't a place to build or invest in. The Anchorage Home Builders Association has played a key role in facilitating conversations with the Assembly on ways we can assist developers with some of the hurdles they face in code which drive up costs. The Anchorage Economic Development Corporation has dialogued with investors and helped guide the Municipalities work to ensure a thriving downtown, a key factor looked at when deciding to invest in our city.

The number of training programs and business mentorship groups have grown tremendously in recent years, a positive sign for our economy. Newer events like Accelerate: Alaska, a two-day interactive conference, focus on helping provide businesses the tools they need to grow. The Anchorage School District's recent policy move to increase opportunities in technical education programs provide an alternate pathway for youth to gain real-world skills, helping develop young entrepreneurs.

The Assembly discussion around economic development focused on expanding and broadening these opportunities, including a review of barriers for small businesses, creating incentives to foster a thriving economic climate, daylighting Fish Creek to provide for increased business opportunities, continuing our work to streamline Title 21, following the recommendations of the Bendon Adams report, solidifying our plans for the Port of Alaska, and finalizing the ML&P sale.

To continue work in this area, the Assembly should explore a few key questions:

- What are the current roadblocks in development?
- What are our conflicts with federal or state regulation?
- Are new businesses opening? How many businesses are closing? Why or why not?
- Are there enough opportunities for training and education to ensure our youth are prepared to enter and compete in the market after graduating high school/ trade school / college?
- What analytics are used to benchmark progress?

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED...

The Assembly role in this discussion is to convene and facilitate discussion among organizations already working in this area, as well as explore policy ideas and funding to encourage growth and ensure access for all to the opportunities available.

Short Term Goals

- Focus appropriate and limited website revamp resources on business and development frequently used sites.
- Explore barriers to economic well-being of small and large businesses.
- Make it easier to engage in dialogue between the community, business, and government.

Long Term Goals

- Convene discussions surrounding roadblocks to development and implement suggestions.
- Total revamp of website and move to e-services.

To be successful, the Assembly must engage with our partners, including the Small Business Administration, Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, The Business Boutique, Visit Anchorage, Anchorage Home Builders Association, Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, trade organizations, labor unions, Alaska General Contractors, Native Village of Eklutna, Alaska Railroad, Business Owners and Managers Association, Bankers Association, Chugiak-Eagle River Chamber of Commerce, JBER, Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, Community Councils, and others.

While the Municipality plays a key role in our economy along with other players, including the state and federal governments, the Assembly will be accountable to moving forward on our goals.

How we'll be accountable:

- Is it easier for businesses to interact with the Municipality?
- Are there more local businesses? And are they thriving?
- Are all segments of our community able to enjoy economic opportunities?