

IV. Resiliency

In recent years, the Kenai Peninsula economy has been challenged by a series of unanticipated shocks that ultimately impacted all households and employers in the region in some way. Of greatest magnitude naturally is the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020. The COVID recession likely led to more job losses and business closures than any prior economic downturn in the Peninsula's history. Yet, COVID-19 is only the most recent of multiple natural disasters to impact the region. In November 2018, a 7.1 magnitude earthquake hit Southcentral Alaska, including the Peninsula, causing uncounted millions in property damage around the state. In 2019, the Swan Lake Fire raged between Sterling and Cooper Landing from June through September, causing public health warnings, loss of private property, disrupting visitation, and forcing the closure of popular recreation sites.

Even without these natural disasters, the Kenai Peninsula was not immune to broader forces weakening the statewide economy. Two headwinds in particular have been the volatility of oil prices, and the unresolved budget deficit in state government finances. Together, these two forces caused a three-year statewide recession, from 2015 to 2018, that destroyed thousands of Kenai Peninsula jobs. The fact that the state (and regional) economies were somewhat weak at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic could potentially mean a slower economic recovery compared to other parts of the US.

Resiliency Threats

COVID-19. Much of this CEDS document has discussed the economic damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. On the Kenai Peninsula, the viral outbreak caused peak summer employment to fall by nine percent,¹⁰³ taxable sales by 12 percent,¹⁰⁴ and a massively diminished visitor season in 2020. As of May 2021, the Borough had reported nearly 4,500 cases of COVID-19, over 100 hospitalizations, and 22 deaths.¹⁰⁵ The rollout of vaccines in the spring of 2021 improved optimism about a return to normalcy. However, the cruise ship season in 2021 appeared to face formidable obstacles as of the writing of this document, as the ships were disallowed to enter Canadian waters.

The Pandemic Hit Most Industries

Employment change by industry from August 2019 to August 2020.

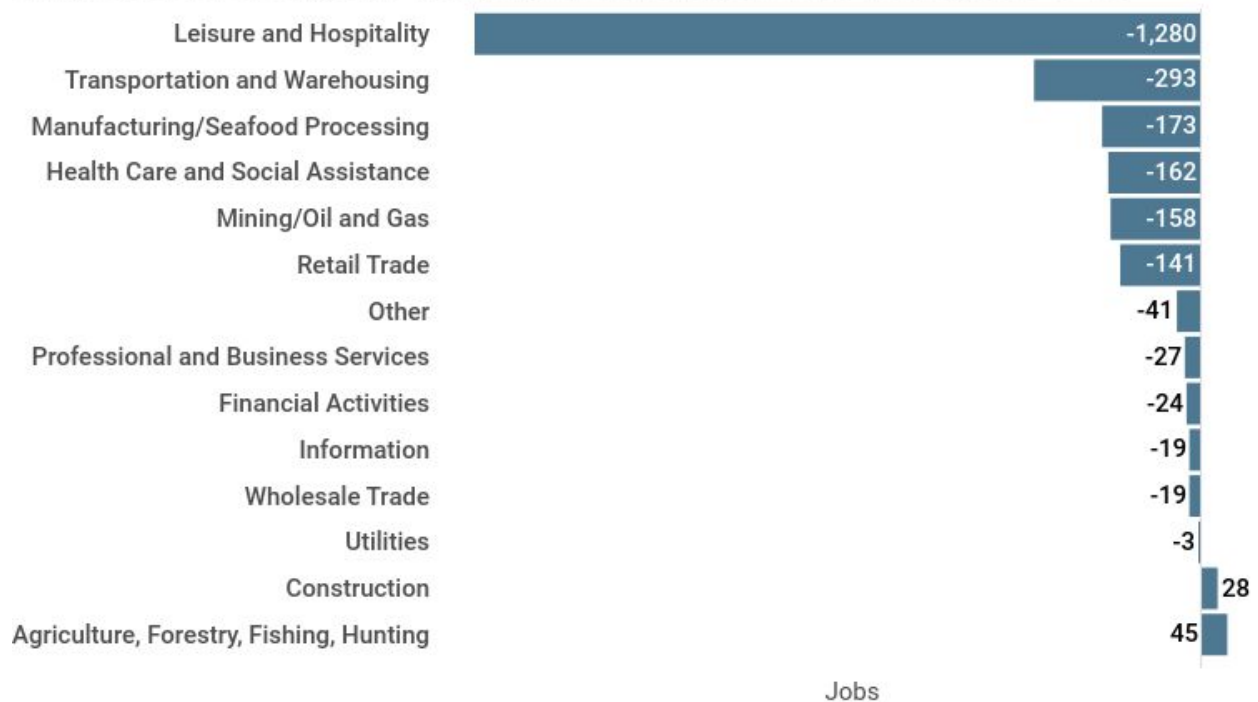
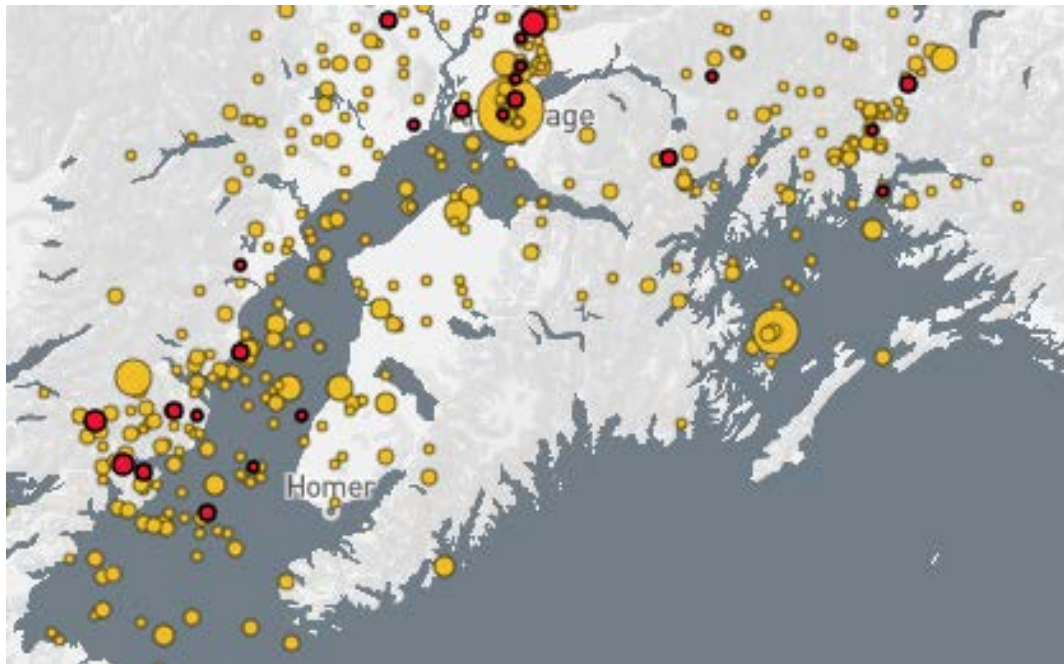


Figure 35: Employment change by sector from August 2019 to August 2020.
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, QCEW.

Earthquakes. Southcentral Alaska sits at the northern extreme of the Pacific “Ring of Fire” that circles the world’s largest ocean, causing seismic events from Indonesia to South America. The Kenai Peninsula therefore sees frequent earthquakes and periodic volcanic eruptions. Most earthquakes are small in magnitude and do not cause notable damage, but the 2018 earthquake was an important reminder of destructive potential. The Good Friday Earthquake of 1964 was the most devastating in the region’s recorded history, causing especially strong damage in Seward from the resulting tsunami.



*Figure 36: Seismic activity in the Kenai Peninsula between April 17 and May 3, 2021.
Source: Alaska Earthquake Center.*

Volcanoes. On the western side of Cook Inlet sits a chain of active volcanoes—Augustine Volcano, Mount Iliamna, Mount Redoubt, and Mount Spur. In the last two decades Augustine and Iliamna have erupted, triggering earthquakes and spewing ash thousands of feet into the air. The ash grounds flights and causes health hazards as it lingers in the air.

Wildfires. Much of the Kenai Peninsula's is covered with spruce, birch, and cottonwood forest. Forest fires have been a perpetual hazard in the region since its first inhabitation by humans, although most fires have beneficial ecosystem effects. Nonetheless, large scale fires near inhabited areas can bring economic damage. The Swan Lake Fire of 2019 is one recent example. Crews worked hard to minimize infrastructure and property damage, but highway shutdowns and closures of recreation sites likely harmed visitation and local spending. Future fires could threaten natural gas distribution, power lines, commercial property, homes, and lives. Spruce bark beetles contribute to fire risks by leaving dead standing spruce trees in their wake, which become tinder for the next burn.



*Figure 37: Remnants of the Swan Lake Fire, June 2019.
Source: AK Fire Info.*

Erosion and floods. These are constant factors effecting life and commercial activity at the water's edge. The Kenai River, a center for economic activity in much of the region, has been prone to periodic flooding and steady erosion. Oldtown Kenai, which sits on a bluff above the river near its mouth, has been in need of serious control measures to retain its viability. The Homer Spit, a key commercial and tourism area, has seen erosion from heavy surf during storms. Prolonged heavy rains have also caused flooding in Seward near the Resurrection River, and resulted in the washout of bridges.

Fisheries disasters. Salmon runs fluctuate according to natural cycles and environmental changes, often with implications for commercial, recreational, personal use, and subsistence fisheries. Poor returns of Kenai River king salmon, once a major draw for anglers, have weakened a once-thriving guide industry since about 2008. This means less spending by visitors on fishing gear, guide services, and lodging.¹⁰⁶ Halibut and sablefish from the Gulf of Alaska are federally-managed fisheries operated through quota systems. Reductions in allowable catch from year to year result in lost income for fishermen and processors, particularly in Seward and Homer. A potential long-term threat to fisheries is ocean acidification, caused by increased dissolution of carbon dioxide into seawater. Acidification could potentially harm the biomass of copepods, a key food source for other fish.

Oil and gas prices and supply. Like all of Alaska, the Kenai Peninsula economy is sensitive to changes in the price of oil. The 2015-2018 recession was caused primarily by depressed oil prices, which rippled through the economy as the oil companies reduced employment and spending on contractual support services. This impacted the Cook Inlet oil and gas fields as well as the North Slope (where some Kenai Peninsula residents work) and caused reductions in state spending. An additional complication for the region is the relatively low remaining known reserves of both oil and gas. Although the Cook Inlet Basin will likely produce oil and gas for decades, the gas supply is likely to be insufficient to meet in-state

demands after 2030. Declining production could mean declining employment, if not offset by new discoveries.

Resiliency Action Plan

Recognizing the very real danger posed by unexpected negative shocks, KPEDD has taken the lead in anticipating—and responding to—resiliency challenges. In cooperation with partner organizations, KPEDD lays out the following framework for resiliency.

Pre-Disaster Planning

Careful coordination and planning for potential disasters ahead of time can pay off when a negative event occurs. A pre-disaster recovery plan being spearheaded by KPEDD will describe key stakeholders, roles, actions, and responsibilities in the event of a natural disaster. The major stakeholders include KPB, municipal governments, tribes, chambers of commerce, industry associations, and others. As it has during COVID-19, KPEDD can be the primary coordinating role among these groups in promoting economic recovery. The pre-disaster recovery plan will also include a collection of resources and tools for business recovery, such as sources of funding.

Activating Information Networks

The flow of timely and accurate information between governments, business groups, and residents is essential during a disaster. KPEDD is utilizing a network of partner organizations, detailed web resources, access to media outlets, and a large business distribution list to maintain the flow of information. Maintaining close contact with federal funding agencies, the State Legislature, and state agencies is also essential. During a prolonged downturn, business surveys can relay vital information to decisionmakers about near-term needs for policy fixes and financial resources. KPEDD's frequent business surveys function as an early-warning indicator as well, flagging concerns that can lead to large-scale layoffs or closures, as well as to facilitate business retention and expansion (BRE) activities.

Ensuring Access to Capital

Disasters often cause businesses to experience sudden revenue shortfalls, often forcing them lay off workers, reduce hours, or close their operations entirely. KPEDD has operated a revolving loan fund for more than a decade, and is currently working to restructure the fund as a source of emergency capital to respond to resiliency shocks. In addition to its own capital sources, helping business access other financial resources will play a key role in future disasters, should they occur. In 2020, KPEDD executed a contract with the State of Alaska to promote the AK CARES business grant program, resulting in \$50 million being distributed to over 1,000 COVID-impacted businesses—proportionately more than any other region of the state. Other government capital programs like the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) were critical resources, but businesses often required the assistance of organizations like KPEDD and the Alaska Small Business Development Center. KPEDD will reprise its role as both a facilitator and provider of capital during future events.

Improve Broadband Access and Affordability

Broadband is critical infrastructure in today's global economy. The pandemic resulted in roughly 40 percent of Alaska workers being forced to work from home for extended periods during 2020 and 2021. The education system, from K-12 through college, also had to utilize videoconferencing services to function. For households without affordable, high-speed internet, remote education and work were not

feasible. In addition, many businesses also had to transition to selling their products or services online, such as restaurants using mobile apps for take-out and delivery. Although these pandemic conditions are not permanent, they made clear the central role broadband access plays in economic life. In the Kenai Peninsula, less than half of households have access to speeds of 100 MBPS, compared to almost 99 percent in Anchorage. Some smaller communities, such as Hope, lack access to speeds greater than 25 MBPS. To improve broadband access, KPEDD is committed to advocating for federal funds to build middle-mile and last-mile satellite and fiber infrastructure.

Streamlining Job Access

Job loss is one of the most feared outcomes from any sort of resiliency shock. Declining revenues cause employers to lay off workers, but when conditions improve, employers often struggle to find qualified workers. Both challenges have been apparent during the COVID recession. At the same time, workforce readiness is a persistent challenge for businesses, who are often forced to hire non-locals when faced with high seasonal demand. With all of these in mind, KPEDD launched the Kenai Peninsula Workforce website as an extensive resource hub for jobseekers, employers, and training programs. The website provides detailed information about high-demand occupations in the region, including average salaries, qualifications, and associated training programs. It also links to job postings, scholarships, apprenticeships, and jobseeker tools like a resume builder.

Ensure Transportation Reliability

Transportation infrastructure is a potential vulnerability for the Kenai Peninsula. The Seward and Sterling Highways connect the Borough communities to each other and to Anchorage, and suffer frequent shutdowns due to fatal traffic accidents and, periodically, avalanches. Poor maintenance conditions in the winter can also sever this key artery. The Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS), which has suffered from budget cuts, is another area of transportation concern. AMHS serves Homer and Seldovia but has been forced to reduce the frequency of sailings, disrupting an affordable means to moving people and goods. Seldovia is particularly dependent on AMHS, as it lacks highway access. KPEDD advocates for ongoing support for highway maintenance and safety improvements, and continuing state funding for AMHS.

Efficient Land Use

Although the Kenai Peninsula is vast in size, relatively little land is available for residential and commercial use. Between the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge and the Chugach National Forest, private ownership is primarily limited to lands adjacent to the highway system. Efficient use of land to maximize economic benefit is therefore critically important. One protective measure to do so is erosion control and mitigation. As mentioned previously, lands in Homer, Kenai, and Seward, as well as other areas threatened by erosion will require mitigation and protection measures. Without flood and erosion control, private investment will not occur in certain areas like Downtown Kenai. Other sites formerly used for mining or another purpose can also be reused, such as Red Mountain near Seldovia, a former mine proposed for use as a recreational area.

A Focus on Emerging Industries

One way to ensure a prosperous economic future amid uncertainty is to diversify the regional economy by promoting emerging industries. On the Kenai Peninsula, this includes shellfish farming, marine trades, agriculture, seafood byproduct utilization, and others. KPEDD assists these emerging sectors through

business advising, project funding, workforce development, and lending activities. Emerging sectors often require specialized types of infrastructure to thrive. For example, the marine trades require ports and harbors, vessel hall outs, and specialized buildings. Both agriculture and seafood depend on cold storage. KPEDD and partner organizations work to source funding for these types of projects wherever possible.

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V.Goals

Quality of Living/Place is the overarching goal. This includes continuing to develop the Kenai Peninsula "brand" for residents, visitors, and businesses, and promoting expansion of recreational amenities and public access.

Overarching Goal: High Quality of Place and Quality of Life

Technology/ Telecommunications (Goal 1)

- Expanded broadband access across the Borough

Workforce & Human Capital (Goal 2)

- Industry partnerships and VOC-tech
- Attract, retain, and train a qualified workforce

Infrastructure & Land Use (Goal 3)

- Industry-focused infrastructure
- Stability and resiliency in transportation infrastructure
- Mitigation/responsible use of lands

Business Climate & Entrepreneurship (Goal 4)

- Outreach, education, and information sharing with government in support of businesses
- Promote responsible development of natural resources
- Develop and support entrepreneurship
- Create incentives to bring new businesses to the area

Regional Partnerships (Goal 5)

- Coordinate with industry
- Coordinate with municipalities, communities, and non-profits

VI. Action Plan

Overarching Goal: Quality of Place/Quality of Life			
Objective	Strategies and Actions	Metrics/Impacts	Key Partners
0.1 Develop the Kenai Peninsula “brand” for residents, visitors, and businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate a promotion campaign to attract families to relocate to the Kenai Peninsula. Support telework/remote work opportunities. Sustain and enhance visitor marketing efforts to attract more shoulder-season and independent visitors. Promote the Kenai Peninsula as a safe destination during COVID-19 with high vaccination rates and minimal crowds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Above average tourism rates, increase in visitors to region, sales tax revenues, gross sales increases. Increase in fishing license sales (ADFG). Hashtags, locations shared on social media platform, increase in website visits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) Chambers of Commerce Alaska State Parks Municipal governments
0.2 Promote expansion of recreational amenities and public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund, develop, and construct the Soldotna Fieldhouse. Fund, develop, and construct the Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Project Advance the Seward to Fairbanks trail concept. Solicit additional recreational projects for federal funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased platforms to share project information. Project approvals/votes. Funding opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development Administration (EDA) Municipal government

Goal 1: Technology/Telecommunications			
Objective	Strategies and Actions	Metrics/Impacts	Key Partners
1.1 Expand broadband access across the borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build fiber optic connection to Hope. • Secure federal or other funds to build or expand fiber optics lines or satellite internet access to all communities to improve speeds and costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average speeds. • Monthly costs. • Percent of households with access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denali Commission • Economic Development Administration (EDA)
1.2 Improve digital infrastructure to advance economic activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to videoconferencing services at public facilities such as libraries, civic buildings, and schools. • Encourage development of businesses related to information technology. • Enable hospitals and clinics to make better use of telemedicine. • Provide communities and residents with greater access to education through distance learning. • Make the Kenai Peninsula more attractive to technology driven businesses and corporations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhance Public safety and emergency response systems. • Encourage and promote the use of distance delivery for business workshops and workforce trainings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of technology startups. • Number of public buildings with videoconferencing services. • Virtual trainings held. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDA • State of Alaska (DCCED, Alaska Development Team) • Regional tribes

Goal 2: Workforce and Human Capital

Objective	Strategies and Actions	Metrics/Impacts	Key Partners
2.1 Build stronger industry partnerships for K-12, voc-tech., secondary, post-secondary, and adult education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create partnerships between industry and K-12 programs as a gateway and pipeline to facilitate career exploration and to build awareness of potential careers. • Support apprenticeship or engaged learning opportunities that provide actual workforce readiness. • Collaborate to start an agricultural training program for students to work on farms during the summer. • Develop and implement Tyonek tribal workforce plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased apprenticeship program enrollment numbers • Student outreach numbers • Employer outreach surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AVTEC • University of Alaska • Employers • School districts & home school programs • Tribal governments
2.2 Attract, train, and retain a qualified workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand on “attraction” campaigns to show off that this is a great place to live. Highlight remote work opportunities. • Targeted outreach for specific community groups (veterans, adult learners, at risk/recovery population) focused on entering the workforce and accessing training. • Provide online training opportunities including re-skilling or up-skilling programs. Including credit and non-credit options. • Identify the need for new programs and certificates based on industry feedback; including training around new/emerging technology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater application rates • Increased enrollment in colleges • Increased apprenticeship applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Professionals Group • Veterans groups • AVTEC (or provider of re-skilling/up-skilling training) • University • KPEDD; Workforce Development Website • Kenai Peninsula School District

<p>2.3 Connect job-seekers to employers and training opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and grow the Kenai Peninsula Workforce website as a hub for employers, educators, trainers, and job-seekers. • Develop an ongoing assessment of workforce needs for each industry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased website traffic and clicks. • Number of employer engagements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local/borough employers • Vocational/technical programs • Kenai Peninsula Borough School District • UAA Kenai Peninsula College
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Goal 3: Infrastructure, Land Use, and Natural Resources			
Objective	Strategies and Actions	Metrics/Impacts	Key Partners
3.1 Develop industry-specific infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Seward Dock and Rail project. • Fund and develop the Alutiiq Pride Visitor Center in Seward. • Develop cold storage capacity to grow the agricultural sector. • Advocate and seek funding for port and harbor expansions in Homer, Kenai, Seldovia, and Seward. • Develop and expand shoreside infrastructure to support the seafood, oil and gas, and marine trade sectors. • Develop the “KPEDD innovation campus” concept with commercial kitchen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project dollars secured (public and private) • Complete implementation and completion of projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alaska Railroad • Farming groups • Agrium USA Inc.
3.2 Advance stability and resiliency in transportation infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for stable funding for the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) to maintain or improve service to Peninsula communities. • Assess impacts of reduced AMHS service for affected communities. • Advocate for year-round maintenance of the Seward and Sterling Highways to maintain access and safety at all times. • Advocate for ongoing state support to improve and maintain airports. • Identify and advocate for other needed improvements in road, marine, rail, and air transportation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of advocacy engagements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMHS • ARDORs • Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)

3.3 Mitigation & responsible use of lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete erosion mitigation projects in Kenai and Homer to enable continued development. • Assess the reuse/redevelopment of former gravel pits for new uses (such as recreation sites). • Identify and assess the need for zoning improvements between municipal and borough governments. • Reclaim and redevelop the former Red Mountain Mine site in Kachemak Bay into a recreation area with access and trails. • Mitigate spruce beetle damage by removing dead trees and milling the lumber for commercial or residential use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dollar value of public and private investment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US Forest Service • US Fish and Wildlife Service • Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
3.4 Promote responsible development of natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for a stable and predictable tax structure for mining, oil, and gas operations at state and local level. • Advocate for ongoing incentives to encourage oil and gas exploration in Cook Inlet to secure energy supplies. • Support responsible mining projects that create local jobs and revenues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of advocacy engagements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of Alaska • KPB • Industry Groups

Goal 4: Business Climate and Entrepreneurship			
Objective	Strategies and Actions	Metrics/Impacts	Key Partners
4.1 Outreach, education, and information sharing in support of businesses resiliency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue business retention and expansion (BRE) activities to determine health of businesses and ways to assist with pandemic recovery. Promote buy local program Help businesses access other support services such as the Small Business Development Center. Conduct surveys of businesses to evaluate ongoing needs and areas of assistance needed. Provide updates on the regional economy and business climate to chambers, local governments, and industry groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of surveys completed. Number of businesses provided with assistance. Number of businesses reporting favorable views of business climate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alaska Small Business Center (SBDC) Small Business Administration. (SBA)
4.2 Improve access to capital for businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restructure KPEDD's revolving loan fund to meet needs during an economic downturn or natural disaster. Assist businesses with obtaining relief funding through federal, state, and local assistance programs. Assess the use of financial incentives such as tax credits and abatements to attract new businesses to the region or help existing businesses expand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding dollars awarded to businesses. Number of businesses assisted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) Small Business Administration (SBA) Economic Development Administration (EDA)
4.3 Develop and support entrepreneurship and new business formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host entrepreneurship workshops for individuals starting businesses. Lead and coordinate Startup Weekend on the Kenai Peninsula every November. Advise and counsel startup businesses. Promote Central Peninsula Small Business Week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of workshops hosted. Number of businesses assisted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers of Commerce UA Center for Economic Development (UA CED) Alaska Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

<p>4.4 Support emerging sectors with high growth potential</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist mariculture operations in meeting capital and expansion needs. • Counsel and assist industrial maritime businesses such as ship builders and repair operations. • Initiate a pilot project to develop seafood byproducts into marketable products. • Counsel and assist manufacturing businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of marine focused businesses assisted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alaska MEP Center • -Alaska Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
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Goal 5: Build and Grow Regional Partnerships for Resiliency			
Objective	Strategies and Actions	Metrics/Impacts	Key Partners
5.1 Proactively coordinate roles for economic resiliency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align and streamline assistance roles between funding agencies and resource partners in the event of an economic disaster. Promote, and expand current processes for regular communication, monitoring and updating business community needs and issues to be used post-event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete KPEDD resiliency plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding agencies Borough government Municipal governments Tribal entities & Native Organizations Chambers of Commerce Industry groups Nonprofits
5.2 Produce pre-disaster recovery plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a collection of resources (especially financial resources) of private, local, state, and federal tools for economic recovery for residents, businesses, and communities. Generate a plan describing key stakeholders, roles, actions, and responsibilities in the event of a natural disaster. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete KPEDD resiliency plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding agencies Borough government Municipal governments Tribal entities & Native Organizations Chambers of Commerce Industry groups Nonprofits

VII. Appendix A: Business and Resident Survey Results

To support the SWOT Analysis and the Goals and Action Plan sections of this document, a survey instrument was designed to draw perspectives from across the borough on the regions business and economic climate, quality of life, and opportunities for the future. While the survey results are not statistically significant, they do apply context and texture to the items discussed in this CEDS.

The survey instrument was split into two separate surveys: a business survey and resident survey. The surveys were open between the following dates:

- Business Survey: February 8, 2021 to February 15, 2021; and,
- Resident Survey: February 17, 2021 to February 26, 2021.

Both surveys were available on KPEDD's website and promoted by KPEDD staff and board members.

Business Survey Results

General Overview

A total of 72 individuals completed the business survey, with businesses located across the borough. The majority of the survey respondents were located in Homer.

Business Survey Responses

Responses by location to KPEDD CEDS business survey.

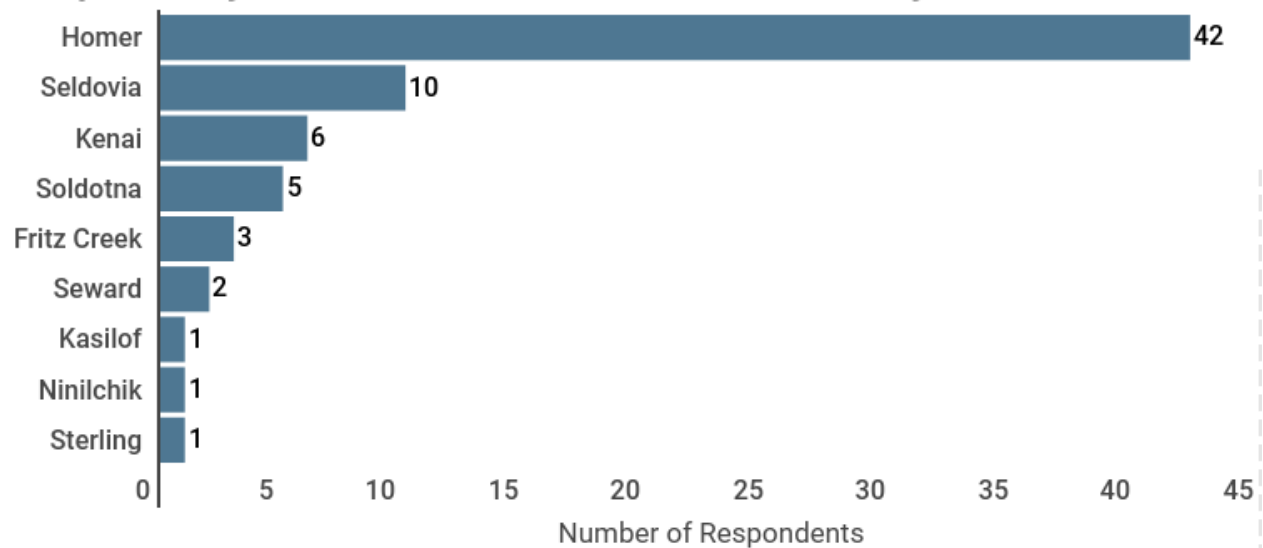


Figure 38: Responses by location to KPEDD CEDS business survey.

The businesses surveyed came from a variety of sectors. The top five sectors with survey responses included:

- Retail;
- Accommodation and food services;

- Arts, entertainment, and recreation; agriculture,
- Forestry, fishing, and hunting; and,
- Construction.

What Industries do Businesses Work In?

Business survey responses by industry.

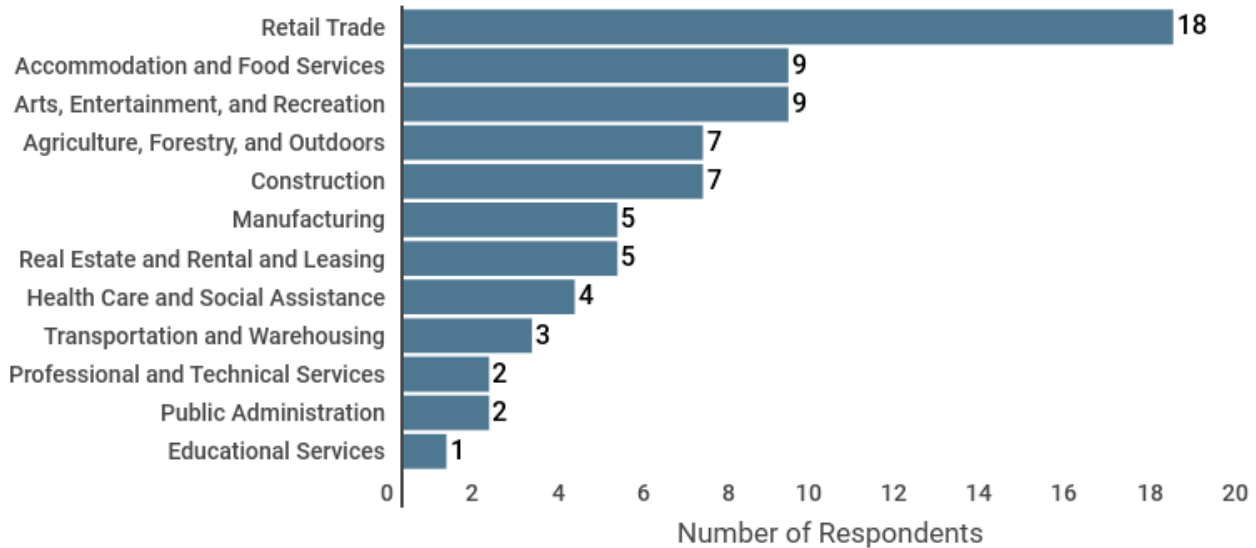


Figure 39: Business survey responses by industry.

While it was not the goal of the of the surveys to target any specific population or industry, it is important to note the bias that the skew in the data create. Survey results clearly emphasize the specific communities and specific industries, creating bias in the priorities identified, challenges listed, and opinions on economic conditions.

Operation and Employment

Of the businesses surveyed, the majority operate year-round. The remaining are split between a mix (year-round operations with large seasonal swings) and seasonal operations.

Seasonal Swings in Hiring Among Small Firms

Business employment, current and peak season.

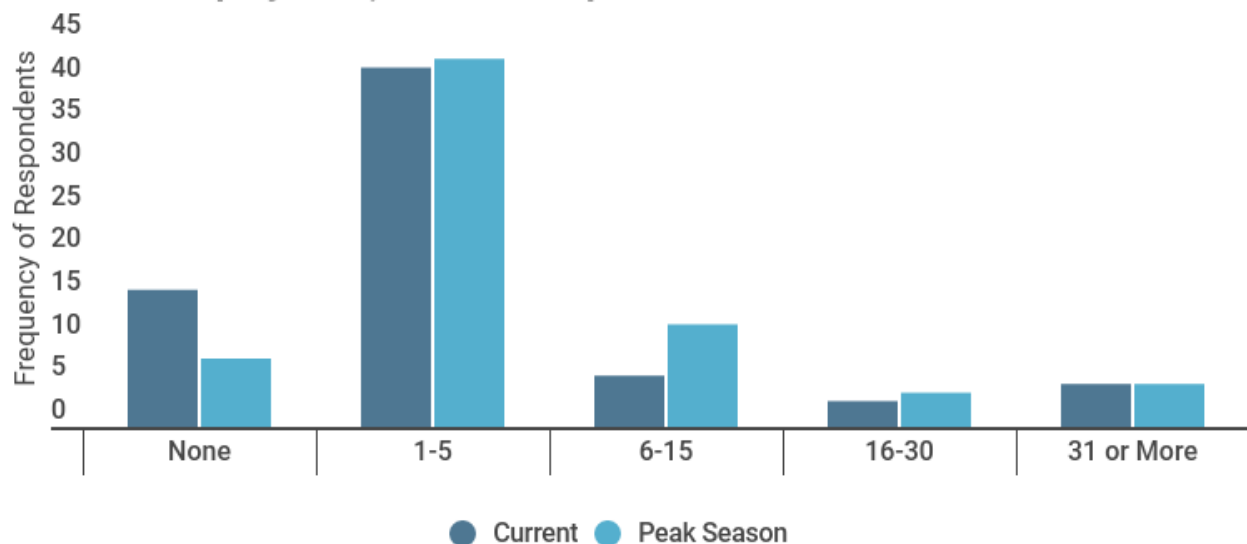


Figure 40: Business respondent employment, current and peak season.

Employment by businesses surveyed reflect business employment trends for the region as a whole. Most of the businesses surveyed employ five or fewer people. Many businesses experience some seasonal swings in employment. Current employment trends could also be reflective of the impacts to businesses from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Business Climate and Economic Outlook

Survey respondents were asked questions about their perceptions on the business climate and economic outlook for Alaska and the Kenai Peninsula. Perceptions of the business climate were relatively evenly split between 'Poor' and 'Good', with perceptions about the business climate on the Kenai Peninsula fairing slightly better than Alaska as a whole.

Business Climate Perceptions

Perceptions of the business climate in Alaska and Kenai Peninsula.

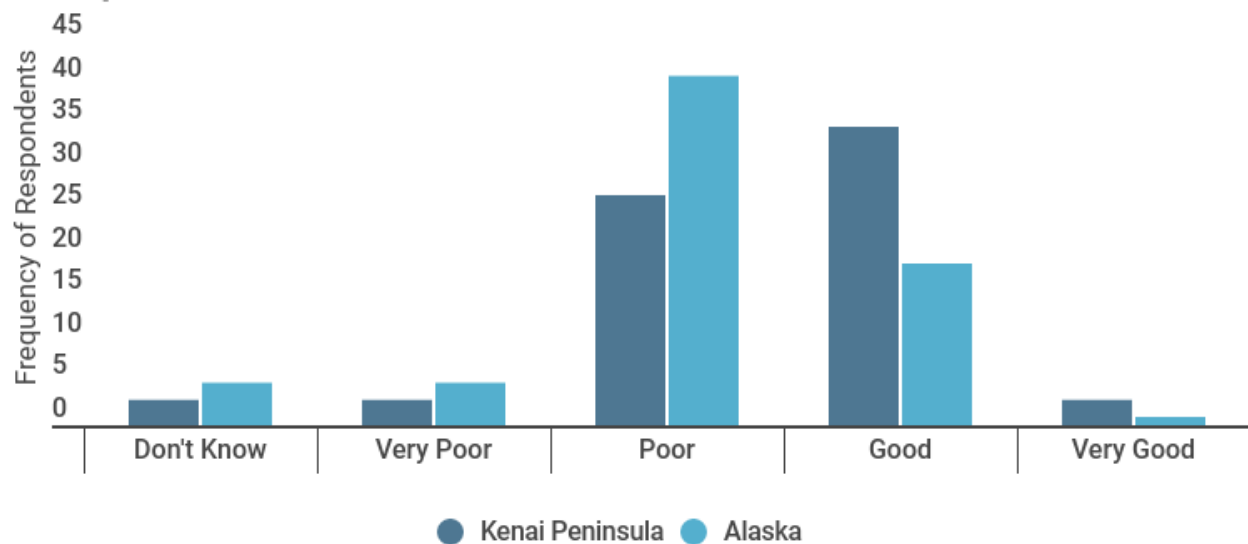


Figure 41: Business Survey perceptions of the business climate in Alaska and the Kenai Peninsula.

When asked about the economic outlook in the coming year for respondents' business or industry, the majority identified that they expect to fair the same or better than the previous year. Considering the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially to the hospitality and tourism industries, a slightly better outlook over the next year signals recovery for the region.

Economic Outlook on the Kenai Peninsula

Perceptions of the economic outlook over the next year, compared to the last year on Kenai Peninsula.

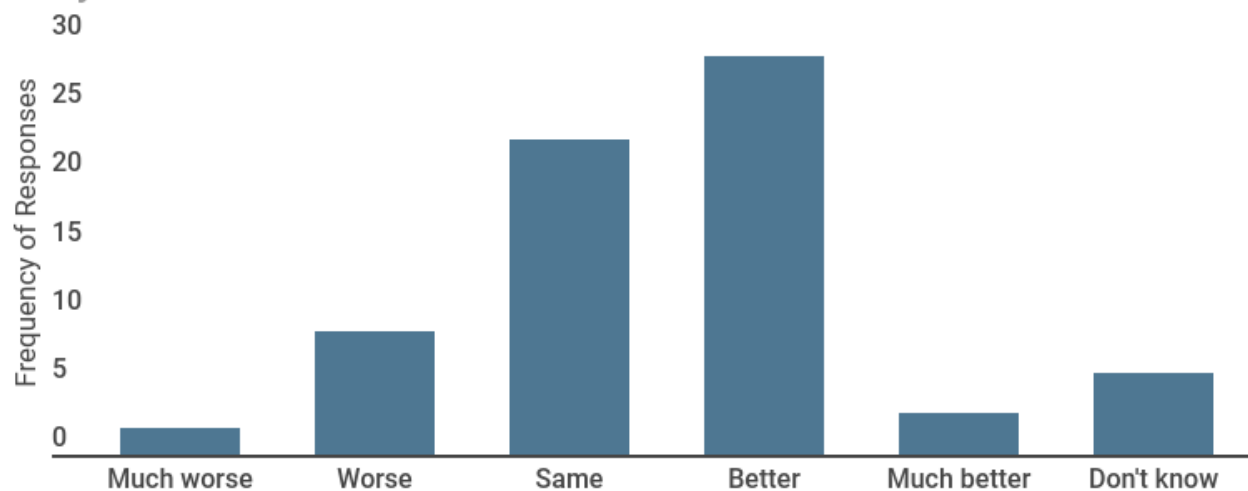


Figure 42: Perceptions of the economic outlook over the coming year, compared to the previous year.

Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic

Of the businesses surveyed, 81 percent were negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Of those affected, the majority experienced a decline in revenues; however, temporary closures, reduced hours, and layoffs were also common.

Impacts of COVID on Businesses

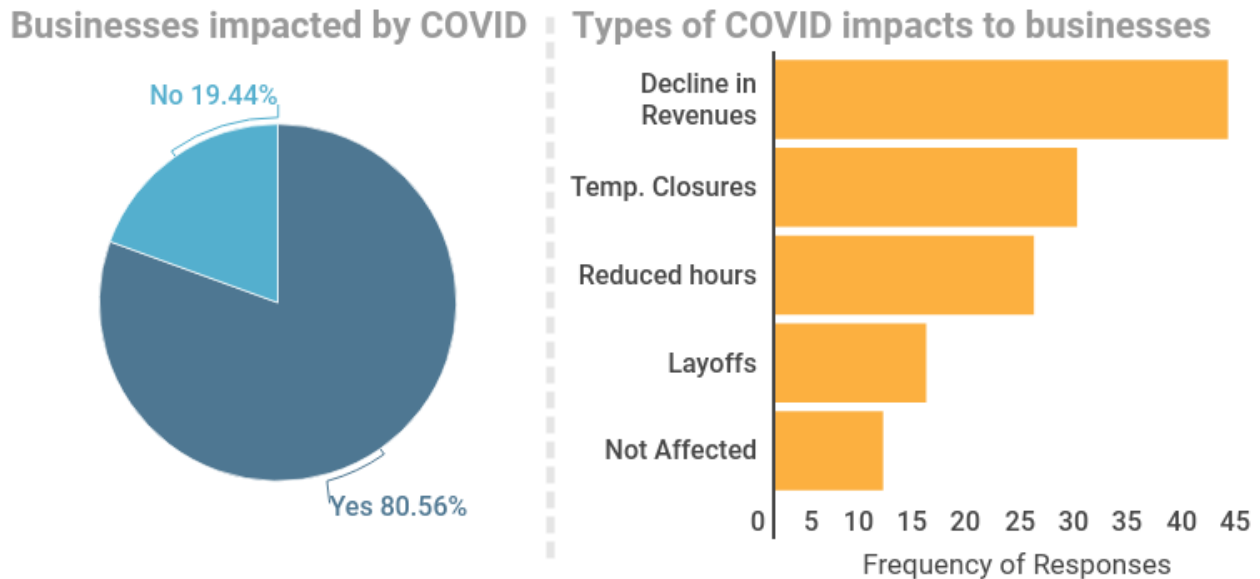


Figure 43: Impacts of COVID on business survey respondents.

Survey respondents were also given the opportunity to expand on other impacts felt by the pandemic. Other impacts of COVID listed by businesses included:

- Difficulty dealing with people.
- Folks not able to travel to view properties, buyers pulling out from making offers due to nervousness about the future.
- More cleaning.
- Canceled events.
- Closed doors at beginning and did curbside pickup only.
- Doors open yet mandates in AK and outside reduced availability.
- I have been affected by all of these things but am past all of them now.
- Will probably have to close my doors.
- Lack of guests coming to Homer to sport fish.
- Supply shortages.
- Extra sanitary measure costs.

Challenges and Barriers to Doing Business

Survey respondents were asked about the challenges and barriers to doing business in the borough. Specific questions were targeted at:

- Workforce challenges;
- Conditions of the local, state, and national economy;
- Costs of labor, goods, and services; taxes;
- Cost and availability of commercial property and housing;
- Public safety;
- Access to capital;
- Transportation linkages; and,
- Regulations.

The most significant challenges identified by businesses included access to qualified labor, conditions of the state and national economy; cost of goods and materials; energy prices; and transportation linkages with suppliers and markets.

Workforce Challenges on the Kenai Peninsula

Workforce challenges experienced by survey respondents.

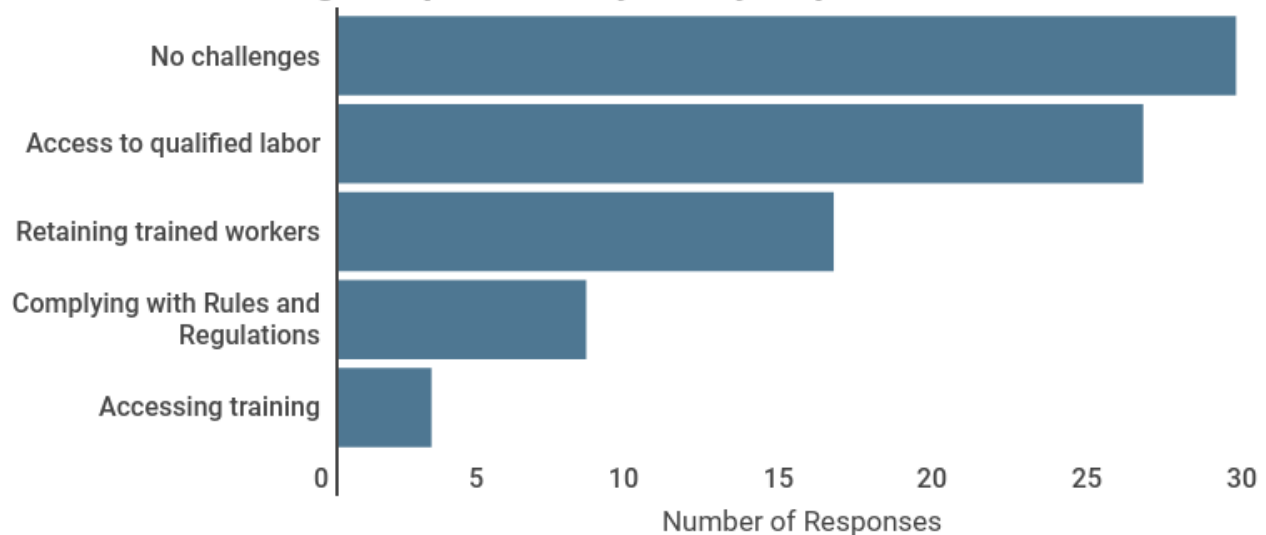
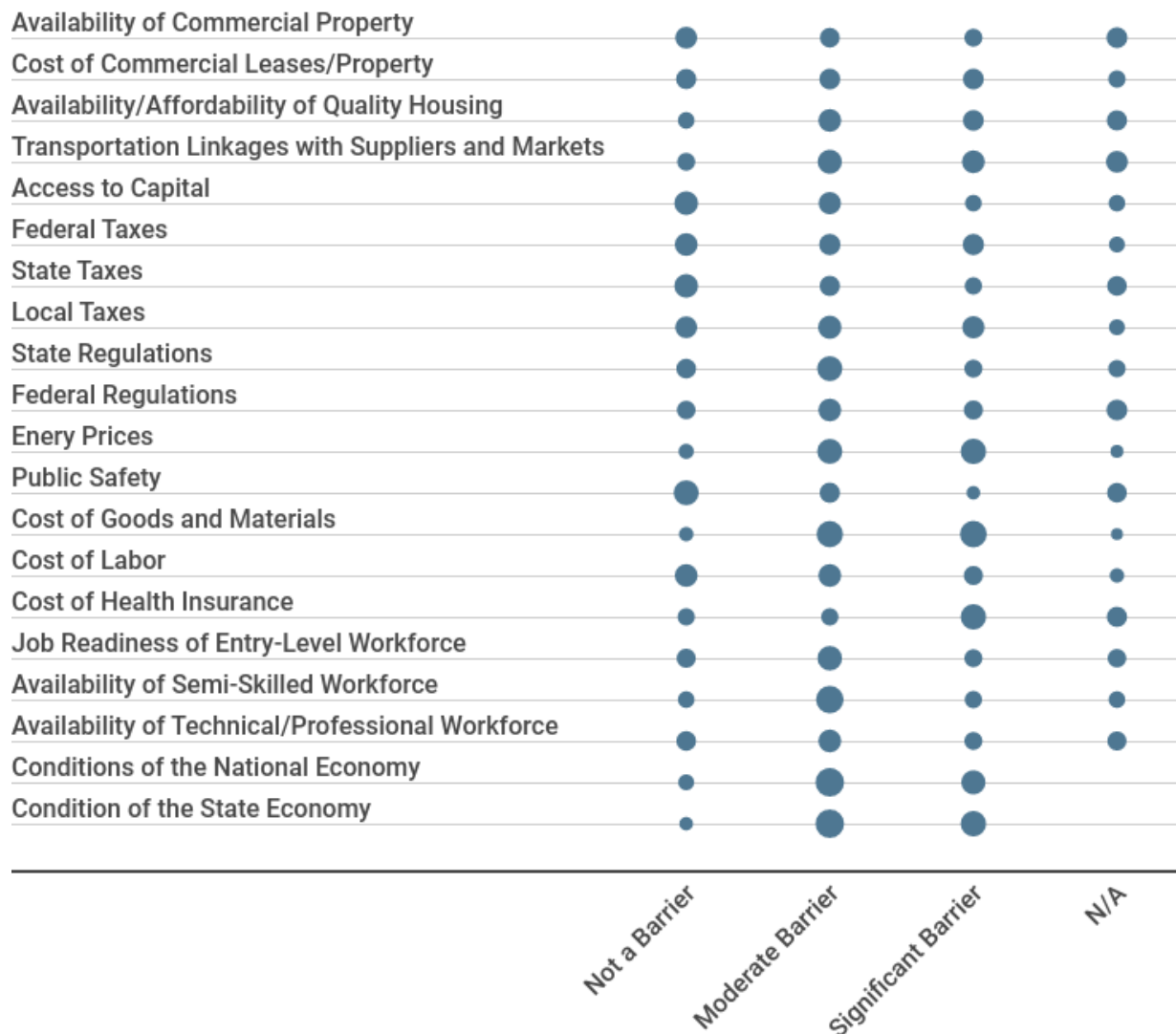


Figure 44: Workforce challenges experiences by business survey respondents.

Barriers to Doing Business on the Kenai Peninsula

Perceptions of barriers to business growth experienced by survey respondents.



Frequency of Response by Rank

Figure 45: Perceptions of barriers to business growth experienced by business survey respondents.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to list other business challenges. Responses included:

- COVID.
- Active opposition from government, along with Kenai River Sportfishing Association, to the detriment and almost complete closure of commercial fishing in Cook Inlet.
- Having year-round population growth in addition to more visitors.
- Having to deal with the State DOT.

- Access to referral sources—hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, etc. will not let us in.
- Teaching classes is a big part of my revenue so that stopped and is slowly starting up again.
- Finding reasonable outlets for selling.
- Marketing is costly.
- Good employees.
- Dramatic drop in visitors who purchase my art work and adventure services.
- Lack of internet services.
- Transportation- specifically AMHS.
- As a remote community, the biggest challenge is consistent access to the ferry system to receive supplies.
- Local tax laws for sale of produce.
- Affordable housing for employees, cost of living.
- Bed tax.
- High shipping cost [mentioned 4 times]
- Businesses that will not sell to us due to the recent changes in sales tax laws.
- Sales tax confusion.
- Never had any unmanageable challenges in 40 years.
- Impact of wildfires, lack of effective tourism marketing, competition from unlicensed businesses.
- KPB Planning Department in Soldotna. Very anti-business.
- Lack of good retail space.
- We have experienced very high utilities, lower revenues, and less tenants than normal.
- Cost of doing business.
- Hard to hire workers. Fishing is very poor in same area of state.
- Having tourists arrive and feel welcomed.
- Low wages and prohibitive cost of living for young people has created a stagnant business environment and local economy, outdated and overpriced commercial spaces make our downtown unattractive.
- Less now that locals are not going up to Anchorage (where there is no sales tax) to shop.
- We are subject to the road conditions—availability to fly into Homer—vehicles available to rent in AK. Weather/volcanoes and earthquakes in addition to a federal fishery who will not establish the upcoming years regulations until February.
- Customers complain about high sales taxes.
- Freight costs to move ingredients to Homer and goods out of Homer. High electric costs. Political processes that affect statutes governing the business.
- Shipping issues.
- Less and less fish to catch.
- Access (Ravn recently restarted but lack of commuter planes, ferry and cruise ships hurts traffic at the end of the road).
- Access to supplies getting shipped here.
- Tourism impacted by COVID.
- Uncertainty.

- We are affected by the lack of cruise ships. Homer being at the end of the road makes for less tourism.

Why Do Business in the Borough?

Business respondents were also asked why they choose to locate themselves in the borough. The goal of this was to determine the aspects of life and doing business in the borough that should be retained. The existing strengths.

Survey respondents identified with a mix of reason, family, and proximity to support resources being two of the main reasons.

Reasons for Doing Business on the Kenai Peninsula

Survey respondent reasons for locating on the Kenai Peninsula

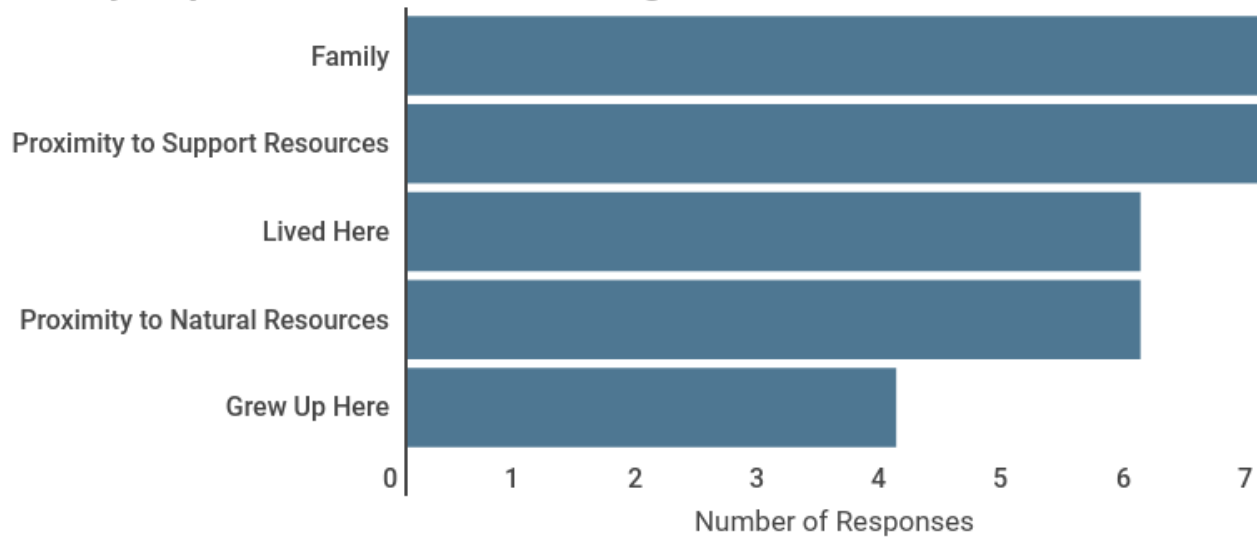


Figure 46: Business survey respondents' reasons for locating on the Kenai Peninsula.

Businesses were also asked for their opinions on things that would improve their ability to do business in the borough. Top ranked categories included transportation investments and faster, cheaper internet.

Improving Business on the Kenai Peninsula

Perceptions on ways to improve business in the borough by survey respondents.

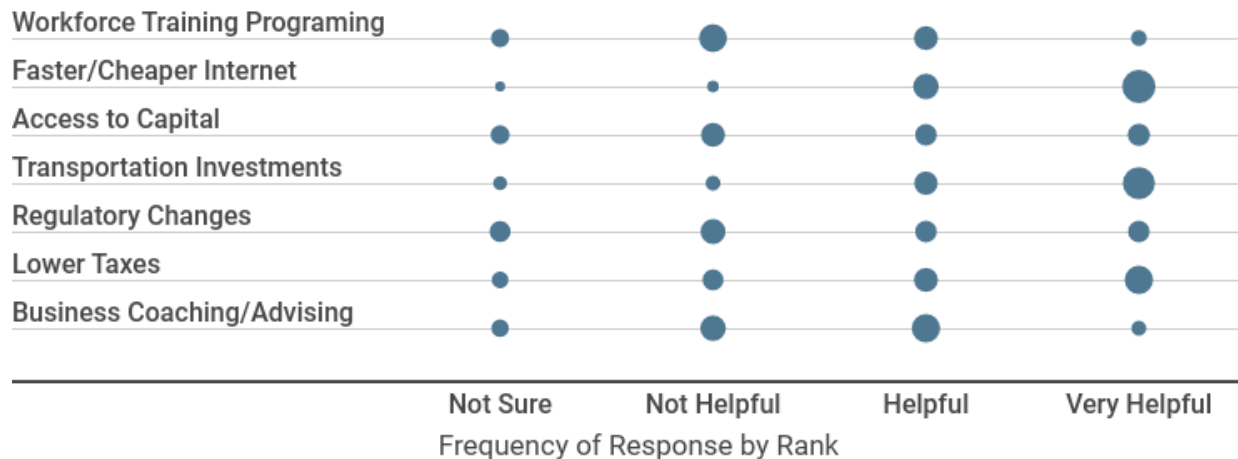


Figure 47: Perceptions on ways to improve business in the borough by survey respondents.

Other

Survey respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional feedback and insights into their perspectives on the economic future of the Kenai Peninsula. Responses included:

- COVID and people thinking it is not serious are causing our business to most likely end. We are not risking the lives of our employees or ourselves during a global pandemic, but our community thinks we should. After 30 years here, we are no longer happy on the peninsula after seeing the selfishness of this community. We have been unable to work for almost a year due to COVID but mainly because other people put us at risk by not even doing the bare minimum of mask wearing and keeping their aerosol germs to themselves. We are fed up by the leadership in this community and in the state.
- Commercial fishing in Cook Inlet is vital to the growth and wellness of the KPB economy.
- We started up in March 2020 and despite the many restrictions, we are growing at a steady pace. As restrictions ease, we can once again network with the health community to let them know how we can partner with them to care for their patients and how we can be easier for them to use.
- Kenai is specifically a dying city to do business in and there is no support ever given. I will consider expanding and taking my business to K-Beach.
- I am concerned that Alaska is not making significant progress toward diversifying our economy beyond extractive resources and the medium to long term economic consequences of this lack of progress toward diversification.
- Market garden producer would like to see friendly approach to production and sale of food grown locally.

- COVID-19 has crippled our tourism industry, affecting more than those in that industry as we are all interdependent. Supply of goods, construction materials has dwindled in supply and costs have increased, and concerns in Seldovia regarding dependable AMHS service is in jeopardy.
- The marine industrial zone limits development of the Spit, and for what reason? I can store drilling muds, petroleum, and coal on site, but I can't have nightly rentals? This policy is a half century behind the times. The spit underlies a lot larger tourist chunk of the economy than marine services will ever generate.
- The Port of Homer is very important to my business and many others on the peninsula.
- The State of Alaska needs to consider raising revenue to cover the cost of providing adequate services to all Alaskan instead of simply cutting budgets. It is time to get rid of the permanent fund dividend program ~ it has produced a culture of unproductive people who feel they are entitled to free money.
- Any way that the borough can help support the Homer Harbor would ultimately help the borough. That harbor is one of the best economic drivers in the borough and could use some support
- The biggest help we could have gotten since COVID hit would have been mask mandates. It is very exhausting to have to argue with customers or feel we have to watch every customer who walks through our door. That is a huge public safety issue to us and we wish the Borough and the State would have supported all of us better.
- It is really important to have good services on the Homer Spit (good roads, free parking, restroom facilities, low harbor fees, camping, appropriate activities for families with children).
- Homer Harbor is vital to growth and sustenance of business on the Spit. Reinfusing sales tax dollar generated into its aging floats and delivery mechanisms for goods will help this area to continue to grow and flourish. It is a big challenge to combat erosion and aging the Alaskan waters put onto structures. We are often told that our business (a boardwalk) is not eligible for economic support as it is looked at as a rehab project not growth capital project. Also, the Harbor was subsidized for years by the State of AK and once it became a property owned by the City much deferred maintenance was passed on as well. Without funds being driven back into our vital port our cost of goods (influx of traveler costs are more also) makes Homer less appealing to travelers (flying, renting a car, or trying to access the ferry) over inner road accessed areas of Alaska.
- Keep government small.
- We need to get COVID in the rearview mirror.
- My business was down 55% last year and looks to be worse this year.

Resident Survey Results

General Overview

A total of 89 individuals responded to the resident survey. Of those 89, more than half were from the Homer area.

Resident Survey Responses

Responses by location to KPEDD CEDS resident survey.

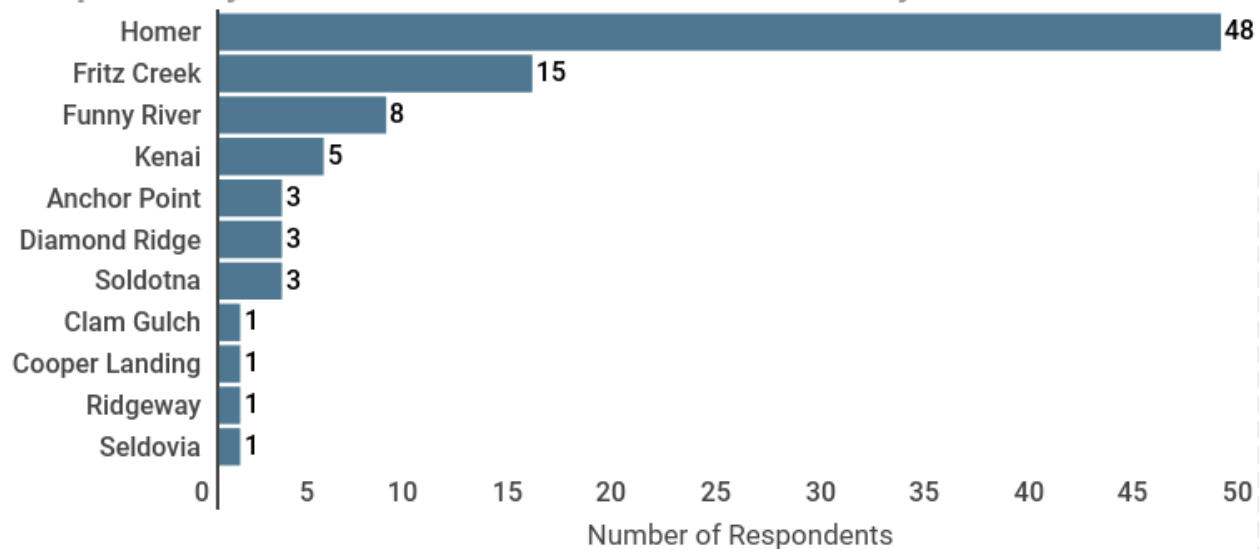


Figure 48: Resident survey responses by location.

Of the survey respondents, approximately a quarter were not currently employed, meaning they were either unemployed, retired, or otherwise not participating in the labor market. Outside of those not employed, survey respondents came from a mix of industries and professional backgrounds

What Industries do Residents Work In?

Resident survey responses by industry.

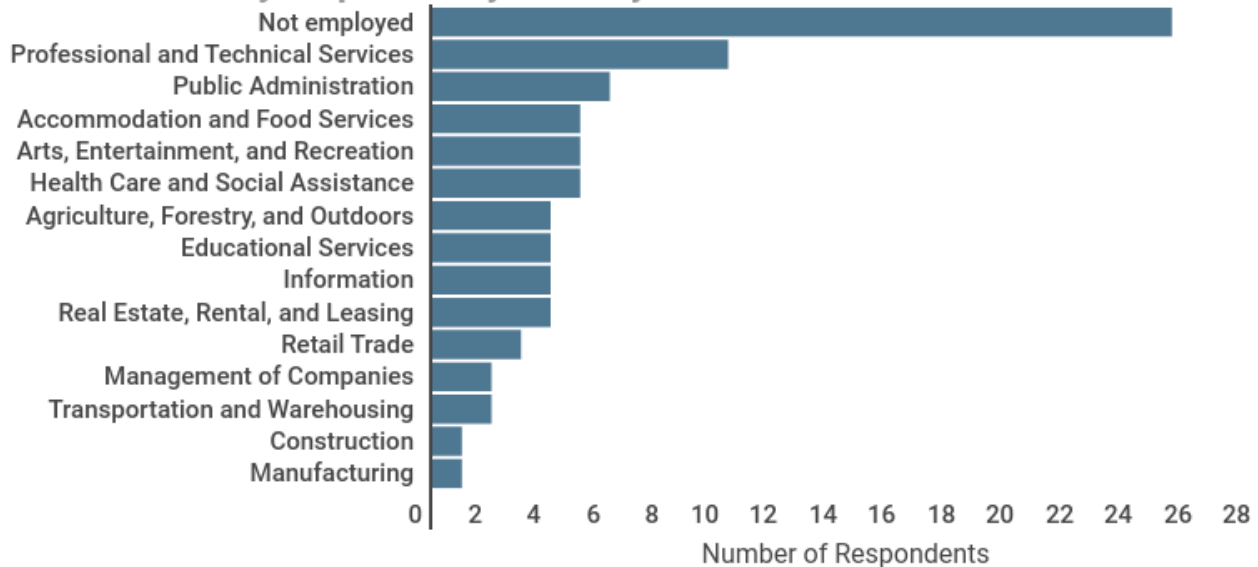


Figure 49: Resident survey responses by industry employment.

Quality of Life

Most of the questions in the resident survey focused on quality of life—those aspects of living in the borough that residents find beneficial and those that residents find challenging. Residents were asked why they choose to live in the borough, and about some of the best aspects of living on the Kenai Peninsula.

Residents listed community and proximity to recreation opportunities as two of the top reasons for living in the region. Survey respondents were also given the opportunity to provide additional feedback. Among the open responses, natural beauty and climate were common themes.

Drivers for Living on the Kenai Peninsula

Resident survey reasons for living on the Kenai Peninsula.

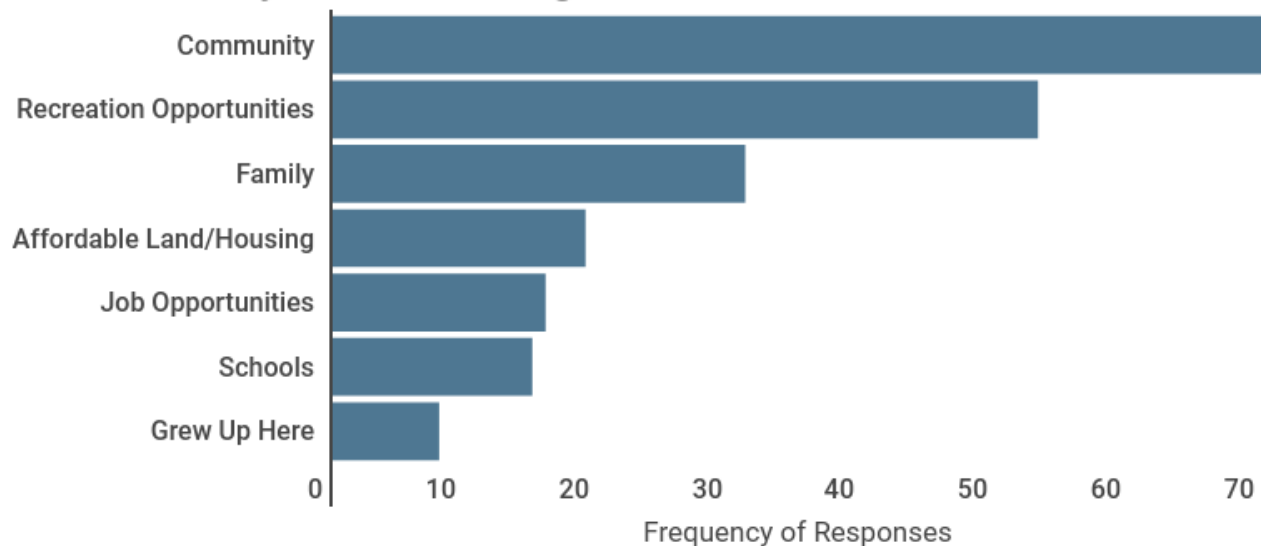


Figure 50: Resident survey respondent reasons for living on the Kenai Peninsula

Reasons for Living in KPB, Other Responses	
Married into it	Animal Shelter
Natural Beauty	View
Cultural Events	Climate
Friends	Natural Beauty
Safety	Great Place to Live
Small, Artsy, Gorgeous place to live	Great People
Agriculture	Arts
Restaurants	Culture
Art	Science
Natural Beauty	Size of Community
Healthy Ecosystems	Remoteness
Health Reasons	

Table 11: Resident survey responses, other reasons for living in KPB

When asked about the best aspects about living in the borough, the results followed similar themes. 'Recreation opportunities' and 'Good place to raise a family' received the highest the highest average scores.

Best Aspects of Living on the Kenai Peninsula

Resident rankings of top reason for living on the Kenai Peninsula.

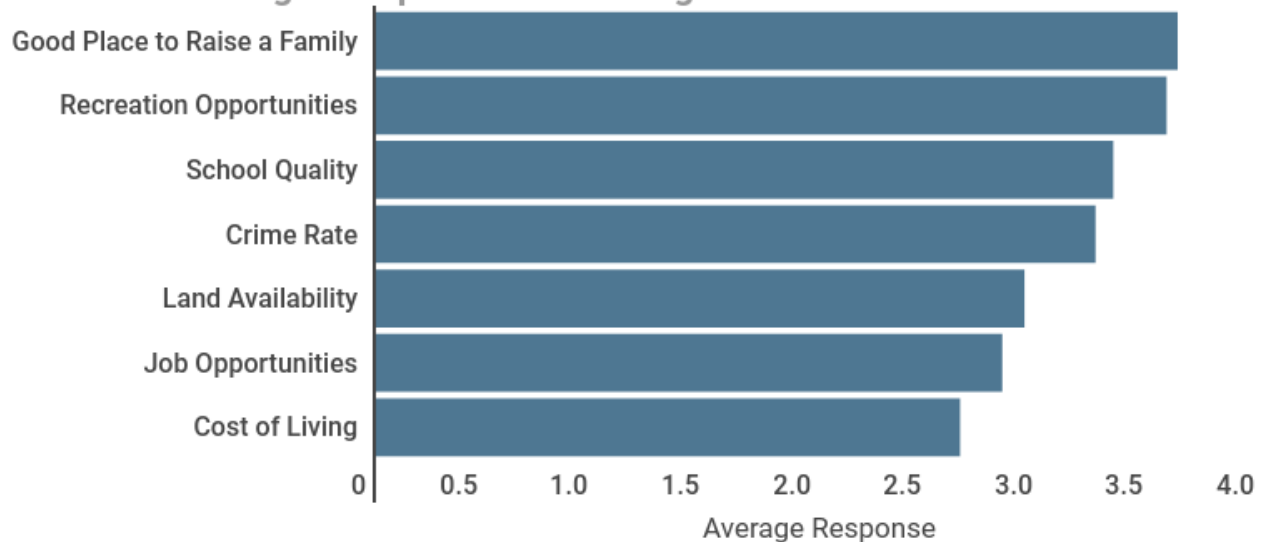


Figure 51: Resident rankings of top reasons for living on the Kenai Peninsula.

When asked about their likeliness to leave the borough more than half of the respondents responded indicated that they were very unlikely to leave.

Leaving the Kenai Peninsula

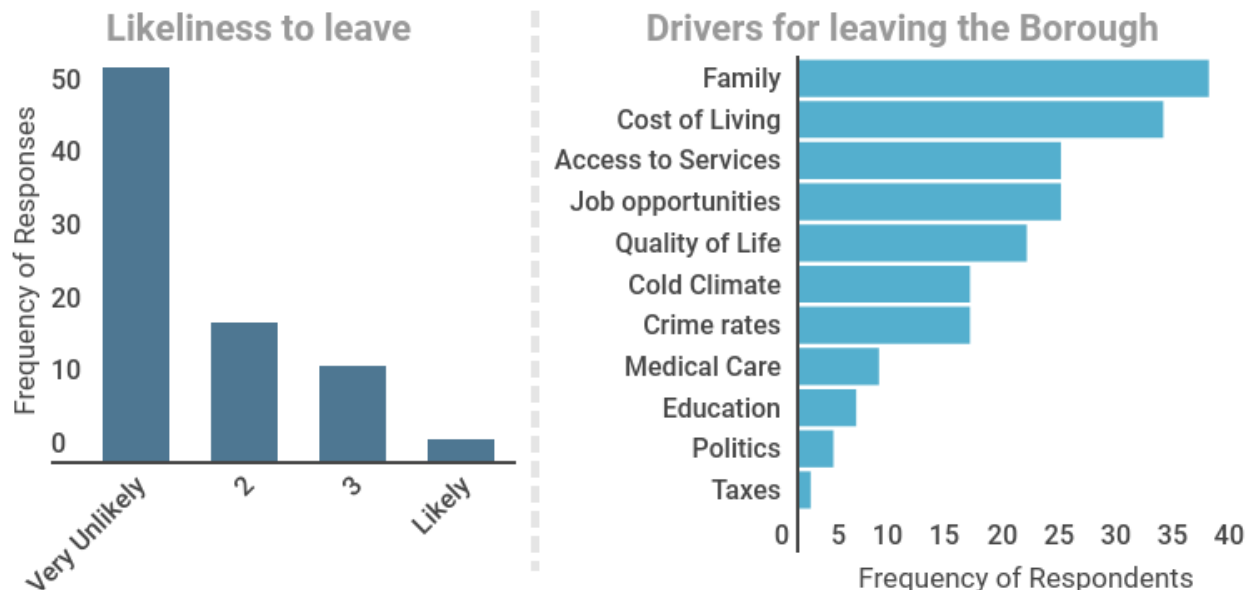


Figure 52: Likelihood to leave the Kenai Peninsula and drivers for leaving.

However, respondents indicated drivers that could motivated them to leave the borough. Family, cost of living, job opportunities, access to services, and quality of life all ranked high for frequency of responses. Other responses included, “if my car gets run over again by an Argo vehicle” and “death.”

Challenges and Threats

Residents were asked a series of questions about challenges of living in the borough and threats to the economy. Respondents were asked to rank challenges such as: housing cost, access to childcare, and broadband availability. Cost of goods and services, energy cost, and housing costs where all ranks as some of the biggest challenges, with the highest average ranking.

Challenges of Living on the Kenai Peninsula

Perceptions of challenges of living in the borough by survey respondents.

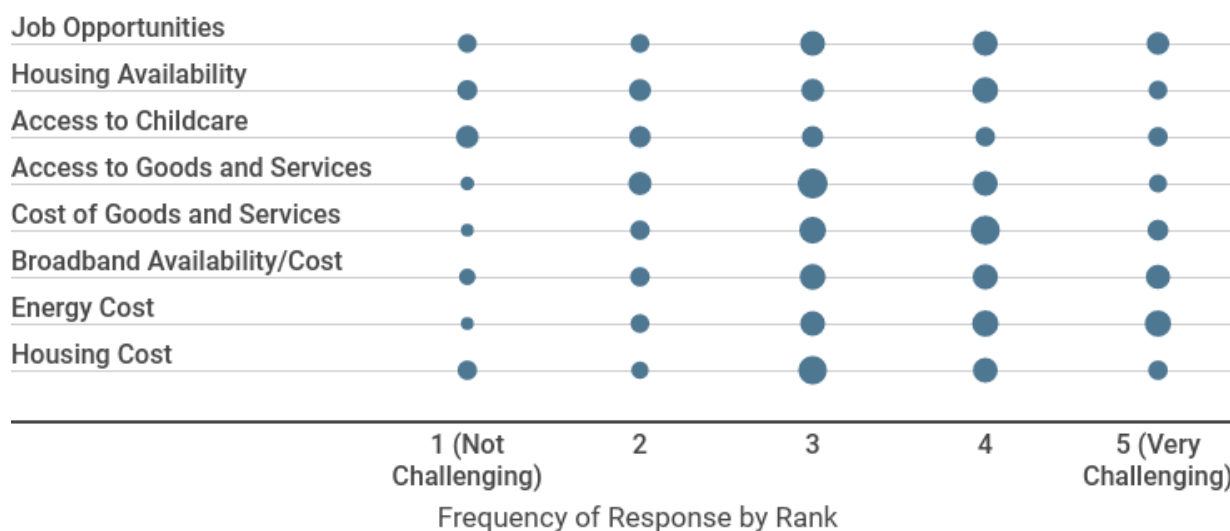


Figure 53: Perceptions of challenges of living in the borough by resident survey respondents.

Respondents were also asked about their perspectives on threats to the borough economy. Respondents were asked to rank threats as not a threat, moderate threat, significant threat, do not know, or not applicable. The highest ranked threats included:

- Disruptions to air and marine travel;
- Changes in the fishing industry;
- Decline in employment opportunities; and,
- State fiscal crisis.

Threats to the Kenai Peninsula

Perceptions on threats to the borough economy by respondents.

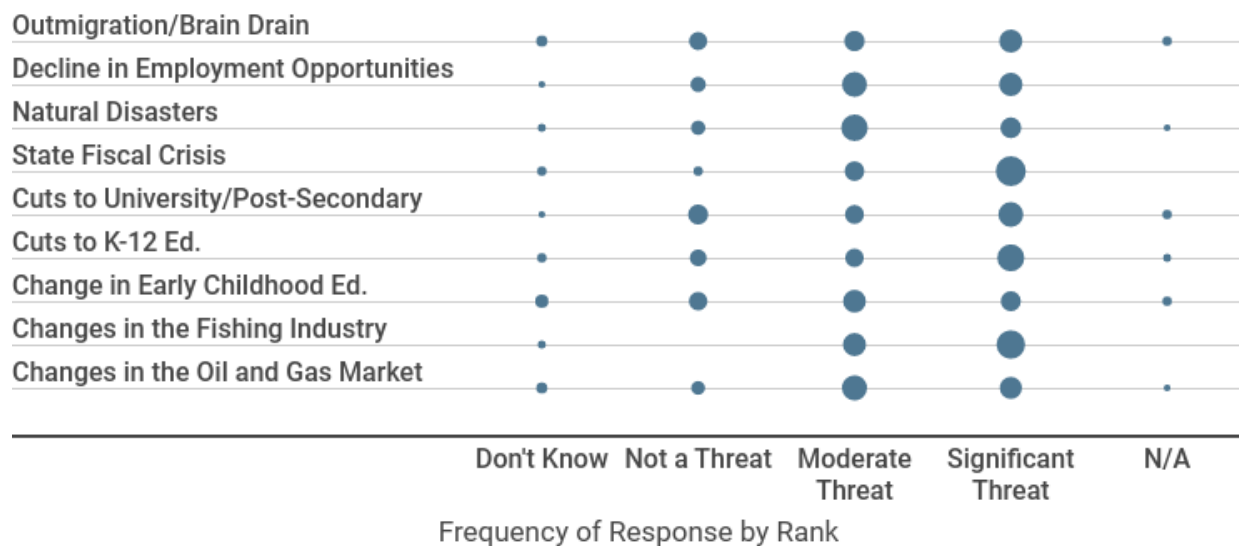


Figure 54: Perceptions on threats to the borough economy by resident survey respondents.

Development Opportunities

Residents were asked for their perspectives on development opportunities on the borough, from amenities and infrastructure to quality of life projects and industry development.

Respondents were asked what amenities or services they thought were missing from their area. Responses were grouped thematically. Themes in responses included:

- Health care;
- Social services;
- Goods and services;
- Education;
- Housing;
- Utilities;
- Land;
- Public services; and,
- Recreation.

Missing Amenities and Services on the Kenai Peninsula from Survey Responses	
Health Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical specialties available locally. • Mental health support. • Drug intervention. • Resident rehabilitation services. • Affordable health care (for small business owners specifically). • More hospital services.
Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless shelter. • Support for household food provision. • Senior housing. • Low income services.
Goods and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health foods store. • Restaurant variety. • Tourist attractions. • Big box stores. • After school activities and summer programs. • Banks. • Legal services. • Large meeting spaces. • Cold storage for agriculture products. • Livestock processing facilities. • Large grocery store (Fred Meyer). • Affordable shipping. • Local building suppliers. • Electric vehicle charging stations.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller school class size. • Early childhood education. • Skill base classes. • School education quality. • Vocational training.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable year-round housing.
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband access and cell phone infrastructure. • Easy access to electricity. • Better internet connection. • Natural gas access.
Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State park access via road (Eastland). • Easy access to public land (recreation). • Parks access. • Non-motorized recreation access. • Bike and walking paths. • Affordable Agriculture land. • Public access to Kenai River. • Safer access to Funny River.
Public Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare. • Better snowplowing.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transportation. • Community center. • More school funding. • Homer Airport Safety • Piped water (Kachemak City). • Water and sewer. • Quality roads. • Representation of outlying communities at local government level. • Larger harbor. • Walkable sidewalks. • Boat launch and post office. • Reliable postal service.
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable gym. • Community recreation center. • Alcohol free meeting spaces (not bars and restaurants). • Alcohol free adult entertainment (dance classes or events). • Professional entertainment.

Table 12: Missing Amenities and Services on the Kenai Peninsula from survey responses.

Respondents were also asked to rank infrastructure asset development by importance. Top ranked infrastructure projects included transportation, ports and harbors, and broadband.

Infrastructure on the Kenai Peninsula

Priorities for infrastructure development in the borough by respondents.

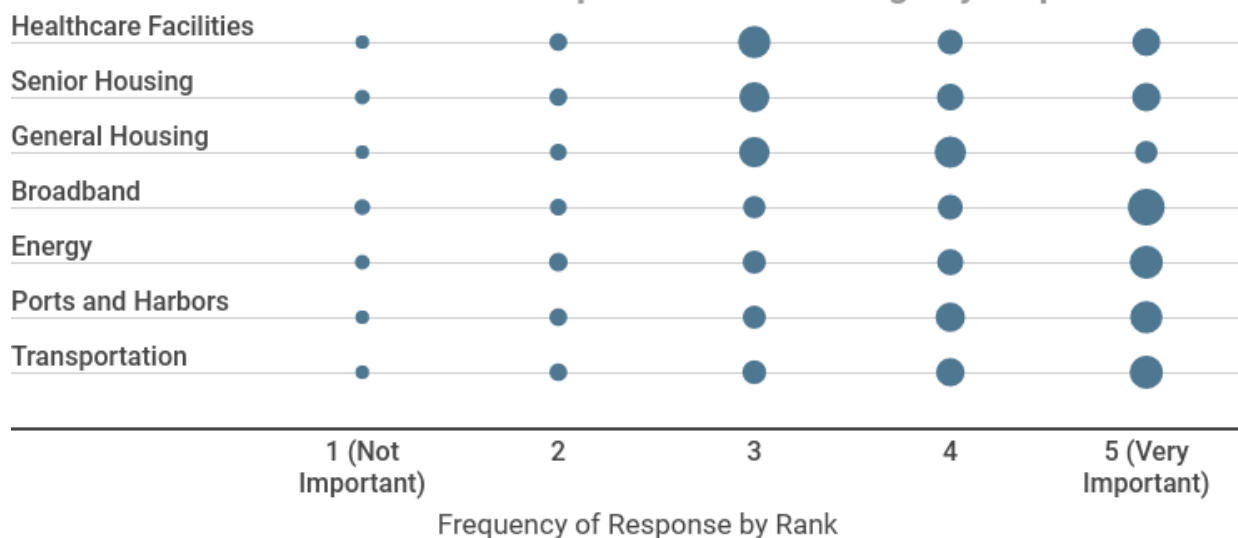


Figure 55: Priorities for infrastructure development in the borough by respondents.

Focused industry development opportunities are another component of the CEDS. Residents were asked to rank how supportive they were of developing. Top ranked industries included:

- Fisheries;
- Health Care;
- Tourism; and,
- Agriculture.

Industry on the Kenai Peninsula

Priorities for industry development in the borough by respondents.

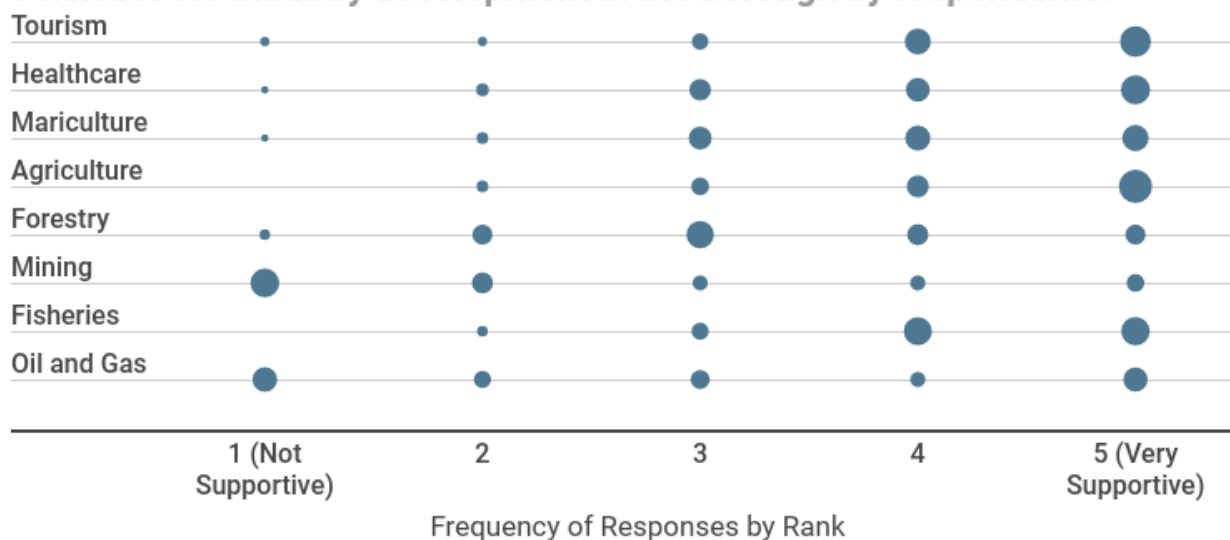


Figure 56: Priorities for industry development in the borough by respondents.

Finally, residents were asked a series of questions about their positions between two economic development extremes. These question included population development, development of government services, and land development.

Economic Development on the Kenai Peninsula

Positions on economic development options in the borough by respondents.

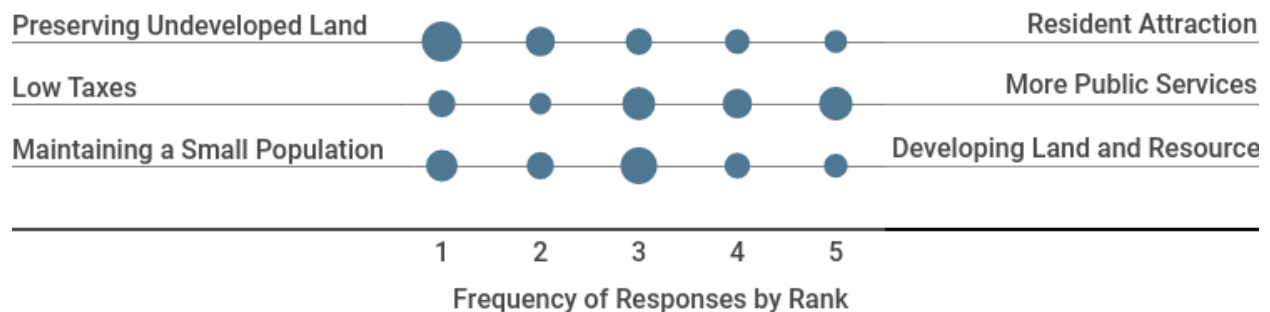


Figure 57: Positions on economic development options in the borough by respondents.

Projects and Other Opportunities

Survey respondents were asked two open ended questions to determine their interest in specific projects in the borough and other economic development opportunities. Responses included:

Projects to Improve Quality of Life:

- Bridge from Funny River Road to Sterling to help road congestion, reliable airlines, efforts to curb drug problems and reduce criminal activity
- Investing more into sustainable resources and the jobs/more affordable utilities that industry could provide; borough/municipal-provided broadband; better/more drug rehab programs/facilities on the peninsula so recovering individuals do not have to travel out to get help and can stay closer to family
- More senior housing with increasing levels of assistance built in
- Repair the bluff in Old Town, Kenai.
- Accessible and reliable internet, affordable housing, more childcare options (esp. after school).
- Conservation of natural resources for the use of many for the long-term future. Do not sell borough/state/public land, keep it open for all.
- Less liberal arts investment - more infrastructure investment.
- Public transportation.
- Increase broadband access, increase cell phone technologies so younger families and people can telecommute and contribute to the tax base; dissolve the senior citizen property exemption.
- A deep-water port, airport expansion, and a rail line.
- A 24-hour fitness place with childcare (during normal hours) a larger harbor for more jobs, more parks within the city, specific walking trails, dog park where dogs can be off leash, benches on the spit path, a fitness park in the city limits (Homer)
- Complete Homer wayfinding project, including wireless access/mapping to it. A really nice Italian restaurant.
- Home solar and wind projects. Battery backup systems.

- Creating one to two seats on the Homer city council to represent surrounding communities that shop there, own businesses there but refuse to live under their communist rule and pay their ridiculous property taxes.
- Re-pavement of East Hill road, it has fallen apart and is overdue.
- More youth programs and after school programs. More support of public schools and community colleges to educate and keep kids here.
- Better road maintenance, lower property taxes for businesses.
- Making central peninsula more walkable/bikeable. Fostering local food/restaurant excellence-partner with AVTEC culinary institute. Develop more housing variety (apts., cabins, tiny homes, community designed housing instead of just single-family home subdivisions).
- Limit traffic through residential neighborhoods and move it to main traffic corridors.
- Sell off some borough land for development. State land too.
- Small business support.
- Access to trails at Kachemak state park. More trails. Sidewalks.
- Better roads, more plowing.
- Post office and closer access to Sterling highway.
- Getting more public lands into private ownership.
- A full employment economy where everyone is paid a livable wage. A ceiling on how much people make. No one needs hundreds of thousands, millions or billions of dollars to live comfortably. People who provide the basic necessities can never make such incomes so why should we allow a select few.
- Bike trails connecting communities.
- More supports for working families and younger workers. More starter housing, childcare and before and after school programs
- Something to make cost of living cheaper, like cheaper energy. Get container ships to unload locally. Extend railroad to Homer. Lift prohibitions on box stores.
- Access to covered Stages and concert venues. On the job training stipend programs.
- More public spaces - parks and trails
- Better roads on SKP, Senior residential complex, cultural and art activities, build small southern KP Career and construction/ maritime training center.
- More accountability for services provided. Borough contractors often waste or unfairly collect a lot of tax money.
- Low income and senior housing, road maintenance, lower energy costs.
- Recreation for teens and seniors
- Fix more of the highways and roads. Some good work has been done, but there is more to do. Create more protected park lands. Add layers of protection to navigable waterways. Begin the shift borough-wide to greener sources of energy. Improve the funding for our schools and for Kenai Peninsula College.
- Development of sustainable economy, no extraction (no oil/gas exploration).
- State of Alaska Office in Anchor Point DJJ, HSS. And if the borough took an interest in Alut Avenue for maintenance needs. The State of Alaska owns land out Alut Ave. and it is a good farming area.

- A public bus that goes from Fritz Creek to Homer twice a day and another that goes from Kenai to Homer twice a day.
- Gas line from slope to Nikiski.
- Recruit/encourage high tech-low impact companies to relocate here. Distance working is so easy now that highly productive, highly compensated people should want to live in the beauty of the peninsula and have access to the many local recreational activities.
- Fully funding public schools and universities, more public services for the poor.
- Require green space for all developments; set aside public lands for open space and access.
- Improved broadband and increased educational opportunities.
- Getting the roads to stay useable and whole year round and not be blocked with traffic. Cooperation between DOT and AST to make roads wider, or with more passing areas, and enforcement of laws concerning speed (both too fast and too slow) would be a big help.
- Some low cost housing. Better access to assisted living for seniors.
- More trails, roadside Public Use Cabins, Kenai Long Trail, Kachemak Bay Water Trail.
- Family community center.
- Bus system and continue developing recreational opportunities
- Repave Funny River.
- Lower cost of electricity and housing taxes.
- A borough wide, wildfire medication program, fire breaks.
- How the borough and city of Soldotna were run (events, etc.) pre-2020. Having zero restrictions and worry regarding events and outings.

Other Comments:

- I want to see KPB wisely use its resources, so that 100 years from now, people still have the same quality of life and access to the outdoors. We need to be intentional with our government spending, projects undertaken, and priorities, over a long-term horizon.
- Startup funding for businesses along with the coaching you do would be amazing.
- Our legislature needs to build a place people want to move to and people want to stay. Cutting spending to the bone will not accomplish that. People will only tolerate poor roads and education cuts for a short period of time before they pack up and leave. We need to invest in the state to make the state a desirable place to live. Our future relies on attracting more 20 and 30 somethings who will have kids and live here. Put them in little league and dance class. Capitalism is dependent on continuous growth. The Permanent Fund is mismanaged. Management of the fund needs to be modernized for the 21st century. That is how we move towards the future.
- Stop Kenai Old Town bluff erosion.
- Heavy equipment operators run all over public lands without permission. Motorized vehicles are tearing up public lands degrading them for our shared future use.
- Preserving the land is important: in favor of developing land for agriculture or forestry but not business buildings and more concrete, do not want a sprawled out mini city.
- We have an opportunity on the Kenai Peninsula to show the rest of the state ways that we can diversify our economy and reduce dependence on one industry (oil and gas). KPEDD has been a valuable asset in demonstrating how diverse our economy is. I hope this survey and the

resulting plan will help us further develop our diverse economy for the benefit of all residents. I am hoping we can all figure out ways to work together for the benefit of the economy and quality of life. My belief is that our economy needs to seek sustainability in all things rather than extraction to the point of non-recovery or favoring one economic development opportunity to the detriment of others (this can be across industries as well as within an industry). For instance, developing oil and gas with no concern for its impacts on other ways to generate income for the borough and its residents is not sustainable. Also, not sustainable is pitting one fishery against another (e.g., sport fishing vs. commercial fishing). It is a lot to balance and I appreciate KPEDD's work. Thank you.

- I love this area, but it is tragic to see how the state fails to manage resources like Kachemak Bay State Park—currently by collecting revenue but failing to fund basic infrastructure and staffing. There are many examples in other states regarding funding such resources and the resultant boom in revenue both for the state and local business.
- Develop and support cell technology, broadband infrastructure, and workforce development; there should be an intent to raise successful, intelligent, young humans that will want to come back to the Peninsula (if they left the area for secondary education or training) and contribute to the communities that they grew up in.
- We need at least 1 dedicated year-round taco truck in this city. Thank you and have a nice day.
- Having access to affordable health care plans is a big limiting factor to being able to afford living here and causes most private employers to not offer benefits to their employees which make us uncompetitive for key talent.
- The Kenai is the only place I feel safe during the pandemic. It is a wonderful place with amazing people and I am lucky to be here.
- Ban the Silicon Valley styled neighborhood covenants. They kill desirability to buy houses here.
- People are attracted to southern Kenai peninsula because of unique, remote character. This needs to be maintained with modest and planned growth. Strongly support implementation of income tax with Alaskans being more self-sufficient in funding our state rather than relying on the oil industry. We must take responsibility for ourselves.
- Let's not become a billionaire's playground.
- Please encourage UA System to keep campus open during summer months once able to fully open, we need access to campus during summer months, we need access to professional development testing sites and computer lab access for professional/career development. It is very concerning to me that Alaska Professional industries are expanding credential to out of state pros to serve here telephonic because Alaska does not have career mentorship, and a lot of first-generation degree completers left floundering careers unrealized. A big cohort of people 30 -50, with degrees, are working minimum wage and barely make it week to week let alone afford \$500-\$1000 in licensing fees and testing fees. But those from out of state are getting fees cut 95% to support their financial burn of taking on telephonic service to Alaska?
- I marked that the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic is not concerning to me. What is concerning to me is the effect of government overreach and unelected, unrepresentative people making decisions that affect our daily lives, that are driven by money and politics. Ignoring our laws and more importantly our constitution is of great concern to me. Preserving our civil liberties and freedom and natural and inherent rights is of utmost importance. The government needs to get out of our business, get out of schools, get out of our lives, and do the basic things but

paramount our government was put in place to protect the liberty of the people and they are failing at that. Cut all of these programs and let the people do things for themselves. If it really matters to the people they will do it themselves. Cuts to programs means cuts to the budget and less taxes, as it should be. And stand in the way of government overreach from the feds. That is the biggest thing that you can do

- Quality of life for families must include public education, childcare, access to services, and good jobs. Focus on tourism and sustainable development, alternative energy. Thank you.
- More programs for kids, youth, teens. More mental health support.
- The Borough needs to focus on sustainable, reasonable development of its land and resources – We should not succumb to the efforts by some to make Alaska a huge park.
- For our future, I would like to see a broader diversity of jobs: tech, professional services, etc. Not just more oil and gas. It is a sunset industry. We are digging ourselves a hole and selling ourselves short if we cater to oil and gas. The gas in the inlet is valuable. It is money in the bank; we'll get more for it if we hold on to it than if we use it all now.
- Limitations on noise, light, air, and water pollution definitely increase quality of life.
- The State needs to implement an income tax in order to maintain public services like snow plowing/road maintenance etc.
- Support Homer's Port and Harbor Expansion Project
- I would like to see development, but I believe that it should and can be "green". In the long run, preserving the look, feel, and usability of the land and resources can be maintained with careful management and use of the land and resources.
- The education system needs to be completely overhauled.
- Our political boundaries should be designated by our watersheds (i.e. Kachemak Bay, Anchor River, Stariski Creek, Deep Creek, Ninilchik River, Kasilof River, Etc.) Maintaining the health of each watershed is the responsibility of each landowner within the watershed. Healthy watersheds are the basis for our necessities and our economy.
- I am extremely concerned with the condition of the only access road to our community. It should be completely redesigned and rebuilt. It is dangerous.