

Mayor-Elect Bronson Transition Plan

May 17, 2021

PURPOSE: The purpose of this transition plan to provide for the orderly and efficient transition of executive power within the Municipality of Anchorage from Acting Mayor Austin Quinn-Davidson to Mayor-Elect Dave Bronson.

PROCESS: The transition plan focused on the priorities Mayor-Elect Bronson established for his administration. To clearly articulate the objectives and present a path for success, the transition plan establishes five teams responsible to develop specific action plans for implementation, starting on the first day of the Bronson Administration.

The five teams are:

- 1. Policy** - This team will review current Policies and Procedures within the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) and recommend changes, additions, or deletions. The outcome of this effort is to provide a specific list of both short and long term policy changes for consideration by Mayor-Elect Bronson for implementation to serve as the guiding principles for his administration.
- 2. Economic Recovery** – The Anchorage economy has been in decline the past six years. The COVID pandemic accelerated the decline and has caused serious negative economic impacts to the private sector.

While The Municipality of Anchorage has a significant role to play in this economic recovery, the numerous non-government and semi-government organizations, like the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, Anchorage Community Development Authority, Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, and many others must work with the Municipality to develop economic stimulation programs and incentives for improving our economy. This team will identify from each organization specific achievable short-term objectives.

One of the first actions for my Administration will be to establish an Economic Recovery team to create the framework for identifying short-term and long-term objectives for the economic recovery of Anchorage. The team will focus on reversing the drastic decline in economic activity in downtown Anchorage and identify opportunities for revitalizing downtown. This will include a focus on the tourism industry, as well as bringing in more office business to fill the empty spaces. Retail sales is another serious concern. Downtown cannot be turned into a “summer-only” activity. Year-round businesses must remain downtown in order to bring people into town year-round.

This team will reach out to existing retail sales companies to identify the critical elements that an innovative program would require to retain business. This may include tax abatement programs, joint business marketing programs, a review of the current parking program and parking garage capabilities to determine ways to increase activities, and/or implementation of a specific improvement zone incentive program authorized by federal law (such as the SBA HUBZone program) which has proven successful in other municipalities to revitalize underutilized business zones.

A focus of this team will also include a comprehensive review of the Port of Alaska. The Port of Alaska is one of the most important transportation links in Alaska and must be structured to be competitive and successful; however the port is in need of expansion and improvements. This project is one of the highest priorities for my administration.

Anchorage is a robust sport city. To stimulate an economic recovery, this team will address the role that Parks and Recreation programs and facilities may provide. Facility enhancements, such as ways the MOA may be able to increase venues from existing facilities, like increased use of the Sullivan Arena, to expand sports programs that attract more sporting events to Anchorage will be a focus topic. Regaining certification as a Division I hockey venue is one area that would boost an economic recovery.

3. Personnel & Organizational Structure

- a. **Personnel** - This team will review the current personnel structure within the MOA and provide recommendations for any potential structural changes that would improve the efficiency of delivering municipal services, as well as to create cost savings associated with these changes. The team will also identify all appointed positions within the administration, recommend consolidation and/or reductions, develop a recruitment process to fill executive appointment positions, and establish a process and data bank for storing letters of interest and resumes.
- b. **Organizational Structure** – Over the years the size and structure of the municipal government has changed and expanded. The current structure may not be optimum to facilitate community and business development. The organizational structure of the MOA may also not be conducive to efficient operations and accessibility for the public. The structure may be a contributing factor as to the high cost of living and business stagnation in Anchorage.

This team will evaluate the current structure of the MOA government and provide recommendations to consolidate, eliminate, create, or out-source any function currently being accomplished by the MOA in order to reduce costs,

increase efficiencies, and provide more transparent and greater accessibility to the public. Recognizing that the organizational structure must be approved by the Assembly, this team will out-reach to existing assembly members to inquire about ideas for organizational changes to be considered by my Administration.

Part of the review will include a comparison between the 2009 and 2020 MOA organizational charts to identify both positive and negatives changes that occurred. From this the team will provide suggested changes for implementation at the start of my term.

- 4. Budget** – The past few years the MOA budget has been increasing with additional services and taxes that have not resulted in a more prosperous community. Rather, the economic base for Anchorage has been declining throughout this same period. It is essential the municipal government budget not be a burden to residents and businesses.

This team will review the current MOA budget and develop recommendations for adjustments to the 2021 budget and identify budget objectives for preparation of the forthcoming 2022 budget. Specifically, there may be some budget changes that can be accomplished by the Executive Branch within the existing budget, creating the benchmark for the 2022 budget development process.

To maintain budget discipline, the team will consider potential policy implications for ensuring that new bond debt for the MOA does not increase the existing bond debt already approved by the voters. The objective is to review the bond obligations and projected new bond requirements and provide an analysis of reducing bond level for the MOA while maintaining adequate infrastructure of economic growth. The review will evaluate potential retirement and/or refinancing bonds to reduce debt service costs, with consideration for a completing an independent bond audit.

Concurrent with this activity will be a review of past actions by the MOA that created new taxes, such as the gas and alcohol taxes, to ensure all taxes collected within the MOA are in compliance with the voter approved Tax Cap. Recommendations will be developed addressing the impact the Tax Cap has on sustainment of services.

This team will consider moving towards a multi-year budget planning process, targeting a 2-3 year window.

5. Public Safety

- a. Anchorage Police Department – Anchorage has one of the finest police departments in America, with some of the least corruption and fewest incidents of police misconduct. However, Anchorage also has one of the highest violent crime rates in the nation. The focus of the Bronson

administration is to reverse this trend and make Anchorage one of the safest cities in the country. This team will review current municipal ordinances, regulations, and policies pertaining to the operation of the Anchorage Police Department and provide any recommendations for changes, additions, or deletions to decrease the criminal activities in Anchorage. The objective of this team will be to ensure law enforcement in Anchorage has the resources and authorities necessary to reduce the city crime rate, while protecting the fundamental rights of both citizens and officers. The team will also initiate the search for the next Anchorage Police Department Chief, and will have a short list ready for presentation to Mayor-Elect Bronson prior to July 1, 2021.

- i. The candidates for Anchorage Police Chief will require a complete background check, including, but not limited to, review of professional qualifications, educational transcript review and verification, personnel and training records, credit check, and reference checks by the Personnel Committee.
- b. Anchorage Fire Department – Operational assessment and cooperative agreements need to be reviewed for maximum benefit of service and operational efficiency. Including but not limited to evaluation of current AFD use of Emergency Management Services staffing, Chugiak Volunteer Fire Department and Girdwood Fire Department partnerships to ensure maximum benefit is gained from these relationships, and appropriate staffing models are employed municipality wide.
 - i. The candidates for Anchorage Fire Chief will require a complete background check, including, but not limited to, review of professional qualifications, educational transcript review and verification, personnel and training records, and reference checks by the Personnel Committee.
- c. Vagrancy and Homelessness – Vagrancy and homelessness has exploded in Anchorage over the past six years. Current policies have enabled homelessness and not provided solutions to reduce both the number of homeless and the underlying causes of homelessness in Anchorage. This team will develop a framework plan to address the chronic vagrancy and homelessness problem plaguing Anchorage, recognizing that many of the homeless have underlying issues that must be addressed in order to improve their quality of life and reduce the cost of simply warehousing these people through a turn-style system that has not reduce the problem or helped these individuals become productive members of society. This is one of the top priorities of my Administration.

6. Communications - This team will develop and implement a transition communications plan that provides transparency of the process and objectives to be achieved by the Bronson administration.

TRANSITION TEAM LEADERSHIP: It is important that each team be led by a highly knowledgeable and skilled leader who can recruit and organize team members. Team leaders will be responsible to conduct all necessary meetings, bring the team to closure on issues, and write the final report for submission to Mayor-Elect Bronson.

Transition Team Co-Leaders - Craig Campbell and Larry Baker

Final written reports will be developed by each team and will be presented to Mayor-Elect Bronson at a final Transition Team Leaders Meeting prior to taking office.