



# Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks & Recreation Carlson Center Feasibility Study Final Presentation November 17, 2020



We will begin in a few minutes

How we'll gather your input:

- Polls
- Chat: submit your questions

## GREENPLAY<sub>LLC</sub>

*The Leading Edge In Parks, Recreation,  
And Open Space Consulting*

# Your Team



Pat O'Toole,  
Principal  
Principal in Charge  
GreenPlay, LLC



Tom Diehl, Principal  
Project Manager,  
GreenPlay, LLC



## Poll Question

How many people including yourself are participating in tonight's webinar

1 - just myself

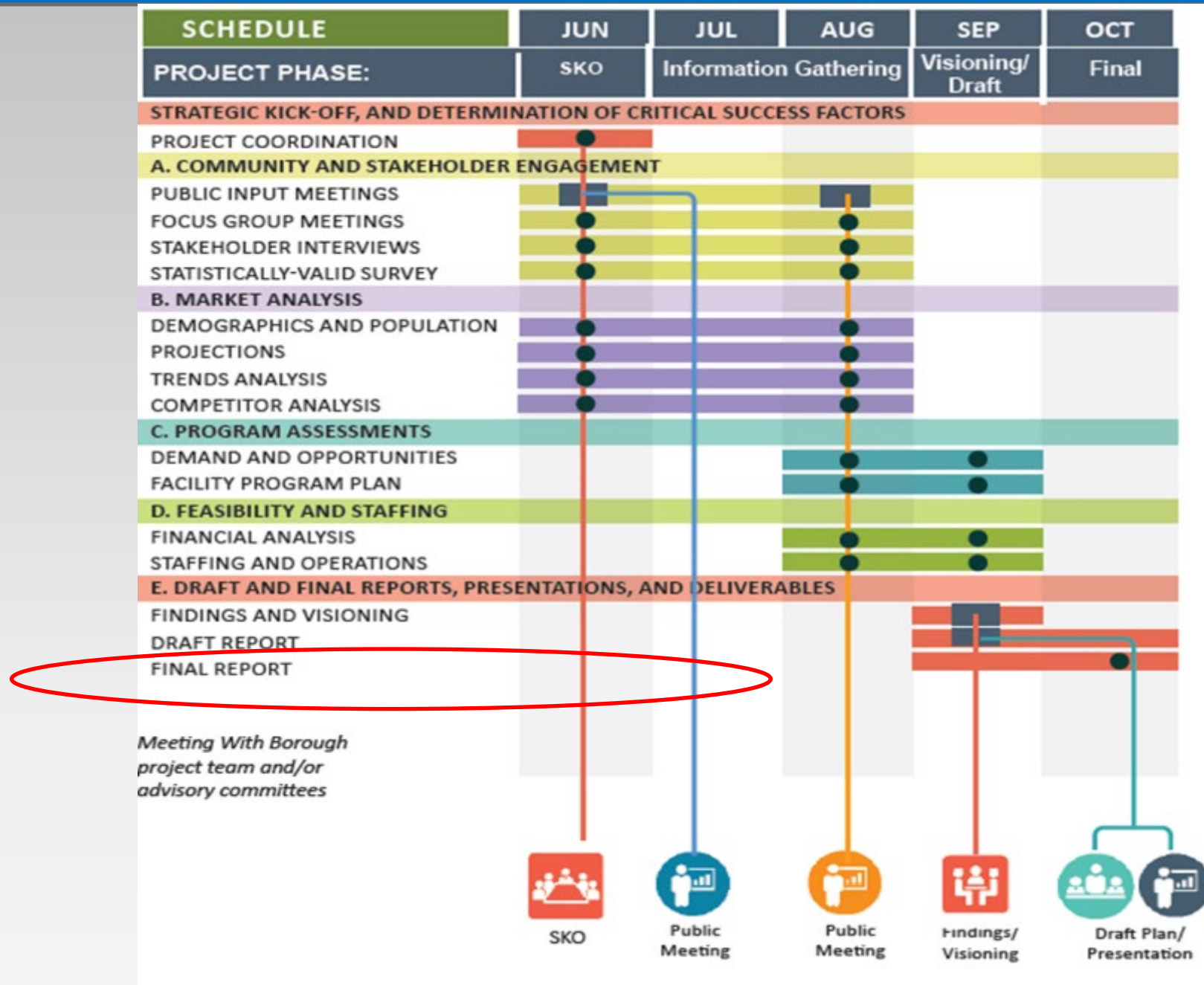
2 – myself and one other – total of 2

3 - myself and two others – total of 3

4 - myself and three others – total of 4

5 – more than 4

# The Process



## FNSB Voices



July 27, 2020 - 2 Focus Groups - 16 participants



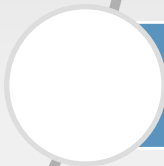
July 29, 2020 - 4 Stakeholder Interviews -14 participants



July 30, 2020 Public Zoom Webinar – 118 participants



**August/September 2020 - 1,845 Completed Surveys**



October 29, 2020 Findings Webinar – 52 participants



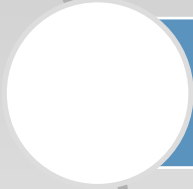
November 17, 2020 Final Report Webinar Presentation

## Poll Question

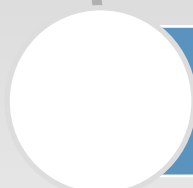
Please  
indicate  
which public  
engagement  
activities you  
participated  
in.



1 - July 27, 2020 - 2 Focus Groups



2 - July 29, 2020 - 4 Stakeholder Interviews



3 - July 30, 2020 Public Zoom Webinar



4 - August/September Needs Assessment Survey 2020



5 - October 29, 2020 Findings Webinar

Carlson  
Center SMG  
of Alaska  
management  
agreement  
expires on  
June 30,  
2021



Objectives for this plan include:

Engagement of community, staff, and stakeholders

Identification of community needs

Evaluation of current facility operations & maintenance

Assessment of FNSB Parks and Recreation

Assessment of partnerships,

Development of recommendations for the best method to manage the Carlson Center

# FNSB Carlson Center Market Analysis

A key component of determining the feasibility of the Carlson Center is to look at alternative providers who offer similar services through a market analysis. This inventory of like-service providers can assist with understanding the area's current facilities and how they may overlap with the potential services of the Carlson Center.

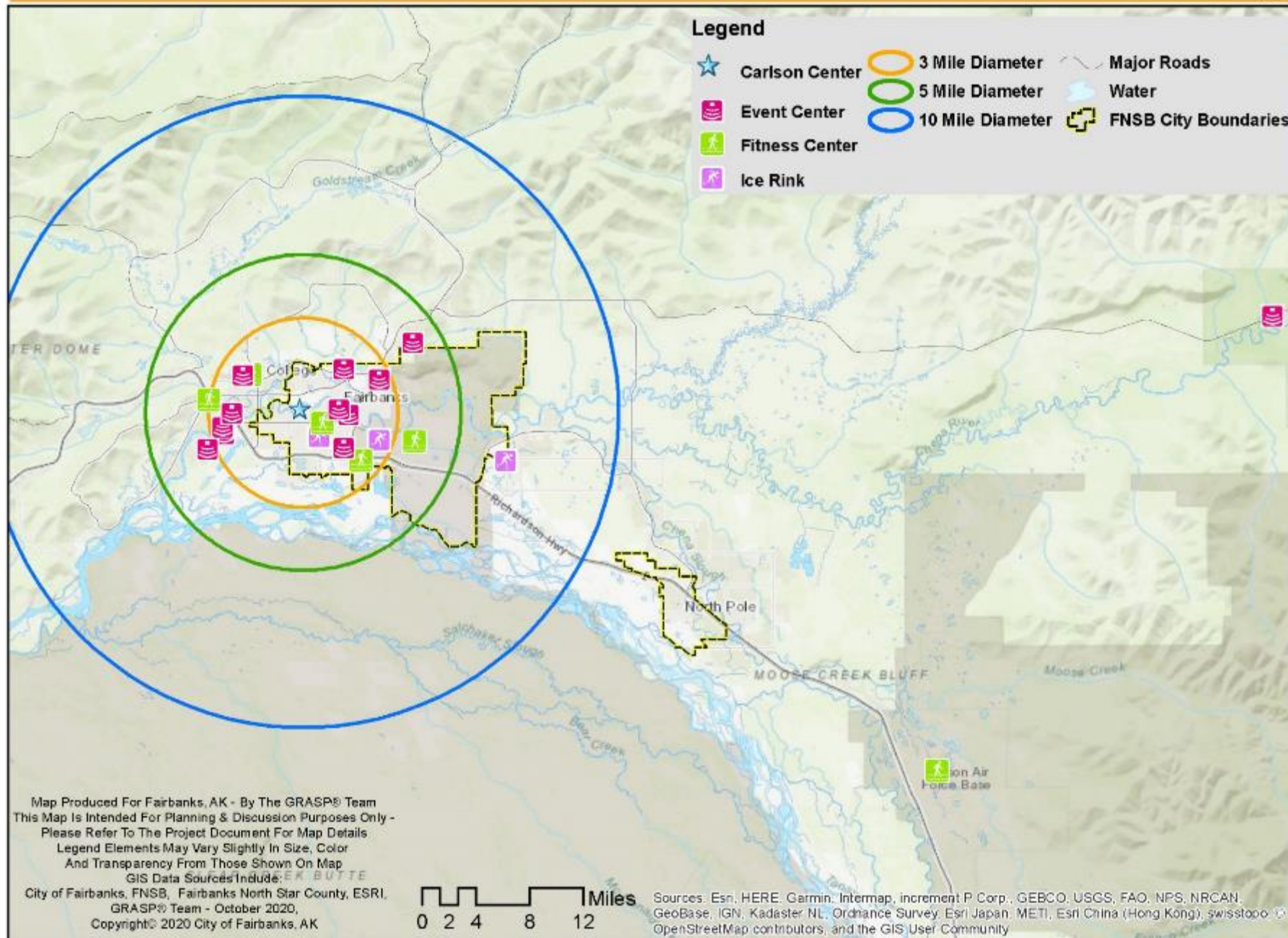
FITNESS CENTER	EVENT CENTER	ICE ARENA
<p>Defined as having multi-function space for cardio and weight equipment.</p> <p>Some facilities offered group fitness classes, a leisure/lap pool, tanning, walking track and/or multi-use sports court.</p>	<p>Defined as having rental space for small and/or large functions, such as birthday parties, weddings, etc.</p> <p>Many of the facilities were hotel rooms, lodges, or resorts with some being basic community centers with rental space.</p>	<p>Defined as having one or more ice sheets generally available for public skate or private sport use.</p>



# FNSB Carlson Center Alternative Providers

FITNESS CENTER	EVENT CENTER	ICE ARENA
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<p>The Alaska Club (South) <b>Within 3 Miles</b></p>	<p>Centennial Center for the Arts <b>Within 1 Mile</b></p>	<p>University of Alaska Fairbanks Patty Ice Arena <b>Within 3 miles</b></p>
<p>Planet Fitness <b>Within 3 Miles</b></p>	<p>J P Jones Community Center <b>Within 3 Miles</b></p>	<p>Fairbanks North Star Borough Big Dipper Ice Arena <b>Within 3 miles</b></p>
<p>University of Alaska Student Recreation Center <b>Within 3 Miles</b></p>	<p>The Westmark Fairbanks Hotel &amp; Conference Center <b>Within 3 Miles</b></p>	<p>Moral Welfare and Recreation Physical Fitness Center (PFC) <b>Within 3 miles</b></p>
<p>Moral Welfare and Recreation Physical Fitness Center (PFC) <b>Within 5 Miles</b></p>	<p>Fairbanks Dog Musers Assn. Musers Hall <b>Within 3 Miles</b></p>	<p>Polar Ice Arena <b>Within 10 miles</b></p>
<p>The Alaska Club (West) <b>Within 5 Miles</b></p>	<p>Pike's Waterfront Lodge <b>Within 3 Miles</b></p>	<p>City of Delta Junction Liewer- Olmstead Ice Arena <b>Within 100 miles</b></p>
<p>Eielson Air Force Base Baker Field House Fitness and Sports Center <b>Within 50 Miles</b></p>	<p>Fairbanks Princess Riverside Lodge <b>Within 3 Miles</b></p>	<p>University of Alaska Anchorage Seawolf Sports Complex <b>Within 300 Miles</b></p>
	<p>Vivlamore Event Center &amp; Lounge <b>Within 3 Miles</b></p>	<p>Municipality of Anchorage Ben Boeke Ice Arena <b>Within 300 Miles</b></p>
	<p>Wedgewood Resort <b>Within 3 Miles</b></p>	<p>Municipality of Anchorage Sullivan Arena <b>Within 300 Miles</b></p>
	<p>University of Alaska Wood Center/Museum <b>Within 3 Miles</b></p>	
	<p>Birch Hill Recreation Area <b>Within 3 Miles</b></p>	
	<p>River's Edge Resort <b>Within 5 Miles</b></p>	
	<p>La Quinta Inn &amp; Suites by Wyndham Fairbanks Airport <b>Within 5 Miles</b></p>	
	<p>Chena Hot Springs Resort <b>Within 50 Miles</b></p>	

# FNSB Carlson Center and Surrounding Alternative Providers



# FNSB Carlson Center Alternative Fitness Centers Key Takeaways

**Fitness Centers:** within five miles of the Carlson Center:

- Five fitness facilities, two of which are restricted in access

**There are no "true" multipurpose community centers with recreational activities for all ages/interests in the service area.**

# FNSB Carlson Center Alternative Event Center Key Takeaways

**Event Centers:** within five miles of the Carlson Center

- Ten alternative providers were identified as event centers.

**The market is saturated with facilities offering specialized room space for smaller or personal gatherings.**

# FNSB Carlson Center Alternative Ice Rinks Key Takeaways

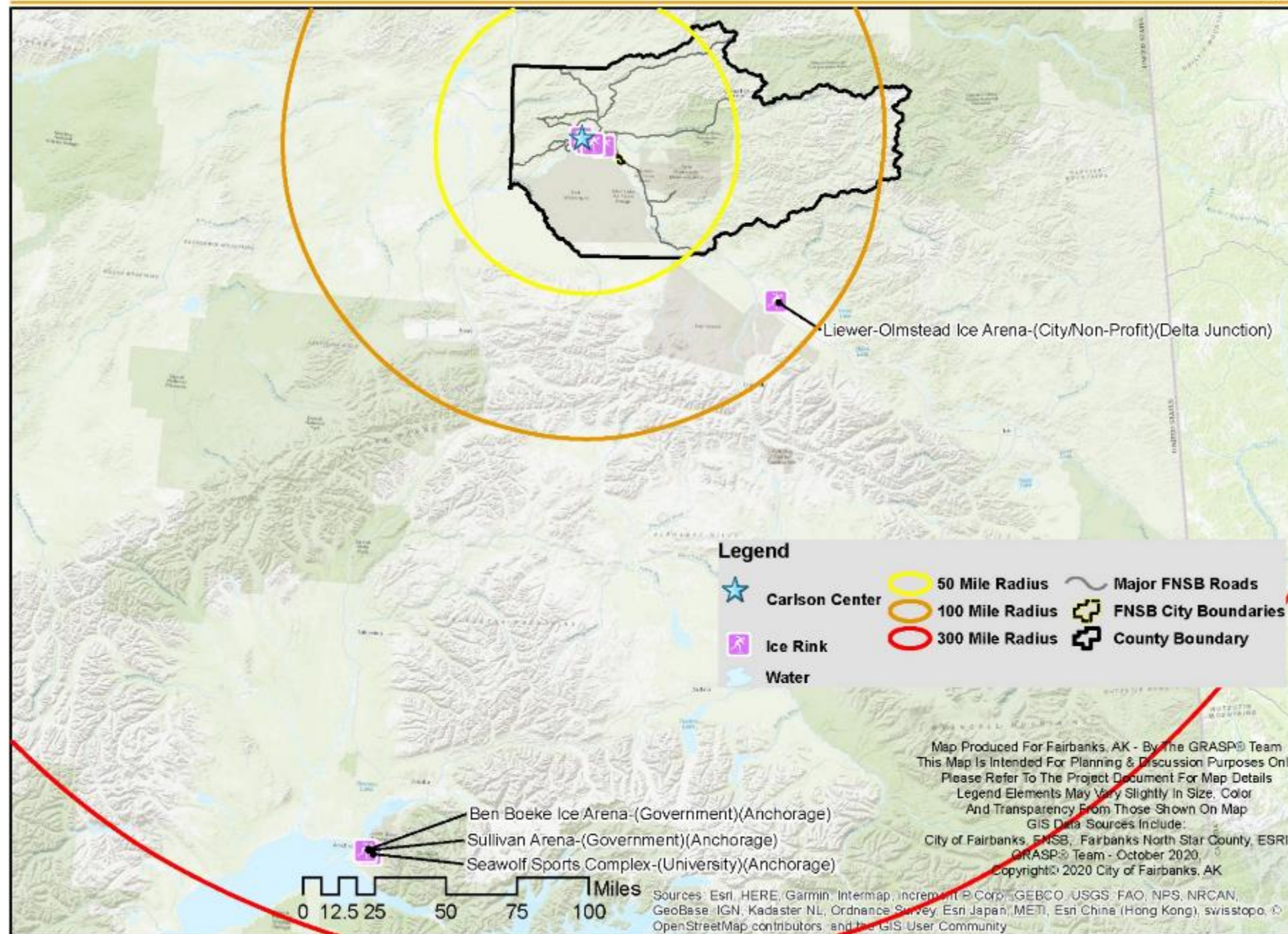
**Ice Arenas:** within ten miles of the Carlson Center,

- Four ice arenas which offer opportunities for public skate and ice rentals for team sports.

**The market is saturated with ice arenas, and the addition of that amenity in the Carlson Center may be considered a duplication of these services.**



# FNSB Carlson Center and Regional Ice Rinks



# Public Engagement 2,045+

- Convention/Event users
- Key Stakeholders
- Hockey, Soccer, Basketball
- Military
- University
- Rotary Club
- Veterans
- Business Owners
- Parks & Recreation staff
- Borough Leadership
- University Athletics
- ASM Global

## Participants

**2 Focus Groups - 16 participants**

**4 Stakeholder Interviews -14 participants**

**1<sup>st</sup> Public Zoom Webinar – 118 participants**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Public Zoom Webinar – 52 participants**

**1,845 Completed Surveys**

# Key Survey Findings



## PARTICIPATION

83% of invite respondents are current users of activities/programs/facilities at the Carlson Center. Open link respondents are more likely to be participants, with 88% being current users. Use of the Alaska Centennial Center for the Arts is somewhat less although still substantial at 68-69% for both samples.



## INCREASE USE

More programs/community events (73%), improved communication about offerings (51%), more facilities/amenities (41%), and lower pricing/user fees for rentals (41%) were among the top items that would increase use of the Carlson Center.



## IMPORTANCE OF RENOVATING THE CARLSON CENTER

Renovating the Carlson Center is somewhat or very important to about two-thirds of invite respondents (64%). Open link respondents exhibit slightly stronger opinions on the importance of renovating the Carlson Center (71% somewhat or very important).



## COMBINING OPERATIONS OF THE CENTENNIAL CENTER

Fewer although a slight majority support moving or combining operations of the Centennial Center with the Carlson Center (56%). Comments note the need for a “mid-size” facility like the Centennial Center and that it should be rebuilt and not eliminated (financial support for this effort is also suggested). Carlson Center does not have the variety/capacity to accommodate everything.



# Key Survey Findings

## FUTURE NEEDS

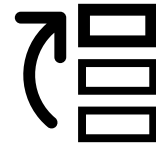


By far, more special events—including concerts, expos, festivals, non-profit events, educational seminars, parties, and wedding receptions—is the most important need for the future at the Carlson Center (70%), followed by utilizing the Carlson Center as more of an inclusive community center for all members of the public (47%). Support for UAF hockey along with new ice is more of a secondary consideration.

## INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY CENTER



Many comments also call for and support the Carlson Center becoming more community oriented and focused on a variety of sports/activities (in addition to hockey), large events, and education, while developing and maintaining the Centennial Center for arts, community, and smaller group events.



## NEW SPACES/AMENITIES

An indoor walking track is the most important amenity that residents would like to see included in the renovation of the Carlson Center (35%). Indoor playground (31%) and indoor turf field (28%) are important as well. The open link sample is especially enthusiastic about the indoor turf field (41%). The need for more opportunities for entertainment, activity, and to interact with others (given Fairbanks' isolated location and long, dark winters) is expressed throughout the comments.

## INDOOR TURF FIELD



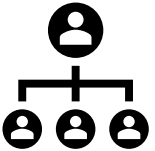
Many of the comments specifically focus on the need for an indoor turf field or field house, particularly for soccer and tennis, and that the focus should not be solely on hockey. Fairbanks' competitive disadvantage (compared to other communities) is also noted.

# Key Survey Findings



## VALUES & VISION

Providing affordable activities and facilities to all, continuing to focus on providing family-oriented activities, and ensuring parks and recreation opportunities are accessible to all residents are the top three most important values for Fairbanks North Star Borough to focus on in its mission for the future.



## MANAGEMENT SCENARIOS

The hybrid management scenario (Borough manages facilities and hires contractors as needed) is the most preferred by 40%, although a large number, 29%, don't know or are uninformed on the issue.



## FUNDING SOURCES

More private/public partnerships and sponsorships/naming rights have strong support as potential funding sources. There is also relatively strong support for a bond referendum for specific projects, but not for new property or sales taxes. Support for a hospitality tax is more mixed.



## COMMUNICATION

The most preferred methods to receive information on facilities, services, and programs provided at the Carlson Center is through local media (63%), followed by social media (56%), and email (32%). Results demonstrate a need to maintain diversify in communication methods.

# Findings Recurring Themes

- Maximize usage of Carlson Center
- Serve entire community, increased usage-daily
- Provide an indoor recreation space during the long cold winter
- Recreation, sports, athletic & fitness programs for entire community
- Develop community supported Carlson Center mission/vision
- Indoor turf, playground, hockey, soccer, walking track/adventure course
- Large multi-purpose space - for recreation, trade shows, conferences, events, concerts, etc.
- Lower fees and increase value to community
- Fiscal/Cost Recovery
- Operated by FNSB versus private management company

# Community Needs Identified (1 of 2)

## **Desired Programs**

- Fitness/wellness activities
- Indoor athletic and recreation activities
  - Field and court activities
- Bring the outside indoors during the winter

## **Desired Events**

- Community-wide events
- Smaller trade shows
- Indoor soccer, baseball, softball, lacrosse, flag football, indoor football, basketball, volleyball

## **Future Opportunities**

- Maximize usage
- Daily usage for entire community
- Consolidating Parks & Recreation functions into Carlson Center

# Community Needs Identified (2 of 2)

## **Additional Amenities**

- Indoor turf, Indoor ropes course/obstacle /adventure course/indoor playground
- Walking track, adventure track, competitive track
- Multipurpose space
- Fitness/weights/cardio space,
- Gymnasium space
- Food options, Kitchen

## **Carlson Center Primary Function**

- Maximize community access and participation
- Indoor community gathering
- Physical recreation/fitness space
- Venue for large events (economic impact to community)
- Multipurpose uses/activities



# Potential Building Elements





# Potential Building Elements





# Potential Building Elements





# Potential Building Elements





# Potential Building Elements



## **Future Vision for The Carlson Center**

- Carlson Center should function as a Community Center
- FNSB should manage the day-to-day operations of the Carlson Center using contractors to assist with special events
- The Carlson Center should be renovated to be a Community Center to include:
  - Large multiple purpose space consisting of:
    - Gymnasium space
    - Indoor turf
    - Adventure course that runs throughout the activity spaces
    - Fitness/wellness space
    - Indoor playground
    - Multiple-purpose meeting rooms
    - Commercial kitchen

## Poll Question

Which of the following program spaces in the Carlson Community Center would you and/or your family utilize?

1. Gymnasium Space

2. Indoor Turf

3. Adventure Course that runs throughout the activity spaces

4. Fitness/Wellness Space

5. Multipurpose Meeting Rooms - Program/Rental Space

6. Commercial Kitchen

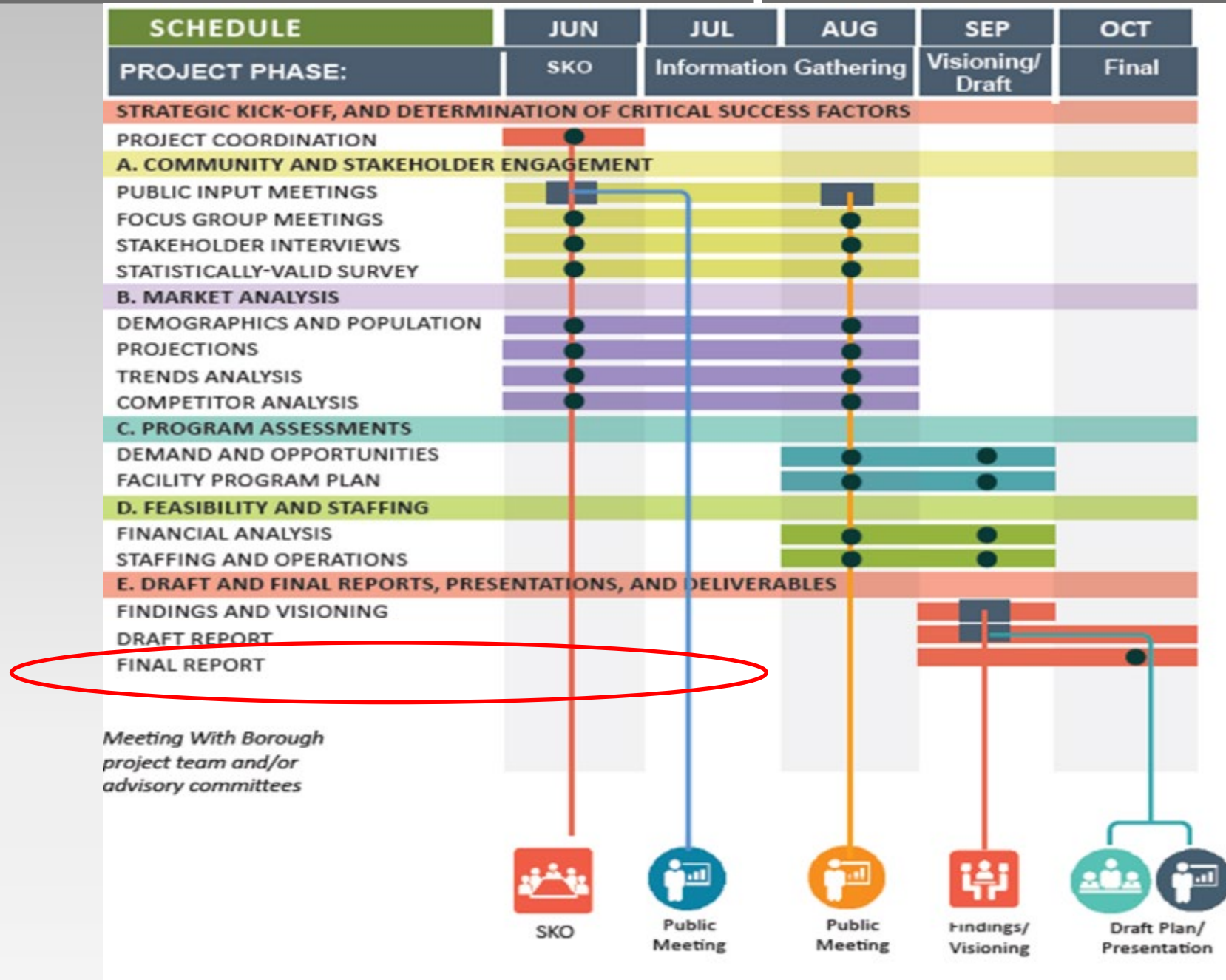
7. None

## **Recommendations/Action Plan**

- The FNSB should begin managing the Carlson Center effective July 1, 2021
- The FNSB should operate the facility with an emphasis on multi-generational programs and activities that maximizes the buildings usage, and provides low-cost recreational opportunities
- The FNSB should add a fulltime position asap – Carlson Center General Manager to oversee the transition of the Carlson Center to a Community Center and to manage the facility going forward
- The FNSB should conduct a Conceptual Design Study to determine potential floorplans and square footage needs for each identified activity space, and to determine detailed Operation & Maintenance projections to include all potential costs and revenue



# Next Steps



Comments?

Suggestions?

Feedback?

# Thank You For Your Time & Consideration!

Pat O'Toole , Principal  
Principal in Charge  
Direct: 303-345-1804  
[Pato@greenplayllc.com](mailto:Pato@greenplayllc.com)

Tom Diehl, CPRP, Principal  
Project Manager  
Direct: 804.833.6994  
[Tdiehl@greenplayllc.com](mailto:Tdiehl@greenplayllc.com)

