

# ***Funny River***

## **Community Plan 2004**



Restaurant



Community Center



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# ***Funny River***

## ***Alaska***

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## I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

On April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004 a public meeting was held in the community of Funny River to discuss the possible interest in the development of a Long Range Community Economic Development Plan.

As a result of the initial public meeting, a second meeting was held on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2004 to discuss changes and additions to the community plan. These two meetings (along with a meeting held on August 17<sup>th</sup>) were attended by over 30 community members, including leaders from the Funny River Community Council. The Administrative Coordinator for the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (EDD) facilitated the preparation of the community plan. The development of this community plan represents a commitment from the Funny River community to establish goals and objectives related to the development of a diversified economic base.

## II. DESCRIPTION OF AREA

### Physical Description:

The community of Funny River, Alaska is located approximately 10 miles east of the City of Soldotna, Alaska and includes a wide area surrounding Funny River Road. The area is bordered on the south by the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, on the north by the Kenai River, and on the east by the confluence of the Kenai and Killey Rivers. The only access to the community is by traveling Funny River Road, which is a paved secondary road, maintained by the State of Alaska. The Kenai River, Funny River, and Brown's Lake, located within the community, provide numerous recreational opportunities for both residents and seasonal visitors. The area encompasses 27.2 sq. miles of land and 2.1 sq. miles of water. Average winter temperatures range from 4 to 22; summer temperatures average from 46 to 65. Average annual precipitation is 20 inches.

### History and Culture:

3.5% of the population are Alaska Native or part Native. There is no school in Funny River; 61 students are bused to Soldotna area schools. The community is primarily non-Native, however, a large portion of the land in this area is owned by Alaska Native corporations. The Central Peninsula Sports Center in Soldotna offers an ice rink, racquetball courts, weight room and meeting facilities. During the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 621 total housing units, and 343 were vacant. 307 of these vacant housing units are used only seasonally. 257 residents were employed. The unemployment rate at that time was 23.05%, although 54.75% of all adults were not in the work force. The median household income was \$43,047, per capita income was \$22,648, and 3.5% of residents were living below the poverty level.

### Population:

The population for the Funny River area from the 2000 census is 636.

### Economy and Transportation:

Nearby Kenai and Soldotna offer a variety of employment opportunities. Sport fishing is the major attraction in this area of the Peninsula. The Kenai River offers top trophy king salmon fishing during June and July. A 97 lb. 4 oz. world record king salmon was taken from the Kenai River in 1985, and catching kings of over 60 pounds is not uncommon here.

The Soldotna and Kenai airports serve local air traffic. The Sterling Highway provides access to Anchorage and other destinations. The Funny River area supports several fish camps, RV parks and various commercial activities. Businesses currently located in the community include excavating contractors, a trusses contractor, a golf course, restaurant and bakery (seasonal). In addition, several bed and breakfasts are located in the Funny River Road area.

### Public Facilities and Services:

The Kenai Peninsula Borough provides emergency and hospital services through service areas and maintains local roads. Voluntary public services provided in the community include the Funny River Chamber of Commerce and emergency services. A Community Center was constructed and is utilized for community events and activities.

## **III. FUNNY RIVER VISION STATEMENT**

To assist in the development of a long-range vision statement, the Funny River Action Team developed the following list of positive attributes related to living in the Funny River area:

- Privacy
- Rural, but accessible to services
- The area's residents
- Low crime rate
- Good place to raise children
- Beauty
- Open space
- Relaxing drive
- Potential for expansion
- Peace and quiet
- Abundant recreational opportunities
- Abundant wildlife
- Kenai and Funny Rivers
- Public lake access (Browns Lake)

- Fishing
- Feeling of community spirit
- Chamber of Commerce

**In addition, to better assist in the development of a vision statement, the Action Team developed the following “needs” list to help guide them in future long range economic development activities. (It should be noted that the following list has not been prioritized by the Action Team.)**

- Increased visitor facilities
- Additional opportunities for small business development
- Increased public fishing access on the river
- Implementation of an annual fish stocking program in Browns Lake
- Private ownership of tourism related facilities
- Increased road improvements
- Increased youth related activities and seasonal employment opportunities
- Acquire Borough lands for community and tourism related facilities

Utilizing the above information, the Funny River Action Team developed the following vision statement:

**FULLY UTILIZE THE COMMUNITY’S HUMAN AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC DIVERSITY THROUGH THE ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT OF RESIDENT AND VISITOR ACCESS AREAS AND RELATED RECREATIONAL FACILITIES WHILE PRESERVING THE AREA’S RURAL LIFESTYLE AND ITS NATURAL AND SCENIC RESOURCES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.**

#### **IV. COMMUNITY CHALLENGES**

The following is a list of challenges related to the economic development of Funny River:

- Fire protection services provided by the Kenai Peninsula Borough do not extend into the community. The community lacks basic public services such as a public school or post office.
- The Funny River area provides year ‘round recreational opportunities but lacks adequate facilities, including toilets, river access areas, overnight campgrounds and trail systems.
- The youth of the Funny River area is recognized as one of the community’s strongest assets. Youth related activities in the area are limited by the need for both recreational and employment opportunities.
- Small business opportunities are limited due to the community’s isolation and difficult access.
- Kenai Peninsula Borough road system needs upgrading to Borough standards.

## V. COMMUNITY GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION ITEMS

The following goals, objectives, and action items have been developed by the Funny River community plan participants to promote economic development and diversification. *(It should be noted that the following action items have not been prioritized. Project prioritization will occur as annual project plans are developed and submitted to potential funding sources.)*

**GOAL A: PROMOTE LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL INTERAGENCY COORDINATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A KENAI RIVER BRIDGE TO ALLOW ADDITIONAL ACCESS TO THE COMMUNITY OF FUNNY RIVER**

**GOAL B: PROMOTE RECREATIONAL AND TOURISM RELATED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

**Objective 1** – Develop recreational facilities in a manner that protects and preserves the area’s natural and scenic resources and rural life style.

### Action Items:

- 1) Plan, design and develop a Funny River Community Park Complex which could contain, but not be limited to, the following recreational components:
  - Covered multi-purpose facility
  - Baseball / softball field
  - Horseshoe courts
- 2) Develop and maintain a system of trails in the Funny River area for the following uses:
  - Bicycle / pedestrian
  - X-Country skiing
  - Snow machine / ATV
  - Horse
  - Dog mushing
- 3) Develop a public shooting range for community and visitor use.
- 4) Plan, design and construct river access areas for day use activities (fishing, boat launch, etc.). Plan, design, and construct overnight campground facilities.
- 5) Develop public restrooms and RV dump facilities for visitor use.

**Objective 2** – Develop tourism related activities and services in the community of Funny River.

### Action Items:

- 1) Construct a swimming area, water slide, public restrooms, and boat launch on Brown's Lake for public use.

<b>GOAL C: PROVIDE ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES IN AN EFFORT TO ATTRACT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES</b>
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**Objective 1** – Facilitate the completion of community expansion, construction, renovation and recognition projects.

Action Items:

- 1) Work with local gas company to establish service to the community of Funny River.
- 2) Work with local and state entities to obtain community recognition (unincorporated community).
- 3) Seek appropriate funding sources to allow for the planning, design and construction of the following community facilities:
  - o Library
  - o Elementary school
- 4) Establish a voting precinct / district in the community of Funny River.

**Objective 2** – Obtain and/or upgrade rural fire protection and emergency medical services, equipment and associated infrastructure.

Action Items:

- 1) Establish a Funny River volunteer fire brigade and emergency first responder unit.
- 2) Engage in a project to all-weather pave the forward area of the fire station.
- 3) Plan, design, and construct equipment and training facility for the fire brigade and emergency responder unit.
- 4) Develop a community helicopter pad for emergency access and use.
- 5) Work with State and Borough officials to ensure quality road maintenance and/or construction for emergency access purposes.

**VI. FUTURE COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

The Funny River Community Group will utilize this long-term community plan to seek and secure future sources of local, state, and federal technical and financial assistance to promote the recovery and diversification of the economic base of Funny River, Alaska.

The strategy for this plan to be implemented is for the Funny River Community to meet on an annual basis to review potential action items and develop, where appropriate, funding applications to meet the goals and objectives as stated. Continued assistance to the Funny River community in the implementation of specific items outlined in this plan will be provided by the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District, Inc. (KPEDD), Kenai Peninsula Resource Conservation & Development District (RC&D) and the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

**VII. FUNNY RIVER COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN APPROVAL**

The Funny River Action Team hereby adopts this Community Plan and agrees to effectively use all available assistance to realize the goals, objectives, and action items outlined herein.

<u>/s/ Ray Price</u>		<u>/s/ William Godfrey</u>	
Ray Price	Date	William Godfrey	Date
President, FRCC		Vice President, FRCC	

<u>/s/ Warren Hoflich</u>		<u>/s/ Rose Scott</u>	
Warren Hoflich	Date	Rose Scott	Date
Treasurer, FRCC		Secretary, FRCC	

**VIII. FUNNY RIVER COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN ENDORSEMENTS**

PRINTED NAME	SIGNATURE
	<i>/s/ Ramona Price</i>
	<i>/s/ Byron L Bondurant</i>
	<i>/s/ Elizabeth Hoflich</i>
	<i>/s/ Mike Chenault</i>
	<i>/s/ Rose Marie Galloway</i>
	<i>/s/ Al Stirman</i>
	<i>/s/ Helen Striman</i>
	<i>/s/ Patoy Bird</i>
	<i>/s/ Warren C. Hoflich</i>
	<i>/s/ Linda K Miller</i>
	<i>/s/ Dianna L. Chapman</i>
	<i>/s/ Annie M Ramsey</i>

**IX. Appendix A: 2000 Census Data**

COMMUNITY	BOROUGH	CENSUS AREA	POPULATION 2000
Funny River	Kenai Peninsula Borough	Kenai Peninsula	636

**X. Appendix B: Map of the Funny River Area**



**X. Appendix C: Map of the Kenai Peninsula Borough**

