Alaska Smart Communities Forum Charter

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cities, boroughs and businesses collect vast amounts of data to operate and deliver services, often independently. They want to continuously improve systems and processes to operate more efficiently, reduce costs, be more responsive, enable better access to services, and enable citizens to be more engaged with local government and their community. Meanwhile, citizens and customers demand easier ways to get information, receive services, and better understand resources in their communities. Smart Communities implement solutions that better integrate data to help meet these needs. The Alaska Smart Communities Forum is a program to educate and build cooperation among public and private organizations with a shared vision to better serve citizens and customers with information they can use.

Vision:

- The Alaska Smart Communities Forum is a catalyst for education, partnerships, data exchanges, tools, shared projects and resources to deliver more useful information and tools to citizens, customers, and businesses.

Goals:

- Form a nucleus to serve and enable communities to create their own Smart Communities;
- Provide useful, more integrated information and services;
- Enable citizens to create value-added services from more, better integrated data, tools;
- Enable citizens to be better informed of resources, services and economic opportunities;
- Enable employees to be more efficient, responsive and effective;
- Reduce duplication in data collection and tools available to residents and businesses;
- Enable citizens to be more involved in their own government.

PROGRAM PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION

Government agencies and businesses all have systems, services, and projects that fit or support the description of Smart Community or Smart City. A Smart Community uses data, tools and partnerships to more effectively serve its citizens with information they can use. Businesses gather data to better serve their customers in the communities which they serve. The internet, applications and mobile devices enable people to get information, locate places and engage in tourism, government services, education, research and economic development. GPS and location services increase our knowledge about how to find addresses, resources, and assets. Sensors help monitor traffic, weather, parking spaces, emergency vehicles, and so on. Notification systems provide reminders and alerts we can subscribe to or push out. The data captured by public and private sectors is growing, though often independently.

The Alaska Smart Communities Forum provides a starting point to share ideas, identify and identify opportunities to cooperatively create solutions or to exchange tools and resources. The Forum brings agencies and organizations together to learn about data, tools, services and create partnerships to share expertise and resources to more and better information to residents, businesses and customers and be more efficient in the work they do.

<p align="center">**Alaska Smart Communities Forum Charter**</p>

PRELIMINARY SCOPE

The Alaska Smart Community Forum is an informal program with no formal authority. Participants include agencies, businesses, organizations, the 'tech' community and the public interested in better serving their community, open to sharing data and tools, or supporting Forum activities. The following are Focus Areas of the Forum.

- Data: identify sources, how to use, share and collect among agencies
- Services: integrating, analyzing and visualizing data of interest
- Education: what other cities and organizations are doing
- Partnerships: sharing resources/data/investment

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Data

- Identify top priorities for data gathering and sharing.
- Identify common practices for the development of data and services.
- Establish a data portal framework that acknowledges different data portals.
- Establish a data portal including a directory of 30 data sources and data sets in formats usable by other agencies and businesses. Include authoritative sources.
- Enable a data portal where the public can host data.
- Create a data dictionary that describes for each data set the purpose.

Services

- Facilitate applications for the public with participating Forum members.
- Facilitate application services (e.g. API) that improve workflow or other efficiencies useful by participating organizations.

Education

- Conduct Smart Communities Forums that include:
  - guest speakers from other communities with similar initiatives;
  - ideas and advice on how smart communities are evolving and benefitting citizens;
  - methods of gathering and sharing data and how to use and apply data available.
  - recognize the initiatives and projects among participating organizations.
- Participating communities and organizations maintain their own education to their own citizens, customers and members.

Partnerships

- Determine methods how participants can work together as a group.
- Identify partners for statewide dataset stewardship and working groups.

- Establish Working Groups (e.g. data standards, funding sources, communications) to support the Key Elements above.
- Identify multi-jurisdictional projects of any size involving two or more agencies and organizations. This can be informal or via a more formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), such as for data sharing.
- Determine whether and how a shared service model that serves multiple organizations would work with regard to data, applications, tools, training.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

Community Success

- Livability in the community
- Economic growth
- Transparent and efficient government
- More engaged citizens
- More informed decisions

These criteria can be difficult to measure. Possible ways to determine changes in these success measures include changes in the amount and type of information available, cost to provide data and application services, response time to service requests, and ease to access services.

Forum Success

- Education and knowledge gained from Forum events
- Number and type of opportunities identified
- New information and services provided
- Degree of resource sharing and partnerships established

ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING

Organizational Elements

- Quarterly meetings for education, project updates, demonstrations, and networking. These can be expanded to facilitate more discussion, feedback and ideas among elected officials and executives of the participating agencies, businesses and organizations.
- Working Groups to identify and lead projects. These can be formed to ensure focused attention and progress on an area of interest, such as the Focus Areas described above.
- Advisory Group to provide guidance on program charter, goals, projects, Forum events, potential partnerships and program management. Advisory Group will be volunteers with no formal authority and agree to meet up to eight (8) times per year.

- Program Manager to coach and monitor progress of projects and Working Groups and facilitate Forum events and the Advisory Group. The Program Manager will seek volunteers for Working and Advisory Groups and foster representation among various organizations. The Program Manager may be staffed or contracted by a member of the Advisory Group.

- Vendors with experience and services to accelerate our smart community objectives.

- Executives from participating organizations to gain knowledge and provide guidance on Forum events, accomplishments and goals.

Operating Guidelines

- The Forum seeks volunteers to host events, present ideas and initiatives, coordinate agendas, and share facilities for meetings. The Forum is not a funded organization by any government or private business, therefore costs associated with events such as travel, time management or administrative are the responsibility of each attendee.

- Forum organization and planning are volunteer functions of the participants. Some government entities have staff and contractors supporting various smart community initiatives, however the Forum should not expect those entities to fund initiatives of other agencies. There are formal processes that address resource sharing across jurisdictions that should be followed. Likewise, the Forum is not an entity to commission or contract work with private sector business. Government participants must follow their respective procurement and communication policies.

- Ideas from the Forum that a government or business may want to pursue should flow back into formal channels of communication between government representatives and use established procurement processes when private sector engagements might be useful.

- Grants and funding for multi-jurisdiction initiatives can be discussed at the Forum with the focus on outcomes and sharing information that would make the initiative successful. Discussions about government decisions or debates is appropriate for the Forum, then directed to existing communication processes facilitated by an agency or business.

- The Forum is vendor agnostic, inviting solutions and ideas with and among various companies that provide tools and services that support smart community efforts, but not advocating necessarily for any one solution.

- Efforts and interests of participating agencies, businesses and groups will be recognized through the Forum.

- Expanding participation is encouraged across various entities that have an interest and/or stake in the topics and outcomes of the Forum. Further, the Forum will seek to increase communication and discussion among participants.

- The Forum will establish and update a list of ideas, events, and solutions toward accomplishing the Forum's goals and objectives. This may be in the form of milestones and dates for the year or longer.

- Forum participants will continue to lead their own projects in their own organizations while considering ways to make the results generally available.

- Forum participants will seek and consider opportunities to share their successes and leverage the work of other participating organizations, consistent with the Forum objectives of reducing redundant and duplicate data sources and information services.

ASSUMPTIONS

- Participation in the Forum will help agencies, businesses and organizations be more effective in delivering services and providing information to their citizens and customers.
- Each participating organization can be more effective by participating in the Forum and working together on areas of mutual interest.
- Participants will actively support the vision, goals and objectives of the Forum and intentionally invest time and resources on projects in their own organizations that also benefit participating organizations.
- Several participating organizations will allocate one to several weeks' during the year on events and projects relating to and supporting the goals and objectives of the Alaska Smart Communities Forum.
- Forum will focus on issues and topics of common interest among participants. These may include areas such as Community Services, Public Safety and Emergency Services, Transportation Access, Land Use Planning, Business and Job Growth, and others.
- Participants will work to connect and leverage data sources, not recreating them, reducing independent data silos.
- Participants will continue to build analytic capacity and skills within their organizations.

RISKS AND CONSTRAINTS

- Limited staff and funding for the Forum and its planned activities.
- Decreasing interest and participation in the Forum events.
- Level of effort in assigning staff to projects.

CONCLUSION

Participating agencies, businesses and organizations agree with and support the Alaska Smart Communities Forum as described within this Charter. The Forum is a volunteer program with no formal decision-making authority or commitment of funds and resources. The Forum is intended to educate and build cooperation among public and private organizations with a shared vision to better serve citizens and customers with information they can use.