

# LOOKING FORWARD, Alaska Pioneer Homes



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Sean Parnell  
Governor

William Hogan, Commissioner  
Department of Health & Social Services

David Cote, Director  
Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes

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**LOOKING FORWARD,  
Alaska Pioneer Homes**

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

*While preserving the dignity and individuality, the Pioneer Homes are committed to providing a safe and compassionate environment to residents, with a focus on people's abilities and potential for personal growth.*

*- David Cote, Director -*

The Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes operates six pioneer homes throughout the state. Existing homes are located in Ketchikan, Sitka, Juneau, Anchorage, Palmer, and Fairbanks. Together, these homes provide assisted living care for 508 Alaskans who are 65 years of age or older. The Alaska Pioneer Homes have a proud history of service to Alaskan's that predates statehood. Our residents include many of the great pioneers from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including homesteaders, miners, and bush pilots. Not all of Alaskan seniors live in state provided assisted living facilities. In all there are approximately 55,000 Alaskan who are 65 years of age or older. Of those, 435 are on the active wait list for a residency in the pioneer homes, for which there are only 508 licensed beds, all of which are full. The need for additional pioneer home beds is apparent.

We are all aware that we are living longer today than in earlier generations. The Alaska Commission on Aging reported in 2008 that Alaska had the fastest growing senior population of any state in the country.\* The extension of people's lives into the golden years has resulted in an ever increasing number of older Alaskans who need assistance with everyday life skills. Many older Alaskans continue to live independently at home with help from family or caregivers. Some elderly are able to move in with their children, although these numbers are less than previous generations. Lastly, some seniors choose to move into an assisted living environment where they are supported by professional caregivers. There are a total of 2,077 public and private assisted living beds throughout the state.

The range of care in the homes falls into one of three categories: Level I, II, or III. Requests for admissions to a pioneer home are primarily Level III applicants, which is the highest level of care. Not surprisingly, the proportion of level III applicants has increased from 25% to 58% between 1995 and 2009. Conversely, Level I residents have decreased from 37% to 12% during this same time period. This is indicative that Home and Community Based Services have enabled Alaskan Seniors to remain in their home longer, and only seek the services of the Pioneer Homes when they reach a higher level of acuity.

Over the next 20 years the demand for specialized senior care will spike as the baby boomers reach the age requiring these services. Population forecasts note that in 2010 there are approximately 55,324 individuals living in Alaska that are 65 years of age or older. That number is forecast to expand to 134,391 by 2030\*. This nearly threefold increase will place significant additional pressure on a system that is currently under serving constituents' needs. The Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes has developed this proactive plan to understand the need and develop a course of action to add 205 beds to the existing inventory over the next 10 years. While this increase surely will not satisfy all the demand, it will reduce the impact while maintaining a fiscally responsible operations budget.

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\* *Information Insights, Alaska Pioneer Homes Planning for Tomorrow, December 2009*

TEN YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

	FAIRBANKS PIONEER HOME	JUNEAU PIONEER HOME	ANCHORAGE PIONEER HOME	SOUTH CENTRAL PIONEER HOME	
Number of Additional Beds	60	25	60	60	
FY 1	1. Secure \$14,541,839 for Phase 1 expansion/renovation. 2. Design renovation of existing facility and addition of 24 beds and support space. Plan for Phase 2 addition.				\$14,541,839
FY 2	3. Construct addition and renovation project.	1. Secure \$11,982,078 for 25 bed addition. 2. Design 25 bed addition.			\$11,982,078
FY 3	4. Construct addition and renovation project.	3. Construct addition project.	1. Secure \$2,000,000 for site study and acquisition.		\$2,000,000
FY 4	5. Occupy facility addition.	4. Construct addition project.	2. Secure \$40,581,471 for addition project. 3. Design renovation/addition project.		\$40,581,471
FY 5		5. Occupy addition.	4. Construct 60 bed addition and renovation project.	1. Secure \$2,500,000 for site study and acquisition.	\$2,500,000
FY 6			5. Construct 60 bed addition and renovation project.	2. Secure \$51,051,796 for new 60 bed facility. 3. Design new 60 bed pioneer home.	\$51,051,796
FY 7			6. Occupy addition.	4. Construct new 60 bed facility.	
FY 8	6. Secure \$17,289,138 for Phase 2 expansion. 7. Design addition of 36 beds and support space.			5. Construct new 60 bed facility.	\$17,289,138
FY 9	3. Construct addition project.			6. Occupy new 60 bed pioneer home.	
FY 10	5. Occupy facility addition.				
FACILITY COST	\$31,830,977	\$11,982,078	\$42,581,471	\$53,551,796	\$139,946,322

# FAIRBANKS PIONEER HOME

## THE PROJECT

The Fairbanks Pioneer Home was built as a sixty-one bedroom assisted living facility in 1966 when the Fairbanks population was approximately 44,000. The original structure has been enhanced and expanded to serve ninety-three residents. Today Fairbanks finds its population to be approximately 99,000 and the pioneer home has an active, 80+ person waiting list to enroll in the home. To begin to satisfy this demand, the Department of Health and Social Services proposes to expand the facility in two distinct phases.



The first phase adds 24 beds and renovate the existing 59,360 square foot structure. The renovation will enhance the building's energy efficiency, repair deficient mechanical systems, repair an aging roof, expand the kitchen and laundry facilities to accommodate the expanded population and other upgrades to allow this structurally sound building to serve the state for another 50 years.

The proposed addition will follow the formula found to best minimize an institutional atmosphere and create a comfortable home like environment for these Alaskans in their final years of life.

The second phase of the Fairbanks project adds 36 additional beds, thus expanding the home to accommodate 153 Alaskans.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### FAIRBANKS PIONEER HOME

1

Construct an addition to the Fairbanks Pioneer Home that will support 24 new residents. The addition will support the specialized needs of residents suffering from advanced dementia. The space will create a new fourth neighborhood.

\$14,541,839

2

Expand basic utilities and support spaces to accommodate the increased population with consideration for a future neighborhood of 36 residents. Components of the expansion include the electrical room including the standby generator, mechanical room, particularly fan rooms and cold water heat exchanger, kitchen and institutional laundry and linen storage.

3

Upgrade and restore the existing building to increase thermal efficiency and reduce operation costs. The upgrade will also include replacement of the existing roof and upgrade the deficient mechanical and electrical systems.

4

Construct a new 36 bed wing to complete the planned expansion to the home. Accommodations to serve this addition will have been made in the Phase 1 project, therefore disruption will be minimized.

\$17,289,138

Total Project Cost

\$31,830,977

## DISCOVERIES



- The 93 bed Fairbanks Pioneer Home is the second oldest in the system. This well maintained facility is in need of a mechanical and electrical upgrade to increase resident comfort and energy efficiency. The focus of the upgrade is the ventilation and standby generation systems. These antiquated systems perform below current practice and ASHRA 90.1.
- The list of individuals awaiting admission includes 87 people as of June 2010. For those who are seeking Level III service the wait will likely be 4-5 years which can easily be a life time for some individuals in their 80's or 90's.
- The average age of residents in the Fairbanks home is 88 years old. Rooms become available frequently but do not come near meeting the need of the community. The addition of 24 beds will not completely satisfy the demand but it will significantly reduce wait times.
- People are enrolling into the pioneer homes later in life or when their condition deteriorates to the point it is difficult to care for themselves. Currently, the Fairbanks home takes care of less than ten Level I residents. The majority of residents are Level III. This higher level of classification requires specialized care and spaces such as lifting hoists, space for parking wheel chairs and circulation routes that diminish confusion. A very few individuals become agitated and aggressive within their confusion. To protect other residents, staff and the individual, a higher level of monitoring and some restricted access to others are amongst the accommodations that need to be made.
- Reducing the institutional feeling in the Fairbanks home has reinforced a home-like setting with furnishings, artwork and personalized staff service. The establishment of smaller living units or "neighborhoods" helps foster the feeling of community.
- Replacement of the existing roof is needed and when that work is completed, insulation enhancements are required to increase thermal efficiency to current standards.

## SITE



# JUNEAU PIONEER HOME

## THE PROJECT

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The 45 bed Juneau Pioneer Home was constructed in 1987 and is one of the newest state owned homes. The building has been well maintained and several enhancements have been put in place to complement the building's appearance and longevity.

The home is surrounded by serene views of the wetlands and wooded areas. The pleasant views and well maintained facility support the feeling that the Juneau home offers a high level of service in a comfortable setting. In the 23 years since the home was built there have been developments in senior care, particularly as this care applies to seniors suffering from mild to acute dementia. Additions and renovations within the home have worked towards incorporating the new models fostering smaller environments in a home-like setting. Steps being taken to promote this approach are the removal of open nurse/staff stations and the development of open activity areas for residents with personal space surrounding the activity areas. These open areas create hubs that are typically the center of focus within the individual neighborhoods.

Some of the current resident sleeping rooms are accessed by way of long double loaded corridors. This configuration is not supportive of individuals with a tendency to become confused or disoriented and is to be avoided to the extent possible in future construction. Creating spaces with rooms around open activity areas that have visual clues help older residents locate themselves within the building and promote individuals to exercise and move about the space. The Juneau home currently has a wait list of 75 eligible seniors as of June 2010. To satisfy this shortfall, the Department is recommending an addition of 25 beds to the existing home. Due to site constraints the addition will be divided into three units. While fitting well into the site, the proposed approach also promotes smaller neighborhoods and creates links between neighborhoods encouraging resident indoor walking routes.



This modest addition to the facility coupled with some enhancements to increase capacity of the utility system will address the increased population within the facility.



JUNEAU PIONEER HOME

- 1 Construct additions to create living space for 25 new residents to increase the available pioneer home bed space in South East Alaska.

\$11,982,078

- 2 Expand the utility systems, including kitchen and laundry to support the addition. This work will include renovation of existing facilities. Disruption of these critical services will be well understood and managed during construction.

- 3 Expand and reorganize the vehicle parking area to satisfy the demand created by the addition.

Total Project Cost

\$11,982,078

## DISCOVERIES



- The Juneau Pioneer Home is a comfortable well maintained assisted living center accommodating 45 seniors. The regional demand for assisted living care outstrips available rooms. The current active wait list as of June 2010, for the Juneau home is 75 seniors.
- The natural setting is somewhat impaired by lot size and configuration. The site constraints will require careful site development to accommodate the addition, vehicle parking and pedestrian walking paths.
- Existing utility, food service and laundry systems are not sufficient to support the addition. Enhancements to these systems will be required to accommodate the increased population.
- A high percentage of the population is suffering from dementia and require specialized care that will be enhanced through space configuration to support orientation and spacial recognition. A small number of these individuals are confused and aggressive. These individuals are handled with extreme care and require special environments.
- Property and shore line setbacks will determine the usable site and to some degree, drive the development approach. Property line setbacks are 15 feet and shore line setbacks are 50 feet.
- The building will offer the greatest flexibility possible. One aspect of this is accessible toilet facilities with showers will be provided to every resident bedroom.

## SITE



# ANCHORAGE PIONEER HOME

## THE PROJECT

The Anchorage Pioneer Home is the largest assisted living state-owned facility with 168 residents living in the 150,360 square foot building. The well cared for five-story building is prominently located on the edge of the Anchorage central business district and fronts onto the city's park blocks. The current site provides direct access to the amenities offered in downtown Anchorage including a grocery and bakery within easy walking distance.



While the 2.3 acre site is ideal for resident access and readily available amenities, it is land constrained with no ability to expand on the current state owned site. Unfortunately the need to add assisted living beds in the Anchorage area is increasing dramatically as our population ages. The department has concluded that a 60 bed addition to the existing Anchorage facility will provide the most effective solution to accommodate the demand projected over the next 20 years. This development will be most effective and efficient if the expansion is physically attached to the existing building, thus allowing food and laundry service to be provided from the existing facility. For that reason land acquisition is one recommendation of this study. If site control of parcels immediately adjacent to the existing home is not possible a stand alone satellite facility could be constructed. The satellite approach will incur the extra cost of administrative staff and resident services. For the purposes of this document the assumption has been made that the expansion will be an addition.

The architectural solution in Anchorage is envisioned to be multiple stories with approximately twenty residents on each floor. Each floor in this concept will represent a neighborhood, similar to the approach currently in use at the Anchorage home. The addition will be designed to accommodate all three levels of resident care but it is expected the primary use in the foreseeable future will be Level III beds. Through the use of existing support and administrative space the Anchorage home addition will be a very efficient facility.

Some expansion of existing systems will be required to serve the 60 new residents. It is expected that all utility service will need to be increased, the kitchen expanded by approximately 400 square feet and the laundry increased by 150 square feet.

Connection of the addition to the existing building is expected to be by way of an extension from the basement into the addition. Elevators will be arranged to move materials vertically between the buildings/floors.

With the proposed addition the Anchorage Pioneer Home will provide assisted living services for 228 Alaskans in an efficient well cared for home. These services will be provided with the same level of care that the Anchorage Home has been providing for the past 30 years.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

ANCHORAGE PIONEER HOME

- 1 Conduct site selection study, select and secure site for pioneer home addition project.

\$2,000,000

- 2 Design and construct Pioneer Home addition to accommodate 60 residents. The expansion is to be flexible enough to accommodate Level I, II or III residents but the short term need is accommodations for Level III residents. For this reason, consideration in design must be given to the needs of fragile elderly people who will likely suffer from some level of dementia. Due to site constraints it is suggested that the building be three stories tall. The building is expected to maintain the existing character of the existing home. The building envelop and all systems are to incorporate current construction efficiency principals. The construction project will address both the limited renovation projects in the existing home and the expansion project. The project will also address the parking issue, which likely will require additional land acquisition.

\$40,581,471

Total Project Cost

\$42,581,471

## DISCOVERIES

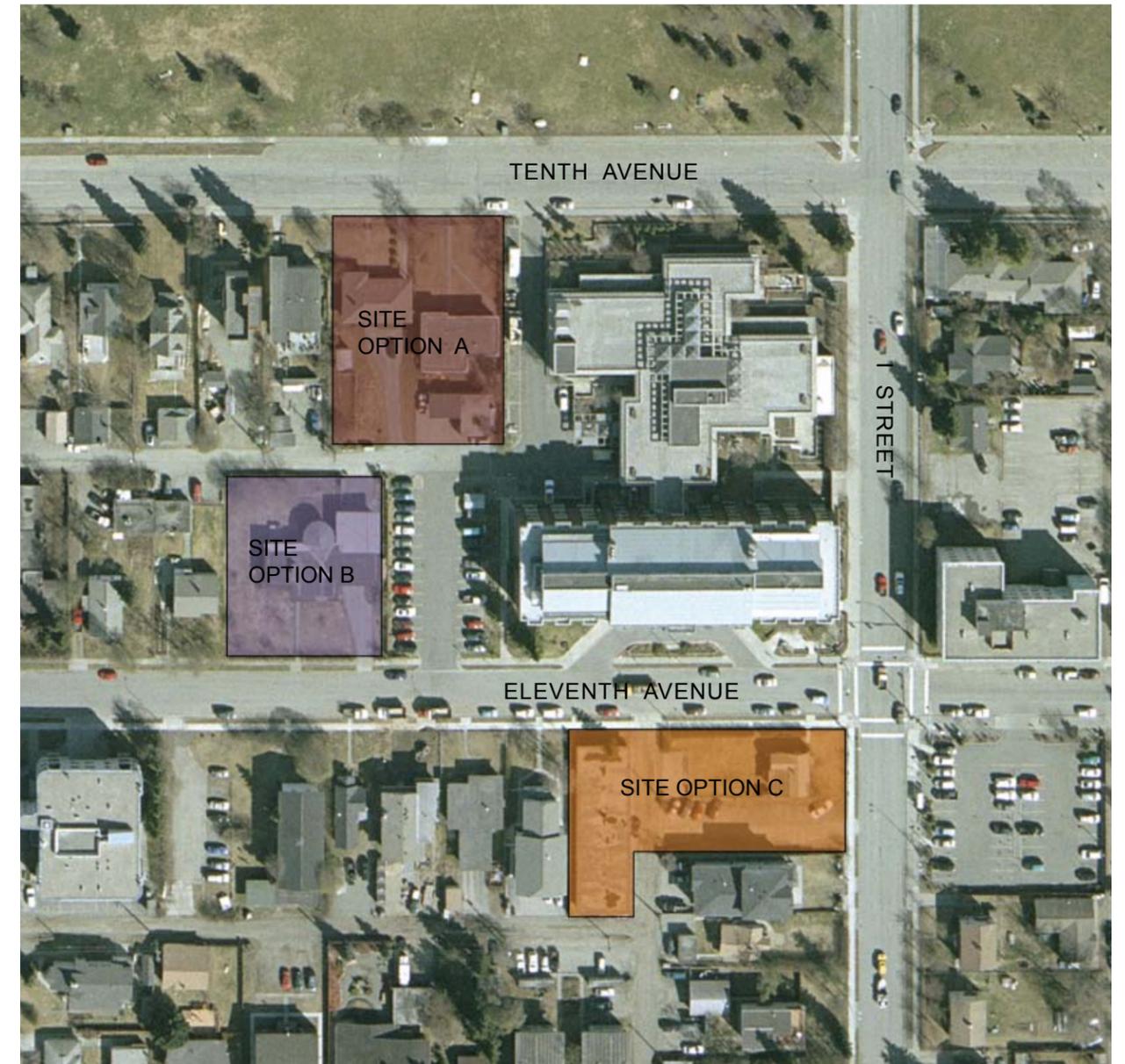


- The existing Anchorage Pioneer Home is a well maintained efficient building that is slightly under occupied due to the unfortunate way the original building was constructed in 1977. The existing construction method is suitable for "R" (residential) occupancy by definition of the current building code. The current demand is for Level III beds, which require "I" (institutional) occupancy.

Upgrades to the existing building to allow it to be used as an I occupancy include seismic, mechanical, egress and emergency systems modifications. The degree of renovation required to accommodate the I occupancy is extremely expensive and disruptive to the remainder of the facility. There is no place to relocate the 85 residents who currently live in the original portion of the facility and certainly no place to relocate the 168 residents who reside in the home, if the level of disruption required closure of the facility. For these reasons the current use is recommended to continue.

- The efficiency gained by expanding the existing home rather than building a new stand alone home is significant. Savings will be found in reduced construction costs since a significant amount of support space will not need to be built. Also there will be reduced operating cost found through staffing economies strongly favor the addition approach.
- The existing laundry, food service and staff spaces are currently at or slightly beyond capacity. Any addition will require some expansion or reconfiguration of these spaces.
- Finishes in portions of the existing 30-year old building are worn and in need of replacement. The level of rejuvenation is not significant. Investment in the existing building will pay dividends of serviceable life of the structure.
- Parking for residents, staff and guests is not adequate for the current facility. Additional parking is currently needed, the addition of 60 beds further increase the parking demand.
- Providing a variety of activity spaces is recommended to keep the resident's mind stimulated. One of the many advantages of the expansion approach is that significant diversity of space currently exists. The addition will further enhance the diversity by providing secure outdoor space, either at or above grade.

## SITE



# SOUTH CENTRAL NEW PIONEER HOME

## THE PROJECT

The Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes currently operates six assisted living homes throughout the state. These homes are generally located in the most populated region. The Fairbanks home provides care for elderly for the northern region, the Palmer and Anchorage Homes accommodate South Central region and the Juneau, Sitka and Ketchikan homes provide care for elderly Alaskans in Southeast.

Increasing demand for elderly assisted living care has caused the Division to investigate the demographics of the expanding need against the areas that are expected to be under served. The purpose of this evaluation is to develop a new 60 bed assisted living home. To that end the study has identified two likely candidate communities as future sites for pioneer homes. Wasilla and Kenai currently have a significant number of seniors and these numbers are expected to radically increase over the next 20 years. Both communities have good access to health care and available practitioners to work in the facilities.

The current population of individuals over 65 in the Kenai Borough is 5,775. In the Mat-Su Borough the number of people over 65 is 6,581. These populations are expected to reach 13,084 in Kenai Borough and 18,906 in the Mat-Su Borough by 2030. These dramatic increases suggest the greatest need will be in the Mat-Su Borough. However, the figures are somewhat offset by Palmer currently being served by a 79 bed pioneer home and the fairly short commute between the large home in Anchorage and the Mat-Su Borough.

Smaller homes have proven to be more costly per resident than larger homes. For this reason and the fact that the staff is able to provide personalized service when they become acquainted with and know all the residents, this is much easier when there are fewer than 100 residents are under their care. This familiarity helps the homes provide personal services to people they know. The balance of these factors has resulted in the belief that a 60 resident home is an ideal target number for the new facility.

The projection for 60 additional beds will cost essentially the same amount whether the building is build on the Kenai Peninsula or the Mat-Su Valley.

Further study of demographics, work force, site options and community endorsement is required before adequate background is available to make an informed decision on the actual location of a new home. In either case, significant demand exists for a new 60 resident pioneer home to be built in the South Central region.

It is expected that a 60 bed facility will require a 60,891square foot structure on a 139,200 square foot (3.2 acre) building site. Single story facilities are favored over multi-story buildings for several cost and operational reasons. The strong preference is for the building to be a one story structure, near a health care center on a site that is conveniently accessed and has community utility services.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### SOUTH CENTRAL NEW PIONEER HOME

- 1 Conduct site selection study, select and secure site for pioneer home addition project. Approximately 5-7 acres.

\$2,500,000

- 2 Design and construct a new 60 resident pioneer home in the community that is selected through the site selection process. The facility is to be designed to embrace current principles of senior care. These approaches generally reduce the resident population into smaller, semi-independent groups or "neighborhoods" to create smaller, more intimate living areas. Towards that end, long double loaded corridors are to be avoided and small clusters of rooms (10-20) are to be created around activity spaces.

\$51,051,796

Total Project Cost

\$53,551,796

## DISCOVERIES

- The area with the highest concentration of individuals who are currently 65 years old or older is in South Central Alaska (Anchorage, Kenai and Mat-Su Borough). This population is expected to more than double (nearly triple) in the next 20 years. This particular segment of population will require assisted living facilities that currently have long wait lists (Anchorage 129, Palmer 112) the demand for additional assisted living is well beyond the current capacity and is expected to continue to outstrip available services through 2030.
- The Palmer Pioneer Home is dedicated to serve veterans and is expected to continue to fulfill that role with a smaller percentage of the beds being allocated to Mat-Su Borough residents who are not veterans.
- It is important for any new pioneer home to be located in a community that has access to medical services, preferably a hospital.
- Locating a new facility in a community that has ready access to health care practitioners who will work in the facility is an important site selection criteria.



Matanuska-Susitna Borough



Kenai Peninsula Borough