

# 2020



## Tanacross Community Plan



Prepared by the Tanacross IRA Council  
in partnership with Tanana Chiefs  
Conference, Planning and Development  
Program and the community members  
of Tanacross.



# Contents

Resolution .....	4
Acknowledgement .....	5
Executive Summary.....	6
Vision Statement.....	7
Values.....	7
Goals Summary .....	8
Introduction .....	9
Community Plan Process.....	9
Community Overview .....	10
History .....	10
Culture.....	11
Location .....	12
Climate .....	13
Demographics .....	14
Population .....	14
Population History.....	14
Population by Race.....	14
Governance.....	15
Tanacross IRA Council .....	15
Law Enforcement & Justice .....	15
Corporations .....	16
Doyon, Limited .....	16
Tanacross Incorporated.....	17
Tanana Chiefs Conference.....	18
Denakkanaaga .....	19
Interior Regional Housing Authority.....	19
Infrastructure .....	21
Housing.....	21
Public Utilities .....	22
Electrical and Power.....	22
Water and Sewer.....	22
Solid Waste.....	22

Communication .....	22
Bulk Fuel Storage.....	22
Public Facilities.....	23
Tanacross Health Clinic .....	23
Laundromat/Washeteria.....	23
US Post Office.....	23
Safe House.....	23
Volunteer Fire Station or Volunteer Response Team .....	24
Tribal Government Office.....	25
Community Hall.....	26
St. Timothy’s Church .....	26
Educational Facilities .....	27
Transportation .....	28
Land Status.....	29
Economy .....	30
Industry & Capital Projects.....	30
Available Jobs .....	30
Income Levels.....	30
Barriers to Economic Development .....	31
Potential for Growth .....	31
Subsistence.....	31
Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan .....	32
YOUTH AND ELDERS GOAL.....	32
EDUCATION.....	33
HOUSING.....	34
LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT.....	35
ECONOMY .....	36
Appendices .....	37
Survey Results.....	38
References .....	40
Table of Figures.....	41
Contact Information .....	42



## Tanacross IRA Resolution

Adopting the Community Plan

Resolution 20-31

Whereas, this plan was created through a public process which captured the goals of our community: and,

Whereas, this plan is a tool that helps us manage change in our community: and,

Whereas, this plan is intended to coordinate future community development and service delivery; and,

Whereas, this plan was created for public use and will be made publicly available; and,

Whereas; we ask all public, private, and non-profit entities serving our community to recognized and use this plan; and,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the parties of this resolution agree to work together to pursue the goals expressed in this plan

### Certification

We hereby certify that this resolution was duly passed and approved on May 7 2020

Within favor, 7 opposed, and 0 abstaining.



1<sup>st</sup> Chief, Herbie Demit



Name: Secretary/Treasurer

## **Acknowledgement**

Many community members, leaders, council staff, and Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) staff came together to help develop this plan. Tribal members contributed their thoughts and suggestions through the Community Feedback Survey and the community meeting held in November 2019.

A very special thank you to Anne Esmailka, who played a key role in researching, creating and working on this document during the fall 2019 Community Planning Specialist cycle.

A special thank you to the Tanacross IRA Council, Tribal Administrator Jerry Isaac and Tribal Secretary, Monica Isaac for the help, support, and contribution to this document.

The finalized draft of the Tanacross Community Plan 2020 was prepared and published by Tanana Chiefs Conference, Planning and Development Program staff.



## Executive Summary

Tanacross IRA Council, realizing the importance of strengthening and unifying the community, partnered with Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), Planning and Development (P&D) program to prepare this community plan.

The Tanacross Community Plan is a living document designed to continually be updated as the goals and objectives identified in the community plan are accomplished.

The goals and objectives included in this plan reflect the top priorities identified by Tanacross' community members and will be utilized to plan future projects and guide future development.



FIGURE 1 WELCOME TO TANACROSS SIGN



## Vision Statement

The village of Tanacross values the wellbeing of our community striving for better education, protection of culture and tradition, safety, and getting more people involved in our growing community. We take pride in who we are and where we come from.

## Values

1. Respect and caring of self, elders and families
2. Traditional culture, lifestyle and values as were taught by our ancestors
3. Healthy community with spirituality, sobriety, and togetherness for all
4. Education
5. Working for the betterment of self and community



FIGURE 2 TANACROSS COMMUNITY VALUES

## Goals Summary

### Goal 1

- **Youth/Elders/Culture**

### Goal 2

- **Education**

### Goal 3

- **Housing**

### Goal 4

- **Land Use & Environment**

### Goal 5

- **Economy**

## Introduction

The Tanacross IRA Council, realizing the importance of strengthening and unifying the community, partnered with Tanana Chiefs Conference's Planning and Development Program to prepare the Tanacross Community Plan.

## Community Plan Process

The Planning and Development (P&D) staff reached out to Tanacross several times over the course of a few years to encourage the hiring of a Community Planning Specialist (CPS). The CPS position was advertised with no interested applicants.

Tanacross then requested the P&D staff to begin drafting the document. Once the directive was received, P&D began to gather information and data for the plan.

In July, 2019, when a good draft of the plan was forming, the TCC Community Planning Intern traveled to Tanacross during the Fall Upper Tanana Sub-regional meeting. Upon arriving, she gathered data and other pertinent information to add to the draft of the plan. She also toured the community and took photos of buildings and infrastructure.

In September, 2019, Tanacross signed a contract with TCC to hire a Community Planning Specialist to begin in October.

As work on these projects moves forward, other goals and objectives will advance up the list – with a full review, re-visitation of priorities, and development of subsequent work plans to follow in Year Five of this community plan.



FIGURE 3 COMMUNITY PLANNING MEETING NOVEMBER 2019

## Community Overview

### History

The Daendeh, Tanacross for “People of the Tanana River Watershed” have lived in and around this “Traditional Use Area” for many centuries. Daendeh ancestors lived a semi-nomadic life, occupying and using a vast area of land. This “Traditional Use Area,” as western science has labeled it, lies between what is now the Canadian Border to the east, the Delta River to the west, and Goodpaster River to the north, and the Copper River to the south, essentially as far north as was necessary to find moose and the migratory caribou. The Daendeh People alone had over 5,000,000 acres of subsistence land base used and occupied on a regular basis.

Over the centuries, the Tanacross Village site has moved many times. A number of ancient sites are known, and others remain to be located. The Ketchumstuk site was occupied for several centuries; once a thriving village, disease and epidemics virtually wiped out the population. In the late 1800’s, Tanacross people relocated from Ketchumstuk to Lake Mansfield and established Mansfield Village; about 400 people resided in the area at this time. Some families also settled at a place six miles southeast of Mansfield, because the site offered easier river access for their trading expeditions. This site was situated on the northern bank of the Tanana River, across from the present location of the Native Village of Tanacross.

The name Tanacross derives from “Taats’altey,” or Tanana Crossing, which was where the Eagle Trail crossed the Tanana River. Many people settled there from Ketchumstuk, Mansfield, and Last Tetlin in 1912 when Bishop Rowe established St. Timothy’s Episcopal Mission. A trading post opened near the mission in 1912, and the St. Timothy’s post office opened in 1920. More Natives moved from Mansfield when a formal school opened in 1932, although classes had been held at the mission.

In the mid-1930s, an airfield was built across the river from the village. In 1941, the village gave the military permission to use its airfield as an emergency deployment post during World War II. The airfield was paved in 1942, and temporary camps were established. Thousands of troops were deployed through Tanacross airfield during the War. People of the village served as volunteer scouts and backup support for the army. After the war, the airfield was closed.

In 1972, due to persistent floods and unsanitary conditions, and the need to be closer to the Alaska Highway and the new community of Tok, the village moved once again to its present location. By 1976, everyone who lived in the old village moved out permanently. An important part of Tanacross’ history was lost in 1979 as a result of an out-of-control grass fire that destroyed all but four cabins at the old village site. Many of its residents felt that



they lost a part of their lives because their ancestral belongings were lost in this fire; especially hard-felt was the loss of irreplaceable family mementos of Chief Walter Isaac.

In addition to the old Tanacross village site, Mansfield village site continues to be a place of cultural and traditional importance to the Native Village of Tanacross. Chief Andrew Isaac, the last Traditional Chief for the Tanacross Athabascans, is buried there; further, it remains an important fish camp site, and several tribal members have cabins there. Annually, a “Traditional Culture Camp” is held there to give elders and youth the opportunity to learn from each other.

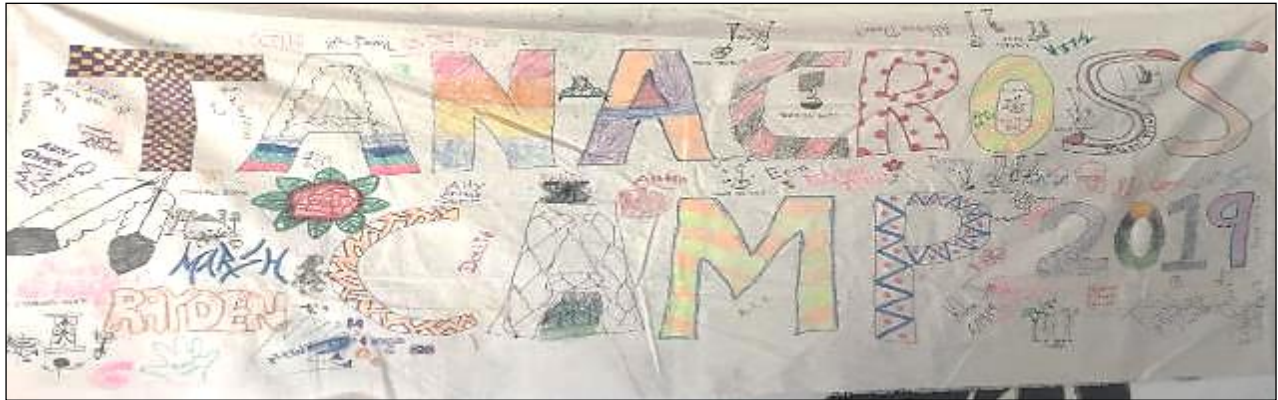


FIGURE 4 CULTURE CAMP BANNER 2019

## Culture

Tanacross Natives are proud of their cultural traditions. Traditional foods such as moose, caribou, rabbit, fish, ducks, muskrat, spruce root and wild berries are just a few important foods. These foods are an important part of their diet and the elders prefer them to the western diet. When they kill an animal, none of it goes to waste. Even the stomach, head, liver, kidneys and tongue are used.

The Daendeh People have a long history of being expert trappers and provided the traders who came and stayed, with immense quantities of mink, fox, marten and muskrat furs. Some Daendeh People still continue this tradition and make an effort to teach these skills to willing students. Mukluks, moccasins, mittens and hats are made out of the skins and furs from the animals that they trap and hunt.

A potlatch is given to honor someone, or to celebrate the first kill of small or large game. Potlatches are also given to show respect for a loved one who has passed on. Potlatches



FIGURE 5: WHITEFISH FISHNET, IMPORTANT FOR SUBSISTENCE



generally last about three days. Food, dancing, singing, and visiting are all a part of the potlatch ceremony. On the third day gifts are given to the visiting guests who traveled from the surrounding villages as well as from our neighboring country, Canada.

As like other Athabascan people throughout Alaska, the Daendeh traveled throughout the year searching for food. To this day, Tanacross people still not only trap fur-bearing mammals during the winter, but also hunt migratory waterfowl before the birds pair up for nesting. Many still travel to their respective fish camps during the summer to tend their fish wheels or nets and prepare various fish (i.e. chum salmon, silver salmon, white fish, or pike) for the oncoming winter. Various berries are traditionally sought during the late summer months and migratory birds hunted again during the fall. Sharing one's food and resources is a very important characteristic of the Athabascan culture.

## Location

The Native Village of Tanacross is an Athabascan Indian community located on the Tanana River, approximately 12 miles NE from the community of Tok, Alaska, 90 miles west from the Canadian border, and 200 miles NW from Fairbanks. Tanacross is connected to the Alaska Highway by a one and a half mile unpaved access road.

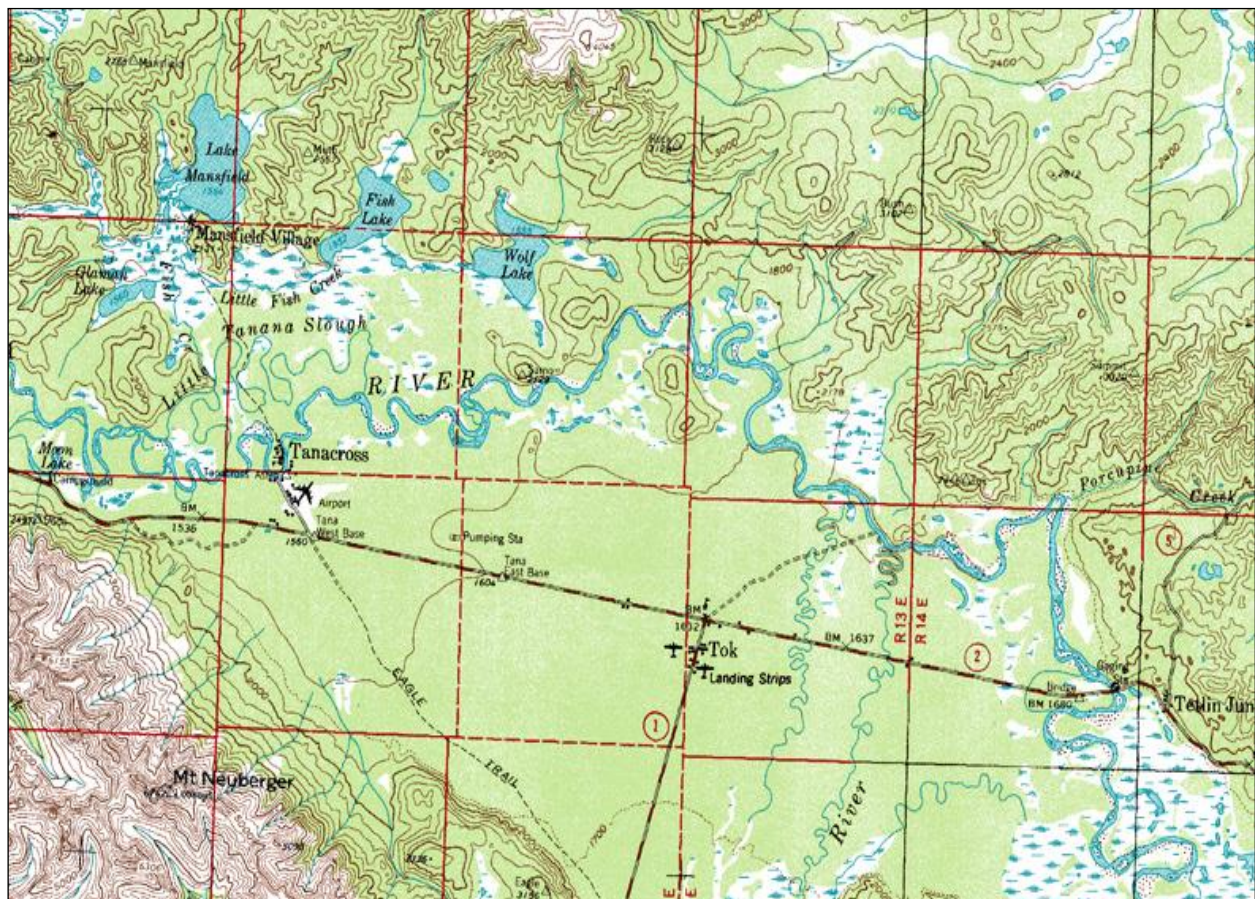


FIGURE 6 TANACROSS MAP LOCATION

## Climate

Tanacross lies within the continental climatic zone, with cold winters and warm summers. In the winter, cold air settles in the valley and often results in ice fog. Ice fog is dense, cold winter fog consisting of frozen particles of water, vehicle exhaust and wood smoke. The average low during January is  $-22^{\circ}\text{F}$ ; the average high during July is  $65^{\circ}\text{F}$ . Extreme temperatures have been recorded from  $-75^{\circ}\text{F}$  to  $90^{\circ}\text{F}$ .

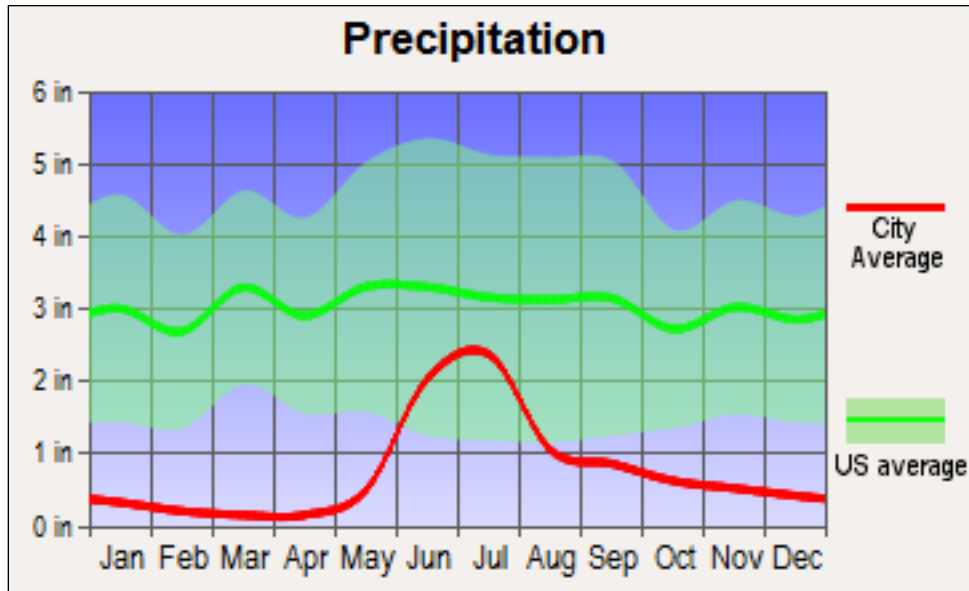


FIGURE 8 ANNUAL PRECIPITATION

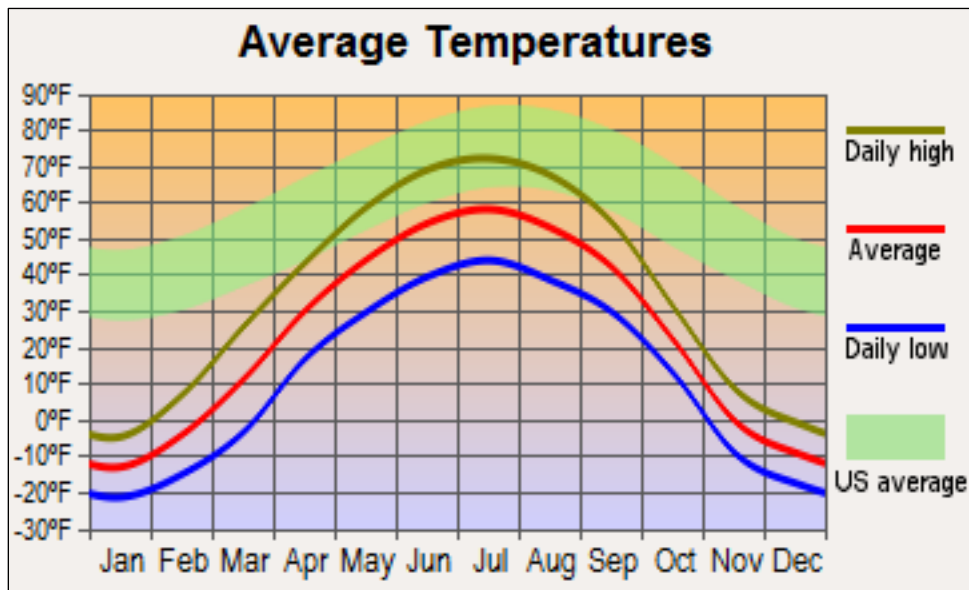


FIGURE 7 AVERAGE TEMPERATURE



## Demographics

### Population

Since the early 1920's, when census records were first being kept for Tanacross, the village population has averaged about 110, with a low of 80 in 1930 and a high of 140 in 2000. Of these 140, 88% were Alaska Native. The median age of the population in 2000 was 32.7 years. More importantly, approximately 48% of the total population was less than 24 years of age, which could extrapolate to a population increase of about 60 to 90 more people in the village over the next 20 years.

### Population History

The earliest record of Tanacross' population was 101 in 1920. The current estimate is about 136.

### Population by Race

The majority of the population of Tanacross (80%) is Alaska Native. The remaining residents are white or two or more races.

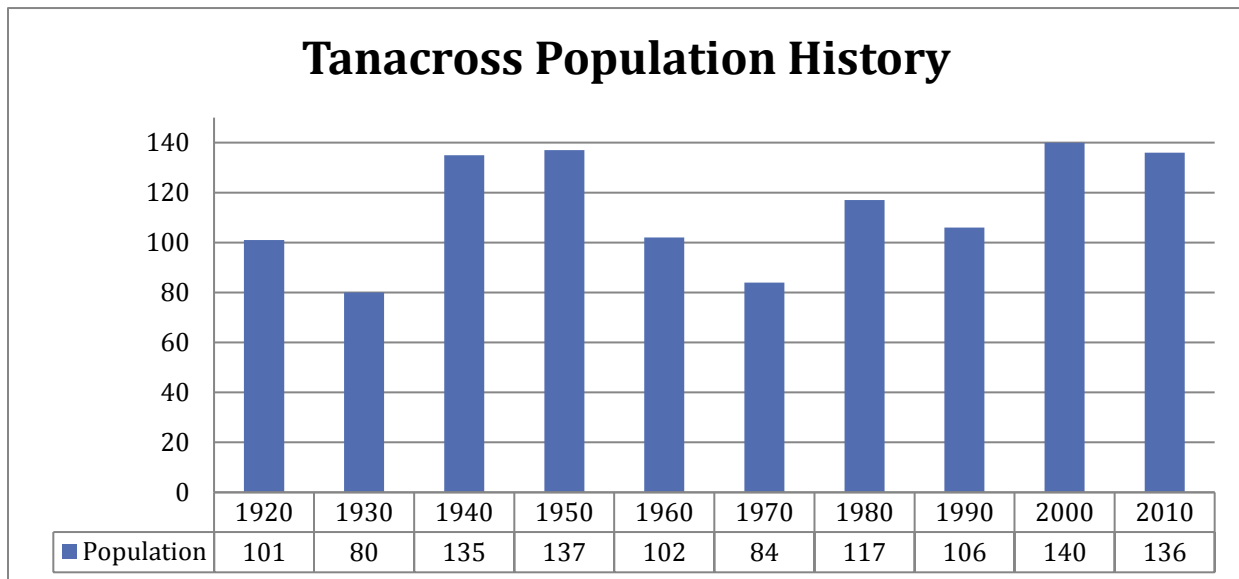


FIGURE 10 CENSUS POPULATION FOR TANACROSS

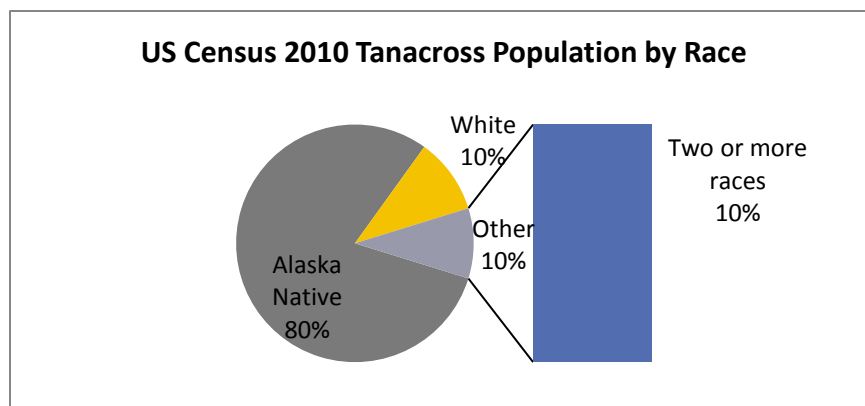


FIGURE 9 TANACROSS POPULATION BY RACE

## Governance

### Tanacross IRA Council

The governing body of the village is the Tanacross IRA Council. The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) government was incorporated by the federal government in 1942. The Council has seven members elected by tribal residents for three year terms.



FIGURE 11 DIHTHAAD MOOSEHIDE WALL HANGING

The Native Village of Tanacross has an Extended Memorandum of Agreement (EMOA) with Tanana Chiefs Conference. Through the EMOA the following services and programs are provided: tribal operations and administration, employment and training, adult education, natural resources management, administration of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), welfare assistance, economic development, and adult vocational training.

The Tanacross IRA has the following employees: Tribal Administrator, Bookkeeper, Tribal Family and Youth Specialist, IGAP Coordinator, Tribal Workforce Development Specialist, Custodian for Office as well as the Clinic, and Native American Lands Environmental Mitigations Program (NALEMP) Coordinator.

The Tanacross IRA administers the following grants; IGAP, COPS, Victims of Crime, NALEMP, and Tribal Transportation Program.

### Law Enforcement & Justice

With no Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) located in Tanacross, the first responders for emergencies are the Alaska State Troopers posted in Tok. The ride is about 12 miles, so law enforcement can take approximately 15 minutes to respond. In 2019 the village was awarded the COPS grant which will provide a Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) within the community for local law enforcement and safety for community members.

## Corporations

### Doyon, Limited

Tanacross is one of 34 tribes in Doyon Limited, the Alaska Native Regional Corporation for Interior Alaska incorporated in 1972 under the 1971 Alaska Native Claim Settlement Act (ANCSA). Provisions under ANCSA, Doyon is entitled to receive approximately 12.5 million acres across Interior Alaska, making Doyon the largest private landowner in Alaska. Doyon has, to date, received title to nearly 10 million acres, mainly around the 37 villages within the TCC region.



#### DOYON VISION:

Leader in All We Do

#### DOYON MISSION:

To continually enhance our position as a financially strong Native corporation in order to promote the economic and social well-being of our shareholders and future shareholders, to strengthen our Native way of life, and to protect and enhance our land and resources.

#### DOYON VALUES:

- ❖ Financially responsible
- ❖ Socially and culturally responsibility Alaska Native people
- ❖ Pride and respect in Native ownership
- ❖ Commitment to the long-term
- ❖ Honesty and integrity
- ❖ Commitment to excellence
- ❖ Respect for employees
- ❖ Commitment to employee safety and sound environmental practices

Board of Directors member from Tanacross includes Jerry Isaac.

## Tanacross Incorporated

Tanacross, Inc. is a for-profit village corporation formed under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANSCA) and holds land and corporate assets for Tanacross- entitlement to 92,160 acres. Most Tanacross, Inc. shareholders live in Tanacross, although in recent years, the number of shareholders living elsewhere has increased. Reference Tanacross Inc., land status on page 28.

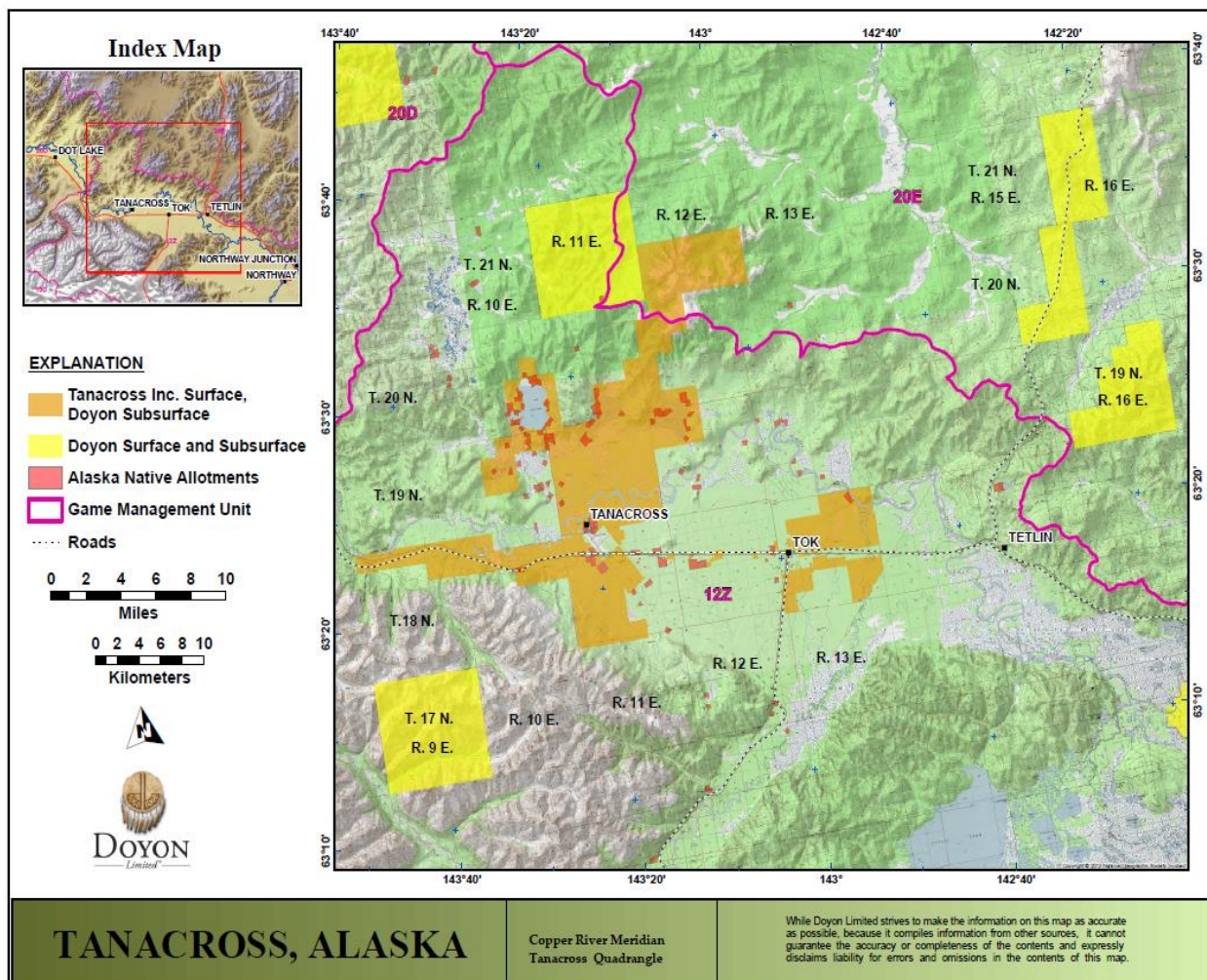


FIGURE 12 DOYON LAND MAP - TANACROSS INC



## Tanana Chiefs Conference

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) was officially formed in 1962 and incorporated under Alaska State Law in 1971. TCC is organized as Dena' Nena' Henash or "*Our Land Speaks*," an Alaska Native regional, nonprofit corporation, charged with advancing Tribal self-determination and enhancing regional Native unity. TCC provides a unified voice in advancing sovereign tribal governments through the promotion of physical and mental wellness, education, socioeconomic development, and culture of the Interior.



TCC provides services while balancing traditional Athabascan and Alaska Native values with modern demands. TCC's objectives are to provide health, social, and economic services to the native people and villages of interior Alaska, known as the TCC Region, using federal, state, and local resources. TCC is comprised of three core departments: 1. Administration; 2. Health Services; and 3. Tribal Client Services.

Within those core departments, we offer services in the following categories: Tribal Department; Self Governance; Housing; Public Safety Officer; Natural Resources; Client Development; Elder Nutrition; Employment and training; Child Development; Child Protection; Head start; Staff Development; Vocational Rehabilitation; Work Assistance Program and ASAP; Dental; Quality Management; Laboratory ; Purchased & Referred Care; Registration; Environmental Health; Pharmacy; Medical; Family Medicine; Specialty Clinics; Radiology; Home Care Provider; Behavior Health; Old Minto Family Recovery Camp; Psychiatry; Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment; Paul Williams House; Community Health Aide Program; Patient Hostel; Eye Clinic; Housing First; Wellness and Prevention; and Willow House.

The Tanana Chiefs Conference region covers an area of 235,000 square miles in Interior Alaska, which is equal to about 37 percent of the entire state, and just slightly smaller than the state of Texas. Within our region are six sub regions:

**Yukon Flats Sub region**

**Lower Yukon Sub region**

**Yukon Koyukuk Sub region**

**Upper Kuskokwim Sub region**

**Yukon Tanana Sub region**

**Upper Tanana Sub region**

Within our six sub regions are 37 federally recognized tribes, including 3 tribes that are not federally recognized. TCC also serves clients in the Fairbanks and Tok areas.

**Vision:** Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes

Executive Board member from Tanacross: Jerry Isaac, three-year term (2018-2021).

## Denakkanaaga

Denakkanaaga, meaning “Our People Speak” in Denaakk’e (Koyukon Athabascan), is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization which serves as the voice for the Interior Native Elders in the Doyon and Tanana Chiefs Conference region. Denakkanaaga acts on behalf of the Elders, working to ensure their concerns are addressed regarding topics such as Native cultures, traditions, languages, subsistence and social issues. As the population of residents over 65 years old grows within Interior Alaska, Denakkanaaga works with other organizations to maximize efforts to advocate for Native Elders.



### Denakkanaaga Core Values/Commitments:

- United Voice
- Keep Native voice stronger together for positive action
- Continue traditions, art, cultural values, language, and subsistence life
- Unity among Native organizations and people

### Denakkanaaga core programs:

- Peer support for each other (Elder to Elder)
- Support/mentor the next generation
- Cultural programs
- Regional voice on issues/concerns



FIGURE 13 DENAKKANAAGA TANACROSS 2018

## Interior Regional Housing Authority

Interior Regional Housing Authority (IRHA), a non-profit organization, is the Tribally Designated Housing Entity (TDHE) for Tanacross IRA Council. Formed in 1974, they implement the Indian Housing Plans to improve and expand affordable housing. IRHA offers services such as, grant writing, environmental reviews, project managers, project site control, payroll, accounts payable, financial reporting, procurement, material inventory/shipment, homebuyer counseling and collections.



### Mission Statement:

To provide housing opportunities and support self-sufficiency through housing.

### Vision Statement:

Thriving families with quality affordable housing.

### Values:

Innovation  
Respect  
Honesty  
Accountability

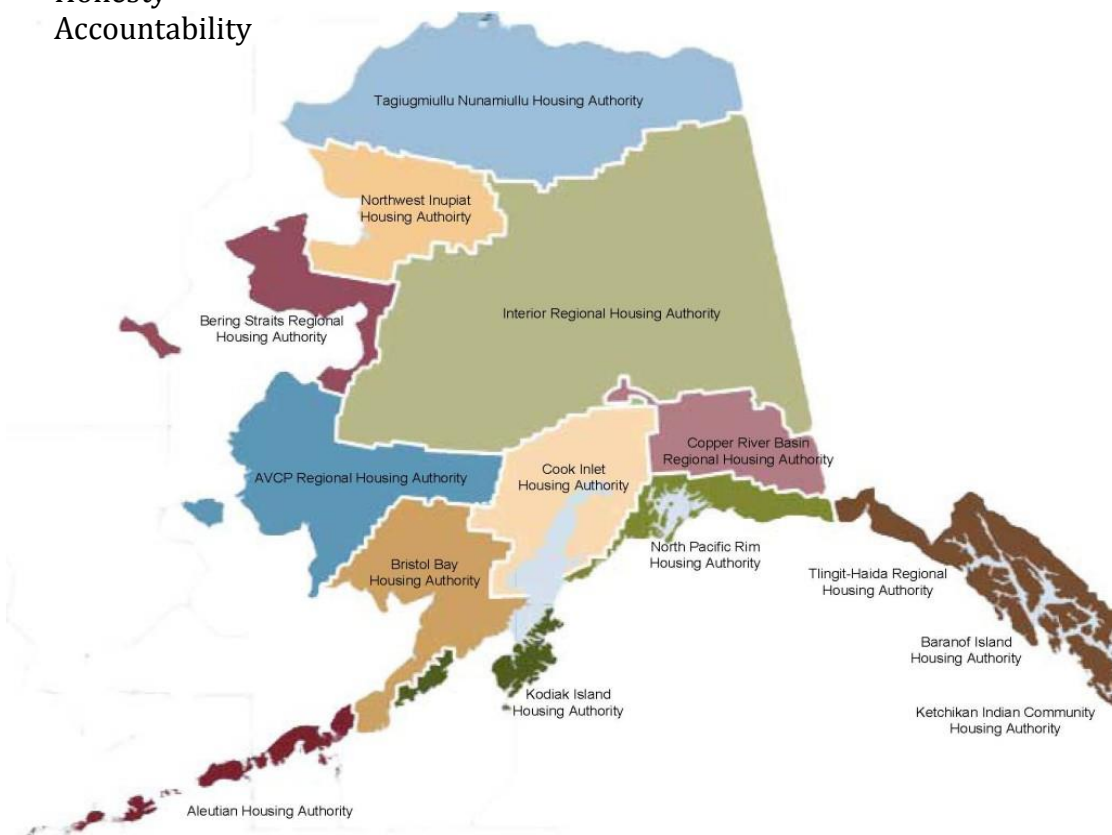


FIGURE 14 MAP OF IRHA SERVICE AREA



## Infrastructure

### Housing

Between 2005 and 2010 the Tanacross Tribal Council worked with Interior Regional Housing Authority (IRHA) and constructed 20 new homes. The 2010 Census reported a total of 73 housing units, of which 53 were occupied. This fulfilled one of the primary goals set in 2006 during the initial community planning process. This brings the total number of houses up to 73.

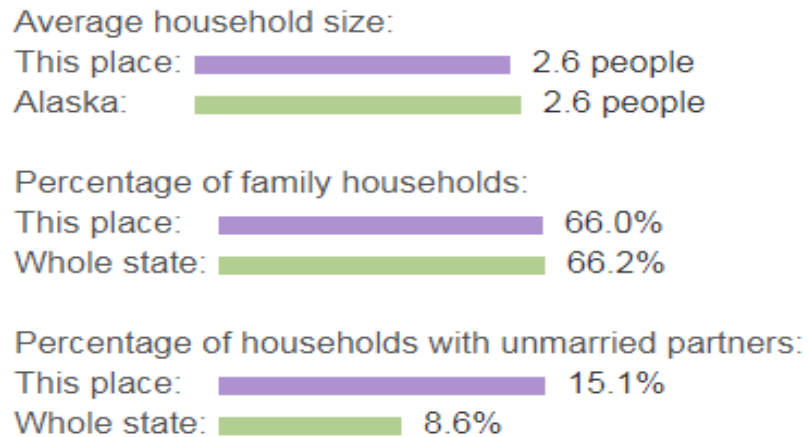


FIGURE 15 ACS TANACROSS HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

### How many Generations live in Household

■ One Generation   ■ Two Generations   ■ Three Generations

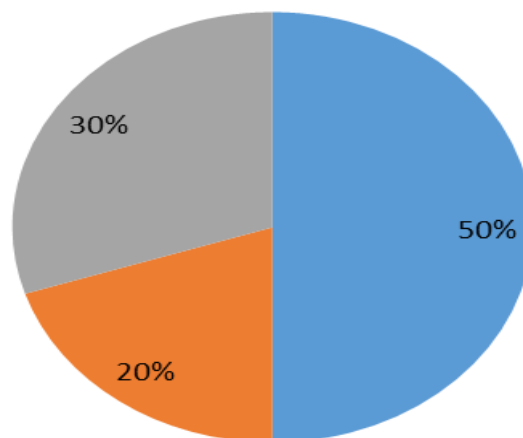


FIGURE 16 DATA DERIVED FROM THE TANACROSS COMMUNITY SURVEY

## **Public Utilities**

### **Electrical and Power**

Electricity is provided by Alaska Power & Telephone Company (AP & T), which uses diesel fuel from nearby Tok. The Alaska Power & Telephone Company participates in the Alaska Power Cost Equalization program, which provides a subsidy for the high power costs in Tanacross. The current resident rate for power is \$0.2299 per kWh.

### **Water and Sewer**

The construction of the new Tanacross Water System was completed in 2001. At the time, an additional water and sewer line was laid for proposed new housing on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. The water and sewer system is in need of an upgrade as cold weather is causing water and sewer lines in the community to freeze and the maintenance costs are exceeding budget allowance.

### **Solid Waste**

The Tanacross Village Council operates a permitted Class III Landfill. It is located approximately ½ mile west of the community which includes a burn unit. Each home is responsible for self-hauling its solid waste to the landfill.

### **Communication**

AP & T provides telephone services; the local internet provider is also AP & T. The Native Village of Tanacross is currently exploring options of developing a tribally-owned telecommunications system that could provide broadband internet access to village residents, as well as the health clinic and school.

### **Bulk Fuel Storage**

The term “bulk fuel” as used in this report refers, generically, to sawdust, wood chips, shavings, bark, pellets, etc. The availability of bulk fuel is essentially non-existent around Tanacross, so the cost of bulk fuel systems is high.

## Public Facilities

Public facilities in the Village include a Laundromat, contract US Post Office, volunteer fire station, Tribal government office, health clinic, Episcopal Church, Safe House and community hall.

There are no retail stores in Tanacross. Residents go to Tok for the purchase of small incidentals or gasoline. For bulk shopping or purchase of major consumer goods, residents go to Fairbanks.

### Tanacross Health Clinic

Health care services available in the village are provided by Tanana Chiefs Conference, a regional non-profit service organization located in Fairbanks. TCC provides acute care through its Tanacross health clinic, as well as mental health and alcohol counseling. These services are available to all individuals requesting care, regardless of whether they are tribal members or not. In addition, Tanacross residents who are Alaska Native or Native American may utilize a broad spectrum of other medical, dental, vision and mental health services in Fairbanks.



FIGURE 17: TANACROSS HEALTH CLINIC

### Laundromat/Washeteria

The laundromat facility is operated and maintained by the village.

### US Post Office

The Tanacross US Postal Service is located at 1000 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and is open from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. each weekday, and closed on Sunday.

### Safe House

In the case of emergencies the Safe House is available for residents seeking a safe place. The house is heated and maintained by the Tanacross Council.

### **Volunteer Fire Station or Volunteer Response Team**

In 2001, the Village of Tanacross partnered with the Tanana Chiefs Conference, BLM – Alaska Fire Service, Alaska Division of Forestry, and US Fish and Wildlife Service to begin a proactive and coordinated approach to hazardous fuels reduction. Through this unique interagency effort, BLM – Alaska Fire Service was able to obtain funding from the National Fire Plan to implement shaded fuel breaks around the potentially high risk community of Tanacross. This partnership also provided training and employment opportunities for local residents.



FIGURE 18 FIRE DEPARTMENT BUILDING

## Tribal Government Office

Tanacross built their tribal office in the 1980s. The office is owned by the Tanacross IRA Council. In 2017, some rehabilitation work was completed, but survey responses suggest that a new tribal office is needed.



FIGURE 19 TANACROSS TRIBAL OFFICE



## Community Hall

Tanacross' community hall was constructed between 2000 and 2001. It is located along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, next to their church. Community members gather at the community hall for meetings, group activities, public information, and other purposes. A new multipurpose building has been constructed but funding needs to be secured to finish the hall and second floor of the building. The completed sections of multipurpose building house the clinic and behavioral health office.



FIGURE 20 TANACROSS COMMUNITY HALL

## St. Timothy's Church

St. Timothy's Church in Old Tanacross turned 100 years old in 2012. In its early years, it was part of a string of missions that the Episcopal Church established along the Tanana River. The church's original Bible is still sitting on the altar of the old church. The dedication page in the bible says the first service at Tanacross (then called Tanana Crossing) was held September 25, 1912.

The re-creation of St. Timothy's Church (pictured below) is located adjacent to the Community Hall in Tanacross. For a variety of reasons the community relocated from the north bank to the south bank of the Tanana River in the early 1970s. Once at the new location residents pitched in and built a new church patterned after the old one. The clergy is Betty Thomas-Denny.



FIGURE 21 ST. TIMOTHY CHURCH

## Educational Facilities

There is one school in Tanacross, organized under the Alaska Gateway School District, for grades kindergarten through eighth. For high school, Tanacross youths either go to the high school in Tok – 12 miles from the village by school bus – or attend one of Alaska’s boarding schools, such as Mt. Edgecumbe in Sitka. The principal of Tanacross School is Suzanne Bell, and the Superintendent of the Alaska Gateway School District is Scott MacManus.

About 11 children enrolled in the 2019-2020 school year. The highest enrollment to date was 18 students in 2014. 91.7% of the students are American Indian/Alaska Native and 8.3% are two or more races. There are usually two teachers per school year, so the student/teacher ratio is roughly 6.6.



FIGURE 23: TANACROSS SCHOOL

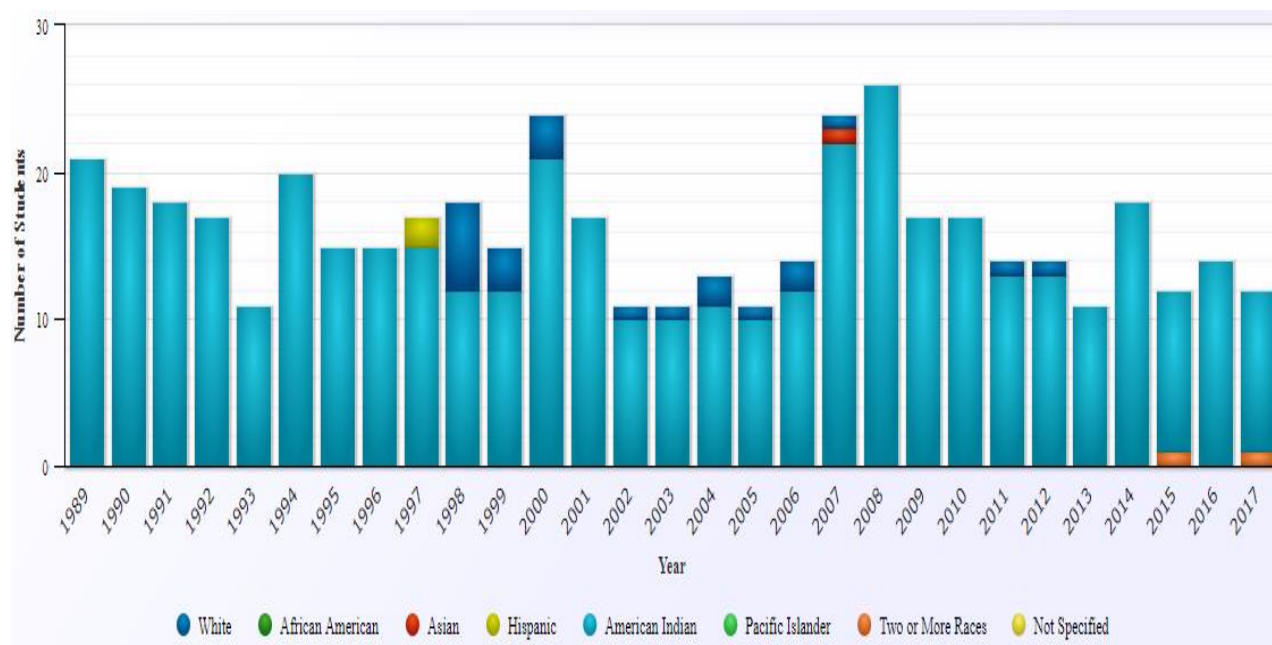


FIGURE 22 TANACROSS SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY RACE – AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE



## Transportation

Unlike most Interior Alaska Athabascan villages, Tanacross is located on the road system. Tok, a town of about 1,400 with lodging, restaurants, and several convenient stores that offer a variety of goods, is located 12 miles south of Tanacross. Village residents can also drive to Fairbanks, 192 miles northwest of Tanacross, for a wide selection of goods and services. The drive along the Alaska Highway takes under four hours to drive one-way, on paved, two-lane roads; and then after passing Delta Junction, drivers reach the Richardson Highway.

Although there is a maintained airport near Tanacross, it is primarily used by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) during summer months as a staging area for fire retardant planes. Air taxi services are provided by 40-Mile Air in nearby Tok.

Trucks, cars, snow machines, ATVs and riverboats are used for transportation, recreation and subsistence purposes. Tanacross is located on the historic Eagle Trail which connects Eagle to Valdez. The Eagle Trail is used and maintained by the Tribe from the Glenn Highway (Highway 1) to its intersection with the Alaska Highway (Highway 2), a trail section approximately 10 miles long. The trail is also maintained year-round north of Tanacross, from the village to Lake Mansfield – a distance of about six miles.



FIGURE 24: THE TANANA RIVER BORDERING THE VILLAGE OF TANACROSS

## Land Status

The struggle for land claims in Tanacross dates back to the 1950's when Tanacross filed a claim for its traditional hunting area with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The claim was rejected in November, 1961; a protest was filed by the village. The Secretary of the Interior declined to respond or take action in response to the protest. In 1964, the State of Alaska filed for lands surrounding Tanacross. The State planned to sell recreational lots on nearby Lake George, at that time claimed by the Native Village of Tanacross and later claimed by Dot Lake Village.

In 1973, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) resolved Alaska Native aboriginal land claims through the permitted conveyance of about 44 million acres to Alaska Native corporations, and a cash payment of nearly \$1 billion. As a result of ANCSA, Tanacross Village established a village corporation, Tanacross, Inc., which was entitled to select 92,000 acres of land. Most of the acreage selected by Tanacross, Inc. surrounds the village and includes lands important for subsistence activities. Tanacross, Inc. has also selected lands with highway frontage: along the Alaska Highway in Central Tok, on the western and eastern edges of Tok at Tok Junction, at the intersection of the highways from Anchorage (Tok Cut-off), and along Fairbanks (Alaska) highways.

The current Tanacross Village town site was surveyed by the US Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in 1971. An addition to the town site was surveyed by Charles Broker in 1983. Two secondary monuments from the original survey were recovered at that time and used as the basis of bearing for the first addition survey.

ANCSA also requires that a minimum of 1,280 acres be re-conveyed from the village corporation to the community for municipal purposes and community expansion. Since Tanacross is not in a municipality, this land will be re-conveyed to and administered in trust for a future municipality by the Municipal Lands Trustee. The Municipal Lands Trustee program is administered by the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development.

Presently the Tribe and Tanacross, Inc. are negotiating an agreement for other yet-to-be-determined lands to be set aside for a future municipality, and for lands to be conveyed to the Tribe as fee-simple rather than trust lands.

## Economy

### Industry & Capital Projects

Between 2005 and 2010, the Native Village of Tanacross contracted to build housing units. 20 new homes were built in Tanacross through the Indian Housing Block Grant. This project was a considerable undertaking, however there are now sufficient homes in Tanacross for its residents. Other projects have included improvements to and the completion of a community health center and multi-purpose facility, through funding made available by State of Alaska, Commerce, Community, and Economic Development - Division of Community and Regional Affairs and matching funds through the Denali Commission. In 2005 there were improvements made to the water and sewer system through funding made available through Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC).

### Available Jobs

The main jobs available in Tanacross are through the Tribal Council and school. Many residents work seasonally as emergency firefighters for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), or on various Tribal projects. Some people commute to Tok for employment. Other residents trap and sell fur, or make Alaska Native handcrafts to sell.<sup>1</sup>

**2016 Workers by Industry**

	Number of workers	Percent of total employed	Female	Male	Age 45 and over	Age 50 and over
Natural Resources and Mining	5	7.6	0	5	2	2
Construction	3	4.5	0	3	2	2
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	6	9.1	4	2	3	3
Information	1	1.5	0	1	1	1
Financial Activities	1	1.5	1	0	0	0
Professional and Business Services	3	4.5	2	1	0	0
Educational and Health Services	6	9.1	4	2	6	5
Leisure and Hospitality	12	18.2	6	6	1	1
State Government	1	1.5	0	1	0	0
Local Government	28	42.4	13	15	13	11

FIGURE 25 STATE OF ALASKA WORKER'S INDUSTRY

### Income Levels

According to the Denali Commission's *Distressed Community Criteria 2010 Update*, Tanacross meets the criteria of a distressed community. In order for a community to meet the 2010 criteria of being considered distressed, it must meet two out of the following three criteria: the average market income was less than \$14,968 in 2009, more than 70% of residents over the age of 16 earned less than \$14,968 in 2009, and less than 30% of residents over the age of 16 worked the entire year.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> (Tanacross, Alaska, n.d.)

<sup>2</sup> (Denali Commission, 2010)

## **Barriers to Economic Development**

Possible barriers to economic development include difficulty in securing funding for projects. Much of the economic activity within Tanacross is possible through grants, federal funding, and state funding. Securing these funds is competitive and often challenging. Projects that are completed are often based on what funding is available and not necessarily on the priorities of the community. Other barriers to economic development include difficulty in acquiring adequate and necessary trade, professional training that will help the Tribal members of Tanacross secure jobs when they come available, and an unemployment rate of 10.4%.

## **Potential for Growth**

The Tanacross Village Corporation owns prime real-estate at the Tok Junction which provides excellent opportunities for commerce and business. Tanacross designed a business plan for a cultural museum that could be placed at the Tok junction. Daily dances and performances would occur in addition to providing a location for Tanacross Tribal members to sell their art and crafts. In addition to completing a business plan for this project, Tanacross has developed a set of blue prints for the cultural museum building.

The Native Village of Tanacross has also considered developing an RV Park on the Alaska Highway. In addition to creating several positions for Tribal members, this project would also allow Tanacross to utilize tribal lands for bolstering their economic base.

## **Subsistence**

Nearly every family depends on subsistence activities for food. Whitefish, moose, porcupines, rabbits, ptarmigan, ducks, and geese are utilized. Caribou from the nearby 40-Mile Herd are also hunted. However, for many years, the herd has been closed to hunting by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game due to low herd numbers. Each summer, some residents travel to the Copper River, about 150 miles southeast, for salmon. Some residents trap and sell fur, or make Alaska Native handicrafts to sell.



FIGURE 26: A TRADITIONAL FOOD CACHE

## Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan

### YOUTH AND ELDERS GOAL

**Goal 1: Tanacross is a village where elders, youth and community members reside in harmony with the land and traditional Native culture.**

- I. Provide youth and young adults with access to cultural activities that are structured and in an environment free of alcohol and drugs.
  - Establish a team of volunteers to assist with cultural activities.
  - Seek funding to create projects dedicated to wellness and sober living.
  - Seek out elders to participate in mentoring our youth and young adults.
  - Create a monthly schedule of events for the youth and elders.
- II. Revitalize a traditional song and dance group with elders & youth collaboratively working together.
  - Provide youth with a culturally enriched program from ties to their ancestral knowledge.
  - Support language classes for youth and young adults to instill and provide young adults with a sense of self-awareness and identity.
  - Collect and preserve the traditional songs and dance through video recordings.
  - Perform locally and as invited to the Festival of Natives Arts, TCC Annual Convention, World Eskimo Indian Olympics, and the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention.
- III. Encourage diverse cultural activities for all ages to experience broader ways of life.
  - Culture camps during the summer that provides sewing, cooking, fishing, and food preservation.
  - Apply for Doyon Daaga funding for culture camp with life skills enhancement.
  - Culture camps in winter that teaches hunting, trapping and survival skills during the long winter days.
  - Activities such as softball, basketball, running, biking, hockey, and dog mushing to provide activities that will lead to healthy living for all.



## EDUCATION

**Goal 2: Education is provided with services that is set with high standards and all our youth graduates with a diploma and tools to enter the work force or seek further education.**

- I. Alaska Gateway School District works with Tanacross Village Council to ensure that all students enrolled are highly educated as set by their standards.
  - Include the Alaska Gateway School District in meetings with the village council.
  - Encourage more parent involvement and support.
  - Seek funding for after-school educational program for tutoring or extracurricular activities.
- II. Students are given opportunities to enhance employability skills such as summer youth employment, after-school employment, or job skills courses for all.
  - Research opportunities available on the local, state, and national level for students to participate in.
  - Keep an ongoing list of opportunities available for all age groups.
  - Partner with TCC Summer Youth Program and Employment and Training.
  - Advertise for vacant jobs and encourage residents to potentially apply.
- III. Mentorship programs for youth that are offered by the council, teachers, and other employers within the region.
  - Design a mentorship program with expectations, activities, and schedule of events.
  - Seek volunteer mentors for the mentorship program.
  - Create a parent/guardian consent form and a list of interested youth.
  - Designate a space to accommodate mentors and youth bi-monthly.
- IV. Assist community members with obtaining a GED or a diploma.
  - Partner with the Alaska Gateway School District to designate space in the evening for community members to pursue their GED.
  - Reach out to the Alaska State GED Administrator, about curriculum, program guidelines, and testing schedules and locations.
  - Request educational material and supplies pertaining to adult GED training.
  - Hire a lead tutor for the adult education program, to prepare for the GED test.

## HOUSING

### **Goal 3: Housing unit within the village will be rehabilitated with modern material and equipment to provide a livable unit for residents.**

- I. Work with homeowners and Interior Regional Housing Authority (IRHA) and Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) to provide mold remediation for all home within the village.
  - Provide education to homeowners on mold and ways to prevent mold.
  - Encourage yearly home maintenance and provide resources on how to maintain a home, budgeting, saving for emergencies, importance of good credit, and home buyer topics.
- II. Rehabilitate and update vacant homes within the village for residents to occupy.
  - Work with IRHA to consult about the Rehabilitation Program; educate residents about eligibility requirements and application process.
  - Create a needs assessment and inspect homes that identify rehabilitation as a need.
  - Seek funding through HUD ICDBG, USDA Elders Repair 62+ Program, TCC Weatherization, and other relevant agencies.
- III. Work to upgrade the fire hall and make it a unit that will be utilized if an emergency arises
  - Create a list of volunteers to organize and clean the fire hall.
  - Create an inventory of material and equipment to use for emergencies.
  - Generate a list of emergency items needed.
- IV. Secure funding for the completion of the multi-purpose building so all space can be utilized.
  - Consult with IRHA about adding the multi-purpose building to the annual Indian Housing Plan; designate housing funds to the completion of the multi-purpose building.
  - Get an updated assessment and budget for the completion of the building.
  - Seek funding such as; HUD ICDBG, non-profit and private funders, and/or discuss the different low-interest loans available to Tribes.



## LAND USE & ENVIRONMENT

### Goal 4: Land in Tanacross is managed to promote opportunities and improve community growth.

- I. Each member is aware of the environment and encourages preservation of our resources surrounding the village.
  - Support and encourage yearly hunting, fishing, and seasonal harvest activities.
  - Education and training on the process of wood cutting and preparing wood for burning.
  - Recreational trails are marked for hiking, camping and personal use.
- II. Provide a dialogue with Tanacross Inc. on land management so that all are updated and aware of our roles and responsibilities for the land and environment
  - Establish a committee to address land needs for future development.
  - Review 14(c)(3) lands to determine if any further actions are needed to finalize land transfers to the Tribe.
  - Attend the necessary trainings to understand land transfers and conveyances.
- III. Solid waste is properly disposed in the landfill and site contamination-free.
  - Work collaboratively with Tanacross Inc. on a new site for the dump.
  - Support landfill operator in the monitoring and tracking of the landfill.
  - Provide awareness focused on the safe & sanitary disposal of solid waste.
- IV. Establish a site for recycling within the community to preserve the environment surrounding the village
  - Improve recycling and litter prevention with bi-annual clean-up days.
  - Seek volunteers to upkeep and maintain street fronts to attract visitors.
  - Promote recycling by adding bins at the landfill site and around the community.

## **ECONOMY**

**Goal 5: The Native Village of Tanacross has developed an economy base to maximize opportunities for tribal members in local, regional and state improvement projects.**

- I. Utilize our village corporation lands to secure a sustainable industry in tourism.
  - Educate members on the tourism industry and ways to capture necessary economic funding for such an endeavor.
  - Seek technical assistance through TCC P&D Program to create a business plan for tourism in Tanacross.
  - Seek funding from ANA Social and Economic Development Strategies Alaska to develop a sustainable tourism program for the community.
  - Gain access to lands on the entrance roads to our village to construct a historical museum.
- II. Community members are prepared and engaged for employability skills.
  - Provide community members with job training programs in various fields to secure employment.
  - Collaborate with Tanana Chiefs Conference Employment and Training and Education, UAF Interior Alaska Campus to host a career and educational event for all age groups.
  - Provide resume building, computer skills, and financial fundamental classes for tribal members.
- III. Ensure that tribal members are employed at the village council level, as well as other jobs within the village.
  - Fill available local job vacancies by active recruitment.
  - Provide local summer jobs for youth and adults.
  - Apply for TCC's Grant Development Specialist position each spring and fall.

# Appendices

## Tanacross Community Planning Meeting

### November 18, 2019


### 4:00 p.m.

**Community Planning and visions for the community future.**

The first planning meeting for community input and discuss the goals and vision for Tanacross.

Dinner will be provided after the meeting.  
Door Prizes

The meeting is sponsored by:  
Tanacross Village Council and  
Tanana Chiefs Conference



### Community Planning Meeting Sign-in

11-18-19

Name and Title (Please Print)	E-mail Address	Survey Complete
1. Helene Dunit President of TUC	helene.dunit@tanachiefs.org	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
2. MARION ISAAC		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
3. Shelly Sulfridge Northern Lights Missions	shellysulfridge@gmail.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
4. Julie L. Noy-Resident	meisaac9183@gmail.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
5. John Baker II-Resident	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
6. Jangal O.F. Noy-Resident		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
7. Lorna Baker-Resident		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
8. Grace L.F. Noy-Resident		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
9. Jerry Isaac, USA.	jerry_isaac@hotmail.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
10. Alfred Jonathan		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
11. Dollie Jonathan	Dollie.jonathan@tanachiefs.org	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
12. Anne Esmailka	anne99748@yahoo.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
13. Liz Webb	taninc@aptalaska.net	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
14. Joene Malamute	joene.malamute@gmail.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
15. MILDRED JONATHAN		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
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### Community Planning Meeting Agenda

November 18, 2019

1. Introduction
  - Who am I
  - The New Community Planning Specialist
  - Planning Process
2. Community Surveys
3. Identifying Values and Vision
  - Vision Statement
    - Is the current vision statement still relevant
    - What Can we add or change
  - Values
    - What do people treasure about Tanacross
4. Goals and Objectives
  - What are our goals for Tanacross
5. Discuss Future Planning Meetings
  - Final Draft Review for comments
  - Objectives and action plan for goals
  - Data from Survey

Please remember to fill out your survey for an opportunity to win a door prize!!

If you have any pictures or information that you would like to include in the plan please email the items to: [anne99748@yahoo.com](mailto:anne99748@yahoo.com).

### Tanacross Community Feedback Survey 2019

Tanacross IRA Council, in partnership with Tanana Chiefs Conference, is creating a Community Plan for Tanacross. This survey will help document the needs of the village and help guide the community by setting new goals. This information will be used to create a strategy to meet these needs. If you would like to be eligible to win a \$25 gift card, please submit your completed survey with your name and contact information to Anne Esmailka by November 1, 2019.

**ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED WILL BE TREATED CONFIDENTIAL AND YOUR ANSWERS WILL REMAIN ANONYMOUS.**

#### Basic Demographics:

Age: Youth 18-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61-70 71-80 81-90 91+

Gender: M F Veteran? N

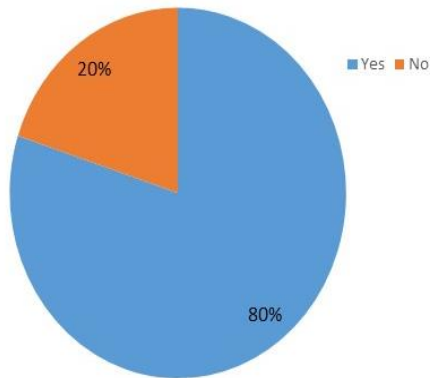
#### Goal Questions

1. What do you enjoy most about living in Tanacross?  
Being Athabaskan.
2. What would like to see happen in your community in the next 2-3 years?  
Sobriety. No more alcohol or drugs.  
Experienced, policy abiding, sober, healthy council members. Hire experienced clean and sober employees.  
Have TCC pay ALL employees. Do drug tests before hiring for any job. Do random test.
3. What are the biggest issues and challenges facing your community?  
Alcohol and drugs. Elder abuse. Disrespect for each other. Foul language. One family operation is dysfunctional and disrespectful to community members.
4. What are the three most important projects that would improve life in your community?  
Sober, drug free people.  
Council members that plan to improve the community. Make things happen.  
Employees work 8-5 or within these hours.  
Fix septic system. Clock in and out, no excuses.  
Hire an experienced and successful grant writer.  
Have fundraisers to have events. No draining money from Council budget.

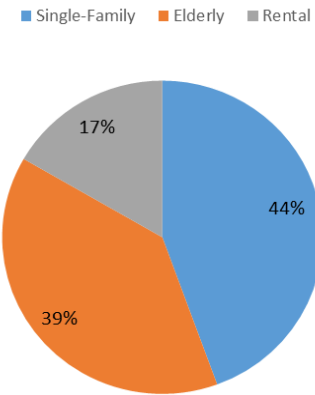
FIGURE 27 MEETING NOTICES, SIGN IN SHEET, AGENDA, AND SURVEY COVER

# Survey Results

Do you Participate in Cultural & Traditional Activities?

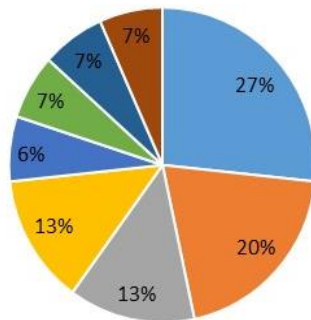


What type of homes are needed in Tanacross?



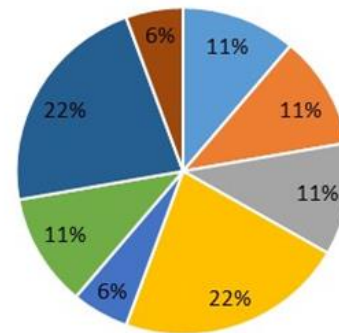
Summer Activities for Youth

Softball   Culture Camp   Youth Employment   Swimming  
 Fishing   Berry & Root Picking   Moose Hide Tanning   Storytelling



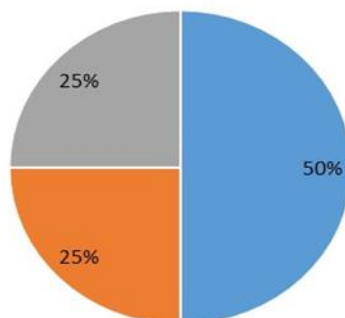
Suggestions for youth winter activities

Dog Sledding   Winter Camp   Ice Fishing   Trapping  
 Drum making   Winter hunting   Seasonal Sports   Snow shoes



Do you have concerns with AGSD/Tanacross?

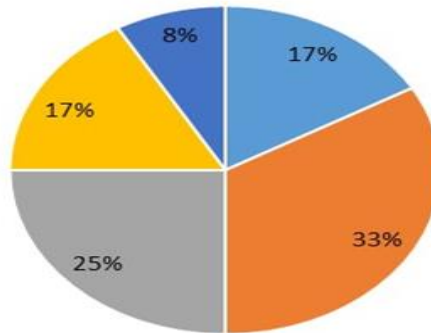
Yes   No   N/A





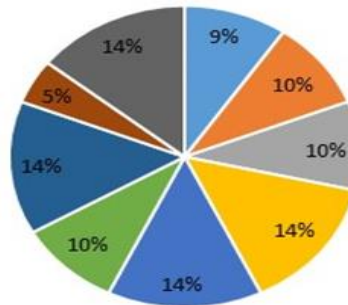
### Ideas about Educating the Youth

■ Cultural Knowledge ■ Native Language ■ Parent Support ■ Trapping Skills ■ Hunting Skills



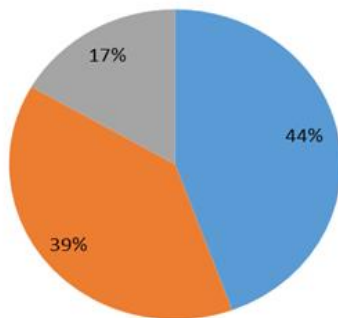
### What would you like to see in 2-3 years?

■ Housing ■ Water & Sewer ■ Community Building Completion  
 ■ Sobriety ■ Health & Wellness ■ Alcohol & Drug Prevention  
 ■ Economic Development - Jobs ■ Native Language ■ Family Activities



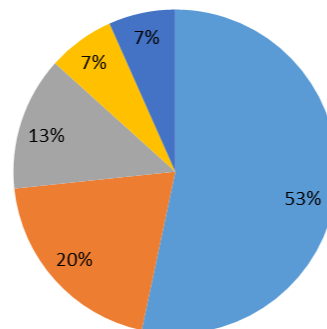
### What type of homes are needed in Tanacross?

■ Single-Family ■ Elderly ■ Rental



### Environmental Concerns

■ Water & Sewer ■ Landfill ■ Air Quality ■ Use of Plastic Bags ■ Stray Dogs



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## Table of Figures

Figure 1 Welcome to Tanacross Sign .....	6
Figure 2 Tanacross Community Values .....	7
Figure 3 Community planning meeting November 2019.....	9
Figure 4 Culture Camp Banner 2019.....	11
Figure 5: Whitefish Fishnet, Important for Subsistence .....	11
Figure 6 Tanacross Map Location .....	12
Figure 7 Annual precipitation .....	13
Figure 8 Average temperature.....	13
Figure 9 Tanacross Population by Race .....	14
Figure 10 Census population for Tanacross.....	14
Figure 11 Dihthaad moosehide wall hanging .....	15
Figure 12 Doyon Land Map - Tanacross Inc .....	17
Figure 13 Denakkanaaga Tanacross 2018.....	19
Figure 14 Map of IRHA Service Area .....	20
Figure 15 ACS Tanacross Household Characteristics .....	21
Figure 16 Data derived from the Tanacross Community Survey .....	21
Figure 17: Tanacross Health Clinic .....	23
Figure 18 Fire Department Building.....	24
Figure 19 Tanacross Tribal Office.....	25
Figure 20 Tanacross Community Hall .....	26
Figure 21 St. Timothy Church.....	26
Figure 22: Tanacross School.....	27
Figure 23 Tanacross school enrollment by race – American Indian/Alaska Native .....	27
Figure 24: The Tanana River Bordering the Village of Tanacross .....	28
Figure 25 State of Alaska Worker's industry.....	30
Figure 26: A Traditional Food Cache.....	31
Figure 27 Meeting Notices, Sign In Sheet, Agenda, and Survey Cover .....	37
Figure 28: Tanacross Village Welcome Sign.....	41



FIGURE 28: TANACROSS VILLAGE WELCOME SIGN

## Contact Information

### ***Tanacross IRA Council***

PO Box 76009  
Tanacross, AK 99776  
Phone: (907) 883-5024/4496  
Fax: (907) 883-4497

### ***Tanacross Health Clinic***

PO Box 76050  
Tanacross, AK 99776  
Phone: (907) 883-4131  
Fax: (907) 883-3327

### ***Tanacross Inc.***

PO Box 76029  
Tanacross, AK 99776  
Phone: (907) 883-4130  
Fax: (907) 883-4129

### ***Tanacross School***

PO Box 76030  
Tanacross, AK 99776  
Phone: (907) 883-4391  
Fax: (907) 883-4390

### ***Alaska Gateway School District***

PO Box 226  
Tok, AK 99780  
Phone: (907) 883-5151  
Fax: (907) 883-5154



