



Formerly McDowell Group

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

December 2023

PREPARED FOR:
Prince William Sound
Economic Development District



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Executive Summary

As in many Alaska regions, Prince William Sound communities are struggling to meet the housing needs of their residents. Challenges include the high cost of construction, low availability of construction workers, limited buildable land, and aging housing stock. Though some communities are managing to add housing to their inventory, significant gaps remain. The Prince William Sound Economic Development District contracted with McKinley Research Group to conduct a housing needs assessment for six communities in the region: Chenega, Cordova, Eyak, Tatitlek, Valdez, and Whittier. Sources included community surveys, town hall meetings, and key informant interviews in addition to data from U.S. Census, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and Alaska Housing Finance Corporation. Following are key findings of the study. Communities are presented alphabetically.

CHENEGA

Chenega needs at least four new large, single-family houses and to build one or two new duplexes or triplexes each year to meet the needs of the community.

- Chenega's size and remoteness makes housing development particularly challenging. It also contributes to difficulty in completing other, necessary infrastructure projects, such as renovating the school.
- Chenega needs a combination of housing types to replace aging housing stock and ensure residents are not experiencing overcrowding.
- Chenega needs new large, single-family houses to accommodate two purposes: the need for temporary, non-resident workforce for specific projects, and the long-term need for multi-generational housing for residents.

CORDOVA/EYAK

Cordova needs at least 20 additional 1-2-bedroom rental units and 20 additional 2-4-bedroom ownership units. Eyak has a particularly high need for senior housing.

- Cordova struggles with high costs of construction, lack of available labor, a perceived lack of buildable land, and a significant number of deteriorated properties that do not contribute to the usable housing stock.
- Cordova's housing needs are in both rental and owner units, small scale multi-family style and single-family homes, and units dedicated to seniors.
- New construction in Cordova has been so low for decades that the number of houses going off market due to structural deterioration exceeds the number being added to inventory.

- Members of the Native Village of Eyak living in Cordova have even more acute housing needs than the broader Cordova population. In particular, NVE members require more attainable housing ownership opportunities.
- As the City of Cordova, NVE, and other tribal entities consider housing options, an important factor will need to be the number of new condos or houses required for NVE members, particularly those over 65 and wishing to age in place.

TATITLEK

Tatitlek needs a new multi-family development with four to six small-scale housing units, particularly for seniors or others with limited mobility.

- While similar to Chenega in size and remoteness, Tatitlek has benefited recently from the addition of three subsidized single-family housing units through North Pacific Rim Housing Authority.
- The housing in Tatitlek is older and gradually needs to be replaced or upgraded to be adequate for its population, especially its older residents who need safe homes to age-in-place.

VALDEZ

Valdez needs 40-50 additional units of long-term rental housing, and at least 20 new single-family homes, for its population.

- Valdez has been experiencing a tight housing market for many years, and it has been exacerbated by an increase in short-term rentals and non-resident workers looking for housing.
- While the Naswik Project's addition of 37 housing units and the Valdez Senior Apartments addition of 28 senior units in 2024 will help to ease the pressure somewhat, the high number of residents living in mobile homes or deteriorating properties and wanting to move may mean this does not add to the total number of occupied units.
- More multi-family and rental development is needed in Valdez to accommodate the robust economy and workforce needs of the community.

WHITTIER

Whittier requires a new multi-family residential building with at least 200 units, in a combination of ownership and rental models, to accommodate the current population.

- Whittier's unique housing challenges are defined by its lack of buildable land, condensed further by the Alaska Railroad's master lease of most land in the city.
- While residents of Whittier for the most part enjoy the experience of living in the same two buildings, they are frustrated with the state of repair of the Begich Towers.

- The new building likely would also require a new management structure to avoid a perceived concentration of power with multi-unit owners, and it is possible the City of Whittier should manage any new residential building.

Introduction

Most communities in Alaska suffer from housing availability and affordability issues. None have found easy solutions as they seek better alignment between housing supply and housing demand. Common themes include a limited supply of housing for senior citizens, a shortage of affordable entry-level homes that are necessary to attract and retain young families, and a shortage of seasonal housing for a growing non-resident workforce, among other issues. Much of the economic growth that has occurred in Alaska in recent years has been in service and retail sectors with wages and seasonality that are inconsistent with prevailing housing market conditions.

Prince William Sound has its own set of unique characteristics that overlay these challenges as it seeks ways to support a housing market that best meets the needs of its residents and businesses. Recognizing that housing issues have far-reaching implications on quality of life and economic opportunity, the Prince William Sound Economic Development District (PWSEDD) contracted with McKinley Research Group to conduct a housing needs assessment. This study provides a common understanding of Prince William Sound's housing gaps and their impact on the economies of the six communities studied. The information will help the communities prioritize housing projects and inform ongoing planning efforts and policy development.



The Prince William Sound communities studied in this report.

A housing needs assessment uses primary and secondary data from communities to determine answer three critical questions:

- What is the current housing inventory and quality in the community?
- What is the perception of housing, and what housing needs do residents have?
- What types of housing are needed to fill the gap in the community?

The six communities studied in-depth for this report include Chenega, Cordova (including the Native Village of Eyak), Tatitlek, Valdez, and Whittier. The research team used publicly available data about current housing inventory to create existing conditions reports for each community, survey data to inform the current housing needs of residents, and a combination of key informant interviews and survey data to compile housing needs assessments for each community. The housing needs are determined based on a ten-year time horizon, though in many cases the need for housing is more urgent.

Methodology

Data Sources

A limited amount of published data is available regarding housing market conditions in Prince William Sound. Sources of data presented in this report include the following:

- U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates
- Prince William Sound Economic Development District Household Population Survey
- Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development (ADOLWD) New Housing Unit Survey
- Alaska Housing Finance Corporation Rent Reasonableness Standards
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Indian Housing Block Grant Formula Data

A Note on the Reliability of American Community Survey Data

On most topics, ACS is the source of best available data on Prince William Sound's housing market. Data from this source is survey-based with low sample sizes and is subject to large margins of error. The ACS data presented in this report should be interpreted with an understanding that some data points could be significantly misleading. The margins of error associated with various ACS estimates are generally included for units such as number of housing units.

Despite the limitations associated with large margins of error, ACS housing data provides useful information and is worth taking into consideration. Typically, ACS data are presented for Valdez as well as Cordova, Seward, and Homer to allow comparison with nearby coastal communities. The most recent ACS housing data available for Prince William Sound communities is the 2017-2021 five-year estimate, which is based on a sample of 40 housing units. Five-year estimates can be understood as estimates of the average conditions over the five-year period.

A Note about Employment and Wage Data

Employment data were sourced from the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development for the Chugach Census Area and the U.S. Census Bureau for the smaller communities that make up the Prince William Sound region. The differences between sources are outlined below.

- ADOLWD counts workers by place of work and therefore captures seasonality, but counts are only available at the larger census area level.

- USCB counts workers by place of residency. This is a different measure than ADOLWD, but USCB provides data at the more granular community level.
- ADOLWD employment and wage data provides complete information for all of 2022.
- USCB's latest employment data are 2021 five-year averages (the average employment by industry from 2017 through 2021).

Household Survey

McKinley Research Group fielded a telephone survey of randomly selected Valdez households in January 2020 for a housing needs assessment for the City of Valdez. The survey included a variety of questions related to housing in Valdez, including satisfaction with current housing; perceptions on the availability, quality, and affordability of housing; senior housing needs; and priorities for city housing efforts, among other questions. See Appendix A for survey instrument with full list of questions asked. A total of 210 Valdez households were surveyed. Results from the 2020 survey are used for this report.

MRG conducted a similar survey of Cordova residents in September 2023. This mailed survey offered respondents the opportunity to submit the survey by mail or scan a QR code or link and take the survey online. A total of 238 Cordova residents responded to the survey.

This survey was distributed to Chenega households by staff members of the Chenega Corporation in October 2023. The survey was distributed to Tatitlek residents by Chugach Corporation staff during the Alaska Federation of Natives conference in Anchorage in October 2023. The survey was distributed to Whittier residents during two Town Halls in October 2023. A total of 14 Chenega residents, 10 Tatitlek residents, and 10 Whittier residents responded to the survey.

All respondents were entered to win one of six cases of jarred smoked salmon, with one winner chosen per community surveyed.

For the two communities with sufficient sample sizes (Valdez and Cordova), survey data was analyzed as a whole, as well as for various subgroups, including length of residency, rent/own, presence of children and seniors in the household, income level, and other subgroups. Statistically significant differences between subgroups are noted in the text.

Because of the small sample sizes of the other three communities (Chenega, Tatitlek, Whittier), survey results are reported in terms of numbers of responses rather than percentages.

Key Informant Interviews

Interviews were conducted in fall 2023 to gather insights regarding housing conditions, barriers to housing development, housing priorities, and other topics. Interviews were conducted with a

broad range of Prince William Sound community leaders and housing stakeholders. A total of 18 people were interviewed for this study. See Appendix A for a list of those interviewed.

Chugach Census Area

The Chugach Census Area is a census-designated area in southcentral Alaska comprised of 9,530 square miles and 6,874 people as of 2022. Most of this area was previously part of the Valdez-Cordova Census Area, although some of that census area became part of the Copper River Census Area to the north. This change occurred as of the 2020 census, making comparison of data from 2010 to 2020 challenging. The data presented below uses totals only from the Chugach Census Area where possible, excluding any previous Copper River Census communities. Where this was not possible, it is noted.

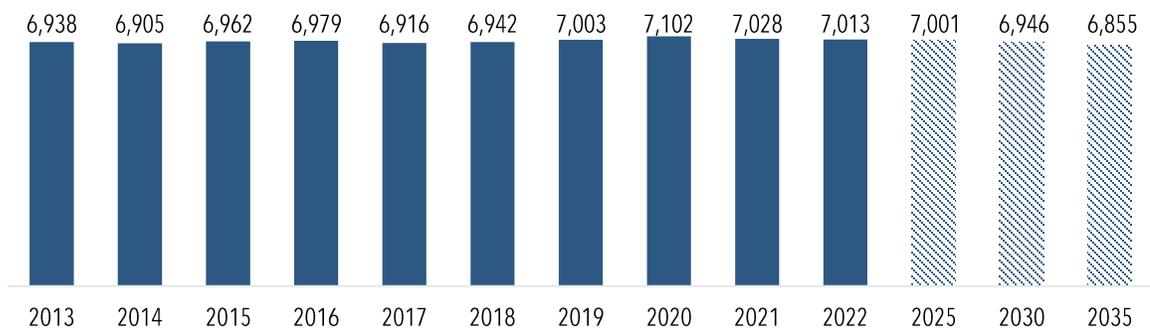
Demographics and Existing Conditions

Population

As of 2022, approximately 7,000 residents lived in the Chugach Census Area. The largest share of residents lived in Valdez and Cordova: 56% and 37%, respectively.

Between 2013 and 2022 the population of the Census Area remained virtually flat, increasing by 1% over the last decade. Between 2022 and 2035, the population is projected to decrease by 2%, a forecasted loss of 160 residents. For comparison, the state of Alaska's population is projected to increase 3% by 2035.

Figure 1. Chugach Census Area Population, 2013-2022, 2025-2050 Projected



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

*2020 population is a Census count and may differ from 2020 population numbers elsewhere in the report.

Since 2013 there has been a general trend of net out-migration in the Chugach Census Area, meaning more people have left than moved to the region. Natural increase has dropped over time meaning fewer births compared to deaths.

Table 1. Components of Population Change, Chugach Census Area, 2013-2022

Year	Natural Increase/Decrease		Net Migration	Total Population Change	Population at End of Period
	Births	Deaths			
2012-13	98	-23	75	-106	6,938
2013-14	79	-38	41	-74	6,905
2014-15	96	-47	49	8	6,962
2015-16	92	-38	54	-37	6,979
2016-17	81	-34	47	-110	6,916
2017-18	83	-30	53	-27	6,942
2018-19	74	-39	35	26	7,003
2019-20	63	-33	41	43	7,087*
2020-21	80	-30	50	-109	7,028
2021-22	70	-48	22	-37	7,013

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

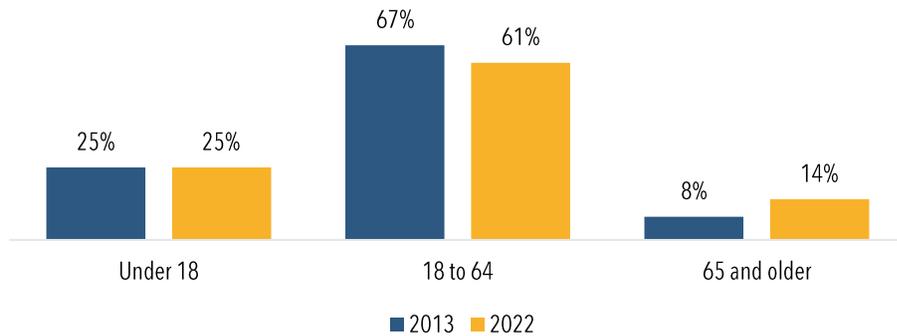
*2020 Components of Change population numbers are DOL July estimates and may differ from 2020 population numbers elsewhere in the report.

Age

In 2022, the median age in the Chugach census area was 38.0, higher than the Alaska median of 36.5.

The proportion of residents by age cohort is similar to Alaska proportions. Of the approximately 7,000 Chugach Census Area residents, 61% are between 18 and 64, 25% are under 18, and 14% are over 65. The Census Area has an aging population. Between 2013 and 2022, the population over 65 years old increased by 450 residents.

Figure 2. Age Distribution, Chugach Census Area, 2013 and 2022

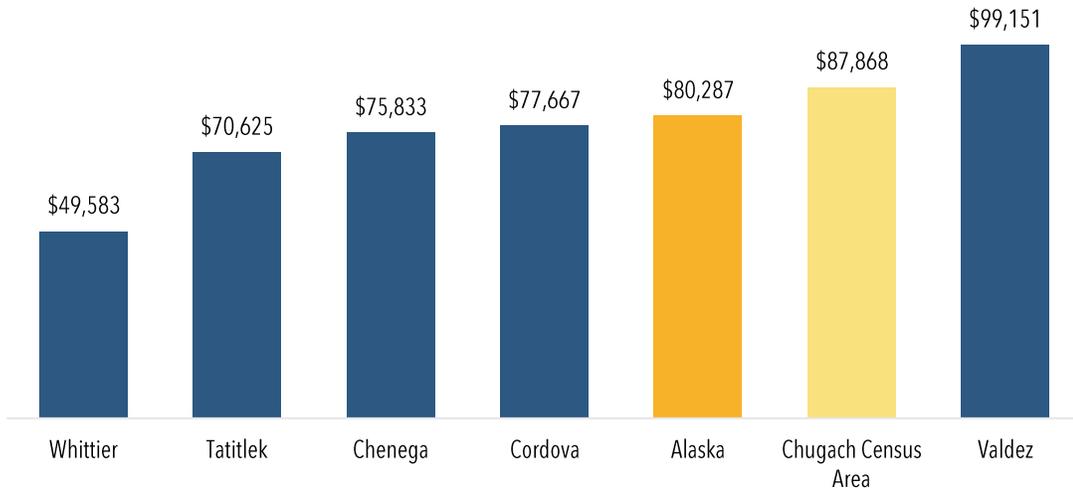


Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Income

In 2021, annual median household income in the Chugach Census Area was \$87,868, approximately \$7,600 (9%) higher than Alaska median household income, largely due to Valdez. Valdez' median income was \$99,151 in 2021, while all the other study communities have lower median incomes than the statewide median.

Figure 3. Median Household Incomes, Chugach Census Area and Alaska, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Employment and Wages

In 2022, over 3,600 people were employed in various industries in the Chugach Census Area. The highest concentration of employment on average was in local government (19%, or 685 workers) and contributed 24% of wages (\$58 million). Employment associated with manufacturing made up 17% of total employment (619 workers) and 14% of wages (\$34 million), largely due to the size of the seafood processing industry in the region. Transportation and warehousing, which include pipeline activities and water and air transport, made up 14% of total employment (500 workers) and 27% of wages (\$66 million). The table below shows the remaining top industries/employment and their associated wages.

Table 2. Employment and Wages by Industry, Chugach Census Area, 2022

Industry	Employment	% of Total Employment	Wages (\$Millions)	% of Total Wages
Government	917	25%	\$58	24%
Local Government	685	19%	\$43	17%
Manufacturing	619	17%	\$34	14%
Transportation & Warehousing	500	14%	\$66	27%
Leisure & Hospitality	360	10%	\$12	5%
Retail Trade	292	8%	\$10	4%
Education & Health	252	7%	\$13	5%
All Other	727	20%	\$54	22%
Total	3,667	100%	\$248	100%

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Cost of Living

The cost of living in the Chugach Census Area is significantly higher than the rest of the United States, and higher than in urban Alaska. Transportation contributes to these higher costs, as most of these communities are inaccessible by road and materials have to be shipped, first to Anchorage, and then by air or boat into town. Even the communities with road access, Valdez and Whittier, experience high costs of goods and sometimes limited availability.

The U.S. Department of Defense, which has a large presence in Prince William Sound, annually ranks communities for their cost of living compared to the continental United States. In 2022, Cordova was calculated to be 46% more expensive than the US average, and Valdez was 44%. This takes into account all costs, from housing to food to childcare, and is naturally higher in communities that are more remote (such as Chenega and Tatitlek). ¹

Housing Supply

As of 2021, there were an estimated 3,626 housing units within the Chugach Census Area. Over 90% of units within the Census Area are located within the five study communities: Chenega, Cordova, Tatitlek, Valdez, and Whittier. Over half of housing units within the Chugach Census Area are located in Valdez (53%), and approximately one-quarter are located in Cordova (28%).

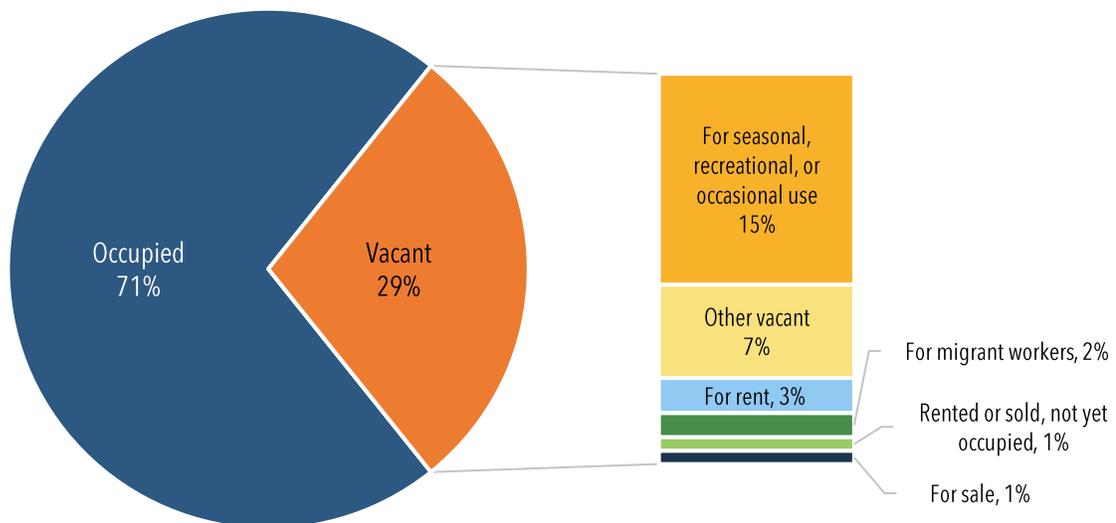
Of the 3,626 housing units within the Chugach Census Area, 2,592 are estimated to be currently occupied; the remaining 1,034 are identified as vacant. Vacancy rates are based on surveys

¹ Alaska Economic Trends, July 2022, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

conducted by the U.S. Census throughout the year. As of 2021, an estimated 29% of housing units in the Chugach Census Area were vacant, higher than the Alaska estimate of 20% of units.

The majority of units held vacant in the Chugach Census Area were vacant for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use (54% of vacant units, 15% of all housing units). This includes housing developments that are used exclusively as seasonal workforce housing for seafood canneries. These developments are more similar to barracks than housing and are not available to the rest of the community as housing the rest of the year. Therefore, the housing vacancy rate is inflated, particularly in Cordova where cannery housing is more prevalent. Of the five study communities, Chenega and Tatitlek had the highest proportion of units held vacant for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use (70% and 66% of vacant units, respectively). In Alaska statewide, 50% of vacant units are held vacant for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Figure 4. Occupancy Status, Chugach Census Area, 2021

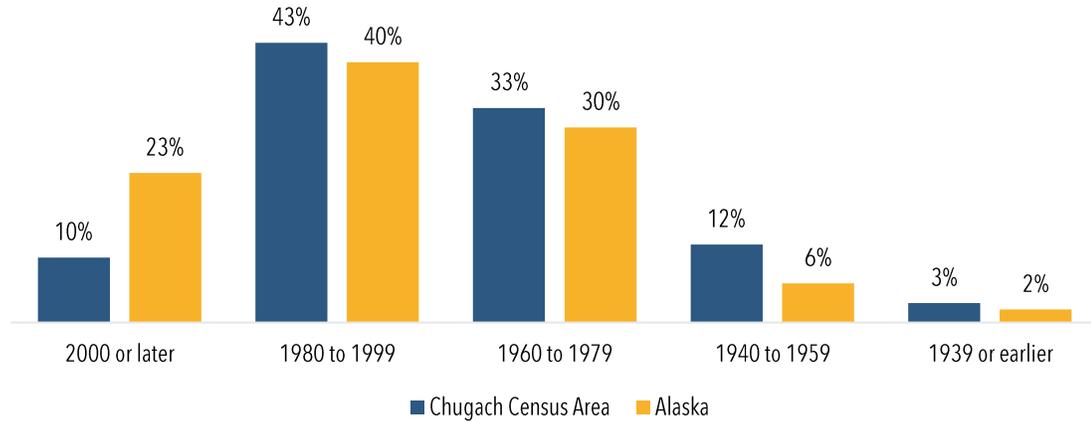


Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Residents of the Chugach Census Area live in older housing units than the average Alaskan. An estimated 15% of all occupied housing units in the Chugach Census Area were built before 1960, nearly twice the statewide proportion of 8%. Further, 10% of units in the Census Area were built after 2000, compared to 22% of all occupied units in Alaska.

In both the Chugach Census Area and Alaska statewide, the majority of housing units were built between 1960 and 1999 (76% and 70%, respectively).

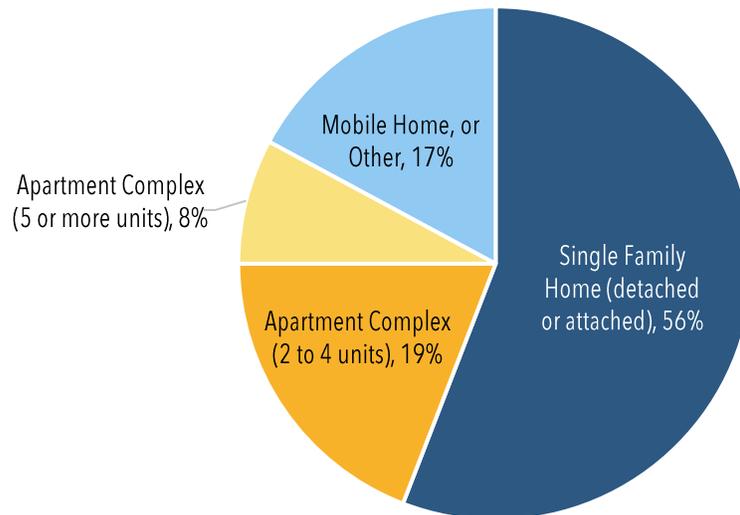
Figure 5. Age of Occupied Housing Stock, Chugach Census Area and Alaska, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Of the approximately 2,592 occupied units in the Chugach Census Area, 56% (1,448 units) are single-family homes. Nearly 20% of occupied units are located in apartment complexes containing 2 to 4 units, 8% are located in apartment complexes with 5 or more units (nearly all in Whittier), and 17% are mobile homes (nearly all in Valdez) or other housing units (predominantly boats).

Figure 6. Occupied Housing by Type, Chugach Census Area, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Cost and Availability

In the past five years, a total of 47 units were sold in the region, including 34 in Cordova, 12 in Valdez, and 1 in Whittier. An average of 10 single-family homes in Valdez were sold annually between 2015 and 2022. Because data from the Alaska Multiple Listing Service (MLS) only includes homes put on the market, actual regional sales volumes are likely higher. Many homes in the Prince William Sound region, especially in Valdez and Cordova, are sold via word-of-mouth directly by owners. For this reason, the home may never be officially listed and therefore does not show up in compiled data of home sales. Anecdotally, residents report that 15 or more houses per year are sold in Valdez and Cordova without ever appearing on a listing service. Residents also report that these sales happen in a matter of days from when the owner decides to sell the property, as the market is tight, and buyers are ready to make an offer immediately.

Housing data from the MLS is collected by sub-region. The MLS defines three sub-regions within Prince William Sound: Whittier and Vicinity (including Whittier and Chenega), Valdez and Vicinity (including Valdez and Tatitlek), and Cordova and Vicinity.

Between 2020 and 2023, the average sale price of single-family homes has been relatively stable at \$345,000 to \$360,000. The average annual sale price varies widely in the region due to the low volume of homes put on the market. This number also does not reflect homes that are sold without being listed, and, according to residents interviewed, is most likely much lower than the actual average home sale price.

Housing Attainability

Housing options that middle-income individuals and families can afford is referred to as “attainable housing,” while “affordable housing” is targeted to low-income individuals and families.

For this analysis, attainable housing is defined as housing within financial reach of households earning between 80% and 120% of the Areawide Median Income (AMI) and does not cause a household to become cost-burdened. Cost-burdened households are defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as households spending 30% or more of gross income on housing-related expenses, including mortgage or rental payments, taxes, and utilities, among others. This includes home heating and fuel costs, which are higher in remote areas such as the communities explored in this report. Therefore, while rent and mortgage numbers are presented here, those figures must also include what a family is spending on all utilities, which can be a significant percentage of overall household costs.

Using these definitions, the maximum monthly housing cost the median household in the Chugach Census Area can afford is \$2,100. The full range of attainable monthly housing costs for households earning between 80% and 120% of AMI is \$1,700 to \$2,500. This equates to a home price range of \$225,000 to \$337,500.

By comparison, the average home sale price range in the Chugach Census Area between 2020 and 2022 was \$345,000 to \$360,000 (again, this may be low as it does not include homes that were sold without being listed). The approximate mortgage payment for homes sold at this price is \$2,500 to \$2,630, within the financial reach of households making over 123% of AMI annually.

Table 3. Attainable Housing Thresholds, Chugach Census Area, 2023

	Annual Income	Monthly Housing Costs	Max Cost of Attainable Home
80% AMI	\$78,880	\$1,600	\$225,000
100% AMI	\$98,600	\$2,100	\$281,200
120% AMI	\$118,320	\$2,500	\$337,500

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021 5-year Estimates, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, McKinley Research Group calculations.

Note: AMI calculations have been adjusted for inflation. The maximum housing cost calculation uses a cost-burdened threshold of 25%. This is adjusted down from HUD's 30% definition to account for additional housing-related expenses outside of mortgage or rent payments, including utilities and taxes. The maximum cost of an attainable home was calculated assuming a 30-year mortgage, a down payment of 5%, and an annual interest rate of 8.5% (current rate as of 11/1/2023). Applies to all Attainable Housing tables in this report.

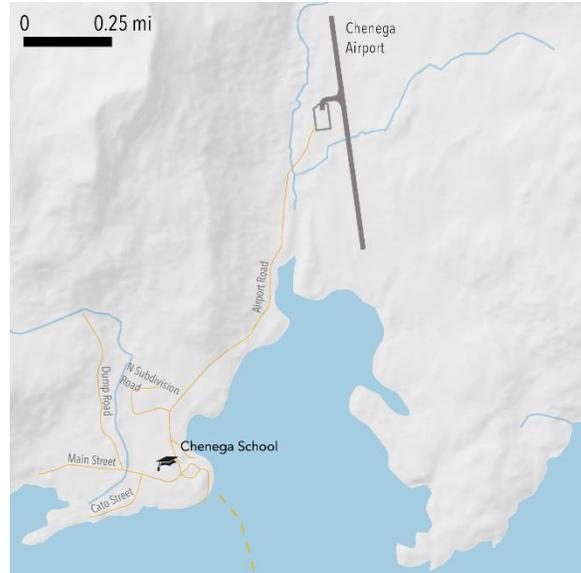
Chenega

Located on Evans Island in the southwestern corner of Prince William Sound, Chenega is a tribal community of approximately 50 people. Chenega is accessible only by boat or private airplane.

Demographics and Existing Conditions

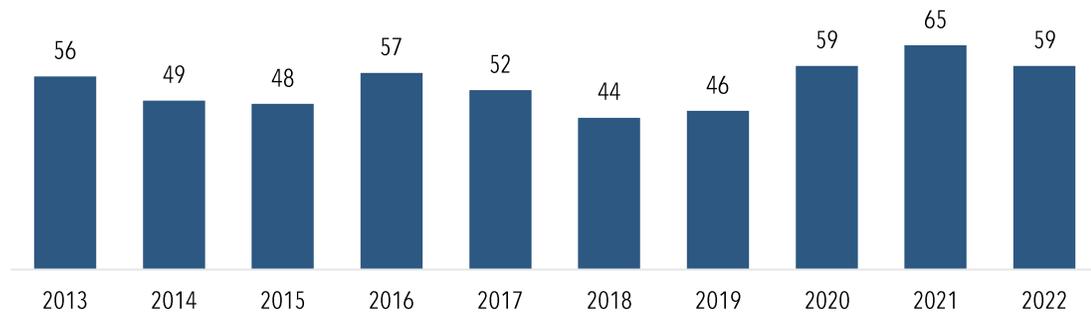
Population

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development estimates indicate the population in Chenega varied between 44 and 65 residents over the last decade.



Village of Chenega.

Figure 7. Chenega Population, 2013-2022



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

*2020 population is a Census count and may differ from 2020 population numbers elsewhere in the report.

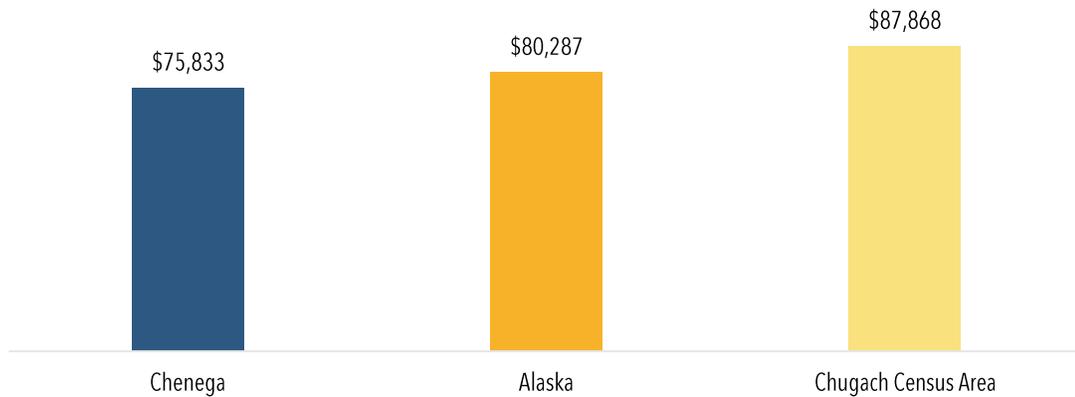
Age

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that over one-third of Chenega residents are under the age of 18. Comparatively, 24% of Chugach Census Area residents are under the age of 18. Of the remaining residents, 51% are between 18 and 64, and 15% are over the age of 65. The Census Bureau estimates that the median age in Chenega is 27.5, over 10 years lower than the Chugach Census Area and Alaska statewide medians.

Income and Cost of Living

The annual median household income in Chenega was \$75,833 in 2021, 14% below the Chugach Census Area median and 6% below the Alaska median.

Figure 8. Alaska, Chugach Census Area, and Chenega Median Household Incomes, 2012 – 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Chenega residents face a high cost of living. For example, as of July 2022, a gallon of home heating oil cost \$5.52 in Chenega, and a gallon of unleaded gasoline cost \$6.04. This was compared to a nationwide average of \$4.70 for heating oil and \$3.31 for unleaded gasoline, making Chenega more than 82% more expensive for purchasing residential fuel, which all homes rely on, and 17% more expensive for purchasing gasoline.² This impacts the availability of household income for overall housing costs, such as rent, mortgage, or repairs.

Employment and Wages

The highest concentration of employment in Chenega is in the public administration sector, indicating a substantial number of residents working in either local government or tribal services. Chenega IRA Council is the largest single employer and has operations in construction, fishing, and resource extraction industries. Residents employed by Chenega IRA Council may be listed in any of those industries.

² Alaska Economic Trends, July 2022, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Table 4. Employment by Industry, Chenega, 2021

Industry	Employed	Share of Total Employed
Public administration	14	54%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting, & mining	7	27%
Construction	2	8%
Education, health care & social assistance	1	4%
Professional services	1	4%
Other services	1	4%
Total	26	100%

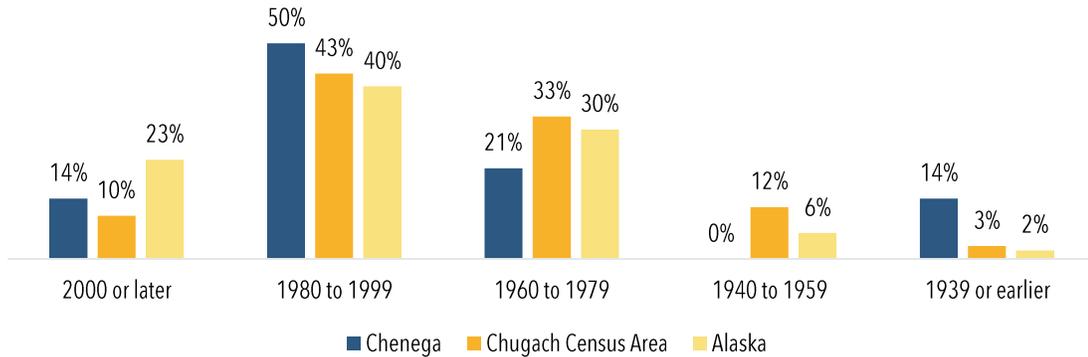
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Supply and Characteristics

The Census Bureau estimates that nearly 90% of occupied housing units in Chenega are detached single-family homes. Approximately 70% of occupied housing units are renter-occupied, and 30% are owner-occupied. The Census Bureau estimates a high vacancy rate in Chenega, with 70% of vacant units held vacant for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Census estimates for small communities are subject to large margins of error. Caution should be used when interpreting these data.

According to Census Bureau estimates, 14% of Chenega homes were built before 1939, compared to 3% of Chugach Census Area homes and 2% of Alaska homes. However, all homes in Chenega were destroyed by a tsunami after the 1964 earthquake, and the community was relocated to its current location on Evans Island in 1983. The majority of homes in Chenega were built between 1980 and 1999 (almost all of which were built by North Pacific Rim Housing Authority), and 14% were built after 2000.

Figure 9. Age of Housing Stock, Alaska, Chugach Census Area, and Chenega, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Supply

The Alaska Multiple Listing Service (MLS) combines data for Chenega with Whittier data. It is unknown whether any sales volume from the 'Whittier and Vicinity' region defined by MLS includes any sales in Chenega. Additionally, MLS data only includes homes put on the market, therefore sales volumes in Chenega may not be captured by MLS.

Chenega is located between mountains on one side and Prince William Sound on the other, with limited buildable land available for new residential construction. Most housing in Chenega was built in the early 1980s, with five units built in the early 2000s. The housing stock is old and considered low quality. Though residents expressed a need for new housing, little action has been taken in recent decades to develop more housing units. The high cost of shipping materials to the remote island, coupled with a lack of available specialized labor in Chenega, makes construction of private housing projects cost-prohibitive.

North Pacific Rim Housing Authority, the regional housing development authority for the Chugach Census Area, has not initiated projects in Chenega because it is unable to allocate HUD resources for those projects. NPRHA has limited grant resources and allocates project funding based on a priority system, which considers the overall income of the community and the total housing needs. Chenega has not been a high priority community, though the current housing gap of 11 units (per HUD) may increase their priority status in the near future. The high cost of construction in Chenega, compounded by the logistical complexities of getting materials and workers to the area, have hindered private developers from building new housing in the village.

Housing Affordability

Chenega households earning median income can afford a maximum of \$1,800 in monthly housing cost. The full range of attainable monthly housing costs for households earning between 80% and 120% of AMI is \$1,400 to \$2,100. This equates to a home price range of \$194,200 to \$291,300.

Table 5. Attainable Housing Thresholds, Chenega, 2023

	Annual Income	Monthly Housing Costs	Max Cost of Attainable Home
80% AMI	\$68,080	\$1,400	\$194,200
100% AMI	\$85,100	\$1,800	\$242,700
120% AMI	\$102,120	\$2,100	\$291,300

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021 5-year Estimates, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, McKinley Research Group calculations.

Note: Chenega data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey has a high margin of error.

Housing Survey Results

Satisfaction with Housing

The household survey received 14 responses. Survey respondents were evenly split on whether they felt satisfied with their current housing (7) or dissatisfied (7), with one choosing not to answer. Respondents overwhelmingly stated they were dissatisfied with the state of repair of their home (12). Some of these houses were built with little concern for quality in an attempt to build quickly during the oil boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Consequently, the state of repair of houses in Chenega is generally perceived as poor.

Residents and interviewees consistently felt that almost all housing in Chenega needs to be upgraded or replaced in the next 5-10 years.

Housing Need Analysis

Interviews with housing experts and stakeholders in the region, combined with survey responses, indicate the greatest need is for additional housing that could be used for multi-generational living. Large, single-family homes with 4-5 bedrooms could accommodate families with three generations under one roof to assist older residents with aging in place and allow younger families the opportunity to own a home.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provides annual housing gap estimates based on Indian Housing Block Grant Formula data for tribal villages such as Chenega and Tatitlek. The estimates are based on population counts that include only people of American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) heritage. The FY 2024 estimates the Chenega AIAN population at

47 people, and 12 households with incomes below 50% of the Areawide Median Income. There is currently only one housing unit in Chenega that is considered available for this low-income population, leaving a gap of 11 affordable housing units.³

Infrastructure challenges have led to unmet workforce needs because of the lack of housing. For example, state and federal funding has been available for the renovation of the school building in Chenega. However, the construction workers necessary to complete the project are not available locally, and the project would last six to 12 months, requiring workers to fully relocate to the village during that time. Without workforce housing (rooms for rent or small apartments), the project cannot begin, and the funds for the new school building are unused. Families interested in continuing to live in Chenega expressed concern that they would have to take their children elsewhere if the school is not renovated soon. Other families that may want to move to the area could also be dissuaded by the lack of a renovated school. The lack of housing has created barriers for workers, investment, and family mobility.

Large, single-family homes could serve the dual purpose of providing temporary workforce housing before being used by resident families. It was suggested that this would be the most efficient way to create housing that serves long-term and short-term purposes, without building camp style housing projects for non-resident workers that do not fit the needs of the broader community. Due to the small size of the community, four additional large houses of this type would likely accommodate the needs of the village to provide workforce housing and long-term, quality housing for residents.

Additionally, smaller multi-family units would help to serve the senior population in Chenega or those who wish to live by themselves. A development with 4-6 one-bedroom units would provide an opportunity for seniors to age-in-place or for younger Chenega residents to live on their own. Smaller units could help to attract a long-term workforce.

³ FY 2024 Formula Response Form (Chenega), Office of Native American Program, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Cordova



City of Cordova.

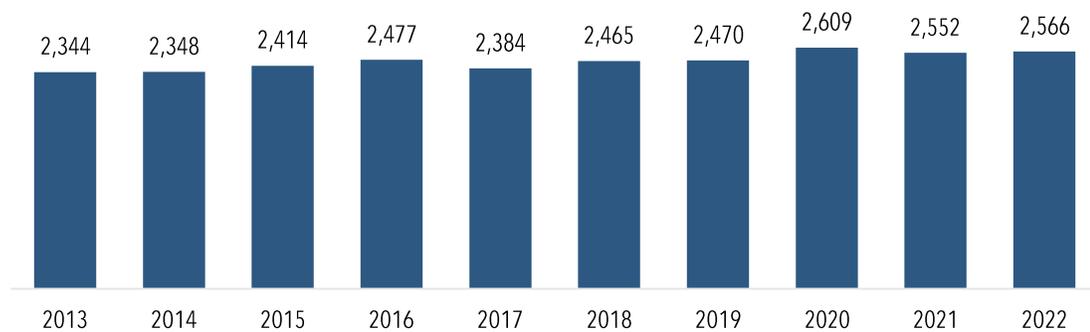
Cordova is the second-largest community in the Prince William Sound region, with just over 2,500 residents. Cordova has a predominantly seafood-based economy, known for its internationally recognized Copper River salmon brand, and is only accessible via boat or airplane. Cordova is also home to the Native Village of Eyak, a tribal council made up of the indigenous people of the Copper River delta. In this report, Cordova and Eyak demographic and economic data are reported together, but survey responses are presented for all Cordova residents as well as the subset of Native Village of Eyak members.

Demographics and Existing Conditions

Population

Cordova’s population increased by nearly 9% between 2013 and 2022 (+222 residents). Comparatively, the population of the Chugach Census Area increased by 1% during this period, and the Alaska population decreased by 0.2%.

Figure 10. Cordova Population, 2013-2022



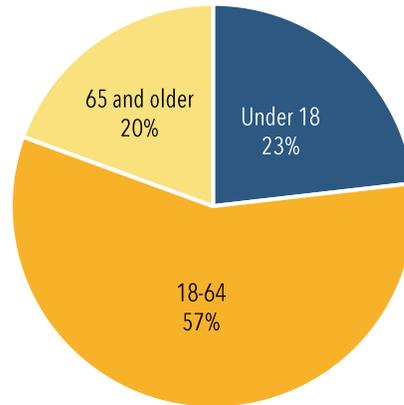
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

*2020 population is a Census count and may differ from 2020 population numbers elsewhere in the report.

Age

As of 2022, one in five Cordova residents (20%) were over the age of 65, a higher proportion than in Alaska statewide (14%). The median age in Cordova is 40.1, higher than the median age in the Chugach Census Area (38.0) and Alaska (36.5).

Figure 11. Age Distribution, Cordova, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Income

The median annual household income in Cordova was \$77,667 in 2021, 3% lower than the statewide median and 12% lower than the Chugach Census Area median. Cordova has the second-highest median income of the five study communities, behind Valdez.

Figure 12. Alaska, Chugach Census Area, and Cordova Median Household Incomes, 2012 – 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Employment and Wages

The largest industry in Cordova is fishing, with more than one in five employed in this sector. Cordova is also a destination for independent travelers, which helps to support a robust retail sector in the community. After fishing, the largest sector is government, with public

administration, education, health care and social assistance making up almost 30% of the workforce.

Table 6. Employment by Industry, Cordova, 2021

Industry	Employed	Share of Total Employed
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting, & mining	283	22%
Retail trade	222	17%
Public administration	199	15%
Education, health care & social assistance	186	14%
Manufacturing	91	7%
Construction	56	4%
Professional services	55	4%
Arts, entertainment, & recreation, accommodation & food services	46	4%
Information	43	3%
Wholesale trade	43	3%
Other	71	5%
Total	1,295	100%

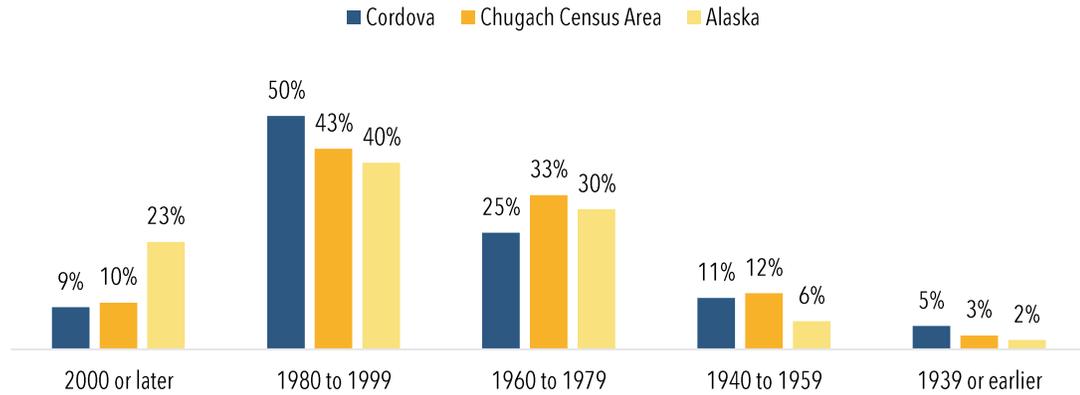
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Supply

There were an estimated 1,016 housing units within Cordova in 2021, 81% of which were identified as being currently occupied. Cordova has a lower vacancy rate than both the Chugach Census Area and Alaska statewide (19% versus 29% and 20%, respectively). Of the approximately 200 vacant units in Cordova, 38% are held vacant for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, a lower proportion than in Chugach Census Area or Alaska statewide (54% and 50% of vacant units, respectively).

Of the approximately 1,000 occupied homes in Cordova, 75% were built between 1960 and 1999. The age of Cordova housing stock is similar to that of the Chugach Census Area.

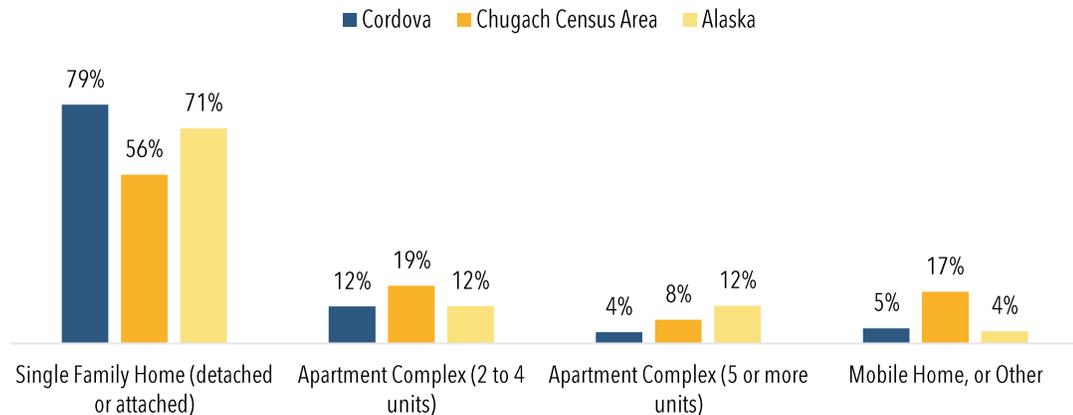
Figure 13. Age of Housing Stock, Cordova, Chugach Census Area, and Alaska, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

In Cordova, approximately four in five occupied housing units are single-family homes, 16% are apartment complexes, and 5% are mobile homes. The proportion of housing by type is similar to Alaska statewide in all categories except large apartment complexes. In Alaska, 12% of occupied housing units are in apartment complexes with 5 or more units, three times more than in Cordova.

Figure 14. Occupied Housing by Type, Cordova, Chugach Census Area, and Alaska, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Cost and Affordability

An average of 7.5 homes are put on the market and sold in the Cordova area annually. The average annual sale price varies widely in the region due to the low volume of homes. The three-year average sale price of single-family homes sold in the Cordova region was \$375,000. This does not include houses that are sold without being listed formally through a realtor or listing service. Residents report that many homes are sold this way because the high demand and small

communities allow for relatively fast sales through word-of-mouth only. Consequently, the average home sale price is likely higher than what is reported, but it is not possible to aggregate the data from unlisted home sales.

Housing Attainability

The maximum monthly housing cost the median household in Cordova can afford is \$1,800. The full range of attainable monthly housing costs for households earning between 80% and 120% of AMI is \$1,500 to \$2,200. This equates to a home price range of \$198,700 to \$298,100.

By comparison, the average home sale price range in the Chugach Census Area between 2020 and 2022 was \$375,000. The approximate mortgage payment for homes sold at this price is \$2,740, within the financial reach of households making 151% or more of AMI annually.

Table 7. Attainable Housing Thresholds, Cordova, 2023

	Annual Income	Monthly Housing Costs	Max Cost of Attainable Home
80% AMI	\$69,680	\$1,500	\$198,700
100% AMI	\$87,100	\$1,800	\$248,400
120% AMI	\$104,520	\$2,200	\$298,100

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021 5-year Estimates, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, McKinley Research Group calculations.

Housing Survey Results

The by-mail survey conducted in September 2023 received 238 responses, some of which were completed online via a link or QR code on the mailed survey.

Current Housing Status

RENT VS. OWN

Close to two-thirds (60%) of survey respondents own their current home in Cordova, while 31% rent and 9% have another housing arrangement, most frequently 'living on a boat' and 'living with family'.

Similar proportions apply to Eyak residents: 12 respondents own (58%), six rent (28%), and three respondents have other housing arrangements (14%).

Do you rent or own your current home in Cordova?

n=238	% of Total
Rent	31
Own	60
Other arrangement	9

Subgroup analysis

Most homeowners live in single-family homes in Cordova (86%). Almost all (93%) of those who report living in an apartment own the dwelling, indicating that apartments in Cordova operate more like condominiums in other communities. Most of those who report living in duplexes report renting (62%), and about half of those who live in mobile homes also report renting (49%).

TYPE OF HOUSING

Most respondents (61%) currently live in a stand-alone, single-family home, with 15% living in an attached home such as a duplex or zero lot line, 12% in an apartment, 6% in a mobile home or trailer, and 5% in another form of housing (boat, cabin, or tribal housing).

In Eyak, 11 respondents live in a stand-alone, single-family home (56%), one lives in an attached home (4%), three live in a mobile home/trailer (14%), and two live in another type of housing (10%).

Which type of housing do you currently live in?

n=235	% of Total
A stand-alone, single-family home	61
An attached home such as a duplex or zero lot line	15
An apartment	12
A mobile home or trailer	6
Refused	1
Other	5

AGE OF HOME

Among respondents who know the age of their home (23% do not), homes averaged 51 years old. Only 9% of homes were reported as 12 years old or less.

What year was your home built?

n=238	% of Total
2011 or later	9
1991-2010	11
1981-1990	12
1971-1980	11
1951-1970	15
1900-1950	16
Refused	2
Don't know	23
Average age	51 years old

Size of Home

The average home in Cordova is 1,500 square feet, and over 60% have two to three bedrooms. In Eyak, the average home is 2,000 square feet and has 3.0 bedrooms.

How many bedrooms are in your home?

n=238	% of Total
0	1
1	12
2	33
3	32
4	14
5+	4
Don't know	1
Refused	3
Average	2.6

HOUSING COSTS

Nearly one-third of Cordova respondents (30%) are not making any monthly payments for housing, and 24% pay over \$1,500 a month. Similarly, 31% of Eyak Tribal members make no monthly payment, and 20% pay over \$1,500 a month.

The average Cordova monthly payment is \$1,464; Eyak Tribal members report a slightly higher monthly payment (\$1,516).

Approximately how much is your monthly rent or mortgage payment?

	Cordova % of Total n=238	Eyak % of Base n=20
\$750 or less	8	-
\$ 751-\$1,000	8	14 (3)
\$1,001-\$1,250	9	3 (1)
\$1,251-\$1,500	17	12 (2)
Over \$1,500	24	20 (4)
Not making any payments	30	31 (6)
Don't Know	2	4 (1)
Refused	2	16 (3)
Average	\$1,464	\$1,516

Subgroup analysis

About 54 Cordova respondents (23%) report being cost-burdened, defined as having a monthly housing payment that is more than 30% of their household's combined monthly income. About half (51%) report not being cost-burdened. Many declined to answer this question (22%).

Similar proportions exist in Eyak: two respondents are cost-burdened (10%), ten respondents are not (50%), six declined to answer (29%), and 2 (12%) didn't know.

Of those that report being cost-burdened, one-quarter of Cordova residents (27%) report being extremely cost-burdened. This is defined as having a monthly housing payment that is more than 50% of your household's combined monthly income. All Eyak cost-burdened respondents report being extremely cost-burdened.

Satisfaction with Housing

OVERALL SATISFACTION

Overall, Cordova residents (82%) are satisfied with their current housing.

There is less satisfaction with current housing among Eyak Tribe members: 57% are satisfied and 43% are dissatisfied (11 and 9 respondents, respectively).

Subgroup analysis

Three-quarters of renters and 89% of owners are satisfied with their current housing. Most single-family home and duplex respondents are satisfied (86% and 89%, respectively). The least satisfied subgroup are those with housing arrangements other than renting or owning (living on a boat or living with family); about half (48%) with other arrangements are dissatisfied.

**Overall, are you satisfied
with your current housing?**

n=238	% of Total
Satisfied TOTAL	82
Very satisfied	33
Satisfied	49
Dissatisfied TOTAL	18
Dissatisfied	15
Very dissatisfied	3

SATISFACTION WITH SPECIFIC FEATURES

The highest level of satisfaction with the features of their current housing is with the number of bedrooms (85% of respondents), followed by design qualities and attractiveness (75%). The highest level of dissatisfaction is with suitability for seniors to age in place (45% dissatisfied including 28% very dissatisfied).

Among Eyak Tribe members, the highest proportion of satisfaction is with number of bedrooms, tied with parking (both 88%). The highest proportion of dissatisfaction was with suitability for seniors to age in place (55%) followed by design qualities and attractiveness (50%).

Residents report that due to the housing shortage many Cordovans live in homes that are larger than they need. Many residents looking for new housing will take any dwelling that is put up for sale or rent, regardless of whether it may be overly large for their needs. This creates a mismatch in housing, where some residents are unable to find homes to move into at all, while others have more bedrooms than they require. This may be why the level of satisfaction with number of bedrooms is so high among those who currently own or rent is high.

Subgroup analysis

- Respondents living in a duplex are most satisfied with the number of bedrooms (93%).
- The highest level of satisfaction with energy efficiency is among those living in apartments (69%).
- Those with living arrangements other than renting or owning (living on a boat or living with family) are the most satisfied with their home’s state of repair (79%).
- Three-quarters of respondents (77%) living in apartments are satisfied with the value for the price of their home. Over one-quarter of respondents (28%) in a mobile home are very dissatisfied with the value for the price of their home.

How satisfied are you with each of the following features of your current housing?

n= 238	% of Total						
	TOTAL Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	TOTAL Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	NA
Number of bedrooms	85	38	47	12	10	2	-
Energy efficiency	62	15	47	35	22	13	2
Indoor air quality	73	20	53	27	20	7	-
Parking	71	29	42	26	17	9	2
State of repair	69	18	51	31	24	7	<1
Design qualities and attractiveness	75	21	54	25	18	7	<1
Suitability for children	69	21	48	15	9	6	16
Suitability for seniors to age in place	39	6	33	45	28	17	16
Value for the price	68	23	45	27	21	6	5

PRESENCE OF VARIOUS HOUSING ISSUES

The most frequent issues Cordova respondents report in their current housing are mold (33%), heating issues (30%), and plumbing (28%). Forty-four percent report no issues.

Most Eyak Tribal members (57% or 12 respondents) responded with 'none of the above' for various housing issues. Both mold and plumbing issues impact 43% of Eyak respondents.

Subgroup analysis

The highest proportion of residents experiencing housing issues live in mobile homes.

- Almost 60% of those living in mobile homes experience plumbing issues compared to 27% of those living in single-family homes.
- Mold disproportionately affects mobile homes when compared to single-family homes and duplexes: 59% compared to 30% and 11%, respectively.

Which of the following, if any, do you experience in your current housing? (Multiple responses allowed)

n= 238	% of Total
Plumbing issues	28
Heating issues	30
Structural issues	27
Mold	33
Neighborhood crime	4
Landlord issues	3
None of the above	44

RATING HOUSING QUALITY, AFFORDABILITY, AND AVAILABILITY

When asked to rate three aspects of housing in Cordova, most respondents gave poor ratings. The lowest rating was given to housing availability, with 91% saying this was poor, closely followed by affordability at 87%. One-third (31%) gave quality of housing a poor rating.

Only 17% of Eyak respondents rated the quality of housing in Cordova good, while 81% rated it poor. Ninety percent rated affordability as poor, including 50% who rated it as *very* poor. Almost all (95%) of Eyak respondents rated the availability of housing as poor.

For each of the following aspects of housing in Cordova, please tell me whether you think it is very good, good, poor, or very poor?

n= 238	% of Total Weighted						
	TOTAL Good	Very Good	Good	TOTAL Poor	Poor	Very Poor	Refused
Quality of housing	31	1	30	66	49	17	2
Affordability of housing	8	1	7	87	33	54	3
Availability of housing	8	2	6	91	29	62	2

Subgroup analysis

All subgroups rated housing availability as poor. Three quarters (77%) of renters gave the quality of the rental market poor, while 21% gave it a positive rating.

Future Housing Plans

LOOKING FOR NEW HOUSING

One-third of Cordova respondents said they were looking for a new home in Cordova.

Half of Eyak Tribal members (10 respondents) were looking for new housing.

Subgroup analysis

The largest proportion (69%) looking for different housing in Cordova are from those living in a mobile home. Only 15% of those living in a single-family home are looking for a new home in Cordova.

Are you currently looking for different housing in your community?

n= 238	% of Total
Yes	32
No	67
Refused	1

REASONS LOOKING FOR NEW HOUSING

Of those looking for new housing in Cordova, the largest proportion (41%) cite wanting to own as the main reason. Another 17% need more space, and 23% wrote in other reasons. The top write-in response was "building quality."

Three Eyak Tribal members cited building quality as the main driver for their search.

What is the main reason you are looking for new housing?
(Base = Those looking for housing)

n= 76	% of Base
Want to own	41
Need more space	17
Building quality	8
Housing costs	5
Family/roommate issues	2
Parking (boat, car, other)	3
Aging/need more care	1
Location	1
Other	23

DESIRED FUTURE HOUSING

Most respondents seeking new housing are looking for a single-family house, including 83% of Cordova respondents and 56% of Eyak Tribal members.

Of the following, which types of housing are you looking for, or expect to look for?
(Base = Those looking for housing)

n= 76	% of Base
A stand-alone, single-family house	83
An apartment	6
A condominium	3
An attached home such as a duplex or zero lot line	1
A mobile home or trailer	<1
Other	7

More than half of those who are looking and currently rent (57%, or 24 respondents) plan to buy, and almost all (97%) of those who own plan to own again.

Are you more likely to rent or buy?
(Base = Those looking for housing)

n= 76	% of Base
Buy	68
Rent	31
Refused	1

LIKELIHOOD TO MOVE FROM CORDOVA

Over one-third of Cordova respondents (38%) said they are likely to move to a different community within the next five years, including 13% who said this was very likely. A similar percentage of Eyak respondents (41%) said moving away was likely.

How likely are you to move to a different community within the next five years?

n= 238	% of Total
Likely TOTAL	38
Very likely	13
Somewhat likely	25
Unlikely TOTAL	54
Unlikely	18
Very Unlikely	36
Not applicable	8

INABILITY TO MOVE TO CORDOVA

Over half of Cordova respondents (56%) and 60% of Eyak Tribal members know someone that would like to move to Cordova but cannot due to lack of housing.

Do you have any family members, friends, or work colleagues that would like to move to Cordova but cannot because of lack of housing?

n= 238	% of Total
Yes	56
No	43
Refused	1

Senior Housing

One-quarter (23%) of households include at least one member over 65 years of age and 12% have at least one senior 80 years or older in the home.

How many seniors live in your household?

n=238	% of Total
0	73
1	15
2	10
3	<1
Refused	2
Average	0.4 people

Over one-quarter (27%) of households with seniors report that at least one member of the household is somewhat or very likely to move to an assisted living or nursing home facility in the next five years, while 68% say this is unlikely.

Table 8. How likely is it that any Elders in your household will need assisted living or nursing home care in the next five years?

(Base = Households with at least one senior)

n=63	% of Base
Likely TOTAL	27
Very likely	9
Somewhat likely	18
Unlikely TOTAL	68
Somewhat unlikely	40
Very unlikely	28
Refused	5

Housing Need Analysis

This section summarizes the various sources of information collected on Cordova's housing situation, perceptions of housing from Cordova residents as a whole, and the subset of Cordova residents that are members of the Native Village of Eyak.

- Housing availability, affordability, and quality are all significant issues affecting the housing market in Cordova.

- Residents who want to own a home are either priced out of homeownership opportunities or cannot find suitable housing.
- The size of housing in Cordova is perceived as adequate, but this may be a result of residents living in homes that are larger than they need and not being able to find smaller homes.
- Older residents of Cordova, especially members of NVE, need housing options that are safe, affordable, and allow them to age in place.
- There is a very high level of dissatisfaction with Cordova's housing situation in the community.

Rental and Multi-Family Housing

While most Cordova residents looking to move into new housing are wanting to own a single-family home, there are considerable gaps in the rental and multi-family market as well. Specifically, those that have current arrangements other than renting or owning (e.g., living with family or living on a boat) are most dissatisfied with their housing and interested in finding something new. These residents expressed interest in smaller housing and were most likely to want to rent.

Based on survey results, a very high proportion of renters consider there to be few good options in the local rental market. Almost all renters in mobile homes reported that there were few good options, and 69% of mobile home residents are looking for different housing.

Cordova has experienced a decline in the number of occupied housing units over the last decade, particularly for renter-occupied units. The age of housing (most are over 40 years old) and the reported rate of deteriorated properties indicate that many people who are currently renting would prefer different housing, even if they continued renting. Though the Cordova population is growing only slightly, there is a need for replacement housing for units that are no longer suitable for residence. Responses indicate a need for at least 20 additional unrestricted rental units in the community, at a 1- or 2-bedroom size.

SENIOR HOUSING

The highest level of housing dissatisfaction was with the suitability of housing for seniors, and this was particularly high (55%) for members of NVE.

More than one quarter of Cordova respondents said it is likely an Elder in their household will need assisted living in the next five years. This points to a need for either small-scale, age-in-place housing for seniors or a dedicated senior living facility in Cordova. This type of housing can be rented or owned but is most efficient when developed as multi-family complexes. Multi-family senior developments also contributed to a sense of safety for residents, who may live by themselves in their units but do not feel they are "alone" in a building with others. The responses

indicate a need for 10 or more 1- and 2-bedroom housing units that could accommodate seniors.

Estimating the number of additional rental housing units needed is hampered by a lack of data on rental vacancy rates in the community. By most accounts rentals vacancies are nearly always immediately filled through a waiting list or word-of mouth. Furthermore, an unknown number of mobile homeowners, seasonal residents, and others would rather rent an apartment than other options currently utilized.

Single-Family Housing

Almost three-quarters of Cordova residents live in either a single-family home or a duplex, and 83% wished to live in a standalone single-family home.

A lack of professional residential builders in Cordova and high costs of construction have resulted in near zero new single-family homes constructed in the last decade. During that time, existing homes have aged and some have become structurally unsound. The average age of housing in Cordova is 51 years.

One-third of Cordova residents reported wanting to move into new housing, and the vast majority of those preferred single-family housing as their option. Housing size was not considered an issue for most, but housing affordability was perceived as poor or very poor by 87% of respondents. More than half of respondents (56%) said they had family members or friends who wished to move to Cordova but could not because of a lack of available or affordable housing.

Families and individuals currently living in rental or multi-family housing are largely looking for opportunities to own housing in Cordova and finding few options available in their price range. Cordova needs more single-family homes in the 2 to 3-bedroom range available at an attainable price for middle-income residents. To meet the needs of current residents wanting to move into different housing and those interested in moving to Cordova but struggling to find housing, Cordova will need approximately 20 additional single-family homes with 2-4 bedrooms.

Affordable Housing

One-third of Cordova survey respondents reported being cost-burdened by their housing, defined as spending more than 30% of their income on housing-related expenses. The average home sales price of \$375,000 was out of reach for residents making less than 151% of the Average Median Income, and the average annual volume of homes listed for sale (7.5) indicates a pressure on the market that will continue to keep prices high.

To provide housing that is attainable for the majority of Cordova residents, the community will need additional property development that is subsidized in some fashion to keep the prices low.

Whether through HUD grants, North Pacific Rim Housing Development Authority housing projects, or tribal- or city-backed new housing developments, some component of new residential projects in Cordova will need government assistance to be attainable.

DETERIORATED PROPERTIES

A frequent issue mentioned by survey respondents and interviewees is the number of deteriorated properties in Cordova that are not usable as housing. The City Council has taken up the issue in attempts to incentivize owners of deteriorated properties to either improve the dwelling to make it livable or dispose of the land cheaply to someone who is able to develop it into new residences.

Cordova is challenged by not having a building inspector in the community, which prevents the City from enforcing code as it relates to deteriorated properties. While enforcement of “unsightly premises” can be straightforward, when dilapidated vehicles or other objects are on the property, the enforcement of requirements to fix structural problems are more difficult. Residents interviewed for this report indicated there were at least six properties in Cordova, with the potential to be 12-20 units of housing, that are deteriorated to a point of being unlivable and should be redeveloped as soon as possible.

Tatitlek is a tribal community of fewer than 100 residents on the northern edge of Prince William Sound, south of Valdez. Tatitlek is accessible only by boat or private airplane.

Demographics and Existing Conditions

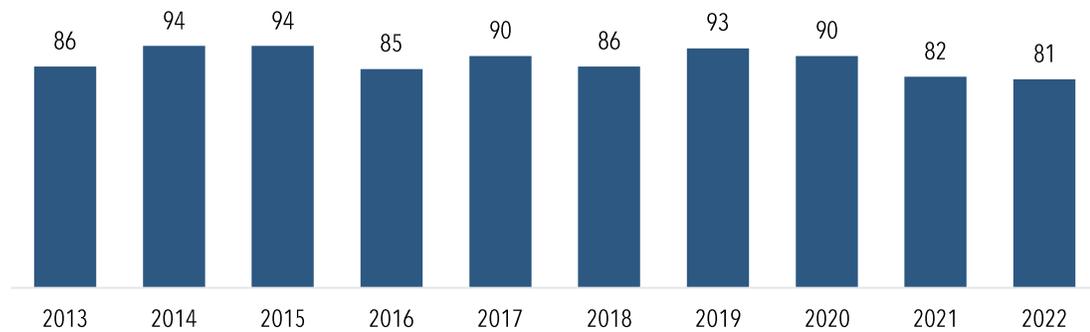
Population

Alaska Department of Labor estimates indicate the population in Tatitlek varied between 81 and 94 residents over the last decade. Due to the size of the community, estimates are subject to margins of error.



Village of Tatitlek.

Figure 15. Tatitlek Population, 2013-2022



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

*2020 population is a Census count and may differ from 2020 population numbers elsewhere in the report.

Age

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that over one-third of Tatitlek residents are over the age of 65. Of the remaining residents, 52% are between 18 and 64, and 12% are under the age of 18. Comparatively, 24% of Chugach Census Area residents are under the age of 18, and 14% are over the age of 65. The Census estimates that the median age in Tatitlek is 55.5, over 15 years higher than the Chugach Census Area and Alaska statewide medians.

Income

The annual median household income in Tatitlek was \$70,625 in 2021, 20% below the Chugach Census Area median and 12% below the Alaska median. Tatitlek’s median household income is the second lowest of the five study communities, behind Whittier.

Figure 16. Alaska, Chugach Census Area, and Tatitlek Median Household Incomes, 2012 – 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Employment and Wages

With a small population, Tatitlek’s economy is based almost entirely on government services and tribal administration of the village corporation. Much of the community relies on subsistence for some component of their livelihood.

Table 9. Employment by Industry, Tatitlek, 2021

Industry	Employed	Share of Total Employed
Public administration	6	50%
Education, health care & social assistance	6	50%
Total	12	100%

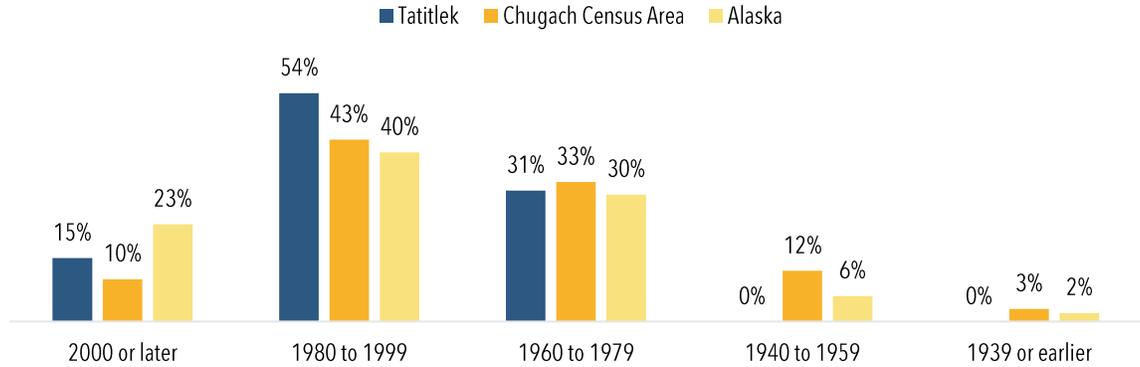
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Supply and Characteristics

All occupied housing units in Tatitlek are detached single-family homes. Census Bureau estimates indicate approximately 70% of occupied housing units are owner-occupied, and 30% are renter occupied. The Census Bureau estimates a high vacancy rate in Tatitlek, with 66% of vacant units held vacant for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. It is important to note that Census estimates for small communities are subject to large margins of error.

According to Census Bureau estimates, nearly one-third of Tatitlek homes were built between 1960 and 1979, over half were built between 1980 and 1999, and 15% were built after 2000.

Figure 17. Age of Housing Stock, Alaska, Chugach Census Area, and Tatitlek, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Cost and Affordability

The Alaska Multiple Listing Service combines data for Tatitlek with Prince William Sound data. It is unclear whether any sales volume from the 'Prince William Sound and Vicinity' region defined by MLS includes any sales in Tatitlek. Additionally, MLS data only includes homes put on the market, therefore sales volumes in Tatitlek may not be captured by MLS.

Housing Attainability

The maximum monthly housing cost the median household in Tatitlek can afford is \$1,700. The full range of attainable monthly housing costs for households earning between 80% and 120% of AMI is \$1,300 to \$2,000. This equates to a home price range of \$180,700 to \$271,100.

By comparison, the average home sale price range in the 'Valdez and Vicinity' subregion between 2020 and 2022 was \$375,000. The average home sale price of units sold in Tatitlek is unknown due to data limitations.

Table 10. Attainable Housing Thresholds, Tatitlek, 2023

	Annual Income	Monthly Housing Costs	Max Cost of Attainable Home
80% AMI	\$63,360	\$1,300	\$180,700
100% AMI	\$79,200	\$1,700	\$225,900
120% AMI	\$95,040	\$2,000	\$271,100

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021 5-year Estimates, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, McKinley Research Group calculations.

Housing Survey Results

The household survey in Tatitlek received eight responses.

Current Housing Challenges

As with the other communities in Prince William Sound, particularly those inaccessible by road, Tatitlek struggles with the cost of construction of new housing and lack of professional builders in the community. The housing stock in Tatitlek was primarily built in the 1970s and early 1980s, and often was not built up to high standards. These homes are deteriorating and are not considered adequate for seniors in the community to live safely as they age in place.

Satisfaction with Housing

Survey responses in Tatitlek were low, with only eight residents completing the survey and many of those electing not to answer some questions. Of the four that responded to the question asking about their satisfaction with their current housing, three said they were satisfied and one said they were very satisfied.

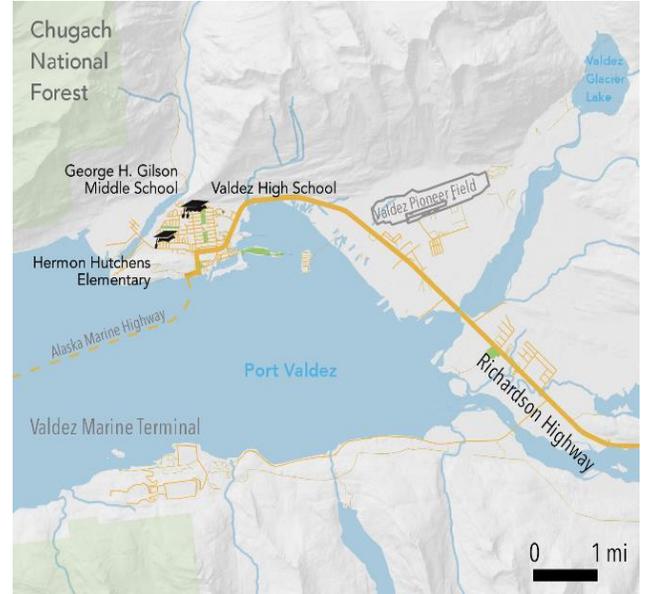
Housing Need Analysis

The high vacancy rate in Tatitlek indicates that there are not currently large gaps in the housing inventory. However, the age of housing is a concern for residents and interviewees, and the quality of older houses is perceived as a safety issue, especially for seniors. Over the next 5 to 10 years, Tatitlek will require new housing to take the place of older residences, and a focus on small-scale condos or apartments that are suitable for seniors aging in place is necessary.

While all current housing in Tatitlek is detached, single-family homes, new developments could find efficiency by focusing on duplexes or triplexes. Tatitlek will require one or two new such multi-family developments a year over the next decade to begin replacing its older housing stock.

Valdez

Historically, Valdez’s population has been steady at around 4,000 residents, though it has trended down slightly over the last several years. The relative long-term population stability in Valdez stems from its economic diversification, including serving as the marine terminus for the Trans Alaska Pipeline, a destination for both Alaskans and out-of-state visitors, and its key role in the Prince William Sound seafood industry.



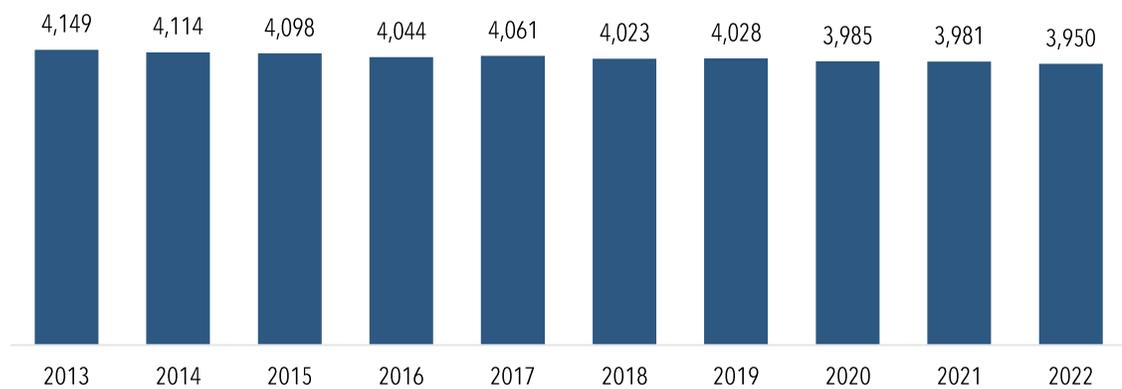
City of Valdez.

Demographics and Existing Conditions

Population

Within the last ten years of available data, the population of Valdez decreased by 5% (-199 residents). Comparatively the Chugach Census Area population increased by 1% during this period.

Figure 18. Valdez Population, 2013-2022



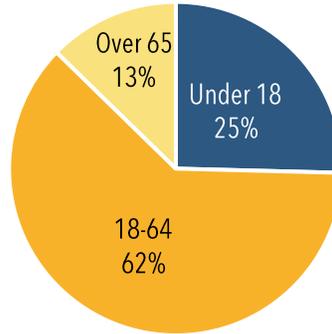
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

*2020 population is a Census count and may differ from 2020 population numbers elsewhere in the report.

Age

The median age in Valdez was 37.1 in 2022, lower than the Chugach Census Area median of 38.0. The proportion of Valdez's population by age cohort is similar to the Chugach Census Area. As of 2022, 13% of the population was over the age of 65 (506 residents).

Figure 19. Age Distribution, Valdez, 2022

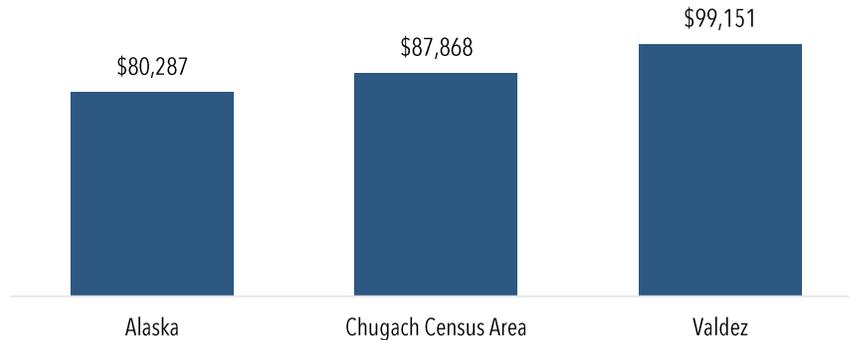


Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Income

The annual median household income in Valdez was \$99,151 in 2021, 13% higher than the Chugach Census Area median and 23% higher than the statewide median.

Figure 20. Alaska, Chugach Census Area, and Valdez Median Household Incomes, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Employment and Wages

The largest private employer in Valdez is the Alyeska Pipeline Service Corporation (APSC), followed by Providence Health & Services Alaska. The largest sector in Valdez is education, health care, and social assistance, which is composed of private employees at Providence as well as public employees at the State of Alaska and City of Valdez. Support services, such as

retail, entertainment, and finance, have strong sectors in Valdez. APSC and Providence offer higher-than-average salaries compared to the rest of the state at the Chugach Census area.

Table 11. Employment by Industry, Valdez, 2021

Industry	Employed	Share of Total Employed
Education, health care & social assistance	424	22%
Transportation & warehousing, utilities	353	18%
Professional services	285	15%
Public administration	169	9%
Retail trade	144	8%
Manufacturing	135	7%
Other services	105	5%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting, & mining	104	5%
Arts, entertainment, & recreation, accommodation & food services	79	4%
Information	49	3%
Construction	46	2%
Finance, insurance, & real estate	24	1%
Total	1,917	100%

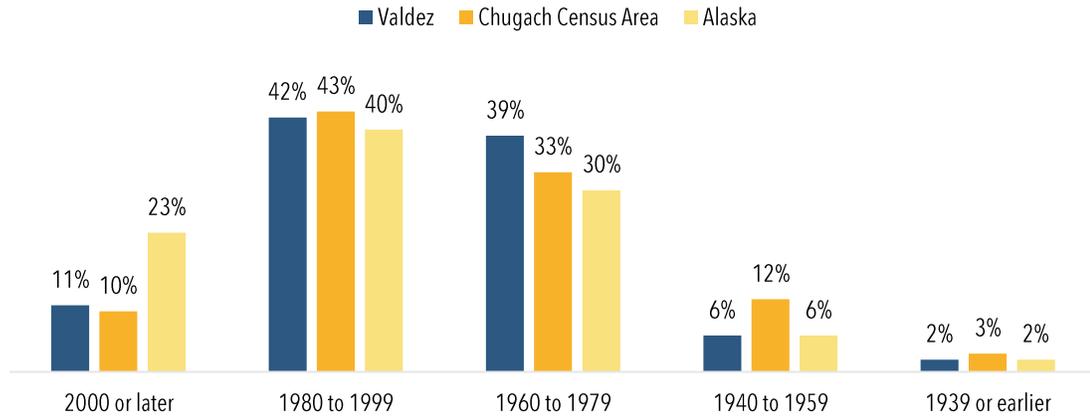
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Supply

There were an estimated 1,918 housing units within Valdez in 2021, 84% of which were identified as being currently occupied. Valdez has a lower vacancy rate than the Chugach Census Area and statewide (16% versus 29% and 20%, respectively). Of the approximately 300 vacant units in Valdez, 30% are held vacant for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, a lower proportion than in Chugach Census Area or statewide (54% and 50% of vacant units, respectively).

Of the approximately 1,600 occupied homes in Valdez, 81% were built between 1960 and 1999. The age of Valdez housing stock is similar to that of the Chugach Census Area.

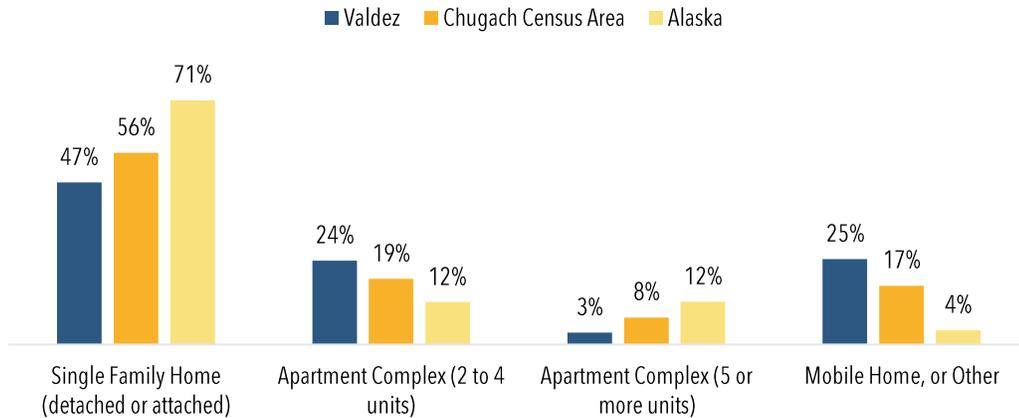
Figure 21. Age of Housing Stock, Valdez, Chugach Census Area, and Alaska, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

In Valdez, approximately one-half of occupied housing units are single-family homes, one-quarter are apartment complexes, and one-quarter are mobile homes. The proportion of single-family homes is much lower in Valdez than in the Chugach Census Area or Alaska statewide (47% versus 56% and 71%, respectively). In Alaska, only 4% of occupied housing units are mobile homes, six times less than the Valdez proportion (25%).

Figure 22. Occupied Housing by Type, Valdez, Chugach Census Area, and Alaska, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Housing Cost and Availability

An average of 2.5 homes are put on the market and sold in the Valdez area annually. The average annual sale price varies widely in the region due to the low volume of homes put on the market (for example, no homes were put on the market in 2021). In 2020 and 2022, the most recent data available, the average sale price of single-family homes was approximately \$320,000.

Housing Attainability

The maximum monthly housing cost the median household in Valdez can afford is \$2,300. The full range of attainable monthly housing costs for households earning between 80% and 120% of AMI is \$1,900 to \$2,800. This equates to a home price range of \$253,700 to \$380,600.

By comparison, the average home sale price range in the Chugach Census Area between 2020 and 2022 was \$320,000. The approximate mortgage payment for homes sold at this price is \$2,340, within the financial reach of households making 101% or more of AMI annually.

Table 12. Attainable Housing Thresholds, Valdez, 2023

	Annual Income	Monthly Housing Costs	Max Cost of Attainable Home
80% AMI	\$88,960	\$1,900	\$253,700
100% AMI	\$111,200	\$2,300	\$317,100
120% AMI	\$133,440	\$2,800	\$380,600

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021 5-year Estimates, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, McKinley Research Group calculations.

New Developments

In June 2023, a private consortium of Alaska Native Corporations consisting of Chugach Corporation, Chenega Corporation, and Tatitlek Corporation began construction of a 37-unit multi-use residential development in downtown Valdez. The development, called the Naswik Project, is set to open in summer of 2024 with six two-bedroom apartments on the top floor and 31 studio apartments in the rest of the building.

The impetus behind the Naswik project was the clear need for additional housing for employees of Alyeska Pipeline Service Company and Providence Health and Services in Valdez. These two large employers have been struggling with finding housing for workers and filling important vacancies. The consortium was able to finance the private housing development despite the high costs and low margins for new housing in the community.

The Naswik Project is an important example of a new model of housing development that may be possible not just elsewhere in Valdez, but throughout the Prince William Sound region. Because of the social mission of Alaska Native Corporations, in addition to a financial duty to shareholders, they are uniquely positioned to provide market rate housing to rural communities even if it is not lucrative. Using self-financing, these corporations are also able to capitalize the projects over a longer term and therefore do not have to focus on the profitability of a housing development in the first few years after it is built.

The Naswik Project will be Valdez's first large-scale housing development in decades. While it is seen as a positive development by those interviewed, it is also not large enough to substantially reduce the housing gap in the community. Moreover, some see the potential for new housing

to be immediately bought or rented by newly arriving workers or their employers, crowding out current residents from upgrading into new housing.

Although the Naswik Project will provide mostly short-term housing, it may have the effect of moving some short-term workers into this development and out of apartments or houses that they are renting long-term (preventing other households from occupying those units). This could lead to lower vacancy rates, as Naswik more efficiently houses those who are only in Valdez temporarily (or have on/off schedules), and allows year-round households to live in houses that have been vacant when their tenants are working elsewhere.

Housing Survey Results

Results of a telephone survey of 210 randomly selected Valdez households in 2020 are presented below. The maximum margin of error is $\pm 6.6\%$ at the 90% confidence level. See the methodology section of this report for additional survey details.

Survey data was analyzed as a whole, as well as for various subgroups, including length of residency, rent/own, presence of children and seniors in the household, income level, and other subgroups. Only statistically significant differences between subgroups are reported.

Data in tables may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Current Housing Status

RENT VS. OWN

Three-quarters (74%) of survey respondents owned their current home in Valdez while 20% rented and 5% had another housing arrangement. These results are consistent with the latest ACS data, which indicates that renters make up 21% of occupied housing units.

Subgroup analysis

Similar proportions of those living in mobile homes and those living in single-family homes reported owning their home (85%-86%). Most of those in other housing types reported renting (59%).

Table 13. Do you rent or own your current home in Valdez?

n=210	% of Total
Own	74
Rent	20
Other arrangement	5
Refused	1

YEARS IN CURRENT HOME

Almost half (46%) of survey respondents had lived in their current home for five years or less, while 16% had lived in their home for 6 to 10 years, 21% for 11 to 20 years, and 14% for over 20 years. The average length of residency for all households surveyed was 10.5 years.

Subgroup analysis

Those living in mobile homes had the highest average tenure in their current home (14.8 years), compared to 11.3 years for those in single-family homes and 8.4 years for those in attached homes or multi-family situations. One in six (16%) mobile home households reported living in their current housing for more than 30 years, compared to just 2%-6% of other respondents.

Table 14. How many years have you lived in your current home?

n=210	% of Total
5 years or less	46
6-10	16
11-20	21
21-30	8
Over 30	6
Don't know	1
Refused	1
Average	10.5 years

TYPE OF HOUSING

The largest proportion (65%) of respondents were currently living in a stand-alone, single-family home, with 12% living in a mobile home or trailer, 11% in an attached home such as a duplex or zero lot line, 10% in an apartment, 1% in a condominium, and 2% in another form of housing.

Based on other data sources, it appears that the survey somewhat under-sampled those in mobile homes. ACS and Valdez Population survey data indicate that mobile homes make up 23% of occupied housing units, whereas 12% of the survey sample resided in this housing type.

Subgroup analysis

Three-quarters (74%) of homeowners lived in a stand-alone, single-family home, while 34% rented. Over half of renters (58%) lived in either an attached home or an apartment.

Table 15. Which type of housing do you currently live in?

n=210	% of Total
A stand-alone, single-family home	65
A mobile home or trailer	12
An attached home such as a duplex or zero lot line	11
An apartment	10
A condominium	1
Other	2

AGE OF HOME

Among respondents who knew the age of their home (28% do not), homes averaged 33 years old. Only 8% of homes were reported as ten years old or less.

Subgroup analysis

More than half of mobile homes were reported to be over 40 years old (61%), compared to just 24% of single-family homes in the survey sample.

Table 16. How many years ago was your home built?

n=210	% of Total
10 years or less	8
11-20	11
21-30	11
31-40	17
41-50	18
Over 50	7
Don't Know	28
Average	32.8 years

SIZE OF HOME

Housing size among respondents averaged 1,783 square feet. The size of housing was evenly spread out among respondents from 14% who lived in 1,000 square feet or less, to 20% in 1,001 to 1,500 square feet, 16% in 1,501 to 2,000 square feet, and 17% in 2,001 to 3,000 square feet. Six percent lived in housing larger than 3,000 square feet.

Table 17. Approximately how many square feet is your current home?

n=210	% of Total
1,000 or less	14
1,001-1,500	20
1,501-2,000	16
2,001-3,000	17
Over 3,000	6
Don't Know	25
Refused	3
Average	1,783 ft²

Homes contained an average of 3 bedrooms. One-third (33%) of homes had fewer than 3 bedrooms and 23% had more.

Table 18. How many bedrooms are in your home?

n=210	% of Total
1	10
2	23
3	43
4	14
5+	9
Refused	1
Average	3 bedrooms

HOUSING COSTS

Monthly housing costs (rent or mortgage payments) were over \$1,000 for 40% of respondents, and \$1,000 or less for 17%. Thirty-one percent of respondents did not currently make housing payments. Over half (58%) of respondents 65 years of age or older were not making payments.

Table 19. Approximately how much is your monthly rent or mortgage payment?

n=210	% of Total
\$750 or less	8
\$ 751-\$1,000	9
\$1,001-\$1,250	10
\$1,251-\$1,500	15
Over \$1,500	15
Not making any payments	31
Don't know	4
Refused	8
Average	\$1,298

Among those answering questions on housing costs (8% declined this question), 19% reported these payments represented more than 30% of their household’s combined monthly income. This is similar to ACS data which puts cost-burdened households (those paying more than 30% of their incomes to housing costs) at 17%.

Satisfaction with Housing

OVERALL SATISFACTION

Most respondents (85%) reported satisfaction with their current housing, though respondents were more likely to be satisfied (52%) compared to very satisfied (33%). Only 14% were dissatisfied, including just 3% that were very dissatisfied.

Subgroup analysis

A larger proportion of those who had lived in Valdez for over 10 years reported total satisfaction, at 92%, compared to 74% of those with residency of 10 years or less. One-quarter (24%) of those who had lived in Valdez for 10 years or less reported they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, as did 29% who did not own their home.

Table 20. Overall, are you satisfied with your current housing?

n=210	% of Total
TOTAL Satisfied	85
Very satisfied	33
Satisfied	52
TOTAL Dissatisfied	14
Dissatisfied	11
Very dissatisfied	3
Don't know	2

SATISFACTION WITH SPECIFIC FEATURES

Respondents were asked about their level of satisfaction with an array of features in their current housing. At least half were satisfied (satisfied or very satisfied) with every feature on the list. The largest proportion (88%) reported total satisfaction with parking, followed by indoor air quality (83%), and number of bedrooms (80%). The highest level of dissatisfaction was found for suitability for seniors to age in place (36% total dissatisfied) and energy efficiency (28% total dissatisfied).

Subgroup analysis

A smaller majority of mobile home households were satisfied with state of repair and design qualities (58% and 56%, respectively) compared to single-family home households (83% and 89%, respectively). Roughly three in ten mobile home households were dissatisfied with these two features of their housing, though relatively few reported being “very dissatisfied.”

Table 21. How satisfied are you with each of the following features of your current housing?

n=210	% of Total Weighted							
	TOTAL Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	TOTAL Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	NA	DK
Parking	88	34	54	8	6	2	4	-
Indoor air quality	82	23	59	14	12	2	3	-
Number of bedrooms	80	30	50	12	10	2	8	1
Design qualities and attractiveness	79	24	55	14	12	2	4	3
State of repair	78	23	55	14	11	3	4	3
Suitability for children	74	29	45	12	8	4	13	1
Value for the price	69	28	41	22	16	6	6	2
Energy efficiency	68	19	49	28	24	4	4	-
Suitability for seniors to age in place	52	11	41	36	25	11	10	3

Note: DK = Don't Know.

PRESENCE OF VARIOUS HOUSING ISSUES

Respondents were asked about whether various potential issues were present in their current housing. One-third (33%) experienced draftiness, 21% experienced plumbing issues, 16% mold, 12% structural issues, and 8% neighborhood crime. Less than half of households (46%) experienced none of the issues listed.

Subgroup analysis

A larger proportion of renters than homeowners experience draftiness (48% of renters versus 28% of owners) and plumbing issues (37% versus 15% of owners). Mold and neighborhood crime were much more likely to be reported by mobile home households (29% and 33%, respectively) compared to those in other housing situations (less than 15% and less than 6%, respectively).

Table 22. Which of the following, if any, do you experience in your current housing?

n=210	% of Total
Draftiness	33
Plumbing issues	21
Mold	16
Structural issues	12
Neighborhood crime	8
None of the above	46
Don't know	1

QUALITY OF RENTAL OPTIONS

Renters were asked their opinion on the quantity of good options available in the local rental market. Over three-quarters (77%) of renters said there were few good options in the Valdez rental market. Only 5% of renters thought there were many good rental options.

Subgroup analysis

All renters (100%) in mobile homes reported that there were few good options in the Valdez rental market, compared to 84% of single-family home renters and 72% of renters in other housing types (including apartment buildings, multiplexes, and attached homes).

Table 23. In general, do you think the Valdez rental market has many good options, some good options, or few good options?

(Base = Renters)

n=41	% of Base
Few good options	77
Some good options	15
Many good options	5
Don't know	3

RATING HOUSING QUALITY, AFFORDABILITY, AND AVAILABILITY

While relatively few respondents were dissatisfied with their own housing, a clear majority of respondents rated various measures of Valdez’s housing market poorly. More than three-quarters rated housing availability in the city as poor or very poor (83%), including 36% that rated availability as very poor.

Similar portions of households rated housing affordability as poor (81%), including 34% saying very poor.

More than half (55%) of households surveyed Valdez housing quality as poor or very poor.

Subgroup analysis

Respondents who had lived in Valdez for 10 years or less were more likely to report availability of housing as very poor, at almost half (48%), and quality of housing as poor or very poor (67%). Slightly more than one-quarter (28%) of respondents who had lived in Valdez for longer than 10 years rate housing availability as very poor and 47% rate quality of housing as poor or very poor.

Households living in attached or multi-family housing were much more likely to rate availability and quality of housing as very poor in Valdez. More than half (52%) of these respondents rated housing availability as very poor, compared to 30-34% of those living in single-family homes or mobile homes. Similarly, a third (32%) of households in attached or multi-family housing rated housing quality in Valdez as very poor, compared to just 8-9% of other households.

Table 24. For each of the following aspects of housing in Valdez, please tell me whether you think it is very good, good, poor, or very poor?

n=210	% of Total Weighted						
	TOTAL Good	Very Good	Good	TOTAL Poor	Poor	Very Poor	Don't know
Quality of housing	40	5	35	55	41	14	5
Affordability of housing	14	2	12	81	47	34	4
Availability of housing	12	3	9	83	47	36	5

Future Housing Plans

LOOKING FOR NEW HOUSING

Respondents were asked whether they were currently looking for different housing in Valdez. Less than a quarter (17%) said yes, though an additional 16% expected to look for new housing in Valdez within the next five years.

Subgroup analysis

More than a third of renters (35%) were currently looking for new housing, compared to 10% of homeowners.

Table 25. Are you looking for different housing in Valdez?

n=210	% of Total
No	61
No, but expect to in the next five years	16
Yes	17
Don't know	6

REASONS LOOKING FOR NEW HOUSING

Among those looking or expecting to look for new housing, the most cited reasons were the need for more space (36%) and a desire to own their housing (24%). The next most common responses were downsizing (5%) and aging/need or more care (5%). Other reasons were each cited by fewer than 5% of respondents.

Table 26. What is the main reason you are looking, or expect to look, for new housing?
(Base = Those looking or expecting to look for housing within the next five years)

n=69	% of Base
Need more space	36
Want to own	24
Downsizing	5
Aging/need more care	5
Building a home	4
Parking (boat, car, other)	3
High cost of rent	3
Family/roommate issues	3
Location	2
Building quality	2
Other	11
Refused	3

DESIRED FUTURE HOUSING

Three-quarters (77%) of respondents looking for, or expecting to look for, new housing expected to look for a stand-alone, single-family house. The next most desired type of housing reported was apartment (8%) and zero lot line (4%). Despite mobile homes making up a large portion of the local housing stock, only 1% of those looking for new housing expected to look for a mobile home.

Table 27. Which type of housing are you looking for or expecting to look for?
(Base = Those looking or expecting to look for housing within the next five years)

n=69	% of Base
Stand-alone, single-family house	77
Apartment	8
Attached home (i.e. duplex or zero lot line)	4
Condominium	2
Mobile home or trailer	1
Other	2
Don't know	3
Refused	3

More than two-thirds of those looking for new housing (69%) expected to buy their housing, while 22% expected to rent and 9% didn't know.

Table 28. Are you more likely to rent or buy?

(Base = Those looking or expecting to look for housing within the next five years)

n=69	% of Base
Buy	69
Rent	22
Don't know	9

LIKELIHOOD TO MOVE FROM VALDEZ

Almost one-third of respondents (31%) reported they were somewhat or very likely to move from Valdez within the next five years, while 67% were not likely.

Table 29. How likely are you to move from Valdez within the next five years?

n=210	% of Total
Very likely	17
Somewhat likely	14
Not likely	67
Don't know	2

INABILITY TO MOVE TO VALDEZ

Nearly a third (30%) of Valdez residents surveyed reported having family, friends, or work colleagues who would like to move to Valdez but could not due to lack of housing.

Table 30. Do you have any family members, friends, or work colleagues that would like to move to Valdez but cannot because of lack of housing?

n=210	% of Total
No	69
Yes	30
Don't know	1

Senior Housing

Nearly a quarter (23%) of households included at least one member over 65 years of age.

Table 31. How many seniors (65+ years) live in your household?

n=210	% of Total
0	76
1	16
2	7
Refused	1

Seventeen percent of households with seniors reported that at least one member of the household was somewhat or very likely to move to an assisted living or nursing home facility in the next five years, while 75% said this is unlikely.

Table 32. How likely is it anyone age 65 or older in your household will need to move to an assisted living or nursing home facility in the next five years?

(Base = Households with at least one senior)

n=48	% of Base
Very likely	6
Somewhat likely	11
Not likely	75
Don't know	8

Housing Need Analysis

The following gaps, and related general observations, are evident:

- Expansion of Valdez housing inventory would be beneficial, especially in multi-family housing but also in single-family housing and senior housing.
- Housing availability and affordability are bigger issues than housing quality.
- High median wages in the community contribute to disparities in housing affordability. Most of the private housing development has focused on single-family homes for moderate- to higher-income residents. This leaves the biggest gap for lower-income residents and new residents looking for rentals.

There is a very high level of dissatisfaction with Valdez's housing situation in the community and equally high levels of support for city action on the topic. These are strong signs of the presence of housing gaps in the community.

Rental and Multi-Family Housing

A variety of observations point to rental housing as a top housing gap in Valdez.

Based on survey results, a very high proportion of renters consider there to be few good options in the local rental market. All renters in mobile homes reported that there were few good options as well as 84% of single-family home renters and 72% of renters in attached homes and multi-family complexes.

Valdez has experienced a decline in the number of occupied housing units over the last decade. This decline has been steepest for renter-occupied units. A possible explanation is conversion of housing, especially rentals, into crew houses, vacation rentals, and second homes.

The percentage of households renting is lower in Valdez than other nearby coastal communities – with 21% renting compared to 30% to 51% in Homer, Seward, and Cordova. This is especially notable when taking into account that a significant number of Valdez rentals are higher-end homes (21% of Valdez renter households paid more than \$2,000 a month compared to just 4% to 9% in the other communities).

Recent new housing starts have mostly focused on single-family homes, although the Naswik Project and the 28-unit Valdez Senior Apartments will add to the multi-family inventory over the next year.

Multi-family housing makes up a much larger portion of the housing stock in other similar communities such as Homer and Seward. This is particularly true for 5-9 unit complexes, which are also promising from an affordability standpoint.

Estimating the number of additional rental housing units needed is hampered by a lack of data on rental vacancy rates in the community. By most accounts rentals vacancies are nearly always immediately filled through a waiting list or word of mouth. Furthermore, an unknown number of mobile homeowners, seasonal residents, and others would rather rent an apartment than other options currently utilized.

Single-Family Housing

Single-family housing, not including mobile homes or trailers, is the most desirable housing type for most Valdez residents. Various sources of information indicate that there is unmet demand for single-family housing in Valdez.

A lack of active residential-focused professional builders contributed to a decline in new single-family home construction seen between 2012 and 2016. A spike in home construction in 2017 was associated mostly with crew housing constructed for Edison Chouest employees. Other than those exceptions, Valdez has typically seen construction of about 10 single-family homes annually, nearly all presold or owner-built.

Similar to rental housing, Valdez's owner-occupied housing stock appears to be declining, likely due in part to an increase in vacation rentals, crew houses, and second homes. Some of this decline may also be attributable to housing deterioration and older houses no longer being a part of the occupiable inventory.

More than one-third of renters (35%) are currently looking for new housing, compared to 10% of homeowners. Of those looking, three-quarters (77%) would prefer a stand-alone, single-family house. Among those looking or expecting to look for new housing, the most cited reasons were the need for more space (35%) and a desire to own their housing (24%).

Senior Housing

Nearly one-quarter (23%) of households include at least one member over 65 years of age. Of these, 6% (or 1.3% of all Valdez households) indicated that someone in their household is very likely to need to move to an assisted living or nursing home facility in the next five years. These percentages can be translated into at least 20 residents very likely and an additional 40 residents somewhat likely to need this type of housing in the next five years.

More than one-third of households were dissatisfied with their current housing's suitability for seniors to age in place, including 11% very dissatisfied.

Fewer households with seniors were cost-burdened than households without seniors (16% compared to 30%, respectively). This could be partly due to the fact that half of Valdez homeowners do not have a mortgage on their home, as well as the fact that the city exempts seniors from local property taxes (up to \$150,000 in home value).

With the addition of 28 new senior housing units with the Valdez Senior Apartments, much of this demand is likely to be met by late 2024.

Affordable Housing

Due primarily to higher incomes, Valdez is better situated than many communities when it comes to customary measures of housing affordability. One in six (17%) Valdez households is estimated to be cost-burdened, which is defined as spending more than 30% of household income on housing costs. This compares favorably to Cordova (32% of households cost-burdened) and Homer (32%).

Data from the household survey paints a more mixed picture. Roughly half of residents rate Valdez's housing affordability as poor and another third rate it as very poor. On the other hand, two-thirds of households say they are satisfied with the value for the price of their current housing. Possible explanations for these contradictions include the fact that those unable to find a reasonable housing situation often leave the community; a satisfaction with current housing

but memory of a very difficult time upon moving to the town; and the high impediments associated with changing housing.

MOBILE HOME RESIDENTS

Interviewees frequently discussed Valdez's unusually large number of mobile homes and the deteriorating quality of this housing stock. More than half (61%) of mobile homes were reported to be over 40 years old, and three in ten mobile home households report problems with mold.

While there is clearly a mix of situations facing mobile home residents, a significant portion of these residents appear to be stuck in this type of housing. Despite mobile homes making up nearly one-quarter of the local housing stock, only 1% of those looking for new housing expect to look for a mobile home. Of current mobile home residents, 42% are looking for different housing or expect to in the next five years. While most of them are looking to buy single-family homes, the mean combined household income for those in mobile homes is nearly half the overall average at just \$50,000.

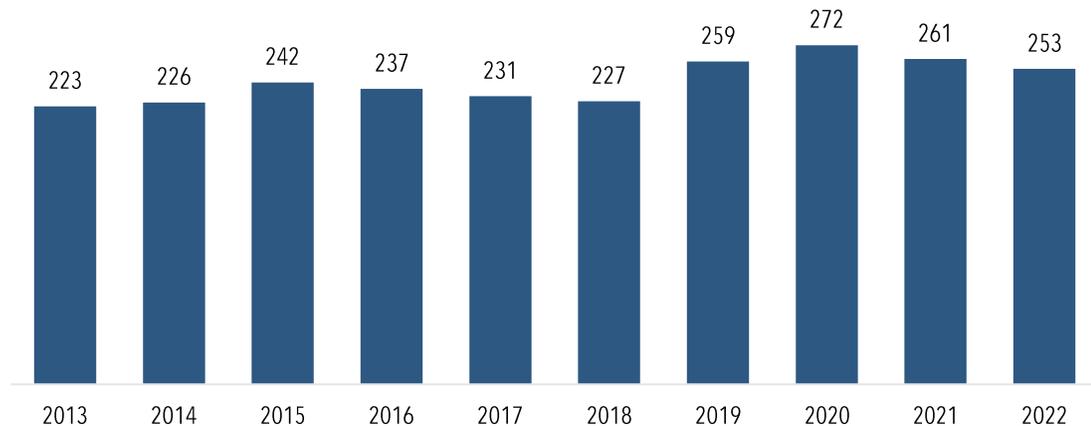
Whittier is a town of fewer than 300 residents on the Western edge of Prince William Sound. The economy is primarily tourism-based, and the city hosts more than 700,000 cruise passengers each summer. The entire population of the city lives in two residential buildings: Begich Towers, built in 1954, and Whittier Manor, built in 1986. Whittier is accessible by road and rail from Anchorage, which is 60 miles away.

Demographics and Existing Conditions

Population

Between 2013 and 2022, the population of Whittier fluctuated between a low of 223 in 2013 to a high of 272 in 2020. In total, the population has increased by 12% over the last decade (+30 residents).

Figure 23. Whittier Population, 2013-2022



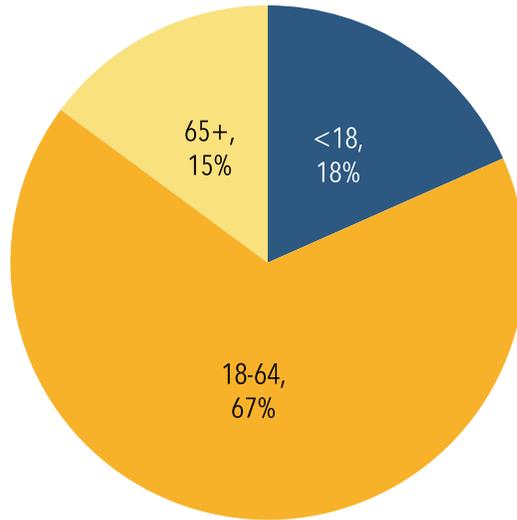
Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

*2020 population is a Census count and may differ from 2020 population numbers elsewhere in the report.

Age

Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that two-thirds of the population in Whittier are between ages 18 and 64, a higher proportion than the Chugach Census Area or Alaska statewide. Approximately 18% of Whittier residents are younger than 18, the second smallest proportion of the five study communities. Comparatively, 24% of Chugach Census Area residents are under 18, and 25% of Alaska residents.

Figure 24. Age Distribution, Whittier, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Income

The annual median household income in Whittier was \$49,583 in 2021, 38% below the Chugach Census Area median and 44% below the Alaska median. Whittier's median household income is the lowest of the five study communities.

Figure 25. Alaska, Chugach Census Area, and Whittier Median Household Incomes, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Employment and Wages

Whittier's economy is heavily influenced by the transportation sector (the Alaska Railroad is the largest employer) and the visitor industry. Retail trade and arts, entertainment and recreation together make up 27% of all employment in the community. Construction is the largest sector, and much of the construction activity in Whittier is attributable to Alaska Railroad or cruise ship company projects.

Table 33. Employment by Industry, Whittier, 2021

Industry	Employed	Share of Total Employed
Construction	28	21%
Retail trade	20	15%
Transportation & warehousing, utilities	16	12%
Arts, entertainment, & recreation, accommodation & food services	16	12%
Finance, insurance, & real estate	14	11%
Public administration	13	10%
Manufacturing	10	8%
Education, health care & social assistance	6	5%
Other services	5	4%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting, & mining	3	2%
Information	2	2%
Total	133	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Nearly all Whittier residents live in the Begich Towers, a 14-story apartment complex built in the 1950s. The building also contains the Whittier post office, a general store for residents, a laundromat, and a community church.

Housing Cost and Affordability

An average of 8 units in the Begich Towers were put on the market for sale annually between 2015 and 2022. Between 2020 and 2022, the average sale price of a unit was \$50,500.

Preliminary 2023 data indicates that 5 units were sold in 2023, for an average of \$122,200.

Housing Attainability

The maximum monthly housing cost the median household in Whittier can afford is \$1,200. The full range of attainable monthly housing costs for households earning between 80% and 120% of AMI is \$900 to \$1,400. This equates to a condo price range of \$126,900 to \$190,300.

By comparison, the average condo sale price range in Whittier between 2020 and 2022 was \$50,500. Although unit sale prices increased to a preliminary average of \$122,200 in 2023, sale prices of units in the Begich Towers are below attainable housing thresholds for middle-income families in Whittier.

Table 34. Attainable Housing Thresholds, Whittier, 2023

	Annual Income	Monthly Housing Costs	Max Cost of Attainable Home
80% AMI	\$44,480	\$900	\$126,900
100% AMI	\$55,600	\$1,200	\$158,600
120% AMI	\$66,720	\$1,400	\$190,300

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021 5-year Estimates, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, McKinley Research Group calculations.

Housing Survey and Town Hall Results

Residents of Whittier report challenges with housing stemming from the limited land availability and age of existing housing stock. The Alaska Railroad holds a master lease to most of the land in Whittier. Historically, the AKRR has been uninterested in releasing any land from the lease for housing development. This significantly restricts any possible new development in Whittier.

Additionally, few utilities exist outside the small footprint of downtown Whittier. Though Shotgun Cove Road has been extended west nearly ten miles out of town, land accessed by the road is on steep hillsides and lacks electrical or water infrastructure. It is unlikely that anyone would build housing in these areas because of the high cost of privately extending utility infrastructure.



The City of Whittier.

The Buckner Building is an abandoned U.S. military building in Whittier that once served as army barracks. It was formerly the only residential building in Whittier, and included a cafeteria, movie theater, bowling alley, and other recreational facilities for the nearly 1,000 military servicemembers stationed there. The building has not been used since 1966 but takes up a substantial amount of the buildable land in Whittier. Decades of attempts to demolish the building have resulted in obstruction because of difficulties in permitting between the U.S. Army, Environmental Protection Agency, and Alaska Railroad. Even if the building were demolished,

substantial environmental cleanup would be required to make the site usable for other developments.

Satisfaction with Housing

Though survey data was limited to only ten responses, town hall attendees provided substantial feedback on satisfaction with housing in Whittier. Overall, homeowners and renters at both the Begich Towers and Whittier Manor reported that they like where they live. The size of dwellings, availability of units, and community as whole were all seen as benefits to living in Whittier.



The Begich Towers in Whittier.

Dissatisfaction with housing comes from the age of the two residential buildings and a perceived lack of attention to maintenance and safety upgrades. For example, the elevators in the Begich Towers are frequently out of service, requiring some residents to take stairs up 14 stories to access their unit. This is especially challenging for older residents and those with mobility issues. Residents of the Begich Towers also report that the units can become very hot, especially in the summer, with

no central air to cool the units down. Even in the winter the temperature can be stifling in higher story units. Windows are not always functional, and air conditioning units are not allowed.

Additional dissatisfaction with housing was reported from the management of the Homeowners Association (HOA) of the two residential buildings. The HOA Board is elected annually, and votes are distributed based on number of units owned, providing multi-unit owners more influence in elections. Both homeowners and renters felt this created an unfair representation of large property owners who may not share interests with other residents of the buildings. Renters expressed concern that their voices are not included in HOA decisions, and that they could face retribution from landlords for attending a town hall to discuss housing issues.

Moreover, there is considerable overlap between the members of the Begich Towers and Whittier Manor HOA Boards and the City Council. Town hall attendees expressed frustration that a small group of property owners makes decisions on behalf of all residents, sometimes seemingly without the input of renters or single unit owners.

Housing Need Analysis

This section summarizes the various sources of information collected on Whittier's housing situation with the goal of clarifying the housing gaps present in the community.

The following gaps, and related general observations, are evident:

- Whittier residents desire new construction or updated housing options that provide physical safety.
- Multi-family housing is the primary gap, as residents agree that there is no space, or likely interest, in single-family housing in Whittier.
- Renters and single-unit owners at the Begich Towers and Whittier Manor are interested in more diverse and representative governance of the residential building associations.
- The Buckner Building provides the best opportunity for redevelopment and residential construction in Whittier, if environmental and government restrictions can be overcome.

There is a very high level of dissatisfaction with Whittier's housing situation in the community and a perceived lack of action to improve the current housing quality or build a new residential complex for the city.

Rental and Multi-Family Housing

Multi-family housing will continue to be the only option in Whittier due to the geographic constraints of the area. Residents are happy to live in a community that is close-knit and centered on two buildings. Most town hall participants said that they chose to live in Whittier specifically because of the communal nature of the housing.

However, as the Begich Towers and Whittier Manor buildings age and deteriorate, new multi-family housing options will become necessary. Though the boiler in the Begich Towers was recently replaced (extending the useful life of the building in some capacity), the building does not meet safety code in several respects, including emergency egress. Residents expressed concern about long-term safety in the building, and a desire for a community strategy to build a new multi-family development.

BUCKNER BUILDING

The Buckner Building is seen as the best possible option for a new multi-family building in Whittier. Despite the significant environmental concerns with demolition and new construction, the building is on some of the only flat and buildable land in Whittier. It was suggested that tearing down the Buckner Building to make way for a new, high-rise condo building should be the top priority of the City.

Summary

All six communities surveyed and researched for this report have unmet housing needs. These needs are exacerbated by high costs of materials and labor in these remote areas of the state, and the lack of significant new housing construction for the last ten to twenty years.

Below is a table that summarizes the housing needs in each community, estimated from publicly available economic data, survey responses, and interviews with housing experts. This represents the housing needs of these communities over the next five years.

Table 35. Housing Type Needs, by Community

Community	1 bedroom	2-3 bedroom	4+ Bedroom
Chenega	3	3	4
Cordova / Eyak	20	20	-
Tatitlek	-	6	-
Valdez	25	35	10
Whittier	100	140	-

This table reflects a mix of rental and owner-occupied housing needs. In Cordova and Valdez, the smaller units are likely to be in demand as rentals, whereas in Whittier, small condos are popular as year-round owner-occupied residences. The age of the housing stock in each of these communities also means that without additional construction in the short-term, the housing needs of the community will continue to grow.

Appendix A: Contact List

The following individuals were interviewed in the course of the study.

REGIONAL OR STATEWIDE

Jack Blackwell, Chugach Alaska Corporation
Daniel Delfino, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
Mark Fineman, Cook Inlet Housing Authority
Olen Harris, North Pacific Rim Housing Authority
Josie Hickel, Chugach Alaska Corporation
Andy Petroni, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
Tyler Robinson, Cook Inlet Housing Authority
Ethan Stoops, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
Name withheld for confidentiality, Alaska Railroad Corporation

CORDOVAK

Kevin Johnson, City Planner, City of Cordova
Becky Chapek, Realtor, Alaska Real Estate of Cordova
Angela Butler, Tribal Administrator, Native Village of Eyak

CHENEGA

Megan Bergene, Tribal Administrator, Native Village of Chenega

TATITLEK

Roy Totemoff, Tribal Administrator, Native Village of Tattilek

VALDEZ

Kate Huber, Planning Director, City of Whittier
Melissa Hursh Metzger, Owner, Hursh Rentals

WHITTIER

Jackie Wilde, City Administrator, City of Whittier
Tom Wagner, Building Manager, Begich Towers

Appendix B: Survey Suggestions

The survey conducted for this study asked respondents “Do you have any suggestions for ways your local government can address housing issues?” Following are main themes. These responses highlight the multifaceted nature of the housing issue and the necessity for a comprehensive approach involving regulation, development, affordability, and community engagement to address the housing shortage and make living in the area more accessible for various demographics. These responses do not include Valdez.

Land Use and Development: The need for more land to be annexed or opened up for housing development was a recurring theme. The suggestions included utilizing state land, encouraging the use of unused or vacant land owned by various entities such as the Alaska Railroad, Eyak Corporation, and the city itself. Many suggested making land more accessible, especially for multi-family housing, condos, and apartments.

Regulation of Property Use: Several respondents recommended regulating short-term rentals such as Airbnb, particularly to ensure that properties aren't left vacant for extended periods. There was also a suggestion to limit the number of vacation or second homes and enforce limitations on short-term rentals, thereby addressing housing availability for permanent residents.

Affordability and Assistance: The affordability of housing is a significant concern. Suggestions included grants, tax incentives, and financial assistance for building or renovating homes. There were calls for programs that cater to families across income levels, not just extremely low-income households, while also providing support for middle-income families.

Infrastructure and Services: Recommendations included addressing utilities costs, such as water and electricity, to make living and building more affordable. Some respondents suggested improving services such as healthcare (including labor and delivery facilities) and transportation, as these impact residents' decisions to live in certain areas.

Rehabilitation and Demolition of Abandoned Properties: Abandoned or derelict properties was a common area of concern. Some suggestions involve incentivizing property owners to renovate, while others propose the demolition of blighted or condemned properties to make space for new construction.

Collaboration and Engagement: Several respondents called for collaboration between different entities, such as the local government, Coast Guard, University of Alaska, and private developers, to address housing shortages and facilitate development.

Taxation and Property Ownership: Some suggested changing property tax rates, potentially penalizing vacant properties or increasing taxes on properties owned by non-residents. There was also discussion about the impact of government-owned properties and how they could be made available for development.

Housing Diversity: Several respondents encouraged a range of housing options including single-family homes, apartments, condos, tiny homes, and high-density housing to cater to different needs within the community.

Appendix C: Survey Instruments

See attached.

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