

Valdez Economic Strategic Action Plan 2030:

Valdez Five-Year Economic Plan Recommendations of the Economic Diversification Committee

Updated: June 20, 2024

The Valdez Economic Diversification Committee (EDC) developed five-year Strategic Economic Action Plan recommendations for the Valdez City Council. The EDC began work in April 2023 to develop economic initiatives and plan elements. In February 2024, 62 community leaders were invited to participate in a prioritization exercise to rank plan elements. Through these efforts the EDC developed an economic plan with 30 economic initiatives, 5 of which they elevated to priority objective status. On June 19th, 2024 the EDC approved this plan.

The next steps include a **joint workshop** between the EDC and the VCC to further discuss/modify plan recommendations, and appoint **project champions** (the person and/or department responsible for these highest priority initiatives). Project champions will develop **action plans, measurable goals, timelines, steps, partners, and identify funding requirements and funding sources** for the top priority objectives.

This version includes results of prioritization process - which recommends that **8 initiatives in grey** be eliminated and 5 starred initiatives be elevated to priority objective status.

30 Five-Year Economic Planning Initiatives in 8 Categories

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EDC Recommended: VALDEZ 2030 STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

The Valdez Economic Diversification Committee (EDC) developed a Valdez 2030 Strategic Economic Action Plan. The EDC worked on this Plan between April 2023 and June 2024. The committee developed 30 economic initiatives, including 5 recommended priority objectives. The Plan's prioritized objectives are listed below, as approved by the EDC on June 19, 2024. The Plan will be sent to the Valdez City Council for further input.

HOUSING INITIATIVES

- ★ 1. **Priority** Promote Housing Availability and Price Affordability
- ★ 2. **Priority** Increase Supply of Rental Housing
- 3. Strategic Housing Subdivision Planning
- 4. Continue to Develop Housing-Directed Incentive Programs
- 5. Focus on Development of Workforce Housing
- 6. Short-Term Rental Analysis
- 7. Reduce Dependence on Mobile Homes in Valdez



WORKFORCE INITIATIVES

- 1. Health Care Workforce Development
- 2. Maritime Workforce Development
- 3. Support Prince William Sound College
- 4. Commercial Drivers License Class/ More Certified Drivers



SOCIAL SERVICES INITIATIVES

- ★ 1. **Priority** Childcare Expansion
- 2. Quality of Life

TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES

- 1. Ferry Connectivity
- 2. Strengthening FAA Capacity and Enhanced Air Connectivity
- 3. Bus Transit System between Valdez and Anchorage



RECREATION & VISITOR INITIATIVES

- ★ 1. **Priority** Promote Valdez as a Destination
- 2. Sports Fishing Enhancement for Visitors
- 3. Support Winter Tourism
- 4. Tourism Best Management Practices
- 5. Wayfinding



OIL/ENERGY INITIATIVES

- 1. Energy Efficiency Support & Promote Beneficial Electrification
- 2. Continue to Support Core Valdez Oil Sector
- 3. Continued Support for Strong Coast Guard Presence



PORTS AND HARBORS INITIATIVES

- 1. Complete Small Boat Harbor
- 2. Enhance Cruise Ship Dockage Facilities in Valdez



SEAFOOD INITIATIVES

- ★ 1. **Priority** Salmon Hatchery Support
- 2. Strengthen the Marine Industrial Sector
- 3. Understand Threats to Valdez Seafood Sector
- 4. Mariculture



Introduction

The following is a working document of the Valdez Economic Diversification Commission (EDC). The EDC is a seven-member advisory commission to the City Council on activities related to economic development and diversification in Valdez, which supports the City Economic Development Director in achieving the Valdez economic mission.

The City of Valdez Economic Development Mission is to promote an environment of opportunity through the attraction of new businesses and retention of existing businesses, and by providing the resources that enable and advance the wellbeing for all citizens of Valdez. Guidance in achieving this mission comes from the Valdez Comprehensive Plan.

One of the Comprehensive Plan's seven themes is a **Thriving, Stable & Sustainable Economy**, with four goal areas to attain that overall economic vision:

1. **Build upon Valdez's core economy**
2. **Pursue a diverse and self-reliant economy**
3. **Promote Valdez as a destination**
4. **Improve regional connectivity**

The EDC is working to develop a Valdez Economic Strategic Action Plan that can be used to support the city's economic development mission as well as the economic theme and goals of the community's comprehensive plan.

The document draws from the following Valdez sources:

1. **Comprehensive Plan:** <https://www.valdezak.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9954/Comprehensive-Plan>
2. **Meals Hill Master Plan:** <https://www.valdezak.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9607/Meals-Hill-Master-Plan>
3. **Parks and Recreation Master Plan:** <https://www.valdezak.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8307/Parks-and-Recreation-Master-Plan>
4. **Waterfront Master Plan:** <https://www.valdezak.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7988/Waterfront-Master-Plan>
5. **Valdez by the Numbers:** <https://www.valdezak.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13045/Valdez-by-the-numbers-2022-final>
6. **Valdez Alaska Comprehensive Plan Revision Public Survey:** https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zFNSK6zG_sysqCUfAlZZKP--5vIDFcZy
7. **Prince William Sound Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2021-2025:** https://www.pwsedd.org/_files/ugd/c8be42_4b623f34aa92495fa753caa2a8461057.pdf
8. **City of Valdez City Council July 2023 Planning Retreat** (no link available)
9. **Valdez Child Care Crisis Task Force Final Report:** <https://valdez.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6483953&GUID=2D3961AC-3E5D-4768-8892-B9973D7A29BD&Options=&Search=>

Housing Initiatives¹

Availability and affordability of housing is arguably the single biggest challenge in Valdez and across the state. Housing is the top priority for the Valdez City Council.



Recommended Valdez 2030 Priority Objective



Promote Housing Availability and Price Affordability²

The lack of housing and high housing costs are deterrents to economic growth, making it difficult to attract or retain employees in Valdez. Support the development of more single-family residences in Valdez, especially in the mid-market price range, a top priority according to the Comprehensive Plan Survey. Identify strategies for increasing market rate and housing stock. Increase access to housing in all housing categories, to create a more livable, economically competitive, resilient community. Identify barriers and specific problems to address and engage specific stakeholders (builders, finance, real estate, affordable housing organizations, potential occupants, etc.). Study and make recommendations to address the rising cost of housing in Valdez. Support the Valdez Planning Department on the Title 17 rewrite. Support the work of the City Council Housing Subcommittee.

Champion Recommendation: Kate Huber, Planning Director City of Valdez



Increase Supply of Rental Housing³

Encourage development of more year-round rental properties for a healthier overall housing market. In Valdez there are 1,550 occupied housing units. Of these 27% are renter occupied, while 73% are homeowner occupied. Typically, the occupied housing tenure ratio is one-third rentals and two-thirds homeowners, meaning that Valdez's level of rental housing is comparatively low.

Champion Recommendation: Kate Huber, Planning Director City of Valdez

Strategic Housing Subdivision Planning⁴

Homes should be developed in areas where utilities are already connected. Constructing new housing is expensive. Support the improvement of utilities in existing Valdez subdivisions. Work with private developers and City of Valdez to bring water and sewer to existing Valdez Subdivisions (top housing priority of Comprehensive Plan Survey). Includes proactively planning for future subdivision expansion on city-owned land.

¹ See City of Valdez City Council July 2023 Planning Retreat: Objective #3: Increase Housing.

² Priorities from the 2021 Valdez Comprehensive Plan Public Survey. Also Goal A: Priority Objective #3 of the Prince William Sound CEDS "Increase housing quality and affordability" (see page 3 for links). Initiate language developed in conjunction with Kate Huber City of Valdez Planning Director.

³ Data from *Valdez by the Numbers*. Initiate language developed in conjunction with Kate Huber City of Valdez Planning Director.

⁴ Priorities from the 2021 Valdez Comprehensive Plan Public Survey. Initiate language developed in conjunction with Kate Huber City of Valdez Planning Director.

Continue to Develop Housing-Directed Incentive Programs⁵

Track the progress and success of the new Valdez housing incentive adopted by the City Council in 2022. The housing incentive program provides a \$10,000 cash payment for the creation of qualifying new dwelling units in Valdez and is set to expire on December 31, 2024. The city has also developed the Infrastructure Grant Program, allowing developers to apply for reimbursement for some of the cost for developing infrastructure associated with new housing development. Continue to research potential city government incentives for housing, including the development of city-owned land (including construction of infrastructure), incentives for developers, utilization of special improvement districts, and pursuit of Alaska Housing Finance Corporation grant funding, among others. Research housing development land grant programs for developers.⁶

Focus on Development of Workforce Housing⁷

Develop workforce housing, including short-term high-density housing and smaller unit development that can readily accommodate those coming to Valdez for work.

Worker housing could include shared kitchens, living areas, and restrooms; and will be designed to accommodate transient and quickly increase the overall housing options in the community.

Short-Term Rental Analysis

Monitor prevalence of the short-term rental market. Valdez needs to have places for employees and staff to live. Better understand use of short-term rentals in community. Bed tax is not currently collected on most short-term rentals, and it is difficult for the municipality to track local use. Review examples from other communities. The revised Title 17, if adopted, will allow the community to better track short-term rental data. This is crucial to understanding the short term housing needs of the community.

Reduce Dependence on Mobile Homes in Valdez

Valdez has a much larger percentage of mobile home in the community than elsewhere in Alaska, and these homes are aging rapidly. Focus on development of housing that provides alternative more sustainable long-term quality options. Understand improvement needs of mobile home housing stock.

⁵ Valdez Housing Incentive Program <https://www.valdezak.gov/807/Housing-Incentive-Program>. Initiate language developed in conjunction with Kate Huber City of Valdez Planning Director.

⁶ Review document “Municipal Housing Tax Abatement & Deferral Strategies in Alaska” developed for the Valdez EDC by Rain Coast Data in October 2023.

⁷ Title 17 of the Valdez Municipal Code, pending adoption. Initiate language developed in conjunction with Kate Huber City of Valdez Planning Director.

Senior Housing⁸

The 28-unit Valdez Senior Living Apartments are expected to open in March 2024. Continue to support the development of the Senior Housing Application and St. Patrick Subdivision. Support staff recommendations on developer agreement and land development grants.

Grey = draft initiative recommended for deletion from 2030 Plan due to lower ranking in prioritization exercise

⁸ Valdez Senior Living Apartments <https://www.valdezak.gov/852/Valdez-Senior-Living-Apartments>. Initiate language developed in conjunction with Kate Huber City of Valdez Planning Director.

Workforce Initiatives

Workforce development and support of career and technical education are included throughout this plan. Develop workforce resources through education, training, and career opportunities. Link and expand college programs to existing new industries. Support continued development of K-12 and post-secondary education opportunities and pathways in Valdez.

Health Care Workforce Development⁹

Partner with Prince William Sound College and the UAA College of Health to coordinate and advocate for more locally-grown nurses. Support prerequisites that students may need before acceptance into the nursing program (Anatomy & Physiology, etc.). Work to retain students in health care related programs and support them through graduation. Give providers an opportunity to help students stay in Valdez by offering perks to college or students. Work with Providence to offer incentives and employment pathways. Once students are trained they will likely to settle in the community that provides their first job. Work to remove the barriers to having those first jobs be in Valdez.¹⁰

Maritime Workforce Development: Build Teaching Through Technology Alliance with Mariculture Sector¹¹

The T3 (Teaching Through Technology) Alliance Alaska program provides a unique and innovative pathway for students to learn technical skills and contribute to meaningful challenges facing their communities. Build the T3 alliance with Mariculture Sector and a state-wide mariculture T3 club for high school students. Partner with Alaska Blue Economy Center (ABEC) and K-12 system to support mariculture and maritime-related educational programs. Create a maritime academy. Support maritime sector through boat building, marine industrial, welding, mariculture support, etc. Work with the Alaska Safety Alliance to expand the Maritime Works program. Work with Prince William Sound College on educational and workforce development programs.

Support Prince William Sound College

Quality education and workforce training is critical to the development of a strong economy. Valdez has an insufficient pool of skilled employees with professional and technical expertise to support the business sector. Provide input to PWSC regarding local workforce needs so it can offer the programs and courses the community needs the most, especially if those needs are likely to be paired with increased enrollments and investments in those programs. Support PWSC in securing assets to develop new facilities and recruit new faculty to support emerging community education and training

⁹ See City of Valdez City Council July 2023 Planning Retreat: Objective #7: Address limits of health care

¹⁰ Initiate language developed in conjunction with Dennis Humphrey, Prince William Sound College Campus Director

¹¹ Initiate language developed with input from Amanda Glazier, PhD Assistant Professor of Biology and Environmental Science Prince William Sound College; and Tommy Sheridan Associate Director, ABEC; ARCTIC Community Site Coordinator, ACEP University of Alaska Fairbanks

needs. Ensure PWSC has certifications to meet local workforce needs. Create mentorships. Develop and retain top talent. Support scholarships and grants for PWSC.¹²

Commercial Drivers License Class/Development of More Certified Drivers

Coordinate with the UAA Career and Technical College, Prince William Sound College, and local industry to provide local Commercial Drivers License (CDL) training. Develop a creative solution to overcome local infrastructure limitations (i.e. Valdez does not have features like multi-lane highways and on ramps needed to complete all of the road portions of the driver training and testing). Consider local training paired with a trip to Anchorage to complete training.¹³

Childcare Workforce Development Program

To address the critical need for qualified childcare providers, rethink workforce conditions and recognize childcare as a skilled trade. Collaborate with SEAAEYC to guide interested individuals through its Child Development Associate (CDA) process to meet minimum licensing requirements. Partner with the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) to establish a childcare apprenticeship cohort to bridge the workforce gap while allowing participants to work toward UAA's Occupational Endorsement Certificate (OEC) in Child Development. Classes for the OEC could be offered at PWSC through an adjunct partnership. The funds allocated for workforce measures in the innovation grant could be utilized to fund these initiatives and to set up a wage subsidy program to attract and retain both entry level and skilled childcare workers. Advocate for the Governor's Childcare Taskforce recommendations that propose eliminating the CCA requirement for the operation of childcare centers, enhancing the background check process, and providing categorical eligibility of childcare assistance benefits for the children of licensed providers. These measures, if enacted, will make childcare jobs more attractive and retention more likely.¹⁴

(Recommendation: Combine with other childcare initiative on following page)

Grey = draft initiative recommended for deletion

¹² Initiate language developed in conjunction with Dennis Humphrey, Prince William Sound College Campus Director

¹³ Initiate language developed with input from Dennis Humphrey, Prince William Sound College Campus Director

¹⁴ Initiate language developed using the Valdez Child Care Task Force Report and Recommendations January 2024, and in discussion with Alaska childcare expert Blue Shabler. Blue Shabler is executive director of the Southeast Alaska Association for the Education of Young Children, and previously served as administrator for Discovery Preschool.

Social Services Initiatives

Support sufficient healthcare, education, childcare, wellness, and social support services in Valdez.



Childcare Expansion¹⁵ Recommended Valdez 2030 Priority Objective

To address the inherent challenges in the childcare business model, proactively fund and strengthen the Valdez childcare system, while waiting for additional state and federal investments. Create a pathway to increase the availability of childcare options, fostering a positive impact on child development, parental workforce participation, and overall community well-being. An allocation of dedicated local funds for childcare operating stipends would incentivize new childcare startups to meet the urgent demand for services. Collaborate with SEAAEYC to define metrics for the operating stipends based on community needs to ensure focused and practical support for childcare infrastructure. Identify facility space that can be offered to a private operator rent free for a larger childcare center, such as HHES. This can be most efficiently started by offering the space to an independent operator through an RFP process. Develop a start-up grant program for in-home providers, that includes an annual amount for home repair/maintenance. Identify public indoor and outdoor spaces that could be used by in-home providers for recreation and events, such as school gyms and playgrounds. Advocate for the Governor's Childcare Taskforce recommendations that propose to reduce regulatory barriers and improve the licensing application process. If a new childcare facility is built, ensure housing provisions for childcare leadership positions are built into the plans.

Champion Recommendation: Economic Development Director Martha Barberio, with support from Blue Shibler

Quality of Life

Make Valdez a more attractive, sustainable, and vibrant place to live and work. Improve the quality of life in Valdez by integrating arts, culture, and heritage, environmental sustainability, local entrepreneurship support, communications infrastructure, and strategies to attract and retain young professionals.

¹⁵ Valdez Child Care Crisis Task Force was established by the Valdez City Council through adoption of Resolution 23-07 and was tasked with creating a strategic plan to address the child care crisis in the Community. Initiative language developed using the Valdez Child Care Task Force Report and Recommendations January 2024, and in discussion with Alaska childcare expert Blue Shibler. <https://valdez.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6483953&GUID=2D3961AC-3E5D-4768-8892-B9973D7A29BD&Options=&Search=> See also City of Valdez City Council July 2023 Planning Retreat: Objective #4: Child Care And Goal B: Priority Objective #1 PWESEDD CEDS.

Community and Cultural Wellness

Support the development of activities and infrastructure that promote a healthy, active Valdez community and a positive, livable environment for residents that encourages and supports recreation, health, and cultural wellness. Support efforts to construct infrastructure that highlights and promotes Valdez indigenous cultures. Support the creation, expansion, and collaboration of cultural programs and developments that elevate indigenous communities.¹⁶

Continue to Support Valdez Seniors and Senior Center¹⁷

The Valdez Senior Center provides support and services for the seniors of Valdez through programs such as Senior Independent Living Apartments, Meals on Wheels, Congregate Meals, Transportation, Medicaid Assistance, Social Security Assistance, and Medicare Counseling. Expand support for the facility and programs in order to retain senior residents. Review additional Valdez senior needs in transportation, housing, hospice, home care, health care, etc.

Grey = draft initiative recommended for deletion from 2030 Plan due to lower ranking in prioritization exercise

¹⁶ Developed with input from the Sound Wellness Alliance Network

¹⁷ See City of Valdez City Council July 2023 Planning Retreat: Objective #2: Brainstorm a Senior Population Strategy

Transportation Initiatives

GOAL 4.2 of the Valdez Comprehensive Plan is to Improve community transportation connections: Develop a safe, convenient, and linked year-round multi-modal transportation network to neighborhoods, destinations, and services.

Ferry Connectivity¹⁸

Work to increase passenger and vehicle ferry service to and from Valdez. Partner with the State of Alaska on current Alaska Marine Highway Planning. Collaborate and align efforts to access funding from infrastructure bill elements focused on ferries.¹⁹ Explore intra-regional ferry system: analyze intra-regional ferry system financial feasibility, including infrastructure consistency with vessels. Integrate planning process with local uplands development.

Strengthening FAA Capacity and Support in Valdez for Enhanced Air Connectivity²⁰

Strengthen the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) capacity in Valdez, enhance air passenger connectivity, and reduce operational downtimes. Partner with FAA to establish a more robust FAA presence in the community. Support appointing a local FAA representative responsible for air navigation maintenance, and investing in infrastructure upgrades. Support increased reliability and efficiency in air travel, enhanced local expertise in FAA operations, and long-term economic benefits for Valdez.

Bus Transit System between Valdez and Anchorage

Currently a commercial service provides van connectivity between Valdez and Anchorage three days per week. Explore support of a more robust transit system linking Valdez and Anchorage. Conduct a comprehensive feasibility study to assess the practicality and impact of establishing additional transportation options. Enhancing mobility with a reliable bus service could stimulate economic growth by offering a travel alternative for residents, workers, and visitors.

¹⁸ Valdez Comp Plan Goal 4.1, Action E is “Continue to advocate for reliable ferry and air service.”

¹⁹ Alaska Marine Highway System Awarded \$285 Million in Infrastructure Funding: <https://www.murkowski.senate.gov/press/release/alaska-marine-highway-system-awarded-285-million-in-infrastructure-funding->

²⁰ See also: Valdez Pioneer Field Airport Master Plan Update ADOT&PF

Recreation and Visitor Initiatives

Increase visitor-related opportunities; enhance Valdez as a destination for visitors; capitalize on the attributes of the community; and improve recreation opportunities for residents.



Promote Valdez as a Destination²¹

Promote the community as a year-round visitor and recreation destination while balancing the benefits with possible impacts. Develop a tourist carrying capacity study, including the target number of cruise ship port calls/annually. Connect beautification, marketing, community information, recreation, economic development, long term cruise planning, and RV planning. Support and encourage tourism and small business growth. Provide cruise ship facilities; grow retail and restaurant sector. Enhance the Old Town site as a destination. Museum, history, and cultural destination support. Continue to support and develop infrastructure to house culture, history, and museum support. Work on clean up. Develop facilities to manage waste (bathrooms, trash cans, pit toilets, etc.). Partner to enable cultural, recreation, and business opportunities.

Champion Recommendation: Faith Harris Executive Director, Valdez Convention & Visitors Bureau (VCVB)



Recommended Valdez 2030 Priority Objective

Sports Fishing Enhancement for Visitors²²

Focusing on both King and Coho salmon enhancement would provide early spring and fall shoulder seasons for sports fishing (following ski season) to develop a year-round recreation economy in the community. Facilitate a funding discussion regarding these options.

- 1). **King Salmon enhancement.** Partnership with Valdez Fisheries Development Association (VFDA) to create Spring King salmon season. King salmon fisheries enhancement success requires sufficient funding for operations, long term planning, and a six-year timeframe for development of viable returns of adult salmon.
- 2) **Coho Salmon enhancement.**²³ The hatchery needs a building replacement to expand capacity for production and to increase visitor demand for commercial recreation in the Fall. The hatchery's juvenile rearing facility has reached the end of its serviceable life and a new building is soon needed to maintain the existing sportfish program and potentially expand commercial recreation in early summer by other species such as king salmon. The coho salmon enhancement program at the Solomon Gulch Hatchery has developed into one of the largest sport fisheries

²¹ Goal 3.3 of the Valdez Comprehensive Plan

²² <https://www.valdezfisheries.org/>

²³ <https://www.valdezfisheries.org/sport/>

in Alaska. Coho salmon begin to return to Port Valdez in mid-July through mid-September. The best time for sport fishing coho from the shore is late summer. Valdez has gained great popularity for its silver fishing. Valdez Fish Derbies sponsor several events around the pink and silver salmon seasons in the Valdez area.

Support Winter Tourism²⁴

Continue to focus on winter tourism and development of a ski area. Support development of responsible winter camping, snow machine trails, helisking operations, nordic ski routes, alpine skiing, and other winter activities.

Tourism Best Management Practices²⁵

Develop a year-round Valdez Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) program to minimize the impacts of tourism in a manner that addresses both residents' and industry concerns. The program works through the cooperation of Valdez tour operators, cruise lines, transportation providers, merchants, hospitality businesses, tour brokers, environmental groups, outdoor recreation organizations, and the City of Valdez. Membership in TBMP is voluntary, and member tour operators and their employees agree to abide by the program's guidelines. To develop a TBMP Guideline document, the Valdez visitor industry and the City of Valdez will review guidelines from other communities and adopt the elements that will be best for Valdez in the following areas: Transportation and Vehicles; Walking, Hiking and Trails; Cruise Ships; Docks and Harbors; Marine Tours, Sightseeing, Sport Fishing; Restaurants and Hospitality Businesses; RVs; Events; Outdoor Recreation. The guidelines will be updated annually, so that any additions, changes, or corrections to be made on an ongoing basis. Once the new document is completed, copies will be distributed throughout the community and provided to each TBMP member company.

Wayfinding²⁶

Develop wayfinding that supports the Business and Waterfront Districts with connections along the way to all that Valdez has to offer. Use landmarks, city signage and pathways to help visitors and residents easily navigate and fully enjoy the Valdez experience. Use streetscape design, site furniture and plantings help make the journey safer and more enjoyable. Enhance trail facilities by adding wayfinding and installing trailhead facilities. Develop interactive kiosks: build your own itinerary.

²⁴ See references to Winter Recreation in Valdez Parks and Recreation Master Plan

²⁵ Language modeled after Juneau and Wrangell TBMP planning documents. <https://travelwrangell.com/tbmp-guidelines> and <https://juneau.org/index.php?gf-download=2023%2F05%2F2023-TBMP-Guidelines-FINAL.pdf&form-id=22&field-id=11&hash=b2f2cc50347b4efd26edd85053db1ea6b0693a228c54a34a6c95baeaaae98700>. Developed with input from the Kirby Day

²⁶ Valdez Wayfinding Project: <https://www.valdezak.gov/632/Wayfinding-Project> and Valdez Comp Plan Goal 3.3 Action D

Support Local Transportation Providers During Cruise Season

Develop sufficient capacity to move visitors during tourism season using buses with certified drivers.

Infrastructure Development to Support Year-Round Motorsports

Support year-round motorsports industry, including trail development, parking, camping, mapping, marketing, and improved wayfinding.²⁷

Non-Motorized Trail Network Growth²⁸

Follow the goals of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to improve and expand facilities and amenities by expanding trail connectivity. Evaluate existing and proposed trails, along with gap analysis. Prioritize developing trails that link to existing and future parks and facilities. Develop a “share the trail” concept, for multiple user groups sharing the same trails. Develop a trails mobility plan in conjunction with Title 16 & 17 development to maintain interconnectivity between new properties in the community for pedestrian, biking, and hiking activities. Develop a more walkable Valdez, along with a non-motorized trail network. Build out sidewalks.

Grey = draft initiative recommended for deletion from 2030 Plan due to lower ranking in prioritization exercise

²⁷ Updated with input from Ken Lares

²⁸ Valdez Parks and Recreation Master Plan Goal 3: Improve and Expand Facilities and Amenities: Objective 3.1 – Expand trail connectivity. Updated with input from Ken Wilson

Oil/Energy Initiatives

Support sufficient healthcare, education, childcare, wellness, and social support services in Valdez.

Energy Efficiency Support & Promote Beneficial Electrification²⁹

Work with Cordova Electric to educate the community on energy conservation ideas for homes, to make it more affordable to live in community. Reduce demand for new generation. Support continuation of the Energy Assistance Program to help local residents afford winter energy rates. Explore use of heat pumps, and electric vehicles (EVs). Work with utility to support utilizing a wider range of renewable resources in the community and to develop innovative rates and programs that encourage beneficial electrification by consumers.

Continue to Support Core Valdez Oil Sector³⁰

Continue to advocate for the elements of Valdez’s core oil economy. The pipeline has traditionally provided the city with stable employment as well as a steady source of tax revenue. More than a quarter of all local wages and 12% of all jobs in Valdez are in this sector. Oil is also the primary source of income for the City of Valdez with oil and gas property tax earnings.

Continued Support for Strong Coast Guard Presence³¹

The primary Federal Government employer in Valdez is the US Coast Guard (USCG) with 81 workers. The USCG has several components including 18 crew aboard the cutter Liberty. If the cutter leaves Valdez, it will lead to loss of jobs and families in the community. Work to attract new cutter to the community. The Coast Guard in Valdez is tasked with waterside security of the terminal and enforcing maritime security zones in and around the Port of Valdez. Response plan should not be reduced.

²⁹ Aligned with Southeast Alaska CEDS Energy Objective #1: Promote beneficial electrification. <https://www.seconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Updated-CEDS-2025-Feb-2023.pdf> Also aligned with Goal A: Priority Objective #5 of the PWSEDD CEDS “Increase energy efficiency and integration of renewable resources.”

³⁰ Valdez Comp Plan Goal 3.1 “Build upon Valdez’s core economy.”

³¹ See Valdez by the Numbers page 11 <https://www.raincoastdata.com/project/valdez-by-the-numbers-2022/> See also City of Valdez City Council July 2023 Planning Retreat: Objective #5: Address: Strategic Port Values / Coast Guard Issues

Ports and Harbors Initiatives

The Valdez waterfront serves as the major economic contributor to Valdez and the State of Alaska, which in part also makes it a first-class public waterfront and top priority for the City & State of Alaska. Ports & Harbors initiatives help provide a first-class waterfront experience; preserve, enhance, and expand the diversity of amenities; attract new industries and businesses; and leverage public investments to catalyze private investment and development.³²

Complete Small Boat Harbor³³

The Small Boat Harbor master plan development is a multiphase plan. Complete small boat harbor reconstruction of H-K floats, tour dock, launch ramp expansion and replacement. The Harbor currently has a 200-boat waiting list, primarily for recreational boaters. Just over half (53%) of Valdez's recreational boats are owned by Alaskans from the Interior who travel south to fish, and that a reconstruction and expansion are needed.

Enhance Cruise Ship Dockage Facilities in Valdez

Continue to upgrade and expand the cruise ship dockage facilities in Valdez, specifically focusing on Kelsey Dock, Alaska State Ferry Dock and the possible expansion of both facilities in the downtown waterfront. The City has made substantial improvements to the Kelsey Dock Interpretive and passenger loading areas. The Pier infrastructure is in need of repairs, upgrades and expansion to accommodate the current operations and increased growth. Continue to upgrade and renovate Kelsey Dock for existing cruise ships clients and explore engineering to meet demand for large vessels in the downtown. Focus upgrades on structural enhancements, the development of motor coach staging areas, and the improvement of the seawalk for better accessibility and functionality.

Improve Seafood Freight Capacity

Explore potential public private partnership Alaska Marine Lines for seafood shipping. Support freight by upgrading barge landing craft area. Currently freight shipped to Valdez by landing craft for small barges can only be loaded or unloaded at high tide, and a better solution is needed. The landing for small barges must be upgraded, and dredging should occur to be able to continue using the existing infrastructure and allow for 24/7 uninterrupted access. Currently Valdez is being considered as the Hub for Prince William Sound Seafood, this would bring Cordova Seafood to Valdez for export to Seattle and possibly Asia.

Grey = draft initiative recommended for deletion from 2030 Plan due to lower ranking in prioritization exercise

³² Taken from the guiding principles of the Ports & Harbors Commission and Port Department Waterfront Master Planning discussion in the Waterfront Master Plan page 4.

³³ See Valdez Waterfront Master Plan pages 10, 20-35

Seafood Initiatives

Seafood is an important source of jobs, workforce earnings and contributions to the tax base of Valdez. Continue to support a strong seafood sector in Valdez.



Salmon Hatchery Support³⁴

Recommended Valdez 2030 Priority Objective

Continue to recognize the economic importance of the Valdez Fisheries Development Association (VFDA) and other PWS nonprofit salmon hatcheries on the Valdez commercial fishing industry. VFDA salmon accounts for about a quarter of the value of all seafood processed in PWS. Support salmon hatchery activities in order to benefit subsistence fishermen, personal use fishermen, sport fishermen, charter fishermen, commercial fishermen, seafood processors, as well as the state and local government. Communicate that hatcheries are operated by non-profit associations who rely on the best scientific methodology, precautionary principles and sustainable fisheries policies to protect wild salmon populations.

Champion Recommendation: Valdez Fisheries Development Association Mike Wells, Executive Director

Strengthen the Marine Industrial Sector³⁵

Develop marine industrial park with a large vessel haul-out capability. Create more waterfront access for tourism and local quality of life in balance with the need for working waterfront uplands for marine industrial activities. Continue to support and build commercial fishing industry with infrastructure. Increase shoreside processing opportunities for private entities including direct marketers, microprocessors, and large seafood processors. Support seaweed infrastructure, such as space for seaweed drying. Support design permitting, and construction of the Sea Otter Point development (an undeveloped site), Valdez's last natural deep-water vessel location. Examine advantages and disadvantages of boat storage alternative against traditional in water moorage infrastructure.

Understand Threats to the Valdez Seafood Sector³⁶

The biggest threat to the fisheries of Valdez at this time are the impacts of global market disruption due to world events. The city will support the seafood industry in its efforts to increase markets for Alaska seafood products and stabilize production of regional fisheries by area fishermen through Valdez processing plants. Work collaboratively to

³⁴ Aligned with Southeast Alaska CEDS Seafood Objective #7 "Communicate the Importance of Salmon Hatcheries." Information from the Economic Impact of the Valdez Fisheries Development Association: https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/fishing/PDFs/hatcheries/2018_vfda_economic_impact_report.pdf

³⁵ Part of the Five-Year Vision of the Valdez Comprehensive Waterfront Master Plan. See also Goal C: Objective #1 "Build on and sustain Prince William Sound's blue economy" PWSEDD CEDS

³⁶ Aligned with Southeast Alaska CEDS Seafood Objective #5 "Research the effects of changing ocean conditions." <https://www.seconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Updated-CEDS-2025-Feb-2023.pdf>

reduce impacts of ocean-acidification and ocean warming on the fisheries in Valdez by supporting the research of the University of Alaska and other state and federal agencies regarding temperature impacts on marine ecosystems, range shifts, and recruitment failures. Support sustainable, science based fisheries management practices in the face of climate driven changes.

Mariculture³⁷

Develop and support a robust and sustainable mariculture industry, producing shellfish and aquatic plants for the long-term benefit of the Valdez economy, environment and community. Encourage continued support for this emerging industry. Leverage and utilize existing infrastructure (such as the cold storage facility and business incubator). Build infrastructure to support seaweed farmers to process seaweed, manufacture products and ship to market. Encourage cooperative agreements (for example, working with the petroleum or seafood industries). Work with other entities (such as Alaska Mariculture Alliance, Alaska Mariculture Cluster, University of Alaska, EVOS-funded mariculture researchers) to help current and future seaweed partnerships.³⁸

³⁷ City of Valdez Resolution # 22-36 <https://www.valdezak.gov/712/Mariculture-Project>

³⁸ Includes feedback from Julie Decker, President for Pacific Seafood Processors Association

Next Steps

Hold Joint Work-session with EDC and Council to Edit/Approve Initiatives and Priority Objectives

The EDC will have a joint meeting with the Valdez City Council to set initiatives and top priorities.

Appoint Project Champions for Each Priority Objective

In order to remain priority objectives, each of the top initiatives must have a willing project champion. The following potential project champions have been identified for the five top initiatives (order based on prioritization exercise):

- **Priority Objective #1 Promote Housing Availability and Price Affordability**
Recommendation: **Kate Huber**, Planning Director City of Valdez – Planning Department
- **Priority Objective #2 Salmon Hatchery Support**
Recommendation: Valdez Fisheries Development Association **Mike Wells**, Executive Director
- **Priority Objective #3 Childcare Development and Expansion**
Recommendation: Economic Development Director **Martha Barberio** City of Valdez
- **Priority Objective #4 Increase Supply of Rental Housing**
Recommendation: **Kate Huber**, Planning Director City of Valdez – Planning Department
- **Priority Objective #5 Promote Valdez as a Destination**
Recommendation: **Faith Harris** Executive Director Valdez Convention & Visitors Bureau (VCVB)

Develop Economic Plans for Each Priority Objective

Rain Coast Data will work with project champions, once appointed to determine the following:

- i. Timeline
- ii. Funding (costs, sources)
- iii. Steps
- iv. Partners (people, organizations)
- v. Evaluation Measures