

## Approach & Scope of Work

### APPROACH

The City of Valdez adopted a new Comprehensive Plan in 2021 that reflects their current vision, goals and future aspirations. Since Plan Valdez was adopted, Title 17 Zoning Districts was updated to implement the Comprehensive Plan. Title 17's update reduced red tape, provided more flexibility in development and allowed for accessory dwelling units to address Valdez's need for additional affordable housing.

Valdez is making strides towards addressing the community's growing need for housing. The City continues to fund the Land Development and Housing Incentive programs. These programs are important tools to encourage completion of more housing options for the City of Valdez. The next step in the City's progress towards housing and development is an update to Title 16 Subdivisions. This update will balance private property rights with community vision, amend the Title's standards to adjust to Valdez's unique environmental characteristics, and increase its ease of reading and implementation.

### SCOPE OF WORK

One of the many challenges when revising, updating or creating new land use code is ensuring the final product encourages growth in a responsible manner. The **R&M CONSULTANTS, INC.** (R&M) team has extensive experience working with municipalities, cities and boroughs to analyze, write, revise and implement code and comprehensive plans that will guide development for the Title 16 Subdivisions Code Revision. Our approach to providing the requested services is outlined below.

#### **Task 1: Review Valdez Comprehensive Plan - Plan Valdez Not In Contract-Comprehensive Plan Review to be provided by City of Valdez**

In developing this proposal, we reviewed Plan Valdez and summarized goals, objectives and strategies related to subdivisions. This process will be ongoing throughout the entire project to ensure code revisions are not in conflict with community desires. In addition, we researched Title 17 Zoning Code and the City of Valdez Capital Improvement Program and budget to develop a foundational understanding of the planning and policy decisions and processes, as well as development patterns. The summary report will provide useful information to assess success in achieving the current plan's goals through Title 16 revisions. We will work with staff subject matter experts (SME) such as Community Development Department (CDD) staff, Public Works and Capital Projects to confirm our understanding of the following Plan Valdez Goals and Action Items related to Title 16 revisions:

- Goal 6.2 - Minimize environmental impacts.
- Goal 6.3 - Promote efficient uses of resources.
- Goal 7.1 - Reduce the community's vulnerability to natural events.

- Action Item 2.1.G - Investigate development standards to establish a fair allocation to developers of the costs for required off-site improvements needed to help support the impacts of development projects on public infrastructure.
- Action Item 2.1.N - Ensure that snow storage sites are maintained and assessed to match development and community needs. Snow storage is a critical need in developed areas, but is not mapped or monitored. Future land use and development in the community may modify the need, location and size of snow storage areas to allow the community to operate in winter



#### **TASK 1 DELIVERABLES**

*Comprehensive summary report of plans and goals identified in the Comprehensive Plan to inform Title 16 revisions:*

#### **Task 2 and Task 3 Combined: Review Current Title 16 Subdivision Code and Analyze and Identify Areas of Concern**

**Code Assessment.** R&M's staff is experienced in land development, from multi-family to small and large commercial developments throughout Alaska, including the communities of Seward, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB), Municipality of Anchorage (MOA), Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB), Petersburg and Juneau. R&M starts every project with completing a project planning checklist, which includes an evaluation of the area's development code requirements. It also includes outlining required permitting, which can include local planning reviews, building permits, platting, wetlands and other federal, state and local requirements. R&M has extensive knowledge of reviewing and implementing MOA Title 21 Zoning, City of Seward Titles 15 and 16 Land Use and Subdivision Codes, and other land use regulations in Alaska.

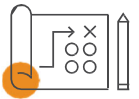
Additional tasks should include:

- Review and analyze subdivision variance requests and approvals over the past five years. Reviewing of subdivision variances provide vital information that informs the need for future code amendments. In 2024, our research indicates Valdez granted two variances or exceptions to the code to facilitate development. In addition, three Conditional Use Permit (CUP) applications were granted. Understanding the types of variances and CUP requests will help inform Title 16 revisions.
- Clarify Variance (16.04.060) language with more specificity to provide certainty for development and developers.



#### **TASK 2 DELIVERABLES**

*Technical Memorandum on Code Review*




**Task 3: Analyze and Identify Areas of Concern**

One of the challenges with code revisions is identifying potential limiting factors or obstacles for development once code is implemented. Due to our team’s familiarity with code analysis and implementation, we will help identify some of these potential hurdles, reducing the need for future code modifications. The R&M team will provide an assessment focusing specifically on which practices are best suited to Valdez based on an evaluation of population, local climate and environmental constraints such as steep slopes and avalanche/landslide, flooding and tsunami concerns, existing and future development patterns, community acceptability and needs. We will work with CDD staff, the development community, the Steering Committee, Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) members and other interested and potentially affected interests throughout this code revision to ensure we identify the correct issues to be addressed in this Title 16 code revision. Our strategy for public education and involvement is outlined in *Task 5 - Public Outreach Plan*.

In addition to our findings in Task 2, we identified several areas that could be revisited with CDD staff to confirm if they should be addressed with this code update, including:

- 900’ cul-de-sacs and issues with emergency access.
- Plat processing timelines to find areas of efficiency for recording final plats in the Anchorage recorder’s office.


 **TASKS 2 and 3 DELIVERABLES**  
~~Technical~~ Memo on Title 16 Code Assessment and Identified Areas of Concern to be provided to public.

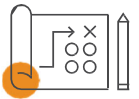
**Task 4: Develop Code Revision Recommendations**

Based on our review of Title 16, Title 17 and the Comprehensive Plan, we identified the following preliminary areas that may be included in code revisions:

- **Consider the establishment of new Alternative Subdivisions, such as Conservation Subdivisions and/or Unit Lot Subdivisions.** Valdez is environmentally unique, with parts of the City susceptible to flooding, erosion, earthquakes and landslides. The establishment of new subdivision types that put importance on preserving environmentally sensitive lands, while also allowing for safe and responsible development, has been used with success in other communities. In the more urban areas of Valdez where medium to high density is desired, Unit Lot Subdivisions may be used to provide smaller, fee simple lots of attached dwelling units. Financing has historically created challenges in developing condominium style developments. In some cases, financial institutions require 50-75% of the units to be pre-sold prior to securing funding. Unit Lot Subdivisions are a lending tool that allow the developer to obtain financing more easily for the project, while at the same time creating more affordable dwelling units on fee simple lots.

- **Establish an administrative approval process for minor subdivisions.** The City of Valdez Subdivision regulations distinguishes between major and minor subdivisions. However, it appears that in both cases, approval authority lies with the PZC. In the case of minor subdivisions with no variances or vacations of rights-of-way, an administrative review and approval process would be beneficial. This may reduce cost and provide approval expeditiously.
- **Extend the approval period for both minor and major subdivisions.** In Alaska, where development occurs primarily in the summer months, a small setback in the permitting process could result in a year(s) long delay. By extending the approval period, you’re giving the developer ample time to resolve all conditions associated with plat approval rather than needing to come back after 12 months for an administrative extension. Consider 18-24 month approvals with one administrative 18-24 month time extension.
- **Establish public and private snow disposal sites.** Valdez receives on average 330” of snow annually, triple many other parts of the state. Valdez should consider establishing a reliable standard for required snow storage areas. Furthermore, use of public recreation space and residential land for snow storage should be reviewed to determine if this is the highest and best use.
  - Establishment of additional large-scale public and private snow disposal sites.
  - Consider snow storage easements adjacent to right-of-way at the time of subdivision.
- **Reduce minimum lot depth.** The current lot depth requirement in Valdez is a minimum of 100’. Reduction in the minimum lot depth to 60’-80’, may, in some cases, create opportunities for additional lots for housing.
- **Reducing setbacks for corner and double frontage lot to create more land for housing development.** A property owner’s ability to develop is often dictated by the developable envelope of the lot. Reducing the setbacks for corner and double frontage lots will provide a larger footprint and allow for design flexibility.

 **TASK 4 DELIVERABLES**  
 In addition to the above analysis, R&M will provide an analysis/assessment report focusing specifically on which practices are best suited to Valdez based on the code evaluation, local climate, existing and future development patterns in practice and as recommended by the Comprehensive Plan, community acceptability and needs.



**Task 5: Public Outreach ~~Plan~~**

A lot of community outreach has occurred during the last several years for the Comprehensive Plan update, as well recently for Title 17 Zoning District code update. We will ensure that our outreach plan and tools for implementing it are clear in the outreach objectives. While the Comprehensive Plan is at the 5,000’ level, the Plan’s implementation through its land use code updates and subdivision code changes will have more scrutiny and participation from the development community, real estate industry and design industry who implements projects. Our public participation/involvement program will focus on tying changes to Title 16 code to the Comprehensive Plan, where necessary, to update outdated standards or regulations that better reflect the Comprehensive Plan’s vision, goals and recommendations. We recommend the following strategies for working with potentially affected interests, stakeholders, development community and City leadership:

**Steering Committee (SC)- (Not In Contract)** We recommend a SC made up of industry representatives, including real estate, land developers, housing contractors, affordable housing organizations, economic development professionals and one-to-two members from the Comprehensive Plan committee for consistency. We also recommend working with Valdez staff to ensure recommended Title 16 changes are implementable and enforceable. We propose two meetings with the SC at the following milestones:

- Meeting 1 – Introduction of the project and the need for code revisions, summary of code assessment and related Title 17 and Comprehensive Plan objectives and goals to be achieved.
- Meeting 2 – Draft revision to Title 16 for feedback.

**Joint PZC/City Council Work Sessions.** Our formal adoption strategy at the PZC Commission and City Council Hearings are in *Task 8 - Review and Adoption Process*.

**Public Workshop.** The public will review and provide feedback on the Draft Title 16 Code Update, after completion of Task 5 Recommendations. Our presentation and community conversation will focus on major content changes, how to read or interpret the proposed code, and communicating its practical significance by applying it to familiar Valdez examples. [Joint PZC/City Council Worksession and Public Workshop will be the same meeting. Valdez Planning Staff will provide public notice of the event.](#)



**TASK 5 DELIVERABLES**

- Public Outreach ~~Plan~~
- Implementation Schedule for Code Revision
- Meeting Agendas, Materials and Advertisements
- Public Engagement Outcome Summaries for each Public Interaction

**Task 6: Draft Proposed Title 16**

The work of the preceding tasks will culminate with development of the internal draft Title 16 Code. We will workshop draft revisions to Title 16 with CDD staff prior to releasing a public review draft. Title 16 is implementation zoning, a tool for decision-making, and should be easily understood by a wide variety of audiences. We will present the preliminary draft to CDD Staff and the SC (Meeting 2) and release it for inter-agency review and comment. After review and resolution of CDD Staff and inter-agency review comments, we will create and distribute the public review draft of Title 16 for public review.

**Test Project and Case Study. (Not in Contract)** In reviewing the City’s 2024 budget and other City of Valdez resources, including recent news articles, increasing the housing supply and ensuring new housing is attainable is an area of concern that Title 16 revisions should focus on. After we have developed a new Title 16 with the CDD Staff/PMT, we recommend testing it with a concept project to ensure it will be implementable. We will develop a conceptual site plan based on the recently adopted Title 17 Zoning ordinance and the revised Title 16 code to show how a new housing project would be implemented.



**TASK 6 DELIVERABLES**

- Internal Draft of Title 16
- Inter-agency Review Draft of Title 16
- Public Review Draft of Title 16

**Task 7: Draft New Ordinance with Revision to Title 16**

We will prepare a draft ordinance based on the agreed upon draft revisions to Title 16 with CDD staff. We will organize a work session with City Clerk and City Attorney’s office to ensure compliance with the City’s charter.



**TASK 7 DELIVERABLES**

- Draft Ordinance
- Public Review Ordinance

**Task 8: Review and Adoption Process**

Our team will be available to assist City of Valdez CDD staff and City Clerk’s office staff with the code adoption process by providing presentations, preparing draft and final ordinances, and attending public hearings. We will successfully present the updated code for adoption. Our support will include:


- [Joint PZC/City Council-Work session 1 \(in-person\)](#)– to introduce the code revision, research and analysis to date, and provide an overview of the process and schedule.
- PZC Work Session 2 [\(virtual\)](#) – facilitate review of draft ordinance and recommended changes to Title 16.
- [Incorporating changes from PZC work session 2 into a public review draft of Title 16 revisions.](#)



- PZC Public Hearing on Title 16
- After the hearing, updating the code revisions and work with CDD Staff and the City Clerk’s office for City Council introduction (1st reading) and City Council Public Hearing for Adoption (2nd reading).

- Incentivize more senior living housing, such as Valdez Senior Living Apartments, which is underway.
- Consider a tax abatement program that will offset the cost of housing development, such as an Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) incentive grant.

**Final Title 16 Code.** We will capture changes to the code from Tasks 6 and 7 in this task. We will provide a comment response matrix with identified changes and the reasons for the changes to document the process. The code will become final with adoption by City Council, the final step in Task 8.

 **TASK 8 DELIVERABLES**  
Code Adoption  
Final Title 16 Subdivision Code

**UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY NEEDS**

During development of the Comprehensive Plan, a Community Survey was used to focus the plan’s priorities by asking Valdez residents to rank public funding priorities. The 2020 Community Survey resulted in housing as the top priority, with expanded public water and service as the second highest priority. Residents were also supportive of economic development in Valdez through providing new water, sewer and road connections as the third highest priority with 49% support in the survey. With this understanding, the City’s 2024 budget priorities and the goals and action items from Plan Valdez, we will focus Title 16 Code Revisions to help the City move forward in achieving these goals. While updating Title 16 is one lever the City can use to facilitate more housing development, it is one of many tools that can be concurrently implemented to continue the momentum Valdez has started.

Below is a preliminary list of recommendations and action items outside of code revisions to facilitate housing:

- Create a Chief Housing Officer position that works with CDD Staff, Financing and Public Works to coalesce efforts on attaining new housing.
- Develop Private Public Partnerships (P3) for housing development, which helps developers offset the cost of new construction infrastructure such as utilities, water and sewer, roads and drainage.
- Extend the Housing Incentive Program, which was adopted by the City Council in 2022 and expires on December 31, 2025 to continue to provide a \$10,000 cash payment for the creation of qualifying new dwelling units in Valdez.
- Extend the Alaska Housing Land Development Grant Program, which expires on December 31, 2024,

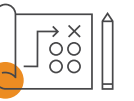
**UNIQUE CHALLENGES**

A significant portion of developed areas in Valdez are within mapped natural hazard areas susceptible to tsunamis, flooding, erosion, liquefaction during earthquakes or landslides, and avalanches. Fire danger is also a risk, as well as snow loads in the winter from high precipitation. Future subdivisions and development in Valdez will need to consider the risk of natural hazards in addition to areas already developed in high hazard zones such as Alpine Woods Nordic Subdivision, Corbin Subdivision, Valdez Glacier Stream Valley, Slater Creek and Corbin Creek Valleys, Valdez Airport, Mineral Creek drainage and Richardson Highway MP 0 to MP 3.0 (within the City) and MP 10 to MP 20 (City limits). In addition to natural hazards as a constraint for growth, we have identified the preliminary challenges from our review of Valdez studies, plans and resources related to the housing supply shortage:

- Aging housing stock.
- Housing affordability.
- Variety of housing for vulnerable populations such as low-income and senior populations.
- Mobile homes not constructed to a standard suitable for Valdez’ severe and harsh climate.
- Cost of construction for development.
- Utilities expansion and connections.

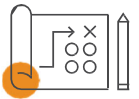
**PUBLIC OUTREACH PLAN**

Our public outreach plan is discussed under Task 5.



## Work Schedule and Project Timeline

TASK	DELIVERABLE	TIMEFRAME	2024	2025												2026	
			DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
NTP	Kickoff Meeting	12/2024	●														
	Scope & Schedule Refinements	12/2024	●														
PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION	Every 3 weeks recurrence with Valdez PMT	12/2024 - 2/2026	[Continuous orange bar]														
	Workshopping Tasks	12/2024 - 2/2026	[Continuous orange bar]														
1: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW (NIC)	Comprehensive Summary of plans and goals identified in the Comprehensive Plan to inform Title 16 revisions.	12/2024 - 1/2026	[Orange bar from Dec 2024 to Jan 2026]														
2: TITLE 16 CODE ASSESSMENT	Code Assessment Report	12/2024 - 1/2026	[Orange bar from Dec 2024 to Jan 2026]														
3: ANALYZE AND IDENTIFY AREAS OF CONCERN		1/2025		[Orange bar]													
4: DEVELOP CODE REVISION RECOMMENDATIONS	Best Practices Analysis/Assessment Report	2/2025 - 3/2025			[Orange bar]												
5: PUBLIC OUTREACH	Public Outreach Plan	12/2024 - 1/2025	[Orange bar from Dec 2024 to Jan 2025]														
	Meetings with City Departments	12/2024 - 2/2025	[Orange bar from Dec 2024 to Feb 2025]														
	Release for Public Comment	5/2025								◆							
	Public Workshop (in-person)	5/2025								◆							
	Joint PZC/City Council Work Session (in-person)	5/2025								◆							
	PZC Work Session 2 (virtual)	8/2025											◆				
6: DRAFT PROPOSED TITLE 16	Preliminary Draft	4/2025						[Orange bar]	◆								
	Public Hearing Draft	6/2025								[Orange bar]	◆						
7: DRAFT ORDINANCE	Draft Ordinance	6/2025								[Orange bar]	◆						
	Public Review Ordinance	7/2025									[Orange bar]	◆					
8: REVIEW AND ADOPTION PROCESS	PZC Public Hearing (virtual)	8/2025										[Orange bar]	◆				
	City Council Introduction (1st Reading)	9/2025											[Orange bar]	◆			
	City Council Public Hearing (2nd Reading) (virtual)	11/2025													[Orange bar]	◆	
	Update Title 16 based on City Council Adoption/ Review Comments	1/2026 - 2/2026														[Orange bar]	◆
	Final Deliverable	2/2026															[Orange bar]



## Fee Schedule and Cost Estimate

### FEE SCHEDULE

Name	Title	Rate (\$/hr)
<b>R&amp;M</b>		
Dave Whitfield	Project Manager	\$201.60
Len Story, PLS	Contract Manager	\$345.60
Beth McKibben, AICP	Land Use Planner/Public Involvement	\$192.96
Van Le, AICP	Land Use Planner	\$224.64
Taryn Oleson-Yelle, AICP	Land Use Planner/Public Involvement	\$164.16
Rachael Selby, EIT	Planner/Public Involvement	\$115.20
Dave Hale, PLS	Land Surveyor/Platting Specialist	\$210.24
Don Porter, PE	QA/QC	\$244.80

### COST ESTIMATE

Below is a summary overview of our cost estimate for the code revision. It is inclusive of all tasks and expenses (travel, in-person meetings, public involvement materials, etc.). More detailed cost information can be found on the following pages.

Task	Cost	Expenses	Subtotal
<del>1. Comprehensive Plan Review (NIC)</del>	<del>\$23,420</del> \$0	-	<del>\$23,420</del> \$0
2. Title 16 Code Assessment	<del>\$17,433</del> \$19,077	-	<del>\$17,433</del> \$19,077
3. Analyze and Identify Areas of Concern <u>(Combined w/Task 4)</u>	<del>\$9,982</del> \$0	-	<del>\$9,982</del> \$0
3. Develop Code Revision Recommendations <u>(Combined w/Task 3)</u>	<del>\$16,399</del> \$14,112	-	<del>\$16,399</del> \$14,112
4. Public Outreach	<del>\$44,127</del> \$17,050	<del>\$6,380</del> \$3,510	<del>\$50,507</del> \$20,560
5. Draft Proposed Title 16	<del>\$14,230</del> \$11,290	-	<del>\$14,230</del> \$11,290
6. Draft Ordinance	<del>\$13,579</del> \$12,436	-	<del>\$13,579</del> \$12,436
7. Review and Adoption Process	<del>\$17,672</del> \$12,280	-	<del>\$17,672</del> \$12,280
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b><del>\$163,222</del> \$89,755</b>