

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2026

Increasing Local Control of Municipal Property Taxation

Assessed values of homes have dramatically increased in recent years, creating a hardship for residents. As currently written, AS 29.45 severely limits how local governments can respond to offer taxpayers relief. The City of Valdez urges the Alaska Legislature to pass HB13 or a similar measure to add flexibility in allowable local property tax exemptions and increase local control.

Investing in Transportation and Port Infrastructure in Valdez

As the 27th largest port in the United States by cargo volume and terminus of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, Valdez plays a key role in supporting national defense and energy security. Port Valdez's unique combination of ice-free deep-water access, existing industrial infrastructure, and a multi-modal transportation system make it strategically significant, but Valdez depends heavily on the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to maintain and improve the state-owned roads and infrastructure at the core of this system.

The Richardson Highway and Alaska Marine Highway are lifelines for our community, and gateways to the rest of the state, and we encourage the state to continue investing in their upkeep.

Reinstating a Park Ranger Position for Valdez Area State Parks

The passive management of thousands of acres of State Park lands around Valdez since 2016 has caused a cost-shift to the City of Valdez. The local non-profit that holds the contract with the Department of Natural Resources to maintain our area parks relies heavily on non-state funding sources including an annual grant from the City of Valdez. Reinstating a full-time Park Ranger position in our area will help to address public safety and maintenance issues in our state parks, which are now serving ever increasing numbers of visitors each year.

ADDITIONAL CITY AND COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Take Active Steps to Stabilize Housing and Child Care in Alaska

The City Council has identified housing and child care as top priorities. Valdez has been working hard on local initiatives and trying to find ways to support projects in both areas but addressing these dual crises will require ongoing support from all levels of government. We ask that the legislature and the governor maintain and expand funding for initiatives that directly aid local communities in addressing housing and child care scarcity and affordability issues.

Support Local Schools

It is essential that the Alaska Legislature and the Governor fund K-12 education adequately and equitably as the Alaska Constitution mandates. Support for education accounts for 19% of the city's annual budget. We encourage funding of the School Major Maintenance and School Bond Debt Reimbursement programs. Valdez continues to advocate for control of local contributions and supports measures that stabilize school funding.

Stabilize Alaska's Public Retirement System

The quality of Alaska's public retirement system is important for recruiting and retaining public servants, especially our first responders and teachers. We support the creation of a new defined benefits option within PERS and TRS to help attract high quality professionals to our community.

Support Prince William Sound Fisheries and Mariculture Industries

Valdez is home to 41 permit holders and homeport to 91 vessels participating in various commercial fisheries and one of the largest purse seine salmon fisheries in Alaska. Each summer, up to 200 commercial vessels fish near the Solomon Gulch Hatchery, the Alyeska Marine Terminal and regulatorily closed waters. Additionally, Prince William Sound has an emerging mariculture industry with significant potential to drive economic diversification in the region.

The Valdez fishing fleet relies on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Commercial Fisheries Division to ensure maximum fishing opportunities and sustainable resource management and the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute to remain competitive in an environment of unprecedented impacts on seafood markets caused by increased production costs, reduced consumer demand post-pandemic, unfair trade policies, and geopolitical instability.

Sustain Essential State Services in Valdez

State of Alaska provides many essential services in Valdez that enrich our community including:

- **University of Alaska, Prince William Sound College:** We ask for continued state support of technical and vocational education programs at PWSC that support local industries of Oil and Gas, Mariculture, Healthcare and Outdoor Recreation.
- **Alaska Department of Law and Court System** – We ask that the state address delays in prosecution of criminal charges and staffing shortages that continue to adversely impact the work of local law enforcement.
- **Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Spill Prevention and Response:** We support stable staffing of SPAR positions in Valdez that play a key role in keeping oil moving safely through Port Valdez and add response capacity in the event of a major oil spill.
- **Department of Administration, Division of Motor Vehicles:** We appreciate that the local DMV allows Valdez residents to conduct business without having to travel more than 100 miles.
- **Department of Family and Community Services, Office of Children's Services:** We rely on the one existing staff position for OCS in Valdez being filled to help bolster the safety of our community's most vulnerable children.
- **Department of Public Safety, Wildlife Troopers:** We support the continued presence of a Wildlife Trooper in Valdez.

Support State Grant Programs

The City of Valdez recognizes the importance of maintaining funding for various state-administered grant programs that provide essential funding to local governments and community organizations.

- **Regional and Community Jail Funding (DOC)** -Annually, the state provides essential monetary support to offset the cost of community jail operations. Valdez is one of 15 communities that contract with the state to operate jail facilities in lieu of the state taking on this public safety responsibility.
- **Recreational Boating and Access Program (ADF&G):** The City of Valdez is seeking funding to improve the boat launch ramp at the Valdez Small Boat Harbor through this program.
- **Alaska Community Transit Human Service Grant Program (DOT&PF):** The Valdez Senior Center provides transit services to seniors and individuals experiencing disabilities through this program enabling these vulnerable populations to participate in activities of daily life.
- **Community Based Primary Prevention Program Grants (CDVSA):** Local agency Advocates for Victims of Violence relies on this grant funding to help individuals facing family or intimate partner violence.
- **Child Advocacy Center Grant (DFCS) and VOCA Grant (DPS):** The City of Valdez provided supplemental to the Copper River Basin Child Advocacy Center in direct response to state support for the program.