



December 30, 2024

-delivered by electronic transmission-

2025 All-America City Award- Letter of Intent to Apply

Dear National Civic League staff:

I am writing on behalf of the City of Valdez in the state of Alaska to inform you of our intent to apply for the 2025 All-America City Award.

We believe our community is an excellent candidate for the All-America City Award because of our enduring legacy of fostering resilience and supporting environmental awareness in the wake of natural and manmade disasters. Two events that loom large in our community's history are the 1964 Good Friday Earthquake and the 1989 Exxon Valdez Oil Spill. These tragedies have had a positive outcome in shaping our town's culture into one that values emergency preparedness, environmental stewardship and collaborative planning.

Valdez has a long history of collaborative community driven projects and was previously named an All-America City twice in recognition of these efforts, first in 1965 and then in 1981. In 2024, this collaborative culture is still thriving and continues to drive our town forward. Two recent projects that have involved robust community processes are the efforts to establish the new Nayurluku Park on Meals Hill and the adoption and implementation of the City of Valdez 2021 Comprehensive Plan revision.

The first phase of construction on Nayurluku Park (named for the Sugcestun word meaning "to take care of" or "to guard") at Meals Hill commenced during the 2024 summer building season and will continue this coming summer. Breaking ground on this project was the culmination of a multi-year community project to establish a conservation area and park to protect and maintain this land in perpetuity and prevent any use that will impair, degrade, or interfere with its natural and undisturbed habitat values. Meals Hill, 184-acres of undeveloped land purchased using a grant from the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, is uniquely positioned along the waterfront, adjacent to the city's residential neighborhoods, waterfront, and west of the downtown core. The final park will include a series of hiking, biking and skiing trails, including accessible trails, to serve residents and visitors alike. Development of this vision and [the Meals Hill Master plan](#) was a community effort that engaged non-profit, city and business stakeholders as well as various outdoor recreation user groups.

The [City of Valdez 2021 Comprehensive Plan Revision, Plan Valdez](#), is a collective vision developed by the community to shape Valdez over the next 20 years. It offers a foundation for determining effective public policy and land use decisions now and into the future. The plan is broken down into themes, goals, and actions that create a framework for informed, directed development and decision making. Plan Valdez outlines short- and long-term planning actions

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that will continue to safeguard the city's history and sense of place. This document has guided code revisions (a full zoning code revision and addition of economic development property tax incentives), city council policy priorities (a focus on housing and community planning efforts (the Child Care Crisis Task Force) since its adoption and provides a true north for what we want our town to be.

Additionally, there is a significant focus locally on emergency preparedness with City of Valdez staff being trained in the Incident Command System structure and the city building collaborative relationships with the State of Alaska, United States Coast Guard, the Red Cross and Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. The City of Valdez helped coordinate [a full-scale disaster exercise, AlaskaEx2024](#), in May of 2024.

Technical education and workforce development programs have also been a major community focus in recent years with future looking programs at the local college, Prince William Sound College, focused on topics that support local environmental and economic sustainability efforts like mariculture, marine trades, natural resource management, construction, healthcare and childcare. Additionally, the city and college have partnered with the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Teaching Through Technology (T3) Alaska program to help high school students gain hands on experience in mariculture and the natural sciences in Prince William Sound during summer programs.

Our community contact person will be:

City Clerk Sheri Pierce
Phone: 907-834-3408
Email: clerks@valdezak.gov

We understand the application deadline is **February 27, 2025**. If named a finalist, we commit to bringing a community delegation to Denver, Colorado, for the second part of the application process: a live presentation to a jury at the 2025 **All-America City Award Event, June 27-29, 2025**.

Sincerely,

Sheri Pierce
City Clerk, City of Valdez
Phone: 907-834-3408
Email: clerks@valdezak.gov

Elise Sorum-Birk

To: Rebecca Trout
Subject: RE: Letter of Intent to Apply

From: Rebecca Trout <rebeccat@ncl.org>
Sent: Thursday, January 2, 2025 5:19 AM
To: Elise Sorum-Birk <ESorumBirk@ValdezAK.Gov>
Subject: RE: Letter of Intent to Apply

Hi Elise,

Thank you for submitting a Letter of Intent for Valdez! I'm excited to work with you and your team through the 2025 application process and learn more about the initiatives outlined in your LOI.

If you're interested, we can pair you with a mentor community that has previously been designated an All-America City. These mentors can provide guidance on the application criteria, share insights into the review process, and offer feedback on draft applications.

I'm happy to accept your LOI; by submitting your Letter of Intent, you've earned \$100 off the application fee! Use the discount code 'LOI25' at checkout to reduce your fee from \$250 to \$150. Application fees are due by the final submission deadline on February 27, 2025. You can pay online via [our payment page](#) (3.5% card processing fee) or by mailing a check to the address provided on the payment page.

Additionally, if you weren't able to attend our informational webinar on the 26th, you can watch the [recording here](#).

For the latest updates from the National Civic League and All-America City Awards, be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and subscribe to our monthly [e-newsletter](#).

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions. I look forward to receiving your application!



Rebecca Trout
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[National Civic League](#)
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Our mission is to advance civic engagement to create equitable, thriving communities.

