



City of Valdez

212 Chenega Ave.
Valdez, AK 99686

Meeting Agenda

City Council

Tuesday, August 26, 2025

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

Work Session - Public Works and Economic Development Departments

WORK SESSION AGENDA - 6:00 pm

Transcribed minutes are not taken for Work Sessions. Audio is available upon request.

1. [Snow Removal Operations for 2025-2026 Season and Personnel Request for Lead Mechanic in 2026](#)
2. [2026 Economic Development Department Work Plan](#)



Legislation Text

File #: 25-0377, **Version:** 1

ITEM TITLE:

Snow Removal Operations for 2025-2026 Season and Personnel Request for Lead Mechanic in 2026

SUBMITTED BY: John Witte, Director, Public Works Department

FISCAL NOTES:

Expenditure Required: To be determined during budget development

Unencumbered Balance: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The Public Works Department will provide an overview of preparations for the 2025-2026 snow removal season, including operational plans, staffing schedules, and anticipated challenges related to Valdez's extreme snowfall.

This presentation will also outline a personnel request for a Lead Mechanic position. The addition of this position will strengthen fleet reliability, enhance preventative maintenance, and provide direct leadership within the shop to support both the Street and Solid Waste Divisions.



Meeting Valdez's Fleet Demands with a New Mechanic

Public Works Department,
Street/Shop Division

A brief overview of the need for an additional full-time mechanic in the Public Works Department. The presentation highlights current staffing challenges, growing fleet demands, and how this position will reduce downtime, prevent burnout, and improve citywide service efficiency.

Why We're Here

Requesting one additional
Lead Mechanic position



Support Operational Readiness

Ensure essential City services stay on schedule by reducing vehicle and equipment downtime.



Prevent Staff Burnout

Provide relief to current mechanics facing unsustainable workload.



Meet Growing Demands

Keep pace with an expanding and aging fleet that requires increased maintenance and repair capacity.

Based on a 2023 internal survey of Alaska and national municipal fleets, a 1 mechanic per 50 vehicle ratio is widely recognized as an appropriate standard — particularly for heavy-use, in-house maintained fleets like ours.

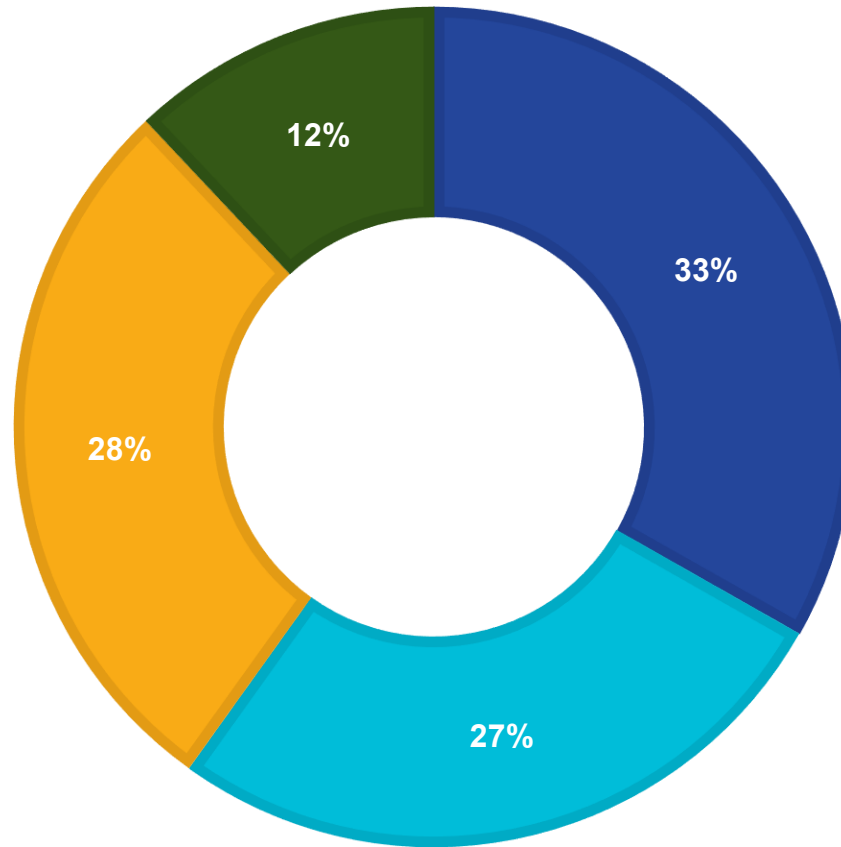
Breakdown of 2025 Municipal Fleet by Category

Boats & Trailers 12%

Covers watercraft used for marine operations along with trailers that support equipment transport and storage across various departments.

Specialty Equipment 28.1%

Includes specialized municipal equipment such as lifts, forklifts, sweepers, compactors, and critical emergency vehicles like fire trucks, pumpers, tankers, ambulances, and rescue units.



Heavy Equipment 33.2%

Includes large machinery used for road construction, snow removal, grading, excavation, and other heavy-duty public works tasks.

Light Equipment 26.7%

Consists of lighter vehicles such as pickups, SUVs, vans, and smaller utility vehicles used for daily operations, inspections, and transport.

Fleet Growth & Staffing Timeline:

2023:

- Fleet Size: **153 known vehicles**
- Staff: **1 Mechanic + 1 Fleet Manager (50% mechanic)**
- Mechanic-to-fleet ratio: **1 mechanic per 102 vehicles**
- Industry benchmark established: **1 mechanic per 50 vehicles**
- All mechanics support snow removal efforts.

2024:

- **Mechanic Assistant added**
- Fleet Size: **157 known vehicles**
- Effective mechanic coverage: **2 Mechanics + 1 Fleet Manager (50% mechanic)**
- Mechanic-to-fleet ratio: **1 mechanic per 64 vehicles**
- Modest improvement, but demand still outpaces capacity
- All mechanics support snow removal efforts.

2025:

- **Conducted a full fleet audit**
- Fleet Size: **217 units / Weighted count: 191.5** (adjusted for trailers/boats)
- Current staff: **2 Mechanics + 1 Fleet Manager (50% mechanic)**
- Current ratio: **1 mechanic per 76 vehicles**
- All mechanics support snow removal efforts.

2026 Positive Outlook:

Additional Mechanic Approved

Fleet Growth:

- Projected fleet size: **192.5 vehicles**

Staffing Improvement:

- Restructure: Fleet Manager to oversee Street & Shop Departments
- Adding 1 full-time Mechanic
- Total: 3 + 1 Fleet Manager (50% mechanic time)
- Mechanic-to-fleet ratio improves to **approximately 1 mechanic per 55 vehicles**
- Closer to the industry benchmark of 1:50

Fleet Management Software:

- Implemented to track work orders, maintenance schedules, and inspections
- Enhances maintenance planning and response times

Benefits:

- Increased vehicle uptime and availability
- Faster and more efficient maintenance operations
- Improved safety through proactive inspections



Meeting Valdez's Fleet Demands with a New Mechanic

Questions



Snow Removal Operations

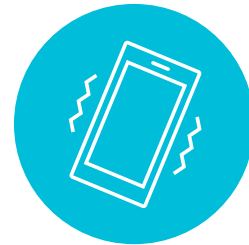
Winter Review & Operational Updates

Snow Removal Operations Overview



Trigger for Action

Snow removal begins after ~4 inches of accumulation and between 2 - 4 inches of wet snow accumulation. The Street Foreman has discretion over the consistency.



Crew Activation

During heavy snow events, crews are called out as early as 2:00 AM by the Street Foreman.



Berm Formation

Equipment may create a snow berm in the middle of roads.– Crews remove berms to snow dumps as soon as possible.– Please be patient during large-scale events.

Street Priorities & Sanding

Clearing Priorities:

- Hospital routes
- Schools & bus routes
- City Hall, Fire & Police
- Residential streets

Sanding:— Applied as needed, conditions permitting.—
Scarifier blades used during high winds for better traction.

2024–2025 Concerns & Responses

Corbin Loop Contractor Delay:

- Did not begin until **>10”** snowfall.
- Issue was addressed; **no repeat incident.**

Freezing Rain:

- Sand was often iced over or washed away.
- Led to **reduced effectiveness** despite frequent sanding.

What's Changing for 2025–2026

Better Contractor Coordination:

- Street Foreman will call out contractors at the same time as City crews during emergency events.

Improved Communication:

- Continued use of City Facebook and website for public updates.

Snow Management Plan Updates:

- Updating our Snow Management by year-end 2025. City Manager Policy Review in 2026.
- Ongoing efforts to improve safety, efficiency, and public expectation management.

Snow Removal Challenges



New Neighborhoods & Streets

Growth: New neighborhoods and streets increase service demands.

Constraints: No added crews, contractors, or equipment.

Storage: Snow storage capacity remains insufficient.



Resident Issues with Private Snow Removal

Increased use of contracted and private ATVs, skid steers, and tractors storing snow on city streets

Residents clearing beyond areas allowed by city code

Limited enforcement leading to ongoing conflicts and safety concerns



Potential Code Revision

Explore prohibiting heavy equipment (private & contractor) from storing snow in streets



Residential Snow Placement Rules

What Residents Can Do:

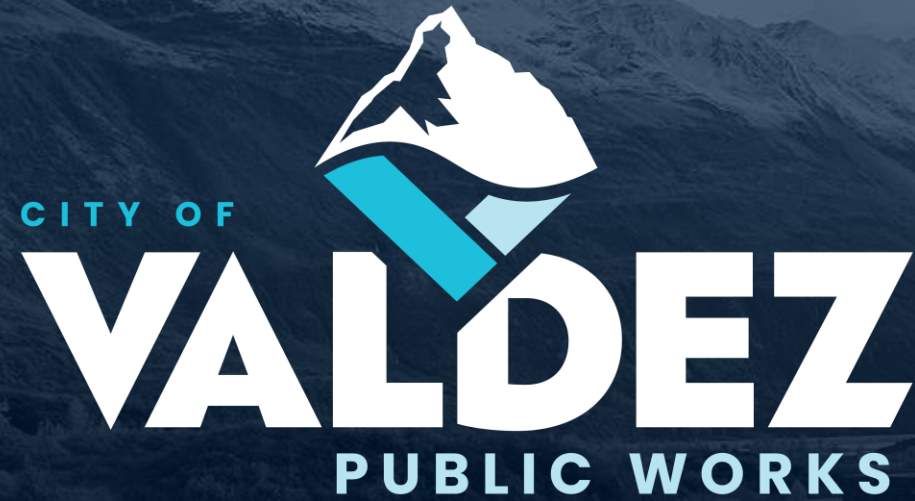
- You may shovel snow from your driveway or walkway to the edge of the road.
- Make sure it's:
 - As close to the road edge as possible
 - Not blocking traffic or driveways

What Residents Can't Do:

- Don't dump snow into the street from other areas of your property (like your yard or large roof clean-offs).
- That snow must stay on your lot or be hauled to a City-approved snow lot.

Contractors & Paid Help:

- Anyone paid to remove any snow may not dump it in the street, sidewalk, or right-of-way.
- They must haul it to the nearest authorized City snow storage lot.
- Snow must be stacked near existing piles without blocking access to the lot.



Snow Removal Operations

Questions?



Legislation Text

File #: 25-0378, **Version:** 1

ITEM TITLE:

2026 Economic Development Department Work Plan

SUBMITTED BY: Martha Barberio, Economic Development Director

FISCAL NOTES:

Expenditure Required: N/A

Unencumbered Balance: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

n/a

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

This work plan outlines specific initiatives such as small business incentives and training, continued support for tourism and cruise industry expansion, workforce development programs, wayfinding design and implementation, child care facility development, and collaboration with regional partners.

These initiatives directly align with City Council priorities and provide measurable steps toward long-term community growth and sustainability.



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Valdez Economic Development Department 2026 Work Plan

To strengthen Valdez's economy by advancing outdoor recreation, tourism, maritime industries, and licensed childcare. We foster innovation, support local businesses, and develop infrastructure that enhances the well-being of the community, aligns with City Council's priorities, and ensures a vibrant, resilient future for residents and visitors.

City Manager
Nathan Duval





2026 City Council Priorities



Housing

- Increase housing stock by Fall 2027, utilizing the Housing Needs Assessment (2025)

Childcare

- Complete an operating, active, licensed childcare facility by 2026

Maintenance

- Annually appropriate funds toward deferred maintenance and critical infrastructure

Modernize & Expand

- Annually modernize aging infrastructure, while leveraging natural and transportation assets, to expand: Outdoor recreation, Tourism, Maritime and Community



2026 City Council Priorities Supported

- Help create and find operator of a childcare facility by Fall 2026
- Expand Wayfinding and tourism infrastructure
- Expand tourism & cruise ship industry engagement
- Support the local economy through small business growth
- Support VFDA, VCVB, ABEC contract & CSO events
- Research & expand transportation options
- Foster community partnerships and workforce development



Economic Development Priorities for Local Businesses

- Support existing local businesses and industries
- Promote and assist new local businesses
- Find and support outside businesses looking to establish a presence in Valdez



Small Business Support & Incentives

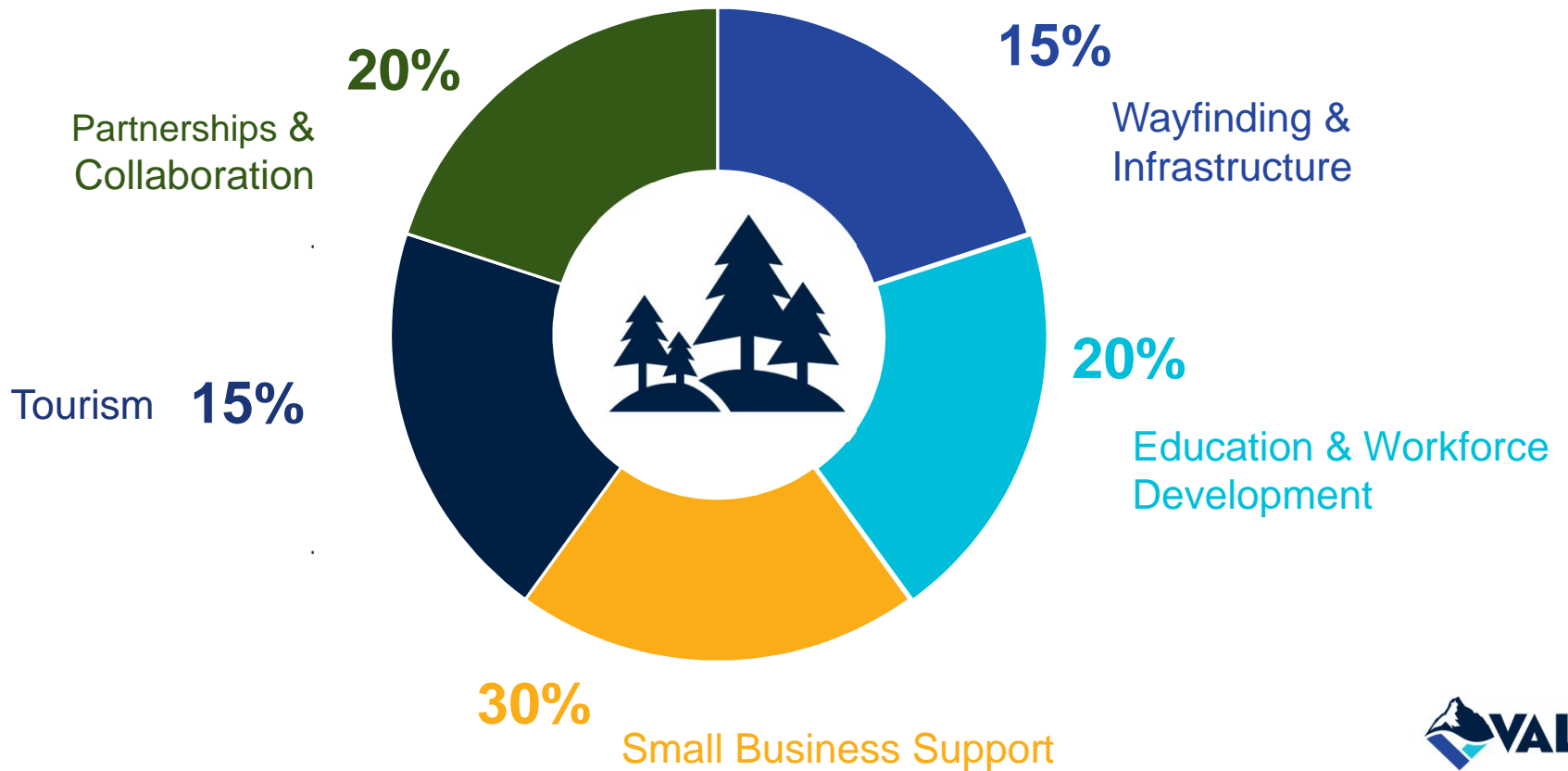
- Assist small businesses with tailored incentives to meet industry-specific needs and offset startup costs
- Spring Small Business Week with planning and networking opportunities
- Fall Business Builder Workshops targeting specific business needs
- Exploring economic incentive districts and site selection assistance
- Partnerships with PWSEDD, ASBWC, and others for training, mentorship, and guidance

Tourism, Marketing & Events

- **Tourism:**
 - Continue to collaborate with VCVB on tourism issues
 - Keep working towards a completion of the Tourism Best Management Practices
 - Carry on with existing cruise ship marketing efforts
- **Wayfinding:**
 - Install new signage and visitor navigation enhancements
- **Industry Support:**
 - Work with Civic Center on package creation for events
 - Work with Ports & Harbors on marketing a world class waterfront experience
 - Maintain engagement with VFDA, VCVB, and ABEC to strengthen local economy
- **Create improved processes for CSO events after meeting with CSO committee**



Economic Development 2026 Work Plan Focus





Workforce Development & Education

- T3 Alliance educational programs
- AWBC coaching and education
- Marine centered programming including mariculture/aquaculture
- Healthcare training programs
- CDL licensing and reimbursement programs
- Partnerships to bring training, programs, and mentorship to Valdez