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September 13, 2018

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

Thank you for inviting the community to be a part of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) to shape and create a legacy for generations to come. As a family physician I understand the importance of details, structure, balance and connection. City planning, like medicine, deals with complex systems that must work seamlessly with other complex systems to accomplish its goal and objectives. My career in medicine has taught me the value of teamwork, goal setting, patience and perseverance.

I worked at the Valdez Medical Clinic from August 2008 until June 2011 but then moved back to my home state of Florida. Valdez is such a special place and almost every summer from 2011 until we moved back in August 2015, my family and I came to either work or vacation here. The community is so unique and when we moved back we knew it would be a long-term commitment. The community drew us back so it makes perfect sense that I volunteer to strengthen that community and leave it an even better place than I found it. My particular area of interest is individual and community well being. This does not exist in a silo, but should be incorporated into every aspect of community planning and core topic categories, rather than being one topic all by itself. Along with representing the Sound Wellness Alliance Network (SWAN) as the board chair, I also am a board member for Connections to Care, work with the Valdez City Schools as the school physician, provide forensic examinations and recommendations for the Copper River Basin Child Advocacy Center, operate a small functional medicine micro-practice and work a full time healthcare related telecommuting job. Of all of these positions, I am most proud of my work for representing and speaking up for those that can't represent themselves. I envision a city that puts the people first in all endeavors and works diligently to assure that everyone has a voice and is represented.

There are obviously some absolutely wonderful aspects of our little snow town, but it could be even more glorious. I have shared my vision of Valdez with my SWAN board and would like to close by sharing that with you. I am not a specialist of the systems within the city and would never propose to be, but I am an expert in people and can help to navigate what is in the best interests of those we serve.

This was something I wrote in January of this year trying to put on paper how I feel the direction of this city should go, particularly centered around well being with the next 5 years (hence Valdez 2023). Please enjoy.

*VALDEZ 2023 is a vibrant city that fosters community engagement to improve the wellbeing of its residents. A group of students attended a SEED MEDIA camp in 2018 and produced a series of wellbeing public service announcements. This effort, backed by the United Way, started a sensation of awareness in Valdez that focused on the small things we can do daily to improve the lives of our community and ourselves. Those PSAs continue today and have been recognized nationally for their efforts in leading the wellness movement in Valdez. We have access to fresh fruit and vegetables without being too expensive because we have created networks of local greenhouses, community gardens and school-based gardens. We have an indoor facility that can be used in bad weather that has a walking track and doubles as a location for indoor soccer/bowling and mini-golf. Valdez 2023 encourages its youth to partner with its elders to share history and create the social connection that is absolutely essential for optimal health. This partnership is seen several nights per month where you will find young and old going against each other in games of bingo, chess, board games or Ping-Pong. Once a month Valdez 2023 has some type of fitness challenge that ranges from snow shoeing the Valdez campgrounds to the Furry 4K. Businesses compete for the GOLD SWAN that is displayed in the business that has the most percentage of participation in the wellness challenges and local faith groups have incorporated physical and mental wellbeing into their weekly meetings. The Bountiful Harvest Feast occurs once a year after harvesting the vegetables from the community garden. This really has grown to quite the event; folks come from all over to witness the goodness grown from the Valdez soil. Finally the Annual Wellness Symposium is a sight to see. This gathering started as a couple of groups chatting about the change they would like to see in the community to a week long event that brings in people from all over the world. The Symposium provides a mechanism for collaboration for local businesses and community members as well as an amazing educational experience for new research into community and social wellbeing. While we haven't achieved it yet, Valdez 2023 has its sights on being designated a Blue Zone, there is still work to do but we are inspired to live well.*

Thank you for your time and consideration. It would be an honor to work on such a noble effort as the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AA', enclosed within a light gray rectangular box.

Angela Alfaro MD