



# Valdez Comprehensive Development Plan

# Valdez Comprehensive Plan

## Table of Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.....</b>	<b>1</b>
2.1	INTRODUCTION .....	1
2.2	OVERALL GOAL .....	2
2.3	GOALS AND OBJECTIVES .....	3
2.4	LAND SENSITIVITY .....	9
2.4.1	Introduction.....	9
2.4.2	Criteria .....	9
2.4.2.1	Undevelopable lands .....	10
2.4.2.2	Developable lands .....	10
2.4.3	Coastal Management Plan Findings.....	11
2.5	IMPLEMENTATION.....	14
2.5.1	Land Use Policies .....	16
2.5.1.1	Residential .....	18
2.5.1.2	Commercial.....	19
2.5.1.3	Industrial.....	20
2.6	STREET AND ROAD PLAN .....	21
2.6.1	Major arterials.....	22
2.6.2	Collector/Business Streets .....	23
2.6.3	Local Access Streets .....	23
2.6.4	Pedestrian Access.....	23
<b>3.0</b>	<b>APPENDIX .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>EXISTING CONDITIONS .....</b>	<b>24</b>
1.	HISTORY, SETTING AND CLIMATE	
1.1	History.....	24
1.2	Location .....	26
1.3	Climate.....	27
1.4	City Boundaries .....	27
1.5	Local City Government.....	28

2.	COMMUNITY POPULATION AND HOUSING INVENTORY	
2.1	Introduction.....	28
2.2	Historic Population Growth .....	29
2.3	Current Population .....	29
2.4	Demographic Information.....	30
2.5	Housing.....	30
3.	COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES	
3.1	Introduction.....	31
3.2	City Services/Public Utilities.....	31
3.2.1	Water.....	38
3.2.2	Sewer.....	38
3.2.3	Streets.....	39
3.2.4	Solid Waste .....	40
3.2.5	Electric Service .....	40
3.2.6	Telephone Service.....	41
3.3	Transportation .....	41
3.3.1	Airport.....	42
3.3.2	City Dock .....	42
3.3.3	Valdez Container Terminal.....	42
3.4	Education .....	42
3.4.1	Library.....	42
3.4.2	Schools.....	43
3.4.3	Community College.....	44
3.5	Medical Services.....	45
3.5.1	Hospital .....	45
3.5.2	Medical Clinic.....	46
3.5.3	Dentists .....	46
3.5.4	Other Medical Services.....	46
3.6	Recreation .....	46
3.6.1	Parks.....	47
3.6.2	Winter Recreation .....	47
3.6.3	Summer Recreation.....	47
3.6.4	Hiking .....	47
3.6.5	Fishing.....	47
3.6.6	Swimming Pool.....	47
3.7	Other General Services .....	47
4.	ECONOMIC INFORMATION .....	47

**B. STREETS AND ROADS.....48**

1.0 INTRODUCTION .....48  
2.0 STREET TYPES.....49  
    2.1 Arterials.....49  
    2.2 Collector.....50  
    2.3 Local Access .....50

**4.0 FIGURES**

Figure 1 General Location Map ..... 26-A  
Figure 2 Valdez City Limits ..... 29-A

**5.0 TABLES**

Table 1 – Municipal Powers Assumed by the City of Valdez .....28  
Table 2 – Valdez Population Estimates 1920 – 1990 .....30  
Table 3 – 1990 Population Estimate .....30  
Table 4 – Copper Valley Electric Association, Inc.....41  
Table 5 – Valdez City School District .....44  
Table 6 – Valdez Student Enrollment by Year .....44

**6.0 MAPS**

Natural Environmental Maps ..... 56-64  
Natural Resource Map .....65  
Zoning Maps ..... 66-72  
Comprehensive Plan Zoning Maps..... 73-79  
Utility Maps ..... 80-82

## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 2.0 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Planning, by definition, is the process of developing a course of action to accomplish a predetermined set of wants and needs. Therefore, one of the first things that must be done in a planning program is to measure the wants and needs (goals and objectives) of community residents.

The public hearing process is often used to gain insight into community desires. A more reliable source of public input comes through a survey of residents' aspirations. Attitudinal survey results are more likely to reflect the community's opinions and desires rather than those of a few vocal citizens or special interests.

When this plan has been reviewed, amended, and adopted by the city it will represent official City policy for guiding the future growth and development of Valdez. It should, therefore, be followed closely when deciding on the use and disposal of public and private property, designing future subdivisions and street layouts, siting community facilities and preparing city building and development codes and ordinances. Remember, however, that a community plan is never finished or completed. Rather, community plans must be constantly reevaluated, updated, and amended as:

- community natural resource, and physical attributes change;
- the prospects for growth, development, and economic change occur;
- residents' desires for the future change;
- political and financial circumstances change; and
- technology provides new, better, and/ or more economical methods for resolving community problems and needs.

Accordingly, these planning proposals should be reevaluated yearly or as needed to make sure the plan reflects the most recent needs and desires of the community.

The working definitions of planning terms should be understood before continuing:

- **Goals** are broad statements of long-term results the community wishes to achieve. Goals represent the completion of a planning effort, and are major milestones in the life of a community.
- **Objectives** are actions that are taken in order to achieve a goal, or bring a goal closer to reality. Objectives

can be short-term, and are achievable within the context of the city's Comprehensive Development Plan.

- **Policies** are working guidelines to achieve objectives. Policies guide the actions of both the private and public sectors (e.g., a land use plan) in accomplishing community planning objectives. In sum, the policy guidelines of this comprehensive development plan are the planning recommendations set forth later in this report.
- **Standards** are the laws and regulations (zoning ordinances, subdivision ordinances, and building codes) and financial plans (capital improvement programs) that communities adopt to implement planning policies. These elements are not included in this study effort, but will be the subject of subsequent work by the Community Development Department.

The following goals and objectives identify what has been discerned to be the needs and desires of the residents of Valdez. They have been drawn from the results of the community attitudinal survey. They have been taken from previous planning works the city has completed, and have been the subject of a number of public hearings held by the City Planning Commission.

It should be remembered that as time passes new community issues will emerge which are not foreseen today. Thus the issues, goals, objectives, and policies suggested herein should not be viewed as final; rather they should be adjusted and fine-tuned as time passes and circumstances change.

## **2.2 OVERALL GOAL**

To create an atmosphere that will encourage stable economic development in Valdez while enhancing the quality of life. Improvements should be made to all elements that give the community its' character. This would include enhancing the economic productivity and diversification of the region to assure continued economic prosperity; providing for public safety and the economic welfare of the community when siting future industrial, commercial, residential, and public land uses; enhancing the scenic beauty, uniqueness and historic significance of the Valdez area; and opening up new land for residential, commercial, and industrial land.

This overall goal has several component goals with appropriate objectives. These component goals and objectives are set forth on the following pages.

## **2.3 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**Goal - Lifestyle:** Provide for a maximum freedom of choice for people to engage in the cash economy and use local natural resources to supplement their selected economic lifestyles.

**Objective** - Increase local employment opportunities.

**Objective** - Enhance the skills of the local labor force.

**Objective** - Conserve sensitive habitats and enhance the availability of natural resources used and consumed by residents of the community.

**Objective** - Protect water quality and spawning areas with respect to fisheries needs.

**Objective** - Measure expected impacts from proposed land use and transportation development in sensitive resource areas.

**Objective** - Closely monitor and manage any land use and transportation developments in sensitive resource areas.

**Objective** - Insure that state fish and game management practices are in the long-range interest of the residents of Valdez.

**Goal - Economic Development:** Encourage the development of a broad-based economy in Valdez.

**Objective** - Develop a community plan, which accommodates resource related industrial development that meets the desires of community residents.

**Objective** - Encourage the placement of a gas pipeline terminus in Valdez and the development of associated petrochemical industry.

**Objective** - Encourage growth in tourism, fishing, and the fish processing industries.

**Objective** - Strive to maintain, restore, develop, or enhance the natural biological productivity of Port Valdez, and anadromous fish streams and lakes in the area.

**Objective** - Market the Port of Valdez as a commodities port facility, supply, and pipe shipping station for gas and oil pipelines.

**Objective** - Strive to create an atmosphere in the community that is conducive to commercial and industrial development.

**Objective** - Require major industrial developments to submit and maintain a current, detailed working plan outlining proposed operating levels, support requirements, and time schedules.

**Objective** - Encourage industries to provide for seasonal or itinerant workers, and construction workers that are beyond the number of permanent employees they expect to settle in the community.

**Objective** - Dispose of city lands that need to be made available for industrial development projects.

**Goal - Land Use:** Provide a community land use pattern that is compatible with existing land use patterns in the community, which is physically safe, environmentally sensitive, and consistent with the provisions and requirements of the Valdez Coastal Management Program.

**Objective** - Provide for the adequate separation of incompatible land uses.

**Objective** - Prohibition of the location/construction of structures in hazardous or environmentally sensitive areas.

**Objective** - Provide development standards for lands that require special physical or environmental attention before they can be safely used or developed.

**Objective** - Reserve shoreline areas for water-dependent uses and activities; water-related uses and activities; and uses and activities, which are neither water-dependent or water-related or for which there is no feasible and prudent inland

alternative to meet the need for the use or activity.

**Objective** - Encourage the development of lands within the city through regulation and through the disposal of city lands.

**Goal/Residential Land Use** - Provide safe, convenient, and attractive residential areas that protect and enhance property values while encouraging economies in necessary community expenditures for required community infrastructure and utilities.

**Objective** - Encourage the location of residences in areas that will not be burdened with unnecessary traffic, noise, or environmental problems that might be associated with commercial or industrial land uses.

**Objective** - Encourage residential construction and expansion in those areas of the community where necessary community facilities and utilities are already in place and/or can easily be extended.

**Objective** - Encourage larger lots and visual amenities in mobile home subdivisions.

**Objective** – Discourage the location of mobile home courts adjacent to existing or planned industrial uses.

**Goal - Housing:** Provide lands for adequate and available housing for all residents of Valdez.

**Objective** - Increase the availability of land for residential development in Valdez through the use and disposal of city lands.

**Objective** - Encourage the rapid conveyance of city-selected state lands needed for residential development.

**Goal/Commercial-Business Land Use:** Provide safe, convenient, and attractive business areas that do not unduly create traffic, lighting, noise, or other unnecessary impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods.

**Objective** - Encourage the consolidation of offices and retail/shopping businesses in the central

business district.

**Objective** - Encourage the consolidation of heavy commercial businesses outside of the central business district.

**Objective** - Provide for land use buffers between commercial and residential areas.

**Objective** - Insure the provision of safe ingress/egress and off-street parking and loading spaces.

**Objective** - Improve the aesthetics of the downtown area and reduce conflicts between incompatible land uses.

**Goal - Industrial Land Use:** Provide for industrial land uses so that they limit impacts on adjacent land uses and the environment, and yet have safe and convenient access to the major transportation facilities they require.

**Objective** - Encourage the consolidation of industrial land use activities.

**Objective** - Provide buffers between industrial and other land uses as a means to restrict the hazardous and/or nuisance aspects of industrial uses.

**Objective** - Control undesirable air and water emissions of industrial land uses.

**Goal - Transportation:** Provide for safe, efficient, and environmentally sound transportation systems to, from, and within the community.

**Objective** - Improve surface and air transportation links to Interior Alaska and the 'lower 48'.

**Objective** - Improve surface transportation links between the Port of Valdez and the airport.

**Objective** - Provide for community expansion and access across Mineral Creek and westerly out Port Valdez.

**Objective** - Provide alternative access routes for safety and emergency preparedness needs.

**Objective** - Provide street and highway rights-of-way of a size required to adequately accommodate snow removal, drainage, and required public utilities.

**Objective** - Provide for motorist safety by limiting access points along major streets and highways.

**Objective** - Provide for pedestrian safety through the provision of sidewalks, paths and trails, and discouraging speedy through traffic in residential areas.

**Objective** - Provide adequate access to shorelines and public lands and water.

**Objective** - Site transportation routes away from water courses, shorelines, marshes, and wetlands.

**Objective** - Avoid anadromous streams when setting bridges, culverts, streets and highways.

**Objective** - Assure adequate parking in the area of the small boat harbor.

**Objective** - Encourage expanded use of the existing port facilities.

**Goal - Community Facilities and Services:** Provide for the maximum range of community services and facilities in appropriate locations consistent with the community's desire and ability to fund these.

**Objective** - Maximize the community's investments in existing community facilities.

**Objective** - Encourage greater use of the Civic Center by local residents.

**Objective** - Promote private sector participation in the provision of community facilities and services.

**Objective** - Encourage recreational safety through community

sponsored safety programs.

**Objective** - Develop diversified recreational facilities and activities, particularly for teenagers and young adults.

**Objective** - Ensure that utilities and easements are adequately planned for in new subdivisions.

**Objective** - Provide for city financial participation in any required upsizing of required city utilities.

**Objective** - Improve snow removal in outlying subdivisions and require new subdivisions to provide for on-site snow storage.

**Objective** - Encourage improvements in medical care, both in the quality of care provided and the quantity of providers.

## **2.4 LAND SENSITIVITY**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

Physical and environmental constraints should be major considerations when one evaluates land for settlement, use, or development. All too often, however, individuals place themselves in hazardous and costly circumstances, and communities incur unnecessary expenses because homes, businesses, and other land uses have been located in known geotechnical, and environmentally sensitive or hazardous areas.

This inventory segment of the Valdez Comprehensive Development Plan is provided so the above types of problems can be avoided in Valdez. It does this by providing a physical and environmental evaluation of lands within the city limits as they should affect land settlement, use, and development. More specifically, the evaluation identifies land areas within the City of Valdez that:

- should not be subject to settlement or development (e.g., known floodways or areas subject to avalanche, landslide, etc.);
- could be subject to settlement or development subject to certain development standards and/or criteria being met

(e.g., flood fringes where flood-proofing measures can be instituted);

- can be subject to settlement, use, development, or population pressure (e.g., areas that are not affected by geotechnical, environmental, or other problems) without undue difficulty.

This information is presented on a series of nine Natural Environment maps on pages 56-64. The first map in the series shows the entire city limits of Valdez and is intended to provide information for the less developed portion of the city. The remaining eight maps are of a greater scale and provide more detailed information for the more accessible developed portions of Valdez.

The criteria adhered to in making these determinations included the following.

## **2.4.2 Criteria**

### **2.4.2.1 Undevelopable Lands**

**Undevelopable Lands** include land areas, which have been identified as having:

- seismic hazards from ground rupture, lineaments, and/or tsunamis (e.g. liquefaction areas);
- mass wasting hazards from landslides, debris slides, or rock slides;
- avalanche hazard;
- floodway hazards from storm surge; rainfall, snowmelt and glacial melt; or glacier dammed lake release; or been reserved for safety, environmental, or open space uses by governmental plan or regulation (e.g., the airport clear areas).
- R-22 district;

### **2.4.2.2 Developable Lands**

**Developable Lands/Subject to Restriction** include land areas which are identified as:

- floodplain fringes where flood proofing can be undertaken;
- important but not critical habitat;
- wetlands and tidelands subject to '404' permits;
- seismic hazard areas that experience ground shaking/liquefaction problems that could be used for public open space/recreation or low impact storage activities; and
- areas restricted by governmental act (e.g., the old townsite Urban Renewal Area).

**Developable Lands** are the remaining lands within Valdez.

In reaching our findings in this matter we relied extensively on findings and evaluations of the city's existing COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM. Importantly, this study notes:

All of the data and information presented is preliminary. The boundaries of the hazard area are based on interpretations of maps and aerial photographs, and have not been field checked. Little information is available on recurrence intervals of avalanche and mass wasting hazards. Little existing subsurface information is available to evaluate the liquefaction potential of the granular deposits that underlie most of the flatter areas in the Valdez area. A preliminary field reconnaissance was made by helicopter. A limited ground reconnaissance was conducted in the area between the airport and Mineral Creek. The main intent of these investigations was to examine avalanche zones before all the snow had melted in the area. Thus, other things, such as mass wasting, lineaments and features covered by snow were not investigated during these reconnaissances.

The information and maps contained in this report are general guidelines for future planning, and are not intended to take the place of detailed geologic investigations of specific sites.

### **2.4.3 Coastal Management Plan Findings**

In reviewing these maps and this information the reader should be aware that the VALDEZ COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN noted the following:

## **Seismic Hazard**

Faults are often visible on aerial photographs as linear features (lineaments). However, not all lineaments seen on aerial photographs result from faulting. Although it may be shown that lineaments are not potentially hazardous faults or the probability of sudden displacements along these features is remote, until additional studies are completed, these lineaments should be considered potentially hazardous with respect to land use planning.

For the purposes of this preliminary study, the areas on the maps indicating floodplains, deltas, or tidal zones are considered to have higher exposure to earthquake effects. In these areas special engineering may be necessary for the construction of safe buildings.

Most damage during the 1964 earthquake occurred along the shoreline of Port Valdez, within 1500 m (5,000 feet) of the pre-quake shoreline. The exception to this was the area south of Knife Ridge along the Dike (Dike Road) south of Valdez Glacier Stream. In that area ground rupture and liquefaction were noted as far as 2,450 m (8,000 feet) in from the pre-quake shoreline.

The absence of evidence of damage due to waves, ground rupture, or ground shaking to the single dwelling on the Mineral Creek alluvial fan demonstrated its preferred location with regard to seismic stability.

The key conditions for high liquefaction potential are loose granular sediments and high water table. All areas believed to consist of loose, saturated, fine sand and silt have been delineated. Not all areas depicted on the map have the same potential for damage, and some areas where the liquefaction potential is high may have been missed in this cursory study. Zones that are shown as having a high potential for liquefaction should be thoroughly investigated prior to placing structures in these areas. Also, structures placed in these areas should be engineered to adequately withstand effects of liquefaction predicted during site-specific geotechnical studies. The site of Old Valdez probably has the highest potential for liquefaction.

The Mineral Creek delta to the west of New Valdez may have similar high potential. The saturated lake deposits adjacent to Robe Lake may also have high potential for ground failure. The Lowe River deposits constitute less of a hazard because they are more or less contained (except at the mouth of the river) by steep valley walls, which restrict their movement.

## **Mass Wasting Hazard**

In the Valdez area, mass wasting is generally related to rock falls and debris slides. Obvious debris slides have been mapped. Occasional rock fall areas should be expected within about 100 feet of any slopes steeper than 40 degrees. Rock falls can be contained to minimize the potential hazard. Debris slides, on the other hand, may require extensive and costly engineered systems to reduce their potential impact. Some of the smaller debris slides may not have been detectable on the aerial photographs. For this reason caution is recommended in building any structures near steep slopes.

### **Avalanche Hazard**

The north shore of Port Valdez between the airport and the city has low avalanche potential. Certain areas within Mineral Creek Valley and other tributary valleys are more prone to avalanche. Keystone Canyon and its near-vertical walls are not conducive to snow accumulation, and therefore have a lower hazard potential.

Avalanche zoning overlay district is determined by scientific study of a specific area.

Damage from avalanches is primarily to structures lying in the path of runout zones. Construction near the ends of avalanche chutes or runout zones should be adequately engineered to mitigate the hazards. Runout zones can be reduced in size by the construction of retarding structures (mounds) and deflecting structures. These may eventually become viable solutions since land available for development is so physically limited in Valdez.

### **Flood Hazard**

Because Port Valdez is protected by its orientation, tsunamis are not a likely hazard. However, due to the physical features of Port Valdez, locally generated waves are a potential.

Valdez is exposed to the hazard of combined storm surge/high tide flooding due to winter storms in the Gulf of Alaska. Such flooding can occur along the entire Port Valdez shoreline. Because of the steep terrain, the area affected by the hazard is generally small. The relatively flat land of the river deltas allows for greater flooding.

Frequent river flooding should be expected in the unvegetated floodplains of all rivers in the area. Less frequent flooding occurs in overbank areas adjacent to the rivers.

## R-22 District

The R-22 District for Old Town is a federally restricted area due to the 1964 earthquake. The City has amended the R-22 District, creating the following three zones which expire in 2015.

1. No development along the waterfront
2. Limited development between the Richardson Highway and the Waterfront
3. Light Industrial uses allowed north of the Richardson Highway.

## 2.5 IMPLEMENTATION

This segment of the report contains a long-range land use plan to guide future growth and development in Valdez. The plan is displayed on the zoning maps pages 66-72

- depicts the spatial and locational arrangement for the various residential, commercial, and industrial land use activities;
- provides for the siting of new and expanded community facilities; and
- incorporates the suggestions for major road and street improvements.

These land use planning recommendations represent a synthesis of the work completed, and more specifically, they graphically depict a plan to handle future growth and development that is based upon:

- the desires of the residents of Valdez as expressed in the results of the community attitudinal survey;
- the planning goals and objectives adopted by the planning commission;
- the results of the land capability analysis;
- the economic analysis and demand forecasts;
- the recommendations for new and expanded community facilities;
- the major street and road planning recommendations; and
- existing land use and land ownership patterns. The suggested planning recommendations have also taken into account the following relevant policy guidelines

that were previously adopted by the City of Valdez as part of its Coastal Management Program.

1. In planning for development in shoreline areas, priorities shall be in the following order
  - a. water-dependent uses and activities;
  - b. water-related uses and activities; and
  - c. uses and activities, which are neither water dependent inland alternative to meet the public need for the use or activity.
2. All land and water uses and activities shall avoid potentially adverse impacts on fish and wildlife and their habitats.
3. To the extent feasible and prudent, development in or over water shall avoid adverse impacts on water quality, fish and wildlife, vegetation, and physical processes.
4. Where industrial uses and activities may cause significant adverse visual or noise impacts on adjacent uses and activities, the developer shall be required to provide adequate screening or open space buffers to reduce the nuisance to acceptable levels. Where prudent and feasible, a 100-foot buffer of natural vegetation will be maintained.
5. The placement of structures and the discharge of dredge or fill material into waterbodies, floodways, backshores or wetlands must, at a minimum comply with the standards contained in parts 320-330, Title 33, Code of Federal Regulations.
6. Residential development shall not occur in areas designated as hazardous areas such as avalanche runout zones, active floodways and high water channels and unstable slopes and shorelines.
7. To the extent feasible and prudent, industrial and commercial uses and activities must have enough space for reasonable expansion of facilities without preempting lands suitable for other development.
8. Projects, which require dredging, clearing, or construction in productive habitats, shall be designed to keep these activities to a minimum area for the project.
9. To the extent feasible and prudent, industrial and commercial uses and activities will be sited to minimize impact on environmental and cultural values on adjacent lands and waters.
10. The City of Valdez shall encourage recreational and tourism development. Recreational developments shall provide the local population a wide range of recreation opportunities in appropriate locations.

11. The City of Valdez shall support local, state, and federal efforts to develop marine parks, roadside pullouts and other recreation facilities on public lands.
12. Wherever there is a feasible inland alternative, transportation and utility routes shall be located away from the shorelines. If shoreline routes are constructed, they shall provide reasonable means of public access to the water.
13. All industrial and commercial development within mass wasting areas and avalanche runout zones shall be prohibited unless appropriate siting, design and construction measures for minimizing property damage and protection against loss of life have been provided.
14. To the extent feasible and prudent, structures (including bridges and flood diversion structures such as dikes) shall not be located in the floodway.
15. New developments near the water shall be limited to water-related or water-dependent uses.
16. All development within liquefaction areas shall be prohibited unless appropriate siting, design, and construction measures for minimizing property damage and protecting against loss of life have been provided.
17. To the extent feasible and prudent, new development adjacent to the shoreline shall incorporate public access to the shoreline.
18. The City of Valdez shall continue to provide access to the shoreline through trails, bike paths and development of state public interest lands.

### **2.5.1 Land Use Policies**

#### **LAND USE DISTRICTS**

There are 13 different types of land use districts proposed in this land use plan. These include:

**Residential Areas** - These areas are to generally provide for more urban or higher density single or residential land uses. Accordingly, the lots in these areas would be comparatively smaller than other residential areas and fully served by city piped water and sewer systems.

This Residential Area is designed to accommodate single-family structures, mobile homes, and/or duplexes as local neighborhoods may desire and the zoning ordinance permits.

**Rural Residential Areas** - These areas are to provide for the more rural lower density residential land uses. The lots would generally be served by individual on-site water and/or sewerage systems and thus be of a comparatively greater size than those found in the Residential Area.

Again, the Rural Residential area is designed to accommodate single-family structures, mobile homes, and/or duplexes as local neighborhoods may desire and the zoning ordinance permits.

**Semi-Rural Residential Areas** – These areas are intended to include lands where a full range of public services and utilities may not be available but topography and soil condition allow development at low population densities that can rely on on-lot water and sewer without creating a public health hazard. R-N districts are intended to protect low-density living, and to protect the rural character of the district.

**Multi-Family Residential Areas** - These areas are meant to accommodate the higher density tri-plex, four-plex, and apartment complexes in Valdez. And, while it may be possible to design on-site water and/or sewer systems to serve tri-plex and four-plex land uses, most of these areas will require public water and sewer to accommodate the higher residential densities.

**Neighborhood Commercial Areas** - These areas are meant to provide convenience goods (e.g., a 7-11 type store) outlets for individual neighborhoods. These area thus limit lengthy and/or unnecessary trips to the more specialized commercial areas located in the town center for the many items that households need frequently.

**Central Business District Area** - This area is to serve as the center of commercial activity in Valdez. The area is meant to offer sites for specialty shops and retail sales and services, professional and other types of offices, and heavily used public and quasi-public uses that should be conveniently located in a central location.

**General Commercial Areas** - These commercial areas are to provide space for tourist-related businesses and other wholesale and retail business activities required in the community that do not necessarily require a central location.

**Waterfront Commercial Areas** - These areas have been set aside to provide for those tourist, retail, and commercial service activities that are best sited in the waterfront areas of Valdez (e.g., hotels, tourist gift shops, etc.). Retail and commercial services include marine supply shops and maintenance shops.

**Waterfront Industrial Areas** - These areas have been set aside to provide for those industrial land uses that require and are best sited in the waterfront areas (e.g., fish processing facilities).

**Light Industrial Areas** - These areas have been set aside to provide for those less noxious industrial uses that require good access to major transportation facilities or breaks in transportation but do not require a waterfront location.

**Heavy Industrial Areas** - These areas have been set aside to provide for the more noxious industrial uses that require good access to major transportation facilities or breaks in transportation but do not require a waterfront location.

**Undevelopable Areas** - These areas have physical characteristics (e.g., slopes, soils, avalanche problems, etc.) that require they be kept free of structures and not become public or private hazards.

**Community Open Space/Green Belts** - These area are set aside to provide for public use activities such as hiking, cross country skiing, watershed protection, etc. Many of these designations contain less desirable developable lands (e.g., floodplains, liquefaction areas, etc.). They are also to serve as "holding areas" for alternative future land use designations as growth and demand might necessitate.

## **PLAN HIGHLIGHTS**

The economic analysis completed earlier in this study indicates that the most likely land use demand for the year 2000 will approximate the following:

Residential Land Use : 447 acres (+15%)  
Commercial Land Use: 100 acres (+18%)  
Industrial Use: 765 acres (+5%)  
Docking and Harbor Facilities: (+60%)  
Fish Processing Sites: (+60%)

The more important considerations and provisions of this plan are discussed below.

### **2.5.1.1 Residential**

#### **Residential Land Use**

The plan for residential land use is first and foremost designed to provide for the diversity of housing types and settings desired by the residents of Valdez. It provides for residential land use in both the more urban and rural portions of the community. It provides for those that desire smaller city lots with full utilities as well as those that would prefer larger tracts of outlying land with their own on-site water/sewer systems. Finally, it provides for the full gamut of housing types - i.e., single family, multi-family, and mobile homes.

Currently, there are nearly 400 acres devoted to residential land use in Valdez. It is estimated that the demand for additional residential land use through the year 2000 is approximately 47 acres. The areas proposed for residential land use are far in excess of the anticipated demand and will, therefore, obviously satisfy the anticipated additional demand. Furthermore, the large area proposed for residential land use is meant to eventually provide some balance in land supply and demand characteristics and keep land/housing costs in Valdez on reasonable scale.

Every attempt has been made to separate or provide adequate natural open-space or land use buffers between the residential areas and incompatible commercial and industrial land uses. It is presumed

that the city will encourage "in-filling" in residential areas presently served by existing utility services as a means to maximize its investment in, and use of, the existing utilities before it takes on any additional or unnecessary expenditures for such.

The most noticeable element of the residential component is the suggestion for expanding residential development across Mineral Creek to the West Mineral Creek Subdivision. This proposal has existed for years and phase I of the project was completed in 1991. The continued expansion into this area would seem timely given the need for more urban, fully serviced housing sites and the lack thereof in Valdez.

### **2.5.1.2 Commercial**

#### **Commercial Land Use**

The suggested commercial/business land use planning component suggests the major retail, office, governmental, and tourist accommodations continue to be limited to and concentrated in the Central Business District/ Boat Harbor area. This type of concentrated commercial development will provide a focal point and increase the number of shoppers destined for the area.

This in-turn creates a healthier shopping climate for both shoppers and retailers. It benefits the shoppers because competition creates lower prices. It also benefits the shoppers because the increased number of shoppers creates an economic environment conducive to more specialty shops. Retailers, on the other hand, can realize more volume than in more isolated locations.

Heavier commercial businesses that require large amounts of space for on-site storage and storage yards are suggested to front on major arterial and roads located outside of the city center. As these properties are developed the city should take great care to make sure that this strip commercial development does not get characterized by individual driveway access to individual business. Rather, provisions should be made so that frontage roads can be eventually constructed. This system of frontage roads will limit the traffic access points and traffic conflicts and thus reduces traffic accidents along such major streets and highways. Neighborhood commercial uses are proposed to serve outlying residential areas outside of the community center. These centers would generally provide for those convenience-shopping goods that are needed frequently (e.g., milk, newspapers, pet food, soda pop, etc.) and should not require a lengthy trip to the center of town to purchase.

Currently, there are about 85 acres devoted to commercial land use in Valdez. Our estimated demand for additional commercial land use through the year 2000 is approximately 16 acres. The areas proposed for commercial land use by the year 2000 should satisfy the anticipated additional demand.

### **2.5.1.3 Industrial**

## **Industrial Land Use**

Currently, there are approximately 729 acres of land devoted to industrial land use in Valdez: 576 acres in the Alyeska Terminal facility and 153 acres in other industrial land and uses. Under our most likely economic development scenario we estimate a demand for an additional 35 acres of industrial land through the year 2000. Our most optimistic forecast, on the other hand, estimates a need for an additional 650 plus acres of industrial land (i.e., for the proposed TAGS, and associated industries. In either case, the plan more than adequately provides for such industrial land use demand.

The most notable suggestion for industrial land use expansion includes the 600 plus acre site for the proposed TAGS facility that has been discussed for that area south of and adjacent to Anderson Bay.

## **Community Facilities and Services**

Existing community facilities as well as lands required for new or improved community facilities are shown on the land use map. In reviewing these recommendations, it should be remembered that they are made without the benefit of detailed site engineering analysis. Accordingly, detailed soils studies, environmental evaluations and analysis, and other engineering evaluations will need to be finalized before any final decisions are made on the precise location for the following structures and uses:

- development of visitor infrastructure;
- sewer line extension to Robe River Subdivision;
- small boat harbor expansion;
- adequate snow storage requirements in all subdivisions;
- relocated boat storage area;
- police storage facility;
- further development of the Jack Bay marine park/camping facility.
- replacement of schools;
- expansion of parks and trails;
- hospital;

## **2.6 STREETS AND ROADS**

Road, street, and highway types and traffic conditions vary widely in Valdez. There is the heavily traveled Richardson Highway that provides access to and through central Valdez. There are fully improved paved streets with gutters, curbs, and associated sidewalks. And, there are a number of sparsely traveled gravel roads that provide access to properties and homes in the outlying parts of the community. In looking to the future, a well thought out and functional systems of roads, streets, off-street parking, and pedestrian walkways will be important contributors to community safety, convenience, and economy.

This portion of the Valdez Comprehensive Development Plan sets forth a suggested road and street circulation plan for Valdez. It is premised on the transportation goal and objectives set forth below and includes:

- a classification and definition for the different types of streets that should be provided for in Valdez; and
- a planning map and accompanying narrative that shows and describes the street and highway components of the suggested traffic circulation system for Valdez.

### **STREET TYPES**

Certain types and volumes of traffic require specialized street design and layout. The following describes the three types of streets that are proposed in this street and highway plan.

#### **Major Arterial Streets and Highways**

These streets and highways provide access to the City of Valdez (e.g., the Richardson Highway) and to the major activity centers in the city (i.e., the central business district, the airport, and the Alyeska Marine Terminal). These streets and highways have the highest traffic counts and are primarily for major destination and/or through traffic needs.

#### **Collector/Business Streets**

These streets ‘collect’ traffic from residential access streets and channel it onto the major arterial street and highway system described above. These streets also serve as important access routes to abutting commercial/business and high traffic volume community facility land use activities.

#### **Local Access Streets**

These streets are comprised of all the streets not classified as one of the two above types and are used primarily to provide access to abutting residential land uses and low traffic areas.

## **STREET AND HIGHWAY CIRCULATION PLAN FOR VALDEZ**

Maps on pages 56-64 display the present street and highway circulation plan for Valdez. A description of each of the components of this plan follows. In reviewing this plan it should be remembered that a number of the suggestions, especially some of the proposed major streets and arterials, represent circulation concepts and are not meant as precise recommendations on location. Final location determinations will require detailed evaluations of soils, gradient, cost, and other engineering factors.

### **2.6.1 Major Arterials**

#### **Major Arterial Streets and Highways**

**Richardson Highway** - The existing Richardson Highway which connects Valdez with Fairbanks, Anchorage, and the "lower 48" states is by far the most significant street/highway in Valdez. This highway currently has a design capacity far in excess of average daily traffic loads. Accordingly, no improvements are required or planned for.

**Egan Drive extended to/through the Proposed West Mineral Creek Subdivision Development** - This arterial is proposed to provide access to the proposed West Mineral Creek Subdivision. It will also connect the subdivision development and other properties in the area with the central business district and the Richardson Highway.

**Airport Loop** - This arterial "loop" will provide a route entirely around the airport and is proposed to accomplish two things:

- provide arterial access to developed abutting properties that are eventually opened up west of the airport; and
- limit traffic flows on the main access route to the airport.

That portion of Valdez Glacier Creek Road that is east of Salcha Way should be vacated.

**Mineral Creek Loop Road** - This existing arterial currently provides access to the container terminal and abutting properties south/west of the Richardson Highway.

**Container Terminal Road Extended** - This extension is proposed to provide a more direct route for the heavy trucking traffic between the container terminal and the Richardson Highway. In doing this it will alleviate such traffic from Mineral Creek Loop Road.

**Dayville Road** - This existing heavily traveled highway provides access to the South side of Port Valdez and on to the Alyeska Pipeline Terminal facility. Other proposed industrial development projects could make this an even more heavily traveled highway.

### **2.6.2 Collector/ Business Streets**

**Mineral Creek Drive to and across the City Center Bypass** - This route will provide for convenient and direct access to an alternative arterial out of town. It will also provide for more direct access to the upper Mineral Creek area.

**Blueberry Hill Loop Road** - This street is proposed to provide access to and through the Blueberry Hill area as these properties are subdivided and developed.

### **2.6.3 Local Access Streets**

**Mineral Creek Loop Road Access Street** - This street will provide for the overall subdivision development of lands within the Mineral Creek Loop Road and the Richardson Highway.

2.6.4 **Pedestrian Access** – A number of city streets do not have sidewalks. The provision for pedestrian access is important for safety as well as traffic flow between the various commercial districts, the small boat harbor and the ferry terminal and waterfront. Sidewalks should be an integral part of the design process. Crosswalks should be provided at convenient locations.

### **3.0 APPENDIX**

#### **I. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

##### **1. HISTORY, SETTING, AND CLIMATE**

###### **1.1 History**

Prince William Sound has long proven attractive for human habitation. Archaeological studies suggest that Chugach Eskimos and neighboring groups were present in the region during the early Holocene period. Separate from the Athabaskan speaking Eyak (Cordova Region) and the Ahtna (Copper River Basin) peoples, the Chugachmuit consisted of eight subgroups with an estimated total population of fewer than 500. The Tatitlek group was the nearest to Valdez. Villages usually occupied protected shoreline sites with unobstructed views of all approaches; closed bays were considered traps and were avoided. It is unlikely that Port Valdez was used for anything more than sporadic foraging and hunting activities.

The 1700's marked the entry of European exploratory expeditions into the region. Vitus Bering led a Russian Expedition into the Gulf of Alaska in 1741, and was later followed by Captain James Cook, who explored and charted Prince William Sound in 1778. The Spaniards are credited with the discovery of Port Valdez. In 1790, Don Salvador Fidalgo named the bay in honor of Antonio Valdez, the head of the Spanish Navy. Prior to the exploration of Alaska by Americans, British, Russian, and Spanish explorations occurred within Prince William Sound, however little inland exploration was undertaken by these groups.

Within 15 years of the U.S. purchase of Alaska from Russia (1867), American prospectors started to make their appearance in the Valdez area. By 1897, prospectors had built a tent city that was to become Valdez. In 1898, Captain William R. Abercrombie of the U. S. Army led an expedition that was to find a route from Port Valdez to the interior. He later recommended a military trail from Port Valdez to the head of the Tanana River. Valdez was established as a transportation route to the interior and by 1901 the makings of a port town began to take shape. In addition to miners passing through Valdez, prospectors were active in the area around Valdez. The City of Valdez was incorporated in 1901 when its population was between 300 and 400 people.

By 1910, the basic structure of Valdez as a transportation center had been established. Other developments in Valdez through this date included the construction of Fort Liscum on Port Valdez in 1900; the construction of the Valdez-Eagle Trail in 1901; the completion of the WAMCATS (Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System) telegraph line in 1902; the connection with the Sitka submarine cable in 1905; and the establishment of the headquarters for both the Alaska Road Commission and Third Judicial Division. With the discovery of massive copper deposits, Valdez entered an unsuccessful competition with Cordova for the terminus of a railroad to the copper fields.

The 1920's showed a decline in the importance of Valdez. Traffic to the interior continued to pass through Valdez, but the construction of the government-subsidized Alaska Railroad in 1923 from Seward to Fairbanks caused Seward to eclipse Valdez as the region's major transportation center. Valdez also lost its importance as a communication center due to communication improvements elsewhere and the linking of Seward and Cordova by cable. Other factors in Valdez's decline included the gradual decrease of mining profits and closure of Fort Liscum. By 1920, Valdez's population had dropped to 466 from 810 in 1910.

Fishing became important to the economy of Valdez when mining activity was reduced. Valdez's first cannery opened in 1917. Between 1917 and 1955, several canneries opened and closed, the largest of which was the Dayville Cannery, which at one time packed as many as 40,000 cases of fish. By 1951, production was down to 700 cases, and by 1955, the cannery closed.

Fur farming was also part of Valdez's economy. Most farming occurred on the islands of Prince William Sound with marketing of the furs in both Valdez and Cordova. The peak of the industry in Valdez was in the 1920's. A change of fashion trends and the depression ended the fur farming industry by 1929.

Mining influenced Valdez from before its incorporation up to the 1940's. Both copper and gold were mined locally. Fifteen copper mining companies operated in Prince William Sound, one of which was in Valdez. It opened in 1901 at the head of Solomon Gulch and closed in 1920 due to lack of shipping. Gold was mined in the Valdez area with mines located at least seven miles from Valdez. Gold mining continued until World War II caused the closure of all mines in 1942. Both copper and gold were mined with moderate success.

During World War II, Valdez became a busy port again, shipping military freight via the Richardson Highway. However, the end of the war brought a slump. Winter closure of Thompson Pass, the only road link to the Interior, prevented Valdez from competing successfully with Seward and Whittier for freight hauls.

A local truck and freight operator worked throughout the winter of 1949-50, proving that the pass could be kept open. This encouraged the Alaska Road Commission to employ permanent crew to provide winter service and maintenance on Thompson Pass, and new freight operators again came to Valdez.

Statehood in 1959 had little effect on Valdez until decisions were made to utilize the community as a location to house the developmentally disabled and the State Highway Regional Offices and Maintenance Shops. Tourism began to increase when a museum was built and local charter boat operations began. However on March 27, 1964, the economy of Valdez literally stopped when an earthquake and its initial tsunami destroyed much of the town. Unstable soils and the town's location on sandy, loose soil of the alluvial fan of Glacier Stream resulted in tremendous damage. The federal and state governments responded with disaster aid and helped to relocate the City of

Valdez four miles southwest to the new/current townsite, where more stable ground conditions existed.

A period of very slow economic activity followed until 1969, when oil development hit Alaska, initiating land speculation and rapid change. Valdez was selected as the terminus of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and the site of the oil storage/ transfer marine terminal. From the initial hauling of the pipe (to be stored along the route of the pipeline) until construction of the line and the completion of the new 1000-acre terminal in 1977, a boomtown situation existed. After the construction phases of this project ended, the community was left with a more stable population and a healthier economy.

More recently, on March 27, 1989, Valdez was again significantly impacted as a result of the EXXON VALDEZ oil spill at Bligh Reef at the entrance to Valdez Arm some 25 water miles from Valdez. While the spilled oil did not reach the shores of Port Valdez or the community, Valdez became the center for a majority of the spill clean up and coordination activities. This resulted in thousands of people migrating to Valdez for work during the summer of 1989.

## 1.2 Location

The City of Valdez (270 square miles) (4,306 population; 1990 U.S. Census Bureau data) is located at the southern terminus of the Richardson Highway at the head of the east/ west oriented Port Valdez in Prince William Sound. Port Valdez, in turn, connects with the rest of Prince William Sound via the north/south oriented Valdez Arm. Port Valdez itself is an ice-free harbor 12 miles long with an average width of three miles.

Depths in Port Valdez range to 140 fathoms (820 feet). The mean range of tide of about 9.4 feet and the maximum range is about 18 feet. Tidal currents are negligible.

By water, Valdez is 1,239 miles northwest of Seattle, 170 miles northeast of Seward, 80 miles northeast of Whittier, and some 45 miles northwest of Cordova. By air, Valdez is approximately 120 air mile miles east of Anchorage and 1,450 miles northwest of Seattle. By road, it is approximately 120 miles to Glennallen, 305 miles to Anchorage, and 364 miles to Fairbanks.

The youthful and rugged Chugach Mountains surround the community of Valdez. While the summits of the peaks around Valdez approximate 4,000 feet, Mt. Marcus Baker, 55 miles northwest of Valdez, reaches 13,250 feet.

The current city center and most commercial and residential development in Valdez are located on the north side of Port Valdez on an alluvial fan formed by Mineral Creek. This area is relatively flat when compared to the surrounding area and slopes gently seaward. Elevations in this area range from sea level along the waterfront to approximately 60 feet in the center of the alluvial fan.

While the city center and Mineral Creek alluvial fan contain most businesses and residences in Valdez, a number of other residences and businesses are located eastward from the city center up the Lowe River Valley/Richardson Highway area. Also, the significant Alyeska Trans-Alaska Pipeline and Marine Terminal and transshipment facilities are located on the south side of Port Valdez directly across from the city center.

### 1.3 Climate

Valdez typically has short, mild summers and long, cold winters. During the summer, cool air from the sea and from snow and ice fields moderates temperatures. During the winter, high mountain ridges to the north provide some barrier to the flow of cold air from the Interior, but the moderating effect of these ridges is largely offset by downslope drainage of cold air from snowfields and glacier area. The coldest temperatures are thought to be related to the latter factor. Temperatures average 8 degrees Centigrade (18 degrees Fahrenheit) during January and 12 degrees Centigrade (53 degrees Fahrenheit) during July.

The surrounding mountains also have the effect of channeling local winds. From October through April, the prevailing direction is from the northeast; from May through September, the prevailing direction is from the southeast. During the winter, high-pressure systems in the Interior interact with low-pressure systems in the gulf to cause occasionally strong and sustained northeast winds. The annual average wind speed is 6.0 mph, and it is calm approximately 33 percent of the time.

The growing season extends from the end of May to mid-September. The ground is normally frozen from the end of October through the end of April.

Rainfall in Valdez averages about 60 inches per year; October is the wettest month, while June is usually the driest. Snowfall is heavy, averaging nearly 300 inches annually. There is considerable cloudiness the entire year.

### 1.4 City Boundaries

Extending some 36 miles from the Valdez Narrows on the west to east of Keystone Canyon on the east, and another 20 miles from the headwaters of Mineral Creek on the north to south of Allison Lake, the city limits of Valdez encompass some 270 square miles. An examination of Figure 2 will show that only the eastern half of the city limits is accessible by highway, while the western half of the city is accessible only by water.

### 1.5 Local City Government

The City of Valdez has a home rule type of government with a strong City Manager, City Council and Boards and Commissions.

The Alaska Municipal Code provides that city governments can exercise any power not prohibited by law. Pursuant to this and previous authorities, the City of Valdez has assumed the community facilities and services powers shown in Table 1 on page 30.

## 2. COMMUNITY POPULATION AND HOUSING INVENTORY

### 2.1 Introduction

This segment of the Comprehensive Development Plan presents statistical information on:

- the historic growth of Valdez's population;
- the existing population characteristics of the community; and
- the existing housing stock of Valdez.

<b>TABLE 1</b>
<b>MUNICIPAL POWERS ASSUMED BY THE CITY OF VALDEZ</b>
Streets & sidewalks
Sewers & sewage treatment facilities
Harbors, wharves & other marine facilities
Watercourse & flood control facilities
Health services & hospital facilities
Cemeteries
Police/jail facilities
Emergency services
Electricity
Refuse
Water
Transportation systems
Community centers
Libraries
Recreation
Fire protection
Housing/renewal development
Planning, platting, and land use regulation
Education
Tax Assessment and Collection

This information has been taken from U.S. Census Bureau reports, the findings of the community attitudinal survey, and from information put together by the city.

### 2.2 Historic Population Growth

Table 2 on the page 32 shows estimates of population for Valdez from 1920 through 1990. This table shows that the population of Valdez remained relatively stable between 450 and 550 between 1920 and 1960. Between 1960 and 1970, the population grew from 555 to 1005 - a significant 81.1% increase. The boom/bust population changes associated with the construction and start-up of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and Marine Terminal facility occurred during the 1970 - 1980 decade.

During this period, the population grew from 1,005 in 1970; to 6,670 in 1975 (an increase of 664%); to 8,253 people in 1976; and then back to approximately 3,500 (an increase of some 348% over 1970) in 1980. During the 1980's, it would appear that Valdez again experienced a more stable population growth, increasing from the 3,500 level to approximately 4,500 in 1990 (an increase of 29%).

### 2.3 Current Population

According to preliminary figures released by the U.S. Census Bureau, the April 1, 1990 population in Valdez was estimated to be 3,951. Darbyshire & Associates estimated the fall 1990 population of Valdez to be 4,419. This estimate was calculated by multiplying the average household size (3.2 persons/household) it obtained in its attitudinal survey findings, by the occupied dwelling unit count undertaken by the city's Community Development Department (1,381 units).

The differences in the estimated populations for 1990 of 3,951, 4,419 and 4,653 would appear to make the figures highly suspect. Significantly, Darbyshire & Associates economic inventory for Valdez shows that employment levels fluctuate significantly throughout the year in the community (from a low of about 1,500 for the period between October and April of 1988, to a peak of nearly 3,000 in July of that year). While many of the added seasonal employment opportunities are filled by unemployed or underemployed residents of Valdez, a great number are no doubt filled by seasonal workers moving to Valdez through the summer and fall months. This circumstances give credence to the alternative and varied population estimates reported by the three different groups.

<b>TABLE 2</b>		
<b>VALDEZ POPULATION ESTIMATES 1920 – 1990</b>		
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>PERCENT CHANGE</b>
1920	466	-
1930	442	-5.1
1940	529	+19.7
1950	554	+4.7
1960	555	+0.2
1970	1,005	+81.1
1975	6,670	+663.7
1980	3,500	-52.5
1985	3,667	+4.8
1990	4,068	+20.0
1995	4713	

The City of Valdez prepared its own estimate of population for the fall of 1990. This census estimated a population of 4,653 as follows:

<b>TABLE 3</b>					
<b>1990 VALDEZ POPULATION ESTIMATE</b>					
<b>Structure Type</b>	<b>Number Rate</b>	<b>Vacant Units per Household</b>	<b>Occupied Units</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Population</b>

Single Family	583	1%	577	3.55	2,048
Multi-Family	225	5.3%	213	2.38	506
Mobile Homes	617	4.1%	591	3.02	1,784
Group Quarters	93				4,338
Special Places	222				
<b>ESTIMATED TOTAL POPULATION</b>					<b>4,653</b>

## 2.4 Demographic Information

The existing demographic information for Valdez (e.g., age, sex, housing, etc.) is presented in the 1990 U.S. Census. Obviously, that information is out of date and may be significantly different what would be found today. New demographic data for Valdez will, of course, be released with the findings of the 2000 U.S. Census. According to the findings of the 1990 census, the total population of Valdez was 4,068. The median age was 31.4 with 2,242 males and 1,826 females. There were 3,609 Caucasian and 239 American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut. As the data from the 2000 census becomes available it should be examined and included in this segment of the report.

## 2.5 Housing

Table 3 on page 32 estimates the existing housing stock of Valdez to be composed of 1,425 dwelling units (583 single family dwellings units, 617 mobile homes, and 225 multi-family dwelling units). The overall vacancy rate in the community is estimated at a very low 3% (1% for single family dwellings, 4.1 % for mobile homes, and 5.3% for multi-family units).

## C. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### 3.1 Introduction

The City of Valdez offers an impressive variety of public facilities and services, many of which are not available in communities larger than Valdez. This chapter identifies and describes these facilities and services, discusses important planning issues, and offers findings and recommendations. City-operated programs and departments are also described as well as essential non-city services such as education, hospital, electric power, and telephone service.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The City of Valdez offers an impressive array of public facilities and services unparalleled for a community of 4,500 people. These facilities, services, and programs are essential for public health and safety, and for strengthening the quality of life for residents and visitors. Such programs and activities not only enrich the lives of residents, but also make Valdez an attractive place for new industry, tourism and economic development.

The surrounding spectacular alpine terrain and marine setting limit suitable locations for public facilities and services in Valdez. In addition, lands which are relatively level and appear buildable often lie in floodplains, have high water tables or lie in avalanche hazard areas.

The following narrative summarizes specific findings and recommendations for issues related to public facilities and services in the community.

### 3.2 City Services/ Public Utilities

## **CITY DEPARTMENTS, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES**

### **City Administration**

The Administration Department consists of the City Manager and an Administrative Assistant and support staff. The Valdez City Council is composed of seven council members who are elected by local voters to stagger terms. The Mayor is also elected by popular vote and presides over the City Council.

As a home rule city under Alaska statutes, Valdez has chosen a City Manager form of government. The City Manager is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the City Council. He/she serves as the chief administrative officer of the city, administers day-to-day operations of municipal government and carries out policy set by the City Council. The Manager oversees the operations of the thirteen departments and branches.

Assisting several city departments and functions are a number of Boards and Commissions, including:

- Planning & Zoning Commission
- Valdez Regional Health Authority
- Valdez Museum & Archive Board
- Library Board
- Ports & Harbor Commission
- Parks & Recreation Commission

The City also provides grants and/or support to a Prince William Sound Economic Development Committee, the Valdez Chamber of Commerce, the Valdez Convention/Visitors Bureau (VCVB), the Valdez Fisheries Development Association and other civic groups.

### **City Clerk**

The City Clerk is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the City Council. The Clerk is responsible for recording and safekeeping all proceedings of the City Council, including maintaining files of all materials presented for Council action. The Clerk also codifies all city ordinances, publishes necessary legal notices, and serves as secretary to the Mayor and Council.

The Clerk is also the Records Manager for the City, and works with other departments to establish filing systems and proper records retention. In addition, the City Clerk is the registrar and election supervisor. The Assistant City Clerk supports the City Clerk.

### **Finance Department**

The Finance Department provides the full range of accounting functions found in all municipal finance departments. Both the City Treasurer and City Comptroller report to the City Manager. Main functions of the department include:

- accounts receivable
- accounts payable
- property taxation
- budgeting and budget control
- payroll
- treasury management

In addition, the Finance Department performs other important tasks for city government:

- debt management
- financial reporting
- fixed asset control
- grants management
- hotel/motel taxation
- lease management
- risk management

### **Police Department**

The mission of the Valdez Police Department is to ‘protect and serve’ the citizens of Valdez. This mission is accomplished through a combination of programs and activities, including patrol, investigations, preventive and educational programs, special services, the city jail, animal control and civil defense.

The city experimented briefly in the mid-1980s with combining the functions of police, fire and rescue into a single Department of Emergency Services. The goal of this merger was to increase efficiency and service while eventually reducing the number of staff and overall cost. The combined department proved unwieldy, however, and police and fire functions again formed their own departments in 1989.

The Police Department has approximately 20 full-time employees, including the Chief of Police, four police sergeants, six police officers, four jail officers, a chief dispatcher, four dispatchers and an animal control officer.

The Animal Control shelter is located just off the Richardson Highway on the western edge of the Valdez Duck Flats. The shelter is inadequately designed to house and dispose of stray animals. Animal control officials provide incentives for pet owners to sterilize and license their pets. An unsterilized dog, for example, costs \$20.00 to license, while a neutered dog costs \$5.00.

During 1991 the Police Department also assumed Emergency Preparedness responsibilities. Objectives include ensuring the health and safety of the public during and after a civil or natural disaster. The Department intends to provide training to the public prior to a civil or natural disaster in how to better prepare and respond to emergencies. 1991 goals were expansion of the early warning system, adding a civil disaster radio frequency and rewriting the city's Emergency Operations Plan.

Police headquarters and the City Jail occupy a portion of City Hall at Chenega Avenue and Pioneer Drive. The jail can house 16 offenders, with 24-hour security coverage. The Department has nine vehicles: 6 marked patrol cars, 1 jail vehicle, 1 animal control vehicle and 1 police chief vehicle.

**Need to Improve Police Department Space:** In general, police office space is adequate and functions well. A number of architectural and structural annoyances, however, could be corrected. For example:

- the basement of the building frequently fills with 1-2" of water during winter and rainy months. To protect equipment and furnishings, a series of elevated wooden platforms have been constructed;
- four exterior garages have no interior doors connecting them. Workers who must access one garage from another must open both doors and exit the building;
- the roof above the garages lacks any overhanging protection. Snow falls directly in front of the garage doors and must be removed by hand.

According to Police Chief Joe Michaud, the two primary capital improvement needs beyond repairs to the city administration building are:

- the need for a dry, heated storage facility for physical evidence of at least 1,500 square feet.
- a new animal control facility. The existing building was originally a water pumping station and is poorly designed to house stray animals. Cats and dogs need to be separated, for example, and animal remains properly handled. A new incinerator is needed to dispose of dead animals.

## **Fire Department**

The Valdez Fire Department provides public safety programs in the areas of fire protection, fire education, rescue and emergency medical services (EMT).

The fire protection program includes marine fire protection response and investigations, in addition to structural fire protection and training. Equipment includes six engines and two heavy tankers. The rescue program is designed to respond to any reasonable contingency, including high angle mountain rescue, avalanche rescue and surface water rescue. EMT personnel operate two advanced life support and one basic life support ambulances, equipped to include I.V.'s, medication and defibrillation.

The Fire Department has eight full-time employees, including the Fire Chief and seven firefighters. The Department also has 19 volunteer fire fighters from the community.

The Fire Department headquarters and main station is housed in the east north wing of City Hall with 24-hour coverage of at least two personnel at all times.

In addition to the main fire station, the department has two unmanned stations spread throughout the community:

- Station No. 3 is a standard butler building at the Robe River subdivision. It needs to have a complete bathroom to make an adequate shelter.

- Station No. 4 at Alpine Woods Subdivision also requires remodeling. It needs to have a complete bathroom to make an adequate shelter.

The Department also relies on volunteers, many of whom are trained as EMTs. The career staff is here to support, lead and train the volunteers, as well as give the community a rapid response to their emergency.

### **Community & Economic Development**

The Community & Economic Development Department (CEDD) provides a variety of information and services to the public ranging from providing information on land ownership, land use and development permits to assisting in identifying suitable land for development. On a daily basis, over 50 percent of staff's time is devoted to research and data collection in providing such information. The CEDD is headquartered in City Hall and consists of the Community Development Director, a Planning Technician, a Building Inspector, and a secretary. The Director serves as staff to the Planning & Zoning Commission.

The CEDD is responsible for preparing and implementing the Valdez Comprehensive Plan, as well as other specialized studies and analyses. The Department also enforces the building and land use regulations. The Department is responsible for the orderly and efficient growth and development of the City's socioeconomic and physical systems through a number of planning and management techniques and tools, including:

- City Development and Growth (Comprehensive Development Plan, subdivision regulation enforcement);
- Land Use Regulation Enforcement (zoning, Valdez Coastal Management Program, gravel management, floodplain management);
- City Property Land Management (process land use, lease and purchase applications, administer public land sales, select municipal land entitlements);
- Business Registration Administration (process and issue Business Registrations, Temporary Business Licenses and Home Occupation Permits);
- Information/Technical Support (disseminate planning information to the public, staff, Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council)

### **Engineering**

The Department of Engineering Services conducts a variety of engineering-related activities, including overseeing the Capital Improvements Program. The Director of Engineering Services oversees a staff consisting of two Project Managers, a Secretary and other support staff.

**Capital Improvement Program:** The Department of Engineering Services is also charged with implementing the city's capital improvement program. During Fall 1999, the City prepared its most recent listing of capital project requests, which would be funded from both local sources and state funds. Many of the following projects are discussed separately in the narrative for each department, facility or service:

**Need to Implement Solid Waste Alternatives:** A pressing challenge for the city has been to find a replacement location or alternative method for refuse disposal. The City landfill has a long-standing history of environmental problems, acknowledged by the City of Valdez, the Alaska Department of

Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The landfill is currently operating under compliance by consent order requiring the city to make timely improvements in an expeditious manner.

The landfill consists of two sites totaling about 30-40 acres, one for normal refuse and the other for construction-related debris. Both landfills are sited in a glacial outwash plain, subject to groundwater fluctuations. During 1990, for example, local groundwater rose 6-10 feet and was visible in the construction debris landfill. Monitoring wells did not detect any off-site movement of landfill material, however. In addition to groundwater problems, both landfills are near capacity, a condition greatly accelerated by the Exxon Valdez clean-up effort.

Acceptable alternative landfill sites in the Valdez area are not readily available, nor is there expansion room at the present site.

As one viable alternative, the City has purchased a solid waste baler and constructed a baling facility near the Sewage Treatment Plant. By compacting solid waste into bales, the system offers several advantages over conventional disposal: state and federal regulatory approval, easier recycling, slow decomposition of bales, extending the life of existing landfills by using far less space and less cover material.

The baler plant receives trash from city collection vehicles, sorts materials to be recycled, compresses trash into bales and deposits them at the Sanitary Landfill.

Many Alaskan communities use the baler system, including Anchorage, Fairbanks, Cordova, Kodiak, Homer, Adak and Naknek.

**Providing Sewer Service to the Robe River Subdivision:** The Robe River Subdivision consists of 194 residential lots and is the largest concentration of residential and commercial development in Valdez not served by city sewer. Many of these lots are only 17,000 square feet. There has been some concern expressed in the past about septic tank failures and the effect on public health in the area. In 1994, the city commissioned a study by CRW Engineering Group to investigate alternatives for domestic sewage treatment in Robe River Subdivision.

The study recommended a collection system and trunk sewer connection to the existing treatment plant. The recommendation is valid only if the residents of Robe River Subdivision are supportive enough to pay their share of the construction costs. The project has been estimated to cost \$7 million. At this time, this service is cost prohibitive.

Connecting the subdivision to the city system would allow for the area to develop at a higher density, thus proving additional residential building lots.

**Developing the Proposed Mineral Creek Subdivision:** In February 1991 the City Council approved a proposal to develop a new subdivision on the western side of Mineral Creek. This development provided needed residential housing in the community. The developer was required to bear the costs of providing roads and utility infrastructure within the development. Under ideal circumstances, land closer to downtown should be developed first to avoid leapfrogging

development. The reality, however, is that this is the nearest property available for development in the near-term. The City estimates that the cost of extending water, sewer, electric power and telephone service some 1,500 feet across Mineral Creek was about \$750,000.

The banks of Mineral Creek have been stabilized with dikes along both shorelines. Annual maintenance and upkeep costs approximate \$10,000. The Engineering Department is currently evaluating the suitability of these dikes for the proposed subdivision.

**Low River Flood Control:** Two residential subdivisions, Alpine Woods and Nordic, have been developed in the past 15 years within the floodplain of the Lowe River. Properties in the area are subject to both erosion and general flooding.

Currently, two separate diversionary dikes (700 feet and 800 feet) are in place. Bank armoring, riprap and groins provide extra protection above the dikes. Annual maintenance and upkeep is estimated at \$15,000.

The City has sponsored a number of studies, which have recommended various solutions, ranging from abandonment of the subdivisions, channel relocation and the addition of dikes, groins and flood control devices. The most recent Lowe River Stabilization/ Relocation Study was completed by CH2M Hill in 1990. According to this report, the chief deficiency in the existing system is the space between the groins, where subchannels could migrate and quickly attack the upstream face of each structure.

A full subdivision dike, as proposed by CH2M Hill, would cost \$830,000 with \$20,000 for annual maintenance. As an interim solution, following report recommendations, the city intends to raise/improve some 450 feet of embankment above the downstream dike, plus add some 150 feet of protection above the upstream dike. Total costs are \$110,000 and construction did take place during 1991.

Recently, the 700' long dike that was constructed in September of 1995 during the last major flood event was armored. The summer of 1999 saw the completion of repairs to 200 feet of groin and the construction of 200 feet of groin at up streamside of flood control system.

If other locations were readily available, the city should consider relocating these subdivisions, rather than investing in long-term flood control structures. However, alternative sites are not readily available, and some flood control structures are already in place. Proceeding with the interim solution is an appropriate step while the city considers long-term options.

**Sewage Dump Station - Small Boat Harbor:** Federal law prohibits dumping of sewage in the boat harbor. The U.S. Coast Guard has chosen not to enforce the law due to lack of facilities. Resolution of the problem is easy since the city stubbed in a sewer line to the parking lot on the northwest side of the harbor. This project has been completed at a cost of \$115,000.

**Water Service Issues:** City staff identified the following water-related problems, which should be addressed by the Comprehensive Plan:

- Well No. 5 or the Loop Road Subdivision water well has a pumping capacity of only 75 gal/min. For additional development of the Loop Road area, a second well located towards the airport, with a much larger pumping capacity, would be needed.
- Well No. 4, which serves the No. 2 in town reservoir, has no backup well. This reservoir supplies water primarily to the port end of town, or the industrial area including the canneries. The pump at well No. 4 has had to be throttled down due to low water table problems during peak demands. A back up well located in the immediate area to serve the No. 2 reservoir would solve any problems related to future water demands.

### 3.2.1 Water

**Water System:** The Valdez area is characterized by the availability of large amounts of high-quality subsurface water. Local aquifers have been described as continuous and capable of providing an ample supply of relatively inexpensive water for the foreseeable future.

Valdez residents pay \$8.50/month for each residential hook-up. Businesses and commercial activities pay an equivalent rate for the total number of residential hook-ups. For example, each hotel pays \$8.50/month for each four rooms or fraction thereof. Retail stores pay this rate for each twelve plumbing fixtures or fraction thereof. A \$50.00 water deposit is normally charged each customer. Utility maps are on pages 80-82.

The current municipal water system is divided into four independent systems with a total distribution system of about 20 miles:

- 1) the downtown area, served by a major distribution system, is fed from four wells with a combined pumping capacity of 6.6 mgd. Current average daily usage is approximately 1.6 mgd. This system also includes two 750,000-gallon reservoir tanks for a total storage capacity of 1.4 million gallons. Wells No. 1, 2, and 3 are located near the high school and have capacities of 300, 1,000 and 1,200 gallons per minute (gpm) respectively. These three wells supply one reservoir north of Mineral Creek Drive. Well No. 4 has a capacity of 1,400 gpm, together with the second reservoir, is located at the southwestern edge of town south of Egan Drive.

The other three systems have capacities from .35 to .5 mgd:

- 2) The Loop Road system, near the new port facility, has a 420,000-gallon storage reservoir. Well No. 5 has a capacity of just 75 gpm.
- 3) The South-central well No. 6 serves the airport area with a capacity of 400 gpm.
- 4) The Robe River Subdivision includes well No. 7 (350 gpm) and a 420,000 gallon reservoir.

### 3.2.2 Sewer

**Sewage Treatment:** The Valdez Sewage Treatment Plant won the Sewage Treatment Plant of the Year Award for the State of Alaska in 1990. The award was presented to recognize the

accomplishments of engineering personnel in successfully meeting the massive influx of sewage associated with the Exxon Valdez oil spill clean up.

The Sewage Treatment Plant is located near the center of the Old Valdez Townsite. Since 1976, the facility has consisted of a three-pond lagoon system including two aerated ponds. The design loading for the ponds is 1.5 million gal/day. The plants federal permit allows a limit of 1.25 million gal/day. Average flow through the system at this time is .8 million gal/.day. Due to infiltration and inflow problems, the plant has experienced difficulty in meeting permit requirements to remove 85 percent BOD and suspended solids. Upgrades to the treatment system have been budgeted in an effort to resolve these problems and to allow for future growth.

The City provides sewer service throughout the new townsite, the airport and adjacent trailer parks and to the Zook Subdivision. The collection system involves some 20 miles of sewer line. Residents are charged \$7.75/ month for using the public sewer system.

### 3.2.3 Streets

#### **Public Works**

The Public Works Department is an umbrella agency, which performs important operational and maintenance functions for municipal utilities, streets and roads and public infrastructure. These activities include:

- Streets and Roads. Public Works maintains 26 miles of city streets, including asphalt repairs, curbs and sidewalks, street signs, brush removal and storm drain maintenance.
- Snow Removal. The most challenging responsibility is snow removal (e.g. over 500 inches during the 1989-1990 winter) from city streets, sidewalks, parking areas and trails. Instead of piling and removing snow, the city has chosen to pile snow on a series of vacant lots and city parklands, letting snow accumulate and melt during late spring/early summer. The policy results in huge piles of snow, but greatly reduces the expense of loading and hauling snow to more remote dumping sites. The Existing Land Use map shows designated snow storage areas throughout town. The City contracts snow removal to private contractors for 5.4 miles of roads in the Robe River Subdivision, Alpine Woods/ Nordic Subdivision, and the Airport area.
- Refuse. The city collects and disposes residential and commercial trash and solid waste. Residential service is twice weekly and without charge. The sanitary balefill is located about five miles east of town north of the Richardson Highway. The City utilizes a baler facility, located near the sewer treatment plant, to process all commercial and residential solid waste. The City also maintains a construction debris landfill.
- Water. Public Works shares responsibility with the Engineering Department for providing an adequate supply of safe drinking water and sufficient water for fire protection. Public Works maintains underground water lines and fire hydrants.
- Sewer. Public Works oversees the wastewater treatment plant and sewer collection system for domestic and commercial sewage.
- Building Maintenance. The Department provides daily and preventative maintenance for all city owned buildings.
- Vehicle Maintenance. Public Works maintains and repairs all city owned vehicles, which include 10 front-end loaders, 5 graders, 2 snow blowers, refuse trucks, fire trucks,

police vehicles, miscellaneous small equipment (chain saws and compactors), street sweeper, water truck and many other miscellaneous vehicles.

The Public Works Department operates from the City Maintenance Shop at West Egan Drive and Harris Avenue. In addition to the Public Works Director, the Department employs:

- A street foreman, four equipment operators, 2 refuse collectors and two seasonal equipment operators;
- Shop Mechanic Foreman with one Mechanic, a Partsman, and four building maintenance technicians.
- A dispatcher/ data entry/ contract clerk.

**Need for Additional Snow Storage Areas:** The most important challenge facing the Public Works Department in the Comprehensive Plan is to locate and secure enough suitable snow storage sites. The city currently lacks enough designated snow dumping sites, especially in the Robe River, Alpine Woods and Nordic Subdivision areas. The City amended its Subdivision Regulation to require a developer to dedicate one (1) square foot of land for snow storage for every square foot of street surface.

The city can lease vacant lots, or purchase lots, if necessary. When park land is used, care should be taken to coordinate with the Department of Parks and Recreation to find locations, which will have minimal impacts on existing vegetation, play equipment or trails.

3.2.4 Solid Waste

3.2.5 Electric Service

### **Copper Valley Electric Association, Inc.**

The Copper Valley Electric Association, Inc. (CVEA) supplies electric power to the Valdez and Glennallen areas. CVEA is a member-owned electric cooperative formed under the auspices of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936. CVEA was first formed in the Glennallen area and expanded service into Valdez during reconstruction after the 1964 earthquake.

The primary source of power is the state-owned hydroelectric project at Solomon Gulch. This hydropower project provides ample power to the area, except during winter months when water levels are too low. During these times, diesel plants in both Valdez and Glennallen provide power to each community.

CVEA had 1,623 customers in Valdez as of December 1990. This number is up about 2 percent from the 1,588 customers reported in December 1989. Table 4 shows total customers and revenue per kilowatt-hour (kWh). These charges represent some of the highest energy rates in Alaska and are not offset by the Power Cost Equalization program.

TABLE 4		
COPPER VALLEY ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC.		
Customers, Revenues, and Electric Rates		
Valdez Customers		Revenue per kWh
Residential	1,307	0.167
Small Commercial	222	0.154
Large Commercial	56	0.140
Street Lights	9	0.184
Public Buildings	29	0.153
Total	1,623	0.150
Current Electric Rates		
Residential		
Customer Charge		\$12.00 / month
Energy charge		.0678 / kWh
Fuel & purchased power cost - ***		.0677 / kWh
Small Commercial		
Customer Charge		\$20.00 / month
Energy charge		.0604 / kWh
Fuel & purchased power cost - ***		.0677 / kWh
Large Commercial		
Customer Charge		\$100.00 / month
Demand Charge		12.00 / kWh
First 25,000 kWh		.0562 / kWh
Over 25,000 kWh		.0172 / kWh
Fuel & purchased power cost - ***		.677/kWh
*** Charges on a quarterly basis		

### 3.2.6 Telephone Service

#### **COPPER VALLEY TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE, INC.**

Telephone and communications service is provided locally by the Copper Valley Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (CVTC). CVTC was an outgrowth of the Copper Valley Electric Association, Inc. In 1974, the two utilities were separated and the new CVTC established its headquarters in Valdez on West Egan Drive. In addition to Valdez, CVTC provides members with services in Chitina, McCarthy, Paxson, Tatitlek, Chenega, Glennallen and Mentasta.

Residential customers are charged \$13.45 for each residential access line. Business customers have a monthly fee of between \$19.60 and \$23.65, depending upon the number of lines in service.

State-of-the-art digital switching equipment was installed in 1987 and no major upgrades or capital improvements are required.

### 3.3 Transportation

#### **Airport/Port**

The Airport, City Dock and Container Terminal are administered by the Port Department. This department has a Director, Port Operations Manager, Port Facility Manager and two seasonal positions. Staff also supports the activities of the Ports and Harbor Commission. This section describes the following facilities and services.

- Airport Terminal
- City Dock
- Valdez Container Terminal

### 3.3.1 Airport

**Airport Terminal:** The City owns and operates the airport terminal building at the state-owned Valdez Airport. The building contains about 28,000 square feet and currently serves one airline, two rental car agencies, a gift shop, offices, a restaurant and houses The Alaska Cultural Center.

### 3.3.2 City Dock

**City Dock:** The City Dock is a 600 foot long x 60 foot wide wood wharf that was constructed in 1967. Deck height is 16 feet, depth is 26 feet. Services include: water, lights, phone, garbage and wastewater disposal. The 1999 activity included 60 landings from small cruise ships operating in Prince William Sound.

### 3.3.3 Valdez Container Terminal

**Valdez Container Terminal:** The Valdez Container Terminal has a 700-foot long x 100 foot wide floating concrete dock, which was constructed in 1981. Two dolphins extend the dock 1,200 feet. Deck height is 15-feet, depth is 56 feet. Services include: water, lights, garbage disposal and phone. North Star Terminal & Stevedore Company provides longshoreman services. The 1999 activity included 62 landings from cruise ships.

The floating dock is tied to a 21-acre marshalling yard by two 200-foot ramps leading from the dock to the marshalling yard. The yard has container storage capacity of 560 40-foot vans and 360 dual reefer outlets. There is a 60-ton Fairbanks certification scale located at the entrance to the terminal.

The grain terminal consists of nine concrete terminals. Each silo is 112 feet tall and 33 feet in diameter and has a total capacity of 522,000 bushels.

## 3.4 Education

### 3.4.1 Library

#### **Library**

The Valdez Consortium Library is housed in an approximately 15,000 square foot building completed in 1980 across from City Hall on Fairbanks Drive. The full basement, renovated in 1987, includes a conference room, audio/visual room, study tables and carrels and soundproof booths for typing, music listening and computer use.

The mission of the Valdez Consortium Library is to provide well-balanced collection programs and services that meet the educational, recreational and informational needs of the community. In 1982, the library expanded to support the curriculum of Prince William Sound Community College (PWSCC).

### **Heritage Services**

The Heritage Services Department provides the community with a local history museum and an historical archive. These collections, materials and programs are designed to enhance public awareness and appreciation of local history for education's, cultural and economic development purposes.

The museum works closely with educational and cultural groups in the community, as well as the visitor industry. Heritage Services staff includes the Museum Director, Exhibits Curator, Registrar and three seasonal/full time Museum Attendants.

The Museum is proposing to add a Maritime Wing and has requested \$200,000 in the City's Capital Projects Requests for design and construction. Projected design envisions a 6,000 square foot addition, including a two-story lighthouse replica to serve as a maritime history wing.

The City of Valdez lacks design controls or an ordinance requiring an aesthetic or architectural theme in construction. If such regulations are oriented towards legitimate historical or regional themes, they can be valuable for encouraging tourism as well as improving the visual quality of the downtown area. The proposed Maritime Wing addition, for example, would provide a needed architectural centerpiece for the community, as well as act as a potential catalyst for other complimentary development and the promotion of a town-wide theme.

### 3.4.2 Schools

## **ADDITIONAL PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

### **Valdez City School District**

Public primary and secondary education is provided by the Valdez City School district, which is headquartered on West Klutina Street. The District employs some 6 administrators, 65 teachers and 59 support staff. School District programs and curricula have an excellent reputation statewide.

**TABLE 5**

**VALDEZ CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Existing Facilities and Student Enrollment**

**Facilities include:**

Hermon Hutchens Elementary School	96,000 sq. ft.
Administrative Offices	7,056 sq. ft.
Gilson Junior High School	23,664 sq. ft.

Wood Shop		5,000 sq. ft.
Valdez High School		91,000 sq. ft.
School Bus Garage		8,100 sq. ft.
<b>Enrollment for the 1999 – 2000 school year totals 865 students as follows:</b>		
Elementary K-6	455	
Junior High 7-8		170
Senior High 9-12		240

Student enrollment has been relatively steady for the past decade after peaking during the construction of the Trans-Alaska pipeline and terminal. Increases have been relatively evenly distributed throughout the grade structure and are not attributable to any single economic activity or program. Table 6 summarizes enrollment since 1981.

1981	830
1985	758
1989	826
1990	818
1992	961
1994	909
1995	902
1996	876
1998	856
1999	865

While Gilson JHS is near capacity, the district believes new construction or additions to any school facility would not be required unless student enrollment increased by approximately 200.

The only foreseeable event triggering such an increase would be construction of the proposed gasoline. Short-term student increases beyond the capacity of the existing facilities could be met with portable classrooms or other solutions, instead of permanent construction.

### 3.4.3 Community College

#### **Prince William Sound Community College (PWSCC)**

- This two-year college was formed in 1978 as part of the University of Alaska network. In 1981/82 the enrollment was 1195 and in 1992/93 it increased to 3008. The enrollment for 1999/00 is 4629. The college campus includes the former Growden Harrison Elementary School and three dormitories (Copper Basin, Valdez and Cordova Halls) at Pioneer Drive and Meals Avenue. PWSCC offers 4 Baccalaureate Degrees, 8

Associate Degrees, 8 Certificates, and the Rural Alaska Teacher Education (RATE) program with a degree in elementary education.

### 3.5 Medical Services

#### **Valdez Counseling Center**

The Valdez Counseling Center, located at 337 Egan Drive, is on the second floor of a commercial building. It is funded through State and local support, in addition to client fees. It is dedicated to the provision of mental health, substance abuse, family preservation and non-secure juvenile attendant care services. The Center has been in operation since 1979. It became an agency of the Valdez Regional Health Authority in August 1997.

The Counseling Center regular staff includes the Director, two full time clinicians, one full time administrative assistant and a half time case manager. Since August 1997 the number of direct service hours has increased by over 130% with no increase in staffing.

Consolidation with the Valdez Regional Health Authority (in terms of location – support services are already shared with the hospital) appears to be a vital component to the continued viability of Counseling Center services. Appropriate staffing levels will be a critical concern when addressing ever-increasing caseloads and regulatory requirements.

#### 3.5.1 Hospital

#### **Valdez Community Hospital**

The Valdez Community Hospital is a part of the Valdez Regional Health Authority, a not-for-profit corporation owned by the City of Valdez and operated by a seven member Board of Directors appointed by the corporate owners. The hospital is located at 911 Meals Avenue in an 80,000 square foot building, formally Harborview Developmental Center, owned by the State of Alaska. In December of 1997 the State closed Harborview, effectively abandoning 75% of the building. Currently, the building is being maintained by the State up to a combined cost of \$235,000. Cost of operation, maintenance, and repairs above this amount will be billed to the hospital.

The hospital is fully equipped and includes emergency room and surgical capabilities. It is currently licensed for 15 acute care beds with 6 swing beds. The hospital administrative team, along with the Director of the Counseling Center, comprises the Management Team operating the Valdez Regional Health Authority. The combined services both receive an annual subsidy from the City of Valdez.

The Hospital is currently involved in two studies, which will define the future of health care in Valdez in the years to come. The first is an analysis on the effect of change of designation from an Acute Care Hospital to a Critical Access Hospital. The second is an analysis of the range of health care services that should be provided in Valdez and the physical plant that will be needed.

#### **Horizons Unlimited, Inc.**

Horizons Unlimited Inc. provides supported living and respite care services to individuals who experience substantial developmental disabilities. Support is provided to insure these individuals are able to continue living in their homes and participate to the maximum extent possible in the everyday acts of life in our community. When the State of Alaska decided to close Harborview Development Center (HDC), guardians of individuals forced to leave HDC and Alaska Dept. of Health & Social Services personnel requested that Horizons expand their services to provide support to additional individuals.

Horizons Unlimited employs 32 full-time and 8 part-time staff. Currently 21 individuals are approved for services. All of these individuals experience substantial disabilities and most require 24-hour support.

Agency offices are currently maintained in the Royal Center. Support services are provided in two homes owned by Horizons.

- 3.5.2 Medical Clinic
- 3.5.3 Dentists
- 3.5.4 Other medical services

### 3.6 Recreation

#### **Parks and Recreation**

The mission of the Parks and Recreation Department is to provide opportunities for city residents and visitors to enjoy a variety of year-round activities, programs and experiences. Valdez offers an extensive listing of recreational facilities and services for a small urban community. Parks, campgrounds and other recreational facilities are shown in the Land Use Plan. Major facilities and services include:

- Black Gold Recreation Hall. Located on North Waterfall Street, this facility was originally a recreation hall owned by Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. The city has upgraded it into a multi-purpose facility with meeting and game rooms, and sponsors a variety of activities ranging from square dancing to exercise classes.
- Teen Center. Located near the High School, this facility provides an indoor recreational outlet for students from 13 to 19 years of age.
- Valdez High School. The Department and the School District jointly offer public swimming, an indoor rifle range and outdoor track.
- Hermon Hutchens Elementary School. The public can use gym facilities & racquetball courts.
- Valdez Civic Center. The Civic Center has over 10,000 square feet of meeting and exhibit space, in addition to a 487 slant-seat full theater, banquet facilities and conference rooms. Since the city lacks a private movie theater, the Civic Center shows movies on a regular basis. Marketing of the Civic & Convention Center results in an average of 3-8 conferences/ conventions annually. While the revenues collected fund only 30% of the annual operations costs, the economic impact of the conventions is a major benefit to the community.

- Glacier Campground. The city offers 101 campsites at this public campground located 2.4 miles north of the Richardson Highway on Airport Road. Reservations are accepted and the nightly charge is \$5.
- City Cemetery. The City Cemetery has been in use since territorial days and is located south of the Richardson Highway from the Robe River Subdivision. The City provides free burial and plot maintenance. Mortician services must be obtained in Anchorage or Fairbanks. The older section contains approximately 350 burial plots with an additional 30 spots reserved for future use. Several plots contain the remains of early residents whose identities are unknown.

The Parks & Recreation Department is following an expansion plan and developing an adjacent area of the cemetery. This plan attempts to avoid areas of high water tables, a recurring problem in the Valdez area.

The Parks and Recreation Staff consists of approximately 5 full time and 25 part time or seasonal personnel. Major positions, in addition to the Director, include the Teen Center Director, Special Events Coordinator, Civic Center Coordinator and Recreation Supervisor/ Pool Coordinator.

- 3.6.1 Parks
- 3.6.2 Winter Recreation
- 3.6.3 Summer Recreation
- 3.6.4 Hiking
- 3.6.5 Fishing
- 3.6.6 Swimming Pool

### 3.7 Other General Services

There are other general services provided such as, grocery stores, daycare facilities, sand & gravel, hardware stores and churches.

## 4.0 ECONOMIC INFORMATION

### **B. STREETS AND ROADS**

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### **VALDEZ STREETS AND ROADS**

Road, street, and highway types and traffic conditions vary widely in Valdez. There is the heavily traveled Richardson Highway that provides access to and through central Valdez. There are fully improved paved streets with gutters, curbs, and associated sidewalks. And, there are a number of sparsely traveled gravel roads that provide access to properties and homes in the outlying parts of the community. In looking to the future, a well thought out and functional systems of roads, streets, off-street parking, and pedestrian walkways will be important contributors to community safety, convenience, and economy.

This portion of the Valdez Comprehensive Development Plan sets forth a suggested road and street circulation plan for Valdez. It is premised on the transportation goal and objectives set forth below and includes:

- a classification and definition for the different types of streets that should be provided for in Valdez; and
- a planning map and accompanying narrative that shows and describes the street and highway components of the suggested traffic circulation system for Valdez.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Pages 2 – 8 of this planning report sets forth a comprehensive list of community planning goals and objectives to guide the future growth and development of Valdez. The transportation goals and objectives provide the following with regard to future streets and roads.

**Goal - Transportation:** Provide for a safe, convenient, efficient, and environmentally sound transportation systems to, from, and within the community.

**Objective** - Encourage the improvement of surface transportation links to Interior Alaska and the 'lower 48.'

**Objective** - Encourage the improvement surface transportation links between Port of Valdez and the airport.

**Objective** - Provide for community expansion and access across Mineral Creek and westerly out Port Valdez.

**Objective** - Provide alternative access routes for safety and emergency preparedness needs.

**Objective** - Provide street and highway rights-of-way of a size required to adequately accommodate snow removal, drainage, and required public utilities.

**Objective** - Provide adequate access to shorelines and public lands and water.

**Objective** - Site transportation routes away from water courses, shorelines, marshes, and wetlands.

**Objective** - Avoid anadromous streams when siting bridges, culverts, streets and highways.

**Objective** - Provide for motorist safety by limiting access points along major streets and highways.

**Objective** - Provide for pedestrian safety through the provision of sidewalks, paths and trails, and discouraging speedy through traffic in residential areas.

**Objective** - Assure adequate parking in the area of the small boat harbor.

**Objective** - Discourage unnecessary traffic from the central business district.

## 2.0 STREET TYPES

Certain types and volumes of traffic require specialized street design and layout. The following describes the three types of streets that are proposed in this street and highway plan.

### 2.1 Arterials

These streets and highways provide access to the City of Valdez (e.g., the Richardson Highway) and to the major activity centers in the city (i.e., the central business district, the airport, and the Alyeska Marine Terminal). These streets and highways have the highest traffic counts and are primarily for major destination and/or through traffic needs.

**Richardson Highway** - The existing Richardson Highway which connects Valdez with Fairbanks, Anchorage, and the 'lower 48' states is by far the most significant street/ highway in Valdez. This highway currently has a design capacity far in excess of average daily traffic loads. Accordingly, no improvements are required or planned for.

**Egan Drive extended to/ through the Proposed West Mineral Creek Subdivision Development** - This arterial is proposed to provide access to the proposed West Mineral Creek Subdivision. It will also connect the subdivision development and other properties in the area with the central business district and the Richardson Highway.

**Airport Loop** - This arterial 'loop' will provide a route entirely around the airport and is proposed to accomplish two things:

- provide arterial access to developed abutting properties that are eventually opened up west of the airport; and
- limit traffic flows on the main access route to the airport

That portion of Valdez Glacier Creek Road that is east of Salcha Way should be vacated.

**Mineral Creek Loop Road** - This existing arterial currently provides access to the container terminal and abutting property south/west of the Richardson Highway.

**Container Terminal Road Extended** - This extension is proposed to provide a more direct route for the heavy trucking traffic between the container terminal and the Richardson Highway. In doing this it will alleviate such traffic from Mineral Creek Loop Road.

**Dayville Road** - This existing heavily traveled highway provides access to the South side of Port Valdez and on to the Alyeska Pipeline Terminal facility. Other proposed industrial development projects could make this an even more heavily traveled highway.

### 2.2 Collector

These streets 'collect' traffic from residential access streets and channel it onto the major arterial street and highway system described above. These streets also serve as important access routes to abutting commercial/business and high traffic volume community facility land use activities.

**Hanagita Street Extended** - This extension and street will:

- provide an alternative and quicker means of access to residential properties located in the northern parts of Mineral Creek Subdivision.
- further reduces unnecessary traffic in the city center; and
- preserve an alternative transportation corridor of access to the West Mineral Creek area should the City Center Bypass (proposed above) prove to costly or difficult to engineer and not become a reality.

**Mineral Creek Drive to and across the City Center Bypass** - This route will provide for convenient and direct access to an alternative arterial out of town. It will also provide for more direct access to the upper Mineral Creek area.

**North Harbor Drive Extended to Kennicott Avenue** - This extension is designed to tie in to the expanded small boat harbor area just east of the existing boat harbor per the land use recommendations contained in the next segment of this report. This alignment also ties in with the realignment of Chitna and Kennicott Avenues discussed above. This extension is not viable until the marine lift, the boat launch ramp and Harbormaster's Office are relocated.

**Blueberry Hill Loop Road** - This street is proposed to provide access to and through the Blueberry Hill area as these properties are subdivided and developed.

### 2.3 Local Access

These streets are comprised of all the streets not classified as one of the two above types and are used primarily to provide access to abutting residential land uses and low traffic areas.

**Mineral Creek Loop Road Access Street** - This street will provide for the overall subdivision development of lands within the Mineral Creek Loop Road and the Richardson Highway.

## A STREET AND HIGHWAY CIRCULATION PLAN FOR VALDEZ

Maps on pages 56-64 display the present street and highway circulation plan for Valdez. A description of each of the components of this plan follows. In reviewing this plan it should be remembered that a number of the suggestions - especially some of the proposed major streets and arterials - represent circulation concepts and are not meant as precise recommendations on location. Final location determinations will require detailed evaluations of soils, gradient, cost, and other engineering factors.

### 4.0 FIGURES

Figure 1 General Location Map

Figure 2 Valdez City Limits

### 5.0 TABLES

Table 1 – Municipal Powers assumed by the City of Valdez

Table 2 – Valdez Population Estimates 1920 - 1990

Table 3 – 1990 Population Estimates

Table 4 – Copper Valley Electric Association, Inc.

Table 5 – Valdez City School District

Table 6 – Valdez Student Enrollment by Year

## **6.0 MAPS**

Natural Environmental Maps

Natural Resource Map

Zoning Maps

Comprehensive Plan Zoning Maps

Utility Maps

Topography Maps – will be inserted when received

Aerial Photography - will be inserted when received

Note: The “Appendix” shall be updated as needed without approval of the City Council.