



Legislation Text

File #: RES 21-0044, **Version:** 1

ITEM TITLE:

#21-44 - Adopting Plan Valdez - the 2021 Comprehensive Plan

SUBMITTED BY: Kate Huber, Planning Director

FISCAL NOTES:

Expenditure Required: N/A

Unencumbered Balance: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Resolution #21-44 adopting Plan Valdez - the 2021 Comprehensive Plan.

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

After an extensive community-wide process, the Planning Team is ready to present the proposed final draft of Plan Valdez - the 2021 Comprehensive Plan.

The plan is meant to be the community's collective vision for Valdez over the next 20 years. It establishes a blueprint for future land use and infrastructure development and provides a guide for our elected officials, City staff, and private developers.

The plan is designed with seven themes that reflect the community's vision. Each theme contains specific goals, as well as short and long-term actions that will help us achieve those goals. Each action is tied to a metric that will allow City staff and officials to monitor plan implementation. The plan is designed to be amended as needed and updated every five years, to ensure that it continues to reflect our evolving community vision.

Plan Valdez was developed during an extensive multi-year process. The consultant team working on Plan Valdez was led by Corvus Design and included members from Kittelson and Associates, Rain Coast Data, SALT, PND Engineers, ECI, and Corvus Culture, as well as Gordon Smith.

The team was joined by members of City staff and was overseen by a volunteer citizen advisory committee - The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC.)

In order to achieve the broad community vision, the planning team undertook an extensive public involvement process. This process included 15 focus group meetings with various industry and community stakeholder representatives, multiple meetings with the City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission, and sessions with other citizen boards and commissions.

The team also conducted a very successful community survey that received over 460 responses, and did a thorough review and analysis of economic data and past plans or studies conducted for Valdez. After releasing the first draft plan, we collected public comments through an online comment collector, and in writing at City Hall. We also held a community meeting and discussion to gather public feedback in person.

The proposed final draft is the result of the public comments gathered, as well as feedback from City staff and both the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council.

During the Oct. 27 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, a public hearing was held to take comment on the proposed final draft plan. During the hearing we heard one public comment from Nate Smith. Mr. Smith urged the Commissioners to recommend an amendment to the final draft of the plan. As a representative of East Peak Resort, he expressed their desire to see Action 2.1.C modified under the Import column and Metric column. He urged that the import be changed to “high” and the metric be modified to reflect “6 months” as the timeline. Mr. Smith spoke about conversations that they are having with Alaska Department of Natural Resources regarding a possible lease of land adjacent to their property and expressed the need for the action related to creation of the Destination Resort Overlay District to move quickly.

Additionally, one written public comment was received in advance of the public hearing and shared with commissioners via email and in writing during the hearing. The public comment from Joe Prax is attached.

After the public hearing the Planning and Zoning Commission discussed the Comprehensive Plan adoption and voted unanimously (6 commissioners in favor, 1 vacancy) to recommend adoption of the final plan. Prior to this vote an amendment to their recommendation was proposed. Commissioner Wade, Seconded by Commissioner Kipar, moved to recommend that Council change action 2.1.C to reflect an Import of ‘High’ and a metric timeline of “6 months” instead of 2 years. The vote on the amendment was 5 commissioners in favor, 1 abstention - Commissioner Reese.

Staff noted during the discussion on the amendment that the import and metric for action 2.1.C were designed to reflect the same as action 2.1.D - Conduct a comprehensive rewrite of Title 17 Zoning, and Title 16 Subdivisions to implement Plan Valdez. Staff also reported that they plan to include the creation of the Destination Resort Overlay District in the rewrite of Title 17 which will commence in early 2022. Planning staff has concerns about the possibility of completing that rewrite within 6 months. It is crucial that the creation of the Destination Resort Overlay District fits seamlessly into the other districts considered in the overall zoning code rewrite.

In general discussion about the comprehensive plan, and in discussion about the recommended amendment to the plan, multiple commissioners expressed their wishes that the comprehensive plan be used as a guiding document and not a tool to “hold up” development.

A copy of the proposed plan is attached. It is a large PDF file and may take a while to download. If you would like to pick up a paper copy, please call 907-834-3401 to arrange pickup or visit the Planning Window at City Hall, reopening on 11/01. To learn more about the development of the plan, visit the project website at <https://valdezcompplan.blogspot.com/>.