

PLAN VALDEZ

OLDTOWN | NEWTOWN | YOURTOWN

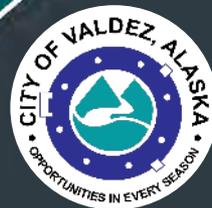
Implementing the Plan: Zoning Code (Title 17) Revision

Joint City Council - Planning and Zoning Commission Work Session
Wednesday, October 12, 2022

Consultant Team

Agnew::Beck Consulting

Stantec



Time	Item	Lead
6:00	Call to Order	Mayor Scheidt
6:10	Land Acknowledgement Introductions Work Session Objectives	Kate Huber Shelly Wade <i>Agnew::Beck</i>
6:15	Context <i>What is a Comprehensive Plan?</i> <i>What is Zoning?</i> <i>How does updating Title 17 connect back to PlanValdez?</i>	Shelly Wade
6:20	Project Overview	Shelly Wade
6:30	What We've Learned So Far <i>Known issues with current code</i>	Erin Perdu <i>Stantec</i>
6:50	Interactive Discussion <i>Guidance for code revision</i>	Erin Perdu, Ryan Givens
7:20	Next Steps, Timeline	Shelly Wade
7:30	Adjourn	Mayor Scheidt

Tonight's Agenda

We will give a brief overview of the project, then facilitate discussion with Council Members and Commissioners.

Land Acknowledgement & Introductions

- **VALDEZ:** We live, work, learn, and operate on the traditional, ancestral lands of the Chugach Alutiiq/Sugpiaq people, and hunting and harvesting lands of the Ahtna and Eyak People.
- The consultant team are presenting from the lands of:
 - **ANCHORAGE (Shelly & Anna):** Dena'ina People
 - **BELLEVUE, WA (Ryan):** Duwamish and Stillaguamish Peoples
 - **MINNEAPOLIS, MN (Erin):** Wahpekhute People

Photo credit: Discover Valdez



Work Session Objectives

1. Introduce Zoning Code (Title 17) Update project; connect to Plan Valdez (Comprehensive Plan).
2. Confirm project goals for Title 17 update.
3. Identify known issues with current Title 17.
4. Identify desired approach(es) on specific topics to be addressed in code.

Context:

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

PLAN VALDEZ

BASIS FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND DECISION MAKING The goals and policies guide the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council in their deliberations on zoning, subdivisions, capital improvements, and other matters relating to land use and development. This provides a stable, long-term basis for decision-making.

BASIS FOR REGULATORY ACTION
Forms the groundwork for a statutory basis upon which zoning and land use decisions are made.

LONG-TERM GUIDE Assists in the long-term evaluation of public and private proposals that affect the community's physical, social, economic, and environmental characteristics.

Plan Valdez Themes, Goals

Collaborative
Accountable
Transparent



Livable Built
Environment



Thriving, Stable
and Sustainable
Economy



Connected



Healthy Living



Environmental
Stewardship



Adaptable and
Resilient



Context: What is Zoning?

Zoning code is local law governing how land is used or developed, where and how buildings are sited, and other rules related to how a property functions.

VALDEZ MUNI. CODE, TITLE 17

Valdez Municipal Code		Title 17 ZONING
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Title 16 SUBDIVISIONS	
- <input type="checkbox"/>	Title 17 ZONING	Title 17 ZONING
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.02 GENERAL PROVISIONS	Chapters: 17.02 General Provisions
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.04 DEFINITIONS	17.04 Definitions
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.06 ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT	17.06 Administration and Enforcement
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.08 BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT	17.08 Board of Adjustment
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.10 ZONING DISTRICTS	17.10 Zoning Districts
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.12 P PUBLIC LANDS DISTRICT	17.12 P Public Lands District
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.14 R-A SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT	17.14 R-A Single-Family Residential District
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.16 R-B SINGLE- AND TWO-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT	17.16 R-B Single- and Two-Family Residential District
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.18 R-C MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT	17.18 R-C Multiple-Family Residential District
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.20 R-R RURAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT	17.20 R-R Rural Residential District
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.21 R-N SEMI-RURAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT	17.21 R-N Semi-Rural Residential District
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.22 R-M RESIDENTIAL MOBILE HOME DISTRICT	17.22 R-M Residential Mobile Home District
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.24 N-C NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	17.24 N-C Neighborhood Commercial District
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.26 C-R COMMERCIAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT	17.26 C-R Commercial Residential District
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.28 CBD CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT	17.28 CBD Central Business District
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.30 G GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	17.30 G General Commercial District
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.32 W-C WATERFRONT COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	17.32 W-C Waterfront Commercial District
+ <input type="checkbox"/>	Chapter 17.34 W-I WATERFRONT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT	17.34 W-I Waterfront Industrial District

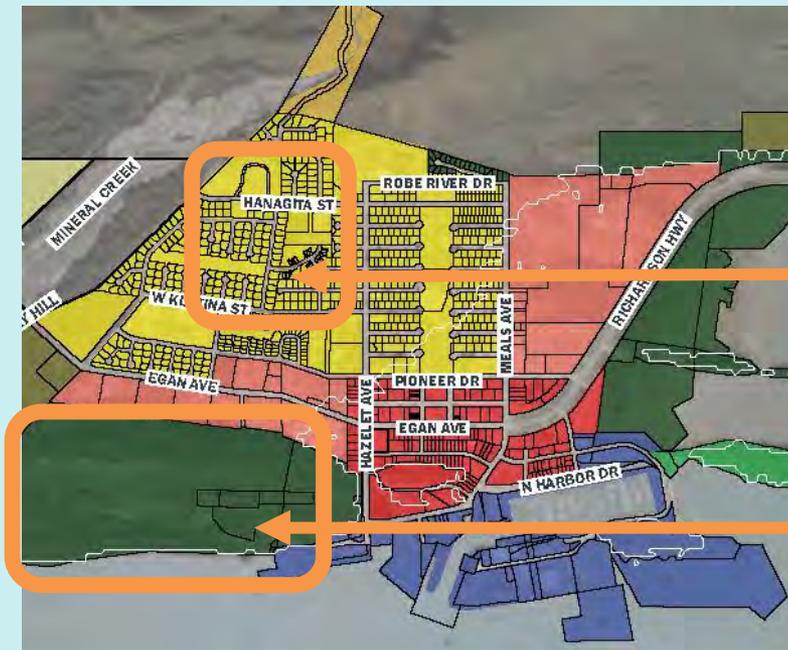
CURRENT ZONING MAP (2022)



How Does Zoning Connect to the Comprehensive Plan?

The Future Land Use Place Types Maps (Areas 1-4) in the Plan provides a blueprint for how the area will accommodate change and meet resident needs.

PLAN, PLACE TYPES MAP (2021)



CURRENT ZONING MAP (2022)

2 examples where the current zoning may not match the intent for future land uses



How Does This Project Connect to the Comprehensive Plan?

- **Goal 2.1 and associated Actions: Plan for responsible growth**
- Goal 2.3 and associated Actions: Promote, protect and build quality housing
- Goal 5.2: Provide programs and facilities for active lifestyles;
Action: Update Title 17 to include conditions for the approval for new motorized sports facilities.
- Goal 7.1: Reduce the community's vulnerability to natural events.

Goal 2.1

Plan for

Responsible Growth

Action 2.1.D

2.1.D

Conduct a comprehensive rewrite of Title 17, and Title 16 Subdivisions to implement Plan Valdez.

The current code has become a patchwork of amendments and revised regulations which in some cases are outdated, overly complex, and inconsistent.

Update and align Title 17 and Title 18 to remove inconsistencies and make it easier administer. The code should be modernized to address new uses and initiatives, be more user friendly to all users (such as including illustrations for development standards), and codify processes.

Project Goals

Discussion: What additional or different goals do you have?

1. Create a zoning code that is **practical, usable, and effective**.
2. Ensure the code is **easy to understand and interpret**, for the benefit of property owners, developers, and staff.
3. **Eliminate unnecessary regulation** and process steps.
4. Align districts, uses and standards to the **place types and goals defined in Plan Valdez** (Comprehensive Plan).
5. **Modernize** code language.
6. Include **more options and flexibility for innovative uses** of property, while mitigating potential negative impacts on neighbors.
7. Allow for **more mixed-use development**.
8. Make **housing easier to build**.
9. Ensure the code supports **places where people want to spend time**, both residents and visitors.
10. Incorporate **equity** into code requirements.

Project Schedule

Sept. 29, 2022	✓ Staff Listening Session 1: Planning Department staff
Oct. 12, 2022	Joint Work Session 1: City Council Planning, Zoning Commission
Oct. 25, 2022	Staff Listening Session 2: Additional City Departments
Nov. 2022 – Spring 2023	Working Group: monthly meetings with community stakeholders. Meeting 1: Thursday, November 10, 2022, 12:00 - 1:30 pm (<i>tentative</i>)
Fall 2022 – Early 2023	Community outreach: Schedule to be refined this fall.
Early 2023	Public Review Draft: Initial review draft of Title 17 ordinance
Spring 2023	Joint Work Session 2: City Council Planning, Zoning Commission
Spring 2023	Approval Process: Official public hearing draft, approval process

Known Issues

Discussion: What are we missing? What are some local examples of issues like these (specific areas, projects, etc.)?

- Natural hazards
- Winter city
- Allow for housing types the city wants
- No expedited process for approving minor variances
- Definitions and land use descriptions
- Walkability v. freight traffic, and resident driving
- Accommodations for existing businesses and uses

Your Perspective

Discussion: Please share local examples.

**Summary notes from discussion on the following slides.
Some questions were adjusted and combined during discussion.**

1. What are Valdez's strengths that code should build toward, code should allow and encourage?
2. Where are some local examples of "ideal land use/uses" that we should look to codify in Title 17?
3. What are your top 3 priority areas for us to consider in this code update?
4. What are some examples of where the zoning code is confusing?
5. Where have you seen the zoning code act as a barrier to accomplishing the community's goals?
6. Currently, uses are allowed (by-right) or require a full review process. What are examples of projects or issues that should be streamlined?
7. What types of housing are lacking in Valdez, and need support in code?

Discussion Notes: Project Goals

Summarized after discussion during meeting

What additional or different goals do you have?

- Opportunities to assess building code requirements to add flexibility and reduce construction costs.
- Opportunity to “upzone” areas to allow for more uses (and streamline certain/desired uses).
- Opportunity to identify other housing types (e.g., smaller units) to begin replacing aging mobile homes.
- The limited code language may hinder housing options. Housing is a long-time goal/need for Valdez.
- Create more opportunities for people living and working in the community.
- Explore opportunities to allow more housing types (e.g., tiny homes, container conversions). Make allowances, possibly incentives, for new accessory dwelling units. Allow accessory dwellings in all zones that allow housing. Rely on the building code for safety, but reduce zoning rules around housing.
- Question: is there a standard for Zoning Codes (e.g., template)? *Not a formal standard, but best practices.*
- Identify ways to eliminate regulation, so development can take place.
- Recommendation: allow any use that is not specifically prohibited.
- Create solutions for individuals to allow additional units on their land (temporary housing, but could be protected for other tenants – “grandfather these structures”).
- Small housing units needed for seasonal workers, individuals with limited income.
- Small lots, small homes, and accessory dwellings are vital options.

Discussion Notes: Known Issues

Summarized after discussion during meeting

What issues are we missing? What are some local issues?

- Example: A person wanted to put a rope course and a cycle track on their property as recreational uses, but this could not be accommodated in a single zone. These seem like compatible uses.
- Acknowledge that the City communicated during the Comprehensive Plan process, adoption of the Plan would not result in a zone change that displaces residents (e.g., mobile home neighborhood). Define a strategy to respond to past community commitments/communication, and ensure Plan implementation (such as the Title 17 rewrite) does not create unintended consequences.
- Allow future rezones that may not fully align with the Comprehensive Plan so, the City can grow organically. Example: a property owner wanted to rezone his property to match surrounding properties already zoned this way, but because the Plan did not allow that type, so it was denied.

Discussion Notes: Questions

Summarized after discussion during meeting

Q1. Valdez strengths, that code should build towards, allow, encourage?

Q2. Local examples of good land uses we should look to codify?

- Promote more mixed-use projects, especially downtown. Example: Day Building has ground floor commercial with housing units on upper floors.
- Allow housing to be constructed as part of commercial uses/employment centers.
- Accommodate more employee housing/workforce housing, especially for seasonal workers.
- Address transportation services associated with worker housing, such as bussing for “man camps.”
- Accommodate situations where uses can be stacked (e.g., multiple activities on the same lot).
- Retain provisions for snow storage.
- Address similar zones and redundant code provisions (especially relating to individual zones).
- Incorporate the same terminology and consistent definitions throughout the code.
- Simplify dimensional standards and how they are applied uniformly in the district.
- Address/evaluate current building height limitations (do height limits need to be kept?).
- Evaluate liabilities associated with recreational use/equipment.
- Accommodate/address recreational uses on private properties.
- Address parking and onsite storage, such as allowing shipping containers onsite.

Discussion Notes: Questions

Summarized after discussion during meeting

Q5. Top 3 priority areas for us to consider in Title 17 update?

This question was skipped, since several priorities were identified earlier under Goals.

Q4. Some examples of where the zoning code is confusing?

Q5. Where has the zoning code been a barrier to accomplishing the community's goals?

- Case Example: Many homes were constructed from kits which options to retrofit to become more units (a single family home can have another unit added, and become a duplex). The code is a barrier to allowing for more housing types, in certain zones.
- Development projects take a long time between permitting and construction. The construction season is short and the code should not cause delays.
- List of prohibited uses is problematic, the City doesn't allow certain uses and opportunities.
- Address unique housing conditions, such as where there may not be a "primary dwelling" on a particular lot. It is preferable to be more permissible and allow multiple dwellings.

Discussion Notes: Known Issues

Summarized after discussion during meeting

Q6. Currently, uses are either allowed, or require a full review process. What are examples of projects or issues that should be streamlined?

- Storage building (including pre-fab structures) require permitting and review. Other storage facilities should be readily allowed.
- Create opportunities where minor setback variances could be reviewed and approved administratively by staff (and still subject to building code provisions).
- Create allowances / procedures for simple lot line adjustments/eliminations, such as making that process an administrative approval.
- Remove restrictions on the number of structures, features or vehicles on a property.
- Generally speaking, if a specific type variance or other change brought forward is always approved with no issues, this is a good candidate for something to change to administrative approval.

Discussion Notes: Known Issues

Summarized after discussion during meeting

Q6. What types of housing are lacking in Valdez, and need more support from the zoning code?

- Acknowledge multiple residential projects and types are needed to address Valdez's housing needs.
- Accommodate a wider variety of housing types: Valdez has few apartments and small housing units.
- Acknowledge the construction costs are directly tied to affordable housing. Some costs are difficult to reduce; reduce costs where possible related to zoning code.
- Remove onerous requirements that contribute to construction costs (e.g., fence permits).
- Proposed provisions to reduce the costs to new housing, such as foundations for tiny homes.
- Make more land available for new housing (e.g., zoning allowances).
- Address short-term rentals: this is a business opportunity for property owners, but also concerns shared about impacts on long-term housing market.
- Support local trades people (e.g., painters, plumbers, electricians etc.): make allowances for business activities on properties, that would not require a rezone.
- Focus on older mobile homes in disrepair as a means to provide new housing, upgrading or replacing these units.
- Create opportunities for individuals to purchase existing mobile home lots, so they own the land.

Reminder: Project Schedule

Sept. 29, 2022	✓ Staff Listening Session 1: Planning Department staff
Oct. 12, 2022	Joint Work Session 1: City Council Planning, Zoning Commission
Oct. 25, 2022	Staff Listening Session 2: Additional City Departments
Nov. 2022 – Spring 2023	Working Group: monthly meetings with community stakeholders. Meeting 1: Thursday, November 10, 2022, 12:00 - 1:30 pm (<i>tentative</i>)
Fall 2022 – Early 2023	Community outreach: Schedule to be refined this fall.
Early 2023	Public Review Draft: Initial review draft of Title 17 ordinance
Spring 2023	Joint Work Session 2: City Council Planning, Zoning Commission
Spring 2023	Approval Process: Official public hearing draft, approval process

Thank You!

Project Website

Coming soon!

Project Contacts

Kate Huber, Director
Planning Department
khuber@valdezak.gov

Anna Brawley,
Project Manager
Agnew::Beck Consulting
anna@agnewbeck.com



Photo credit: Discover Valdez