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# City of Valdez, Alaska

## PLAN VALDEZ AND CODE ANALYSIS



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# CHAPTER 1: PROJECT INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Valdez Zoning Code Update is focused on revising the regulatory framework to align zoning and land use standards with the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan (“Plan Valdez”). The revised code and zoning maps are instrumental in achieving the City’s vision. The revised code must protect the people, the built environment, and the natural environment.

The City’s Consultant Team (Agnew::Beck and Stantec) prepared this analysis. This analysis includes not only a look at the current zoning code, but also an assessment of City goals and consistency with Plan Valdez. An analysis of the existing code is one of the first steps in determining what is working and what is not, and is heavily informed by the input of staff, the Planning & Zoning Commission, and the City Council.

### **Guiding Policy Document: Plan Valdez**

Plan Valdez, the City’s most recent comprehensive plan (adopted in 2021) provides clear land use policies that impact the zoning ordinance. The most important mechanism is the establishment of Place Type destinations on various lots within the municipal limits, which include primary, supporting, and incompatible land uses. Chapter 3 of this report discusses the Plan in more detail.

### **Zoning Code Consistency Update**

An important factor behind this zoning code update is to bring the code into consistency with the Place Types and policies of the comprehensive plan. There are many primary and supporting uses defined for the Place Types but are not currently allowed by the code/zones. In addition to revisions to uses within zoning districts, the Plan also presents development suitability constraints that must be considered.



**Figure 1.1.1 – Community Context Aerial Photograph**  
(Source: Google Earth Pro)

## 1.2. PROJECT SCOPE OF WORK

One of the first steps in updating the code is to conduct a thorough analysis of its current standards (this report). The main objectives of this regulatory and policy analysis include:

- **Plan Valdez Regulatory Implementation** – Identify zoning and other regulatory amendments that will implement the Place Types from the Plan Valdez policy document so that the City’s land use and development standards align with its long-range vision.
- **Address Problematic Code Provisions** – Identify and address code provisions that are unclear or pose challenges for desired land uses and land development.
- **Address Redevelopment Barriers** – Identify and offer solutions to potential regulatory barriers to urban infill, adaptive reuse projects, and redevelopment in general (e.g., allowable land uses, setbacks, density limits); AND
- **Provide Character-based Recommendations:** Provide zoning text recommendations to ensure new projects respond to the areas’ intended character (based on Plan Valdez goals and policies) and retain historical building patterns (e.g., building orientation, parking location, vehicular use areas, facade treatment, height, and land use).

### Scope of Work

This report is intended to review the City’s current long-range policy document (“Plan Valdez”) and the current zoning and subdivision standards to serve as baseline data for potential regulatory changes. The following lists the topics and methodology that were included in this report and analysis:

- **A. Plan Valdez** - Review the Plan Valdez document to understand the community’s long-range vision for the City as it relates to land use, development form, and preservation. List each of the Place Types described in the Plan Valdez document and the corresponding land uses and development forms. Identify key goals and actions that will guide potential code revisions.
- **B. Title 17: Zoning** - Review and assess the standards and requirements listed in *Title 17: Zoning Ordinance* of the *Municipal Code*. Conduct an analysis that (a) summarizes the current requirements, (b) identifies methods to align code with the Plan Valdez goals and actions, and (c) presents ideas to make the code clearer and more streamlined.
  - **Zoning Districts:** Compare the current zoning districts with the Place Types listed in Plan Valdez. Analyze the code comparing existing zones to each Place Type in the plan and summarize allowable land uses and building types for each zone, identifying potential inconsistencies to resolve. Summarize the dimensional standards for each zone (e.g., setbacks, height limits, etc.) and identify potential conflicts with the corresponding Place Types; this analysis will serve as a baseline for potential regulatory revisions. Review and summarize the following code topics:
    - **Use and Conditional Use Standards:** Review and summarize requirements and limitations applicable to specific land uses, and conditional uses, which are normally intended to protect surrounding properties from negative impacts. Recommend additional uses to allow more flexibility in the code, and other potential regulatory refinements to achieve better compatibility for those uses.
    - **Parking:** Review and summarize the current parking requirements in terms of dimensional and design requirements (stall and driveway sizes) and minimum parking ratios by use (parking quantities). For comparison purposes, identify the parking ratios from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Parking Generation Manual. Identify

potential conflicts between parking requirements and the intended character of specific Place Types (e.g., the Town Center and Mixed-use Center are intended to be strong pedestrian destinations).

- **Administration and Procedures:** Review and summarize current administrative and review procedures for various land use and zoning applications in the City. Identify potential revisions to clarify process, streamline desired development, and provide review for land uses and development types that may pose compatibility concerns at certain locations.
- **C. Title 16: Subdivision** - Review Title 16: Subdivision and provide *recommendations* on potential revisions to streamline the review process and eliminate redundancy with *Title 17*. Summarize current roadway standards and identify potential revisions based on the Place Type descriptions in Plan Valdez (i.e., context sensitive roadway standards).
- **D. Zoning Map** - Conduct a comparative analysis of the City's current zoning map with the Land Use Place Type map from Plan Valdez. Notate areas on the zoning map that do not align with the Land Use Plan Type Map and provide options for district changes. Identify potential overlay zones (and location) pursuant to Plan Valdez.



## 1.3. ANALYSIS SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

### Main Regulatory Categories

The City of Valdez can create a regulatory framework that supports development/redevelopment and by focusing on three main categories to ensure new projects contribute to community vitality: Zoning Map, Zoning Districts and Allowable Uses. There are many challenges to developing in Valdez, both natural and economic – thus, it is important that the regulatory framework provides land use and design flexibility while creating a predictable permitting process in order to entice owners and investors to create new or better uses.

### Key Analysis Findings

The following summarizes the key findings from the zoning and regulatory analysis, including considerations and recommendations to improve the City’s regulatory framework to align with the vision, goals, and Place Types listed in Plan Valdez. Further detail is provided in Chapter 4.

### Zoning Map

#### Considerations

- There are several areas where the zoning map does not align with the boundaries or intended uses in the Plan Valdez Place Types. For example, there are multiple conservation place types that are zoned for a variety of commercial or residential uses. There are also mixed-use centers that are currently zoned industrial.

#### Recommendations

- Update the zoning map for consistency with the place types in Plan Valdez.

### Zoning Districts

#### Considerations

- Some districts are near-duplicates of others in terms of dimensional and bulk standards and uses allowed, for example the RR and RN Districts.
- There are also zoning districts established for basically a single use (i.e.-HI-G, A). To reduce complexity, such districts should be consolidated.

#### Recommendations

- Consolidate the RR and RN districts.
- Consolidate the R-A and R-B districts.
- Consolidate the VCT and WI
- Consolidate the NC and CR districts
- Consolidate the A and LI districts
- Consolidate the G and WC districts, and possibly the CBD district.
- Consider an overlay district for the CBD that would include special design standards to create a more walkable town center than the rest of the commercial areas.
- For single-use districts, consider allowing those uses only as conditional in other similar districts and eliminating the district.

## **Allowable Uses**

### **Considerations**

#### **Use Groups**

- The list of permitted, accessory, and conditional uses is extensive and very detailed. Because, by law, uses not specifically listed in a zoning ordinance are considered prohibited, this does not leave much room for flexibility or interpretation of similar uses.
- Many uses are near-duplicates of other listed uses.
- More permitted and conditional uses should be included in the zoning districts to ensure that all Primary and Supporting uses in the Place Types from Plan Valdez are allowed.

#### **Industrial Uses**

- There is demand for uses that complement industrial uses to be located nearby or on-site. These include: worker housing, retail and restaurants catering to employees, and personal services.
- Often, industrial users that produce a product sold directly to consumers wish to have a showroom or sales floor. Currently those types of uses are prohibited. This may also apply to microbreweries who wish to include a tap room.

#### **Housing Types**

- There is a strong desire for the code to be more permissive regarding housing types and where they are permitted. There is a shortage of housing in the city as a whole, and residents and employers who are trying to provide needed housing run into roadblocks in the ordinance.
- Lists of permitted, accessory and conditional uses are currently included within each zoning district. This has led to many uses that are the same but have *slightly* different wording. It also makes it difficult for users to figure out which district(s) permit what they want to do.

### **Recommendations**

- Establish Use Groups that allow more flexibility and room for interpretation, such as “Shopping”, “Dining”, “Residential – Detached”, “Residential – Attached”.
- Add more permitted and conditional uses to zoning districts where appropriate to align with Place Types.
- Update industrial districts to allow complementary uses as accessory uses.
- Update industrial districts to allow showrooms or sales offices as accessory uses.
- Allow worker housing as an accessory use in industrial districts, but with specific standards that require housing to be tied directly to the industry.
- Define, in more general terms, a wider range of housing types.
- Include these housing types as permitted uses where they can be located without negative impacts to surrounding properties and where infrastructure is present to support them.
- Create one use table that lists all use groups, specific uses that require conditional uses, and accessory uses by zoning district.

# CHAPTER 2: CITY GOALS AND DESIRES

## 2.1: OVERVIEW

To establish the project goals and the City's priorities with regard to the Code update, the consultant team hosted a series of "listening sessions" in Fall 2022 with various municipal representatives (a) to obtain individual preferences on the desired character for Valdez, (b) to define which code provisions that seem to work well for the community, and (c) to understand current regulatory challenges in terms of project permitting, code interpretation, project design, and outcomes. The following subsections summarize the feedback provided to-date from City staff, Planning and Zoning Commission, and City Council. Meetings were held with each group to discuss preliminary ideas and issues for the code update. This feedback can be used as baseline data that will guide potential revisions and update to the City's code. Common themes from the participants focus on creating more flexibility and clarity in the code and allowing a broader range of uses in certain zoning districts (as appropriate).

## 2.2. CITY STAFF FEEDBACK

The consultant team facilitated two separate listening sessions to obtain City staff perspectives on the current code's challenges and their preliminary ideas to help streamline project review and achieve a better development form. This included a listening session with planning staff on September 29, 2022, and a second session with other City representatives on October 25, 2022. The following summarizes the priority topics expressed at these two staff meetings.

1. Natural hazards create barriers for development in Valdez; therefore, to protect people and the natural environment, regulations need to be responsive to these potential hazards.
2. Valdez is a winter city, so things like snow storage need to be considered when looking at setbacks, building placement regulations, and the public realm.
3. Make the code clearer and more flexible, allowing for the types of housing and development that the City wants. Currently, staff spends a lot of time with property owners and developers interpreting what's possible, and often there is not an appropriate use to apply.
4. It would be beneficial for both property owners and staff to have an option to evaluate minor variances with administrative approval, rather than having to use a formal public hearing process; reserve the full variance review process for larger or more complex projects.
5. Definitions and land use descriptions are narrow and prescriptive.
6. There are several districts that are either rarely used or very similar to other districts; consider consolidation of districts. Align these districts with the Place Types defined in Plan Valdez.
7. Lists of uses are antiquated, too specific, and should be more generalized.
8. Need to balance the desire for a walkable community with the needs of freight carriers and residents who drive.
9. Accommodate existing businesses/uses as much as possible: because there are so many other barriers to development, from remote location to construction costs, it is important to allow people to keep operating.

10. Rather than making non-conforming uses or businesses with significant impacts to relocate, consider buffers or transition requirements to mitigate any negative impacts on neighbors.

## 2.3. PLANNING AND ZONING AND CITY COUNCIL FEEDBACK

The consultant team and the City's planning staff facilitated a discussion with the City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission in a joint work session on October 12, 2022. The purpose was to allow participants to discuss goals, ideas, and issues with the zoning code. The following is a summary of the discussion:

### Goals

- Allow for more uses
- Streamline the process for desired uses
- Explore opportunities to allow more housing types
  - Accessory dwelling units – several on one parcel
  - Container conversions
  - Tiny homes
  - Housing for seasonal workers
  - Allow for smaller lots
- Eliminate unnecessary regulation so that development can take place
- Create more opportunities for people living and working in the community

### Strengths that the code should encourage:

- Promote mixed-use projects like the Day Building (154 Fairbanks Drive)
- Allow housing to be constructed as part of commercial/employment centers; accommodate more employee housing

## 2.4 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ENGAGEMENT

A more complete summary of engagement from the Plan Valdez process as it relates to the Code update can be found in Appendix C of this report. Highlights include:

- Housing was the dominant topic in the survey. Residents agree that housing is a high priority and having a wider variety of housing types and price points is important.
- Downtown is seen as a high priority for redevelopment; residents cited vacant and rundown buildings as a problem, as well as a desire to bring more activity and new developments to the commercial center.
- Several comments also support current snow management strategies, including having space between buildings (setbacks), using green space and park strips for snow storage.
- Several residents support reducing or relaxing rules in order to make development easier. Some support a full free-market approach; others acknowledge seismic and environmental conditions require strict building codes but want to see more flexibility. Some respondents were worried the City would implement more rules, such as historic preservation or design standards, as a result of this process. They want the City to be helpful, facilitate new projects (by making land available, incentives, etc.), and utilize its powers to make development easier.

# CHAPTER 3: PLAN VALDEZ SUMMARY

## 3.1: PLAN VALDEZ OVERVIEW

This chapter summarizes the purpose and long-range planning framework of Plan Valdez, the community's Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2021, which serves as the City's primary policy document to guide land use decisions and potential zoning and regulatory amendments. Some of the text herein is taken directly from the Plan Valdez document.

Plan Valdez is a collective vision developed by the community to shape Valdez over the next 20 years and beyond. It offers a foundation for determining effective public policy and land use decisions now and into the future. The plan is broken down into themes, goals, and actions that create a framework for land use and development decisions within the municipal limits. Plan Valdez outlines short- and long-term planning actions that will continue to safeguard the City's history and sense of place. Overall, the plan:

- Establishes a blueprint for future land use and infrastructure to effectively and efficiently guide private and public investments;
- Seeks to balance competing demands on land to the greatest benefit for citizens and the community as a whole;
- Identifies areas that will benefit from public infrastructure to promote well-planned, phased development patterns;
- Facilitates the development of work plans, budgets, capital improvements, and recommended amendments to zoning and land use ordinances to achieve desired goals and responsible stewardship of public resources; and,
- Implements a consistent framework for addressing land use issues that will establish a degree of predictability for property owners, businesses, and residents

## 3.2: DEVELOPMENT SUITABILITY MAP

Figure 3.2.1 on the following page illustrates the development suitability analysis included in the Plan. The various categories (or map colors) identify which area of the City would be most conducive for development, and at certain intensities, versus retained in their natural state. These categories help define where development should be allowed; areas along the waterfront and at the base of mountain slopes are considered "constrained" making them potentially less conducive for urban development.

- **Low Development Constraints (Green):** Areas without environmental impacts and slopes less than 10%.
- **Medium Development Constraints (Yellow):** Areas with one or more environmental impacts resulting in more extensive groundwork due to moderate slopes (10-15%), less stable soils, as well as areas of partial wetlands where mitigation may be required.
- **High Development Constraints (Orange):** Areas with one or more environmental impacts where significant groundwork and additional structures may be required. These include slopes 15-25%, significant soil and wetland conditions, and areas prone to flooding.



- **Areas with Significant Environmental Constraints (Red):** Development is not recommended in these areas due to steep slopes greater than 25%, avalanche and landslide hazards, and areas subject to significant flooding events.

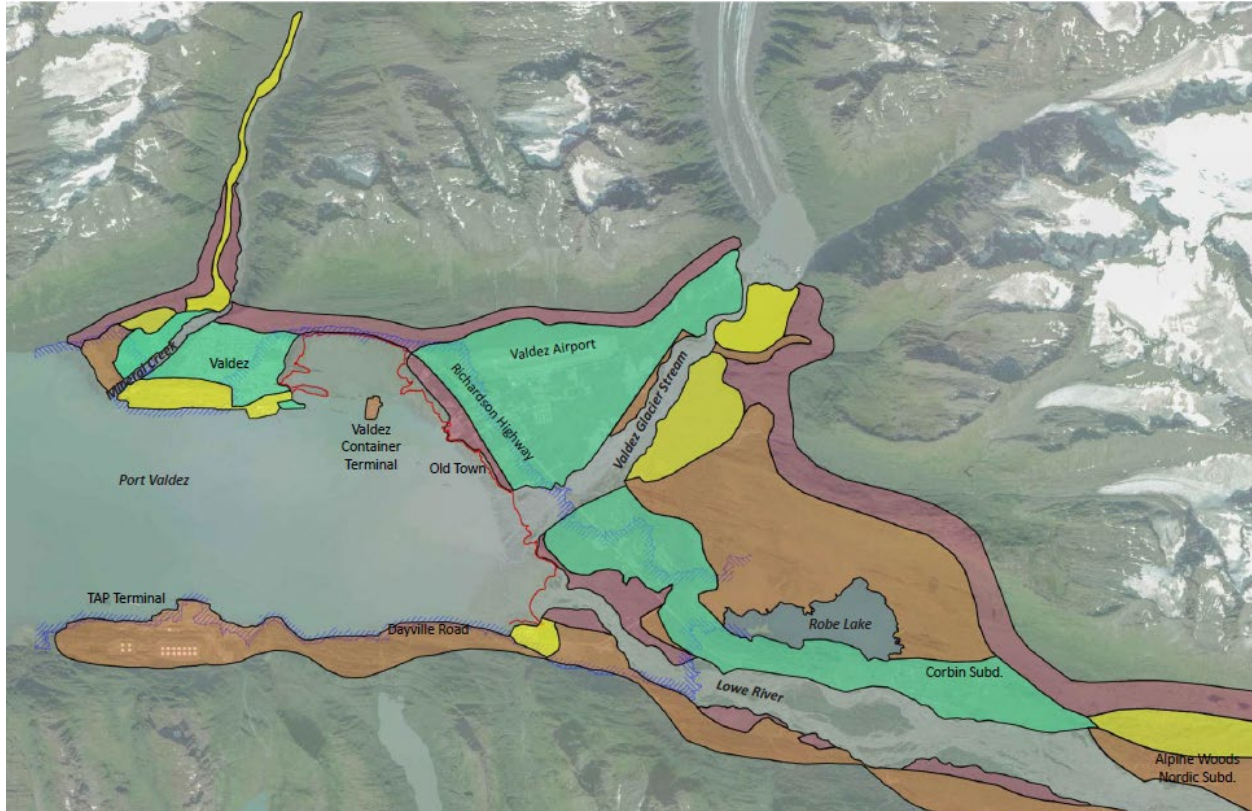


Figure 3.2.1 – Plan Valdez Development Suitability Map

### 3.3: PLACE TYPES

The portion of Plan Valdez that most closely relates to the zoning ordinance is the establishment of Place Types. The 16 Place Types are organized into five broad land use categories: Commercial, Residential, Industrial, Public Land, and Specialty. Tables 3.3.a – e provide descriptions for each Place Type along with their associated land uses and zoning conditions. Figure 3.3.1 depicts the Land Use Place Types Map for the City; whereas, the larger Place Types Maps (for each sub-area) are provided in Appendix A. Future updates to the code and the associated zoning map should be consistent with the Place Types (as those regulatory documents are intended to advance the land use goals and Place Types from Plan Valdez).

## LAND USE PLACE TYPES

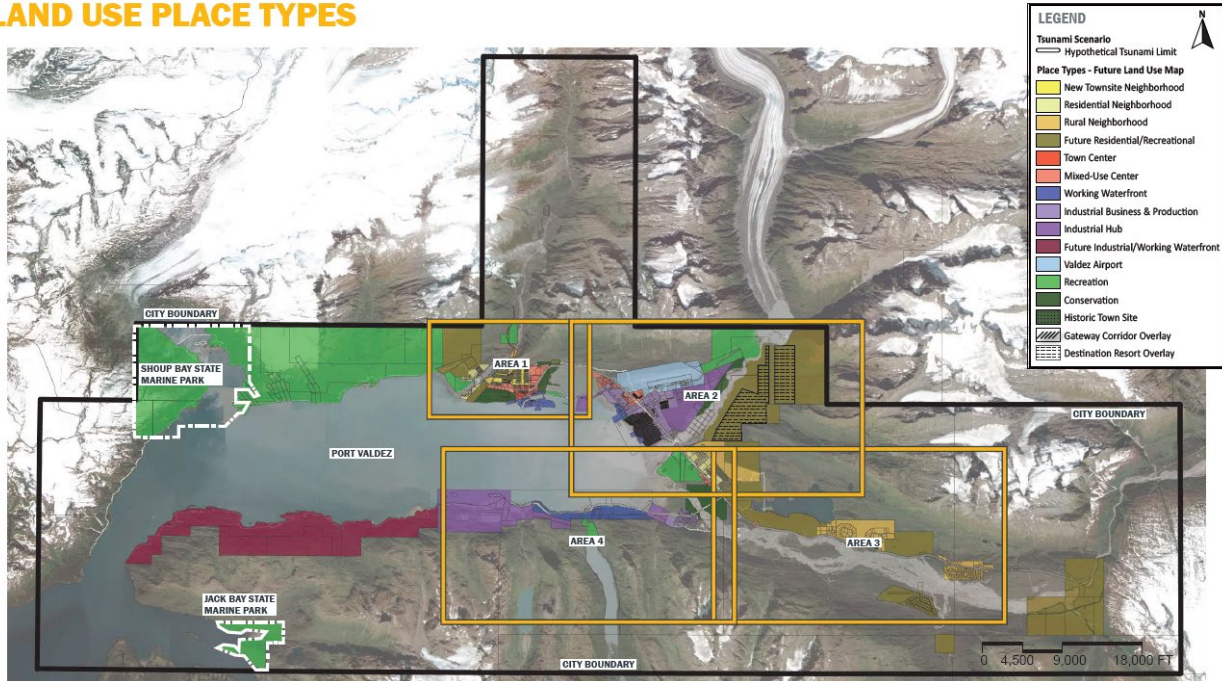


Figure 3.3.1 Place Types

Table 3.3.a Plan Valdez Place Type Descriptions - Commercial	
Place Type and Description	Land Uses and Considerations
<p><b>Town Center</b></p> <p>The Town Center Place Type will blend commercial, multi-family residential, cultural, institutional, and entertainment uses with an environment centered on walkability and strong connections to live, work, play destinations. Compatible mixed-use buildings are encouraged with retail/commercial on the ground floor and residential above. This environment is supported with building frontages and entrances oriented to the street. Gathering spaces are encouraged in the form of civic plazas, courtyards, and small parks.</p> <p>Shared parking is encouraged and located near the rear or side lots of buildings. Parking, plazas, and park spaces can be used throughout the winter as snow storage lots. Mixed-use buildings are encouraged in transition areas at the edge of the Town Center area.</p>	<p><b>Primary Land Use(s):</b> Commercial - All</p> <p><b>Supporting Land Use(s):</b> Residential - Multi-Family &amp; Live/Work Institutional – All Recreation – All</p> <p><b>Incompatible Land Use(s):</b> Residential – Single-family detached, single-family attached, &amp; Manufactured</p> <p><b>Zoning Considerations:</b> Mixed-use development with buildings oriented to the public streets. Active ground floor uses in targeted, high-priority areas, either via restricting the location of single-use buildings or designating particular corners or streets for active ground floors. Small or no building setbacks.</p>
<p><b>Mixed-Use Center</b></p> <p>This Place Type is characterized by a mix of stand-alone retail buildings, larger stores (i.e., grocery store, general merchandise store), offices, and small-scale mixed-use buildings with higher density residential uses such as townhomes, apartments, and live/work units physically and functionally integrated. Uses can be mixed in either a vertical or horizontal configuration. Residential and office above ground-floor commercial should be encouraged. These uses are located along collector and arterial</p>	<p><b>Primary Land Use(s):</b> Commercial – all Institutional - all</p> <p><b>Supporting Land Use(s):</b> Residential – single-family attached, multi-family, live/work, manufactured Recreation - all</p>

<b>Table 3.3.a Plan Valdez Place Type Descriptions - Commercial</b>	
<b>Place Type and Description</b>	<b>Land Uses and Considerations</b>
roads and tend to be more automobile oriented with larger parking areas. Pedestrian connectivity should be a priority to reduce the number of vehicle trips between uses.	<p><b><u>Incompatible Land Use(s):</u></b></p> <p>Residential – single-family detached Industrial - all</p> <p><b><u>Zoning Considerations:</u></b></p> <p>Small-scale mixed-use buildings (vertical) along with stand-alone commercial and multi-family Design requirements for pedestrian connectivity between buildings and the street/sidewalk. Pedestrian connectivity between uses</p>
<p><b>Working Waterfront</b></p> <p>The Working Waterfront Place Type is intended to represent water-related activities that derive an economic or social benefit from a waterfront location. Primarily, the uses will relate with commercial/economic enterprises, tourism, or recreation. Land will continue to be reserved to meet current and future needs for cargo shipping, fishing, passenger cruises, ferries, excursion boats, recreational boats, and other water-dependent activities. Park space, pedestrian connection, and public space is encouraged in the working waterfront.</p>	<p><b><u>Primary Land Use(s):</u></b></p> <p>Commercial – all Industrial – Light Waterfront</p> <p><b><u>Supporting Land Use(s):</u></b></p> <p>Residential – temporary worker Recreation – parks, passive Institutional - community</p> <p><b><u>Incompatible Land Use(s):</u></b></p> <p>Residential – Single-family Attached and Detached, Multi-family, Manufactured Recreation – Regional Institutional – Education, Medical Industrial – Heavy, Aviation</p> <p><b><u>Zoning Considerations:</u></b></p> <p>Mixture of water-dependent uses Safe pedestrian connections between waterfront and adjacent areas Allow temporary worker housing in waterfront commercial and industrial districts</p>

<b>Table 3.3.b Plan Valdez Place Type Descriptions - Residential</b>	
<b>Place Type and Description</b>	<b>Land Uses and Considerations</b>
<p><b>New Townsite Neighborhood</b></p> <p>The New Townsite Neighborhood Place Type will continue to reflect its origins as a planned townsite, characterized by single-family detached homes. As the area continues to mature, the inclusion of more duplexes, townhomes, accessory dwelling units, and small-scale multi-family housing is expected.</p> <p>Multi-family housing and appropriately scaled neighborhood commercial are encouraged when the New Townsite Neighborhood Place Type transitions towards the Town Center and Mixed-Use Center. Parks, schools, and religious institutions are encouraged, as well as multi-modal connection networks. Distinctive characteristics are reinforced by encouraging developments compatible in scale and design.</p>	<p><b><u>Primary Land Use(s):</u></b></p> <p>Residential – Single-family Detached, Single-family Attached</p> <p><b><u>Supporting Land Use(s):</u></b></p> <p>Residential – Small scale Multi-Family, Live/Work, &amp; Manufactured Recreation – All Commercial - Neighborhood Institutional – Education &amp; Community</p> <p><b><u>Incompatible Land Use(s):</u></b></p> <p>Residential – Temporary Worker Industrial – All Commercial – General &amp; Major Office Institutional - Medical</p> <p><b><u>Zoning Considerations:</u></b></p> <p>Allow for multi-family housing with design and bulk standards sensitive to surrounding uses</p>

<b>Table 3.3.b Plan Valdez Place Type Descriptions - Residential</b>	
<b>Place Type and Description</b>	<b>Land Uses and Considerations</b>
	<p>Allow vertical mixed-use buildings</p> <p>Require multi-modal amenities (bike racks, bike parking areas, sidewalk connections, and/or multi-modal trail connections) for new developments.</p>
<p><b>Residential Neighborhood</b></p> <p>The Residential Neighborhood Place Type has a dependency on the automobile to reach services and jobs. The Residential Neighborhood may include parks, greenbelts, community centers, and similar amenities. Public services, including water and wastewater services, are readily available or in close proximity with a service expansion plan in place.</p>	<p><b>Primary Land Use(s):</b></p> <p>Residential – Single-family Detached, Single-family Attached</p> <p><b>Supporting Land Use(s):</b></p> <p>Residential – Multi-family (up to and including four-plex), Manufactured</p> <p>Recreation – All</p> <p>Institutional – Educational, Community</p> <p><b>Incompatible Land Use(s):</b></p> <p>Commercial - All</p> <p>Institutional – Medical</p> <p>Residential – Live/Work, Multi-family (greater than four-plex), Temporary Worker</p> <p>Industrial – All</p> <p><b>Zoning Considerations:</b></p> <p>Ensure mix of zoning districts allows both single-family (attached and detached) and multi-family up to four-plex</p> <p>Allow temporary worker housing in single-family attached and detached districts</p>
<p><b>Rural Neighborhood</b></p> <p>The Rural Neighborhood Place Type is primarily used for residential buildings and surrounded by lands that exhibit a more rural character. Development layouts follow land contours, incorporate natural features, and protect sensitive resources. The neighborhoods are automobile dependent and frequently characterized by non-grid street patterns and relatively long distances to the Town Center. Public services are not readily available and large lots are required to support on-site wells and septic systems.</p> <p>Limited commercial uses are appropriate along the fringes of this place type and along the Richardson Highway</p>	<p><b>Primary Land Use(s):</b></p> <p>Residential – Single-family Detached, Single-family Attached</p> <p><b>Supporting Land Use(s):</b></p> <p>Residential – Single-family Attached, Manufactured</p> <p>Neighborhood Commercial</p> <p>Recreation – Parks, Passive</p> <p><b>Incompatible Land Use(s):</b></p> <p>Commercial – General, Major Office</p> <p>Institutional – All</p> <p>Residential – Live/Work, Multi-family, Temporary Worker</p> <p>Industrial – All</p> <p>Recreation - Regional</p> <p><b>Zoning Considerations:</b></p> <p>Maintain large lot sizes</p> <p>Allow smaller lot sizes with cluster development</p>

<b>Table 3.3.c Plan Valdez Place Type Descriptions - Industrial</b>	
<b>Place Type and Description</b>	<b>Land Uses and Considerations</b>
<p><b>Industrial Business &amp; Production</b></p> <p>The Industrial Business and Production Place Type includes light industrial businesses and operations that are consumer oriented and typically create</p>	<p><b>Primary Land Use(s):</b></p> <p>Industrial - Light</p>



**Table 3.3.c Plan Valdez Place Type Descriptions - Industrial**

Place Type and Description	Land Uses and Considerations
<p>products for the end user. They may include complementary commercial and office spaces. They have less environmental impacts than heavy industrial operations. They will be located by adjoining roadways that will accommodate truck traffic without negatively impacting quieter place types. Where this place type borders other place types setbacks and buffers are used to minimize impacts to adjacent land uses.</p>	<p><b><u>Supporting Land Use(s):</u></b>  Industrial – Aviation &amp; Waterfront  Commercial – All  Recreation – Motorized Sports/Facilities</p> <p><b><u>Incompatible Land Use(s):</u></b>  Industrial – Heavy  Institutional – All  Recreation – All Other  Residential - All</p> <p><b><u>Zoning Considerations:</u></b>  Buffer requirements to minimize negative impacts on adjacent uses  Special consideration for existing non-conforming uses</p>
<p><b>Industrial Hub</b></p> <p>The Industrial Hub Place Type typically includes heavy industrial operations and the use of large and heavy equipment and facilities. They have more environmental impacts than Industrial Business and Production and will be required to have appropriate buffers from all other place types to minimize impacts to the environment and the public health and safety. It is important that adjoining transportation facilities provide fast and convenient freight access to the Industrial Hub and that roadway access and designs accommodate large truck traffic where appropriate.</p>	<p><b><u>Primary Land Use(s):</u></b>  Industrial - Heavy</p> <p><b><u>Supporting Land Use(s):</u></b>  Industrial – Light, Aviation &amp; Waterfront  Recreation – Motorized Sports/Facilities</p> <p><b><u>Incompatible Land Use(s):</u></b>  Commercial - all  Industrial – Heavy  Institutional – all  Recreation – all other  Residential - all</p> <p><b><u>Zoning Considerations:</u></b>  Buffer requirements to minimize negative impacts on adjacent uses  Special consideration for existing non-conforming uses</p>
<p><b>Valdez Airport</b></p> <p>The Valdez Airport Place Type includes the airport and may include aviation support, maintenance facilities, aircraft hangars and tie downs, aviation related tourism, short-term materials and goods storage, and tourist support services (car rental, tours).</p>	<p><b><u>Primary Land Use(s):</u></b>  Industrial - Aviation</p> <p><b><u>Supporting Land Use(s):</u></b>  Industrial – Light  Commercial - General</p> <p><b><u>Incompatible Land Use(s):</u></b>  Commercial – Neighborhood, Major Office  Industrial – Heavy, Waterfront  Institutional – all  Recreation – all  Residential - all</p> <p><b><u>Zoning Considerations:</u></b>  Buffer requirements to minimize negative impacts on adjacent uses  Special consideration for existing non-conforming uses</p>



<b>Table 3.3.d Plan Valdez Place Type Descriptions – Public Land</b>	
<b>Place Type and Description</b>	<b>Land Uses and Considerations</b>
<b>Historic Town Site</b> The Historic Town Site Place Type will have minimal development that is focused in a culturally appropriate manner. Activities are day-use only and are to include passive recreation such as hiking, fishing, and picnicking. Interpretive amenities are encouraged to highlight the story of the original Valdez townsite and the history of Valdez.	<u><b>Primary Land Use(s):</b></u> Recreation - Passive <u><b>Supporting Land Use(s):</b></u> <i>unspecified</i> <u><b>Incompatible Land Use(s):</b></u> Recreation – Parks, Regional Residential – All Institutional – All Commercial – All Industrial - All <u><b>Zoning Considerations:</b></u> None
<b>Recreation</b> The Recreation Place Type focuses on a variety of recreational uses ranging from passive to active. Passive activities include those with minimal facilities including hiking, walking, cross-country skiing, cycling, and day-use areas, as well as approved motorized recreational activities. Developed and active recreation in this place type includes large open recreation space with athletic and sports fields, recreation facilities and buildings, playgrounds, campgrounds, developed fishing areas, urban trails, and parking.	<u><b>Primary Land Use(s):</b></u> Recreation - Passive <u><b>Supporting Land Use(s):</b></u> Institutional – Community Commercial – Recreation-related <u><b>Incompatible Land Use(s):</b></u> Residential – All Institutional – Education, Medical Commercial – All others Industrial - All <u><b>Zoning Considerations:</b></u> Ensure that amenities are available nearby to support active and passive recreational activities
<b>Conservation</b> The Conservation Place Type includes lands designated for conservation that are intended to remain in their natural state. This place type also includes some lands that are identified as hazard lands. There may be opportunities for limited passive recreation such as non-motorized trails, trailheads with parking, and viewing platforms that complement the natural setting. In some cases, after a special study, limited development may be possible but should not include habitable buildings or critical facilities.	<u><b>Primary Land Use(s):</b></u> Recreation - Passive <u><b>Supporting Land Use(s):</b></u> <i>unspecified</i> <u><b>Incompatible Land Use(s):</b></u> Recreation – Parks, Regional Residential – All Institutional – All Commercial – All Industrial - All <u><b>Zoning Considerations:</b></u> None

<b>Table 3.3.e Plan Valdez Place Type Descriptions – Specialty</b>	
<b>Place Type and Description</b>	<b>Land Uses and Considerations</b>
<b>Gateway Corridor Overlay</b> The Gateway Corridor Place Type is an overlay place type that adds conditions to the underlying place type. The underlying place type continues to be a compatible use with an emphasis on creating a positive visual experience along the corridor while providing for continued safe and efficient use of the roadway.	<u><b>Primary Land Use(s):</b></u> Per underlying Place Type <u><b>Supporting Land Use(s):</b></u> Per underlying Place Type <u><b>Incompatible Land Use(s):</b></u> Per underlying Place Type <u><b>Zoning Considerations:</b></u>

<b>Table 3.3.e Plan Valdez Place Type Descriptions – Specialty</b>	
<b>Place Type and Description</b>	<b>Land Uses and Considerations</b>
	Potential overlay district to impose standards related to appearance and creation of a special identity for people entering the city.
<p><b>Destination Resort Overlay</b></p> <p>Resorts can become significant economic generators and social gathering places creating employment opportunities, substantially expanding the tax base and enhancing the quality of life for the local community. The Destination Resort Overlay is intended to promote flexibility in development to seamlessly integrate the variety of land uses needed to support a resort ranging from residential, retail, lodging, restaurants, and utility infrastructure. There is emphasis on the need for a specialized Master Plan to promote land use compatibility and sustainability, efficient provision of transportation and utility infrastructure and to suitably protect environmentally sensitive resources, community character, and natural features. Until this project becomes reality, the underlying place type dictates land use.</p> <p>The Master Plan for the proposed development will indicate the type of uses expected within this overlay and requires City approval prior to development. The land uses to the right are anticipated land uses but does not restrict the potential uses that would be associated with this development.</p>	<p><b><u>Primary Land Use(s):</u></b></p> <p>Recreation - All</p> <p><b><u>Supporting Land Use(s):</u></b></p> <p>Residential – All Commercial – All Industrial - Light</p> <p><b><u>Incompatible Land Use(s):</u></b></p> <p>Institutional – All Industrial – All others</p> <p><b><u>Zoning Considerations:</u></b></p> <p>Process for creating a master plan for resort areas</p> <p>Standards for a seamless development that integrates the variety of land uses proposed</p>
<p><b>Future Residential/Recreation</b></p> <p>The Future Residential/Recreation Place Type is for lands that, in the foreseeable future, are less suitable for development because of the high cost of extending and maintaining public infrastructure and services and high expected development costs. Prior to development, a special study to better understand risks, costs, and benefits of allowing development of the area is recommended.</p>	<p><b><u>Primary Land Use(s):</u></b></p> <p>Recreation – All Residential - All</p> <p><b><u>Supporting Land Use(s):</u></b></p> <p>Institutional - Community</p> <p><b><u>Incompatible Land Use(s):</u></b></p> <p>Institutional – Education, Medical Industrial – All Commercial - All</p> <p><b><u>Zoning Considerations:</u></b></p> <p>None – special study required</p>
<p><b>Future Industrial/Working Waterfront</b></p> <p>The Future Industrial/Working Waterfront Place Type is for lands that, in the foreseeable future, are less suitable for development because of the high cost of extending and maintaining public infrastructure and services and high expected development costs. Prior to development, a special study to better understand risks, costs, and benefits of allowing development of the area is recommended.</p>	<p><b><u>Primary Land Use(s):</u></b></p> <p>Industrial - All</p> <p><b><u>Supporting Land Use(s):</u></b></p> <p>Residential – Temporary Worker Recreation – Passive, Motorized, Sports/Facilities Commercial - General</p> <p><b><u>Incompatible Land Use(s):</u></b></p> <p>Commercial – Neighborhood, Major Office Institutional – All Residential – All other</p> <p><b><u>Zoning Considerations:</u></b></p> <p>None - special study required</p>



### 3.4: OTHER KEY PLAN VALDEZ POLICIES

In addition to establishing Place Types, Plan Valdez sets forth several goals and actions that are relevant for the zoning code update, namely:

- **Goal 2.1:** Plan for responsible growth
  - B. Rezone City of Valdez parcels to align with the future land use map.
  - D. Conduct a comprehensive rewrite of Title 17-Zoning, and Title 16-Subdivisions to implement Plan Valdez.
  - E. Rezone parcels with willing property owners to align with the Future Land Use Map (included within this comprehensive plan).
  - J. Update Title 17 to better differentiate between nuisance types and verify coordination with recent Title 8 update.
  - M. Identify special use standards in Title 17 for helicopter landing areas.
  - N. Ensure that snow storage sites are maintained and assessed to match development and community needs.
  - O. Officially adopt other City of Valdez district, special use areas, and master plans developed.
- **Goal 2.3:** Promote, protect and build quality housing (and associated Actions)
  - B. Revise residential zones in the Title 17, Zoning Code.
  - C. Revise Title 17 to provide guidelines for short term rental housing and accessory dwelling units.
  - H. Evaluate land for consideration for future manufactured homes and other forms of lower cost housing.
- **Goal 5.2:** Provide programs and facilities for active lifestyles  
*Action:* Update *Title 17* to include conditions for approval for new motorized sports facilities.
- **Goal 7.1:** Reduce the community's vulnerability to natural events

# CHAPTER 4: TITLE 17 - ZONING ANALYSIS

## 4.1: APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter summarizes the applicable standards listed in *Title 17 – Zoning of the Valdez Municipal Code* that will be major subjects of the code update process. ction addresses specific regulatory topics – summarizing the existing regulations, followed by considerations and recommendations to align the City’s zoning/development standards with Plan Valdez (and respond to City staff feedback described in Chapter 2).

The overarching analysis objectives were to identify areas within the code that are: (a) overly complex, redundant, and unclear, (b) barriers to providing much needed services and housing, (c) onerous with regard to permitting and approvals, (d) outdated with regard to sound planning practices, or (e) failing to achieve the outcome the City wants to see within its municipal limits. The analysis focuses on the following code subjects:

- **Zoning Districts:** Identify the current zoning district along with their descriptions, associated dimensional standards, and alignment/consistency with the Place Types listed in Plan Valdez.
- **Use Allowances and Conditional Use Standards:** Identify the allowable uses within each zoning district (whether permitted, allowed as a conditional use, and/or prohibited). Summarize uses which are subject to other special conditions/requirements.
- **Parking:** Identify the current parking requirements in terms of stall dimensions, minimum parking ratios (i.e., quantity) for individual land uses, and a comparison with the ITE Parking Generation Manual recommended parking ratios.
- **Administration and Review Procedures:** List and summarize the City’s current administration and permit review procedures (e.g., administrative vs. public hearing).

## 4.2: CURRENT ZONING DISTRICTS

### 4.2.1 – Current Zoning Districts

A property’s zoning dictates how the site may be used and developed. Currently, the zoning code has 22 individual zoning districts – each includes an intend statement, allows (and prohibits) specific land uses (discussed in subsection 4.3.1) and establishes a set of dimensional standards (e.g., minimum building setbacks, maximum structure height, etc.). The following table includes each zoning district (as currently adopted as of September 2022) and its intent (or description).

Table 4.2.1.a. Current Zoning Districts and Intent/Description	
Zone	General Plan Description
Public Land (P)	The P (Public Lands) district is intended to contain major open space areas, watershed management areas and major public and quasi-public, recreational, educational and institutional uses, including private lands and uses that are essentially public in character and of specific value to the entire community.
Single-Family Residential District (R-A)	The R-A (Single-Family Residential) district is intended to include lands for urban development and which are provided with a full range of public utilities, including sewers, water, electricity and street drains or are intended to be provided with such utilities in the near future. This district is intended primarily for single-family dwellings, excluding mobile homes, at moderate densities. Structures and uses required to serve recreational, religious and other noncommercial needs of residential areas are allowed as permitted or conditional uses subject to restrictions intended to preserve the residential character of the R-A district.
Single- and Two-Family	The R-B (Single- and Two-Family Residential) district is intended to include lands for urban development and which are provided with a full range of public utilities including sewer, water, and utilities in the future.



<b>Residential District (R-B)</b>	This district is intended primarily for single-family and two-family dwelling units at moderate densities. Structures and uses required to serve recreational and other noncommercial needs of residential areas are allowed as permitted or conditional uses subject to restrictions intended to preserve the residential character of the R-B district.
<b>Multiple-Family Residential District (R-C)</b>	The R-C (Multiple-Family Residential) district is intended to include lands for urban development which are provided with a full range of public utilities, including sewers, water, electricity and street drains or are intended to be provided with such facilities in the future. This district is intended primarily for single- and multiple-family residences at moderately high population densities. Structures required to serve governmental, educational, recreational, religious and limited commercial needs are allowed subject to permitted or conditional use restrictions intended to preserve and protect the residential character of the R-C district.
<b>Rural Residential District (R-R)</b>	The R-R (Rural Residential) district is 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-R districts are intended to protect low-density living, and to protect the rural character of the district.
<b>Semi-Rural Residential District (R-N)</b>	The R-N (Semi-Rural Residential) district is 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.
<b>Residential Mobile Home District (R-M)</b>	The R-M (Residential Mobile Home) district is intended to allow mobile home dwellings within the subdivision which are provided with a full range of public utilities if available. The specific purpose is to make available areas within the city for a specific location of single-family dwellings or single-family mobile home dwellings. The R-M zone will also discourage any use which would generate traffic on minor streets other than normal traffic to serve the residential dwellings on those streets. This district is intended primarily for single-family dwellings at moderate densities. Structures and uses required to serve recreational, religious and other noncommercial needs of residential areas are allowed as permitted or conditional uses subject to restrictions intended to preserve a residential character generally similar to that of a standard single-family area.
<b>Neighborhood Commercial District (N-C)</b>	The N-C (Neighborhood Commercial) district is intended to include lands for urban development which are provided with a full range of public services, including sewers, water, electricity and street drains, or are intended to be provided with such services in the future. The district is intended to encourage the development of small and compact areas for convenience business establishments, which serve the daily needs of adjacent residential neighborhoods. Extension of this district along arterial streets in a "strip" fashion is not intended and shall be discouraged. Further, commercial uses shall be developed as a "mall type" within one structure if more than one such commercial use is desired.
<b>Commercial Residential (C-R)</b>	The C-R (Commercial Residential) district is intended to allow commercial and light industrial uses of land which do not detract from the residential use of the land by introducing excess noise, increased safety hazards, air pollution or water pollution.
<b>Central Business District (CBD)</b>	The CBD (Central Business District) area is served by a full range of utilities and services and is established as a district in which the principal use of land is for retail and parking, personal and business services of all kinds, satisfying the needs of residents of the entire community in one central location. The zone is intended to permit convenient expansion of permitted uses and to provide the proper amount of light and space needed for streets and more exposure of buildings. The CBD area should protect businesses within the zoning district from over-congestion, and should prohibit exclusive residential and industrial uses or any other uses which would substantially interfere with the development and continuation of a cohesive central business district.
<b>General Commercial District (G)</b>	The G (General Commercial) district is served by the major and essential utilities of sewer, water and electricity and is intended to include those areas which are heavily exposed to automobile traffic. The district is intended specifically for those areas surrounding major intersections where personal services, convenience goods and auto-related service facilities are desirable and appropriate land uses. The extension of the G district commercial uses along arterials in a "strip" fashion is discouraged.
<b>Waterfront Commercial District (W-C)</b>	The W-C (Waterfront Commercial) district is intended to be applied to lands with direct access or close proximity to navigable tidal waters within the city. Uses within the W-C district are intended to be water-dependent or water-related and primarily those uses that are particularly related to tourism, recreation or commercial enterprises that derive an economic or social benefit from a waterfront location.

<b>Waterfront Industrial (W-I)</b>	The W-I (Waterfront Industrial) district is intended to be applied to lands with direct access or close proximity to navigable waters within the city. Uses within the W-I district are intended to be water-related and primarily those uses that are particularly related to marine industries. The W-I district is intended to make the city waterfront as productive and efficient as possible for the allowable uses.
<b>Valdez Container Terminal District (VCT)</b>	The VCT (Valdez Container Terminal) district is intended to be applied to this specific facility.. Uses within the VCT district are intended to be shipping, receiving, staging of waterborne freight, and related accessory uses.
<b>Light Industrial District (L-I)</b>	The L-I (Light Industrial) district is intended for light industrial development including light manufacturing, processing, warehousing, storage, wholesale and distribution operations, and similar processes and operations. Limited commercial uses and accessory residential uses are allowed in the L-I district to serve the uses for which the district is primarily intended.
<b>Heavy Industrial District (H-I)</b>	The H-I (Heavy Industrial) district is intended for industrial development, including heavy manufacturing, shipping terminals, natural resource extraction and other processes or operations which involve one or more of the following: employs large numbers of workers, heavy truck traffic, significant environmental effects or large-volume public water or sewer service or storage of hazardous materials under a conditional use permit. Commercial and retail uses are generally not allowed in the H-I district. Residential uses other than accessory uses listed in Section 17.38.030 are prohibited.
<b>Heavy Industrial, Gravel Extraction District (HI-G)</b>	The HI-G (Heavy Industrial, Gravel Extraction) district is intended for gravel extraction as a primary use. This includes the mining of gravel, stockpiling, sorting operations, weighing areas and heavy truck traffic. Other heavy industrial uses not associated with gravel extraction, commercial and retail uses are not allowed in the HI-G district. Residential uses are prohibited.
<b>Airport District (A)</b>	The A (Airport) district is intended to include aviation lands and areas directly adjacent to the airport which, because of their proximity to the airport, are directly influenced by aviation-related uses. Principal land uses within these areas should be aviation-related or of a character that does not conflict with the safe and efficient operation of the airport.
<b>Unclassified Lands District (UL)</b>	The UL (Unclassified Lands) district is intended to include lands which are undeveloped and cannot be precisely zoned due to inadequate information on the extension of public services and utilities, and the suitability of the land to support commercial, residential, industrial or public uses
<b>Conservation District (CO)</b>	The CO (Conservation) district is intended to include only those public lands which have been identified as critical habitat for fish and wildlife by state or federal agencies. The primary use of these lands will be for the enhancement and protection of existing fish and wildlife habitats. Other acceptable uses in this district would include parks whose recreation activities and facilities would be passive in nature. "Passive" is defined as those activities which include wildlife viewing, nature walks, educational and interpretive uses and other uses that do not change the character of the land or disrupt fish and wildlife. Passive activities would be secondary to habitat protection and enhancement.
<b>Avalanche Hazard District (A-H)</b>	The A-H (Avalanche Hazard) district is intended to establish the high hazard areas within the city. Uses within the A-H district will be restricted to maintain life safety by not allowing new or expanded residential development within the designated areas.

#### 4.2.2 – Zoning Dimensional Standards

Each zoning district includes required dimensional standards that guide site elements such as minimum lot size/dimensions (for subdivision activities), building placement (e.g., setbacks and lot coverage), and maximum structural height. The following tables summarize the dimensional standards for each of the current zoning districts (these tables are arranged by broad land use categories, e.g., Commercial, Residential, and Industrial).

<b>Table 4.2.2.a. Current Zoning Dimensional Standards – Commercial Zones</b>					
	<b>Zoning District</b>				
<b>Standard</b>	<b>N-C</b>	<b>C-R</b>	<b>CBD</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>W-C</b>
<b>Lot Width (min.)</b>	100-FT	50-FT	None	50-FT	50-FT
<b>Lot Area (min.)</b>	11,000-SF (up to four dwelling units) PLUS 1,500-SF for each additional dwelling unit	11,000-SF (up to four dwelling units) PLUS 1,500-SF for each additional dwelling units	None	6,000-SF	6,000-SF
<b>Setbacks</b>					
<b>Front</b>	20-FT	20-FT	Subject to building code regarding fire walls and separation of buildings	Subject to building code regarding fire walls and separation of buildings	Subject to building code regarding fire walls and separation of buildings
<b>Side</b>	10-FT, or when abutting a residential zone, side setback shall be the same as abutting zone.	10-FT, or when abutting a residential zone, side setback shall be the same as abutting zone.	When abutting a residential zone, side setback shall be the same as abutting zone.	When abutting a residential zone, side setback shall be the same as abutting zone.	Subject to building code regarding fire walls and separation of buildings & when abutting a residential zone, side setback shall be the same as abutting zone.
<b>Rear</b>	15-FT	15-FT	When abutting a residential zone, side setback shall be the same as abutting zone.	When abutting a residential zone, side setback shall be the same as abutting zone.	Subject to building code regarding fire walls and separation of buildings & when abutting a residential zone, side setback shall be the same as abutting zone.
<b>Lot Coverage (max.)</b>	50%	50%	Unrestricted	Unrestricted	Unrestricted
<b>Structure Height (max.)</b>	35-FT	35-FT	35-FT	Principal Structures: 35-FT Accessory Structures: 16-FT	Principal Structures: 35-FT Accessory Structures: 16-FT
<b>Other Limitations</b>	Commercial space limited to 2,000-SF	--	--	--	--

**Table 4.2.2.a. Current Zoning Dimensional Standards – Commercial Zones**

Standard	Zoning District				
	N-C	C-R	CBD	G	W-C
Density/Intensity Limits	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified
“Setback” means that line that is the required minimum distance from the street right-of-way or any other lot line that establishes the area within which the principal structure must be erected or placed.					

**Table 4.2.2.b. Current Zoning Dimensional Standards – Residential Zones**

Standard	Zoning District					
	R-A	R-B	R-C	R-R	R-N	R-M
Lot Width (min.)	80-FT	80-FT	100-FT	120-FT	135-FT	50-FT
Lot Area (min.)	8,000-SF	8,000-SF	1-2 units: 8,800-SF 3 units: 9,600-SF 4 units: 11,000-SF 5 or more units: Additional 1,500 square feet per unit	40,000-SF	40,000-SF	5,500-SF provided water and sewer are available
Setbacks						
Front	20-FT	20-FT	20-FT	20-FT	20-FT	20-FT
Side	10-FT	10-FT	10-FT	10-FT	10-FT	10-FT
Rear	15-FT	15-FT	15-FT	15-FT	15-FT	15-FT
Lot Coverage (max.)	35%	35%	40%	50%	50%	35%
Structure Height (max.)	Principal: 35-FT Accessory: Less than one acre – 16-FT More than one acre – 35-FT	Principal: 35-FT Accessory: 16-FT	Principal: 35-FT Accessory: 16-FT	Principal: 35-FT Accessory: 35-FT except Ag 40-FT	35-FT	Principal: 35-FT Accessory: 16-FT
Other Limitations	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified
Density/Intensity Limits	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified	Unspecified
“Setback” means that line that is the required minimum distance from the street right-of-way or any other lot line that establishes the area within which the principal structure must be erected or placed.						

**Table 4.2.2.c. Current Zoning Dimensional Standards – Industrial Zones**

Standard	Zoning District					
	W-I	VCT	L-I	H-I	HI-G	A
Lot Width (min.)	50-FT	None	Determined by use and other codes	200-FT	200-FT	None
Lot Area (min.)	6,000-SF	None	Determined by use and other codes	40,000-SF	4,000-SF	None
Setbacks						

Table 4.2.2.c. Current Zoning Dimensional Standards – Industrial Zones						
Standard	Zoning District					
	W-I	VCT	L-I	H-I	HI-G	A
Front	Subject to building code requiring fire walls and separation of structures	None	Subject to building code regarding fire walls and separation of structures	Subject to building code regarding fire walls and separation of structures	Subject to building code regarding fire walls and separation of structures + Fifty feet from any locally used road	Subject to building code regarding fire walls and separation of structures
Side/ Rear	Where it abuts a residential zoning district: same as that required for the residential district	None	Subject to building code regarding fire walls and separation of structures	Subject to building code regarding fire walls and separation of structures.  Where it abuts a residential zoning district: same as that required for the residential district	Subject to building code regarding fire walls and separation of structures + Fifty feet from any locally used road	Subject to building code regarding fire walls and separation of structures
Lot Coverage (max.)	Unrestricted	Unrestricted within setbacks	Unrestricted within setbacks	Unrestricted within setbacks	Unrestricted within setbacks	Unrestricted
Structure Height (max.)	35-FT	Subject to building code	35-FT*	Unrestricted	Unrestricted	Shall not exceed thirty-five feet in height, except as otherwise provided in this title
Other Limitations	<i>Unspecified</i>	<i>Unspecified</i>	*Structures over 35-FT height considered Conditional Uses	<i>Unspecified</i>	<i>Unspecified</i>	<i>Unspecified</i>
Density/Intensity Limits	<i>Unspecified</i>	<i>Unspecified</i>	<i>Unspecified</i>	<i>Unspecified</i>	<i>Unspecified</i>	<i>Unspecified</i>
"Setback" means the line that is the required minimum distance from the street right-of-way or any other lot line that establishes the area within which the principal structure must be erected or placed.						

Table 4.2.2.d. Current Zoning Dimensional Standards – Other Zones				
Standard	Zoning District			
	P	UL	CO	A-H
Lot Width (min.)	Unrestricted	N/A	Unrestricted	None
Lot Area (min.)	<i>Unspecified</i>	N/A	Unrestricted	None
Setbacks				



<b>Table 4.2.2.d. Current Zoning Dimensional Standards – Other Zones</b>				
<b>Standard</b>	<b>Zoning District</b>			
	<b>P</b>	<b>UL</b>	<b>CO</b>	<b>A-H</b>
<b>Front</b>	20-FT	N/A	<i>Lands adjacent to conservation districts will be required to maintain a minimum twenty-five-foot setback</i>	None
<b>Side</b>	10-FT	N/A	<i>Lands adjacent to conservation districts will be required to maintain a minimum twenty-five-foot setback</i>	None
<b>Rear</b>	15-FT	N/A	<i>Lands adjacent to conservation districts will be required to maintain a minimum twenty-five-foot setback</i>	None
<b>Lot Coverage (max.)</b>	50%	N/A	<i>Unspecified</i>	35%
<b>Structure Height (max.)</b>	Principle: 35-FT Accessory: 16-FT	N/A	<i>Unspecified</i>	Subject to building code
<b>Other Limitations</b>	<i>Unspecified</i>	Prior to the development of unclassified lands, the lands must be rezoned following procedures outlined in Chapter 17.54	<i>Unspecified</i>	<i>Unspecified</i>
<b>Density/Intensity Limits</b>	<i>Unspecified</i>	N/A	<i>Unspecified</i>	<i>Unspecified</i>
"Setback" means the line that is the required minimum distance from the street right-of-way or any other lot line that establishes the area within which the principal structure must be erected or placed.				

#### 4.2.3 – Zoning and Place Type Consistency

Zoning districts are intended to implement the land use(s) and intended character for each of the Place Types listed in Plan Valdez. One or multiple zoning districts may be used to implement an individual Place Type. In some cases, a new zoning district (or major amendments to an existing zone) may be warranted to implement a Place Type. Table 4.2.3.a lists each Place Type, their land use category (from Plan Valdez) and the implementing zoning district(s). This table can be used in the code update process to help ensure the City's revised regulatory framework is consistent with the Plan Valdez Place Types in terms of neighborhood/district character and land use allowance. Zoning districts with (\*) do not completely align with the corresponding Place Type as the code is currently written but could reach better alignment with some of the modifications recommended in this report.

<b>Table 4.2.3.a. Place Types and Corresponding Zoning District(s)</b>	
<b>Place Type</b>	<b>Corresponding Zoning District(s)</b>
<b>COMMERCIAL CATEGORY</b>	
<b>Town Center</b>	N-C: Neighborhood Commercial C-R: Commercial Residential CBD: Central Business District G: General Commercial* R-C: Multiple-Family Residential

<b>Table 4.2.3.a. Place Types and Corresponding Zoning District(s)</b>	
<b>Place Type</b>	<b>Corresponding Zoning District(s)</b>
<b>COMMERCIAL CATEGORY</b>	
Mixed-Use Center	C-R Commercial Residential N-C: Neighborhood Commercial G: General Commercial R-B: Single- and Two-Family Residential R-C: Multiple-Family Residential R-M: Residential Mobile Home
Working Waterfront	G: General Commercial W-C: Waterfront Commercial W-I: Waterfront Industrial L-I: Light Industrial Allowances for recreation uses (P district, conditional uses within Industrial districts)
<b>RESIDENTIAL CATEGORY</b>	
New Townsite Neighborhood	R-A: Single-Family Residential R-B: Single- and Two-Family Residential R-C: Multiple-Family Residential R-M: Residential Mobile Home N-C: Neighborhood Commercial
Residential Neighborhood	R-A: Single-Family Residential R-B: Single- and Two-Family Residential R-M: Residential Mobile Home R-C: Multiple-Family Residential*
Rural Neighborhood	R-R: Rural Residential R-N: Semi-Rural Residential R-A Single-Family Residential R-C: Multiple-Family Residential*
<b>INDUSTRIAL CATEGORY</b>	
Industrial Business & Production	L-I: Light Industrial W-I: Waterfront Industrial G: General Commercial W-C: Waterfront Commercial Allowances for recreation uses (P district, conditional uses within Industrial districts)
Industrial Hub	H-I: Heavy Industrial L-I: Light Industrial W-I: Waterfront Industrial Allowances for recreation uses (P district, conditional uses within Industrial districts)
Valdez Airport	A: Airport L-I: Light Industrial G: General Commercial
<b>PUBLIC LAND CATEGORY</b>	
Historic Town Site	CO: Conservation
Recreation	CO: Conservation P: Public Lands G: General Commercial
Conservation	CO: Conservation A-H: Avalanche Hazard
<b>SPECIALTY CATEGORY</b>	
Gateway Corridor Overlay	No applicable zoning district
Destination Resort Overlay	No applicable zoning district
Future Residential/Recreation	P: Public Lands R-A: Single-Family Residential

<b>Table 4.2.3.a. Place Types and Corresponding Zoning District(s)</b>	
<b>Place Type</b>	<b>Corresponding Zoning District(s)</b>
<b>COMMERCIAL CATEGORY</b>	
	R-B: Single- and Two-Family Residential R-M: Multiple-Family Residential R-M Residential Mobile Home
<b>Future Industrial/Working Waterfront</b>	L-I: Light Industrial W-I: Waterfront Industrial H-I: Heavy Industrial Potential PD Planned Development District
Note: Zoning district noted with (*) may not completely align with the place type based on the how the code is currently written (as of October 2022); modifications thereto may be warranted to reach better consistency.	

#### 4.2.4 – Zoning District Considerations and Recommendations

The following lists key considerations and recommendations as they relate to the City’s zoning districts/map to better support the goals/actions and the Place Types listed in Plan Valdez, and to respond to the staff feedback obtained through this code update process.

<b>Table 4.2.4.a. Zoning District/Map Considerations and Recommendations</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Consideration(s)</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
<b>#1 – District Consolidation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some zoning districts appear to be near duplicates of others in terms of dimensional standards and allowable uses (e.g., the RR &amp; RN districts are almost identical). There are also zones that appear to be established to accommodate a single use (e.g., gravel extraction activities in the HI-G zone, and airport operations in the A zone). There is opportunity to consolidate certain districts to result in fewer zones.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consolidate the RR and RN districts.</li> <li>Consolidate the RR and RN districts.</li> <li>Consolidate the R-A and R-B districts.</li> <li>Consolidate the VCT and WI</li> <li>Consolidate the NC and CR districts</li> <li>Consolidate the A and LI districts</li> <li>Consolidate the G and WC districts, and possibly the CBD district.</li> <li>Eliminate single-use districts and allow those uses subject to a conditional use permit in other zones.</li> </ul>
<b>#2 – New or Revised Districts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most place types in Plan Valdez generally allow for a broader mix of land uses (described therein as primary and supporting land uses), while the City’s descriptions and intent statements for each zoning district tends to be more restrictive in terms of land use focus and allowances. (Also see Table 4.3.4.a. for more information pertaining to allowable uses)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amend the description and intent statement for each zoning district to better align with the goals, character and intent of their corresponding place type.</li> </ul>
<b>#3 – Setbacks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The code defines a “Setback” as the required minimum distance from the street right-of-way or any other lot line that establishes the area where the <u>principal</u> structure may be placed. Additionally, a supplemental code standard states that “fences, driveways, paved parking lots, and other non-obstructing uses of the property are permitted within the setback zone.” These definitions/standards suggest that setback standards do not apply to accessory structures or parking lots on the lot/parcel.</li> <li>City staff explained that setbacks are intended to retain areas on a parcel to accommodate for snow shedding.</li> <li>For Residential districts, the code requires relatively large setbacks (e.g., 20-ft front, 10-ft both sides, and 15-ft rear). This reduces the development capacity on smaller lots creating potential barriers for certain housing types (e.g., apartments, townhouses, cottages, and tiny homes). Furthermore, the current standards do not appear to recognize shared wall scenarios associated with duplexes and townhouses (especially where lot lines are established around individual units that share the same structure).</li> <li>In most Commercial districts, the code also requires large minimum setbacks (e.g., the N-C and C-R require 20-ft front, 10-ft both sides, and 15-ft rear). Other commercial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amend the definition to clarify which structures are applicable to minimum setback standards. Alternatively, establish separate setback requirements for accessory structures.</li> <li>Evaluate and determine the land area that would be needed to effectively address snow shedding on individual parcels.</li> <li>Reduce and refine the side and rear setback standards to coincide with the snow storage/shedding needs on individual parcels.</li> <li>Create allowances (or allow for 0-ft side setbacks) for attached housing types where lot lines are established around individual units that share a structure (e.g., duplex and townhouse units with individual lots).</li> </ul>

	<p>districts refer the reader to the City’s building code for setback determination OR require the same setbacks as an abutting residential zone; it appears that 0-ft setbacks may be allowed in the G and W-C districts unless the building code or adjacent zone says otherwise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In most Industrial districts, the code refers the reader to the building code to determine the setbacks; it appears that 0-ft setbacks may be allowed in those situations unless the building code says otherwise. Notably, the VCT does not require setbacks, and the HI-G requires a 50-ft setback from local roadways.</li> <li>▪ Pursuant to Plan Valdez, some of the Place Types are intended to support a more compact and walkable land use character; large setback requirements may conflict with the Plan’s intent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create build-to lines or maximum setbacks in areas of the city that are intended to support urban-scaled projects and more compact housing types. Specifically focus on zones intended to implement Commercial Place Types.</li> <li>▪ Include snow storage areas as one criterion for permitting and include general standards to guide staff in evaluation.</li> <li>▪ Continue to require larger setbacks between zones that pose compatibility concerns for adjacent land uses (e.g., larger setbacks for industrial uses that abut residential).</li> </ul>
<b>#4 Lot Sizes &amp; Dimensions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ For Commercial zones, the code establishes minimum dimensions for lots (e.g., lot area and width). Notably, the N-C and C-R zones require a minimum lot width between 50 and 100-ft and minimum lot size of 11,000-sf PLUS 1,500-sf for each dwelling unit. These standards are usually applicable to subdivision activities. The current standards may conflict with the intended compact, pedestrian-oriented character of the corresponding Place Types. Furthermore, vertical mixed-use and urban infill projects could be accommodated on smaller parcels (especially in Downtown and along the waterfront).</li> <li>▪ For Residential zones, the minimum lot dimensions for the R-A, R-B, and R-C are quite large (i.e., 8,000-sf to 11,000-sf minimum lot area) considering they are intended for urban areas of the city. Furthermore, the R-B and R-C zones are intended to allow for attached and multi-family units; yet the minimum lot dimensions tend to require these housing types to be placed on a shared lot. There are opportunities to reduce the minimum lot dimensions based on housing types so that new lots can be established around individual units (e.g., a buyer could purchase a townhouse unit and own the front and rear yards). Smaller lots could increase the City’s housing capacity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduce the minimum lot size for commercial zones, with priority on the N-C, C-R, and districts to better accommodate (and promote) compact urban infill projects in the downtown and waterfront areas.</li> <li>▪ In the R-A zone, reduce the minimum lot size/lot width to allow for more housing in single-family subdivisions served with public utilities.</li> <li>▪ In the R-B and R-C zones, adopt separate minimum lot sizes for different housing types (e.g., single-family, duplexes, townhouses, and multi-family structures) to allow the creation of lots around individual units (e.g., townhouse/duplex units).</li> </ul>
<b>#5 – Building Height</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ For most Commercial and Residential zones, the maximum building height for principal building(s) is 35-ft; this would allow for up to 3 above ground levels with a modest roof pitch. There may be opportunities to increase the maximum height in the downtown, waterfront areas, and residential neighborhoods where the community would support more urban-scale development.</li> <li>▪ For some Industrial zones (namely the VCT, H-I, and HI-G), the maximum building height is 35-ft which may limit certain industries’ ability to operate based on interior space needs. For other industrial zones, the code does not establish any height limitations, which could pose compatibility concerns to adjacent land uses. There is</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revise the building height definition for clarity and simplicity.</li> <li>▪ Consider increasing the maximum principal building height allowances in areas of the city that are intended to support more intense, urban-scale projects (e.g., downtown, waterfront, and certain urban neighborhoods).</li> <li>▪ .</li> <li>▪ Increase the maximum accessory structure building height allowance for certain</li> </ul>

	<p>opportunity to reevaluate the maximum height limits (or lack thereof) for all industrial zones.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For most accessory structures, the various zoning districts limit the maximum height to 16-ft. This may be challenging to construct two story accessory buildings (e.g., a detached garage with second-floor habitable space). There is opportunity to increase the maximum allowable building height for accessory structures.</li> </ul>	<p>zones from 16-ft to allow for multi-level buildings with sloped roofs.</p>
<b>#6 – Lot Coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on the code’s current definitions; “Coverage” means the percentage of the total area allowed to be covered by buildings or structures of any type or size. “Structure” means anything which is constructed or erected and which is located on or under the ground, or attached to something fixed to the ground. Based on these definitions, the maximum lot coverage standards for each zone are applied to buildings, paved parking areas, and other site improvements (affixed to the ground). This greatly limits the development potential for an individual lot/parcel.</li> <li>For Commercial zones N-C and C-R, the maximum lot coverage is 50%, there is opportunity to increase this limit to accommodate more urban-scale mixed use projects.</li> <li>For Residential zones, each zoning district has a unique lot coverage limit. Notably, zones for urban areas allow up to 35-40% coverage, yet rural zones allow up to 50% coverage. In best planning practices, jurisdictions typically allow for more lot coverage closer to the urban core but greatly limit lot coverage in rural areas (especially given the larger lot sizes that contain natural vegetation and provide groundwater recharge function).</li> <li>For Industrial zones, the code does not limit lot coverage, meaning that the entire lot may be covered with impervious surfaces and buildings (though still subject to setback requirements). Industrial sites with large impervious coverage could create situations where untreated stormwater/snow melt runoff could be discharged in the nearby waterbodies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amend the definition for lot coverage to exclude parking lots and other improvements that do not extend much higher than the parcel’s finished grade.</li> <li>Consider eliminating the maximum lot coverage standard for urban residential zones (e.g., R-A, R-B, R-C, and R-M).</li> <li>Establish maximum lot coverage standards for industrial zones while allowing for administrative exceptions where effective stormwater and snowmelt treatment facilities are provided on a given lot.</li> <li>**Alternatively, eliminate the maximum lot coverage in all zones and rely on other code provisions to limit development intensity on individual parcels.</li> </ul>
<b>#7 – Building Orientation and Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan Valdez describes several place types as pedestrian-oriented areas of the community. Notably, the Town Center description includes buildings oriented to the adjacent streets. Other Place Types are described with mixed-use buildings.</li> <li>The current code does not appear to have standards relating to required building orientation or street-facing façade design. There is opportunity to establish standards that improve building appearance and their relation to area streets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt minor (yet reasonable) design standards for properties in pedestrian-oriented areas of the city (with an emphasis on Downtown, the waterfront, and urban mixed-use neighborhoods). Adopt standards relating to building orientation, minimum window coverage, pedestrian access, and entrance placement.</li> </ul>
<b>#8 – Zoning Map</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are several areas where the zoning maps do not align with the boundaries or intended uses in the Plan Valdez Place Types. For example, there are multiple conservation place types that are zoned for a variety of commercial or residential uses. There are also Mixed-Use Center Place Types that are currently zoned industrial.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update the zoning map for consistency with the place types in Plan Valdez.</li> </ul>

<b>#9 – Zone Descriptions/ Intent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many of the zoning district intent statements are not consistent with the uses allowed in that district.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update district descriptions and intent statements a) to reflect the uses that are allowed and (b) to better describe the intended character therein.</li> </ul>
<b>#10 – Outdated Language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Throughout the document there are outdated terms used with regard to uses and within district intent statements. In many cases, this outdated language unnecessarily restricts desired development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update the code to replace outdated terms with more modern and/or more encompassing language.</li> </ul>



## 4.3: USE AND CONDITIONAL USE STANDARDS

### 4.3.1 – Current Land Use Standards

*Title 17 – Zoning* lists land uses within each zone as either a (i) “permitted use” or (ii) “conditional use”. The Code implies that if a use is not specifically designated (listed as either permitted or conditional use) then it is considered prohibited. Table 4.3.1.a summarizes the allowable uses for each zone (this is a consolidated list of most typical uses that may occur in a given zone – for brevity, specialized and less typical use are omitted). The bullets below further describe the review procedures for permitted versus conditional uses.

- **Permitted Uses:** Uses listed as a “permitted use” are allowed within the zone without additional conditions. Through an administrative review, the City’s Zoning Administrator must approve any associated site development activities to ensure compliance with other Code sections (e.g., buildings, parking areas, etc.). This zoning review and approval takes place during the building permit process. Where site improvements are proposed, the applicant must prepare and submit a site plan so that staff can ensure compliance with the code.
- **Conditional Uses:** Uses listed as a “conditional use” require review and approval from the City’s Planning and Zoning Commission in a public hearing format. Conditional uses are reviewed on a case by case basis and are generally subject to criteria related to public health, safety and welfare as well as consistency with the comprehensive plan and intent of the zoning ordinance. The conditional use review duration is a maximum 60 days between application and Planning & Zoning Commission recommendation and may require site plans or other documentation that explains the applicant’s proposal. The Planning Commission will hear public testimony, review the application, and choose to approve, approve with conditions, or deny the proposal. An additional 30 days is allowed for the City Council to take final action. (See subsection 4.3.2 for more information pertaining to conditional use requirements)
- **Prohibited Uses:** Uses that are not listed as permitted, accessory or conditional in the zoning districts are generally assumed to be prohibited in the zone. Each zone includes the following language under prohibited uses, in addition to listing any uses that are specifically prohibited: “any uses or structures not of a character indicated under permitted principal uses and structures or permitted as a conditional use are prohibited”. This clause provides some flexibility for interpretations of specific uses by planning staff.

<b>Table 4.3.1.a. Consolidated List of Allowable uses By Zone</b>		
<b>**The uses herein area a consolidated list allowable uses for each zone - See Appendix B for a comprehensive list of allowable uses</b>		
<b>Zoning District</b>	<b>Typical Permitted Uses</b>	<b>Typical Conditional and Accessory Uses</b>
<b>RESIDENTIAL ZONES</b>		
<b>R-A</b>	Single-family dwellings (excluding mobile homes) Parks Group care facilities Childcare homes	Home occupations Accessory buildings (in conjunction of a permitted use) Automobile parking (in conjunction with another use) Religious uses
<b>R-B</b>	Single-family dwellings (excluding mobile homes) Two-family dwellings (excluding mobile homes) Parks Group care facilities	Childcare centers Religious uses Community buildings Condominiums, townhouses, PUDs
<b>R-C</b>	Single-family, two-family and multiple-family dwellings, excluding mobile homes	Multiple-family dwellings with more than one principal structure per lot

**Table 4.3.1.a. Consolidated List of Allowable uses By Zone**

\*\*The uses herein area a consolidated list allowable uses for each zone - See Appendix B for a comprehensive list of allowable uses

<b>Zoning District</b>	<b>Typical Permitted Uses</b>	<b>Typical Conditional and Accessory Uses</b>
	Childcare homes Group care facilities Parks	Condominiums, townhouses, cluster housing and PUDs Schools Childcare centers Religious uses Community buildings Libraries, museums, art galleries
R-R	Single-family and two-family dwellings, including single-family mobile homes (one principal dwelling only) Schools Parks Childcare centers and homes Group care facilities Community buildings Raising of livestock Gardening, greenhouses, nurseries, aquaculture	Religious uses Heavy equipment storage Natural resource extraction Raising of livestock, riding stables Veterinary services / hospitals
R-N	Single-family and two-family dwellings, including single-family mobile homes (one principal dwelling only) Schools Parks Childcare centers and homes Group care facilities Community buildings Gardening, greenhouses, nurseries, aquaculture	Religious uses Heavy equipment storage
R-M	Childcare homes Group care facilities Parks Mobile Home (one dwelling only) Single-family dwelling	Childcare centers Religious uses
N-C	Single-family dwellings Owner/managers apartment above commercially allowed enterprise Drugstores Eating, drinking, entertainment Grocery Services – barber/beauty shops, laundry Group care facilities	Condominiums, townhouses, cluster housing and PUDs Religious uses Childcare centers Retail Veterinary clinics, kennels Automobile service stations and repair Fire station, lift station, water wells
C-R	Single family and two-family homes Mobile homes Retail Office Services Group care facilities	Religious uses Condominiums, townhouses, cluster housing and PUDs Multifamily dwellings Eating and drinking establishments Grocery Schools Retail Police and fire station Motels Funeral homes Light manufacturing Food processing Warehousing
CBD	Professional services Retail Repair Drugstores	Assembly hall Commercial PUDs Limited marijuana cultivation facilities (in conjunction with a retail store)

**Table 4.3.1.a. Consolidated List of Allowable uses By Zone**

\*\*The uses herein area a consolidated list allowable uses for each zone - See Appendix B for a comprehensive list of allowable uses

Zoning District	Typical Permitted Uses	Typical Conditional and Accessory Uses
	Distribution – appliance Bakery Personal services – banks, barber, beauty, laundry, etc. Breweries, brewpubs, distilleries, winery Childcare centers Eating and drinking establishments Food stores and food processing Hotel Museum and art gallery Funeral homes Office Police and fire station Marijuana testing facilities and retail stores Pawnshops or secondhand stores Schools Library	
G	All uses listed in CBD, plus the following: Accessory buildings Automobile service stations and repair Childcare facilities Community buildings Hardware materials and supply in enclosed buildings Motels Multi-family dwellings Parks	Boat/marine storage and repair facilities Commercial PUDs RV campgrounds Playgrounds Limited marijuana cultivation/manufacturing facilities (only in conjunction with a retail store)
W-C	Water-oriented services and facilities Eating and drinking establishments Fish and seafood markets Hotels Retail stores, Gift shops Laundromat Travel agencies, Visitor information center Waterfront parks, access paths, and boardwalks Marijuana retail stores and testing facilities	Boat repair Camper and boat trailer parking Limited marijuana cultivation and manufacturing facilities (only in conjunction with a retail store)
W-I	Barge freight and ferry terminal Boat/marine equipment storage yard, sales, and repair facilities Port and harbor facilities, shipyards Seafood processing plants and facilities Storage and warehouse facilities	All industries dependent on marine transportation Eating and drinking establishments
VCT	Ferry terminal and cruise ship landing Freight staging and handling areas Fuel piers Port and harbor facilities Waterborne vessels terminals	N/A
L-I	Agriculture nurseries and greenhouses Automobile service stations Barge freight, ferry terminal Breweries, distilleries, wineries Building material supply Marine/boat/water-oriented services, equipment, repair, storage, sales, and facilities Marijuana cultivation, testing, manufacturing, retail Professional offices Seafood processing plants and facilities	Airports Animal hospital, veterinary services, kennels Asphalt and concrete plants Correctional facilities Hazardous and flammable storage and distribution Mobile homes RV campground Restaurant, tavern, cocktail lounge Sawmills

**Table 4.3.1.a. Consolidated List of Allowable uses By Zone**

\*\*The uses herein area a consolidated list allowable uses for each zone - See Appendix B for a comprehensive list of allowable uses

Zoning District	Typical Permitted Uses	Typical Conditional and Accessory Uses
	Shipyards Storage and warehouse	Solid waste processing facilities
H-I	All uses listed in L-I, plus the following: Agriculture, forestry, and fishery resource processing Aquaculture operations Construction yards, equipment, and storage Power generation Fabrication facilities Manufacturing and processing facilities Mining support services Petroleum exploration and development operations and service bases	Airports Explosive ammunition, gunpowder manufacturing and storage Junkyards, auto wrecking Natural resource extraction Outdoor shooting ranges Petroleum related facilities Storage, manufacturing, handling, use of flammable, combustible, and hazardous materials
HI-G	Gravel extraction Storage and stockpile sites	Resource extraction other than gravel
A	Air freight and aircraft related operations, warehouses, offices, sales, maintenance, repair, schools, etc. Car rental agencies Drinking and eating establishments (airport terminal) Gift shops and related tourist industries Marijuana retail stores	Automobile service stations Drinking and eating establishments (outside the airport terminal building) Hotels Offices (commercial) which are in character with the general use of the airport district
UL	See Appendix B for details	
CO	None	Interpretive displays including signage Pedestrian trails, boardwalks, platforms Vehicle pullouts, parking lots, access roads
A-H	See Appendix B for details	

**Accessory Structures** – The current code defines an accessory structure as “incidental and subordinate to the main use of the property and located on the same lot as the main use”. While the code allows for accessory structures in most zones, the following lists key situations.

- **Quantity Limits** – The code does not appear to specify how many accessory structures may be allowed on an individual parcel.
- **Independent Structures** – The code definition implies that an accessory structure, like a standalone shed or garage, may only be allowed where a principal building exists on the same lot/parcel.
- **Accessory Dwelling Units** – The code does not include allowances or provisions relating to accessory dwelling units on individual lots. These are typically described as separate dwelling units with kitchen and bathroom facilities that are either attached or detached from the principal dwelling unit(s) occupying the same parcel.
- **Sheds and Workshops** – The current code provisions suggest that accessory structures should be smaller (e.g., incidental and subordinate) to the main use of the property, whereas the code does not appear to include limitations and allowances regarding the size of accessory structures in relation to the principal building(s) on the property. This is particularly important when determining allowances for large sheds or workshops that a property owner may desire on their property.

#### 4.3.2 – Conditional Use Review Standards

Conditional uses are reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis when the City determines that the proposal is compatible with the surrounding character and land uses. City staff and the Planning and Zoning Commission use these criteria when deciding to approve, approve with conditions, or deny conditional use applications.

- **General Review Criteria:** All conditional uses are subject to the following review guidance: “If it is the finding of the commission, after consideration of the report of such investigation, that it is empowered under the provisions of this title to grant the request for conditional use and restrictions or conditions will be in accordance with the comprehensive plan and will not endanger the public health, safety or general welfare, or be inconsistent with the specific provisions and the general purpose and intent of this title, the commission may approve the application with or without conditions.” More specifically, Chapter 17.50.020 provides the following criteria:
  - A. Topography, slope and soil stability, geophysical hazards, surface and subsurface drainage and water quality, and the probable effects of the proposed conditional use upon these factors.
  - B. Utilities and services requirements of the proposed conditional use, including sewers, storm drainage, water, fire protection, access and electrical power; the planning and zoning commission may request the assistance of public officials with knowledge of the relevant public utility and service systems in evaluating the probable effects of the proposed use of public systems, and may consider the costs of enlarging, upgrading or extending public utility or service systems for the proposed use in establishing conditions under which the use shall be permitted.
  - C. Lot or tract characteristics, including minimum lot size, minimum yard requirements, maximum lot coverage by all buildings or structures, and maximum height of buildings or structures.
  - D. Use characteristics of the proposed conditional use that affect adjacent uses and districts, including hours of operation, numbers of persons, traffic volumes, off-street parking and loading facilities, trash and litter removal, exterior lighting, noise, vibration, dust, smoke, heat and humidity, recreation and open space requirements.
  - E. Community appearance, such as landscaping, fencing and screening, depending upon the specific use and its visual impact on the community

Applicants shall demonstrate that their conditional use request complies with the review criteria – this is generally in the form of a project narrative and site plan provided with their application.

#### 4.3.3 – Standards/Criteria for Specific Uses

The Code lists additional standards and/or review criteria for specific land uses that may be subject to a conditional use permitting process. The following lists those uses with a summary of these additional standards and review criteria.

- **Gravel Extraction** – Gravel extraction outside of the HI-G Heavy Industrial district requires a conditional use permit. The Planning & Zoning Commission may approve a CUP for gravel extraction if the use meets the following standards:
  1. The extraction operations will not pose a hazard to the public health and safety;

2. The extraction operations will not generate noise, dust, surface water runoff or traffic that will unduly affect the surrounding land use;
  3. The permittee assures that after extraction operations cease, the site will be left in a safe, stable and aesthetically acceptable condition
- **Planned Unit Development (PUDs)** – PUDs are allowed in the R-B and R-C districts to encourage integrated uses and flexibility in design. There are separate standards for Residential and Commercial PUDs, as well as a list of detailed standards for townhouses.

Residential PUD standards related to uses (cluster, duplex, multi-plex condominium, and townhouses), density, common open space and perimeter requirements.

Commercial PUD standards include privacy buffers around the perimeter and dimensional flexibility.

Standards for Townhomes include:

1. A detailed development plan is submitted with the application for a conditional use, including a site plan drawn to scale. The site plan shall include but shall not be limited to the topography and drainage of the proposed site, the location of all buildings and structures on the site, courts and open space areas, circulation patterns, ingress and egress points, parking areas (including the total number of parking spaces provided) and a general floor plan of the principal buildings, together with such other information required by the planning commission.
2. No more than one townhouse project shall be located any closer than three hundred feet to another townhouse project unless otherwise approved by the planning commission.
3. Minimum lot width of twenty-eight feet for an individual townhouse project unless otherwise approved by the planning commission.
4. Minimum lot area for each townhouse unit shall be two thousand square feet and the townhouse project must conform to the following:
  - a. Total first floor area shall not exceed forty percent of the lot area;
  - b. Total open area shall be at least one hundred ten percent of the total floor area;
  - c. Open area, if provided, shall not include areas used for parking or vehicular access;
  - d. Parking space area shall be provided at the minimum rate of two spaces per dwelling unit exclusive of traffic lanes in parking lots, and street dedications.
5. Each townhouse unit shall have a total yard area containing at least seven hundred square feet. Such total yard area may be reduced to five hundred square feet if common open or common recreational area, not including parking spaces, is available for each unit.
6. Minimum setbacks for townhouse developments shall adhere to the setback requirements of the zoning district within which it is located.

- **Child Care Centers** – Special standards for child care centers include meeting all current state day care center licensing requirements. CUPs for child care centers are nontransferable and valid only while the state license is valid.
- **Telecommunication Towers** – CUPs are required for the construction of communication towers exceeding thirty-five feet in height within all zoning districts of the city. Criteria for approval include:
  1. **Location and Visual Impact.** The proposed location of the telecommunication tower will minimize the visual impact on the surrounding area while allowing the telecommunication tower to function in accordance with minimum standards imposed by the applicable telecommunications regulations and the applicant’s technical design requirements. Telecommunication towers and attached antennas and equipment must be painted or coated in a color that blends with the surrounding environment. Muted colors, earth tones, and subdued hues, such as gray, shall be used. All associated structures such as equipment buildings, including the roofs, shall be painted with earth tone colors unless otherwise required under this code or other applicable law. Where necessary to make a telecommunication tower compatible with the historical, environmental or cultural character of its location, the planning and zoning commission may require that the telecommunication tower be disguised, hidden or screened, or integrated as an architectural feature of a structure, to reduce its visual impact.
  2. **Inability to Collocate.** It is not feasible to locate the applicant’s telecommunication antenna and other equipment on any existing structure or tower under the control of the applicant.
  3. **Location in a Residential Zoning District.** An applicant seeking to locate a telecommunication tower in a residential zoning district must show that the area cannot be adequately served by a telecommunication tower located in a nonresidential zoning district for valid technical reasons.
  4. **Design for Future Use.** A new telecommunication tower shall be designed to allow collocation of telecommunication antennas equal in number to the applicant’s present and reasonably foreseeable future requirements.
  5. **Safety Code Met.** The telecommunication tower meets all applicable laws and code requirements, including without limitation health, nuisance, noise, fire, building and safety code requirements.
  6. **Distance from Existing Telecommunication Towers.** A telecommunication tower shall not be approved if it is located within one-half mile (two thousand six hundred forty feet) of an existing telecommunication tower, unless the applicant certifies that the existing telecommunication tower does not meet the applicant’s structural specifications and technical design requirements, or that a collocation agreement could not be obtained.
  7. **Zoning Requirements.** With the exception of requirements for setback and height, which are established in this section, the telecommunication tower must comply with all applicable zoning laws and regulations.
  8. **Signs.** No signs may be located on a telecommunication tower except for identification signage.



9. Lighting. No lighting may be located on a telecommunication tower except as reasonably required for safety purposes or as required by the Federal Communications Commission, Federal Aviation Administration or other government agency with jurisdiction.
10. Fencing. A fence with a minimum height of eight feet must be placed on the perimeter of the site of a telecommunication tower site to limit access by the public

#### 4.3.4 – Land Uses Considerations and Recommendations

The following lists key considerations and recommendations as they relate to the allowable land uses and review criteria. The City may choose to make regulatory refinements to support consistency with Plan Valdez and other city goals.

<b>Table 4.3.4.a. Land Use Considerations and Recommendations</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
<b>#1.a – New or revised districts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Most place types in Plan Valdez generally allow for a broader mix of land uses (described therein as primary and supporting land uses), while the City’s current zoning districts tend to be more restrictive with regards to allowable land uses. Specifically, each zone has its own land use focus (restricting options for property use); albeit there is opportunity to reevaluate each zoning district and its consistency with the corresponding Place Type.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expand allowable land uses and create more general categories for each zoning district (as appropriate) to create more flexibility for property use and to better align the zone with its corresponding Place Type.</li> <li>▪ Make certain uses, that pose compatibility or life/safety concerns at certain locations, subject to conditional use review (and a public hearing) so proposals fit seamlessly into the surrounding context.</li> <li>▪ Consider establishing overlays or just special standards for specific uses that currently have their own districts (such as VCT and A).</li> </ul>
<b>#1.b – Use Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The list of permitted, accessory, and conditional uses is extensive and very detailed. Because, by law, uses not specifically listed in a zoning ordinance are considered prohibited, this does not leave much room for flexibility or interpretation of similar uses.</li> <li>▪ Many uses are near duplicates of other listed uses in each zone.</li> <li>▪ More permitted and conditional uses should be included in the zoning districts to ensure that all Primary and Supporting uses in the Place Types from Plan Valdez are effectively accommodated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish “Use Groups” that cover broad (and more general) land uses which would allow for more flexibility and room for interpretation, such as “Retail”, “Dining,” “Residential – Detached,” “Residential – Attached”</li> <li>▪ Reevaluate which uses should be allowed in each zone based on their consistency with the corresponding Place Types.</li> <li>▪ Add more permitted and conditional uses to zoning districts where appropriate to align with Place Types. Specifically, uses that may be appropriate under certain circumstances could be classified as “conditional” so they are reviewed (and allowed) on a case-by-case basis and subject to compatibility provisions.</li> </ul>

**Table 4.3.4.a. Land Use Considerations and Recommendations**

Item	Consideration	Recommendation
<b>#2 – Specific Use Criteria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For districts recommended for consolidation, there may be specific uses or aspects of uses that the City wishes to review with a higher level of scrutiny (such as drive-through service windows, or specific industrial uses).</li> <li>Some permitted uses may pose compatibility concerns for adjacent properties/uses, there is opportunity to adopt specific use criteria that would be applicable to those uses (even if they are not a conditional use or subject to a public hearing).</li> <li>In several zones, the current code lists several uses as “conditional,” yet they align with the zone’s intent and the corresponding place type (e.g., in the R-C zone, townhouses and some multi-family buildings are listed as conditional uses). There is opportunity to make certain uses “permitted” where they are included in the zone’s description and intent statement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reevaluate which uses should be permitted or conditional in each zoning district using the Place Type descriptions as the guide. Uses that are appropriate for the zone yet pose potential compatibility concerns should be reviewed as conditional uses. Amend the use allowances in each zone based on the evaluation findings.</li> <li>Adopt specific review criteria for select uses that may require additional design, buffering, and/or compatibility measures to allow them to be seamlessly added to specific neighborhoods within the city. Focus on multi-family buildings, drive-through service windows, intense industrial operations, and commercial services in or close to residential neighborhoods.</li> </ul>
<b>#3 – Complementary Uses in Industrial Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are certain uses that are complimentary to industrial and employment operations that lessen the demand for vehicle trips (e.g., eateries, worker housing, and maintenance/service establishments).</li> <li>Accessory retail space may be appropriate for manufacturers and processors to sell their finished goods on the same site as the fabrication/production activities occur (e.g., a small market space where fish processing occurs). There is opportunity to allow some nonindustrial uses and accessory retail space as “permitted.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow complementary uses as accessory and/or as permitted uses. Consider whether to adopt specific criteria and limitations for said uses to preserve most of the land in the zone for industrial and job-creating activities.</li> <li>Update industrial districts to allow showrooms or retail areas as accessory uses.</li> </ul>
<b>#4 – Housing Types</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a strong local desire for the code to be more permissive regarding housing types and where they are permitted. The community has a housing shortage yet the code includes several regulatory barriers to residential development. There is opportunity to streamline the City’s regulatory framework to support housing development.</li> <li>For residential zones, attached and multi-family-style housing are focused in the R-B and R-C districts. The code does not allow for more compact single-family housing types (e.g., cottage homes, and other houses on smaller lots). Furthermore, there are situations where a townhouse and certain multi-family housing requires conditional use approval (including a public hearing). Additionally, mobile homes are considered differently than single-family homes and are permitted/regulated separately.</li> <li>For Commercial zones, housing could complement the adjacent uses and build in a local consumer base. Townhouse and multi-family buildings generally mimic the size/scale of commercial structures. Yet most of the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define, in more general terms, a wider range of housing types. Add housing types like cluster or cottage housing (e.g., houses on smaller lots), live-work units, etc.</li> <li>Expand the list of permitted housing types for each zone. Specifically make multi-family, townhouses, and duplexes allowed (under certain criteria) in the R-B, R-C, and commercial zones.</li> <li>Reevaluate whether mobile homes should be permitted in the same manner as single-family houses (while their construction methods are different, they have very similar character and impact on a neighborhood but at a much lower cost).</li> </ul>

Table 4.3.4.a. Land Use Considerations and Recommendations		
Item	Consideration	Recommendation
	commercial zones either do not allow housing or require conditional use approval.	
<b>#5 – Use Table</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each zoning district includes a text list of permitted, accessory and conditional uses that may be allowed. This has led to many uses that are the same but have <i>slightly</i> different wording. It also makes it difficult for users to decipher which district(s) allows certain land use and development activity as compared to others. There is opportunity to include a single table in the code that lists each land use activity and how they are allowed in each zoning district.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create one use table that lists all use groups by zoning district. The table should define which uses are allowed as permitted or conditional use approval. Include notations if the use would be subject to specific use criteria (see #2 above)</li> </ul>
<b>#6 – Ownership References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several places in the ordinance refer to condominiums as a permitted or conditional use. The term “condominium” refers to an ownership structure and not a specific housing type. Fair housing law prohibits zoning from regulating the ownership structure of a development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove references to condominiums (or rental housing) and replace with descriptions of specific, physical housing types (like courtyard apartments, manufactured homes, tiny homes, 4- or 8-plexes, rowhouses and more).</li> </ul>
<b>#7 – Mixed Use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While mixed use (within a site, neighborhood, or building) is referenced many times in Plan Valdez (and within its place types), there is only one district (C-R) that explicitly allows residential to mix with commercial uses. The Planned Unit Development provisions encourage integrated development, but the uses allowed are segregated into residential PUDs and commercial PUDs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine existing districts for opportunities to allow a wider mix of uses. Prioritize zoning districts that are intended to implement the more urban-scale Place Types.</li> <li>As appropriate, adopt specific use criteria to achieve a true mixed-use development pattern (See #2 above).</li> </ul>
<b>#8 – Accessory Dwelling units</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The code does not appear to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) as part of residential parcels. These are typically separate living quarters from the principal dwelling on the lot – these units typically include individual entrances, kitchen, and bathroom spaces (e.g., garage apartments, “mother-in-law” quarters, etc.) ADUs can be either attached or detached to the principal dwelling. There is opportunity to make allowances (and limitations) for this housing type. ADUs can provide supplemental income to homeowners, create more affordable housing options, and even accommodate extended family members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow ADUs on all residential properties while adopting specific use criteria so the structures fit seamlessly into the neighborhood (e.g., size, quantity, and locational limitations).</li> <li>Avoid onerous regulatory provisions that add to permitting time and construction costs, and complicate lending/financing activities (e.g., do NOT require separate utility meters, additional parking, limit who may occupy the ADU, or excessive façade design treatments).</li> </ul>

## 4.4: PARKING STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT

Chapter 17.48.100 provides the City's off-street parking requirements. Specific standards are listed for each use. Some uses listed in this section are not listed anywhere else in the ordinance (for instance, welfare or correctional institution); these are candidates for removal or consolidation. Many of the uses are outdated and require modernization (i.e. boarding houses, dance halls and launderettes).

<b>Table 4.4.a. Sample Parking Ratios</b>	
<b>Use</b>	<b>Off-street Parking Required</b>
<b>Single-Family Residential</b>	Two spaces per unit
<b>Multi-Family Residential (5 or more units)</b>	1.5 spaces per unit
<b>Grocery store</b>	1 space per 200 sf. gross floor space
<b>Industrial</b>	1 space per 400 sf. gross area OR 1 space per 3 employees, whichever is greater
<b>Retail</b>	1 space per 300 sf. retail floor area

It is one of the community's goals to balance the need for walkability with the needs of residents and freight carriers to drive in the community. Staff, Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council members have identified that the number of spaces and the required dimensions often render local parking lots too small. Staff have also identified that many of the uses listed are too specific, cumbersome, and often do not fit the uses being proposed.

Current requirements for parking dimensions (stalls, drive isles) are shown below. For 90-degree spaces, the most common, the depth is slightly larger than what we typically see (19' versus 18' typical). However, staff has indicated that large vehicles present problems because they cannot fit in a typical parking space and/or they block drive aisles.

<b>Table 4.4.b. Parking Dimensional requirements</b>	
<b>Type</b>	<b>Required Dimensions</b>
<b>90-degree space</b>	8' x 19'
<b>90-degree one-way aisle</b>	12' width
<b>90-degree two-way aisle</b>	29' width
<b>45-degree space</b>	8' x 19'1"
<b>45-degree single aisle</b>	14'1" width
<b>60-degree space</b>	8' x 19'
<b>60-degree single aisle</b>	19' width
<b>Parallel space</b>	8' x 23'
<b>Parallel one-way aisle</b>	12'
<b>Wheel curb offset</b>	2'

### Recommendations:

1. The number of spaces required for each use should be reviewed and updated to reflect current local needs and national standards. Consult Institute for Transportation Engineers (ITE) Standards as a starting point.
2. Standards for mixed use spaces should be reviewed, as there are often opportunities for the uses to share parking spaces.

3. Consider creating parking *maximums* as well as minimums, which will prevent over-parked sites and help with stormwater runoff.
4. Update drive aisle width minimums and parking space dimensions to account for larger vehicles. Require a certain percentage of parking spaces be reserved for these vehicles.
5. Include administrative allowances to meeting parking demand in creative ways, including on-street parking and shared parking lots within a maximum distance.

## 4.5: ADMINISTRATION AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

The following summarizes the administrative and review procedures for certain applications outlined in the code.

### Conditional Uses

Conditional uses are under the authority of the Planning and Zoning Commission. The lists of which uses require a CUP are included within each zoning district. Specific criteria for granting conditional uses are set forth in the code. Conditional Use Permit application submittals must include a project narrative, site plans and supporting drawings, and information on parking, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, open space, and utilities.

### Variances and exceptions

These applications allow applicants to formal seek adjustments (or relief) for certain code provisions based on unique situations associated with the lots or development proposal. In most cases, applicants are NOT allowed to seek exceptions, or variances, to the use provisions of a given zone. Unlike conditional uses, there is no specific approval body stated in the ordinance. Given the proximity of this section to other powers of the Planning and Zoning Commission, one might assume that approval power over variances resides with the Commission. However, the approval body should be stated explicitly in the ordinance.

Criteria for approving variances are listed in Chapter 17.06.050. The use of the word “hardship” is outdated and potentially contradictory to the “practical difficulties” criteria. Hardship should be removed from the approval criteria, as recent case law has determined that practical difficulty is the appropriate standard.

An opportunity to make the ordinance more accommodating to property owners seeking small variances is to allow administrative variances up to a certain size or percentage of requirements. This could include variances of up to 5 feet into a required setback, or up to 10% of required lot coverage or lot size.

### Nonconformities

Chapter 17.52 lays out the requirements for nonconforming lots, uses and structures. The intent is to permit the nonconformities to continue until they are removed, but not encourage their perpetuation. The Chapter defines a nonconformity as those that were *lawful* on January 17, 1983 (the year the zoning ordinance was adopted). It is more common to state something to the effect of “lawful when established” rather than referring to a specific date.

- The nonconforming lot provisions allow a principal use and accessory buildings to be constructed on a nonconforming lot, with the caveat that the lot must not have continuous frontage with another nonconforming lot under the same ownership.
- Nonconforming structures are permitted to continue with the following provisions:
- The structure cannot be enlarged in a way which increases its nonconformity but may be altered to decrease its nonconformity.

- If the structure is damaged to an extent more than 50% of its assessed value, it cannot be reconstructed except in conformity with the zoning ordinance.
- If the structure is moved, it must conform with the regulations of the district to which it is moved.

Nonconforming uses are permitted to continue under the following circumstances:

- The use cannot be enlarged or extended to occupy a greater area of land.
- The use cannot be moved.
- If the use ceases for more than 12 months, any subsequent use must conform to the zoning regulations.
- The chapter provides that a nonconforming structure or use may be expanded with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP).

These regulations are quite common in U.S. zoning ordinances and state enabling acts.

Input from staff, Planning Commissioners and City Council members show a desire to accommodate nonconforming uses as much as possible without negatively impacting surrounding properties. One way to do this is to allow some degree of expansion or alteration (e.g. 10%) to be approved administratively with some specific review criteria. Another may be to examine the length of time before a nonconforming use is considered “abandoned.”

#### **Public Hearings and Notifications**

Chapter 17.06.060 requires notice of conditional use or variance applications to be published in the newspaper as well as mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the subject property. Two publications in the newspaper are required, over posting for two consecutive weeks prior to the meeting. Staff has indicated that the public notice system has worked well. As local news delivery methods are evolving and many small newspapers are reducing or eliminating print publications, the city may wish to consider publication on the web as an option.

# CHAPTER 5: TITLE 16 – SUBDIVISION ANALYSIS

## 5.1: APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

In addition to the review and analysis of *Title 17 – Zoning*, the consultant team provided a high-level overview of *Title 16 – Subdivisions* to achieve better alignment with Plan Valdez and the potential zoning updates. Although it is not possible to do a complete analysis of the subdivision ordinance before the zoning ordinance is complete, the analysis focuses on general issues to be addressed.

## 5.2: OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Process

Currently, *Title 16* provides for preliminary and final plat review of “all subdivisions or re-subdivisions which result in the partitioning, dividing, combining or altering of any lot, parcel or tract of land.” Thus, any division of lots must go through the platting process. This includes lot splits other than subdivisions, such as certified survey maps.

Major subdivisions are defined as the creation of more than 4 lots, and minor subdivisions 4 or fewer lots. While these terms are defined, there are no separate procedures provided for major or minor subdivisions. The same is true for “other land divisions” (Chapter 16.28); these divisions also must go through the same preliminary and final platting process.

The Planning Commission holds approval power for both preliminary and final plats. Typically, City Councils retain this approval power because there is often property dedicated to the public (rights-of-way, streets, parks).

### *Process recommendations:*

- Create a streamlined process (which may include administrative approval only) for lot splits, lot line adjustments, or minor subdivisions.
- Provide an option to combine preliminary and final plat review for applicants that choose it.

### Design Standards

Chapter 16.20 sets out design standards for all subdivisions, which include standards related to:

- Lot layout, dimensions, frontage and access
- Snow storage
- Hazardous areas
- Phasing
- Block arrangements
- Street grades, alignment, intersections, and cul de sacs
- Street names and addresses
- Geometric profiles
- Engineering design criteria



Some of these sections contain standards that are also present in the zoning ordinance (i.e.-lot sizes and minimum dimensions, lot frontage). The design standards allow for “flag lots” with certain minimum widths for the “flag pole portion” of the lot.

*Design Standard recommendations:*

- Remove dimensional standards from the subdivision ordinance and, if they are necessary, include them in the appropriate zoning district lot requirements.
- “Major streets” are referenced in the lot frontage and access section, but are not defined. A list, map, or definition of major streets is necessary to deem compliance with this section. If these are defined in a separate plan, that plan should be referenced.
- If flag lots are desired, include a definition and include dimensional requirements in the zoning ordinance.
- Many places could benefit from illustrations, for example the description of the required “two-tier” arrangement of lots in a block.

# CHAPTER 6: ZONING MAP / PLACE TYPE COMPARISON

## 6.1: APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

While larger issues concerning the evolution of zoning districts to match the intent of the Place Types are included in Chapter 4 of this report, this chapter provides more specific analysis and point out inconsistencies between the maps that should be resolved during the rezoning process. This also identifies instances where site elements or design considerations are included in the Place Types that should be included in the zoning standards.

## 6.2: COMPARISON OF ZONING MAP AND PLACE TYPES

### Area 1: Valdez Townsite, Harbor

**Zoning.** The zoning for this area includes the following districts:

- Single Family Residential District (R-A) is the predominant zoning district in this area.
- Multiple-Family Residential District (R-C) pockets are spread throughout Area 1, intermixed with R-A-zoned property.
- General Commercial District (G) surrounding the CBD to the east, south, and west, the largest of the areas being to the east along Richardson Highway. There are also several pockets outside this area that are also zoned for General Commercial.
- Central Business District (CBD) includes the 6-block area is considered as Valdez's main commercial area, encompassed by Pioneer Drive along the north, Meals Avenue along the east, Egan Drive along the south, and South Hazelet Avenue along the west.
- Light Industrial District (L-1) on the peninsula is zoned L-1, in addition to waterfront property across the peninsula, and property along West Egan Drive.
- Single-and Two-Family Residential District (R-B) in very small pockets intermixed within the R-A and R-C-zoned areas.
- Commercial Residential District (C-R) sits on the western part of this area, along Homestead Road and to the south.
- Rural Residential District (R-R) in 3 pockets dispersed throughout the area – one along Homestead Road, one along the waterfront on Salmonberry Way, and one to the north along Mineral Creek Road.
- Neighborhood Commercial District (N-C) at the corner of West Egan Drive and Homestead Road.
- Conservation District (CO) covering the estuary east of the townsite is zoned for conservation.
- Public Lands District (P) – The Public Lands District is mostly designated to areas surrounding the townsite which are mountainous or have steep slopes, but there are also several areas within the townsite that have this zoning designation, that are either parks, open space, or another public entity such as a school.

- Waterfront Industrial District (W-I) representing a small area along the waterfront near and along Kobuk Drive.
- Unclassified Lands (UL) in 3 areas within the general townsite area – two on the edges of the townsite and one fronting West Egan Drive that stretches south to the waterfront.

**Place Types.** The place types for this area includes the following:

- New Townsite Neighborhood – covering the residential area
- Town Center north of the harbor
- Mixed-Use Center branching out from the Town Center along Egan Avenue as well as Meals Avenue and the Richardson Highway
- Residential Neighborhood abutting Mineral Creek
- Working Waterfront at the harbor
- Conservation areas near the water

#### **Major Inconsistencies**

- Residential zoning on the conservation area south of Egan Drive
- Commercial zoning on the conservation area east of Richardson Highway
- Industrial zoning along Egan Dr. that is planned as a Mixed-Use Center
- Commercial-Residential zoning on the Mineral Creek State Recreational Site

#### **Site Elements or Design Considerations**

- Multi-family housing and neighborhood commercial should be scaled appropriately for the surrounding character where the New Townsite Neighborhood transitions towards the Town Center and Mixed-Use Center.
- Orient buildings toward the street and place at or near the street in Town Center.
- Incorporate small gathering spaces in the Town Center area.
- Create continuous bicycle and pedestrian connections, including safe connections to the working waterfront.
- Create basic landscaping requirements.

#### **Area 2: Airport, Old Town, Robe River**

**Zoning.** The zoning for this area includes the following districts:

- Heavy Industrial (HI) south and east of the airport, including a Heavy Industrial Gravel area.
- Light Industrial (LI) south of the airport and across Richardson Highway
- Airport (A) at the airport
- Multiple-Family Residential (R-C)
- Scattered Commercial zones (C-R and G) along Richardson Highway

- Conservation (CO) in the western part of the area generally between Richardson Highway and the water
- Waterfront Industrial (WI) and Valdez Container Terminal (VCT) near the Valdez Container Terminal

**Place Types.** The Place Types for this area includes the following:

- Valdez Airport
- Industrial Business & Production and Industrial Hub south of the airport
- Historic Town Site
- Working Waterfront along Mineral Creek Loop Road and in Old Town
- Mixed Use Centers along Richardson Highway to the west
- Residential Neighborhood in the southeast with Rural Neighborhood surrounding
- Recreation south of Richardson Highway across from the Residential Neighborhood
- Large Future Residential/Recreational area covering the eastern portions of this area

#### **Major Inconsistencies**

- Industrial zoning over the Old Town Site
- Industrial zoning over Mixed Use Center adjacent to the airport

#### **Site Elements or Design Considerations**

- Require buffers in industrial zones that adjoin non-industrial zones.
- Create safe pedestrian connections between Mixed-Use Center and the Airport.

### **Area 3: Robe Lake, Residential Neighborhoods**

**Zoning.** The zoning for this area includes the following districts:

- Rural Residential (R-R) in pockets along Richardson Highway
- Commercial Residential (C-R) in smaller pockets
- One small pocket of Waterfront Commercial (W-C) on the north side of one C-R district

**Place Types.** The Place Types for this area includes the following:

- Future Residential/Recreational areas on the north side of Richardson Highway and one subdivision to the south
- Rural Neighborhood in platted areas along Richardson Highway
- One Conservation area between Richardson Highway and a Rural Neighborhood

**Major Inconsistencies** - None

#### **Site Elements or Design Considerations**

- Protect sensitive natural features as Rural Neighborhoods are developed.

- Create safe pedestrian connections for those needing to walk to commercial areas, as well as to minimize vehicle trips between uses.

#### **Area 4: Dayville Road**

**Zoning.** The zoning for this area includes the following districts:

- Heavy Industrial (H-I) in almost all areas that are not Public Lands (P)
- Light Industrial (L-I) in one area on the south side of Danville Road on the west side of the Lowe River

**Place Types.** The Place Types for this area includes the following:

- Working Waterfront along the south side of Port Valdez
- Industrial Hub in the western portion of the area and just to the east of the Working Waterfront
- Industrial Business & Production in an area slightly larger than the existing L-I zone
- Recreation in one area on the south side of the Working Waterfront

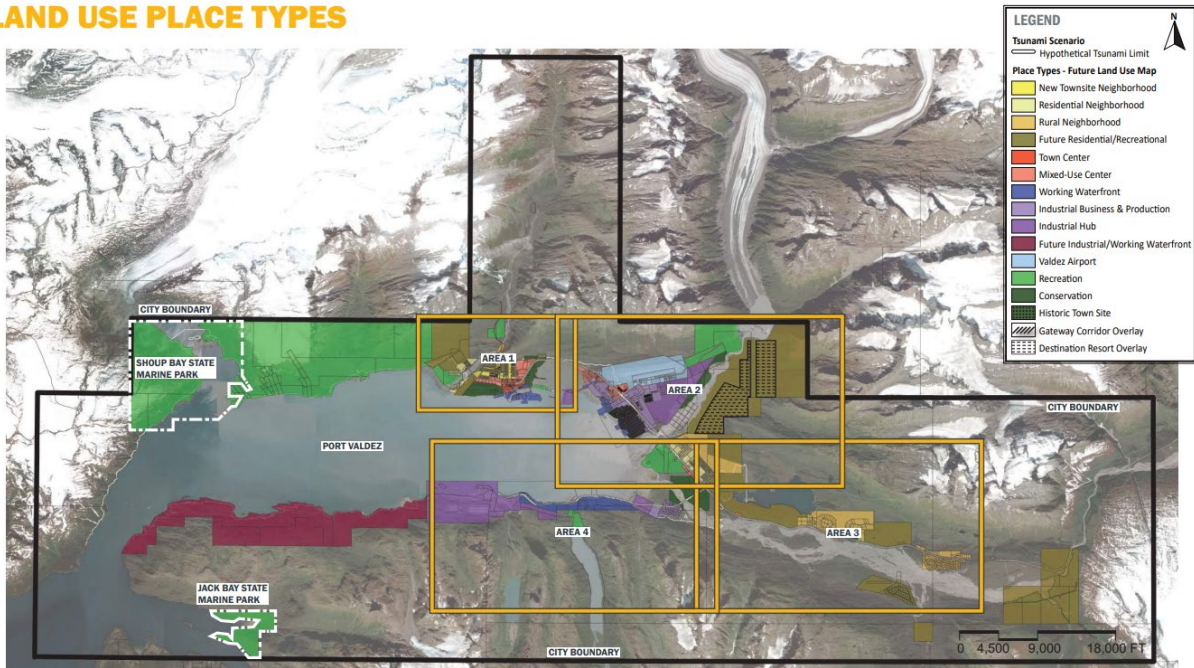
**Major Inconsistencies** - None

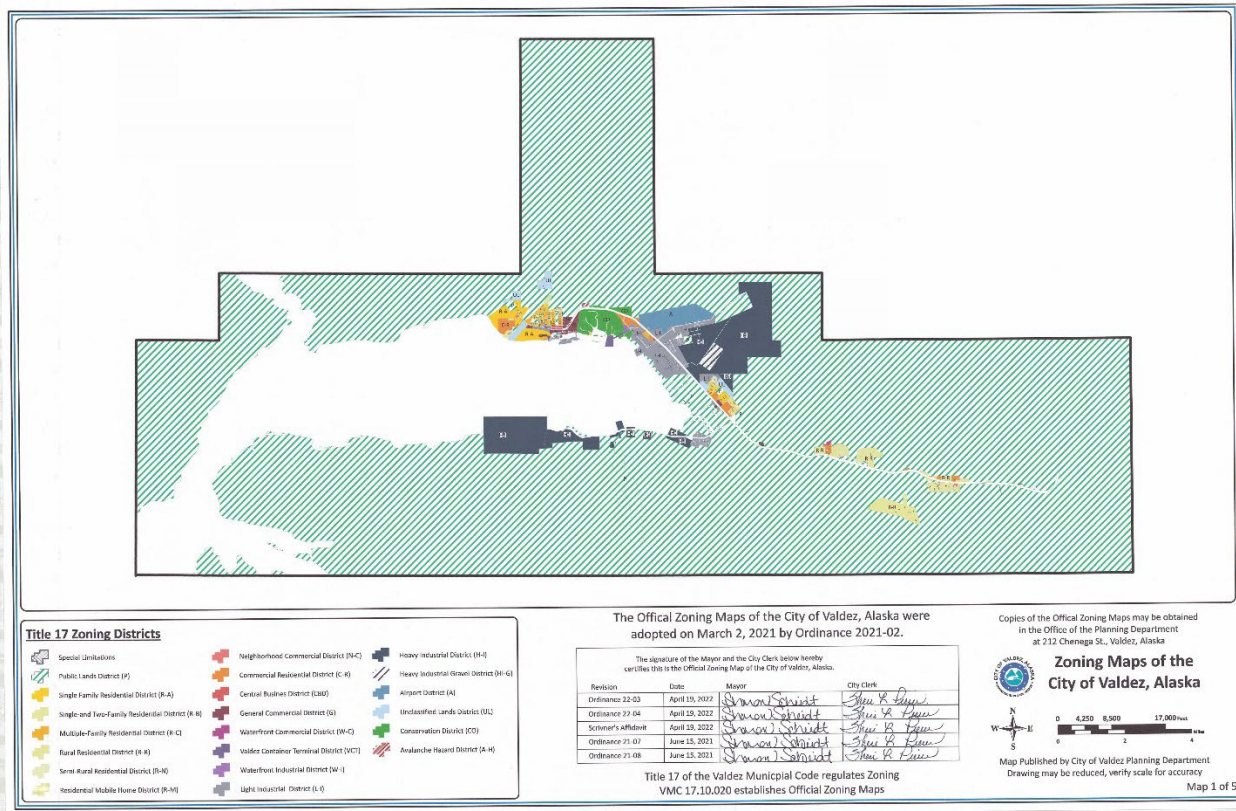
**Site Elements or Design Considerations** - None

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A – PLACE TYPES AND ZONING MAPS

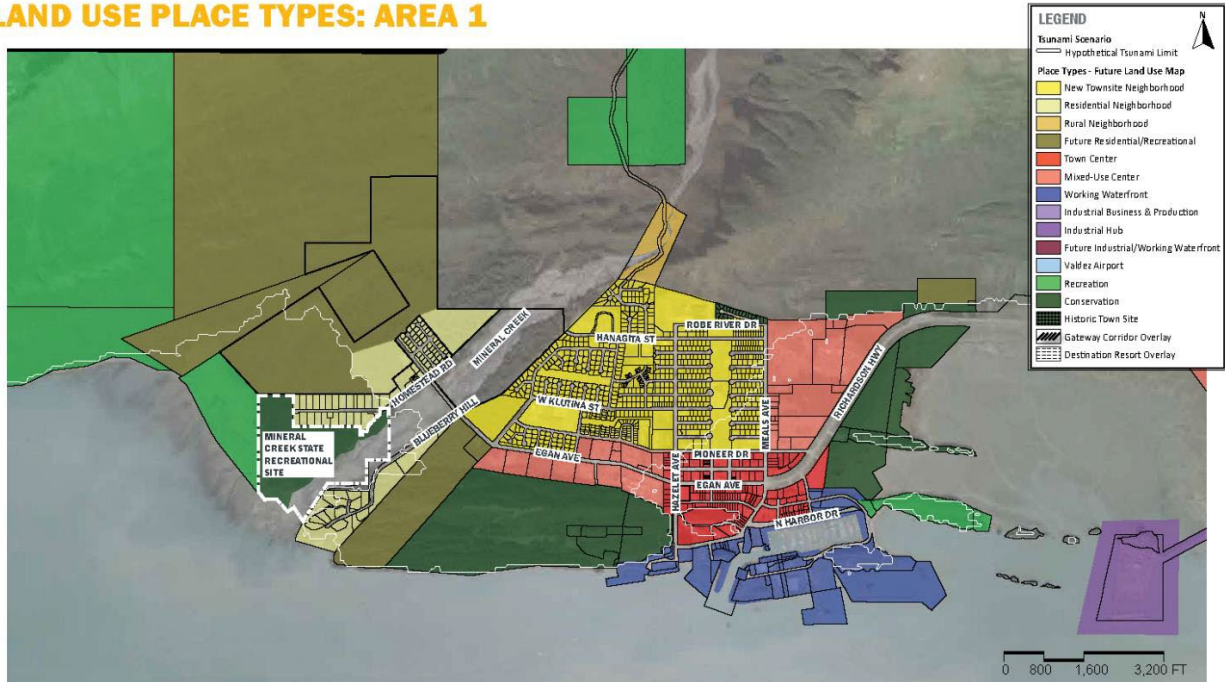
### LAND USE PLACE TYPES







## LAND USE PLACE TYPES: AREA 1



## Current Zoning:





**County**  
 — Hypothetical Tsunami Limit

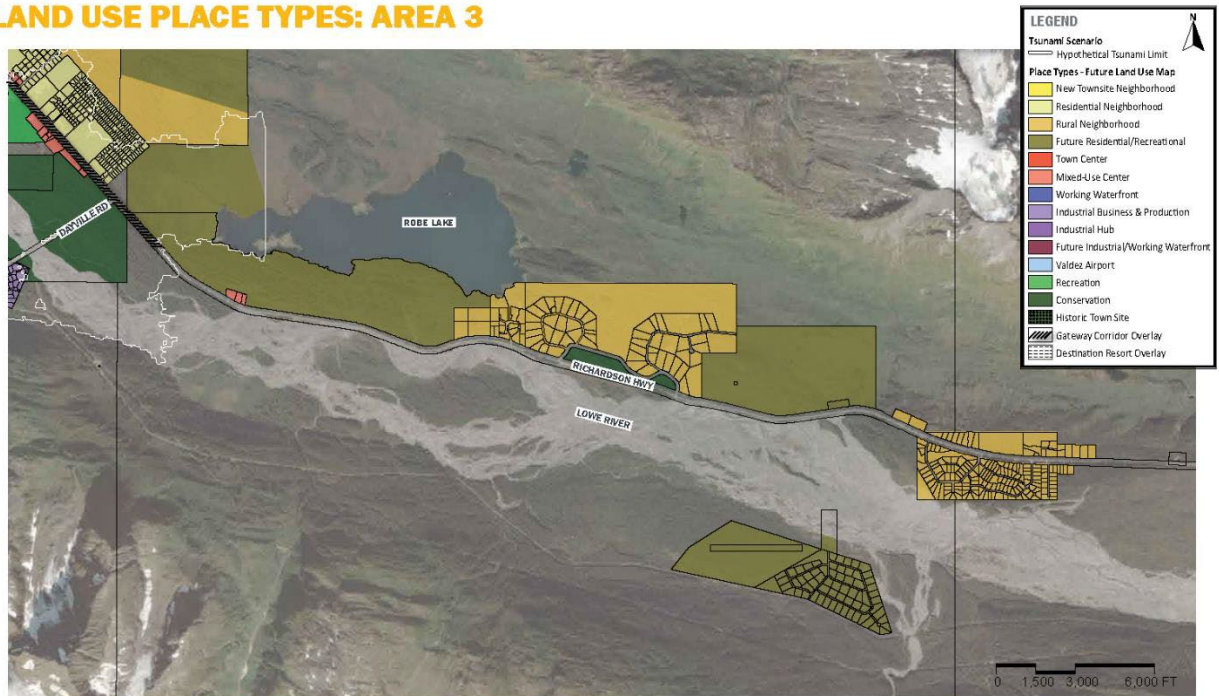
**Place Types - Future Land Use Map**

- New Townsite Neighborhood
- Residential Neighborhood
- Rural Neighborhood
- Future Residential/Recreational
- Town Center
- Mixed-Use Center
- Working Waterfront
- Industrial Business & Production
- Industrial Hub
- Future Industrial/Working Waterfront
- Valdez Airport
- Recreation
- Conservation
- Historic Town Site
- Gateway Corridor Overlay
- Destination Resort Overlay

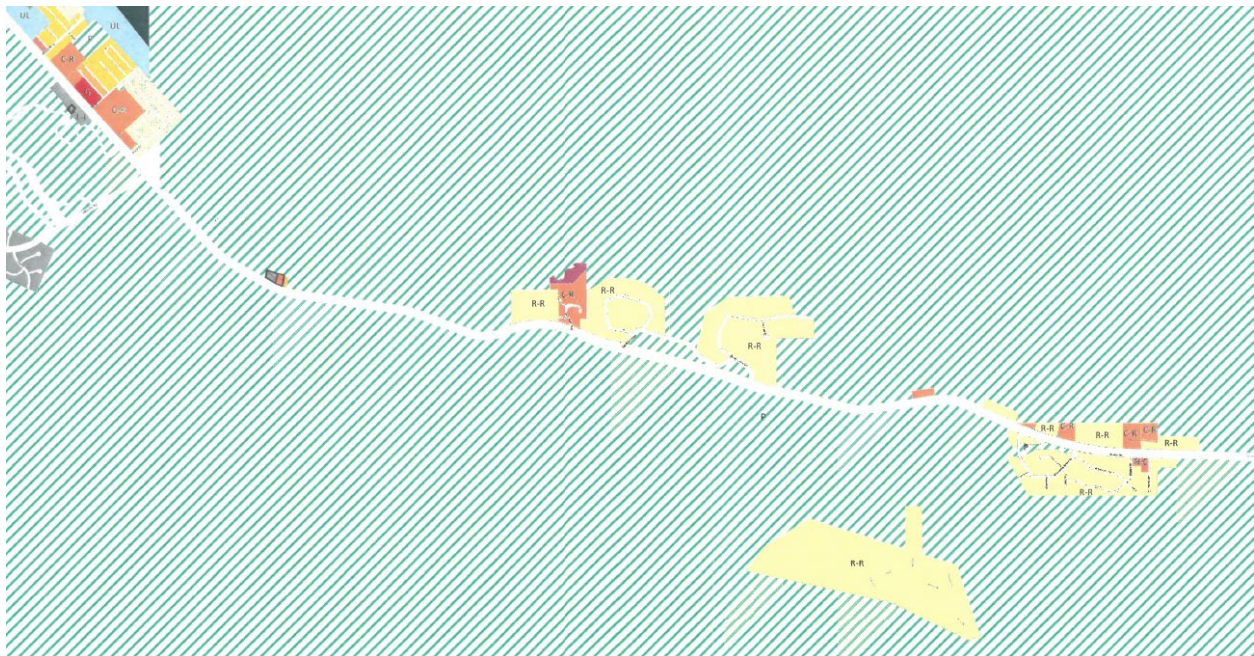
0 1,500 3,000 6,000 FT



## LAND USE PLACE TYPES: AREA 3

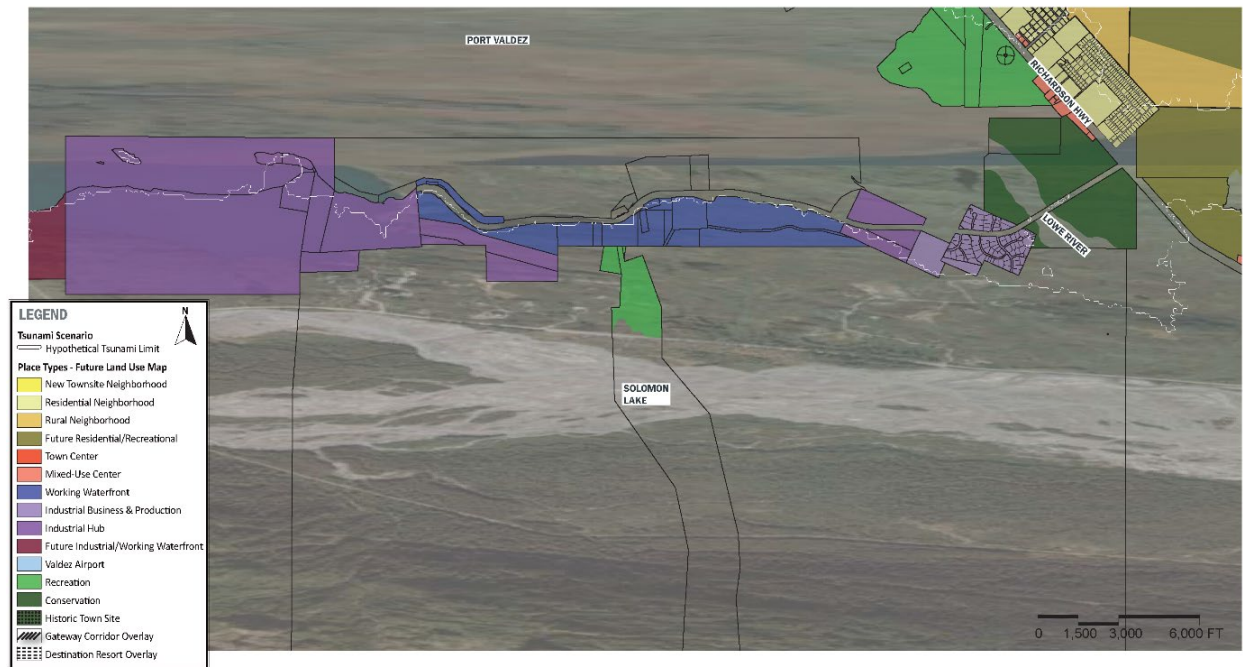


## Current Zoning:

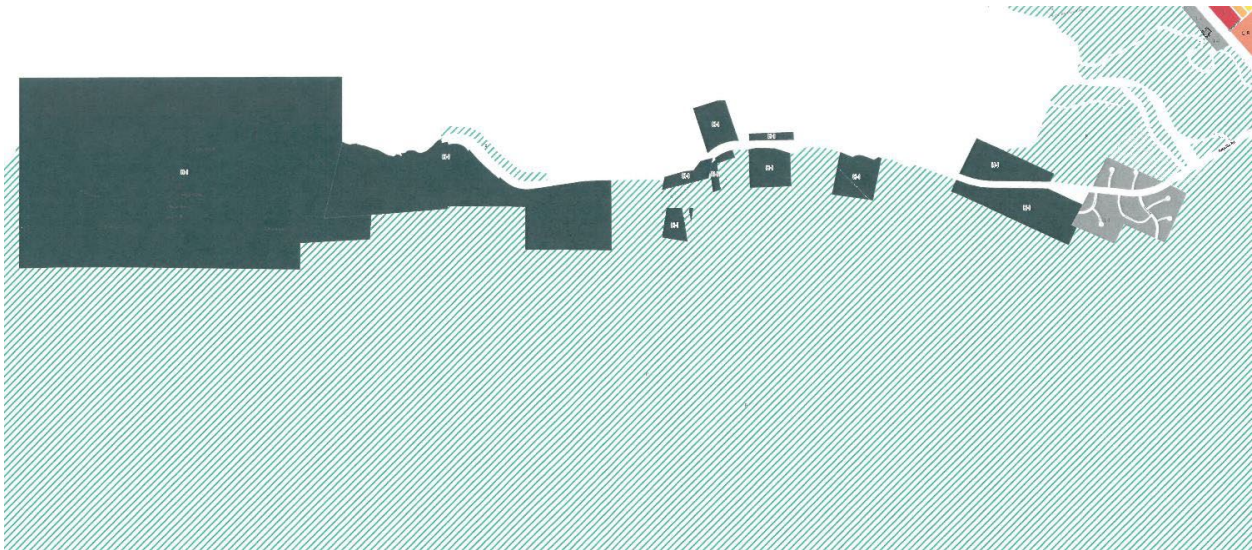




## LAND USE PLACE TYPES: AREA 4



## Current Zoning:





**APPENDIX B – USE TABLE**

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## APPENDIX C: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY

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### OVERVIEW

Below is a summary of the Housing section of the Existing Conditions Report, and comments relevant to land use, zoning and development in the December 2020 community survey. Each section specifies whether the summary is original language from the 2020 materials, or a new written summary for the 2022 zoning revision project.

The Comprehensive Plan's project blog is posted as of October 2022:

<https://valdezcompplan.blogspot.com/>



## KEY THEMES FOR ZONING REVISION

### Comprehensive Plan Community Engagement (2020)

- Housing was the most dominant topic in the survey, with more specific questions about priority types and locations for housing. Residents agree that housing is a high priority and having a wider variety of housing types and price points is important.
- There is less agreement about whether the city should prioritize building more or new housing, expanding into new subdivisions, versus prioritizing services for existing residents, such as water and sewer access for subdivisions currently using wells and septic.
- Utility (water and sewer) extensions were also a common theme in the comments, related to where it is feasible to develop or redevelop areas. Some residents are frustrated by the fact they do not have access to piped utilities and perceive other projects (like the new Fire Station) should have been lower priority than these services. Others commented that new subdivisions and development should be coordinated with utility extensions.
- Downtown is seen as a high priority for redevelopment, residents cited vacant and rundown buildings as a problem, as well as a desire to bring more activity and new developments to the commercial center.
- Many people want more connectivity (sidewalks, trails) and pedestrian safety in town. Most comments focus on winter maintenance, since sidewalks are often not cleared and trails not maintained in the winter or are used for snow storage.
- Several comments also support current snow management strategies, including having space between buildings (setbacks), using green space and park strips for snow storage.
- North Harbor Drive and the Waterfront are seen as community assets, especially in the summer; residents highlighted parking and walkability challenges along the road. Some residents pointed out that the waterfront is a centerpiece of the city's economy, visitor attractions and natural amenities such as scenic views, but it is difficult to access and mostly used for commercial uses. Making the waterfront a focal point, and more accessible for a variety of uses, is desirable.
- Multiple comments expressed interest in relocating or otherwise addressing conflicting uses: moving housing away from industrial areas or shifting industrial uses further from housing.
- Several residents support reducing or relaxing rules in order to make development easier. Some support a full free-market approach; others acknowledge seismic and environmental conditions require strict building codes but want to see more flexibility. Some people were worried the City would implement more rules, such as historic preservation or design standards, as a result of this process. They want the City to be helpful, facilitate new projects (by making land available, incentives, etc.), and utilize its powers to make development easier.
- Several comments focused on enforcement and addressing nuisance or "junk" properties: some people did not want government involvement in private property; others want to see properties along the Richardson Highway and gateway into the town center cleaned up. Many pointed out current neighborhoods and commercial areas are a mix of well-kept and dilapidated properties. There were diverse opinions on whether to have more or less code enforcement.

### Summary Themes, Community Survey

*Reproduced from Valdez Comprehensive Plan Community Survey Results Report (December 2020)*

- Valdez residents prioritize expenditures on housing over other funding priorities. Residents also see housing planning as the top economic priority for the community.
- The highest housing priority is the development of single family residential housing.

- Valdez residents most want new housing developed in areas which are already connected to utilities. Residents also would like to have utility connections to existing subdivisions.
- Respondents very strongly want dilapidated downtown land parcels to be redeveloped or cleaned up. Residents have prioritized development of the downtown commercial area over other areas in the next decade.
- Increased Alaska Marine Highway ferry service is the most critical transportation priority for Valdez residents.
- The senior center expansion has the most community support of any current project. However, residents are most supportive of the funding strategy connected to school renovations.
- Vehicular transportation generally works well for Valdez citizens, although there are some safety concerns regarding specific intersections.
- The community is eager to see increased recycling.
- The initiative that would most improve community quality of life is increased child care.

### **Summary Themes from October 2020 Focus Groups**

- Housing, particularly affordable housing, rental housing, and options for seniors, students, and workers (short-term stays, seasonal and year-round). More housing and neighborhoods near commercial centers and major employers.
- Better connectivity between different areas of town: some neighborhoods don't have trail connections to other areas, such as central business district and employment areas.
- Better connectivity and recreation, trail options year-round: winter maintenance, connectivity to other recreational attractions outside of town.
- Promote more attractive development and unique character, especially in areas that attract visitors and residents (Egan Drive, North Harbor Drive). Redevelopment of vacant lots, aging buildings, making it easier to utilize properties.
- Desire to specifically improve commercial areas of New Town (revitalize "downtown"), better utilization of Old Town for tourism, education and history.
- Address and offset barriers to development: high cost of construction and transporting materials; building codes and requirements to address safety and environmental needs; costs of redeveloping existing properties; restrictive zoning code; utility and infrastructure costs.
- City owns land that could be utilized for new housing and development. Divest and/or subdivide this land to make it available for use.
- Utility and infrastructure issues: need to address existing well and septic (limitations on more dense development, where properties still rely on onsite systems), upgrade current systems, expand to other areas to encourage housing and other development.
- Address environmental needs: hazard mitigation, winter access and maintenance, snow storage and management, preservation and enhancement of natural areas as a major asset.

### **Key Themes: Housing**

*Reproduced from Valdez Comprehensive Plan Existing Conditions Report (June 2020)*

- Valdez has almost 80% owner-occupied housing, with 20% renter-occupied housing.

- There is a somewhat unusual mix of housing stock, with a much larger proportion of mobile homes (23% of units) than the national average (5%) or coastal Alaska's average (7%). Mobile homes have provided affordable housing for the community, but many are in poor condition and pose safety issues (fire risk, snow load/roof condition). Many community comments focused on these areas as potential for making homeownership affordable to people, but needing to upgrade or replace these with more permanent housing.
- Housing affordability (spending no more than 1/3 of monthly income on housing costs) is relatively better in Valdez than most Alaska communities, with approximately 17% of households cost burdened, compared with 28% in coastal Alaska. This suggests that the available housing stock, and relative lack of inventory, limits people's housing choices, more than their ability to pay market rates for housing.
- Most housing in the community was built in the 1970s and 1980s, following the destruction of the original townsite in the 1964 Earthquake and coinciding with construction and operation of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and terminal at the Port of Valdez. There has been relatively little built since 2010; primarily single-family homes were built.

### **Summary Findings, 2019 McDowell Group Housing Gap Analysis (2019)**

*Reproduced from Valdez Comprehensive Plan Existing Conditions Report (June 2020)*

- **Too few rentals:** The rental housing market in Valdez is tight, particularly in the summer and in the downtown area. Resourceful renters with higher-end incomes typically can find a place eventually, but others struggle to find rental housing, and some leave town as a result.
- **Too few lower cost homes:** There are not sufficient homes for sale under \$375,000.
- **Lack of available lands for building:** Limited land availability leads to high costs of available lots for building.
- **High cost of construction:** The cost of concrete; transportation; engineering and building code requirements related to seismic and snow load considerations; and costs associated with putting in utilities such as sewer and water all contribute to high construction costs of new homes in Valdez.
- **Insufficient senior housing:** The Valdez Senior Center staff estimate that there is enough demand for 10-12 new senior apartments in the community.
- **Service industry housing:** When asked about the impact of housing gaps on the local economy, the most common issue discussed was employee retention, especially in lower-wage sectors such as the service industry.

## **EXCERPTS FROM 2020 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MATERIALS**

**Community Survey (December 2020)**

### **Survey Overview**

- Survey was fielded December 3-18, 2020. 468 responses.
- Topics addressed in survey (listed as sections in the Table of Contents)
  - Housing
  - Project Planning
  - Downtown
  - Transportation Planning, Safety Concerns

- Community Aesthetics
- City Focus and Prioritization
- Economic Development
- Quality of Life
- Additional specific questions for open-ended response, particularly focused on housing. Individual questions are noted below as they appeared in the survey.

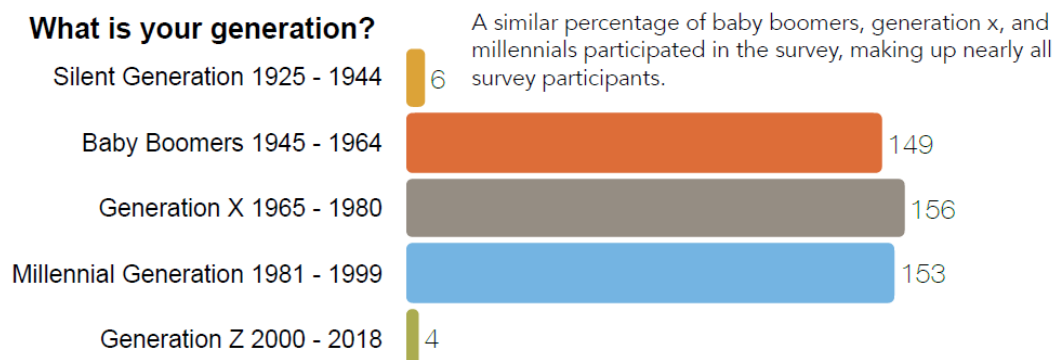
### **Summary Themes [copied from survey results report]**

Summary list provided in survey document; items relevant to zoning code revision highlighted in blue:

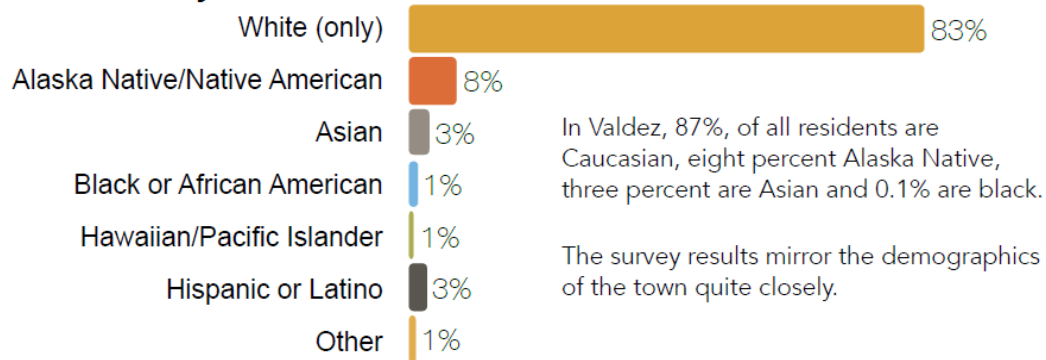
- Valdez residents prioritize expenditures on housing over other funding priorities. Residents also see housing planning as the top economic priority for the community.
- The highest housing priority is the development of single family residential housing.
- Valdez residents most want new housing developed in areas which are already connected to utilities. Residents also would like to have utility connections to existing subdivisions.
- Respondents very strongly want dilapidated downtown land parcels to be redeveloped or cleaned up. Residents have prioritized development of the downtown commercial area over other areas in the next decade.
- Increased Alaska Marine Highway ferry service is the most critical transportation priority for Valdez residents.
- The senior center expansion has the most community support of any current project. However, residents are most supportive of the funding strategy connected to school renovations.
- Vehicular transportation generally works well for Valdez citizens, although there are some safety concerns regarding specific intersections.
- The community is eager to see increased recycling.
- The initiative that would most improve community quality of life is increased child care.

### **Survey Demographics**

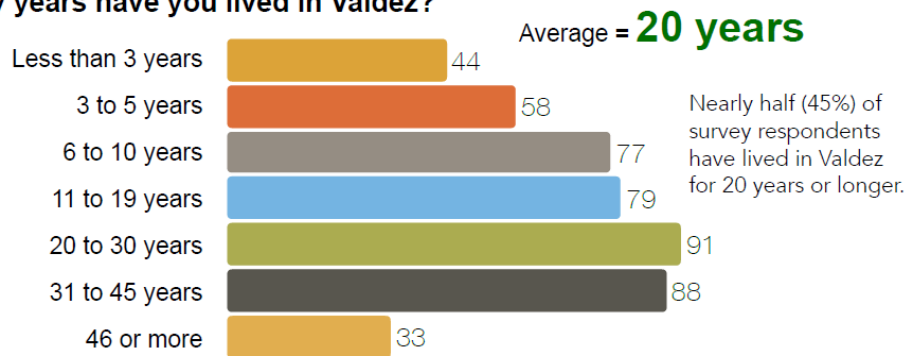
#### **What is your generation?**



## What is your Race?



## How many years have you lived in Valdez?



## Highlights by Question

Priority questions framed as asking a priority level: Highest, Medium-High, Medium, Low, Not a Priority.

### ***How important are development of the following housing types in Valdez?***

How important are development of the following housing types in Valdez?

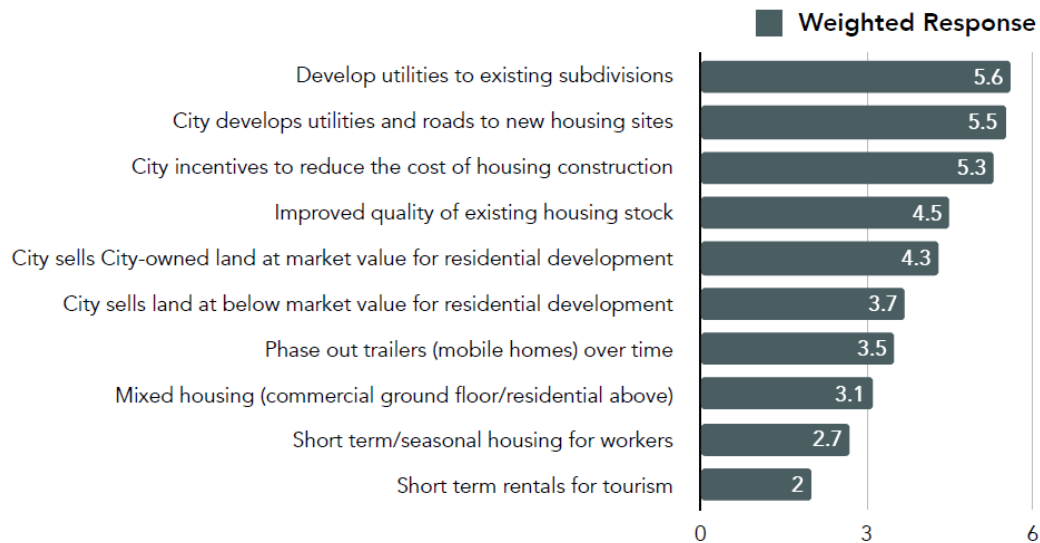


Priorities by generation:

- Baby Boomer: Single family, assisted senior housing, independent senior housing
- Gen X: Single family, mid-priced housing, rental housing
- Millennial: Single family, low income, rental housing

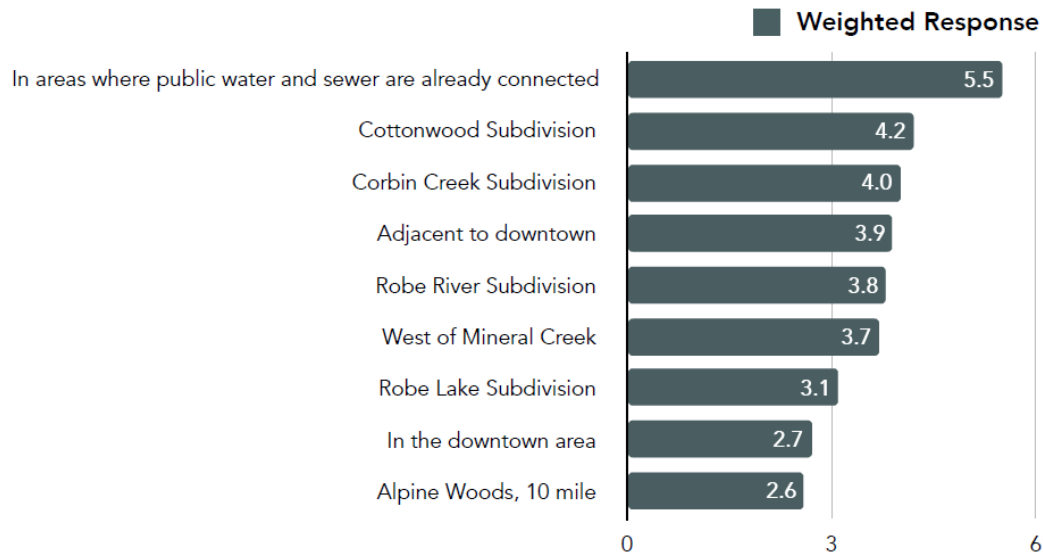
### ***How important are the following housing strategies in Valdez?***

How important are the following housing strategies in Valdez?



### Where in Valdez should new housing be built?

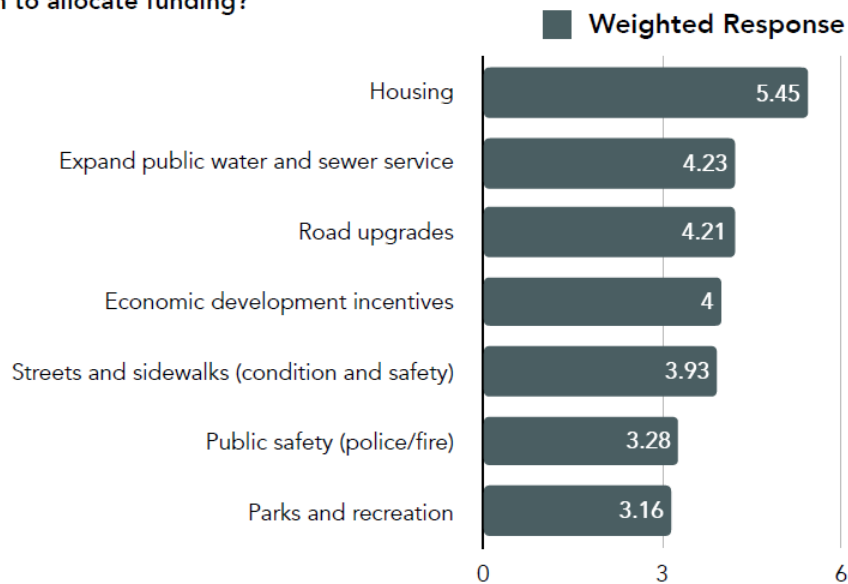
Where in Valdez should new housing be built?



### Project planning in Valdez?

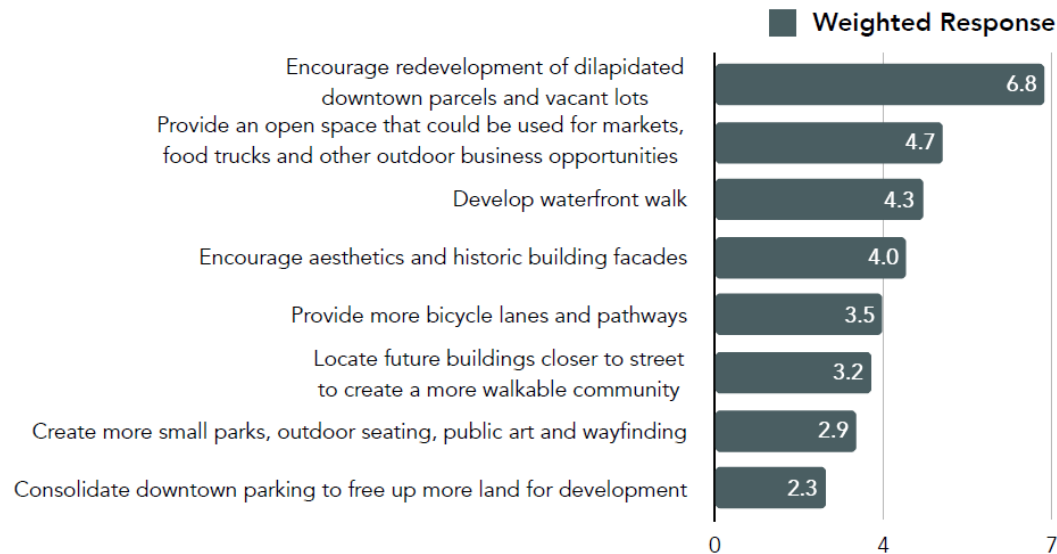
*This question was a list of potential capital projects, such as school renovations and recreation center. Individual results not included here.*

If you were responsible for funding the following community priorities, how would you rank them to allocate funding?



### ***As Downtown Valdez begins to redevelop, what are your priorities?***

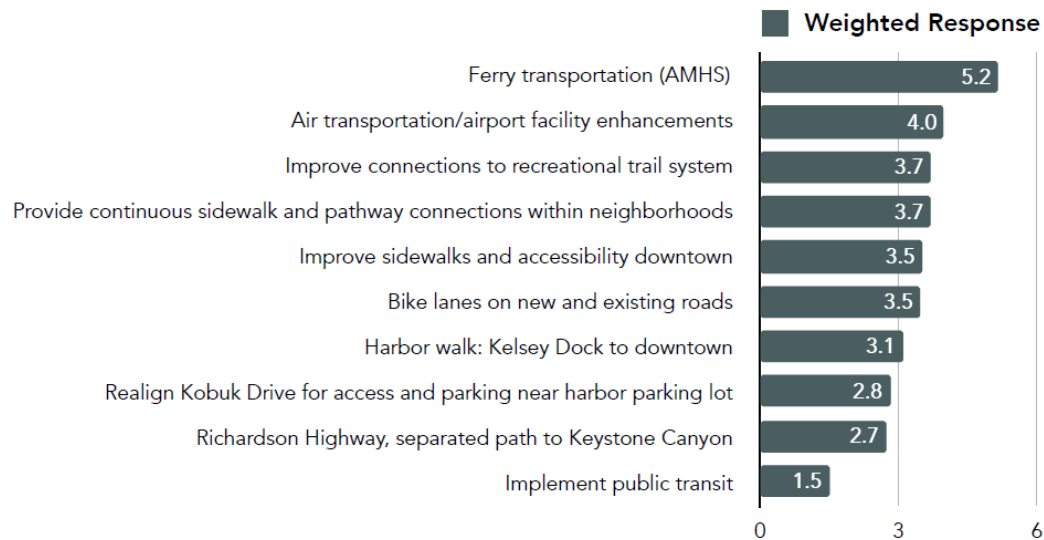
As Downtown Valdez begins to redevelop, what are your priorities?



### ***How important are the following connection improvements in Valdez?***

The ferry system is ranked as the most important transportation priority across all generations.

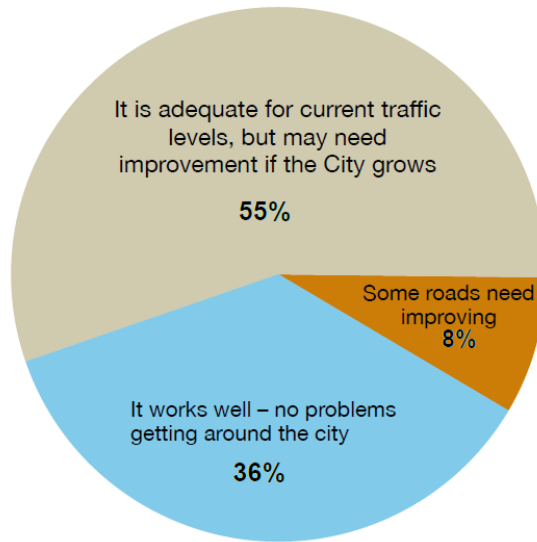
How important are the following connection improvements in Valdez?



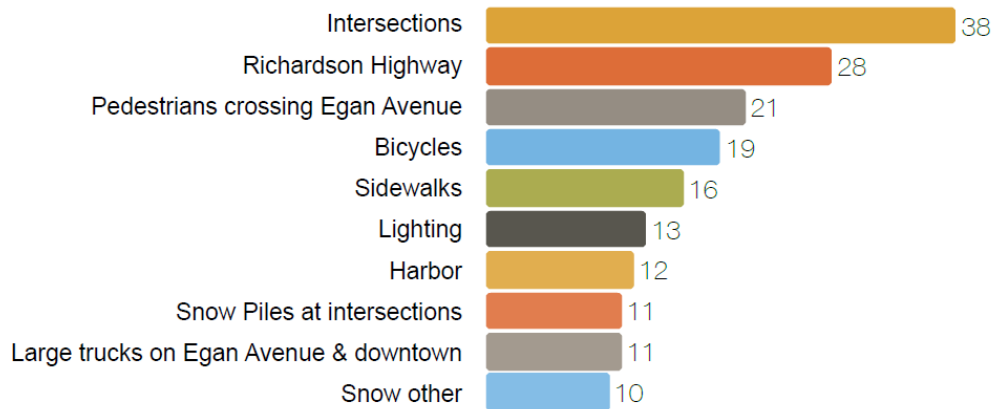


**Which of the following best describes your perception of the City's vehicular transportation network?**

Generally, Valdez residents are satisfied with the state of the community's vehicular transportation network. Just over one-third (36%) say it works well, and just over half (55%) say it is adequate to meet current demand. Just 8% say that some roads need improvement.



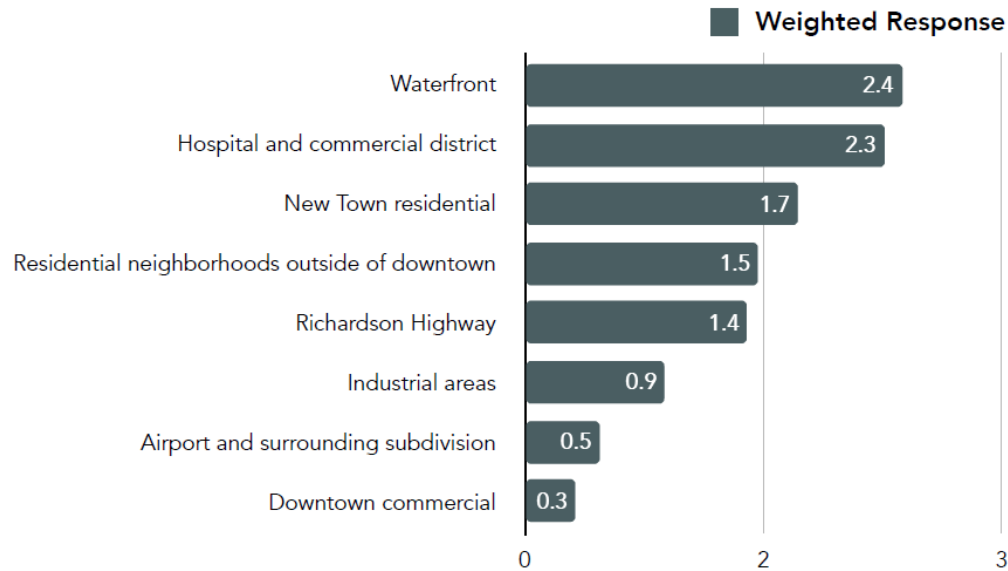
Valdez residents were asked to identify safety concerns related to transportation in Valdez. Respondents provided 265 specific responses. Top responses are listed below:



***What is your perception about the aesthetic appearance and quality of development in the following areas of the city?***

This question framed as rating the quality of each item: Excellent, Good, Acceptable, Poor, No opinion.

What is your perception about the aesthetic (visual) appearance and quality of development in the following areas of the city?

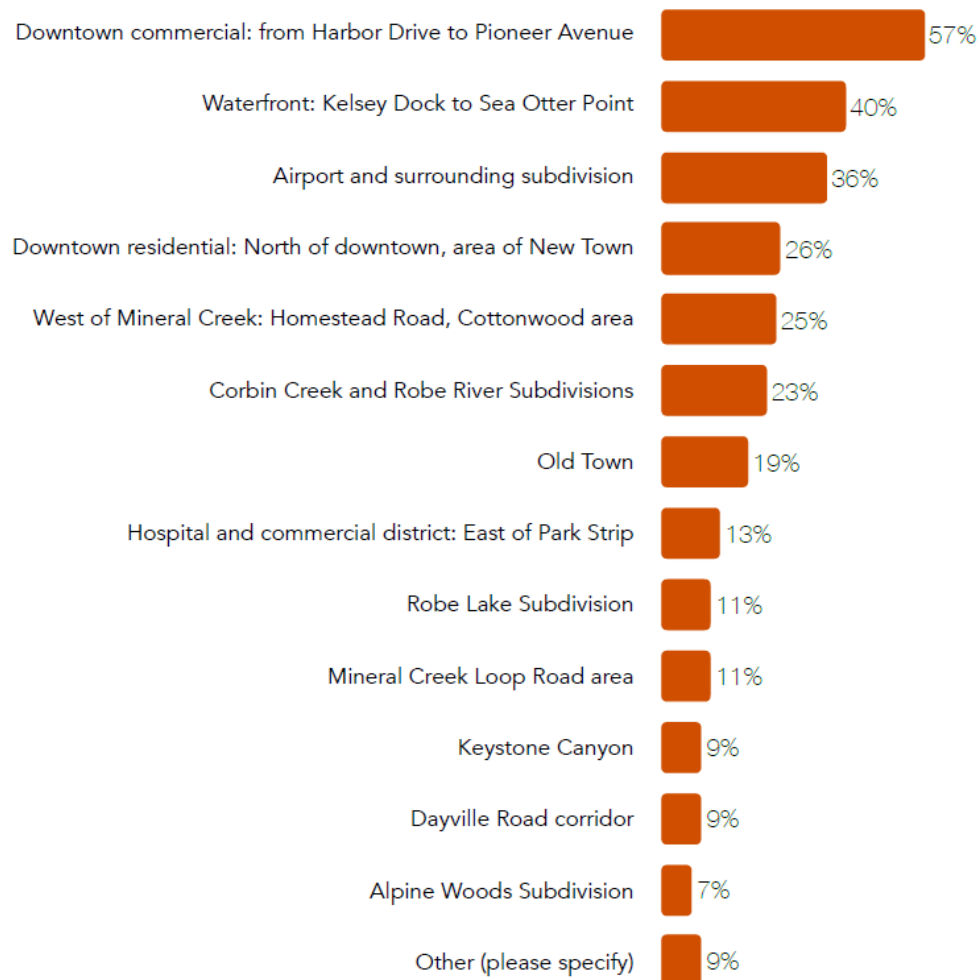


***What are the topics you feel need more attention in the city?***

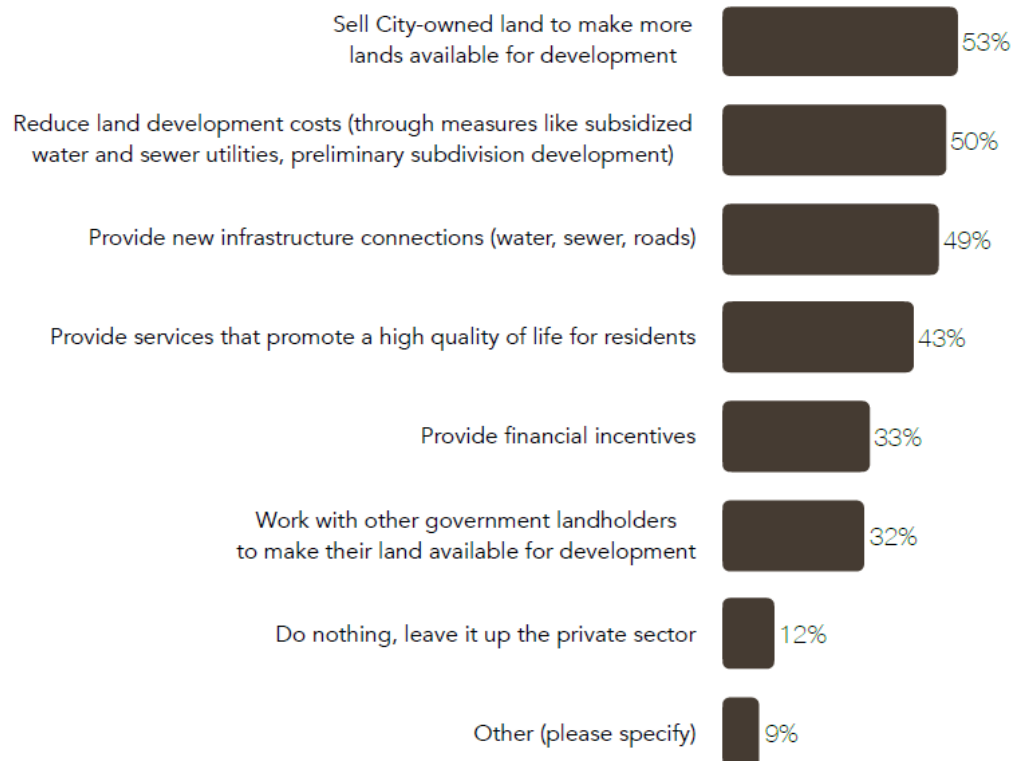
Relevant to zoning project, the percent of respondents who chose the following as priorities:

- Preservation of natural areas and green space (49%)
- Land use compatibility (42%)
- Zoning enforcement (33%)
- Environmental quality, pollution control (27%)
- Historic preservation (27%)
- Relocate critical infrastructure out of hazard lands (20%)
- Relocation of housing from existing industrial areas (12%)

**Select locations that Valdez should prioritize development of over next 10 years.**

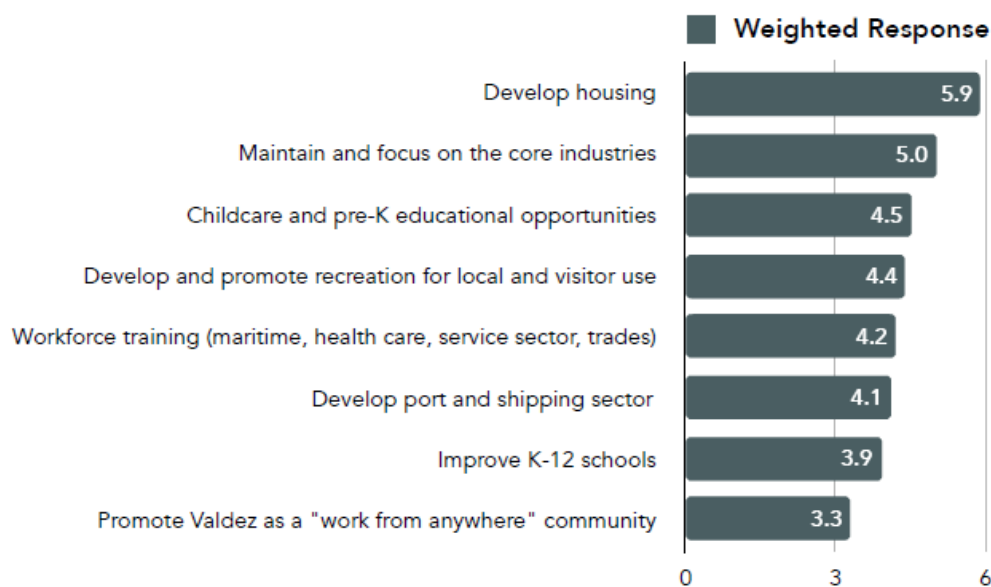


**What should the City's role be in supporting economic development efforts to attract new employment or help retain existing employers?**



**What are the most important elements to facilitate economic growth in the future?**

What are the most important elements to facilitate economic growth in the future?



### ***Additional Comments (Open-Ended Responses)***

- Transportation comments:
  - Many comments on needing better bicycle, pedestrian and non-motorized infrastructure.
  - Winter maintenance of trails, sidewalks and routes needs to be improved (snow management).
  - North Harbor Drive:
    - “Harbor Drive needs to be partially shut down for a walking harbor. Should be a one-way loop from N Harbor all the way around to Kobuk.”
    - “Harbor Drive parking and foot traffic make it somewhat unsafe for pedestrians.”
  - Sidewalks:
    - “Widen all sidewalks to 6'.”
    - Several comments about maintaining, plowing sidewalks during the winter.
    - “Egan Street sidewalks poorly maintained. used as snow storage in winter.”
    - “Current way snow removal is conducted is not safe. In wintertime people without cars can't safely walk.”
  - “There is no way to get around without a car. “In town” is even a far walk from college to harbor to Safeway & back.”
  - “Standing water in roads; better drainage when storm drains aren't kept open.”
- Housing comments: *Respondent chose “Other” and included open-ended response*
  - “The availability of housing in general is very important. This is the biggest complaint/ concern we get from new hires.”
  - “We don't need to create tiny house communities as those will quickly become run down and look just like the ghetto trailer parks.”
  - “We have enough low-end housing. Need more mid-high housing to move big makers into bigger homes to make room for the low makers.
  - “We just need affordable housing that's not low-income housing . People want to own their own home.”
  - “City of Valdez should eliminate involvement in free market.”
  - “Communal and extended family living clusters.”
  - “Housing for people who work jobs other than for the City or across the bay; there's a lot of other jobs in town that need to be done, and not all of us can afford the high-end homes that are the only ones that ever seem to be built.”
  - “I am not interested in increasing the local population. I am interested in having housing for long term residents.”
  - “The ‘affordable housing problem’ exists solely in the minds of the people who moved here from the lower 48 and didn't do their research on the cost of living in Valdez. The other big problem is technology and the internet have changed how people can rent out their homes. Valdez actively promotes tourism. That creates a market for homeowners to rent out their houses with Airbnb. The third huge issue is Valdez has a declining population and economy. What developer in their right mind is going to come into Valdez and construct large tracts of housing with nothing on the horizon that will be coming in to create new jobs?”

- “Before putting in utilities and roads to new subdivisions, the City should pave/bring water and septic to Corbin Creek.”
- “City develop lots for building and then coordinate a "housing Fair." Invite builders and/or manufactured home sellers to Valdez. People could pick lots and homes of various sizes and prices. City needs to be the coordinator (not subsidizer) to get new housing projects off the ground.”
- “City does not reduce costs to build but reduce the permitting delays and hoops that make it challenging and frustrating to build. It's not about the cost, it's about the ease of the process.”
- “City of Valdez should eliminate involvement in free market.”
- “Existing subdivisions land prices reflect not having utilities. Utilities should be installed in areas where housing is more concentrated.”
- “How about the city actually do something for me in my subdivision where I pay 20 mils for dirt roads, once per week trash pick-up and snow plowing? I have no water, no sewer, no pavement, no sidewalks, my winter trails are groomed once per week if we are lucky and I have no fire hydrants but a giant, grandiose, monstrosity of a fire station in town that does me no good. My taxes should be lower for the few services I receive.”
- “If you consider city limits at 18 mile offer all utilities to that boundary. No septic, no wells.... Treat everyone equal.”
- “Improve utilities in existing neighborhoods that need them. Corbin Creek wells are mostly rotten. They could greatly benefit from City water services.”
- “The highest priority before anything new should be the city bringing utilities to homes that are here and being heavily taxed.”
- “Use of the large number of snow lots for housing development. Many of these already have utilities.”
- “We still don't have our city sewer system that we were promised 30 years ago in Robe River Subdivision!”
- “It's notable in Valdez, compared to other seaside communities in Alaska, that very few residences with an ocean view. With the understanding that the reasons for this were by design when "New Town" was laid out. It doesn't do much to capitalize on the charm or aesthetic appeal of having such options available. Most residents are barely aware on a daily basis if the tide is in or out, which is also remarkable considering the tidal swing in our corner of the world. Seaside charm is universally appealing to residents and visitors and I believe Valdez could capitalize on that more, both in terms of construction of new residences or creating space for marine support services in the harbor vicinity.”
- “At all costs avoid any more structures to be built in Alpine Woods. Nothing should have ever been built on that riverbed in the first place.”
- “City owned land currently used as covered storage in Black Gold subdivision. Up to 4 new homes could be built if the dilapidated cold storage building is removed and items within it find a new area to be stored.”
- “No real need for new housing. Make current housing better. Improve and expand city water and sewer to neighborhoods who don't have it.”
- “The city has tons of septic system problems, why they would even consider developing more residential in areas without water and sewer is asinine.”

- “The neighborhoods out the road have septic system issues. What kind of person thinks it is a good idea to build more homes out there? Only Robe River has fire hydrants the rest of the neighborhoods just have their houses burn to the ground or a total losses from smoke damage.”
- “Utilities (water/sewer) should only be installed where housing is more concentrated, and not where people choose to have a larger amount of land over the convenience of utilities.”
- Where to focus development (may include housing, commercial, etc.)
  - “Valdez business district around old town. Allow for mixed uses housing and industrial. This was downtown before. Close to current downtown.”
  - “A large concentrated parking area may lead to roadway congestion during high traffic events in town. A great example of how traffic and parking doesn't work is the Homer farmer's market, where the thoroughfare to the spit (a big commerce location in that community) is utterly impeded by the market parking circus on days when it is open. Great example of what not to do, although the market is quite enjoyable. Additionally, it would be great to see a boardwalk development similar to Potters Marsh in the duck flats area of Valdez. Access could be either from Loop road or the Dock Point trail system.”
  - “Enforce and support clean up initiatives, phase out mobile homes in downtown.”
  - “Locate future buildings closer to the street? Who comes up with this? People who haven't lived here long enough to see a normal winter, how much the snow stacks up.”
  - “Main Street needs to be #1. Remove old buildings clean area up. Royal center needs help with modernizing if you're going to give out free money. Our town needs to grow in population in order to support any business. Finding employees is a nightmare for our small business community.”
  - “Make sure any downtown development/structures allow for efficient snow removal.”
  - “People don't want to patronize businesses in winter because they are afraid of slipping on the sidewalk. Better sidewalk maintenance or giving everyone in town a couple sets of high-quality ice grippers would help.”
  - “Sidewalks need redone/expansion. Too narrow for how much foot and bike traffic Valdez gets. Parking is already an issue downtown, so consolidation seems retroactive. Waterfront development is high priority, but user fees (slips) are already very expensive. Consider making a local rate vs visitor rate and prioritizing locals for permanent slips. 5 year wait list is crazy.”
  - “Take every opportunity to orient the town of Valdez to its waterfront. At present the waterfront is cut off from the town between the small boat harbor and city dock.”
  - “Valdez is very walkable for folks who live in town, find ways to encourage increased pedestrian use.”
  - “We already have a number of underutilized outdoor spaces that should be encouraged for additional uses - Kelsey Dock.”
  - “Connect bike paths and downtown, require Petro Star to move tank farm and loading dock to refinery.”
  - “Please no bike lanes. This would be a safety nightmare. Alaskans are not accustomed to this type of traffic pattern. Create wider sidewalks and maintain sidewalk snow removal in winter, especially between airport road and downtown. Many walk on the highway. Very dangerous!”

- “Waterfront housing or waterfront-view housing. Most coastal communities have beautiful houses facing the waterfront. Our waterfront is all commercial.”
- “Expand tourism development east of airport, keep separate residential and tourism developments.”
- “Expansion north of Corbin Creek subdivision. Great recreational opportunities. The dilemma is whether or not to expand water/sewer utilities or remain with well and septic and of course the associated cost of utility expansion.”
- “There should be more housing options for long term/transient population. Work on orienting the town to be welcoming to tourist. Do something with Fidalgo street.”
- “The city needs to get out of the role thinking they are a developer. They are terrible at it. Focus on maintaining your existing infrastructure. Otherwise the city will just continue to get taken advantage of by selling land to bullshit "local developers" who buy land like out at Valdez Glacier for \$1,000 per acre and do nothing with it but try and sell it to people from California. The next thing they will want is for the city to build them a road to their inaccessible property.”
- “The City of Valdez needs to consider being more cooperative with individuals willing/interested in developing land within the City limits.”
- City aesthetics, character
  - “Encourage aesthetics, but don't fake historical facades. Valdez is a modern town since the relocation in 1965. Historical fronts are amazing and charming when it supports the town's history; but that is not our history, so don't try to fake it.”
  - “Funny how we are both the world richest and ugliest town. We need to decide where the town center is. Why isn't the ocean our focus?”
  - “Most areas have poor and good next to each other, making these answers difficult.”
  - “Are you going to put on a bunch of rules so that you drive up the cost of housing and business?”
  - “Can't really answer many of these because of strange groupings - Robe River and Corbin subdivisions with trailer courts? Hospital with "commercial district", whatever that means, new town residential with poorly maintained trailers in a few areas.”
  - “Having a gravel pit in town is unacceptable if we care about aesthetic appearance.”
  - “Need to clean up all along Airport Road; our tourists see broken down trailers, cars, and other trash as soon as they leave the airport coming to town; maybe put up mural fences along Aleutian trailer park and the road.”
  - “New business-like Valdez Brewing are making positive efforts to have attractive buildings that are appealing to residents and tourists!!”
  - “New businesses have been doing a great job with aesthetic, but our main street Egan looks like a wasteland save for the Museum, Banks, and one or two commercial properties.”
  - “Now that the COV has a designated code enforcement officer I have noticed improvements. With that it is incumbent that some owners step up their game as they can and take pride.”
  - “Please let's continue with the poor show of having a code enforcement officer that actually does nothing. Stop bothering people and what their property looks like. It's theirs they should be able to choose how to have it without the government involvement.”



- “Require Petro Star to move Tank Farm and barge loading to refinery.”
- “Simmons trailer park is really unsightly, as well as the mechanic shop and eagles building.”
- “Some properties are beautiful and then there are some that look like a city dump... need some sort of standard.”
- “There are a lot of dumpy lots on the way into town, between Loop Rd entrances. It makes the town look dumpy when first driving in. Empty lots and dilapidated buildings on main street need attention.”
- “There are some locations/homes on the Richardson Hwy look like a junk yard from the road.”
- “This is hard to rate because you have beautiful homes downtown next to run down homes that should be abated. One size does not fit all.”
- “Valdez is an industrial compound shrouded by intense natural beauty.”
- Priorities needing attention
  - “Allow for mixed use like in many other towns do.”
  - “Where is the town center?”
  - “Can’t do much if we are land locked. We still need snow removal lots. Cleaning up existing land residential and commercial are critical . Making Main Street more attractive. We already have a huge park strip which is used as a big snow dump lot. Cleaning up dump road. Why would you want a garbage dump next to a beautiful river so close to town? Move it to the other side of the pass. That area would be gorgeous for developing housing. Clean up and get rid of Hotai’s crap on dump road to start.”
  - “Curbs at the end of driveways need to go away. They are all over the place and damaging to cars.”
  - “If there were decent apartments available many of the run-down trailer parks would go away. Closing those down should be at the top of the list. The trailers at the bottom of Civic Center hill and across from the PO and all along Galena look like squalor.”
  - “Reevaluating our processes for zoning, code development, and alterations to them. The city should be more flexible and helpful. They should also focus on completing permits in a timely manner and being more resourceful and forward thinking when something comes up that doesn’t fit in there special box. Like tiny homes, connex’s, shop/houses, businesses with living quarters. Most of the options listed just smell of more restrictions without support and excuses to grow city gov further.”
  - “Relocate industrial in town on West Egan to out of town & build residential - apartments/townhouses - in town (ie, where Crowley trucks pick up their loads and further west); also, why didn’t the city allow apartments or multiplex units instead of the 8-oil company-owned homes on 1/2 acre lots out by the elementary school?! We can’t waste space like that.”
  - “X2 on Zoning Enforcement, there have been so many waivers given for building and construction on numerous projects that it just creates more problems for the city and its residents leading to additional costs to the city and residents. Housing being built too close together causing snow removal and storage problems, housing easements waived or shrank leading to twice the number of septic systems in an area than what would normally be allowed that will eventually cost the city millions of dollars in city sewer upgrades. We have a policy/ordinance enforcement officer that should be doing his job.”

### **Community Focus Groups (October 2020)**

Summary highlights from focus groups, organized around specific topic areas. The planning team hosted 15 focus group meetings with people representing businesses, industries, local organizations, City staff, non-profits, and the general public. Full notes are no longer posted on the website, but presentations and notes files were created.

Summaries of each meeting posted on Comprehensive Plan blog:

<https://valdezcompplan.blogspot.com/2020/11/discovery-month-summaries-focus-groups.html>

Items relevant to zoning code revision **highlighted in blue**.

### **Community Members Focus Group**

- **Need to support and include the needs of the homeless and low income community members**
- Daycare is a community wide issue that needs to be addressed especially for low income families
- Need to diversify economy; fisheries and year-round tourism has the greatest opportunities
- Provide public transportation and **locate housing near areas of employment** to help low income community members
- **Environmental stewardship needs to be part of the decision-making process at the City level**
- **Celebrate and include Alaskan Natives in the planning process and meet their needs**
- The City does not have a collaborative or transparent process

### **Education and Child Care Focus Group**

- **Community has a high turn-over of residents due to lack of housing**, cost of health care, and schools
- Need to focus on education for the 0-3 year olds
- Need to expand the local workforce through education and training (career, technical center, trades, construction, culinary, health care, fisheries, etc.)
- Need centralized organization structure for business partnership in schools and community. No structure is currently in place (No chamber of commerce, etc)
- Inconsistent transportation and reduced service is impacting the community at all levels and resulting in economic impacts, and costs to individuals, schools and others.
- Community does a good job of taking care of each other and creating event opportunities
- Health care in Valdez is excellent and high quality, especially for a community of this size.
- **Need to protect critical infrastructure from flooding and other impacts**

### **Major Industries Focus Group**

- **Need to focus on downtown with vacant lots, foreclosed properties. Need a vibrant downtown core that is linked to the waterfront that balances the built environment with open space**
- Valdez is a 'boom-or-bust' town; need to find long term stability with the needed infrastructure to support long-term businesses
- Maintain and focus on the core industries first, then when stable, focus on fostering new opportunities
- Upgrade the Richardson Highway to support the movement of heavy freight into the interior
- Need improved regional connectivity with Prince William Sound communities
- **Maintain and expand outdoor access (trails) for all, all year round, including for a variety of users and locations**

- Find balance between environmental stewardship and growing the community
- Communication at all levels is required for the community

### **Youth Focus Group**

- Valdez is a recreation and outdoors based community that is friendly and walkable
- Employment and housing for post high school and college students is a challenge that needs to be addressed to keep youth in community
- Great local connectivity within town (trails, sidewalks, roads) but lacks regional connections
- Being small is a significant draw to attract new residents
- Valdez needs to provide full service recycling program
- Portions of the community are not attractive with vacant lots, industrial use downtown and lack of up-keep of buildings and properties. Need to improve the look of the community.
- Valdez is an adaptive and resilient community and rises to the challenges it faces.

### **Visitor and Tourism Focus Group**

- Need to resolve housing shortage including short-term affordable housing for seasonal workers, tiny homes and cottages
- Need to provide centralized community gathering areas linked to community attractions, destinations and recreation facilities. Get people out of their cars and walk the community
- City needs to make the development of housing simple and cost effective
- Zoning needs to be overhauled to be flexible, allows vision, and allow the development of multi-use facilities
- Bike paths and sidewalks are excellent downtown but need to link to all neighborhoods including remote subdivisions and Keystone Canyon
- Provide more recreation facilities especially during winter including ice rink, bowling alley, multi-use spaces, sculpture park and other community spaces for events
- Provide trails through sensitive landscapes to minimize environmental damage due to lacking facilities
- Recycling is ineffective, need to improve

### **Housing Focus Group**

- Shortage of available property. The City owns too much property and needs to release to allow private development and building more housing
- Cost of construction is high due to limited available land, high water table, code impacts, limited sewer and water service and material costs
- Housing needs greatest for low and middle income housing and rentals
- Valdez is a recreation mecca, play off our strengths for attracting new people and businesses.
- Housing shortage is impacting the community at all levels and should be the number one priority
- City needs to divest in property or develop a department that focuses on housing and other development including incentives and programs to make affordable

- Ensure undeveloped properties and neighborhoods have easements in place to allow future trail connections
- A housing program for Valdez has to be executed, and has been talked about for a long time

### **Recreation Focus Group**

- Future development needs to celebrate and reflect the community's identity and culture. Fishing (provide needed facilities and access), recreation (expand trails and access to public lands), winter activities (skiing, snow machining facilities), and showcase culture and history
- Valdez is a recreation destination. Make facilities world class for locals and to attract long term visitation, year round.
- Need to provide activities and destination for cruise ship passengers to stay in and spend money in Valdez. Many are being bussed out of town. Find ways to diversity economy through cruise ship industry
- Robe Lake is a hidden gem for the community. Develop as a recreation destination and float plane facility
- City needs to evaluate its land holdings and divest itself of lands and restructure as needed. Identify best use of its land
- Market Valdez to Anchorage (they are going to Homer). Valdez has more to offer
- Link community from Shoup Bay to Keystone Canyon linking neighborhoods between. Include both motorized and non-motorized trails for year round use
- Valdez has done a good job on community wellness programs
- Need large indoor recreation facility

### **Shipping and Transportation Focus Group**

- Develop Sea Otter facilities and needed dock facilities for fish processors
- Improve Richardson Highway for improved access and hauling to other communities and interior
- Valdez is well positioned to service the interior, military, and Asian market. Ensure facilities are in place to allow these opportunities
- Huge demand for marine related trades in PWS and beyond. This demand is not being met and training and providing these services could happen in Valdez
- Need to improve transportation connections locally (roads) and regionally (ferries not meeting current needs - create a new partnership linking PWS communities by water)
- Improve walkability from Kelsey Dock to downtown. Create loops to destinations/attractions
- Plan for improving and expanding the Valdez Container Terminal to meet current, future and the possibility of rail link. Link VCT to Richardson Highway via existing right of way rather than on Mineral Creek Loop Road
- Valdez airport has potential that is not being capitalized on. Need hangars, airport service, competitions and connectivity to adjacent campgrounds. Make Valdez a small plane destination.

### **Utilities and Roads Focus Group**

- Some roads are sub-standard and need to be brought up to City standards (Airport Industrial Subdivision, Corbin Creek, Homestead)

- Septic is a major issue in Valdez and is impacting neighborhoods, environment, and future development
- Expansion of sewer and water is needed to resolve septic problems, housing shortages and economic opportunities. Corbin Creek and Airport Industrial Subdivision are the highest priority areas needing extension
- Need to ensure existing infrastructure is maintained before expanding. Expansion needs to be strategic and funded. Infrastructure in community is nearing 20 years old and is getting critical
- City should provide roads, sewer and water in new areas to promote growth and development
- Loss of air service and very limited ferry service has a significant impact on the community. Need to prevent this from happening.
- Need to lower energy costs to promote growth and keep residents. Work with TAP to create partnerships where energy is generated from lost/surplus energy at the terminal and provided to the community
- Snow removal and storage is a huge use of land in the winter. Need to find better use of these lands during rest of year
- Investigate local generation of alternative power at the house and business level and sell back to community to reduce costs.
- Need better community prioritization of capital improvements. Need to better engagement and input.

#### **Public Safety and Emergency Response Focus Group**

- Neighborhoods that are sub-standard and do not meet code need to be improved. 6 mile neighborhood has bad access, no hydrants at Corbin Creek or Alpine Woods.
- Need to verify that when the occupancy of a building changes that the code requirements are met for the new use to reduce safety issues.
- Having mixed users on trails (motorized vs. non-motorized) and poor lighting creates safety issues on trails. Need to manage all appropriately and provide lighting on key trails. Safety concerns for trails that are managed by others than the City (they are not managed)
- Some streets are dark and need better illumination
- Dayville Road needs a multi-use trail along the road connecting the Richardson to the various recreation facilities along the road
- Need 'official' motorized trail along Richardson Highway and connecting to the glacier. Concern is crossing Valdez Glacier Stream and adding motorized recreation vehicle use to the existing highway bridge
- Preparedness for natural disasters is a priority and at the forefront of emergency management
- Critical City infrastructure must not be in hazard areas and needs to be moved out over time
- Radio communication is good but needs to be improved. Some neighborhoods have no coverage. System is aging and needs to be upgraded
- Climate change is resulting in longer dry periods in summer. Valdez is not set up to respond to wildland fire fighting

## **Economics Focus Group**

- Valdez is a beautiful and walkable community with vibrant waterfront. We can do better through improved sidewalks, wayfinding, signs, and improved streetscape (gathering areas, interpretation, etc.)
- New growth is a challenge due to limited housing, daycare, and neighborhoods without sewer and water service. Need to extend sewer and water service and develop housing for seasonal workers and 1-2 bedrooms for low to middle income levels
- Valdez can capitalize on being a small town for remote working and living in a beautiful environment that is safe (remote) with great internet and recreation lifestyle. Promote this to 20-30 year olds
- Continue to market and develop facilities and services for recreation focused visitors (and locals)
- Need to diversify economy from oil-quickly. Focus on fishing, shipping (port and harbor), marine service, and tourism are important but won't replace oil revenue. Need year-round businesses that provide stable employment and incomes
- Valdez has significant sources of income and needs to plan for the future diversification now. We can chart our own course, determine our priorities and needs, and act appropriate to plan for our future and economic diversity
- Parks and Recreation is doing an amazing job with its facilities and programs
- Need to focus on the needs of young families and meet their needs to retain or attract new people
- Community communication is a challenge with the loss of the local newspaper.
- Alberta 2 Alaska Railroad and rail link to Valdez is an economic opportunity that we need to pursue. So is liquified natural gas facility
- Implement the waterfront master plan, parks and recreation master plan, and Meals Hill master plan (when complete)

## **Senior and Pioneers Focus Group**

- Downtown core and its walkability, aesthetics, and small town feel are important to the quality of life for seniors
- Lack of senior housing is a need. Integrate into the community rather than a campus. Create diverse neighborhoods with a variety of community members, and age groups
- Restore the Egan Drive and other roads that have lost their original buildings, character, and sense of scale and aesthetics. Beautification process has lost the historic character and culture of Valdez. New buildings are not consistent with Valdez's character. Old Town had character.
- Alaska and Valdez has an interesting environment. If you are not comfortable here (weather), you are not going to integrate or to stay no matter what's here.
- We have lost ground promoting Valdez to the tourism industry due to abusive attitudes about visitors in our town. Need to fix this but find balance for locals
- Loss of air service and reduced ferry, coupled with occasional road closures creates community vulnerability.
- Valdez as a whole provides a good quality of life for seniors with programs, access to recreation, services, and incredible health care.
- Some concerns for lower income seniors and substandard housing and access to services

- Need to preserve Old Town and its stories before it is lost. Develop recreation and interpretation in a sensitive manner. Sacred ground.
- What do we want our community to look like? Driven by history, culture, tourism or modernization? We have missed an opportunity with new town but need to figure this out.

### **Alaska Native Focus Group**

- Need to be mindful of culturally significant lands and use areas and include Tribal discussion as part of all planning efforts. Include elders who have the knowledge. Develop management strategies for these lands.
- Communication needs to be improved between the Tribes, the City and the community.
- Need to make people and visitors feel welcome while minimizing impacts to the land. Provide sidewalks and wayfinding to control access
- Any development and planning needs to consider subsistence as a critical factor in considering future community development
- Reestablish the Russian Orthodox church that was part of Old Town
- Housing is a significant challenge that needs to be addressed
- Need to appropriately celebrate and preserve (educate) the local Native culture. Work with community college and those that travel to Valdez to capitalize on cultural opportunities. Provide community gathering and celebration spaces in community.
- Work with Tribe in environmental stewardship and their existing programs (ocean acidification, climate change impacts, invasives monitoring, recycling program) and development of new programs
- Need to be better stewards of our lands. Subsistence, clean air and water, flora and fauna, fisheries. Need to better deal with fish waste
- There is significant healing that is needed. The Tribe is not federally recognized, loss of subsistence rights, etc. Tribe is working to becoming federally recognized. There are seven tribes in PWS, only two are recognized.

### **Healthcare Focus Group**

- Lack of housing makes it difficult for visiting physicians and long term hires. Lack of daycare also makes this challenging. Create partnerships with college for housing for visiting physicians
- Existing education, recreation, community events, and small town feel is a draw to get people to move to Valdez
- To create economic diversity, need to consider the economies of scale that is appropriate for Valdez. Focus on core strengths (transportation/shipping, oil, fisheries (sport and commercial), recreation and tourism). Need to also capitalize on marine services.
- Retaining and attracting a younger population is critical to the growth and health of community
- Main street (downtown core), old buildings, and costs are daunting to develop new businesses. Need better properties and opportunities to start new businesses
- Digital connections are critical for a remote community to function and be successful. Valdez is doing well and as a result healthcare has expanded and better services provided. Need to ensure good connectivity at the individual house level as well

- Air travel is a major impact on the community. Even with loss of Ravn, weather is also a significant impact. Not having regular service (all forms) is stifling the economics of the community
- Excellent trails and snow clearing operations in Valdez. Need to also focus on providing better winter trail connections throughout community
- Access to recreation critical to mental and physical well being. Need to expand trail to Keystone Canyon, neighborhoods, waterfront, and other areas. Continue to grow community events and programs for mental health
- Community has a long story of resiliency and a legacy of overcoming natural disasters...all within one of the most beautiful locations with world class fishing and recreation
- Need better focus on our culture and stronger partnerships with the Alaska Native population and their elders

### **History and Cultural Focus Group**

- Preserve, present and interpret our culture and history. Valdez is very utilitarian (snow removal a priority, functional unaesthetic 1960's buildings) and resulted in this loss of character and identity. Need to reestablish, this is the greatest challenge that faces Valdez.
- Valdez's transient population is a positive for the community but needs to be included
- Meals Hill has significance to the Alaska Native population. Work with them to ensure it is developed appropriately and the stories are told
- Old Town needs to have well developed trails, interpretation and provide education for local kids and visitors.
- Valdez is a gateway and needs to tell the stories of the area and community (Chugach mountains, Kelsey Dock, local place names (including traditional), glaciers, military, aviation, Alaska Native, natural environment, Keystone Canyon and Thompson Pass. Provide at community entry points and get people interested to stay longer
- Need diversification from oil industry. Arts, culture, history and tourism can help diversify and tell our stories and restore our identity.
- Strengthen our programs and community through partnerships
- Affordable housing is needed. We have the jobs and opportunities, not the housing.
- Internet connectivity is key to success of a remote community. Need access at the local (house) level and other areas of poor connectivity
- Work with local artists to improve existing eyesores in the community (employment and improving our community)
- Stewardship and self sustaining community is a priority (community gardens, recycling, renewable energy, farmers market, and responding to climate change and planning a resilient community)
- Need to learn from our past and consult with our elders so we do not repeat mistakes and become more resilient