

**CITY OF UNALASKA
PLANNING COMMISSION & PLATTING BOARD
2024 ANNUAL REPORT**



This annual report is designed to serve multiple functions: to summarize the planning activities of the Unalaska Planning Commission; to serve as a resource document; to project future planning needs and activities; and to meet the requirements of § 2.60.090, Unalaska Code of Ordinances.

The Planning Commission, Platting Board, Department of Planning, and Unalaska City Council refer to the adopted Comprehensive Plan, Platting and Subdivision Regulations, Zoning Code of Ordinances, Zoning Map, and other applicable codes for all decisions rendered.

The following residents of Unalaska served on the City of Unalaska's Planning Commission and Platting Board in 2024:

Chair, Travis Swangel
Vice Chair, Ian Bagley
Vicki Williams
Virginia Hatfield
Rainier Marquez

The Planning Commission and Platting Board are supported by the City of Unalaska's Planning Department, which consists of:

Cameron Dean, Planning Director
Thomas Roufos, Associate Planner (Transferred to Fire Department, October 2024)
Elaine Blankenship, Administrative Assistant
Jackie Adams, Grants Management Coordinator

PLANNING COMMISSION AND PLATTING BOARD
RESOLUTION 2025-01

In accordance with § 2.60.090 of the Unalaska Code of Ordinances, the City of Unalaska's Planning Commission officially adopts the following annual report, filing the same with the Unalaska City Council.

CITY OF UNALASKA
PLANNING COMMISSION

BY: 

Acting Travis Swangel Ian Bagley
Commission Chair



Cameron Dean
Secretary of the Commission

DATE OF ADOPTION: 1/23/25

INTRODUCTION

Alaska State law gives incorporated municipalities the authority and responsibility for planning, platting, and land use regulation. In addition to providing for the orderly and efficient use of land and other resources, planning can establish ground rules for development for the whole community and provide the means by which residents participate in important decisions about their community's future. With effective planning, a community can define its character and realize tangible benefits.

The Unalaska Code of Ordinances establishes the Planning Commission and Platting Board to help assure orderly growth of Unalaska and offers additional guidance regarding their functions, power and duties, which include:

- To recognize and utilize such basic information necessary to understand past trends, present conditions, and forces affecting community growth and development;
- To prepare and keep current a Comprehensive Plan for meeting present requirements and future needs for community growth and development as may be foreseen by the Commission/Board;
- To establish principles and policies for guiding actions affecting growth in the city;
- To prepare and to recommend to the City Council ordinances, regulations, or other proposals promoting orderly development indicated as desirable by the Comprehensive Plan;
- To exercise jurisdiction over platting as provided in Chapter 8.08, and to act upon requests for variances, conditional uses, and zone amendments as provided in Chapter 8.12;
- To keep the City Council and general public informed and advised as to matters before the Commission/Board;
- To conduct such meetings, as required, to gather information necessary for the drafting, establishment, and maintenance of the Comprehensive Plan and the ordinances and regulations relating to it; and
- To perform other duties lawfully assigned to the Commission/Board or which have a bearing on the preparation or accomplishment of the Comprehensive Plan.

§ 2.60.090 of the Unalaska Code of Ordinances requires each board and committee to submit an annual report which summarizes the activities which have occurred during the previous year. The Annual Report is a mechanism for monitoring those activities and for presenting to the City Council the goals and objectives for Planning in the coming year.

SUMMARY OF PLANNING ACTIONS FOR 2023

I. General Statistics (January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024)

Application Type	Considered or Reviewed/ Granted, Approved or Formally Recommended		
	2022	2023	2024
Variance	1/1	-	1/1
Conditional Use	3/3	6/5	-
Zone Amendment	4/3	-	1/1
Property Acquisitions	-	-	-
Code Revisions	-	-	-
Plats	1/1	5/4	1/1
Planning Documents	1/1	2/2	1/1
TOTAL MEETINGS	6	10	5

II. Planning Commission Recommendations to Council

<i>January 18, 2024: Approved Resolution 2024-01</i>	The Planning Commission through Resolution 2024-01 approved the <i>Planning Commission and Platting Board 2023 Annual Report</i> , which reviewed the year in Planning in Unalaska.

III. Planning Commission Actions and Activities

<i>April 18, 2024: Work session reviewing the Unalaska Bay Site Specific Plan</i>	The Planning Commission reviewed the State of Alaska’s tideland classification plan for Unalaska Bay. The Commission suggested improvements to the plan to better correspond with local zoning and land use. It also directed Staff to present a resolution recommending a zone amendment of the Marine Dependent Industrial area near McLees Lake to one that better reflects its use and value for subsistence and recreation.
<i>July 18, 2024: Approved Resolution 2024-03</i>	Resolution 2024-03 Approved a rear yard setback variance from 15 feet to 1 foot for the Amaknak Fire Station lease lot to accommodate storage of fire training equipment.
<i>August 15, 2024: Approved Resolution 2024-04</i>	Resolution 2024-04 Recommended to City Council a zone amendment of the Marine Dependent Industrial area near McLees Lake to Open Space
<i>December 19, 2024: Work session reviewing the Capital and Major Maintenance Plan</i>	The Planning Commission reviewed the FY25-34 CMMP and provided comments for the FY26-35 CMMP.

IV. Platting Board Actions

<i>January 18, 2024: Approved Resolution 2024-02</i>	Resolution 2024-02 Approved the final plat of Purevsuren Subdivision on Choate Lane.

V. Summary of Appeals Cases and Actions:

None.

VI. Department of Planning Activities:

The Department of Planning’s primary responsibility is coordinating community planning and development, land use, and capital growth within the City of Unalaska. Services include assisting the public, Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission, and other City departments by providing information, guidance, and direction on land use issues and regulations. Under the guidance of the department, the City’s annual capital improvement, replacement, and maintenance program is developed. The department also initiates and directs studies and reports relating to long and short-term planning needed for both community growth and development in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.

In 2024 the department initiated a grant management program, coordinating grant activities City-wide. The department hired Jackie Adams as Grants Management Coordinator, replacing the previous GIS Administrator position.

In addition to the involvement in the items described in previous sections, Departmental activities and accomplishments for 2024 include the following:

- **Negotiated Agreements:** Coordinated the negotiation and approval of:
 1. Tideland leases and easements which will allow for businesses to expand operations in our community and help to diversify Unalaska’s economic base, as well as provide access for public works projects.
- **Community Support Grants:** The Planning Department administers the community support grant program. The Planning Department received 8 Community Grant Applications from different non-profit organizations serving the City of Unalaska. These applications were reviewed, summarized and presented to City Council. Once awarded, the department managed required reporting and budget change requests from each grantee.
- **Code Enforcement:** The City completed mediation for a long running enforcement action at 176-180 Chernofski. The mediation resulted in a \$207,125 settlement for the City.
- **Grants:** Work on the EPA Brownfields Assessment grant received in FY22 continues with investigations ongoing in Pyramid Valley and Strawberry Hill and remote sensing and regulated building material surveys planned for Spring 2025. The department coordinated applications for several large grants supporting energy and recycling.
- **Other:**
 1. Staff participate in the Alaska chapter of the American Planning Association (APA).

2. Staff built and deployed a road maintenance application for the Department of Public Works. The application allows the Roads Division to record and track issues while in the field.
- **Capital and Major Maintenance Plan (CMMP):**
 1. Completed the FY25-34 CMMP.
 2. The FY26-35 CMMP process is ongoing.

VII. Departmental goals for 2025 include the following:

- Expand online GIS access, improve mapping on mobile devices and train staff in new programs.
- Update the Comprehensive Plan as the current plan has reached the end of its lifespan and a new plan is required to provide guidance for community facility and infrastructure investments. An RFP is in progress and the update to the plan will begin in 2025.
- Work with Engineering / Permitting to improve the permitting and review process.
- Staff continues to work toward improved accuracy and availability of GIS resources internally and to the public.