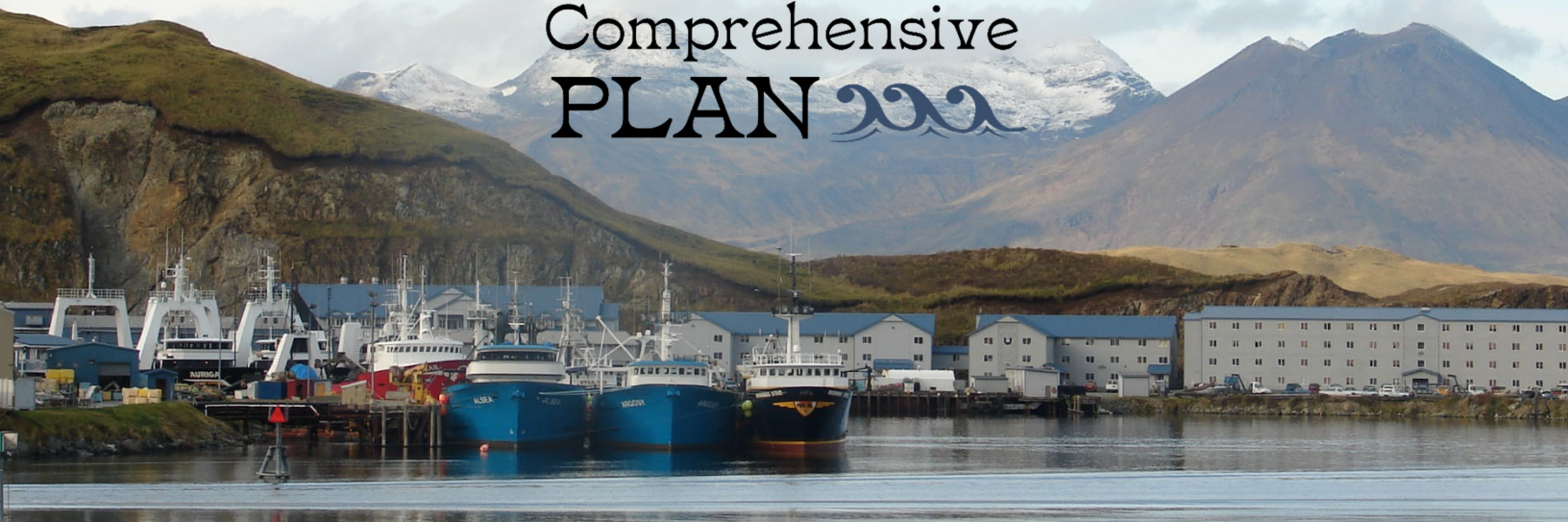




City of Unalaska Comprehensive PLAN



PREPARED FOR
City of Unalaska

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McKinley Research Group

Existing Conditions Report

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Introduction

About Unalaska

The City of Unalaska is the largest population center in the Aleutian Islands, the chain of islands that stretches from mainland Alaska into the Bering Sea. The community spans two islands—Amaknak and Unalaska—connected by a central bridge and considered a single, unified area. Unalaska Island is very large, approximately 1051 square miles,¹ although only a small portion is developed. Unalaska has several unique geological and climatological factors.² Makushin Volcano, an active stratovolcano, is located just to the west of the City of Unalaska. The island's remote, northern position means that it is often battered by strong winds, and winter storms or foggy conditions frequently delay air and ocean travel. Despite these conditions, the surrounding land and ocean provide rich natural resources that have supported generations of residents through fishing, hunting, and gathering.³

Unalaska is the homeland of the Unanga people, who have lived in the region for at least 9,000 years.⁴ Russian explorers and fur traders arrived in the late 18th century, marking the beginning of a period of major cultural change. During World War II, Unalaska became the westernmost U.S. military base, and in 1942, Japanese forces bombed the Dutch Harbor Naval Base and Fort Mears over two days.⁵ This military presence caused lasting impact, both to the Unanga residents who were forcibly evacuated and to the island itself in the form of lasting environmental contamination.

Today, Unalaska is home to three primary governing and administrative entities: the City of Unalaska, the Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska (a federally recognized Alaska Native tribe), and the Ounalashka Corporation (OC), the local Alaska Native village corporation and major landowner. These organizations frequently collaborate to support community development. The island of Amaknak is also home to the Port of Dutch Harbor, which is consistently ranked as the top U.S. fishing port by volume and one of the most valuable.⁶

¹ World-Islands.net, Unalaska, <https://world-islands.net/details/unalaska/>.

² Shvili, J. 2022. "Unalaska, Alaska." *World Atlas*

³ Shvili, J. 2022. "Unalaska, Alaska." *World Atlas*.

⁴ US National Park Service. 2024. "Aleutian Islands World War II National Historic Area." <https://www.nps.gov/aleu/learn/faq.htm>.

⁵ US National Park Service. 2024. "Aleutian Islands World War II National Historic Area." <https://www.nps.gov/aleu/learn/faq.htm>.

⁶ Welch, Laine. 2024. "Top U.S. Ports for a Quarter Century." *National Fisherman*.



City of Unalaska Boundary



Figure 1: City of Unalaska Boundary



Project Overview & Purpose

The City of Unalaska, in partnership with R&M Consultants, Alta Planning + Design, and McKinley Research Group, is developing a Comprehensive Plan as an update to the previous document adopted in 2011. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide an overview of the status of the island, establish a shared vision and community goals, and outline a course of action for future development.

This Existing Conditions Report is a key element in the planning process for updating the City of Unalaska's Comprehensive Plan. This report outlines community characteristics and technical information, including housing, population and demographics, employment and economic trends, land use patterns, recreational facilities, natural areas, public facilities, transportation, utilities (water, wastewater, electricity, and broadband). This creates a comprehensive overview of city's current status and highlights trends that may influence the future. This collection of information supports informed decision making by ensuring all community members have the same set of facts. Understanding existing conditions and trends lays the groundwork for the development of future goals, policies, and regulations, providing important baseline information that will serve as the foundation for the Comprehensive Plan update.

Past Planning

The City of Unalaska has developed and adopted a variety of planning documents over the decades. These adopted planning documents offer guidance and should be included in the Comprehensive Plan Revision to ensure consistency in community planning. Recognizing these plans as part of the Existing Conditions Report guarantees the documents, with their vision, goals, and recommendations are integrated or updated with the Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, several plans and studies completed by other organizations have been reviewed and are included in this summary as they may be relevant to the planning effort.

Unalaska Comprehensive Plan 2020, 2011

The 2011 update to the Comprehensive Plan is the guiding document for the city with a planning horizon of 2020. The plan addresses economic development, health and wellbeing, overall quality of life, physical appeal, environment, education, art, culture, entertainment, land use, transportation, and infrastructure.

This plan establishes the vision, goals, strategies, and actions for land use, economic development, transportation and infrastructure, environment, and housing within the city limits. For each of these categories the plan also establishes values and recommends actions to achieve the stated goals.⁷

Comprehensive Plan 2020 Housing Plan, 2011

The 2020 Housing Plan, adopted in 2011, is an element of the Comprehensive Plan. The plan is intended to serve as the guiding document for future housing developments within city limits. The plan assesses housing trends and conditions, preferences, and housing needs. The plan includes an

⁷ City of Unalaska. 2011. Unalaska Comprehensive Plan 2020 – Adopted February 22, 2011. Unalaska. AK: City of Unalaska, Planning Department.



evaluation of potential housing sites. A first-year action plan, with specific actionable items, responsibilities, and target date is provided.

Goals

- Create a plan for the phased development of housing sites throughout the City of Unalaska.
- Increase affordable home-ownership opportunities for current and future city residents.
- Increase the supply of affordable rental housing using local funds to leverage other resources.
- Preserve and improve the condition and stability of existing housing throughout the city.
- Make existing housing more affordable.
- Adaptively reuse older landmark historic buildings to preserve Unalaska's historic heritage and create a broader range of housing choices.
- Provide a comprehensive system of emergency shelter.
- Improve homebuyer confidence in the concept of leasing land for housing; and structure land lease terms to address the needs of both OC and potential lessees.
- Ensure that zoning and all regulatory and permit processes support the redevelopment of in-fill lots and new subdivisions for new housing development.
- Create greater awareness and compliance of fair housing laws and requirements among local landlords.
- Increase the capacity of all local organizations to carry out housing improvement and development.
- Create a climate that fosters efficient, collaborative, and sustainable progress in carrying out improvements in housing affordability, supply, and conditions.

Unalaska Land Use Plan, 2015

The Unalaska Land Use Plan is an element of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan. This document is intended to supplement the land use section of the 2011 plan. The plan establishes the vision goals and strategies for land use within the City of Unalaska. The stated vision is to provide well thought out orderly growth in Unalaska consistent with the community's vision for land use. The plan relies, in part, on the work completed with the Community Planning Assistance Team.

Unalaska Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan & Appendices, 2025

The purpose of this Master Plan is to be a road map for Parks, Culture and Recreation (PCR) to provide services for the next five to ten years and beyond. The plan includes goals, strategies, and action items developed based on data reported in the plan. The goals of the plan are:



1. Deliver high-quality recreation facilities that provide the greatest level of support for residents and the seasonal fishing industry.
2. Provide high-quality aquatics facilities that support recreation and the safety of Unalaska residents.
3. Deliver recreation programs that continue to build a sense of community as the focal point for Unalaska residents' and visitors' quality of life.
4. Maintain, preserve, and enhance safe parks and park experiences.
5. Deliver parks and recreation services in a financially resilient and sustainable manner.
6. Provide library services that connect residents to educational opportunities, digital literacy, and the power of reading.

City of Unalaska Transportation Study, 2018

The 2017-2018 Transportation Study evaluates the need for, and feasibility of, a public transit system within the city of Unalaska. There is an increased need for transit during the peak fishing season when the population more than doubles, and many are reliant on either walking, biking, or a taxi. The study also examines the high-level economic benefits that could come with having a transit system.

Unalaska Airport Master Plan Update- Final Technical Report, 2023

This report is intended to improve the potential for safe and reliable air service, which is essential to the community. Revised and updated FAA airport design standards and safety criteria guidance necessitated the need to review and plan for updates of current designs. The MP Technical Report was developed to provide information regarding those updates, while also addressing key issues, objectives, and goals pertinent to the airport's future development. The goals of the Airport Master Plan Update are design related and technical in nature.

Unalaska City School District Strategic Plan 2024-2029, 2024

The Strategic Plan establishes the vision and mission for the Unalaska City School District, with four Focus Areas:

1. Expand opportunities through partnerships.
2. Prepare students to navigate their personal journey and advocate for their future.
3. Create caring and joyful learning environments.
4. Adapt instruction so all learners can thrive.

Each focus area has goals, impacts, and strategies for implementation.



City of Unalaska Wastewater Master Plan, 2017

The primary purpose of the City's Wastewater System Master Plan (WWSMP) is to identify and schedule sewer system improvements that correct existing deficiencies and ensure a safe and reliable sewer system for current and future customers.

Of note, the fish processors on Unalaska do not discharge to the City's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), but treat their process water and discharge the treated water through their individual permitted ocean outfalls.

The goals of the Wastewater Master Plan are to:

1. Provide a functional planning document to assist in the Department of Public Utilities (DPU)'s vision development.
2. Provide direction and justification for future projects to support the City's Capital Major Maintenance Program (CMMP).
3. Identify and prioritize regulatory and nonregulatory improvements to the City's sewer system.

City of Unalaska Water System Master Plan, 2018

This master plan informs the Capital and Major Maintenance Plan (CMMP), identifying future and capital needs based on substantiated goals to continually improve the reliability of water service to customers. The plan is a tool to be used to predict future customer demands, identify deficiencies in the system and improvement needs, and document operations and maintenance concerns.

The five key goals recommended for focus are:

1. Solve several major hydraulic limitations in the water transmission and distribution system by installing a water main along Captains Bay Road to North Pacific Fuel.
2. Take advantage of hydroelectric power generation opportunities.
3. Produce more water to meet projected future demand growth.
4. Develop more treated water storage, especially in the Town pressure zone.
5. Implement a proactive and routine pipe asset management program.

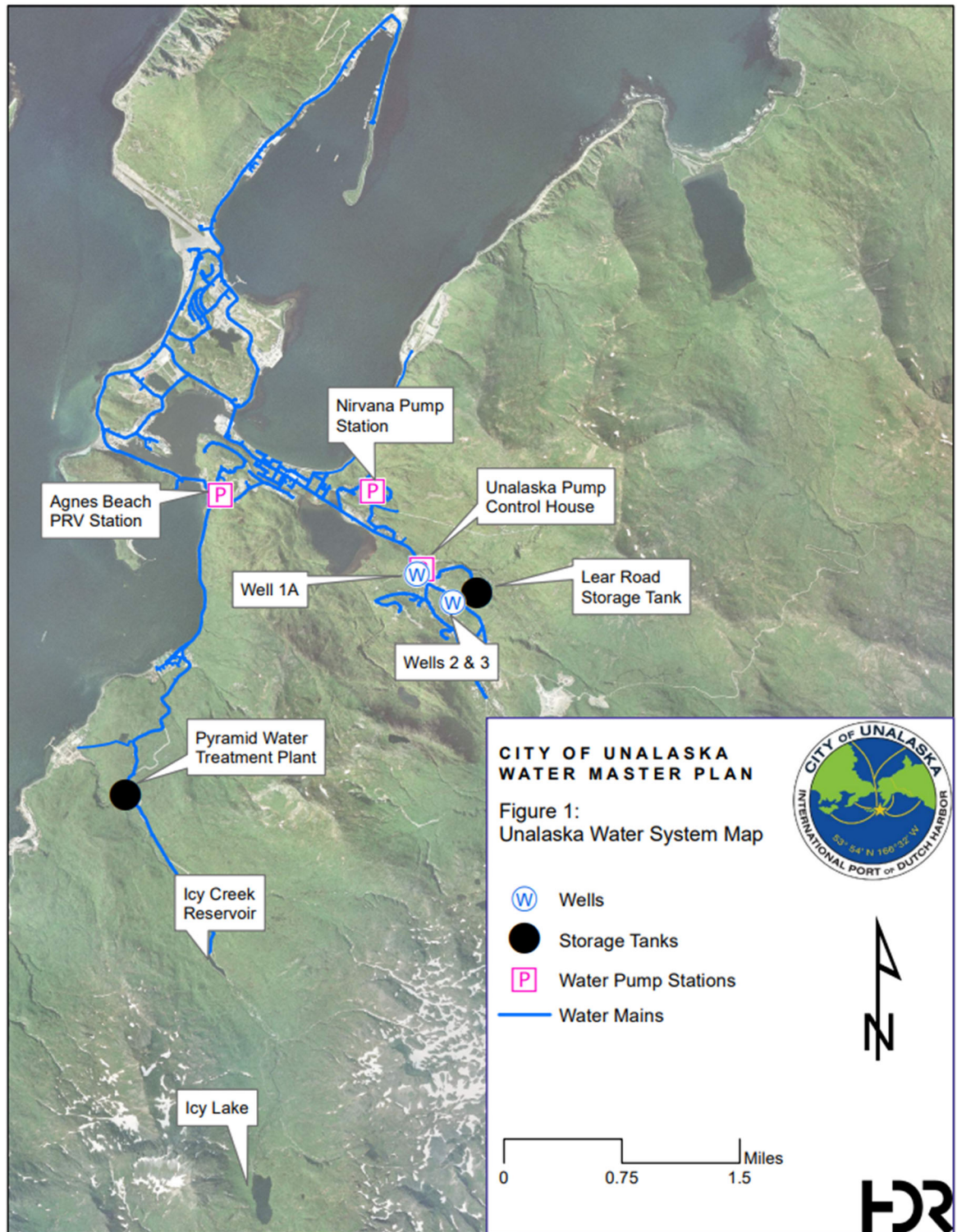


Figure 2: City of Unalaska Water Master Plan. Source: COU Water System Master Plan



City of Unalaska Landfill Master Plan, 2017

The Landfill Master Plan “is intended to: assess and summarize current landfill operations, identify regulatory-driven current and future changes, upgrades, or deficiencies that will require future action or funding; and evaluate options for the most cost-effective waste disposal operations in the future.”

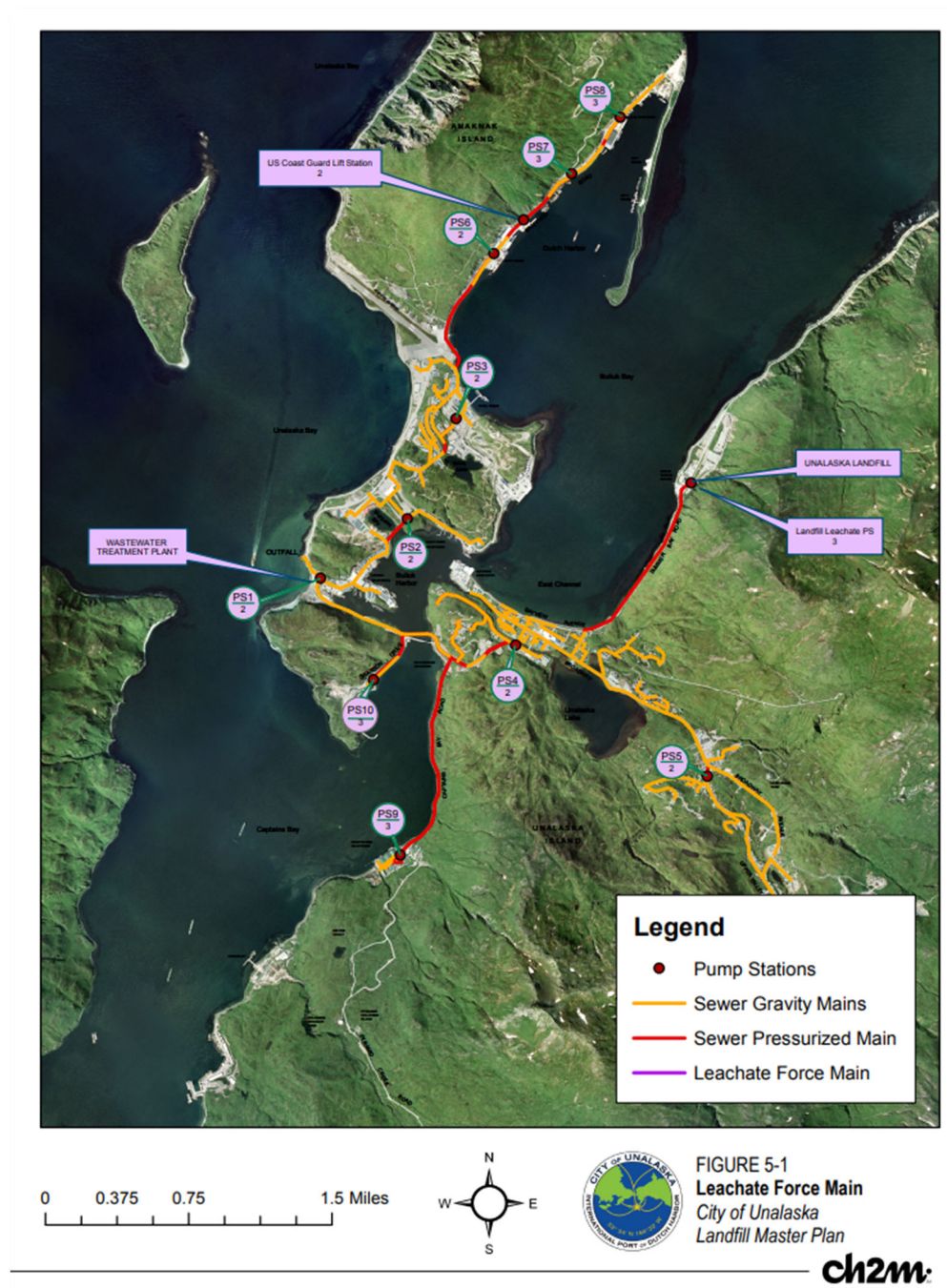


Figure 3: City of Unalaska Landfill Master Plan. Source: COU Landfill Master Plan

City of Unalaska, Alaska Electric Utility Master Plan, 2018



This plan aims to address the future needs of the City's electrical infrastructures, clearly defining purposes and needs while prioritizing and categorizing each solution. The plan provides cost estimates and approximate time frames needed to execute each solution. The project categories are: Reliability, Environmental, Efficiency, Administration, and Additional.

FY25-FY34 Capital & Major Maintenance Plan

Reviewed every year by the City Council, the CMMP serves as a tool to help the City effectively and efficiently meet the needs of the community. City Departments are invited to submit project nominations, which are then reviewed by the City Staff and City Council for consideration for the next update.

COU Electric, Water, Wastewater & Solid Waste Utilities Revenue Requirement Overview, 2021

This analysis presents a high-level overview of the revenue requirements using the FY2016 budget as a basis. It aimed to answer:

1. Whether the rates in effect are sufficient to provide adequate revenues for each utility; and
2. How the revenue equipment should be collected from the customer classes.

The second topic would be addressed more thoroughly in future reports.

COU Zoning Code - Title 8

This chapter establishes the Planning Commission and Platting Board, the requirement for a comprehensive plan, and its adoption and amendment process.

- Platting and Subdivision – controls the form, size, dedication, and vacation of lands and other aspects of subdivision, including improvements, dimensions of lots and tracts of land, street width, easements, rights-of-way, public utility easements, and other public use areas.
- Zoning – establishes zoning districts in accordance with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan, provides minimum standards for each district for the uses of land, location and height of buildings, density and off-street parking and facilitates the provision of adequate services and facilities such as water, sewer, and utilities. This section establishes the official zoning, streets, and highway map, as well as the process and criteria for amendments to the official map.

See Figure 9 in the Land Use Section for a copy of the Zoning Map for the City of Unalaska.

COU Public Utilities - Title 10

This chapter establishes the rules and conditions of service for the operation of utilities. How a property owner or developer may apply for city utilities, the requirements for extending public utilities to private service, ownership, maintenance and repair responsibilities, rates and billing are also addressed.



COU Streets & Other Public Places - Title 15

The chapter governing street naming, street addressing, permits for use of streets and other public places and parks.

COU Buildings & Construction -Title 17

The chapter establishes building, plumbing, mechanical, electrical, and fire prevention requirements for all construction within city limits. The authority of the building official and need for construction permits and inspections are also established. The Unalaska Register of Historic Places is established as are regulations for wind energy systems. Some exemptions to these requirements are allowed.

COU Title 18 Port & Port Facilities

The chapter governing Harbor Management and Harbor Rules for the Unalaska Port, establishing guidelines around the authorities of the Port Director and Harbormasters.

Unalaska Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2025 Draft

Used to identify the potential hazards existing in the community in order to reduce vulnerability. The plan's strategy for mitigation centers around five goals, which are intended to guide everyday activities and be used to incorporate into future plans, policies, and projects.

Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan Update AKDOT&PF, 2016

The Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan (SWATP) "informs development decisions to maximize the public benefits from transportation investments in Southwest Alaska." It centers around four goals: Safety, System Preservation, Connectivity, and Economic Value.

The plan recommends eleven projects, including:

- **Unalaska Marine Center Berths 3 and 4:** Unalaska's location on the Great Circle marine navigational route, coupled with existing infrastructure and maritime services, make Unalaska a prime candidate to serve as a crossroads between Arctic and Asian American routes, serving regional and international economic interests. This project upgrades two of the seven berthing positions, improving AMHS service, expanding the capacity for vessels served, and improving uplands services. Estimated cost: \$28.3 million. See letter K on the map above.

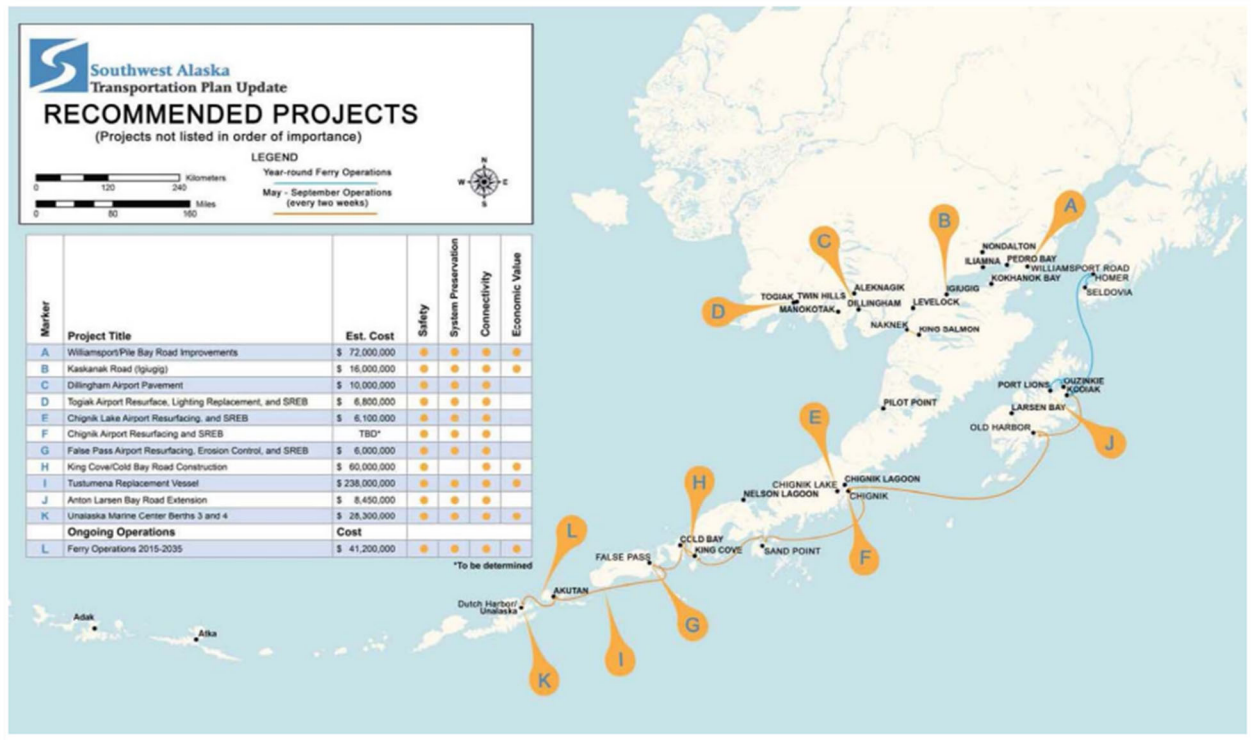


Figure 4: Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan Update Recommended Projects. Source: SWATP 2016, page ES-3

Southwest Alaska Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2020

The CEDS is a plan for the development of Southwest Alaska to be used by the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC). It provides direction that supports economic development in the region backed by quantifiable data and the insight of leadership parties. It organizes strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and lays out actionable strategies that enhance the potential of Southwest Alaska.

Unalaska is listed as a strength under Strategic Ports and Harbors. “Unalaska has the westernmost container terminal in the state and serves as the staging area for supplies and fuel to the Bering Sea marine fleet and many communities in Western Alaska. In 2006, the Port of Dutch Harbor (Unalaska) saw almost 1.2 million short tons of freight move through, which includes both foreign and domestic receipts and shipments. Unalaska is only one of two international ports in Alaska, serving export markets to Asia.”

Seafood Processing Energy also cites Unalaska as an Infrastructure – Internal Strength.

Alaska Moves 2050 Statewide Freight Plan, 2022

The passage of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST ACT) in 2015 instituted new requirements for state departments of transportation, including the requirement for a state freight plan



with specific details included. The passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) in 2021 further augmented these requirements.

Freight plans focus on the statewide network of ports, highways, airports, rail, ferries, and pipelines that move goods statewide, nationwide, and around the world. The Alaska Moves 2050 Statewide Freight Plan calls out opportunities for partnerships between state, local agencies, tribes, privately-owned businesses, and other stakeholders to collaborate to improve the system's safety, resiliency, and redundancy for all users.

With these objectives in mind, the plan outlines goals, actions, and project priorities. The goals include:

- **Safety** - Increase safety for all modes during the movement of freight
- **Mobility and Access** - Move goods safely, reliably, and cost-effectively across Alaska
- **Economic Vitality** - Facilitate economic growth and lower the cost of goods and services
- **State of Good Repair** - Keep what we have in a state of good repair
- **Resiliency** - Have a freight network that can recover quickly from disruptions
- **Sustainability** - Promote a sustainable, clean, equitable freight system
- **Strategic Partners** - Collaborate with other levels of government, industry partners, and the public
- **Stewardship of the Transportation System** - Find the best, most affordable ways to improve the freight network
- **Performance-Based Management** - Have stable, flexible, and long-term funding sources
- **Transportation Innovation** - Leverage innovations that benefit safety, efficient freight movement, and work force need

Community Characteristics

The following section summarizes selected data that describe Unalaska's people and economy. Some demographic data are only available at the Census area level rather than the city area, but Aleutians West Census Area data provide a useful approximation of Unalaska because the city represents more than 80% of the Census area population.

Unalaska is the largest population center along the Aleutian Islands chain and the largest community in all directions for more than 500 miles, including in the Aleutians West Census Area and the neighboring regions of the Aleutians East Borough, the Lake and Peninsula Borough, the Bristol Bay Borough, and the Dillingham Census Area.



Population

Unalaska’s estimated population in 2024 was 4,120, which includes an estimated “group quarters” population of 2,577.⁸ While this population metric accounts for some seasonal workers it does not fully describe either the maximum peak fishing season population or the number of full-time residents – the annual minimum population. Much of the published demographic data about Unalaska is limited by variability in timing and methods of the Decennial Census.

Population Change

Unalaska’s population grew rapidly during the development of crab and groundfish fisheries in the 1970’s and 1980’s and has oscillated around 4,000 residents since the 1990’s. Unalaska became the most populous community in the Aleutians West Census Area and wider Aleutian Islands region following the closure of Naval Air Facility Adak in 1997.

Table 1. Decennial Census Population, Aleutians West Census Area* and Alaska, 1994-2024**

Year	Unalaska City	Aleutians West Census Area	Alaska
1950	173	5,600*	128,643**
1960	218	6,011*	226,167
1970	342	8,057*	302,583
1980	1,322	7,768*	401,851
1990	3,089	9,478	550,043
2000	4,283	5,465	626,932
2010	4,376	5,561	710,231
2020	4,254	5,232	733,391

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Decennial Census Data for Alaska; U.S. Census Bureau

*Data for 1950-1980 are available for Aleutian Islands Census Area rather than Aleutians West Census Area.

**Alaska was a U.S. Territory for the 1950 Decennial Census.

Seasonal Population Fluctuations

Large seasonal fluctuations in the seafood industry workforce shape the community of Unalaska, which expands to include workers from other parts of Alaska, the U.S., and the world during fishing seasons. Most of these workers are seafood processors, although employment in related sectors including seafood harvesting, and shipping also increases during the fishing season.

Foreign workers who come to the U.S. temporarily through the H-2B visa program have provided a significant part of Unalaska’s seafood processing workforce in recent years. H-2B is a guest worker program that allows U.S. companies to bring foreign nationals to the United States to fill temporary nonagricultural jobs. The importance of the H-2B for filling seafood processing jobs in Unalaska has declined in 2025 and 2026 as major employers including Unisea and Trident have moved to a

⁸ Residents working in communal settings, including seafood processor bunkhouses.



workforce of predominantly U.S. residents, citing the regulatory challenges and high travel costs of hiring H-2B workers.⁹

As seen in the table below, the seasonal fluctuation of workers into the Aleutians West Census Area (largely into Unalaska) was about 3,000 workers in 2023, most of them from outside of Alaska. The Census population for Unalaska likely includes a mixture of seasonal and full-time residents, putting the peak season Unalaska population at about 7,000 people.

Table 2. Aleutians West Census Area Workforce by Worker Residence, 2023

Worker Residency	Number of Workers	% of Workforce
Local Resident Workers	1,614	33%
Non-Local Alaska Residents	401	8%
Non-Alaska Residents	2,829	58%
Total Workforce	4,844	100%

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Statistics

Note: Residency based on Permanent Fund Dividend application data. There are limits to using PFD data to determine worker residency. To be eligible for the PFD, a person must live in Alaska for a full calendar year. This requirement means that new residents to the state will be counted as nonresidents in Alaska worker residency data.

Seasonality

Unalaska's largest volume fishing seasons are the Alaska pollock "A" Season from late January to April, and the "B" Season from June to October, although some fishing and processing work takes place year-round. Different from other seasonal workers in Alaska such as summer salmon fishermen or processors, seasonal groundfish processing workers may spend half or more of their year in Alaska.

Change to Workforce Composition

Non-local workers have increased as a share of the Unalaska workforce over the past 10 years, reaching 67% for the wider Aleutians West Census Area region 2023. This trend has mostly been driven by a declining number of local residents in the workforce.

Table 3. Non-Resident Workforce Aleutians West Census Area, 2014-2023

Year	Total Work Force	Non-Local Worker* %
2014	5,278	60%
2015	5,084	57%
2016	5,057	59%
2017	4,552	57%
2018	4,787	59%
2019	4,869	61%
2020	4,739	61%
2021	4,912	65%
2022	4,583	64%

⁹ Alaska Public Media, 2026. "[Alaska pollock processors drop foreign worker program, citing uncertainty.](#)"



Year	Total Work Force	Non-Local Worker* %
2023	4,844	67%

Source: Alaska Department of Labor

*Local workers are defined as workers whose primary address for the PFD filing year was Aleutians West Census Area and whose place of work from employer unemployment insurance filings was also Aleutians West Census Area.

Demographics

Compared to Alaska in general, Unalaska’s population is more racially and linguistically diverse and has a higher proportion of working-aged people.

Age

Because of the large working-age temporary resident population, the Aleutian West Census Area has a smaller youth population (13% in the census area are under 20 years old, compared to 26% statewide in 2024) and a much smaller population over 65 years old (6% compared to 16% statewide). However, as with the state overall, the average age in the region has been increasing.

Table 4. Age Distribution of Population, Aleutians West Census Area and Alaska Statewide, 2024

Age Group	Aleutians West Census Area	Alaska Statewide
Under 20 Years	13%	26%
20-64 Years	82%	58%
65 Years and Above	6%	16%

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

School Enrollment

Enrollment in the two Unalaska City School District schools was 337 in the 2024-2025 school year, down from more than 400 in the 2019-2020 school year.

Table 5. School Enrollment, Unalaska City School District, 2015/2016–2024/2025

School Year	Eagle’s View Elementary	Unalaska City School	Total District Enrollment
2015-2016	204	174	378
2016-2017	197	190	387
2017-2018	217	184	401
2018-2019	230	188	418
2019-2020	238	174	412
2020-2021	226	161	387
2021-2022	189	166	355
2022-2023	184	163	347
2023-2024	191	161	352
2024-2025	163	174	337

Source: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development



Race

Unalaska’s racial composition is very different than Alaska statewide, with more Asian and Hispanic residents and fewer white and Alaska Native residents. The city has significant Filipino, Samoan, Vietnamese, and Mexican-origin populations.

The city’s racial composition can change relatively quickly between years based on which countries H-2B visa workers seafood processing workers are recruited from. Most H-2B workers in Unalaska were from Eastern Europe or Latin America including the Czech Republic, Serbia, Poland, Bulgaria, Guatemala, and El Salvador as of 2025, although these nationalities vary with the changing demographics of the seasonal workforce.

Most of the city’s Alaska Native residents are Unanga.

Table 6. Population by Race and Ethnicity, Unalaska and Alaska, 2023

Race	Unalaska	Alaska
Asian alone	47%	6%
White alone	23%	61%
Some other race alone	7%	2%
Black /African American alone	5%	3%
Alaska Native /American Indian alone	3%	14%
<i>Alaska Native /American Indian alone or in combination</i>	4%	20%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander alone	2%	2%
Two or more races	13%	12%
Total	100%	100%
Hispanic Origin (of any race) alone	15%	7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5 Year ACS, 2019-2023

Language

Unalaska is a multi-lingual community in which the majority of residents speak a language other than, or in addition to, English at home. Languages commonly spoken in Unalaska include Tagalog and Cebuano (Filipino languages), Samoan, Spanish, and Vietnamese. While many residents speak a language other than English, English is widely used and understood. Among the 63% of residents who speak a language other than English, only 20% of those residents speak English less than “very well.”¹⁰

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS)



Table 7. Language Spoken at Home, Unalaska and Alaska, 2023

Race	Unalaska	Alaska
English only	37%	84%
Language other than English	63%	16%
Asian and Pacific Islander languages	43%	6%
Spanish	11%	3%
Other languages	10%	6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5 Year ACS, 2019-2023

Population Projections

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development projects that the population of the Aleutians West Census Area will increase slightly over the next 25 years, with annual growth rates averaging under one-half percent. The state population is expected to grow by one-tenth of a percent per year until 2030, experience no change between 2030-2035, and begin contracting by 2035 due to declining birthrates.

The Aleutians West Census Area has a higher-percentage working-age population compared to the rest of the state in combination with a high fertility rate – 7.4 births per 100 women in Aleutians West in the last year compared to 5.7 per 100 women statewide.¹¹ Although negative net migration in Aleutians West Census Area is projected by 2035, a surplus of births over deaths is expected to outweigh the impact of net outmigration.

The nature of Unalaska's economy, in particular the commercial fishing and processing industry, will play a large role in determining future migration patterns and the future size of the community.

Table 8. Projected Components of Average Annual Population Change, Aleutian West Census Area, 2025-2050

Year	Births	Deaths	Net Migration	Population Change	Population Growth Rates	
					Aleutians West	Alaska
2025-2030	+47	-34	+10	+23	+0.5%	+0.1%
2030-2035	+51	-34	+6	+23	+0.4%	<i>No change</i>
2035-2040	+55	-33	-3	+19	+0.4%	- 0.1%
2040-2045	+55	-33	-7	+15	+0.3%	- 0.2%
2045-2050	+53	-32	-9	+12	+0.2%	- 0.2%

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Estimates (2025-2050)

Employment & Education

The average Unalaska resident earned \$114,286 in 2023, and the estimated Gini coefficient was 0.33, as compared to 0.43 statewide.¹² The Gini coefficient is a measure of income inequality, with 0 representing perfect equality and 1 representing perfect inequality; there is therefore greater income

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 5 Year ACS, 2019-2023

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, 5 Year ACS, 2019-2023



equality in Unalaska than in Alaska overall. Educational attainment in Unalaska is somewhat lower than the rest of Alaska. In Unalaska, 18% of residents 25 or older had bachelor's degrees or higher in 2023, compared to 31% for Alaska as a whole.¹³ Meanwhile, 90% of Unalaska residents 25 and older were high school graduates (including high school equivalency), compared to 94% in the rest of the state.

Economy

Unalaska is an important hub of Alaska's commercial seafood industry. Employment numbers provide one measure of an industry's role within the local economy. Median household income is higher in Unalaska than Alaska in general, but costs of living are also higher. More than half of the jobs and wages in the Aleutians West Census Area in 2024 were in seafood processing. Another 12% of jobs and 17% of wages were in the high-paying water transportation and transportation support sectors, which are closely connected to the commercial fishing and processing sector.

Besides the seafood processing industry, the existing economic footprint of other current and possible economic sectors (described more in the Analysis of Key Industries part of this report) was limited in 2024.

- **Healthcare:** An annual average of 93 people were employed in the healthcare and social services sector (3% of regional employment).
- **Leisure and Hospitality:** There were 47 jobs (1% of regional jobs) in the leisure and hospitality sector.
- **Government:** Most current public sector jobs were in local government (12% of average annual employment), with about 1% in state or federal government jobs.¹⁴

Table 9. Wage and Salary Employment, Aleutians West Census Area, 2024

Industry	Average Annual Employment	Percent of Total Employment	Annual Wages (Millions)	Percent of Total Wages
Government	570	17%	\$35	13%
Local Government	537	16%	\$32	12%
Federal & State Government	33	1%	\$3	1%
Private Employers	2,780	83%	\$238	87%
Manufacturing (Seafood processing)	1,823	54%	\$149	55%
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	610	18%	\$61	22%
Water Transportation	225	7%	\$31	11%
Transportation Support Activities	180	5%	\$17	6%
Retail Trade	130	4%	\$5	2%

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, 5 Year ACS, 2019-2023

¹⁴ These statistics do not include military or Coast Guard jobs, so do not include employment at the Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Dutch Harbor in Unalaska.



Industry	Average Annual Employment	Percent of Total Employment	Annual Wages (Millions)	Percent of Total Wages
<i>All Other Trade, Transport, & Utilities</i>	75	2%	\$8	3%
Health Care & Social Assistance	93	3%	\$8	3%
Leisure & Hospitality	47	1%	\$2	1%
All Other Industries	207	6%	\$18	7%
Total Employment	3,350	100%	\$272	100%

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Note: Columns may not sum due to rounding

Household Income and Poverty

Median household income is higher than Alaska statewide, with some sectors paying average wages of more than \$100,000 per year, such as marine terminal operators at \$137,000. Compared to the state in general fewer Aleutians West residents were below the state poverty income threshold. However, this poverty threshold does not take into account regional variations in the cost of living, as described below.

Table 10. Percent of Population, Families, and Children Below Alaska Poverty Guideline, Unalaska and Alaska, 2023

Community	Unalaska	Alaska
Median household income	\$114,286	\$89,336
Population below poverty line	8%	10%
Families below poverty line	3%	7%
Children below poverty line	4%	16%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5 Year ACS, 2019-2023

Cost of Living

The *Alaska Geographic Differential Study* published in 2008 is the basis for the cost differentials described below and is the latest, most comprehensive Alaska cost of living study published to date. The following differentials provide a measure of the cost of living in Unalaska relative to Anchorage. Unalaska's composite cost differential was 1.58, compared to 1 in Anchorage, indicating household costs were on average 58% higher in Unalaska compared to Anchorage.

Although this cost differential study is now more than 15 years old, fundamental factors have not changed since 2008: overall costs in Unalaska remain substantially higher than costs in Anchorage, driven by high transportation costs (particularly airfare, see **Error! Reference source not found.** Passenger Air Service below for more information), and housing costs.



Table 11. Unalaska Cost of Living Differentials, 2008

Component of Household Budget	Differential
Composite	1.58
Transportation	2.35
Housing	1.65
Food	1.43
Clothing	1.08
Medical	0.98
All Other *	1.37

Source: McDowell Group, Alaska Geographic Differential Study 2008

*Note: All other household expenditure components include household furnishings and appliances, communications services, personal care items, recreation, and education.

Subsistence

Hunting, fishing, and gathering wild plants are important sources of nutrition in rural Alaska and these activities represent a significant non-monetary economic activity not captured in the economic statistics previously described. In 2020, 75% of Unalaska households reported participating in subsistence, according to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.¹⁵

Government

City

The City of Unalaska was incorporated in March 1942 and is a first-class city. City boundaries include areas of Unalaska Island and Amaknak Island, encompassing Dutch Harbor. The city is governed by a city council and mayor, operated by professional staff led by a City Manager. The city provides water, wastewater, electric generation and distribution and solid waste services. The city also provides library, parks and recreation, streets, and land use services. The City of Unalaska encompasses approximately 102 square miles of land and 109 square miles of water.¹⁶

The City of Unalaska has many boards and commissions, including the Planning Commission, Parks, Culture and Recreation Committee, Library Advisory Committee, and Historic Preservation Commission. The 9-member Advisory Committee (AC) is assisting with this comprehensive planning effort.

Tribe

The Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska is the federally recognized tribe providing services for enrolled tribal members in Unalaska. Alaska's federally recognized tribes are unique in that they have no land base, due to the enactment of ANSCA. Federally recognized tribes are eligible to receive certain federal benefits, services, and protections. Qawalangin Tribe is governed by a seven-member council and operated by a professional staff led by a chief executive officer. Consistent with their mission, the

¹⁵ Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 2020, via [Community Subsistence Information System \(CSIS\) Data Downloader](#).

¹⁶ www2.census.gov/geo/docs/maps-data/data/gazetteer/2020_Gazetteer/2020_gaz_place_02.txt



tribe's programs include cultural preservation and education, health and wellness, fisheries, recycling, resilience, PCP monitoring, Brownfields, and mitigation of military impacts.

A federally recognized tribe is an American Indian or Alaska Native tribal entity that is recognized as having a government-to-government relationship with the United States, with the responsibilities, powers, limitations, and obligations attached to that designation, and is eligible for funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Other

The Ounalashka Corporation (OC) is the Alaska Native Village Corporation for Unalaska. OC was formed in 1973 under ANCSA and received 115,200 acres of surface lands on Unalaska and Amaknak islands. Regional and village corporations are owned by enrolled Alaska Native shareholders and are for profit organizations. While not technically a governmental entity or governing body, OC is the largest land owner in the city and has a history of working cooperatively with the City and Tribe.

Governmental Coordination

In August 2020, the City of Unalaska, Qawalangin Tribe, and the Ounalashka Corporation entered a memorandum of understanding (MOU) called Unalaska Trilateral Agreement. This agreement is the first of its kind. It is a commitment by the three entities to work together toward common goals to benefit the community. The MOU was amended and affirmed in 2023. The stated goal of the Trilateral Coalition is to diversify the community, improve communication among the coalition members and coordinate an appropriate response to issues involving public health, public administration, environmental management, economic development, public works and utilities, and public communications.

State

The state of Alaska maintains a State Troopers, Wildlife Troopers, Fish and Game (ADF&G) and Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT) staff in Unalaska. Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities staff support the operation of the state-owned airport. The city offers Department of Motor Vehicles services in collaboration with the state by providing limited DMV services at the city's Police Department.

Current staffing is one Fish & Wildlife Trooper; five year-round and five seasonal ADF&G staff; and our ADOT employees at the airport.

Federal

Federal agencies with a presence in Unalaska are the Federal Aviation Administration and Customs and Border Protection.



Public Services & Infrastructure

Utilities

The City of Unalaska owns and operates all major public utilities, including electric generation and distribution, water, wastewater, and solid waste services.

Electricity

Electricity is produced through two diesel-generating power plants, which together have an installed capacity of 22.4 megawatts. Power is distributed through two 5 MVA substations that serve 14 miles of 35 kV circuit and 32 miles of underground cable. Many large industrial customers including Westward Seafoods, Alyeska Seafoods, UniSea, Horizon Lines, and American President Lines (APL) operate in Unalaska. In the past, these industrial consumers generated their own power because the city lacked the capacity for generation and distribution to support them. The city is developing and expanding its electrical infrastructure to be able to support the fishing industry. At this time there are no agreements in place for any of the industrial customers to purchase electricity from the city.

Water

The municipal water system supplies more than 600 customers, roughly half metered and half unmetered. Water is drawn from four reservoirs and three wells with a combined production capacity of 2,800 gallons per Page 34 of 70 minute (GPM). Water is distributed through about 21 miles of pipeline. The City also has a fully operational Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system that enables both remote monitoring and control over assets. The 2025 Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan notes that the city has unique challenges for water supply due to the seasonal influx of transient population and increased demand by the seafood industry. To compensate for these large peaks in water demand the city maintains a large storage capacity for untreated water.

Wastewater

The wastewater system includes 12 lift stations and 23 miles of sewer line. The city operates a “chemically enhanced primary treatment” wastewater plant. Treated wastewater is dechlorinated and then discharged to South Unalaska Bay. Screened solids are disposed at the municipal land fill. According to the City’s internal utility accounting, wastewater volume is notably lower than total water use, likely due to the high industrial demand for water and the amount of wastewater discharged offshore under permit.

Solid Waste

Solid waste is managed through the City Landfill, which processes approximately 8,500 tons of material each year. The Unalaska Landfill is a Class I Municipal Solid Waste Landfill, permitted by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Refuse is bailed and stored on site in lined “cells.” Hazardous materials are shipped off-island. Scrap metal and vehicles are also shipped off island when possible. The city recently commissioned an Alternative Solid Waste Management Feasibility Study. This study evaluated three alternatives for solid waste management. The study recommends the continued use and expansion of the landfill. The recommendation includes



upgrades to the baler building, purchase of a tire shredder, and replacement of the baler within 5 years. The long-term recommendation is permitting and construction of a 5-acre landfill cell. The study anticipates the recommended alternative will significantly extend the life of the landfill.

Recycling

Currently, Unalaska does not provide municipal recycling or household garbage collection services. The Qawalangin Tribe was awarded federal funds to build an Aleutian Islands regional recycling hub and provide community education about recycling. The Tribe's program "Recycling and Backhaul" encourages and facilitates recycling in Unalaska. Currently glass, cardboard, paper, aluminum and #1 plastic are accepted for recycling. QC also manages an electronic recycling program that removes old computers, televisions, etc. annually.

In 2025, the city was awarded \$3.7M in grant funding to establish recycling infrastructure to sort and store recyclable solid waste for shipment off island. The funding will also purchase a vehicle crusher to prepare vehicles for off-island transport and recycling. Grant funds will fund training for the vehicle crusher, public education about the recycling infrastructure and proper recycling methods, and a scale for tracking residential waste.

Internet

Internet and phone service is provided by multiple service providers using either satellite or fiber optic connections to reach off-island. Fiber to the home is available throughout the city, as well as broadband cellular data networks. Unalaska has 1 Mbps broadband service provided by HughesNet, Starlink services, and OptimERA, as well as direct users. GCI, Tel Alaska, and OptimERA offer cellular services in Unalaska. GCI's fiber network is available citywide.

Public Services

The City of Unalaska provides two major categories of services to the public besides utilities: public safety and public recreation.

Public Safety

The Unalaska Police Department handles approximately 4,000 calls per year, with services consisting of traffic enforcement, accident investigations, criminal investigations, and DMV/commercial vehicle enforcement. Also under the Police Department are the Corrections, Communications, and Animal Control divisions.

Operating with a combination of volunteers and paid staff, the Unalaska Fire Department maintains the fire safety and awareness of the community and provides high-level pre-hospital emergency medical ambulance services, as well as emergency management. The Fire Department operates out of two stations. The primary station is on Unalaska Island and the secondary on Amaknak Island. Members' certifications range from basic firefighter certifications to advanced-level pre-hospital provider licenses. The Unalaska Fire Department provides advanced life support (ALS) transport



service and operates on all hazards within city limits. The department has 2 – ALS ambulances, 2 – Engines, 1 – Tower Ladder, 1 – Technical Rescue, and 3 – Command Vehicles.

Recreation

For public recreation, the city maintains a Parks, Culture, and Recreation Department (PCR) that operates the Community Center, Library, Aquatics Center, and numerous parks and outdoor facilities. Unalaska lacks the privately operated recreational facilities common in other communities, like gyms or movie theaters, and these amenities are instead provided by PCR.

The Unalaska Public Library was recently renovated and reopened to the public in May of 2023. The library's collection includes a wide variety of books, periodicals, movies, and audiobooks. With the Unalaska Public Library card, you can also borrow eBooks and eAudio titles for free through the Alaska Digital Library and access books and movies throughout the state and nation through interlibrary loans. The library provides public access to internet computers, free Wi-Fi, video conferencing, three public meeting rooms, a teen room, two private study rooms, and a children's room. Additional services include passport application acceptance, notary, and exam proctoring. The special Alaskan Collection located in the Ray Hudson Room contains rare and unique items as well as historical newspapers from the region. The library hosts Unalaska's book club, as well as story times, author visits, and other programs for a wide range of ages and interests. Anyone may use library resources in-house, and any individual with current, government-issued identification may obtain a full-service library card.

The Museum of the Aleutians was founded through a partnership between the City of Unalaska, the Ounalashka Corporation, the Qawalangin Tribe, and the Aleut Corporation for the purpose of preserving and sharing the human history of Unalaska Island and the Aleutians Islands region. The museum's permanent exhibit gallery showcases the breadth of Aleutian history with an extensive collection of Unangaġ, Russian, and American artifacts. The museum's changing gallery is used throughout the year to display a variety of exhibits, as well as for special events and presentations. Each year, the museum provides a variety of programs for the community, including community archaeology, lectures by visiting researchers, and hosting school groups from all over the region. The museum collections are professionally cared for in a secure, climate-controlled environment, accessible by appointment to both researchers and the general public.

The Aleutian World War II National Historic Area Visitor Center is owned and operated by the Ounalashka Corporation. The visitor's center is in the historic Aerology Operations Building. The structure has been renovated to its original façade. The historic area is a 134-acre tract of land on Amaknak Island and houses the military ruins of Fort Schwatka, the highest coastal battery ever constructed in the United States. The Visitor Center contains many artifacts and photographs of the era and is located near the airport in Unalaska.

The Community Center, located in the center of town, offers music and art spaces, a Department of Environmental Conservation certified commercial kitchen, indoor basketball court, conference room, indoor track, cardio room, weight room, multi-purpose room, racquetball courts and a teen room. Individuals and families may purchase membership ranging from a 10-punch pass to a yearly pass



which can be used to access the community center and aquatic center. Local companies purchase corporate memberships as an employee benefit. Facility rentals for the community center resources are available. Classes are offered.

The Aquatic Center provides a 6-lane, 25-yard indoor swimming pool, a warming pool, water slide, locker rooms, a family changing room, a dry sauna, and a fitness room. Swim lessons for all ages, lifeguard certification courses, and youth swim league are offered. The City School Swim Team uses this facility for practices and hosting meets. Facility rentals are offered.

The U.S. Postal Service provides two post offices with lobbies and post office box access. The larger post office is located on Airport Beach Road. Both post offices are open 9-5 Monday through Friday and 9-1 Saturday.

Education

There is one facility of higher education in Unalaska, the Unalaska Learning Center, which is an outpost of the Bristol Bay campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks.¹⁷ The Learning Center offers distance delivery and in-person university courses, vocational and technical courses, and dual credit options for high school students. The Unalaska City School District serves students pre-K-12 at two buildings; Eagles View Elementary School Achigaaluġ (K-6) and Unalaska City School (7-12).¹⁸ As of 2024 there were 163 elementary students and 174 junior/senior high students.

Healthcare

For healthcare facilities, the majority of standard, preventative and emergency care is provided by Illiuliuk Family and Health Services, a federally qualified health center.¹⁹ The Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association operates the Oonalaska Wellness Center, which provides primary care to veterans and Indian Health Service beneficiaries and behavioral health services to the entire community.²⁰ The majority (82.8%) of Unalaskan residents have employer-provided health insurance.²¹ Dentists and an optometrist travel to Unalaska on a regular basis to provide services.

Senior & Youth Services

The Unalaska Senior Citizens group provides a meals-on-wheels program and a nutritious, balanced diet through the senior lunch program, regular transportation to and from the post offices, grocery stores, the Clinic, special events, and exercise programs for seniors.

The city's PCR department organizes indoor youth sports such as soccer. PCR also offers after-school and summer programs.

¹⁷ University of Alaska Fairbanks. 2025. "Unalaska Learning Center | Bristol Bay Campus." <https://www.uaf.edu/bbc/about/unalaska-learning-center/>.

¹⁸ Unalaska City School District. 2025. "Unalaska City School District." <https://www.ucsd.net/>.

¹⁹ Illiuliuk Family Health Center. 2025. "Illiuliuk Family Health Center Medical Services." <https://ifhs.org/medical/>.

²⁰ Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association. 2025. "Unalaska | Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association." <https://www.apiai.org/tribes/unalaska/>.

²¹ Data USA. 2023. "Unalaska, AK." <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/unalaska-ak#demographics>.



Transportation & Mobility

Unalaska's unique coastal environment and remoteness significantly influence its transportation systems. As an island community over 800 miles from Anchorage, all freight, mail, and passenger air services must first route through Anchorage before reaching Unalaska. This dependency makes both air and marine transportation costly and weather dependent.

On-Island Mobility

Unalaska's road network extends approximately 67 miles.²² Of this total, gravel roads account for 58 miles while paved and marked roads make up the remaining nine. The City of Unalaska maintains and owns most of the road system, managing roughly 85% of all roads. Private roads, primarily under the Ounalashka Corporation, account for the remaining 15%. Many private roads fall on Section 17(b) easements²³, granting public access but maintenance may fall outside the City's responsibilities. The predominance of gravel roads reflects the high cost of paving in a remote marine environment.

Currently there is no public transit system in Unalaska. This comprehensive planning effort includes a parallel transit study which will explore transit for the city. There are currently 18 registered taxis available. The Unalaska City School District provides its own student transit using 14-passenger vans. These vehicles are occasionally chartered as transportation to cruise ship passengers during the non-school year in collaboration with the Unalaska Visitors' Bureau. In addition, the senior center provides on-demand transportation to seniors for medical appointments, but it is primarily geared towards seniors who live on-site. Finally, One marijuana retailer previously offered transportation services to their clients with fixed route service making multiple stops around the city in addition to their store.

Section **"17(b) Easements"** are named after the section of the Federal Regulation, Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act "ANCSA" (PL 92-203 - 85 Stat. 688). This Federal Regulation allows reserving easements on lands which will be conveyed to Alaska Native Village and Regional Corporations in order to allow public access to public land and water. The Federal Regulations, 43 CFR 2650.4-7, describe the guidelines which are used in reserving easements in conveyance documents.

Off-Island Mobility

Due to the community's geography, air service is especially important to Unalaska's passenger transportation services. The community is connected to other regions of Alaska via the Alaska Marine Highway System. However, current scheduled flights transport passengers between Anchorage and Unalaska in less than two-and-a-half hours, a trip that requires several days via the Alaska Marine Highway System ferry to Homer and up to Anchorage on the highway. The ferry typically makes two trips per month in the summer, though they may be cancelled due to sea conditions. In addition to

²² City of Unalaska. 2025. City of Unalaska Road Network and Ownership Data (LGIM Database, 2025). Unalaska. AK: City of Unalaska, Public Works & Planning Department.

²³ Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land and Water webpage.



transporting residents and those working in Unalaska, the community acts as a regional hub for air travel to and from other communities.

The community relies on a mix of air and marine transportation for freight and fuel delivery.

Passenger Air Service

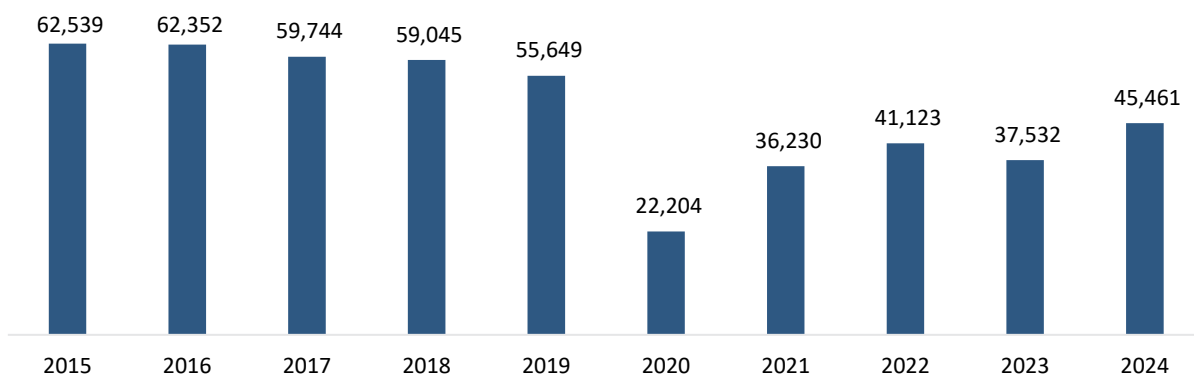
The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) owns and operates the Tom Madsen Airport. According to the 2011 Comprehensive Plan, the single runway is too short to accommodate larger, more fuel-efficient aircraft, contributing to high airfares. Tall mountains surrounding the airport, low flight ceilings and the lack of a crosswind runway make flying unreliable. Often flights travel all the way to Unalaska before determining that they cannot land and return to Anchorage. As a result, flight costs to Anchorage currently average around \$750 per passenger one way.

The cost and availability of flights between Unalaska and Anchorage was a main concern of residents in the city's 2011 Comprehensive Plan and remains a key challenge in late 2025 following several changes to air service over the last decade.

Aleutian Airways began operation in November 2022 using turboprop Saab 2000 aircraft. Unalaska is also a hub for scheduled regional flights offered by Grant Aviation to nearby islands.

Unalaska has gone without direct scheduled air service to Anchorage twice in recent years – following a fatal accident in 2019 and for a longer period in 2020 following the bankruptcy of RavnAir Alaska amid the COVID 19 pandemic. In the absence of scheduled service, chartered aircraft and flights from other regional airports were used by workers and residents for passenger travel to and from Unalaska.²⁴

As seen below, air passenger traffic to and from Unalaska dipped in 2019 and fell sharply in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic and Ravn bankruptcy. Annual passenger traffic had increased to about 75% of pre-COVID levels by 2024.



²⁴ See *National Fisherman*, 2020. [“Ups and downs: Alaska’s remote fishing hubs grapple with ferry and flight shutdowns.”](#) for a recent history of passenger aviation in Unalaska.



Figure 5. Unalaska Air Passenger Volume, 2015-2024

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Statistics.
Note: Includes unscheduled charter flights.

Unalaska previously had access to jet airplane service on Boeing 737-200 planes operated by Alaska Airlines and MarkAir, but the 4,500-foot runway at the Tom Madsen Airport that serves Unalaska is too short for most contemporary jets. Extending the airport runway was the top priority for Unalaska identified in a survey associated with the 2011 City Comprehensive Plan.

Aleutian Airways is a code share partner with Alaska Airlines, allowing customers to book single itineraries between Unalaska and cities served by Alaska Airlines. However, the two airlines are not fully mileage partners, and while residents may use Alaska Airlines miles to travel between Unalaska and Anchorage, the cost in miles is prohibitively high.

Unalaska does not have federal government-subsidized flights under the Essential Air Service Program, a U.S. government program that ensures small and rural communities maintain a minimum level of scheduled air service, often through federal subsidies. It is unusual for a community of its size and remoteness in Alaska to lack EAS service. The city is also not part of the Bypass Mail system, which provides lower-cost air freight to rural Alaska retail stores. This system is a specialized process for shipping Parcel Post mail that does not require handling by Postal Service personnel or in a Postal Service facility, alleviating congestion of mail in processing centers and allowing for faster delivery to recipients in remote locations.

Ferry Service

Unalaska is the final of several ports served by the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) Southwest route, connecting the Aleutian Chain and Kodiak Island to the Alaska road system. The Southwest route is generally served by the Tustumena, a vessel built in 1964 with capacity to transport 160 passengers and about 34 vehicles per trip. The vessel can typically accommodate six commercial vans and has 23 staterooms. The State of Alaska plans to replace the Tustumena with a new vessel in 2028.²⁵ This route can be served year-round but is currently only offered May-October. Service may not be offered each month due to required vessel overhaul or other system constraints.

²⁵ Alaska Business Magazine, 2025. [Alaska Marine Highway Update](#).

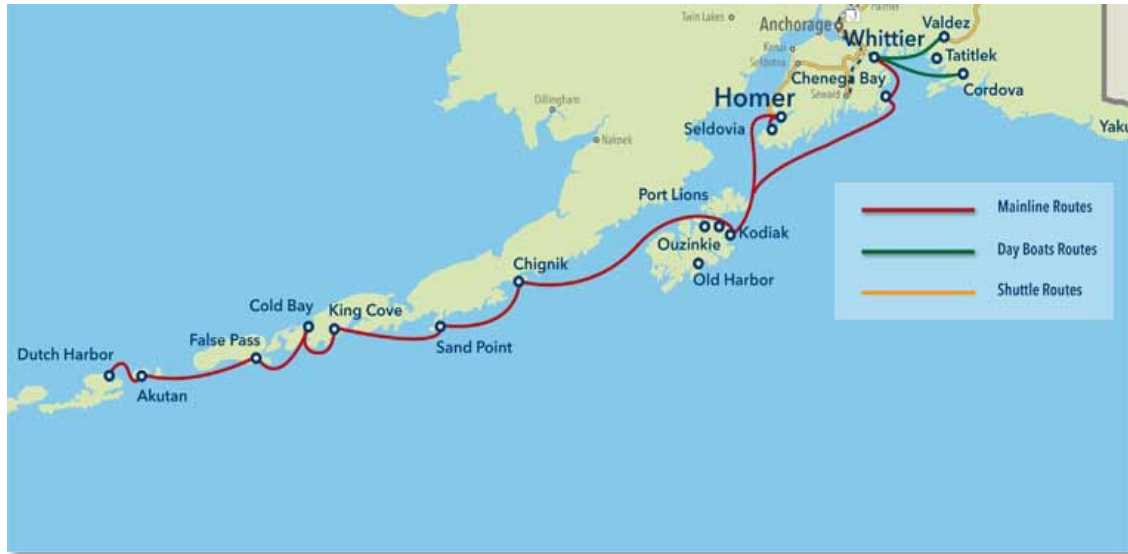


Figure 6. Alaska Marine Highway Service Map in Southwest Alaska

Source: Alaska Marine Highway System [Route Guide - Alaska Marine Highway System](#)

Passenger and vehicle traffic to or from Unalaska (Dutch Harbor) on the AMHS system is generally dependent upon the number of departures offered each year. For example, the Dutch Harbor port had 10 AMHS ferry departures in 2015, with 562 passengers and 70 vehicles embarking at the port that year. There were only five departures in 2024, passenger and vehicle embarkations were lower.

Table 12. Alaska Marine Highway System Traffic, Dutch Harbor, 2015 and 2024

	2015 Operations	2024 Operations
Port Departures	10	5
Passenger Traffic		
On at Dutch Harbor	562	261
Off at Dutch Harbor	611	278
Vehicle Traffic		
On at Dutch Harbor	70	26
Off at Dutch Harbor	66	24

Source: Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

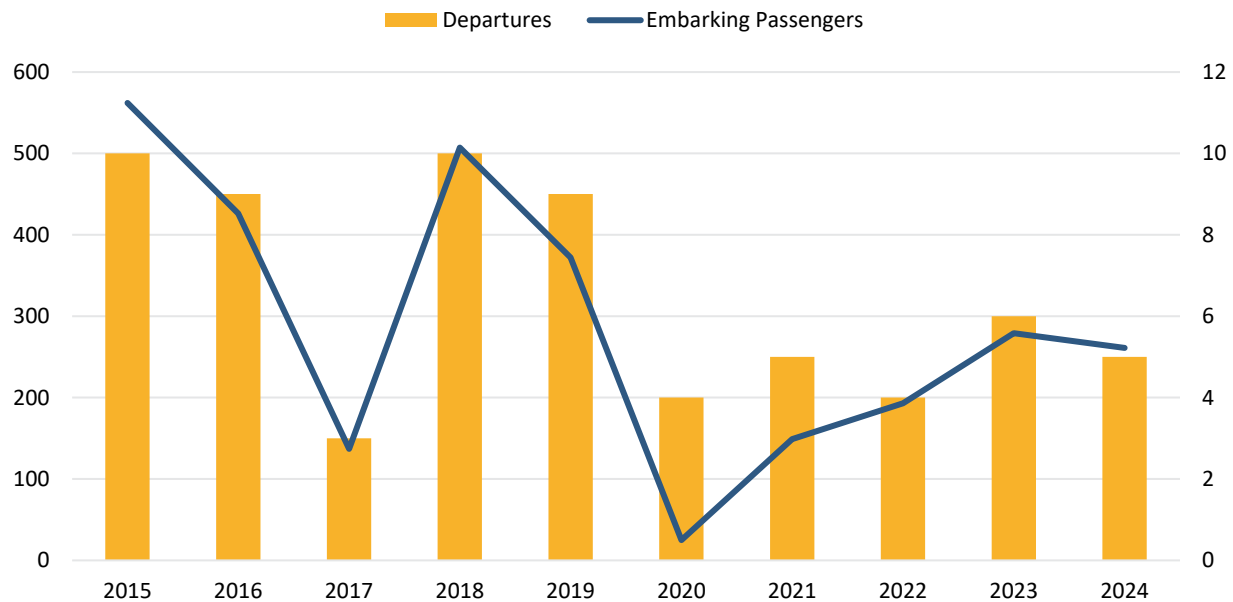


Figure 7. Alaska Marine Highway System Port Departures and Passenger Embarkations, Dutch Harbor, 2015-2024
Source: Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

Port & Harbors

The Port of Dutch Harbor, a city department, operates five port facilities and the airport terminal. The Unalaska Marine Center Dock, which includes the US Coast Guard Dock, offers cargo, passenger, and other port services. Spit Dock offers berths for mooring vessels up to 300-feet. The Spit Light Cargo Dock offers two sheet pile docks for transient moorage. The Robert Storrs International Boat Harbor offers seventy-one slips for vessels up to 60-feet and the Carl E. Moses Boat Harbor provides 52 slips.

The Port of Dutch Harbor is the only deep draft port from Unimak Pass, west to Adak and north to the Bering Straits that is ice free year-round. It is designated as a port of refuge, providing year-round protection for disabled or distressed vessels. According to NOAA's report, Fisheries of the United States 2022, Unalaska's Port of Dutch Harbor landed the greatest quantity of fish in the nation, for the 26th year and was second in the nation in terms of value of the catch. In 2022, 613.5 million pounds of seafood were delivered, valued at \$160 million.²⁶

Additionally, Unalaska's Port of Dutch Harbor is the westernmost container terminal in the United States. It is one of the most productive ports for transshipment of cargo in Alaska as well as weekly shipments to Asia and Europe.

The island is served by freight companies such as Matson, Alaska Marine Lines (AML), and CMA CGM, which provide essential shipping services for fuel, construction materials, food, and general cargo. Unalaska lies near major shipping routes between Asia and North America, making it an important

²⁶ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. 2023. *NOAA Fisheries Releases 2023 Ecosystem Status Reports for Alaska*. NOAA. <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/noaa-fisheries-releases-2023-ecosystem-status-reports-alaska>.



stop for transshipping, service and refuge. However, frequent storms, strong winds, and rough seas often delay shipments and increase transport costs.

Natural Resources & Environment

Environment

Geography

The City of Unalaska is the largest population center in the Aleutian Islands. The community spans two islands—Amaknak and Unalaska—connected by a central bridge and considered a single, unified area. Unalaska Island is approximately 1051 square miles,²⁷ although only a small portion is developed. It is 800 miles southwest of Anchorage and 50 miles from the North Pacific Great Circle Route, Latitude: 53°52'24" N and Longitude: 166°32'12" W. The island of Unalaska is one of several islands that are part of an island chain called the Fox Islands, which are part of the larger chain of islands known as the Aleutians. The terrain is rugged ranging from an average elevation of 19 feet above sea level to Makushin Volcano with an elevation of 5,960 feet.

Climate

Unalaska's climate is classified as "subpolar oceanic" which is characterized by long, mild winters and cool short summers.²⁸ The mean annual temperature is 41.6 °F, with a January mean of 33° F and an August mean temperature of 53.7°F. Unalaska is one of the rainiest places in the United States with about 225 rainy days per year. June through August is typically the driest time of year. The average snowfall is about 81 inches per winter.

Natural Hazards

In February of 2025, the City of Unalaska collaborated with major island stakeholders – the Qawalangin Tribe, Ounalashka Corporation, Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, and Iliuliuk Family Health Services – to create a Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.²⁹ The following is taken from the MJHMP regarding the natural hazards present in Unalaska, their severity, and their probability. In terms of both likelihood to occur and threat posed to infrastructure, the most dangerous hazards are ground failure/landslide, earthquake, extreme weather event, and volcanic eruption/ashfall. In a public survey, the top three most-experienced hazardous events were Severe Winter Weather, High Winds, and Earthquakes.³⁰

²⁷ World-Islands.net, Unalaska, <https://world-islands.net/details/unalaska/>.

²⁸ "Interactive United States Koppen-Geiger Climate Classification Map". www.plantmaps.com. Retrieved October 31, 2018.

²⁹ City of Unalaska. 2025. *Unalaska Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan*. Unalaska, AK: City of Unalaska.

https://www.unalaska.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/Fire%20Department/page/10350/2024_mjhmp_updated_doc.pdf.

³⁰ Iliuliuk Family Health Center. 2025. "Iliuliuk Family Health Center Medical Services." <https://ifhs.org/medical/>.



Earthquake

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) database listed 32,342 earthquakes within 100 miles of Unalaska in the past 100 years.³¹ Of those twenty were of magnitude 6.0 or greater. The largest recorded earthquakes that occurred within 100 miles of the city were measured magnitude 6.9 at 43 miles and 79 miles from the city, occurring in 1987 and 1980, respectively. These earthquakes did not cause any significant damage to critical facilities, residences, non-residential buildings, or infrastructure. Future site development should account for soils response to earthquakes and building construction should meet standards suitable for this region.

Erosion

The Aleutian Islands region of Alaska is at risk from coastal erosion. This is the attrition of land resulting from loss of beach, shoreline, or dune material from natural activity or human influence. Coastal erosion may also be affected by sea level rise, subsidence, or construction of shore protection structures. The 2025 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan indicates that the lack of storm water run-off control contributes to erosion and sedimentation. Additionally, on areas with unstable soils accumulation of snow and intense rainfall also contribute to erosion.

Flood

Unalaska does not participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. The 2025 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan indicates the area has minor flood risk, and most events are caused by high rain or heavy snow events. Flood events are recorded in 1985, 1991, and 2007. All of these flood events are attributed to heavy rains or snowmelt.

Avalanche and Landslide

According to the 2025 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, avalanche risk is limited for Unalaska. The plan estimates that the probability of experiencing landslide or rockfall is likely. There have been several such events recorded in the past. The area's steep slopes, heavy rain and snow, as well as volcanic activity contribute to the area's vulnerability to landslides.

Tsunami

Earthquake generated tsunamis are documented in 1938, 1946, 1957, 1964, 1965, 1986, 1991, and 1996. The 2025 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan indicates the threat assessment for tsunami is possible. Recent modeling by the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Geophysical Institute indicates that areas near the harbor and airport could experience impacts from tsunami.

³¹ 2025 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan



Volcano

The Aleutian Islands consist of a volcanic chain (14 large and 55 smaller volcanic islands). Makushin Volcano is on Unalaska Island and visible from the City of Unalaska. The community is vulnerable to volcanic ash dispersal. In 2017, the city experienced flight disruptions due to an ash cloud from the eruption of Bogoslof Volcano. Anecdotally, ash from the Bogoslof Volcano eruption resulted in a lack of fish available for subsistence. The most recent eruption of Makushin Volcano was in 1995. According to the 2025 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, there were reports of volcanic ash for a short time after this eruption. The 2025 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan indicates that the vulnerability of the community from this natural hazard depends on the type and size of the activity, and current weather, particularly wind direction and speed.

Extreme Weather

The 2025 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan indicates high winds, ice storms and heavy snow are the most likely types of extreme weather to impact Unalaska. Potential impacts from these events include immobilization of the community, including closure of the airport, roof collapse, damage to power lines, light aircraft, and boats, freezing pipes, and heat lines. A quick thaw could result in flooding. The plan indicates that based on previous occurrences and criteria identified Unalaska is highly likely to experience extreme weather.

Contaminated Sites

Unalaska and Amaknak Islands were used as an operational base by the US military during the Aleutian Islands Campaign of World War II.³² The Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base on Unalaska was the westernmost significant naval base in Alaska at the beginning of the war and included various facilities such as barracks, underground storage tanks, munitions storage facilities, and a power plant. Following the Japanese attack on Dutch Harbor in June 1942, the US military initiated the Aleutian Islands Campaign and quickly increased its military presence in the region, which involved establishing and expanding defense sites on and around Unalaska Island. Most of these military sites were abandoned after World War II, leaving behind various structures and materials, including munitions, lumber, paint, electrical wiring, insulation containing asbestos, transformers containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and tanks and drums containing hazardous substances like brake fluid, fuels, diesel and antifreeze. Consequently, much of the area is contaminated. Active sites are regulated by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Contamination at these sites is recognized as posing a risk to human health or the environment, and the extent of the contamination may not be fully determined. Coordination with the DEC is necessary before beginning any ground-disturbing activities at these sites. Additionally, DEC has identified “informational sites” which are

³² Integrated Environmental Assessment and Management -volume 20, number 5 - pp 1420-1431 Formerly used defense sites on Unalaska Island, Alaska: Mapping a legacy of environmental pollution Renee Jordan-Ward,¹ Frank A. von Hippel,² Jennifer Schmidt,³ and Marc P. Verhoughstraete



those being evaluated by the DEC. These sites could be designated as "Active" based on further evaluation by the DEC.

Land Use

Land Ownership

Understanding land use in Unalaska requires recognition of the community's unique geographic and ownership characteristics. While Unalaska Island spans approximately 1050 square miles, the city spans only approximately 212 square miles, and only a small fraction of the land within city limits is suitable for development. Unalaska's rugged topography presents substantial development constraints. Steep terrain and limited flat land mean that most projects carry significant site preparation costs. Pervasive environmental contamination, a legacy of WWII, creates additional risk for any new excavation.

The largest single landowner is the Ounalashka Corporation, the community's Alaska Native Village Corporation, which leases land for many residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

The City of Unalaska's zoning districts cover approximately 103.9 square miles (66,504 acres) of land.

Zoning

Analysis of the City's zoning reveals a settlement pattern dominated by undeveloped natural areas and maritime industrial uses, with concentrated residential and commercial districts. The majority of zoned land (74%) is either a Holding Zone, which does not allow most development until it is rezoned, or an Open Space district. The Marine Dependent Industrial (MDI) and Marine Related Industrial (MRI) districts collectively comprise about 17% of the total zoned area, highlighting the Island's strong port and maritime-based economy.



Table 13: Zoning District by Size

Zoning District	Area (sq miles)	Area (acres)	% of Total Zoned Land
Holding Zone (HZ)	45.44	29074.98	43.70%
Open Space (OS)	31.88	20403.83	30.70%
Marine Related Industrial (MRI)	9.12	5835.36	8.80%
Marine Dependent Industrial (MDI)	8.54	5467.72	8.20%
Restricted Deeds/Native Allotments (RDNA)	3.19	2040.04	3.10%
High Density Residential (HDR)	2.32	1484.65	2.20%
Single Family/Duplex Residential (SFD)	1.44	920.98	1.40%
Moderate Density Residential (MDR)	0.96	615.5	0.90%
General Commercial (GC)	0.33	212.14	0.30%
Public Quasi-Public (PQP)	0.15	93.1	0.10%
Subsistence Tidelands (ST)	0.07	48.39	0.10%
Developable Tidelands (DT)	0.05	32.12	<0.1%
Communications & Utility Towers (CUTO)	0.03	18.42	<0.1%
Watershed (H2O)	0.03	17.89	<0.1%

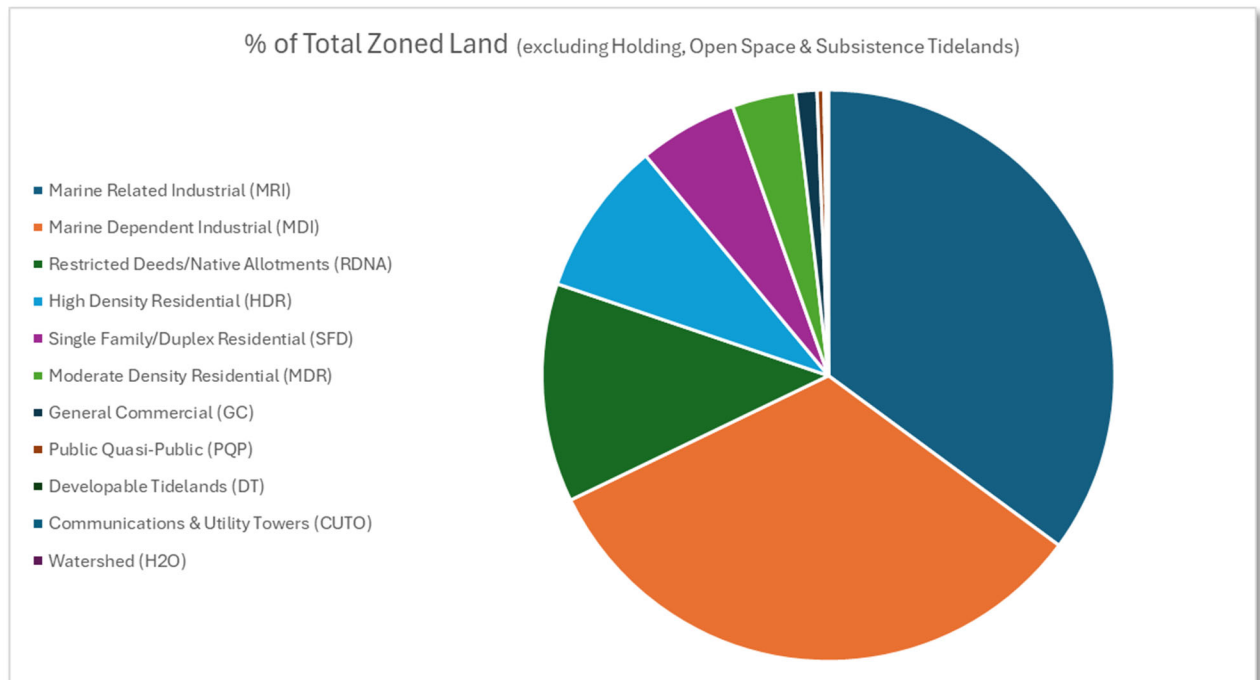


Figure 8: Percent of Total Zoned Land – Excluding Holding, Open Space and Subsistence Tidelands Zoning Districts



Zoning Categories

The zoning categories below are those currently in the city's zoning ordinance, Title 8. The narratives summarize the code, and the reader is encouraged to review Title 8 for a complete description of each zoning district.

Single-Family/Duplex (SFD) is intended for one and two-family development served by public water and sewer. Other uses allowed include daycare for five or fewer children, public parks, and playgrounds. Other uses that may be permitted with an approved conditional use permit include schools, churches, daycare for more than five children, bed and breakfast/lodging houses, public and quasi-public buildings and social/recreational facilities.

Moderate-Density Residential (MDR) provides land for intermediate density multi-family development of up to four dwelling units per lot. Other uses allowed are the same as those allowed in SFD. Uses that may be allowed with an approved conditional use permit include, in addition to those allowed in the SFD, also include group homes, halfway houses and safe houses, mobile home parks, and commercial greenhouses.

High Density Residential (HDR) HDR is intended for single, two and multi-family dwelling units served by public water and sewer. Hospitals and clinics may be permitted with an approved conditional use permit.

General Commercial (GC) provides land primarily for general retail sales, service and repair, as well as professional offices, and identified commercial and light industrial uses. Hotels and motels are also allowed. Uses that may be allowed with an approved conditional use permit include uses permitted in the Public/Quasi Public district, animal hospitals, boat building, crew camps, ice and cold storage, research and testing laboratories.

Marine Related Industrial (MRI): The MRI zoning district provides land for industrial uses not dependent on direct access to a water body. Any use permitted in the general commercial zoning district may be permitted in the marine related industrial district.

Marine Dependent Industrial (MDI) The MDI zoning district provides land for uses and structures whose primary purposes require direct access to a water body and/or can only take place on, in, or adjacent to a waterbody. Public uses, such as parks and trails that provide access to waterbodies, may be allowed. Housing for workers of marine dependent industry may also be permitted.

Watershed (H2O) is intended to preserve and protect the potable water reserves available to the city. Agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial land uses are considered incompatible with watershed protection. Uses allowed are generally those that support protection, storage, and distribution of water. No specific uses are listed as permitted with an approved conditional use permit; however, other uses may be considered after consideration of the impact to water supplies.

Opens-Space (OP) provides land for the preservation and protection of scenic resources, parks, recreation, and subsistence activities. Uses permitted include parks, playgrounds, traditional subsistence activities, and agricultural or grazing. Listed conditional uses are limited.



Public/Quasi Public (PQP). The PQP district is intended to provide for public and quasi-public educational, recreational, health, utility, administrative, and institutional uses. Some of the uses permitted in this zoning district include airports, government offices, community buildings and halls, museums, schools, parks and recreation facilities, maintenance shops, public safety buildings, libraries, medical facilities, warehouses, uses essential to the physical and economic welfare of the area, such as utility buildings and facilities, fire stations, electric substations, and water treatment plants. Other uses may be permitted with an approved conditional use permit.

Subsistence Tidelands (ST), The ST zoning district is intended to protect tide and submerged land that have been identified as important fish and wildlife habitats. Personal use subsistence, casual recreation and similar uses are allowed.

Developable Tidelands (DT). The DT zoning district provides for those tide and submerged lands that have been identified as developable subject to guidelines and restrictions. Uses allowed may include all uses permitted in the Subsistence Tidelands District (primarily subsistence and low impact recreational uses), commercial or industrial on- and off-loading of supplies and materials; piers, wharfs, docks, warehousing, commercial aquaculture, and liveaboard vessels. When the DT zoning district is adjacent to an MRI or MDI district, the tide and submerged lands may also be used for marine dependent commercial or industrial support services and facilities, fish processing activities and boat repair.

Holding (HZ). The HZ zoning district provides a temporary zoning designation for lands that are suitable and intended for future development but for which there are no proposed land use plans. The HZ does not prohibit future development but is intended to provide both the city and the landowner flexibility in determining the future zoning district.

Communications and Utility Towers Overlay (CUTOD) is an overlay district that implements additional regulations specific to communications and utility towers in addition to the regulations of the underlying, or base, district. The height regulations of the base district do not apply to communications and utility towers.

Restricted Deed/Native Allotment (RDNA). Lands designated as RDNA on the city's zoning maps are Native Allotments and Restricted Deed Lots, and are exempt from zoning regulations, until an unrestricted title is granted. When the full and unrestricted title is granted by the federal government, these properties are then classified as "Holding District" and are subject to zoning regulations. Zoning must be reclassified from Holding prior to development.



City of Unalaska Zoning

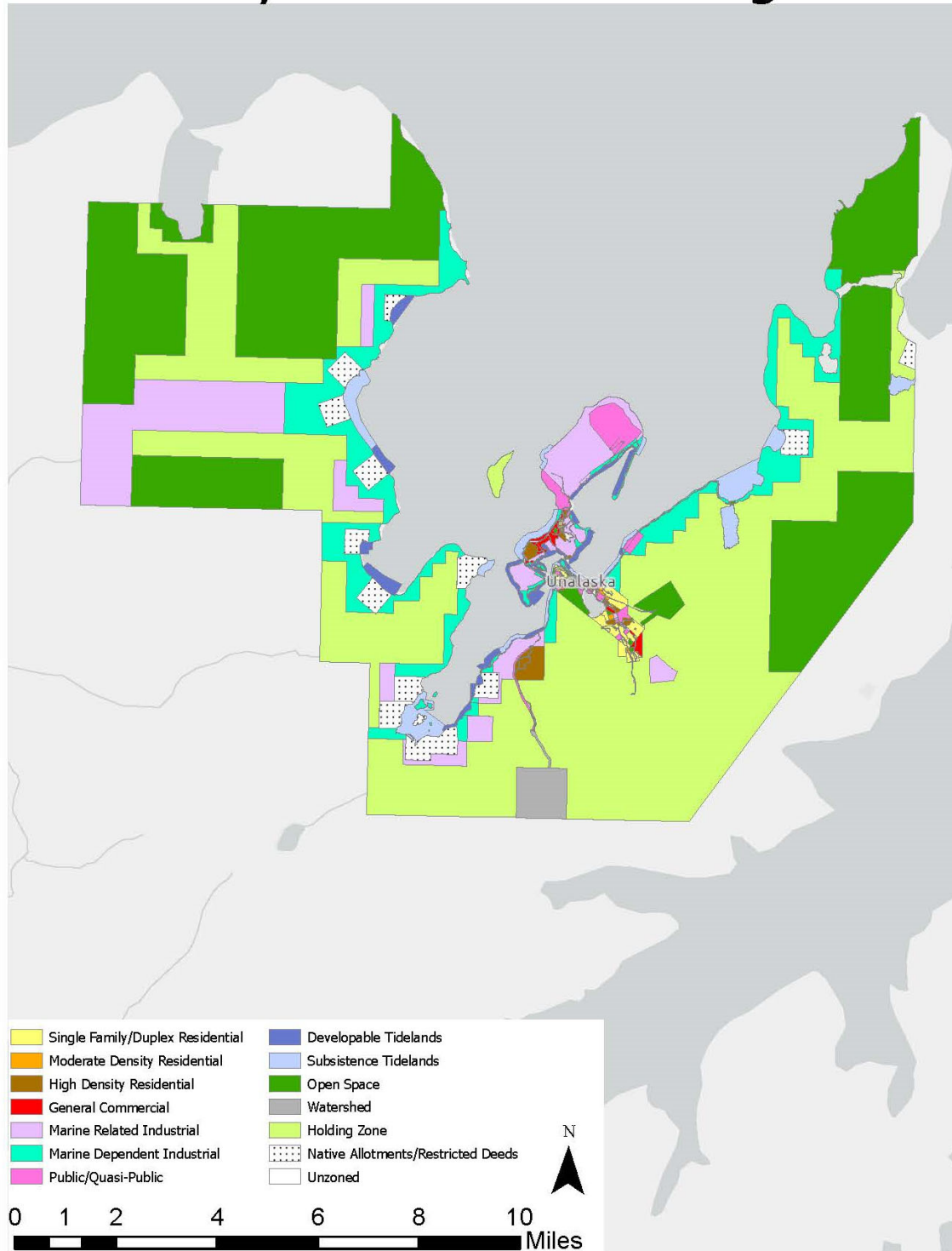


Figure 9: City of Unalaska Zoning Map



Neighborhoods

The City of Unalaska has developed with distinct areas, which this plan will call “neighborhoods”. They are described below.

Unalaska Island

Alyeska

Alyeska functions as an area for both residential and industrial activities for company employees. It is adjacent to Downtown, the island’s primary residential and civic hub. The neighborhood is primarily associated with industrial employment and becomes seasonally active during the fishing and production season, typically from late winter through early fall. During this period, Alyeska houses numerous seasonal workers employed in the seafood-processing facilities. Outside of peak season (generally November through January), activity in the neighborhood decreases significantly, and the area becomes notably quiet. Alyeska’s seasonal seafood activities reflect its long-standing role in supporting Unalaska’s local economy.

Downtown

Downtown Unalaska is the city’s most densely populated neighborhood and serves as the civic and cultural heart of the community. It features a diverse mix of housing types that accommodate families, seniors, and seasonal workers. Several essential public facilities—including the Unalaska Community Center (PCR), the Aquatic Center, the Public Library, senior housing, and various parks—are located here. The neighborhood is the primary location for community gatherings, recreation programs, and citywide events. Its proximity to the schools, churches, and civic institutions reinforces Downtown’s role as an administrative, social, and residential core of the island.

Westward / Captain Bay

Westward and Captain Bay form a long, linear industrial corridor along the southern coastline of Unalaska Island. This area contains several major seafood-processing and maritime operations, including Westward Seafoods, OSI, North Pacific Fuel Dock, and Crowley Dock. Worker housing in the form of industrial bunkhouses is common, reflecting the seasonal labor demands of the fishing industry. Road conditions vary, with most parts having gravel surfaces. The neighborhood is heavily trafficked and highly active during fishing seasons but becomes significantly quieter in the off-season. Its land use pattern illustrates Unalaska’s role as one of the top commercial fishing ports in the nation.

Nirvana / Armstrong Court / Lake

Situated east of Unalaska Lake, this neighborhood represents a medium-density residential area that connects Downtown to the Valley. Housing includes a mix of single-family homes, duplexes, and multi-family buildings, many of which are wood-frame structures typical of Aleutian construction practices designed for wind and seismic resilience. It includes Eagle’s View Elementary, the only elementary school in the Unalaska City School District. The area appears well-maintained, with only a limited number of units showing signs of aging or deferred maintenance. Its close proximity to Downtown, schools, and community facilities makes it a desirable residential choice for year-round workers and



families. The corridor also serves as a gateway to outdoor recreation areas such as Summer Bay and Morris Cove.

Haystack

Haystack is a compact hillside neighborhood distinguished by its elevation, small residential clusters, and concentration of key public facilities. Important municipal and emergency-service infrastructure, including City Hall, the Department of Public Safety (Fire, Police, and DMV), and IFHS Clinic, are located here. Its location on higher ground provides makes it an important destination during tsunami evacuations, but the roads to the higher residential are steep, complicating winter access. The neighborhood's mix of civic and residential uses makes it an essential component of the city's administrative and public safety framework.

The Valley (Steward Road and East Broadway)

The Valley is Unalaska's largest residential area, spanning two major road corridors: Steward Road to the west and East Broadway Avenue to the east. It features a range of housing types, from single-family homes to multi-family units, serving local workers employed across the city's industrial, commercial, and public sectors. The Valley's sheltered topography provides some protection from the island's harsh coastal winds, making it a suitable area for continued residential development and infill. The neighborhood plays a key role in meeting the city's long-term housing needs.

Amaknak Island

Standard Oil Hill

Located on the northern side of Amaknak Island, Standard Oil Hill is a quiet residential neighborhood mostly composed of single-family homes. While most parts of this area are zoned for single-family/duplex, many of the properties have been converted to multi-family units hosting three or four families and are nonconforming. Many houses are wood framed, reflecting historical construction styles common in Alaska's coastal communities. Many of these homes were constructed during WWII. The area's name originates from the Standard Oil Company, which operated fueling infrastructure in the Aleutians during the early and mid-20th century. Today, the neighborhood is valued for its scenic views of Iliuliuk Bay. Its elevated position also provides natural protection from coastal flooding.

UniSea

UniSea is one of the island's busiest mixed-use areas, centered around the UniSea seafood processing complex—one of the largest processing operations in the Aleutian Islands. The population fluctuates seasonally, growing significantly during peak fishing seasons. The neighborhood contains commercial amenities such as the Dutch Harbor Mall, the Harbor View Bar & Restaurant, company offices, and worker housing. It is also home to the Ounalashka Corporation headquarters and the Museum of the Aleutians, one of the island's key cultural institutions. UniSea serves as both an economic engine and a social gathering space, reflecting the interconnected nature of industry and community life in Unalaska.



Ballyhoo

Named after the iconic Ballyhoo Mountain, this neighborhood includes several industrial bunkhouses—such as Pacific Stevedoring (Pac Steve) housing—and supports adjacent dock operations. The maritime facilities here, including Spit Dock, Light Cargo Dock, Kloosterboer, and most importantly, the Unalaska Maritime Center (UMC), are huge contributors to the Island's fishing industry and local economy. Ballyhoo is historically significant, hosting landmarks associated with World War II, including the WWII Visitor Center near the Amaknak Fire Station in the historic WWII-era Aerology Building. The neighborhood is also home to the Tom Madsen Airport (Unalaska Airport), serving as the primary point of arrival for residents, visitors, and seasonal workers. Ballyhoo combines transportation, historical, and industrial functions, making it one of the island's most multifaceted areas.

Amaknak Retail District

The Amaknak Retail District is Unalaska's commercial and hospitality center. It contains the island's only fuel station, major retail establishments such as Safeway and Three Bears, and lodging facilities including the Grand Aleutian Hotel. Restaurants, cafés, and entertainment venues—such as the Norwegian Rat Saloon and Amelia's Restaurant—help make the district a social hub. Activity peaks throughout the day with shopping and service use and intensifies in the evenings and weekends at dining and entertainment establishments. The district serves residents, maritime workers, and visitors, reinforcing Unalaska's role as a regional service provider for the commercial fishing fleet.

East Point

East Point is a mixed-use neighborhood with light industrial facilities, shipping operations, and a small number of residential units, including single-family and duplex homes. East Point Road serves as the primary corridor through the area and supports frequent truck traffic associated with shipping and logistics. The roadway is mostly gravel-surfaced. Although primarily industrial in nature, the neighborhood includes housing for workers seeking proximity to marine and transportation-related employment centers.

Little South America / Bunker Hill

Located on the southern end of Amaknak Island, this area is largely owned by the Ounalashka Corporation and includes the Carl E. Moses Small Boat Harbor—one of the city's most active maritime facilities. Henry Swanson Drive provides access to docks, staging areas, a boat ramp, and recreational areas on Bunker Hill and Glass Beach. Little South America's combination of industrial activity, undeveloped open space, and scenic landscapes provides opportunities for recreation, cultural exploration, and economic operations related to Unalaska's maritime port.

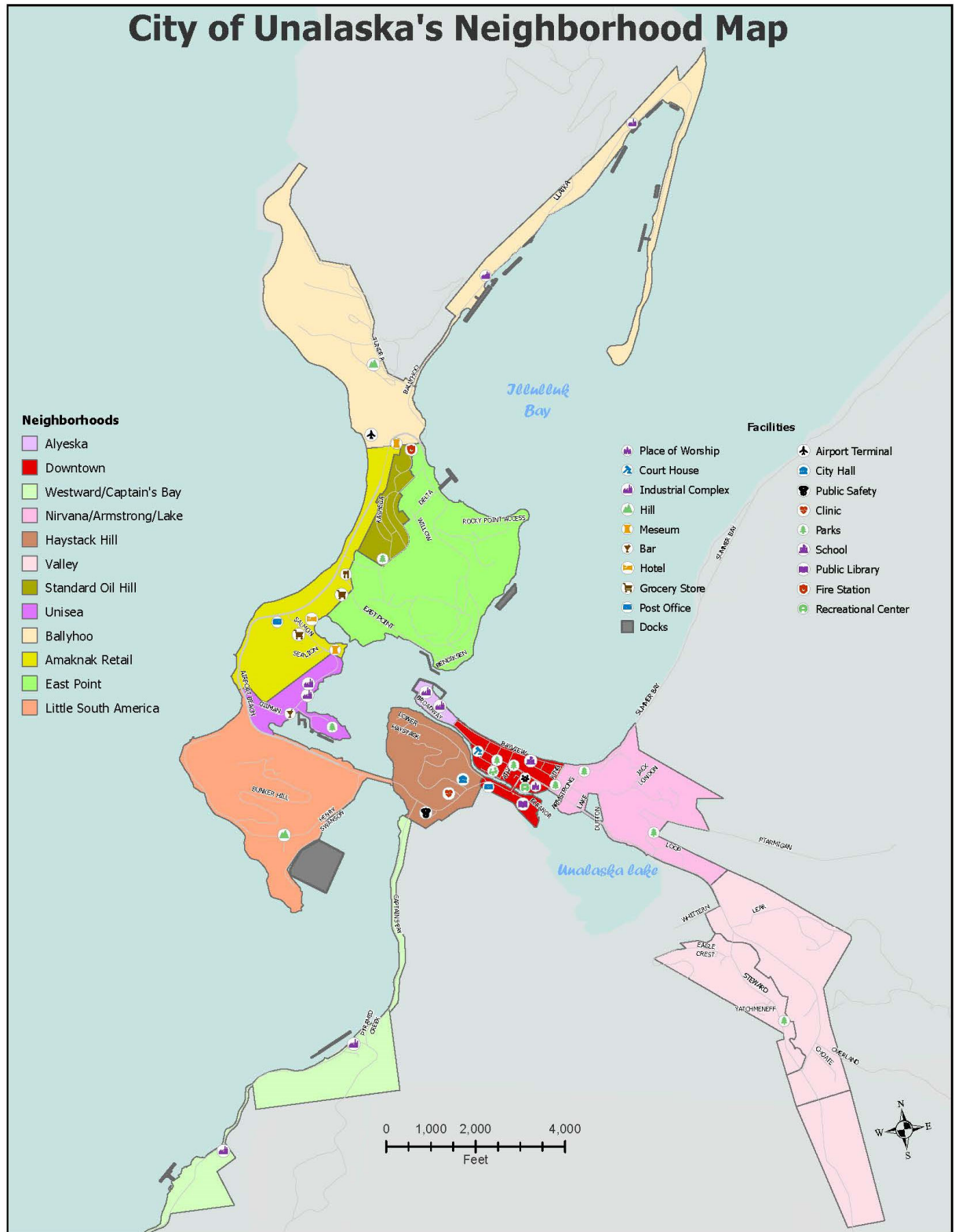


Figure 10: City of Unalaska's Neighborhood Map



Housing

Residential areas, including Single Family/Duplex Residential (SFD), Moderate Density Residential (MDR), and High Density Residential (HDR) districts, represent less than 5% of the total zoned land, demonstrating Unalaska's concentrated development pattern. Housing types range from single-family homes in established neighborhoods to company-provided housing on industrial campuses.

Unalaska's housing stock is substantially different from most Alaska housing. The existing Unalaska housing stock was shaped by the development of the commercial fishing industry, land use, and geographic constraints. Compared to the state in general, Unalaska's homes are disproportionately multi-unit rentals built in the 1980's and 1990's. Costs of buying, renting, heating, and maintaining homes all tend to be higher in Unalaska as compared to more urban areas of the state.

Ownership and Costs

Fewer than one-third of Unalaska housing units were owner-occupied in 2023, the reverse of the statewide average of more than two-thirds owner-occupied. Housing costs, both rents and average home values, were higher than statewide averages.

Table 14. Occupied Housing Ownership, Monthly Cost, and Median Home Value, Unalaska, Aleutians West Census Area, and Alaska, 2023

	Unalaska	Aleutians West Census Area	Alaska
Total Housing Units	967	1,391	327,610
Owner-Occupied	27%	30%	67%
Monthly Owner Costs*	\$2,402	\$2,379	\$2,192
Median Gross Rent	\$2,040	\$1,886	\$1,388
Median Home Value	\$448,700	\$419,100	\$333,300

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5 Year ACS, 2019-2023

*Includes mortgage and utilities

Average Unit Size

Multi-unit housing is much more common in Unalaska compared to elsewhere in the state: 15% are in buildings with 20 or more units.

Table 15. Housing Supply by Number of Units, Unalaska and Alaska, 2023

	Unalaska	Alaska
Single family, detached homes	26%	64%
Townhouse, and 2- to 4-unit complexes	32%	20%
5- to 19-unit complexes	24%	7%
20+ unit complexes	15%	5%
Other (RV, boat, van, mobile home, etc.)	3%	4%
Total Housing Units	967	327,610

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5 Year ACS, 2019-2023



Unalaska’s rental housing market is characterized by limited availability, high costs and strong demand driven by both the permanent resident population and seasonal workforce fluctuations. The market reflects the community’s unique economic conditions, with rents significantly higher than state and national averages due to remoteness, limited land available for housing, and high construction costs.

The rental market is consistently tight with vacancy rates much lower than national averages. Smaller and more affordable units, for example one and two-bedroom apartments in multifamily buildings, had almost no vacancies in 2024, when the Planning Department last conducted a rental market study. The lack of availability in smaller unit types particularly impacts new residents, single workers, and small families seeking housing in Unalaska.

As many local employers own housing and provide it as a benefit to their employees, a large proportion of local residents are dependent upon their employer for housing. Given the otherwise tight housing market, losing a job can often force residents to leave the community. This dynamic also limits job mobility within the community.

Housing Stock Age

Most of Unalaska’s housing was built in the 1980’s and 1990’s. Unalaska’s salt water and strong storms have an aging effect on buildings.

Table 16. Age of Housing Supply by Decade Built, Unalaska and Alaska, 2023

Decade Built	Age	Unalaska	Alaska
Prior to 1970	56 years +	15%	15%
Built 1970 to 1979	55-46 years old	9%	22%
Built 1980 to 1989	45-36 years old	20%	24%
Built 1990 to 1999	35-26 years old	40%	13%
Built 2000 to 2009	25-16 years old	7%	16%
Built 2010 or later	15 years or less	8%	9%
Total Housing Units		967	327,610

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5 Year ACS, 2019-2023