
Qawalangin Tribal Council Local Economic Development Plan

Presented to the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association



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Location



Figure 1: Location of Unalaska
Source: ExploreNorth.com

Unalaska is a city located on Unalaska Island and neighboring Amaknak Island in the Aleutian Islands off mainland Alaska. The climate is subpolar oceanic climate with heavy precipitation, and often, intense storms occur during winter. The city falls within the unorganized borough of Alaska.



Figure 2: Close-up of Dutch Harbor and Amaknak Islands and surrounding Geography.
Source: Tideforecast.com

History and Culture

Aleut or Unangan people have inhabited the area around Unalaska for thousands of years. When Russian explorers and traders arrived, there were 24 settlements on Unalaska and Amaknak Islands with over 1,000 Aleut inhabitants. The relationship between the Russians and Aleuts began with trade in 1759 and within three years turned to warfare. The Spanish briefly claimed the area, but their claims ended after losing a conflict with the British in Southeast Alaska. Russia transferred their claims to the United States peacefully when the United States purchased Alaska in 1867.

The foreign contact brought disease that decimated the isolated Aleut population. Between 1836 and 1840, several epidemics decreased the Aleut population to around 400 individuals. Later, the Gold Rush of the Early 1900s and then the Spanish Flu Epidemic of 1919 further decimated the indigenous population. Accordingly, maintaining the historical culture is important the Aleut people.

Infrastructure and Community Facilities Summary

Unalaska			
Asset	Present	Description/Condition	Ownership
Airstrip	Yes	4,100 by 100 Ft Paved runway; There is also a seaplane base	State
Marine Highway Service	Yes	Bi-Weekly between April and October	State
Community Hall	Yes	There are four Churches in Unalaska. There is also a Senior Center.	Non-Profit
Water/Sewer	Yes	The system consists of two open, and two enclosed reservoirs, four wells and is operated by a state certified water and wastewater supervisor.	City
Electricity	Yes	Two diesel generation plants are capable of 17.6mW-combined production.	City
Fuel Storage	Yes	Petrostar provides various fuel types (heating, marine, automotive) and Aleutian Fuel Services has a 75,000-barrel state of art tank farm and marine fuel delivery system.	Private, Tribal
Medical Services	Yes	The local clinic provides comprehensive primary medical care, dental and mental health services. There is also a Native health clinic.	City, Tribal
Dock/Harbor	Yes	There are ten ports in total. The Department of Ports and Harbors manages six city-owned ports, the Coast Guard Dock, the Unalaska Marine Center Dock, the Spit Dock, the Spit Light Cargo Dock, the International Small Boat Harbor and the Moses Boat Harbor. The city is well positioned to continue as the largest fishing port in the United States.	City, State, Federal
Public Safety	Yes	The Police Department has eight patrol officers, one animal control officer, in addition to command staff.	City
Fire Protection	Yes	The division has five paid staff and up to 30 volunteers.	City
Telephone and Internet	Yes	Residential: TelAlaska cable (1mbps) and DSL service (4mgps) Hughesnet provides Satellite internet (15mgps). Commercial: TelAlaska Cable (1mbps) X2nSat Satellite (speed not listed) GCI Copper (6mbps). Public: The library offers free internet for 30 minutes at a time.	Private
Post Office	Yes	Two post offices serve the city.	Federal

Table 1: Infrastructure in Unalaska, Alaska.

Demographics and Economy

The following information is from the Census Bureau's American FactFinder database. Due to the small population, the most current information for many of these indicators is 2016, and represent a five-year average from the American Community Survey. The year of 2010 was selected as a benchmark year because the data is as authoritative as the Census Bureau can produce as it comes from the decennial census.

Indicator	2010	2016	Percent Change
Population	4376	4710	8%
Tribal Members	268	307	15%
Housing Units	1106	1167	6%
Median Household Income	\$80,625	\$92,083	14%
Unemployment Rate	2.2%	0.9%	-59%

*Table 2: Demographic and Economic Indicators for Unalaska.
Source: American FactFinder*

Rural Alaska is experiencing net outmigration from the villages to the urban centers. Unalaska is a regional hub that is receiving some of this migration, and the population has increased over the past six years. In addition, the average unemployment rate has declined from 2.2% to 0.9%, and the median household income has increased from \$80,600 to \$92,000. There are currently 93 active business licenses addressed to Unalaska. In addition, the number of fishing permits is in decline from 33 in 2010 to 13 in 2018.

Community Development Quota (CDQ) groups

Western Alaska groundfish fisheries are managed under several federal programs. The Community Development Quota program reserves 10% of the catch for groundfish, pollock, and crab within a region to qualified Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANSCA) communities within 50 miles from shore. Unalaska (Dutch Harbor) is an eligible CDQ community.



Figure 3: Map of CDQ Communities in the Aleutians Islands.
Source: North Pacific Management Council

Existing Community Projects

1. Improve Air Services and Reduce the Cost of Air Travel
2. Support Sustainable Management of Fisheries
3. Explore Development of Alternate Energy
4. Make Land Available for Business and Industry
5. Broaden and Diversify the Local Economy

Existing Workforce Competencies

The table below will show the vast majority of employment in Unalaska is related to food manufacturing. Normally, local government dominates employment in rural Alaskan villages. However, Unalaska has relatively low local government employment at only 14%, in part due to the dominance of fishing and food manufacturing.

2016 Workers by Industry	Number of workers	Percent of total employed
Manufacturing	804	46.8%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	421	24.5%
Local Government	240	14%
Educational and Health Services	68	4%
Financial Activities	38	2%
Construction	35	2%

Leisure and Hospitality	25	1.5%
State Government	20	1.2%
Information	18	1%
Other	18	1%
Professional and Business Services	16	0.9%
Unknown	12	0.7%
Natural Resources and Mining	2	0.1%

Figure 4: 2016 Workers by Industry.

Source: Alaska Local and Regional Research

Given the preeminence of food manufacturing (i.e., fish processing) in Unalaska, it is unsurprising that the resident labor force has a lot of experience in manufacturing and industries related to the storing and transportation of those products.

Number of Workers with Experience in Industry 2012–2016	
Manufacturing	987
Transportation and warehousing	424
Trade	271
Health care and social assistance	126
Construction	106
Real estate and rental and leasing	77
Accommodation and food services	71
Administration and support and waste management	46
Information	44
State government	41
Professional, scientific and technical services	35
Finance and insurance	17
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	14
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	13
Mining	2
Educational services	1
Management of companies and enterprises	1
Utilities	0

Table 3: Number of Resident Workers with Experience in Industry from 2012 to 2016.

Source: Alaska Local and Regional Information

Local Government/Community Stakeholders

Community Organizations

- Qawalangin Tribe
- Ounalashka Corporation
- FilAm Bayanihan Association
- Big and Small Business Representatives

- Educational Representatives
- State and Local and Federal Government stakeholders
- Various Churches

Borough Government

Unalaska is within the Unorganized Borough of Alaska

Municipality/Village

Unalaska has been a first-class home-rule city within the Unorganized Borough of Alaska since 1942. The city has a mayor-council type government with the council elected at-large.

Native and Village Corporations

- **Tribal Governments (*Qawalangin Tribe*):** Tribal governments have the status as federally recognized tribes. They have responsibility for specific local health and social service programs and have access to sources of federal funding.
- **ANCSA Village Corporations (*Ounalashka Village Corporation*):** Village corporations are the major surface landowners in Unalaska.
- **ANCSA Regional Corporation (*Aleut Corporation*):** Regional corporations are the major subsurface landowner in the area, and are a major partner in land and economic development.

Existing Community Plans

The City of Unalaska created their current plan, the 2020 Comprehensive Plan, by using the existing plans, and research conducted in 1999, 2001, and 2009 as a framework for their new ten-year plan.

Unalaska's "amazing sense of community" would continue to be valued and maintained. This would include Unalaska's traditions of:

- Neighbor helping a neighbor;
- Caring for our children and their success;
- Providing each other with a huge support system;
- Neighborly love; and
- People were very generous with each other.¹

¹ Unalaska. "Unalaska Comprehensive Plan 2020." (2011). Accessed 3/22/2018 from http://www.ci.unalaska.ak.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/Planning/page/2001/unalaska_comprehensive_plan_adopted_02-22-2011.pdf

Existing Plans and Initiatives

- Capital and Major Maintenance Plan (FY2017-FY2021)
- Comprehensive Plan (2011)
- Housing Plan (2011) Unalaska Land Use Plan (2015)
- Community Planning Assistance Team (CPAT) Final Report (2015)
- Infill Development Analysis (2014)
- Hazard Mitigation Plan

Goals and action plan from previous plans

Goal: Economic Development

Primary Actions

1. Improve Air Services and Reduce the Cost of Air Travel
2. Support Sustainable Management of Fisheries
3. Explore Development of Alternate Energy
4. Make Land Available for Business and Industry
5. Broaden and Diversify the Local Economy

Secondary Actions

1. Increase Water Capacity
2. Create Quality, Affordable Childcare
3. Expand Basic Retail and Service Offerings
4. Attract More Local Skilled Building Contractors and Professional Service Providers
5. Improve City Dock Facilities
6. Leverage Name Recognition Resulting from TV Industry
7. Downtown Revitalization: Create a Central Destination
8. Unalaska/Port of Dutch Harbor Convention and Visitors Bureau
9. Think Globally

Goal: Health & Well-Being

Primary Actions

1. Maintain Clean Drinking Water
2. Improve IFHS Clinic Administrative Functions
3. Create a Regional Hospital

Secondary Actions

1. Ensure Unalaska Remains Safe for Families
2. Provide Greater Privacy of Patient Information at IFHS Clinic
3. Work to Become a Drug-Free Community

Secondary Actions

1. Work to Stop Underage Drinking
2. Renovate/Expand Health IFHS Clinic
3. Create Assisted Living Facilities for Elders of Region

4. Offer More Sex Education Classes in School
5. Construct a New Wastewater Treatment Plant
6. Construct New Cells at the Landfill

Goal: Overall Quality-of-Life

Primary Actions

1. Improve and Lower Cost of the Internet, Cable, and Phone Service
2. Make More Land Available for Housing
3. Encourage Construction of Quality, Reasonably-Priced Housing
4. Encourage Ounalashka Corporation Board and City Council to Work Cooperatively to Improve the Quality-of-Life Enjoyed by Unalaska Residents

Secondary Actions

1. Continue to Make Unalaska a Regional Hub
2. Increase Ferry Service to Twice Per Month
3. Enable Residents to Obtain U.S. Citizenship in Unalaska
4. Make Community More Bicycle-Friendly
5. Embrace Our Ethnic Diversity

Goal: Physical Appeal

Primary Actions

1. Pave More Roads
2. Maintain “What We Have”
3. Remove Abandoned Junk Vehicles

Secondary Actions

1. Create Additional Sidewalks
2. Take More Pride In Our Personal Property
3. Adopt/Enforce Building Codes

Goal: Environment

Primary Actions

1. Create a Recycling Center

Secondary Actions

1. Acquire Spill Response Equipment
2. Protect Our History
3. Museum of the Aleutians
4. Clean-Up of WWII Non-Historic Waste
5. Protection of Subsistence Lifestyle

Goal: Education, Art, Culture & Entertainment

Primary Actions

1. Have the #1 High School in Alaska, Academically

2. Expand Public School Buildings, As Needed

Secondary Actions

1. Expand University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Opportunities and Presence
2. Expand Library to Offer More Services and Collections
3. Increase Radio and Television Offerings
4. Construct a Movie Theater
5. Continue the Development of Park, Cultural, and Recreation Facilities and Offering of Programs
Aleutian Arts Council

Identification of barriers to Community and Economic Development

- The region's economy is tied tightly to the fishing industry. The barriers to economic development include shorter fishing seasons, the types of fish being caught are changing, the rise of farmed seafood internationally, and an aging fishing fleet. These barriers put the existing economic base of Unalaska at risk. Management of fish stocks, revitalizing the fleet and seeking efficiencies in fishing and food manufacturing is essential to ensuring the economic base of Unalaska.
- Additionally, Unalaska has identified shortcomings in its municipal resources for fish processing. Unalaska needs improvements to its wastewater treatment facilities, as the current plant does not meet regulatory requirements under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. In addition, the landfill is in need of expansion.
- Natural hazards and isolation provide a continuous barrier to economic development. Weather-related hazards, such as cyclonic storms, can make transportation by land and air unreliable and unsafe. Volcanic and seismic activity pose a probable risk of property damage. The remote location and lack of agricultural land cause a high cost of living for all supplies, and food specifically.
- Unalaska has for a long time self-identified substance abuse and the related social problems to be a concern for the community and continues to have police, educators, and houses of worship and the community at large work together to create a drug-free community.

SWOT Analysis



Figure 5: SWOT Analysis

Tribal Council Goals

These goals and SWOT are the preliminary results of a meeting with the tribal council in late February 2018. They summarize some of the top priorities/goals of the tribe.

Tourism

- Would like a place for tribal members to sell their wares in addition to things like books and food.
- Would like to see a museum/gift shop in the tribal office space (not to compete with the WW II museum or the museum operated by OC).
- Would like to expand youth involvement in learning traditional dances.
- There is currently no shelter and nowhere to sit on the dock. The dock is owned by the city, and they are not currently interested in investing in the shelter. In addition, security is increasing at the dock.
- Interested in exploring marketing and selling of local food (blueberries, salmonberries, dried fish.) Would need to find a commercial kitchen where food preparation could take place. Some potential kitchens include the senior center, the school, and the city.
- Would like to look into ecotourism opportunities.

Healthcare

- There is currently a senior center run by the Aleutian Housing Authority, which the tribe helped establish.
- Would like to look into telemedicine. (Potentially look at grants and/or collaborating with GCI on this).

Environmental

- Currently examining the state of tribal-run environmental programs, to ensure they are fiscally sustainable. The tribe has I-Gap funding that supports these environmental programs.
- Would like to make environmental programs a more profitable enterprise for the tribe.
- Examples of previous environmental projects include trolling, sampling, and cleaning up old military debris. Would like to expand into other environmental programs. Nicole has experience working with air quality programs.
- There is a current focus on waterways and shellfish testing.
- Would like to increase the number of tribal members trained as a part of an environmental response team. Tribal members have participated in these types of clean-up efforts previously.
- Would like to expand programs for air quality, soil sampling, asbestos removal, and recycling (potentially be part of a pilot program for Backhaul Alaska).

Transportation

- Look into getting BIA funding to assist with transportation projects.
- Would like to look into collaborating with other stakeholders on the roads program.
- Would like to look into a specific project, a road to the WW II bunkers.

Infrastructure

- Are there potential projects around desalination the tribe could assist with?
- Look at the potential to collaborate with other local entities to get replacement engines through the VW settlement. These partnerships could then be used to leverage other resources.
- Currently working with DOE and other entities to look at grants for a tribal hall.
- Look at potential geothermal projects.

Drugs and Alcohol

- Would like to look into a recovery program/center.
- Look into increasing workforce development and resources for those in recovery/returning to the community.
- Would like better communication around what services are coming to the APIA clinic, and then they are coming.

Workforce Development

- Are there potential clean up jobs?
- What opportunities are there for college students coming home for the summer?

Tribal Hall

- Would like it to be run partially by renewable energy.
- The tribal hall could potentially include:
 - Office space
 - Space for functions (potential revenue source, right now the senior center and Grand Aleutian are only spaces available for functions).
 - Gift shop
 - Meeting room
 - Tribal hall
 - Community kitchen (potential activities include the creation of a cookbook and classes on traditional cooking).
 - Bunkhouse/B&B

- Classroom space (potential activities include basket weaving, dance, language classes, storytelling, more frequent culture camps).
- Need to look at local land regulations.

