

**CITY OF UNALASKA
PLANNING COMMISSION & PLATTING BOARD
2018 ANNUAL REPORT**



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

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

The following residents of Unalaska served on the City of Unalaska's Planning Commission and Platting Board throughout 2018:

Chair Billie Jo Gehring (Elected at meeting of August 16, 2018)

Vice Chair Travis Swangel

Vicki Williams

Helen Brown

Lottie Roll (resigned after meeting January 18, 2018)

Tom Bell (Appointed February 13, 2018)

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

William Homka, AICP, Planning Director

Thomas Roufos, Associate Planner

James Price, GIS Administrator (resigned July, 2018)


Judy Huling, Administrative Assistant (resigned November, 2018)


PLANNING COMMISSION AND PLATTING BOARD
RESOLUTION 2019-01

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

CITY OF UNALASKA
PLANNING COMMISSION

BY: _____


Billie Jo Gehring
Commission Chair


William Homka
Secretary of the Commission

DATE OF ADOPTION: January 31, 2019

INTRODUCTION

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



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

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

- To perform other duties lawfully assigned to the Commission/Board or which have a bearing on the preparation or accomplishment of the Comprehensive Plan.

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

SUMMARY OF PLANNING ACTIONS FOR 2018

I. General Statistics (January 1, 2018 – December 31, 2018)

2018 was about as busy as 2017 for both the Planning Commission and Platting Board. The PC/PB actions for 2018 and previous years are summarized below:

Application Type	Considered or Reviewed/ Granted, Approved or Formally Recommended		
	2016	2017	2018
Variance	3/3	3/2	6/5
Conditional Use	7/7	6	4/4
Zone Amendment	1/1	-	-
Property Acquisitions	-	-	-
Code Revisions	3/3	-	-
Plats	3/3	3	3
Planning Documents	2/1	2	2/1
TOTAL MEETINGS	11	8	10

II. Planning Commission Recommendations to Council

The Planning Commission recommended no Code Revisions and one Planning Document to the City Council for action in 2018.

<i>July 19, 2018: Tabled Resolution 2018-11, an update to city policy</i>	The Planning Commission tabled Resolution 2018-09 a resolution to endorse an update to city policy regarding liveboard vessels due to confusion over draft policies
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<i>August 16, 2018: worksession regarding Resolution 2018-11, an update to city policy</i>	Discussion, but no action taken, tabled indefinitely
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<i>November 15, 2018: Announced planning document</i>	Planning Staff announced and discussed with Planning Commission the results of the city's bus transit study
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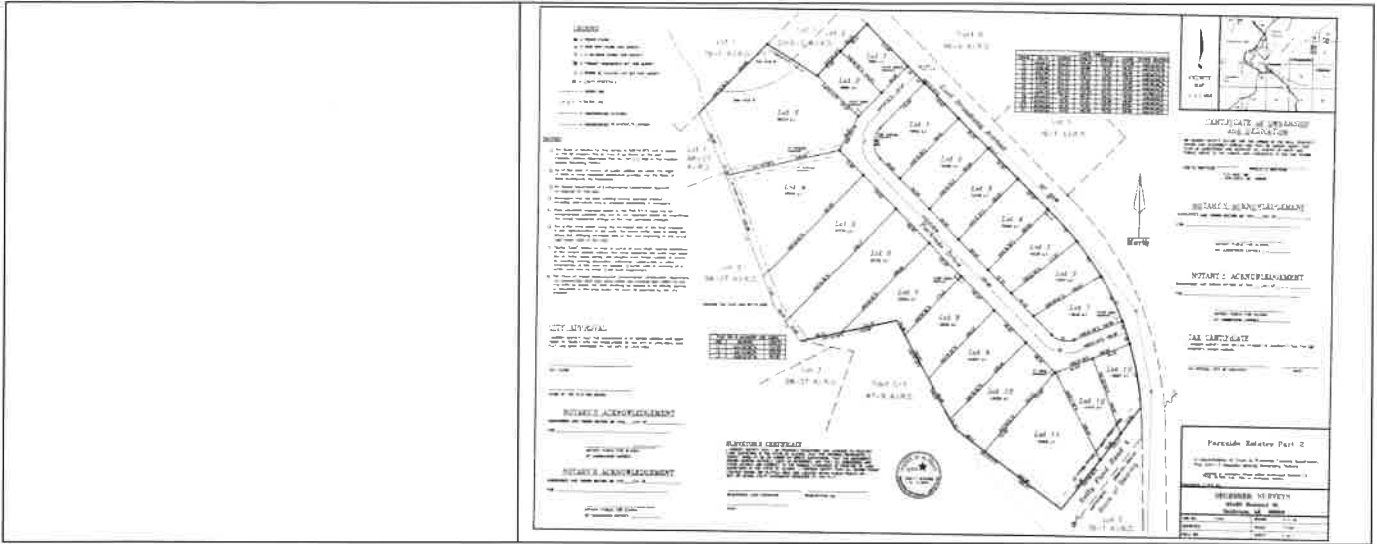
III. Planning Commission Actions and Activities

<p>The Planning Commission & Platting Board reviewed two Planning Documents, approved five Variances, and approved four Conditional Use Permits in 2017, and held two special meetings.</p>	
<p><i>January 15, 2019: Special Meeting</i></p>	<p>Planning Commission met on site at 1757 Broadway Ave to better understand the circumstances of Resolutions 2017-11 and 2017-12, with a further trip to the Matson container yard to experience the sound of the refrigerated container vans</p>
<p><i>January 18, 2019: Approved Resolution 2017-11, a conditional use permit</i></p>	<p>The Planning Commission through Resolution 2017-11 approved an octopus processing facility on a residential lot at 1757 Broadway Ave.</p>
<p><i>January 18, 2019: Denied Resolution 2017-12, a Variance</i></p>	<p>The Planning Commission through Resolution 2017-12 denied a variance request for setback reduction for the same octopus processing facility.</p>
<p><i>February 15, 2018: Approved Resolution 2018-01 Annual Report (Planning Document) and filed with City Council</i></p>	<p>The Planning Commission through Resolution 2018-01 approved the <i>Planning Commission and Platting Board 2017 Annual Report</i>, which reviewed the year in Planning in Unalaska.</p>
<p><i>February 15, 2018: Approved Resolution 2018-02, a conditional use permit</i></p>	<p>The Planning Commission through Resolution 2018-02 approved a 3 story housing structure on 2nd St.</p>
<p><i>February 15, 2018: Approved Resolution 2018-03, a variance</i></p>	<p>The Planning Commission through Resolution 2018-03 approved setback variances for a 3 story housing structure on 2nd St.</p>
<p><i>February 15, 2018: Approved Resolution 2018-04, a conditional use</i></p>	<p>The Planning Commission through Resolution 2018-04 approved a conditional use for a communications tower on the Optimera site at the top of Lear Rd, a Public/Quasi-Public use in a Single Family/Duplex zone</p>
<p><i>February 15, 2018: Approved Resolution 2018-05, a variance</i></p>	<p>The Planning Commission through Resolution 2018-04 approved front setback variance for a communications tower on the Optimera site at the top of Lear Rd</p>
<p><i>May 17, 2018: Approved Resolution 2018-06, a variance</i></p>	<p>The Planning Commission through Resolution 2018-06 approved a lot frontage variance and new subdivision on Lot 2 of Hester Subdivision</p>
<p><i>May 17, 2018: Denied Resolution 2018-07, a variance</i></p>	<p>The Planning Commission through Resolution 2018-08 denied a variance request for a hot tub gazebo on a lot at 226 West Broadway.</p>
<p><i>June 21, 2018: Approved Resolution 2018-08, a variance</i></p>	<p>The Planning Commission through Resolution 2018-08 Approved a variance request for a greenhouse on Lot 14A of Aerie Subdivision, Plat 89-01</p>
<p><i>June 21, 2018: Denied Resolution 2018-09, a variance</i></p>	<p>The Planning Commission through Resolution 2018-09 Approved and amended variance request for an art entry and stairs on Lot 1 of Seagull Hill Subdivision, Nichols Addition,</p>

	Plat 99-05
<i>June 21, 2018: Tabled Resolution 2018-10, a large subdivision</i>	The Planning Commission tabled Resolution 2018-10 at the request of the applicant who was unable to be present
<i>July 19, 2018: Approved Resolution 2018-10, a large subdivision</i>	The Planning Commission approved Resolution 2018-10 as a preliminary plat, for amendments to be made to file the final plat
<i>July 19, 2018: Tabled Resolution 2018-11, a update to city policy</i>	The Planning Commission tabled Resolution 2018-09 a resolution to endorse an update to city policy regarding liveboard vessels due to confusion over draft policies
<i>July 23, 2019: Special Meeting</i>	Walking tour taken of downtown area. Lead by Christian Schmidt, Planning intern. Discussed various issues present in downtown areas. Considered how these issues could be addressed.
<i>August 16, 2018: Approved Resolution 2018-12, a conditional use</i>	The Planning Commission approved Resolution 2018-12 for PacSteve to operate a pallet factory, a manufacturing use, in a general commercial zone
<i>August 16, 2018: Approved Resolution 2018-13, a conditional use</i>	The Planning Commission approved Resolution 2018-13 for Smokey Point Concrete to operate a sand/gravel pile and batch plant, a use slated for Marine Related Industrial, in a Marine Dependent Industrial zone
<i>September 20, 2018: Announced planning determinations</i>	Planning Staff announced two planning determinations to the Planning Commission
<i>November 15, 2018: Announced planning document and delineation</i>	Planning Staff announced and discussed with Planning Commission the results of a wetland delineation and the city's bus transit study

IV. Platting Board Actions

The Platting Board took action on two subdivision plats in 2018. One plat remains in the preliminary stage, a final plat with appropriate edits was never returned to the Planning Commission.	
<i>May 17, 2018: Approved Resolution 2018-06, a variance</i>	The Planning Commission through Resolution 2018-06 approved a lot frontage variance and new subdivision on Lot 2 of Hester Subdivision – This plat was not recorded, due to the final plat remaining incomplete
<i>June 21, 2018: Tabled Resolution 2018-10, a large subdivision</i>	The Planning Commission tabled Resolution 2018-10 , a large subdivision, at the request of the applicant who wished to be present for the meeting but was unable to be present
<i>July 19, 2018: Approved Resolution 2018-10, a large subdivision</i>	The Planning Commission approved Resolution 2018-10 as a preliminary plat, for amendments to be made to file the final plat

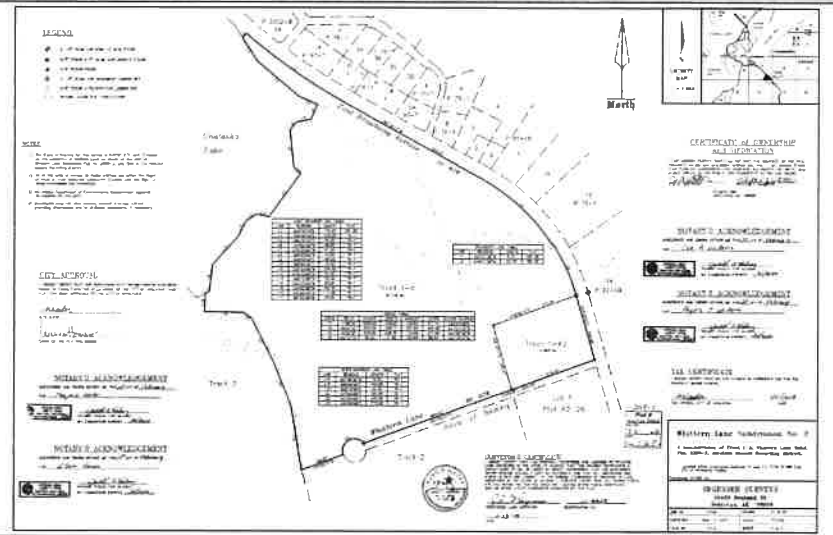


V. Platting Authority Actions

The Planning Director acting as the Platting Authority and took action on two subdivision plats in 2018, and one new tideland survey.

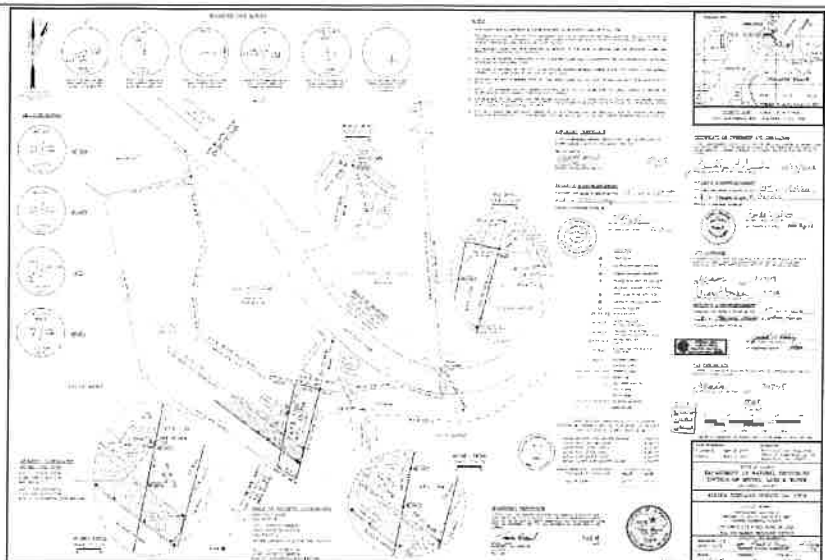
On February 27th, 2018, the Platting Authority approved **Whittem Lane Subdivision No. 2**, a resubdivision of Tract 1-A, Whittem Lane Subdivision, Plat 2000-3, Aleutian Islands Recording District.

The new plat is **Plat #2018-3, AIRD**



On July 17th, 2018, the Platting Authority approved **Alaska Tideland Survey No. 1709**

The new plat is **Plat #2018-10, AIRD**



On December 5th, 2018, the Platting Authority approved **Slope Easement Plat BLM Tract 38**

The new plat is **Plat #2018-12, AIRD**



VI. Planning Determinations

The Planning Director issued Two planning determinations in 2018.

August 20th, 2018: Planning Determination assigning a rear yard

Assigned a rear yard lot line designation to a more appropriate lot line to better suit development and lot shape on Lot 2, Huling Subdivision Add. 1, Plat 98-12

August 20th, 2018: Planning Determination nullifying a side-yard setback requirement

Nullified the requirement for a side yard setback on a lot due to existing cliff side creating a clear delineation and negating the need for a side yard setback.

VII. Summary of Appeals Cases and Actions:

The Planning Commission did not hear any appeals of administrative decisions.

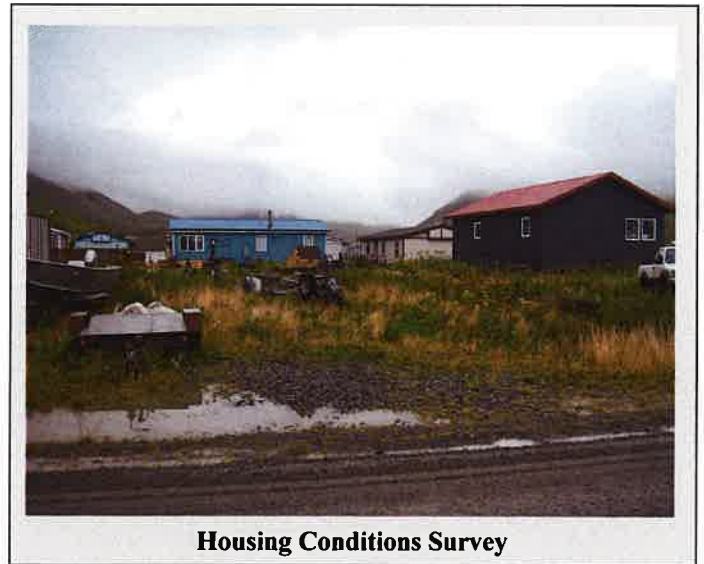
VIII. Department of Planning Activities:

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



In addition to the involvement in the items described in previous sections, Departmental activities and accomplishments for 2018 include the following:

- **Negotiated Agreements:** Coordinated the negotiation and approval of:
 1. Tideland leases and easements which will allow for businesses to expand operations in our community and help to diversify Unalaska's economic base, as well as provide access for public works projects.
 2. Negotiated the lease of city owned real estate for the location of a cellular tower on E. Broadway across from the Department of Public Works.
- **GIS Improvements.** Maintained contract with GTG and updated to new ArcPro software, a successor to the existing ArcMap software.
 1. Held on-site training with ESRI representative for the basics of new ArcPro.
 2. Supported the Department of Public Safety in the configuration of a new Computer Aided Dispatch system
- **Housing Conditions Survey.** Planning staff completed 95% of the field work for the Housing Conditions Survey between July and October 2017. This document was completed in 2018. The study determined that for a total of 878 parcels surveyed, 298 were identified as single family residences, 96 as duplexes, 56 as multi-family, and 14 as bunkhouses. The remaining parcels were public, commercial, industrial, or undeveloped parcels and tidelands. Of the 298 single family residences 18 were designated vacant or abandoned (6%). The zoning of each parcel was identified as well as the current use of the parcel. For more information, see the council memo and report.



- **Planning Education and Outreach.** The planning department participated in the annual job fair and Heart of the Aleutians at the Unalaska High School, and hosted a first grade class during their field trip to City Hall.
- **Planning Commissioner Training.** Planning staff arranged for Commissioners Bell and Brown to participate in Commissioner Training at the 2018 Alaska Planning Conference held in Anchorage in January, 2019.
- **Aerial Photography:** Received new aerial photography from Aleutian Aerial and began integrating the imagery into the GIS system. Currently at 80%, the new GIS administrator will complete the project upon his arrival in late January of 2019
- **Transportation Study:** In 2017, the planning department initiated a transportation study of all the islands transportation resources, including the study of possible public transit.
 1. In addition to collecting data about registered vehicles, licensed drivers, analyzing use patterns and possibilities, the staff set up cameras in partnership with several businesses. The cameras served to provide visual resources for reviewing traffic patterns, turning movements, etc. as well as to aid with counts of various types at eight locations.
 2. The staff also coordinated the operation of one study period whereby the city provided free bus service throughout an established route during a week in August. There were 266 riders who also completed surveys about transportation needs.
 3. The January 2018 operation of a bus was informed by the results of the August run. In January, two rented vans were used, shortening bus runs to 30 minutes or less. The number of set bus stops was also paired down from 25 to 10 at some of the most popular locations, all within about a 5-minute walk of almost any location off of Airport Beach Road and Broadway Avenue. There were 1,350 riders who utilized the bus on this run.
 4. This study won the City of Unalaska Teamwork Award for bringing together a large team of city employees to conduct such a thorough study.
- **Comprehensive Planning.** The planning department has begun the process of collecting data toward updating the Comprehensive Plan. The data collected thus far pertains to basic demographic and economic data, as well as housing data. Two committees were established to aid with the process and activities, including a Steering and a Technical Advisory Committee. A public meeting was held in April and utilized a new technology, Sli.do, to gain comments from audience participation on their smartphones. The Sli.do app was successful in capturing the majority of responses, with some minor technical glitches presumably due to bandwidth restrictions.
- **All Hazard Mitigation Plan 5 Year Update.** The planning department successfully coordinated a consultants work and meetings with staff and directors to consider any new data and natural hazard occurrences to update the City's All Hazard Plan. The Plan is required to be current so the city is eligible to receive any federal funds associated with future recovery efforts from natural disasters. City Council adopted the 5 Year Update in October 2018.
- **US Census 2020 Preparation:** Staff assisted the Census Bureau in reviewing addressing information to better prepare our island residents for the upcoming decennial census. This involved



troubleshooting address problems/issues provided to us by the Census Bureau and verifying individual addresses per the city's addressing policy.



- **Downtown Tour:** Planning Intern Christian Schmidt reviewed zoning code in the context of the downtown area surrounding 1st through 3rd St.'s. A special meeting was then held to walk Planning Commissioners through the area, making note of locations of interest, such as where property lines were unrealistically small to allow future use per current code, or where buildings cross multiple property lines, or conflicting uses lie adjacent to each other. This successful walk-through helped to identify and support the need for zoning reform or overlay for the downtown area.
- **Fireworks Coordinator:** Director Homka assumed the role of coordinator in partnership with Dan Winters, Public Utilities Director. Dan has served in this capacity for over 10 years and mentored Bil in the role of coordinating the city's New Year's Eve fireworks display. The fireworks occur twice each year, on New Year's Eve and on Independence Day.
- **CMMP Process:** This year, the Planning Department has

moved from Publisher to PowerPoint to minimize the amount of background and legacy formatting that is stuck in the Publisher documents. This has increased the speed at which the project files can be opened, and made the process of compiling new slides faster and more efficient.

IX. Departmental goals for 2019 include the following:

- Continue to explore options for zoning code changes to better implement our 2020 Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Plan.
- Continue improving process of zoning and public nuisance code enforcement as minor offenses.
- Finalize the update to the GIS aerial photography layer, create web maps, set up collector app, and train staff in new programs.
- Update the Comprehensive Plan as the current plan is nearing the end of its lifespan and a new plan is required in order to provide guidance for community facility and infrastructure investments.
- Analyze ways to improve inter-city permitting and review coordination
- Evaluate software to aid with the CMMP process; currently use Microsoft Excel.
- Assume administration of the City's Community Grants Program