



City of Seward

Strategic Plan

Approved by City Council Resolution No. 99-043

This Strategic Plan is a flexible and evolving document which the City government will use to move the community into the future.

Introduction



The community of Seward is using strategic planning to identify and address the major issues of the future. The City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, and administrative staff developed this plan, using the results of the Community Town Meetings, to guide the City to the year 2020. The goals and objectives identified under each vision element were developed based on a five year schedule for completing the objectives and attaining the goals.

This Strategic Plan is a flexible and evolving document which will guide decision-making. The City will use this plan to develop specific action items to move our community, with confidence, into the twenty-first century.

Our Beginning



Seward was founded in 1903 as a railroading town, one of Alaska's earliest planned communities. This ice-free port became the tidewater terminus for an overland route to the Interior, the gateway to the Iditarod gold fields, and the means to export the state's agricultural, mineral, and timber resources.

*This vision
reflects
the citizen's
hopes for
the Seward
community
into and
beyond the
year
2020.*

Our Vision

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Building on Seward's heritage and impressive natural setting, the community's vision for Seward includes: an attractive, healthy, vibrant community; a strong diverse economy with quality business, educational and recreational opportunities; a process for orderly growth; and an appreciation of local history, culture and sense of community.

The City's Mission

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The mission of the City of Seward government is to provide quality leadership, operate efficiently, be responsive to the desires of its residents, preserve and promote the unique heritage and natural setting of the city, and further the social and economic well-being of its citizens.

VISION ELEMENTS



These
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comprise
today's
vision of
Seward
in the
year
2020.

Economic Base:

We are a community that promotes economic diversity, encourages growth of year-round businesses, desires environmentally-responsible industry, and seeks jobs that promote a higher standard of living.

Growth Management and Land Use Planning:

We have an attractive community in which to live, work, be educated and recreate, where growth is orderly and driven by community consensus. Growth and land use planning are coordinated through the collaboration of private and public entities. We promote and facilitate balanced development.

Recreation and Leisure:

We provide diverse, year-round, indoor and outdoor recreational, educational, and cultural opportunities and facilities for residents and visitors of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds.

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History and 'Sense of Community':

We value and protect Seward's historic character, culture and physical attributes, all of which contribute to its strong sense of community.

Natural Environment:

We celebrate our natural environment by: preserving views and open spaces; working in harmony with nature; protecting wildlife; and providing environmentally sensitive access to nearby waterways, glaciers, fjords, mountains, and marine life.

Transportation Facilities:

We are a community with diverse transportation facilities including road, rail, air, pedestrian, and water routes that meet the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.

These goals and objectives will guide the City government over the next five years to help reach the community's vision for the year 2020

Economic Base

We are a community that promotes economic diversity, encourages growth of year-round businesses, desires environmentally-responsible industry, and seeks jobs that promote a higher standard of living.

Goals and Objectives:

■ *Attract New Industry*

- * Develop an aggressive marketing campaign which highlights the diverse resources, and quality of life that make Seward a great place to live and establish a business or industry
- * Develop appropriate economic tools to attract industry
- * Endeavor to provide modern communication infrastructure
- * Adjust local development regulations, where appropriate, to encourage development that is consistent with our economic base vision
- * Develop infrastructure expansion plans for currently undeveloped residential and commercial property
- * Establish a foreign trade zone

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■ ***Attract More Public Sector (Federal/State) Employment and Program Funding***

- * Continue to lobby on behalf of the University of Alaska in their efforts to expand the Institute of Marine Science facility in Seward
- * Continue to lobby the Department of Corrections and the state legislature to expand the Spring Creek Correctional Center
- * Continue to lobby for the growth of the Alaska Vocational Technical Center
- * Support construction of the inter-agency facility including: National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Alaska State Parks, and University of Alaska
- * Continue to support external funding for the Alaska SeaLife Center
- * Support efforts of village and regional native corporations to expand their services
- * Encourage the appointment of a superior court judge, and construction of a courthouse/public safety building in Seward

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■ ***Improve and Expand Maritime Facilities***

- * Complete the renovation of the Small Boat Harbor
- * Continue working with the Alaska Railroad, Alaska Marine Highway System, shipping, and cruise ship industries to ensure the expansion and modernization of the freight and cruise ship port facilities
- * Complete the eastward expansion of the Small Boat Harbor

■ ***Reduce Energy Costs***

- * Expand customer base within the Seward Electric Utility area
- * Complete a utility rate study
- * Continue to support efforts that would provide Seward with alternative energy sources including natural gas, hydropower, etc.

■ ***Expand Development in the Seward Marine Industrial Center***

- * Resolve the financial burden of the North Dock
- * Expand utilities throughout the Seward Marine Industrial Center area
- * Develop an active marketing campaign

■ ***Promote Winter Activities***

- * Promote winter back-country activities such as the expansion of nordic ski trails, alpine skiing and snowmachining
- * Support and encourage the development of an ice-skating/hockey facility

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Growth Management and Land Use Planning

We have an attractive community in which to live, work, be educated and recreate, where growth is orderly and driven by community consensus. Growth and land use planning are coordinated through the collaboration of private and public entities. We promote and facilitate balanced development.

Goals and Objectives:

- ***Establish An Attractive Highway Corridor From Mile 0-8***
 - * Establish a joint land use planning process for the corridor with the local residents and the Kenai Peninsula Borough
 - * Coordinate with local residents and the Borough to develop a specific land use plan for the corridor
 - * Implement the jointly adopted land use plan
- ***Promote Residential and Commercial Development Inside The City***
 - * Encourage construction of residential and seasonal housing at all market levels
 - * Streamline plan approval and building inspection processes

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- * Develop infrastructure and utility expansion plans for currently undeveloped residential and commercial property
- * Create a financial plan for new services and infrastructure
- * Reduce utility costs
- **Maintain Comprehensive And Land Use Plans That Reflect And Achieve The Community's Vision**
 - * Revise the Comprehensive Plan so that it is consistent with this Strategic Plan
 - * Annually review, update, and affirm the Comprehensive and Land Use Plans
 - * Revise the Comprehensive Plan to include infrastructure and growth plans
- **Pursue the community's vision through rigorous implementation of the Comprehensive and Land Use Plans**
 - * Promote in-fill development by encouraging and promoting construction on vacant sites in already established areas of the city
 - * Achieve public awareness and acceptance of the Comprehensive and Land Use Plans through public participation in town meetings, outreach to community groups, and increased public relations

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- * Ensure that all legislative and administrative decisions are consistent with the goals of the Strategic and Comprehensive plans
- * Update the Zoning Code in order to implement the Comprehensive Plan
- * Work towards bringing the Zoning Map into conformance with the Land Use Plan
- * Ensure uniform and consistent enforcement of the Zoning Code
- ***Mitigate Flood Hazards***
 - * Secure funding to implement the comprehensive flood mitigation plan for Resurrection River and Japanese Creek
 - * Actively maintain the Fourth of July Creek channel through debris removal
 - * Determine the best solution and seek adequate funding to diminish the Lowell Creek flood potential
- ***Plan and Prepare for Natural Disasters***
 - * Actively participate in the National Flood Insurance Program
 - * Coordinate with the Kenai Peninsula Borough to annually review all disaster emergency plans
 - * Coordinate community-wide disaster preparedness training and public education efforts

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Recreation and Leisure

We provide diverse, year-round, indoor and outdoor recreational, educational, and cultural opportunities and facilities for residents and visitors of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Goals and Objectives:

- ***Beautify Waterfront Park***
 - * Develop a landscaping plan for Waterfront Park which provides for additional green space
- ***Protect Waterfront Open Space***
 - * Maintain Park Zoning designation throughout Waterfront Park
- ***Develop and Improve Public Playgrounds***
 - * Replace and maintain equipment with a focus on safety and ADA accessibility
 - * Complete Two Lakes Park improvement plan
 - * Develop a neighborhood park in the Gateway Subdivision
- ***Encourage Cultural Activities, Expand Library Services, and Develop Additional Recreational Facilities***

History and Sense of Community

We value and protect Seward's historic character, culture and physical attributes, all of which contribute to its strong sense of community.

Goals and Objectives:

- ***Enhance the 'Sense of Community' Among Residents of the Greater Seward Area***
 - * Make every effort to involve the entire community in decision making processes
 - * Maintain Seward's small town character throughout the growth process
 - * Promote the development of local communication networks
- ***Encourage the Recognition, Rehabilitation and Preservation of Historic Sites and Buildings***
 - * Support the Historic Preservation Commission's efforts to raise public awareness regarding local historic property
- ***Plan and Celebrate the Seward Centennial Celebration in 2003***

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- ***Continue to Support and Encourage the Re-vitalization of Downtown***
 - * Focus downtown revitalization efforts on vacant and dilapidated buildings
 - * Complete Hoben Park improvements
 - * Identify location for public restrooms and fund construction
 - * Encourage downtown resident apartments

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Natural Environment

We celebrate our natural environment by: preserving views and open spaces; working in harmony with nature; protecting wildlife; and providing environmentally sensitive access to nearby waterways, glaciers, fjords, mountains and marine life.

Goals and Objectives:

- ***Preserve and Protect the Scenic Views of the Mountains and Resurrection Bay***
 - * Ensure that Waterfront Park is zoned and dedicated for park purposes in perpetuity
 - * Seek ways to protect the watershed and mitigate development impacts on the slopes of Bear Mountain, Marathon Mountain, Mount Benson, and the Mt. Alice bench
- ***Encourage Citizens, As Well As The City, To Take An Active Role In Beautifying The Community***
 - * Plant trees, shrubs, and wildflowers
 - * Develop landscaping recommendations

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Expanded Transportation Facilities

We are a community with diverse transportation facilities including road, rail, air, pedestrian and water routes that meet the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.

Goals and Objectives:

- ***Provide Safe and Efficient Vehicular Transportation Facilities That Meet the Needs of the Community***
 - * Use the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) to complete the Seward Highway MP 0-8 improvement project, which includes replacing the Resurrection River bridges and constructing a separated pedestrian/bicycle path, and upgrade Lowell Point Road
 - * Improve public transportation between downtown and the harbor by developing an ADA-compliant local transit system
 - * Improve access to and within the City
- ***Improve the State Airport***
 - * Complete an airport runway expansion feasibility study
 - * Develop a flood mitigation project to protect the runway from flooding
 - * Upgrade navigational aids technology

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- ***Expand and Maintain Existing Sidewalks and the Multi-Purpose Trail System in Order to Provide a Safe, Fully Accessible, Paved Pathway Throughout the City***
 - * Construct a separated trail along the Seward Highway from mile 0-8
 - * Construct a pedestrian sidewalk between the Alaska Railroad Dock and the Iditarod Trail at Fourth Avenue and Van Buren Street
 - * Connect schools and residential areas through the development of sidewalks and trails
 - * Develop long-term sidewalk installation plans
 - * Ensure year-round maintenance of existing sidewalks
 - * Support the construction of a pedestrian path to Exit Glacier

Other Major Elements of Our Vision:

The following elements were identified by the public as key components of Seward's vision. Specific goals and objectives were not identified for these elements because many of them have already been addressed in other sections of the Plan. However, the Council, Planning and Zoning Commission and administration agreed that they warranted special consideration in the Plan.

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- ***Expand and integrate educational programs***

We are a community with quality educational resources and facilities that provide academic and personal growth opportunities for citizens of all ages. Such a vision includes integrating the Seward public schools, University of Alaska, Institute of Marine Science, Alaska Vocational Technical Center, Alaska SeaLife Center, and other such facilities, to maximize resources.

- ***Promote a safe community***

We are a community that promotes the public health, safety and welfare of its residents by preparing for natural and man made hazards through responsible building construction, maintaining streets and sidewalks, and providing superior police, fire, and disaster management services.

- ***Expand availability of affordable, diverse, year-round housing***

Seward has a wide range of housing alternatives to meet the varied needs of Seward's long term and seasonal residents.

- ***Provide adequate funding for a financially sound city government***

The City of Seward is a fiscally responsible entity which utilizes creative and responsible funding alternatives.

- ***Maintain and enhance medical and social services***

We are a community that provides an integrated array of health care services designed to protect and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

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Implementation



It is the City's intent to consider the implementation of all recommendations outlined in this Strategic Plan to the fullest extent possible. In order to assist in the implementation, the Plan will be used as the basis for all City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission and administrative decision making. The City of Seward annual operating budget, capital improvement budgeting and Comprehensive Plan will also be developed consistent with the community vision and recommendations of the Strategic Plan.