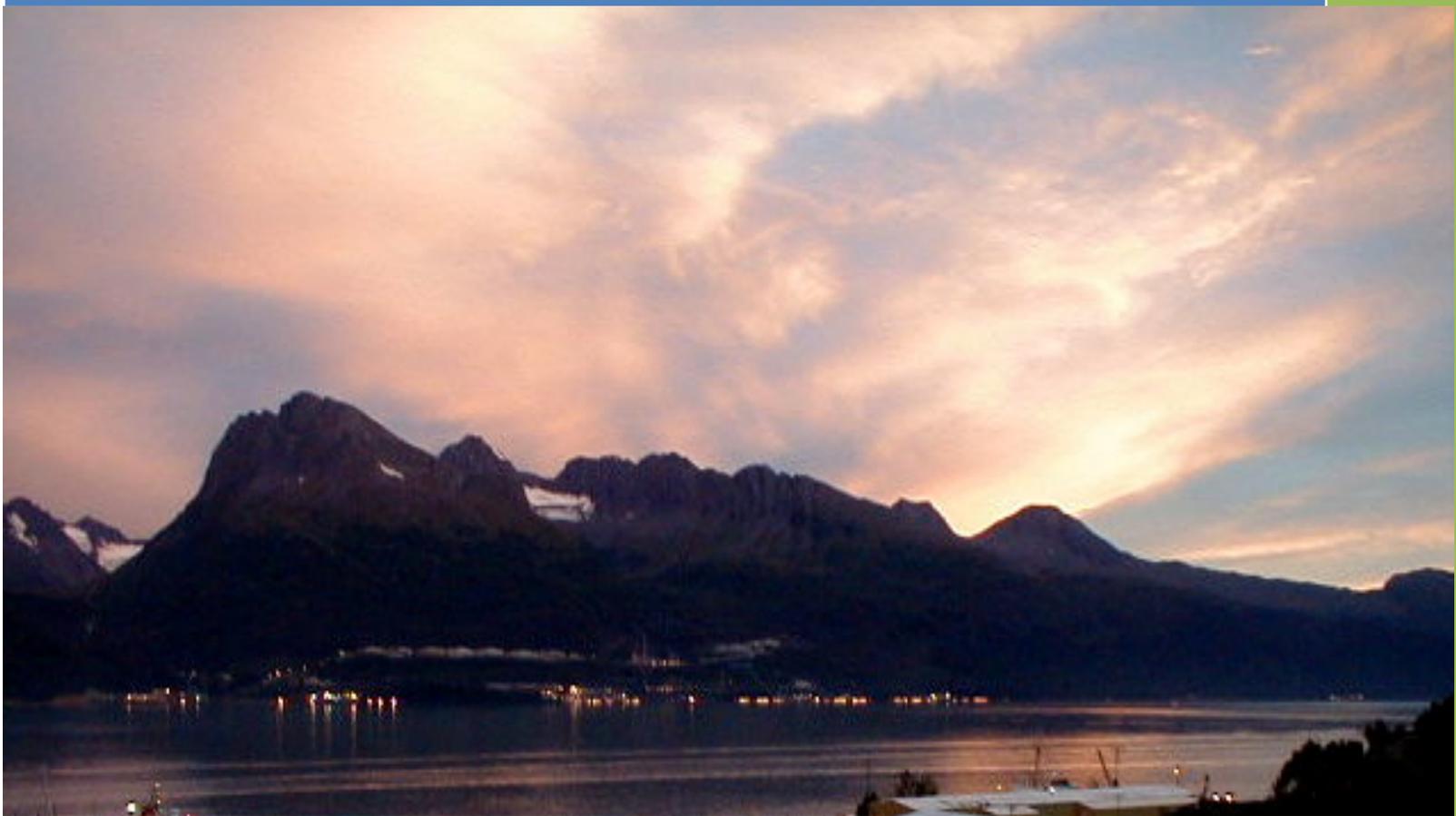


[2010]

# Coordinated Community Transportation Plan



**Valdez, Alaska**

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## INTRODUCTION

The community of Valdez has no public transit system and only one cab company which has no handicap accessible vehicles and, being privately owned, is unable to offer sliding fees for low-income passengers. The goal of the committee is to act in cooperation with the cab company to make necessary transportation available for those who can't afford, or are unable to utilize, cab service and to better use the resources available towards that goal with a special focus on seniors and people with disabilities.

No one agency has the financial resources, personnel or equipment to provide area-wide transportation to the community. Presently, some of them are finding it difficult to serve their own clients. Therefore, this plan was developed based on the concept of coordinating existing resources as a starting point. The basic concept would be for the development of a coordinating center that could receive requests for transportation and direct those requests to the agency or private provider that can best meet the needs of the client.

Under this concept, one agency will accept a leadership role and act as the coordinating agency. It is felt that many of the transportation needs that are not currently being provided can be met under this approach.

This plan:

- Profiles existing transportation services in the area.
- Summarizes the known needs and gaps in the current transit services available.
- Describes the methods used to involve the community in the formation of this plan and summarizes the results of that involvement.
- Provides several strategies for improvement.
- Outlines implementation strategies (see Action Plan).

## **COMMUNITY BACKGROUND**

Formed in 2007, the Valdez Coordinated Transportation Committee (VCTC) consists of individuals representing different service provision agencies and community groups having a common interest in providing transportation services for people with special needs (e.g., health issues/disabilities, senior citizens, and those who are unable to meet the cost of their transportation needs) as well as others in the community. The development of this plan as an on-going cooperation between agencies has continued.

### ***Location***

The city of Valdez is a small, isolated community. The nearest town by road is Glennallen which is 117 miles away. We are over 300 miles from both Anchorage and Fairbanks by road. There is only one road, the Richardson Highway, leading in and out of town. Furthermore, this one highway and our airport are closed periodically due to weather conditions. The town is spread out between the mountains and Prince William Sound so that people who live within the city limits may be over ten miles away from the business district. Valdez has heavy winter snowfalls that average around 325.6 inches per year, and rainfalls that average about 67.41 inches per year, both with periodic high winds. Walking from place to place within the business area is often hazardous and impractical during the winter months, especially for those with physical limitations. The danger of natural disaster in the area, such as flooding, tsunami and earth-quakes as well as possible terrorist threat directed at the terminus of the Alyeska Pipeline make it especially essential that everyone in the community have the ability to evacuate on short notice.

### ***Transportation***

We cannot support a lot of competing for-profit businesses or those that require a large consumer base with the small population size of Valdez; therefore, we have only one taxi service and no other forms of public transportation. The taxi service is costly and lacks handicap accessible vehicles. Due to hazardous weather conditions, safe and reliable transportation is needed. Valdez is the home of several non-profit agencies that provide various types of support for seniors, people with disabilities, low-income, and native populations. The City of Valdez is supportive of these agencies, as is the community as a whole. The city has a long history of support for people with disabilities. It is the former home of Harborview Developmental Center, which employed people in the community and affected many. Several of the former residents of the facility still live in Valdez, making it their home since the mid-seventies.

The non-profit community is close-knit and cooperative, sharing former employees, consumers, and board members. We work well together. The Community Transportation Plan is just an extension of the informal process we have always used to cover each other's transportation needs when necessary.

**Map: Community of Valdez**



**COORDINATED SERVICES INVENTORY**

*Members of Coordination Group*

While a large number of organizations and individuals in the community have been invited to participate in developing this plan, the VCTC continues to be a small number of groups. The following organizations serve as the VCTC and form the steering committee for the development of this plan.

- Connecting Ties, Inc.
- Special Olympics
- Providence Valdez Counseling Health
- Providence Valdez Medical Center
- Valdez Senior Center
- Frontier Community Services
- City of Valdez
- Valdez Assembly of God

### *Description of Current Service*

The information in this section is not intended to be all-inclusive. The agencies listed are both public and private. It should be noted that there is no general public transportation system that serves the Valdez area on a systematic basis. General bus transportation through the city of Valdez has been tried on a limited basis; however, it was not able to cover the costs of operating a scheduled bus service. (Updated 2/16/10)

### Agencies

1. Providence Valdez Medical Center is located in Valdez. They have minimal transportation needs for residents in the long term care unit. They have a 10-passenger van for ambulatory patients. Some families provide transportation for family members. They contract with the Valdez Senior Center to use their van for transporting long term residents to outside activities. However, their fee for service is not financially cost effective to the hospital so they continue to look for other means of transportation for their long-term care residents that will be more cost effective in the long run. They also have a memo of agreement with Frontier Community Services to share a van which they currently use every Friday and can request when needed.
2. Valdez Senior Citizens Center is located in Valdez. They have two 9-passenger vans, one of which is wheelchair accessible. In addition to serving the senior population they serve adults with physical disabilities. The van is used for their home-delivered meal program, in addition to their agency transportation needs.
3. Valdez Yellow Cab Company is located in Valdez and provides rides to all individuals who have the ability to pay. At present, they will provide rides to all individuals who can get in and out of the vehicle. They have two 6-passenger vans, but neither are handicap accessible.

4. Frontier Community Services has a branch located in Valdez. Currently, they have two older vans equipped with wheelchair lifts and two tie-downs as well as one new ten passenger van equipped with wheelchair lift and four tie-downs that they share with Providence Medical Center. They provide transportation to residents in their group homes, to and from shopping, community activities, and medical appointments. They serve individuals who experience developmental disabilities.
5. Connecting Ties, Inc. has its main office in Valdez. Currently they have two 7-passenger vans, only one of which is wheelchair accessible. They provide transportation for individuals in the community who experiences a disability. They have a variety of programs serving individuals who experience developmental, and/or physical disabilities, and older residents.
6. Valdez School District contracts for most school children transportation with Students First, Inc. The vans and buses are assigned to individual schools. Two small buses are equipped with handicap lifts for students with disabilities.
7. Advocates for Victims of Violence is located in Valdez. They have a small 5-passenger van that they use for the transportation of clients as it is needed.
8. Providence Valdez Counseling Health is located in Valdez and provides rides using a voucher program with Valdez Yellow Cab Company on a limited basis for individuals meeting specific requirements.
9. There are other agencies, which transport individuals, such as the fire department and emergency medical services (ambulances). These vehicles are for specialized services.

**Table 1. Valdez Transportation Resources and Accessibility**

Agency	Vehicle		Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Providence Valdez Medical Center	*10 Passenger Van	Long Term Care Residents	share van with Frontier Community Services on Fridays						
	9 Passenger Van	Meals/Seniors	8am-4pm	8am-4pm	8am-4pm	8am-4pm	8am-4pm	Closed	Closed
Valdez Senior Citizens Center	*9 Passenger Van	Meals/Seniors	8am-4pm	8am-4pm	8am-4pm	8am-4pm	8am-4pm	Closed	Closed
	6 Passenger Van	Private Hire	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours
Valdez Yellow Cab	6 Passenger Van	Private Hire	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours
	6 Passenger Van	Private Hire	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours
Frontier Community Services	*5 Passenger Van 2-W/C	Disabled	Currently used 7 days a week as needed for residents in their assisted living homes						
	*5 Passenger Van 2-W/C	Disabled	Currently used 7 days a week as needed for residents in their assisted living homes						
	*10 passenger Van	Any Disability	on call	on call	on call	on call	shared	on call	on call
Connecting Ties (On call for evenings and weekends)	7 Passenger Van 2-W/C	Any Disability	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	on call
	*7 Passenger Van 2-W/C	Any Disability	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	on call
School District (Laidlaw)	Busses	Students Only	8am-4pm	8am-4pm	8am-4pm	8am-4pm	8am-4pm	Closed	Closed
Valdez Advocated for Victims of Violence	5 Passenger Van	Clients Only	transport clients as needed						
	10 Passenger Van	Employees Only	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	Closed
* Wheelchair Accessible									

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This section provides an overview of Valdez’s demographics.

**Table 2: Community Demographics<sup>1</sup> for Valdez, 2000**

	<b>Valdez</b>
<b>2000 Population</b>	4,036
<i>2007 State Demographer population estimate<sup>2</sup></i>	3,599
<b>Population 65 and over</b>	141
<b>Percent Population 65 and older</b>	3.5%
<b>Per Capita Income</b>	27,341
<b>Median Family Income</b>	74,187
<b>Median Household Income</b>	66,532
<b>Persons in Poverty</b>	248
<b>Persons Below Poverty</b>	223

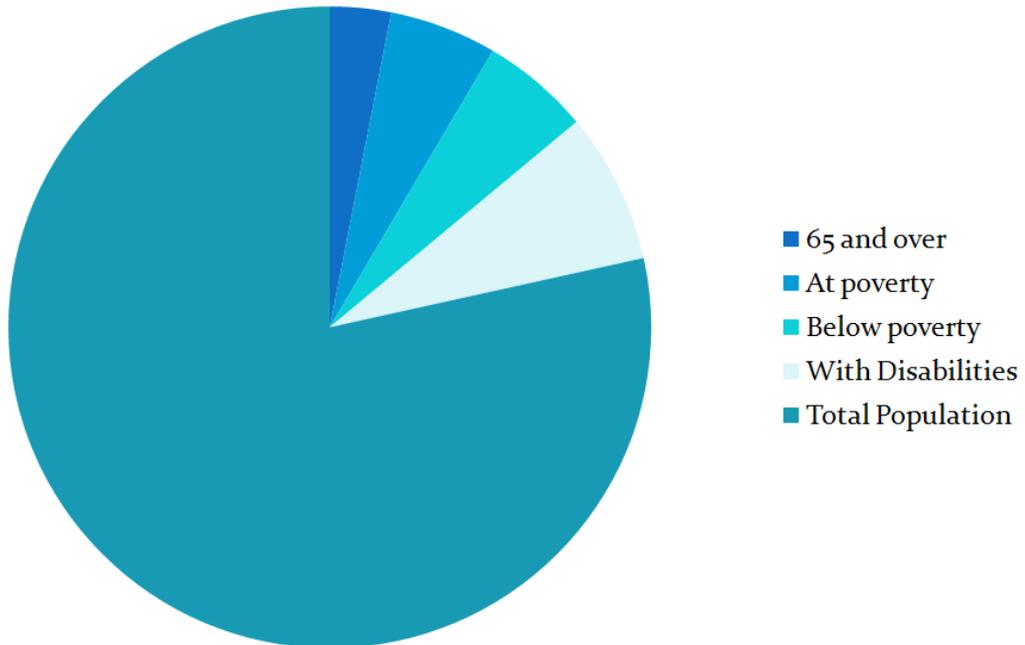
Source: 2000 US Census Bureau Data, except where noted.

<sup>1</sup>Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development Community Database Website: [http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/commdb/CF\\_BLOCK.htm](http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/commdb/CF_BLOCK.htm), as accessed 2/12/10.

<sup>2</sup>2007 State Demographer population estimate

**Table 3: Targeted Population Demographics**

**Total Population as of 2007 – 3,599**





## 2009 COMMUNITY SURVEY

In September of 2009 surveys were mailed to every post office box in the community of Valdez to obtain their input and information in order to better create a transportation system for Valdez. Of those that were sent out, 120 were returned. In the section for comments the majority of the replies informed us of transportation routes that residents would like to be implemented. Of those that stated they would like to use a voucher system if it was available, they were located further outside of the town of Valdez and had a difficult time getting to work. Of those that were supportive of a transportation service, they stated they would make use of such a service if it was available during a time period that met their schedule.

**Table 6: Results of Community Survey, 2010**

**Total number of surveys returned:** 120

**Is your home located in or near?**

Downtown	71	59%
Loop Road	3	2.5%
Airport/Valdez Mobile Home	14	11.7%
Old Town Valdez	1	0.83%
Corbin Creek	3	2.5%
Robe River Subd.	10	8.3%
Rainbow	2	1.6%
6.5 mile	4	3.3%
10 mile/Alpine Woods	11	9.2%
19 mile	0	0%

**How many trips per week do you or others in your household make**

To work	672
To College/Education/Training	48
To High School	98
To Take Children to pre-school	19
For before school activities	19
For after school activities	67
Socializing	218
Entertainment	82
Business/Committee/group meet	122
Shopping any kind	352
Church	65
Medical appointments	23.35

**How many vehicles does your household own?**

		average mpg
Car	88	18mpg
Truck	88	13mpg
Suv/Van	35	12.58mpg

**Does anyone in your household carpool?**

Yes	12	10 %
No	108	90%

**If Valdez had reliable, affordable public transit would you eliminate one or more of your vehicles?**

Yes	21	18%
No	98	82%

**How much money per year would eliminating one or more vehicles save you?**

Averaged Total/ Person	\$887.80
------------------------	----------

**If Valdez offered round trip fixed route transit twice a day what time would be best for you?**

	average
Monday - Friday	6am - 6pm
Saturday - Sunday	10am - 6pm

**Is anyone in your household disabled and or a senior citizen?**

Developmental	1
Health/physical	15
Health/psychiatric	0
Hearing	3
Vision	0
Senior Citizen	34

**If you are a senior citizen do you live**

At Home	30
At the Senior Citizens Center	2
Providence Long term Care	0

**Would you buy transit vouchers if they were offered at an affordable rate based on your income?**

Yes	58	48%
No	62	52%

**GAPS IN SERVICE**

Through community meetings and surveys, the following general areas were identified as areas where needs are not being met or the present method of providing for the need is not adequate and needs to be improved. (Updated 2/16/10)

- Rides for low income clients
- Rides for welfare to work clients
- Rides for low-income patients at the hospital/counseling center
- Rides for individuals to pick up food at food bank
- Rides for elders on Medicaid and wheelchair bound individuals
- Rides to pick up medication
- Rides for individuals to attend support group meetings
- Rides for individuals living outside Valdez
- Rides for individuals going to work
- Rides for families without access to automobiles for day care
- Rides for seniors and individuals with disabilities to shopping, doctors appointments, post office
- Rides for kids/teenagers to attend school activities and events
- Rides for kids/teenagers who have missed the bus to/from school

### *Transit Needs*

Findings of the VCTC it is anticipated that:

- one (1) wheelchair accessible van will be necessary, preferably 4-wheel drive to replace an older van.
- Information distribution by all agencies.
- Develop and implement a voucher program.
- Coordination of existing available vehicles and personnel to provide transportation to consumers.
- Vehicle purchase and operational cost assistance.
- Centralized call-in system.
- Designated drivers

### **STRATEGIES:**

#### *Improvement Strategies*

This section presents a range of possible solutions in response to identified needs from the community involvement process. Each of the possible solutions was evaluated based on the following:

- Cost effectiveness in terms of
  - (1) the cost to implement
  - (2) cost to the consumer
- Effectiveness in terms of the population served
- Ease of implementation and cooperation between agencies
- Level of service in terms of hours of day, days of week, frequency of service
- Quality of service
- Eligibility determination

As a result of discussion at meetings of the VCTC, a range of potential solutions are presented:

- Information distribution by all agencies.
- Develop and implement a voucher program.
- Coordination of existing available vehicles and personnel to provide transportation to consumers.
- Vehicle purchase and operational cost assistance.
- Establish a coordinated transit system for consumers.
- Utilizing a centralized call in system with additional equipment and personnel.

*Action Plan*

1. Maintain current level of services
  - Engage community in transportation efforts
  - Identify funding opportunities
  - Pursue cab voucher program
2. Expand transportation services
  - Acquire appropriate number of handicap accessible vehicles
  - Promote transportation use by community
  - Provide designated drivers to transport
3. Enhance communication and advocacy
  - Promote the sharing of information between agencies to better identify needs
  - Distribute information for agencies who participate in coordination
  - Establish a call-center and Mobility Manager to promote coordination activities
  - Improve communication with riders' and riders' ability to communicate with agencies
4. Improve and expand transportation facilities
  - Make transportation service more attractive to riders
  - Install shelters for vehicles
  - Establish call-in center
5. Establish cab services
  - Promote awareness of issue within the community
  - Have taxis that are capable of transporting with a voucher program
6. Marketing
  - Provide information to the community about availability of transportation services
  - Encourage agencies participating in coordinated transportation services to assist
7. Improve access to services and locations
  - Promote transportation options
  - Provide transportation during non-peak hours and to areas located further outside the town of Valdez
8. Share and coordinate resources
  - Establish shared resources

- Establish estimated number of consumers being served
- Establish scheduling and services
- Encourage partnerships and coordination that will increase access to services
- Promote opportunities that utilize existing services

### ***Financial Plan***

A financial plan will be developed. This plan will take into consideration the following possible sources of funding:

- Mental Health Trust Authority
  1. Small Projects Grant
  2. Partnership/Designated Grant
- State of Alaska DOTPF
- FTA Section 5310 Grants for vehicles and vouchers
- FTA Section 5311 Other-than-urbanized-area grant
- FTA Section 5316 Jobs Access and Reverse Commute
- FTA Section 5317 New Freedom Beyond the ADA
- Service Providers
- Consumers

## **PRIORITY OF PROJECTS**

Since the project began in 2007, the VCTC has accomplished several priority goals that were set previously to this plan. Three new wheelchair accessible vehicles have been purchased, Memorandum of Agreements were developed and signed by community agencies, and a voucher program has been pursued. (Updated 2/16/10)

### ***Projects and Priorities 2010***

#### **Purchase of Services**

- Develop a Voucher System using State of Alaska grant

#### **Vehicle**

- Purchase of 1 wheel-chair accessible van, preferably 4-wheel-drive to replace an older van.

#### **Planning**

- Mobility manager (Connecting Ties)

***Community Priority 2010***

- Vehicle: Purchase of 1 wheel-chair accessible van, preferably 4-wheel-drive to replace an older van.
- Purchase of Services: Develop Voucher Program
- Planning: Mobility manager – Connecting Ties

***Long-term Projects 2-5 years***

Vehicle

- Purchase of 1 wheel-chair accessible van, preferably 4-wheel-drive to replace an older van.

Facilities

- Purchase shelter for current/new vehicles

Planning

- Continue to work on MOA's
- Acquire funds for designated drivers

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