

**Mayor**  
Alice Ruby

**City Manager**  
Dan Decker



**Dillingham City Council**  
Bertram Luckhurst  
Michael Bennett  
Steven Carriere  
Curt Armstrong  
Kaleb Westfall  
Kevin McCambley

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** December 2, 2024  
**To:** Dan Decker, City Manager  
**From:** Christopher Maines, Planning Director  
**Subject:** December 2024 Monthly Report

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### **Planning Commission Activities:**

In the month of November, we held one planning commission meeting. The meeting was to discuss and review the preliminary replat for Harbor Lease Lot 2 and Lease Lot 3. The preliminary replat was to shift the existing common line south by 60 ft, dedicate a public access easement, and include a utility easement for Nushagak Electric to fix the buried power line on the south end of the Dillingham Boat Harbor. During the hearing it was asked about the disposal of municipal property process. Under 5.30 of the Dillingham Municipal Code, it requires us to go through a public process when disposing of City owned real property, this also includes leased property. Because of this it required additional research and action on the replat of the lease lots was tabled. We will be going through the proper process before bringing it back to the Planning Commission.

### **Planning Department Activities:**

I am currently reviewing Title 12, Title 17, and Title 18 of the Dillingham Municipal Code. The overall purpose and goal of this reevaluation is to see if current codes are still applicable today and if changes or additional language should be adopted. In 2015 through 2017 there was an effort to review each section of the Dillingham Municipal Code under the suggestion of Janice Williams the former City Clerk. At that time Title 4 and Title 7 were heavily reviewed. With upcoming major projects and future development in mind, I will be submitting suggested areas of the Dillingham Municipal Code for your review to determine if changes and or revisions need to be made.

I am currently training through LinkedIn Learning on ArcGIS so that I will be able to update the City of Dillingham system. Our mapping has needed an overhaul for years and being able to update items in house would be beneficial. I am hoping to add layers for City owned and maintained streets to better assist in snow removal routes, update addresses

for EMS and Police Dispatchers, and clean up the location mapping of City operated infrastructure, such as curb stops, storm drains, and valve locations. These changes will take time but will be beneficial to all departments.

I have been reviewing the City of Dillingham permit processes and the application process we currently use. There has been recent confusion and questions about what requires a permit and some of the requirements, such as insurance. One other question related to special events is if the City of Dillingham is required to submit permit applications to host events or if its exempt. If it is exempt, changes will have to be made to the code.

In October I sent out staff nominations for the CIP list. The closing date was the end of November. I have received several project requests, primarily from Public Works. These projects have been compiled and will be provided to Agnew Beck for the upcoming City Council workshop.

I received my certification in Municipal Stormwater Monitoring and Stormwater Management. I started my courses in September and received my certificates on November 25, 2024.

### **Upcoming Activities**

Starting in January of 2025. I will begin promoting our land use permitting through advertisement. It was brought to my attention in November when the City Assessors arrived to conduct work, that the permits that our office received were primarily for non-construction development. Unless we emphasize the importance of these permits to the general public, we may fail to capture any improvements made to existing or new real property within the Dillingham Area. Enforcement has always been an issue, so I am researching what we can do to improve our permit acquisitions.

The City of Dillingham will begin advertising for the Administrative Assistant position within the Planning Department in early December. I will update the Council once the position has been filled.

### **Upcoming Calendar Items:**

Planning Commission Meeting	December 19, 2024
Nuyakuk Hydro Project's Updated Study Report	January 15/16 2025

**Attachment:** Revitalizing Dillingham: A Bold Initiative for Housing Development

# Revitalizing Dillingham: A Bold Initiative for Housing Development

## Introduction

Dillingham, Alaska, a community rich in culture and natural beauty, faces a critical juncture in its development. Like many remote Alaskan towns, we grapple with a pressing housing crisis that threatens our ability to grow, retain our population, and attract vital professionals to our community. Today, we present a visionary yet practical approach to address this challenge head-on, drawing inspiration from successful initiatives in other Alaskan communities while tailoring solutions to Dillingham's unique needs.

## The Challenge

Our community faces two significant hurdles in housing development:

1. The exorbitant cost of construction materials, further inflated by hefty shipping expenses.
2. The immediate burden of property taxes on newly constructed homes and rental properties.

These factors have created a stagnant housing market, deterring both private and public developers from investing in our community's future.

## Our Proposal: A Two-Pronged Approach

We propose two innovative measures that will not drain city resources but will demonstrate Dillingham's commitment to growth and development:

### 1. Property Tax Exemption for New Construction

Following the successful model implemented in Wasilla, we propose exempting newly constructed rental properties and homes within Dillingham from real property taxation for a period of 5-10 years.

#### Benefits:

- Stimulates economic growth by encouraging construction projects
- Creates jobs in the construction sector and related industries
- Attracts outside investment to our community
- Increases long-term tax revenue through expanded housing stock
- Helps retain current residents and attract new ones

## 2. Reduced Shipping Fees for Building Materials

We propose exempting or significantly reducing the wharf, handling, and tariff fees for shipping building materials intended for new home and rental property construction within Dillingham.

### Benefits:

- Directly lowers construction costs, making projects more viable
- Encourages the use of higher-quality, more durable materials
- Supports local construction companies and suppliers
- Sets Dillingham apart as a forward-thinking, development-friendly community

### Implementation Strategy

To ensure the success of these initiatives, we propose the following approach:

1. **Pilot Program:** Begin with a targeted pilot in a specific area or for a particular type of development.
2. **Clear Eligibility Criteria:** Establish transparent guidelines to ensure the incentives are used as intended.
3. **Regular Review:** Conduct annual assessments to measure the program's effectiveness and make necessary adjustments.
4. **Community Engagement:** Host town halls and workshops to gather input and build community support.
5. **Economic Impact Study:** Partner with local economists to project the long-term benefits of these initiatives.

### Addressing Potential Concerns

We anticipate and are prepared to address several potential concerns:

- **Maintaining City Services:** We will present a detailed plan to ensure essential services remain fully funded during the tax exemption period.
- **Preventing Abuse:** Strict oversight measures will be implemented to prevent any misuse of these incentives.
- **Long-term Financial Impact:** Our projections show that the increased tax base after the exemption period will more than offset the initial revenue deferment.

### The Broader Impact

This initiative extends far beyond just creating more housing. It's about building a stronger, more vibrant Dillingham:

- **Economic Diversification:** A thriving construction sector can help reduce our economic reliance on seasonal industries.

- **Attracting Professionals:** Improved housing options will make it easier to recruit and retain teachers, healthcare workers, and other professionals crucial to our community's well-being.
- **Community Health:** Better housing directly correlates with improved health outcomes and overall quality of life.
- **Environmental Considerations:** By enabling the use of modern, energy-efficient materials, we can reduce our community's carbon footprint.

## Call to Action

Dillingham stands at a crossroads. We can choose to maintain the status quo and watch as our housing crisis deepens, or we can take bold, proactive steps towards a brighter future. This proposal offers a path forward that is both ambitious and achievable.

Together, we can build a Dillingham that not only meets the needs of our current population but is poised for sustainable growth and prosperity in the years to come.

Let's seize this opportunity to show that Dillingham is not just a great place to visit, but an even better place to call home.

Thank you for your consideration.