

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dillingham 2025 Comprehensive Plan: Evolution, Timeline, and Path Forward

Project Timeline and Financial Overview

March 2023: City of Dillingham contracts with Agnew::Beck Consulting for comprehensive plan update at \$65,000 (separate housing study contract also executed) **2023-2024:** Partial completion of comprehensive plan update including community engagement and technical analysis

Total Expenditure to Date: \$13,780 from original approved contract

Contract Status: Original contract for \$65,000 expired

Current Proposal: \$46,250 to complete 2025 comprehensive plan update

Total Project Investment: \$59,030 (\$13,780 spent to date + \$46,250 proposed)

2025 Budget Allocation: \$60,000 budgeted for plan update—proposed completion cost remains under budget

Planning Commission Financial Context

The Planning Department allocated \$60,000 in the 2025 budget specifically for this comprehensive plan update. The proposed completion cost of \$46,250 keeps the project under the budgeted amount of \$13,750. This represents responsible fiscal management while completing a statutorily required planning document.

Substantive Changes from Previous Plans

Strategic Reorganization and Enhanced Focus

The 2025 plan represents a fundamental restructuring from the 2010 version:

From General Aspirations to Specific Implementation

- 2010 plan contained broad goals with limited implementation pathways
- 2025 plan provides detailed action items with specific implementation notes and responsible parties
- New emphasis on measurable outcomes and annual progress reporting

Integration of Recent Studies and Assessments

- Incorporates 2020 Dillingham Waterfront Strategic Plan findings
- Integrates 2020 Curyung Tribal Transportation Safety Plan recommendations
- Builds on 2022 City Services Assessment findings

- References separate housing study data for evidence-based housing strategies

Housing: From Secondary Concern to Primary Crisis

2010 Approach: Housing mentioned as part of general land use goals **2025 Approach:** Housing elevated to crisis-level priority requiring immediate coordinated response

New Elements:

- Recognition of critical housing shortage (0.7% ownership vacancy rate)
- Specific strategies for workforce housing to address recruitment/retention challenges
- Collaborative housing coalition approach involving multiple stakeholders
- Direct link between housing availability and economic development capacity

Economic Development: From Recovery to Strategic Diversification

2010 Context: Plan developed during fisheries crisis and economic uncertainty **2025 Context:** Plan recognizes recovered fisheries while pursuing strategic diversification

Key Shifts:

- Fishing industry treated as stable foundation rather than recovery target
- Tourism development elevated with specific infrastructure and marketing strategies
- Workforce development aligned with regional initiatives (Bristol Bay Career and Technical Education Program)
- Local food production and energy independence as economic resilience strategies
- Recognition of emerging renewable energy opportunities (Nuyakuk Hydroelectric Project)

Infrastructure: From Basic Maintenance to Asset Management

2010 Approach: Reactive approach to infrastructure needs **2025 Approach:** Proactive asset management with lifecycle planning

Enhanced Elements:

- Comprehensive assessment of deferred maintenance needs based on 2022 City Services Assessment
- Integration of GIS and asset management software already implemented
- Financial planning for equipment replacement cycles
- Recognition of climate change impacts on infrastructure longevity
- Specific attention to coastal erosion threats to wastewater lagoon

Governance: From City-Centric to Collaborative Regional Approach

2010 Approach: City of Dillingham as primary implementer **2025 Approach:** Regional hub model with extensive partnerships

New Coordination Mechanisms:

- Formalized protocols with Curyung Tribe and Alaska DOT&PF
- Regional energy collaborative participation through Bristol Bay Native Corporation initiative
- Bristol Bay economic development coordination through BBNA CEDS process
- Enhanced state and federal agency partnerships

COVID-19 Pandemic Response Integration

The 2025 plan uniquely incorporates lessons learned from the 2020-2023 pandemic period:

Organizational Resilience:

- Recognition of staff recruitment/retention challenges exacerbated by pandemic
- Emphasis on cross-training and operational redundancy
- Enhanced digital communication and public engagement tools

Community Health Systems:

- Strengthened coordination between city and health providers
- Recognition of housing's role in public health emergency response
- Enhanced emergency operations and communication protocols

Economic Recovery:

- Understanding of tourism industry vulnerabilities and recovery strategies
- Recognition of supply chain disruptions affecting local businesses
- Enhanced focus on local economic resilience

Implementation Realism and Capacity Assessment

The 2025 plan demonstrates more realistic assessment of implementation challenges:

Financial Constraints Acknowledged:

- Recognition that many strategies require external funding
- Emphasis on grant-writing capacity and partnership development
- Prioritization of projects based on available resources

Staffing Limitations Addressed:

- Specific attention to recruitment and retention challenges
- Emphasis on regional collaboration to share implementation burden
- Recognition of need for outside contractors for specialized tasks

Phased Implementation Approach:

- Waterfront improvements organized into clear Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects
- Transportation improvements coordinated with existing agency planning
- Housing strategies designed for collaborative implementation

Value Proposition for Completion

Fiscal Responsibility: Completing the plan for \$46,250 utilizes 77% of budgeted funds and avoids waste of \$13,780 already invested.

Legal Compliance: Fulfills Alaska State Statutes requirement for comprehensive planning and provides foundation for land use regulations.

Grant Eligibility: Many federal and state funding programs require current comprehensive plans as application prerequisites.

Regional Coordination: Provides framework for participation in regional initiatives already underway (energy collaborative, transportation planning, economic development).

Performance Management: Establishes baseline and metrics for measuring municipal progress and service delivery improvements.

Critical Implementation Considerations

Immediate Priorities: The plan identifies several crisis-level issues requiring immediate attention regardless of plan completion:

- Housing shortage affecting workforce recruitment
- Wastewater lagoon erosion vulnerability
- Downtown revitalization needs
- Staff recruitment and retention

Resource Requirements: Successful implementation will require:

- Sustained grant-writing capacity
- Enhanced regional partnership development
- Community engagement and volunteer coordination
- Technical assistance for specialized projects

Monitoring and Adaptation: The plan establishes annual review processes but will require:

- Realistic timeline adjustments based on actual capacity
- Flexibility to respond to changing federal/state funding opportunities
- Integration with other municipal planning processes