

**CITY OF CORDOVA  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 1997**

**A Cooperative Effort**

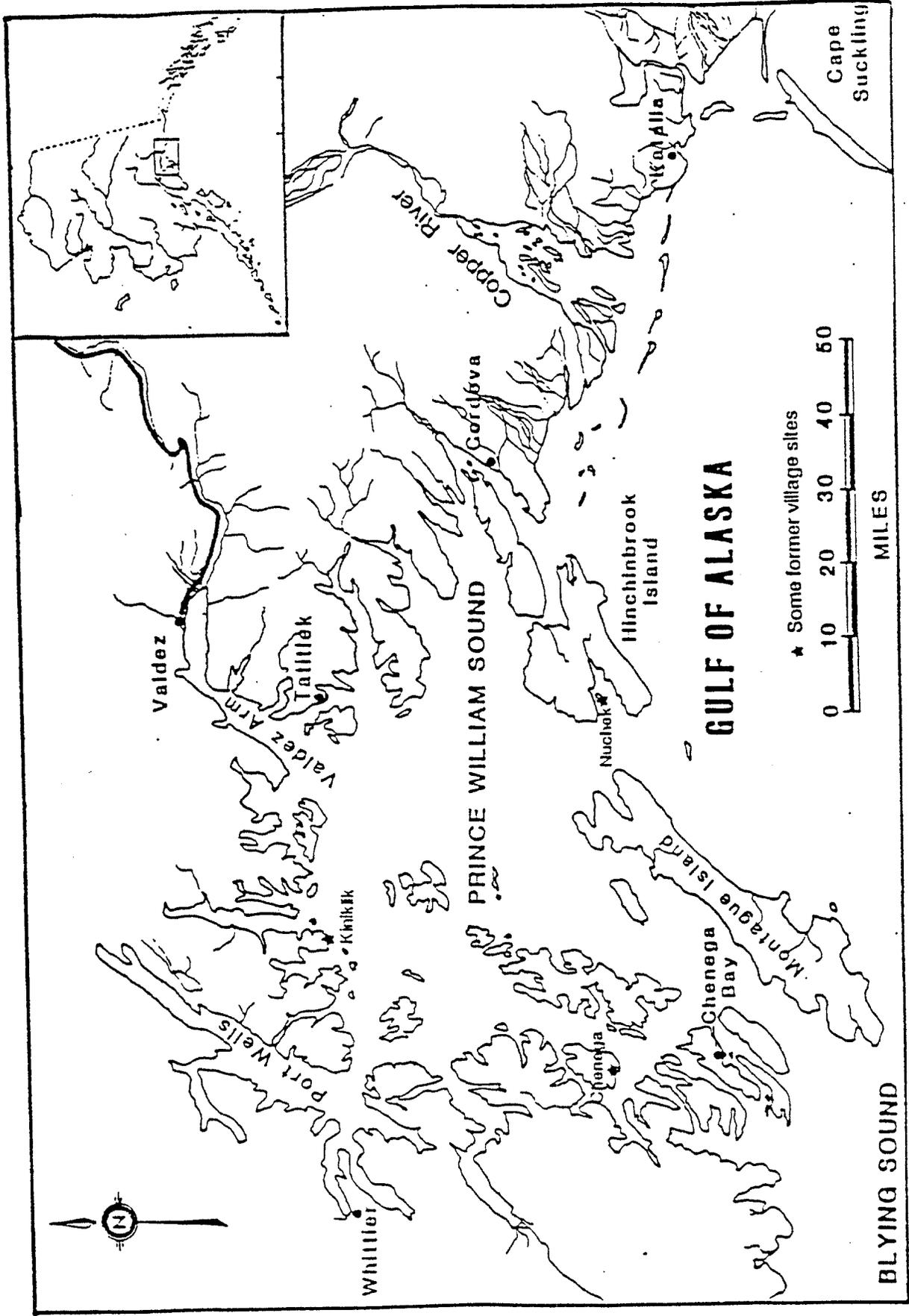
**City of Cordova Port and Commerce Development Advisory Board  
and  
Prince William Sound Economic Development Council**

**Prepared by  
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Communities of Prince William Sound, Northern Gulf of Alaska.

## I. CORDOVA AREA AND ECONOMY

### A. General Description of the Area:

Cordova is located on Orca Inlet at the southeastern side of Prince William Sound. It is 52 air miles southeast of Valdez, and 150 miles southeast of Anchorage (see map). According to the DCRA Community Database, Cordova has a population of approximately 2,597 people living in and around this home rule city. Commercial fishing is the area's primary economic activity, although other industries are present. Cordova was originally called Eyak and was home to Aleut peoples along with migrating Athabascan and Tlingit natives, all of whom referred to themselves as Eyaks. Today, Cordova's population is largely non-native. The town of Cordova was named in 1906 by Michael Heney who built the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad to connect the Kennicott Copper Mines with the sea. The mines operated until 1938, yielding copper, silver, and gold. After mining declined in importance, fishing replaced mining as Cordova's central economic concern.

Cordova has no means of overland transportation and can only be reached by air or water. The Alaska Marine Highway ferry service makes regular stops bringing supplies and visitors to the area and providing a link to the outside world. The ferry runs primarily from Valdez, but occasionally trips to or from Seward or Whittier are available. Year round barge service is also available. The Merle K. (Mudhole) Smith Airport is located at mile 13 of the Copper River Highway. This State owned and operated airport has a 7,400' runway and daily scheduled jet flights. Air taxis are available at the Mudhole Smith Airport. Air taxi service is also available from the state-owned Cordova Municipal Airport located on Eyak Lake. Harbor facilities include a small boat harbor, a ferry terminal, docking and marine repairs. The Copper River Highway, a gravel road, provides access to the Copper River Delta, as far east as the Million Dollar Bridge at mile 51. Plans to connect the Copper River Highway to the statewide road system have been controversial.

### B. Natural Resources:

Commercial fish, and most especially salmon, are Cordova's most important natural resource. Many species of fish and shellfish have been commercially harvested in the area, but the major commercial fishing focus is on the five Prince William Sound salmon species. Until recent years the herring fishery was active, but in 1994 there was little harvest of herring and in 1995, herring fishing was closed entirely due to low biomass counts by ADF&G surveys.

Some timber is harvested in the Cordova area. The subsistence and sport taking of bear, moose, caribou, deer, beaver, harbor seals, sea otters, clams, salmon and crabs is practiced by many local residents. Wild berry picking is a common fall activity.

### **C. Environmental Issues:**

**Climate:** Cordova has a primarily maritime climate with average daily temperatures ranging from 17-28 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter to 49-63 degrees in the summer. The average annual precipitation includes 66 inches of rain and 80 inches of snow. With Prince William Sound to the west, the Copper River Delta to the east, and mountains in between, Cordova experiences a wide variety of weather conditions. Often conditions at the airport at mile 13 are very different from the conditions in town.

**Environmental Sensitivity:** By far the largest impact on the area in recent years has been the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill of 1989. Many area scientists and fishermen believe that declining wild salmon stocks, and the disease discovered in the herring stocks in 1993 are direct results of the oil spill. The implementation of the Ship Escort Response Vessel System (SERVS) has been a positive step toward preventing future oil spills, but the many local residents feel that the threat continues to exist as long as oil tankers continue traversing Prince William Sound. Proposals to begin offshore oil exploration at Katalla, which is near Cordova, have met with much opposition from the commercial fishing industry.

### **D. Political Geography:**

Cordova was incorporated as a home rule city in 1909, and city operations are governed by a Mayor and six member City Council. Elections are held the first Tuesday in March, and the Council meets in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of each month. Cordova has a 6% year round sales tax. Property tax assessments are currently set at 13.25 mils in town and 10.74 mils in recently annexed areas. The City of Cordova provides water and sewer services as well as administration of harbor facilities, garbage collection and the operation of the municipal landfill. Other services include public safety, education, street maintenance including snow removal, as well as the operation of Cordova's museum, library, pool and recreation center.

### **E. Population and Labor Force:**

Most of the available population information is based on the 1990 census. According to that census, the 1990 population of Cordova was 2,110 with 1,149 of those being males, and 961 being females. The native population was 237 and the non-native population was 1,973. The median household income was \$46,304. The potential workforce, defined as those persons 16 years and older, was 1,569 in 1990. Unemployment in Cordova is 3.1%, or approximately 35 people, again, based on the 1990 census.

## **F. Economy**

Most of the private sector employment in Cordova comes from commercial fishing (464 residents hold commercial fishing permits), fish processing, logging, tourism, retail trade, and services. Most jobs connected with the fishing industry are seasonal. Local, state, and federal governments employ a significant portion of the workforce. The US Coast Guard Cutter, Sweetbrier, is stationed in Cordova as well as a rescue helicopter squad, for a total military representation of 86, and the USDA Forest Service Headquarters for the region are located in Cordova. A family of four will spend approximately \$120 on food for one week. Cordova has a variety of retail stores for the purchase of groceries and other supplies, although the high cost of shipping does figure prominently in the prices.

## **G. Infrastructure and Services:**

As of the 1990 census, there were 883 housing units in Cordova, with 320 being single family dwellings. In 1993 additional low income housing apartment units were constructed. Cordova uses four water sources and two of those are several miles from the existing filtration plant. Water storage capacity is 2.1 million gallons. The City operates a piped water and sewage system. Sewage is treated prior to discharge. Over 90% of homes are fully plumbed, and refuse collection services and a local landfill are available. Cordova Electric Cooperative operates two diesel power plants, Eyak and Orca, and the Humpback Creek Hydro facility. Most homes are heated with fuel oil, wood fired stoves or a combination of the two heat sources.

The City of Cordova owns and operates the local hospital which carries an acute care and long term care facility rating. It also has a medical clinic with three full time physicians. Emergency care and rescue/first aid services are provided by the Cordova Volunteer Fire Department/EMS Division.

Local telephone service is provided by Cordova Telephone Cooperative, and long distance service is available by AT&T/Alascom and GCI. Cellular Telephone service is provided by Copper Valley Cellular. Teleconferencing services are available through the Alaska Teleconferencing Network. Cordova is served by the ARCS television network and by Cordova Cablevision. The locally owned and operated radio station is KLAM-AM. Valdez Public Radio, KCHU-FM is broadcast via translator.

Cordova is in the Chugach School District. There are two schools in the Cordova City Limits. Mt. Eccles Elementary School serves approximately 306 students in grades K-6, and Cordova Junior/Senior High School serves about 198 students in grades 7-12. In outlying areas, Icy Bay school serves 5 students in grades 3-6, and Two Moon Bay Community School serves 5 students in grades 1-6. Many families in Cordova also choose to home-school their children.

## **H. Planning and Economic Development Activities:**

Cordova is currently involved in many development projects. Some of the larger ones include: The construction of Shepard Point Road; development of a new ferry staging area, and the development of an airport master plan. Recently completed projects include: Abandoned vehicle and scrap metal removal; a waterfront master plan; new paving of the Copper River Highway from the ferry terminal to 6½ mile, including installation of period lighting on Main Street; the renovation of Centennial Park playground; and the construction of an ADA sport fishing facility at Fleming Spit Recreation Area.

## II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS

### A. Introduction

The 1996/97 Cordova Economic Development Strategy for the City of Cordova is intended to serve as a guide to economic development efforts for the community. It will also, as it is updated and modified from year to year, serve as a record accomplishment in the areas of planned growth. Calendar year 1996 will be the starting point and base line for the CEDS planning process. It is understood that economic development planning is an ongoing effort and that, in some cases, the plan is simply a description of work that is already underway. Future years will see annual updates and the inclusion of comparative data. Economic development work will be evaluated in terms of goals and objectives established the previous year.

The CEDS process is focused on strengthening the existing economy and building local infrastructure by moving to the completion of planned work and identifying new opportunities for development. The CEDS is intended as guide to planning and development and is designed to be updated regularly. The plan focuses on business growth and development that is appropriate to the local culture, environment and to current economic conditions.

### B. Committee Membership

The Cordova Economic Development Strategy process based in the work of the Port and Commerce Development Advisory Board. The Committee to support long-range economic development for Cordova as assembled in October, 1994. The membership includes:

<u>Members</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Appointed</u>
Mr. Kim Ewers, Chairman PO Box 1324 Cordova, Alaska 99574 (907)-424-5344	Fishing	October, 1994
Mr. Dave O'Brien, Vice Chair PO Box 2056 Cordova, Alaska 99574 (907)-424-3246	Business	October, 1994
Ms. Sylvia Lange PO Box 135 Cordova, Alaska 99574 (907)-424-5920	Processing	October, 1994

Mr. Mike O'Leary PO Box 1052 Cordova, Alaska 99574 (907)-424-7758	Fishing	October, 1994
Mr. John Thomas PO Box 284 Cordova, Alaska 99574 (907)-424-7497	Fishing	October, 1994
Mr. Gary Graham PO Box 873 Cordova, Alaska 99574 (907)-424-3350	Business	October, 1994

### **C. Methodology**

The Cordova Economic Development Strategy process was organized in five phases. The planning process was designed to identify local resources, clarify development goals, generate objectives and produce a series of time-bound development "tasks" that will satisfy consensus community goals.

#### **Phase One**

Establish a local Oversight Committee that represents diverse local interests and which has the ability to insure that the planning process and final recommendations reflect a cross section of community priorities.

#### **Phase Two**

Collect and compile pertinent historic and factual information including geography, demography, natural and human resources, community development infrastructure including public services and general socio-economic conditions. From this data develop a "snapshot" of the local economy entitled "Cordova Area and Economy".

#### **Phase Three.**

1. Examine, organize and analyze, with the assistance of the local Advisory Committee, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and strengths (SWOT) inherent in the local economic system.
2. Conduct individual interviews with Advisory Committee members to establish historical perspective.
3. In two facilitated sessions with Advisory Committee, collect data for generation of economic development Objectives and Tasks.

#### **Phase Four**

In two facilitated sessions with the general public, review data generated in Phases Two and Three. Collect public comment with a focus on additional elements for action planning and viability of action items.

#### **Phase Five**

Determine objectives, strategies and tasks from data collected in facilitated sessions. List projects to be completed and break out those portions of action plan to be completed in one year time frame. Submit plan to committee for final review and present results to Cordova City Council.

To produce a workable action plan and bring it into action will require community input and sufficient political support to carry the plan forward. The Advisory Committee members were chosen to insure that all interested parties would have a voice. The overall project goals are broad-based community support for action items coupled with an action plan that will accomplish objectives.

### **D. Assumptions for Planning Process**

1. There is currently a high level of uncertainty in the Prince William Sound fishing industry and these uncertainties will have an effect on the Cordova economy.
2. There is an existing and growing tourist industry in Cordova that can be nurtured and channeled to create jobs and stimulate economic growth in a manner acceptable to the community of Cordova.
3. The City of Cordova can be an effective partner in economic development through planning, infrastructure development and revenue generation.

### **E. Criteria for Inclusion in Planning Process**

Action plan items must be:

1. Practical and feasible;
2. Able to be funded;
3. Able to generate sufficient political support to bring to completion;
4. Able to be accomplished in the short to middle term time frame or within 1 to 6 years.

### **III. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS**

#### **S.W.O.T. Analysis**

The Port and Commerce Development Advisory Board met on April 15, 1996 to conduct a strategic analysis of the forces affecting the Cordova economy. The first step in the process was to define the parameters of the Cordova economy in terms of place and economic components. The S.O.W.T. data included below is unedited. Given the complex nature of the Cordova economy and the rapid pace of economic change it is possible that an item will be included as both a strength and weakness or as an opportunity and a threat.

#### **A. Cordova Economy by Category of Employment (not ranked)**

1. Government Service
2. Commercial Fishing
3. Fish Processing
4. Retail Sales
5. Tourism
6. Construction
7. Forest Products
8. Service Industries
9. Transportation
10. Cottage Industries/Arts and Crafts

#### **B. Major Influencing Factors (not ranked)**

1. Regional Hospital
2. Regional Post Office
3. Hub for Prince William Sound
4. Only PWS community with direct jet service to Seattle
5. Regional Hatchery
6. Rich in history and culture

#### **C. Strengths**

1. Natural beauty and abundant wildlife
2. Sense of community spirit
3. Local talent and ability
4. Proximity to abundant natural resources: fish, timber, minerals
5. No road - you must have a purpose to visit town
6. Unique history and sense of history
7. Good climate
8. Potential access to deep water shipping

### **Strengths, cont.**

9. Jet airport
10. Excellent small boat harbor with ancillary services
11. Numerous opportunities for recreation
12. High tourism potential
13. Coast Guard - cutter and helicopter for search and rescue
14. Prince William Sound Science Center
15. Ethnic Diversity
16. Prince William Sound Aquaculture Association
17. High percentage of self-employed workers
18. Marine mammals/Sea Otters
19. Resurgence of Native Culture
20. Fleming Spit Project

### **D. Weaknesses**

1. High costs for energy and freight
2. High cost for doing business
3. Lack of political influence
4. Lack of common community vision
5. Lack of land for business development
6. Small population base
7. Weather
8. Geographical isolation
9. Lack of transportation infrastructure: Road, Ferry and Deep water port.
10. Lack of year-round employment opportunity
11. Seasonal economy
12. Lack of economic diversity
13. High reliance on uncertain economic resources
14. Transient population
15. Low percentage of resident land owners
16. High percentage of non-resident voters
17. Lack of access to offshore fishing quotas (CDQ's)
18. Lack of manufacturing industry
19. Lack of transient housing
20. Lack of adequate museum space
21. High percentage of self-employed workers
22. Poor intra-community communications
23. Lack of public participation in planning processes
24. Small tax base

## **E. Opportunities**

1. Tourism - Consumptive and non-consumptive
2. Fleming Spit Project
3. Cottage Industry/Arts and Crafts
4. Road access to Prince William Sound through Whittier
5. Value added industries: fishing, timber
6. Forest products industry
7. Niche marketing for fisheries products
8. Expanded tax base through borough creation
9. Hydroelectric power for utility cost stabilization
10. Prince William Sound Science Center
11. Prince William Sound Aquaculture
12. Improved electronic communications - Internet
13. High speed ferry
14. Improved public infrastructure
15. Privatization of government services
16. Marine services industry expansion: Marine travel lift, marine repair services
17. New High School
18. Deep water port

## **F. Threats**

1. Loss of jet service subsidy
2. Further loss of ferry service
3. Natural disasters
4. Man-made disasters
5. Technological disasters
6. Competition with other communities
7. Access to Prince William Sound from Whittier
8. Increased personal consumption of Copper River fish
9. Continued decline of fishing economy
10. Decline in state and federal funding for local programs
11. Lack of community cohesion and consensus
12. Declining position of community
13. Inability to find cheaper power
14. Loss of historical traditions - community culture
15. Loss of historical artifacts
16. Push to keep Cordova a "fishing only" community
17. High percentage of self employed people
18. Increased restrictive regulations
19. Aging public infrastructure
20. Lack of effective long term planning
21. No strategic vision

### **Threats, cont.**

22. Large non-resident, non-tax paying population
23. Large percentage of local property exempt from city taxes
24. Transfer of political and economic power to Anchorage
25. Non-resident landlords
26. Irresponsible /uncontrolled land use and timber harvest
27. Lack of socio-economic opportunity for young people
28. Sea Otters
29. Prince William Sound Aquaculture: financial difficulties, overproduction and competition with fishermen for resource
30. Yakutat Borough annexation
31. Loss of Community Hospital

### **G. Cordova's Vision for the Future - Cordova 2006**

- Cheap and affordable power
- Bike trail/walking path around waterfront w/some covered walkways
- Active and prosperous visitor industry
- Appropriate public buildings/improved infrastructure
- New High School
- Native Cultural Center
- New resort hotel
- Active and well funded small boat harbor
- Deep water port
- Adequate RV and tent camping
- Thriving arts and crafts industry
- Thriving lumber manufacturing industry
- Natural gas for heating and power generation
- Thriving fishing industry
- Eco-tourism
- Expanded and strengthened post-secondary education: Science Center and PWSCC
- Consortium library - College, public schools, Science Center
- 21<sup>st</sup> century communications
- New community recreation center
- Convention Center/Civic Center

## **IV. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

### **Objectives and Tasks**

#### **A. OBJECTIVE 1. - Provide cost effective electrical power for the community of Cordova.**

**Task 1** - Support ongoing efforts by City and Cordova Electric to secure additional hydroelectric generation capacity.

**Task 2** - Broaden and expand public awareness of local utility issues.

**Task 3** - Lobby for continuation of Power Cost Equalization program.

**Status** - City is actively seeking funding for Power Creek project. Information and updates will be provided to the public as available.

#### **B. OBJECTIVE 2. - Support, enhance and develop Cordova's tourist industry.**

**Task 1** - Create tourism-related capital infrastructure including:

- Copper River Bike Trail
- Campground at Fleming Spit
- Waterfront Pathway
- More Public Restrooms
- Covered stair from lower to upper downtown area
- Tourist/Bus parking downtown
- Native Cultural Center
- In-town bike trails
- Breakwater trail and picnic area
- Fleming spit project (in progress)
- Ski Hill camp site and new trails (in progress)
- Beautification of main street

**Task 2** - Provide political and/or economic support for agencies that foster tourism.

- Adequate public support for Forest Service recreation projects
- Sufficient funding for visitor's center and visitor services
- Needed support for the Prince William Sound Science Center

**Status** - Capital projects are prioritized in the annual work plan. The Advisory Committee and City Staff are lead for political support of local Forest Service and Science Center efforts. Possible City funding sources for visitors services will be reviewed September/October 1996.

**C. OBJECTIVE 3. - Improve transportation and transportation infrastructure.**

**Task 1 - Complete Deep Water Port facility for Cordova.**

- Complete Shepard Point Road
- Complete deep water dock at Shepard Point
- Research possible funding sources for deep water dock
- Provide adequate public education and political support for road and dock
- Poll community to sample potential users and determine use priorities

**Task 2 - Investigate feasibility of Marine travel lift for small boat harbor.**

- Finish material feasibility studies including soil work
- Poll potential user group to determine economic feasibility

**Task 3 - Improve marine transportation between Cordova and other PWS communities.**

- Lobby DOT for improved Alaska Marine Highway service
- Explore high-speed ferry
- Encourage private passenger transport

**Task 4 - Maintain and improve air transportation.**

- Maintain jet service to Seattle and Anchorage
- Work with carriers to improve service to other PWS communities

**Task 5 - Create and maintain enterprise fund for Cordova small boat harbor.**

**D. OBJECTIVE 4. - Generate additional revenue for infrastructure improvements and tourism information.**

**Task 1- Educate general public about City revenue issues.**

**Task 2 - Find additional sources of funding for economic development projects.**

- Personal property tax with real property tax adjustments for landowners
- User fees at small boat harbor including ramp fees
- Bed tax with exemption for long term seasonal housing
- Severance tax for natural resources
- Use tax
- Reduce or privatize existing city services

**E. OBJECTIVE 5. - Seek community consensus for development projects.**

**Task 1 - Improve public education and public information.**

- Better use of public media including radio, newspaper and City newsletter
- Hire part-time community information officer to facilitate information flow
- Annual meeting for with City Council for all Boards and Commissions

**Task 2 - Implement ongoing and effective community planning.**

- Interface Cordova Economic Development Strategy with Watershed Project
- Create annual work plan for development projects with timeline for completion
- Synthesize extant planning material
- Prioritize projects and integrate strategies

**F. ONGOING ISSUES**

- Shepard Point project - public opinion poll
- Marine Travel Lift - Survey of potential user group
- Investigate TRAAK funding for paths and trails
- Seek alternatives for transient camping
- Develop strategy for providing input to PWS Transportation Plan

## V. ASSESSMENT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### 1. NATURAL RESOURCES

A major factor in the area's natural resources arena, the Eyak Corporation was formed in 1973 according to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. The mission of the Corporation is to benefit the shareholders, maintain Native ownership and control of the corporation and land, and to preserve the Eyak culture and heritage. To achieve this goal the Eyak Corporation has been supporting opportunities to create economic growth, a diversified investment structure, and shareholder benefits. The corporation's primary business is the management of its 149,000 acre land holdings in the Cordova area. Timber has been the principle income producing resource. Six of the Corporation's eight employees are Native, and the Corporation has provided approximately \$12,000 in education and training scholarships over the past three years to native shareholders and descendants of native shareholders.

Eyak Corporation's subsidiary, Eyak Development Corporation, has operated the Prince William Marina for the past 20 years. The marina provides quality marine-based commercial services and storage. The marina currently creates jobs for two of Eyak Corporation's native shareholders.

Over the past 5 years, the Eyak Corporation has paid its 344 shareholders a total of \$6.3 million in dividends. In 1994, the Eyak Corporation sold approximately 2,052 acres of commercial timber at Orca Narrows to the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council to provide long term habitat protection for several species of wildlife for which significant injury resulting from the 1989 oil spill has been documented. The timber sale also served to foster the area's scenic value for recreation and tourism.

The Eyak Corporation concluded an agreement with the City of Cordova in 1995 to provide a grant of land to help meet the future needs of the community. Approximately 150 acres were set aside for watershed protection for Cordova's drinking water supply, 60 acres were committed for a landfill site, and three one acre sites were established to meet future public needs for site emergency infrastructure.

In 1996 the Eyak Corporation successfully conducted a 4 million board foot timber harvest on corporation land adjacent to Eyak Lake and Eyak River. The harvest was conducted by helicopter and on a selective basis within this watershed area to minimize impacts on viewsheds, fish and wildlife resources, and the Cordova community.

## 2. FISHERIES

The fishing industry in Prince William Sound has been hard hit by a collection of negative forces. Virtually every commercial fishery in Prince William Sound has been affected. Low salmon prices represent the largest and most immediate threat.

Since 1977, salmon hatcheries operated by Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation, including those constructed by PWSAC and the ones taken over from the State, have produced an ex-vessel catch value of approximately \$210,700,000. That number translates to a first whole sale value of approximately \$457,219,000.

PWSAC has obtained roughly \$30,000 in capital and operating loans since 1977 and has repaid through 1996 approximately \$6,690,000. Additionally, raw fish tax from hatchery fish amounts to another \$7.5 million. Thus, since 1977, the sale of hatchery fish has put about \$14 million directly into the State coffers.

Because of the low prices being paid for salmon, PWSAC has been fiscally strained. Drastic measures have been implemented to control expenditures. The Corporation has succeeded in developing a balanced operating budget for FY98, an outgrowth of the combined efforts of a new CEO, a new Finance Director, a recently promoted hatchery expert and the Executive and Finance Committees. New emphasis has been placed on Board and Management relations. With this unified approach, PWSAC's future looks brighter.

Cordova District Fishermen United is an organization founded in 1935 to preserve and perpetuate the fishing industry in Prince William Sound and to promote safety at sea. Some of their 1995 accomplishments include the stopping of Lease Sale 79 (proposed oil and gas exploration west of Cape Suckling), the implementation of the *One More Set for the Kids* program to support local school activities, and the acquisition of a herring research grant to buy state-of-the-art hydroacoustic equipment for use by ADF&G in herring and pollock surveying.

In 1996, CDFU successfully lobbied the governor into vetoing HB 158 (Tort Reform), and, in conjunction with UFA and Salmon for Alaska's Future, defeated the F.I.S.H. Initiative. CDFU worked with the U.S. Coast Guard and SERVS to alleviate traffic problems in the tanker lanes during seine season and lobbied the North Pacific Fisheries management Council to postpone the pollock B season for 2 weeks in order to extend the floating processors' stay in PWS for the seine season. The organization also initiated the first annual Senior Salmon Day where fresh Copper River salmon was given to local senior citizens and others unable to acquire fresh salmon of their own. In addition, CDFU coordinated the collection and distribution of 1,200 pounds of red salmon to the fire victims in Big Lake.

Ongoing projects for CDFU include the installation of channel markers from Point Whitshed to Egg Island, and management of the oil spill response program for Cordova (largest fleet of the 8 responding areas).

### 3. TOURISM

The Cordova Chamber of Commerce also serves as the visitor center for Cordova. Nearly all of the requests for information that are received in Cordova are answered by the Chamber staff and/or volunteers. Requests number in the thousands each year and range from a need for visitor or relocation information to school children trying to learn about different areas of the country. In recent years, the Chamber has made many efforts to increase the marketing of Cordova as a visitors destination. A video postcard was produced with a grant from the Forest Service, and a local artist designed the cover. The same artwork was used to create a poster and a postcard. The video has been distributed to many travel agencies and tour group operators in Alaska and in the lower 48.

Two of the major tourism events held in Cordova each year are the Iceworm Festival and the Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival. The Iceworm Festival is held the first weekend in February and features a parade, variety show, a survival suit race, a paper airplane contest, a log cutting contest, arts and crafts fairs and contests, numerous other events around town, and in 1996 the first annual fireworks display.

The Shorebird Festival centers around the annual migration of millions of shorebirds that pass through the Copper River Delta on their way to nesting grounds on the Yukon Delta. The festival features many guest speakers and workshop presenters, a children's birding education program, many field trips to view both shorebirds and other native waterfowl, and often, a highlight of the festival is the release of a rehabilitated bald eagle by the Bird Treatment and Learning Center out of Anchorage. The shorebird festival is held the first or second weekend in May and is coordinated in partnership by the Chamber of Commerce and the USDA Forest Service with help from the Prince William Sound Community College and the Prince William Sound Science Center. The festival usually fills all of Cordova's hotels and B&B's providing a boost to the economy, and many out of town guests have commented that Cordova's festival is the best event of its kind they've attended.

The Shepard Point Road and Dock project has the potential to improve tourism access to Cordova as well. The deep water port and dock will enable cruise ships to dock a mere six miles from town providing tour companies with a new Alaskan destination for their customers.

### 4. UTILITIES

Cordova Electric Co-op has recently signed a contract with White Water Engineering for the design phase of the power Creek Hydro-electric project. White Water has submitted the necessary applications and is anticipating approval in fall of 1997. The project has received a \$2 million grant from the Federal government and a \$1 million, zero interest loan from the State of Alaska. C.E.C. is also in the permitting phase for extension of service out Whitshed Rd., and they are anticipating approximately \$3 million in system improvements over the next few years.

Cordova Telephone Cooperative (CTC) has added many new services recently. Local internet access is now available through an agreement with Telephone Utilities of the Northland, Inc. and Telephone Utilities of Alaska, Inc. (d.b.a. PTI Communications). Subscribers can surf the net and maintain e-mail addresses by dialing a local phone number. Many telephone service features have been added to Cordova Telephone's repertoire including voice mail service, call forwarding, call waiting, and ring again. Caller ID and related features are scheduled to be available in late summer of 1997. Local high school students are enjoying the benefits of C.T.C.'s scholarship program, through which the Board of Directors has awarded scholarships to high school seniors each year. Recently the Board awarded a scholarship to a high school junior to attend the National Telephone Cooperation Association's Youth Tour in Washington DC.

Cellular phone service is provided by Copper Valley Cellular (C.V.C) of Valdez, AK. C.V.C has expanded operations greatly in the last two years and now provides blanket coverage for most of the Copper Valley and Prince William Sound. Large areas of Prince William Sound are now receiving service from strategically placed mountain top sites, and Cordova's range has been greatly improved by the addition of a transmitter on Heney Ridge.

The Prince William Sound fishing fleet should have access to cellular service from most of the fishing grounds in Prince William Sound, and many say the privacy obtained with cell service is preferable to using the marine operator. Roaming agreements are in place with cellular providers in the lower 48, and "home rate" roaming is available in Anchorage as well as many locations outside.

## **5. SMALL BUSINESS**

Prince William Sound Economic Development Council offers small business assistance to Cordova, Valdez, and Whittier along with Chenega Bay and Tatitlek. Services include coordination of small business workshops in the fall and winter and private counseling on small business issues. A wide variety of information can be found at the PWSEDC office, including many free brochures. A lending library of small business books is available as well as referrals to other business assistance organizations.

The Uptown Business Organization is a group of local merchants working together in the main business district. They currently have members on the Cordova City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the Port and Commerce Development Advisory Board. In recent years the UBO has facilitated and worked with a local business woman to provide flower baskets uptown seasonally, and they made AK DOT aware of the poor condition of the sidewalks uptown and those sidewalks are now on DOT's "to do" list. The UBO serves as a sounding board for uptown businesses that wish to do facelifts on their storefronts, and they provided input on the new light pole banners scheduled to be completed for summer of 1997. They collected funds and provided financial support for the Iceworm fireworks display and the UBO as a whole recently became a member of the Cordova Chamber of Commerce.

## 6. TRANSPORTATION

Improvements to the Copper River Highway began in 1995 and will continue through the summer of 1997. The highway from the Ferry Terminal to mile 6 was widened and repaved, a project that included the installation of period lighting along Main Street. The dikes at the 23 and 35 mile bridges were repaired and new road topping was placed and graded from mile 37 to the Million Dollar Bridge. Brushing was done along with the new road topping and more brushing and resurfacing work is scheduled in 1997 from miles 13 to 37.

The Alaska State Ferry System has been working on upgrades in Cordova since 1995. Terminal improvements scheduled for completion in 1997 include a new staging area and terminal building.

The Shepard Point Road and Dock facility has been an ongoing project for several years. Currently, the environmental feasibility report and the site suitability survey are complete. The Prince William Sound Science Center is working on an environmental investigation report which should be finished in November 1997. This would allow for the permitting process to begin in November or December, 1997 and construction could begin as early as summer of 1998. The Shepard Point Road and Dock will provide access to deep water allowing for the exportation of natural resources, improved oil spill response capability, and potential increases in tourism. The dock would be approximately 6 miles north of downtown Cordova.

## 7. EDUCATION

The 1996-97 school year has seen several changes at the Cordova School District with the introduction of technology going into full swing at both schools. BP Exploration and ARCO Alaska are in the process of donating 25 computers each to the district to enhance the computer technology programs. Some of these computers will be used with a teacher exploration center located at the elementary school. (The public will also be able to take advantage of this center.) BP is also providing funding for software and teacher training. An increase in grant submissions has occurred throughout the year, with emphasis on technology upgrades and school to work programs. Overall, the district has been very successful this year with grants and has brought in approximately \$150,000.

Several of Cordova's academic and athletic teams and individuals continue to rank high in their respective activity or sport. A new governance class has been added to the high school curriculum for the students who are representatives on the School Board and City Council. The Family Resource Center has been involved with the district through the purchase of dolls for the "Baby Think it Over" program, as well as involvement with the Natural Helpers program. Working with the local Forest Service, the district obtained a fresh water aquarium for the elementary school and a salt water aquarium for the Discovery Room located at the PWS Community College. A \$6,000 grant was also obtained with the help of the Forest Service for the Sea/River Week activities. Sea/River Week works primarily at

the elementary level doing field trips, workshops, and classroom presentations during the month of May.

The district is in the beginning process of setting up site councils for each building. This is a new and exciting concept for the district. The idea is to draw more people into involvement with the schools. There will also be a council set up at the district level. A management team consisting of administration and key personnel has already been organized and has been meeting weekly going over major areas of interest for the district. The Prince William Sound Community College has seen tremendous growth over the past four years, over 200%. Full time enrollment is the highest in the history of the college, and over 40,000 square mile of Prince William Sound is served. Recent accomplishments include the implementation of curriculum to assist Cordova High students in receiving college credits. Alyeska has contracted with PWS Community College for all their major safety and awareness training, a program which will be featured at the American Association of Community Colleges in spring 1997. In October of 1996 the college held the Symposium on Oil Spill Prevention and Readiness in partnership with SERVUS, and every year a nationally renowned theatre conference is hosted at the Valdez campus.

## **8. HEALTH CARE**

The most significant accomplishment in Cordova health care has been the integration of the medical clinic with the hospital. Previously two separate entities, the medical clinic and the hospital make up the Cordova Community Medical Center and services and billing procedures are now more streamlined. The medical center welcomed its first female physician to the staff in 1996 and some new equipment has been added to the facility as well, including a color sonogram machine. Although the Cordova Community Medical Center is owned and operated by the City of Cordova, it maintains its own budget and has moved away from the mentality of being a government facility to a strategy of public marketing. Great efforts have been made to attract long term care patients to Cordova. The Cordova Community Medical Center also operates the mental health clinic, Sound Alternatives; a respite care program for children with developmental disabilities; the child care assistance program which provides day care financial aid to qualifying parents who are working or going to school; a home health program; physical therapy. The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program; an infant learning program; and social services are housed at the Medical Center. There is also a Senior Grant Program which provides meals, both congregate and home delivery, to senior citizens along with transportation and other assistance to seniors including referral services.

## **9. RECREATION**

The Cordova Parks and Recreation Department has made many improvements and has many plans for the near future. All new playground equipment highlighted the renovation of Centennial Park behind the library. Skaters Cabin on Eyak Lake was renovated and is now available for use as a gathering place, for cookouts and camp-overs. The cabin has enjoyed such heavy use, it only had 3 vacant days in the summer of 1996. Barbecue pits

and stands were installed in parks around town in 1996, 23 trees were planted, and the exterior of the Bidarki Recreation Center received new siding. Plans for summer of 1997 include construction of a new softball complex that will feature 2 regulation size fields and a batting cage, completion of a tot park by the old ball field, and the planting of at least 23 more trees. Future plans call for a teen park for rollerblading and skateboarding activities, and long range planning for Odiak Pond next to the hospital. An area greatly enjoyed by the long term care patients, development plans include a boardwalk trail circling the pond and a weir to maintain a constant water level. There is hope that waterfowl such as geese and swans will nest on Odiak Pond providing wild life viewing opportunities for the community.

In a cooperative effort between the City of Cordova, the Cordova Sporting Club, the Prince William Sound Economic Development Council, and Alaska State Parks, the Fleming Spit Recreation Area was completed in 1996. Improvements included the installation of ADA fishing ramps and platforms, a restroom facility, and habitat improvements to the lagoon.

In the summer of 1997 a trail connecting the Mt. Eyak Ski Area with the Crater Lake trail system will be completed. This project was proposed by the Sheridan Ski Club, is being funded by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and is being managed by the Prince William Sound Economic Development Council.

## 10. RESEARCH

Founded in 1989 by scientists, fishermen, and other Cordova residents, the Prince William Sound (PWS) Science Center is an independent, community-based organization that collaborates with resource management agency and university scientists. The PWS Science Center leveraged a three year, \$300,000 grant for operations, received in 1992, from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, into a thriving research and education program with over 25 employees and an annual budget in excess of \$2 million. Since its establishment, the PWS Science Center has promoted a broad ecosystem approach for research conducted in the Prince William Sound region. This contrasts with many prior studies that tended to focus on a single species.

In 1993, the PWS Science Center's staff was instrumental in drafting the Sound Ecosystem Assessment (SEA) science plan. The SEA project, a multi-year, cooperative study by the PWS Science Center, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the University of Alaska/Fairbanks, has become a model for other restoration work funded by the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council. By focusing on the life cycles of pink salmon and herring (two commercially valuable species), the SEA researchers are gaining a broad understanding of the overall physical and biological processes at work in the PWS ecosystem. PWS Science Center staff and facilities grew considerably to accommodate the SEA research effort.

The Science Center facilities now house state-of-the-art computer technology, including a Geographic Information System for the Prince William Sound region; advanced

Visualization System software used to examine underwater three-dimensional images of the marine environment; sophisticated acoustical and oceanographic measurement instruments; and a field data communication network that relays data from remote sites to radio repeater towers and ultimately to the PWS Science Center. Facilities also include a laboratory and small bunkhouse. Another major accomplishment resulting from the SEA program was the purchase of the research vessel, the *Orca Challenger*.

The computer network based at the Center links the geographically distant researchers working on the SEA project and allows them to share their data and analysis through a secured page of the Internet. As analysis is complete and general data available, it is placed on the public web pages for the research project ([www.pwssc.gen.ak.us/sea/sea.html](http://www.pwssc.gen.ak.us/sea/sea.html)).

Other major accomplishments of the PWS Science Center in recent years include organizing and funding the Science of the Sound education program directed at elementary and home school students. The Outreach Program links students in Chenega Bay, Tatitlek, and Whittier to the education program through twice-yearly visits; and a summer science camp program, From the Forest to the Sea started in 1995.

Most recently, the PWS Science Center received funding to administer a federally established entity called the Oil Spill Recovery Institute (OSRI). Formed in the aftermath of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, the OSRI program is designed to improve prevention and response technologies for oil spills in the Arctic and Sub-arctic, and to conduct studies assessing the long range effects of such spills. In May 1997, a newly composed OSRI Advisory Board will hold a workshop and business meeting to determine direction for their research and education programs.

## VI. STATISTICS

### A. POPULATION: (Based on 1990 Census, Source: DCRA Community Database)

#### Population and Ethnicity:

Male Pop: 1,149	Caucasian: 1,678	Owns Housing: 426
Female Pop: 961	Indian: 53	Rents Housing: 347
	Eskimo: 22	Group Quarters: 80
Non-Native: 1,873	Aleut: 162	In Institutions: 13
Native Pop: 237	African-Amer.: 8	
% Native: 11.2%	Asian/Pacific: 170	
	Other Race: 17	

#### Historical Population:

1880 Pop: 0	1920 Pop: 955	1960 Pop: 1,128
1890 Pop: 0	1930 Pop: 980	1970 Pop: 1,164
1900 Pop: 0	1940 Pop: 938	1980 Pop: 1,897
1910 Pop: 1,152	1950 Pop: 1,165	1990 Pop: 2,110

### B. CLIMATE: (Source: National Weather Service, Cordova Office - Feb. '97)

<u>Precipitation</u>	<u>Temperature in F.</u>
Mean Annual            140.00"	January Mean High    30.1
Record Daily            7.4"	January Mean Low    13.4
Annual Snowfall        127.8"	July Mean High        60.6
Annual Rainfall        117.9"	July Mean Low        46.2
Mean Days w/Precip. 260	

- C. **GOVERNMENT SERVICES:** (Source: 1997 Cordova Telephone listing)
- | <u>State of Alaska</u>                           | <u>Federal</u>                |
|--|-------------------------------|
| AK Court System                                  | US Dept. of Agriculture       |
| AK Dept. of Education                            | Forest Service - Dist. Ranger |
| Marine Advisory Program                          | US Coast Guard                |
| AK Dept. of Env. Conservation                    | Federal Highway Admin.        |
| AK Dept. of Fish and Game                        | US Postal Service             |
| Legislative Affairs Office                       | US Dept. of Transportation    |
| AK Dept. of Public Safety                        | Federal Aviation Admin.       |
| Fish and Wildlife Protection                     | NOAA                          |
| Div. of Motor Vehicles                           |                               |
| AK Dept. of Social Services                      |                               |
| Div. of Family and Youth Services                |                               |
| AK Dept. of Transportation and Public Facilities |                               |
| Div. of Marine Transportation                    |                               |

D. **PUBLIC SCHOOLS:** (Source: Cordova Public Schools -1997)

<u>School</u>	<u>1996-1997 Enrollment</u>
Mt. Eccles Elementary	315
Cordova Jr./Sr. High	210
PWS Community College (Cordova Campus)	154 (Spring Semester)

**E. UTILITIES:** (Sources, Cordova Electric Cooperative, Cordova Telephone Cooperative, City of Cordova - 1997)



Electricity:      Supplier: Cordova Electric Cooperative

Rates:	Residential	Base Charge:	\$18.000/mo.
		1 <sup>st</sup> 300 KWH/mo.:	\$ .22688/KWH
		300+ KWH/mo.:	\$ .17688/KWH
	General Services	Base Charge:	\$20.00/m.o
		1 <sup>st</sup> 300 KWH/mo.:	\$ .20688/KWH
		300+ KWH/mo.:	\$ .17688/KWH
	Boat Harbor:	Base Charge:	\$ 5.00/mo.
		All KWH/mo.:	\$ .23688/KWH
	Large Power: (non-cannery)	Base Charge:	\$50.00/mo.
		Demand Charge:	\$ 7.00/KWH
		1 <sup>st</sup> 5000 KWH/mo.	\$ .17688/KWH
		2 <sup>nd</sup> 20,000KWH/mo.	\$ .15688/KWH
		25,000+KWH/mo.	\$ .13688/KWH
	Winter Seafood: (Oct.1-March 31)	Base Charge:	\$100.00/mo.
		Demand Charge	\$ 7.00/mo.
		1 <sup>st</sup> 20,000 KWH/mo.	\$ .1475/KWH
		2 <sup>nd</sup> 20,000 KWH/mo.	\$ .13/KWH
		40,000+ KWH/mo.	Per tariff formula
	Canneries:	Base Charge:	\$100.00/mo.
		Demand Charge:	\$ 7.00/KWH
		1 <sup>st</sup> 20,000 KWH/mo.	\$ .1475/KWH
		2 <sup>nd</sup> 20,000 KWH/mo.	\$ .13/KWH
		40,000+ KWH/mo.	\$ .12/KWH



Telephone:      Supplier: Cordova Telephone Co-op, Inc.

Rates:	Residential	Single Party Line	\$16.42/mo.
	Commercial	Single line	\$25.14/mo.
		2 or more lines, ea.	\$28.00/mo.





Water: Supplier: City of Cordova

Rates:	Residential	Per Unit	\$23.00/mo.
	Commercial	N/A	
	Size of Mains	6-14 inches	
	Source	2 catchment, 1 reservoir, 1 falls, 1 lake (emergency use only)	
	Consumption	1.2 million gallons daily average	
	Capacity	3.5 million gallons/day	
	Treatment	Gas Chlorine (minimum amount required)	



Sewer: Supplier: City of Cordova

Rates:	Residential:	Per Unit	\$27.60/mo.
	Capacity:	1 million gallons/day	
	Treatment:	Aeration	



Refuse:Supplier: City of Cordova

Rates:	Residential:	33.70/mo.
	Commercial:	33.70/mo.
	Disposal:	Sanitary Landfill



**F. COST OF LIVING:** (Source: Alaska Cooperative Extension Publication, December, 1996)

**Cost of Food per Week:**

<u>Families</u>	<u>Cordova</u>	<u>U.S. Averages</u>
Family of 2 (20-50yrs)	83.30	70.40
Family of 2 (51 & older)	80.02	67.70
Family of 4 (children 1-5yrs)	120.37	101.70
Family of 4 (children 6-11yrs)	141.72	119.80

Individual Females

12-19 yrs.	34.13	28.90
20-50 yrs.	35.35	29.90
51 & older	34.26	29.00

Individual Males

12-14 yrs.	39.64	33.50
15-19 yrs.	40.87	34.50
20-50 yrs.	40.38	34.10
50 & older	38.49	32.50

**Household Expenses:**

	<u>Cordova Residence</u>
Electric (1000 KWH)	191.88
Electric, paid by State	57.12
Heating Oil (55 gallons)	90.20
Gasoline, Unleaded (55 gallons)	102.85

**Housing:** (Source: local realtor survey - February, 1997)

Rentals:

Apartments (most include heat, but not other utilities):

1 bedroom	\$450 - 500/mo.
2 bedroom	\$600-650/mo.
3 bedroom	\$750 +/-mo.

Houses:

1-2 bedroom	\$750-850/mo.
3 bedroom	\$900+/-mo.

House Sales:

1-2 bedroom	\$110,000.00 +
3+ bedroom	\$150,000.00 +

**G. HEALTH CARE:** (Source: Administrator, CCMC - February 1997)

<b>Hospital:</b>	Cordova Community Medical Center Owner/Operator: City of Cordova 13 beds
<b>Clinic:</b>	Cordova Medical Clinic - 3 physicians Owner/Operator: Cordova Community Medical Center
<b>Long Term Care:</b>	Cordova Community Medical Center 10 beds
<b>Alternate Care:</b>	Cordova Volunteer Fire Dept./EMS
<b>Dental:</b>	1 Private Dentist
<b>Chiropractic:</b>	1 Private Chiropractor
<b>Mental Health:</b>	Sound Alternatives - Cordova Community Medical Center
<b>Suicide Prevention:</b>	Sound Alternatives - Cordova Community Medical Center
<b>Substance Abuse:</b>	Sound Alternatives - Cordova Community Medical Center
<b>Shelters/Domestic Violence:</b>	Cordova Family Resource Center

**H. HOTELS / RESTAURANTS:** (Source: local survey - February 1997)

<b>Hotels:</b>	4
<b>Alternate Lodging:</b> (B&B's, Cannery bunkhouses)	13
<b>Total Rooms:</b>	115
<b>Restaurants:</b>	6 year round 4 seasonal

**I. OUTDOOR RECREATION:** (Source: local survey - 1997)

**Summer:** rollerblading, biking, walking, softball, sport fishing, boating, camping, hunting, hiking, shooting range.

**Winter:** snow machining, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, winter fishing, hunting, shooting range.

**J. TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE:** (Source: City of Cordova - 1997)

**Highways:** Copper River Highway - Starts at the Ferry Terminal and ends at the Million Dollar Bridge at 52 mile. Provides access to the Copper River Delta and the Cordova Airport at 13 mile. Does not connect with any other State road or highway.

**Port:** State Ferry provides transportation to Whittier and Valdez in the Summer, Valdez only in the winter. Year round barge service is available.

**Harbor:**

840 slips, up to 100'	
Boat Lift Crane:	40-45 tons
New Tidal Grid:	250 tons
Old Tidal Grid:	50' or less
Municipal Dock:	408', -23' mllw
City Dock(Coast Guard):	300', -20' mllw
N. Containment (T-Dock):	213', -20' mllw
Rates: Annual:	\$18.77 per ft, per year
Monthly:	\$ 6.56 per ft, per month
Daily:	\$ .29 per ft, per day

**Airport:** State operated, 7,400' runway. Daily jet service and air taxis are available. State owned Cordova Municipal airport at Eyak lake serves small planes. Float planes can also land at the harbor.

**K. COMMUNICATIONS:** (Source: DCRA Community Database - March, 1996)

**In-State Phones:** Cordova Telephone Co-op  
**Long Distance:** AT&T/Alascom; G.C.I.  
**Cellular Phone:** Copper Valley Cellular  
**TV Stations:** ARCS Programming  
**Cable Provider:** Cordova Cablevision  
**Radio Stations:** KLAM-AM; KCHU-FM (via translator)  
**Teleconferencing:** Alaska Teleconferencing Network; Legislative Teleconferencing Network

**L. OTHER LOCAL SERVICES:** (Source: local survey - 1997)

**Police:** City  
**Fire/Rescue:** City; Civil Air Patrol  
**Court:** State of Alaska  
**Youth Center:** Bidarki Recreation Center  
**Senior Services:** Senior Grant Program operated by Hospital  
**Gym/Pool:** Bob Korn Memorial Pool  
**Bingo:** Elks and Moose lodges  
**Movie Theaters:** None  
**Museum:** City Museum  
**Library:** City Library  
**Post Office:** 2140 boxes  
**Visitors Center:** Cordova Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center