

TO: Wasilla 2045 Steering Committee
FROM: Karlie Lamothe, AICP
DATE: December 29, 2025
SUBJECT: Meeting 5: Wrapping up 2025

The Wasilla 2045 Steering Committee launched in October of 2025 and has held four meetings covering a variety of topics related to the 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update. This memorandum provides a brief overview of each meeting held in 2025 and identify key themes and feedback received at each meeting which is expected to inform the project moving forward.

Based on the discussions at the Steering Committee meetings, this summary proposes objectives in each section that the Committee will further define with action items.

Meeting 1- Introduction and Overview

This meeting kicked off the Wasilla Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The meeting covered the comprehensive plan process, introduced existing plans and policies which will be revisited during the project, and outlined the roles and responsibilities of steering committee members. The committee completed a visioning exercise at the meeting which eventually led to the formulation of the Wasilla 2045 Comprehensive Plan vision statement:

“Wasilla is a family-centered community that leads Alaska in responsible, innovative growth while preserving small-town values, supporting local opportunity, and enhancing quality of life.”

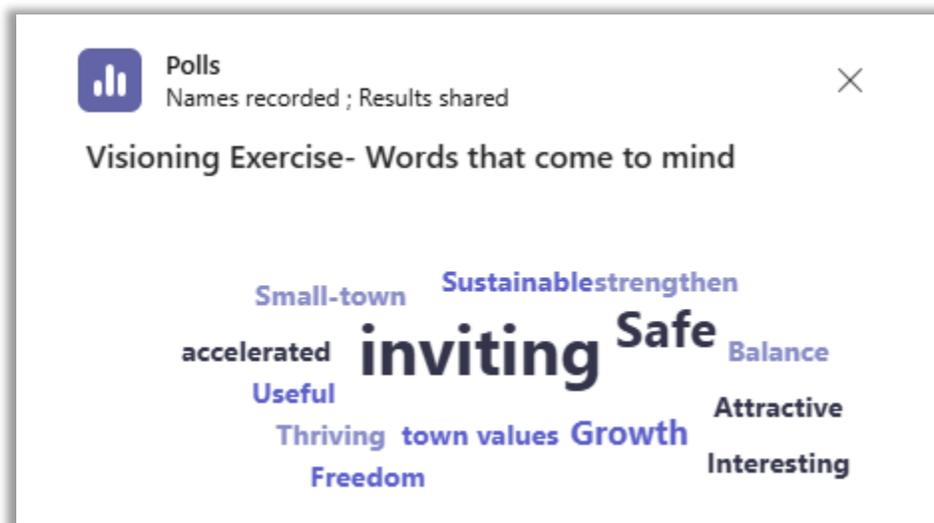


Figure 1 Visioning Exercise Word Cloud

Meeting 2- Public Facilities

This meeting centered around public facilities. Background information including portions of the 2011 Wasilla Comprehensive Plan and the 2023 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) were reviewed prior to the meeting to inform discussion. Committee members also participated in a survey on public facilities concerns and gaps, and a review of the previous action items.

Committee members reviewed and discussed existing goals and policies of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan. Focus was placed on Goal 2 which emphasizes enhancing educational opportunities. The Committee affirmed that the goal was still valid but suggested refinement to better clarify the desired outcome of the goal. Specific guidance included:

- Further develop skilled workforce
- Engage citizens in what the City is doing

Committee members responded that goals identified in the CEDS are applicable but also required revisions to better-establish actionable outcomes. Specific feedback included:

- Clarifying Wasilla's ability to provide and maintain essential functions during disasters
- Better define food insecurity and identify gaps in local food banks

Objectives for Public Facilities:

1. Ensure Wasilla Municipal Code (WMC) Title 16, Land Development Code, supports workforce development (vocational/trade schools)
2. Ensure WMC permits multi-family housing and mixed-use developments that may include space for training or learning facilities, in addition to commercial mixed-use
3. Support workforce training programs that support local and regional needs
4. Education campaign-Encourage civic participation in city planning, advisory boards, and youth education initiatives
5. Improve and expand City water and sewer capacity
6. City-sponsored campaign for education of residents on hazard mitigation planning and emergency preparedness

Meeting 3- Transportation

Mat-Su Valley Planning for Transportation (MVP), a newly created metropolitan planning organization (MPO), provided an introduction on the who, what, and why of MPO's. The main function of an MPO is to coordinate transportation planning across the region to ensure federal transportation funding is allocated fairly for long-term transportation priorities. MPO's ensure that the Alaska Department of Transportation (DOT) is working with the community to implement plans and allocate funding.

The 2045 Comprehensive Plan can recommend specific transportation related projects, upgrades, and elements of long-range transportation plans. Having projects identified in the Comprehensive Plan will provide more support to the MPO for funding.

During this meeting, Committee members discussed the Parks Highway Bypass Plan, noting the economic impact it could have on Wasilla. Members also discussed support for a commuter rail and the positive impact it could have on the community including the ability to attract new residents, but not the cost-restriction aspects as a feasibility issue. They also acknowledged the need for City support to advance the idea.

Objectives for Transportation:

1. Update the Wasilla Official Streets and Highways Plan (OS&HP)
2. Conduct an Access Management Plan
 - a. Address concerns with continuous turn lanes
 - b. Limit access points onto higher-classification roadways (specifically highways)
 - c. Promote right-in/right-out turns
3. Improve coordination with the Mat-Su Borough on driveway permits
4. Promote commuter transit development
5. Find cost-effective solutions for traffic flow through the City of Wasilla
6. Coordination with MVP MPO

Meeting 4- Economic Development

This meeting was held in-person and was focused on the 2023 CEDS, and how economic development and related policies affect all elements of the comprehensive plan.

During this meeting, Committee members were asked to rank goals and action items from the CEDS based upon what they saw as the highest priority for the community.

The highest-ranked goals of the CEDS are as follows:

1. Build an attractive Main Street District (CEDS Goal C.1)
2. Upgrade water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure (Goal A.1)
3. Attract new industries (Goal B.1)

The highest-ranked action items of the CEDS are as follows:

1. Attract new product manufacturing and assembly plants (CEDS Action B.1)
2. Promote training programs to meet expected workforce needs (Action B.2.b)
3. Promote hotel and accommodation development (Action B.3.b)
4. Conduct a walkability, connectivity, traffic, and parking study (Action C.1.a)

Objectives for Economic Development:

1. Update the Wasilla Official Streets and Highways Plan
2. Designate Wasilla as an Age-Friendly Community through AARP
3. Update WCM Title 16 to include new uses that are not currently listed, such as data centers
4. Create a continuous working group for Downtown master planning/redevelopment plan
5. Review permitted uses that may impede annexation opportunities
6. Define and build an attractive Main Street

Meeting 4 concluded with a brief introduction on land use, which will be covered in future steering committee meetings. The Committee discussed the difference between zoning (specific and legally-binding, current regulations and code-specific regulations) and land use (broad, long-term vision, future focus on how land should be developed).

Committee members were also asked to access an interactive map application to review the City's zoning map and current development patterns and to provide site specific comments about existing conditions, challenges and opportunities. This is an on-going task that will help inform the future land use plan map update.

Objectives for the Land Use element will be identified in subsequent meetings.