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Planning Issues for Development of the Fisheries Industry in Valdez, Alaska

Support of the commercial fishing industry depends on a web of interrelated support infrastructure and business interests. A port with adequate haulout facilities and no related support businesses will attract little interest from vessel operators. The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) describes this web concept as a community fishery center (CFC) where related businesses eventually become a force greater than the sum of their individual enterprises. M. Yami writes in *Community Fishery Centres: Guidelines for Establishment and Operations* that:

“A CFC is more than just an assembly of stores and workshops. A CFC becomes the focus of the fishing life in the village. It is where the fishermen meet for a chat and a drink, where they can negotiate a loan with the bank or credit-scheme functionary...can get advice from the extensionist (*our UAF Sea Grant Program in Alaska*), congregate and organize into groups and associations, through which they may meet and negotiate prices and deliveries with the fish dealers and more...”

Not every component of a CFC can be developed simultaneously, but planning should be in place to account for all of the components required for successful fishing community. The basis of the harbor’s presentation of the *Valdez Marine Center Concept* to the Valdez City Council last year was to address the necessary planning that should be considered as part of the upland development associated with our harbor expansion project. The overarching goal for Valdez should be to ensure all of the required components work towards making our community a economically successful marine center in the greater Prince William Sound region. A quote from *A Comprehensive Vision for Valdez Harbor Expansion and Marine Related Development – The Valdez Marine Center* – reinforces this idea:

“Studies and concepts too often focus on single projects with singular benefits. Valdez has many rich resources that need to be brought into concert with future development. There are seldom functions or activities occurring within the community that are not in some part dependent on another enterprise or activity. A boatlift, for example, may not be a profitable enterprise in itself. However, the economic activity generated by repairs, storage and other maintenance functions would provide a much greater economic benefit to the community than that reflected in the cost of the boat lift.”

I would like to see the Fisheries Development Taskforce address two broad issues. The first is to address the future needs of the community and identify required components needed for a

successful marine center to exist in Valdez. Required components of a marine center can be grouped into several functional areas like vessel maintenance or community resources. The task force should review these functional areas and related components included in this paper for completeness and identify areas where we need improvement or establishment of a listed service. Land use planning for the uplands associated with the harbor expansion project and these components is vital to our success. The second area of concern for the taskforce should be to consider the projects currently approved and funded by the State of Alaska. Issues that need to be addressed include equipment location, operational concerns, capacity, portability, durability, and facility policy and procedures. A review of the current approved projects, the 2005 grant request and ideas for future projects that could be developed in the port or harbor are also included in this paper.

Required Components of a Marine Center (CFC)

Vessel Maintenance

- Machine shop
- Metal work and welding (fixed and portable)
- Hydraulic repairs
- Canvas work
- Electrical repair/installation
- Marine surveyors
- Safety equipment certification (life rafts, EPRIB, etc.)
- Certification society representatives (Lloyd's Register, ABS, Bureau Veritas, etc.)

Vessel Supplies

- Ships stores/chandlery
- Fuel, bunkers and lubes
- Groceries/food
- Ice and water

Fish Markets

- Fish brokers
- Fish auctions

- Branding of Valdez products

Fish Handling/Quality

- Cold storage facility
- Ice plant/ice storage
- Fish handling equipment (fish pump)
- Transportation for fresh and frozen products
- Hoists

Fish Processing

- Smokeries
- Canneries
- Value added filet or pouch products
- Self-marketing by fishermen
- Fish meal production
- Surimi
- Roe

Upland Infrastructure

- Vessel maintenance pads
- Net lofts
- Net repair racks
- Boat yard
- Used oil and bilgewater disposal
- Dry vessel storage
- Outside gear storage

Moorage

- Protected moorage
- Transient moorage and staging space

Community Services

- Education/training

- Crane safety
- Value added fish processing
- Marine and biological science
- Vocational education
- Hazardous materials
- Business practices
- Hospital/emergency services
- Fire and police protection
- Showers, laundry, restrooms
- Pharmacy
- Restaurants and bars
- Meeting places
- Resource agency support from ADF&G and USF&WS
- Regulatory agency support from ADEC, NMFS and USCG
- Environmental response businesses like Alaska Chadux or SERVS

2004 Approved Fisheries Development Projects

Larger Dock Crane – The City of Valdez built an open cell sheetpile dock designed to support commercial fishing vessel operations in 1987. A larger, more dependable crane is needed for the dock. Dock cranes are used in the harbor to move product, gear, supplies and equipment. A dependable crane is vital to the efficient operational support of the fishing fleet. This project proposes a 15,000-pound all radius capacity crane, with a twenty foot boom, designed for our northern maritime environment. The crane would feature remote access controls, safety lighting and an overload alarm/cutoff. A quote for a suitable crane was obtained from Hydra Pro for \$63,000.

Ice Plant – Rapid cooling is a key strategy for improvement of seafood quality. There is demand in Valdez for an ice plant and storage facility that could generate 25 tons of flake ice per day. The proposed project meets the needs of the community by producing a high-quality flake ice that may be loaded directly from the Fishermen’s Dock. Major components of this project include a model 40 carbon steel icemaker (\$44,655), container mounted ice rake (\$92,295), control panel

(\$10,825) and screw conveying system (\$8,000). A complete system designed by North Star Ice Equipment Inc. would cost about \$170,000 installed in Valdez.

Fish Pump – A fish pump would greatly improve the number of fish that could be delivered over the dock and would help improve product quality by reducing the handling of fish in totes and by hand. The proposed project would be able to handle up to 80 tons of fish per hour. The major components include a wet pump tank, vacuum blower, electrical motor with/controls, hoses and a dewatering box. Complete specifications are included in the appendix of this application. Ryco has an excellent reputation in the industry for equipment quality and dependability. There are fish pumps in use on the grounds that are more than 20 years old. The pump can be skid-mounted on-shore or placed on a small barge. The quote from Ryco Equipment for an adequate system was \$43,000.

2005 Fisheries Development Project Request

Extension of bulkhead float – Space is available in Northwest corner of the harbor to install an extension of the bulkhead floating dock. The current dock consists of salvaged materials and is inadequate for commercial fishing vessel demands. The project proposes to replace existing floating docks and add approximately 200 more feet of moorage. Construction would be of heavy timber with a 10' width. Seiners use this area extensively during the Summer Pink Salmon season and the float would greatly improve both moorage capacity and efficiency of vessel movements. The engineering cost estimate for the project including design and contract administration is \$231,000 and the City has a standard design for this type of float in use, so there will be minimal delay in project design. The project could be designed, bid and installed easily in one season.

Ideas for Fisheries Development Grants

(*Reference: VMP – Valdez Small Boat Harbor Master Plan)

Valdez Marine Center Land Use Master Plan – VMP 5.2.2 & VMP 5.4 The marine center concept envisions marine support businesses and industries as the primary tenants of uplands at the new harbor. Proper planning of land use for this valuable real estate would insure the best use of our limited uplands and provide the right mix of businesses needed to support and grow our fishing fleet. Proper placement of an industrial fueling facility, boat lift dock, launch

ramp, and cargo bulkhead is important and infrastructure development will further support growth of the fishing industry.

Commercial Fishermen's Sales Area There have been numerous discussions of developing an area to allow sales of fresh fish by commercial fishermen or local processors. This may work in concert with the effort by the VFDA in their fisheries incubator project. Fishermen's Terminal in Seattle provides an area of bulkhead moorage where fish sales can occur on a daily rental basis. Dave Cobb has been advocating development of an area across from the harbor to support fresh fish sales. The final form this idea might take will better determine cost estimates.

150 Ton Travelift and Dock - VMP 5.2.1 A larger travelift has been identified in the master plan as key component of the marine center operation. Improved capacity would benefit larger commercial fishing vessel operations and provide improved support for the fleet. A grant could be applied to either a dock or the equipment. The dock is likely more expensive than the lift.

Cold Storage Facility – VMP 5.1.5 Improved cold storage capacity would bolster the commercial fishing industry in Valdez and would be a good fit with the current ice plant project. VFDA may be interested in this project as well.

Gear/Net Float at Tour Dock Bulkhead – VMP 2.2.1 Modify our proposal to install a new extended float at the Tour Dock Bulkhead by doubling its width and adding net mending racks. The project would provide much needed space for repair of fishing gear and would allow more fishing vessels access to the harbor during the season.