

City of Seward

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Introduction

"I came, I saw, I liked, I stayed."

Historic Preservation Commissioner and thirty year resident, Dan Seavey

The town of Seward, through its landscape, setting, historic architecture, central downtown district and transportation ties, conveys a strong "sense of place" to those who visit and who reside there. A spectacular natural setting and planned community layout, set it apart from other Alaskan communities.

Seward's role in the history and development of Alaska is significant. Unlike many communities triggered by a single purpose, Seward's setting on Resurrection Bay has attracted settlement through all periods of Alaska history: prehistoric, Russian, miners and trappers, gold rush, railroad, territorial days, and World War II. Vestiges of all these periods of history remain today. History is not quiet here; it speaks from remnant pilings along the beach, the Iditarod Trail, a railroad depot, the Lowell Canyon diversion tunnel, a Quonset hut. These and other places and structures are our link to the past; part of the quality of life which brings us here. There is no way to "freeze frame" the historical character of Seward into any one of these periods. They are all part of what Seward is and was, the town "character" many find difficult to describe, but hold dear.

Purpose of the Plan

According to the 1990 Seward Comprehensive Plan, when asked what they liked most about Seward, residents singled out the people, Seward's natural beauty and small town nature. Through a local historic preservation plan, the community intends to identify, maintain, protect and enhance its cultural, historic, social, economic, architectural, archaeological and scenic heritage.

The Seward Historic Preservation Plan focuses on the historic and cultural resources unique to the community and suggests ways to integrate these resources into current and projected growth patterns. The plan identifies sites, buildings and structures residents consider essential to the identity of their community and "sense of place." It is intended to provide resource material and guidance to the Seward Historic Preservation Commission (SHPC) and the City's Community Development Department in developing annual and long range work plans and taking on new projects. Upon approval by the Seward Historic Preservation Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission and the Seward City Council, the final plan will be included as an addendum to the Seward Comprehensive Plan, adding preservation goals and considerations to city-wide planning efforts.

Many local historic resources have been lost throughout the years and present economic opportunities may put others at risk. An effort must be made by all governmental bodies and the private sector to prevent the gradual loss of these resources. The adoption of a preservation plan guarantees that historic resources will be incorporated into future development and land use

planning.

This plan is designed to help inform, guide and focus community efforts to preserve historic resources by providing the local historic commission with a tool to formulate future recommendations and actions. The plan is not designed to respond to any particular project, past, present or future but rather promote historic and cultural resources as valid and necessary planning concerns.

Method

This plan was developed through three public work sessions with the Seward Historic Preservation Commission, a community survey, interviews, a town meeting and research material gathered from July through December 1995. Every effort was made to reflect the concerns and wishes of the community.

Community surveys were circulated and collected in the community over a 15 week period (mid-August to mid-November). Modeled after the statewide historic preservation questionnaire, contractors worked with the local Historic Preservation Commission to customize the survey to meet community needs. The type of format (75% essay) required 20-30 minutes to complete and most certainly affected response rate. Over 200 were distributed with a return of 50. Although troublesome to complete and difficult to tabulate, the survey succeeded in bringing out more than superficial responses on issues of historic preservation in Seward and should prove helpful to the local commission in assessing community sentiments and concerns. A summary of survey responses is located in Appendix C.

On November 15, 1995, the Commission hosted a town meeting at the historic Railroad Depot building. The Depot, a recent focus of preservation concerns since being vacated by the Alaska Marine Highway in the summer of '95, provided an inspiring and realistic setting in which to discuss community concerns regarding local historic preservation. Thirty-six people attended, reflecting a variety of backgrounds, businesses and concerns. The meeting served not only to obtain information, but to increase community awareness of the preservation plan process, the Commission and historic preservation in general.

The meeting was facilitated by one of the contractors, and notes were taken by both city staff and the contractors. The recorded information was used to augment the community survey to identify Seward's historical assets, threatened sites and the best means to preserve historic properties. The meeting agenda is found in Appendix D and meeting notes are on file with the Community Development Department.

Goals for Historic Preservation

Based on the above process, the following goals are set forth to identify, maintain, protect and enhance Seward's cultural, historic, and scenic heritage:

Maintain the historic character of Seward while encouraging its development as a commercial, cultural, and tourist center.

Ally historic preservation and economic development in Seward through the promotion of heritage tourism and adaptive re-use of historic buildings and structures.

Identify and preserve the diverse aspects of Seward's history: buildings, sites, structures, trails, landscapes, archives, transportation facilities, downtown district, and artifacts.

Integrate historic preservation into Seward's city planning process to insure preservation decision making becomes routine in local land use planning.

Encourage community understanding and appreciation of Seward history.

Community History and Character

Geography

➡ Seward's destiny as an ice free port and the hub of commerce and transportation began as long as two million years ago with the advent of the Pleistocene Epoch.

The Seward side of the Kenai Peninsula provides some of the best evidence of Pleistocene glacial activity. Most of the valleys are U-Shaped with steep sides and a broad flat bottom. River cut valleys tend to be V-shaped. The valley in which Seward is situated was formed by a main valley glacier.

From several miles north of its head to the mouth of Resurrection Bay, a river of ice hundreds of feet thick flowed south. To get an idea of how far it filled this valley, note the terrace it formed halfway up the side of Mount Marathon. Then look across the valley and pick out the highest peak, Mount Alice the U-shaped valley just below Mount Alice is hanging above the main valley floor. The base of the ice was not at today's shoreline. Judging from the soundings in Resurrection Bay, the ice scored up to 900 feet below current sea level.---All the ground you walk on in the Seward area has in some way been shaped by glacial activity. (Testarmata)

Viewed from across Resurrection Bay or from the air it is easy to see the alluvial fan caused by the abrupt change in gradient of a loaded stream which once flowed out of what is now known as Lowell Canyon and the flood plain and delta at the mouth of Resurrection River. Though it looks to be barren soil, in fact this age old alluvial fan was once densely covered with coniferous forest. (Ross)

Early Native Influence

➡ Legend and history confirm that humans used this area for many centuries. In prehistoric and early historic times, the bays around Seward sheltered *Unixkugmiut settlements*. (Barry). Nearly all of these settlements were abandoned by the 1880 census, although a village called Yalik, in Yalik Bay south of Seward was inhabited by 32 people in 1880. It was abandoned by the 1890 census. (Barry) Several significant indigenous camps or settlements survive along the coast. In 1993 archeological surveys in Kenai Fjords National Park reconfirmed the presence of these and uncovered several new sites used by both prehistoric and early historic man. (Kenai Fjords National Park)

Explorations and Settlement

➡ Unlike other countries who came north largely to chart and explore the vast new territory, the *Russians* came to Alaska to explore and to establish firm claim to the land by building permanent settlements. Grigor Shelikhov, a Siberian merchant, built the first Russian settlement on Kodiak in 1784. Shelikhov hired Alexander Baranov and in 1792 ordered the building of ships in the new colony. Baranov entered the inlet he chose for the shipbuilding site on Easter Sunday, 1793 and named it "Voskresenskaya Gavan," - Resurrection Bay. Storehouses, living quarters, and a palisade were constructed somewhere in the Bay area. The *PHOENIX*, the first Russian ship built in what was to become America, was launched in August, 1794. (Barry I: 17-19) No confirmed artifacts from this historic shipbuilding site in Resurrection Bay have been found to date.

➡ Captains Portlock and Dixon, of the *British Royal Navy*, charted portions of Prince William Sound in 1786 and 1787. Portlock's chart gave the name "Port Andrews" to the site now known as Resurrection Bay. (Barry I: 15)

➡ A small party of the *United States Geological Society* (USGS) which was exploring Alaska from Cook Inlet northward to discover a route from tidewater to the Tanana River, landed at Resurrection Bay on May 30, 1898. It was lead by Lt. H.G. Learnard. Also in the party were Mr. Bagg and Walter C. Mendenhall of the USGS. One of the routes to the Turnagain Arm gold fields at Sunrise and Hope, founded in 1895, began at the head of Resurrection Bay.

Several results of this 1898-1899 exploration were significant for Seward's future. This party mapped the trail from Resurrection Bay to Turnagain Arm and the Crow Creek to Eagle River route. The reports influenced the development of the railroad route from Resurrection Bay to the head of Turnagain Arm and along the north side of the Arm, and also lead to the establishment of the Iditarod dog team trail.

The official reports also mention the agricultural possibilities of the Matanuska Valley and the extensive and valuable Matanuska coal fields. These findings, together with the mining activities at Hope and Sunrise encouraged promoter John Ballaine to organize the first railroad out of Seward. (Barry 1986)

➡ Although the founding of Seward is dated from the August 28, 1903 landing party headed by the Ballaine brothers, the founders of the Alaska Central Railway, there were *early settlers* prior to 1903. Mail and supplies for the gold fields in the Hope-Sunrise area were landed here as early as the 1890's. Later this included Nome and Iditarod.

Frank Lowell and his family settled on Resurrection Bay in 1884. Mrs. Lowell, who was of Russian and Native extraction, and several children and their spouses, had homes in what became part of the original townsite. Frank Lowell decamped to Kodiak and remarried prior to the coming of the Ballaines and the railroad. Nothing of Lowell homesite remains, but sites such as Lowell Point, Lowell Canyon, Lowell Glacier, Mt. Alice and Mt. Eva commemorate their place in Seward's

history.

Seward's footprint was determined by a survey drawn up by C. M. Anderson, Civil Engineer, and signed by Frank Ballaine on behalf of his brother John Ballaine, founder of the Alaska Central Railway. The plan laid out city blocks divided by wide streets and bisected by alleys as neatly and precisely as a railroad surveyor could make them.

The original townsite proceeded from the waterfront to seven lots beyond Monroe Street and from First Avenue at the foot of Mount Marathon and Bear Mountain to the sea. There were 40 blocks and 1211 lots (some were truncated by the curve of the shoreline.) Each lot within this townsite was 30' wide by 100' long. The street bordering the south side of town was named Railway Avenue and each of the other east-west streets were named for the first Presidents: Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe. The North/South avenues were named First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh (now Ballaine Blvd).

Frank Ballaine dedicated the streets and avenues to public use, reserving the right to construct and operate railways, telegraph and telephone lines, gas and water mains, and tunnels or other excavations on the streets. The plat was recorded on June 7, 1905 and with a few exceptions continues to this day. (Barry 1986)

By the time the plat was recorded, Seward's earliest settlers, many of whom had arrived on the steamer *SANTA ANA* in 1903, had built a thriving town. Millionaire's Row, a series of larger homes on Third Avenue, were built and occupied by Alaska Central Railway officials by 1905. Many of these early homes and apartments such as the Ballaine House, Hale House, Cameron House, Holland House, Winter, Stewart and Williams Houses and Harborview Apartments still stand in Seward today.

Home Brew Alley, a collection of small houses on lower Second Avenue, housed several of the early settlers. This area fell victim to urban renewal after the 1964 earthquake and there are no extant buildings from this unique area of town.

With the exception of Anchorage, which also began as a railroad terminus, Seward is unique in Alaska for its conformation and compact downtown business section. In many ways Seward resembles small railroad towns in the rest of the United States rather than its sister cities in Alaska which often have meandering streets and spread out business sections.

Military and Government

➡ The first attempt at *city incorporation* was an election held in May 1911, but the proponents failed to garner the two-thirds majority needed. The incorporation was delayed until May of 1912 when Seward residents voted 160 for and 31 against incorporation. (Barry 1986)

One of the reasons given for Seward's survival as a town during the discouraging years between the first boom accompanying the building of the Alaska Central

Railway and the excitement related to the beginning of the Alaska Railroad was the stability of the town's institutions.

Unlike many early Alaskan settlements, Seward had a planned layout and most of the amenities found in Stateside towns of the same size. Legal procedures were immediately available, a school system began during the founding and grew with the town, and churches were established, with permanent buildings to accommodate them. (Barry 1986)

Seward developed some industries which helped it survive the hiatus between the railroad activities. The largest source of jobs was the mining industry on the Kenai Peninsula. The transportation point for travel into the interior began in Seward, and the town became the headquarters for many who followed the various gold rushes. The community also had an aggressive booster organization in the Seward Commercial Club and an optimistic newspaper. (Barry 1986) The Alaska Central Commission Building served as City Hall until it was razed in 1964 and replaced by the current city hall building.

An early jail and magistrate's office was located at the corner of 3rd and Adams but was moved to the rear of the fire hall in 1917 and into the Harriman (Ray) Building in 1919 (the vault was used as a cell). In 1920 the jail was moved to the Commission Building, then into the fire hall located on Third Avenue where the Tot Lot is now located. In 1948, the firemen built a firehall at the present location next to the Civic Center. This building burned, along with the Civic Center in 1962, and a new one was built in 1963. When the new city hall was built in 1964 the jail was relocated to the basement where it remains.

➡ Alaska was not much affected by the *World War I* era in terms of Federal spending. (Alaska Historical Commission). However, the decision in 1914 by the Federal Government to purchase the Alaska Northern Railway and build the Alaska Railroad had a significant effect on Seward. By 1916, 600 men were working out of Seward on the railroad, and in 1917 this had increased to 888 men, creating a housing shortage. (Barry 1993)

Polk's Directory for 1917-18 shows a population of 1500, a sharp rise from previous surveys. Many of the workers were affiliated with the Alaska Engineering Commission, the U.S. Government agency engaged in the construction of the Alaska Railroad.

After the United States entered World War I, the armed forces drew off people to work outside of Alaska. However, work continued on the railroad and on September 10, 1918 the gap which existed between Seward and Anchorage was closed, and three trains per week began running between the two towns. The railroad headquarters moved to Anchorage in 1917 taking higher ranking personnel and causing much resentment in Seward. (Prince) All sectors of the economy suffered and the population dropped. The 1920 census lists fewer than 700 people in Seward. (Barry 1993) In 1930 train service to Seward was reduced to one train per week. Economic doldrums continued throughout the decade with declining population and no growth.

➡ The imminence of a *second world war* made a significant impact on Seward in July, 1941 when the Army stationed 171 officers and 3,278 enlisted men at Fort Raymond, an Army Post established just outside the townsite limits. Fortifications, including a 6 inch "en barbette" battery named Fort McGilvery, were built at Caines Head and several of the islands south of Seward. Seward was ringed with 155 MM, and 75 MM gun emplacements, remnants of which still exist in various places around the area. The airport was cleared and made ready for planes by August 30 of 1941.

The initial encampment consisted of a vast array of tents. Later, Quonset huts and wooden barracks were built. The 420th Coast Artillery Corps soon joined the Army. They were located on Seventh Avenue (now Ballaine Blvd.) between Jefferson and Monroe Streets.

One can only imagine the impact an Army of this size had on the small city, as well as the financial benefits derived from the \$6,641,495 in construction costs of these defense units.

The entire camp and the gun emplacements were abruptly dismantled in March, 1944. Some Quonset huts were converted to dwellings after the war and are still occupied. Many of the Fort Raymond buildings were bought by local people, moved, and converted to other uses. For example, the Cedarside Apartments building on Third Avenue began its life as a military barracks and the Methodist Church, which was destroyed by fire in 1994, once served as the Chapel at Fort Raymond. Remnants of Fort McGilvery still exist in the Caines Head State Recreation Area south of Seward.

Commerce and Economic Development

➡ The gold *mining* strikes at Sunrise and Hope on Turnagain Arm in 1893 turned into a gold rush in 1896. One of the routes to Turnagain Arm started at Resurrection Bay. Other gold producing areas on the Kenai Peninsula developed: Russian River, Palmer Creek, the Moose Pass district, and Nuka Bay. Seward became the principal supply point of the Kenai Peninsula mining operations. (Barry 1986)

Alfred Lowell and others located mining claims in and near Seward on Tonsina Creek, Humpy Cove, Falls Creek, Sunny Bay, Thumb Cove, and the head of Fourth of July Creek. These unprofitable mines were soon abandoned, leaving little in the way of buildings or other indications of their existence.

While no coal deposits were found in the Seward area, it was the coal fields located in the interior that lead Ballaine to believe that a railroad was economically feasible and ultimately led to the founding of Seward as a debarkation point for coal from the northern fields. The withdrawal of development and mineral rights of these coal fields by the Federal Government in 1906 led to the bankruptcy of the railroad and the cessation of railroad construction. Today that interior coal is moved by rail and shipped to overseas markets.

➡ ***Fur trade*** in the area was limited. After Frank Lowell settled on Resurrection Bay in 1884 a ship would come in once a year to pick up furs, perhaps obtained from pelagic hunters who sought otter and other sea mammals, and to leave supplies. (Barry 1986)

While fur hunting was not a major part of Seward's economy, by 1923 Seward functioned as headquarters for outfitters and guides on the Kenai Peninsula and Fox Island was the site of a fox farm. Fox Island was also the home of noted New York artist and book illustrator, Rockwell Kent and his son during the winter of 1918-1919. Kent's book, Wilderness (1920), was written about his life on Fox Island.

➡ With the establishment of ***dairy herding*** in 1904, Seward residents were supplied with fresh milk as early as 1904. In 1915, the Seward Dairy was established at Mile 3 (the McPherson Homestead) by Adelman and Quilty. Mr. Adelman, later sole owner, moved the business to what is now called Dairy Hill, formerly Chamberlain Hill (Barry 1986). Purchased in 1924 by Henry Leirer, the Dairy operated until 1956. The present residence was built in 1929 and is still occupied by the Leirer family.

➡ The ***fisheries*** industry began when San Juan Fisheries and Canning Company established the first cold storage plant in Seward in 1917. It was located offshore on pilings between Monroe and Van Buren Streets as was the subsequent salmon saltery, halibut processing plant, and salmon cannery. Remains of the pilings are still visible. (Williams)

The Halibut Producers Co-Op (now Seward Fisheries-Icicle Seafoods) was the first business to rebuild in Seward after the 1964 earthquake, following complete destruction of the original processing plant on the waterfront. At one time it was the nation's largest halibut processor. It is still in operation and processes salmon, halibut, cod, and crab in season. This operation has been expanded several times and has an active dock area.

➡ Since the townsite and the surrounding area had an abundant ***timber*** growth of spruce and hemlock, cottonwood, birch and alder (much used to smoke fish) small scale logging was part of Seward's industrial development from its founding. Sawmill operations were opened at Mile 3-1/2 and logging was opened up in 1923 at several sites around the Bay, at Fourth of July Creek, and at Bear Lake. A sawmill operated at Bear Lake by the Tressler Brothers until 1973 when it was acquired by Louisiana Pacific and was moved and enlarged. It closed and left Seward in the 1970's.

President Theodore Roosevelt established the Chugach National Forest on July 23, 1907. Today it is one of the oldest national forests in America. The original boundaries included what is now Anchorage all the way to, and including, Kodiak. It is currently the second largest national forest in the country. (Allen)

➡ ***Tourism*** was a part of the economy even before there was a town of Seward. Steamships landed passengers and freight at the head of the ice free bay and from there they headed north to the gold fields by horse, dog team or on foot. As the work on the railroad progressed, more

traffic was generated and early Seward boasted the Coleman House, Hotel McNeiley, Seward Hotel, Hotel Overland and others. The Van Gilder, built in 1916 as an office building and meeting rooms, was converted to a hotel in 1921. Only the Van Gilder survives today as the others were victims of fires.

With the creation of the Kenai Fjords National Monument by President Carter in 1978, tourism began to occupy an important place in Seward's economy. It became a national park in 1980 and visitation has since grown to 170,000 visitors in 1993. (U.S. National Park Service). There are numerous fishing charter boats, tour boats, buses and cruise ships all catering to the visitor industry. This trend is expected to increase with cruise ship dockings growing each year. Numerous bed and breakfast operations have joined the hotels and motels and new restaurants have opened each year.

Development of the small boat harbor waterfront between Third and Fourth Avenues, outside the original townsite, has resulted in a second commercial district with restaurants, motel, art gallery, shops, charter/tour boat operations, etc. Several of the businesses are housed in relatively small buildings designed only for summer use. Many of the businesses, even in more substantial buildings, close for the winter. Commerce in the boat harbor is particularly busy in the summer tourist months. The U.S. National Park Service has established the headquarters for Kenai Fjords National Park in the boat harbor area.

➔ **General Commerce** began in Seward even before the town plat was recorded in 1905. By October, 1904 there were over 40 businesses established in town. These included two barbershops, a dairy and a delivery service, three restaurants, four saloons, and three hardware and furniture stores.

Brown & Hawkins, the oldest businesses in Seward, and the oldest business in the state still run by the same family, is still housed in the original building. The Yukon Bar occupies another of the earliest buildings. Other early structures are the Orlander, Osbo, and Seward Commercial Buildings, all on Fourth Avenue.

There were two machine shops, one of which housed the Ford dealership. Lechner's Seward Machine Shop still remains, albeit abandoned. The Buick Building on Third Avenue, once a car dealership, survives and is now used as a laundry and apartments.

The shrinking number of banks, from two in 1915, (the Harriman National Bank of Alaska at Seward and the Bank of Seward,) to one in 1923 (Bank of Seward), reflected a decline in population and commerce as Anchorage grew. The old Harriman bank building, now known as the Ray Building, serves as an adjunct to the Seward City Hall. A new bank building was erected in 1979 on the site of the Bank of Seward on the corner of Fourth and Adams.

Polk's Alaska Yukon Gazetteer and Directory for 1911-12 recorded Seward's population as 500. It noted that 6 steamers a week plied the waters between Seward and Seattle. Many of the residents recorded were classified as miners. Their homes located on Second and Third Avenues between Washington and Jefferson Streets, constructed during the 1903-1906 building boom, were "a step

down from the Railroad owners' houses (on Millionaire's Row) and a step up from the shacks on Home Brew Alley." (Williams)

Longshoring at the port of Seward was one of the main occupations during the early and mid-1900's, and during the 1940's, 50's and early 60's, employing over 250 men. Most of the freight to interior Alaska came through Seward. The city also supplied the needs of western Alaska. As the transportation industry changed, fewer men were needed. Anchorage built a dock and began shipping. The Alaska Railroad decided to use rail barges and Whittier became the base for this traffic, primarily for economic reasons. (Seward Phoenix Log) By 1950 the population in Seward had soared to 2,114. But by 1960 reduced commerce had left Seward with a population of only 1,891.

The Alaska Marine Highway ferry *M/V TUSTUMENA* was stationed in Seward beginning in 1960 bringing a total of 35 new jobs to the area. The ferry used Anderson's dock first and then utilized the remains of a City owned dock at the end of Fourth Avenue that was damaged in the 1964 earthquake. They established their offices in the old Alaska Railroad Depot. There were no new buildings associated with the ferry.

The establishment of The Alaska Skill Center, now called the Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC), in 1969 brought employment for 65 to 70 state workers. AVTEC started with only two training programs in food service and mechanics and has expanded to include 55 to 60 training programs today. Annually 1,600 to 1,800 students from throughout the state attend training courses varying in length from a week to 14 months.

An active downtown merchants association bolsters the downtown business section of Seward. Several of the older buildings are empty. However, the construction of a \$50 million marine research and visitor center, the Alaska SeaLife Center, at the base of Third Avenue at Railway is revitalizing the area. Several lots and buildings have sold, some new businesses have opened, and a new gift shop has been built. Many buildings have been upgraded from new paint to major remodeling. The upstairs of the Alaska Commercial (Sauer) Building has recently been restored as a bed and breakfast. Prior to the SeaLife Center funding, only one new building, the Apollo Restaurant, had been constructed since just after the 1964 earthquake when two new buildings were erected. The Fourth Avenue business district is configured today as the original layout in 1903 and is lined with one and two story buildings.

Transportation

➡ *Steamships*

"... the steamers had been in and out of Resurrection Bay before the town of Seward began. It was *BERTHA* in 1902 that dropped a survey party led by F. G. Bleckly and John G. Scurry near where the old dock stood.

Another party under William G. Atwood had left Seattle in February 1902 for the Nenana area. From there they headed south toward Broad Pass where they were to meet up with the group landed by *BERTHA*.

Both expeditions had been sent by the newly formed Alaska Central Railroad Company to scout out and survey the starting point and route.

It was also the steamer *SANTA ANA* that landed the first party of permanent settlers here on August 28, 1903.

In the fall of 1904 there were two steamship companies servicing Seward on a regular basis.

Alaska Pacific Navigation Company had its headquarters in Seattle. E. R. Gray was the local Seward agent. They ran the *SANTA CLARK*, the *SANTA ANA*, and the *DORA*.

The Alaska Commercial Company, with home offices in San Francisco, ran the steamers *BERTHA* and *PORTLAND*. *BERTHA* sailed from Seattle via Juneau on the 10th of each month. She left Seward on the 22nd.

By 1905 steamer traffic and service to Seward was to increase considerably. By May 1906 it wasn't unusual to read reports of five boats arriving within two days. In fact, Seward was averaging 20 to 30 steamers a month." (Capra)

➔ ***Trails and mail routes*** formed Seward's early transportation routes. In 1902 Anton Eide contracted to carry mail from Resurrection Bay to Sunrise and Hope. This contract brought a monthly steamer into the bay. (Barry 1986) A series of trails existed from Resurrection Bay to the gold fields of Nome. In 1908 the Alaska Road Commission surveyed a new trail from Seward to Nome to provide more direct winter transportation by dog sled. Nearly 1,000 miles were cleared and marked in 1910-1911. Heavy traffic continued over the trail until the 1920's when mining declined. Seward is Mile "O" of the Iditarod National Historic Trail System. An informational sign marks the start. The bike path that begins at Fourth Avenue and Ballaine Boulevard and continues along the shoreline is considered to be the beginning of the Iditarod Trail. (Seward Iditarod Trail Blazers Pamphlet)

➔ ***Railroads***

"It was five o'clock on that August 7th morning in 1905 when the steamer *VALENCIA* docked in the port of Seward; aboard were 443 men to work on the railroad, 25 horses, several tons of cargo for the railroad commissary, one determined woman, and an adventurous 14-year-old boy." (Capra)

Frank and John Ballaine built the Alaska Central Railway to transport coal from interior coal fields.

While construction of the railroad precipitated the birth and early growth of Seward, the line itself only extended to Mile 76 prior to the arrival of the Federal Government in 1914 and completion of the line to Anchorage and beyond.

A gasoline driven auto car was put on the railroad for passenger traffic in 1909. Passengers took the railroad to mile 34, went over the trail by packtrain to the gold mining area at Sunrise, and then traveled by boat across Cook Inlet to Susitna. This shortened the trip from Seward to Susitna to two days. Even though the railroad had built a \$55,000 headquarters building on the corner of Adams and Fifth Avenue (replaced by the present City Hall after the 1964 earthquake) Seward's rail system did not become a major part of the Southcentral Alaska transportation system until after the completion of the government railroad to Fairbanks.

The Alaska Railroad Depot, constructed in 1917 at what is now Adams Street and Ballaine Boulevard, was moved to its present location on Railway Avenue following a damaging flood down Jefferson Street. A craftsman style building, it was used as the depot until 1964, when the railroad was destroyed in the earthquake and more recently as headquarters of the Alaska Marine Highway ferry Tustumena for over twenty years. The depot was entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1987.

Alaska Central Railroad Tunnel No. 1 is located just north of Seward and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

➡ The *highway* from Seward to Anchorage was completed in 1951. However, various segments of the road were constructed to Moose Pass and Hope and it was possible to drive to Hope in 1928 - if one first took the train to Moose Pass. An 18 mile segment from Seward to Kenai Lake was finished in 1923, but the Mile 18 bridge, which was referred to as the "missing link," was not completed until 1946, allowing access by highway from Seward as far north as Hope, and as far west as what is now the Russian/Kenai River Confluence (Henton's Lodge or Sportsman's Lodge).

➡ Seward was brought into the *air* age in 1923 when the U.S. Army Air Service began planning an around the world flight. The four planes of the World Flyers arrived in Seward on April 13, 1924 and landed in Resurrection Bay where they were tied to moorings at the San Juan Fisheries dock. The fliers overnighted in the Van Gilder Hotel. This flight increased the interest in commercial air travel in Seward but the first work on an airfield was not done until 1927 when a site at the head of Resurrection Bay was selected and the Alaska Road Commission began work.

The airfield was improved and enlarged in 1929 and again in 1935. In 1940 the Civil Aeronautics Authority took a survey of the Seward Airfield with the objective of turning it into a mile-long field with radio beam station and residences for personnel. (Barry 1993) The Seward Airport was brushed out and completed by the Army and ready for planes by August 30, 1941.

➡ Seward's place as a major *port* began with the Alaska Central Railway's development of extensive docking and warehousing facilities at the foot of Fourth Avenue where all water transportation arrived. Nothing except old photographs remain of the early trestles, warehouses,

docks, and railroad tracks and facilities.

Following the 1964 earthquake and urban renewal, a new small boat harbor was built in an area created by dredging and filling north of the original townsite. The Seward Small Boat Harbor has 500 slips and 7000 lineal feet of transient boat space. Many businesses have opened up in the harbor since 1970.

Communications

➡ In 1905, the Ballaines conveyed one 30 foot lot to the U.S. Signal Corps as a site for a cable station in Seward. In August, 1905 the Washington-Alaska Military Cable and **Telegraph** Station (WAMCATS) was completed. The two story cable office, now a private home, is located on Sixth Avenue. (Barry 1986) In 1916 the Alaska Communications System run by the U.S. Army took over long distance **telephone** service to Alaska. Four Alaska Communications System buildings used to house personnel and equipment were constructed on Third Avenue and remain as private homes today.

In April, 1917 President Wilson set aside 40 acres of flatland at the head of Resurrection Bay as a site for a **wireless station**, first proposed in 1914 to serve military ships and forces. The facilities included an operating station, a six man dormitory, quarters for four families, and a power house. It was in operation by December of 1917. The municipality of Seward acquired the abandoned station in 1931 for a \$1.00 a year lease. A fire in 1934 destroyed most of the facility. The remains of the wireless station building are in the vicinity of the Seward airport near the head of Resurrection Bay.

➡ Seward had one or two **newspapers** from its early beginnings and very complete files are extant in the Seward Community Library. A 1904 to 1910 index of the Seward Gateway has been compiled and published.. Other newspapers include: the Seward Daily Gateway, the Seward Polaris, The Seward Seaport Record, The Seward Tribune, Seward Weekly Gateway, The Petticoat Gazette, and the Seward Phoenix Log. Prior to 1919 the Gateway was housed in various locations. In 1919 it was moved to the basement of the Van Gilder Hotel, and later to the Arcade Building until that building burned in 1941. New papers were started, merged and disappeared leaving the Gateway the survivor until 1941.

Spiritual Structures and Sites

➡ St. Peter's Episcopal **Church** (1904), which is listed on the National Register, is the only active early religious building still used for religious purposes in the original townsite. Sacred Heart Catholic Church, built in 1909-1910 and replaced by a new A-Frame church building after the 1964 earthquake, burned in 1988.

The original Methodist Church at Third and Jefferson Streets had an important, perhaps predominant role in the town's religious life. (Barry 1986) The church was built in 1906 and with a pastor's

residence added in 1907. In 1908 the bell tower was added. At one time high school classes were held in this church. In 1916, a new church was built at Third and Church Street along with a pastor's residence. (Barry 1993) These buildings were eventually sold to the Lutherans, and in 1967, the pastor's residence burned. The church is currently an art gallery/coffee house. A chapel from Fort Raymond was moved in 1946 to the corner of Fourth and Church and became the new Methodist Church. It was destroyed by fire in 1994.

➡ Since Seward's 1903 founding, there have been a number of *cemeteries* located within and around the community. In the early years there were burials at the present hospital site, on the beach near the ball diamonds, and on the hillside above the Bayview Addition where there are still a few graves. At the other two sites the remains were relocated and the sites used for other purposes.

In 1916 the city purchased and replatted a parcel of land known as the Woodlawn Cemetery along what is now Salmon Creek Road just before entering Camelot Subdivision. When Salmon Creek changed its course, the water table became too high to continue using the land as a cemetery so it was abandoned in 1926 with most of the remains being relocated to the present cemetery reserve site.

In 1930 the city received patent to USS 1759, known as the Cemetery Reserve, encompassing approximately 40 acres at Coolidge Drive and the Seward Highway. Since a number of local fraternal organizations had initiated the concept of acquiring this land for a cemetery, the city deeded one-acre tracts to each of these fraternal groups. The Jesse Lee Home also used a portion of the cemetery in the dense trees just north of the Oddfellows plot.

Educational and Social Institutions

➡ The Jesse Lee Home was built in 1923, as an *orphanage* for Alaska's native children, under the auspices of the Wesleyan Women of the Methodist Church. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995.

Eighty children and a staff of six to eight were moved from Unalaska to Seward after construction. This institution was moved to Anchorage in 1964, following the earthquake. The privately owned buildings are currently empty and stripped of all windows, partitions, wiring and plumbing. The original administrator's residence is currently a private home.

➡ In the early days of Seward, *school* was conducted in the Episcopal and Methodist Churches as money was not available to build a school. However, school was an important aspect of Seward's life and several lots were donated and various buildings were built, beginning in 1904. The earliest school building was constructed on the corner of Second and Jefferson in 1904 but was destroyed by the Lowell Canyon Flood of 1917.

In 1914 eight lots south of the Episcopal Church were purchased for a new school which opened in

January 1915 with 48 students. Many residents sent their children Outside to high school as Seward was not accredited for a 12 year program. In 1927-28 high school (without seniors) was held in the Harriman Bank Building (Ray Building). (Williams)

A new elementary/high school building was constructed on the block bounded by Third and Fourth Avenues and Madison and Monroe in 1928. In the early 1950's the high school moved into a new building of its own on Second Avenue. The elementary school continued in use until 1969 when a new elementary school was built on part of the Jesse Lee Home property. In 1979 the Second Avenue high school moved into a new facility adjoining the newest elementary school.

The 1928 school building was torn down in 1982 to make way for buildings associated with the Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC) facilities. Other AVTEC functions are located in several buildings both old and remodeled in Seward. The dormitories and food service center, library and student services center, are located between Madison and Monroe and Third and Fourth Avenues on the former site of the elementary school which was demolished in 1982.

The administration center is in the remodeled high school on Second Avenue and the building maintenance training area is located in the National Guard Armory, also on Second Avenue. Other shops housing the mechanics department are located along the Seward Highway near the north end of town in newer buildings built by the state.

The University of Alaska established the Institute of Marine Science (IMS) on the waterfront and based its research vessel, the *R/V ALPHA HELIX*, in Seward. A marine life laboratory, supply warehouse, transient student dormitory, and a new auditorium-marine display building, built in 1981, are part of this campus complex located at the foot of Third Avenue. The SeaLife Center located next door, will allow IMS staff to conduct research at that facility. The IMS campus complex is slated for expansion in 1996 with the addition of an 11,500 sq. ft. mariculture technical center/shellfish hatchery.

➔ **Health** care came to Seward in 1911, when Dr. J. H. Romig established a hospital in the former Cameron House on Millionaires Row, 423 Third Ave. He became the chief surgeon of the Alaska Railroad.

A major health problem in Alaska, tuberculosis, was detected in the State during WWII and in 1946 a Sanitarium under the auspices of the Wesleyan Ladies Auxiliary was opened in buildings erected at the decommissioned Fort Raymond. The "San" as it was called, could accommodate over 100 patients and was a major employer in Seward after the war. This property is now owned by the City of Seward and occupied by the U.S. Army and Air Force Recreational Camps which were established after the Sanitarium closed in the mid 1950's. The building now housing the Wesley Rehabilitation & Care Center on First Avenue was built in 1958 to house the nurses employed at the "San". (Williams) The present Seward General Hospital was erected in 1957.

Recreation

➡ Many ***social organizations*** formed in Seward in its formative years. An active Arctic Brotherhood chapter (Seward Camp No. 21) constructed a social hall on the corner of Fifth and Washington in 1917. Later used as a gymnasium, theater and garage, it has housed Dreamland Bowl since 1948.

The upper story in Brown and Hawkins was used as a social hall and for dances during the early days of Seward. The Pioneers of Alaska held their first dance there in 1913.

The Masons and Oddfellows held their meetings on the third floor of the Van Gilder Hotel from 1916-1921. Eventually the Masonic Lodge moved its meetings to the upstairs of the McMullen building on Fourth Avenue until they built a new structure on Fifth in the 1960's. The McMullen building was built in 1929 by Gerhard (Stucco) Johnson using concrete blocks made in Seward. The devastating fire of 1941 started in the building next to the McMullen Building and spread south. The McMullen Building prevented the fire from spreading north. When the McMullen Building was remodeled in 1983, the remaining vestiges of the old Masonic Lodge were removed.

An International Order of Oddfellows (IOOF) Hall was built in 1921 on Adams Street and is used today by the Seward Life Action Council.

Seward enjoyed an active Chamber of Commerce, a booster organization called the Seward Commercial Club, a Ladies Aid Society of the Methodist Church, The Women's Auxiliary of the Episcopal Church, and the Altar Society of the Catholic Church during its early history. All had a great influence on Seward and continue today.

➡ ***Community Celebrations*** have always been a part of Seward's history. The Fourth of July has always been an important celebration day in Seward, embellished by the addition of the Mt. Marathon Race. This is the second oldest foot race in the U.S. dating from 1915. Held annually, the race attracts runners and sports enthusiasts from all over the United States and some foreign countries.

In 1956 the Seward Chamber of Commerce started the Seward Silver Salmon Derby. This annual August event continues to draw numerous entrants. The Chamber also has a month long halibut derby which began in 1987.

Reverend Louis H. Pederson, Seward's first Methodist minister, wrote the resolution which led to making Alaska Day an official holiday in Alaska. (Barry 1986)

The Alaska Legislature has designated July 9th a state holiday - Alaska Flag Day. This was the date upon which the Alaska Flag was first flown in Alaska. Benny Benson, an orphan housed at the Jesse Lee Home, created the winning design for the Alaska State Flag in 1927.

The Resurrection Bay Historical Society annually promotes the founding of Seward on August 28th.

➡ Seward has been blessed with many public developed ***recreation*** camps, cabins, and

trails. Since the late 1960's, the U.S. Army and the U.S. Air Force have utilized the former Fort Raymond as a recreational camping and boating headquarters for Seward and the Resurrection Bay area. The Army is currently rebuilding their portion of the camp retaining few of the buildings. The Alaska State Parks, U.S. Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service supply recreation cabins, well groomed trails, and campgrounds in the area surrounding Seward.

Two Lakes Park, located on the hillside area of Seward includes trails and lakes which are used extensively. Early swimming and ice skating areas were located here. Ice skating is still a popular winter activity.

The Greenbelt Park was developed after the 1964 earthquake demolished the railroad roundhouse, tracks, Standard Oil storage tanks and the docks then located along the waterfront. The bike path follows the designated route of the Iditarod Trail. The park supports pavilions, parking for numerous recreational vehicles, and a tent camping area.

Disasters

➡ Natural and man made disasters have plagued Seward from its early years. Lowell Creek ***flooding*** began in September, 1917 when heavy rains and powerful winds struck Seward. At the time, the creek was located where Jefferson Street is now, and washed out everything in its path - bridges, trees, houses, and the railroad tracks. It tore the school house (Second and Jefferson) from its foundation and toppled the newly constructed Community Christian Church. Every light and power pole along the stream washed into the Bay and Seward was without light, telephones, power and water. Lowell Creek also flooded property south of the stream, between First and Third Avenue. Washouts occurred on the rail line. Subsequent to the flood a citizens committee recommended building a flume 15 feet wide, eight feet high and 3,000 feet long. A second flood in 1918 damaged the old Seward General Hospital at Fifth and Jefferson, then operated by the Catholic Sisters of St. Joseph. (Barry 1993)

The Lowell Creek Diversion Tunnel was constructed by the Corps of Engineers in 1939 to divert the waters of Lowell Creek from its course down Jefferson Street. The tunnel is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

➡ The devastating ***fire*** of 1941 burned 19 businesses from McMullens south on the east side of Fourth Avenue to the Arcade Building on the corner of Fourth and Railway and over to the Seward Hotel on Fifth Avenue. Over 450 persons were left homeless. The Army provided tents to house them. Another fire in 1942 burned the west side of Fourth Avenue from the present day Elks Lodge on the corner of Fourth and Washington south to the Lechner property. One hundred persons were left without homes. (Polk)

➡ The ***1964 Good Friday Earthquake*** and its resultant tsunamis devastated the industrial heart of Seward. It destroyed the San Juan, Army and railroad docks, the tracks leading to the dock, the oil tank farms, fish processors, warehouses and the small boat harbor. The waterfront

of downtown Seward was permanently altered.

The destruction of the waterfront led to less emphasis on Seward's role as a rail port facility. The railroad began moving more materials through the port at Whittier and increased the shipping going directly into Anchorage. Economic stagnation resulted from the loss of longshoring jobs.

Although the U.S. Government's post-earthquake Urban Renewal Program built a new city hall, it also wiped out much of an older area of Seward including Home Brew Alley, located behind Second Avenue directly against Bear Mountain, and Alley B a section of small shacks used for many years for various unsavory recreational purposes. The University of Alaska Institute of Marine Science now occupies most of that area, located at the end of Third Avenue.

➡The ***1989 Exxon Valdez Oil Spill***, while an environmental disaster in the waters and on the beaches of Kenai Fjords National Park, proved to be an economic boost to Seward. Over 500 persons found employment in the immediate area. Fishermen deprived of their fishing season were able to charter their boats to the oil spill cleanup and many received compensation for lost fishing.

Oil spill litigation settlement monies will also benefit Seward in the funding of the research portion of the Alaska SeaLife Center and purchase land for public use. These include a waterfront tract at Lowell Point to be used as a trail head and access to Caines Head State Recreation Area (Fort McGilvery during World War II) and a parcel located at Mile 7 of the Seward Highway at Grouse Lake.

Community Resources

Historic Buildings and Structures

There are four source listings for historic properties in Seward:

National Register of Historic Places,
Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRs)
Seward Register of Historic Places (Ordinance No. 95-10, May '95)
Seward Historical Site Inventory Summary (Appendix B)

The latter was developed as part of this plan and is the most comprehensive of these sources. It is an inventory of historical sites at least 50 years old and includes sites listed on the AHRs which have been lost or destroyed. This detailed inventory represents an invaluable resource to city staff, historic preservation commissioners and community members and is an essential planning tool for historic preservation activities. At the request of the Seward Historic Preservation Commission (SHPC), all sites listed on the Seward Historical Site Inventory will soon be listed on the AHRs.

Recent activities in historic preservation include an updating of the AHRs by the Community Development Department (October, 1995), the addition of a local register of historic places, and the acceptance of the Jesse Lee Home National Register of Historic Places nomination in September 1995. There are now nine sites in Seward listed on the National Register (Appendix E):

Jesse Lee Home
Ballaine House*
Swetmann House*
Van Gilder Hotel*
Government Cable Office*
Brown and Hawkins Building*
Railroad Depot*
St. Peter's Church*
Lowell Canyon Diversion Tunnel

The (*) buildings also appear in the publication, Buildings of Alaska, published by the Society of Architectural Historians. Buildings highlighted in this series were chosen for specific points of architectural history they illustrate. Other historic buildings listed in the book for their historical architectural significance include: the Ray Building and the Stewart and Cameron Houses on Millionaire's Row.

The Iditarod Trail, from Seward to Nome, was declared a National Historic Trail under Public Law 95-625 (The National Parks and Recreation Act) on November 10, 1978.

The Seward Register of Historic Places was established to provide for public recognition of local cultural resources worthy of preservation. Applications are reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission who shall according to criteria outlined in SHPC Resolution No. 95-06, recommend nominations for approval by the City Council. The listing currently consists of the National Historic Register properties listed above.

Other Resources

➡ ***City files*** are an often forgotten source of information on Seward history - past city council minutes, resolutions, ordinances and old tax assessor records. The city clerk has traditionally cared for these documents. The Community Development Department also maintains a sizable collection of historic maps, plans and documents. Much of this information is not indexed or cataloged and is in need of curation. The city has applied for grant funds to archive and preserve city documents currently in under-protected storage.

➡ ***District Court/Land Recorders Office*** documents such as land transactions and death records are of great historical importance. This office provides an essential resource for researching mining claims and title searches on property ownership.

➡ The ***Library*** has collected thousands of historic photos, documents, films, and rare Alaskan publications. This is an ongoing process with community members contributing significant materials every year.

➡ The ***Resurrection Bay Historical Society and Museum*** maintains an excellent source for local historic research and information including curated artifacts, photos, newspapers and documents.

Preservation Law

Individuals, commissioners and city administrators need to be aware of three levels of historic preservation law which are linked together and come from the federal, state and local levels of government. Together, these laws provide a resource for individuals and local governments interested in historic preservation. Because historic preservation has been ongoing in the United States for many years, a huge volume of information is available. While many of Seward's historic preservation problems seem unique, most have been faced and dealt with by communities around the country. The designation of Seward as a Certified Local Government along with the formation of the Seward Historic Preservation Commission provides the city with the opportunity to request assistance from state and federal experts in a wide variety of disciplines.

➡ By 1966, Congress had come to the realization that projects funded by the federal government were capable of destroying important historic and archaeological sites. As a result the ***National Historic Preservation Act*** was enacted requiring that historic and prehistoric properties be taken into consideration during the construction of large scale federally funded projects. Federal and state laws affect city and private property only when state or federal money is being used in a particular project.

This Act also established several programs to encourage historic preservation. These include the National Register of Historic Places and a matching grant fund administered through state historic preservation offices. It provided funding for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and for the identification and protection of historic and prehistoric sites which might be adversely affected by federally funded construction. The Secretary of the Interior was given overall responsibility for the implementation and coordination of the Act. The National Park Service was made the federal government's official advisor on matters relating to historic preservation.

While inclusion on the National Register affords a special status, owners are under no special obligation to preserve historical structures. However, these properties are eligible for tax credits and technical assistance for preservation and rehabilitation on a voluntary basis. Owners volunteering to be involved in these state and federally funded programs are required to follow the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation.

➡ In 1974 the State of Alaska declared its official policy regarding historic preservation through the enactment of the ***Alaska Historic Preservation Act*** and the creation of the Alaska Historical Commission. The commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources was given overall responsibility for historic preservation duties. To assist the commissioner are the Alaska Historic Commission and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and staff.

State law essentially mirrors federal law. It provides for implementation of the National Historic Preservation Act at the state level. The SHPO's office reviews nominations to the National Register, assists applicants and makes recommendations to the Keeper of the National Register. They are charged with insuring that state-funded construction projects do not adversely affect historic and

archaeological properties. Additionally, SHPO administers the Federal Historic Preservation Fund Program, serves as a "clearinghouse" for information on the state's historic, prehistoric and archaeological resources, and encourages and assists local governments in historic preservation activities through the Certified Local Government program.

➡ At the local level the Seward City Council sets policy for historic preservation matters. Implementation of local ordinances and resolutions is performed by the city manager and his staff.

As a requirement of its ***Certified Local Government*** (CLG) status, in 1992 the City created the Seward Historic Preservation Commission. This body of appointed citizen volunteers was tasked to look into Seward's historic needs including historic buildings, archeological sites and documents. They are charged with the development of a historic preservation plan, identification and inventory of local historic and prehistoric resources, making recommendations for properties eligible for the National Register, and acting as an advisory body to the city council, city administration and other boards and commissions.

Preservation Efforts

In general, the key to successful historic preservation activities is to act before buildings, structures, documents and sites are threatened, damaged or in danger of destruction. Properties allowed to deteriorate cost more to restore and in some cases are beyond saving. In Seward there are many borderline cases. Historical research and historic preservation efforts are anything but new in Seward; they have been underway for years through the efforts of many people.

Documents

➡ Seward is very fortunate that one of the first published histories of the town was written by one of the town's founding fathers, John Ballaine. Ballaine, whose railroad building efforts led to the development of Seward's original townsite and the building of the Alaska Central Railway, had the foresight to recall what he knew of the town's founding. He published an essay on the founding of Seward in the December 5th, 1925, "*Progress Edition*" of the Seward Daily Gateway. In addition it is believed that a manuscript written by John Ballaine regarding the development of Seward is located in the University of Washington's Suzallo Library. Efforts are under way to locate this document.

➡ Seward's *newspapers*, published under various editors and names over the years, remain one of the best sources of historical information about the area. In addition to providing detailed news of significant events and people there has also been several mini-histories and historical essays published in them.

A series of historical essays, written by Jay Stauter an Anchorage newspaper columnist, appeared in the 1951 Seward Seaport Record. These essays were based on Stauter's personal knowledge of history and interviews with reliable sources.

The 1954 Petticoat Gazette "50th Anniversary Issue" ran a capsule history of the town's development and was illustrated with many historic photographs. This role of Seward's newspapers continues to this day.

Doug Capra, a Seward high school teacher, published a 1978 series of historic essays in the Seward Phoenix Log. Over the years he has produced a number of significant articles, plays and most recently two books of short essays of historical interest.

The 1975 "Progress Edition" sponsored by the Seward Phoenix Log and the local radio station contained many articles on Seward's development.

The Seward Observer was a short lived paper published in 1993 and contained many articles on Seward's history.

➡ Over the years volunteers have contributed to both local and tourist understanding of our town through their efforts at organizing a local *historic walking tour*. This information has been published annually since 1978 and was most recently included in the Seward Chamber of Commerce visitor's guide.

➡ Many *books* about Seward have been published. In 1975 long time Seward resident John Paulsteiner wrote a book entitled Seward Alaska, Sinful Town on Resurrection Bay. Hailed by some and hated by others, the publication goes beyond a basic chronicling of facts and includes interpretation and critical examination of history. The publication clearly shows that no two people view history the same way.

Perhaps the most impact of Paulsteiner's book was the influence it must have had on his daughter Mary Barry. Since 1986 she has published a three volume chronological history of Seward creating an exhaustive reference aid on Seward's history. Seward is fortunate to have such a dedicated researcher with an interest in its history.

Over the years many authors have found Seward interesting enough to use its historic past as a backdrop for their writing or other creative endeavors. Some of the people inspired by historic Seward include: Rockwell Kent (Wilderness 1920, paintings, drawings, writings), Robert Lund (The Alaskan, 1935), Pat O'Cotter (Rhymes of a Roughneck 1919), Ralph Guthrie (Breed of the North 1928), Billy Blackjack Johnson (Jesse Lee Home, Shelter from the Storm 1990), V. M. Potter (God Flies Benny's Flag 1989) and P. Krasilavsky (Benny's Flag 1960).

There are many other written accounts of Seward, its history, people and environment. A complete listing of their works would prove to be very long. These include innumerable short and specific histories on topics such as the Mount Marathon Race, families such as the Osbo's, and President Harding's visit to Alaska.

➡ Others have used *audio visual* and other media to present Seward's past. These have included Margaret Deck and Doug Capra (Seward is Burning, film documentary of the 1964 earthquake), Jim Pffiefenberger (Spotlight Seward, T.V. productions with historical issues discussed, 1995), Larry and Christy Johnson ("76 Hours in Eternity" video on the earthquake) and local high school Swetmann Scholarship projects.

Preservation

➡ Perhaps the first organization formed to deal specifically with historic preservation was the *Resurrection Bay Historical Society*. A small group of foresighted and dedicated individuals met in 1962 to discuss the formation of a group dedicated to the collection of artifacts and papers relevant to Seward's history. The society was formally incorporated as a non-profit group in 1965 and has been active and successful in its goals ever since. Enough can not be said about the contributions of this group over the years. In addition to the development of an excellent museum of well curated artifacts, photos, newspapers and documents, the museum is also involved

in the education of children in Seward and the southcentral Alaska region. Tourism also benefits from their activities; 10,203 visitors were counted passing through the museum in 1995. The society publishes a monthly newsletter, which has nationwide circulation and serves as a chronicle of the Society's historical preservation efforts. The society receives little local, state, or federal financial support for its activities.

➡ In the 1960's, the *Seward Community Library* became a major player in Seward's historic preservation efforts. Librarians prepared National Register of Historic Places nominations for most of the buildings in Seward now listed. Library staff and board members also put together a narrated slide program on Benny Benson and the Alaska flag. It is still available for viewing at the library. Through a grant, the library produced a cross-indexed volume of Seward's earliest newspapers (1904-1910) making research of early papers relatively easy. Volume I, of what was hoped to be part of a complete index, was published in 1983. Unfortunately the project has not been completed. The library receives little financial support for their historic preservation endeavors.

➡ Many *other organizations* have also made important contributions to historic preservation. The community's 1967 Alaska Centennial projects included the Benny Benson Memorial and the 1978 Diamond Jubilee celebration which brought about the Annual Library Photo Contest, the Founder's Monument, the Seward Historic Walking Tour, the Iditarod Trailblazers efforts at trail reconstruction and commemoration of the role of trails and dog sledding in Seward's past. Other significant activities have included the Phoenix Bicentennial Committee's efforts to remind people of the Russian shipbuilding efforts in Resurrection Bay two hundred years ago, the Seward Senior Center's Women in History Month lecture series, the reunions of U.S. military groups who served in Seward during World War II, the earthquake reunions, the state park restoration and interpretive efforts at Caines Head. All of these group and individual efforts show there is a clear public interest in the history of Seward.

➡ The *City* has demonstrated a leadership role in pursuing Certified Local Government (CLG) status and the development of a local historic preservation plan. Significant city resources have been allocated to this effort. The city has demonstrated initiative in historic preservation efforts in a wide range of projects: cemetery restoration, acquiring funds for preparation of the Jesse Lee Home National Historic Register nomination and providing coordination and assistance to the downtown business district historic lighting project. In the summer of 1995, the city appointed an ad-hoc committee to formulate a plan for use and restoration of the historic railroad depot building and Hoben Park that would:

- * Restore and preserve historic integrity and significance of the depot and park.
- * Provide for long term maintenance
- * Reduce or eliminate the city's financial liability exposure
- * Allow the SeaLife Center plaza, park and depot to compliment one another
- * Provide income to the city from a capital asset.

The committee's efforts culminated in a proposed Seward Gateway Historic Transportation District Plan which included eight significant historic sites and structures. Only the sections of the plan

addressing the Railroad Depot and Hoben Park were approved by the City Council. In the meantime the depot and park have become high profile properties, and the community expects the city to follow through with a request for proposals to accomplish the objectives set forth in the ad-hoc committee plan.

Since its creation, the Seward Historic Preservation Commission, has recommended several ordinances and resolutions which have been enacted into local law and policy by the City Council. To date they have related primarily to the creation of historic districts, and recommending the nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places.

➡ The *public's interest* and efforts in historic preservation are reflected in a recent 18 month (February 1994 - July 1995) chronicle of newspaper articles Appendix A. During this period, 28 articles appeared having some relation to history and historic preservation. All were published in The Seward Phoenix Log. Most were written by Eric Fry, newspaper reporter. This chronicle documents that many individuals and organizations are involved in historic preservation. The citizens of Seward should be proud of this public involvement; many communities are not so fortunate.

Restoration

➡ There has also been an increased effort in the historic preservation, restoration and adaptive re-use of historic buildings in the community. These efforts have primarily been associated with commercial buildings. The Van Gilder Hotel, the Alaska Commercial Company (Sauer Building) and the Ballaine House are using their historical significance to attract visitors for overnight lodging. A prospective buyer hopes to do the same with the Jesse Lee Home as negotiations are currently underway for the sale and renovation of the Home into a hotel complex. Although the Brosius & Noon Building (now Seaview Plaza) has been drastically modified from its original state and has been determined ineligible for the National Register, it is currently being utilized as an office building. The original Methodist church is currently being utilized as an art gallery/coffee house with the owners occupying what used to be the pastor's residence. The Swetmann House, which is listed on the National Register, continues to be occupied as a single family residence.

Preservation Incentives

People choose to preserve and protect their historic heritage for **social, educational, community environment or economic** reasons. Almost every town has some reminder or monument to its founders. Streets and buildings are often named after early pioneers and libraries, archives and museums are established to collect and protect their words and images.

Alaska's towns were settled by people who did so at great personal risk. The towns of Chena, Council and Candle were once numerous in population but exist no more. Those towns that did survive take great pride in having prevailed against the odds. Today several generations of families have lived in these communities. The nucleus of historic preservation grows around the memory of these pioneering families who, with few resources, came, fought the climate, the economy, and the odds, stayed and prospered.

Social

➡ The descendants of a town's founders and others who came later begin to develop a unique sense of pride in the role these pioneers played in developing their town. A sense of place, of belonging, of vested ownership begins to evolve. This feeling is not exclusive to the direct descendants of the pioneers; in fact it is easily transferred to and adopted by newcomers and visitors. This sense of pride and feeling of place is at the core of why people choose to become involved in historic preservation.

A visitor may only be in a town a few hours but he or she will feel this "sense of pride" if it is there. Whether or not a visitor is favorably impressed with a town is often dependent on this feeling. If a town's historic resources are well taken care of it is easy for visitors to feel that a town is proud of itself.

Educational

➡ In an ideal community, school children are taught about the prehistoric and historic past of their town. They learn about the struggles their forefathers faced in building the town. They learn of the evolution of their town and the town's role in the development of their state and country. Educators consider this knowledge to be part of a well balanced education. Children raised with a sense of pride in their forefathers role in the development of their community come to respect the hard work of those who preceded them.

In order to instill these feelings of pride and respect in the younger generations, teachers must first have this feeling themselves and secondly must have truthful and inspirational material to work with. Thus historic documents, photos, artifacts, landmarks and buildings become tangible tools in the education process. The ability to hear our forefathers actual words through their own writings, to feel the tools they used to build the town, and to see first hand the things they built enhances the process of learning.

Adults, too, stand to gain from remembering the past. It has often been said "people who ignore history are doomed to repeat it." There are few social, economic, political or environmental problems that face us today that have not existed in the past. By reviewing the actions of our predecessors, we can find solutions for today's problems. We can also see where past solutions have not worked and we can attempt to develop genuinely new solutions with a better chance for success.`

Community

➡ Our community environment is molded by our history and how it is preserved. Two years ago the City of Seward sponsored a series of town meetings in which the following question was asked, "What do you want your town to look like in the year 2003?" The year 2003 was chosen because it is the one hundredth anniversary of the town's founding.

About one hundred Seward residents attended this series of meetings and represented a good "cross section" of the community. Both long and short term residents were represented as were people from government and private sector employment. While many views were expressed regarding the future of the city, especially how best to develop its economic growth and stability, the majority agreed that they liked the city much as it is, especially its present size and basic layout and "feel."

Many communities have found that plain old friendly persuasion can be an effective way of getting property owners to maintain their historic buildings and to rehabilitate them in a way that respects the distinctive community character. The National Alliance of Preservation Commissions encourages local preservation commissions to provide helpful guidance to property owners on design matters.

Economic

Because no two communities have the same preservation needs, economic incentives on the local level present an opportunity to offer not just moral encouragement but actual financial incentives specifically designed to provide monetary rewards for property owners who assist in the preservation and restoration of Seward's historic character

When it can be shown that historic preservation and economic stability and growth can work together, many local governments provide economic incentives to encourage private property owners to preserve or rehabilitate historic buildings. Following is a brief review of economic incentives used in other cities which may be considered locally to aid in the rehabilitation of older buildings.

➡ *Grants and Loans*

Federal matching grants administered through the State Historic Preservation Officer to Certified Local Governments have been utilized by the City of Seward to assist in the nomination of the Jesse

Lee Home to the National Register of Historic Places and for the development of the Seward Historic Preservation Plan. Grants are generally awarded on an annual basis for the following types of preservation projects: 1) Survey, 2) Inventory, 3) National Register Nomination, 4) Historic Preservation Planning, 5) Public Preservation Education, and 6) Predevelopment, Development or Acquisition projects.

Many communities throughout the country and some Alaskan cities have developed small scale revolving loan funds which involve the city administration entering into an alliance with local banks to offer citizens very low interest loans for historic preservation work. Generally, these loans are less than \$5000.00 and often the city guarantees them on behalf of the applicant.

➔ *Tax Incentives*

The Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit provides owners of historic buildings an opportunity to qualify for a 20 percent rebate off the cost of rehabilitation projects. This program is limited to rehabilitation projects on buildings or sites which are listed or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and are able to generate a source of income. It cannot be an owner-occupied residence. To find out if a building's proposed rehabilitation project will qualify for this tax break, it must be certified by the State Historic Preservation Officer and National Park Service.

Throughout the country there are various types of local sales and property tax relief or exemptions for owners who rehabilitate historic buildings. Currently, the City of Seward and the Kenai Peninsula Borough have no such incentives.

Sales tax waivers for material purchased for historic preservation work would be difficult to apply in Seward because the Kenai Peninsula Borough collects the 5% city (3%) and borough (2%) sales tax.

A possible option for consideration would be for the city to grant rebates of sales tax monies once they are returned from the borough.

A more practical local tax incentive plan would be a property tax relief program at the borough level. Under Alaska Statutes, Title 29, boroughs can offer property tax exemptions for historic preservation work. There are several types of property tax relief for historic preservation applied throughout the country which should be considered including: 1) a flat exemption from taxation, 2) a lower mil rate for historic property owners who agree to do certain types of preservation work, and 3) a freeze on property taxes prior to the commencement of preservation work. The theory behind the later incentive being that often property values increase after preservation work is accomplished.

A tax freeze would essentially ensure that owners are not penalized in terms of higher property assessments and taxes because they have improved their property.

➔ *Building & Zoning Code Exemptions*

Consider and develop flexibility in zoning, parking and building code requirements to encourage the preservation of historic structures. This might include permitting waivers of Zoning Code

development requirements for historic rehabilitation projects. There already exists building code exemptions for historic buildings.

➡ *Other Financial Incentives*

While all of the above financial incentive plans refer to historic buildings and structures, the community should also consider financial incentives for the donation of other types of historic material. Currently, people who donate items such as rare books, important historic documents, artwork, historic artifacts and photo collections to non-profit institutions such as the library and museum can write off the value of the objects against their federal taxes. Perhaps the city and/or borough should consider granting tax and/or utility credits to people who make such donations. There are many ways such a credit system could be structured, the underlying theory being that these people who make these types of donations should be rewarded as the donation of historic materials of the use of the community is more significant than the loss of a relatively small amount of tax or utility revenue.

Threats and Opportunities

There are many activities within the community that affect historic properties. Some are natural and some are based on human activity. These activities present both opportunities and threats to historic resources. Of greatest concern to the community is the increased growth and development currently taking place within the Seward area. The main sources of growth were identified as the Alaska SeaLife Center and tourism.

➡ **Natural Forces** are generally considered a threat to historic properties. In the past the community has experienced many devastating events including floods, fires, an earthquake and resulting tsunami which have damaged or destroyed historic properties or structures that would be considered historic today. Recurrences of those events continue to present a threat to historic properties. These natural disasters are discussed under the historic background and character section of the plan and will not be elaborated further here.

➡ The majority of Seward residents envision steady **community growth** over the next ten years. The perceived trend appears substantiated; in 1995, the city's population hit an all time high of 3,074, culminating an upward trend started in the 1970's. Gross sales, according to Kenai Peninsula Borough statistics, are projected to be up in 1995 for the third year in a row.

Community sentiment is split on whether or not population growth and development constitute a direct threat to historic properties or present possible opportunities for historic preservation. It may threaten historic and scenic property values. Hillside development and annexation of Meridian Valley could compromise scenic or historic values of Marathon Mountain, the Iditarod Trail and the Seward Scenic Byway. Demand for property could threaten "marginal" historic properties if incentives for re-use and renovation are not there.

On the flip side many residents point out that growth and development can encourage historic preservation; a healthy economy provides the incentive, private and public funds to fuel a community historic preservation program. New development can occur in a way complementary to historic preservation and therefore does not necessarily constitute a guaranteed threat.

➡ A significant element of Seward's environmental and economic growth is the increased **Tourism/Visitor Industry**. According to a study prepared for the National Park Service (Jones and Jones, 1994) visitation to Seward in 1993 totaled 316,849. Over 75% of those visitors came by private auto or recreational vehicle. Although there is no comprehensive program to produce an annual tally of visitors (Jones' tally was computed from reports from Alaska Railroad, Marine Highways, cruise ship operators, and the Alaska Visitor Statistical Program) individual sectors substantiate an upward trend. City operated campgrounds showed substantial increases in usage between 1989 and 1993; from 34,544 to 113,159. The number of bed and breakfast lodgings listed with the Seward Chamber of Commerce increased from 29 in 1994, to 52 in 1995. Seward Chamber of Commerce information center visitor counts show 14,396 in 1988; 24,383 for 1993 and 37,760 for 1995 (as of 9/30/95). Cruise ship dockings increased from 13 in 1985, to 29 in 1990, to 113 in 1995.

Visitation to Kenai Fjords National Park (Visitor Center and Exit Glacier) increased from 131,364 in 1990 to 214,466 in 1993. Moderate growth scenarios prepared by the National Park Service project visitation to exceed 300,000 in the year 2003. Seward has already surpassed all other Kenai Peninsula communities in visitation by non-residents showing a 102% increase between 1989 and 1993.

Upward trends in visitation have already caused concerns among the community regarding waterfront development, use and access (greenbelt area and Small Boat Harbor). Waterfront is a desirable tourist commodity; it enhances basic services such as food and lodging and is the major source of visitor "entertainment," sightseeing and fishing charters. With up to 75% of the visitors traveling by private auto or recreation vehicle, the subsequent need for adequate parking puts further demand on a limited waterfront area and limited amount of developable land in general. The need for parking and possible revenue attached to it could impact the more "marginal" value of historic properties and open space areas remaining in town.

Competition for waterfront property is keen. Waterfront location is also required by many of Seward's industries: fishing and fish processing, timber, and shipping. The most recent local development project, the Alaska SeaLife Center, also required waterfront property.

As waterfront and developable properties diminish the threats to open space and existing historic properties will increase. Without financial incentives for re-use and renovation, many properties could be subject to demolition to meet demands of growth. Although many waterfront properties were lost during the 1964 earthquake, historic properties still exist on the south end of town: the Depot, Hoben Park, and related sites considered in the proposed Seward Historic Gateway Transportation District Plan. Waterfront development for the tourism industry could constitute threats to beach access, and pocket parks, such as the Small Boat Harbor plaza, Benny Benson Memorial and the Founder's Monument.

Increased needs for visitor lodging could result in substantial renovations to private historic homes and demolition of historic properties to make way for new construction and/or parking. Many historic homes such as the Ballaine House, which is listed on the National Register, have become revenue "generators" since renovated for use as bed and breakfast lodgings, their historic aspects highlighted in visitor information. The historic Van Gilder Hotel promotes its National Historic Register status and enjoys a busy tourist season.

➡ Another growth issue is the impact of the *Alaska SeaLife Center* (ASLC). In addition to fueling attraction to a growing visitor destination, the actual waterfront site lies within the established local Downtown Historic District.

In 1994, a report Historic Architecture Survey of the Waterfront, Seward, Alaska, was prepared for the Section 106 review of the ASLC under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The project's potential area of effect on historic architecture was defined by a development "footprint" where land disturbance would take place and where view of the proposed development could adversely affect values of properties eligible for the National Register. This "footprint" did not take

into account 90% of the Downtown Historic District, which is perceived by many locals to be under significant development pressure as the ASLC becomes eminent. Proximity to such a volume visitor attraction will put high premium on downtown properties. Rapid growth in the downtown area could endanger the "downtown character" and appeal of this historic district, of noted importance by Seward residents in the Comprehensive Plan and the Town Meeting of November 15, 1995.

The ASLC project, the resulting environmental impact study (EIS) and Waterfront study required for federally funded projects, created a launching point for a flurry of historic preservation activities including the official naming of Hoben Park, the identification of two properties which may be eligible for the National Register (Hoben Park and the Seward Machine Shop), an archaeological excavation, and the activities of the Depot/Hoben Park Ad Hoc Committee. It must be noted that all of these undertakings, except the Ad Hoc Committee, were a result of regulations attached to federally funded projects. Further development in the adjacent Downtown Historic District will not necessarily be subject to the same requirements.

➡ The ***Military Recreation Camp Renovation*** project in Seward has caused concern among residents. The construction is taking place on City property leased to the military on the site of WWII Fort Raymond. The original fort was dismantled in 1944; most of the buildings were moved to various locations around town and converted to other uses. An environmental assessment was completed in compliance with Section 106 requirements with a finding of no significance. The project has proceeded without City oversight since developers claimed federal exemption from building permits. Although the City was provided with the construction plans, City officials have not inspected the project construction.

➡ Economic development and historic preservation need not be mutually exclusive. ***Heritage tourism*** is a concept embodying the development and use of historic resources as visitor attractions. It has also been used by many small communities as a strategy for neighborhood revitalization.

Currently, the tourism drawing card to Seward is Kenai Fjords National Park. In the shadow of calving tidewater glaciers and humpback whales, Seward's heritage may be easily overlooked as a potential visitor attraction. According to a survey by the United States Travel and Tourism Administration of the top leisure and recreational activities participated in by overseas travelers to the U.S., visiting historic places ranked fifth. Visiting National Parks ranked seventh tied with visits to art galleries and museums.

Heritage tourism includes individual historic properties open to the public, tours, special events and celebrations. Elements of all already exist in Seward and could be further developed and promoted to create a theme for communicating Seward's unique heritage to visitors. The Seward Gateway Historic Transportation District Plan exemplifies such an effort; resources were surveyed, a theme identified and a plan for interpretation developed in concert with the maintenance and preservation of the properties involved.

The Caines Head State Recreation Area is located south of Seward and contains World War II

resources. This historic site which is already a popular tourism and recreational resource presents an excellent opportunity for heritage tourism development. The guiding principles established by the National Trust for Historic Preservation concerning tourism are:

Authenticity and Quality. Tell the true stories of historic sites and culture of the area. The specific development of an area and the contributions made by previous generations are what distinguish one place from another.

Education and Interpretation. History can be fun. Names and dates don't bring a place or event alive, but the human drama of history does. The interpretation of historic sites should be creative and exciting.

Preservation and Protection. Take care of maintaining historic places and the historic buildings of neighborhoods and towns for residents and visitors both now and in the future. A community wanting to attract tourists must safeguard the future by establishing measures to protect the very elements that attract visitors.

Local Priorities and Capacity. Build strong, comprehensive tourism programs directed toward local priorities and ensure that tourism is of economic and social benefit to the community and its heritage.

Partnership. Cooperation among business leaders in tourism, operators of historic sites, local governments and many others is important to enhance tourism activities. Historic sites and districts deserve special funding consideration for operations and maintenance since they are often the reasons why people wish to visit a community.

➔ ***Individual involvement*** provides an excellent opportunity for historic preservation. Such efforts are, for the most part, what has kept historic preservation alive in Seward, Alaska. As discussed throughout this plan, it has generally been one or a few individuals who have completed local preservation projects. There are so many different facets of preservation that there is something for just about everyone. It is common for people to be involved in some form of historic preservation and not realize that they are part of a much larger group of people working toward the same or a similar goal.

➔ The public has identified the following ***threatened buildings, structures, sites and districts*** within the community:

St. Peter's Episcopal Church (NHR 79). Members of the community are concerned that the congregation of this still active church cannot adequately fund maintenance of this aging building. The furnace is failing and there is no sprinkler system. The fact that two other historic churches have been destroyed by fire in the past ten years clearly shows that the concerns are legitimate. Recently a fund has been established to save the church. The church was listed on The Alaska Association for Historic Preservation's (AAHP) Ten Most Endangered Properties List for 1996.

Jesse Lee Home (NHR 95): The home was listed on the AAHP's Ten Most Endangered Properties list in 1993 and 1994. Although consistently cited by Seward residents as a high priority for historical preservation, community members express a futility about its future under private ownership. Currently, the present owner is engaged in litigation over the property with the City of Seward. Consulting architects on the proposal of the Seward Senior Citizens have given the structures two years before it is beyond salvage for a senior housing project. Many residents feel its salvation is beyond the scope of a small community and that its status as a state historic treasure and home of the Alaska flag design should be recognized.

Railroad Depot (NHR 87) / Hoben Park: Most residents are concerned with the Depot's present status as a vacant city property. Other concerns expressed are the condition of the building and the possibility of yet another "t-shirt shop." There is strong sentiment for it to be managed for community use. This building was also listed on the AAHP's Ten Most Endangered Properties List in 1996.

Railroad Car/Information Cache: Owned by the Chamber of Commerce, the observation car on Third Avenue has fallen into a notable state of disrepair. Concern is that the Chamber does not have the funds and may find it difficult to preserve it.

Lowell Canyon Diversion Tunnel (NHR 77): The tunnel is in need of repairs to insure it fulfills its original intent of protecting the downtown from Lowell Creek flooding.

Downtown Business District: Perceived threats of this area include: "loss of character" through development, seasonally vacant storefronts, and an over abundance of tourist retailers (cited as t-shirt shops).

Navy Radio Station: Located at the head of Resurrection Bay, this structure is clearly endangered by tidal waters and the channeling of Resurrection River. Access to this property is limited.

Waterfront/Open Space: There are concerns that open waterfront will give way to a developed coastline.

Archives: Tremendous archival resources exist in Seward under the management and care by the City, library, museum and local churches. Many are not properly stored; few are catalogued.

Archaeological Sites: Little archaeological surveying has been done in the Seward area. There is no oversight of subsurface excavation when federal funds are not involved.

Land Use - Preservation Coordination

Past Efforts

➡ The Downtown and Jesse Lee Home *Historic Districts* were established by City Council resolution in 1984. In 1988, the Downtown Historic District was redefined to encompass a greater area (Appendix E). The criteria established for selection of local historic districts mirrors state and federal standards. The City Council designation of local historic districts accompanied the efforts of several individuals to place local properties on the National Register of Historic Places.

Most recently, Ordinance No. 95-10, provided historic preservation with its own chapter under Title 15, Planning and Land Use Regulations of the Seward City Code. This chapter contains provisions for a local historic register, criteria, involvement of the historic preservation commission and established historic overlay districts. Upon enactment, all designated historic districts are classified as Overlay District H - Historic District on the official city zoning maps.

The New Illustrated Book of Development Definitions defines an overlay zone as a zoning district encompassing one or more underlying zones and that imposes additional requirements above those required by the underlying zone. The Seward Zoning Code defines an historic district as:

An area containing buildings or places in which historic events occurred or having special public value because of notable architectural or other features relating to cultural or artistic heritage of the community of such significance to warrant conservation and preservation.

While the code provides for historic overlay districts it imposes no additional protective zoning requirements beyond those of the "underlying" district. Results from the community survey and town meeting show a split in the community as to the effectiveness of zoning to implement historic preservation.

In some states enabling legislation requires that local historic districts be official zoning districts. Alaska zoning enabling legislation does not specifically mention historic preservation as a legitimate purpose of zoning. When this is the case, it is wise to consider basing a local preservation program on some authority other than zoning.

Role of the Historic Preservation Commission

➡ Article 2.30.400 of the City Code establishing a Seward Historic Preservation Commission (SHPC) directs the commission to:

.....act in advisory role to other officials and departments of local government regarding identification and protection of local historic and archaeological resources (2.30.425, A.4) and;

.....review local projects and recommendations about the effect on properties identified in the local historic preservation inventory.

The commission performs these functions as issues and concerns are brought before them by private owners or through administrative reports. Involvement in private sector projects relies upon the disposition of the applicant. Involvement in public works relies upon public vigilance and the cooperation among city staff. Projects involving federal funding fall under Section 106 review are required to seek commission approval. These have included the Alaska SeaLife Center project, Seward Highway project Mile 0-38, and the military camps.

Administrative reports and citizen participation provide a "link" between historic preservation and Planning and Zoning (P&Z). The commission may review a project and forward a recommendation to P&Z. The commission may, but is not directed to, appear at P&Z hearings to raise preservation concerns. There is nothing stated to determine how the recommendations made by the commission are taken into account; the role of the commission to all officials and groups is advisory only. The commission receives no special notice of P&Z meetings and agendas other than the standard public notice process; agendas appear in the paper one week before, public hearing notices are published two weeks in advance.

The SHPC has the authority to review and act in an advisory capacity to the P&Z Commission and City Council with regard to properties listed on the local historic site inventory, however there is no stated review process upon which to base their recommendations.

Recommendations/Summary

➡ Other than federal projects, items scheduled for review by the Historic Preservation Commission are subject to the voluntary actions of private citizens and the keenness of administrative staff. Currently, with an administrative staff attuned to historic preservation this presents no problem. If the staff should change, subjects for review would be subject to the disposition of their successors; there are no clear-cut guidelines as to what the commission should review.

There are several actions which can progress towards a goal of incorporating historic preservation into the planning process. Some actions listed here are not included in the Agenda For Future Action as overall community feedback did not indicate a desire to enact additional local legislation and zoning requirements as a strategy to implement historic preservation. Such actions are included for future reference and consideration in the annual plan review and revision process.

1. The SHPC should consider developing a review process which establishes guidelines for review of local projects which might affect historic properties, especially those identified in this plan. Goals and objectives generated by the Commission and community input could be used to develop guidelines upon which the Commission could base their recommendations.

An ordinance could be considered which would require Historic Preservation Commission review of land use actions involving properties on the local historic register, the local historic site inventory, or historic overlays districts and clarify the relationship with the P&Z Commission in such actions. The Commission would need to develop guidelines for consideration.

2. Building permits issued by the City of Seward could be cross referenced with the historic resources survey and the Seward Register of Historic Places. If listed the building permit could be scheduled for review and recommendations by the Community Development Department and the Historic Preservation Commission. The Commission would need to develop guidelines for review and approval/disapproval. The process could have a positive effect and be limited to alerting the owner to the historical significance of the property, historical properties provisions in the Uniform Building Code, and alerting them to incentives and benefits of preservation. This could be implemented by adding a historic resource survey cross reference to the zoning site plan review checklist completed by the Community Development Department for all city building permit applications.

3. Currently, historic districts are classified as Overlay District H-Historic District on the official zoning map of the City. By definition, overlay districts can impose additional requirements above that required by the underlying zone (Moscowitz). Through ordinance, additional requirements that conserve and protect the historic district could be applied. This may require the assistance of an architect to identify essential design elements to help develop guidelines although many communities use the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation. Again, it should be noted that community sentiment is split on the use of zoning to pursue historic preservation. Any changes in the current historic districts zoning would need to be initiated by a petition of registered voters, a majority of the property owners, or the P&Z Commission and be approved by the City Council.

Agenda for Future Action

This plan has set forth community goals for historic preservation in Seward along with an historical perspective and background of the political and economic framework within which these goals will be achieved. Although goals, by definition, may be lofty, an agenda for action must be reasonable in identifying steps towards accomplishing those goals. In a small community such as Seward, it is unreasonable to expect that a position in the city government would be created dedicated to historic preservation oversight and development. If the responsibility continues to fall within the Community Development Department, the staff of two persons can hardly be expected to devote more than a small percentage of their time to historic preservation efforts.

Given the present resources, the following agenda for action is set forth to move toward the historic preservation goals cited in the plan. Goals and objectives were generated by work sessions with the Seward Historic Preservation Commission and refined through public input. Activities have been developed as more specific "tasking" for the objectives from research conducted on the plan. Target dates and responsibilities have not been set forth; it is suggested that these "steps" be prioritized and assigned by the Seward Historic Preservation Commission in conjunction with the Community Development Department and incorporated into annual work plans and long range planning.

Goal #1 Maintain the historic character of Seward while encouraging its development as a commercial, cultural and tourist center.

Objectives:

1. City Council adopt a local historic preservation plan.
2. Identify and develop financial incentives for restoration and preservation of historic structures.
3. Encourage adaptive re-use, rehabilitation, and maintenance of historic structures from all periods of Seward history.
4. Provide informational services (i.e. workshops, printed information) to business and property owners about economic benefits of historic preservation.
5. Encourage and facilitate community involvement in historic preservation through local organizations as demonstrated by the Iditarod Trail Blazers, Seward Women's Club, Resurrection Bay Historical Society, Seward Senior Citizens and the Seward Library Association.

Activities:

1. Establish calendar for adoption of plan by City Council by July '96.
2. Develop and provide concise information on financial incentives and benefits of historic preservation to property owners.
3. Develop and provide a directory of help/information services on historic preservation including how to obtain local, state and federal historic listing status, and current listing sources available.
4. Set up a workshop with the State Historic and Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the National Trust for Historic Preservation on benefits of historic preservation for local business and property owners.
5. Recognize and support community efforts in historic preservation.
6. Seek funding (National Trust for Historic Preservation) to assist in defining historic character and suggest design guidelines for existing historic districts.

Goal #2 **Ally historic preservation and economic development in Seward through the promotion of heritage tourism and adaptive re-use of historic buildings and structures.**

Objectives:

1. Make accurate and consistent historical information available to business, charter and cruise operators, and the Chamber of Commerce.
2. Document historic properties for the local and National Historic Register.
3. Promote and monitor continued maintenance of established monuments and parks such as the Founder's, Iditarod, Benny Benson, and Hoben monuments and flag raising site at Jesse Lee Home.
4. Encourage the private sector to take an active role in historic preservation by identifying advantages of heritage tourism and preservation incentives.

Activities:

1. Encourage the Resurrection Bay Historical Society to organize local

historical information for business and visitor services and/or be involved in materials review. They may consider requesting a fee for these services.

2. Develop a system of recognition (signage) for national, state and local register properties; identify potential funding source; encourage owners to utilize. If no funds are identified, pursue a sponsorship program.
3. Work with the Parks and Recreation Department to incorporate historic preservation goals into park planning and management; identify annual maintenance requirements; solicit involvement of community groups, i.e. adopt a park/monument.
4. Work with the Seward Chamber of Commerce to provide accurate historic information and incorporate heritage aspects into Seward promotional information (already prevalent in the visitor's guide.)
5. Encourage formation of an ad-hoc group with commission, community groups, city, local business and visitor services members to evaluate the potential of heritage tourism in meeting the goals of historic preservation and economic development in a growing visitor industry.
6. Provide recognition for outstanding community efforts in historic preservation and heritage tourism.

Goal #3 Identify and preserve the diverse aspects of Seward's history: buildings, structures, sites, trails, landscapes, archives, transportation facilities, downtown district and artifacts.

Objectives:

1. Identify significant historic properties threatened by development, neglect, abandonment, or erosion.
2. Establish and nominate a downtown historic district to the National Register of Historic Places.
3. Insure that policies and ordinances for preservation protect private property rights.
4. Encourage city government to take a leadership role in restoring and preserving city owned historic properties.
5. Rehabilitate and map cemeteries in the Seward area.

6. Encourage proper archival care for city, library and museum archives and collections.
7. Cooperate with local native groups to encourage archaeological survey in the Resurrection Bay area.
8. Prepare indexes of local newspapers and photo collections held by the local library and museum.

Activities:

1. Continue to monitor Jesse Lee Home status and support the efforts to save it. Seek statewide support.
2. Monitor progress of Seward Historic Transportation Gateway District.
3. Pursue a National Register nomination for the downtown historic district in cooperation with Downtown Business Association and property owners. Seek funds to identify period of significance and suggest design guidelines.
4. Monitor Alaska SeaLife Center (ASLC) Section 106 requirements.
5. Rehabilitate and map local cemeteries.
6. Monitor city fund requests to manage city archives; if not forthcoming pursue through city budget process.
7. Encourage the Public Works Department and local contractors to consult the local historic site inventory before commencing projects affecting historic properties; inform Community Development Department and Historic Preservation Commission.
8. Identify funding sources to support archiving of library photo and newspaper collections.

Goal #4 Integrate historic preservation into Seward's city planning process to insure preservation decision making becomes routine in land use planning.

Objectives:

1. Advocate for the Historic Preservation Commission to become involved in the building permit review process regarding properties listed on the local historic inventory.
2. Maintain open communication between the Historic Preservation Commission, the City Council, and the Planning and Zoning Commission.
3. Insure the role of the Historic Preservation Commission in land use planning issues remains simple, straight forward and positive.

Activities:

1. Add requirements to Community Development Department's Zoning Site Plan Review checklist to cross reference building permit applications with the Local Historic Site Inventory. Inform the owner of the property's historic status, restoration incentives, and exemptions in the Uniform Building Code.
2. Continue to develop an open working relationship between the Historic Preservation Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission.
3. Include historic preservation goals in the city Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan.
4. Define the function of a historic overlay district.
5. Develop and implement a review process to guide Historic Preservation Commission recommendations on local projects affecting historic properties, especially those noted in the plan.

Goal #5 Encourage community understanding and appreciation of Seward history.

Objectives:

1. Make historic information readily available to the public.
2. Develop a directory of where Seward historic information is available.

3. Develop a guide on how to conduct local historic research.
4. Encourage Kenai Peninsula Community College to offer courses in local and Alaska history, restoration and preservation.
5. Encourage city-wide participation in the celebration of national, state and local historic anniversaries such as Historic Preservation Week, Seward's Day and Founder's Day.

Activities:

1. Invite local groups and individuals to participate in annual work planning of the historic preservation commission.
2. Encourage local groups i.e. Iditarod Trail Blazers, Resurrection Bay Historical Society, Women's Club, Seward Seniors, Qutekcak Native Association, to share information on their activities with the historic preservation commission.
3. Develop a directory of historic research sources in Seward.
4. Encourage city wide participation in celebration of national, state and local historic anniversaries.
5. Request Community Schools and Community College offerings in local history, research and restoration.
6. Promote the teaching of local and Alaska history in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District high schools.

Plan Implementation

➡ Completion of the Seward Historic Preservation Plan marks another chapter in the story of local efforts to improve the community. Participation in the planning process by local residents is evidence of the value placed on maintaining the "historic character" of Seward. The roles for government, private preservation organizations and individual property owners will be expanded and refined in the years to come

Community input has indicated sentiments that the future of historic preservation in Seward rests primarily with private individuals, groups and cooperative efforts. However, the community expects city government to take a leadership role in the protection and preservation of historic sites over which it has direct control. As discussed earlier, the City has already demonstrated a willingness to step forward in a wide range of projects and initiatives. The City of Seward should consider the lead of other municipalities by involving all city departments in historic preservation. City departments should consider the value of historic resources in all projects involving their review and participation. Identification of resources could come from the historic inventory summary and guidance from the Historic Preservation Commission and should extend to public rights of way, infrastructure development, parks and city owned properties. Decisions regarding maintenance, demolition, or disposition of city-owned historic properties should merit recommendations from the Historic Preservation Commission and the community. Historic preservation goals and objectives should be considered for incorporation into the city's current strategic plan.

The success of historic preservation in Seward will rely upon the combined efforts of interested citizens and property owners, the City of Seward, the Seward Historic Preservation Commission, and local groups such as Iditarod Trail Blazers, Resurrection Bay Historical Society, Seward Women's Club, Seward Seniors and the Seward Community Library Association.

Plan Adoption

➡ Present the plan to the public in general, the Planning and Zoning Commission and Historic Preservation Commission for review and recommendations.

➡ Planning and Zoning Commission and Historic Preservation Commission approve a resolution recommending City Council adoption of the plan.

➡ City Council approve a resolution adopting the Seward Historic Preservation Plan.

Plan Review and Revision

➡ Annually in April, the Seward Historic Preservation Commission will hold a work session to review the plan and determine progress in meeting stated goals, whether goals and activities should be redefined, and reevaluate priorities. This process will form the basis to develop an annual work plan for the Commission. Efforts should be made to involve interested constituent groups who contributed to the plan, i.e. Resurrection Bay Historical Society, Seward Community Library, Seward Women's Club, and the Iditarod Trailblazers. Recommended changes and revisions to the plan may be made at this time by majority decision of the Commission.

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Appendix A. Chronicle of Seward Phoenix Log Articles January 1994-July 1995

- 1) Feb 24 >Hope artist wins Phoenix Bicentennial Logo Contest
- 2) Mar 10 >Historians Lydia Black and Richard Pierce to speak on the Russian-American history of Resurrection Bay.
>Seward's Day celebration held at museum
>Museum installs computer to answer students\visitors questions about the 1964 earthquake.
- 3) Mar 17 >James Leirer Memorial Bookcase purchased for library rare Alaskana book collection.
- 4) Mar 24 >Consultants to study social (historical\archeological) and economic impact of Alaska SeaLife Center Project.
>30th anniversary of earthquake spurs reunion of Seward's earthquake survivors.
- 5) Mar 31 >Earthquake survivors invited to tell tales.
- 6) Apr 14 >Uncovering archeology in 6th grade classrooms
>Talent show includes plays on Rockwell Kent and building of Phoenix
- 7) May 19 >Local archeologist teaches 6th graders how to dig history at waterfront demonstration site
- 8) May 26 >Historic Preservation Commission targets Jesse Lee Home for National Register Nomination.
- 9) Jun 6 >\$200,000 awarded for "antique" street lights
- 10) Jul 14 >City intern writes Certified Local Government (CLG) application, Historic Preservation Commission creation, first phase of Historic Preservation
>Plan completed, Jesse Lee Home National Register nomination funded.
- 11) Jul 21 >City manager guest commentary "The Future of Jesse Lee Home"
>Plaque to be unveiled by Methodists at Jesse Lee Home
- 12) Aug 11 >Citizen concerns about impact of Alaska SeaLife Center project on archeological resources expressed at Planning and Zoning Commission. State archaeologists sees no archeological concerns with project.
- 13) Aug 25 >Council fails to support conditions placed on conditional use permit for the Alaska SeaLife Center project. Archeological monitoring still required condition of permit.
- 14) Sep 1 >Founders Day celebration announced
- 15) Sep 8 >Mitch Seavey announces he will recreate historic Seward to Iditarod run.
- 16) Sep 22 >P&Z Commission conditions on SeaLife Center project not approved by City Council. Archeological monitoring still required.
- 17) Nov 3 >Library auctions historic Swetmann memorabilia to raise funds
- 18) Nov 23 >"Interest in Seward's history on rise"
 - a) Historic photo calendar produced
 - b) Historic streetlights ordered
 - c) Historic Preservation Commission requests permission of city council to apply for grant to complete Phase II of Historic Preservation report and plan
 - d) Possibility of local historic building register discussed
 - e) Historic building walking tour guide updated produced by Donna Kowalski

- 19) Dec 29 >Historic Methodist Church goes up in fire
- 20) Feb 23 >Seavey will mush entire Iditarod Trail
- 21) Mar 2 >Historic trip, Mitch Seavey finishes Seward-Anchorage run prepares to depart for Nome
>Seniors want to restore and use Jesse Lee Home
- 22) Mar 16 >"Local Teacher has some tales to tell about Seward" Doug Capra's book A Handful of Pebbles about Seward's history published.
- 23) Mar 30 >Photographer captures bits of southwest Alaska life in early 1900's; John Thwaites photos (early Seward residents)
- 24) May 11 >Seniors wish to purchase Jesse Lee Home
- 25) May 25 >Archeology in the school project - 6th grade students dig up clues about past
- 26) Jun 8 >Newly formed Alaska Nellie Historical Society Meets
- 27) Jun 22 >City Council shaves library funds for curating historical photos/documents.
- 28) Jul 13 >Archeology monitoring at SeaLife Center, state archeologist to let excavations continue.

Appendix B. Seward Historical Site Inventory

Appendix C. Community Survey

Following is a summary of survey responses:

1. Which category best describes you? (Note: Some cited more than one category)

Local govt	4	Non-profit agency	1
State Agency	2	Private Business	15
Federal Agency	2	Private Citizen	27
Other (Borough)	3		

2. Describe how you envision the growth of Seward by the year 2005.

Increased tourism	24	Rapid growth	7
Steady growth	19	Changes/impacts from ASLC	8
Growth outside city (annexation)	10		

3. List what you consider significant historic resources:

Depot/Hoben Park	27	Benny Benson Memorial	7
Jesse Lee Home	23	Van Gilder Hotel	7
Downtown (14/9 general/specific Bldg.)	23	Resurrect Art	6
Millionaire's Row	13	Ballaine House	5
St. Peter's Episcopal Church	11	Navy Radio Station	5
Iditarod Trail	8		

Also cited: 2 to 4 notations: small homes/cottages, Liberty Theater, Railroad Car (information cache), cemeteries, archives, archaeological sites, railroad houses on Fourth Ave, Marathon Mtn, waterfront, parks, library, Quonset huts, Ft Raymond.

4. Rate the impacts of the following on historic and archaeological properties in the Seward area:

	<i>Minor</i>	\leftrightarrow	<i>Impacts</i>	\Rightarrow	<i>Major</i>
	1	2	3	4	5
Development Pressure	9	8	6	6	15
Natural Resource Development	12	11	11	7	2
Population Shifts	6	9	11	8	5
Lack of Funds	2	3	6	9	25
Inappropriate Renovations	5	6	8	12	13
Abandonment/Neglect	0	0	6	17	24
Water/Erosion	3	5	12	11	12
Road Construction	13	10	9	7	2
Tourism	7	4	10	11	10
Other	0	0	0	0	0

5. What proposed development, clean-up or other activities threaten historical and archaeological sites in the Seward area?

Alaska SeaLife Center:	4	Increased traffic:	3
Depot/Hoben Park status:	3	Jesse Lee Home litigation:	3
Fort Raymond (construction):	3		

Also cited: flood danger, waterfront development, open space development, "overdone archaeological concerns," lack of development, logging within view of Resurrection Bay, archaeological sites have been lost to earthquake and erosion.

6. What programs, projects, and/or events highlight preservation in Seward?

Museum/Founder's Day, Bicentennial of Phoenix:	15
Resurrection Bay Historical Society:	9
Effort of Seniors to save Jesse Lee Home:	7
Historic Walking Tour:	6
Efforts of private property owners:	5
Iditarod (Seavey's '94 start from Seward):	5
Historic Preservation Commission:	4
4th of July Celebration/Mt. Marathon Race:	6
Efforts of Women's Club for Depot:	3
Downtown business owners efforts:	3
Library archives:	3

Also cited more than once: Kenai Fjords National Park archaeology awareness program, cemetery plotting.

7. a. What value do you place on Seward's historic and archaeological properties? (1=low; 5=high) 2) 1 response; 3) 9 responses; 4) 9 responses; 5) 16 responses

7. b. What value do you think the community places on these resources?

1) 4 responses 2) 11 responses 3) 11 responses 4) 4 responses 5) 4 responses

8. What opportunities exist for adaptive use of historic buildings and properties in Seward?

19	Depot/Hoben Park (museum, gallery, performing arts, community center, native cultural center, community hall, gateway interpretive site)
6	Jesse Lee Home (Seward Senior Citizen's proposal)
7	Heritage tourism and interpretation (signage)
4	Private investment
	General comments: Need to use, not just preserve, historic sites.

9. Considering the current political and economic climate in Seward, rate historic preservation assistance that would be most effective.

	<i>Least Effective</i>				<i>Most Effective</i>
	1	2	3	4	5
Local Protective Legislation	7	4	12	2	14
State Protective Legislation	10	6	11	4	9
Local Economic Incentives	0	3	7	12	18
State Economic Incentives	2	3	9	10	14
Private Financial Incentives	0	1	9	10	14
Nonprofit Financial Incentives	2	1	11	12	10
Public Education	1	1	9	12	16
Other	0	0	0	0	money!

10. What historic and archaeological properties are you most interested in? Feel are most endangered?

Jesse Lee Home:	12	Archaeological sites:	3
Depot:	11	Greenbelt:	3
Railroad Car (information cache):	6	Navy Radio Station:	3
Downtown:	4	Woodlawn Cemetery:	2
St. Peter's Episcopal Church:	4		

Appendix D. Town Meeting Agenda

November 15, 1995

hosted by: Seward Historic Preservation Commission

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Purpose of the Meeting
- B. Format
- C. Introduce Commissioners/Staff

II. ROLE OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

- A. Background
- B. Activities

III. DOES SEWARD'S PAST HAVE A PLACE IN ITS FUTURE?

IV. WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER SEWARD'S GREATEST HISTORIC TREASURES?

V. ARE ANY OF THESE SITES THREATENED? (by growth, development, abandonment, deterioration)

VI. WHAT IS/ARE THE BEST WAYS TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE HISTORIC PROPERTIES?

VII. OPEN MIKE

VIII. WRAP UP

