



Agenda

City Council Worksession

Monday, November 10, 2025 at 4:00 PM

City Hall Cowles Council Chambers In-Person & Via Zoom Webinar

Homer City Hall

491 E. Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603
www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Zoom Webinar ID: 965 8631 4135 Password: 792566

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CALL TO ORDER, 4:00 P.M.

AGENDA APPROVAL (Only those matters on the noticed agenda may be considered, pursuant to City Council's Operating Manual, pg. 6)

DISCUSSION TOPIC(S)

- a. Ordinance 25-64, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Adopting the City of Homer 2045 Comprehensive Plan and Recommending Adoption by the Kenai Peninsula Borough City Manager.

Memorandum CC-25-254 from City Manager as backup

Memorandum CC-25-242 from Planning Director/Community Dev. Director as backup.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE (3 minutes)

ADJOURNMENT

Next Regular Meeting is Monday, November 24, at 6 p.m., Worksession at 4:00 pm., Committee of the whole at 5:00 p.m. All meetings scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.



MEMORANDUM

**Ordinance 25-64, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska Adopting the City of Homer 2045 Comprehensive Plan and Recommending Adoption by the Kenai Peninsula Borough.
City Manager.**

Item Type: Backup Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor Lord and Homer City Council
Date: October 13, 2025
From: Ryan Foster, City Planner
Through: Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager

The attached ordinance will adopt the 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan. Staff recommends the Council introduce Ordinance 25-64, set a public hearing at a subsequent regular meeting, and adopt the 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan with staff-recommended amendments. Staff also recommends that the Council request adoption of the plan by the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

Background

The 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan reflects a multi-year process of research, outreach, and collaboration. Between 2023 and 2025, the project team engaged hundreds of residents, businesses, and organizations through surveys, open houses, interviews, community events, and meetings with the City Council, Planning Commission, boards, commissions, committees, staff, and community entities. This extensive effort, summarized in Appendix C: Methodology, confirms that the plan is grounded in broad community input and reflects the shared values and priorities of Homer residents. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Public Hearing Draft of the 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan on August 20, 2025, then closed the hearing to public testimony and postponed to the following meeting date. On September 3, 2025, the Commission voted to forward the plan to the City Council along with five individual sets (from five Planning Commissioners) of recommended potential amendments. When combined and analyzed, these submittals resulted in a total of 107 potential amendments to the plan. The Commission voted to forward individual Commissioner comments in their entirety, without distinguishing which amendments carried majority support from the Commission. To aid the City Council in their decision-making, the project team has reviewed Planning Commissioner comments and staff have prepared a list of proposed amendments, summarized below, and identified in more detail in Attachment 1.

Disposition of Planning Commission Suggestions

Planning Commissioners submitted five individual sets of suggestions with limited deliberation on many items. Staff have organized Commissioner comments into two categories for clarity in Attachment 1:

- **Amendments Recommended for Adoption:** These are amendments that have support through the public process, align with most inputs received to date, improve accuracy of the plan, facilitate implementation, and/or correct technical errors.
 - Includes **2 substantive** amendments.
 - Includes **17 technical** amendments.
- **Amendments that are Not Recommend for Adoption:** These are amendments that lack support through the public process, conflict with inputs received to data, including the plan framework or data, or lack sufficient detail for direct implementation.
 - Includes **87** amendments.

Attachment 1 provides rationale for Planning Commissioner proposed amendments.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Introduce Ordinance 25-64 at the October 13th Council Meeting;
- B. Hold a public hearing on the Public Hearing Draft at a subsequent meeting; and
- C. Adopt staff-recommended amendments identified in Attachment 1 along with Ordinance 25-64

Attachments:

1. Staff recommended amendments to the Public Hearing Draft Comprehensive Plan
2. Public Hearing Draft of the 2045 Comprehensive Plan
3. Planning Commission August 20, 2025 Memorandum 25-038
4. Planning Commission August 20, 2025 Supplemental: Presentation and Public Comments
5. Planning Commission August 20, 2025 Laydown: Additional Public Comments
6. Planning Commission August 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes
7. Planning Commission September 3, 2025 Laydown: Planning Commissioner Comments
8. Planning Commission September 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes
9. Public Comments received from the City Clerk's Office

Attachment I:

Staff Response to Planning Commission Comments

Following the Planning Commission's September 3, 2025 action to forward individual Planning Commissioner comments on the Public Hearing Draft of the 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan, the project team reviewed all 107 comments for clarity, consistency, and alignment with the goals of the plan. This attachment summarizes the project team review, dividing amendments into those recommended for adoption and those not recommended. The original recommendations submitted by individual Planning Commissioners are included in Attachment 1.

Amendments Recommended for Adoption

These are amendments that have support through the public process, align with most inputs received to date, improve accuracy of the plan, facilitate implementation, and/or correct technical errors.

Substantive Amendments

#	Component, Chapter, Page #	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
I	Core Plan Introduction, Page 7	Include the following language to introduce the plan: "The 2045 comprehensive plan serves as an aspirational guide for shaping the long-term vision, growth, and development of our community. It is a blueprint sets forth goals, strategies, and actions to inform policy-making and decision-making across land use, infrastructure, housing, transportation, and environmental stewardship. The plan is a living document-intended to be periodically reviewed and amended in response to changing conditions, emerging needs, and evolving community values. Its implementation must always be grounded in the realities of available public resources and pursued in a fiscally responsible and sustainable manner to ensure its relevance and effectiveness serves the community's best interest over time."	Smith, H	This recommendation was broadly supported by Planning Commission members during the August 20 meeting and refined during the September 3 meeting. The language conforms to the overall tone/theme of the plan to balance the aspirational and practical functions of the plan.

#	Component, Chapter, Page #	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
2	Core Plan Transportation, Page 47	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: Please identify as an Action, "Implement recommendations from the Homer Transportation Plan."	Venuti	This action is implied throughout the chapter and other policies, but never explicitly stated.

Technical Amendments

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By
1	Executive Summary, Page 1	The Table of Contents should be at the very beginning of the document.	Venuti; Harness
2	Executive Summary, Page 4	Add to "Top Priorities and Projects for Homer to Focus on for the Next 10-20 Years:" Increase access to recreational opportunities for visitors and residents.	Staff recommendation (also included in Barnwell comments)
3	Core Plan Introduction, Page 8	Change "make the code clearer and more easy to use" to "make the code more effective, efficient and user friendly"	Smith, S
4	Executive Summary Land Use and Environment, Page 8	[Future Land Use Map] "properties associated with Homer Airport" is vague. [Staff to revise to remove 'properties' and replace with state lands.]	Barnwell
5	Core Plan Introduction, Page 8	Add sentence: "The 2018 Plan emphasized the use of Green Infrastructure. This Plan recognizes the importance of green infrastructure (aka nature based solutions), but frames these needs in terms of drainage and stormwater management."	Barnwell
6	Executive Summary Transportation, Page 15	Missing: Walkability goals (see Core Plan vision and other), although connectivity is emphasized. [Staff to add language that connects this chapter to the 2024 Transportation Plan as the Core Plan does. Walkability also emphasized in themes, goal A, and Strategies 1, 4, and 5]	Barnwell
7	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 19	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: suggest the explanation about what a Future Land Use Map is be moved from Page 19 to Page 17, before Figure 7.	Venuti
8	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 19	Move content from page 19 "what is future land use vs. zoning" to before the table on page 17	Harness

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By
9	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 25	Remove the second 'planning' from "The City of Homer provides a range of services, including water, sewer, planning, road maintenance, community development, recreation, parks, port and harbor management, fire protection, law enforcement, planning, and emergency services.	Smith, S
10	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 25	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: There's a nice quote, on Page 25 of the PRD that has been omitted from the PHD: ""Future growth should consider how development may impact environmental resources both inside and outside the city boundary." Please put it back.	Venuti
11	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 27	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: The PRD, Page 27, includes Strategy (7) about developing policies for specific community areas, which is not in the PHD. Please put it back. If Strategy (7) in the PHD is supposed to take the place of (7) in the PRD, please add the additional, descriptive language that is in the PRD [Staff notes that this language was removed from the PFS chapter to reduce duplication with the LUE chapter, but should be cross referenced.]	Venuti
12	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 29	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: Includes Strategy (4) related to new facilities on the Homer Spit. It includes Action (a) regarding the harbor expansion. i. This action should be in Strategy (3) related to Port/Harbor Infrastructure.	Venuti
13	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 29	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: Includes Strategy (4) related to new facilities on the Homer Spit. It includes Action (a) regarding the harbor expansion. ii. I don't like the way the sentence says "[s]upport a harbor expansion..." without qualification. This sounds like the outcome is pre-supposed; that is, that the city will move forward with the harbor expansion, no matter what. It is true that the City Council is supporting the project at this time, but this is still qualified support. Feasibility and affordability must be still be demonstrated. I recommend using language like "continue to explore the operational, financial and environmental feasibility of a harbor expansion" because that is what we are doing.	Venuti
14	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 30	Change Strategy 6: "Increase the City's capacity to provide and expand community services and improve the synergy between the City and other community partners to maximize resource and investments." to "Be responsive to community driven desires to enhance community services. Improve the synergy between the City and other community partners to maximize resources and investments."	Smith, H
15	Core Plan Economic Development, Page 41	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: The PHD has an Action (1)(a), Page 41, that says we should "incentivize growth of the marine trades". This makes it sound like we're going to do this whether it makes sense economically or environmentally. Please put some limitations around this, such as saying "support sustainable growth of the marine trades..."	Venuti

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By
16	Core Plan Transportation, Page 47	Clarify the City's roll in Goal B. Explain how the City plays a roll in "maintaining" a network outside of its city limits? Advocacy? "within" greater homer area. [Note: Staff to change Goal B to: Maintain a sustainable and safe motorized transportation network year-round to move people and goods to, from, and within the Greater Homer Area.]	Smith, H
17	Appendix B Glossary	Provide a suitable definition of "ensure" in Appendix B so that users of this document understand that outcomes of efforts cannot be guaranteed. Or use another word.	Smith, H

Not Recommended for Adoption

These are amendments that lack support through the public process, conflict with inputs received to data, including the plan framework or data, or lack sufficient detail for direct implementation.

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
1	Core Plan, Introduction, Page 2	Correct the double (::) between Agnew Beck	Smith, S	Not an error.
2	Executive Summary, Page 4	Add to "Top Priorities and Projects for Homer to Focus on for the Next 10-20 Years:" "provide for utilities infrastructure that supports development in appropriately zoned areas." (Note: this refers to survey "Increase the diversity of Homer's economy and economic foundations 73%")	Barnwell	Not an error - does not match survey question or response language.
3	Executive Summary, Page 4	Edit to "Top Priorities and Projects for Homer to Focus on for the Next 10-20 Years:" instead of "Preserve open public spaces within the city from development" use "Protect open public spaces within the city."	Barnwell	Not an error - does not match survey question or response language.
4	Core Plan Introduction, Page 5	Homer Profile Population numbers for Homer and Soldotna are very similar. I question the Soldotna numbers. And Kenai numbers. Are the Soldotna numbers from the COS?	Barnwell	This section of plan does not exist; not enough info to implement this change.

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
5	Core Plan Introduction, Page 6	Homer Workforce: As shown, “retail” is the highest percentage of jobs. Given this (I question it), has the Team thoroughly canvassed retail industries in Homer? If so, where is this in the Plan?	Barnwell	This section of plan does not exist; not enough info to implement this change.
6	Core Plan Introduction, Page 7	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: The PRD had a Figure 4, Page 10, which listed all the public outreach events that were held to collect input about the plan. This was important information because it showed the City’s efforts to include a broad range of opinions. The PHD does not include this figure. Was it put someplace else?	Venuti	This information is included in Appendix C: Methodology to accommodate the broad support received from the public, Council, and Planning Commission to reduce the size of the Core Plan to increase usability of the plan.
7	Executive Summary Land Use and Environment, Page 8	[Future Land Use Map] Areas shown as Commercial don’t align with open space, green infrastructure, and conservation goals.	Barnwell	There is not enough information to support a map change, and in many cases commercial, industrial and conservation uses might co-exist through site design standards, green infrastructure requirements, and buffers—without reclassifying land use designations.
8	Executive Summary Land Use and Environment, Page 8	[Future Land Use Map] Multiple uses” conflict with conservation, e.g. commercial.	Barnwell	There is not enough information to support a map change, and in many cases commercial, industrial and conservation uses might co-exist through site design standards, green infrastructure requirements, and buffers—without reclassifying land use designations.
9	Executive Summary Land Use and Environment, Page 8	[Future Land Use Map] Manufacturing and “supportive infrastructure” is in conflict with land use conservation and open space	Barnwell	There is not enough information to support a map change, and in many cases commercial, industrial and conservation uses might co-exist through site design standards, green infrastructure requirements, and buffers—without reclassifying land use designations.

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
10	Executive Summary Land Use and Environment, Page 8	[Future Land Use Map] Environmental constraint overlay as shown on p. 11 in conflict with “commercial” designation as shown on map	Barnwell	There is not enough information to support a map change, and in many cases commercial, industrial and conservation uses might co-exist through site design standards, green infrastructure requirements, and buffers—without reclassifying land use designations.
11	Executive Summary Land Use and Environment, Page 8	[Future Land Use Map] Environmental constraint overlay as shown on p. 11 in conflict with “commercial” designation as shown on map. Key themes as mentioned in sustainability and resilience refer to “open space and natural lands support long-term community well being.”	Barnwell	There is not enough information to support a map change, and in many cases commercial, industrial and constrained lands might co-exist through site design standards, green infrastructure requirements, and buffers—without reclassifying land use designations.
12	Executive Summary Land Use and Environment, Page 8	[Future Land Use Map] Airport category intended uses is contradictory: manufacturing, etc. doesn’t mix well with conservation. Conservation: maintained as undisturbed and natural state conflicts with certain areas such as Airport commercial land use.	Barnwell	Not an error - Combination of heavy industrial and critical habitat into an 'airport' land use designation was requested during the joint council/pc meeting in June. Further, these two designations mirror state plan land classifications for this area.
13	Executive Summary Land Use and Environment, Page 8	[Future Land Use Map] Include the following area plans as area plan overlays: Diamond Cr. Recreational Area, Gateway District, Woodard Creek Watershed.	Barnwell	This idea was not broadly supported during the Planning Commission’s deliberations, nor is it representative of the feedback and inputs we heard during the plan process. The DCRA is outside of city limits and the Woodard Creek Watershed's plan was adopted in 2017. There may be an opportunity to add an area plan action for the Gateway Business District during future plan amendments.

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
14	Executive Summary Public Facilities and Services, Page 12	Need a line that considers the of future water supply and planning. Recognize the role that Homer's municipal water supply has in supporting population growth outside the city limits. This includes referencing the existing water and sewer agreements between Homer and Kachemak City. Action items may include: 1. Identify where City water is currently being delivered, 2. Research how other communities use water supply to manage growth.	Barnwell; Harness	The City is not currently experiencing, nor does it anticipate experiencing, water capacity challenges. This has also not been identified as a concern via the public process or from Public Works staff. The community has expressed support for concentrating and guiding growth (e.g., through infill) within City limits rather than focusing or controlling growth outside City limits.
15	Appendix J Implementation Plan, Page 12	Add action ""Investigate commercial transport alternatives connecting Sterling Highway (Bypass) and East End Rd.""	Barnwell	Does not match action language in core plan; the plan directs the community to implement the 2024 Transportation Plan, which includes policies related to establishing an alternate truck route (Objective 1B).
16	Executive Summary Housing, Page 13	Lacks a strategy for zoning that encourages affordable housing, i.e. housing that is accessible to walkable and transportation close to the CBD.	Barnwell	Covered in Land Use and Environment Chapter and cross referenced.
17	Executive Summary Economic Development, Page 14	Missing: Harbor impacts on economy.	Barnwell	Not missing. See 'Fishing and Tourism' theme, see actions under Strategy 1.
18	Executive Summary Governance, Page 16	Mention should be made for the need for drainage infrastructure funded by taxation or some means of city revenue. Other city models for taxation supporting storm water and other infrastructure should be considered, e.g. Anchorage AWWU, and other.	Barnwell	This idea was not broadly supported during the Planning Commission's deliberations, nor is it representative of the feedback and inputs we heard during the plan process.
19	Executive Summary Governance, Page 16	Change instances of "Natural and Climate-Driven Hazards" or "natural hazards" to geohazards	Barnwell	This idea was not broadly supported during the Planning Commission's deliberations, nor is it representative of the feedback and inputs we heard during the plan process. The plan uses

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
				terminology that aligns with FEMA, State of Alaska, and HUD language, ensuring consistency with funding and hazard mitigation planning. Additionally, substituting for “geohazards” would narrow the scope of hazards considered—excluding hazards like wildfire, drought, and extreme weather—and could cause confusion by using a less familiar term not widely recognized in community engagement or regulatory frameworks.
20	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 16	Land Use: Green Infrastructure	Barnwell	Not enough info to implement this change; related policies included in plan.
21	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 16	Goal A: Add "Promote sustainable and moderate growth that preserves Homer's small-town character; and protects important habitat and open spaces."	Barnwell	Adding this phrase to Goal A would be duplicative and blur the distinction between the two goals, which are structured to keep growth management and resource protection as complementary but separate priorities (Goal A focused on directing growth responsibly and Goal B explicitly addressing habitat and open space protection).
22	Appendix J Implementation Plan, Page 16	Correct sentence “Update and adopt the City’s Low-Impact Development Plan (also referred to as the Green Infrastructure – Stormwater Master Plan) to “Update and adopt the City’s Low-Impact Development Plan (<u>and</u> the Green Infrastructure – Stormwater Master Plan)”	Barnwell	This is not an error.

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
23	Appendix J Implementation Plan, Page 16	“Continue to incorporate green infrastructure approaches (e.g., rain gardens, vegetated buffers, permeable surfaces) into City-led projects, and new developments.”	Barnwell	Unnecessary; 'new developments' are encompassed under 'projects'; and change would not match action language in core plan.
24	Appendix J Implementation Plan, Page 16	Add "Develop technical mapping tools, including stormwater drainage basins and flow analysis, to guide City-led infrastructure decisions and support watershed-based planning"	Barnwell	Unnecessary; Already captured in Appendix I: Partner Actions, Sustainability and Resilience Strategy 4h.
25	Appendix J Implementation Plan, Page 16	[Replace hazards with] Geohazards	Barnwell	This idea was not broadly supported during the Planning Commission’s deliberations, nor is it representative of the feedback and inputs we heard during the plan process. The plan uses terminology that aligns with FEMA, State of Alaska, and HUD language, ensuring consistency with funding and hazard mitigation planning. Additionally, substituting for “geohazards” would narrow the scope of hazards considered—excluding hazards like wildfire, drought, and extreme weather—and could cause confusion by using a less familiar term not widely recognized in community engagement or regulatory frameworks.
26	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 18	[Future Land Use Map] Keep the Gateway District. The proposed change from Gateway Business to Commercial Mixed Use does not “preserve scenic views and insure a welcoming entrance to Homer. It should remain as Gateway Business.”	Smith, S; Venuti; Harness	This idea was broadly supported during the public hearing process of the plan, and was vocally supported by the majority of the planning commission (see minutes). Staff notes, however, that the Gateway District is a zone that can be established and preserved under the umbrella of the Commercial Mixed Use land use

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
				designation of the FLUM. This will occur during Title 21 revisions.
27	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 18	[Future Land Use Map] Include the Harbor Expansion in the map.	Smith, S	Harbor expansion is already included on the FLUM as part of the Homer Spit Planning Area Overlay.
28	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 18	Revise 'Conservation' land use designation intent to say ""Public and private lands that serve key environmental functions, such as critical habitat, watershed areas, areas to be maintained in an undisturbed and natural state."	Barnwell	This idea was not broadly supported during the Planning Commission's deliberations, nor is it representative of the feedback and inputs we heard during the plan process. The proposed change overstates the intent by suggesting that all conservation-designated lands must be kept "undisturbed and natural," which could conflict with community-supported uses such as recreation, traditional harvest, or infrastructure siting that are compatible with conservation values.
29	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 18	In Area Plan Overlay, include Woodard Creek Watershed, Diamond Creek Recreation Area, and Gateway District.	Barnwell	This idea was not broadly supported during the Planning Commission's deliberations, nor is it representative of the feedback and inputs we heard during the plan process. The DCRA is outside of city limits and the Woodard Creek Watershed's plan was adopted in 2017. There may be an opportunity to add an area plan action for the Gateway Business District during future plan amendments.

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
30	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 18	[Future Land Use Map] "Airport" area is in large and conflict with the conservation needs in this area.	Barnwell	Combination of heavy industrial and critical habitat into an 'airport' land use designation was requested during the joint council/pc meeting in June.
31	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 18	Add a page of the following text: "The ocean-influenced maritime climate lends to a fairly temperate place by Alaska standards. Average daily temperatures range from 45 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer and 14 to 27 in the winter. Yearly snowfall during the winter averages 55 inches; total annual precipitation is 24 inches. The topography of the region adds to its beauty. The City of Homer is situated in a geographical area referred to as the Homer Bench characterized by high bluffs to the north and gently sloping shorelines in the south. Homer is bounded by Kachemak Bay to the south, and Diamond Ridge to the north, which rises from about 400 to 1,100 feet above sea level. Common rock types include shale, sandstone, coal, and claystone. The steep slopes and the loose nature of the soil and bedrock make the area susceptible to landslides when saturated with water. Homer experiences both bluff and shoreline erosion problems. Homer's location makes it vulnerable to natural hazards including earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, and flooding, as well as the longer term impacts of climate change. There are numerous plans and reports that provide recommendations for improving the resilience of Homer's infrastructure. 16 The Port, Harbor, and the Homer Spit, which are all important components of Homer's economy, are especially vulnerable to severe storms and climate change." Please put the natural hazards verbiage that was in the Spring PRD back into this Plan, as shown above. This is a huge issue for Homer and should not be understated.	Barnwell	Much of this language does not appear in any previous drafts. Some language about "natural hazard verbiage" was moved from the Public Facilities Chapter to the Sustainability and Resilience theme "Natural and Climate-Driven Hazards Increase Risks to People and Infrastructure" during the revision process. Other language was removed because it was redundant. For example, the sentence "There are numerous plans and reports that provide recommendations for improving the resilience of Homer's infrastructure," was removed because the plans and reports are either footnoted in the plan as part of the theme or included in Appendix D: Plan Review.

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
32	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 18	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: Natural hazards. The PRD, Page 18, contained a nice paragraph entitled “Development that fits Natural Conditions”. The only part of this paragraph that appears in the PHD is the first sentence. Please put the rest of the paragraph back as it is important to remind people that natural hazards restrict growth and development on much of Homer’s lands.	Venuti	The longer PRD paragraph was intentionally condensed in the Public Hearing Draft to improve readability, consistent with direction from the June Joint Council/Planning Commission work session. The key themes about how natural hazards restrict growth and development are still carried forward in the PHD through hazard-specific sections and the Land Use & Environment and Sustainability and Resilience chapters. Reintroducing the full PRD text would add redundancy without improving clarity.
33	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 19	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: Gaps. The PRD, Page 19, contained some nice language about the “gaps” in outdoor areas, which is omitted from the PHD. This was good language – please put it back.	Venuti	Language removed or redistributed based on feedback received at the PC/Council joint work session.
34	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 19	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: This map would be more helpful, if the outlines were more distinct; that is, if the outlines followed property boundaries. Without clear boundaries, the Planning Commission is just guessing about which designation applies to specific parcels. This is particularly important when talking about the Environmental Constraints Overlay. If you can’t identify boundaries, maybe you can identify some criteria – some tool the Planning Commission can use identify if a property is supposed to be in the EC Overlay or not.	Venuti	The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is not intended to operate at the parcel level and should not be confused with a zoning map. Its role is to provide broad policy direction that will guide subsequent zoning revisions, which are the tools applied at the property scale. More specifically, the Environmental Constraints Overlay relies on external datasets (e.g., FEMA floodplain, DEC wetlands, and slope analysis), and it is important that applicants and decisionmakers consult those authoritative sources directly rather than treating the FLUM as a regulatory tool. In addition, this concern has been partly addressed through the release of

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
				the interactive online map, which allows users to view layers in more detail than the static plan document. For these reasons, staff does not recommend parcel-level edits to the FLUM.
35	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 21	In Strategy 2h: "Modify zoning and permitting tools to support small business growth and economic resilience, including consideration for locally owned and emerging industries." Define 'emerging industries' and add agricultural and other food production industries important to food security.	Barnwell	This idea was not broadly supported during the Planning Commission's deliberations, nor is it representative of the feedback and inputs we heard during the plan process. More specifically, defining "emerging industries" risks limiting interpreting for the 20-year plan.
36	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 21	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: Please delete the words about "gauging...interest" and substitute the phrase "research and implement zoning and policy tools...."	Venuti	This idea was not broadly supported during the Planning Commission's deliberations, nor is it representative of the feedback and inputs we heard during the plan process.
37	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 21	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: includes Action (h) which refers to "locally owned and emerging industries". Please define "emerging industries," so we know what we're supposed to support. Also, this would be a good place to add "agricultural and other food production industries.	Venuti	This is a 20-year plan, so emerging industries will change over the life of plan and should not be defined to keep plan more flexible.
38	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 22	Add action item under Strategy 4 to "Protect and conserve areas of hydric soils considered important to water storage, stormwater management, open space, and stormwater management."	Barnwell	A this action is duplicative as-written. The draft already (1) maps hydric soils in the Future Land Use Map "Environmental Constraints" overlay, and (2) has multiple actions to use wetlands/green infrastructure for stormwater (see Land Use and Environment strategies 3c-d; 3f; and Sustainability and Resilience strategies 3a-3d).

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
39	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 22	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: In Strategy 3, the PRD contained a number of Actions (b) – (f), that are not contained in the PHD. That was good language – please put it back. What’s currently in the PHD is good, but it needs to be buttressed with the original language of this section.	Venuti	Language redistributed to other actions, Sustainability and Resilience Chapter, or withdrawn due to Council, PC, and Staff comments on PHD.
40	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 22	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: includes Strategy (4) regarding “open, green space”. The PRD contained a number of Actions (a) – (d) that are not contained in the PHD. This was good language – please put it back. What’s currently in the PHD is good, but it needs to be buttressed with the original language from the PRD	Venuti	Language redistributed to other actions, Sustainability and Resilience Chapter, or withdrawn due to Council, PC, and Staff comments on PHD.
41	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 23	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: includes Strategy (5) regarding “place-based planning”. This Strategy was in the PRD, but the Actions that were in the PRD are totally different from what is shown in the PHD. I can’t tell if the PHD’s Actions are intended to encompass the PRD’s Actions or if the intents are different. Some terms from the PRD, such as “broader range of housing types and compatible mixed-use developments,” “public-private partnerships” and “targeted infrastructure upgrades” do not appear in the PHD. These were good phrases. Please put them back.	Venuti	Language redistributed to other actions, Sustainability and Resilience Chapter, or withdrawn due to Council, PC, and Staff comments on PHD.
42	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 24	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: an additional strategy (g) about “adopting building codes and incentive programs to increase energy efficiency and promote renewable energy”. Please add something to the PHD that addresses these important topics if only to refer to the city’s Climate Action Plan.	Venuti	The Climate Action Plan is cited in Sustainability and Resilience Chapter.

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
43	Core Plan Land Use and Environment, Page 24	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: Strategy (6) regarding public-private partnerships. The language about such partnerships in the PRD, page 26, Action (c), was more descriptive. Please put that language back. Also, please don't refer to Strategy 6 and 7 as "Partner -led Strategies". This looks like the city is taking a back-seat to these strategies. Please use language that puts the city in a more proactive position.	Venuti	Language for partner-led v city-led strategies matches the intent from comments received at joint Council / PC work session.
44	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 25	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: The PRD's chapter on Public Facilities & Services had a paragraph, Page 33, on "Vulnerability to Natural Hazards", which is not in the PHD. Please put it back.	Venuti	Language about facilities' vulnerability was moved from the Public Facilities Chapter to the Sustainability and Resilience theme "Natural and Climate-Driven Hazards Increase Risks to People and Infrastructure" during the revision process. Other language was removed because it was redundant.
45	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 26	Last paragraph, Last sentence under: Rising Service Demands and Infrastructure Costs. Substitute the word adequate for insufficient so the last sentence reads: "The water and sewer services within the City are adequate insufficient, and but stormwater runoff impacts the capacity of the wastewater treatment plants."	Harness	The City is not currently experiencing, nor does it anticipate experiencing, water capacity challenges. This has also not been identified as a concern via the public process or from Public Works staff. The community has expressed support for concentrating and guiding growth (e.g., through infill) within City limits rather than focusing or controlling growth outside City limits. This quote was removed from the earlier version for this reason.
46	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 27	Add action: "Move Public Works Campus to a suitable location safe from natural hazards and accessible to the Public and Staff."	Barnwell	Already captured in Sustainability and Resilience Strategy 2a to "Relocate municipal buildings out of tsunami inundation zones where feasible and continue to consider hazard-prone or

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
				unsuitable areas in future development projects.”
47	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 29	Strategy 3: "Maintain and (I)mprove" ... small I is used - change to capital I	Smith, S	Not an error.
48	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 29	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: The PHD, Page 29, includes Strategy (3) related to Port & Harbor Infrastructure. This Strategy lists Action (a) regarding a P/H Management Plan, which I would assume would include a list of important capital projects. This Strategy also lists Action (d) regarding one specific project – the large vessel haul-out area. The P/H needs a lot of projects, so it makes no sense to single out this one particular project in the Comprehensive Plan. It makes more sense to specify, in Action (a), that the Management Plan will include a Capital Improvement Program. Then, this inappropriate call out of the large-vessel haul-out area can be omitted.	Venuti	This idea was not broadly supported during the Planning Commission’s deliberations, nor is it representative of the feedback and inputs we heard during the plan process. More specifically, the large vessel haul out facility was identified as a priority for inclusion in the plan by the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission at their February 26th meeting.
49	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 29	Add action to Port and Harbor Strategy 3: "Develop and maintain a business plan for the Port and Harbor Enterprise that demonstrates well thought out strategies for independent success.	Smith, H	This idea was not broadly supported during the Planning Commission’s deliberations, nor is it representative of the feedback and inputs we heard during the plan process. The Port and Harbor Enterprise operates with financial oversight and long-term planning tools through the City budget process and Capital Improvement Program. Developing a standalone “business plan” could duplicate existing management processes or fall outside the scope of a comprehensive plan.

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
50	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 30	Strategy 9: Capitalize 'State' and 'Federal'	Smith, S	Not an error.
51	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 30	Strategy 5: Include a parking plan for the Spit that includes no parking zones to reduce accidents; limit birder parking to west side of spit road.	Smith, S	This level of detail may be more relevant for a master plan for the Spit, as recommended in Land Use and Environment Strategy 5c.
52	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 31	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: Potential Partner-led Strategies. This looks like the city is taking a back-seat to these strategies. Please use language that puts the city in a more proactive position.	Venuti	Language for partner-led v city-led strategies matches the intent from comments received at joint Council / PC work session.
53	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 31	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: There was a nice quote about infrastructure in the PRD, Page 34, which was omitted in the PHD: "Support our infrastructure. Our water and sewer facilities are at capacity, and we keep building new things with little thought to how we will maintain them." Please put it back.	Venuti	The City is not currently experiencing, nor does it anticipate experiencing, water capacity challenges. This has also not been identified as a concern via the public process or from Public Works staff. The community has expressed support for concentrating and guiding growth (e.g., through infill) within City limits rather than focusing or controlling growth outside City limits. This quote was removed from the earlier version for this reason.
54	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 31	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: , included a Strategy related to roads, which does not appear in the PHD	Venuti	Moved to Transportation and linked with 2024 Transportation Plan.
55	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 31	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: PRD has a more expansive list of airport improvements, which does not appear in the PHD. Please put this list back.	Venuti	Moved to Appendix I: Partner Actions due to PC/Council feedback at joint work session; Airport not City-led

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
56	Core Plan Public Facilities and Services, Page 31	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: Add PRD Strategy related to stormwater, which does not appear in the PHD. Please put it back.	Venuti	Moved language to Sustainability and Resilience Chapter due to Council/PC feedback at joint work session.
57	Core Plan Housing, Page 32	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: The PRD, Page 40, had a nice introductory paragraph about Homer's housing situation, which is somewhat re-stated in the PHD, but not exactly, causing some ideas to be missed. Please add such language back in.	Venuti	The PHD version was intentionally streamlined to improve clarity and reduce redundancy in all chapters, including Housing. Restoring the PRD text would add length without new insights and reverse a deliberate choice made in response to Council/PC direction. Additionally, some language related to short-term rentals in the PRD was removed because parts of it were inaccurate. The PHD combines key housing themes (costs, workforce impacts, livability) into a stronger, more concise summary that still conveys the intent and keeps the majority of the inputs referenced in the PRD.
58	Core Plan Housing, Page 33	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: The PRD, Page 42, had a paragraph about "Tourism's Influence on the Rise of Short-term Rentals in Homer", which does not appear in the PHD. This was valuable context; please put it back.	Venuti	This context was found to be inaccurate after further review of current short-term rental trends in Homer, which was discussed at the Joint Council/PC work session in June. However, the linkage is still discussed as one barrier out of many in the theme "Rising Costs and Land Availability Limit Housing Development Opportunities."
59	Core Plan Housing, Page 34	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: The PRD, Pages 44-45, had more Strategies and Actions related to housing than what is contained within the PHD. That was some good stuff – please put it back.	Venuti	Language removed due to Council, PC, and Staff comments on PRD.

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
60	Core Plan Economic Development, Page 37	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: The PRD, page 55, has a nice graph showing community preferences for growth, which does not appear in the PHD. Please put it back.	Venuti	Unnecessary; this graph was not removed; rather, it appears as Figure 6 in the Introduction Chapter of the PHD.
61	Core Plan Economic Development, Page 42	Strategy 6: "Support access to quality, affordable health care." could "to both private and borough services" be added?	Smith, S	The draft plan reflects community input emphasizing access to health care broadly, without limiting or prioritizing certain providers, and is written to remain consistent with health planning best practices. Adding "private and borough services" may narrow the scope and unintentionally exclude Tribal, regional, nonprofit, or State health providers that also play critical roles in Homer. Keeping the strategy general keeps it inclusive of all health partners.
62	Core Plan Economic Development, Page 42	Strategy 8: "Promote food security" Broaden this topic or have this be a sub-topic within a larger topic of Services/Resources Security	Smith, S	Not enough info implement this change; Appendix I Actions for Partner Strategies already include an action to "identify supply chain vulnerabilities".
63	Core Plan Economic Development, Page 42	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: The strategies in the PHD, Page 41, for Economic Development, are completely different than the economic development strategies listed in the PRD. Some of the PRD's Actions f should be put back, including: 1. Action (2) about "vocational training...year-round employment..." 2. Action (3) about "encouraging economic growth...while preserving the natural resources...valued by residents..." 3. Action (4) about "moderate, sustainable growth in tourism".	Venuti	Actions moved to Partner-led Strategies due to Council/PC feedback at joint work session.

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
64	Core Plan Economic Development, Page 42	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: The PHD, Page 42, includes nine Potential Partner-led Strategies. This looks like the city is taking a back-seat to these strategies. Please use language that puts the city in a more proactive position.	Venuti	Actions moved to Partner-led Strategies due to Council/PC feedback at joint work session.
65	Core Plan, Transportation, Page 44	Missing: Supporting an alternate truck route through downtown.	Smith, S; Barnwell; Venuti.	The plan directs the community to implement the 2024 Transportation Plan, which includes policies related to establishing an alternate truck route (Objective 1B).
66	Core Plan Transportation, Page 44	Transportation Hub - This needs more elaboration on why Homer is a “transportation hub for the region”	Barnwell	Not enough info to implement this change; May be more appropriate to include during plan amendments, updates.
67	Core Plan Transportation, Page 44	The COH non motorized transp plan should be mentioned and referenced.	Barnwell	The 2024 Transportation Plan encompasses 2022 Non-Motorized Transportation goals and objectives.
68	Core Plan Transportation, Page 46	The reference on p.46 needs more elaboration	Barnwell	Not enough info to implement this change
69	Core Plan Transportation, Page 47	Add Goal C: Commit to the development of the Core business/tourist area of Homer upholding the values of walkability, safety, Wayfinding and visual characteristics.	Smith, S	This idea was not broadly supported during the Planning Commission’s deliberations, and the draft plan already reflects community input emphasizing walkability and safety across the entire transportation system. More specifically, the proposed goal overlaps with existing transportation strategies and misplaces issues of wayfinding and visual character, which are better addressed in the Land Use and Community Design context. Creating a new, area-specific transportation goal would be duplicative

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
				and risk narrowing the scope of the transportation chapter.
70	Core Plan Transportation, Page 47	Switch Goal A & B	Smith, S	Not widely supported by majority of planning commissioners. Unnecessary; Goals are not represented in order of priority.
71	Core Plan Transportation, Page 47	Strategies and Actions should mention areas beyond the CBD / downtown area, as good as that is. But as the Plan introduction mentions this Plan is not just about downtown Homer.	Barnwell	Not enough info to implement this change
72	Core Plan Transportation, Page 47	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: The PHD, Page 48, includes three Potential Partner-led Strategies. This looks like the city is taking a back-seat to these strategies. Please use language that puts the city in a more proactive position.	Venuti	Actions moved to Partner-led Strategies due to Council/PC feedback at joint work session.
73	Core Plan Transportation, Page 47	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: The PRD listed a number of Actions related to transportation that were deleted from the PHD. Please put them back.	Venuti	Actions were found to be redundant with 2024 Transportation Plan.
74	Core Plan Governance, Page 49	The funding of public facilities infrastructure is a major issue in Homer e.g. water/sewer, public works campus, other. We need discussion of this here.	Barnwell	Not enough info to implement this change.
75	Core Plan Governance, Page 49	Mention of storm water and drainage management should be made for the need for drainage infrastructure funded by taxation or some means of city revenue.	Barnwell	This idea was not broadly supported during the Planning Commission's deliberations, nor is it representative of the feedback and inputs we heard during the plan process.

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
76	Core Plan Governance, Page 53	Reconcile-- page 40 :findings in desired growth of government (66% want minimal to no growth) and page 25 where the Community Survey response shows 95% and 96% that the fire, ems, police meet the mark-- with "staff capacity challenges" on page 53. Figure 25 is likely staff, not community driven comment. The City has increased its staff by about 12% in recent years. Labor has the largest single financial impact on the budget. Sustainability has to govern growth.	Smith, H	Not enough information to implement this change at this time.
77	Core Plan Governance, Page 55	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: The PHD, Pages 55 and 56, lists Strategy (1) – (4) regarding long-term fiscal planning and related Actions. Some of the Actions from the PRD's Governance chapter are omitted and should be put back.	Venuti	Actions removed due to Council/PC feedback at joint work session.
78	Core Plan Sustainability and Resilience, Page 59	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: The PRD, page 29, included some nice figures related to slope stability, landslide hazard that were omitted from the PHD. Please put them back, they illustrate the point about natural and climate driven hazards.	Venuti	These photos were removed because they were inconsistent with the Environmental Constraints Overlay, available in Appendix H: Land Use and Environment Background.
79	Core Plan Sustainability and Resilience, Page 59	Consider Kaiser Comments from August 15: RE: The PHD's Strategies and Actions related to Sustainability and Resilience are worded completely differently from those in the PRD. The PRD contained some helpful concepts and useful language and to the extent concepts were deleted, they should be put back.	Venuti	Many concepts and actions were moved Appendix I: Partner-led Actions due to Council/PC feedback at joint work session ; Not enough info to implement this change; May be more appropriate to include during plan amendments, updates.

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
80	All plan	Remove the words "climate change" from plan and replace with alternate descriptions, such as 'normal and extreme environmental hazards, environmental impact, natural hazards,' etc.	Smith, S; Venuti	This idea was not broadly supported during the public process of the plan, nor was it vocally supported by the majority of the planning commission (see minutes). More specifically, the comprehensive plan is based on community input, scientific research, and current best practices in planning. Consistently, both local stakeholders and technical sources identify climate change as a primary driver of intensifying hazards in Homer, from wildfire risk to storm surge. Removing the phrase "climate change" may weaken the plan's accuracy, reduce its credibility with funding and regulatory partners, and risk undermining the City's ability to pursue grants and resilience funding that explicitly require climate-related language.
81	All plan	Remove photos from plan - irrelevant and distracting	Venuti	This idea was not broadly supported during the Planning Commission's deliberations, nor is it representative of the feedback and inputs we heard during the plan process.
82	All plan	Two preferences that the people surveyed have which should be driving the development of this plan are: a. Preserve small town feeling. & b. A desire for moderate growth.	Venuti	Already included in plan; Not enough info to implement this change.
83	All plan	ADA compliance should be required of any existing or newly constructed business or public facility within the City of Homer	Venuti	Already included in plan; Not enough info to implement this change; more appropriate for Title 21.
84	All plan	The issue of storm water and the value of wetlands is not adequately considered in the plan. Some wetland areas should be designated as no-build zones.	Venuti	Already included in plan; Not enough info to implement this change; more appropriate for Title 21.

#	Component, Chapter, Page 3	Recommended Amendment (Summarized)	Recommended By	Rationale
85	All plan	The important issue of annexation is not included in this plan. When one considers the amount of growth seen in this community over the past ten years, it is naïve to discount the importance of physically growing our city in order to keep up with anticipated growth.	Venuti	Does not support inputs received throughout plan process; May be more appropriate to include during plan amendments, updates.
86	All plan	Consider the Community Design Manual to be included the plan	Venuti	The Community Design Manual is referenced on page 12 of the Core Plan and in Appendix D: Plan Review.
87	Appendix B Glossary	Define "character of Homer" according to who, what time period	Smith, H	Not enough information to implement this change at this time.



Memorandum 2025 – 038

TO: Homer Advisory Planning Commission
FROM: Ryan Foster, City Planner
DATE: August 20, 2025
SUBJECT: Public Review Draft Comprehensive Plan Recommendation and Comments

The City of Homer contracted with Agnew Beck to update the 2018 Comprehensive Plan (Ordinance 23-23). The new document is a major update to the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, the 2006 Homer Town Center Development Plan, and 2010 Homer Spit Plan.

After consultation with appropriate City Departments, Commissions, Committees, and gathering extensive public input, the Public Review Draft Comprehensive Plan is submitted for review and recommendation to the Planning Commission.

After Council approval, the plan will be submitted to the Kenai Peninsula Borough Planning Commission and Assembly for review and adoption. The City of Homer holds zoning powers as delegated by the Kenai Peninsula Borough, but the Borough has retained area wide planning powers. Therefore, Borough approval is required as the final step in adoption. Attached is the Public Review Draft Comprehensive Plan. It also available for public review at:

<https://homercompplanupdate.com/>

Requested action: Review the Public Review Draft of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan and recommend adoption to the Homer City Council along with any comments you may have.

Attachments:

Public Review Draft of the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan

Draft Ordinance 25-0XX for Comprehensive Plan Adoption



City of Homer

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Planning

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(f) 907-235-3118

Memorandum

Agenda Changes/Supplemental Packet

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION
FROM: ZACH PETTIT, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II
DATE: AUGUST 20, 2025
SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTAL

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

8. A. A REQUEST TO VACATE THE 66-FOOT-WIDE SECTION LINE EASEMENT ACROSS LOT 2 ARNO SUBDIVISION, T 6S R 14W SEC 13 SEWARD MERIDIAN HM 2001078 ARNO SUB LOT 2 THAT PORTION LYING INSIDE HOMER CITY LIMITS, KNOWN AS 1145 DIAMOND RIDGE RD, STAFF REPORT 25-37

1. SLE Vacation – Topography 5’ Intervals **Page 3**

2. SLE Vacation Lot 2 Arno Subdivision – Topography with Elevation Profile **Page 4**

8. B. AN ORDINANCE OF THE HOMER CITY COUNCIL ADOPTING THE 2025 HOMER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND RECOMMENDING ADOPTION BY THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH, Memorandum PL 25-038

1. 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan Update Slideshow **Page 5**

2. Public Comments Received **Page 25**

2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan Update

Public Hearing
City of Homer Planning Commission
August 20, 2025

Agenda Item Overview

Agenda Item Overview

- **Timeline and process** of draft plan to date and going forward
- **Key elements** of the plan
- **Review top themes** from drafting process and how the hearing draft responds
- **Planning Commission's role** today



Timeline and Process

Phase 1 and Phase 2 Timelines

Phase 1: Comprehensive Plan Update



The Title 21 Update builds from the Comprehensive Plan Update

Phase 2: Title 21 Update

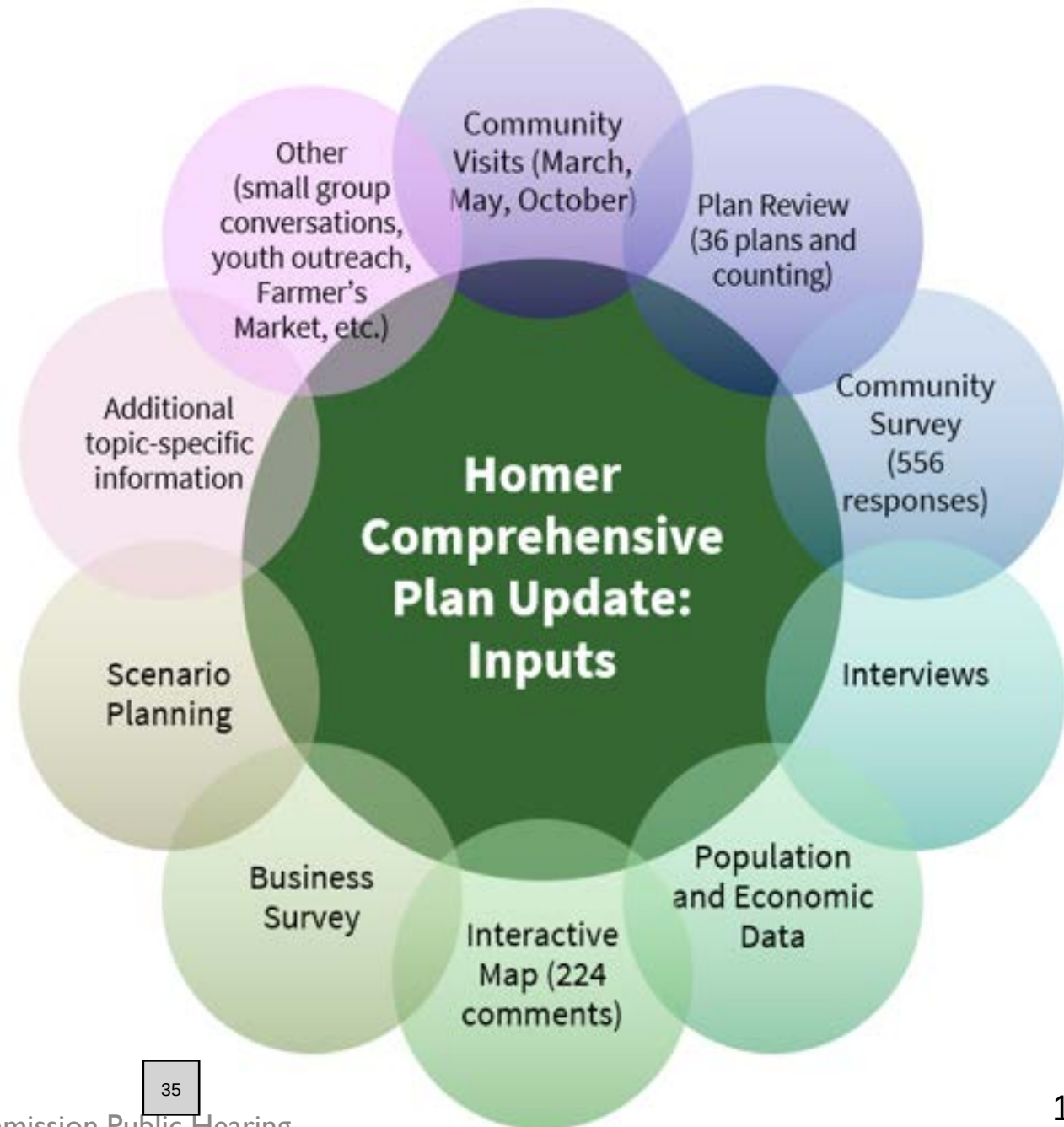


Process

Shaped by over a year and a half of outreach, research, and collaboration.

Every step — from scenario planning to topic-specific research, from workshop to workshop— has brought us to this August 2025 public hearing.

*More information in Appendix C:
Methodology*





March 2024



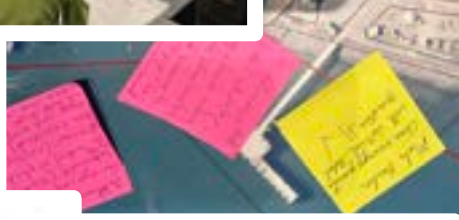
**40 Under 40
May 2024**



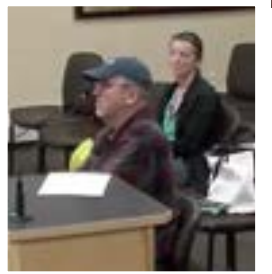
**Growth Scenarios
October 2024**



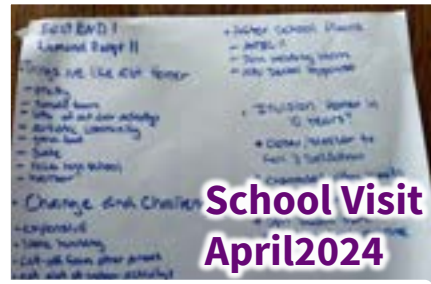
**Open House
February 2025**



**PC Work Session
April 2025**



**Steering Committee
February 2024**



**School Visit
April 2024**



**Builders Day
March 2024**



**Library Open Hours
May 2024**



**66 sets of comments
on the Public
Review Draft**

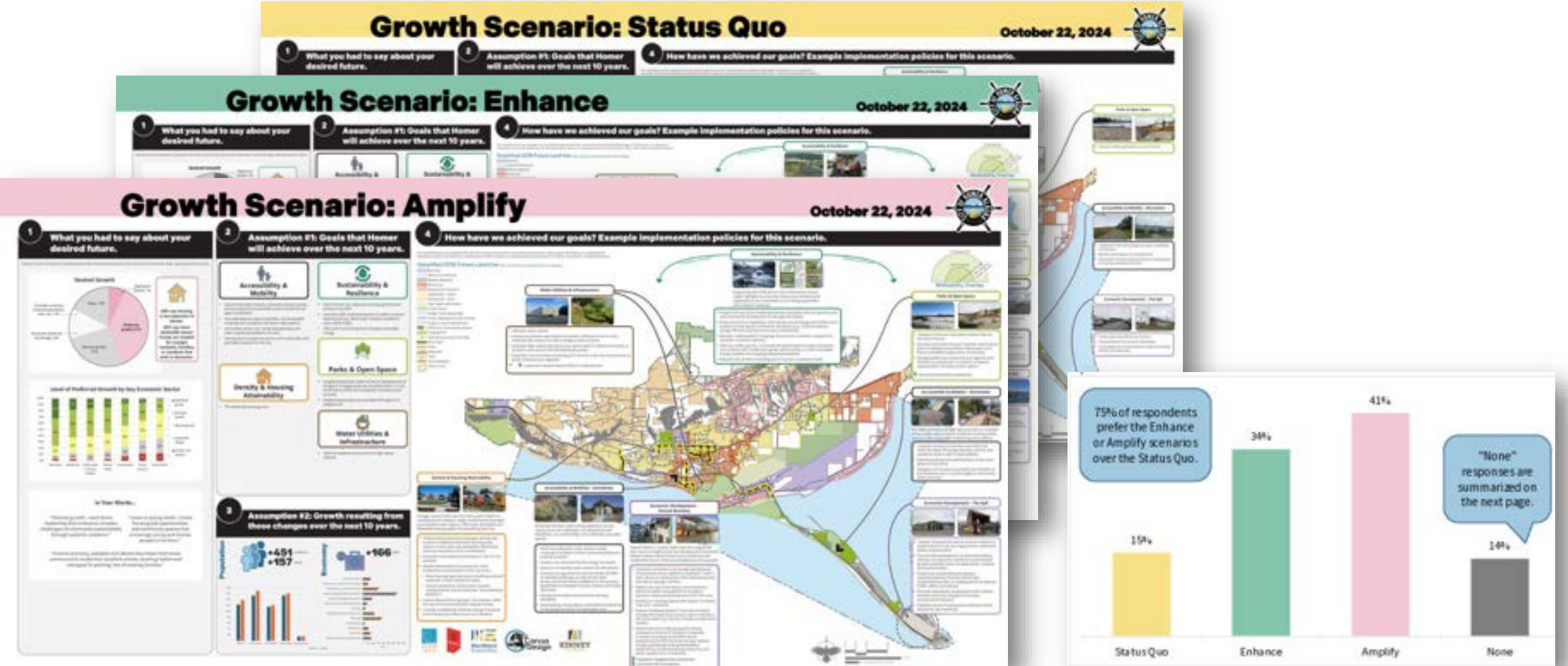
**Meetings with all
City Boards and
Commissions**

**Over 10 Steering
Committee
meetings**

Elements of the Plan & Development

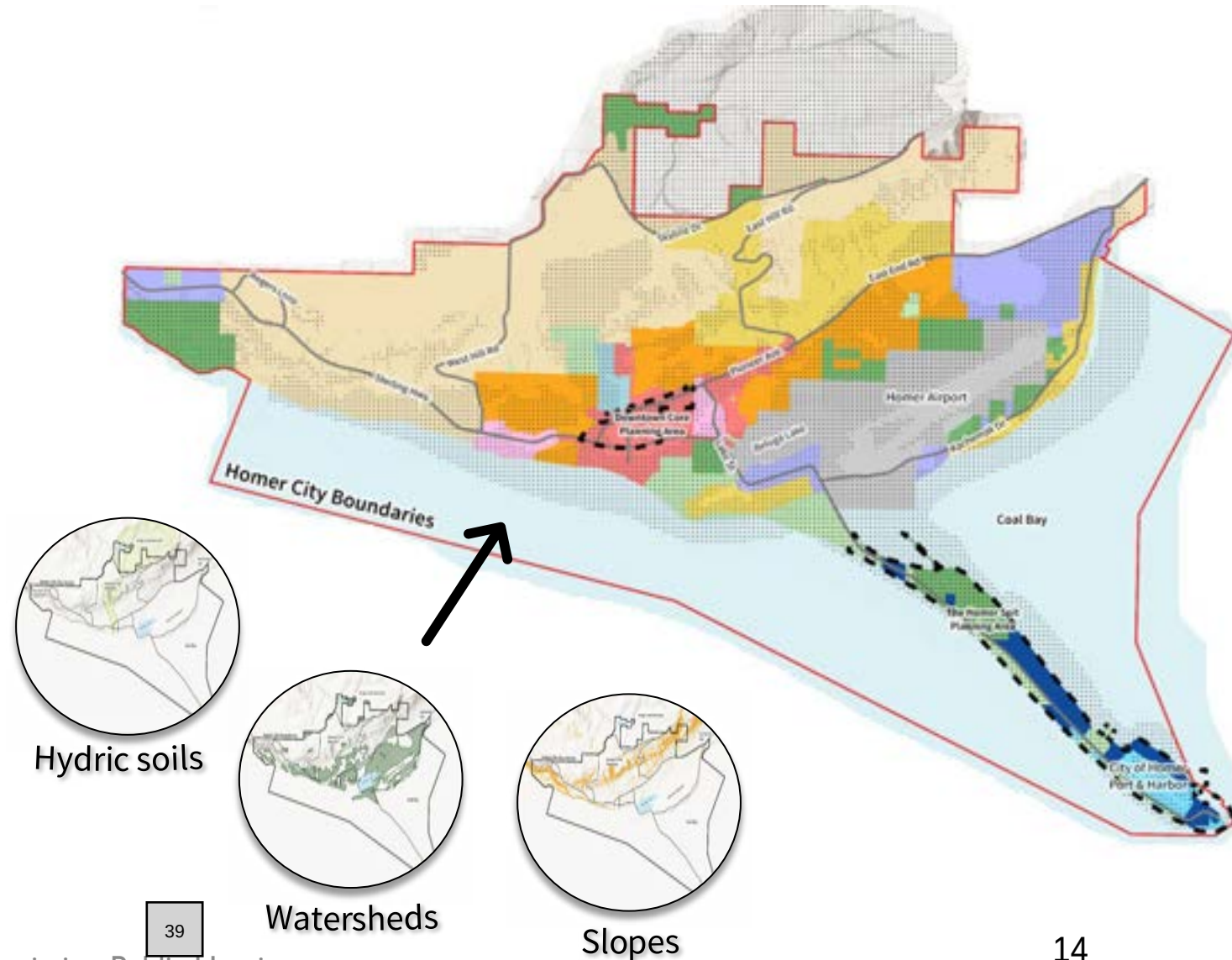
This plan is unique!

Element: Growth Scenarios



Element: **Future Land Use Map**

- Addresses limited developable land
- Relates to housing constraints
- Connects to Sustainability and Resilience Chapter



Element: City and Partner Strategies

Appendix I

Partner-led strategies and actions for all chapters

City-Led Strategies and Actions			
Icon Key: ✓ Priority: Emerging priority for implementation ✗ Capital: An action that includes a potential capital project ✱ Code: An action that recommends a specific code revision ◆ 2018: An action adapted from/carried over from the 2018 Comprehensive Plan			
1. Invest in infrastructure that supports economic growth in key sectors. ✓			
Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Incentivize growth of the marine trades in Homer to expand services offered locally, create jobs, support fishing, increase the City's taxbase, and reduce the need to travel to other areas of Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. ✗ ✱	Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Economic Development Commission, Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Undetermined	Ongoing

Economic Development Potential Partner-Led Strategies	
4. Support Homer's youngest residents and their families by making sure they have what they need to grow and thrive, including access to child care. ✓	
a. Ensure quality childcare is accessible and affordable, with parents and caregivers easily able to connect with available childcare resources and programs.	
b. Promote a healthy lifestyle by increasing activities available for youth.	
c. Promote volunteer and education opportunities for youth to become involved in civic life and contribute to improving the community.	

Excerpts from Economic Development Core Chapter and Appendix I

Element: City and Partner Strategies

City-led	Partner-led
• City-led strategies include actions in the Core Plan • Priority City-led strategies include action plans	• Partner-led actions included in Core Plan • Potential actions for partner-led strategies are in the appendix

City-Led Strategies and Actions			
Icon Key: ✓ Priority: Emerging priority for implementation ✖ Capital: An action that includes a potential capital project ✱ Code: An action that recommends a specific code revision ◆ 2018: An action adapted from/carried over from the 2018 Comprehensive Plan			
1. Invest in infrastructure that supports economic growth in key sectors. ✓			
Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Incentivize growth of the marine trades in Homer to expand services offered locally, create jobs, support fishing, increase the City's taxbase, and reduce the need to travel to other areas of Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. ✖ ✱	Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Economic Development Commission, Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Undetermined	Ongoing

Excerpts from Economic Development Core Chapter and Appendix I

Element: Implementation Plan (Appendix J)

Public Facilities and Services Action Plan

See Appendix A for a list of acronyms.

Funding Public Facilities and Services Priorities: To support implementation of strategies and actions in this section, see potential funding opportunities B, G, I, K, M, N, O, P, Q, R, V, Y, Z.

Icon Key: ✖ Capital Project | ✱ Code Revision | ♦ Action Carried Over from 2018 Comprehensive Plan

Strategy 1. Provide safe, year-round public facilities for residents of all ages and abilities.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Maintain the library as a thriving community space for learning and connecting, including assessing the library's anticipated need for growth and improvements over the next decade and planning for upgrades. ✖	Library Advisory Board, Library Department, Information Technology Department	Remodel engineering study: \$75k (FY26 CIP)	Ongoing

A. Alaska State Capital Project Submission and Information System (CAPSIS)

Funder: Alaska State Legislature; Must contact Alaska State Representatives to begin the process.

Relevant Chapters: Land Use and Environment, Public Facilities & Services, Housing, Economic Development, Transportation, Sustainability and Resilience

Award Information: Amounts range. Recent trail and recreation projects have received between \$1 and \$6 million.

Eligibility: State, locality, or Congressional district

Description: The Alaska State Capital Project Submission and Information System (CAPSIS) is the system that allows organizations to submit funding requests for capital projects to their legislators for consideration and approval.

Due Date/Frequency: Annual; Contact Homer State Representatives in the fall to begin process.

B. Coastal Program FY25

Relevant Chapters: Land Use and Environment, Sustainability and Resilience

Funder: U.S. Dept. of the Interior (DOI), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

Element: **Plan (Phase I)** and **Code Revisions (Phase 2)**



Table 4: Future Land Use Designations and Potential Changes to Zoning Districts

Future Land Use Designation	Corresponding Zoning District	Potential Change
Commercial		
Downtown Mixed Use	CBD – Central Business District Town Center	Consider consolidation of CBD and Town Center Districts
Commercial Mixed Use	GBD – Gateway Business District	Potential renaming to Commercial Mixed Use
Marine Commercial	MC – Marine Commercial	No change required
Residential		
Urban Residential	UR – Urban Residential RO – Residential Office	Redesignate Residential Office to Urban Residential (or edit permitted uses in the districts).
Transition Residential	RR – Rural Residential	New Zoning District – Transition Residential
Rural Residential	RR – Rural Residential	No change required
Medical Mixed Use	M – Medical	Potential renaming as Medical Mixed Use



Response to Feedback

Response to June Joint Work Session

What We Heard	Response
Future Land Use Map difficult to read	Published interactive Future Land Use Map; package as 11x17 in final plan
More details on funding research and Council role in Implementation Plan	Added greater detail to Appendix J
Point-in-time data in Core Plan is no longer most current	Added direction to find current data releases
Split out population projections for communities near Homer	Added breakdown of population projections for each neighboring community
Missing harbor expansion efforts	Added related policies in the Public Facilities and Services Chapter

Responsive to City Leadership

What We Heard – Desired Plan Features		Response
Relevant to City of Homer, its responsibilities and fiscal reality, and responsive to the federal landscape		Implementation Plan, elevated City-led strategies
Accessible and user-friendly		Core Plan, Title 21 Process
Flexible and adaptable to rapidly changing circumstances		Implementation Plan, FLUM
Constructed from extensive community representation and feedback		Robust outreach efforts, extensive community comments, Growth Scenarios activity
Mindful of the workload of City staff and be realistic when preparing action items		City-led strategies, 20-year Implementation Plan

“The comp plan cannot overlook the “day to day” responsibilities of the City and community, the infrastructure that needs to be maintained. Even if these goals are mundane, they are important.”

– April 2024 Joint Planning Commission/City Council Meeting

Commission's Role Today

Planning Commission's Role Today

- **Hear and consider** written and in-person testimony on the Public Hearing Draft.
- **Balance public hearing input** with what's been learned throughout the planning process from various other inputs (April + June workshops, comments, open houses, survey, analysis, etc.)
- **Keep in mind:** this is a 20-year vision that will guide—but is separate from—the Title 21 Code Update.
- **Decide** whether to:
 - Recommend any changes to the Draft.
 - Recommend adoption to City Council.

Potential Amendments List (A):

From staff:

1. In the Executive Summary (page 4), add “Increase access to recreational opportunities for visitors and residents” to list of top priorities.

Top Priorities and Projects for Homer to Focus on for the Next 10-20 Years

- Increase supply and accessibility of affordable housing
- Encourage the retention and creation of more year-round, higher wage jobs
- Preserve open public spaces within the city from development
- Create a livable, walkable, vibrant downtown
- Encourage renewable energy projects

*Identified as “important/
very important” by 74% or
more of survey participants.*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Homer Planning Commission
FROM: Janette Keiser, PE
DATE: August 15, 2025
RE: Comments on 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan Update – Public Hearing Draft

I reviewed the Public Hearing Draft (“PHD”) , dated July 2025, of the new Homer Comprehensive Plan, comparing it page by page with the Public Review Draft (“PRD”) dated February 2025. The purpose of this Memorandum is to point out areas where the PHD is different from the PRD and to request that the earlier language, which is sometimes more descriptive, be added.

1. RE: Formatting issues:

- a. There needs to be a Cover Page, with the Table of Contents immediately after that, identifying, among other things, the page numbers where the Executive Summary and the body of Plan starts.

2. RE: Public Outreach Events. The PRD had a Figure 4, Page 10, which listed all the public outreach events that were held to collect input about the plan. This was important information because it showed the City’s efforts to include a broad range of opinions. The PHD does not include this figure. Was it put someplace else?

3. RE: Natural hazards. The PRD, Page 18, contained a nice paragraph entitled “*Development that fits Natural Conditions*”. The only part of this paragraph that appears in the PHD is the first sentence. Please put the rest of the paragraph back as it is important to remind people that natural hazards restrict growth and development on much of Homer’s lands.

4. RE: Gaps. The PRD, Page 19, contained some nice language about the “*gaps*” in outdoor areas, which is omitted from the PHD. This was good language – please put it back.

5. RE: Future Land Use Map. I suggest the explanation about what a *Future Land Use Map* is be moved from Page 19 to Page 17, before Figure 7.

6. **RE: Future Land Use Map.** This map would be more helpful, if the outlines were more distinct; that is, if the outlines followed property boundaries. Without clear boundaries, the Planning Commission is just guessing about which designation applies to specific parcels. This is particularly important when talking about the Environmental Constraints Overlay. If you can't identify boundaries, maybe you can identify some criteria – some tool the Planning Commission can use identify if a property is supposed to be in the EC Overlay or not.

7. **RE: Land Use.**

- a. The PHD, Page 21, contains Strategy (2), which includes a list of Actions. One of them is “(g) *gauging community and stakeholder support for zoning and policy tools....*” This sounds wishy-washy. Please delete the words about “*gauging...interest*” and substitute the phrase “*research and implement zoning and policy tools....*” Obviously, implementation can't take place without community support, so community support, or lack thereof, for such tools will manifest itself during the implementation process. Thus, it's ok to state this strategy more assertively.
- b. The PRD, Page 24, included an additional strategy (g) about “*adopting building codes and incentive programs to increase energy efficiency and promote renewable energy*. Please add something to the PHD that addresses these important topics if only to refer to the city's Climate Action Plan.
- c. The PHD, Page 21, includes Action (h) which refers to “*locally owned and emerging industries*”. Please define “emerging industries,” so we know what we're supposed to support. Also, this would be a good place to add “*agricultural and other food production industries.*”
- d. The PHD, Page 22, includes a Strategy (3) to “*strategically align development regulations with natural hazards and land suitability...*” The PRD contained a number of Actions (b) – (f), that are not contained in the PHD. That was good language – please put it back.

- What's currently in the PHD is good, but it needs to be buttressed with the original language of this section.
- e. The PHD, Page 22, includes Strategy (4) regarding "*open, green space*". The PRD contained a number of Actions (a) – (d) that are not contained in the PHD. This was good language – please put it back. What's currently in the PHD is good, but it needs to be buttressed with the original language from the PRD.
 - f. The PHD, Page 23, includes Strategy (5) regarding "*place-based planning*". This Strategy was in the PRD, but the Actions that were in the PRD are totally different from what is shown in the PHD. I can't tell if the PHD's Actions are intended to encompass the PRD's Actions or if the intents are different. Some terms from the PRD, such as "*broader range of housing types and compatible mixed-use developments*," "*public-private partnerships*" and "*targeted infrastructure upgrades*" do not appear in the PHD. These were good phrases. Please put them back.
 - g. The PHD, Page 24, includes Strategy (6) regarding public-private partnerships. The language about such partnerships in the PRD, page 26, Action (c), was more descriptive. Please put that language back. Also, please don't refer to Strategy 6 and 7 as "*Partner -led Strategies*". This looks like the city is taking a back-seat to these strategies. Please use language that puts the city in a more proactive position.

8. RE: Public Facilities and Services.

- a. There's a nice quote, in the red box, on Page 25 of the PRD that has been omitted from the PHD. Please put it back.
- b. The PRD, Page 27, includes Strategy (7) about developing policies for specific community areas, which is not in the PHD. Please put it back. If Strategy (7) in the PHD is supposed to take the place of (7) in the PRD, please add the additional, descriptive language that is in the PRD.

- c. The PRD's chapter on Public Facilities & Services had a paragraph, Page 33, on "*Vulnerability to Natural Hazards*", which is not in the PHD. Please put it back. This is a huge issue for Homer and should not be understated.
- d. There was a nice quote about infrastructure in the PRD, Page 34, in the box, which was omitted in the PHD. Please put it back.
- e. The PRD, Page 36, included a Strategy related to roads, which does not appear in the PHD. Please put it back.
- f. The PRD, Page 37, has a more expansive list of airport improvements, which does not appear in the PHD. Please put this list back.
- g. The PRD, Page 37, included a Strategy related to stormwater, which does not appear in the PHD. Please put it back.
- h. The PHD, Page 29, includes Strategy (3) related to Port & Harbor Infrastructure. This Strategy lists Action (a) regarding a P/H Management Plan, which I would assume would include a list of important capital projects. This Strategy also lists Action (d) regarding one specific project – the large vessel haul-out area. The P/H needs a lot of projects, so it makes no sense to single out this one particular project in the Comprehensive Plan. It makes more sense to specify, in Action (a), that the Management Plan will include a Capital Improvement Program. Then, this inappropriate call out of the large-vessel haul-out area can be omitted.
- i. The PHD, Page 29, includes Strategy (4) related to new facilities on the Homer Spit. It includes Action (a) regarding the harbor expansion.
 - i. This action should be in Strategy (3) related to Port/Harbor Infrastructure.
 - ii. I don't like the way the sentence says "[s]upport a harbor expansion..." without qualification. This sounds like the outcome is pre-supposed; that is, that the city will move forward with the harbor expansion, no matter what. It is true that the City Council is supporting the project at this time, but this is still qualified support. Feasibility and affordability must

be still be demonstrated. I recommend using language like “continue to explore the operational, financial and environmental feasibility of a harbor expansion” because that is what we are doing.

- j. The PHD, Page 30, includes three *Potential Partner-led Strategies*. This looks like the city is taking a back-seat to these strategies. Please use language that puts the city in a more proactive position.

9. **RE: Housing.**

- a. The PRD, Page 40, had a nice introductory paragraph about Homer’s housing situation, which is somewhat re-stated in the PHD, but not exactly, causing some ideas to be missed. Please add such language back in.
- b. The PRD, Page 42, had a paragraph about “*Tourism’s Influence on the Rise of Short-term Rentals in Homer*”, which does not appear in the PHD. This was valuable context; please put it back.
- c. The PRD, Pages 44-45, had more Strategies and Actions related to housing than what is contained within the PHD. That was some good stuff – please put it back.

10. **RE: Economic Development.**

- a. The PRD, page 55, has a nice graph showing community preferences for growth, which does not appear in the PHD. Please put it back.
- b. The strategies in the PHD, Page 41, for Economic Development, are completely different than the economic development strategies listed in the PRD.
 - i. Why did this happen?
 - ii. Some of the PRD’s Actions f should be put back, including:
 - 1. Action (2) about “*vocational training...year-round employment...*”
 - 2. Action (3) about “*encouraging economic growth...while preserving the natural resources...valued by residents...*”
 - 3. Action (4) about “*moderate, sustainable growth in tourism*”.

- c. The PHD has an Action (1)(a), Page 41, that says we should “*incentivize growth of the marine trades*”. This makes it sound like we’re going to do this whether it makes sense economically or environmentally. Please put some limitations around this, such as saying “support sustainable growth of the marine trades...”
 - d. The PHD, Page 42, includes nine *Potential Partner-led Strategies*. This looks like the city is taking a back-seat to these strategies. Please use language that puts the city in a more proactive position.
11. **RE: Transportation.**
- a. The PRD listed a number of Actions related to transportation that were deleted from the PHD. Please put them back.
 - b. Please identify as an Action, “Implement recommendations from the Homer Transportation Plan”
 - c. The PHD, Page 48, includes three *Potential Partner-led Strategies*. This looks like the city is taking a back-seat to these strategies. Please use language that puts the city in a more proactive position.
12. **RE: Governance.**
- a. The PHD, Pages 55 and 56, lists Strategy (1) – (4) regarding long-term fiscal planning and related Actions. Some of the Actions from the PRD’s Governance chapter are omitted and should be put back.
13. **RE: Sustainability and Resilience.**
- a. The PRD, page 29, included some nice figures related to slope stability, landslide hazard that were omitted from the PHD. Please put them back, they illustrate the point about natural and climate driven hazards.
 - b. The PHD’s Strategies and Actions related to Sustainability and Resilience are worded completely differently from those in the PRD.
 - i. Why is this?
 - ii. It’s hard to tell what exactly has changed. Are the concepts and Actions set forth in the PRD contained in the PHD, but with different wording? Or have some concepts been abandoned?

- iii. The PRD contained some helpful concepts and useful language and to the extent concepts were deleted, they should be put back.

14. **RE: Quality of Life**

- a. The PRD, Page 58, included a Quality-of-Life Chapter. I know this chapter was deleted and topics were scattered in the remaining chapters.
 - i. It's hard to tell where they went in the PHD. Do you have a road map?
 - ii. Were all the concepts adopted by other chapters or were some concepts omitted completely?

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Thank you for your service to our community, and for the opportunity to share my concerns regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update. I have previously shared these concerns with Agnew::Beck and the Planning Director, and I appreciate your consideration as well.

My primary concern is the Plan's failure to acknowledge access to potable water as a limiting factor to growth in the region. In fact, it could be a key factor in managing growth. By treating water as a controlled commodity, the City of Homer could more strategically guide development, support affordable housing, and incentivize annexation—as other communities have attempted with water policy.

Access to Homer's city water has been a driving force behind population growth outside the city limits—particularly to the east, where well-water is often non-potable. These areas rely heavily on Homer's water supply. The Plan notes (on page 12) that, since 1994, the population of surrounding communities has exceeded Homer's own population. However, the Plan fails to connect this trend to the City's role in providing water to these thirsty properties. Additionally, the City does not currently track these water deliveries, leaving a significant blind spot in understanding and managing regional development.

Because of this, Homer is missing a valuable opportunity to visualize how to manage growth strategically and sustainably.

Suggestions for Plan Revisions and Additions:

1. Acknowledge the Role of City Water in Regional Growth

Update pages 11 and 37 (and elsewhere as appropriate) to recognize the role that Homer's municipal water supply has played in supporting population growth outside city limits.

2. Begin collecting and analyzing data on current water delivery locations—both inside and outside city limits.

- Include this information on pages 11, 28, and 37.
- Identify locations where bulk water is available to the public (e.g., Safeway, Chevron, Public Works RV Dump /Potable Water Station).
- Provide a map showing where water is currently being delivered throughout the greater Homer area.

3. Explore Water Policy as a Growth Management Tool

Consider requiring each out-of-city water user to register as a Homer water customer. The City could also explore policies such as:

- **Limiting water use for short-term rentals outside city limits** to encourage long-term and affordable housing options.
- **Restricting subdivisions in areas with environmental hazards** or where development could negatively impact City services.

4. Correct Language on Page 26

Replace the word “adequate” with “insufficient” in the sentence:

“...some of the homes within the annexed areas are still not served by City services. The water and sewer services within the City are adequate...”

This better reflects the existing service gaps.

5. **Prioritize Water and Sewer Extensions within City Limits**

Page 28 should emphasize the importance of extending water and sewer services to all existing City residences. Our infrastructure makes such extensions feasible and cost-effective, as the water system lies uphill and the sewage system downhill from these neighborhoods.

6. **Clarify Status of Kachemak City and Existing Agreements**

On pages 10 and 37, explicitly acknowledge that Kachemak City is the only incorporated second-class city in the region, and reference the existing water and sewer service agreements between Homer and Kachemak City. The Plan currently groups Kachemak City with unincorporated areas like Diamond Ridge and Fritz Creek, which may be misleading.

Finally, on another note:

7. **Maintain the Gateway Business District Identity**

On page 17, the proposed change from “Gateway Business” to “Commercial Mixed-Use” appears to contradict the stated goals of the Gateway District—specifically, preserving scenic views and ensuring a welcoming entrance to Homer. I recommend retaining both the name and the intent of the **Gateway Business District**, as originally envisioned.

The Comprehensive Plan is a thoughtful, forward-looking document, and I commend the effort that has gone into its development. As an ecologist who moved to Homer 35 years ago from drought-afflicted California, I understand firsthand that water availability, as a limiting factor, can shape a communities growth. I hope the final Plan will address this reality more directly and comprehensively.

Summary of Requested Modifications:

1. Acknowledge the role of Homer city water in population growth outside city limits.
2. Collect and analyze data on City and non-resident water delivery use.
3. Research and consider how other communities (e.g., Santa Barbara, Walla Walla, Lake Tahoe) use water policy to manage growth.
4. Correct language inconsistency on page 26.
5. Prioritize extension of water and sewer services to existing City residents.
6. Acknowledge Kachemak City’s status and agreements with Homer.
7. Retain the Gateway Business District name and original goals.

Thank you again for your time and your dedication to shaping Homer’s future.

Sincerely,

Rick Foster

Former HAPC and KPB PC

Homer city resident

William Anderson

From: Mike Illg
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2025 10:20 AM
To: Shelly Wade
Cc: Ryan Foster; Department Planning; Dave And Lyn
Subject: Comp Plan information/Comment
Attachments: Page 4- Top priorities07-23-25
_homercompplanupdate_publichearingdraft_reduced.pdf; Detailed Project Timeline – April 20Page 26- 24_ _shared with Steering Committee as component of the project
Public Participation Plan – broader schedule also shared at subsequent meetings.pdf

Hi Shelly, et al,

In looking at the latest public comp plan document I must commend you all as this certainly covers many aspects of our Homer community especially with such a wide range of topics, issues, needs, etc. to help us plan for the future. I am also pleased to see municipal parks and recreation identified as a core service.

More importantly, I also want to point out **again** that while the of process of soliciting community input, you all have received data/feedback that *"Increase access to recreational opportunities for visitors and residents"* is a top priority and is still not listed as such despite meeting the **74% threshold**. This question/topic has been pointed out previously and the email below makes reference where the data is located.

On page 4, yellow box lower left. See attachment.

https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/78660/07-23-25_homercompplanupdate_publichearingdraft_fullplan-append.pdf

There is a lot of support and interest for recreation (indoors and outdoors) and the City is making significant strides in supporting these opportunities as it is clearly important to residents. As you all know being able to refer to the comp plan not only shows an solid reflection what are the community needs but also helps with planning for future legislation, funding, opportunities, partnerships, grants, etc. Not listing *"Increase access to recreational opportunities for visitors and residents"* as a top priority is inaccurate and could hinder future opportunities for this field and service. See attachment.

With all due respect to the hard work and professionalism with this process so far, I would suggest the document be corrected/amended and list this topic as one of the identified **top priority** list based on the data that was received. Or at least a formal response why this is not included on the priority list.

Thanks,

Mike Illg

From: Mike Illg
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2025 6:48 PM
To: 'Shelly Wade' <shelly@agnewbeck.com>
Cc: Ryan Foster <rfoster@ci.homer.ak.us>
Subject: Comp Plan information

Hi Shelly,

Thanks for the work on the Comp Plan! As a follow up to my questions earlier today, I am sending this follow up email at your request.

I am asking about out the topic *"Increase access to recreational opportunities for visitors and residents"* is not listed as an identified under:

Top Priorities and Projects for Homer to Focus on for the Next 10-20 Years (page 4) in your executive summary.

https://homercompplanupdate.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Feb2025_2035HomerCompPlanUpdatePRD_ExecSumm.pdf

Whereas *"Increase access to recreational opportunities for visitors and residents"* issue has received public feedback from your October survey at **74%** for respondents within city limits and **76%** for respondents outside of the city.

As listed as Top Priorities by Location (Page 26)

https://homercompplanupdate.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/10-02-24_HomerCompPlanCommSurvey_ComparisonsSummary_Final.pdf

I would suggest the *"Increase access to recreational opportunities for visitors and residents"* topic be included as a priority be included in the "Top Priorities and Projects for Homer to Focus on for the Next 10-20 Years" based upon the statistically valid data information that was collected by Agnew::Beck that actually shows it has a response at 74% which is the threshold you have identified that qualifies as a top priority for the current comp plan document.

Thanks,

Mike Illg

Top Priorities by Location

N = 497

Responses included where more than 50% of respondents agreed

Top Priorities ("Very Important" or "Important")	% of Responses
Increase supply and accessibility of affordable housing	87%
Create a livable, walkable, vibrant downtown	83%
Encourage the retention and creation of more year-round and higher wage employment	82%
Encourage renewable energy projects	77%
Preserve open public spaces within the city from development	77%
Increase access to recreational opportunities for visitors and residents	74%
Increase the diversity of Homer's economy and economic foundations	73%
Prepare for and address the effects of climate change on Homer	69%
Support the commercial and sport fishing industries	62%
Attract more year-round residents of all ages	54%

Top Priorities ("Very Important" or "Important")	% of Responses
Increase supply and accessibility of affordable housing	87%
Encourage the retention and creation of more year-round and higher wage employment	84%
Preserve open public spaces within the city from development	76%
Increase access to recreational opportunities for visitors and residents	76%
Encourage renewable energy projects	73%
Create a livable, walkable, vibrant downtown	72%
Increase the diversity of Homer's economy and economic foundations	69%
Support the commercial and sport fishing industries	66%
Prepare for and address the effects of climate change on Homer	60%
Attract more year-round residents of all ages	52%

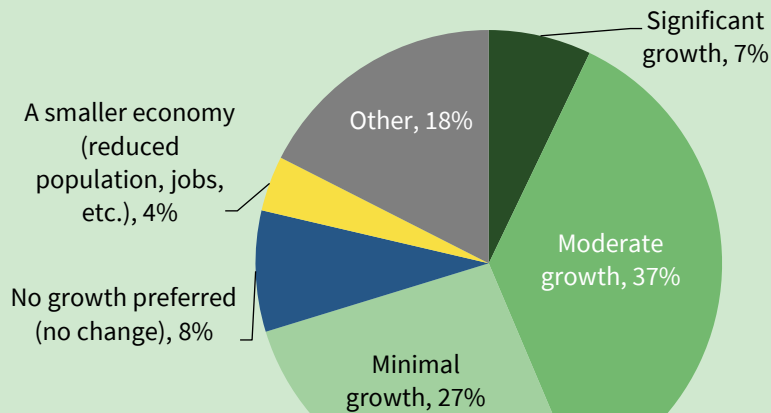
Only three priority areas showed a **greater than 5% difference** by location (see callouts on next slide)

Who responded to the 2024 Community Survey?

556 people participated in the survey, exceeding our goal of 500 participants. 224 comments were received on the interactive map. Of the 556 survey participants:

- 70% have lived in Homer more than a decade.
- 91% live in Homer year-round.
- 39% reside within the City of Homer limits.¹

Desired Growth



Most comments about growth discuss “sustainable and controlled growth” with a focus on planning that considers environmental impact, infrastructure capacity, and preservation of Homer’s character.

Housing Highlights

- 76% of survey participants are satisfied/very satisfied with their current housing situation.
- 68% say housing is too expensive in Homer.
- 66% say more attainable starter homes are needed for younger residents, families, or residents that wish to downsize.

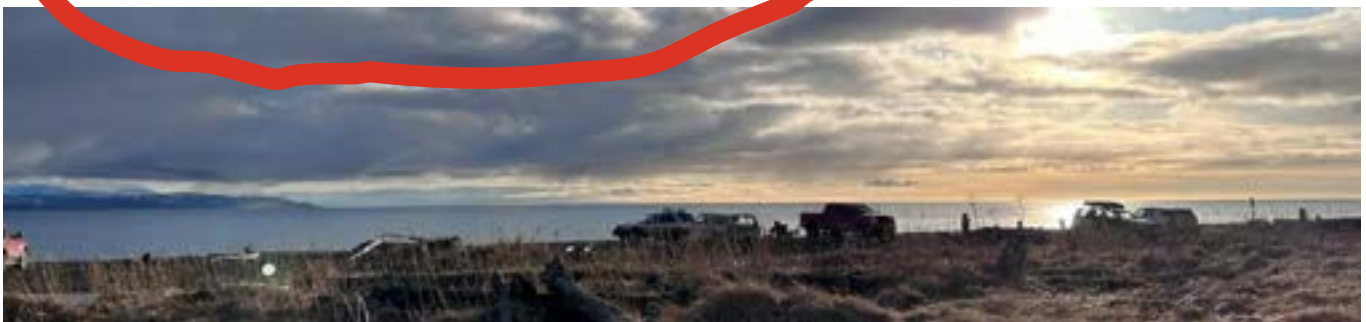
Quality of Life

- A combined 82% rate the quality of life in Homer as good/excellent.
- A combined 88% rate Homer as a good/excellent place to raise a family.

Top Priorities and Projects for Homer to Focus on for the Next 10-20 Years

- Increase supply and accessibility of affordable housing
- Encourage the retention and creation of more year-round, higher wage jobs
- Preserve open public spaces within the city from development
- Create a livable, walkable, vibrant downtown
- Encourage renewable energy projects

Identified as “important/very important” by 74% or more of survey participants.



¹ The project team conducted a deeper review of many of the community survey results to check for variations by age, income, and location. There was minimal variance across these categories. [Click here](#) to view the comparison results.

The plan has made great progress from the original drafts...more readable and actionable...well done.

The following is a list of action items for the Planning Department generated from the following Google Gemini AI query:

For the three attached documents, (The Executive Summary, Core Plan and Appendices) please identify the action items directed to the Planning department.

The Google Gemini analysis results are as follows:

Based on the three provided documents, the following action items are directed to the City of Homer's Planning Department and/or Planning Commission:

Governance

- Collaborate with City staff, boards, and commissions to prepare annual work plans based on the comprehensive plan's action plans.
- Present accomplishments and proposed priorities from the Comprehensive Plan to the City Council each year as part of the annual work planning process.
- Develop a website with tracking information for annual reporting of implementation progress.

Housing

- Explore new tools and regulations to increase the housing inventory, such as implementing a program to track Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) permits and streamlining the permitting process.
- Review existing zoning codes and modify them to support a greater diversity of housing options, including mixed-use development and infill.
- Gauge community support for zoning and policy tools that expand housing options.
- Address the cost and complexity of construction on vacant or underused properties through targeted infrastructure investment and infill-oriented zoning strategies.

Land Use and Environment

- Develop technical mapping tools, including stormwater drainage basins and flow paths, to guide City-led infrastructure decisions and support watershed-based planning.
- Inventory land with geographic information systems (GIS) to identify priority sites for open space acquisition and hazard mitigation.
- Develop a wetlands inventory and management plan to guide long-term land use decisions based on the function and value of wetland areas.
- Consider and potentially adopt an updated, science-based wildlife corridor map that integrates habitat data, climate resilience, and land use patterns to protect critical habitats.

- Explore incentives and voluntary guidelines that encourage sustainable development practices on private land.

Question for the Planning Commission:

Do you feel comfortable with all that is being asked of the Commission and Department?

2045 Plan

Somewhere along the way we transitioned from a 2035 plan to a 2045 plan. That's ok, as it may have cost savings by not having to repeat this process ten years from now.

A 2045 plan, a seemingly simple change, highlights greater uncertainty in those outlying years. Financially speaking, our ability to forecast financial needs in a two-year budget cycle is challenging enough. Trying to understand the financial impact 20 years from now resulting from planning decisions set in motion today, is even more challenging.

RECOMMENDATION:

Make note of that transition somewhere in the beginning of the document. In addition to that note, the document should say that the plan, being a 20-year plan, is designed to be flexible in its implementation. At no time should the City of Homer be held to take a particular action by a particular time, irrespective of cost and benefits received. This plan should be recognized as an **aspirational** guide for the future. As noted on page 14 of the core plan:

Goals

*Themes are followed by a broad set of goals. The goals identify long term, **aspirational** improvements.*

This is the only location in all the documents where the term "aspirational" is used.

RECOMMENDATION:

At a minimum, each document should reinforce that the actions herein are aspirational in nature and not an obligation. They are descriptive, not prescriptive.

Additionally, on page 14 of the core plan it says the following:

Plan Amendments and Updates *The Kenai Peninsula Borough holds planning and platting authority; therefore, all plan amendments and updates require approval by the Borough. This is intended to be a 20-year plan, although if conditions change significantly in the community within the 20-year period (such as major population growth or population loss), it may be necessary to update sooner.*

RECOMMENDATION:

Given the high hurdle of borough approval for changes and amendments, I encourage the planning commission to look closely at the obligations noted above and consider if it would be wise to “soften” some of those action items to make them more aspirational.

That said, there are still some cleanup items that I recommend you consider as it passes on its final route for approval.

- 1) The Coast Guard 110 ft small cutter is no longer stationed in Homer. In the future, the Buoy Tender (Aspen) is unlikely to be stationed in Homer as the Coast Guard focuses on its fast response vessel design based in Kodiak. Has the plan sought to understand the impact of the Coast Guard leaving, both financially and housing?
- 2) The term “climate change” appears four times in the executive summary, six times in the core plan and eight times in the appendices and yet lacks a definition. Failing to define “climate change” in the appendix muddies the waters when it comes to action planning. Some people think that addressing climate change is preparing for weather conditions that could come about from long term trends. Others believe climate change requires taking action to reduce Greenhouse Gases (GHG) associated with energy production (community survey result quote near the bottom of page 60 in the core plan).

Failing to define the term “climate change” results in a reduced focus on what we are trying to achieve. Throughout much of the plan, there is discussion of protecting infrastructure from, or mitigating risks to infrastructure from the “impacts of climate change”. Yet, there is another term, already used many times in the documents, that effectively renders the term, climate change, as unnecessary—and that is resilience. The definition of resilience as stated in the Appendix B Glossary (and hasn’t changed from the last draft) is:

Resilience: The ability of a community to anticipate, plan, and prepare for **threats**, persevere through stressful or disruptive events, and recover and adapt to new conditions.

If the impacts of climate change exhibit themselves as **weather related threats**, then building resilience into our designs and decision-making processes addresses this threat. I recommend we eliminate the phrase “climate change” or “impacts of climate change” and replace it with “weather related threats”.

As noted in the core plan on page 59, In the 2023 community survey, 74 percent of respondents said it was “very important” to encourage renewable energy projects over the next 20 years.

That's admirable, however, the community was only presented with part of the information when asked about renewable energy. The question failed to ask "at what cost?" and "who pays?". Who wouldn't want renewable energy if it's free?

The current tax levy on each dollar assessed valuation of taxable property within the city is 4.5 mills, and the rate of sales tax is 4.85 percent. What if the question asked was "would you support the city of Homer investing in renewable energy projects that reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by 0.000001% and will result in a property tax increase of \$500 per year?" Or "would you support the City of Homer investing in renewable energy projects that reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by 0.000001% and will result in a sales tax increase that translates to \$200 per year for each resident of Homer?"

RECOMMENDATION:

Please reconsider Page 8 of Appendix I where it says:

Sustainability and Resilience Potential Partner-led Strategies

4. Leverage Partnerships to Advance Community-Wide Sustainability and Resilience. Advance Renewable Energy and Infrastructure Innovation

- a. Support the expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the community to reduce transportation-related emissions and improve access for residents and visitors.
- b. Collaborate with partners to advocate for and invest in renewable energy sources, including hydroelectric, solar, wind, and tidal.
- c. Coordinate with utilities to pilot and plan for future microgrid networks that improve local energy resilience and distribution.

The language of these three activities obligates the city to provide funding for resources that doesn't make economic sense. These kinds of activities are not cost effective and are inconsequential regarding green house gas reductions.

I propose the following **highlighted** modified language to be used:

Sustainability and Resilience Potential Partner-led Strategies

4. Leverage Partnerships to Advance Community-Wide Sustainability and Resilience. Advance Cost-Effective Renewable Energy and Infrastructure Innovation

- a. Support the expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the community to reduce transportation-related emissions and improve access for residents and visitors.
- b. Collaborate with partners to advocate for and invest in renewable energy sources, including hydroelectric, solar, wind, and tidal.
- c. Coordinate with utilities to pilot and plan for future microgrid networks that improve local energy resilience and distribution.

These three actions are DESCRIPTIVE of the types of actions the city may take. They are not PRESCRIPTIVE. The comprehensive plan does not obligate the city to fund these activities if it becomes clear there is not a cost-effective way to implement them.

Do the math

For reference: On March 5, 2024, I performed a presentation at the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission Work Session that included deploying tidal energy generation as part of the Homer Harbor expansion.

Here is a link to the meeting materials: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/phac/port-harbor-advisory-commission-worksession-18>

The GHG reduction calculations in that presentation demonstrate the inconsequential impact these actions would have to reduce global GHG, yet there was/is desire to continue to investigate and perhaps even deploy tidal energy generation as part of the project. The bottom line is, diversifying the energy portfolio (at an enormous cost) should not drive scoping discussions for the Port and Harbor expansion effort and it likewise shouldn't drive activity from city staff (or consultants) as part of this comprehensive plan.

Final word on climate change

If we feel the need to continue to use the phrase "climate change" we should define it.

RECOMMENDATION:

I recommend the following definition provided by Google Gemini AI:

Climate Change: A long-term shift in the average temperature and weather patterns of a region or the Earth as a whole.

How this plan will address climate change

This comprehensive plan seeks to mitigate the effects of these weather patterns through resilience planning. This comprehensive plan does not seek to obligate the City of Homer to deploy greenhouse gas reducing activities that do not result in direct cost reductions in the conduct of city business.

Sustainability

On page 2 of appendix B, the term Growth, Sustainable is defined as:

Growth, Sustainable: *Creating long-term value without depleting natural or social resources, characterized by practices that are environmentally friendly, socially responsible, and economically viable.*

This definition identifies a link to RVKS and Associates which has used the following language in their definition of sustainable growth:

Rather than just focus on quantity of growth, “quality” of growth is also relevant. The need for “sustainable” growth in organizations for instance, is not just about increasing financial metrics; it integrates a broader perspective that encompasses environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors.

The comprehensive plan should not be attached to philosophies like ESG factors which has been demonstrated to be inferior when managing a business. For several years, financial advisor Ric Edelman cautioned against jumping on the ESG bandwagon as he expected the financial performance of companies that emphasized these factors would fall short of other companies—for a variety of reasons. In his December 21, 2023 podcast, titled "The False Narrative of ESG Investing", he discusses why ESG investing is misleading and demonstrates that ESG funds have underperformed the overall market, as measured by the S&P 500.

Here is a link to the episode on Apple Podcasts: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/12-21-23-the-false-narrative-of-esg-investing/id1603081576?i=1000639343039>

Additionally, on page 3 of Appendix B, Sustainability is defined as:

Sustainability: *The process of using our finite resources as a community to balance the goals of economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and social equity to ensure that we can meet the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

Perhaps it is just an oversight, but using a definition of sustainability that includes social equity is just not proper.

As noted in my comments from March 2025, “the City Government is here to provide core services, not to be a social equity and climate leader. City Government should focus on the blocking and tackling of providing core services in a safe, responsive, excellent, and economic fashion.”

Perhaps a simple solution would be to use the definition of sustainability that has already been published in the City of Homer document intitled “Money, Energy and Sustainability A policy guide for City of Homer employees on reducing energy use and waste in local government operations”:

What is “sustainability”? One of the simplest and most often cited definitions of sustainability refers to practices that “meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Source: World Commission on Environment and Development—Our Common Future (1987)

RECOMMENDATION:

Change the definition of Sustainability to the version that is already used in the City of Homer Policy guide.

Closing:

This comprehensive plan is nicely improved over the previous version. My review and commentary are not exhaustive. However, the few additional improvements I have noted above should substantially improve the document to assist us as we plan for 2045. Thank you for the opportunity to participate.



Kachemak Bay Watershed Council

The Kachemak Bay Watershed Council facilitates communication, planning, advocacy, and restoration to protect, steward, and revitalize the Kachemak Bay Watershed to ensure the sustainability and integrity of natural and human communities for future generations.

Homer Planning Commission
planning@ci.homer.ak.us.

The Kachemak Bay Watershed Collaborative City of Homer 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan: Public Hearing Draft, July 2025 Comments

August 20, 2025

Dear City of Homer Planning Commission:

The Kachemak Bay Watershed Collaborative (KBWC) is a non-profit conservation organization focused on applying data and information related to climate change, land uses and other environmental impacts, to inform policy makers and agency planners regarding management of Kachemak Bay on a watershed basis. The current version of the City of Homer Comprehensive Plan (Plan), is an improvement over past versions regarding strategies for addressing the increasing number and level of intensity of climate change and development can present to human health and welfare, water infrastructure and critical fish and wildlife habitat challenges the City will face in the 21st century.

The Nation's water supplies and services are at risk. Climate change, growing income disparities, and the threats posed by aging water infrastructure and impacts to fish and wildlife call for an increased focus on the use of ecosystem services and the need to manage watersheds on an ecosystem bases rather than a piecemeal approach to water management. In order to avoid the problems of the lower 48, Alaskans must come together and create a new era of water management that secures economic, environmental, and community wellbeing. To this end,

across the state stakeholders are collaborating and innovating to advance sustainable water management solutions. Through the Comprehensive Plan, the City of Homer (City) has an opportunity to spread and scale up these efforts to benefit communities and watersheds within and outside City boundaries.

The Plan therefore provides a good jumping off point for the City to engage in Integrated Water Resource Planning (IWRP) and nature-based solutions including planting trees to replenish forests, reconnecting rivers to floodplains, and restoring wetlands, is a sustainable and cost-effective way to help rebalance the water cycle, mitigate the effects of climate change and improve human health and livelihoods.

To this end, KBWC specific comments include the following:

I. Governance

Under this section, KBWC is encouraged by the Plan's listed "Potential Partner-Led Strategies" including to "[i]dentify opportunities to coordinate with organizations including Tribal organizations, Alaska Native Corporations, and local and regional non-profits to leverage resources and provide services more cost-effectively." (Plan p. 16). To this end, we recommend that the City work with the above organizations to develop an Integrated Water Resource Management that includes the following components:

a) IWRM Plan

Watersheds have always been essential to protection of fish and wildlife habitat and water infrastructure. They are a source of biodiversity and fresh water. They reduce risks of natural disasters like landslides and flooding. They act as a carbon sink, removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it, thus mitigating climate change. They make an essential contribution to food security by helping to maintain the environmental conditions needed for fishery production. They stabilize the soil, prevent erosion, enhance the land's capacity to store water, and moderate air and soil temperatures. As sources of raw material, biomass, renewable energy, and nontimber products, watersheds support rural communities. Many rural and indigenous people depend on watersheds for their livelihoods which also enhance well-being by providing recreation and amenity values.

As means of protecting watersheds and water infrastructure that cities and towns rely upon, from the impacts of climate change, the City could create an Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (IWRMP) which is "a process that promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems." Global Water Partnership Technical Advisory Committee (2000).

The City should collaborate with other federal, state, tribal, local, research, conservation and other stakeholders to apply IWRMP criteria including consideration of these factors: 1) Manage water sustainably; 2) Balance economics, social equity, environment; coordination and integration; participation from all water sectors; 3) Holistic management of connected resources; 4) Process oriented adaptive management; 5) Enable environmental policies and resources; and 6) Institutional roles and capacity. As an example of how to protect fish and wildlife resources from the impacts of climate change is to take measures to mitigate warming stream and related temperatures. For example, growing willows and other trees close to the banks of streams and rivers; providing shade over the water and creating in-stream habitats made of logs under which fish can cool off when things heat up. (See the Nooksak Tribe of Washington State Salmon Habitat research projects <http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/threat-of-salmon-extinction-turns-small-tribe-into-climate-researchers-20160906>).

b) IWRM Tools

An example of a tool that the City could use in an IWRM strategy is the EPA's Watershed Optimization Management Support Tool (WMOST) which is a publicly available tool that can be used by state and local managers to screen a wide-range of options for cost-effective management of water resources. It supports a broader integrated watershed management (IWM) approach by allowing the user to simultaneously consider stormwater, drinking water, wastewater and land conservation management practices. Users can select from three versions of WMOST based on their specific management needs. (<http://www.epa.gov/exposure-assessment-models/wmost>). The first version focuses on management of base and peak flows, the second adds a flooding module to assess costs associated with peak flows, and the third includes a water quality module. WMOST aids in evaluating the environmental and economic costs, benefits, trade-offs and co-benefits of various management options, and can facilitate the evaluation of low impact development and green infrastructure management options that are suitable for projects using State Revolving Funds.

Currently, this tool is being used primarily by state agencies and counties in the lower 48 for cost-effective stormwater management practices for meeting the management goals of a typical community in their state and consortiums of communities, regional development commissions, and non-governmental and watershed organizations to determine the most cost-effective options to meet water quality goals (such as TMDLs), water quantity targets (maintaining base flows and water supplies), reducing flooding and impacts of Combined Sewer Overflows, and supporting land conservation goals under both current and future growth and climate scenarios.

II. Sustainability and Resilience

Under Goal A of this section the Plan proposes the maintenance of “Open Space and Natural Lands” in order to “Support Long-Term Community Well-Being” by protecting “both existing and new infrastructure from the impacts of climate change, environmental constraints, and hazards,” modernizing “City operations for long-term efficiency and resilience and reducing “risk from natural hazards through proactive siting and planning.” (Comp Plan page 17).

To this end KBWC recommends that the City of Homer update its current Climate Action Plan (HCAP). (See, Ibid at 59). The City developed the HCAP almost 20 years ago that includes the

requirement that the city: 1) develop management plans specific to Port and Harbor facilities on the Homer Spit (construction, maintenance, dredging, etc.) that take into account climate change impacts; and 2) taking climate change into consideration in all long-range planning efforts (e.g., transportation, land use, Homer Spit, emergency management, economic development). In addition, there is currently no comprehensive climate change adaption plan addressing the Kachemak Bay Watershed that includes the City of Homer. After adoption of the HCAP, the Plan states, [t]oday, the community continues to express strong support for renewable energy, hazard mitigation, and environmental stewardship.” (Ibid).

Therefore, in order to implement the standards in the current Climate Action Plan, the assessments of the potential impacts of development activity needed to include full consideration of all of its potential impacts. Updating the HCAP, is also an opportunity for the city to join the ongoing climate change conversation in Homer led by the KBWC and other stakeholders who have been discussing priority climate related projects for planning, management and protection of both freshwater and marine ecosystems within the Watershed.

Finally, KBWC has identified federal funds that could be used in planning and development of harbor infrastructure. These include grant program funding for watershed related ecosystem resilience projects from the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act. To this end, the Watershed Collaborative is currently, updating the attached Kachemak Bay Fox River Climate Risk Assessment completed in 2019 that would result in a Resiliency Plan and would incorporate the projects for planning, management and protection of both freshwater and marine ecosystems within the Watershed. We would like to work with the City to co-develop such a plan as part of updating the HCAP and to partner with the Collaborative to seek funding to complete such plan.

III. Land Use and Environment

Under this section, KBWC supports the need to “Modernized Zoning is Essential for Attainable Housing, Safety, and Future Growth” due to the fact that “Homer’s current land use regulations no longer reflect the community’s development needs or values. Residents have called for more attainable housing options, greater consideration of natural hazards, and updates to zoning

standards that align with infrastructure availability and environmental constraints.” (Comp Plan Page 15).

In addition, approximately 35 percent of Homer’s land base includes wetlands, steep slopes, or critical habitat that limits development feasibility and increases hazard exposure³. Residents want code updates that allow for more flexibility in building types, incentivize infill and redevelopment in appropriate areas, and ensure that private and public development considers runoff, slope stability, and infrastructure capacity. (Ibid).

A good example of this concern is the City of Homer's Planners have recommended approval of a preliminary plat to subdivide existing parcels into 10 lots within The Woodard Creek Watershed. This would allow for a 22-acre subdivision to go forward which would be inconsistent with the Woodard Creek Watershed Plan because it will disturb a large wetland ‘holding tank’ of water. Woodard Creek is Homer’s most prominent perennial stream, and it has a rich history as an early settling place for homesteaders seeking year-round water supply. The upper watershed, Woodard Creek is confined in Woodard Canyon, a steep-sided valley some 300 feet deep. Downstream, the creek remains confined in a valley approximately 20 feet deep, becoming shallower in some areas due to historic human activities. The final mile of Woodard Creek flows through a municipal park and some 45 residential and commercial properties before flowing to Kachemak Bay at a beach front bluff.

IV. City-Led Strategies and Actions

The Plan calls for implementation of a Future Land Use Map that guides future decisions about land use and growth” that would include the following categories:

- a. **Open Space Recreation** - Public lands with uses that promote public recreation and access opportunities while preserving the natural and scenic resources of the areas.
- b. **Conservation** - Public and private lands that serve key environmental functions, such as critical habitat or watershed areas, to be maintained in an undisturbed and natural state.
- c. **Environmental Constraints** - Known areas of environmental constraints, such as critical habitat and steep slopes, to help identify places where more detailed site analysis may be warranted if areas are to be developed or improved.
- d. Flood zones, coastal bluff instability, scarps, hydric soils, key watersheds. (Comp Plan page 18).

A key element of such implementation will be to manage watersheds within and outside of the city limits on an ecosystem wide rather than piecemeal jurisdictional bases. In addition to 5 municipalities, the Kachemak Bay Watershed includes jurisdictional boundaries for the federal government, the state and others. Individual management of these lands by different agencies has led to much resource protection and proper management of such resources to fall through the cracks. The Plan is therefore, a good a starting point for the City to work with other land management entities on a watershed basis to protect the entire Watershed. This includes the development of an IWRMP and updated the City of Homer’s Climate Action Plan.

V. Strategically align development regulations with natural hazard risks and land suitability to support safe, resilient, and responsible growth.

Under this section the Plan lists the following actions:

- a. Use the City of Homer Hazard Mitigation Plan to inform updates to zoning and development codes, ensuring land use decisions reflect the latest risk assessments;
- b. Clarify zoning procedures and criteria for rezoning reviews to ensure consistency with the comprehensive plan and hazard mitigation goals;
- c. Update development standards for steep slopes, drainageways, and erosion-prone areas to manage grading, erosions, runoff, and vegetation clearing. Encourage the use of green infrastructure and site-responsive design solutions to improve drainage and reduce hazard exposure;
- d. Strengthen stormwater and erosion control provisions in City code, incorporating green infrastructure techniques—such as vegetated buffers and infiltration features—to reduce coastal bluff erosion and other site-based hazards;
- e. Consider expanding the range of conditions that may be applied to Conditional Use Permits to address riparian protection, soil stability, wetland preservation, and related site concerns. (Comp Plan page 22).

One of the best ways to implement these actions is for the City to update it’s Climate Adaption Action Plan to broaden coverage of these actions and include standards for implementing them.

VI. Protect and enhance green space in Homer to support habitat connectivity, recreational access, and community well-being

One of the best means of maintaining habitat connectivity is for the City to work with other federal, state and tribal entities to manage Watersheds both within and outside of city limits on an ecosystem rather than jurisdictional basis. Because fish and wildlife travel and subsist over a broad range of land and water, proper management of habitat should not observe jurisdictional limits. In addition:

Homer’s ecosystems, wetlands, and green spaces provide natural protection against flooding, erosion, and other hazards—while also contributing to the community’s quality of life. Residents strongly support preserving these natural assets: 77 percent of community survey respondents identified the preservation of public open space as a top priority. In open responses and interviews, residents expressed support for concentrating new development in existing disturbed areas, avoiding steep slopes and flood-prone zones, and protecting wildlife corridors and critical habitat. Preserving wetlands, riparian buffers, and upland vegetation also enhances Homer’s capacity to manage stormwater through low-impact development and natural drainage systems.

Due to the impacts of climate change on the once biologically productive Kachemak Bay Watershed, one of the primary tools left to protect and restore the Watershed’s ecosystem is through mitigation of lands use and development impacts on aquatic ecosystems that affect connectivity. (Comp Plan page 60).

VII. Advance place-based planning and development that supports Homer’s unique community character, encourages targeted infill, and strengthens Homer’s role as a regional

The Plan calls for “Lead area planning efforts for the Spit and downtown core [that] should address land use, infrastructure needs, environmental hazards, economic development, and recreational access.” (Comp Plan Page 23). Once again, the updating of the City of Homer Climate Action Plan including the results of KBWC’s MPARVAT would be the best means of achieving this goal.

CONCLUSION

The challenges the City faces today require it to adopt watershed wide solutions for greater efficiency, improved water quality, sustained regulatory compliance, and critical habitat protection. There are a wide variety of collaborative approaches that can work and many policy levers to help expand their adoption. Partnering with neighbor communities and other organizations to meet common needs makes sense, and we collaboration will take greater hold as more communities demonstrate their power to improve water management for all. In addition, there are funding mechanisms that would assist in achieving these goals. Finally, an Integrated Water Resource Management strategy would reduce flood risk and storm damage and help protect habitat and drinking water resulting in additional long mitigation of the impacts of climate change.

Please contact me at (907) 491-1355; halshpherdwpc@gmail.com if you have any questions regarding these comments. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Hal, Shepherd, President
Kachemak Bay Watershed Council
PO Box 332 Homer, AK 99603
907-491-1355



2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan Update

Executive Summary: Public Hearing Draft, July 2025



Plan Purpose

The City of Homer is updating the 2018 Comprehensive Plan to recognize and celebrate what we have **accomplished**, to address new **challenges and opportunities** for our community, and to coordinate efforts to **achieve our shared vision for a future Homer**.

The 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan serves as a community resource and guide for community leaders, residents, and other partners to protect what residents value most about Homer while enhancing the quality of life for current and future residents.

The updated Homer Comprehensive Plan is a combination of long-term vision, goals, and practical strategies that will: guide decisions about land use and environment, housing, public services and infrastructure, transportation, economic development, health and wellness, sustainability, resilience and climate change, and quality of life, and more. It provides a roadmap for implementation, with clear priorities and actions.

The Homer Comprehensive Plan Update is **Phase 1** of a two-phased project. In **Phase 2**, the project team will work closely with the City of Homer to update the City's zoning code, Title 21, to support the land use recommendations in the updated plan.



Land Use & Environment



Public Facilities & Services



Housing



Economic Development



Transportation



Governance



Sustainability & Resilience

What is a comprehensive plan?

A combination of **long-term goals** and **short-term strategies** that **guides decisions** about land use, housing, public services and infrastructure, transportation, economic development, health and wellness, sustainability, resilience and climate change, quality of life, and more. The plan provides a road map for implementation with clear priorities and action items. The **Future Land Use Map** in the comprehensive plan provides a blueprint that sets **intent** for how the area will accommodate change and meet resident needs.

What is a zoning code?

Zoning code and the zoning map are local laws governing **how land is used or developed**, where and how buildings are sited, and other rules related to how a property functions. Zoning is the tool used for achieving the intent set by the comprehensive plan and goals set in the Future Land Use map.

Community Voices: Highlights from the Community Survey

TOP 3 THEMES: What three things do you **value most** about living in Homer?

Community, small town feel, family and friends

Natural beauty and scenery

Access to outdoor activities and ocean



"Thank you for gathering this input! Homer has been an amazingly connected and healthy place for me, and I want it to remain so for my kids and any who are drawn to our engaged, connected community."

TOP 3 THEMES: What 3 things do you find **most challenging** about living in Homer?

Overall cost of living

Infrastructure and transportation challenges

Lack of affordable housing



"The lack of affordable homes/rentals for locals year-round. I have a year-round dwelling, but I am seeing many service workers being priced out of living here."

TOP 3 THEMES: 20 years from now, what does your **ideal Homer** look like?

Homer has retained its small-town character

Affordable housing and reasonable cost of living

Walkable, vibrant downtown



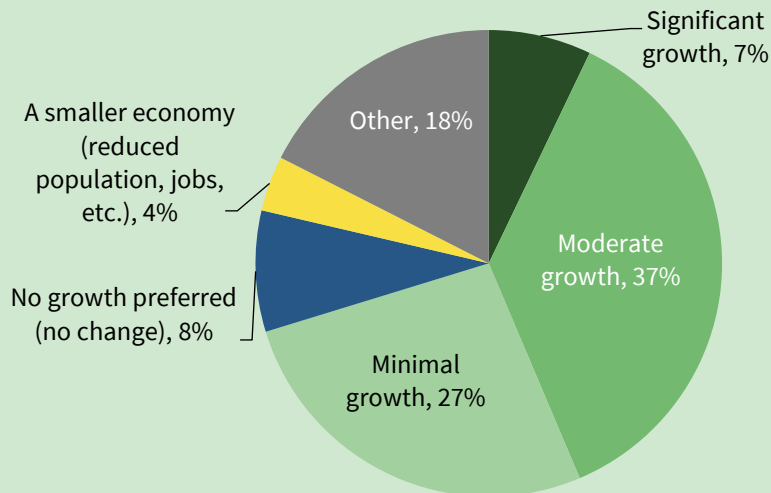
"I came here to work a seasonal job... I stayed because Homer gave me the space and support to be who I am. I love this place deeply; I love the fun and quirky community that I've found."

Who responded to the 2024 Community Survey?

556 people participated in the survey, exceeding our goal of 500 participants. 224 comments were received on the interactive map. Of the 556 survey participants:

- 70% have lived in Homer more than a decade.
- 91% live in Homer year-round.
- 39% reside within the City of Homer limits.¹

Desired Growth



Most open-ended comments about growth discuss “sustainable and controlled growth” with a focus on planning that considers environmental impact, infrastructure capacity, and preservation of Homer’s character.

Housing Highlights

- 76% of survey participants are satisfied/very satisfied with their current housing situation.
- 68% say housing is too expensive in Homer.
- 66% say more attainable starter homes are needed for younger residents, families, or residents that wish to downsize.

Quality of Life

- A combined 82% rate the quality of life in Homer as good/excellent.
- A combined 88% rate Homer as a good/excellent place to raise a family.

Top Priorities and Projects for Homer to Focus on for the Next 10-20 Years

- Increase supply and accessibility of affordable housing
- Encourage the retention and creation of more year-round, higher wage jobs
- Preserve open public spaces within the city from development
- Create a livable, walkable, vibrant downtown
- Encourage renewable energy projects

Identified as “important/very important” by 74% or more of survey participants.



¹ The project team conducted a deeper review of many of the community survey results to check for variations by age, income, and location. There was minimal variance across these categories. [Click here](#) to view the comparison results.

Homer by the Numbers

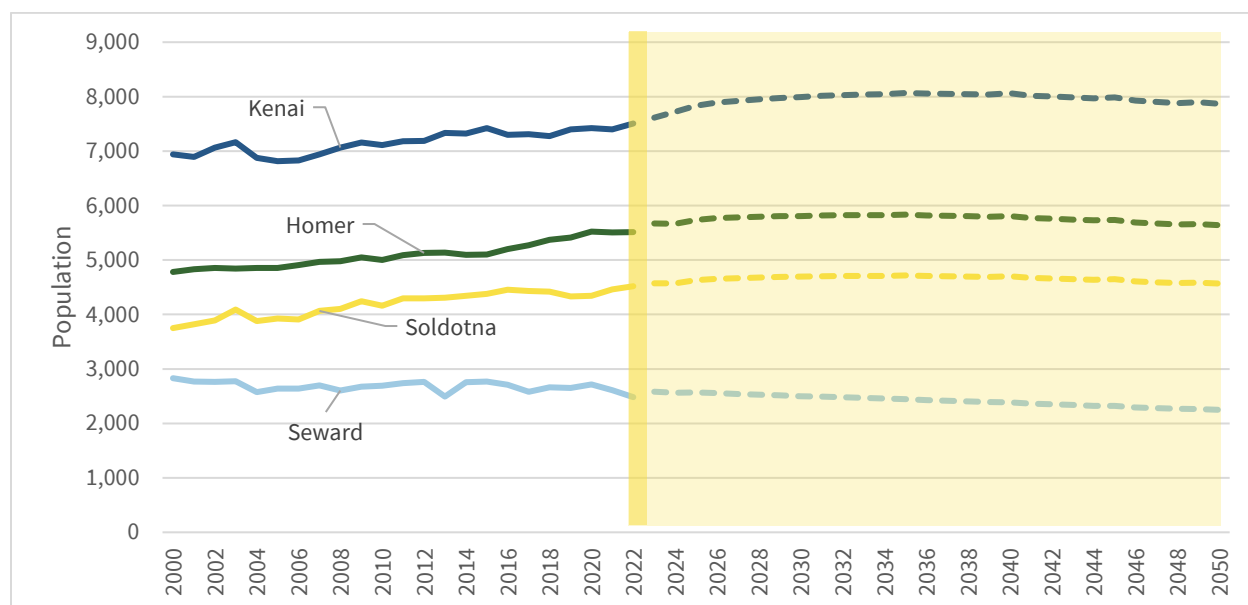
Where have we been? Where are we today? Where are we headed?

Our People*

Total population: 5,515 ↑ 7%	Ages 65+: 22% of population ↑ 8%
Predicted population growth: ↑ 2.3% by 2050	School enrollment: 1,745 ↓ 5%
Median age: 40.8 ↓ 4%	

Historical and Forecasted Populations for Homer and Comparison Cities in the Kenai Peninsula Borough

Homer's population has been experiencing steady, modest growth over the past 22 years.



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development and Northern Economics analysis

*Note: Population and economic data in this plan are current as of 2022; updated data are released annually by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

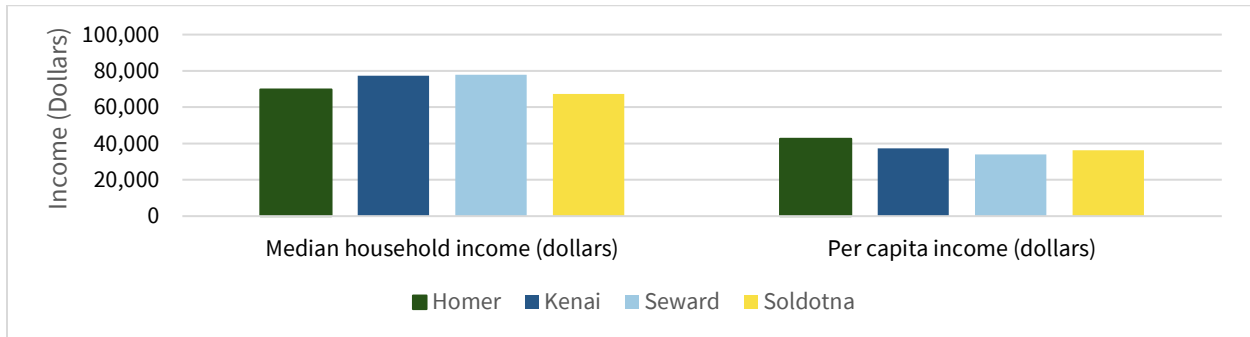
At-A-Glance Homer History *(adapted from the 2018 Comprehensive Plan)*

- Home to Indigenous people for over 8,000 years; archeological evidence of campsites on the Homer Spit.
- 1896 – Homer Pennock arrived with a crew of 50 gold miners and developed a small settlement on the Spit.
- Early 1900s to today – fishing developed into an important industry.
- 1964 – Year of city's incorporation and the Good Friday earthquake, which devastated Seldovia's waterfront; the Spit also subsided several feet.
- 1989 – Exxon Valdez oil spill impacted Homer's coastline
- 2002 – Annexation of 4.6 sq. miles.

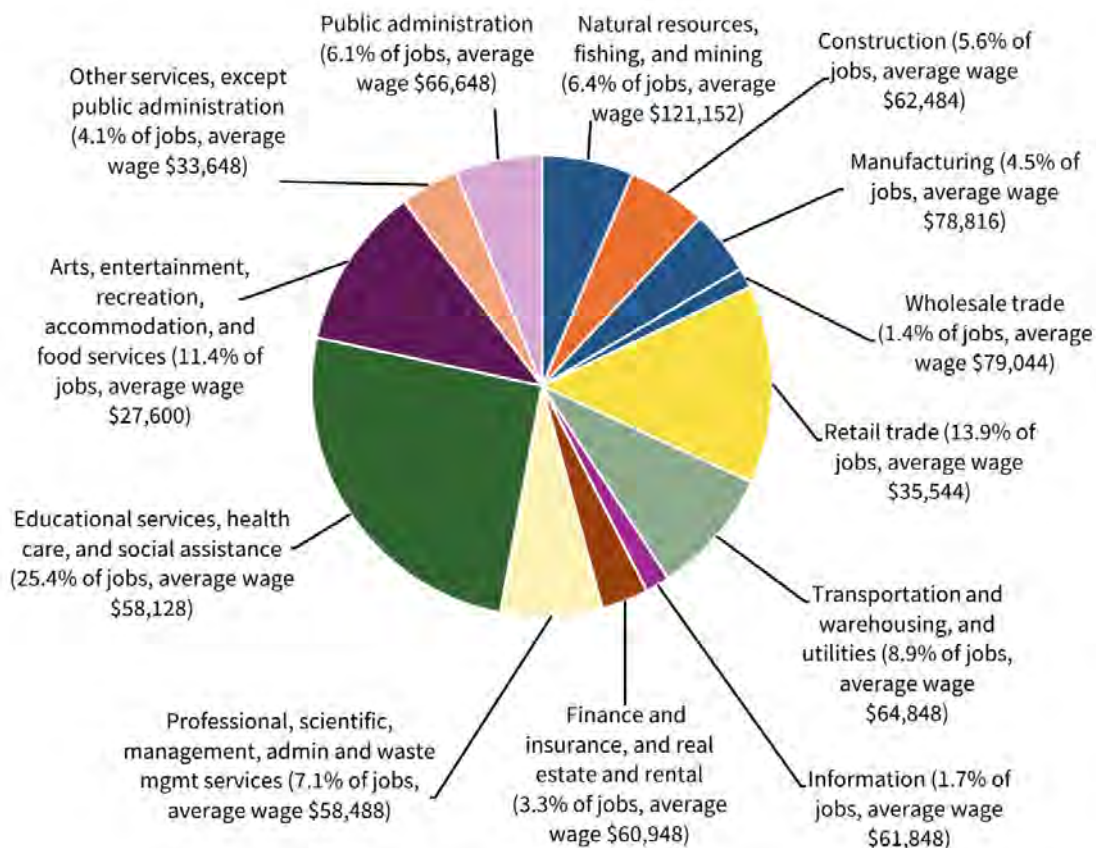
Our Economy*

Median annual household income (inflation-adjusted): \$69,757 ↑ 30%	Estimated gross earnings for commercial fishermen: \$117,873,969 ↑ 42%	Annual unemployment rate: 5.4% ↑ 43%	Top industry: Education, health care and social assistance
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Income in Homer and Comparison Communities



Percentage of Homer Workforce by Industry



Sources for pages 5 and 6: 2018 Homer Comprehensive Plan (History); Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, 2022; US Census Bureau American Community Survey: 2022, 2013 (ACS 5-Year Estimates), Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, 2022, and Northern Economic Analysis, 2024; ADOLWD Current Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages; Northern Economics Analysis, 2024. *Note: Population and economic data in this plan are current as of 2022; updated data are released annually by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.



Photo: Derek Mueller



Land Use and Environment

Key Themes Guiding the Plan

- Moderate Growth Desired
- Modernized Zoning Is Essential for Attainable Housing, Safety, and Future Growth
- Equitable Access to Recreation and Open Space Enhances Community Well-Being
- Place-Based Planning Strengthens Homer's Distinct District and Regional Role

Goal A	Goal B	Goal C
Promote sustainable and moderate growth that preserves Homer's small-town character.	Plan for responsible development that balances environmental impacts, community connections, and infrastructure capacity.	Modernize zoning and land use regulations to reflect the community's vision.

City-Led Strategies

1. Implement a Future Land Use Map that guides future decisions about land use and growth.
2. Implement zoning reforms to support sustainable growth and attainable housing development.
3. Strategically align development regulations with natural hazard risks and land suitability to support safe, resilient, and responsible growth.
4. Protect and enhance green space in Homer to support habitat connectivity, recreational access, and community well-being.
5. Advance place-based planning and development that supports Homer's unique community character, encourages targeted infill, and strengthens Homer's role as a regional hub.

Potential Partner-Led Strategies

6. Collaborate with public and private partners to enhance community spaces and recreational infrastructure.
7. Coordinate with regional and state agencies to align land use policies with environmental stewardship and shared planning goals.

Future Land Use Map Categories

Future Land Use Map Primary Categories				
Category	Intended Land Uses	Application Areas	Use Examples	2018 Designation
Downtown Mixed Use	The urban core of Homer, allowing for a mix of commercial, community, and high to medium density residential uses (low lot size minimums, high lot coverage, reduced setback limitations and parking maximums) with adaptability to changing market needs. A focus on close proximities and a walkable, human-scale environment, enabling all-day and all-season use by all.	Combination of the 2018 Future Land Use Designations for Downtown Mixed Use, Medical District, Office Residential and Town Center	Hospitals, live-work spaces, mixed use buildings, retail, eateries, community facilities, multi-unit housing, apartment buildings, parks	Downtown Mixed Use, Medical District, Residential Office and Town Center
Urban Residential	Medium density residential uses with compatible public and light commercial uses that generate low traffic volumes, and areas for infill and densification.	2018 Future Land Use Designations for Urban Residential	Emphasis on varied housing (single unit, accessory dwellings, cottage clusters)	Urban Residential
Neighborhood Flex	A mix of residential and compatible uses that emphasize adaptability —to topography, mix of housing types, and variety of community uses. Supports a mix of housing types and small-scale community uses within walkable areas that respond to environmental constraints. Designed to balance access to services with preservation of landscape character.	Same as 2018 Future Land Use Designation for Residential Transition	Varied housing types, community garden, neighborhood café, corner store, schools, churches	Residential Transition
Rural Residential	Low density residential uses that may not have access to public utilities.	Same as 2018 Future Land Use Designation for Rural Residential	Single family units with accessory dwellings, lodges, conservation areas	Rural Residential
Commercial Mixed Use	Commercial and community uses supported by residential uses within a walkable, human-scaled environment. Flexibility for businesses is prioritized.	Same as current zone areas for Gateway Business District	Mixed-use buildings, culture venues, retail, restaurants	Gateway Business District
Medical Mixed Use	The Medical District of Homer, allowing for medical facilities and other mixed uses supportive of the district , with an emphasis on accessible design and amenities that meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.	Same as current zone areas for Medical District	Medical facilities, professional offices, assisted living facilities, varied housing types, parks	Medical District
Airport	State-owned lands with multiple uses associated with the Homer Airport where preferences might	Properties associated with the Homer Airport	Manufacturing and processing, worker housing,	Commercial 2 and Conservation

Future Land Use Map Primary Categories				
Category	Intended Land Uses	Application Areas	Use Examples	2018 Designation
	supersede City land use intent. Includes critical habitat and adjacent airport-related uses.	as designated by the 2001 Kenai Area Plan	airports, cold storage facilities	
Light Industrial Mixed Use	Predominately commercial and industrial uses that generally require direct motor vehicle access and potentially larger land areas. Residential uses are accessory.	Combination of current zone areas for East End Mixed Use and General Commercial 1	Warehousing and distribution hubs, building supply stores, supportive infrastructure	East and Mixed Use and Commercial 1
Marine Commercial	Water-dependent or related commercial uses requiring direct motor vehicle access, potentially larger land areas, and benefit from proximity or convenient connection to the waterfront.	Same as current zone areas for Marine Commercial along the Spit	Retail, restaurants, cold storage, docks, marine charters, accessory lodging	<i>Not included</i>
Marine Industrial	Water-dependent industrial uses that require direct marine access for their operation, direct motor vehicle access, and potentially larger land areas. Commercial uses are accessory.	Same as current zone areas for Marine Industrial	Fish processing, marine transportation, cold storage	<i>Not included</i>
Open Space Recreation	Public lands with uses that promote public recreation and access opportunities while preserving the natural and scenic resources of the areas.	Same as current zone areas for Open Space Recreation	Community parks, playgrounds, recreation facilities, trails	Open Space Recreation
Conservation	Public and private lands that serve key environmental functions , such as critical habitat or watershed areas, to be maintained in an undisturbed and natural state.	Same as current zone areas for Conservation and areas dedicated as conservation	Habitat protection facilities with education facilities or non-motorized trails	Conservation, and Open Space Recreation

Future Land Use Map Overlays

Future Land Use Map Overlay Categories		
Category	Description	Application Areas
Area Plan	Areas where further planning efforts may be needed and/or where additional development regulations may apply.	The Homer Spit (encompassing the Small Boat Harbor Overlay) and the Downtown Area
Environmental Constraints	Known areas of environmental constraints, such as critical habitat and steep slopes, to help identify places where more detailed site analysis may be warranted if areas are to be developed or improved.	Flood zones, coastal bluff instability, scarps, hydric soils, key watersheds, and slopes 30 percent or greater

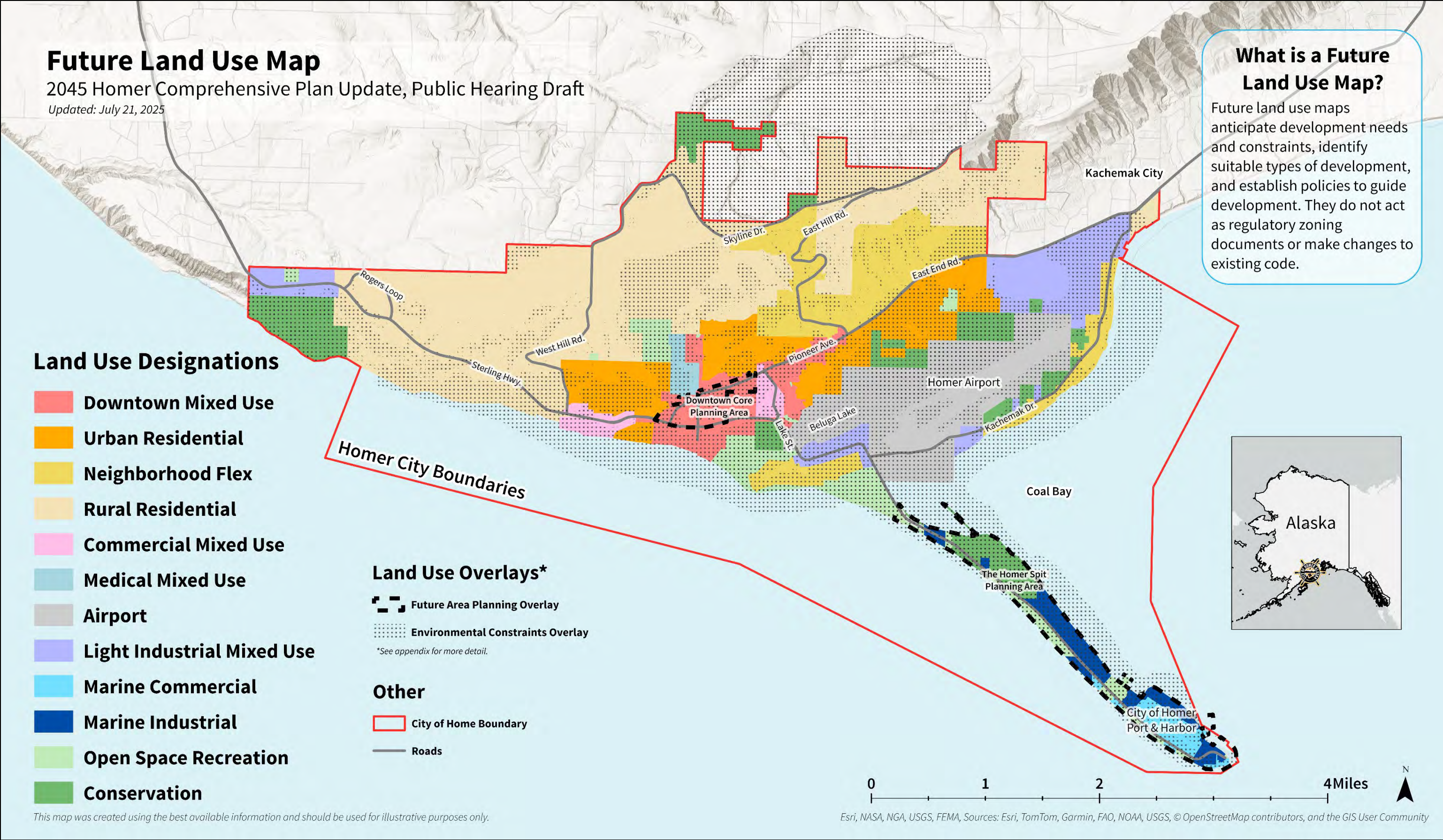




Photo: Derek Mueller



Public Facilities and Services

Key Themes Guiding the Plan

- Reliable and Affordable Services
- Accessible, Maintained Community Facilities
- Rising Service Demands and Infrastructure Costs

Goal A	Goal B	Goal C
Ensure City services are available, affordable, and adequate.	Provide and improve City-operated facilities to meet the needs of the community, accommodate desired growth, and support sustainability and conservation goals.	Mitigate risks to City-owned infrastructure from climate change and natural hazards.

City-Led Strategies

1. Provide safe, year-round public facilities for residents of all ages and abilities.
2. Continue to provide high-quality water and sewer services within the City to meet current and anticipated demands.
3. Maintain and improve Port and Harbor infrastructure.
4. Develop new facilities to support access and safety on the Homer Spit.
5. Continue to meet the community’s public safety needs to ensure the safety of residents, visitors, and first responders.
6. Increase the City's capacity to provide and expand community services and improve the synergy between the City and other community partners to maximize resource and investments.

Potential Partner-Led Strategies

7. Identify and address the deficiencies of the Homer Airport (updated master plan, more reliable year-round service, etc.).
8. Ensure people of all ages and abilities can live, work, and play in the community, including encouraging businesses and organizations to create accessible, ADA-compliant facilities.
9. Collaborate with Borough, state, and federal partners to ensure year-round access to community facilities for recreational, educational, social, and cultural activities.



Housing

Key Themes Guiding the Plan

- Housing Supply Does Not Meet the Community Needs
- Rising Costs and Land Availability Limit Housing Development Opportunities
- Unattainable Housing and the High Cost of Living are Barriers to Economic Growth and Quality of Life

Goal A	Goal B	Goal C	Goal D
Preserve and produce a high-quality, healthy, safe, and energy efficient housing inventory that accommodates for projected population growth and is affordable, attainable, and safe for all Homer residents.	Develop Homer's housing inventory to be compatible with the beloved existing community character while allowing for essential growth and density.	Ensure housing development aligns with the City's preservation and sustainability goals, minimizing the environmental impact of new construction.	Build strong community and regional partnerships around housing to improve housing attainability and affordability.
City-Led Strategies 1. Implement zoning reforms to encourage attainable housing development for young people, families, seniors, and seasonal workers. 2. Assess Homer's housing needs and maintain data collection. Potential Partner-Led Strategies 3. Develop incentives and public-private partnerships for affordable and long-term housing development.			



Photo: Art Koeninger



Economic Development

Key Themes Guiding the Plan

- Population Expected to See Slight Growth
- Residents Value the Quality of Life but Struggle with Cost of Living, Housing
- Fishing and Tourism Industries Remain Strong Economic Drivers

Goal A	Goal B	Goal C	Goal D	Goal E
Enhance Homer's defined downtown to drive commerce, business, and resident and visitors' services.	Support Homer's economy by honoring traditional industries, while supporting expansion of select industries that maintain the character of Homer.	Expand workforce development in key sectors to increase year-round, high wage employment opportunities.	Develop and maintain sustainable, accessible infrastructure that supports a thriving local economy.	Sustain Homer as an active, vibrant, healthy community with year-round opportunities to enjoy art, events, and recreation.

City-Led Strategies

1. Invest in infrastructure that supports economic growth in key sectors.
2. Celebrate Homer's status as a vibrant hub for arts, culture, and community engagement.
3. Sustain Homer's role as an agricultural hub.

Potential Partner-Led Strategies

4. Support Homer's youngest residents and their families by making sure they have what they need to grow and thrive, including access to child care.
5. Expand vocational training resources, particularly in trades, marine trades (including mariculture and shipping industries), and healthcare industries, to retain young residents and provide year-round employment.
6. Support access to quality, affordable health care.
7. Promote fishing and maritime services as viable career options in Homer and demonstrate long-term support for and commitment to the industry.
8. Promote food security.
9. Address barriers to workforce recruitment and retention (e.g., housing, child care).
10. Pursue moderate, sustainable growth in tourism, focusing on activities that benefit small businesses and minimize negative impacts on community character.
11. Support Homer's seniors, including the ability to remain in the community as they age.
12. Support high-quality K-12 and higher education in Homer, support teachers, and sustain lifelong learning opportunities for all residents.



Transportation

Key Themes Guiding the Plan

- A Transportation Hub for the Region
- Road and Sidewalk Maintenance is a Community Priority
- Residents Walk and Bike Year-Round
- Traffic Flow and Safety Concerns
- Continued Interest in Transit Opportunities

Goal A

Provide a resilient non-motorized transportation network focused on connectivity, safety, and access to the downtown, to schools, and to trails for users of all ages and abilities.

Goal B

Maintain a sustainable and safe motorized transportation network year-round to move people and goods to, from, and within the Greater Homer Area.

City-Led Strategies

1. Build or improve safe roadway and pathway access and connections to key locations.
2. Maintain a year-round transportation network.

Potential Partner-Led Strategies

3. Ensure continued operation of safe airport and ferry operations to support the movement of people and goods to and from the community and maintain Homer's status as a regional hub.
4. Explore public transit options, particularly in the Homer Spit area, to alleviate traffic congestion and improve accessibility for seasonal workers, residents, and visitors.
5. Install benches, trash cans, bike racks and create drop-off and pick-up locations for buses, taxis and visitors, in alignment with the Homer Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan.



Photo: Lorna Branzuela



Governance

Overarching Themes Guiding the Plan

- The City of Homer Faces Fiscal Uncertainty

Other Themes Guiding the Plan

- Revenue Growth Driven by Tourism, but Inflation Limits Gains
- Dependence on Sales Tax as a Primary Revenue Source
- Aging Population and Increased Property Tax Exemptions
- Staff Capacity Challenges Impacting Service Delivery
- Public Engagement and Fiscal Transparency are Important
- The Value of Collaboration and Partnerships in Fiscal Sustainability

Goal A	Goal B	Goal C
Ensure long-term financial stability.	Enhance fiscal transparency and community engagement.	Strengthen collaboration and partnerships.

City-Led Strategies

1. Develop a long-term fiscal plan that is proactive, sustainable, and responsive to short-term challenges and opportunities.
2. Diversify revenue streams to reduce dependence on sales and property taxes.
3. Conduct operational efficiency audits to identify cost savings and streamline municipal services.
4. Increase public participation in budget planning, improve access to financial data, and foster community discussions to ensure policies reflect the needs and priorities of residents both inside and outside City limits.

Potential Partner-Led Strategies

5. Identify opportunities to coordinate with organizations including Tribal organizations, Alaska Native Corporations, and local and regional non-profits to leverage resources and provide services more cost-effectively.
6. Work with the Kenai Peninsula Borough to advocate for and implement policies that fiscally benefit borough communities.



Photo: Kyra Wagner



Sustainability and Resilience

Key Themes Guiding the Plan

- Natural and Climate-Driven Hazards Increase Risks to People and Infrastructure
- Sustainability and Resilience Are Core to City Planning and Investments
- Open Space and Natural Lands Support Long-Term Community Well-Being

Goal A

Protect both existing and new infrastructure from the impacts of climate change, environmental constraints, and hazards.

Goal B

Encourage Homer residents to be proud stewards of their community and the spectacular natural setting around them.

City-Led Strategies

1. Modernize City operations for long-term efficiency and resilience.
2. Reduce risk from natural hazards through proactive siting and planning.
3. Enhance natural drainage systems.

Potential Partner-Led Strategies

4. Leverage partnerships to advance community-wide sustainability and resilience.



2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan Update

Core Plan: Public Hearing Draft, July 2025

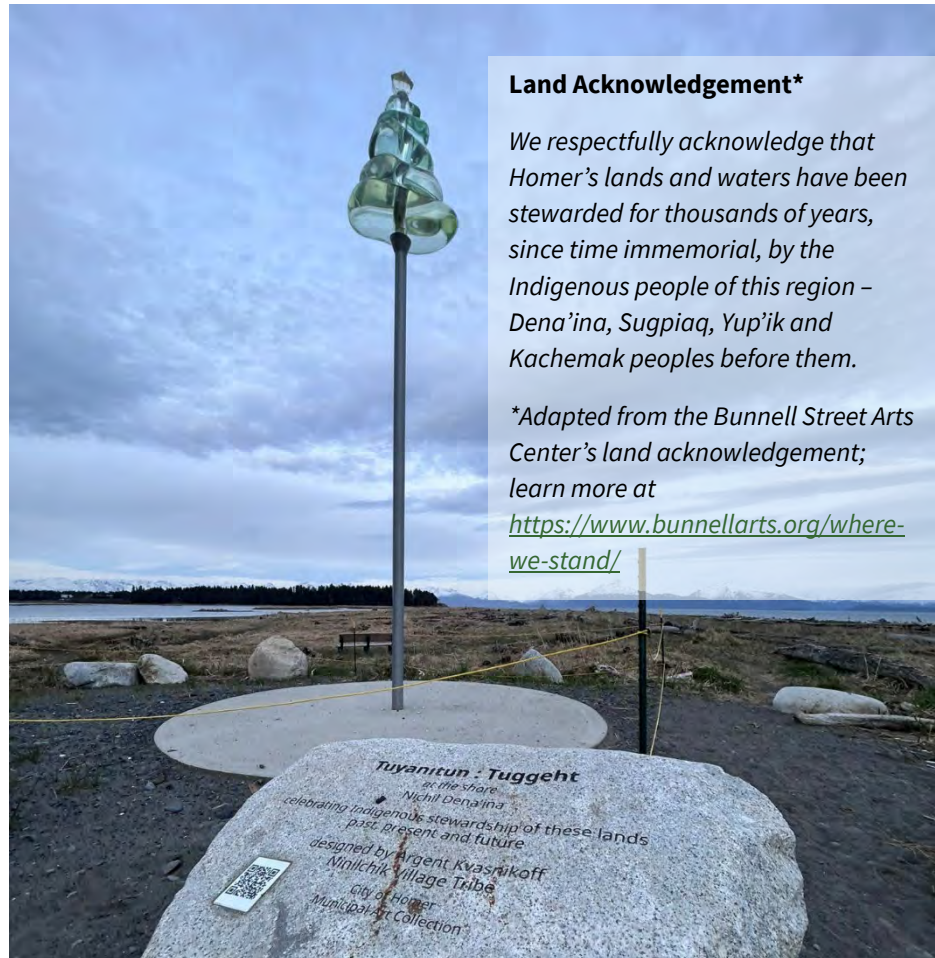


HomerCompPlanUpdate.com

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“Tuyanitun: Tuggeht,” a sculpture on Bishop’s Beach, created by local artist Argent Kvasnikoff, a member of the Ninilchik Tribe of Alaska, to celebrate Indigenous stewardship of Homer area lands past, present, and future.



This plan was produced by Agnew::Beck Consulting in partnership with RESPEC, Kinney Engineering, Northern Economics, Corvus Design, and Stantec to ensure the planning process, and ultimately the final plan meets community needs.

Many photos in this plan were submitted by residents during a project photo contest; these photos are listed with photo credits. Uncredited photos were taken by members of the project team.



Homer City Council Ordinance No.

To come in final document when adopted.

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- Appendix H: Land Use and Environment: Supplemental Maps
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Credit: Derek Mueller

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Introduction

The 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan serves as a resource for community leaders, residents, and other partners to protect what residents value most about Homer and guide decision-making while enhancing the quality of life for current and future residents. The plan establishes a long-term community vision for Homer's future, captured in Figure 1 below. It proceeds to translate that vision into broad goals as well as practical strategies and actions in the subsequent chapters.

Figure 1. City of Homer Vision



Purpose

Why do we need an updated comprehensive plan?

The City of Homer is updating the Comprehensive Plan to recognize what we have accomplished, address new challenges and opportunities for our community, and coordinate efforts to achieve our shared vision for a future Homer.

- The first Homer Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1954. The plan has gone through periodic updates every five to ten years. The 2018 update was a technical update and did not include significant changes from the previous major plan, which was completed in 2008.
- The conditions around the Greater Homer Area have evolved since 2018, and the community has made progress and completed strategies from the 2018 Homer Comprehensive Plan.
- The 2018 plan update was conducted internally by City staff with input from the City Council and City commissions/advisory boards. The 2018 plan did not include a major public participation component.
- The City is updating the zoning and planning sections of the City Code (Title 21) to make the code clearer and easier to use. This update aims to support better development decisions, particularly on key issues like housing, natural hazard mitigation, and urban sprawl. To ensure the code reflects Homer's current needs, the City wants to align the code updates alongside the up-to-date plan, with ample opportunities for residents to shape the future direction of the community.

Alaska Statute, Title 29

Title 29 of Alaska Statute requires that cities and boroughs must engage in some form of land use regulation:

AS 29.40.030(b). Comprehensive Plan.

*(a) The **comprehensive plan** is a compilation of policy statements, goals, standards, and maps for guiding the physical, social, and economic development, both private and public and may include, but is not limited to, the following:*

- (1) statements of policies, goals, and standards;*
- (2) a land use plan;*
- (3) a community facilities plan;*
- (4) a transportation plan; and*
- (5) recommendations for implementation*

Some of the recommendations in the 2018 Homer Comprehensive Plan are still relevant today.

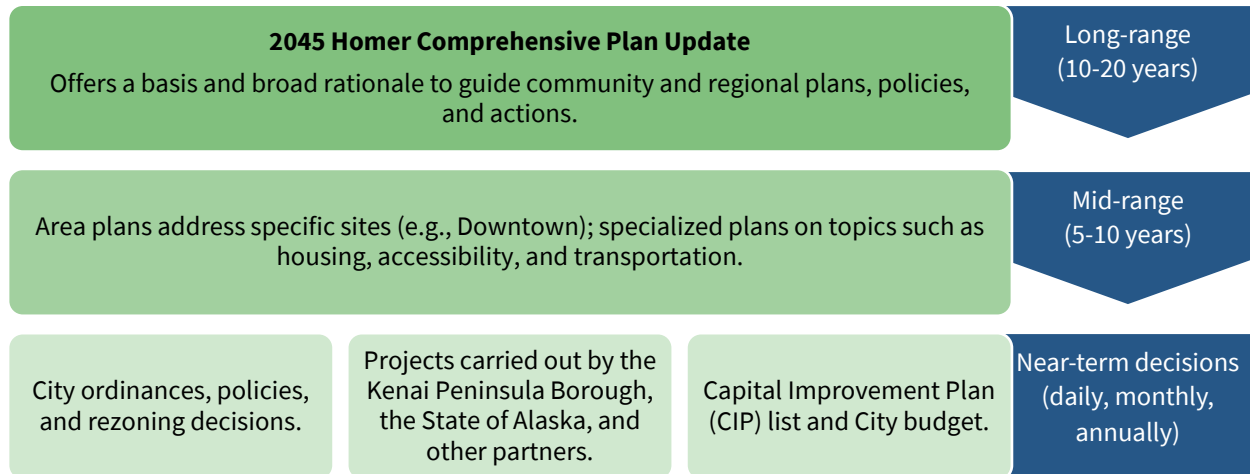
This plan includes strategies and actions that have been adapted from the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. These strategies and actions are identified in the focus area chapters using a green diamond symbol:



How does this 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan Update relate to the 2018 Homer Comprehensive Plan?

The 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan Update and accompanying Future Land Use Map provide broad direction and guidance for the Homer community. This update process recognized changes to community characteristics and resident needs in the last five years, especially with consideration for Phase 2 of this project, the Homer Title 21 Code Update. For example, this plan includes a chapter on housing to reflect the concerns in Homer and much of the state about the availability of quality, affordable housing, where the 2018 plan did not have a dedicated chapter on housing. This updated plan aims to have practical strategies and goals that are widely accepted by the community and implementable by the City of Homer, the community, and other partners.

How does this plan relate to other community plans?

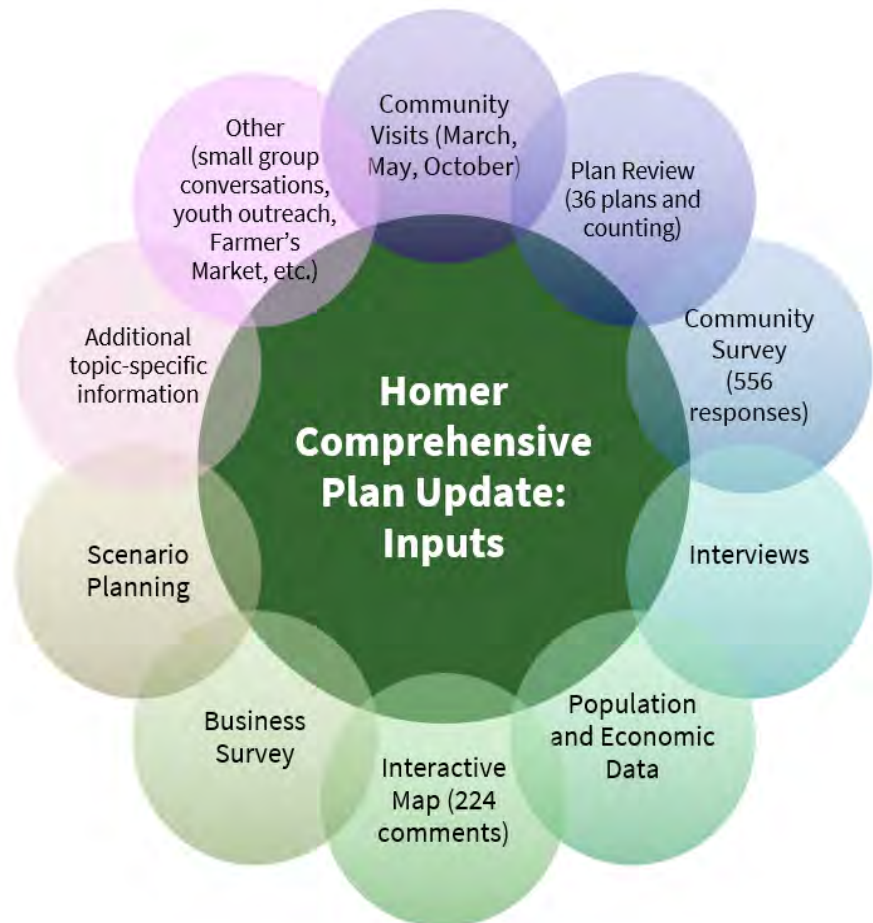


Methodology

How was this plan developed?

This plan was developed with extensive input from residents, City leadership and staff, commissions, committees, and other community leaders, as well as regional, state, and federal partners. See the list of inputs in Figure 2. The planning process kicked off in December 2023, with adoption in fall 2025. For a detailed summary of the project activities and inputs that contributed to the plan, see Appendix C: Methodology. Detailed summaries of project outreach activities can be found on the project website: homercompplanupdate.com.

Figure 2. Homer 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update: Inputs

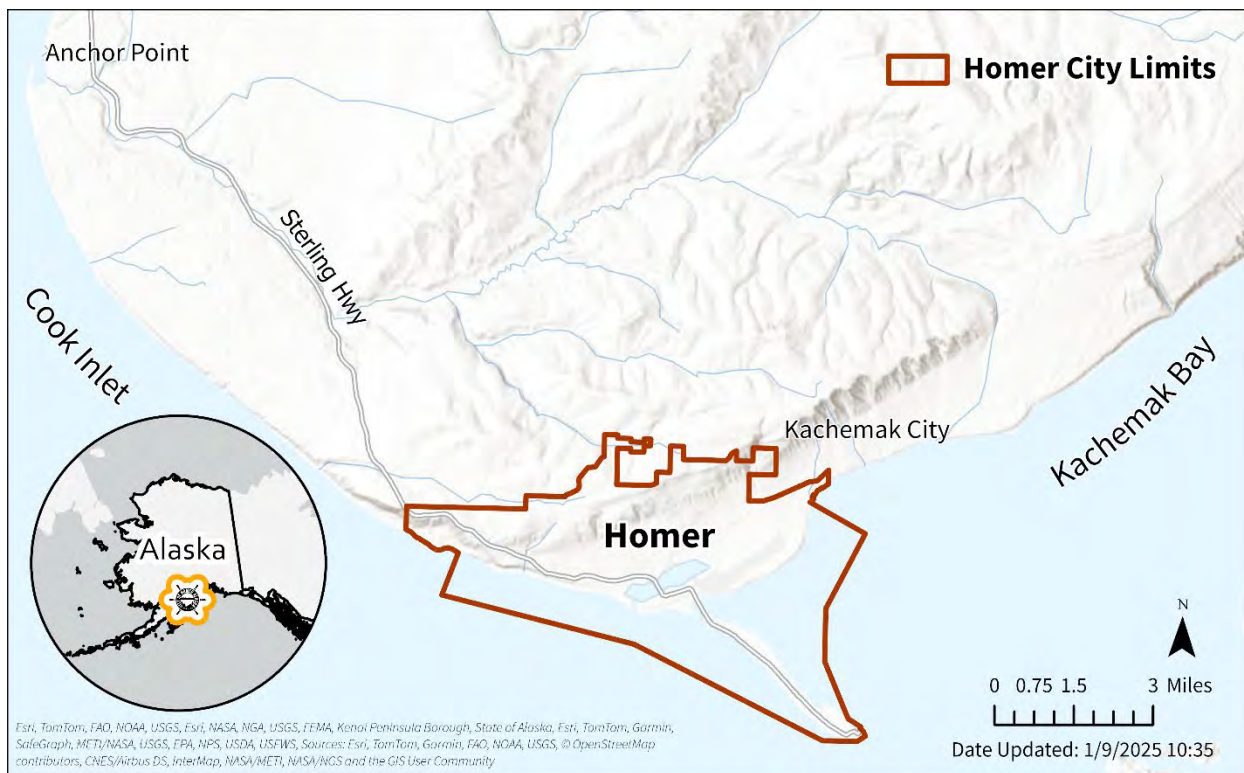


Context

Project Area

The "Greater Homer Area" encompasses the City of Homer and its neighboring communities, including Diamond Ridge, Kachemak City, and Fritz Creek. Located on the southwestern edge of Alaska's Kenai Peninsula, this region contains a broad mix of services, employment, housing, and recreational opportunities. The area is defined by its distinctive geography—coastal lowlands and tidal flats along Kachemak Bay, the narrow 4.5-mile Homer Spit with its seasonal marine commerce, and upland ridges that support residential and agricultural uses with sweeping views of the bay and mountains. The Sterling Highway and Alaska Marine Highway connect these communities to Homer, supporting daily flows of people and goods and reinforcing Homer's role as a regional hub. While the policies in this plan focus on the City of Homer and services within its jurisdiction, they are written with consideration for the City's connections to the greater area it serves.

Figure 3. Map of the Greater Homer Area



Why update the Plan Now?

The City of Homer has made progress since the 2008 Homer Comprehensive Plan Update (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Community Accomplishments Since 2008

✓ Built a new police station and completed repairs to fire department	✓ Completed an ADA transition plan for City facilities	✓ Revised the Community Design Manual
✓ Added public restrooms in downtown Homer and Homer Spit	✓ Completed the Climate Action Plan Progress Report	✓ Reduced parking requirements for homes and businesses
✓ Renovated and expanded City Hall	✓ Constructed port and harbor office	✓ Updated the Homer Transportation Plan
✓ Improved trail systems and built new sidewalks; completed trail between harbor and Seafarers Memorial	✓ Developed updated beach policy and revised Coastal Bluff construction setback regulations	✓ Rezoned areas according to the Future Land Use Map such as creating the Town Center, East End Mixed Use and Medical Zoning Districts
✓ Completed upgrades to End of the Road, Bishop's Beach, Jack Gist, and Karen Hornaday Parks	✓ Increased police and emergency response coverage	✓ Expanded Community Recreation Services and public-private partnerships
✓ Modified City budget and taxation based on major reductions of state funding to municipalities	✓ Completed long-range planning for future facilities such as public works and indoor recreation	✓ Continued purchasing lands in the Bridge Creek Watershed Protection District to protect public drinking water
✓ Completed cruise ship disembarkment improvements and harbor overlook at Deep Water Dock	✓ Completed a Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan and began making improvements	✓ Updated the Homer Spit Plan and followed up with zoning revisions and parking management

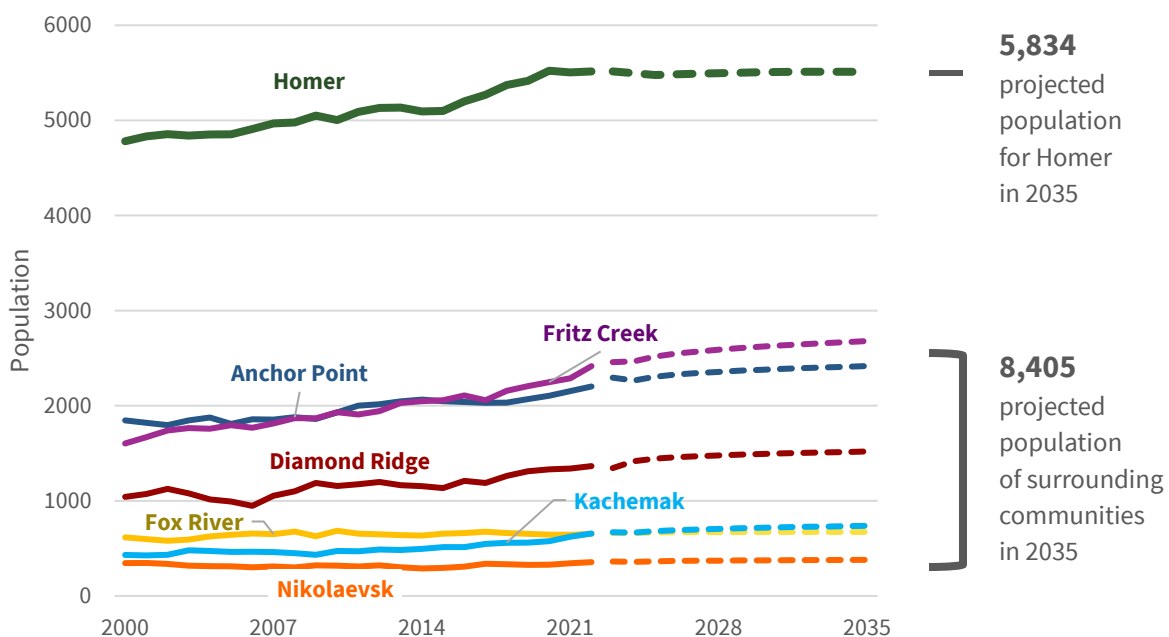
At the same time, the City of Homer and surrounding area have changed significantly since the technical update in 2018. The following are a list of other impactful changes that have occurred:

- Homer is experiencing a **growing senior population**; the percentage of the population that is 65 or older increased from 14 percent to 22 percent between 2013 to 2022.¹
- The **COVID-19 pandemic** left lasting impacts, from changes in worker habits to higher inflation.
- Impacts from **climate change** are a growing concern.
- The City is planning for **port, harbor, and Homer Spit ("the Spit") improvements** to meet economic needs and increase resilience to natural hazards and climate change.
- **Housing** is increasingly cited as a concern for hiring and retaining workers and for the overall quality of life.
- The City is facing **fiscal uncertainty**, necessitating careful planning and prioritization of resources (see Governance chapter for more details).

¹ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022 data

- The area's **population has continued to grow**. Figure 5 shows historic and forecasted population trends in Homer and the surrounding communities.
 - o Homer's population in 2022 was 15.4 percent larger than it was in 2000 (**green line on chart**).
 - o Considered together, the surrounding communities around Homer were 30.0 percent larger in 2022 than in 2000, outpacing growth within City limits.
 - o Since 1994, the total population of the surrounding communities has exceeded the population in the City of Homer.
 - o Many residents in these surrounding communities work in the City and/or rely on City services, facilities, and businesses. Many of these residents also have shared they would like to live in Homer but cannot afford to live within City boundaries; housing cost and housing affordability are often cited as a barrier.

Figure 5. Historical and Forecasted Population in Homer and Surrounding Community Populations, 2000–2035



Note: Population and economic data in this plan are current as of 2022; updated data are released annually by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development and Northern Economics analysis (see Appendix F: About Homer for details). Population projections are updated regularly; for most current estimates, visit

<https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/article/alaska-population-projections>

How to Use This Plan

This plan serves as a basis and rationale for other community policies and actions, including: site-specific and neighborhood plans; specialized plans addressing housing and other topics; ordinances and other policies carrying out comprehensive plan goals; projects carried out by City staff; and a tool for communicating priorities and funding requests to state and federal government or other funders, such as the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) list, neighborhood-initiated rezones, or special legislative appropriations.

The goals of this plan give the City and community a broad vision and direction to work toward in the coming years. A key element of this plan is the Future Land Use Map, which offers broad guidance on preferred future land use and will inform future changes to zoning, land uses, housing, transportation, and recreation-related policy decisions.

Most importantly, this plan should serve as a key tool for community leaders and residents in their short-term and long-term planning and decision-making. In conjunction with more detailed plans and current information, the plan should be the backdrop and foundational reference for all City Planning Commission and Council meetings and rulings regarding the project area, and for City departments in their daily operations. See below for a specific breakdown of how different stakeholders might use the plan.

How to use this plan if you are a...

Resident Use as a tool to protect or improve the things you love about the area; for example, to propose a trail connection, or to learn about where the community agreed future development might occur and take place.	City Staff Guide decision-making on land use changes such as zoning, and permitting; identifies needed policy changes and enforcement priorities.	City or Regional Representative Use when City Commissions, Boards, and Council members make decisions, rulings, and create policy in the project area.
Property Owner or Developer Identify areas where different types of growth are encouraged or discouraged while summarizing housing, transportation, and commercial needs.	Business Owner Use to understand where your type of business may be best located or what community priorities could inform a business idea and plan.	Grant Writer Use to demonstrate communitywide support for key priorities in the project area when applying for funding from state, federal, and other sources.

What's in This Plan

Executive Summary Offers a graphic, condensed summary of the plan, including the City's vision, goals, and strategies for each topic; also includes the Future Land Use Map.	Core Plan (<i>this document</i>) Includes additional information on the process, area, and key issues that were used to inform the goals and strategies.	Appendices Includes extensive background information, context, and discussion used to inform the Future Land Use Map and related plan goals and strategies.
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There are ten appendices that accompany the plan, including a list of acronyms and a glossary of frequently used terms. See the Table of Contents for the full list of appendices.

Chapters in the Core Plan and Chapter Organization

The following chapters are included in the plan:



Land Use and Environment



Public Facilities and Services



Housing



Economic Development



Transportation



Governance



Sustainability and Resilience

Chapters are organized into the following components:

Key Themes

Each chapter in this plan begins by identifying key themes that describe current conditions, community perspectives, and relevant trends for that focus area.

Goals

Themes are followed by a broad set of goals. The goals identify long term, aspirational improvements.

City-Led Strategies and Actions

Each chapter includes a set of policies (strategies and actions) that guide residents, the City, and partners in achieving the vision and goals of the plan. A subset of strategies are identified as proposed priority strategies. These strategies were selected based on the community survey and related inputs such as the growth scenarios activity, feedback received during the public review draft, and input from City boards and commissions. Priority strategies include a more detailed action table that identifies who should lead and support implementation, estimated resources (staff capacity, policies, funding) that may be needed, and whether the action is short, medium, or long-term. Appendix J brings the action plans from all chapters into one place, as well as proposed next steps for implementation and a list of potential funding resources.

After plan adoption, City staff and commissions use the action plans to collaboratively prepare annual work plans to help guide implementation, with each commission selecting three actions from the plan to advance during the year. These annual work plans will reflect available resources and guide leadership and staff, while also providing Homer residents, businesses, and partners a picture of progress tied to budget and capital improvement priorities.

Partner-Led Strategies

Partners play a key role in achieving the community's vision and goals and supporting implementation of the plan. Following the City-led strategies, each chapter features a set of potential partner-led strategies. Appendix I includes additional detail on these strategies, including a list of potential actions for many of the partner-led strategies.

Policies in Other Chapters

In some cases, a policy may support goals in other chapters. For example, harbor-related policies are relevant in the Public Facilities and Services chapter, the Transportation chapter, and the Economic Development chapter. To reduce redundancy, each policy is only listed once; the end of each chapter features a table with cross-references to other chapters.

Plan Amendments and Updates

The Kenai Peninsula Borough holds planning and platting authority; therefore, all plan amendments and updates require approval by the Borough. This is intended to be a 20-year plan, although if conditions change significantly in the community within the 20-year period (such as major population growth or population loss), it may be necessary to update sooner.

Key to Icons in the Plan

✂: **PRIORITY.** This strategy has been identified as an emerging priority for implementation

✂: **CAPITAL.** This action features a potential capital project (including those in planning and feasibility stages).

*: **CODE.** This action recommends a specific code revision.

◆: **2018.** This action is adapted/carried over from the 2018 Comprehensive Plan.



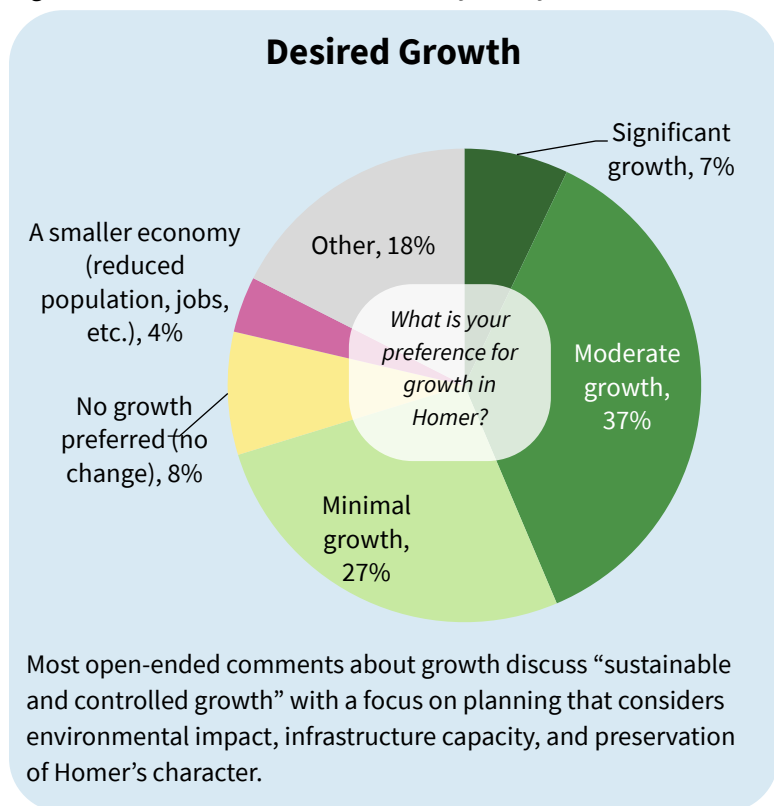
Land Use and Environment

Key Themes Guiding the Plan

Moderate Growth Desired

Homer's population is projected to grow at a slower rate over the next 20 years and most residents want to see growth occur moderately and sustainably within City boundaries.² As shown in Figure 6, nearly 65 percent of the 548 respondents in the community survey prefer minimal to moderate community and economic growth and 75 percent of the 91 respondents in the Growth Scenarios Report Card chose scenarios that reflect a more dense, central, and connected development pattern. According to multiple comments received from interviews, community events, and surveys, Homer places a high value on preserving its small-town character through growth that prioritizes equitable access to resources, respects ecological benefits and limits, and enhances local resilience.

Figure 6. Results From the 2024 Community Survey



Modernized Zoning is

Essential for Attainable Housing, Safety, and Future Growth

Homer's current land use regulations no longer reflect the community's development needs or values. Residents have called for more attainable housing options, greater consideration of natural hazards, and updates to zoning standards that align with infrastructure availability and environmental constraints. Most survey respondents (87 percent) said increasing affordable housing was important, yet many central areas are zoned in ways that limit higher-density options, infill, or non-traditional housing types such as townhomes, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), or modular homes. 66 percent of respondents agreed that starter homes are especially needed. Meanwhile, approximately 35 percent of Homer's land base includes wetlands, steep slopes, or critical habitat that limits development feasibility and increases hazard exposure³. Residents want code updates that allow for more flexibility in building types, incentivize infill and redevelopment in appropriate areas, and ensure that private and public development considers runoff, slope stability, and infrastructure capacity. Aligning Homer's

² Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. (2023). *Alaska population projections 2023 to 2050*. <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/pop/projections/pub/popproj.pdf>

³ From spatial analysis performed on environmental constraints overlay of the Future Land Use Map.

zoning code with these goals is essential to support equitable housing, reduce long-term hazard risks, and ensure that future growth respects the City’s landscape and resources.

Equitable Access to Recreation and Open Space Enhances Community Well-Being

Residents value the many ways they engage with Homer’s outdoors—from informal shoreline access to year-round trail use and recreation in neighborhood parks. In the community survey, 77 percent of respondents identified preservation of public open space as important. Though Homer has a broad inventory of public and quasi-public land, not all areas are easily accessible, and some active-use spaces are not formally protected for open space or recreation in current land use designations. Community members expressed strong interest in improving park facilities, expanding all-season trail networks where feasible, and ensuring beach access remains safe and publicly available. As Homer continues to grow, access to existing open space will be a key factor in maintaining health, social connection, and quality of life for all residents.

Place-Based Planning Strengthens Homer’s Distinct District and Regional Role

From the economic and cultural activity on the Homer Spit (“the Spit”) to the services concentrated in the downtown core, different areas of Homer serve different functions in the daily life of the community. Residents and stakeholders have called for more detailed planning in these unique places to ensure development supports their intended purposes. Coordinated land use planning, infrastructure investment, and zoning updates in key areas will help maintain Homer’s role as a connected regional center.



Homer residents gathered for the October 21st, 2024 Growth Scenarios Work Session.

Goals

Goal A	Goal B	Goal C
Promote sustainable and moderate growth that preserves Homer’s small-town character.	Plan for responsible development that balances environmental impacts, community connections, and infrastructure capacity.	Modernize zoning and land use regulations to reflect the community’s vision.

City-Led Strategies and Actions

1. Implement a Future Land Use Map that guides future decisions about land use and growth.

Note: Actions associated with this strategy are encompassed in Land Use and Environment Strategy 2.

Figure 7. Future Land Use Map Primary Categories

Future Land Use Map Primary Categories				
Category	Intended Land Uses	Application Areas	Use Examples	2018 Designation
Downtown Mixed Use	The urban core of Homer, allowing for a mix of commercial, community, and high to medium density residential uses (low lot size minimums, high lot coverage, reduced setback limitations and parking maximums) with adaptability to changing market needs. A focus on close proximities and a walkable, human-scale environment, enabling all-day and all-season use by all.	Combination of the 2018 Future Land Use Designations for Downtown Mixed Use, Medical District, Office Residential and Town Center	Hospitals, live-work spaces, mixed use buildings, retail, eateries, community facilities, multi-unit housing, apartment buildings, parks	Downtown Mixed Use, Medical District, Residential Office and Town Center
Urban Residential	Medium density residential uses with compatible public and light commercial uses that generate low traffic volumes, and areas for infill and densification.	2018 Future Land Use Designations for Urban Residential	Emphasis on varied housing (single unit, accessory dwellings, cottage clusters)	Urban Residential
Neighborhood Flex	A mix of residential and compatible uses that emphasize adaptability —to topography, mix of housing types, and variety of community uses. Supports a mix of housing types and small-scale community uses within walkable areas that respond to environmental constraints. Designed to balance access to services with preservation of landscape character.	Same as 2018 Future Land Use Designation for Residential Transition	Varied housing types, community garden, neighborhood café, corner store, schools, churches	Residential Transition
Rural Residential	Low density residential uses that may not have access to public utilities.	Same as 2018 Future Land Use Designation for Rural Residential	Single family units with accessory dwellings, lodges, conservation areas	Rural Residential
Commercial Mixed Use	Commercial and community uses supported by residential uses within a walkable, human-scaled environment. Flexibility for businesses is prioritized.	Same as current zone areas for Gateway Business District	Mixed-use buildings, culture venues, retail, restaurants	Gateway Business District
Medical Mixed Use	The Medical District of Homer, allowing for medical facilities and other mixed uses supportive of the district , with an emphasis on accessible design and amenities that meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.	Same as current zone areas for Medical District	Medical facilities, professional offices, assisted living facilities, varied housing types, parks	Medical District

Future Land Use Map Primary Categories				
Category	Intended Land Uses	Application Areas	Use Examples	2018 Designation
Airport	State-owned lands with multiple uses associated with the Homer Airport where preferences might supersede City land use intent. Includes critical habitat and adjacent airport-related uses.	Properties associated with the Homer Airport as designated by the 2001 Kenai Area Plan	Manufacturing and processing, worker housing, airports, cold storage facilities	Commercial 2 and Conservation
Light Industrial Mixed Use	Predominately commercial and industrial uses that generally require direct motor vehicle access and potentially larger land areas. Residential uses are accessory.	Combination of current zone areas for East End Mixed Use and General Commercial 1	Warehousing and distribution hubs, building supply stores, supportive infrastructure	East and Mixed Use and Commercial 1
Marine Commercial	Water-dependent or related commercial uses requiring direct motor vehicle access, potentially larger land areas, and benefit from proximity or convenient connection to the waterfront.	Same as current zone areas for Marine Commercial along the Spit	Retail, restaurants, cold storage, docks, marine charters, accessory lodging	<i>Not included</i>
Marine Industrial	Water-dependent industrial uses that require direct marine access for their operation, direct motor vehicle access, and potentially larger land areas. Commercial uses are accessory.	Same as current zone areas for Marine Industrial	Fish processing, marine transportation, cold storage	<i>Not included</i>
Open Space Recreation	Public lands with uses that promote public recreation and access opportunities while preserving the natural and scenic resources of the areas.	Same as current zone areas for Open Space Recreation	Community parks, playgrounds, recreation facilities, trails	Open Space Recreation
Conservation	Public and private lands that serve key environmental functions , such as critical habitat or watershed areas, to be maintained in an undisturbed and natural state.	Same as current zone areas for Conservation and areas dedicated as conservation	Habitat protection facilities with education facilities or non-motorized trails	Conservation, and Open Space Recreation

Figure 8. Future Land Use Map Overlays

Future Land Use Map Overlay Categories		
The overlays defined on the map cover areas with base land use designations but identify special provisions in addition to the base designation.		
Category	Description	Application Areas
Area Plan	Areas where further planning efforts may be needed and/or where additional development regulations may apply.	The Homer Spit (encompassing the Small Boat Harbor Overlay) and the Downtown Area
Environmental Constraints	Known areas of environmental constraints, such as critical habitat and steep slopes, to help identify places where more detailed site analysis may be warranted if areas are to be developed or improved.	Flood zones, coastal bluff instability, scarps, hydric soils, key watersheds, and slopes 30 percent or greater

A key element of this plan is the **Future Land Use Map**, which offers broad guidance on preferred future land use and growth and will inform future changes to zoning, subdivisions and other land uses, housing, transportation, and recreation-related policy decisions.

The Future Land Use Map is a vital tool for guiding development and resource management. Key considerations include:

- *Zoning Designations*: Clear classification of areas for residential, commercial, industrial, and conservation uses.
- *Compatibility with Existing Uses*: Ensuring new land uses align with current neighborhood characteristics and infrastructure.
- *Environmental Considerations*: Incorporating natural features and constraints into land use planning to protect ecosystems.
- *Community Input*: Engaging residents in the planning process to reflect their needs and priorities in the land use designations.



Beluga Lake

Zoning is a regulatory framework or policy that describes how land can be used in the present; it provides some overarching restrictions to ensure land uses within a designated area do not conflict. A future land use map identifies broad future land use intentions for an area. Zoning codes are law and a way to implement and enforce land use goals within a specified area, while a future land use map aligns with existing and desired future land use in the project area. The plan and the associated Future Land Use Map will not immediately result in zoning changes. Rather, the proposed land use categories and recommended zoning improvements in this plan provide categories and tools to guide land use decisions in the City in a way that guides the vision for the area, promotes planning best practices, and considers local context. If there are proposed rezones in the project area, the Future Land Use Map will guide the zoning actions.



A Future Land Use Map DOES:

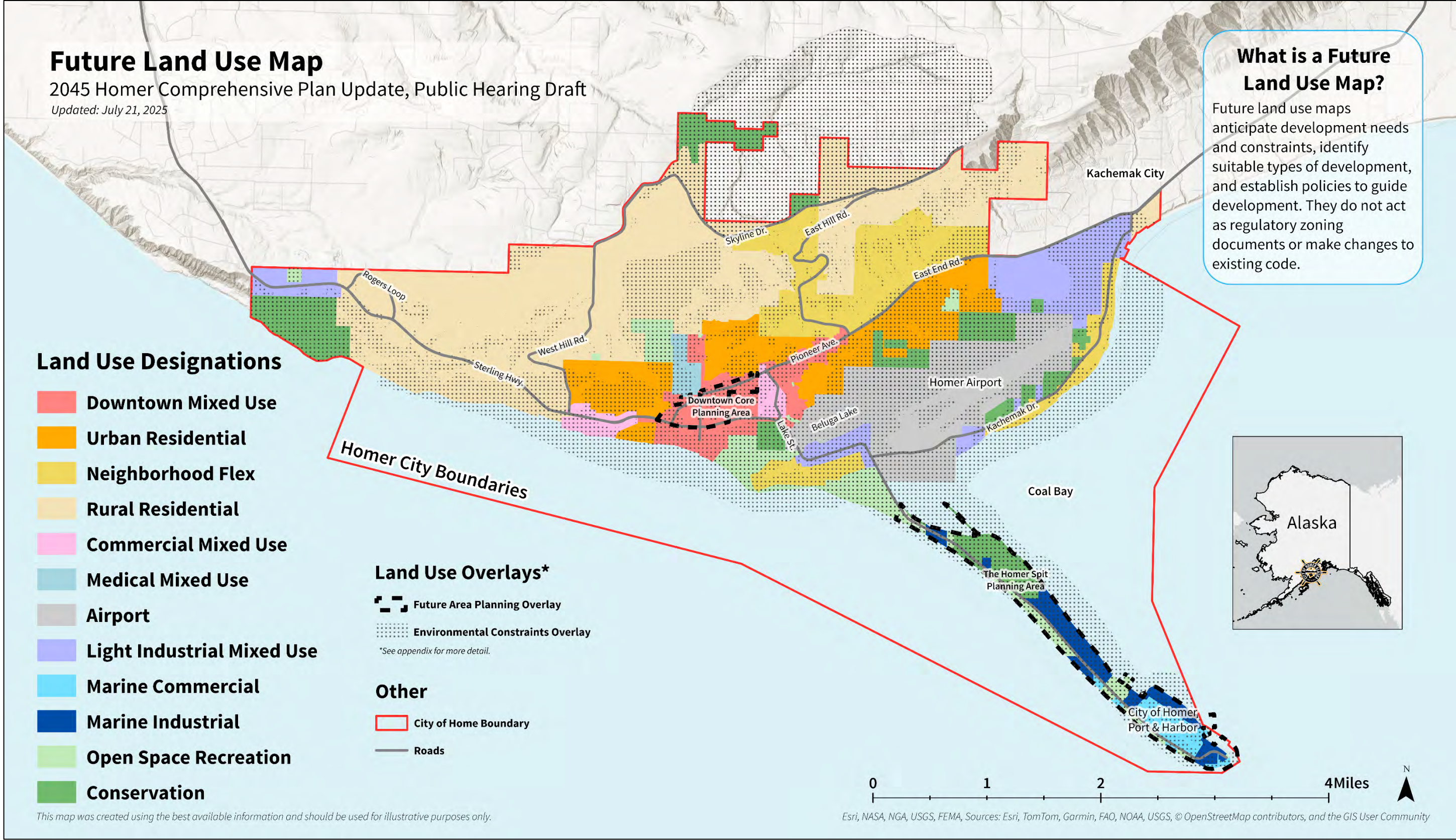
- Anticipate development needs, opportunities, constraints.
- Identify suitable/unsuitable types of development.
- Propose recommendations for how an area should develop.
- Establish policies and standards to guide development.
- Recommend improvements to zoning codes.
- Guide decisions about rezones and future area planning.



A Future Land Use Map does NOT:

- Act as a zoning document.
- Make changes to existing zoning codes.
- Apply retroactively.

Figure 9. Future Land Use Map



Icon Key:

✈ Priority: Emerging priority for implementation

✂ Capital: An action that includes a potential capital project

* Code: An action that recommends a specific code revision

◆ 2018: An action adapted from/carried over from the 2018 Comprehensive Plan

2. Implement zoning reforms to support sustainable growth and attainable housing development. ✈

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Prioritize zoning reforms that expand housing choice, including support for higher-density and mixed-use development, infill, and housing types such as ADUs, townhomes, and modular homes. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
b. Create zoning tools like form-based codes and flexible use standards that accommodate evolving land uses and building types. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
c. Create consistent design and infrastructure standards that reflect neighborhood character and support multi-modal access. * ◆	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
d. Align development regulations with community service availability, promoting growth in areas already served by schools, utilities, and other key services. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
e. Simplify and clarify the development approval process and related staff procedures. * ◆	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
f. Improve enforcement and reporting procedures to address development-related health and safety issues, within scope of zoning and permitting authority. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
g. Gauge community and stakeholder support for zoning and policy tools that expand housing options, such as density bonuses, parking requirement adjustments, and other potential incentives for affordable and long-term housing development.	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
h. Modify zoning and permitting tools to support small business growth and economic resilience, including consideration for locally owned and emerging industries.	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)

3. Strategically align development regulations with natural hazard risks and land suitability to support safe, resilient, and responsible growth. ⚡

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Use the City of Homer Hazard Mitigation Plan to inform updates to zoning and development codes, ensuring land use decisions reflect the latest risk assessments. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
b. Clarify zoning procedures and criteria for rezoning reviews to ensure consistency with the comprehensive plan and hazard mitigation goals. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
c. Update development standards for steep slopes, drainageways, and erosion-prone areas to manage grading, erosion, runoff, and vegetation clearing. Encourage the use of green infrastructure and site-responsive design solutions to improve drainage and reduce hazard exposure. * ♦	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
d. Strengthen stormwater and erosion control provisions in City code, incorporating green infrastructure techniques—such as vegetated buffers and infiltration features—to reduce coastal bluff erosion and other site-based hazards. * ♦	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
e. Improve coordination between subdivision design standards and site-level review to ensure hazard mitigation measures carry through from platting to construction. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
f. Consider expanding the range of conditions that may be applied to Conditional Use Permits to address riparian protection, soil stability, wetland preservation, and related site concerns. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)

4. Protect and enhance green space in Homer to support habitat connectivity, recreational access, and community well-being. ⚡

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Complete priority upgrades to existing City parks, including Karen Hornaday Park, Bayview Park, and Jack Gist Park. ✖	Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, Public Works Department, City Council	Karen Hornaday: \$1.1M Jack Gist: \$840k Bayview: \$190k (all from FY26 CIP)	Medium (3-5 years)
b. Continue to improve existing trails and public access points to meet the needs of families, seniors, and residents and visitors with limited mobility. ✖	Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
c. Enhance or improve safe public access to beaches at designated public access points as feasible. ✖	Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Ongoing

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
d. Develop and implement a Master Park and Recreation Plan to proactively guide park maintenance, upgrades, and future facility needs. ✖ ♦	City Administration, Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)

5. Advance place-based planning and development that supports Homer's unique community character, encourages targeted infill, and strengthens Homer's role as a regional hub.

Action
a. Lead area planning efforts for the Spit and downtown core. These efforts should address land use, infrastructure needs, environmental hazards, economic development, and recreational access. Area plans should inform updates to zoning maps, capital improvements, and long-term planning priorities. ♦
b. Support compact, walkable downtown development that encourages mixed-use buildings, incremental infill, and redevelopment of underutilized parcels. Update development standards—such as building form, setbacks, and lot coverage—to ensure projects contribute to a financially productive, pedestrian-friendly streetscape. ♦
c. Develop a Homer Spit Master Plan to guide long-term land use, infrastructure investment, harbor operations, and climate adaptation. The plan should address erosion and sea level rise, coordinate City-owned leases, balance economic and recreational uses, and protect environmental resources. It should inform updates to zoning, capital improvements, and emergency management policies. ✖
d. Prioritize infrastructure investments—such as street improvements, multimodal access, water and sewer upgrades, and broadband—in areas identified for infill and redevelopment through area planning efforts. Compile development standards into a unified design manual that integrates transportation, streetscape, and infrastructure guidance. ♦ ✖
e. Coordinate with relevant agencies to improve land use planning around key public assets, including the Homer Airport. Work to align local zoning and infrastructure improvements with future airport operations, economic development goals, and state transportation plans.

What is 'infill'?

*Infill is the **strategic use of underutilized or vacant land** within already developed areas to create new housing, businesses, or public spaces. Using this redevelopment strategy maximizes existing infrastructure, helps create connected, walkable neighborhoods, and revitalizes communities without expanding into undeveloped land.*



Potential Partner-Led Strategies

6. **Collaborate with public and private partners to enhance community spaces and recreational infrastructure.** ♦
7. **Coordinate with regional and state agencies to align land use policies with environmental stewardship and shared planning goals.**

“Future growth should consider how development may impact environmental resources both inside and outside the city boundary.”

~ Community Meeting

“Keeping Homer Homer is valid, but there are different interpretations of that. To me, it means keeping it unique, allowing people to have a choice, and providing affordable housing.”

~ Stakeholder Interview

Policies Supporting Land Use and Environment in Other Chapters

The table below summarizes the location of related policies in other parts of the plan that support and contribute to Homer’s land use and environment goals. They are shown in order by chapter.

Topic	Chapter and Strategy Number of Related Policies					
	Public Facilities & Services	Housing	Economic Development	Transportation	Governance	Sustainability & Resilience
Open space and parks connectivity	1					3
Area planning	4		1, 5	5		
Airport area	7			4		
Hazard mitigation and climate-responsive land use	5				4	2
Zoning reform for housing		1				
Preserving community character			9			
Infill and dense development			5	1, 2	3	
Wayfinding				2		
Education about infill, density					4	
Partnerships, open space management					5	
Mapping tools to guide development						4

“Unless Homer embraces change and alters the status quo, we will experience more of the sprawl model of development that we are already witnessing.”

~ Growth Scenarios Report Card Results

“Emphasize infill development, however, do it in a thoughtful way that facilitates moose travel from the hillside, through town, to the water’s edge.”

~ Community Survey Results



Credit: Derek Mueller

Public Facilities and Services

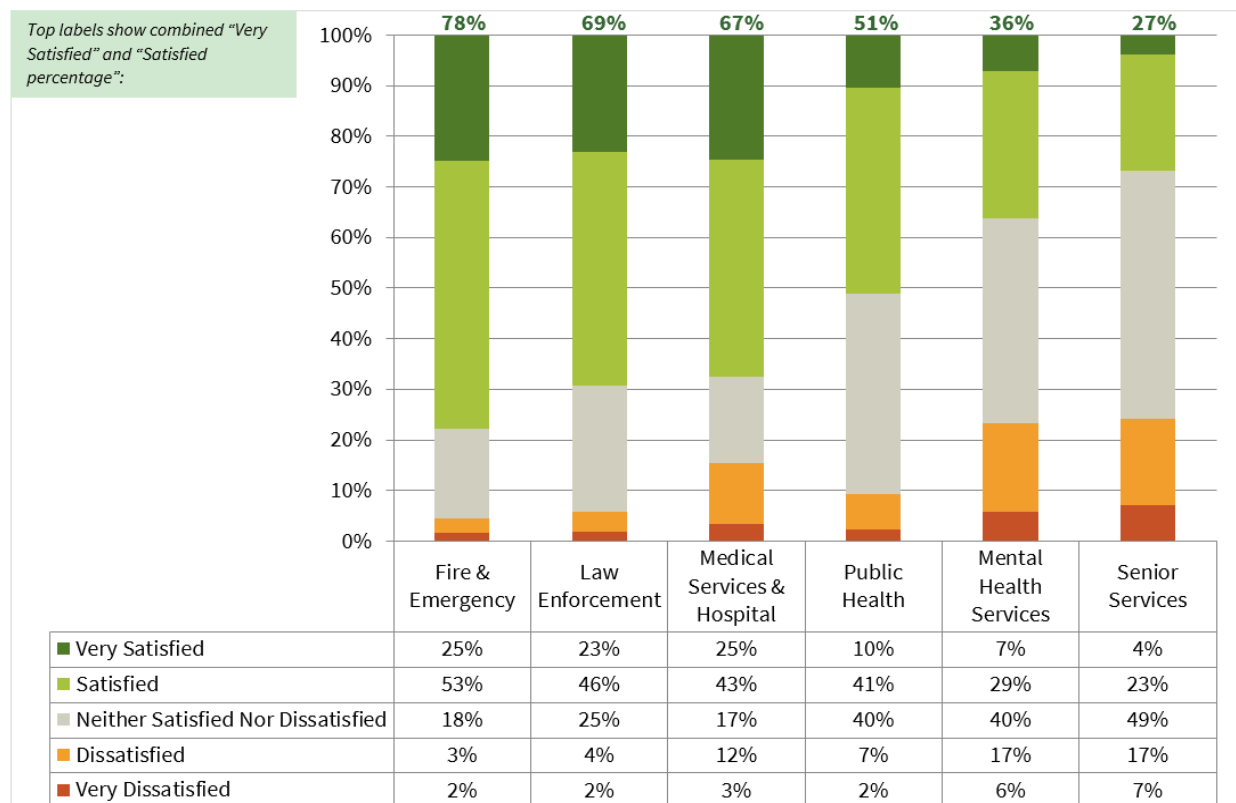
Key Themes Guiding the Plan

Reliable and Affordable Services

The City of Homer provides a range of services, including water, sewer, planning, road maintenance, community development, recreation, parks, port and harbor management, fire protection, law enforcement, planning, and emergency services. The City relies on other public and private entities, such as the Kenai Peninsula Borough⁴, for other services such as education, healthcare, and solid waste management; the State of Alaska manages many of the important transportation facilities, including the airport and major roadways. Although responses to the community survey show general satisfaction with fire, law enforcement, and emergency services (Figure 10), there are some concerns about inadequate funding and staffing levels.

Figure 10. Responses to the 2024 Homer Community Survey Question, “How satisfied are you with the availability of the following Health and Safety programs or services in Homer?”

Answered: 552



⁴ Agnew::Beck Consulting. (2019), *2019 Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan*. Prepared for the Kenai Peninsula Borough with support from Alaska Map Company, ASRC Energy Services, Alaska Survey Research, Casey Planning and Design, Northern Economics, and PDC Inc. Engineers.

https://www.kpb.us/images/KPB/PLN/PlansReports/Comp_Plan/2019_KPB_Comprehensive_Plan.pdf

Accessible, Maintained Community Facilities

The City of Homer owns and manages a variety of facilities in the community, ranging from the Public Library to the Airport Terminal. An increasing population necessitates the strategic improvement of public services and infrastructure, including public safety, utilities, and recreational facilities. For example, Homer has identified a multi-use community recreation center as a longtime community priority. Improvements to Homer's infrastructure are necessary to support growth and attract businesses; these are supported by the community as shown through the community survey and public comments. At the same time, existing facilities in the community have significant ongoing maintenance needs that sometimes stretch the capacity of City staff and its aging equipment. The City maintains a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that identifies priorities for major capital expenditures, including both new and existing facilities. The CIP is a six-year plan, updated annually.



Credit: HERC Task Force Final Recommendation Report, 2018

Accessibility and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements are also essential to ensuring that all members of the community—regardless of age, ability, or mobility—can safely and comfortably access and enjoy public facilities. Inclusive design not only upholds civil rights and legal standards but also strengthens community equity and cohesion by expanding participation in public life and supporting the dignity of every resident.⁵ Many of the projects on Homer's CIP feature needed ADA improvements, including to key facilities such as City Hall.

"Create a centralized community space that serves all the community."

~ Community Survey Results

Rising Service Demands and Infrastructure Costs

As a regional hub, Homer provides many services that also benefit residents outside of City limits, such as its recreation facilities and the library. At the same time, maintaining and upgrading infrastructure—especially water and sewer systems—is a financial challenge due to a limited customer base. In 2000, the City of Homer successfully petitioned to annex just over 25 square miles of land to the West, North, and East of City limits. While this annexation helped grow the City's tax base to support the provision of services, some of the homes within the annexed areas are still not served by City services. The water and sewer services within the City are adequate, but stormwater runoff impacts the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant.

"Make sure infrastructure keeps up with growth."

~ Community Survey Results

"Focus on responsibility to replace aged buildings, such as fire station that benefit all residents and visitors."

~ Growth Scenarios Report Card Results

⁵ "Does improving accessibility boost local economies? ADA compliance can be costly for community – but the financial benefits may be bigger," Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Dec. 1, 2022, <https://cmap.illinois.gov/news-updates/does-improving-accessibility-boost-local-economies/>

Goals

Goal A	Goal B	Goal C
Ensure City services are available, affordable, and adequate.	Provide and improve City-operated facilities to meet the needs of the community, accommodate desired growth, and support sustainability and conservation goals.	Mitigate risks to City-owned infrastructure from climate change and natural hazards.

City-Led Strategies and Actions

Icon Key:

- ✈ Priority: Emerging priority for implementation
- ✂ Capital: An action that includes a potential capital project
- * Code: An action that recommends a specific code revision
- ◆ 2018: An action adapted from/carried over from the 2018 Comprehensive Plan

1. Provide safe, year-round public facilities for residents of all ages and abilities. ✈

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Maintain the library as a thriving community space for learning and connecting, including assessing the library's anticipated need for growth and improvements over the next decade and planning for upgrades. ✂	Library Advisory Board, Library Department, Information Technology Department	Remodel engineering study: \$75k (FY26 CIP)	Ongoing
b. Implement the 2023 City of Homer ADA Transition Plan for Parks, Play Areas and Campgrounds and the Transition Plan for City Facilities to correct deficiencies and implement policies that increase accessibility of Homer's public facilities and recreation spaces. Priority sites for upgrades include City Hall, Karen Hornaday Park, the Nick Dudiak Fishing Lagoon Accessible Ramp and Fishing Platform, and removing parking and pavement barriers at City facilities. ✂	ADA Advisory Board, Administration Department, Public Works Department, Port and Harbor Department	City Hall: \$1.1M Fishing Lagoon Ramp & Platform: \$770k Parking Barrier Removal: \$386k (all from FY26 CIP)	Medium (3-5 years)
c. Plan for and construct a new, multi-purpose community center in Homer's downtown to serve the social, recreation, cultural, and educational needs of the Homer community. Preferred features include a general-purpose gymnasium, multi-purpose space for instructional programs, safe walking/running, dedicated space for youth, and possible emergency shelter. ✂	Administration Department, Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, City Council	~\$16.05M (FY26 CIP)	Medium (3-5 years)
d. Demolish the Homer Education and Recreation Complex (HERC) and identify opportunities for remediation of the site. ✂	Administration Department, City Council	Undetermined	Long (more than 5 years)

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
e. Consider and evaluate changing the City's organizational structure to provide park facilities and recreation services by establishing a dedicated Parks and Recreation Department.	Administration Department, Finance Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
f. Ensure that City facilities are sufficient to support events that draw visitors such as festivals and activities (e.g., clean restrooms on the Homer Spit ("the Spit"), RV dump stations, adequate trash collection, etc.). ✖	Administration Department, Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
g. Update the Homer Airport Terminal to address deferred maintenance and improve accessibility. ✖	Public Works Department, Administration Department, City Council	\$1.3 M for initial repairs and renovations (FY26 CIP)	Medium (3-5 years)

2. Continue to provide high-quality water and sewer services within the City to meet current and anticipated demands. ⚡

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Update the 2006 Water and Sewer Master Plan.	Administration Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
b. Continue to build, upgrade, and replace water and wastewater infrastructure to meet industry standards, changing regulatory requirements, and replace aging systems. ♦✖	Public Works Department	\$707k for wastewater treatment plant improvements \$10.4 M for water storage and distribution improvements (FY26 CIP)	Ongoing
c. Maintain the water and sewer Capital Asset Repair and Maintenance Allowance (CARMA) funds for repair and replacement of facilities that serve existing customers.	Finance Department, Public Works Department, City Council	Undetermined	Ongoing
d. Use the Homer Accelerated Water and Sewer Program (HAWSP) to fund the design and construction of facilities that support new and existing customers.	Finance Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
e. Continue to limit and manage development in the Bridge Creek Watershed Protection District to maintain its suitability as a drinking water source.	Community Development Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Ongoing

3. Maintain and improve Port and Harbor infrastructure. ⚡

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Develop a long-range Port and Harbor Management Plan that considers the environmental and economic significance of the Spit, the impacts of climate change, and natural hazards like earthquakes, tsunamis, and erosion.	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Erosion Mitigation: \$4M (FY26 CIP)	Medium (3-5 years)
b. Maintain infrastructure to maximize longevity and ensure safety of users. ✖	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
c. Maintain and promote Homer's status as a "working waterfront" by being a partner for the Alaska Marine Highway System, the U.S. Coast Guard, commercial operations, and other state and federal partners.	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
d. Plan for and construct a large vessel haul out facility. ✖	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	\$5.3 M (from FY26 CIP)	Long (more than 5 years)
e. Consider opportunities to integrate complementary marine industrial and tourism uses, for example by constructing walking paths and viewing platforms that would allow visitors to observe aspects of the marine trades that they may not be able to see elsewhere. ✖	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Undetermined	Ongoing

4. Develop new facilities to support access and safety on the Homer Spit. ⚡

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Support the harbor expansion and related infrastructure, including environmental review, geotechnical studies, and funding strategies to align with public safety, traffic, and parking objectives on the Spit.	Port and Harbor Department, Community Development Department, Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, City Administration, City Council	\$278 mil (FY26 CIP)	Long (5+ years)
b. Develop new non-motorized infrastructure providing safe access to the harbor and improve the accessibility of existing infrastructure, including ADA improvements at the Fishing Hole. ✖	ADA Advisory Board, Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
c. Further develop parking at the base of the Spit, designate formal parking areas to minimize parking in unsuitable areas, and consider free seasonal shuttles and pay-to-park options in congested areas to reduce traffic. ✖	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department, City Council	Undetermined	Long (5+ years)
d. Evaluate the need for a new parking structure on the Spit that could also serve as a shelter-in-place location during tsunamis. ✖	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Undetermined	Long (5+ years)

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
e. Improve viewpoints for wildlife observation. ✖	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department, Public Works Department, Planning Commission, Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
f. Evaluate the uses of City-owned property on the Spit and ensure uses align with the needs and aesthetics of the area.	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)

5. Continue to meet the community's public safety needs to ensure the safety of residents, visitors, and first responders.

Action
a. Conduct a needs assessment and strategic plan for fire, emergency, and law enforcement services to identify gaps in funding and staffing and develop recommendations for maintaining and improving these services.
b. Complete planning for and construct a new fire station. ✖
c. Support the mission and capacity needs of the Homer Police Department.
d. Upgrade the City's fire department fleet of vehicles to maximize firefighting capabilities and meet Insurance Services Office (ISO) requirements. ✖
e. Collaborate with the Kenai Peninsula Borough to implement recommendations in the Safe Streets and Roads for All Comprehensive Safety Action Plan.

6. Increase the City's capacity to provide and expand community services and improve the synergy between the City and other community partners to maximize resource and investments.

Action
a. Provide technical assistance to community organizations seeking to expand their services. ♦
b. Partner with community organizations to supplement or expand City services and the operating hours of City facilities. ♦

Potential Partner-Led Strategies

7. Identify and address the deficiencies of the Homer Airport (updated master plan, more reliable year-round service, etc.).
8. Ensure people of all ages and abilities can live, work, and play in the community, including encouraging businesses and organizations to create accessible, ADA-compliant facilities.
9. Collaborate with Borough, state, and federal partners to ensure year-round access to community facilities for recreational, educational, social, and cultural activities.

Policies Supporting Public Facilities and Services in Other Chapters

The table below summarizes the location of related policies in other parts of the plan that support and contribute to Homer's public facilities and services goals. They are shown in order by chapter.

Topic	Chapter and Strategy Number of Related Policies					
	Land Use & Environment	Housing	Economic Development	Transportation	Governance	Sustainability & Resilience
Parks and trails	4					
Marine trades			1			
Homer Spit development			1			
Community use of facilities			2			
Roads, sidewalks, and bike lanes				1, 2		
Wayfinding				1, 9		
Parking				1		
Airport and ferry				4		
Financing of facility and service improvements					1	
Infill of water-sewer					2	
Engaging residents in service and facility planning and spending					2, 3	
Energy efficiency of municipal facilities						1
Hazard mitigation and placement of municipal facilities						1
Stormwater and green infrastructure						3



Aerial view of the Homer Spit at dawn. Credit: Tim Hatfield



Public Works facility: plans for a new facility are underway.



Housing

Key Themes Guiding the Plan

Housing Supply Does Not Meet the Community Needs

Although Homer has a relatively high overall housing vacancy rate, many residents continue to face difficulty finding homes that are affordable, available year-round, and suited to their household needs. In the past decade, the City has added a modest number of new housing units each year—averaging 36 units annually between 2013 and 2023.^{6,7} However, the types of homes being built have not kept pace with the needs of working families, older adults, and younger residents entering the housing market. According to the community survey, 68 percent of respondents said housing is too expensive, and 66 percent said more attainable homes are needed for people just starting out or seeking to downsize. With long-term population growth projected at just 2.3 percent through 2050, the core challenge is not growth pressure but the mismatch between existing housing stock and what year-round residents can access. Zoning reforms that support a greater variety of housing types—especially in areas served by infrastructure and close to services—can help the City respond to these persistent gaps.

Rising Costs and Land Availability Limit Housing Development Opportunities

Housing in Homer has become significantly more expensive, limiting options for residents across income levels, particularly young professionals, families, and older adults seeking to downsize. As of November 2024, the median home listing price in Homer was approximately \$550,000—a 97 percent increase since 2018 and well above the statewide median of \$396,000.⁸ According to census data, half of all renter households in Homer (358 out of 702) are cost-burdened, spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing.⁹ These figures do not reflect additional barriers such as limited availability of pet-friendly units, or housing that is in good condition and available year-round. High construction costs—driven by inflation, labor shortages, shipping expenses, and rising material prices—also constrain new development. Nationally, construction costs have increased by 40 percent since 2018, according to the



⁶ Alaska Division of Research and Analysis Section. (2024). *Alaska New Housing Units Multiple Years*. Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/housing/new.html>

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B25070: Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income*.

⁸ Specific number based on <https://www.realtor.com> data; other sources were compared and numbers were comparable.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S2501: Occupancy Characteristics*.

Mortenson Construction Cost Index.¹⁰ While the 2023 Homer Housing Review identified 1,163 vacant tax parcels within City limits with an average lot size of 1.3 acres, many of these properties face significant development barriers, including wetlands, steep slopes, and lack of access to utilities.¹¹ These conditions increase the cost and complexity of construction and limit the feasibility of building new homes. Addressing these constraints through targeted infrastructure investment and infill-oriented zoning strategies will be essential to expanding the range of housing options available to the community.

Unattainable Housing and the High Cost of Living are Barriers to Economic Growth and Quality of Life

Limited access to affordable, attainable housing continues to challenge Homer’s ability to retain essential workers, support local businesses, and meet the needs of a changing population. Homer business survey results show that 13 percent of respondents identified a lack of housing for seasonal employees as a key hiring barrier, second only to the shortage of qualified applicants. In interviews, the high cost of housing was also cited as a reason why more fishermen do not live in Homer year-round. Seniors seeking to age in place and younger residents starting families or attending college locally often face limited choices that are affordable, accessible, and available year-round. While some workers find more attainable housing outside City limits, they may lack access to City services and representation, weakening civic connection and economic participation. More broadly, Homer’s high cost of living—including housing, transportation, and construction—adds on residents and local employers alike. Expanding housing options for year-round workers, seniors, and young people is essential to sustaining the local economy and ensuring Homer remains a livable community for all generations.

“Affordable housing developers would benefit from a simplified process with the city.”

~ Growth Scenario Report Card

Figure 11. Top Five Community Areas for Improvement, Historical Perspective

Top 5 Community Areas for Improvement, Historical Perspective

	2015 Perceptions Survey (590 responses)	2019/2020 Perceptions Survey (469 responses)	2023 Perceptions Survey (1,020 responses)
1	Jobs and economic opportunities (48%)	Jobs and economic opportunities (13%)	Housing (58%)
2	Public transport (38%)	Substance abuse treatment (13%)	Public transportation (24%)
3	Substance abuse treatment (36%)	Housing (12%)	Jobs and economic opportunities (20%)
4	Housing (26%)	Public transportation (12%)	Substance abuse treatment (17%)
5	Access to job training and higher education (17%)	Respect for varied viewpoints (10%)	Behavioral health services (17%)

Source: Perception of Community Health Survey

Image from the 2023 Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) Community Health Needs Assessment

¹⁰ Mortenson. (2024). *Construction Cost Index Report*. <https://www.mortenson.com/cost-index>

¹¹ City of Homer. (2023). *Homer Housing Review*. <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/communitydevelopment/housing>

Goals

Goal A	Goal B	Goal C	Goal D
Preserve and produce a high-quality, healthy, safe, and energy efficient housing inventory that accommodates for projected population growth and is affordable, attainable, and safe for all Homer residents.	Develop Homer's housing inventory to be compatible with the beloved existing community character while allowing for essential growth and density.	Ensure housing development aligns with the City's preservation and sustainability goals, minimizing the environmental impact of new construction.	Build strong community and regional partnerships around housing to improve housing attainability and affordability.

City-Led Strategies and Actions

Icon Key:

- ✂ Priority: Emerging priority for implementation
- ✂ Capital: An action that includes a potential capital project
- * Code: An action that recommends a specific code revision
- ◆ 2018: An action adapted from/carried over from the 2018 Comprehensive Plan

1. Implement zoning reforms to encourage attainable housing development for young people, families, seniors, and seasonal workers. ✂ *

Note: Actions associated with this strategy are encompassed in Land Use and Environment Strategy 2.

2. Assess Homer's housing needs and maintain data collection. ✂

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Conduct a Housing Needs Assessment to identify current and future housing needs, including types and numbers of units required to serve projected population growth and affordability ranges as well as support economic growth and industries.	Administration Department, Community Development Department, City Council	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
b. Complete a housing stock report and buildable lands inventory.	Administration Department, Community Development Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
c. Evaluate the City's land portfolio to identify any feasible opportunities for strategic dispositions.	Administration Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
d. Update housing indicators (see Figure 12 below) annually to track housing issues, constraints, needs, and opportunities; share updates online.	Community Development Department, Administration Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
e. Monitor short-term rentals and their impact on the housing market.	Administration Department, Community Development Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)

Potential Partner-Led Strategies

3. Develop incentives and public-private partnerships for affordable and long-term housing development.

Policies Supporting Housing in Other Chapters

The table below summarizes the location of related policies in other parts of the plan that support and contribute to Homer's housing goals. They are shown in order by chapter.

Topic	Chapter and Strategy Number of Related Policies					
	Land Use & Environment	Public Facilities & Services	Economic Development	Transportation	Governance	Sustainability & Resilience
Zoning reforms for housing	1, 2					
Infrastructure support and future needs		2			3	
Aging in place			4, 10			
Fiscal tools to support attainable housing					2	
Education and partnerships for housing accessibility			8		4	4
Land suitability						2

Figure 12. Housing Indicators

Indicator	Description	What it tells us	Sources
New Housing Units	Quarterly report of new single family, multi-family, and mobile home units.	Tracking the number of new housing units added to the market can help track how well the market is responding to demand and track progress toward new housing goals.	Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) Alaska Housing Market Indicators Report (available at https://www.ahfc.us/efficiency/education-and-events/research-information-center/alaska-housing-market-indicators or https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/housing/new.html)
Housing Occupancy and Vacancy Rates	Total occupied/vacant housing units, homeowner vacancy rate, rental vacancy rate.	Vacancy rates below five percent are an indication of a tight housing market that could limit housing mobility and is often a sign of pent-up demand. A growing number of vacant units can be an indication that the housing supply is not meeting the needs of residents and the existing housing stock is not being used to its full potential.	U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates: Table DP04 SELECTED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS (available at https://data.census.gov/)
Housing Tenure	Owner-occupied housing units, renter-occupied housing units, and average household size for both owner-occupied and renter-occupied units.	The relative demand/need for ownership <i>versus</i> rental housing in a community. Household size can indicate the housing unit size that renters and owners are looking for, respectively.	U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates: Table DP04 SELECTED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS (available at https://data.census.gov/)

Indicator	Description	What it tells us	Sources
Overcrowding	Occupants per room.	Often an indication of pent-up demand within a community, overcrowding is defined as more than 1.0 person per room. Severe overcrowding is defined as 1.5 or more people per room.	U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates: Table DP04 SELECTED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS (available at https://data.census.gov/)
Affordability	Selected monthly ownership costs as a percentage of household income (SMOCAPI) and gross rent as a percentage of household income (GRAPI).	Households that spend more than 30 percent of their total income on housing costs are considered to be cost burdened. Spending a larger portion of household income on housing limits the amount of income available for other non-discretionary spending, such as food, clothing, and transportation.	U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates: Table DP04 SELECTED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS (available at https://data.census.gov/)
Median Family Income	Median family income and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) income limits broken down by persons in family and income limit category.	HUD sets income limits that determine eligibility for assisted housing programs including the Public Housing, Section 8 project-based, Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher, Section 202 housing for the elderly, and Section 811 housing for persons with disabilities programs.	The Department of Housing and Urban Development, FY 2023 Income Limits Summary (available at https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html#query_2023)
Local Building Permit Activity	Data collected by local assessors on the number and or type of building activity occurring in the community.	Data that describe current building activity in the community can help track how well the market is responding to demand and any progress toward new housing goals.	Local Accessors/Municipal Planning Departments
Housing Wage	Housing wage is an estimate of the hourly wage a full-time worker must earn to afford a modest rental home at HUD's fair market rent (FMR) without spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs.	Illustrates the gap between renters' wages and the cost of rental housing.	National Low Income Housing Coalition, Out of Reach Dashboards (available at https://nlihc.org/oor/state/ak)
Population Estimates/Components of Change	Components of change including births, deaths, and net migration.	Helpful information around how a community is changing/ growing and what role housing could play in population dynamics moving forward.	Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce, Alaska Population Estimates (available at https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/data-pages/alaska-population-estimates)



Credit: Art Koeninger

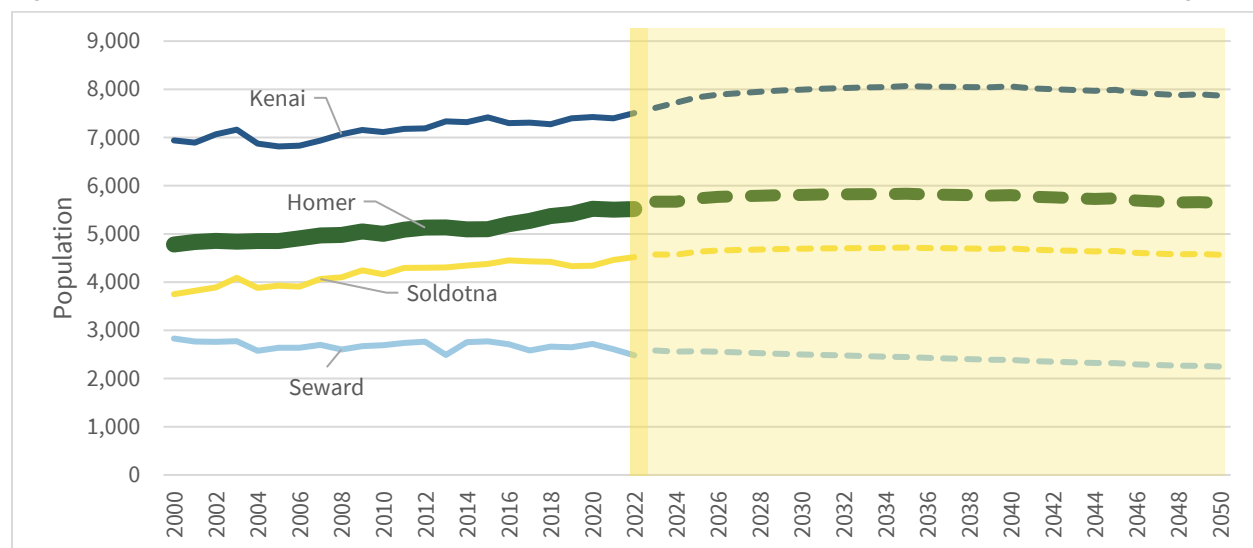
Economic Development

Key Themes Guiding the Plan

Population Expected to See Slight Growth

Homer's population has been steadily increasing, with a 15.4 percent growth from 2000 to 2022, and is projected to continue growing slightly until 2050 (Figure 13). The City has a growing senior population (increasing from 14 percent in 2013 to 22 percent in 2022). This growth presents unique economic challenges and opportunities, particularly in housing and healthcare services. Homer has a higher per capita income compared to nearby communities, and its median household income has seen a modest increase over the past decade. However, residents are still concerned about the high cost of living and doing business in Homer and cite those costs as one of the biggest challenges of living in Homer.

Figure 13. Historical and Forecasted Populations for Homer and Comparison Cities in the Kenai Peninsula Borough



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development data (accessed 2024), and Northern Economics analysis; see Appendix F: About Homer – Community Background for more detailed analysis. Note: Population and economic data in this plan are current as of 2022; updated data are released annually by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

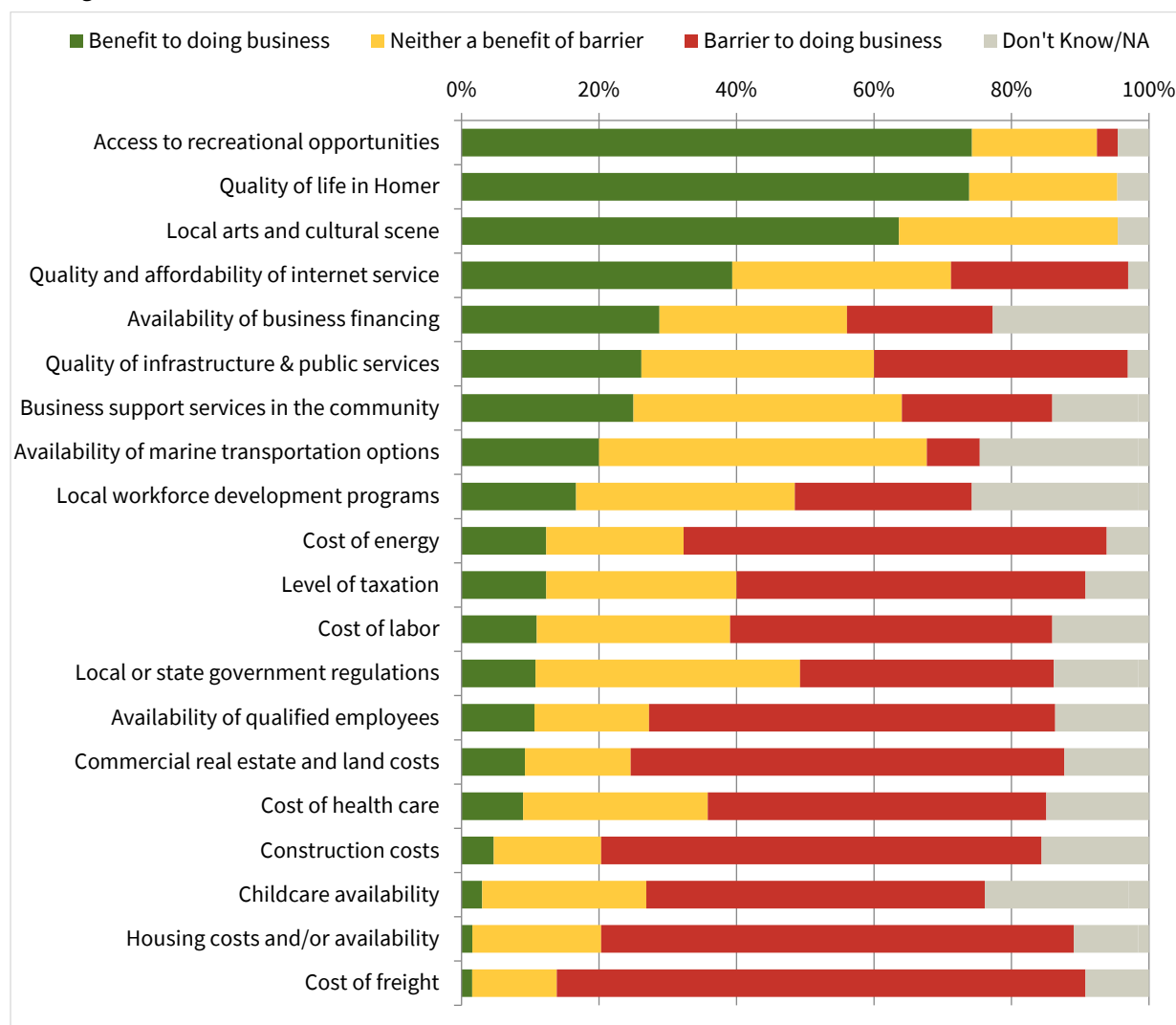
During the planning process for this update, the comprehensive planning team worked with the community to explore different levels and types of growth. Community survey respondents were asked about preferred levels of growth; three scenarios were later developed to explore what a desired future Homer could look like, and residents had the opportunity to review and grade the different options. In both the community survey and the growth scenarios activity, most participants indicate support for minimal to moderate growth. The Homer community also expresses an ongoing desire to manage growth to ensure it is sustainable and does not compromise the quality of life, character, or the environment in the community.

Residents Value the Quality of Life but Struggle with Cost of Living, Housing

Homer is vibrant with small businesses, many nonprofit organizations, and active civic engagement. However, like many of Alaska's communities, Homer residents and businesses face a high cost of living, especially when it comes to housing affordability and availability (see Housing chapter). Some of the same characteristics that residents and businesses value, such as the small town feel and the beautiful environment, also attract many visitors each summer, bringing challenges such as congestion and pressures on the housing market. Families value Homer's schools, safe feel, and high quality of life; however, they similarly cite housing costs, limited childcare availability, and limited year-round employment as barriers to choosing Homer as a place to raise a family. The University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) also hosts the Kachemak Bay Campus in the community, a satellite branch of the UAA's Kenai Peninsula College.

Based on a 2024 survey of Homer businesses (Figure 14), business owners cite barriers to attracting and training employees as their primary obstacle to doing business in Homer. Expanding educational training could help build a skilled workforce, which is essential for supporting local industries and attracting new businesses. Homer businesses are also impacted by the global trend of increases in online purchases, sometimes at the expense of local stores that provide jobs and support the local tax base.

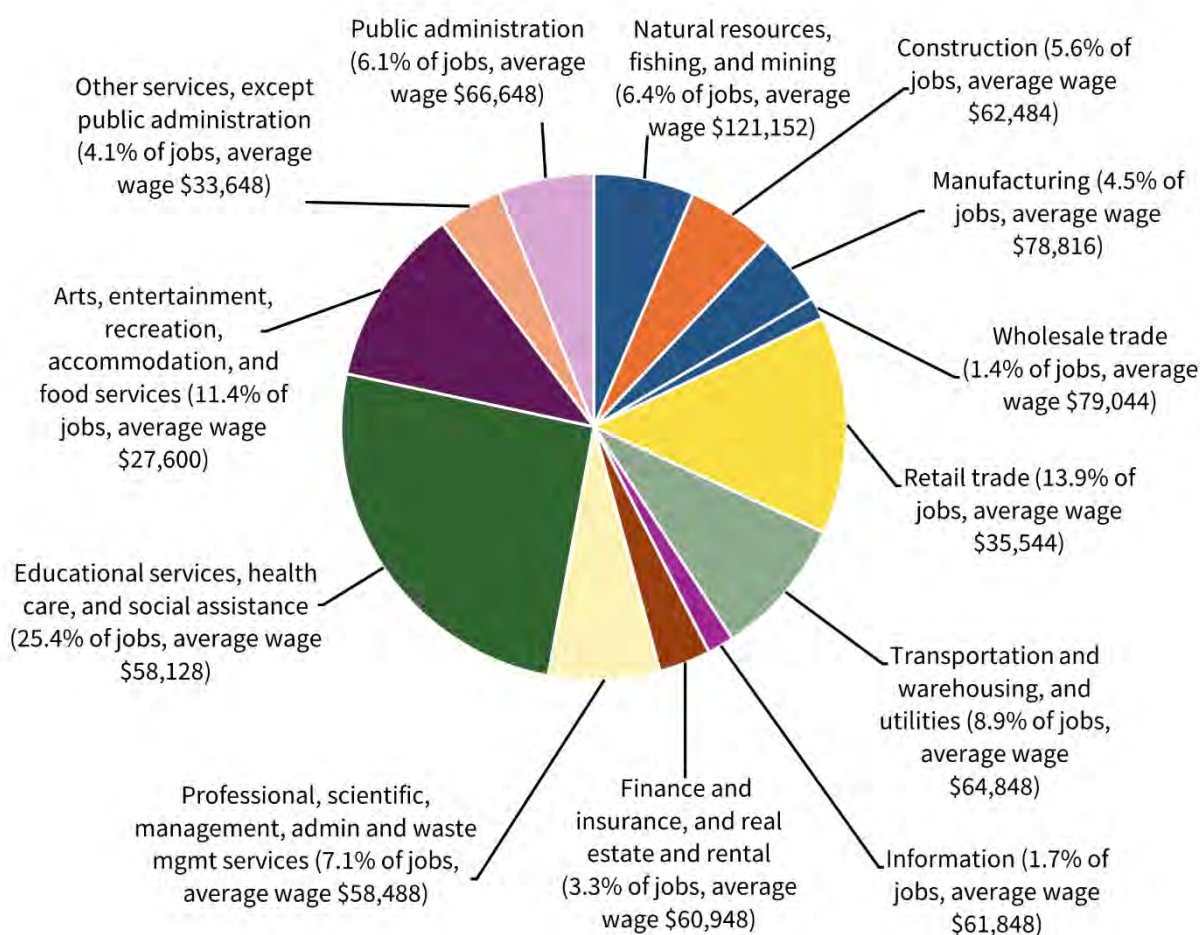
Figure 14. Responses to the Homer Business Survey Question, "Please rate the following factors as benefits or barriers to doing business in the Greater Homer Area."



Fishing and Tourism Industries Remain Strong Economic Drivers

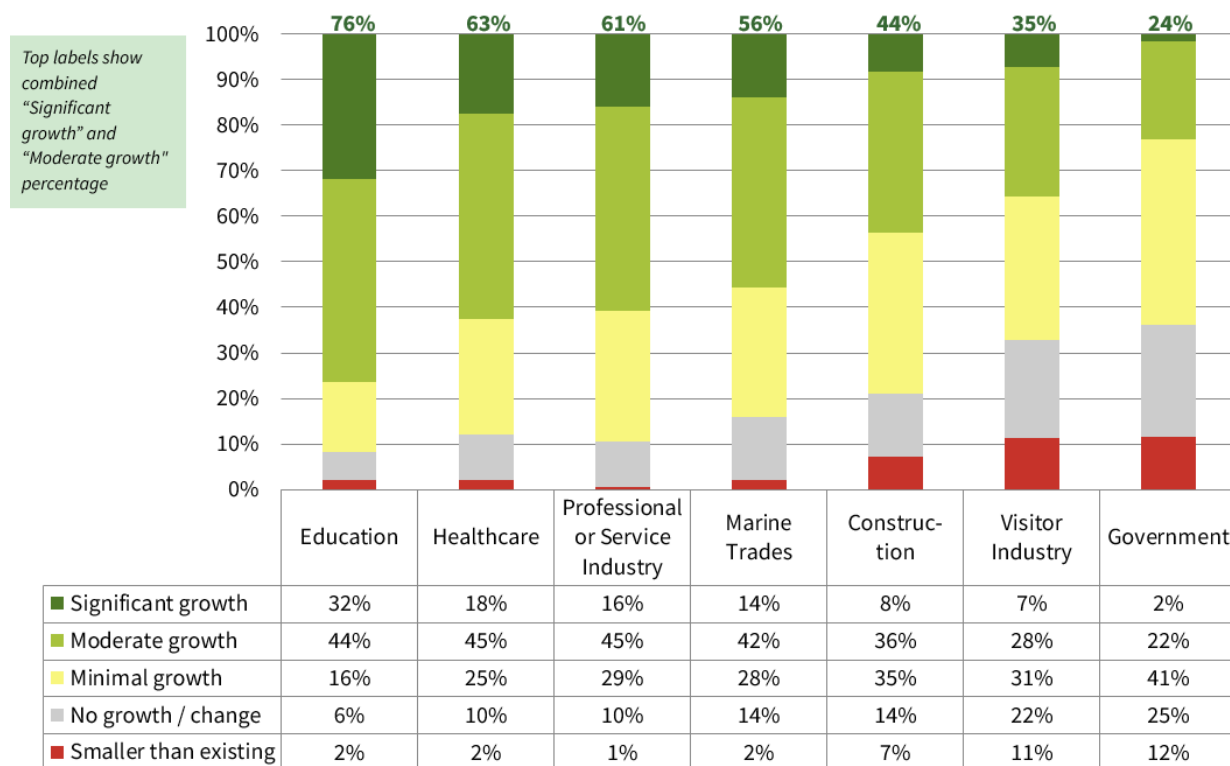
The largest industry sectors in Homer by share of workforce include education, healthcare, retail trade, and arts and entertainment (Figure 15). The fishing industry, although employing a smaller portion of the workforce, continues to play an important role in Homer's economy through high per-worker earnings and its broader contributions of commercial, charter, and subsistence fishing, which support local businesses, cultural identity, and food security. Tourism and marine trades are not specifically identified in state industry data, but both are identified as key industries in the community. Tourism is a critical component of Homer's economy, but there is concern about relying too heavily on this industry or growing this industry at the expense of other priorities important to residents. The community survey showed support for growing the potential of the marine trades industry to provide new economic opportunities and support existing community strengths (Figure 16). Homer also has a thriving agriculture sector and is nicknamed the "City of Peonies."

Figure 15. Percentage of Homer Workforce by Industry and Annual Wages by Industry for the Kenai Peninsula Borough



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development based on Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages and Northern Economics Analysis, 2024. Excludes self-employed individuals and those serving in the armed forces. Categories based on the North American Industry Classification System: <https://www.bls.gov/cew/classifications/industry/home.htm>. Categories may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 16. Responses to the 2024 Homer Community Survey: Preferred Level of Growth by Economic Sector



"We need growth that reflects community values and benefits the local economy – not growth for growth's sake. Keep local input central."

~ Community Survey Results

"A diverse economy is a healthier economy."

~ Business Survey Results

Goals

Goal A	Goal B	Goal C	Goal D	Goal E
Enhance Homer's defined downtown to drive commerce, business, and resident and visitors' services.	Support Homer's economy by honoring traditional industries, while supporting expansion of select industries that maintain the character of Homer.	Expand workforce development in key sectors to increase year-round, high wage employment opportunities.	Develop and maintain sustainable, accessible infrastructure that supports a thriving local economy.	Sustain Homer as an active, vibrant, healthy community with year-round opportunities to enjoy art, events, and recreation.

City-Led Strategies and Actions

Icon Key:

- ✈ Priority: Emerging priority for implementation
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1. Invest in infrastructure that supports economic growth in key sectors. ✈

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Incentivize growth of the marine trades in Homer to expand services offered locally, create jobs, support fishing, increase the City's taxbase, and reduce the need to travel to other areas of Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. ✂ *	Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Economic Development Commission, Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
b. Continue to develop the Homer Spit ("the Spit") in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner to provide opportunities for marine trades and tourism. ✂	Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, Economic Development Commission, Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Undetermined	Ongoing

2. Celebrate Homer's status as a vibrant hub for arts, culture, and community engagement. ✈

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Update the Parks, Art, Recreation, and Culture Needs Assessment, and continue to expand City partnerships with other organizations and entities to implement recommendations.	Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission Administration Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
b. Support arts and culture installations and spaces in the community, including Homer's museums and galleries and on the Spit. ✂	Economic Development Commission, Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission,	Undetermined	Ongoing
c. Collaborate with citizen groups and nonprofit organizations to address community needs by providing limited technical assistance and the option to use City land or facilities at reduced rates. ◆	City Administration, City Council	Undetermined	Ongoing
d. Increase the presence of Alaska Native art, signage, and history around Homer.	Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Ongoing

3. Sustain Homer's role as an agricultural hub.

Action

- a. Support limited small scale farming and backyard gardens to strengthen the local food economy.
- b. Maintain Homer's role as an agricultural hub for the surrounding area by supporting efforts that facilitate the processing, storage, distribution, and marketing of local agricultural products (e.g., farmer's markets).

Potential Partner-Led Strategies

4. Support Homer's youngest residents and their families by making sure they have what they need to grow and thrive, including access to child care. ⚡
5. Expand vocational training resources, particularly in trades, marine trades (including mariculture and shipping industries), and healthcare industries, to retain young residents and provide year-round employment. ⚡
6. Support access to quality, affordable health care. ⚡
7. Promote fishing and maritime services as viable career options in Homer and demonstrate long-term support for and commitment to the industry.
8. Promote food security.
9. Address barriers to workforce recruitment and retention (e.g., housing, child care).
10. Pursue moderate, sustainable growth in tourism, focusing on activities that benefit small businesses and minimize negative impacts on community character. ♦
11. Support Homer's seniors, including the ability to remain in the community as they age.
12. Support high-quality K-12 and higher education in Homer, support teachers, and sustain lifelong learning opportunities for all residents.



"The cost of housing is not reflective of our local economy and is rapidly outpacing the middle class wage earner."

~ Community Survey Results

Policies Supporting Economic Development in Other Chapters

The table below summarizes the location of related policies in other parts of the plan that support and contribute to Homer's economic development goals. They are shown in order by chapter.

Topic	Chapter and Strategy Number of Related Policies					
	Land Use & Environment	Public Facilities & Services	Housing	Transportation	Governance	Sustainability & Resilience
Improve zoning code to promote growth in desired areas and simplify permitting and procedures	2					
Thriving downtown	5					
Guide planning at the Homer Spit	5	4				
City facilities equipped to host large events		1				
Maintenance of existing parks and restrooms that enhance visitor experiences		1				
Port and harbor infrastructure		3				
Homer airport						
Accessible, ADA compliant facilities, including businesses		7				
Affordable, attainable housing			1, 2, 3			
City center parking and walkability				1		
Public transportation options to improve accessibility for seasonal workers, residents, and visitors				5		



Vendors in front of Homer business on Contractor's Day



Transportation

Key Themes Guiding the Plan

A Transportation Hub for the Region

Homer is connected to other parts of the Kenai Peninsula by road, air, and water. Homer's port is a key connection point for distributing goods and moving people around the Kenai Peninsula and beyond. Homer is one of the only communities on the Kenai Peninsula serviced by the Alaska Marine Highway System. For details on the airport, port, and harbor, see the Public Facilities and Services chapter.

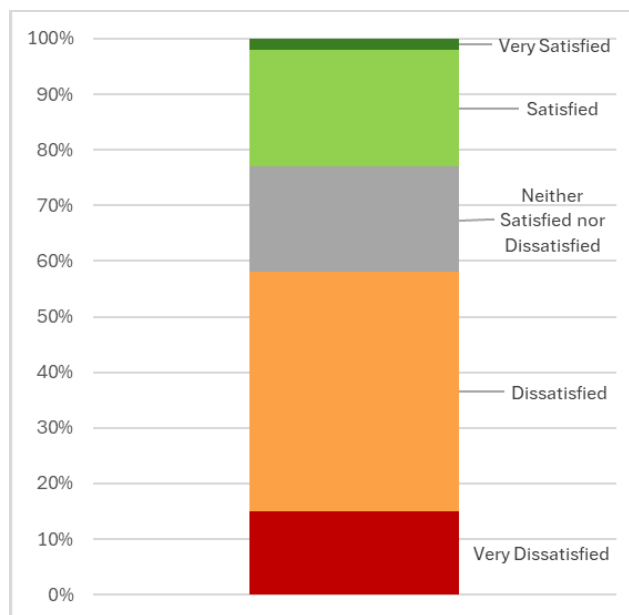


Road and Sidewalk Maintenance is a Community Priority

Year-round maintenance of the transportation network is critical for improving access, safety, equity, and quality of life for Homer residents. Indeed, maintenance of roadways, sidewalks, and trails is identified in the 2024 Homer Transportation Plan¹² and was also identified as a priority through community outreach. In the community survey results, residents identified maintenance as one of the most challenging things about living in Homer, citing the need for improvements to state-maintained roads. The City of Homer's Public Works Department is responsible for maintenance on 29 miles of rural roads and 21 miles of urban roads.¹³ As additional roads and sidewalks are constructed, maintenance burdens must be considered. As an example, where sidewalks are constructed, crews can no longer push snow to the side of the road and leave it there. Instead, snow must be trucked away to the City snow dump to clear the sidewalks.

Figure 17. Responses to the 2024 Homer Community Survey Question, "How satisfied are you with the availability of Roads and Sidewalks in Homer?"

Results show almost 60 percent of residents want more roads and sidewalks; write-in comments indicate residents specifically want more walking and biking facilities.



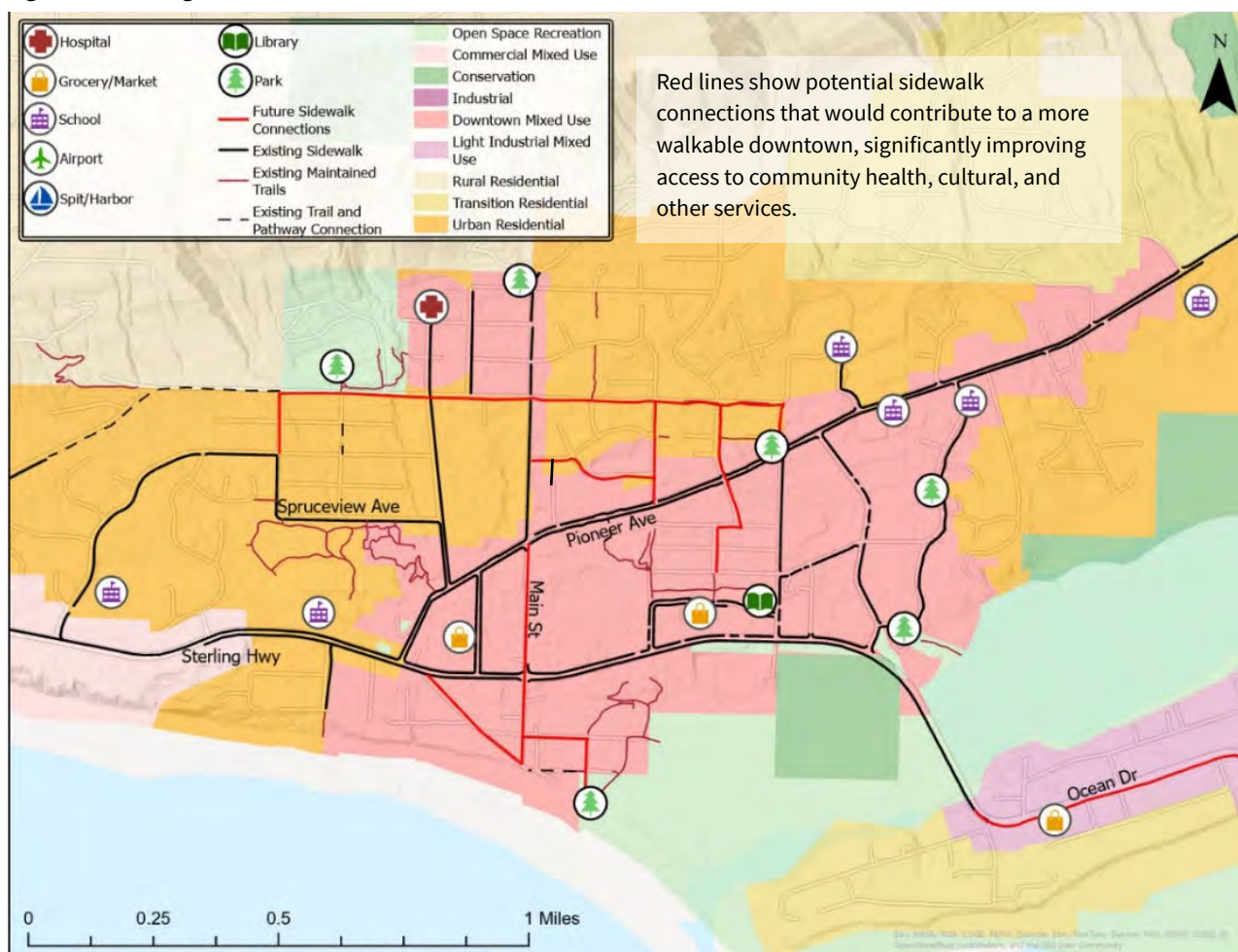
¹² Homer Transportation Plan (2024). https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/78524/transportation_plan_07102024.pdf

¹³ The City has been working to improve safe travel for persons of all ages and abilities. The Homer All-Ages and Abilities Pedestrian Pathway (HAPP) will connect the Senior Center, main medical district, library, post office, police station, grocery store, and pharmacy, as well as existing trails (from the Transportation Plan).

Residents Walk and Bike Year-Round

Walkable neighborhoods directly contribute to the small-town feel that Homer residents value. Connecting schools, shopping, the library, parks, and medical facilities can reduce vehicle trips, support affordable housing by reducing transportation costs per resident, and improve safety. Throughout the planning process, residents expressed a desire for improved infrastructure to walk and bike year-round. In the community survey results, residents identified a need for increased pedestrian connectivity and in bike infrastructure. Over 50 percent of respondents were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied over the availability of roads and sidewalks.¹⁴ Currently, the City has over 24 miles of sidewalk and bike/walking pathways and almost 13 miles of maintained trails (Figure 18). However, many connections between paths are missing, leaving pedestrians to walk along the roadway or find a less desirable route to their destination.¹⁵ For longer trips, bicycles could be accommodated by widening shoulders or installing separated pathways on key routes, such as along the Sterling Highway and on East and West Hill Roads. The recently completed 2024 Homer Transportation Plan identifies many of these challenges and offers recommendations for improvements to the non-motorized network.

Figure 18. Existing and Potential Future Sidewalk Connections

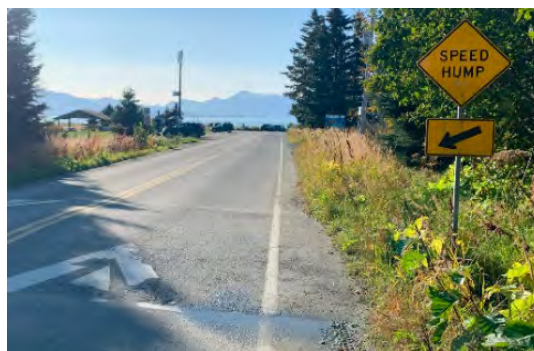


¹⁴ 83 percent of survey respondents from the Homer Transportation Plan Survey said they use a car daily but would prefer to walk and bike more.

¹⁵ The City is working to improve safe travel for persons of all ages and abilities. The Homer All-Ages and Abilities Pedestrian Pathway (HAPP) will connect the Senior Center, main medical district, library, post office, police station, grocery store, and pharmacy, as well as existing trails. (from the Transportation Plan)

Traffic Flow and Safety Concerns

Homer's existing roadway network can support the future traffic growth that could come with increased population. Although most residents use a car daily, many would like to reduce those trips and use walking and biking more frequently, especially for commuting and to access recreation.¹⁶ Three key areas to enhance longevity and access within the network include expanding sidewalks and trails, connecting new neighborhoods to collector roads as they are built, and providing continuing maintenance. Other issues identified in the community survey results were truck routing, parking, pedestrian safety, and summertime congestion. These issues affect the entire transportation network, both motorized and non-motorized.



Speed hump for slowing traffic to Bishop's Beach.

The natural environment makes some network connections challenging. For example, East Hill and West Hill Roads connect neighborhoods above the bluff to the downtown area but don't have adequate walking and biking facilities and are a circuitous and sometimes dangerous route for pedestrians and bicyclists. Some residents requested trail connections through the bluff area (similar to Reber Trail) to make more direct non-motorized connections; however, the topography will make it difficult for these connections to be maintained and to be used by persons of all ages and abilities.

Continued Interest in Transit Opportunities

Providing public transportation could support households without access to a car and could also serve areas like the Homer Spit ("the Spit") where vehicle traffic overwhelms the network during the tourist season. Currently, local taxi companies transport most residents and visitors who don't have access to their own vehicle. Some private and nonprofit entities provide van service as part of their programs. In the past, some private companies have tried providing transit services more broadly, but these efforts have not been financially sustainable.



The Calhoun Trail is an example of one of the 25 city-maintained trails, together spanning almost 11 miles. Its maintenance and upkeep provides a pedestrian connection from Fairview Avenue to Bayview Avenue.

Goals

The 2024 Transportation Plan identified four key goals for transportation in the City of Homer:

- *Goal 1:* Increase Safety of Interactions Between Different Modes of Travel
- *Goal 2:* Provide A Connected Network of Local and Collector Roads and Trails That Balances Modes Based on Land Use Contexts
- *Goal 3:* Maintain Transportation Network to Be Usable Year-Round
- *Goal 4:* Provide Expanded Transportation Options for Residents and Visitors

¹⁶ 83 percent of survey respondents from the Homer Transportation Plan Survey say they use a car daily but would prefer to walk and bike more. Learn more at www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/78524/transportation_plan_2024_01302024_red_size_002.pdf

The 2024 Transportation Plan includes specific recommendations. The policies in this chapter supplement those already identified in the Transportation Plan and focus on topics that received less coverage in the Transportation Plan.

Goal A	Goal B
Provide a resilient non-motorized transportation network focused on connectivity, safety, and access to the downtown, to schools, and to trails for users of all ages and abilities.	Maintain a sustainable and safe motorized transportation network year-round to move people and goods to, from, and within the Greater Homer Area.

City-Led Strategies and Actions

Icon Key:

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1. Build or improve safe roadway and pathway access and connections to key locations. ✂

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Improve non-motorized connections to schools. ✂	Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, Community Development Department, Public Works Department, Kenai Peninsula Borough, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	Undetermined	Varies
b. Implement recommendations in the Homer Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan. ✂ ◆	Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, Community Development Department, Public Works Department	\$278k (FY26 CIP)	Long (5+ years)

Note: See the 2024 Homer Transportation Plan for related policies on the following topics: e-bike legislation, complete streets/all ages and abilities policy, traffic calming, bicycle safety campaign, parking study, neighborhood connectivity to schools, extension of the Homer All Ages and Abilities Pedestrian Pathway (HAPP) Loop, walking and biking infrastructure priorities, complete East-West connections.

2. Maintain a year-round transportation network.

Action
a. Update design standards and road design for walking and biking infrastructure in Title 11 to ensure they are connected, safe, and maintainable. *
b. Ask voters whether to renew the Homer Accelerated Roads and Trails fund beyond 2027.
c. Identify additional funding sources and strategies to support new construction, renovation, maintenance, and equipment for roads and trails.

Note: See the 2024 Homer Transportation Plan for related policies on the following topics: bicycle parking, transfer of responsibilities for state road maintenance, improved winter maintenance on state roads, winter maintenance standards, updating City non-motorized facility design standards, Kachemak Drive reconnaissance engineering study.

Case Study: Public-Private Partnership Providing Public Transportation

In the City of Sitka, public transportation is provided under the oversight of the nonprofit Center for Community with two partner organizations: Sitka Tribe of Alaska (who operates the fixed-route scheduled bus service) and Southeast Senior Services (who operates the door-to-door paratransit service). Sitka Tribe of Alaska receives federal transit funding directly to the Tribe; the City of Sitka supports the services with yearly contributions and by maintaining the paratransit vehicles; other grants also help to meet the operating and capital funding needs. (<https://ridesitka.com/>)

Potential Partner-Led Strategies

- 3. Ensure continued operation of safe airport and ferry operations to support the movement of people and goods to and from the community and maintain Homer's status as a regional hub.**
- 4. Explore public transit options, particularly in the Homer Spit area, to alleviate traffic congestion and improve accessibility for seasonal workers, residents, and visitors.**
- 5. Install benches, trash cans, bike racks and create drop-off and pick-up locations for buses, taxis and visitors, in alignment with the Homer Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan.**

Note: See the 2024 Homer Transportation Plan for related policies on the following topics: truck network/truck routes, transit options, school pick up and drop off congestion, updating existing trail maps.

"State roads make up the backbone of the City of Homer transportation system, providing key connections between local city roads for walking, biking, driving, and the movement of freight... both state- and city-owned roads are needed to provide safe transportation options for residents, visitors, and the movement of freight."

~ Transportation Plan 2024

Policies Supporting Transportation in Other Chapters

The table below summarizes the location of related policies in other parts of the plan that support and contribute to Homer's transportation goals. They are shown in order by chapter.

Topic	Chapter and Strategy Number of Related Policies					
	Land Use & Environment	Public Facilities & Services	Housing	Economic Development	Governance	Sustainability & Resilience
Infill and walkability	1, 5					
Trails	4					
Downtown development	5					
Homer Spit planning and development	5	4				
Homer airport land use	5					
Accessibility improvements		1, 7				
Port and harbor improvements		3				
Kenai Peninsula Borough Safe Streets and Roads for all		5				
Airport improvements		6				
Tsunami evacuation routes						2
Roads and bluff stability						2

Governance

Overarching Theme and Context

The City of Homer Faces Fiscal Uncertainty

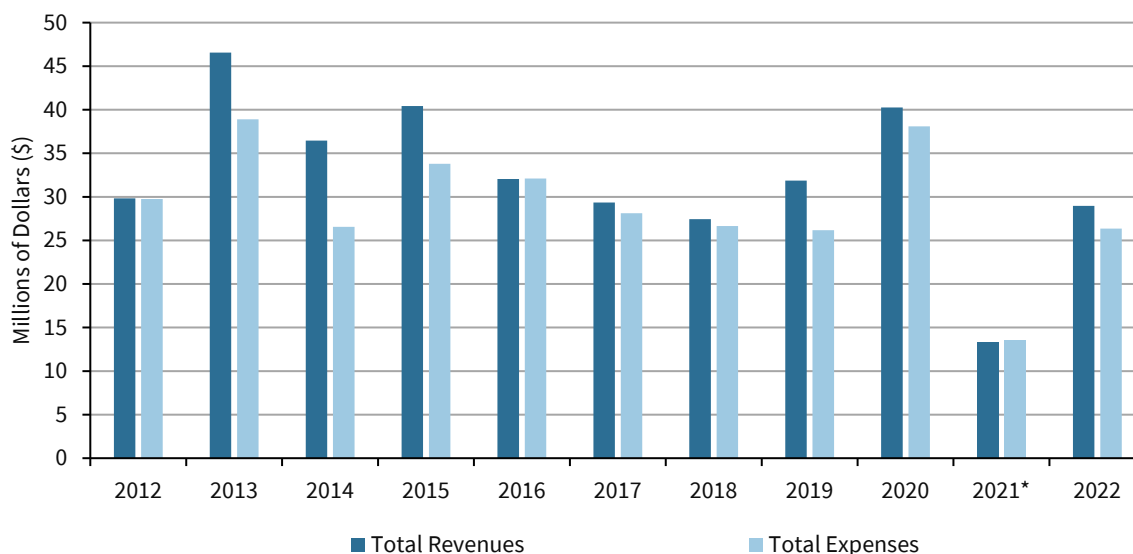
Understanding the City’s fiscal position—its revenues, expenditures, and economic capacity—is essential for informed and effective comprehensive planning. Municipal budgets are the foundation of local government operations. Like many small municipalities, Homer faces ongoing fiscal uncertainty that requires careful planning and prioritization of resources. This chapter begins with an overview of Homer’s revenues and expenses as well as some of the challenges contributing to an uncertain fiscal environment. For more background, see Appendix G: City of Homer Fiscal Trends.

“Anything that requires significant funding needs to start with stating who is willing to pay for it.”

~Growth Scenarios Report Card Results

Over the years, the City of Homer’s annual revenues and expenses have fluctuated. As seen in Figure 19, total revenues exceeded total expenses in nine out of 11 years – in six of those years, by a considerable margin. The two years where expenses exceeded revenues were 2016 and 2021, resulting in \$57,641 and \$169,125 deficits, respectively, for those years. Compared to the financial gains made in other years, these amounts were both small deficits.

Figure 19. Revenues and Expenses for the City of Homer, 2012–2022 (Millions of 2022 Dollars)



Note: Includes all funds. The City changed from a calendar year to a fiscal year, resulting in 2021 only covering six months. As a result, revenues and expenses shown for 2021 reflect six months of activity. A full fiscal year is shown for 2022 (July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022). Source: City of Homer audits (2012–2022), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis for inflation adjustments (2023), and Northern Economics analysis. See Appendix G: City of Homer Fiscal Trends for details.

About the Data in this Chapter

The primary sources used to inform key themes and draft policies in this chapter include City of Homer financial statements, budget documents, department reports and additional information and data from City sources; Kenai Peninsula Borough Assessing Department data; and U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and Census Bureau data. These sources informed a detailed “City of Homer Fiscal Trends Report”, prepared as part of the 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan Update process (see Appendix G). Community input, including the community survey, interviews with elected City officials, commissions, boards, and committees, and other community conversations, as well as research on comparable communities also informed key themes and policies.

The information in this chapter is based on available datasets at the time of plan development and may not reflect current trends. For current information about the City's budget and taxation trends, visit:

- City of Homer: Latest Operating and Capital Budgets: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/finance/budgets>
- Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development's Taxable Database: <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra/OfficeoftheStateAssessor/alaskaTaxable-New.aspx>
- Kenai Peninsula Borough Property Tax Webpage: <https://www.kpb.us/departments/property-tax/property-tax-overview>

The State of Alaska’s fiscal situation has and continues to remain uncertain. As a result, the City cannot rely on some of the same state funding sources as it has in the past for certain programs. The pandemic caused further uncertainty in future revenue and expenditure activities for the City. An additional source of financial vulnerability is the City’s water and sewer utility fund. The City owns expensive and expansive treatment, collection, and distribution infrastructure with few customers paying for maintenance and operations of those systems. Capital grants have played a crucial role in Homer’s finances, but they fluctuate significantly year to year. This variability creates challenges in long-term planning, making the City reliant on uncertain external funding sources.



Homer faces challenges meeting increasing demands for services while dealing with high inflation following the pandemic. The City has experienced revenue growth, largely fueled by increased tourism. However, inflationary pressures on labor, supplies, and equipment have offset these gains, reducing overall purchasing power. While inflation is expected to stabilize, the City must carefully manage expenditures to maintain a balanced budget.

The following three sections— “Revenue Snapshot”, “Expenses Snapshot”, and “Taxation Snapshot”—provide additional context on the need to address the City of Homer’s fiscal uncertainties.

Revenue Snapshot

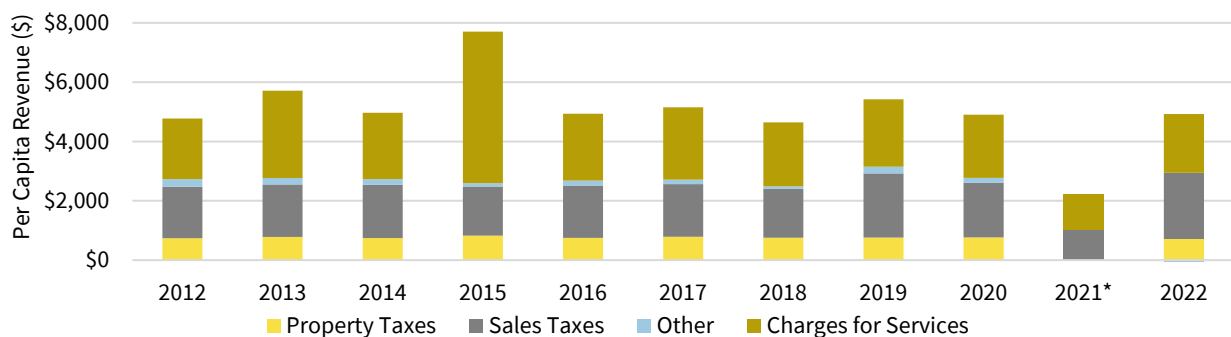
Total revenues for the City of Homer fluctuated between 2012 and 2022 with periods of growth and periods of shrinkage. One driving factor in revenue fluctuations is operating and capital grants, which are received periodically. Figure 20 identifies the largest single line-item revenue sources across all different funds and sources of revenues. As shown in the table, the largest revenue sources for Homer in 2022 were (1) sales tax (\$12.34 million), (2) port and harbor services (\$5.19 million), and (3) property tax (\$3.91 million). As detailed in Figure 21, revenues per capita are generally stable at around \$5,000 (excluding capital and operating grants and contributions). If all factors remain constant, for example, and if the City does not realize any additional revenue streams, the City could anticipate generating around \$5,000 in revenue per capita in future years.

Figure 20. Inflation-Adjusted City of Homer Revenues, 2012, 2016, 2020, and 2022 (Millions of 2022 Dollars)

	2012	2016	2020	2022
Charges for services, port and harbor	\$ 4.96	\$ 5.26	\$ 5.70	\$ 5.19
Charges for services, water	\$ 2.18	\$ 2.38	\$ 2.39	\$ 1.95
Charges for services, sewer	\$ 1.97	\$ 2.09	\$ 1.87	\$ 1.81
Operating grants and contributions	\$ 2.06	\$ 1.33	\$ 12.44	\$ 1.35
Capital grants and contributions	\$ 3.27	\$ 5.06	\$ 0.75	\$ 1.20
Property tax	\$ 3.80	\$ 3.89	\$ 4.24	\$ 3.91
Sales tax	\$ 8.90	\$ 9.20	\$ 10.15	\$ 12.34
Other revenues	\$ 2.69	\$ 2.85	\$ 2.72	\$ 1.22

Source: City of Homer (2015, 2016, 2020, 2022), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis for inflation adjustments (2023), and Northern Economics analysis.

Figure 21. Per Capita Revenue by Category 2012 – 2022, Excluding Grants and Contributions (2022 Dollars)



Note: The amount shown for 2021 represents six months, due to the change from a calendar year to a fiscal year. Source: City of Homer (2012–2022), ADOLWD (2024a, 2024b, 2024c), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis for inflation adjustments (2023), and Northern Economics analysis

Expenses/Cost of Services Snapshot

On average, port and harbor, public safety, and water and sewer make up the largest share of service-related expenses for the City of Homer (see Figure 22). The port and harbor services alone account for 23 percent of expenses, although port and harbor services generate an even greater share of revenues at 42.1 percent. Other significant expenditures include public safety (18.8 percent of expenses), and water and sewer (17.17 percent).

Many programs generate enough self-supporting revenue which they generate through their service charges, leaving a relatively small deficit to make up through operating and capital grants and other tax-based revenues. Some programs are designed as “business-type activities”, meaning they should recover all or most of their costs through user fees and charges. These include water and sewer, and port and harbor.

Figure 22. Inflation-Adjusted City of Homer Expenses, 2012, 2016, 2020, 2022 (Millions of 2022 Dollars)

	2012	2016	2020	2022
Port and Harbor	\$ 5.89	\$ 8.75	\$ 6.68	\$ 5.83
Public Safety	\$ 6.02	\$ 6.23	\$ 5.75	\$ 5.81
Public Works	\$ 3.39	\$ 3.76	\$ 4.62	\$ 4.39
Water and Sewer	\$ 5.82	\$ 5.40	\$ 4.99	\$ 4.38
General Government	\$ 4.92	\$ 4.12	\$ 5.58	\$ 4.20
Other Expenses	\$ 3.71	\$ 3.85	\$ 10.46	\$ 1.76

Source: City of Homer (2012–2022), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis for inflation adjustments (2023), and Northern Economics analysis

Taxation Snapshot

Figure 23 shows an upward trend in sales tax revenue for the City of Homer from 2012 to 2022. The City of Homer collects a year-round 7.85% sales tax (4.85% of which is for the City and 3% for the Borough) with a \$500 cap. Homer has the second highest sales tax rate in the Borough behind Seldovia, which charges 9.5 percent seasonally (April through September). On a per-capita basis, sales tax revenue in 2012 was \$1,734.81 and in 2022 it was \$2,237.71 per person,

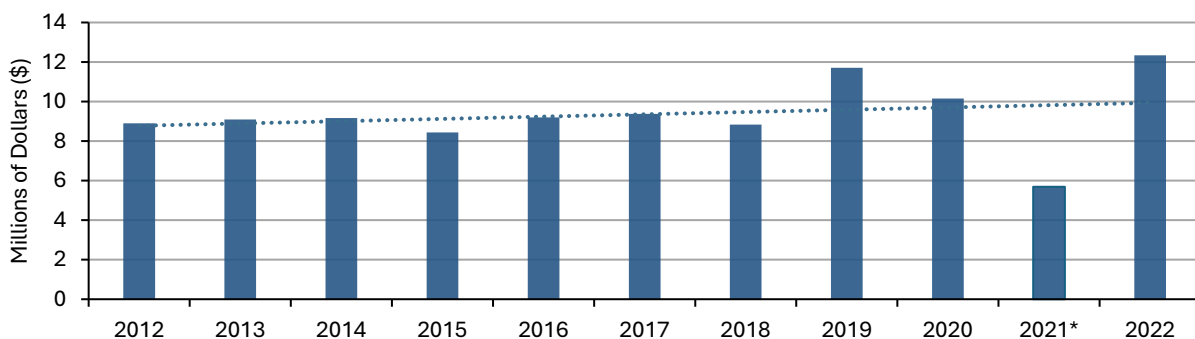
demonstrating real growth relative to the population and inflation. It is likely that the increase in tax revenue per capita came from both an increase in spending as well as an increase in the tax rate in 2019. Some of this sales tax is applied toward a bond payment for Homer's police station.

"A big concern is that the actual city limits are so small compared to the actual areas that many residents live in and thus many of us who own businesses and earn sales tax for the city, do not actually live within the city limits and therefore are not able to vote on citizen decisions. Nor do we qualify for city services, such as the police and animal shelter. Something needs to change around all of that. Perhaps we don't need the city water and sewer where we live but would sure like to have more of a voice."

~Community Survey Participant

Total property tax revenues have generally been steady from 2012 to 2022, increasing by about half a percent each year (Figure 24). One trend that could impact future property tax revenues received by the City is an aging population, since there are property tax exemptions for senior citizens. For residents who are 65 or older or are disabled veterans, the Borough exempts the first \$150,000 of property valuation.

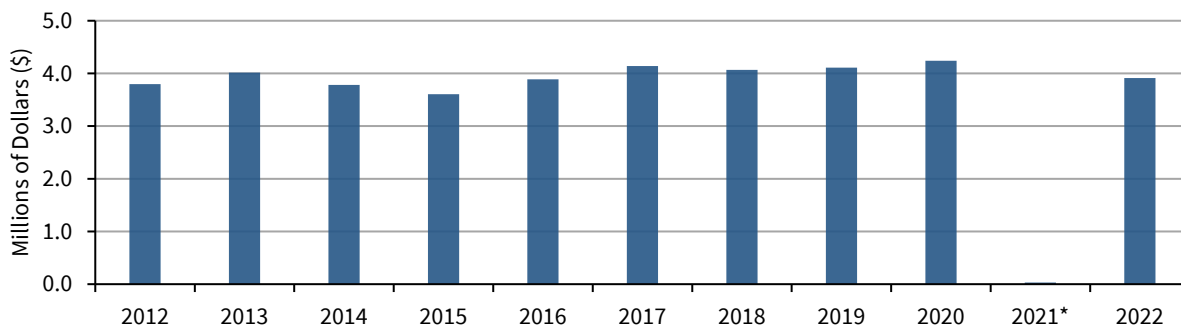
Figure 23. Homer Sales Tax Revenues 2012–2022 (Millions of 2022 Dollars)



Note: The amount shown for 2021 represents six months, due to the change from a calendar year to a fiscal year.

Source: City of Homer (2012–2022), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis for inflation adjustments (2023), and Northern Economics analysis

Figure 24. City of Homer Property Tax Revenues, 2012–2022 (Millions of 2022 Dollars)



Note: *2021 is not shown, due to changes in tracking from a calendar year to a fiscal year. Source: City of Homer (2012–2022), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis for inflation adjustments (2023), and Northern Economics analysis

Other Themes and Related Fiscal Challenges

Revenue Growth Driven by Tourism, but Inflation Limits Gains

The City of Homer has experienced revenue growth, largely fueled by increased tourism. However, inflationary pressures on labor, supplies, and equipment have offset these gains, reducing overall purchasing power. While inflation is expected to stabilize, the City must carefully manage expenditures to maintain a balanced budget.

Dependence on Sales Tax as a Primary Revenue Source

Sales tax remains the most significant revenue source for Homer, contributing 43 percent of total revenues in 2022. Sales tax revenue has grown at an average annual rate of 3.32 percent. This reliance makes the City vulnerable to economic downturns and shifts in consumer spending.

Aging Population and Increased Property Tax Exemptions

Property tax revenue has remained stable but faces future risks due to the increasing number of senior citizens eligible for property tax exemptions. In Homer, residents aged 65 and older represent a larger share of the population (22 percent) compared to Alaska as whole (14 percent). According to tax data from the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, the share of tax-exempt property in the Kenai Peninsula Borough has grown: there were 3,700 approved property tax exemption applications in the Borough in 2012, compared to 6,704 approved applicants in 2022. These exemptions could potentially impact the City's ability to generate stable revenue from property taxes. See Appendix G for additional details.

Staff Capacity Challenges Impacting Service Delivery

The City of Homer faces staffing shortages that impact its ability to provide essential services efficiently. Limited personnel and funding constraints have led to delays in project implementation, code enforcement, and service expansion. Addressing workforce needs and limitations across City departments will be crucial for ensuring the City's long-term operational sustainability. If the City expands its infrastructure and services, that will likely require robust recruitment, training, and retaining of additional staff to operate and maintain any new facilities or programs.

Current staff capacity was a recurring theme throughout the 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan Update engagement process. As shown in Figure 25, for “Fire and Emergency Services”, when asked to share more detail about those community health and safety programs they are least satisfied with, many residents shared concerns with staff capacity. Similar concerns were raised regarding the implementation of existing and potential policies or new code that are created through the updated plan and Title 21 code revision process.

Figure 25. Responses to the 2024 Homer Community Survey: Qualitative Feedback Dissatisfaction with Fire and Emergency Services

Fire and Emergency Services: More staffing and resources needed; challenges posed by relying on volunteers for critical emergency services	45	• <i>There is not enough law enforcement to cover the city of Homer and outlying areas</i> • <i>It would be great to have all services with designated staff instead of volunteers. Takes a long time for responses by time the volunteers get to the station, then out on the call</i> • <i>Our fire and emergency services are grossly understaffed. Please fix it. We finally increased the staff from one to two on call at night but that is still insufficient</i> • <i>Public safety should be first and foremost on the minds of a local government, the rest is details</i> • <i>Our fire and emergency response teams need more funding so they can hire more staff. They have a very large area to cover and with limited staff their ability to do their job is negatively impacted.</i>
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Public Engagement and Fiscal Transparency are Important

There is a strong demand for greater public involvement and education about the City’s fiscal situation. Many residents outside City limits contribute to the economy but lack voting rights, leading to concerns about representation and service access. A key step in achieving a shared community understanding and ownership of City actions is consistent resident participation in City boards, commissions, committees, elected positions, and related City processes. Ongoing education for participants and residents on public involvement, information sharing, and civic engagement is key to reducing divisiveness and supporting inclusive policy and project implementation in Homer.



As evident in the robust community participation in comprehensive planning activities, residents across the Greater Homer Area are interested and invested in Homer’s future. Based on responses to the community survey, residents highly value and look to the “City Council” and “City Government” for guidance on Homer’s future (ranked 2nd in number of mentions after “non-profit and environmental organizations”). At the same time, as shown in Figure 16 in the Economic Development chapter, residents selected “Government” as the sector they desire the least amount of growth (most saying a combined “no growth/change” or “smaller than existing”, even while noting lack of funding and/or staff capacity for fire and emergency services and road maintenance).



“Growth outside of the city depends on city services, but the city lacks funding to support growth outside the city.”

~Growth Scenarios Report Card Results

“Some of this happens outside of city limits. How to develop without sacrificing the rural elements of Homer. Most people who live outside of limits don’t want to be included because of fees. Homer is a hub, which can be a deficit for the city.”

~Planning Commissioner comment

The Value of Collaboration and Partnerships in Fiscal Sustainability

Public-private partnerships (PPPs), or partnerships between the public sector and the private sector for the purpose of delivering a project or a service traditionally provided by the public sector, is one tool the City of Homer can use to complete priority community projects. By leveraging private investment and expertise, the City can support key projects without overburdening taxpayers. Successful PPPs in Alaska’s coastal communities have demonstrated the ability to enhance economic development, improve public services, and expand infrastructure while reducing municipal costs. An example of an effective PPP in Homer today is in the community’s Medical District with the South Peninsula Hospital (SPH)—a partnership between the City of Homer (landowner), Kenai Peninsula Borough (facility owner), SPH, Inc. Board of Directors (governance), and South Kenai Peninsula Hospital Service Area (public advisory board). Homer can benefit from similar partnerships in areas such as harbor improvements, renewable energy projects, and housing development. Similarly, the City can also partner with Tribal organizations or nonprofit partners that have access to different funding streams and resources to achieve shared priorities.

“The comprehensive plan is spearheaded by the city, but other partners help implement the strategies and actions.”

~Planning Commissioner comment

Goals

Goal A	Goal B	Goal C
Ensure long-term financial stability.	Enhance fiscal transparency and community engagement.	Strengthen collaboration and partnerships.

Icon Key:

- ✈ Priority: Emerging priority for implementation
- ✂ Capital: An action that includes a potential capital project
- * Code: An action that recommends a specific code revision
- ◆ 2018: An action adapted from/carried over from the 2018 Comprehensive Plan

City-Led Strategies and Actions

1. Develop a long-term fiscal plan that is proactive, sustainable, and responsive to short-term challenges and opportunities. ✈

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Establish a six-year budget framework to improve financial foresight and stability.	Administration Department, Finance Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
b. Ensure the Capital Improvement Plan is tied to the six-year budget.	Administration Department, Finance Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)

2. Diversify revenue streams to reduce dependence on sales and property taxes. ✈

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Increase financial reserves to mitigate risks from economic downturns or unexpected expenditures.	Administration Department, City Council, Finance Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
b. Leverage City-owned land for development that aligns with economic and housing goals.	City Council, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
c. Explore the feasibility of taxation options.	Administration Department, City Council, Finance Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
d. Use tools such as bonds, tax increment financing (TIF), Business Improvement District (BID) assessments, and other mechanisms to finance infrastructure improvements and public amenities in designated redevelopment areas.	Administration Department, City Council, Community Development Department, Finance Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
e. Offer property tax abatements (City-wide or targeted) to developers to incentivize investment in higher-density projects.	City Council, Community Development Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
f. Expand fees for City services, such as permitting and recreational activities, to align costs with service use.	Administration Department, City Council, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
g. Support small business growth through targeted incentives to expand the local tax base.	City Council, Administration Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)

3. Conduct operational efficiency audits to identify cost savings and streamline municipal services.

Action
a. Encourage infill development and connect customers to water and sewer systems where the infrastructure already exists to avoid additional build-out capital costs.
b. Solicit regular input from residents about desired services and facilities, and how to improve service delivery.
c. Engage City commissions and boards in their respective budget areas to inform prioritization and planning.
d. Evaluate staffing levels across departments and identify workforce gaps and inefficiencies based on current needs.

4. Increase public participation in budget planning, improve access to financial data, and foster community discussions to ensure policies reflect the needs and priorities of residents both inside and outside City limits.

Action
a. Educate residents about service levels, benefits, and costs for different parts of the City and those areas adjacent to City boundaries.
b. Educate residents on City powers, roles, responsibilities, and the benefits of different planning processes and tools.
c. Inform residents and visitors of the value of green infrastructure in reducing infrastructure costs, as well as educate the community on which types of green infrastructure works best in Homer.
d. Continue to create opportunities for youth involvement in City decision-making.
e. Educate the public about the benefits of higher density development, such as reduced traffic congestion and increased walkability.
f. Encourage shared planning and decision-making to ensure policies reflect community priorities and needs.

Potential Partner-Led Strategies

5. Identify opportunities to coordinate with organizations including Tribal organizations, Alaska Native Corporations, and local and regional non-profits to leverage resources and provide services more cost-effectively.

6. Work with the Kenai Peninsula Borough to advocate for and implement policies that fiscally benefit borough communities.

Policies Supporting Governance in Other Chapters

The table below summarizes the location of related policies in other parts of the plan that support and contribute to Homer's governance goals. They are shown in order by chapter.

Topic	Chapter and Strategy Number of Related Policies					
	Land Use & Environment	Public Facilities & Services	Housing	Economic Development	Transportation	Sustainability & Resilience
Higher density, sustainable growth	2					
Community and stakeholder input on zoning and policy tools	2					
Improved processes and efficiencies in zoning, design, and review	3					
Evaluation of creating a municipal Parks and Recreation Department		1				
High quality, sustainable municipal facilities and services		All				
Land dispositions			2			
Encourage expansion of select industries				1		X
Access to City facilities				2		
Sustainability and resilience in City planning						
Energy efficiency of municipal facilities						



Credit: Adela Pederson



Credit: Lorna Branzuela

What are the core functions of the State of Alaska, Borough, and City?

Figure 26 illustrates the breakdown of responsibilities between the State of Alaska, the Kenai Peninsula Borough and the City of Homer, presented in alphabetical order.

Figure 26: Core Functions of the State of Alaska, Borough, and City

State of Alaska	Kenai Peninsula Borough second class borough*	City of Homer first class city*
- Alaska Marine Highway Ferry Terminal - Alaska State Troopers (outside of City limits) - Homer Airport - Road Maintenance of major roadways (including Sterling Highway, Pioneer Avenue, Homer Spit Road, Kachemak Drive, West Hill Road, and East Hill Road) - State Parks (e.g., Kachemak Bay State Park)	- Hospital (via service areas) - Planning and platting - Regional emergency medical services (via service areas) - Road maintenance (via service areas) - Schools, via Kenai Peninsula Borough School District - Solid waste services	- Airport terminal - Animal control - City code enforcement - Elections - Parks and recreation - Planning and zoning (within City limits) - Police - Port and harbor - Public library - Right of way management - Road maintenance and snow removal (shared with State) - Volunteer Fire Department - Water and wastewater

Alaska has two primary classifications of municipalities: General Law and Home Rule. Within the General Law classification there are first class cities/boroughs and second class cities/boroughs. The Kenai Peninsula Borough is a second class borough and the City of Homer is a first class city. For both, powers are defined by state law and by local ordinances; while these powers can be broad, there are some limitations on certain activities like taxation. Home Rule municipalities generally have broader powers and may exercise all legislative powers not prohibited by law or charter. To learn more about the powers of municipalities, visit the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development Division of Community and Regional Affairs, Local Government Resource Desk:

www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra/LocalGovernmentResourceDesk/MunicipalGovernment/MunicipalGovernmentStructureinAlaska.aspx.



Credit: Kyra Wagner

Sustainability and Resilience

Key Themes Guiding the Plan

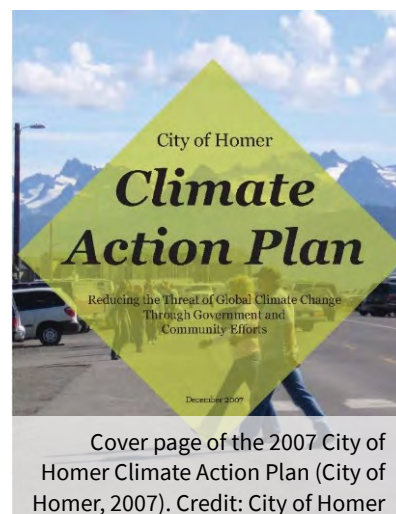
Natural and Climate-Driven Hazards Increase Risks to People and Infrastructure

Homer's natural setting makes it vulnerable to multiple hazards, including earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, wildfires, and flooding. These risks are expected to intensify as the region experiences the effects of a warming climate. The number of extreme wildfire danger days around Homer is projected to increase significantly by 2050, with higher temperatures, drought, and beetle-killed forests contributing to fire risk. Severe and extreme drought conditions are projected to occur around 20 percent of the time.¹⁷ At the same time, inland flooding is expected to worsen, particularly around Beluga Lake, as 1-in-100-year rainfall events become more intense.¹⁸ Although isostatic rebound may offer short-term relief from storm surge, flood depths on the Homer Spit ("the Spit") are expected to increase again by 2080, with parts of the Spit experiencing over two meters of inundation in a major event.¹⁹ Several City facilities are also at risk including the Public Works campus, which lies in a tsunami inundation zone.²⁰ These evolving hazards highlight the need for forward-looking planning, facility siting, evacuation coordination, and land management tools to strengthen Homer's resilience over time.



Sustainability and Resilience Are Core to City Planning and Investments

The City of Homer has a long history of leadership on sustainability, having adopted Alaska's first Climate Action Plan in 2007. Today, the community continues to express strong support for renewable energy, hazard mitigation, and environmental stewardship. In the 2023 community survey, 74 percent of respondents said it was "very important" to encourage renewable energy projects over the next 20 years. Community members also emphasized the importance of resilience-focused infrastructure, sustainable development practices, and forward-looking



¹⁷ Woodwell Climate Research Center. (2022). *Climate Risk Assessment: Homer and Seldovia, Alaska*. Retrieved from <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/publicworks/climate-risk-assessment>

¹⁸ Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy (ACCAP). (2023). *Alaska's Changing Climate: Localized Projections for Southcentral Alaska*.

¹⁹ Suleimani, E.N. (2019). *Tsunami Hazard Assessment for the Kachemak Bay Area*. Alaska Earthquake Center.

²⁰ City of Homer. (2023). *Tsunami Risk Final Report and Recommendations for Public Works Campus*.

land use decisions. These values are reflected in the City’s ongoing efforts to transition municipal facilities to more efficient energy sources, conduct energy audits, incorporate green infrastructure, and modernize capital projects to have long-term resilience.²¹ As hazards and environmental stressors increase, integrating sustainability as a baseline assumption in all City policies and capital investments will help reduce future costs, improve operational efficiency, and protect the well-being of Homer’s residents.

Open Space and Natural Lands Support Long-Term Community Well-Being

Homer’s ecosystems, wetlands, and green spaces provide natural protection against flooding, erosion, and other hazards—while also contributing to the community’s quality of life. Residents strongly support preserving these natural assets: 77 percent of community survey respondents identified the preservation of public open space as a top priority. In open responses and interviews, residents expressed support for concentrating new development in existing disturbed areas, avoiding steep slopes and flood-prone zones, and protecting wildlife corridors and critical habitat. Preserving wetlands, riparian buffers, and upland vegetation also enhances Homer’s capacity to manage stormwater through low-impact development and natural drainage systems. Continued investment in data tools—such as Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) mapping, green infrastructure inventories, and watershed-based planning—will help the City and its partners prioritize land for conservation and align development with long-term environmental resilience.



Credit: Kachemak Communications

“We need to make considerations about how we are going to get our energy in 10-20 years and adjust for climate change. Invest in ways to minimize our energy demand and alternative methods of harnessing our energy.”

~ Community Survey Results

Goals

Goal A	Goal B
Protect both existing and new infrastructure from the impacts of climate change, environmental constraints, and hazards.	Encourage Homer residents to be proud stewards of their community and the spectacular natural setting around them.

²¹ City of Homer. (2023). *Energy Audit Reports and Capital Improvement Plan Updates*. Kinney Engineering. (2020). *Low Impact Development Planning for the City of Homer*. City of Homer Public Works Department. Retrieved from https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/public_works/page/49271/low_impact_development_planning_study_6-30-20_final.pdf

City-Led Strategies and Actions

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1. Modernize City operations for long-term efficiency and resilience. ✈

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Completion
a. Incorporate sustainability (long-term resource stewardship) and resilience (ability to adapt and recover from disruptions) into the design and evaluation of all City plans, policies, and capital projects. *	All City boards, commissions, departments	Undetermined	Ongoing
b. Conduct energy audits of City facilities and operations on a 10-year basis to identify cost-saving opportunities and inform capital upgrades. ✂	Administration Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
c. Transition City facilities and assets to more efficient and lower-emission energy sources where feasible. ✂	Administration Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
d. Continue to seek grant funding and technical assistance for projects that restore ecological functions, reduce flood risk, or enhance long-term resilience.	Administration Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
e. Explore the use of local or alternative building materials to reduce building costs and improve resilience.	Administration Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)

2. Reduce risk from natural hazards through proactive siting and planning. ✈

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Completion
a. Relocate municipal buildings out of tsunami inundation zones where feasible and continue to consider hazard-prone or unsuitable areas in future development projects. ✂	Administration Department, Community Development Department, Public Works Department	\$11.4 M for Public Works facility (FY26 CIP)	Ongoing
b. Provide information and signage to educate residents and visitors about tsunami evacuation routes. ✂	Administration Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
c. Incorporate landslide risk analysis into City planning using tools such as LiDAR mapping and geotechnical field assessments, with an emphasis on bluff areas most vulnerable to development and climate impacts. ✂	Community Development Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Completion
d. Continue to implement the Homer Beach Policy and Management Plan, including enforcement of existing regulations, establishment of future regulations, and public education to ensure Homer's beaches are maintained, preserved, protected, and enjoyed. ♦	Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department, Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Committee, Police Department, City Administration	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
e. Evaluate current bluff stability best practices in City infrastructure design standards, including guidance for street extensions, trails, utilities, and Right of Way (ROW) projects near coastal or inland bluffs. Incorporate if needed.	Public Works Department	Undetermined	Long (5+ years)

3. Enhance natural drainage systems. ⚡

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Completion
a. Update and adopt the City's Low-Impact Development Plan (also referred to as the Green Infrastructure – Stormwater Master Plan) to incorporate current data on erosion, water quality, and flooding. The updated plan should identify strategic opportunities for wetland preservation and enhancement as a form of natural stormwater management.	Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
b. Continue to incorporate green infrastructure approaches (e.g., rain gardens, vegetated buffers, permeable surfaces) into City-led projects.	Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
c. Continue to integrate wetlands, riparian areas, and other natural drainage features into the City's capital planning, permitting review, and long-term infrastructure decisions.	Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
d. Explore incentives, recognition programs, or voluntary guidelines that encourage sustainable development practices on private land.	Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)

Potential Partner-Led Strategies

4. Leverage partnerships to advance community-wide sustainability and resilience. ⚡

Policies Supporting Sustainability and Resilience in Other Chapters

The table below summarizes the location of related policies in other parts of the plan that support and contribute to Homer's sustainability and resilience goals. They are shown in order by chapter.

Topic	Chapter and Strategy Number of Related Policies					
	Land Use & Environment	Public Facilities & Services	Housing	Economic Development	Transportation	Governance
Title 21 and responsible growth	1, 2					
Title 21 and hazard mitigation	3					
Open space preservation	4					
Infill and sprawl reduction	5					
Green infrastructure / wetlands integration		3				
Hazard-based siting and resilience		5				
Long-range stormwater management plan		3				
Water and sewer management plan		6				
Food security				3		
Moderate, sustainable growth in tourism				9		
Transportation network sustainability					1, 3, 4	
Public-private partnerships						4
Engaging community about sustainability, stewardship						5

Appendices

2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan Update, Public Hearing Draft

Appendix A: Acronyms

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2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan Update

Appendices: Public Hearing Draft, July 2025

Appendix A: Acronyms

ACS	American Community Survey
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADU	Accessory Dwelling Unit
AHFC	Alaska Housing and Finance Corporation
AS	Alaska Statute
BMP	Best management practices
BUILD	Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Transportation Grants Program
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CARMA	Capital Asset Repair and Maintenance Allowance
CDP	Census Designated Places
CIP	Capital Improvement Plan
DOT&PF	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
EV	Electric vehicle
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FMR	Fair market rent
FY	Fiscal year
GhG	Greenhouse gas
GIS	Geographic information systems
GRAPI	Gross rent as a percentage of household income
HAPP	Homer All-Ages and Abilities Pedestrian Pathway
HART	Homer Accelerated Roads and Trails Program
HAWSP	Homer Accelerated Water and Sewer Program
HERC	Homer Education and Recreation Center
HUD	US Department of Housing and Urban Development
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
ISO	Insurance Services Office
KPB	Kenai Peninsula Borough
KPBSD	Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
KPC	Kenai Peninsula College
KPEDD	Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District
LID	Low-Impact Development
MAPP	Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships
PARCAC	Parks, Art, Recreation, and Cultural Advisory Commission
PPP	Public Participation Plan
RFP	Request for proposal
RV	Recreational vehicle
SMOCAP	Selected monthly ownership costs as a percentage of household income
SPARC	South Peninsula Area Rec Center
SPH	South Peninsula Hospital
TBD	To be determined
TORA	Transfer of responsibility agreement
US	United States

Appendix B: Glossary

This glossary is intended to provide definitions and clarification for terms in the 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan including the Core Plan and other appendices.

Anadromous Water Body¹: The portion of a fresh water body or estuarine area that (A) is cataloged under Alaska Statutes (AS) 16.05.871 as important for anadromous fish; or (B) is not cataloged under AS 16.05.871 as important for anadromous fish but has been determined by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to contain or exhibit evidence of anadromous fish, in which event the anadromous portion of the stream or waterway extends up to the first point of physical blockage. The term ‘anadromous fish’ species that are born in freshwater, migrate to the ocean to grow and mature, and then return to freshwater to spawn (e.g. salmon).

Area Plan²: (*See also Master Plan*) A plan that covers specific subareas of a community that provides basic information on the natural features, resources, and physical constraints that affect development of the planning area. They may also specify detailed land-use designations used to review specific development proposals and to plan services and facilities.

Complete Streets³: Streets designed and operated to enable safe use and support mobility for all users. This includes people of all ages and abilities, regardless of whether they are traveling as drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, or public transportation riders.

Downtown Area: *See Future Land Use Map, Figure 9 of the Core Plan.*

Greater Homer Area: *See Greater Homer Area Map, Figure 3 of the Core Plan.* The "Greater Homer Area" encompasses the City of Homer and its neighboring communities, including Diamond Ridge, Kachemak City, and Fritz Creek.

Green Infrastructure⁴: Green infrastructure uses filtration, infiltration, and evapotranspiration to treat and soak up rainwater where it falls. It can deliver multiple environmental, social, and economic benefits beyond stormwater management alone. Terms such as nature-based solutions, green stormwater infrastructure, and low-impact development are also used to describe green infrastructure installations, and there is overlap between these concepts. When green infrastructure systems are thoughtfully designed to fit the site-specific, local, or regional needs of the community and environment, they can provide cleaner air and water, protect against flooding and excessive heat exposure, provide diverse habitat, and create beautiful green spaces for all to enjoy.

Growth, Minimal: In the Growth Scenarios Report Card Results, minimal growth is referred to as “status quo” where there is no growth or there is “natural,” unguided growth that maintains current

¹ Adapted from Alaska Statute § 41.17.950 (2023).

² Adapted from: Michael Davidson & Fay Dolnick (Eds.), *A Planners Dictionary* (PAS Report Nos. 521/522), American Planning Association, 2004.

³ Adapted from U.S. Department of Transportation. (n.d.). *Active transportation*. <https://www.transportation.gov/mission/office-secretary/office-policy/active-transportation/active-transportation>

⁴U.D. Environmental Protection Agency (2025). *About Green Infrastructure*. <https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/about-green-infrastructure>

trends such as keeping current zoning and land use policies. This definition is consistent between the Core Plan and appendices.

Growth, Moderate: In the Growth Scenarios Report Card Results, moderate growth is referred to as “enhance” where there is a minimal increase in density through minor code modifications and a focus on current economic drivers. This definition is consistent between the Core Plan and appendices.

Growth, Significant: In the Growth Scenarios Report Card Results, significant growth is referred to “amplify” where there is a moderate increase in density through major code modifications that encourages new economic drivers aimed toward young families. This definition is consistent between the Core Plan and appendices.

Growth, Sustainable⁵: Creating long-term value without depleting natural or social resources, characterized by practices that are environmentally friendly, socially responsible, and economically viable.

Housing, Affordable⁶: (*See also Attainable Housing*) The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines “affordable housing” as housing on which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities. Housing that is affordable can be built by private developers and open to all income groups. This is sometimes called naturally occurring affordable housing. Housing that is affordable can also be built using public investment and restricted to certain incomes. In some communities, there is an abundance of naturally occurring affordable housing that has been built by private developers. In other communities, the opportunities for housing that is affordable are few and far between, as housing prices have outpaced wage growth, causing housing to be out of reach for many households.

Housing, Attainable⁷: (*See also Affordable Housing*) Attainable housing means a variety of housing types for moderate- or middle-income households with incomes ranging between 80 – 120% of Area Median Income (AMI); this population segment sometimes is referred to as the ‘Missing Middle’. Attainable housing is targeted towards income earners which may include teachers, healthcare providers, public safety personnel, armed service members, resort workers, etc. These individuals are typically ineligible for Affordable Housing because their household incomes often exceed the limits of Affordable Housing eligibility.

Infill⁸: Development or redevelopment of land that has been bypassed, remained vacant, and/or is underused because of the continuing urban development process. Generally, the areas and/or sites are not particularly of prime quality; however, they are usually served by or are readily accessible to

⁵ RVKS and Associates. (2024, December 5). *Strategies for sustainable business growth*. AGN International. <https://agn.org/insight/navigating-growth-strategies-for-sustainable-growth/#:~:text=Sustainable%20growth%20focuses%20on%20creating,socially%20responsible%2C%20and%20economically%20viable>

⁶ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (n.d.). *Glossary of HUD terms*: A. HUD User. https://archives.huduser.gov/portal/glossary/glossary_a.html

⁷ Adapted from: Association for the Improvement of American Infrastructure. (n.d.). *Attainable housing terms*. <https://aiainfra.org/attainable-housing-terms/>

⁸ Adapted from: Michael Davidson & Fay Dolnick (Eds.), *A Planners Dictionary* (PAS Report Nos. 521/522), American Planning Association, 2004.

the infrastructure (services and facilities) provided by the applicable local governmental entity. Use of such lands for new housing and/or other urban development is considered a more desirable alternative than to continue to extend the outer development pattern laterally and horizontally thus necessitating a higher expenditure for capital improvements than would be required for infill development.

Infrastructure⁹: The built environment. FEMA defines public infrastructure as, “at a minimum, the structures, facilities, and equipment for roads, highways and bridges; public transportation; dams, ports, harbors and other maritime facilities; intercity passenger and freight railroads; freight and intermodal facilities; airports; water systems, including drinking water and wastewater systems; electrical transmission facilities and systems; utilities; broadband infrastructure; and buildings and real property; and structures, facilities and equipment that generate, transport and distribute energy including electric vehicle (EV) charging.”

Master Plan¹⁰: (*See also Area Plan*) A document that describes the physical development of the City which may include accompanying maps, plats, charts, descriptive and explanatory matter that shares the City of Homer Planning Commission’s recommendations for the development of the City territory. This may include, among other things, development of the type, location, and sequence of all public improvements; the relocation, removal, extension or change of existing or future public ways, grounds, spaces, buildings, properties, and utilities; and the general extent and location of rehabilitation areas. A master plan for the City must be approved by the City Council after consideration and report by the Planning Commission.

Resilience¹¹: The ability of a community to anticipate, plan, and prepare for threats, persevere through stressful or disruptive events, and recover and adapt to new conditions.

Sustainability¹²: The process of using our finite resources as a community to balance the goals of economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and social equity to ensure that we can meet the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Tidelands¹³: Lands which are periodically covered by tidal waters between the elevation of mean high and mean low tides.

⁹ U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2023), *Infrastructure*. Federal Emergency Management Agency. <https://www.fema.gov/about/glossary/infrastructure>

¹⁰ Adapted from: City of Homer. (n.d.). *Homer City Code § 2.72.030 – Powers and duties*. <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/cityclerk/homer-city-code>

¹¹ Adapted from Fairbanks North Star Borough. (2024). *Climate Action and Adaptation Plan*. <https://fnsb.gov/DocumentCenter/View/21949/climate-action-and-adaptations-plan?bidId=>

¹² Adapted from Fairbanks North Star Borough. (2024). *Climate Action and Adaptation Plan*. <https://fnsb.gov/DocumentCenter/View/21949/climate-action-and-adaptations-plan?bidId=>

¹³ Adapted from: City of Homer. (n.d.). *Homer City Code § 18.28.050 – Definitions*. <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/cityclerk/homer-city-code>

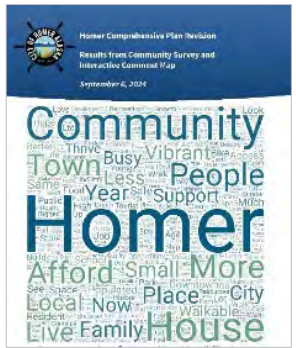
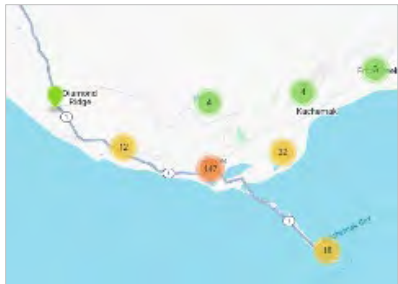
Appendix C: Methodology

How Was this Plan Developed?

This plan was developed with extensive input from residents, city leadership and staff, commissions, committees, and other community leaders, and regional, state, and federal partners.

The following table summarizes the activities and inputs that contributed to this draft plan. Detailed summaries of project outreach activities can be found on the project website: homercompplanupdate.com.

In-Person Activities	
Steering Committee	The Steering Committee met 15 times (through December 2024) during the duration of the project and assisted in the development of the comprehensive plan. The committee plans to meet twice more during the drafting phase in January and February 2025. The five-member committee is comprised of two city council members, one city planning commissioner, one economic development commissioner, and a city resident representative nominated by the mayor and approved by the City Council. The roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee are outlined in City of Homer Resolution 23-129(A) and include: • Assist in the refinement and execution of the public outreach process, outreach program, and schedule. • Participate in public outreach activities and events including work with each of the member's represented organizations to keep them informed on the project and encourage their participation, solicit participation from a wide range of people and organizations in the community, participate in event exercises and provide feedback. • Provide feedback and recommendations on Comprehensive Plan draft documents. The Steering Committee meetings are noticed and open to the public.
City Meetings	The project team routinely provided updates at the Homer City Council meetings and Planning Commission meetings. The project team facilitated a Joint City Council and Planning Commission Work Session in March 2024 to kick off the project, review the overall purpose and legal basis for comprehensive plans and prepare the planning commissioners, Council members, and staff for the comprehensive plan revision process. The project team also attended and engaged many of the city boards and commissions including the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, Library Advisory Board, Economic Development Advisory Commission, and Americans with Disabilities Act Advisory Board. Project team members also met with City department staff, including the library staff, public works staff, port and harbor staff, community development staff, and others.
Community Group Meetings	The project team attended and provided updates at the meetings of several active community groups including, the Homer Chamber of Commerce board of directors, Homer Guiding Growth, Homer Stormwater Working Group, Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) Steering Committee, MAPP Housing Working Group, Homer Marine Trades Association, and others.
Community Conversations and Open Houses	The project team hosted the following public community conversations and open houses where the project team discussed current economic conditions, emerging vision, values, priorities, and policies for the Homer Comprehensive Plan: • Community Open House March 28, 2024 at Alaska Islands and Oceans Visitor Center. • Community Work Session on Growth Scenarios October 22, 2024 at Alaska Islands and Oceans Visitor Center. • Community Open House to launch Public Review Draft Planned for February 11, 2025 at Alaska Islands and Oceans Visitor Center. 
Events and Information Tables	The project team and Steering Committee attended the following community events or locations to engage with the community:

	• March 15, 2024: Hosted an information table at the Spenard Builders Supply's Contractors day to engage with local contractors, builders, and others. • April 11, 2024: Met with high school government class at Homer High School. • May 14-16, 2024: Held open hours at the Homer Public Library to receive feedback and provide information on the plan. • May 15, 2024: Hosted an Under 40 Focus Group to collect feedback and input from Homer residents under 40 years old. • May 24, 2024: Hosted a conversation with fishermen and marine trade representatives at the Gear Shed. • September 14 and 21, 2024: Hosted a booth at the Farmer's Market to engage with residents and visitors.
Interviews	The project team conducted more than two dozen interviews with business owners, community leaders, community organizations, and committees to learn about community challenges, priorities and collect suggestions for the plan.
Surveys	
Community Survey	The community survey was aimed at engaging residents and gathering feedback. The survey was open April 22, 2024, through July 1, 2024 and received 556 responses. The survey was distributed online, announced via project e-newsletters and website, announced via social media, in public meetings, and through outreach by Steering Committee members. The survey was also available in hard copy at the Homer Public Library and City Hall. 
Business Survey	The business survey was aimed at engaging business owners. It was open from July 12, 2024, through August 25, 2024 and received 66 responses. The survey was designed and promoted with assistance from the City's Economic Development Commission and the Homer Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center.
Visitor Survey	The Visitor's Survey received five responses. The Project Team decided to not analyze these results due to the low response rate.
Interactive Map	The Interactive Comment Map was aimed at soliciting location-based input on community priorities. It was open in conjunction with the community survey, for the same time period and distributed through the same methods and received 224 responses. 
Outreach and Media	
Project Website	The project website provided a place for residents to easily find background information about the project, downloads of past presentations and draft files, announcements of upcoming meetings, links to project surveys, and a form to sign up for project e-newsletters. https://homercompplanupdate.com/
Email Distribution	Throughout the project, the project team developed and sent multiple email project updates to nearly 250 interested community and partner subscribers.
Social Media	The project team announced project updates on social media, through the City of Homer's Facebook page that has 814 followers. The Homer Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center also shared some announcements, reaching its 5,600 followers.

Newspaper and Radio	Ads announcing public events were published throughout the project in the Homer News and newspaper staff covered some community events and conversations. Public Service Announcements announcing events aired on radio stations KBBI, K-Wave FM 105, KPEN FM 102, K-BAY 93.3, and KGTL AM 620/FM 100.
Research Tasks	
Mapping	The project team developed land use, transportation, and other relevant maps to use as decision-making tools and guide future development.
Secondary Research	The project team collected information from local, state and federal sources to tell the story of Homer: how it is changing and how the population, housing, economy and land use characteristics compare to other Kenai Peninsula communities.
Plan Review	The project team reviewed past and existing community, regional and other relevant plans and reports, including the 2018 Comprehensive Plan.

Appendix D: Plan Review



City of Homer Comprehensive Plan Update: Plan Review

Updated May 2025

Purpose

This plan review was conducted as part of the Background Research and Analysis Task for the City of Homer Comprehensive Plan Update. Documents reviewed were developed by local, borough, and state entities and will serve to inform the Comprehensive Plan Update alongside public outreach, mapping, and other data collection efforts.

In addition to summaries for each plan, this review identifies themes, strengths and challenges, and other commonalities amongst the plans and highlights key documents and plan excerpts organized by focus area.

Documents Reviewed

This review focuses on plans published after the 2018 Comprehensive Plan as well as key external components of the 2018 plan.

Name	Author/Source	Publication Date
State Transportation Improvement Plan Volume 1: Project Details (partially approved)	DOT&PF	2024
Transportation Plan	City of Homer	2024
Landslide Hazard Susceptibility Mapping in Homer, Alaska	Alaska DNR DGGS	2024
Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Strategy	South Peninsula Hospital	2024
2023 Community Health Needs Assessment	MAPP of the Southern Kenai Peninsula	2023
Alaska 2022-2023 Visitor Profile Report	Alaska Travel Industry Association	2023
Homer City Code	City of Homer	2023
2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan	City of Homer	2023
Adopted Biennial Operating Budget FY23-FY25	City of Homer	2023
Land Allocation Plan	City of Homer	2023
City of Homer ADA Transition Plan for Parks, Play Areas & Campgrounds (Draft)	City of Homer	2023
City of Homer ADA Transition Plan for City Facilities (draft update)	City of Homer	2023
Community Conversation: Housing Solutions in the Greater Homer Area	City of Homer	2023
Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2023-2027	State of Alaska	2023

<u>Homer Quality of Life</u>	City of Homer	2022
<u>2022 Annual Traffic Volume Report</u>	AMHS	2022
<u>Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan</u>	City of Homer	2022
<u>Short Term Rental Basics Memorandum</u>	City of Homer	2022
<u>City of Homer Local Hazard Mitigation Plan</u>	City of Homer	2022
<u>Coastal Bluff Stability Assessment for Homer, Alaska</u>	Alaska DNR DGGs	2022
<u>Homer Public Works Campus Task Force Report</u>	City of Homer	2021
<u>City of Homer Beach Policy & Management Plan</u>	City of Homer	2021
<u>Executive Summary – Final Report and Recommendations on Tsunami Risk to the Public Works Campus</u>	City of Homer	2021
<u>City of Homer Climate Action Plan: Progress Report</u>	City of Homer	2021
<u>City of Homer Community Design Manual</u>	City of Homer	2021
<u>Road Assessment Report</u>	City of Homer	2020
<u>Low-Impact Development Planning for the City of Homer</u>	City of Homer	2020
<u>Homer Accelerated Water and Sewer Program Policy Manual</u>	City of Homer	2020
<u>Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2020 Update</u>	KPB	2020
<u>Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan</u>	KPB	2019
<u>Kenai Peninsula Borough Hazard Mitigation Plan</u>	KPB	2019
<u>Draft Kenai Peninsula Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan</u>	KPB	2019
<u>Updated Tsunami Inundation Maps for Homer and Seldovia, Alaska</u>	Alaska DNR DGGs	2019
<u>Business Retention & Expansion Survey Report</u>	City of Homer	2018
<u>Homer Comprehensive Plan</u>	City of Homer	2018
<u>Growing Local Food: A Survey of Commercial Producers on the Southern Kenai Peninsula</u>	Homer Soil and Water Conservation District	2018
<u>Homer Spit Comprehensive Plan</u>	City of Homer	2011
<u>City of Homer Climate Action Plan</u>	City of Homer	2007
<u>Homer Water and Sewer Master Plan</u>	City of Homer	2006
<u>Homer Town Center Development Plan</u>	City of Homer	2006
<u>Homer Area Transportation Plan</u>	City of Homer	2005
<u>Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan</u>	City of Homer	2004

Emerging Themes

The following information was either found explicitly in multiple plans or was supported by content in multiple plans.

Mission and Vision

“Keep Homer a lively, vital community that effectively responds to change and growth while retaining what is best about Homer’s character.” (Homer Comprehensive Plan, 2018, p. 3-1)

Opportunities (copied from 2022 *Homer Quality of Life*, SWOT analysis):

- Encourage multi-family housing.
- Increase ease of walking and biking.
- Collaborate with community partners on habitat, climate, erosion and other natural environment issues that impact quality of life.
- Find ways to keep young or returning residents in the community.

Values and Strengths

Residents enjoy the small town character and natural environment of Homer. These characteristics also appeal to visitors.

Strengths (copied from 2022 Homer Quality of Life SWOT analysis):

- Small town feel and scale.
- Eclectic businesses, buildings and people.
- Wide variety of locally owned small businesses.
- Integrated town with outdoor environment.
- Connected community with vibrant cultural and business groups.

Challenges and Barriers

Homer is fairly remote, vulnerable to numerous natural disasters and climate-related threats and lacks some social support for the working population (e.g., transportation, childcare, affordable housing).

Weaknesses (copied from 2022 Homer Quality of Life SWOT analysis):

- Lack of worker support: Housing, Childcare, Training.
- Difficulty for early to mid-career residents to thrive.
- Some infrastructure is in need of repair (roads) or expansion – storm water + green infrastructure.
- Local regulation does not result in the patterns and development the community would like to see.

Threats (copied from 2022 Homer Quality of Life SWOT analysis):

- Difficult to recruit new talent.
- Poor retention of workers.
- Loss of town/wildlife interface.
- New residents may not become involved in the community; slow loss of volunteer run organizations, events and services; risk of gentrification; becoming a community of empty households.
- Costs of living and doing business.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies

Land Use & Environment

- Maintaining and improving environmental quality is a key theme in most plans.
- There are numerous threats from natural disasters that should be considered in land use planning.

Housing

- Affordability and availability are key barriers to housing.
- There is concern that tourism (short-term rentals) will make housing challenges worse.

Public Services & Infrastructure

- The City of Homer wants to provide reliable utilities without overburdening residents with costs.

Transportation

- Improving infrastructure for/access to transportation alternatives (transit, non-motorized transportation) is a goal for the City of Homer.

Economic Development

- Desire for sensible economic development/growth that supports the community without changing its character/charm.
- Tourism and fishing are important components of Homer's economy.
- The cost of doing business and employee recruitment/retention are key challenges.
- Aesthetic appeal/consistency is important to maintain appeal for tourism.

Health & Wellness

- Accessibility, walkability, and well-maintained public parks are priorities.

Sustainability, Resilience, & Climate Change

- More severe tsunamis are a concern.
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies are important to the City of Homer.
- Maintaining and improving environmental quality is a key theme in most plans.

Quality of Life

- Residents enjoy the small town feel but struggle with the costs of living/doing business.
- Walkability, accessibility, affordability are all priorities.
- Infrastructure should support an aging population.

Individual Plan Summaries and Key Takeaways

Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (2024)

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) is a funding plan for transportation system preservation and development projects.

Key Takeaways

- Sterling Highway Milepost 157-169 Reconstruction Anchor Point to Baycrest Hill
 - o Parent and Final Construction STIP ID: 2670
 - o Stage 1 STIP ID: 34434
 - o Stage 2 STIP ID: 34435
 - o Stage 3 STIP ID: 34436
- Kachemak Bay Drive Milepost 0-3.5 Reconstruction (STIP ID: 34427)
- Homer All-ages and Abilities Pedestrian Pathway (HAPP) (STIP ID: 34426)

Transportation Plan (2024)

This draft plan identifies goals and objectives for the Homer transportation network. It also provides a description of the current state of the transportation system, best practices, and recommendations. It considers non-motorized transportation, land use, hazard mitigation planning, and climate action planning.

Key Takeaways

- Addresses motorized and non-motorized transportation, including transit.
- Safety and accessibility for all ages and abilities is a priority.

Landslide Hazard Susceptibility Mapping in Homer, Alaska (2024)

The Alaska DGGs assessed landslide hazards in Homer and Kachemak, mapping past slope failures, landslide susceptibility, and debris flow runouts. The data highlight areas more prone to landslides to aid planning and risk assessment.

Key Takeaways

- Areas around the Bluff Point landslide headscarp, Thurston Canyon, and near the end of China Poot Street are areas susceptible to deep-seated landslide hazards, which should be considered in planning efforts.

Community Health Needs Assessment (2023) and Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Strategy (2024)

In 2023, South Peninsula Hospital, in collaboration with the MAPP of SKP Health Coalition, conducted a community health needs assessment for the southern Kenai Peninsula. Upon reviewing the findings, the hospital identified an implementation strategy to address pressing challenges.

Key Takeaways

- The assessment identified needs related to mental health, housing, substance use, childcare, physical health, aging population, barriers to care, social isolation, and staff workforce shortages.
- Priorities included addressing the lack of affordable housing concerns and developing a communications plan to connect people to existing resources.
- Most implementation strategies were related to expanding access to care and support services, community engagement and collaboration, and workforce development and retention.

Alaska 2022-2023 Visitor Profile Report (2023)

This document, created by the Alaska Travel Industry Association, summarizes data regarding tourism in Alaska for the summer 2022 and winter 2022-23 seasons. This includes tourist demographics, trip purpose and details, and tourist satisfaction.

Key Takeaways

- Homer accounted for 9% of destinations identified by the over 4,000 people surveyed.
- Of all visitors to Alaska, 15% were independent travelers who visited Homer, 11% were part of a guided group that included time in Homer, and 2% were on a cruise that stopped in Homer.
- 10% of tourists who visited Homer were from the Eastern US, 8% were from the Western US, and 9% were international travelers.

Homer City Code (2023)

The Homer City Code, also known as the “Code of Ordinances, City of Homer, Alaska,” establishes regulations, limitations, and guidelines for activities within the City of Homer.

Key Takeaways

- Duties and powers of the Planning Commission are established in Section 2.72 with the intent of maximizing local involvement in planning.

- Title 10 establishes general provisions and protections for the port, harbor, and waterways.
- Title 14 establishes the City of Homer public utilities (water and sewer).
- Title 21 (Zoning and Planning) of the Homer City Code is applicable to all areas within the City of Homer and the Bridge Creek Watershed Protection District, which extends beyond the city limits.
- Policies, plans, etc. that promote high density should be avoided (Title 21).

2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan (2023)

This document identifies and prioritizes capital improvement needs in the City of Homer.

Key Takeaways

- The following legislative requests for FY25 were approved by the city council
 - o Homer Harbor Expansion
 - o Multi-Use Community Center
 - o Slope Stability & Erosion Mitigation Program
 - o Homer Harbor Critical Float System Replacement: Float Systems 4 & 1
 - o Karen Hornaday Park Public Restroom Facility
 - o A-Frame Water Transmission Line Replacement
 - o Homer Spit Erosion Mitigation
 - o New Public Works Facility

Adopted Biennial Operation Budget (2023)

The FY2023-25 biennial operation budget allocates approximately \$26.2 million to the General Fund, Water & Sewer Special Revenue Fund, and Port & Harbor Enterprise Fund.

Key Takeaways

- The General Fund (\$16.1 million) covers the departments of Administration, Police, Volunteer Fire, and much of Public Works.
- The Water & Sewer Special Revenue Fund (\$4.3 million) is forecasted using a three-year running average and helps fund the Utility CARMA (Capital Asset Repair and Maintenance Allowance).
- The Port & Harbor Enterprise Fund (\$5.8 million) covers expenses related to the Port of Homer and Homer Harbor and revenue from moorage, wharfage, parking, boat launching, and camping.

Land Allocation Plan (2023)

This plan identifies lands available for lease, leased lands, port facilities, city facilities and lands, parks, green spaces, cemeteries, bridge creek lands, and conservation easements. This plan is required by Homer City Code and is adopted annually.

City of Homer ADA Transition Plan for Parks, Play Areas & Campgrounds (2023)

This document describes the self-evaluation of ADA compliance issues at the City of Homer's parks, play areas, and campgrounds and includes a transition plan for correcting non-compliance. Accessibility is a priority for Homer to ensure people of all ages and abilities can live, work, and play in the community.

Key Takeaways

- Projects were assigned timelines for in-house completion; projects requiring a contractor are assigned a year in which staff anticipate preparing an Invitation to Bid.
 - o Timeline A: can be completed within a year.
 - o Timeline B: may be completed within 1-2 years.
 - o Timeline C: may be completed within 3-5 years, or possibly sooner if done by a contractor.
- Locations of identified projects include Karen Hornaday Hillside Park, Bayview Park, Bishop's Beach Park & Beluga Slough Trail, Mariner Park and Campground, Fishing Hole Campground, Seafarer's Memorial Park, and Jack Gist Park.

City of Homer ADA Transition Plan for City Facilities (2023 Draft Update)

This document describes the self-evaluation of ADA compliance issues at city-owned facilities in Homer and includes a transition plan for correcting non-compliance. Accessibility is a priority for Homer to ensure people of all ages and abilities can live, work, and play in the community.

Key Takeaways

- Non-compliance issues are prioritized following ADA standards for accessible design:
 - o Priority 1: Building accessibility.
 - o Priority 2: Equitable access to goods and services.
 - o Priority 3: Restrooms.
 - o Priority 4: All other measures.

Community Conversation: Housing Solutions in the Greater Homer Area (2023)

This document describes the results of an event at which community members discussed housing challenges in the Greater Homer Area. A survey conducted prior to the event indicated that affordability and availability were key barriers to housing in the area.

Key Takeaways

- The full notes of the workshop are included in this document (**NEW DATA**).

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2023-2027 (2023)

This plan identifies trends in outdoor recreation in Alaska, summarizes outdoor recreation by region, and provides seven statewide outdoor recreation goals.

Key Takeaways

- The plan notes there are no year-round public restrooms between Soldotna and Homer.
- The description of Southcentral is provided in Section B of Chapter 3 (page 24).

Homer Quality of Life (2022)

This document provides a Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses, and Threats (SWOT) analysis for Homer's quality of life to guide positive economic growth. The analysis considered four broad categories: Business Climate, Built Environment, Natural Environment, and Social Climate.

Key Takeaways

- “Local regulation is not resulting in the patterns and development the community would like to see” (page 3).

2022 Annual Traffic Volume Report (2022)

This report provides passenger and vehicle traffic volumes in 2022 and previous years for the Alaska Marine Highway System, which includes Homer.

Key Takeaways

- *MV Tustumena* provides regular service to Homer.
- Includes **NEW DATA** about passenger/vehicle traffic.

Public Works Campus Task Force

The Public Works Campus Task Force was created by City Council via Resolution 20-125 to review findings from a 2019 Tsunami Inundation Report and make recommendations.

Key Takeaways

- The task force released a report summarizing findings and identifying preferred options in March 2021.
- The task force recommended relocating the Public Works Campus and critical equipment housed there to another location.

Short Term Rental Basics Memorandum (2022)

This memorandum describes the challenges, opportunities, and perceptions of short term rentals in the City of Homer. Many communities with similar characteristics to Homer are described as case studies.

Key Takeaways

- Approximately 63% of households in Homer are owner-occupied.
- 49% of parcels in Homer are non-commercial residential (**NEW DATA**).

City of Homer Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2022)

This plan identifies nine hazards, assesses the risk to the City of Homer from each hazard, and identifies strategies to mitigate risk and vulnerability. Hazards include climate change, earthquakes, erosion, floods, landslides, severe weather, tsunamis, volcanoes, and wildfires. The goals of the plan are to enhance climate protection and adaptation efforts, create a healthy and safe community, and protect critical facilities and infrastructure against hazards.

Coastal Bluff Stability Assessment for Homer, Alaska (2022)

This report provides an analysis of the stability of coastal bluffs in Homer and was intended to inform the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan update. Most of the coastline was determined to have a low to medium bluff instability hazard score.

Key Takeaways

- Results are provided by region.
- Diamond Creek: low to medium instability score.
- Bluff Point Landslide Area: has the fastest erosion rate in Homer and an instability score of medium.
- Downtown: high instability score.
- Munson Point: very low instability score.
- Kachemak Drive: low instability score.
- East End Road: medium instability score.

City of Homer Beach Policy & Management Plan

This plan encompasses the seven areas of beaches within the City of Homer and is intended to support the enforcement of existing regulations and future regulations and necessary actions that keep the beaches safe and enjoyable without causing detriment to the natural environment.

Key Takeaways

- Property lines of seafront properties may extend into the water.
- Maintenance, preservation, and protection of Homer's beaches is a priority.
- Public education through campaigns, signage, and other means is important to preserve beaches, promote safety, and minimize user conflicts.

Executive Summary – Final Report and Recommendations on Tsunami Risk to the Public Works Campus (2021)

This report was prompted by the 2019 Updated Tsunami Inundation Maps, which indicated that the City of Homer Public Works Campus would be inundated in a worst-case scenario tsunami. The report reviewed alternatives to minimize risk to public works equipment and buildings that would be needed to respond to a tsunami.

Key Takeaways

- The report recommends using a Long Term Incremental strategy to move the components of the Campus that can be moved.

City of Homer Climate Action Plan: Progress Report (2021)

This document provides an update on the city's actions in relation to the 2007 Climate Action Plan (CAP). The original CAP defined a strategy for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated through city operations

by 20%. As of 2019, overall GHG emissions decreased by 29.44% from 2006 levels. The analysis notes that changes in building square footage and average winter temperatures impacted stationary emissions.

Key Takeaways

- Report contains **NEW DATA**.
- Recommendations for further reducing GHG emissions include eliminating use of heating oil and improving the city's vehicle fleet.

City of Homer Community Design Manual (2021)

This manual outlines aesthetic considerations for certain applicable sites and structures in the City of Homer. The intention of the design manual is to maintain the appearance of the city's built environment to support the visitor industry; it is referenced in several areas of City Code.

Road Assessment Report (2020)

This document describes the road assessment process that was developed for the City of Homer. The process included collecting road condition data and integrating it into the city's GIS to allow road maintenance crews to update conditions in real time. The condition assessments were based primarily on the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) model, with some adaptations to account for vegetation concerns. This assessment process is intended to improve efficiency of road maintenance and provide better justification for maintenance costs.

Key Takeaways

- Most gravel roads were rated as "Fair" or "Good"
- Most paved roads were rated as "Good."

Low-Impact Development Planning for the City of Homer (2020)

This plan, also referred to as the Green Infrastructure – Stormwater Master Plan, describes techniques for mimicking natural drainage processes for stormwater management. The plan identifies major watershed drainage basins, estimates future runoff volumes for each basin, and estimates the costs to implement a storm drain system that utilizes Low-Impact Development (LID) practices compared to traditional stormwater management.

Key Takeaways

- Implementation of LID strategies would likely produce a positive economic benefit to City of Homer.
- Implementation of LID strategies would benefit water quality.

Homer Accelerated Water and Sewer Program Policy Manual (2020)

The Homer Accelerated Water and Sewer Program (HAWSP) was established to improve the health and welfare of Homer residents by extending water and sewer mains without increasing cost burdens on individual property owners. This document provides definitions of terms and defines maximum spending limits for the HAWSP.

Key Takeaways

- "The HAWSP is funded by a voter-approved dedicated sales tax, and assessments levied on benefited properties."

- The HAWSP should expand the capacity of water and sewer utilities while maintaining a good state of repair for existing infrastructure.

Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2020 Update (2020)

The Kenai Peninsula Borough, including the City of Homer, is part of the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD). This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is the action plan for KPEDD to achieve its goal to enhance vitality and quality of life in Kenai Peninsula communities.

Key Takeaways

- Homer's population was experiencing slow-to-moderate growth at the time of the CEDS update.
- Homer has one of three Alaska Small Business Development Center offices in the KPB.
- Homer has one of two large ice-free ports with a Coast Guard presence in the KPB.
- Homer had the highest housing costs in the KPB at the time of the CEDS update.
- Homer was ranked as the 68th best port in the US by value of seafood landings.

Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2019)

This plan documents the visions, goals, and strategies that guide planning, funding, and development in the borough through 2039. Goals include economic diversification, proactive growth management, improved quality of life, access, and connectivity, and increased resident engagement and government efficiency. Homer is one of six incorporated communities within the Kenai Peninsula Borough; the plan focuses primarily on the areas outside these communities.

Key Takeaways

- Plan focuses primarily on land outside the incorporated cities.
- KPB receives a portion of the state's cruise passenger vessel (CPV) excise tax revenue based on dockings in Seward and Homer; this revenue is redistributed to the two cities for port-related capital improvement projects.
- The landings value of Homer's port seems to be decreasing over time (was in the top 50 in 2012 and 2013).
- Objective A. Support a more sustainable and resilient Kenai Peninsula by increasing production and distribution of quality, healthy agricultural products for local, state and export markets.
 - o Homer Soil and Water Conservation District is listed as an entity that will be consulted as part of this objective.
 - o 64% of residents surveyed in Homer and Anchor Point said agriculture was very important.
- City of Homer and KPB are voluntary participants in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- Bradley Lake expansion was expected to increase capacity of the hydroelectric facility by 37,300 megawatt hours (facility owned by Alaska Energy Authority, which contracts with Homer Electric Association to provide electricity to the southern & central portion of the peninsula).
- Homer has high housing costs.
- KPB provides solid waste services throughout the borough. The Homer Transfer Station also collects hazardous waste.
- There are three National Register of Historic Places properties in Homer: Chugachik Island Site, Thorn-Stingley House, and Yukon Island Main Site.

- 44% of Homer and Anchor Point residents surveyed graded public transportation services as a D or F.

Kenai Peninsula Borough Hazard Mitigation Plan (2019)

This plan identifies actions to reduce the impacts of natural disasters, including earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, coastal erosion, wildfires, volcanic activity and ash fallout, avalanches, and severe winter weather. It also identifies actions to mitigate damage from human-caused disasters such as levee failures or accidental chemical releases. Local hazard mitigation plans are included as annexes in this plan.

Key Takeaways

- Bridge Creek Dam is identified as a High Hazard and Beluga Lake Dam is identified as a Significant Hazard by the US Army Corps of Engineers.
- The Bridge Creek Watershed Protection District extends beyond the City of Homer but is subject to City of Homer regulations (KPB Ordinance 99-47).

Draft Kenai Peninsula Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (2019)

This plan identifies existing transportation service providers and unmet transportation needs across the borough, including in the City of Homer. It provides goals and strategies to improve the efficiency of transportation services and address unmet needs.

Key Takeaways

- Homer is accessible via the Sterling Highway, Alaska Marine Highway System, and the Homer Airport Terminal & Cargo Facility.
- Transportation service providers serving Homer include: BUMPS (Ninilchik Traditional Council), Independent Living Center, Ryder Transport LLC, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (Division of Employment and Training Services), Alaska Division of Public Assistance – Work Services, and TNT Transportation.
- Information/communication gaps, coordination between local government and programs/agencies, cost to users and programs/agencies, and insufficient accessible vehicles are identified as key challenges.

Updated Tsunami Inundation Maps for Homer and Seldovia, Alaska (2019)

This document provides maps and worst-case scenarios for inundation from tsunamis generated by earthquakes or submarine landslides. The information is based on numerical modeling of tsunami dynamics and provides analyses for the cities of Homer and Seldovia, as well as Seldovia Village, Jakolof Bay, and Kachemak Selo.

Key Takeaways

- Maximum predicted wave height from a tectonic tsunami is 33-40 feet for Homer.
- Maximum predicted wave height from a landslide-generated tsunami is 13 feet for Homer Spit.
- Based on the modeling, numerous tsunami scenarios pose significant threats to Homer and Homer Spit.

Business Retention & Expansion Survey Report (2018)

This report summarizes the results of the Economic Development Commission's Business Retention & Expansion Survey. The survey was conducted to improve communication with local businesses, gather business owners' ideas, identify needs and concerns, and develop strategies and actions to retain and expand small businesses in the City of Homer.

Key Takeaways

- The survey had a response rate of 7% (112 completed surveys).
- 65% of respondents rated Homer as a good or excellent place to do business.
- 91% of respondents rated Homer as a good or excellent place to live.
- Transportation infrastructure, especially an affordable harbor with expanded infrastructure, are noted as key needs for businesses.

Homer Comprehensive Plan (2018)

This plan serves as a 10-year revision to the 2008 Comprehensive Plan update. It includes background information about the City of Homer and community values and guidance for land use, transportation, public services and facilities, economic vitality, and energy. The plan's key theme is "Keep Homer a lively, vital community that effectively responds to change and growth while retaining what is best about Homer's character."

Growing Local Food: A Survey of Commercial Producers on the Southern Kenai Peninsula (2018)

This survey aimed to gather insights from farmers, consumers, policymakers, and data to provide a broader understanding of the region's food system.

Key Takeaways

- Farm numbers on the Kenai Peninsula are rising faster than anywhere else in Alaska or the U.S. While farm numbers in the Lower 48 dropped by 3 percent over the past five years, Alaska saw a 30 percent increase, with the Kenai Peninsula leading at 60 percent growth.
- Supporting local agriculture means supporting local producers' needs, such as cold storage, labor, farm loans, agriculture land, and an FSIS-inspected slaughter facility.

Homer Spit Comprehensive Plan (2011)

This plan describes the conditions of the Homer Spit and recommends improvements and future land uses to maintain the unique characteristics of the Spit, which is important to residents and tourists alike.

Key Takeaways

- The Spit was not included in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan (or 2018 update) due to its unique characteristics and importance to the community.
- Transportation (traffic, parking, non-motorized transportation, transit), conservation, and economic development were key topics.
- "[Land] Uses include marine-related industrial and commercial, including fishing and fish processing, the harbor and harbor related business, the marine highway terminal, port facilities, fuel storage, retail, lodging, camping, parking, and recreational, conservation, and public land uses" (p. 6).

City of Homer Climate Action Plan (2007)

This plan was developed in recognition of the severe consequences of human-caused climate change. In the interest of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the plan identifies mitigation recommendations in the categories of Energy Management, Transportation, Purchasing & Waste Reduction, Land Use, and Outreach & Advocacy. The plan also includes adaptation strategies to develop a more resilient community.

Key Takeaways

- The mitigation recommendations focus on interventions within the purview of the City of Homer. The Outreach & Advocacy category includes public education and encouraging change at various levels of government.
- Adaptation measures are focused on building a resilient local economy, protecting infrastructure, increasing emergency preparedness, and ensuring future development policies consider the impacts of climate change.

Homer Water and Sewer Master Plan (2006)

This plan was developed to guide improvements and expansions of the City of Homer's water and sewer utilities for a period covering 2006-2025.

Homer Town Center Development Plan (2006)

This plan provides a guide for development policy and public infrastructure improvements for the heart of the Central Business District, which was largely undeveloped at the time the plan was written.

Key Takeaways

- Green space, walkability, and curbing urban sprawl were identified as priorities.
- The plan emphasizes the need for sustainable, human scale development.

Homer Area Transportation Plan (2005)

The Homer Area Transportation Plan and the Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan together encompass the long-term planning for Homer's transportation infrastructure. Both plans will be replaced by the 2024 Transportation Plan once it is adopted.

Key Takeaways

- Traffic, connectivity, walkability, accessibility, and user conflicts (e.g., industrial/commercial and recreational traffic) were key issues with the system at the time.

Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan (2004)

The Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan and the Homer Area Transportation Plan together encompass the long-term planning for Homer's transportation infrastructure. Both plans will be replaced by the 2024 Transportation Plan once it is adopted.

Key Takeaways

- Infrastructure for non-motorized transportation should allow residents and visitors to travel throughout the City of Homer without needing a personal vehicle.

Plans and Plan Excerpts By Focus Area

The content below, which is organized by focus area, is copied from the respective plans and is intended to be used as a quick reference to locate information in each plan. Some plans are relevant in their entirety and therefore specific excerpts are not included. The following plans are relevant in their entirety to the entire Comprehensive Plan Update:

Homer City Code (2023) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform the update

Adopted Biennial Operating Budget (2023) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform the update

Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2019) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform the update

Homer Comprehensive Plan (2018) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform the update

Homer Spit Comprehensive Plan (2011) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform the update

City of Homer Climate Action Plan (2007) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform the update

Land Use & Environment

Transportation Plan (2024)

Goal 1: Increase safety of interactions between modes of travel

Objective 1B: Provide for safe use of the right-of-way by all transportation modes, considering the land use context and type of vehicle

Goal 2: Provide a connected network of local and collector roads and trails that balances modes based on land use contexts

Goal 3: Maintain transportation network to be viable year-round

Objective 3G: Include appropriate improvements for each travel mode as part of reconstruction or new construction projects within the public right-of-way

As roads are constructed or reconstructed, infrastructure should be considered for each mode. New or improved infrastructure should be consistent with the land use context (such as providing sidewalks in urban areas and wide shoulders or separated paths in rural areas), meet design standards, and help to complete the priority network for that mode.

Policies:

- Truck Network
- E-Bike Legislation
- Bicycle Parking
- Traffic Calming
- Update Non-Motorized Facility Design Standards
- Complete Streets/All Ages and Abilities Policy

Projects:

- Parking Study
- Improve Drop-Off and Pick-Up Locations at Schools
- Neighborhood Connectivity to Schools

- Kachemak Drive Reconnaissance Engineering Study
- Pioneer Ave as an Extension of the HAP Loop
- Old Town Connections as an Extension of HAP Loop
- Regularly Update Existing Trails Maps
- Complete East-West Connections

Definition of Terms includes “Land Use Context” and “Traffic Calming”

2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan (2023)

“Each project listed in the CIP document has been evaluated for consistency with the City’s goals as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. The following goals were considered in project evaluation:

Land Use: Guide the amount and location of Homer’s growth to increase the supply and diversity of housing, protect important environmental resources and community character, reduce sprawl by encouraging infill, make efficient use of infrastructure, support a healthy local economy, and help reduce global impacts including limiting greenhouse gas emissions.” (p. vi)

Land Allocation Plan (2023) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

City of Homer Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2022)

Ability to expand resources: “Integrate climate sustainability plans into Homer’s Comprehensive Plan (including measures to reduce greenhouse emissions) through a series of local transportation, land use, building energy, water, waste, and green infrastructure programs and policies.” (p. 5-7)

Recommended mitigation actions: “Adopt a comprehensive flood protection ordinance/overlay zone for areas that are in the SFHA or subject to flooding. Properties in this overlay are often subject to additional standards concerning development/land uses, building elevation, stream buffers, outdoor storage, building materials, and permitting procedures.” (p. 5-9)

Integration of the 2022 LHMP: “Update of the Homer Comprehensive Plan to address hazards in the LHMP that are not currently included in it. Consider creating a hazard profiles section in the Comprehensive Plan. The land use planning process can help identify investments in nature-based solutions to natural hazards, including preserving parks and greenways.” (p. 5-15)

Coastal Bluff Stability Assessment for Homer, Alaska (2022) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

City of Homer Beach Policy & Management Plan (2021) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Low-Impact Development Planning for the City of Homer (2020) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Kenai Peninsula Borough Hazard Mitigation Plan (2019) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Updated Tsunami Inundation Maps for Homer and Seldovia, Alaska (2019) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Homer Spit Comprehensive Plan (2011) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

City of Homer Climate Action Plan (2007)

Land Use/Planning & Zoning Mitigation Measures (p. 33)

Adaptation Measures (p. 37)

Homer Town Center Development Plan (2006) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Housing

Community Conversation: Housing Solutions in the Greater Homer Area (2023) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Homer Quality of Life (2022) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Short Term Rental Basics Memorandum (2022) - priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

“The popularity of short-term rentals (STRs)¹ have exploded in the last decade with the development and proliferation of online and app-based services such as Airbnb and VRBO. STRs are particularly popular in Homer with an estimated 326 units available, a significant portion of the local housing stock. This memo presents the positive and negative impacts of STRs, local context for STRs, and provides case study information regarding STR regulations methods found in other communities.” (p. 1)

Kenai Peninsula Borough Economic Development Strategy 2020 Update (2020)

Housing Market: “Within the Kenai Peninsula Borough, homes are most expensive in Homer, averaging \$298,209, and the Greater Kenai area homes are the least expensive, averaging \$239,771. Home prices have decreased slightly with the statewide average between 2018 and 2019.” (p. 12)

Updated Tsunami Inundation Maps for Homer and Seldovia, Alaska (2019) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Homer Spit Comprehensive Plan (2011) – priority health plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Public Services and Infrastructure

2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan (2023) – various projects

“Each project listed in the CIP document has been evaluated for consistency with the City’s goals as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. The following goals were taken into account in project evaluation:

Energy: Promote energy conservation, wise use of environmental resources, and development of renewable energy through the actions of local government as well as the private sector.” (p. vi)

Beluga Sewage Lift Station (p. 34)

Homer’s Waste Water Treatment Plant Improvements (p. 43)

Water Storage Distribution Improvements, Phase 3 (p. 46)

Long-range projects on p. 66

City of Homer ADA Transition Plan for Parks, Play Areas & Campgrounds (2023) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

“Homer’s mission is to be a dynamic community where all can live, play, work and invest. To make that mission a reality, it needs to be accessible. The City of Homer owns and manages 17 parks, comprised of over 520 acres of land, along with 5.41 miles of maintained trails. These range from small pocket parks and multi-use trails to forested natural areas, larger established parks with play areas, campgrounds, and sports fields. To ensure our parks, play areas and campgrounds are accessible to all, the City commenced the development of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Parks, Play areas & Campgrounds Transition Plan in 2021. This document will be incorporated with 108 the ADA Facilities Transition Plan adopted by City Council in 2019.” (p. 4)

City of Homer Climate Action Plan: Progress Report (2021) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Category – Water & Wastewater Treatment Facilities: “As with the previous categories, the primary energy sources for Water & Wastewater Treatment Facilities are electricity and heating oil. The wastewater treatment facility also consumed 2,000 gallons of propane. These records were calculated for GHG using the same methods and emission factors as the previous electricity and stationary fuel consuming categories.

In addition to electricity and stationary fuels, N2O emissions from aerobic processing of waste, and N2O from effluent discharge are measured. The calculation for N2O emissions from waste treatment is based on community population for the given year, which in 2010 was 5,049 people. N2O for effluent discharge is based on daily Nitrogen load in kilograms released to the environment. The daily nitrogen load was 14 derived from a ratio of average wastewater treatment plant flows and monthly average NH3 readings for 2010.

All electricity and stationary fuel use for water and wastewater facilities was combined with N2O emissions from waste treatment to produce a GHG emissions grand total for this category.” (p. 13)

“CO2e totals for 2019 are 951.22 metric tons less than totals for 2010 – a 21.78% decrease. The most significant decrease belongs to Buildings & Facilities followed by Water and Wastewater.” (p. 17)

“A comparison of electricity use reveals a CO2e reduction of 987 CO2e (MT) between years 2010 and 2019. The largest reductions were achieved in the Water and Wastewater Treatment Facilities.” (p. 19)

Executive Summary – Final Report and Recommendations on Tsunami Risk to the Public Works Campus (2021) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Homer Accelerated Water and Sewer Program Policy Manual (2020) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

City of Homer Climate Action Plan (2009)

Energy Management Mitigation Measures (p. 28)

Purchasing & Waste Reduction Mitigation Measures (p. 31)

Homer Water and Sewer Master Plan (2006) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Transportation

Transportation Plan (2024) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (2024)

- Sterling Highway Milepost 157-169 Reconstruction Anchor Point to Baycrest Hill
 - o Parent and Final Construction STIP ID: 2670
 - o Stage 1 STIP ID: 34434
 - o Stage 2 STIP ID: 34435
 - o Stage 3 STIP ID: 34436
- Kachemak Bay Drive Milepost 0-3.5 Reconstruction (STIP ID: 34427)
- Homer All-ages and Abilities Pedestrian Pathway (HAPP) (STIP ID: 34426)

2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan (2023) – various projects

“Each project listed in the CIP document has been evaluated for consistency with the City’s goals as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. The following goals were taken into account in project evaluation:

... Transportation: Address future transportation needs while considering land use, economics and aesthetics, and increasing community connectivity for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.” (p. vi)

2022 Annual Traffic Volume Report (2022) – various references to Port of Homer

Road Assessment Report (2020) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Draft Kenai Peninsula Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (2019) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

City of Homer Climate Action Plan (2009)

Transportation Mitigation Measures (p. 30)

Intersections Planning Study (2005) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Homer Area Transportation Plan (2005) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan (2004) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Economic Development

2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan (2023) – various projects

“Each project listed in the CIP document has been evaluated for consistency with the City’s goals as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. The following goals were taken into account in project evaluation:

...Economic Vitality: Promote strength and continued growth of Homer’s economic industries including marine trades, commercial fishing, tourism, education, arts, and culture. Support development of a variety of well-defined commercial/business districts for a range of commercial purposes. Preserve quality of life while supporting the creation of more year-round living wage jobs.” (p. vi)

Alaska 2022-2023 Visitor Profile Report (2023)

The executive summary (p. 2) provides an overview of visitation to Alaska.

Data specific to Homer are mentioned on pages 32 and 33.

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2023)

Chapter 3, Section B, Southcentral Alaska (excerpt from p. 24, information continues through p. 28):

“This region includes the large majority of Alaska’s population, most visited destinations, and well-developed outdoor recreation infrastructure. Diverse landscapes including long beaches, rivers, lakes, mountains, glaciers, and fjords offer boundless outdoor recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.

Unique resources in the region include:

- This area has the most road-accessible outdoor recreation destinations, developed recreation facilities, and communities that offer visitor services in Alaska. This includes well-developed city parks and greenbelts.
- Southcentral boasts a mix of the most sought-after outdoor recreation experience. This includes accessing the alpine terrain, fishing on the Kenai Peninsula, visiting the marine mecca of Prince William Sound, visiting a growing network of year-round, in- and out-of-town trails, and discovering walkable “destination” communities such as Homer, Seward, Talkeetna, and downtown Anchorage.
- Large state and federally designated public land recreation areas include Chugach State Park, the Chugach National Forest, the southern side of Denali National Park, Denali State Park, Kenai Fjords National Park, portions of Lake Clark and Katmai National Parks, the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, and more.
- Parks and trails non-profit organizations in this region are active and successful.”

Homer Quality of Life (2022) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Short Term Rental Basics Memorandum (2022) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section; see above excerpt from Housing section

2022 Annual Traffic Volume Report (2022) – various references to Port of Homer

Kenai Peninsula Borough Economic Development Strategy 2020 Update (2020) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Human Capital: “Unincorporated communities with highway access, and in close proximity to commercial centers like Soldotna or Kenai show the highest rates of growth. Established cities like Seward, Homer, and Soldotna have grown at a slow-to-moderate pace, and several South Peninsula communities are losing population.” (p. 6)

Infrastructure and Transportation: “The only communities currently on the Alaska Marine Highway System are Homer and Seldovia. Ferry service is a critical link for these cities.” (p. 7)

Strengths: “Three Alaska Small Business Development Center offices: Seward, Homer and Kenai.” (p. 8)

Tourism: “2016 summer visitation from outside Alaska estimates for Seward were 441,000 visitors, more than double Homer, Seldovia, Kenai and Soldotna combined. In Seward, an average of 50% arrive by plane, 45% arrive by cruise ship, and 5% arrive by highway or ferry. In Homer and Seldovia, an average of 77% arrive by plane, 11% by cruise ship, and 12% by highway or ferry. A majority of visitors to Kenai and Soldotna arrive by plane at 87%, 4% by cruise ship and 8% by highway or ferry.” (p. 13)

Commercial Fisheries: “Three Kenai Peninsula ports rank among the top ports in the U.S. by value of seafood landings: Seward (15th), Kenai (37th), and Homer (68th). Adjusted for inflation, prices for pinks have declined since the 1980s. In constant dollars, sockeye prices in 2018 were about the same as in 1984. Sockeyes are the predominant commercial species in the upper Cook Inlet (which includes Seward) sees a larger catch of pinks as well as halibut and sablefish. Upper Cook Inlet salmon harvests for 2018 included 1,720,295 Sockeye, 163,859 Coho, 129,176 Chum, 70,741 Pinks, and 3,148 Chinook salmon.” (p. 13)

Business Retention & Expansion Survey Report (2018) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Homer Spit Comprehensive Plan (2011) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

City of Homer Climate Action Plan (2009)

Adaptation Measures (p. 37)

Homer Town Center Development Plan (2006) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Health & Wellness

City of Homer ADA Transition Plan for City Facilities (2023)

“In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, this document shall serve as the City of Homer’s Transition Plan.

This is an overview of the plan that includes the self-evaluation that identifies barriers to program accessibility and municipal owned properties throughout the City and includes project checklists to track improvements. The plan consists of an Inventory Assessment, implemented requirements and annual reassessment of goals and improvements.

The City of Homer ADA Coordinator will manage all aspects of ADA Compliance. This plan is available on the City of Homer website for review by the general public. Individuals are encouraged to submit comments or issues on accessibility of City programs and facilities by contacting the City ADA Coordinator.” (p. 1)

City of Homer ADA Transition Plan for Parks, Play Areas & Campgrounds (2023) – see above excerpt from *Public Services and Infrastructure* section

Sustainability, Resilience, & Climate Change

Coastal Bluff Stability Assessment for Homer, Alaska (2022) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

City of Homer Climate Action Plan: Progress Report (2021) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Low-Impact Development Planning for the City of Homer (2020) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

City of Homer Climate Action Plan (2009) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Quality of Life

City of Homer ADA Transition Plan for City Facilities (2023) – See above excerpt for *Health & Wellness*

City of Homer ADA Transition Plan for Parks, Play Areas & Campgrounds (2023) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section; see above excerpt from *Public Services and Infrastructure* section

Quality of Life (2022) – priority plan; use the entire plan to inform this section

Appendix E: Public Participation Overview

Links to Public Participation Inputs
Community Survey Comparison Results Summary (October 2024)
Business Survey Homer Comprehensive Plan Business Survey Summary (September 2024).
Homer Comprehensive Plan Community Survey and Interactive Comment Map Results (September 2024)
Homer Comprehensive Plan Community Survey and Interactive Comment Map Results – Executive Summary (September 2024)
Community Visit #2: May 2024 Results
Community Snapshot (May 2024)
Public Participation Plan (April 2024)
Project Overview Flyer (April 2024)
Community Visit #1: March 2024 Results
Additional small group conversations, Homer High School student outreach, and interviews through the process.

See these and other related materials on the project website:

<https://homercompplanupdate.com/>

Appendix F: About Homer – Community Background

2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan

Background Research and Data Analysis

Prepared by Northern Economics, Inc.

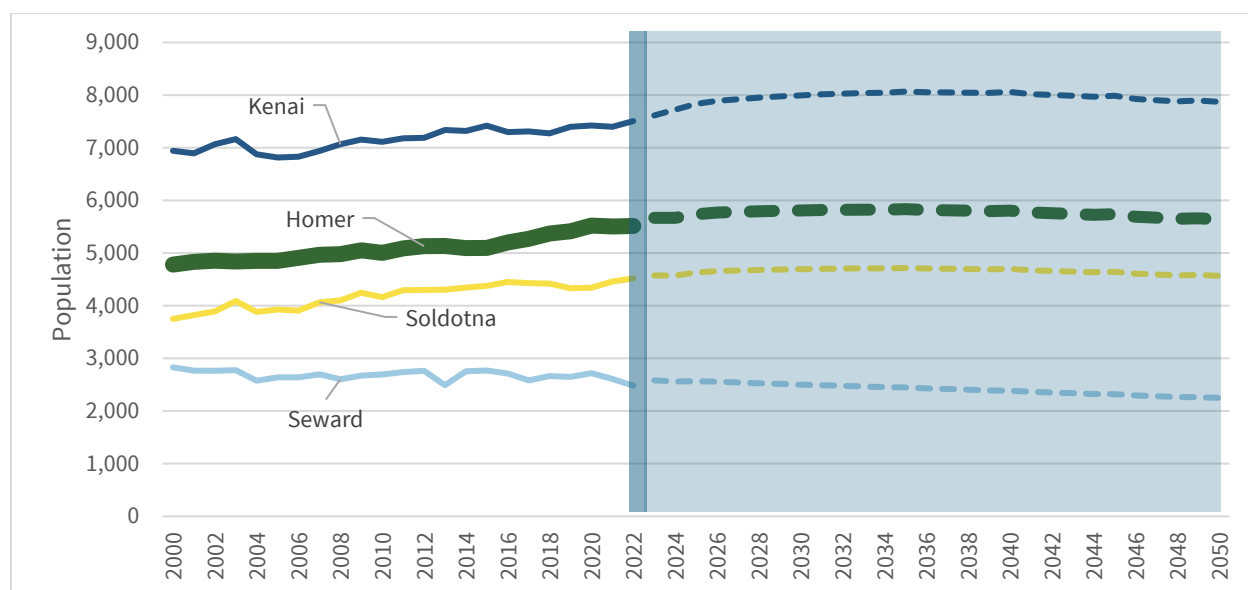
Updated July 2025

Our People

Homer's population has been experiencing steady, modest growth over the past 22 years.

Homer's population in 2022 was 15.4% larger than it was in 2000 (growing 0.7% year-over-year on average). Using ADOLWD forecasts, Northern Economics predicts a population increase from 2023 to 2050, with the population of Homer forecast to be 2.3% larger in 2050 than it was in 2022.^{1,2,3,4} Population increases are also predicted for 2023–2050 in all comparison communities except for Seward, with year-over-year changes averaging 0.0% for Soldotna, and 0.1% for Kenai. The state as a whole is expected to experience 0.1% decline year-over-year on average from 2023–2050.

Figure 1: Historical and Forecasted Populations for Homer and Comparison Cities in the KPB



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development^{1,2,3,4} and Northern Economics analysis

There are several small communities that surround Homer and treat the City of Homer as their hub. These surrounding communities—Anchor Point, Diamond Ridge, Fox River, Fritz Creek, Kachemak, and Nikolaevsk—provide an important context to growth in Homer proper.

¹Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Historical Data: Places, “Population, 2000-2010”.

https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/pop/estimates/data/TotalPopulationPlace_2000to2010.xls. Accessed March 18, 2024.

²Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Historical Data: Places, “Population, 2010-2020”.

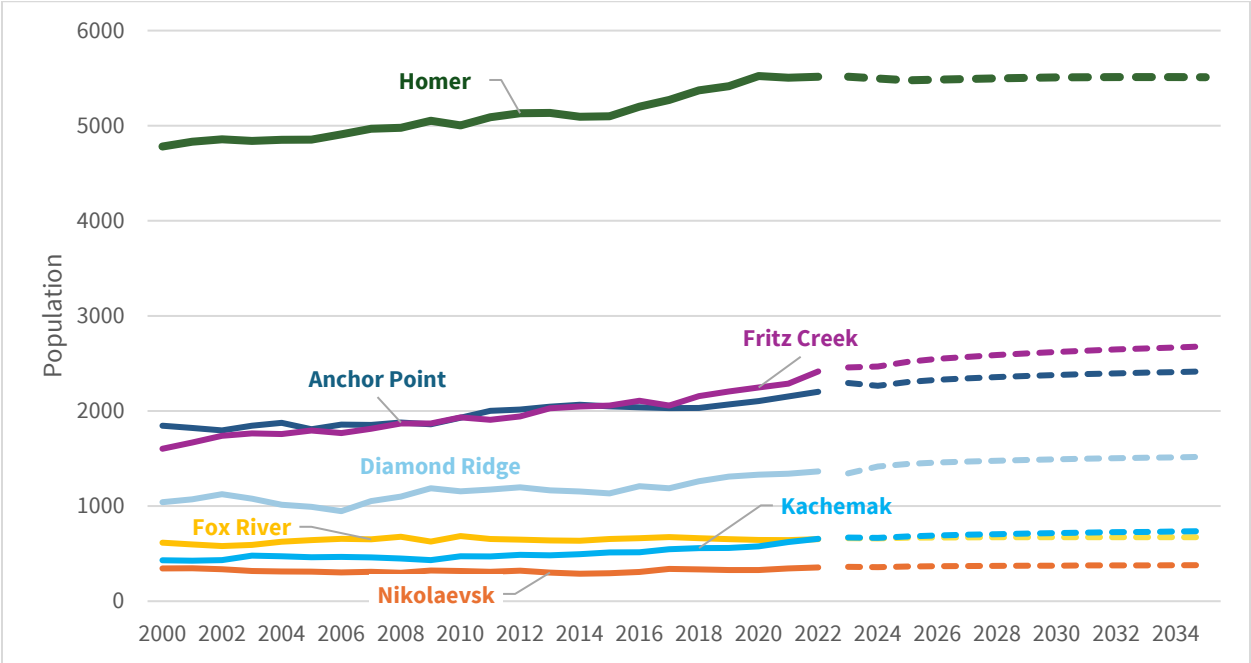
https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/pop/estimates/data/TotalPopulationPlace_2010to2020.xls. Accessed March 18, 2024.

³Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Alaska Population Projections, “Alaska Population Projections 2023 to 2050”. <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/pop/projections/pub/popproj.pdf>. Accessed October 9, 2024.

⁴Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Places and Other Areas, “Cities and Census Designated Places (CDPs), 2020 to 2023”. <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/pop/estimates/data/TotalPopulationPlace.xlsx>. Accessed March 18, 2024.

As previously mentioned, Homer’s population in 2022 was 15.4% larger than it was in 2000. Considered together, the surrounding communities were 30.0% larger in 2022 than in 2000. Additionally, since 1994 the total population of the surrounding communities has exceeded the population in the City of Homer. When taken together, the population in Homer and its surrounding communities was 23.4% larger in 2022 than in 2000.

Figure 2. Historical and Forecasted Population in Homer and Surrounding Community Populations, 2000–2035



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development^{1,2,3,4} and Northern Economics analysis

Table 1. Kenai Peninsula Borough Components of Population Change, 2013–2023

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Population	56,852	57,366	57,631	57,995	58,058	58,232	58,328	58,849	59,049	60,000	60,898
% Growth	0.47%	0.90%	0.46%	0.63%	0.11%	0.30%	0.16%	0.89%	0.34%	1.61%	1.50%
Natural Increase	327	325	267	272	261	227	174	188	197	-2	80
Net Migration	-61	189	-2	92	-198	-53	-78	333	3	953	818

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development^{1,5}

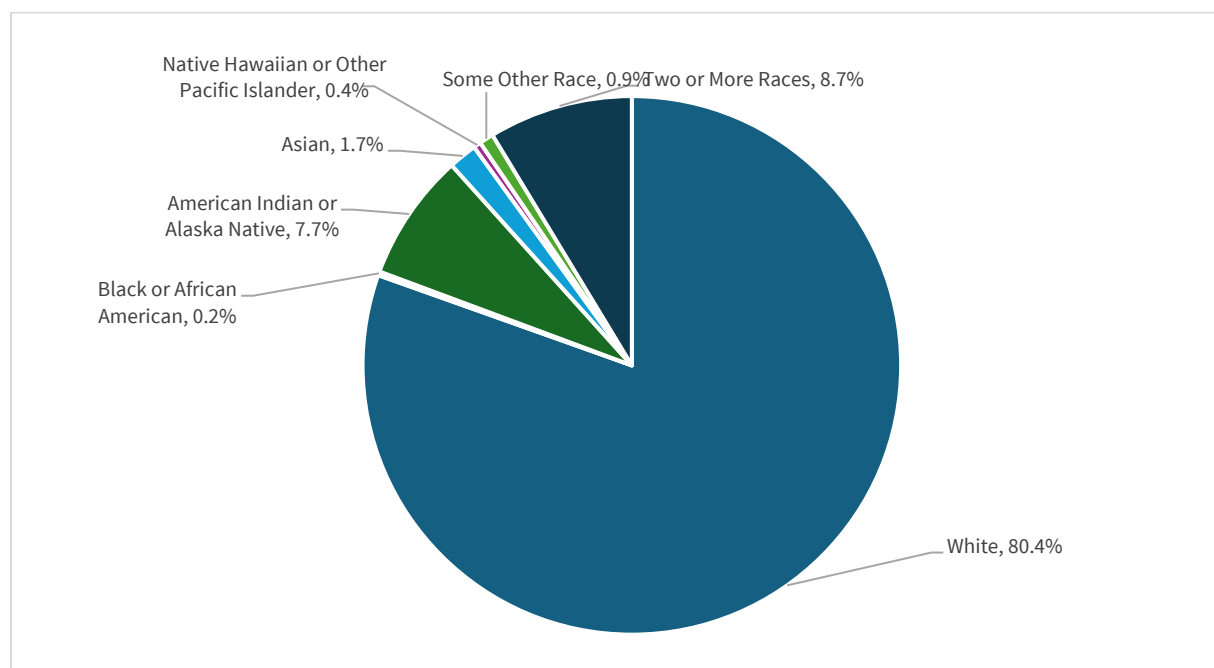
Table 1 summarizes the components of population change for 2013–2023 in the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB)—the lowest level of detail at which this information is available.^{2,3}

⁵ Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Population Estimates, Economic Regions and Boroughs/Census Areas, Components of Change, 2020-2023. <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/data-pages/alaska-population-estimates>. Accessed April 8, 2024.

Over the period, migration into and out of the region fluctuated. For example, 2017 was a year with high out-migration, with a net migration of -198. On the other hand, recent years have had high rates of in-migration compared with the other years in the period, with 953 net migration from 2021 to 2022, and 818 net migration from 2022 to 2023.

The predominant racial group in Homer is white, and 80.4% of the population is white alone. The American Community Survey offers insights into race in Homer and other communities.⁶ In Homer, 91.3% of the population is one race, while 8.7% is two or more races. As shown in **Figure 3**, 80.4% of the population is white alone and 7.7% is American Indian and Alaska Native alone. In Homer and the comparison communities, the predominant racial group is white, accounting for 70% or more of the population in each community, followed by American Indian and Alaska Native. This holds true for the state of Alaska as well, but white alone accounts for a slightly lower overall percentage at 64.1% of the state's population.

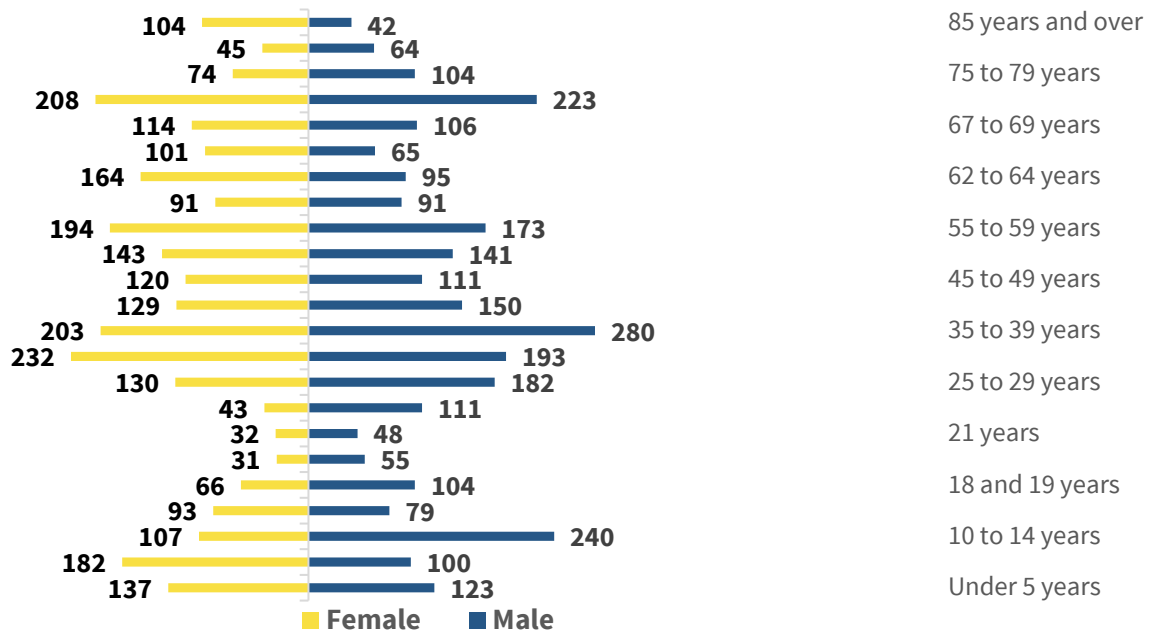
Figure 3. Race of Homer Population, 2022 (5-Year Average)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022 data⁴

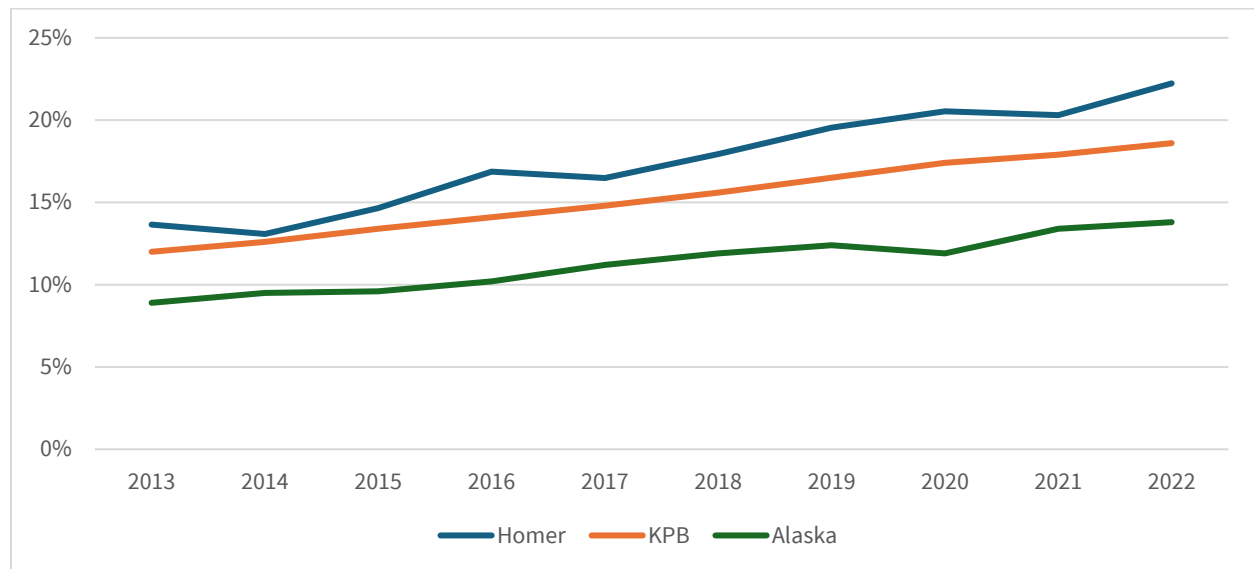
⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. "ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05, 2022, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2022.DP05?g=160XX00US0233140>. Accessed on March 18, 2024.

Figure 4. Age of Homer Population, 2022 (5-Year Average)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022 data⁷

Figure 5. Senior Population (65+) Change Over Time in Homer, the Kenai Peninsula Borough, and Alaska



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022 data⁴

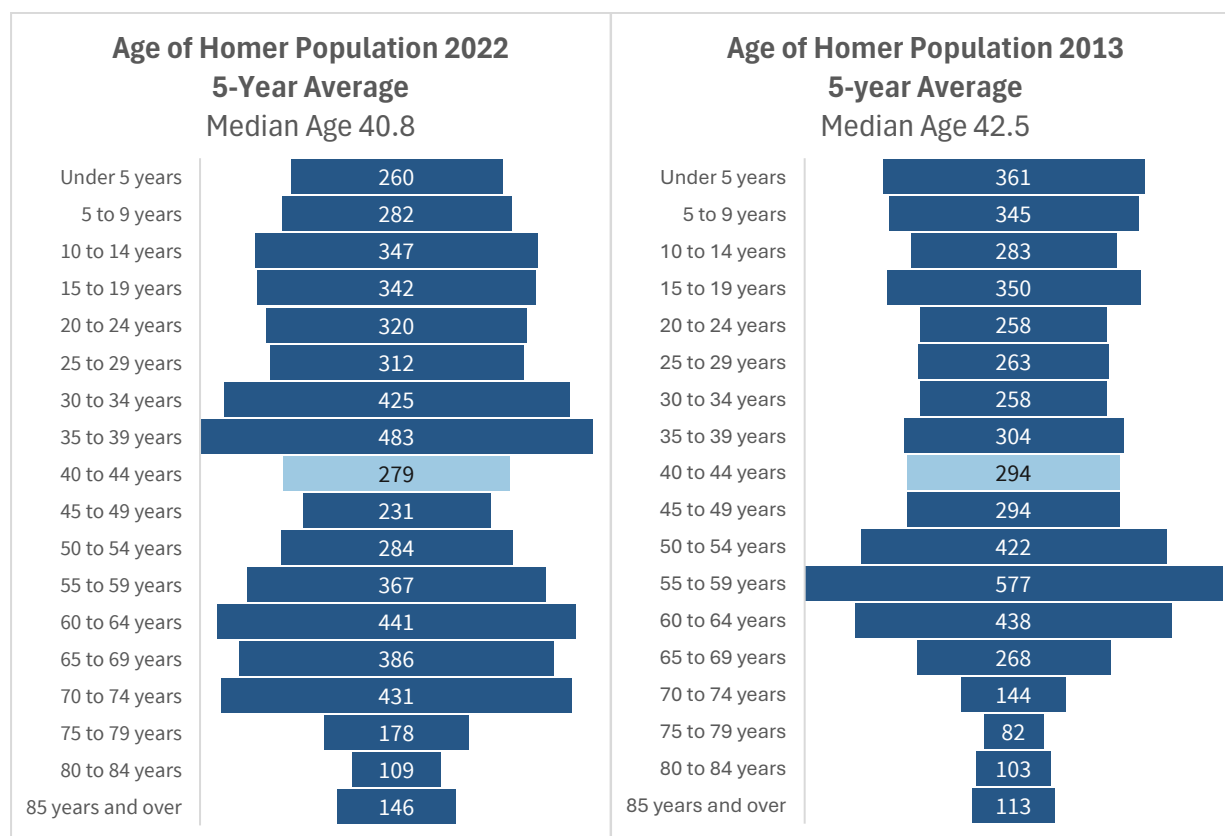
⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. "Age and Sex." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0101, 2022, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S0101?g=160XX00US0233140.0238420.0271640&moe=false>. Accessed on March 18, 2024.

Similar to the Kenai Peninsula Borough and the state of Alaska, Homer has a large and growing senior population. Over the last 10 years, we have seen the population across Alaska aging, with people over 65 representing an increasing proportion of individuals in many communities.⁴ **Figure 5** shows that the 65 and over population in both Homer and the KPB has made up a larger share of the population compared to Alaska as a whole. Seniors have different needs from other age groups for their housing and medical care. Additionally, seniors may need additional transportation options for those who are no longer able to drive so they can stay connected and engaged in the Homer community.

The median age in Alaska increased from 33.1 in 2013 to 35.9 in 2022. During this time, KPB's median age increased slightly from 40.7 to 41.2. However, Homer experienced an interesting trend: the median age in Homer now was slightly younger in 2022 than it was in 2013, going from 42.5 to 40.8, while at the same time the percentage of the population that is age 65 and over has increased from 14% to 22%.

Figure 6 illustrates how the age distribution of the Homer population has changed from 2013 to 2022.⁵ In 2013, the population shares at each age group were fairly uniform, except for a distinct increase in the population in the 50–64 age range. In 2022, that cohort had aged to where they are now contributing to the increase in the older population. It also looks like there has been notable growth in the 30–39 age group from 2013 to 2022, but that growth does not appear to be accounted for with the existing population in 2013 aging. This would suggest that new Homer residents that migrated to the area from 2013 to 2022 were likely in that age range or slightly younger when they moved there.

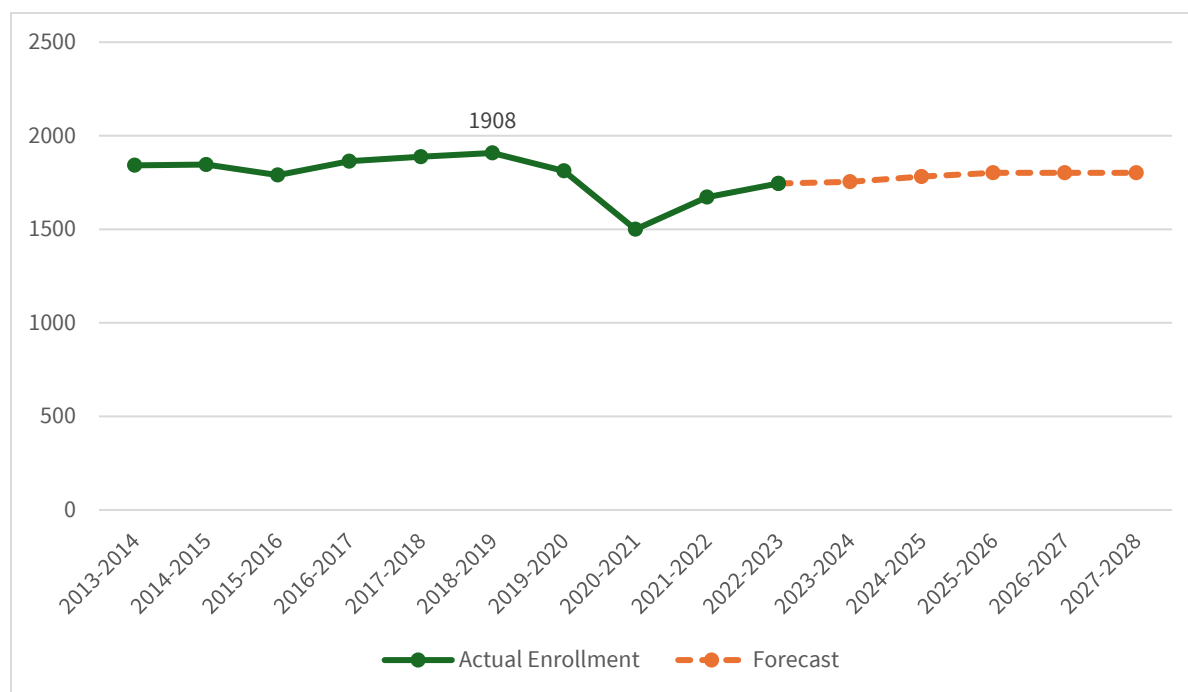
Figure 6. Comparison of Homer Population Age Distributions



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022 data⁵

Enrollment in Homer area schools has fluctuated in recent years but has not rebounded fully from the dip during the pandemic. Homer is served by the Kenai Peninsula School District (KPBSD).⁶ **Figure 7** shows enrollment trends for what the KPBSD considers Homer area schools. Enrollment has fluctuated over the past 10 years, with a notable decline following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, since then enrollment has recovered partially. Enrollment peaked in the 2018–2019 school year, with 1,908 students enrolled across all grades. KPBSD is forecasting increasing enrollment at the Homer area schools, while forecasting decreasing enrollment for the overall district.

Figure 7. Homer School Enrollment, Pre-Kindergarten to 12th Grade



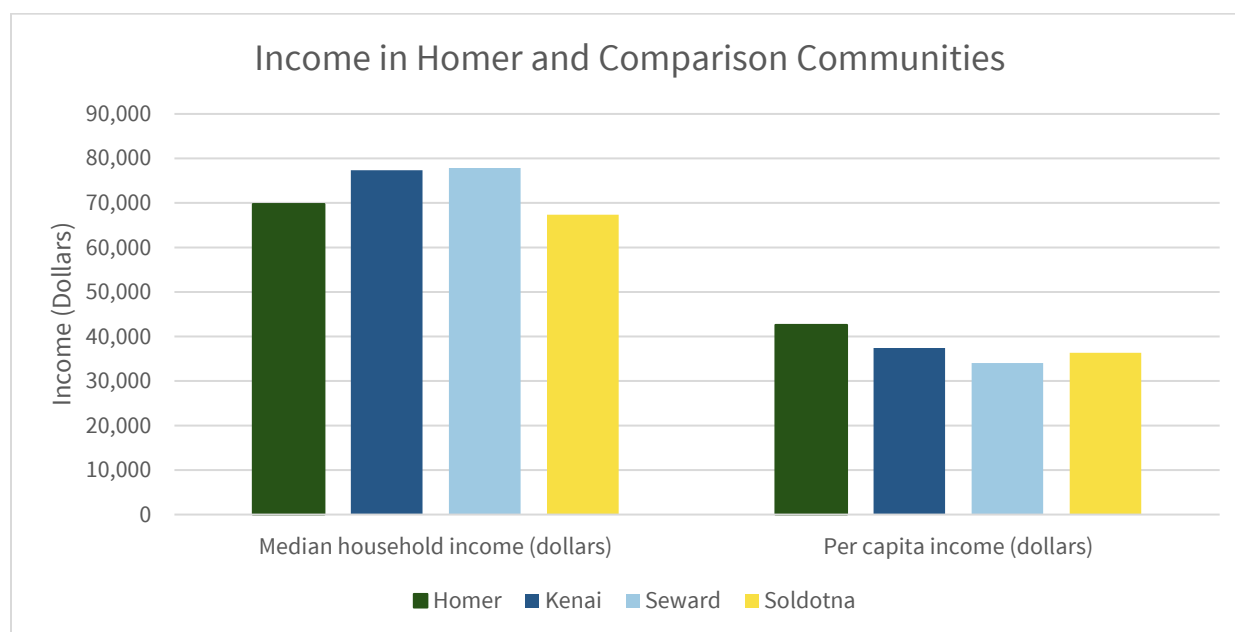
Source: Kenai Peninsula Borough School District⁸

⁸ Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. "Five-Year Enrollment Projection 2023-24 through 2027-28". November 4, 2022. <https://kpbsd.org/wp-content/uploads/departments/finance/budget-development/fy24/FY24-Projected-Enrollment-Document.pdf>. Accessed April 26, 2024

Our Economy

Homer residents have a higher per capita income than residents of comparison communities. **Figure 8** shows median household income and per capita income in Homer and comparison communities.⁹ Homer has the highest per capita income among comparison communities, though Kenai and Seward have higher median household incomes. From 2013 to 2022, Seward had the greatest increase (30%) in median household income, while Homer's increased by about 2% over the same period. Kenai and Soldotna both saw decreases in median household income on an inflation-adjusted basis. Homer has a lower percentage of residents below the poverty level (12.7%) than Kenai and Soldotna, though it is more than twice the level seen in Seward (6.1%).

Figure 8. Income in Homer and Comparison Communities



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022 data⁷

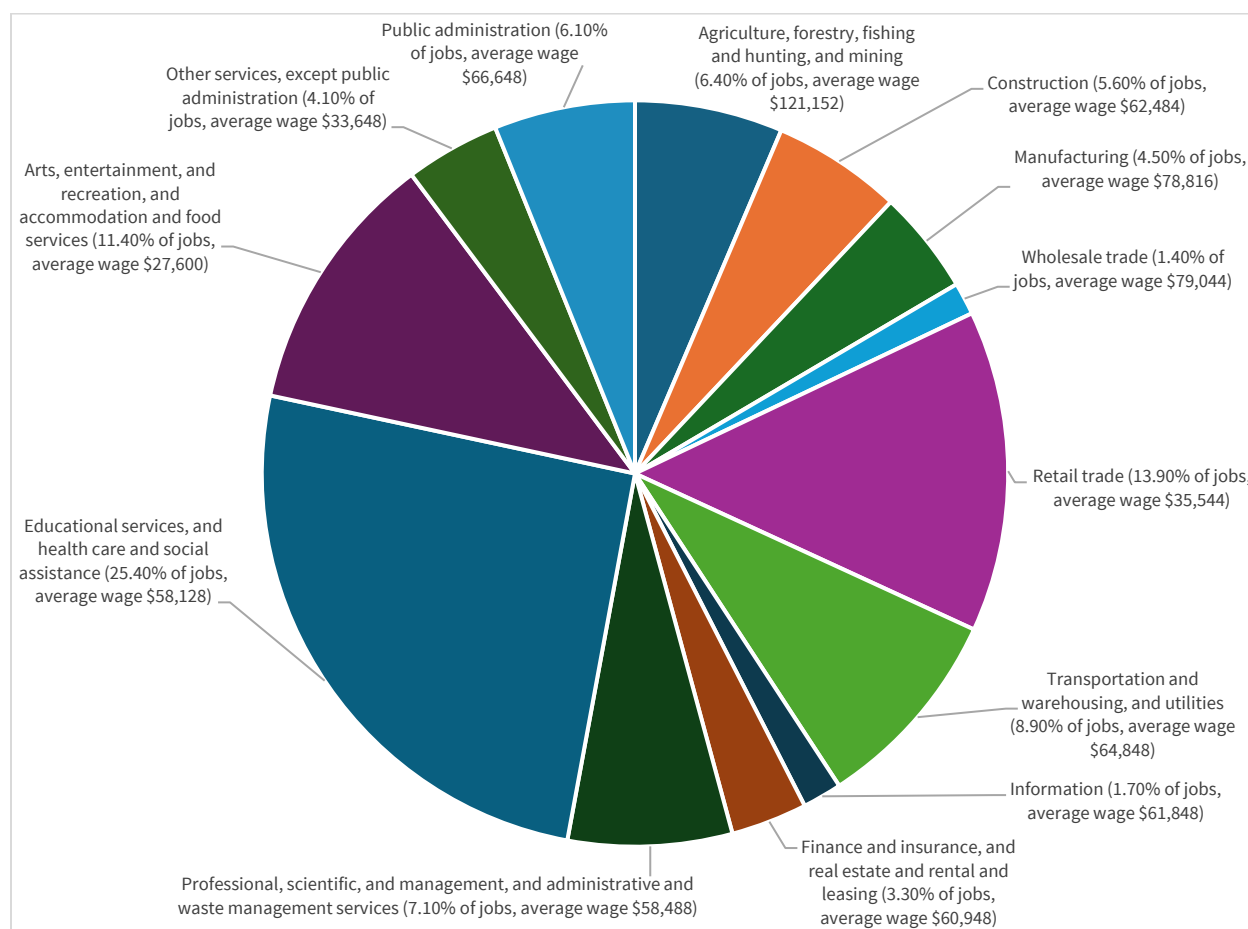
Homer has a diverse mix of industries. The three largest are 1) education, health care, and social assistance; 2) retail trade; and 3) arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services.¹⁰ **Figure 9** provides more detailed information on industries and wages in Homer. Based on monthly wage data for the Kenai Peninsula Borough, the average annual

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. "Selected Economic Characteristics." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP03, 2022 & 2013, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2022.DP03?q=per capita income&g=160XX00US0233140_0238420_0268560_0271640](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2022.DP03?q=per%20capita%20income&g=160XX00US0233140_0238420_0268560_0271640). Accessed on March 18, 2024.

¹⁰ Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. "Current Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Annual January to December 2022." 2022. <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/article/current-quarterly-census-employment-and-wages-qcew>. Accessed April 26, 2024

wage for educational services, health care, and social assistance is \$58,128, assuming year-round work at a typical wage. Although there is not one specific NAICS industry that is designated as “tourism”, the industries that would be the most affected by tourism are 1) transportation and warehousing; 2) administrative and support and waste management and remediation services; 3) arts, entertainment, and recreation; and 4) accommodation and food services¹¹. Retail Trade would also likely be impacted as well. The industries in the Kenai Peninsula borough with the highest average monthly wages were mining (\$11,331), management of companies and enterprises (\$10,569), and utilities (\$9,470).

Figure 9. Percentage of Homer Workforce by Industry and Annual Wages by Industry for the KPB



Note: This method of wage calculation may overinflate real annual earnings for the Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, and mining industry since much of the work is seasonal and not the same monthly earnings year-round.

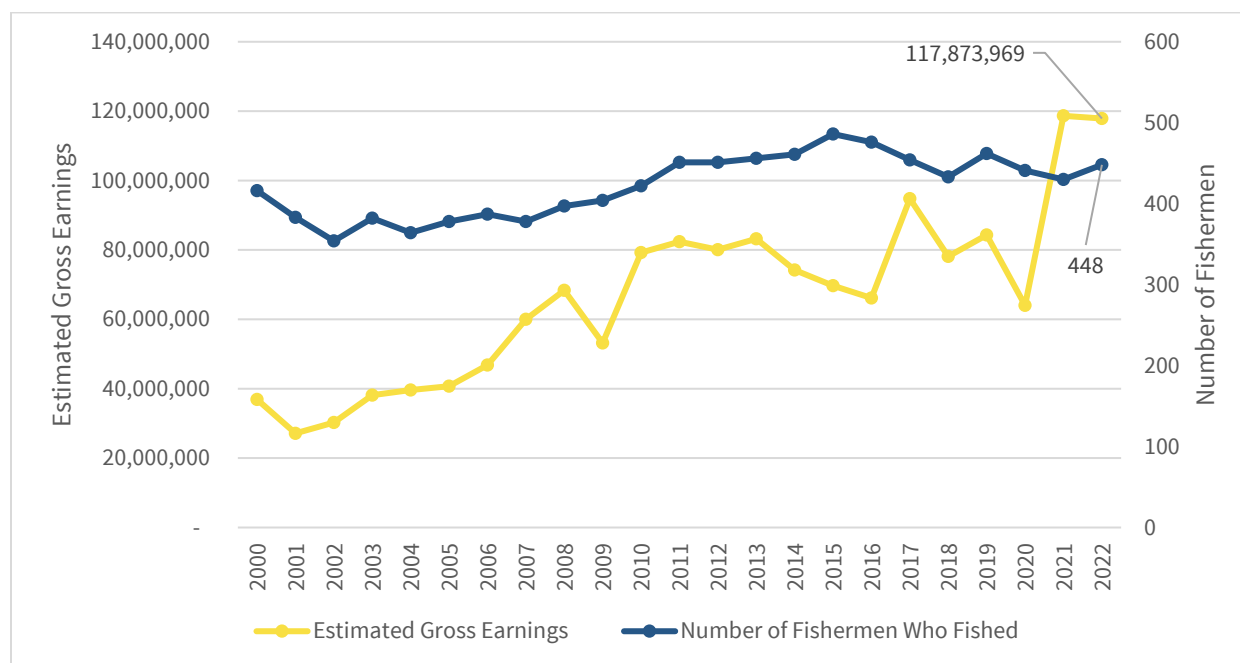
Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022 data⁷; ADOLWD Current Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages⁸, Northern Economics Analysis

¹¹ The University of Texas at San Antonio. “Tourism, Travel, and Hospitality” <https://libguides.utsa.edu/c.php?g=485669&p=3731491>. Accessed April 29, 2024

Homer is a community with strong ties to the commercial fishing industry. **Figure 10** shows the estimated gross earnings and the number of Homer residents who were commercial fishermen.¹² The number of commercial fishermen in Homer peaked in 2015 at 486. Estimated gross earnings have been trending upward, peaking in 2021 at just below \$120 million. The large spike in 2021 and 2022 was likely the result of higher than usual prices per pound of seafood, combined with a larger than usual catch.¹³ The industry saw the largest salmon run in the past 100 years in 2022.

Salmon was the largest fishery, accounting for \$79.5 million of the total gross earnings in 2022. However, much of those earnings came from salmon caught in Bristol Bay, not in the waters immediately adjacent to Homer. Kenai, Seward, and Soldotna had much smaller gross earnings in 2022 than Homer. In comparison to other Alaska fishing communities, estimated 2022 gross earnings in Homer were nearly double those of Petersburg, while Kodiak had slightly higher earnings at an estimated \$124.2 million.

Figure 10. Estimated Gross Earnings and Number of Fishermen



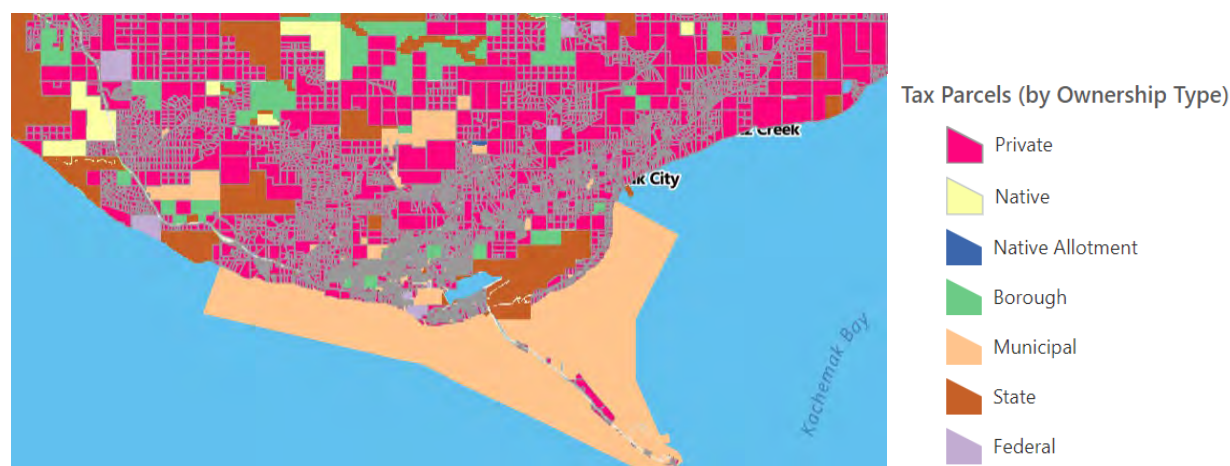
Source: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission⁹

¹² Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission, Fishery Statistics – Participation & Earnings, Permit & Fishing Activity By Year, State, Census Area, or City. 2022. <https://www.cfec.state.ak.us/gpbycen/2022/122256.htm> Accessed March 18, 2024.

¹³ Working, Mark. “Wild Alaskan Salmon- An Industry in a Crunch”. *ZacharyScott Insight*. September 2023. <https://zacharyscott.com/wild-alaskan-salmon-an-industry-in-a-crunch/>. Accessed April 26, 2024.

Land Ownership

Figure 11. Land Ownership in the Homer Area



Source: ViewKPB¹⁴

Figure 11 shows the land ownership in Homer, which highlights a few key trends. Much of the land in the city of Homer is privately owned. The Homer spit is a mix of municipal and private land. Aside from the spit, the waterfront in Homer is mostly privately owned, with a few areas of state or federal ownership.

The 2019 KPB Comprehensive Plan included additional information about land ownership in the borough.¹⁵ The KPB is largely publicly owned (87%), including federal (65%), state (21%), and local government land (1%). Of the remaining lands in the borough, 9% are owned by Native corporations and 3% are private owners. The Cook Inlet Regional Corporation is the largest private landowner in KPB, with over 330,000 acres of surface lands. However, when looking at established communities in the KPB, they have much higher rates of private ownership and different patterns from the rural land that influences broader KPB patterns.

Other comparison communities appear to follow similar land ownership patterns to Homer, in that they have more private ownership relative to the KPB. However, it appears that Homer has less Alaska Native owned lands immediately adjacent to it compared with other KPB communities. Homer also has less municipal owned land compared to the comparison communities.

¹⁴ ViewKPB, <https://geo.kpb.us/vertigisstudio/web/?app=ee8eef8b5c55417a8d2635a13658a76f>. Accessed April 26, 2024

¹⁵ Kenai Peninsula Borough. 2019 Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan. https://www.kpb.us/images/KPB/PLN/PlansReports/Comp_Plan/2019_KPB_Comprehensive_Plan.pdf. Accessed April 26, 2024

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<https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2022.DP05?q=Homer city, Alaska&t=Age and Sex&moe=false>.

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U.S. Census Bureau. "Selected Economic Characteristics." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP03, 2013, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2022.DP03?q=per capita income&g=160XX00US0233140,0238420,0268560,0271640](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2022.DP03?q=per%20capita%20income&g=160XX00US0233140,0238420,0268560,0271640). Accessed on March 18, 2024.

ViewKPB, <https://geo.kpb.us/vertigisstudio/web/?app=ee8eef8b5c55417a8d2635a13658a76f>. Accessed April 26, 2024

Appendix G: City of Homer Fiscal Trends

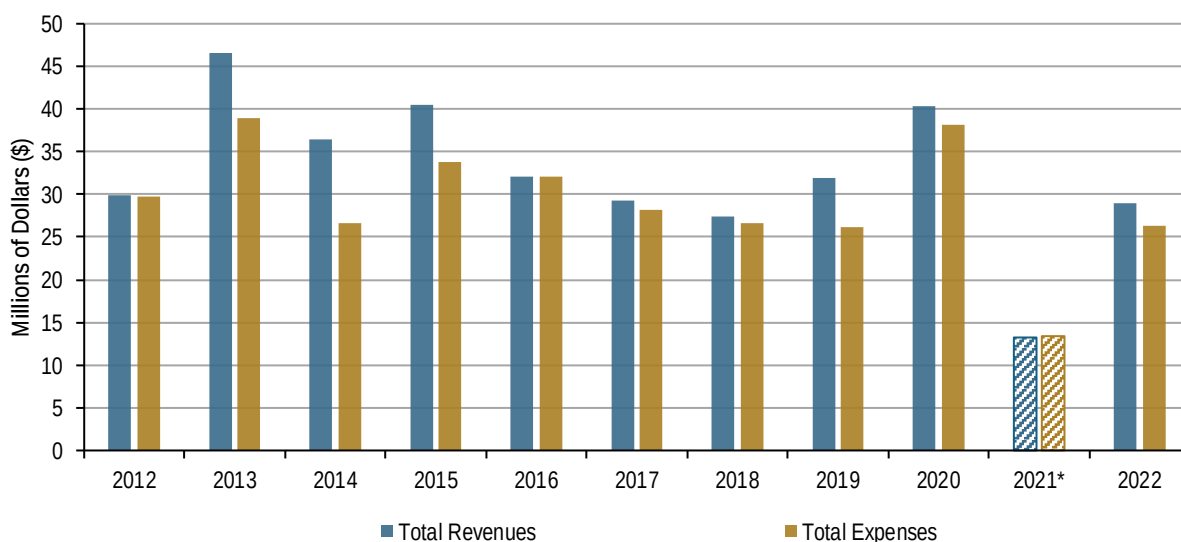
Fiscal Trends

Prepared by Northern Economics, Inc.
July 10, 2024

City Revenues and Cost of Service

Over the years, the City of Homer's annual revenues and expenses have fluctuated. It is important to note that in 2021, the accounting method changed from a calendar year to a fiscal year, so the 2021 data only cover 6 months instead of 12. As seen in Figure 1, total revenues exceeded total expenses in 9 out of 11 years—in 6 of those years, by a considerable margin. The two years in which expenses exceeded revenues were 2016 and 2021, resulting in \$57,641 and \$169,125 deficits respectively for those years. Compared to the gains made in other years, these were both small deficits.

Figure 1. Revenues and Expenses for the City of Homer, 2012–2022 (Millions of 2022 dollars)



*Note: *The City changed from a calendar year to a fiscal year, resulting in 2021 only covering six months. As a result, the revenues and expenses shown for 2021 reflect six months of activity. A full fiscal year is shown for 2022 (July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022).*

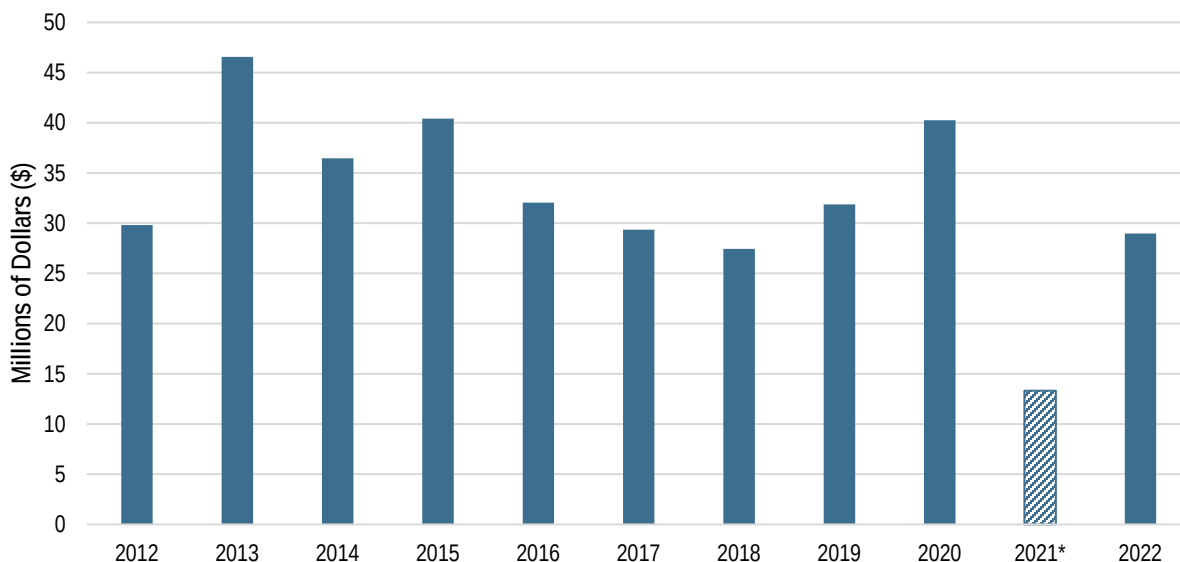
Source: City of Homer (2012–2022), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis for inflation adjustments (2023), and Northern Economics analysis

Revenues

Figure 2 shows total revenue by year from 2012 to 2022, in 2022 dollars. City revenue experienced a slightly negative compound annual growth rate of -0.29% after being adjusted for inflation from 2012 to 2022. The total revenue in 2022 was about 3% less than the total revenue in 2012. It is worth noting that this year was still close enough to the pandemic that it might not be truly representative of the overall trend. When only examining pre-pandemic data, the compound annual growth for revenues was 3.82%, and when adjusted for inflation, the revenues in 2020 were 35% greater than they were in 2012. The total revenues have fluctuated between 2012 and 2022, and there have been periods of growth and periods of shrinkage. One driving factor in revenue fluctuations is operating and capital grants, which are received periodically.

The fastest growing revenue observed was sales tax (3.32% annual compound growth). Port and harbor revenue experienced compound annual growth of 1.11% from 2012 to 2022 after being adjusted for inflation. Both charges for services and property taxes also grew slightly (0.4% and 0.3% compound annual growth). Among various charges for services, the fastest growing was public safety (4.96% compound annual growth), and the revenues in 2022 were 62% greater than the revenues in 2012 when adjusted for inflation. The fastest growing services within the general fund were ambulance services (10.99% compound annual growth) and miscellaneous services (5.72% compound annual growth). After being adjusted for inflation, revenues from ambulance services were 2.8 times greater in 2022 than 2012, and revenues from miscellaneous services were 1.74 times greater in 2022 than 2012.

Figure 2. City of Homer Annual Revenue, 2012–2022 (Millions of 2022 dollars)



Note: *The amount shown for 2021 represents six months, due to the change from a calendar year to a fiscal year.

Source: City of Homer (2012–2022), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis for inflation adjustments (2023), and Northern Economics analysis

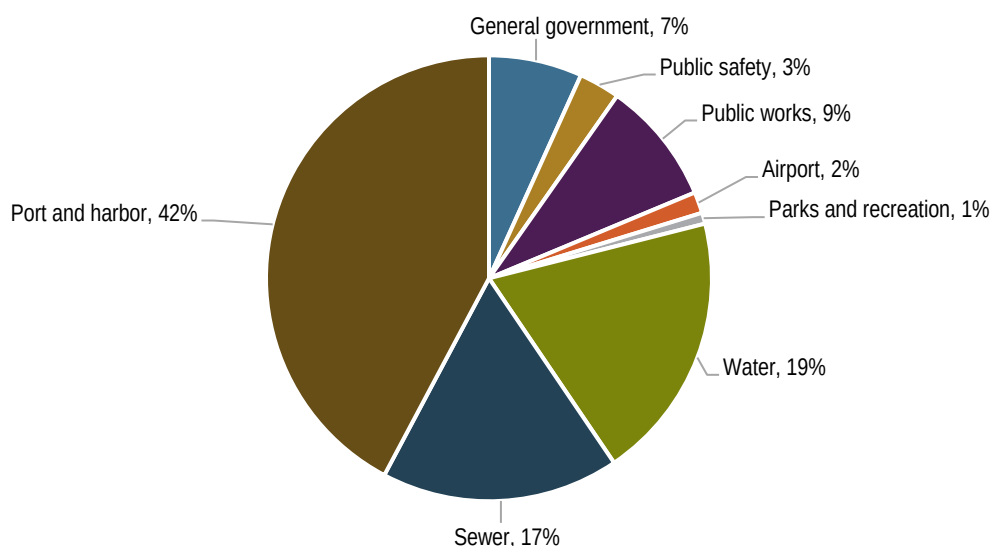
Table 1 shows the breakdown of significant sources of revenue for the City of Homer over time, adjusted for inflation. Typically, the revenue source that contributed the most total dollars was sales taxes (43% of total revenue in 2022). Charges for services was another significant revenue contributor (38% of total revenue in 2022). Figure 3 shows the average share of charges for service revenue by category. Within those categories, the greatest contributors were port and harbor (51%), water (18%), and sewer (17%). Port and harbor revenues were stable throughout the period when adjusted for inflation, with a compound annual growth rate of 1.11%.

Table 1. Inflation-Adjusted City of Homer Revenues, 2012, 2016, 2020, and 2022 (Millions of 2022 dollars)

	2012	2016	2020	2022
Charges for services, Port and harbor	\$ 4.96	\$ 5.26	\$ 5.70	\$ 5.19
Charges for services, Water	\$ 2.18	\$ 2.38	\$ 2.39	\$ 1.95
Charges for services, Sewer	\$ 1.97	\$ 2.09	\$ 1.87	\$ 1.81
Operating grants and contributions	\$ 2.06	\$ 1.33	\$ 12.44	\$ 1.35
Capital grants and contributions	\$ 3.27	\$ 5.06	\$ 0.75	\$ 1.20
Property tax	\$ 3.80	\$ 3.89	\$ 4.24	\$ 3.91
Sales tax	\$ 8.90	\$ 9.20	\$ 10.15	\$ 12.34
Other Revenues	\$ 2.69	\$ 2.85	\$ 2.72	\$ 1.22

Source: City of Homer (2015, 2016, 2020, 2022), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis for inflation adjustments (2023), and Northern Economics analysis

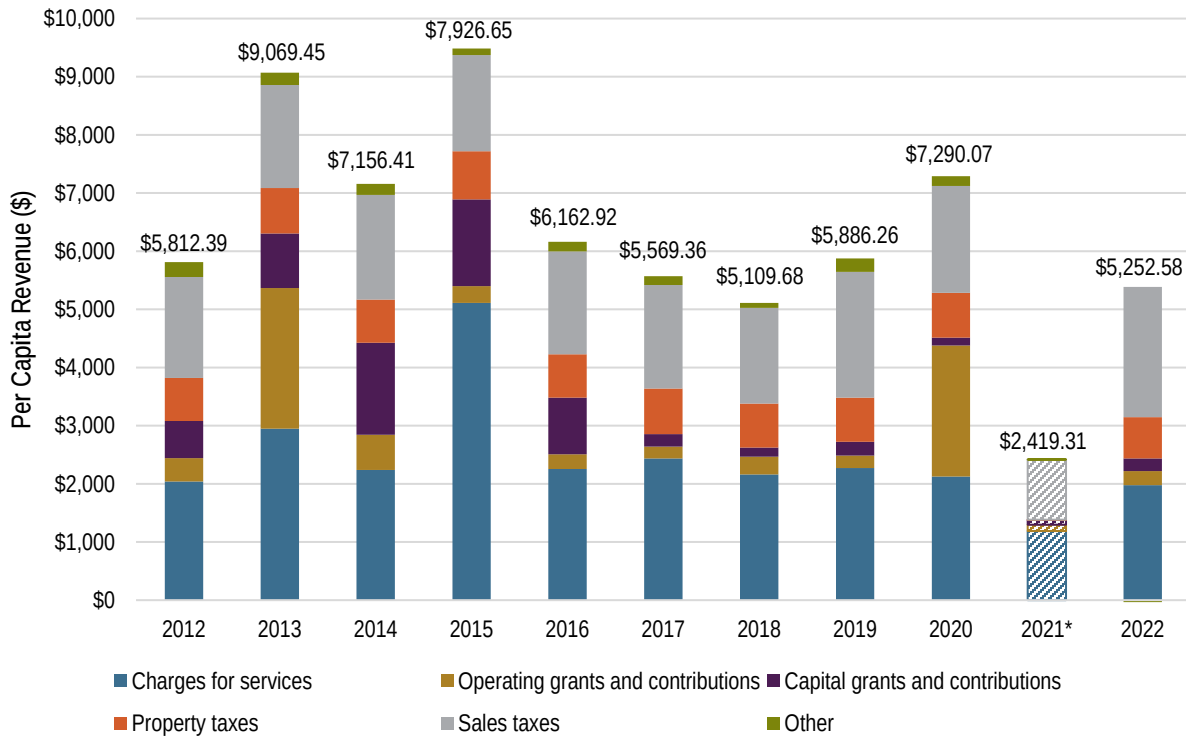
Figure 3. Average Share of Charges for Services by Category, 2012–2022



Source: City of Homer (2012–2022), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis for inflation adjustments (2023), and Northern Economics analysis

Homer's population has increased over the past decade, growing 0.73% on average each year from 2012 to 2020 (ADOLWD 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). The population in 2022 was 7.48% greater than in 2012. Figure 4 shows annual revenues for 2012–2022 per capita and demonstrates the fluctuating nature of total revenues. Prior to the pandemic, revenues were on a downward trend, reaching a low in 2018. However, from 2018 to 2020, there was a rapid increase until the pandemic. It is hard to say whether the increasing pattern would have continued if it were not interrupted by the pandemic. The largest sources of revenue per capita were charges for services and sales tax. Infrequently, operating grants and contributions had one of the highest per capita revenues, but this is only when large grants were received.

Figure 4. Per Capita Revenue by Category 2012–2022 (2022 dollars)



Note: *The amount shown for 2021 represents six months, due to the change from a calendar year to a fiscal year.

Source: City of Homer (2012–2022), ADOLWD (2024a, 2024b, 2024c), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis for inflation adjustments (2023), and Northern Economics analysis

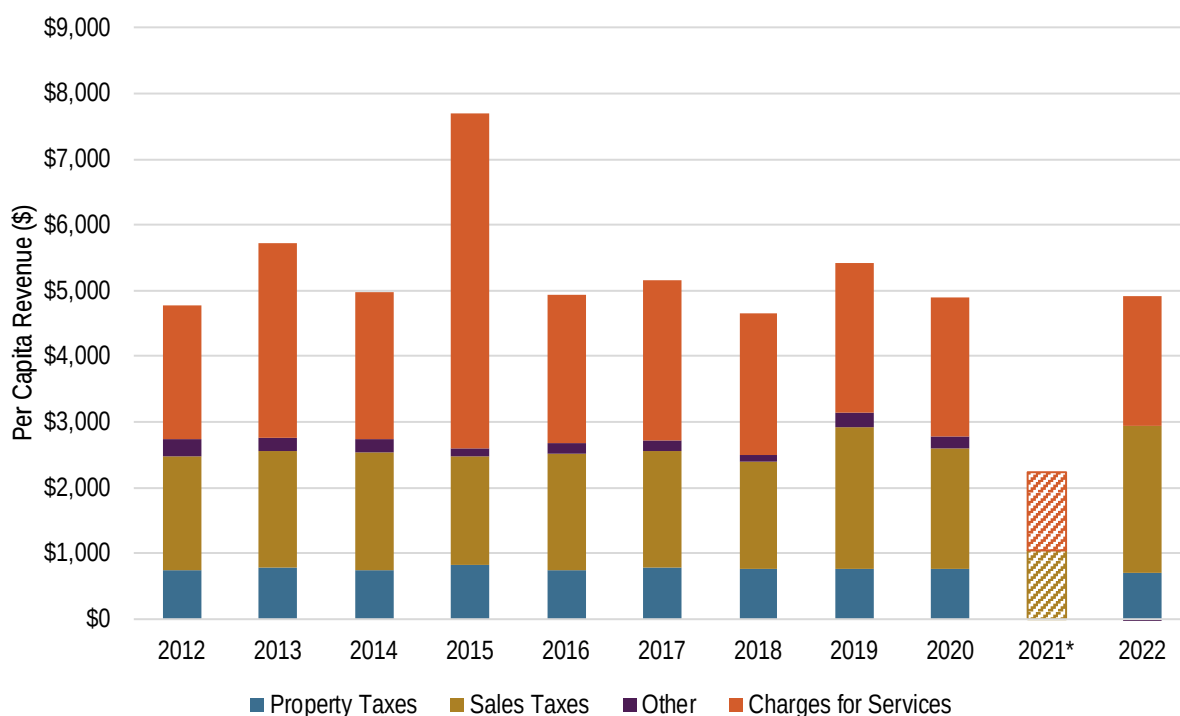
Looking at the broadest level of revenue categories, there were many categories that decreased on a per capita basis when including data for 2012–2022. However, when looking at the 2012–2020 period, most of the revenue categories experienced slight annual growth. This would suggest that 2022 may still be a recovery year from the pandemic, but since there are no data for 2023 yet, it is hard to say if the outlook is positive. However, even in years where revenues are lower, typically expenses have been lower as well, which is discussed in greater depth in the expenses section of this analysis.

When including 2022, total revenues shrank by 1% per year, and most revenue categories shrank or were stable. Sales tax and public safety were the only exceptions, growing 2.6% and 4.2% annually per capita. However, when only including pre-pandemic data from 2012 to 2020, most revenue categories grew slightly on a per capita basis. Total revenue for the period grew at 2.9% annually per capita. The revenue categories that had the greatest annual growth rates per capita were public safety (4.4%), general government (3.6%), and port and harbor (0.8%).

Figure 5 shows revenues without capital or operating grants and contributions to help isolate trends in the other, more consistent, sources of revenue. One notable exception within Figure 5 is 2015, in which there were unusually high revenues in the charges for services category. In 2014 and 2016, charges for services typically brought in between \$11 million and \$12 million. However, in 2015 there were special

assessments collected related to the natural gas pipeline, which boosted charges for services revenue to just over \$26 million (City of Homer 2015). As shown in Figure 5, revenues per capita are generally stable at around \$5,000, when we exclude capital and operating grants and contributions. As a result, it seems reasonable to anticipate that if no additional revenue streams are realized, the city should anticipate generating around \$5,000 in revenue per capita.

Figure 5. Per Capita Revenue by Category 2012 – 2022, Excluding Grants and Contributions (2022 dollars)



Note: *The amount shown for 2021 represents six months, due to the change from a calendar year to a fiscal year.

Source: City of Homer (2012–2022), ADOLWD (2024a, 2024b, 2024c), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis for inflation adjustments (2023), and Northern Economics analysis

City Expenses and Cost of Services

Total expenses in 2022 were less than total expenses in 2012 after being adjusted for inflation. However, this does not tell the whole story. Post-pandemic data are not the most reliable due to an accounting methodology change that impacted 2021, 2022 being a relatively low year in both revenue and expenses, and 2023 data not yet being available for comparison with 2022. For these reasons, this analysis has included discussion both including and omitting post 2020 data.

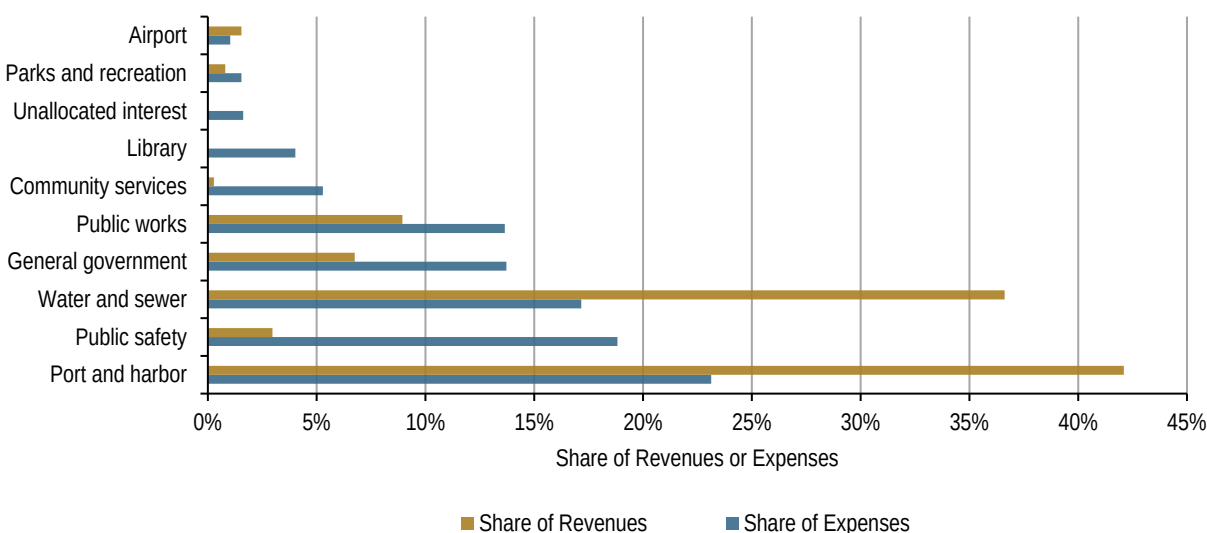
For 2012–2022, total expenses per capita decreased with a compounded annual rate of -1.9%. All categories of expenses decreased except for public safety expenses, which increased 1.9% annually.

When excluding the partial year in 2021, the average per capita expenses for 2012–2022 after being adjusted for inflation were \$5,819.80, compared with \$6,523.58 per capita revenues.

Port and harbor, public safety, and water and sewer make up the largest share of service-related expenses on average. The port and harbor alone accounts for 23% of expenses, which is offset by its making up 42.1% of revenues from services. Other significant expenditures include public safety (18.8% of expenses), and water and sewer (17.17% of expenses). Public safety did not generate a significant share of revenues from services to balance out the expenditures (2.97% of revenues). However, water and sewer generated 36.6% of revenues for services. Figure 6 compares the average share of service-related revenues compared to the share of expenses for various programs and services for 2012–2022. Not all programs and government functions exist for the purpose of generating revenue, and some are necessary government functions or community services. As a result, expenses tend to be more broadly shared across all programs and government functions, while revenues are concentrated in a few different programs.

Table 2 shows the breakdown of significant expenditures for the City of Homer over time, adjusted for inflation. Typically, the department that accounted for the greatest expense was port and harbor (22% of total expenses in 2022). Public safety was another significant source of expenses (22% of total expenses in 2022).

Figure 6. Average Share of Revenues and Share of Expenses by Program/Government Function, 2012–2022



Note: The calculations for revenues and expenses excluded operating and capital grants and contributions to capture the true program cost versus the amount of revenue it generates. Additionally, revenues from taxes are excluded from the 100% total since there is not a tax-specific expense with which to compare.

Source: City of Homer (2012–2022) and Northern Economics analysis

Table 2. Inflation-Adjusted City of Homer Expenses, 2012, 2016, 2020, 2022 (Millions of 2022 dollars)

	2012	2016	2020	2022
Port and Harbor	\$ 5.89	\$ 8.75	\$ 6.68	\$ 5.83
Public Safety	\$ 6.02	\$ 6.23	\$ 5.75	\$ 5.81
Public Works	\$ 3.39	\$ 3.76	\$ 4.62	\$ 4.39
Water and Sewer	\$ 5.82	\$ 5.40	\$ 4.99	\$ 4.38
General Government	\$ 4.92	\$ 4.12	\$ 5.58	\$ 4.20
Other Expenses	\$ 3.71	\$ 3.85	\$ 10.46	\$ 1.76

Source: City of Homer (2012–2022), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis for inflation adjustments (2023), and Northern Economics analysis

Some programs generate enough revenues to cover well over their expenses without any other grants or contributions, and others do not. Many programs generate enough revenues to be mostly self-supporting with the revenue they generate from their charges for services. This leaves a relatively small deficit to make up through operating and capital grants and other tax-based revenues. Some programs are designated as “business-type activity”, meaning they should recover all or most of its costs through user fees and charges. This includes water and sewer, and port and harbor. Usually, the port and harbor covers most of its expenses through charges for services and leaves a relatively small portion that needs to be covered through other means of support. The other programs covering most of their expenses are designed so that they can be primarily supported by taxes and intergovernmental revenue.

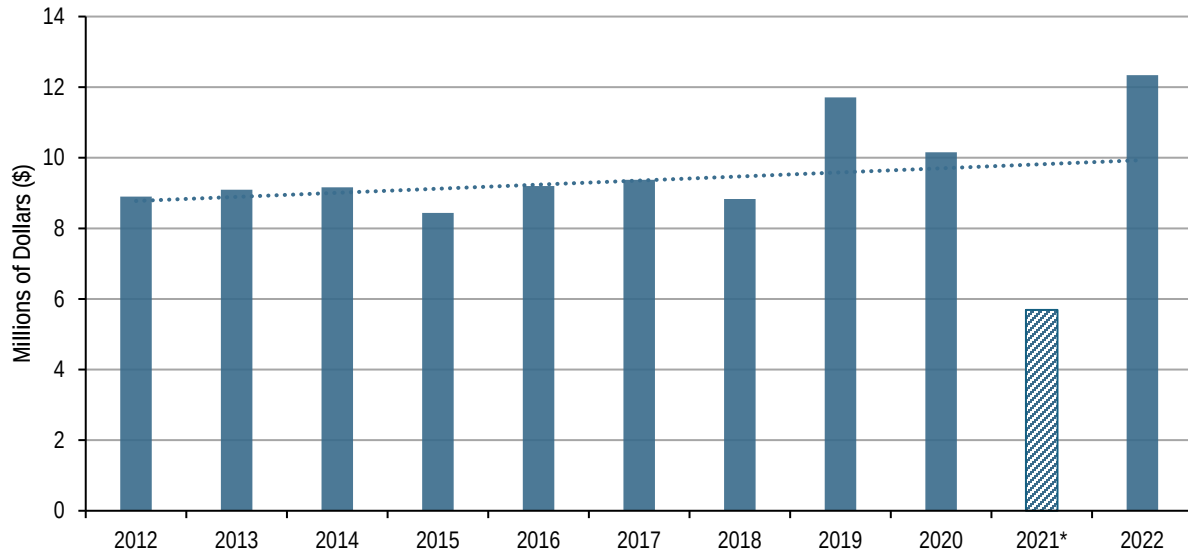
Taxation

The City of Homer receives sales tax revenue and property tax revenue. The Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) collects tax revenue on behalf of the city and then distributes it.

Sales Tax

The City of Homer collects a year-round 7.85% sales tax (4.85% of which is for the city) with a \$500 cap (KPB 2024b). It is the second highest tax rate in the borough behind Seldovia, which charges 9.5% seasonally (April through September). The city’s tax rate has been in effect since January 1, 2019, when it increased from 4.5% to finance the bonds for a police station. The increase expires once enough funds have been generated to pay all the debt service. Figure 7 shows the inflation-adjusted sales tax revenue from 2012 to 2022. Excluding 2021 from the calculation, sales tax revenue has grown an average of about 4% year over year from 2012–2022. The 33% increase from 2018 to 2019 was the result of the previously mentioned city sales tax increase.

Figure 7. Homer Sales Tax Revenues 2012–2022 (Millions of 2022 dollars)



*Note: *The amount shown for 2021 represents six months, due to the change from a calendar year to a fiscal year.*

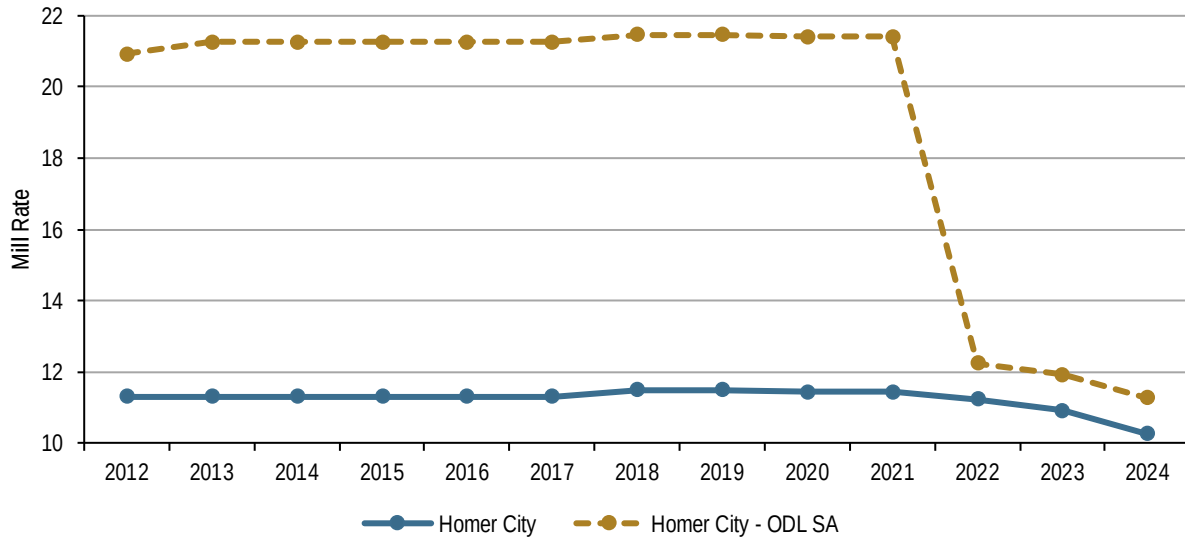
Source: City of Homer (2012–2022), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis for inflation adjustments (2023), and Northern Economics analysis

On a per-capita basis, sales tax revenue in 2012 was \$1,734.81 and in 2022 it was \$2,237.71 per person, demonstrating real growth relative to the population and inflation. It is likely that the increase in tax revenue per capita came from both an increase in spending as well as an increase in the tax rate in 2019.

Property Tax

Property tax is collected by the KPB and then distributed to the cities, including Homer. The mill rate is the dollar amount of property taxes collected per \$1,000 of assessed property value. In the City of Homer, the 2024 tax year mill rate is 10.26. Of the total 10.26 mill rate, 4.50 of that is for the City of Homer, 4.30 is for the Borough (standard across all properties in the borough), 0.34 is for paying off debts related to special projects, and 1.12 is for South Hospital (KPB 2024a). Figure 8 shows the mill rates in Homer from 2012 to 2024. As noted below the figure, a higher rate was assessed in the Homer City Ocean Drive Loop Service Area (ODL SA) to cover the cost of necessary seawall repairs that benefited the residents of that area. After funding the needs, the special assessment was removed in 2022. Over time, the mill rates have remained stable for the Homer area with small fluctuations. The general rate in the city hovers around 11 mills.

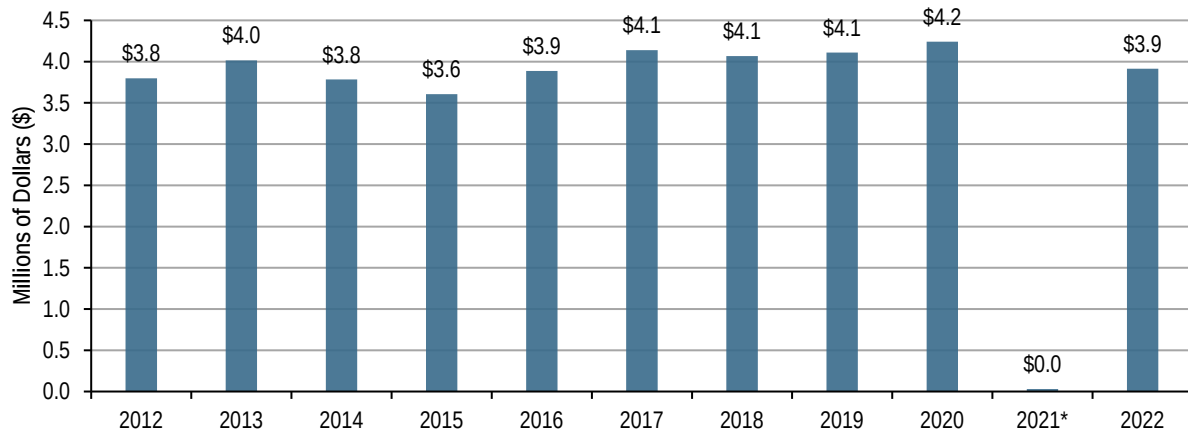
Figure 8. Historic Mill Rates Homer, 2012-2024



Note: Homer City – ODL SA refers to the Homer City Ocean Drive Loop Service Area, which had an increased mill rate to help cover seawall repairs (City of Homer 2020b).

Source: KPB (2024a)

Figure 9. City of Homer Property Tax Revenues, 2012–2022 (Millions of 2022 dollars)



Note: *2021 is not shown, due to changes in tracking from a calendar year to a fiscal year.

Source: City of Homer (2012–2022), U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis for inflation adjustments (2023), and Northern Economics analysis

As can be seen in Figure 9, total property tax revenues have been steady from 2012 to 2022, increasing by about half a percent each year. However, one trend that could impact future property tax revenues received by the city is an aging population, since there are property tax exemptions for senior citizens. For residents who are 65 or older or are disabled veterans, the KPB exempts the first \$150,000 of property valuation.

The population over the age of 65 in the KPB increased from 11.3% of the population in 2012 to 18.6% in 2022. Homer has an even greater share of people over the age of 65 than the KPB and that share has been increasing as well (USCB 2022). In the KPB, there were 3,700 approved property tax exemption applications in 2012, compared to 6,704 approved applicants in 2022 (ADCCED 2024). This increase represented a 6.06% increase each year on average from 2012 to 2022. After being adjusted for inflation, the equivalent of \$5,527,965 dollars were exempted in 2012, compared to \$8,914,444 in 2022, a 61% increase. Considering optional tax exemptions in the KPB, the overall percentage of the tax base exempted has fluctuated, peaking at 31.3% in 2014 and going as low as 18.6% in 2013 (ADCCED 2024). In 2022, the percent of the tax base exempted was 20.7%. This could result in less revenue for the city when funds are redistributed to it from the KPB if the borough is generating less revenue.

Fiscal Challenges and Trajectory

The state's fiscal situation is still uncertain. As a result, the city cannot count on some of the same sources of state funding as it has in the past for certain programs. The pandemic also caused additional uncertainty in future revenue and expenditure activities for the city. The city will be utilizing federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act–Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds in 2023-2024. An additional source of financial vulnerability is the city's water and sewer utility fund. The challenge is that the city owns expensive and expansive treatment, collection, and distribution infrastructure. However, there are few customers to pay for maintenance and operations of the systems. The proposed best course of action has been to infill and hook up customers where the infrastructure already exists, avoiding additional build-out capital costs (City of Homer 2022).

Additionally, the city's FY24/25 budget notes that Homer is currently facing challenges meeting increasing demands for services while dealing with high inflation following the pandemic (City of Homer 2023). As a result, despite revenue growth, the buying power of the revenue growth has been hurt by market price increases. Supply chain disruptions have also been challenging for the city following the pandemic. However, there has also been an increase in visitation from independent tourists. While in the short term the rate of revenue increase is close to the rate of expense increases for cost of goods and services, the hope is that as inflation eases revenues will continue to remain strong and increase.

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ADCCED (Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development). 2024. Alaska Taxable Database. <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/dcra/admin/Taxable>. Accessed June 3, 2024.

ADOLWD (Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development). 2024a. Historical Data: Places, “Population, 2000-2010”. https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/pop/estimates/data/TotalPopulationPlace_2000to2010.xls. Accessed March 18, 2024.

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Note regarding the audited financial statements: Each of the City of Homer’s audits include data for the current year and the year, but there are a few instances where there are discrepancies between what is reported in the audit for the year and what is reported for that year in the subsequent audit. In the few instances where this was the case, the project team used the actual year rather than the subsequent year.

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Appendix H: Land Use and Environment Chapter Background

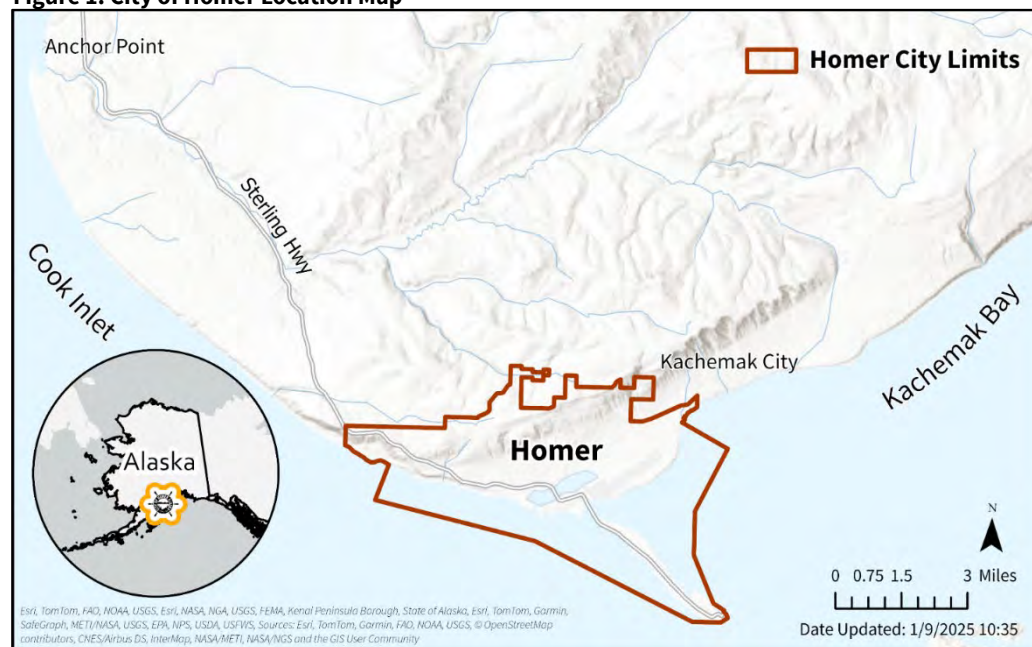
Supplemental Maps

This appendix provides a series of supplemental maps that informed development of the Future Land Use Map and corresponding policies in the Land Use and Environment chapter of the Core Plan. These figures present key background data on land ownership, existing land use patterns, current zoning, and environmental conditions within the City of Homer. Together, they offer geographic context and spatial analysis that supported the planning process.

Figures included in this appendix:

- **Figure 1:** City of Homer Location Map
- **Figure 2:** City of Homer Ownership Map
- **Figure 3:** City of Homer Current Land Uses Map
- **Figure 4:** City of Homer Zoning Map
- **Figure 5:** Environmental Constraints Overlay
- **Figure 6:** Environmental Constraints Overlay: Conditions
- **Figure 7:** Table of Descriptions in Environmental Constraints Overlay: Conditions
- **Figure 8:** Environmental Constraints Overlay: Designations

Figure 1: City of Homer Location Map



These maps represent the best available data at the time of plan drafting and were used to identify development opportunities and environmental limitations across the community.

Figure 2: City of Homer Ownership Map

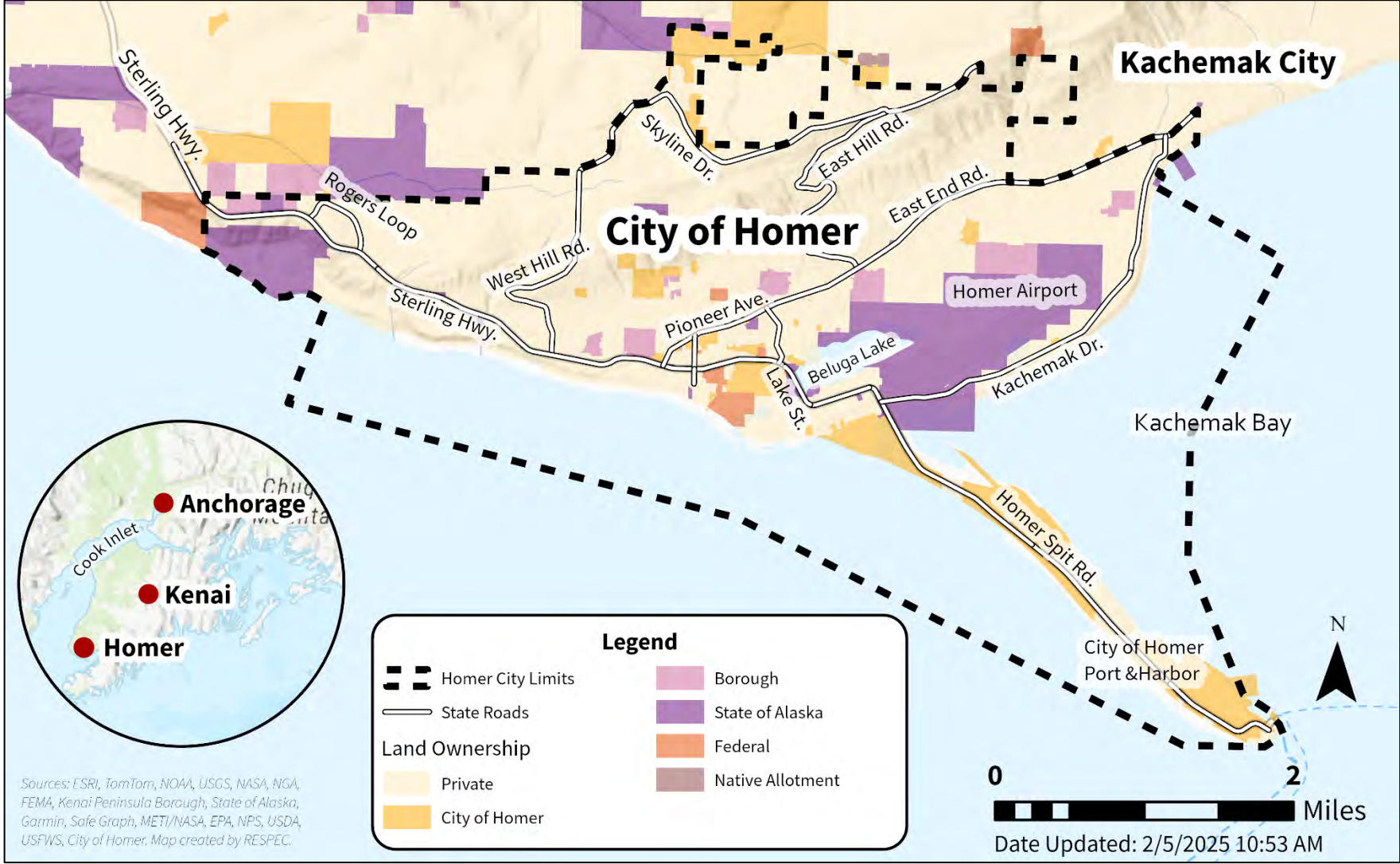


Figure 3: City of Homer Current Land Uses Map

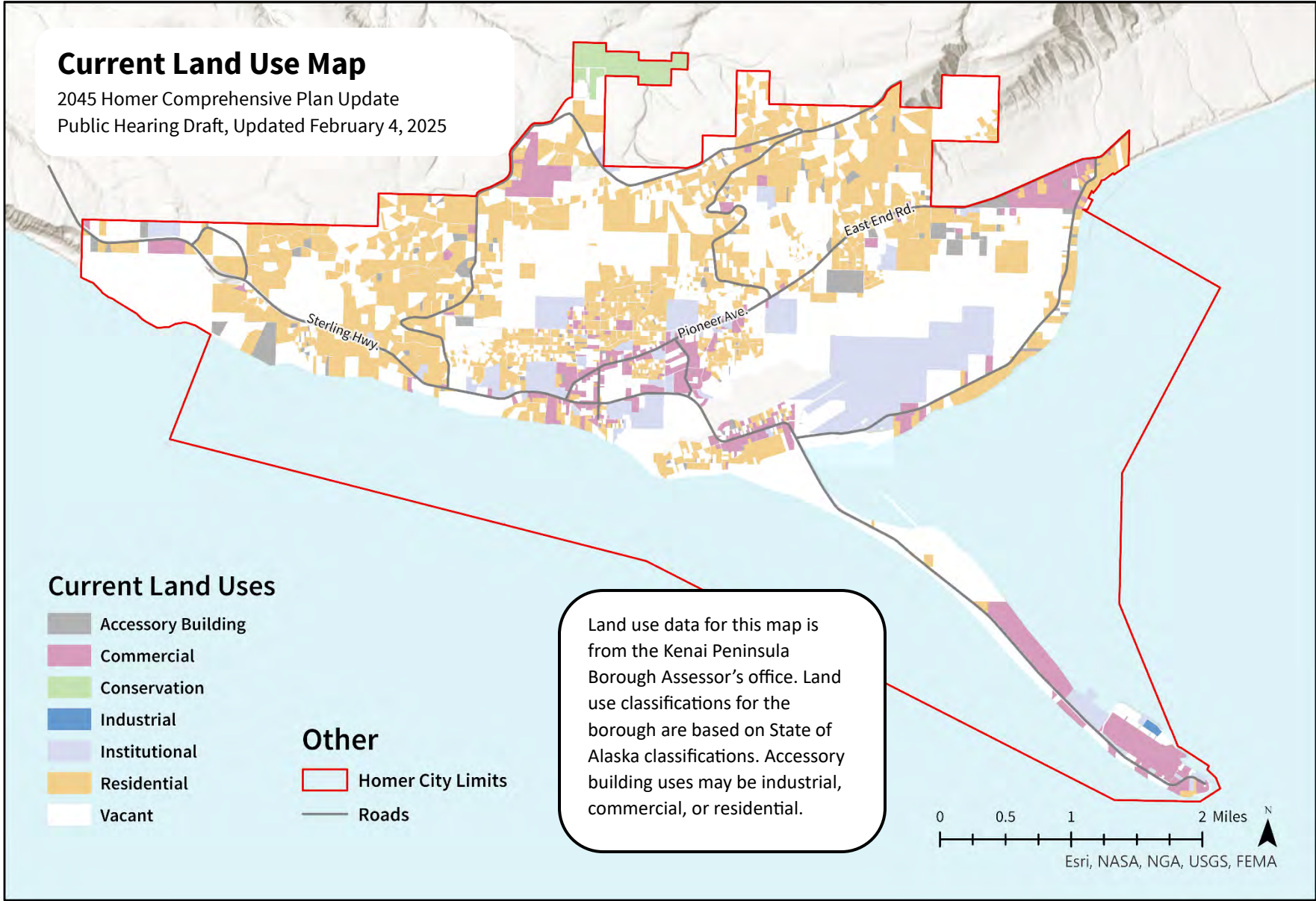
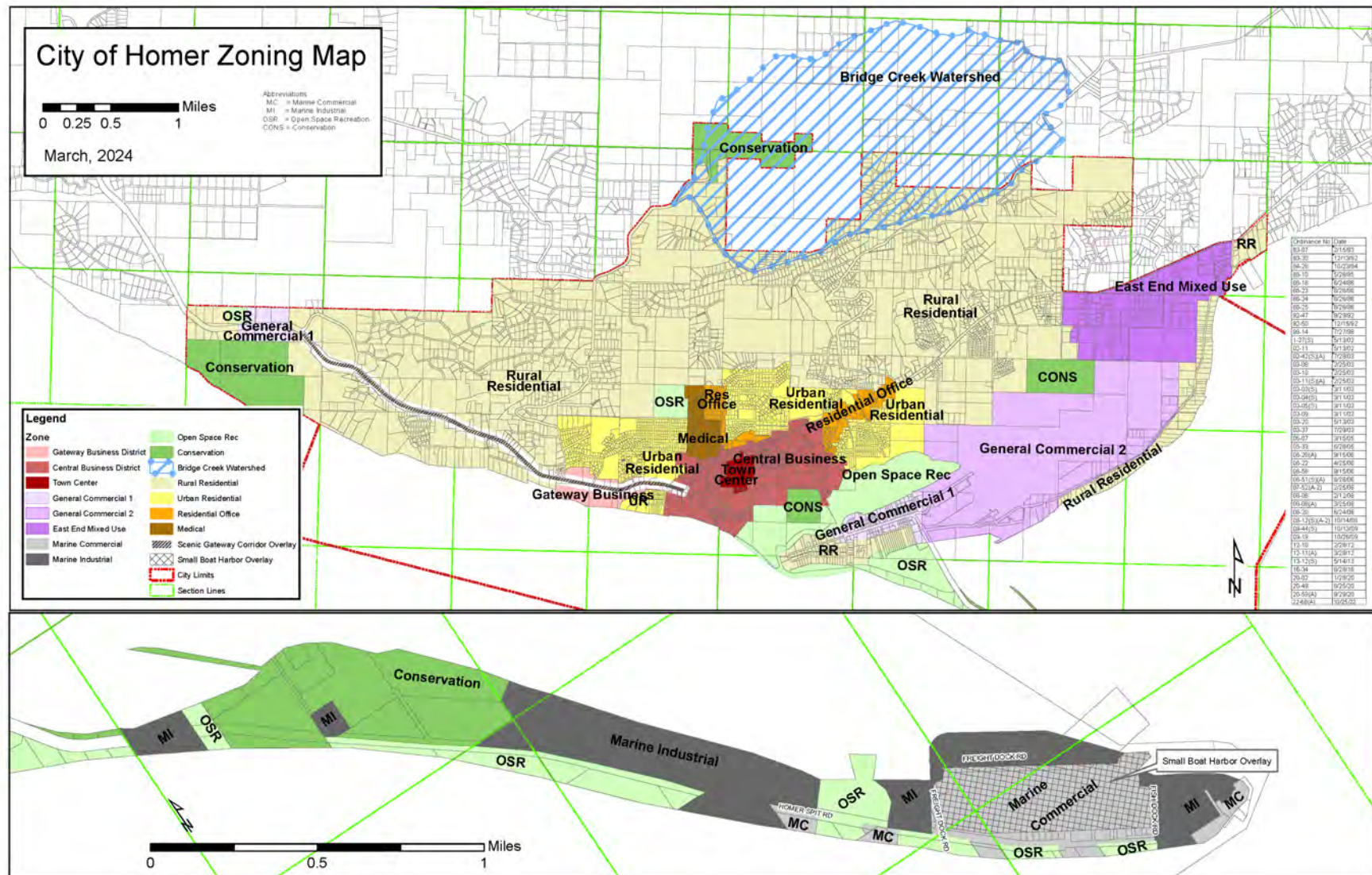


Figure 4: City of Homer Zoning Map



Environmental Constraints Overlay

The Environmental Constraints Overlay is a planning tool developed to support the Future Land Use Map and guide long-term land use policy decisions. It brings together a range of environmental data to illustrate where physical and ecological conditions may present limitations to development or require special consideration. The overlay is organized below into two maps:

- **Conditions** include physical characteristics of the landscape that may pose risks or limitations for development, such as watersheds, steep slopes, scarps, floodplains, hydric soils, and areas of high erosion potential.
- **Designations** include areas that are formally recognized by public entities for conservation or ecological value, such as the Homer Airport Critical Habitat Area.

The Environmental Constraints Overlay accompanies the Future Land Use Map's base designations for the Plan. It provides a general illustration of environmental constraints that may affect development, based on approximate data. **It is not intended to serve as a definitive guide for site-specific decisions.** Detailed technical analysis should be conducted as part of any proposed site development to fully assess conditions. Additionally, users are encouraged to consult the original source data for each mapped constraint; citations for these sources are provided below.

Figure 5: Environmental Constraints Overlay

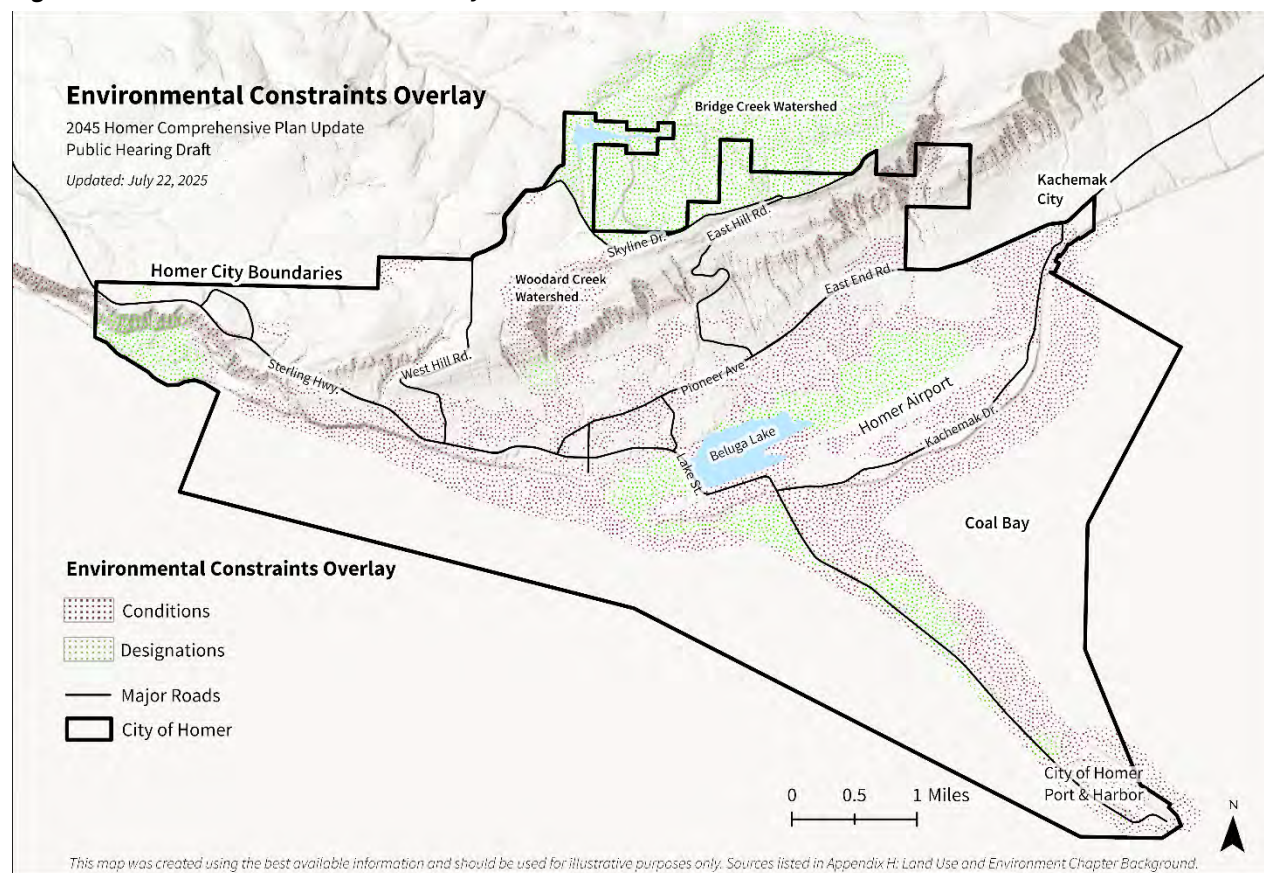


Figure 6: Environmental Constraints Overlay: Conditions

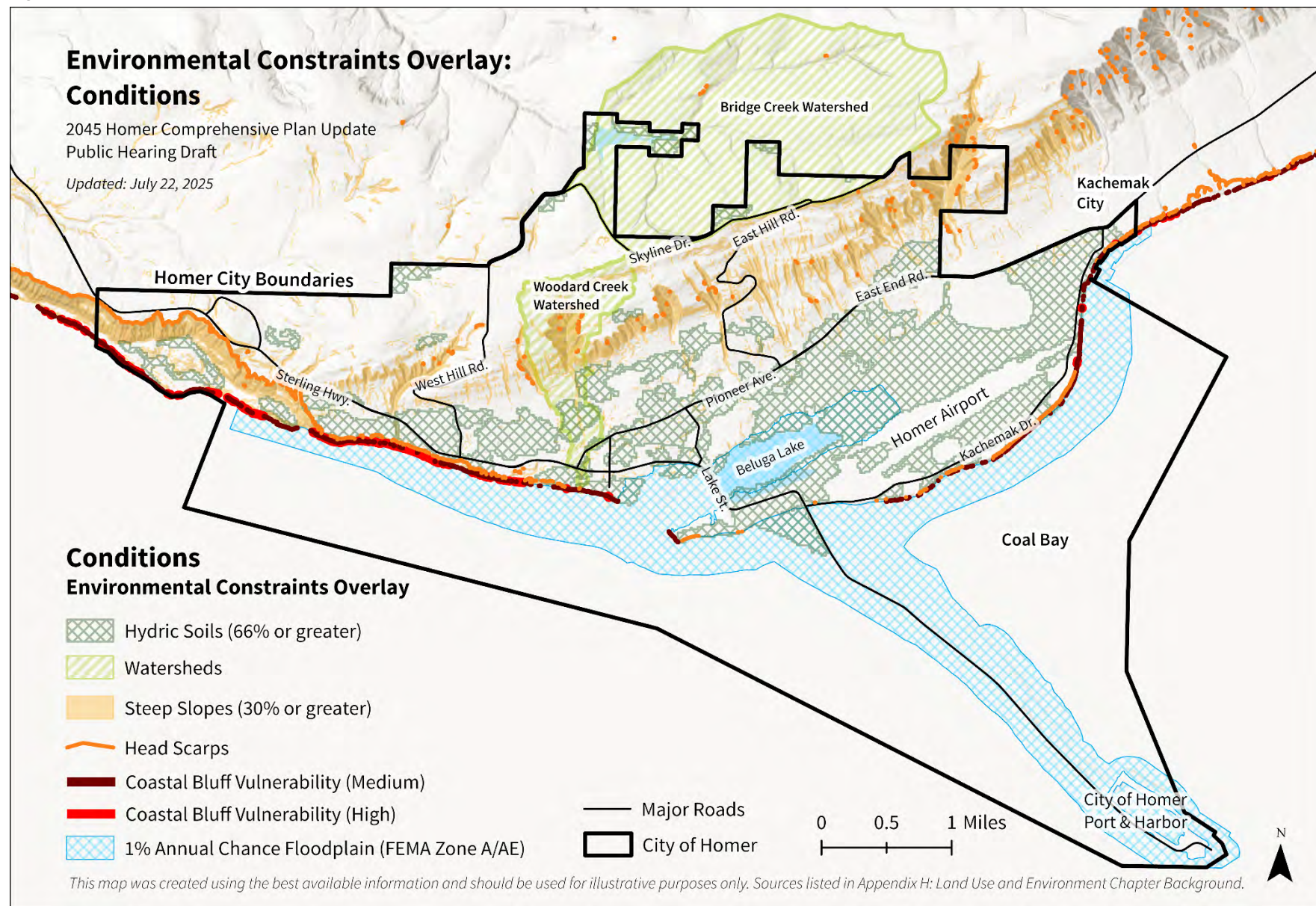
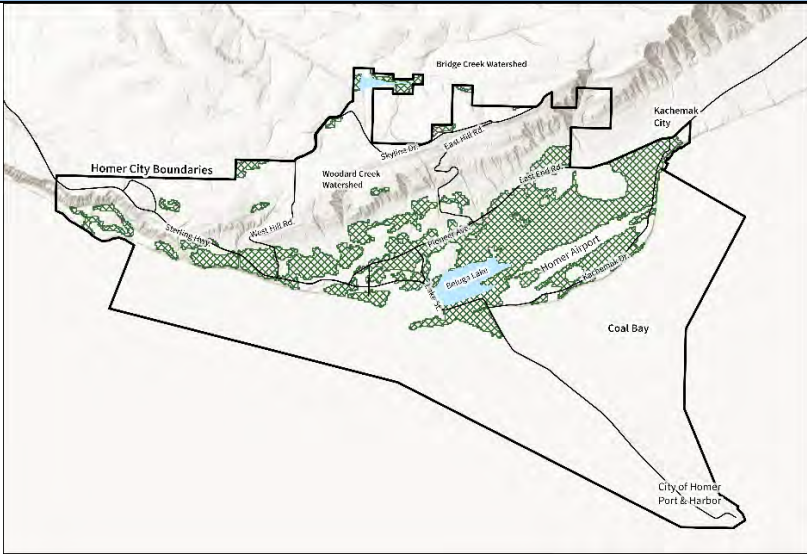
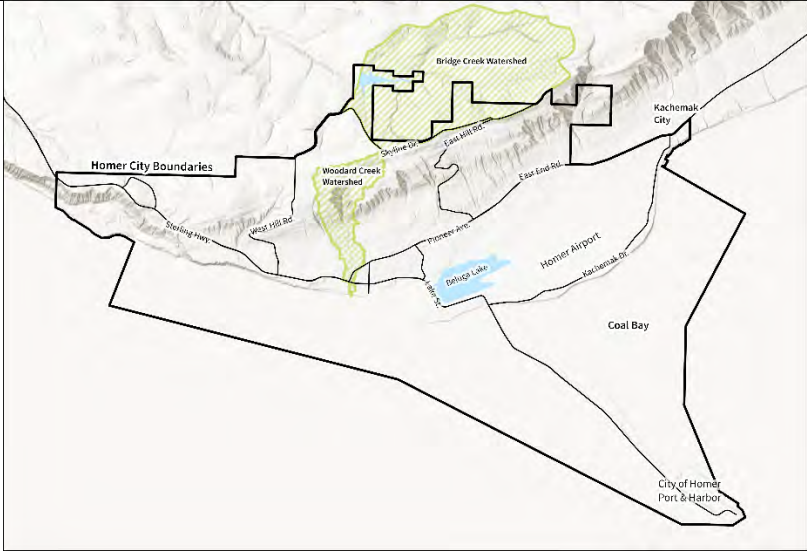
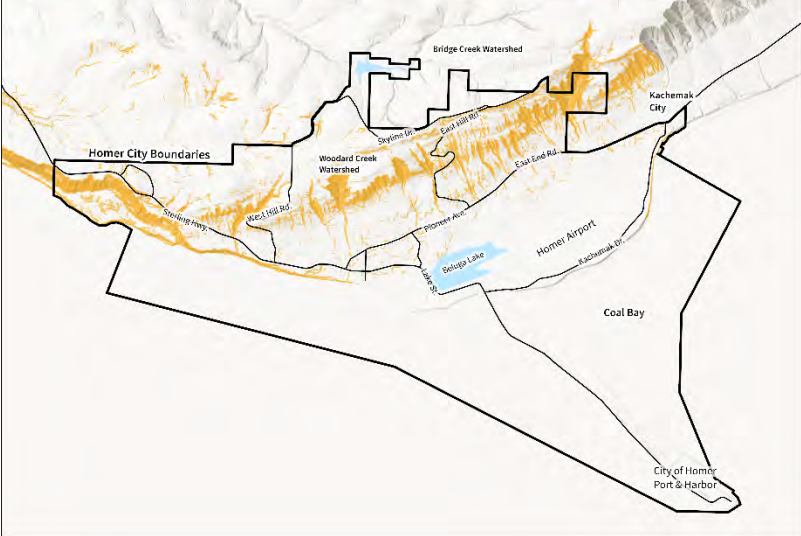
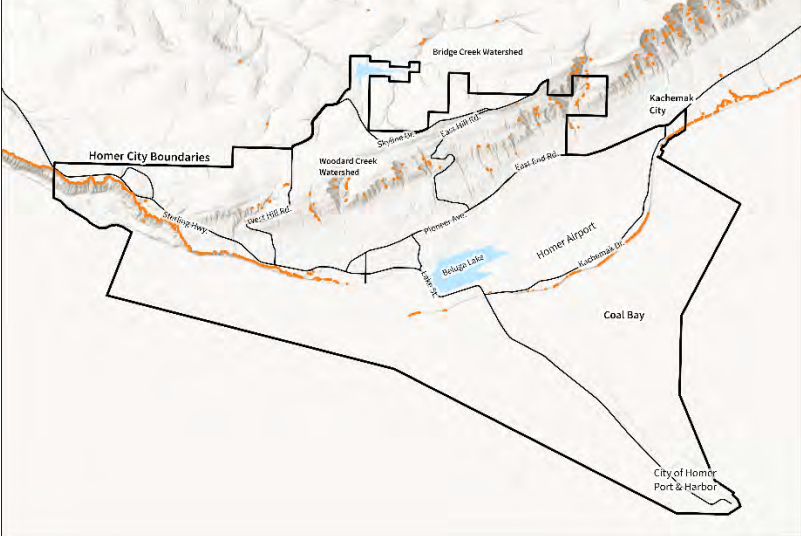


Figure 7: Table of Descriptions in Environmental Constraints Overlay: Conditions

Name, Description, and Source	Map Element
Hydric Soils (66% or greater) The constraints map shows partially (66-90%) and predominantly (more than 90%) hydric soils. Hydric soils are defined as soils that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part of the soil profile. They often signal the presence of wetlands or other areas with limited development potential due to poor drainage, seasonal inundation, or regulatory protections. They also help identify important ecological areas that provide natural water filtration, habitat, and flood mitigation functions. Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. (2024). Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO) [Data set]. https://sdmdataaccess.sc.egov.usda.gov	
Watersheds A watershed is an area of land where all the water – whether from rain, snowmelt, or streams – drains into a common outlet, such as a bay or river. In Homer, key watersheds include Bridge Creek, which supplies the city's drinking water, and Woodard Creek, which flows through downtown and into Kachemak Bay. These watersheds are vital for maintaining water quality, managing stormwater, and supporting fish habitats. Source: City of Homer. (2024). <i>Watershed Boundaries</i> [GIS data]. City of Homer GIS Department. Retrieved from https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov	

Name, Description, and Source	Map Element
Steep Slopes (30% or greater) This layer highlights areas where the land surface rises sharply – slopes of 30 percent or more. Steep slopes can signal places where development may be more difficult due to poor soil stability, erosion potential, and increased costs. They can also indicate areas at higher risk of landslides. For more detailed landslide information in Homer – including mapped debris flows and slope failure zones – see the 2024 <i>Landslide Hazard Susceptibility Mapping in Homer, Alaska</i> report. <i>Note that the study focuses on smaller-scale landslides and does not assess large landforms like the Bear Creek alluvial fan, which may also present risks.</i> Source: Developed from: Esri. (n.d.). <i>Terrain - Slope Percent</i> [Data set]. ArcGIS Living Atlas. Retrieved [insert retrieval date], from https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=304e82c39ca14273b41c26f07e692e93	
Head Scarps This layer shows the mapped upper edges of past landslides – known as head scarps – identified through high-resolution lidar analysis by the Alaska Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys. These features mark the original failure points of slope movements and may indicate areas of ongoing or future instability, even when no landslide deposits are visible on the surface. In Homer, head scarps are often found in steep upland areas and coastal bluffs, where they help identify terrain that may not be suitable for development without further geotechnical study. Source: Salisbury, J. B. (2024). <i>Landslide hazard susceptibility mapping in Homer, Alaska</i> (Report of Investigation 2024-3). Alaska Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys. Retrieved from https://dggs.alaska.gov/pubs/id/31155	

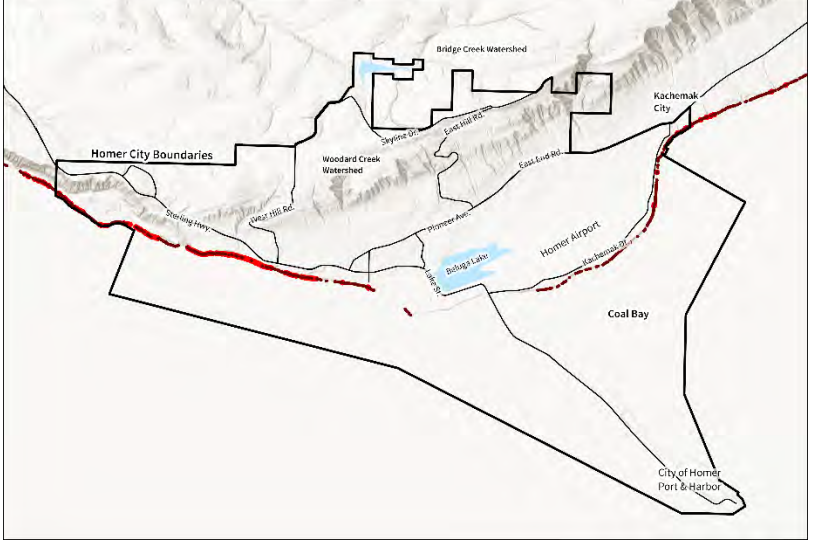
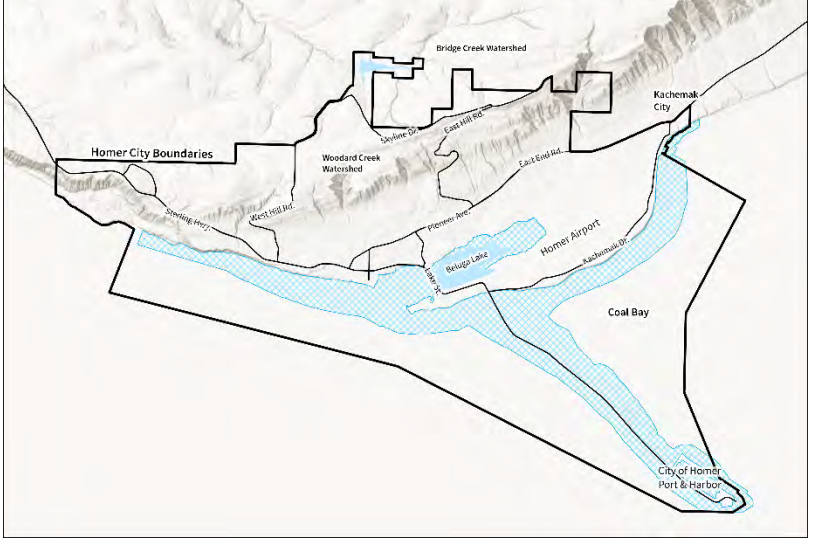
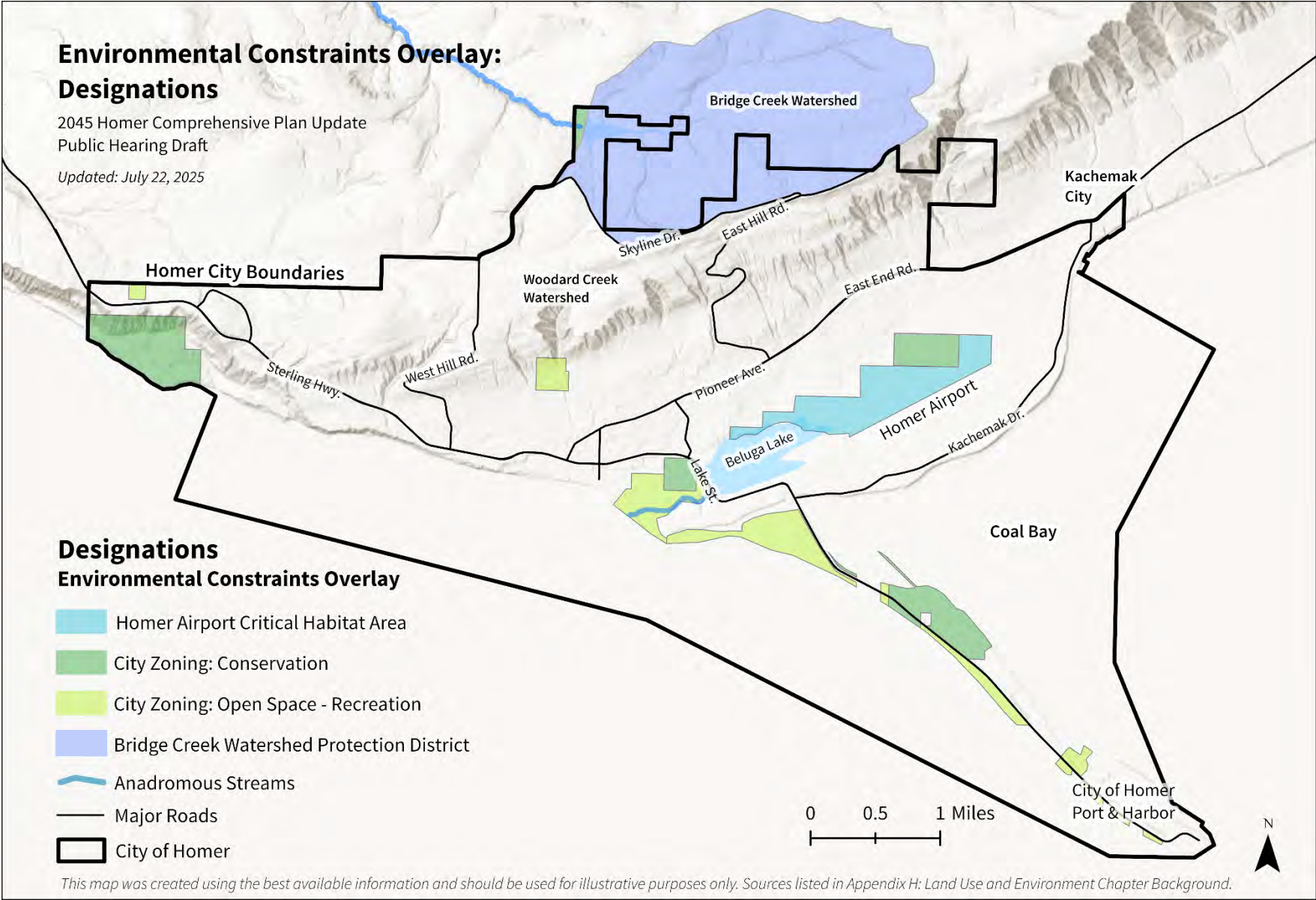
Name, Description, and Source	Map Element
Coastal Bluff Vulnerability This layer shows areas along Homer’s coastline classified as having medium or high vulnerability to bluff instability, based on the 2022 <i>Coastal Bluff Stability Assessment for Homer, Alaska</i> by the Alaska Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys. These classifications are based on historical erosion rates, bluff height, slope, and the likelihood of future retreat. High vulnerability zones indicate areas where coastal erosion and slope failure are more likely to occur and may pose risks to nearby infrastructure or development. Including these areas on the constraints map helps inform decisions about shoreline development, safe access points, and hazard mitigation. Source: Buzard, R.M., & Overbeck, J.R. (2022). <i>Coastal bluff stability assessment for Homer, Alaska</i>. https://dggs.alaska.gov/pubs/id/30908	
1% Annual Chance Floodplain (FEMA Zone A/AE) This layer identifies areas within Homer that have a 1% annual chance of flooding—commonly known as the “100-year floodplain”—as defined by FEMA’s Zone A and AE designations. These zones represent the highest flood risk areas mapped by FEMA and are often subject to stricter building and insurance requirements. Other FEMA flood zones, such as areas of minimal or undetermined flood risk, are not included here to maintain clarity and emphasize the most critical flood hazard zones for planning purposes. Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency. (n.d.). <i>Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map Database, City of Homer, Alaska, USA</i>. Retrieved from https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/digital-flood-insurance-rate-map-database-city-of-homer-alaska-usa	

Figure 8: Environmental Constraints Overlay: Designations



Appendix I: Actions for Partner Strategies

Key to Icons in the Plan

✓: **PRIORITY.** Emerging priority for implementation.

✂: **CAPITAL.** This action features a potential capital project (including those in planning and feasibility stages).

*: **CODE.** This action recommends a specific code revision.

◆: **2018.** This action is adapted/carried over from the 2018 comprehensive plan.

Land Use & Environment Potential Partner-Led Strategies

6. **Collaborate with public and private partners to enhance community spaces and recreational infrastructure.** ◆
 - a. Promote public-private partnerships for the maintenance and improvement of parks, trails, and green spaces.
 - b. Expand the adopt-a-park program to engage local businesses, service organizations, and youth groups in caring for public spaces.
 - c. Explore the creation of a park endowment fund to support long-term maintenance and upgrades of outdoor recreation areas.
 - d. Partner with local organizations and private property owners to complete sidewalks, install landscaping, improve building façades, and integrate green infrastructure in commercial areas.
 - e. Encourage joint use agreements and shared investment in parking, access, and public amenities that support compact, walkable development.
7. **Coordinate with regional and state agencies to align land use policies with environmental stewardship and shared planning goals.**
 - a. Work with regional land use partners to ensure development codes reflect adopted plans and evolving land management goals.
 - b. Incorporate shared hazard mitigation, watershed protection, and climate adaptation priorities into local land use planning through ongoing interagency collaboration. ◆

Public Facilities and Services Potential Partner-Led Strategies

7. Identify and address the deficiencies of the Homer Airport (updated master plan, more reliable year-round service, etc.).

- a) Collaborate with the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) in the development of a new airport master plan for Homer Airport.
- b) Collaborate with air carriers to provide more reliable year-round service to and from Homer Airport.

8. Ensure people of all ages and abilities can live, work, and play in the community, including encouraging businesses and organizations to create accessible, ADA-compliant facilities.

- a) Include accessible crossings in all future road projects. ✖
- b) Ensure community hubs (schools, university campus, stores, services, parks) are accessible and connected for all ages and abilities. ✖

9. Collaborate with Borough, state, and federal partners to ensure year-round access to community facilities for recreational, educational, social, and cultural activities.

- a) Support the efficient use of existing community facilities. Partner with organizations to keep city facilities operating beyond normal hours. ♦
- b) Continue to collaborate with the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) to use school facilities for recreational, educational, social, and cultural activities to the entire community after school hours and in the summer. ♦

Housing Potential Partner-Led Strategies

3. **Develop incentives and public-private partnerships for affordable and long-term housing development.**

- a. Conduct targeted borough land disposition for housing with specific objectives in mind: manufactured housing, smaller lots for more affordable ownership and rental products, duplexes, and triplexes. Note: The strategic approach to land disposition could occur through targeted negotiations/partnerships with local organizations, such as Tribes and Kenai Peninsula Housing Initiatives, Inc. In addition, the RFP process could be used to select developers/contractors and associated homebuyers for selected borough owned lots with specific housing objectives.
- b. Explore the creation of a local housing fund and implement targeted incentives to encourage affordable housing development over luxury and short-term rental projects.
- c. Address the scarcity of affordable land by exploring Community Land Trust models (example: Sitka, AK) and other strategies to lower land acquisition costs.
- c) Explore ways to incentivize private property owners to place existing vacant parcels into residential use.
- d. Build public-private partnerships with organizations that influence housing development, such as contractors, nonprofits, Tribal housing authorities, and lending agencies.
- e. Explore possibilities for City land acquisition with the intent to develop attainable housing through a request for proposal (RFP) process.
- d) Explore partnerships and solutions that could reduce the cost of shipping for building materials and manufactured homes to Homer.
- e) Engage with lenders, insurance providers, utility companies, and housing advocates to identify barriers and potential solutions for financing, insuring, and connecting non-traditional housing types (e.g., yurts, tiny homes, manufactured housing).

Economic Development Potential Partner-Led Strategies

- 4. Support Homer's youngest residents and their families by making sure they have what they need to grow and thrive, including access to child care. ⚡**
 - a. Ensure quality childcare is accessible and affordable, with parents and caregivers easily able to connect with available childcare resources and programs.
 - b. Promote a healthy lifestyle by increasing activities available for youth.
 - c. Promote volunteer and education opportunities for youth to become involved in civic life and contribute to improving the community.
- 5. Expand vocational training resources, particularly in trades, marine trades (including mariculture and shipping industries), and healthcare industries, to retain young residents and provide year-round employment. ⚡**
 - a. Enhance health care opportunities and adjacent industries to strengthen local services and employment. ♦
 - b. Create co-working spaces and incubator hubs for small-scale manufacturers and entrepreneurs. (The Commons in Ketchikan is a good case study <https://www.tongassfcu.com/business/business-services/the-commons-at-tfcu/>.)
 - c. Encourage the retention of existing and the relocation of new Federal and State Government jobs and training programs to Homer. Promote Homer as a place to expand and attract government operations. ♦
 - d. Continue and increase support for the Alaska Small Business Development Center business advisor located in Homer to foster local business growth.
- 6. Support access to quality, affordable health care. ⚡**
- 7. Promote fishing and maritime services as viable career options in Homer and demonstrate long-term support for and commitment to the industry.**
 - a. Develop programs to attract seafood buyers and retailers to Homer, increasing competition and driving better prices for local fishermen.
 - b. Expand hands-on training and apprenticeships to promote fishing as a viable career option.
 - c. Offer grant programs, financial assistance, and legal services to support new entrants to the fishing industry.
 - d. Promote sustainable, science-based fisheries management.
- 8. Promote food security.**
 - a. Identify supply chain vulnerabilities.
- 9. Address barriers to workforce recruitment and retention (e.g., housing, child care).**
- 10. Pursue moderate, sustainable growth in tourism, focusing on activities that benefit small businesses and minimize negative impacts on community character. ♦**
- 11. Develop regenerative tourism strategies to balance visitor growth with environmental and community preservation.**

- b. Promote recreation, the arts, and non-governmental organizations as a complement to tourism and as an export industry. ♦

11. Support Homer’s seniors, including the ability to remain in the community as they age.

12. Support high-quality K-12 and higher education in Homer, support teachers, and sustain lifelong learning opportunities for all residents.

- a. Develop regenerative tourism strategies to balance visitor growth with environmental and community preservation.
- b. Promote recreation, the arts, and non-governmental organizations as a complement to tourism and as an export industry. ♦

Transportation Potential Partner-Led Strategies

- 3. Ensure continued operation of safe airport and ferry operations to support the movement of people and goods to and from the community and maintain Homer's status as a regional hub.**
- 4. Explore public transit options, particularly in the Homer Spit area, to alleviate traffic congestion and improve accessibility for seasonal workers, residents, and visitors.**
- 5. Install benches, trash cans, bike racks and create drop-off and pick-up locations for buses, taxis and visitors, in alignment with the Homer Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan.**

Governance Potential Partner-Led Strategies

5. **Identify opportunities to coordinate with organizations including Tribal organizations, Alaska Native Corporations, and local and regional non-profits to leverage resources and provide services more cost-effectively.**
 - a. Build a coalition of public-private partnerships to support improvements to the commercial streetscape of Pioneer and Old Town.
6. **Work with the Kenai Peninsula Borough to advocate for and implement policies that fiscally benefit borough communities.**

Potential Kenai Peninsula Borough Policies that Could Benefit Homer

Potential Borough Policy	Description	Benefit(s) for Homer
Revenue-Sharing Based on Population Growth	Borough level policy that adjusts revenue-sharing allocations based on population growth.	As Homer grows, the policy would provide additional funds to support expanded public services, infrastructure, and public safety without burdening local taxpayers.
Capital Improvement Fund for Growing Municipalities	Establish a dedicated borough capital improvement fund to provide grants and low interest loans to cities experiencing growth.	Would help Homer to handle the infrastructure costs of population growth without taking on significant debt, reducing the burden on Homer's operating budget and freeing up funds for other critical needs.
Population-Weighted Grant Distribution	Borough level grant distribution system that prioritizes municipalities with a higher growth rate for specific needs, such as public safety or health funding. Grants could be allocated based on metrics such as population increase, infrastructure needs, and public safety demands.	Homer's infrastructure needs are expected to rise with additional population. These targeted grants would help ensure that the city can afford any necessary expansions without relying heavily on local taxes.
Borough-Wide Infrastructure Bonds	Issue borough-wide bonds for large-scale infrastructure projects that benefit growing cities like Homer, with repayment shared across the borough rather than being the sole responsibility of individual cities.	Large infrastructure projects are very costly for a single city. A shared bond would allow Homer to access necessary funds without incurring unsustainable debt.
Tourism and Recreation Investment	Implement borough-level strategies to boost tourism and recreational activities in cities experiencing growth. This could include building and maintaining parks, trails, and tourist attractions that drive additional sales tax revenue.	Boosting tourism-related investments could help offset the costs of population growth while generating additional revenue for the city's budget.

Sustainability and Resilience Potential Partner-Led Strategies

4. Leverage Partnerships to Advance Community-Wide Sustainability and Resilience. ⚡

Advance Renewable Energy and Infrastructure Innovation

- a. Support the expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the community to reduce transportation-related emissions and improve access for residents and visitors.
- b. Collaborate with partners to advocate for and invest in renewable energy sources, including hydroelectric, solar, wind, and tidal.
- c. Coordinate with utilities to pilot and plan for future microgrid networks that improve local energy resilience and distribution.

Strengthen Land and Watershed Stewardship Through Collaborative Planning

- d. Partner with conservation organizations and regional land managers to restore, enhance, and manage wetlands and habitat systems that support resilience and watershed health.
- e. Develop a wetlands inventory and management plan to guide long-term land use decisions based on the function and value of wetland areas.
- f. Develop and consider adoption of an updated, science-based wildlife corridor map that integrates updated habitat data, climate resilience considerations, and land use patterns to inform protection of critical habitats.
- g. Enhance stream corridors with constructed ponds, restored wetlands, and other ecological features that provide habitat, manage runoff, and improve recreational access.

Improve Mapping and Data to Support Resilient Land Use Decisions

- h. Develop technical mapping tools, including stormwater drainage basins and flow paths, to guide City-led infrastructure decisions and support watershed-based planning.
- i. Inventory land with geographic information systems (GIS) to identify priority sites for open space acquisition and hazard mitigation.

Promote Waste Reduction and Resource Recovery

- j. Coordinate with the Kenai Peninsula Borough to support community recycling and resource recovery programs and explore opportunities for improved waste management.

Appendix J: Implementation Plan

Each chapter of the Core Plan includes a set of policies (goals, strategies, and actions) to guide the City, residents, and partners with achieving the community's vision. The following proposed implementation plan includes priority strategies that would be City-led. In the Core Plan, these are the strategies identified with the priority icon (↗). Priorities were selected based on community input, feedback from City staff, leadership, boards, and commissions, review of the 2008 and 2018 Comprehensive Plans and other relevant plans, reports, and City actions (e.g., City Council-adopted Capital Improvement Project list). Proposed action plans have varying specificity based on available data; for example, the cost of implementation is not available for all actions. These details will be revisited as the plan is implemented.

The following action plans provide broad guidance to support implementation of the comprehensive plan and should be considered working drafts subject to change. For example, many cost estimates are drawn from the City's FY26 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and reflect priorities at the time of adoption. The CIP is updated annually, and project costs and priorities may shift over time. Any proposed actions that require budget commitments or code changes will be further considered by the City Council for formal action and/or approval. As such, this implementation plan and proposed actions should not be considered a formal mandate to fully implement and/or fund all proposed City-led strategies and/or actions. To support implementation, City staff, boards, and commissions will collaboratively prepare annual work plans based on the action plans. Annual work plans will consider existing and anticipated resources and will provide potential direction to City leadership and staff. As part of this annual work planning process, City departments will present on Comprehensive Plan accomplishments and proposed priorities to the City Council each year. The Community Development Department will create a website with tracking information for annual reporting of implementation progress.

Key to Icons in the Plan

✂: **CAPITAL.** This action features a potential capital project (including those in planning and feasibility stages).

*: **CODE.** This action recommends a specific code revision.

♦: **2018.** This action is adapted/carried over from the 2018 comprehensive plan.

Action Plan Tables

How are the action plans organized?

Strategy: Priority strategy; these are found in all chapters.

Actions:

Near-term steps the City and can take to move a strategy forward.

Who:

Staff, committees, and partners who will lead and support implementation, in alphabetical order. Most actions will require collaboration to be successful.

Estimated Costs:

Projected costs to implement the action over the next twenty years, when known.

Potential Resources:

Potential funding sources to support implementation. The back of this appendix includes a reference list of lettered funding sources.

Target Timeframe: Approximate timeframe to complete the action, based on adoption date:

- Ongoing = no end date
- Short = 1-2 years
- Medium = 3-5 years
- Long = more than 5 years

Land Use and Environment Action Plan

See Appendix A for a list of acronyms.

Funding Land Use and Environment Priorities: To support implementation of strategies and actions in this section, see potential funding opportunities A, B, C, F, G, K, S, X, Z.

Icon Key: ✖ Capital Project | * Code Revision | ♦ Action Carried Over from 2018 Comprehensive Plan

Strategy 1. Implement a Future Land Use Map that guides decisions about land use and growth.

Note: Actions associated with this strategy are encompassed in Land Use and Environment Strategy 2.

Strategy 2. Implement zoning reforms to support sustainable growth and attainable housing development.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Prioritize zoning reforms that expand housing choice, including support for higher-density and mixed-use development, infill, and housing types such as ADUs, townhomes, and modular homes. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
b. Create zoning tools like form-based codes and flexible use standards that accommodate evolving land uses and building types. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
c. Create consistent design and infrastructure standards that reflect neighborhood character and support multi-modal access. * ♦	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
d. Align development regulations with community service availability, promoting growth in areas already served by schools, utilities, and other key services. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
e. Simplify and clarify the development approval process and related staff procedures. * ♦	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
f. Improve enforcement and reporting procedures to address development-related health and safety issues, within scope of zoning and permitting authority. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
g. Gauge community and stakeholder support for zoning and policy tools that expand housing options, such as density bonuses, parking requirement adjustments, and other potential incentives for affordable and long-term housing development.	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
h. Modify zoning and permitting tools to support small business growth and economic resilience, including consideration for locally owned and emerging industries. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)

Strategy 3. Strategically align development regulations with natural hazard risks and land suitability to support safe, resilient, and responsible growth.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Use the City of Homer Hazard Mitigation Plan to inform updates to zoning and development codes, ensuring land use decisions reflect the latest risk assessments. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
b. Clarify zoning procedures and criteria for rezoning reviews to ensure consistency with the comprehensive plan and hazard mitigation goals. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
c. Update development standards for steep slopes, drainageways, and sensitive sites to manage grading, erosion, runoff, and vegetation clearing. Encourage the use of green infrastructure and site-responsive design solutions to improve drainage and reduce hazard exposure. * ◆	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
d. Strengthen stormwater and erosion control provisions in City code, incorporating green infrastructure techniques—such as vegetated buffers and infiltration features—to reduce coastal bluff erosion and other site-based hazards. *◆	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
e. Improve coordination between subdivision design standards and site-level review to ensure hazard mitigation measures carry through from platting to construction. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
f. Consider expanding the range of conditions that may be applied to Conditional Use Permits to address riparian protection, soil stability, wetland preservation, and related site concerns. *	City Administration, Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)

Strategy 4. Protect and enhance green space in Homer to support habitat connectivity, recreational access, and community well-being.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Complete priority upgrades to existing City parks, including Karen Hornaday Park, Bayview Park, and Jack Gist Park. ✖	Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, Public Works Department, City Council	Karen Hornaday: \$1.1M Jack Gist: \$840k Bayview: \$190k (all from FY26 CIP)	Medium (3-5 years)
b. Continue to improve existing trails and public access points to meet the needs of families, seniors, and residents and visitors with limited mobility. ✖	Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
c. Enhance or improve safe public access to beaches at designated public access points as feasible. ✖	Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
d. Develop and implement a Master Park and Recreation Plan to proactively guide park maintenance, upgrades, and future facility needs. ✖ ♦	City Administration, Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)

Public Facilities and Services Action Plan

See Appendix A for a list of acronyms.

Funding Public Facilities and Services Priorities: To support implementation of strategies and actions in this section, see potential funding opportunities B, G, I, K, M, N, O, P, Q, R, V, Y, Z.

Icon Key: ✖ Capital Project | ✱ Code Revision | ♦ Action Carried Over from 2018 Comprehensive Plan

Strategy 1. Provide safe, year-round public facilities for residents of all ages and abilities.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Maintain the library as a thriving community space for learning and connecting, including assessing the library's anticipated need for growth and improvements over the next decade and planning for upgrades. ✖	Library Advisory Board, Library Department, Information Technology Department	Remodel engineering study: \$75k (FY26 CIP)	Ongoing
b. Implement the 2023 City of Homer Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan for Parks, Play Areas and Campgrounds and the Transition Plan for City Facilities to correct deficiencies and implement policies that increase accessibility of Homer's public facilities and recreation spaces. Priority sites for upgrades include City Hall, Karen Hornaday Park, the Nick Dudiak Fishing Lagoon Accessible Ramp and Fishing Platform, and removing parking and pavement barriers at City facilities. ✖	ADA Advisory Board, Administration Department, Public Works Department, Port and Harbor Department	City Hall: \$1.1M Fishing Lagoon Ramp & Platform: \$770k Parking Barrier Removal: \$386k (all from FY26 CIP)	Medium (3-5 years)
c. Plan for and construct a new, multi-purpose community center in Homer's downtown to serve the social, recreation, cultural, and educational needs of the Homer community. Preferred features include a general-purpose gymnasium, multi-purpose space for instructional programs, safe walking/running, dedicated space for youth, and possible emergency shelter. ✖	Administration Department, Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, City Council	~\$16.05M (FY26 CIP)	Medium (3-5 years)
d. Demolish the Homer Education and Recreation Complex (HERC) and identify opportunities for remediation of the site. ✖	Administration Department, City Council	Undetermined	Long (more than 5 years)
e. Consider and evaluate changing the City's organizational structure to provide park facilities and recreation services by establishing a dedicated Parks and Recreation Department.	Administration Department, Finance Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
f. Ensure that City facilities are sufficient to support events that draw visitors such as festivals and activities (e.g., clean restrooms on the Spit, RV dump stations, adequate trash collection, etc.). ✖	Administration Department, Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
g. Update the Homer Airport Terminal to address deferred maintenance and improve accessibility. ✖	Public Works Department, Administration Department, City Council	\$1.3 M for initial repairs and renovations (FY26 CIP)	Medium (3-5 years)

Strategy 2. Continue to provide high-quality water and sewer services within the City to meet current and anticipated demands.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Update the 2006 Water and Sewer Master Plan.	Administration Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
b. Continue to build, upgrade, and replace water and wastewater infrastructure to meet industry standards, changing regulatory requirements, and replace aging systems. ♦ ✖	Public Works Department	\$707k for wastewater treatment plant improvements \$10.4 M for water storage and distribution improvements (FY26 CIP)	Ongoing
c. Maintain the water and sewer Capital Asset Repair and Maintenance Allowance (CARMA) funds for repair and replacement of facilities that serve existing customers.	Finance Department, Public Works Department, City Council	Undetermined	Ongoing
d. Use the Homer Accelerated Water and Sewer Program (HAWSP) to fund the design and construction of facilities that support new and existing customers.	Finance Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
e. Continue to limit and manage development in the Bridge Creek Watershed Protection District to maintain its suitability as a drinking water source.	Community Development Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Ongoing

Strategy 3. Maintain and improve Port and Harbor infrastructure.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Develop a long-range Port and Harbor Management Plan that considers the environmental and economic significance of the Spit, the impacts of climate change, and natural hazards like earthquakes, tsunamis, and erosion.	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Erosion Mitigation: \$4M (FY26 CIP)	Medium (3-5 years)
b. Maintain infrastructure to maximize longevity and ensure safety of users. ✖	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
c. Maintain and promote Homer's status as a "working waterfront" by being a partner for the Alaska Marine Highway System, the U.S. Coast Guard, commercial operations, and other state and federal partners.	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
d. Plan for and construct a large vessel haul out facility. ✖	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	\$5.3 M (from FY26 CIP)	Long (more than 5 years)
e. Consider opportunities to integrate complementary marine industrial and tourism uses, for example by constructing walking paths and viewing platforms that would allow visitors to observe aspects of the marine trades that they may not be able to see elsewhere. ✖	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Undetermined	Ongoing

Strategy 4. Develop new facilities to support access and safety on the Homer Spit.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Support the harbor expansion and related infrastructure, including environmental review, geotechnical studies, and funding strategies to align with public safety, traffic, and parking objectives on the Spit. ✖	Port and Harbor Department, Community Development Department, Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, City Administration, City Council	\$278 mil (FY26 CIP)	Long (5+ years)

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
b. Develop new non-motorized infrastructure providing safe access to the harbor and improve the accessibility of existing infrastructure, including ADA improvements at the Fishing Hole. ✖	ADA Advisory Board, Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
c. Further develop parking at the base of the Spit, designate formal parking areas to minimize parking in unsuitable areas, and consider free seasonal shuttles and pay-to-park options in congested areas to reduce traffic. ✖	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department, City Council	Undetermined	Long (5+ years)
d. Evaluate the need for a new parking structure on the Spit that could also serve as a shelter-in-place location during tsunamis. ✖	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Undetermined	Long (5+ years)
e. Improve viewpoints for wildlife observation. ✖	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department, Public Works Department, Planning Commission, Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
f. Evaluate the uses of City-owned property on the Spit and ensure uses align with the needs and aesthetics of the area.	Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)

Housing Action Plan

See Appendix A for a list of acronyms.

Funding Housing Priorities: To support implementation of strategies and actions in this section, see potential funding opportunities B, G, L, U.

Icon Key: ✂ Capital Project | ✱ Code Revision | ♦ Action Carried Over from 2018 Comprehensive Plan

Strategy 1. Implement zoning reforms to encourage attainable housing development for young people, families, seniors, and seasonal workers.

Note: Actions associated with this strategy are encompassed in Land Use and Environment Strategy 2.

Strategy 2. Assess Homer's housing needs and maintain data collection.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Conduct a Housing Needs Assessment to identify current and future housing needs, including types and numbers of units required to serve projected population growth and affordability ranges as well as support economic growth and industries.	Administration Department, Community Development Department, City Council	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)Long (5+ years)
b. Complete a housing stock report and buildable lands inventory.	Administration Department, Community Development Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
c. Evaluate the City's land portfolio to identify any feasible opportunities for strategic dispositions.	Administration Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
d. Update housing indicators annually to track housing issues, constraints, needs, and opportunities.	Administration Department, Community Development Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
e. Monitor short-term rentals and their impact on the housing market.	Administration Department, Community Development Department, City Council	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)

Economic Development Action Plan

See Appendix A for a list of acronyms.

Funding Economic Development Priorities: To support implementation of strategies and actions in this section, see potential funding opportunities A, B, D, E, G, I, M, N, O, P, Q, R, T, U, V, W, Y.

Icon Key: ✂ Capital Project | ✱ Code Revision | ♦ Action Carried Over from 2018 Comprehensive Plan

Strategy 1. Invest in infrastructure that supports economic growth in key sectors.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Incentivize growth of the marine trades in Homer to expand services offered locally, create jobs, support fishing, increase the City’s taxbase, and reduce the need to travel to other areas of Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. ✂ ✱	Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Economic Development Commission, Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
b. Continue to develop the Homer Spit (the Spit) in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner to provide opportunities for marine trades and tourism. ✂	Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, Economic Development Commission, Port and Harbor Advisory Commission, Port and Harbor Department	Undetermined	Ongoing

Strategy 2. Celebrate Homer's status as a vibrant hub for arts, culture, and community engagement.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Update the Parks, Art, Recreation, and Culture Needs Assessment, and continue to expand City partnerships with other organizations and entities to implement recommendations.	Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission Administration Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
b. Support arts and culture installations and spaces in the community, including Homer's museums and galleries and on the Spit. ✂	Economic Development Commission, Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission,	Undetermined	Ongoing
c. Collaborate with citizen groups and nonprofit organizations to address community needs by providing limited technical assistance and the option to use City land or facilities at reduced rates. ♦	City Administration, City Council	Undetermined	Ongoing
d. Increase the presence of Alaska Native art, signage, and history around Homer.	Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Ongoing

Transportation Action Plan

See Appendix A for a list of acronyms.

Funding Transportation Priorities: To support implementation of strategies and actions in this section, see potential funding opportunities A, B, C, F, G, K, S, X, Z.

Icon Key: ✖ Capital Project | ✱ Code Revision | ♦ Action Carried Over from 2018 Comprehensive Plan

Strategy 1. Build or improve safe roadway and pathway access and connections to key locations.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Improve non-motorized connections to schools. ✖	Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, Community Development Department, Public Works Department, Kenai Peninsula Borough, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	Undetermined	Varies
b. Implement recommendations in the Homer Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan. ✖ ♦	Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, Community Development Department, Public Works Department	\$278k (FY26 CIP)	Long (5+ years)

Note: See the 2024 Homer Transportation Plan for related policies on the following topics: e-bike legislation, complete streets/all ages and abilities policy, traffic calming, bicycle safety campaign, parking study, neighborhood connectivity to schools, extension of the Homer All Ages and Abilities Pedestrian Pathway (HAPP) Loop, walking and biking infrastructure priorities, complete East-West connections.

Governance Action Plan

See Appendix A for a list of acronyms.

Funding Governance Priorities: The below policies are all internal and no funding sources have been identified to support implementation.

Icon Key: ✖ Capital Project | ✱ Code Revision | ♦ Action Carried Over from 2018 Comprehensive Plan

Strategy 1. Develop a long-term fiscal plan that is proactive, sustainable, and responsive to short-term challenges and opportunities.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Establish a six-year budget framework to improve financial foresight and stability.	Administration Department, Finance Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
b. Ensure the Capital Improvement Plan is tied to the six-year budget.	Administration Department, Finance Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)

Strategy 2. Diversify revenue streams to reduce dependence on sales and property taxes.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Increase financial reserves to mitigate risks from economic downturns or unexpected expenditures.	Administration Department, City Council, Finance Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
b. Leverage City-owned land for development that aligns with economic and housing goals.	City Council, Community Development Department, Planning Commission	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
c. Explore the feasibility of taxation options.	Administration Department, City Council, Finance Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
d. Use tools such as bonds, tax increment financing (TIF), Business Improvement District (BID) assessments, and other mechanisms to finance	Administration Department, City Council, Community	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
infrastructure improvements and public amenities in designated redevelopment areas.	Development Department, Finance Department		
e. Offer property tax abatements (City-wide or targeted) to developers to incentivize investment in higher-density projects.	City Council, Community Development Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
f. Expand fees for City services, such as permitting and recreational activities, to align costs with service use.	Administration Department, City Council, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
g. Support small business growth through targeted incentives to expand the local tax base.	City Council, Administration Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)

Sustainability and Resilience Action Plan

See Appendix A for a list of acronyms.

Funding Sustainability and Resilience Priorities: To support implementation of strategies and actions in this section, see potential funding opportunities A, B, C, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, Q, X.

Icon Key: ✖ Capital Project | * Code Revision | ♦ Action Carried Over from 2018 Comprehensive Plan

Strategy 1. Modernize City operations for long-term efficiency and resilience.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Incorporate sustainability (long-term resource stewardship) and resilience (ability to adapt and recover from disruptions) into the design and evaluation of all City plans, policies, and capital projects. *	All City boards, commissions, departments	Undetermined	Ongoing
b. Conduct energy audits of City facilities and operations on a 10-year basis to identify cost-saving opportunities and inform capital upgrades. ✖	Administration Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
c. Transition City facilities and assets to more efficient and lower-emission energy sources where feasible. ✖	Administration Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
d. Continue to seek grant funding and technical assistance for projects that restore ecological functions, reduce flood risk, or enhance long-term resilience.	Administration Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Ongoing
e. Explore the use of local or alternative building materials to reduce building costs and improve resilience.	Administration Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)

Strategy 2. Reduce risk from natural hazards through proactive siting and planning.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Relocate municipal buildings out of tsunami inundation zones where feasible and continue to consider hazard-prone or unsuitable areas in future development projects. ✖	Administration Department, Community Development Department, Public Works Department	\$11.4 M for Public Works facility (FY26 CIP)	Ongoing
b. Provide information and signage to educate residents and visitors about tsunami evacuation routes. ✖	Administration Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Ongoing

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
c. Incorporate landslide risk analysis into City planning using tools such as LiDAR mapping and geotechnical field assessments, with an emphasis on bluff areas most vulnerable to development and climate impacts. ✖	Community Development Department, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
d. Continue to implement the Homer Beach Policy and Management Plan, including enforcement of existing regulations, establishment of future regulations, and public education to ensure Homer's beaches are maintained, preserved, protected, and enjoyed. ♦	Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department, Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Committee, Police Department, City Administration	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years)
e. Evaluate current bluff stability best practices in City infrastructure design standards, including guidance for street extensions, trails, utilities, and ROW projects near coastal or inland bluffs. Incorporate if needed.	Public Works Department	Undetermined	Long (5+ years)

Strategy 3. Enhance natural drainage systems.

Action	Who	Estimated Costs	Target Timeframe
a. Update and adopt the City's Low-Impact Development Plan (also referred to as the Green Infrastructure – Stormwater Master Plan) to incorporate current data on erosion, water quality, and flooding. The updated plan should identify strategic opportunities for wetland preservation and enhancement as a form of natural stormwater management.	Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
b. Continue to incorporate green infrastructure approaches (e.g., rain gardens, vegetated buffers, permeable surfaces) into City-led projects.	Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years)
c. Continue to integrate wetlands, riparian areas, and other natural drainage features into the City's capital planning, permitting review, and long-term infrastructure decisions.	Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Short (1-2 years), Ongoing
d. Explore incentives, recognition programs, or voluntary guidelines that encourage sustainable development practices on private land.	Community Development Department, Planning Commission, Public Works Department	Undetermined	Medium (3-5 years) long

Funding Opportunities to Support Implementation (alphabetically by name)

Below are potential funding opportunities to support implementation of the priorities in the comprehensive plan. The funding opportunities are referenced by letter in the “Potential Resources” columns in the action plan tables above. This list is intended to offer broad guidance for implementation. Details for each funding opportunity are likely to change over time, and some funding opportunities may not be renewed. At the time of plan development, the federal funding landscape is rapidly evolving, and these opportunities may no longer be available in the future. The list below was compiled prior to July 2025.

Each funding opportunity is summarized using the categories below:

- **Name:** The name of the funding opportunity, with a hyperlink to more information. Each funding opportunity was given a unique letter to use for reference in the action plan tables above.
- **Funder:** The agency or organization who funds the opportunity
- **Relevant Chapters:** The chapter(s) that are most relevant to the funding opportunity; when a chapter name is listed here, the funding opportunity is connected to one or more actions in the tables above.
- **Award Information:** Details regarding funding availability, minimum and maximum award amounts, estimated number of awards made annually, and other helpful insights. These numbers are subject to change and are based on most recent information; not all opportunities will have this level of detail.
- **Eligibility:** A description of who is eligible to apply for the grant (note: other entities not listed may also be eligible, check opportunity for further eligibility questions).
- **Description:** A summary of the purpose of the opportunity, including what types of projects/activities are eligible.
- **Due Date/Frequency:** The deadline for the funding opportunity and the typical frequency to apply based on past grant cycles.

A. Alaska State Capital Project Submission and Information System (CAPSIS)

Funder: Alaska State Legislature; Must contact Alaska State Representatives to begin the process.

Relevant Chapters: Land Use and Environment, Public Facilities & Services, Housing, Economic Development, Transportation, Sustainability and Resilience

Award Information: Amounts range. Recent trail and recreation projects have received between \$1 and \$6 million.

Eligibility: State, locality, or Congressional district

Description: The Alaska State Capital Project Submission and Information System (CAPSIS) is the system that allows organizations to submit funding requests for capital projects to their legislators for consideration and approval.

Due Date/Frequency: Annual; Contact Homer State Representatives in the fall to begin process.

B. Coastal Program FY25

Relevant Chapters: Land Use and Environment, Sustainability and Resilience

Funder: U.S. Dept. of the Interior (DOI), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

Eligibility: City governments, Native American tribal governments & organizations, nonprofits

Award Information: Total Funding: \$6M; Award Ceiling: \$500K.

Description: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Coastal Program is a community-based program that helps coastal areas with technical and financial support to address complex conservation challenges of priority coastal ecosystems. This support is mainly provided through cooperative agreements with conservation partners and landowners, including state and Tribal agencies. The goal is to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitats on both public and private lands. Coastal Program staff work with partners, stakeholders, and other Service programs in important areas for conservation. They set goals and priorities for habitat conservation in these focus areas. The program has specific lists of priority species and focus areas for each U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service region. Applicants seeking technical or financial assistance from the Coastal Program are required to contact a local Program office BEFORE developing or submitting an application. You can find this information in the current strategic plan at this link or by contacting your local Coastal Program office at this link. Projects are developed collaboratively by partners and Service field staff. All Coastal Program projects must align with the missions of the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Coastal Program. They are also based on sound biological principles and the best available science.

Due Date/Frequency: September 30, 2025.

C. Commercial Fishing Occupational Safety Training Project Grants

Funder: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - ERA

Relevant Chapters: Economic Development

Award Information: Max: \$975,000; Min: \$250,000; Estimated Total Program Funding: \$3M; Expected # of Awards: 20.

Eligibility: Native American tribal organization or government, City governments, Small businesses, Nonprofits

Description: The goal of the training grant program is to enhance the quality and availability of safety training for United States commercial fishermen. Availability includes the frequency, geographic considerations, channels or partners of dissemination, culturally and/or educational appropriate training material, and other characteristics of a successful training program. As a result, the Coast Guard and NIOSH invite applications to support the development and implementation of training and education programs that: develop and deliver training which addresses the needs of commercial fishermen in the United States, provide qualified marine safety instructors, or otherwise accepted by the National Maritime Center instructors and faculty to conduct the training, evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the training program on reducing injuries among fishermen, and coordinate with existing training programs and partnerships with industry fishermen.

Due Date/Frequency: January 31, 2028.

D. Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program, Alaska

Relevant Chapters: Economic Development, Sustainability and Resilience

Funder: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA), Rural Development (RD)

Award Information: Grants can be approved up to 75% of project; typical award range is up to \$150K

Description: Funds can be used to purchase, construct, and/or improve essential community facilities, to purchase equipment, and to pay related project expenses. Examples of essential community facilities include: 1) Healthcare facilities such as hospitals, medical clinics, dental clinics, nursing homes, or assisted living facilities; 2) Public facilities such as town halls, courthouses, airport hangars, or street improvements; 3) Community support services such as child care centers, community centers, fairgrounds, or transitional housing; 4) Public safety services such as fire departments, police stations, prisons, police vehicles, fire trucks, public works vehicles, or equipment; 5) Educational services such as museums, libraries, or private schools; and 6) Utility services such as telemedicine or distance learning equipment

Due Date/Frequency: Open Year Round.

E. Community Support for Marine Debris Removal

Relevant Chapters: Land Use and Environment, Sustainability and Resilience

Funder: NOAA and State of Alaska

Award Information: Total \$2M. Award Ceiling \$200K. # of awards: 10

Description: Projects may consist of onshore or boat-based activities to remove marine debris from coastal areas and waters, such as derelict fishing gear, beach litter, etc. Removal locations may include bays, marshes, and beaches as well as upstream sources such as coastal adjacent streams, rivers, ponds, and shorelines.

Due Date/Frequency: Anticipated release December 2025.

F. Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS)

Funder: United States Senate Committee on Appropriations; Need to contact senators for consideration (Sen. Murkowski / Sen. Sullivan)

Relevant Chapters: Land Use and Environment, Public Facilities & Services, Housing, Economic Development, Transportation, Sustainability and Resilience

Award Information: \$200,000 to \$14.4 million for selected infrastructure and community development projects. Average award amount for selected community development projects is \$2 million.

Eligibility: State, locality, or Congressional district

Description: This process allows Alaskans to identify and receive federal assistance for needs in the state. The CDS has funded a range of infrastructure, energy, and community development projects. In 2023 the CDS through Murkowski's office secured funding for approximately 24 projects with an average award of \$2 million ranging from \$200,000 to \$5.6 million.

Due Date/Frequency: Annual; FY26 requests were open from January 6, 2025, to March 31, 2025. Monitor in January 2026 for FY27 requests.

G. Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG)

Relevant Chapters: Sustainability and Resilience

Funder: State of Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM)

Award Information: 2024 EMPG Program funds will only be used to support emergency management staff salaries for activities outlined in your application work plan. Requires 50% match.

Description: The 2024 EMPG continues FEMA's and the Alaska DHS&EM's efforts to sustain and enhance all-hazards emergency management capabilities. Emergency management must coordinate for natural and man-made hazards, as well as technological events, that threaten the security of the homeland and the safety and well-being of citizens.

Due Date/Frequency: Annual and typically published between April and July.

H. Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund (ESHPF)

Relevant Chapters: Land Use and Environment, Public Facilities & Services, Economic Development, Sustainability and Resilience

Agency: National Park Service

Deadline: July 15, 2025

Award Information: Min: \$75,000; Max: \$15M; Est Total Program Funding: \$48M; Expected # of Awards: n/a.

Description: The National Park Service Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund (ESHPF) program supports recovery, and related expenses, for historic and cultural resources in areas impacted by natural disasters occurring in calendar years 2023 and/or 2024 that have received a major disaster declaration pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act). Resources must be listed in or determined eligible by the applicable State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) or Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, equivalent Tribal register, or designated a National Historic Landmark, either individually or as contributing to a district. Unlisted resources must be listed in the National Register or equivalent Tribal register by the conclusion of the grant. Eligible resources must have incurred damage by a natural disaster with a major disaster declaration in calendar years 2023 and/or 2024.

I. Environmental Regulatory Enhancement

Relevant Chapters: Land Use and Environment, Sustainability and Resilience

Funder: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Native Americans (ANA)

Award Information: Total Funding \$2M; Award Floor \$100K; Award Ceiling \$900K; # of Awards: 4

Description: The ERE program enhances the ability of tribal governments to provide effective stewardship over the lands, water, and air that encompass their communities, following tribal cultural preservation and natural resource management priorities to achieve environmentally healthy and sustainable communities.

Due Date/Frequency: Anticipated release January 2026 / Annual.

J. First Nations Grant Programs

Relevant Chapters: Land Use and Environment, Sustainability and Resilience

Funder: First Nations Development Institute

Eligibility: Federal- and State-Recognized Tribal Governments, Native-controlled nonprofits, Native 7871 Organizations, Fiscally-sponsored Native community organizations.

Award Information: Depends on the program; recent program awards have ranged from \$1,000 (Native Agriculture & Food Systems Investments Scholarship) to \$50,000 (Advancing Tribal Conservation Easements Grant)

Description: Grants opportunities are available throughout the year to support tribal projects in the following program areas: Native Foods & Health, Native Youth, and Community Asset-Building.

Due Date/Frequency: Varies, grants tend to be one-time opportunities in specific subject areas. One recent grant opportunity included “Advancing Tribal Conservation Easements Grants.”

K. Homes Production Grant Program

Relevant Chapters: Housing

Funder: U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Award Information: Total Funding \$40M; Award Floor \$1M; Award Ceiling: \$2M; Est. # of Awards 20; Cost sharing/matching required

Description: The Healthy Homes Production Program (HHP), part of HUD’s broader Healthy Homes Initiative since 1999, aims to tackle multiple childhood diseases and injuries by addressing housing-related hazards comprehensively. Unlike programs targeting single hazards, HHP integrates efforts to control various environmental health and safety risks in housing units. Cost sharing/matching required. Key objectives include protecting vulnerable residents, such as children and elderly, from these hazards in low-income housing, promoting cost-effective healthy home practices, and building local capacity for sustainable hazard prevention. The program emphasizes collaboration between health and housing sectors, supports economic opportunities for low-income individuals, and ensures environmental justice and compliance with disability regulations. It aims to enhance housing quality while safeguarding public health through integrated, community-focused initiatives.

Due Date/Frequency: Last due September 3, 2024 / Annual.

L. Humanities in Place Grant Program

Funder: Mellon Foundation

Relevant Chapters: Economic Development, Public Facilities & Services

Award Information: Typical award range is \$250,000 - \$1 million.

Eligibility: Most grants are made to non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations. Proposals are accepted [by invitation](#).

Description: Humanities in Place supports a fuller, more complex telling of American histories and lived experiences by deepening the range of how and where

our stories are told and by bringing a wider variety of voices into the public dialogue. Working with media, heritage and public spaces, history museums and other institutions, and conveners of shared experiences—including the digital or ephemeral—we strive to expand the public expression of the histories that have made us and the values we hold. Our program works across and within diverse communities, encouraging bold, innovative rethinking of past practice, as well as visionary new approaches for how to collectively understand, uplift, and celebrate more complete stories about who we are. Through the program’s strategy of “Promote Greater Engagement and Understanding”, these grants support projects and programs with a place-based focus that promote greater access, interaction, and exchange of stories and experiences toward a fuller appreciation and understanding of a wider variety of our histories, narratives, and expression. This grant supports exhibitions and interpretive materials and supports public places and institutions.

Deadline: Rolling.

M. Museums for America

Funder: Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)

Relevant Chapters: Public Facilities & Services, Economic Development

Award Information: Total Program Funding \$21.7 million, Award Floor \$5,000, Award Ceiling \$250,000 with an average of \$180,825 per award . Est. # of Awards: 120

Eligibility: State, local, or tribal government or be a private, nonprofit organization, must qualify as a museum.

Description: This program supports museums of all sizes and disciplines in strategic, project-based efforts to serve the public through exhibitions, educational/interpretive programs, digital learning resources, professional development, community debate and dialogue, audience-focused studies, and/or collections management, curation, care, and conservation. This is a 1:1 cost-share funding opportunity.

Deadline: Forecasted for release with a November 14, 2025 deadline.

N. Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP)

Funder: U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration

Relevant Chapters: Economic Development, Public Facilities & Services

Award Information: Max: \$125M; Min: \$1M; Estimated Total Program Funding: \$500M; Expected # of Awards: 40.

Eligibility: Native American tribal government, City governments, County governments

Description: Eligible projects for FY 2025 PIDP grants shall be located either within the boundary of a port, or outside the boundary of a port and directly related to port operations or to an intermodal connection to a port. Grants may be made for capital projects that will be used to improve the safety, efficiency, or reliability of: (1) the loading and unloading of goods; (2) the movements of goods into, out of, around, or within a port, such as for highway or rail infrastructure, intermodal facilities, freight intelligent transportation systems, and digital infrastructure systems; (3) operational improvements; (4) environmental improvements, including projects to improve port resilience; and (5) port and port-related infrastructure that supports seafood and seafood-

related businesses, including the loading and unloading of commercially harvested fish and fish products, seafood processing, cold storage, and other related infrastructure.

Due Date/Frequency: September 10, 2025.

O. Public Humanities Projects

Funder: National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

Relevant Chapters: Public Facilities & Services, Economic Development

Deadline: September 10, 2025

Award Information: Total Program Funding \$5.5 million (both deadlines combined), Award Ceiling \$400,000 (\$550,000 with staff position added). Est. # of Awards: 13

Eligibility: a nonprofit organization, an accredited institution of higher education (public or nonprofit), state or local government or one of their agencies, a federally recognized Native American Tribal government.

Description: This program supports projects in three categories: Exhibitions (permanent, temporary, or traveling); interpretive programs at Historic Places; and Humanities Discussions. Projects must engage humanities scholarship to analyze significant themes in disciplines such as history, literature, ethics, and art history. Awards support projects that are intended to reach broad and diverse public audiences in non-classroom settings in the United States. Projects should engage with ideas that are accessible to the general public and employ appealing interpretive formats. Public Humanities Projects supports projects in three categories (Exhibitions, Historic Places, and Humanities Discussions), and at two funding levels (Planning and Implementation).

P. Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs

Funder: Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA)

Relevant Chapters: Public Facilities & Services, Economic Development, Sustainability and Resilience

Award Information: Min: \$100,000; Max: \$30M; Expected # of Awards: 3,000.

Eligibility: District Organization; Indian Tribe or Consortium; State, County, City or political subdivision of a State; Institution of higher education; public or private non-profit organizations

Description: EDA intends to advance general economic development in accordance with EDA's investment priorities, but also to pursue projects that, where practicable, incorporate specific priorities related to equity, workforce development, and climate change resiliency so that investments can benefit everyone for decades to come. Each project funded must be consistent with at least one of EDA's Investment Priorities: Equity; Recovery & Resilience; Workforce Development; Manufacturing; Technology-Based Economic Development; Environmentally-Sustainable Development; and Exports & Foreign Direct Investment. Each project must be consistent with the region's current Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Funds may be awarded through EDA's primarily construction-oriented Public Works program or through the Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program, which provides investments to support a wide range of construction and non-construction activities. Applicants do not need to specify the program (Public Works or EAA) for which they are applying. EDA will consider the application under the most appropriate pool of funding.

Due Date/Frequency: There are no application submission deadlines. Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until the publication of a new PWEAA NOFO, cancellation of this PWEAA NOFO, or all available funds have been expended. EDA intends to review applications expeditiously upon receipt of the complete application.

Q. Rasmuson Foundation

Relevant Chapters: Public Facilities & Services, Economic Development

Deadline: Rolling

Award Information: Example project range, not a prediction of future amounts \$35,000 - \$1.5 million

Eligibility: Eligible organizations will either be an established 501(c)(3), or a local or Tribal government.

Description: Rasmuson Foundation offers a variety of grant programs to respond to community priorities, ranging from capital needs to programmatic or strategic projects. By not having restrictions on sectors or focus areas for our grantmaking, they look to their partners to identify what is most important to their communities. **Community Support Grants:** The Foundation anticipates awarding approximately 10 to 20 mid-sized grants annually, ranging from \$35,000 - \$250,000. **Legacy Grants:** The Foundation anticipates awarding approximately 10 to 15 grants over \$250,000 annually. Legacy grants are most applicable to the Homer Strategic Priorities. Recent examples of awards at this level include a new childcare facility, a small business development program, a new hub for business and community connection, and the creation of a quota bank to promote rural and indigenous access to fisheries.

R. Recreational Trails Program Grant

Relevant Chapters: Land Use and Environment

Funder: Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

Award Information: Award Floor: \$0. Award Ceiling: \$300,000 for Motorized/Motorized diversified projects and \$200,000 for Non-motorized/Non-motorized diversified projects.

Description: DPOR offers this competitive, reimbursable, matching trail grant for maintaining public recreational trails and related facilities, and for safety and educational projects.

Due Date/Frequency: September 30, 2025 / Annual.

S. Save America's Treasures

Funder: National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

Relevant Chapters: Public Facilities & Services, Economic Development

Deadline: December 10, 2025 (forecasted)

Award Information: Total Program Funding \$26.5 million in FY24, Award Ceiling \$750,000 (FY24).

Eligibility: a nonprofit organization, an accredited institution of higher education (public or nonprofit), school districts, state or local government or one of their agencies, a federally recognized Native American Tribal government.

Description: This program provides preservation and/or conservation assistance to nationally significant historic properties and collections. Grants are awarded through a competitive process and require a dollar-for-dollar, non-Federal match, which can be cash or documented in-kind. The grant program is administered by the National Park Service (NPS) in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

T. Small Surface Water and Groundwater Storage Projects (Small Storage Program)

Relevant Chapters: Public Facilities & Services, Economic Development, Sustainability and Resilience

Funder: U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation

Award Information: Total Funding \$43.5M; Award Ceiling \$30M; # of Awards: 7

Description: This program's objective is to enhance water storage opportunities for future generations by funding small surface water and groundwater storage projects. The program funds up to a 25% Federal cost-share to plan, design, and construct surface and groundwater storage projects between 200 and 30,000 acre-feet that will increase water storage or move water to or from a storage project.

Due Date/Frequency: Apr 17, 2026

U. Social and Economic Development Strategies for Alaska

Relevant Chapters: Economic Development

Funder: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Native Americans (ANA)

Award Information: Total Funding \$2M; Award Floor \$100K; Award Ceiling \$900K; # of Awards: 3

Description: This program provides targeted support for community-based, Village-specific projects to improve and strengthen the administrative and management capacity of Alaska Native Village governments and governments that are central to social and economic self-sufficiency in Alaska. This announcement promotes economic and social self-sufficiency for Alaska Natives and is intended to respond to the unique governmental structures in Alaska at the Alaska Native Village level.

Due Date/Frequency: July 2025 / Annual.

V. Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program: Non-compete grants

Funder: Environmental Protection Agency / Philanthropy Northwest (administrator)

Relevant Chapters: Land Use and Environment, Sustainability and Resilience

Award Information: \$75,000 non-compete grant option

Eligibility: Eligible applicants include those serving areas with populations of 50,000 or fewer people.

Description: Over three years, Philanthropy Northwest will be distributing over \$40 million in grants to communities and tribal nations who have been negatively impacted by environmental changes in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

Due Date/Frequency: August 1, 2025. Complete non-compete grant request [here](#).

W. United States Marine Highway Program (USMHP)

Funder: U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration

Relevant Chapters: Public Facilities & Services, Economic Development, Transportation

Award Information: Max: \$14,042,621; Expected Number of Awards: 25. Includes a 20% minimum match requirement.

Eligibility: Native American tribal organization or government, City governments, Small businesses, Nonprofits

Description: The United States Marine Highway Program (USMHP) statute authorizes the U.S. Department of Transportation (“Department” or “DOT”) to make grants to implement Projects or components of Projects that 1) provide a coordinated and capable alternative to landside transportation; mitigate or relieve landside congestion; promote Marine Highway Transportation; or use vessels documented under 46 U.S.C. chapter 121; and 2) develop, expand, or promote Marine Highway Transportation or shipper use of Marine Highway Transportation

Due Date/Frequency: July 15, 2025 / Annual

X. Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program in Alaska

Funder: USDA Rural Development

Relevant Chapters: Land Use and Environment, Public Facilities & Services

Award Information: Current loan interest rates effective 4/1/25: Poverty: 2.500%; Intermediate: 3.375%; Market: 4.250%.

Eligibility: Most state and local governmental entities, private nonprofits, federally-recognized tribes.

Description: This program provides funding, in the form of long-term low-interest loans, and grants (if funds are available) for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas. Areas that may be served include: rural areas and towns with populations of 10,000 or less; Tribal lands in rural areas; and colonias. Funds may be used for drinking water sourcing, treatment, storage and distribution; sewer collection, transmission, treatment and disposal; solid waste collection, disposal and closure; and storm water collection, transmission and disposal.

Due Date/Frequency: Applications accepted on ongoing basis.

Memorandum

Future Land
use map
- Environmental
constraints overlay
- Interactive map

TO: Homer Planning Commission
FROM: Janette Keiser, PE
DATE: August 20, 2025
RE: Comments to Public Hearing Draft of new Homer Comprehensive Plan

1. **RE: Strategy (4)(a). Page 29.** This says we should support the use the Harbor Expansion, without qualifications. This makes it look like we're going to support this project whether or not it makes sense financially or environmentally. Recently, the Homer City Council was asked to identify their preference for a design alternative. Everyone expressed concern that they were being asked to do this without knowing more about the financial and environmental implications of the harbor expansion project. I suggest this language be changed to something like, *"continue to explore the financial, operational and environmental consequences of the Harbor Expansion Project..."*
2. **RE: Strategy (1)(a) and (b). Page 41.** This says we should *"invest in infrastructure that supports growth in key sectors"* but the only actions regarding incentives relates to the marine trades and the Homer Spit. This denigrates the contribution of other industries in Homer, such as health care, small scale agriculture, the arts, sports and even home-based businesses. There should be language that manifests Homer's commitment to fostering a broad range of other key sectors of economic opportunity, besides the marine trades.
3. **RE: Transportation. Page 47.** The Homer Transportation Plan identified other transportation needs, besides improving non-motorized connections to schools. There should be an action that says *"implement the recommendations of the Homer Transportation Plan"*. Likewise, there should be a reference to the KPB's recently adopted Safety Action Plan, which identified policies and projects to improve traffic safety in Homer.
4. **RE: Sales taxes. Page 53.** This language states that Homer is dependent on sales tax as a primary revenue source. This is true. It is also somewhat scary. The HART Fund, which is built on sales tax, is scheduled to sunset in 2027. The voters will

need to pass a new proposition to keep this tax in place. Some people will want to use this opportunity to reduce their taxes. But, this fund is what pays for Homer's road maintenance. Without the sales tax, this fund will evaporate and Homer would be in deep do-do. I'd like to see a cautionary note about this added to this section, if only as an example of how dependent we are on sales tax.

5. **RE: Partner-led Strategies.** There are many places where "*Partner-led Strategies*" are identified. There's a description of what this means on Page 14. And, Appendix I provides more detail about what actions are recommended. I like the strategies and actions, but the City's role is not clear. It looks like the City is a passive by-stander. I'd like to see the City's role defined more clearly, and preferably, in a leading role or at least, as a key stakeholder invested in proactive collaboration to create positive outcomes.



Kachemak Bay Watershed Council

The Kachemak Bay Watershed Council facilitates communication, planning, advocacy, and restoration to protect, steward, and revitalize the Kachemak Bay Watershed to ensure the sustainability and integrity of natural and human communities for future generations.

Homer Planning Commission
planning@ci.homer.ak.us

The Kachemak Bay Watershed Collaborative City of Homer 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan: Public Hearing Draft, July 2025 Comments

August 20, 2025

Dear City of Homer Planning Commission:

The Kachemak Bay Watershed Collaborative (KBWC) is a non-profit conservation organization focused on applying data and information related to climate change, land uses and other environmental impacts, to inform policy makers and agency planners regarding management of Kachemak Bay on a watershed basis. The current version of the City of Homer Comprehensive Plan (Plan), is an improvement over past versions regarding strategies for addressing the increasing number and level of intensity of climate change and development can present to human health and welfare, water infrastructure and critical fish and wildlife habitat challenges the City will face in the 21st century.

The Nation's water supplies and services are at risk. Climate change, growing income disparities, and the threats posed by aging water infrastructure and impacts to fish and wildlife call for an increased focus on the use of ecosystem services and the need to manage watersheds on an ecosystem bases rather than a piecemeal approach to water management. In order to avoid the problems of the lower 48, Alaskans must come together and create a new era of water management that secures economic, environmental, and community wellbeing. To this end,

across the state stakeholders are collaborating and innovating to advance sustainable water management solutions. Through the Comprehensive Plan, the City of Homer (City) has an opportunity to spread and scale up these efforts to benefit communities and watersheds within and outside City boundaries.

The Plan therefore provides a good jumping off point for the City to engage in Integrated Water Resource Planning (IWRP) and nature-based solutions including planting trees to replenish forests, reconnecting rivers to floodplains, and restoring wetlands, is a sustainable and cost-effective way to help rebalance the water cycle, mitigate the effects of climate change and improve human health and livelihoods.

To this end, KBWC specific comments include the following:

I. Governance

Under this section, KBWC is encouraged by the Plan's listed "Potential Partner-Led Strategies" including to "[i]dentify opportunities to coordinate with organizations including Tribal organizations, Alaska Native Corporations, and local and regional non-profits to leverage resources and provide services more cost-effectively." (Plan p. 16). To this end, we recommend that the City work with the above organizations to develop an Integrated Water Resource Management that includes the following components:

a) IWRM Plan

Watersheds have always been essential to protection of fish and wildlife habitat and water infrastructure. They are a source of biodiversity and fresh water. They reduce risks of natural disasters like landslides and flooding. They act as a carbon sink, removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it, thus mitigating climate change. They make an essential contribution to food security by helping to maintain the environmental conditions needed for fishery production. They stabilize the soil, prevent erosion, enhance the land's capacity to store water, and moderate air and soil temperatures. As sources of raw material, biomass, renewable energy, and nontimber products, watersheds support rural communities. Many rural and indigenous people depend on watersheds for their livelihoods which also enhance well-being by providing recreation and amenity values.

As means of protecting watersheds and water infrastructure that cities and towns rely upon, from the impacts of climate change, the City could create an Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (IWRMP) which is "a process that promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems." Global Water Partnership Technical Advisory Committee (2000).

The City should collaborate with other federal, state, tribal, local, research, conservation and other stakeholders to apply IWRMP criteria including consideration of these factors: 1) Manage water sustainably; 2) Balance economics, social equity, environment; coordination and integration; participation from all water sectors; 3) Holistic management of connected resources; 4) Process oriented adaptive management; 5) Enable environmental policies and resources; and 6) Institutional roles and capacity. As an example of how to protect fish and wildlife resources from the impacts of climate change is to take measures to mitigate warming stream and related temperatures. For example, growing willows and other trees close to the banks of streams and rivers; providing shade over the water and creating in-stream habitats made of logs under which fish can cool off when things heat up. (See the Nooksak Tribe of Washington State Salmon Habitat research projects <http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/threat-of-salmon-extinction-turns-small-tribe-into-climate-researchers-20160906>).

b) IWRM Tools

An example of a tool that the City could use in an IWRM strategy is the EPA's Watershed Optimization Management Support Tool (WMOST) which is a publicly available tool that can be used by state and local managers to screen a wide-range of options for cost-effective management of water resources. It supports a broader integrated watershed management (IWM) approach by allowing the user to simultaneously consider stormwater, drinking water, wastewater and land conservation management practices. Users can select from three versions of WMOST based on their specific management needs. (<http://www.epa.gov/exposure-assessment-models/wmost>). The first version focuses on management of base and peak flows, the second adds a flooding module to assess costs associated with peak flows, and the third includes a water quality module. WMOST aids in evaluating the environmental and economic costs, benefits, trade-offs and co-benefits of various management options, and can facilitate the evaluation of low impact development and green infrastructure management options that are suitable for projects using State Revolving Funds.

Currently, this tool is being used primarily by state agencies and counties in the lower 48 for cost-effective stormwater management practices for meeting the management goals of a typical community in their state and consortiums of communities, regional development commissions, and non-governmental and watershed organizations to determine the most cost-effective options to meet water quality goals (such as TMDLs), water quantity targets (maintaining base flows and water supplies), reducing flooding and impacts of Combined Sewer Overflows, and supporting land conservation goals under both current and future growth and climate scenarios.

II. Sustainability and Resilience

Under Goal A of this section the Plan proposes the maintenance of “Open Space and Natural Lands” in order to “Support Long-Term Community Well-Being” by protecting “both existing and new infrastructure from the impacts of climate change, environmental constraints, and hazards,” modernizing “City operations for long-term efficiency and resilience and reducing “risk from natural hazards through proactive siting and planning.” (Comp Plan page 17).

To this end KBWC recommends that the City of Homer update its current Climate Action Plan (HCAP). (See, Ibid at 59). The City developed the HCAP almost 20 years ago that includes the

requirement that the city: 1) develop management plans specific to Port and Harbor facilities on the Homer Spit (construction, maintenance, dredging, etc.) that take into account climate change impacts; and 2) taking climate change into consideration in all long-range planning efforts (e.g., transportation, land use, Homer Spit, emergency management, economic development). In addition, there is currently no comprehensive climate change adaption plan addressing the Kachemak Bay Watershed that includes the City of Homer. After adoption of the HCAP, the Plan states, [t]oday, the community continues to express strong support for renewable energy, hazard mitigation, and environmental stewardship.” (Ibid).

Therefore, in order to implement the standards in the current Climate Action Plan, the assessments of the potential impacts of development activity needed to include full consideration of all of its potential impacts. Updating the HCAP, is also an opportunity for the city to join the ongoing climate change conversation in Homer led by the KBWC and other stakeholders who have been discussing priority climate related projects for planning, management and protection of both freshwater and marine ecosystems within the Watershed.

Finally, KBWC has identified federal funds that could be used in planning and development of harbor infrastructure. These include grant program funding for watershed related ecosystem resilience projects from the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act. To this end, the Watershed Collaborative is currently, updating the attached Kachemak Bay Fox River Climate Risk Assessment completed in 2019 that would result in a Resiliency Plan and would incorporate the projects for planning, management and protection of both freshwater and marine ecosystems within the Watershed. We would like to work with the City to co-develop such a plan as part of updating the HCAP and to partner with the Collaborative to seek funding to complete such plan.

III. Land Use and Environment

Under this section, KBWC supports the need to “Modernized Zoning is Essential for Attainable Housing, Safety, and Future Growth” due to the fact that “Homer’s current land use regulations no longer reflect the community’s development needs or values. Residents have called for more attainable housing options, greater consideration of natural hazards, and updates to zoning

standards that align with infrastructure availability and environmental constraints.” (Comp Plan Page 15).

In addition, approximately 35 percent of Homer’s land base includes wetlands, steep slopes, or critical habitat that limits development feasibility and increases hazard exposure³. Residents want code updates that allow for more flexibility in building types, incentivize infill and redevelopment in appropriate areas, and ensure that private and public development considers runoff, slope stability, and infrastructure capacity. (Ibid).

A good example of this concern is the City of Homer's Planners have recommended approval of a preliminary plat to subdivide existing parcels into 10 lots within The Woodard Creek Watershed. This would allow for a 22-acre subdivision to go forward which would be inconsistent with the Woodard Creek Watershed Plan because it will disturb a large wetland ‘holding tank’ of water. Woodard Creek is Homer’s most prominent perennial stream, and it has a rich history as an early settling place for homesteaders seeking year-round water supply. The upper watershed, Woodard Creek is confined in Woodard Canyon, a steep-sided valley some 300 feet deep. Downstream, the creek remains confined in a valley approximately 20 feet deep, becoming shallower in some areas due to historic human activities. The final mile of Woodard Creek flows through a municipal park and some 45 residential and commercial properties before flowing to Kachemak Bay at a beach front bluff.

IV. City-Led Strategies and Actions

The Plan calls for implementation of a Future Land Use Map that guides future decisions about land use and growth” that would include the following categories:

- a. **Open Space Recreation** - Public lands with uses that promote public recreation and access opportunities while preserving the natural and scenic resources of the areas.
- b. **Conservation** - Public and private lands that serve key environmental functions, such as critical habitat or watershed areas, to be maintained in an undisturbed and natural state.
- c. **Environmental Constraints** - Known areas of environmental constraints, such as critical habitat and steep slopes, to help identify places where more detailed site analysis may be warranted if areas are to be developed or improved.
- d. Flood zones, coastal bluff instability, scarps, hydric soils, key watersheds. (Comp Plan page 18).

A key element of such implementation will be to manage watersheds within and outside of the city limits on an ecosystem wide rather than piecemeal jurisdictional bases. In addition to 5 municipalities, the Kachemak Bay Watershed includes jurisdictional boundaries for the federal government, the state and others. Individual management of these lands by different agencies has led to much resource protection and proper management of such resources to fall through the cracks. The Plan is therefore, a good a starting point for the City to work with other land management entities on a watershed basis to protect the entire Watershed. This includes the development of an IWRMP and updated the City of Homer's Climate Action Plan.

V. Strategically align development regulations with natural hazard risks and land suitability to support safe, resilient, and responsible growth.

Under this section the Plan lists the following actions:

- a. Use the City of Homer Hazard Mitigation Plan to inform updates to zoning and development codes, ensuring land use decisions reflect the latest risk assessments;
- b. Clarify zoning procedures and criteria for rezoning reviews to ensure consistency with the comprehensive plan and hazard mitigation goals;
- c. Update development standards for steep slopes, drainageways, and erosion-prone areas to manage grading, erosions, runoff, and vegetation clearing. Encourage the use of green infrastructure and site-responsive design solutions to improve drainage and reduce hazard exposure;
- d. Strengthen stormwater and erosion control provisions in City code, incorporating green infrastructure techniques—such as vegetated buffers and infiltration features—to reduce coastal bluff erosion and other site-based hazards;
- e. Consider expanding the range of conditions that may be applied to Conditional Use Permits to address riparian protection, soil stability, wetland preservation, and related site concerns. (Comp Plan page 22).

One of the best ways to implement these actions is for the City to update it's Climate Adaption Action Plan to broaden coverage of these actions and include standards for implementing them.

VI. Protect and enhance green space in Homer to support habitat connectivity, recreational access, and community well-being

One of the best means of maintaining habitat connectivity is for the City to work with other federal, state and tribal entities to manage Watersheds both within and outside of city limits on an ecosystem rather than jurisdictional basis. Because fish and wildlife travel and subsist over a broad range of land and water, proper management of habitat should not observe jurisdictional limits. In addition:

Homer's ecosystems, wetlands, and green spaces provide natural protection against flooding, erosion, and other hazards—while also contributing to the community's quality of life. Residents strongly support preserving these natural assets: 77 percent of community survey respondents identified the preservation of public open space as a top priority. In open responses and interviews, residents expressed support for concentrating new development in existing disturbed areas, avoiding steep slopes and flood-prone zones, and protecting wildlife corridors and critical habitat. Preserving wetlands, riparian buffers, and upland vegetation also enhances Homer's capacity to manage stormwater through low-impact development and natural drainage systems.

Due to the impacts of climate change on the once biologically productive Kachemak Bay Watershed, one of the primary tools left to protect and restore the Watershed's ecosystem is through mitigation of lands use and development impacts on aquatic ecosystems that affect connectivity. (Comp Plan page 60).

VII. Advance place-based planning and development that supports Homer's unique community character, encourages targeted infill, and strengthens Homer's role as a regional

The Plan calls for "Lead area planning efforts for the Spit and downtown core [that] should address land use, infrastructure needs, environmental hazards, economic development, and recreational access." (Comp Plan Page 23). Once again, the updating of the City of Homer Climate Action Plan including the results of KBWC's MPARVAT would be the best means of achieving this goal.

CONCLUSION

The challenges the City faces today require it to adopt watershed wide solutions for greater efficiency, improved water quality, sustained regulatory compliance, and critical habitat protection. There are a wide variety of collaborative approaches that can work and many policy levers to help expand their adoption. Partnering with neighbor communities and other organizations to meet common needs makes sense, and we collaboration will take greater hold as more communities demonstrate their power to improve water management for all. In addition, there are funding mechanisms that would assist in achieving these goals. Finally, an Integrated Water Resource Management strategy would reduce flood risk and storm damage and help protect habitat and drinking water resulting in additional long mitigation of the impacts of climate change.

Please contact me at (907) 491-1355; halshpherdwpc@gmail.com if you have any questions regarding these comments. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Hal, Shepherd, President
Kachemak Bay Watershed Council
PO Box 332 Homer, AK 99603
907-491-1355

PRESENTATIONS/VISITORS

REPORTS

A. City Planner's Report, Staff Report 25-35

City Planner Foster provided a summary of his staff report in the packet, noting the following:

- Ordinance 25-54 has been referred to the Planning Commission and the Economic Development Advisory Commission.
- Next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 3, 2025.
- Next Commissioner report to Council on August 25, 2025.

There was a brief discussion regarding the United States Army Corps of Engineers fill permit down at the Spit.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. A REQUEST TO VACATE THE 66-FOOT-WIDE SECTION LINE EASEMENT ACROSS LOT 2 ARNO SUBDIVISION, T 6S R 14W SEC 13 SEWARD MERIDIAN HM 2001078 ARNO SUB LOT 2 THAT PORTION LYING INSIDE HOMER CITY LIMITS, KNOWN AS 1145 DIAMOND RIDGE RD, Staff Report 25-37

Chair S. Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to City Planner Foster, who provided a summary of his staff report in the packet.

Chair S. Smith opened the floor for the Applicant. Katie Kirsis noted that she was the surveyor for the project and made herself available for any questions.

Chair S. Smith then opened the public hearing. With no one coming forward to speak, Chair S. Smith closed the public hearing. He then opened the floor to questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Harness questioned why the pedestrian easement was only 20 feet instead of 66 feet similar to the section line easement. Ms. Kirsis stated it's not likely a trail would be constructed through that area, and therefore 20 feet is a reasonable width to reserve for public access.

Commissioner H. Smith asked if the easement would affect what is defined as inside or outside city limits. Ms. Kirsis stated that it wouldn't affect the legal boundaries.

SCHNEIDER/BARNWELL MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 25-37 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE VACATION OF THE SECTION LINE EASEMENT ACROSS LOT 2 ARNO SUBDIVISION.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

B. AN ORDINANCE OF THE HOMER CITY COUNCIL ADOPTING THE 2025 HOMER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND RECOMMENDING ADOPTION BY THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH, Memorandum PL 25-038

Chair S. Smith introduced the item by reading of the title. He then opened the floor for Shelly Wade of Agnew::Beck. Ms. Wade covered the following items in her presentation:

- Timeline and process of draft plan to date and going forward
- Key elements of the plan
- Review of the top themes from the drafting process and how the hearing draft responds
- Planning Commission's role today

Upon the conclusion of Ms. Wade's presentation, Chair S. Smith opened the public hearing period.

Jan Keiser, city resident, provided written comments on the draft comprehensive plan, recommending revisions to language regarding harbor expansion, support for entrepreneurship, and commitments to the Transportation and Safety Action Plans. She expressed overall support for the ideas but suggested clarifying and strengthening specific language.

Hal Shepherd, representing the Kachemak Bay Watershed Council, supported the improved draft plan, emphasized addressing land development and extraction impacts on climate change, and encouraged using the plan as a foundation for watershed management partnerships.

Michael Jones, city resident, commended the progress of the draft plan, noted his written comments including an AI summary of Commission obligations, and recommended softening the language that appears to create obligations.

Tracy Nordstrom, city resident, thanked the Commission and the consultants for their extensive work. She recommended the Commission forward the draft plan along to City Council and further encouraged the Commission to use this document and cite components of it when new actions are before the Commission. She requested clarification on how Homer plans to court and support potential partners moving forward.

Devony Lehner, city resident, urged inclusion of the Diamond Creek Recreation Area in the Comprehensive Plan, highlighting its importance and recent connections to adjacent lands. She also suggested realizing Homer's potential role in coordinating food distribution during emergencies.

Rick Foster, city resident, urged the Commission to address potable water as a key growth management factor, recommending acknowledgment of the City's role in regional water supply and collection of data on delivery locations. He suggested policy changes included prioritizing water/sewer extensions within city limits, clarifying agreements with Kachemak City, correcting language on page 26, and maintaining the Gateway Business District identity.

Robert Ruffner, Planning Director for the Kenai Peninsula Borough, noted the Borough is reviewing the plan and public input, and encouraged the Commission to continue its work.

With no others coming forward to speak, Chair S. Smith closed the public hearing.

Chair S. Smith called for a 10-minute recess at 8:12 p.m.

Chair S. Smith called the meeting back to order at 8:22 p.m.

The Commission reviewed the document in its entirety. Discussion topics included the following items:

- Current introduction and condensed reflection
- Table of contents and list of appendices
- Gateway Business District presentation and zoning
- Water/Stormwater management and other water supply options
- Diamond Creek Recreation Area plan
- Affordable housing
- Public facilities and services

H. SMITH/SCHNEIDER MOVED TO EXTEND THE MEETING TO 9:45 P.M.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

H. SMITH/BARNWELL MOVED TO CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION ON THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO THE NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

A. Election of Officers, Memorandum PL 25-040

H. SMITH/SCHNEIDER MOVED TO VOTE BY SHOW OF HANDS.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair S. Smith opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair.

Commissioner Barnwell was nominated for the position of Vice Chair.

With no other nominations called out, Chair S. Smith declared Commissioner Barnwell re-elected as Vice Chair. Mr. Smith then handed the gavel over to Vice Chair Barnwell.

Vice Chair Barnwell opened the floor for nominations of the Chair.

Commissioner S. Smith was nominated for the position of the Chair.

2045 Comp Plan Draft Observations: Scott Smith

General Questions

- P 21 2b. What is form-based codes?
- P23 5. What is place-based planning?
- P 27 City Led Strategies – 1. B. under “Who” should “Planning” be added to this list?

Grammar Items:

- P 2 under the picture there is a double (::) between Agnew Beck
- P 8 4th bullet point – semantics here – “make the code clearer and more easy to use” – add/change to terms “make the code more effective, efficient and user friendly”
- P 25 under Reliable and Affordable Services – the word “planning” is used twice in the sentence.
- P 29 – 3. Maintain and (l)improve ... small l is used – change to capital I
- P 30 – Potential Partner-Led Strategies 9. Collaborate Borough, (S)tate, and (F)ederal ...

Climate Change Items:

Climate Change has been going on for thousands of years. (Are we still in an Ice Age?) The term Climate Change is extremely divisive and polarizing, and Homer has a chance to take the lead of eliminating the use of these divisive terms and use those that can be agreed upon, without eliminating the actual plan. What most of us do agree upon is that humanity needs to be far more responsible and ethical in regard to environmental impact. We recognize that there are normal and extreme weather situations that impact our community. There are standards of mitigation that should be implemented, as well as standards of development. I am encouraging the use of terms that support these ends without using the terms including and related to Climate Change.

Also, the term Climate Change is quite nebulous. We can clarify many of the Goals and other uses of this term by using more definable terms.

P 12 (The first P 12) Goal C – omit climate change – ~~“from climate change and natural hazards”~~ to **from normal and extreme environmental hazards**

P 11 – 3rd bullet point ~~“Impacts from climate change are a growing concern”~~ to **“Environmental Impacts are a growing concern”**.

P 11 – 4th bullet point – ~~“resilience to natural hazards and climate change”~~ to **“Resilience to normal and extreme natural hazards”**

P 27 Goal C – change ~~“from climate change and natural hazards”~~ to “from normal and extreme natural hazards”

P 29 3. Maintain and Improve Port and Harbor Infrastructure. A. change ~~“the impacts of climate change, and natural hazards like earthquakes ...”~~ to **“the impacts of normal and extreme natural events of weather, earthquakes ...”**

P 59 – ~~“Natural and Climate-Driven Hazards Increase Risk ...”~~ to **“Normal and Extreme Environmental Hazards ...”**

P 59 Sustainability and Resilience, Key Themes, Quote 19 is speculation and is part of the language that promotes panic. We can use different language that promotes responsibility and responsiveness without using these loaded terms.

P 60 Goals, Goal A “Protect both existing and new infrastructure from the impacts of climate change, environmental constraints, and hazards” to “Protect both existing and new infrastructure from **normal and extreme environmental impacts, constraints and hazards.**”

Supporting A Truck Route:

There was a fairly significant voice represented in the 2018 Comp Plan which supported finding a way to divert heavy, commercial traffic off of Pioneer and Lake streets. This is not represented in the 2045 plan, and I suggest that this voice not be reduced or eliminated.

P 3 Theme: Walkable downtown – currently a complete experience with dump trucks!

P 14 Economic Development – Goal A – “Enhance Homer’s defined downtown to drive commerce, business, and resident and visitor’s services.

This goal will be hard to achieve if heavy traffic is allowed to continue. It’s less of an enjoyable experience if dodging belly-dumps is part of the experience.

P 23 5. a. Lead area planning efforts for the Spit and downtown core.

P 23 5. b. Walkable downtown

P 23 5. c. ... “Compile developmental standards into a unified design manual that integrates transportation, streetscape, and infrastructure guidance.”

I have often heard comments about desires to have the Pioneer St., Main St, Lake St. core area to be a place that is visually attractive, stimulating and enjoyable for residents and tourists alike. Architecture, street, walkway and traffic planning is essential to have this area be what many in Homer hope for. A common observation of annoyance is the amount of heavy traffic in that area. Having multiple dump-trucks and other heavy vehicles regularly roaring down these areas does allow for these desired goals/results. Keeping a truck route on the Comp Plan Radar means that those on the various Councils and Commissions have been attentive to and are working toward the end of these desires (just like with walkability!) Please keep Truck Route as a goal in the 2045 plan.

P 40 Goals – Goal A “Enhance Homer’s defined downtown to drive commerce, business and resident and visitors’ services.” This goal supports getting heavy vehicle traffic out of this area.

Land Use:

Keep Gateway District

P 20 Is Harbor Expansion included in the Future Land Use Map? Should be!

Spit Parking Items

P 12 City-Led Strategies (5.) As public safety is a priority, Spit Parking (and No Parking Zones) should be a high priority. The more Public walk and cross the Spit highway (birding areas, or end of Spit), it increases their danger to accident.

Possible and Much-Needed Action Item: Birder parking limited to West side of Spit Road ONLY between Kachemak Drive and Mariner Park.

Economic Development

P 14 Potential Partner-Led Strategies

6. Support access ... could "to both private and borough services" be added?

8. Promote Food Security – this was brought up at our last meeting and based upon a response to this question, it made me consider that it could be a much larger question. Food security includes a lot of different dynamics including availability. One source of availability is the supply chain from Anchorage, etc. If the roads get knocked out, as they have previously, how do we get basic supplies? Should Food Security be a sub-topic within a larger topic: Services/Resources Security? (This is also on P 42 under Potential Partner-Led Strategies 8. Promote Food Security.)

Transportation:

P 15 - Switch Goal A & B – AND

P 47 – Switch Goal A & B

As I read these, it makes me think that the City has more of a priority for paths and sidewalks, rather than to its transportation infrastructure, without which, there would be no community. With all respect to the significant voice (and having no desire to diminish this voice) to have greater walkability within the Homer area, what is in Goal B should come first.

Add Goal C: Commit to the development of the Core business/tourist area of Homer upholding the values of walkability, safety, Wayfinding and visual characteristics.

HOMER COMP PLAN REVIEW**C.BARNWELL****9/2/25****Review Categories:**

SUBSTANTIVE (looking for main topics, or subtopics within a larger category that are missing, incomplete, or perhaps should be omitted)

TECHNICAL INFORMATION, including grammar and punctuation, and wordsmithing similar to what Heath brought forth about the Introduction sentence, or questions

MISSING GOALS that should be in the Plan

Executive Summary PHD Review

COMMENT	REVIEW CATEGORY	PAGE #	MOTION?
Top Priorities/projects Suggest addition of “Increase access to recreational opportunities for visitors and residents” topic be included as a priority be included in the list. Suggest addition of “provide for utilities infrastructure that supports development in appropriately zoned areas.” (Note: this refers to survey “Increase the diversity of Homer’s economy and economic foundations 73%” Suggest: instead of “Preserve open public spaces within the city from development” use “ Protect open public spaces within the city.”	MISSING GOALS TECHNICAL	4	Y
Land Use Map Areas shown as Commercial don’t align with open space, green infrastructure, and conservation goals.	SUBSTANTIVE Land Use and Environment	8,9, (also see p.16) see verbiage	Y

Multiple uses” conflict with conservation, e.g. commercial. “properties associated with Home Airport” are vague. Manufacturing and “supportive infrastructure” is in conflict with land use conservation and open space.. Environmental constraint overlay as shown on p. 11 in conflict with “commercial “ designation as shown on map on p. Key themes as mentioned in sustainability and resilience refer to “open space and natural lands support long-term community well being.		from plan: This is the blueprint that sets intent for how area will accomodae change and meet needs	
Airport category intended uses is contradictory: manufacturing, etc. doesn’t mix well with conservation.	TECHNICAL Land Use Categories	9	Y
Conservation: maintained as undisturbed and natural state conflicts with certain areas such as Airport commercial land use.			Y
Area Plans some key areas are missing from the Comp Plan. Key areas that have been discussed in the past 2 years are Diamond Cr. Recreational Area, Gateway District, Woodard Creek Watershed. I move that these areas be added to this item.	SUBSTANTIVE Land use map overlays	10	Y
Environmental Constraints: A well written category	SUBSTANTIVE Land Use map overlays	10	
A well presented map and most of it makes sense except for the environmental overlay in the Airport area. This is a critical habitat and peatlands/wetlands/hydric soils area that should be clearly designated conservation.		11	
Public Facilities and Services Generally, strategies are good, but need a line that mentions	SUBSTANTIVE	12	

consideration of future water supply and planning.			
Emphasis here on sustainability and energy efficient housing is fine, but this lacks a strategy for zoning that encourages affordable housing, i.e. housing that is accessible to walkable and transportation close to the CBD.		13	
Missing the harbor impacts on the economy.	SUBSTANTIVE Economic	14	
Transportation No mention of walkability goals (see Core Plan vision and other), although connectivity is emphasized. No mention of need for alternatives for movement of industrial traffic (e.g. trucks) through the CBD. Walkability is part of the Vision as shown on p.7 of the Core Plan. Also note walkability is listed on p.9 of the Core Plan.	SUBSTANTIVE, Transportation	15	
Storm Water and Drainage Management In the Governance section, mention should be made for the need for drainage infrastructure funded by taxation or some means of city revenue. Other city models for taxation supporting storm water and other infrastructure should be considered, e.g. Anchorage AWWU, and other.	SUBSTANTIVE, Governance	16	

Water Supply for COH	Substantive		
Geohazards	Technical		

Substantive

Technical

Core Plan PHD Review

COMMENT	CATEGORY	PAGE #	MOTION?
Add sentence: "The 2018 Plan emphasized the use of Green Infrastructure. This Plan recognizes the importance of green infrastructure (aka nature based solutions), but frames these needs in terms of drainage and stormwater management."	MISSING GOAL TECHNICAL	8	Y
Homer Profile Population numbers for Homer and Soldotna are very similar. I question the Soldotna numbers. And	TECHNICAL	P.5	

Kenai numbers. Are the Solodotna numbers from the COS?			
Homer Workforce As shown, “retail” is the highest percentage of jobs. Given this (I question it), has the Team thoroughly canvassed retail industries in Homer? If so, where is this in the Plan?	SUBSTANTIVE Homer Industry	6	
Land Use and the Environment			
Land Use: Green Infrastructure	SUBSTANTIVE Land Use and Environment		
	SUBSTANTIVE Land Use and Environment		
Land Use and Environment Revise Goal A to read (see italics) “Promote sustainable and moderate growth that preserves Homer’s small-town character; <i>and protects</i>	TECHNICAL MISSING GOALS	16	

<i>important habitat and open space.”</i>			
Land Use Categories: Revise the following conservation verbiage under category: “Public and private lands that serve key environmental functions, such as critical habitat , <i>watershed areas</i>, and <i>key hydric soils areas</i> to be maintained in an undisturbed and natural state.”	SUBSTANTIVE TECHNICAL	18	
Land Use Categories: Revise the Area Plan application areas to include: Woodard Creek Watershed, Diamond Creek Recreation Area, and Gateway District.		18	
Future Land Use Map I question the designation “Airport” mainly because the area designated this is large and conflicts with the conservation needs in this area. Suggest a) adding a page of text explaining the land use designations, and b) revising the spatial extent of “Airport” to take into		20	Y

account conservation needs. On this same page is needed a brief description of Homer's environment. This is something most land use plans include.. Suggest the following text: "The ocean-influenced maritime climate lends to a fairly temperate place by Alaska standards. Average daily temperatures range from 45 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer and 14 to 27 in the winter. Yearly snowfall during the winter averages 55 inches; total annual precipitation is 24 inches. The topography of the region adds to its beauty. The City of Homer is situated in a geographical area referred to as the Homer Bench characterized by high bluffs to the north and gently sloping shorelines in the south. Homer is bounded by Kachemak Bay to the south, and Diamond Ridge to the north, which rises from about 400 to 1,100 feet above sea level. Common rock types include shale, sandstone, coal, and claystone. The steep slopes and the loose			
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nature of the soil and bedrock make the area susceptible to landslides when saturated with water. Homer experiences both bluff and shoreline erosion problems. Homer's location makes it vulnerable to natural hazards including earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, and flooding, as well as the longer term impacts of climate change. There are numerous plans and reports that provide recommendations for improving the resilience of Homer's infrastructure. 16 The Port, Harbor, and the Homer Spit, which are all important components of Homer's economy, are especially vulnerable to severe storms and climate change.” Please put the natural hazards verbiage that was in the Spring PRD back into this Plan, as shown above. This is a huge issue for Homer and should not be understated.			
Strategies, Item (h) Please define “emerging industries,” Also, add “agricultural and other food production industries, important to food security.”		21	21

Protect Green Space , #4 Add Action item as follows: “Protect and conserve areas of hydric soils considered important to water storage, stormwater management, open space, and stormwater management.”	MISSING GOALS	22	Y
Public Facilities: City led Strategies Suggest adding action “Move Public Works Campus to a suitable location safe from natural hazards and accessible to the Public and Staff.”		27	Y
Transportation Hub This needs more elaboration on why Homer is a “transportation hub for the region” Residents and walk/bike: a good section, but the COH non motorized transp plan should be mentioned and referenced. The reference on p.46 needs more elaboration. It’s a good section, but how it integrates with walkability and Area plans needs to be described.	SUBSTANTIVE, Transportation	44, 45, 47	

Strategies and Actions should mention areas beyond the CBD/downtown area, as good as that is. But as the Plan introduction mentions this Plan is not just about downtown Homer.			
Fiscal uncertainties: The funding of public facilities infrastructure is a major issue in Homer e.g. water/sewer, public works campus, other. We need discussion of this here.		49--53	
Storm Water and Drainage Management In the Governance section, mention should be made for the need for drainage infrastructure funded by taxation or some means of city revenue.	SUBSTANTIVE, Governance	16	
Appendix J. Correct sentence "Update and adopt the City's Low-Impact Development Plan (also referred to as the Green Infrastructure – Stormwater Master Plan to "Update and adopt the City's Low-Impact Development Plan	TECHNICAL MISSIG GOALS	p.16	

(and the Green Infrastructure – Stormwater Master Plan) Suggest revising the following (see italics): “Continue to incorporate green infrastructure approaches (e.g., rain gardens, vegetated buffers, permeable surfaces) into City-led projects, <i>and new developments.</i> Suggest adding the following: <i>Develop technical mapping tools, including stormwater drainage basins and flow analysis, to guide City-led infrastructure decisions and support watershed-based planning.</i>			
Water Supply for COH	Substantive		
Geohazards	Technical		

Appendix J Suggest including item as follows "Investigate commercial transport alternatives connecting Sterling Highway (Bypass) and East End Rd."	MISSING GOAL	P.12	

Venuti Comp Plan Comments

TECHNICAL

1. The Table of Contents should be at the very beginning of the document.
2. The comments made by Jan Kaiser in her memorandum of August 15th regarding the PHD make sense, have real value and should be considered.
3. Fewer photos should be within the plan. Many photos are of topics that have nothing to do with the plan. They are distracting from the contents. This is not a travel guide. Photos obviously raise the cost of printing the document. We do not need photos, we need words.

SUBSTANTIVE

1. Two preferences that the people surveyed have which should be driving the development of this plan are:
a. Preserve small town feeling. & b. A desire for moderate growth.
2. ADA compliance should be required of any existing or newly constructed business or public facility within the City of Homer
3. The issue of storm water and the value of wetlands is not adequately considered in the plan. Some wetland areas should be designated as no-build zones.
4. Eliminating the term Climate Change and replacing it with Weather Related Issues will remove any partisan concerns about the issue.
5. The proposed change from Gateway Business to Commercial Mixed Use does not “preserve scenic views and insure a welcoming entrance to Homer. It should remain as Gateway Business.”
6. The importance of providing a safer Truck Route through Homer is not addressed in the plan. Allowing Tandem Belly Dump Trucks and other large commercial/industrial vehicles to drive down Pioneer Avenue does not add to the desire for Homer to be a safe, walkable community.
7. The important issue of annexation is not included in this plan. When one considers the amount of growth seen in this community over the past ten years, it is naïve to discount the importance of physically growing our city in order to keep up with anticipated growth.
8. During the development of this plan there has never been the opportunity for the Planning Commission to review the 2018 Comp Plan and determine what needed to be changed.
9. Should the Community Design Manual be considered in the plan ?

The 2045 comprehensive plan serves as an aspirational guide for shaping the long-term vision, growth, and development of our community. It is a blueprint sets forth goals, strategies, and actions to inform policy-making and decision-making across land use, infrastructure, housing, transportation, and environmental stewardship. The plan is a living document—intended to be periodically reviewed and amended in response to changing conditions, emerging needs, and evolving community values. Its implementation must always be grounded in the realities of available public resources and pursued in a fiscally responsible and sustainable manner to ensure its relevance and effectiveness serves the community's best interest over time.

Public Facilities and Services

Page 27, 30, 34 etc Provide a suitable definition of “ensure” in Appendix B so that users of this document understand that outcomes of efforts cannot be guaranteed. Or use another word.

Page 29 e. Develop and maintain a business plan for the Port and Harbor Enterprise that demonstrates well thought out strategies for independent success.

Page 30 6. Be responsive to community driven desires to enhance community services. Improve the synergy between the City and other community partners to maximize resources and investments.

Page 40 Goal B: define “character of Homer” according to who, what time period....

Transportation

Page 47 Clarify the City's roll in Goal B. Explain how the City plays a roll in “maintaining” a network outside of its city limits? Advocacy? “within” greater homer area.

Governance

Page 53

Reconcile-- page 40 findings in desired growth of government (66% want minimal to no growth) and page 25 where the Community Survey response shows 95% and 96% that the fire, ems, police meet the mark-- with “staff capacity challenges” on page 53. Figure 25 is likely staff, not community driven comment. The City has increased its staff by about 12% in recent years. Labor has the largest single financial impact on the budget. Sustainability has to govern growth.

Dotti Harness notes for Comp Plan Update

SUBSTANTIVE

Future Land Use Map – Gateway Business District

Page 20 Future Land Use Map. Change the Commercial Mixed Use along the Sterling Highway back to the Gateway Business District and insert the current description of the Gateway Business District in the Future Land Use Map Category.

Explore the role of City Water in Regional Growth

Recognize the role that Homer’s municipal water supply has in supporting population growth outside the city limits. This includes referencing the existing water and sewer agreements between Homer and Kachemak City. Action items may include:

-
1. Identify where City water is currently being delivered,
 2. Research how other communities use water supply to manage growth.
-

FORMATTING – TECHNICAL DETAILS

Move page 19 which describes the Future Land Use and insert it before page 17.

Move the Table of Contents to the front of the document and continue the page numbers through the entire document including the Appendices.

P26, Last paragraph, Last sentence under: Rising Service Demands and Infrastructure Costs.

Substitute the word ~~adequate~~ for insufficient so the last sentence reads: “The water and sewer services within the City are insufficient, and ~~but~~ stormwater runoff impacts the capacity of the wastewater treatment plants.

Chair S. Smith asked City Planner Foster if he could respond to Ms. Keiser's concerns regarding the creation of a wider easement. Mr. Foster noted that discussion pertaining to adding fill to the property wouldn't technically be appropriate until the zoning permit process.

Public Works Director Kort stated that he isn't opposed to a wider easement but added that there's an earthen wedge on the parcels that creates the building site. He reasoned that he couldn't foresee anyone adding fill further towards the stream.

There were also conversations regarding the wetlands associated with the plat and whether there should be a drainage easement on the eastern boundary.

H. SMITH/BARNWELL MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 25-43 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE PRELIMINARY PLAT, WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

1. GRANT A 15' UTILITY EASEMENT FRONTING EAST END ROAD, ALONG THE ENTIRE BOUNDARY WEST OF THE 25' SEWER MAIN EASEMENT.
2. AMEND THE LEGEND TO CLEARLY DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE VARIOUS LINE TYPES DEPICTED ON THE PLAT—INCLUDING PROPERTY LINES, SECTION LINES, AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY CENTERLINES.
3. ADJUST THE ARROW IN THE VICINITY MAP TO ACCURATELY LOCATE TRACT-A, RATHER THAN ADJACENT LOTS TO THE EAST.
4. DEDICATE A 20' WIDE DRAINAGE EASEMENT CENTERED ALONG THE LOCATION OF THE EXISTING CREEK, CONSISTENT WITH THE EASEMENT GRANTED UNDER HM 2018-40, TO BE SUBJECT TO HOMER CITY CODE WITH THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION TO BE SHOWN.

Commissioner H. Smith asked for clarification on defining exactly what was meant by "centered along the location of the existing creek." City Planner Foster specified that it would be 10 feet on each side of the centerline of the creek.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair S. Smith called for a 10-minute recess at 7:55 p.m.

Chair S. Smith called the meeting back to order at 8:05 p.m.

PENDING BUSINESS

- A. AN ORDINANCE OF THE HOMER CITY COUNCIL ADOPTING THE 2025 HOMER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND RECOMMENDING ADOPTION BY THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH, Memorandum PL 25-038

Chair S. Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and opened the floor for continued discussion on the Draft Comprehensive Plan. The Commissioners went around the dais, each reading their recommended changes and suggestions into the record.

H. SMITH/BARNWELL MOVED TO EXTEND THE MEETING TO 10:30 P.M.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

H. SMITH/WALKER MOVED TO FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION THAT CITY COUNCIL ADOPT THE 2025 HOMER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WITH COMMENTS ATTACHED FOR CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS.

There was brief discussion regarding the wording of the motion.

Chair S. Smith requested the Clerk to perform a roll-call vote.

VOTE: YES: HARNESS, BARNWELL, WALKER, S. SMITH, VENUTI, H. SMITH, SCHNEIDER.

Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Ordinance 25-54, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Amending Homer City Code Title 8 Permits, Licenses and Regulations by Adding Chapter 8.13 Temporary Retail Services, Memorandum PL 25-44

Chair S. Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to City Planner Foster, who provided a summary review of the memorandum included in the packet. Discussion topics included the Farmer's Market, what defines a "structure," parking requirements, and ADA accessibility.

SCHNEIDER/H. SMITH MOVED TO EXTEND THE MEETING TO 10:45 P.M.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

SCHNEIDER/VENUTI MOVED TO FORWARD A RECOMMENDATION THAT CITY COUNCIL ADOPT ORDINANCE 25-54 AS PRESENTED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NO: SCHNEIDER, H. SMITH, VENUTI, S. SMITH, WALKER, BARNWELL, HARNESS.

Motion failed.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. 2025 Planning Commission Calendar
- B. 2025 Planning Commission Meeting Dates & Submittal Deadlines

Chair S. Smith noted the informational materials included in the packet.

The plan has made great progress from the original drafts...more readable and actionable...well done.

The following is a list of action items for the Planning Department generated from the following Google Gemini AI query:

For the three attached documents, (The Executive Summary, Core Plan and Appendices) please identify the action items directed to the Planning department.

The Google Gemini analysis results are as follows:

Based on the three provided documents, the following action items are directed to the City of Homer's Planning Department and/or Planning Commission:

Governance

- Collaborate with City staff, boards, and commissions to prepare annual work plans based on the comprehensive plan's action plans.
- Present accomplishments and proposed priorities from the Comprehensive Plan to the City Council each year as part of the annual work planning process.
- Develop a website with tracking information for annual reporting of implementation progress.

Housing

- Explore new tools and regulations to increase the housing inventory, such as implementing a program to track Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) permits and streamlining the permitting process.
- Review existing zoning codes and modify them to support a greater diversity of housing options, including mixed-use development and infill.
- Gauge community support for zoning and policy tools that expand housing options.
- Address the cost and complexity of construction on vacant or underused properties through targeted infrastructure investment and infill-oriented zoning strategies.

Land Use and Environment

- Develop technical mapping tools, including stormwater drainage basins and flow paths, to guide City-led infrastructure decisions and support watershed-based planning.
- Inventory land with geographic information systems (GIS) to identify priority sites for open space acquisition and hazard mitigation.
- Develop a wetlands inventory and management plan to guide long-term land use decisions based on the function and value of wetland areas.
- Consider and potentially adopt an updated, science-based wildlife corridor map that integrates habitat data, climate resilience, and land use patterns to protect critical habitats.

- Explore incentives and voluntary guidelines that encourage sustainable development practices on private land.

Question for the Planning Commission:

Do you feel comfortable with all that is being asked of the Commission and Department?

2045 Plan

Somewhere along the way we transitioned from a 2035 plan to a 2045 plan. That's ok, as it may have cost savings by not having to repeat this process ten years from now.

A 2045 plan, a seemingly simple change, highlights greater uncertainty in those outlying years. Financially speaking, our ability to forecast financial needs in a two-year budget cycle is challenging enough. Trying to understand the financial impact 20 years from now resulting from planning decisions set in motion today, is even more challenging.

RECOMMENDATION:

Make note of that transition somewhere in the beginning of the document. In addition to that note, the document should say that the plan, being a 20-year plan, is designed to be flexible in its implementation. At no time should the City of Homer be held to take a particular action by a particular time, irrespective of cost and benefits received. This plan should be recognized as an **aspirational** guide for the future. As noted on page 14 of the core plan:

Goals

*Themes are followed by a broad set of goals. The goals identify long term, **aspirational** improvements.*

This is the only location in all the documents where the term "aspirational" is used.

RECOMMENDATION:

At a minimum, each document should reinforce that the actions herein are aspirational in nature and not an obligation. They are descriptive, not prescriptive.

Additionally, on page 14 of the core plan it says the following:

Plan Amendments and Updates *The Kenai Peninsula Borough holds planning and platting authority; therefore, all plan amendments and updates require approval by the Borough. This is intended to be a 20-year plan, although if conditions change significantly in the community within the 20-year period (such as major population growth or population loss), it may be necessary to update sooner.*

RECOMMENDATION:

Given the high hurdle of borough approval for changes and amendments, I encourage the planning commission to look closely at the obligations noted above and consider if it would be wise to “soften” some of those action items to make them more aspirational.

That said, there are still some cleanup items that I recommend you consider as it passes on its final route for approval.

- 1) The Coast Guard 110 ft small cutter is no longer stationed in Homer. In the future, the Buoy Tender (Aspen) is unlikely to be stationed in Homer as the Coast Guard focuses on its fast response vessel design based in Kodiak. Has the plan sought to understand the impact of the Coast Guard leaving, both financially and housing?
- 2) The term “climate change” appears four times in the executive summary, six times in the core plan and eight times in the appendices and yet lacks a definition. Failing to define “climate change” in the appendix muddies the waters when it comes to action planning. Some people think that addressing climate change is preparing for weather conditions that could come about from long term trends. Others believe climate change requires taking action to reduce Greenhouse Gases (GHG) associated with energy production (community survey result quote near the bottom of page 60 in the core plan).

Failing to define the term “climate change” results in a reduced focus on what we are trying to achieve. Throughout much of the plan, there is discussion of protecting infrastructure from, or mitigating risks to infrastructure from the “impacts of climate change”. Yet, there is another term, already used many times in the documents, that effectively renders the term, climate change, as unnecessary—and that is resilience. The definition of resilience as stated in the Appendix B Glossary (and hasn’t changed from the last draft) is:

Resilience: The ability of a community to anticipate, plan, and prepare for **threats**, persevere through stressful or disruptive events, and recover and adapt to new conditions.

If the impacts of climate change exhibit themselves as **weather related threats**, then building resilience into our designs and decision-making processes addresses this threat. I recommend we eliminate the phrase “climate change” or “impacts of climate change” and replace it with “weather related threats”.

As noted in the core plan on page 59, In the 2023 community survey, 74 percent of respondents said it was “very important” to encourage renewable energy projects over the next 20 years.

That's admirable, however, the community was only presented with part of the information when asked about renewable energy. The question failed to ask "at what cost?" and "who pays?". Who wouldn't want renewable energy if it's free?

The current tax levy on each dollar assessed valuation of taxable property within the city is 4.5 mills, and the rate of sales tax is 4.85 percent. What if the question asked was "would you support the city of Homer investing in renewable energy projects that reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by 0.000001% and will result in a property tax increase of \$500 per year?" Or "would you support the City of Homer investing in renewable energy projects that reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by 0.000001% and will result in a sales tax increase that translates to \$200 per year for each resident of Homer?"

RECOMMENDATION:

Please reconsider Page 8 of Appendix I where it says:

Sustainability and Resilience Potential Partner-led Strategies

4. Leverage Partnerships to Advance Community-Wide Sustainability and Resilience. Advance Renewable Energy and Infrastructure Innovation

- a. Support the expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the community to reduce transportation-related emissions and improve access for residents and visitors.
- b. Collaborate with partners to advocate for and invest in renewable energy sources, including hydroelectric, solar, wind, and tidal.
- c. Coordinate with utilities to pilot and plan for future microgrid networks that improve local energy resilience and distribution.

The language of these three activities obligates the city to provide funding for resources that doesn't make economic sense. These kinds of activities are not cost effective and are inconsequential regarding green house gas reductions.

I propose the following **highlighted** modified language to be used:

Sustainability and Resilience Potential Partner-led Strategies

4. Leverage Partnerships to Advance Community-Wide Sustainability and Resilience. Advance Cost-Effective Renewable Energy and Infrastructure Innovation

- a. Support the expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the community to reduce transportation-related emissions and improve access for residents and visitors.
- b. Collaborate with partners to advocate for and invest in renewable energy sources, including hydroelectric, solar, wind, and tidal.
- c. Coordinate with utilities to pilot and plan for future microgrid networks that improve local energy resilience and distribution.

These three actions are DESCRIPTIVE of the types of actions the city may take. They are not PRESCRIPTIVE. The comprehensive plan does not obligate the city to fund these activities if it becomes clear there is not a cost-effective way to implement them.

Do the math

For reference: On March 5, 2024, I performed a presentation at the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission Work Session that included deploying tidal energy generation as part of the Homer Harbor expansion.

Here is a link to the meeting materials: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/phac/port-harbor-advisory-commission-worksession-18>

The GHG reduction calculations in that presentation demonstrate the inconsequential impact these actions would have to reduce global GHG, yet there was/is desire to continue to investigate and perhaps even deploy tidal energy generation as part of the project. The bottom line is, diversifying the energy portfolio (at an enormous cost) should not drive scoping discussions for the Port and Harbor expansion effort and it likewise shouldn't drive activity from city staff (or consultants) as part of this comprehensive plan.

Final word on climate change

If we feel the need to continue to use the phrase "climate change" we should define it.

RECOMMENDATION:

I recommend the following definition provided by Google Gemini AI:

Climate Change: A long-term shift in the average temperature and weather patterns of a region or the Earth as a whole.

How this plan will address climate change

This comprehensive plan seeks to mitigate the effects of these weather patterns through resilience planning. This comprehensive plan does not seek to obligate the City of Homer to deploy greenhouse gas reducing activities that do not result in direct cost reductions in the conduct of city business.

Sustainability

On page 2 of appendix B, the term Growth, Sustainable is defined as:

Growth, Sustainable: *Creating long-term value without depleting natural or social resources, characterized by practices that are environmentally friendly, socially responsible, and economically viable.*

This definition identifies a link to RVKS and Associates which has used the following language in their definition of sustainable growth:

Rather than just focus on quantity of growth, “quality” of growth is also relevant. The need for “sustainable” growth in organizations for instance, is not just about increasing financial metrics; it integrates a broader perspective that encompasses environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors.

The comprehensive plan should not be attached to philosophies like ESG factors which has been demonstrated to be inferior when managing a business. For several years, financial advisor Ric Edelman cautioned against jumping on the ESG bandwagon as he expected the financial performance of companies that emphasized these factors would fall short of other companies—for a variety of reasons. In his December 21, 2023 podcast, titled "The False Narrative of ESG Investing", he discusses why ESG investing is misleading and demonstrates that ESG funds have underperformed the overall market, as measured by the S&P 500.

Here is a link to the episode on Apple Podcasts: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/12-21-23-the-false-narrative-of-esg-investing/id1603081576?i=1000639343039>

Additionally, on page 3 of Appendix B, Sustainability is defined as:

Sustainability: *The process of using our finite resources as a community to balance the goals of economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and social equity to ensure that we can meet the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

Perhaps it is just an oversight, but using a definition of sustainability that includes social equity is just not proper.

As noted in my comments from March 2025, “the City Government is here to provide core services, not to be a social equity and climate leader. City Government should focus on the blocking and tackling of providing core services in a safe, responsive, excellent, and economic fashion.”

Perhaps a simple solution would be to use the definition of sustainability that has already been published in the City of Homer document intitled “Money, Energy and Sustainability A policy guide for City of Homer employees on reducing energy use and waste in local government operations”:

What is “sustainability”? One of the simplest and most often cited definitions of sustainability refers to practices that “meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Source: World Commission on Environment and Development—Our Common Future (1987)

RECOMMENDATION:

Change the definition of Sustainability to the version that is already used in the City of Homer Policy guide.

Closing:

This comprehensive plan is nicely improved over the previous version. My review and commentary are not exhaustive. However, the few additional improvements I have noted above should substantially improve the document to assist us as we plan for 2045. Thank you for the opportunity to participate.

Kathryn Carssow
PO Box 3518
Homer, Alaska 99603
(907)399-3738, kcarssow@live.com

September 11, 2025

Mayor Rachel Lord
City Council
City of Homer
491 E. Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

Dear Mayor Lord and Members of the City Council,

As former chair of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, initially responsible for guiding public participation in developing the Homer Comprehensive Plan Update, I believe that the public review of the public hearing draft has been poorly timed and is inadequate. Last fall, I shared my concern with you when the project timeline was substantially extended that the public hearing draft would be released during the summer months when Homer residents would be least available to review and respond to it. Indeed that happened with the release of the public hearing draft on July 23rd and the Planning Commission public hearing held on August 20th.

I'm concerned that the public hearing draft is overwhelming and confusing and too much to expect concerned citizens returning from summer work and play to digest and interpret. Much of it isn't of immediate concern in that it just sets out goals that may or may not be realized. But the Land Use Map is immediately relevant to Title 21 revisions and critical land use issues before our community now.

The Planning Commission Chair's and Vice Chair's memorandums to you advise you that the final plan land use recommendations conflict radically from recorded public input (the Survey and other). Those two reports further make extensive recommendations for plan additions and revisions. Homer citizens deserve the opportunity to be fully informed of and to weigh in on the future land use map and environmental policies set out in the plan and the impact their implementation will have on the quality of life in our community. This is especially important given the 20 year timeframe of this plan. Also, it is important in that the Future Land Use Map will guide the revised Zoning Map (assuming the Zoning Map is revised which is not clear).

I urge you to refer the public hearing draft of the comprehensive plan back to the Planning Commission for further public notice and hearing, giving the public a meaningful opportunity to discuss and debate it. I urge you to request that the Planning Commission direct revisions to the draft plan as it finds necessary in order to forward a document that the Commission endorses for adoption by the City Council.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Carssow

Cc: Planning Commission

MEMORANDUM

TO: Homer City Council
FROM: Janette Keiser, PE
DATE: October 2, 2025
RE: Comments on 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan Update – Public Hearing Draft

At your October 13, 2025, meeting, you will be asked to deliberate on the version of the new Homer Comprehensive Plan known as the “Public Hearing Draft or PHD”. This document, dated July 2025, is an updated version of the “Public Review Draft or PRD”, dated February 2025. The purpose of my memorandum is to point out areas where language in the PHD is different from the PRD. In some cases, the differences are minor and in some cases they are substantive. You will need to decide whether or not you care about the changes. I have made numerous recommendations, often to reinstate language from the PRD.

I presented this same information to the Planning Commission. They didn’t do much with it because they were already overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task before them; that is, (a) to voice their own comments about the PHD and (b) to synthesize their collective comments into recommendations for you. At the end of the day, they could not figure out how to do that and forwarded all their comments for you to sort through on your own.

1. RE: Formatting issues:

- a. There needs to be a Cover Page, with the Table of Contents immediately after that, identifying, among other things, the page numbers where the Executive Summary and the body of Plan starts.

2. RE: Public Outreach Events. The PRD had a Figure 4, Page 10, which listed all the public outreach events that were held to collect input about the plan. This was important information because it showed the City’s efforts to include a broad range of opinions. The PHD does not include this figure. It should be reinstated.

3. **RE: Natural hazards.** The PRD, Page 18, contained a nice paragraph entitled “*Development that fits Natural Conditions*” that reminded people that natural hazards restrict growth and development on much of Homer’s lands. The only part of this paragraph that appears in the PHD is the first sentence. The rest of the paragraph should be reinstated as it is important to remind people of this crucial fact.
4. **RE: Gaps.** The PRD, Page 19, contained some nice language about the “*gaps*” in outdoor areas, which is omitted from the PHD. That was good language that should be reinstated.
5. **RE: Future Land Use Map.** I suggest the explanation about what a *Future Land Use Map* is be moved from Page 19 to Page 17, before Figure 7.
6. **RE: Future Land Use Map.** This map in its current form is almost useless because the outlines are not sufficiently clear to ascertain which pieces of property are in a particular land use. The outlines need to follow property boundaries. Without clear boundaries, the Planning Commission is just guessing about which designation applies to specific parcels. This is particularly important when talking about the Environmental Constraints Overlay.

This is one of the most substantial flaws in the current version. The zones, current or future, need to be mapped with particularity so everyone, property owners, developers and the Planning Commission, know which properties lie within which zone.

7. **RE: Land Use.**
 - a. The PHD, Page 21, contains Strategy (2), which includes a list of Actions. One of them is “(g) *gauging community and stakeholder support for zoning and policy tools....*” This sounds wishy-washy. Please delete the words about “*gauging...interest*” and substitute the phrase “*research and implement zoning and policy tools....*” Obviously, implementation can’t take place without community support, so community support, or lack thereof, for such tools will manifest itself during the implementation process. Thus, it’s ok to state this strategy more assertively.

- b. The PRD, Page 24, included an additional strategy (g) about “*adopting building codes and incentive programs to increase energy efficiency and promote renewable energy*,” which does not appear in the PHD. The PHD should address these important topics if only to refer to the city’s Climate Action Plan.
- c. The PHD, Page 21, includes Action (h) which refers to “*locally owned and emerging industries*”. Please define “emerging industries,” so we know what we’re supposed to support. Also, this would be a good place to add “agricultural and other food production industries.”
- d. The PHD, Page 22, includes a Strategy (3) to “*strategically align development regulations with natural hazards and land suitability...*” The PRD contained a number of Actions (b) – (f), that are not contained in the PHD. That was good language, which should be reinstated. What’s currently in the PHD is good, but it needs to be buttressed with the original language of this section.
- e. The PHD, Page 22, includes Strategy (4) regarding “*open, green space*”. The PRD contained a number of Actions (a) – (d) that are not contained in the PHD. This was good language, which should be reinstated. What’s currently in the PHD is good, but it needs to be buttressed with the original language from the PRD.
- f. The PHD, Page 23, includes Strategy (5) regarding “*place-based planning*”. This Strategy was in the PRD, but the Actions that were in the PRD are totally different from what is shown in the PHD. I can’t tell if the PHD’s Actions are intended to encompass the PRD’s Actions or if the intents are different. Some terms from the PRD, such as “*broader range of housing types and compatible mixed-use developments*,” “*public-private partnerships*” and “*targeted infrastructure upgrades*” do not appear in the PHD. These were good phrases, which should be reinstated..
- g. The PHD, Page 24, includes Strategy (6) regarding public-private partnerships. The language about such partnerships in the PRD, page 26, Action (c), was more descriptive and should be reinstated. Also,

please don't refer to Strategy 6 and 7 as "*Partner-led Strategies*".

This looks like the city is taking a back-seat to these strategies.

Please use language that puts the city in a more proactive position.

8. RE: Public Facilities and Services.

- a. There's a nice quote, in the red box, on Page 25 of the PRD that has been omitted from the PHD. It should be reinstated.
- b. The PRD, Page 27, includes Strategy (7) about developing policies for specific community areas, which is not in the PHD. Please reinstated it. If Strategy (7) in the PHD is supposed to take the place of (7) in the PRD, please add the additional, descriptive language that is in the PRD.
- c. The PRD's chapter on Public Facilities & Services had a paragraph, Page 33, on "*Vulnerability to Natural Hazards*", which is not in the PHD. Please reinstate it. This is a huge issue for Homer and should not be understated.
- d. There was a nice quote about infrastructure in the PRD, Page 34, in the box, which was omitted in the PHD. Please reinstated it.
- e. The PRD, Page 36, included a Strategy related to roads, which does not appear in the PHD. Please reinstated it.
- f. The PRD, Page 37, has a more expansive list of airport improvements, which does not appear in the PHD. Please reinstated it.
- g. The PRD, Page 37, included a Strategy related to stormwater, which does not appear in the PHD. Please reinstate it.
- h. The PHD, Page 29, includes Strategy (3) related to Port & Harbor Infrastructure. This Strategy lists Action (a) regarding a P/H Management Plan, which I would assume would include a list of important capital projects. This Strategy also lists Action (d) regarding one specific project – the large vessel haul-out area. The P/H needs a lot of projects, so it makes no sense to single out this one particular project in the Comprehensive Plan. It makes more sense to specify, in Action (a), that the Management Plan will include

a Capital Improvement Program. Then, this inappropriate call out of the large-vessel haul-out area can be omitted.

- i. The PHD, Page 29, includes Strategy (4) related to new facilities on the Homer Spit. It includes Action (a) regarding the harbor expansion.
 - i. This action should be in Strategy (3) related to Port/Harbor Infrastructure.
 - ii. I don't like the way the sentence says "[s]upport a harbor expansion..." without qualification. This sounds like the outcome is pre-supposed; that is, that the city will move forward with the harbor expansion, no matter what. It is true that the City Council is supporting the project at this time, but this is still qualified support. Feasibility and affordability must be still be demonstrated. I recommend using language like "continue to explore the operational, financial and environmental feasibility of a harbor expansion" because that is what we are doing.
- j. The PHD, Page 30, includes three *Potential Partner-led Strategies*. This looks like the city is taking a back-seat to these strategies. Please use language that puts the city in a more proactive position.

9. RE: Housing.

- a. The PRD, Page 40, had a nice introductory paragraph about Homer's housing situation, which is somewhat re-stated in the PHD, but not exactly, causing some ideas to be missed. Please reinstated the original paragraph.
- b. The PRD, Page 42, had a paragraph about "*Tourism's Influence on the Rise of Short-term Rentals in Homer*", which does not appear in the PHD. This was valuable context; please reinstate it.
- c. The PRD, Pages 44-45, had more Strategies and Actions related to housing than what is contained within the PHD. That was some good stuff – please reinstate it.

10. RE: Economic Development.

- a. The PRD, page 55, has a nice graph showing community preferences for growth, which does not appear in the PHD. Please reinstate it.
 - b. The strategies in the PHD, Page 41, for Economic Development, are completely different than the economic development strategies listed in the PRD.
 - i. Why did this happen?
 - ii. Some of the PRD's Actions f should be reinstated, including:
 - 1. Action (2) about "*vocational training...year-round employment...*"
 - 2. Action (3) about "*encouraging economic growth...while preserving the natural resources...valued by residents...*"
 - 3. Action (4) about "*moderate, sustainable growth in tourism*".
 - c. The PHD has an Action (1)(a), Page 41, that says we should "*incentivize growth of the marine trades*". This makes it sound like we're going to do this whether it makes sense economically or environmentally. Please put some limitations around this, such as saying "support sustainable growth of the marine trades..."
 - d. The PHD, Page 42, includes nine *Potential Partner-led Strategies*. This looks like the city is taking a back-seat to these strategies. Please use language that puts the city in a more proactive position.
11. **RE: Transportation.**
- a. The PRD listed a number of Actions related to transportation that were deleted from the PHD. Please reinstate the original language.
 - b. Please identify as an Action, "Implement recommendations from the Homer Transportation Plan"
 - c. The PHD, Page 48, includes three *Potential Partner-led Strategies*. This looks like the city is taking a back-seat to these strategies. Please use language that puts the city in a more proactive position.
12. **RE: Governance.**

- a. The PHD, Pages 55 and 56, lists Strategy (1) – (4) regarding long-term fiscal planning and related Actions. Some of the Actions from the PRD’s Governance chapter are omitted and should be reinsated.
13. **RE: Sustainability and Resilience.**
- a. The PRD, page 29, included some nice figures related to slope stability, landslide hazard that were omitted from the PHD. Please reinstate them as they illustrate the point about natural and climate driven hazards.
 - b. The PHD’s Strategies and Actions related to Sustainability and Resilience are worded completely differently from those in the PRD.
 - i. Why is this?
 - ii. It’s hard to tell what exactly has changed. Are the concepts and Actions set forth in the PRD contained in the PHD, but with different wording? Or have some concepts been abandoned?
 - iii. The PRD contained some helpful concepts and useful language and to the extent concepts were deleted, they should be reinstated.

Dear City Council Members,

Thank you for your service to our community and for the opportunity to share my concerns regarding the *Comprehensive Plan Update*.

I presented these concerns at the August 20 Planning Commission meeting and have also discussed them with Agnew::Beck and the Planning Director both at public meetings and in private conversations.

Primary Concern

My primary concern is the Comprehensive Plan's failure to acknowledge that **access to potable water in the Greater Homer Area is a limiting factor to regional growth.**

This concern is not about a scarcity of Homer's water supply. Rather, it is about **access**—specifically, how availability of Homer's city water has driven population growth outside city limits, particularly to the east, where well water is often non-potable.

The Plan's introduction should clearly acknowledge that many of these areas depend heavily on Homer's municipal water. The Plan notes (on page 12) that since 1994, the population of surrounding communities has surpassed Homer's own—but it fails to connect this trend to Homer's role in supplying that water.

Additionally, the Plan does not recognize that the City currently does not track water deliveries, which creates a significant blind spot in understanding and managing regional development. A truly *comprehensive* plan should provide guidance in this area.

Because of this omission, Homer is missing a valuable opportunity to visualize, understand, and manage its growth—strategically and sustainably. That is the core purpose of a comprehensive plan.

Suggestions for Plan Revisions and Additions

1. Acknowledge the Role of City Water in Regional Growth

Update pages 11 and 37 (and elsewhere as appropriate) to recognize the key role Homer's municipal water supply has played in supporting population growth outside city limits.

2. Collect and Analyze Data on Water Deliveries

Include a discussion of how the City might collect and analyze data on bulk water deliveries, both inside and outside city limits.

- Add this to pages 11, 28, and 37.
- Identify public bulk water locations (e.g., Safeway, Chevron, Public Works RV Dump / Water).
- Provide a map showing where water is being delivered throughout the greater Homer area.

3. Explore Water Policy as a Growth Management Tool

Consider policies that use water access as a means to support sustainable growth, such as:

- Requiring out-of-city water users to register as Homer water customers.
- Managing water delivery for short-term rentals outside city limits to encourage affordable housing.
- Restricting subdivisions in areas with environmental constraints or where development could strain City services.

4. Correct Language on Page 26

Revise the sentence:

“...some of the homes within the annexed areas are still not served by City services. The water and sewer services within the City are adequate...”

Replace “adequate” with “insufficient” to accurately reflect existing service gaps.

5. Prioritize Water and Sewer Extensions Within City Limits

On page 28, emphasize the importance of extending water and sewer services to all existing City residences. The infrastructure makes such extensions feasible and cost-effective, with the water system uphill and the sewage system downhill from these neighborhoods.

6. Clarify Kachemak City’s Status and Agreements

On pages 10 and 37, explicitly acknowledge that **Kachemak City** is the only incorporated second-class city in the region and reference its existing water and sewer service agreements with Homer. The Plan currently groups Kachemak City with unincorporated areas like Diamond Ridge and Fritz Creek, which may be misleading.

7. Maintain the Gateway Business District Identity

On page 17, the proposed change from “Gateway Business” to “Commercial Mixed-Use” appears to contradict the District’s original goals—preserving scenic views and ensuring a welcoming entrance to Homer.

Maintaining the *identity* of the **Gateway Business District** honors strong public input that emphasized protecting Homer’s pastoral landscape and scenic views of Kachemak Bay. This designation preserves the welcoming, “green entrance” to Homer and reflects the community’s intent to balance small-scale development with the area’s natural beauty and character. Replacing it with a generic “Commercial Mixed-Use” label would risk losing that distinct sense of place that defines Homer’s approach to growth.

I recommend retaining both the *name* and *intent* of the Gateway Business District.

Closing Remarks

The *Comprehensive Plan* is a thoughtful, forward-looking document, and I commend the effort that has gone into its development. As an ecologist who moved to Homer 35 years ago from drought-stricken California, I understand firsthand that **water availability is the foundation of sustainable growth**.

Acknowledging water as both a resource and a management tool could help Homer guide development strategically—supporting affordable housing, incentivizing annexation where appropriate, and preserving the character our community values.

Thank you again for your time, your service, and your commitment to shaping Homer’s future.

Rick Foster
Former HAPC and KPB PC
Homer city resident

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rafoster@acsalaska.net



MEMORANDUM

**Ordinance 25-64, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska Adopting the City of Homer 2045 Comprehensive Plan and Recommending Adoption by the Kenai Peninsula Borough.
City Manager.**

Item Type: Backup Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor Lord and City Council
Date: October 20, 2025
From: Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager

Background: At the October 13th regular City Council meeting Ordinance 25-64 was introduced. With the introduction, Comprehensive Plan amendments included substantive amendments 1-2, and technical amendments 2-17 as outlined in attachment 1 to Memo CC-25-242, and some formatting changes.

Follow-up requests included an updated Comprehensive Plan draft, an off cycle worksession, and a form for Councilmembers to use to present proposed amendments.

Next Steps:

- At the October 27th meeting
 - a worksession is scheduled for 4:00 p.m.,
 - our partners at Agnew::Beck will present under visitors, and
 - a public hearing is scheduled.
- An updated public hearing draft and amendment forms will be provided by October 27th.
- An off cycle worksession is scheduled for November 7th from 9:00 am to noon.
- Prior to the November 7th worksession, Community Development Director Engebretsen will meet individually with Councilmembers with the goal of learning what's working for them in the plan, answer questions, and hear feedback.
- A second public hearing is scheduled for November 10th.

At the October 27th worksession, Community Development Director Engebretsen will discuss planning for the November 7th worksession, planning for individual meetings with Councilmembers, review the Comprehensive Plan amendment form, and answer questions. Shelly Wade with Agnew::Beck will be in attendance to begin presenting to Council on the updated draft plan, hear comments, and answer questions.

At the regular meeting Council will take public testimony and may propose amendments if they choose too. Council may also choose to hold off on proposing amendments until November 10th, after time to get into the weeds a little bit during the November 7th worksession.

Recommendation: Conduct a public hearing on October 27th, and discuss if needed.

**CITY OF HOMER
HOMER, ALASKA**

City Manager

ORDINANCE 25-64

AN ORDINANCE OF THE HOMER CITY COUNCIL ADOPTING THE
2045 HOMER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND RECOMMENDING
ADOPTION BY THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH.

WHEREAS, The Kenai Peninsula Borough as a Second Class Borough shall provide for
planning on an areawide basis in accordance with AS 29.40; and

WHEREAS, As provided in Kenai Peninsula Borough Code 21.01.025, cities in the
Borough requesting extensive comprehensive plan amendments may recommend to the Kenai
Peninsula Borough Planning Commission a change to the city comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, The City of Homer has prepared extensive comprehensive plan amendments
in the form of the 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, A comprehensive plan is a public declaration of policy statements, goals,
standards and maps for guiding the physical, social and economic development, both private
and public, of the City; and

WHEREAS, The 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan will guide the development of the City
of Homer; and

WHEREAS, The Homer Planning Commission, in its advisory position to the Kenai
Peninsula Borough, and other advisory bodies for the City, have reviewed said plan and or
conducted public hearings; and

WHEREAS, The Homer City Council, based upon the recommendation of the Homer
Planning Commission, recommends that the Kenai Peninsula Borough Planning Commission
and Assembly adopt the 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan.

NOW THEREFORE, The City of Homer Ordains:

Section 1. The 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan is hereby adopted as the City of Homer
Comprehensive Plan, superseding the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, the 2006 Homer Town Center
Development Plan, and 2010 Homer Spit Comprehensive Plan.

Section 2. The previously adopted Homer Master Roads and Streets Plan (1986), Homer
Transportation Plan (2024), remain part of the 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan.

Section 3. Subsection (b) of Homer City Code 21.02.010, Comprehensive Plan-Adoption, is amended to read as follows:

b. The following documents, as initially approved and subsequently amended, are adopted by reference as comprising the Homer Comprehensive Plan.

- ~~1. Homer Comprehensive Plan (2018)~~
- 2. Homer Comprehensive Plan (2045)**
3. Homer Master Roads and Streets Plan (1986)
4. Homer Transportation Plan (2024)
- ~~5. Homer Town Center Development Plan (2006)~~
- ~~6. Homer Spit Plan (2010)~~

Section 4. The City of Homer hereby recommends the Kenai Peninsula Borough Planning Commission and Assembly adopt the 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan as extensive comprehensive plan amendments under Kenai Peninsula Borough Code 21.01.025, and as an element of the Official Borough Comprehensive Plan within the City of Homer planning area of the Borough.

Section 5. Sections 1 through 3 of this ordinance shall take effect upon the adoption of the 2045 Homer Comprehensive Plan by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly. The remainder of this ordinance shall take effect upon its adoption by the Homer City Council.

Section 6. Section 3 of this ordinance is of a permanent and general character and shall be included in the city code. The remainder of this ordinance is not of a permanent nature and is a non-code ordinance.

ENACTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF HOMER, ALASKA, this _____ day of November, 2025.

CITY OF HOMER

RACHEL LORD, MAYOR

ATTEST:

ZACH PETTIT, ACTING CITY CLERK

86
87 Introduction:
88 Public Hearing:
89 Second Reading:
90 Effective Date:
91
92 YES:
93 NO:
94 ABSTAIN:
95 ABSENT:
96
97