



# Agenda

## Planning Commission Worksession

Wednesday, April 03, 2024 at 5:30 PM

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

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### Homer City Hall

491 E. Pioneer Avenue  
Homer, Alaska 99603  
[www.cityofhomer-ak.gov](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov)

### Zoom Webinar ID: 936 2815 3389 Password: 865591

<https://cityofhomer.zoom.us>  
Dial: 346-248-7799 or 669-900-6833;  
(Toll Free) 888-788-0099 or 877-853-5247

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**CALL TO ORDER, 5:30 P.M.**

### AGENDA APPROVAL

#### DISCUSSION TOPIC(S)

- A. Review of Draft Transportation Plan with Planning Commission Comments

Memorandum from Economic Development Manager as backup.

### CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

### REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

### COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE (3 minute time limit)

### ADJOURNMENT

Next Regular Meeting is Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. All meetings scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.



# City of Homer

[www.cityofhomer-ak.gov](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov)

## Planning

491 East Pioneer Avenue  
Homer, Alaska 99603

[Planning@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:Planning@ci.homer.ak.us)

(p) 907-235-3106

(f) 907-235-3118

### Staff Report PL 24-015

TO: HOMER PLANNING COMMISSION  
THROUGH: RYAN FOSTER, AICP, CITY PLANNER  
FROM: JULIE ENGBRETSSEN, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER  
DATE: APRIL 3, 2024  
SUBJECT: TRANSPORTATION PLAN

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### Introduction

At the March 6, 2024 Regular Meeting, the Commission agreed by consensus that they would review the plan draft individually and submit recommendations, concerns or comments to staff for review and discussion at the April 3, 2024 regular meeting and worksession and then conduct the Public Hearing on May 1, 2024.

### Commissioner Comments

Attached are the comments received by March 27 for review and further discussion, and selection to forward to the City Council. The following comment is based on a suggestion from the last Planning Commission meeting:

- P4S Priorities for walking and biking
  - Connections into Homer from outlying areas (the Diamond Creek Underpass is an example of this type of connection).

### Next Steps

After the Commission has reviewed the Plan, the Commission will hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to the City Council. Council passes an ordinance adopting the plan, and then the plan is approved/adopted by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Planning Commission, and finally the Assembly.

Please give some thought as to how many meetings the Commission would like to spend on the Plan. Would a public hearing on May 1 be a reasonable goal?

\*If you find typos or unclear sentences, please email or contact staff directly. Meeting time is best used for Commission discussion and comments.

**Recommendation:**

Prepare comments that the Planning Commission would like to present for consideration at an anticipated May 1, 2024 public hearing on the Draft Transportation Plan.

**Attachments**

Comments received by Commissioners by March 27, 2024

My Priority	Policy/Project	Objective	Comments
1 Truck Network		1B	The most important item I think
2 E-Bike Legislation		1B	We could benefit with some clarity but may be difficult to enforce
2 Transfer of Responsibility of State Roads		3D	I'd love to see clear winter sidewalks but budgeting could be difficult
2 Ownership of State Roads		3D	I'd love to see clear winter sidewalks but budgeting could be difficult
2 Update Nonmotorized Facility Design Standards		2A,	Uniform standard for new development makes sense for maintenance
2 Update Nonmotorized Facility Design Standards		2B	Integrating with existing Infrastructure may present challenges
2 Update Nonmotorized Facility Design Standards		3F	Integrating with existing Infrastructure may present challenges
2 Traffic Calming		1B	Seems obvious
2 Pioneer Ave as an Extension of the HAP Loop		1A	Improving pedestrian and bicycle safety or even prioritizing it. Dovetails with Traffic calming
2 Pioneer Ave as an Extension of the HAP Loop		3G	Improving pedestrian and bicycle safety or even prioritizing it. Dovetails with Traffic calming
2 Kachemak Drive Reconnaissance Engineering Study		1A	It would be good to know the possibilities
2 Kachemak Drive Reconnaissance Engineering Study		1B	It would be good to know the possibilities
3 Bicycle Parking		2B	No strong opinion or objections
3 Maintenance Standards		3E	No strong opinion or objections
3 Complete Streets/All Ages and Abilities Policy		3G	No strong opinion or objections
3 Transit Options		4A	No strong opinion or objections
3 Bicycle Safety Campaign		1C	No strong opinion or objections
3 Parking Study		2D	No strong opinion or objections
3 Improve Drop Off/Pick up at Schools		1A	No strong opinion or objections
3 Improve Drop Off/Pick up at Schools		2A,	No strong opinion or objections
3 Improve Drop Off/Pick up at Schools		2B	No strong opinion or objections
3 Neighborhood Connectivity to Schools		2A,	No strong opinion or objections
3 Neighborhood Connectivity to Schools		2B	No strong opinion or objections
3 Neighborhood Connectivity to Schools		2B	No strong opinion or objections
3 Neighborhood Connectivity to Schools		2B	No strong opinion or objections
3 Neighborhood Connectivity to Schools		3A	No strong opinion or objections
3 Neighborhood Connectivity to Schools		3B	No strong opinion or objections
3 Pioneer Ave as an Extension of the HAP Loop		2A,	No strong opinion or objections
3 Pioneer Ave as an Extension of the HAP Loop		2B	No strong opinion or objections
3 Old Town Connections as an Extension of the HAP Loop		2A,	No strong opinion or objections
3 Old Town Connections as an Extension of the HAP Loop		2B	No strong opinion or objections
3 Regularly Update Existing Trail Maps		2A,	No strong opinion or objections
3 Regularly Update Existing Trail Maps		2B	No strong opinion or objections
3 Regularly Update Existing Trail Maps		3A	No strong opinion or objections
3 Regularly Update Existing Trail Maps		3B	No strong opinion or objections
3 Identify Additional Priorities for Walking & Biking Infractu		3A	No strong opinion or objections
3 Complete East West Connections		2C	No strong opinion or objections

**COH Transportation Plan  
Final Draft  
3/4/24**

Comments by Charles Barnwell  
City of Homer (COH) Planning Commission commissioner

**General Comments:**

I think this Plan is vastly improved from the previous version the Planning Commission reviewed, for these reasons:

- Organization of the plan is logical, and coupled with good writing and layout, makes for a Plan that is understandable to layperson and professionals.
- The layout of the plan, including sectional divisions, graphics, are very well done, and make for easier reading
- The maps are clear, simple, and effective;
- The Goals and Objectives section is very well organized, nicely presented for readability; and goals and objectives are well phrased. Overall, very well written.
- The goals and objectives fit the currently expressed needs of Homer at this time, addressing such issues as non-motorized transportation, truck routes, pedestrian safety, ADA needs, and more. I think the Complete Streets approach is a nice addition to the Plan addressing the strong connection between land use and transportation.
- Policy and analysis-wise, I think the Plan “hits the nail on the head” especially with regard to pedestrian/non-motorized routing and safety. I think the Plan presents some innovative approaches, such as Complete Streets.
- Truck routing and heavy vehicle routing is addressed, but perhaps lacking a bit in analysis. This is difficult as there aren’t a lot of options in moving large vehicles East-West through core City. But, somehow for a 20 year timeframe, some real options or solutions should be presented now, along with analysis of the pros and cons of these options.
- I like the mention of electric vehicle charging stations. I personally have an EV, and believe Homer should be forward looking in establishing charging infrastructure.

**Specific Comments:**

p.6

Figure 3:

Comment: This map makes clear that the core City of Homer is a walking town. It is interesting to see the high density of biking routes appear on Westhill Road, despite no bike lane on that road; and on Ocean Drive near the intersection with FAA Road.

p.10

TABLE 3. ADOT&PF Routes and non-motorized infrastructure.

Comment: it is striking that out of the 14 roads listed, 10 of these have no non-motorized infrastructure.

Figure 6. This map makes clear that although there are sidewalks and separated pathways on the core city area State routes, there are no non-motorized pathways leading up to the higher ground of Homer, or in other words nothing up West Hill, East Hill, or Skyline (realizing that this route isn't in COH boundaries).

p.12.

Figure 8. Showing traffic volumes.

Comment: it is striking that Ocean Drive has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest volume (9,000) of COH area routes (next to connecting Sterling Hwy at 9,300). Further evidence of the congestion in the Ocean Dr area to Homer Spit Road.

p.13

Electric vehicle charging infrastructure may be needed. I would note that "may" should be changed to "will." Currently, thanks to some progressive community members, there are 3 places to charge in Homer: AJ's Restaurant, The Art Shop Gallery, and Homer Electric Association. The latter 2 stations are low kWhr charging stations (<7 kWhr). With the increase in EV's and electric bikes as well, it would be good, especially with a 20 year Plan timeframe, to plan a good charging infrastructure.

p.17

Truck Routing;

The 2 proposed route options are both problematic in terms of pedestrian safety; realizing that we don't have many options. The Kachemak Drive option is especially problematic, as it has no designated pedestrian sidewalk or corridor. Truck traffic would only exacerbate this problem. Kachemak Drive also has significant boat transport with large vehicles. Making this a truck route would require substantial improvements.

p.20

Transit:

This page contains a good summary of current transit options in Homer.

I think what is missing is mention of an option of providing a shuttle to the Harbor area from the city core area. This would relieve parking on the Spit.

p.28

Complete Streets:

A great addition to the Transp Plan. I think the approach applies to Homer. I would like to see (not necessarily in this Plan), a GIS type map showing different zones in Homer corresponding to the Complete Streets categories (improvements depending on land use context).

p.33

Goal 2 in particular fits with Complete Streets, and is very appropriate to Homer—a workable approach for this community.

p.34

Goal 4 is an excellent forward looking goal for Homer, in expanding transportation options for both residents and visitors. A public transit system is needed, and particularly in the summer from city core to the Spit. East End Road transit would serve the expanding population in east Homer commuting or traveling to the city core.

p.37

Objective 1B: An excellently phrased objective. Emphasizing the need for safe use of right of way, and considering vehicle types, mode of transport.

Objective 2B: Again, well phrased language recommending bicycle parking, and city ordinance for parking at buildings.

Objective 3D: Needed language speaking to the necessity of COH and ADOTPF cooperation and joint planning for roads in the COH (and broader) area.

p.40

Objective 3G:

I fully agree with development of a Complete Streets policy for Homer. As mentioned above, a GIS mapping of Complete Streets “zones” based on land use would help guide the policy.

p.41

Objective 2D: Well phrased language advocating for planning of parking and transit . These two aspects should be coupled as stated, and are really needed for connection of Spit to core city, and East Homer to city core. Centralized parking lots are a great idea and the time has come for these to be planned for in Homer before land is not available for these.

p.42

Objective 1A, 2A, 2B

I like the idea of identifying conflict points of pedestrians and traffic, and improving safety at these connections. An example is Ocean Drive where many conflict points exist, and some potential ones, such as the proposed Doyon Hotel.

p.44

Objective 1A and 1B:

This is a great objective, again well phrased, that speaks to the need to figure out what to do with Kachemak Drive and pedestrian corridor, safety and non-motorized transportation.

This important road, a key connector between core city and eastern Homer, poses a real safety threat to walkers, bikers, and other non motorized transportation along it.

### Survey Results

I think this section succinctly presents results of the Kinney survey. The maps are well chosen, simple, and present clearly the various transportation needs in Homer.



To: Julie Engebretsen  
From: Scott Smith  
What: Draft Transportation Plan Review

(My personal) Transportation Goals:

1. **Connectivity** (Responding to public request)
  - a. Non-motorized transportation systems
    - i. Trails
    - ii. Sidewalks (did the ordinance about sidewalks fail?)
    - iii. Walkways
  - b. Pedestrian safety
    - i. Signage: hazard warning, wayfinding
    - ii. Crosswalks
    - iii. Teaching/Training Campaign (communicate road rules/standards via posters/fliers/schools/charters/etc in strategic areas)
  - c. New "roads"
    - i. East-west connector between west side and high school
    - ii. Other?
2. **Long-term Traffic/Road Development/Management:**
  - a. Develop (quality and access) Pioneer Rd, Main Street, Old Town, Ocean Dr (and other) areas for residential and tourist access and enjoyment.
    - i. Motorized
      1. Access
      2. Parking
  - b. Identify/Construct Truck Route
  - c. Resolve traffic choke areas (i.e., Farmers Market)
  - d. Systems of maintenance, etc.
3. **Develop Marine/Private/Industrial/Commercial Transportation Structures:**
  - a. Identify/Be one step ahead of need/growth
  - b. Make sure TP coordinates with Spit Plan and EEMU services

Comments on Policies - pp 36-40 (I'll use a 1-5 priority ranking. 1 being highest.)

**Truck Network (Priority 1A): (1B is listed below with comments)**

- Absolutely essential to meet desires of public about providing:
  - Attractive, safe resident and tourist areas for
    - Shopping (Art, medical, schools, etc.)
    - Restaurants
    - General services (Banking, food and beverage, phone, etc)
  - Reduce congestion at Lake Street/Pioneer intersection
  - Provide alternate route from East End to Spit
  - Provide route from EEMU services to Spit without going through residential areas
  - Provides NMT link from East End to Spit
- Challenges:
  - \$\$\$ - did I mention \$\$\$?
  - Land Use hurdles

**E-Bike Legislation (Priority 3, 5)**

- Legislation (3) is “easy/inexpensive” and probably wise
- Tangible investment (5) at this stage should only be in the form of what also accomplishes the greater connectivity needs. E-bikes are a small percentage of vehicular pressure and not be given too much special consideration at this time. If they are considered a motorized vehicle, treat them like motorcycles.
- I’m not a fan of E-everything until real studies are done regarding long-term disposal impact of batteries. They pose a true threat to eco-systems.

#### **Bicycle Parking (Priority 5)**

An Ordinance specifying bicycle parking for new and existing structures? Vehicle parking is tough enough. I would guess that most business owners in Homer would be very pro-bike. However, to mandate bicycle parking areas for each structure might get quite the backlash. Maybe an idea is to consider having covered bicycle “sheds” in strategic locations (KPCC, Ulmer’s, Farmers Market, Old Town area, parking lot across from Lighthouse Village, across from Mariner Memorial). I’m not convinced that Homer should aim for a Sitka-like standard. We have too much more vehicular volume for that to be reasonable.

#### **Transfer of Responsibility Agreements (Priority 1)**

Homer needs the ability to manage all roads (maybe not the highway) within its jurisdiction. Management (plowing, filling pot holes, etc.) should be differentiated from costs associated with paving, curbing, etc.

#### **Ownership of State Roads (Priority 1)**

Same as above.

#### **Maintenance Standards (Priority 2)**

Same as above. Maybe a program advocating some personal responsibility by the public can be encouraged? Borrow standards from Homer’s Sister City in Japan.

#### **Update Non-Motorized Facility Design Standards (Priority 1)**

I like the way this is presented in the Draft Plan, with the exception of having too much focus on a public transportation network.

#### **Complete Streets/ All Ages and Abilities Policy (Priority 1)**

At a policy level, this is great discussion to have and a goal to eventually reach. Do this in stages and it can be done well.

#### **Transit Options (Priority 5)**

Public Transportation in Homer? There is need, but funded by the City? Nah. Other solutions should be implemented.

#### **Traffic Calming (Priority 2)**

This will take a lot of work to distinguish the various needs and applications of calming. It needs to happen, but my guess is that professional evaluations of our streets, etc., will need to happen first. Identify priority areas and work to meet those needs.

## **Comments on Projects:**

### **Bicycle Safety Campaign (Priority 4)**

Can a partnership with the Fire and Police Departments be created to do this? What percentage of kids ride bikes? Scale priority and effort to that scale.

### **Parking Study (Priority 1)**

This is, perhaps, the Cities most felt need. Parking must be increased ASAP.

Code will need to be addressed to avoid another Safeway disaster.

### **HAP Loop Projects (Priority 1)**

#### **Kachemak Drive Reconnaissance Study (Priority 1B)**

The evaluation and location of a possible Truck Route should be processed in conjunction with this project. Determining a truck Route will determine how K Bay Drive could be developed. Maybe some places (residential sections) would be developed to different standards if an optional Truck Route is identified.

### **Updating Trail Maps (Priority 4)**

Most people are accustomed to using the internet to gain information. If a map is created online, and updated as necessary, and then is advertised via proper means (Wayfinding, Chamber of Commerce, Charter Offices, Museum, etc.), most people will get used to this option pretty quickly. Not a lot of money is needed for this.

### **Walking and Biking Infrastructure (This could be combined under the HAP umbrella effort)**

#### **Complete East-West Connections (Priority ... .. 3)**

Yes and no. If they are already proposed and passed after going through Public Process, yes. If this involves options besides what is listed above, no.