

**CITY OF HOMER**  
**Homer Public Safety Building**  
**DRAFT PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN**

**USKH**

SHARED VISION. UNIFIED APPROACH.

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*Prepared for:*

Homer Public Works Department  
3575 Heath Street  
Homer, Alaska 99603

*Prepared by:*

USKH Inc.  
2515 A Street  
Anchorage, AK 99503

*Point-of-Contact:*

Dale Smythe AIA, USKH Principal  
Regional Architectural Manager  
Architectural Department  
Phone (907) 343-5254

USKH WO# 1435500



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Case Statement draft options for input**

- To ensure Homer has adequate emergency services into the future that protect community health and safety.
- To ensure Homer keeps residents safe by providing locally responsive, cost-effective emergency services.
- To ensure Homer's integrated emergency services protect lives, property, and the environment using a cost-effective, locally responsive service model.

### **1.2 Purpose and Organization**

The purpose of this Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is to describe how the consultant team and Homer will keep stakeholders and the public involved and informed during conceptual design for a new Public Safety Building for the City of Homer. The PIP is organized into three sections:

- The first introduces the project scope and public involvement goals.
- The second lists interested parties and stakeholders, with initial themes from stakeholder interviews that can inform both the conceptual design and help guide more effective public involvement.
- Section three lists PI activities and targeted timelines for ensuring that targeted interests contribute to, and are engaged in the conceptual design process and for encouraging public awareness and participation in shaping outcomes. Specific tasks are listed that will be fulfilled by the consultant team, followed by a list of strategies beyond the consultant's scope that may be used by the City of Homer, to supplement the overall PI process, if desired.

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### **1.3 Project Scope & Public Involvement Goals**

The City of Homer's Fire and Police Departments are currently housed in aging facilities with significant deficiencies. Thus, the City is taking a careful look at the options and costs for constructing a combined department new Public Safety Building. To enable a more efficient project at a lower and more predictable cost, the City is utilizing the General Contractor/Construction Manager approach and has hired a consultant, USKH, to lead this effort in partnership with Loren Berry Architect and Cornerstone General Contractors.

Project consultants and the City of Homer will use a collaborative team approach aimed at designing and constructing a cost-effective, up-to-date combined facility for the Police and Fire Departments, specifically tailored to local needs and resources. A case statement will be developed



The scope of the first phase of work is conceptual design for a new Public Safety Building facility, with three primary tasks:

**Task A. Fire & Police Building Program** - The team will identify, analyze, and summarize in a report and presentations the technical requirements, space needs, and siting criteria for the new Homer Public Safety Building.

**Task B. Draft Site Selection and Concept Design** - Building from Task A outcomes and criteria, the team will work with the City to determine the top two sites for the Homer Public Safety Building and then will explore alternative design approaches to achieve a draft Concept Design and rough cost estimates.

**Task C. Public Involvement** – Plan as presented for input.

During the Conceptual Design phase of the project, team efforts and activities will be guided by these Public involvement goals:

- Fully collaborate with facility users on the design concept to optimize outcomes and create a facility that is highly responsive to local needs and resources.
- Meaningfully engage key affected stakeholders, interested groups, and target sectors of the public in reviewing and providing feedback on interim deliverables and assumptions to improve project outcomes.
- Raise the awareness of community decision-makers and community in general around project needs, options, and possible outcomes to help them weigh public costs and benefits.

## 2. PIP TARGET SECTORS

### 2.1 Stakeholders and Interested Parties

Sustained efforts will be made over the duration of the concept design phase to actively seek the involvement of each of these targeted sectors of the community who have an interest in project outcomes:

#### Facility Owner/Users

- The City of Homer’s Mayor, City Council and Administration
- The City of Homer’s Fire Department, including staff and volunteers
- The City of Homer Police Department

#### Interested Parties

- Alaska Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management
- Safety and Emergency Response agencies
- Law enforcement agencies (Troopers, Coast Guard and State Parks)
- The City of Homer Public Works Department
- State of Alaska Department of Transportation
- Kenai Peninsula Borough
- Environmental Permitting agencies



- The City of Homer Planning Department and Homer Advisory Planning Commission
- Potential Project Site Neighbors
- Potential Project Site Existing Tenants/Users (e.g., Homer Education and Recreation Complex (HERC))
- Community organizations
- Potential funding sources (Alaska State Legislature, Governor’s Office, Dept. of Commerce, etc. )

#### Regional Public at Large

- Citizens who depend on and are served by the City of Homer’s emergency services
- Taxpayers
- Citizens who seek to participate in community affairs

## **2.2 Initial Stakeholder Themes**

Project consultants spent several days in Homer May 21-23, 2014 to initiate information gathering and meet face-to-face with the City of Homer and key stakeholders. The team included Jack Berry and Loren Berry from Berry Architects and Jerry Neubert, Dale Smythe, and Meredith Noble from USKH. The team spent two days interviewing the Police Chief, Fire Chief, and staff members of each department learning about the needs for a future facility through site tours and intensive interviews.

Additionally, to better understand the project’s role in the community, including current facility deficiencies, and public opinion toward the project, Meredith Noble conducted ten “off-the-record” interviews with City staff and the public. Those identified from the public were referred through word of mouth as influential thought-leaders in the community. From those interviews several themes started to surface. Although anecdotal, and possibly reflecting only a narrow segment of the community, these themes can inform both the conceptual design and help guide more effective public involvement.

**Aging Facilities** – Homer’s Police Station was built in 1979, and a year later the Fire Hall was built on an older, existing garage/shop structure. These facilities have served the community well over several decades and, to many local residents, they are nostalgic landmarks from Homer’s early days as a small town. This is especially true of the Fire Hall, as Homer’s Volunteer Fire Department (established in 1952) found funding and invested sweat equity to build the facility — no city funds were used.

**Deficiencies** –Running modern emergency response and police services from aging facilities have costs, risks, and challenges that the community may not be aware of. Examples include:

- Replacing the heating systems from heating fuel to natural gas and building more energy efficient buildings would reduce annual heating costs by about 40% (roughly \$13,596 in annual savings);
- Winter emergency response times would be faster if indoor space was available to park emergency vehicles (not to mention deterioration and security issues associated with outdoor parking);
- The existing facilities are non-compliant with safety regulations/facility design standards and thus pose risks and health concerns to staff. Examples include the Fire Hall’s lack of OSHA compliant biohazard decontamination/cleaning area and lack of diesel exhaust emissions protection. The Police



Station's air handling system exhausts into employees' work areas and its lobby does not have ready access to a secure, bullet proof, service counter/window with passive barriers to stop vehicles.

- Regular interruptions occur because of poor separation between uses. For example, prisoners regularly disrupt staff due to the lack of separated entrances into the jail and prisoner visitation rooms and acoustics between the jail and staff areas. The Fire Hall lacks space to accommodate more than four overnight crew members in the station without disrupting normal operations.
- Modern emergency response and police work depend on communications and computer technologies that did not exist 35 years ago. Both facilities have issues and needs that are hard to address in the current buildings.
- There is a lack of adequate space generally. The Departments are serving a much larger population based from facilities that have not expanded in 35 years. Acute issues include the need for a larger evidence storage room and evidence lab, training areas and meeting space for working internally and with outside agencies, overnight accommodations, and storage space generally (for clean medical supplies, equipment, etc.).

**Communicate Why the Facility Is Needed:** Homer's fire station looks to be in mint condition, and from the outside appearances, the public does not necessarily understand why the police and fire stations are insufficient. After talking to someone who works there or getting a tour, it is woefully clear why a new facility is needed, but "you have a sales job here" to communicate this to the rest of Homer if you intend to seek support for a new building.

**Cost/Benefit Considerations:** As a community, Homer knows that this project will be costly, both upfront and into the future, as the total cost of ownership for the building can be almost three times more than initial design and construction costs. The City needs to be realistic when assessing the financial aspects of this project, and how Homer will pay for long-term O&M using. The public then needs clarity, since as seen with the public bathroom investment, there can be significant "sticker shock" at the cost of projects.

**Nice, But Not Too Nice:** Though a creative community that appreciates quality design, Homer residents have conservative values in terms of the overall community investment in public facilities. A new facility needs to be respectfully adequate and not "gaudy" or overbuilt so that it appears wasteful.

**Sensitive to HERC Site:** The HERC building provides a critical recreation need for the community. Some residents do not want the HERC site considered for this project, while others like the idea of keeping the gym but tearing down the rest of the building to make way for a new Public Safety building.

**Existing Site Repurposing:** It is important to maintain continuity in fire and police services by constructing the new facility while the existing sites are fully operational. Once services are re-located, the community has the option to try and recoup some of the facility cost by selling the Homer Volunteer Fire Department and Homer Police Station shared lot (KPB shared lot assessment ≈\$2,398,400) and adding to the downtown commercial district. Alternately, the strategically located central site could be used for a community purpose. Although this question is outside the scope of this effort, it is a question that needs community consideration and some clarity.

**A Base of Public Support:** Although support for the project is not universal within Homer at this preliminary stage, a solid group of supporters are willing to advocate for investing in a new, consolidated Public Safety facility to ensure that Homer has adequate services into the future. Moreover, Homer's fire and police are valued and respected public services. A solid design concept and workable site, along with word-of-mouth



communication from respected residents, could make it feasible for the project to build broad support well beyond its current base.

### **3. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES**

#### **3.1 Consultant PI Tasks and Milestones**

This section outlines public involvement efforts for the Design Concept phase of the new Homer Public Safety Building to be performed by USKH, coordinating with Carey Meyer and the Public Safety Building Committee. Activities are focused around five tasks, each with a target timeline and specific objectives. The tasks marked with an asterisk indicate that a Public Meeting will be held to gain input on project progress.

#### **Homer Public Safety Building Project Tasks and Timeline**

##### **TASK 1: Seek Involvement and Input**

*Target Timeline: June - August 2014*

*Objective: Create outreach contact lists, tools, and prepare for an initial open house event, while retaining open communications with key parties.*

##### **Consultant Activities**

- a) Finalize project contact and outreach list.
- b) Confirm public meeting date calendar and reserve venues.
- c) Create outreach materials to include a project fact sheet, web text and graphics that the City of Homer can use on its page, and a flier announcing public meeting #1.
- d) Continue to coordinate with the City of Homer, the Public Safety Building Committee, and stakeholders to gather relevant input that supports a better understanding of technical requirements, space needs, and siting criteria for the new Homer Public Safety Building.

##### **TASK 2: Present Project Need and Site Criteria, Gather Input**

*Target Timeline: August – September 2014*

*Objective: Share preliminary Fire & Police Building Program findings with stakeholders at a formal public open house. Gather input specific to the building program and site criteria to help refine and enhance project outcomes.*

##### **Consultant Activities**

- a) Organize and facilitate internal meetings with the City of Homer Administration, and Public Safety Building Committee to share progress to date and seek guidance in preparation for Open House #1.
- b) Create public displays that summarize team findings to date and illustrate the need for a new facility using rough planning level parameters (size, adjacencies, order of magnitude costs, etc.).



- c) Create an agenda and input form, and a public presentation to share at Open House #1.
- d) Conduct outreach for Open House #1 to the project contact and outreach list.
- e) Facilitate Open House #1 and gather input from participants.
- f) Summarize meeting proceedings and input in a written memo.
- g) Continue to coordinate with the City of Homer, the Public Safety Building Committee, and stakeholders to gather relevant input that supports a better understanding of technical requirements, space needs, and siting criteria for the new Homer Public Safety Building.

**TASK 3: Present Site Selection Rankings and Preliminary Design Concept, Gather Input**

*Target Timeline: September 2014*

*Objective: Share preliminary site selection rankings and a preliminary design concept with stakeholders at a formal public open house and gather input that helps refine and enhance project outcomes.*



### Consultant Activities

- a) Organize and facilitate internal meetings with the City of Homer Administration, and Public Safety Building Committee to share progress to date and seek guidance in preparation for Open House #2.
- b) Update outreach materials and displays to incorporate finalized building program, preliminary site selection rankings, input to date, and to announce Open House #2.
- c) Create an agenda and input form, and a public presentation to share at Open House #2.
- d) Conduct outreach for Open House #2 to the project contact and outreach list.
- e) Facilitate Open House #2 and gather input from participants.
- f) Summarize meeting proceedings and input in a written memo.

### **TASK 4: Present a Refined Design Concept**

*Target Timeline: October 2014*

*Objective: Share a refined design concept with stakeholders at a formal public open house and share rough cost parameters and possible funding strategies.*

### Consultant Activities

- a) Organize and facilitate internal meetings with the City of Homer Administration, and Public Safety Building Committee to share progress to date and seek guidance in preparation for the final Open House.
- b) Update outreach materials and displays to incorporate the refined design concept, rough cost parameters, and possible funding strategies.
- c) Create an agenda, input form, and public presentation to share at Open House #3.
- d) Conduct outreach for Open House #3 to the project contact and outreach list.
- e) Facilitate Open House #3 and solicit input and letters of support from participants.
- f) Summarize meeting proceedings and input in a written memo.

## **3.2 Supplemental Strategies**

During stakeholder interviews a number of ideas were shared for generating additional public interest and support for the project. These are listed below in the event that the City of Homer or Public Safety Building Committee members and/or project advocates elect to undertake them to supplement the overall PI process:

### **Outreach and Educational Activities:**

- Open House Tours
  - Have snow-cones or hot-dogs, etc. for the public and discuss what is deficient in your facilities and why you need a new building.
  - July 4<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Firefighter BBQ is an excellent opportunity for tours, handing out flyers, and having conversations with the public about the project.
    - Announce the event on KWAVE- Straight Talk, Tuesday mornings 9-10 am. 15 minutes. Contact Tim White at [kwavefm@xyz.net](mailto:kwavefm@xyz.net)
    - Invite police staff to join in the BBQ.
    - Ensure all staff is on the "same page."
  - Tour for Re-create Recreate/HERC enthusiasts



- As an obviously very sensitive issue, it would be beneficial to show HERC recreationists that their voices are being heard. Consider hosting a tour of the police and fire station for this group exclusively and ensure we engage them early when site selection conversations begin.
- Concert On The Lawn
  - Get a booth to discuss the project, hand-out informational flyers, and ask people if they'd like to be on an email list with project updates. Have both fire fighters and police officers jointly staffing the table.
  - Deadline for booth is June 15<sup>th</sup>. Cost \$110 for 10x10 space.
- Presentations
  - Have a police officer and fire fighter discuss the project at various community groups. Suggested presentations include:
    - Homer Realtor Association- August 20<sup>th</sup>, 12:00, location unknown
    - Rotary Club of Homer-Kachemak Bay- 12:00, Thursdays
    - Chamber of Commerce Luncheon- Tuesday in September
    - Port & Harbor
    - Re-create Recreate/HERC enthusiasts
- Door-to-Door Campaign
  - Leave a flyer behind about the project at residences. There are enough clusters in Homer to do this with minimal time commitment.
  - Consider doing this to advertise your booth at an event or an open house.
- Engage City's Various Commissions
  - Have agenda item on the various commissions to get an update on the project. Could be watching video fire/police staff made of their facilities or get a quick update from a staff member on project status.
  - Why? This reaches 100 people with facts about the project that are civically minded and engaged. They can act as advocates for the project if well informed.
- Letters to the Editor
  - Newspaper isn't relied on the way it used to be so instead of utilizing costly ad space, use "free" resources like letters to the editor or articles by the press.
  - <http://homertribune.com/2013/08/council-considers-a-new-public-safety-building/>
- Virtual Tours
  - Since many people can't or don't care to attend public meetings, one way to still engage them is through virtual tours. These are online tours of project information that conclude with a feedback form.
- Make YouTube/Vimeo Video
  - Have someone locally make a short 1-4 minute film about why the project is needed. Show the inside of the police and fire station and have excerpts from staff. Try to respond to some of the concerns identified as common objections to the project.
    - Example: <http://www.lcfd1-sprague.com/>
- Utility Bill Inserts
  - Create utility bill inserts that can be sent to residents with information about public meetings or ways to get informed about the project.
- PowerPoint/Prezi Presentation
  - Design a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation for the project staff to use whenever they need it to tell the story about why this project is important and next steps.



- Display Boards at City Hall
  - Create boards or posters that could be displayed at City Hall (or elsewhere), that show information like site or design selection. Have place for public to submit their input on the decision.
- Radio
  - Many people suggested paying for actual ads on KWAVE, KPEN, KGTL, etc. to reach the dock workers, truck drivers, etc. Give quick update on project and provide information on ways to submit feedback if desired.
  - Run in August when ad volume slows from summer rush.
  - KBBI-Coffee Table- Wednesday morning 9-10 am. Contact Dorle at 235-7721
  - Alaska Matters- Though not always supportive of the City, the project presents an opportunity to work with Chris Story to tour the facilities and interview police and fire staff.
- Involve Legislators
  - Involve early and often. Send monthly email updates on the status of the project with upcoming public involvement events and past progress. Invite them to participate in events ahead of time.
- Articles on City Website
  - Keep the public updated on the project or upcoming ways to engage with updates online, either through the City Clerk's projects or the fire and police station sites.
- Social Media
  - Utilize your network of supporters to reach citizens through Facebook, Twitter, and the web such as sharing the YouTube clip of the project so it can be shared freely.
- Monthly Project Updates
  - Provide regular updates on cost containment and commitment status to outreach contact list.

#### **Funding Prep Activities:**

- Gather Letters of Support
  - Reach out to community members, Kachemak Bay, Alaska State Forestry, K.E.S.A, Alaska Fire Chief's Association, State Fire Marshal's Office, Wildwood Correctional Center, OSHA, Department of Security, Port & Harbor, Recreate-Recreate, etc. for letters of support.
  - Gather letters of support at final public meeting.
- Submit Project to State Legislature Budget
  - Prepare promotional package and submit in November.
- Open House for Funding Agencies/Legislators
  - Host special open house of facilities for funding agency representatives & legislators to bring them together for funding collaboration and answer any questions. Ideally host in the fall so they can also attend a public meeting.

#### **Future Activities:**

- Public Input for Exterior Design
  - Engage the public in exterior design decisions.
- Naming Contest
  - Have public contest to name the new building.