



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

AGENDA

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Friday, April 19, 2024 at 3:30 PM

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

Zoom Webinar ID: 971 1030 8124 Password: 151329

<https://cityofhomer.zoom.us>

Dial: 346-248-7799 or 669-900-6833;

(Toll Free) 888-788-0099 or 877-853-5247

CALL TO ORDER, 3:30 P.M.

AGENDA APPROVAL

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA (3 minute limit)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Steering Committee Meeting Minutes of March 29, 2024

Page 3

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

REPORTS

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Community Visit #1 Summary of Results – Review & Finalize
- B. Community Survey – Finalize Draft & Confirm Initial Outreach
- C. Meeting in a Box – Review & Finalize
- D. Community Visit #2 – Discuss Draft Schedule

Page 6

Page 28

Page 30

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE (3 minute limit)

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

COMMENTS OF THE TASK FORCE

ADJOURNMENT

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 29, 2024 at 3:30 p.m. All meetings scheduled

to be held via Zoom Webinar and in person in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

CALL TO ORDER

Session 24-05 a Regular Meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was called to order by Chair Kathy Carssow at 9:00 a.m. on March 29, 2024 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.

PRESENT: COMMITTEE MEMBERS CARSSOW, DAVIS, ERICKSON, & KIM

ABSENT: COMMITTEE MEMBER BARNWELL

STAFF: DEPUTY CITY CLERK PETTIT

CONSULTING: CITY PLANNER FOSTER & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR ENGBRETSSEN

AGENDA APPROVAL

CARSSOW/DAVIS MOVED TO AMEND THE AGENDA BY ADDING AGNEW::BECK’S VISITING SCHEDULE TO THE AGENDA UNDER **NEW BUSINESS ITEM D.**

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

CARSSOW/DAVIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

Mayor Castner shared his concerns that there are decisions being made behind closed doors that will shape the future of Homer without soliciting the comprehensive advice of the City. Specifically, he spoke to the closures taking place at the airport starting in April, stating that the decisions the City wants to make are being made by other people in other places. He explained to the Committee that the City can only do what the City can actually do. He emphasized the need to incorporate the Spit Comprehensive Plan into the City’s new Comprehensive Plan in order to achieve an all-encompassing plan. He assured the Committee that he is going to do what he can in the background to ensure that the City achieves what it can achieve given the governance that surrounds the City and living in the shadow of Anchorage.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Steering Committee Meeting Minutes of March 18, 2024

ERICKSON/DAVIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 18, 2024 STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

REPORTS

PENDING BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

A. Community Visit #1 – Debrief

Shelly Wade of Agnew::Beck thanked Committee Members Carssow and Erickson for their contributions during the initial meeting this past Monday, adding that it really set the tone and gave her a feeling that they were off and running. She touched on the productive discussion that she had with Public Works Staff that was led by Meg Friedenauer of Agnew::Beck and Luke Rubalcava of RESPEC. She also thanked Mayor Caster for the dialogue that he facilitated at the Joint Work Session with the Planning Commission and City Council. Other discussion topics included:

- An opportunity to meet with the Chamber of Commerce, and the Chamber's agreement to assist with a business survey.
- Back-to-back engagements with the Guiding Growth Group and the Storm Water Working Group.
- Summarized recap of the open house event at Islands & Oceans Visitor Center.
- Various opportunities for youth engagement.

B. Community Survey – Draft Framework

Ms. Wade reviewed the draft framework for the Community Survey while explaining the changes that had been implemented since the last time the group reviewed the document. Changes included, but were not limited to:

- Adding a “Health & Safety” suite of items.
- Adding a category of items under “Infrastructure & Economic Development.”
- Adding a broader category of “Quality of Life.”
 - Childcare and Early Childhood Development were added to this section.
- Per the Committee's suggestion, a section was added where individuals taking the survey will indicate their preferred level of growth for some key economic sectors (marine trades, visitor industry, healthcare, government, construction, etc.).
- There is also a plan to include a question regarding residency to find out how long folks have lived in Homer/if they live in Homer full-time or seasonally, etc.

Committee Member Davis suggested changing the survey to read that it's open to “Homer area residents” instead of just “Homer residents.” He also suggested making parks and trails one category under “Quality of Life” as opposed to having them included with outdoor recreational opportunities. Also discussed was the idea of creating a livable, walkable, vibrant downtown area. Committee Member Kim recommended including a question regarding indigeneity, stating that this is a question that is often left out in terms of how long a people has lived in an area.

C. Discuss April Steering Committee Meeting Schedule

KIM/ERICKSON MOVED TO APPROVE APRIL 17TH AT 3:30 P.M. AND APRIL 29TH AT 3:30 P.M. FOR THE NEXT TWO SCHEDULED MEETINGS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

D. Agnew::Beck Visiting Schedule

Ms. Wade noted that May becomes very busy, including Shorebird Festival and Taste of Homer that are back-to-back, big community events. City Planner Foster suggested taking a look at the scope of the project to help to determine what the activities are in the May time period, and then try to put something together.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

COMMENTS OF THE TASK FORCE

Committee Member Kim thanked the Committee for the work that they are handling together. He asked the Committee to keep in mind the people that don't attend the meetings and those that are hard for the group to relate to. He added that as the "token" member of the group, he feels it is imperative that he speaks on behalf of Alaskan natives, indigenous people and minority groups.

Committee Member Erickson said that it's been a really interesting week and that it's been fun to watch everything come together. She shared her appreciation for Agnew::Beck's participation in the activities throughout the week.

Chair Carsow thanked Agnew::Beck for a wonderful start to the kickoff of the comprehensive plan.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Chair Carsow adjourned the meeting at 10:29 a.m. The next regular meeting is Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 3:30 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers and via Zoom Webinar.

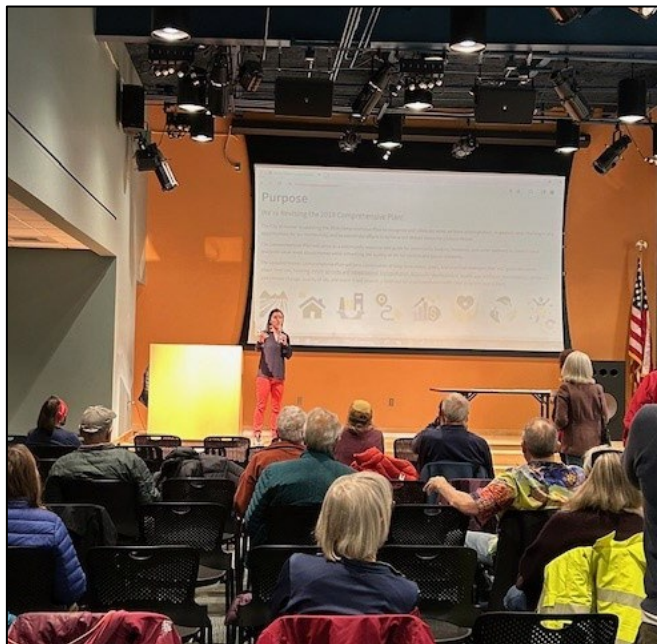
ZACH PETTIT, DEPUTY CITY CLERK I

Approved: _____



Homer Comprehensive Plan Rewrite: Summary of Community Visit Events March 26-29, 2024

Summary of Results



The planning team attended several events and conversations about the Homer Comprehensive Plan Rewrite project in Homer March 26-29, 2024. Below is a schedule of the events, with detailed notes below. Comprehensive notes from the Community Open House are attached.

Schedule of events:

-----Tuesday, March 26, 2024 -----

- Homer Steering Committee and Staff Meeting
- Homer Public Works Staff Meeting
- City Council and Planning Commission Joint Work Session

-----Wednesday March 27, 2024 -----

- Homer Chamber board and staff
- Homer Guiding Growth Meeting
- Homer Stormwater Working Group Meeting
- Port and Harbor Advisory Commission

-----Thursday, March 28, 2024 -----

- Port and Harbor Staff Meeting
- Homer Community Open House

-----Friday, March 29, 2024 -----

- Steering Committee Meeting
- Public Works Discussion

CITY OF HOMER
Comprehensive Plan Rewrite

Community Open House

Thursday, March 28, 6:00-8:00 PM

Alaska Islands & Ocean Visitor Center

95 Sterling Highway #1, Homer, AK 99603

WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU, HOMER!

Help kick off a process that will **guide** Homer residents, leaders, organizations, and partners **over the next 10 years**.

Join us to:

- Share **what you value most** and **what could make life better** in Homer.
- Learn about the comprehensive planning process and how **your ideas will help shape the revised comprehensive plan** (find a link to the 2018 Plan on the project website: www.homercompplanupdate.com).

<p>Contact Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Homer Planner: Ryan Foster, rfoster@ci.homer.ak.us, 907-299-8529 • Project Consultant: Shelly Wade, shelly@agnewbeck.com, 907-242-5326 • Project website: www.homercompplanupdate.com • City of Homer on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/cityofhomerak 	<p>Other March Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Work Session with Homer City Council & Planning Commission, March 26 • Meeting with the Port & Harbor Advisory Commission, March 27 • Meetings with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee • Public sharing and feedback opportunities at local establishments • Stakeholder interviews and meetings with local organizations
--	---



-----**Tuesday, March 26, 2024**-----

Homer Steering Committee and Staff Meeting

9 am - 11 am

Attendees: Ryan Foster, Kathy Carrsow, Shelly Erikson, Luke Rubalcava (RESPEC), Shelly Wade and Meg Friedenauer (Agnew::Beck)

Key takeaways and discussion:

- Next Steering Committing meetings will be April 17th and 29th, 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm
- Steering Committee members are invited to attend any meetings or discussions scheduled this week. Ideally members can attend the joint work session and open house events this week.
- Julie Engebretsen staffs the Economic Development Advisory Commission. Meg will work with Julie to arrange to attend a meeting with EDC.

The team reviewed preliminary data posters to be used at Thursday's open house. Comments and discussion included:

- How can data about Homer retirees be captured? It's a segment of the population that receives some tax exemptions, like property taxes, but they also desire city services.
- Homer seems to have unusually high home values/prices. Can that data be captured?
- Add median housing costs to compare median household income.
- Show effects of city's tax income compared to population.

Additional committee member comments:

- It's helpful for the Steering Committee to receive materials that will be reviewed at the meeting beforehand in the packets.
- Agnew::Beck will provide outreach materials for steering committee members to use in outreach for survey.
- Reach out to Senior Center to make connections with seniors. Mayor Castner may be able to assist with making connections with Senior Center staff.

Homer Public Works Staff Meeting

1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Attendees: Dan Kort Mike Zelinski, Chad, Russel, Jeane, Aaron Yeaton, Todd Cook,, Luke Rubalcava (RESPEC), Meg Friedenauer (Agnew::Beck)

Key takeaways and discussion:

Biggest changes that affect public works department since last comprehensive plan update (2018) include:

- Personnel changes and turnover.
- Numerous new subdivision and extra manpower needed.
- Aging infrastructure.
- Acquired land for new public works center, but new center not yet designed or funded.
- Homer does not have a specific “parks plan.”
- Drainage (residential sump pumps and gutters) is “illegally” connected to the sewage collection system adding to I&I issue.
- Source Water Protection (reservoir) needs attention
- “Dead” cars are an issue. Any disposal method is expensive and there is no master program to help individuals.

The group reviewed current comp plan actions and strategies and discussed progress on those actions and possible new actions for update.

City Council and Planning Commission Joint Work Session

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Meeting minutes and recording available at: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/citycouncil/city-council-planning-commission-joint-worksession-0>

The planning team met with the Planning Commission and City Council in a joint work session. Shelly Wade of Agnew::Beck provided an overview of the project schedule and goals. The Planning Commission and Council made individual comments about the comprehensive plan to start.

Key comments and questions from council and commission members included:

- Ensuring flexibility to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances like a future pandemic or natural disaster.
- Homer is not necessarily a “small town” but it has a role as a hub for the wider Kachemak Bay region and Kenai Peninsula Borough.
- Balancing infill and growth while preserving green space, drainage, and quality of life.
- Revitalizing downtown areas like Pioneer Avenue and creating a more walkable community.
- Being mindful of the workload of city staff during this process and when coming up with action items for the city.
- The comp plan work is especially important to prepare for phase two of the project, updating the zoning code.
- Considering the impacts of increased cruise ships or port activity on transportation needs.
- Assessing the appetite for different types of growth like tourism versus residential development. The book “Less is More; Degrowth Can Save the World” was cited as a resource about how to think differently about growth.
- Evaluating housing options like affordable units downtown versus large homes on the periphery of town.
- Incorporating existing plans for specific areas like the spit and medical district.

- Consider ADA compliance in recommendation, including an existing ADA transition plan.
- Managing increased development on sloped areas and its effects on downstream flooding.
- 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.
- A discussion of ensuring representation in public outreach and engagement efforts.
- A preview of the draft community survey that will be used to gather input.
- An overview of Agnew Beck's planned activities and community visits during the week in Homer.
- A review of roles and responsibilities outlined in the public participation plan.

Some of the key action items that came out of this meeting include:

- Revising the community survey based on feedback, such as potentially adding household size as a demographic question and adjusting the household income brackets.
- Ensuring representation of stakeholders like contractors and the senior center in outreach efforts.
- Exploring ways to visualize potential development scenarios, such as through maps or artist renderings.
- Considering how to address drainage and flooding issues related to development and growth.
- Engaging partners like the Kenai Peninsula Borough in the planning process given their role in the region.
- Involving the planning commission early in the process to allow for input.

-----**Wednesday March 27, 2024** -----

Homer Chamber Board and Staff Meeting

10 am – 11 am

Attendees: Board members Joell Restand, Jim Anderson, Marcia Kuszmaul, Amanda Jerde and Executive Director Brad Anderson, Shelly Meg Friedenauer (Agnew::Beck)

The planning team met with members of the Homer Chamber of Commerce board member. Shelly Wade of Agnew::Beck provided an overview of the project schedule and goals.

Comments and questions from council and commission members included:

- The current comp plan is too generalized. There is no sense of what the community looks like or its character. The comp plan should be a practical tool and road map for the community.
- The business community is interested in providing input. This could be done through a specific survey for businesses. The Chamber could help distribute the survey through its network.
- There is interest in diversifying the economy of Homer, including through the arts and recreation opportunities, and supporting entrepreneurs.

- A priority is to revitalize downtown areas like Pioneer Avenue, making the retail areas more business and visitor friendly and accessible. Can the comp plan help answer, “what and where is Homer’s ‘anchor’ area?”
- Alaska Small Business Development Center has one part time employee located in the Chamber office and stays very busy.

Homer Guiding Growth Meeting

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

The planning team met with members of the Guiding Growth Group. Shelly Wade of Agnew::Beck provided an overview of the project schedule and goals.

Discussion, comments, and questions from the working group included:

- Impacts of nonprofits are often underestimated; how can that be captured in the comp plan data? MAPP is an important connection in this regard.
- Guiding Growth developed in part to address, “What is driving change in Homer?” Some people are concerned about the fast pace of growth and development in the community. Others emphasize isn’t about “pro” or “anti” growth but about the rate of growth.
- There are different takes on “social status” in Homer. Some people give more merit to people who have lived in Homer longer.
- One dimension of growth is the demographic of who is moving to Homer. It impacts the kind of growth that occurs, i.e., recent growth concerns include the rise of large homes that sit empty for part of the year. That kind of growth is not conducive to most families or young people needing affordable housing.
- The community has limited ability to manage growth and land development. “We’re focused on individual lot development, not community development.”
- Can the comp plan expand the community’s tools to *guide* growth? Can it help the community understand how individual land development affects the community at large?
- There were some good goals in the 2018 comp plan but little work to establish how city code can support those goals.
- The 2018 plan doesn’t address fiscal funding strategies to address and accomplish goals.

Homer Stormwater Working Group Meeting

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

The planning team met with members of the Stormwater Working Group. Shelly Wade of Agnew::Beck provided an overview of the project schedule and goals.

Discussion, comments, and questions from the working group included:

- History of water management challenges in Homer dating back to the 1980s, and lack of progress on implementing recommendations from past plans and studies.

- Issues related to erosion, water quality, flooding, habitat connectivity, and their impacts on infrastructure and private property.
- Development pressures exacerbating existing problems by increasing impervious surfaces and altering natural drainage patterns.
- Gaps in city regulations and authority to adequately address stormwater management, wetland protection, erosion control, and downstream impacts.
- Opportunity to strengthen policies and codes through the comprehensive planning process to support green infrastructure and low impact development.
- Importance of interagency coordination between the city, local organizations, Kenai Peninsula Borough, state and regional landowners on solutions.
- Need for education around wetland delineation, regulatory authorities, and landowner responsibilities related to water.
- Potential community conversation on water management issues to gather broader public input.

Potential next steps that were discussed include:

- Identifying code revisions and policies to better regulate stormwater management, wetlands protection, and erosion control.
- Prioritizing "low hanging fruit" regulatory changes that could be implemented more quickly
- Exploring opportunities to work with the Kenai Peninsula Borough on coordinated planning and regulations.
- Hosting a community water management conversation to get public input on these issues.

Port and Harbor Advisory Commission

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Meeting minutes and recording available at <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/phac/port-harbor-advisory-commission-regular-meeting-58>

The planning team met with the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission. Shelly Wade of Agnew::Beck provided an overview of the project schedule and goals.

Discussion, comments, and questions from the working group included:

- Setting up a work session with Agnew::Beck and the steering committee to discuss the comprehensive plan update process in more detail.
- Discussing the spit comprehensive plan and harbor strategic plan and how to incorporate them into the city comprehensive plan update.
- Ensuring commercial fishing and marine trades perspectives are well represented in the comp plan update.

- Ensuring effective communication and opportunities for public input throughout the comprehensive plan update process.

-----**Thursday, March 28, 2024**-----

Port and Harbor Staff Meeting

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Attendees: Bryan Hawkins, Matt Clarke, Aaron Glidden, Amy Woodruff, Luke Rubalcava (RESPEC), Shelly Wade and Meg Friedenauer (Agnew::Beck)

The planning team met with Port and Harbor staff. Shelly Wade of Agnew::Beck provided an overview of the project schedule and goals. The group discussed how to incorporate the Homer Comprehensive Spit Plan into the comprehensive plan, infrastructure and programs the department oversees, the ongoing expansion project, and other topics and considerations for the comprehensive plan.

Key takeaways from this meeting include:

- The Split Plan will be reformatted, updated and included in the master plan. This will allow the plan to be revisited and monitored in conjunction with the rest of the topics. The current Spit Plan has been gathering dust.
- Homer Marine Trades Association (HMTA) will be a valuable group to talk with.
- Request for in person event at Gear Shed before the fleet leaves (Late May).
- Request for work session w/ Planning Team

Homer Community Open House

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm at Islands & Ocean Visitor Center

Description of activity:

The planning team and city planning staff hosted a community open house attended by 70-80 people. The planning team opened the meeting with an overview of the comprehensive plan update process, purpose, and timeline. Participants were then invited to visit the posters with their ideas or *checkmark* those topics they agreed with.

See attached detailed meeting notes.

-----**Friday, March 29, 2024**-----

Steering Committee Meeting

9:00 am – 11:00 am

Meeting minutes and recording available at: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/bc/comprehensive-plan-steering-committee-regular-meeting>

Key takeaways from this meeting include:

- There was positive feedback on the progress made with the community engagement so far.
- The committee discussed strategies for effective outreach during the busy month of May, including pop-up events and distributing materials at various community gatherings.
- Having face-to-face meetings with stakeholder groups like the Planning Commission was emphasized as still being important.
- Gathering input from underrepresented groups like indigenous people and working classes was highlighted as a priority.

The main action items from this meeting include:

- Finalizing the community survey based on feedback and testing it out.
- Scheduling Agnew Beck's next visit to Homer week of May 13
- Continuing community outreach and engagement through events in May to share preliminary survey results and gather more input. Agnew::Beck will provide “meeting in box” materials for events that may include:
 - Luke and Julie will work together on outreach events at SBS and Kachemak Gear Shed.
 - Meg to ask Julie about comp plan materials for health fair.
 - Meg to work on outreach to school.
 - Luke and Meg to work on outreach to Marine Trades group.
 - Shelly to work on outreach to Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.

Public Works Discussion

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Attendees: Dan Kort, Jan Keiser, Luke Rubalcava (RESPEC), Meg Friedenauer (Agnew::Beck)

This meeting discussed topics from a fact sheet provided by Jan.

Homer Community Open House

Detailed results from poster exercise

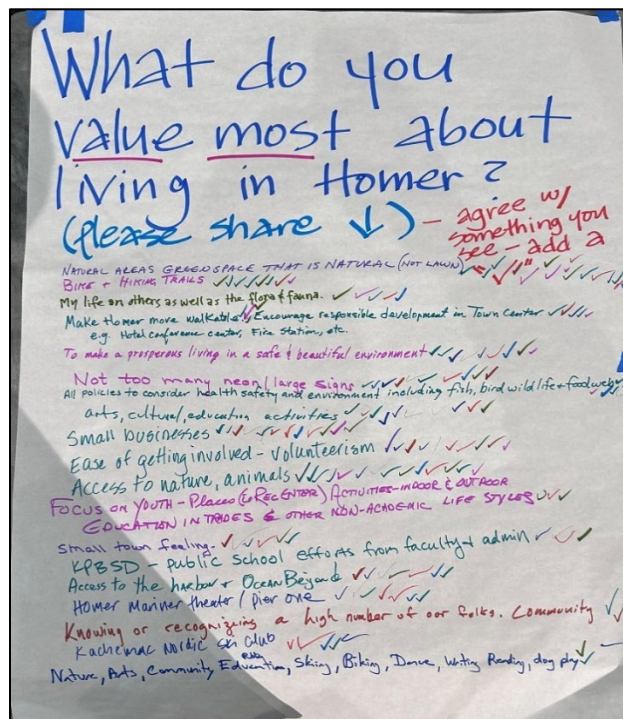
Attendees were asked to answer the questions on the top of posters. They could also place a checkmark next to ideas they agreed with. The responses are grouped by themes, with the specific answers below and the number of responses listed in the right column.

What do you value most about living in Homer?

Natural areas, natural beauty, recreational opportunities	85
Natural areas green space that is natural (not lawn)	15
Access to nature, animals	14
The natural beauty	14
To make a prosperous living in a safe and beautiful environment	9
Bike and hiking trails	8
Ecosystems that are (mostly) still functioning well to support diversity of life	7
All policies to consider health safety and environment including fish, bird, wildlife, and food web	6
Wildlife and moose	6
My life with others as well as the flora and fauna	5
Access to wilderness	1
Community, small-town feeling, and size	84
Small town	15
Not big box stores	13
Small businesses	12
Ease of getting involved, volunteerism	10
Not too many neon/large signs	10
Access to the harbor and ocean beyond	7
Small town feeling	6
Knowing or recognizing a high number of our folks. Community.	4
non-stereo type people - open minded locals.	4
We haven't paved everything into strip malls yet.	2
It's far from anguish (Anchorage)	1
Values of people and nature over money making...a reasonable life in which people care about each other and allow diversity - compassion, open mindedness	

Arts, culture, education, and non-profit activities	39
All the non-profits being supported	12
Arts, culture, and education activities	9
Homer Mariner Theater/Pier One	7
Kachemak Nordic Ski Club	5
Focus on youth, place (i.e., Rec Center) activities - indoor and outdoor. Education in trades and other non-academic lifestyles	3
Nature, arts, community	3

Additional comments	
Encourage responsible development in town center	5
KPBSD - public school efforts from faculty and admin	4
Make Homer more walkable	3
Turn the "waste" into "treasures"	1
Expanded specialty health services/providers	
Much better snow removal than Anchorage	



What is challenging about living in Homer?

Lack of ease for biking, walking, parking concerns, and lack of public transportation	54
More and better bike trails	12
Not very safe for biking	9
Walking or bicycling around town and having to fear of getting run over by inattentive or inconsiderate drivers not looking both ways or following correct driving protocol i.e., running stop signs or yielding at marked crosswalks...yipes!	8
No public transportation	8
Public transportation	6
Parking at spit in summertime for locals (and overall traffic)	4
Turning left in summer	3
Lack of public parking and public transport	3
When walking/biking getting safely from point A to point B	1
Bad summer traffic	
Housing concerns	43
Affordable housing	14
Affordable housing	12
Need for senior housing	7
Bringing together a couple ideas I've already seen a bunch: sustainable, affordable, well-organized housing in walkable, family friendly neighborhood	5
Lack of enough high-density, affordable housing	5
Lack of or threats to green space, over development	42
Open green space going away	20
Over development	7
Not having walkable shopping, big empty spaces in downtown	4
Too much concrete without natural green areas	4
Lack of regulation to preserve balance between natural and build environment	3
Development/housing builds that clear cut	3
Not enough wilderness	1
No greenspace in parking areas	

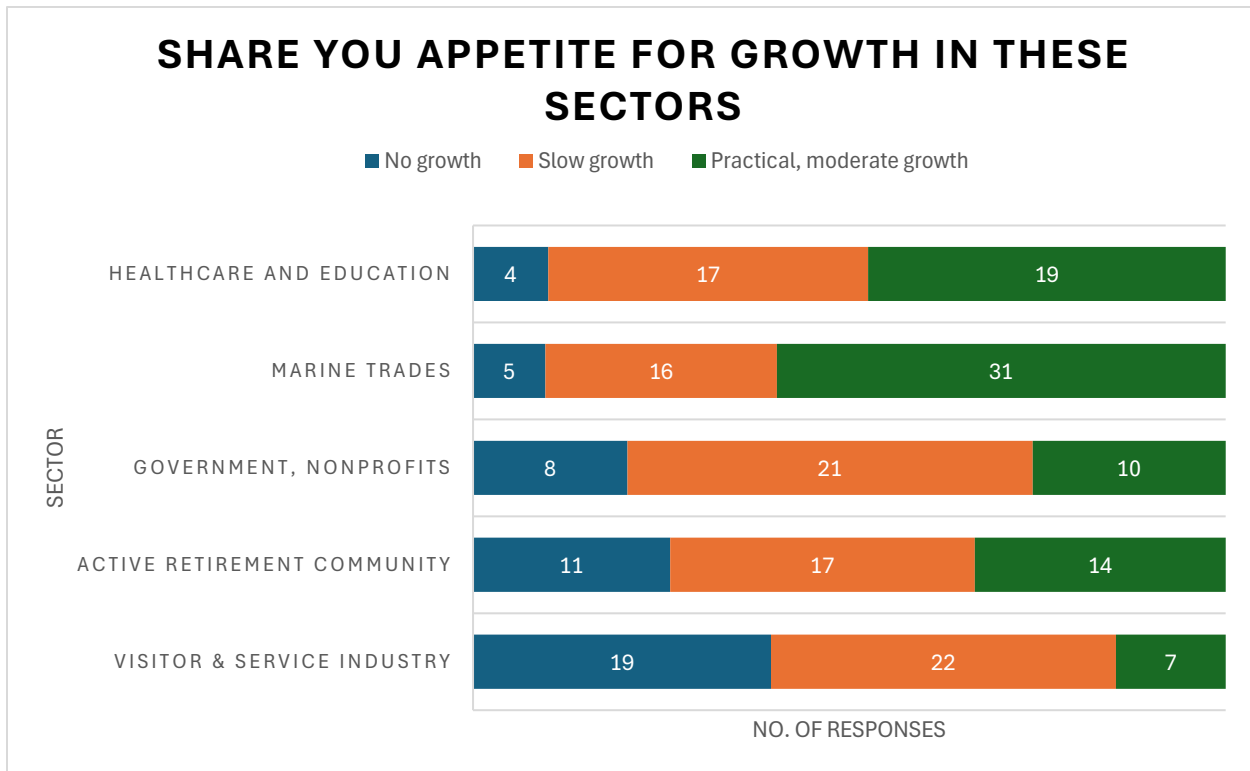
Concerns about tourism		9
Overtourism		6
Overrun with tourism, especially cruise ship days special summer days/holiday		2
Future growth/overgrowth of less desirable tourism (cruise ships) that overwhelm the community - the spit in summer is extremely crowded		1
Other challenges		
Non-resident landowners - empty vacation homes		14
Unhappy with legislative representation		10
Walkability - it's getting better		10
Very difficult for young families to make it in Homer		10
Pressure on resources - fisheries, open land		6
Lack of youth focus for youth activities and non-academic lifestyles		5
Senior property tax exemption means more burden on young families		5
High energy costs		5
Recreation center needed		5
How spread out "town" is		4
Not enough employment opportunities that make living in Homer accessible/attainable		3
Two economies - the have-much's and the have-nots. Less and less in between		3
The dust in the spring from sand used on winter roads		3
Road conditions/maintenance		3
No convention center for group meetings of 50+ folks		2
City serves a much wider population than those that live within city limits		2
Finding affordable child/day care		1
Bring exemption to current housing market levels		1
East End Road - increased traffic and speed		1
Flush of non-resident home owners since COVID		1
Space for large number of people to gather/eat (weddings)		
Parking is not shared and if there is room allow others to park there no complaining		
The properties that are easy to develop are gone. Everything left has challenges and is expensive to build		

What could improve the quality of life in Homer?

Attention to nature, green space, beach access, recreation, and parks	103
Continued attention to trails and pedestrian connections in town	15
Protecting creeks and natural waterways	14
Make the Lake Street/Ocean Drive safer for walkers/bikes (think Farmers Market)	14
Keep Bay Ave. beach access	12
Maintain beach access - deliberate greenspace plan and implementation	11
Get easements to connect walking and hiking trails, sidewalks, etc.	9
Concentrate housing so less sprawl. Keep open, natural spaces	9
Learn to live in harmony with others and the environment	7
More trees and wildlife habitat - pocket parks	6
Natural infrastructure use ecosystem services like rye grass protection buffers between building lots natural not lawns	3
Include a recreation, service district	2
Prohibit clear-cutting of properties - requires vegetation retention	1
Trails, connect, increased green space, parks	
Zoning and regulation enforcement	40
No building higher than 35 feet	12
More housing options, denser, at a variety of price points	12
No building over 70,000 sq ft	10
Zoning enforcement	3
Zoning enforcement	3
Zoning	
City should take over regulation and enforcement of development of wetlands, like it used to do	
Regulatory measures that preserve balance between natural and built environments	
More housing	15
Senior housing	6
Small projects, small houses	6
FBC student housing	3
Less dense new housing areas	

Decrease impacts of tourism		13
Less tourists		7
De-emphasize tourism as our economic base - maintain tourism as a viable industry but manage the impact and monetize their visits so we can pay for the impacts		6
Other		
Ensure American Disabilities Act is followed in all businesses		4
Accessibility vs just compliant		1
Bed tax		9
Shelter from sun in parking lots		8
Large, comprehensive community recreation building		6
Limit short term rentals to only owner/operator premises		6
More emphasis on quality of life than on purely economic measures of progress		6
Don't blow road snow into the Beluga Slough lots		5
More focus on creating incentives for young families to thrive in Homer		5
Diversify tax base		4
Plan for climate change - more snow - warmer		4
Public transportation		4
Small is beautiful		4
Banning miscreants no matter how rich or theologically connected they are		3
Define what growth means - growth that is measured by measures that include preservation of nature with all humans in mind		3
Adult day activities		2
Let youth have more say in the development of Homer		2
Big Brothers/Big Sisters org		1
Create a blue zone (geographic area with low rates of chronic disease and increased life expectancy)		1
Consider ocean/fishing failure		1
Youth employment program		1
More access roads		
Support for youth teen spaces		
More emphasis on small, quick, pilot-project type fixes (>\$10,000) over huge money (>\$100,000.) i.e., point a crosswalk, use removable bollards, find traffic slowing methods instead of building \$1.2 million sidewalks.		

Appetite for Growth



Additional ideas for economic development

Community solar, wind, tidal	5
Senior housing	5
Music, arts, and film school	3
Public transportation	3
Adult day care	3
Young people housing	3
Senior housing	2
Railroad or bus from Home to Anchorage airports through North Kenai	2
Being accessible, not just compliant	2
Small business incubation	2
Educational training: plumbers/electrical schools the teach carpenters/tradespeople	2
More agriculture	1
Growth in Agriculture, high tunnels, farming, food production	1
Growth in Construction	1
Growth in Repair/industrial: auto, hydraulics, marine trades, dirt work	1

More summer camps for adults and kids

I

Remove barriers to having small business in residential areas?

Walkable city

Keep destination for gateway to recreation, ocean, and arts small business

Showcase energy self-sufficiency and retention of small business with that outside of city connections to agriculture, food production, unique diverse community: small houses, agriculture, solar, wind off grid lifestyle, unique experiences on small scale, art education destination, marine trades education (including college and high school)

Later generational/co-housing

Turn local "trash" into more recycle energy

Art coop

non driving housing



Additional comments from map posters

Port and Harbor of Homer Alaska 2016 map

Bigger Harbor

Make sure port and harbor upgrades and expansion are ADA compliant and accessible

Make harbor clean energy generator with vertical tidal generation

Tidal energy that takes advantage of up and down motion of dock infrastructure

Add water access for non-motorized watercraft (kayaks, small sailboats) on outside of harbor.
Allow good access at all tide stages. Reduce safety issues in harbor.

City of Homer Topography & Wetlands

Structure tax that does not force residents to sell large parcels

No clear cutting

City of Homer Land Ownership Map and Homer Spit inset map

Limited gravel parking. No asphalt or concrete. Let spit drain.

Use wood bollards with chain to cordon off parking

Protect the bands of rye grass on the spit. No net loss. This holds the spit together

Define industrial. Non-polluting industry safeguards put in place to accommodate environment

Acknowledge there is no more parking (on the spit). Adjust congestion not adding parking

Share available parking to accommodate other business needs.

Give incentives to homesteaders with large acreage or lots so they are not forced to sell to pay taxes. Structure tax base that holds larger properties in trust until they subdivide.

Develop a connecting trail from Reber up the powerline along W. Hill

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Recommendations Map

Add zoning category for high-density housing (condo/townhouse0apt) and encourage downtown development that includes efficient parking, open walkable areas, etc.

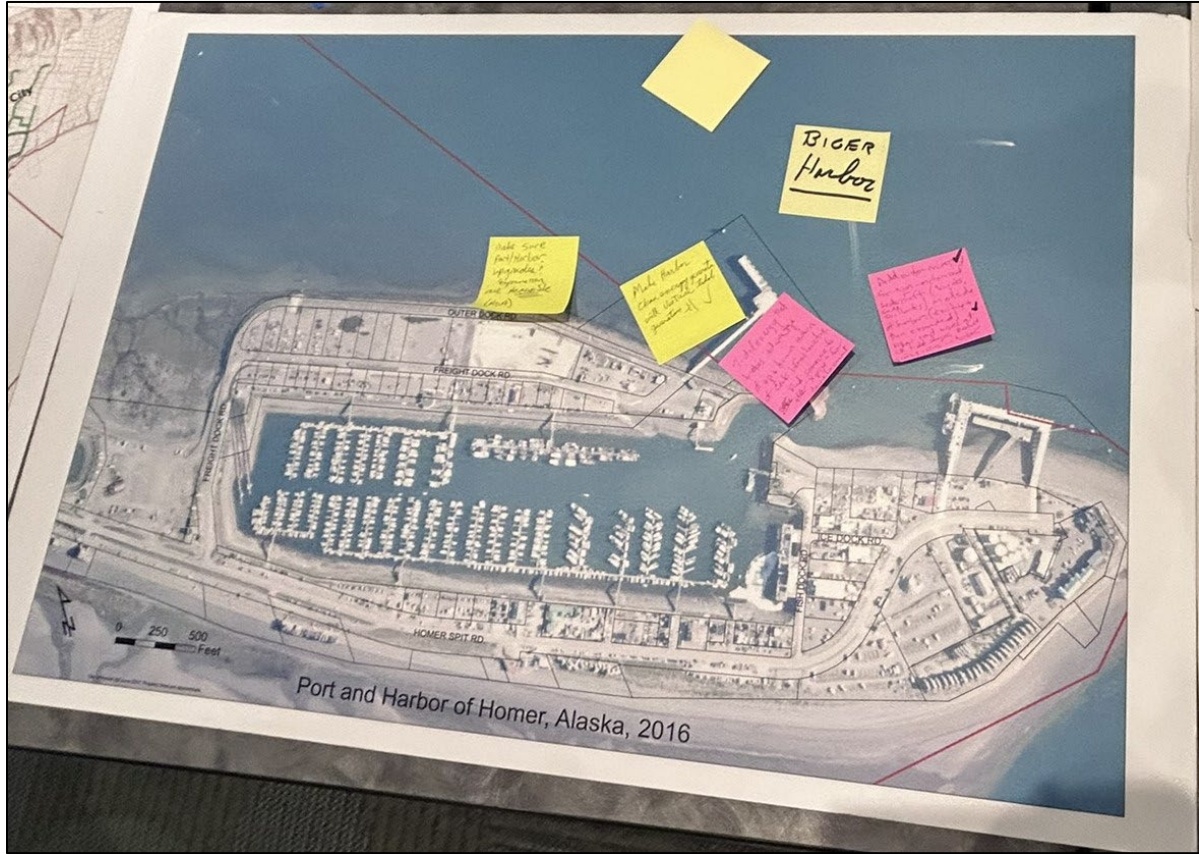
Trail extension to Diamond Creek

I would like to see less restrictions on residential code, setbacks, lot size, min/max structure, and less restrictions on housing/small biz in residential areas

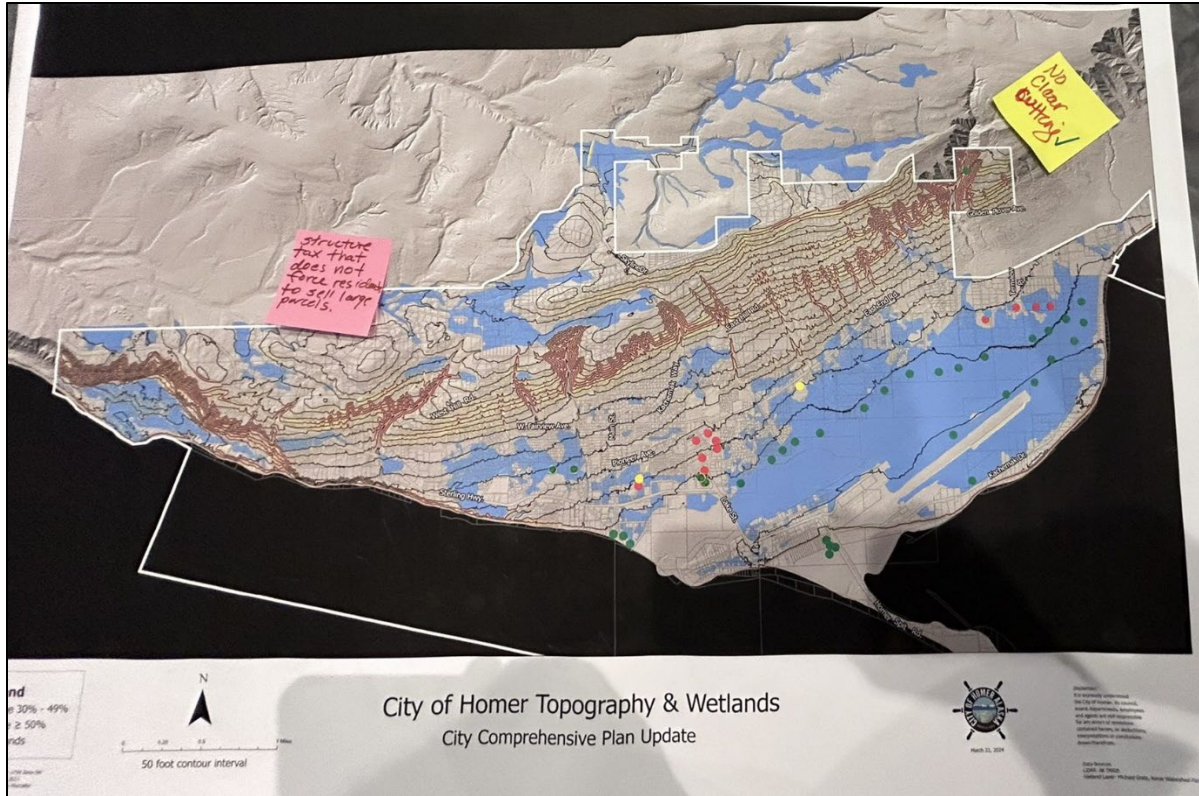
Charging parking, could change the “feel” and walkability of downtown, thinking of Pioneer Ave.
Not all parking in front of businesses?

Bring code up for hotels and larger building city wide

Less parking minimums



Port and Harbor of Homer, Alaska, 2016

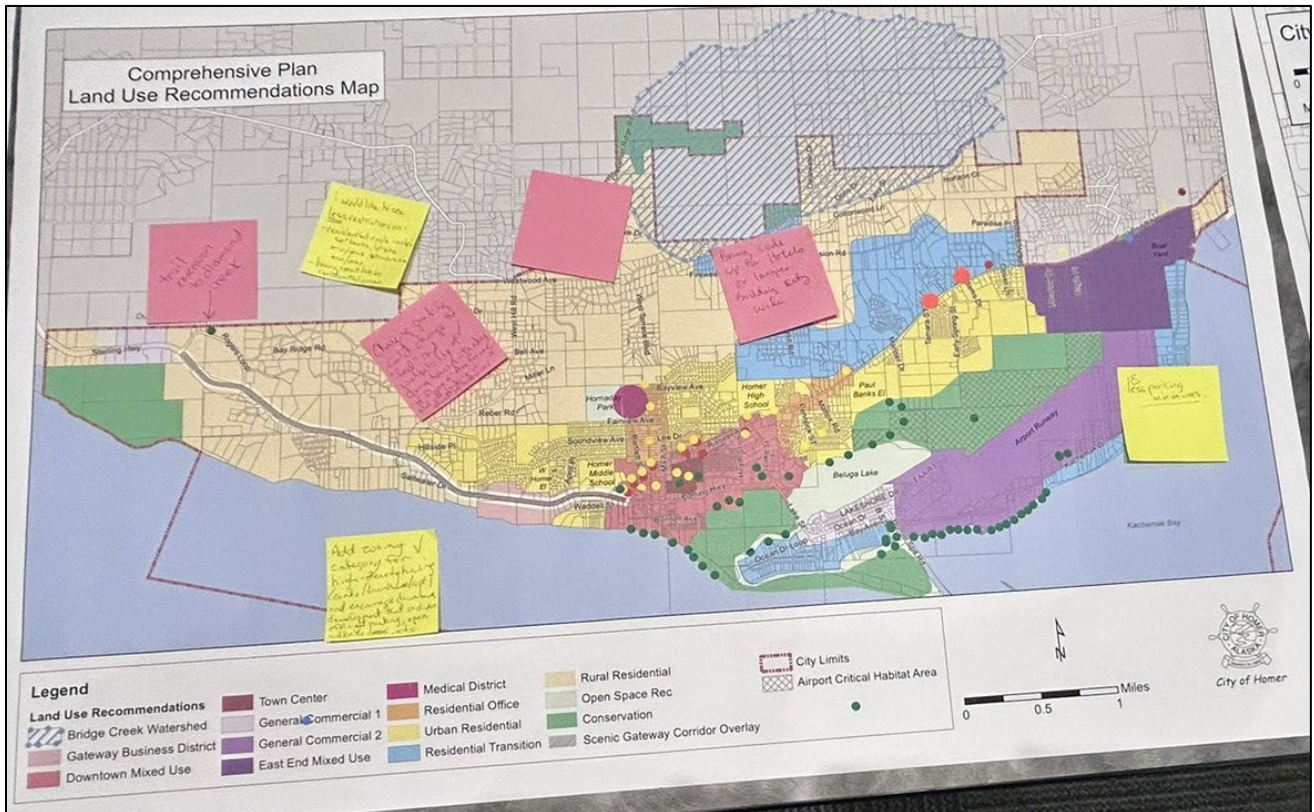
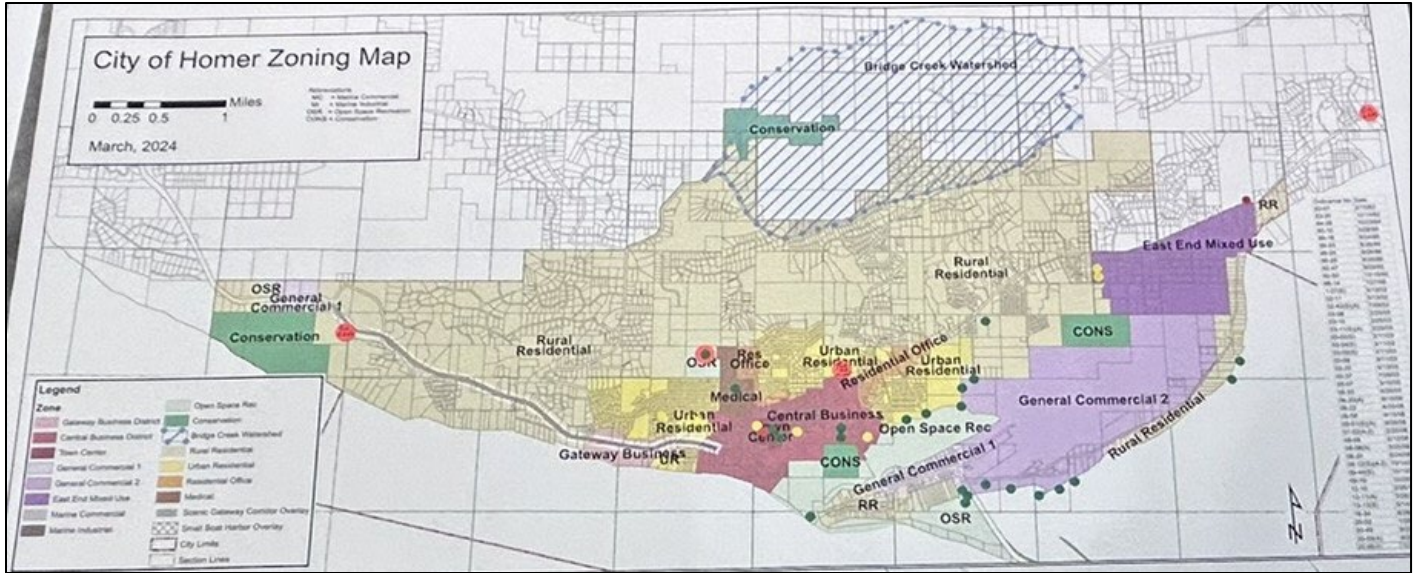


Future Land Use
Instructions:

Use a dot to show where you would like to see more:

- = housing (yellow dot)
- = parks, rec, open space (green dot)
- = Commercial, business activity (red dot)
agriculture...
- = industrial use, activity (blue dot)
- = other - please use post-it to share what other use you would like

★ Use postits for other comments



Community Survey 2024

Participate in the survey to help guide the future of Homer and update the Homer Comprehensive Plan!

27



CITY OF HOMER

Comprehensive Plan Rewrite



For more information on the Homer
Comprehensive Plan Rewrite and to
access the survey please visit:

www.HomerCompPlanUpdate.com

CITY OF HOMER

Comprehensive Plan Rewrite



Community Survey 2024

Participate in the survey to help guide the future of Homer and update the Comprehensive Plan!





Meeting in a Box Materials

Updated April 12, 2024



Purpose

This tool is intended to help city staff, committee members and other residents quickly share information about the comprehensive planning process at existing community meetings, events, and workplace locations around Homer. It includes talking points and a list of recommended materials to bring when presenting information about the plan.

Contents

1. Talking Points & Frequently Asked Questions
2. Guiding Questions For Public Engagement

Attachments

1. Sign-In Sheet
2. General Comment Form
3. Notetaking Template
4. Facilitator Notes for Success
5. Project Flyer

Talking Points & Frequently Asked Questions

Note: The website <https://homercompplanupdate.com/> can be used for a reference and includes many of the same details below.

WHAT is a comprehensive plan?

- A comprehensive plan is a process for communities to plan for their future by creating a long-term vision, community goals, and practical short-term strategies.
- The comprehensive plan is a community-driven tool that will provide direction to community leaders – especially the Planning Commission and City Council - and residents, funders, and other partners.
- While this is a city-led process, the comprehensive plan is a community document meant to be used by residents, current and prospective business owners, local, state, and federal partners, and anyone interested in the future of Homer.
- Homer’s Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2018.
- This is phase one of a two phased project; the updated comprehensive plan will help guide phase 2 which will be a revision process for Title 21 of the Homer City Code, the Zoning and Planning code.

WHO is leading the planning process?

- The City of Homer, led by a Steering Committee, is overseeing this effort with help from consulting team, led by Agnew::Beck Consulting with partners Stantec, Northern Economics, RESPEC, Kinney Engineering, and Corvus Design.
- The Steering Committee is a five-member committee comprised of two city council members, two city commission members, and one city resident nominated by the mayor and approved by the City Council. City planning staff, the Planning Commission, and City Council is also assisting in leading the process.
- Community entities will share the responsibility of plan implementation.

WHEN will plan development happen?

- The timeframe for the comprehensive plan process is through the end of 2024. A detailed timeline is on the project website.

WHY is the comprehensive plan relevant to Homer residents?

- It is an opportunity to preserve and improve Homer quality of life – The updated plan will guide decision-making on land use, housing, economic development, transportation, parks and recreation, health and wellness and other topics that impact quality of life in Homer.
- It starts with and centers on a shared vision and goals for prioritizing and evaluating all future actions – The plan will clearly identify the community’s desired future direction (long-term) and policies and actions (shorter-term) that ensure progress toward that vision.
- It will position the community Homer for funding/partnering opportunities – The plan will send a clear message to regional, state, and federal partners about Homer’s priorities, how the community is taking action and contributing to their own success.
- The process will engage residents in shaping how they want the future of Homer to look, providing many opportunities to share and discuss common ideas and concerns. It broadly answers:
 - **How can we as a community protect the characteristics people value about living here?** *(For examples, the parks, open spaces, and beach access, the quality of the schools, the harbor infrastructure, support for entrepreneurs.)*
 - **How can we address the challenges that make it hard to live here?** *(For example, the high cost of living, limited accessible and affordable housing, increase the walkability of the town center.)*
 - **What are our big priorities? How can we work together to achieve them?**

HOW can you get involved?

- Visit the website: <https://homercompplanupdate.com/>
 - Includes links to the online survey
 - Includes a link to sign up for e-mail updates
 - Meetings and events will be posted
 - Project information and materials available for download
- Respond to the community survey
 - Open through June 14, 2024
 - Also available in hard copy at city hall
- Attend a community event or focus group (see the website or email the project team for upcoming events)

Guiding Questions for Public Engagement

The following is a list of potential questions to guide conversations during interviews and small group discussions. The first section of “General” questions can help guide conversations with all Homer residents. The additional categories of questions are focused on specific topics within the comprehensive plan. Use these questions to guide discussion; they do not need to be asked in any specific order or all together for input to matter; all feedback and conversation is important!

The goal of these guiding questions is to distill:

- **What residents value about Homer**
- **What residents find challenging about living and working in Homer**
- **What residents identify as opportunities to thrive and grow resiliency**
- **What kind of Homer residents would like to see in 20 years**
- **What strategies and actions may help Homer achieve its goals**

Take notes and capture feedback!

Take notes on conversations as it works best in the circumstances. It is most helpful to list the themes and topics you hear during conversations and details about any specific strategies or actions suggested. You can also record virtual meetings, if possible, and share the recordings with the project team. Please connect with the project team to share your notes after your event (email shelly@agnewbeck.com and rfoster@ci.homer.ak.us.)

Question categories:

- General questions for all residents
- Land Use
- Housing
- Public Services and Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Health and Wellness
- Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Change

General questions for all residents:



1. **Values:** What do you like most about living in Homer? What makes it special? Which programs, services, or projects are important for the community? Why do you choose to live here?
2. **Challenges:** What are the biggest issues or challenges facing the community? What can make it challenging to live and work in Homer?
3. **Opportunities:** How could life be improved for Homer residents? For example, what would make it easier to be a business owner or raise a family in Homer?
4. **Future:** 20 years from now, what does your ideal Homer look like? What would you change and what you would keep the same as today?
5. **Priorities:** What should be the highest priorities for Homer, both in the short term and long term? These can be projects, activities, programs, etc. (for suggestions that are emerging as potential priorities, ask for details when possible – what steps and resources are needed to make that happen? Who would lead the project and are partnerships are needed? What is the potential impact?) **Specifically, how can the community help enhance and support the projects you've identified?**

Land Use Questions



1. What are your organization/community/agency's short and long-term land use goals and strategies in the Homer?
2. Which areas in Homer are the best sites for future growth?
3. Which areas do you want to remain undeveloped or for some other specific purpose?
4. How would you characterize growth and development in Homer? What would you say are the highest priority development projects in Homer?
5. Based on the values, opportunities, and priorities mentioned above, how do any or all of those depend on land use policies?
6. How supportive are you of regulatory or zoning land use policies?
7. What is the capacity of staff to implement current and any proposed land use policies or ordinances?
8. How well do you think land use conflicts are currently addressed in Homer? What could help address conflicts or disagreements before they happen?
9. What, if any, changes are needed to current land use policies to help meet goals for quality of life, for economic development, and for environmental protection?

Housing Questions



1. Describe the quality of housing stock in the Homer.
2. Which solutions to address housing issue in Homer have gained traction?
3. If there is a need for new or improved housing:
 - a. Who needs that housing?
 - b. What type of housing is needed?
 - c. Which specific populations and services are needed? For example, does Homer have sufficient senior/elder care housing and services for aging residents who want to stay in Homer?
4. Where should that housing be located (relates to current and desired future land use and zoning policies)?
5. Which building standards and permitting processes are in place for new construction? Do current building standards and permitting process meet community needs?
6. Do you have any ideas or comments about access to services, type of housing, etc.?

Public Services and Infrastructure Questions



1. What are the community's utility challenges, needs, and/or opportunities in the following subcategories:
 - Drinking water
 - Sewer, stormwater, septic systems
 - Solid waste, recycling
 - Communications
 - Power
 - Renewable and alternative energy sources

Transportation Questions



1. How satisfied are you with the quality and maintenance of Homer's roads, sidewalks, harbors, airport, and trails?
2. What are the community's transportation challenges, needs, and/or opportunities? For example:
3. How does transportation affect the quality of life for residents and businesses in Homer?
4. What are the future facility needs for the Homer marine transportation system, including docks and harbors?

Economic Development Questions

1. What are Homer’s unique economic features and strengths? Where do you see business, families, and residents thriving?
2. What are the biggest barriers or threats to economic development opportunities?
3. Which projects, strategies and/or business opportunities have the potential to economically benefit (create jobs, retain, or expand businesses, bring in more outside revenue) the entire region and improve quality of life for Homer residents?
4. What actions are needed to strengthen the economy and improve resilience to withstand economic downturns, disruptions, or unforeseen events?



Health and Wellness Questions

1. How healthy do you think the residents of Homer are, overall?
2. What are the biggest barriers or challenges to physical and mental health for residents?
3. Which events, services, and programs in Homer come to mind when thinking about physical and mental health for residents?
4. Which types of services or programs do you think could increase the physical and mental health for residents, including elders, families, and youth?



Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Change Questions

5. What are some of the greatest effects of climate change Homer faces?
6. What does sustainability and resilience mean to you?
7. What are Homer’s unique efforts in addressing sustainability, resilience, and climate change?
8. What more needs to be done to address the current and future effects of climate change in Homer?



Notetaking Template

Meeting/Group: _____ Date: _____

Attendees

- [Insert names](#)

Discussion Notes

Introductions

- [Record any initial comments or questions here](#)

Responses to Questions

- What do you like most about living in Homer? What makes it special? Which programs, services, or projects are important for the community? Why do you choose to live here?
 - [Record comments here](#)
- What are the biggest issues or challenges facing the community? What can make it challenging to live and work in Homer?
 - [Record comments here](#)
- How could life be improved for Homer residents? For example, what would make it easier to be a business owner or raise a family in Homer?
 - [Record comments here](#)
- Twenty years from now, what does your ideal Homer look like? What would you change and what you would keep the same as today?
 - [Record comments here](#)
- What should be the highest priorities for Homer, both in the short term and long term? These can be projects, activities, programs, etc. (for suggestions that are emerging as potential priorities, ask for details when possible – what steps and resources are needed to make that happen? Who would lead the project and are partnerships are needed? What is the potential impact?) Specifically, how can the community help enhance and support the projects you've identified?
 - [Record comments here](#)
- Additional topical questions: (List questions and comments below)
 - [Record comments here](#)

Wrap Up and Next Steps

- [Record final comments or questions here](#)

Facilitator Notes for Success

Identify key roles before the meeting starts; for example:

- **Lead facilitator:** Ensures the meeting starts and ends on time, guides attendees through the agenda and guiding questions, listens to feedback.
- **Notetaker:** Documents input/comments/discussion, and ensures participants sign the sign in sheet.

Notes for facilitators:

- **The session is to get community input, not rank or make final decisions.** While we are asking participants to think about values, challenges, opportunities, and vision, the group does not have to agree on any answers. If there are opposing points of view, write them down with a note that it did not have consensus.
- **Let participants share freely, as much as possible.** Facilitators should try to be flexible during discussion. When appropriate, redirect the conversation back to the topic at hand.
- **If one person is doing all the talking, the facilitator should gently make space for others at the table.** One tactic: wait for the person to finish speaking, thank them for sharing. Then ask, either a specific person or generally to the table, “We haven’t heard your thoughts yet” or “Is there anyone who hasn’t shared yet that would like to?”



CITY OF HOMER

Comprehensive Plan Rewrite

Why, Who, What, When, and How | Spring 2024

Why a Comprehensive Plan Revision?

- ✓ 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 Comprehensive Plan will serve 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.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A combination of **long-term vision, goals, and practical strategies** that will:

Guide 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.

Provide a roadmap for implementation, with clear priorities and actions.



What is Our Timeline?

FEBRUARY 2024

- Project kick-off
- Steering Committee kick-off and initial meetings to map out public participation plan
- Background research and data collection



MARCH & April 2024

- Resident, community leader, and partner interviews and small group discussions
- Community survey and interactive comment map launch
- **COMMUNITY VISIT #1 AND OPEN HOUSE: Introduce planning process, gather initial input on community vision**



May 2024

- **COMMUNITY VISIT #2: Share a “Community Snapshot” that includes an initial summary of community input and research on potential growth/development scenarios**
- Community survey and comment map continue



SUMMER-FALL 2024

- Community survey and comment map close
- Ongoing community outreach
- Public Review Draft release (by early October)
- **COMMUNITY VISITS #3 & #4: Share and get feedback on Public Review Draft**



NOVEMBER 2024

- **COMMUNITY VISIT #5: Provide information during public hearings on plan adoption**



WINTER 2024

- Revision and Adoption Process



Upcoming May 2024 Visit

- ✓ The Project Team will be in Homer May 13-16, 2024 and hold drop in hours for residents throughout the week (*details to come and will be listed on the project website.*)
- ✓ Project team will be meeting with City Council, the Planning Commission, other city advisory councils and community organizations.
- ✓ Public sharing and feedback opportunities at local establishments
- ✓ Stakeholder interviews and meetings with local organizations



Photo by Kachemak Communications

How Can You Get Involved?

- Visit the project website: www.homercompplanupdate.com.
- Take the Community Survey available on the website or in hard copy at city hall.
- Follow the City of Homer on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/cityofhomerak/>
- Contact the project team:
 - Ryan Foster, City of Homer Planner, rfoster@ci.homer.ak.us, 907-299-8529
 - Shelly Wade, Project Consultant, shelly@agnewbeck.com, 907-242-5326

