



## City of Homer

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

## Office of the City Manager

491 East Pioneer Avenue  
Homer, Alaska 99603

[citymanager@cityofhomer-ak.gov](mailto:citymanager@cityofhomer-ak.gov)

(p) 907-235-8121 x2222

(f) 907-235-3148

## City Manager's Report

TO: Honorable Mayor Wythe and Homer City Council  
FROM: Katie Koester, City Manager  
DATE: November 23, 2015  
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report

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### **Get out the Vote for HART**

HART education is in full swing in preparation for the December 1<sup>st</sup> election. This includes the attached mailing that was sent to all registered voters in City limits, spots on local radio stations, and pieces in the paper. Thank you to councilmembers who volunteered to be on the radio and write opinion pieces for the paper.

### **Strategic Doing on ADA**

When Council initiated the strategic doing process, they chose ADA accessibility as one of the items they would like to tackle first. I have been working with Rick Malley of the Independent Living Center on suggestions on how to make the City of Homer more ADA friendly. He has met with public works staff to go over some of the accessibility issues and put me in contact with a specialist in training municipal employees on ADA sensitivity. In light of the Council's commitment and the Independent Living Center's willingness to help the City of Homer become more ADA friendly, I have dedicated the January Strategic Doing to ADA accessibility. At that session the Council will work on laying the ground work for a transition plan detailing the ways Homer can be more accessible. One thing that I have learned through this process is that ADA accessibility is often not about infrastructure but about employees finding creative solutions to help all residents access municipal programs, information and activities. In that vein, I am hoping to bring in a specialist and offer training to frontline City of Homer employees on ADA sensitivity in the near future.

### **Website Upgrades**

We have been talking for quite some time about making the City of Homer website more mobile friendly and updating its form and functions. The contractor that designs our website (aHa Consulting) will be here in December to train employees on the new interface. We are hoping to keep many of the features that the community loves the same, but upgrade the look and functionality of the website. Stay tuned for a fresh and functional City of Homer web experience for the new year.

### **Welcome New Faces to the City of Homer Staff**

The City would like to extend a warm welcome to Kim Gilbert in the Finance Department and Jason Hoffman at Public Works. Please say hi to the newest members of the City of Homer team if you get a chance.

### **Town Hall**

Despite the blustery and slushy winter weather, we had a great Town Hall on Monday the 9<sup>th</sup>. I really appreciate the full Council attending. It provided a great opportunity for those in attendance to ask direct questions of the decision makers and exchange ideas and opinions.

At the Town Hall we unveiled an excel spreadsheet tool that lets the public chose elements of Budget A (assumes revenue) and Budget B (bare bones) coupled with the suspension of the HART fund to try their hand at balancing the budget. A survey is also included with questions on HART and the outreach process (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/N639HFG>). Preliminary survey results are attached. We also introduced an online budget tool called Open Budget that provides a graphic representation of the City of Homer budget over the last 5 years. This is neat tool for the public, Council and staff to more easily understand both historical budgets and current spending. So far, lots of great questions internally have come from being able to see the numbers in a bar chart form and I am looking forward to questions from the public. Check out both tools on the City of Homer website: <http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/>.

### **Land Sales – Do we Need a Professional?**

This fall Council directed me to make City of Homer Land sales simpler. In response, Council passed Ordinance 15-28(A) streamlining the land sale process. Staff proceeded through the process of RFPing lots Council had identified an interest in selling. For example, we RFP'd the Lillian Walli lots in October. Even though we have had developers express an interest in the lots, no one has signed up on the planholders list and I extended the time frame until December 14<sup>th</sup>. During this time we also began advertising the lots on Zillow and Craigslist. As of Monday the 16<sup>th</sup>, we had almost 500 views - but no bites yet. I perceive a disconnect between the City of Homer RFP process and how people look for property. To maintain integrity and transparency of the RFP process, staff cannot let individuals know when City of Homer has issued an RFP. However the RFP process is problematic for land sales. For the most part, people use a real estate agent, or at least browse online through sites like MLS, when looking for property. If the City wants to make an active push to get rid of land, I think the City should consider hiring a municipal real estate agent.

Using an agent is necessary to get property onto MLS and other information sources commonly used by prospective purchasers to search for properties that are for sale. A good agent also can provide helpful advice regarding pricing and market conditions. The best way to hire an agent consistently with the code would be to solicit proposals to provide this service. The RFP might be for particular properties and/or for a particular limited time period (agents are accustomed to an agreement for an exclusive listing for a specified period). This

would allow the City to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach (and the selected agent) without making a more general commitment.

**Out of Room at Hickerson Cemetery**

Hickerson Cemetery has only a handful of lots left that are spread out around the cemetery. Parks has proposed a \$350,000 capital request to purchase land for a new cemetery. Fully developing the cemetery would cost an additional \$230,000. Public Works has proposed a fee increase as part of the FY2016 budget process to help recoup these costs (\$250,000 to \$1,000). However, there is a substantial upfront capital investment that is needed. The current City Manager's proposed budget does not include expansion of the cemetery. Without this project, the City will likely have to turn families away in the near future.

Enc:

HART mailer

Budget Breakdown Survey Results

Letter of support for Coastal Studies grant application

# VOTE YES ON PROP 1

*Keep Vital Services, Suspend HART*

## **Vote YES on Prop 1**

*Keep Vital Services, Suspend HART*

### **What is HART?**

¾% of sales tax in the City of Homer is dedicated to the Homer Accelerated Roads and Trails fund, used for road and trail improvements.

### **What is Proposition 1?**

Suspension of new tax dollars to HART for 3 years. These funds will be redirected to pay for vital services such as: plowing, emergency services, community recreation, parks & the library, as well as other valued services.

### **Why Suspend HART?**

This is not a new tax. With the passage of Prop 1 alongside City belt tightening we can close the budget gap and keep these valued services.

### **Find out more?**

[www.cityofhomer-ak.gov](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov) or 907-235-8121

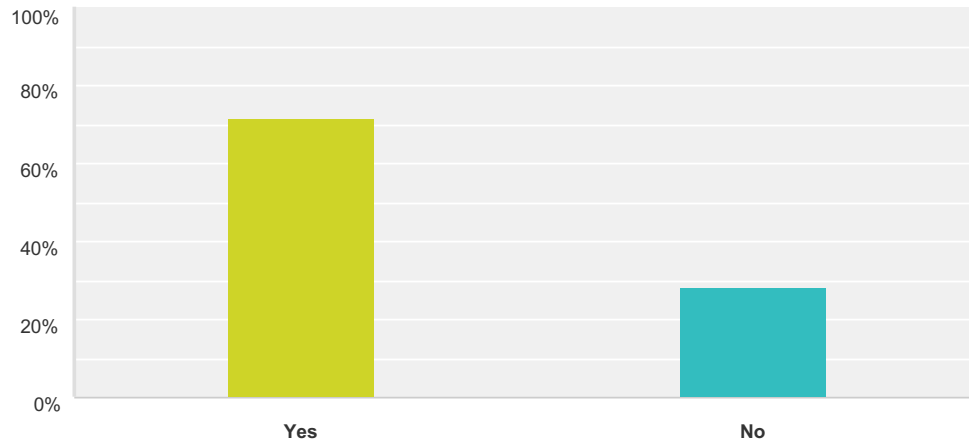
## **Vote December 1st**

absentee voting begins November 16th

This communication was paid for by the City of Homer, Homer, Alaska

### Q1 Are you a City of Homer resident?

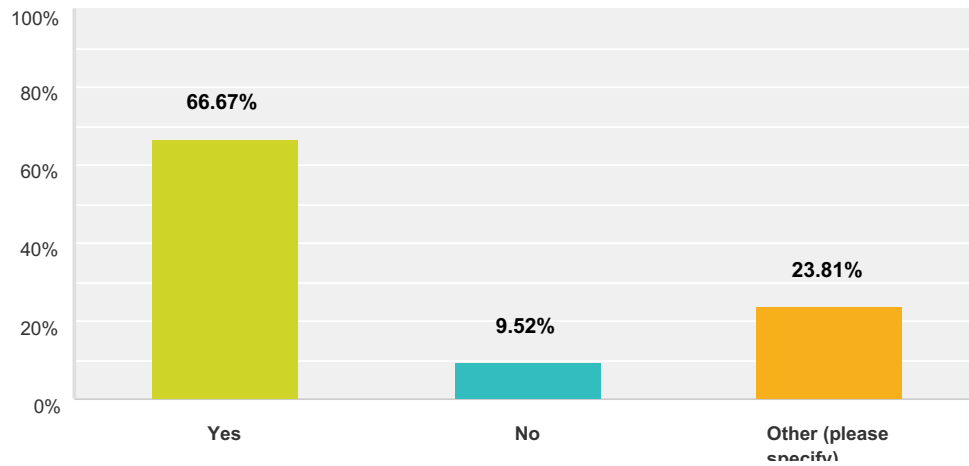
Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	71.43%	15
No	28.57%	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>21</b>

**Q2 Currently 3/4% of city sales tax is dedicated to the Homer Accelerated Roads and Trails (HART) program. Do you support the redirection of these dedicated tax dollars for 3 years to the general fund in order to fund vital city services?**

Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	66.67%	14
No	9.52%	2
Other (please specify)	23.81%	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>21</b>

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	A year by year approach to reallocating funds, decided by the City Council, is a effective mechanism with a 3-year limit. The City should use the HART funds for roads & trails that would stimulate the local economy. Note: the projects should be RFP set-asides for local small businesses and the City could allocate a portion of the contract amount to support an owner rep and a City administrator.	11/14/2015 2:09 PM
2	I suggest that a 5 year hiatus would better serve our needs today and over the next 5 years to give us more "wiggle room" and time to maximize our city enterprisers for fund generation.	11/13/2015 7:28 PM
3	While it is a temporary solution, I think the City needs a long term solution. Less spending. Put projects on hold until the budget bounces back some.	11/9/2015 9:38 AM
4	Only as a very short term stop gap. I hope Council makes the budget the priority until June when the mill rate and sales tax rates are set.	11/9/2015 8:43 AM
5	Don't know what it is. Should have had a brief summary i. This survey question.	11/6/2015 8:56 PM

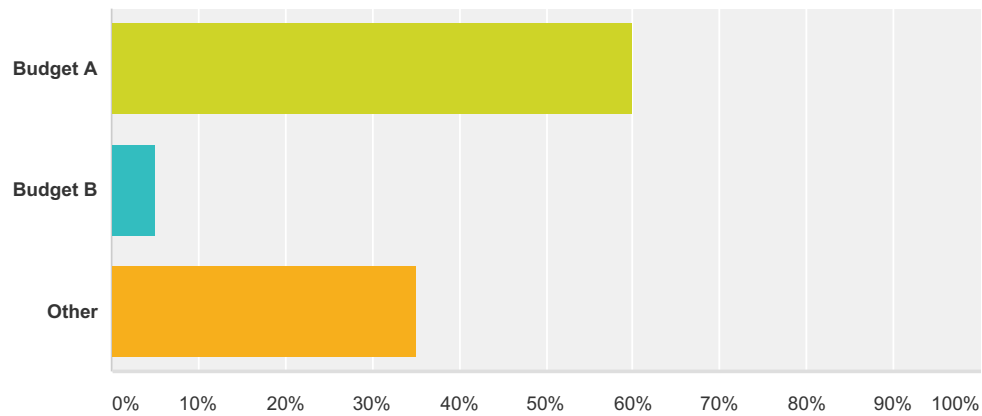
### Q3 Suspension of the HART is a short term fix; the need for a long term solution is not far off. What long term revenue generating solutions would you support?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 8

#	Responses	Date
1	#1 -- a hotel tax--please! Most urgent one! Secondly, year-round sales tax	11/16/2015 12:03 PM
2	All tax sources should be examined.	11/16/2015 9:54 AM
3	-increased user fees (including for those outside city limits, if KPB will play along - I would support increased property tax but not until exemptions are either ended or made rational & fair (ie, Senior Exemption) -Bed tax & "head tax" for harbor & airport usage -any revenue enhancements that are truly fair (ie "one suffer; all suffer"	11/14/2015 5:27 PM
4	1) Sell City property and put the revenue into an endowment to support City operations. 2) Use the HART \$\$ to fix the City sidewalks etc to promote tourist, retiree, etc. safe accesses to businesses. Stop the "uglization" of Homer with businesses along tourist specific areas. What happened to the 30+year City Plan for a City Center. The City Center is for practical purposes the New Old Town. This would attract small business to Pioneer Ave. Revenue would be generated through a touristy town that is appealing to the visitor. It is not that now. This includes the Spit. 3) A large boat haul-out would be a source of revenue for the City and local businesses. It should be a low cost project using a rail system and could relocate one of the Fish Dock cranes to support the haul-out.	11/14/2015 2:09 PM
5	Recreation tax area to allow more contribution to City services by those of us living outside the City. Increase in sales tax or removal of the grocery tax holiday.	11/14/2015 5:46 AM
6	Maximizing our harbor and airport ops for increased revenues. We should also consider raising the parking fees on the spit to the point of installing meters that accept credit cards. Anchorage is a good example of how this process works.	11/13/2015 7:28 PM
7	a balance of raising taxes & trimming services.	11/13/2015 6:49 PM
8	severe budget cuts	11/13/2015 8:38 AM
9	Follow up with Mayor Navarre about the borough taking over Fire and EMS. Ask if current employees could be hired on by the borough.	11/12/2015 9:49 AM
10	excise taxes on alcohol, tobacco and eventually cannabis. motor vehicle fuel tax. 1% additional sales tax in six summer months. Reduction of senior property tax exemption	11/11/2015 4:20 PM
11	Borough support of city services used by Borough residents, change in senior property exemption, increased taxes if needed	11/11/2015 2:23 PM
12	Raise sales tax cap Increase summer sales tax Bed tax dedicated to promoting tourism Work with state to eliminate at least some portions of the senior tax exemptions, especially the hospital mill rate exemption. Poor seniors should be protected but many of our seniors can afford to pay their share. (I will be one of those seniors soon.)	11/11/2015 1:20 PM
13	Petition the state to get rid of the senior citizen tax exemption. Charge non city residents for library and recreational services to encourage the formation of a service area to fund these quality of life services. It blows my mind that the city of Homer just gives a million dollars worth of library services away. Increase the seasonal sales tax. Tax church property, with the exception of the Methodists, as they actually contribute to the community as a whole through the food pantry.	11/9/2015 8:47 PM

### Q4 Do you support either of the proposed budgets?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 1



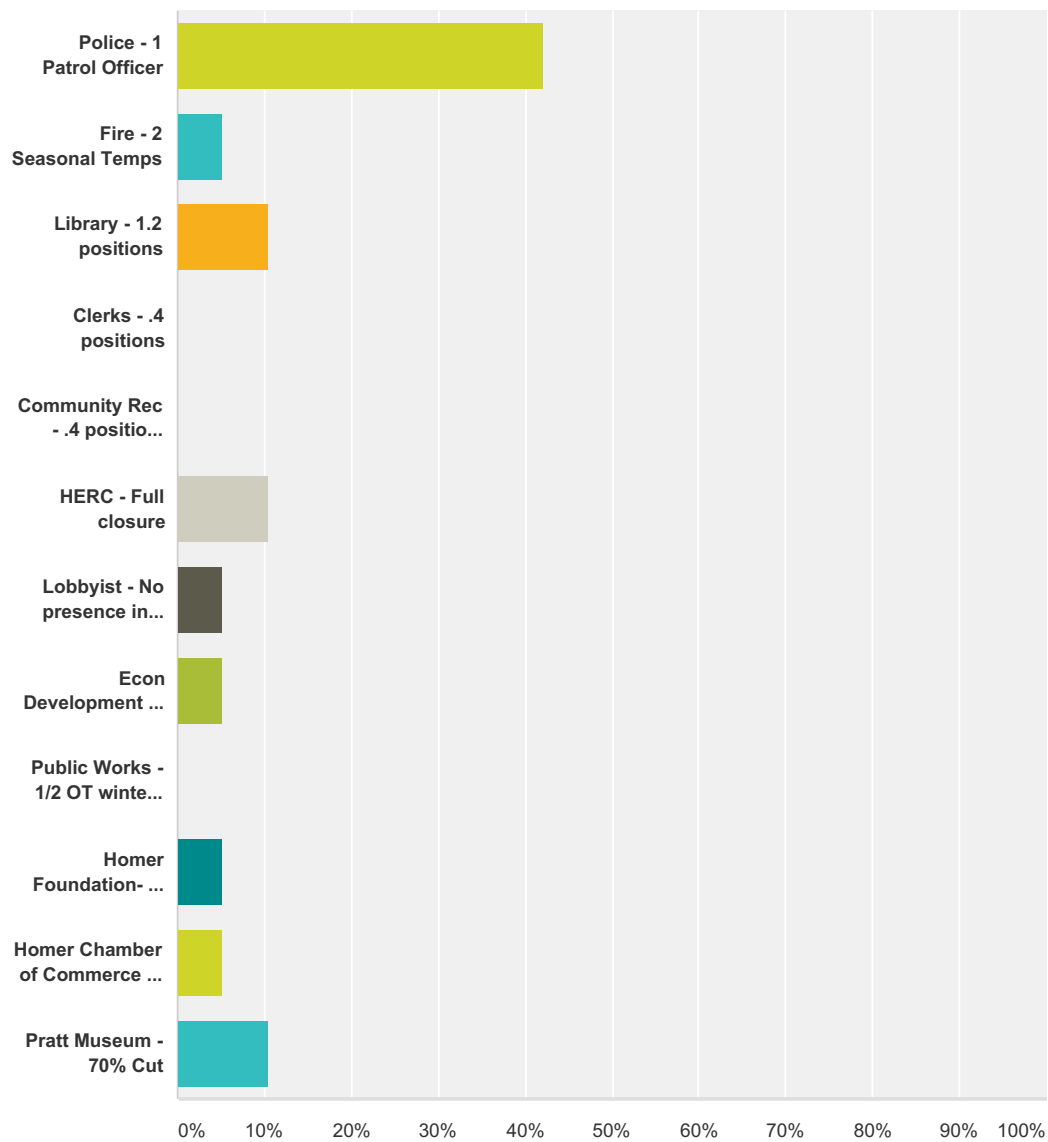
Answer Choices	Responses
Budget A	60.00% 12
Budget B	5.00% 1
Other	35.00% 7
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

#	Other	Date
1	Budget A with some of B. Re below: 1) HERC should be closed and demolished, property could be sold. The City applies the funds to expand the Bell Arena to support HERC activities. 2) Reduce clerks by two 3) Reduce Community Rec by two 4) Cut lobbyist in Juneau, Reallocate some of the funds for City travel to Juneau 5) Why is the City giving money to the Homer Foundation. This is a pass trough funding that goes back to the City. The Foundation should find its own \$\$\$. Also, the City could be viewed as in "conflict of interest" with the Foundation and its CEO. 6) Same for Chamber of Commerce.	11/14/2015 2:09 PM
2	I support BOTH with certain implementations.	11/13/2015 7:28 PM
3	Both	11/13/2015 8:38 AM
4	In general I would rather rob the HART revenues than have the stripped down budget, but to cut positions that affect public safety, like a police dispatcher and not cut ANY library personal seems crazy. Story time at the library used to be a once a week volunteer position. Now we have a full time employee dedicated to children's services. How has it become the city of Homer's task to provide early childhood education for the entire south peninsula? It would be one thing if the borough was involved and it was administered through the school district, but it's unfair to city residents that they should be tasked with this.	11/9/2015 8:47 PM
5	Cut funding from Homer Foundation, Pratt, and Homer Chamber of Commerce, Library Cuts. While people like the library, library hours could be cut and FTEs could be reduced.	11/9/2015 9:38 AM
6	Budget B would be a small step in the right direction. All spending on non-essential services (libraries, museums, parks & rec, et. al.) should be terminated. Exceptions could be made only in the case of a non-essential service that returns (annually) more revenue than expense incurred. That is, only fund non-essential services that turn a fiscal profit (with no phony accounting procedures).	11/7/2015 8:31 AM
7	Not sure. Did not study them. Thank you for posting though, for those who want to study in depth. Most people probably do not.	11/6/2015 8:56 PM



### Q5 What proposed cut from Budget B would you least like to see implemented?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 2

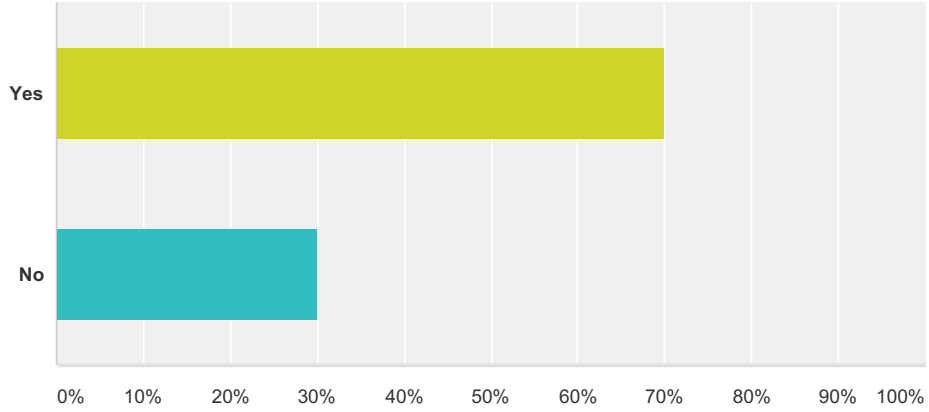


Answer Choices	Responses
Police - 1 Patrol Officer	42.11% 8
Fire - 2 Seasonal Temps	5.26% 1
Library - 1.2 positions	10.53% 2
Clerks - .4 positions	0.00% 0
Community Rec - .4 positions and less temp hours	0.00% 0
HERC - Full closure	10.53% 2
Lobbyist - No presence in Juneau	5.26% 1

Econ Development - non-visitor advertising	5.26%	1
Public Works - 1/2 OT winter equip oper hours and temp park maintenance	0.00%	0
Homer Foundation- 70% cut	5.26%	1
Homer Chamber of Commerce - 70% Cut	5.26%	1
Pratt Museum - 70% Cut	10.53%	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>19</b>

### Q6 Did you use the excel budget tool found on The City's website to help you understand the budget gap?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	70.00%	14
No	30.00%	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>20</b>

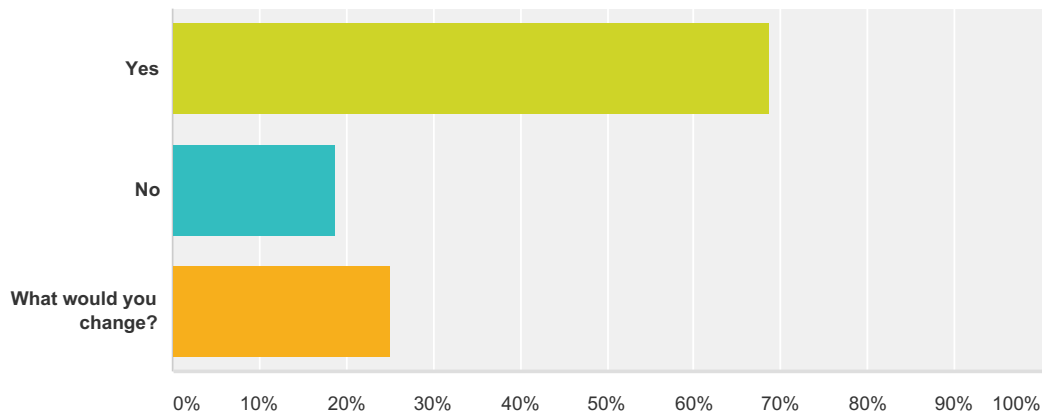
**Q7 After using the excel budget tool, do you have any specific recommendations to Council on an amendment to either budget A or B?**

Answered: 8 Skipped: 13

#	Responses	Date
1	I tried but couldn't get it to be interactive on my Mac	11/16/2015 12:03 PM
2	Refer to above #4	11/14/2015 2:09 PM
3	My computer does not have Microsoft Office so I cannot open the tool.	11/14/2015 5:46 AM
4	I am still studying the process.	11/13/2015 7:28 PM
5	Both for 3 years	11/13/2015 8:38 AM
6	Cut the two Fire seasonal temps. Ask Fire department why volunteers are not adequate for staffing. If retention is an issue, why? Cut funding to the Chamber. They have members that pay dues to fund their budget.	11/12/2015 9:49 AM
7	All of the Budget B cuts are extreme and not an option for me. These cuts are being layered on years of cuts and belt tightening. Alternative revenue sources are essential.	11/11/2015 2:23 PM
8	Bite the bullet and raise revenue. Budget A cuts are barely acceptable.	11/11/2015 1:20 PM

### Q8 Did you find the Town Hall meeting structure useful?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 5

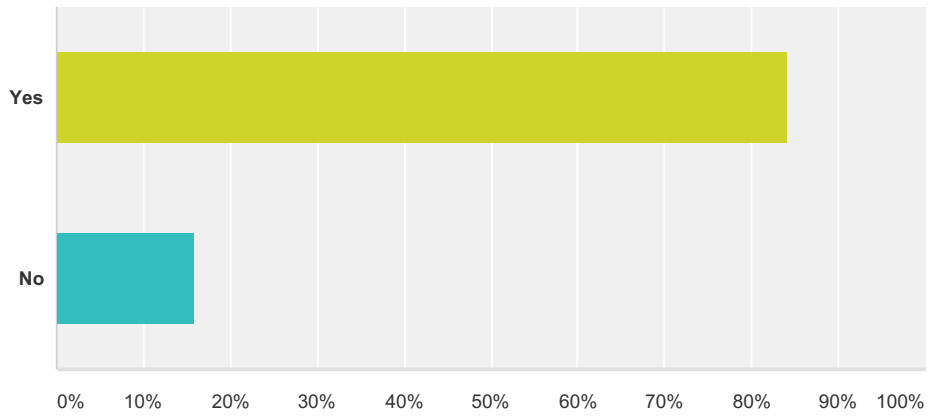


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	68.75% 11
No	18.75% 3
What would you change?	25.00% 4
<b>Total Respondents: 16</b>	

#	What would you change?	Date
1	City needs to come up with Plans and present to the citizens	11/14/2015 2:09 PM
2	Larger turn out.	11/13/2015 7:28 PM
3	more participation of general public.	11/11/2015 4:20 PM
4	More internet based outreach. People are busy.	11/6/2015 8:56 PM

### Q9 Would you like to see more Town Hall meetings in the future?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	84.21%	16
No	15.79%	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>19</b>

### Q10 How could The City improve its outreach in the future?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 7

#	Responses	Date
1	ask this question at local service agencies, have their staff arrange focus groups of clients, where people with few could express the perceived priorities of our most vulnerable populations who don't have resources to attend meetings (or feel that their voices count).	11/16/2015 12:03 PM
2	figure out how to shame citizens into participating in THEIR government (ie, the problem is us)	11/14/2015 5:27 PM
3	Residents outside the City would like more of a voice in City decisions and to support the City more.	11/14/2015 5:46 AM
4	Just continue to promote that "We are in this TOGETHER" and it takes a "village" to make things work best.	11/13/2015 7:28 PM
5	Maybe post the Town Hall notes or send them to those interested in case they couldn't make the meeting. Social media to engage younger residents...	11/13/2015 6:49 PM
6	Bed Tax	11/13/2015 8:38 AM
7	Facebook	11/11/2015 4:20 PM
8	I think you're making a good effort.	11/11/2015 1:20 PM
9	I think you're doing a great job with outreach to those who are interested.	11/9/2015 8:47 PM
10	Install sign similar to Paul Banks School (small) to post meetings and events at City Hall.	11/9/2015 12:25 PM
11	I think outreach has improved, keep it up.	11/9/2015 9:38 AM
12	Put meeting info on-line at LEAST one week if not two weeks before the meeting. And email the link to employees.	11/9/2015 8:43 AM
13	Embrace the interweb. Virtual meetings/surveys/feedback is far more efficient/inclusive/timely than non-virtual.	11/7/2015 8:31 AM
14	Online surveys. We will not attend meetings. Too long and not convenient to many. Also, more accessibility to officials. They seem essentially unapproachable in general and not open to input from community members."This is the way it is.""You're not special." "We don't care what you think."	11/6/2015 8:56 PM



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(p) 907-235-8121 x2222

(f) 907-235-3148

November 17, 2015

Elizabeth Trowbridge  
Executive Director  
Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies  
P.O. Box 2225  
Homer, AK 99603

*Delivered Electronically*

Dear Ms. Trowbridge,

This letter is in support of the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies (CACS) Recreational Trails Program grant application to repair a bridge in the Bridge Creek Watershed. CACS has been a valuable part of the greater Homer community since 1982 and offers many opportunities for people of all ages to connect with the outdoors through guided walks, tours, educational programs, overnights, school programs and more. Local trail networks that attract visitors to our community and the educational programs offered by CACS are beneficial to the community of Homer.

The Wynn Nature Center contains over 5 miles of interpretive nature trails. CACS delivers educational programs and guided tours to over 12,000 students and visitors every year. The Recreational Trails Program grant CACS is applying for would repair a deteriorating bridge that crosses a stream towards the bottom of the Moose Meander Trail. This stream is part of the Bridge Creek Watershed and the Wynn Nature Center and provides valuable protection of the watershed. CACS has a strong history of educating the public about the importance of the Bridge Creek Watershed to residents of Homer and visitors through interpretive signage and educational programing. Thank you for your consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,

Katie Koester  
City Manager





## City of Homer

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

Port and Harbor

4311 Freight Dock Road  
Homer, AK 99603

[port@cityofhomer-ak.gov](mailto:port@cityofhomer-ak.gov)

(p) 907-235-3160

(f) 907-235-3152

November 5, 2015

Emily Angel  
Interpretation and Education Program Manager  
Div. of Parks and Outdoor Recreation  
550 W. 7th Avenue, Ste. 1340  
Anchorage, AK 99501

Re: Letter of Support for Kachemak Bay State Park Orientation Panel

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Bryan Hawkins and I am the Port Director/Harbormaster for the City of Homer's Port and Harbor. My duties and responsibilities include managing the City-owned property on the Homer Spit.

Recently, Homer completed an extensive public access trail system around the harbor basin; one of our goals in this project was to create opportunities for public, educational signage on and around the trails. Our guideline for the signage is that it cannot obstruct the view, is pleasant to look at, is informative to both visitors and locals, and is relevant to its location on the harbor rim.

Ramp 2 in the harbor is a gathering/launching location for visitors and locals accessing Kachemak Bay State Park. Thousands of people use this space for adventure day-trip excursions every year, making it a perfect location for informational signage about our park. I believe that the project proposed by the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation will be a great upgrade to the existing signage, which is old and weathered and in need of freshening up. It will be a great improvement to the Ramp 2 area while also providing valuable information to those individuals interested in adventuring in our beautiful park.

Thank you for your work on this project.

Sincerely,

Bryan Hawkins  
Port Director/Harbormaster



## City of Homer

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

## Public Works

3575 Heath Street  
Homer, AK 99603

[publicworks@cityofhomer-ak.gov](mailto:publicworks@cityofhomer-ak.gov)

(p) 907- 235-3170

(f) 907-235-3145

November 2, 2015

Tom Stroozas - President  
Homer Chamber of Commerce  
201 Sterling Highway  
Homer, Alaska 99603

**RE: Letter of Non-Objection  
Placement of Kiosk at Baycrest Hill PullOut**

Mr. Stroozas;

Please consider this a letter of non-objection to the construction of a traveler information kiosk at the Baycrest Hill Pullout as shown on the information provided to Public Works on November 2, 2015.

The kiosk shall be located as shown on the State of Alaska, ADOT/PF permit #25890 (south of the upper planting bed, in front of the wind rose located near the bed). As discussed, the Chamber will be responsible for maintaining the facility.

Yours Very Truly;

**CITY OF HOMER**

Carey S. Meyer, P.E., MPA  
Public Works Director



**Structure Details**  
12 feet high to top of Cupola  
6/12 roof pitch asphalt shingles  
16 foot diameter octagonal – 256 sq. ft.  
Dura-temp smart plank exterior

**State of Alaska**  
**Department of Transportation and Public Facilities**

**Traveler Information Kiosk (TIK)**  
**Permit #25890**

This permit allows a government entity, chamber of commerce, convention bureau, visitors bureau, business association, or similar organization to provide centralized information on businesses, services, or activities located in the vicinity of a traveler information kiosk within a State owned highway Right of Way.

Applicant:	<b>Homer Chamber of Commerce</b>
Mailing Address:	201 Sterling Highway Homer, AK 99603
Contact Name:	<b>Tom Stroozas</b>
Phone:	(907) 235-7740
Business License Number:	103802
<b>Permit Expiration Date: 12/31/2020</b>	
Location of the Proposed TIK installation (includes highway name, milepost and other pertinent information): Sterling Hwy/Baycrest-Homer Hill Pullout - MP 169.8 - Sec 14 T6S R14W Seward Meridian Highway Speed Limit: 45 MPH	
Tourist-Oriented Activities, Recreational and cultural Interest Areas, and General Services to be included in the TIK: Area Attractions, Fishing, Trail Maps/Hiking, Scenic Drive Maps, Lodging, Museums, Arts, Transportation Info, RV Park/Camp site listings, Shopping, Restaurant/Dining, Natural History, Festivals, Relocation Info & State Park Info	