



# City of Homer

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## Office of the City Manager

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### Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council  
FROM: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager  
DATE: March 7, 2024  
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for March 11, 2024 Council Meeting

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#### EPA Award

The City of Homer has been selected to win an award from the EPA's Drinking Water SRF AQUARIUS program. The AQUARIUS program recognizes exceptional projects funded by the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRF) in six different categories which include excellence in: innovative financing, system partnerships, community engagement, environmental and public health protection, creative solutions, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. The City of Homer will receive the excellence in climate change mitigation and adaptation award for our seawall Armor Rock project. This award category is new as of this year's award cycle, and we will be the first winners. Winners will be recognized at the Council of Infrastructure Financing Authorities (CIFA) Summit in Washington, DC on April 3, 2024 and the City will be providing a one-minute long video for the awards ceremony.

#### Homer All-Ages and Abilities Pedestrian Pathway Wins State Grant

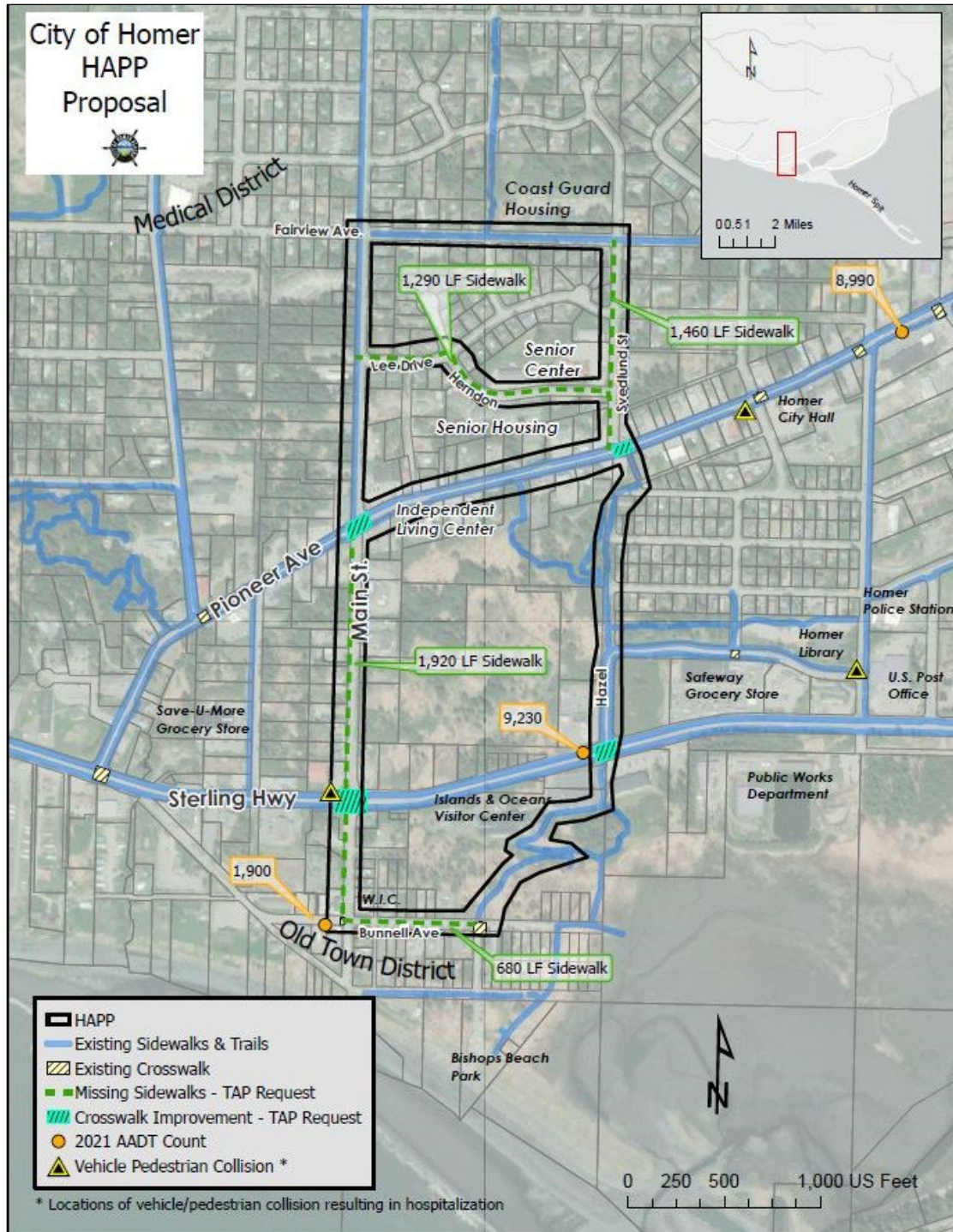
Alaska Department of Transportation recently announced that the Homer All-Ages and Abilities Pedestrian Pathway (HAPP) project was awarded Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant funds in the amount of \$3,487,500. Funding will complete design and construct 5-foot wide asphalt sidewalks (with concrete curbs and gutter, ADA-compliant curb cuts, and storm drain renovations where needed) on the following roads:

- a. Main Street South, between Pioneer Ave and Bunnell Avenue
- b. Bunnell Ave, between Main St and Beluga Place
- c. Svedlund Street, between Pioneer Ave and Fairview Ave
- d. Herndon Avenue and Lee Drive to Main Street

High visibility crosswalks were also requested for Pioneer Avenue at Svedlund, and on the Sterling Hwy at Pioneer Avenue, Main Street and Hazel Avenue.

While the funding is contingent on the Alaska STIP receiving Federal Highway Administration approval, and Council agreement to the terms required by the state in any grant agreements, we are excited about this news! The project fills significant gaps in Homer's non-motorized transportation network within the downtown core that the City and Homer citizens have long advocated for. This was truly a group effort. Thanks to the Independent Living Center staff who worked with City staff to develop the HAPP concept (combining disparate City sidewalk projects into a single project). Thanks to the many non-motorized

transportation advocates who participate in community-wide planning and write letters to support City funding applications, and to the City of Homer voters who approve the HART fund which provides valuable



matching funds for opportunities like this.

At some point, DOT&PF's regional transportation planner will reach out to the City to initiate the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) process, which will lay out the specifics of the collaboration and coordination between DOT&PF and the City. Our understanding of the TAP program is that the State will construct the project. The City, as acknowledged in Resolution 23-013, would be required to provide a matching funds which a currently estimated to be 10.03% of the total project which equals \$387,500. The FY24/25 set aside "HART Roads Match" funds of \$500,000 in anticipation of a grant award for this project. Other City commitments will include wayfinding pedestrian signs on Main Street, Svedlund Avenue and

Pioneer Avenue, and a Neighborhood Information sign on Bunnell Avenue per the Wayfinding/Streetscape Plan. The City will also assume maintenance of the sidewalk on Main St South (not ownership).

### **Video Pilot Project**

Deputy Clerk Zach Pettit and Assistant to the City Manager Lori Pond have been collaborating with me on a pilot project that creates short videos previewing City Council agendas and providing brief recaps after Council meetings. The goal is to engage the public with a new channel of marketing for Council meetings and activities. We've completed a few test runs in-house in an effort to dial in the templates and processes for creating these videos quickly and efficiently. We are intending to begin publishing videos publicly to the City website and social media accounts this month. We are excited to have another way to reach out to the public with information about their local government.



### **Mid-Biennium Budget Adjustment**

In March, I will begin reviewing the budget with the leadership team to assess how the FY24 operating budget has met, or not met, expectations so far. We will work to identify potential modifications for FY25. We will likely have a few additions or adjustments for the FY24/25 capital budget as well. I expect that we will begin talking about our findings and proposed modifications with Council in April, and then aim to have a budget adjustment approved in late May or early June.

### **Questions about Microplastics in Water**

The Public Works Department has received a few questions recently in regards to microplastics and the City of Homer's drinking water following the news article titled "[Microplastics prevalent in Kenai Peninsula waterways](#)" published in the Homer News on February 7, 2024. The City of Homer obtains its drinking water from the Bridge Creek Reservoir. The water is pumped from the reservoir to the Water Treatment Plant. The Water Treatment Plant uses a state of the art ultrafiltration membrane treatment system to produce high quality drinking water that meets or exceeds USEPA drinking water standards. The ultrafiltration membranes

are capable of removing colloidal particulate matter, bacteria, and viruses from the water prior to the water entering the drinking water distribution system where it is eventually distributed to individual households for use. The removed material is dried out and disposed of appropriately. The City is in the process of replacing the membrane filter trains at the Water Treatment Plant. Council approved a contract with Zenon Environmental Corporation for the purchase of five membranes across the next five years (Resolution 23-123, purchases of membranes two through five are contingent upon Council appropriating the funds for each unit).

Microplastics can be derived from numerous sources ranging from plastic wastes degrading in the environment to the clothing we wear. Microplastics are defined as plastic debris measuring less than 5 millimeters (or 5,000,000 nanometer) in size and can be as small as 100 nanometers. The ultrafiltration membrane used in the City's Drinking Water Treatment Plant has a porosity of 0.04 micrometers (or 40 nanometers). Microplastics are larger in size than the pore size diameter of the ultrafiltration membranes, and the microplastics are being filtered out and removed from the drinking water before the water enters the water distribution system.

### **Comprehensive Plan Update**

Agnew:Beck will be in Homer the week of March 25<sup>th</sup> meeting with staff, Council, commissions, various stakeholders, and the general public. The Comprehensive Plan will be the subject of a joint work session with Council and the Planning Commission on March 26<sup>th</sup>, the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission meeting on March 27<sup>th</sup>, and the City and Agnew::Beck will be hosting the first public meeting on March 28<sup>th</sup> at Islands and Oceans from 6p to 8pm. The project website is now live and can be viewed at: <https://homercompplanupdate.com/>

### **New Pumper Tanker Design Visit**

Chief Kirko will be headed to Appleton, Wisconsin to review the final drawings of the two pumper tankers being built by Piece Manufacturing. Homer and Kachemak City both ordered vehicles at the same time, and Chief Kirko is providing review for both entities as part of our fire services agreement with our neighboring city. Chief Kirko will be reviewing truck specifications and working with the engineers to ensure the build out meets the needs of our firefighters and the context of firefighting in Alaska. The new apparatus are slated to have seating capacity for six firefighters (current vehicles seat three), they will have a 2500 gallon capacity (500 gallons more than the current apparatus), and the equipment storage capacity will nearly double. The vehicles will also have stronger motors and transmissions to allow for improved hill climbing capabilities, and stronger brakes for safer descents.

### **How to Run for Elected Office Event**

Kenai Peninsula Votes, the League of Women Voters, and the City Clerk's office are collaborating on a program for citizens who are interested in learning more about running for office. The forum will include information on qualifications to run for office, filing deadlines, and Alaska Public Office Commission (APOC) requirements related to State, Borough, and City candidacy. There will also be a panel of citizens who have held these offices to share some perspective on what it's like to hold an elected seat, time commitments involved, challenges and rewards of serving, and to answer questions from the audience. The event is scheduled for Thursday, April 4th from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers. An informational flyer is being developed and should be out soon!

### **Library Improvements**

The Building Maintenance Division hung a “new” display screen at the Library’s front desk. This was made possible by the replacement of the television in the Library’s meeting room. This screen, now that it has been redeployed to the front desk area, will be used for displaying information to the public regarding upcoming events, library hours, upcoming events, highlights of the collection, and featured services or resources like electronic databases and special equipment of which the public may not be aware.

