



# City of Homer

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

## Office of the City Manager

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### Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council  
FROM: Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager  
DATE: September 18, 2024  
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for September 23, 2024 Council Meeting

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#### City Hall Fiber Optic Install Complete

City Hall has successfully cut over to a new Internet link using the underground fiber optic cable that was installed in July. The link from City Hall provides internet to most of the City's operating locations, and about 80% of City staff. This kind of upgrade not only makes daily work for staff easier, it dramatically changes what the City can do with our internet link and re-calibrates strategic decisions like whether to utilize software as a service (SaaS or "cloud" services) vs continuing to make capital-intensive investments in on premise hardware to provide most data services. A few other notes about the project:

- The project to install buried fiber optic cable to City Hall was part of the FY24 capital budget, with help from the State of Alaska Community Assistance Program funding (Ordinance23-43(S)).
- The bandwidth increase is nearly 10x what was available from the previous connection, a jump from 35 mbps to 300 mbps.
- The monthly service cost represents an increase of only about 25% over our previous monthly service.



#### Cruise Ships

Council passed Resolution 24-048 in April regarding cruise ships coming to Homer. The Port and Harbor Commission has completed their work and the Economic Development Advisory Commission expects to complete their tasks in October. On September 12, Port Director Bryan Hawkins, Community Development Director Julie Engebretsen and Councilmember and Homer Tours owner Shelly Erickson participated in a Chamber luncheon on the topic. Panelists shared experiences working with cruise ships, heard from Chamber members on their views and observations, and informed the audience about upcoming Comprehensive Plan events. Staff expects to wrap up the project and report back to Council in the latter half of October.

### **SS4A – Safe Streets 4 All, transportation partnership with Kenai Peninsula Borough**

Community Development Director Engebretsen and Council Members Aderhold and Davis attended the open house held at the college on Thursday September 12<sup>th</sup>. Project team R&M Consulting provided an overview of the borough wide survey held earlier this year on the transportation safety concerns of residents. They also provided an in-depth analysis of crash data, encompassing 2018-2022. A data dashboard with data and results will be publicly available shortly. The draft plan will be out for public review early in 2025, concurrent with a third and final open house in Homer. Adoption is anticipated in June of 2025. This plan will make other funding sources available for transportation safety improvement projects, for all modes of transportation. The next round of funding will be announced in March next year. To fund the SS4A project, the Borough received a large federal grant. Five Cities within the Borough are participating by providing matching funds or in kind services (Resolution 22-063). Each City's share of match is based on population. At this point it is unlikely the project will require enough City of Homer staff time to meet the match. Staff will be providing council an ordinance for the calculated remainder of the Homer's required match.

### **Homer Landslide Assessment**

Way back in 2018, FEMA awarded funding for a project to complete a comprehensive landslide hazard assessment for the City of Homer. The project included working with the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources Geological & Geophysical Surveys (DGGs) and the University of Fairbanks. Field work was conducted, and the Planning Commission was given a presentation of the draft findings before the pandemic. Fast forward to fall 2024, and the study is finally ready for public release. More information and the study will be forthcoming in October.

### **Ben Walters Sidewalk Project Update**

East Road Services recently wrapped up all the drainage work, storm drains, curbs, and gutters for the new Ben Walters sidewalk. The paving crew started work September 12 and will be continuing through early the next week. Traffic control and lane reduction are in place. Residential and business access will be restored as soon as the new pavement cools. Once paving is complete, the contractors will replace fire hydrants, construct the new pressure reducing valve building and plumbing assemblies, and other items through the end of September.



### **Homer Airport Terminal Sidewalk Replacement**

Folks flying in or out of Homer Airport will notice some temporary detours to the terminal doors and in the parking lot because the terminal sidewalk replacement project is underway. Currently the existing sidewalk, planters, curb, and pavement in front of the terminal building are being removed. After that contractors will be installing the sub-grade materials, including insulation board and heating tubes which will help reduce ice build up on the sidewalk in the winter months. Over the following three weeks, new sidewalks, curbs, and ramps will be constructed.





### Visit from the US Coast Guard Sector Western Alaska & US Arctic

On September 11, members of the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Western Alaska and US Arctic paid a visit to the City to discuss enhancing our Coast Guard City partnership and understanding local needs. Sector Western Alaska & U.S. Arctic is the Coast Guard's largest geographic sector, exercising authority in a jurisdiction extending through-out Western Alaska, The North Slope, and the Aleutian Islands through Prince William Sound. We were thrilled they came for a visit! The visit introduced key Coast Guard staff Deputy Sector Commander Scott Farr, Senior Chief Matthew Burns, Chief of Prevention Christine Brown, and Lieutenant Juston Lee with the local Marine Safety Detachment and outlined ways their staff are able to enhance the USCG City relationship through community engagement opportunities. Mayor Ken Castner and Council Member Rachel Lord discussed local needs and reiterated great appreciation for the important role the USCG plays in our maritime community – including search and rescue, pollution prevention & response, waterways management, port security, vessel inspections, and investigations.



Attachments:

- Homer Harbor Expansion Project Monthly Report
- City Council Work Session Schedule
- Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council Director's Report
- Conversations with a Council Member Fall 2024 Schedule



# MEMORANDUM

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City Managers Report  
City Council  
September 23, 2024

## Homer Harbor Expansion Study Monthly Written Update

**Item Type:** Informational Memorandum  
**Prepared For:** Mayor and City Council  
**Date:** September 18, 2024  
**From:** Jenny Carroll, Special Projects and Communications Coordinator  
**Through:** Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager and Bryan Hawkins, Port Director

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**Purpose:** This memorandum provides the Homer Harbor Expansion Study monthly written update to Homer City Council per Resolution 23-037.

### The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Project Development Team (PDT)

Continuing study activities:

- The USACE Environmental Resources team
  - Has another site visit planned for September 20 to continue their series of beach seining and bottom trawls.
  - Resumed monthly coordinating meeting to keep agencies engaged and updated on the status of the study.
  - Plans to re-engage the Environmental Stakeholders Working Group after the field season is finished.
- Building upon previous community input on Local Service Facility (LSF) needs, the USACE Economics and Hydrology/Hydraulics teams continue collecting moorage demand data, maintenance cost data
- Economics team welcomed a senior USACE Economist, J Walter, to the Project Development Team to work with Megan Green. They are planning for meetings with harbor user groups in possibly October/November to help determine the appropriate basin size and local service facilities (LSF) as they pertain to the regional and national economic benefits.

### HDR – Owner Representative:

- Geophysical-hydrographic data collection is going well, with most data delivered. One of the sensors malfunctioned, so the contractor had to get it repaired and will return to the site to complete the survey. Completion is estimated for mid to late September.
- Completed the analysis of moorage demand in the current harbor and submitted to the USACE.
- Arranged for the publication of an Opinion piece in the [Homer News](#) and the [Peninsula Clarion](#).
- Developed social media ads and fliers (which were locally distributed by City staff), targeted at raising awareness about the importance of the Homer Harbor in general, and encouraging citizens to engage with the [Homer Harbor Expansion website](#).
- Attended twice-monthly USACE Project Development Team meetings and weekly meetings with City.
- Provides communications support as-needed; keeps [Homer Harbor Expansion website](#) updated.

**City of Homer staff:**

- Attended biweekly USACE Project Development Team meeting and biweekly meetings with HDR.
- Scheduling a joint meeting with the United States Coast Guard, the USACE project development team and the City to discuss harbor and local service facility design considerations for USCG vessels that moor and layover in Homer Harbor.
- Providing logistical support for USACE meetings with harbor user groups.
- Port Director coordinating with Ronny McPherson at HDR on a Homer Harbor Expansion GI presentation at the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators' annual fall conference to be held in Homer October 21-25, 2024.
- Ongoing communications/outreach: Information and updates about the study are being disseminated through the [Homer Harbor Expansion website](#), the City's quarterly newsletter, the [City of Homer Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages and through HHE email subscriber list as needed.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Informational Only.

# WORK SESSION

## AGENDA CALENDAR 2024

<b>Council Meeting Dates</b>	<b>Work Session Topic</b>
<b>Monday, January 8</b>	<i>Exempt Employee Wage Scale</i>
<b>Monday, January 15 Off-cycle</b>	<i>Joint Session with Parks Art Recreation &amp; Culture Advisory Commission</i>
<b>Monday, January 22</b>	<i>Homer Harbor Expansion Baseline Conditions Report Overview – Ronny McPherson &amp; KC Kent HDR</i>
<b>Monday, February 12</b>	
<b>Monday, February 26</b>	<i>Ord 23-61 Amending HCC Title 5 to add Chapter 5.48 Short Term Rentals</i>
<b>Monday, March 11</b>	
<b>Monday, March 18 Off-cycle</b>	<i><del>Joint Session with ADA Advisory Board</del> Rescheduled to August</i>
<b>Tuesday, March 26</b>	<i>3:00 start Comp Plan Meeting with Agnew:Beck and Planning Commission (tentative)</i>
<b>Monday, April 8</b>	<i>Longevity Pay/City Manager Transition</i>
<b>Monday, April 15 Off-cycle</b>	<i>Joint Session with Port &amp; Harbor Advisory Commission</i>
<b>Monday, April 22</b>	<i>Water &amp; Sewer Rate Model</i>
<b>Monday, May 13</b>	<i>Health Care Renewal Mid-Biennium Budget Adjustments (if time allows)</i>
<b>Monday, May 20 Off-cycle</b>	<i>Joint session with Library Advisory Board</i>
<b>Tuesday, May 28</b>	<i>Mid Biennium Budget Amendments Water Sewer Rates</i>
<b>Monday, June 10</b>	<i>HCC Chapter 11, vegetation in the ROW</i>
<b>Monday, June 17 Off-cycle</b>	<i><del>Joint session with Economic Development Advisory Commission</del> Rescheduled to October</i>
<b>Monday, June 24</b>	
<b>Monday, July 22</b>	<i>Tentative e-session @4pm</i>



<b>Council Meeting Dates</b>	<b>Work Session Topic</b>
<b>Monday, August 12</b>	<i>E-session: Cyber Security Risk Assessment Review</i>
<b>Monday, August 19 Off-Cycle</b>	<i>Joint Session with ADA Advisory Board</i>
<b>Monday, August 26</b>	<i>Capital Improvement Plan &amp; Legislative Requests</i>
<b>Monday, September 9</b>	<i><del>Vessel Haul Out/Camping Land Allocation</del> Rescheduled</i>
<b>Monday, September 16 Off-cycle</b>	<i><del>Joint Worksession with Economic Development Advisory Commission</del> Rescheduled</i>
<b>Monday, September 23</b>	<i>End of Year Financial Worksession</i>
<b>Monday, October 14</b>	
<b>Monday, October 21</b>	<i><del>Joint Worksession with Planning Commission</del> To be Rescheduled in Early 2025</i>
<b>Tuesday, October 21</b>	<i>Comp Plan Event, Islands &amp; Ocean Visitor Center</i>
<b>Monday, October 28</b>	<i>Future Use of Pier One Area Land Allocation Plan</i>
<b>Tuesday, November 12</b>	
<b>Monday, November 18</b>	<i>Joint Worksession with Economic Development Advisory Commission</i>
<b>Monday, November 25</b>	





Carla Stanley, representing the  
City of Homer

## Update from the Board of Directors

### Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council

The Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council held its regular meeting on Friday, September 6th in Kodiak.

The Council heard presentations that focused on Kodiak area issues and industries. Arron Jones, a Mariculture Technician from Alaska SeaGrant gave an update on the emerging mariculture industry around Kodiak, focusing mainly on kelp and oyster production. Macrosystis kelp beds are being discovered and tracked in the area, and more information about that expansion and the role of kelp production in the local economy are important data points that are informing oil spill response plans. Statewide, 93 permits for kelp farms have been issued, covering more than 1,300 acres. Jones noted the potential upsides to this new industry and some of the conditions unique to Alaska that are suitable to kelp production.

Lexa Meyer, Alaska Mariculture Alliance Liaison for the Kodiak Archipelago Leadership Institute and Owner and Hatchery Manager of Alaska Ocean Farms LLC provided a more detailed look at the local industry at this stage in its development; what challenges remain for local producers and what producers are looking for in terms of regulatory changes that could provide a boost for those local operations.

The Council also heard presentations about updated tsunami inundation maps for south central Alaska and were provided with an overview of tsunami warning systems and protocols. Barrett Salisbury, Ph. D, Earthquake and Tsunami Hazards Program Manager, Geohazards Section, Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys and Chair of the AK Seismic Hazards Safety Commission, provided examples of tsunami events both in Alaska and in other parts of the world and how those events affected local communities.

Dave Snider, Tsunami Warning Coordinator with the National Tsunami Warning Center in Palmer walked the Council through the tsunami warning process, explaining areas where NOAA and the National Weather Service are working on improvements to the system to better reflect a particular area's actual threat risk.

The Council received an update from Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Ex-Officio Board member Ytamar Rodriguez, Prevention and Tactical Response Unit Manager for the Department's Spill Prevention and Response (SPAR) division. He reported that central region staffing levels are currently full and employee turnover in the division has decreased.

Finally, the Council set its meeting schedule for 2025, with our annual meeting set for Kenai in April. Our rotating meeting will be in Seldovia in September. The Council will meet next in Anchorage on December 5th and 6th, 2024.



MONTHLY  
**CONVERSATIONS**  
WITH A  
**CITY COUNCIL**  
**MEMBER**

CONNECT, REFLECT, AND LEARN TOGETHER!



**12:00 - 1:00 pm at Homer Public Library in the Conference Room**

Bring your questions, ideas, and lunch (if desired) for an informal conversation with a different Homer City Council Member each month. Join us on the second Tuesday of each month, September - May, at the Homer Public Library.



**Donna  
Aderhold**

**Tuesday,  
Sept. 10, 2024**



**Rachel  
Lord**

**Tuesday,  
Oct. 15, 2024**



**Caroline  
Venuti**

**Wednesday,  
Nov. 13, 2024**

### What to Expect :



Informal  
Conversations



Idea  
Exchanges



Information  
Updates



Q & A  
Opportunities



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