

MEMORANDUM

TO: Homer City Council
FROM: Janette Keiser, PE
DATE: October 26, 2025
RE: Proposed Amendments to the 2045 Homer Comp. Plan–

- **Recommended Amendment No. 1:**

Page 15, 1st paragraph, last sentence:

After the word “*resilience*” add the phrase, from the February 2025 Public Review Draft:

“aligning with principles of sustainable and community-focused development.”

- **Recommended Amendment No. 2:**

Page 16, before the 1st full paragraph

Add the following paragraph, from the February 2025 Public Review Draft:

“Development that Fits Natural Conditions:

Homer’s land base area contains approximately 35 percent of slopes, wetlands, critical habitat, and land with other biophysical characteristics that make development challenging. While these areas significantly reduce the amount of suitable land for development, they also provide immense benefits through their resultant protection of suitable/developed land and their ecological functions. 34 percent of residents listed sustainable and resilient development as the single most important priority during the Growth Scenarios event. Specifically, residents want development and growth to be more integrated and compatible with the local environment. Solutions called out by residents in surveys and meetings include green infrastructure incorporation, open space preservation, and greater attention to development standards for both private and public infrastructure.”

- **Recommended Amendment No. 3:**

Page 16, paragraph entitled **Equitable Access to Recreation and Open Space Enhances Community Well-Being**. Before the 1st sentence, add the following, from the February 2025 Draft:

“Residents cherish Homer’s varied opportunities for recreation and subsisting, but they want more connections and protection of those opportunities.”

- **Recommended Amendment No. 4:**

Page 16, paragraphs entitled **Equitable Access to Recreation and Open Space Enhances Community Well-Being**. Before the last sentence, add the following, from the February 2025 Public Review Draft:

“There are gaps or missing connections to neighborhoods and downtown Homer, and some areas used for open space for active and passive recreational activities are mostly within other land use zones and are not formally dedicated to the Open Space Recreation intended land use.”

- **Recommended Amendment No. 5:**

Page 19, before the last paragraph, insert the following language:

“The Future Land Use Map is intended to be tied to the City’s existing GIS mapping system, making it a more useful tool for city staff, property owners, potential developers, and realtors; that is, anyone who is interested in researching the characteristics, existing and future, of a piece of property.”

- **Recommended Amendment No. 6:**

Page 20, Future Land Use Map.

Replace the existing map with one that does the following:

A. Accurately depicts the following:

- Existing land use designations,
- All private and publicly owned open space, including the Diamond Creek Recreation Area,
- Property boundaries; and
- Distinct recommended land use boundaries.

B. Is tied to the City’s existing GIS mapping system, including all available features such as streams, catchment areas, steep slopes, etc. and made publicly available on the City’s website

- **Recommended Amendment No. 7:**

Page 21, Strategy 2, Action (g). Replace the 1st line with the following language from the February 2025 Draft:

“research and implement zoning and policy tools for”

- **Recommended Amendment No: 8**

Page 21, Strategy 2, Action (h). To the end of the sentence, add the words:

“agricultural and other food production industries.”

- **Recommended Amendment No. 9:**

Page 21, Strategy 2, add the following Action, from the February 2025 draft:

“Adopt building codes and incentive programs to increase energy efficiency and promote renewable energy in existing and new residential and commercial developments.”

- **Recommended Amendment No. 10:**

Page 21, Strategy 2, add the following Action, adapted from language in the February 2025 draft:

“Review and update the Community Design Manual to more comprehensively balance functionality and aesthetics for commercial developments.”

- **Recommended Amendment No. 11:**

Page 23. After Strategy 5, reinstate the following language from page 24 of the February 2025 Public Review Draft and renumber as appropriate:

“Strategy 3, Create affordable housing develop incentives and initiatives and modify code to increase attainable housing opportunities that cater to the needs of young people, families, seniors, and seasonal workers.

- a. Update zoning regulations to support higher density and mixed-use developments where appropriate, facilitating the creation of multi-family housing and affordable units.*
- b. Remove regulatory barriers to higher density and infill development to enable higher density housing projects and integrate appropriately into existing neighborhoods.*
- c. Expand allowable housing types, including accessory dwelling units, tiny homes, townhomes, courtyard homes and manufactured and modular homes.*
- d. Create development incentives, such as affordable housing initiatives, density bonuses, and public private partnerships for affordable and long-term housing developments.”*

- **Recommended Amendment No. 12:**

Page 23. Strategy 4. Add the following Action and renumber as appropriate:

“(f) Develop a set of Low Impact Development Standards for lands with mapped environmental constraints, such as steep slopes, wetlands, substantial drainages, and catchment areas.”

- **Recommended Amendment No. 13:**

Page 23. Reinstate the following language from page 25 of the February 2025 Public Review Draft, contained in ***“Strategy 4, Strategically align***

development code with natural hazard considerations and habitat values.

- (a) Use the City of Homer Hazard Mitigation Plan as a guiding tool to inform land use policies and develop regulations, ensuring ongoing updates reflect the latest hazard assessments and mitigation strategies.*
- (b) Revise development regulations for steep slopes and sensitive sites to address grading, drainage, vegetation clearing, building setbacks, and footprints. Allow flexibility in road dimensions to minimize excessive grading. Require site-specific analysis or geotechnical reports for development on steep slopes or outfalls.*
- (c) Ensure development setbacks for streams and sensitive watersheds align with Alaska Department of Fish and Game recommendations. Consider establishing Stream Corridor zoning for hydrologically significant streams to enhance long-term watershed protection.*
- (d) Strengthen erosion and stormwater management standards to minimize bluff and shoreline erosion, surface water management practices (BMPs) into development review processes, including improve surface water management on coastal bluffs.*
- (e) Collaborate with conservation organizations and regional partners (e.g., Homer Soil & Water Conservation District, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust) to identify and manage environmentally sensitive areas and critical natural systems. Explore Special Use Districts to coordinate Infrastructure, drainage, and trail planning at a regional or watershed level.”*

- **Recommended Amendment No. 14:**

Page 23. Reinstate the following language from page 25 of the February 2025 Public Review Draft, contained in **“Strategy 5, Conserve open green space in Homer to protect environmental values, provide recreational opportunities and enhance biophysical connectivity,”** which reads as follows:.

- a. *“Partner with public and private entities to preserve existing open space and create new green space connections that increase recreation activities and habitat value areas.*
- b. *Develop a strategic open space protection that prioritizes high-value lands for conservation, recreation, and habitat connectivity. Focus on a areas with limited development potential due to biophysical characteristics and use tools such as land purchases, trades, conservation easements, and partnerships with land trusts and public agencies to secure long -term protections.*
- c. *Integrate green infrastructure and open space into development regulations by incorporating parks, trails, and stormwater management systems into zoning and subdivision standards to enhance resilience and livability.*
- d. *Explore conservation and public benefit requirements for large developments, such as dedicating land for open space, habitat corridors, stormwater management, or community recreational facilities.*
- e. *Identify opportunities for trail and park expansion within city tidal lands, enhancing waterfront access and recreational connectivity.”*

And renumber appropriately.

- **Recommended Amendment No. 15:**

Page 23. Reinstate the inset quotation from page 25 of the February 2025 Public Review Draft, which states:

“Future Growth should consider how development may impact environmental resources both inside and outside the city boundary.” Community Meeting”

- **Recommended Amendment No. 16:**

Page 23. Reinstate the following language from page 27 of the February 2025 Public Review Draft, which states:

“[Strategy] 7. Develop policies for specific community areas to help preserve character and address challenges unique to those areas.

- a. *Ensure local and regional land use plans inform development codes by collaborating with Homer Soil and Water Conservation, the Kenai Peninsula Borough, and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. Update codes as needed to reflect evolving land use recommendations from adopted plans.*
- b. *Develop a long-range Port and Harbor Management Plan that considers the environmental and economic significance of the Homer Spit, the impacts of climate change, and natural hazards like earthquake’s tsunamis, and erosion.”*

And renumber as appropriate.

- **Recommended Amendment No. 17:**

Page 25. Delete the existing first paragraph and reinstate the following language from page 33, of the February 2025 Public Review Draft:

“Vulnerability to Natural Hazards

Homer’s location makes it vulnerable to natural hazards including earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, and flooding, as well as the longer term impacts of climate change. There are numerous plans and reports that provide recommendations for improving the resilience of Homer’s infrastructure. The Port, Harbor and the Homer Spit, which are all important components of Homer’s economy, are especially vulnerable to severe storms and climate change. Similarly, the Public Works Campus is vital to the City’s operations but is in a tsunami inundation zone. The water and sewer services within the City are adequate, but inflow and infiltration from stormwater is impacting the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant.”

- **Recommended Amendment No. 18:**

Page 25. Reinstate the inset quotation from page 34 of the February 2025 Public Review Draft, which reads as follows:

“Support our infrastructure. Our water and sewer facilities are at capacity and we keep building new things with little thought to how we will maintain them.” Community Survey Results”

- **Recommended Amendment No. 19:**

Page 29. Reinstate Strategy 4, page 37, from the February 2025 Public Review Draft, which reads:

“Work with residences, visitors, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the DOT/PF to identify and address the deficiencies of the Homer Airport Terminal.

- a. Assess the need for additional parking and consider developing off-site parking with a shuttle system if necessary that provides sufficient access to the airport terminal and air charter areas of the airport.*
- b. Collaborate with DOT&PF in the development of a new airport master plan for Homer Airport.*
- c. Collaborate with air carries to provide mor ere liable year-round service to and from Homer Airport.”*

And renumber the strategies in this Chapter as necessary.

- **Recommended Amendment No. 20:**

Page 29. Reinstate Strategy 5, page 37, from the February 2025 Public Review Draft, which reads:

“5. Develop a long-range stormwater drainage and management plan to mitigate negative downstream impacts such as property damage, bluff erosion, and pollution.

- a. Update and refine the Low-Impact Development Plan) also referred to as the Green Infrastructure Stormwater Master Plan). The plan should consider water quality, inflow and infiltration, climate change, and erosion, and provide recommendations for implementing proactive stormwater management. The plan should also identify*

- strategic locations for real estate acquisitions to support green infrastructure.*
- b. Create an updated holistic, regional map of the stormwater network to ensure stormwater management decisions are made appropriately for each stormwater drainage basin for a system-wide improvement.”*

And renumber the strategies in this Chapter as necessary.

- **Recommended Amendment No. 21:**

Page 29. Reinstate Strategy 10, Page 38, from the February 2025 Public Review Draft, which reads:

“Develop a long -range Port and Harbor Management Plan that considers the environmental and economic significance of the Homer Spit, the impacts of climate change, and natural hazards like earthquakes, tsunamis, and erosion.

- a. Work with DOT&PF, residents, business owners, and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to improve the resilience of the Homer Spit, and especially Homer Spit Road, to natural hazards.*
- b. Continue to develop the Homer Spit in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner to provide opportunities for marine trades and tourism.*
- c. Incentivize growth of the marine trades in Homer to expand services offered locally, create jobs, increase the City’s taxbase, and reduce the need to travel to other areas of Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. This could be accomplished through offering education opportunities, modifying zoning to enable growth, or providing tax incentives.*
- d. Consider opportunities to integrate complementary marine industrial and tourism uses, for example, by constructing walking paths and viewing platforms that would allow visitors to observe aspects of the marine trades that they may not be able to see elsewhere.”*

And renumber sections as appropriate.

- **Recommended Amendment No. 22:**

Page 29. Delete the existing language in Action 4(a) and replace with the following language:

“Continue to explore the operational, financial, and environmental feasibility of a harbor expansion.”

- **Recommended Amendment No. 23:**

Page 33. Reinstate the 2nd paragraph, Page 42 of the February 2025 Public Review Draft which reads:

“Tourism’s influence on the Rise of Short-Term Rentals in Homer

In the community survey results, about 18 percent of respondents identified vacation rentals as a barrier to housing, reflecting concerns about the impact of tourism on housing availability. While tourism is a vital economic driver for Homer, many residents believe it contributes to housing market pressures. Data about the number of short-term rentals varies; the city identified approximately 326 short-term rental units in 2022 using now-discontinued city software. This represents 14.8 percent of the total housing stock, a not ably high percentage compared to other communities in Alaska (see Figure 13). The KPB Land Management Department estimated 475+/- Airbnb and 260 +/- VRBO offerings in the Greater Homer area in its March 2023 Homer Housing Review. Growing support exists within the community for regulating short-term rentals to preserve residential neighborhoods and ensure housing availability for long-term residents and workers.”

And, renumber sections as necessary.

- **Recommended Amendment No. 24:**

Page 34. Reinstate the following language from **Strategy 1 Implement zoning reforms to encourage attainable housing development,**

prioritizing housing solutions that cater to the needs of young people, families, seniors, and seasonal workers:

- a. Update zoning regulations to support higher density and mixed-use developments where appropriate facilitating the creation of multi-family housing and affordable units.*
- b. Remove regulatory barriers to compact and infill development, enabling denser housing projects that integrate well into existing neighborhoods.*
- c. Expand allowable housing types, including manufactured and modular homes.*
- d. Monitor short-term rentals and their impact on the housing market. Consider updating the definition of short-term rentals in City code to lay the foundation for future regulation, if needed.”*

And renumber sections as needed.

- **Recommended Amendment No. 25:**

Page 34. Add the following new Strategy and Actions and number the new sections accordingly:

“Strategy. Implement appropriate regulation for Short Term Rentals.

Action a. Research best practices for short term rentals in communities similar to Homer’s population and popularity as a tourist destination.

Action b. Develop draft language for appropriate regulation.

Action c. After due consideration of the public process, adopt appropriate regulation.”

- **Recommended Amendment No. 26:**

Page 38. Reinstate the Figure 21 from page 55 of the February 2025 Public Review Draft depicting the results of the Community Survey regarding growth and renumber figures as necessary.

- **Recommended Amendment No. 27:**

Page 41. Action 1(a). Delete the word “*incentivize*” and substitute the words “*support sustainable*”.

- **Recommended Amendment No. 28:**

Page 41. Reinstate Strategy 3 from page 57 of the February 2025 Public Review Draft, which states,

“3. *Encourage economic growth and infrastructure development while preserving the natural resources and community characteristics valued by current residents and attracting new residents.*

- a. Develop Homer’s Downtown Area, focusing on connected, dense, and walkable spaces.*
- b. Develop public transportation options, particularly in the Homer Spit area, to alleviate traffic congestion and improve accessibility for seasonable workers, residents, and visitors.*
- c. Invest in infrastructure, parks, public restrooms, and recreational facilities to improve the quality of life for residents and enhance tourism experiences.*
- d. Regularly review and update city economic plans to reflect current needs and opportunities.”*

And renumber sections as necessary.

- **Recommended Amendment No. 29:**

Page 41. Reinstate Strategy 4 from page 57 of the February 2025 Public Review Draft, which states:

“4. Pursue moderate, sustainable growth in tourism, focusing on activities that benefit small businesses and minimize negative impacts on community character.

- a. Develop regenerative tourism strategies to balance visitor growth with environmental and community preservation.*
- b. Promote recreation, the arts, and non-governmental organizations as a complement to tourism and as an export industry.”*

And renumber as appropriate.

- **Recommended Amendment No. 30:**

Page 47. To **[Strategy] 1. Build or improve safe roadway and pathway access and connections to key locations**, add the following language from page 50 of the February 2025 Public Review Draft, which states:

- a. Develop a Complete Streets Policy for the City of Homer to support non-motorized connections and ensure efficiency in the motorized network. (Policies would include goals/objectives from 2018.)*
- b. Apply the Complete Streets Policy to Pioneer Avenue, to enhance Pioneer Avenue as a main street.*
- c. Expand the Homer All Ages and Abilities Pedestrian Pathways (HAP) Loop, including extensions along Pioneer Avenue and into Old Town.*
- d. Consider locations for public parking in the city center to allow visitors to park once and walk.*
- e. Establish truck routes for the City of Homer to reduce interactions between truck traffic and non-motorized users.”*

And renumber as appropriate.

- **Recommended Amendment No. 31:**

Page 47. **Strategy 1. Build or improve safe roadway and pathway access and connections to key locations.**

Add the following Actions:

- (c) Implement recommendations from the Homer Transportation Plan.*
- (d) Implement recommendations from the Kenai Peninsula Borough's [Transportation] Safety Action Plan as it pertains to Homer.*
- (e) Implement recommendations from the Kenai Peninsula Borough's Walkability Plan.*
- (f) Maintain all city-owned roads, sidewalks and trails to a consistent and acceptable standard*
- (h) Consider entering into a transfer of responsibility agreement (TORA) with the AK DOT/PF regarding maintenance of Pioneer Avenue, Lake Street and Main Street, south of Pioneer Ave."*

And renumber sections as appropriate.

- **Recommended Amendment No. 32:**

Page 60. Reinstate the language in the paragraphs entitled **Preservation of Ecosystems and Open Space** and **Sustainable and Resilient Development** from pages 28-29 of the February 2025 Public Review Draft, which read as follows:

"Preservation of Ecosystems and Open Space.

Homer residents place a high value on preserving and protecting existing green spaces, water bodies, and ecosystems. Seventy-nine percent of respondents to the community survey identified preserving public open space spaces in the city as a top priority. Protection of undeveloped green and blue spaces, conservation

of sensitive ecosystems, and a desire to increase consideration for the natural environment were common themes across the community survey results, growth scenarios report card results, and steering committee feedback. Open response and interview comments suggested concentrating development in already developed areas (infill and redevelopment), discouraging development in unsafe or environmentally sensitive areas, and protecting wildlife corridors.

Sustainable and Resilient Development

Homer residents want development that is resilient to climate change and works within known environmental constraints. Many comments indicated the need for the comprehensive plan and future land use map to consider environmental constraints (such as steep slopes) and climate change impacts (such as more intense and frequent storms, changes to fisheries, and energy system transitions), known or predicted natural hazards impacting development in an around the City of Homer include vulnerability to earthquakes, tsunamis and flooding, landslides, and slope erosion. Continuing the City’s work to proactively manage stormwater with low-impact development strategies such as green infrastructure is another key priority from the public and steering committee feedback.”

And, add any relevant citations.

- **Recommended Amendment No. 33:**

Page 61. Add the following Actions, from page 30-32 of the February 2025 Public Review Draft to [Strategy]**1. Modernize City operations for long-term efficiency and resilience:**

- a. *Reengage the community about climate change mitigation, adaptation, and the status of the City’s Climate Action Plan and pursue public-private partnerships and collaborations with local climate-change-motivated entities.*
- b. *Maintain annual membership with the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) and continue to use the ICLE protocol for organizing and calculating City of Homer energy use.*
- c. *Coordinate with the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) landfill/waste management center to support an encourage recycling and resource recovery.*
- d. *Empower staff to continue to produce annual basic inventory reports for all energy consuming and greenhouse gas (GhG) producing City sectors, including summaries of energy consumption, GhG, energy out puts, and costs; reports should include both sector and individual facility totals for detailed year-to-year comparison.*
- e. *Make improvements to the City’s vehicle fleet and operations including replacing older and less fuel-efficient vehicles.*
- f. *Work with partners such as Homer Electric Association, Homer Drawdown, and the Kenai Peninsula Borough to advocate for and invest more in renewable energy sources, including hydroelectric, solar, wind, and tidal energy.”*

And renumber sections as appropriate.

- **Recommended Amendment No. 34:**

Page 61. To [Strategy] **2. Reduce risk from natural hazards through proactive siting and planning**, add the following Actions, from the February 2025 Public Review Draft:

(d) Update City Code to promote sustainable and resilient land use and transportation strategies, including denser mixed-use and

more compact development, urban infill and redevelopment, and non-motorized transportation infrastructure.

(e) Develop Homer's Downtown Area focusing on connected, dense and walkable spaces.

(f) Enact guidelines, regulations, or incentives to limit development in environmentally sensitive areas, including erosion-prone slopes and bluffs, and support the protection of habitat and green infrastructure on public and private lands."

And renumber sections as appropriate.

- **Recommended Amendment No. 35:**

Page 62. To **[Strategy] 3. Enhance natural drainage systems**, add the following Actions, from the February 2025 Public Review Draft:

"(e) Update green infrastructure mapping to identify and retain natural drainage channels and important wetlands that serve drainage functions.

(f) Develop watershed plans, as appropriate, to inform the stormwater master plan and decision-making processes.

(g) Adopt code that provides the City the authority to address stormwater management during the development process.

(h) Develop and adopt area-wide stormwater management standards that utilize nationally recognized stormwater management practices and controls; low impact development and/or green infrastructure concepts for new projects and redevelopments as appropriate."

- **Recommended Amendment No. 36:**

Page 62. After Strategy 3, add the following language, from the February 2025 Public Review Draft, to comprise a new strategy and renumber the sections accordingly:

Protect and enhance wetlands and waterbodies to support stormwater management, water quality, recreation and responsible development:

- (a) “Develop a new wetlands mapping inventory to inform a Wetlands Management Plan that can be used to help preserve the functions and values of important wetlands and manage the property use of lower value wetlands. Use the wet land maps and Wetlands Management Plan to guide decision making.*
- (b) Enhance stream channels with the creation of ponds, wetlands, and different habitat that allow for trail systems, water bird habitat, overflow surface water and stormwater collection.”*

- **Recommended Amendment No. 37:**

Page 62. After Strategy 3, add the following language, from the February 2025 Public Review Draft, to comprise a new strategy and renumber the sections accordingly:

Protect and enhance open spaces for recreational and environmental benefits.

- (a) Inventory lands using geographic information systems (GIS) and develop a strategy for targeted open green space acquisition.*
- (b) Amend land use regulations and relevant plans to incorporate policies, procedures, and management standards for natural open space.*

- (c) Promote and encourage the identification and conservation of open spaces, including access to greenbelts, parks, coastal refuges and state parks...*
- (d) Create a strong alliance with the community, state and local governments, education and the private sector to ensure that parks are accessible to people of all ages and abilities in the community.*
- (e) Encourage public/private collaboration methods for natural open space protection.*

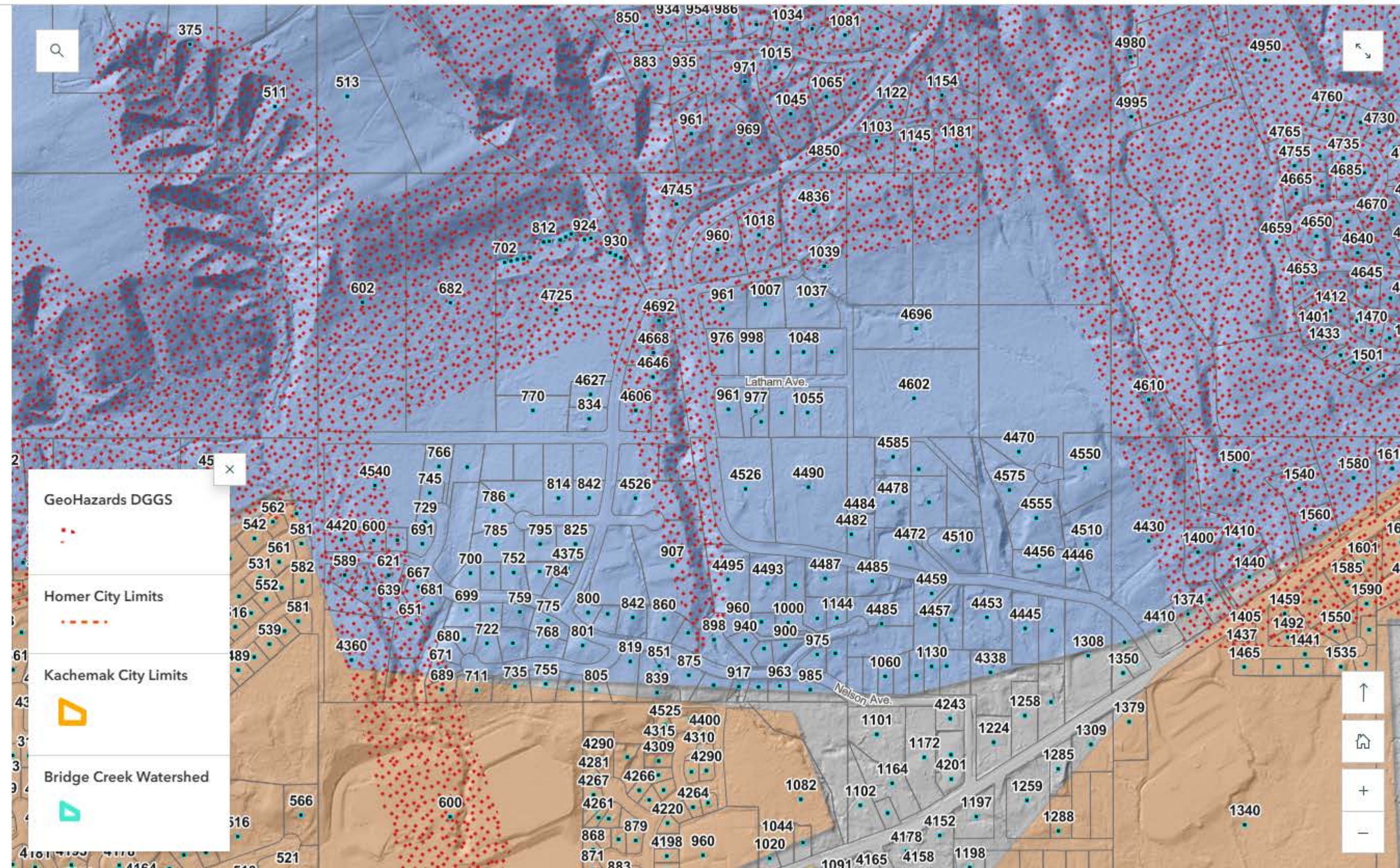


Geo Hazard Potential

DGGS

The potential for slope failures poses a great safety and financial risk to people and infrastructure in many communities throughout Alaska, including the City of Homer. The Alaska Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys (DGGS) completed a comprehensive landslide hazard assessment for the city by creating a map and database of historical and prehistoric slope failures, maps of shallow and deep-seated landslide susceptibility, and a map of simulated debris flow runouts for the City of Homer and neighboring Kachemak.

The landslide inventory map integrates existing maps of landslides caused by the 1964 Great Alaska Earthquake and newly mapped slope failures identified in sequences of aerial photos since 1950 and high-resolution light detection and ranging (lidar) data



Hydrology and Wetlands

Stormwater Map of the City of Homer and Kachemak City. Layers include flowlines, catchments and subcatchments, stormwater infrastructure, and Kenai Watershed Forum Wetlands. Stormwater vector data was produced using ArcHydro and Spatial analysis tools in ArcGIS Pro 3.4. The source data is a hydro conditioned DEM processed from the 2019 Homer LiDAR raster. Most of the recent road development and storm drain/culvert infrastructure is accounted for through geoprocessing operations which alter the DEM elevations to represent current conditions.

Thus flowlines, catchments and infrastructure represent the most up to date hydrology.

The topology - i.e. line to point relationships such as flowline to drain inlet - isn't precise,

yet the flow of surface water and its management by infrastructure are accurately

