



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Office of the City Manager

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

citymanager@cityofhomer-ak.gov

(p) 907-235-8121 x2222

(f) 907-235-3148

Memorandum

TO: Mayor Lord and Homer City Council
FROM: Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager
DATE: April 8, 2026
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for April 13, 2026 Council Meeting

Airport Terminal Update

On March 23rd a water line break caused flooding in the Homer Airport Terminal. The building was closed to the public and remediation efforts got underway quickly. Bald Mountain Air was able to provide space for Aleutian Air to process passengers until the eastern portion of the terminal was able to re-open March 31st. As of April 2nd building restoration crews had completed most of the initial cleanup and stabilization work at the terminal. Flooring has been cleaned, and damaged base molding, sheetrock, and insulation have been removed to allow full drying of the walls. Industrial dehumidifiers remain in place and continue to reduce residual moisture. Water damage assessment continues in the portion of the building that remains closed to the public, and the City is actively looking at solutions for airport tenants should repair and construction carry into the summer months.

With the limited reopening of the facility, public access is available at the northeast entrance with the interior screened to allow use of the ticket counter area only. Aleutian Air, Pioneer Car Rental, and Alaska Bus Company have resumed operations within the terminal under this configuration. We believe this setup can be operated safely on an interim basis while we await further evaluation from our engineers. Porta-potties have been placed at the terminal, two egress points are available, and staff have been instructed to evacuate the building immediately in the event of any seismic activity.

Ditch and Culvert Winter Maintenance

Our usually long stretch of single-digit cold weather days with minimal snow has kept Public Works Staff and the Steam Truck busy as we move through the breakup season and into spring. Frost has been measured up to 8 feet deep in some areas and is causing more issues with glaciation and flooding than usual. Public Works is maintaining a list of frozen culverts and ditches as they are reported by residents and crews respond as quickly as possible, but with these unusual conditions, the ice is filling back up within a matter of days. But why do the ditches and culverts keep filling up? The Homer hillside continuously vents groundwater to the ground surface year-round, even in winter, and the water then flows down through drainages and ditches. During more typical winters, this groundwater flow is not as obvious because snow covers it and provides insulation, so the water keeps flowing. We appreciate the community's support and patience as crews work on the ditches and culverts.

Public Comment Periods are Open for the HERC ABCA and Title 21 Update

Just a reminder that the draft Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) for the Homer Education and Recreation Complex (HERC) and the Title 21 Public Review Draft are available for public comment before they are finalized. Public notice of both comment periods is being provided through local media outlets, the City website <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/> and social media [@cityofhomerak](https://twitter.com/cityofhomerak), fliers, etc.

A digital copy of the ABCA is available at <https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/csp/brownfields/assessment-cleanup/dbac-projects/homer-herc-abca/>. The public comment period is open until 5 pm April 24, 2026.

The Title 21 public review draft is available at <https://homert21codeupdate.com/>. The public comment period is open through May 15, 2026.

Easement Clearing for the Raw Water Transmission Line Project

In the last City Manager’s report I shared information that the Raw Water Transmission Line Project was kicking off on April 1st. The first items of business have been to survey the easement and clear the vegetation and trees that have grown in over the past 50-60 years since the first transmission line was built. During the course of the project we’ll be preserving the top soil seed bed so existing plants can regrow, after the new transmission line replacement is completed. If additional supplementation is needed to stabilize the soil, we’ll work to ensure that an appropriate seed mix for this area is used. The anticipated completion date is October 2026.



Closing on the First NOAA Grant Property

Success! The City of Homer closed on a 26.5 acre conservation property, purchased with NOAA grant funds. The project was in partnership with the Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust.



Old Police Department Building

In 2020 the new Police Department (PD) building was completed and the department moved over from the old PD located behind the Homer Volunteer Fire Department (HVFD). After the move was completed the HFVD began using the building for storage and training. The old PD building was constructed in 1979, and has shown its age for a while. In early March when Homer experienced some high wind events, Public Works discovered some metal roofing from the building on the sidewalk. Public Works is working compiling information on the status of the roof in anticipation of a future budget request for some needed repairs.

Conversations about a Parking Lot on Homer Spit Lot 88-2

At a recent Port and Harbor Advisory Commission (PHAC) meeting the Commission had a spot on their agenda to talk about highest and best use of City owned property on the Spit. Because parking around the harbor is a big topic for the Commission to discuss, conversations about land use shifted to parking and one of the areas that was discussed was Lot 88-2 that currently holds a short-term lease with La Baleine Café, along with two other short-term leases. The Commission discussed the needs and benefits of the different services around the Port and Harbor, and also talked about another area across the street that had been considered to expand parking some years back, but was denied for that use. In the end a motion was made in support of the notion of Lot 88-2 being transitioned to parking. Following that meeting the City Clerk's office received a significant amount of public input against developing parking in that location and copies of the written comments are attached to this report. I met with the owners of La Baleine Café to assure them that Council has not taken any action to change any use on Lot 88-2 and affirming that they have a lease in place through the end of the year. As I've already mentioned, parking on the Spit is always a hot topic. I just want to take this opportunity to reinforce that before any changes in land use happen on the Spit, there will be a public process through the PHAC and City Council.

Attachment:

Written Public Comments