



# AGENDA

## Economic Development Advisory Commission Regular Meeting

Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at 6:00 PM

City Hall Cowles Council Chambers In-Person & Via Zoom Webinar

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### Homer City Hall

491 E. Pioneer Avenue  
Homer, Alaska 99603  
www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

### Zoom Webinar ID: 990 0366 1092 Password: 725933

<https://cityofhomer.zoom.us>  
Dial: 346-248-7799 or 669-900-6833;  
(Toll Free) 888-788-0099 or 877-853-5247

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1. **CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, 6:00 P.M.**
2. **AGENDA APPROVAL**
3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA** (3 minute time limit)
4. **RECONSIDERATION**
5. **CONSENT AGENDA** (Items listed below are considered routine and non-controversial by the Commission and are approved in one motion. If a separate discussion is desired on an item, a Commissioner may request that item be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda under New Business.)
  5. A. Unapproved EDC Minutes  
Unapproved Regular Meeting Minutes for May 9, 2023 **pg 3**
6. **VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS**
  6. A. Homer Housing Conversation Report  
Ryan Foster, AICP, Interim City Planner & Karin Marks
7. **STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS**
  7. A. EDC Staff Report  
Memorandum EDC 23-029 **pg 11**
  7. B. Chamber of Commerce Report
  7. C. Homer Marine Trades Association (HMTA) Report
  7. D. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) Report
  7. E. Port Expansion Project
  7. F. Guiding Homer's Growth Update
  7. G. HERC Update

|            |  |                                     |
|------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>8.</b>  | <b>PUBLIC HEARING(S)</b>   |                                     |
| <b>9.</b>  | <b>PENDING BUSINESS</b>  |                                     |
| 9. A.      | Housing Update<br>Memorandum EDC 23-030  | <b>pg 12</b>                        |
| 9. B.      | EDC Mission Statement<br>Memorandum EDC 23-031                                     | <b>pg 13</b>                        |
| 9. D.      | EDC Bylaws<br>Memorandum EDC 23-032  | <b>pg 15</b>                        |
| <b>10.</b> | <b>NEW BUSINESS</b>  |                                     |
| 10. A.     | Future Joint Worksession with Council<br>Memorandum EDC 23-033                     | <b>pg 20</b>                        |
| 10. B.     | Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Review (CEDs)<br>Memorandum EDC 23-034 | <b>pg 21</b>                        |
| 10. C.     | Comprehensive Plan Review – Chapter 7<br>Memorandum EDC 23-035                     | <b>pg 45</b>                        |
| <b>11.</b> | <b>INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS</b>   |                                     |
| 11. A.     | City of Homer Newsletter – June 2023 Issue   | <b>pg 57</b>                        |
| 11. B.     | City Manager’s Reports<br>CM May 22, 2023 Report<br>CM June 12, 2023               | <b>pg 69</b><br><b>Supplemental</b> |
| 11. C.     | EDC 2022-23 Strategic Plan – FINAL   | <b>pg 71</b>                        |
| 11. D.     | EDC Meeting & City Council Report Calendar   | <b>pg 74</b>                        |
| 11. E.     | Sculpture Dedication and Reception at Bishop’s Beach Invitation                    | <b>pg 75</b>                        |
| <b>12.</b> | <b>COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE</b> (3 minute time limit)                              |                                     |
| <b>13.</b> | <b>COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF</b>  |                                     |
| <b>14.</b> | <b>COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION</b>  |                                     |
| <b>15.</b> | <b>ADJOURNMENT</b>   |                                     |

Next Regular Meeting is **Tuesday, August 8, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.** All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Session 23-05 a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Karin Marks at 6:03 p.m. on May 9, 2023 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Mel Kim was welcomed to the Commission by the Chair.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS MARKS, PITZMAN, AREVALO, BROWN, KIM

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS GAMBLE, PEREZ (excused) & STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PEARSON

STAFF: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER ENGBRETSSEN & DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

Chair Marks read the Supplemental Items into the record: REPORTS, Item 7 F Port Expansion Project, Homer Harbor Expansion Design Charrette Schedule and Informational Materials, Public Comment Received on Budgetary Requests for Parks and Recreation and requested a motion.

AREVALO/BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA**

**RECONSIDERATION**

**CONSENT AGENDA** (Items listed below are considered routine and non-controversial by the Commission and are approved in one motion. If a separate discussion is desired on an item, a Commissioner may request that item be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda under New Business.)

5.A. Unapproved April 11, 2023 EDC Minutes

Deputy City Clerk Krause read the Consent Agenda.

AREVALO/BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS READ.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

**VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS**

6. A. Trails as Economic Drivers for the Community, Cameale Johnson, Homer Trails Alliance

Ms. Johnson provided an overview of how outdoor recreation, specifically trails is beneficial to the overall economic vitality of a community. She briefly reviewed work that is performed by the Homer Trails Alliance, the organization's goals, organizations that they partner with to accomplish the

selected projects and maintenance of the trails that are created and where the organization obtains the materials to construct their projects. Ms. Johnson presented highlights of their vision for the area known as Diamond Creek Recreation Area and referenced the strategic planning that was adopted in the management plan by the City of Homer in 2013. The Homer Trails Alliance has applied for the available grant funding known as Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to connect Rogers Loop to Diamond Creek State Recreation Site to establish pedestrian connectivity by constructing off road parking at the Rogers Loop Trailhead, a multi-plate tunnel under the Sterling Highway, which would connect to the proposed detached pathway from Green Timbers Trailhead at MP 167.9 and the Department of Transportation Trailhead at MP 168.9 to Rogers Loop Trailhead on Rogers Loop Road. This would then connect to the existing sidewalk along the Sterling Highway at Milepost 169.9.

Ms. Johnson facilitated discussion on the following:

- RTP Grant is separate from the TAP grant application
- RTP Grant is to fund the pedestrian crossing
  - o Federal Grant
  - o SCORP
  - o LWCF grants have clear criteria
- TAP grant requires 9.6% match requirement
  - o City of Homer has adopted a Resolution supporting the application
  - o City will be constructing the Rogers Loop Trailhead parking
- Communities such as Anchorage have organizations that Homer does not
- It is a very realistic project but very competitive process

## **STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### 7.A. EDC Staff Report for May

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen provided a verbal report on the following:

- Upcoming personnel changes in the Planning Department
- Agenda Changes
- Water & Sewer Rates
  - o Water/Sewer service for Jack Gist Park
- Guiding Growth in Homer
  - o Housing Interest
  - o Port Expansion Project
- Comprehensive Plan Funding in the FY24-FY25 Biennial Budget
  - o Including Town Center
- Numerous Permit Applications
  - o Many construction projects being started

Ms. Engebretsen facilitated discussion on the following:

- parking issues at Jack Gist Park
- Traffic flow onto East End Road

### 7.B. HERC Update

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen provided a verbal report on the following:

- Testing for PCB was conducted on May 1-2, 2023 and results should be received by mid-June. These results will determine the next steps forward in the process.
- Drafting of a Business Plan using existing user groups to quantify their demand and determine which programs are expected to increase.
- Council approved the budget for recreational software to be able to provide some of the required data for the Business Plan
- Right sizing the new facility
- Flyers posted on a monthly basis on the city website
- Worksession conducted by City Council in March with additional worksessions scheduled for August and September.
  - The August worksession will cover what amount Council would be willing to bond to construct a building.
- Construction Bond, operations maintenance these costs go together and factor into what the City can afford to construct for the community.

#### 7. C. Chamber of Commerce Report

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen verbally reported on the last Chamber meeting. She noted that the Chamber has done the following:

- Conducting mixers on a monthly basis
- hired an events person

Ms. Engebretsen reported that City Council did include them in the FY24-25 Biennial Budget, but did not approve the additional funding requested for the Small Business person in the amount of \$15,000.

Ms. Engebretsen facilitated discussion on how the Commissioners could advocate to Council to include that amount in the budget.

#### 7.C. Homer Marine Trades Association (HMTA) Report

Chair Marks noted that the minutes from the April 5, 2023 meeting that was included in the packet. There was no one present to provide further information from the Homer Marine Trades Association.

#### 7.D. Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) Report

Chair Marks reported that she attended the April 20, 2023 meeting. She reported on the following:

- funding source outside the areas of interest
- Southern Kenai Peninsula Transit Coalition
- Support for the Homer All Ages and Abilities Pathways
- HEA Studying geothermal and wind energy on oil platforms
- Mariculture grant
- KPEDD 2023 update for the CEDS on their website

#### 7. E. Port Expansion Project

Chair Marks introduce the item by reading of the title and deferred to Ms. Engebretsen.

Ms. Engebretsen noted that this will be a monthly item under reports possibly the Consent Agenda and noted the Charrette schedule provided in the supplemental packet.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

### **PENDING BUSINESS**

9.A. Housing Update  
Action Item Report EDC 23-023

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading the title. She provided a recap of the Homer Housing Conversation event that took place March 25<sup>th</sup> and spoke to the live survey links that are available online. This coalition is primarily going to help interested groups learn what next steps to take. The report generated from that event will soon be publicly available and a presentation will take place at City Council.

There was discussion on some of the statistics and facts realized at the event, what will be included in the report, and the commission's desire for housing/rental fact-checking/data collection and vetting.

9.B. EDC Budget Requests FY24 & FY25  
Agenda Item Report EDC 23-024

Chair Marks introduced the agenda item by reading the title and deferred to Commissioner Pitzman and noted the email from Janie Leask requesting the Commission support the PARC Advisory Commission budget request for the recreational software and additional staffing. At the Council meeting last night the Council approved funding for a part time staff person and the recreation software.

Ms. Engebretsen noted that Council did not approve the funding request by the Chamber of Commerce for the staff person and noted that it was unlikely to change as it is not included in the Budget going forward. She further commented on the hesitation to include the funding for the continued Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan implementation, but they did approve that request. She noted the following:

- With the funding approved, consideration of banners for the Port & Harbor and the banners identifying the City of Homer
- The budget request will be included in the next staff report for June so that the Commission can see the individuals components included for the wayfinding.
  - o budget request did not include the major neighborhood signs
  - o This is just a start to the complete wayfinding and streetscape plan which amounts to approximately \$300,000

Commissioner Pitzman stated his appreciation that Council funded the staff and software budget requests for Community Recreation. He noted the cumbersome process of using paper and pencil and the benefits to having a good data collection system.

Ms. Engebretsen stated that the best method would be to have the person providing the report at the next Council meeting, express the Commission support. That is if the Commission agrees by consensus on the funding of the permanent part time staff person and recreation software budgets requested.

The Commissioners agreed by consensus that they supported those budget requests.

Ms. Engebretsen facilitated discussion on the funding of the Small Business Staff position at the Chamber of Commerce by the City and the benefits to the business community and the city as a whole

on having that resource available and the reasons that Council was not supportive of the funding through the budget process. it was determined to address the subject under their strategic planning document.

9.C. EDC Mission Statement  
Agenda Item Report EDC 23-025

Chair Marks introduced the item and noted that Commissioner Perez was to provide information on this item and seeing that he was not in attendance for this meeting with the Commission's approval this item will be postponed to the June regular meeting.

Deputy City Clerk Krause reported that she did receive an email from Commissioner Perez requesting excusal due to illness and expressed his apologies for the late notification.

The Commission agreed by consensus to postpone the item to the June meeting.

9. D. Revision to SWOT Analysis  
Agenda Item Report EDC 23-026

Chair Marks introduced the item and deferred to Commissioner Arevalo.

Commissioner Arevalo for the benefit of the newest member, Commissioner Kim, provided a brief summary of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis that was performed by the Commission in 2021-2022. A worksession was conducted with the Chamber of Commerce in February and the Commission found that the Chamber was performing much more to support and promote small businesses than they thought in the beginning. In review of the strategic plan, it was discovered that the verbiage in the SWOT was not applicable. Ms. Arevalo then read into the record the proposed new language which she believed would encapsulate what is being done.

“Collaborate with the Homer Chamber of Commerce to help maintain attention towards building up our local small businesses across sectors”

Commissioner Arevalo expressed that she felt this verbiage covered the initial intent and what the Chamber is currently doing to help focus on the small business community in Homer.

Commissioner Pitzman suggested amending the statement to “maintain focus” and stated that he supported it either way it was written.

Chair Marks hearing no further comments, questions or amendments being considered requested a motion and second.

BROWN/KIM MOVED TO ADOPT THE REVISION TO THE SWOT ANALYSIS UNDER CHAMBER MARKETING TO THE LANGUAGE PROPOSED BY COMMISSIONER AREVALO, “COLLABORATE WITH THE HOMER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO HELP MAINTAIN FOCUS TOWARDS BUILDING UP OUR LOCAL SMALL BUSINESSES ACROSS SECTORS”

There was no further discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Ms. Engebretsen noted that she will be participating on a subcommittee of the Chamber's Board and one of the interests is an economic sector analysis.

There was brief discussion on the benefits to perform that analysis to obtain data on what is the Homer economy beyond tourism and how can they capture breadth of the really small businesses that do not maintain a store front. It was believed that it would also benefit in the updates to the Chamber's website. It was unknown if they were focusing on just membership or outside as well. There may be some businesses that can be approached and the website can be used as contact information since phone books are a thing of the past.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### 10.A. Election of EDC Officers Agenda Item Report EDC 23-027

Chair Marks introduced the item and clarified the methods to vote for Chair and Vice Chair. She indicated to the Commission that she was willing to serve as Chair once again. Ms. Marks called for nominations of Vice Chair after confirming if Vice Chair Brown would consent to serve again.

Commissioner Brown stated that if there was no interest in serving a Vice Chair by another Commissioner she would serve another term.

There were no further nominations and Commissioner Brown was re-elected as Vice Chair.

Chair Marks then turned the gavel over to Vice Chair Brown.

Vice Chair Brown called for nominations for the office of Chair.

Commissioner Arevalo nominated Commissioner Marks.

Vice Chair Brown hearing no further nominations conducted the vote for the Office of Chair and congratulated Chair Marks on her re-election handing the gavel back to Ms. Marks.

#### 10. B. EDC Bylaws Review Agenda Item Report EDC 12-028

Chair Marks introduced the item by reading of title and reviewed the report provided by Deputy City Clerk Krause. She noted the proposed amendments and process and requested a motion and second to amend the bylaws as noted.



AREVALO/BROWN MOVED TO AMEND THE BYLAWS TO REFLECT THE UPDATED TITLE OF THE STAFF LIAISON AND FORMAT OF THE MEETING AGENDA AND BRING THE AMENDED BYLAWS FOR ADOPTION AT THE JUNE REGULAR MEETING.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

### **INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS**

- 11.A. City of Homer Newsletter – May 2023 Issue
- 11.B. City Manager’s Reports  
CM April 24, 2023 Report  
CM May 8, 2023 Report
- 11.C. EDC 2022-23 Strategic Plan
- 11.D. EDC Meeting & City Council Report Calendar

Chair Marks noted the informational materials and thanked Commissioner Pitzman for requesting an item to be on the agenda, noting that the Commission can contact Ms. Engebretsen or herself to have an item added to the agenda. She welcomed the newest Commissioner, Mel Kim. Ms. Marks then noted that a volunteer was needed to provide the report to City Council at the next meeting on May 22, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. She noted that Commissioner Pitzman was scheduled for August and September. There were no immediate volunteers. After a brief moment of quiet, Commissioner Pitzman asked Ms. Engebretsen to send him the “cliff notes” and he will make the report to Council. Chair Marks expressed her appreciation for Commissioner Pitzman stepping forward.

### **COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

#### **COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF**

Deputy City Clerk Krause expressed her appreciation for the Commission’s patience with the packet materials, supplemental packet explaining that there was still a lot of things happening and even being short-staffed in the Clerk’s Office they haven’t slowed down. She looks forward to working with the Commission for the near term.

Economic Development Manager Engebretsen welcomed Commissioner Kim and expressed her appreciation for the efforts of the Clerk and having a great meeting.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Pitzman welcomed Commissioner Kim to the Commission and he was looking forward to working with him.

Commissioner Arevalo reported that there were a couple of workshops for people that are interested in growing food locally coming up really soon. One is about growing fruit in Alaska and the challenges and opportunities, and what plants need. The second one is on Lasagna Beds, but the term used could

not be recalled right at the moment. She proceeded to describe the process used in that type of planting. They will be available through the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District's website. She then requested that the Commission be notified when they have attendees present via Zoom at their meetings noting it would be helpful. It was a good meeting.

Commissioner Kim thanked everyone for the welcome and stated that he has been talking with some persons who are working out on the Spit and they have reported the conditions of the bathrooms and those conditions are a persistent issue, additionally there is a lack of parking especially in the high season. They have asked about access to parking during the summer. He acknowledged that he did not know the right avenue to direct those conversations.

Ms. Engebretsen explained that it was always best to contact staff as soon as possible regarding issues.

Chair Marks commented that this Commission operated at a 30,000 foot view whereas other Commissions were focused on specific things. She went on to reiterate that the Commission will be reviewing their Strategic Plan and later the Comprehensive Plan that they may be able to consider the issue. The Port & Harbor would be more focused on that aspect though she believed. She recommended that the Commissioners keep asking questions of the community. Chair Marks related an incident where a business owner along Pioneer complained about the speeding that was occurring, not that the Commission can do anything about the issues but they can pass it along and she believed this was a good place to start. She expressed her appreciation of Commissioner Brown for stepping up to serve as Vice Chair again and the Commissioners for allowing her to serve them in the role of Chair again, stating that the Commission has made a lot of progress. Ms. Marks reminded them that they will be taking July off again and before you know it fall will be here.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Chair Marks adjourned the meeting at 7:56 p.m. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers and via Zoom Webinar.

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RENEE KRAUSE, MMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_



# City of Homer

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

Planning

491 East Pioneer Avenue  
Homer, Alaska 99603

[Planning@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:Planning@ci.homer.ak.us)

(p) 907-235-3106

(f) 907-235-3118

## MEMORANDUM 23-029

TO: Economic Development Advisory Commission  
FROM: Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager  
DATE: June 8, 2023  
SUBJECT: June Staff Report

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The last month has been a whirlwind! I took a week off and enjoyed some time with family. Council approved the operating budget last month, and could approve the capital budget Monday night. TBD. These approvals provide funding for projects I will be working on over the next two years. These projects potentially include master planning and building a new playground at Bayview Park, Karen Hornaday Park master planning, and wayfinding and streetscape improvements. These all relate to quality of life amenities.

### Other items:

- Pioneer Ave Banners are done! They await pick up in Anchorage (anybody heading that way this week?)
- Myself and other city staff continue to review federal grant opportunities for sidewalks and infrastructure. We are not eligible for some types of funding because we do not have certain specific types of plans. (We're also a small town; we don't have the staff or traffic issues of larger cities!) I continue to learn about grants and funding sources.
- I'm participating on the Chamber of Commerce Membership Advocacy Committee, which meets monthly. I will provide an update at the EDC meeting.



# City of Homer

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## Planning

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Homer, Alaska 99603

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(p) 907-235-3106

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## MEMORANDUM EDC 23-030

TO: Economic Development Advisory Commission  
FROM: Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager  
DATE: June 7, 2023  
SUBJECT: Housing

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**Recommendation Action:** No action at this time. This is a standing agenda item.

- Chair Marks and Acting City Planner Ryan Foster will be giving a presentation on the final housing report at the meeting.



# ACTION ITEM REPORT

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## EDC Mission Statement

**To:** Economic Development Advisory Commission  
**From:** Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager  
**Meeting Date:** June 13, 2023

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### Summary Statement:

EDC Short Term Goal #2: View economic development through the lens of balancing growth with quality of life.

*Task:* Create an EDC Mission statement as a guiding principle for what the EDC does.

*Task:* Define positive economic development, and what is the role of the EDC is in balancing growth and quality of life.

Recap: The Commission has defined a vision statement (see next page). At the last meeting, the EDC looked at examples of mission statements and provided guidance to Commissioner Perez. The language below is his draft mission statement for Commission discussion.

### From Commissioner Perez:

The Economic Development Commission (EDC) of the City of Homer serves as a volunteer advisory body providing an interface between citizens and city government. Our driving philosophy is to foster sustainable economic growth while preserving cultural and natural heritage, and promoting a high quality of life for residents and businesses in Homer and the surrounding area.

The EDC exists to serve the local community, and as informed citizens, we will provide a forum to engage in emerging community issues. The EDC will also facilitate community enhancement projects and provide actionable recommendations for the City of Homer. The EDC seeks to bring together broad perspectives and backgrounds from our volunteer citizens to ensure our priorities provide value to the City of Homer. We believe that by engaging in emerging issues and facilitating discussions around sustainable economic growth, we can help to shape the economic future of our community in a positive and impactful way.

**Staff Recommendation:** Discuss the draft mission statement.

*Vision Statement:* The Economic Development Advisory Commission provides a forum for civic and business engagement on behalf of the City of Homer with the goal of fostering sustainable growth of an economically diverse community while preserving its cultural and natural heritage to maintain a high quality of life.



# ACTION ITEM REPORT

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## Review of EDC Bylaws

**To:** Economic Development Advisory Commission  
**From:** Renee Krause, MMC, Deputy City Clerk II  
**Meeting Date:** June 13, 2023

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### Summary Statement:

At the May 9, 2023 regular Meeting the Commission Reviewed and amended the Bylaws to effect the following:

1. Article V, Line 64, Section 1. Deputy City Planner is specifically shown as Staff Liaison and it should reflect Economic Development Manager.
2. Article VI, Line 110, Section 6. Agenda Item should be amended to reflect CONSENT AGENDA

### Recommended process:

Make a motion to adopt the amended bylaws for second and final reading and forward to City Council for approval.

1 **CITY OF HOMER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
2 **BYLAWS**

3  
4 **ARTICLE I - NAME AND AUTHORIZATION**

5  
6 The Economic Development Advisory Commission was established October 25, 1993 with the adoption  
7 of Ordinance 93-15(S)(A). The Commission was inactivated on January 24, 2000 and reactivated  
8 February 27, 2006 by Resolution 06-20. The following bylaws were adopted on December 13, 2021 and  
9 shall be in effect and govern the procedures of the Economic Development Advisory Commission.

10  
11 **ARTICLE II - PURPOSE**

12  
13 The Economic Development Advisory Commission will act in an advisory capacity to the City Manager  
14 and the City Council on the overall economic development planning for the City of Homer in accordance  
15 with Homer City Code Chapter 2.76.040.

16  
17 **ARTICLE III - MEMBERS**

18  
19 Section 1. The Commission shall consist of seven members comprised of at least five (5) members that  
20 reside inside city limits and shall be registered voters in the Kenai Peninsula Borough or the City of  
21 Homer. Members shall be nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by City Council to serve for three-  
22 year terms to expire on April 1<sup>st</sup> of designated years.

23  
24 Section 2. Notice of term expirations will be delivered to members by the City Clerk's Office. Members  
25 wishing to continue services upon the completion of a three-year term must submit a reappointment  
26 application to the City Clerk's Office, which is subject to review by the Mayor and confirmed by City  
27 Council. There are no limits on the number of terms a member may serve.

28  
29 Section 3. Members may not have alternates. If a position is vacated during a term, it shall be filled for  
30 the unexpired term by an appointee selected by the Mayor and confirmed by City Council.

31  
32 Section 4. A member's appointment is vacated under the following conditions:

- 33
- 34 • A member fails to qualify to take office within 30 days after their appointment;
  - 35 • A member resigns;
  - 36 • A member is physically or mentally unable to perform the duties of the office;
  - 37 • A member is convicted of a felony or of an offense involving a violation of their oath of office; or
  - 38 • A member has three consecutive unexcused absences, or misses half of all meetings within an  
39 appointment year, whether excused or unexcused.

40 Section 5. The Mayor may appoint, subject to confirmation by the City Council, one City Council  
41 member and one Homer area high school Student Representative to serve as consulting, non-voting  
42 members. The Mayor, the City Manager, a representative of the Homer Marine Trades Association, and  
43 the Director of the Homer Chamber of Commerce shall serve as non-voting, consulting members.

44  
45 **ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS**

46  
47 Section 1. A Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be elected from among the appointed  
48 commissioners at the regular April meeting of the Commission.



49  
50 Section 2. Officers shall serve a term of one year from the April meeting at which they are elected, and  
51 until their successors are duly elected. Officers may be re-elected in subsequent years.  
52

53 Section 3. The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Commission, authorize calls for any  
54 special meetings, execute all documents authorized by the Commission, serve as ex officio/voting  
55 member of all committees, and generally perform all duties associated with that office.  
56

57 Section 4. In the event of the absence, or disability of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall  
58 assume and perform the duties of the Chair. If both the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are absent,  
59 and a quorum of four members are present, the senior member shall assume and perform the duties  
60 and functions of the Chair.  
61

## 62 **ARTICLE V – CITY STAFF ROLES**

63  
64 Section 1. The **City Manager shall assign** ~~Deputy City Planner shall serve as~~ a staff liaison to the  
65 commission. The staff liaison shall assist the Chairperson in setting meetings, preparing agendas, and  
66 other documentary material, and coordinating the acquisition of needed materials and training. The  
67 staff liaison shall submit reports and recommendations for those agenda items requiring decisions or  
68 recommendations by the Commission. Other staff having experience, education, and professional  
69 training in the subject matter may provide input into the reports and recommendations, or may provide  
70 supplemental information. The information submitted may be oral, written or graphic, or some  
71 combination of all.  
72

73 Section 2. The City Clerk shall designate a recording clerk to take minutes for the Commission and serve  
74 as the Commission’s parliamentary advisory pursuant to AS 29.20.380(10) and HCC 2.12.010, and assist  
75 the Chairperson with the conduct of the meeting.  
76

## 77 **ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS**

78  
79 Section 1. Regular meetings shall be open to the public and held on the second Tuesday of each month  
80 at 6:00 p.m. in the designated location and shall be posted for public information as required by Homer  
81 City Code and Alaska State Statutes.  
82

83 Section 2. Special meetings and Worksessions may be called by the Staff Liaison, Chair, or a majority  
84 of the Commission. Notice of such meetings shall be posted in the same manner as that for regular  
85 meetings.  
86

87 Section 3. A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting shall consist of four members. For  
88 purposes of determining the existence of a quorum, consulting members shall not be counted.  
89 Worksessions do not require a quorum, however, no action may be taken at a worksession; items on  
90 the agenda are for discussion only.  
91

92 Section 4. Any member who is unable to attend a meeting, whether regular or special, shall contact the  
93 Clerk in advance no later than two hours prior to the scheduled meeting time for excusal.  
94

95 Section 5. Meeting agenda deadline is at 5:00 p.m. the Wednesday preceding the meeting. Allowances  
96 will be made for holidays.



145 1.18 Conflicts of Interest, Partiality, and Code of Ethics; HCC 2.58 Boards and Commissions; HCC 2.76  
146 Economic Development Advisory Commission; and the Open Meetings Act – AS 44.62.310-312.

147  
148 Section 2. Each member, including the Chairperson, shall vote, and shall not abstain from voting,  
149 unless such member claims a conflict of interest, or has an excused absence, in which event the  
150 member shall be excused from voting. The member shall then state for the record the basis for the  
151 abstention. Four affirmative votes are required to pass a motion. Voting will be by a roll call vote, the  
152 order to be rotated; or by unanimous consent if no objection is expressed. Voting by proxy or absentee  
153 is prohibited.

154  
155 Section 3. Any rule or resolution of the Commission, whether contained in these Bylaws or otherwise,  
156 may be suspended temporarily in connection with business at hand; and such suspension to be valid;  
157 may be taken only at a meeting at which at least four of the members of the Commission shall be  
158 present, and two-thirds of those present shall so approve.

159  
160 Section 4. Training sessions developed or arranged by the City Clerk and approved by the City Manager  
161 shall be mandatory unless a member's absence is excused by the Chairperson. The City Manager  
162 and/or City Clerk, in their discretion and in consultation with the City Attorney as needed, may develop  
163 model procedures to be used as a guide for the Commission.

164

#### 165 **ARTICLE VIII - COMMITTEES**

166  
167 Section 1. Committees of one or more members for such specific purposes as the business of the  
168 Commission will only become active upon approval of Council. A memorandum and resolution will go  
169 before Council outlining the reason, tasks assigned and termination date. Committees shall be  
170 considered to be discharged upon completion of the purpose for which it was appointed, and after its  
171 final report is made to and approved by the Commission.

172  
173 Section 2. All committees shall make a progress report to the Commission at each of the Commission's  
174 regular meetings.

175

#### 176 **ARTICLE IX - BYLAW AMENDMENTS**

177  
178 The Bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the Commission by a majority plus one of the members,  
179 provided that notice of said proposed amendment is given to each member in writing. The proposed  
180 amendment shall be introduced at one meeting and action shall be taken at the next Commission  
181 meeting. Amendments to bylaws shall be effective upon approval of the amendments by City Council  
182 via resolution.



# City of Homer

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

Planning

491 East Pioneer Avenue  
Homer, Alaska 99603

[Planning@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:Planning@ci.homer.ak.us)

(p) 907-235-3106

(f) 907-235-3118

## MEMORANDUM EDC 23-033

TO: Economic Development Advisory Commission  
FROM: Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager  
DATE: June 8, 2023  
SUBJECT: Future Work Session with Council

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*Chair Marks requested this be an agenda item.*

- Council has expressed interest in meeting with each Commission. Question for EDC: What does September look like for you? Is that a month you'd like to request a work session?

For general discussion:

- There are potentially several large projects happening in Homer that will shape our future – port expansion, zoning code rewrite, comprehensive plan... how would the EDC like to be involved?
- How can we keep the EDC relevant to the activities of City government and community action?



# City of Homer

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(p) 907-235-3106

(f) 907-235-3118

## MEMORANDUM EDC 23-034

TO: Economic Development Advisory Commission  
FROM: Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager  
DATE: June 7, 2023  
SUBJECT: KPEDD CEDS Review

**Recommendation Action:** No action at this time. This is a standing review item on the annual calendar. Please review the attached document. If something catches your eye, bring it up at the meeting!

The Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District KPEDD, updates the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) every five years. During interim years, the plan is reviewed and small updates are made. The attached document is the CEDS for this year.

Homer City Code tasks the EDC with reviewing and commenting on yearly CEDS updates.

### 2.76.040 Duties and responsibilities of the Commission.

a. Oversee responsibility of the City of Homer's work with KPEDD in developing a strategic plan for the specific Homer portion of the regional CEDS that is written every five years.

1. Cohost with KPEDD public meetings to collect comments on local strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats especially relating to the economy to determine the City's needs and wants. This is done to broaden public involvement.
2. Review and comment on yearly CEDS updates.
3. Monitor the implementation of the regional CEDS in terms of the Homer portion.

### Attachment

KPEDD 2023 Update Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy



# 2023 UPDATE

## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy



**KENAI PENINSULA ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT**

907-283-3335 - [Info@kpedd.org](mailto:Info@kpedd.org)

[www.KPEDD.org](http://www.KPEDD.org)

[www.KenaiPeninsulaWorkforce.org](http://www.KenaiPeninsulaWorkforce.org)

# Executive Summary

The Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD), in partnership with the University of Alaska Center for Economic Development (UAA CED); Economic Development Administration (EDA); Kenai Peninsula Borough; incorporated and unincorporated communities; Tribes; industry leaders; non-profit resource providers; and residents, develops the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) every five years to provide strategic direction for the economic development of the region. Annual updates provide essential progress updates, insight into the changing economic landscape of the region, efforts to meet identified goals, and incorporate new partners and their respective roles. This plan also seeks to unite regional efforts, mitigating redundancies and waste.

The 2023 annual update incorporates and summarizes the major components of the 2021 full CEDS plan, and focuses on adjustments to the initial strategy, reports on economic development activities, identifies goals for the upcoming fiscal year, and ranks investment priorities in the region – all through the lens of economic resiliency.

For a copy of the full 2021 report – which includes data on the geography and climate, human capital, cost of living, quality of life indicators, infrastructure and transportation; an expanded SWOT analysis by industry, infrastructure, and human capital; resiliency threats and action plan; goals, and business survey results – please visit our website at [www.kpedd.org](http://www.kpedd.org)



**The CEDS plan encompasses an economically, geographically, and culturally diverse region, incorporating the projects and ideas of our communities. This plan is critical to the strategic and sustainable growth of the Kenai Peninsula Borough.**

**Tim Dillon, Executive Director**



# Introduction

## Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Overview

The Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) is a 501(c)(4) non-profit regional economic development organization. Established in 1988, KPEDD serves the residents and communities of the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) in Southcentral Alaska.

As the first federal Economic Development District designated in Alaska, as well as the first Alaska Regional Development Organization or ARDOR, KPEDD has actively pursued development opportunities for the region. Over its lifetime, KPEDD has been involved in a variety of projects including public works advocacy, shellfish industry development, international trade, promotion of a North Slope Natural Gas Pipeline to Cook Inlet, building infrastructure, industry recruitment, and business retention and expansion (BR&E).

KPEDD, with funding provided by the KPB and U.S. Economic Development Administration, compiles and publishes the Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and this document represents the most recent update, replacing the previous 2016 document.

## CEDS Strategy Committee

The KPEDD staff and the University of Alaska Center for Economic Development (UA CED) conducted the CEDS process, under the general direction and guidance of the KPEDD Board of Directors. The board consisted of the following individuals:

### Current KPEDD Board Members:

- Rusty Swan (President), KPB At Large
- Liz DeMoss, (Vice President) City of Seward
- Chris Hough (Secretary), KPB At Large
- Karin Marks (Treasurer), Homer
- Todd Smith, Kenai;
- Bruce Richards, Soldotna
- John Czarnezki, City of Soldotna;
- Brad Anderson, Homer;
- Jan Yaeger, City of Seldovia;
- Sara Bieber, City of Kenai;
- Jeff Hetrick, Seward;
- Randi Broyles, City of Kenai
- Tim Redder, KPB At Large; and,
- Tyson Cox, City of Soldotna.

### KPEDD Staff:

- Tim Dillon, Executive Director;
- Cassidi Cameron, Special Projects Manager
- Caitlin Coreson, Program Manager; and
- Abby Dial, Research Assistant.



# Our Process

KPEDD's CEDS was developed in accordance with the U.S. Economic Development Administration's guidelines, with Executive Director Tim Dillon overseeing its completion. UAA CED conducted the initial plan's background research, coordination of public process, facilitation and creation of the action plan, and drafting of the document itself. Wherever possible and practical, the Executive Director and Board members participated in community forums and industry focus groups and provided extensive feedback and input on various drafts of the document.

The relationship with the UAA CED began in Fall 2020, with work continuing into the winter and then the final draft and publication occurred spring of 2021. Subsequent annual updates were created in house, documenting milestones, implementation, and additional key partnership created during the period. Key milestones in the CEDS outreach include:

|                 |                           |                    |                                    |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| July 1, 2022    | Homer Chamber             | August 23, 2022    | Broadband Outreach                 |
| July 5, 2022    | Nikiski Senior Center     | August 24, 2022    | Borough Assembly                   |
| July 6, 2022    | Kenai Chamber             | August 25, 2022    | City of Soldotna                   |
| July 7, 2022    | Homer Legislative Update  | August 31, 2022    | City of Seward                     |
| July 8, 2022    | Broadband Taskforce       | September 6, 2022  | Homer Transportation & Housing     |
| July 12, 2022   | Kenai Peninsula College   | September 13, 2022 | Borough Assembly                   |
| July 15, 2022   | Seward Chamber            | September 21, 2022 | Southeast Conference               |
| July 22, 2022   | The Alliance              | September 29, 2022 | Alaska Travel Industry Alliance    |
| July 25, 2022   | Homer Transportation      | October 11, 2022   | Regional Transportation            |
| July 27, 2022   | City of Soldotna          | October 19, 2022   | Alaska Travel industry Alliance    |
| August 1, 2022  | Broadband Taskforce       | October 21, 2022   | City of Seward                     |
| August 3, 2022  | Alaska Regional Dev. Org. | October 24, 2022   | U.S. Census Bureau                 |
| August 4, 2022  | City Managers             | November 2, 2022   | City of Homer                      |
| August 10, 2022 | Alaska Municipal League   | November 14, 2022  | Resource Development Council       |
| August 17, 2022 | AK LNG                    | November 28, 2022  | Homer Chamber                      |
| August 19, 2022 | Community of Sterling     | December 7, 2022   | City of Seward                     |
| August 22, 2022 | Broadband Outreach        | December 8, 2022   | Alaska Municipal League            |
|                 |                           | January 5, 2023    | Coastal Caucus                     |
|                 |                           | January 11, 2023   | Industry Outlook Forum             |
|                 |                           | January 12, 2023   | Broadband Taskforce                |
|                 |                           | January 16, 2023   | Alaska Mariculture Alliance        |
|                 |                           | January 20, 2023   | Homer Harbor Council               |
|                 |                           | January 24, 2023   | Kenai Peninsula Borough            |
|                 |                           | February 28, 2023  | City of Seward                     |
|                 |                           | March 28, 2023     | City of Homer                      |
|                 |                           | March 29, 2023     | Soldotna Riverfront Advisory       |
|                 |                           | May 15, 2021       | Alaska Municipal Management Assoc  |
|                 |                           | June 15, 2021      | Draft CEDS 30-day comment period;  |
|                 |                           | June 15, 2021      | Draft finalized                    |
|                 |                           |                    | KPEDD Board reviews final document |

Looking for the full  
CEDS report and  
research?

Visit  
[www.kpedd.org](http://www.kpedd.org) for  
the full plan

# SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) is a framework that allows regions to evaluate the position of their local economies. Factors affecting the region may be beneficial or harmful, and internal or external. Strengths are positive elements that are internal to the region, while weaknesses are negative internal factors. Opportunities and threats are external drivers the state's economy and national economic influences, for example. This section provides an overview SWOT of the Kenai Peninsula economy, its industries and business climate, infrastructure, and human capital; this matrix is intended to provide a deeper analysis of what factors are influencing our economic health on the Kenai Peninsula.

| STRENGTHS  | WEAKNESSES   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Government, Business, and Non-Profit Resources</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Crime Rates</li> <li>• Transportation and Accessibility</li> <li>• Access to Affordable Energy</li> <li>• Natural Resources</li> <li>• Health Care</li> <li>• Leadership</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population Decline</li> <li>• Dependence on government revenues for essential services</li> <li>• Declining School Enrollment</li> <li>• Cost and Availability of Goods and Services</li> <li>• Instability in Tourism Sector</li> <li>• Changes to Fishery Policies</li> <li>• Oil and Gas Production</li> <li>• Cost of Energy</li> <li>• Housing Availability</li> <li>• Broadband and Wireless Communications</li> <li>• Public Transportation</li> <li>• Aging Infrastructure</li> </ul> |
| OPPORTUNITIES  | THREATS  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment Opportunities</li> <li>• Access to Health Care</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oil and Gas Instability</li> <li>• Changes to Seafood Harvests</li> </ul>   |

- New Industry Growth
- Coast Guard Expansion
- Land and Housing Development
- Quality of Life
- Access to Education
- Transportation
- Government Accessibility
- Economic Resiliency Planning
- Disruptions to Marine and Air Travel
- State Government Budget
- Early Childhood and Pre-Kindergarten Education
- COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts
- High Unemployment
- Out-Migration

## **Strengths- Expanded analysis**

**Mature, diverse base industries.** While some regions of Alaska depend heavily on one industry—oil and gas for the North Slope, commercial salmon for Bristol Bay—the Kenai Peninsula has a relatively diverse industry mix. The region has three primary ‘base’ industries, which attract money from outside the Borough: Seafood, oil and gas, and recreation and tourism. These three sectors provide the underpinnings for a variety of other industries like health care, retail, construction, nonprofits, and others.

**Fisheries and seafood.** The Kenai Peninsula’s freshwater and marine environments support productive commercial and sport fisheries. In 2019, the ports of Homer, Kenai, and Seward landed almost 73 million pounds of seafood, with an ex-vessel value of \$72 million. Seward ranked 22nd in the nation in terms of commercial landings by weight, with Kenai coming in at 28th.[i] In 2018, nearly 1,600 Peninsula residents held commercial fisheries permits.[ii] The major commercially-targeted species are sockeye salmon, pink salmon, halibut, and sablefish.

**Oil and gas.** The Cook Inlet Basin produces oil and gas, most of which is refined, stored, and consumed in-region. In 2019, there were over 1,200 jobs on the Kenai Peninsula in oil and gas, utilities, and refining.[iii] The basin produced 12,000 barrels per day of oil and 215,000 MCF of gas in 2020. Cook Inlet natural gas meets the heating needs of most Southcentral Alaskans, and provides power to all of Alaska’s Railbelt utilities.

**Tourism and recreation.** Tourists are attracted to the Peninsula’s wildlife, sport fishing, and scenery. Ports like Seward and Homer receive cruise ships during the summer, but the region also attracts independent travelers. The visitor industry suffered a sharp drop in visitation in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2016, over 700,000 tourists from outside of Alaska visited the region, including about 200,000 cruise ship passengers.[iv] One stabilizing feature of this sector is the large number of in-state visitors who come to the Peninsula to recreate. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in-state visitors (predominantly from Southcentral Alaska) continued to visit the region and spend money in local businesses.

**Health care.** Health care has been a growth sector for several years, creating jobs at hospitals and clinics while meeting the local population’s needs. Hospitals in Seward, Soldotna, and Homer minimize the need to leave the region to receive care. The Peninsula’s health care sector employed 3,202 individuals in 2019, or about five percent of the population.[v] A thriving health care sector enables retirees and families to settle in the area.

## **Weaknesses- Expanded analysis**

**Regulatory barriers/development costs.** Responsible mineral, oil, and gas development all require extensive permitting processes and regulatory hurdles that raise development costs that are already high. This inhibits new investment to a degree, especially in Cook Inlet oil and gas development along with mining prospects on the west side of the inlet.

**High operating costs.** Although some parts of Alaska have much higher costs for real estate, energy, labor, and freight, operating costs on the Peninsula are still generally much higher than in the Lower 48.

**Workforce limitations.** Despite the presence of University of Alaska satellite campuses and AVTEC, employers site limited workforce availability as a major obstacle to business expansion.

## **Opportunities - Expanded analysis**

**Emerging sectors.** Outside of the mature base industries, the Kenai Peninsula hosts a number of emerging sectors, or small industries with high growth potential. These include mariculture, marine services, natural resource development and farming/agriculture.

**Mariculture.** Oyster and shellfish farms already exist in Kachemak and Resurrection bays, and expansion potential is high. Additional shellfish species like geoducks could be farmed, greatly increasing the value of output. Experimental kelp farming is also taking place in Alaska waters, and offers possibilities to marine communities on the Peninsula.

**Marine services.** Seward and Homer both host vessel fabrication and repair facilities and infrastructure. With a large (and aging) in-state fleet, research indicates that there is an opportunity to capture more of the repair and service market from Washington State. Commercial and recreational boats made in Homer are sold both in-state and in the Lower 48. SMIC features the largest marine lift in the state and several private maintenance/repair providers.

**Agriculture.** According to the USDA, the Kenai Peninsula is the fastest-growing agricultural region in the state.[i] There are at least five farmers markets on the Peninsula, found in Soldotna, Anchor Point, and Homer. Agricultural products include potatoes, leafy greens, beef, pork, and peonies. New visitor markets. While there is no shortage of visitors most years (COVID aside), significant potential exists to cultivate and expand new tourism segments. These niches include winter and shoulder-season visitation, ecotourism, and cultural tourism. Expanding these segments could grow and broaden visitor spending to create more business opportunities, jobs, and local government revenue.

**Liquefied Natural Gas.** Nikiski is the most likely place for an export-focused LNG plant if a gas line is constructed between the North Slope and Southcentral Alaska.

## **Threats – Expanded analysis**

**COVID-19 pandemic.** As with the rest of the world, the global pandemic has been a sharply negative shock to the economy of the Kenai Peninsula. It caused businesses to close, both temporarily and permanently, with a large majority citing a strongly negative effect. Job losses related to the pandemic have been especially pronounced in tourism, retail, construction, and health care.

**Commodity prices.** A significant share of the Kenai Peninsula economy rests the export of commodities to region's outside of the borough—chiefly, oil, gas, and seafood. The prices for all of these valuable products depend on global market forces well outside of local control. This contributes to volatility and price cycles with a heavy influence on the local economy in terms of business success and employment.

**State fiscal uncertainty.** Many business owners cite the state fiscal situation—a lack of resolution on spending, revenues, and Permanent Fund Dividends—as an obstacle to growth and new investment.[i] Potential cuts to state services could threaten public safety and education in the region, and new state taxes could dampen business success and investment.

## **The Kenai Peninsula's Resiliency Outlook**

In recent years, the Kenai Peninsula economy has been challenged by a series of unanticipated shocks that ultimately impacted all households and employers in the region in some way. Of greatest magnitude naturally is the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in early 2020. The COVID-19 recession likely led to more job losses and business closures than any prior economic downturn in the Peninsula's history. Yet, COVID-19 is only the most recent of multiple natural disasters to impact the region. In November 2018, a 7.1 magnitude earthquake hit Southcentral Alaska, including the Peninsula, causing uncounted millions in property damage around the state. In 2019, the Swan Lake Fire raged between Sterling and Cooper Landing from June through September, causing public health warnings, loss of private property, disrupting visitation, and forcing the closure of popular recreation sites.

Even without these natural disasters, the Kenai Peninsula was not immune to broader forces weakening the statewide economy. Two headwinds in particular have been the volatility of oil prices, and the unresolved budget deficit in state government finances. Together, these two forces caused a three-year statewide recession, from 2015 to 2018, that destroyed thousands of Kenai Peninsula jobs. The fact that the state (and regional) economies were somewhat weak at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic could potentially mean a slower economic recovery compared to other parts of the US.

### **Resiliency Threats**

COVID-19. Much of this CEDS document has discussed the economic damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. On the Kenai Peninsula, the viral outbreak caused peak summer employment to fall by nine percent,[i] taxable sales by 12 percent,[ii] and a massively diminished visitor season in 2020. As of May 2021, the Borough had reported nearly 4,500 cases of COVID-19, over 100 hospitalizations, and 22 deaths.[iii] The rollout of vaccines in the spring of 2021 improved optimism about a return to normalcy. However, the cruise ship season in 2021 appeared to face formidable obstacles as of the writing of this document, as the ships were disallowed to enter Canadian waters.

# Resiliency Action Plan

Recognizing the very real danger posed by unexpected negative shocks, KPEDD has taken the lead in anticipating—and responding to—resiliency challenges. In cooperation with partner organizations, KPEDD lays out the following framework for resiliency.

**Pre-Disaster Planning.** Careful coordination and planning for potential disasters ahead of time can pay off when a negative event occurs. A pre-disaster recovery plan being spearheaded by KPEDD will describe key stakeholders, roles, actions, and responsibilities in the event of a natural disaster. The major stakeholders include KPB, municipal governments, tribes, chambers of commerce, industry associations, and others. As it has during COVID-19, KPEDD can be the primary coordinating role among these groups in promoting economic recovery. The pre-disaster recovery plan will also include a collection of resources and tools for business recovery, such as sources of funding.

**Activating Information Networks.** The flow of timely and accurate information between governments, business groups, and residents is essential during a disaster. KPEDD is utilizing a network of partner organizations, detailed web resources, access to media outlets, and a large business distribution list to maintain the flow of information. Maintaining close contact with federal funding agencies, the State Legislature, and state agencies is also essential. During a prolonged downturn, business surveys can relay vital information to decisionmakers about near-term needs for policy fixes and financial resources. KPEDD's frequent business surveys function as an early-warning indicator as well, flagging concerns that can lead to large-scale layoffs or closures, as well as to facilitate business retention and expansion (BRE) activities.

**Ensuring Access to Capital.** Disasters often cause businesses to experience sudden revenue shortfalls, often forcing them lay off workers, reduce hours, or close their operations entirely. KPEDD has operated a revolving loan fund for more than a decade, and is currently working to restructure the fund as a source of emergency capital to respond to resiliency shocks. In addition to its own capital sources, helping business access other financial resources will play a key role in future disasters, should they occur. In 2020, KPEDD executed a contract with the State of Alaska to promote the AK CARES business grant program, resulting in \$50 million being distributed to over 1,000 COVID-impacted businesses—proportionately more than any other region of the state. Other government capital programs like the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) were critical resources, but businesses often required the assistance of organizations like KPEDD and the Alaska Small Business Development Center. KPEDD will reprise its role as both a facilitator and provider of capital during future events.

**Improve Broadband Access and Affordability.** Broadband is critical infrastructure in today's global economy. The pandemic resulted in roughly 40 percent of Alaska workers being forced to work from home for extended periods during 2020 and 2021. The education system, from K-12 through college, also had to utilize videoconferencing services to function. For households without affordable, high-speed internet, remote education and work were not feasible. In addition, many businesses also had to transition to selling their products or services online, such as restaurants using mobile apps for take-out and delivery. Although these pandemic conditions are not permanent, they made clear the central role broadband access plays in economic life. In the Kenai Peninsula, less than half of households have access to speeds of 100 MBPS, compared to almost 99 percent in Anchorage. Some smaller communities, such as Hope, lack access to speeds greater than 25 MBPS. To improve broadband access, KPEDD is committed to advocating for federal funds to build middle-mile and last-mile satellite and fiber infrastructure.

**Streamlining Job Access.** Job loss is one of the most feared outcomes from any sort of resiliency shock. Declining revenues cause employers to lay off workers, but when conditions improve, employers often struggle to find qualified workers. Both challenges have been apparent during the COVID recession. At the same time, workforce readiness is a persistent challenge for businesses, who are often forced to hire non-locals when faced with high seasonal demand. With all of these in mind, KPEDD launched the Kenai Peninsula Workforce website as an extensive resource hub for jobseekers, employers, and training programs. The website provides detailed information about high-demand occupations in the region, including average salaries, qualifications, and associated training programs. It also links to job postings, scholarships, apprenticeships, and jobseeker tools like a resume builder.

**Ensure Transportation Reliability.** Transportation infrastructure is a potential vulnerability for the Kenai Peninsula. The Seward and Sterling Highways connect the Borough communities to each other and to Anchorage, and suffer frequent shutdowns due to fatal traffic accidents and, periodically, avalanches. Poor maintenance conditions in the winter can also sever this key artery. The Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS), which has suffered from budget cuts, is another area of transportation concern. AMHS serves Homer and Seldovia but has been forced to reduce the frequency of sailings, disrupting an affordable means to moving people and goods. Seldovia is particularly dependent on AMHS, as it lacks highway access. KPEDD advocates for ongoing support for highway maintenance and safety improvements, and continuing state funding for AMHS.

**Efficient Land Use.** Although the Kenai Peninsula is vast in size, relatively little land is available for residential and commercial use. Between the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge and the Chugach National Forest, private ownership is primarily limited to lands adjacent to the highway system. Efficient use of land to maximize economic benefit is therefore critically important. One protective measure to do so is erosion control and mitigation. As mentioned previously, lands in Homer, Kenai, and Seward, as well as other areas threatened by erosion will require mitigation and protection measures. Without flood and erosion control, private investment will not occur in certain areas like Downtown Kenai. Other sites formerly used for mining or another purpose can also be reused, such as Red Mountain near Seldovia, a former mine proposed for use as a recreational area.

**A Focus on Emerging Industries.** One way to ensure a prosperous economic future amid uncertainty is to diversify the regional economy by promoting emerging industries. On the Kenai Peninsula, this includes shellfish farming, marine trades, agriculture, seafood byproduct utilization, and others. KPEDD assists these emerging sectors through business advising, project funding, workforce development, and lending activities. Emerging sectors often require specialized types of infrastructure to thrive. For example, the marine trades require ports and harbors, vessel hall outs, and specialized buildings. Both agriculture and seafood depend on cold storage. KPEDD and partner organizations work to source funding for these types of projects wherever possible.





# Goals

The regionally-driven goals are selected based on relevant data in the final 2021 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

The overarching accepted goal of maintaining and cultivating the high Quality of Living/Place on the Kenai Peninsula. This includes continuing to develop the Kenai Peninsula "brand" for residents, visitors, and businesses, and promoting expansion of recreational amenities and public access. Within the overarching goal, five complimentary goals were developed as indicators of success for KPEDD to concentrate our efforts on throughout the lifecycle of the 2021 CEDS.

01

## Technology & Telecommunications

- Expanded broadband access across the Borough

02

## Workforce & Human Capital

- Industry partnerships and VOC-tech
- Attract, retain, and train a qualified workforce

03

## Infrastructure & Land Use

- Industry-focused infrastructure
- Stability and resiliency in transportation infrastructure
- Mitigation/responsible use of lands

# 04

## Business Climate & Entrepreneurship

- Outreach, education, and information sharing with government in support of businesses
- Promote responsible development of natural resources
- Develop and support entrepreneurship
- Create incentives to bring new businesses to the area

# 05

## Regional Partnerships

- Coordinate with industry
- Coordinate with municipalities, communities, and non-profits

The complimentary goals succinctly align with the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration's national investment priorities. EDA's investment priorities provide an overarching framework to ensure its grant investment portfolio – ranging from planning to infrastructure construction -- contributes to local efforts to build, improve, or better leverage economic assets that allow businesses to succeed and regional economies to prosper and become more resilient.

- **Equity:** Economic development planning or implementation projects that advance equity across America through investments that directly benefit 1) one or more traditionally underserved populations, or 2) underserved communities within geographies that have been systemically and/or systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic prosperity.
- **Recovery & Resilience:** Economic development planning or implementation projects that build economic resilience to and long-term recovery from economic shocks that may benefit from economic diversification-focused resilience.
- **Workforce Development:** Economic development planning or implementation projects that support workforce education and skills training activities directly connected to the hiring and skills needs of the business community and that result in well-paying, quality jobs.
- **Manufacturing:** Economic development planning or implementation projects that encourage job creation, business expansion, technology and capital upgrades, and productivity growth in manufacturing, including efforts that contribute to the competitiveness and growth of domestic suppliers or to the domestic production of innovative, high-value products and production technologies.

- **Technology-Based Economic Development:** Economic development planning or implementation projects that foster regional knowledge ecosystems that support entrepreneurs and startups, including the commercialization of new technologies, that are creating technology-driven businesses and high-skilled, well-paying jobs of the future.
- **Environmentally-Sustainable Development:** Economic development planning or implementation projects that help address the climate crisis including through the development and implementation of green products (PDF), green processes (PDF) (including green infrastructure), green places (PDF), and green buildings (PDF).
- **Exports & FDI:** Economic development planning or implementation projects that enhance or build community assets to support growth in US exports or increased foreign direct investment.

# Action Plan

Overarching Goal: Quality of Place/Quality of Living on the Kenai Peninsula

| Objective   | Strategies and Actions  | Metrics/Impacts  | Key Partners   |
|---|---|--|--|
| 0.1 Develop the Kenai Peninsula “brand” for residents, visitors, and businesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate a promotion campaign to attract families to relocate to the Kenai Peninsula.</li> <li>• Support telework/remote work opportunities.</li> <li>• Sustain and enhance visitor marketing efforts to attract more shoulder-season and independent visitors.</li> <li>• Promote the Kenai Peninsula as a safe destination during COVID-19 with high vaccination rates and minimal crowds.</li> <li>• Support arts and cultural programming at the local level.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Above average tourism rates, increase in visitors to region, sales tax revenues, gross sales increases.</li> <li>• Increase in fishing license sales (ADFG).</li> <li>• Hashtags, locations shared on social media platform, increase in website visits.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA)</li> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Alaska State Parks</li> <li>• Municipal governments</li> </ul> |
| 0.2 Promote expansion of recreational amenities and public access               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund, develop, and construct the Soldotna Fieldhouse.</li> <li>• Fund, develop, and construct the Soldotna Riverfront Redevelopment Project</li> <li>• Advance the Seward to Fairbanks trail concept.</li> <li>• Solicit additional recreational projects for federal funding.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased platforms to share project information.</li> <li>• Project approvals/votes.</li> <li>• Funding opportunities.</li> <li>• Increased number of handicap accessible amenities</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development Administration (EDA)</li> <li>• Municipal government</li> </ul>  |

## Goal 1: Technology & Telecommunications

| Objective   | Strategies and Actions   | Metrics/Impacts  | Key Partners   |
|---|--|--|--|
| 1.1 Expand broadband access across the borough                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create regional Broadband Taskforce to identify specific needs</li> <li>• Secure federal or other funds to build or expand fiber optics lines or satellite internet access to all communities to improve speeds and costs.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average speeds.</li> <li>• Monthly costs.</li> <li>• Percent of households with access.</li> <li>• Level of community investment</li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denali Commission</li> <li>• Economic Development Administration (EDA)</li> <li>• Tribes and Municipal Government</li> <li>• Large employers</li> </ul>   |
| 1.2 Improve digital infrastructure to advance economic activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access to videoconferencing services at public facilities such as libraries, civic buildings, and schools.</li> <li>• Encourage development of businesses related to information technology.</li> <li>• Enable hospitals and clinics to make better use of telemedicine.</li> <li>• Provide communities and residents with greater access to education through distance learning.</li> <li>• Make the Kenai Peninsula more attractive to technology driven businesses and corporations.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enhance Public safety and emergency response systems.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Encourage and promote the use of distance delivery for business workshops and workforce trainings.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of technology startups.</li> <li>• Number of public buildings with videoconferencing services.</li> <li>• Virtual trainings held.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USDA</li> <li>• State of Alaska (DCCED, Alaska Development Team)</li> <li>• Regional Tribes</li> <li>• Educational Institutions</li> <li>• Regional Public Service Providers such as Libraries</li> <li>• Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI)</li> <li>• Cook Inlet Tribal Council</li> <li>• Chugach Regional Resources Commission</li> <li>• Incorporated and Unincorporated Community Representatives</li> <li>• Utility and Service Providers</li> </ul> |



## Goal 2: Workforce & Human Capital

| Objective  | Strategies and Actions  | Metrics/Impacts  | Key Partners  |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>2.1 Build stronger industry partnerships for K-12, voc-tech., secondary, post-secondary, and adult education.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create partnerships between industry and K-12 programs as a gateway and pipeline to facilitate career exploration and to build awareness of potential careers.</li> <li>• Support apprenticeship or engaged learning opportunities that provide actual workforce readiness.</li> <li>• Collaborate to start an agricultural training program for students to work on farms during the summer.</li> <li>• Develop and implement Tyonek tribal workforce plan</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased apprenticeship program enrollment numbers</li> <li>• Student outreach numbers</li> <li>• Employer outreach surveys</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AVTEC</li> <li>• University of Alaska</li> <li>• Employers</li> <li>• School districts &amp; home school programs</li> <li>• Tribal governments</li> <li>• Alutiiq Pride Marine Institute</li> </ul>   |
| <p>2.2 Attract, train, and retain a qualified workforce.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand on “attraction” campaigns to show off that this is a great place to live. Highlight remote work opportunities.</li> <li>• Targeted outreach for specific community groups (veterans, adult learners, at risk/recovery population) focused on entering the workforce and accessing training.</li> <li>• Provide online training opportunities including re-skilling or up-skilling programs. Including credit and non-credit options.</li> <li>• Identify the need for new programs and certificates based on industry feedback; including training around new/emerging technology.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater application rates</li> <li>• Increased enrollment in colleges</li> <li>• Increased apprenticeship applications</li> </ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alaska Department of Labor</li> <li>• Young Professionals Group</li> <li>• Veterans’ groups</li> <li>• AVTEC (or provider of re-skilling/up-skilling training)</li> <li>• University</li> <li>• KPEDD; Workforce Development Website</li> <li>• Kenai Peninsula School District</li> </ul> |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support affordable housing efforts/programs in the Kenai Peninsula through public/private partnerships</li> </ul>  |  |   |
| <p>2.3 Connect job-seekers to employers and training opportunities.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and grow the Kenai Peninsula Workforce website as a hub for employers, educators, trainers, and job-seekers.</li> <li>• Develop an ongoing assessment of workforce needs for each industry.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased website traffic and clicks.</li> <li>• Number of employer engagements.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local/borough employers</li> <li>• Vocational/technical programs</li> <li>• Kenai Peninsula Borough School District</li> <li>• UAA Kenai Peninsula College</li> </ul>  |



## Goal 3: Infrastructure, Land Use & Natural Resources

| Objective   | Strategies and Actions   | Metrics/Impacts  | Key Partners   |
|---|--|--|--|
| 3.1 Develop industry-specific infrastructure                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the Seward Dock and Rail project.</li> <li>• Fund and develop the Alutiiq Pride Visitor Center in Seward.</li> <li>• Develop cold storage capacity to grow the agricultural sector.</li> <li>• Advocate and seek funding for port and harbor expansions in Homer, Kenai, Seldovia, and Seward.</li> <li>• Develop and expand shoreside infrastructure to support the seafood, oil and gas, and marine trade sectors.</li> <li>• Develop the “KPEDD innovation campus” concept with commercial kitchen.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project dollars secured (public and private)</li> <li>• Complete implementation and completion of projects</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alaska Railroad</li> <li>• Farming groups</li> <li>• Agrium USA Inc.</li> <li>• University</li> <li>• AVTEC</li> <li>• Chugach Regional Resources Commission</li> <li>• Alutiiq Pride Marine Institute</li> </ul> |
| 3.2 Advance stability and resiliency in transportation infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for stable funding for the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) to maintain or improve service to Peninsula communities.</li> <li>• Assess impacts of reduced AMHS service for affected communities.</li> <li>• Advocate for year-round maintenance of the Seward and Sterling Highways to maintain access and safety at all times.</li> <li>• Advocate for ongoing state support to improve and maintain airports.</li> <li>• Identify and advocate for other needed improvements in road, marine, rail, and air transportation.</li> </ul>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of advocacy engagements.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMHS</li> <li>• ARDORs</li> <li>• Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&amp;PF)</li> </ul>   |
| 3.3 Mitigation & responsible use of lands                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete erosion mitigation projects in Kenai and Homer to enable continued development.</li> <li>• Assess the reuse/redevelopment of former gravel pits for new uses (such as recreation sites).</li> <li>• Identify and assess the need for zoning improvements between municipal and borough governments.</li> <li>• Reclaim and redevelop the former Red Mountain Mine site in Kachemak Bay into a recreation area with access and trails.</li> <li>• Mitigate spruce beetle damage by removing dead trees and milling the lumber for commercial or residential use.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dollar value of public and private investment.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US Forest Service</li> <li>• US Fish and Wildlife Service</li> <li>• Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation</li> </ul>   |
| 3.4 Promote responsible development of natural resources              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for a stable and predictable tax structure for mining, oil, and gas operations at state and local level.</li> <li>• Advocate for ongoing incentives to encourage oil and gas exploration in Cook Inlet to secure energy supplies.</li> <li>• Support responsible mining projects that create local jobs and revenues.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of advocacy engagements.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State of Alaska</li> <li>• Kenai Peninsula Borough</li> <li>• Chugach Regional Resources Commission</li> <li>• Industry Groups</li> </ul>   |

## Goal 4: Business Climate & Entrepreneurship

| Objective  | Strategies and Actions   | Metrics/Impacts   | Key Partners  |
|--|--|---|---|
| 4.1 Outreach, education, and information sharing in support of businesses resiliency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue business retention and expansion (BRE) activities to determine health of businesses and ways to assist with pandemic recovery.</li> <li>Promote buy local program</li> <li>Help businesses access other support services such as the Small Business Development Center.</li> <li>Conduct surveys of businesses to evaluate ongoing needs and areas of assistance needed.</li> <li>Provide updates on the regional economy and business climate to chambers, local governments, and industry groups.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of surveys completed.</li> <li>Number of businesses provided with assistance.</li> <li>Number of businesses reporting favorable views of business climate.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alaska Small Business Center (SBDC)</li> <li>Small Business Administration. (SBA)</li> </ul>   |
| 4.2 Improve access to capital for businesses   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restructure KPEDD's revolving loan fund to meet needs during an economic downturn or natural disaster.</li> <li>Assist businesses with obtaining relief funding through federal, state, and local assistance programs.</li> <li>Assess the use of financial incentives such as tax credits and abatements to attract new businesses to the region or help existing businesses expand.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding dollars awarded to businesses.</li> <li>Number of businesses assisted.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA)</li> <li>Small Business Administration (SBA)</li> <li>Economic Development Administration (EDA)</li> <li>Private lenders</li> </ul>   |
| 4.3 Develop and support entrepreneurship and new business formation                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host entrepreneurship workshops for individuals starting businesses.</li> <li>Assist in running Startup Weekend on the Kenai Peninsula every November.</li> <li><u>Advise</u> and counsel startup businesses.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of workshops hosted.</li> <li>Number of businesses assisted.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>UA Center for Economic Development (UA CED)</li> <li>Alaska Small Business Development Center (SBDC)</li> </ul>  |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Central Peninsula Small Business Week</li> </ul>  |   |   |
| 4.4 Support emerging sectors with high growth potential                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist mariculture operations in meeting capital and expansion needs.</li> <li>Counsel and assist industrial maritime businesses such as ship builders and repair operations.</li> <li>Initiate a pilot project to develop seafood byproducts into marketable products.</li> <li>Counsel and assist manufacturing businesses.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of marine focused businesses assisted.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alaska MEP Center</li> <li>Alaska Small Business Development Center (SBDC)</li> <li>Alaska Mariculture Alliance</li> <li>ARDORs</li> <li>Alaska Department of Commerce</li> <li>Chugach Regional Resources Commission</li> <li>Alutiiq Pride Marine Institute</li> </ul> |

## Goal 5: Build & Grow Regional Partnerships for Resiliency

| Objective  | Strategies and Actions   | Metrics/Impacts   | Key Partners   |
|--|--|---|--|
| 5.1 Proactively coordinate roles for economic resiliency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Align and streamline assistance roles between funding agencies and resource partners in the event of an economic disaster.</li> <li>Promote, and expand current processes for regular communication, monitoring and updating business community needs and issues to be used post-event.</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete KPEDD resiliency toolkit</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding agencies</li> <li>Borough government</li> <li>Municipal governments</li> <li>Tribal entities &amp; Native Organizations</li> <li>Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>Industry groups</li> <li>Nonprofits</li> </ul> |
| 5.2 Produce pre-disaster recovery plan                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a collection of resources (especially financial resources) of private, local, state, and federal tools for economic recovery for residents, businesses, and communities.</li> <li>Generate a plan describing key stakeholders, roles, actions, and responsibilities in the event of a natural disaster.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete KPEDD resiliency toolkit</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding agencies</li> <li>Borough government</li> <li>Municipal governments</li> <li>Tribal entities &amp; Native Organizations</li> <li>Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>Industry groups</li> <li>Nonprofits</li> </ul> |





# FY23 Efforts Based on CEDS Goals

## 1. TECHNOLOGY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Leading broadband infrastructure development through a broadly represented the Broadband Taskforce that includes IT professionals and communication liaisons for major user groups (i.e. hospital, utility providers, school district, government, tribes, and industry)

## 2. WORKFORCE & HUMAN CAPITAL

Supporting educational institutions, industry, and the Department of Labor by providing up-to-date information on leading employment opportunities, training requirements, wage data, scholarship opportunities, changes in state and federal regulation, changing and emerging industries, and economic forecasts for the region.

## 3. INFRASTRUCTURE & LAND USE

Supporting sustainable development of both emerging industries and recreational opportunities by working with state and federal partners to grow mariculture farming and connect existing trail systems to support greater outdoor opportunities for resident and tourists

## 4. BUSINESS CLIMATE & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Connecting and providing new and existing businesses with financial and planning resources through one-on-one consultation, the development of a toolkit, and connecting businesses with partners and investors with the ultimate goal of reinforcing regional resiliency

## 5. REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Leading regional discussions and coordination efforts between Industry, municipalities, incorporated and unincorporated communities, educators, and non-profits by providing platforms for discussion and disbursing information to regional stakeholders

# FY24 Projects Based on CEDS Goals

## 1. TECHNOLOGY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Continue leading broadband infrastructure development through the Broadband Taskforce; providing a platform for regular communication between federal and state funding agencies, providers, and consumers to ensure regional needs are met - including challenging fabric maps, prioritizing buildout locations, public outreach, stakeholder identification, and advocating at state and federal levels

## 2. WORKFORCE & HUMAN CAPITAL

Coordination of Transportation, housing, and childcare access by connecting funding agencies and private investors with community advocacy groups, existing providers, and incorporated and unincorporated communities to fill gaps in resources, adjust existing services as needed, and identify funding opportunities to expand current infrastructure.

## 2. WORKFORCE & HUMAN CAPITAL

Upgrading and expanding both [www.kpeddd.org](http://www.kpeddd.org) and [www.kenaipeninsulaworkforce.org](http://www.kenaipeninsulaworkforce.org) sites with current infographic statistics, incorporating emerging industry clusters, adding new resources and layered GIS maps, stronger marketing strategies, and improving integration between the two platforms.

## 3. INFRASTRUCTURE & LAND USE

Continue developing a viable and sustainable mariculture industry producing shellfish and aquatic plants, increase mariculture-related manufacturing, and supporting industries in the region. This will be a four-year industry-lead, coordinated effort with a long-term goal to grow the industry to \$100 million annually over the next 20 years producing a significant amount of tax revenue for the Kenai Peninsula Borough. This effort will utilize private partnerships that encourage private investment into local economies, increase food security, create jobs, reduce carbon dioxide in coastal waters, and increase revenue for state and local government.

#### 4. BUSINESS CLIMATE & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Restructure the existing Microloan Program to allow for larger loans caps, measure private investment and job growth, decrease interest rates, utilize unused capacity, and mitigate unnecessary risk.

#### 5. REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Design a structure and application checklist for entities pursuing foundation and philanthropic funding, creating a consistent application resource that assists entities constructing a formal proposal. Strengthening the strategy and application process will guide consistent and sustainable development in our most vulnerable communities. The foundation funding request structure would include: 1. sources of funding (programs available, Identification of “best fit” for categorical requests), 2. background research (Identifying community needs and vulnerabilities, regional assets), 3. package structure and presentation (effectively communicating goals, project needs, and anticipated outcomes), 4. gathering and gauging community support (Identifying stakeholders, letters of support, tracking match), 5. measuring success (measurable and reportable deliverables, methods of measurements).

#### 5. REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Continue hosting regional discussions and leading coordination efforts between Industry, municipalities, incorporated and unincorporated communities, educators, and non-profits.

The 2024 Industry Outlook Forum and Tribal Economic Forum will continue to provide a platform for federal and state agencies, Tribes and Tribal Corporations, industry leaders, and resource providers to discuss project updates, economic projections, and changing regulations that effect the region.

Present updates quarterly to the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly, incorporated and unincorporated communities and stakeholder groups.

Want to get involved? Send us an email or call us!



## Acknowledgements

This strategic plan was developed in partnership with the University of Alaska Center for Economic Development (UAA CED); Economic Development Administration (EDA); Kenai Peninsula Borough; incorporated and unincorporated communities; Tribes; industry leaders; non-profit resource providers; and residents, develops the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs)

### **KENAI PENINSULA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT**

[www.KPEDD.org](http://www.KPEDD.org) - [www.KenaiPeninsulaWorkforce.org](http://www.KenaiPeninsulaWorkforce.org)

14896 Kenai Spur Hwy - Kenai, AK 99611

907-283-3335 - [Info@kpedd.org](mailto:Info@kpedd.org)



# City of Homer

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## MEMORANDUM EDC 23-035

TO: Economic Development Advisory Commission  
FROM: Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager  
DATE: June 7, 2023  
SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan

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**Recommendation Action:** No action at this time. This is a review item once a year.

I will have an update at the meeting about the Comprehensive Plan; Council may take action at their meeting Monday .... To be determined....

A comprehensive plan is essentially a blue print of how a community wants to change over time, and how the city government will do business. This document is required by state law. Alaska has fairly light requirements of what must be in a comprehensive plan; states like California or Washington have extensive rules that encompass housing plans and environmental impacts.

I have attached Chapter 7, Economic Vitality. You can see how some of the current EDC work items draw from the plan (Goal #1). For some context, this plan was written in 2006/2007, and adopted in 2008. Around 2015, the City began an update to the plan, which took about three years to accomplish. It was adopted in 2018. Some of the plan is still relevant; some of it is dated.

You can check out the whole plan here: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/planning/long-range-planning>

### Attachment

Chapter 7, Economic Vitality

# CHAPTER 7 ECONOMIC VITALITY

*Vision Statement: Homer’s economic industries remain strong and show continued growth.*

## Overview

This chapter presents goals and objectives related to economic development. While the private and non-profit sectors, along with state and federal spending, ultimately drives much of the economic activity, local government plays an important role in stimulating and guiding growth through its land use and infrastructure policies and projects.

The 1989 comprehensive plan stated:

*Though it is generally recognized that fishing has been the backbone of the Homer economy for the past forty years, diversification of the Homer economy has taken place, especially in the last few years. Tourism, commercial and government services, retail trade, and a retirement population have been added in [the 1980s]...*

These trends have continued and perhaps accelerated in the years since the 1989 plan. Additionally, as state and federal funding has changed, local and regional governments are bearing increased costs in providing services. Private sector economic health and growth are required to build the tax base if residents want to maintain existing government services and facilities.

Most of the economic development actions presented here are tied to topics addressed in other chapters. For example, recommendations regarding commercial development are included in Chapter 4 – Land Use. As a result, much of the value of this chapter is for those readers who are focused on economic issues and want to see a compilation of plan policies regarding economic development together in a single chapter. In 2011, the city adopted the Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS document is a broad document covering many sectors of Homer’s economy.

Homer’s quality of life is a principal economic asset. Maintaining and improving the quality of life in Homer is crucial to keeping existing business and attracting new business and professional activity. Quality of life is challenging to define because it involves many dimensions of a community to which people place varying degrees of importance. The elements of quality of life that are particularly valuable to economic development are those that make the community especially attractive to residents, visitors, and small businesses. While there is room for further improvement, Homer currently possesses many such elements.

### **Homer’s Quality of Life Elements**

- A strikingly beautiful natural setting
- A diverse, engaged, involved community, and rich civic life
- Diverse culture and leisure activities, including ready access to parks and a wide range of year-round outdoor recreation
- Eclectic neighborhoods such as Old Town and Pioneer Ave.
- Access to education and lifelong learning
- A feeling of safety and freedom from crime
- A clean, healthy, natural environment
- An active arts community, tradition of skill and interest in performing and visual arts
- Multiple transportation and access options, a developing trail system, and road access to Anchorage
- Access to commercial and recreational activities in and around Kachemak Bay
- High quality, comprehensive healthcare service

## Summary of Goals

**GOAL 1:** Define and encourage economic development that meets the desires and interests of Homer residents and supports the unique character of the community.

**GOAL 2:** Encourage the retention and creation of more year-round and higher wage employment.

**GOAL 3:** Identify and promote industries that show a capacity for growth.

**GOAL 4:** Support renewable and non-renewable energy services.

**GOAL 5:** Strengthen Homer as a tourism destination.

**GOAL 6:** Support community efforts to establish affordable housing.

## Goals and Objectives for Economic Vitality

**GOAL 1:** Define and encourage economic development that meets the desires and interests of Homer residents and supports the unique character of the community.

Homer residents would like to foster economic development in its many existing sectors. Education, sustainable tourism, health care, construction, commercial fishing and marine industries, arts, and culture are the industries that Homer has been built upon. These industries are viable and stable today and offer good prospects for growth. The remainder of this chapter looks in more detail at steps to strengthen Homer's economy, and to do so in a manner that provides economic opportunity while sustaining Homer's unique character and high quality of life.

### Implementation Strategies

- Support local businesses with internal and external policies.
- Partner with organizations that have interests in the success of local merchants and products.
- Review and update city economic plans.



**GOAL 2: Encourage the retention and creation of more year-round, higher wage jobs.**

Homer residents desire more year round, living wage jobs. This in turn will help support small businesses, and the tax base.

**Objective A:** Increase year-round employment that will enable local people to work, live, and raise their families in Homer.

While almost all city actions will ultimately affect the course of economic change and job growth, city actions to promote year-round jobs include those listed below:

**Implementation Strategies**

- Consider zoning regulations that support new business opportunities while minimizing negative impacts.
- Evaluate opportunities to create and support public and private infrastructure.
- Encourage science, information infrastructure, and technology-based business development.
- Evaluate regional or other successes for opportunity within Homer.

**Objective B:** Encourage retention of existing and the relocation of new Federal and State Government jobs and training programs to Homer.

Government jobs are an important part of the local and regional economy. Government employment, whether research, visitor or education related, comprises 17.5% of local jobs. (American Community Survey 2014). Some government employment is found in every community, such as local, borough and state jobs related to day-to-day activities (airports, roads, schools, etc.). In addition, Homer has many residents who are employed through state agencies such as state parks, the court system, public health, the university, including the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve, and federal agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, which are headquartered in Homer. The Coast Guard also has a presence in the community. The City of Homer is also known as an important base for marine research and education activities.

**Implementation Strategies**

- Work to retain existing state and federal jobs.
- Promote Homer as a place to expand and attract government operations



Homer: Not just the Halibut Capital of the World



**Objective C: Support efforts to increase the scale and scope of the education industry to support a skilled workforce.**

Education is important to Homer’s economic vitality for two reasons. First, it provides residents with the ability to acquire the skills and knowledge (“human capital”) needed to succeed in the global economy, and find a local job. To the extent people can acquire these skills and knowledge without leaving home, they can earn higher incomes, create new businesses and jobs for others, keep their education expenditures circulating in the local economy, and provide the skilled workers needed for existing local jobs. Education is also an exportable product if people come to Homer to learn.

University of Alaska provides essential post-secondary and vocational education to Homer residents. The economic impact is broad and significant. Additional educational programs are provided by several nonprofit organizations operating in Homer and across Kachemak Bay. The marine environment and spectacular setting of Homer and Kachemak Bay are significant assets that could lead to growth of the education industry. The implementation strategies below apply not only to Kenai Peninsula College (KPC), but also to any other interested educational institution.

**Implementation Strategies**

- Support development of programs that prepare individuals through workforce development
- Support opportunities for partnerships and collaborative educational programs

**GOAL 3: Identify and promote industries that show a capacity for growth.**

**Objective A: Recognize emerging industries.**

Homer is a place of big ideas and entrepreneurial spirit. Examples include the fervor with which local agriculture has developed, particularly high tunnel cultivation and commercial peony growing. These are growing local and regional business opportunities. Over time, there will be new economic opportunities that arise; the city should be open to these new ideas and support those that show reasonable opportunities for growth.

**Implementation Strategies**

- Interact with those involved in introducing new industries and services to Homer

**Objective B: Promote the marine trades including mariculture and shipping industries.**

Homer’s harbor and associated marine trade and services activities are an important component of the local and regional economy. Marine related activities could be expanded to increase the number of living wage, skilled jobs in the community. Local seafood processing, boat building, and fabrication services offer a chance for a local product to reach the local, state and national markets. Homer’s public and private port facilities also serve as a staging area for freight destined to more remote parts of the coast.

**Implementation Strategies**

- Work to identify and support infrastructure for marine related industries

**Objective C:** Promote recreation, the arts, and non-governmental organizations as a complement to tourism and as an export industry.

Recreation and the arts are key components of the Homer economy and support the tourism industry and Homer's quality of life. Actions to promote the arts include those listed below. Some of these objectives are best carried out by the City, while others are best undertaken by local arts groups and tourism marketing organizations with City cooperation and encouragement.

#### Implementation Strategies

- Consider and review zoning for opportunities that support the arts industry
- Support sustainable recreational facilities and opportunities (*see Objective E of Chapter 6, Public Services and Facilities*)

**Objective D:** Support the health care and wellness industries.

Health care and wellness are a growing sector of Homer's economy. This is partially driven by an aging population, but also by resident's desire for improved health. Over the past decade, South Peninsula Hospital has completed a major expansion, several new dental clinics have been constructed, and the Seldovia Village Tribe constructed both a medical clinic and a wellness center. Specialized medical services such as surgeries, sleep studies, oncology and VA care are also available. As the health care industry continues to change, Homer can expect to see growth in the types of medical services available, and more jobs in this field.

#### Implementation Strategies

- Support allied programs and businesses that strengthen Homer's local health care opportunities

**GOAL 4:** Support regional renewable and non-renewable energy exploration and production.

Homer citizens support researching and pursuing renewable energy projects. Outside of the city, oil and gas exploration continues. Supporting the exploration, extraction, and renewable energy industries does not necessarily have to compromise Homer's scenery or quality of life. There are many opportunities to benefit from the construction, research, and extraction activities, whether through direct employment, or by providing services such as worker housing, catering, fuel, payroll, and transportation to local and non-local contractors who work on site (*also, see Chapter 8, Energy Plan*).

#### Implementation Strategies

- Consider Homer's ability to provide support services

**GOAL 5:** Strengthen Homer as a tourism, business travel, education and recreation event destination.

Homer is already one of Alaska's premier tourist destinations and appears to be enjoying continuing growth in visitation and expenditures. A trend is also emerging to hold professional conferences and educational events in the community in addition to the many athletic, cultural and recreation opportunities. City actions can have a significant impact on the economic importance of the visitor economy by promoting longer stays, increased expenditures per person, and more repeat visitation.

Equally important, City government plays a crucial role in guiding the growth of tourism to maximize its benefits and to minimize the costs imposed on the people of Homer.

**Objective A:** Invest in local infrastructure, parks, and civic improvements that will serve locals well as visitors by promoting longer stays, increased expenditures per person, and more repeat visitation as a form of economic development.

One economic development strategy is to find ways to encourage visitors to stay in the community longer during their visit, or to visit again in the future. The Farmer’s Market in downtown Anchorage is an example; visitors to the market also visit other downtown businesses. Even staying an hour or two longer in the community may result in visitors eating more meals in local restaurants or spending more money shopping. The City benefits through increased sales tax revenue. To keep Homer an attractive destination requires that the City and private business work in partnership to provide the basic services that visitors and locals expect. These improvements and public expenditures should also benefit local taxpayers.

Effort should be made in the future to have more tourists visit downtown Homer to support year round businesses. Seasonally, the Spit will continue to be a huge draw, but investment in tourist amenities should be equally focused on downtown Homer.

#### Implementation Strategies

- Maintain a welcoming environment that serves the needs of visitors

**Objective B:** Support efforts to improve community attractions, including land and water trails, and access to marine activities and the marine environment. Improve links between attractions.

Homer can be considered to have three main tourism destination areas: The downtown and Old Town area, the Spit, and the area across Kachemak Bay. While each of these areas currently attracts numerous visitors, it is likely that more tourists could be accommodated and more spending could be encouraged if the unique attributes of each area were further developed and if better connections were made among the three areas. Ideally, the enhancements that attract more tourists equally benefit local residents as well, resulting in an increase to business activity, tax receipts, and quality of life.

#### Implementation Strategies

- Improve the ability and convenience of travelers to travel throughout Homer

**Objective C:** Increase the net benefits that tourism brings to Homer.

Homer’s distinctive character and attractions create substantial economic benefits to the community in terms of jobs, business opportunities, and tax revenues. Tourism also helps the community host a greater number and diversity of businesses and services than what local spending alone can support. While tourism creates a wide array of benefits, it can also be disruptive to local life. For example, tourism may exacerbate traffic congestion, transform commercial areas from local to visitor-serving, cause crowding at recreation destinations enjoyed by residents, and potentially adversely affect fish, wildlife, and other elements of the natural environment. Community members have expressed a desire to encourage tourism activities that do not require extensive changes to the existing environment, but rather help to conserve Homer’s natural setting and improve the area.

As a result of this mix of positive and potential negative impacts, Homer should pursue a guided tourism growth policy. The community will promote tourism growth, but do so in a manner that helps sustain the qualities of the community that attract residents and visitors.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- Promote tourist amenities that provide benefits beyond the tourist season
- Review the cost to maintain tourist amenities and minimize the amount of local subsidy
- Promote tourist activities that have the least negative impact to locals
- Promote Homer as a tourist destination

### **GOAL 6: Support community efforts to establish affordable housing.**

Many residents expressed the view that economic development depends, at least in part, on a balance between income and the cost of living. Strategies to promote a diverse range of housing options are discussed in *Chapter 4, Land Use*. This goal is included as a component of economic vitality to explicitly reflect the connection between housing opportunities and the economic well-being of Homer.

City government has few tools to address the issue of affordable housing. The direct role of the City of Homer is limited by the fact the City is not a housing authority, and city taxation and development fees are relatively low. In recent years, the Economic Development Commission (EDC) has studied Homer's tax policies. The EDC found that the tax credits for housing that the city could institute do not significantly affect the cost of housing. The market demand is for homes that are more expensive, and the high cost of real estate and land development results in very few new 'affordable' housing units. However, the city can support the efforts of other groups in building new affordable housing units, which will free up units on the private rental market.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- Consider support mechanisms for special population

## Economic Vitality Implementation Table

Table 10. Chapter 7, Economic Vitality Implementation Table

| Project   | Timeframe |          |             | Ongoing | Primary Duty                 |
|---|-----------|----------|-------------|---------|------------------------------|
|   | Near Term | Mid Term | Longer Term |         |                              |
| <b>Goal 1 - Encourage Economic Development</b>  |           |          |             |         |                              |
| 1-1 Support Chamber's Buy Local campaign and source city purchases locally when price competitive.  |           |          |             | x       | Administration               |
| 1-2 Continue the local bidders preference in city procurement policies.   |           |          |             | x       | City Council                 |
| 1-3 Review and make zoning recommendations that promote local agriculture and other locally sourced products.   | x         |          |             | x       | HAPC                         |
| 1-4 Plan for economic development by partnering with organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce. Retain an active board role with the chamber, and involvement with Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District, Inc. (KPEDD), Homer Marine Trades, non-profits and other similar organizations. |           |          |             | x       | Administration               |
| 1-5 Review the Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan.   |           | x        |             |         | EDC                          |
| 1-6 Create an action plan from the CEDS plan.   | x         |          |             |         | Administration, EDC          |
| 1-7 Stay abreast of the requirements of information technology infrastructure.  |           |          |             | x       | HAPC, EDC                    |
| <b>Goal 2 - Encourage Year-round Jobs</b>   |           |          |             |         |                              |
| 2-A-1 Review zoning regulations to ensure new businesses and development are not unduly restricted.   |           |          |             | x       | HAPC                         |
| 2-A-2 Continue to invest in community infrastructure and transportation systems (see <i>Chapter 5, Transportation</i> ).  |           |          |             | x       | City Council, Administration |
| 2-A-3 Identify business needs through business retention program participation.   |           |          |             | x       | EDC                          |
| 2-A-4 Stay abreast of the needs of technology-based business and review the ability of the city to support.   |           |          |             | x       | EDC                          |
| 2-A-5 Partner with KPEDD to identify options for incentives to encourage local business growth.   | x         |          |             | x       | EDC, Administration          |
| 2-A-6 Work with KPEDD to identify regional successes.   | x         |          |             | x       | EDC, Administration          |
| 2-B-1 When local state or federal jobs are being considered for elimination or relocation, lobby to retain them.  |           |          |             | x       | City Council, Administration |

| Project   | Timeframe |          |             | Ongoing | Primary Duty                        |
|---|-----------|----------|-------------|---------|-------------------------------------|
|   | Near Term | Mid Term | Longer Term |         |                                     |
| 2-B-2 Actively work with the Coast Guard to support the retention and expansion of facilities in Homer.   | x         |          |             | x       | City Council, Administration        |
| 2-B-3 Work with state and federal authorities to promote the expansion of their activities in Homer.  |           |          |             | x       | City Council, Administration        |
| 2-C-1 Keep abreast of KPC program offerings and consider resolutions of support.  |           |          |             | x       | City Council                        |
| 2-C-2 Review zoning requirements in regard to student housing opportunities.  |           | x        |             |         | HAPC                                |
| 2-C-3 Support collaborative educational programs.   |           |          |             | x       | City Council                        |
| 2-C-4 Connect sources of information that contribute to identifying local job training needs.   |           |          |             | x       | EDC, Administration                 |
| <b>Goal 3 – Promote Growing Industries</b>  |           |          |             |         |                                     |
| 3-A-1 Periodically review land use regulation effects upon new business opportunities.  |           |          |             | x       | HAPC, Planning                      |
| 3-B-1 Make ice available year round for fish processing, when demand dictates.  |           | x        |             |         | Port                                |
| 3-B-2 Continue to evaluate demands and plan to address ways to support the fishing industry.  |           |          |             | x       | Port and Harbor Commission          |
| 3-B-3 Continue efforts to expand the Deep Water Dock and other Harbor infrastructure.   | x         |          |             | x       | Administration, Port, City Council  |
| 3-B-4 Continue East Boat Harbor expansion studies.  |           |          |             | x       | Administration, Port, City Council  |
| 3-C-1 Review zoning for opportunities that accommodates art studio, art education activities, and residential living ( <i>also, see chapter 4, Land Use</i> ).  | x         |          |             |         | Planning, HAPC                      |
| 3-C-2 Investigate options for creating a new, multi-purpose cultural, performing arts and community center in Homer’s town center ( <i>see the Town Center Plan and Park Art Recreation and Culture Needs Assessment</i> ). |           |          | x           |         | Administration                      |
| 3-D-1 Lobby for support of Kenai Peninsula College (KPC) programs supporting the local healthcare industries.   |           |          |             | x       | City Council                        |
| 3-D-2 Consider shared marketing opportunities to also include Homer as a healthcare destination.  |           |          |             | x       | Administration, Chamber of Commerce |

| Project  | Timeframe |          |             | Ongoing | Primary Duty   |
|--|-----------|----------|-------------|---------|--|
|  | Near Term | Mid Term | Longer Term |         |  |
| <b>Goal 4 – Support Energy Exploration and Production</b>  |           |          |             |         |  |
| 4-1 Maintain and/or expand industrial zones.   |           |          |             | x       | Planning Commission  |
| 4-2 Support community efforts to remediate brownfield locations via letters and resolutions of support and technical assistance for grant applications.  |           |          |             | x       | Administration, City Council, other departments as appropriate |
| 4-3 Continue to review zoning options for provisions of renewable energy systems in the City.  |           |          |             | x       | Planning Commission  |
| 4-4 Promote renewable energy development regionally with resolutions of support.   |           |          |             | x       | City Council   |
| 4-5 Review how land use policies may be used to support energy, mining, oil, and gas support services.   |           |          |             | x       | Planning Commission  |
| <b>Goal 5 – Strengthen Homer as a Destination</b>  |           |          |             |         |  |
| 5-A-1 Support and fund beautification efforts on Pioneer Avenue through budget appropriations, CIP, cost sharing and grant applications.   |           |          |             | x       | City Council, Administration                                   |
| 5-A-2 Ensure that City facilities are sufficient to support events that draw visitors such as festivals and activities (e.g., clean restrooms on the Spit, RV dump stations, adequate trash collection, park maintenance, etc.). |           |          |             | x       | City Council, Administration, Public Works                     |
| 5-B-1 Review opportunities to improve shuttle stops (also, see 5-B-3).   |           |          |             | x       | Public Works, City Council                                     |
| 5-B-2 Design and build a wayfinding system that includes the Spit, Pioneer Ave., and Old Town, consider a local partnership.   |           | x        |             |         | City of Homer, Chamber of Commerce, community partner          |
| 5-B-3 Consider constructing ADA accessible sidewalk improvements and installing benches and trashcans at central shuttle stops, such as the corner of Bunnell and Main.  | x         |          |             |         | Public Works, City Council                                     |
| 5-C-1 Adequately fund maintenance of public facilities.  |           |          |             | x       | City Council, Administration, Public Works                     |
| 5-C-2 When planning new amenities, evaluate projects benefits for both residents and visitors (e.g., trails).  |           |          |             | x       | City Council, Administration, Public Works                     |
| 5-C-3 Support eco-tourism concepts and passive or quiet low-impact recreation activities in marketing information.   |           |          |             | x       | City partnership with Chamber of Commerce                      |

| Project   | Timeframe |          |             | Ongoing | Primary Duty   |
|---|-----------|----------|-------------|---------|--|
|   | Near Term | Mid Term | Longer Term |         |  |
| 5-C-4 When opportunities arise, work with private sector partners to support private sector establishment of conference and convention capabilities.  |           |          |             | x       | Administration                                       |
| 5-C-5 Review infrastructure capacity for the ability to meet current and future demands.  |           |          |             | x       | Public works   |
| 5-C-6 Recommend and support taxation policies and fee structures that result in revenues from tourism that cover the city's costs in providing services to tourists.  | x         |          |             | x       | City Council and City Departments                    |
| 5-C-7 Support shoulder season activities that are not seasonally dependent as a way to expand the local economy.  |           |          |             | x       | Public Works, Administration, City Council           |
| 5-C-8 Identify, promote and expand, and target visitor markets, including Alaska residents, out-of-state independent travelers, and small group package tour travelers.   |           |          |             | x       | Chamber of Commerce, KPTMC                           |
| 5-C-9 Accommodate and encourage events such as the Shorebird Festival and Kachemak Bay Writers' Conference, professional and educational conferences, and sporting tournaments.                                   |           |          |             | x       | Administration, City Council, and community partners |
| <b>Goal 6 – Support Efforts to Establish Affordable Housing</b>   |           |          |             |         |  |
| 6-1 Support the efforts of other organizations to provide housing for target populations such as seniors, low income and special needs residents. Write letters or pass resolutions of support.                   |           |          |             | x       | City Council, Administration                         |
| 6-2 Support senior housing that allows seniors to age within the community, such as assisted living and long term care. Write letters or pass resolutions in of support for grant applications to expand housing. |           |          |             | x       | City Council, Administration                         |
| 6-3 Maintain land use regulations that support cradle to grave housing options for special populations.   |           |          |             | x       | HAPC   |



# CITY OF HOMER NEWSLETTER

VOL. II - ISSUE IX | JUNE 2023



## WHAT'S INSIDE?

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

### SUMMER BEGINNINGS

Embrace the spirit of summer on a journey through our coastal town in this month's newsletter. Discover library events, explore upcoming events in the Community Corner, and celebrate Homer being designated as a Coast Guard City. Learn more about the recent Homer Harbor Design Charrette, plan to attend the *Tuyanitun : Tuggeht* reception and dedication, and more!

### HOMER IS OFFICIALLY A COAST GUARD CITY!

On May 22, 2023, the City of Homer became the sixth official Coast Guard City in Alaska, recognized by the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard and the United States Congress. The proclamation was accepted by the Homer City Council at a regular meeting.

Read more about the Coast Guard City Designation on **Page 4**.



- Library Events
- Community Corner
- Community Recreation
- Coast Guard City Designation
- Housing Report Available
- Homer Harbor Design Charrette
- *Tuyanitun : Tuggeht* Dedication
- Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Police Department
- Public Works Department
- Economic Development
- Fire Department
- Public Safety Corner
- Meet the Staff
- Municipal Art Collection
- Stay Connected with City Council
- Join Our Team

Discover something new today and see the latest City project updates information! Learn about ways community members can get involved at City Hall and in the Homer community.

### Follow us on Social Media

- City Hall: [@cityofhomerak](#)
- Parks & Recreation: [@homerparksandrec](#)
- Homer Public Library: [@homerpubliclibrary](#)
- Homer Police: [@homerpolice](#)
- Fire Department: [@HomerVolFireDept](#)

Subscribe to the Monthly Newsletter:

[www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/citymanager/monthly-email-newsletter](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/citymanager/monthly-email-newsletter)

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*"Where the Land Ends and the Sea Begins"*

# LIBRARY EVENTS

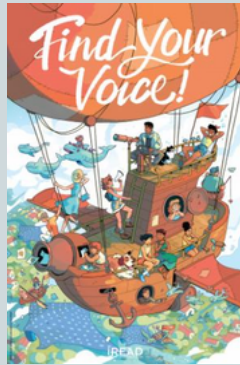
## VIRTUAL AUTHOR TALKS

Zoom in and listen to your favorite authors talk about their latest books. For a complete list of Upcoming Speakers, go to <https://libraryc.org/homerlibrary/upcoming>

- June 7** *The Fun Habit* by Mike Rucker 12 - 1 p.m.
- June 15** *An American in Provence* by Jamie Beck 10 - 11 a.m.
- June 28** *The Blood Colony* by Tananarive Due 4 - 5 p.m.

## FIND YOUR VOICE! SUMMER@HPL KICK-OFF!

**Summer@HPL** launches with crafts, games, and a story time. Join us inside and outside the library! Register for the reading challenge and learn more about all the fun coming up at the library for kids 0-18 at the library this summer!



**Saturday, June 3**  
10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
Story time at 11:30 a.m.



## PERFORMING A BOOK WITH PIER ONE THEATRE!

Join staff from the Pier One Theatre bring a book to life! Find your inner actor and collaborate to put on a short performance!

**Monday, June 12**  
4 - 5:30 p.m.

## LIBRARY EVENTS CONTINUED

- |                   |                                      |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>June 8</b>     | Young Readers Group                  | 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.   |
| <b>June 13</b>    | Teens and Tweens Get Crafty!         | 4:30 - 6 p.m.      |
| <b>June 14</b>    | Leap into Science                    | 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. |
| <b>June 17</b>    | Tell a Story in Cartoon Form         | 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.   |
| <b>June 19-20</b> | Midsummer Magic                      | 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.   |
| <b>June 22</b>    | Teens Produce a 'Zine (Day 1 of 3)   | 4 - 5:30 p.m.      |
| <b>June 23</b>    | Family Karaoke                       | 4 - 6 p.m.         |
| <b>June 26</b>    | Teens and Tweens book club           | 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.   |
| <b>June 27</b>    | Storytime at Bishop's Beach pavilion | 10:30 - 11:15 a.m. |
| <b>June 28</b>    | Leap into Science                    | 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. |
| <b>June 29</b>    | Teens Produce a 'Zine (Day 2 of 3)   | 4 - 5:30 p.m.      |

Check out the complete line-up of library programs



**Homer Public Library**  
500 Hazel Street - 907-235-3180  
[circ@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:circ@ci.homer.ak.us)  
[www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library)



# COMMUNITY CORNER

## HOMER HALIBUT FESTIVAL

**June 1 - 30**  
[www.homerakalaska.org/events/annual-events](http://www.homerakalaska.org/events/annual-events)

## JUNETEENTH X HOMER PRIDE COMMUNITY WALK

**Saturday, June 17 | WKFL Park**  
[www.homerakpride.com](http://www.homerakpride.com)

## SUMMER SOLSTICE FESTIVAL

**Wednesday, June 21 | Port of Homer**  
**Deep Water Dock**  
[www.homerakalaska.org/events/annual-events](http://www.homerakalaska.org/events/annual-events)

## HIGHLAND GAMES

**Saturday, July 1 | Karen Hornaday Park**  
[www.kachemakbayscottishclub.org](http://www.kachemakbayscottishclub.org)

## Community Recreation

# Summer Activities



Kids Zumba



Adult and Youth  
Pick-Up Basketball  
&  
Youth Basketball  
Summer Camp



Drop-In Volleyball



Ultimate Frisbee  
&  
Pick-Up Soccer



Find more information on the City's Communication Recreation website  
[www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/com-rec/current-programs-events](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/com-rec/current-programs-events)

# HOMER IS SIXTH CITY IN ALASKA TO BE DESIGNATED AS A COAST GUARD CITY

*continued from the cover page...* Mayor Ken Castner expressed his excitement about the designation, emphasizing the strong partnership between Homer and the Coast Guard. He highlighted the Coast Guard's role in ensuring safety, protecting waters, and upholding maritime security. The community celebrated this recognition and expressed gratitude to the Coast Guard for their service and dedication.

To achieve the Coast Guard City designation, Homer demonstrated its ability to organize civic celebrations and support Coast Guard morale and welfare initiatives. The City Council, with the backing of the community, set the goal to become a Coast Guard City in 2022. Homer is the 31st city in the nation to receive this honor.

Homer serves as the home port for USCGC *Aspen*, USCGC *Naushon*, and the USCG Marine Safety Detachment. The Coast Guard provides essential services related to maritime safety, security, and environmental protection. They conduct search and rescue operations, enforce maritime laws, and maintain navigation aids. The Coast Guard City designation recognizes the longstanding positive relationship between Homer and the Coast Guard since 1969 when Coast Guard crew members and their families became part of the community. The designation aims to improve the living and service conditions for Coast Guard families in Homer.

Learn more on the City's website: [www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/citymanager/homer-proud-coast-guard-city](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/citymanager/homer-proud-coast-guard-city).



## HOUSING REPORT AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNITY

The organizers of the *Community Conversation: Homer Area Housing Needs* have released a report analyzing the outcomes of the event held on March 25. The report highlights key findings of the event and presents a survey summary to better understand the community's perspective on the housing crisis, as well as provides insights and recommendations and encourages community participation.

At the event, over 100 attendees discussed housing challenges and opportunities. The report is available on the City of Homer's website:

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

**The report will be presented at the City Council meeting on June 12.** Community members are invited to read it and join the discussion. For more information, visit the City's website or contact Ryan Foster, Special Projects Coordinator, at [rfoster@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:rfoster@ci.homer.ak.us) or 907-299-8529.

**COMMUNITY CONVERSATION:**  
HOUSING SOLUTIONS IN THE GREATER HOMER AREA  
MARCH 25, 2023  
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CHURCH  
HOMER, ALASKA

mapp  
CITY OF HOMER, ALASKA  
Choosing Our Roots  
Safety Housing Quaker Youth  
South Peninsula Hospital FOUNDATION  
KPEDD  
HOMER  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VISITOR CENTER



# U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS COMPLETES SUCCESSFUL DESIGN CHARRETTE FOR THE HOMER HARBOR EXPANSION STUDY

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) recently finished the first phase of the Homer Harbor Expansion feasibility study. This involved a three-day design charrette from May 17 to May 19. The charrette brought together the USACE's 13-member project delivery team, the public, stakeholders, and City of Homer representatives. The objectives of the charrette were to identify problems, gather data, reach consensus on study objectives, and create design alternatives.

The USACE project development team consists of experts in various fields including engineering, environmental resources, economics, real estate, planning, archaeology, cultural resources, and regulatory compliance.

The first day focused on establishing a shared understanding of the study process and milestones. The USACE presented an overview of previous studies and approached the charrette with an open mind. They engaged stakeholders to ensure the design selected for further analysis aligns with community input and meets technical, environmental, and regulatory standards.

The second day involved a harbor site visit and meetings with vessel owners to understand user concerns. Additionally, a public work session was held to discuss measures and develop design alternatives based on identified project objectives.

The third day included a review of design alternatives and collaborative feedback sessions. Participants rated the designs individually. The USACE discussed the next steps, which include screening and evaluating the alternatives based on criteria such as effectiveness, efficiency, and implementability. The study will also adhere to the National Environmental Policy Act's environmental review process.



For more information go to [www.homerharborexansion.com](http://www.homerharborexansion.com)

The City extends gratitude to the meeting venue hosts, community members, stakeholders, and the USACE for their engagement in advancing the study for the benefit of the Homer community.

For more detailed information and to see the USACE Design Charrette presentations, visit the City's website: [www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/port/homer-harbor-expansion](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/port/homer-harbor-expansion).



## COMMUNITY CORNER

### Youth-only king salmon fisheries to open in Homer on June 3

Fishing Extravaganza! Head to the Nick Dudiak Fishing Lagoon on Saturday, June 3 to enjoy all-day fishing in the "youth-only sport fishing area" across from the entrance. Ages 16 and up can fish elsewhere in the lagoon. Additional information about regulations and opportunities can be found at [adfg.alaska.gov](http://adfg.alaska.gov).

# SCULPTURE DEDICATION AND RECEPTION AT BISHOP'S BEACH PARK

The City of Homer, in collaboration with the Bunnell Street Arts Center and the Ninilchik Tribal Council, is pleased to announce the addition of a new sculpture to the City of Homer Municipal Public Art Collection. The dedication ceremony will take place on Wednesday, June 21 at 5:30 p.m. at the Bishop's Beach Park and Pavilion.

The sculpture, titled "*Tuyanitun : Tuggeht*" (pronounced too-yan-eee-ton : to-get), was installed in October of 2022 and is a significant addition to the public art landscape. Designed by Argent Kvasnikoff, a member of the Ninilchik Village Tribe and a talented artist, the sculpture aims to honor the Indigenous stewardship of the lands, both in the past and for the future.

The name "*Tuyanitun*" references an ancient Dena'ina wayfinding system, while "*Tuggeht*" represents the Dena'ina name for the location, also known as Bishop's Beach, a place beloved by all, and evokes boreal spruce, rock cairns, and beach glass.

This noteworthy public art project has garnered support from various organizations and individuals. Funding contributions have been provided by the Alaska Community Foundation Social Justice Fund, Alaska State Council on the Arts, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, National Endowment for the Arts, National Performance Network, Rasmuson Foundation, The Ninilchik Village Tribe, as well as individual donors.

For more information please visit the [Bunnell Street Gallery website](https://www.bunnellarts.org) or contact [info@bunnellarts.org](mailto:info@bunnellarts.org).



Wednesday, June 21  
Refreshments at 5:30 p.m.  
Dedication at 6 p.m.



Bishop's Beach Park and Pavilion



## LOCAL MITIGATION GOALS

Mitigation goals play a crucial role in shaping disaster management strategies by outlining an agency's objectives in hazard and loss prevention. These long-range policy-oriented statements reflect the community-wide vision and guide the development of effective mitigation plans. The City of Homer utilized the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) priorities for the 2022 Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program for the recently adopted Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). These priorities serve as the foundation for defining three key goals in Homer's LHMP. This series will delve into the significance of mitigation goals and explore the specific objectives outlined by FEMA for building resilient communities.

1. Enhance climate protection and adaptation efforts.
2. Create a healthy and safe community.
3. Protect critical facilities and infrastructure against hazards.

### 1 Enhance climate protection and adaptation efforts

In the face of an increasingly changing climate, enhancing climate protection and adaptation efforts has become a paramount goal for mitigating hazards. The City of Homer recognizes the importance of incorporating climate resilience into its mitigation plan to minimize the impacts of natural disasters. This goal entails developing strategies that address the vulnerabilities associated with climate change, such as rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and changing precipitation patterns.

Mitigation measures can include promoting sustainable land use practices, implementing green infrastructure initiatives, and adopting resilient building codes and standards. By integrating climate protection and adaptation efforts into the LHMP, the community can build resilience and reduce the potential for future losses caused by climate-related hazards.



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# Police Department

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## A HEARTWARMING BIRTHDAY SURPRISE

When a mother called, asking if her son could visit us in Homer for his 17th birthday, the Police team sprang into action. They organized a surprise party that he will never forget. From a behind-the-scenes tour of the department to sitting in a patrol car and speaking on the radio, every moment was filled with joy. This heartwarming encounter reminds us of the power of compassion and community. Together, we can create extraordinary moments and inspire hope.



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# Public Works Department

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## E BUNNELL AVENUE/CHARLES WAY WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The City's contractor, Southcentral Construction, has started a project to improve sewer and water infrastructure on E Bunnell Avenue, Charles Way, and Allen Way. The goal is to connect properties in Old Town that currently don't have access to City water and sewer services. The project is part of a Special Assessment District initiated by property owners, with the City paying an additional fee to extend services to Bishop's Beach Park. The impact of these improvements goes beyond sanitation and water access, as they lay the groundwork for future enhancements, such as a possible restroom located at Bishop's Beach Park.



Preserving the historical and environmental significance of Old Town is a priority for the City. By extending sanitary sewer services, they aim to prioritize the well-being and convenience of community members, enhance the experience for visitors, and safeguard the environment in this cherished part of the city.

Construction is expected to finish by mid-July, and a traffic control plan will be implemented by Southcentral Construction. Drivers are encouraged to follow the posted signs and directions from the flaggers to ensure smooth and safe traffic flow throughout the project area.

For more information, visit the City's website at <https://bit.ly/3Mv4dZY>.

# HOMER AWARDED LARGE WASTEWATER SYSTEM OF THE YEAR!

The City of Homer is proud to have been awarded the "Large Wastewater System of the Year" by the Alaska Chapter of the American Water Works Management Association (AWWMA). This recognition is given to wastewater systems serving over 2,500 individuals or processing an average of 250,000 gallons per day. The City's Public Works team received the honor at the AWWMA conference in Anchorage on May 10.

The award celebrates Homer's commitment to excellence and its dedication to providing outstanding wastewater services to its residents. It acknowledges the City's efforts in protecting the environment, ensuring public health, and promoting sustainable development. The recognition also highlights the collaborative spirit and teamwork involved in managing such a large-scale wastewater system.

This accolade serves as a reminder of Homer's unwavering dedication to excellence and sustainable practices. The City remains committed to maintaining an exceptional wastewater system and seeking innovative solutions for continuous improvement.

Congratulations to the Wastewater Treatment team for their well-deserved recognition as the Large Wastewater System of the Year. Their achievements inspire us and demonstrate the positive impact of dedication and excellence in serving our community and preserving the environment.



# TODD COOK: LARGE SYSTEM MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Also at the AWWMA annual conference, Todd Cook, Homer's Water/Sewer Superintendent, received the Large System Manager of the Year Award. This award is in "recognition of excellence in performance as a manager of a large water and/or wastewater system in Alaska. "Large" refers to any system serving 2,500 or more customers, which means Todd was chosen from managers representing Anchorage, Wasilla, Juneau, and other, much larger cities. Todd has served the citizens of Homer for almost 14 years. He has been instrumental in introducing upgrades to the City's water and wastewater operations and maintenance protocols that have improved water quality for Homer customers and Kachemak Bay. Prior to coming to Homer, Todd worked for the water/sewer utilities of Cordova and Sitka. He plays the Native American flute, bass guitar, and drums. His eight children include multiple wrestling champions who have represented Homer at State and national wrestling tournaments over a period of over ten years.



*Todd Cook, Water Sewer Superintendent, received the Large Waste Water System Manager of the Year Award*



## VOLUNTEERISM FOR PARKS PROJECTS

Over 300 volunteers joined forces for the "Serve the City" initiative in Homer on May 21. This community event witnessed an outpouring of support as volunteers dedicated over 1,300 hours to various projects throughout the city, with a particular focus on enhancing parks and facilities.

The event, organized by five community churches, built upon the existing Adopt-a-Park relationship the Church on the Rock had with Karen Hornaday Park. What started as a spring clean-up quickly spread as other church groups were inspired to contribute. This collaborative effort united the community churches, leading to an even more significant impact.

The volunteers tackled an impressive range of projects. At Karen Hornaday Park, their efforts included brush clearing, picnic table and fire ring maintenance, playground painting, safety hazard removal, bleacher reconstruction, restroom cleanup, and the installation of a brand new 9-hole disc golf course. Jack Gist Park saw volunteers spreading gravel, improving the fields, and carrying out other enhancements. In various locations around town, they rebuilt structures, picked up trash, delivered firewood, and provided free oil changes.

The organizers meticulously planned every aspect of the day, working closely with the City's Parks Planner, Matt Steffy. Safety measures were put in place, including the provision of personal protective equipment and the coordination of tasks based on volunteers' skill sets. The collaboration extended beyond the event, as organizations such as the Homer Little League, Homer Softball Association, HHS Softball Team, and Disc Golf user group were involved in the planning and participated alongside other volunteers.

The success of the Serve the City initiative in Homer reflects a nationwide model that has inspired similar events across the country. To promote and coordinate the event locally, the organizers established a dedicated website, [www.servethecityhomer.com](http://www.servethecityhomer.com).

The impact of this collaborative effort is truly remarkable, and the City of Homer extends its heartfelt gratitude to all the volunteers. Their contributions have not gone unnoticed and are deeply appreciated throughout the community. Serve the City stands as a powerful testament to the strength of community engagement and the profound effect of volunteerism.

For more information, or to learn how to get involved, contact Matt Steffy, Parks & Trails Planner, at [msteffy@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:msteffy@ci.homer.ak.us) or 907-435-3178.



Photos by Christopher Kincaid

# Fire Department

## LADDER TRAINING EXERCISES

On May 30, the Homer Fire Department and Kachemak Emergency Services (KESA), the City's trusted partner in emergency response, participated in a comprehensive training session focused on rescuing victims from upper-level windows. The firefighters were also trained in self-rescue techniques from higher floors.

Entering a building on the ground level to search for victims above the fire floor can present unexpected challenges. In rapidly spreading fire conditions, original entry points can become blocked, necessitating an alternative means of escape. This training equips firefighters with the skills to self-extricate from upper floors without relying on ladders.

The training session included valuable ladder truck operations for the Homer firefighters. This was a crucial step in preparing them for the imminent arrival of a ladder truck that the Homer Fire Department will soon be receiving.

These training exercises are instrumental in enhancing the capabilities and preparedness of our dedicated firefighters. By continuously honing their skills and expanding their knowledge, they ensure the safety and well-being of our community in emergency situations.



## PUBLIC SAFETY CORNER



In this section, we aim to keep readers informed about the latest developments in public safety in the community. Whether it's news about crime prevention, emergency preparedness, or updates on local law enforcement activities, we've got you covered. Our goal is to promote a safe and secure environment for all community members and visitors of Homer, and we believe that staying informed is a crucial part of achieving that. Read on to learn more about what's happening in public safety in Homer.

## HVFD'S WILDFIRE SAFETY TIPS FOR SUMMER

As summer approaches in Homer, the risk of wildfires rises. The Homer Volunteer Fire Department (HVFD) is dedicated to promoting wildfire safety. Follow these essential tips from the HVFD to protect your home and community from wildfires.

- **Create Defensible Space:** Clear flammable debris and maintain a 30-foot cleared space around your home. Seek HVFD's recommendations for your property's location.
- **Maintain Vegetation:** Trim tree branches at least 10 feet from structures. Keep grasses and shrubs well-watered and pruned. Remove dead or dying plants that can fuel fires.
- **Safeguard Your Home:** Install spark arresters on chimneys and stovepipes. Keep roofs and gutters clear. Use fire-resistant materials and consider fire-resistant screens for windows.

- **Prepare an Emergency Kit:** Create a kit with first aid supplies, non-perishable food, water, flashlights, batteries, and important documents. Keep it easily accessible for quick evacuation.
- **Stay Informed and Vigilant:** Stay updated on fire conditions and HVFD advisories. Report any smoke or fire sightings promptly.

Every individual plays a vital role in fire prevention and response. Staying well-informed, preparing in advance, and giving top priority to wildfire safety is key. This season tends to bring more wildfire activity, making it even more important to prioritize safety. By working together, let us strive to foster a safer and more resilient community this summer.

# Welcome to the team

The City is delighted to extend a warm and enthusiastic welcome to Brenden and Taylor. We are thrilled to have them join the team!

- **Brenden Fuson**, Ice Plant Operator I
- **Taylor Wilkinson**, Port Admin Assistant

## MAY ANNIVERSARIES

We would like to recognize City staff members with anniversaries this month. Thank you for the dedication, commitment, and service you've provided the City and taxpayers of Homer over the years. You all are an integral part of what makes the City of Homer a great place to work and the community.

|                  |              |          |
|------------------|--------------|----------|
| Mark Whaley      | Port         | 18 Years |
| Pike Ainsworth   | Port         | 15 Years |
| Mike Gilbert     | Public Works | 9 Years  |
| Jackie McDonough | Library      | 9 Years  |
| Sean McGroarty   | Port         | 7 Years  |
| Ralph Skorski    | Public Works | 5 Years  |
| Taylor Crowder   | Police       | 2 Years  |
| Susan Jeffres    | Library      | 2 Years  |
| Sean Love        | Public Works | 2 Years  |
| Tim Roberts      | Public Works | 1 Year   |
| Devan Wilson     | Police       | 1 Year   |

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATE



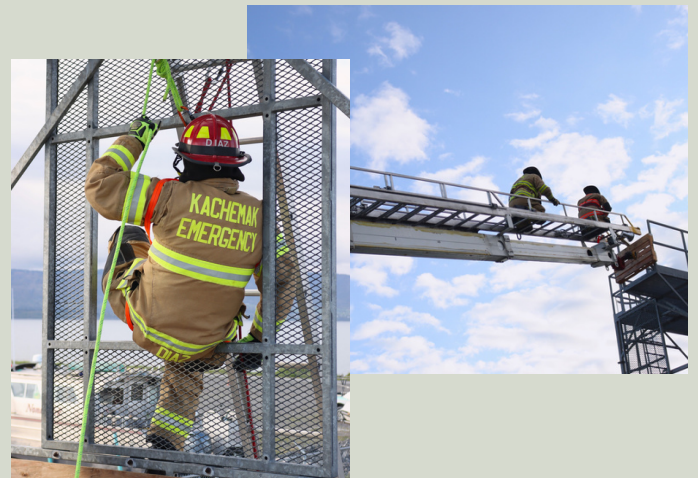
After the departure of long-time City Planner Rick Abboud in May, the Planning Department has entered a period of transition. Courtney Dodge, who previously held the part-time role of Assistant Planner, has now assumed the full-time position of Associate Planner. Courtney brings valuable expertise from her background in nonprofit work and environmental regulations. Having resided in Homer for the past seven years, she possesses a deep understanding of the local context.

In the interim, Ryan Foster, the Special Projects Coordinator, has taken on the role of Acting City Planner until a permanent replacement is found. Ryan boasts a 15-year career as a city planner, having worked in Virginia, New Mexico, and most recently as the Planning Director for the City of Kenai. With their combined efforts, Ryan and Courtney are dedicated to streamlining the processing of development applications during this peak period.

During the construction season, the Planning Department's primary objective is to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of its comprehensive services in a timely and thorough manner. Despite the challenges posed by the short duration of the construction season, Ryan and Courtney are committed to maintaining high-quality support for ongoing development projects.



*The Port Maintenance crew (Pike Ainsworth and Kurt Read) working with a diver (Matt North) to repair the potable water system. The City turns on the potable water to the Harbor every May. This year there were several leaks and the crew identified hoses that needed to be replaced.*



*Photos of the HVFD/KESA joint training exercise described on [page 10](#).*

# CITY OF HOMER ROSTER

**Mayor** - Ken Castner (2024)

## City Council

Donna Aderhold (2024)  
Jason Davis (2025)  
Shelley Erickson (2024)  
Storm P. Hansen-Cavasos (2025)  
Rachel Lord (2023)  
Caroline Venuti (2023)

## City Staff Leadership

Rob Dumouchel, City Manager  
Melissa Jacobsen, MMC, City Clerk/Deputy Director of Administration  
Ryan Foster, Acting City Planner  
Mark Robl, Chief of Police  
Bill Jirsa, Chief Technology Officer  
Mike Illg, Community Recreation Manager  
Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager  
Elizabeth Walton, Finance Director  
Mark Kirko, Fire Chief  
Dave Berry, Library Director  
Andrea Browning, Personnel Director  
Bryan Hawkins, Port Director/Harbormaster  
Jan Keiser, Public Works Director/City Engineer

## Commissions and Boards

ADA Advisory Board  
Economic Development Advisory Commission  
Library Advisory Board  
Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission  
Planning Commission  
Port and Harbor Advisory Commission

# MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION

Learn more about the municipal art collection at:

[www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/  
prac/city-homer-municipal-art-collection](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/prac/city-homer-municipal-art-collection)



*Salmon and Kelp* by Lynn Marie Naden, 2006  
Homer Public Library



*Sea Stars* by Lynn Marie Naden, 2006  
Homer Public Library

## STAY CONNECTED TO CITY COUNCIL

Go to [cityofhomer-ak.gov/cityclerk/stay-connected-city-council](http://cityofhomer-ak.gov/cityclerk/stay-connected-city-council) to find instructions on how to listen, provide testimony, and participate in the meetings via Zoom.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

June

|    |           |  |
|----|-----------|--|
| 7  | 5:30 p.m. | Planning Commission Work Session                     |
|    | 6:30 p.m. | Planning Commission Regular Meeting                  |
| 8  | 5 p.m.    | ADA Advisory Board Regular Meeting                   |
| 12 | 5 p.m.    | City Council Committee of the Whole                  |
|    | 6 p.m.    | City Council Regular Meeting                         |
| 13 | 6 p.m.    | Economic Development Advisory Commission Meeting     |
| 15 | 5:30 p.m. | Parks, Art, Recreation & Culture Advisory Commission |
| 21 | 5:30 p.m. | Planning Commission Work Session                     |
|    | 6:30 p.m. | Planning Commission Regular Meeting                  |
| 26 | 5 p.m.    | City Council Committee of the Whole                  |
|    | 6 p.m.    | City Council Regular Meeting                         |
| 28 | 6 p.m.    | Port & Harbor Advisory Commission Regular Meeting    |

## JOIN OUR TEAM

The City of Homer has current Job Openings. Sign up for Job Alerts or Apply Online at: [cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs](http://cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs)

Current Job Listings:

- [Library Technician, Part-Time](#)
- [Parks Technician, Seasonal](#)
- [Treatment Maintenance Technician I or II, Full-Time](#)



### ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The City of Homer Newsletter is published monthly. For questions or comments, please contact Bella Vaz at

[bvaz@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:bvaz@ci.homer.ak.us).

## City of Homer

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907-235-8121

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

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# City of Homer

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

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(p) 907-235-8121 x2222

(f) 907-235-3148

## Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council  
FROM: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager  
DATE: May 18, 2023  
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for May 22, 2023 Council Meeting

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### US Army Corps Charrettes

The US Army Corps of Engineers' charrette process got underway on Wednesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> and is scheduled to run through Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. Working together with the Army Corps, and our owner's representative HDR, the charrette process was expanded and public engagement opportunities increased beyond what would be provided in a "standard" project study. Only one day of the charrette occurred before submittal of my report, but I have high hopes for the outcome of this early checkpoint in the study.



### Todd Cook Wins AWWMA Large System Manager of the Year Award!

In addition to the City's award for the large wastewater system of the year, Todd Cook, Homer's Water/Sewer Superintendent, received the Large System Manager of the Year Award from the Alaskan Water & Wastewater Management Association (AWWMA) at its annual conference in Anchorage on May 10, 2023. This award is in "recognition of excellence in performance as a manager of a large water and/or waste water system in Alaska. "Large" refers to any system serving 2,500 or more customers, which means Todd was chosen from managers representing Anchorage, Wasilla, Juneau and other, much larger cities. Todd has served the citizens of Homer for almost 14 years. He has been instrumental in introducing upgrades to the City's water and waste water operational and maintenance protocols that have improved water quality for Homer customers and Kachemak Bay. Prior to coming to Homer, Todd worked for the water/sewer utilities of Cordova and Sitka.

He plays the Native American flute, bass guitar and drums. His eight children include multiple wrestling champions, boys and girls, who have represented Homer at state and national wrestling tournaments over a period of over 10 years. I'm planning on having Todd make a brief presentation to Council in June about our water and wastewater systems.

### **Information Technology Plan Update**

The IT Division, under the direction of Library Director Dave Berry, developed its first comprehensive Information Technology Plan in 2021. In a time of pandemic, high demand for tech services, and low staffing levels, it was very helpful to deploy a well-structured planning framework to focus our IT efforts. Earlier this year, Bill Jirsa joined the IT team as the Chief Technology Officer. He is currently leading the team through an update to the IT Plan for FY24 and beyond. Our main priorities for the foreseeable future are cyber-security, service management, and infrastructure reliability. We're still understaffed for the size and complexity of our organization's IT assets (I would recommend building up to at least five FTE across the next few years), but with all three budgeted positions filled in IT we are seeing a lot of great work from the team.

### **Budget Chat on KBBI**

Mayor Castner, Councilmember Lord, and I were the guests for this week's Coffee Table program. We spent the hour talking about the budget currently before Council, the process of developing the budget, and answered questions from the host and listeners about the budget.

### **Summer Reading Program**

The Homer Public Library's summer reading program launches on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. There are numerous special events planned for June and July listed on the City's website: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library/summer-hpl-2023>

### **Return to Municode Meetings**

After a year of working with iCompass for agenda management, the Clerk's Office is returning to Municode Meetings. Across the last year, staff worked with iCompass to transition to their platform. Ultimately the program was not a good fit for the City. We did, however, receive benefit from the process. We are quite happy with the look of the new agenda layout, we've also made improvements to internal processes inspired by things we learned in our attempt to transition platforms. We are in the process of moving back to the Municode Meetings program we were using previously. Municode doesn't have as many bells and whistles as iCompass, but it has proven to be a better fit for how we do things here in Homer.

### **Public Works Campus Land Purchase**

I mentioned at a previous meeting that we may be close to having a parcel for Council to consider purchasing as part of a long-term plan to move parts of Public Works out of the tsunami zone and into better fitting facilities for our heavy equipment. Finding an appropriate parcel has been a priority since the Public Works Task Force completed its work in fall of 2021. We've had difficulties finding parcels that meet the City's needs, are available for sale, and have sellers willing to let them go for a price that can be supported by an appraisal. We have zeroed in on an 8+ acre parcel that checks those boxes. I anticipate that an ordinance will come to Council at the next regular meeting for introduction to move forward with a purchase of a parcel for Public Works. We don't currently have a timeline for the next phase of that project, however, if we do purchase land it will open up grant opportunities not currently available to us for relocating the campus.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION  
2022-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN & GOALS**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Ongoing Goals</b></p>                                | <p>1. Use the Commission’s SWOT analysis to develop strategies to implement policies that support Homer’s quality of life.</p> <p>2. Keep our ears to the ground and seek out areas of "lack." Confer with Julie about communicating with City Council and advising them on ways to overcome barriers- "the nexus of economic goals."</p>   |
| <p><b>Near Term Goals</b><br/>&lt; 6 Months</p>            | <p>1. Familiarize with smart growth principles and best practices, and also green infrastructure concepts. Have these in our toolbox when development decisions come our way for consideration.</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Staff to provide smart growth resources.</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Promote energy resiliency through diversity and efficiency. Invite a speaker to talk about energy as that impacts cost of doing business and cost of living. (Perez)</p> <p>2. View economic development through the lens of balancing growth with quality of life.</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Create an EDC Mission statement as a guiding principle for what the EDC does.</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Define positive economic development, and what is the role of the EDC is in balancing growth and quality of life.<br/>(Perez volunteered, first quarter 2023)</p> <p>3. Housing: affordable short and long term housing. Seasonal workers, general work force, seniors, etc. affordable year round housing. (Marks)</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Stay engaged with the City for all housing conversations</p> <p>4. Present an annual report of EDC accomplishments to the City Council</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Approve memo to Council, read accomplishments to Council</p> <p>5. Have a conversation with the Chamber of Commerce about other economic development beyond tourism. How can the City and the Chamber work together to promote quality of life, and economic development for industries other than tourism, including messaging?</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Have a work session with the Chamber</p> |
| <p><b>Mid Term Goals</b><br/>1 - 3 Years (2022 – 2025)</p> | <p>1. BR&amp;E – review annually and plan for a new report (5 year mark is 2022-2023)<br/><i>Opportunity:</i> Consider a funding request for the FY 2024-2025 budget</p> <p>2. Downtown vitalization momentum and wayfinding/streetscape plan</p> <p><i>Status:</i> Wayfinding and Streetscape work ongoing through 21 and implementation activities in 2022-2024</p> <p><i>Task:</i> Participate in the Transportation Plan, focusing on a walkable town with greenspace and connected business districts</p> <p><i>Longer term:</i> Consider storefront/Downtown and landscaping improvement program</p>  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p>3. Economic resiliency planning.</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> EDC provide suggestions to KPEDD on the business tool box. EDC promote tool box to community.</p> <hr/> <p>4. Assess jobs training needs, workforce development, availability of workers and workforce supports including child care, housing.</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Invite KBC Director Reid Brewer as speaker, how does the college make course offering decisions? How is work force development part of the planning? What does the KBC Advisory Board do?</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Invite 9-Star to make a presentation</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> Brief survey to businesses and employees on their needs.</p> |
| <p><b>Long Term Goals</b><br/>5 Years or More (2025+)</p> | <p>1. Multipurpose community center (HERC)</p> <p><i>Status:</i> Scoping study has been funded. Demolition of the smaller building has been funded; tear down planned in 2023.</p>   |

**OVERALL EDC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Economic Development Advisory Commission will act in an advisory capacity to the City Manager and the City Council on the overall economic development planning for the City of Homer in accordance with Homer City Code Chapter 2.76; [www.codepublishing.com/AK/Homer](http://www.codepublishing.com/AK/Homer). The EDC also assists with official City planning documents including the following:

- Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District (KPEDD) – Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (link will bring you to all KPEDD reports): <https://kpedd.org/reports>
- Homer’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS): [www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/economicdevelopment/comprehensive-economic-development-strategy](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/economicdevelopment/comprehensive-economic-development-strategy)
- Business Retention and Expansion Survey Report (BR&E): <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/economicdevelopment/2017-business-retention-expansion-survey-report>
- Homer Comprehensive Plan: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/planning/comprehensive-plan>

**DUTIES OF COMMISSION/STAFF**

Commissioners

- Attend City Council meetings as assigned.
- Attend work sessions and training opportunities.
- Come prepared to make a motion for action at meetings, or ask staff before the meeting for more information.
- Communicate with City Council members to gain support on EDC-related projects that need sponsorship at the Council level.

Staff (Julie Engebretsen)

- Aid the Chair in setting the agenda.
- Compile packet material from commissioners, write backup memos, and submit to Clerk.
- Provide information on items the commission needs to review annually.



- Inform the Commission of City Council actions and discussion of economic development related issues.

Clerk's Office

- Aid Staff in compiling packet materials and print/distribute them to the Commission.
- Aid Staff and Chair in setting the agenda.
- Tracking yearly items such as reappointments and elections.
- Help the Commission learn to be more efficient and effective in their meetings.
- Support the Commission's ability to communicate with the Mayor and City Council (through Memorandums, Resolutions, and Ordinances).

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION 2023 Calendar

|                  | <b>AGENDA DEADLINE</b>      | <b>MEETING</b>             | <b>CITY COUNCIL MEETING FOR REPORT*</b>               | <b>ANNUAL TOPICS/EVENTS</b>  |
|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---|--|
| <b>JANUARY</b>   | Wednesday 1/4<br>5:00 p.m.  | Tuesday 1/10<br>6:00 p.m.  | Monday 1/23<br>6:00 p.m.<br><a href="#">[Arevalo]</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Budget Review/Develop Requests<br/>*may be n/a during non-budget years</li> <li>• Land Allocation Plan Review</li> <li>• KPEDD Industry Outlook Forum</li> </ul> |
| <b>FEBRUARY</b>  | Wednesday 2/8<br>5:00 p.m.  | Tuesday 2/14<br>6:00 p.m.  | Monday 2/27<br>6:00 p.m.<br><a href="#">[Gamble]</a>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KPC Job Fair</li> </ul>   |
| <b>MARCH</b>     | Wednesday 3/8<br>5:00 p.m.  | Tuesday 3/14<br>6:00 p.m.  | Tuesday 3/28<br>6:00 p.m.<br><a href="#">[Perez]</a>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clerk Reappointment Notices Sent Out</li> <li>• Update from Public Works Director</li> <li>• KPEDD CEDS Review</li> </ul>   |
| <b>APRIL</b>     | Wednesday 4/5<br>5:00 p.m.  | Tuesday 4/11<br>6:00 p.m.  | Monday 4/24<br>6:00 p.m.<br><a href="#">[Perez]</a>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms Expire April 1<sup>st</sup></li> <li>• Advisory Body Training Worksession</li> </ul>  |
| <b>MAY</b>       | Wednesday 5/3<br>5:00 p.m.  | Tuesday 5/9<br>6:00 p.m.   | Monday 5/22<br>6:00 p.m.<br><a href="#">[Pitzman]</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Review of Commission's Bylaws</li> <li>• Election of EDC Officers</li> </ul>   |
| <b>JUNE</b>      | Wednesday 6/7<br>5:00 p.m.  | Tuesday 6/13<br>6:00 p.m.  | Monday 6/26<br>6:00 p.m.                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive Plan Review</li> </ul>  |
| <b>JULY</b>      | No Regular Meeting          |                            |   |  |
| <b>AUGUST</b>    | Wednesday 8/2<br>5:00 p.m.  | Tuesday 8/8<br>6:00 p.m.   | Monday 8/14<br>6:00 p.m.<br><a href="#">[Pitzman]</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital Improvement Plan Review</li> <li>• Update from Public Works Director</li> </ul>   |
| <b>SEPTEMBER</b> | Wednesday 9/6<br>5:00 p.m.  | Tuesday 9/12<br>6:00 p.m.  | Monday 9/25<br>6:00 p.m.<br><a href="#">[Pitzman]</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce Development Speaker</li> </ul>  |
| <b>OCTOBER</b>   | Wednesday 10/4<br>5:00 p.m. | Tuesday 10/10<br>6:00 p.m. | Monday 10/23<br>6:00 p.m.                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Review of EDC's Strategic Plan/Goals &amp; BR&amp;E</li> </ul>   |
| <b>NOVEMBER</b>  | Wednesday 11/8<br>5:00 p.m. | Tuesday 11/14<br>6:00 p.m. | Monday 11/27<br>6:00 p.m.                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chamber's Annual Presentation to EDC</li> <li>• Approve Meeting Schedule for Upcoming Year</li> </ul>   |
| <b>DECEMBER</b>  | No Regular Meeting          |                            |   |  |

\*The Commission's opportunity to give their report to City Council is scheduled for the Council's regular meeting following the Commission's regular meeting, under Agenda Item 8 – Announcements/ Presentations/ Borough Report/Commission Reports.

# Tuyanitun : Tuggeht Sculpture Dedication and Reception at Bishop's Beach Park

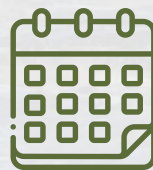
The City of Homer, in collaboration with the Bunnell Street Arts Center and the Ninilchik Traditional Council, is pleased to announce the addition of a new sculpture to the City of Homer Municipal Public Art Collection. The dedication ceremony will take place on Wednesday, June 21 at 5:30 p.m. at the Bishop's Beach Park and Pavilion.

The sculpture, titled "*Tuyanitun : Tuggeht*" (pronounced too-yan-eee-toon : to-get), was installed in October of 2022 and is a significant addition to the public art landscape. Designed by Argent Kvasnikoff, a member of the Ninilchik Village Tribe and a talented artist, the sculpture aims to honor the Indigenous stewardship of the lands, both in the past and for the future.

The name "*Tuyanitun*" references an ancient Dena'ina wayfinding system, while "*Tuggeht*" represents the Dena'ina name for the location, also known as Bishop's Beach, a place beloved by all, and evokes boreal spruce, rock cairns, and beach glass.

This noteworthy public art project has garnered support from various organizations and individuals. Funding contributions have been provided by the Alaska Community Foundation Social Justice Fund, Alaska State Council on the Arts, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, National Endowment for the Arts, National Performance Network, Rasmuson Foundation, the Ninilchik Village Tribe, as well as individual donors.

For more information please visit the [Bunnell Street Gallery website](https://www.bunnellarts.org) or contact [info@bunnellarts.org](mailto:info@bunnellarts.org).



Wednesday, June 21  
Refreshments at 5:30 p.m.  
Dedication at 6 p.m.



Bishop's Beach Park  
and Pavilion