



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

(p) 907-235-8121

(f) 907-235-3140

Memorandum 22-082

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
THROUGH: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
FROM: Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager
DATE: May 5, 2022
SUBJECT: HERC/ Pioneer Gateway Revitalization Project presentation

This topic will be split between two meetings on May 9th; the Work Session and the Committee of the Whole. Special Projects Coordinator Jenny Carroll will provide a presentation on grant opportunities, and what steps need to be taken to apply for funding. I will provide information on capital costs, operational costs, level of service, and project timeframe.

There are four main points for Council to consider. In the May/June timeframe, staff would like to see a resolution to address these topics. Resolutions are a good way to document decision points, particularly over long projects.

Considerations/decision points

1. Council ultimately needs to determine a budget for the project. How do we define what process will we use to 'right size' and refine the building plans?
 - A building committee?
 - A Commission?
2. What level of service will the city provide in a new facility? Is the building open for drop in activities and staffed 7 days a week?
 - Recreation staffing will need to be increased to meet the expectations for the new facility.
 - What are your expectations?
3. What grants should the city pursue? (How should staff spend their time? Examples will be provided on May 9th by Jenny Carroll)
4. What is the timeframe the Council would like to pursue? (Police station bond will likely be paid for in 2025, and the .3% sales tax automatically sunsets. A ballot measure would be required for a new sales tax).

Attachments: Public comments 4/12/22 – 5/4/22

Serial	What do you think of the plans?	What would make the plans better?	Should the City pursue funding to keep moving forward?	Comments?
81			Yes	See attached document
82	I think this will add so much potential to our community!	Making sure to include indoor roller skating and roller derby.	Yes	Our roller skating group is always struggling to find a home come winter and would love for this facility to be it!
83	Good multipurpose uses	Signage plan	Yes	Bond issue
84	Good multipurpose uses	Signage plan	Yes	Bond issue
85	Option A seems best. I like the layout inside and out. Less enthused about a 2-story because retail spaces can make this less welcoming (competition for parking) and safe for children and teens.	Multi-purpose room could be adapted to four spaces not just two with folding walls. This might be handy for smaller groups.	Yes	I'd like to see a big emphasis for this multi-use facility for children and teens! Thanks for moving this forward!
86	Too big and expensive	Smaller and cheaper	No	Too expensive and more taxes on homeowners, the taxes are already way too high
87	Really excited about these plans, especially options A and C. I fully support community improvement projects that support locals and visitors alike to spend quality time with friends and family in our community.	As plans move forward I hope there is consideration for well planned outdoor play spaces that appeal to all ages and will stand the test of time. Also hope the same thing for any building that is built, that the upkeep and future changes in our demographic, economy and population are taken into consideration when finalizing plans for the building. Having too much empty space that still requires upkeep is a bit of a concern.	Yes	So proud of our community for coming together on this and look forward to seeing these plans develop!
88	This community would benefit so much from having this space!! It is very thoughtfully designed.	More expansion of spaces for art making.	Yes	
89	I am grateful the City is looking at reimagining this space.	Any development needs to include space designated and accessible by youth in the community.	Yes	Has the Boys & Girls Club been approached as a potential partner on this project? Maybe they could be the private part of this development. When they left Homer there was a giant void created. We need spaces to support youth during afterschool hours.

Serial	What do you think of the plans?	What would make the plans better?	Should the City pursue funding to keep moving forward?	Comments?
90	Inappropriate use of public funds during the highest inflation seen in 40 years	Grassroot fundraising by the public. The small percentage of the public that wants this facility built should find a way to do it without public monies. The rest of us want our infrastructure and public safety taken care of first.	No	It's hard to believe that this project is being considered in the financial climate we are living in. Where in the city's charter does it say it will provide for anything other than public safety and infrastructure? Our fire department is so far behind in its fleet replacement schedule that it boggles the mind that the city is even considering this project. The second out fire truck is from 1989 and doesn't meet modern safety standards. The city put a million dollars into refurbishment of the current fire hall with the intent of making it last another ten years. Where is the city at in that schedule? Six years now? If anything the city should be planning and building the new fire station that was intended. Public monies are for projects that serve all the public like fire, police, and infrastructure. A recreation center will serve only the people who choose to go there. The council needs to fulfill their oath of office and put the needs of all of their constituents first. Go ahead and build the recreation center before giving your fire department the tools that they need to operate safely but you can bet those vehicles will get paid for one way or another either through utter mechanical failure or litigation when one of our professional staff or citizen volunteers gets injured or a citizen is unable to have their emergency mitigated due to a situation that is utterly preventable.
91	We like them!	Nothing, they looks great!	Yes	
92	We like them!	Nothing, they looks great!	Yes	
93	Great, I like PLAN B better!	Room for aerial circus equipment. Community hangout space, cafe and lobby for people to meet and talk	Yes	Thank you so much, we NEED THIS!

Serial	What do you think of the plans?	What would make the plans better?	Should the City pursue funding to keep moving forward?	Comments?
94	They don't serve the ppl votes on what they wanted with the plans. Weight room was a high vote and not included in the plans.	Weight room. Why does homer need to play ground parks that are both over 300k. Why can't we just take care of the first park building by donors.	No	Need to do what the ppl want. Not the council members...lose the personal agendas in this projects. You were elected to voice the ppl in this city. Talk to all groups that benefit this town. Been told by one council member that the city will not compete with the bay club with a weight room but why is it ok to compete with the sparcs and the rink for recreational use during the winter months? Why would you add another playground for over 300k when a lot of time and effort went into the park at Hornaday? Why would you move the skate park and spend 1 mil on it when it was all donor/sponsorship money for the first park that is here now? And it can only be used for roughly 5/6 months a year? People struggle to live in this town with the prices and taxes already. To build a 27mil dollar project will only put more stress on ppl by raising there taxes to get it done.
95	Meh we need to do better.	We really need an all inclusive rec center similar to the one in Ketchikan. A place where adults and kids can recreate. A warmer pool that is open year round for swimming & swim lessons, water aerobics for the elderly. Work out rooms and class spaces for things like yoga, kickboxing etc. Racquetball courts, gaming area for kids/teens, meeting space for businesses & birthday parties.	Yes	We need to invest upfront and do this right.
96		In door play ground	Yes	Year round I. Door play ground.