



MEMORANDUM

Strategic Planning Worksession - August 25, 2025

Item Type: Action Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor Lord and Homer City Council
Date: August 20, 2025
From: Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager

At the beginning of the year, Council met for a Saturday morning worksession to discuss strategic planning. Following that meeting Mayor Lord distributed a list of the projects/initiatives that were proposed and asked Council to rate them on difficulty and impact, share what success would look like, and room for notes or questions. Included with this memo is a copy of the worksheet with the combined responses that were received. The difficulty and impacts are an average of the total responses to each project/initiative, and a summary of the written responses. I've added a column at the end that includes very brief comments from me.

At this meeting it will be helpful to review the worksheet and determine if any projects/initiatives can be removed (or added?) and possibly get a ranking of the top priorities from Council's perspective. From there we can work to develop a planning schedule. I don't think it will be accomplished in this worksession, and we'll have opportunities for future worksessions.

Mayor asked that I include my priorities. This is challenging because there are so many but for the near term, in no particular order –

- Homer Accelerated Roads and Trails Program extension approved by voters
- Completing a financial plan for general fund and harbor enterprise fund
- Asset & Reserve Management
- Successful recruitment and hiring of a Fire Chief and Police Chief
- Update Design Criteria Manual
- Update the Emergency Operations Plan
- Completing projects that are underway
 - Comp Plan and Title 21 re-writes
 - Kachemak Peatlands Grant
 - Harbor General Investigation (there will be more to come after that)
 - Spit Erosion planning
 - Raw Water Transmission Line Replacement Project
 - A-Frame Transmission Line Replacement Project
 - Funding Harbor Float Replacement Project
 - HCC 18.08 City Property Leases review

Attachment:
August 25, 2025 Council Projects Worksheet

Project / Initiative	Difficulty (1–10)	Impact (1–10)	What Would Success Look Like?	Notes/Questions	Manager's Comments
	1 = relatively easy / 10 = extremely difficult	1 = relatively low impact / 10 = extremely high impact	If we accomplished this project/initiative, what would ultimate success look like to you?		
FY 26/27 Budget	8	10	Balanced operating and capital budget.	Reserve funds are low and need plan for refilling CARMA sub-accounts. Fund to support staff rentention and morale.	Completed.
Comprehensive Plan	6	9	A well written plan that guides the city into the future and future changed documented	Underway. This is just a plan, need funding to accomplish goals. Nearing completion, gaps to be filled.	Underway and moving toward completion.
Title 21 Rewrite	7	9	More usable zoning code that reflects current & future interestes & guides well into the future. Code changes can impact property owners.	Underway	Underway, moving toward first review draft.
Harbor General Investigation (GI)	7	10	The GI study will determine if a project meets the threshold for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) investment. However, even if the project scores favorably, significant	Need State and Federal funds to complete	Underway, had recent update from the team on Aug 11
Harbor Expansion Local Services Plan	10	10	Plan will allow City to engage w/users on needs & develop cost estimates for infrastructure	Need more explanation.	
Spit Erosion	10	9	Safe, secure & sustainable. Dealing w/erosion outside ROW allows renourishment & reduces vulnerability	Requires multiple agencies, difficult to accomplish near term and may lose more city and private property which are important to local economy	Some funding has been designated. Input from State has been slow, may have more
Traffic Calming / Street Design	7	8	Streets are safe for all types of users.	May impact residents disproportionately. See Transportation Plan implementation.	
Election Code Updates	5	6	Updates needed to align with borough code and applicable state statute	Needs to be completed before October election	Postponed to after KPB Election and hand count ballot proposition results
Procurement Policy Review	4	5	Procurement policy meets state and federal laws and is clear and easily understood	Internal and attorney review	Procurement Policy had a major overhaul and adopted - Reso 24-083
Lease Policies & Procedures	7	8	Lease policies and procedures are current, clear & fair to all involved. Light on administrative over-sight.	Challenge unwinding existing non-compliance. We often get tripped up by leases, and their review by staff, PHC, and Council. Lease associate hired.	Underway, staff working w/PHC currently.
Public-Private Partnerships	5	7		Vague. Support the concept, need binding agreements.	
Expanding Transportation Options	9	8	User friendly for all.	Railroad? Tough because need is for people outside city to come to the city. Link to housing affordability?	
Financial Policy Development	8	8	Clear financial policies for staff, council, and public.	Need to make time for staff and council to discuss.	High priority for me.
HART Policy Manual Update	5	8	HART renewed by voters. Policy that is clear all & will aid in voter support of the program.	City staff currently reviewing; intent to come back to Aderhold and Parsons	Underway, anticipate completion in or before January 2026
Asset & Reserve Management	6	9	Staff & Council clear understanding of all city assests and maintenance/replacement schedule.	Lots of moving pieces. Staff time neccessary to develop lists and schedules, could be done a bit at a time.	High priority for me.
Homer Volunteer Fire Dept. Operations	7	9	Insurance costs go down. Good reposnse times, high department morale, all feel welcome	Council needs to stay in lane while responding to public interest. Volunteer recruitment & retention requires dedicated staff diligence.	Operational Audit postponed, working w;HVFD team on next steps.
Volunteerism at the City	5	8	Civic participation in "doing the doing". Volunteerism and volunteer morale is high for all city departments and programs that incorporate volunteers	Volunteer recruitment & retention requires dedicated staff diligence.	Looking for clarification
Cemetery Management	5	6	Pride in appearance. Respectful & pleasing place to honor loved ones.	Public/private partnership?	Funding was appropriated for Cemetery in 27/28 budget.
Rec Center Development	7	9	Completed multi-purpose communy recreation center with programs for all ages & abilities	Economic reality is a challenge, and lots of planning needed.	Ballot prop Ord not approved feed to determine next steps

Project / Initiative	Difficulty (1–10)	Impact (1–10)	What Would Success Look Like?	Notes/Questions	Manager's Comments
	1 = relatively easy / 10 = extremely difficult	1 = relatively low impact / 10 = extremely high impact	If we accomplished this project/initiative, what would ultimate success look like to you?		
Town Center Planning & History Review	4	6	Renewed possibilities for Town Center,	Housing for young families is a critical issue the plan needs to consider. Review of past work is easy, revizing zoning is more difficult.	Pending
New Public Works Facility	7	8	Constructed facility that meets the current and future needs of the city. Viable & long term campus out of tsunami zone.	Planning & funding needed. Bond?	Need funding for planning
New HVFD Facility	8	8	Welcomong, safe & sustainable bldg	Planning & funding needed. Bond?	Need funding for planning
Sister City – New Fund & Program	2	5	Program is alive and well		I think this is at a good place right now
City Employee Morale Survey	2	7	Understand where the city's doing well & what needs improvement,	Let's do this! This seems easy; implementing findings can be challenging.	Almost ready to launch
HERC Demolition (2022)	9	6	Clean & buildable site.	Disposal realities. Outside funding and outside expertise is required. EPA funds will help.	Still working toward resolution
Stormwater Management Plan (2022)	7	7	Homer has an environmentally sound to help better manage stormwater in relation to other land use demands		
Climate Action Plan Update (2022)	6	6	Plan reactivated, updated, and implemented.	CAP goals were implemented and evaluated after approval of plan but has languished. Good that its included in new Comp Plan and City should evaluate what can be done now.	
Building Safety & Code Enforcement (2022)	9	5	Structures meet or exceed International Building Code	Implementation realities. Should include all business districts. Loss of BRIC grant has stalled this.	No funding to pursue at this time, some consideration in Title 21 process
Strengthening Cybersecurity Program (2022)	8	9	Secure system protecting City assets and information	Underway, and current realities mean future investment.	IT Dept continues to improve the program, will need continued investment
Emergency Preparedness Planning & Training (2022)	6	8	Citizens would be better aware of shelter locations	Believe goal of this is council training to be prepared for their roles in an incident.	Important and hope to have more time for this over the winter
Public Safety Citizens' Advisory Board (2022)	8	7	Depends on nature and scope of the board	Additional conversation needed on intent and scope for a board. Would include police and fire.	Will welcome more input on scope and intent
Transportation Plan Implementation	7	9	Plan is implemented	Donna added this because of work associated with the Alaska Walkability Action Institute and Public Works bringing forward updated plan to construct/upgrade trails, sidewalks, and paths; see also traffic	