



MEMORANDUM

Resolution 26-041, A Resolution of the City Council of Homer, Alaska Directing the City Manager to Issue a Request for Proposals for Route Identification and Conceptual Planning for a Low-Impact Looped Hiking Trail above Karen Hornaday Park. Davis/Erickson.

Item Type: Backup Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor Lord and Homer City Council
Date: June 3, 2026
From: Councilmembers Davis and Erickson

In our May 26 meeting, Council considered Ordinance 26-29 appropriating \$389,000 for professional services associated with planning and design of a proposed loop trail above Karen Hornaday Park.

The proposed contract resulted from a Request for Proposals (RFP) that included geotechnical investigation, engineering assessment, drainage analysis, slope stabilization, and development of bid-ready design plans for a trail. The scope placed significant emphasis on evaluation and improvement of the existing switchback roadbed trail.

Following discussion, the ordinance failed to receive sufficient support for approval.

This resolution proposes a different approach.

Rather than beginning with extensive engineering analysis and preparation of 100% construction-ready plans, it directs the city manager to issue a more limited RFP focused on identifying the most feasible route for the as-yet unconstructed return segment needed to create a looped hiking trail. The intent is to determine whether a scenic, low-impact trail alignment can be identified before undertaking more extensive engineering and design work.

The resolution reflects several themes repeatedly expressed during public testimony and Council discussion:

- Preference for a hiking trail rather than a multi-use trail intended to accommodate bicycles or motorized vehicles;
- Preference for a low-impact trail design utilizing native surfaces, limited excavation, minimal imported materials, and trail alignments responsive to the natural terrain;
- Avoidance of wet areas, erosion-prone terrain, and unnecessary vegetation removal where feasible;

- Recognition that any future work involving significant vegetation removal, grading, or development on steep slopes may require additional engineering review under Homer City Code; and
- Recognition that future study of drainage, stabilization, scenic overlooks, or other improvements to the existing switchback roadbed may be advisable, but is not the primary purpose of this planning effort.

The resolution specifically directs that the route identification effort be conducted using the City's Level 1 (Backcountry Trail) standards. This designation is generally characterized by narrow native-surface trails, limited grading, and minimal infrastructure, and is therefore more consistent with the low-impact trail concept than higher-level trail classifications incorporating wider corridors and multiple user groups.

The goal of this resolution is not to determine final trail design, construction methods, or future capital expenditures. Rather, it is to identify the most feasible and attractive route for a looped hiking trail and to identify any locations where additional engineering or permitting may later be required.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution 26-041