CHAPTER 4 LAND USE

Vision Statement: Guide the amount and location of Homer’s growth to increase the supply and diversity of housing, protect important environmental resources and community character, reduce sprawl by encouraging infill, make efficient use of infrastructure, support a healthy local economy, and help reduce global impacts including limiting greenhouse gas emissions.

Goals & Objectives for Land Use

GOAL 1: Guide Homer’s growth with a focus on increasing the supply and diversity of housing, protecting community character, encouraging infill, and helping to minimize global impacts including limiting greenhouse gas emissions.

Objective A: Promote a pattern of growth characterized by a concentrated mixed-use center, and a surrounding ring of moderate-to-high density residential and mixed-use areas with lower densities in outlying areas.

Many of the community’s most important goals are tied to the amount and location of growth. These goals include encouraging affordable housing, protecting environmental quality, creating a walkable community, and efficiently providing public services and facilities. The broad strategy behind this objective is to encourage concentrated residential and business growth in the central area of the city, with densities decreasing in outlying areas. The existing pattern of development in the city and current zoning generally follow this pattern. The alternative to this pattern – to allow the same quantity of growth to spread over a much wider area – works against all these goals.

While concentrating land uses brings many benefits, residents clearly want to maintain a sense of open space and privacy that is often associated with lower density development, particularly in residential areas. As a result, this objective of concentrated growth must be accompanied by a set of standards that ensure housing and commercial areas are well designed. The remainder of this section presents more details on the location of new development. The following sections address the character of new development.

The key element of this section is the generalized Land Use Recommendations Map (see Appendix A-10, Comprehensive Plan Land Use Recommendations Map). This is not a zoning map, but a general map of proposed future land uses in Homer. Before these recommendations have the force of law, a separate, subsequent process must occur to amend the City’s current zoning code.

Implementation Strategies

- Review Land Use Recommendations Map
Objective B: Develop clear and well-defined land use regulations and update the zoning map in support of the desired pattern of growth.

The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Recommendations Map establishes the location and intent of proposed land use districts, but does not address the standards needed to guide development.

Implementation Strategies
- Revise zoning map
- Encourage preservation of natural system infrastructures
- Review density objectives
- Review appropriate design standards

Objective C: Maintain high quality residential neighborhoods; promote housing choice by supporting a variety of dwelling options.

Diverse, high-quality residential neighborhoods are crucial to the stability and economic health of Homer. Growth puts pressure on housing prices as land prices increase. Neighborhoods established decades ago with large lots face pressure as some landowners create subdivisions with smaller lots, while others would like to preserve the established neighborhood character. Housing choice is crucial to accommodate future growth as the dominant single family large lot developments clearly won’t be able to meet future demand in quantity or price.

Implementation Strategies
- Review code for opportunities for appropriate infill
- Support options for affordable housing

Objective D: Consider the regional and global impacts of development in Homer.

Homer is a community that understands and appreciates its place in the context of the larger, global environment. As shown by its robust environmental nonprofit community and the work of the City’s Global Warming Task Force, Homer residents look beyond their boundaries and have expressed the importance of acting locally as a way of addressing global issues.

Implementation Strategies
- Review opportunities that support energy efficiency for structures
- Consider land use policies that promote density and discourage sprawl