

2045 Comp Plan Draft Observations: Scott Smith

General Questions

- P 21 2b. What is form-based codes?
- P23 5. What is place-based planning?
- P 27 City Led Strategies – 1. B. under “Who” should “Planning” be added to this list?

Grammar Items:

- P 2 under the picture there is a double (::) between Agnew Beck
- P 8 4th bullet point – semantics here – “make the code clearer and more easy to use” – add/change to terms “make the code more effective, efficient and user friendly”
- P 25 under Reliable and Affordable Services – the word “planning” is used twice in the sentence.
- P 29 – 3. Maintain and (l)improve ... small l is used – change to capital I
- P 30 – Potential Partner-Led Strategies 9. Collaborate Borough, (S)tate, and (F)ederal ...

Climate Change Items:

Climate Change has been going on for thousands of years. (Are we still in an Ice Age?) The term Climate Change is extremely divisive and polarizing, and Homer has a chance to take the lead of eliminating the use of these divisive terms and use those that can be agreed upon, without eliminating the actual plan. What most of us do agree upon is that humanity needs to be far more responsible and ethical in regard to environmental impact. We recognize that there are normal and extreme weather situations that impact our community. There are standards of mitigation that should be implemented, as well as standards of development. I am encouraging the use of terms that support these ends without using the terms including and related to Climate Change.

Also, the term Climate Change is quite nebulous. We can clarify many of the Goals and other uses of this term by using more definable terms.

P 12 (The first P 12) Goal C – omit climate change – ~~“from climate change and natural hazards”~~ to **from normal and extreme environmental hazards**

P 11 – 3rd bullet point ~~“Impacts from climate change are a growing concern”~~ to **“Environmental Impacts are a growing concern”**.

P 11 – 4th bullet point – ~~“resilience to natural hazards and climate change”~~ to **“Resilience to normal and extreme natural hazards”**

P 27 Goal C – change ~~“from climate change and natural hazards”~~ to “from normal and extreme natural hazards”

P 29 3. Maintain and Improve Port and Harbor Infrastructure. A. change ~~“the impacts of climate change, and natural hazards like earthquakes ...”~~ to **“the impacts of normal and extreme natural events of weather, earthquakes ...”**

P 59 – ~~“Natural and Climate-Driven Hazards Increase Risk ...”~~ to **“Normal and Extreme Environmental Hazards ...”**

P 59 Sustainability and Resilience, Key Themes, Quote 19 is speculation and is part of the language that promotes panic. We can use different language that promotes responsibility and responsiveness without using these loaded terms.

P 60 Goals, Goal A “Protect both existing and new infrastructure from the impacts of climate change, environmental constraints, and hazards” to “Protect both existing and new infrastructure from **normal and extreme environmental impacts, constraints and hazards.**”

Supporting A Truck Route:

There was a fairly significant voice represented in the 2018 Comp Plan which supported finding a way to divert heavy, commercial traffic off of Pioneer and Lake streets. This is not represented in the 2045 plan, and I suggest that this voice not be reduced or eliminated.

P 3 Theme: Walkable downtown – currently a complete experience with dump trucks!

P 14 Economic Development – Goal A – “Enhance Homer’s defined downtown to drive commerce, business, and resident and visitor’s services.

This goal will be hard to achieve if heavy traffic is allowed to continue. It’s less of an enjoyable experience if dodging belly-dumps is part of the experience.

P 23 5. a. Lead area planning efforts for the Spit and downtown core.

P 23 5. b. Walkable downtown

P 23 5. c. ... “Compile developmental standards into a unified design manual that integrates transportation, streetscape, and infrastructure guidance.”

I have often heard comments about desires to have the Pioneer St., Main St, Lake St. core area to be a place that is visually attractive, stimulating and enjoyable for residents and tourists alike. Architecture, street, walkway and traffic planning is essential to have this area be what many in Homer hope for. A common observation of annoyance is the amount of heavy traffic in that area. Having multiple dump-trucks and other heavy vehicles regularly roaring down these areas does allow for these desired goals/results. Keeping a truck route on the Comp Plan Radar means that those on the various Councils and Commissions have been attentive to and are working toward the end of these desires (just like with walkability!) Please keep Truck Route as a goal in the 2045 plan.

P 40 Goals – Goal A “Enhance Homer’s defined downtown to drive commerce, business and resident and visitors’ services.” This goal supports getting heavy vehicle traffic out of this area.

Land Use:

Keep Gateway District

P 20 Is Harbor Expansion included in the Future Land Use Map? Should be!

Spit Parking Items

P 12 City-Led Strategies (5.) As public safety is a priority, Spit Parking (and No Parking Zones) should be a high priority. The more Public walk and cross the Spit highway (birding areas, or end of Spit), it increases their danger to accident.

Possible and Much-Needed Action Item: Birder parking limited to West side of Spit Road ONLY between Kachemak Drive and Mariner Park.

Economic Development

P 14 Potential Partner-Led Strategies

6. Support access ... could "to both private and borough services" be added?

8. Promote Food Security – this was brought up at our last meeting and based upon a response to this question, it made me consider that it could be a much larger question. Food security includes a lot of different dynamics including availability. One source of availability is the supply chain from Anchorage, etc. If the roads get knocked out, as they have previously, how do we get basic supplies? Should Food Security be a sub-topic within a larger topic: Services/Resources Security? (This is also on P 42 under Potential Partner-Led Strategies 8. Promote Food Security.)

Transportation:

P 15 - Switch Goal A & B – AND

P 47 – Switch Goal A & B

As I read these, it makes me think that the City has more of a priority for paths and sidewalks, rather than to its transportation infrastructure, without which, there would be no community. With all respect to the significant voice (and having no desire to diminish this voice) to have greater walkability within the Homer area, what is in Goal B should come first.

Add Goal C: Commit to the development of the Core business/tourist area of Homer upholding the values of walkability, safety, Wayfinding and visual characteristics.

HOMER COMP PLAN REVIEW**C.BARNWELL****9/2/25****Review Categories:**

SUBSTANTIVE (looking for main topics, or subtopics within a larger category that are missing, incomplete, or perhaps should be omitted)

TECHNICAL INFORMATION, including grammar and punctuation, and wordsmithing similar to what Heath brought forth about the Introduction sentence, or questions

MISSING GOALS that should be in the Plan

Executive Summary PHD Review

| COMMENT | REVIEW CATEGORY | PAGE # | MOTION? |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| <p>Top Priorities/projects</p> <p>Suggest addition of “Increase access to recreational opportunities for visitors and residents” topic be included as a priority be included in the list.</p> <p>Suggest addition of “provide for utilities infrastructure that supports development in appropriately zoned areas.” (Note: this refers to survey “Increase the diversity of Homer’s economy and economic foundations 73%”</p> <p>Suggest: instead of “Preserve open public spaces within the city from development” use “ Protect open public spaces within the city.”</p> | MISSING GOALS TECHNICAL | 4 | Y |
| <p>Land Use Map</p> <p>Areas shown as Commercial don’t align with open space, green infrastructure, and conservation goals.</p> | SUBSTANTIVE Land Use and Environment | 8,9, (also see p.16) see verbiage | Y |

| | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Multiple uses” conflict with conservation, e.g. commercial. “properties associated with Home Airport” are vague. Manufacturing and “supportive infrastructure” is in conflict with land use conservation and open space.. Environmental constraint overlay as shown on p. 11 in conflict with “commercial “ designation as shown on map on p. Key themes as mentioned in sustainability and resilience refer to “open space and natural lands support long-term community well being. | | from plan: This is the blueprint that sets intent for how area will accomodae change and meet needs | |
| Airport category intended uses is contradictory: manufacturing, etc. doesn’t mix well with conservation. | TECHNICAL Land Use Categories | 9 | Y |
| Conservation: maintained as undisturbed and natural state conflicts with certain areas such as Airport commercial land use. | | | Y |
| Area Plans some key areas are missing from the Comp Plan. Key areas that have been discussed in the past 2 years are Diamond Cr. Recreational Area, Gateway District, Woodard Creek Watershed. I move that these areas be added to this item. | SUBSTANTIVE Land use map overlays | 10 | Y |
| Environmental Constraints: A well written category | SUBSTANTIVE Land Use map overlays | 10 | |
| A well presented map and most of it makes sense except for the environmental overlay in the Airport area. This is a critical habitat and peatlands/wetlands/hydric soils area that should be clearly designated conservation. | | 11 | |
| Public Facilities and Services Generally, strategies are good, but need a line that mentions | SUBSTANTIVE | 12 | |

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|----|--|
| consideration of future water supply and planning. | | | |
| Emphasis here on sustainability and energy efficient housing is fine, but this lacks a strategy for zoning that encourages affordable housing, i.e. housing that is accessible to walkable and transportation close to the CBD. | | 13 | |
| Missing the harbor impacts on the economy. | SUBSTANTIVE Economic | 14 | |
| <p>Transportation</p> <p>No mention of walkability goals (see Core Plan vision and other), although connectivity is emphasized.</p> <p>No mention of need for alternatives for movement of industrial traffic (e.g. trucks) through the CBD.</p> <p>Walkability is part of the Vision as shown on p.7 of the Core Plan. Also note walkability is listed on p.9 of the Core Plan.</p> | SUBSTANTIVE, Transportation | 15 | |
| | | | |
| <p>Storm Water and Drainage Management</p> <p>In the Governance section, mention should be made for the need for drainage infrastructure funded by taxation or some means of city revenue. Other city models for taxation supporting storm water and other infrastructure should be considered, e.g. Anchorage AWWU, and other.</p> | SUBSTANTIVE, Governance | 16 | |

| | | | |
|----------------------|-------------|--|--|
| Water Supply for COH | Substantive | | |
| Geohazards | Technical | | |
| | | | |

Substantive

Technical

Core Plan PHD Review

| COMMENT | CATEGORY | PAGE # | MOTION? |
|--|---------------------------|--------|---------|
| Add sentence: "The 2018 Plan emphasized the use of Green Infrastructure. This Plan recognizes the importance of green infrastructure (aka nature based solutions), but frames these needs in terms of drainage and stormwater management." | MISSING GOAL TECHNICAL | 8 | Y |
| Homer Profile Population numbers for Homer and Soldotna are very similar. I question the Soldotna numbers. And | TECHNICAL | P.5 | |

| | | | |
|--|---|----|--|
| Kenai numbers. Are the Solodotna numbers from the COS? | | | |
| Homer Workforce As shown, “retail” is the highest percentage of jobs. Given this (I question it), has the Team thoroughly canvassed retail industries in Homer? If so, where is this in the Plan? | SUBSTANTIVE Homer Industry | 6 | |
| Land Use and the Environment | | | |
| Land Use: Green Infrastructure | SUBSTANTIVE Land Use and Environment | | |
| | SUBSTANTIVE Land Use and Environment | | |
| Land Use and Environment Revise Goal A to read (see italics) “Promote sustainable and moderate growth that preserves Homer’s small-town character; <i>and protects</i> | TECHNICAL MISSING GOALS | 16 | |

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------|----|---|
| <i>important habitat and open space.”</i> | | | |
| <p>Land Use Categories:</p> <p>Revise the following conservation verbiage under category: “Public and private lands that serve key environmental functions, such as critical habitat , <i>watershed areas</i>, and <i>key hydric soils areas</i> to be maintained in an undisturbed and natural state.”</p> | SUBSTANTIVE TECHNICAL | 18 | |
| <p>Land Use Categories:</p> <p>Revise the Area Plan application areas to include: Woodard Creek Watershed, Diamond Creek Recreation Area, and Gateway District.</p> | | 18 | |
| <p>Future Land Use Map</p> <p>I question the designation “Airport” mainly because the area designated this is large and conflicts with the conservation needs in this area.</p> <p>Suggest a) adding a page of text explaining the land use designations, and b) revising the spatial extent of “Airport” to take into</p> | | 20 | Y |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>account conservation needs.</p> <p>On this same page is needed a brief description of Homer's environment. This is something most land use plans include.. Suggest the following text:</p> <p>"The ocean-influenced maritime climate lends to a fairly temperate place by Alaska standards. Average daily temperatures range from 45 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer and 14 to 27 in the winter. Yearly snowfall during the winter averages 55 inches; total annual precipitation is 24 inches. The topography of the region adds to its beauty. The City of Homer is situated in a geographical area referred to as the Homer Bench characterized by high bluffs to the north and gently sloping shorelines in the south. Homer is bounded by Kachemak Bay to the south, and Diamond Ridge to the north, which rises from about 400 to 1,100 feet above sea level. Common rock types include shale, sandstone, coal, and claystone. The steep slopes and the loose</p> | | | |
|---|--|--|--|

| | | | |
|---|--|----|----|
| <p>nature of the soil and bedrock make the area susceptible to landslides when saturated with water. Homer experiences both bluff and shoreline erosion problems. Homer's location makes it vulnerable to natural hazards including earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, and flooding, as well as the longer term impacts of climate change. There are numerous plans and reports that provide recommendations for improving the resilience of Homer's infrastructure. 16 The Port, Harbor, and the Homer Spit, which are all important components of Homer's economy, are especially vulnerable to severe storms and climate change.”</p> <p>Please put the natural hazards verbiage that was in the Spring PRD back into this Plan, as shown above. This is a huge issue for Homer and should not be understated.</p> | | | |
| <p>Strategies, Item (h) Please define “emerging industries,” Also, add “agricultural and other food production industries, important to food security.”</p> | | 21 | 21 |

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|------------|---|
| Protect Green Space , #4 Add Action item as follows: “Protect and conserve areas of hydric soils considered important to water storage, stormwater management, open space, and stormwater management.” | MISSING GOALS | 22 | Y |
| Public Facilities: City led Strategies Suggest adding action “Move Public Works Campus to a suitable location safe from natural hazards and accessible to the Public and Staff.” | | 27 | Y |
| Transportation Hub This needs more elaboration on why Homer is a “transportation hub for the region” Residents and walk/bike: a good section, but the COH non motorized transp plan should be mentioned and referenced. The reference on p.46 needs more elaboration. It’s a good section, but how it integrates with walkability and Area plans needs to be described. | SUBSTANTIVE, Transportation | 44, 45, 47 | |

| | | | |
|---|----------------------------|--------|--|
| Strategies and Actions should mention areas beyond the CBD/downtown area, as good as that is. But as the Plan introduction mentions this Plan is not just about downtown Homer. | | | |
| Fiscal uncertainties: The funding of public facilities infrastructure is a major issue in Homer e.g. water/sewer, public works campus, other. We need discussion of this here. | | 49--53 | |
| Storm Water and Drainage Management In the Governance section, mention should be made for the need for drainage infrastructure funded by taxation or some means of city revenue. | SUBSTANTIVE, Governance | 16 | |
| Appendix J. Correct sentence "Update and adopt the City's Low-Impact Development Plan (also referred to as the Green Infrastructure – Stormwater Master Plan to "Update and adopt the City's Low-Impact Development Plan | TECHNICAL MISSIG GOALS | p.16 | |

| | | | |
|---|-------------|--|--|
| <p>(and the Green Infrastructure – Stormwater Master Plan)</p> <p>Suggest revising the following (see italics): “Continue to incorporate green infrastructure approaches (e.g., rain gardens, vegetated buffers, permeable surfaces) into City-led projects, <i>and new developments.</i></p> <p>Suggest adding the following: <i>Develop technical mapping tools, including stormwater drainage basins and flow analysis, to guide City-led infrastructure decisions and support watershed-based planning.</i></p> | | | |
| Water Supply for COH | Substantive | | |
| Geohazards | Technical | | |
| | | | |

[illegible]

Venuti Comp Plan Comments

TECHNICAL

1. The Table of Contents should be at the very beginning of the document.
2. The comments made by Jan Kaiser in her memorandum of August 15th regarding the PHD make sense, have real value and should be considered.
3. Fewer photos should be within the plan. Many photos are of topics that have nothing to do with the plan. They are distracting from the contents. This is not a travel guide. Photos obviously raise the cost of printing the document. We do not need photos, we need words.

SUBSTANTIVE

1. Two preferences that the people surveyed have which should be driving the development of this plan are:
a. Preserve small town feeling. & b. A desire for moderate growth.
2. ADA compliance should be required of any existing or newly constructed business or public facility within the City of Homer
3. The issue of storm water and the value of wetlands is not adequately considered in the plan. Some wetland areas should be designated as no-build zones.
4. Eliminating the term Climate Change and replacing it with Weather Related Issues will remove any partisan concerns about the issue.
5. The proposed change from Gateway Business to Commercial Mixed Use does not “preserve scenic views and insure a welcoming entrance to Homer. It should remain as Gateway Business.”
6. The importance of providing a safer Truck Route through Homer is not addressed in the plan. Allowing Tandem Belly Dump Trucks and other large commercial/industrial vehicles to drive down Pioneer Avenue does not add to the desire for Homer to be a safe, walkable community.
7. The important issue of annexation is not included in this plan. When one considers the amount of growth seen in this community over the past ten years, it is naïve to discount the importance of physically growing our city in order to keep up with anticipated growth.
8. During the development of this plan there has never been the opportunity for the Planning Commission to review the 2018 Comp Plan and determine what needed to be changed.
9. Should the Community Design Manual be considered in the plan ?

The 2045 comprehensive plan serves as an aspirational guide for shaping the long-term vision, growth, and development of our community. It is a blueprint sets forth goals, strategies, and actions to inform policy-making and decision-making across land use, infrastructure, housing, transportation, and environmental stewardship. The plan is a living document—intended to be periodically reviewed and amended in response to changing conditions, emerging needs, and evolving community values. Its implementation must always be grounded in the realities of available public resources and pursued in a fiscally responsible and sustainable manner to ensure its relevance and effectiveness serves the community's best interest over time.

Public Facilities and Services

Page 27, 30, 34 etc Provide a suitable definition of “ensure” in Appendix B so that users of this document understand that outcomes of efforts cannot be guaranteed. Or use another word.

Page 29 e. Develop and maintain a business plan for the Port and Harbor Enterprise that demonstrates well thought out strategies for independent success.

Page 30 6. Be responsive to community driven desires to enhance community services. Improve the synergy between the City and other community partners to maximize resources and investments.

Page 40 Goal B: define “character of Homer” according to who, what time period....

Transportation

Page 47 Clarify the City's roll in Goal B. Explain how the City plays a roll in “maintaining” a network outside of its city limits? Advocacy?

“within” greater homer area.

Governance

Page 53

Reconcile-- page 40 findings in desired growth of government (66% want minimal to no growth) and page 25 where the Community Survey response shows 95% and 96% that the fire, ems, police meet the mark-- with “staff capacity challenges” on page 53. Figure 25 is likely staff, not community driven comment. The City has increased its staff by about 12% in recent years. Labor has the largest single financial impact on the budget.

Sustainability has to govern growth.

Dotti Harness notes for Comp Plan Update

SUBSTANTIVE

Future Land Use Map – Gateway Business District

Page 20 Future Land Use Map. Change the Commercial Mixed Use along the Sterling Highway back to the Gateway Business District and insert the current description of the Gateway Business District in the Future Land Use Map Category.

Explore the role of City Water in Regional Growth

Recognize the role that Homer’s municipal water supply has in supporting population growth outside the city limits. This includes referencing the existing water and sewer agreements between Homer and Kachemak City. Action items may include:

-
1. Identify where City water is currently being delivered,
 2. Research how other communities use water supply to manage growth.
-

FORMATTING – TECHNICAL DETAILS

Move page 19 which describes the Future Land Use and insert it before page 17.

Move the Table of Contents to the front of the document and continue the page numbers through the entire document including the Appendices.

P26, Last paragraph, Last sentence under: Rising Service Demands and Infrastructure Costs.

Substitute the word ~~adequate~~ for insufficient so the last sentence reads: “The water and sewer services within the City are insufficient, and ~~but~~ stormwater runoff impacts the capacity of the wastewater treatment plants.