



AGENDA

Planning Commission - Regular Meeting

Wednesday, March 15, 2023 at 6:30 PM

City Hall Cowles Council Chambers In-Person & Via Zoom Webinar

Homer City Hall

491 E. Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603
www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Zoom Webinar ID: 979 8816 0903 Password: 976062

<https://cityofhomer.zoom.us>
Dial: 346-248-7799 or 669-900-6833;
(Toll Free) 888-788-0099 or 877-853-5247

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS UPON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

The public may speak to the Commission regarding matters on the agenda that are not scheduled for public hearing or plat consideration. (3 minute time limit)

- 3.A. Written Public Comment Received on Decisions & Findings for Conditional Use Permit 23-01 Building Area in Excess of 30% of the Lot in the Central Business District at 106 West Bunnell **Page 3 - 7**
[Public Comment Received - CUP 23-01](#)

4. RECONSIDERATION

5. CONSENT AGENDA

(Items listed below will be enacted by one motion. If separate discussion is desired on an item, that item may be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Meeting Agenda at the request of a Commissioner.)

- 5.A. Unapproved Meeting Minutes **Page 8 - 15**
[Meeting Minutes for March 1, 2023](#)
- 5.B. Decisions & Findings **Page 16 - 21**
[Conditional Use Permit 2023-01 for Building Area in Excess of 30% of the Lot in the Central Business District at 106 W. Bunnell](#)

6. PRESENTATIONS/VISITORS

7. REPORTS

- 7.A. City Planner's Report **Page 22 - 26**
[Agenda Item Report PC 23-017](#)

8. PUBLIC HEARING(S)

- 8.A. Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 23-02 for building area over 8000 square feet at 3375 Sterling Highway **Page 27 - 51**
[Agenda Item Report PC 23-018](#)

- 8.B. Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 23-03 to Construct a 4 Unit Multi-family Structure in the General Commercial 1 District (GC1) at 1368 Lakeshore Drive. **Page 52 - 75**
[Agenda Item Report PC 23-019](#)

9. PLAT CONSIDERATION(S)

10. PENDING BUSINESS

- 10.A. Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat Reconsideration Continuation **Page 76 - 184**
[Agenda Item Report PC 23-020](#)

11. NEW BUSINESS

12. INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- 12.A. City Manager's Report **Page 185 - 222**
[CM Report for March 13, 2023](#)

13. COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

14. COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

15. COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

- 16. ADJOURNMENT** Next regular meeting is Wednesday, April 5, 2023 at 6:30 p.m., a Worksession is scheduled at 5:30 p.m. All meetings scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska

From: [Livingston](#)
To: [Renee Krause](#)
Subject: Written Testimony for Commission/Board Meetings
Date: Wednesday, March 8, 2023 12:18:44 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Written Testimony for the Planning Commission Name:
Melody Livingston Email: melodyliving@yahoo.com
Phone: 907-942-5205 Residency: City Resident Meeting
to Participate In: Planning Commission Regular Meeting
Wed, 03/15 Public Comments - Citizen may comment on
regular agenda items not scheduled for public hearing or
Plat Considerations (Planning Commission only) such as
Consent Agenda items, Minutes, Reports, Pending
Business, New Business, and Informational Materials.
Written Testimony:

We are requesting that the Commission clarify its ruling on the CUP application for the project at 106 W Bunnell, Unit B (CUP 23-01). We request that this clarification be included in the Decisions and Findings document, reflecting approval of the CUP.

The City Planner has taken the position that the Commission intended to require submission of a completely new and separate CUP application in order to

make a determination on whether to accept the current non-conforming setback. The City Planner is insisting on approval of this second CUP before the project that was approved by this Commission on March 1st is allowed to proceed. We do not believe this was the intent of the Commission and ask that the Commission rectify the confusion by either: instructing the City Planner that Condition 5 has been satisfied, by striking the condition from the approved CUP, or other action as the Commission may deem appropriate in order to allow the project to proceed and avoid unnecessary delays and the costs (and revenue that may be lost due to such delays) and frustrations that further unnecessary administrative steps would entail.

As a reminder:

- The Commission was made aware of the non-conformity to the setback and discussed the issue during the March 1st hearing.
- The Commission was informed about and agreed that the historically non-conforming setback for Wild Honey and the Bunnell was consistent with surrounding properties (AJ's, the Driftwood Inn, etc.).
- It was also noted at the hearing that there were plans in the works to modify the setback generally for Old Town.
- Several of the Commissioners were clear that they did not see the setback as a bar to granting the CUP and

approving the project to move forward.

We have tried to address this with the City Planner, but he has taken a hard line that a separate CUP must be issued or that a formal appeal must be filed. However, the City Planner has provided no legal authority to support this requirement or his contentions that:

1. the Commission did not have the authority to consider and approve the non-conforming setback pursuant to the CUP application presented on March 1st (CUP 23-01); or
2. the Commission cannot clarify its decision as part of its approval of the Decisions and Findings document, to be presented to the Commission on March 15th.

There is no legal or administrative reason that barred the Commission from approving the non-conforming setback as part of its consideration at the March 1st hearing of the CUP application, and indeed, it seemed clear at the hearing that this is exactly what the Commission did. Requiring a second CUP will cause unnecessary delay, expense, and frustration for all parties involved.

Additionally, requiring a second CUP makes no practical sense. This second CUP would contain exactly the same information and would entail the exact same discussion before the Commission that has already occurred. The City Planner has identified no information that would be

relevant to the setback that was not already included in the CUP that has already been approved.

Finally, we would also remind the Commission that it has previously approved both the setback and lot coverage for the 106 W Bunnell property pursuant to a previously CUP that was submitted for this property in 2020. Under that CUP, the Commission approved a complete demolition and rebuild of the Unit B structures, allowing Wild Honey to maintain the existing footprint and thereby approving the historically non-conforming setback and lot coverage. (Wild Honey voluntarily withdrew the 2020 CUP after being unable to proceed with the project due to high building costs.) However, it seems clear that the Commission has in no instance seen the historically non-conforming lot coverage or setback as barring renovation of the Wild Honey space.

Considering the above and the clear intent of the Commission to allow the project at 106 W Bunnell to proceed as proposed, we ask the Commission to clarify its approval of CUP and direct the City Planner to move forward, with all due speed, with the administrative actions needed to allow the project to continue.

Sincerely,

Melody Livingston (907-942-5205)

Scott Livingston (773-504-4043)

Electronic Signature: Melody Livingston Submitted on
Wednesday, March 8, 2023 - 12:18pm The results of this
submission may be viewed at: [https://www.cityofhomer-
ak.gov/node/60481/submission/50435](https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/node/60481/submission/50435)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Session 23-05, a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Scott Smith at 6:30 p.m. on March 1, 2023 at the Cowles Council Chambers in City Hall, located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and via Zoom Webinar. A worksession was held prior to the regular meeting for a presentation and discussion facilitated by Ryan Foster, Special Projects coordinator on the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning & Planning Code Update, Grading and Clearing Regulations, Greater Homer Housing Event.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS VENUTI, SMITH, HIGHLAND, STARK, CHIAPPONE, BARNWELL, CONLEY

STAFF: CITY PLANNER ABBODD, DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE

CONSULTING MEMBER: MAYOR CASTNER

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Smith read the items from the supplemental packet and requested a motion and second to adopt the agenda as amended.

HIGHLAND/BARNWELL MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

4. RECONSIDERATION

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- 5A. Unapproved Meeting Minutes
PC Unapproved Minutes for February 15, 2023

HIGHLAND/BARNWELL MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

6. PRESENTATIONS/VISITORS

7. STAFF & COUNCIL REPORTS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

7A. City Planner's Report
Agenda Item Report PC 23-013

Chair Smith introduced the topic and deferred to City Planner Abboud.

City Planner Abboud reviewed his staff report that was presented in the packet. He spoke to the following:

- Council actions taken at the February 27th meeting
- Transportation Plan draft scheduled for the worksession on April 5, 2023
- Reviewed New Banners for Pioneer Avenue at the Economic Development Advisory Commission
- There were no volunteers to attend Council meeting on March 13th
 - o Chair Smith will submit written report.

City Planner Abboud responded to questions on the topic of the proposed new banners for Pioneer Avenue.

8. PUBLIC HEARING(S)

8.A. Request for Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 23-01 at 106 W. Bunnell Avenue for Approval of a Building Area in Excess of 30% of the Lot Area
Agenda Item Report PC 23-014

City Planner Abboud provided a thorough review of Staff Report AIR PC 23-014 that included the following:

- Condominium ownership
- Neighboring properties and uses
- Design of the buildings
- Building constructed in 1937
- There are four buildings
 - o first building is 3 stories containing
 - Art Gallery
 - B & B
 - consignment shop
 - o This building is not included in the proposed project.
 - o Two Quonset type houses
 - one houses a dining area
 - one is used for storage
 - o Wild Honey Bistro
- Ownership
 - o Condition 1 Required signature of acknowledgement from property owner/co -owner
- Parking
 - o Condition 2 Required agreement with land owner for the required parking needs
- Landscaping
 - o Screening
 - Condition 3 Required all dumpsters must be screened from the residential units as required by HCC
 - Condition 4 Required screening of rear parking area along the north lot line per HCC

- Requirements to grant the CUP regarding existing setback issues:
 - o Finding 1 – If approved by CUP more than 30% lot coverage and buildings with the 20 foot building setback area are allowed
 - o Finding 2 – The improvements found in the 20 foot setback may be approved with a CUP per HCC 21.18.040 (b)(4)
 - o Condition 5: Obtain approval of structures in the setback prior to commencement of any building activities.
 - City Planner Abboud provided background information on the improvements in the setback and that it was recommended to the applicant to take care of that at this time, the applicant disagreed stating that since this project did not affect the issue of the building in the setback that it was not applicable. Mr. Abboud stated an application will be needed reiterating that it could be taken care of at the March 15th meeting. However, in accordance with HCC 21. 18.040(b)(4) this issue must be taken care of prior to the commencement of any building activities regardless.
- Outdoor Lighting
 - o Condition 6: Required all outdoor lighting must be downlit.
- No written comments were received on this project.

Melody Livingston, Applicant stated that they are not planning on changing the footprint that the plan is to only replace the existing building that is being used as a dining area and that the construction will reflect the style of the main building.

Chair Smith opened the public hearing.

Susan Miller, resident, commented in support of the replacement of the Quonset which they were told eleven years ago that it was a temporary structure, questioned the timeline for the remainder of the structure as it was an eyesore. She noted that the roses that were planted were not successful in the use as a screen for the dumpster and requested a more formal screening structure. Ms. Miller also requested that the aesthetics for the rear of the building in plantings be addressed similar to those done in the front of the buildings.

Joshua Bregge, non-resident, commented in support for the project noting a business relationship with the applicant and encouraged keeping within the old style buildings to retain the historical aesthetics of the area of Old Town.

Chair Smith closed the public hearing.

City Planner Abboud facilitated discussion on the following topics:

- Old Town Overlay District
- Anyone participating in this hearing will have the right of due process
- Screening landscaping materials

Ms. Livingston requested clarification on the purpose of the screening for the dumpster and the parking lot. She stated that they intend to have a more formal screening for the dumpster which will also designate the location of where it will belong and offer a more acceptable view to the nearby residents. She responded

that they would be willing to work with the other owners on a more appropriate screening method for the parking area but within affordable limits in response to the comments on the failure with the Sitka Roses previously planted.

Commissioner Venuti questioned the applicant's response to a Fire Marshall review noting the regulations requiring that and it stated it needs to be sorted out.

Mr. Scott Livingston, responded that his interpretation of the city code, they are not required to have Fire Marshall review, however, to be clear they will be obtaining a Fire Marshal review as they are installing hoods and other things and to move forward with the commercial kitchen. He then addressed concerns regarding the dumpster screening.

City Planner Abboud provided clarification that to obtain the Zoning Permit a Fire Marshall Permit will be required.

Ms. Livingston explained that the prior project was going to be a complete teardown and rebuild however due to the cost being prohibitive and the issues with a neighboring property owner, they will be tearing down 2/3 of the existing building (Quonset hut) and the remaining 1/3 will be used as storage until the future when they will come before the Commission again for another CUP in response to questions on the Quonset building demolition.

Mr. Livingston added that this current proposal maintains the original café structure which is the 1937 build and is very attractive, charming and quaint. In the next phase they will remove the remaining portion of the Quonset hut and construct a combined facility similar in style to the original building. This will create a unified structure to combine the seating and storage, but that is 2-3 years out at this time. He then stated that two thirds of the existing structure is the closest part to the Bunnell, straight back from the café, this will allow them to expand their kitchen which is too small to accommodate their growing needs. The existing kitchen creates long wait times and it will only get worse if they do not do something soon. Mr. Livingston referred to the picture in the packet on page 12, stating that where the double doors are located and to the right, that section would remain.

City Planner Abboud confirmed that Condition 2 requires the signature of Asia Freeman and a Zoning Permit will not be granted without her signature. He confirmed that the letter does not fulfill the requirements and the CUP can be granted with that Condition in response to questions from Commissioner Highland and Chair Smith.

Commissioner Highland requested clarification on the building in the setback and how that will be addressed by Conditional Use Permit.

City Planner Abboud explained that while that issue could have been addressed if the applicant included it on this application but since it was not the applicant will need to address the issue before they will be granted the zoning permit to start this project.

Mr. Livingston interjected that his interpretation of the regulations, believing that since they will not be touching the portion of the building in the setback that they do not need to address the setback issue at this time. He noted that this is consistent with all the other buildings in the area.

City Planner Abboud explained that he did address the issue of the complications, he referred to how it was addressed in his Staff Report, and continued stating that in code if a CUP was not required, that expansion of a non-conforming building in a way that doesn't expand the non-conformity could be done. It can be debated whether it is needed or not but stated that it was included in his report and it is up to the Commission's discretion to address this and as far as the non-conformity, he can refer to Homer City Code as far as construction, as listed in Finding number 2 on what is allowed and there can be some debate on whether this particular addition does not affect the setback and as such can be dealt with at a separate time. These buildings are very old. This is a conservative look at the building within a 20 foot setback and is something that the Commission should consider.

Commissioner Highland requested further clarification regarding the statement provided earlier by the City Planner that the applicant is required to come back for another CUP regarding the non-conformity.

City Planner Abboud responded that he would prefer somewhat of both. This point has been discussed with many others at great length, he added that he sees the merits on both sides and there is no clear cut case on presenting this kind of issue in this manner. There are cases regarding non-conformity but nothing conclusive to state a decision was made. He would prefer that it is cleaned up at this time, but the applicant stated his interpretation of the regulations and was not going to address it at this time. This is a conservative approach. Mr. Abboud stated that in accordance with code, the expansion of a structure can be allowed in a way that does not increase the non-conformity if the Commission grants the CUP for the over 30%, they will still be left with this structure in the 20 foot setback, but it has been like this for a very long time, it fits within the expectations of the city's code and plans.

Chair Smith read into the record, Homer City Code 21.18.040 Dimensional requirements. (b) Building Setbacks (4) If approved by a conditional use permit, the setback from a dedicated right-of-way, except from the Sterling Highway or Lake Street, may be reduced.

Chair Smith then reiterated that the City Planner has noted that there is this allowance in code to permit this sort of activity.

Commissioner Highland expressed her continued uncertainty and requested further clarification on what action was required by the Commission on the setback issue.

City Planner Abboud stated that since this current application did not address the setback issue and it was not addressed in the Notice that was distributed and published as legally required, he assured the Commission he did address the topic with the applicant, it would require another application.

Mr. Livingston interjected once again there was misunderstanding between Mr. Abboud and himself, he reiterated that he did not think the setback was an issue because they were not including it since it was not implicated or changing the setback or performing any deconstruction or construction on the area of the lot where the setback is implicated. He continued by stating that it is not a bar that the Commission should be concerned moving forward with granting this CUP and would appreciate that the Commission do that. Mr. Abboud responded to Commissioner Venuti that he was correct in assuming that this setback issue was a common one among other buildings in the immediate area not applicable to just this building.

Chair Smith called for a motion and second.

HIGHLAND/VENUTI MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT AIR PC 23-014 AND APPROVE CUP 23-01 WITH FINDINGS 1-11 AND CONDITIONS ONE THROUGH SIX.

There was a brief clarification and discussion on condition two must be completed before a Zoning Permit is issued.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

9. PLAT CONSIDERATION(S)

10. PENDING BUSINESS

11. NEW BUSINESS

12. INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- 12.A. City Manager's Report
CM Report for February 27, 2023

Chair Smith commented on the Anchorage Boat Show being referred to as the Homer Boat Show due to the number of Homer businesses present.

Mayor Castner provided a report on the Sales Tax collected.

13. COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

14. COMMENTS OF THE STAFF

15. COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

Mayor Castner stated that it would be really disingenuous for him to not tell the Commission that the comprehensive plan that they heard so much about tonight, is, will probably be vetoed. He reported that he will be reducing the amount from \$650,000 to \$250,000 which would be enough to attack Title 21 and the City should do Title 22 at the same time. Mayor Castner then provided the reasons to support his veto. He noted there are four more months to go in in this budget cycle and a new two year budget starts on July 1, 2023. The City has been “check booking” it for the last year, just writing checks outside the budget to replace something that has to be replaced, an emergency thing or something like that. But the comprehensive plan is not an emergency. It's all of a sudden. He acknowledged that the City Council was talking about redoing it, and the City Attorney stated that we could do it in a serial manner. He did not believe that anybody consulted the Commission and reported that no one consulted the City Council on what it was that they or this Commission wanted to attack. A list of deficiencies was not presented to City Council to support this action. It brings forward the questions, “Why, now?” and “How come?” He stated that it was really unsettling to keep writing checks when the City has finite income. The City has an expectation of a lot of grants that could become available, and in order for us to be to meet those grant

availabilities, the City going to have to have the cash to do the match. There is the accounting portion. That's pretty easy, but the economics of it is not so easy. How much do we set aside in order to meet those grants and where we are right now? The meeting before this last one City Council approved a whole bunch of grant applications, and some of them didn't have immediate matches, but many of them had subsequent matches, and he didn't know where the City was. The City Council's number one goal coming out of last year's visioning session in March was to have a comprehensive fiscal plan and that has not happened yet. I mean, if it's happened, it's only happened at the administrative level. The City Council does not have a comprehensive fiscal plan, and that's really frustrating to me, because it's not that hard when you have two sources of income. So I had asked a couple of weeks ago, for the City Manager to try and figure out a way where the City could do part of it, because it was initially presented as a two-step process. What has occurred to make this come out in one glop? He stated that he never got a good explanation. Administration just reported that they were developing the Comprehensive Plan first then tackling title 21. He did not agree that is what has to happen. He encouraged the Commission to agree that they see that the City needs to rewrite Title 21 soon before similar projects like the last one comes before them. The ambiguity and the setback thing could easily be fixed. Stantec had the \$213,000 proposal to do all of the Title 21 work, and they have all of the databases, and all of the information from other cities and towns, and everything like that. I think it would be worth a while to do it and get it done before the next election. The comprehensive plan. I don't see any reason what the difference would be if we started now or in July. So, I am going to veto the ordinance and resolution. Mayor Castner provided input on the platting process, expressing how and what should be included in the process for approval of preliminary plats, the next topic was the misunderstanding that was going through the community on a proposed road through Mud Bay and he stated that there will be no roadway built through Mud Bay. Mayor Castner then provided input on what he thought was the Port & Harbor Advisory Commission's perspective of the Harbor Expansion project and what has actually happened since 2022 and why and whom initiated the actions.

Commissioner Highland expressed her appreciation for the Mayor providing some clarification and she expressed that she believed they had a pretty darn good Comp Plan and appreciated his efforts, she did have some heartburn on the size and scope of the Harbor Expansion and wished that it was presented to the Planning Commission before everyone else. She expressed that it was a good meeting.

Commissioner Stark thanked the Mayor for his comments and that he shared the people's frustration as he has heard a lot of comments on the priority, referring to the Harbor Expansion since they believe it is a huge project, and take too long to get completed. But if you do not start somewhere it will never get completed and it does not have to take forever. He believed there were ways to get things done expeditiously with partnerships.

Commissioner Conley commented that the Planning Commission arrange to have some dialogue between the Harbor Commission and the Planning Commission. He was positive that the Chair of the Harbor Commission would be happy to attend one of their meetings and provide an opportunity for questions and answers. He then stated that he was fortunate enough to sit in on one of the worksessions, reporting that it was very informative, lots of interaction and good information. He believed it was on the Commission to be engaged and close the gap, he would volunteer to do that unless Mr. Abboud would be able to address that. It was a good meeting and he expressed his appreciation for the work provided by the staff tonight.

Commissioner Venuti stated that it was an interesting meeting, good conversations. He agreed with the Mayor about the inadequacies over the two plats and he was wondering how, as they develop the comprehensive plan that they can incorporate performance bonds and requirements for subdivisions so

that when developers say they are going to do something they actually do it. Mr. Venuti expressed that spending \$650,000 for the Comprehensive Plan boggles his mind. They have been able to work with the City Planner and improve it over time that he has been on the Commission without spending money and he thinks they should rethink spending that type of money for an out of town company that does not understand Homer. He continued by stating he has lived here 43 years and believed he had a really good feeling for the pulse of Homer and did not believe it would be beneficial for somebody coming down from Anchorage and making changes based on their experience. He expressed his thanks to the staff and Commissioners.

Commissioner Chiappone expressed his admiration to the owners of Wild Honey for going to great lengths to meet the requirements. It was a rather complicated situation but they did a great job with that and he then expressed his thanks to the Mayor for his report.

Commissioner Barnwell thanked the Mayor for his comments. He has been saying for months that the Commission should be more involved with the Comp Plan, the scope of work and consultant review. He realizes that it is difficult due to it being an internal process but having been a consultant before, he has stated before that the scope of work and the Comp Plan is reflected in Chapter 21 and it is huge. It may be easy for Council to think it is worth the \$650,000 but he appreciated the serial approach and tackling one bit at a time. Title 21 needs to be address right away and should be the focus. There is so much that Homer has going in right now with the Harbor Expansion Project, Transportation Plan, you name it. He expressed that he really supported what the Mayor stated tonight and then agreed with Commissioner Chiappone with regards to Wild Honey sticking through it. Mr. Barnwell expressed that and overlay district is a really good one for this area and he believed would solve several problems. He thanked staff for the great meeting tonight.

Chair Smith expressed his appreciation to the Commission to fit the report to City Council in 2 pages. He announced that the Kachemak Bay Traditional Games would be held at the Homer High School on March 10-12, 2023 and encouraged everyone if they had children or grandkids who were not into traditional sports to get involved with an amazing group of people. He expounded on the benefits and how it gets kids involved with physical activity that is fun and challenging. He echoed the sentiments of the Commission expressing that he appreciated the Mayor's fiscal intelligence, he cringes at the thought of blank check capabilities but understands, he would love to see more growth and things happen in a wise way with regards to process. Chair Smith expressed his thanks for the Commissioners providing their time and again encouraging those as soon as they are able to attend meetings in person, noting that Commissioner Stark is still out of town as the exception.

16. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is Wednesday, March 15, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. A worksession is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. All meetings scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom webinar.

Renee Krause, MMC, Deputy City Clerk II

Approved: _____



City of Homer

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HOMER PLANNING COMMISSION

Approved CUP 2023-01 at the Meeting of March 1, 2023

RE: Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 2023-01

Address: 106 W Bunnell Ave

Legal Description: CHAMBERLAIN & WATSON NO 4 Lot 1-A, and T 6S R 13W SEC 19 Seward Meridian HM 2011002 INLET TRADING POST CONDOMINIUMS UNIT 2

DECISION

Introduction

Melody Livingston, representing Wild Honey Bistro (the “Applicant”), who is the owner of Inlet Condominiums Unit 2 and her husband Ed (Scott) Livingston, applied to the Homer Planning Commission (the “Commission”) for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) under Homer City Code (HCC) 21.18.040(d), for a building area in excess of 30% of the lot in the Central Business District.

The applicant proposed to remove part of an existing detached storage structure and expand the kitchen of the Wild Honey Bistro into substantially the footprint of the portion of the storage structure to be demolished.

A public hearing was held for the application before the Commission on March 1, 2023, as required by Homer City Code 21.94. Notice of the public hearing was published in the local newspaper and sent to 56 property owners of 40 parcels within 300 feet of the proposal, as shown on the Kenai Peninsula Borough tax assessor rolls. Public notices contained information on how to submit written testimony, participate telephonically, or participate on the Zoom meeting platform.

At the March 1, 2023 meeting of the Commission, all seven Commissioners were present. The Commission approved CUP 2023-01 unanimously with eleven findings and six conditions.

Evidence Presented

City Planner, Rick Abboud reviewed the staff report. The Applicant described the proposed improvements. There were two who testified in support of the proposal including Susan Miller and Joshua Bregge. Their comments included support for replacement of the storage structure, concerns for screening the rear of the building, and encouragement for continuing

the style of the existing structures. The Applicant stated she would be willing to work with others on determining appropriate screening for the parking area. Clarification was made to Mr. Livingston that Fire Marshall approval is required for the structure and that the conditions for approval included the requirement to gain approval for the portion of existing structure in the 20' setback from the right-of-way (ROW).

A discussion ensued about gaining approval for the portions of the structures that were located in the 20' setback. City Planner Abboud stated that it could have been addressed in the CUP. Mr. Livingston stated that he did not believe that he had to address the setback issue at this time. Chair Smith read the code that allows a reduced setback with a CUP into the record. After being asked for clarification by Commissioner Highland, City Planner Abboud stated that the application did not address the issue of the setback and that the matter would be required to be addressed in a properly noticed public hearing and it would require another application. It was then moved and approved with unanimous consent to approved CUP 23-01 with findings 1-11 and conditions 1-6.

Findings of Fact

After careful review of the record and consideration of testimony presented at the hearing, the Commission determined CUP 2023-01, to allow more than 30% of building area on a lot in the Central Business District per HCC 21.18.040(d), satisfies the review criteria set out in HCC 21.71.030 and is hereby approved.

The criteria for granting a Conditional Use Permit is set forth in HCC 21.71.030 and 21.71.040.

a. The applicable code authorizes each proposed use and structure by conditional use permit in that zoning district.

Finding 1: If approved by a Conditional Use Permit, more than 30% lot coverage and buildings within the twenty foot building setback area are allowed.

Finding 2: The improvements found in the twenty foot building setback may be approved with a conditional use permit per HCC 21.18.040(b)(4).

Condition 5: Obtain approval of structures in the setback prior to commencement of any building activities.

b. The proposed use(s) and structure(s) are compatible with the purpose of the zoning district in which the lot is located.

Finding 3: The purpose of the Central Business District includes providing for general retail shopping, restaurants, and encourages pedestrian-friendly design and amenities. The proposed development is compatible with the purpose statement of the district.

c. The value of the adjoining property will not be negatively affected greater than that anticipated from other permitted or conditionally permitted uses in this district.

Finding 4: Lot coverage over thirty percent as proposed is not expected to negatively impact the adjoining properties greater than other permitted or conditional uses.

d. The proposal is compatible with existing uses of surrounding land.

Finding 5: Redevelopment of the existing restaurant with the proposed site plan and lot coverage is compatible with existing mixed uses of surrounding land.

e. Public services and facilities are or will be, prior to occupancy, adequate to serve the proposed use and structure.

Finding 6: Existing roads, public water, sewer, police and fire services are adequate to serve the site.

f. Considering harmony in scale, bulk, coverage and density, generation of traffic, the nature and intensity of the proposed use, and other relevant effects, the proposal will not cause undue harmful effect upon desirable neighborhood character.

Finding 7: The Commission finds the proposal will not cause an undue harmful effect upon desirable neighborhood character as described in the purpose statement of the district.

g. The proposal will not be unduly detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the surrounding area or the city as a whole.

Finding 8: The proposal will not be unduly detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the surrounding area and the city as a whole when all applicable standards are met as required by city code.

h. The proposal does or will comply with the applicable regulations and conditions specified in this title for such use.

Finding 9: An approved CUP and zoning permit will ensure that the proposal will comply with applicable regulations and conditions specified in Title 21.

Condition 1: Applicant to gain signature of Asia Freeman per requirement of granting a CUP per HCC 21.71.020(a)(9)(b).

Condition 2: Provide eight offsite parking stalls by documenting a parking agreement with a private land owner.

Condition 3: Screen dumpster on at least one side, from view of the cottages located to the north.

Condition 4: Screen the rear parking area along the north lot line per HCC 21.55.020 (a)(4)(f).

i. The proposal is not contrary to the applicable land use goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Finding 10: The proposal is not contrary to the applicable land use goals and objects of the 2018 Homer Comprehensive Plan. The proposal aligns Goal 1, Objective A; Goal 3, Objective B; and Goal 4, Objective A and no evidence has been found that it is contrary to the applicable land use goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

j. The proposal will comply with all applicable provisions of the Community Design Manual.

Finding 10: Project will comply with the applicable provisions of the CDM.

Condition 6: Outdoor lighting must be down lit per HCC 21.59.030 and the CDM.

HCC 21.71.040(b). b. In approving a conditional use, the Commission may impose such conditions on the use as may be deemed necessary to ensure the proposal does and will continue to satisfy the applicable review criteria. Such conditions may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- 1. Special yards and spaces:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 2. Fences and walls:** See Condition 4.
- 3. Surfacing of parking areas:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 4. Street and road dedications and improvements:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 5. Control of points of vehicular ingress and egress:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 6. Special provisions on signs:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 7. Landscaping:** See Conditions 3.
- 8. Maintenance of the grounds, building, or structures:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 9. Control of noise, vibration, odors or other similar nuisances:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 10. Limitation of time for certain activities:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 11. A time period within which the proposed use shall be developed:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.

12. A limit on total duration of use: No specific conditions deemed necessary.

13. More stringent dimensional requirements, such as lot area or dimensions, setbacks, and building height limitations. Dimensional requirements may be made more lenient by conditional use permit only when such relaxation is authorized by other provisions of the zoning code. Dimensional requirements may not be altered by conditional use permit when and to the extent other provisions of the zoning code expressly prohibit such alterations by conditional use permit.

14. Other conditions necessary to protect the interests of the community and surrounding area, or to protect the health, safety, or welfare of persons residing or working in the vicinity of the subject lot.

Conclusion: Based on the foregoing findings of fact and law, Conditional Use Permit 2023-01 is hereby approved, with Findings 1-11 and the following 6 conditions.

Condition 1: Applicant to gain signature of Asia Freeman per requirement of granting a CUP per HCC 21.71.020(a)(9)(b).

Condition 2: Provide eight offsite parking stalls by documenting a parking agreement with a private land owner.

Condition 3: Screen dumpster on at least one side, from view of the cottages located to the north.

Condition 4: Screen the rear parking area along the north lot line per HCC 21.55.020 (a)(4)(f).

Condition 5: Obtain approval of structures in the setback prior to commencement of any building activities.

Condition 6: Outdoor lighting must be down lit per HCC 21.59.030 and the CDM.

Date

Chair, Scott Smith

Date

City Planner, Rick Abboud

NOTICE OF APPEAL RIGHTS

Pursuant to Homer City Code, Chapter 21.93.060, any person with standing that is affected by this decision may appeal this decision to the Homer Board of Adjustment within thirty (30) days of the date of distribution indicated below. Any decision not appealed within that time shall be final. A notice of appeal shall be in writing, shall contain all the information required by Homer City Code, Section 21.93.080, and shall be filed with the Homer City Clerk, 491 East Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska 99603-7645.

CERTIFICATION OF DISTRIBUTION

I certify that a copy of this Decision was mailed to the below listed recipients on _____, 2023. A copy was also delivered to the City of Homer Planning Department and Homer City Clerk on the same date.

Date

Courtney Dodge, Assistant Planner

Melody Livingston
106 W Bunnell #2
Homer, AK 99603

Michael Gatti, JDO Law
3000 A Street, Suite 300
Anchorage, AK 99503

Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
City of Homer
491 E Pioneer Avenue
Homer, AK 99603



AGENDA ITEM REPORT

City Planner's Report

Item Type: Informational Item
Prepared For: Planning Commission
Meeting Date: 15 Mar 2023
Staff Contact: Rick Abboud
Attachments: [2023 PC Calendar](#)

Summary Statement:

3.13.23 City Council Regular Meeting Tentative Agenda

Ordinance 23-14, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Amending the FY23 Capital Budget by Appropriating \$25,000 from the Port Reserves for the Purpose of Purchasing Parking Signage and Mobile Parking Delineation Barriers to be used in the Port's Summer 2023 Parking Improvements Plan. City manager/Port Director.

Ordinance 23-xx, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Amending the FY23 Capital Budget by Accepting and Appropriating a 2023-2025 Alaska Clean Water Actions (ACWA) Grant from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) in the Amount of \$153,307 for the Beluga Slough Green Infrastructure Storm Water Treatment System and Appropriating an Additional \$107,182 in Local Matching Funds of Which \$81,313 is Appropriated from Homer Accelerated Roads and Trails (HART) Roads Fund and \$25,869 from an In-Kind Match for Project Management Services. City Manager/Public Works Director.

Ordinance 23-xx, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Amending Homer City Code Section 11.20.070 to Specify that a Performance Guaranty is Required for New Subdivisions. City Manager/Public Works Director.

Agenda Item Report CC-23-xxx from Mayor Castner re: Vetoing Ordinance 23-11 and Resolution 23-017 Approving the Funding and Contract for Developing a New Comprehensive Plan and Title 21 Code Rewrite.

Resolution 23-xxx, A Resolution of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Supporting the Construction of a Parking Lot to Serve the Eastern End of East End Bike Path. Aderhold.

Permitting Software

We are working on outreach to make people aware of the option and hope to have the option to pay on-line functional soon. <https://ci-homer-ak.smartgovcommunity.com/Public/Home>

Transportation Plan

I plan to schedule a work session April 5th. A link to information and additional opportunity to give input may be found on the front page of the city website at the link below. <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/publicworks/transportation-plan>

Comprehensive Plan Fast-forward and Title 21 Rewrite

We are awaiting the results of the Mayor's intent to veto the funding for the activities and plan to present more information after the City Council meeting.

Clearing and Grading

Special Projects Coordinator, Ryan Foster has distributed a draft of regulation to be commented on by staff. His draft creates an application process and moves the subject out of Title 21, with the intent to be administered by Public Works. This will be supplemental to a revision the design guidelines manual from Public Works which will address expanded drainage and storm water concerns that will likely add regulations to the development of private property, not just rights-of-way and easements. When this is in a more finalized form, the Planning Commission will be asked to review the documents and policies. He will provide an update at the work session.

Housing Forum

The City of Homer is looking at participating in a housing forum. In conjunction with the event we are distributing a survey on housing to gain additional data. The agenda for the meeting is currently being formulated and we have a tentative date of March 25th. It will be the start of a conversation to identify issues and hopefully some follow up.

EDC

The EDC held a work session with members of the Homer Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. A goal of the EDC's for this year is to "Have a conversation with the Chamber of Commerce about other economic development beyond tourism. How can the City and the Chamber work together to promote quality of life, and economic development for industries other than tourism." The work session was a great conversation between all the participants. The EDC and the Chamber share the common goals of addressing the lack of housing, childcare and transportation as all currently having a negative impact on Homer's quality of life. The Chamber also noted they no longer heavily market Homer as a destination for July and August. Local accommodations and restaurants at full, and encouraging more people to visit when we can't serve them well will lead to less enjoyable experiences for visitors. Instead, the Chamber is focusing on the shoulder travel seasons, and locals events like the Halloween on Pioneer event last fall. The Commission is also working on a Vision Statement and will follow with a Mission Statement. Chair Marks continues involvement in the Housing event later this month. Lastly, the Commission continues to review designs for new street banners on Pioneer Ave. Hope to have them up sometime this summer!

Commissioner Report to Council

3/27/23 _____

4/10/23 _____

Attachments:

[2023 PC Calendar](#)

**PLANNING COMMISSION
2023 Calendar**

	AGENDA ITEM DEADLINES	MEETING DATE	COMMISSIONER SCHEDULED TO REPORT	CITY COUNCIL MEETING FOR REPORT*	ANNUAL TOPICS/EVENTS
JANUARY	12/14/22 Public Hearing Items	01/04/23		Monday, 01/09/23 6:00 p.m.	•
	12/16/22 Preliminary Plat Submittals				
	12/23/22 Regular Agenda Items				
	12/28/22 Public Hearing Items	01/18/23		Monday 01/23/23 6:00 p.m.	•
	12/30/22 Prelim Plat Items				
	01/06/23 Regular Agenda Items				
FEBRUARY	01/11/23 Public Hearing Items	02/01/23	Highland	Monday 02/13/23 6:00 p.m.	• PC Training on Legislative vs Quasi-Judicial decisions
	01/13/23 Prelim Plat Items				• Developing and Writing Decisions & Findings
	01/20/23 Regular Agenda Items				
	01/25/23 Public Hearing Items	02/15/23		Monday 02/27/23 6:00 p.m.	•
	01/27/23 Prelim Plat items				
	02/03/23 Regular Agenda Items				
MARCH	02/08/23 Public Hearing Items	03/01/23		Monday 03/13/23 6:00 p.m.	• AK APA Conference
	02/10/23 Prelim Plat Items				• Comp Plan & Title 21 Update, Grading Permit, Homer Housing Event Presentation/Discussion
	02/17/23 Regular Agenda Items				
	02/22/23 Public Hearing Items	03/15/23		Tuesday 03/28/23 6:00 p.m.	• Presentation on Old Town, Transportation Plan Updates and Timeline
	02/24/23 Prelim Plat Items				
	03//23 Regular Agenda Items				
APRIL	03/15/23 Public Hearing Items	04/05/23		Monday 04/10/23 6:00 p.m.	• HNMTTP Review
	03/17/23 Prelim Plat Items				• Comp Plan Review
	03/24/23 Regular Agenda Items				
	03/29/23 Public Hearing Items	04/19/23		Monday 04/24/23 6:00 p.m.	•
	03/31/23 Prelim Plat Items				
	04/07/23 Regular Agenda Items				
MAY	04/12/23 Public Hearing Items	05/03/23		Monday 05/08/23 6:00 p.m.	•
	04/14/23 Prelim Plat Items				
	04/21/23 Regular Agenda Items				
	04/26/23 Public Hearing Items	05/17/23		Monday 05/22/23 6:00 p.m.	•
	04/28/23 Prelim Plat Items				
	05/05/23 Regular Agenda Items				
JUNE	05/17/23 Public Hearing Items	06/07/23		Monday 06/12/23 6:00 p.m.	• Reappointment Applications will be sent out
	05/19/23 Prelim Plat Items				
	05/26/23 Regular Agenda Items				

JUNE	05/31/23 Public Hearing Items	06/21/23	Monday	•
	06/02/23 Prelim Plat Items		06/26/23	
	06/09/23 Regular Agenda Items		6:00 p.m.	
JULY	06/28/23 Public Hearing Items	07/19/23	Monday	• Reappointment Application Due
	06/30/23 Prelim Plat Items		07/24/23	• Spit Comp Plan review
	07/07/23 Regular Agenda Items		6:00 p.m.	
AUGUST	07/12/23 Public Hearing Items	08/02/23	Monday	• Election of Officers
	07/14/23 Prelim Plat Items		08/14/23	• Training - City Clerk's Office
	07/21/23 Regular Agenda Items		6:00 p.m.	
SEPTEMBER	07/26/23 Public Hearing Items	08/16/23	Monday	• Capital Improvement Plan
	07/28/23 Prelim Plat Items		08/28/23	
	08/04/23 Regular Agenda Items		6:00 p.m.	
SEPTEMBER	08/16/23 Public Hearing Items	09/06/23	Monday	• Economic Development Visitor
	08/18/23 Prelim Plat Items		09/11/23	
	08/25/23 Regular Agenda Items		6:00 p.m.	
OCTOBER	08/30/23 Public Hearing Items	09/20/23	Monday	•
	09/01/23 Prelim Plat Items		09/25/23	
	09/08/23 Regular Agenda Items		6:00 p.m.	
OCTOBER	09/13/23 Public Hearing Items	10/04/23	Monday	• Floodplain or other Hazard regulation Overview
	09/15/23 Prelim Plat Items		10/09/23	
	09/22/23 Regular Agenda Items		6:00 p.m.	
NOVEMBER	09/27/23 Public Hearing Items	10/16/23	Monday	•
	09/29/23 Prelim Plat Items		10/23/23	
	10/06/23 Regular Agenda Items		6:00 p.m.	
NOVEMBER	10/11/23 Public Hearing Items	11/01/23	Monday	• Annual Meeting Schedule Approval
	10/13/23 Prelim Plat Items		11/27/23	
	10/20/23 Regular Agenda Items		6:00 p.m.	
DECEMBER	11/15/23 Public Hearing Items	12/06/23	Monday	• Review Commission Bylaws, Policies and Procedures
	11/17/23 Prelim Plat Items		12/11/23	• Town Center Plan Review
	11/24/23 Regular Agenda Items		6:00 p.m.	

*The Commission's opportunity to give their report to City Council is scheduled for the Council's regular meeting following the Commission's regular meeting, under Agenda Item 8 – Announcements/ Presentations/ Borough Report/Commission Reports. Reports are the Commission's opportunity to give Council a brief update on their work. Attend via Zoom or in Person.



AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 23-02 for building area over 8000 square feet at 3375 Sterling Highway

Item Type: Action Memorandum

Prepared For: Planning Commission

Meeting Date: 15 Mar 2023

Staff Contact: Rick Abboud

Sponsor or Through Person: Rick Abboud, City Planner

Attachments: [3375 Sterling Hwy - CUP Application](#)
[Enlarged Station Addition Site Plan](#)
[site photos](#)
[Compliance review of comprehensive plan for CUP 23-02](#)
[Public Notice](#)
[Aerial Photograph](#)

Summary Statement:

Synopsis The applicant proposes a 1,060 sq. ft. addition to an existing commercial structure. A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required per HCC 21.18.040(d) building area of over 8,000 sq. ft.

Applicant: Jeff Erickson, property owner (Tesoro)
PO Box 3695
Homer, AK 99603

Location: 3375 Sterling Highway

Legal Description: T 6S R 14W SEC 15 SEWARD MERIDIAN HM 2005056 TICE-HENRIKSON NO 2 TRACT B-1A

Parcel ID: 17367008

Size of Existing Lot: 6.79 acres (295,336 sq. ft.)

Zoning Designation:	General Commercial 1 District
Existing Land Use:	Auto fuel station/convenience store/restaurant
Surrounding Land Use:	North: KPB Refuse Transfer Station South: Bluff/open space East: Hotel/motel (Alaskan Suites) West: RV Park (Baycrest KOA RV Park)
Comprehensive Plan:	Goal 4: Support the development of a variety of well-defined commercial/business districts for a range of commercial purposes.
Wetland Status:	Not within wetlands
Flood Plain Status:	Zone D, flood hazards not determined.
BCWPD:	Not within the Bridge Creek Watershed Protection District
Utilities:	City water and sewer are not available.
Public Notice:	Notice was sent to 6 property owners of 8 parcels as shown on the KPB tax assessor rolls.

ANALYSIS: The applicant is proposing to construct a 1,060 sq. ft. addition to the south of the existing commercial structure on existing impervious surface. A conditional use permit is required by HCC 21.24.040(d) under dimensional requirements for lots containing building area of over 8,000 sq. ft. In the General Commercial 1 District. The existing fuel station/restaurant uses are permitted outright per HCC 21.24.020(f).

The criteria for granting a Conditional Use Permit is set forth in HCC 21.71.030, Review criteria, and establishes the following conditions:

a. The applicable code authorizes each proposed use and structure by conditional use permit in that zoning district;

Applicant: Proposed 1,060 sq. ft. construction of an addition to an existing commercial structure. The current structures have been permitted prior to the adoption of HCC 21.24.040(d) which requires a CUP for lot containing a building area of over 8,000 sq. ft. An auto fuel station is considered a customary use and is permitted outright per HCC 21.24.020(f).

Staff Analysis: Structure(s) that exceed 8,000 square feet of building area on a lot can be approved by a Conditional Use Permit per HCC 21.24.040(d) and auto fuel station/restaurant are permitted uses per HCC 21.24.020(f) and (h)

Finding 1: The applicable code authorizes the structure and use in the GC1 zone district.

b. The proposed use(s) and structure(s) are compatible with the purpose of the zoning district in which the lot is located.

Purpose: The General Commercial 1 (GC1) District is primarily intended to provide sites for businesses that require direct motor vehicle access and may require larger land area, and to provide business locations in proximity to arterials and transportation centers. It is also intended to minimize congestion and adverse effects on adjacent residential districts and on the appearance of the community.

Applicant: Gas Stations, Convenience Stores (C- Stores), Restaurants are allowed outright in GC-1 Zoning.

Staff Analysis: The purpose of the district includes centrally located businesses. This proposal expands an existing business use. The current use is compatible with the GC1 zone district in that it requires direct motor vehicle access and a larger land area. The site is also provided optimal proximity to the Sterling Highway (which has an arterial road classification).

Finding 2: The uses and structures are compatible with the General Commercial 1 District found at the top of Baycrest.

c. The value of the adjoining property will not be negatively affected greater than that anticipated from other permitted or conditionally permitted uses in this district.

Applicant: The addition will have same or similar exterior finishes as existing structure. It is not visible from adjacent properties and should have no impact on their value.

Staff Analysis: The abutting properties to the east and west are currently used as a hotel/motel and RV park, respectively. Across the highway to the north is the State of Alaska DOT storage area and the KPB waste transfer station. Staff finds that expansion of the fuel station use would not negatively affect these properties any greater than that from existing, permitted, or conditionally permitted uses in this district.

Finding 3: Building area over 8,000 sq. ft. on the site is not expected to negatively impact the adjoining properties greater than other permitted or conditional uses.

d. The proposal is compatible with existing uses of surrounding land.

Applicant: The project enhances view from Adjacent RV Park and is supporting existing allowed uses.

Staff Analysis: Other uses complementary and pertinent to the proposed expansion of the fuel station/restaurant are available, including existing roadway and access that were designed and constructed for heavy use by larger trucks. The existing facility is located just off the Sterling Highway in an easily accessible location for the general public as well as other complementary commercial uses.

The surrounding land use of recreational vehicle parks and hotels/motels are both compatible and permitted in the GC1 zone district. Since this CUP application is based on

dimensional requirements (to conditionally approve more than 8,000 sq. ft. of building area on the lot) an analysis of the surrounding land was composed. The property of the west has approximately 4,132 sq. ft. of building area, and to the east has 8,671 sq. ft. Percentage wise, because these are large lots, building area is fairly small at 1.21% and 5.09%, respectively. The proposed lot coverage at the project site is comparable at 3.39% of building area on the site.

Finding 4: The proposal is compatible with existing uses of surrounding land.

e. Public services and facilities are or will be, prior to occupancy, adequate to serve the proposed use and structure.

Applicant: The on-site water and sewer systems are approved by ADEC. HEA has indicated that the power supply is more than adequate to support the added demand. Homer Fire Chief has approved access for emergency purposes.

Staff Analysis: Adequate public and community facilities and services are available and sufficient to serve the proposed use and structure.

Finding 5: Existing public, water, sewer, and fire services are adequate to serve the proposed facility.

f. Considering harmony in scale, bulk, coverage and density, generation of traffic, the nature and intensity of the proposed use, and other relevant effects, the proposal will not cause undue harmful effect upon desirable neighborhood character.

Applicant: No effect on neighborhood character. Traffic safety will be enhanced by requiring vendors to deliver to the back of the station instead of parking in the traffic lanes. Current access is problematic for weather including snow removal.

Staff Analysis: The proposed 1,060 sq. ft. addition would not cause undue harmful effect upon desirable neighborhood character. The property currently has approximately 64,270 sq. ft. of impervious lot coverage (approx. 21% of the 6.79-acre parcel). The property to the west has approximately 57% impervious surface lot coverage, and to the east approximately 26%. Considering the impervious surface coverage on the abutting properties, and that the footprint of the proposed addition is already impervious surface, staff finds that the addition would not cause undue harmful effect upon desirable neighborhood character. The proposal is not expected to generate more traffic to the site, but rather improve circulation and vendor access.

HCC 21.55.090 Off-Street Parking requires that this site provide 17 off-street parking spaces at 1 per 300 sq. ft. of retail and 1 per 3 indoor seats for the restaurant space. There are 34 seats in the restaurant requiring 11.3 spaces (rounded to 12). There is a little under 1,500 sq. ft. in the retail space, requiring 5 spaces. Based on aerial imagery, staff finds that there is more than sufficient parking at the site to meet minimum required off-street parking.

Finding 6: The Commission finds the proposal will not cause undue harmful effect upon desirable neighborhood character.

g. The proposal will not be unduly detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the surrounding area or the city as a whole.

Applicant: No. The project is intended to enhance convenience and safety for our customers, employees and vendors.

Staff Analysis: The addition has been approved and certified by the State of Alaska Plan Review Bureau – Office of the State Fire Marshal in conformance with fire safety regulations.

Finding 7: The proposal will not be unduly detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the surrounding area and the city as a whole when all applicable standards are met as required by City code.

h. The proposal does or will comply with the applicable regulations and conditions specified in this title for such use.

Staff Analysis: The applicant is not seeking any exception from Code. Obtaining an approved CUP and subsequent zoning permit will allow compliance with applicable regulations.

Finding 8: The proposal will comply with applicable regulations and conditions specified in Title 21.

i. The proposal is not contrary to the applicable land use goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Applicant: The addition enhances current allowed uses.

Staff Analysis: The intent of the GC1 district is to provide for auto-oriented businesses. This proposal is aligned with this land use goal and objective of the Comprehensive Plan. See *Compliance Review of Comprehensive Plan for CUP 23-02* attachment.

Finding 9: The proposal is not contrary to the applicable land use goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

The proposal will comply with the applicable provisions of the Community Design Manual (CDM).

Staff Analysis: Community Design Manual, Chapter 3: Outdoor Lighting applies to the General Commercial 1 District.

Finding 10: Project will comply with the applicable provisions of the CDM.

Condition 1: Outdoor lighting must be down lit per HCC 21.59.030 and Chapter 3 of the Community Design Manual.

HCC 21.71.040(b). b. In approving a conditional use, the Commission may impose such conditions on the use as may be deemed necessary to ensure the proposal does and will continue to satisfy the applicable review criteria. Such conditions may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- 1. Special yards and spaces:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 2. Fences and walls:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 3. Surfacing of parking areas:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 4. Street and road dedications and improvements:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 5. Control of points of vehicular ingress and egress:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 6. Special provisions on signs:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 7. Landscaping:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 8. Maintenance of the grounds, building, or structures:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 9. Control of noise, vibration, odors or other similar nuisances:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 10. Limitation of time for certain activities:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 11. A time period within which the proposed use shall be developed:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 12. A limit on total duration of use:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
13. More stringent dimensional requirements, such as lot area or dimensions, setbacks, and building height limitations. Dimensional requirements may be made more lenient by conditional use permit only when such relaxation is authorized by other provisions of the zoning code. Dimensional requirements may not be altered by conditional use permit when and to the extent other provisions of the zoning code expressly prohibit such alterations by conditional use permit.
14. Other conditions necessary to protect the interests of the community and surrounding area, or to protect the health, safety, or welfare of persons residing or working in the vicinity of the subject lot.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMENTS: None.

FIRE DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

STAFF COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

After reviewing the request for expansion of the site for an addition to the existing commercial structure, staff recommends Planning Commission approve CUP 23-02 with findings 1-10 and the following condition:

Condition 1: Outdoor lighting must be down lit per HCC 21.59.030 and Community Design Manual Chapter 3.

Attachments:

[3375 Sterling Hwy - CUP Application](#)

[Enlarged Station Addition Site Plan](#)

[site photos](#)

[Compliance review of comprehensive plan for CUP 23-02](#)

[Public Notice](#)

[Aerial Photograph](#)



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Planning

491 East Pioneer Avenue

Homer, Alaska 99603

Planning@ci.homer.ak.us

(p) 907-235-3106

(f) 907-235-3118

Applicant

Name: Jeff Erickson Phone No.: 907-399-1495

Address: P.O. Box 3695 Homer AK 99603 Email: jeffhro@alaska.net

Property Owner (if different than the applicant):

Name: HomeAte LLC Phone No.: 907-399-1495

Address: PO Box 3670 Homer AK 99603 Email: jeffhro@alaska.net
Jeff Erickson managing member

PROPERTY INFORMATION:

Address: 3375 Sterling Hwy Lot Size: 6.79 acres KPB Tax ID # 17367008

Legal Description of Property: Tract B-1A, Tice/Henrickson NO. 2

For staff use:

Date: 2/16/23 Fee submittal: Amount \$1000.00

Received by: RA Date application accepted as complete _____

Planning Commission Public Hearing Date: _____

Conditional Use Permit Application Requirements:

1. Site Plan - drawn to a scale of not less than 1" = 20' which shows existing and proposed structures, clearing, fill, vegetation and drainage
2. Right of Way Access Plan
3. Parking Plan
4. A map showing neighboring lots and a narrative description of the existing uses of all neighboring lots. (Planning staff can provide a blank map.)
5. This completed application form
6. Payment of application fee (nonrefundable)
7. Any other information required by Code or staff to review your project

Circle Your Zoning District

	RR	UR	RO	CBD	TCD	GBD	GC1	GC2	MC	MI	EEMU	BCWPD
Level 1 Site Plan	x	x	x			x			x			x
Level 1 ROW Access Plan	x	x							x			
Level 1 Site Development Standards	x	x										
Level 1 Lighting			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Level 2 Site Plan			x	x	x		x	x		x	x	
Level 2 ROW Access Plan			x	x	x		x	x		x	x	
Level 2 Site Development Standards			x*	x	x	x	x	x			x	
Level 3 Site Development Standards									x	x		
Level 3 ROW Access Plan						x						
DAP/SWP questionnaire				x	x	x	x	x			x	

- ☒/N Are you building or remodeling a commercial structure, or multifamily building with more than three (3) apartments? If yes, Fire Marshal Certification is required.
Status: Approved Plan Review # 2023 ANCH0020
- ☐/N Will development trigger a Development Activity Plan?
Application Status: _____
- ☐/N Will development trigger a Storm Water Plan?
Application Status: _____
- ☐/N Does the site contain wetlands? If yes, Army Corps of Engineers Wetlands Permit is required. Application Status: _____
- ☐/N Is development in a floodplain? If yes, a Flood Development Permit is required.
- ☐/N Does the project trigger a Community Design Manual review?
If yes, complete the design review application form. The Community Design Manual is online at: <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/planning/community-design-manual>
- ☐/N Do the project require a traffic impact analysis?
- ☐/N Are there any nonconforming uses or structures on the property?
- ☐/N Have nonconforming uses or structures on the property been formally accepted by the Homer Advisory Planning Commission? NA
- ☒/N Does the site have a State or City driveway permit? Status: YES existing
- ☐/N Does the site have active City water and sewer permits? Status: NA

Conditional Use Permit Application Questions. Use additional sheets if necessary.

- Currently, how is the property used? Are there buildings on the property? How many square feet? Uses within the building(s)?
C-Store 3200 SF, Canopy over dispensers 4320 SF,
well house 384 SF (AWS 249231)
- What is the proposed use of the property? How do you intend to develop the property? Attach additional sheet if needed. Provide as much information as possible.
Same as existing, Gas station, C-store, restaurant

Conditional Use Permit Application Questions. Use additional sheets if necessary.

1. Currently, how is the property used? Are there buildings on the property? How many square feet? Uses within the building(s)?

3200 SF C-Store and Restaurant, Canopy over dispensers 4320 SF, Well house 384 SF

Portable storage by Well house 448 sf

Existing portable storage in project area to be removed.

2. What is the proposed use of the property? How do you intend to develop the property? Attach additional sheet if needed. Provide as much information as possible.

Gas station, C-Store, Restaurant same as existing use.

Conditional Use Permit Review Criteria Information. Use additional sheets if necessary. Per HCC 21.71.030 Review Criteria, the applicant must produce evidence sufficient to enable meaningful review of the application. Unless exceptions or other criteria are stated elsewhere in the Code, the application will be reviewed under these criteria:

a. What code citation authorizes each proposed use and structure by conditional use permit?

Proposed 1,060 sq ft construction of an addition to an existing commercial structure. The current structures have been permitted prior to the adoption of HCC 21.24.040(d) which requires a CUP for lot containing a building area of over 8,000 sq ft. An auto fuel station is considered a customary use and is permitted outright per HCC 21.24.020(f).

b. Describe how the proposed uses(s) and structures(s) are compatible with the purpose of the zoning district.

Gas Stations, Convenience Stores (C- Stores), Restaurants are allowed outright in GC-1 Zoning

c. How will your proposed project affect adjoining property values?

The addition will have same or similar exterior finishes as existing structure. It is not visible from adjacent properties and should have no impact on their value.

d. How is your proposal compatible with existing uses of the surrounding land?

The project enhances view from Adjacent RV Park and is supporting existing allowed uses.

e. Are/will public services adequate to serve the proposed uses and structures?

The on-site water and sewer systems are approved by ADEC.

HEA has indicated that the power supply is more than adequate to support the added demand.

Homer Fire Chief has approved access for emergency purposes.

f. How will the development affect the harmony in scale, bulk, coverage and density upon the desirable neighborhood character, and will the generation of traffic and the capacity of surrounding streets and roads be negatively affected?

No effect on neighborhood character. Traffic safety will be enhanced by requiring vendors to deliver to the back of the station instead of parking in the traffic lanes. Current access is problematic for weather including snow removal.

g. Will your proposal be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the surrounding area or the city as a whole?

No. The project is intended to enhance convenience and safety for our customers, employees and vendors.

h. How does your project relate to the goals of the Comprehensive Plan? Find the Comprehensive Plan on the City's website: www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/planning/comprehensive-plan?

The addition enhances current allowed uses.

i. The Planning Commission may require special improvements. Are any of the following a component of the development plan, or are there suggestions on special improvements you would be willing to make? Circle each answer and provide clarification on additional pages if Yes is selected.

1. Y/☒N Special yards and spaces

2. Y/☒N Fences, walls and screening

3. Y/☒N Surfacing of parking areas

4. Y/☒N Street and road dedications and improvements (or bonds)
5. Y/☒N Control of points of vehicular ingress and egress
6. Y/☒N Special provisions on signs
7. Y/☒N Landscaping
8. Y/☒N Maintenance of the grounds, buildings, or structures
9. ☒Y/☒N Control of noise, vibration, odors, lighting, heat, glare, water and solid waste pollution, dangerous materials, material and equipment storage, or other similar nuisances, *protects storage of used vegetable waste oil.*
10. Y/☒N Time for certain activities
11. Y/☒N A time period within which the proposed use shall be developed
12. Y/☒N A limit on total duration of use
13. ☒Y/☒N Special dimensional requirements such as lot area, setbacks, building height *exceeds 8000 SF Allowance,*
14. Y/N Other conditions deemed necessary to protect the interest of the community

Parking Questions

1. How many parking spaces are required for your development? 18
- If more than 24 spaces are required see HCC 21.50.030(f)(1)(b)
2. How many spaces are shown on your parking plan? 22
3. Are you requesting any reductions? No

I hereby certify that the above statements and other information submitted are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, and that I, as applicant, have the following legal interest in the property:

CIRCLE ONE:

Owner of record

Lessee

Contract purchaser

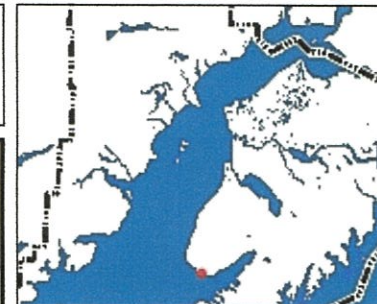
Per HCC 21.71.020(a)(9), if the applicant is not the owner of the subject lot, the owner's signed authorization grants the applicant authority to:

- (a) apply for the conditional use permit, and
- (b) bind the owner to the terms of the conditional use permit, if granted.

Applicant signature: Jeff A. Erich Date: 2/16/2023

Property Owner signature: Jeff A. Erich Date: 2/16/2023

Short Stop Tesoro



Legend

- Mileposts
- City Limits
- Highways
- Major Roads
- Roads
 - Town Medium Volume
 - Town Low/Seasonal; Other
 - Proposed
- Parcels
- Image
 - Red: Red
 - Green: Green
 - Blue: Blue



Notes

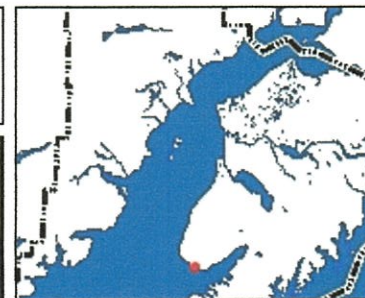
3375 Sterling Hwy, Homer, AK

This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable. Do not use for navigation.

DATE PRINTED: 1/17/2023



Short Stop Tesoro and Vicinity



Legend

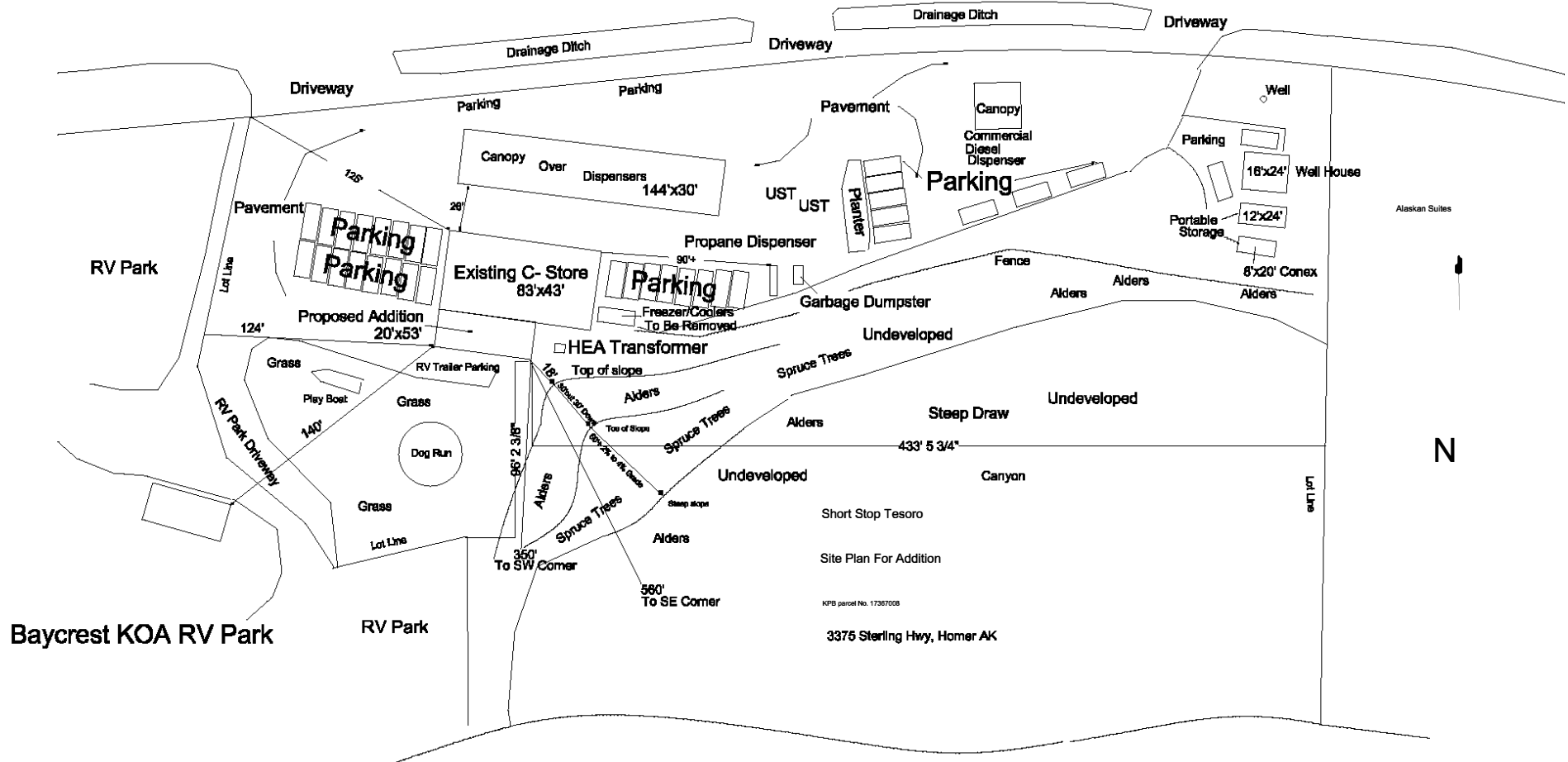
- Mileposts
- City Limits
- Highways
- Major Roads
- Roads
 - Town Medium Volume
 - Town Low/Seasonal; Other
 - Proposed
- Parcels
- Image
 - Red: Red
 - Green: Green
 - Blue: Blue

Notes

This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable. Do not use for navigation.

DATE PRINTED: 2/16/2023

Sterling Hwy



Southern Portion of building - location of proposed addition 2/15/23



KPB Assessing photo

Review of 2018 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Chapter for CUP 23-02

GOAL 1: Guiding Homer's growth with a focus on increasing the supply and diversity of housing, protect community character, encouraging infill, and helping minimize global impacts of public facilities 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.

Staff Response: This project supports promoting a pattern of growth characterized by a mixed-use area on Baycrest, with commercial uses along the Sterling Highway, and improving upon existing uses.

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

Staff Response: Not applicable. This proposal is not associated with an update of zoning map.

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

Staff Response: Not applicable. This proposal is not located in a residential zone district.

GOAL 2: Maintain the quality of Homer's natural environment and scenic beauty.

Objective A: Complete and maintain a detailed "green infrastructure" map for the City of Homer and environs that presents an integrated functional system of environmental features on lands in both public and private ownership and use green infrastructure concepts in the review and approval of development projects.

Staff Response: Not applicable. This proposal is not associated with mapping.

Objective B: Continue to review and refine development standards and require development practices that protect environmental functions.

Staff Response: Not applicable. This proposal is not associated with creation of development standards.

Objective C: Provide extra protection for areas with highest environmental value or development constraints.

Staff Response: Not applicable. This proposal is already developed area, and no change in impact proposed.

Objective D: Collaborate with jurisdictions outside the City of Homer, as well as State and Federal agencies, to ensure that environmental quality is maintained.

Staff Response: Not applicable. This proposal is not associated with other jurisdictions.

GOAL 3: Encourage high-quality buildings and site development that complement Homer's beautiful natural setting.

Objective A: Create a clear, coordinated regulatory framework that guides development.

Staff Response: Implementation items listed under Goal 3, Objective A are directives to review and consider new policies and are not applicable to directly to CUPs.

Objective B: Encourage high quality site design and buildings.

Staff Response: The proposal increases efficiency of site circulation and maintains quality of the existing commercial structure with an addition approved by the State Fire Marshal. This expansion will improve site circulation by providing access for vendors and freeing parking areas at the front of the site for customers.

GOAL 4: Support the development of a variety of well-defined commercial/business districts for a range of commercial purposes.

Objective A: Encourage a concentrated, pedestrian oriented, attractive business/commerce district in the Central Business District (CBD) following the guidelines found in the Town Center Development Plan.

Staff Response: Not applicable. This proposal is not located with the Central Business District zone district.

Objective B: Discourage strip development along the Sterling Highway and major collectors/thoroughfares.

Staff Response: This proposal is not implementing new business along the Sterling Highway.

Finding:

The proposal is not contrary to the applicable land use goals and objects of the Comprehensive Plan.

**CITY OF HOMER
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

Page 21 of 25

A public hearing on the matter below is scheduled for Wednesday, March 15, 2023 during the Regular Planning Commission Meeting. The meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. and will be conducted via Zoom webinar. Participation is available virtually or in-person at City Hall, more information below.

A request for Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 23-02, to allow a 1,060 sq. ft. addition to existing commercial structure at 3375 Sterling Highway, Tract B-1A Tice-Henrikson-Bouman Subdivision, Sec. 15, T. 6 S., R. 14 W., S.M., HM 2001079. A CUP is required for by Homer City Code (HCC) 21.24.040 (d) lots containing building area over 8,000 sq. ft. within the General Commercial 1 District.

In-person meeting participation is available in Cowles Council Chambers located downstairs at Homer City Hall, 491 E. Pioneer Ave., Homer, AK 99603.

To attend the meeting virtually, visit zoom.us and enter the Meeting ID & Passcode listed below. To attend the meeting by phone, dial any one of the following phone numbers and enter the Webinar ID & Passcode below, when prompted: 1-253-215-8782, 1-669-900-6833, (toll free) 888-788-0099 or 877-853-5247.

Meeting ID: 979 8816 0903
Passcode: 976062

Additional information regarding this matter will be available by 5pm on the Friday before the meeting. This information will be posted to the City of Homer online calendar page for March 10, 2023 at <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/calendar>. It will also be available at the Planning and Zoning Office at Homer City Hall and at the Homer Public Library.

Written comments can be emailed to the Planning and Zoning Office at the address below, mailed to Homer City Hall at the address above, or placed in the Homer City Hall drop box at any time. Written comments must be received by 4pm on the day of the meeting.

If you have questions or would like additional information, contact Rick Abboud at the Planning and Zoning Office. Phone: (907) 235-3106, email: clerk@cityofhomer-ak.gov, or in-person at Homer City Hall.

NOTICE TO BE SENT TO PROPERTY OWNERS WITHIN 300 FEET OF PROPERTY

.....

VICINITY MAP ON REVERSE

Vicinity Map



City of Homer
Planning and Zoning Department

February 24, 2023

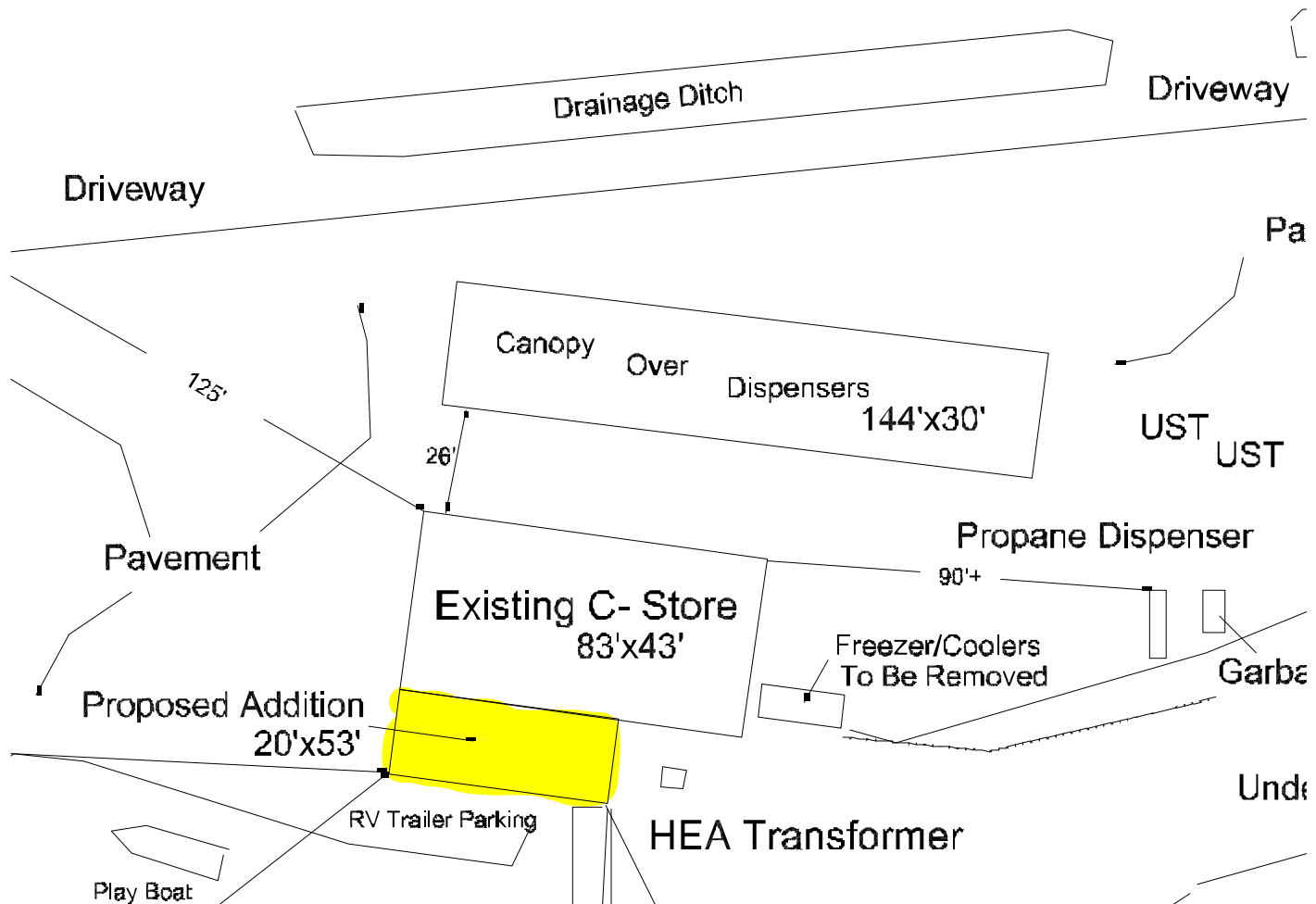
Request for Conditional Use Permit 23-02 3375 Sterling Hwy

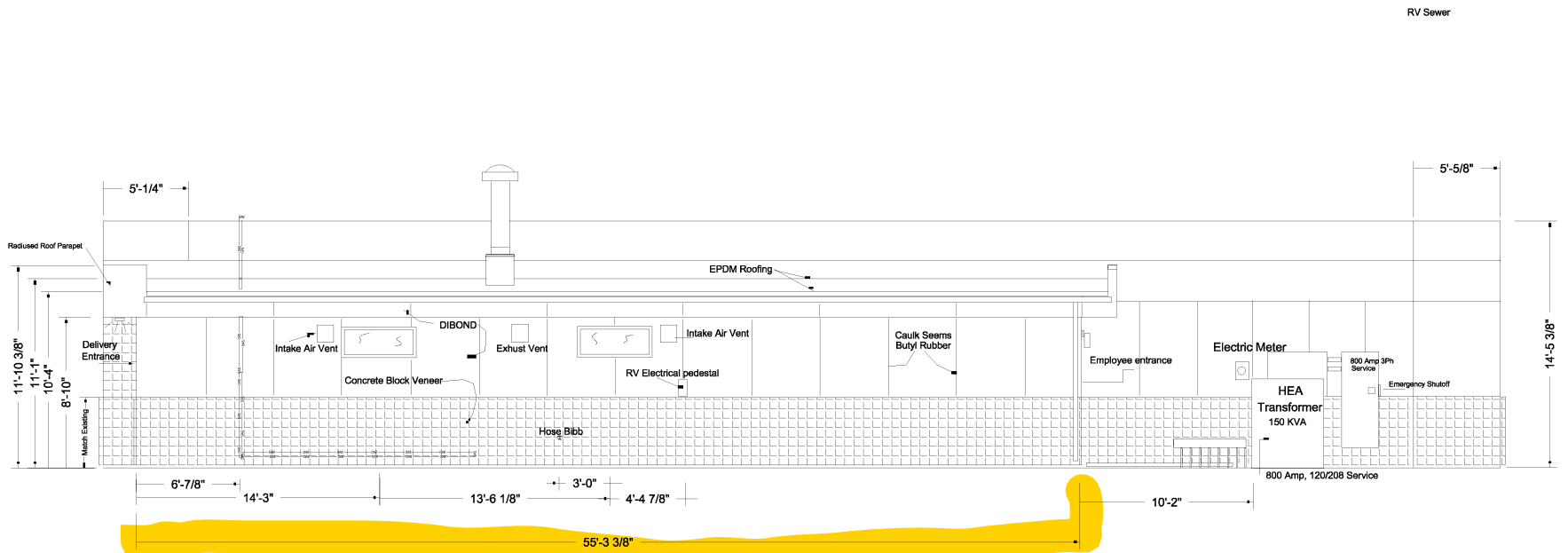
Marked lots are within 300 feet and
property owners notified



*Disclaimer:
It is expressly understood the City of
Homer, its council, board,
departments, employees and agents are
not responsible for any errors or omissions
contained herein, or deductions, interpretations
or conclusions drawn therefrom.*

Sterling Hwy







South Elevation
Short Stop Tesoro Addition
3375 Sterling Hwy, Homer AK 99603

Aerial Imagery Map

Homer Transfer Station

Subject Lot for CUP
Short Stop Tesoro Station

Legend

-  CUP parcel Short Stop Tesoro
-  City Limits



City of Homer
Planning and Zoning Department

March 9, 2023

Aerial Imagery
Conditional Use Permit 23-02
3375 Sterling Hwy



Disclaimer:
It is expressly understood the City of Homer, its council, board, departments, employees and agents are not responsible for any errors or omissions contained herein, or deductions, interpretations or conclusions drawn therefrom.



AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 23-03 to Construct a 4 Unit Multi-family Structure in the General Commercial 1 District (GC1).

Item Type: Action Memorandum
Prepared For: Planning Commission
Meeting Date: 15 Mar 2023
Staff Contact: Rick Abboud

Summary Statement: The applicant proposes construct a 4 unit multi-family structure in the General Commercial 1 District (GC1). A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required per Homer City Code (HCC) 21.24.030(c).

Applicant: Andrew Reed
PO Box 1191
Homer, AK 99603

Location: 1368 Lakeshore Dr.

Legal Description: T 6S R 13W SEC 21 SEWARD MERIDIAN HM 0000839 BAY VIEW SUB LOT 87

Parcel ID: 17918109

Size of Existing Lot: .4 Acres

Zoning Designation: General Commercial 1 District

Existing Land Use: vacant

Surrounding Land Use: North: Beluga Lake/floatplanes
South: Commercial
East: Multi-family
West: Float Plane operation

Comprehensive Plan: 2018 Homer Comprehensive Plan (HPC) Goal 1, 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.

Wetland Status: Wetlands may be present according to KWF assessment

Flood Plain Status: Area along edge of Beluga Lake has an A21 flood plain designation.

BCWPD: Not within the Bridge Creek Watershed Protection District

Utilities: Public utilities service the site.

Public Notice: Notice was sent to 16 property owners of 27 parcels as shown on the KPB tax assessor rolls.

ANALYSIS: The applicant is proposing to construct a 4-plex on a lot in the GC1 District.

The criteria for granting a Conditional Use Permit is set forth in HCC 21.71.030, Review criteria, and establishes the following conditions:

a. The applicable code authorizes each proposed use and structure by conditional use permit in that zoning district;

Applicant: Homer City Civic Code Chapter 21.24.030 “Conditional uses and structures” may permit the following uses when authorized by conditional use permit (CUP): “(c) Multiple-family dwelling.”

Analysis: A multi-family structure may be allowed with and approved CUP per HCC 21.24.030(c).

Finding 1: The applicable code authorizes the proposed use and structure.

b. The proposed use(s) and structure(s) are compatible with the purpose of the zoning district in which the lot is located.

Applicant: This proposed residential project is an accessory use to the existing neighboring mixed-use development for Emerald Air Services. The adjoining lot to the west, is also owned by AKRE Holdings, LIC. Appropriate housing for staff and pilots has been difficult to procure in the Homer area.

The existing lot 87(1368 Lakeshore Drive) is limited in width (70’) and has a more pronounced slope directly off Lakeshore Drive. The vehicular circulation and required parking on this narrow lot limits the possibilities for a larger development.

While not wholly compatible with the commercial premise of the GC1 district, the proposed use is to support the adjoining business, Emerald Air Service (EAS). Both lots adjoining this property on the east and west have some residential uses also.

Analysis: HCC 21.24.010, Purpose: The General Commercial 1 (GC1) District is primarily intended to provide sites for businesses that require direct motor vehicle access and may require larger land area, and to provide business locations in proximity to arterials and transportation centers. It is also intended to minimize congestion and adverse effects on adjacent residential districts and on the appearance of the community.

Beluga Lake represents a transportation center supporting float plane operations. The proposal is to provide housing for the pilots of the planes serving the transportation center. The proposal also meets the intent of allowing higher residential densities in the district with additional review (HCP, A-8).

Finding 2: The structure and use is compatible with the purpose of the district.

c. The value of the adjoining property will not be negatively affected greater than that anticipated from other permitted or conditionally permitted uses in this district.

Applicant: The directly adjacent properties both have multi-family uses currently. Another residential structure would be compatible with the neighboring properties.

Analysis: Many uses in the GC1 District have greater negative impacts than would be realized from a multi-family dwelling. Pipelines, gas stations, RV parks, manufacturing, and shelter for the homeless may have a greater impact on nearby property values. Restaurants and hotels would generate a good deal of traffic.

Finding 3: A multi-family structure is not expected to negatively impact the adjoining properties greater than other permitted or conditional uses.

d. The proposal is compatible with existing uses of surrounding land.

Applicant: The directly adjacent properties both have multi-family uses currently. Another residential structure would be compatible with the neighboring properties. This project is being developed with the primary intention of creating housing for EAS employees and staff.

Analysis: A 4-plex is similar, but much smaller in scale than the housing complex to the east and is in support of the float plane operation that includes several cabins to the west. It does not introduce compatibility problems with commercial operations found nearby as the scale and intensity is minimal by comparison.

Finding 4: The proposal is compatible with existing uses of surrounding land.

e. Public services and facilities are or will be, prior to occupancy, adequate to serve the proposed use and structure.

Applicant: City sewer and water services are stubbed to the property yet have not been verified as this lot has not been previously developed. Overhead electrical power and underground natural gas is available.

Homer City Code requires 1 parking space per 1 bedroom unit. 4 parking spaces will be provided

Analysis: The site is served by a full array of utility services, road access, and Homer public safety operations.

Finding 5: Existing public, water, sewer, and fire services are adequate to serve the proposal.

f. Considering harmony in scale, bulk, coverage and density, generation of traffic, the nature and intensity of the proposed use, and other relevant effects, the proposal will not cause undue harmful effect upon desirable neighborhood character.

Applicant: 1368 Lakeshore Drive is 70' in width, as it was originally platted. It's ability to be developed for a commercial interest is limited by not only the parcel width, but also the site slope. The proposed residential four plex fits this niche parcel in terms of use, scale and project siting. The structure is similar in scale to many of the existing buildings on Lakeshore Drive, and the residential use is also compatible with the

existing numerous residential developments along this street. The southern siting of this structure allows for a large portion of this lot to remain landscaping, not impervious cover.

Four parking spaces will not create a burden on the traffic along Lakeshore Drive.

Analysis: Desirable neighborhood character could be described by a portion of the Purpose statement for the district. The proposed 4-plex would not be much of a driver of congestion and would not produce an adverse effect on adjacent residential districts or the appearance of the community.

Finding 6: The Commission finds the proposal will not cause undue harmful effect upon desirable neighborhood character as described in the purpose statement of the district.

g. The proposal will not be unduly detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the surrounding area or the city as a whole.

Applicant: No.

Analysis: The proposed multi-family development is well supported by city services and is not expected to produce any detrimental effects to those nearby or in the rest of the city. A 4-plex is required to gain state fire marshal approval prior to construction.

Finding 7: The proposal will not be unduly detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the surrounding area and the city as a whole when all applicable standards are met as required by city code.

h. The proposal does or will comply with the applicable regulations and conditions specified in this title for such use.

Analysis: Gaining a CUP and subsequent zoning permit that includes provisions for wetlands review by the US Army Corp of Engineers for any development in regulatory wetlands and a review of the structure by the Fire Marshal will ensure that the applicant complies with applicable regulations.

Finding 8: Gaining an approved CUP and subsequent zoning permit will provide for compliance with applicable regulations and conditions specified in Title 21.

i. The proposal is not contrary to the applicable land use goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Applicant: Emerald Air Services has been operating air services in Homer since 1991. The growth of bear viewing, flightseeing, and charter operations in Homer has created the need for more and more floatplane operations and services for this industry.

Emerald Air Services is currently located at 1344 Lakeshore Drive, on Beluga Lake — directly west of the proposed project site. They have an office, and 3 guest cottages for their clientele. The aircraft are tethered on a sizeable float dock, and fuel services are

on site for this aircraft. The office and cabins are newly built; they were permitted by the approved Conditional Use Permit (CUP 2018-08).

This project proposal is primarily to accommodate the demand for employee and staff housing for Emerald Air Services. Hiring and retaining employees, staff and pilots has been a challenge for the business — complicated by the lack of adequate and appropriate housing in the Homer area. The availability of this neighboring parcel allows for a separate but integrated development for Emerald Air Services.

Analysis: The proposal aligns with Goal 1 and Objective A and Goal 3 Objective B and no evidence has been found that it is not contrary to the applicable land use goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. A compliance review of the 2018 HCP is attached.

Finding 9: The proposal is not contrary to the applicable land use goals and objects of the Comprehensive Plan.

- j. The proposal will comply with the applicable provisions of the Community Design Manual (CDM).

Analysis: The Outdoor Lighting Chapter of the CDM is applicable to the GC1 District.

Finding 10: The project is required to comply with the Outdoor Lighting requirements of the CDM.

Condition 1: Outdoor lighting must be down lit per HCC 21.59.030 and the CDM

HCC 21.71.040(b). b. In approving a conditional use, the Commission may impose such conditions on the use as may be deemed necessary to ensure the proposal does and will continue to satisfy the applicable review criteria. Such conditions may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- 1. Special yards and spaces:** No specific conditions deemed necessary
- 2. Fences and walls:** Condition 2: Any dumpster shall be screened on three sides.
- 3. Surfacing of parking areas:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 4. Street and road dedications and improvements:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 5. Control of points of vehicular ingress and egress:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 6. Special provisions on signs:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 7. Landscaping:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 8. Maintenance of the grounds, building, or structures:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.
- 9. Control of noise, vibration, odors or other similar nuisances:** No specific conditions deemed necessary.

10. Limitation of time for certain activities: No specific conditions deemed necessary.

11. A time period within which the proposed use shall be developed: No specific conditions deemed necessary.

12. A limit on total duration of use: No specific conditions deemed necessary.

13. More stringent dimensional requirements, such as lot area or dimensions, setbacks, and building height limitations. Dimensional requirements may be made more lenient by conditional use permit only when such relaxation is authorized by other provisions of the zoning code. Dimensional requirements may not be altered by conditional use permit when and to the extent other provisions of the zoning code expressly prohibit such alterations by conditional use permit.

14. Other conditions necessary to protect the interests of the community and surrounding area, or to protect the health, safety, or welfare of persons residing or working in the vicinity of the subject lot.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMENTS: None

FIRE DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

STAFF COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS: Planning Commission approve CUP Agenda Item Report PC 23-019 with findings 1-10 and the following conditions.

Condition 1: Outdoor lighting must be down lit per HCC 21.59.030 and the CDM

Condition 2: Any dumpster shall be screened on three sides.



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Planning

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

Planning@ci.homer.ak.us

(p) 907-235-3106

(f) 907-235-3118

Applicant

Name: Andrew Reed Telephone No.: 907.299.2277 c

Address: POB 1191; Homer, Alaska 99603 Email: andrewreed@horizonsatellite.com

Property Owner (if different than the applicant):

Name: FB Freeman Jr, AKRE Holdings LLC. Telephone No.: 784.2254.8821

Address: 16221 Foster Street; Overland Park, KS; 66085 Email: _____

PROPERTY INFORMATION:

Address: 1368 Lakeshore Drive Lot Size: .40 acre acres KPB Tax ID # 179.18.109

Legal Description of Property: T 06S, R 13W; Section 21 of the Seward Meridian; HM 0000839 - BayView Subdivision, Lot 87

For staff use:

Date: 2/22/2023 Fee submittal: Amount \$500

Received by: RSK Date application accepted as complete 2/22/2023

Planning Commission Public Hearing Date: 3/15/2023

Conditional Use Permit Application Requirements:

1. A Site Plan
2. Right of Way Access Plan
3. Parking Plan
4. A map showing neighboring lots and a narrative description of the existing uses of all neighboring lots. (Planning can provide a blank map for you to fill in).
5. Completed Application Form
6. Payment of application fee (nonrefundable)
7. Any other information required by code or staff, to review your project

Circle Your Zoning District

	RR	UR	RO	CBD	TCD	GBD	GC1	GC2	MC	MI	EEMU	BCWPD
Level 1 Site Plan	x	x	x			x			x			x
Level 1 ROW Access Plan	x	x							x			
Level 1 Site Development Standards	x	x										
Level 1 Lighting			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Level 2 Site Plan			x	x	x		x	x		x	x	
Level 2 ROW Access Plan			x	x	x		x	x		x	x	
Level 2 Site Development Standards			x*	x	x	x	x	x			x	
Level 3 Site Development Standards									x	x		
Level 3 ROW Access Plan						x						
DAP/SWP questionnaire				x	x	x	x	x			x	

Circle applicable permits. Planning staff will be glad to assist with these questions.

Page 8 of 24

- ☒ ☐ Are you building or remodeling a commercial structure, or multifamily building with more than 3 apartments? If yes, Fire Marshal Certification is required. Status: _____
Application for AK Fire Marshall building permit will occur after City of Homer CUP approval.
- ☐ ☒ Will your development trigger a Development Activity Plan?
Application Status: _____
- ☐ ☒ Will your development trigger a Storm water Plan?
Application Status: _____
- ☒ ☐ Does your site contain wetlands? If yes, Army Corps of Engineers Wetlands Permit is required. Application Status: _____
Jurisdictional Determination and wetlands determination by ACOE, completed September 2018
- ☐ ☒ Is your development in a floodplain? If yes, a Flood Development Permit is required.
- ☐ ☒ Does your project trigger a Community Design Manual review?
If yes, complete the design review application form. The Community Design Manual is online at: <http://www.ci.homer.ak.us/documentsandforms>
- ☐ ☒ Do you need a traffic impact analysis?
- ☐ ☒ Are there any nonconforming uses or structures on the property?
- ☐ ☒ Have they been formally accepted by the Homer Advisory Planning Commission?
- ☐ ☒ Do you have a state or city driveway permit? Status: _____
Permit application to be made with Homer zoning permit application
- ☐ ☒ Do you have active City water and sewer permits? Status: _____

1. Currently, how is the property used? Are there buildings on the property? How many square feet? Uses within the building(s)?

There are no structures on this lot - it is undeveloped. The lot is .40 acre (70' wide x 248' to 254' in length)

2. What is the proposed use of the property? How do you intend to develop the property? (Attach additional sheet if needed. Provide as much information as possible).

The proposed project is a 4 unit residential structure. Each unit will accomodate 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, laundry, kitchen and living area.

The 53' x 46', two story structure will be sited on the southern side of the lot, towards Lakeshore Drive, in order to minimize the vehicular circulation on this narrow lot. Homer Civic Code requires 1 parking space per 1 bedroom unit - 4 parking spaces are provided.

The Site plan (sht. 0.0) outlines the proposed structure and the site development.

- a. What code citation authorizes each proposed use and structure by conditional use permit?

SEE Response "a." on separate sheet.

- b. Describe how the proposed uses(s) and structures(s) are compatible with the purpose of the zoning district.

SEE Response "b." on separate sheet

- c. How will your proposed project affect adjoining property values?

SEE Response "c." on separate sheet

- d. How is your proposal compatible with existing uses of the surrounding land?

SEE Response "d." on separate sheet

- e. Are/will public services adequate to serve the proposed uses and structures?

SEE Response "e." on separate sheet

- f. How will the development affect the harmony in scale, bulk, coverage and density upon the desirable neighborhood character, and will the generation of traffic and the capacity of surrounding streets and roads be negatively affected?

SEE Response "f." on separate sheet

- g. Will your proposal be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the surrounding area or the city as a whole?

No.

- h. How does your project relate to the goals of the Comprehensive Plan?
The Comprehensive Plan are online,

SEE Response "h." on separate sheet

- i. The Planning Commission may require you to make some special improvements. Are you planning on doing any of the following, or do you have suggestions on special improvements you would be willing to make? **(circle each answer)**

1. Y ☒ Special yards and spaces.
2. Y ☒ Fences, walls and screening.
3. Y ☒ Surfacing of parking areas.
4. Y ☒ Street and road dedications and improvements (or bonds).
5. Y ☒ Control of points of vehicular ingress & egress.
6. Y ☒ Special provisions on signs.
7. Y ☒ Landscaping.
8. Y ☒ Maintenance of the grounds, buildings, or structures.

9. ☒ N Control of noise, vibration, odors, lighting, heat, glare, water and solid waste pollution, dangerous materials, material and equipment storage, or other similar nuisances. Page 10 of 24
10. ☒ N Time for certain activities.
11. ☒ N A time period within which the proposed use shall be developed.
12. ☒ N A limit on total duration of use.
13. ☒ N Special dimensional requirements such as lot area, setbacks, building height.
14. ☒ N Other conditions deemed necessary to protect the interest of the community.

PARKING

1. How many parking spaces are required for your development? 4 required
If more than 24 spaces are required see HCC 21.50.030(f)(1)(b). _____
2. How many spaces are shown on your parking plan? 4 shown
3. Are you requesting any reductions? No

Include a site plan, drawn to a scale of not less than 1" = 20' which shows existing and proposed structures, clearing, fill, vegetation and drainage.

I hereby certify that the above statements and other information submitted are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, and that I, as applicant, have the following legal interest in the property:

CIRCLE ONE:

Owner of record

Lessee

Contract purchaser

Applicant signature: _____

Date: Feb 20, 2023

Property Owner's signature: _____

Date: 2/20/2023

Conditional Use Information (HCC 21.71.030) Page 3 responses**a. What code citation authorizes each proposed use and structure by conditional use permit?**

Homer City Civic Code Chapter 21.24.030 "Conditional uses and structures" may permit the following uses when authorized by conditional use permit (CUP): "(c) Multiple-family dwelling."

The proposed development of this lot is for multi-family residential use – 4 units.

The proposed project does not exceed any other provisions or requirements of the Homer Civic Code.

b. Describe how the proposed uses(s) and structures(s) are compatible with the purpose of the zoning district.

This proposed residential project is an accessory use to the existing neighboring mixed-use development for Emerald Air Services. The adjoining lot, to the west, is also owned by AKRE Holdings, LLC. Appropriate housing for staff and pilots has been difficult to procure in the Homer area.

The existing lot 87 (1368 Lakeshore Drive) is limited in width (70') and has a more pronounced slope directly off Lakeshore Drive. The vehicular circulation and required parking on this narrow lot limits the possibilities for a larger development.

While not wholly compatible with the commercial premise of the GC1 district, the proposed use is to support the adjoining business, Emerald Air Service (EAS). Both lots adjoining this property on the east and west have some residential uses also.

c. How will your proposed project affect adjoining property values?

The directly adjacent properties both have multi-family uses currently. Another residential structure would be compatible with the neighboring properties.

d. How is your proposal compatible with existing uses of the surrounding land?

The directly adjacent properties both have multi-family uses currently. Another residential structure would be compatible with the neighboring properties. This project is being developed with the primary intention of creating housing for EAS employees and staff.

e. Are/will public services adequate to serve the proposed uses and structures?

City sewer and water services are stubbed to the property yet have not been verified as this lot has not been previously developed. Overhead electrical power and underground natural gas is available.

Homer Civic code requires 1 parking space per 1 bedroom unit. 4 parking spaces will be provided.

f. How will the development affect the harmony in scale, bulk, coverage and density upon the desirable neighborhood character, and will the generation of traffic and the capacity of surrounding streets and roads be negatively affected?

1368 Lakeshore Drive is 70' in width, as it was originally platted. It's ability to be developed for a commercial interest is limited by not only the parcel width, but also the site slope. The proposed residential four plex fits this niche parcel in terms of use, scale and project siting. The structure is similar in scale to many of the existing

buildings on Lakeshore Drive, and the residential use is also compatible with the existing numerous residential developments along this street. The southern siting of this structure allows for a large portion of this lot to remain landscaping, not impervious cover.

Four parking spaces will not create a burden on the traffic along Lakeshore Drive.

g. Will your proposal be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the surrounding area or the city as a whole?

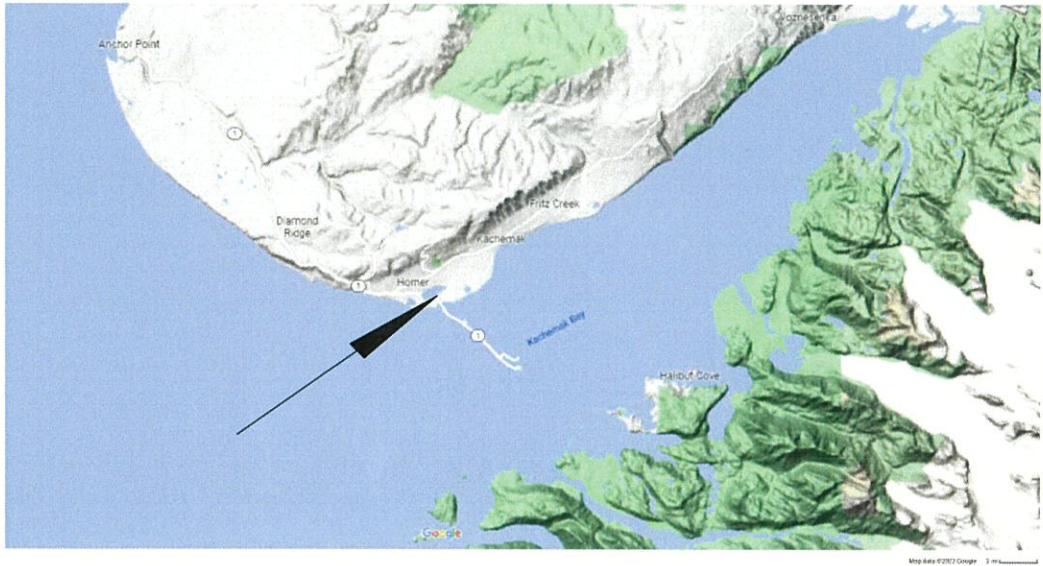
No.

h. How does your project relate to the goals of the Comprehensive Plan?

Emerald Air Services has been operating air services in Homer since 1991. The growth of bear viewing, flightseeing, and charter operations in Homer has created the need for more and more floatplane operations and services for this industry.

Emerald Air Services is currently located at 1344 Lakeshore Drive, on Beluga Lake – directly west of the proposed project site. They have an office, and 3 guest cottages for their clientele. The aircraft are tethered on a sizeable float dock, and fuel services are on site for this aircraft. The office and cabins are newly built; they were permitted by the approved Conditional Use Permit (CUP 2018-08).

This project proposal is *primarily* to accommodate the demand for employee and staff housing for Emerald Air Services. Hiring and retaining employees, staff and pilots has been a challenge for the business – complicated by the lack of adequate and appropriate housing in the Homer area. The availability of this neighboring parcel allows for a separate but integrated development for Emerald Air Services.



1
1.0
LOCATOR

PROPERTY OWNER: AKRE Holdings LLC; 16221 Foster Street; Overland Park, Kansas 66085

PROPERTY Description: 1368 Lakeshore Drive; Homer, Alaska 99603

LEGAL Description: T 06S, R 13W, SEC 21 of the Seward Meridian; HM 0000839 - Bay View Subdivision, LOT 87

APN: 179.18.109

ZONING: per CITY OF HOMER CIVIC CODE: **GC1** (General Commercial 1)

PROPOSED USE(S): **Multiple-family dwelling**

GOVERNING BUILDING CODE: 2009 International Residential Code, City of Homer Municipal Code

Per City of Homer Zoning Ordinances, the following setbacks are to be observed:

Front (along existing right of way (R.O.W)) = 20'

Sidyard and Rear = 5' (unless proper firewalls are provided as defined by Alaska State Fire Code.)

MAXIMUM Building Height = 35'

LOT AREA: LOT: irregular = 17,597.01 SF (0.40 acre)

COVERAGE: LOT 87	Gravel driveway and parking areas	1,900 SF
	Structure (building footprint)	1,962 SF
	Porches, and decking	606 SF
	TOTAL IMPERVIOUS COVERAGE	4,468 SF

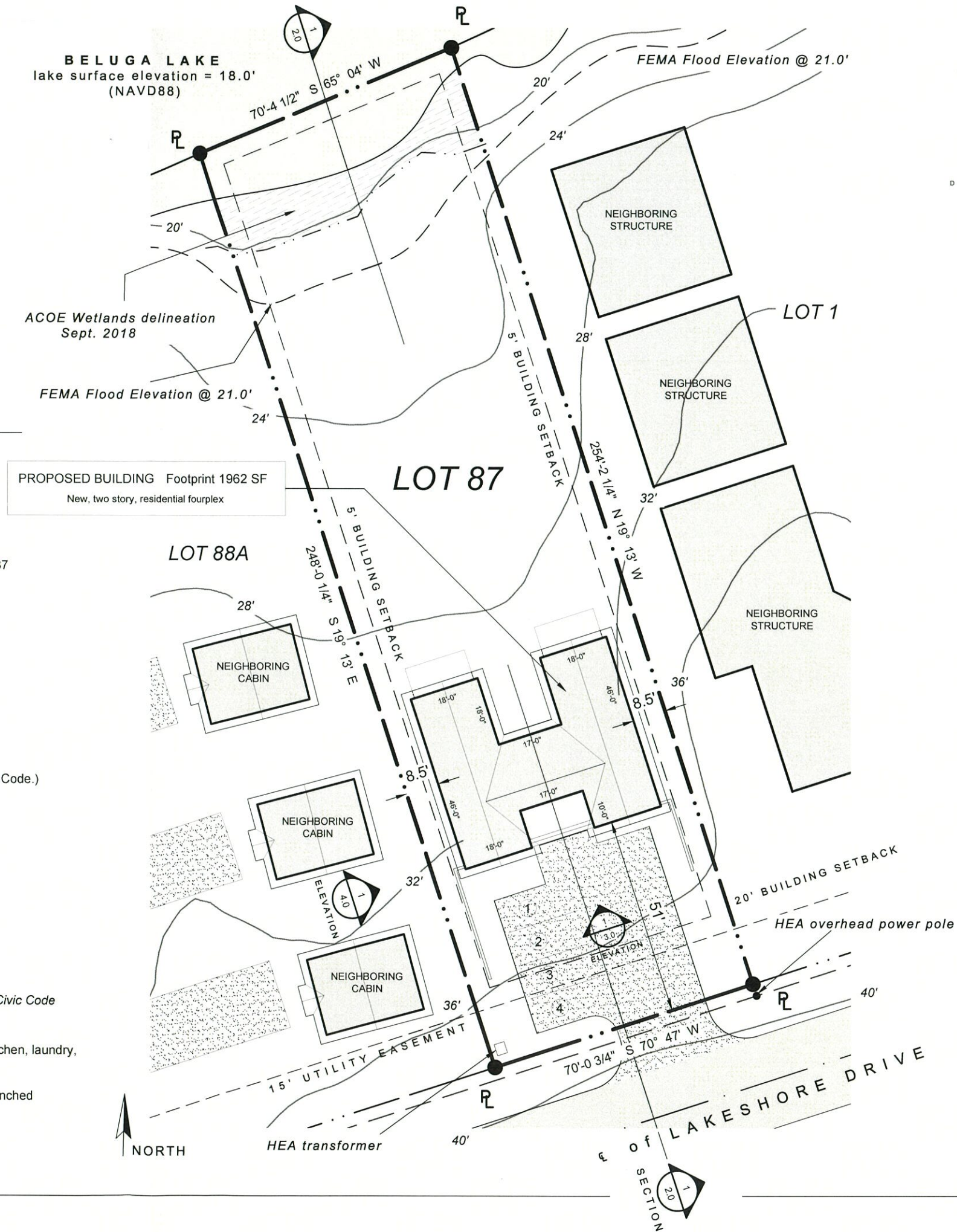
TOTAL LOT COVERAGE 4,468 sf (coverage) / 17,597.01 sf (lot area) = **25.39 %**

Total impervious coverage of this lot DOES NOT EXCEED the 60% threshold requiring a Stormwater Plan (SWP), per Homer City Civic Code 21.0505.030e

PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK: Construction of a two story, 4 unit residential structure. All units will have 1 bedroom, 1 bath, a kitchen, laundry, and a living area. Structure will be wood framed on an ICF foundation.

Power to be routed underground per HEA approval and location. Sewer, water, and natural gas utilities trenched underground from services at Lakeshore Drive.

1
1.0
1"=30'
SITE PLAN



AKRE HOLDINGS BELUGA LAKE HOUSING
1368 Lakeshore Drive
Homer, Alaska 99603

Project Title: AKRE 23
Set Date: 20 FEB 2023

Drawn by: ABR

Revisions:

Page 13 of 24
SITE

1.0



POB 1191
Homer, Alaska 99603
907.299.2277 c

AKRE HOLDINGS BELUGA LAKE HOUSING

1368 Lakeshore Drive
Homer, Alaska 99603

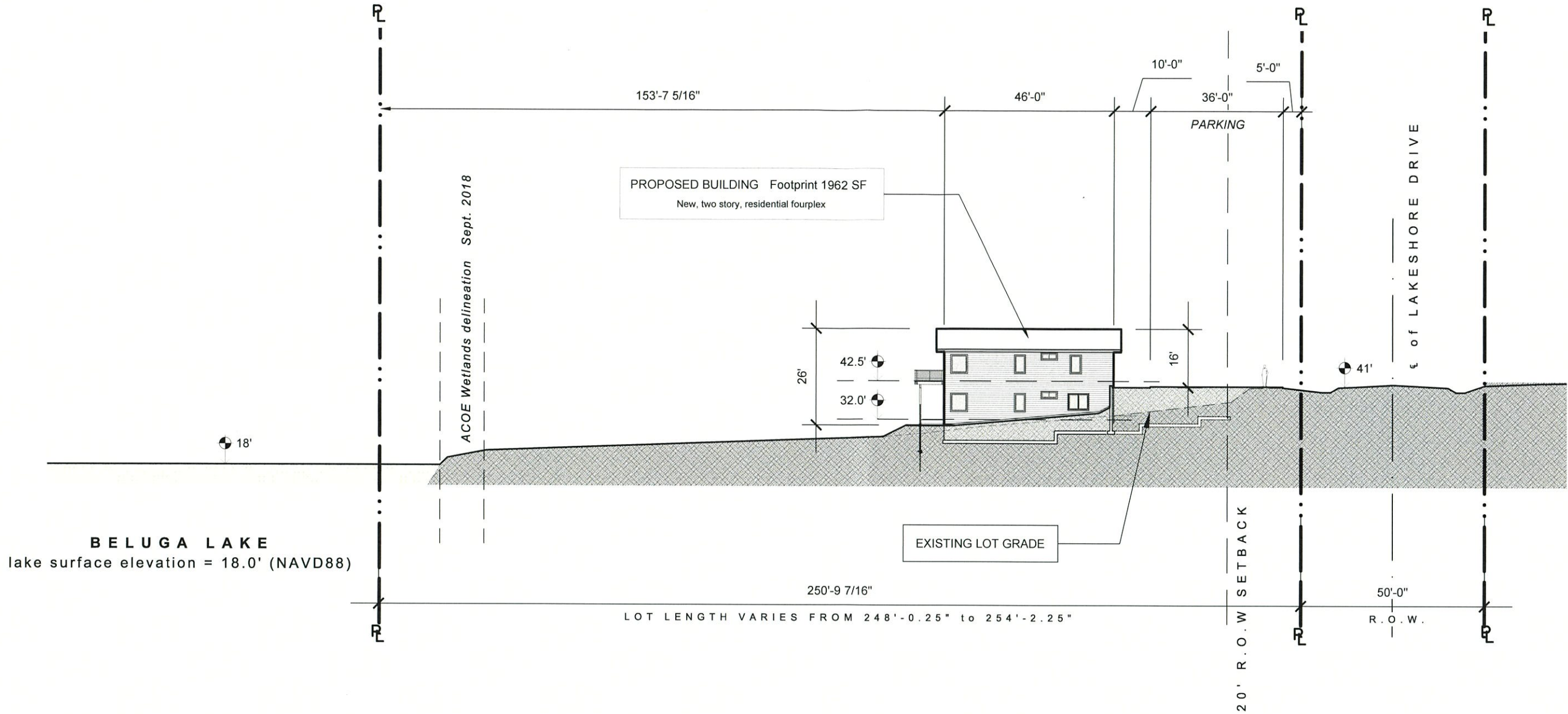
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Set Date: 20 Feb 2023

Drawn by: ABR

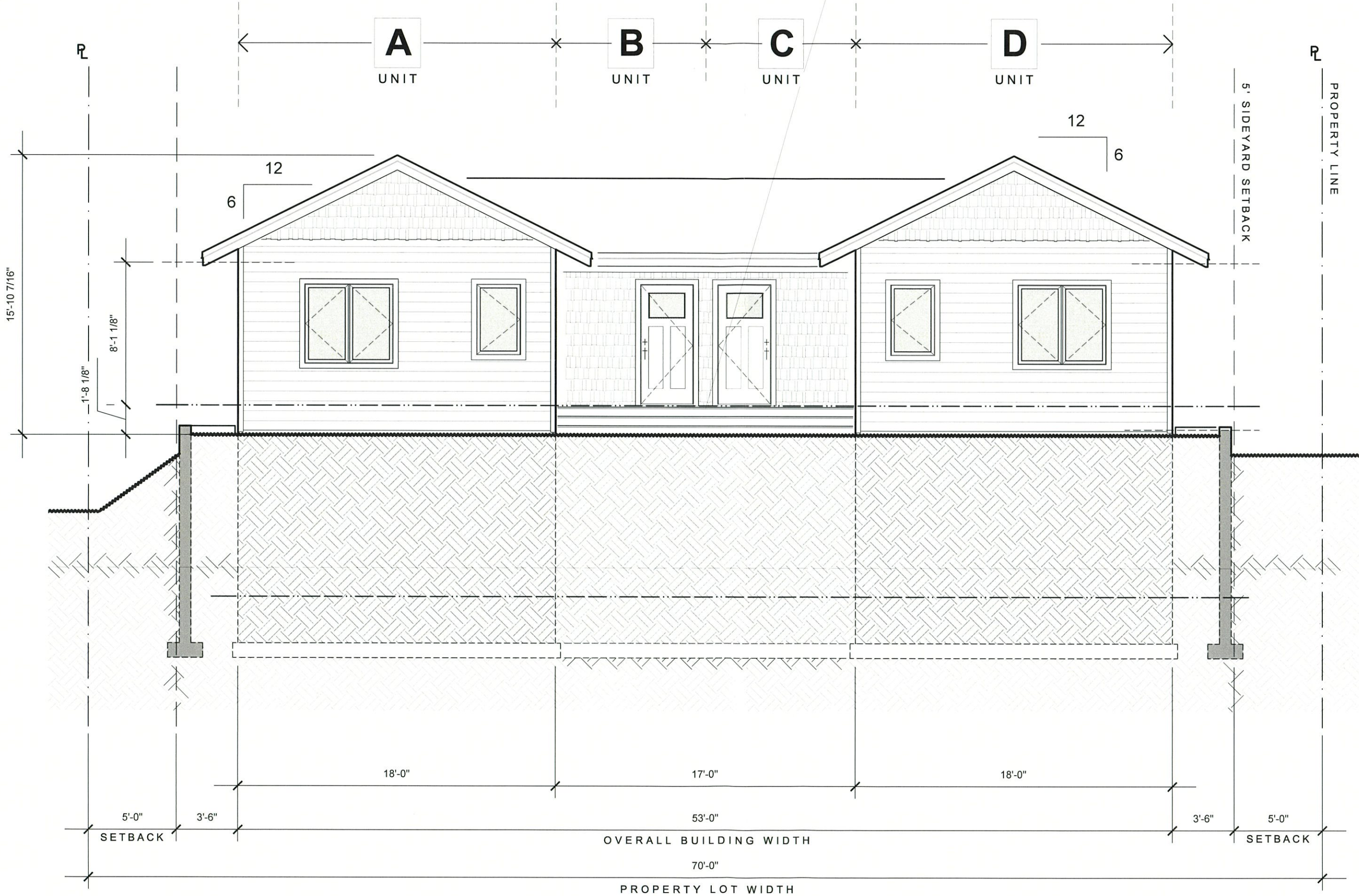
Revisions:

Page 14 of 22
SITE SECTION

2.0



1"=30' 1 2.0 SITE SECTION



ELEVATION

SOUTHERN, looking north



POB 1191
Homer, Alaska 99603
907.299.2277 c

AKRE HOLDINGS BELUGA LAKE HOUSING

1368 Lakeshore Drive
Homer, Alaska 99603

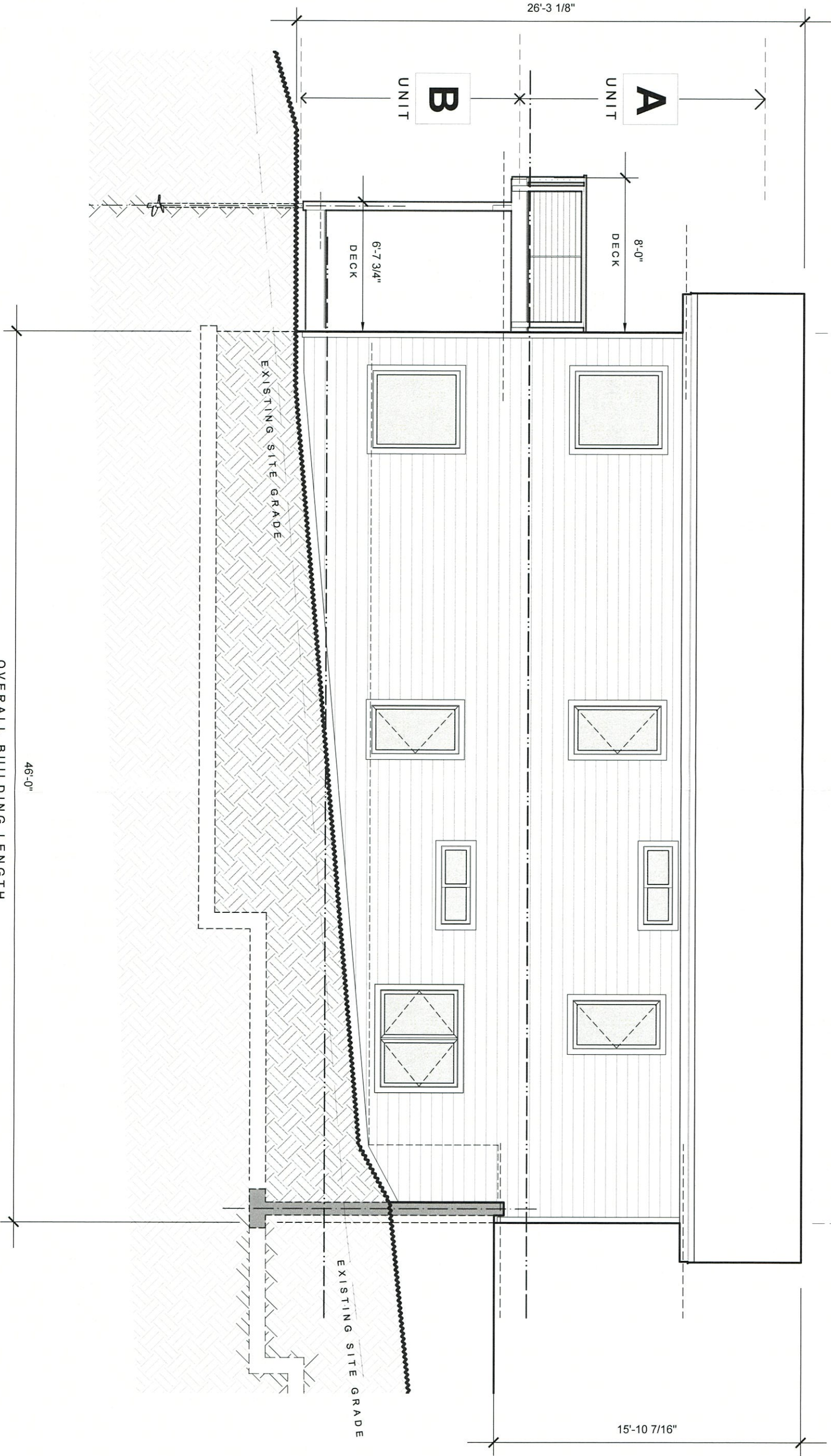
Project Title: AKRE 23
Set Date: 20 Feb 2023

Drawn by: ABR

Revisions:

ELEVATION

3.0



A AND **B**
UNIT UNIT

Compliance review of 2018 Homer Comprehensive Plan (HCP) for CUP 23-03

GOAL 1: Guiding Homer’s growth with a focus on increasing the supply and diversity of housing, protect community character, encouraging infill, and helping minimize global impacts of public facilities 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.

***Staff:** This project supports the moderate density and mixed-use while infilling a vacant lot near the center of town.*

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

***Staff:** N/A – concerns writing regulations*

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

***Staff:** The proposed development does contribute to the variety of dwelling options where multi-family housing has not made significant gains in relation to single-family housing starts.*

GOAL 2: Maintain the quality of Homer’s natural environment and scenic beauty.

Objective A: Complete and maintain a detailed “green infrastructure” map for the City of Homer and environs that presents an integrated functional system of environmental features on lands in both public and private ownership and use green infrastructure concepts in the review and approval of development projects.

***Staff:** N/A- not making maps*

Objective B: Continue to review and refine development standards and require development practices that protect environmental functions.

***Staff:** N/A – not reviewing and refining standards.*

Objective C: Provide extra protection for areas with highest environmental value or development constraints.

Staff: *N/A – A function of creating codes, project will comply with applicable codes.*

Objective D: Collaborate with jurisdictions outside the City of Homer, as well as state and federal agencies, to ensure that environmental quality is maintained.

Staff: *N/A – Not a function of CUP review.*

GOAL 3: Encourage high-quality buildings and site development that complement Homer's beautiful natural setting.

Objective A: Create a clear, coordinated regulatory framework that guides development.

Staff: *N/A - Goal 3, objective A implementation items are all directives to review and consider new policies and are not applicable to directly apply to CUP's.*

Objective B: Encourage high quality site design and buildings.

Staff: *The proposed structure is required to have a safety review from the State Fire Marshal. The site design maintains a modest footprint. The site design and building is of a high quality, although the encouragement is provided by existing regulations.*

GOAL 4: Support the development of a variety of well-defined commercial/business districts for a range of commercial purposes.

Objective A: Encourage a concentrated, pedestrian oriented, attractive business/commerce district in the Central Business District (CBD) following the guidelines found in the Town Center Development Plan.

Staff: *N/A, the proposal is found outside of the CBD.*

Objective B: Discourage strip development along the Sterling Highway and major collectors/thoroughfares.

Staff: *The proposal is not found to be located along a major collector or thoroughfare.*

Finding:

The proposal is not contrary to the applicable land use goals and objects of the Comprehensive Plan

**CITY OF HOMER
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

A public hearing on the matter below is scheduled for Wednesday, March 15, 2023 during the Regular Planning Commission Meeting. The meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. and will be conducted via Zoom webinar. Participation is available virtually or in-person at City Hall, more information below.

A request for Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 23-03, to allow a new four unit multi-family dwelling at 1368 Lakeshore Drive, Lot 87 of BayView Subdivision, T. 6S., R. 13 W., S.M., HM 0000839. A CUP is required by Homer City Code (HCC) 21.24.030 (c) multi-family dwelling within the General Commercial 1 District.

In-person meeting participation is available in Cowles Council Chambers located downstairs at Homer City Hall, 491 E. Pioneer Ave., Homer, AK 99603.

To attend the meeting virtually, visit zoom.us and enter the Meeting ID & Passcode listed below. To attend the meeting by phone, dial any one of the following phone numbers and enter the Webinar ID & Passcode below, when prompted: 1-253-215-8782, 1-669-900-6833, (toll free) 888-788-0099 or 877-853-5247.

Meeting ID: 979 8816 0903
Passcode: 976062

Additional information regarding this matter will be available by 5pm on the Friday before the meeting. This information will be posted to the City of Homer online calendar page for March 10, 2023 at <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/calendar>. It will also be available at the Planning and Zoning Office at Homer City Hall and at the Homer Public Library.

Written comments can be emailed to the Planning and Zoning Office at the address below, mailed to Homer City Hall at the address above, or placed in the Homer City Hall drop box at any time. Written comments must be received by 4pm on the day of the meeting.

If you have questions or would like additional information, contact Rick Abboud at the Planning and Zoning Office. Phone: (907) 235-3106, email: clerk@cityofhomer-ak.gov, or in-person at Homer City Hall.

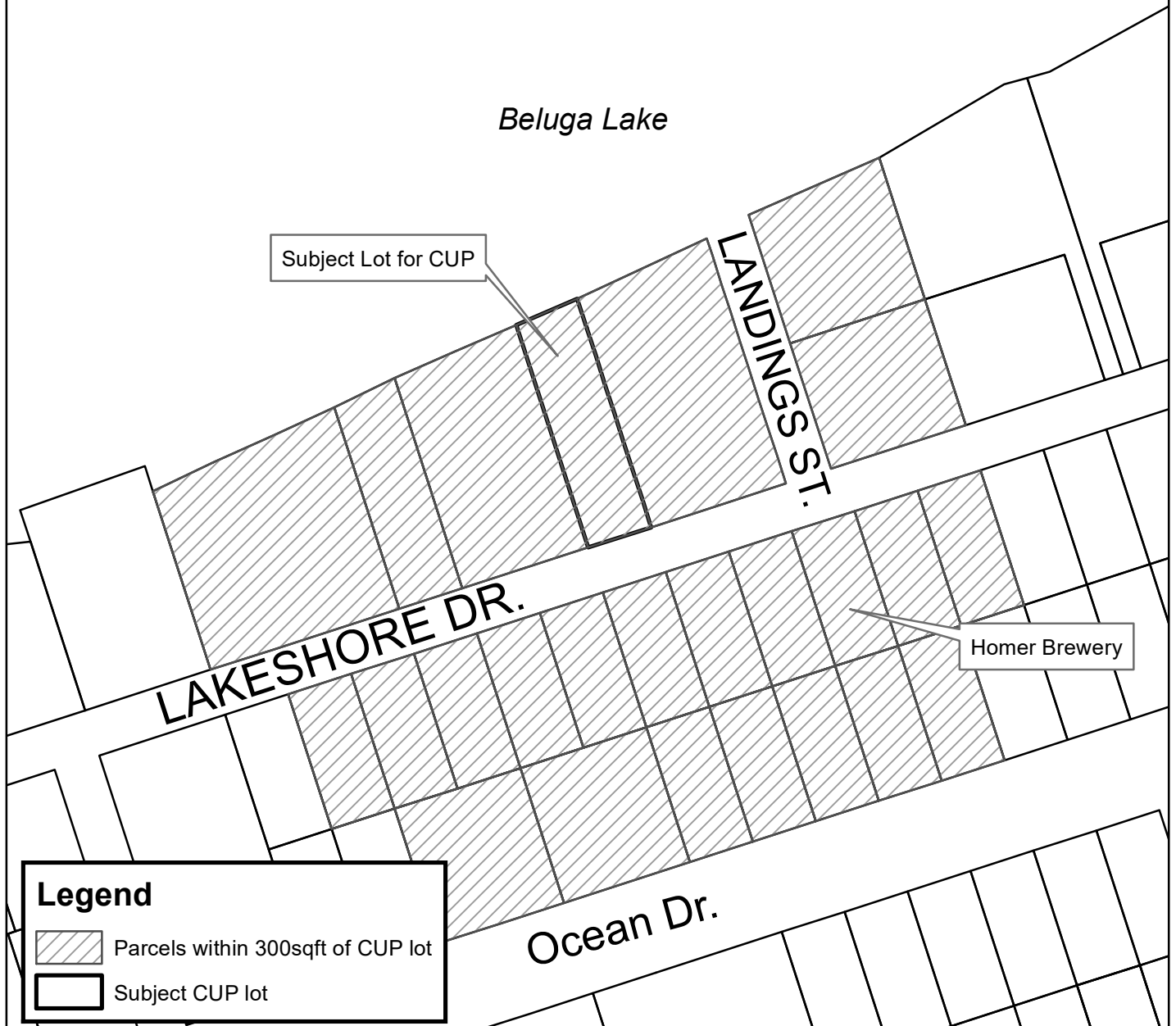
NOTICE TO BE SENT TO PROPERTY OWNERS WITHIN 300 FEET OF PROPERTY

.....

VICINITY MAP ON REVERSE

Vicinity Map

Page 20 of 24



City of Homer
Planning and Zoning Department

February 24, 2023

Request for
Conditional Use Permit 23-03
1368 Lakeshore Dr.

Marked lots are within 300 feet and
property owners notified



*Disclaimer:
It is expressly understood the City of
Homer, its council, board,
departments, employees and agents are
not responsible for any errors or omissions
contained herein, or deductions, interpretations
or conclusions drawn therefrom.*



POB 1191
 Homer, Alaska 99603
 907.299.2277 c

AKRE HOLDINGS BELUGA LAKE HOUSING

1368 Lakeshore Drive
Homer, Alaska 99603

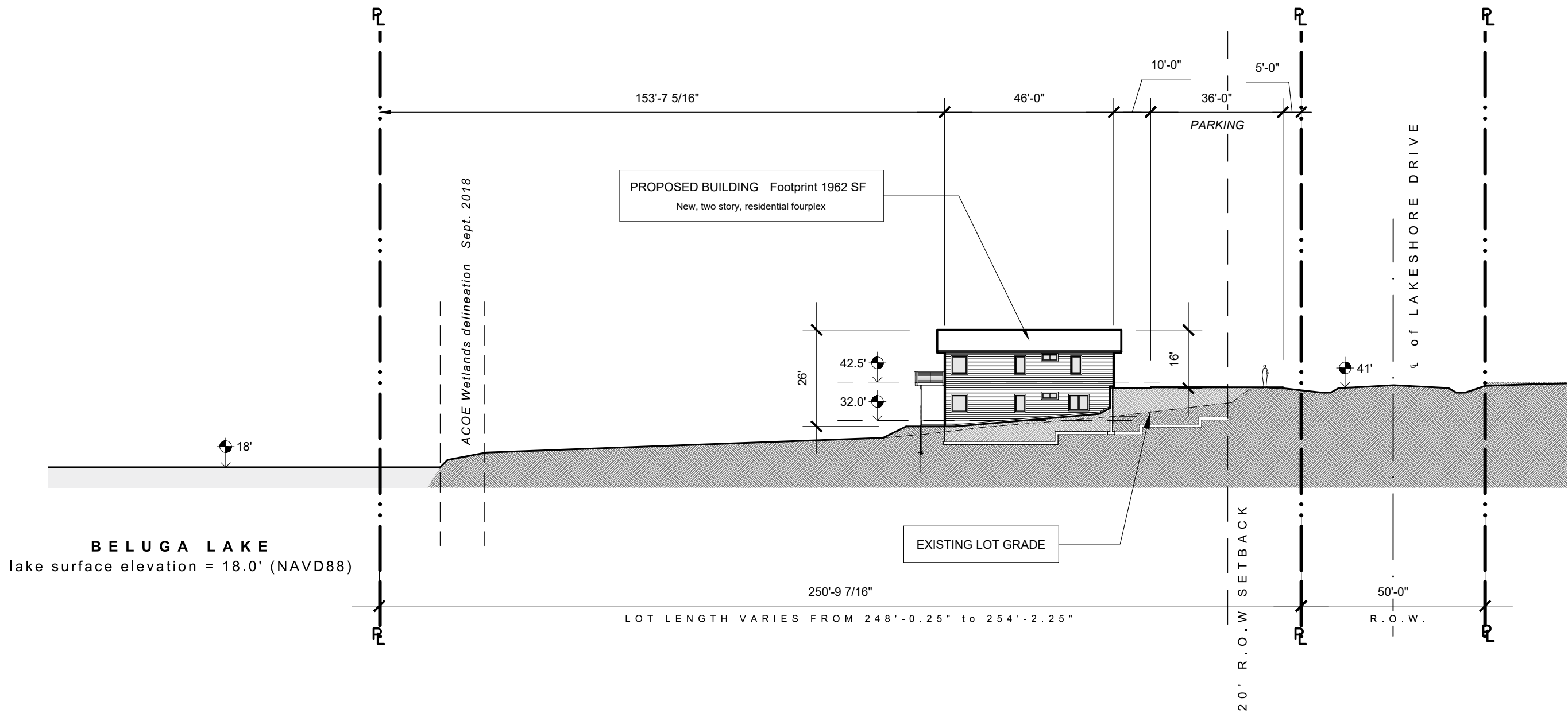
Project Title: AKRE 23
Set Date: 20 Feb 2023

Drawn by: ABR

Revisions:

SITE
SECTION

2.0



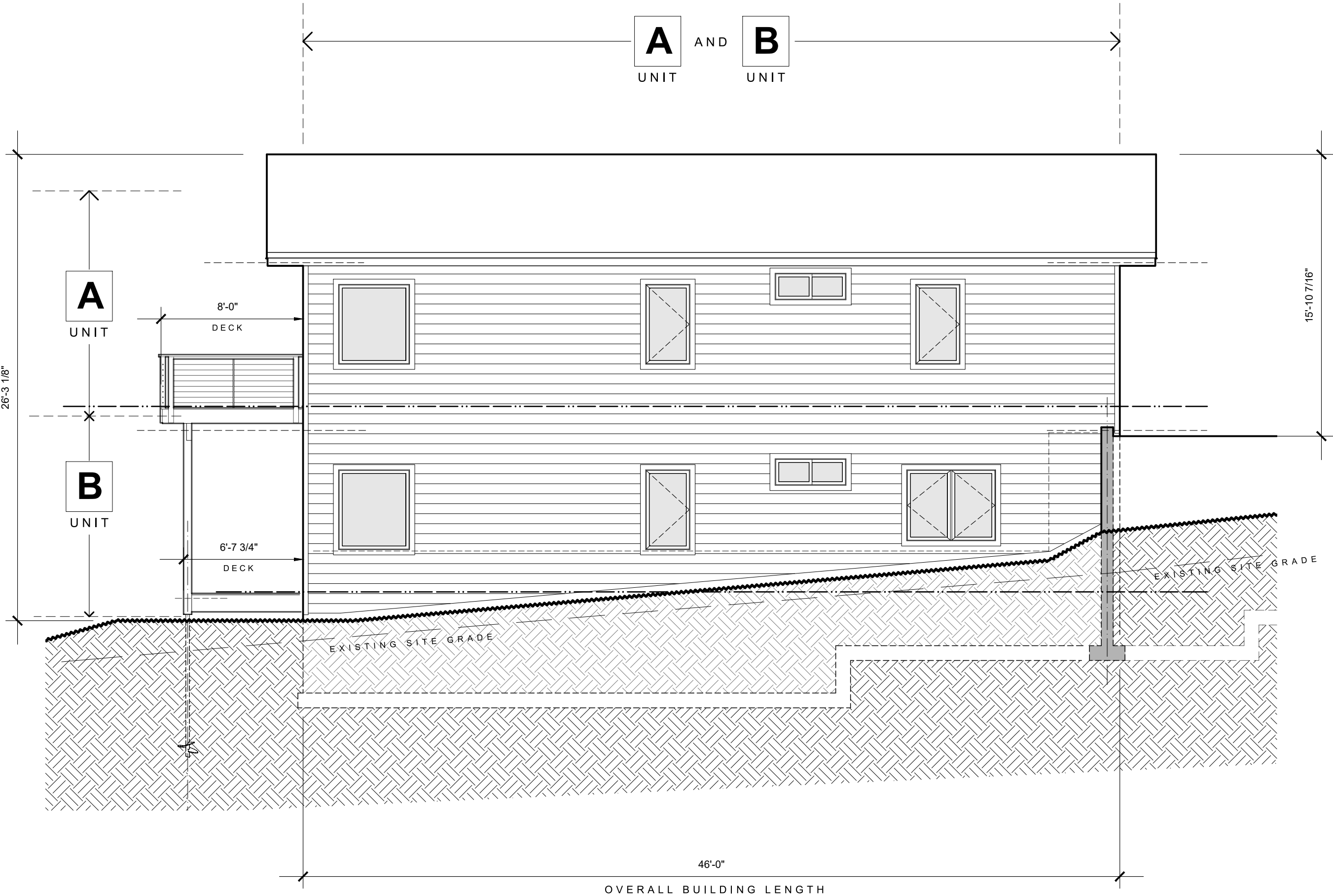
1"=30'

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S I T E S E C T I O N

A AND B
UNIT UNIT



ELEVATION

WESTERN, looking east

Aerial Map

Page 23 of 24

Beluga Lake

Subject Lot for CUP

Landings St.

Lakeshore Dr.

Homer Brewery

Legend

 Subject CUP lot



City of Homer
Planning and Zoning Department

March 9, 2023

Request for
Conditional Use Permit 23-03
1368 Lakeshore Dr.



Disclaimer:
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Homer, its council, board,
departments, employees and agents are
not responsible for any errors or omissions
contained herein, or deductions, interpretations
or conclusions drawn therefrom.



Aerial Imagery Map



Legend

- Mileposts
- Major Roads
- └┐ Township Lines
- Section Lines
- ▭ Parcels



Notes

This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable. Do not use for navigation.

DATE PRINTED: 3/9/2023



AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Forest Trails Subdivision Findings and Recommendations

Item Type:	Informational Item
Prepared For:	Planning Commission
Meeting Date:	15 Mar 2023
Staff Contact:	Jan Keiser
Attachments:	Attachments to AIR PC 23-020 Public Works Findings & Recommendations Forest Trails Prelim Plat REVISED 1-17-23 Excerpt of Approved Minutes for 2.1.23, 2.15.23 Feb 1 2023 Agenda Packet Materials Feb 1 2023 Supplemental Packet Materials

Summary Statement:

I have researched applicable codes, the City's historical practices related to subdivision development, and other relevant documentation to ascertain the City's existing authority to regulate subdivision performance requirements. Below are my findings as well as recommendations vis á vis the proposed Forest Trails Subdivision.

Policy Implications:

1. Finding #1: Level One Site Development standards apply.

1.1 Basis in Code/Practice: *"All developments in [rural residential zones]...shall comply with Level One site development standards..."* (HCC 21.12.050).

1.2 Recommendation: The proposed development resides within the Rural Residential Zone and thus, should comply with Level One site development.

2. Finding #2: It is appropriate to address potential downstream impacts.

2.1 Basis in Code/Practice:

2.1.1 "Development activities shall not adversely impact other properties..." (HCC 21.50.020).

2.2.2 "Accompanying street designs shall be a...street design report containing...wetland status...drainage patterns... [including] method of disposing [of] drainage downstream and

mitigating downstream impact.” (Design Criteria Manual for Street and Storm Drainage, adopted April 1985, revised February 1987.)

2.2 Recommendation: It is appropriate to consider downstream impacts when reviewing the configuration and design of the proposed plat.

3. Finding #3: It is appropriate to require some preliminary engineering during the preliminary plat process as necessary to address development challenges.

3.1 Basis in Code/Practice:

3.1.1 While the design details for infrastructure improvements are typically not developed until after the preliminary plat is approved and a Subdivision Development Agreement is negotiated, there have been times when the City has required conceptual engineering during the preliminary plat process to ensure there are sensible engineering solutions to problematic issues. For example, this was done in the case of the Terra Bella Subdivision to address road alignment and drainage issues.

3.1.2 The Developer and the City almost always confer, pre-development, to address various infrastructure issues such as where water and sewer lines will come from and what road access will look like.

3.2 Recommendation: The Developer should be required to provide conceptual engineering, during the plat process, to ensure there are viable engineering solutions to the multiple infrastructure challenges. (See Figure 9.)

4. Finding #4: A Storm Water Plan, conforming to the Drainage Management Plan, will be required, during construction.

4.1. Basis in Code:

4.1.1 A Storm Water Plan (SWP) is required for development that “...includes grading, excavation or filling that cumulatively moves 1,000 cubic yards or more of material.” HCC 21.50.020(d)(3).

4.1.2 SWP must comply with the provisions of the Drainage Management Plan. (HCC 1104.080.)

4.1.3 “Site designs shall minimize the channelization of storm water that results from all natural forms of precipitation (including snow melt) and maximize pervious areas for storm water absorption”. HCC 21.75.020.

4.1.4 “Storm water runoff generated by development activities and discharged directly into wetlands...shall be adequately treated to limit nonpoint source and point source pollution.” HCC 21.75.020(b).

4.1.5 “A SWP... shall be accompanied by...performance guaranty...equal to 150 percent of the engineers estimate of the cost of constructing and installing the mitigation methods and structure that are required to comply with the SWP”. HCC 21.75.030(b).

4.2 Recommendation: A compliant Storm Water Plan will be required during construction.

5. Finding #5: City Standards specify that drainage channels should remain in a natural state.

5.1 Basis in Code/Practice:

5.1.1 The City's Drainage Management Plan, updated February 1982, and codified in HCC 11.04, Street Design and Construction Standards, says,

5.1.2 "Major drainage channels should be maintained in their natural condition to the greatest possible extent, as routing discharge to a new area may result in rapid gully erosion...Easements should be established to protect these drainage-ways...vegetative cover should be maintained to the greatest possible extent...extensive channel routing of drainage should be avoided..." (Id. at Pg. 6)

5.1.3 "...the simplest method of avoiding drainage and erosion problems is to carefully site and plan development in accordance with the natural characteristics of the site..." (Id.).

5.1.4 "...[M]any of the major drainage-ways in the city are in a natural, unaltered condition...these natural drainage-ways may not be altered in any way, such as alternations including, but not limited to, deepening, widening, relocating, filling, encroaching and removing vegetation..." (Id at Pg. A-2.)

5.1.5 "Alternation of minor drainage-ways should be avoided." (Id.)

5.1.6 "... [M]aintaining drainage-ways in their natural channels and siting development so as to avoid drainage-ways is an effective means of preventing drainage problems." (Id. at Pg. 30)

5.2 Recommendation: If this finding were applied literally, no fill would be allowed in Cantrell Creek. This would make it impossible to build a road across Cantrell Creek or other drainage ways. A literal enforcement would prevent future development in many areas of Homer and if it had been applied literally in the past, would have prohibited the construction of many existing roads. Instead, we recommend applying a more well-reasoned approach; that is, impacts to existing drainage ways should be reviewed holistically, with the goal of minimizing adverse impacts and preserving the natural conditions to the greatest extent possible, while still allowing development, through the use of thoughtfully engineered solutions, drainage easements and Erosion Buffer Zones.

The Developer's Design Engineer has conceived a preliminary plan for a road design, which conveys the anticipated water flow in Cantrell Creek, within the existing drainage channel. (See Figure 10). This, combined with the drainage easement and Erosion Buffer Zone, addressed in Finding #6, are reasonable approaches that balance the Developer's ability to build the improvements with the need to manage the watershed.

6. Finding #6: City Standards identify the creation of drainage easements and "Erosion Buffer Zones" as Best Management Practices.

6.1 Basis in Code/Practice:

6.1.1 “[M]ajor drainage-ways should be protected by establishing easements or rights-of-way...should contain the drainage-way and its ravine or valley, plus a strip along the banks...which provide[s] the needed erosion buffer zone...” (1982 Drainage Management Plan Update, Pg. 15)

6.2 Recommendation #6: A drainage easement and Erosion Buffer Zone should be established for the drainage channels of Cantrell Creek. (See Figure 8.)

7. Finding #7: Water in Cantrell Creek flows from a substantial watershed north of East End Road and includes both surface and ground water.

7.1 Basis in Code/Practice:

7.1.1 In 2021-2022, the Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (KBNERR), as part of their research on ground water in the Homer area, used LIDAR data to map ground water flow lines that bring water to the Cantrell Creek Watershed. (See Figure 1.)

7.1.2 In 2021-22, as part of their work on the Homer Green Infrastructure Study and Drainage Management Plan Update, Kinney Engineering used GIS and LIDAR data, to map the drainage ways that contribute to Cantrell Creek. (See Figure 2.)

7.1.3 In two separate studies, one circa 2005-2006 and one circa 2014, the eastern portion of the subject property, through which Cantrell Creek flows, is identified as “High Value Wetlands” in a map of the Homer Wetlands. (See Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6.)

7.1.4 Decades earlier, Cantrell Creek is identified in the 1982 Drainage Management Plan Update as B4 and described as “well –established...should be protected with drainage easements...” (Drainage Features Map, Beluga Lake Area, Sheet 4 of 5, in 1982 Drainage Management Plan update; 1982 Drainage Management Plan Updated, Pg. 37) (See Figure 7.)

7.1.5 It is of primary importance that sufficient hydraulic to collect and discharge both channel and sheet flow in the Beluga Lake Area be maintained and developed or improved as necessary.” (Id.)

7.2 Recommendation #7: The water flowing into and through Cantrell Creek should be properly managed to avoid flooding and preserve the flow of water into the high value wetlands downstream, through the use of a drainage easement and Erosion Control Buffer.

8. Finding #8. There is no set standard for the width of a drainage easement or Erosion Control Buffer.

8.1 Basis in Code/Practice:

8.1.2 Easements 15 feet wide have been applied. (Eg. Foothills Subdivision.)

8.1.3 “Easements should be a minimum of 20 feet wide, centered on the natural thread of the channel. Easements for channels that are in a ravine should extend 10 feet beyond the top of bank on both sides...” (1981 Drainage Study, pg. 2)

8.1.4 Public Works has established a practice of requiring a drainage easement that suits the channel of the drainage way and the site's geography. (Eg. Terra Bella Subdivision, where the preliminary plat included Note 9 saying "There is a drainage easement 20 feet on both sides of the existing creek. Approximate location of creek is shown.")

8.2 Recommendation #8: A drainage easement should be established that extends from one side of the Cantrell Creek bank to the opposite bank, with Erosion Buffer Zones that extend 20 feet beyond the drainage easement, on both sides of Cantrell Creek. The drainage easement and Erosion Buffer Zone should be maintained in a natural state. (See Figure 8.)

Finding #9. The draft preliminary plat did not include all the items listed on the Kenai Peninsula Borough Checklist (KPB Checklist), which requires specified information to be included on the preliminary plat. (See Figure 9.)

9.1 Basis in Code/Practice:

9.1.1 "A vicinity map, drawn to scale showing location of proposed subdivision, north arrow...township and range, section lines. Roads, political boundaries, and prominent natural and manmade features, such as shorelines or streams [should be provided]." KPB Checklist, Item D.

9.1.2 "Approximate locations of areas subject to inundation, flooding, or storm water overflow, the ordinary high water, wetlands when adjacent to lakes or non-tidal streams...[should be shown.]" KPB Checklist, Item H.

9.1.3 "Within the limits of incorporated cities, the approximate location of known existing municipal wastewater and water mains, and other utilities...[should be shown]. (Id. Item K)

9.2 Recommendation #9: The plat should comply with the KPB Checklist.

Finding #10. The plat does not show how the proposed subdivision will be served with water or sewer services.

10.1 Basis in Code/Practice:

10.1.1 Typically, if the site will be served by City utilities, the preliminary plat often contains a note "These lots will be served by city of Homer sewer and water." and the details of the utility design are set forth in the engineered plans, which are developed as part of the Subdivision Development.

10.1.2 Utilities are subject to the City's Design Criteria Manual and Standard Construction Specifications. HCC 11.20.060

10.2 Recommendation #10: The preliminary plats should contain a note identifying how the lots will be served with water and sewer.

Finding #11. The City does not require a bond to guarantee the performance of a subdivision development agreement.

11.1 Basis in Code/Practice:

11.1.1 “A performance bond...in the amount of 100 percent of the [estimated project cost], which bond shall be waived on the case of new subdivisions, in each case plat filing or recordation, cannot occur until improvements are installed and accepted. HCC 11.20.070.

11.2 Recommendation #11: The City should change HCC 11.20.070 to require a performance guaranty, before this plat is vested.

Finding #12. HCC now requires the inclusion of a facility for non-motorized transportation in some developments, including this one, because of its proximity to Paul Banks Elementary and the Calvin & Coyle Trail.

12.1 Basis in Code/Practice:

12.1.1 HCC 11.04.120(b) states “A new street to be accepted by the City for maintenance shall be required to include dedicated facilities...at the developer’s cost...for non-motorized transportation...where any of the following conditions exist...the new street connects to, or comes within 100, linear feet, of an existing destination which provides...recreational...educational services...”

12.1.2 The proposed Cantrell Creek Road comes within 100 feet of Paul Banks Elementary School as well as the existing sidewalk on East End Road.

12.2 Recommendation #12: There should be a note on the plat that specifies a requirement for non-motorized transportation facilities. This could be similar to the standard note that specifies the lots will be served by City water & sewer. For example, the note could say, “A facility for non-motorized transportation on Cantrell Creek Road is required in this subdivision, per HCC 11.04.120.” (See Figure 10.)

Attachments:

[Attachments to AIR PC 23-020 Public Works Findings & Recommendations](#)

[Forest Trails Prelim Plat REVISED 1-17-23](#)

[Excerpt of Approved Minutes for 2.1.23, 2.15.23](#)

[Feb 1 2023 Agenda Packet Materials](#)

[Feb 1 2023 Supplemental Packet Materials](#)



Figure 7: Estimated flow paths of stream channels within Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park and adjacent parcels (Source: Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve 1/27/2023)

Figure 1

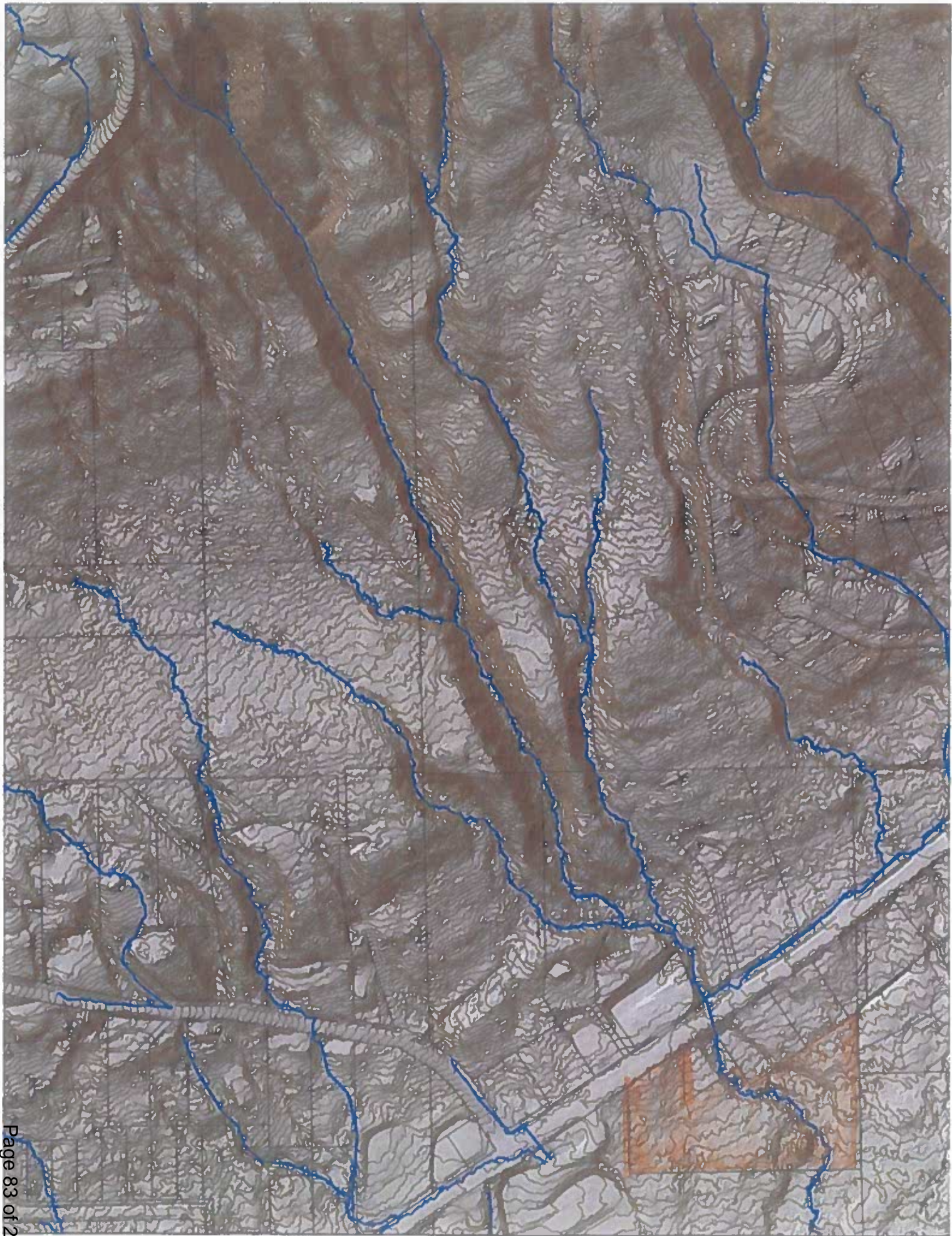


Figure 2

HOMER WETLAND COMPLEXES AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Moose Population and Movements Around Homer

Moose have been abundant on the Kachemak Peninsula for over 100 years (Lutz 1960). Moose are an important resource for hunters and are a desired spectacle for local wildlife viewers and tourists. Disturbances around the state vary according to the quality of the habitat, predation levels, and other factors. The moose population around the greater Homer area (south of the Anchor River to Kachemak Bay) is currently over 500 animals and is considered a high-density population (Schwartz and Franzman 1989) with about 3 moose per square mile. This Homer moose population is currently the most abundant and productive population on the Kachemak Peninsula. Moose from this population study act as a "source" population in providing dispersing individuals to areas of lower moose densities around the lower Kachemak Peninsula (Lubinski et al. 1994).

Moose have evolved and adapted to habitat changes influenced by fire (Spencer and Nikula 1964, Lorange et al. 1980) and other natural disturbances. While disturbances such as fire increase the quality and quantity of browse for moose over time with the regeneration of new plant growth, the habitat changes caused by human development can remove important moose forage, eliminate access to existing forage, and/or fragment available browse into small and disconnected areas.

Moose and humans have shared the landscape in various Alaskan communities for many years. Moose habitat areas within Anchorage because there still is available habitat. However, human-moose conflicts continue to increase as the human population grows and the amount of moose habitat decreases. Moose have been radiocollared in Anchorage using GPS technology that records locations multiple times each day. The data have not been analyzed; however, moose in urban areas appear to spend most of their time in natural areas including parks, greenbelts, and undeveloped properties near developments (R. Strout, Anchorage-ADFG biologist, pers. comm.). These "green areas" provide moose browse, cover to escape from human disturbance and to stay cool, bedding areas for rest and food processing, and undisturbed areas for calving.

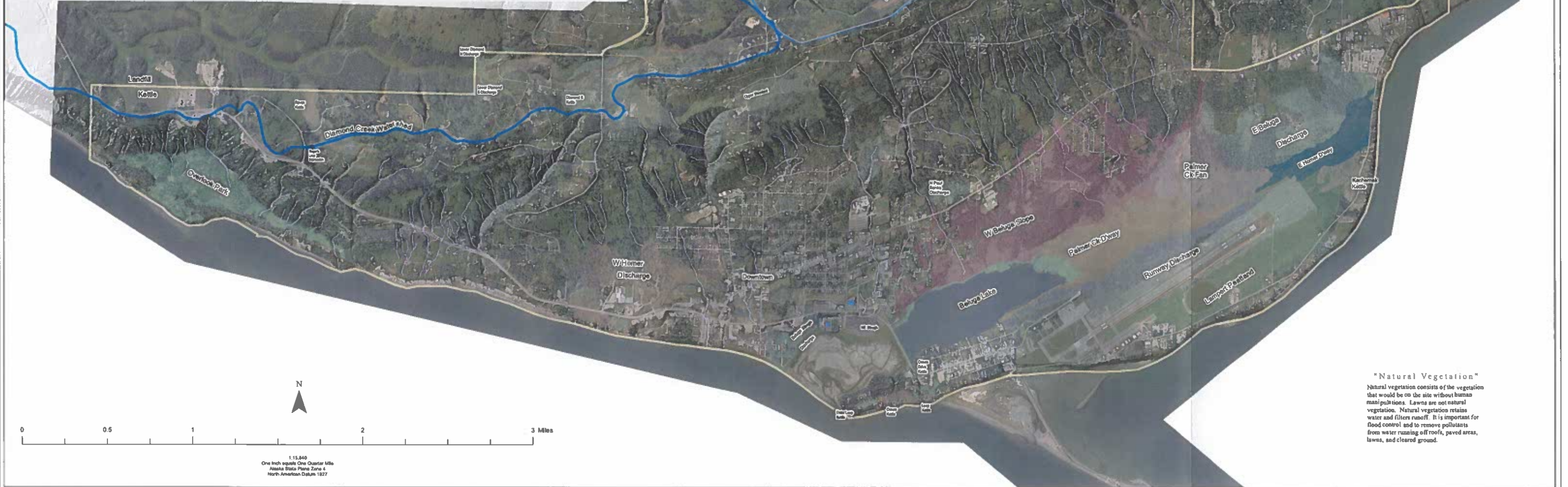
Moose around Homer eat a wide variety of vegetation based on the nutritional quality and availability of the plant species. In the summer when vegetation is plentiful, moose eat leaves from birch and willow along with forbs, grasses, sedges, and aquatic plants (Lafascho and Davis 1973). During the winter, food is often limiting and moose focus on high-nutritional quality such as birch, willow, and ornamentals planted around human residences. Willows are an integral part of the diet for moose especially in the winter. When moose browse greater than 30% of the previous summer's growth of willow stems, there can be an increase in the production of new stems the following year (Collins 2002). However, browsing over 80% of the previous year's growth will increase the production of secondary plant compounds, which limits the amount of nutrition the moose receives from the plant (Collins 2002). Continued browsing of the new annual growth of a plant, such as paper birch, year after year can eventually kill the plant (Oldenmeyer 1983). Every winter in Homer, most preferred willow species suffer nearly 100% browsing of the previous summer's plant growth.

Moose spend much of their time along forest edges because of the availability of good browse and for avoiding human disturbance (Bange et al. 1995). Utilization of moose browse species will increase with the severity of the winter snowfall (Collins 2002). Winter snow conditions are often severe in Homer. Deep snow conditions cover food sources and make traveling more energetically difficult for moose, especially calves. The deep snow winters of 1991/92, 1994/95, 1997/98, and 1998/99 resulted in severe over-browsing of the available moose habitat and caused the death of over 200 moose in and around the city of Homer due to malnutrition. Even in relatively mild winters such as 2005-06, over 10 moose died in residential areas in Homer during late winter due to malnutrition. These mortality totals do not include many moose that die due to malnutrition and are unreported or undetected.

It is likely that a low-density moose population could survive with extensive human development with or without mitigating development and proactive planning for protecting moose habitat. However, mitigation measures to protect certain critical moose habitat patches in Homer will improve the long-term sustainability of our local moose population. The Homer moose population is currently a high-density population and the growth in the local moose population during the past 5-10 years has tolerated moose numbers in areas surrounding Homer. Moreover, failing to protect important habitats for moose in Homer will ensure a large proportion of the population will die due to malnutrition every winter. Negative moose-human interactions will also rise as moose increase their movements between available food patches and act defensively while feeding on small browse patches around human residences.

The purpose of identifying important areas of moose habitat and mitigating development of these habitats is not to improve or enhance the moose habitat that currently exists. The purpose is to lessen the impact of habitat loss that is inevitable with development. The assumption is that the public wants the local moose population to be healthy and negative encounters between humans and moose to be low. A desired decrease in the moose population to reduce potential human-moose conflicts should warrant a detailed plan of moose reductions via hunting rather than a slow removal of their prime habitat in the city and subsequent mortality due to malnutrition when winter snow conditions are severe. If the division of wildlife management is to maintain a healthy moose population, then an active habitat management program is required. Providing mitigation measures for the human development of high-quality moose habitat within the City of Homer is a wise first step.

Thomas McDonough
Wildlife Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game
5 June 2006



Beluga Lake

Prohibit fill in Beluga Lake or the two associated wetland polygons (docks are permitted).

Beluga Slough

Development in tidally influenced wetlands should be prohibited.

Beluga Slough Discharge Slope

Development should be encouraged in this core area of Homer. Mitigate for the loss of moose habitat. Further development north of Bunell Avenue and east of Main Street should be discouraged. A goal of this plan is to bring private parcels in this area into conservation status. Development in tidally influenced wetlands should be prohibited.

Bridge Creek Wetlands

The wetland management strategy for this watershed is the same as the Bridge Creek Watershed Protection ordinance, which includes a prohibition on filling wetlands.

Diamond Creek Wetlands

Maintain large lot sizes. Maintain a 100 ft setback of natural vegetation along either side of Diamond Creek and its tributaries. Crossings should be perpendicular to the channel, via bridge or oversized culvert and involve the minimum amount of fill necessary for safety. Where uplands exist on a lot they must be used prior to filling wetlands. If more than 3% of wetlands on any lot are converted to with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Downtown wetlands

On City-owned parcels, maintain greenbelts incorporating storm water retention designs. Where uplands exist on a lot they must be used prior to filling wetlands. If more than 3% of wetlands on any lot are converted to with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

East Beluga Discharge

Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Site design should include hydrologic connectivity to upstream and downstream parcels. Moose habitat values are high throughout. Moose habitat should be preserved or mitigated. Development along the border with the East Homer Drainageway Complex should maintain an 85 ft buffer of natural vegetation.

East Homer Drainageway

This area should be targeted for preservation and restoration. Encourage purchasing of private lots by Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, Moose Habitat Incorporated and others. If possible, restore hydrology and repair or implement suitable storm water management measures along Kachemak Drive. Some fill may be allowed along Kachemak Drive.

Kachemak Kettle

Maintain a 100 ft buffer along the East Homer Drainageway. Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Lampert Pentland

Maintain a 100 ft buffer around Lampert Lake. Mitigate for lost hydrologic, general habitat, and moose habitat functions in wetlands west of Lampert Lake. Discourage further development of wetlands east of Lampert Lake. Prohibit wetland filling more than 400 ft from Kachemak Drive.

Landfill Kettle

Restrict development to the south side of the wetlands and along the highway. Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated. The peatlands should be preserved and buffered with a 50 ft setback of undisturbed natural vegetation as they are highly functional for water retention and filtering.

Loop Kettle

Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

NE Slough

Retain natural vegetation as is practicable. Preserve existing wetlands for water quality functions and moose habitat.

N. Paul Banks Discharge

Encourage development here. Retain natural vegetation as is practicable. Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Ocean Kettle

Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Ocean Drive Kettle

Retain natural vegetation as is practicable. Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Outer Loop Kettle

Retain natural vegetation as is practicable. Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Overlook Park

Public lands: Maintain in conservation status and manage according to site management plan. Private lands: Maintain moose habitat by limiting fill to the minimum necessary for a residence and minimum driveway and parking. No ditching or changes to drainageways should be allowed. Locate roads out of wetlands and out of drainageways to the extent possible. Maintain a 100 ft setback of natural vegetation on either side of Overlook Creek.

Palmer Drainageway and Fan

Maintain a 100 ft setback of natural vegetation on either side of Palmer Creek. Crossings should be perpendicular to the channel via bridge or oversized culvert and involve the minimum amount of fill necessary for safety. All of these wetlands should be preserved. A wetlands bank with Moose Habitat Incorporated will target private parcels in this area, along with the East Homer Drainageway, for purchase and preservation. Wetlands within the City of Homer that have been targeted for moose mitigation are eligible to receive credits from this bank.

Raven Kettle & Roger's Loop Depression

Avoid wetland fill. Maintain the hydrologic integrity of drainageways and water retention and filtration capacity of the complex. Where uplands exist on a lot they must be used prior to filling wetlands. If more than 3% of wetlands on any lot are converted to hardened surface they must be compensated for with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Runway Discharge

Within the airport boundary wetland hydrology should be maintained. Public lands: Those tracts outside the airport boundary should be maintained and managed for the values of the Homer Airport Critical Habitat Area. Private lands: Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Upper Woodward

On City-owned parcels, maintain greenbelts incorporating storm water retention designs. Retain as much natural vegetation on individual lots as is practicable. Where uplands exist on a lot they must be used prior to filling wetlands. If more than 3% of wetlands on any lot are converted to hardened surface they must be compensated for with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

West Beluga Slope

Public lands: Publicly owned lands should be preserved as undisturbed wetlands. Private lands: These should be prioritized and purchased over time for inclusion in a mitigation bank whose purpose is to preserve moose habitat. Development should be discouraged. A master plan should be developed for this area as it is a very important wetland complex, and it is probably the most threatened in the City of Homer.

West Homer Discharge

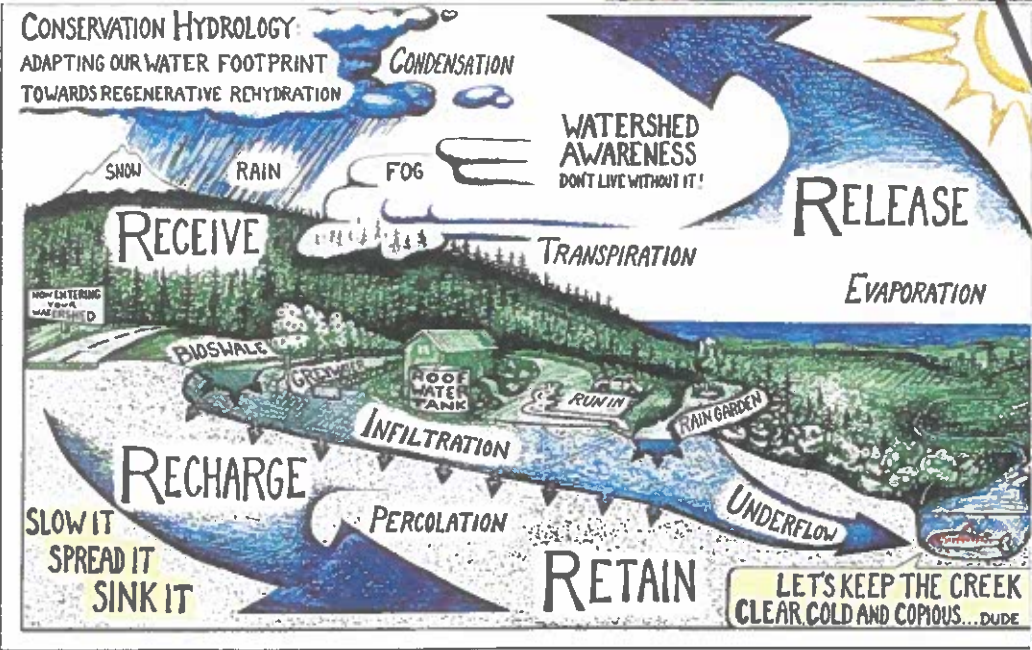
Retain natural vegetation as is practicable. Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Synopsis

In 2005-2006 representatives of the City of Homer, US Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Kachemak Bay Research Reserve, Cook Inletkeeper, Kenai Watershed Forum, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Alaska Department of Fish & Game met to assess Homer wetlands. After a thorough review of methods, a scoring protocol was developed and all wetlands were scored. These strategies arose from that effort and are currently being used by some agency personnel to comment on Clean Water Act Section 404 wetland permits.

Wetland management in the Beluga planning area

After the functions of Homer wetlands were assessed and scored, wetlands were ranked as high, moderate, or low based on the cumulative scores for all the functions they provide. The map at right shows wetland rankings in the planning area.



Wetlands help control stormwater. Stormwater can be reduced by following the general guideline illustrated at left:

“Slow it—Spread it—Sink it”
(see Low Impact Development)

Subject property
shown as High
Value Wetlands

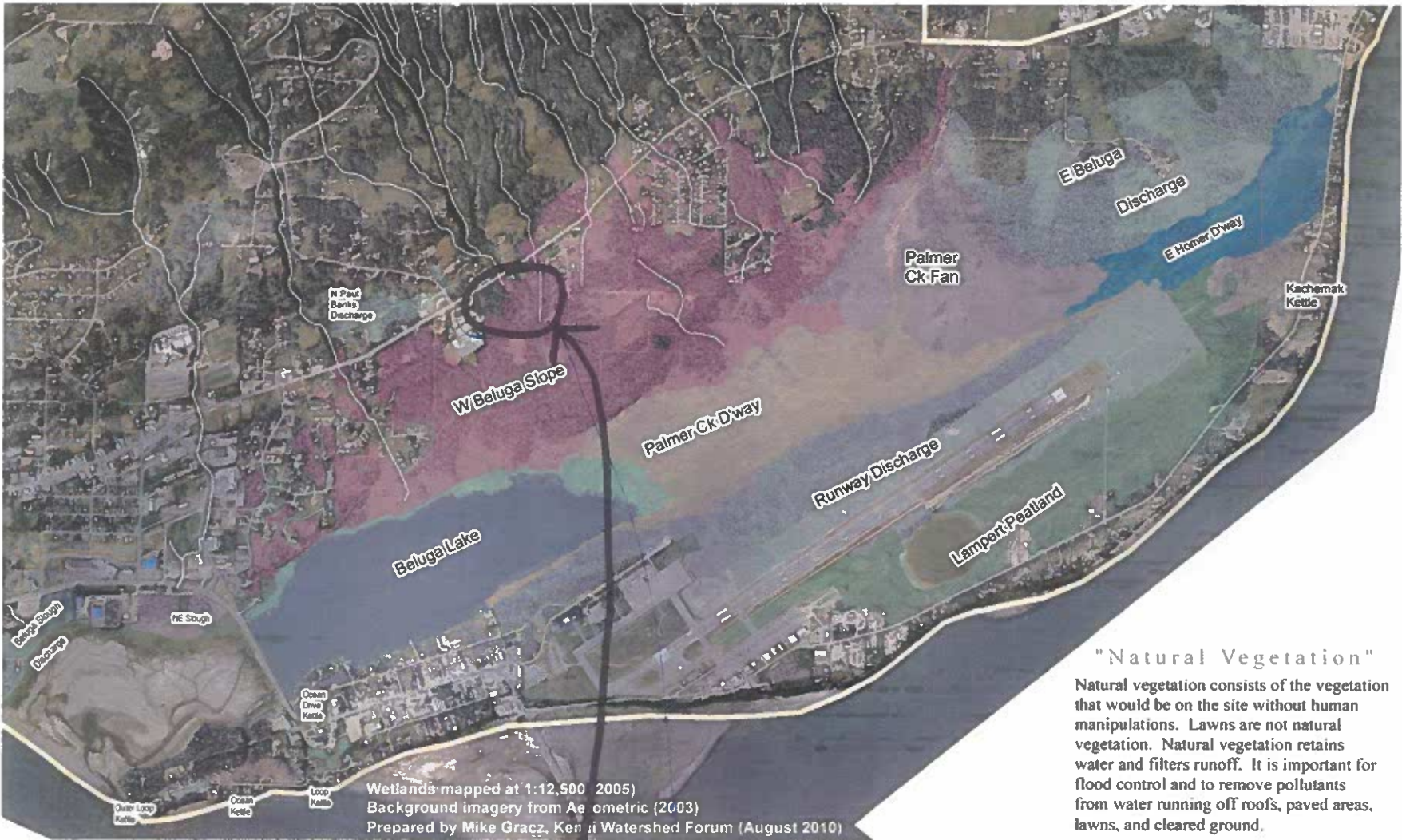
Fig 4

Wetland Map created by inter-agency team in 2005-2006
Fig 5

The map below shows wetland management areas in the planning area as designated by an interagency team. Management recommendations for each of these areas are shown in the accompanying Beluga Planning Area Atlas.

In the map below, "natural vegetation" is defined as follows:

"...vegetation that would be on the site without human manipulations. Lawns are not natural vegetation. Natural vegetation retains water and filters runoff. It is important for flood control and to remove pollutants from water running off roofs, paved areas, lawns, and cleared ground."



Beluga Area Planning Reference

08/26/14

[jump back](#)

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Subject Property identified as part of W. Beluga Slope, which should be protected.

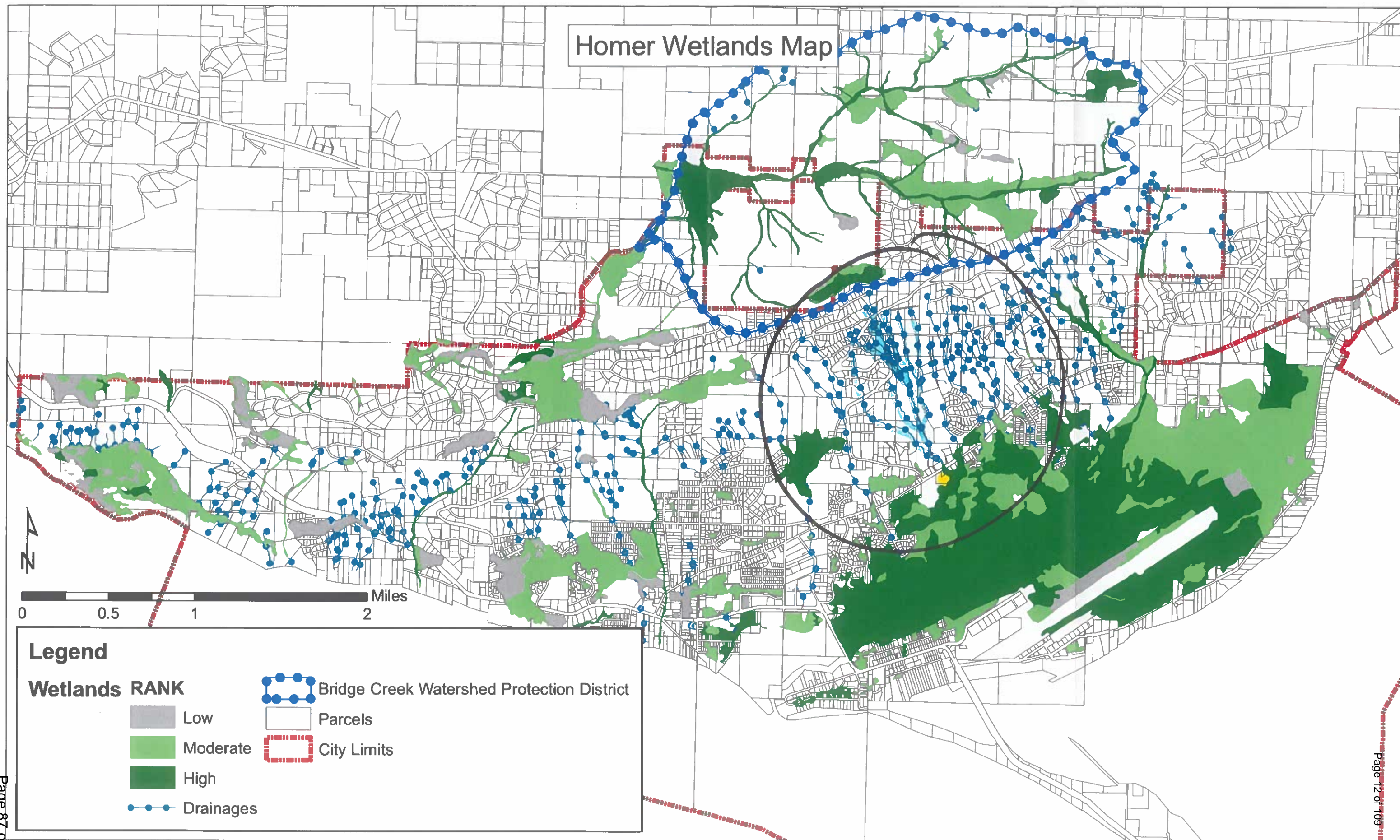


Fig 6

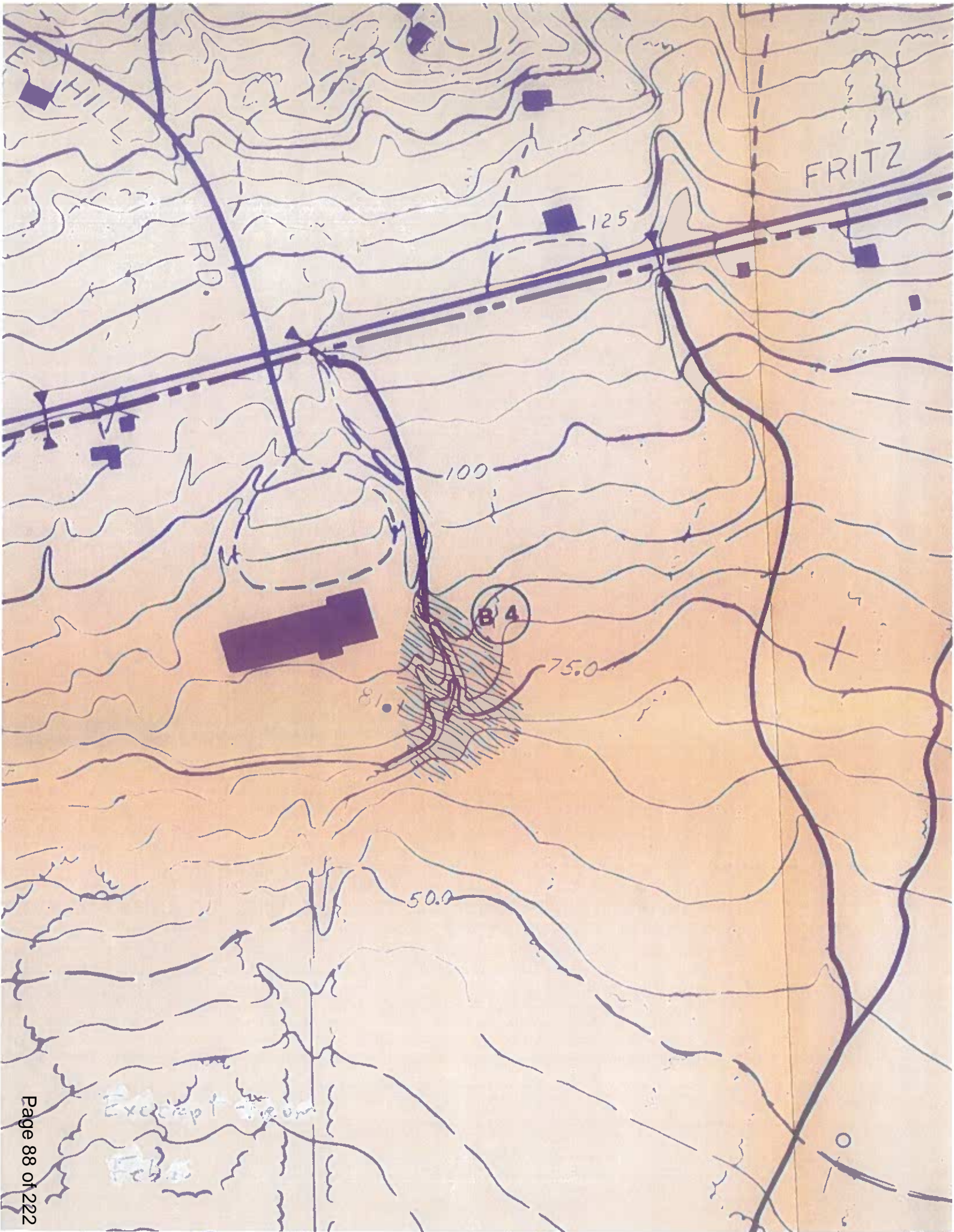
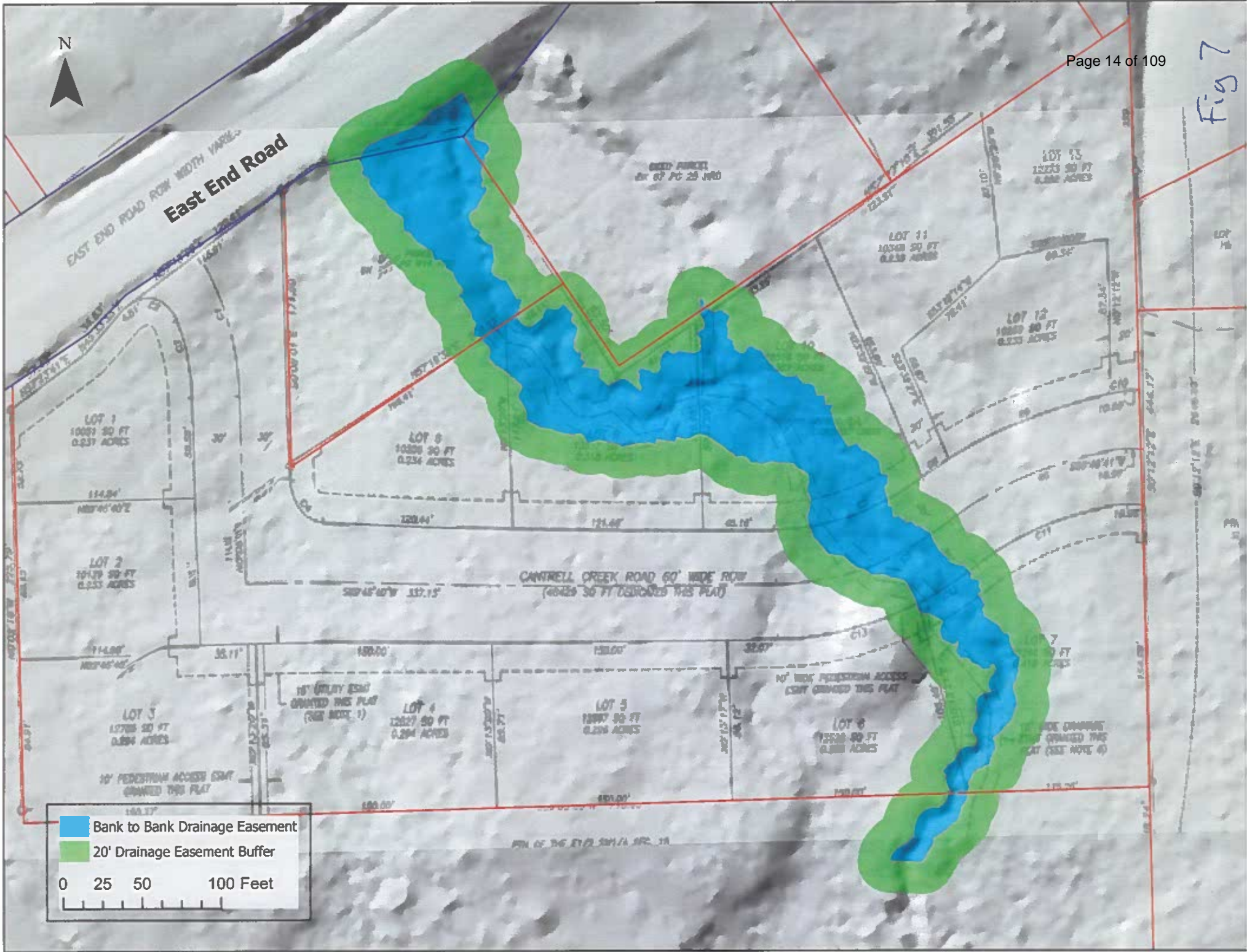


Fig 7



20.25.070 - Form and contents required.

The preliminary plat shall be drawn to scale of sufficient size to be clearly legible and shall clearly show the following:

A.	Within the title block:	Not applicable to my plat.	The required information has been shown/noted.
	1. Name of the subdivision which shall not be the same as an existing city, town, tract, or subdivision of land in the borough, of which a plat has been previously recorded, or so nearly the same as to mislead the public or cause confusion;		
	2. Legal description, location, date, and total area in acres of the proposed subdivision; and		
	3. Name and address of owner(s), as shown on the KPB records and the certificate to plat, and registered land surveyor;		
B.	North point;		
C.	The location, width and name of existing or platted streets and public ways, railroad rights-of-way, and other important features such as section lines or political subdivisions or municipal corporation boundaries abutting the subdivision;		
D.	A vicinity map, drawn to scale showing location of proposed subdivision, north arrow if different from plat orientation, township and range, section lines, roads, political boundaries, and prominent natural and manmade features, such as shorelines or streams;		
E.	All parcels of land including those intended for private ownership and those to be dedicated for public use or reserved in the deeds for the use of all property owners in the proposed subdivision, together with the purposes, conditions, or limitations of reservations that could affect the subdivision;		
F.	The names and widths of public streets and alleys and easements, existing and proposed, within the subdivision;		
G.	Status of adjacent lands, including names of subdivisions, lot lines, block numbers, lot numbers, rights-of-way; or an indication that the adjacent land is not subdivided;		
H.	Approximate locations of areas subject to inundation, flooding, or storm water overflow, the line of ordinary high water, wetlands when adjacent to lakes or non-tidal streams, and the appropriate study which identifies a floodplain, if applicable;		
I.	Approximate locations of areas subject to tidal inundation and the mean high water line;		
J.	Block and lot numbering per KPB 20.60.140, approximate dimensions and total numbers of proposed lots;		
K.	Within the limits of incorporated cities, the approximate location of known existing municipal wastewater and water mains, and other utilities within the subdivision and immediately abutting thereto or a statement from the city indicating which services are currently in place and available to each lot in the subdivision;		
L.	Contours at suitable intervals when any roads are to be dedicated unless the planning director or commission finds evidence that road grades will not exceed 6 percent on arterial streets, and 10 percent on other streets;		
M.	Approximate locations of slopes over 20 percent in grade and if contours are shown, the areas of the contours that exceed 20 percent grade shall be clearly labeled as such;		
N.	Apparent encroachments, with a statement indicating how the encroachments will be resolved prior to final plat approval; and		
O.	If the subdivision will be finalized in phases, all dedications for through streets as required by KPB 20.30.030 must be included in the first phase.		

Subdivision Name: _____ Date _____

Fig 9



FOREST TRAILS SUBDIVISION

A REPLAT OF THAT PORTION OF THE NE1/4 SW1/4 SEC 16, EXCEPTING THEREFROM THAT PORTION CONVEYED TO AK DOT&PF BY WARRANTY DEED (BK 315 PG 496 HRD), T. 6 S., R. 13 W., SEWARD MERIDIAN, HOMER DRAFT ROADWAY PLAN

BISHOP ENGINEERING, LLC
PO BOX 2501 HOMER, ALASKA 99603
(907) 298-7609

DATE: 2/22/2023
CHK'D: JSB
SCALE: AS SHOWN
PROJ. NO.: 2023008

Page 6 of 6

CULVERT IS 3 1/2' TALL X 6' WIDE PIPE ARCH

Fig. 10

NOTES

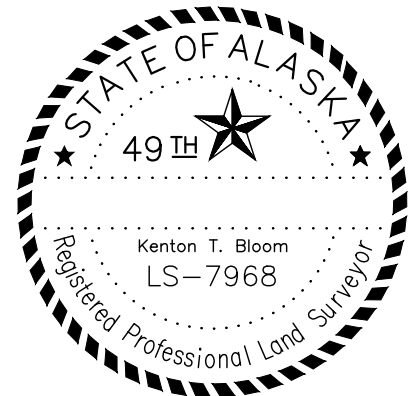
1. THE 15' FRONTING RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND THE 20' WITHIN 5' OF SIDE LOT LINES IS A UTILITY EASEMENT GRANTED THIS PLAT. NO PERMANENT STRUCTURES SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED OR PLACED WITHIN A UTILITY EASEMENT WHICH WOULD INTERFERE WITH THE ABILITY OF A UTILITY TO USE SAID EASEMENT.
2. ALL WASTEWATER DISPOSAL SYSTEMS SHALL COMPLY WITH EXISTING APPLICABLE LAWS AT THE TIME OF CONSTRUCTION.
3. NO ACCESS TO STATE MAINTAINED RIGHTS-OF-WAY PERMITTED UNLESS APPROVED BY THE STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.
4. PROPERTY OWNER SHOULD CONTACT THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PRIOR TO ANY ON-SITE DEVELOPMENT OR CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY TO OBTAIN THE MOST CURRENT WETLAND DESIGNATION (IF ANY). PROPERTY OWNERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL REQUIRED LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL PERMITS.
5. THESE LOTS ARE SUBJECT TO CITY OF HOMER ZONING REGULATIONS. REFER TO HOMER CITY CODE FOR ALL CURRENT SETBACK AND SITE DEVELOPMENT RESTRICTIONS. OWNERS SHOULD CHECK WITH THE CITY OF HOMER PRIOR TO DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.
6. THE CENTERLINE OF THE EXISTING "CANTRELL" CREEK AS SHOWN IS THE CENTERLINE OF A 15' WIDE DRAINAGE EASEMENT GRANTED THIS PLAT TO THE CITY OF HOMER.
7. NO STRUCTURES ARE PERMITTED WITHIN THE PANHANDLE PORTION OF THE FLAG LOT(S).
8. THERE ARE LIMITATIONS ON FUTURE SUBDIVISION OF THESE LOTS DUE TO ISSUES REGARDING ACCESS, DEVELOPMENT TRENDS IN THE AREA, AND TOPOGRAPHY.
9. THERE IS A RIGHT OF WAY EASEMENT OF NO DEFINED LOCATION THAT AFFECTS THIS SUBDIVISION, GRANTED TO HOMER ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC. RECORDED BK 29 PG 192 HRD.
10. THERE IS A RIGHT OF WAY EASEMENT OF NO DEFINED LOCATION THAT AFFECTS THIS SUBDIVISION, GRANTED TO HOMER ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC. RECORDED BK 49 PG 180 HRD.

GPS CONTROL DATA

1. BASIS OF COORDINATES FOR THIS SURVEY IS FROM GPS STATIC OBSERVATIONS TAKEN ON THE MONUMENT POSITIONS AS SHOWN ON THIS PLAT. NAD83 ALASKA STATE PLANE GRID COORDINATES OBTAINED FROM THE GPS OBSERVATIONS WERE BASED ON THE NGS PUBLISHED VALUES FOR USC&GS TRISTATION "HOMAIR". THESE COORDINATES SHOULD BE USED TO LOCATE AND VERIFY EXISTING CORNERS AND MONUMENTS.
2. TRUE BEARINGS AND DISTANCES WERE DETERMINED BY ROTATING AND SCALING FROM GRID USING USC&GS TRISTATION "HOMAIR" AS A SCALING POINT. TRUE BEARINGS WERE DETERMINED BY ROTATING GRID INVERSE AZIMUTHS -1°17'13.4". TRUE DISTANCES WERE OBTAINED BY DIVIDING GRID INVERSE DISTANCES BY 0.999986896.
3. THE RESULTING SCALED COORDINATES WERE TRANSLATED TO A LOCAL COORDINATE SYSTEM BASED ON USC&GS TRISTATION "HOMAIR" N=100,000 E=100,000. ALL COORDINATE VALUES REPRESENT GROUND DISTANCES ORIENTED TO TRUE NORTH.

LEGEND

- └ SET 2" AC 7968-S 2023
○ FND 3/4" IRON PIPE
● FND 1" G.I.P.
● FND 5/8" REBAR
○ FND 1/2" REBAR
⊕ FND 2" AC 7538-S 2018
⊕ FND 2.5" BC MON 1301-S 1968
⊕ FND 2.5" USGLO BC MON 1917
⊕ FND 2.5" BC MON 268-S 1971



WASTEWATER DISPOSAL

PLANS FOR WASTEWATER DISPOSAL THAT MEET REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS ARE ON FILE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION.

ENGINEER LICENSE DATE

CURVE TABLE					
CURVE #	LENGTH	RADIUS	DELTA	CH. BEARING	CH. LENGTH
C1	85.24'	150.00'	32°33'30"	N16°24'46"W	84.10'
C2	35.29'	20.00'	101°06'23"	S72°08'20"E	30.89'
C3	18.03'	120.00'	8°36'30"	S17°16'53"E	18.01'
C4	31.45'	20.00'	90°05'19"	S45°10'40"E	28.31'
C5	117.84'	200.00'	33°45'30"	S72°53'55"W	116.14'
C6	100.16'	170.00'	33°45'30"	N72°53'55"E	98.72'
C7	22.94'	50.00'	26°17'33"	N69°09'57"E	44.63'
C8	20.09'	50.00'	23°01'26"	S86°10'33"E	19.96'
C9	59.09'	50.00'	67°42'51"	N40°48'24"W	55.71'
C10	112.68'	50.00'	129°07'11"	N57°36'37"E	90.30'
C11	24.07'	25.00'	55°09'45"	S85°24'40"E	23.15'
C12	91.41'	230.00'	22°46'12"	N78°23'34"E	90.80'

CERTIFICATE OF ACCEPTANCE

THE UNDERSIGNED OFFICIAL IDENTIFIED BY NAME AND TITLE IS AUTHORIZED TO ACCEPT AND HEREBY ACCEPTS, ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF HOMER FOR PUBLIC USES AND FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES THE REAL PROPERTY TO BE DEDICATED BY THIS PLAT INCLUDING EASEMENTS, RIGHT-OF-WAYS, ALLEYS, AND OTHER PUBLIC AREAS SHOWN ON THE PLAT IDENTIFIED AS FOLLOWS:

CANTRELL CREEK ROAD 60' WIDE RIGHT OF WAY
THE UTILITY EASEMENT WITHIN THE 15' FRONTING RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND 20' WITHIN 5' OF SIDE LOT LINES
THE 15' WIDE DRAINAGE EASEMENT CENTERED ON "CANTRELL" CREEK
THE 10' WIDE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS EASEMENTS

THE ACCEPTANCE OF LANDS FOR PUBLIC USE OR PUBLIC PURPOSE DOES NOT OBLIGATE THE PUBLIC OR ANY GOVERNING BODY TO CONSTRUCT, OPERATE, OR MAINTAIN IMPROVEMENTS.

ROB DUMOUCHEL, CITY MANAGER
CITY OF HOMER

DATE

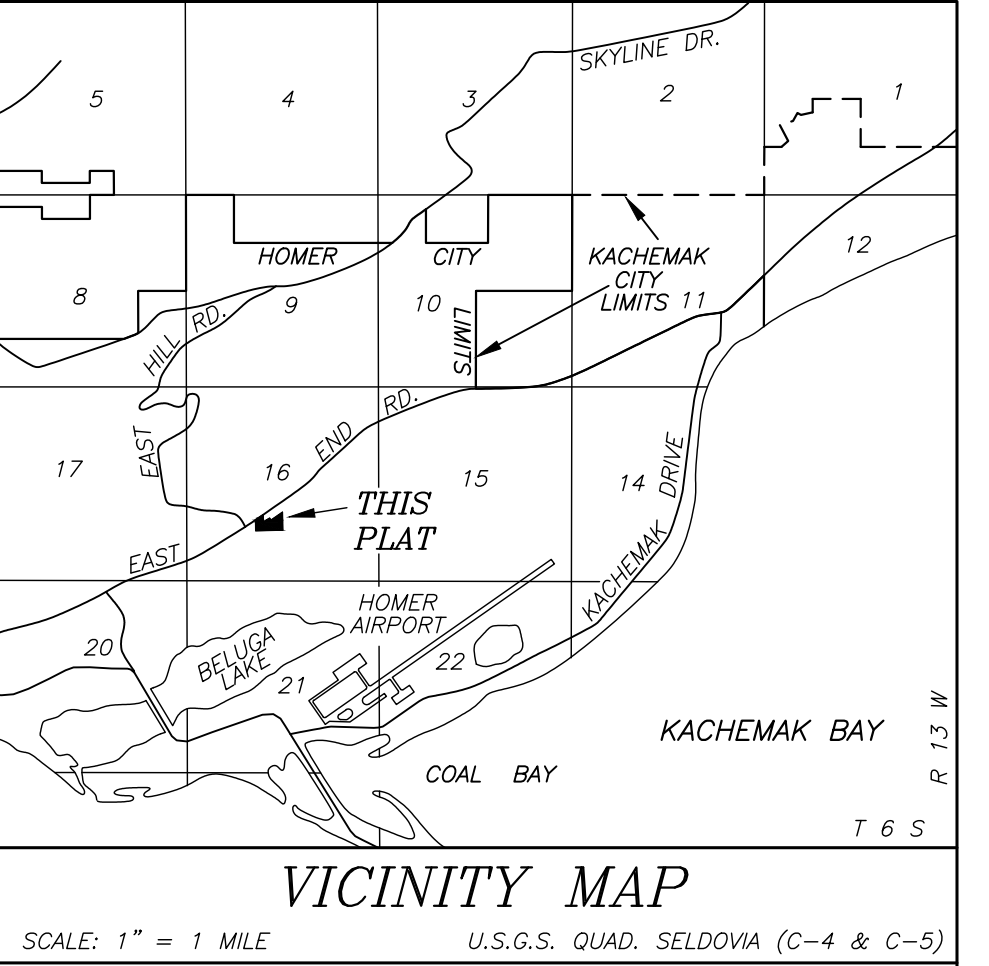
PLAT APPROVAL

THIS PLAT WAS APPROVED BY THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION AT THE MEETING OF

BY:

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL
KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH

DATE



CERTIFICATE OF OWNERSHIP

WE HEREBY CERTIFY THAT DELTA JL, LLC IS THE OWNER OF THE REAL PROPERTY SHOWN AND DESCRIBED HEREON, THAT ON BEHALF OF DELTA JL, LLC WE HEREBY ADOPT THIS PLAN OF SUBDIVISION, AND BY OUR FREE CONSENT DEDICATE ALL RIGHTS OF WAY AND PUBLIC AREAS TO PUBLIC USE, AND GRANT ALL EASEMENTS TO THE USE SHOWN HEREON.

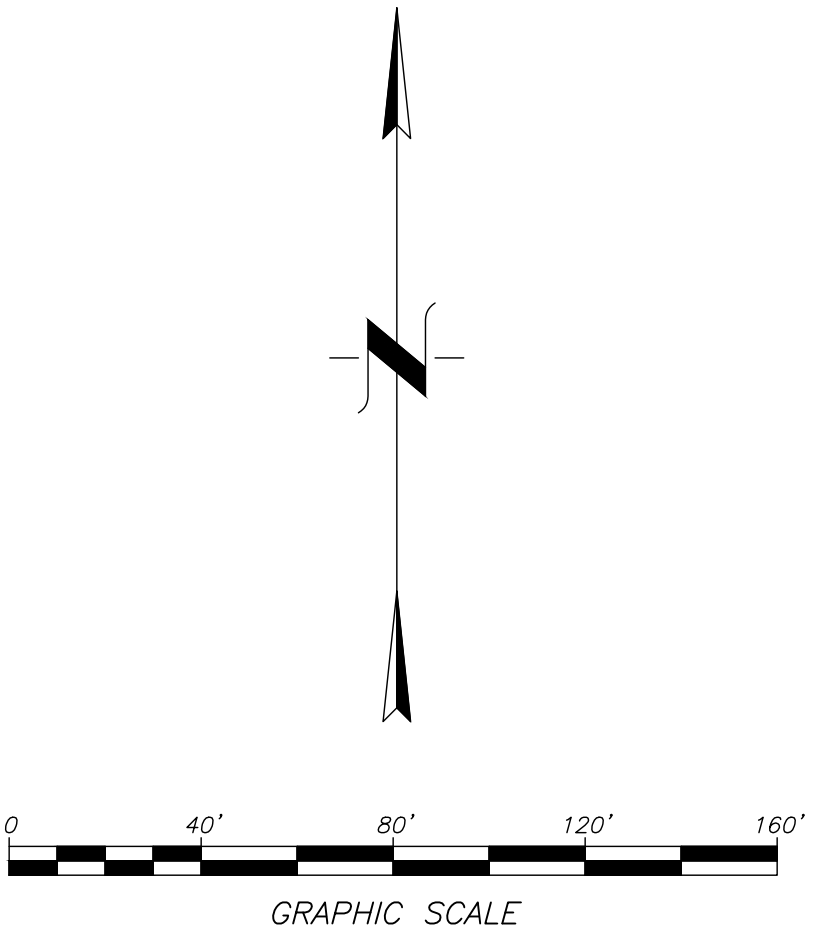
NICK BOTKIN, MEMBER
DELTA JL, LLC
3397 HOLLYWOOD OAKS DRIVE
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33312

NOTARY'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT

FOR: _____
ACKNOWLEDGED BEFORE ME THIS _____
DAY OF _____, 2023

NOTARY PUBLIC FOR ALASKA

MY COMMISSION EXPIRES _____



HOMER RECORDING DISTRICT		KPB FILE NO. 2023-XXX	
FOREST TRAILS SUBDIVISION			
A REPLAT OF THAT PORTION OF THE NE1/4 SW1/4 SEC 16, EXCEPTING THEREFROM THAT PORTION CONVEYED TO AK DOT&PF BY WARRANTY DEED (BK 315 PG 496 HRD), T. 6 S., R. 13 W., SEWARD MERIDIAN, CITY OF HOMER, KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH, THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT, ALASKA			
CONTAINING 4.853 ACRES			
SEABRIGHT SURVEY + DESIGN KENTON T. BLOOM, P.L.S. 1044 EAST ROAD, SUITE A HOMER, ALASKA 99603 (907) 299-1091			
CLIENTS: DELTA JL, LLC 3397 HOLLYWOOD OAKS DR. FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33312			
DRAWN BY: KK		CHKD BY: KB	JOB #2022-80
DATE: 01/2023		SCALE: 1"=40'	SHEET #1 OF 1

6. PRESENTATIONS/VISITORS

7. STAFF & COUNCIL REPORTS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 7A. City Planner's Report
Agenda Item Report PC 23-006

Chair Smith introduced the topic and deferred to City Planner Abboud.

City Planner Abboud reviewed his staff report that was presented in the packet. He spoke to the following:

- Invasive Species
- Port Expansion
- funding for the purchase of land in the Bridge Creek Watershed
- Permitting software update
- Commission providing input on the transportation plan draft mid-March
- Selection of a firm to perform the Comprehensive Plan and Title 21 Update
- Clearing and Grading regulations
 - o information provided tonight in the supplemental packet provides good information for consideration
 - o Can be used for the Comprehensive Plan update
 - o Previous recommendations of 50 & 100 feet did not pass with the public
- Participation by the City in a housing forum
 - o Planning Directors of Alaska speaking on this topic
- Commission Calendar
- EDC actions over the past month

Commissioner Highland volunteered to provide the Commission report at the February 13th Council meeting.

Mayor Castner responded to the public comment made on Ordinance 23-02 and stated that it was postponed to the February 13th Council meeting. He provided a quick synopsis of the process regarding the ordinance, reporting that a new ordinance was not required.

City Planner Abboud stated that when a draft of the Transportation Plan was ready it will be submitted to the Commission for review and input. He explained that he was not involved in that project and would have to double check the staff assigned to it. City Planner Abboud reiterated the mid-March date as a first guess for Commission review in response to Commissioner's questions.

8. PUBLIC HEARING(S)

9. PLAT CONSIDERATION(S)

- 9.A. Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat
Agenda Item Report - PC 23-007

Chair Smith introduced the item and deferred to City Planner Abboud.

City Planner Abboud pointed out the aerial map and reviewed specifics included in the Action Item Report PC 23-007 commenting further on the following:

- Comprehensive Plan guidance
- Applicant working with Public Works and the Planning Department on road rights of way widths
- Pedestrian Easement and paths or connections
- Development Agreement is required
- Exceptions that the Applicant was requesting
- Staff recommends the Commission approve this preliminary plat
- Creek bed has been designate as wetlands from the Corps of Engineers
- Discussion can be held on the road width
- Easements required are being met
 - o 2 Pedestrian Easements leading to the school
- Review of the Borough Code Requirements
 - o If the project is phased streets must be dedicated in the first phase
- Not discussing the development of this property at this time and the city would need to amend city code to address those concerns.

Nick Botkin, applicant, reported that he was present for questions from the Commission.

Chair Smith opened the public comment period.

Jan Keiser, Public Works Director/City Engineer, referring to page 20 in the packet, reviewed her Memorandum dated January 12, 2023 on this project. Referring specifically to the recommendations in that memorandum stated the following:

- a 10 foot wide easement between Lot 3 & Lot 4 recommended adoption
- provided an explanation for asking for the 40 foot drainage/pedestrian easement
 - o working out land management concerns with the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust
- working with DOT in the future for connecting sidewalk and Paul Banks along East End Road

Joel Cooper, Stewardship Director for Kachemak Heritage Land Trust (KHLT), noted the information that was provided in the Supplemental Packet covering 10 pages expounded on the following points:

- stream channel that runs through the area is a significant one
- KHLT manages almost 4000 acres - 28 conservation easements, and 18 parks and preserves
- pro-land and pro-development
- protection of vital habitats
- Previously seen in these types of developments were immediate increase in unauthorized tree cutting, motorized vehicle use, discriminate trail development which opens areas up for the potential spread of invasive species and habitat degradation.
- Recommended reducing the right of way size which will lessen the impact, reduce impervious cover, which will lessen the impact to drainage that would affect the property that KHLT manages.
- Recommended and requested a 50 foot undisturbed, riparian buffer.
 - o information was submitted on the benefits of a natural buffer versus a planted buffer
- The Notice of Subdivision should have included a map that had more information since their opinion the map provided was not informative enough, it just showed lines and did not reflect the prominent natural and man-made features.
- The city should review the requirements of Chapter 20 and cross reference with the subdivision process.

- Having pedestrian access to their managed land creates additional costs for KHLT and they already have limited staffing and budget.
 - o It is believed by KHLT that this will bring additional persons and impacts to the management of the property and existing trail system.

Scott Adams, city resident, expressed concerns on bringing a development of 13 homes next to a school with no safe pedestrian access for children, the bulldozing of trees on the property before anything has been approved, presenting plans with pedestrian connections that are never developed and if developed are not maintained. This subdivision will also compound the issue of traffic along East End Road to and from Paul Banks Elementary School and he hopes the Commission will take that into consideration.

Laura Karstens, city resident, explained that she started listening and attending Planning Commission meeting when she herself was recently sent a notice regarding activity near her home up Baycrest. She has her children take a bus to West Homer Elementary a mile to the school as she does not believe that there is a safe way for her children to walk that mile to the school. She noted that the maintenance of the sidewalk and location next to the highway provides questionable safety. She encouraged the Commission to implement a safe alternative for this subdivision to the school.

Chair Smith seeing no further members coming forward or indicating they wish to provide comment, closed the Public Comment period. He offered the City Planner and Applicant the opportunity for rebuttal.

City Planner Abboud reminded the Commission on some of the information before them regards cleaning some items up when they make motions. He stressed the Commission make a motion on what they felt was appropriate, Public Works is asking for a 40 foot easement and a neighboring property owner is requesting a 50 foot buffer. He noted that City Code does not contain a definition for buffer. If there is a drainage easement, you cannot construct anything within that easement or interfere with it. The Commission can amend the size to keep people out of the drainage easement. A buffer would have some qualities that in theory the city could put something in there. He recommended the Commission make a motion to address the size of the drainage easement. In that motion you may combine it with verbiage that addresses a pedestrian easement on the south of the right of way on the plat. Impervious coverage would be addressed in the development agreement. City Planner Abboud acknowledged that he would not mind seeing where the road would be placed and if there would be a consideration for a narrower developed road; that is a part of City Code that is enforced by Public Works, not the Planning Department.

In reference to the Public Notice, the Planning department could send out a more detailed vicinity map. The intent of the notice is to provide neighboring property owners of the proposed development, but the purpose is to give people an idea and the public can then ask for more information on the project. He noted the pedestrian sidewalk/easement was addressed and would be included in the subdivision agreement.

Mr. Botkin, applicant, offered rebuttal on the reason for the pedestrian easement were to provide that access. He was unsure whose responsibility the maintenance of such access would fall to once those lots were sold.

Chair Smith opened the floor to questions from the Commission.

City Planner Abboud facilitated discussion on the following:

- City Council approved regulations requiring all new subdivision roads to have sidewalks, this subdivision is not requiring sidewalks.

- Pedestrian access would be created on the south side of the right of way
 - o Question is raised on how a sidewalk is constructed next to a gravel road
 - Very Wide gravel road which lends to speeding traffic
 - Separated path with additional maintenance issues
- this is rural residential district not central business district or urban residential where a paved road and sidewalk is required
- they will have a space for pedestrians
 - o minimal traffic
 - o narrow road, residential traffic, limited
- Does the regulations permit that flexibility
 - o Yes, it is permitted outright for sidewalk and paved roads in urban residential, residential office and central business districts
 - o as the transportation plan is developed refining requirements better

Mayor Castner countered that City Council was not interested in having unimproved rights of way that is not going to substitute for access. If you create an unimproved right of way, then that is all it probably will ever be. He further stated that the expectation the city will come in, construct the improvement then maintain it if there is an improved right of way, then the expectation may be met. He opined that this is not what Council had in mind on providing walkable areas.

Commissioner Highland requested clarification on the pedestrian access up to East End Road and between Lots 3 and 4 regarding size.

City Planner Abboud and the applicant, Mr. Botkin, facilitated discussion on the following from the Commissioners:

- Not providing a larger print out of the plat, while the one provided in the packet was clear the writing was so tiny it could not be easily read.
 - o Technical issues in printing the document provided by the applicant prohibited an 11 x 17 copy to be provided to the Commission.
 - o Staff offered to share screen so they could review a larger copy of the print
- Concerns with the lack of a buffer along the creek as it was a substantial drainage
- Trees were already cut to edge of the creek
 - o trees were cut down to perform a topographical survey as the road would be going in along the creek which is required for the engineering specifications
- No construction can be conducted within a drainage easement
- Public Works recommended a drainage easement of 40 foot, this is 20 feet on each side of center
 - o Commissioners can amend that recommendation
- Consideration of a 60 foot drainage easement
 - o Question on how that would impact the building setback and the unknown effect on the development design
 - o Development cannot interfere with the drainage so the building setback would be the drainage easement.
- Clarification that a pedestrian path, in the existing easement, would run along the south side of the proposed subdivision road, there is a proposed pedestrian easement between Lot 3 and Lot 4
- Steep slope regulations would not be applicable to this action, even though some of the topography in the pictures may make it appear to apply, but unless there was a 15 drop to the creek it would not apply.

- Appreciation was expressed for the memorandum from Public Works and the recommendation on extending the easement for the drainage.
- Concerns on how this creek was affected by a 100 year flood
 - o There was no available data or studies on this creek.

Mr. Cooper requested an opportunity to speak to the Commission.

Chair Smith advised that the Commission would require a motion to suspend the rules to allow additional public comment period.

Chair Smith requested a motion.

HIGHLAND/CONLEY MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ALLOW ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Mr. Joel Cooper requested clarification of the definition of a 15 foot drainage easement in as far as landscape and vegetation.

City Planner Abboud stated that the drainage management is definition of the land in this case centered on the actual drainage, which is the stream itself. You would extend 15 feet from the center to the left and then to the right. No structures would be allowed as far as zoning and development, no filling, debris that would or could interfere with the drainage could be removed using heavy equipment if needed. The city has no regulations on the vegetation in that drainage at this time.

Mr. Cooper then posed a question regarding installation of oversized culverts in the creek crossings to accommodate the possibility of heavy rain events bringing lots of sediment downstream and onto KHLT property.

City Planner Abboud noted that the person within the city was present tonight and has heard Mr. Cooper's concerns. The Commission does not address those concerns during this action tonight. There is nothing in the plan that is before the Commission for them to reference.

Mayor Castner commented that he was familiar with state laws regarding riparian zones, and they are always marked from the edge of the creek, not center of the creek. So, if the city has an alluviated area that is 10 feet wide they would only have a couple of feet to work.

City Planner Abboud responded that they can only work with the current conditions. He could not forecast what would happen if the drainage changes in the area, it is not supposed to be disturbed now, mark it on the plat according to what the surveyors find is the center of the creek currently.

Mayor Castner questioned further, that if they were starting from center and the creek or stream was 3 to 4 feet wide then we have already eaten up a couple of feet on each side, so he tried to visualize other areas

in the city where people have contacted him regarding flooding because they never got the drainage area delineated and then structures were constructed within the drainage and while these were legal, they really were detrimental to the flow and drainage of the storm water. He expressed surprise and consternation at the thought of having to deal with the center line of any water course, expressing that those courses can move back and forth and you could end up with a house sitting on the edge of a creek.

City Planner Abboud noted that there no riverine studies and that would be needed to do such regulations. The Commission can address the issue by recommending a larger easement.

Scott Adams commented reviewing the Kenai Peninsula Borough website and the changes that happen from preliminary plat to actual construction regarding pedestrian access easements and for the most part he stated they never were built; so questioned what assurance was provided that the pedestrian access routes would be constructed.

Public Works Director Keiser responded that Public Works has been researching and marking all pedestrian easements and actually over the past summer brushed out so that they can be used by the public. They will have gravel laid this upcoming summer. She provided further information on pedestrian easements in the new development next to Jack Gist Park. Ms. Keiser explained that the drainage easement is designed to cover the area where the stream or creek is predicted to go, however that is not always the way things happen, in Homer there is a tendency for the stream to get deeper, not wider. If we get the easement wider then it could follow the stream as it moves from side to side. We haven't seen big alluvial drifts being created. Asking for the 40 foot is a progressive move for the city. This will allow the water to move and we can keep structures out of the drainage.

Commissioner Barnwell noted that page 39 of the supplemental packet described the easement with pictures and could be very useful in discussion of drainage management and the different habitats involved.

Commissioner Conley supported increasing the drainage easement to 40 feet and that would address a lot of the Commissions concerns.

HIGHLAND/CONLEY MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 23-007 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE PRELIMINARY PLAT WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

1. THE CITY OF HOMER DOES NOT OBJECT TO REQUESTS FOR EXCEPTION TO CODE LISTED IN THIS STAFF REPORT.
2. INCREASE DRAINAGE EASEMENT TO 40 FEET FROM CENTER OF DRAINAGE
3. PORTION OF SOUTH ROAD RIGHT OF WAY WILL INCLUDE PEDESTRIAN EASEMENT

Discussion ensued on the following:

- Use of Weed Free Gravel
- Getting Walkways in Developments
- Setbacks or provisions for the sustainability of the creek were accomplished
- City sets standards and the Developer must meet those standards before taking on the maintenance
- Council expressed frustration over the lack of enforcement of adopted policies
- City Code establishes requirements for non-motorized transportation
- Pedestrian Access is defined between Lot 3 & 4 on the plat

- Does a Pedestrian easement get defined in the utility easement or right of way
- Observation of heavy traffic on East End Road and school children walking along there versus having a pedestrian path
- Previous success by the City working with the School District regarding establishment of connecting trails to schools

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair Smith called for a recess at 8:08 p.m. The Meeting was called back to order at 8:16 p.m.

10. PENDING BUSINESS

11. NEW BUSINESS

11. A. US DOT RAISE Planning Grant Application and Recommendation of Support Agenda Item Report - PC 23-009

Chair Smith introduced the item by reading of the title and deferred to City Planner Abboud.

City Planner Abboud and Public Works Director Keiser jointly reported on the purpose and intent of the proposed grant application and how the opportunity for federal funding would be used by the City of Homer and for which projects. It was explained that the action was time sensitive so a motion in support is being requested.

Chair Smith requested a motion and second.

HIGHLAND/VENUTI MOVE TO ADOPT ACTION ITEM REPORT 23-009 AND RECOMMEND SUPPORT OF THE CITY OF HOMER REACH PROJECT, 2023 RAISE PLANNING APPLICATION AND FURTHER RECOMMEND CITY COUNCIL FAVORABLY CONSIDER ISSUING A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT.

There was no discussion

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

11. B. Review of the Preliminary Plat Processes Agenda Item Report - PC 23-008

Chair Smith introduced the item and deferred to City Planner Abboud.

City Planner Abboud reviewed Action Item Report 23-008. He commented further on the following:

- Process and review of the preliminary plat by the Planning Department staff then present for public comment before submittal to the Kenai Peninsula Borough Planning Commission.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Session 23-04, a Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Scott Smith at 6:30 p.m. on February 15, 2023 at the Cowles Council Chambers in City Hall, located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and via Zoom Webinar. The worksession was canceled by the City Planner.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS VENUTI, SMITH, HIGHLAND, STARK

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER CHAIPPONE, BARNWELL, CONLEY (EXCUSED)

STAFF: CITY PLANNER ABBOD
DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Chair Smith read the items from the supplemental packet and requested a motion and second to adopt the agenda as amended.

HIGHLAND/VENUTI MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

John Whittier, non-resident, submitted written testimony, as read by Penelope Haas, Mr. Whittier expressed his concerns with the logging operation going on the property located at 1441 East End Road owned by Nicholas Botnick. He stated that it was pretty outrageous to him that it was allowable to clear cut both side of a creek, destroy its banks and then fill the creek with debris so his machinery can drive back and forth through it. Mr. Whittier stated that the creek is enjoyed by many people around this town, especially on the trail system immediately downstream and the way Mr. Botnick has treated his property is disrespectful to everyone and everything around it. He stated that when he was at the creek there were six moose standing around the perimeter of the newly cleared land looking into it. He believed it was time to consider tougher regulations on land use within the city. I have been here 30 years and believe the quality of life around here has substantially deteriorated over that period of time primarily because of the distaste for regulation and a religious commitment to relentless growth. This is especially true over the last few years. While much of this is owed to the ethics of developers, realtors and those moving here to build giant empty houses he believed there are things that the city should do to maintain the integrity of the land we live on. The most obvious would be stream setbacks on logging. Homer used to be a heavily wooded town given that we have lost most of that to spruce bark beetles he thought there should be a discussion of how much logging is permissible on what forest is left around here. He stated that it might be a controversial idea but stream setbacks seem pretty straightforward.

Penelope Haas, Kachemak Bay Conservation Society, expressed appreciation for the comments submitted by the Kachemak Bay Land Trust and hoped that the Commission was able to review them. Ms. Haas commented that the project has already moved somewhat ahead of itself and wanted to point out what she considered key issues raised by the Land Trust. She believed that these can be generalized for application to other developments and hope the Commission will make changes to City Code. She supported the fifty foot buffer around creeks especially those that drain into the wetlands and directly into Kachemak Bay. Ms. Haas stated this was about habitat, erosion, flooding, and the quality of water that runs into other people's property and eventually into Kachemak Bay. She encouraged the Commission to look closely at the city code and make those proposals to City Council. She agreed with comments that developers should have a plat approved before being able to start clearing their land with heavy equipment and supported a down slope compensation guarantee, roads should be minimized when placed above wetlands. Ms. Haas encouraged the Commission to look at regulations within City limits as there are folks from all walks of life that don't like the direction that development is going and she is very worried about the future.

Rika Mouw, city resident, stated that she agreed with previous comments and stated that she does not know enough about the platting process or how much authority the Commission has in designing plats but opined that this property was poorly designed, the property owner could have fewer lots that sold for higher amounts creates low-quality lots for potential buyers, does not maintain integrity of the land, no regard for existing land use, better management of clearing before Plat Approval.

Joel Cooper, Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, commented in the resolution adopted by Council urging the Commission to reconsider and applying regulations cited in city code Chapter 11.04 and recommended that the Commission work with Council to effect those regulations in Chapter 22. Mr. Cooper recounted impacts to a land owner down from the proposed subdivision and his conversations with Jen Martin at the Corps of Engineers in Soldotna, noting that they have not issued a permit yet.

Pat Case, city resident, commented on the passion in passing the ordinance regarding sidewalks and the language that is included, he expressed his concerns about how the Plat was presented to the Commission, there are multiple streams on this lot but only one shown on Plat; poor representation of water drainage, he questioned how water and sewer will be run through stream channel, noted the significant slope on property not represented in Plat, questioned why trees were cleared prior to a Plat approval, why construct a gravel road in this day and age which left the question on how to create pedestrian access on gravel road, and the need to raise the bar for subdivision development in Homer.

Scott Adams, city resident, supported the reconsideration, commenting that not only pathway but the width of the road, stating he did not think the road serving 13 homes needed to be that wide. Mr. Adams then commented on having setbacks for streams and wetlands the same as there are setbacks for buildings. he then echoed the sentiments previously expressed regarding clear cutting of the trees before any permits are issued.

4. RECONSIDERATION

4.A. Reconsideration Issued by Commissioner Venuti: Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat Agenda Item Report PC 23-012

Chair Smith introduced the item and requested Commissioner Venuti to state for the record how he voted on the motion before the Commission for Reconsideration.

Commissioner Venuti stated that he voted in favor of the motion.

Chair Smith requested a motion and second.

HIGHLAND/VENUTI MOVED TO RECONSIDER THE VOTE ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT PC 23-007 AND RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF THE FOREST TRAILS SUBDIVISION PRELIMINARY PLAT WITH COMMENTS ONE THROUGH THREE.

Chair Smith restated the motion and requested Commissioner Venuti to state his reasons for requesting reconsideration.

Commissioner Venuti responded that he would provide his reasons when the Commission addressed the item under Pending Business.

Chair Smith requested clarification from the Clerk on Commissioner Venuti refusal to respond.

Deputy City Clerk Krause noted there is no guidance in Robert's Rules or the Planning Commission Policies and Procedures that state a Commissioner is required to state their reasons. The Commission will have to make that decision.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair Smith noted that the item will be addressed as Item A under Pending Business.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

5A. Unapproved Meeting Minutes

PC Unapproved Minutes for February 1, 2023

Chair Smith read the consent agenda into the record and requested a motion and second.

HIGHLAND/VENUTI MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA CONTAINING THE MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 1, 2023.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

6. PRESENTATIONS/VISITORS

7. STAFF & COUNCIL REPORTS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 7A. City Planner's Report
Agenda Item Report PC 23-006

Chair Smith introduced the topic and deferred to City Planner Abboud.

City Planner Abboud reviewed his staff report that was presented in the packet. He spoke to the following:

- Presentation on the Comp Plan and Title 21 Update by Ryan Foster, Special Projects at the March 1st worksession
- There were no volunteers to report at the February 27th Council meeting so a written report will be submitted by the Chair to the Clerk for the Council packet
- Safe Streets program and grant
- Clearing and Grading Ordinance

8. PUBLIC HEARING(S)

9. PLAT CONSIDERATION(S)

10. PENDING BUSINESS

10. A. Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat
Agenda Item Report - PC 23-007
Supplemental Packet 020123

Chair Smith introduced the item and referred the Commission to page three of the packet and read the motion that was before the Commission into the record as follows:

HIGHLAND/CONLEY MOVED TO ADOPT STAFF REPORT 23-007 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE PRELIMINARY PLAT WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

1. THE CITY OF HOMER DOES NOT OBJECT TO REQUESTS FOR EXCEPTION TO CODE LISTED IN THIS STAFF REPORT.
2. INCREASE DRAINAGE EASEMENT TO 40 FEET FROM CENTER OF DRAINAGE.
3. A PORTION SOUTH ROAD RIGHT OF WAY WILL INCLUDE A PEDESTRIAN EASEMENT

Chair Smith then requested Commissioner Venuti to state his reasons for reconsideration prior to opening discussion on the motion.

Commissioner Venuti stated that he issued a reconsideration on the motion for the following:

- He did not feel comfortable approving the preliminary plat as presented
- Supplemental packet materials was not received with enough time to fully review the contents
- The applicant and surveyor did not sign the plat
- There is no indication of how water and sewer will be brought into the parcel and across the stream
- He did not understand how the developer could be allowed to cut down the trees before receiving permits
- How can the City allow gravel roads
- This is a good time for the City to raise the bar on developments

Chair Smith requested comments and questions from the Commission. The following was provided:

- Addressing very strong comments made by the Mayor at the Council meeting on Monday, February 13, 2023 by allowing the Mayor to state his concerns to the Commission.
 - o Preference to hear the Commission comments first then have the Mayor state his concerns
- Concerns regarding drainage and wetlands information provided by Kachemak Heritage Land Trust at the last meeting.
 - o Responsibility of the Commission to make decisions regarding the land and the people
 - o This creek and drainage flows/drain into Beluga wetlands and what effects that will have
- Request for recommendation from the Commission to address the concerns regarding drainage mitigation.
 - o Can the Commission make a recommendation to have the developer obtain an engineer
- Clarification that the motion is what is reconsidered which opens the issue to discussion by the Commission.
- What are the regulations for preconstruction activities by the developer or property owner, are there such as tree clearing?
- Does the pedestrian pathway that has been provided satisfy the regulations as established by Ordinance 22-43(S-3)?
- Clarification on the requirement to provide pedestrian pathways was directed at safe routes for children
- Delineating a sidewalk or walkway from a gravel road, could be done by installation of curb and gutter.
- Does regulation require that pedestrian walkways be paved?

Chair Smith stated that he will hear from the City Planner, then the Mayor and then the Public Works Director and gave the floor over to the City Planner to start.

City Planner Abboud responded the following:

- In accordance with current regulations regarding pre-construction or site development standards a developer can remove trees and as long the quantity of soil removed is minimal
 - o This is the same as the Corps of Engineers
 - o Regulations would be needed to regulate tree removal
- Corps of Engineers would direct the removal of debris from waterways or wet area of a stream and no fill would be allowed in the area of the stream.
- Plat is not signed and it is not approved so the appropriate signatures would be required
- The stream channels
 - o Corps of Engineers jurisdiction determination and defer to the Public Works Director to identify anything else the City would require in an easement
- Road Contours
 - o Verify with the Surveyors the contours over 20% slope
 - o Not known if the contours could be configured before the trees were cleared
- Rural Residential District
 - o No requirement for paved roads at this time.
 - o Gravel Road is the minimum standard, anything over may be required that the city pay for some part of the construction
- Completed improvements
 - o part of the subdivision agreement, entered into an approved plan or performance bond
 - o no requirements at this time to have a bond up front, City may require this in the future

- Suggested language to be included as a comment for separated pathways to further endorse exactly what is expected
 - “Acknowledges a development agreement is necessary and it is understood that they will follow the recommendations in Title 11.04 including development of a separated pathway to a recognized trail standard along the south side of the road right of way.”
 - This would be included in development agreement and would be a requirement for the Final Plat approval.
- Public Works Director Keiser or the Surveyor could answer the technicalities of the road if needed, including how a pedestrian walkway could be install next to a gravel road.

Mayor Castner provided input on the following:

- A plat is a proposal from a developer which is stating here is our plan
 - They ask questions such as please tell us what you like about this plan as they believe it complies with all the City and Borough requirements.
 - The Kenai Peninsula Borough has a checklist and if it does not comply then it is an insufficient plat
 - A finding should be made of the insufficiencies
- The City Planner has presented that he has reviewed the plat and it is compliant.
- He has reviewed the plat and notes the following:
 - There is no direct plan for water and sewer
 - There are two notes that property owners will provide DEC approved wastewater or waste disposal system which means they can put in a septic tank and leach field
 - The lots are 13,000 square feet and cannot accommodate that
 - There is a utility easement that surrounds the development with stub-outs that represents water and sewer.
 - City Planner has indicated the plat is compliant in relationship to item K on the checklist and he disagrees stating that it is not shown on the plat.
 - There is not a single elevation on this plat, there is nothing to indicate the elevation at East End Road and where it falls into the bottom of the creek.
 - The plat states that they will abandon the main channel of Cantrell Creek where it runs downhill between Lots 9 and 10. On the Lidar maps and if you walk the area you almost fall into it because there is an 18 foot elevation change.
 - They will divert it to the east through a culvert under the proposed road, which will accelerate the flow and it will dump onto the managed wetlands property.
 - The two easements are just permission to do something.
 - A pedestrian easement connecting to Paul Banks between Lot 3 & 4 has two stub-outs in the center
 - There is a Pedestrian and Drainage easement between Lots 6 and 7 and this has two sub-outs at the bottom
 - Questionable on how the water and sewer systems will all work
 - The City Council will insist that it was their intention that it was the developer's responsibility to comply with the new regulations as outlined in the ordinance.
 - Findings of the City Planner and the Public Works Director does not believe a sidewalk on Cantrell Creek Road but recommended a widened shoulder.
 - City Council believes that is walking in the road.

- The Subdivision agreements do not go through public process, the preliminary plat is a public process.
- If the City Planner sat on this for a period of time and then went to the Borough and they sat on it for a period of time, the plat would automatically be adopted.
- Administration has requested a long term study from Council
 - this has been heard for the last 50 years
 - People making promises about drainage, swales, and storm water treatment, green infrastructure and it never get done.

Public Works Director Keiser stated the following:

- Agreed with the passionate comments regarding this plat
 - The material submitted by the Kachemak Heritage Landtrust was very informative regarding the wetlands
 - Requesting additional time for her to review in more detail the implications to the development agreement
- Public Works Department gets involved once the preliminary plat is approved. The typical process is as follows:
 - Developer is usually still working on the design details for the waterlines, sewer lines, roads and any additional infrastructure.
 - Public Works and the Developer work on the specifics for infrastructure governed by the design criteria manuals and execute the agreement which contains the details for the project. This will include the requirements stated in 11.04.120
 - Public Works Department will issue final completion when all items are met in the agreement.
 - Developer will be required to provide a Warranty Bond which covers the infrastructure for 2 years.
 - Zoning Permits and Driveway Permits will then be issued
 - Kenai Peninsula Borough signs off on the final plat
 - The missing piece in the system would be a performance guarantee or performance bond.
 - This will guarantee that the improvement (project) will be constructed as and developed as designed and if the contractor does not follow through or goes bankrupt, the City can go to the surety who produces the bond and get the improvement completed as agreed.
 - There is no requirement for this for subdivision developers, not sure why or who created these agreements that are in place but it is what was inherited.
 - The second issue is the crossing of the creek to access the remaining lots will require a bridge, not a culvert, but actual arch over the creek and do not believe the developer had this mind.
 - She used as an example another proposed development on Baycrest with challenging topography, stream, wetlands.
 - Recommended no decision be made by the Commission tonight to allow time to review of the concerns and require the applicant to address the challenges of drainage and crossing the creek.
 - Homer City Code 11.04.120 amendments does not specify a sidewalk but states a non-motorized facility in certain situations, not all conditions. The condition that triggers eligibility for this particular development is that it is within 100 feet of an educational facility.

- Certain instances according to Title 11.04 where topography and geography do not allow installation of a non-motorized route the net requirement can be waived so the developer is not required to install a paved road, or a sidewalk. The developer according to this code is required to have a non-motorized facility that is appropriate to the topography and geography of the area.
- Exact details are actually unknown as it is undefined what the actual route will be and that routing requires determination to actually consider what is feasible.
 - This supports the recommendation for postponement on a decision at this time.
 - Definition of routing is where for example if the survey suggested a separated path, is there room for a separated path. In review it appears that there could be and looks to slope in the right direction, but we do not want to design it on the fly, the work needs to be completed first.
 - This project could have used some pre-engineering prior to the planning process. The easy land in Homer is all developed. The land that people are now developing is the complicated areas of Homer and pre-engineering is required before actually approving preliminary plats.
 - There are some options available to the developer and more discussion is needed to study those.
- There is no public process when a subdivision agreement is developed and that could be looked into regarding changing the process while a public hearing should not be required for water lines and such but having some public process in the development may be a good idea as well as requiring some engineering on these remaining parcels of land in Homer is a good idea.
- Addressing the clearing of land prior to development permitting is not addressed in current regulations and is not triggered until the quantity of soil is removed hits the specific amount.

Chair Smith requested additional questions or comments from the Commission and Staff responded to the following:

- Relocation of the creek referring to page 33 in the packet showed various drainages

- The basis behind the drainage easement of 40 feet from the center of drainage is to actually locate where the water was, then you would measure 40 feet out on each side from the center of that water. There are several pathways for the drainage so the water flow really needs to be figured out to define where the measurement should be taken.
- The City has concerns for the property owners located downstream as well.
- East Road was built over the creek using culverts, the exact size is unknown but believed to be 4 feet in diameter.
- Calculations have not been done on the amount of drainage from upstream, which is what is done during the engineering phase.
- It was believed a considerable amount of water comes through that drainage.

Commissioner Stark reiterated previous statements by Public Works Director on the process to develop a preliminary plat and provided a comparison of a private developer and commercial developer in regards to what is provided and to what depth of detail on the project is given for preliminary approval. Mr. Stark commented that he believed that was how Devony Lehner's subdivision, Stream Hill Park was developed

so well, the back and forth process with Public Works. He also pointed out that the Public Works Director is a duly licensed engineer and therefore is able to address these issues.

Commissioner Stark lost connection momentarily and Chair Smith requested he repeat his statement for the record.

Commissioner Stark stated that when the Ordinance to amend Homer City Code 11.04.120 was presented his recollection was the Commission preferred to wait until the transportation plan was done, he felt that it should wait until the transportation plan was finalized. Council wanted something done in the interim. Ordinance 22-42(S-3) was adopted. Mr. Stark noted that the City Planner stated that Council should define what a sidewalk, walkway were and delineate and differentiate between the two. He agreed that the ordinance did not specify, as indicated by Public Works Director Keiser, that a walkway should be concrete. He believed that this should be clearly defined and set expectations for performance guarantee and surety bond so that under the development agreement what items are contracted are completed and the city has some assurances.

Public Works Director Keiser responded that it was not clear according to the image shown on page 33 of the packet, where the center of drainage was as there is more than one drainage. The stream should stay in the natural form and the center of the waterway should be configured from there and if there are more than one the drainages, the easement should be configured from there.

Additional discussion ensued on the following points:

- Requiring performance standards and surety bonds
- Secondary Public comment processes
- Preliminary plats should reflect all design elements, including but not limited to, non-motorized transportation facilities, water lines, sewer lines, utilities, roads, drainages
- time frame for approval of the preliminary plat
- Public Works performs their due diligence on the improvements and has the steps in place to make the developer conform.
 - o If there is an engineer for the development they start working on the plans and specifications for the project, which is reviewed and accepted by Public Works
 - o The City will inspect the project once completed and sign off on it, if it is found compliant
 - o There is no additional public process.
- Requiring better, fleshed out preliminary plat that is complete and that is what the public should be able to comment on
- Submittal criteria is in the staff report, the city does not have final platting authority, it was agreeable to require more details on a preliminary plat and those requirements will need more technical expertise.
- Clarification on the language in the ordinance and the intent of the Council to provide for non-motorized transportation.

Commissioner Highland asked if she could ask the surveyor, Kenton Bloom a question, Chair Smith tried to get a response from Mr. Bloom but there was no response. Chair Smith noted that the applicant Mr. Botkin was in attendance and may be able to answer the question for her.

Mr. Botkin was unable to provide Commissioner Highland with a response regarding if Lot 9 would flood and stated he would rely on the information provided by the survey, but opined that the higher lots would probably not flood, as Lot 9 is one of the highest lots.

Commissioner Highland stated that all of these lots have flooded in the last 100 year floods, so that would be an issue with the subdivision and with the location of the creek it may be better to leave Lot 9 vacant or as open green space.

Mr. Botkin responded that in his opinion it would probably be Lot 10 that would flood and should be left as open green space, but if you look at the lot and walk it compared to what is shown on paper, and if water came over Lot 9 then it would probably flood Paul Banks Elementary and everything else. He understood her point.

Further discussion on the request to postpone the decision for further review and adding a comment regarding the pathway ensued with the Public Works Director stating she would request postponement until the March 15th meeting and clarification on procedure from the Clerk in making the motions was obtained.

HIGHLAND/VENUTI MOVED TO POSTPONE UNTIL THE MARCH 15, 2023 REGULAR MEETING TO ALLOW PUBLIC WORKS AND THE DEVELOPER TO PERFORM RESEARCH AND ADDITIONAL ENGINEERING ON THE PRELIMINARY PLAT.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

11. NEW BUSINESS

11. A. Ordinance 22-42(S-3) and Representative Development Agreement Agenda Item Report PC 23-011

Chair Smith introduced the item and deferred to City Planner Abboud.

City Planner Abboud reviewed Agenda Item Report PC 23-011 stating that Ordinance 22-42(S-3) was heavily discussed by the Commission prior to adoption by the City Council. He facilitated discussion on the following:

- Connecting the dots from Chapter 11 to Chapter 22.10.050 in City Code.
- Framing the Commission response around this after they hear from the City Engineer at the March 15th meeting.
- Commission can add a comment regarding pathways to be included in the subdivision/development agreement.
- This item was brought forward by the Chair to provide clarification on the requirements of the Ordinance in regards to Forest Trail Subdivision.



AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat

Item Type: Action Memorandum

Prepared For: Planning Commission

Meeting Date: 01 Feb 2023

Staff Contact: Rick Abboud, City Planner

Attachments: [Preliminary plat](#)
[Surveyor's Letter](#)
[Surveyor's Email Forest Trails Subd KPB - Exceptions](#)
[Public Works Memo](#)
[USACE JD Map](#)
[Calvin & Coyle Trail Map](#)
[Public Notice](#)
[Aerial Map](#)

Summary Statement:

Applicants:	Nick Botkin	Kenton Bloom, P.L.S.
	Delta JL, LLC	Seabright Survey + Design
	3397 Hollywood Oaks Dr.	1044 East End Road, Suite A
	Fort Lauderdale, FL 33312	Homer, AK 99603
Location:	1441 East End Road (East of Paul Banks Elementary School)	
Parcel ID:	17903021	
Size of Existing Lot(s):	4.85 Acres	
Size of Proposed Lot(s):	13 Lots ranging from .231 - .381 Acres	
Zoning Designation:	Rural residential District	
Existing Land Use:	Vacant	
Surrounding Land Use:	North: Commercial/residential/vacant	

South: School lot
East: School lot
West: Conservation/residential

Comprehensive Plan: Chapter 4, Goal 1, 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.

Wetland Status: There is a creek that has been determined to be a wetland.

Flood Plain Status: Zone D, flood hazards undetermined.

BCWPD: Not within the Bridge Creek Watershed Protection District.

Utilities: City water and sewer are available.

Public Notice: Notice was sent to 41 property owners of 35 parcels as shown on the KPB tax assessor rolls.

Analysis: This subdivision is within the Rural Residential District. This plat divides one lot into 13 lots and dedicates a right-of-way, drainage, and pedestrian easements.

Homer City Code 22.10.051 Easements and rights-of-way

- A. The subdivider shall dedicate in each lot of a new subdivision a 15-foot-wide utility easement immediately adjacent to the entire length of the boundary between the lot and each existing or proposed street right-of-way.

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

- B. The subdivider shall dedicate in each lot of a new subdivision any water and/or sewer easements that are needed for future water and sewer mains shown on the official Water/Sewer Master Plan approved by the Council.

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

- C. The subdivider shall dedicate easements or rights-of-way for sidewalks, bicycle paths or other non-motorized transportation facilities required by HCC 11.04.120.

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements. The recommendations in the Public Works Memo are being met. The applicant will be working with public works to provide a walkable area/path on the south side of the right-of-way, this will become part of the development agreement. Two pedestrian easements are dedicated to the school district property to the south.

- D. The City Council may accept the dedication of easements or rights-of-way for non-motorized transportation facilities that are not required by subsection (c) of this section, if the City Council determines that accepting the dedication would be Consistent with the adopted plans of the City.

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

Preliminary Approval, per KPB code 20.25.070 Form and contents required. The commission will consider a plat for preliminary approval if it contains the following information at the time it is presented and is drawn to a scale of sufficient size to be clearly legible.

A. Within the Title Block:

- 1. Names of the subdivision which shall not be the same as an existing city, town, tract or subdivision of land in the borough, of which a plat has been previously recorded, or so nearly the same as to mislead the public or cause confusion;
- 2. Legal description, location, date, and total area in acres of the proposed subdivision; and
- 3. Name and address of owner(s), as shown on the KPB records and the certificate to plat, and registered land surveyor;

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

B. North point;

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

- C. The location, width and name of existing or platted streets and public ways, railroad rights-of-way and other important features such as section lines or political subdivisions or municipal corporation boundaries abutting the subdivision;

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

- D. A vicinity map, drawn to scale showing location of proposed subdivision, north arrow if different from plat orientation, township and range, section lines, roads, political boundaries and prominent natural and manmade features, such as shorelines or streams;

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

- E. All parcels of land including those intended for private ownership and those to be dedicated for public use or reserved in the deeds for the use of all property owners in the proposed subdivision, together with the purposes, conditions or limitation of reservations that could affect the subdivision;

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

- F. The names and widths of public streets and alleys and easements, existing and proposed, within the subdivision; [Additional City of Homer HAPC policy: Drainage

easements are normally thirty feet in width centered on the drainage. Final width of the easement will depend on the ability to access the drainage with heavy equipment. An alphabetical list of street names is available from City Hall.]

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

- G. Status of adjacent lands, including names of subdivisions, lot lines, lock numbers, lot numbers, rights-of-way; or an indication that the adjacent land is not subdivided;

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

- H. Approximate location of areas subject to inundation, flooding or storm water overflow, the line of ordinary high water, wetlands when adjacent to lakes or non-tidal streams, and the appropriate study which identifies a floodplain, if applicable;

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

- I. Approximate locations of areas subject to tidal inundation and the mean high water line;

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

- J. Block and lot numbering per KPB 20.60.140, approximate dimensions and total numbers of proposed lots;

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

- K. Within the limits of incorporated cities, the approximate location of known existing municipal wastewater and water mains, and other utilities within the subdivision and immediately abutting thereto or a statement from the city indicating which services are currently in place and available to each lot in the subdivision;

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

- L. Contours at suitable intervals when any roads are to be dedicated unless the planning director or commission finds evidence that road grades will not exceed 6 percent on arterial streets, and 10 percent on other streets;

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

- M. Approximate locations of slopes over 20 percent in grade and if contours are shown, the areas of the contours that exceed 20 percent grade shall be clearly labeled as such;

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

- N. Apparent encroachments, with statement indicating how the encroachments will be resolved prior to final plat approval; and

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements.

- O. If the subdivision will be finalized in phases, all dedications for through streets as required by KPB 20.30.030 must be included in the first phase.

Staff Response: The plat meets these requirements. A cul-de-sac dedication was requested from the City of Homer, as the property to the east is owned by the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust and held for conservation and we would not expect to make a road connection through the property. The other properties to the east are developed on a cul-de-sac. The rest of the land is adjacent to a lot owned by the Kenai Peninsula School District in support of Paul Bank Elementary School. We do not find that any additional roadway connections are warranted.

Public Works Comments:

1. Existing code allows for a 50' radius for the cul-de-sac.
2. Request a 40' drainage easement based on the centerline of the drainage way.

A development agreement is required

Fire Department Comments: No comments

Exception Requests: The surveyor plans on requesting exception to borough code as described below.

20.30.130 A - We are requesting an exception for the minimum radius for Curve 1. The minimum radius per COH design standards is 150' and we are in conformance with that requirement. AK DOT wants to see the intersection of the proposed ROW and East End Road as far to the east as possible due to the proximity of Paul Banks Elementary School. This configuration allows the proposed ROW to meet East End Rd at a 90 degree angle while maximizing the distance from the Paul Banks entrance and minimizing the amount of acreage lost to the east.

We are also requesting an exception for the 90 degree angle in the proposed ROW centerline. The right angle turn will have a stop sign and will slow traffic into the subdivision, and allows for more standard rectangular lot configurations.

20.30.130 B – We are requesting an exception for the minimum 100-foot tangent required between Curve 5 & 6. The reverse curve is at the end of the road where there will be minimal traffic. This design brings the ROW closer to the midpoint of the east subdivision boundary line which splits the acreage more equally on either side of the ROW.

The City of Homer has no objections to the requests for exception described above.

Staff Recommendation:

Planning Commission recommend approval of the preliminary plat with the following comment.

1. The City of Homer does not object to requests for exception to code listed on this staff report.

Attachments:

[Preliminary plat](#)

[Surveyor's Letter](#)

[Surveyor's Email Forest Trails Subd KPB - Exceptions](#)

[Public Works Memo](#)

[USACE JD Map](#)

[Calvin & Coyle Trail Map](#)

[Public Notice](#)

[Aerial Map](#)

NOTES

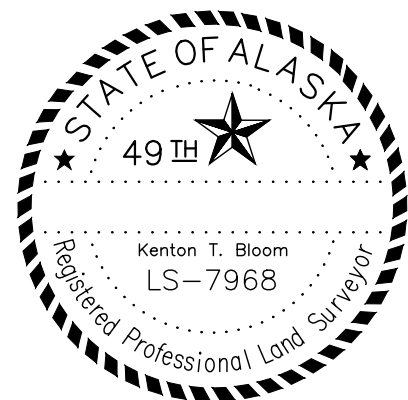
1. THE 15' FRONTING RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND THE 20' WITHIN 5' OF SIDE LOT LINES IS A UTILITY EASEMENT GRANTED THIS PLAT. NO PERMANENT STRUCTURES SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED OR PLACED WITHIN A UTILITY EASEMENT WHICH WOULD INTERFERE WITH THE ABILITY OF A UTILITY TO USE SAID EASEMENT.
2. ALL WASTEWATER DISPOSAL SYSTEMS SHALL COMPLY WITH EXISTING APPLICABLE LAWS AT THE TIME OF CONSTRUCTION.
3. NO ACCESS TO STATE MAINTAINED RIGHTS-OF-WAY PERMITTED UNLESS APPROVED BY THE STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.
4. PROPERTY OWNER SHOULD CONTACT THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PRIOR TO ANY ON-SITE DEVELOPMENT OR CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY TO OBTAIN THE MOST CURRENT WETLAND DESIGNATION (IF ANY). PROPERTY OWNERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL REQUIRED LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL PERMITS.
5. THESE LOTS ARE SUBJECT TO CITY OF HOMER ZONING REGULATIONS. REFER TO HOMER CITY CODE FOR ALL CURRENT SETBACK AND SITE DEVELOPMENT RESTRICTIONS. OWNERS SHOULD CHECK WITH THE CITY OF HOMER PRIOR TO DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.
6. THE CENTERLINE OF THE EXISTING "CANTRELL" CREEK AS SHOWN IS THE CENTERLINE OF A 15' WIDE DRAINAGE EASEMENT GRANTED THIS PLAT TO THE CITY OF HOMER.
7. NO STRUCTURES ARE PERMITTED WITHIN THE PANHANDLE PORTION OF THE FLAG LOT(S).
8. THERE ARE LIMITATIONS ON FUTURE SUBDIVISION OF THESE LOTS DUE TO ISSUES REGARDING ACCESS, DEVELOPMENT TRENDS IN THE AREA, AND TOPOGRAPHY.
9. THERE IS A RIGHT OF WAY EASEMENT OF NO DEFINED LOCATION THAT AFFECTS THIS SUBDIVISION, GRANTED TO HOMER ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC. RECORDED BK 29 PG 192 HRD.
10. THERE IS A RIGHT OF WAY EASEMENT OF NO DEFINED LOCATION THAT AFFECTS THIS SUBDIVISION, GRANTED TO HOMER ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC. RECORDED BK 49 PG 180 HRD.

GPS CONTROL DATA

1. BASIS OF COORDINATES FOR THIS SURVEY IS FROM GPS STATIC OBSERVATIONS TAKEN ON THE MONUMENT POSITIONS AS SHOWN ON THIS PLAT. NAD83 ALASKA STATE PLANE GRID COORDINATES OBTAINED FROM THE GPS OBSERVATIONS WERE BASED ON THE NGS PUBLISHED VALUES FOR USC&GS TRISTATION "HOMAIR". THESE COORDINATES SHOULD BE USED TO LOCATE AND VERIFY EXISTING CORNERS AND MONUMENTS.
2. TRUE BEARINGS AND DISTANCES WERE DETERMINED BY ROTATING AND SCALING FROM GRID USING USC&GS TRISTATION "HOMAIR" AS A SCALING POINT. TRUE BEARINGS WERE DETERMINED BY ROTATING GRID INVERSE AZIMUTHS -1°17'13.4". TRUE DISTANCES WERE OBTAINED BY DIVIDING GRID INVERSE DISTANCES BY 0.999986696.
3. THE RESULTING SCALED COORDINATES WERE TRANSLATED TO A LOCAL COORDINATE SYSTEM BASED ON USC&GS TRISTATION "HOMAIR" N=100,000 E=100,000. ALL COORDINATE VALUES REPRESENT GROUND DISTANCES ORIENTED TO TRUE NORTH.

LEGEND

- └ SET 2" AC 7968-S 2023
- FND 3/4" IRON PIPE
- FND 1" G.I.P.
- FND 5/8" REBAR
- FND 1/2" REBAR
- ⊕ FND 2" AC 7538-S 2018
- ⊕ FND 2.5" BC MON 1301-S 1968
- ⊕ FND 2.5" USGLO BC MON 1917
- ⊕ FND 2.5" BC MON 268-S 1971



WASTEWATER DISPOSAL

PLANS FOR WASTEWATER DISPOSAL THAT MEET REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS ARE ON FILE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION.

ENGINEER LICENSE DATE

CURVE TABLE					
CURVE #	LENGTH	RADIUS	DELTA	CH. BEARING	CH. LENGTH
C1	85.24'	150.00'	32°33'30"	N16°24'46"W	84.10'
C2	35.29'	20.00'	101°06'23"	S72°08'20"E	30.89'
C3	18.03'	120.00'	8°36'30"	S17°16'53"E	18.01'
C4	31.45'	20.00'	90°05'19"	S45°10'40"E	28.31'
C5	117.84'	200.00'	33°45'30"	S72°53'55"W	116.14'
C6	100.16'	170.00'	33°45'30"	N72°53'55"E	98.72'
C7	22.94'	50.00'	26°17'33"	N69°09'57"E	44.63'
C8	20.09'	50.00'	23°01'26"	S86°10'33"E	19.96'
C9	59.09'	50.00'	67°42'51"	N40°48'24"W	55.71'
C10	112.68'	50.00'	129°07'11"	N57°36'37"E	90.30'
C11	24.07'	25.00'	55°09'45"	S85°24'40"E	23.15'
C12	91.41'	230.00'	22°46'12"	N78°23'34"E	90.80'

CERTIFICATE OF ACCEPTANCE

THE UNDERSIGNED OFFICIAL IDENTIFIED BY NAME AND TITLE IS AUTHORIZED TO ACCEPT AND HEREBY ACCEPTS, ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF HOMER FOR PUBLIC USES AND FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES THE REAL PROPERTY TO BE DEDICATED BY THIS PLAT INCLUDING EASEMENTS, RIGHT-OF-WAYS, ALLEYS, AND OTHER PUBLIC AREAS SHOWN ON THE PLAT IDENTIFIED AS FOLLOWS:

CANTRELL CREEK ROAD 60' WIDE RIGHT OF WAY
THE UTILITY EASEMENT WITHIN THE 15' FRONTING RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND 20' WITHIN 5' OF SIDE LOT LINES
THE 15' WIDE DRAINAGE EASEMENT CENTERED ON "CANTRELL" CREEK
THE 10' WIDE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS EASEMENTS

THE ACCEPTANCE OF LANDS FOR PUBLIC USE OR PUBLIC PURPOSE DOES NOT OBLIGATE THE PUBLIC OR ANY GOVERNING BODY TO CONSTRUCT, OPERATE, OR MAINTAIN IMPROVEMENTS.

ROB DUMOUCHEL, CITY MANAGER
CITY OF HOMER

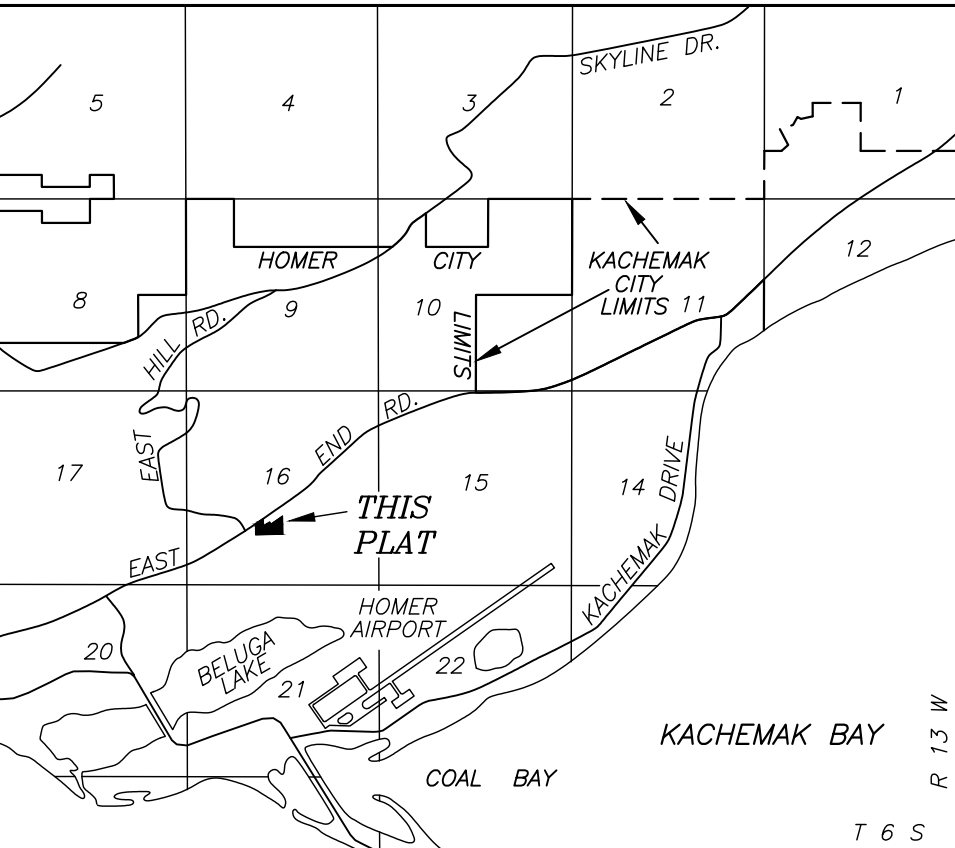
DATE

PLAT APPROVAL

THIS PLAT WAS APPROVED BY THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION AT THE MEETING OF _____

BY: _____
AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL
KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH

DATE



VICINITY MAP

SCALE: 1" = 1 MILE U.S.G.S. QUAD, SELDOVIA (C-4 & C-5)

CERTIFICATE OF OWNERSHIP

WE HEREBY CERTIFY THAT DELTA JL, LLC IS THE OWNER OF THE REAL PROPERTY SHOWN AND DESCRIBED HEREON, THAT ON BEHALF OF DELTA JL, LLC WE HEREBY ADOPT THIS PLAN OF SUBDIVISION, AND BY OUR FREE CONSENT DEDICATE ALL RIGHTS OF WAY AND PUBLIC AREAS TO PUBLIC USE, AND GRANT ALL EASEMENTS TO THE USE SHOWN HEREON.

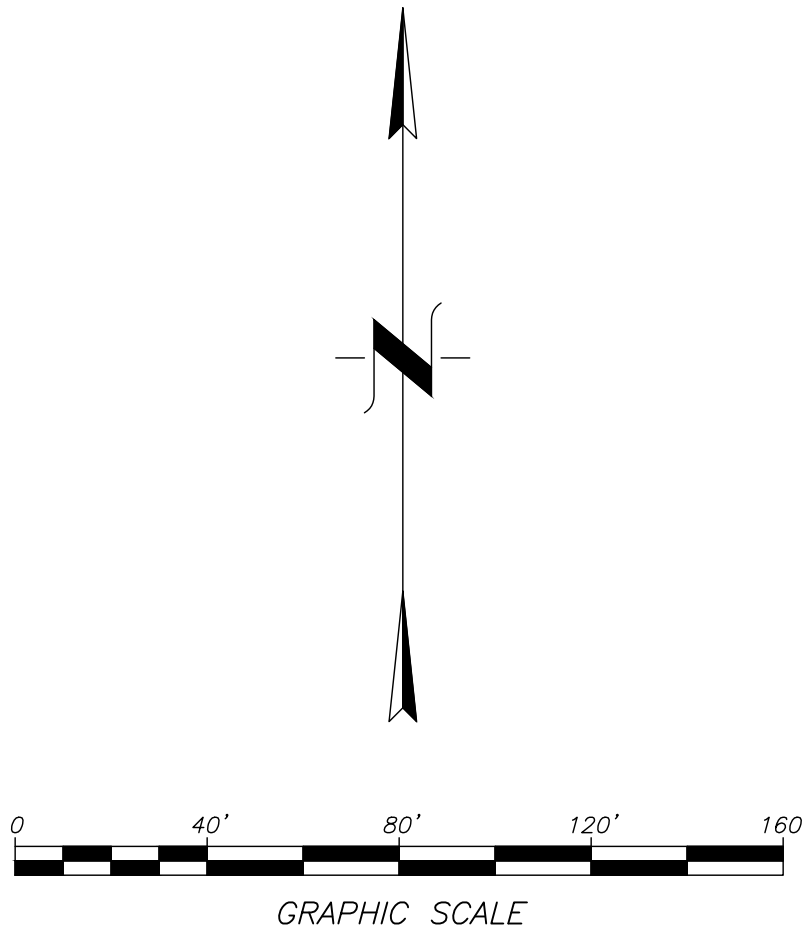
NICK BOTKIN, MEMBER
DELTA JL, LLC
3397 HOLLYWOOD OAKS DRIVE
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33312

NOTARY'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT

FOR: _____
ACKNOWLEDGED BEFORE ME THIS _____
DAY OF _____, 2023

NOTARY PUBLIC FOR ALASKA

MY COMMISSION EXPIRES _____



HOMER RECORDING DISTRICT KPB FILE NO. 2023-XXX

FOREST TRAILS SUBDIVISION

A REPLAT OF THAT PORTION OF THE NE1/4 SW1/4 SEC. 16, EXCEPTING THEREFROM THAT PORTION CONVEYED TO AK DOT&PF BY WARRANTY DEED (BK 315 PG 496 HRD), T. 6 S., R. 13 W., SEWARD MERIDIAN, CITY OF HOMER, KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH, THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT, ALASKA

CONTAINING 4.853 ACRES

SEABRIGHT SURVEY + DESIGN

KENTON T. BLOOM, P.L.S.

1044 EAST ROAD, SUITE A
HOMER, ALASKA 99603
(907) 299-1091

CLIENTS: DELTA JL, LLC
3397 HOLLYWOOD OAKS DR.
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33312

DRAWN BY: KK	CHKD BY: KB	JOB #2022-80
DATE: 01/2023	SCALE: 1"=40'	SHEET #1 OF 1

SEABRIGHT SURVEY+DESIGN

Kenton T. Bloom, P.L.S.

1044 East Road Suite A

Homer, Alaska 99603

(907) 299-1091

seabrightz@yahoo.com

December 29, 2022

City of Homer
491 E Pioneer Ave
Homer, AK 99603

RE: Preliminary Plat Submittal for "Forest Trails Subdivision"

Dear Planning Dept.,

We are pleased to submit the above reference preliminary plat for your review. Included in this submittal packet you will find:

- 2 full size plat copies
- 3 11x17 plat copies
- Signed (KPB) plat submittal form
- 1 11x17 asbuilt detail diagram
- \$1300 check for prelim review fee (1x \$1200 check + 1x \$100 check)

Please let us know if there are any concerns or clarifications we can address.

Cordially,

Kenton Bloom

Kenton Bloom, PLS
Seabright Survey + Design

From: [Kenton Bloom](#)
To: [Rick Abboud](#)
Cc: [Bella Vaz](#)
Subject: Forest Trails Subd KPB Exceptions
Date: Wednesday, January 11, 2023 1:51:00 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hi Rick,

Here are the exceptions that we plan to request upon our preliminary submittal of Forest Trails Subdivision to the Kenai Peninsula Borough. We have provided justification for these requests. Please feel free to provide any additional feedback. We look forward to further discussing the HCC design requirements for this subdivision next week.

20.30.130 A - We are requesting an exception for the minimum radius for Curve 1. The minimum radius per COH design standards is 150' and we are in conformance with that requirement. AK DOT wants to see the intersection of the proposed ROW and East End Road as far to the east as possible due to the proximity of Paul Banks Elementary School. This configuration allows the proposed ROW to meet East End Rd at a 90 degree angle while maximizing the distance from the Paul Banks entrance and minimizing the amount of acreage lost to the east.

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Cordially,

Katie
Seabright Survey + Design
1-907-299-1580



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Public Works

3575 Heath Street

Homer, AK 99603

publicworks@cityofhomer-ak.gov

(p) 907-235-3170

(f) 907-235-3145

Memorandum

TO: Rick Abboud, City Planner

THROUGH: Janette Keiser, PE, Public Works Director/City Engineer

FROM: Aaron Yeaton, GIS Technician, Public Works Department

DATE: January 12, 2023

SUBJECT: Forest Trails Subdivision Pedestrian Amenities

- I. **Purpose.** The purpose of this memorandum is to make recommendations regarding non-motorized transportation amenities within the proposed Forest Trails Subdivision.
- II. **Overview.** The Forest Trails Subdivision is situated on the south side of East End Road between Paul Banks Elementary School and the Calvin and Coyle Trail. The East End Road sidewalk accesses the elementary school, but then transitions to the north side of East End Road via a crosswalk. The trail head for the Calvin and Coyle Trail is at the end of Mariner Drive, east of the subject development, but a portion of the Trail runs in property, owned by the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust immediately adjacent to the subject development.
- III. **Does this development trigger the need for non-motorized transportation?** The subdivision, as shown in the preliminary layout, is subject to HCC 11.04.120, which mandates that developers are required to provide amenities for non-motorized transportation in designated circumstances. In the case of the subject property, the triggering circumstances are:
 - (1) the property comes within 100 feet of an educational facility (Paul Banks Elementary School); and
 - (2) There is an existing non-motorized transportation facility on an adjacent property (the Calvin and Coyle Trails).

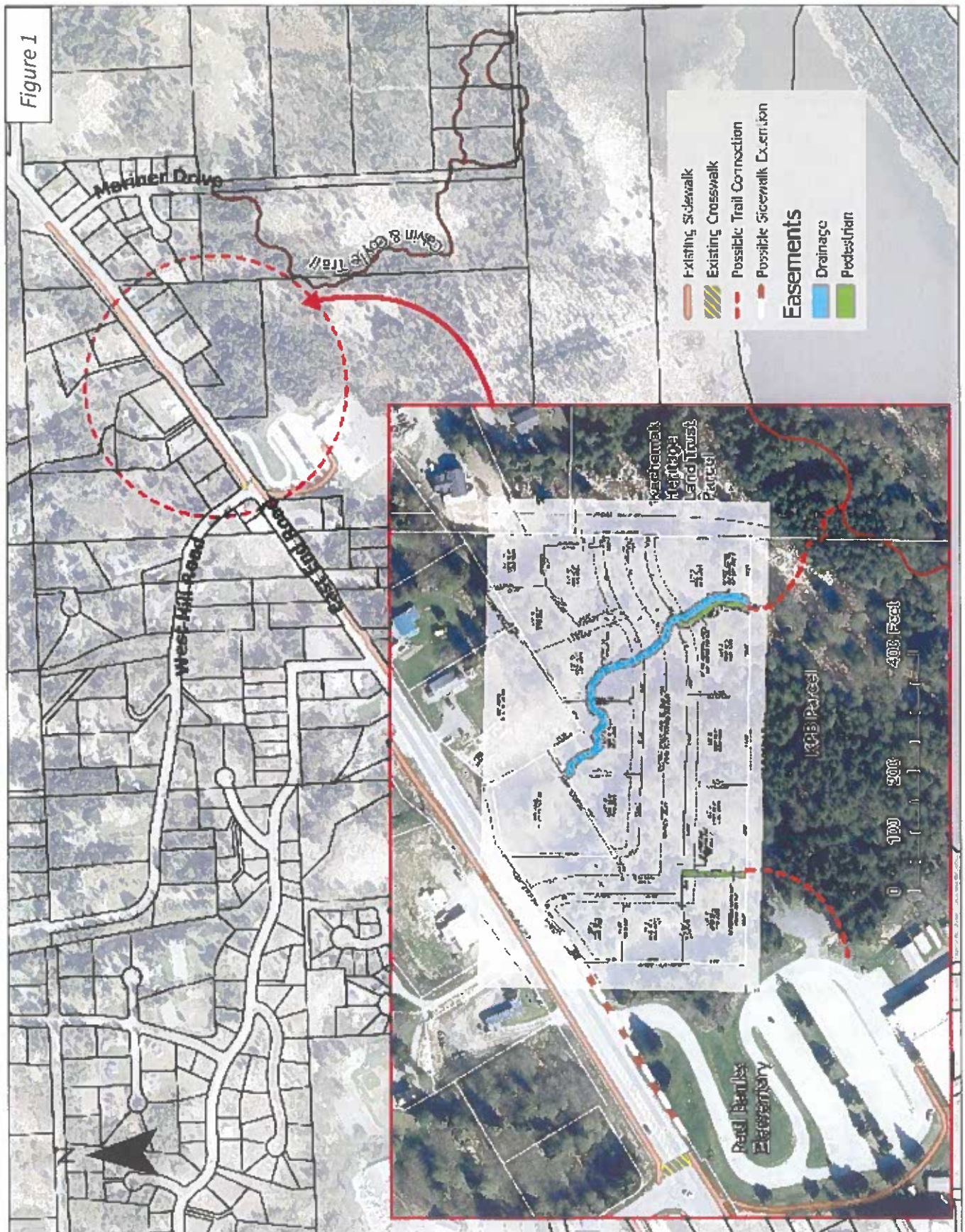
Requiring non-motorized transportation amenities satisfies the City's intent to improve connectivity and accessibility to schools, the greater community and local recreational opportunities as recommended in the Homer Non-Motorized Transportation Plan.

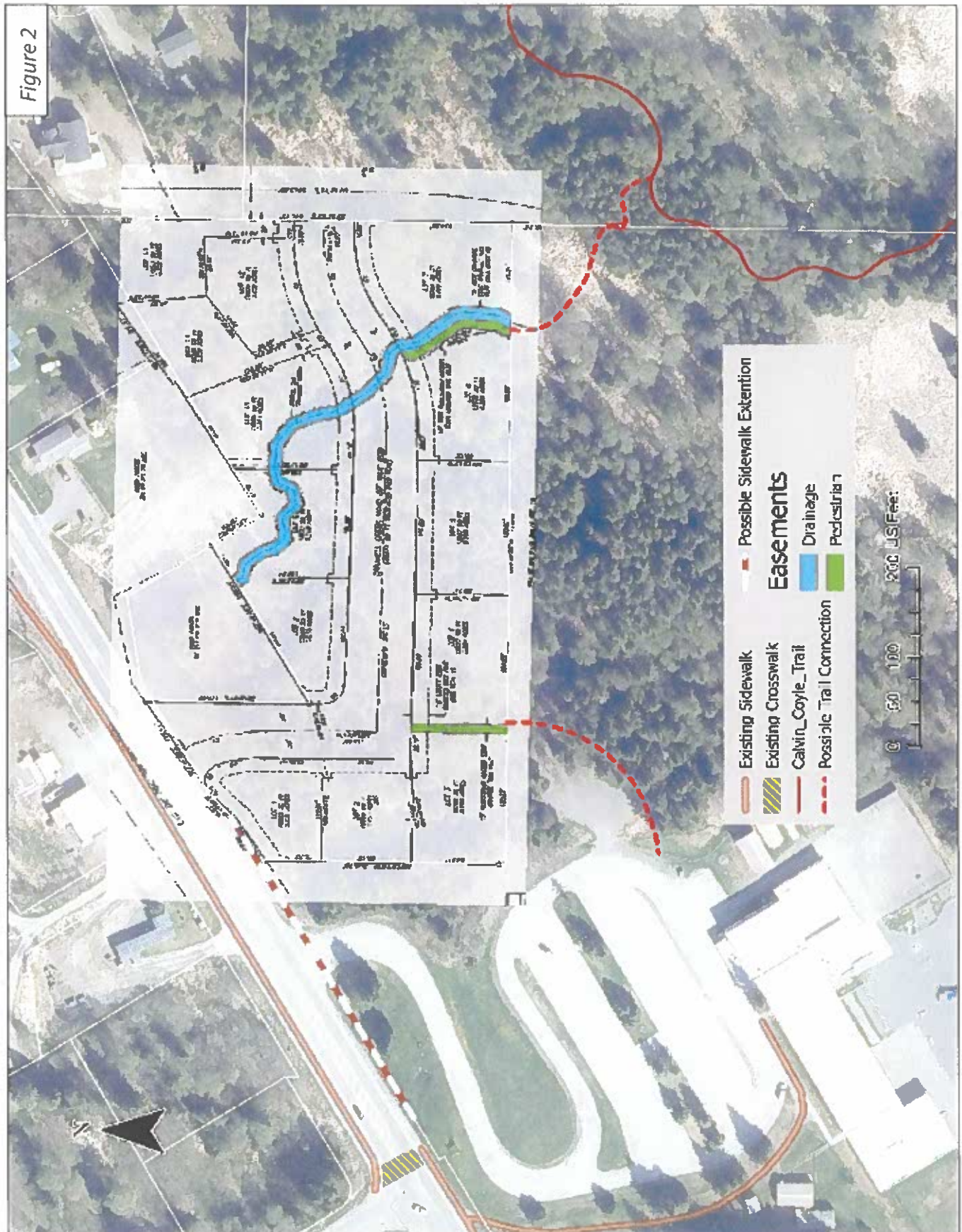
IV. What kinds of non-motorized transportation amenities should be provided?

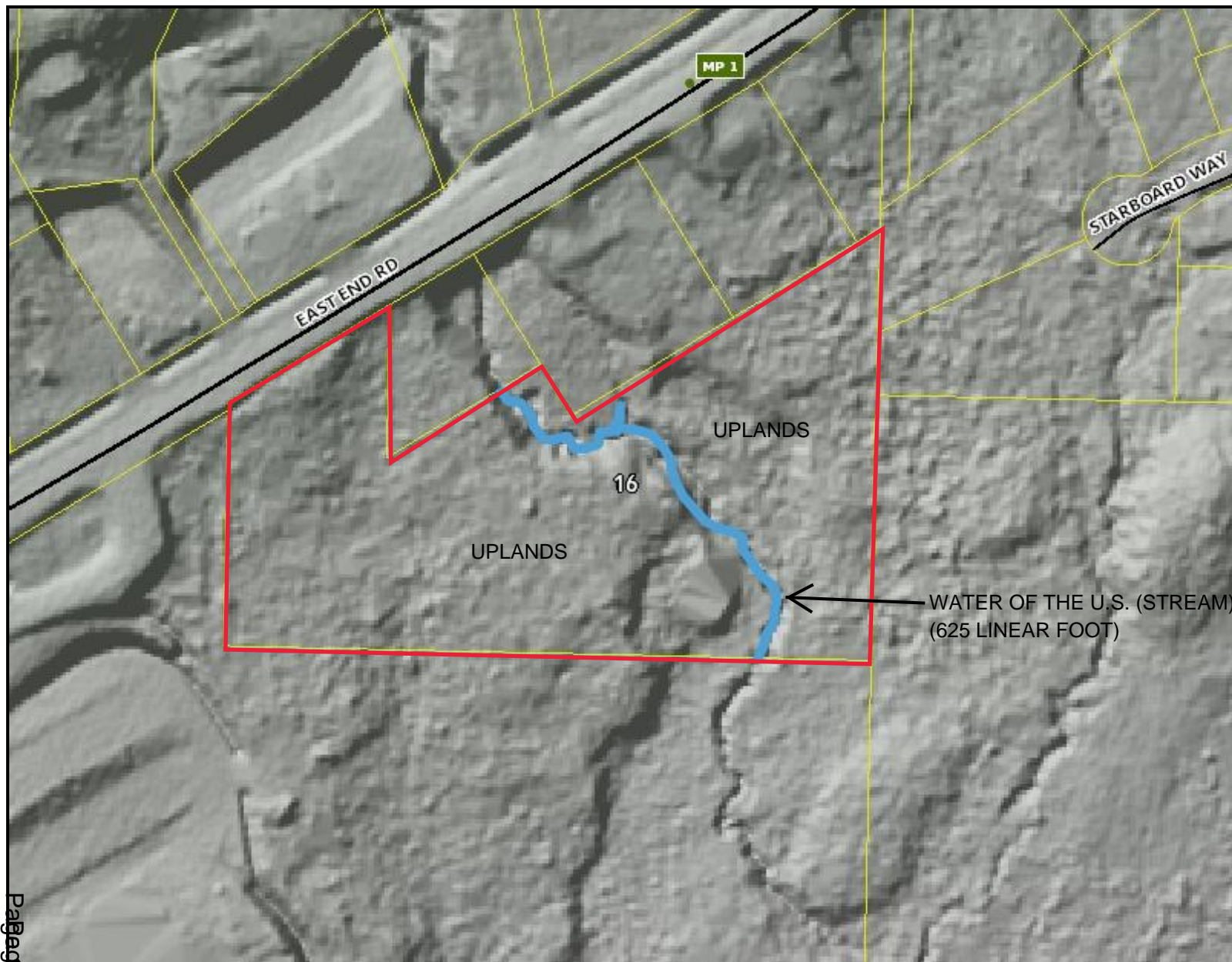
- A. The preliminary plat shows a 10' wide pedestrian easement along the joint property line between Lots 6 and 7, connecting Cantrell Creek Road the south boundary of the subdivision, which is the northern boundary of the Land Trust property. A trail in this easement would connect the subdivision to the Calvin and Coyle Trail, via a short extension developed in the future by others. This would provide subdivision residents with easy access to this lovely trail system. (See Figures 1 and 2.)
- B. The preliminary plat shows a 10' wide pedestrian easement along the joint property line between Lots 3 and 4. A trail in this easement would connect the subdivision to Paul Banks Elementary, via a short extension developed in the future by others.
- C. Public Works does not believe a sidewalk on Cantrell Creek Road is warranted, but recommends that a widened shoulder be provided to accommodate pedestrians.
- D. While it would be beneficial to extend the existing sidewalk on the south side of East End Road to the intersection with Cantrell Creek, Public Works does not feel it is the developer's sole responsibility to provide this. The City work show the extension in the new Non-Motorized Transportation Plan as a preferred route and collaborate with the Developer and the AK Dept. of Transportation to realize it.

V. Recommendations.

- A. The 10' wide pedestrian easement between Lots 3 & 4 should be adopted.
- B. The 10' wide pedestrian easement contiguous with the proposed drainage easement that is shared between Lots 6 & 7 should be adopted.
- C. The developer should provide a widened shoulder along Cantrell Creek Road to accommodate pedestrian travel within the subdivision and to East End Road.
- D. The City and the Developer should work with the Kenai Peninsula Borough to provide pedestrian access through Parcel 17903018 to connect the western pedestrian easement with Paul Banks Elementary School.
- E. The City and the Developer should work with the Kenai Peninsula Borough and Kachemak Heritage Land Trust to provide pedestrian access through Parcels 17903018 and 17903056 to connect the western pedestrian easement with the Calvin and Coyle Trail.







Legend

- Mileposts
 - Major Roads
 - └┐ Township Lines
 - Section Lines
 - Parcels
- Homer, AK



Notes

JD Map - drawn 27 Oct 2022 by Jen Martin



= review parcel



= perennial stream (water of the U.S.; 625 linear foot)

This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable. Do not use for navigation.

DATE PRINTED: 10/27/2022

Calvin and Coyle Nature Trail Map



NOTICE OF SUBDIVISION

Public notice is hereby given that a preliminary plat has been received proposing to subdivide or replat property. You are being sent this notice because you are an affected property owner within 500 feet of a proposed subdivision and are invited to comment.

Proposed subdivision under consideration is described as follows:

Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat

The location of the proposed subdivision affecting you is provided on the attached map. A preliminary plat showing the proposed subdivision may be viewed at the City of Homer Planning and Zoning Office. Subdivision reviews are conducted in accordance with the City of Homer Subdivision Ordinance and the Kenai Peninsula Borough Subdivision Ordinance. A copy of the Ordinance is available from the Planning and Zoning Office. **Comments should be guided by the requirements of those Ordinances.**

A public meeting will be held by the Homer Planning Commission on Wednesday, February 1, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. In-person meeting participation is available in Cowles Council Chambers located downstairs at Homer City Hall, 491 E. Pioneer Ave., Homer, AK 99603. To attend the meeting virtually, visit zoom.us and enter the Meeting ID & Passcode listed below. To attend the meeting by phone, dial any one of the following phone numbers and enter the Webinar ID & Passcode below, when prompted: 1-253-215-8782, 1-669-900-6833, (toll free) 888-788-0099 or 877-853-5247.

Meeting ID: 979 8816 0903

Passcode: 976062

Additional information regarding this matter will be available by 5 p.m. on the Friday before the meeting. This information will be posted to the City of Homer online calendar page for February 1, 2023 at <https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/calendar>. It will also be available at the Planning and Zoning Office at Homer City Hall and at the Homer Public Library.

Written comments can be emailed to the Planning and Zoning Office at the address below, mailed to Homer City Hall at the address above, or placed in the Homer City Hall drop box at any time. Written comments must be received by 4 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

If you have questions or would like additional information, contact Rick Abboud at the Planning and Zoning Office. Phone: (907) 235-3106, email: clerk@cityofhomer-ak.gov, or in-person at Homer City Hall.

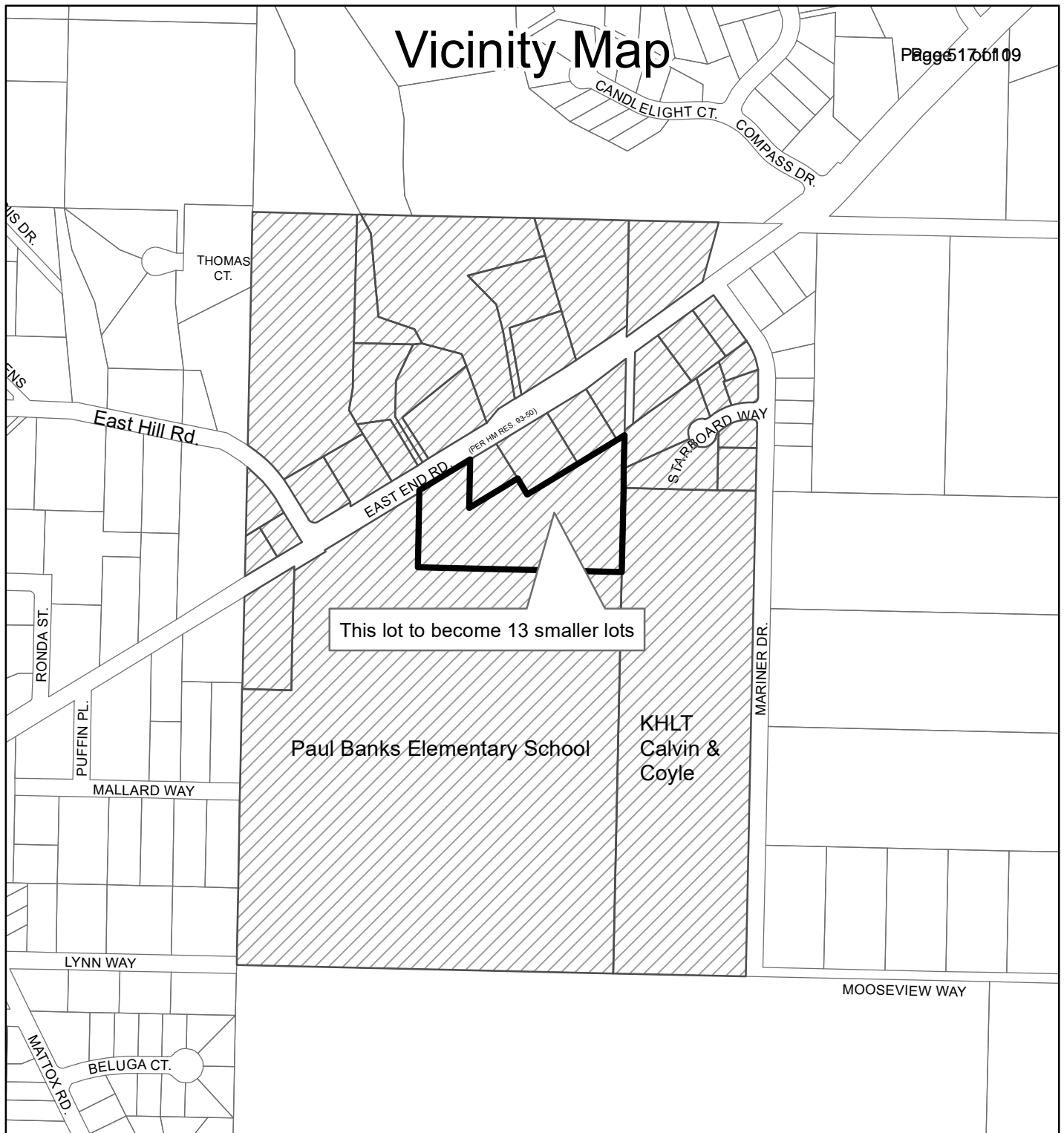
NOTICE TO BE SENT TO PROPERTY OWNERS WITHIN 500 FEET OF PROPERTY.

.....

VICINITY MAP ON REVERSE

Vicinity Map

Page 51766109



City of Homer
Planning and Zoning Department

January 19, 2023

Request for Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat

Marked lots are within 500 feet and
property owners notified.

0 250 500 Feet



Disclaimer:
It is expressly understood the City of
Homer, its council, board,
departments, employees and agents are
not responsible for any errors or omissions
contained herein, or deductions, interpretations
or conclusions drawn therefrom.

NOTES

1. THE 15' FRONTING RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND THE 20' WITHIN 5' OF SIDE LOT LINES IS A UTILITY EASEMENT GRANTED THIS PLAT. NO PERMANENT STRUCTURES SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED OR PLACED WITHIN A UTILITY EASEMENT WHICH WOULD INTERFERE WITH THE ABILITY OF A UTILITY TO USE SAID EASEMENT.
2. ALL WASTEWATER DISPOSAL SYSTEMS SHALL COMPLY WITH EXISTING APPLICABLE LAWS AT THE TIME OF CONSTRUCTION.
3. NO ACCESS TO STATE MAINTAINED RIGHTS-OF-WAY PERMITTED UNLESS APPROVED BY THE STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.
4. PROPERTY OWNER SHOULD CONTACT THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PRIOR TO ANY ON-SITE DEVELOPMENT OR CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY TO OBTAIN THE MOST CURRENT WETLAND DESIGNATION (IF ANY). PROPERTY OWNERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL REQUIRED LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL PERMITS.
5. THESE LOTS ARE SUBJECT TO CITY OF HOMER ZONING REGULATIONS. REFER TO HOMER CITY CODE FOR ALL CURRENT SETBACK AND SITE DEVELOPMENT RESTRICTIONS. OWNERS SHOULD CHECK WITH THE CITY OF HOMER PRIOR TO DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.
6. THE CENTERLINE OF THE EXISTING "CANTRELL" CREEK AS SHOWN IS THE CENTERLINE OF A 15' WIDE DRAINAGE EASEMENT GRANTED THIS PLAT TO THE CITY OF HOMER.
7. NO STRUCTURES ARE PERMITTED WITHIN THE PANHANDLE PORTION OF THE FLAG LOT(S).
8. THERE ARE LIMITATIONS ON FUTURE SUBDIVISION OF THESE LOTS DUE TO ISSUES REGARDING ACCESS, DEVELOPMENT TRENDS IN THE AREA, AND TOPOGRAPHY.
9. THERE IS A RIGHT OF WAY EASEMENT OF NO DEFINED LOCATION THAT AFFECTS THIS SUBDIVISION, GRANTED TO HOMER ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC. RECORDED BK 29 PG 192 HRD.
10. THERE IS A RIGHT OF WAY EASEMENT OF NO DEFINED LOCATION THAT AFFECTS THIS SUBDIVISION, GRANTED TO HOMER ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC. RECORDED BK 49 PG 180 HRD.

GPS CONTROL DATA

1. BASIS OF COORDINATES FOR THIS SURVEY IS FROM GPS STATIC OBSERVATIONS TAKEN ON THE MONUMENT POSITIONS AS SHOWN ON THIS PLAT. NAD83 ALASKA STATE PLANE GRID COORDINATES OBTAINED FROM THE GPS OBSERVATIONS WERE BASED ON THE NGS PUBLISHED VALUES FOR USC&GS TRISTATION "HOMAIR". THESE COORDINATES SHOULD BE USED TO LOCATE AND VERIFY EXISTING CORNERS AND MONUMENTS.
2. TRUE BEARINGS AND DISTANCES WERE DETERMINED BY ROTATING AND SCALING FROM GRID USING USC&GS TRISTATION "HOMAIR" AS A SCALING POINT. TRUE BEARINGS WERE DETERMINED BY ROTATING GRID INVERSE AZIMUTHS -1°17'13.4". TRUE DISTANCES WERE OBTAINED BY DIVIDING GRID INVERSE DISTANCES BY 0.999986696.
3. THE RESULTING SCALED COORDINATES WERE TRANSLATED TO A LOCAL COORDINATE SYSTEM BASED ON USC&GS TRISTATION "HOMAIR" N=100,000 E=100,000. ALL COORDINATE VALUES REPRESENT GROUND DISTANCES ORIENTED TO TRUE NORTH.

LEGEND

- └ SET 2" AC 7968-S 2023
- FND 3/4" IRON PIPE
- FND 1" G.I.P.
- FND 5/8" REBAR
- FND 1/2" REBAR
- ⊕ FND 2" AC 7538-S 2018
- ⊕ FND 2.5" BC MON 1301-S 1968
- ⊕ FND 2.5" USGLO BC MON 1917
- ⊕ FND 2.5" BC MON 268-S 1971



WASTEWATER DISPOSAL

PLANS FOR WASTEWATER DISPOSAL THAT MEET REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS ARE ON FILE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION.

ENGINEER LICENSE DATE

CURVE TABLE					
CURVE #	LENGTH	RADIUS	DELTA	CH. BEARING	CH. LENGTH
C1	85.24'	150.00'	32°33'30"	N16°24'46"W	84.10'
C2	35.29'	20.00'	101°06'23"	S72°08'20"E	30.89'
C3	18.03'	120.00'	8°36'30"	S17°16'53"E	18.01'
C4	31.45'	20.00'	90°05'19"	S45°10'40"E	28.31'
C5	117.84'	200.00'	33°45'30"	S72°53'55"W	116.14'
C6	100.16'	170.00'	33°45'30"	N72°53'55"E	98.72'
C7	22.94'	50.00'	26°17'33"	N69°09'57"E	44.63'
C8	20.09'	50.00'	23°01'26"	S86°10'33"E	19.96'
C9	59.09'	50.00'	67°42'51"	N40°48'24"W	55.71'
C10	112.68'	50.00'	129°07'11"	N57°36'37"E	90.30'
C11	24.07'	25.00'	55°09'45"	S85°24'40"E	23.15'
C12	91.41'	230.00'	22°46'12"	N78°23'34"E	90.80'

CERTIFICATE OF ACCEPTANCE

THE UNDERSIGNED OFFICIAL IDENTIFIED BY NAME AND TITLE IS AUTHORIZED TO ACCEPT AND HEREBY ACCEPTS, ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF HOMER FOR PUBLIC USES AND FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES THE REAL PROPERTY TO BE DEDICATED BY THIS PLAT INCLUDING EASEMENTS, RIGHT-OF-WAYS, ALLEYS, AND OTHER PUBLIC AREAS SHOWN ON THE PLAT IDENTIFIED AS FOLLOWS:

CANTRELL CREEK ROAD 60' WIDE RIGHT OF WAY
THE UTILITY EASEMENT WITHIN THE 15' FRONTING RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND 20' WITHIN 5' OF SIDE LOT LINES
THE 15' WIDE DRAINAGE EASEMENT CENTERED ON "CANTRELL" CREEK
THE 10' WIDE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS EASEMENTS

THE ACCEPTANCE OF LANDS FOR PUBLIC USE OR PUBLIC PURPOSE DOES NOT OBLIGATE THE PUBLIC OR ANY GOVERNING BODY TO CONSTRUCT, OPERATE, OR MAINTAIN IMPROVEMENTS.

ROB DUMOUCHEL, CITY MANAGER
CITY OF HOMER

DATE

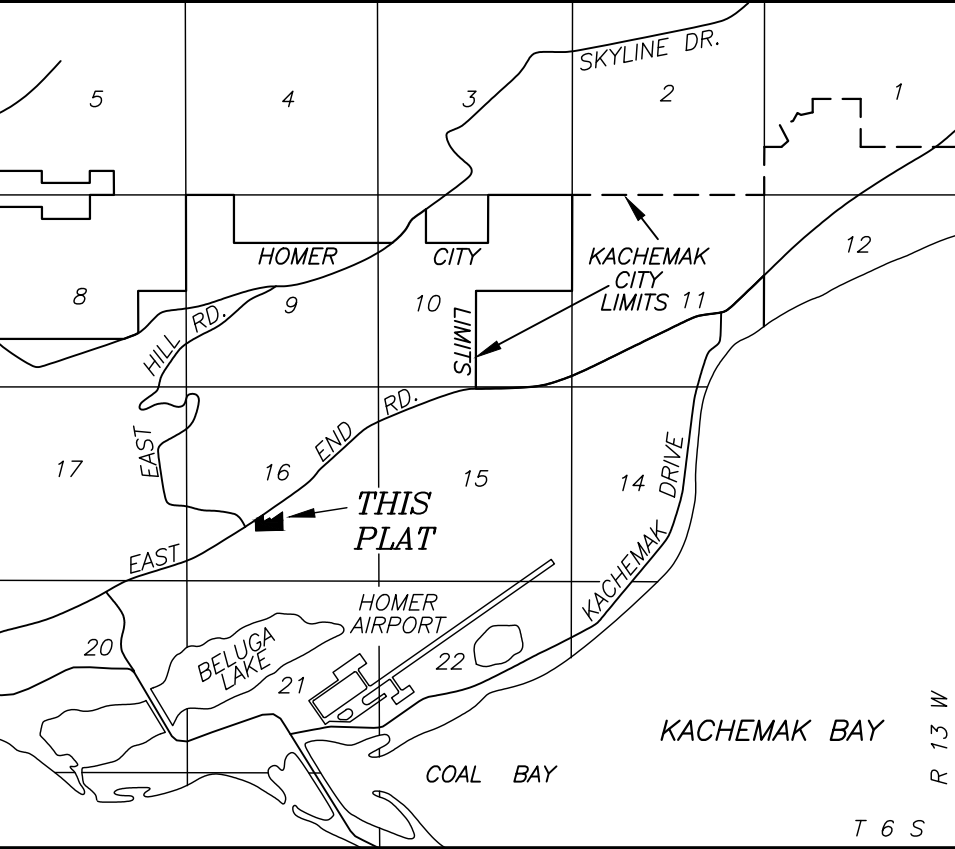
PLAT APPROVAL

THIS PLAT WAS APPROVED BY THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION AT THE MEETING OF

BY:

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL
KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH

DATE



VICINITY MAP

SCALE: 1" = 1 MILE U.S.G.S. QUAD, SELDOVIA (C-4 & C-5)

CERTIFICATE OF OWNERSHIP

WE HEREBY CERTIFY THAT DELTA JL, LLC IS THE OWNER OF THE REAL PROPERTY SHOWN AND DESCRIBED HEREON, THAT ON BEHALF OF DELTA JL, LLC WE HEREBY ADOPT THIS PLAN OF SUBDIVISION, AND BY OUR FREE CONSENT DEDICATE ALL RIGHTS OF WAY AND PUBLIC AREAS TO PUBLIC USE, AND GRANT ALL EASEMENTS TO THE USE SHOWN HEREON.

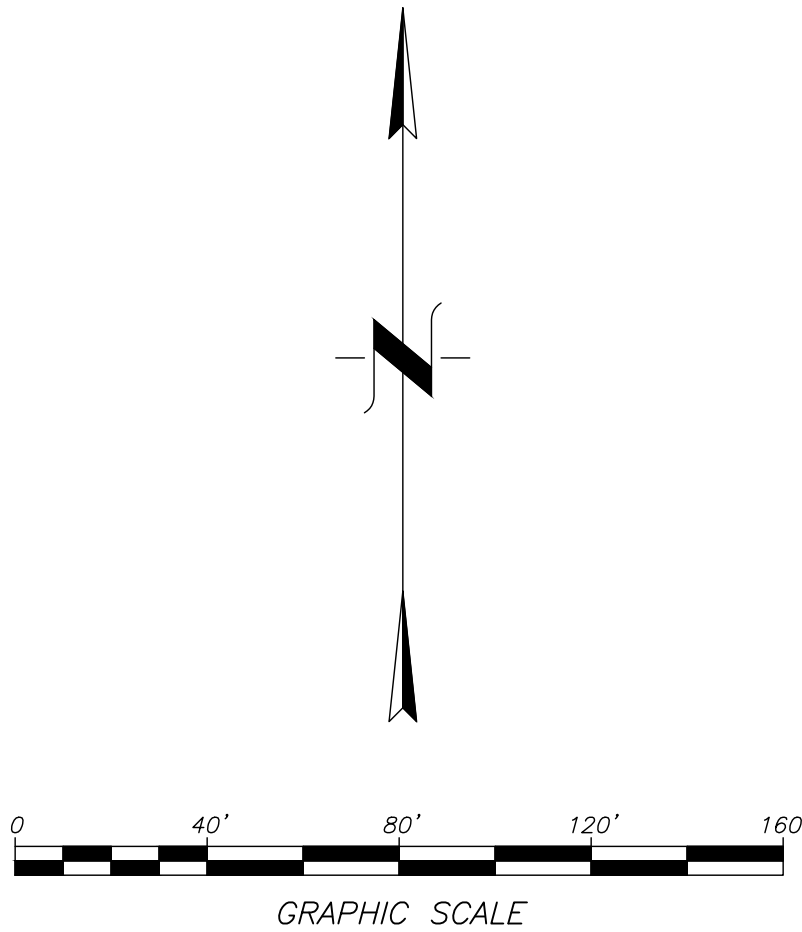
NICK BOTKIN, MEMBER
DELTA JL, LLC
3397 HOLLYWOOD OAKS DRIVE
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33312

NOTARY'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT

FOR: _____
ACKNOWLEDGED BEFORE ME THIS _____
DAY OF _____, 2023

NOTARY PUBLIC FOR ALASKA

MY COMMISSION EXPIRES _____



HOMER RECORDING DISTRICT KPB FILE NO. 2023-XXX

FOREST TRAILS SUBDIVISION

A REPLAT OF THAT PORTION OF THE NE1/4 SW1/4 SEC. 16, EXCEPTING THEREFROM THAT PORTION CONVEYED TO AK DOT&PF BY WARRANTY DEED (BK 315 PG 496 HRD), T. 6 S., R. 13 W., SEWARD MERIDIAN, CITY OF HOMER, KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH, THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT, ALASKA

CONTAINING 4.853 ACRES

SEABRIGHT SURVEY + DESIGN

KENTON T. BLOOM, P.L.S.

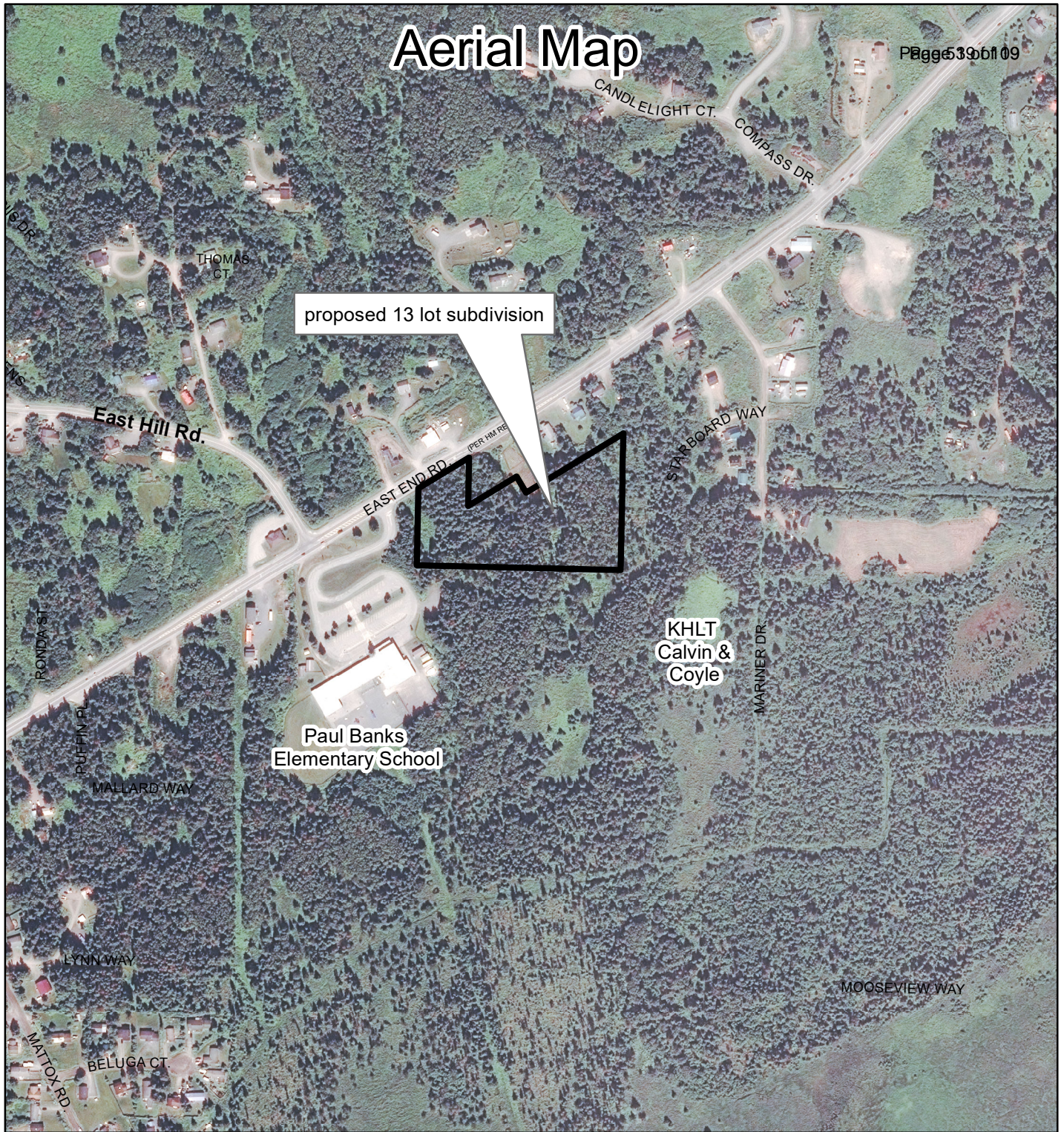
1044 EAST ROAD, SUITE A
HOMER, ALASKA 99603
(907) 299-1091

CLIENTS: DELTA JL, LLC
3397 HOLLYWOOD OAKS DR.
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33312

DRAWN BY: KK	CHKD BY: KB	JOB #2022-80
DATE: 01/2023	SCALE: 1"=40'	SHEET #1 OF 1

Aerial Map

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City of Homer
Planning and Zoning Department

January 19, 2023

Request for Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat

Marked lots are within 500 feet and
property owners notified.

0 250 500 Feet



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or conclusions drawn therefrom.



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

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Planning

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

Planning@ci.homer.ak.us

(p) 907-235-3106

(f) 907-235-3118

Memorandum

Agenda Changes/Supplemental Packet

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION
FROM: RENEE KRAUSE, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II
DATE: FEBRUARY 1, 2023
SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTAL

9. PLAT CONSIDERATION(S)

9.A. Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat

Public Comment received

From: [Melissa Jacobsen](#)
To: [Renee Krause](#); [Rick Abboud](#)
Subject: FW: Public Comments for Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat
Date: Wednesday, February 1, 2023 7:58:36 AM
Attachments: [2023_01_31_CCB_Forest_Trails_Prelim_Plat_Comments_Submitted.pdf](#)

For the planning commission, I'll forward to Council.

Thanks!

From: Joel Cooper <joel@kachemaklandtrust.org>
Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2023 5:54 PM
To: Melissa Jacobsen <MJacobsen@ci.homer.ak.us>
Cc: Marie McCarty <marie@kachemaklandtrust.org>; Dan Marsden <dan@kachemaklandtrust.org>
Subject: Public Comments for Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hi Melissa,

As per our phone conversation, I would like to submit the attached written comments for the Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat. Please distribute these comments to the City of Homer Planning Department, Planning Commission, Mayor and City Council. I will be attending the Planning Commission Worksession and Public Meeting accordingly.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Please acknowledge in this email that you have received these comments.

Many thanks!

Joel Cooper
Stewardship Director/IT Specialist
Kachemak Heritage Land Trust
315 Klondike Ave.
Homer, AK 99603
(907) 235-5263 (Main Office)
(907) 235-5331 (Direct Line)
joel@kachemaklandtrust.org





January 31, 2023

Homer Planning Commission
491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, AK 99603

Re: Kenai Peninsula Borough parcel # 179-030-21, a 4.85-acre parcel located at 1441 East End Road, Homer, Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat Review

Dear Planning Commission Members,

I am writing on behalf of Kachemak Heritage Land Trust (KHLT) as an adjacent landowner to the above-referenced parcel. KHLT is the owner of the Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park containing six parcels totaling 28.67 acres that is depicted in Figure 1 below. The northwestern boundary of parcel # 17903056 is adjacent to the proposed Forest Trails Subdivision.

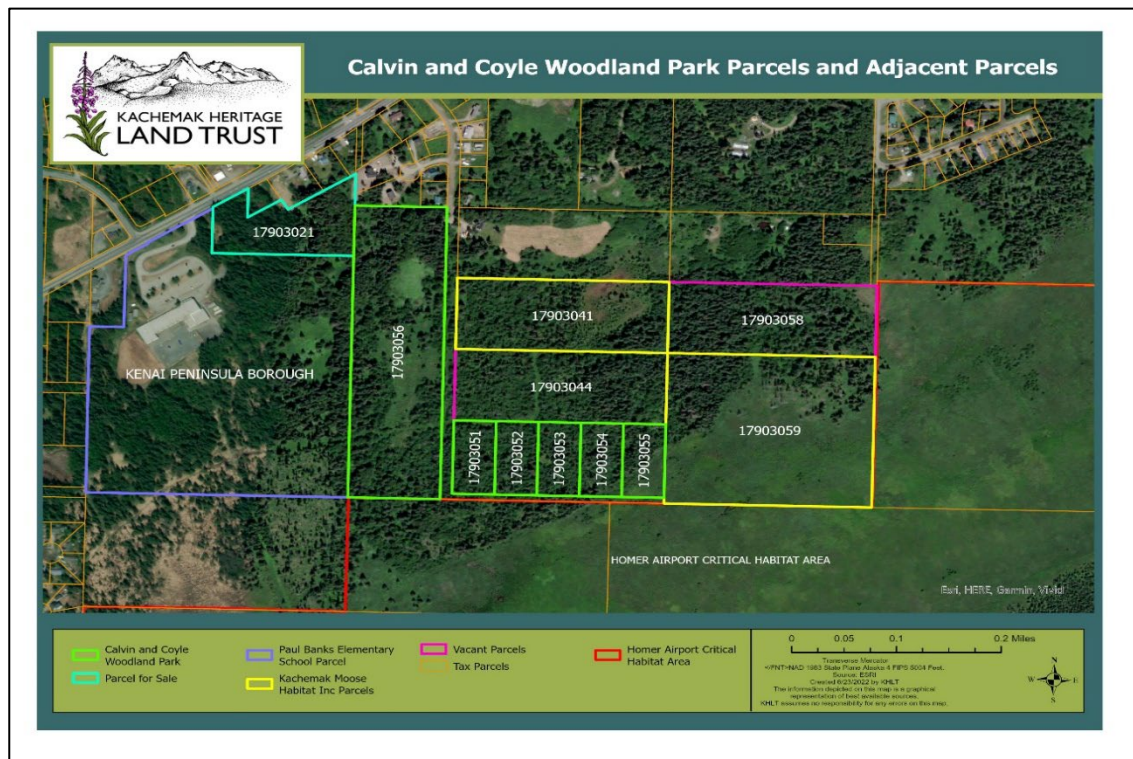


Figure 1: Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park and Adjacent Parcels

Conserving the natural heritage of the Kenai Peninsula for future generations

315 Klondike Avenue • Homer, AK 99603 • ph: 907-235-5263 • fax: 907-235-1503 • www.kachemaklandtrust.org

KHLT is not opposed to the development of private property but wishes to express its concern about the impact of the proposed development adjacent to one of its Ambassador Properties and hopes that there is an opportunity for mitigation of potential adverse impacts to the community-loved trail. Consensus of this region's ecological importance is best described in the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District's (HSWCD) 2013 City of Homer (COH) Beluga Planning Atlas, which labeled the Beluga watershed as the "*Wetland Heart of Homer*" (see Figure 2). KHLT submits its comments as part of its public comment for the KPB and COH mayors, councils, planning commissions and land developers to take into consideration when reviewing preliminary plats.



Figure 2: Bear Creek/Beluga Slough Watershed (*The Wetland Heart of Homer*). Source: HSWCD Beluga Planning Area Volume 1 (8/26/2014)

KHLT's primary goal for the Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park is to manage the land to benefit wildlife habitat and for public benefit. This includes preserving the surface resources, vegetative cover, wetland, hydrologic and other water quality values of the property in its natural condition. The KHLT property is primarily a wetland discharge slope with a small area identified as wetland kettle (Source: KPB). KHLT protects the natural resource values of the property in perpetuity by prohibiting any use of the property, including over-use, that conflicts with these inherent conservation values.

KHLT manages the 1.5 mile out and back trail with a lollipop loop on the southern part of the property (see Figure 3). KHLT works with the Kenai Peninsula School District to manage the trail (see Figure 2) on their parcel and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) who manages the adjacent Homer Airport Critical Habitat Area (HACHA).

In addition, KHLT is bound to a North American Wetlands Conservation Act ("NAWCA") Grant Agreement which includes ensuring the long-term conservation of the property in accordance with the

Grant Agreement and obtaining the consent of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) prior to the conveyance of any property interests.

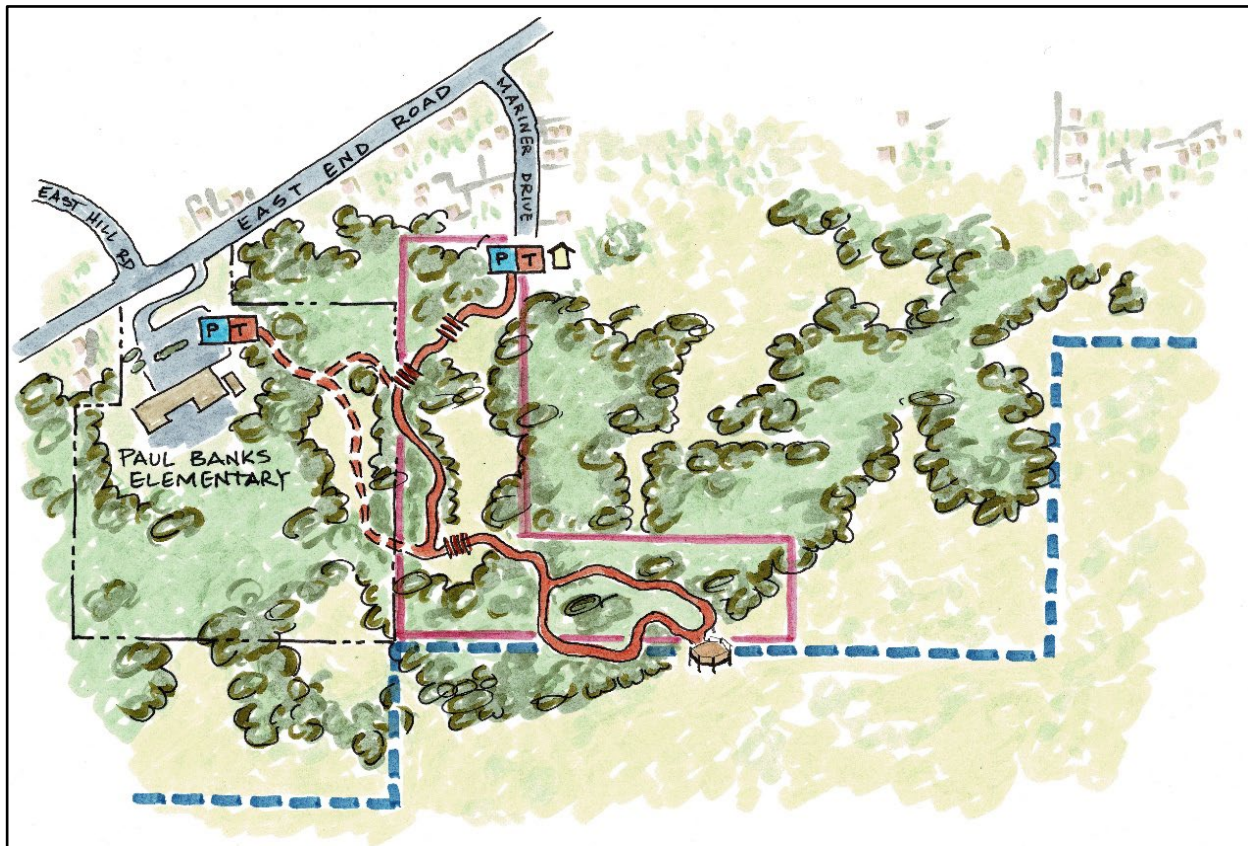


Figure 3: Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park Trail System and Adjacent Paul Banks Elementary Trail System

KHLT manages 28 conservation easements totaling 2,496.59 acres and 18 fee-owned parks and preserves totaling 1,335.44 acres across the Kenai Peninsula. When managing these lands KHLT finds adjacent developments like these can impact the conservation values of these properties through unauthorized motor vehicle use, trail development, and tree cutting. An increase in littering also occurs. These developments also increase the potential for the spread of invasive species.

KHLT has the following concerns with the proposed plat:

- Increased impervious coverage upgradient to the Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park will affect the hydrology of the wetlands ecosystem of the park. The proposed development is very condensed with 13 lots ranging from 0.231 acres (10,051 ft²) to 0.381 acres (16,596 ft²) in a 4.85 acre parcel. A 60-foot-wide ROW totaling 1.087 acres (47,347 ft²) bisects the property ending with a cul-de-sac and 44.84 feet of land separating the cul-de-sac from the western boundary of KHLT parcel # 17903056.
- Inadequate riparian buffer and culverting of the 625 linear feet of stream channel running through the site that was documented by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in their October 28,

2022 jurisdictional determination. This channel makes its way through Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park and terminates in the HACHA.

- Unauthorized trail development, motorized vehicle use, and tree cutting in the Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park.
- Increased potential for the spread of invasive species.
- Increased public use of Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park. This development will have a direct economic impact on KHLT's management of this park due to an increased potential for unauthorized motor vehicle use, trail development, tree cutting, and littering.

According to the COH Planning Department, the Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat parcel is zoned Rural Residential and would need to follow level one site development standards 21.50.020 Site development standards – Level one. These standards are found on the Homer City Code website:

<https://www.codepublishing.com/AK/Homer/#!/Homer21/Homer2150.html#21.50>.

Based on the information and concerns described above, KHLT proposes the following recommendations as they pertain to the Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat.

- Reduce the size of the ROW to minimize the amount of impervious coverage.
- Require a minimum 50 feet of undisturbed natural forest riparian buffer of existing native vegetation on each side of the 625 linear feet of stream channel. Buildings and other features that require grading or construction must be set back at least 10 additional feet from the edge of the buffer. The Bridge Creek Watershed Protection District requires a 50 foot buffer. This stream channel drains into one of Homer's most important wetlands, "*The Wetland Heart of Homer*", and should require similar standards.
- Use level two site development standards to help mitigate the impacts to the down gradient wetlands. These standards are found on the Homer City Code website: <https://www.codepublishing.com/AK/Homer/#!/Homer21/Homer2150.html#21.50>.
- Require the use of weed free gravel and soil to reduce the chance of introducing invasive species.

Subdivision Process

KHLT was first contacted about the Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat on 1/9/2023 when staff from the City's Planning Department, contacted KHLT's Executive Director (ED) via email requesting a copy of the conservation easement for the property east of Paul Banks Elementary (Parcel # 17903056). The Executive Director asked that I follow up on this request.

I spoke with the City's Associate Planner on 1/9/2023 and explained to her that there was not a conservation easement held on parcel #17903056 and that this was one of six parcels that makes up the Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park. I also advised her that KHLT is required to draft a management plan as a nationally accredited land trust. KHLT completed a revision of this management plan and it was Board approved in August 2022.

We discussed the Forest Trails Subdivision Plat dated 12/2022 depicting the 60 foot ROW dead ending up against KHLT parcel #17903056. The Associate City Planner provided this plat via email during our discussion. The Forest Trails parcel is adjacent to the northwest corner of Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park. During this discussion the Associate City Planner mentioned that the Army Corps did a wetlands determination on the Forest Trails subdivision and provided me a copy of this determination via email on 1/10/2023. This determination identifies 625 linear feet of stream channel running through the Forest Trails Subdivision parcel. This stream runs year-round and after it exits the 4.85 acre Forest Trails Subdivision parcel, it makes its way through the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) Paul Banks Elementary School parcel, to KHLT's Calvin and Coyle Woodland Park, and then terminates in the Homer Airport Critical Habitat Area (see Figure 7 flow paths map from the Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (KBNERR)). I told the Associate City Planner that KHLT would submit comments as it pertained to the Forest Trail Preliminary Plat and the potential impacts to the Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park and that I may have more questions.

KHLT's Executive Director informed me on 1/20/2023 that tree cutting had begun on Forest Trail Preliminary Plat parcel. I viewed the property on 1/24/2023 from East End Road and confirmed that tree cutting had begun and several trees in the center of the property had been felled.

KHLT staff drafted comments to be reviewed by its Land and Easement Committee at its meeting on 1/24/2023 to solicit additional input as to how this subdivision development might impact the hydrology and management of the Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park. KHLT received a Public Notice of Subdivision in the mail on 1/24/2023 and this notice included a Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat dated 1/2023 depicting the 60 foot ROW ending with a cul-de-sac and 44.84 feet of land separating the cul-de-sac from the western boundary of KHLT parcel # 17903056 and this was provided to the Committee prior to the meeting. The Vicinity Map included with this Public Notice depicts Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park and Paul Banks Elementary School on a map adjacent to the subdivision parcel. The Committee recommended that stewardship staff do on the ground documentation of the northwestern boundary of KHLT parcel # 17903056 and the stream corridor on 1/25/2023



Figure 4: Tree cutting activity along the western border of KHLT parcel # 17903056 and the Forest Trails parcel. Arrows point to surveyed boundary stake and flag. KHLT's parcel lies to the left of this line and the Forest Trails parcel to the right. (Source: KHLT, Photo taken 1/25/2023)

On 1/25/2023 KHLT's Stewardship Director and Coordinator made a site visit to KHLT parcel # 17903056 to document activity along its northwestern border and trace, viewed from KHLT's property, the stream channel described in the 10/28/2022 Army Corp Wetlands Determination (POA-2022-00431) from the Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park to the southern boundary of the Forest Trails Subdivision parcel. Figure 4 documents activity along the western border of KHLT parcel # 17903056. It appears that all trees in this area on the Forest Trails Subdivision parcel were cut up to the border of KHLT parcel # 17903056 and some of the felled material fell onto KHLT's parcel # 17903056. KHLT is reviewing this activity as it pertains to third-party violations.

Figure 5 below looks north into the Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat parcel from the KHLT parcel at the Army Corps determined 625 linear feet of stream channel and the vegetation removal that had already taken place in the buffer zone of the stream channel.



Figure 5: Looking north from the Paul Banks Elementary School parcel at the 625 feet of stream channel running through the Forest Trails Preliminary Plat parcel. (Source: KHLT, photo taken on 1/26/2023)

During KHLT's site visits on 1/25 and 1/26/2023, on KHLT's land, its stewardship staff attempted to walk from the second bridge shown in Figure 3 to the southern boundary of the Forest Trails Preliminary Plat parcel to spatially map the stream channel. KHLT staff could see the channel corridor connecting from Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park Nature Trail Bridge #2 to the southern end of the 625 linear feet of stream channel documented in the Army Corps wetlands determination. However, staff could not walk the channel because 5 moose were browsing and bedded down in the stream corridor. KHLT staff again attempted to walk the channel on 1/26/2023 and encountered the same 5 moose defending this stream channel that feeds into the HACHA (Figure 6). Figure 7 shows the estimated flow paths of stream channels within Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park and adjacent parcels.



Figure 6: Arrow points to moose bedded down on stream corridor bank.

After reviewing the Public Notice of Subdivision provided by the City of Homer, speaking to the KPB Department and the City of Homer Planning Department, KHLT reviewed the regulatory process in both KPB and COH code for creating a subdivision. The site development activity took place prior to the Public Hearing and due date of the Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat Public Comments. KHLT is concerned that the order of sections of HCC are being implemented in an order that allows significant and potentially impactful development before the public comment period and the public hearing, rendering some of the public input essentially moot.

KHLT requests that 21.50.030 Site development standards – Level two be applied to this parcel to further protect the 625’ jurisdictional stream and the down gradient properties. Most of the property’s trees were cut down prior to the public hearing with an excavator with a tree cutting implement that has disturbed the topsoil. It is of concern to KHLT that 21.50.020 Site development standards – Level one, which are required for a zoned Rural Residential parcel¹, were not followed by the Homer Planning Department. The activity I observed has had an impact on the recommended buffer zone and compromised KHLT’s public comments.

¹ <https://www.codepublishing.com/AK/Homer/#!/Homer21/Homer2112.html#21.12> Web accessed on 1/31/2023.

KPB code 20.25.050 D requires that “A vicinity map, drawn to scale showing location of proposed subdivision, north arrow if different from plat orientation, township and range, section lines, roads, political boundaries, and prominent natural and manmade features, such as shorelines or streams;.”² be provided. The Vicinity Map² that KHLT received in the Public Notice of Subdivision did not depict the stream channel and the prominent natural (Figure 7) and manmade features (Figure 3). This stream runs year-round and after it exits the 4.85 acre Forest Trails Preliminary Plat parcel, it makes its way through the Paul Banks Elementary School parcel, to KHLT's Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park, and then terminates in the HACHA (Figure 7). These parcels will be impacted based on how this plat is approved. In addition, the Vicinity Map does not show the Homer Airport Critical Habitat Area, a critical parcel of this drainage. Although this is not adjacent to the Forest Trails Subdivision parcel, this is an important natural feature that could be impacted by development activities around the 625 feet of stream channel as it is down gradient. Without the required information on the Vicinity Map, those receiving notice have not been advised of the prominent natural features and may not consider commenting.

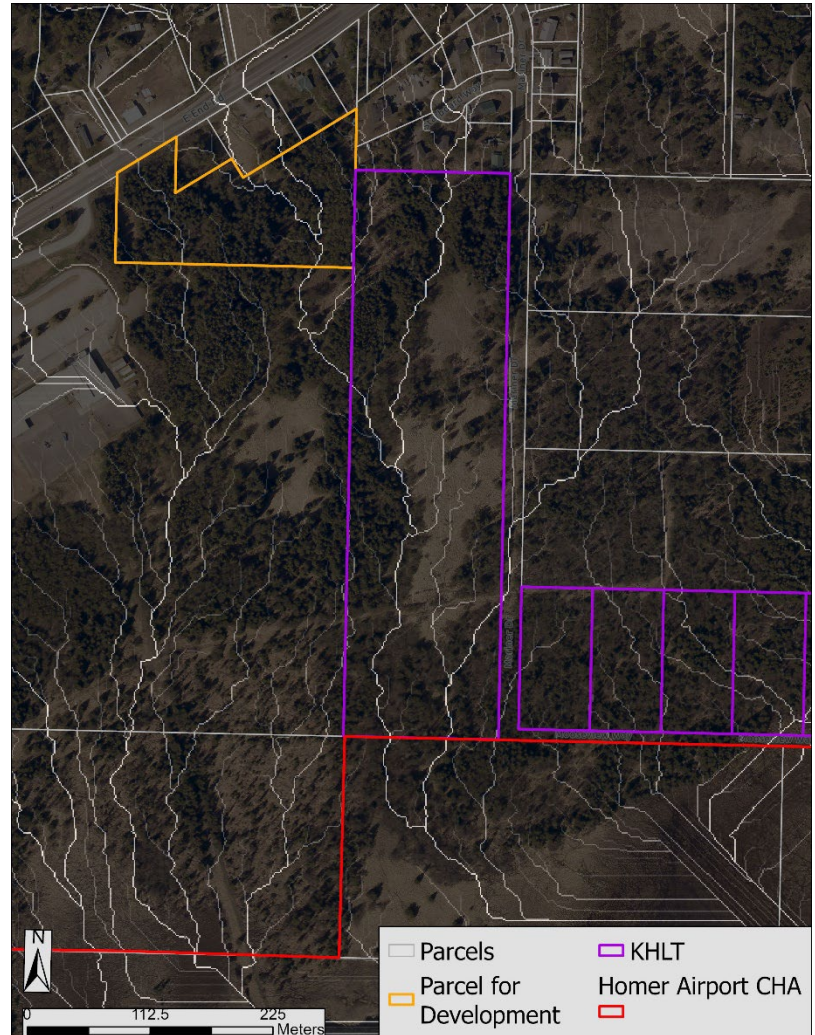


Figure 7: Estimated flow paths of stream channels within Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park and adjacent parcels (Source: Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve 1/27/2023)

KHLT suggests that once the landowner submits a subdivision plat for COH Planning Department review and subsequent public hearing and comments that it was up to the City Planner to administer and enforce the Zoning Code³. It appears that HCC is silent as to when to administer and enforce 21.50.020 Site development standards – Level one during the plating process, which can make public comment occur too late in the process. Discretion could have been used to recognize that 21.50.020 Site development standards – Level one should be considered during the plating phase of the process as this was no longer a situation where a landowner can cut their trees on their private parcel of land but that a subdivision is being developed that can impact the adjacent landowners and the *prominent natural and manmade features* associated with adjacent parcels. KHLT requests that COH Planning Department work with the Homer City Council to draft HCC to make it explicitly clear as to when and what code to administer and

² The Vicinity Map is not the same as the Forest Trails Subdivision Preliminary Plat Map as per KPB code 20.25.050 D.

³ <https://www.codepublishing.com/AK/Homer/#!/Homer21/Homer2190.html#21.90> Web accessed on 1/31/2023

enforce during the platting phase of subdivision development so that both the developer and the public are clear about when and how the process will be administered when requesting preliminary plat approval.

Buffers

Within the City Code there is no clear definition of a “*Buffer*”. However, the concept of riparian buffers is not new. KHLT considers the riparian buffer of stream corridors a primary conservation value in the lands we protect and a main criteria considered in our due diligence process in stewarding land. Below is a cited definition of a “*Buffer*”.

“Buffers are, by definition, natural vegetation left along the banks of a water body in the course of conducting a land-disturbing activity. This definition implies that the buffer has a finite width, starting at the water body, and ending at some point where the activity occurs. The alteration of the vegetation beyond the edge of the buffer means that the buffer boundary is exposed to conditions different from those in the natural forest. The edge of the buffer receives more sunlight, and is exposed to prevailing winds. From a design standpoint, then, in addition to the buffer width that is appropriate for the site conditions, buffer stability is an issue.”⁴

The key here in this definition is to maintain the natural vegetation in the buffer zone. KHLT recognizes that it is possible to clear all natural vegetation up to a stream edge and then replant it with native species but working with and leaving the natural vegetation in place provides a true natural buffer and stability for the given water body. KHLT is concerned that the ACOE jurisdictional stream channel of 625 feet has now been rendered meaningless because the landowner cleared most of the trees in this zone (see Figure 5).

Forest Trails Subdivision Pedestrian Amenities

According to the Memorandum from the COH Public Works Department to the City Planner included in this meeting packet, the Department considered HCC 11.04.120 Sidewalks and non-motorized transportation corridors. The memorandum provided maps depicting connector trails to KHLT’s Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park Nature Trail and the Paul Banks Elementary School Trail System which KHLT helps to maintain.

KHLT maintains the trailhead and kiosk at the end of Mariner Drive. In June 2002, KHLT granted the City of Homer a permanent sanitary sewer easement along the northern boundary of parcel # 17903056. In exchange for granting the easement, the city pledged to construct a small parking pad in the Mariner Drive right-of-way for use by visitors of Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park. The trailhead and kiosk are on KHLT property.

KHLT is pro trail and pro private property rights. KHLT wants to work with the landowner of the Forest Trails subdivision, Paul Banks Elementary School and the KPB School District, and the COH to improve trail connectivity and accessibility to schools, the greater community and continue to provide local recreational opportunities as recommended in the Homer Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. As mentioned above, KHLT is concerned about the impact this subdivision development will have on the management of the Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park and know that this development will have a direct impact on the amount of stewardship staff time and money required to meet our management obligations.

⁴ <https://forestry.alaska.gov/Assets/pdfs/forestpractices/1LitBufferDesign8-7-00.pdf> Web accessed on 1/31/2023.

KHLT takes great pride in our stewardship program and is careful to take into consideration all expenses related to perpetual ownership of land used and loved by the public. If future conversations propose trail connections to the KHLT property, as a nonprofit organization, KHLT will need to have the funds available to manage the increased property use.

KHLT appreciates the opportunity to comment and would be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joel Cooper", is positioned above the typed name.

Joel Cooper,
Stewardship Director

From: [Devony Lehner](#)
To: [Renee Krause](#)
Cc: [Janette Keiser](#)
Subject: wetlands related to proposed Forest Hills Subdivision
Date: Wednesday, February 1, 2023 3:23:09 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[homer_wetland_complexes_strategies_poster_reduced.pdf](#)
[kenaiwatershed.org-Discharge Slope Wetlands.pdf](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Greetings, Renee,

I'd appreciate it greatly if a printout of this email could be a laydown at tonight's Planning Commission meeting and the email itself could be forwarded to all the Planning Commissioners. Thank you so much! I sincerely apologize that I just saw this topic on tonight's agenda.

I notice on the Planning Commission agenda for tonight (Item 9.A) that the Forest Hills Subdivision east of Paul Banks Elementary School will be discussed. I've worked on wetlands assessments and planning efforts in the Homer area for many years, and I wondered if the commissioners are familiar with the wetland planning map developed by the city when it retained wetland permitting functions. Local resident Mike Gracz, Ph.D. could inform commissioners of how this map was developed, but I thought I could at least share a copy of it for those who would be interested. The attached pdf can be enlarged as much as needed to be quite readable, and I've included a couple of screenshots from the enlarged map.

As the screenshots show, the proposed subdivision is within what is called the "West Beluga Slope" wetland area (an area of discharge slope wetlands--see attached pdf about Discharge Slope wetlands). The management recommendation for this area (as included on the wetland planning map) is shown below the aerial image.



West Beluga Slope

Public lands: Publicly owned lands should be preserved as undisturbed wetlands.

Private lands: These should be prioritized and purchased over time for inclusion in a mitigation bank whose purpose is to preserve moose habitat. Development should be discouraged. A master plan should be developed for this area as it is a very important wetland complex, and it is probably the most threatened in the City of Homer.

I can provide more information about local wetlands assessments and management, but here I'll just refer the commissioners to a couple of publications that can be downloaded from the [Homer Soil and Water Conservation District publications page](#), these are

- Managing Kenai Peninsula Wetlands: <https://www.homerswcd.org/user-files/pdfs/ManagingKPWetlands2014.pdf>
- and the two volumes for the Beluga Planning Area, an area that encompasses the proposed subdivision:
 - <https://www.homerswcd.org/user-files/pdfs/Beluga-Planning-Area-Homer-Vol1.pdf>
 - <https://www.homerswcd.org/user-files/pdfs/Beluga-Planning-Area-Homer-Vol2.pdf>

I might also mention that the community "Drawdown" group during its first year focused on the value and importance of local wetlands, particularly peatlands.

Again, thank you so much, Renee!!

Devony Lehner

HOMER WETLAND COMPLEXES AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Moose Population and Movements Around Homer

Moose have been abundant on the Kenai Peninsula for over 100 years (Lutz 1960). Moose are an important resource for hunters and are a desired spectacle for local wildlife viewers and tourists. Densities around the state vary according to the quality of the habitat, predation levels, and other factors. The moose population around the greater Homer area (south of the Anchor River to Kachemak Bay) is currently over 500 animals and is considered a high-density population (Schwartz and Franzman 1989) with about 3 moose per square mile. This Homer moose population is currently the most abundant and productive population on the Kenai Peninsula. Moose from this population likely act as a "source" population in providing dispersing individuals to areas of lower moose densities around the lower Kenai Peninsula (Labonte et al. 1998).

Moose have evolved and adapted to habitat changes influenced by fire (Spencer and Hakala 1964, Lorange et al. 1990) and other natural disturbances. While disturbances such as fire increase the quality and quantity of browse for moose over time with the regeneration of new plant growth, the habitat changes caused by human development can remove important moose forage, eliminate access to existing forage, and/or fragment available browse into small and disconnected areas.

Moose and humans have shared the landscape in various Alaskan communities for many years. Moose inhabit areas within Anchorage because there still is available habitat. However, human moose conflicts continue to increase as the human population grows and the amount of moose habitat decreases. Moose have been radiocolored in Anchorage using GPS technology that records locations multiple times each day. The data have not been analyzed; however, moose in urban areas appear to spend most of their time in natural areas including parks, greenbelts, and undeveloped properties near developments (R. Sinnott, Anchorage-ADF&G biologist, pers. comm.). These "green areas" provide moose browse, cover to escape from human disturbance and to stay cool, bedding areas for rest and food processing, and undisturbed areas for calving.

Moose around Homer eat a wide variety of vegetation based on the nutritional quality and availability of the plant species. In the summer when vegetation is plentiful, moose eat leaves from birch and willow along with forbs, grasses, sedges, and aquatic plants (LeResche and Davis 1973). During the winter, food is often limiting and moose focus on twigs of limited nutritional quality such as birch, willow, and ornamentals planted around human residences. Willows are an integral part of the diet for moose especially in the winter. During the winter, when moose browse greater than 30% of the previous summers growth of willow stems, there can be an increase in the production of new stems the following year (Collins 2002). However, browsing over 80% of the previous years growth will increase the production of secondary plant compounds, which limits the amount of nutrition the moose receives from the plant (Collins 2002). Continued browsing of the new annual growth of a plant, such as paper birch, year after year can eventually kill the plant (Oldemeyer 1983). Every winter in Homer, most preferred willow species suffer nearly 100% browsing of the previous summers plant growth.

Moose spend much of their time along forest edges because of the availability of good browse and for avoiding human disturbance (Bangs et al. 1985). Utilization of moose browse species will increase with the severity of the winter snowfall (Collins 2002). Winter snow conditions are often severe in Homer. Deep snow conditions cover food sources and make traveling more energetically difficult for moose, especially calves. The deep snow winters of 1991/92, 1994/95, 1997/98, and 1998/99 resulted in severe over-browsing of the available moose habitat and caused the death of over 200 moose in and around the city of Homer due to malnutrition. Even in relatively mild winters such as 2005-06, over 10 moose died in residential areas in Homer during late winter due to malnutrition. These mortality totals do not include many moose that die due to malnutrition and are unreported or undetected.

It is likely that a low-density moose population could survive within expansive human development with or without mitigating development and proactive planning for protecting moose habitat. However, mitigation measures to protect certain critical moose habitat patches in Homer will improve the long-term sustainability of our local moose population. The Homer moose population is currently a high-density population and the growth in the local moose population during the past 5-10 years has bolstered moose numbers in areas surrounding Homer. Moreover, failing to protect important habitats for moose in Homer will ensure a large proportion of the population will die due to malnutrition every winter. Negative moose-human interactions will also rise as moose increase their movements between available food patches and act defensively while feeding on small browse patches around human residences.

The purpose of identifying important areas of moose habitat and mitigating development of these habitats is not to improve or enhance the moose habitat that currently exists. The purpose is to lessen the impact of habitat loss that is inevitable with development. The assumption is that the public wants the local moose population to be healthy and negative encounters between humans and moose to be low. A desired decrease in the moose population to reduce potential human-moose conflicts should warrant a detailed plan of moose reductions via hunting rather than a slow removal of their prime habitat in the city and subsequent mortality due to malnutrition when winter snow conditions are severe. If the direction of wildlife management is to maintain a healthy moose population, then an active habitat management program is required. Providing mitigation measures for the human development of high-quality moose habitat within the City of Homer is a wise first step.

Thomas McDonough
Wildlife Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game
5 June 2006



Synopsis

In 2005-2006 representatives of the City of Homer, US Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Kachemak Bay Research Reserve, Cook Inletkeeper, Kenai Watershed Forum, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Alaska Department of Fish & Game met to assess Homer wetlands. After a thorough review of methods, a scoring protocol was developed and all wetlands were scored.

These strategies arose from that effort and are currently being used by some agency personnel to comment on Clean Water Act Section 404 wetland permits.

Beluga Lake

Prohibit fill in Beluga Lake or the two associated wetland polygons (docks are permitted).

Beluga Slough

Development in tidally influenced wetlands should be prohibited.

Beluga Slough Discharge Slope

Development should be encouraged in this core area of Homer. Mitigate for the loss of moose habitat. Further development north of Bunnell Avenue and east of Main Street should be discouraged. A goal of this plan is to bring private parcels in this area into conservation status. Development in tidally influenced wetlands should be prohibited.

Bridge Creek Wetlands

The wetland management strategy for this watershed is the same as the Bridge Creek Watershed Protection ordinance, which includes a prohibition on filling wetlands.

Diamond Creek Wetlands

Maintain large lot sizes. Maintain a 100 ft setback of natural vegetation along either side of Diamond Creek and its tributaries. Crossings should be perpendicular to the channel, via bridge or oversized culvert and involve the minimum amount of fill necessary for safety. Where uplands exist on a lot they must be used prior to filling wetlands. If more than 3% of wetlands on any lot are converted to hardened surface they must be compensated for with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Downtown wetlands

On City-owned parcels, maintain greenbelts incorporating storm water retention designs. Where uplands exist on a lot they must be used prior to filling wetlands. If more than 3% of wetlands on any lot are converted to hardened surface they must be compensated for with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

East Beluga Discharge

Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Site design should include hydrologic connectivity to upstream and downstream parcels. Moose habitat values are high throughout. Moose habitat should be preserved or mitigated. Development along the border with the East Homer Drainageway Complex should maintain an 85 ft buffer of natural vegetation.

East Homer Drainageway

This area should be targeted for preservation and restoration. Encourage purchasing of private lots by Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, Moose Habitat Incorporated and others. If possible, restore hydrology and repair or implement suitable storm water management measures along Kachemak Drive. Some fill may be allowed along Kachemak Drive.

Kachemak Kettle

Maintain a 100 ft buffer along the East Homer Drainageway. Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Lampert Peatland

Maintain a 100 ft buffer around Lampert Lake. Mitigate for lost hydrologic, general habitat, and moose habitat functions in wetlands west of Lampert Lake. Discourage further development of wetlands east of Lampert Lake. Prohibit wetland filling more than 400 ft from Kachemak Drive.

Landfill Kettle

Restrict development to the south side of the wetlands and along the highway. Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated. The peatlands should be preserved and buffered with a 50 ft setback of undisturbed natural vegetation as they are highly functional for water retention and filtering.

Loop Kettle

Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

NE Slough

Retain natural vegetation as is practicable. Preserve existing wetlands for water quality functions and moose habitat.

N. Paul Banks Discharge

Encourage development here. Retain natural vegetation as is practicable. Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Ocean Kettle

Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Ocean Drive Kettle

Retain natural vegetation as is practicable. Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Outer Loop Kettle

Retain natural vegetation as is practicable. Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Overlook Park

Public lands: Maintain in conservation status and manage according to site management plan. Private Lands: Maintain moose habitat by limiting fill to the minimum necessary for a residence and minimum driveway and parking. No ditching or changes to drainageways should be allowed. Locate roads out of wetlands and out of drainageways to the extent possible. Maintain a 100 ft setback of natural vegetation on either side of Overlook Creek.

Palmer Drainageway and Fan

Maintain a 100 ft setback of natural vegetation on either side of Palmer Creek. Crossings should be perpendicular to the channel via bridge or oversized culvert and involve the minimum amount of fill necessary for safety. All of these wetlands should be preserved. A wetlands bank with Moose Habitat Incorporated will target private parcels in this area, along with the East Homer Drainageway, for purchase and preservation. Wetlands within the City of Homer that have been targeted for moose mitigation are eligible to receive credits from this bank.

Raven Kettle & Roger's Loop Depression

Avoid wetland fill. Maintain the hydrologic integrity of drainageways and water retention and filtration capacity of the complex. Where uplands exist on a lot they must be used prior to filling wetlands. If more than 3% of wetlands on any lot are converted to hardened surface they must be compensated for with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Runway Discharge

Within the airport boundary wetland hydrology should be maintained. Public lands: Those tracts outside the airport boundary should be maintained and managed for the values of the Homer Airport Critical Habitat Area. Private lands: Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

Upper Woodard

On City-owned parcels, maintain greenbelts incorporating storm water retention designs. Retain as much natural vegetation on individual lots as is practicable. Where uplands exist on a lot they must be used prior to filling wetlands. If more than 3% of wetlands on any lot are converted to hardened surface they must be compensated for with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

West Beluga Slope

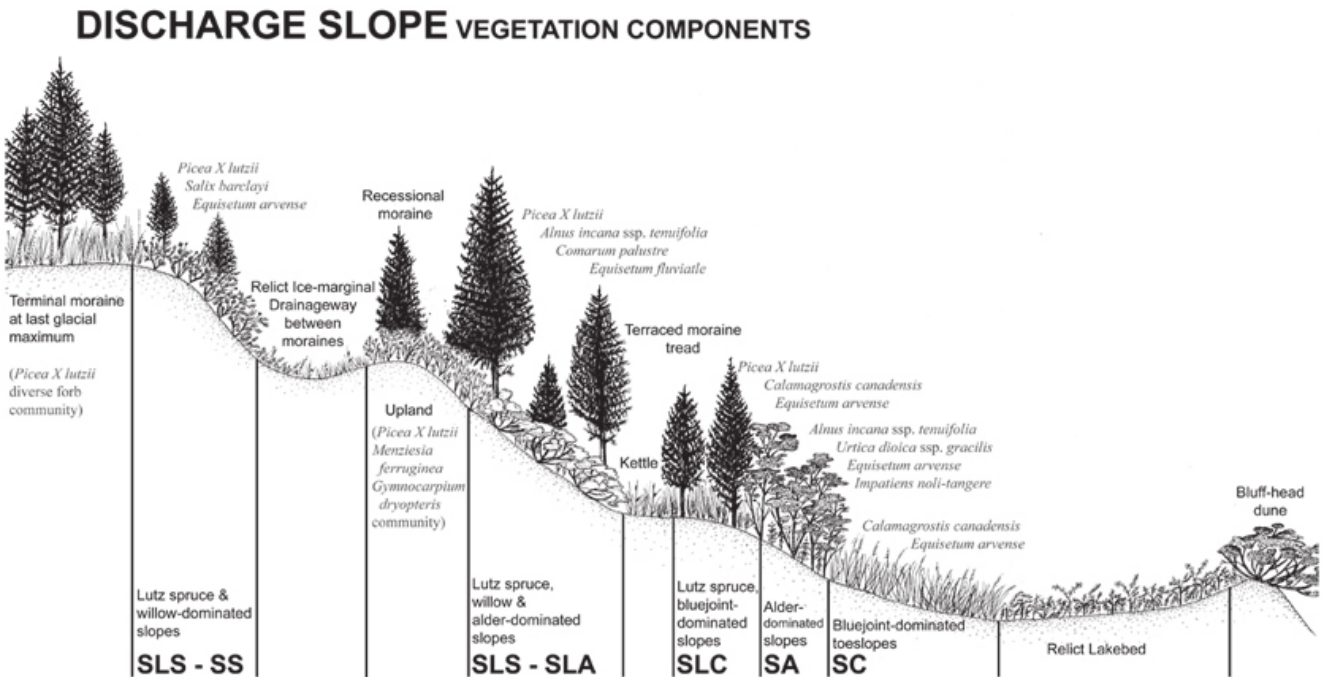
Public lands: Publicly owned lands should be preserved as undisturbed wetlands. Private lands: These should be prioritized and purchased over time for inclusion in a mitigation bank whose purpose is to preserve moose habitat. Development should be discouraged. A master plan should be developed for this area as it is a very important wetland complex, and it is probably the most threatened in the City of Homer.

West Homer Discharge

Retain natural vegetation as is practicable. Accelerated runoff from hardened surfaces will be offset with swales and/or runoff retention ponds. Loss of moose habitat should be mitigated.

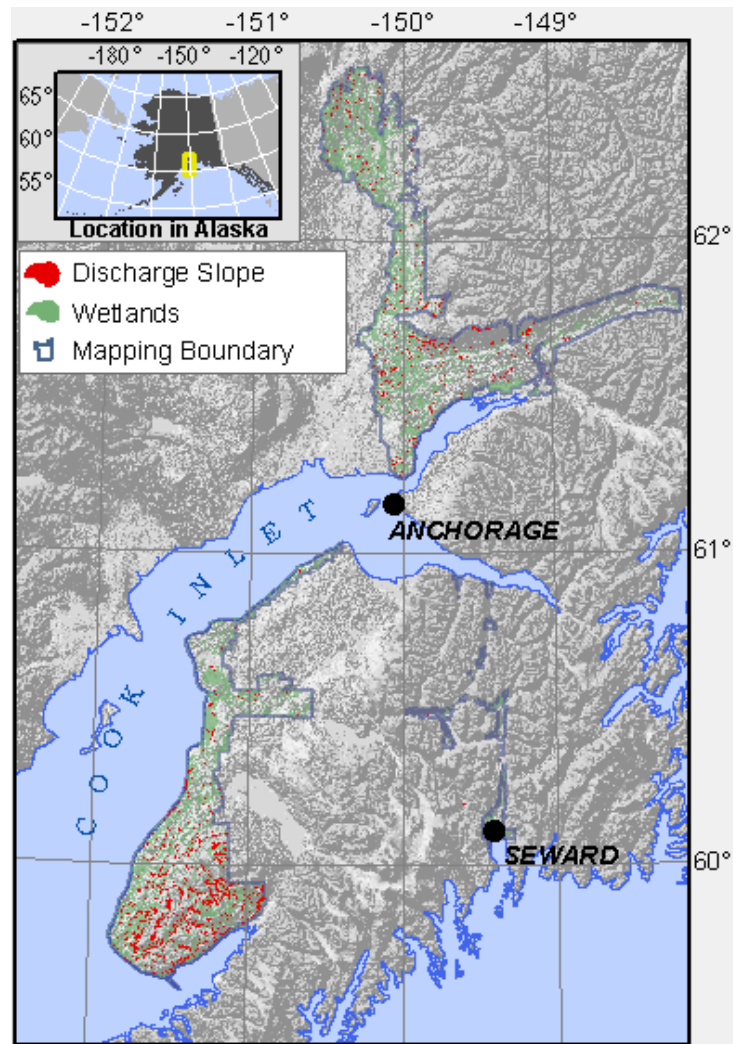
"Natural Vegetation"

Natural vegetation consists of the vegetation that would be on the site without human manipulations. Lawns are not natural vegetation. Natural vegetation retains water and filters runoff. It is important for flood control and to remove pollutants from water running off roofs, paved areas, lawns, and cleared ground.



Artwork by Conrad Field

Mapping components of and common plants in Discharge Slope wetlands



Occurrence of Discharge Slope wetlands in the Cook Inlet
Lowlands Mapping Area

Discharge Slope wetlands occur over hydric mineral soils where shallow groundwater discharges at or near the surface. Discharge Slopes typically occur at the transition between wetland and upland where the boundary can be indistinct. These wetlands often support high water tables only seasonally, and therefore can be difficult to identify. Shallow groundwater wells in the Mat-Su Valley indicate that sites with late-season water tables deeper than 150 cm can support hydric conditions sufficient to meet wetland criteria (Clark, 1995). Discharge Slopes are the most extensive geomorphic type on the Kenai Peninsula, and a Discharge Slope dominated by Lutz spruce (*Picea X Lutzii*) is the most common mapping component there. Especially on the southern Kenai Peninsula, extensive deposits of glacial till, which is saturated, but slowly permeable, support Discharge Slopes (see map figure, above). The unsorted till is most prevalent as terraces along the western front of the Caribou Hills physiographic subdivision of Karlstrom (1964). In other areas of the Basin these till deposits are not so extensive, and can be more permeable.



Lutz spruce with Barclay's willow and field horsetail at the margin of a small fen in the Caribou Hills.



A spruce and birch stand with a bluejoint – field horsetail understory on a kame toe slope in the Soldotna Creek watershed.



A thinleaf alder stand on a toe slope near the mouth of the Kenai River.



Lutz spruce with a rusty menziesia / field horsetail understory on a terrace riser foot slope above the large fen east of Anchor Point.

Discharge Slope components are named after dominant plant species. Broad areas at the toe-slope position of the western margin of the Caribou Hills on the Kenai Peninsula are dominated by Lutz spruce and alder and support near-surface groundwater discharge. In the area between Palmer and Houston, Discharge Slopes are frequently forested with Alaska paper birch (*Betula neoalaskana*) and/or white spruce (*Picea glauca*) with an understory of field horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*). Although the indicator status of paper birch (*B. papyrifera*) has been changed to facultative in the Cook Inlet Lowlands, it likely does not occur there. However, Alaska paper birch (*B. neoalaskana*), which is probably the most common species in the region, is listed as facultative upland on the 2013 [list of plant indicator status](#), along with white spruce and Lutz spruce (**P. X lutzii**), complicating wetland determinations on forested Discharge Slopes in the region. Further complications result because recent taxonomic changes suggest that much of the birch on the southern Kenai Peninsula is *B. kenaica* which has no status on the wetland plant indicator list (and therefore may be considered an upland plant). Good local knowledge, consideration of the position of the site in the surrounding landscape and augering to depth is sometimes required to accurately delineate these wetlands.

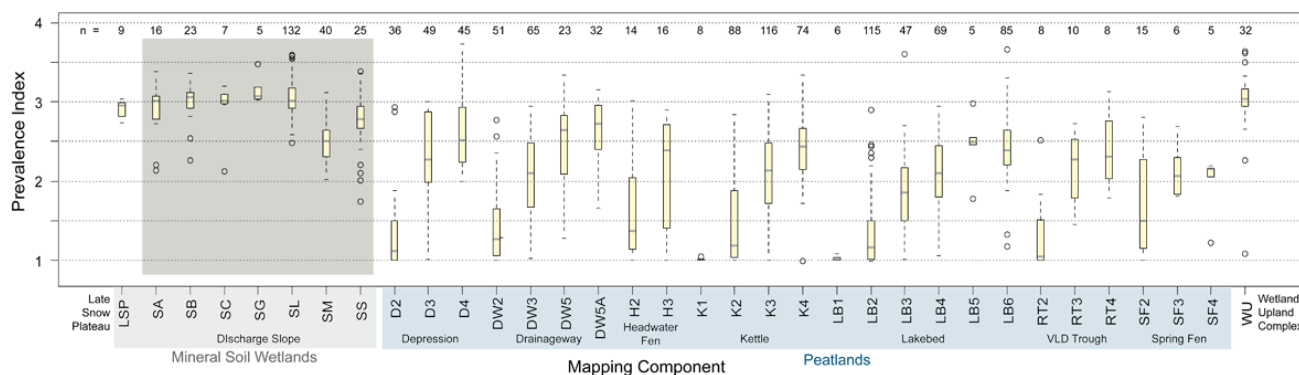


NWI and HGM

Discharge Slope wetlands are primarily classified in the US Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) as forested palustrine wetlands (PFO). Forested wetlands were frequently overlooked on the NWI, which was mapped at 1:63,360. Shrub- and herbaceous-dominated Discharge Slopes are classified as PSS and PEM respectively.

The LLWW Hydrogeomorphic classification of Tiner (2003) would classify most Discharge Slope wetlands as Terrene Slope groundwater-dominated Throughflow wetlands. If there is no wetland connected up slope, such as along upper terraces or stream valley walls, then they are Terrene Slope Outflow wetlands. A few have Paludified Slope wetland components, although paludification is uncommon, if present at all on the lowlands.

Plant Prevalence Index in Common Wetland Mapping Components

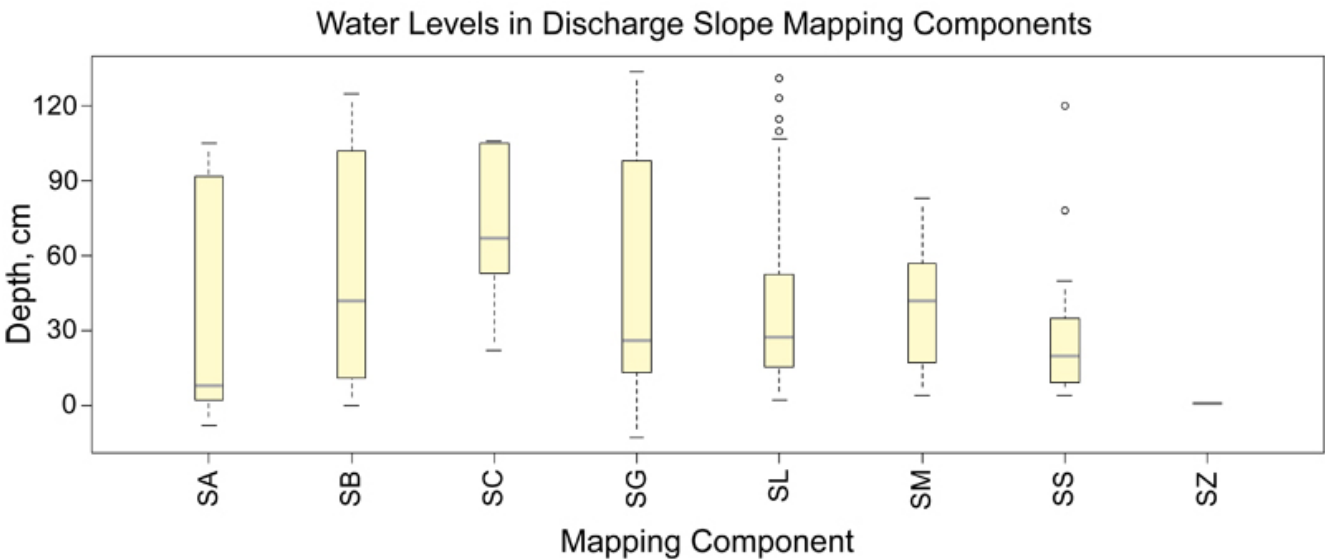


Box plots of Plant Prevalence Index (PI) in common wetland mapping components. Discharge Slope wetlands (highlighted in gray) exhibit uniformly high values for PI. Prevalence Index is calculated from the percent cover and the wetland indicator status of each plant found in a wetland plot. Lower values indicate a higher prevalence of plants assigned a wetland indicator status of obligate or facultative. Indicator status is assigned nationally, by state, and by regions within states. Prevalence

Index may be a better descriptor of the variability of the water table than one-time measurements of the actual position of the water table. Measurements are often made before the water table has had time to fully equilibrate, and are dependent on antecedent conditions. However, if Indicator Status is accurately assigned the plants present will integrate long-term average conditions.

Although Prevalence Index is a good proxy for water table position and variability in many settings, PI may be a less reliable indicator on Discharge Slopes. Lower values of PI should indicate a water table closer to the surface for a longer portion of the growing season. For example, an Index value equal to one indicates that the plot supported only wetland obligate plants (occur in wetlands greater than 99% of the time under natural conditions) and a Prevalence Index value greater than 3 suggests that the plot may not be a wetland for jurisdictional purposes. Prevalence Index may not be as reliable an indicator of water table depth and variation in Discharge Slope wetlands because the bi-modal ecological distribution of many plants can complicate assignment of indicator status. For example, bluejoint reed grass and birch may grow over well-drained soils on south-facing slopes as well as on saturated toe-slopes at the margins of peatlands.. A single value for Prevalence Index is therefore impossible to assign for some plant species. The taxonomic changes discussed above further complicate accurate assignment of indicator status within regions.

However, box plots of water level measurements made during visits to Discharge Slope wetlands generally corroborate the PI values, showing that these wetlands most often occur at the transition between wetland and upland. Median water levels in Discharge Slope mapping components are often near 30 cm below the surface, the wetland cut-off.



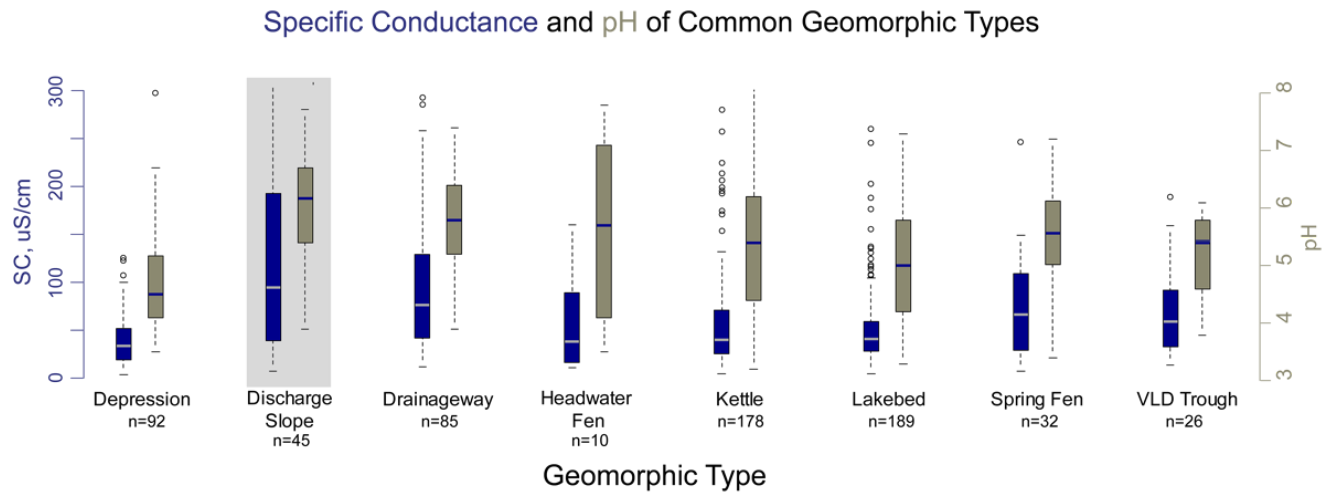
A= alder (n=10), B= birch (n=18), C= bluejoint reed grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*) (n=5), G= White spruce (*Picea glauca*) (n=5), L= Lutz spruce (*Picea x lutzii*) (n=108), M= black spruce (*Picea mariana*) (n=26), S = willow (*Salix* spp.) (n=15), Z = a single high elevation meadow on the upper slopes of Baldy Ridge, above Wasilla in the Matanuska Valley.

Note however, that some deviations are apparent. Compare the PI values to depth at black spruce Discharge Slopes (SM), for example. PI is low, but water level measurements are relatively deep. Alder Discharge Slopes (SA) have a shallow median water level, yet median PI is near 3.

Because of these problems with water level variation at the wetland/upland transition, other factors such as slope, aspect, and elevation are more important in driving differences among Discharge Slope wetlands. By contrast, water level variability is very important in peatlands (highlighted in blue in the first graph). Because water level variation is less important in Discharge Slope wetlands, plant species dominance was chosen in place of a hydrologic component to distinguish mapping components. Within the hydrogeomorphic setting of discharge slopes, plant species probably best reflect unique combinations of environmental conditions in different wetlands.

In the box plots, yellow boxes enclose the first through third quartile (where 50% of the data values lie); the gray bar is the median, and the whiskers extend to the last value within 1.5 times the inner quartile range. Values lying beyond 1.5 times the inner quartile range are plotted as hollow circles. The number of samples for each map component is given across the top.

Box plots of specific conductance (SC- blue) and pH (brown) in the common geomorphic types. A few values for specific conductance greater than 300 micro-Siemens/cm are not shown. Discharge Slope wetlands (highlighted in gray) have the highest median values for both pH and specific conductance when compared to wetlands in other common geomorphic settings in Cook Inlet Basin. The high values indicate that that groundwater connections to the surface are relatively strong.



In box plots, the boxes enclose the first through third quartile (where 50% of the data values lie); the horizontal bar in the box is the median value, and the whiskers extend to the last value within 1.5 times the inner quartile range. Values lying beyond 1.5 times the inner quartile range are plotted as hollow circles.

Wetland Indicators

Table 1. Wetland Indicators in Discharge Slope map components throughout the Cook Inlet Lowlands.								
Map Component	Peat Depth (cm)	Water Table (cm)	Redox features (cm)	Saturation (cm)	pH	Alkalinity mg/l as CaCO3	Specific Conductance μS/cm	Plant Prevalence Index
SA	90 (16)	26 (15)	23 (6)	3 (7)	6.2 (8)	39.0 (3)	177 (5)	2.92 (16)

SB	82 (19)	54 (19)	29 (15)	42 (18)	6.5 (10)	61.6 (2)	182 (9)	Page 2.29 of 239
SC	57 (7)	71 (5)	24 (6)		7.0 (1)			2.93 (7)
SG	20 (5)	52 (5)	14 (4)	47 (4)	5.7 (4)	3.0 (1)	75 (4)	3.16 (5)
SL	31 (128)	38 (108)	26 (82)		5.4 (9)	4.8 (4)	49 (2)	3.05 (132)
SM	46 (40)	37 (32)	34 (15)	28 (24)	5.4 (12)	0.0 (4)	62 (10)	2.49 (40)
SS	43 (22)	27 (18)	28 (9)	9 (3)	6.7 (5)	84.3 (4)	259 (5)	2.72 (25)
SZ	23 (1)	1 (1)		1 (1)	6.0 (1)		18.4 (1)	2.35 (1)

Explanation:

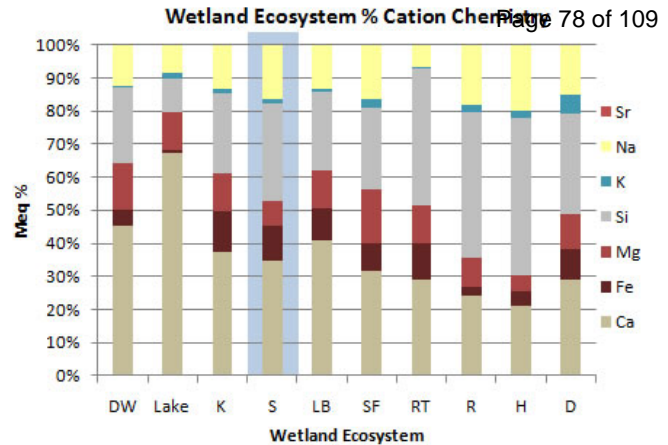
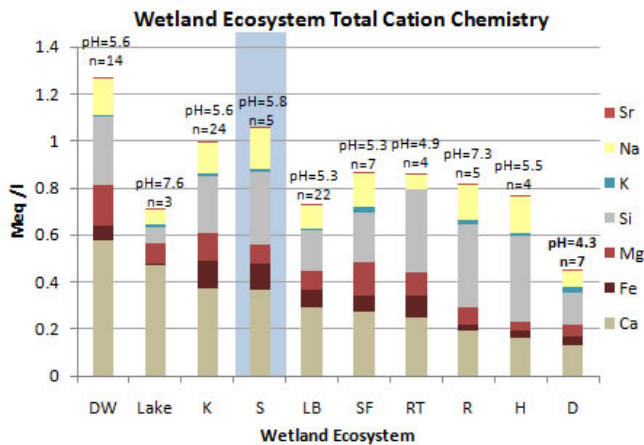
- Numbers in parentheses indicate number of samples.
- Peat depth is a minimum, because some sites had thicker peat deposits than the length of the auger used (between 160 – 493 cm).
- Water table depth is a one time measurement. At sites with seasonally variable water tables this measurement reflects both the conditions that year, and the time of year.
- Redox features with deep depths typically indicate deeper peat deposits, which mask redox indicators so the depth corresponds to the peat thickness.
- pH and specific conductance measured in surface water or a shallow pit with a YSI 63 meter calibrated each sample.
- Plant Prevalence Index calculated based on Alaska indicator status downloaded from the USDA PLANTS database, which may use different values than the 1988 list.

Soils and Plant Communities

Table 2. Common soils and plant communities found in Discharge Slope wetlands.		
Map Component	<u>COMMON SOILS</u>	<u>COMMON PLANT COMMUNITIES</u>
SA	Typic Cryorthents <u>BELUGA</u>	<u>Alnus viridis ssp. sinuata / Equisetum arvense</u> <u>Alnus viridis ssp. sinuata / Equisetum palustre</u> <u>Alnus incana ssp. tenuifolia / Calamagrostis</u> Paper birch – White spruce / Thinleaf alder

SB	<u>TYPIC</u> <u>CRYAQUENTS</u> <u>ESTELLE</u> <u>KICHATNA</u>	Paper birch – White spruce / Thinleaf alder Paper birch – Black spruce / Thinleaf alder	Page 77 of 109
SC	<u>BELUGA</u> Typic Cryorthents	<u>Calamagrostis canadensis – Equisetum arvense</u>	
SG	<u>STARICHKOF</u> <u>HISTOSOLS</u> <u>CRYAQUEPTS</u> <u>SOLDOTNA</u>	Paper birch – White spruce / Thinleaf alder <u>Picea x lutzii / Salix barclayi / Calamagrostis canadensis</u>	
SL	<u>STARICHKOF</u> <u>KILLEY</u> <u>DOROSHIN</u> <u>MUTNALA</u>	<u>Picea x lutzii / Salix barclayi / Calamagrostis canadensis</u> <u>Picea x lutzii / Equisetum arvense – Calamagrostis canadensis</u> <u>Picea x lutzii / Menziesia ferruginea / Equisetum arvense</u>	
SM	<u>HISTOSOLS</u> <u>CRYAQUEPTS</u> <u>STARICHKOF</u>	<u>Picea mariana / Equisetum sylvaticum – Ledum palustre ssp. decumbens</u> <u>Picea mariana / Equisetum arvense – Betula nana</u>	
SS	<u>KILLEY</u> <u>STARICHKOF</u> <u>DOROSHIN</u>	<u>Salix barclayi / Rich</u> <u>Salix barclayi / Calamagrostis canadensis – Equisetum arvense</u> <u>Picea x lutzii / Salix barclayi / Calamagrostis canadensis</u>	
SZ	<u>CRYAQUEPTS</u>	UNDEFINED	
HISTOSOLS are any organic soils greater than 40 cm deep.			

Cation Chemistry



Cation chemistry by Geomorphic Component. Discharge Slope wetlands (highlighted in blue) have high cation concentrations compared to other Geomorphic Components. This indicates the strong groundwater discharge influence on porewater chemistry. Although calcium and silicon show the greatest concentrations, magnesium and iron concentrations in our area are high for natural waters. DW = Drainageway, K = Kettle; S = Discharge Slope; LB = Lakebed; SF = Spring Fen; RT = VLD Trough; R= Riparian; H = Headwater Fen; D = Depression.

Samples were collected from a surface pool where possible, otherwise from a separate shallow pit excavated to just below the water table. All samples were filtered through either a 0.2 micron filter using a disposable syringe, or pumped through a 0.45 micron filter using a peristaltic pump. Samples were acidified with ultra-pure nitric acid and kept cool until analysis on a direct current plasma spectrometer to about 5% accuracy (except K, 10-20% accuracy).

Discharge Slope Vegetation Components:

Map unit names are made of combinations of map components. A suffix 'c' indicates a created wetland, and a 'd' indicates a highly disturbed wetland.

SA: Dominated by alder, usually *Alnus incana* ssp. *tenuifolia*

- **NWI:** PSS1Bn,g
- **HGM:** Terrene Slope groundwater-dominated Throughflow

SB: Dominated by birch. Taxonomy of local birches is problematic; tree birches in this project have been designated *Betula papyrifera*, realizing that *B. Kenaica* is widespread, and other taxa are probably present.

- **NWI:** PFO1Bn,g
- **HGM:** Terrene Slope Outflow

SC: Dominated by bluejoint reed grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*).

- **NWI:** PEM1Bn,g
- **HGM:** Terrene Slope groundwater-dominated Throughflow

SG: Dominated by white spruce (*Picea glauca*); occurs primarily in the Matanuska Susitna Valley. Much of the spruce that is not black spruce (*P. mariana*) is Lutz spruce (*Picea X Lutzii*), a hybrid between the more continental white spruce and coastal Sitka spruce (*P. sitchensis*). Page 79 of 109

- **NWI:** PFO4Bn
- **HGM:** Terrene Slope Outflow

SL: Dominated by Lutz spruce (*Picea X Lutzii*), a hybrid between the more continental white spruce (*P. glauca*) and coastal Sitka spruce (*P. sitchensis*). Most common on the Kenai Peninsula, especially closer to maritime influence.

- **NWI:** PFO4,5Bn
- **HGM:** Terrene Slope Outflow, if adjacent to upland.

If wetlands above and below: groundwater-dominated Throughflow.

SM: Dominated by black spruce (*Picea mariana*).

- **NWI:** PFO4Bn,g
- **HGM:** Terrene Slope Outflow

SP: Dominated by Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), two wetland polygons in Seward.

- **NWI:** PFO4Bn
- **HGM:** Terrene Slope Outflow

SS: Dominated by willow, usually Barclay willow (*Salix barclayi*).

- **NWI:** PSS1Bn
- **HGM:** Terrene Slope groundwater-dominated Throughflow,

if wetlands above and below. If wetlands only below, then: Terrene Slope Outflow.

SZ: High elevation mountain meadows of various lush forb assemblages. Mapped only along the upper slopes on Baldy Ridge, above Wasilla.

- **NWI:** PEM1Bn
- **HGM:** Terrene Slope groundwater-dominated Throughflow


Table 3. Summary of and Cook Inlet Discharge Slope Map Unit occurrence.				
Map Unit	N	Hectares	% Polygons	% Area
SA	70	288	0.25	0.15
SAB	1	0.3	0.00	0.00
SAC	20	167	0.08	0.09
SAG	3	12	0.01	0.01

SAL	50	604	0.21	0.32
SAM	3	20	0.01	0.01
SAS	9	50	0.04	0.03
SB	90	991	0.37	0.53
SBA	4	19	0.02	0.01
SBd	3	7	0.01	0.00
SBG	7	14	0.03	0.01
SBM	10	295	0.04	0.16
SC	38	206	0.16	0.11
SCA	20	114	0.08	0.06
SCAd	5	9	0.02	0.00
SCd	3	0.6	0.01	0.00
SCG	2	2.7	0.01	0.00
SCL	10	63	0.04	0.03
SCLd	7	7.9	0.03	0.00
SCS	20	107	0.08	0.06
SCSd	1	24	0.00	0.01
SG	59	861	0.25	0.46
SGA	4	84	0.02	0.04
SGB	19	123	0.08	0.05
SGC	3	69	0.01	0.04
SGM	9	105	0.04	0.05
SGS	4	15	0.02	0.01
SL	1463	18,715	6.08	9.97
SLA	66	635	0.27	0.34
SLC	7	49	0.03	0.03
SLCd	2	2.1	0.01	0.00
SLd	6	37	0.02	0.02
SLM	58	447	0.24	0.24

SLMd	2	2.9	0.01	0.00
SLS	336	3164	3.18	2.53
SLSd	1	0.7	0.00	0.00
SM	765	4851	3.18	2.53
SMA	5	34	0.02	0.02
SMB	31	200	0.13	0.11
SMC	1	1.7	0.00	0.00
SMd	7	29	0.03	0.02
SMG	24	121	0.10	0.06
SML	42	340	0.17	0.18
SMLd	1	5.9	0.00	0.00
SMS	9	55	0.04	0.03
SPS	2	6.7	0.01	0.00
SS	315	1580	1.31	0.00
SSA	17	109	0.07	0.06
SSC	29	176	0.12	0.09
SSG	3	15	0.01	0.01
SSL	272	2149	1.13	1.14
SSM	13	63	0.05	0.03
SZ	20	214	0.08	0.11

Review

Riparian Buffers as a Critical Landscape Feature: Insights for Riverscape Conservation and Policy Renovations

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Abstract: Riparian zones are critical for functional integrity of riverscapes and conservation of riverscape biodiversity. The synergism of intermediate flood-induced disturbances, moist microclimates, constant nutrient influx, high productivity, and resource heterogeneity make riparian zones disproportionately rich in biodiversity. Riparian vegetation intercepts surface-runoff, filters pollutants, and supplies woody debris as well as coarse particulate organic matter (e.g., leaf litter) to the stream channel. Riparian zones provide critical habitat and climatic refugia for wildlife. Numerous conservation applications have been implemented for riparian-buffer conservation. Although fixed-width buffers have been widely applied as a conservation measure, the effectiveness of these fixed buffer widths is debatable. As an alternative to fixed-width buffers, we suggest adoption of variable buffer widths, which include multiple tiers that vary in habitat structure and ecological function, with each tier subjected to variable management interventions and land-use restrictions. The riparian-buffer design we proposed can be delineated throughout the watershed, harmonizes with the riverscape concept, thus, a prudent approach to preserve biodiversity and ecosystem functions at variable spatial extents. We posit remodeling existing conservation policies to include riparian buffers into a broader conservation framework as a keystone structure of the riverscape. Watershed-scale riparian conservation is compatible with landscape-scale conservation of fluvial systems, freshwater protected-area networks, and aligns with enhancing environmental resilience to global change. Sustainable multiple-use strategies can be retrofitted into watershed-scale buffer reservations and may harmonize socio-economic goals with those of biodiversity conservation.

Keywords: riparian zones; riparian buffers; streams; rivers; riverscapes; watersheds; catchments; conservation



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1. Introduction

Riparian zones are influenced by hydrodynamic forces in fluvial ecosystems (i.e., lotic systems, such as rivers and streams) and represent transitional aquatic-terrestrial interface bordering these ecosystems, and as such have numerous functions. They connect terrestrial and aquatic habitats through surface runoff, subsurface flow, and flooding [1–3]. Riparian zones are characterized by saturated soils, elevated water tables, and a three-dimensional configuration, which extends laterally into the river basin, vertically into the riparian canopy and groundwater, and longitudinally along fluvial channels [1–4]. Through surface and subsurface hydrologic processes, riparian buffers colligate waterbodies with adjacent uplands and govern the exchange of energy and matter between aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems [3,5]. The three-dimensional configuration, mediation of energy and matter flow, habitat heterogeneity, and the unique biotic communities make riparian zones an integral constituent of riverscapes [6,7]. The constituents and conceptual framework of riverscapes vary considerably among various disciplines of applied and foundational ecology. Lotic systems and their biota, including the spatiotemporal dynamics (e.g., species-habitat and community-scale interactions) inherent to these systems,

nested within socioecological landscapes are collectively referred to as a riverscape [8,9]. While accommodating this broader viewpoint, riverscapes can be defined as spatially structured, hierarchically organized, heterogeneous habitat mosaics nested within the river continuum [10–14].

Natural disturbances in riparian systems enhance environmental complexity both spatially and temporally [3,15]. Through variable flow regimes, alternative erosion-deposition patterns, and channel migration, fluvial processes have sculpted riparian zones into land-form mosaics with modified geomorphology and edaphic conditions [1,3]. Riparian vegetation is substantially structured by the hydrologic gradient (i.e., the variability in the duration, frequency, and timing of inundation). Interspecific differences in flood tolerance and moisture dependence produce spatial and temporal patterns in the riparian community composition and cover types along the hydrologic gradient [16]. Riparian zones have a disproportionate influence on the local ecosystem, yielding a multitude of ecosystem services, thus considered a keystone resource within the landscape [3,4,17].

Studies that have spanned across numerous global ecoregions have emphasized critical and complex functions of riparian zones, including regulation of aquatic thermal properties [3,4]; bank stabilization [1,17]; nutrient assimilation, silt and sediment retention [18,19]; groundwater recharge [3]; and input of woody debris and other allochthonous matter [1,15].

Given these complex ecosystem services and functions and extensive habitat degradation experienced by lotic systems, the scientific community has widely recognized the need for riparian zone conservation. Numerous natural-resource management and conservation authorities have implemented regulatory policies and established guidelines targeting riparian-buffer delineation. The biological effectiveness of existing policies is debatable, while such regulatory enforcement has received substantial criticism [20,21]. Existing policy standards in certain jurisdictions can be outdated, resulting in conflicts with the current scientific comprehension of riparian ecology. Originally intended to mitigate non-point source pollution, riparian buffers can be managed for wildlife conservation as well as to boost ecosystem functions [22,23]. Although the ecological role of riparian zones has been long recognized, scientific literature on riparian buffers mostly focuses on either a single taxon (e.g., fish, amphibians) or a handful of ecosystem functions (e.g., nutrient filtering, pollution remediation). We argue that a review of current literature on riparian systems will lay a foundation for a multi-taxa multi-functional focus on riparian-zone conservation, painting a holistic ecological framework to reinforce policies and regulatory actions. Many studies on riparian-buffer management are shoehorned towards specific localities or geographic regions. Thus, an overview of such region-specific approaches and their applicability across broader geographic contexts are both prudent and timely needs. In this review, specifically targeting temperate North American riparian systems, we intend to (i) explore their overall ecological benefits; (ii) discuss threats and conservation challenges; and (iii) synthesize conservation actions and policy reforms targeting riparian conservation. Our review will help conceptualize conservation potential and ecological values of riparian buffers and thereby provide a foundation to formulate novel conservation approaches to protect and manage riparian zones.

2. Riparian Buffers—A Nexus for Biodiversity

Riparian habitats represent a nexus of biodiversity where both species richness and density of wildlife are disproportionately high compared to nearby terrestrial habitats [1,24]. Many semi-aquatic and aquatic organisms, particularly those with complex life histories (e.g., amphibians), depend on riparian zones for a significant portion of their lifecycles [25–27]. Riparian zones in the United States account for <5% of the land area (15–50 million hectares) yet provide habitat for over 70% of vertebrate species and are thus considered a keystone habitat [28]. In the arid southwestern United States, riparian habitats account for <1% of the landscape yet are enriched with 80–90% of regional wildlife diversity [29]. Riparian zones exhibit high levels of species richness and diversity and

provide habitats for numerous habitat specialists. Riparian systems can act as local refugia for species, thus serving as population sources to support recolonization of disturbed habitats, such as commercial timberlands [30,31]. Bats and birds use forested riparian corridors as flyways, foraging grounds, and roosting sites [32,33]. During the migratory season, the avifaunal richness of riparian zones is at least an order of magnitude higher than the nearby uplands due to increased foraging opportunities and overwintering sites [34]. Amphibian dependency on riparian buffers is pronounced in the Pacific Northwest of the United States, where 47 species are either obligate or facultative stream associates [35]. Many turtles are particularly dependent upon riparian buffers for dispersal, foraging, hibernation, and oviposition. Floral biodiversity, particularly bryophytes, pteridophytes, and herbaceous plants, is remarkably high in riparian buffers [36]. In northern hardwood forests, native vascular plant richness in riparian forests was remarkably higher compared to upland, interior forests, while invasive and ruderal species were less frequent in the former [37]. Marked floristic species turnover rate (beta diversity) between riparian buffers and adjacent uplands heightens species complementarity along the aquatic-upland gradient, which also generates a greater landscape-scale species richness (gamma diversity) [15].

3. Riparian Zones—Ecological Functions

3.1. Reciprocal Energy and Matter Subsidies

Riparian zones, particularly those with mature forests, supply copious amounts of organic matter and allochthonous input to fuel food-web dynamics in lotic systems (Figure 1). Forests provide an abundant supply of woody debris into rivers, which trap sediments, fine and coarse particulate organic matter, and silt, forming habitats and microsites for aquatic macroinvertebrates and fish [38,39]. Coarse particulate organic matter and fine particulate organic matter are the nutrient sources for detritivores and shredders, which in turn become profitable foraging resources for predatory vertebrates [40,41]. Through decomposition, microbial biofilms growth on woody debris yields dissolved and suspended organic matter [42], which is critical for buffering pH and sequestering heavy metals [17].

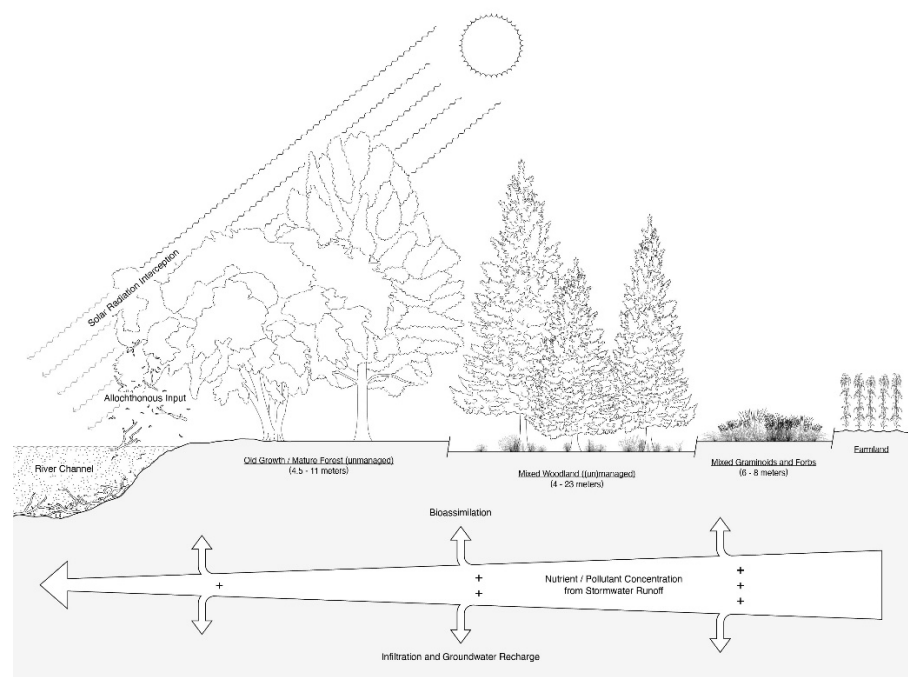


Figure 1. Ecological structure, functions, and multi-tiered delineation of riparian buffers.

Often overlooked or undervalued, the biphasic life histories of many organisms drive aquatic-upland reciprocal energy and nutrient subsidies, highlighting an inextricable connection of the riparian zone to the river itself [43]. Shifting trophic dynamics from

allochthonous to autochthonous production and replacement of specialist feeding guilds (i.e., insectivores, predators) with generalist grazers has been documented after riparian zones have been harvested or otherwise degraded [44–46]. The ultimate consequences of such trophic shifts will likely lead to biotic homogenization where the species turnover and functional diversity of aquatic biodiversity from headwaters to lower reaches attenuate along the river continuum [47].

3.2. Critical Habitat, Channel Stabilization, and Nonpoint-Source Pollution Mitigation

Riparian vegetation supplies particulate organic matter in the form of leaf litter and woody debris of variable sizes and decay classes that structure geomorphology and habitat complexity of the aquatic core-forming microsites and refugia for aquatic fauna [17,40,41]. Woody debris resists erosive water currents and redistributes the flow throughout the riverbed resulting in mosaic patterns of erosion and alluvial depositions along river corridors, which further contribute to habitat heterogeneity [3,23]. Deep-water pools formed by debris dams provide critical habitats for spawning and refugia during low-flow seasons [48]. Further, the abundance of large within-stream woody debris is positively associated with turtle density, as it provides critical thermoregulatory sites [49,50].

By intercepting precipitation and slowing surface runoff, riparian buffers filter silt and sediments, heavy metals, agrochemicals, organic wastes, and pathogens, thereby preventing these contaminants from reaching the aquatic core or groundwater [17,19,39,51]. These buffering functions become crucial in urban and agricultural landscapes where nonpoint-source pollution via surface runoff intensifies during rainstorms [51,52]. The root masses of riparian vegetation assist in maintaining the physical structure of soil and reducing soil erosion [17,39]. Decelerated surface runoff enhances groundwater recharge through the riparian soils, even during storm surges [17,53]. Water quality metrics of buffered aquatic systems are more stable than unbuffered systems. For instance, enhanced siltation elevated peak discharge velocities, and channel incision was reported in unbuffered rivers. In contrast, buffered rivers contained the highest volumes of riverbed woody debris, lower sand/silt content, and reduced river discharge, as well as lowered fecal coliform and nutrient concentrations [54,55].

Riparian buffers intercept sedimentation and prevent the loss of interstitial spaces of stream beds, which represent critical habitat for aquatic organisms [31,53,56]. Buffered streams support a diverse aquatic macroinvertebrate community, including environmentally sensitive taxa [54]. In contrast, freshwater turtles inhabiting streams without adequate riparian buffering, particularly those dissecting urban landscapes, exhibit skewed sex ratios and age structures, reduced juvenile recruitment, heightened incidental mortality, and subsidized predation [56,57].

3.3. Climate Change Resistance and Resilience

Riparian zones are both spatially and temporally dynamic and stochastic; as such, riparian biota has evolved life-history strategies and adaptations under environmental variations, which may make them either more resilient or resistant to climate change [5]. Riparian vegetation exhibits a wide array of adaptive morphological and physiological traits—heterophylly (production of variable leaf forms in response to environmental conditions), heteroblasty (abrupt morphological changes in the ontogenetic development), variable-depth root systems, propagule dormancy, and persistence under variable disturbances (flooding, fluvial, fire) and soil conditions (increased salinity)—that confer resilience to extreme climates [5]. Riparian buffers create spatial connectivity across lateral, longitudinal, and vertical dimensions, which provides multiple pathways for species migrations in response to climate shifts [3,58,59]. Additionally, riparian buffers form climate envelopes with high humidity and thermal stability that function as climate refugia [42]. For instance, large trees typical of intact riparian zones create a continuous canopy, which intercepts solar radiation and regulates stream thermal properties [55]. Indeed, harvesting riverbank vegetation has often resulted in elevated average and maximum water temperatures, in-

creased diel fluctuations and incidences of thermal extremes, and erratic disruptions in seasonal thermal regimens [55,60].

4. Threats and Conservation Challenges

Streams and rivers are among the most imperiled habitats in the United States, as well as across the world [58,59,61]. The current estimates for the riparian-zone surface area of the United States range from 15–50 million hectares, of which >90% are degraded [29,62]. There is growing anthropogenic pressure on riverine ecosystems. In the conterminous United States, a significant proportion of the population dwells within 1-km of a river. Nevertheless, only 2% of stream reaches receive riparian protection [62]. Riparian protection remains uneven across the United States. For instance, compared to eastern North America or the Great Plains, riparian zones of the western United States receive enhanced protection where federal land stewardship ensures appreciable conservation attention. Nationwide, ~480,000 km of rivers exhibit degraded water quality, with impaired riparian buffering being at least partly responsible. Impaired riparian systems experience increased solar incidence, dry microclimatic conditions, and lack of environmental complexity, making them unfit for native wildlife, with the exception of a handful of urban exploiters, urban-adapted human commensals, and invasive species [63].

4.1. Anthropogenic Land-Cover Changes and River Modifications

As ecosystem functions of riparian zones rely heavily on fluvial processes, anthropogenic alterations fundamentally influence riparian dynamics [36]. To facilitate navigation, irrigation, and mitigate threats of catastrophic flooding, rivers have undergone drastic modifications with channelization, diversion, and impoundment, which impacts the riparian zone [36,64,65]. In the United States, there are over 2 million dams that influence nearly 90% of regional drainage basins, disrupting both longitudinal and lateral connectivity [66]. For example, permanent upstream floodplain inundation, downstream sediment and nutrient deprivation, damped hydrologic variability, and downstream peak flow attenuation lead to major modifications in the riparian structure and function [29,63]. Dams also impede downstream hydrochory and plant propagule recruitment, which subsequently suppresses riparian vegetation [67,68].

Channelization and bank-stabilization structures sever the connection between the riparian zone and the in-stream habitats, which prevents recruitment of riparian vegetation, disrupts the riparian microhabitat structure, lowers the riparian water table reduces the frequency of overbank flow, and homogenizes shoreline complexity [29,34]. Channelized river corridors lack soft sandy riverbed substrates, sandbars, and large downed wood, which are critical for basking and nesting turtles [64]. Cumulative effects of flow regulation, drainage, and floodplain reclamations transform anastomosing, meandering, and braiding rivers into oversimplified single-tread channels that are severed from riparian zones [65].

Loss of riparian forest cover is particularly notable in anthropogenic landscapes. Biotic homogenization—reduced species turnover across environmental gradients—as a consequence of urbanization was observed across American riverscapes [69,70]. Declining riparian forest cover changes aquatic productivity, such as the prolific growth of exotic species and filamentous algae at the expense of unicellular phytoplankton and non-vascular plants [47,61]. The proliferation of these primary producers neither contributes to food webs nor is exploited by consumers [42,71]. Sporadic changes in seasonal river temperatures resulting from loss of streamside vegetation can negatively impact juvenile development among fish and trigger adverse behaviors, such as untimely migration and phenological mismatches [23,42].

4.2. Recreation-Based Degradation

Given unique aesthetic and scenic values, recreation-based development and activities (whitewater rafting, canoeing, swimming) are often concentrated within riparian zones [72,73]. Proximity to large rivers is among the most demanding landscape features

sought by recreational developers as well as amenity migrants for secondary and vacation homes [74,75]. Snag removal and vegetation clearance in the riparian zone to boost recreational and scenic values led to declining diversity among turtles in the northern Midwest [38]. Increased cover of invasive and weedy species is frequently observed in riparian zones impacted by human disturbances [34]. For instance, invasive plant species were found to be absent from river reaches where the surrounding land use was largely undisturbed and exhibited greater complexity in vegetation structure, suggesting that these reaches were more resistant to invasion than reaches, which have experienced degradation [76]. Deliberate introduction of exotic species as landscape ornaments is partly responsible for such biological invasions, at least in the early phases of establishment outside the native range. Riparian corridors are conduits for plant propagules, therefore, riparian zones are particularly vulnerable to plant invasions. Recreational activities enhance the human footprints in riparian zones (e.g., vegetation removal, changes in natural land-cover, simplification of the structural complexity) as well as the fluvial channel (e.g., modifications in the riverbed and bank geomorphology), which can further exacerbate biological invasions [76].

4.3. Resource Overuse

Land development in the riparian zones and floodplains increases the acreage of impervious surfaces, which alter local hydrodynamics and fluvial processes. Riparian forests are high in aboveground biomass, making them particularly susceptible for commercial timber harvesting [1]. Logging or clearcutting within the buffer zone can lead to localized extirpation of riparian specialists [36,48]. Additionally, the paper, pulp, and biofuel industries are also attributed to intensified silvicultural practices within the United States. River corridors have been historically used as effective conveyers of harvested timber. However, to facilitate convenient access to river channels to transport timber to sawmills downstream, riparian vegetation and within-stream wood are often removed [77]. River valleys historically were and continue to be targeted by mineral harvesters, particularly for gold mining, resulting in the clearcutting of riparian vegetation as well as the excavation of streambed substrates [59,73]. Indeed, ecosystems within the riparian zone have been and continue to be set on courses exceeding their historical norms due to anthropogenic influences relating to resource overuse [78].

4.4. Agriculture and Farming

Due to high productivity and soil fertility, riparian habitats across the United States have been converted to row-crop farms nationwide [34]. Moreover, nutrient-rich soils of the riparian zones of large, sluggish rivers and dependable access to water have led to the transformation of such riparian zones into extensive croplands [73]. Given high productivity and access to water and shade, riparian zones attract livestock, which results in overgrazing of riparian vegetation and soil compaction. Setting aside forested buffers for conservation is economically costly, thus farming operations usually encroach the riparian zone, resulting in the conversion of diverse native riparian flora into monocrop stands.

4.5. Challenges in Riparian Conservation

Much of America's riparian zones are located within privately owned lands. Unfortunately, many of these landowners prioritize profit over sustainability [39,73]. Streams and rivers crossing private lands, especially low-order reaches, receive little to no legislative protection [79]. Land managers of local jurisdictions are often underinformed about riparian functions and biodiversity, hence policies emerging from local authorities are unlikely to generate tangible conservation benefits [52]. Taking riparian lands out of production and re-vegetating buffers are prohibitively expensive, thus, regulations on riparian zones are often resisted by farmers [52,80]. Consequently, riparian conservation policies in the United States are often distilled into politically palatable decisions driven by what private landowners are willing to concede [17].

5. Conservation Efforts

Maintaining intact riparian zones has long been recognized as a crucial element in biodiversity conservation. During the last few decades, riparian-buffer conservation has undergone paradigm shifts where sustainable resource use, endangered species conservation, landscape-scale connectivity, and climate resilience were incorporated into conservation planning [35,63,81].

5.1. Local Scale and Fixed-Width Buffer Zones

Fixed-width buffer zones are the most popular approach to riparian conservation, where decisions were primarily made at the state level, resulting in significant variations in buffer widths (12–52 m) throughout the United States [77]. The site-specific widths for riparian buffers were often estimated based on the maximum height of dominant plant species along the riverbanks. This baseline may be increased based on the aquatic or terrestrial community targeted for conservation. For instance, fish-bearing perennial rivers may have a buffer zone that is twice the height of the tallest tree height (~90–145 m) [82]. The scientific reasoning behind this baseline remains questionable. Nonetheless, the greater buffer-width variations stipulated by different local land managers for protection of the same target species, communities, or ecosystem functions within similar ecoregions is a significant conservation concern [20].

An array of multi-layered vegetation strips has been recommended to mitigate nonpoint-source pollution in streams associated with commercial farmlands (Figure 1). Multi-layered vegetation strips generate a gradient of structural complexity, thereby maintaining multidimensional niches for numerous taxa, including specialist foraging guilds [83]. For example, a vegetation strip dominated by graminoids and herbaceous vegetation has a rapid biomass turnover rate and thus helps restore biologically optimal soil structures. Multi-layered approaches recommended for the United States include a relatively undisturbed old-growth forest (4.5–11 m wide) closest to the stream channel, followed by managed shrub-mixed woodland layer (4–23 m wide), and a graminoid-dominant herbaceous strip mixed with shrubs and scrubs (6–8 m wide) (Figure 1) [3,18,84]. The innermost strip regulates water temperature, enhances habitat complexity and bank stability, and supplies woody debris to the aquatic core while providing critical wildlife habitats for conservation-dependent biota [40,41]. The middle strip assimilates nutrients, retains fine sediments, and enhances groundwater recharge. The outermost strip acts as a physical barrier to storm-water runoff, reducing erosion and retaining silt, sediment, and agrochemical contaminants. Conservation Buffer Initiative—which stems from the United States Department of Agriculture Conservation Reserve Program—advocates a three-tiered design comprising perennial grasses, two rows of shrubs, and 4–5 rows of mature woody plants for rivers flowing through farmlands [85].

Numerous taxon-specific fixed-width buffer zones have been proposed for wildlife conservation in the United States. For example, buffer zones ranging from 43–290 m have been recommended for the conservation of 95% of herpetofaunal communities [20]. A forested riparian buffer of 150 m is recommended for the conservation of most North American riverine turtles, especially to support their seasonal navigations [38]. This fixed-width buffer becomes untenable for species with complex and wide-ranging life histories. For example, threatened species of riparian turtles may seek refugia as far as 400 m from the river channel they inhabit [38]. Surprisingly, fixed-width buffer zones intended to support macroinvertebrate, fish, and avian species are often smaller than those recommended for herpetofauna, ranging from a minimum of 30 m (macroinvertebrates and fishes) to 175 m (specialized forest birds) [33,86,87]. Similarly, 100–200 m riparian buffers are effective in protecting passerine assemblages and stabilizing populations of area-sensitive songbirds [88]. However, bank stability, protection of water quality, and channel heterogeneity may be achieved by much smaller buffer widths (10–130 m) and may account for >90% of regional vascular floristic richness [35,37]. Nevertheless, large buffers (>100 m) serve

multiple purposes, such as mitigation of edge effects on nesting birds while providing habitats for riparian-dependent herpetofauna and small mammals [86,89,90].

Fixed-width buffers gained popularity mostly due to their administrative and operational simplicity but are ineffective to sustain ecosystem functions, metacommunity dynamics, and upland habitat associations of semiaquatic fauna [37,77]. Such singular, generic buffers are often homogenous in habitat structure and incongruent with natural processes, thereby over-simplifying riparian zones' bio-physical complexity [53]. For instance, in Canadian boreal forests, fixed-width buffers are at least partly responsible for fire suppression. Small-width homogenous buffers take longer to recover from extreme climatic disturbances and are susceptible to species invasions, insect outbreaks, and forest pathogens. Concerning multi-layered buffers, maintaining the prescribed vegetation structure may warrant intensive management interventions, which can be both financially and logistically challenging.

5.2. Watershed Scale and Variable-Width Buffer Zones

Fixed-width buffer zones are readily employable, sufficiently simple for on-ground delineation, and only warrants management interventions at the local scale. In contrast, variable-width buffer zones are more operationally complex and may necessitate land management beyond the local scale yet are effective at reaching desired conservation goals and may generate lasting benefits across broader spatial extents. For instance, watershed-wide buffer zones are compatible with systematic conservation planning designed for both freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems and align with overreaching environmental themes applicable to riverscapes. Resilience to global environmental change, prevention of nonpoint-source pollution, restoration of trophic dynamics and the riverscape continuum, mitigation of "urban stream syndrome," and augmentation of amphibian and fish biomass in urban and agricultural watersheds can be harmonized with watershed-wide riparian conservation [11,53,64,91]. At the watershed scale, buffered riparian zones support species migrations, assist movements of dispersal-limited species, augment metapopulation dynamics, thereby relieving small, declining, or isolated populations from inbreeding depression, genetic drift, and demographic stochasticity [81,92,93]. For example, streams within extensively forested watersheds yielded enhanced growth and breeding activities, greater body condition, and greater densities of rare salamanders [94]. In anthropocentric landscapes or disturbance-prone watersheds, buffered streams provide refuge for terrestrial source populations [30,31,95]. Watershed-wide riparian buffers established along a north-south orientation or elevation gradients can function as latitudinal migratory corridors aiding poleward or altitudinal range shifts in response to climate change [84].

Buffer zones delineated at the watershed scale restore connectivity integral for rivers and wetlands, including fourfold eco-hydrological dynamics: (1) lateral interactions between aquatic cores and the uplands as well as among different aquatic cores and wetlands; (2) longitudinal dynamics along the river continuum; (3) vertical linkages among the surface water, groundwater and atmosphere; and (4) temporal changes including wetland successions and modifications in channel geomorphology, hydroperiods and flow regimes [11,43,59]. Hence, watershed-wide buffer zones complement biological, hydrological, and geomorphological processes. Effective delineation of watershed-wide buffer zones requires policies that transcend administrative boundaries, focus beyond local scale conservation targets, and warrant participatory management of different jurisdictions and conservation authorities.

5.3. Determinants of Watershed-Scale Buffer Delineation

The magnitude, spatiotemporal extent, and importance of ecological functions of riparian zones depend on both large-scale watershed-wide regional properties and small-scale local habitat characteristics [96]. Thus, the delineation of riparian buffers should be a synergistic product of both local and watershed-scale factors.

Local-scale determinants include channel slope, local topographic relief, riverbank vegetation structure (e.g., stem density, basal area, vegetation successional stages), soil properties, and channel geomorphology [37,53]. Numerous field studies indicated a non-linear relationship between required buffer widths and increasing slope as well as soil erosivity, underpinning the importance of site-specific conditions in delineating buffers [17,23]. Stream order, stream width at bankful discharge, annual discharge regimes, channel dynamics (lateral channel migration and formation of oxbow or scroll lakes) and planform (the quasi-equilibrium channel morphology created by concentration or dissipation of energy and sediment movements), and floodplain complexity should also be considered [58,81,97]. For instance, buffers zones of headwater streams should be sufficiently extensive to protect riverbank seepage formations where the groundwater table approaches the surface. Concerning middle- and higher-order streams, conventional flood-risk assessments [86,87] can be utilized to determine buffer widths, thereby deterring development and industrial farming in flood-prone riparian zones. As private land managers and entrepreneurs are risk averse, delineating high-risk flood zones as local-scale riparian buffers will carry unintended conservation benefits.

Among watershed-wide determinants—watershed size, basin-wide ecosystem processes, regional geography and climate, current and historical land-use land-cover (the extent of impervious surfaces and modified land-cover types), floodplain characteristics (presence, distribution and types of wetlands), hydrologic connectivity, spatial and temporal distribution of pollutant sources, and types of pollutants—should be accounted when delineating buffer dimensions [11,54,60]. Further, the sociocultural and socioeconomic dimensions cannot be ignored when determining the size and extent of riparian buffers, as local stakeholders must be able to connect the benefits of setting aside tracts of land with their needs and interests [78]. Riparian zones have long been shaped by both human (land-uses and resource extractions) and natural (e.g., climatic, hydrological, geomorphological, fluvial, and biological) processes. Recognizing this multidimensional co-construction will also highlight riparian buffers as an integral component of fluvial ecosystems, which may create a favorable attitude from various sectors (e.g., farmers, agroindustry, policy makers, land-use planners, and land developers) towards riparian-buffer conservation [78]. Thus, watershed-scale buffer delineations must weigh in on anthropocentric uses and values of riparian ecosystems. Both at local and watershed-scale, regional and local wildlife communities that associate riparian buffers as a critical habitat should be factored in as well. Watershed-scale buffer zonation should consider the upland dispersal and migration distance of semiaquatic fauna, which is critical for species with complex life cycles where both breeding migrations and post-natal dispersal occur over long distances [85,95,98,99].

Riparian buffers in managed timberlands should be determined based on harvest regimes, based on the total size of harvested area versus acreage of the unharvested forests in the watershed, harvesting methods, and stand age structure [31,80]. Rivers and wetlands embedded in landscapes with a prolonged land-use past, such as cattle grazing and industrial agriculture, require a lengthy recovering period as well as ample riparian reservations. Thus, land-use legacies, as well as disturbance histories across the watershed, are also critical determinants of buffer zone allocation [54,96]. Legacies resulting from anthropogenic alterations (e.g., riparian timber harvest) induce lasting changes in the entire river corridor (e.g., complete transformation of channel structure and fluvial dynamics), creating alternative states with impoverished ecosystem services [100]. Watershed-scale buffers designed to protect and restore riparian biodiversity and ecosystem functions can be more effective if the lasting effects of historical legacies are recognized.

5.4. Designs for Watershed-Scale Riparian Buffers

Olson et al. [35] proposed watershed-wide buffer conservation, which accounts for lateral and longitudinal linkages of riparian biodiversity as well as riparian-zone ecosystem functions. With the emphasis on cross-ridgeline connectivity to accommodate faunal movements among headwater streams, this conceptual model advocate for wider (200–

400 m) buffers. Olson and Burnett [84] designated ridgeline forests with a high density of headwater streams as “linkage corridors” to facilitate cross ridgeline connectivity of local biota. Dispersal aside, ridgeline forests were habitats for endemic species and harbored stable populations of native vertebrates [35,84]. Attributed to this dual function (dispersal and refugia), we proposed that “linkage corridors” be retrofitted into a riparian-buffer network. If strategically designated with ideal spatial configuration within a watershed, “linkage corridors” enhanced metapopulation interactions and assist safe passage during drought-induced movements and provided access to climate refugia in headwaters.

A two-tiered, riparian buffer design was conceptualized for headwaters of the Pacific Northwest, which can reconcile both commercial land-use operations (logging) and wildlife (amphibian) conservation [89]. Referred to as the “spaghetti-meatball approach,” this design comprises non-random alternating configurations of narrow (40–150 m) and wide (400–600 m) buffers [35,92]. The narrow, long buffer strips (“spaghetti”) running alongside streams encompass the moist-mesic riparian microclimates via “stream effect” while protecting strictly-aquatic and bank-dwelling species. When protected areas or other critical and rare habitats (e.g., ephemeral wetlands, fluvial lakes, old-growth stands, tributary junctions) neighbor the river channel, particularly at ridgetops, wider buffers (“meatballs”) can be applied to enhance the structural heterogeneity and resource availability of the riparian environments. Narrow “spaghetti buffers” are sufficient to confer bank stability and filter runoff, thus making them suitable for streams dissecting timberlands and farmlands. High-value conservation targets, such as stream reaches with a high density of microendemic or threatened species, local hotspots of diversity, and bioclimatic refugia can benefit from “meatball buffers”. The “spaghetti-meatball” design also harmonizes economically profitable, yet sustainable land uses with freshwater biodiversity conservation, hence applicable to watershed-scale riverscape conservation.

Riverscapes are spatially complex fluvial systems mosaics of habitat types and environmental gradients, interconnected by dendritic networks with unique spatial configurations and structures that differ markedly from most terrestrial systems and other aquatic systems [11,41]. The spatially heterogeneous structures of the riparian environment (including the floodplains), riparian biotic communities, and matter and energy exchange are particularly important attributes of riverscapes [7,65]. We argue that watershed-wide riparian-buffer conservation will effectively capture all critical attributes of the riverscape.

We recommend the implementation of riparian-habitat conservation criteria by Semlitsch and Bodie [25] and Olson et al. [35] to delineate buffers along river channels at the watershed scale, yet caution against abiding by the suggested buffer widths as canonical rules (Figures 2–4). Instead, we encourage re-tailoring variable buffer widths based on the spatial configuration of critical riverscape elements (i.e., floodplains, isolated channels) and niche dimensions of riparian-dependent biota of the regional species pool. The riverscape is the template for both between-habitat species turnover (beta diversity) and landscape-scale community diversity (gamma diversity); the latter metrics are prudent biodiversity targets representative of the entire riverscape [81]. Incorporating niche dimensions of riparian biotas, such as the lateral navigation distance of both philopatric and vagile species when delineating riparian zones, will make these buffers more biologically productive [90].

Hereto, we first highlight the immediate riparian zones as both core habitats of the riverscape and keystone structures of the watershed (hereafter, critical riparian core), ergo propose the first tier of buffer delineation throughout the drainage system alongside both main stems and tributaries (both perennial and ephemeral), provisionally extending into the floodplain to envelope riparian wetlands and wetland-obligate communities. These buffers can be locally distended at confluences or to connect the river channel with neighboring wetlands. The first tier should be designed to buffer the stream channel from atmospheric and terrestrial stressors, protect water sources, and enhance habitat associations of riparian and semiaquatic biota. Second, we propose delineating a critical terrestrial core beyond the critical riparian core. This second tier will promote metacommunity dynamics [91] and subdue edge effects [101]. To enhance wildlife permeability, we advise restrictions

on both exploitative (subdivision or infrastructure developments, agriculture, grazing, and clearcutting) or non-consumptive (recreational) uses within the critical riparian core while permitting specific land uses (agroforestry, permaculture, forest gardening, selective logging) within the critical terrestrial core.

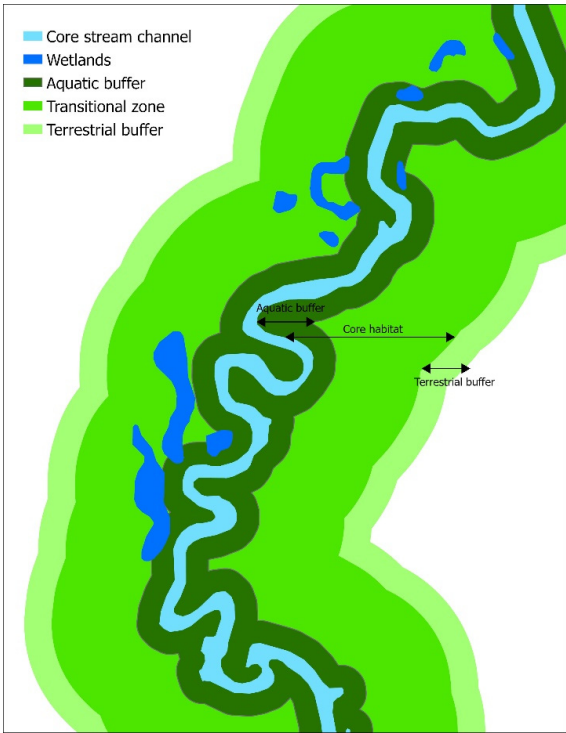


Figure 2. Fixed buffer widths applied to a single mainstem river corridor following multi-tiered buffer widths recommended by Semlitsch and Bodie [25].

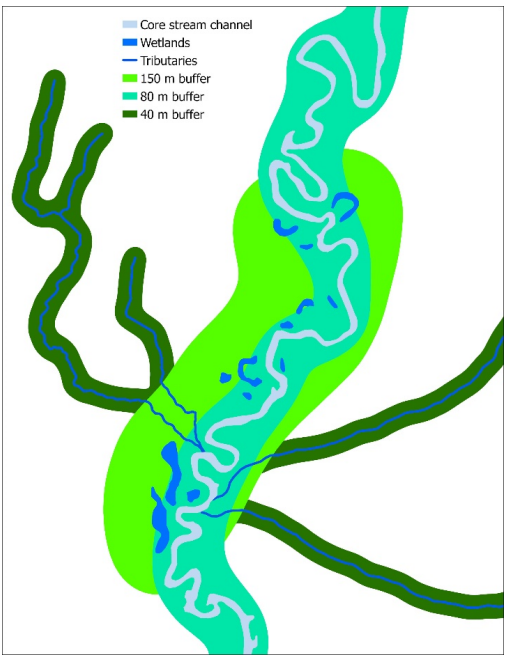


Figure 3. A variation of the Spaghetti-meatball buffer-zone delineation with variable buffer widths as recommended by Olson et al. [35,89] applied to the mainstem river corridor, including the tributaries to the mainstem.

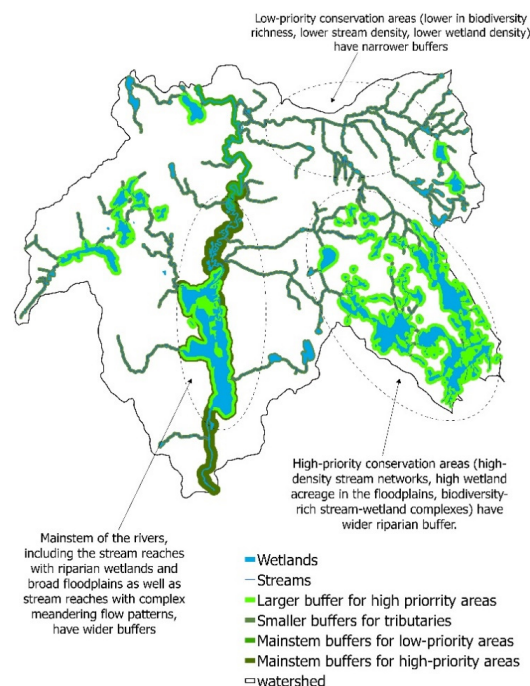


Figure 4. Variable buffer widths applied to stream channels (mainstem and tributaries) and stream-associated wetlands at the watershed scale. Increased riparian buffer widths are applied to regions with high conservation potential and other critical hydrological or ecological features to protect infertility ecosystem structure and functions.

Greater habitat heterogeneity that satisfies natural and life history requirements of riparian obligates is critical in a watershed-wide buffer delineation. Thus, we advocate the inclusion of multiple landscape elements—hibernacula, climatic refugia, high-quality foraging and nesting grounds, heterogeneous wetland complexes with variable hydroperiods, aquatic habitats that offer complementary resources, and a variety of upland habitats—into both riparian and terrestrial core habitats [93]. Moreover, we contend inclusion of forest remnants, commercial timberlands, silvopastoral systems, traditional farmlands, and restored habitats into the critical terrestrial core to reinvigorate beta and gamma diversity and to refuel metacommunity interactions and ecosystem processes [42,102].

5.5. Habitat Management within Buffer Zones

Harvested riparian zones should be characterized by mixed-aged riparian vegetation, vertical stratification, and variable successional stages, thus providing habitats for both seral and climax communities [48,103]. To promote habitat heterogeneity in the riparian buffers where historical disturbances (flooding, fire, debris flow) are suppressed, sustainable forestry operations based on various shelterwood harvesting methods, such as selective thinning in variable-sized patches, and partial cuts may generate spatial patchiness resembling natural disturbances [36,48,83]. Here, it is imperative to mimic historical disturbance regimes in terms of frequency, duration, magnitude, and spatial patterns [103]. Management decisions should weigh in the system resilience, legacy effects (historical fire regimes and grazing), climate conditions (average precipitation), and susceptibility to extreme events (windstorms, floods). A multi-use approach with regulated timber harvesting and extraction of non-woody products in designated riparian buffers will also harmonize conflicts between conservation authorities and resource users [104].

Riparian timber harvest can be connected to the multi-tiered buffer approach we proposed. No logging should be permitted within the immediate riparian zone adjacent to the stream channel (critical riparian core). Variable and transitional timber management operations forming an environmental gradient with respect to stem density, basal area, canopy closure, stand maturity, and species of interest can be permitted in outer tiers (criti-

cal terrestrial core). We urge for minimal use of machinery and motor vehicles, which leads to soil compaction and other disturbances. Availability, diversity, and size of forest-floor cover objects in the riparian buffer are crucial for ameliorating the ill-effects of logging as these cover objects preserve cool, moist microclimatic conditions for forest floor fauna [95]. Thus, we caution against salvage logging or residue removal [35,84]. However, if adequate forest-floor cover exists, some of the logging residuals can be placed alongside banks as microsites to harbor riparian vertebrates and vegetation propagules [96].

To restore longitudinal and lateral connectivity through riparian management, removal of dams, dikes, and levees is imperative to reunite river channels with floodplains and reengineer natural fluvial (meandering, braiding, anastomosing) dynamics [16,96]. Breaching artificial bank stabilization structures such as ripraps also helps reconstitute surface-to-groundwater movements as well as hydrologic and sediment regimes that are critical for healthy ecosystem functions of riparian zones [16,105]. Dam removal also restores both coarse- and fine-scale geomorphic features, natural flow regimes, and plant successional processes that constitute critical riparian habitats (e.g., floodplain conditions, riparian food webs, plant-community dynamics) and reduce the establishment and persistence of exotic plant species in the riparian zone [16,106,107]. Natural resource managers should estimate site-specific risks of dam removal on riparian zones (e.g., sediment aggradation on riverbanks, habitat homogenization by reducing the variability of bed elevations, biological invasions) for making informed decisions on post-restoration monitoring to detect negative impacts and implement mitigatory measures [97,105]. To improve riparian buffering functions (flood and discharge mitigation, groundwater recharge, and bioremediation), we recommend restoration of floodplain wetlands, which is particularly necessary following dam removal [108]. In impaired (urban and agricultural) watersheds with contaminated runoff, these floodplain wetlands can be an ecologically sound alternative to artificial drainage ponds.

Restoring degraded riparian zones may require the introduction of site-appropriate topsoils and subsoils with adequate soil-particle size distributions and organic matter since plant propagule recruitment, microbial remedial processes, and groundwater movements are functions of soil properties [16]. Introduction of natural cover objects across the riparian buffers in forms of woody debris in variable size and decay classes might be warranted [30,109]. We discourage “landscape manicuring”—removal of downed or standing deadwood for aesthetics and navigation. Spatial arrangement and retention of dead standing trees (snags), rock outcrops, and other vertical geological formations warrant attention as such structures serve as keystone resources for riparian fauna [98]. As degraded riparian zones are species-depauperate and periled with exotic invasions, re-introduction of foundation species (e.g., willows (*Salix* spp.)) and ecosystem engineers (e.g., American beavers (*Castor canadensis*)) as well as controlling exotic and invasive species can accelerate recovery with enhanced resilience [82,104,105].

6. Policies and Protection of Riparian Buffers

Numerous United States environmental policies contribute to riparian-buffer conservation [79]. These laws take effect via three mutually nonexclusive avenues: (1) direct acquisition or supporting acquisition of lands and waterways for buffer delineation; (2) restrictions on resource exploitation in riparian environments; and (3) develop environmental standards and guidelines to mitigate water pollution based on buffer-zone management. Herein, we will briefly review a selection of these policies, including their effects and recommendations for enhancing their impact on riparian systems.

Empowered with legislative authority on wetland and riverine buffers, the Clean Water Act (CWA) aims to “restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters.” Administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Army Core of Engineering, the CWA recognizes pollution mitigation and provision of wildlife habitats as critical functions of riparian buffers, thus, mandates avoidance and minimization of damage to riparian zones [99,110]. We advocate that CWA’s specifications

on total maximum daily load, the maximum amount of a pollutant permissible in a water-body to maintain acceptable water-quality standards, be leveraged for buffer delineation as a measure against nonpoint-source pollution [53]. We urge the CWA to recognize the riparian buffer as a “critical habitat complementary to the aquatic core” while underscoring the functional nexus between intact riparian zone and biological integrity of aquatic core habitats, thereby advocating restoration and delineation of riparian buffers as a mitigation strategy [25,26].

Administered by Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) has the potential to secure riparian environments as “critical habitats” for endangered or threatened species [111]. We encourage the inclusion of the “critical habitat” concept into a panoptic “critical riverscape” perspective to encapsulate watershed-wide environmental complexity and functional diversity inherent to riparian zones. For riparian conservation, we propose that the ESA targets umbrella species such as riparian obligates and riparian-dependent species, particularly those characterized by longevity, delayed reproductive maturity, elevated egg/larval mortality, and high sensitivity to anthropogenic disturbances [112].

Mandated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requires a minimum of 30 m buffer around perennial rivers and lakes and prohibits land uses that impair water quality or fish habitats [34]. As corroborated by our review, the 30-m minimum threshold might suffice conservation of a subset of stream biota (e.g., headwaters) but is insufficient to maintain upland associations of most riparian communities. In lieu of our variable buffer-width standards, we recommend employing local and watershed-scale biophysical determinants to prescribe variables both buffer widths and length to assure watershed-wide continuity.

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (NWSRA, Departments of Interior and Agriculture) aims to preserve “free-flowing” rivers with remarkable ecological and non-consumptive (aesthetic and recreational) values [39,88]. The NWSRA recommends a 400 m riparian buffer along designated rivers flowing through federal lands [113]. Given the conservation potential of these rivers, we suggest remodeling NWSRA to recognize the main stem, tributaries, and floodplains (including floodplain wetlands) of designated rivers collectively as “wild and scenic riverscape corridors” while identifying buffers as “critical life zones” of the entire watershed.

Significant extents of riparian zones in the United States are located within private lands. Further, most land development occurs within local jurisdictions where the decision-making officials are likely uninformed about local biodiversity, ecological principles, or sustainable economic benefits associated with riparian buffers [114]. As such, we highlight the urgency to educate local officials as well as private landowners on watershed-scale buffer designs [73]. To cultivate responsible stewardship among public and local officials, we recommend the introduction of citizen-science projects tailored to generate locale-specific long-term data on riparian biodiversity and ecosystem processes, which provide a scientific basis for decision making [30,115]. We also encourage repurposing citizen science as a communication hub among scientific communities, town officials, and private landowners, particularly to disseminate novel approaches on riparian conservation [43]. To enhance public buy-in, we also recommend the adoption of charismatic or flagship species that symbolize riparian habitats (e.g., river otters (*Lontra canadensis*) [102].

For watershed-wide riparian conservation to take effect, rewarding land stewards who adopt riparian best management practices are effective and prudent [78]. Administered by the USDA through the Farm Bill, a number of such programs, Conservation Reserve Program, Conservation Easements, and Environmental Quality Incentive Program, have demonstrated success in optimizing conservation potential and environmental benefits in productive agricultural lands [116]. Program participants offset environmentally sensitive lands from production and establish resource-conserving native plant species in exchange for rental payments, tax breaks, and financial and technical support for improving farming operations [85]. Our recommendations herein include educating farmers on agricultural

benefits through the use of riparian buffers (e.g., flood and erosion prevention) and remodeling incentive programs for recreational entrepreneurs, the timber industry, and non-timber extraction ventures. Given the multitude of ecosystem functions originating from riparian buffers—groundwater recharge, water-quality enhancement, game species conservation, aesthetic and scenic values—we recommend enhancing incentives through Payments for Ecosystem Services for land stewards participating in riparian-buffer conservation [115].

Policy reforms for watershed-scale riparian-buffer conservation will require a paradigm shift from a conventional reach-based perspective to a more inclusive ecosystem-centered approach tailored for the conservation and restoration of hydrogeomorphological processes with the emphasis on ecological integrity and biological dynamics of rivers [117,118]. Herein, the riparian buffers should allocate more physical space to facilitate channel mobility (e.g., lateral migration, meandering) and seasonal flooding [106,118]. Such policy frameworks not only ensure sustainability and resilience of riverine biodiversity but also mitigate flood and erosion risks. Hydrogeomorphology-influenced policies have been successfully implemented in Europe and Canada [107,117]. These legislative frameworks piggyback on the notion of risk aversion (erosion and flooding) as well as ecological integrity, thus are palatable for multiple stakeholders while affording protection to critical riparian features (e.g., floodplain wetlands) and exclude development and detrimental human activities from the riparian buffers. When implemented at watershed scale, these process-driven conservation actions warrant minimal management interventions over time yet are suitable for enhancing the resilience of lotic ecosystems against global environmental change. In addition, such policies simultaneously address multiple regulatory and conservation goals such as the Habitats and Water Framework Directives of the European Union and the Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts in the US [118].

We advocate that policy reforms recognize riparian buffers not only as “critical life zones” or “core habitats” but also a vital riverine and riverscape elements crucial for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem functions [62,104]. Watershed-scale riparian conservation is appropriate for the conservation of aquatic biota, management of all forms of freshwater habitats, and resolution of competing for anthropocentric interests [11,61]. As inter-state and among-municipality collaborations are pivotal to watershed-scale conservation, we suggest that both federal and state funding mechanisms encourage such cross-jurisdictional partnerships. It is of critical importance that policymakers and scientists are cognizant of the sociocultural dimension in management decisions, as overly simplistic approaches to addressing the perceptions, needs, and interests of local communities are likely to result in conservation impasses [78]. Ultimately, if the knowledge gained through research is unable to be contextualized in a manner, which can be readily assimilated and applied, efforts, which would otherwise preserve and enhance ecosystem structure and function while simultaneously meeting the needs of the local populous are likely doomed to failure. Longitudinal and lateral dimensions inherent to watershed-wide riparian reserves will account not only local species richness (alpha diversity) but also between-habitat species turnover (beta diversity) and landscape-scale diversity (gamma diversity) [34]. We encourage state and federal conservation authorities to use these biodiversity metrics to rationalize conservation-focused decision-making.

7. Conclusive Remarks

We advocate for watershed-scale delineation of variable-width riparian buffers with multiple conservation and management objectives in place of conventional reach-scale, uniform-width approaches. Watershed-wide riparian conservation should draw from a robust ecological knowledge base and conform to the dynamics of riparian-zone ecosystem structure and functions, especially with respect to life and natural histories of local and regional species. Herein, we stress the need to protect diverse arrays of habitats—lentic, lotic, and wetland systems as well as floodplains and upland environments—to preserve landscape-scale heterogeneity, thereby configuring and enhancing connectivity. Riparian buffers are cornerstones for landscape-scale conservation planning and pave

a pathway for not only riverscape conservation but also for freshwater protected-area networks. The incongruity between freshwater versus terrestrial protected areas has frequently emerged as a significant conservation challenge, yet little action has been taken to remedy this problem. Riparian buffers define an ecologically meaningful nexus between both stream channels and terrestrial environments, protect and buffer core aquatic habitats, and provide critical resources for biota along the aquatic-terrestrial continuum. Hence, riparian-buffer conservation and management, particularly when implemented at the watershed scale, may have the potential to harmonize disparate conservation goals pertinent to freshwater and terrestrial protected areas.

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The Science Behind the Need for Riparian Buffer Protection

Extensive scientific research documents that vegetated strips of land along waterways provide extensive water quality and other environmental and economic benefits.

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Introduction

Scientific research clearly documents that riparian buffers, particularly forested buffers and those along headwater streams, deliver tremendous benefits. Through the interaction of their soils, hydrology, and biotic communities, riparian buffers serve many important physical, biological, and ecological functions (Klapproth, 2009).

Definition

Riparian buffers are the lands and assemblages of plants bordering rivers, streams, bays and other waterways. They directly affect and are directly impacted by the aquatic environment. Buffers have high levels of soil moisture, experience frequent flooding, and are populated by plant and animal communities that are adapted to life along the water. The boundary between the buffer and adjoining uplands is gradual and may not be well defined (Klapproth, 2009).

Degradation

The USDA Forest Service estimates that over one-third of the rivers and streams in Pennsylvania have had their riparian buffers degraded or altered, a sobering statistic when the value of their functions is considered (DEP, 2006).

Benefits

Scientific research clearly documents that riparian buffers, particularly forested buffers and those along headwater streams, deliver tremendous economic, ecological and other benefits. Among these benefits, riparian buffers:

- protect the quality of the water we drink;
- intercept [non-point source](#) pollutants carried by surface water runoff and remove the excess nitrogen, phosphorus and other substances that can pollute water bodies;
- stabilize stream banks and minimize erosion;
- decrease the frequency and intensity of flooding and low stream flows;
- prevent sedimentation of waterways;
- through shading, reduce swings in stream temperatures and prevent elevated temperatures harmful to aquatic life;
- provide food and habitat for wildlife of the land, water and air and allow for wildlife movement within natural corridors; and
- replenish groundwater and protect associated wetlands.

Width

The width needed for a riparian buffer to be effective depends on a number of factors, but, in general, the wider the buffer, the greater the benefits delivered.

Forested Versus Grass Buffers

Forested riparian buffers provide substantially more and better ecosystem services than grass buffers (Burgess, 2004). The roots of herbaceous and woody plants

strengthen the stream bank and prevent stream bank erosion. Roots and downed trees slow the flow of stormwater and form a physical barrier to the stream or river, which allows sediment to settle out and be trapped. The forest canopy shades water, moderating water temperature. The plants are an important source of woody material in streams, which provides habitat and food for aquatic wildlife. They also provide quality habitat and food for terrestrial wildlife. These services are discussed in detail below.

Headwaters

As described in the Headwater Streams section below, research demonstrates that healthy riparian buffers along headwaters streams, both perennial and intermittent, deliver exceptionally high ecological value.

Buffer Functions

The following sections highlight key ecosystem services delivered by riparian buffers:

- reducing erosion;
- filtering sediment;
- filtering pollution;
- providing shade to moderate water temperatures;
- providing habitat; and
- storing water and reducing flooding.

Reduce Erosion

Riparian buffers reduce erosion, which both conserves topsoil and lessens the amount of sediment in streams and rivers. A buffer's roots of herbaceous and woody plants strengthen the stream bank by going through the topsoil and into a stream bank's weathered or fractured bedrock and other more stable strata. This increases the stream bank cohesiveness and adds a tensile strength that can resist shear stresses on stream bank soil (Castelle, 2000).

Filter Sediments

Riparian buffers filter sediment from stormwater runoff, reducing the amount of sediment in streams and rivers. Tree roots and downed trees slow the flow of surface water and form a physical barrier, which allows sediment to settle out and be trapped. Several studies have shown the effectiveness of riparian buffers in filtering sediment, including:

- In Blacksburg, VA, when 9.1m and 4.6m wide orchard grass buffers were exposed to shallow, uniform waterflow, they removed an average of 84% and 70% of incoming suspended solids respectively (Dillaha, Renea, Mostaghimi, & Lee, 1989).
- Over a 100-year period (1880-1979), a riparian zone of a coastal plain agricultural watershed in Georgia accumulated an estimated 190,667 to 283,276 pounds of sediment per acre per year (Lowrance, Sharpe, & Sheridan, 1986).
- In North Carolina, the movement of runoff was measured through two types of riparian buffers: a grass buffer and a buffer composed of grass, weeds and small shrubs that became an area with hardwood trees. The buffers reduced sediment load in the runoff by 60% to 90%. The effectiveness of the filters varied with the erosiveness of the watershed and storm intensity (Daniels, 1996).

Filter Pollutants

Filter Sediment, Trap Pollutants

Filtration of sediment is also important for removing chemical pollutants that bind to sediment. For example, excess phosphorus binds to soil and is found primarily in the top few inches of the soil, which are very susceptible to erosion. Trapping sediments is the most effective way to reduce non-point source pollution (Bongard, 2009).

Vegetation Removes Pollutants

Riparian vegetation removes metals, nutrients, and other chemicals from runoff via plant uptake and by facilitating bacterial degradation of the pollutants (Castelle & Johnson, 2000). Although narrow buffers can generally remove sediment in runoff, wide buffers are needed for effective nutrient removal (Dabney, Moore, & Locke, 2006).

The removal of nitrogen, a major pollutant of many watersheds, from runoff occurs almost exclusively in water-saturated zones where abundant organic matter is present. Bacteria in the buffer use nitrogen as an energy source, converting it to gas. Plant roots also absorb nitrogen in groundwater and use it for plant growth. Buffers act as a nitrogen sink when it is taken up by trees and stored in their biomass.

Multiple studies have shown that buffers are effective in removing pollutants from water:

- A study of 16 streams in eastern Pennsylvania found that forested streams were far more efficient at re-

moving key pollutants from water than non-forested streams. In the case of nitrogen pollution, 200-800 times more nitrogen reached the stream in the non-forested segments than reached the stream in the forested segments (Chesapeake Bay Foundation, n.d.).

- In Coastal Plain, Georgia, researchers measured agricultural runoff through a 38-meter riparian buffer. The riparian buffer lowered the concentrations of atrazine and alachlor by a factor of 20. Atrazine and alachlor are both commonly used herbicides. Atrazine is among the most common contaminants in American reservoirs and other sources of drinking water (Duhigg, 2009).
- The degradation of the herbicide metachlor before it reaches water bodies is given extra importance because it does not readily break down in aquatic environments. It is, however, metabolized in the soil by microorganisms. It reaches water bodies by soil leaching and surface runoff. In Mississippi, the half-life of the herbicide metachlor was 10 days in a vegetated buffer as compared to 23 days in an adjacent bare field. This was likely due to a higher level of organic matter and microbial activity in the riparian strip. The enhanced degradation of metachlor in buffers may limit how much reaches water bodies (Staddon, Locke, & Zablotowicz, 2001).
- In northern Baltimore County, MD, Minebank Run flows past residential areas, corporate offices, the Baltimore beltway, a high school, and a county park before reaching the Gunpowder River. For decades, heavy volumes of stormwater running off of impervious surfaces, like roads, rooftops and parking lots, have impacted the stream. Restoration efforts included widening the riparian buffer with over 3,000 new trees and 6,000 shrubs. The restoration work, which affected nearly 3.5 stream miles, prevents up to 50,000 pounds of sediment from entering the stream annually and reduces the stream nitrogen levels by 25-50% (Lutz, 2006).

Cool Streams and Moderate Temperature Swings

The trees of riparian buffers shade the water, moderating water temperature. Temperature is a critical influence in aquatic ecosystems, affecting both the physical and biological characteristics of the stream. Changes in temperature can decrease stream biodiversity and impede animal growth. Increases in summer temperatures can increase

the susceptibility of fish to pathogens; decrease food availability; alter the feeding activity and body metabolism of fish; inhibit spawning, and block spawning runs into streams (Castelle and Johnson, 2000). At the same time higher stream temperatures reduce the amount of dissolved oxygen in water; they also increase the metabolic rate of aquatic animals, increasing their oxygen needs.

In small streams, the presence of a forest canopy greatly affects the intensity of light reaching the surface of the stream. Depending on the season, light intensity in a shaded area of a stream can be 30 to 60% less than that of an exposed area (Sweeney, 1992). By limiting the amount of solar radiation that can reach a stream, trees limit both the daily fluctuations in stream temperature and the maximum stream temperatures reached (Bongard, 2009). A British Columbia study found that streams without buffers have temperatures up to 1-2 °C higher than those with buffers (Rayne, Henderson, Gill, & Forest, 2008). A study from Washington State found that non-buffered streams have maximum temperatures 2.4 °C higher than those with buffers (Pollock, Beechie, Liermann, & Bigley, 2009). In Oregon, studies of stream temperatures following the removal of riparian vegetation found that maximum stream temperatures both increased by 7 °C and occurred earlier in the summer. (Shifts in the timing of maximum temperatures, with greater increases in early summer stream temperatures, can impact sensitive stages of aquatic animals.)

Water Temperature and Chemical Toxicity

Increased water temperature increases the toxicity of many chemicals, such as ammonia. Ammonia is an inorganic form of nitrogen. It is present in water in two forms, un-ionized (NH₃), which has a relatively high toxicity, and ionized (NH₄⁺), which has a relatively negligible toxicity. As water temperatures increase, more of the ammonia is converted to the toxic un-ionized ammonia form (EPA, 1995). Polluted runoff is a large source of ammonia and nitrogen to streams (EPA, 1995). When riparian buffers are not preserved, both their ability to remove nitrogen from runoff and their ability to maintain lower water temperatures and prevent it from converting to its un-ionized ammonia form are lost.

Provide Habitat

Aquatic Habitat

Large woody debris is an essential part of stream life. It provides fish habitat and changes the stream's physical condition. Organic matter from riparian buffers, such as

leaves, twigs, logs and stems that fall from the buffer into the water are a main source of food for aquatic macroinvertebrates. Aquatic macroinvertebrates are animals without a backbone, are visible with the naked eye and spend all or part of their life in the water. These animals, which include worms, mollusks, insects and crustaceans, consume the wood and the biofilms (bacteria, fungi, and algae) that form on it (Pitt & Batzer, 2011), serving as a vital link in the food web between the producers (e.g. leaves, algae) and higher consumers, such as fish.

The wood from buffers also traps additional leaf litter and wood. Macroinvertebrates use the wood as habitat, living inside the wood, under residual bark, and on surfaces that protrude out of the water. Some insects use the protruding surfaces as sites to emerge into adults or to lay eggs (Pitt & Batzer, 2011). A study of 16 streams in eastern Pennsylvania found that forested stream segments have over six times the amount of large woody debris than do grass buffered streams, even though two-thirds of the grass buffered streams were immediately downstream of forested areas (Sweeney, 1992)

Forested riparian buffers are also essential for maintaining stream and river bottom habitat. Most of the biological activity in stream ecosystems takes place on inorganic (sand, gravel, cobble, etc.) and organic (leaves, woody debris, etc.) materials on stream bottoms. Networks of tree roots, the organic debris from buffers and the variety of sizes of cobble and gravel these trap can increase the overall size of bottom habitat more than a thousand times when compared to a bare mineral soil bottom in a grass-buffered stream (Sweeney, 1992). In addition, where riparian buffers have been deforested, streams are narrower because of encroachment by herbaceous plants, mostly grasses, that would have been shaded out under forest cover, causing an additional loss of river bottom habitat (Sweeney, 1992).

Deforestation of a section of a riparian buffer can change stream bottom habitat and influence biodiversity, even if the deforested section is still vegetated. In southern Appalachia, 12 streams with deforested, but vegetated, buffers were studied. The deforested sections were up to 5.3 km long. The stream segments studied were all downslope of watersheds with at least 95% forest cover. As the length of deforested sections increased, habitat diversity decreased and riffles became filled with fine sediments (Jones, Helfman, Harper, & Bolstadt, 1999). As the length of the non-deforested segments increased, overall fish abundance decreased, though the number of non-native species in-

creased. Even in heavily forested areas, clearing a 1-3 km stretch of forested buffer was found to have substantial impacts on fish assemblages (Jones, Helfman, Harper, & Bolstadt, 1999).

Terrestrial Habitat

A broad range of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians rely on riparian buffers for habitat. Riparian buffers are core habitat for many semi-aquatic and terrestrial [ecotone](#) species, such as salamanders, frogs, turtles, minks, beavers and otters, and these species require a buffer that is both long and wide. Long stretches of riparian buffer also serve as wildlife travel corridors. Many birds, such as herons, fishers, eagles, and ospreys, as well as some mammals, rely on forested buffers for both habitat and resting places. These birds hunt for fish in the water and nest in adjacent forests.

For buffers to provide adequate habitat for forest dependent songbirds, they must be wide. Several studies have shown that bird species richness increases in buffers that are at least 100 meters wide and that the presence of forest dependent songbirds decreases dramatically when buffers are less than 50 meters (Bongard, 2009). For more information on the importance of protecting species richness, see the guide [Biodiversity](#).

Store Water and Reduce Flooding

Riparian buffers, especially forested buffers, absorb rainwater, which recharges ground water supplies and allows storm runoff to be released more slowly. This reduces the intensity and frequency of flooding as well as allows for more water flow in streams during dry periods.

Minimum Buffer Width Needed

The minimum width needed for an effective riparian buffer depends on the function you want the buffer to serve. For example, sediment can be physically filtered out of stormwater faster than dissolved nitrogen, which requires bacterial transformation to remove it. Thus, a narrower buffer would be needed to remove sediment than that needed to remove dissolved nitrogen. Scientific studies have shown that efficient buffer widths range from 10 feet for bank stabilization and stream shading to over 300 feet for wildlife habitat. (Hawes & Smith, 2005). Necessary widths will also vary depending on site conditions, such as soil type, slope and adjacent land use and other factors. (Hawes & Smith, 2005)

In *Riparian Buffer Zones: Functions and Recommended Widths* (Hawes and Smith, 2005), the authors summarize the results of scientific studies, identifying the buffer widths needed for a buffer to effectively serve particular functions; they report the following ranges:

Erosion/sediment control	30 feet to 98 feet
Water quality:	
Nutrients	49 feet to 164 feet
Pesticides	49 feet to 328 feet
Biocontaminants (e.g. fecal matter)	30 feet or more
Aquatic habitat:	
Wildlife	33 feet to 164 feet
Litter/debris	50 feet to 100 feet
Temperature	30 feet to 230 feet

Regarding terrestrial habitat, research suggests a range of 30 to 1,640 feet. However, because the habitat needs for terrestrial wildlife vary widely, the authors do not believe it is feasible to capture the needs of all species with a uniform buffer size. They recommend reviewing information about specific animals in the targeted area as well as land conservation work at adjacent and nearby lands.

Headwater Streams

Definition

Headwater streams are the smaller tributaries that carry water from the upper reaches of the watershed to the main channel of the river. They are rarely named and are often so small that it takes little effort to jump across them. While there is no universally accepted definition of headwaters, they are often defined as first and second order streams. A stream with no tributaries, recurring or perennial, is a first order stream. When two first-order streams come together, they form a second-order stream. The Stroud Research Center defines headwaters as “tributary streams, intermittent streams, and spring seeps” (Kaplan, Bott, Jackson, Newbold, & Sweeney, 2008).

Ubiquity and Vulnerability

Headwaters represent 50-70% of the total stream miles in the U.S. (Fritz, Johnson, & Walters, 2008). Nearly everyone in the United States has a headwater stream within a mile or two of their home, leaving headwaters close to human activities such as urbanization, dams and diversions, water withdrawals, point and non-point source pollution, deforestation, and agriculture (River Keeper, 2005). The

small size of headwater streams, along with their integration into the landscape, makes them highly vulnerable to degradation (Kaplan et al., 2008).

Headwater streams are not as resilient as larger streams because they lack sufficient water flow to transport and dilute sediment and pollution (Kaplan et al., 2008). Forested buffers are needed to remove pollutants from stormwater before they reach the stream. The aquatic wildlife of headwaters are usually coldwater adapted (Kaplan et al., 2008), and therefore rely on the temperature moderation effects of riparian trees. Riparian buffers are essential to the provision of food for both the headwaters themselves, and the resulting downstream food web. Riparian vegetation provides up to 90% of the organic matter (food) necessary to support headwater stream communities (Cummins & Spengler, 1978).

Essential to the Health of Water Ecosystems

Water quality, biodiversity, and ecological health of freshwater systems depend on the ecosystem services of healthy headwater streams (Kaplan et al., 2008). According to Lowe and Likens (2005),

There is no doubt that it is important to safeguard lowland sites, but it is difficult to see how any conservation action with a goal of protecting the long-term ecological integrity and ecosystem services of natural systems, whether aquatic or terrestrial, can succeed without a foundation of intact and functional headwaters.

Headwaters are the source of much of the water, gravel, wood, and nutrients that flow through the stream network and eventually to the ocean (USDA, 2008). Headwaters can help to keep sediment and pollutants out of the stream system’s lower reaches. (Kaplan et al., 2008).

Recycling organic carbon contained in the bodies of dead plants and animals is a crucial ecosystem service and is the basis for every food web on the planet (Meyer et al., 2003). In freshwater ecosystems, much of this recycling happens in small streams and wetlands (Meyer et al., 2003). This recycling process makes nutrients more biologically available to organisms downstream (Meyer et al., 2003). Headwater streams have been found to be significantly more efficient at breaking down the larger organic materials of dead plant and animals into nutrients usable to small animals, such as mayflies and caddis flies. The nutrients then work their way through the food web into larger animals downstream such as trout and birds. The processing of organic carbon in headwaters also prevents

large amounts of organic material from being taken downstream, where the decomposition of large quantities could deplete dissolved oxygen levels and kill or harm aquatic life (Meyer et al., 2003).

Owing to favorable microclimate and availability of water, headwaters provide habitat for distinct assemblages of plants and animals (USDA, 2008). Hydrological conditions of many headwaters, which include running seasonally and drying out in the summer, periodically flowing underground, and frequent cascades and obstacles, lead to a lack of fish, which provides habitat that many amphibians can thrive in. Headwaters act as [refugia](#) for riverine species during specific life-history stages and critical periods of the year, such as warm summer months (Lowe & Likens, 2005).

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[Bernard W. Sweeney, Ph.D.](#), President, Director, Senior Research Scientist, Stroud Water Research Center

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Related Resources at ConservationTools.org

Library Categories

[Riparian Buffer](#)

[Riparian Buffer Protection Ordinances](#)

[Water Quality](#)

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[Model Riparian Buffer Protection Agreement](#)

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[Riparian Buffer Protection Via Local Regulation](#)

[Riparian Buffer Protection Agreement](#)

[A Scientific Foundation for Shaping Riparian Buffer Protection Regulations](#)

Experts

[Wesley R. Horner](#), Senior Advisor for Water Resources, Brandywine Conservancy

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Submit Comments and Suggestions

The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association would like to know your thoughts about this guide: Do any subjects need clarification or expansion? Other concerns? Please contact Andy Loza at 717-230-8560 or aloza@conserveland.org with your thoughts. Thank you.

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Colcom Foundation

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Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
FROM: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
DATE: March 9, 2023
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for March 13, 2023 Council Meeting

Parity Study is Complete

Every five years, per the Personnel Regulations, the City's Human Resources division completes a salary and benefits study that compares Homer to other municipal employers in Alaska which is then delivered to the City Manager for review. HR Director Andrea Browning put in a lot of work pulling data from nine other municipal units and analyzing them in relation to Homer. The parity study results are a bit of a mixed bag for the City. We are reasonably competitive in our benefit packages and most of our front line to mid-management positions for wages, however, we are suffering wage compression issues and our wages are not very competitive for certain department-head-level staff and above. As I work with staff to develop my draft of the FY24/25 budget, I will be considering what we've learned from the parity study as it relates to wages, COLA, benefits, etc. Council may see some suggested modifications to the pay scale in the near future as a follow up to this report.

Camping Operations Update

Campground management has been challenging for the Public Works Parks Division in recent years and I am experimenting with some operational changes related to camping in an attempt to improve the management of those campgrounds and the experience for campers. Management of Spit campgrounds will be moving to the Port & Harbor Enterprise. This change will be reflected in the proposed FY24/25 budget in two major ways: 1) I will be requesting additional summer temporary employee funds for the Harbor to manage the campgrounds, and 2) I will be proposing that Spit campground revenues be directed to the Enterprise instead of the General Fund. I believe in the long run, the Harbor team will be better suited to professionally manage campground properties on the Spit. I also see this as a reasonable way to increase revenue streams to the Enterprise to help support future financial obligations related to maintaining and expanding the City's facilities on the Spit. I'm currently working with Finance and the Port Director to determine if we will need to request Council support for a small appropriation to cover temporary employee salaries for the beginning of the season. Related to the campground management change, the Port will also take on Airport parking management.

IT is Fully Staffed!

After a long period of transition, the City IT division is back up to full strength! Just in the past year, Tomasz Sulczynski has taken the position of Network Administrator, Matt Dominguez has come onboard as the IT Support Specialist, and this week we welcome Bill Jirsa in the role of Chief Technology Officer. Tom has been with the City for fifteen years and is familiar to many Homer residents, not only because of his work with City

IT, but through his past job providing wireless internet service to local area residents and businesses and his present support for community events like Salmonfest and Tech Help in the library. Matt joins us from Phoenix, where he worked on a huge array of technologies for a gigantic school district. Bill has worked most recently for Polar Field Services in Colorado after 14 seasons at McMurdo Station in Antarctica. The team is looking forward to tackling a variety of pending projects all over town.

Greater Homer Housing Conversation

On March 25, starting at 9am, a collaborative group of community organizations are hosting an event at the Christian Community Church, in Homer. The purpose of the event is to start a discussion on the topic of housing in the community, identify key issues, and discuss potential solutions.

This collaborative effort consists of the following community organizations interested in the topic of housing: Choosing Our Roots; City of Homer; Homer Chamber of Commerce; Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District; Kenai Peninsula Homelessness Coalition; Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships; and South Peninsula Hospital Foundation.



COMMUNITY CONVERSATION: Housing Solutions in the Greater Homer Area

SATURDAY MARCH 25, 2023

9:00AM TO 12:30PM

Christian Community Church, 3838 Bartlett Street, Homer, AK

Childcare Meeting with Alaska Department of Health

Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager, and Ryan Foster, Special Projects Coordinator met with staff representing the Childcare Program Office and Healthy and Equitable Communities of the State of Alaska Department of Health, to discuss childcare challenges in Homer. The conversation was focused on the topic of childcare home businesses including the State's streamlined application process, and challenges

such as zoning, safety inspections, strong demand for childcare, and the various impacts childcare can have on employment, quality of life, and overall community health.

Coast Guard City Update

We reached out to the folks staffing the Coast Guard City program for an update on our application. They let us know that the package is being reviewed by Congress and the congressional approval process can take about 30 days. We could hear news on our application within the next 2-3 weeks.

Temporary Disc Golf Installation at Hornaday Park

With the closure of the Hornaday Park Campground this year, the Homer Disc Golf Association has suggested the installation of a 9-hole temporary disc golf course in that area. The City budgets for park equipment and plans to purchase the goods required (~\$6,000) and the Homer Disc Golf Association has offered to help install and maintain the temporary course. I am enthusiastic about this temporary use because it will ensure that there is active appropriate use in the campground area this summer while camping is shut down. This proposed use was unanimously supported by the Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Commission.

Commission Updates

Following comments from the Port & Harbor Commission Chair at the last Council meeting, there was interest from Councilmembers Lord and Erickson to discuss the relationship between Council and commissions. A meeting with those Councilmembers and staff is scheduled between the writing of this report and the Council meeting on the 13th. More to come as this develops.

Ladder Truck Opportunity

The largest and most expensive item missing from the City's fire fleet is a ladder truck. In recent large fires, mutual aid ladder trucks have been the difference between a small disaster and a big disaster. Chief Kirko identified a truck belonging to the City of Ketchikan which could fill our need for a ladder truck in a very economical way. He made a trip in late January with a City mechanic to evaluate the ladder truck. The day after the Council meeting on the 13th, we have a specialist doing an inspection on the ladder. We believe that we can buy and recondition the vehicle for about \$200k +/- \$50k and get 7 to 10 years out of the vehicle. Normally neither the Chief nor I are big fans of used equipment, but this could be a tremendous value for the City. For comparison, a new ladder truck can run anywhere from \$1.4 to \$1.6 million appropriately equipped. If the vehicle clears inspection successfully, we will bring an ordinance back to Council for consideration.

Attachments-

- March Employee Anniversaries
- Memorandum from Human Resources Director and City of Homer Parity Study
- Community Conversation on Housing Flyer
- Thank you letter from Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Office of the City Manager

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

citymanager@cityofhomer-ak.gov

(p) 907-235-8121 x2222

(f) 907-235-3148

Memorandum

TO: MAYOR CASTNER AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: Andrea Browning
DATE: March 20, 2023
SUBJECT: March Employee Anniversaries

I would like to take the time to thank the following employees for the dedication, commitment and service they have provided the City and taxpayers of Homer over the years.

Matt Clarke	Port	22	Years
Elton Anderson	Port	17	Years
Renee Krause	Clerks	16	Years
Mike Parish	Public Works	9	Years
Angie Kalugin	Finance	8	Years
Elizabeth Walton	Finance	6	Years
Kurt Read	Port	6	Years
Matt Smith	Library	5	Years
Matt Steffy	Public Works	5	Years
Mike Pettit	Public Works	4	Years
Jan Keiser	Public Works	3	Years
Amber Baldus	Fire	1	Year



City of Homer

www.cityofhomer-ak.gov

Human Resources

491 East Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

personnel@cityofhomer-ak.gov
(p) 907-235-8121 x2225
(f) 907-235-3148

Memorandum

TO: City Council

THROUGH: City Manager Dumouchel

FROM: HR Director Browning

DATE: 03/07/2023

SUBJECT: Salary and Benefits Survey Analysis

Section 4.2.2 of the Personnel Regulations requires the HR Director to: "review the Position Classification System no less than every five years and report the findings to the City Manager for review."

Overview

In the fall of 2022, 12 surveys were sent out to municipalities in Alaska. Of those 12, nine municipalities chose to participate. Updates of wage scales were additionally submitted in January 2023 to capture those participants who had COLA's effective January 1, 2023. This ensures the parity study illustrates the most current information possible.

HR Directors and Payroll staff of various employers coordinated with HR Director Browning to review job descriptions and match COH positions to parallel positions within their organizations. In Homer, as well as other cities, most job descriptions have widely varying duties, which makes it difficult to match some positions. The goal was to make an "apples to apples" comparison. If an employer had no comparable position, they were omitted from that job title. If they had a similar position but it was determined that there were more or less duties, that information is noted in the comments box.

Some municipalities additionally have longevity pay/steps. In those cases, there are a certain number of steps after the regular pay scale steps, in which pay increases can be granted every two years.

A benefits section which compares major medical, dental, and vision insurance is also included. Additionally, other benefits such as Annual Leave, Holidays, and Life Insurance were also compared.

Salaries

Overall based on the average between entry and ending salaries the City of Homer is comparable with other employers in the survey. There are some COH salaries that initially appear lower than comparable positions. However, after review, these positions either have less responsibility/ duties, do not supervise staff (as the other positions listed do), or other easily identifiable factors.

There are five (5) COH positions that have low entry salaries and either low or significantly low ending salaries:

1. City Manager; the average salary of the CM positions included in the survey is \$157,045. City Manager Dumouchel's salary is \$144,900, which is \$12,145 less than the average.

*The CM is a contract position, pay rate is determined by Council, and not included on the COH wage scale.

2. Finance Director; the entry salary for position is low, the ending salary for position is significantly low.
3. Chief of Police; the entry salary for position is low, the ending salary for position is significantly low.
4. Fire Chief; the ending salary for position is low.
5. Public Works Director; the ending salary for position is low.

*COH's position is PW Director and City Engineer. This should be two jobs.

Splitting these duties between two positions is recommended when considering capacity, and rate of pay/ parity.

The Finance Director, Chief of Police, Fire Chief, and Public Works Director ending rates of pay on the COH pay scale/ salary schedule are problematic. Additionally, many of our leadership positions appear to be in-line with other municipalities for ending rate of pay. But when you consider the longevity pay others offer, our positions fall behind in ending rate of pay. Unless additional ranges are added, or additional steps inserted at the end of the pay scale (steps beyond "O" or longevity pay), these positions will continue to be underpaid, which can create an issue with retention, and will be problematic for future recruitments.

Wage/Pay Compression

Pay compression is a compensation issue that develops over time. It occurs when there is little difference in pay between employees regardless of difference in their respective knowledge, skills, and abilities. The COH has only added two additional ranges (26/27) to the wage scale in the past 15+ years. During this time, the non-department head supervisory positions have grown to require greater knowledge/education, skills, training, and experience. Those positions have climbed up the ranges on the wage scale, and been compensated appropriately. However, due to the wage scale being limited by max ranges, the compensation difference between what Department Heads and some Division Heads earn is minimal- even though we require significant experience and training for our Department Head positions. Other municipalities have pulled leadership positions (Department Heads and some Division Heads) off the standard wage scale and onto a separate, updated wage scale. This is something I would encourage the City of Homer to explore.

Longevity Pay

Many municipalities have longevity pay, which is a standard tool for recruitment and retention. For example, the City of Kenai offers longevity pay to all employees who have received a rating of satisfactory or better in their last performance evaluation, who have been at step CC for a period of at least two (2) years, and who have not received a range increase or a non-cost of living pay increase within their current pay range within the twelve (12) months prior to July 31 will be paid a longevity pay of two percent (2%) of their annual pay rate (excluding overtime). Longevity pay is paid just once a year on the first payroll in August. The City of Soldotna also offers longevity pay. Once an employee reaches the longevity step they receive a 2% increase every two years thereafter with favorable evaluations. This step increase is for regular employees only and takes effect on their anniversary date.

The City of Homer does not offer longevity pay. If an employee maxes out at a step "O" that is where they stay, and cannot receive any future bumps in pay unless the Council approves a COLA. I recommend that the City of Homer update implements longevity pay to assist with recruitment of future talent, and retention of current employees.

Benefits

Health Insurance; Self-funded vs. Fully-insured

Two employers that participated in the survey are self-funded, the rest are fully-insured. In a self-funded plan the employer takes on the financial risk of funding their health plan from its assets and becomes responsible for managing and administering the benefits plan. Employers that are fully-insured buy their own insurance in the open market. In effect, fully-insured employers are paying an insurance company to assume the risk that they will pay out more in benefits than they collect in premiums. Up until 2015 the COH was self-funded. Since that time we have been fully-insured, with Premiera Blue Cross Blue Shield as our major medical carrier. The benefits paid out by Premiera have exceeded the employer premiums collected each year since 2015, so the switch to a fully-insured plan has proven effective for the COH.

Deductibles

Homer's annual deductible and out of pocket expense (the amount required by employees to pay before the insurance begins paying at 100% for claims) is fairly standard.

The out-of-pocket (family) amount for the COH is \$12,000 which is considerably higher than all but one other municipality (who also has a \$12,000 out-of-pocket max (family)).

Employee Premiums

Out of 8 employers who provided medical premium information:

- Five have employee shares, while three (Palmer, Seward, Wasilla) charge \$0 for employee only premiums, opting to cover 100% of employee healthcare.
- Six have dependent shares, while only two (Seward & Wasilla) charge \$0 for dependent coverage, opting to cover 100% of employees & their dependent's healthcare. While this is an amazing benefit, obviously most employers cannot sustain this, instead opting to have the employees cover a percentage of the costs.
- Homer's employee premiums fall near the mid-range in all categories:
Employee Only, Employee + Spouse, Employee + Child(ren), and Family

Employee Share of Premiums

The employee share, what the City of Homer employees pay per health plan, is average. Some municipalities charge a higher % for employee share, but some cover the cost for medical entirely (\$0 cost to employees). Employees are working hard to keep healthcare costs down! Additionally, Administration and the Employee Committee continue to work together annually to select health plan options that will contain costs.

Prescription Coverage

Prescription coverage is relatively the same.

Dental Coverage

Dental coverage is relatively the same, except several employers did not cover orthodontic (braces).

Vision Coverage

Vision coverage is relatively the same.

Life Insurance

The City of Homer offers Life Insurance coverage at an employee's annual base salary (up to \$100,000). Only two other employers offer life insurance at the employee's annual salary rate (Kenai & KPB). Most employers offered a flat rate, or have a maximum amount attached which may not be equal to the employee's annual

salary. This is a great benefit for the City of Homer employees at a minimal cost to the City. The average cost of life insurance provided for all City of Homer employees is around \$12,000 annually.

Leave Time and Personnel Policies

The leave days were fairly consistent for all employers when taking into consideration whether it was a combined leave bank or separate annual leave and sick leave banks. Personnel Policies were fairly consistent. Salary steps & wage scales can vary greatly per municipality based on unions.

COLA's

Several employers have not given COLA's (Cost of Living Adjustments) on a regular basis. It was noted in conversations that some employers have union contracts, and COLA's are negotiated in the Collective Bargaining Agreements (salary contracts) and not separately. The City of Homer implemented COLA's for the past six consecutive years: 1.5%, 0.5%, 0.5%, 3%, 1%, and 7%. As illustrated in the parity study, our wage scale is starting to keep up with other municipalities for the first time in years! (Excluding Longevity Pay).

However, the City's compensation value decreases when we do not provide a COLA. Adding an annual COLA helps employees keep up with inflation and allows the City's wage scale to remain competitive. This in turn helps with recruitment and employee retention, which is critical. Our employees are our most valuable asset!

CITY OF HOMER



SALARY & BENEFITS SURVEY 2022

ADMINISTRATION

City Manager

Serves as chief administrative officer of the city and is responsible for efficient administration of all city services. Bachelor's degree in business or public administration. Master's degree desired. Five years of management and supervisory experience required.

	Salary	Years in position	Contract Y/N	Exempt Y/N	Additional Benefits
City of Homer	\$144,900	2.5	Y	Y	City pays health premiums Vehicle allowance, \$250/mo
City of Cordova	\$130,000	3	Y	Y	Use of city car
City of Kenai	\$161,000	2 months	Y	Y	40 additional hours of admin leave Vehicle allowance, \$300/mo
City of Kodiak	\$182,520	5.5	Y	Y	
City of Palmer	\$145,000	2.5	Y	Y	City provided car
City of Seward	\$165,838	2	Y	Y	
City of Soldotna	\$152,105 *currently advertised \$140,000-\$170,000	5yrs	Y	Y	Vehicle allowance, \$500/mo. Phone Allowance, \$75/mo. 80 additional hours of admin leave City pays health premiums for family coverage
City of Unalaska	\$175,000 *currently advertised				

Assistant to the City Manager

Performs a full range of administrative duties for the City Manager's office. Completes analysis, studies and reports and works on special projects as assigned. Responsible for scheduling manager appointments and maintaining files. Assists with administering leases, Special Event Permits, Monthly/ Annual dept. statistics. Five years administrative experience. Associate's degree required, Bachelor's preferred.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$25.90	\$40.23	
City of Cordova			
City of Kenai	\$39.66	\$47.59	Assistant to City Manager/ Special Projects Coordinator More duties; Longevity Pay
City of Seward	\$21.32	\$30.87	Executive Assistant to City Manager
City of Soldotna	\$38.61	\$49.92	

Special Projects Coordinator

Conducts city economic development and special projects initiatives at City Manager's request. Researches and writes grants. Completes analysis, studies and reports on special projects as assigned by City Manager. Coordinates and prepares Capital Improvement Plan, Legislative Request and annual report. Serves as the City's Public Information Officer. Bachelor's degree and five years' experience in economic development, special project initiatives, and grant writing or related field.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$33.80	\$52.48	Exempt
City of Cordova	\$28.34	\$41.48	Exempt
City of Kenai	\$39.66	\$47.59	Assistant to CM (see above position) Not resp. for CIP
City of Palmer	\$35.42	\$57.88	Director of Community Development; more duties
City of Seward	\$42.85	\$62.14	Assistant City Manager; More duties
City of Wasilla	\$50.99	\$67.83	Deputy Administrator, oversees some divisions; More duties
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$35.19	\$49.40	Community Fiscal Projects Manager, grant administration and economic activity

Community Recreation Manager

Develops and administers a program of community activities and projects of a recreational nature for the benefit of the community. Three to five years of Park's administrative experience and five years recreational management experience required. Bachelor's degree preferred.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$29.49	\$45.77	Exempt; Less duties
City of Cordova	\$30.46	\$44.37	Exempt; Director Parks & Recreation; More duties
City of Kenai	\$39.68	\$52.37	Exempt; Parks & Recreation Director; More duties
City of Seward	\$37.08	\$53.77	Exempt; Parks & Recreation Director, Rec Center, Sports, Parking, Campgrounds and Parks; More duties
City of Soldotna	\$39.68	\$52.37	Exempt; Parks & Recreation Director; More duties
City of Wasilla	\$50.99	\$67.83	Recreational & Cultural Services Director; More duties
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$40.37	\$58.53	Recreation Director-North Pen Recreation Service Area, (Nikiski area services); More duties

HR Director

Responsible for citywide personnel functions such as maintaining personnel files, administering health, life and other city benefits, monitoring employee appraisal system. Responsible for developing and implementing Personnel Regulations, advertising and processing employment applications. Ensures compliance with local, state, and federal laws. Responsible for CDL Alcohol and Drug Testing Program. Five years' of human resources management. Bachelor's degree in required.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$35.52	\$55.10	Exempt; Degree required
City of Cordova	\$30.46	\$44.37	Exempt; Degree preferred, not required
City of Kenai	\$39.68	\$52.37	Exempt; Dept. Head
City of Palmer	\$28.57	\$46.34	Exempt; Human Resources Manager
City of Seward	\$34.50	\$50.02	Exempt; Human Resources Manager
City of Soldotna	\$38.61	\$49.92	Exempt; Accountant/HR Manager
City of Wasilla	\$38.31	\$50.96	Exempt; HR Manager
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$46.23	\$67.15	Exempt; Director of HR

Chief Technology Officer

Responsible for overall city-wide operation, management, and control of IT and telecom resources. Develops documentation, trains staff, and performs system monitoring and management. Responsible for day-to-day support, operation and various planning aspects of the City's IT network. Bachelor's degree in related field. Five years' experience with enterprise-grade computer systems, including project management experience.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$34.66	\$53.80	Exempt * New position
City of Cordova	\$28.35	\$41.48	Exempt
City of Kenai	\$39.66	\$47.59	
City of Seward	\$39.86	\$57.80	Exempt; IT Director
City of Soldotna	\$38.61	\$49.92	Exempt
City of Wasilla	\$38.31	\$51.96	Exempt; IT Manager
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$43.18	\$62.67	Exempt; Director of IT

Network Administrator

This position is responsible for the overall citywide operational management of the City of Homer's telecom needs, including the implementation and integration of system and technology initiatives necessary to achieve organizational goals. Bachelor of Science degree or equivalent work experience in a related field and five years' experience in managing complex network computer systems.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$30.37	\$47.14	
City of Seward	\$32.47	\$47.02	Senior IT Tech
City of Soldotna	\$27.40	\$35.45	IT Technician
City of Wasilla	\$32.91	\$43.77	IT Network Support Specialist
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$29.65	\$49.94	Sr Helpdesk Tech, Helpdesk Spvr, Network IT Admin

IT Support Specialist

Assists with overall operations of information systems and new media enhanced technology for City government and enterprise functions Degree in related field and 3-5 years of networking experience, or equivalent applicable work experience preferred.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$24.10	\$37.40	
City of Soldotna	\$27.40	\$35.45	IT Technician

CITY CLERK'S

City Clerk

Performs statutory responsibilities of municipal clerk as prescribed in/by State law and City ordinance; administers elections, records management and general public information. Five years' experience in legal/ legislative work as a City Clerk or similar position. Municipal Clerks Certification required.

*Acts as Administrative Services Supervisor to facilitate collaboration and nexus between the Clerk and Finance teams within the Administrative Department, and other departments within the City. **Homer only: City Clerk/ Deputy Director of Administration.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$36.43	\$56.53	Exempt; Also Deputy Director of Administration
City of Cordova		\$46.97	Exempt; Contract; Associate Degree preferred
City of Kenai		\$52.89	Exempt; Contract
City of Seward		Not provided	Exempt; Contract
City of Soldotna		\$44.67	Exempt; Contract
City of Wasilla	\$50.99	\$67.83	Exempt
Kenai Peninsula Borough		\$58.96	Exempt; Borough Clerk

Deputy City Clerk II

Performs a full range of administrative duties. Assists the City Clerk. Acts as recording clerk for commissions and committees as assigned. Provides staff support to Council and Commissions. Required to follow local, state, and federal laws pertaining to job duties. Two years clerical experience. Certified Municipal Clerk certification within five years of hire required.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$24.99	\$38.82	
City of Cordova	\$28.35	\$41.48	Exempt; Acts as Clerk in Clerk's absence
City of Kenai	\$25.59	\$30.71	Admin Assistant II/ Deputy City Clerk
City of Palmer	\$23.97	\$38.59	Deputy City Clerk
City of Seward	\$26.83	\$38.86	Deputy City Clerk
City of Soldotna	\$32.28	\$41.76	Deputy Clerk
City of Wasilla	\$29.91	\$39.81	Deputy City Clerk
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$35.19	\$49.40	Exempt; Acts as Clerk in Clerk's absence, project responsibilities; More duties

PLANNING AND ZONING

City Planner

Responsible for management of planning, zoning, central permitting and land development functions. Bachelor's degree in Planning or equivalent field. Requires extensive knowledge of city planning principles, land/facility use and development, permitting and research methods. Four years' experience in planning or closely related field. American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) certification preferred.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$33.80	\$52.48	Exempt
City of Cordova	\$30.46	\$44.37	Exempt, Master's degree desirable
City of Kenai	\$39.68	\$52.37	Exempt; Planning Director. Department Head
City of Seward	\$37.08	\$53.77	Exempt; Planner
City of Soldotna	\$42.52	\$55.01	Exempt; Director of Economic Development & Planning
City of Wasilla	\$34.83	\$46.33	Exempt
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$43.18	\$62.67	Exempt; Director of Planning

Deputy City Planner

Responsible for ongoing operation of the Geographic Information System including programming and documentation, graphic and related data input and production of GIS products and maps. Assists the City Planner in performing the duties of the Planning and Zoning Division. Bachelor's degree in Planning or Geography required. Two years' experience with GIS, ArcView/Arc Info software.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$33.80	\$52.48	Exempt; Dual Role as Economic Development Manager; More duties
City of Seward	\$29.52	\$42.75	GIS Technician
City of Soldotna	\$29.97	\$38.76	Associate Planner
City of Wasilla	\$24.73	\$32.89	Planning Clerk
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$33.95	\$43.62	Senior GIS Technician

Associate Planner

Responsible for enforcement of City zoning and land use ordinances. Assists the City Planner in performing the duties of the Planning and Zoning Division. Provides technical information on planning and zoning issues. Four years in Planning or equivalent experience required.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$26.81	\$41.62	
City of Kenai	\$26.85	\$32.22	Administrative Assistant III/Code Enforcement
City of Wasilla	\$32.28	\$42.95	Code Compliance Officer; will be downgraded in July
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$31.73	\$40.77	Code Compliance Officer

LIBRARY

Library Director

Responsible for directing the operations of the library to ensure quality library service to the community. Requires Graduate degree in Library and Information Science, at least five years professional library experience, and two years supervisory experience. Extensive knowledge of current methods and practices of public library administration, including personnel management, collection development, budgeting and planning, grant writing and implementation, cataloging, classification, and bibliographical control of library and information resources, automated information retrieval systems, and on-line database sources.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$35.52	\$55.10	Exempt, More duties- supervises IT division
City of Cordova	\$28.34	\$41.48	Exempt
City of Kenai	\$39.68	\$52.37	Exempt; Department Head
City of Palmer	\$27.03	\$43.80	
City of Seward	\$34.50	\$50.02	Exempt; oversees Museum & Historic Preservation Commission
City of Soldotna	\$38.61	\$49.92	Exempt
City of Wasilla	\$34.83	\$46.33	Exempt

Deputy Library Director

The Library Deputy Director is responsible for the day-to-day management of library operations, focused primarily on public-facing duties. Such duties include developing the library collection, providing circulation and reference service, and maintaining facilities and equipment. The Deputy Director also assists the Director of the Library and Information Technology Services Department with administrative functions. Bachelor's degree required.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$28.60	\$44.39	**New position
City of Soldotna	\$32.28	\$41.76	Assistant City Librarian

Youth Services Librarian

Under limited supervision, performs and has oversight of youth services to the community through education and outreach. Performs a variety of library services including reference assistance, planning and conducting library programs, selecting and maintaining youth library materials. Graduation from an accredited four-year college required, Master of Library Science degree from an American Library of Assoc. accredited school of Librarianship preferred. At least three years' experience working in a library setting, including at least one year of experience with youth services.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$24.99	\$38.82	
City of Cordova	\$21.62	\$30.32	Union position
City of Kenai	\$22.08	\$26.50	Library Assistant/Youth Services Coordinator
City of Palmer	\$20.91	\$33.45	
City of Soldotna	\$28.29	\$36.59	Librarian I; More duties
City of Wasilla	\$29.91	\$39.81	Youth/User Services Librarian (supervisory position)

Library Technology Specialist

Responsible for providing ongoing Level I & II technical support of Information Systems and processes. Performs technical service functions related to development and maintenance of electronic resources, cataloging, and patron access to resources. Bachelor's degree or education equivalent to two years at college level with three years library experience.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$22.23	\$34.53	

Library Technician III

Under limited supervision, performs and has oversight of technical services including collection development and maintenance, cataloging, and interlibrary loan services. Performs advanced reference, research and circulation function. Bachelor's degree or equivalent education and experience (two years at college level with three years library experience).

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$22.23	\$34.53	
City of Cordova	\$21.62	\$30.32	Union position
City of Palmer	\$19.36	\$30.87	Library Assistant
City of Seward	\$22.18	\$32.12	Library/ Museum Program Coordinator
City of Wasilla	\$24.73	\$32.89	Library Aide III

Library Technician II

Performs library tasks in connection with public service such as reference, reader's advisory, backup interlibrary loan services and circulation. Collection development and maintenance, acquisitions, and cataloging. Associates degree or equivalent education and experience.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$20.35	\$31.59	
City of Palmer	\$16.30	\$25.71	Library Specialist
City of Soldotna	\$21.25	\$27.46	Library Clerk II; More duties
City of Wasilla	\$20.05	\$26.67	Library Aide II

Library Technician I

Responsible for staffing the public service desk, shelving materials and assisting library patrons. Associates degree or equipment education and experience.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$17.46	\$27.14	
City of Palmer	\$14.78	\$23.13	
City of Seward	\$21.32	\$30.87	Library/ Museum Technician
City of Soldotna	\$18.20	\$23.53	Library Clerk I, More duties
City of Wasilla	\$17.02	\$22.67	Library Aide I

Library Aide/ Sub

Under general supervision assists the public with basic library services, shelves materials accurately. High School diploma or GED, library experience desired.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$15.54	\$24.13	Temporary or Casual Position; not regular F/T or P/T
City of Cordova	\$19.93	\$27.96	Union position
City of Kenai	\$19.09	\$22.91	Library Aide
City of Soldotna	\$14.30	\$17.41	Library Page
City of Wasilla	\$11.83	\$15.74	Library Helper

FINANCE

Finance Director

Responsible for control and administration of city's funds and assets. Directs the preparation of budget and financial reports. Performs investment analyses and makes investment recommendations. Serves as Municipal Treasurer. Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Accounting or Public Administration. Master's degree in a related field or certification as a Certified Public Accountant is preferred. Six years' experience in fund accounting and financial work required. Professional government experience including general funds, enterprise funds and special assessment districts preferred, including auditing procedures. Must have at least 3 years' experience in a supervisory capacity.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$37.35	\$57.95	Exempt
City of Cordova		Not provided	
City of Kenai	\$53.24	\$70.27	Exempt
City of Palmer	\$35.42	\$57.88	Exempt
City of Seward	\$42.85	\$62.14	Exempt
City of Soldotna	\$49.26	\$63.68	Exempt
City of Wasilla	\$50.99	\$67.83	Exempt
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$46.23	\$67.15	Exempt

Controller

Directs and coordinates all accounting and operational functions and auditing; performs complex accounting and auditing functions of specialized accounts and records; assists in preparation of internal and external financial statements, records and reports; Evaluates accounting and internal control systems; supervises staff performing technical general accounting functions. Serves as Deputy Treasurer. Bachelor's degree in accounting. Five years' accounting experience with at least three years of general ledger accounting experience.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$30.37	\$47.14	
City of Cordova	\$30.46	\$44.37	Exempt
City of Kenai	\$43.74	\$52.49	Exempt
City of Seward	\$39.86	\$57.80	Exempt: Deputy Finance Director – more duties
City of Wasilla	\$46.35	\$61.66	Exempt
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$40.37	\$58.28	Exempt; Accounting Manager/ Controller

General Ledger Accountant

Responsible for all general accounting functions and Special District Assessments. Performs accounting analysis for cash, account payables, account receivables, reconciliations, and provides appropriate accounting information to internal and external customers when needed. Bachelor's degree in accounting. Five years of accounting experience with three years general ledger accounting experience.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$28.60	\$44.39	
City of Seward	\$29.52	\$42.75	Senior Accountant
City of Wasilla	\$34.83	\$46.33	Exempt ; Tax Auditor/Accountant
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$37.70	\$52.93	Exempt; Manager – Financial Planning – More duties

Accounting Technician – Utility Billing

Responsible for all Water & Sewer Billing functions. Responsible for reconciling accounts receivable subsidiaries to the General Ledger and preparing accounts receivable audit schedules. Responsible for billing and collection of city-wide accounts receivables. Associates degree in accounting required. Five years' experience and working knowledge in receivables billing and collection.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$24.99	\$38.82	
City of Seward	\$22.32	\$35.33	Accounting Tech III
City of Soldotna	\$28.29	\$36.59	Account Clerk III- AP/AR
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$27.71	\$35.61	General Accounts Specialist – Accts Payable Lead AP

Accounting Technician - Accounts Payable

Processes and maintains accounting records and transactions relative to Accounts Payable, records and reconciles project/grant accounting records, assists with the budget and audit process. Five years' experience and working knowledge of accounts payable and financial reporting to multiple agencies (internal and external).

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$24.99	\$38.82	
City of Cordova	\$22.52	\$31.59	Union position
City of Seward	\$21.32	\$30.87	
City of Soldotna	\$28.29	\$36.59	Account Clerk III- AP/AR
City of Wasilla	\$24.73	\$32.89	Finance Clerk III, Accounts Payable
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$29.65	\$40.77	Grants/Treasury Accountant I/II– No AP duties

Accounting Technician III - Payroll

Prepares, records and reconciles bi-weekly payroll. Records and reconciles payroll accounting records, assists with budget and audit process. Experience with computerized accounting systems required. Five years' experience in accounting. Some college courses pertaining to accounting required.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$23.15	\$35.95	
City of Kenai	\$28.20	\$33.84	Accounting Tech II
City of Palmer	\$23.97	\$38.59	More duties
City of Seward	\$22.18	\$32.12	Payroll & AP
City of Soldotna	\$29.97	\$38.76	Accounting Clerk IV- PR/HR Assistant; More duties
City of Wasilla	\$24.73	\$32.89	Finance Clerk III/ Payroll
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$33.95	\$43.62	Payroll Accountant – More duties, More experience required

Accounting Technician I

Posts all accounts receivable payments, answers and directs incoming calls and visitors to City Hall, prepares utility connects and disconnects, provides accounting support and responds to questions regarding billings. Three years office experience in duties requiring high public contact required.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$21.31	\$33.05	
City of Cordova	\$21.62	\$30.32	Union position, similar duties
City of Kenai	\$26.85	\$32.22	Accounting Tech I
City of Palmer	\$16.30	\$25.71	Part-time Cashier/ Less duties
City of Seward	\$22.18	\$32.12	Accounting Tech Utility
City of Soldotna	\$25.84	\$33.38	Admin Assistant; More duties.
City of Wasilla	\$22.47	\$29.90	Finance Clerk II, Utilities/Receivables/Cashier
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$24.21	\$31.10	Senior Account Clerk – Revenue – Two years' experience

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief of Police

Supervises and directs the activities of the Police Department. Ten years police experience. Requires Advanced Certification from Alaska Police Standards, and graduation from the FBI National Academy or the Southern Police Institute (SPI).

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$44.67	\$57.95	Contract, Exempt
City of Cordova	\$33.51	\$48.80	Exempt, Can be hired outside this pay range
City of Kenai	\$50.64	\$66.85	Exempt; No Jail
City of Palmer	\$35.42	\$57.88	Exempt
City of Seward	\$42.85	\$62.14	Exempt
City of Soldotna	\$49.26	\$63.68	Exempt;
City of Wasilla	\$50.99	\$67.83	Exempt

Lieutenant/Community Jail Administrator

Supervises and assists in directing activities of police department and jail. Acts as Chief of Police in his absence. Eight years police experience. Requires Advanced Certification from Alaska Police Standards, and graduation from the FBI National Academy or the Southern Police Institute (SPI).

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$42.48	\$55.10	Additional liability + duties w/ Jail
City of Kenai	\$48.21	\$57.85	Exempt; No Jail
City of Seward	\$39.86	\$57.80	Exempt; Deputy Police Chief
City of Soldotna	\$42.52	\$55.01	No jail
City of Wasilla	\$46.35	\$61.66	Exempt; No jail

Police Sergeant

Responsible for detailed daily assignments and direction of all patrol functions including patrol assignments and work schedules. Responsible for conducting investigations. Also performs general duty police work. Seven years police experience working as a Police Officer. Requires Intermediate Certification from Alaska Police Standards and Associate's degree or equivalent in experience and education in police related field.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$40.46	\$52.48	
City of Kenai	\$41.66	\$49.99	
City of Palmer	\$27.03	\$43.80	
City of Seward	\$34.50	\$50.02	
City of Soldotna	\$38.83	\$56.24	
City of Wasilla	\$41.78	\$60.93	

Police Officer III

General duty police work. Ten years' experience as police officer. Associates degree or equivalent in experience and education in police related field. Requires Advanced Certification from Alaska Police Standards.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$37.36	\$48.49	

Police Officer II

General duty police work. Five years' experience as police officer. Requires Intermediate Certification from Alaska Police Standards.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$36.34	\$47.14	
City of Palmer	\$25.51	\$41.23	
City of Wasilla	\$33.88	\$49.37	

Police Officer I

General duty police work. Four years' experience in work requiring public contact. Basic certification from Alaska Police Standards within 14 months of hire. PO I stays at this range until 5-year mark.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$35.28	\$45.77	PO II's go up to \$47.14 and PO III's go up to \$48.49
City of Cordova	\$31.74	\$44.53	This is only classification - No PO II's, or III's; Union
City of Kenai	\$35.99	\$43.19	This is only classification - No PO II's, or III's
City of Palmer	\$22.44	\$36.04	
City of Seward	\$29.52	\$42.75	This is only classification - No PO II's, or III's
City of Soldotna	\$34.09	\$49.42	This is only classification - No PO II's, or III's
City of Wasilla	\$30.47	\$44.43	

Jail Officer II

Provides administrative assistance in the operation of the Homer Community Jail, such as statistical reports, and training Jail Officer I's. Performs basic security work in the community jail setting. Responsible for prisoner welfare. Represents city/state at court arraignments and other initial proceedings. Graduation from a law enforcement or correction academy that meets the current standards of the Alaska Police Standards Council or graduation from a 120 hour Community Jail Officer training program required. Two years' experience as a Jail Officer I.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$24.99	\$38.82	
City of Seward	\$26.83	\$38.86	Correctional Sergeant

Jail Officer I

Performs basic security work in the community jail setting. Responsible for prisoner welfare. Represents city/state at court arraignments and other initial proceedings. Two years' experience in work requiring public contact. Graduation from a law enforcement or correction academy that meets the current Alaska Police Standards Council standards or graduation from a 120 hour Community Jail Officer training program within 12 months of hire.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$23.15	\$35.95	
City of Seward	\$24.39	\$35.33	Correctional Officer

Dispatch Communications Supervisor/ Lead Dispatcher

Responsible for all aspects of dispatch operations including scheduling, training, records storage and disposal. Occasionally monitors prisoners for welfare checks. Receives and dispatches calls of administrative and emergency nature for police, fire/ambulance, state troopers, fish and wildlife protection and state parks. Performs clerical duties for the department as required. Five years' experience as a Public Safety Dispatcher required, and supervisory experience preferred.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$30.37	\$47.14	
City of Cordova	\$24.12	\$33.81	
City of Kenai	\$29.64	\$35.57	
City of Palmer	\$25.51	\$41.23	Dispatch Supervisor
City of Seward	\$26.83	\$38.86	Dispatch Supervisor
City of Wasilla	\$30.47	\$44.43	Dispatch Supervisor
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$31.73	\$40.77	Dispatcher Shift Supervisor (3 years' experience)

Public Safety Dispatcher II

Perform duties to coordinate public safety (Police, Fire and EMS) response to protect the life and property through prompt, courteous, and efficient call processing and dispatching. Process case files for District Attorney's office. Obtain and maintain security clearance standards as set by the Alaska Public Safety Information Network (APSIN) and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). Performs some corrections officer duties in monitoring prisoners and the cell block area via remote video camera. Performs clerical duties. Four years' experience as a public safety dispatcher

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$24.99	\$38.82	Jail Monitoring duties in addition to dispatch
City of Cordova	\$21.62	\$30.32	This is only classification – No I's or II's
City of Kenai	\$25.59	\$30.71	This is only classification – No I's or II's
City of Palmer	\$22.44	\$36.04	
City of Seward	\$24.39	\$35.33	This is only classification – No I's or II's
City of Wasilla	\$27.39	\$40.00	This is only classification – No I's or II's
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$29.65	\$38.10	Public Safety Dispatcher II (2 years' experience)

Public Safety Dispatcher I

Perform duties to coordinate public safety (Police, Fire and EMS) response to protect the life and property through prompt, courteous, and efficient call processing and dispatching. Process case files for District Attorney's office. Obtain and maintain security clearance standards as set by the Alaska Public Safety Information Network (APSIN) and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). Performs some corrections officer duties in monitoring prisoners and the cell block area via remote video camera. Performs clerical duties. Two years' experience in clerical duties with public contact required. Entry level position.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$23.15	\$35.95	Jail Monitoring duties in addition to dispatch
City of Palmer	\$20.91	\$33.45	
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$27.71	\$35.61	Public Safety Dispatcher I

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief

Supervises the Fire Department to provide fire protection services, emergency medical services and comprehensive emergency management and prevention services for the City. 10 years' experience in emergency service leadership. Certified as an IFSAC or Pro Board Firefighter II required. Fire Officer-I or II preferred. Baccalaureate degree in Business, Management, Fire Science, Public Administration or a similar field or equivalent. Graduation from the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program preferred. Certified in Methods of Instruction in either EMS or Fire with significant training experience. EMS field experience required (EMT II/III/or paramedic preferred). Serves as City's Director of Emergency Management. Manages the City's emergency preparedness, response and recovery program.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$43.57	\$56.53	Exempt, vehicle
City of Cordova	\$33.51	\$48.80	Exempt, vehicle
City of Kenai	\$48.22	\$63.64	Exempt
City of Palmer	\$35.42	\$57.88	Exempt, vehicle
City of Seward	\$42.85	\$62.14	Exempt, vehicle
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$37.70	\$62.67	Exempt; Two levels of Chief Volunteer Department, Regular Dept.

Deputy Fire Chief

Assists the Fire Chief with managing and supervising the fire and rescue services, including personnel, training, and operations. Eight years' experience and extensive knowledge of emergency services, including fire and rescue services with at least three years at Captain or higher rank. Certified as an IFSAC or Pro Board Firefighter II, Certified in Methods of Instruction in Fire with demonstrated instructor competency, EMS experience required (EMT II/III/or paramedic preferred). Associates Degree in Fire Science, Business, Emergency Management or similar field, or equivalent in experience.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$37.36	\$48.49	Vehicle
City of Kenai	\$43.74	\$52.49	Exempt
City of Palmer	\$25.51	\$41.23	Fire Prevention Officer
City of Seward	\$39.86	\$57.80	Exempt; Vehicle
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$35.19	\$58.53	Exempt; Two levels of Deputy Chief Volunteer Department, Regular Dept.

EMS Assistant Chief

Assists the Fire Chief with managing and supervising the emergency medical services, including personnel, training, and operations. Eight years' experience and extensive knowledge of emergency services, including advanced life support emergency medical services, rescue and fire services with at least three years in a supervisory capacity. Certified Alaska or NREMT-P Paramedic, Certified in Methods of Instruction in EMS training with demonstrated instructor competency, BLS Instructor, and extensive EMS experience required. Associates Degree in a Medical Field, Fire Science, Business, Emergency Management or similar field, or equivalent in experience.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$37.36	\$48.49	Vehicle
City of Palmer	\$25.51	\$41.23	Fire Prevention Officer
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$37.70	\$52.93	Assistant Chief

Firefighter/ EMT-III

Responds to emergency calls as Senior Firefighter-Advanced Life Support EMT and provides training, administrative, maintenance and support services to the Fire Department. Seven years' experience with emergency services, two of which must be w/ HVFD. Must possess a State of Alaska certification as a Firefighter II, Fire Service Instructor-I or EMT Instructor-I, Fire Officer I, EMT III. Must be able to drive and operate all fire department vehicles. Associates Degree in Fire Science, Fire Service Administration or related field or equivalent experience/college credit hours.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$23.29	\$30.19	*** Based on 56 hrs/week ; 2,912 hrs annually
City of Kenai	\$24.49	\$29.39	Fire Engineer; 56 hrs/week ; 2,912 hrs annually
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$27.16	\$35.08	Senior Captain; 56 hrs/week ; 2,912 hrs annually
	\$38.87	\$49.94	Senior Captain – Training Officer (80 hrs/2080 annually)

Firefighter/ EMT-II

Responds to emergency calls as Senior Firefighter-Advanced Life Support EMT and provides training, administrative, maintenance and support services to the Fire Department. Five years' experience with emergency services. Must be currently certified as an EMT-II, or Advanced NREMT. Certified as an IFSAC or Pro Board Firefighter II required. Must possess Fire Service Instructor-I or EMT-I Instructor within one year. Associates Degree in Fire Science, Fire Service Administration or related field or equivalent experience/college credit hours.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$21.68	\$28.16	*** Based on 56 hrs/week ; 2,912 hrs annually
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$23.12	\$30.64	Engineer/EMT III or Para (56 hour/2912hr annual) Base pay only (3 years' experience required for Engineer promotion)

Firefighter/ EMT-I

Responds to emergency calls as a Firefighter-Basic Life Support EMT and provides training, administrative, maintenance and support services to the Fire Department. Three years' experience with emergency services. Must be currently certified as an EMT-Basic or EMT-I with the ability to be certified as an EMT-Advanced or EMT-II within one year of hire, or Advanced NREMT. Must possess Firefighter-I certificate.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$20.91	\$27.13	*** Based on 56 hrs/week ; 2,912 hrs annually
City of Cordova	\$24.12	\$33.81	Union
City of Kenai	\$22.21	\$26.65	Firefighter. 56 hrs/week ; 2,912 hrs annually

Administrative Assistant to Fire Chief

Coordinates the day-to-day administrative, maintenance and support services of the Emergency Services Division and assists the Fire Chief as an administrative assistant. Must be CPR/First-aid certified. Three years' experience working in an office environment.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$22.23	\$34.53	
City of Kenai	\$25.59	\$30.71	Administrative Assistant II
City of Seward	\$21.32	\$30.87	Executive Assistant, office work
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$27.71	\$35.61	Administrative Assistant – Four years' experience- No CPR/First Aid required

PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works Director/Engineer

Manages all department operations, including water distribution and treatment, wastewater collection and treatment, City streets and parks, City vehicles/rolling stock, City-owned public buildings/grounds/equipment, and capital improvement program. Bachelor's degree in civil engineering or related field desirable. Minimum of five years of experience in the planning, construction, maintenance, or operations of public facilities, utilities, or transportations systems. At least three years of this experience must have been at a managerial level and must have included responsibility for supervising professional level staff in government or city service position.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$37.35	\$57.95	Exempt
City of Cordova	\$33.51	\$48.80	Exempt, can be paid outside this range
City of Kenai	\$50.64	\$66.85	Exempt
City of Palmer	\$35.42	\$57.88	Exempt
City of Seward	\$39.86	\$57.80	Exempt: Public Works Director
City of Soldotna	\$46.90	\$60.64	Exempt
City of Wasilla	\$50.99	\$67.83	Exempt, Public Works Director

Public Works Superintendent

Supervises the operation, maintenance and construction of city public facilities, including street and road maintenance, snow removal, parks and recreation facilities, city owned buildings, grounds and equipment. Responsible for equipment maintenance and Motor Pool operations. Prepares and administers annual PW maintenance contracts. Five years' experience is required, three of which must exhibit overall responsible charge at the Superintendent's level relative to supervision, budgets and records keeping. High school diploma or GED required with a college or vocational/technical courses appropriate to the position desirable.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$31.22	\$48.49	
City of Seward	\$29.52	\$42.75	Exempt
City of Soldotna	\$40.53	\$51.39	Exempt ; Maintenance Manager
City of Wasilla	\$46.35	\$61.66	Exempt, Deputy Director PW, more duties
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$43.18	\$62.67	Exempt, Maintenance Director, more duties

Public Works Inspector

Coordinates the placement of public/private utilities and other improvements in City street rights-of-way. Issues right-of-way, driveway, water, and sewer permits. Inspects construction of permitted improvements to insure conformance with applicable regulations/policies. Works with regulatory agencies, developers, surveyors, realtors, property owners and contractors to plan work in the right-of-way in support of private developments. Two years' experience as an inspector on municipal projects and/or two years' experience completing residential/commercial water, sewer, and drainage construction preferred.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$27.70	\$43.01	
City of Kenai	\$37.79	\$45.35	Building Official/Manager; More duties
City of Palmer	\$22.44	\$36.04	Building Inspector
City of Seward	\$32.47	\$47.02	Building/Fire Inspector; More duties
City of Soldotna	\$35.46	\$45.82	Building Official, building code compliance

GIS/ Engineering Technician

Performs a variety of technical duties within the Public Works Department, similar to what would be performed by an assistant city engineer, under the direction of the Public Works Director. Three years' experience utilizing GIS software in support of municipal infrastructure management and project planning desired. Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering or other STEM-related field.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$26.81	\$41.62	

Project Technician

Performs a variety of research, writing and field duties within the Public Works Department under the direction of the Public Works Director. Serves as Project Control Specialist for the Department. Bachelor's degree required, with an emphasis in a STEM-related field

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$24.99	\$38.82	Less duties
City of Soldotna	\$36.78	\$47.55	Exempt; Project Manager

Public Works Office Manager

Manages and performs administrative and fiscal functions for the Department of Public Works, performing a wide range of administrative/controlling functions to support the smooth, cost-effective operation. Minimum of 8 years' experience in an office environment, with at least 5 years' experience in Public Works or construction office environment.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$23.15	\$35.95	
City of Kenai	\$26.85	\$32.22	Administrative Assistant III/Procurement
City of Palmer	\$19.36	\$30.87	PW Administrative Assistant
City of Seward	\$21.32	\$30.87	Executive Assistant, Grants
City of Soldotna	\$25.84	\$33.38	Admin Assistant
City of Wasilla	\$24.73	\$32.89	PW Clerk

Parks Superintendent

Serves as the visionary, caretaker and custodian of the City's parks, trails, and open spaces as well as any related facilities and hardscape, for the community's benefit. Eight years' experience in an environment related to natural resources and parks management.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$27.70	\$43.01	Less duties
City of Palmer	\$25.51	\$41.23	Parks & Facility Manager
City of Seward	\$29.52	\$42.75	Parks & Campground Operation Supervisor
City of Soldotna	\$44.67	\$57.75	Parks & Rec Director; Includes Sports Complex; More duties
City of Wasilla	\$36.20	\$48.16	Maintenance Super., Parks and Properties- More duties

Lead Equipment Operator

Responsible for leading team of equipment operators to construct, repair and maintain City infrastructure, including roads, trails, drainage works, park facilities, and buildings as well as ancillary administrative functions. Minimum of five years' experience in operation of heavy equipment with emphasis on graders, excavators, backhoes and front-end loaders required.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$26.81	\$41.62	
City of Cordova	\$30.46	\$44.37	Exempt; Streets Superintendent; More duties
City of Kenai	\$32.65	\$39.18	Equipment Lead Operator
City of Wasilla	\$36.20	\$48.16	Maintenance Supervisor, Roads; More duties

Equipment Operator II

Operates heavy and light equipment for maintenance of water and wastewater utilities, city streets and parking lots. Five years experience operating heavy equipment. Extensive operation knowledge of graders, excavators and backhoes.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$24.10	\$37.40	
City of Cordova	\$26.46	\$37.12	Union
City of Kenai	\$28.20	\$33.84	Equipment Operator; only classification, no I/II
City of Palmer	\$22.44	\$36.04	
City of Seward	\$26.83	\$38.86	Mechanic & Operator- More duties
City of Soldotna	\$28.29	\$36.59	Streets & Maint Oper/Worker; More duties- City Wide
City of Wasilla	\$30.22	\$44.18	Roads Technician II

Equipment Operator I

Operates heavy and light equipment for maintenance of water and wastewater utilities, city streets and parking lots. Four years experience operating heavy equipment. Entry level position.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$22.23	\$34.53	
City of Cordova	\$23.46	\$32.93	Union
City of Wasilla	\$26.33	\$38.49	Roads Technician I

Lead Mechanic

Maintenance and repair of the City's vehicles, heavy equipment, other rolling stock and small equipment. Provide leadership for, supervise and manage Public Works motor pool operations and staff. Ten years' in mechanical work on heavy and light duty equipment with diesel and gasoline driven engines. Minimum of two years technical education, equivalent to a two-year degree. CDL required.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$29.49	\$45.77	
City of Kenai	\$35.99	\$43.19	Shop Foreman
City of Seward	\$29.52	\$42.75	Shop Foreman
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$33.95	\$43.62	Lead Auto & Diesel Mechanic (5 years journeyman level)

Mechanic II

Performs maintenance and repair of city vehicles including fire, medical and rescue vehicles and their on-board equipment, heavy equipment, other rolling stock and small equipment. Eight years' experience in mechanical work on heavy and light duty equipment with diesel and gasoline engines. Technical education/ training equivalent to some college courses required.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$24.10	\$37.40	
City of Cordova	\$24.46	\$37.12	Union
City of Kenai	\$32.65	\$39.18	Mechanic; only classification, no I/ II
City of Palmer	\$22.44	\$36.04	
City of Soldotna	\$32.28	\$41.76	Mechanic; only classification, no I/ II
City of Wasilla	\$26.33	\$38.49	Mechanic; only classification, no I/ II
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$31.73	\$40.77	Auto & Diesel Mechanic II (4 years' experience)

Mechanic I

Performs maintenance and repair of city vehicles, heavy equipment, other rolling stock and small equipment. Five years experience working on light and heavy engines, transmissions, electrical and hydraulic systems. Entry level position.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$22.23	\$34.53	
City of Cordova	\$23.46	\$32.93	Union
City of Palmer	\$20.91	\$33.45	
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$29.65	\$38.10	Automotive & Diesel Mechanic I (3 years' experience)

Building Maintenance Supervisor

Responsible for building maintenance of city owned and operated facilities. Supervises building technicians and custodians. Five years' experience in maintenance and construction on various type of commercial and/or public buildings. Knowledge of Federal and State Uniform Building, Electrical Standard and Fire Codes.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$26.81	\$41.62	
City of Kenai	\$32.65	\$39.18	Building Maintenance Lead Technician
City of Palmer	\$28.57	\$46.34	Exempt; Maintenance Superintendent; More duties/Experience
City of Wasilla	\$30.22	\$44.18	Facilities Maintenance Technician II
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$35.19	\$49.40	Exempt; Maintenance Foreman (8 years' experience)

Building Maintenance Technician II

Journey-level position, which performs building maintenance of City-owned and operated facilities, capable of taking the lead on projects as assigned by the Building Maintenance Supervisor. Five years of field experience in building/facility maintenance and certified training as an electrician, plumber, HVAC technician, carpenter, boiler technician or building system control technician - may be substituted for up to three years of field experience.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$24.10	\$37.40	
City of Kenai	\$29.64	\$35.57	Building Maintenance Technician; only classification
City of Soldotna	\$32.28	\$41.76	Building Maintenance Technician
City of Wasilla	\$26.33	\$38.49	Facility Maintenance Technician I
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$33.95	\$43.62	Lead Maintenance (GMM); more duties

Building Maintenance Technician I

Entry Level position, which assists in the performance of building maintenance of City-owned and operated facilities. Works under supervision to perform repairs and preventative maintenance tasks on City buildings, including, but not limited to, HVAC systems, water and waste water plumbing systems, electrical systems, and carpentry repairs.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$20.35	\$31.59	
City of Palmer	\$14.78	\$23.13	
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$27.71	\$40.77	General Maintenance Mechanic I/II/III; more duties

Building Custodian

Responsible for custodial services in all city buildings. Two years experience in janitorial work.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$15.54	\$24.13	\$200/month car allowance
City of Kenai	\$14.67	\$17.60	Janitor
City of Palmer	\$14.78	\$23.13	Janitor
City of Seward	\$19.38	\$28.07	Building Maintenance Custodian
City of Wasilla	\$14.21	\$18.89	Building Custodian Laborer
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$21.14	\$29.07	Custodian (1 year exp), Lead Custodian (2 years exp)

Water/Wastewater Utilities

Water and Sewer Superintendent

Supervises the overall operation and maintenance of water and wastewater treatment facilities and distribution/ collection systems to insure safe and adequate supply of drinking water and proper treatment of wastewater to EPA standards. Requires five years' experience operating treatment plants. Must be certified in the State of Alaska as a Level III Water and Wastewater Treatment Operator. Level IV for Water Treatment desirable. State of Alaska Certification Level III in Water Distribution. Level II in Wastewater Collection required.

	Facility DEC Level	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	WD-3 WWC-2	\$32.98	\$51.17	
City of Cordova	WD-2 WWC-2	\$30.46	\$44.37	Exempt
City of Kenai	WD-2 WWC-3	\$35.99	\$45.35	Utility Foreman I/II
City of Seward	WD-2 WWC-2	\$29.52	\$42.75	W/WW Operator Foreman
City of Soldotna	WD-2 WWC-2	\$46.90	\$60.64	Exempt ; Utility Department Manager
City of Wasilla	WD-2 WWC-2	\$36.20	\$48.16	Maintenance Supervisor, Utilities

Lead Water/ Wastewater Utilities Technician

Responsible for maintenance and repair of the water distribution and wastewater collection systems. Supervises W/WW Utilities Techs and other personnel as assigned. Five years of experience. State of Alaska Certification Level III in Water Distribution, Level II in Wastewater Collection required- with ability to obtain Level III certification within 24 months of hire or at least ten years of equivalent field experience.

	Facility DEC Level	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	WD-3 WWC-2	\$27.70	\$43.01	
City of Kenai	WD-2 WWC-3	\$26.85	\$32.22	Utility Operator I/II
City of Palmer		\$25.51	\$41.23	Utilities Foreman
City of Soldotna	WD-2 WWC-2	\$35.46	\$45.82	Lead Utility Operator; W/WW and Distribution & Collection Systems

Water/Wastewater Utilities Technician IV

Responsible for maintenance and repair of water distribution (WD) and wastewater collection (WWC) systems. Supervises W/WW Technician I/II/III's and other personnel as assigned in absence of Lead Utility Tech. Extensive knowledge of maintenance of water and wastewater systems with five years' experience. Must possess current State of Alaska Certification Level III in Water Distribution and Level II in Wastewater Collection. Valid Class B CDL with Tanker Endorsement required

	Facility DEC Level	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	WD-3 WWC-2	\$26.81	\$41.62	
City of Seward	WD-2 WWC-2	\$29.52	\$42.75	Also operates Wastewater Treatment plant

Water/Wastewater Utilities Technician III

Responsible for maintenance and repair of water distribution (WD) and wastewater collection (WWC) systems. Extensive knowledge of maintenance of water and wastewater systems with five years' experience. Must possess current State of Alaska Certification Level I in Water Distribution and Level II in Wastewater Collection within 24 months. Valid Class B CDL with Tanker Endorsement required

	Facility DEC Level	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	WD-3 WWC-2	\$25.90	\$40.23	
City of Cordova	WD-2 WWC-2	\$26.46	\$37.12	Union
City of Seward	WD-2 WWC-2	\$26.83	\$38.86	Also operates Wastewater Treatment plant
City of Soldotna	WD-2 WWC-2	\$32.28	\$41.76	Utility Operator II

Water/Wastewater Utilities Technician II

Performs maintenance of water distribution and wastewater collection systems. Two years' experience in mechanical and structural repairs and working knowledge of light repairs. Must obtain ADEC Provisional Certificate for Water Distribution and Wastewater Collection within 12 months of hire and Level I Certification within 12 months of receiving Provisional Certificate.

	Facility DEC Level	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	WD-3 WWC-2	\$23.15	\$35.95	
City of Cordova	WD-2 WWC-2	\$24.12	\$33.81	Union
City of Seward	WD-2 WWC-2	\$24.39	\$35.33	Also operates Wastewater Treatment plant
City of Soldotna	WD-2 WWC-2	\$29.97	\$38.76	Utility Operator I; More duties- operates all areas in Utility department.
City of Wasilla	WD-2 WWC-2	\$22.35	\$32.68	Utilities Technician

Water/Wastewater Utilities Technician I

Entry-level position. Performs maintenance of water distribution and wastewater collection systems. One year experience in mechanical and structural repairs and working knowledge in light equipment operations.

	Facility DEC Level	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	WD-3 WWC-2	\$20.35	\$31.59	Entry-level
City of Wasilla	WD-2 WWC-2	\$19.48	\$28.48	Operator in Training

Treatment Plant Operator IV

Operates and maintains water and wastewater treatment facilities. Five years' experience in water and wastewater field required, including two years as a City of Homer Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator II. Certified in the State of Alaska as a Level III Water and Wastewater Treatment Operator required.

	Facility DEC Level	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	WD-3 WWC-2	\$26.81	\$41.62	
City of Seward	WD-2 WWC-2	\$29.52	\$42.75	
City of Soldotna	WD-2 WWC-2	\$32.28	\$41.76	More duties
City of Wasilla	WD-2 WWC-2	\$30.22	\$44.18	Waste Water Tech II / Water Tech II

Treatment Plant Operator III

Operates and maintains water and wastewater treatment facilities. Five years' experience in water and wastewater field required, Certified in the State of Alaska as a Level II Water and Wastewater Treatment Operator required.

	Facility DEC Level	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	WD-3 WWC-2	\$25.90	\$40.23	
City of Palmer		\$22.44	\$36.04	
City of Seward	WD-2 WWC-2	\$26.83	\$38.86	
City of Wasilla	WD-2 WWC-2	\$26.33	\$38.49	Waste Water Tech I / Water Tech I

Treatment Plant Operator II

Operates and maintains water and wastewater treatment facilities. Three years working experience in water and wastewater field required. Must be certified in the State of Alaska as a Level I Water and Wastewater Treatment Operator within 18 months of hire.

	Facility DEC Level	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	WD-3 WWC-2	\$23.15	\$35.95	
City of Palmer		\$20.91	\$33.45	
City of Seward	WD-2 WWC-2	\$24.39	\$35.33	
City of Soldotna	WD-2 WWC-2	\$29.97	\$38.76	Same as Utility/WW Treat. Plant Oper. I; More duties;
City of Wasilla	WD-2 WWC-2	\$19.48	\$28.48	Operator in Training

Treatment Plant Operator I

Entry level position. Operates and maintains water and wastewater treatment facilities. One year and some working knowledge of mechanical and electrical equipment.

	Facility DEC Level	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	WD-3 WWC-2	\$20.35	\$31.59	Entry-level

Lead Treatment Maintenance Technician

Performs maintenance of City water and wastewater systems, facilities and public buildings. Five years of general maintenance experience with small hand and mechanical tools required. Extensive knowledge required for safe and efficient maintenance of water and wastewater treatment facilities. Must have extensive knowledge of and perform maintenance with acetylene torch, cutting, brazing, welding, metal fabrication, pumps, motors, and valve systems. Must have working knowledge of the following skills: electrical (to include 480/3Ph), plumbing, carpentry, HVAC, refrigeration, boiler experience, hydraulics/pneumatics, SCADA and capable of performing heavy manual labor. Experience in heavy equipment operation required.

	Facility DEC Level	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	WD-3 WWC-2	\$25.90	\$40.23	

Treatment Maintenance Technician II

Performs maintenance of City water and wastewater systems, facilities and public buildings. Five years of general maintenance experience with small hand and mechanical tools required and two years' experience in at least two of the following skills and working knowledge of the others: SCADA, pumps, motors, and valve systems. Work experience in water and wastewater field desired, as well as Water or Wastewater Level I, back flow prevention, refrigeration, boilers.

	Facility DEC Level	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	WD-3 WWC-2	\$23.15	\$35.95	

Treatment Maintenance Technician I

Performs maintenance of City water and wastewater systems, facilities and public buildings. Maintenance background of at least two years required. Requires working knowledge of; electrical systems, components and troubleshooting of same, pumps, plumbing and carpentry. Welding and metal fabrication skills desirable. Experience in water or wastewater fields desirable. Entry Level.

	Facility DEC Level	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	WD-3 WWC-2	\$20.35	\$31.59	

PORT AND HARBOR

Port Director/Harbormaster

Responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Port and Harbor, fish dock, ice plant and storage facilities and city owned lands on the Homer Spit. Bachelors Degree or equivalent in experience and education in marine related business administration desired. Five years experience.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$36.43	\$56.53	Exempt
City of Cordova	\$33.51	\$48.80	Exempt, Harbormaster
City of Kodiak	\$46.00	\$63.43	Exempt, Harbormaster
City of Seward	\$39.86	\$57.80	Exempt, Harbormaster, supervises Seward Marine Industrial Center (SMIC)

Deputy Harbormaster

Supervises operation of the Port and Harbor to insure smooth, efficient and safe delivery of services to all customers and user groups. Supervisors Harbor Officers. Five years marine background experience, including two years of administrative and supervisory experience.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$31.22	\$48.49	
City of Cordova	\$24.12	\$33.81	Harbor Operations Foreman; Union
City of Kodiak	\$36.75	\$50.67	Exempt
City of Seward	\$37.08	\$53.77	Oversees ship lifts, SMIC, Port Maintenance

Harbor Officer II

Responsible for the safe and efficient operations of the Port and Harbor during assigned shift. Monitors use and security of Port and Harbor facilities. Monitors moorage, electrical usage, grid usage, float and public dock usage. Five years' marine experience. Certification at ETT/Defibrillator level, training in marine firefighting.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$24.10	\$37.40	
City of Kodiak	\$24.00	\$33.09	Senior Harbor Officer
City of Cordova	\$21.62	\$30.32	Union
City of Seward	\$26.83	\$38.86	Harbor Worker II, ship lifts, SMIC, maintenance

Harbor Officer I

Responsible for the safe and efficient operations of the Port and Harbor during assigned shift. Monitors use and security of Port and Harbor facilities. Monitors moorage, electrical usage, grid usage, float and public dock usage. Four years' marine experience, with knowledge of local state, and federal laws governing marine/ harbor facilities. Entry level position.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$23.15	\$35.95	
City of Kodiak	\$22.00	\$30.33	Harbor Officer
City of Cordova	\$20.76	\$29.11	Harbor Maintenance I

Ice Plant/ Fish Dock Supervisor

Supervises the operation and maintenance of the fish dock, cold storage and ice production facility. Supervises Fish Dock Operators. Extensive experience of at least five years in maintaining refrigeration systems preferred, flake ice machines, ice conveying systems or similar type equipment with at least one year management of an ice or related facility desirable. High school diploma or GED required, with college or vocational courses appropriate to the position.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$28.60	\$44.39	

Ice Plant Operator II

Responsible for maintenance and operation of ice production plant, cold storage facility and related dock systems. Three years' experience in maintaining refrigeration systems, flake ice machines, ice conveying systems or similar equipment required. One year vocational/technical school in refrigeration or equivalent experience required.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$23.15	\$35.95	

Ice Plant Operator I

Responsible for maintenance and operation of ice production plant, cold storage facility and related dock systems. Working knowledge of maintaining refrigeration systems, flake ice machines, ice conveying systems or similar equipment desired. One year vocational/technical school in refrigeration or equivalent experience desired.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$22.23	\$34.53	

Port Maintenance Supervisor

Supervises the maintenance, repair and improvements to the Port and Harbor facilities. Supervises port maintenance technicians. At least four years' experience in a similar supervisory role working in a multifaceted governmental or private organization. Extensive knowledge of work associated with the operations and maintenance of Port and Harbors is required. Five years' experience with hydraulic pumps, motors, cylinders and valve systems.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$28.60	\$44.39	

Port Maintenance Technician II

Performs the maintenance, repair and improvements to the Port & Harbor facilities. Minimum five years' experience with hand and power tools required. Extensive experience in at least two of the following areas, and working knowledge of the others: hydraulic systems (motors, cylinders valves, etc.), electrical and mechanical troubleshooting, metal fabrication (welding, cutting, brazing, etc.), small/large engine repair. Must have advanced electrical, plumbing, carpentry experience and capable of performing heavy manual labor.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$23.15	\$35.95	
City of Kodiak	\$23.35	\$32.19	

Port Maintenance Technician I

Performs the maintenance, repair and improvements to the Port & Harbor facilities. Minimum three years' experience with hand and power tools required. Working knowledge of: hydraulic systems (motors, cylinders valves, etc.), electrical and mechanical troubleshooting, metal fabrication (welding, cutting, brazing, etc.), small/large engine repair. Must have basic electrical, plumbing, carpentry experience and be capable of performing heavy manual labor.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$21.31	\$33.05	

Port Administrative Supervisor

Responsible for oversight and supervision of administrative staff. Responsible for accounting and billing preparation of all vessels utilizing the harbor or port facilities and receipt of fees. Assists the Port and Harbor Director with Port and Harbor contracts and administration of leases. Acts as Port Commission Liason, attends meetings and assists with agenda. Five years office experience in duties requiring public contact.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$25.90	\$40.23	
City of Kodiak	\$26.50	\$36.54	
City of Seward	\$21.32	\$30.87	

Administrative Secretary

Responsible for secretarial duties for the Port and Harbor Department. Maintains all department files including correspondence and office equipment files. Three years clerical work experience in a public setting required. Working knowledge of accounting procedures desired.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$21.31	\$33.05	
City of Kodiak	\$21.75	\$29.99	Administrative Specialist
City of Seward	\$21.32	\$30.87	Executive Assistant

Administrative Assistant

First point of contact for over-the-counter transactions and phone calls. Assists with maintaining paper Moorage Agreements and digital client records in harbor database. Acts as purchasing agent for the Port and Harbor and provides budget reports to department heads. Maintains records of daily electric usage and conducts monthly electric billing.

	Starting Salary	Ending Salary	Comments
City of Homer	\$21.31	\$33.05	
City of Kodiak	\$21.75	\$29.99	Administrative Specialist
City of Seward	\$21.32	\$30.87	Executive Assistant

BENEFITS SURVEY

Major Medical Benefits

	Deductible Individual	Deductible Family	Out of Pocket Individual	Out of Pocket Family
City of Homer	\$1500	\$4500	\$4000	\$12,000
City of Cordova Reimbursed \$1,000 EE \$1,500 max	\$1500	\$4500	\$4000	\$12,000
City of Kenai HRA Reimburses Medical Deductible Expenses after \$500 Employee Deductible met; \$1650 Family	\$2,000	\$4000	\$4000	\$8000
City of Palmer	\$1000	\$2000	\$4500	\$9000
City of Seward	\$500	\$1500	\$2,250	\$6,750
City of Soldotna Deductible 2000/4000 city reimburses employee up to 1800/3200 as it is used	\$2000	\$4000	\$3000	\$6000
City of Wasilla	\$300	\$600	\$2,300	\$4,600
Kenai Peninsula Borough – HDHP w/ HSA or HRA	\$2000	\$4000	\$5000	\$8500

Prescription Drug Benefits

	Co-Pay Generic 30-day	Co-Pay Brand 30-day	Mail Order Co-Pay Generic 90-day	Mail Order Co-Pay Brand 90-day
City of Homer	\$20	\$40	\$50	\$100
City of Cordova	\$10	\$20	\$20	\$40
City of Kenai				
City of Palmer	\$15	\$30	\$37.50	\$75
City of Seward	\$20	\$40	\$50	\$100
City of Soldotna	\$10	\$20/\$35	\$20	\$40/\$60
City of Wasilla	\$10	\$25	\$20	\$40
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$5	30%	Same	Same

Dental Benefits

	Individual Deductible	Family Deductible	% Paid Diagnostic-Preventative Basic Services Major Services	Lifetime Orthodontia	Annual Plan Maximum
City of Homer	\$0	\$0	100%, 80%, 50%	\$1000	\$2000
City of Cordova	\$0	\$0	100%, 80%, 50%	\$1000	\$2000
City of Kenai	\$50	\$150	100%, 80%, 50%		\$2000
City of Palmer	\$50	\$150	100%, 80%, 50%	\$1500	\$2000
City of Seward	\$0	\$2,000/ person	100%, 80%, 50%	\$1000	
City of Soldotna	\$50		100%, 80%, 50%	\$1750	\$1500
City of Wasilla			80%	\$2500	\$3000
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$75	\$250	100%, 100%, 50%	none	\$2500

Vision Benefits (in-network)

	Exam	Lenses	Frames	Contacts
City of Homer	100%	Employee pays \$25 materials copay, then covered in full	100% to \$130	In lieu of glasses; 15% discount – up to \$130
City of Cordova	100%	Employee pays \$25 copay for Doctor Visit	\$500 max benefit paid for lenses, glasses, contacts etc.	
City of Kenai HRA Reimburses Vision up to \$150 Employee; \$300 Family	100% Once per calendar year	Covered in full up to \$170	Covered in full up to \$90	See Lenses
City of Palmer	90%	\$350 max combined w/ Wxam and hardware	←	\$170
City of Seward	\$25 Copay	Flat \$150 per calendar yr	\$150	\$150
City of Soldotna	100%	80% of max amt. Two per year	80% of max amt. One set every 2 years	80% up to max amt. depending on the CPT code
City of Wasilla	100%	Employee pays \$20, then covered in full	Employee pays \$20, then covered in full	Employee pays \$60, then covered up to \$145.
Kenai Peninsula Borough	80%	80%, one per calendar year	80% up to \$150, every two years	In lieu of glasses, 1 years supply contacts - 80%

Monthly Insurance Rates-EMPLOYEE SHARE (medical, dental, & vision)

	Name of Insurance	Employee Only	Employee + Spouse	Employee + Child(ren)	Family
City of Homer	Premera Employee share 10-11%	\$111 10%	\$221 11%	\$199 11%	\$310 11%
City of Cordova	Self-insured	\$153.38	\$339.99	\$246.68	\$431.57
City of Kenai	Premera	\$173	\$314	\$345	\$473
City of Palmer	Premera	\$0	\$196.90	\$172.98	\$377.22
City of Seward	Premera	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
City of Soldotna	Aetna	\$104.58	\$485.16	\$400.62	\$676.50
City of Wasilla	Blue Cross Blue Shield	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Kenai Peninsula Borough – HDHP w/ HRA or HSA	Self-insured; Premera TPA	\$95/mo	\$190/mo	Employee cost+ \$25 per child or (6 or more children \$150 total/mo)	Add Employee + spouse + children

Monthly Insurance Rates-EMPLOYER SHARE (health, vision and dental)

	Name of Insurance	Employee Only	Employee + Spouse	Employee+ Child(ren)	Family
City of Homer	Premera	\$991.10	\$2290.19	\$1883.75	\$3185.07
City of Cordova	Self-insured	Did not provide	Did not provide	Did not provide	Did not provide
City of Kenai	Premera	\$1,158.59	\$2,099.93	\$2,312.22	\$3,642.03
City of Palmer	Premera	Did not provide	Did not provide	Did not provide	Did not provide
City of Seward	Premera	\$1324.68	\$3028.26	\$2507.65	\$4211.18
City of Soldotna	Aetna	\$941.33	\$1940.63	\$1602.50	\$2706.06
City of Wasilla	Per CBA/Yearly Cost				
Kenai Peninsula Borough – HDHP w/ HRA or HSA	Self-insured; Premera TPA	\$2650	\$2650	\$2650	\$2650

Employer Provided Life Insurance

	Amount of Coverage	Accidental Death	Spouse Coverage	Dependent Coverage
City of Homer	Annual Salary - Maximum \$100,000	Yes	Supplemental	Supplemental
City of Cordova	\$10,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
City of Kenai	1.5 Annual Salary – maximum of \$100,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
City of Palmer	\$20,000	No	\$1000	\$1000
City of Seward	\$20,000	Yes	Supplemental	Supplemental
City of Soldotna	Regular F/T \$7000 Police up to \$67,000	Yes	No	No
City of Wasilla	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Kenai Peninsula Borough	Annual Salary	Yes	\$2000	\$2000

Annual Leave Benefit – Days per Year (8 hour days)

	1 Yr	2 Yr	3 Yr	4 Yr	5 Yr	6 Yr	7 Yr	8 Yr	9 Yr	10 Yr	15 + Yr
City of Homer	18	21	24	24	24	27	27	27	27	30	35
City of Cordova (Exempt)	12	18	24	24	24	30	30	30	30	30	30
City of Cordova (Union)	12	16	16	16	16	22	22	22	22	22	26 12+yr
City of Kenai	24	24	27	27	27	30	30	30	30	30	33
City of Palmer	23	23	29	29	32	32	32	32	32	38	38
City of Seward	20	20	25	25	25	25	30	30	30	30	30
City of Soldotna	22.5	22.5	25.5	25.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	34.5	34.5
City of Wasilla	18	18	24	24	24	24	24	30	30	30	30
Kenai Peninsula Borough	21	21	25	25	25	30	30	30	30	30	35

Holidays, Sick Leave and Additional Leave Benefits

	# Holidays (Days)	Sick Leave	Additional Leave (Bereavement, Jury, Military)
City of Homer	11 + Employee's Birthday	40 hrs per year, not to exceed 80 in sick bank	Yes
City of Cordova (Exempt)	13 Includes Employee's Birthday	15	Yes
City of Cordova (Union)	13	12	Yes
City of Kenai	12	Combined with leave	Yes
City of Palmer	11	Combined with leave	Yes
City of Seward	12	Combined with leave	Yes
City of Soldotna	11	Combined with leave	Yes
City of Wasilla	11	Combined with Leave	Yes
Kenai Peninsula Borough	12-13	Combined with leave	Yes

Additional Benefits

	Part-time/ Seasonal Benefits	On-Call pay per Hr.	Shift Differential; Swing/Graveyard	Temporary Assignment Pay
City of Homer	Yes, P/T pro-rated	\$3.00 hr 2-hr minimum call-out	2% swing / 4% grave	Yes, if 5 or more days
City of Cordova	No	\$5/hr Police & \$2/hr W&S	4%	Occasionally
City of Kenai	No	2 hr minimum call-out	2% swing / 4% grave	Yes
City of Palmer	Yes	No	3%	After 14 days
City of Seward	None	1 hour at OT rate per day/period	3% swing/ 6% grave	Yes
City of Soldotna	Yes, PT pro-rated	\$4.25 hr.	7%	Yes, 5%
City of Wasilla	Yes, P/T pro-rated	2 hr minimum call-out / dependent on CBA	dependent on CBA	Yes, dependent on CBA
Kenai Peninsula Borough	Yes PT pro-rated	2 hr minimum call-out	3.75% swing/ 7.5% grave	Yes

Personnel Policies

	How many salary steps on wage scale	How often are increases given	Additional salary increases for employee at the end of wage scale
City of Homer	15	Merit based	No
City of Cordova	12 Exempt, 8 Union	Merit based - Exempt Step schedule - Union	No
City of Kenai	9	A-F annually Every two years after	After 2 years at last step 2% longevity bonus annually
City of Palmer	9	Annually	Longevity 3.5% every two years (Steps A-D)
City of Seward	Range – no steps	Merit based	No
City of Soldotna	12	Annually	Longevity pay 2% lump sum annually once hit the top step in range.
City of Wasilla	13 non-union; others dependent on union	Annually	No
Kenai Peninsula Borough	12	Step 1-3 Annual Step 3-12 Biennial	Professional licensing; \$750 lump sum once employee reaches step 12, every two years of service (maximum of three lump sum payments)

COLA's

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
City of Homer	0	0	0	0	2%	0	0	1.5%	.5%	.5%	3%	1%	7%
City of Cordova	2%	2%	3%	2.25%	3.1%	3%	1.5%	1.5%	0%	2%	2%	2%	0
City of Kenai	1.1%	1.1%	.9%	3.6%	2%	3.5%	0	0	.8%	.2%	2%	.22%	4.35%
City of Palmer	0	0	0	0	0	3%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
City of Seward	0	1.2	1.8%	2.5%	3%	3%	0	0	2.1%	0	0	0	0
City of Soldotna	3.5%	1.8% / 2.5%	1.8%	2%	2.2%	3.1%/2.5%	1.6%	.5%/1.5%	.4%/.5%	3%	0/1.4%	1.4%/.5%	4.9%
City of Wasilla	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	3.0%	2%	4.6%	2.5%	3.5%	2.5%	1%	0.5%	0.5%	.5%	2.0%	2.0%	1.5%



COMMUNITY CONVERSATION: Housing Solutions in the Greater Homer Area

SATURDAY MARCH 25, 2023

9:00AM TO 12:30PM

Christian Community Church, 3838 Bartlett Street, Homer, AK

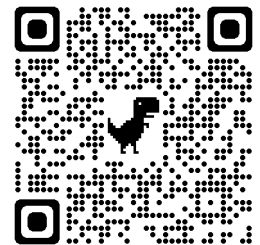
Doors open at 9 AM - Meeting begins at 9:30 AM

9:30-12:30 PM AGENDA

- Homer Housing Survey Results
- Workshop: What are our priorities?
- Workshop: Solutions and Next Steps!

For more information email:
hannah@gsquared.solutions

**SCAN HERE FOR
MORE INFO:**



SUPPORTED BY:





February 23, 2023

Homer City Council
491 East Pioneer
Homer, AK 99603

Dear Council Members,

The Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies (CACCS) would like to thank the City of Homer for continuing to support local nonprofits in the community through the City of Homer Grants Program administered through the Homer Foundation. We are especially thankful for the \$2,733 in operational support we received in 2022 through this program.

City of Homer grant funds are used primarily to support free and reduced priced afterschool and community programs and our CoastWalk program. CoastWalk is conducted every fall and contributes to coastal monitoring and marine debris data collection. In 2022 we had 44 individual volunteers and over 350 students and groups involved in CoastWalk. An additional 180 people engaged in presentations about marine debris and its impact on healthy ocean ecosystems. This program, started in 1984, is an important stewardship activity for the Homer community. In partnership with the City of Homer our High School and KPC/KBC Semester by the Bay Interns continued to monitor 3 recycling stations at key public venues (Karen Hornaday Park, Bishop's Beach, and Mariner Park) throughout the year. In 2022 we collected and sorted 839 lbs of recyclable materials.

Operational funds are very difficult to raise, yet so vital to the functions and sustainability of an organization. Most grantors want to fund projects and programs, but the "cogs in the wheel" are what keeps everything moving forward. The generosity of the city through this grant program, the community and local businesses is also helpful in securing these important unrestricted funds. We thank you for understanding the importance of this for nonprofits and applaud your dedication to making these operational funds available.

Community partnerships are very important to CACCS and our programs. We seek out opportunities to collaborate and enjoy partnerships with the Pier One Theatre, Homer Farmer's Market, local schools, HoWL, Project Grad, USFW/Islands and Ocean Visitor Center staff, KBNERR, the REC Room, and many others.

Thanks for your continuing support of all non-profits in Homer who are collectively contributing to the important work being done to promote a healthy ecosystem, and an engaged and connected community.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Trowbridge
Executive Director