

## FOREWORD

---

This Comprehensive Plan Update is an all-inclusive, long-range plan for the future of Homer. The plan, which builds on the 1989 Comprehensive Plan, the 1999 update, and other plans adopted by the City of Homer, including the Town Center Development Plan (2006), Capital Improvement Plan (2006), Water and Sewer Master Plan (2006), City of Homer Non-Motorized Trails and Transportation Plan (2004) and the Transportation Plan (2005), is based on the values and aspirations of Homer citizens.

The Comprehensive Plan establishes broad goals and strategies for land use, transportation, public services and facilities, and economic development. Overriding goals of the plan include balancing needs for development and conservation, and coordinating private and public development. Plan policies help organize the complex relationships between people, land, resources, services and facilities, to meet the future needs of citizens and to protect the community's natural environment and quality-of-life.

Once adopted by the City Council, and the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly, the Comprehensive Plan will become part of the city's regulatory framework, guiding policymakers as they make decisions about the physical, social, and economic development of the community. While plan policy only directly addresses activities within Homer City limits, the document considers and makes general recommendations regarding issues in "greater Homer."

By design, comprehensive plans are general documents, establishing broad goals and policies. Additional steps are required to implement most plan policies. Examples of actions needed to implement this plan include adoption of new or changed zoning and development ordinances, or approval of specific road, trail or other infrastructure projects. The City is responsible for updating its ordinances to reflect the plan's broad policies.

The Comprehensive Plan update process was developed with wide-ranging community input. Plan development was guided by a Citizen Advisory Committee appointed by the Homer City Council. This committee worked as a liaison between the community and the planning consultants. Additionally, Homer residents gathered for two community workshops to share ideas and feedback about their vision for the plan. Several community groups met to offer comments; outreach to individuals, city staff and local business leaders enhanced the process. The website [www.homercompplan.com](http://www.homercompplan.com) provided a vehicle for people to stay abreast of progress during the planning process and to submit feedback at any time. Lastly, the Homer community can still participate as the Comprehensive Plan proceeds through the required approval process. Steps in the formal review process include review and approval by the Homer Advisory Planning Commission and the Homer City Council. Ultimately, the plan must be formally adopted by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly.

The plan has been a labor of love for the community and reflects the vision and desires of Homer residents. It will guide and support Homer as it moves into its next centennial.

# ■ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

The following groups participated in the 2008 Homer Comprehensive Plan Update:

## **The City of Homer**

Honorable James C. Hornaday, Mayor

Walt Wrede, City Manager

## **Homer City Council**

Dennis Novak

Michael Heimbuch

Mary E. (Beth) Wythe

Francie Roberts

Matt Shadle

Doug Stark

Lane Chesley

Bryan Zak

David Lewis

Barbara Howard

## **City of Homer Advisory Planning Commission**

Ray Kranich Sharon Minsch,

Bruce Hess Dr. Rick Foster

Lane Chesley Pat McNary

Caroline Storm Barbara Howard

Bryan Zak Lloyd Moore

Tom Bos Jeff Sinn

Kent Haina

## **City of Homer Planning Staff**

Beth McKibben, AICP Rick Abboud

Julie Engebretsen Dotti Harness

Shelly Rosencrans

## **Homer Citizen Advisory Committee**

Val McLay (Chair)

Bob Howard (Vice Chair)

Hannah Bradley

Allegra Bukojemsky

Tina Day

Jim Henkelman

Anne Marie Holen

Ethan Martin

Michael McCarthy

Barb Seaman

Bill Smith

Christopher Story

Marianne Schlegelmilch

## **Consultants**

Agnew::Beck Consulting, LLC

HDR Alaska, Inc.

Koonce Pfeffer Bettis, Inc.

Steve Colt, Ph.D.

## **Other Input**

Special thanks to DnA Design for sharing their GIS expertise and suitability mapping.

Homer Soil & Water Conservation District

Kachemak Heritage Land Trust (KHLT)

Photos in this document were provided by Agnew::Beck and HDR Alaska, Inc.

# CODE ORDINANCE ADOPTING PLAN

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46

**CITY OF HOMER  
HOMER, ALASKA**

City Manager

**ORDINANCE 09-40(S)**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE HOMER CITY COUNCIL  
ADOPTING THE 2008 HOMER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND  
RECOMMENDING ADOPTION BY THE KENAI PENINSULA  
BOROUGH.**

WHEREAS, The Kenai Peninsula Borough as a Second Class Borough shall provide for planning on an areawide basis in accordance with AS 29.40; and

WHEREAS, As provided in Kenai Peninsula Borough Code 21.01.025, cities in the Borough requesting extensive comprehensive plan amendments may recommend to the Kenai Peninsula Borough Planning Commission a change to the city comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, The City of Homer has prepared a extensive comprehensive plan amendments in the form of the 2008 Homer Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, A comprehensive plan is a public declaration of policy statements, goals, standards and maps for guiding the physical, social and economic development, both private and public, of the City; and

WHEREAS, The 2008 Homer Comprehensive Plan will guide the development of the City of Homer; and

WHEREAS, The Homer Advisory Planning Commission and other City commissions and bodies have reviewed said plan and/or conducted public hearings; and

WHEREAS, The Homer City Council, based upon the recommendation of the Homer Advisory Planning Commission, recommends that the Kenai Peninsula Borough Planning Commission and Assembly adopt the 2008 Homer Comprehensive Plan.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY OF HOMER ORDAINS:**

Section 1. The 2008 Homer Comprehensive Plan is hereby adopted as the City of Homer Comprehensive Plan, superseding the 1999 Comprehensive Plan update and the 1989 Comprehensive Plan.

Section 2. The previously adopted Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan (2004), Homer Area Transportation Plan (2005) and the Homer Town Center Development Plan (2006), remain part of the Homer Comprehensive Plan.

Section 3. Subsection (b) of Homer City Code 21.02.010, Comprehensive Plan—Adoption, is amended to read as follows:

47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65  
66  
67  
68  
69  
70  
71  
72  
73  
74  
75  
76  
77  
78  
79  
80  
81  
82  
83  
84  
85  
86  
87  
88  
89  
90  
91  
92

b. The following documents, as initially approved and subsequently amended, are adopted by reference as comprising the Homer Comprehensive Plan.

1. Homer Comprehensive Plan (2008)
2. Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan (2004)
3. Homer Area Transportation Plan (2005)
4. Homer Town Center Development Plan (2006)


Section 4. The City hereby recommends that the Kenai Peninsula Borough Planning Commission and Assembly adopt the 2008 Homer Comprehensive Plan as extensive comprehensive plan amendments under Kenai Peninsula Borough Code 21.01.025, and as an element of the Official Borough Comprehensive Plan within the City of Homer planning area of the Borough.

Section 5. Sections 1 through 3 of this ordinance shall take effect upon the adoption of the 2008 Homer Comprehensive Plan by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly. The remainder of this ordinance shall take effect upon its adoption by the Homer City Council.

Section 6. Section 3 of this ordinance is of a permanent and general character and shall be included in the city code. The remainder of this ordinance is not of a permanent nature and is a non code ordinance.

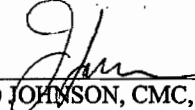
ENACTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF HOMER, ALASKA, this 26<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2010.

CITY OF HOMER

  
BETH WYTHE, MAYOR PRO TEMPORE



ATTEST:

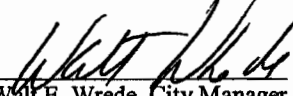
  
JO JOHNSON, CMC, CITY CLERK

YES: 5  
NO: 1  
ABSTAIN: 0  
ABSENT: 0

First Reading: 9/14/09  
Public Hearing: 10/12/09, 10/24/09, 11/23/09, 1/25/10, 2/08/10, 2/22/10, 3/08/10, 4/12/10  
Second Reading: 4/26/10  
Effective Date: 4/27/10

93  
94  
95  
96  
97  
98  
99  
100

Reviewed and approved as to form:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Walt E. Wrede, City Manager

Date: 4/29/11

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas F. Klinkner, City Attorney

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# ■ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

## **INTRODUCTION (Chapter 1)**

This plan was prepared with extensive public involvement. This included a series of meetings with the citizen advisory committee, interviews with Homer residents, and two well-attended community workshops, in April and November 2007. The plan builds from the 1989 City of Homer Comprehensive Plan and its 1999 Update as well as other Plans adopted by the Homer City Council, including the Capital Improvement Plan (2006), Water and Sewer Master Plan (2006). Three existing components of the Comprehensive Plan were also consulted: the Town Center Development Plan (2006), the City of Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trails Plan (2005), and the Transportation Plan (2005). This Comprehensive Plan provides the City and the community with broad goals and direction for the next 10-20 years. Effective plan implementation requires the City Council to develop new ordinances and update the City's zoning code consistent with the policies of this document.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION (Chapter 2)**

Homer's population is changing. Homer continues to grow at a steady pace. The age of the population is shifting and a new level of wealth is visible. Notably a trend has developed toward an increased population of retirees and more second homes leading to higher-priced land and housing. The general change in Homer's demographic is coupled with seasonal population variations. This change presents Homer with opportunities and challenges. Some are listed below:

- Growth will need to be guided to meet Homer's concerns about protecting community character and the quality of the environment.
- Seasonal population fluctuations create challenges for providing city services and facilities. Seasonal peak infrastructure demands force increases in capacity without necessarily providing a commensurate increase in funding.
- The outward expansion of the city affects demand for and costs of roads, water and sewer, schools and other public services, and also presents challenges for protecting open space.
- An aging population and growth in the retiree population creates demands for expanded access to health services and for increased recreational opportunities.
- New arrivals, while contributing to increases in the prices of land and housing, also create a range of jobs and local economic opportunities.
- Retirees can be a resource with the ability to volunteer their time and talents to community organizations, nonprofit agencies, and their service on boards and commissions.

These changes present challenges to the character of Homer and opportunities to emerge as a new kind of community – one that keeps the best of its character *and* embraces the need to grow and change. The purpose of this plan is to establish a framework to reach this ambitious goal.

## **COMMUNITY VALUES (Chapter 3)**

This chapter briefly lists Homer's community values as defined through community input in the Comprehensive Plan process. The overarching theme throughout is to "Keep Homer a lively, vital community that effectively responds to change and growth while retaining what is best about Homer's character."

## **LAND USE (Chapter 4)**

The Land Use chapter of this Comprehensive Plan seeks to respect the past, to recognize the current realities of building and living in Homer, Alaska, and to create a new paradigm for a new century. Befitting the aspirations of a unique and vibrant city, Homer seeks to further develop as a city which respects the environment, is wonderful to live in, and inspiring to visit. Specific goals of the chapter are listed below; the remainder of this section gives an overview of some of the most important policies in this chapter.

**GOAL 1:** Guide 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.

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

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

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

**GOAL 5:** Maintain high-quality residential neighborhoods; promote housing choice by supporting a variety of dwelling options.

**GOAL 6:** Develop a clear and open public process for future changes to City of Homer boundaries. Explore a planned, phased possible expansion and initiate and establish regional planning processes with the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

The chapter outlines strategies for building a compact, walkable community core, partly in response to concerns regarding energy use and global warming. New ideas for maintaining the functional benefits of the natural environment are presented in this chapter's green infrastructure map (Goal 2). Other, more traditional motivations support compact development, including reduced infrastructure costs. Close neighbors sharing resources and looking out for their neighborhoods may hark back to an earlier time, but this also offers an attractive and practical model for the future.

Throughout this chapter, you will find prescriptions for encouraging more compact residential development and better walkability. The intent is to remove regulatory barriers to compact development in a way that enables the private sector to develop denser housing, particularly infill housing that is attractive, well-built, and fits well with existing homes.

The plan's proposed land use recommendations map clarifies intended types of uses. These recommendations include more diverse housing areas and higher density mixed use residential office and commercial areas. The proposed designations would encourage a mix of development types while reducing conflicts by setting out standards for allowable densities and the character of development. This creates a spectrum of housing and commercial options to accommodate income and lifestyle diversity in Homer. Through zoning code amendments, the community will further develop these zoning concepts with clear regulations and guidelines for balancing development and open space.

The plan proposes development of an integrated system of green spaces that benefits the community aesthetically and functionally, by protecting corridors for trails, storm water management, wildlife habitat, and viewsheds. Changing land use designations recognizes the environmental constraints to development that were not apparent when some areas were initially zoned. Suggested changes correspond to the realities of the character of the land and provide ways to create guidelines and incentives to create balanced development and protect environmentally important areas.

Recognizing the inevitable growth within and adjacent to the City, a process is outlined for recognizing when boundary changes may be needed, and assessing that need with an open public process and proceeding appropriately.

Overall, an effort has been made to consider rural cold climate challenges, environmental understanding and economic opportunities as we work to ensure Homer remains Alaska's "cosmic hamlet by the sea."

## **TRANSPORTATION (Chapter 5)**

As Homer continues to grow and change, the community needs to consider transportation alongside all other aspects of community growth and development. Challenges related to circulation will likely grow, including parking, highway congestion, maintenance, and bicycle and pedestrian safety.

Plan goals and associated policies, summarized below, will improve the range and quality of Homer transportation options, to better serve current needs and respond to projected growth.

**GOAL 1:** The street system should be configured to include arterial, collector, and local streets. Through-street connections should be encouraged, while maintaining the integrity of existing neighborhoods.

Goal 1 stresses the importance of creating a more complete circulation system in Homer. Policies described under Goal 1 propose the early identification of collector and arterial roads

as well as methods to pay for right of way acquisition and road building and to ensure that connectivity occurs in a way that protects neighborhood character. Specific recommended road improvements are listed.

**GOAL 2:** The transportation system, including streets, trails, docks and airports, should support future community economic and population growth.



This goal identifies the need for Homer's transportation system to keep pace with growth and economic development. Strategies to reach this goal include working collaboratively with the State, Borough, and other landowners to develop a more complete street network and corridor preservation program as well as to provide alternatives to the automobile. The goals of the Homer Airport Master Plan are supported by this transportation goal.

**GOAL 3:** Homer's transportation system and services should be developed in a manner that supports community land use, design, environmental and social goals.

Homer's transportation system can work to support broad community goals. Policies outlined under this goal encourage implementing the Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trails Plan, developing street, sidewalk, and trail design and landscaping standards, and improving downtown parking. Goal 3 also encourages transportation decisions to create a more concentrated town center. This goal stresses the importance of providing transportation options for Homer residents of different ability levels and ages.

**GOAL 4:** The trail and sidewalk network should provide an alternative to driving, provide enhanced recreational opportunities, and create auto-free connectivity throughout the community.

This goal supports the creation of a trail and sidewalk network that offers Homer residents a viable alternative to driving. Specific trails and sidewalk improvements are listed as well as methods to ensure that seniors and disabled people can fully participate in the non-motorized transportation system.

## **PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES (Chapter 6)**

The City of Homer provides a range of quality public services and facilities. In addition to those provided directly by the City as an independent entity, services and facilities are provided by the Kenai Peninsula Borough, the State of Alaska, and in collaboration with a variety of nonprofit organizations and community groups. Chapter 6 outlines three goals for maintaining and improving these services and facilities.

**GOAL 1:** Provide and improve city-operated facilities and services to meet the current needs of the community, anticipate growth, conserve energy, and keep pace with future demands.

As Homer continues to grow and change, work will be needed to maintain and upgrade existing fire, emergency services, law enforcement, water, sewer, and harbor services. The plan looks at the current status, as well as near and long-term priorities for each area of service delivery. Other services and facilities the plan addresses include parks and recreation development, storm water control, maintaining the library and adequate City administrative offices.

**GOAL 2:** Seek collaboration and coordination with service providers and community partners to ensure important community services are improved upon and made available.

The City is an integral partner in supporting and encouraging Homer's arts and cultural activities, health care services, senior and youth activities and services, educational opportunities, visitor attractions and services and environmental conservation activities. Although not necessarily the primary party responsible for these areas or activities, the City should provide assistance and leadership in these efforts.

**GOAL 3:** Encourage the broader community to provide community services and facilities by supporting other organizations and entities that want to develop community services.

Developing strong partnerships between the City and community partners will expand the ability of citizens to be self-sufficient and provide services and facilities beyond what the City can achieve on its own. Strategies to improve services include: opportunities for increasing net revenues, providing technical assistance to community organizations, and creating incentives for organizations to take a lead in developing and providing services.

Efficiency and sustainability are key elements to the successful implementation and operation of any infrastructure, public facilities or services, whether provided by the City or by its many partners throughout the community.

### **PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE (Chapter 7)**

The plan identifies the need to maintain and improve public parks and open spaces throughout the community. As the amount and intensity of development increases, this will help keep Homer a desirable place to live, work and visit. A system of open spaces is particularly important as housing densities increase.

This chapter outlines policies to protect and improve recreational facilities, parks and open space; to expand resources needed for sustainable operations; and to find funding to implement recreational and cultural components of the Homer Town Center Plan. As set out in the land use chapter, the plan creates a green infrastructure system to take advantage of aesthetic, functional and economic benefits of open space. Additionally, this chapter describes the need to reserve and improve trails and sidewalks, consistent with the Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan. The eventual system of trails will connect key public and recreational areas, and is linked to the green infrastructure plan. To achieve these aims, the chapter establishes the following goals:

**GOAL 1:** Explore resources needed to operate parks and recreation facilities and options for expanding parks and recreation programs.

**GOAL 2:** Create a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

**GOAL 3:** Enhance areawide recreational trail systems, and connections between residential areas, downtown, schools, university, institutional areas, and recreational areas. See *Transportation Chapter*.

**GOAL 4:** Identify recreation resources and key open space areas as part of green infrastructure mapping. See *Land Use Chapter*.

**GOAL 5:** Maintain, improve, and create new citywide parks and recreation facilities and Community School programs to offer year-round opportunities for residents and visitors.

**GOAL 6:** Implement the recreation and cultural components of the Homer Town Center Plan for downtown.

**GOAL 7:** Support public beach access.

**GOAL 8:** Continue to improve local arts and cultural opportunities and Homer's reputation as an art-and-culture-friendly community.

To meet the goals of this chapter, new ordinances must be developed including a policy to dedicate public parks as part of the private development process. Working with community groups, existing parks, recreation and cultural facilities will be inventoried and gaps and needs identified and prioritized. Other possible projects and programs identified in this chapter include construction of a City greenhouse to meet the need for landscaping and park maintenance, expansion of a local volunteer park maintenance program managed by dedicated City staff, and the establishment of a Parks and Recreation Department within the City. Also suggested is the creation of a park endowment fund with the Homer Foundation to assist in department operations and maintenance.

The Parks, Recreation and Culture chapter supports implementation of the Homer Town Center Development Plan, with a focus on the plan's cultural and recreational components. Key elements of this plan include a new City Hall, town square, landscaped east-west and north-south access roads, a conveniently located public restroom, landscaped parking areas, and pedestrian trails. These actions will encourage new private business development and improve community quality of life. Community organizations, in collaboration with the City, will develop an "assets and needs" assessment for Homer's art and cultural opportunities. This assessment will explore means to maximize the value of existing facilities and also investigate options for a new, larger capacity community venue, possibly a civic or cultural center.

The actions and policies contained in this chapter are meant to improve and enhance Homer's reputation for parks, recreation and culture as both the demand, and our capacity to meet it, increase.

### **ECONOMIC VITALITY (Chapter 8)**

Economic vitality in a community is essential to provide the means for citizens to meet their basic needs and enjoy leisure time activities, and to provide resources for community needs. Many aspects of community and government operations affect the economy. Some of those are covered in more detail in other chapters; key points included in this chapter are summarized here. The goals established in the Economic Vitality chapter follow.

*The idea that there is a state called happiness, and that we can dependably figure out what it feels like and how to measure it, is extremely subversive. It would allow economists to start thinking about life in far richer terms, allow them to stop asking, "What did you buy?" and start asking "Is your life good?"*

Bill McKibben  
*(from Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future)*

**GOAL 1:** Define and encourage economic development that meets the desires and interests of Homer residents and positively supports the unique character of the community.

**GOAL 2:** Encourage the creation of more year-round, higher-wage jobs.

**GOAL 3:** Encourage the relocation of Federal and State Government jobs and training programs to Homer.

**GOAL 4:** Encourage technology related businesses such as information science, software development, and the entertainment industry.

**GOAL 5:** Strengthen the arts, education and entertainment industries.

**GOAL 6:** Strengthen the marine trade, mariculture, and shipping industries.

**GOAL 7:** Support regional renewable and non-renewable energy exploration and production.

**GOAL 8:** Strengthen Homer as a tourism destination.

**GOAL 9:** Provide affordable housing.

**GOAL 10:** Maintain Homer's quality of life as a principal economic asset.

Many of the factors that create “quality of life” for Homer residents also serve as economic assets. These include Homer’s spectacular natural setting, outdoor recreational opportunities, arts and culture, and small town character. Dimensions of this character include the variety of locally owned businesses, friendly people, human-scale architecture, and a lack of urban problems that often plague larger towns (e.g., blight, traffic congestion and crime). While growth is inevitable in Homer and could change Homer’s distinctive character, many cities have found ways to grow and maintain their character, through careful attention to development, including economic development.

Specific components of economic development where local government has a large role include creating a more vibrant downtown district (by implementing the Town Center Development Plan); adopting land use policies that contribute to compact, sustainable, and attractive development; and ensuring development of a balanced transportation network including non-motorized transportation and public transportation, which will become more critical as Homer grows and as global energy challenges become more pressing.

Tourism, education, and the arts contribute significantly to Homer’s economy now and hold potential for future growth. Because of its potential to be disruptive, tourism should be guided to help sustain the qualities of the community that attract both residents and visitors. Collaboration between local government and other organizations will help ensure positive development in tourism and the arts.

Homer must maintain existing core industries such as fishing, marine trades, tourism, health care and construction, and seek new ways to promote more higher-wage jobs and to maintain a diverse economy, which reduces the risk of drastic economic downturn. Homer is fortunate to possess a relatively diverse economy currently and should seek to enhance this diversity. Another objective is to encourage year-round economic activity, which can be enhanced by promoting entrepreneurial small business ventures and “footloose” professional activity, along with expanded college programs.

Finally, Homer should look ahead to the challenges facing all communities in a “carbon-constrained world” and seek to enhance local self-reliance in agriculture, sustainable energy production, and other aspects of community life. Indeed, if Homer can develop expertise in these areas, that knowledge itself could be exported, further enhancing the local economy.

## **ENERGY PLAN (Chapter 9)**

Homer understands the necessity of conserving finite energy resources. Reducing the use of fossil fuels and solid waste leads to the reduction of greenhouse gasses. The conservation of resources is not only a benefit to Homer taxpayers, but also contributes to the creation of a sustainable society. The creation of an energy plan situates Homer to be a leader in responsible stewardship. The energy plan positions the community to take advantage of new opportunities to strengthen the local economy, improve public health and improve community livability. The goals listed provide the framework for this stewardship.

**GOAL 1:** Establish and implement an energy plan with emphasis on long term sustainability and affordability.

**GOAL 2:** Implement waste reduction, reuse and recycling program.

**GOAL 3:** Use technologies and operating practices that promote energy efficiency for all new and existing buildings and energy-using projects.

**GOAL 4:** Support renewable-energy research and development.

**GOAL 5:** Reduce dependence on fossil fuels used for transportation.

**GOAL 6:** Encourage industrial and commercial users to be energy efficient, to use renewable resources, and to make energy by-products available for use elsewhere in the community.

As we enter the twenty-first century, the need to contribute to a sustainable society is even more evident. The increased use of renewable energy sources represents an opportunity to benefit the environment, community and the economy, locally, regional and globally. Homer wishes to position the community to take advantage of funding opportunities to participate in the forefront of new technologies.

This energy plan dovetails upon several other city documents. Homer has adopted a Climate Action Plan and an employee sustainability handbook, addressing many of the goals presented here. Additionally, many concepts supporting the goals of this chapter may be found in various chapters.

### **PLAN IMPLEMENTATION (Chapter 10)**

The value of a plan will ultimately be determined by the extent to which it is used. Chapter 10 of the plan summarizes specific strategies for carrying out plan goals and objectives, and lists priority projects for implementing the plan. The actual timing of the implementation of any specific projects will be determined by the City Council; this summary is intended to capture today's views about priorities.

# ■ TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>i</b>
	<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>ii</b>
	<b>CODE ORDINANCE ADOPTING PLAN</b>	<b>iii</b>
	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>vii</b>
	<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>xvi</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1-1</b>
	Overview	
	Overview of Community Boundaries & Setting	
	Purpose of the Plan	
	Plan Time Frame – Visionary & Practical	
	Planning Process & Public Involvement	
	Adoption Process, Link to Borough	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	<b>2-1</b>
	Introduction	
	History	
	Natural Environment	
	Social Environment	
	Trends in Land Use & Housing	
	Economy	
	Growth Trends	
	Summary	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>COMMUNITY VALUES</b>	<b>3-1</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>LAND USE</b>	<b>4-1</b>
	Overview	
	Summary of Goals	
	Context: Land Use in Homer & Surrounding Areas	
	Goals & Objectives for Land Use	
<b>5.0</b>	<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>5-1</b>
	Overview	
	Summary of Goals	
	Context: Transportation in Homer	
	Goals & Objectives for Transportation	

<b>6.0</b>	<b>PUBLIC SERVICES &amp; FACILITIES</b>	<b>6-1</b>
	Overview	
	Summary of Goals	
	Goals & Objectives for Public Services & Facilities	
<b>7.0</b>	<b>PARKS, RECREATION &amp; CULTURE</b>	<b>7-1</b>
	Overview	
	Summary of Goals	
	Goals & Objectives for Parks, Recreation & Culture	
<b>8.0</b>	<b>ECONOMIC VITALITY</b>	<b>8-1</b>
	Overview	
	Summary of Goals	
	Goals & Objectives for Economic Vitality	
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Energy Plan</b>	<b>9-1</b>
	Overview	
	Summary of Goals	
	Goals and Objectives for Energy	
<b>10.0</b>	<b>PLAN IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>10-1</b>
	Overview	
	Process for Revising the Comprehensive Plan	
	Summary of Plan Priorities	

## **APPENDICES**

---

- Appendix A – Growth Scenarios for Homer
- Appendix B – Land Use Designation Categories
- Appendix C – Homer Spit Plan
- Appendix D – Background Land Use Information
- Appendix E – Downtown Design Principals

## **LIST OF TABLES**

---

Table 1. Kenai Peninsula Borough Population Statistics, 1960-2000	<b>2-3</b>
Table 2. Homer Population Statistics, 1960-2000	<b>2-4</b>
Table 3. Age Statistics for City of Homer, 1990-2000	<b>2-5</b>
Table 4. Comparative Age Statistics, 2000	<b>2-5</b>
Table 5. Homer's Labor Force, 1990-2000	<b>2-6</b>
Table 6. City of Homer Tax Revenues, 2000-2006	<b>2-8</b>
Table 7. Top Area Employers, 2004-2005	<b>2-9</b>



Table 8. Historical Wage & Salary Employment Growth	2-11
Table 9. Growth Scenarios	2-13

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1. Change in School Enrollment, 1995-2006	2-6
Figure 2. Homer Housing Types	2-7
Figure 3. Comparison of Residential Permits and Permit Value	2-7
Figure 4. Comparison of Sale Price and Market Time, 1996-2005	2-8
Figure 5. Comparison of List Price and Number of Sales, 1996-2005	2-9
Figure 6. Alaska Summer Visitors, 2001-2006	2-10
Figure 7. Median Income in Homer	2-11
Figure 8. Neckdown or Bulb-out	5-7
Figure 9. CARTS first Wheel-chair Passenger	5-8
Figure 10. Collector Streets & Local Streets being constructed at the same time	5-9
Figure 11. The Mobility Land Access Relationship	5-11
Figure 12. Street and Intersection Improvements	5-12
Figure 13. The three pillars of sustainability	9-1

## **LIST OF MAPS**

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations	4-7
Green Infrastructure	D-3
Current Zoning, City of Homer	D-13
Existing Water and Sewer Lines, City of Homer	D-14

# CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

## Overview

Homer is located on the northern shoreline of Kachemak Bay, a sheltered arm of lower Cook Inlet. Scenic views surround the city in all directions. The snowcapped mountains and glaciers of the Kenai Range are seen from Homer looking across Kachemak Bay. Its maritime location means that Homer is flush with fishing boats, marine life, and the sights, sounds and smells of the ocean. The city has a heritage of sturdy homesteaders who came to Homer and brought an adventurous, industrious spirit that helped shape the well-loved community that exists today.



The community's diverse, organic qualities trace back to these homestead origins. Homer residents continue to take initiative – starting small businesses, producing local art, volunteering for community activities. This has served to shape the look and feel of the town with diverse, albeit scattered businesses, eclectic residential housing styles, the community-supported Pratt Museum, the Islands and Ocean Center, many nonprofits and established churches, and an active Chamber of Commerce. The city government has also captured this spirit with its effective city government, array of services and facilities, and a tradition of active civic debate. Facilities within the city limits of Homer include the airport, the boat harbor, an ice arena, parks and ball fields and the Kachemak Bay Campus of the University of Alaska. Homer is also one of Southcentral Alaska's main hubs for fishing and tourism.

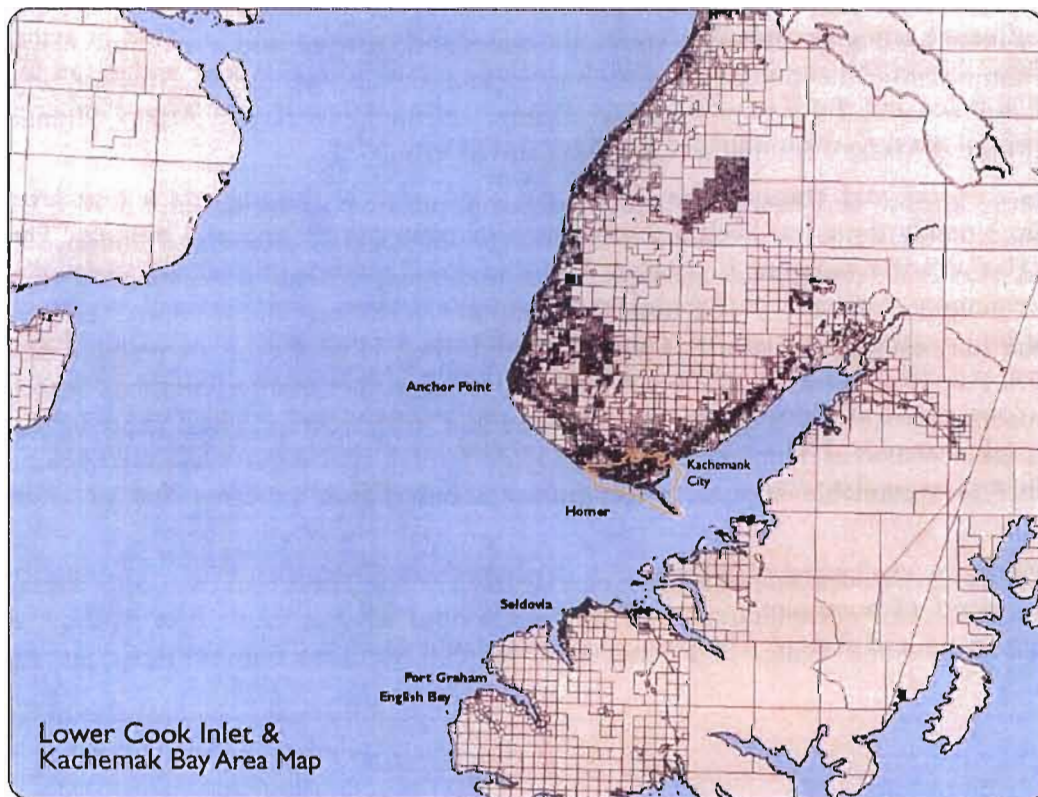
The city continues to grow and change. The age of the population is shifting and a new level of wealth is visible. Notably there has been a trend towards higher-priced land and housing. The general change in Homer's demographic is coupled with traditional seasonal population variations. A distinction is emerging between year-round community members and seasonal residents. In addition to the long-established influx of summer employees, Homer now increasingly draws residents who own second homes in Homer and visit during the warmer months. Seasonal population fluctuations create challenges for city services and infrastructure which must be sized to meet seasonal peak demands. Homer is working to meet these challenges while continuing to provide affordable and equitable access to community services and resources for all Homer residents.

The character of Homer is challenged with these new developments. There also exist opportunities to emerge as a new kind of community – one that holds onto what is best of its heritage and embraces the need to grow and change. The purpose of this plan is to set a framework for just such a strategy.

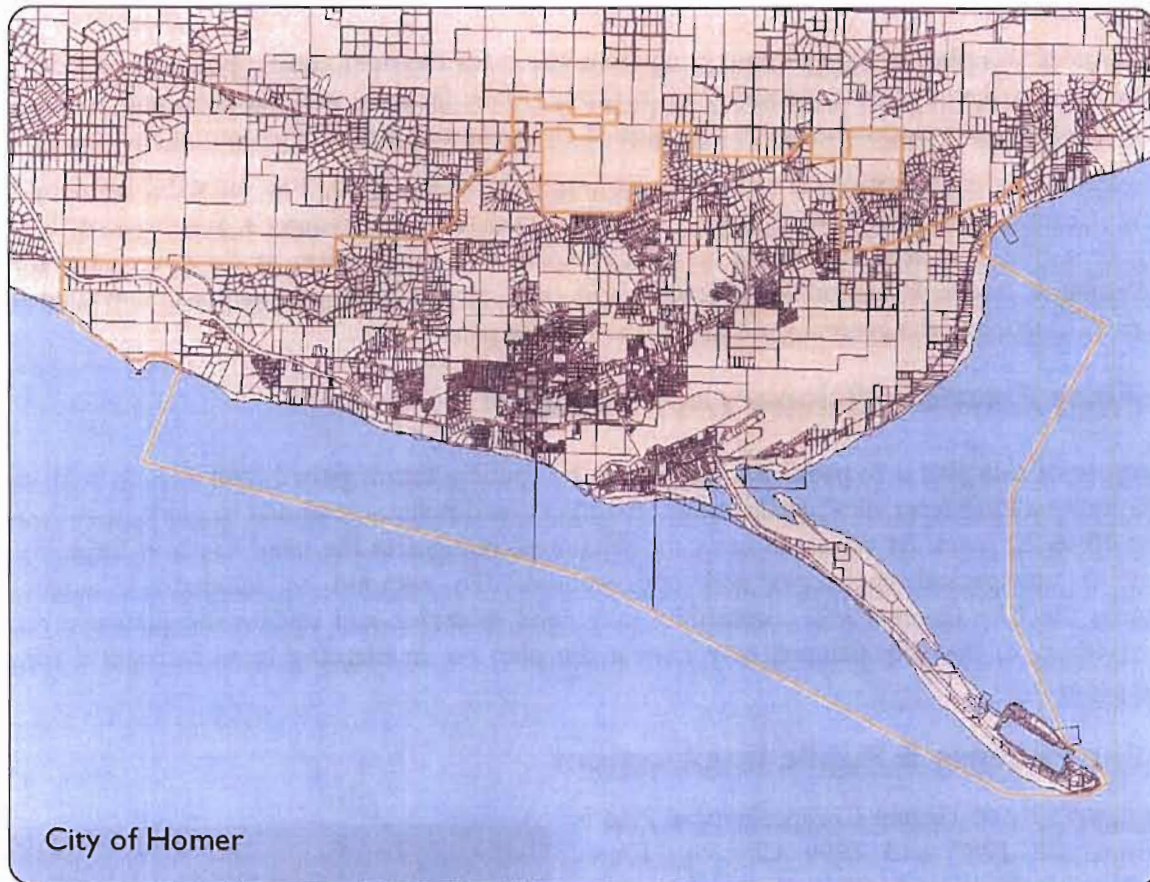
## Overview of Community Boundaries and Setting

Homer lies on the north shore of Kachemak Bay on the southwest edge of the Kenai Peninsula. *See Kachemak Bay area map below.* It is the southern-most point of the road system connecting the Kenai Peninsula with Anchorage, which lies 227 road miles north of Homer. Homer is approximately 59.6° north latitude and 151.6° west longitude. Homer's city boundaries encompass a total area of approximately 25 square miles (15 square miles of land and 10 square miles of water). *See City of Homer map on the following page.* Since the last drafting of the Homer Comprehensive Plan, the city's boundaries and population have grown. In 2002, Homer annexed 4.58 square miles of land. According to the Alaska Department of Community, Commerce, and Economic Development (DCCED), in 2007 Homer's population was estimated at approximately 5,500 people.

Homer has a close relationship with many nearby communities, both along the road system and the marine highway system. Kachemak City, incorporated in 1961, is Homer's closest neighbor, located just east of the city. Its population is approximately 470 (467 in July 2007) people and many of its residents are employed in Homer. Anchor Point, with approximately 1800 residents, is 14 miles northwest of Homer along the road system, and like Kachemak City, many of its residents are employed in Homer. Homer also helps to service the needs of communities across Kachemak Bay, notably Seldovia, Port Graham and Nanwalek (formerly English Bay). The Alaska Marine Highway ferry service connects Homer to Seldovia.







## Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of comprehensive planning is to promote the type of environment – both built and natural – that a community desires. The City of Homer has a robust planning history, especially when compared to many Alaskan communities. Early efforts to create a comprehensive plan date to 1954 with area residents documenting existing conditions and making recommendations for growth and development. The 1989 City of Homer Comprehensive Plan, updated in 1999, currently guides the City's growth and development.

In Alaska, comprehensive plans are mandated of all organized first and second class boroughs by Title 29 of the Alaska State Statutes. The key elements of the statute (Sec. 29.40.030) are summarized below:

The comprehensive plan is a compilation of policy statements, goals, standards, and maps for guiding the physical, social, and economic development, both private and public, of the municipality, and may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Statements of policies, goals, and standards;
- Land use plan;
- Community facilities plan;
- Transportation plan; and,
- Recommendations for implementing a comprehensive plan.

A comprehensive plan provides a method to analyze past development, current issues and community views, and to use this information to establish policies guiding future development. Key

components of this plan include a broad, long-term vision for Homer’s future; policies to guide land use, growth, and development; priorities to improve public facilities and services; and policies to promote economic development, retain community character and protect the natural environment.

To be effective, the comprehensive plan must not only be adopted, but must be used by the Planning Commission and City Council to guide decisions on Homer’s future growth and development. The first step in creating an effective plan will be adoption by the City Council and Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly. After adoption, the City of Homer and its partners will need to take actions to achieve the general goals established by the plan.

## Plan Time Frame – Visionary and Practical

The purpose of this plan is to provide a framework for guiding future growth and change in Homer. The plan takes a long-term view, establishing broad goals and policies intended to guide growth over the next 10 to 20 years. At the same time, the document recognizes the need to allow flexibility to respond to unexpected challenges and opportunities. To respond to inevitable changes in conditions, the City Council and community may need to revisit and update the plan every five years. In addition, the City Council may amend the plan on an ongoing basis through a formal revision process.

## Planning Process & Public Involvement

This updated City of Homer Comprehensive Plan is built from the 1989 and 1999 City of Homer Comprehensive Plans and other plans adopted by the City of Homer, including the Town Center Development Plan (2007), Capital Improvement Plan (2006), Water and Sewer Master Plan (2006), City of Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trails Plan (2004) and the Homer Area Transportation Plan (2005). Additional contributions include work with members of the Homer community, the Homer Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), City staff and City department heads. Agnew::Beck Consulting assisted the City in this process.



The following table summarizes the process in preparing this comprehensive plan.

Date	Activity
January 29 & 30, 2007	Initial meeting between planners, City liaison and staff
January 29, 2007	First CAC meeting to discuss process, issues & goals
January–April	Interviews with City of Homer Department Heads, CAC meetings to flesh out issues and goals

<b>Date (continued)</b>	<b>Activity (continued)</b>
April 25, 2007	First Community Workshop to gain broad public input on comprehensive plan goals
May – September 2007	Series of CAC meetings to review draft plan chapters, including Land Use, Transportation, Public Services and Facilities, Parks and Recreation, plus introductory chapters and informal meetings with various stakeholder groups
Late September	Completion of Internal Review Draft
Early October	Release of Draft Plan for Public Comments
October 18, 2007	Community Workshop to review the Draft Plan
Winter 2007-08	Further meetings with CAC to make final revisions to the plan in response to public comments

Once the draft plan is finalized, the following steps will occur to complete the review, refinement and adoption of the plan. The City of Homer shares responsibilities for approval of the comprehensive plan with the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Fall 2008, Winter 2009 Summer 2009	Review and Approval by City Planning and Zoning Commission
Fall 2009 Winter 2010	Review and approval by City Council
Spring 2010	Review and approval by Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) Planning Commission; review and approval by KPB Assembly



## CHAPTER 2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of Homer's history, current conditions and trends, and sets the stage for the policies presented in the remainder of the plan.

Specific subjects covered include history, natural setting, and trends in land use and economic activity.



### History

The area surrounding Homer has been home to Alaska Natives for over 8,000 years. Ancient cultures converged here, traveling to this rich bay with its sea mammals, salmon and protected waters. They arrived on foot overland from the Alaskan interior, and they paddled strong seas in skin boats from the Alaska Peninsula and Kodiak. Some migrated around the rocky outer coast from Prince William Sound. Great piles of discarded bones, shells, and artifacts, called middens, identify many ancient sites where early cultures lived. House pits, the remains of Sugpiaq Alutiiq and Dena'ina Athabascan semi-subterranean houses, are found on the islands and along the shores of Kachemak Bay. The Pratt Museum and the Homer library are excellent sources of information about the rich Alaska Native history of Kachemak Bay. While archaeological evidence indicates that major Native settlements were located across Kachemak Bay from Homer, there is also evidence of early Native campsites on the Homer Spit. Today persons with Alaska Native heritage make up approximately 7 percent of Homer's total population.

Homer's non-Native history began in 1895 when the US Geological Survey came to the area to study coal and gold resources. The following year, Homer Pennock, the man of character after whom the town is named, arrived with a crew of 50 gold miners and developed a small settlement on the Spit. While gold mining never became a profitable endeavor, coal mining did and was the predominant economic activity from the late 1800s through World War I. In the early 1900s, fishing developed into an important industry. The majority of canneries and fishing-related activity was centered across the bay in Seldovia. *See area map, page 1-2.* However, when the 1964 Good Friday earthquake struck, Seldovia's waterfront was devastated. The Homer Spit also subsided several feet due to the earthquake but it was able to assume Seldovia's fishing support activities. Like the Good Friday earthquake, the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill in Prince William Sound marked another very significant event for Homer. While Homer is somewhat distant from the point of grounding, outside Valdez, the reach of the spill was vast; Homer's shoreline was included in the 1,300 miles of coast impacted by the Exxon Valdez disaster. Afterward, Homer's Pratt Museum developed an award-winning exhibit about the spill's considerable impact on Homer and the surrounding area.

Homer, like the rest of the state, has roots in resource extraction industries. Yet this tie has served to underscore the importance of preservation and protection of the natural environment – critical to the livelihood and success of the community. This strong relationship to the natural environment, combined with Homer's stunning natural setting and its vibrant arts and cultural scene, has made it a popular destination for tourists.

## Natural Environment

Literature intended to draw visitors to Homer describes it as a breathtakingly beautiful community, surrounded by snowcapped mountains and glaciers, a gateway to mountain and maritime adventure and the halibut capital of the world. Homer is also well-known for its gravel spit, a significant geographic feature which extends 4.5 miles into Kachemak Bay.



Kachemak Bay and the Homer Spit

Homer's year-round ice-free port and protected harbor provide easy access to Kachemak Bay, which is traveled by Homer residents, residents of nearby communities and visitors for recreation, wildlife viewing, fishing and transportation. Life in Homer relates to the ocean in many ways – the climate, economy, environment, infrastructure and way of life are all shaped by, and benefitted by, Homer's proximity to the water.

The ocean also influences Homer's climate and environment. Homer has a maritime climate and is fairly temperate by Alaska standards. Average daily temperatures range from 45 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer and 14 to 27 in the winter. Yearly snowfall during the winter averages 55 inches; total annual precipitation is 24 inches. This precipitation feeds many streams and watersheds in the Homer area. In fact, Homer's drinking water comes from a surface water source, the Bridge Creek Reservoir. Other significant streams in the Homer area include Twitter Creek, Fritz Creek and Diamond Creek. Additionally, Homer recently conducted a wetland assessment which identified several high-quality wetland areas. The largest wetland within Homer's city limits is the area surrounding Beluga Lake, which is home to many species of birds and wildlife.

The topography of the region adds to its beauty. The City of Homer is situated in a geographical area referred to as the Homer Bench. The Homer Bench is characterized by high bluffs to the north and gently sloping shorelines in the south. Homer is bounded by Kachemak Bay to the south, and Diamond Ridge to the north, which rises from about 400 to 1,100 feet above sea level. The area is composed of layered sand, silt, clay, conglomerate, coal seams and volcanic ash. Common rock types include shale, sandstone, coal and claystone. The steep slopes and the loose nature of the soil and bedrock make the area susceptible to landslides when saturated with water. Homer experiences both bluff and shoreline erosion problems. Across the bay in Kachemak Bay State Park, the dramatic, heavily glaciated mountains of the Kenai Range provide stunning scenic views for the city.

## Social Environment

### Regional Growth and Demographics

The Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) Comprehensive Plan (2005) documented growth and change throughout the region and found several interesting trends. Specifically, the plan found that long-term trends indicate that the borough's population is aging, which corresponds to a decline in school enrollment. Borough incomes are declining as well. The following data provides more detail regarding these trends.



Table 1 shows that the overall population growth in the borough has slowed to 2 percent from the high growth rates of the 1970s and 1980s.

Table 1. Kenai Peninsula Borough Population Statistics 1960-2000

Year	Population	Average Annual Growth
1960	9,053	-
1970	16,586	6.2%
1980	25,282	4.3%
1990	40,486	4.9%
2000	49,691	2.0%
2005	51,268	0.3%

Source: Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development 2005 population estimates.

The very slight increase in borough population in recent years has not been uniform across age groups. The retirement age group has grown significantly, while other age groups have not. In 1990, 4.9 percent of the population was aged 65 years and older, while in 2000 it increased to 7.3 percent. This change is also reflected in the increase in the median age of the population. In the ten years between the 1990 and 2000 Census, the median age increased from 31 to 36.3 years.

The aging of the population is coupled with a drop in school enrollment in recent years. To date, the high mark was reached in 1997 with 10,459 school children enrolled in KPB schools. Current enrollment, for 2006/07, is at 9,360 students, representing a 9 percent drop in enrollment from the 1997 high.

After adjusting for inflation, median family incomes dropped significantly throughout the borough. The KPB Comprehensive Plan states that the borough wide median income rose from \$42,403 in 1989 to \$46,397 in 1999; however when inflation is factored into this figure, it reflects a 19 percent drop in median family income.

These trends pose important issues for the borough and its communities. Notably, an aging population creates needs for specific types of public facilities and services, tax revenue collection, and special housing. Lower school enrollment numbers often mean that State support becomes more limited and school budgets are stretched. An aging population is often indicative of the lack of local economic opportunity sufficient to attract and hold younger families. A more vibrant economy would attract and retain younger workers and families, and a more diverse tax base. Decreasing incomes may increase demands on social services while simultaneously lowering support for and ability to pay taxes or fees for services.

## Homer Population Trends and Demographics

As a community within the Kenai Peninsula Borough, Homer has experienced many growth changes and trends similar to the borough as a whole. Compared to the borough, Homer's population growth rate has been a bit higher in recent years, averaging 6.3 percent per year between 2000 and 2005. This "growth spurt" is due mostly to the annexation of 4.58 square miles of land in 2002, increasing Homer's land base by 28 percent. If one looks instead at the combined area of Homer, Diamond Ridge and Miller's Landing ("pre-annexation Homer"), population growth between 2000 and 2005 was only 0.9 percent per year, only slightly faster than KPB.

Table 2. Homer Population Statistics 1960-2000

Year	Population	Average Annual Growth
1960	1,247	-
1970*	1,083	-1.4%
1980	2,209	7.4%
1990	3,660	5.2%
2000	3,946	0.8%
2005**	5,435	6.3%

Source: Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development 2005 population estimates.

\* Homer's growth rate declined due to the 1964 incorporation of the city.

\*\* Homer annexation was effective March 20, 2002.

Homer's seasonal population fluctuations complicate the effort to define the community's demographic character. In the summertime, the population of Homer swells dramatically with tourists, seasonal workers employed in commercial fishing and tourist support industries, and part-time summer residents and second-homeowners. General population growth trends, numbers, and graphs do not capture the complexity and variation of Homer's population. For instance, anecdotal accounts from local residents paint a picture of an aging baby-boomer demographic that may reside in Homer for three months of the year, claim Alaska residency, and yet spend large portions of the year out of state.

### Shifting Age of the Population

Like the surrounding borough, Homer too is shifting toward an older population. This may be explained by two main factors: the aging of Homers' existing population and the in-migration of retirees (a large segment of the overall in-migration population).

The rich homesteading heritage of the area, and its many long-standing and established residents who are committed to living out their lives in Homer, account for the first factor; the second is part of a larger trend prevalent throughout the borough. A recent study conducted by the University of Alaska's Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER)<sup>1</sup> served to underscore this perceived growth in the retirement community as it found that out-migration of retirees is not occurring in the Kenai Peninsula Borough. Specifically, between 1995 and 2000, 379 seniors moved to the borough while only 329 departed.

Whether due to in-migration or the aging of long-standing Homer residents, Homer has seen an increase in its population of persons aged 65-and-older from 7 percent in 1990 to 10 percent of the total population in 2000. Additionally, the median age for Homer is higher than in both the state and the borough. Tables 3 and 4 illustrate these facts.

<sup>1</sup> Goldsmith, Scott and Jane Angvik, UA Research Summary No. 7, Institute of Social and Economic Research, September, 2006.

Table 3. Age Statistics for City of Homer, 1990-2000

	1990 Population		2000 Population	
	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total
Total Population	3,660		3,946	
9 and Under	679	19%	551	14%
10 to 19	511	14%	646	16%
20 to 34	844	23%	478	12%
35 to 44	774	21%	659	17%
45 to 54	389	11%	748	19%
55 to 64	203	6%	366	9%
65 and Over	263	7%	398	10%

Source: US Census Bureau. Note: US Census Bureau's 2000 population is slightly different from State of Alaska numbers. The census captures the April 1 population while the State estimates the July 1 population.

Table 4. Comparative Age Statistics, 2000

Location	Median Age	Percent 65 & Up
Homer	38.8	10%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	36.3	7%
Alaska	32.4	5.7%

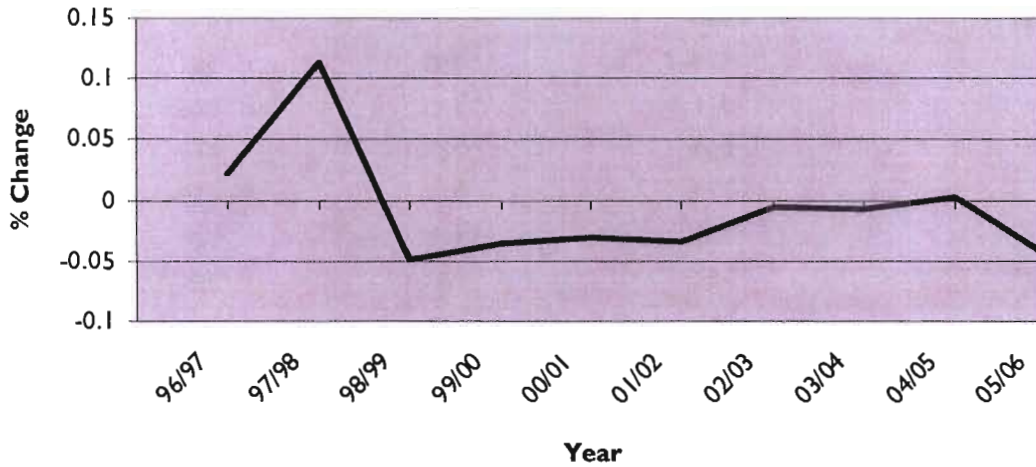
Source: US Census Bureau and Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED).

Additionally, in 1990, almost half of Homer's population (44 percent) was between the ages of 20 and 44. Ten years later, this age range represented less than one-third (29 percent) of the total population. During this same time period, the proportion of people aged 45 to 64 jumped from less than one-fifth (17 percent) of the population to more than a quarter (28 percent).

The aging of the population is accompanied by a decline in school enrollment numbers in Homer. Total school enrollment went from a high of 2,412 students during the 1997-98 school year to 1,958 students during the 2005-06 school year. Again this data indicates that area growth is tied more to older persons, retirees, and second homeowners. Families with young children are less prevalent.

Yet another indicator of an increasingly larger retirement population is the growth in the number of adults not in the labor force and not seeking work. Census data indicates that in 2000, 33 percent of Homer's potential workforce was deliberately not in the labor force nor were they seeking work, a four percent increase from 1990. *See Table 5.*

Figure 1. Change in School Enrollment, 1995-2006



Source: Kenai Peninsula Borough

Table 5. Homer's Labor Force, 1990-2000

	1990 Population Number	2000 Population Number
Total Population	3,660	3,946
Total Potential Workforce (16 & older)	2,673	3,006
Total Employment	1,863	1,849
Adults not in Labor Force (and not seeking work)	810	984
Percent of Potential Workforce not seeking work	29%	33%

Note: unemployment not included in this table

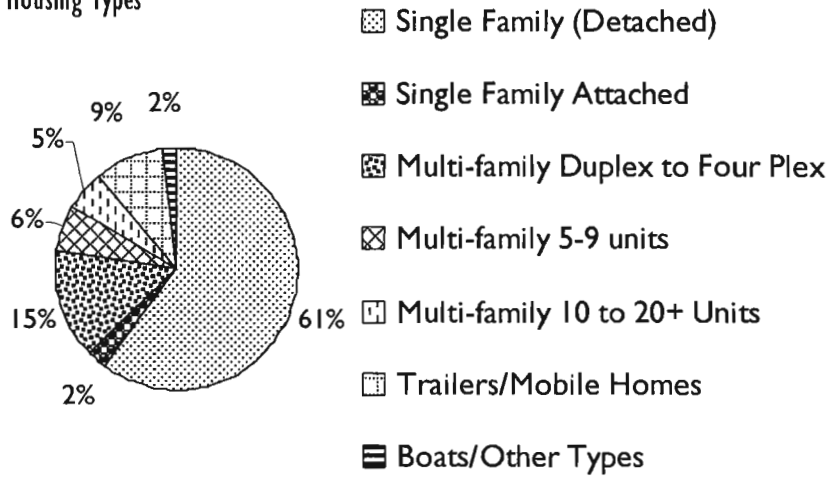
Source: US Census Bureau.

## Trends in Land Use & Housing

### Land Use Patterns & Capacity

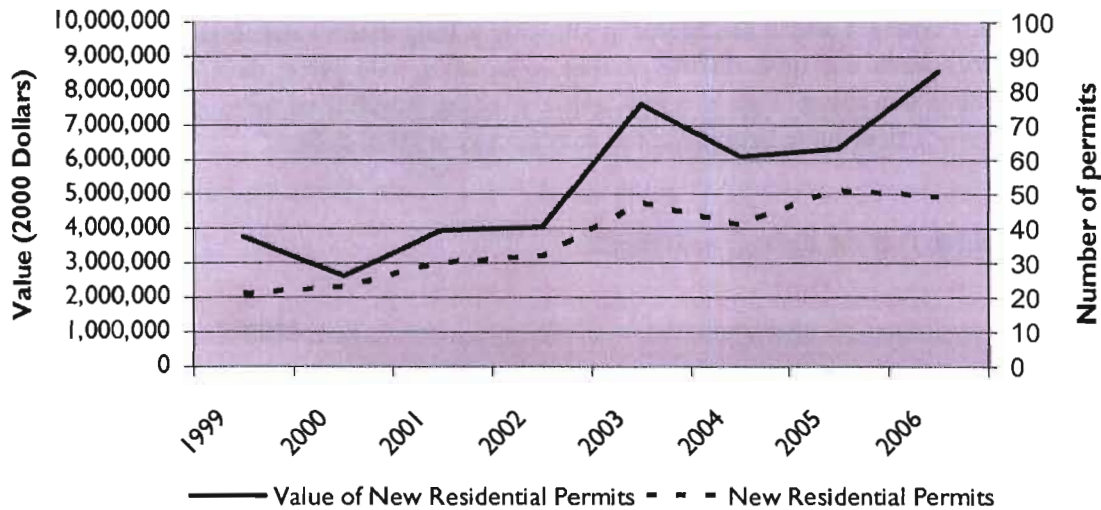
Residential use remains the predominant function of developed land in Homer. The city has three residential zoning districts – urban, rural, and residential office. The majority of current zoning is rural residential which allows for low-density development in areas not served by water and sewer. Despite the majority of the residential uses being located within the rural residential zoning district, many homes are served by public water and sewer. The predominant type of residential development is single family detached. Specifically, 61 percent of Homer residents live in single family detached homes as illustrated by the following chart.

Figure 2. Homer Housing Types



The number of new residential permits has been generally increasing in Homer since 1999. As new housing starts have been on the rise, the value of the new residential permits has been increasing significantly as well. Figure 3 shows the value of new residential permits compared to the number of new residential permits.

Figure 3. Comparison of Residential Permits and Permit Value



Source: Alaska Multiple Listing Service (MLS)

Table 6 shows the City tax revenues from property and sales taxes from 2000 through 2006. Property tax revenues have increased an average of 7 percent each year between 2000 and 2006. This increase reflects both the increase in number of units and the increase in average prices for land and housing. Sales tax revenue has also increased, due to increased sales as well as an increase in the tax rate from 3.5 percent to 4.5 percent.



Table 6. City of Homer Tax Revenues, 2000 through 2006

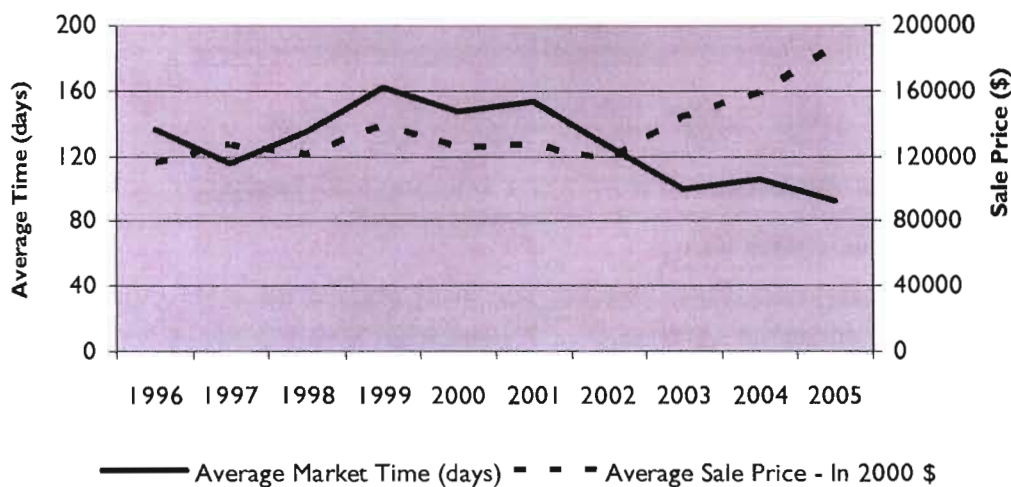
	Property Tax	% Change	Sales Tax	Sales Tax Rate
2000	\$1,347,712	10.4	\$3,465,157	3.5%
2001	\$1,342,886	-0.36	\$3,484,847	4.0%
2002	\$1,374,158	2.3	\$3,585,461	3.5%
2003	\$1,543,120	12.4	\$3,978,578	3.5%
2004	\$1,742,434	12.9	\$4,353,146	3.5%
2005	\$1,797,165	3.1	\$4,701,795	4.5%
2006	\$2,036,066	13.3	\$5,809,399	4.5%

Source: Kenai Peninsula Borough, 2007.

### Housing Characteristics

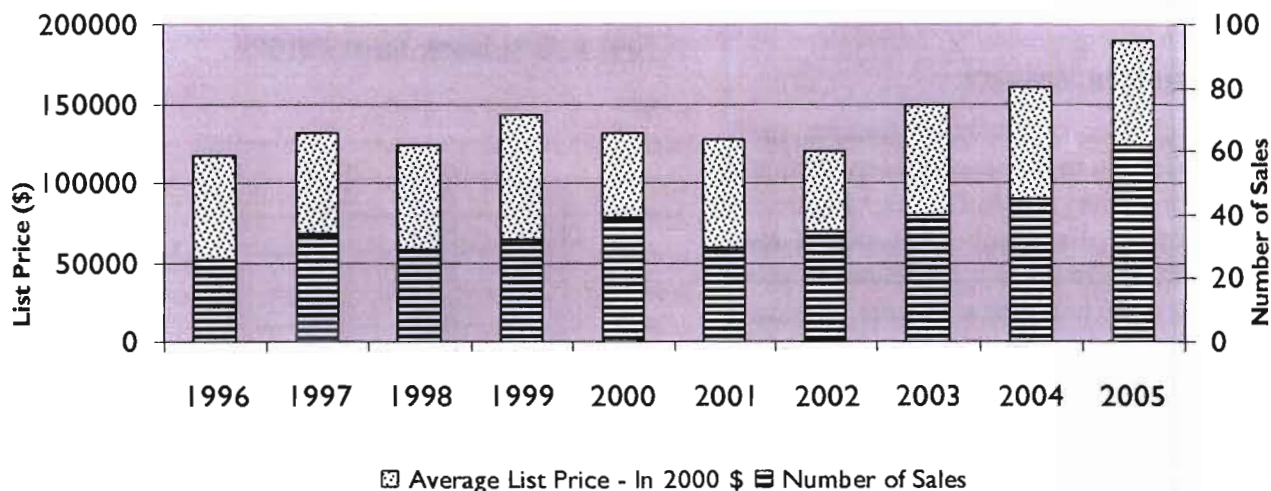
Some Homer residents are concerned that housing prices are being driven by wealth earned outside the community and at a level very difficult to match in Homer. Increasing housing prices have implications for who can live and thrive in Homer. Recent market trends have tended towards a leveling of home prices. However, prices remain high and since 2002, home prices increased annually at rates ranging from 13 to 25 percent. The average list price in 2005 was approximately \$216,000 and the average sale price was \$211,000. In recent years houses typically did not stay on the market for long. While Homer’s hot housing market has cooled a bit, the theory remains that the demand for housing and rise in prices was spurred by money from outside the local area. Anecdotal accounts from local realtors and title companies cite a fairly dramatic increase in the number of sales originating outside Alaska. While data for 2006 and 2007 is not incorporated, Figures 4 and 5 are useful in showing a longer term trend of increased housing prices. Figure 4 compares the time on the market to housing sale price; days on the market are decreasing while prices are rising. Figure 5 indicates the rising number of sales and rising list price over the past 10 years. Prices have been adjusted to reflect year 2000 dollars.

Figure 4. Comparison of Sale Price and Market Time, 1996-2005



Source: Kenai Peninsula Borough, 2007.

Figure 5. Comparison of List Price and Number of Sales, 1996-2005



Source: Kenai Peninsula Borough, 2007.

## Economy

Education, health care, commercial fishing, and tourism form the backbone of Homer’s economy. Education and health care fields provide the greatest number of jobs in Homer. Notably, the South Peninsula Hospital is the second largest employer just behind the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. See Table 7. Census 2000 data indicates that Homer has the highest percentage of self-employed workers on the Kenai Peninsula, illustrative of an entrepreneurial spirit alive and well within the community. Nineteen percent of the local labor force held business licenses at the time of the 2000 census.

Additionally, Homer has the highest number of local residents in the Kenai Peninsula Borough that rely on commercial fishing. Fishing income is incredibly important to Homer’s

Table 7. Top Area Employers, 2004-2005

Top Area Employers, 2004-2005		
Homer	Annual Average Employment	
	2004	2005
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	300	313
South Peninsula Hospital	250	256
South Peninsula Behavioral Health Services	152	150
City of Homer	114	110
State of Alaska (Excludes University)	101	95
Safeway/Eagle Store	82	84
Lands End Resort	81	80
Federal Government	80	75
Chugach Electric	69	69
Homer Electric Association	71	67

Source: Kenai Peninsula Borough, 2007.

economy. Specifically, 541 area residents (of approximately 5,000 total residents) hold commercial fishing permits and in 2002 Homer area fishers claimed approximately 64 percent of harvest income for all the Kenai Peninsula commercial fishers.<sup>2</sup>

### Increasing Visitors

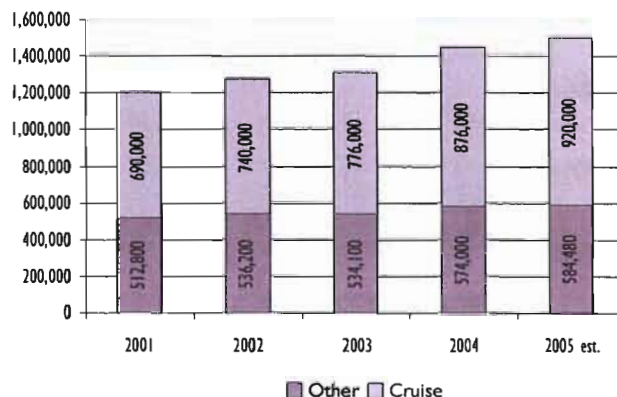
Like Alaska as a whole, tourism grew dramatically in Homer between 1990 and 2000. More recently, as Figure 6 illustrates, the number of out-of-state visitors to Alaska has continued to grow but at a declining rate. Homer continues to be a popular tourist destination. *Alaska Economic Trends* reports that “Homer’s visitor industry is thriving and contributes to the support of local cottage industries including bed and breakfasts and arts and crafts.”<sup>3</sup> It is likely that Homer will continue to draw in visitors as the gateway to Kachemak Bay State Park, “halibut capital of the world,” and for the general access to natural habitat and wildlife areas it provides.

Unlike many of Alaska’s most visited communities – destinations on cruise itineraries like Juneau, Ketchikan, Fairbanks and Skagway – the large majority of visitors to Homer are “independent travelers” from both in-state and out-of-state. These sectors of the state’s tourism economy have grown more slowly than the package/cruise sector, and have declined in the percentage of all Alaska travelers. The upside of attracting these types of visitors is that they tend to spend more and stay longer in a community than “cruise package” visitors.

The general increase in visitors and tourism in Alaska has contributed to job growth in the service sector. In 2005 there were 505 full-time equivalent wage and salary jobs in Homer in the “leisure and hospitality” category. These accounted for more than 15 percent of total wage and salary employment. This classification did not exist prior to 2000, so a trend cannot be directly calculated. However, Homer’s full-time average annual employment in the services sector increased dramatically between 1998 and 2005, more than doubling from 654 to 1,452. The job creation is linked to the robust visitor industry. Most new jobs are in industries that either cater to tourism or provide services, such as the health care and leisure and hospitality industries. In addition, many other tourism jobs are held by proprietors and don’t show up in standard employment data.

Figure 7 shows the median household, family and non-family (individual) income for Homer for both 1990 and 2000. Homer has seen a decline in median income when 1990 levels are adjusted to 2000 dollars as in Figure 7. There has been, however, a notable increase in the percentage of families reporting incomes of more than \$100,000. In 1990, 10 percent of Homer’s families had incomes of more than \$100,000; while in 2000 14 percent had these high incomes. Perhaps contributing to this

Figure 6. Alaska Summer Visitors 2001-2006



Source: Kenai Peninsula Borough, 2007.

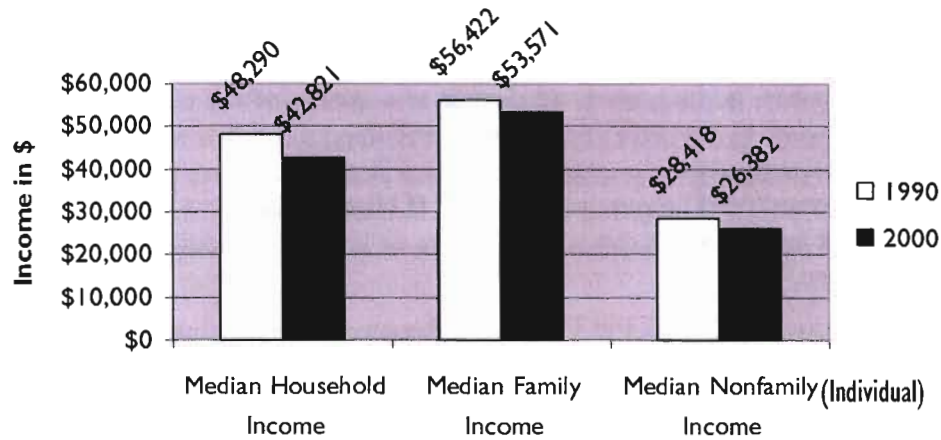
<sup>2</sup> Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), 2003.

<sup>3</sup> *Alaska Economic Trends*, November 2004, Department of Labor and Workforce Development.



rise in income is the increase in the number of persons receiving retirement income which has shifted from 11 percent of households in 1990 to 17 percent of households in 2000.

Figure 7. Median Income in Homer



Source: US Census Bureau and Consumer Price Index (used to adjust to year 2000 level).

Table 8 shows historical wage and salary employment growth for the region. (Wage and salary employment excludes fish harvesters and sole proprietor businesses.) Homer employment surged upward at more than 5 percent per year after 1998. A small part of this increase may have been due to annexation but the main reason appears to be the growth in tourism. The services category of employment more than doubled between 1998 and 2005. There were more than 500 full-time equivalent workers in the “accommodations and food services” sub-sector alone as of 2005. (Because new classifications were adopted in 2002, it is not possible to compare this figure with prior years.)

Table 8. Historical Wage and Salary Employment Growth

	1990	1995	1998	2005	Avg. growth 1990-98	Homer avg. growth 1998-2005
Construction	214	163	165	248	-3.2%	6.0%
Manufacturing	304	242	167	163	-7.2%	-0.3%
Transportation/Communication/ Utilities	245	288	229	319	-0.8%	4.8%
Trade	450	696	664	501	5.0%	-3.9%
Services and misc.	426	602	654	1,440	5.5%	11.9%
Government	463	655	660	937	4.5%	5.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,102</b>	<b>2,646</b>	<b>2,539</b>	<b>3,608</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>

Source: Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), 2007.

## Growth Trends

Homer's future growth will be driven by a combination of what happens to the Alaska economy and also specific factors that are more or less independent of what is happening in the Alaska economy. These include things like the prices for the mix of fish species that Homer fishers tend to catch, the growth of specific visitor attractions similar to the Islands and Ocean Center, and the location decisions of major retailers or other businesses. Perhaps most important of all, and most difficult to forecast, is the growth of Homer as a quality-of-life community that is attracting wealthy people who want to live here. This growth will depend partly on the actions that citizens take to maintain the current attractive qualities, and it will probably also depend on more mysterious attributes that economists call "reputation effects." If Homer remains a "hot" residential destination, then it can grow, at least in some dimensions, more or less independently of changes in the conventional "economic base."

The University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), found that Homer's growth seems to track changes in the Kenai Peninsula Borough economy. By exploiting this relationship, ISER used economic projections for Alaska and for the KPB as a benchmark for projecting future growth in Homer. A high growth scenario was also analyzed that is consistent with projections used in the recently adopted Homer Water and Sewer Master Plan (2006). *See Appendix A.*

The conclusion that Homer tracks the KPB economy was based on three empirical tests.

**Test 1. Population growth:** Data shows that Homer population (as measured with Diamond Ridge and Miller's Landing included) grew at about the same rate as KPB population during the 1990s and during the past six years. The rates for 2000 through 2006 are 0.5 percent for Homer and 0.3 percent per year for KPB, which are substantially the same.

**Test 2. Employment growth and structural change:** Comparing employment by broad sector in Homer to employment in the KPB shows that employment in Homer grew much faster than in the KPB, with the extra growth concentrated in services.

**Test 3. Change in age structure:** The final test addressed the issue of demographic change and the aging baby boomers. Is Homer "aging" faster than the KPB? This would indicate that KPB projections are less useful for projecting Homer conditions. The change in population between 1990 and 2000 for specific age cohorts is remarkably similar for Homer and KPB. Unfortunately there is no data by specific age cohort for recent years so it is conceivable that Homer's age structure no longer matches the KPB structure. However, the match through the 1990s is reassuring.

The three tests and available historical data suggests that Homer's growth has been reasonably consistent with the growth of the KPB. Therefore, a low-growth scenario for Homer has been developed from recent econometric projections of the KPB economy that are, in turn, based on a detailed model of the statewide economy. The population and economic growth rate projected for Homer is as follows:

It is important to understand that while the State economy has matured and diversified, with growth in tourism, air cargo and mining, Alaska remains particularly vulnerable to economic shocks. Homer needs to plan for growth, and there are good reasons to expect this growth will continue. At the same time, the community needs to be aware that growth rates could quickly slow or reverse. The boom and bust of Alaskan economic life requires City governments to be both optimistic and realistic, and to be able to respond to change.

Table 9. Growth scenarios

	2005	2015	2025	2030	Growth Rates		
					2005-2015	2015-2025	2025-2030
Low-growth scenario							
Alaska population (000's)	663.3	717.9	822.5	877.3	0.8%	1.4%	1.3%
KPB population	49,691	52,300	58,700	61,800	0.5%	1.2%	1.0%
KPB wage-salary employment	18,075	17,000	18,700	19,700	-0.6%	1.0%	1.0%
Homer population	5,393	5,676	6,371	6,707	0.5%	1.2%	1.0%
Homer employment	3,608	4,619	5,204	5,482	2.5%	1.2%	1.0%

Source: Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), 2007.

## Summary

Taken together, the set of facts presented in this chapter support the conclusions listed below.

- Homer’s demographics are changing. Many out-of-town and out-of-state retirees are coming to Homer, affecting land prices and expectations about public services and facilities.
- Homer needs room to grow, in a way that respects the community’s character, addressing concerns about sprawl and climate change. The plan should designate locations and patterns for new growth, considering related needs like expanded water and sewer service.
- Housing prices are being driven up by new demands and an influx of more wealthy residents. Maintaining a stock of quality housing for middle- and low-income households will be important for Homer’s future.
- The natural environment is important to Homer’s economy and way of life. The community clearly desires to maintain the natural environment. New strategies will be needed to protect this environment as the community grows – particularly regarding drainage, erosion, and open space.
- Homer has a diverse, vibrant economy that builds on the community’s strengths and character. The community will need to work to enhance and preserve economic opportunity.
- Tourism has grown significantly in Homer, contributing to growth in the overall service sector.
- Trends of the last 15 years are likely to continue, and Homer will face new challenges and opportunities tied to growth.



## CHAPTER 3 COMMUNITY VALUES

The previous chapter describes the growth and change occurring in Homer and surrounding areas along with the resulting opportunities and challenges facing the community. Chapters 4-8 present goals and strategies to respond to the impact of this growth and change. This chapter presents a general summary of the broad values of the Homer community. This material comes from the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update and feedback received from the community in the preparation of this plan.

Listed below are qualities of Homer that are strongly valued by residents. The items listed were repeatedly articulated during the comprehensive plan update process.

- Keep Homer a lively, vital community that effectively responds to change and growth while retaining what is best about Homer's character.
- A strong interest in political matters; a desire to guide the future growth and development of Homer
- Appreciation of Homer's spectacular natural setting, its great views, interesting topography, as well as a tradition of concern about the quality of natural resources and the environment
- Support for a diverse economy, including many small, independent home-based businesses
- Desire for ready access to open space, parks, and recreation
- Pride and support for local arts
- Strong commitment to encouraging a wide range of high quality medical and health-promoting services and facilities, both conventional and nontraditional
- Support for the robust network of nonprofit and volunteer organizations giving to the community in many ways
- Interest in lifelong learning and opportunities for access to education
- A strong tradition of commercial fishing and a strong community bond to the marine environment and resources
- Desire for a mix of rural and main-street character – with many residents living on larger parcels with



space between neighbors – coupled with a desire to create a new “heart of Homer” – a lively town center offering the pleasures and conveniences of a thriving downtown.

## ■ CHAPTER 4 LAND USE

---

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

### **Overview**

This chapter presents background information and policies to guide development in Homer. The first goal presents the overall goal of the land use policies. The other goals are more specific to various aspects of land use issues.

### **Summary of Goals**

- GOAL 1:** Guide 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.
- GOAL 2:** Maintain the quality of Homer's natural environment and scenic beauty.
- GOAL 3:** Encourage high-quality buildings and site development that complement Homer's beautiful natural setting.
- GOAL 4:** Support the development of a variety of well-defined commercial/business districts for a range of commercial purposes.
- GOAL 5:** Maintain high-quality residential neighborhoods; promote housing choice by supporting a variety of dwelling options.
- GOAL 6:** Develop a clear and open public process for future changes to City of Homer boundaries. Explore a planned, phased possible expansion and initiate and establish regional planning processes with the Kenai Peninsula Borough.





## Context: Land Use in Homer & Surrounding Areas

### Land Use in Homer

Land use in Homer today closely corresponds to the area's unique geographical features, history of homesteading, its road system, access to Kachemak Bay, and the vicinity to water. Two very distinct areas with very different land use characteristics developed in the last century, one on the mainland and the other on the Homer Spit. The portion of the City on the "mainland" has a ring-like land use pattern. It has a relatively concentrated, mixed use core or central business district. Transitional land uses surround the core consisting of institutional and public facilities, commercial uses, residential office, and denser, more urban residential. Farther from the central business district, larger lot/low density rural residential land uses prevail. Variations from this general pattern occur, for instance, along the Sterling Highway where roadside commercial activities are prevalent and in some instances compete with concentrated downtown activities. Additionally, the area surrounding the airport, southeast of downtown, holds most of the town's mixed industrial activities.

The Homer Spit contains its own assortment of industrial, commercial and recreational uses. The Spit's functions and land uses fluctuate with the season; during the summer months commercial activities increase in response to the arrival of summer visitors and tourism. Issues on the Spit are sufficiently distinct and complex as addressed separately in the Spit Comprehensive Plan.

Homer's land use pattern is generally supported by the City's current zoning designations, but an eclectic mix of land uses is still found in various zoning districts. *See the Zoning Map, Appendix D-10.* This mixing of uses is part of the unique character of Homer and not without benefits. The current land use zones largely fulfill their intended functions, but in some cases do not mesh with the realities of existing or desired future use patterns. Growth in Homer will require a new set of standards to guide the form and location of future land use and development. For instance, the land downtown and extending



west along the Sterling Highway is zoned central business district and gateway business district respectively. New policies are needed in the central business district to better allow for higher density and greater mixing of retail shopping, professional services, entertainment facilities and restaurants, and residential uses. The policies controlling development in the recently established gateway business district will likely need ongoing refinement to promote business with an emphasis on the visitor industry and at the same time ensure an attractive and notable entry point to Homer and Kachemak Bay.

Homer's public water and sewer infrastructure plays a large role in shaping land use patterns in the city. *See the Water & Sewer Map, Appendix D-11.* To make the investment in public water and sewer infrastructure efficient and fair, decisions on infrastructure need to be coordinated with land use policy. For example, there are some areas within the rural residential zoning that have gained water and sewer service, providing landowners the opportunity to subdivide their lots and develop at a

higher density than the existing land use classification promotes. This situation calls for a solution and is addressed in this plan.

Homer's pattern of development is also greatly influenced by environmental constraints. Steep slopes, bluff and shoreline erosion, and wetland areas make development of many parcels costly, difficult, or even unfeasible. While such areas may be unfeasible for individual development, they can have great value for the community as a whole. Drainage ways, beach areas, or steep or erodible slopes can form an integrated open space network ("green infrastructure") which supports the areas that may be developed more intensively. Environmental constraints and opportunities have an important role in guiding the character and location of new growth.

### **Land Use and Growth in Homer and the Surrounding Area**

The city of Homer is growing and it is likely to continue to grow. *See Background Chapter 2 and Appendix A.* As stated previously in this plan, future growth will be driven by factors including changes in the overall economy of Alaska, the future of the fishing industry, the pace of growth in the visitor industry and – probably the most difficult to forecast – the growth of Homer as a quality-of-life community for retirees, baby boomers and other "footloose" prospective residents. If Homer remains a "hot" residential destination, then it can grow, in some ways, more or less independently of changes in the conventional economic base.



While increasing visitation has had a great impact on the economic growth of Homer, the most significant change in Homer's real estate landscape has been the recent, rapidly growing demand for middle- to high-end residential development. This has led to substantial increases in land prices and the construction of many new homes, particularly in the area just outside of the city's perimeter, extending out East End Road and on the bench above town. This growth is an important consideration in the development of Homer's Comprehensive Plan. Residents of these developments use many of the same public and commercial services as Homer residents including police, fire, water supply, shops, restaurants, visitor and medical facilities, and public institutions like the library. Planning for services requires consideration of this growing residential demand.



## Goals & Objectives for Land Use

**GOAL I:** Guide 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:** Continue to accommodate and support commercial, residential and other land uses, consistent with the policies of this plan.

The specific steps to achieve this objective include expanding infrastructure and modifying the City's existing zoning policies to provide expanded opportunities for residential and commercial development. The process will include an update of the current zoning map as well as an enhancement of existing planning tools such as planned unit developments to best meet the demands of specific development projects. Growth will need to be guided to meet Homer's concerns about protecting community character and the quality of the environment.

### Implementation Strategies

The Land Use Recommendations Map presented under Objective B below shows the general locations identified to meet Homer's housing needs. These areas include:

1. Downtown area – support increased residential uses, including attached, higher density housing, either as stand alone projects or as part of mixed use development. *See Goal 4, Objective A.*
2. “Inner-city” locations – encourage increased residential uses in mixed use designations including office residential, KBC “college” district, gateway mixed use district and east side commercial districts; also encourage residential as a secondary use in the GC1 district.
3. Transitional residential areas – establish a new R-2 residential district to support moderate density residential development in areas previously designated rural residential. *See Goal 5.*
4. Commercial districts – encourage residential uses, while recognizing the primacy of commercial and/or industrial uses.

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

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

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

presents more details on the location of new development; following sections address the character of new development.

The key element of this section is the generalized Land Use Recommendations Map. *See page 4-7 – Comprehensive Plan Land Use Recommendations Map.* This is not a zoning map, but a general map of proposed future land uses in Homer. Before these recommendations have the force of law, a separate, subsequent process must occur to amend the City’s current zoning code. The components of the map are as follows (Appendix B gives a more complete description of these categories):

### Residential Use Districts

- R1 Urban Residential – With higher housing densities in the city core
- R2 Transitional Residential – Development at a density between rural and urban, in areas where water and sewer service exists today or is likely in the near term future
- R3 Rural Residential – Lower density residential and limited agricultural pursuits

### Commercial and Mixed Use Districts

- DT Mixed Use – Concentrated downtown core with a variety of uses and a pedestrian focus
- CBD Central Business District – Adjoining downtown core; mixed use with a mix auto- and pedestrian-oriented development
- GC-1 General Commercial 1 – Other retail and commercial areas with mixed uses, but primarily “drive-to” development
- GC-1/Residential – allow residential uses, encourage water dependant uses along Beluga Lake, and encourage small commercial enterprises on Lakeshore Drive. Maintain the neighborhood character of mixed commercial and residential use, retain mature healthy evergreen trees when practical and plant trees in landscaped areas.
- RO Residential Office – Allow for a range of residential and residential compatible uses. Buildings and sites must have a scale and character similar to single family detached or small multifamily homes.
- G-MU Gateway Mixed Use – Visitor-oriented businesses, developed in a manner that provides an attractive gateway to Homer
- E-MU East End Mixed Use – A wide variety of commercial and industrial uses with access to the marina and airport
- GC-2 General Commercial 2 – Commercial and industrial district
- NC Neighborhood Commercial East End Road – limited numbers of small scale, local serving commercial areas, designed to meet the convenience commercial service needs of neighborhood residents. The objectives behind this recommendations category might also be met through the Planned Unit Development process or an overlay zone allowing more commercial and retail uses than the underlying Residential Office District.

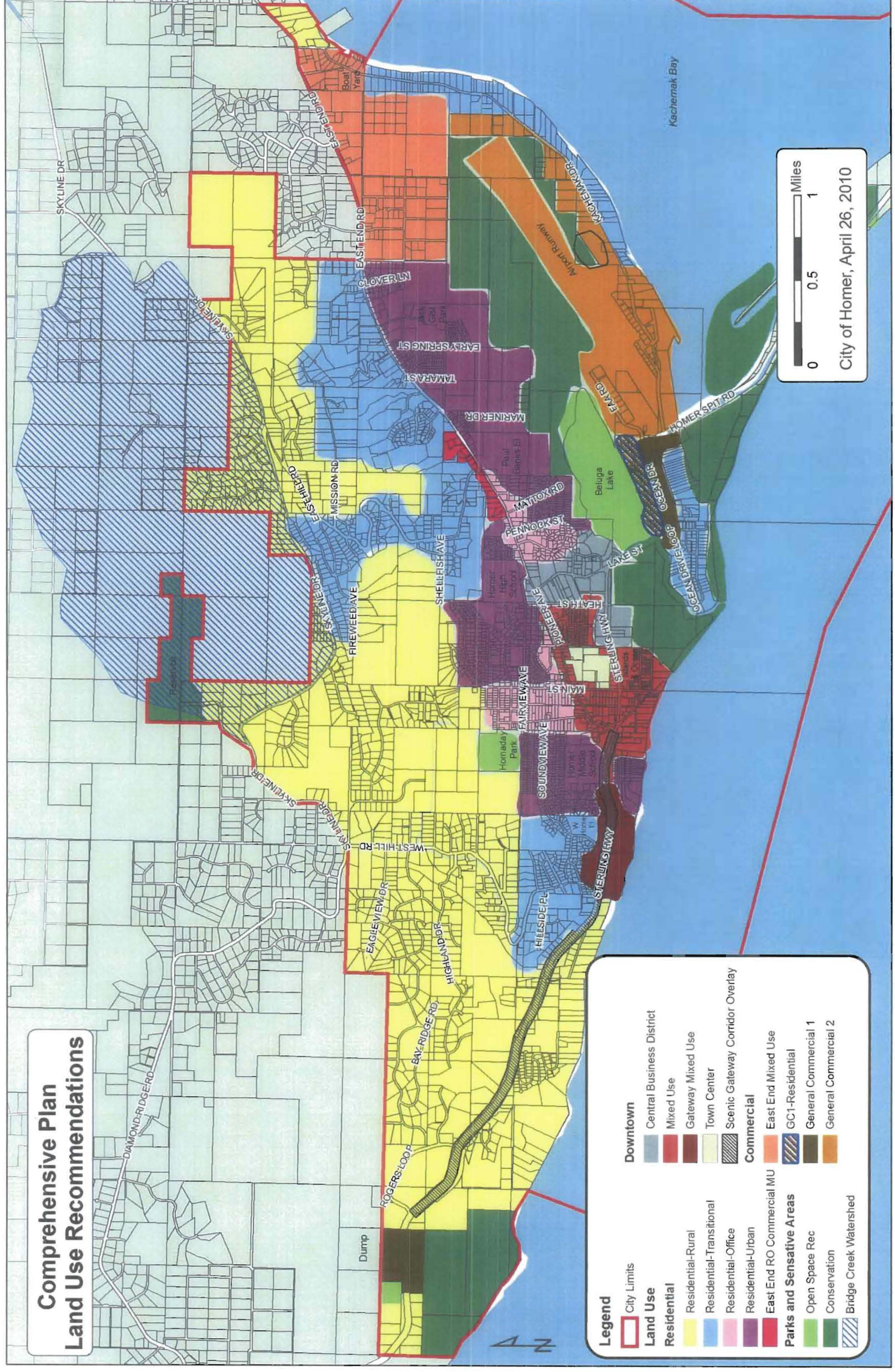
### Other Use Districts

- CO Conservation – Environmentally sensitive public and private lands with particularly high value for water quality, fish and wildlife, and other open space uses

- MC Marine Commercial
- MI Marine Industrial
- OSR Open Space–Recreational Lands
- BCWP Bridge Creek Watershed Protection District



# Comprehensive Plan Land Use Recommendations



**Legend**

- City Limits
- Land Use**
  - Residential
    - Residential-Rural
    - Residential-Transitional
    - Residential-Office
    - Residential-Urban
  - East End RO Commercial MU
  - Parks and Sensitive Areas**
    - Open Space Rec
    - Conservation
    - Bridge Creek Watershed
- Downtown**
  - Central Business District
  - Mixed Use
  - Gateway Mixed Use
  - Town Center
  - Scenic Gateway Corridor Overlay
- Commercial**
  - East End Mixed Use
  - GC1-Residential
  - General Commercial 1
  - General Commercial 2

0 0.5 1 Miles

City of Homer, April 26, 2010



This page intentionally blank

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

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

### Implementation Strategies

Changes to existing regulations will be required to implement the goals of this chapter, listed below:

1. Revise the City's existing zoning code, to reflect the general land use designations presented in Objective B and Appendix B.
2. Encourage alternative methods for preserving natural areas by creating improved cluster housing/open space/Planned Unit Development zoning standards and subdivision ordinance.
3. Develop standards and policies such as buffers and transitional densities to ensure high-quality higher density residential and/or mixed use development, particularly where this adjoins existing lower density residential areas. Create regulations that promote mixed use and high quality, attractive medium- to high-density development.
4. Develop standards and policies for new mixed-use districts, including the recently established Gateway Business district. Use "form-based" zoning strategies, encouraging a modest scale of development while allowing for a wide range of uses. Tailor current residential office and central business district zoning to accommodate more mixed use, medium- to high-density housing; for example, by allowing for more shared parking.
5. Develop consistent design standards for new development to complement the character of the land use. Include architectural and site development standards and standards for associated infrastructure (particularly roads and trails).
6. Re-evaluate height standards in commercial and mixed use districts to determine whether buildings over three stories should be permitted. Height standards must meet fire safety and insurance standards.
7. Develop and apply in all districts new standards addressing environmental issues including management of storm water, slope standards, and on-site septic systems.
8. Develop specific plans and development standards to respond to the issues and opportunities that exist on the Homer Spit. Resolving those issues is clearly important but beyond the scope of this current planning effort. In the interim, the policies for the Spit in the 1999 plan will apply. *See Appendix C.*

**Objective D:** Develop policy that supports infrastructure development that is consistent with the intended land use pattern and provides incentives to encourage development in these areas.

Chapter 6, Public Services and Facilities, presents policies for water, sewer, roads and other infrastructure. That chapter outlines how infrastructure development should respond to the broad goals established in this plan, for quality of life, the environment and economy, and the land use policies of this chapter.

## Implementation Strategies

General strategies for infrastructure development include:

1. Plan the expansion of community infrastructure to serve areas identified for growth, in particular to expand water and sewer into urban and transitional residential and mixed use zones.
2. Encourage development of infrastructure in areas targeted for development by establishing incentives for public/private partnerships. Examples include tax deferral, tax credits and infrastructure local improvement districts (LIDs).
3. In general, adhere to Policy 3.1 of the 1989 Comprehensive Plan, which states: “the City shall provide water and sewer utilities to residents within the City before extending services to non-City residents.”

This policy was established to encourage infill development of residential areas. Continued strong support of infill development in all land use districts benefits the city and allows orderly and planned growth with access to services.

### **Objective E: Consider the regional and global impacts of development in Homer.**

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

Below are some general approaches to meeting the goals of reducing Homer’s impact on global warming, based on work by Homer’s Global Warming Task Force.

## Implementation Strategies

1. Pursue environmentally sound development practices and measure success for every public facility project in Homer either by locally established benchmarks or by LEED certification.
2. Encourage a concentrated development pattern to reduce the need for vehicle trips and encourage non-motorized transportation. *See more in the Transportation Section.*
3. Support planning and zoning regulations that promote land use strategies that include compact, mixed-use development, higher density development, and infill.
4. Adopt building codes and incentives to increase energy efficiency in all new residential and commercial development.
5. Provide assistance to developers and builders in evaluating plans to increase energy efficiency, encourage LEED project certification and promote non-motorized transportation.
6. Consider adopting LEED standards for neighborhood development and building remodeling, and incorporate in the permit process.

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

Homer’s natural setting provides many benefits but also creates significant constraints. The characteristics of the physical setting need to be respected in guiding the location, amount, and density of development.

This plan takes two general approaches to guide development in relation to environmental conditions. One is to “overlay” information regarding environmental constraints and opportunities onto the Land Use Recommendations Map. This means, for example, that some portions of an area identified for development would be limited by the site-specific presence of steep slopes, wetland areas, drainage channels, etc. The second broad strategy is to recommend that appropriate standards be adopted so that where development does occur it is designed to respect environmental functions and characteristics. Examples in this category include site development polices for drainage, vegetation, and grading.

A need exists for the community to take seriously the issue of shoreline stabilization and the implications of allowing ongoing shoreline development. A process should be launched to examine the issue and put proposed solutions before the citizens.

**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.**

Protecting the environment can be a way to achieve goals like reducing infrastructure costs and providing “environmental services” like drainage ways, parks, and trails. For example, protecting the integrity of a stream channel can help provide cost-effective drainage solutions and also provide a trail corridor. The challenge in carrying out these types of actions is that most land in Homer is already split into many individual private parcels. This objective provides the first step in solving this challenge by creating a complete base of knowledge regarding environmental features on land regardless of ownership. Specific steps to establish a system of green infrastructure can be found in Appendix D.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Consider adopting incentives to encourage use of the Green Infrastructure Map developed by the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District.

**Green Infrastructure Defined**

*Green infrastructure is defined as an interconnected network of natural areas and other open spaces that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions, sustains clean air and water, and provides a wide array of benefits to people and wildlife. In contrast to traditional approaches to open space conservation, green infrastructure is integrated with and linked to development. Green infrastructure is a way of conserving natural areas that function as city infrastructure.*

Definition and other information based on Green Infrastructure: Linking Landscapes & Communities.

Mark A. Benedict, Ph.D., Edward T. McMahon, J.D.  
Island Press, 2006



**Objective B:** Establish development standards and require development practices that protect environmental functions.

Once a project has been identified for development, green infrastructure concepts can be used to consider what special conditions, if any, need to be incorporated into the project's layout and development. Guidelines for development such as setbacks from waterbodies or limits on development of steep slopes are covered through the City's zoning code. Homer's existing codes include many good environmental standards. Some specific strategies for accomplishing this objective through the revision of City code include:

### Implementation Strategies

1. Develop standards and guidelines to reduce bluff erosion and shoreline erosion, such as managing surface water runoff on coastal bluffs and implementing any other applicable best management practices.
2. Develop standards for coastal bluff stabilization projects and building setbacks from coastal bluffs.
3. Create standards for setbacks on streams and wetlands.
4. Develop standards for trails (e.g., widths, surfaces, intended use).
5. Create standards for development on steep slopes, in wetland areas, and on other sensitive sites, including standards for grading and drainage, vegetation clearing, building setbacks, and building footprints. Include flexibility in road dimensions to avoid excessive grading.
6. Create an option for a specialized review processes for hillsides and other sensitive settings (e.g., allowance for development on steeper slopes subject to submission of more extensive site analysis and engineering reports).

Appendix D includes examples of how decisions about site clearing, grading, and impervious surfaces can create very different types of development. Homer is encouraged to institute practices that bring about Objective B.

**Objective C:** Use green infrastructure concepts in the review and approval of development projects.

Maps of important environmental features, processes, and key open space areas are valuable to the extent this information shapes decisions about development. In particular, this information is critical to protect features that cross boundaries of multiple parcels; e.g., streams and trails. This action not only protects open space values, but increases value of open space for developers.<sup>1</sup> Specific policies for using this information to shape development include:

---

<sup>1</sup> Park City Utah is an example of a community that has developed an extensive public trail system, almost entirely on private land, by following this approach. Developers in the Park City area have come to recognize that trails are an amenity that buyers seek out, that add value to their projects, and that can be provided at relatively little cost. The coordinated actions of many individual developers have resulted in an integrated communitywide trail system.

## Implementation Strategies

1. Require developers to include details about environmental features and processes, along with plans for open space, when submitting subdivisions or other developments for approval.
2. Require developers to demonstrate how features that cross multiple parcels will be protected in individual projects. Use this process to create links between open space areas and integrate new development into the network of open space.
3. When a Green Infrastructure Map is adopted, use it in the review process.

Comparative examples of different approaches to preserving green infrastructure in land subdivision and development can be found in appendix D.

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

Ideally, adopting more effective development standards will result in the preservation and protection of lands with high environmental value. However, there may be some areas identified that cannot easily be protected through standard means and are so important they should be preserved forever. References such as wetland, steep slope, and green infrastructure maps can help identify and prioritize these lands. Examples of environmentally important areas might include a particular beach access corridor or a particular section of a lake or stream. There are many creative means by which Homer can do this if determined necessary, such as:

## Implementation Strategies

1. Work with land trusts and/or public agencies to acquire land for protection and recreational use. Build on example set by Kachemak Heritage Land Trust.
2. Consider land trades or variations on the transfer of development rights.

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

Homer's environment is affected by actions outside of its borders. Wildlife corridors and drainage systems do not conform to borough and municipal boundaries. In this regard, Homer should work with surrounding jurisdictions, notably the Kenai Peninsula Borough to:

## Implementation Strategies

1. Identify environmentally sensitive sites and natural systems of regional importance and work towards collaborative management of these areas. Options include implementing Special Use Districts to develop and pay for needed infrastructure and addressing drainage and trail issues on a regional or watershed approach.
2. Encourage establishment of environmentally responsible development practices by the KPB on land surrounding Homer. Work with the Borough to develop a common approach to subdivision requirements, road standards, and Road Service Area regulations.

**GOAL 3:** Encourage high quality buildings and site design that complements Homer's beautiful natural setting.

New growth and development in Homer is inevitable. The community has made clear its intent to guide the character of the built environment so this growth improves the quality of the life. The Town Center Development Plan established standards for the development of the city core and sets a good standard for policies that can be followed to achieve higher design quality. An integrated but balanced regulatory and enforcement process is needed for the entire city, to raise the bar for future development standards.

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

Clear, predictable, consistent rules and regulations are key to achieving standard, quality design. These rules and regulations have to fit the context of the marketplace and be accepted by the development community. Overregulation is a disincentive, while under-regulation will achieve less than desired results. Specific policies addressing this topic include:

#### Implementation Strategies

1. Synthesize existing rules and regulations for both public and private development in a comprehensive design manual. For instance, it is important that the Master Roads and Streets Plan is supplemented by the Community Design Manual, Transportation Plan, and a Streetscape Design Manual to balance functionality and aesthetics.
2. Provide a clear and predictable approval process for every development including organizing project review and permitting and providing appropriate staff review.

**Objective B:** Encourage high quality site design and buildings.

Good site design, appealing architecture, and quality construction practices contribute to the creation of high quality buildings. Attractive, well constructed buildings are a long term asset to the community. Design can be thought of in two categories: form, meaning what the building looks like; and function, meaning the construction methods and layout of the building.

#### Implementation Strategies

1. Adopt building codes and create an inspection program.
2. Set standards that regulate the form of development to encourage attractive, diverse housing styles. Specific design objectives are presented under Goal 5, page 4-17.
3. Develop specific policies regarding site development including standards for landscaping, grading, lighting, view protection, etc., in coordination with current national efforts that promote better site development (LEED certification standards, Sustainable Sites Initiative, Low Impact Development, etc.).
4. Ensure that all utility service to new developments shall be underground.
5. Ensure that any redevelopment which moves overhead utilities requires moving those utilities underground.

6. Coordinate with state agencies, notably the State of Alaska DOT/PF and the Kenai Peninsula Borough, to encourage compliance with Homer’s community design standards when developing their projects outside city limits within “greater Homer.”

**Objective C:** Work with the KPB to determine the costs and benefits of shifting some or all platting authority to the City of Homer.

The City of Homer has worked in partnership with the Borough on land use issues in the past and will continue to do so in the future. However, as Homer continues to grow, the community may need to assume some of the responsibilities that currently rest with the Borough. Most important is for Homer to become responsible for reviewing and approving subdivision plats within city boundaries. Local control over platting is critical to achieving many of the goals in this plan, because it allows the community to better integrate land use objectives with a range of other issues, including goals for transportation, economic development, and public services and facilities. Acquiring platting powers will likely require the city to hire additional technical staff.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Create a new City subdivision code.
2. Work with KPB to identify ways to strengthen the city’s position in the subdivision process, and that are affordable to the city.

**GOAL 4:** Support 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.

Creating a vital, successful central business district – the clear commercial and civic center of Homer – won’t happen by accident. A number of strategies are required to reach this objective, as outlined below. These actions are all designed to carry forward in the spirit of the previously approved Homer Town Center Development Plan and Community Design Manual. Those documents provide additional details that need to be considered to gain a full understanding of CBD objectives.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Provide incentives for private investment in the CBD. Incentives can include public investments in improved infrastructure (e.g., roads, trails, parking) and in public facilities (e.g., the recently built library and town square). Particular priorities include improved public parking and construction of a new east-west road through the center of the CBD roughly parallel to the Sterling Highway and Pioneer Avenue.
2. Change the approach to parking in the CBD to allow most parking needs to be met offsite (on-street and shared lots), which in turn allows the clustering of buildings required for a pedestrian friendly environment. Develop on-street and public parking areas to meet parking needs. *See Transportation Chapter.*
3. Revise land use policies to encourage and permit the types of uses, sites and buildings needed for a successful town center. Changes include establishing maximum building



setbacks (“build to” lines), increased maximum building heights, standards for the relationship of buildings to the street, and rules encouraging mixed use, including office or residential uses such as apartments above retail.

4. Create an overlay zone for the “Old Town” section of the CBD, establishing general standards for building design and construction. Aim for future buildings to continue in the style of the older buildings in the area as well as the several more recently constructed buildings that follow these traditions.



5. Use public/private partnerships, Business Improvement Districts, or Tax Increment Financing to improve streetscapes, including better sidewalks, landscaping, and building facades. Develop an attractive, business friendly commercial streetscape for Pioneer Avenue and ensure the Town Square/City Hall project is designed to benefit Pioneer Avenue and Old Town businesses.
6. Locate high quality mixed-use, high density and affordable housing in the central business district to diversify housing stock and create demand for downtown services.
7. Improve trail connections to and within the CBD. Provide a system of trails and sidewalks linking residential areas, commercial and civic uses, attractions such as the Pratt Museum and the Islands and Ocean Visitors Center, and the new town square.
8. Concentrate commercial uses in the downtown. *See following section.*
9. See also Appendix E for a summary of principles for success in small downtowns.

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

Strip development occurs along busy major roads with easy access to businesses. Strip development is an unplanned consequence of building transportation infrastructure, and it tends to include practically any land use in an eclectic – often cluttered and unsightly – array of buildings, parking lots, utilities, and support structures.



Strip development along highways introduces competition for the central business district and weakens its role. Strip development can create unattractive community entries (e.g., the Glenn Highway coming into downtown Anchorage) and unsafe edges along thoroughfares. Communities with no restraints on the location of commercial use often find their downtowns wither, as businesses shift to outlying, lower cost properties. On the other hand, communities need to allow for a measure of outlying commercial growth, to be fair to property owners, to meet the need for the types of commercial uses that don’t fit well into a central commercial core, and to respond to ongoing demand for expansion of commercial activity. Two primary strategies can help avoid and lessen the potential adverse impacts of unwanted strip development:



## Implementation Strategies

1. Use the zoning process to guide the majority of future commercial development into the central business district. Locate development as presented on the Land Use Recommendations Map. Implementation will require an ongoing balancing act.
2. Use strategies to ensure the character of development in strip commercial development makes a positive contribution to the overall character of the community. These include: controls on the size and appearance of signs, requirements for landscaping of parking areas, and basic guidelines regarding building appearance.

**Objective C:** Encourage complementary commercial activity between the CBD and Homer Spit that benefits both in the appropriate locations and builds upon their geographic strengths.

## Implementation Strategies

1. Continue to allow for and encourage water and recreation related marine commercial and marine industrial uses on the Homer Spit while locating land based general commercial and business uses in the CBD.
2. Address the needs of seasonal, tourism related commercial/retail activity on the Spit in the context of the continued focus on marine commercial and marine industrial uses.
3. Provide a strong seasonal transportation access link between the CBD and the Spit to support tourism and recreation businesses at both locations. One option would be to develop multipurpose public parking areas in the CBD, and offer shuttle service to the Spit. Charging for Spit parking would create an incentive to use this service.
4. Develop a detailed master plan for the Spit that builds from the recommendations of the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update and any subsequent updates, addressing parking, residential and other uses. *See Appendix C.*

**Objective D:** Introduce new commercial districts to better encourage and accommodate commercial land uses in appropriate locations, and allow new types of commercial activities to take place.

## Implementation Strategies

1. Anticipate the growth in white-collar business activities and clean industries by designating live-work districts; provide the development standards needed to maintain the quality of these areas. *See Goal 1 of this chapter.*
2. Target high tech industries or professional/web-based activities in these new commercial zones by public provision of access to wireless communication. *See Economic Development Chapter.*
3. Establish a new land use designations to allow for a handful of well-defined neighborhood commercial areas, to reduce the need for longer drives to primary commercial areas, to serve kids and others who don't drive, and to provide neighborhood meeting places.
4. Recognize the capacity of KBC to support expansion of new economic sectors, anticipate and allow for the growth of the university, and encourage student housing. *See Economic Development Chapter. See Appendix B for the full set of proposed land use designation categories.*

**GOAL 5:** Maintain high quality residential neighborhoods; promote housing choice by supporting a variety of dwelling options.

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

**Objective A:** Diversify housing stock to meet demand by people earning a broad range of incomes.

The demand for housing in Homer is steadily growing, and housing prices are increasingly driven by the buying power of people who earned their money outside of Homer. The result is a growing gap between what housing costs and what many Homer residents can afford. This problem is particularly acute for younger buyers and for people in service industries such as tourism.

#### Implementation Strategies

1. Allow for housing in more zones, allow for greater housing density, and support infrastructure expansion so more land is readily developable for housing.
2. Improve zoning standards to ensure that new moderate and higher density development is attractive and a good fit with Homer's character.
3. Review the existing Planned Unit Development ordinance which provides the chance to offer somewhat higher density housing in exchange for providing trails, protecting natural areas and environmental functions.
4. Promote private development of KBC student housing.

*See additional discussion under Objectives C, D and E below.*

**Objective B:** Maintain the availability of lands designated for rural residential use; improve the zoning code for this category to withstand pressure for platting large lots into smaller ones in that district.

The rural residential classification applies to the majority of Homer's residential area. The community expressed a clear desire to maintain large rural residential areas in Homer into the future. In order to avoid unplanned and unwanted changes in rural neighborhoods, the zoning code will have to address standards for new development consistent with this goal. Specific issues to revisit include character of development (setbacks, building heights); removal of vegetation, and minimum lot sizes.

#### Implementation Strategies

1. Evaluate and modify the extent of the rural residential district classification to protect this land use on par with expected demand.
2. Allow for continued infill in these areas, consistent with the general goal of retaining the predominately rural character.

**Objective C:** Promote infill development in all housing districts, redefine current zoning laws in existing districts to promote a range of residential uses, identify new residential zoning districts, and provide for appropriate supporting infrastructure.

This plan promotes infill, particularly in a new residential transitional district established by this plan. The desire to provide diversity in housing options requires revision of zoning standards. In addition, it is in the public's interest to maximize the use of existing infrastructure by serving as many customers as possible. It is also important that infill development in areas already served by water, sewer and other infrastructure compliments existing neighborhoods. This can be accomplished, for example, by building in a comparable scale and character.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Maintain integrity of older, well-established neighborhoods by establishing design standards that maintain neighborhood character. For example, require new infill uses to match the scale (height and bulk), lot coverage, building orientation to the street, and architectural character of existing structures in the neighborhood.
2. Create standards to address impacts of development on established neighborhoods, including provisions to help maintain visual quality. (Examples include height requirements, setbacks from existing structures, etc.).
3. Create development standards and zoning districts that allow and encourage a range of attached and detached accessory dwelling units.
4. Promote denser housing, through changes in zoning, and efficient expansion of infrastructure such as roads and water/sewer service.
5. Identify areas where water and sewer will not be extended because of desire to maintain larger lot sizes and/or where rural lot size minimums will be established.
6. Consider impact fees or other methods to support public services required by new development in an equitable manner.

**Objective D:** Encourage inclusion of affordable housing in larger developments and affordable housing in general.

Homer is likely to continue to experience strong demand for affordable housing. Meeting this demand will require a range of actions.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Retain and improve the quality of existing affordable housing in the community.
2. Explore partnerships with nonprofit organizations to support affordable housing projects, including new construction or rehabilitation programs for low- and moderate-income households. Take advantage of existing possible incentives such as AHFC loans and grants.
3. Encourage developers and provide incentives to include affordable housing as a percentage of new development (as is done, for example, in a number of Lower 48 resort communities, where 5-10 percent of new housing must be affordable).

4. Allow attached and detached accessory housing units on single family lots (“granny units”) as a permitted use outright. Set standards that define the size of such units as a function of the size of the primary unit, with a not-to-exceed maximum square footage.
5. Distribute affordable housing throughout the community. Integrate it into market-rate neighborhoods by encouraging a mixture of larger and smaller lots.
6. Link affordable housing to the mixed-used development proposed in the Town Center Development Plan.
7. Establish a public entity to address affordable housing issues, or affiliate with an existing entity.
8. Promote development of KBC student housing.

**GOAL 6:** Develop a clear and open public process for future changes to City of Homer boundaries. Explore a planned, phased possible expansion; and initiate and establish regional planning processes with the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

Existing land use and future growth around the periphery of Homer has significant impacts on the quality of life, the environment, and the economy of those who live and work within city limits. As a consequence, the City needs to be open to the possibility of annexing lands beyond city boundaries. Some of the specific benefits for those in the annexed areas include:

- Access to water for domestic use
- Improved fire protection services
- Improved street maintenance and snow removal services
- Improved law enforcement services provided by the City police department (as continued growth in outlying areas requires more services than the Alaska State Troopers can provide)
- Local control over planning and zoning (when done in a manner that reflects local values, city planning and zoning authority can help avoid the intrusion of incompatible uses into neighborhoods and help maintain and increase property values)
- Right to vote for elected representatives in Homer, and serve on City Boards and Commissions (currently sales tax provides the majority of the city’s revenue. People outside city boundaries pay sales tax but don’t vote for the people who make the decisions about how sales tax money is spent)

**Objective A:** Develop a clear and orderly process to assess the need and apply for the expansion of the boundaries of the City of Homer, which is likely to be necessary over the coming decades as surrounding areas grow and develop.

For the long-term benefit of both the city and surrounding areas, Homer will adopt a proactive planning strategy in the greater Homer area. Overall intentions regarding possible boundary changes are outlined below:

#### Implementation Strategies

1. Regularly assess the need for phased annexations to guide growth and provide for effective delivery of municipal services which benefit landowners, residents, and businesses.
2. Identify specific criteria for prioritizing prospective annexation areas. Focus near term attention where the uses have the greatest impact on City of Homer interests, including

the area of the Bridge Creek water reservoir and associated watershed, areas where City water is delivered to residents outside city limits, areas directly adjacent to Homer city boundaries, and areas where recreational and open space resources (trails, greenbelts, water and drainage ways) are already in existence or may be easily developed.

3. Establish a clear and open public process for proposing annexations, including obtaining input from interested persons regarding land use and City services.
4. Work actively with the KPB to develop shared plans for current uses and future growth in the areas outside current city boundaries; including services, land use, and development standards.
5. In addition to considering the impacts of proposed annexation on residents and land owners, evaluate the costs and benefits of specific possible annexations to the City of Homer; looking, for example, at the relative balance of expected revenues versus costs to provide needed services.

**Objective B:** Develop a fair, planned process for involving affected members of the public when considering annexation.

Past annexation procedures in Homer have been painful, slow, and costly. Some of this cannot be avoided: annexation is a complex issue and not everyone will be satisfied with the outcomes. Nonetheless, there is room for improvement in the procedures associated with annexation. Specific policies include:

#### Implementation Strategies

1. In the near term, carry out an initial “annexation issues scoping process” for areas outside the city. Get early input from landowners, residents, and businesses in possible annexation areas regarding annexation issues. This will help Homer in planning for future growth, and enable landowners and businesses outside Homer to be part of the process and to understand how annexation may affect them.
2. Prior to proceeding with any annexation petition, the City, working with the Borough, will undertake a planning study of the specific area proposed for annexation. This will include providing public notice and public meetings to help define recommended future land uses and to indicate how and when municipal services (including public safety, utilities, streets and trails) will be extended to the area, together with estimated associated costs. The recommendations of the study will be incorporated into any annexation proposal submitted to the Alaska Local Boundary Commission.
3. Extra effort will be made to give the public a meaningful role in the consideration of annexation costs and benefits.
4. Explore options for different levels of services where clear distinctions can be made in the level of service required. For example, the level of fire protection service may vary greatly as a function of road infrastructure, vegetation, and response time. In outlying areas for example, the focus may be prevention of loss of human life and containment versus protection of life and property in locations closer to town.
5. It is not possible or appropriate for the City of Homer to prepare land use policy for potential annexation areas. At the same time, the City needs to convey general intentions for the future use of annexed lands. These intentions are established through the general



policies of this Comprehensive Plan and other policies for land inside City limits, but also give a helpful sense of what policies might apply in future annexation areas. Examples of general policies that apply citywide and would likely be extended to annexed areas include creating and maintaining quality residential neighborhoods, using setbacks and buffers to ensure compatibility between different types of uses, providing open space and trails, and ensuring roads are built to City standards. The annexation planning studies called for above will build from the general framework in the Comprehensive Plan and take into account the opportunities and constraints of specific locations, as well as the perspectives of affected property owners and residents.

**Objective C: Develop land use and infrastructure policies to address issues such as access and water use for areas that may be annexed in the future.**

Regardless of any future annexations, which may be decades away, the City needs to address several specific land use and infrastructure issues that cross city boundaries into greater Homer. Specific issues and recommended policies are presented below:

### Implementation Strategies

1. Working through a cooperative planning process with the Borough, establish mechanisms to deal with issues outside City of Homer boundaries with greatest impact on the city. Examples include agreement to use common road standards and for cooperative work on trail and open space issues.
2. Re-examine the City's current policy for the provision of water from the public water system to users outside city limits and determine the impact of this practice. Currently approximately 40% of properties within Homer city limits do not enjoy the benefit of piped water delivery. The ability to receive water from city sources outside city boundaries has a major impact on the prospects for development in outlying areas where options for wells are limited. Water delivery in outlying areas contributes to the outward spread of residential uses, which in turn increases driving, energy use and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. Determine if areas receiving water should be high priority areas for annexation. Investigate options for "reciprocity" by either developing plans for annexation or by establishing KPB-enforced land use practices that align with similar practices in the City of Homer. *See also Goal 1, Objective C in Chapter 6 for more on water use.*

## Land Use Implementation Table

Project	Timeframe			Primary Responsibility
	Near Term	Mid Term	Longer Term	
<i>Improved Zoning</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop new zoning code to implement new categories.</li> </ul>			x	City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Recommendation Map on an area by area basis to determine the feasibility and acceptability of rezoning.</li> </ul>			x	City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Flesh out specific development standards and guidelines for commercial zones; create a Town Center overlay zone to better differentiate downtown, auto-oriented neighborhoods.</li> </ul>	x			City along w/ downtown merchants and landowners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Define the boundaries for and then develop an overlay zone for Old Town so buildings in that portion of the district feature an "old Homer" historical character.</li> </ul>	x			City along w/ Old Town merchants and residents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Flesh out specific development standards and guidelines for R-2 residential zone, to create a transitional zone between urban and rural.</li> </ul>	x			City
<i>Improved Standards and Regulations</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a new City subdivision code.</li> </ul>	x			City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluate and consider shifting platting authority from Borough to City of Homer.</li> </ul>			x	City and Kenai Peninsula Borough
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop new parking standards for CBD to support higher density, more walkable commercial areas.</li> </ul>	x			City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish development standards for development in environmentally sensitive areas (wetlands, steep slopes), including upgrade of drainage policies, road policies, stream setbacks.</li> </ul>	x			City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish development standards for higher density residential development, landscaping, lighting, grading, viewshed protection.</li> </ul>		x		City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish development standards for Cluster Housing/Open Space Ordinance.</li> </ul>	x			City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish standards for Student Housing Development.</li> </ul>		x		City and Kenai Peninsula College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Amend non-conforming use ordinance.</li> </ul>	x			City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review and consider revising existing Planned Unit Development code.</li> </ul>		x		City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support LEED or other building efficiency programs.</li> </ul>		x		City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adopt building codes.</li> </ul>		x		City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a maximum building setback for Town Center.</li> </ul>	x			City

Project	Timeframe			Primary Responsibility
	Near Term	Mid Term	Longer Term	
<i>Green Infrastructure</i>				
▪ Evaluate incentives to promote development that uses the green infrastructure ideas presented in Appendix D.	x			City
▪ Develop new standards to address issues related to shore stabilization and ocean front development.		x		City
▪ Pursue sustainable development measures that promote energy efficiency, use of recycled materials, and low impact landscaping in city buildings.	x			City
<i>Pattern of Development</i>				
▪ Work with Borough to prepare mutually acceptable development standards.		x		City, with Kenai Peninsula Borough
▪ Establish a clear policy regarding delivery of City water outside of city limits.	x			City, with Kenai Peninsula Borough
▪ Establish more specific criteria, process, schedule and objectives for possible future annexations.		x		City
▪ Amend city code to recognize the transfer of development rights to preserve environmentally sensitive or recreational areas.	x			City
▪ Develop a Homer Spit Master Plan.	x			City, Port & Harbor Dept

## ■ CHAPTER 5 TRANSPORTATION

---

**Vision Statement: Address future transportation needs while considering land use, economics, aesthetics and increasing community connectivity for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.**

### Overview

This chapter is supplemental to the Transportation Plan and the Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan. This chapter augments these other documents and includes content not covered by these plans.

Transportation in Homer is an integral issue that is important to the future of the community. A small, low-density community typically has few serious transportation problems. Homer, however, is evolving from a small town at the end of the road to a larger, more socially and economically diverse community. Summer visitation compounds traffic problems along certain routes. Without attention to and consideration of transportation in conjunction with land use, economic development, and aesthetics, problems related to circulation, parking, congestion, and bicycle and pedestrian safety will grow.



Transportation is also a key component in Homer's infrastructure, supporting businesses and economic activities. The 1989 Comprehensive Plan noted that "Homer is a point where people and goods often change transportation modes to arrive at the final destination." Homer is a hub for land, sea, and air transportation. Maintaining and enhancing Homer's role as this transportation hub will support future community economic and population growth.

### Summary of Goals

A number of goals were identified during the preparation of the Homer Transportation Plan.<sup>1</sup> These goals were used as the basis for the following comprehensive plan transportation goals and objectives.

**GOAL 1:** The street system should be configured to include arterial, collector, and local streets. Through-street connections should be encouraged, while maintaining the integrity of existing neighborhoods.

**GOAL 2:** The transportation system, including streets, trails, docks and airports, should support future community economic and population growth.

---

<sup>1</sup> *The 2001 Homer Area Transportation Plan* prepared by Mike Taurianinen, P.E. Consulting Engineers, Inc. et al. adopted in 2005.

**GOAL 3:** Homer's transportation system and services should be developed in a manner that supports community land use, design, environmental and social goals.

**GOAL 4:** The trail and sidewalk network should provide an alternative to driving, provide enhanced recreational opportunities, and create auto-free connectivity throughout the community.

## **Context: Transportation in Homer**

Homer grew and developed in the years following World War II. Similar to many other communities that came of age in the post-war period, Homer reflects the use of the automobile to provide local transportation. Much of Homer's early commercial development spread along Pioneer Avenue, East End Road, and Main Street. Homes and businesses are relatively spread out, with room provided for parking along the side or in front of most buildings. While this pattern makes it easy to get around Homer by car, it creates challenges for those who would like to have a more compact, walkable community.

Community concern, as evidenced by committee and public participation in the meetings held for the Comprehensive Plan, has focused appropriately on how the community is to evolve and what it will be like to live in Homer in the future. The role of transportation is to support the development of the kind of community that residents desire. Homer residents have consistently spoken in favor of a community that has a more compact, walkable center with attractive streets that support pedestrians, bicycles as well as cars. These objectives can be achieved, but not without a conscious and consistent effort to use road and property development standards that support community goals.

Awareness of the key role of transportation in community development has lead to a significant amount of local transportation planning in Homer over the past few years. Relevant work includes the following plans:

- The Homer Intersections Planning Study, October 2005
- Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan, June 2004
- The Homer Area Transportation Plan – 2001, updated and adopted 2004
- Homer Master Roads and Streets Plan, July 1985

## **Goals and Objectives for Transportation**

**GOAL 1:** The street system should be configured to include arterial, collector, and local streets. Through street connections should be encouraged, while considering the impact on the integrity of existing neighborhoods.

**Objective A:** Ensure that collector-level streets are planned, designed, and constructed in addition to arterials and local streets.



The primary job of arterial streets is to move traffic from one place to another, rather than to provide access to adjoining property.

Collector streets move traffic from one neighborhood to another, from local streets to arterials, or from one neighborhood to other areas of the community. Predominant travel distances are shorter than on arterial routes and consequently, more moderate speeds are typical. Collectors may provide access to adjacent properties but mobility is typically a more important function.



Figure 8: Collector streets and local streets being constructed at the same time.

Local streets and roads are built as part of residential development. Their primary purpose is to provide access to adjacent land. Local streets provide the lowest level of traffic mobility and serve relatively short distances. They provide access from individual residences to the community street network by connecting to collector-level roads. Through-traffic movement is discouraged.

Arterials are the generally the responsibility of the State. Collectors are typically constructed, owned and maintained by the local government. Local streets are usually built as property is developed, then transferred to local government ownership. Because Alaska communities have been slow to adopt road powers and actively contribute to the development of their street systems, the importance of collector street development has often come too late to inexpensively locate and construct these streets. Homer adopted the 1986 Master Roads and Streets Plan to address the development of Homer's road network.

Identifying future collector street locations is important for a number of reasons. Early location of collector and arterial roads reduces the chance that too much traffic will use residential streets. If subdivisions are developed with minimal land-use controls, what could be called "creeping collectors" may result. For example, an early subdivision is located close to the main road. The streets built for the subdivision are all local streets with driveways opening directly onto the streets, appropriate for serving a single subdivision. Later, a second subdivision is built behind the first. The streets built for the second subdivision are connected to the first subdivision's streets. As houses are built in the second subdivision, traffic slowly increases on the first subdivision's streets, and in particular on the streets providing the most direct link to the main road. If the process is allowed to continue with no thought to the location and construction of collector streets, congestion, the fair distribution of road maintenance costs, safety and other issues arise. It is also much more expensive to establish collector-level streets in a developed area with higher land costs and limited location choices.

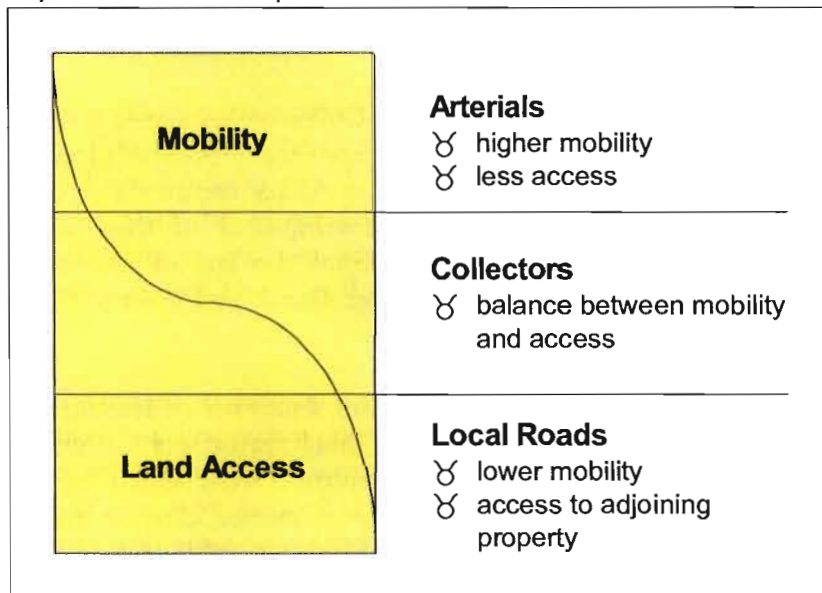
- Early location of collector and arterial roads minimizes the cost of right-of-way. Establishing future collector routes to serve rural development would allow Homer to plan for, reserve, and over time acquire the right-of-way for the street, so that by the time it is needed, it can be designed and built cost-effectively. It is appropriate for the developers of larger subdivisions to build portions of collectors that border and serve the subdivision.
- Early road location minimizes hard feelings. Without locating and designating future collector roads, subdivisions are built and lots occupied before residents know where future main roads will be located. It is far preferable for those who buy land in a development to know, for example, that the western boundary of the development will, at some time in the future, have a collector route built along it, rather than for the property buyers to expect (unrealistically) that the natural area “behind the house” will stay the way it is indefinitely.

Homer has had some success in building collector routes and critical connections through the local improvement district (LID) process in which residents of an area come together and cost share with the City for necessary improvements. This is one way the City can work with residents to improve Homer’s road system.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Update the 1986 Master Roads and Streets Plan.
2. Update the 2005 Transportation Plan as needed.

Figure 9: The Mobility-Land Access Relationship



Source: Safety Effectiveness of Highway Design Features, Vol. 1 FHWA, 1992

**Objective B:** Roadway development in Homer should focus on establishing key street connections.

The Homer Intersections Planning Study and other plans have noted that there are a very limited number of streets and roads that provide connectivity from one part of Homer to another. For

example, Homer only has two routes for getting up the hill: East Hill Road and West Hill Road. Existing roadways and intersections are generally functioning acceptably, but several are expected to be at capacity by 2020. Adding road connections will help avoid the need for additional lanes on existing streets. The Intersections Planning Study and the Town Center Plan have recommended a group of new roadway connections and roadway improvements. These improvements are listed below: *See Figure 10.*

### Implementation Strategies

- Construct connections between West Hill Road and Fairview Avenue,
- Extend of Hazel Street from Poopdeck to Main Street as part of the town center improvement; then from Main Street to connect with Pioneer Avenue at Bartlett Street.
- Add street connections developed as part of the town center connecting the extended Hazel Street to Pioneer Avenue.
- Extend Lake Street from Pioneer Avenue to South Slope Street with a connection to Heath Street.
- Extend Grubstake to Waddell Way.
- Improve Heath Street and Pioneer Avenue Intersection.

These street connections should be reviewed, approved and added to the City's capital projects priority list. This process can take the form of an "official streets and highways plan" or simply an approved map in a transportation or comprehensive plan. This provides planning and public works departments the ability to more effectively deal with development to ensure needed road and trail connections.



Figure 10: Street and Intersection Improvements



**GOAL 2:** The transportation system, including streets, trails, docks, and airport, should support future community economic and population growth.

**Objective A:** Work in concert with the State of Alaska, the Kenai Peninsula Borough, and private landowners to appropriately develop the Homer street system as the community grows.

#### Implementation Strategies

1. Continue to ensure that adequate streets are built by private and public sponsors to keep pace with and to support community development.
2. Consider roadway connectivity development that “minimizes impacts to residential areas and parks.”<sup>2</sup> Street connections that comprise the initial priority group are discussed under Goal 3. *See Objective B on page 5-11.*
3. Pursue designation of the entirety of the Sterling Highway as a National Scenic Byway. Designation of the highway as a Scenic Byway would contribute to tourism-based economic development strategies by granting national promotion of the highway, as well as providing increased leverage for funding road improvements.

**Objective B:** Homer’s street system should operate at acceptable levels of service, delay, and congestion.

Similar to the residents of many small communities, Homer drivers typically experience good levels of service on the community road system. The primary exceptions to this are on Pioneer Avenue and the Sterling Highway. Both can be very busy, with slow average speeds and steady traffic that makes executing left turns onto these roads difficult.

Since it is unlikely that the community will want to expand either the Sterling Highway or Pioneer Avenue to four lanes, serving the growing community adequately will require the simultaneous development considerations.

#### Implementation Strategies

1. Develop a more complete street network including collector connections, rather than two main roads with local streets that feed them, will support community growth without the need for wide, high-volume arterials.
2. Develop pedestrian/bicycle friendly street networks (as revenues allow). In a small community, it is reasonable to expect substantial non-motorized travel if the trails and sidewalks are in place to support walkers and bikers.

---

<sup>2</sup> *The 2001 Homer Area Transportation Plan* Prepared By Mike Taurianinen, P.E. Consulting Engineers, Inc. et al. Pg. 1-21. Adopted in 2005.



3. Support the establishment of a community transit service. Recently, smaller Alaskan communities have been able to develop transit service by combining public transit with private-nonprofit client service. Homer should consider summer service to help visitors choose to complete their trips without having to use a car. *See further discussion of transit in Homer continued in Goal 3 Objectives C and D.*

**Objective C:** Establish a corridor preservation program.

It is important that Homer ensure that its prospective street system includes collector connections as well as main routes and residential streets. Without the designation of general route locations it will be expensive-to-impossible to build the streets after an area is developed.

A corridor preservation program should identify the location of future roads, so that when a collector-level road is needed to connect subdivisions with highways or other arterials, the right-of-way is in hand or readily available. Without such a program, the cost of acquiring right-of-way can be high for not only the City, but also for the residents whose homes and businesses must be relocated or impinged upon. Locating future collectors and establishing a corridor preservation program should be an important objective of the City's transportation program. It is important to ensure that the corridor management program has a solid foundation in the Homer Comprehensive Plan. The Homer Transportation Plan designated road connections that will be needed as parcels of private property develop. The City will have to take a number of steps in the near future to identify and preserve corridors for these connections, shown below (following the discussion of Goal 3, Objective B). These steps include:

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Create a variety of options, such as:
  - a. fee simple purchase of land for right-of-way
  - b. require building setbacks from road rights-of-way
  - c. obtain voluntary dedications or donations of right-of-way on a case-by-case basis during the land development process
  - d. other available tools include securing options to purchase, making interim use agreements, land banking, purchase of access rights and density credits
2. Identify existing roadway easements.
3. Finalize future corridor needs as identified in the Homer Transportation Plan.
4. Field verify recommended corridors to make sure the routes are constructible at a reasonable cost.
5. Select alternative alignments in cases in where recommended or existing (section line) rights-of-way are not feasible.
6. Although not important (or possible, in most cases) to have a precise alignment identified before the road is designed, the designated corridors should indicate corridor needs and identify that the road location will be determined by specific engineering design studies.
7. Working with the Borough and State, reserve as much land in the corridors as possible. Consider the following measures as a basket of tools to be developed and in some cases codified as City Ordinances:

- a. Require subdivision developers to contribute funds toward upgrades on roads that will be more heavily used as a result of their subdivisions.
- b. Deny requests for waivers by subdivision developers who prefer not to improve roads to City or Borough standards.
- c. Utilize criteria for right-of-way exactions and a process for determining the amount of right-of-way dedication that is roughly proportionate to the impact of the proposed development.
- d. Provide a reduction or reprieve from property taxes on property subject to corridor preservation restrictions; e.g., by removing property from the tax roll, reducing the tax rate for preserved land, or providing a tax credit.
- e. Offer an option for clustering developments by reducing setbacks or other site design requirements to avoid encroachment into the right-of-way.
- f. Utilize procedures for intergovernmental coordination between the City, the Borough and Alaska DOT&PF.

**Objective D: Work in concert with the State of Alaska to maintain and improve the Homer airport.**

The Homer Airport is owned and operated by the State Department of Transportation, but the City of Homer owns and operates the terminal building. The facility provides a 6,700-foot long by 150-foot wide asphalt runway and a 3,000 by 600-foot seaplane “runway” and base at nearby Beluga Lake. The airport is equipped with IFR (instrument flight) capability. The city is served by several scheduled and chartered aircraft services.

The Homer Airport Master Plan provides long-range goals for airport improvements. Current priorities include constructing parallel taxiways and expanding the south apron, replacing the rescue and firefighting building, constructing a chemical storage building, and procuring a de-icing truck.

It is in the interest of the City of Homer to support a well maintained and improved airport facility. The airport and related support facilities amount to a vital economic engine that contributes to the local economy. Development decisions near the airport should take into account the externalities that exist with current and future operations.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Consider issues such as noise impacts and safety hazards in the permitting of new housing and development near the airport.
2. During the zoning map amendment process discussed in the Land Use Section, consider the relationship of the airport and surrounding development. Evaluate and amend the map accordingly.
3. The City of Homer will participate in planning activities and comment on plans involving the maintenance and improvement of the airport.

**GOAL 3:** Homer’s transportation system and services should be developed in a manner that supports community land use, design, environmental and social goals.

Homer has expressed a consistency of opinion as to how the city should grow and the “look and feel” that residents want for the community. Key desires are for a more focused and walkable town center, a more walkable and bike-able community, and the development of an attractive community that mirrors the natural beauty of Homer’s setting. The community roadway system will be an important component of Homer’s development and will have a substantial impact on whether the community’s goals will be realized.

**Objective A:** Develop bicycle and pedestrian-friendly standard street designs and cross-sections.

The development of a comprehensive sidewalk and trail system will require the appropriate facilities be included with the construction of each new street. Important elements include standard designs for sidewalks and trails, street side planting and paving requirements, and the inclusion of traffic calming elements in residential streets.



The Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan (2004) provides sample street cross-section designs with locations for both pedestrian and bicycle facilities. These or similar cross-sections should be adopted as standards for a specific area that focuses on the community core. A second set of cross-sections should be developed for more outlying areas. The primary differences between the two would include the presence of curb and gutter and facilities on both sides of the street in the community core, with facilities on one side of the street and no curb and gutter in the outlying areas. A key element of the maintenance of roadside trails in Alaska pertains to how snow is handled. Sidewalks next to the street only work if snow is plowed to the center of the street. For outlying areas with a trail along the side of the road, a key design element is sufficient trail setback to allow plowing and stockpiling of snow between the road surface and the trail.

Landscaping improves the attractiveness of the streetscape, making both motorized and non-motorized travel more pleasant. Plantings can be combined with specialty sidewalk or street pavements to highlight crosswalks, bulb-outs and other features. Alaska designs also need to incorporate temporary snow storage and snow removal.

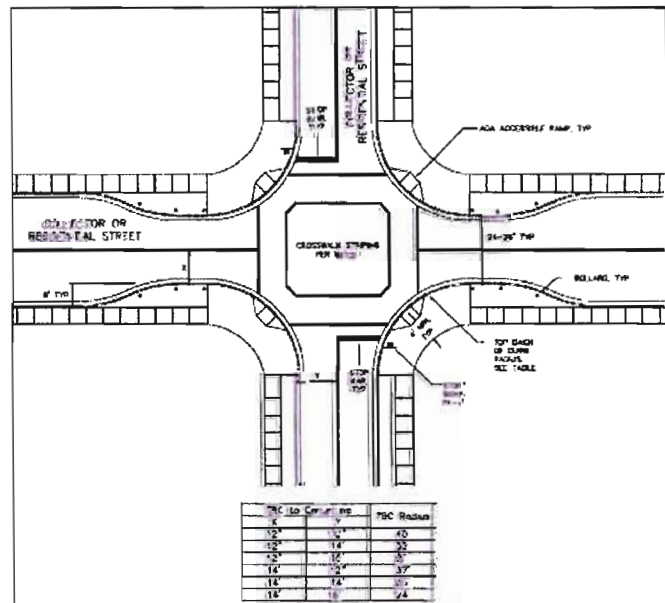


Figure 11: Neckdown or bulb-out (Municipality of Anchorage Traffic Calming Protocol Manual)

Traffic calming has been successfully used on residential streets to reduce the speed of traffic while not limiting auto access. A feature often used in town centers is the sidewalk bulb-out or neckdown at intersections. Bulb-outs have the combined benefits of slowing traffic somewhat and shortening the distance pedestrians must cover to cross the street. They also provide additional sidewalk space for trees or other plantings.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Include sidewalks and trails as appropriate in the construction of new streets.
2. Create standards for traffic calming, streetscape design, and landscaping.
3. Adopt cross-sections for bike and pedestrian facilities in the downtown core.
4. Consider snow removal and maintenance concerns in design standards.

### **Objective B:** Develop a holistic approach to parking development and management.

A number of studies have suggested that the central part of Homer needs improved parking. Because existing parcels in Homer's Central Business District contain insufficient land to accommodate business expansion and the parking spaces required for expansion, businesses have begun to consider moving to outer areas where land is more plentiful. This suggests that more innovative approaches to establishing and managing parking requirements are also needed. Parking improvement strategies should include:

### Implementation Strategies

1. Construct strategically located public parking lots to serve both local residents and out-of-town visitors.
2. Consider the alteration of current parking requirements to allow businesses to contribute to the cost of public parking lots in lieu of meeting parking requirements onsite.
3. Encourage on-street parking and adding on-street parking to streets in the central area of the community.
4. Improve pedestrian circulation so that it is safe and attractive to park once and walk between uses, and to walk into the commercial district from surrounding neighborhoods.
5. Consider alteration of parking requirements or allowing creative ways to meet parking requirements (such as shared parking). Businesses with peak demand at different times of day can share a given number of parking spaces.
6. Provide parking options for visitors and people who might park in the town center area and take a shuttle to the Spit.
7. Consider providing easy-to-find parking lots for RV's at the periphery of, but within walking distance of town center.

### **Objective C:** Support community transit service to enhance mobility, support compact development, and help achieve social goals.

There are two aspects of transit in Homer that are worthy of consideration and development: service for community residents who, due to disabilities or other reasons, are not able to provide their own transportation; and service for visitors to enhance the connection between central Homer and the



Spit. Similar operations in other Alaskan communities use a combination of vehicles owned by the private-nonprofit agencies and the transit system. On the Kenai Peninsula, CARTS, or Central Area Rural Transit System Inc, provides a ride sharing service, providing transportation for a fee to people with reduced mobility or special needs. The advantages of this type of transit organization are that the vehicles can, as a group, be more efficiently utilized and more productive operations result from combining user groups. Operating costs are low, and these systems have typically been established as demand-responsive small bus or van service rather than the fixed-route bus systems typically found in larger communities.

In 2008, the City of Homer adopted a resolution in support of the Homer Area Coordinated Transportation Plan developed by the Homer Coordinated Transportation Task Force.



Figure 12: CARTS First Wheelchair Passenger

### Implementation Strategies

1. Continue to support the Task Force and implementation of the Plan.
2. Investigate a shuttle bus traveling from the Spit and providing a loop around downtown Homer.

**Objective D:** Consider the local, regional, and global environmental impacts of transportation development in Homer.

The U.S. Department of Energy’s 2005 Annual Energy Outlook found that the transportation sector accounted for the largest share of all U.S. carbon dioxide emissions in 2002 (32 percent).<sup>3</sup> Demand for car travel can be decreased in several ways. Compact communities with a mix of land uses and a highly connected street network are associated with fewer vehicle miles and trips, more walking and biking, and thus have lower per capita levels of emissions.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Provide a variety of transit options, such as the community shuttle service described in Objective C above.
2. Invest in more fuel-efficient forms of transportation such as pedestrian and bicycle alternatives and land use patterns that support those options.

<sup>3</sup> “The Urban Form and Climate Change Gamble,” *Planning- The Magazine of the American Planning Association*, August/September 2007.



**GOAL 4:** The trail and sidewalk network should provide an alternative to driving, provide enhanced recreational opportunities, and create auto-free connectivity throughout the community.

**Objective A:** Implement greater sidewalk and trail connectivity.

In 2004, Homer completed the Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan. The plan provides a comprehensive examination of walkability and bike-ability in Homer and suggests a number of improvements to make Homer more walkable and bike friendly. In order for the recommendations of the Non-Motorized Plan to be implemented, it is critical that the specific actions included in the Plan be implemented. As both tourism and the size of the community grow, the traffic loads on Homer's streets will increase. The Non-motorized Plan indicates that as Homer has grown, residents have felt less safe and comfortable walking and biking in Homer. A combination of increasing traffic on the through-routes, limited sidewalks, and unconnected, low-traffic-volume streets leave pedestrians with a limited number of comfortable routes to use.

#### Implementation Strategies

1. Implement the Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan. Pages 15-19, 26-31 and 33-36 list specific improvements.
2. Amend the "Site Design" section of the 1987 Design Criteria Manual for Streets and Drainage to include a requirement for sidewalks on both sides of collector and arterial streets within the Central Business District.

**Objective B:** The transportation system should develop in a manner that includes provisions for the elderly and citizens with disabilities and provides safe walking routes for children.

In general, all of the pedestrian improvements noted in recent plans and included in this plan will benefit children, the elderly and citizens with disabilities. Without linked sidewalks, trails, crosswalks, and pedestrian ways, it is often difficult for seniors to navigate on foot and often impossible for those with disabilities requiring a wheel chair. Again, the Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan recommends, in addition to the improvements noted in the section above, specific improvements for special user groups.

With the baby boomer generation reaching their 60s and with Homer a desirable location for retirement living, consideration of the transportation needs of the elderly will be an issue of increasing importance for Homer.

#### Implementation Strategies

Specific transportation considerations and improvements should include:

1. Encourage seniors and citizens with disabilities to become involved in community planning projects.
2. Work with parents and school groups to create safe walking routes to schools and after school locations frequented by Homer's school aged children.
3. Ensure that meeting notices are routinely sent to senior centers, assisted living facilities, and local senior and disabled citizen's organizations.

4. Construct the sidewalk, trail and street crossing improvements listed under Objective A, above.
5. Develop non-motorized transportation routes in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
6. Amend the Site Design and Connections sections of the 1987 Design Criteria Manual for Streets and Drainage to ensure compliance with the site accessibility requirements set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### Transportation Implementation Table

Project	Timeframe			Primary Responsibility
	Near Term	Mid Term	Longer Term	
Develop Community Transit Service.		x		City
Establish Road Corridor Preservation Program.	x			City
Adopt appropriate ordinances to implement the corridor preservation program. (e.g., road standards, cost sharing mechanisms).		x		City
Update the 1986 Master Streets and Roads Plan and the 2005 Transportation Plan.		x		City
<i>Proposed Roadways</i>				
▪ West Hill Road and Fairview Avenue connection.	x			City
▪ Extend roads into the town center area from four directions as called for in the Town Center Plan.		x		City
▪ Extend Lake Street from Pioneer Avenue to South Slope St. with a connection to Heath Street.		x		City
▪ Extend Grubstake to Waddell Way.		x		City
<i>Parking</i>				
▪ Construct strategically located parking lots near downtown.		x		City, businesses
▪ Develop new parking standards for CBD to support higher density, more walkable commercial areas.	x			City
▪ Improve/increase on-street parking		x		City
▪ Allow for shared parking and in lieu fees for downtown businesses.		x		City
<i>Trails/Non-motorized Transportation</i>				
▪ Develop bike/pedestrian friendly roadway design standards.	x			City
▪ Implement the recommendations of the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan – particularly developing trail standards and a policy for trail easements.	x			City
▪ Build the recommended trail connections in the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan.	x	x	x	City, nonprofits

## ■ CHAPTER 6 PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES

---

**Vision Statement: The City should strive to provide public services and facilities that meet current needs while planning for the future. The City wishes to develop strategies to work with community partners that provide beneficial community services outside of the scope of City government.**

### Overview

Providing adequate, accessible community facilities, services, and infrastructure is a principal function of the City of Homer. Often government effectiveness is somewhat measured by its ability to plan for and finance these facilities. The City of Homer has been successful in this role with a variety of high quality, well-managed community facilities and services. This chapter outlines actions needed to maintain and improve facilities and services as the city changes.

The City provides public water and sewer services, police, fire protection, and emergency services. It also operates and maintains the port and harbor, public library, parks, animal shelter, airport terminal, and recreation facilities. The Kenai Peninsula Borough and City cooperate to provide education, health care, and certain land use planning functions, solid waste disposal, and other human services such as assistance to senior citizens. Homer residents pay city and borough property and sales taxes to help cover the costs of these services and facilities. In addition, Homer has a wide array of community services that are provided and supported by a robust network of nonprofit organizations and community groups.

The first goal in this chapter focuses on actions to provide and improve the services and facilities for which the City is directly responsible. The second goal addresses activities that the City supports. The third goal identifies strategies for the City to work with partners to provide additional community services. Under each goal are objectives which further describe near-term priorities and long-term needs for the described public services and facilities.

This document identifies general goals for future improvements. Final decisions regarding if and when such improvements are made will be determined by the City Council, considering available funding, competing needs, and other factors. Responsibility to achieve the goals in this chapter, particularly the second and third goals, does not solely lie with the City of Homer. As with any community, it is the active participation, support, and motivation of individuals, businesses, non-profit and other organizations that creates a home for many generations to enjoy.

## Summary of Goals

**GOAL 1:** Provide and improve city-operated facilities and services to meet the current needs of the community, anticipate growth, conserve energy, and keep pace with future demands.

**GOAL 2:** Seek collaboration and coordination with other service providers and community partners to ensure important community services are improved upon and made available.

**GOAL 3:** Encourage the broader community to provide community services and facilities by supporting other organizations and entities that want to develop community services.

## Goals and Objectives for Public Services and Facilities

**GOAL 1:** Provide and improve city-operated facilities and services to meet the current needs of the community, anticipate growth, conserve energy, and keep pace with future demands.

**Objective A: FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES** – Maintain and improve the high level of fire protection and emergency services in Homer to respond to current and anticipated future needs.

### Current Status

The Homer Volunteer Fire Department provides fire, rescue, and emergency medical services to the City of Homer and, when necessary, to areas outside of city limits. The department also reviews new building development to ensure it meets certain emergency access criteria. The Department employs six staff. A volunteer core of approximately 30 individuals supports the department's staff. Staff and volunteers are trained in emergency medical services, structural fire fighting, wildfire fighting, marine fire fighting, and some specialty rescue services. Fire hydrant coverage extends throughout the majority of city limits. The city has achieved a fire insurance rating (ISO) of 3 in areas within 1,000 feet of the City's fire hydrants, resulting in significant savings in the cost of home insurance. Structures located more than 1,000 feet distant of a fire hydrant have an ISO rating of 8. Areas located more than five miles from a fire station are rated at an ISO of 10. The goal is to maintain the current ISO ratings as well as the 35 foot structure height limit.

The fire department manages one station in the City of Homer as well as eleven apparatus. The Department also works closely with Kachemak City and Kenai Peninsula Borough's Kachemak Emergency Services Area (KESA). Kachemak City is a Class 2 City with one fire station (at their Community Center) that houses Tanker 1. KESA is a Borough Service Area including the area outside of Homer and Kachemak City up to the Anchor Point Fire Service Area. KESA currently has a station located near McNeil Canyon, approximately Mile 11 East End Road, which houses two engines, a tanker, an ambulance, brush truck, and utility truck. Kachemak City contracts annually with Homer for Fire and EMS.

The majority of calls responded to by the department are for emergency medical services (80 percent). The 2007 adopted budget for the Homer Volunteer Fire Department was \$1,115,031, approximately 5 percent of the City's overall budget.

### **Near-term Priorities**

The fire department's top priority needs relate to facility improvements. Built in 1980 and upgraded approximately 10 years ago, the department's current facility is reaching the end of its functional life span and needs to be upgraded or replaced. Also, the department would like to have an unstaffed satellite facility above town on Skyline Drive in order increase their capability to respond to fires in this high-danger area. With the existing level of marine activity, there is a need for increased marine fire and rescue capacity. Notably, Homer often provides refuge/safe harbor to ships not normally scheduled to stop in port due to the nature of its location, orientation, and protected waters. As Homer continues to grow and develop, the need for code enforcement capabilities is steadily increasing. Enforcement issues are already a concern. Given the recent trends in Homer with the increase in housing construction and residential development, hiring a plans examiner will increase the city's capacity to meet growing demand. Presently this service is deferred to the State.

### **Implementation Strategies**

1. Build a new station and training facility.
2. The Department and City shall develop a plan for a satellite facility on Skyline Drive.
3. Hire or provide for a Homer Fire Department Fire Marshal or Building Plans Examiner.
4. Increase capacity to deal with marine related fire events.
5. Continue to maintain and improve ISO ratings.

### **Long-term Needs**

There is a general need for greater capacity to respond to area demands. The timing and magnitude of this need will be driven by population growth and increases in the fire service area. In regard to marine activities, the Homer port is engaged in determining the feasibility of expanding the deep water port which, if implemented, would attract more marine cargo traffic as well as increased numbers of tourist cruise ships. If the harbor is expanded, the fire department could use a boat in order to deal with an oil leak or ship fire related to an expanded harbor. The fire department with the assistance of other City agencies should continue to address and update their emergency plans, such as the Local All-Hazard Mitigation Plan, as new technology and information become available.

### **Implementation Strategies**

1. Increase the volunteer core from 30 to a target of 50 people.
2. Obtain better equipment.
3. Improve the department's ability to deal with marine related fire and safety issues.
4. Continue to focus on training.
5. Continue to address and update emergency plans such as the All Hazard Mitigation Plan.



**Objective B: LAW ENFORCEMENT** – Provide ample law enforcement services to meet existing demand and anticipated future demands.

**Current Status:**

Homer has a full service municipal police department and is responsible for emergency and police dispatch, patrol and criminal investigations, managing the Homer Jail, and animal control.

The police department staffing includes twelve full-time police officers, seven full-time dispatchers, and six jail officers. To receive training, department employees attend the Police Academy in Sitka and are often sent out of state for additional training opportunities. The department emphasizes training and has sent an officer to advanced accident investigation training. Despite training opportunities, the police department has a recruitment and retention problem and has seen a large reduction in the number of people being attracted to law enforcement careers. Officers are in need of new automobiles. The current fleet is aged beyond any reasonable expectation of service.

The department’s boundaries and responsibilities do not extend outside of the city limits. The Homer Police Department has a good working relationship with the State Troopers and the agencies support one another when necessary. The highest demand on officers is felt in the summertime due to the large volume of visitors to Homer.

The crime rate in Homer is relatively low, consisting mostly of traffic offenses and drug and alcohol activity. In terms of major offences, 80 percent of crime is related to vandalism and theft. Violent crime is very low. Computer-related crime has increased recently and has had an impact on department staffing because the investigation for this type of crime is very labor intensive. The department has had to shift more staff to investigation work. In addition to criminal investigation, crime solving, and general patrolling, staff also engages in enforcement of City Council ordinances. New ordinances have recently been imposed relating to protection of Homer’s fragile beach ecosystem as well as noise disturbances. The police department responds to ordinance violations on a complaint call basis.

The 2007 adopted budget for the Homer Police Department was \$2,971,715, approximately 14 percent of the City’s overall budget.

**Near-term Priorities**

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Increase both the patrol and dispatch staff to better respond to Homer’s growth and change.
  - A. Increase staffing levels seasonally with consideration of adding a dedicated Homer Spit patrol officer for the summer months.
  - B. Develop and implement a plan that addresses the department’s retention and recruitment issues.
2. Implement reasonable vehicle replacement plan.
3. Upgrade technology and information systems as they become available.

## Long-term Needs

There is a need for a larger physical structure to serve as police department operations headquarters. The building was constructed in the late 1970's and added onto in 1980. Another remodel of the building is currently taking place; however, the structure is nearing the end of its planned lifetime and has outgrown capacity. While the current structure is inadequate, the police department feels it can operate safely for the next couple of years. The existing site of the police department buildings is not large enough to accommodate a larger structure. The police department will need to build a new building in another location or adapt and reuse an existing structure in town. Another option may be for the police department to work with the fire department to develop a Public Safety/Emergency Services Facility. Since both departments are in need of new structures out of which to operate, a joint facility may be the most cost effective.

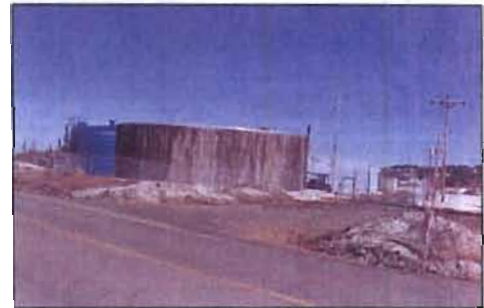
## Implementation Strategies

1. Build a new police department building.

**Objective C: WATER/SEWER SERVICES** – Continue to provide high-quality water and sewer services. Anticipate future demand and effectively guide Homer's growth with the extension of water and sewer into areas identified in the Land Use plan.

## Current Status

Public water and sewer service for the city of Homer is provided by the City of Homer Department of Public Works (DPW). In July 2006, a Water and Sewer Master Plan was completed for the City to provide guidance on future improvements and expansions for each of the utilities. According to the master plan, approximately 64 percent of the occupied homes in the city are served by the water system and approximately 54 percent are served by the sewer system.



## Water System

Homer operates a Class A public water system. Water is supplied from a dammed surface water source which forms the 35-acre Bridge Creek Reservoir. This is the City's sole water source; no other groundwater wells or other surface sources are operated by the City. It is important to note that groundwater in Homer is generally unsuitable for residential and commercial water wells due to low yields, shallow groundwater, lack of a significant freshwater aquifer, and saltwater in wells. The City established the Bridge Creek Watershed Protection District in an effort to preserve and protect the city's drinking water. A recent study on the Bridge Creek Reservoir indicates that this source has capacity limitations for supplying the community's water needs in the future, especially during dry years.

Seasonal summer population fluctuation and increased summer water needs cause summer demands to nearly double the wintertime water production. During times when demand outpaces production, water from the storage reservoirs must be used to meet peaks. Projections from the 2006 Water and Sewer Master Plan report average winter water production is currently at 0.5 mgd and will grow to approximately 1 mgd by 2025. Average summer demands are currently around 0.8 mgd and will

grow to approximately 1.9 mgd by 2025. Peak summer demands are currently around 1.3 mgd and may grow to nearly 3 mgd by 2025.

A new water treatment plant is now under construction. Treated water is distributed and stored in five water storage tanks which have approximately 1,160,200 gallons of operational capacity. These water storage tanks serve as treated water reservoirs for community water demands and fire emergencies.

The water distribution system consists of approximately 40 miles of buried pipe. Pipe materials consist of cast iron, ductile iron, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), and high-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipe. Sizes of pipe range from 4 to 16 inches in diameter. The piping is generally confined to the lower areas of Homer except for two corridors which carry the water down from the reservoir to town. The concentration of the system to the lower areas of town is not a function of engineering but rather of the current density of development. Approximately 1,430 customers are served. There are also 298 fire hydrants connected to the city water distribution system.

Homer residents and businesses not on the public water system typically maintain their own wells or pay to have private contractors haul potable city water to a holding tank. Because groundwater sources are often difficult to find with sufficient production and water quality, many property owners not connected to the City's system choose to purchase hauled water. Water from Homer's reservoir is also hauled to many residences outside of Homer city limits. Bulk water hauled to holding tanks accounts for approximately 20 million gallons/year of the water production at the water treatment plant.

### **Sewer System**

Homer operates a deep shaft wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). The wastewater plant capacity is 880,000 gallons per day for peak flow. Homer has an intra-city agreement with Kachemak City to provide sewer service. Currently, the WWTP treats an average daily flow of approximately 390,000 gallons per day. However, summer population influxes and intense rain storms which contribute to inflow and infiltration can substantially increase flow to the plant to as much as 1.7 million gallons per day.

A study was conducted to better understand the inflow and infiltration contribution to Homer's wastewater plant. Inflow is defined as surface water entering the system from various sources (i.e., manhole lids, roof leaders, foundation drains, or connection to the stormwater system). Infiltration is defined as groundwater entering the system through cracks, faulty connections, or other openings. The study found inflow and infiltration to be a significant contributor to the overall wastewater collected. During a typical rain storm as much as 3 percent of the overall collection may be attributed to inflow and infiltration. During major storm events it is thought that over 1 million gallons of flow may be attributed by infiltration and inflow.

The wastewater collection system consists of approximately 37 miles of buried gravity sewer mains. Pipe materials consist of asbestos concrete, ductile iron, and polyvinyl chloride (PVC). About half of the system is constructed with asbestos concrete pipe, especially in the oldest sections built in approximately 1970. These older sections of pipe seem to be major contributors to inflow and infiltration. At one time, cast iron was used for sewer mains, but these lines are no longer active. Sizes of pipe range from 6 to 24 inches in diameter, with the majority being 8-inch size mains.

The sewer system serves a total of 1,366 customers, 956 of which are residential. Parts of Kachemak City are also served by the system under an intergovernmental agreement with the City of Homer.

Homer maintains seven sewage pump stations. Two additional lift stations serve private septic systems on the Homer Spit. Lift stations are used to pump sewage from topographical low points to higher portions of the gravity system. There are approximately 8.3 miles of force main pipe from the lift stations. Force main pipes are constructed from ductile iron or high density polyethylene pipe (HDPE) and range from 3 to 6 inches in diameter.

Many Homer residents and business owners not connected to the piped community system use on-site wastewater disposal systems. According to the Master Sewer and Water Plan, 47 percent of residents have on-site systems. Soil conditions and perched groundwater levels in Homer are not ideal for on-site systems and many are believed to function poorly.

### **Near-term Priorities**

Demand for water will continue to rise as the community grows and as the outlying areas grow, since Homer's water is hauled to residences outside city boundaries. Water conservation measures can help reduce demands on the City's finite supplies, and also reduce demands on the City sewer system and individual septic systems.

### **Implementation Strategies**

1. Provide incentives for water conservation.
2. Support the installation of low flow plumbing fixtures as well as the encouragement of landscaping using natural vegetation that does not require extensive irrigation.
3. Determine and plan for some limited near-term sewer system improvements that include sewer system main repair and rehabilitation for reduction of infiltration.
4. Enact an inflow reduction program.
5. Identify an additional water source for use in the next 10 to 20 years. An important consideration is that the location of any new source could have implications for land use development in Homer. For instance, developing a source in a new location could induce growth into new areas served by the water line.
6. Enact a better cost-share plan for the extension of water and sewer services.

### **Long-term Needs**

The sewer system is judged to have adequate capacity to meet projected needs and does not require any major improvements.

**Objective D: PORT & HARBOR**—Continue to improve the infrastructure and services of the Port and Harbor to improve its position as an important regional port and harbor facility.

### Current Status

The City of Homer owns and operates much of the land and associated facilities on the Spit. As of 2007, the Port and Harbor Department manages and maintains the Homer Small Boat Harbor with approximately 1,000 boat stalls, the Pioneer Dock where the US Coast Guard and Alaska State Ferry moor, the commercial Fish Dock which processes over 20 million pounds of commercial fish annually, the Ice Production Plant which produces several thousand tons of ice, the Fish Grinding Facility, and the Deep Water Dock. The department operates as an Enterprise Fund financially supported by user fees.

The Port and Harbor facilities are a critical component to Homer's economy. The Small Boat Harbor is the largest single basin facility in Alaska. Commercial fishing is a large, but often unseen enterprise. Many of the boats that operate out of the Homer port are million dollar businesses; however, their fish is either landed elsewhere or quickly moved out of town. Only a small percentage is processed locally. Sport fishing is also a large economic generator in Homer, playing a key role in tourism activities. A multitude of charter companies are based out of the Small Boat Harbor. The Port and Harbor is engaged in a delicate balancing act of trying to accommodate the needs of many user groups. Land must be maintained for marine related industrial activities which support the fishing industry and freight and shipping activities, while providing space for recreational and tourist activities.

The Port and Harbor employs 18 staff members, both full and part-time. Their 2007 budget was \$3,347,344.

### Near-term Priorities

### Implementation Strategies

Many of the projects outlined in Homer's Capital Improvement Program 2007-2012 relate to Port and Harbor activities. Five of the top fifteen CIP priorities are Port and Harbor Projects.

1. Expand the Deep Water Dock. A concept study was completed in 2004 and Phase 1, proposed in the CIP, would widen the existing dock to 88 feet and increase overall length to 744 feet. A driving factor for this dock improvement is to create a facility that can better receive cargo thereby reducing freight costs for goods coming to Homer. Currently most freight is trucked in from Anchorage.
2. Create an East Boat Harbor. This new facility would augment the existing harbor which is essentially full. Boats can be accommodated only by "rafting," tying boats to other boats. In some instances crabbing boats are tied up three deep to the dock. Operating in this manner increases liability for the department and reduces the life of the docks.
3. Pave and improve Freight Dock Road. The improved road is intended to provide upgraded access to the Deep Water Dock and encourage development of a 30-acre marine industrial area on the Spit. In particular, the Port and Harbor would like to attract additional custom fish processing.



4. Address general harbor maintenance and erosion control.
5. Complete the Homer Spit Trail and harbor pathways. The Spit Trail currently stops at the lagoon and if extended along the harbor rim will be a great asset to help link Spit activities together.
6. Improve and provide additional restrooms along the Spit trail. All of these items are outlined in the CIP top 15 list.

### Long-term Needs

Many of the Port and Harbor's long-term needs would be best addressed in a Spit Master Plan, as described in the Land Use Chapter, Goal 4, Objective C.

### Implementation Strategies

Parking is one the major issues for the Spit. There is not enough parking for all current uses; in the longer term parking for the Spit and Port/Harbor will have to be addressed. Efforts have been made to pave lots and require payment. Additionally, the idea of a Spit shuttle has been discussed; however, little progress has occurred.

1. Upgrade or replace the harbormaster office. The harbormaster office has reached the end of its intended lifespan and is in need of an upgrade.
2. Monitor the changing characteristics of the Homer Spit. The Spit is critical to Port and Harbor operations and private land owners and is susceptible to land loss. Hazard and environmental concerns relating to the Spit are challenging to address. The Spit subsided a great deal during the 1964 earthquake; in the event of another major earthquake Spit subsidence remains a great concern.

### **Objective E: PARKS & RECREATION** – Improve and provide quality parks and recreation facilities to respond to current and anticipated demand.

Homer residents place high value on parks and recreational facilities and activities. Parks and Recreation programs enhance the quality of life for residents and benefit the local economy. City facilities that provide recreational opportunities include several parks, a trail system, playing fields, and campgrounds. The school district, community schools, and other parties offer a range of additional programs and facilities. As Homer continues to grow, both in size and as a tourist destination, demands for parks and recreation will grow. The City of Homer recognizes the value of these facilities and activities as an important asset to the community and supports their continued improvement. *See Parks, Recreation and Culture Chapter for specific recommendations.*

### **Objective F: STORM WATER CONTROL** – Provide for current and future needs and explore options for expanding the quality and extent of storm water control.

### Current Status

The majority of Homer's storm water is channeled and drained through an open ditch system. Only the downtown and Old Town area have storm drain lines, specifically along Pioneer Avenue and Main Street. In total, the City maintains approximately 3 miles of storm sewer and associated catch basins. There is one oil/water separator facility, at the intersection of Bartlett and Pioneer Avenue.

The State Department of Transportation maintains drainage along state roadways. Homer's stormwater outflow is located just north of Bishop's Beach. This outflow has not yet reached the threshold which would require monitoring the quality of discharge under NPDES rules.

Currently, drainage needs for large parcel development are dealt with individually, by the developer. Homer's design criteria manual for subdivisions does not address on-site storm water management. However, in the city's denser commercial districts, the zoning code does have provisions requiring developers to prepare storm water management plans. In some recent subdivision developments, property has been dedicated for retention ponds and related facilities due to wetland permit requirements from the Army Corp of Engineers.



### Near-term Priorities

The City should develop a long-range plan for stormwater drainage to foster appropriate development and meet increasing federal and state water quality standards. The plan should set a strategy for most efficiently meeting city stormwater needs, incorporating on-site infiltration when possible.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Develop stormwater design criteria for large parcel development.
2. Adopt area wide stormwater management standards.
3. Encourage the utilization of green infrastructure mapping as a means to identify and retain natural drainage channels and important wetlands, which serve drainage functions.
4. Enhance stream channels with the creation of ponds, wetlands, and different habitats that allow for trail systems, water bird habitat, overflow surface water and stormwater collection.
5. Encourage on-site stormwater infiltration management.

### Long-term Needs

Currently significant areas of the city are not served by storm drains. As the amount and intensity of development increases, the percentage of community covered by impervious surfaces will grow and the City will need to develop new, more active stormwater management strategies. Homer's topography lends itself to drainage issues with highly erodible bluffs and slopes. An effective strategy is to use on-site stormwater infiltration management techniques coupled with limiting development on steep slopes. Under this approach, future subdivisions and other large development projects will retain open space within their boundaries for stormwater collection and infiltration. In addition, development will need to limit impervious areas such as paved driveways and paths to reduce the quantity of runoff and provide more areas for infiltration. Increased reliance on on-site management of stormwater is consistent with the general intent of federal water quality standards, focused on reducing non-point source pollution. Open space areas for stormwater infiltration should become part of Homer's green infrastructure network and could double as space for recreation, community gardens, and similar amenities.

**Objective G: LIBRARY**– Maintain Homer’s first-class library facility and continuously build on the high-quality library services to meet current and projected needs.

**Current Status**

A new Homer Public Library opened on September 16, 2006. The building resulted from a collaborative, communitywide effort to raise needed funds. Since 2002, a citizens group spearheaded by the Library Advisory Board and Friends of the Homer Public Library lead a capital campaign which raised millions of dollars through private donations, grant funds, legislative appropriations, and city assistance. The outcome is a premier, environmentally friendly, certified Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) facility to better serve Homer’s needs.



The Homer Public Library is one of the four largest public libraries in the KPB and serves the greater Homer area. In 2008, the library hosted 133,186 visitors. The facility is approximately 17,000 square feet and houses about 35,000 volumes with a capacity for up to 47,000. The library is a wireless internet access site and offers 20 public computer terminals with Internet access. The library employs five full-time staff. Numerous volunteers support library operations and programs such as Story Hour.

Resources to support the library come from the City’s general fund, the majority of which is from sales and property tax revenue, and extensive local support from the Friends of the Library. The Friends of the Library is a nonprofit organization which provides resources for many library programs as well as funding support for capital improvements.

The 2007 library budget for the City of Homer was \$755,688, approximately 3.5% of the City’s overall budget.

**Near-term Priorities**

Completion of the new Homer Public Library has lead to increased interest in programs and demand for services.

**Implementation Strategies**

The new facility allows for this growth; however, additional staff would be helpful. Current staff levels are able to respond to customers at the front desk, but additional staff could assist with the behind the scenes backlog in processing of books and materials.

**Long-term Needs**

The recent facility expansion is intended to provide capacity to serve projected demand for 20 years. Following this period, another expansion may be warranted. The current site has room for expansion if it becomes necessary. In addition, as technologies continue to change, the library will need to respond.

The library's location near highly used community facilities (bank, post office, grocery store) in the heart of Homer is ideal. Pedestrians can access the library and these facilities easily on an existing trail network.

### Implementation Strategies

1. The library should continue to be involved in the planning for the Homer town center to ensure that it will be linked to this important community project and that any future expansion needs are addressed.

**Objective H: ADMINISTRATION** – Provide adequate administrative services and associated facilities to meet current and anticipated future administration demands on the City of Homer.

### Current Status

The City Manager's office is responsible for overall administration including property, personnel, budget and finance, planning and enforcement of ordinances, as well as implementation of policy directed by the City Council. The offices of the City Manager, City Clerk, Planning, Library, Community Schools, and Personnel comprise the City's administrative services. The Finance Department is a stand-alone department. The Public Works Department is located separately from the City's administrative offices; however, it also provides essential administrative functions.

City sales tax, transfers from other funds, and real property taxes make up of the majority of City revenue. The 2007 City budget is based upon a 4.5 mill property tax rate. The City levies a sales tax of 4.5 percent.

### Future Needs

### Implementation Strategies

The present City Hall building on East Pioneer Avenue has served the City well for several decades. The building houses the City's administrative services, as well as the mayor's office, and the City Council chambers. A new City Hall is required to respond to increased staffing needs. The City Hall will be located in the proposed town center development area in order to help move that project forward and further improve the Homer central business district.

Present and anticipated population growth of the city will result in the need for an increase in municipal staff and resources to meet public service demands, particularly if the City expands its boundaries through annexation.

**GOAL 2:** Seek collaboration and coordination with other service providers and community partners to ensure important community services are improved upon and made available.

**Objective A: SOLID WASTE** – Continue to reduce waste and lessen the impact on the environment. Establish and maintain a City recycling program. *See also Chapter 9.*

The Homer Baling/Landfill Facility (HBF) is located at Mile 169.3 Sterling Highway, north of town. It is owned and operated by the Borough. The HBF receives municipal solid waste,

construction/demolition, land-clearing waste, wastewater treatment plant sludge from the City of Homer, and recyclables.

Currently the HBF municipal solid waste cell has 5 to 7 years remaining life. The construction and demolition cell has at least 15 years of space available. Refuse collection is taken care of by private business and individual residents who haul their own waste to the landfill. Recycling of a variety of consumables is available in Homer; specifically, newspaper, corrugated cardboard/brown grocery bags, glass, aluminum cans, mixed paper, tin cans, plastic milk jugs, used oil, and batteries. Several local private stores offer recycling drop-off. In addition, some individual facilities such as the Islands and Ocean Visitor Center offer recycling receptacles alongside rubbish bins.

While current solid waste services are adequate to meet current and expected near-term demands, there has been community consensus around the need to reduce waste and increase recycling efforts.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Demonstrate City leadership by encouraging recycling within municipal departments.
2. Develop or partner with other organizations to create a public education program to encourage recycling within the community.
3. Work with the Borough to develop future strategies for waste disposal.

### **Objective B: ARTS & CULTURE** – Sustain and support Homer’s robust arts and cultural traditions.

Homer has a tradition of fostering arts and cultural activities. These greatly contribute to quality of life and provide economic benefits to the community. *See Economic Vitality Chapter for specific recommendations.* While the City is not the primary party responsible for continuing and expanding cultural activities, it can be a helpful partner.

Community comments expressed during the process of preparing this plan showed strong support for supporting arts and cultural opportunities in Homer. *See Parks, Recreation & Culture Chapter for specific recommendations.*

### **Objective C: VISITOR SERVICES** – Provide and sustain public services and facilities to serve visitors.

Out-of-town visitors are a major local economic generator. Many of the facilities and amenities described in this plan reveal reasons for Homer’s rich tourist activity. Visitor attractions such as the Islands and Ocean Visitor Center, activities, and events abound in Homer. The Homer Chamber of Commerce offers a Visitor Information Center at 201 Sterling Highway. The City supports the Chamber’s visitor activities with approximately \$30,000 annually for tourism marketing. On a broad level, the City works to maintain and improve the attractiveness of the community as a visitor destination through land use, infrastructure, and circulation policies; for example by improving the character of downtown and the Spit. These policies are described elsewhere in this plan. *See Economic Vitality Chapter for specific recommendations relating to visitor services.*



**Objective D: HEALTH CARE** – Support and encourage health care to provide exceptional cradle to grave services and keep pace with the changing needs of Homer’s community. See *Economic Vitality Chapter*.

**Current Status**

Homer offers a range of health care service options. Homer has a major hospital facility, South Peninsula Hospital, which is Borough-owned, operated by a nonprofit management board, and part of a borough service area. Homer also has a state funded Public Health Center. This nurse-run facility offers immunizations, health education programs, and prenatal programs. Seldovia Village Tribe also operates a health care facility. South Peninsula Behavioral Health Services, Inc. is Homer’s primary outpatient and emergency services provider of mental and behavioral health service and support.



Seldovia Village Tribe Health Center

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Support activities that increase the ability to respond to intensive behavioral health needs of the community, including residential needs for behavioral health consumers of all ages, by looking at the possibility of developing a residential behavioral health facility, particularly for children and youth, located in Homer.
2. Support the continuation of KBC’s course and degree programs in the allied health occupations, to provide a trained labor force for health care facilities. As Homer’s population ages, there will be increased demands on the health care system and a need for more trained health care professionals.
3. Continue to support the South Peninsula Hospital via the Kenai Peninsula Borough and the South Kenai Hospital Service Area.

**Future Needs**

1. Support increased local educational opportunities in health care fields, including KBC, that create opportunities for residents to fill these medical industry jobs. See *Economic Vitality Chapter*.

**Objective E: SENIOR SERVICES** – Keep Homer an attractive place to live for people at all stages of life by providing and supporting public services and facilities to serve the senior population.

**Current Status**

Many features make Homer attractive to this growing segment of the city’s population, including a relatively concentrated downtown with some walkable areas, senior center, library, university, hospital, doctors, and other health care providers. The community has an effective, active nonprofit agency which provides services to Homer’s seniors.

## Implementation Strategies

1. Retain attractiveness as a community that appeals to all ages, from youth through retirement.
2. Effectively respond to the shifting age of the population and Homer's popularity as a retirement and visitor destination.
  - a. Require that all public facilities be accessible by senior citizens and individuals with disabilities.
  - b. Provide amenities and access for seniors in public facilities developed by the City.
  - c. Encourage and/or create incentives that encourage private businesses to make every effort to provide and/or improve accessibility for the senior population.
3. The city, through its land use decisions, will continue to improve the walkability of the downtown core to make the community more habitable and friendly for seniors and for those with disabilities. *See Land Use Chapter.*

**Objective F: YOUTH SERVICES** – Enhance year-round opportunities for youth to be stimulated and engaged in safe, fun, healthy activities.

## Implementation Strategies

1. Promote a healthy lifestyle by increasing activities available for youth. Providing a range of activities and programs in Homer improves the physical, mental, and social health of the community.
2. Support the efforts of Homer organizations that offer a variety of programs for youth. The City supports community-based efforts to increase and maintain opportunities for all citizens to build their physical, emotional, and intellectual strengths.
3. Encourage efforts to remove barriers to youth participation. *See Parks, Recreation and Culture Chapter for specific recommendations.*

**Objective G: EDUCATION** – Provide high-quality education in Homer and enhance and sustain lifelong learning opportunities.

## Current Status

The City of Homer partners with the Borough to use school facilities for the Community Schools programs in which school buildings are used to provide recreational, educational, social, and cultural activities to the entire community after school hours and in the summer. School enrollment for Homer and the entire borough has been declining in recent years, with attendant loss of programs.

Kachemak Bay Campus provides postsecondary education, continuing education, professional development, and vocational training to Homer residents. The Homer campus is poised for growth. The University received \$2.5 million in the 2007 State Capital Budget to acquire and remodel the Homer City Hall. The purchase of Homer's City Hall and the consolidation of KBC in a centralized location will allow KBC to strengthen programs and offerings. Specifically, the college would like to expand and bolster art education, marine biology, allied health opportunities, and to offer technical

and career vocational training. There is a community consensus that KBC expansion would lead to widespread economic and cultural benefits for the area. Development of student housing will allow KBC to attract students to Homer, thereby promoting Homer as a “college town.” The Economic Vitality Chapter, (Goal 5, Objective B) identifies specific actions to support Homer’s post-secondary educational system.

Homer offers additional educational opportunities to both residents and visitors through various nonprofit agencies and has become a popular destination for seminars and learning programs. For instance, many marine related educational programs are offered through the Alaska Islands and Ocean Visitor Center which is the headquarters for both the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge and the Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. The Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies also offers a broad menu of educational programs attracting participants from across the state.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Continue to partner and work to support efforts of the Kenai Peninsula School District.
2. Monitor state education funding if school enrollment continues to decline.
3. Continue active support of the expansion of the KBC.

### **Objective H: Promote renewable and clean energy.** *See also Chapter 9.*

1. Encourage energy utilities to seek renewable sources to meet Homer’s future energy needs.
2. Promote the decentralization of energy production by creating a legal framework for the development of on-grid private systems in collaboration with local energy providers.

### **GOAL 3: Encourage the broader community to provide community services and facilities by supporting other organizations and entities to develop community services.**

#### Implementation Strategies

In many communities there is disconnect between the services and facilities area residents would like the City to provide and the capacity for providing those programs with current City resources. Homer has the benefit of at least 50 nonprofit entities operating within its borders. Supporting their successes and partnering when possible will only improve City operations.

1. Continue to work with residents and businesses to better understand community priorities, and to the extent possible, find resources to meet these needs.
2. Continue to work with citizen groups and nonprofit organizations which play a large role in providing desired services in Homer.

### **Objective A: Increase the City’s capacity to provide and expand community services. Improve the synergy between the City and other community partners.**

#### Implementation Strategies

Residents and businesses will continue to have high expectations for the public services and facilities available in the community. To meet the needs and desires of Homer residents, a strong partnership between the City and community partners will help to bring services and projects to the community beyond what the City can achieve on its own. The following actions will strengthen this partnership and expand the capacity to provide services:

1. Increase the net revenues coming into the city, through managing costs and expanding the community's tax base.
2. Improve the ability of the City to provide technical assistance for community organizations seeking to expand their services. The primary steps the City can take to help these organizations is to provide information regarding possible sources of funding for community service projects and to express support for specific fund raising efforts by writing letters when requested and through this comprehensive plan.
3. Continue to create incentives for other organizations to take a lead in community services by providing small matching grants, limited technical assistance, and the option to use city land or facilities at reduced rates.
4. Support the efficient use of existing community facilities. Partner with organizations to keep city facilities operating beyond normal hours.
5. Create an environment in which Homer's robust nonprofit community can thrive and respond to needs not met by the City.

### Public Services and Facilities Implementation Table

Project	Timeframe			Primary Responsibility
	Near Term	Mid Term	Longer Term	
<i>Fire &amp; Emergency Services</i>				
▪ Construct new building and training facility.		x		City
▪ Develop satellite facility on Skyline Drive.	x			City
▪ Hire Fire Marshal/Code Examiner.	x			City
▪ Increase volunteer core to 50 people.		x		City, community volunteers
▪ Increase marine fire/emergency response capabilities.		x		City, Port & Harbor merchants & patrons
▪ Obtain better equipment.		x		City
▪ Increase training opportunities.		x		City
▪ Update Emergency Operations & Hazard Plans.			x	City
<i>Police Department</i>				
▪ Hire dedicated Homer Spit Officer for summer months.	x			City
▪ Address retention and recruitment issues, and retain a competitive compensation package.	x			City

▪ Implement a reasonable vehicle replacement plan.			x		City
▪ Construct new building.			x		City
<i>Water &amp; Sewer</i>					
▪ Institute a water conservation program and provide incentives.	x				City
▪ Implement the Water Sewer Master Plan	x	x	x		City
▪ Construct water and sewer lines to developed properties as demand warrants.			x		City
▪ Develop new water source.			x		City
▪ Sewer main repair and rehabilitation for reduction of infiltration.	x				City
▪ Enact a Sewer inflow reduction program.	x				City
▪ Identify an additional water source.		x			City
▪ Enact a better cost-share plan for the extension of water and sewer services.	x				City
<i>Port &amp; Harbor</i>					
▪ Develop a Homer Spit Master Plan.	x				City See land use
▪ Complete the Port and Harbor projects listed in Homer's current CIP.	x	x	x		City
▪ Create an East Boat Harbor (CIP)			x		
▪ Address general harbor maintenance and erosion control	x				
▪ Complete Homer Spit trail and harbor pathways(CIP)	x			x	
▪ Improve restrooms along the spit trail (CIP)	x				
▪ Build new Port & Harbormaster facility	x				
▪ Address parking/develop spit shuttle	x				City see land use
▪ Monitor erosion of Spit.	x				City, Spit merchants
<i>Solid Waste</i>					
▪ Improve recycling among City departments.	x				City
▪ Develop or partner with an organization to create a public education program to inspire recycling within the community.	x				City, community
▪ Work with the Borough on developing future strategies for waste disposal.	x				City, Borough
<i>Library</i>					
▪ Increase staff to respond to increased demand.			x		City
<i>Administration</i>					
▪ Build new City Hall and Plaza.			x		City
<i>Senior Services</i>					
▪ Improve accessibility for senior citizens. Require all Public facilities be accessible for seniors and	x				City



individuals with disabilities.				
▪ The City will provide amenities and access for seniors in public facilities developed by the city.		x		City
▪ Encourage or create incentives to encourage private businesses to provide or improve accessibility to the senior population.		x		City, business community
<i>Youth Services</i>				
▪ Provide a range of activities and programs to benefit youth.		x		City
▪ Support other organizations' efforts to offer youth programs.	x			City
▪ Encourage youth participation and remove barriers to participation.		x		City
<i>Education</i>				
▪ Continue to partner and work to support efforts of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District.			x	City, KPB
▪ Monitor state education funding if school enrollment continues to decline.			x	City, Parents
▪ Continue active support of the expansion of the KBC.	x			City
<i>Storm Water</i>				
▪ Develop storm water design criteria for large parcel development.	x			City
▪ Adopt area-wide storm water management standards.		x		City
▪ Encourage the utilization of green infrastructure mapping as a means to identify and retain natural drainage channels and important wetlands, which serve drainage functions.	x			City
▪ Encourage on-site storm water infiltration management.	x			City
▪ Enhance stream channels with the creation of ponds, wetlands, and different habitats that allow for trail systems, water bird habitat, overflow surface water, and storm water collection.			x	City
▪ See land use section for recommendations for drainage standards, (e.g., limit impervious areas).	x			City
<i>Community Capacity</i>				
▪ Continue to work with residents and businesses to better understand community priorities, and to the extent possible, find resources to meet these needs.	x			City
▪ Continue to work with citizen groups and nonprofit organizations which play a large role in providing desired services in Homer.	x			City, Community

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase the net revenues coming into the city, through managing costs and expanding the community's tax base.</li> </ul>	x			City, Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve the ability of the City to provide technical assistance for community organizations seeking to expand their services. Provide information regarding possible sources of funding for community service projects. Express support for specific fund raising efforts by writing letters when requested and through this comprehensive plan.</li> </ul>		x		City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to create incentives for other organizations to take a lead in community services by providing small matching grants, limited technical assistance, and the option to use City land or facilities at reduced rates.</li> </ul>		x		City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support the efficient use of existing community facilities. Partner with organizations to keep city facilities operating beyond normal hours.</li> </ul>	x			City
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create an environment in which Homer's robust nonprofit community can thrive and respond to needs not met by the City.</li> </ul>			x	City

## ■ CHAPTER 7 PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE

---

**Vision Statement: Homer wishes to encourage a wide range of health-promoting recreation services and facilities, desires ready access to open space, parks and recreation, and takes pride in supporting the arts.**

### **Overview**

This chapter reviews existing parks, recreation and cultural facilities, and related programs in Homer and describes actions for needed improvements. Strategies for tourism, a related but separate topic, are covered in the Economic Development chapter.

### **City Services**

Providing a diverse, high-quality system of parks, trails, and sports and recreational facilities and programs is an important role for City government. These activities support the quality of life and help to attract and retain local businesses. In addition, quality recreational facilities and programs are a critical part of the nationwide effort to combat obesity and encourage more active, healthier lifestyles. The City shares responsibility for providing such programs and facilities with a number of partners, including the schools, the State and Borough, sports clubs, and community volunteers.

The Parks and Recreation division of Homer's Public Works department supports and maintains a number of integral Homer facilities. Parks and Recreation staff are responsible for daily operational duties associated with the City's summer campgrounds, parks, playgrounds, and cemetery facilities. Additionally, they monitor and collect parking fees at the Homer Airport.

The Parks and Recreation division also administers the Homer Beautification Project which ensures that City flower gardens are cared for, grass is mowed, streets are cleaned, and dump stations and restrooms are well-maintained. The City parks and recreation staff primarily deals with all of these maintenance tasks with limited support from volunteers.

In 2006, the City assumed responsibility for operating the Homer Community Schools program. The program is partially funded through class fees. The balance of the funding is provided by the City of Homer through tax dollars. The City has an agreement with the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District for use of equipment and facilities at several locations such as Homer High School and Paul Banks Elementary School. The Community Schools program works to promote community involvement and lifelong learning through educational and recreational opportunities for people of all ages. The Community Schools mission statement says that the program will "maximize usage of all community facilities and resources, while utilizing, expanding and uniting local business and school resources and expertise."

### **Community Service Providers**

The City and community of Homer augment City Parks and Recreation's efforts with an array of additional programs ranging from the Community Schools program to programs offered by the Boys and Girls Club. The City supports these community-based efforts. Homer has a hardworking sector of volunteer and nonprofit recreation organizations that also provide recreational activities.

Examples include the Homer Hockey Association, Kachemak Nordic Ski Club, Homer Little League, the Softball Association, and the Kachemak Equestrian Association. A particular challenge is ensuring residents from all sectors of the community have access to programs and facilities. Expanding events and sports programs is generally not a direct City function. These responsibilities largely lie with local schools and sports clubs.

### **Park Users**

Homer's parks and recreational facilities are regularly used not only by residents from within city limits, but by users from adjoining unincorporated areas and visitors from outside the area. Maintaining Homer's parks is a particular challenge in the summertime, when park use increases dramatically due to the visitor population. Goal 1 addresses the issue of how best to sustain and expand capacity and resources for ongoing park and recreation operations.

### **Desired Improvements**

Homer residents have expressed the desire to ensure that Parks and Recreation be given equal status with other community services. Currently Parks and Recreation is a division within the Public Works Department and the Community Schools program is under the Administration Department. The sense among residents is that the maintenance and creation of parks and recreation resources, activities, and programs holds critical importance to the quality of life and its economic vitality. Forming a Parks and Recreation department will give supporters the status, staff, and funding required to further improve Homer's parks and recreation facilities and programs.

One desired improvement identified by many Homer residents is a multi-use, multi-seasonal community recreational facility, offering programs for youth, adults, and seniors. This community recreation center could host a variety of activities for all ages. The center could act as a community information center to publicize current regional activities and coordinate with other organizations. The center could also be a major tenant or attraction in the proposed town center.

Homer residents are eager to improve and expand the trail system and as described in the Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan. In this comprehensive plan, trails and other forms of non-motorized transportation are expanded upon in Chapter 5; however, they link to the discussion of parks and recreation.

Parks and recreation projects need to be organized to provide a clear and realistic implementation plan. Evaluating and prioritizing projects and capital improvement goals will help gain the support of the City and community. The creation of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan will provide clear guidance for support through the City's Capital Improvement Program.

### **Arts and Culture**

Homer's arts and cultural scene is something to boast about. For a town of its size, Homer offers an impressive variety of arts and cultural opportunities including the Pratt Museum, Pier One Theater, Kachemak Bay Campus, numerous restaurants and bars offering live entertainment, and a thriving community of artists who sell their work in an array of local galleries. Homer has a robust festival season



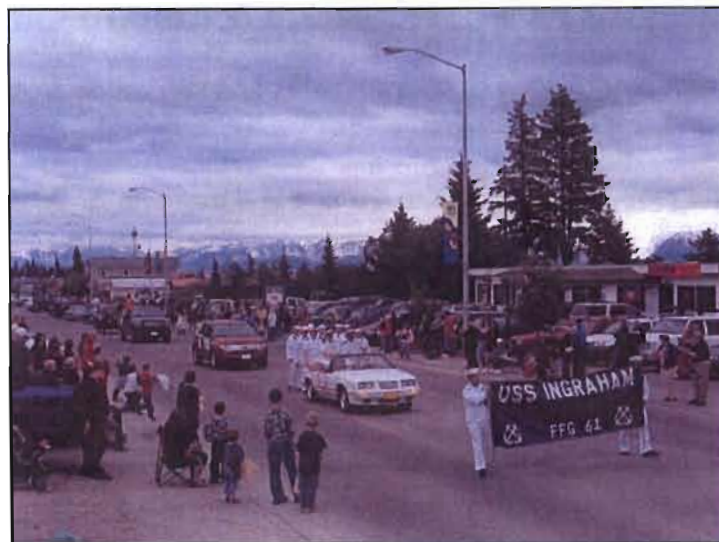
as well. Kachemak Bay also has a rich Alaska Native history whose early culture is shared through exhibits at the Pratt Museum. Continuing support for Homer's arts and culture network benefits Homer's economy and quality of life. Community comments expressed during the process of preparing this plan showed strong support for supporting arts and cultural opportunities in Homer. Some of these objectives are best carried out by the City, while others are best undertaken by local arts groups and tourism marketing organizations with City cooperation and encouragement.

### **1% for the Arts Program**

Homer has a tradition of fostering arts and cultural activities that contribute to quality of life and provide economic benefits to the community. See *Chapter 8, Economic Vitality*. While the City is not the primary party responsible for continuing and expanding cultural activities, it can be a helpful partner. The City has a "1% for Art Program" that aims to foster culture and the arts in the community through the purchase and commissioning of works of art for municipal buildings.

### **Desired Improvements**

Through this comprehensive planning process, a number of people have suggested the benefits of establishing a multipurpose community arts and cultural facility located in the downtown area, near restaurants, shopping, art galleries, bars and other complementary business activities. Homer's downtown will benefit from being able to offer an expanded range of arts and cultural programs. These activities would help draw visitors to specific events, who then might choose to linger and spend time and money at local restaurants and shops. The Homer Town Center Development Plan emphasizes the importance of civic facilities and institutions as providing the "critical mass" needed to bring the area alive. The Plan mentions the need to pursue "a centralized Town Square that includes a cultural center" in addition to "other civic institutions such as a courthouse, civic center or conference center." While developing such a facility would clearly have benefits, it would be costly to construct and operate.



Fourth of July Parade



## Summary of Goals

- GOAL 1:** Explore resources needed to operate parks and recreation facilities and options for expanding parks and recreation programs.
- GOAL 2:** Create a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- GOAL 3:** Enhance areawide recreational trail systems and connections between residential areas, downtown, schools, university, institutional areas, and recreational areas. *See Transportation Chapter.*
- GOAL 4:** Identify recreation resources and key open space areas as part of green infrastructure mapping. *See Land Use Chapter.*
- GOAL 5:** Maintain, improve, and create new citywide parks and recreation facilities and Community School programs to offer year-round opportunities for residents and visitors.
- GOAL 6:** Implement the recreation and cultural components of the Homer Town Center Plan for downtown.
- GOAL 7:** Support public beach access.
- GOAL 8:** Continue to improve local arts and cultural opportunities and Homer’s reputation as an art-and-culture-friendly community.

## Goals & Objectives for Parks, Recreation & Culture

**GOAL 1:** Identify resources needed to operate parks and recreation facilities and options for expanding for parks and recreation programs.

**Objective A:** Expand resources available to manage and maintain facilities and programs.

### Implementation Strategies

Staff, volunteer, and financial resources for park maintenance need to grow, particularly as new parks are developed.

1. Research the year-round and seasonal staff needs to maintain and operate city park facilities and programs. Increase staffing or volunteer involvement as needed to provide basic City services.
2. Work with volunteers and service organizations to expand the local park maintenance workforce. Consider an “adopt-a-park” program in which local businesses, service organizations, or youth groups choose or are assigned to care for a particular park. One drawback to the program is that it may require an additional City staff person to implement and administer.

3. Establish a park endowment fund with the Homer Foundation. This sets up an initial fund and then allows private citizens to donate to it for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the City's park system, thereby relieving some pressure from the City for parks.

**Objective B:** Explore options, costs, and benefits of combining the Community Schools program and the Parks and Recreation division to establish a new, stand-alone Parks and Recreation department.

#### Implementation Strategies

1. If supported by a cost benefit analysis, create a unified Parks and Recreation Department that includes the Community Schools program.

### **GOAL 2:** Create a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

**Objective A:** Identify City owned or offered park and recreation needs.

#### Implementation Strategies

1. Determine geographic layout of parks, where more are needed, and develop a park dedication ordinance.
2. Identify the program gaps and needs for Community Schools.

**Objective B:** Pursue financial strategies that leverage City tax dollars to build public recreation facilities, and support private efforts.

#### Implementation Strategies

1. Use the Capital Improvement Plan, city budget, bond measures and partnerships with other organizations (such as Little League) to lobby, fundraise and build public recreation facilities.

**GOAL 3:** Enhance areawide recreational trail systems. Improve connections between residential areas, downtown, schools, institutional areas, and recreation areas.

**Objective A:** Implement the Homer Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan and other policies to improve pedestrian connections. *Also see Chapter 5.*

#### Implementation Strategies

1. Document where trails are locate.
2. Create incentives and requirements for an interconnected system of trails, biking networks, and pathways.
3. Create public trail easements rather than trails within right of ways.

4. Enhance existing trails by adding landscaped buffers in particular parts of town, such as more urbanized areas.
5. Encourage businesses to participate in the development of landscaped buffers.
6. Support the adoption of policies and dedication of staff to implement the Non-motorized Transportation and Trail Plan.
7. Develop a plan to ensure new trails are maintained.

*See Goal 1 – Objective A this section for discussion of the Parks division. Additionally, this goal is more thoroughly addressed in the Transportation chapter.*

**GOAL 4:** Identify recreation resources, key open space areas, and future parks as part of green infrastructure mapping.

*The Land Use Chapter – Goal 2, Objectives A and B, encourages the development of a “green infrastructure” system for Homer.*

#### Implementation Strategies

1. The green infrastructure system should include consideration of functional environmental features such as waterways that support drainage, and aquifer recharge zones, as well as key recreation and open space resources. The system needs to work at multiple scales – from regionally significant features such as the Homer Spit and the associated bike trail to smaller local facilities such as pocket parks and small swaths of green space in existing neighborhoods.
2. Encourage the use of Green infrastructure mapping to help identify and protect significant open space and recreation resources and to help ensure the goals in this chapter are met. *See Goal 2 of the Land Use Chapter.*

**GOAL 5:** Maintain, improve, and create new city-wide parks and recreation facilities and Community School programs to offer year-round opportunities for Homer residents and visitors.

**Objective A:** Continue to maintain and improve city parks and open spaces.

#### Implementation Strategies

1. Continuously assess whether available park and recreation facilities and programs are meeting demands, from inside and outside city limits.
2. Expand capacity to maintain facilities and offer programs. *See Goal 1.*
3. The City should follow a systematic approach to maintaining and improving Homer’s park system, including the following:
  - a. Identify an integrated “green infrastructure” system for the entirety of Homer, including parks, trails and open spaces. *See the “green infrastructure” section in Goal 2 of the Land Use Chapter, and in Goal 4, for details.*

- b. Establish regulations that facilitate the creation of parks as part of the development process.
  - i. Encourage developers to show existing or potential trails and open space resources on their development plans and demonstrate how they will retain these values in their projects.
  - ii. The City should consider developing a park dedication ordinance. These regulations require that new development either designate a certain amount of useable land for parks and trail access or pay into a park fund in lieu of land dedication.
- 4. In conjunction with a park ordinance, create park landscaping standards to find a balance between natural and manicured park development.
- 5. Develop a City greenhouse to better implement the City beautification program.

**Objective B:** Support and enhance City and community-sponsored year-round recreational facilities and programs to meet the needs of Homer’s youth, adult and senior populations.

### Implementation Strategies

In developing this comprehensive plan, a specific set of priority park-related projects and programs was identified, based on input from the community residents. These are discussed below.

- 1. Partner with other organizations. In addition to continuing to provide programs and facilities for which the City is directly responsible (e.g., campground, trails) the City could partner with schools, nonprofit organizations, and other community groups. Example include providing and helping to maintain land for parks and other recreational facilities.
- 2. Improve Access to Recreation Programs and Facilities.
  - a. Removing barriers to participation is important, particularly for youth and seniors. Suggested means to removing barriers to citizen participation in existing recreational activities include:
    - i. Offering transportation to/from facilities and events
    - ii. Sliding payment scales for participation in sporting activities and equipment purchase
    - iii. Providing facilities with a range of hours of operation
    - iv. Providing small facilities in a variety of locations throughout town
- 3. Establish Community Recreation Center.
 

The City’s role in a community recreation facility, if determined as a priority, includes providing political support for the establishment of the facility and assisting to secure space in an existing building or a site for the proposed facility.
- 4. Determine needed recreational facility improvements and programs using the following steps:
  - a. Conduct an inventory of parks and recreational facilities and programs. Identify key gaps and shortfalls.

- b. Work with user-groups to conduct a community survey to prioritize parks and recreation needs.
- c. Develop a priority recreation facility and program needs and assessment list.
- d. Identify funding sources.
- e. Use this list to raise and direct funds.

**GOAL 6:** Implement the recreation and cultural components of the Homer Town Center Development Plan for downtown.

### Implementation Strategies

A number of major initiatives may be needed to allow the town center to fully and sustainably develop. Plans for downtown are covered in the Land Use Chapter under Goal 4 – Objective A. A short summary of recommended actions include the improvements listed below. A more comprehensive list can be found in the Town Center Plan.

1. Build a town center plaza/town square in the town center area.
2. Build a public restroom in the town center.
3. Maintain a sense of the natural environment in the area through retention of streams and vegetation. Include park areas with a predominately natural feel, as well as more “urban” public spaces.
4. Continue to improve the existing city zoning ordinance to better meet town center goals.
5. Establish routes and right-of-ways for trails and sidewalks; create new north-south and east-west access roads.
6. Encourage new private business development required for a successful town center.

**GOAL 7:** Support public beach access.

**Objective A:** Support citizen efforts to maintain environmental quality and public use of beaches through the current Beach Policy.

The City of Homer has an adopted beach policy. As new challenges and opportunities arise, this document will need to be updated and the city will need to fund any plan implementation strategies. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission is the advisory body which makes recommendations to the City Council on beach issues. This objective is intended to empower Homer citizens to work with the Commission to make recommendations to the City Council on how to manage problems.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Support the policies and recommendations of the Beach Policy document.
2. As the need arises, update the beach policy and implement the recommendations.



**Objective B:** Maintain and Enhance public beach access

Implementation Strategies

1. Discourage right-of-way and public access easement vacations to the beach.
2. When opportunities arise, enhance or improve public access to the beach at public access points.

**GOAL 8:** Continue to improve local arts and culture opportunities and Homer’s reputation as an art-and-culture-friendly community.

**Objective A:** Establish mixed use zoning that accommodates art studio activities and residential living. *See Land Use Chapter.*

**Objective B:** Prepare a Homer Comprehensive Art and Cultural Assets and Needs Plan, including inventorying facilities, documenting future needs, and setting priorities for action such as fundraising, marketing and facilities.

The Economic Vitality Chapter also discusses how Homer can build from its existing strong art and culture base.

Implementation Strategies

1. Prepare a Homer Arts and Cultural Assets and Needs Plan. The City is not the organization to take the lead in this effort, but can be a partner. Key players include the Homer Council on the Arts, the Pratt Museum, the Islands and Ocean Center, as well as downtown and Old Town businesses. This plan could inventory current facilities, activities, and programs, as well as identify near term and longer term strategies to accelerate development of cultural resources. Strategies should be developed to find ways to maximize the community benefits of these developments.
  - a. The plan should address how to improve access to and the availability of arts and cultural activities to people of all ages. In addition, an arts and culture planning effort would be the first step in facilitating Objective C below.

**Objective C:** Evaluate the development of a new, multi-purpose cultural and community facility in Homer’s downtown.

Implementation Strategies

1. In the near term, continue to rely on existing facilities and a collaborative approach to host performing arts events, cultural activities, community meetings, conferences and conventions. The Islands and Ocean Center, Mariner Theater, library and high school currently provide facilities that can support many such uses.
2. As part of the City Hall/Town Square programming and design process, explore options to maximize the use of these new facilities to support a range of cultural, performing arts, conference and meeting activities. A new City Hall might allow for moderately sized community cultural and art events.

3. Design the Town Square to support a range of outdoor and/or partially covered community cultural and art events.
4. Define what is needed as part of this facility, what gap it will fill, what purpose it will serve; e.g., a performing arts space, exhibition hall, meeting facility?
5. Investigate options for creating the facility in downtown. In 2005, the City completed a feasibility assessment of a possible conference and convention facility and concluded that while such a facility would be valuable, there may not be enough demand to sustain its operations without significant public subsidy. In the future, as statewide demand for meeting and conference space expands, along with continued growth in the size of Homer and its capacity to cover costs, developing such a facility may become a practical, sustainable project.

### Parks, Recreation and Culture Implementation Table

Project	Timeframe			Primary Responsibility
	Near Term	Mid Term	Longer Term	
Design, fund, and build Town Center/Town Square.		x		City, community
Increase staffing at Parks & Recreation and determine if a merger with Community Schools would be appropriate.		x		City
Conduct parks inventory and needs assessment; establish a park dedication ordinance.		x		City, nonprofits
Establish, implement park landscaping standards.	x			City
Build a City greenhouse to support the Homer beautification program.			x	City
Improve access/remove barriers to using parks and recreation facilities.	x			City
Develop a community recreation facility.			x	City, nonprofits
Establish park endowment fund.		x		City
Develop public restrooms in downtown.	x			City
Support implementation of the Non-motorized Transportation Plan.	x			City, community
Investigate multipurpose arts and cultural facility.		x		City, nonprofits
Develop Arts and Culture Plan.		x		Nonprofits
Create a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.	x			City
Conduct a parks and recreation inventory to identify gaps and shortfalls in community offerings and facilities.	x			City, nonprofits
Update the Beach Policy.		x		City

# ■ CHAPTER 8 ECONOMIC VITALITY

---

**Vision Statement:** Homer’s economic industries including marine trades, commercial fishing, tourism, education, arts and culture remain strong and show continued growth. Quality of life is preserved while as Homer benefits from the creation of more year-round living wage jobs.

## Overview

This chapter presents goals and objectives related to economic development. While the private sector, along with state and federal spending, ultimately drives much of the economic activity, local government plays an important role in stimulating and guiding growth through its land use and infrastructure policies and projects.

The 1989 comprehensive plan stated:

Though it is generally recognized that fishing has been the backbone of the Homer economy for the past forty years, diversification of the Homer economy has taken place, especially in the last few years. Tourism, commercial and government services, retail trade, and a retirement population have been added in [the 1980s]...

These trends have continued and perhaps accelerated during the nineteen years since the 1989 plan. Homer enjoys a relatively diverse economy with a growing population and increasing property values.

Most of the economic development actions presented here are tied to topics addressed in other chapters. For example, recommendations regarding commercial development are included in Chapter 4 – Land Use. As a result, much of the value of this chapter is for those readers who are focused on economic issues and want to see a compilation of plan policies regarding economic development together in a single chapter. It is also possible that the Homer Economic Development Commission may prepare a more detailed economic development plan.

## Summary of Goals

**GOAL 1:** Define and encourage economic development that meets the desires and interests of Homer residents and positively supports the unique character of the community.

**GOAL 2:** Encourage the creation of more year-round, higher-wage jobs.

**GOAL 3:** Encourage the relocation of Federal and State Government jobs and training programs to Homer.

**GOAL 4:** Encourage technology related businesses such as information science, software development, and the entertainment industry.

**GOAL 5:** Strengthen the arts, education and entertainment industries.

**GOAL 6:** Strengthen the marine trade, mariculture, and shipping industries.

**GOAL 7:** Support regional renewable and non-renewable energy exploration and production.

**GOAL 8:** Strengthen Homer as a tourism destination.

**GOAL 9:** Provide affordable housing.

**GOAL 10:** Maintain Homer's quality of life as a principal economic asset.

### Goals and Objectives for Economic Vitality

**GOAL 1:** Define and encourage economic development that meets the desires and interests of Homer residents and positively supports the unique character of the community.



Homer: Not just the Halibut Capital of the World

For many communities it is easy to identify the type of economic development that they dislike or are not in favor of encouraging. What is harder to define is the type of economic development a community wants to foster. The goal of this chapter is to frame economic development that Homer can support and of which residents can be proud. Homer residents should continuously re-examine what type of industries and economic development activities they want to attract.

Currently, Homer would like to foster economic development in many of its existing sectors: education, sustainable tourism, health care, construction, commercial fishing and marine industries, arts and culture. These are the industries that Homer has been built upon. The industries are viable and stable today, and offer good prospects for growth. The remainder of this chapter looks in more detail at steps to further strengthen these economic sectors, and to do so in a manner which both provides economic opportunity and sustains Homer's unique character.



Economic development strategies could include:

1. Continue the growth of local businesses by supporting a buy local campaign and local bidder's preference in city procurement policies.
2. Encouraging the production or sales of goods and services to better serve the local economy.
3. Amend land use and taxation regulations to encourage production of custom or unique products to sell locally and outside the community; such as art, technology, or value added seafood products.
4. Encourage "import substitution;" i.e., leakage control by producing locally what is otherwise imported. An example is the local farmer's market, which provides produce which would otherwise be trucked into the community with profits leaving the community.
5. Partner with and support the efforts of other organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce to plan for economic development.
6. Review the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy periodically.

**GOAL 2: Encourage the creation of more year-round, higher wage jobs.**

Homer residents want to see more year-round employment that will enable local people to work, live, and raise their families in Homer. In discussing this goal, community members mentioned several specific outcomes consistent with this overall goal. These include:

1. Maintain all existing industries.
2. Increase the size and scope of Homer's educational and health care activities.
3. Promote entrepreneurial small business ventures and "footloose" professional activity, such as consulting, financial management, specialty manufacturing, and design.

"Footloose" activities are those businesses or skilled people that could live and produce their product or service anywhere, without specific geographic needs or constraints. Homer has several key attributes likely to attract the footloose economic sector. These include an exceptional quality of life, access to recreation amenities, a good regional airport, and an existing college campus. Obstacles to these types of development include distance from Anchorage, distance from the Lower 48 states, and a relatively small population base.

While almost all City actions will ultimately affect the course of economic change and job growth, City actions to promote year-round jobs include those listed below:

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Work with the University of Alaska and other educational institutions to determine what new programs might be developed, such as marine biology and/or adventure-based education.
2. Encourage opportunities for local residents to receive job training; e.g., through the University and vocational education opportunities in Homer.
3. Ensure that zoning and land use regulations do not unduly restrict entrepreneurial development and new business formation. Also ensure that the value of adjacent property is not degraded through noise, odor or similarly negative impacts. For instance, provide flexible zoning to support home-based businesses. *See Land Use chapter.*



4. Continue to work to maintain and improve Homer's quality of life (trails, parks, health care, downtown, etc.) capitalizing on and enhancing the area's attractive mix of amenities and natural, scenic beauty. *See below.*
5. Continue to improve Homer's public infrastructure, including the port, airport and road systems. *See Chapter 6, Public Services and Facilities.*
6. Promote and enable small-scale employers who may have different land use and infrastructure needs than one or two-person sole proprietorships.
7. Encourage science, information infrastructure, and technology-based business development that will help position Homer as a leader in responding to global challenges, including affordable health care and environmental sustainability.
8. Consider incentives for local business growth or relocations. This could be part of a broader business expansion and retention program in partnership with another organization, such as the Chamber of Commerce.
9. Remove unnecessary governmental barriers, focusing on simplification to ease transactions between business and government.
10. Establish and maintain consistent municipal standards and policies relating to the establishment and/or expansion of business activities on private and municipal lands.
11. Examine the benefits that could be gained by outsourcing government services.
12. Explore public transportation options.
13. Examine and replicate appropriate regional successes.

**GOAL 3: Encourage the relocation of Federal and State Government jobs and training programs to Homer.**

Government jobs are an important part of the local and regional economy. Government employment, whether research, visitor or education related, comprises 26% of local jobs (appendix A). Regionally, the Kenai Peninsula Borough averages 26% employment in the government sector, and all cities have a higher percentage of government employees, except for Kenai, which has 20% employment in this sector. (Kenai Peninsula Borough 2006 Situations and Prospects page 65). Some government employment is found in every community, such as local, borough and state jobs related to day to day activities (airports, roads, schools, etc). In addition, Homer has many residents who are employed through agencies such as state parks, the court system, the university, Fish and Game operations, and federal agencies such as Fish and Wildlife, the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve, and the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, which are headquartered in Homer. The City of Homer is also known as an important base for marine research and education activities.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Seek opportunities for naval/NOAA home port.
2. Encourage marine science education programs.

**GOAL 4: Encourage technology related businesses such as information science, software development, and the entertainment industry.**

Homer's beautiful scenery and quality of life can help attract technology related business ventures. Expanding this economic activity could create new skilled jobs, with few negative impacts.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Solicit and encourage businesses to relocate to Homer.
2. Improve Homer's information technology infrastructure in order to provide opportunities for small business entrepreneurs to operate globally (low cost high bandwidth internet services).
3. Create a tech/media promoter person to work with the community to promote tourism, using endowment and grant funds to work independently. The city could partner with another organization.

**GOAL 5: Strengthen the arts and education industries.**

Arts and education are two key industries that can provide steady jobs, decent income, and future growth. Global demand for both arts and education is growing with increasing incomes and population. Homer, by virtue of its setting and tradition of enthusiasm for the arts, is well positioned to take advantage of these trends.

Education is important to Homer's economic vitality for two reasons. First, it provides residents with the ability to acquire the skills and knowledge ("human capital") needed to succeed in the global economy. To the extent people can acquire these skills and knowledge without leaving home, they can earn higher incomes, create new businesses and jobs for others, and keep their education expenditures circulating in the local economy. Education is also an exportable product if people come to Homer to learn.

**Objective A: Promote the arts as a complement to tourism and as an export industry.**

The arts are a key component of the Homer economy and support the tourism industry. Actions to promote the arts include those listed below. Some of these objectives are best carried out by the City, while others are best undertaken by local arts groups and tourism marketing organizations with City cooperation and encouragement.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Establish mixed use zoning that accommodates art studio, art education activities, and residential living. *See also Chapter 4.*
2. Accommodate and promote arts events.
3. Investigate options for creating a new, multi-purpose cultural and community center in Homer's town center. *See also Chapter 7.*
4. Prepare a Homer Arts Plan, which includes inventorying facilities, documenting future needs, and setting priorities for action. The plan should also recommend strategies for fundraising, marketing and growth opportunities. *See also Chapter 7.*

**Objective B: Support efforts to increase the scale and scope of the education industry.**

The existing KBC of the University of Alaska provides essential post-secondary and vocational education to Homer residents. The economic impact is broad and significant. Additional educational programs are provided by several nonprofit organizations operating in Homer and across Kachemak Bay. The unspoiled marine environment and spectacular setting of Homer and Kachemak Bay are a significant asset that could be leveraged into growth of the education industry. In addition to the University of Alaska system, other educational institutions could create a branch campus or research facility in Homer. The implementation strategies below apply not only to KBC, but to any other interested educational institution.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Support the consolidation of KBC in one centralized university district.
2. Support the expansion of two- and four-year degree programs offered through the KBC such as marine biology, art, construction, welding, allied health and marine technology.
3. Work toward expansion of KBC into a residential campus of the university by promoting the private development of student housing.
4. Work with the university to establish a “study in Homer” program for students enrolled at the Anchorage campus, particularly in natural sciences, art, and creative writing.
5. Facilitate discussions about new collaborative educational programs that capitalize on Homer’s assets, including marine biology, coastal ecosystem management, and outdoor leadership studies.
6. Encourage the development of vocational and technical training opportunities, including welding, construction, and industrial technology, through the university and/or other private or nonprofit institutions.

**GOAL 6: Strengthen the marine trades including mariculture and shipping industries.**

Homer’s harbor and associated marine trade and services activities are an important component of the local and regional economy. Marine related activities could be expanded to increase the number of living wage, skilled jobs in the community. Oyster growing, on the south side of Kachemak Bay, also offers a chance for a local product to reach the local, state and national markets. Homer’s port facilities could also serve as a staging area for freight destined to more remote parts of the coast.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Facilitate the year-round availability of ice for fish processing.
2. Support and encourage commercial fishing.
3. Support the expansion of the Deep Water Dock.
4. Encourage competition in marine related retail and service entities on the Spit.
5. Consider plans to develop unimproved rights-of-way, for industrial lands that do not have road access, to support industrial activities.
6. Promote the relocation of and sustain the existing government marine facilities in Homer, such as the Coast Guard and ferry home porting of vessels, and scientific research vessels.

**GOAL 7:** Support regional renewable and non-renewable energy exploration and production.

Homer citizens support researching and pursuing renewable energy projects. Outside of the city, oil and gas exploration continues as the traditional sources of natural gas in Cook Inlet begin to decline, leaving the Anchorage market with a projected shortfall. Supporting the exploration, extraction and renewable energy industries does not necessarily have to compromise Homer’s scenery or quality of life. There are many opportunities to benefit from the construction, research, and extraction activities, whether through direct employment, or by providing services such as worker housing, catering, fuel, payroll and transportation to local and non local contractors who work on site.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Support staging areas for large development projects.
2. Encourage bioremediation, reclamation, decontamination, pollution control solutions at the local level.
3. Encourage recycling and resource reutilization in addition to the use of raw material.
4. Support efforts to supply local energy needs with natural gas.
5. Encourage utilities to provide lower cost electrical power to residential and industrial users (research new COOP for energy resource).
6. Promote renewable energy development locally and regionally.
7. Encourage business activities that provide support services to the energy, mining, oil and gas industries.

**GOAL 8:** Strengthen Homer as a tourism destination.

Homer is already one of Alaska’s premier tourist destinations and appears to be enjoying continuing growth in visitation and expenditures. For example, there were more than 500 full-time equivalent jobs in the “accommodations and food services” subsector of the leisure and hospitality industry in 2005.

Future tourism growth depends in large part on overall trends in visitation to Alaska, shifting demographics, fuel prices, and other global trends. However, City actions can have a significant impact on the economic importance of tourism by promoting longer stays, increased expenditures per person, and more repeat visitation. Equally important, City government plays a crucial role in guiding the growth of tourism to maximize its benefits and to minimize the costs imposed on the people of Homer.

**Objective A:** Invest in local infrastructure, parks, and civic improvements that will serve locals well as visitors by promoting longer stays, increased expenditures per person, and more repeat visitation as a form of economic development.

One economic development strategy is to find ways to encourage visitors to stay in the community longer during their visit, or to visit again in the future. The Farmer’s Market in downtown

Anchorage is an example; visitors to the market also visit other downtown businesses. Even staying an hour or two longer in the community may result in visitors eating more meals in local restaurants or spending more money shopping. The City benefits through increased sales tax revenue. To keep Homer an attractive destination requires that the City and private business work in partnership to provide the basic services that visitors and locals expect. These improvements and public expenditures should also benefit local tax payers.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Support and fund beautification efforts on Pioneer Avenue.
2. Partner with other community organizations to support local events that draw visitors such as festivals and art events. *See Chapter 7.*
3. Ensure that City facilities are sufficient to support these festivals and activities (e.g., restrooms on the Spit, RV dump stations, trash collection, park maintenance, etc).
4. Develop the Town Center as another draw for visitors in the City.
5. Support Pioneer Avenue/downtown businesses and other year-round businesses. The Spit is a huge draw and will continue to be. Effort should be made in the future to have more tourists visit downtown Homer to support year round businesses. Investment in tourist amenities should be equally focused on the Spit and downtown Homer.

**Objective B:** Support efforts to improve community attractions, including town center, trails, and access to marine activities and the marine environment. Improve links between attractions.

Homer can be considered to have three main tourism destination areas: The downtown and Old Town area, the Spit, and the area across Kachemak Bay. While each of these areas currently attracts numerous visitors, it is likely that more tourists could be accommodated and more spending could be encouraged if the unique attributes of each area were further developed and if better connections were made among the three areas. Ideally, the enhancements that attract more tourists equally benefit local residents as well, resulting in a win-win for business activity, tax receipts, and quality of life.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Implement and/or revise the existing Homer Spit Plan to clarify which areas of the Spit are oriented toward tourism and to encourage more private sector investment in these areas.
2. Complete the Town Center to provide a destination for shopping and other attractions serving both local residents and tourists in the downtown area.
3. Provide adequate parking for Spit attractions and/or efficient shuttle service between downtown and Spit areas.

More on these topics is presented in the Land Use and Transportation chapters.

**Objective C:** Increase the net benefits that tourism brings to Homer.

Homer's distinctive character and attractions create substantial economic benefits to the community in terms of jobs, business opportunities and tax revenues. Tourism also helps the community to host greater diversity and number of businesses and services than what local spending could support on its own. While tourism creates a wide array of benefits, it can also be disruptive to local life.



For example, tourism may exacerbate traffic congestion, transform commercial areas from local to visitor-serving, cause crowding at recreation destinations enjoyed by residents, and potentially adversely affect fish, wildlife and other elements of the natural environment.

As a result of this mix of positive and potential negative impacts, Homer should pursue a guided tourism growth policy. The community will promote tourism growth, but do so in a manner that helps sustain the qualities of the community that attract residents and visitors.

Preparing a full tourism management plan is beyond the scope of this comprehensive plan. Below are general objectives regarding tourism. Over time the community should develop a more focused community tourism plan.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Establish clear, community-supported goals for the preferred amount, character, and timing of tourism growth.
2. Identify specific target visitor groups by considering the relative benefits that different types of visitors bring. Some groups of visitors, such as independent travelers from Alaska or those who fly up and rent a car, may spend more money per person and stay longer in a location than another group of visitors, such as cruise ship passengers. Visitors with specific interests such as education, arts, culture, or attending specific events like sporting tournaments, may also bring more money into the community than others.
3. Emphasize Homer as a destination; those amenities that are valued during longer visits are likely to also improve the quality of life for residents.
4. Develop new attractions, services, and facilities that draw identified target markets. Emphasize projects that benefit both residents and visitors (e.g., trails).
5. Promote environmentally friendly tourism or “eco-tourism.” Community members have expressed a desire to encourage tourism activities that do not require extensive changes to the existing environment, but rather help to conserve Homer’s natural setting and improve the area. Activities such as tidal pool exploration, bird watching, wildlife viewing, educational activities, and other passive or quiet recreation could figure prominently in tourism planning for the City.
6. Actively promote Homer to identified target markets, including Alaska residents, out-of-state independent travelers, and small group package tour travelers. Specific actions include:
  - a. Collaborate with Chamber of Commerce, KPB, Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council, and other organizations to actively promote Homer.
  - b. Maintain and enhance Homer’s reputation as a welcoming and exciting destination by accommodating and encouraging events such as the Shorebird Festival and Kachemak Bay Writers’ Conference.
  - c. Take advantage of new sports facilities to host more regional or statewide sports events.
  - d. Continue to explore the establishment of conference and convention capabilities in existing and/or new facilities.
  - e. Ensure that adequate basic infrastructure, such as water, sewer, and transportation capacity is available to meet peak demands of increasing summer tourism activity, as well as “shoulder season” activities.

- f. Ensure that fiscal mechanisms are in place so that tourist spending covers the costs that tourism generates in the community (e.g., demand for water, sewer; parking and other public services and facilities).
  - g. City efforts to guide the growth of tourism shall aim to maximize the benefits of tourism and to minimize the costs imposed on the people of Homer.
  - h. Monitor tourism growth with attention to its specific impacts on the community. For example, compile an annual report on facts about number of visitors to specific locations (e.g., Chamber Visitor Center, Pratt Museum, Islands and Ocean Center), conduct periodic surveys showing use of city services by tourists, etc.
  - i. Extend the effective length of the tourism season by promoting “shoulder season” and year-round activities.
13. Create a community tourism plan, considering the items above.

**GOAL 9:** Encourage a range of sustainable housing options suitable for diverse income levels, age groups and tastes.

Many residents expressed the view that economic development depends, at least in part, on a balance between income and the cost of living. Specific strategies to promote a diverse range of housing options are discussed elsewhere in this plan. This goal is included as a component of economic vitality to explicitly reflect the connection between housing opportunities and the economic well-being of Homer. *See the Land Use Chapter for policies on housing.*

**GOAL 10:** Maintain and enhance Homer’s quality of life as a principal economic asset.

Quality of life is challenging to define because it involves many different dimensions of a community and different people place different degrees of importance on these factors. The elements of quality of life that particularly contribute to economic development are those features that make the community especially attractive to residents, visitors, and small businesses. While there is room for further improvement, Homer currently possesses many such elements. These include:

- A Strikingly beautiful natural setting.
- A clean, healthy, natural environment.
- A Diverse, engaged, involved community and rich civic life.
- An active arts community, tradition of skill and interest in performing and visual arts.
- Access to education and lifelong learning;
- The opportunity to live in high-quality housing, at a range of prices.
- Multiple transportation and access options, a developing trail system, and road access to Anchorage.
- A relatively concentrated mixed-use town center.
- Diverse culture and leisure activities, including ready access to parks and a wide range of year-round outdoor recreation.
- Good health services and shopping.
- A feeling of safety and freedom from crime.

Maintaining and improving the quality of life in Homer is crucial to keeping existing business and attracting new business and professional activity. It is also important for attracting tourists and keeping retirees and part-year residents in town, thus increasing the economic multiplier effects of spending by these people. Population growth can contribute to reduced quality of life if care is not taken to prevent unwelcome changes such as traffic congestion and loss of open space. On the other hand, cities much larger than Homer have managed to maintain and enhance quality of life through careful attention to development. Specific actions to maintain quality of life are discussed in other chapters of this plan. *See Chapters 4 through 9.*

### Economic Vitality Implementation Table

Project	Timeframe			Primary Responsibility
	Near Term	Mid Term	Longer Term	
Increase education health care job activities.		x		Community, businesses
Improve technology infrastructure.		x		City, businesses
Work with the University, KBC to develop education and vocation programs for Homer residents.		x		City, University, Students
Research and implement strategies to provide for a range of housing options.		x		City, developers
Accommodate and promote arts and culture events.	x			City, nonprofits
<i>Tourism</i>				
▪ Implement / revise the existing Homer Spit Plan.	x			See land use
▪ Implement the Town Center Development Plan.	x			City, community
▪ Provide adequate parking for Spit attractions and or efficient shuttle service between downtown and Spit areas.	x			City/private
▪ Prepare a Tourism Management Plan.		x		City, Chamber
<i>Relocation of state and federal jobs</i>				
▪ Seek opportunities for naval/NOAA home port.			x	City
<i>Natural Resources</i>				
▪ Expand the Deep Water Dock.			x	City
▪ Support commercial fishing and fish processing.	x	x	x	City
▪ Support staging areas for large development projects.		x		City
▪ Support efforts to supply local energy needs with natural gas.	x			City, Private enterprise
▪ Encourage research development and production of renewable and nonrenewable resources.	x			City, Private enterprise

*Continued on next page.*

Partner with and support the efforts of other organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, to plan for economic development.		x		City, Chamber
Consider a business retention, expansion and relocation program in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce.			x	City, Chamber
Review and update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy as needed.		x		City

## CHAPTER 9 ENERGY PLAN

**Vision Statement: The City of Homer will be seen as a model for energy conservation, wise use of environmental resources, and development of renewable energy through the actions of local government as well as the private sector. Benefits will include energy stability, money savings, and job creation.**

### Overview

Access to an affordable, secure supply of energy is necessary for almost every activity of government, business and private life. Energy policies can play a crucial role in the development of a

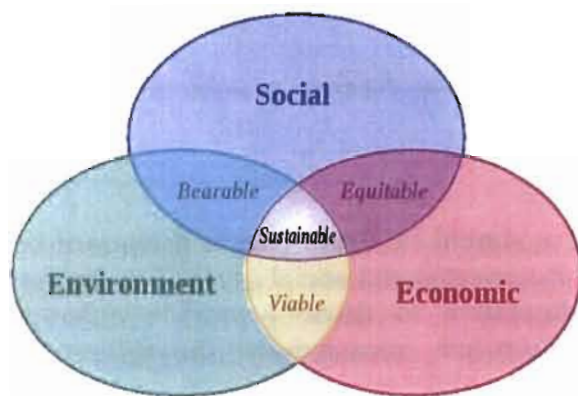


Figure 13 The three pillars of sustainability  
Author: Johann Dréo

local and regional energy system that can help ensure the long-term economic viability and livability of Homer. Currently, national energy policies are beginning to reflect the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and establish a fair degree of independence from uncertain international energy markets. Locally, policies can facilitate responsible contributions from our community to the global human and natural environment. Progressive energy policies should strive for an energy system that is sustainable, locally and globally. On the local level, some direct

benefits of these policies can include job creation and retention of money in the community, as the need to buy energy from sellers outside the region is reduced. In addition, addressing energy use in the transportation sector can improve quality of life by reducing traffic congestion and associated impacts.

The City of Homer has a role in the broader discussion of energy resources and conservation. One major role is to ensure municipal buildings and projects are energy efficient and as sustainable as possible, in a cost efficient manner. A second role includes working with public and private parties to support the use of local renewable resources for power generation. Taking advantage of local renewable energy production is likely to lead to the creation of new jobs. The City can accomplish these and other desired goals by creating and implementing a long-range energy plan.

The City of Homer continues to develop policies that further advance the goal of contributing to a more sustainable environment, seeking to be on the forefront of sustainable thought and action. This energy chapter builds on several recent efforts. Homer citizens and the City have produced and adopted a Climate Action Plan. The goal of the Climate Action Plan is to reduce the threat of global climate change through government and community efforts. Additionally, the City has recently produced an employee sustainability handbook. The employee handbook sets operations policies for City staff and is a resource for other organizations pursuing energy conservation. Both documents



suggest actions that citizens and government can take to reduce carbon emissions and conserve energy.

Several sections of the 2008 Homer Comprehensive Plan discuss energy related policies. The following chapters and goals also relate to this chapter and can be considered as part of the City's energy policies:

*Chapter 4 Land Use, Goal 1 Objective E, and Goal 3 Objective B*

- **Consider the regional and global impacts of development in Homer.**

Homer is a community that understands and appreciates its place in the context of the larger, global environment. As shown by its robust environmental community and the work of the City's Global Warming Task Force, Homer residents look beyond their boundaries and have expressed the importance of acting locally as a way of addressing global issues. Specific implementation items are listed in chapter 4.

- **Encourage high quality site design and buildings.**

Implementation actions in this chapter include items such as developing policies for LEED, Sustainable Sites and Low Impact Development. *See Chapter 4.*

*Chapter 5 Transportation, Goals 3 and 4*

- **Homer's transportation system and services should be developed in a manner that supports community land use, design, environmental and social goals. The trail and sidewalk network should provide an alternative to driving, provide enhanced recreational opportunities, and create auto-free connectivity throughout the community. *See Chapter 5.***

*Chapter 6 Public Service and Facilities, Goal 1*

- **Provide and improve city-operated facilities and services to meet the current needs of the community, anticipate growth, conserve energy, and keep pace with future demands. *See Chapter 6.***

*Chapter 8 Economic Vitality, Goal 7*

- **Support regional renewable and non-renewable energy exploration and production.**

Implementation items include encouraging renewable energy development locally and regionally and supporting efforts to supply local energy needs with natural gas. *See Chapter 8.*

## **Summary of Goals**

**GOAL 1:** Establish and implement an energy plan with emphasis on long term sustainability and affordability.

**GOAL 2:** Implement waste reduction, reuse and recycling program.

**GOAL 3:** Use technologies and operating practices that promote energy efficiency for all new and existing buildings and energy-using projects.

**GOAL 4:** Support renewable-energy research and development.

**GOAL 5:** Reduce dependence on fossil fuels used for transportation.

**GOAL 6:** Encourage industrial and commercial users to be energy efficient, to use renewable resources, and to make energy by-products available for use elsewhere in the community.

## **Goals and Objectives for Energy Planning**

**GOAL 1:** Establish and implement an energy plan with emphasis on long term sustainability and affordability.

### **Energy Planning**

The energy industry is changing rapidly as renewable energy sources are found and new technologies emerge. Federal and State funding sources may become available for renewable energy projects and/or energy efficiency planning and implementation. Homer should examine these funding opportunities and emerging technologies for potential use in the community.

A sound energy policy has several basic principles. There must be an understanding of the energy source, the financial and environmental implications of utilizing that source, and where and how the energy is used. In order to implement the policies outlined in this chapter, it is necessary to establish a plan for the future use of energy resources. Homer should analyze the energy systems supplying the community, potential renewable energy resources, and emerging technologies. The end goal is long term, affordable, sustainable energy supplies.

### **Implementation Strategies**

1. Work with the State of Alaska, Kenai Peninsula Borough, Homer Electric Association, Kachemak Bay communities and other entities in planning for energy resource development and use on the Southern Kenai Peninsula.
2. Develop and implement a long-range energy plan for Homer. The plan should address the City's energy use and include management goals, objectives, and an action plan. The plan should consider renewable energy sources, emerging technologies, other plans being developed within the region and the state, and national energy policies that may impact the local market.
3. Potential renewable energy resources close to Homer should be protected. This includes projects that are permitted through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, including dams and tidal generation facilities.

**GOAL 2:** Implement a waste reduction, reuse and recycling program.

Minimizing solid waste is in the long-term interest of the community. Reducing garbage in the land fill will stretch the life of existing facilities and postpone the expensive process of constructing new disposal sites. The three R's - Reduce, Reuse and Recycle - are the pillars of solid waste reduction. Since Homer is located far from major recycling markets, it may not currently be energy efficient or economical to recycle some materials. Therefore, reuse of materials, and using less material (reducing) are especially important. Effective solid waste reduction requires coordination between the public, private, and non-profit sectors. Some programs may not be cost effective in Homer alone. The City should work with the Kenai Peninsula Borough and private entities to take advantage of recycling and waste reduction opportunities.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Develop a solid waste and recycling plan for municipal facilities and operations.
2. Develop a solid waste and recycling management strategy for users of the Homer transfer station in cooperation with the Kenai Peninsula Borough.
3. Coordinate/cooperate with other Kachemak Bay communities, the Kenai Peninsula Borough, private companies and non-profit organizations within the region on solid waste management and recycling programs.
4. Develop procurement policies to reduce resource and energy consumption “upstream.” *See Sustainability Guidebook.*

**GOAL 3:** Use technologies and operating practices that promote energy efficiency for all new and existing buildings and energy-using projects.

Objective A addresses specific actions for the City of Homer. Objective B addresses both public and private actions.

**Objective A:** City of Homer operations and actions will save taxpayer money and set an example for businesses and individuals in adopting cost effective energy saving technologies and operating procedures.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Continue to implement the Climate Action Plan and the employee sustainability guidebook for City facilities and operations.
2. Establish and utilize a revolving fund to invest in cost effective energy-saving public projects.
3. Monitor and report energy use.
4. When designing new facilities or major renovation of City facilities, analyze life cycle costs of energy applications with consideration of energy efficiency and renewable energy sources given priority.
5. Analyze the workings of the Homer water and wastewater facilities and incorporate energy saving methods and technologies where appropriate.
6. Practice and encourage energy efficiency and conservation to reduce the amount of money leaving the community to pay for fuels.

7. Actively support the development of renewable energy projects.
8. Promote water conservation measures.

**Objective B:** Encourage energy efficiency in building construction and for the life of the building.

Buildings use a lot of energy over their lifecycle, and construction is a very energy and material intense activity. Building and construction design can minimize construction waste and maximize energy efficiency. *See also Chapter 4 as referenced above.*

#### Implementation Strategies

1. Incorporate LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) or similar principles and standards when designing public structures and facilities. The LEED or other standards should be adapted for local climate and materials resources and should include lifecycle cost analyses (including long-term operational costs) with appropriate fuel cost sensitivity analyses over the long-term life of the project. The ratio between maximum energy efficiency and construction cost should be the primary consideration.
2. Encourage consideration of lifecycle costs, the use of energy efficient construction techniques, materials, waste reduction, and equipment that are consistent with acceptable health and safety standards and that are appropriate for local climatic conditions, while finding a balance with project costs.
3. Use materials efficiently. Use design techniques and implementation to design buildings that create less construction waste.

**Objective C:** Include the full costs, direct and indirect, of energy use when performing economic analyses.

The real environmental and social costs of fossil fuels are not reflected in consumer prices. Consumers pay the cost of energy production and transportation, but not directly for air pollution, health problems, or other environmental or social effects of burning fossil fuels. "True or full cost accounting" is a term used to describe how a dollar value can be attributed to these indirect costs. Wise energy production and use requires these external costs to be internalized in energy prices. Paying the true cost will increase energy prices, but also will encourage energy conservation and energy production from renewable sources. Presumably when the full cost of fossil fuels are reflected in consumer prices, renewable energy will be cost competitive.

#### Implementation Strategies

1. Include the full costs, direct and indirect, of energy use when performing economic analyses.
2. Use quantifiable external and indirect costs in establishing the cost of energy when conducting lifecycle cost analyses of City facilities, projects, and operations.

**GOAL 4:** Support renewable-energy research and development.

Homer's proximity to hydroelectric generation and potential ocean energy resources presents an opportunity to guide future energy consumption toward renewable energy sources and away from the negative economic and environmental impacts associated with fossil fuel consumption. Least-cost planning, where energy conservation investment is weighed against energy purchase investment, with life-cycle costs factored in, can provide a framework for cost-effective, responsible energy planning and conservation. Renewable-energy activities can also create high paying local jobs.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Support research efforts to identify potential renewable energy sources and technologies.
2. Encourage programs and projects that will attract and/or train workers for jobs related to renewable energy research and development. *See also Chapter 8.*
3. Encourage the development of tidal, geothermal, wind and other renewable energy sources to generate energy for adjacent uses or for transmission to the electrical grid.

**GOAL 5:** Reduce dependence on fossil fuels used for transportation.

**Objective A:** Reduce vehicle miles traveled and promote a walkable and bikeable community.

Transportation can be a substantial expense for households, businesses, and local government particularly with upward trends in the price of oil. In addition, vehicle traffic in the Homer area contributes to traffic congestion, noise and air pollution, and is responsible for more than one-fifth of the community's greenhouse gas emissions. Affordable, renewable-energy transportation is a goal for the future, and until the technology is available, there are interim steps that can be taken to reduce oil dependence. Carpooling, public/private transportation (including seasonal services such as a shuttle to the Spit) and infrastructure for non-motorized transportation (walking and biking) and implementation of other Smart Growth land use practices will help reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

**Implementation Strategies**

1. Promote the use of public transportation and carpooling to reduce vehicle miles traveled in Homer.
2. Establish and maintain infrastructure for community-wide non-motorized transportation including sidewalks, bike paths, bike racks and trails.

**GOAL 6:** Encourage industrial and commercial users to be energy efficient, to use renewable resources, and to make energy by-products available for use elsewhere in the community.

Industries with large amounts of fuel or energy by-products (e.g. wood waste or steam), may be able to generate electricity to add to the utility grid. The design and operation of industrial developments



can be managed to reduce or transfer this otherwise wasted energy and also to maximize use of renewable energy. This can increase overall community energy efficiency.

### Implementation Strategies

1. Encourage cost effective development of co-generated electrical energy.
2. Encourage energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources in commercial and industrial developments.

## Energy Planning Implementation Table

As used below, “near-term” means one to five years; “mid-term” means five to ten years; and “long-term” means ten years or longer.

Implementation Table

Project	Timeframe			Primary Responsibility
	Near Term	Mid Term	Longer Term	
Create an energy plan.		x		City
Implement the Climate Action Plan, employee Sustainability Guidebook, and strategies to grow and maintain the Sustainably Fund.	x			City
Improve energy efficiency and conservation in City facilities.	x			City
Create a solid waste and recycling plan for City operations, and update procurement policies to reduce “upstream” waste and pollution.	x			City
Partner with public, private, and non-profit organizations to implement a plan to reduce, reuse and recycle solid waste.		x		City, Borough, public and private organizations

# CHAPTER 10 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

---

## Overview

This chapter presents a general approach for actions needed to reach the goals identified by this comprehensive plan. The best measure of the value of a plan is that it provides helpful guidance for ongoing community actions.

Homer's City Council and City administration already engage in an ongoing process of setting goals, evaluating options, and reaching conclusions about community needs and the best course for municipal action. They will use the framework established by the comprehensive plan to encourage planning consistency and to guide decisions leading to coherent and sustainable development in Homer for the next decade and beyond.

It is important to emphasize that the Homer City Council will make the final decisions on specific timing of actions identified in this plan. The plan establishes general priorities for action in the table on the following pages. This table identifies and prioritizes specific comprehensive plan implementation actions. The table lists actions that are the direct responsibility of the City of Homer, and the departments, commissions, and community partners that will contribute to accomplishing the desired outcome.

## Process for Revising the Comprehensive Plan

The success of the Homer Comprehensive Plan process requires that the document remain relevant and usable as a guide to consistently shape Homer's land use, physical development, and provision of public services and facilities. The City should establish a formal process for monitoring plan implementation. Regular reviews of the comprehensive plan and periodic amendments, as conditions warrant, will keep the document useful and up to date.

A comprehensive plan is intended to be a long-range planning document, guiding growth and development over 20 years and longer. However, as a "living document" in a rapidly changing world, the plan needs to be open to change in two ways.

First, amendments should be made when needed, rather than saving all changes for major plan rewrites. The plan should be a useful, current document, throughout the time it is used. Amending the plan to reflect success and failures should occur regularly. Amendments to the plan must follow public process through the City and the Borough.

Second, the plan needs to be regularly updated – typically every five years. The City of Homer Comprehensive Plan and comprehensive plan land use recommendation map should be reviewed after five years by the City Council to determine which actions have been accomplished and which should next be pursued. Over time such revisions to and tracking of the plan will help document the accomplishments and reveal new priorities. The time frames in the implementation tables are not binding, but are suggested sequential steps.

## Implementation Table

The implementation table in this chapter and throughout the plan includes a timeframe for each action. Generally, near term is one to five years from plan adoption, midterm is five to ten years, and long term is more than ten years.

## Summary of Plan Priorities

**Land Use.** See Chapter 4 for details.

Project	Timeframe			Primary Responsibility
	Near Term	Mid Term	Longer Term	
<i>Improved Zoning</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop new zoning code to implement new categories.</li> </ul>			x	City, Planning Department and Commission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Recommendation map on an area by area basis to determine the feasibility and acceptability of rezoning.</li> </ul>			x	City, Planning Department and Commission
<i>Improved Standards and Regulations</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a new City subdivision code.</li> </ul>	x			City, Planning Department and Commission, Public Works
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluate and consider shifting platting authority from Borough to City of Homer.</li> </ul>			x	City Council, Administration, Planning Department and Commission, Public Works and Kenai Peninsula Borough
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adopt new development standards for development in environmentally sensitive areas. Includes road construction practices.</li> </ul>	x			City Planning Department and Commission, Public Works, Transportation Advisory Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create new development standards for higher density residential development.</li> </ul>		x		City, Planning Department and Commission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adopt building codes.</li> </ul>		x		City Council, with future Building Inspector
<i>Green Infrastructure</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluate incentives to promote development that uses the green infrastructure ideas presented in Appendix D.</li> </ul>	x			City, Planning Department and Commission,
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop new standards to address issues related to shore stabilization and ocean front development.</li> </ul>		x		City Planning Department and Commission,
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adopt guidelines for sustainable development such as energy efficiency, use of recycled materials, and low impact landscaping in city buildings.</li> </ul>	x			City Administration, Council
<i>Pattern of Development</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with Borough to prepare mutually acceptable development standards.</li> </ul>		x		City, with Kenai Peninsula Borough
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish more specific criteria, process, schedule and objectives for possible future annexations.</li> </ul>		x		City Council, Administration, Public Works, Finance, Planning

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amend city code to recognize the transfer of development rights to preserve environmentally sensitive or recreational areas.</li> </ul>	x			City Planning Department and Commission, Borough
--	---	--	--	--

**Transportation.** *See Chapter 5 for details.*

Project	Timeframe			Primary Responsibility
	Near Term	Mid Term	Longer Term	
Establish a Road Corridor Preservation Program and adopt appropriate ordinances (e.g., road standards, cost sharing mechanisms).	x			City, Public Works, Planning Department, Planning Commission,
Update the 1986 Master Streets and Roads Plan and the 2005 Transportation Plan. Implement the Transportation Plan.		x		City, Public Works, Planning Department, Planning Commission, Transportation Advisory Committee
<i>Parking</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct strategically located parking lots in or near downtown.</li> </ul>		x		City, Administration, downtown businesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve/increase on-street parking.</li> </ul>		x		City, Planning Department and Commission, Public Works
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow for shared parking and in-lieu fees for downtown businesses.</li> </ul>		x		City, Planning Department and Commission,
<i>Trails/Non-motorized Transportation</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop bike/pedestrian friendly roadway design standards.</li> </ul>	x			City Public Works, Transportation Advisory Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the policy recommendations of the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, e.g. an acceptance policy for trail easements.</li> </ul>	x			City Public Works, Administration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build the recommended trail connections in the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan.</li> </ul>	x	x	x	City Council, Public Works, Parks and Recreation Commission, Transportation Advisory Committee, Planning, nonprofits, developers

**Public Services & Facilities.** *See Chapter 6 for details.*

Project	Timeframe			Primary Responsibility
	Near Term	Mid Term	Longer Term	
<i>Fire &amp; Emergency Services</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct new building and training facility.</li> </ul>		x		City Administration, Council, Fire Department

▪ Develop satellite facility on Skyline Drive.	x			City Administration, Fire Department
▪ Hire Fire Marshal/Code Examiner.	x			City, Council
▪ Increase volunteer core to 50 people.		x		City, Fire Dept, volunteers
▪ Increase marine fire/emergency response capabilities.		x		City, Port & Harbor merchants & patrons
▪ Increase training opportunities.		x		City, Fire Department
▪ Update Emergency Operations & Hazard Plans.			x	City, Fire Department
<i>Police Department</i>				
▪ Hire dedicated Homer Spit Officer for summer months.	x			City, Council, Police Department, Port and Harbor
▪ Address retention and recruitment issues, and retain a competitive compensation package.	x			City, Police Department, Council
▪ Implement a reasonable vehicle replacement plan.		x		City Council, Administration, Public Works
▪ Construct new building.		x		City Council, Administration
<i>Water &amp; Sewer</i>				
▪ Institute a community water conservation program and provide incentives.	x			City, Public Works, Finance, Council
▪ Implement the Water Sewer Master Plan.	x	x	x	City, Public Works, Finance, Council
▪ Construct water and sewer lines to developed properties as demand warrants.			x	City Public Works, Council
▪ Develop a new water source.			x	City, Administration, Public Works
▪ Repair and rehabilitate sewer mains to reduce infiltration.	x			City, Public Works
▪ Enact a sewer inflow reduction program.	x			City, Public Works
<i>Port &amp; Harbor</i>				
▪ Complete the Port and Harbor projects listed in Homer's current CIP, including:	x	x	x	City, Council, Administration, Port and Harbor, ACOE, AKDOT
▪ Create an East Boat Harbor			x	
▪ Address general harbor maintenance and erosion control	x			
▪ Complete Homer Spit trail and harbor pathways	x			
▪ Improve restrooms along the spit trail			x	
▪ Build new Port and Harbormaster facility	x			



▪ Address parking/develop spit shuttle	x			See land use City, Council, Administration, Port and Harbor
▪ Monitor erosion of Spit	x			City, ACOE, AKDOT, KBRR, KPB Coastal Management District
<i>Solid Waste</i>				
▪ Institute measures to improve recycling among City departments.	x			City Administration
▪ Work with the Borough on developing future strategies for waste disposal.	x			City Administration, Borough
<i>Library</i>				
▪ Increase staff to respond to increased demand.		x		City Council, Administration
<i>Administration</i>				
▪ Build a new City Hall and Plaza.		x		City Council, Administration
<i>Senior Services</i>				
▪ Improve accessibility for senior citizens. Require all public facilities be accessible for seniors and individuals with disabilities.	x			City Administration, Public Works, Planning Department and Commission
▪ Encourage or create incentives for private businesses to provide or improve accessibility for seniors.		x		City, business community
<i>Youth Services</i>				
▪ Provide a range of activities and programs to benefit youth.		x		City, Parks and Recreation/Community Schools, nonprofits
<i>Education</i>				
▪ Continue to partner and work to support efforts of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District.			x	City, KPB
<i>Storm Water</i>				
▪ Develop storm water design criteria for large parcel development.	x			City, Public Works
▪ Adopt area-wide storm water management standards.		x		City, Public Works
▪ Encourage the utilization of green infrastructure mapping as a means to identify and retain natural drainage channels and important wetlands, which serve drainage functions.	x			City, Public Works, Planning
<i>Community Capacity</i>				
▪ Continue to work with residents and businesses to better understand community priorities, and to the	x			City, All departments

extent possible, find resources to meet these needs.				
▪ Continue to work with citizen groups and nonprofit organizations which play a large role in providing desired services in Homer.	x			City, Community
▪ Increase the net revenues coming into the city, through managing costs and expanding the community's tax base.	x			City Council, Administration, Community
▪ Support the efficient use of existing community facilities. Partner with organizations to keep city facilities operating beyond normal hours	x			City

**Parks, Recreation, & Culture.** *See Chapter 7 for details.*

Project	Timeframe			Primary Responsibility
	Near Term	Mid Term	Longer Term	
Increase staffing at Parks & Recreation and determine if a merger with Community Schools would be appropriate.		x		City, City Council
Conduct parks inventory and needs assessment; establish a park dedication ordinance.		x		City, nonprofits, Public Works, Planning and Parks and Recreation Departments and Commissions
Establish, implement park landscaping standards.	x			City, Parks and Recreation
Build a city greenhouse to support the Homer beautification program.			x	City, Administration, Parks and Recreation
Improve access/remove barriers to using parks and recreation facilities.	x			City, Parks and Recreation
Develop a community recreation facility.			x	City, nonprofits
Establish park endowment fund.		x		City, City Council, Friends groups, non-profits
Develop public restrooms in downtown.	x			City, Administration
Investigate multipurpose arts and cultural facility.		x		City Administration, nonprofits
Create a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.	x			City, Public Works, Parks and Recreation Department and Commission, Planning
Update the Beach Policy.		x		City, Parks and Recreation Commission, Police Department

**Economic Vitality.** *See Chapter 8 for details.*

	<b>Timeframe</b>	
--	------------------	--

Project	Timeframe			Primary Responsibility
	Near Term	Mid Term	Longer Term	
Improve technology infrastructure.		x		City, businesses
Work with the University, KBC to develop education and vocation programs for Homer residents.		x		City, Economic Development Commission, University, Students
Research and implement strategies to provide for a range of housing options.		x		City, developers
Accommodate and promote arts and culture events.	x			City, Public Arts Committee, nonprofits
<i>Tourism</i>				
▪ Provide adequate parking for Spit attractions and/or efficient shuttle service between downtown and Spit areas.	x			City/private
▪ Prepare a Tourism Management Plan.		x		City, Chamber
<i>Natural Resources</i>				
▪ Expand the Deep Water Dock.			x	City Council, Port and Harbor Commission and Department
▪ Support commercial fishing and fish processing.	x	x	x	City, Council, Lease Committee, Port and Harbor and Economic Development Commissions
Support staging areas for large development projects.		x		City, Council, Lease Committee, Economic Development Commission
Partner with and support the efforts of other organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, to plan for economic development.		x		City, Council, Economic Development Commission, Chamber
Review and update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy as needed.		x		City, all departments, Council

**Energy Plan.** *See Chapter 9 for details*

Project	Timeframe			Primary Responsibility
	Near Term	Mid Term	Longer Term	
Create an energy plan.		x		City - Administration
Implement the Climate Action Plan, employee Sustainability Guidebook, and strategies to grow and maintain the Sustainably Fund.	x			City - Administration, City Council
Improve energy efficiency and conservation in City	x			City - Administration

facilities.				
Create a solid waste and recycling plan for City operations, and update procurement policies to reduce "upstream" waste and pollution.	x			City – Administration, Finance
Partner with public, private and non-profit organizations to implement a plan to reduce, reuse and recycle solid waste.		x		City Administration, borough, public and private organizations

## Appendix A

### Growth Scenarios for Homer

14 March 2007

prepared by:  
Steve Colt

Institute of Social and Economic Research  
University of Alaska Anchorage

#### Introduction

This section presents data showing how Homer has grown since 1960. These data are then combined with regional and statewide economic projections developed by ISER to arrive at plausible growth rates for population and employment in Homer through 2030.

Homer is a small community not tied directly to a major urban center in the way that, for instance, Mat-Su places are tied to Anchorage. Homer's future growth will be driven by a combination of 1) what happens to the Alaska economy and 2) specific factors that are more or less independent of what is happening in the Alaska economy. These include things like the prices for the mix of fish species that Homer fishers tend to catch, the growth of specific visitor attractions similar to the Islands and Oceans center, and the location decisions of major retailers or other businesses. Perhaps most important of all, and most difficult to forecast, is the growth of Homer as a quality of life community that is attracting wealthy people who want to live there. This growth will depend partly on the actions that citizens take to maintain the current attractive qualities, and it will probably also depend on more mysterious attributes that economists call "reputation effects." If Homer remains a "hot" residential destination, then it can grow, at least in some dimensions, more or less independently of changes in the conventional "economic base."

The data presented below show that Homer's growth seems to track changes in the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) economy. By exploiting this relationship, ISER economic projections for Alaska and for the KPB can be used as a benchmark for projecting future growth in Homer. A high growth scenario is also presented that is consistent with projections used in the recently adopted Homer Water and Sewer Master Plan (2006).

#### Historical Growth

Homer underwent a "growth spurt" by annexing part of Diamond Ridge and all of Miller's Landing in 2002. This was geographic growth, not economic growth. Table 6 provides a more consistent data set by combining these three areas into one.



Table 6. Historical Population Growth

	1980	1990	2000	2006	avg growth 80-90	avg growth 90-00	avg growth 00-06
Homer/Miller Ldg/Diamond Ridge	2,790	4,821	5,822	6,144	5.6%	1.9%	0.5%
Greater Homer	3,721	7,466	9,701	10,128	7.2%	2.7%	0.4%
KPB	25,282	40,486	49,691	51,350	4.8%	2.1%	0.3%
Alaska	401,851	550,043	626,931	670,053	3.2%	1.3%	0.7%

Note: "Greater Homer" includes Homer City, Miller's Landing, Diamond Ridge (all of it), Fritz Creek, Kachemak City, and Anchor Point.

Source: U.S. Census (1980-2000), Alaska Dept. of Labor (2006).

When this adjustment for the changing geography is made, it can be seen that Homer's fastest economic growth occurred in the 1980s. Population growth then slowed down and during the past six years both Homer and "Greater Homer" grew more slowly than Alaska, and just a bit faster than the Borough.

Figure 7. Population Growth Rates

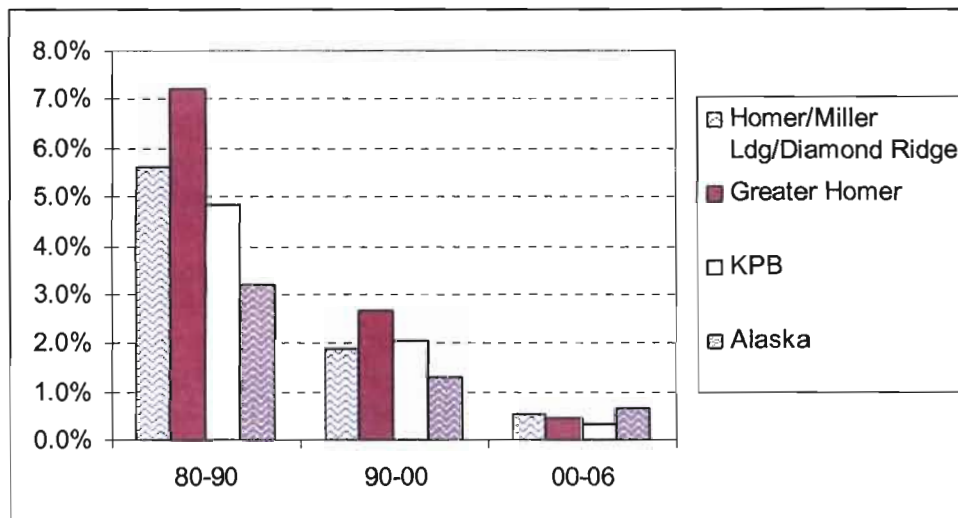
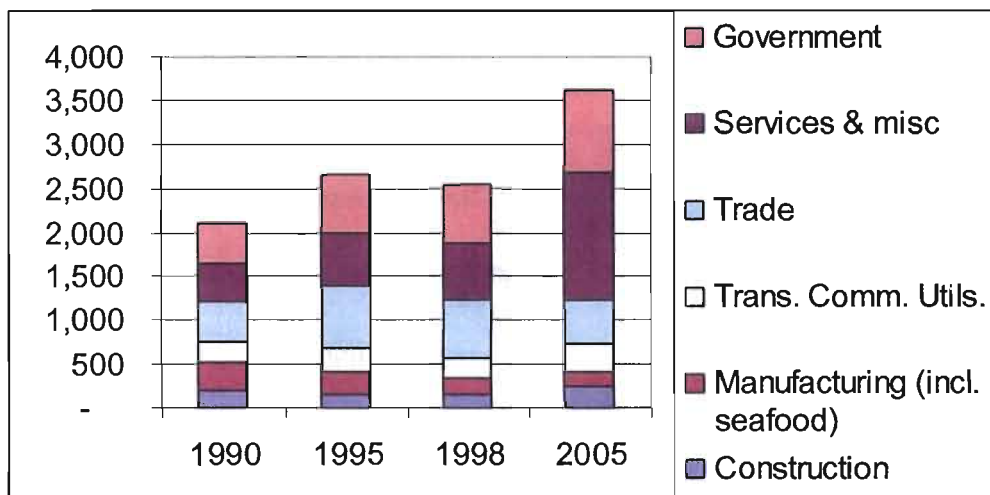


Table 7 shows historical wage and salary employment growth for the region. (Wage and salary employment excludes fish harvesters and sole proprietor businesses.) Homer employment surged upward at more than 5% per year after 1998. A small part of this increase may be due to annexation, but the main reason appears to be the growth in tourism. The services category of employment more than doubled between 1998 and 2005. There were more than 500 full-time equivalent workers in the "accommodations and food services" sub sector alone as of 2005. (Because new classifications were adopted in 2002, it is not possible to compare this figure with prior years.)

Table 7. Historical Wage and Salary Employment Growth

	1990	1995	1998	2005	avg growth 90-98	Homer avg growth 98-05
Construction	214	163	165	248	-3.2%	6.0%
Manufacturing (incl. seafood)	304	242	167	163	-7.2%	-0.3%
Trans. Comm. Utils.	245	288	229	319	-0.8%	4.8%
Trade	450	696	664	501	5.0%	-3.9%
Services & misc	426	602	654	1,440	5.5%	11.9%
Government	463	655	660	937	4.5%	5.1%
Total	2,102	2,646	2,539	3,608	2.4%	5.1%

Figure 8. Homer Wage and Salary Employment by Sector, 1990-2005



### Comparison of Homer to KPB

Clearly Homer cannot simply be tied to the entire State of Alaska when making future projections. However, Homer does seem to track the KPB economy fairly well. This conclusion is based on the following three empirical tests.

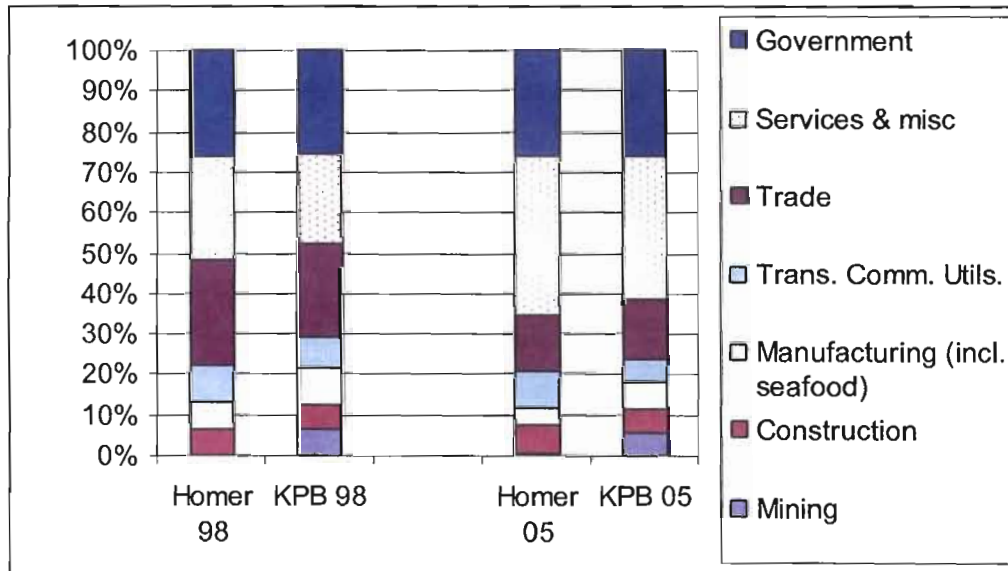
**Test 1. Population growth.** Data presented above show that Homer population (as measured with Diamond Ridge and Miller's Landing included) grew at about the same rate as KPB population during the 1990s and during the past 6 years. The rates for 2000 through 2006 are 0.5% for Homer and 0.3% per year for KPB, which are substantially the same.

**Test 2. Employment growth and structural change.** Table 8 compares employment by broad sector in Homer to employment in the KPB. The broad classifications are necessary because the classification system changed in 2000. The data show that employment in Homer grew much faster than in KPB, with the extra growth concentrated in services.

Table 8. Employment by Sector: Homer versus KPB

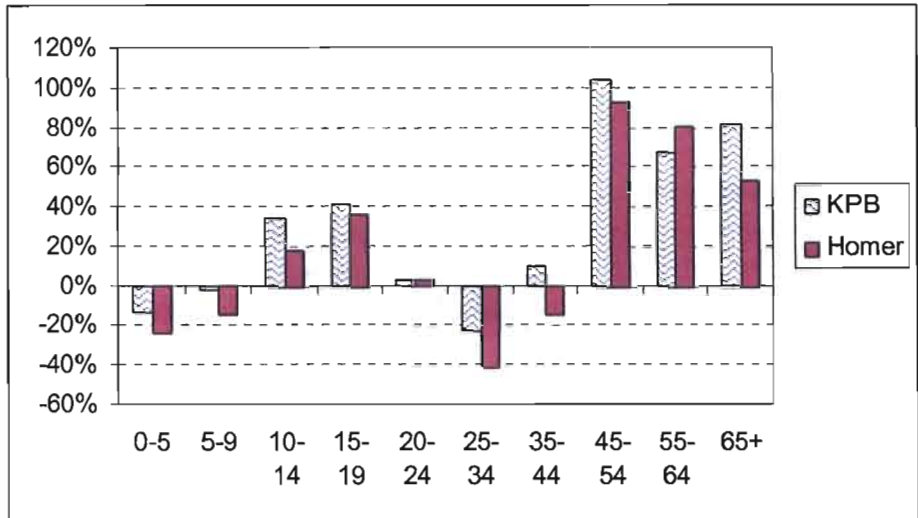
Industry	1998		2005	
	Homer 98	KPB 98	Homer 05	KPB 05
Mining	-	1,096	18	1,005
Construction	165	914	248	1,054
Manufacturing (incl. seafood)	167	1,614	163	1,234
Trans. Comm. Utils.	229	1,199	319	978
Trade	664	3,831	501	2,649
Services & misc	654	3,706	1,422	6,472
Government	660	4,226	937	4,683
Total	2,539	16,586	3,608	18,075
Avg growth, 1998-05	5.1%	1.2%		

Figure 9. Composition of Employment in Homer and KPB



**Test 3. Change in age structure.** The final test addresses the issue of demographic change and the aging baby boomers. Is Homer “aging” faster than the KPB? This would indicate that KPB projections are less useful for projecting Homer conditions. Figure 10 shows the change in population between 1990 and 2000 for specific age cohorts. These changes are remarkably similar. Unfortunately there is no data by specific age cohort for recent years so it is conceivable that Homer’s age structure no longer matches the KPB structure. However, the match through the 1990s is reassuring.

Figure 10. Comparison of Change in the Age Structures of Homer and KPB between 1990 and 2000



Note: the vertical axis measures the percentage change in the size of each cohort during the decade of the 1990s.

### Projections of future growth

These tests show that regional economic projections for the KPB can be used as a good starting point for developing Homer growth scenarios. The data are all consistent with a “model” in which economic growth in Homer – or at least in Greater Homer -- is *at least as high* as the regional growth of the KPB. Due to tourism expansion and the continuing draw of Homer for retirees and footloose businesspeople, a significantly higher growth rate for Homer is still consistent with the regional and statewide growth projected by ISER.

**KPB growth projections.** In 2005 ISER completed a detailed set of economic projections for Alaska using its econometric model of the Alaska economy. These included regional projections for KPB that are fully consistent with the statewide growth path. The KPB projections are based on a number of specific assumptions about economic development projects. Table 9 shows a summary these assumptions and Table 10 shows the projections for the KPB.

Table 9. Summary of Assumptions Driving the KPB Projections

Industry or Project	BASE case assumption for econometric model
Petroleum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Constant employment on N Slope, at industry HQ, and in Cook Inlet exploration and development.</li> <li>*ANWR not developed</li> <li>*Agrium and LNG plants close by 2010 due to lack of inexpensive gas</li> <li>* North Slope gas development generates 500 annual petroleum jobs starting in 2010</li> </ul>
Mining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Greens Creek, Red Dog, Fort Knox, Healy Coal maintain constant employment</li> <li>* Pogo (2006), Kensington (2007), Pebble (2012), Donlin Creek (2015), Beluga Coal (2011) begin production</li> <li>*Other misc. mining increases 4% per year.</li> </ul>
Seafood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Constant employment in harvesting and processing</li> </ul>
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Index of tourist visitor expenditures (measuring visitors, days, and real expenditures per visitor day) increases by 5% with tourism employment growth of 3% thru 2025 and then 2%. Tourism-related infrastructure development grows 2% annually thru 2015 and then 1%. This growth applies equally to all regions.</li> </ul>
Retiree income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Real income per retiree increases at 0.5% per year. (Statewide average).</li> </ul>
Federal government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Military: Kulis closure and realignments under the BRAC process result in loss of 4,200 active duty military and 500 civilian department of defense employees in 2006 thru 2010.</li> <li>*Federal civilian employment continues to increase at long-run rate of 0.25% per year.</li> <li>*Federally funded construction declines slowly after 2008. Knik Arm bridge not constructed.</li> <li>*Federal grants to state governments and nonprofits decline through 2013 then grow with population.</li> </ul>
Air Freight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Air freight employment at Anchorage and Fairbanks increases at about 2.5% per year.</li> </ul>
Forest Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Logging and sawmill employment increases at 1% per year. Some new wood products manufacturing develops in Sitka, Ketchikan, and MatSu.</li> </ul>
State of Alaska spending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Oil prices and production decline slightly consistent with Dept of Revenue spring 2005 forecast.</li> <li>*North Slope gas brings additional \$200 million per year into State treasury.</li> <li>* State spending per person declines, spending focused on operations rather than capital.</li> <li>*No income tax; Permanent Fund earnings used to fill fiscal gap</li> </ul>



Table 10. KPB Base Case Econometric Projections

	WAGE & SALARY EMP (000)	POPULATION (000)	HOUSEHOLDS (000)	REAL PERSONAL INCOME (MILL 03\$)	REAL PER CAP PERSONAL INCOME (MILL 03\$)
2000	17.3	49.7	18.4	\$1,512	\$30,452
2001	17.4	50.1		\$1,541	\$30,740
2002	17.6	50.5		\$1,575	\$30,926
2003	17.7	51.4	19.4	\$1,571	\$30,564
2004	17.9	50.9	19.4	\$1,584	\$31,107
2005	17.6	50.8	19.1	\$1,588	\$31,235
2006	17.4	50.4	19.0	\$1,592	\$31,604
2007	17.2	50.4	19.1	\$1,613	\$32,039
2008	17.2	50.8	19.3	\$1,629	\$32,076
2009	17.0	50.8	19.4	\$1,634	\$32,155
2010	16.9	50.9	19.5	\$1,644	\$32,290
2011	17.0	51.2	19.6	\$1,659	\$32,392
2012	17.1	51.7	19.8	\$1,677	\$32,438
2013	17.1	52.0	20.0	\$1,680	\$32,274
2014	16.9	52.2	20.1	\$1,658	\$31,800
2015	17.0	52.3	20.2	\$1,669	\$31,883
2016	17.1	52.8	20.4	\$1,687	\$31,948
2017	17.2	53.3	20.6	\$1,695	\$31,778
2018	17.3	53.8	20.8	\$1,714	\$31,831
2019	17.5	54.5	21.1	\$1,739	\$31,941
2020	17.7	55.2	21.3	\$1,756	\$31,837
2021	17.8	55.8	21.6	\$1,769	\$31,684
2022	18.0	56.5	21.9	\$1,797	\$31,802
2023	18.3	57.3	22.2	\$1,827	\$31,918
2024	18.5	58.0	22.5	\$1,857	\$32,017
2025	18.7	58.7	22.8	\$1,886	\$32,142
2026	18.9	59.3	23.0	\$1,906	\$32,132
2027	19.1	60.0	23.3	\$1,926	\$32,123
2028	19.3	60.6	23.5	\$1,950	\$32,202
2029	19.5	61.2	23.8	\$1,981	\$32,360
2030	19.7	61.8	24.0	\$2,009	\$32,493

**ANNUAL AVERAGE GROWTH RATE**

2000-2010	-0.23%	0.24%	0.54%	0.83%	0.59%
2010-2020	0.44%	0.81%	0.93%	0.67%	-0.14%
2020-2030	1.07%	1.14%	1.20%	1.35%	0.20%

2000-2020	0.10%	0.52%	0.74%	0.75%	0.22%
2000-2030	0.42%	0.73%	0.89%	0.95%	0.22%

**Low-growth scenario for Homer.** Since the population of KPB has already grown slightly faster than the above numbers, it is appropriate to use these KPB “BASE” projections as the foundation of a *Low-growth scenario* for Homer. In fact, there is a sensitivity case associated with the above BASE case that posits more tourism activity, and this case tracks actual growth through 2007 quite well.

In the above KPB projections, population grows faster than employment. This seems unlikely for Homer given the relatively fast pace of employment growth since 2000. Therefore, the *Low-growth scenario* for Homer incorporates slightly faster employment growth through 2020 than the KPB projections.

**High-growth scenario for Homer.** The City of Homer recently adopted a water and sewer master plan that uses a much higher growth trajectory: 4.5% population growth through 2015 and 3.0% from 2015 through 2025. These growth rates are based on long-run historical trend data and therefore reflect the oil spending boom of the 1980s (as well as prosperous fishing) and the pipeline boom of the 70s. Therefore, they are basically consistent with a *High-growth scenario* that includes some unforeseen strong growth at the regional or, more likely, at the local level.

Table 11. Growth Rates for Homer Growth Scenarios

	2005	2015	2025	2030	Growth Rates		
					2005-2015	2015-2025	2025-2030
<b>Low-growth scenario</b>							
Alaska population (000)	663.3	717.9	822.5	877.3	0.8%	1.4%	1.3%
KPB population	49,691	52,300	58,700	61,800	0.5%	1.2%	1.0%
KPB wage-salary employment	18,075	17,000	18,700	19,700	-0.6%	1.0%	1.0%
Homer population	5,393	5,676	6,371	6,707	0.5%	1.2%	1.0%
Homer employment	3,608	4,619	5,204	5,482	2.5%	1.2%	1.0%
<b>High-growth scenario</b>							
Alaska population (000)	NA - high scenario not based on regional projections						
KPB population							
KPB wage-salary employment							
Homer population	5,393	8,375	11,256	12,427	4.5%	3.0%	2.0%
Homer employment	3,608	5,603	7,530	8,314	4.5%	3.0%	2.0%

## Conclusion

The available historical data suggests that Homer's growth has been reasonably consistent with the growth of the KPB. Therefore, a Low-growth scenario for Homer has been developed from recent econometric projections of the KPB economy that are, in turn, based on a detailed model of the statewide economy. The High-growth scenario is consistent with long-run historical trends and with the water and sewer Master Plan.

## **Appendix B Land Use Designation Categories**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Homer's existing set of land uses and built environment offers much to be commended and retained. Three qualities in particular stand out as strengths:

#### **Mix of uses**

Homer has a freewheeling, organic character. In many parts of town, land uses – residential, office, retail, storage, industrial, and open space – are freely mixed. This style breaks common rules of traditional planning, but in most instances the result is attractive and functional. This eclectic mix of uses fits together with little or no conflicts, and helps create Homer's unique, well-liked character.

#### **1. Building appearance**

Homer has an organic building aesthetic where the majority of buildings “fit.” Many are actually quite attractive, while relatively few stand out as offensive or out-of-place.

#### **2. Development aesthetic**

Homer has a widespread site development aesthetic that is also quite attractive. Many commercial lots in Homer feature hand-crafted informal signage, natural landscaping, and a comfortable, natural fit with the land. This contrasts with the buildings and parking areas in many Alaskan communities (e.g., Wasilla) where development is rarely pleasing to the eye.

In many instances these qualities exist in spite of, or possibly out of, compliance with the City's zoning rules. In light of these realities, the function of an updated zoning code for the City of Homer should be to strengthen and institutionalize the styles and patterns most builders and developers are already following. Care needs to be taken that simplistic zoning rules don't damage the more, unique home-grown qualities that give Homer its special character. At the same time, odds are good that future developers may not know the “unwritten rules” that have made past development generally attractive.

For these reasons and to implement comprehensive plan policies, Homer needs to upgrade and revise its existing zoning code. As part of this comprehensive plan, a “land use designation map” has been prepared identifying intended land uses, working from the existing zoning map. This product is not as detailed or specific as a zoning map, but does express the general land use strategies of the comprehensive plan. This map is a starting point in the process of amending the zoning code to refine and implement these general policies. A particular focus of this land use designation map is to use mixed use zoning practices that focus more on offsite impacts and building forms and less on controls on the specific type of use. This approach provides necessary guidance while still preserving the unique and functional character of the community.

## RESIDENTIAL

### R-1 (URBAN RESIDENTIAL)

- **Intent** The R-1 district is intended to provide more intense residential development in the city core, in a manner that matches Homer's small town character and encourages increased densities near pedestrian-oriented commercial areas.
- **Primary Use** Medium and medium-high density residential including single-family, duplex, and multiple-family; allow for a variety in housing types and housing price levels.
- **Other Uses, Allowances, and Specifications**
  - Areas generally served by water and sewer; central locations with excellent access to a range of urban services and facilities.
  - Residential is primary use; but allows for other uses where these uses maintain residential character.
  - Moderate lot size minimums (for example, 6000 square foot lots for single family homes).
  - Allows bed and breakfasts by right, allows second units and duplexes by right (both subject to standards). (For purposes of this plan, a B&B is defined as lodging where owner proprietor resides on site.)
  - Allows home-based businesses by right (subject to standards).
- **Development standards**
  - Encourage attractive, diverse housing types (vs. "cookie-cutter" subdivisions).
  - Ensure newer housing is compatible with character of older neighborhoods (for example, by requiring transitional densities, buffer uses).

### R-2 (TRANSITIONAL RESIDENTIAL)

- **Intent** The R-2 district is intended to provide a transitional residential zone between higher and lower density residential or residential office developments with a focus on residential land uses. Densities in this area will be in between the lower density rural residential zone (R-3) and the more urban, higher density uses in the R-1 district.
- **Primary Use** Medium-density residential including single-family and duplex; provide for a scale, density, and character of residential development appropriate for locations between urban and rural residential areas.
- **Other Uses, Allowances, and Specifications**
  - Areas generally served by water and sewer or likely to be served in the future; full city services.
  - Moderate lot size minimums (for example, 10,000 square foot lots for single family homes).
  - Allows second units and duplexes by right (both subject to standards).
  - Allows bed-and-breakfasts by right; other small scale accommodations<sup>1</sup> allowed with administrative review. (For purposes of this plan a B&B defined as lodging where owner proprietor resides on site – see footnote for details.)

---

<sup>1</sup> Small accommodations will need to be further defined. Current code allows rooming houses which are five guest rooms or less. Rooming houses is how Homer's code currently deals w B&Bs. There is no requirement for owner/operator on site. This may need to be changed. Hotel/motel is 6 or more rooms or 5 rooms but more than 15 guests.



- Allows home-based businesses by right (subject to standards); allows some larger non-retail business activities subject to administrative review.
- **Development standards**
  - Encourage retention of quasi-rural character.
  - Encourage attractive diverse housing types (vs. “cookie-cutter” subdivisions).
  - Encourage open space subdivisions as alternative to more typical lot layouts.

### R-3 (RURAL RESIDENTIAL)

- **Intent** The R-3 district is intended to provide areas for low density residential development and limited agricultural pursuits.
- **Primary Use** Low-density residential development in outlying locations, generally with less services and/or lower level of service than in urban areas.
- **Other Uses, Allowances, and Specifications**
  - Areas generally not served by water and sewer, nor likely to be served in the near future.
  - Larger lot sizes or cluster subdivisions to preserve sense of open space.
  - Allows accessory housing units by right (subject to standards).
  - Allows bed and breakfasts by right, subject to standards (for purposes of this plan B&B defined as lodging where owner proprietor resides on site)
  - Allows home-based businesses by right, subject to standards; allows some larger non-retail business activities subject to administrative review.
- **Development standards**
  - Option for higher densities and cluster development. Encourage open space subdivisions as alternative to more typical lot layouts.
  - Ensure newer housing is compatible with character of older neighborhoods.

## COMMERCIAL AND MIXED USE

### DT (DOWNTOWN MIXED USE)

- **Intent** The intent of the DT district is to provide a mixed use business district in the core area of Homer, with safe, pleasant, and attractive circulation for pedestrians and vehicles.
- **Primary Use** Provide a concentrated, centrally located district in the center of Homer for a mixture of urban uses, including general retail shopping, personal and professional services, educational institutions, entertainment establishments, restaurants and related businesses, civic uses, recreation and residential uses. Create high quality public spaces (sidewalks, trails, gathering areas) and encourage pedestrian movement throughout the area; allow for a mixture of residential and commercial uses with conflicts resolved in favor of commercial uses.
- **Other Uses, Allowances and Specifications**
  - Areas served by public water and sewer, full range of other urban services
  - Allow and encourage densities typical of small town, “main street” settings (sufficient concentration of uses to encourage circulation by foot).
  - Residential densities – multi-family dwellings; for example, up to 6 units per acre allowed by right; up to 14 units per acre with administrative review.



- Minimal building setbacks to create a friendly, pedestrian-oriented streetscape.
- Encourage parking off-site (e.g., allowing payment of a fee in lieu of meeting on-site parking standards, through shared parking arrangements, through reducing on-site requirements by providing public parking and protected pedestrian ways).
- **Development standards include:**
  - Create an attractive, pedestrian-oriented environment (e.g., windows and doors that are close to the street, landscaped parking, standards to humanize buildings such as clearly articulated entries).
  - Advisory guidelines re design character, so buildings and other structures within the district are compatible with one another and with the surrounding area.
  - Consider establishing an overlay zone for Old Town so buildings in that portion of the district feature an “Old Homer” historical character.
  - Consider establishing a University district.

#### CBD (CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT)

- **Intent** The intent of the CBD commercial district is to provide a mixed use business district in the core area of Homer, with greater allowance for vehicular use than in the Downtown district, but still with a character that encourages pedestrian use.
- **Primary Use** Provide a centrally located area within the City for a mixture of urban uses and activities, including general retail shopping, personal and professional services, educational institutions, entertainment establishments, restaurants and related businesses, civic uses, recreation, and residential uses. Allow a mixture of residential and commercial uses but conflicts resolved in favor of business.
- **Other Uses, Allowances, and Specifications**
  - Areas served by public water and sewer, full range of other urban services
  - Allow and encourage relatively high densities (sufficient concentration of uses to encourage circulation by foot).
  - On-site parking required (option for shared parking with an approved parking plan).
  - Residential densities – for example, multi-family up to 6 units per acre - allowed by right
- **Development standards include:**
  - Create an attractive, pedestrian-oriented environment (e.g., landscaped parking, standards to humanize buildings such as clearly articulated entries).
  - Advisory guidelines regarding design character, so buildings and other structures within the district are compatible with one another and with the surrounding area.
  - Control signage to maintain visual quality (for example, avoid large, highly illuminated signs).

## GC-1 (GENERAL COMMERCIAL 1)

- **Intent** The intent of the GC-1 district is to provide for auto-oriented business.
- **Primary Use** Provide for a diverse array of commercial, retail, and civic uses; commercial uses are primary objective. Applied in locations where the auto is primary means of access.
- **Other Uses, Allowances, and Specifications**
  - Areas served by public water and sewer, full range of other urban services.
  - Residential densities – for example, residential uses up to 6 units per acre allowed by right; higher densities with administrative review or use dimensional standards like CBD above.
  - On-site parking required (option for shared parking with an approved parking plan).
  - Guide use to create/maintain an attractive highway environment.
- **Development standards** include:
  - Control signage to maintain visual quality (for example, avoid large, highly illuminated signs).
  - Provide for safe pedestrian circulation.
  - GC-1/Residential – allow residential uses, encourage water dependant uses along Beluga Lake, and encourage small commercial enterprises on Lakeshore Drive. Maintain the neighborhood character of mixed commercial and residential use, retain mature healthy evergreen trees when practical, and plant trees in landscaped areas.

## RO (RESIDENTIAL OFFICE)

- **Intent** The intent of the RO district is to allow for a range of residential and residential compatible uses. While allowing office, certain commercial and other business uses, buildings and sites must have a scale and character similar to single family detached or small multi-family homes. This district serves as a transition zone between commercial and residential neighborhoods.
- **Primary Use** Provide a mix of low-density to medium-density residential uses with certain specified businesses and offices which may include professional services, administrative services and/or personal services, but does not include direct retail or wholesale transactions except for sales which are incidental to the provision of services.
- **Other Uses, Allowances, and Specifications**
  - Areas served by public water and sewer, full range of other urban services, close to other urban services.
  - Moderate lot size minimums (for example, 7500 square feet); allows for attached housing.
  - Guide use to create/maintain an attractive highway environment
- **Design and development standard**
  - Required (not advisory) standards to maintain residential character/residential scale of buildings (e.g., height, setbacks, parking location, signage).
  - Advisory design guidelines regarding building style (e.g., use of materials, architectural style).
  - Allow for limited commercial signage, consistent with overall goal of retaining a largely residential character.

#### G-MU (Gateway Mixed Use)

- **Intent** The intent of the G-MU district is to provide land uses that primarily cater to the tourism and visitor industry of Homer and to promote year round activity. The gateway district serves as the primary roadway entry into Homer. It will provide an attractive built environment and promote those uses that will not compete with the DT, CBD and GC districts.
- **Primary Use** Promote mixed-use development, with emphasis on the visitor industry. Serve needs and interests of the visitor industry, as well as year-round residents and Homer's role as the Gateway to Kachemak Bay (not to conflict w/CBD). Minimize future traffic congestion along the Sterling Highway corridor and preserve the experience residents and visitors have when entering Homer by way of the Sterling Highway.
- Commercial uses are primary objective; focus on "Gateway" appropriate businesses such as visitor amenities, hotels – no gas stations, fast-food, strip development.
- **Other Uses, Allowances, and Specifications**
  - Areas served by public water and sewer, full range of other urban services.
  - Allow and encourage relatively high densities (sufficient concentration of uses to encourage circulation by foot).
  - Residential densities – for example, multi-family up to 6 units per acre - allowed by right; higher densities with administrative review or use dimensional standards like CBD above.
- **Development standards**
  - Advisory guidelines re "Gateway" design character.
  - Encourage parking behind buildings (through appropriate set-back rules).
  - Design standards that create an entry point the community can be proud of - attractive, pedestrian-oriented to a degree (e.g., landscaped parking).
  - Control signage to maintain visual quality (for example, avoid large, highly illuminated signs).

#### E-MU (EAST END MIXED USE)

- **Intent** The intent of the E-MU district is to allow a wide variety of commercial, industrial, and heavy industrial uses in a district with access to the boatyard, marine services, and the airport; and to ensure such uses, which are important to Homer's economy, continue to have a viable location.
- **Primary Use** Mixed-use development with fewer constraints on uses than existing GC-1 and GC-2. Designed to accommodate the wide range of uses found in the area today, as well as other future uses; examples include industrial, marine-oriented, construction services (including batch plants), storage, and artist workshops. Residential and retail are allowable, but residential/retail and commercial conflicts will be resolved in favor of commercial/industrial uses.
- **Other Uses, Allowances and Specifications**
  - Allows for mixed use, live/work, provides larger lots than would be available in CBD.
  - On-site parking required.
  - Guide use to create/maintain an attractive highway environment.

- **Development standards**
  - Minimal – basic guidelines for parking, setbacks.
  - Encourage basic landscaping.
  - Properties adjacent to the Conservation zone should use best management practices when developing near the southern edge of the property. Strategies may include, but are not limited to, 100 foot buffer zones along the southern property lines adjacent to the conservation areas, tree retention (bird habitat, moose cover), habitat and vegetation retention, and storm water and pollution management techniques. Developers are encouraged to use a combination of techniques to minimize impacts within 100 feet of the south property line and to provide for storm water filtration. Development is encouraged to concentrate on the northern portions of these lots.

#### GC-2 (GENERAL COMMERCIAL-2)

- **Intent** The intent of the GC-2 district is to locate commercial and industrial uses where access to transportation infrastructure is a primary consideration. This district will also serve as a reserve to allow for future commercial and industrial expansion.
- **Primary Use** Promote a sound heavy commercial area within the community with good access to main roads, and reserve land for future industrial expansion. Designed to permit manufacturing, processing, assembly, packaging, or treatment of products within enclosed utilities and facilities required to serve these uses. Residential uses permitted, recognizing the primacy of light industrial and commercial activities. Residential uses limited; certain retail enterprises limited. Performance standards for heavy commercial uses, especially where the district abuts other zoning districts. Allows for heavier commercial uses – manufacturing, processing, packaging, and support of airport activities / needs.
- **Other Uses, Allowances, and Specifications**
  - Accessible by vehicle/direct access.
  - Allows for mixed use, live/work, provides larger lots than would be available in CBD
  - On-site parking required.
- **Development standards include:**
  - Minimal – basic guidelines for parking, minimal setbacks
  - Encourage basic landscaping, screening

#### NC (NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL)

- **Intent** This district is intended to allow small nodes of commercial use in generally residential areas. Examples of such uses include a small neighborhood store, coffee shop, or video rental shop. Allowing such uses adjoining residential neighborhoods is a convenience to residents and helps reduce the need for driving.
- **Primary Use** Limited retail and service commercial, including small restaurants, coffee shops, personal service, video stores, convenience stores.
- **Other Uses, Allowances, and Specifications**
  - Control the location, size and design of such uses so the neighborhood commercial facility does not disrupt neighborhood character, or generate excess traffic.
  - Allow this type of use under the conditional use process, and only to a limited degree and in carefully selected locations, such as intersections of collectors or arterials. Locations can either be identified in advance on the zoning map or be proposed by



an individual, a neighborhood, or developer and then be considered under a special, conditional review process.

- On-site parking required.
- **Development standards**
  - Strict standards for parking, noise, traffic generation, size, landscaping, screening trash and service areas, etc.
  - East End Road NC – limited numbers of small scale, local serving commercial areas designed to meet the convenience commercial service needs of neighborhood residents. The objectives behind this designation category might also be met through the Planned Unit Development process or an overlay zone allowing more commercial and retail uses than the underlying Residential Office District.

#### CO (CONSERVATION)

- **Intent** The conservation district is applied to sensitive public and in some instances private lands that are critical to the maintenance of fish and wildlife resources, serves important watershed protection areas, or serves other key environmental functions. These lands are to be maintained in an undisturbed and natural state, except for enhancement projects. Private landowners may agree to have this designation on their property. The Green Infrastructure map discussed is an important reference in identifying conservation areas.
- **Primary Use** Acceptable uses in this district include undeveloped open space, parks with passive recreation activities and facilities (e.g., wildlife viewing, nature walks, educational and interpretive uses) and other uses that do not change the character of the land or disrupt fish and wildlife. Passive recreation activities are secondary to habitat protection and enhancement. Private landowners may agree to have this designation on their property.
- **Development standards include:**
  - Where applied to private lands, specific development strategies and standards are needed to balance the interests of private land owners with the need for protection of functionally valuable, sensitive natural areas.
  - Consider requiring a 100 foot habitat buffer on all lands bordering the airport area conservation zone, as discussed under the East End Mixed Use zone.

#### EXISTING ZONING CATEGORIES – NOT CHANGED

The remaining land use designation categories are described below, using language from the existing City of Homer zoning code. These use categories are not addressed in this plan. The Marine Commercial and Marine Industrial areas both apply on the Homer Spit, which will be addressed through a separate more detailed planning process outside the scope of this version of the comprehensive plan.

#### MC (MARINE COMMERCIAL)

Provide adequate space for the commercial needs which service and support water-dependent industries and facilities; encourage adequate separation between allied but potentially incompatible commercial and industrial uses while providing proximate locations for the mutual benefit of such



water-oriented commercial and water dependent industrial uses. Commercial enterprise permitted to the extent that it services and supports the water-dependent industries which are important to Homer's economic base (e.g., fishing, marine transportation, off-shore energy development, recreation, and tourism) and to the extent that location elsewhere creates unnecessary hardship for the users of such commercial services. Performance standards are required to minimize the impact of commercial development on the natural features on which it depends.

#### MI (MARINE INDUSTRIAL)

Provide adequate space for those industrial uses that require direct marine access for their operation and to encourage the most efficient utilization of land. Promote marine-dependent industries important to Homer's economic base (e.g., fishing, fish processing, marine transportation, off-shore oil development, and tourism); give priority to those uses, and minimize conflicts among industrial, commercial and recreational uses.

#### OSR (OPEN SPACE—RECREATIONAL)

Promote public recreational opportunities while protecting natural and scenic resources. Give priority to pedestrian uses over motor vehicles uses and preserve public access to the tidelands. All development proposals in the district will be evaluated in terms of their compatibility with natural hazard and erosion potential and their effect on scenic vistas and public access.

#### BCWP (BRIDGE CREEK WATERSHED PROTECTION DISTRICT)

Prevent degradation of water quality and protect the Bridge Creek Watershed to ensure its continuing suitability as a water supply source for the City's public water utility. Restrict land use activities that would impair the water quality or increase the cost for treatment.

**Appendix C  
Homer Spit Plan  
1999 Update – Homer Comprehensive Plan**

# HOMER SPIT PLAN

---

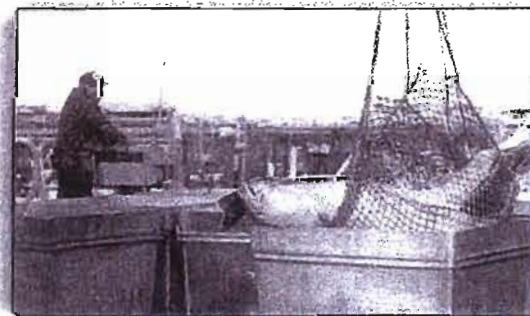
MANAGE THE LAND AND OTHER RESOURCES OF THE SPIT TO ACCOMMODATE ITS NATURAL PROCESSES, WHILE ALLOWING FISHING, TOURISM, OTHER MARINE RELATED DEVELOPMENT, AND OPEN SPACE/RECREATIONAL USES.

---

- ⇒ Provide for public safety while achieving a balanced mix of water-dependent and marine-related activities on the Homer Spit.
- ⇒ Recognize and accommodate natural features and processes while providing adequate space for marine commercial and industrial, tourist commercial, transportation, recreation, open space, and traditional uses.
- ⇒ Priority for use of the Small Boat Harbor and distal end of the Homer Spit shall be given to marine commercial, marine industrial (fishing), industrial transportation, tourism, and day use recreation.
- ⇒ Transportation (including U.S. Coast Guard) and shipping and cargo handling activities are a high priority use of the Deep Water Cargo area and the Main Dock areas of the Spit.
- ⇒ Priority use of the west side of the Homer Spit shall be for open space/recreation.
- ⇒ Priority for the Mud Bay area of the Homer Spit shall be for conservation.

*Action Items:*

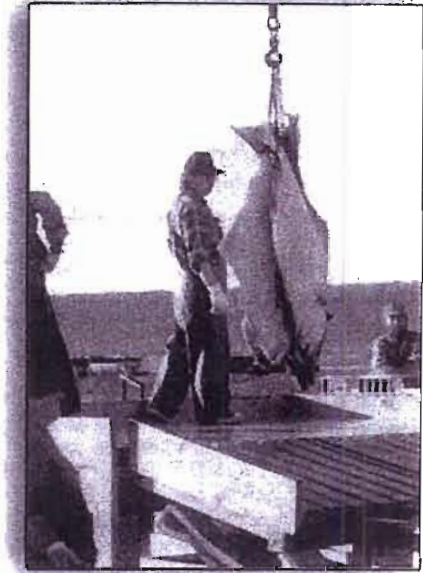
- *Obtain public ownership of land on the Spit.*
- *Similar land uses (such as charter offices, boat and gear sales, tourist activities) shall be encouraged to cluster to achieve a mix of related activities and minimize adverse impacts on other activities.*
- *Evaluate and develop a plan for non-boating access to fishing opportunities, such as the Lagoon "Fishing Hole".*
- *Maintain and protect traditional uses of the beaches along the Spit such as gathering coal, shellfish, and others.*
- *Construct an observation deck near the Fishdock.*
- *Develop sidewalks and walkways around the harbor and roads.*
- *Construct weather-protected picnic and outdoor meeting facilities*
- *Construct a new wood grid with improved access.*
- *Develop a program that advocates that one percent (1%) of new construction costs be spent on landscaping.*



## HOMER SPIT PLAN

### Action Items:

- Encourage continuation of the Spit shuttle to transport day users to various locations on the Spit.
- Commercial fishing storage shall occur on the Spit only when there is no higher priority use for this area.
- Allow the natural transport of sediments along the west side of the Spit to continue uninterrupted. Proponents of bulkheads, groins, breakwaters or other devices shall demonstrate that their project will not adversely disrupt this sediment transport.
- Commercial extraction of sand and gravel from the Spit shall not be allowed.
- Commercial camping shall be encouraged to locate away from commercial and industrial activities at each end of the Spit, recognizing increased non-resident demands for camping, tent, and recreational vehicle usage. Open space camping shall be encouraged to locate in the middle area of the Spit.
- Continue discouraging motorized vehicle traffic in the critical habitat areas on the Homer Spit beaches. Encourage the build up of driftwood on Spit beaches.
- Open space recreation uses shall be encouraged on the east and west sides of the Spit, on public land, from the north end of the existing development to the uplands.



- Require appropriate engineer's approval for structural integrity for any large additions to existing structures.
- Promote a low impact use concept for the west side of the Spit in the update of the zoning code.
- Traffic congestion shall be alleviated by improving the organization of existing parking area, and encouraging of privately provided transportation services (for example, shuttle buses) that will shift parking off the Spit.
- City leases shall include land sufficient for businesses and minimal employee parking.
- The City shall reserve right-of-way for access to the east side of the harbor.
- The City shall reserve 15' pedestrian/safety rights-of-way around the periphery of the small boat harbor.
- Maintain and increase public access to the harbor and beaches on the Spit to improve opportunities for fishing and other recreational activities.

## **Appendix D**

### **Background Land use information**

#### **Contents:**

1. Green Infrastructure Mapping
2. Site Development Practices
3. Land Suitability Mapping
4. 2005 Wetlands Map
5. 2008 Zoning Map
6. Map of existing water and sewer infrastructure

### **Green Infrastructure Mapping**

Following is a draft Green Infrastructure map developed by DnA Design of Homer as part of an independent project with the local Soil & Water Conservation District. The map was developed as a way to define lands viable for future development while considering the need to protect drainage, open space and other environmental features that would complement development. The project defines incentives for developers to consider landscape systems in their projects while maintaining or enhancing their bottom line. The green infrastructure elements are determined by overlaying scientific, ecological and economic values to provide not only an ecological benefit, but also quantifiable economic and quality of life benefits. Since Green Infrastructure (GI) looks at larger scale landscape systems, the map extends beyond the boundaries of the city to include entire watersheds and other key features that cross the political boundary of the city limit. The map legend categories are defined more precisely as follows:

**Highly Developable/Developed (white)**—Areas that are well suited for development or are already developed.

**Some Green Infrastructure Elements (yellow)**—Areas that are well suited for development with consideration of larger landscape systems, such as storm water management, upland-wetland complexes, poor soils, unstable slopes, trails, habitat, etc. These areas will likely have associated incentives to maintain environmental systems while enhancing land values.

**Important Green Infrastructure Elements (light green)**—Development in these areas should consider the specific Green Infrastructure characteristics present. These are not critical natural areas. However, if development in these areas is not careful, it will negatively impact larger landscape systems. Construction costs in these areas will probably be higher if the natural characteristics are not considered. These are areas where the public and property owners should be made aware that there is some important characteristic that they should consider protecting (such as steep slope, valuable wildlife habitat, adjacent creeks, trails or wetlands). Carefully planned development that preserves or enhances Green Infrastructure elements can add value to real estate, for example, by retaining natural features and wildlife. These are areas that would benefit from clear development guidelines to preserve landscape systems, and would be eligible for special development or restoration incentives.

**Critical green infrastructure (dark green)**—These areas have sensitive or critical landscape systems, processes, or connections and are most appropriate for conservation. They are predominantly areas with steep slopes, critical wetlands, poor soils or other sensitive landscape features. These areas would likely be very difficult and expensive to develop, and are limited by existing federal regulation. Development in these areas will cause significant impacts on natural systems, neighboring properties and possibly view sheds, and will increase the risk and associated costs due to natural hazards. These



areas should be considered amenities for the city and its residents because of their value for storm water management, habitat protection, view shed protection open space and trails. Options for preserving these lands should be explored, for example, through conservation easements, land or development trades, or other creative incentives, particularly for areas held in private ownership.

This Green Infrastructure map is generated from spatially explicit GIS base maps including and considering:

- Soils
- Creeks and drainages
- Slopes
- Bluff erosion
- Construction costs (essentially development costs due to slope, road access, soils, wetlands, open water and drainages)
- Trails and public amenities
- Storm water management
- Wetlands
- Vegetation habitat
- Wildlife habitat
- Accessible lands—lands already served by road and water and sewer (basically a weighted buffer by infrastructure construction costs)
- Views and view sheds

More information on the background data and methods behind the Green Infrastructure map as well as possible incentives can be found by going to [www.suitabilitymap.org](http://www.suitabilitymap.org)

**Specific steps to establish a system of green infrastructure include those outlined below; the diagram provides a simplified illustration of this approach:**

1. Identify and map individual environmental features and processes – erosion areas, wetlands, steep slopes, aquifer recharge areas, shoreline access points, critical view sheds, etc.
2. Identify open space and recreation areas – trails, parks and recreation use areas, view sheds and other features that are best protected by allowing the land to remain largely undeveloped.
3. Overlay mapped environmental features with open space and recreation areas to create an integrated “green infrastructure” network map. This should identify features such as stream corridors and trails that cross multiple properties. Also identify areas that may be able to support development, but will require special standards to maintain environmental quality (e.g., steep slope areas).
4. Limit areas included in the green infrastructure map to those of highest value or greatest constraint. For example, the map should identify the most important trails, the most important wetlands and streams, the steepest slopes.
5. Formally adopt the map, recognizing that site-specific developments may lead to changes in the features that need protection for particular development projects.
6. Establish a formal process that balances the long term communitywide benefits of the green infrastructure concept with short-term impacts on individual private landowners.

# GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE HOMER SUITABILITY MAPPING



## Legend

 City of Homer

 Intertidal Zone

### Value

 Highly Developable/Developed

 Some Green Infrastructure elements

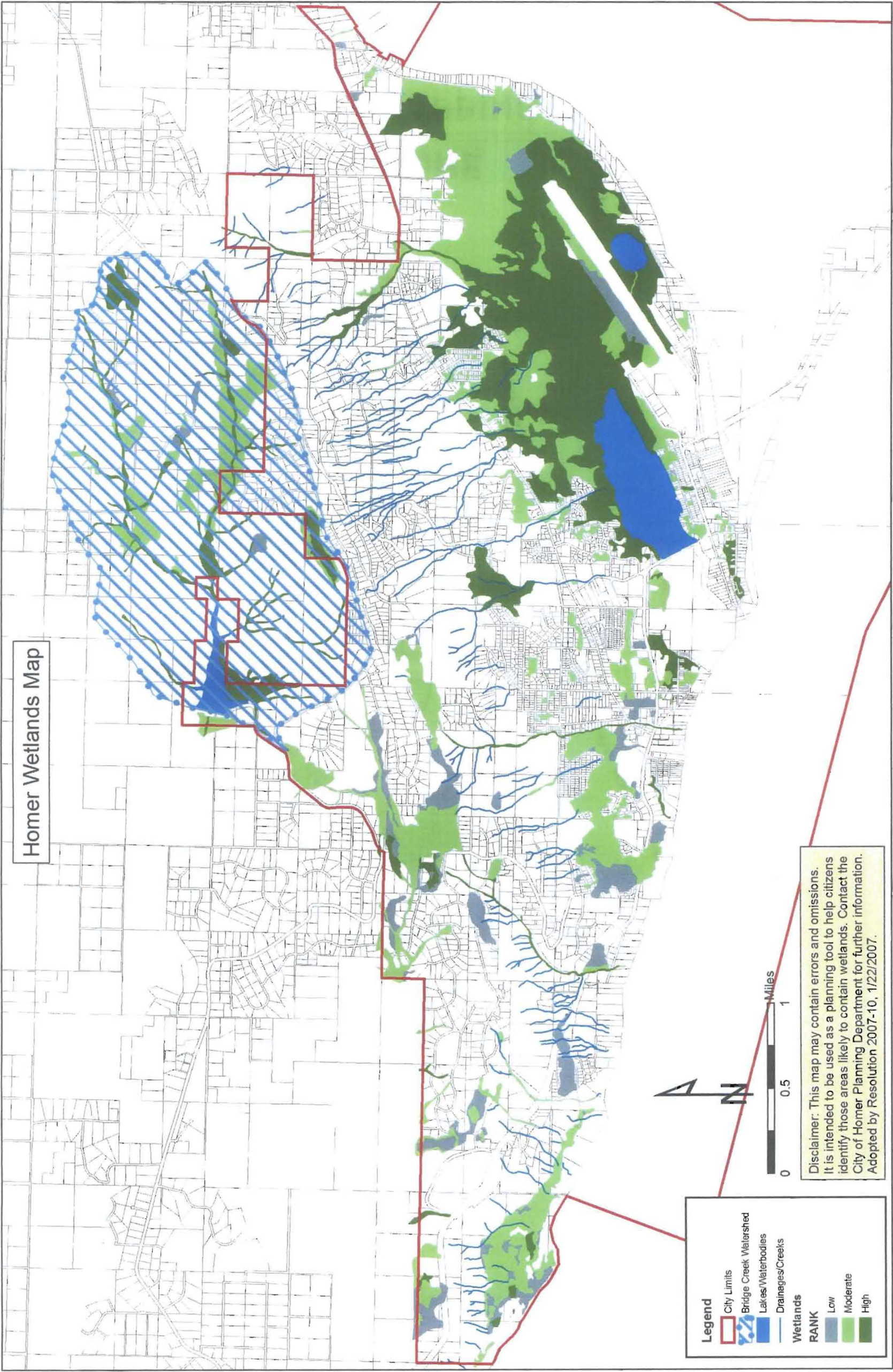
 Important Green Infrastructure elements

 Critical Green Infrastructure

**DRAFT**  
**092407**

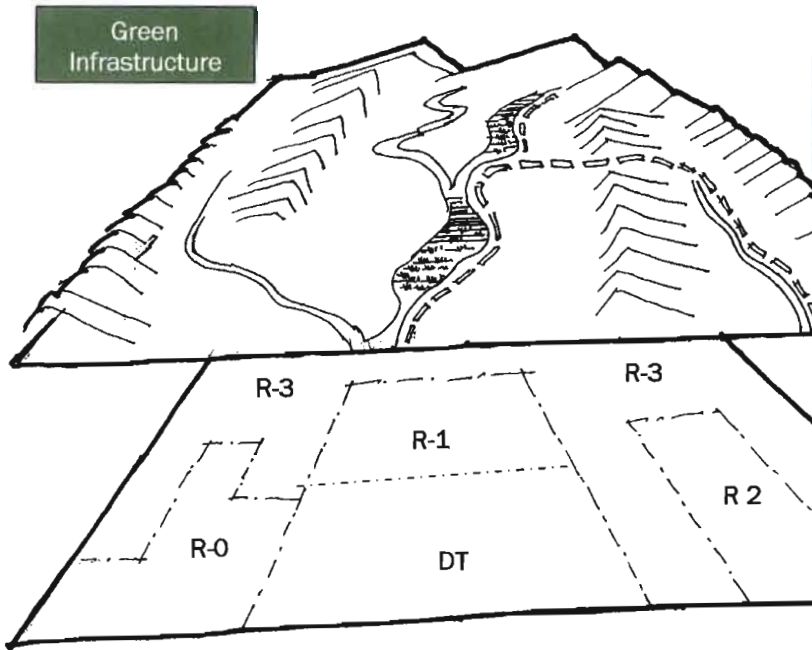








## Site Development Practices



### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE OVERLAY PROCESS

1. Map individual environmental values:
  - Functional & hazard areas: e.g., streams, and wetlands, aquifer recharge areas; steep slopes
  - Open space and recreation resources – trails, recreation use areas, access points.
2. Integrate resource information to identify a system of priority "green infrastructure"
3. Overlay the green infrastructure map on the zoning map - define areas where natural resource functions and open space values should be maintained. Be flexible about the specific mechanisms used to protect green infrastructure values

## Site Development Practices



### Site Development Practices – Option A

- Large building footprint (and therefore large impervious area relative to building square footage)
- Large impervious area, including large driveway, paved walkway
- Large lawn, majority of original vegetation removed
- Substantial cut and fill of original grade to create housing pad
- No provisions for roof run off, on site infiltration
- Relatively high winter and summer maintenance costs for yard care and snow removal

Potential Neighborhood Effects – relatively greater odds of increased drainage & glaciation issues, greater change in character



### Site Development Practices – Option B

- Small footprint building (relative to building square footage)
- Limited impervious surfaces –stepping stones, narrow permeable surface driveway
- Majority of original natural vegetation retained, with exception of trees near house (for fire safety)
- Building set at two levels to retain existing topography and minimize need for grading
- “Rain gardens” used to trap, infiltrate roof runoff

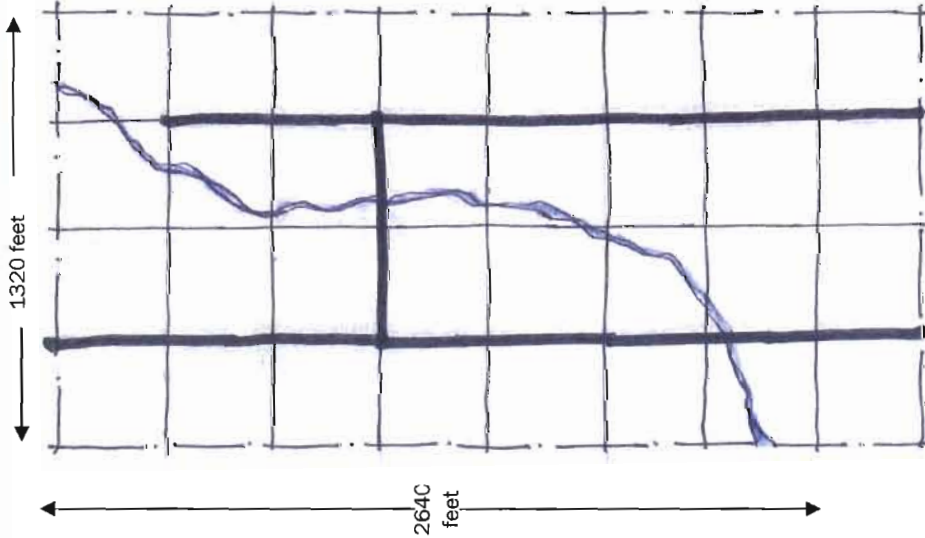
Potential Neighborhood Effects – Reduced impact on natural drainage, reduced off-site runoff; sense of privacy and rural character retained, less yard care and less snow removal costs



**Subdivision Options**

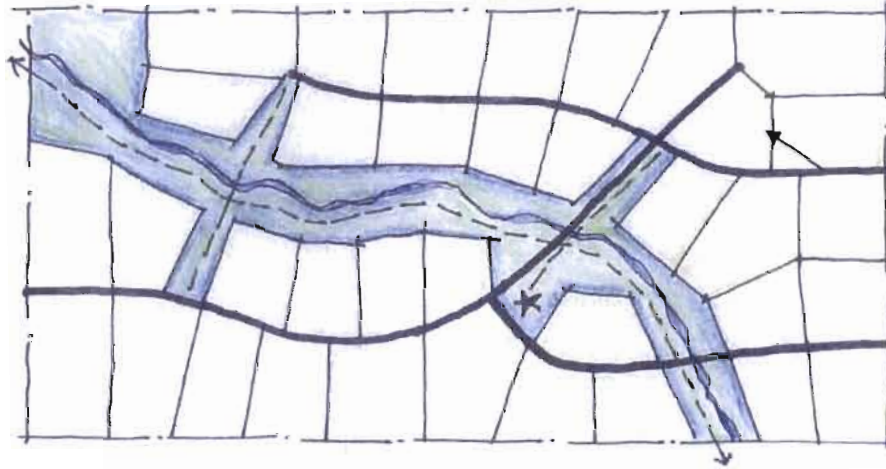
**Three Illustrative Alternatives – Based on a Hypothetical 80 acre Parcel**

**A. Traditional Subdivision**  
 32 lots, 2.5 acre per lot  
 No reserved open space



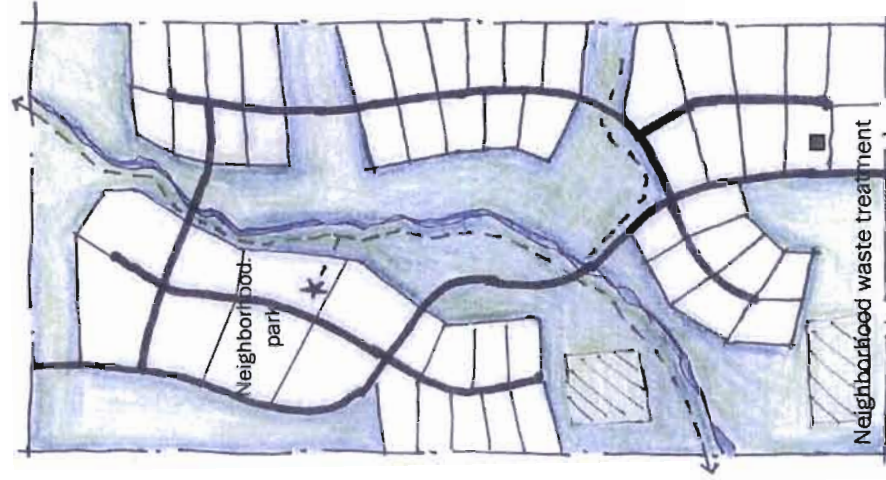
Lots 330' x 330'

**B. Open Space Subdivision**  
 36 lots, 1.5-2.5 acres per lot  
 Approximately 15 acres open space



Typical Lot 250' x 360'

**C. Open Space Subdivision**  
 50 lots, about .50-1.0 ac/lot (20-30,000 SF)  
 Approximately 35 acres open space



Typical Lot - about 125' x 200'

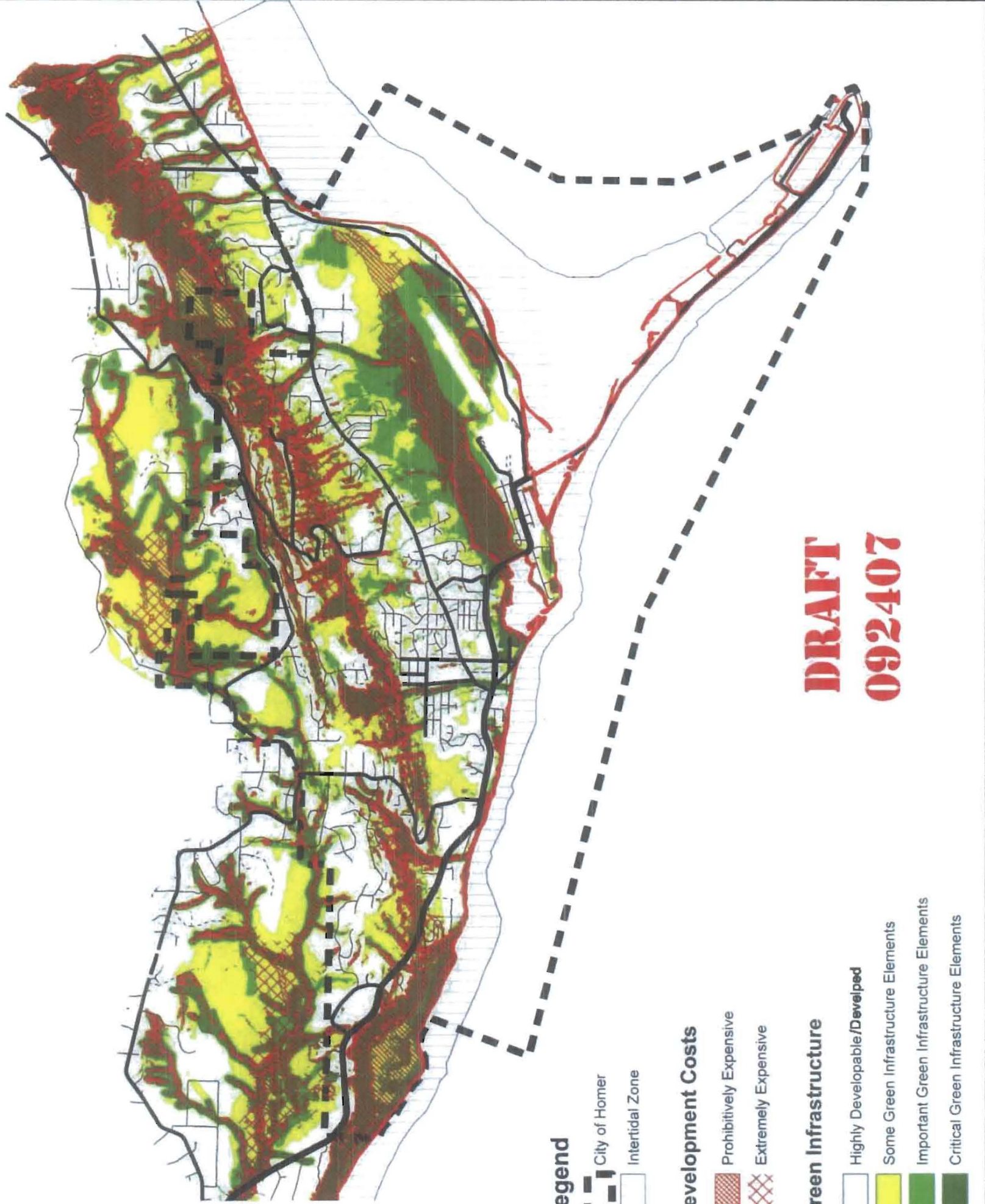
■ Indicates 50' x 50' footprint, 2500 square feet

**This page intentionally blank**



**G.I. and DEVELOPABLE LANDS**

**HOMER SUITABILITY MAPPING**



**Legend**

-  City of Homer
-  Intertidal Zone

**Development Costs**

-  Prohibitively Expensive
-  Extremely Expensive

**Green Infrastructure**

-  Highly Developable/Developed
-  Some Green Infrastructure Elements
-  Important Green Infrastructure Elements
-  Critical Green Infrastructure Elements

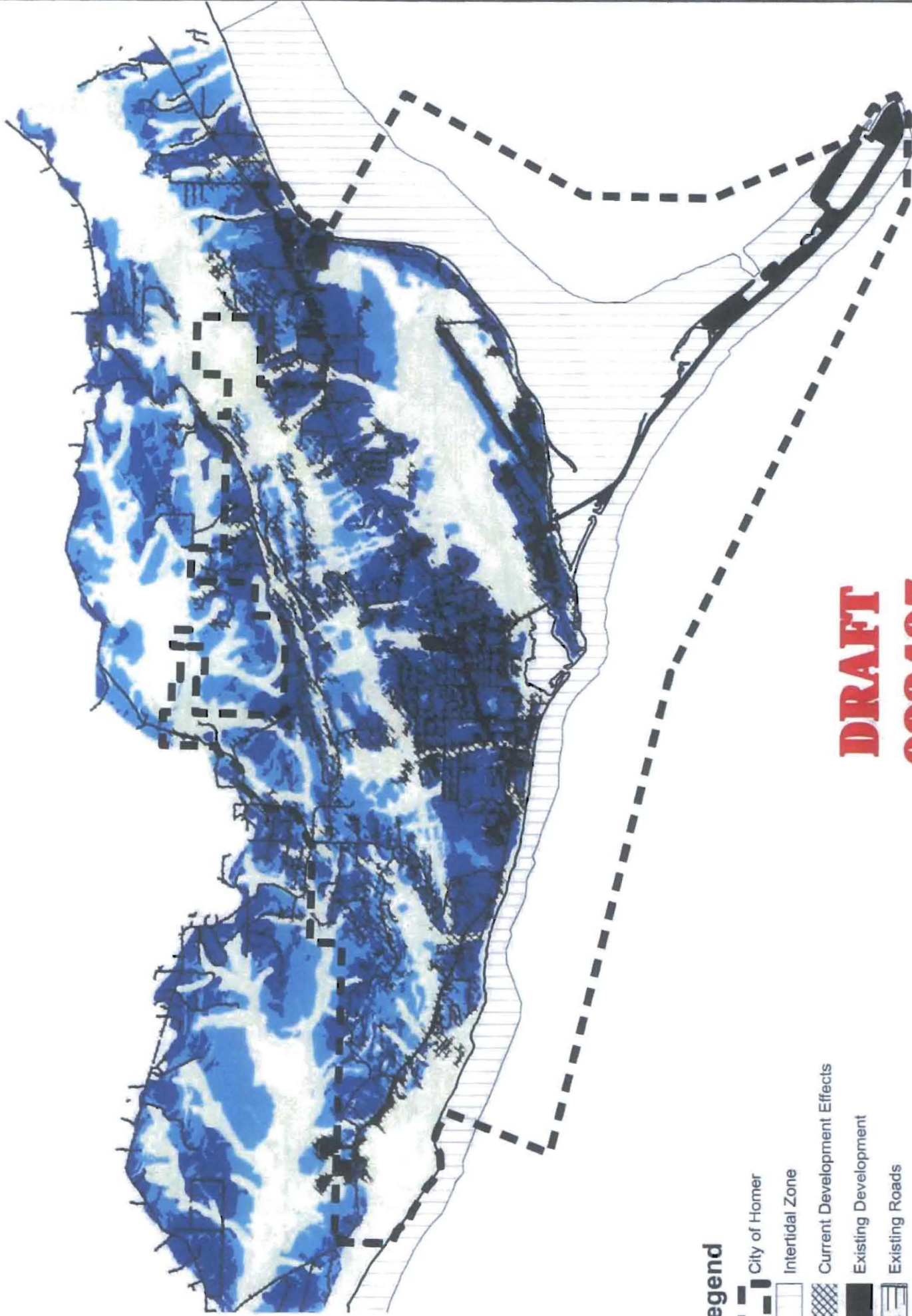
**DRAFT**  
**092407**





# G.I. and DEVELOPABLE LANDS 2

## HOMER SUITABILITY MAPPING



### Legend

- City of Homer
- Intertidal Zone
- Current Development Effects
- Existing Development
- Existing Roads
- High-Value Development Lands
  - Moderate Value
  - High Value

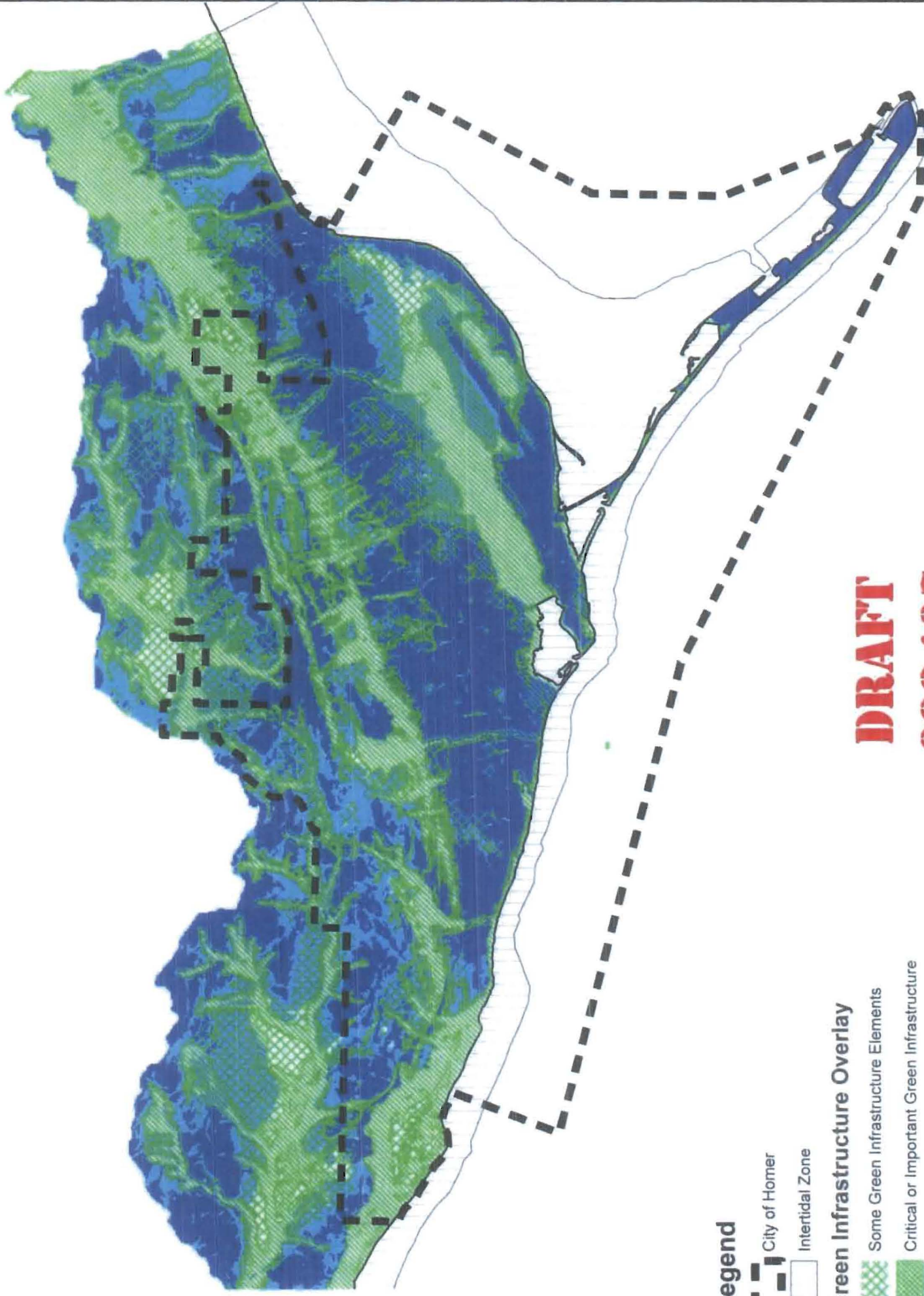
**DRAFT**  
**092407**





# G.I. and DEVELOPABLE LANDS 3

## HOMER SUITABILITY MAPPING



### Legend

- City of Homer
- Intertidal Zone

### Green Infrastructure Overlay

- Some Green Infrastructure Elements
- Critical or Important Green Infrastructure

### High-Value Development Lands

- Moderate Value
- High Value

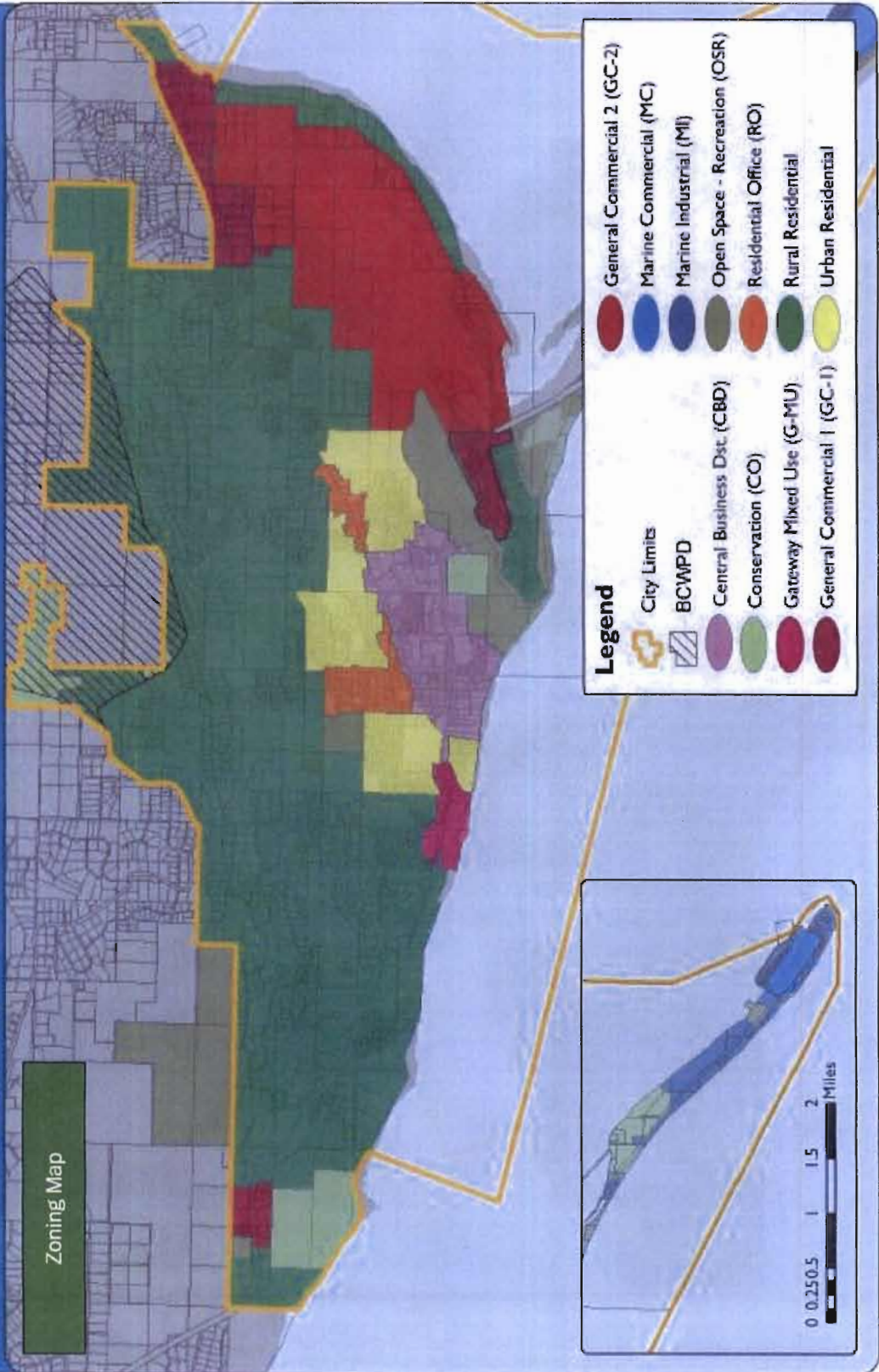
**DRAFT**  
**092407**





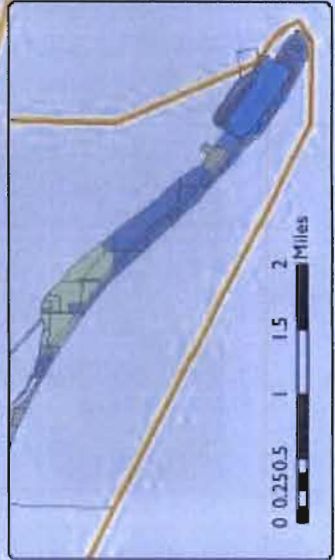
# Current Zoning, City of Homer

Zoning Map



**Legend**

- City Limits
- BCWPD
- General Business Dist. (CBD)
- Conservation (CO)
- Gateway Mixed Use (G-MU)
- General Commercial 1 (GC-1)
- General Commercial 2 (GC-2)
- Marine Commercial (MC)
- Marine Industrial (MI)
- Open Space - Recreation (OSR)
- Residential Office (RO)
- Rural Residential
- Urban Residential



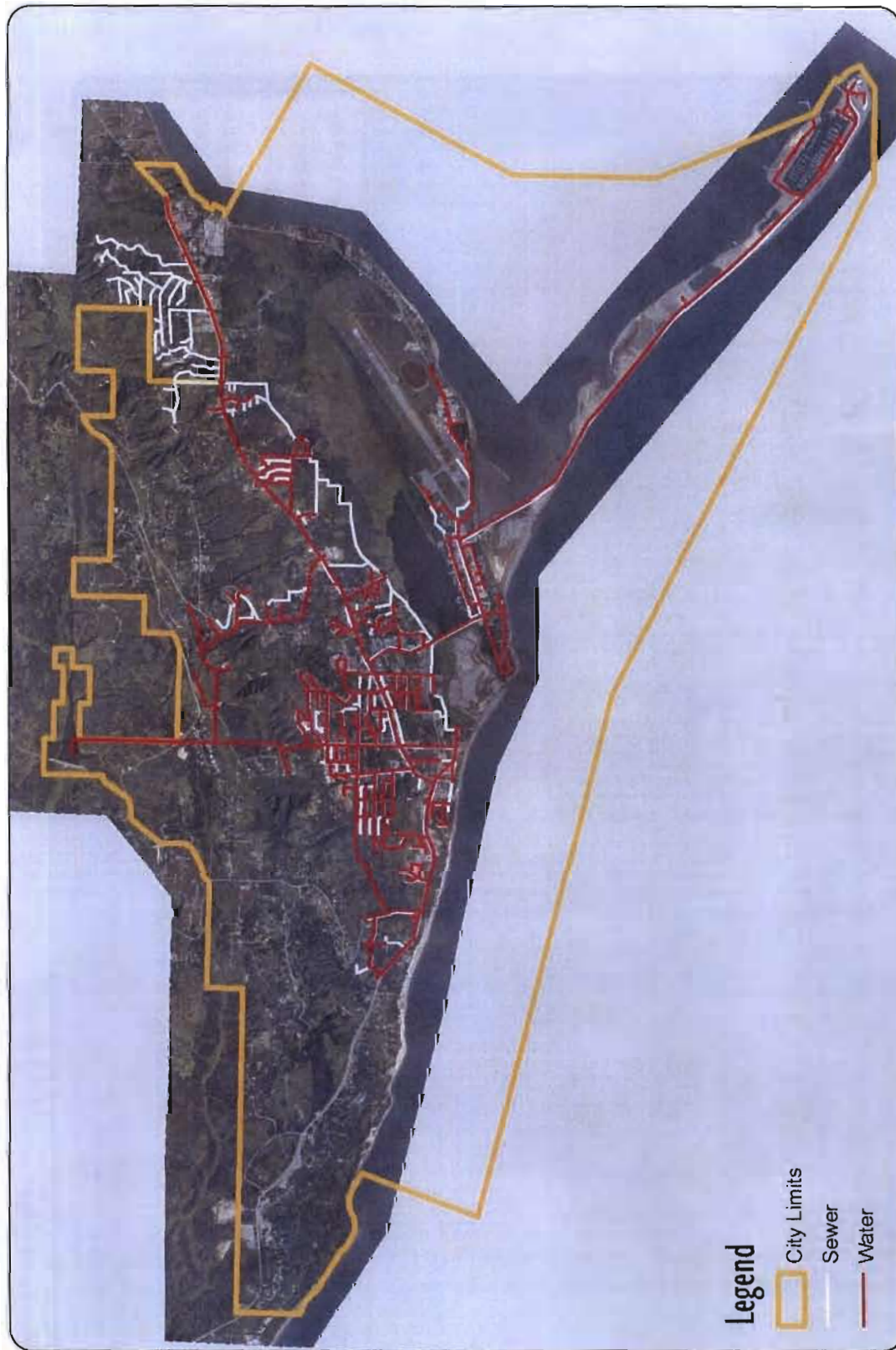
Map by Agnew::Beck.

All data courtesy of City of Homer.

0 0.375 0.75 1.5 2.25 3 Miles

Alaska State Plane, Zone 4, NAD 1927  
 October 1, 2007  
 This map was compiled for the City of Homer.

AGNEW  
 BECK



### Existing Water and Sewer Lines, City of Homer

Alaska State Plane, Zone 4, NAD 1927  
 March 13, 2007

All data courtesy of City of Homer.

This map was compiled for the City of Homer.



## **Downtown Design Principles A Checklist for Success**

### **ATTRACT PEOPLE WITH THE RIGHT MIX OF USES**

#### **1. MEET BASIC COMMERCIAL NEEDS OF RESIDENTS AND VISITORS**

- Regular convenience needs—grocery, drug store, film, hardware/duct tape, books, bank/ATM, cleaners, hair, auto, videos, cards, business services...
- Food & Drink – restaurants, coffee, bakeries...
- Specialty Shopping – clothing, art, home wares...
- Civic Anchors – post office, library, courthouse, city hall, conference facilities
- Commercial ‘Anchors’ – grocery store, coffee shop...

#### **2. CREATE DEMAND & ADD LIFE BY LOCATING POTENTIAL USERS WITHIN EASY WALKING DISTANCE OF DOWNTOWN**

- Residential – single and multifamily housing, employee housing, college student housing
- Visitors – hotels, Motels, Inns, B&Bs
- Employment – offices, other businesses (in addition to retail, services)
- Institutional uses – schools, churches, police, fire, day care, college

#### **3. MORE REASONS TO VISIT: “FIVE STAR” ATTRACTIONS**

- Art and information – visual and performing arts, museums, information centers
- Private recreation – e.g., movie theaters, bowling

### **TAMING THE AUTOMOBILE**

#### **4. VEHICULAR, TRANSIT & TRAIL ACCESS**

- Provide good access for the private automobile
- Mitigate undesirable effects of traffic and roadways; slow traffic
- Provide alternatives to the car – foot, ski, bike, transit

#### **5. PARKING**

- Provide enough parking
- Use efficient layouts (on-street, off-street)
- Mitigate adverse effects of parking (e.g. landscape parking)
- Share parking/manage parking supply

#### **6. OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE (water, storm runoff, fire, etc.)**

- Screen the worst/celebrate the rest – water, sewer, drainage
- Good lighting – save the nighttime stars



## **A GOOD PLACE TO WALK/CONCENTRATE USES**

### **7. “CRITICAL MASS” - CONCENTRATE USES IN THE CENTER OF TOWN**

### **8. CREATE A WALKABLE, COMPACT DOWNTOWN**

- Create A Good Environment For Walking (Comfort, Safety, Attractions)
- Concentrate Commercial Activities Within an Area of about 1/4 Mile Diameter

## **REASONS TO LINGER – PLEASURES OF PLACE & PEOPLE**

### **9. INVEST IN PUBLIC SPACE/PUBLIC LIFE**

**“What attracts people most, it would appear, is other people.” William Whyte**

- Heart Of The Heart - town square/plaza
- Provide Inviting Places To Linger – comfortable, inviting sidewalks and streets
- Preserve Places Special To Locals
- Establish “Sense Of Habitation” – from public flowers to building design standards

### **10. “SENSUAL DELIGHT”**

- Food And Drink, Public Music & Dance, Evocative/Exotic Smells & Sounds

### **11. FUN IN PUBLIC PLACES**

- “Enjoyable Motion” - interesting ways to get around, from pure fun to functional
- Places For Play - kids play structures, “compact sports”, “street toys” for small-scale adventure

### **12. SPECIAL EVENTS**

- Celebrate what makes your community unique
- Devote public resources to create successful events

### **13. IT PAYS TO MAINTAIN A SENSE OF PLACE**

- Provide Good Orientation - a sense of entry, boundaries, landmarks, clear center
- Intricacy & Complexity - invite and reward exploration, provide surprises
- Capture Good Views
- Create Strong Ties To Natural Setting - bring nature in, protect habitat
- Incorporate Local Materials - stone, plants, rocks
- Maintain/Create Good Buildings (architecture): set quality standards, avoid big mistakes, the right setbacks & scale is as important as design
- Tell Good Stories: public art, information “placemakers”
- Celebrate History - weave history into art, buildings, place names...
- Signage - clutter or information & source of character?
- Hitting The Balance Between “Real And Ersatz” – better a bit kitschy than boring