



City of Homer

Phase 1: Comprehensive Plan Update

Public Participation Plan

UPDATED April 25, 2024

Prepared for City of Homer by Agnew::Beck Consulting

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1. Introduction

Project Overview

The purpose of this project is to update the Homer Comprehensive Plan. The process will include:

- **Background research and Analysis**, to include a literature review and compilation of demographic and economic trends.
- A set of **reference maps** depicting land ownership, existing zoning, natural/environmental constraints, and more as determined by the project team.
- **Community outreach**, to include interviews, community discussions, a community survey, and interactive comment map.
- **Preparation of development or re-development strategies** that include strategies for utilization of City-owned land, land acquisition, land disposal, and other details.
- **Preparation of future growth and development alternatives** that includes three specific alternatives that address possible future growth scenarios for the City of Homer.
- Release of a **public review draft** of the comprehensive plan for a public comment period to collect feedback, followed by a refined and final draft of the comprehensive plan for City approval.

Purpose of the Public Participation Plan (PPP)

This Public Participation Plan (PPP) outlines the project team's approach for engaging with residents, partners, and other stakeholders to develop a comprehensive plan that meets the needs of residents, neighbors, and partners. The PPP identifies target audiences, outreach activities, communication tools, an outreach schedule, and key questions to consider throughout the planning process.

2. Schedule

April 24, 2024

	2023	2024											
TASKS	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Project Start-up and Ongoing Project Management	Ongoing project management →												
	1												
Background Research and Analysis				2	3	4							
Public Participation Process	Outreach materials and documentation of outreach efforts → Steering Committee meetings TBD												
				5									
					6	7				8	9	10	
Site Analysis and Identification of Issues and Concerns					11	12	13						
Preparation of Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations								14	15				
Develop or Re-develop Strategies									16				
Preparation of Future Growth and Development Alternatives								17	→ 18				
Recommendations for Implementation											19	20	21
Presentations	Quarterly meetings and work sessions with the City Council and Planning Commission												
				22								23	
Final Plan											24	25	

KEY

- Kickoff meeting (December)
- Public participation plan (March)
- Project website launch (March)
- Literature review summary (April)
- Summary of demographic and economic trends (April)
- Community snapshot (May)
- Community visit #1 (Week of March 25th)
- Launch community survey (April)
- Community visit #2 (Week of May 13th)
- Community visit #3 (September 23rd or October 7th)
- Community visit #4 (October 28th or November 11th)
- Community visit #5 (TBD)
- Map template (March)
- Draft maps (April)
- Updated maps and growth scenario findings (June)
- Draft future land use map (July)
- Public review draft release (August)
- Draft development or re-development strategies (August)
- Three development growth scenarios initial development and public review (July-October)
- Identification of a "most preferred" alternative (October)
- Action plan template (October)
- Draft action plan (November)
- Final plan (December)
- Introductory work session (March)
- Hearing and adoption meetings (November)
- Summary of public comments, proposed set of amendments (October)
- Final comprehensive plan (November)

3. Community and Partner Stakeholders

The table below is organized by the preliminary focus areas for the plan.

Note: The entities below are categorized by their primary focus area but many will be encouraged to provide input across several topic areas. Some representatives of businesses or organizations are also members of City or community boards and commissions. In addition to the targeted outreach below, both seasonal and permanent residents will be encouraged to participate in the planning process.

Table 1. Preliminary Breakdown of Community and Partner Stakeholders

Name	Includes	Partners/Stakeholders to Interview and/or Include in Small Group Discussions/Work Sessions
General	Residents, community leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents • Homer City Council members • Homer Planning Commission members • Homer City staff • Homer City advisory committees and councils
Land Use	Landowners and managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) • Alaska Department Fish & Game • Alaska Earthquake Center • Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Land Office • Alaska State Parks • Bureau of Land Management • Guiding Growth • Homer area building contractors (list provided) • Homer Planning Commission • Homer Soil and Water Conservation District • Kachemak Bay Birders • Kachemak Heritage Land Trust • Kenai Peninsula Borough • Local Developers • Seldovia Native Association • U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service • University of Alaska Land Management
Housing	New construction, rental market and availability, housing preservation and revitalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alaska Housing Finance Corporation • Choosing Our Roots • Kenai Peninsula Housing Initiatives, Inc. • Realtors, mortgage lenders, financing organizations
Public Services and Infrastructure	Power, water, sewer, solid waste, internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alaska Communications • Alaska Waste • City of Homer • ENSTAR • GCI

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homer Electric Association • HomeRun Oil • Kenai Peninsula Borough Solid Waste • Petro Marine • Starlink • Suburban Propane
Transportation	Roads, marine, airport, trails, transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities/Alaska Marine Highway System • Alaska Marine Lines/Lynden • Alaskan Coastal Freight • ATB Water Taxi and Freight • Homer Marine Trades Association • Ravn Air • Span Alaska Transportation
Economic Development	Economic development, tourism, agriculture, maritime, education and workforce development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homer Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center • Kenai Aviation • Mako's Water Taxi • Ravn Air • Span Alaska Transportation
Health and Wellness		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alaska Department of Health • Central Peninsula Hospital • Faith based organizations (Church on The Rock Homer, Salvation Army, Homer United Methodist Church) • Homer Medical Center • Homer Senior Center • Hospice of Homer • Independent Living Center • Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic • Kachemak Bay Medical • Kenai Veteran's Administration Clinic • Ninilchik Traditional Council • Seldovia Village Tribe Health and Wellness • South Peninsula Behavioral Health Services • South Peninsula Haven House • South Peninsula Hospital • South Peninsula Hospital Foundation • South Peninsula Hospital Service Area Board
Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Change		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies • Cook Inletkeeper • Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges • Friends of Kachemak Bay State Parks • Homer Drawdown • Kachemak Bay Conservation Society • Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District • Mobilizing for Action Through Planning & Partnerships (MAPP) • Seldovia Native Association
Quality of Life		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homer Economic Development Advisory Commission • Homer Foundation • Guiding Growth • MAPP • South Peninsula Hospital Foundation
Municipal Financial Considerations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Homer Finance

4. Complete List of Potential Outreach Activities

We will use the following suite of tools below to encourage robust public participation and to guarantee that the revised comprehensive plan truly represents the voices of the community.

Interviews and Small Group Discussions: One-on-one interviews or small group discussions will be conducted with entities and organizations identified in Table 1. These interviews and discussions help to identify preliminary issues, opportunities, and priorities within various topic areas through the Potential Stakeholder Interview Questions in Section 5.

Community Survey: An online attitudinal community survey will collect feedback on key issues and prioritize potential strategies. We would not expect to get a statistically valid sample of the full population, but enough to achieve a helpful sense of the views of a wide cross-section of the Homer area's residents. To boost participation, we will include a suite of survey incentives such as fuel cards, coffee cards, and more.

Existing Community and Organizational Meetings: Whenever possible and appropriate, we will connect with, ask to join a meeting agenda, and accept invitations from existing community and organizational meetings either in-person or remotely to get direct input on emerging strategies and priorities for the comprehensive plan. The groups we intend to reach out to are included in Table 1 of this document. We will provide an overview of the process to date, key dates and events happening in the process, and solicit feedback on comprehensive plan topics germane to each group.

Community Visits: The project team will engage residents and other partners and stakeholders in public meetings and open house events to share their input and stay connected throughout the process, share project team findings to date learned through background research and interviews, and gather initial input on community vision, values, challenges, opportunities, and priorities. We will also engage youth and students by working with Homer High School to arrange a visit and activities with a social studies or civics class or the student council to gather input on vision, values, challenges, and opportunities. See a detailed list of community visit activities in Section 6.

Community Events: To accommodate summer and fall outreach during typically busy months for residents, our team will attend community events to discuss the comprehensive plan, and to listen and capture resident ideas and feedback. This will include casual engagement, such as having a presence and engaging with residents and visitors at the 4th of July parade, the Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival, the Kachemak Bay Wooden Boat Festival, Farmers Market, the Kenai Peninsula State Fair, the Seldovia Summer Solstice Festival, and others.

Notices, Radio Announcements, and Local Radio Programs: We will take the opportunity when appropriate to share information and promote outreach tools, such as the survey, via radio announcements (KBBI, KGTL, KHCX) and Homer News.

Social Media: Our team will work with City staff and other community organizations to post relevant updates, including project milestones and opportunities for community input, such as the survey, on appropriate social media outlets.

Flyers, Postcards, and E-Newsletters:

- We will develop a project flyer that summarizes the project purpose/importance, schedule, how residents and other stakeholders can get involved, and project points of contact.
- We will develop and send up to six e-newsletters for consistent and efficient project communications with residents and stakeholders. We will begin by creating a contact list and an e-newsletter template using the communication platform Mailchimp. We will continue to update the contact list with new subscribers throughout the planning effort.
- We will also design and coordinate the mailing of two postcards to all landowners within City boundaries. While printing and distributing postcards can be costly and require strategic timing, they are a useful tool for reaching older residents, individuals living in outlying areas, and those who may not be tracking happenings online.

Project Website We will work with the City to prepare content for a project-specific webpage that will be referenced on outreach materials. The webpage will include a summary of the project purpose, information on upcoming opportunities to get involved (including an online comment tool), the project schedule, copies of draft products, team contact information, and other relevant materials.

Interactive Comment Map: Our team will use ArcGIS Online as one component of public outreach. By hosting an interactive map of the community, we can solicit public comments on specific elements of the community that are geocoded by location, allowing us to identify site-specific issues, needs and themes.

5. Potential Stakeholder Interview Questions

The following is a list of potential questions to guide conversations during interviews and small group discussions. The list will be adapted for different stakeholder groups as needed.

General – for residents, staff, City Council members, and planning commissioners.

1. **Accomplishments:** As a community, what have been our biggest accomplishments over the last 10 years?
2. **Values:** What do you like most about living in Homer? What makes it special? Which programs, services, or projects are important for the community? Why do you choose to live here?
3. **Challenges:** What are the biggest issues or challenges facing the community? What can make it hard to live and work in Homer?
4. **Opportunities:** How could life be improved for Homer residents?
5. **Future:** 20 years from now, what does your ideal Homer look like? What would you change and what you would keep the same?
6. **Priorities:** What should be the highest priorities for Homer, both in the short term and long term? These can be projects, activities, programs, etc. *(for suggestions that are emerging as potential priorities, ask for details when possible – what steps and resources are needed to make that happen? Who would lead the project and partnerships are needed? What is the potential impact?)* Specifically, how can the community help enhance and support the projects you've identified?

Land Use Questions

1. What are your organization/community/agency's short and long-term land use goals and strategies in Homer?
2. Which areas in Homer are the best sites for future growth?
3. Which areas do you want to remain undeveloped or for some other specific purpose?
4. How would you characterize growth and development in Homer? What would you say are the highest priority development projects in Homer?
5. Based on the values, opportunities, and priorities mentioned above, how do any or all of those depend on land use policies?
6. How supportive are you of regulatory or zoning land use policies?
7. What is the capacity of staff to implement current and any proposed land use policies or ordinances?
8. How well do you think land use conflicts are currently addressed in Homer? What could help address conflicts or disagreements before they happen?
9. What, if any, changes are needed to current land use policies to help meet goals for quality of life, for economic development, and for environmental protection?

Housing Questions

1. Describe the quality of housing stock in the Homer.
2. Describe the efforts the community has already undertaken to address housing issues in Homer?
Which solutions have gained traction?
3. If there is a need for new or improved housing:
 - a. Who needs that housing?
 - b. What type of housing is needed?
 - c. Which specific populations and services are needed? For example, does Homer have sufficient senior/elder care housing and services for aging residents who want to stay in Homer?
 - d. Where should that housing be located (relates to current and desired future land use and zoning policies)?
4. Which building standards and permitting processes are in place for new construction? Do current standards and permits meet community needs?
5. Do you know of any recent or planned new housing developments in Homer? Where are they? What type? Do you have any ideas or comments about access to services, type of housing, etc.?

Public Services and Infrastructure Questions

1. What are the community's utility challenges, needs, and/or opportunities in the following subcategories:
 - Drinking water
 - Sewer, stormwater, septic systems
 - Solid waste, recycling
 - Communications
 - Power
 - Renewable and alternative energy sources

Transportation Questions

1. How satisfied are you with the quality and maintenance of Homer's roads, sidewalks, harbors, airport, and trails?
2. What are the community's transportation challenges, needs, and/or opportunities? For example:
 - How does transportation affect the quality of life for residents and businesses in Homer?
 - What are the future facility needs for the Homer marine transportation system, including docks and harbors?

Economic Development Questions

1. What are Homer's unique economic features and strengths? Where do you see business, families, and residents thriving?
2. What are the biggest barriers or threats to economic development opportunities?
3. Which projects, strategies and/or business opportunities have the potential to economically benefit (create jobs, retain, or expand businesses, bring in more outside revenue) the entire region and improve quality of life for Homer residents?

4. What actions are needed to strengthen the economy and improve resilience to withstand economic downturns, disruptions, or unforeseen events?

Health and Wellness

1. How healthy do you think the residents of Homer are, overall?
2. What are the biggest barriers or challenges to physical and mental health for residents?
3. Which events, services, and programs in Homer come to mind when thinking about physical and mental health for residents?
4. Which types of services or programs do you think could increase the physical and mental health for residents, including elders, families, and youth?

Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Change

1. What are some of the greatest effects of climate change Homer faces?
2. What does sustainability and resilience mean to you?
3. What are Homer's unique efforts in addressing sustainability, resilience, and climate change?
4. What more needs to be done to address the current and future effects of climate change in Homer?

6. Community Visits

Community Visit #1 – Visioning (Week of March 25th, 2024).

Purpose: Introduce planning process and how residents and other partners and stakeholders can share their input and stay connected throughout the process; share project team findings to date learned through background research and interviews; gather initial input on community vision (including thoughts on development/growth scenarios), values, challenges, opportunities, and priorities.

Proposed Activities:

- Steering Committee meeting(s) focused on current and future outreach activities.
- Planning Commission and City Council joint work session aimed at sharing information on the purpose, structure, benefits, and legal aspects of comprehensive plans, including relevant insights from other communities, best practices, and recommendations on how to create a successful comprehensive plan, from draft report to implementable, tangible outcomes.
- One-on-one or small group interviews with entities/organizations identified in Table 1.
- Community open house with short presentation and stations for each comprehensive planning topic that include relevant maps.
- Opportunistic presentations and participation in community activities, events, and/or entity gatherings.
- Community survey and interactive comment map launch with potential 30-day window for responses.

Community Visit #2 – Community Snapshot/Emerging Themes & Policies (Week of April 29th, 2024). To include:

Purpose: Share and continue to get resident, partner, and other stakeholder input on project team findings, including preliminary results from literature review (existing plans, reports, studies), interviews, focus area-specific dialogues, community survey and interactive comment map. The summary of these findings will be shared in the form of the “Community Snapshot” that includes an initial summary of community input and research on potential growth/development scenarios.

Proposed Activities:

- Steering Committee meeting(s) focused on current and future outreach activities related to Snapshot/Emerging Themes & Policies.
- Planning Commission and City Council work sessions/updates.
- One-on-one or small group interviews with entities/organizations identified in Table 1.

- Community open house with short presentation on Community Snapshot and stations for each comprehensive planning topic to build from preliminary findings in the Community Snapshot.
- Opportunistic presentations and participation in community activities, events, and/or entity gatherings.

Community Visits #3 and #4 – Public Review Draft Share, Feedback, & Refinement (Week of September 23rd or October 7th 2024 for Visit #3 and Week of October 28th or November 11th for Visit #4). To include:

Purpose: Two rounds of meetings, month-to-month, to share and get community and partner stakeholder feedback on the public review draft of comprehensive plan (would have been released approximately one week prior to visit). These engagements will define and/or confirm plan components, including growth, development, and redevelopment scenarios, a preferred scenario, potential strategies to achieve plan goals, and ways to measure future progress towards comprehensive plan objectives.

Proposed Activities:

- Steering Committee meeting(s) focused on current and future outreach activities related to Public Review Draft launch and input.
- Planning Commission and City Council joint work sessions to present and get initial feedback on the draft plan.
- One-on-one interviews or small group discussion with entities/organizations identified in Table 1, potentially organized by comprehensive plan topic, to share and get feedback on the draft plan.
- Community open house with short presentation on Public Review Draft and stations for each comprehensive planning topic to get direct input on draft maps, policies, priority strategies and projects, and to get preliminary input on the plan implementation and related actions.
- Opportunistic presentations and participation in community activities, events, and/or entity gatherings.

Community Visit #5 – Plan Adoption (TBD, potentially 2025). To include:

Purpose: Support City staff in preparing materials (motions, resolutions, and related presentations on the Final Plan) for adoption of the Final Plan, including in-person support for Planning Commission and City Council public hearings.

Proposed Activities:

- Steering Committee meeting(s) focused on adoption-related outreach activities.
- Planning Commission and City Council public hearings.

7. Public Participation Roles

Agnew::Beck Consulting will work in partnership with other members of the consulting team and the City of Homer to implement the public participation plan. Primary roles and responsibilities of each group are described below.

Steering Committee

Steering Committee roles and responsibilities include as outlined in City of Homer Resolution 23-129(A):

Assist in the refinement and execution of the public outreach process, outreach program, and schedule.

Participate in public outreach activities and events including work with each of the member’s represented organizations to keep them informed on the project and encourage their participation, solicit participation from a wide range of people and organizations in the community, participate in event exercises and provide feedback.

Provide feedback and recommendations on Comprehensive Plan draft documents.

Steering Committee membership includes:

Kathryn Carsow, Library Board Member (Chair)

Jason Davis, City Council Member

Charles Barnwell, Planning Commissioner

1 seat vacant

Shelly Erickson, City Council Member

Proposed Upcoming Steering Committee Activities

Activity	Timeframe
Steering Committee Meetings	Bi-weekly or as needed
Review Public Participation Plan (PPP), website, initial outreach flyer, revised project schedule, and discuss outline of first community visit and activities in March	Completed
Identify additional partners or stakeholders to engage (as currently outlined in PPP)	Completed
Work on outreach for March visit and refine activities	Completed
Review draft community survey questions	Completed
Review outcomes of March events	Completed
Review Summary of demographic and economic trends	Completed
Assist in planning and outreach for May community events	April/May
Assist with outreach for community survey	April-survey close
Review Draft Literature Review	May
Review outcomes of May events; emerging vision, themes, goals, and strategies.	May

Coordination and Process Team

Coordination and Process Team roles and responsibilities include:

- Communicate and meet regularly to discuss project status, review relevant planning documents, and proactively address next steps and phases of the planning process.
- Provide guidance on overall public participation process and tools.
- Suggest community and stakeholder activities/virtual events for collecting resident input.
- Participate in interviews and small group discussions, when available.
- Support in-person outreach efforts at key points in the process, such as helping staff at events and open houses.
- Help get the word out about the planning process and opportunities to get involved.
- Review draft materials and help make sure what is presented is accurate and complete.

Coordination and Process team membership includes:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Robert Dumouchel, City Manager | Shelly Wade, Agnew::Beck Consulting |
| Ryan Foster, City Planner | Meg Friedenauer, Agnew::Beck Consulting |
| Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager | Holly Smith, Agnew::Beck Consulting |
| Aaron Yeaton, Engineering GIS Technician | |

Planning Commission

Planning Commission roles and responsibilities include:

- Be a sounding board and creative problem solver throughout the planning process.
- Provide guidance on overall public participation process and tools.
- Participate in key informant interviews and focus groups, when available.
- Support in-person outreach efforts at key points in the process, such as helping staff at events and open houses.
- Suggest community and stakeholder activities/virtual events for collecting resident input.
- Help get the word out about the planning process and opportunities to get involved.
- Seek to identify areas of agreement and common solutions that serve all Homer residents.
- Review draft materials and help make sure that what is presented is accurate and complete.
- Work productively with other Core Team members, project staff and partners even when there are differences of opinion.
- Help identify priorities in the plan.
- Advocate for adoption of the plan.

Planning Commission Members:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| • Scott Smith, Chair | • Roberta Highland |
| • Charles Barnwell, Vice Chair | • Brad Conley |
| • Mike Stark | • Franco Venuti |
| • David Schneider | |

Mayor and City Council

Mayor and City Council roles and responsibilities include:

- Participate in key informant interviews and focus groups, when available.
- Help get the word out about the planning process and opportunities to get involved.
- Seek to identify areas of agreement and common solutions that serve all Homer residents.
- Review draft materials and help make sure what is presented is accurate and complete.
- Review and adopt the final plan.

Mayor and City Council Members:

- Ken Castner, Mayor
- Donna Aderhold
- Shelly Erickson
- Storm Hansen
- Caroline Venuti
- Rachel Lord
- Jason Davis

City Staff

City staff roles and responsibilities include:

- Provide guidance on overall public participation process and tools, including reviewing the public participation plan.
- Suggest community and stakeholder activities/virtual events for collecting input.
- Help arrange project updates, work sessions, and presentations with the Planning Commission and City Council.
- Participate in key public outreach activities such as the open houses and stakeholder dialogues.
- Support in-person outreach efforts at key points in the process, such as helping staff at events and open houses.
- Collaborate on efforts to produce local news articles and participate in local radio programming, with support and guidance from the consultant team.
- Post project announcements and content to Homer social media, with support and guidance from the consultant team.
- Review draft materials and help make sure what is presented is accurate and complete.

City staff team includes:

- Robert Dumouchel, City Manager
- Ryan Foster, City Planner
- Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager
- Aaron Yeaton, Engineering GIS Technician

Consulting Team

Consulting team roles and responsibilities include:

- Prepare the public participation plan.

Plan for and facilitate interviews, focus groups, community meetings, and other public participation efforts.

Prepare for, facilitate, and document the results of virtual meetings and events.

Oversee the development and distribution of outreach materials, including e-newsletters, postcards, and flyers.

Produce materials (talking points, QR codes, sign-up sheets, handouts, etc.) to support in person outreach efforts led by Core Team members, City staff, and Planning Commissioners.

Develop, promote, and analyze results from a community survey.

Compile background information and relevant data on demographic and economic trends and summarize key findings.

Work with the City's staff to develop key maps including land ownership and zoning maps.

Package public participation feedback and results.

Assist with plan hearings and adoption, including preparing presentations, providing virtual meeting support, and answering questions.

The Consulting Team includes:

Agnew::Beck Consulting

Northern Economics

Corvus Design

RESPEC

Kinney Engineering

Stantec