



# 2035 Homer Comprehensive Plan Update

## Why update the plan now?

March 2025

This supplemental handout answers some of the frequently asked questions we've heard from you:

1

Why do we need an updated Comprehensive Plan?

2

What have we accomplished since 2008?

3

How is the proposed 2035 Plan different from the 2018 Plan?


4

How has the City of Homer and surrounding area changed since the 2018 Plan was adopted? What other impactful changes have occurred?

### 1. Why do we need an updated Comprehensive Plan?

- The first Homer Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1954. The plan has gone through periodic updates every five to ten years. The 2018 update was a technical update and did not include significant changes from the previous major plan, which was completed in 2008.
- The conditions in and around Homer have evolved since 2018, and the community has made progress and completed strategies from the 2018 Plan. Read some of the highlights of how the community has changed on the back side of this document.
- The 2018 Plan update was conducted internally by city staff with input from the City Council and City commissions/advisory boards. The 2018 Plan did not include a major public involvement component.
- The City is preparing to update the zoning and planning sections of the City Code (Title 21) to make the code clearer and easier to use. This update aims to support better development decisions, particularly on key issues like housing, natural hazard mitigation, and urban sprawl. To ensure the code reflects Homer's current needs, the City wants to ensure the code updates are based on an up-to-date plan, with ample opportunities for residents to shape the future direction of the community.

Some of the recommendations in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan are still relevant today.

The [public review draft of the 2035 Homer Comprehensive Plan](#) includes strategies and actions that have been adapted from the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. These strategies and actions are identified in the focus area chapters using a green diamond symbol: 

## 2. What have we accomplished since 2008?

The community has made progress since the full comprehensive plan update in 2008, including:

✓ Built a new police station and completed repairs to fire department	✓ Completed an ADA transition plan for city facilities	✓ Revised the Community Design Manual
✓ Added public restrooms in downtown Homer and Homer Spit	✓ Completed the Climate Action Plan Progress Report	✓ Reduced parking requirements for homes and businesses
✓ Renovated and expanded City Hall	✓ Constructed port and harbor office	✓ Updated the Homer Transportation Plan
✓ Improved trail systems and built new sidewalks; completed trail between harbor and Seafarers Memorial	✓ Developed updated beach policy and revised Coastal Bluff construction setback regulations	✓ Rezoned areas according to the Future Land Use Map such as creating the Town Center, East End Mixed Use and Medical Zoning Districts
✓ Completed upgrades to End of the Road, Bishop’s Beach, Jack Gist and Karen Hornaday Parks	✓ Increased police and emergency response coverage	✓ Expanded Community Recreation Services and public/private partnerships
✓ Modified City budget and taxation based on major reductions of state funding to municipalities	✓ Completed long range planning for future facilities such as public works and indoor recreation	✓ Continued purchasing lands in the Bridge Creek Watershed Protection District to protect public drinking water
✓ Completed cruise ship disembarkment improvements and harbor overlook at Deep Water Dock	✓ Completed a Wayfinding and Streetscape Plan and began making improvements	✓ Updated the Homer Spit Plan and followed up with zoning revisions and parking management

## 3. How is the proposed 2035 Plan different from the 2018 Plan?

The 2035 Plan is organized in a similar way to the 2018 Plan, with some notable differences identified below:

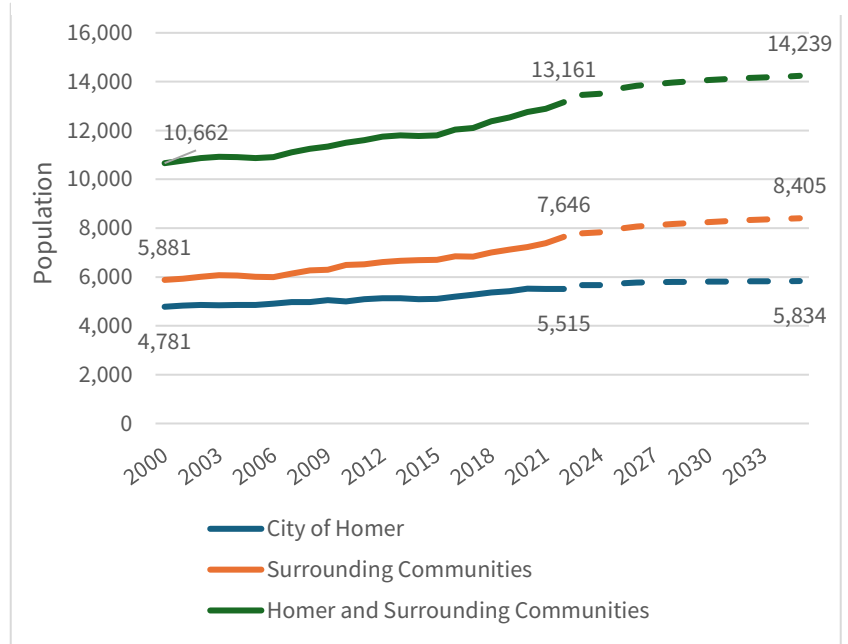
2018 Topics	2035 Draft Topics	Notes
Land Use	Land Use & Environment	The addition of the word “environment” into the chapter title acknowledges that this chapter considers both conservation values and environmental constraints in the context of land use analysis and decision-making.
Transportation	Transportation	No change
Public Services & Facilities	Public Facilities & Services	No change
Economic Vitality	Economic Development	No change
Energy Plan	<i>No energy chapter</i>	Energy information and policies are now included within the Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Change chapter.
<i>No sustainability, resilience, and climate change chapter</i>	Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Change	This chapter has been added to recognize the significant environmental changes that are occurring and are being documented in the Homer area, with policies that will help the community be prepared and resilient.
<i>No housing chapter</i>	Housing	The cost and availability of housing in Homer has been a growing concern and challenge. By elevating housing as its own chapter, the community is recognizing the importance of housing in planning for Homer’s future.
<i>No quality of life chapter</i>	Quality of Life	Homer has many attributes that make it a desirable place to live – the friendliness, the views, the access to open space. This chapter focuses on preserving what residents value and ensuring Homer remains a safe, vibrant place into the future.
<i>No governance chapter</i>	Governance	The City faces fiscal uncertainty due to factors like reductions in state funding, inflation, and over dependence on specific funding streams. This chapter identifies trends in revenues, expenses, and taxation, and offers policies to help ensure long-term financial stability and transparency.

## 4. How has the City of Homer and surrounding area changed since 2018? What other impactful changes have occurred?

Homer has evolved since the 2018 Plan was released:

- The area’s **population has continued to grow**. The chart below shows historic and forecasted population trends in Homer and the surrounding area.
  - Homer’s population in 2022 was 15.4% larger than it was in 2000 (**blue line on chart**).
  - Considered together, the surrounding communities around Homer were 30.0% larger in 2022 than in 2000, outpacing growth within City limits (**orange line on chart**).
  - Since 1994 the total population of the surrounding communities has exceeded the population in the City of Homer.
  - When taken together, the population in Homer and its surrounding communities was 23.4% larger in 2022 than in 2000 (**green line on chart**).
  - Many residents in these surrounding communities work in the City and/or rely on City services, facilities, and businesses. Many of these residents also have shared they would like to live in Homer but cannot afford to live within City boundaries; housing cost and housing affordability are often cited as a barrier.
- Homer is experiencing a large and **growing senior population**; the percentage of the population that is 65 or older increased from 14% to 22% between 2013 to 2022.
- The **COVID-19 pandemic** left lasting impacts, from changes in worker habits to higher inflation.
- Impacts from **climate change** are a growing concern.
- The City is planning for **port, harbor, and Spit improvements** to meet economic needs and increase resilience to natural hazards and climate change.
- **Housing** is increasingly cited as a concern for hiring/retaining workers and to overall quality of life.

**Historical and Forecasted Population in Homer and Surrounding Community Populations, 1990–2035**



*Surrounding communities = Anchor Point, Diamond Ridge, Fox River, Fritz Creek, Kachemak, and Nikolaevsk*

*Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> and Northern Economics analysis*