

Approximately 45 people attended the workshop held in the Homer High School Commons. The purpose of the meeting was to review the Draft Homer Comprehensive Plan with the community and obtain feedback and input. The workshop was facilitated by Tanya Iden and Chris Beck of Agnew::Beck Consulting, LLC, Tamas Deak of kpb architects, and the Homer Comprehensive Plan Citizen Advisory Committee members, as part of the Homer Comprehensive Plan Update. Five break-out sessions occurred grouped around the main plan chapters and were facilitated as follows:

- Land Use – Tamas Deak & Allegra Bukojemsky
- Transportation – Chris Beck, Marianne Schlegelmilch, & Val McLay
- Public Facilities & Services – Tanya Iden & Beth McKibben
- Parks, Recreation, & Culture – Barb Seaman & Hannah Bradley
- Economic Vitality – Anne Marie Holen & Tina Day

Following are the main points from the evening's break-out sessions.

I. LAND USE

- Desire for Mixed Income/Low Income Housing
- Improve Zoning on the Spit
- Better enforce of existing regulations
- Build student housing for university and use for affordable summer labor housing
- City owns a lot of property –use this wisely, keep it for parks because development will occur. Homer might not be “dense” now but likely will be in 10-20 years.
- Annexation – afterwards
- RE: Land Use Map
 - Neighborhood commercial at base of East Hill seems too close to town.
 - Retail Commercial along East End Road, or residential
 - Would like to see agricultural uses on zoning map – no encouragement of medium to small agriculture. Small scale agriculture is only allowed in rural residential under current version of the Plan.

2. TRANSPORTATION

- Connectivity:
 - Need to protect character of neighborhoods; avoid funneling through traffic onto local roads. Allow for cul-de-sacs, road end roads
 - How connections are made is a key issue
 - Need mechanism to require off-site circulation improvements (e.g. roads, side walks)

- “Bulbs” slow traffic, create a shorter distance for pedestrians to cross, “good idea”
 - Look at options to narrow streets to improve environment for pedestrians – “traffic calming”
 - Happy with “walkability” emphasis
 - Pedestrian safety concerns and disabled persons safety concerns (corners and street crossing)
 - Design streets to decrease distance pedestrians have to be in the street to walk across – decrease width at intersections
 - Eliminate visibility issues for drivers (crosswalks raised)
 - Curb extensions at every intersection
 - Ensure that every pedestrian crossing has no more than 20’ curb-to-curb “asphalt exposure”
- Consideration for run away truck turnoffs for large vehicles (school busses etc.) safety
 - General concern about concrete traffic calming measures being put into place
 - Roundabouts – slowing traffic OK as long as traffic keeps moving, stop and start creates sense of delay
 - Raise the intersection on every intersection where there is no roundabout
 - Boulevards (treed) on Pioneer and By Pass (center lane will be eliminated as no turn lane is necessary with roundabouts)
- Update trails map, there have been some changes since the non-motorized plan was adopted (e.g. Bartlett area)
 - There is a discrepancy between the number of round about on road map vs. trails map
 - Goal 3- Homer’s street system etc (change from “should be encouraged” to softer term such as “should be explored”)
- Cost for transportation improvements a concern – where will the money come from?

3. PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

- Water delivery promotes sprawl
 - If city is going to sell water they should make a profit
 - Concern over septic systems in BCWD,
 - Septic is challenging in Homer because of the soil issues
 - Desalinization plant could provide water to Homer
- City can help with education about recycling

- Bailing facility needs more space – city should help put the heat on
- NO tin recycling but we want it
- Green waste not available either
- Social/Human Services:
 - Plan needs more of a focus on social services
 - Community mental health needs
 - Haven House – substance abuse/family violence
 - Promote a “social services corridor”
 - Adolescents need activities
 - Youth homelessness – “couch surfing” family issues
 - Listing of youth services fair – get the word out
 - General Infrastructure:
 - Utilities need to be moving to the west part of town
 - Energy efficient utilities – city can be a model
- Spit is experiencing loss pg(6) 9 &10 – sentence is inaccurate- fix it

4. PARKS, REC AND CULTURE

- Connect pocket parks to business
- Desire for more winter trails, Ski/snow machine trails
- Need parking for trails/restrooms
- Develop a City Trails Bank
- Lose the term “green” throughout the plan
- More connections / references to winter recreation opportunities
- Plan needs more references to university in general
- Review city’s portfolio of property; Consider retaining much of this property for parks and open space; Save on need for future/acquisitions

5. ECONOMIC VITALITY

- Issues – hard to recruit people when there is no affordable housing (summer especially)
Student housing could help with this
- Mixed use development/walk ability helps downtown economic vitality
- Rail connection on to anchorage would have environmental as well as economic benefits
- Conference center and the means to build and sustain it
- Include an element in the plan on how to fund implementation of the plan
- Education/Research:
 - Ocean research – funding available – need a lab
 - Projects – not just college curriculum
 - Tourism:
 - Expand winter recreation – ski trails, etc. (also across the bay “yurt to yurt”)

- Promote fall season – its still beautiful, less people
- Adventure tourism
- Sustainable Ventures:
 - Green economy – local entrepreneurial spirit/sustainability
 - Farmers market – local small scale agriculture (needs space in town center)
 - Renewable energy – growing fields
 - Economic incubator for green businesses
 - Promote clean technologies that will create year – round sustainable jobs (technology central, banking, financial planning, etc.)

Wrap Up:

The Public Comment period on the Homer Comprehensive Plan runs through November 15th. Comment Sheets are available on-line at www.homercompplan.com and at the City Hall and Public Library. The Draft will be revised based on feedback received at the Public Workshop as well as in light of the Public Comments that are sent in. By December a revised Draft should be available to be presented to the Homer Advisory Planning Commission for approval. The Draft will then need to be approved by the Homer City Council and the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly before final adoption. The Public is encouraged to attend these hearings and comment on the Plan.