



# City of Homer

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Port and Harbor

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## Memorandum

TO: HOMER CITY COUNCIL

THRU: KATIE KOESTER, CITY MANAGER

FROM: BRYAN HAWKINS, PORT DIRECTOR/HARBORMASTER

DATE: JANUARY 2 2020

SUBJECT: ANCHORAGE BUSINESS TRIP DECEMBER 12 2019

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Katie Koester, City Manager and I took a whirlwind business day trip to Anchorage on Dec. 12 that had pretty much every minute accounted for, and because of good planning and fair winds I think the trip went very well. Our day was as follows:

**0745 – 0845** Arrival at the Anchorage Airport, car rental, and transportation.

**0845-1045** The first meeting of the morning was with HDR engineering to discuss Homer's Port/Harbor expansion project. Katie and I believe that we are at a point in this process where it would be wise to bring in a team experienced in the management of a mega marine project like the one Homer is about to undertake. We feel that if we are going to be able to keep this project moving and on track we'll need an experienced team to help keep things moving effectively. Ronny McPherson is the lead for the Coastal and Maritime infrastructure department with HDR and he has agreed to help us draft a scope of work that we could then build into a RFP for project management services.

**1030-1230** Katie and I then moved over to our city attorney's at JDO and met with Michael Gatti and Cindy Cartledge. Our focus for that meeting was to discuss funding options and possibilities regarding Homer's Large Vessel Port Expansion funding packet. From our conversation we learned that the JDO team has had quite a bit of experience in helping their clients navigate the confusing world of bonding for projects like ours.

**1300-1400** After leaving our attorneys we drove over to the State DOT offices located on International Airport road and met with Joselyn Biloon and David Post to discuss AK DOT partnering with the City on two very important project studies. First, we talked about our shared need to come up with a long term erosion management plan for the Homer Spit, and the Planning Assistance to

States (PAS) study that we are pushing for with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The State has expressed interest in the need to protect the highway on the Spit and we believe that this study will benefit that priority. The PAS is a 50/50 matching federal program and if the State and City were to split costs our share would likely be \$50,000. One of the chief goals for this project will be to have all the stake holders involved with a long term erosion management plan in which all stakeholders (Federal, State, and City) work cooperatively to plan for, and implement, measures to make positive changes in how the Spit weathers what nature has to throw at it. We will be pushing for a change of Authorization for the USACE's scope of work on the Spit. Currently the USACE is authorized to dredge the navigable waterway of the harbor entrance channel all the way to the Load and Launch ramp. The change to the corps' authorization needs to include erosion control and mitigation of the Homer Spit. This new authorization would include a beach re-nourishment enhancement program, possible revetment extensions to protect critical infrastructure, and a designation that their annual operations and maintenance fund include erosion mitigation as part of the Corps' mission on the Homer Spit. We know from looking at beach maintenance projects in the lower 48 that beach re-nourishment works as an alternative to, or as a way of supporting, hard facing with rock revetment walls, but it will take a major effort a significant source of material to catch up and get ahead of the curve.

Where will we get the amount of material needed to rebuild the Spit?

To help answer that question, the second half of this meeting was to talk about re-engaging the State in Homer's Port and Harbor Expansion Study. In the original harbor expansion study with the Corps the partnership was Corps 50%, State 25%, and City 25%. We shelved that project in 2009 awaiting a time when BCR numbers (Benefit Cost Ratio) for the project were more advantageous. Now, after the completion of the PAS study last year, and the resulting higher positive BCR numbers, we feel we are ready to resume and complete our study for port expansion. We need the State to commit to getting back on board with this very important maritime infrastructure expansion project. The financial commitment for both the city and the state for the general investigation study will be \$750,000 over the next three years and there were some ideas floated as to where and how the State may be able to fund their share. FYI, one of the big cost drivers that gave us such poor BCRs in the original study had to do with the disposal of the thousands and thousands of cubic yards of dredged materials that would be generated by the Port expansion project. Can we say erosion management and beach re-nourishment?

**1400-1500** The State changed out a few of its staff members and we moved straight into a meeting regarding Spit parking safety issues and concerns, as well as plans and progress with Pioneer and Lake street road improvements, crosswalks and other bike and pedestrian concerns on Ocean Drive having to do with on street parking in the summer. We also talked about Tsunami escape route signage and speed limit signage for the Spit. One of my chief concerns for the Spit has to do with vehicles parking on the roadway next to the fog line. We see this as a serious safety issue as it blocks

the driver's sight line and eliminates the pedestrian and bike paths alongside the highway. The Regional Traffic & Safety Engineers at DOT walked us through a few options for signage that we could consider. I agreed to mark up an overview of the areas of concern and keep the conversation moving ahead. It would be my goal to have any changes in place early in May before the summer crowds show up.

**1500-1700**      We grabbed a bite to eat before heading back to the airport for our return flight home.

**1930**            Arrived in Homer and called it a day.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

For information only.