



City of Homer

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Port and Harbor

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Memorandum

TO: PORT & HARBOR ADVISORY COMMISSION

FROM: BRYAN HAWKINS, HARBORMASTER

DATE: DECEMBER 2, 2019

SUBJECT: PARKING UPDATE & PROPOSED BUDGET AMENDMENT FOR HOMER SPIT
PARKING PLAN

The Homer Spit is a hub of commercial and recreational activity. Staff are seeing a steadily-increasing use in the Adventure Tourism category, which seems to be following the national trends. All this is to say that the Port/Harbor is seeing increasing congestion in the peak use months centering on parking. The effect of this congestion brings to light safety concerns such as higher levels of vehicle/pedestrian interactions and shoulder parking, causes difficulty for shop owners and customers alike, and there is a general hindrance to our core customer, the vessel owners mooring their vessels in our harbor, that must be addressed.

In July of 2013 the Port and Harbor Advisory Commission recommended the use of dredged material to expand parking lots around the Spit, which was introduced to Council in November of 2013 and HART funding was dedicated to the project for engineering costs. Staff also added this project to the CIP and ongoing work has been periodically dedicated to this by both the Commission and Staff. However, this is just a small piece of a much larger puzzle in the search for solutions to help alleviate the ever increasing need for more parking.

The Budget amendment, proposed to City Council at their November 25th meeting, takes a holistic approach to parking management on the Spit on a larger scale by funding a parking study that could provide tangible recommendations for managing parking in a way that encourages safety and promotes maximum usage of land available for parking. The study would begin by evaluating the Homer Spit Comprehensive plan created in 2011 and reviewing recommendations and what's already been achieved. However, this study would be focused on looking forward and would be parking specific, looking into matters like: better utilization of existing space from a cost to benefit standpoint, developing fee structures and/or season passes that can guide user patterns and management of space, creation of safer pedestrian traffic patterns, and organizing parking in a way to prioritize use of spaces closest to the intended user.

The plan would need to list recommendations on the management structure needed to create and enforce efficient and effective parking on the Homer Spit. This recommended management structure would need to include the generation of revenue in such a way as to offset operating costs for the Enterprise to ensure a long term, sustainable, parking plan for the future.

The study would include public scoping meetings and reaching out to the many different user groups that enjoy the Homer Spit. It would culminate in recommendations that the Commissions and Council could shepherd through the public process to develop parking strategies that are right sized for Homer.

Although the date for the commencement of this study is not set yet, we're anticipating that it will be in the summer months of 2020. Prepared detailed recommendations from the Port and Harbor Advisory commission, developed during upcoming work sessions or meetings, would be helpful for collaboration and input during the public scoping meetings and the development of this long term plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Informational; for discussion and planning. Any recommendations should be made in the form of a motion.