

By: Borough Manager
Adopted: 02/07/17

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. 17-013**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY APPROVING
STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018.

PORT MACKENZIE RAIL EXTENSION - \$125 million

Port MacKenzie is a deep water port capable of docking and loading the largest cargo vessels in the world. This shorter rail route from Interior Alaska to tidewater, the rail extension will substantially boost the export of Alaska's minerals and other natural resources helping to diversify the statewide economy. The project will create jobs, lower transportation costs and increase economic development. With a shorter distance to tidewater from the Interior, the new segment of rail will save more than \$100 million in construction costs for the State's proposed natural gas pipeline projects over existing ports. Less expensive bulk transport costs will also help stimulate the development of natural resources and mines such as the one-billion-ton limestone deposit near Livengood. The lower transportation costs created by the proposed rail extension coupled with the development of this limestone deposit will create a major new export related manufacturing opportunity for the production of cement; with the rail extension, Alaska will be able to produce up to 15 percent of the nation's annual need for cement.

The shorter mileage to tidewater will also reduce the cost of transporting coal by up to \$6 per ton, making coal from Alaska's Interior competitive on the world market. According to a study by the Institute of Social and Economic Research, the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension Project will create up to 3,400 new jobs in construction, 35 jobs in annual operations, and another 640 direct and indirect jobs. A number of private companies have leased land at Port MacKenzie and will take advantage of the rail extensions quicker transport time to the Interior including Alaska Energy which intends to import low sulfur fuel, store it in million gallon tanks and transport it around the state.

SEWARD MERIDIAN PARKWAY EXTENSION NORTH, PHASE 2 (PALMER-WASILLA HIGHWAY TO SELDON ROAD) - \$30 million

Seward Meridian Parkway is one of only two north-south arterial corridors in the Borough's transportation network. The project will upgrade the current two-lane road with no shoulder to a four-lane road with shoulders, a separated path, a bridge over

Cottonwood Creek, and safety improvements at intersections extending from the Parks Highway to Seldon Road. Phase 1, the Parks to Palmer-Wasilla Highway is complete, and Phase 2 will extend from the Palmer-Wasilla Highway to Seldon Road. With the construction of Mat-Su Day School, an addition to the Career and Technical High School, and construction of a new charter school, along with the existing Teeland Middle School, the intersection at Seward Meridian Parkway and Seldon Road, and the current intersection at Tait and Bogard Roads, are not sufficient to support the growing traffic volumes and needs of the surrounding community. Thousands of Borough residents will benefit from this project through increased efficiency of traffic flow (faster travel time, safer travel, lower levels of vehicle emissions, and improved access to businesses, schools, and emergency service facilities). The project is supported by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Long Range Transportation Plan and Official Streets and Highways Plan. Design and right-of-way is ongoing. Construction is expected in 2018.

MUSEUM DRIVE EXTENSION (PARKS HIGHWAY CONNECTOR) - \$4 million

The Parks Highway from Wasilla to Big Lake is being upgraded to a four-lane highway by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities due to high accident rates and traffic congestion. A frontage road system is required to pull local traffic off the Parks Highway. The Borough owns collector roads that run parallel with the Parks Highway corridor and could be used as frontage roads, but the collector roads are not connected. The Borough has identified four collector roads that could be used as frontage roads that if connected, would relieve the Parks Highway of a significant amount of local traffic. Museum Drive Extension is one of the four roads. The two-mile project would extend Museum Drive west from Parks Highway mile post 47 to intersect with Vine Road and then link to Marigold Drive at Sylvan Road. The recent rapid growth in this area has resulted in an increase in local traffic and traffic crashes.

PARKS HIGHWAY WASILLA ALTERNATIVE CORRIDOR - ADVANCE ROW ACQUISITION - \$10 million

The Parks Highway Alternative Corridor (PHAC, also known as the Wasilla Bypass,) was developed to investigate options for a bypass of the greater Wasilla area in order to relieve congestion on the Parks Highway and to avoid future expansion of the highway (six lanes minimum and costing over \$500 million) which would have significant economic and aesthetic impacts. Traffic forecasts indicate that by the year 2035 congestion on the Parks Highway between Seward Meridian Parkway and Church Road will reach levels approaching gridlock in the peak hours unless additional capacity

is added for east-west traffic movements. The existing east-west arterials (Palmer-Wasilla Highway, Seldon-Bogard Road) are burdened by past land use decisions that make it difficult for the arterials to function efficiently as alternative corridors. As a result, a new east-west, controlled-access route is a critical priority if leaders wish to ensure future economic prosperity in the Mat-Su. The Alaska State Department of Transportation and Public Facilities has worked with the Borough and the city of Wasilla over the past few years to determine whether it was still possible to establish an alternative corridor. There is an approved preferred alignment identified in the Parks Highway Alternative Corridor Conceptual Planning Report. The PHAC is to be developed in phases using State funds. The most critical Phase is preservation of the proposed corridor before development pressures result in sub-division of lands within the alignment. The project is amenable to development in phases in order to make it more affordable. Advance acquisition of right-of-way is critical to preservation of the corridor alignment. Preliminary cost estimates for total right-of-way acquisition are \$25,000,000 over multiple years.

**WILLOW LIBRARY REPLACEMENT AND COMMUNITY CENTER UPGRADES -
\$3 million**

The existing Willow Library is too small to meet the community needs. The existing library will be removed and a new 6,600 square foot library will be constructed on the site. A Pre-development project plan was completed in April of 2016. The plan shows a significant deficit in the existing space to meet the needs of the community during the next 20 years. Further, the remainder of the building is in need of upgrades that include exterior siding, fire suppression and other minor upgrades throughout the structure. Total project cost is \$5,660,000, of which \$400,000 is currently pending legislative reappropriation approval remaining from Talkeetna Library Project funds, and \$50,000 is from Willow Library Association donations. Per the Pre-Development Plan, the remaining funds will be from several sources including: Mat-Su Borough \$1,555,000; Individual and Business Fundraising \$50,000; and Foundations and Grants \$605,000.

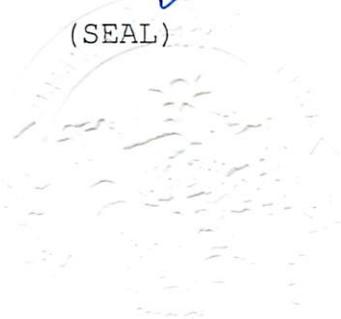
ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly this
7 day of February, 2017.


VERN HALTER, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:


LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

(SEAL)



PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: Sykes, Beck, McKee, Mayfield, Doty, and
Kowalke

