

SUBJECT: INFORMING THE ASSEMBLY OF THE SUBMITTAL OF A U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, BUILD AMERICA BUREAU, 2025 RURAL AND TRIBAL ASSISTANCE (RTA) PILOT PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION REQUESTING \$890,000. FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A PORT DISTRICT MASTER PLAN: PORT, ROAD, AND RAIL LOOP IMPROVEMENTS.

AGENDA OF: October 21, 2025

ASSEMBLY ACTION:

AGENDA ACTION REQUESTED: For information only.

Route To	Signatures
Originator	 Recoverable Signature X Corinne Lindfors Signed by: Corinne Lindfors 10/2/2025
Port Director	X David Griffin Signed by: David Griffin 10/7/2025
Finance Director	 Recoverable Signature X Cheyenne Heindel Signed by: Cheyenne Heindel 10/7/2025
Borough Attorney	X Nicholas Spiropoulos Signed by: Nicholas Spiropoulos 10/7/2025
Borough Manager	X Michael Brown Signed by: Mike Brown 10/8/2025
Borough Clerk	X Lonnie McKechnie Signed by: Lonnie McKechnie

ATTACHMENT (S): Rural Tribal Assistance Grant Application (9pgs)

SUMMARY STATEMENT: The Matanuska-Susitna Borough has submitted an application for a 2025 U.S. Department of Transportation Build America Bureau, Rural and Tribal Assistance (RTA) Pilot Program Grant requesting \$890,000 for the Port District Master Plan: Port, Road, and Rail Loop Improvements project. This grant does not require match funds.

If awarded, a contractor will be procured to develop a long-term Master Transportation Plan around commercial and industrial transportation at the port. The project would include identification, engineering, design, survey, and geotechnical work for two new access roads. These roads would create efficiency for port operations and significantly reduce the conflict between commercial users and private landowners.

Also included in the project will be design, permitting and funding for grant applications to complete construction of the project as designed.

If awarded additional legislation will follow to accept and appropriate funds.

1. Grant type *: Confirm you are applying for the following grant type:

☒ Single project

2. Name and contact information of person for matters involving this application:

First and Last Name

David Griffin

Title

Matanuska-Susitna Borough Port Operations Manager

Phone

(907) 861-7799

Email

david.griffin@matsugov.us

3. Entity name, address, and website:

Organization / Entity Name

Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Address (#, street- no post office box numbers)

350 E. Dahlia Avenue

City

Palmer

State

AK

Zip Code

99645-0000

Website address, if applicable:

(LEAVE BLANK)

4. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN)*:

92-0030816

5. Organization/entity Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) assigned by SAM.gov*:

QRK7LJ2Y3RJ1

6. Entity/Organization headquarters is in this congressional district(s)*:

AK-001

Program/project is in this congressional district(s)*:

AK-001

7. Is the applicant delinquent on any federal debt?

☐ Yes

☒ No

8. Below is a list of eligible entities for this program. Please select the one option that describes your eligibility*: *(See Section C.1: Eligible Applicants of the Notice)*

☒ A unit of local government or political subdivision seeking to advance a project that is located outside of an urbanized area with a population of more than 150,000 residents (Urbanized area listing should be drawn from the 2020 Census results. For 2020 Census results, visit: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>)

☐ A State seeking to advance a project located outside of an urbanized area with a population of more than 150,000 residents

☐ A federally recognized Indian Tribe

☐ The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands

9. Qualifying Funding or Financing Program*: Select which funding or financing program you expect your project to qualify for: *(Information on these programs can be found in the NOFO Appendix. [RTA_FY24 Amended NOFO_0.pdf](#))*

☐ TIFIA

☐ RRIF

☒ INFRA

☐ Mega

☒ BUILD

☐ National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program

10. Project title*: *(Descriptive title of project for which you seek funding)*

MSB Port District Master Plan: Port, Road, & Rail Loop Improvements

11. Project location (no more than 100 words)*: Include city and state if providing street name(s). Latitude/longitude is also acceptable.
(See Section C.1.i Eligible Applicants of the Notice. Note: For Indian Tribes and the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, the project location does not have to meet the non-urban area requirement.)

Port MacKenzie is an industrial port facility located on Cook Inlet's Knik Arm in a rural area of southcentral Alaska within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB). The port is located approximately 2 nautical miles across Cook Inlet from Anchorage, Alaska's largest community. It is connected to southcentral Alaska's road and highway system, including the Parks Highway and Glenn Highway, and it is the terminus of the forthcoming Port MacKenzie Rail Extension that will connect the Alaska Railroad system to the port. (Latitude 61.2680556, Longitude -149.9169444)

12. Briefly describe the overall project (no more than 300 words) * Include:

- Include project type (i.e., bridge, new roadway, transit service)
- Features to be constructed
- Project limits/length
- Project need
- Project Schedule

The Port MacKenzie Master Plan is a transportation improvement planning project and will provide new roads, rail loop and accesses into Port MacKenzie.

The Port District contains 9,000 acres. Of which 1,000 acres are submerged or tidelands and 8,000 are uplands. The Master Plan will develop a long term planning document around commercial and industrial transportation at the port.

A 2-mile-long access road alternative needs to be designed. This new access would alleviate conflicts between commercial users of the port and private property owners seeking legal access to their properties. The project would provide legal access from Point MacKenzie Road to private property on the south side of the port district boundary (i.e. private property south to the rail loop). This separation lowers the risk of collisions and accidents.

Port MacKenzie is also seeking to improve an access route from the rail loop to the dock. The existing road connection is 2.2 miles from the dock to the rail. The new access route would reduce the distance to 0.7 miles long and significantly increase the efficiency of movement of freight, both time and reduced costs. This shorter route will create faster turnaround times for freight, ultimately creating a greater handling capacity for the Port. Work needs to be done to study the alignment, and connection to Lu Young Lane, and John Riggs Memorial Way (the rail loop road).

The estimated start date for the project is November 1, 2025, with a completion date of September 30, 2028. The schedule includes planning, design and construction.

13. Project advancement*: *(See Section VI. B. Criterion #1 of the NOFO for review and evaluation information.)*

- a. Describe, in detail, the activities to be completed with this program funding, stating how these activities will materially advance the overall project and address an identified transportation challenge. (no more than 400 words)**

Port MacKenzie is proposing to develop a long term Master Transportation Plan around commercial and industrial transportation at the port.

The project would include two new access roads that create efficiency for port operations and significantly reduce the conflict between commercial users and private landowners. Currently the Port has aerial view maps with proposed road locations. Funds from this grant will be used to survey, design and engineer the access roads, including the direct port access road and vehicle entry gates.

The initial phase of the project will include working with engineers to identify alternative road access and to survey those areas. The project roads would then move to design stage, with geotechnical work done to inform the design. This project includes funds for geotechnical work, permitting and grant writing to move from the planning and design phase to the construction phase.

The project aims to tackle ongoing conflicts caused by commercial and private property owners which has led to restriction of movement of property owners during times of sensitive (military) shipments or heavy commercial truck traffic in and out of the Port. The new access will prevent bottlenecks and even road closures for private property owners while improving safety. The new access will help reduce accidents involving vehicles, ATVs and pedestrians.

Better access to the rail loop is one of the most important projects for the Port. The new access would reduce the distance from the rail to the Port from 2.2 miles to 0.7 miles. This improved access is key to the Ports infrastructure planning and future growth. Moving freight between the rail and the Port, a shorter more efficient road enhances the flow of commercial truck traffic which significantly reduces delivery times, improves the cost-efficiency of the supply chain, and improves the overall cargo capacity.

The Port District includes 9,000 total acres. 1,000 acres are submerged or tidelands and 8,000 acres of uplands.

Funds will be used to design and permit the project and to apply for transportation grant funding through BUILD, INFRA, and other DOT grants. The MSB may also target other federal or state agencies or entities for transportation funds to complete the construction of this project once designed.

- b. Requested funds from this program*: \$890,000**

c. **Estimated cost of proposed activities*: \$890,000**

d. **Provide evidence of project readiness, including any project-related development activities that have already been completed.** Examples would include data or information that has been collected or activities conducted that are necessary for completing the activities funded through this Program. **(no more than 200 words) ***

Port MacKenzie has identified the most critical needs for safety and efficiency. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the owner and operator of the port, is also the landowner where the new access roads would be located. The Port has identified the potential new access road locations that would need surveyed and designed. The Port's Planning Department and Port Manager have helped to identify these areas of need and have engaged with engineering and other consultants to help estimate the needed deliverables and costs.

The MSB has worked over the last several years to make improvements to the Port for ships to enter and transport freight efficiently. It has fully designed and permitted a new barge ramp for haulout and ease of offloading. Now improvements are needed to roads throughout the Port District for vehicles, including cargo movement (large trucks) transporting goods to and from the port and for residents (conflict avoidance).

The MSB has had consultants onsite to do initial cost estimating and site evaluation of roads and vehicle entry points for some of this work, with no design. Cost estimates will change as design advances through stages to 100% design.

14. Demonstrated experience and confidence in estimated costs*: (See Section VI. B. Criterion #2 of the NOFO for review and evaluation information.)

- **State if you. (no more than 250 words) ***

The MSB will follow its procurement process for contracting with an engineering firm and/or geotechnical firms to study, design, and permit the new roads. We also intend to procure advisory services that include grant writing and planning support for the construction phase of the project. This funding is not needed to hire a MSB employee, but we will use contracted support. Our existing staff at the Borough and the Port will help to manage this project.

Port MacKenzie has already been in contact with planners to discuss the initial need and plans on consulting with an engineering firm for initial design and construction options.

- **Funding breakdown*:** State the overall project budget and a breakdown by activity, with each funding source shown in dollars and percentages. If applicable, identify other Federal funds your organization is applying for, has been awarded, or intends to use. Group funding sources into three categories:
 - non-Federal
 - current application (RTA Program), and
 - other Federal funding

\$115,000 - Preliminary Engineering and Surveying

\$201,250 - Design Components and Geotechnical Studies

\$258,750 – Full Design (ready for bid) and Engineering Fees

\$46,000 - Advanced planning and permitting

\$200,000 – Professional Creation of Master Planning Document

\$69,000 - Grant Writing to raise construction funds

\$ 890,000 TOTAL

Notes:

1.) The MSB does not allow indirect funds from grants, so this is not included.

2.) Projected costs include 15% contingency

- c. Applicants are encouraged to seek bids or quotes, or to estimate the amount of dedicated staff time for the proposed activities to demonstrate the reasonableness of the requested funding in this application. **Have you obtained a bid or quote, or estimated the staff time needed for the activities proposed in this application? ***
- ☒ Yes (to be submitted later if awarded grant)
- ☐ No (provide statement of how you determined estimated cost of proposed activities)

15. Mobility access*: DOT prioritizes projects that help advance mobility access by increasing reliable transportation for people to get to where they need to go to meet the needs of their daily lives regularly, reliably, and safely either through lowering the cost of transportation, increasing access, or increasing safe transportation options. **Explain how the proposed activities will advance at least one of the following aspects of mobility access:**

- **increase safety,**
- **lower transportation costs, or**
- **increase the availability of transportation options.**

From the list above, identify the area of mobility access the project is advancing and how the proposed activities will accomplish this. (no more than 400 words)

(See Section VI. B. Criterion #3 of the NOFO for review and evaluation information.)

This project will increase safety, increase private property access, and increase property owners movement. Currently, the road access for trucks coming into Port MacKenzie has movement conflicts with private property owners and creates safety challenges to drivers and pedestrians. The primary concerns are accidents within this shared road access into the port as well as potential road closures. The new access will prevent bottlenecks and even road closures for the private property owners while improving safety. The new access will help reduce accidents involving vehicles, ATVs and pedestrians.

Better availability of transportation options is one of the most important projects for the Port, including access to the rail loop. The new access would reduce the distance from the rail to the Port from 2.2 miles to 0.7 miles. This improved access is key to the Ports infrastructure planning and future growth. The interface of rail, road, and port all converge here in the Port District of Port MacKenzie making many options available for lower cost shipments of goods and increasing economic activity in the Borough.

This project will also lower transportation costs. Moving freight between the rail and the Port, a shorter more efficient road enhances the flow of commercial truck traffic which significantly reduces delivery times, improves the cost-efficiency of the supply chain, and improves the overall cargo capacity. Smoother and more efficient operations between the Port and rail loop equates to less time and fuel needed to transport goods making goods more affordable to ship.

16. Performance goals and metrics*: Identify, at minimum, 2 metrics for each of the following performance goals:

- **Goal 1: Provide benefits to the community through transportation projects.**
 - i. Through completion of a new design of access road 1, the project will decrease the number of road conflicts and potential accidents between commercial traffic and private property owners in the area.
 - ii. Through a new design of access road 2, Private property owners land value will increase as a result of the new access road.
 - iii. Through a new design of the port access entry gates and secure vehicle checkpoints, the community will benefit with safe driveways and secure port.
 - iv. Future economic growth opportunities for both private property owners and Port MacKenzie's commercial operations will be enhanced through a more comprehensive and efficient access plan.
 - v. Submit a grant application to DOT BUILD or INFRA for transportation infrastructure improvements.
- **Goal 2: Increase grant recipient's capacity, knowledge, and skills to execute transportation projects.**
 - i. By collaborating with grant writing consultants and engineers, Port MacKenzie will be able to identify and apply for available grants that can help secure essential resources for the community.
 - ii. The port and contractors will coordinate with federal DOT staff in Alaska to agree on set project schedule, milestones, and deliverables (design plans, Geotech report, PER, BUILD or INFRA grant application or other).
 - iv. Additionally, through working with consultants, engineers, and specialists, Port MacKenzie will be equipped to successfully execute projects funded by these grants. The experience gained from these efforts will prove valuable for future projects as the port's needs evolve.
- **Goal 3: Engage, educate, and listen to the community throughout the project planning process.**
 - i. Port MacKenzie will continue to inform the community at regular Assembly meetings, which occur monthly. It is expected that an annual update will be provided at one of the Assembly meetings each year and that feedback from the community will be welcome.
 - ii. Port MacKenzie will provide status updates to the community via their website or posted notices, as well as in the community meetings and on its social media page.
 - iii. The port will record comments and provide public feedback to engineers throughout the design process.

- **Goal 4: Advance the transformational project(s) closer to delivery.**
 - i. Port MacKenzie will closely monitor the project schedule and deliverables, adhering to the proposed timeline. The project will require ontime design deliverables and Geotech report.
 - ii. By monitoring the project schedule, Port MacKenzie will identify potential risks such as schedule slip or issues with supplies and labor. Once identified, they will provide mitigation options to the project on track for the scheduled delivery.
 - iii. Submit grant applications for transportation infrastructure improvements.

17. ☒ **By checking this box and submitting this application, I certify that the statements contained herein are true, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 1001) ***

e-signature: David Griffin **Date:** 09/08/2025