

Amended: 12/07/21

Adopted: 12/07/21

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH  
RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. 21-125**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH (MSB) ASSEMBLY APPROVING FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2023.

**1. 2021 MSB TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE PACKAGE - \$61,135,000**

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) has realized a dramatic population increase in the past two decades. In the year 2000, there were approximately 60,000 residents in the Borough. Since then, approximately 48,000 additional people have come to call the MSB home. This population increase has resulted in an ever-increasing demand for new public infrastructure as traffic congestion increases and serious accidents and fatalities rise. It is recognized that the overall network of transportation systems are vital to the well-being of the MSB to allow for efficient movement of people and goods. Over a six-month time span, MSB staff compiled a list of projects that were needed to increase highway traffic and pedestrian safety, decrease traffic congestion, and provide for more efficient traffic flow for freight and goods on the Borough's road network. The MSB Assembly then reviewed and prioritized those needed projects and on August 17, 2021, approved a package of 20 transportation infrastructure projects for voter consideration. MSB voters then approved these projects in a ballot proposition on November 2, 2021 by a nearly 2 to 1 margin.

The project list includes new roads, road upgrades and extensions, pedestrian/bicycle pathways, and transit facility development. Funding this MSB transportation infrastructure package will cover necessary planning, design, right-of-way acquisition, utility relocations, engineering, inspections and testing, administrative expenses, and construction for the following projects:

Trunk Road Connector/Katherine Drive; Smith Road Extension Upgrade and Pathway; Old Glenn Pathway Phase 2; 49th State Street Pathway; Hemmer Road Extension South; Lakes Boulevard Upgrade; Point MacKenzie Road Reconstruction MP 0-7; Lucille Street and Pathway Upgrade; Tex-Al Drive Extension Upgrade and Pathway; MSB School District Shaw Elementary Turn-Lane; Engstrom Road to Trunk Road Corridor; Edgerton Parks Road-Mtn. Trails Drive Upgrade and Pathway; Caswell Lakes Road/Bendapole Road/Passthebait Avenue Paving; Cheri Lake Drive/Karen Avenue/King Arthur Drive; Hidden Hills and Passthebait Avenue Reconstruction; Palmer-Fishhook Separated Pathway; Fern Street Upgrade and Pathway; Seward

Meridian Parkway-Tambert Traffic Signal; MSB School District Pedestrian Projects, and the Multi-Modal Wasilla Depot.

**2. KNIK-GOOSE BAY ROAD RECONSTRUCTION (CENTAUR AVENUE TO VINE ROAD)  
- \$50 Million**

This Federally funded project will expand Knik-Goose Bay Road to a four lane divided highway from Centaur Avenue near the City of Wasilla to Vine Road, a major north-south arterial that connects to the Parks Highway. The project also includes signalized intersections, drainage improvements and a reconstructed separated pathway. Design is currently at approximately 75 percent with right-of-way acquisition and utility coordination underway.

**3. ALASKA RAILBELT CLEAN ENERGY TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT - \$203,900,000**

The MSB, Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB), Interior Gas Utility (IGU), and the Alaska Rail Road Corporation (ARRC) have partnered to extend the existing rail line from the Parks Highway to the Interior Gas Utility (IGU) Titan liquefaction plant (Titan plant) owned by FNSB. This project would complete the northern segments of the MSB Port MacKenzie Rail Extension (PMRE) project allowing for the transportation of LNG via rail versus via the road system from the Titan plant to Fairbanks and North Pole storage facilities.

The Alaska Railbelt Clean Energy Transportation Infrastructure Project consists of three component projects that have been designed to enable lasting economic development opportunities and benefits throughout the region. This concept includes:

1. Expanding Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) capacity at the publicly owned Interior Gas Utility (IGU) Titan plant in Point MacKenzie from 50,000 gallons per day to 150,000 gallons per day. This segment of the project is estimated to cost \$75.9 million and has advanced to 65% design.

2. Completing 18 miles (of 33 total) of the PMRE, which will allow LNG to be shipped 346 miles by rail to Fairbanks and North Pole, Alaska versus 358 miles by truck, increasing fuel efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by up to 75-percent. This segment of the project is estimated to cost \$96.1 million and all State and Federal permits have been acquired, engineering design for the remaining rail work is nearly finished, and right-of-way acquisition is substantially complete.

3. Completing rail spur connections to the Titan plant and to IGU storage and vaporization facilities in Fairbanks (Peger Road) and North Pole (Laurance Road). This segment of the project is estimated to cost \$31.9 million.

The completed PMRE will bring \$184 million in State investment into production, creating jobs, reducing energy and transportation costs while also improving air quality. It is also expected to increase the efficiency of shipping bulk commodities and materials to and from Interior Alaska, and to provide direct rail access for LNG shipments from Cook Inlet to Fairbanks and North Pole. Combined, the component projects will allow for natural gas to be transported more than 346 miles by rail versus (currently) 358 miles by truck to Fairbanks, North Pole and other communities across the rail belt. This project will increase the available supply of natural gas and will reduce energy costs for industry and residential customers in Interior Alaska communities. With increased natural gas supply, the region will realize additional opportunities for natural gas conversion, which will aid in achieving air quality attainment.

The three component projects are in varying stages of design, environmental studies, and permitting however, all State and Federal permits for the PMRE have been acquired, engineering design for the remaining rail work is nearly finished, and right-of-way acquisition is substantially complete.

#### **4. COMPLETION OF PORT MACKENZIE RAIL EXTENSION - \$190 Million**

Project scope would include final design and construction of Segment 2 including the Rail Reserve, and for Segments 1-5 final design, survey and construction of sub-ballast, rail, ties, ballast, and signal/communications installation. Port MacKenzie is a deep-water port where one of the largest cargo vessels in the world has docked and been loaded. This rail extension from the Alaska Railroad mainline to Port MacKenzie will provide a shorter rail route from Interior Alaska to tidewater, which in turn will substantially boost the export of Alaska's minerals and natural resources helping diversify the statewide economy.

The completed PMRE will bring \$184 million in State investment into production, creating jobs, reducing energy and transportation costs while also improving air quality. It is also expected to increase the efficiency of shipping bulk commodities and materials to and from Interior Alaska, and to provide direct rail access for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) shipments from Cook Inlet to Fairbanks and North Pole.

A number of private companies have leased land at Port MacKenzie and will take advantage of the rail extension's quicker transport time to the Interior, including Central Alaska Energy, who plans to import low sulfur fuel, store it, and transport it around the State.

**5. KNIK ARM CROSSING - FUNDS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE ALASKA STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES**

The Knik Arm Crossing (KAC) will provide connectivity between the State's two largest population centers and their road networks, ports, airports, and rail corridors. The KAC will provide a more direct, alternate route from the Borough (Point MacKenzie and beyond) to Anchorage and stimulate growth in the southern portion of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB). Socioeconomic studies performed for the MSB indicate that this area will experience significant growth, and investment in infrastructure to support that growth should begin now in order to avoid costly highway expansion as is currently being experienced on Knik-Goose Bay Road, Parks Highway, and Glenn Highway corridors.

**6. SEWARD MERIDIAN PARKWAY EXTENSION NORTH, PHASE 2 (PALMER-WASILLA HIGHWAY TO SELDON ROAD) - \$49 Million**

Seward Meridian Parkway is one of only two north-south arterial corridors in the MSB'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. Phase 1, Parks Highway to Palmer-Wasilla Highway is complete. Phase 2 will extend from the Palmer-Wasilla Highway to Seldon Road. Heavy traffic generators along the Phase 2 corridor include numerous medical facilities and office complexes, Cottonwood Creek Elementary School, Fronteras Spanish Immersion Charter School, the Career and Technical High School, and Teeland Middle School. The existing two-lane facility and the poorly connected local street network 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). Design is currently at 95 percent complete with right-of-way acquisition and permitting also nearing completion.

**7. MSB SUBSTANDARD ROAD IMPROVEMENTS - \$15 Million**

The MSB is the fastest growing borough in the State of Alaska. Many roads built decades ago were not built to MSB standards, have

substandard gravel bases, lack sufficient right-of-way and sight distance, and are not designed or constructed for the amount of traffic on the roads. Improvements to these roads will ensure that the functionality and safety of the roads meet the proper classification and design standards. These roads are part of the community transportation plan and the MSB's Long Range Transportation Plan.

#### **8. MSB SUBSTANDARD BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS - \$15 Million**

Numerous bridges on the MSB's road system have outlived their design life and require costly repairs or complete replacement. Several bridges received substandard sufficiency ratings on their most recent inspections by the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities Bridge Section. Work needed to bring the bridges into compliance with Federal standards range from riprap replacement to protect against the rivers and creeks that they cross, to full replacement of bridges that are settling or have reduced structural capacity. Several bridges have reduced weight limits because of substandard design and/or gradual deterioration, which limits the type of vehicle that can use the bridges hindering the operations and development of private properties that rely on the bridges for access. This project will improvements to extend the life of multiple bridges for at least another 30 years.

#### **9. FISHERY PROTECTION - \$4 Million**

This project will continue efforts to protect MSB's declining salmon populations by restoring fish habitat and passage, and providing critical resources for research, monitoring and evaluation projects to inform sound scientific policy recommendations for improved Upper Cook Inlet Fishery Management. Salmon populations are declining in the MSB as evidenced by the State designated stocks of concern, frequent sport fishing closures, and associated business losses. A Strategic Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the Upper Cook Inlet (completed in 2015) identified significant gaps in data as a barrier to understanding the salmon population declines and the complex economic consequences. Actions proposed include: continuing successful initiatives aimed at quantifying the economic significance of Upper Cook Inlet sport fisheries, fish habitat restoration including the replacement of fish passage barriers, and installing fish counting tools on critical drainages to provide in-season fishery data. These efforts will apply more stock specific management strategies to ensure more consistent and abundant returns of salmon to the northern waters of the MSB.



**10. FLOOD MITIGATION FOR ACQUISITION OF HIGH HAZARD AREAS - \$2,500,000**

Inventory all floodway properties, analyze, and prioritize the most at-risk areas to flooding and erosion. Offer a voluntary acquisition to maintain open space corridors and enhance flood risk reduction methods, including ice jam flooding, channel migration, and enhancement of fish habitat. There are estimated to be 100 homes with an estimated project cost of \$20 Million. \$2,500,000 represents most critical needs and those homeowners expressing interest in buyouts.


**11. SUSITNA/TALKEETNA RIVER FLOOD CONTROL - \$10,000,000**

Replace existing and/or enhance the current flood and erosion control infrastructure. This could include the construction of new revetments, dikes, floodwalls, etc., around the town.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly this 7 day of December, 2021.

  
EDNA DEVRIES, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

  
LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk  
(SEAL)

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: Hale, Nowers, McKee, Yundt, Tew, Sumner, and Bernier