



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Office of the Borough Manager

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 29, 2021
TO: Mayor and Assembly
FROM: Michael Brown, Borough Manager
RE: Manager's Weekly Post

October Preview: The following topics will be discussed during Assembly meetings in October. Staff are working to coordinate a presentation and Q&A with the Department of Health and Human Services regarding COVID-19 for the October 5 meeting. The October 5 meeting will also include a public hearing on timber regulations and the timber transport permit. At the Joint Assembly/Planning Commission meeting on October 12, Planning will provide an update on various planning efforts. Finally, we will be requesting a special meeting on October 19 at 4:30 p.m. to allow for an hour-long discussion on economic indicators for the Mat-Su valley. We are requesting Neal Fried, economist from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, provide an update on employment, housing, COVID recovery, and other economic indicators. The regular meeting later that evening will include a resolution for Assembly consideration for a list of project priorities that may be applied to the Federal infrastructure bill currently making its way through Congress. It appears most of this funding would go to the State and they will determine how to disperse and utilize it. An Assembly approved list would allow staff to communicate project recommendations with the State Administration and Legislature. If you have specific ideas or thoughts in advance of the meeting, please let the Manager know and we will work to include those in the proposal.

Fish Passage Update: Culverts that carry water under highways, neighborhood roads and driveways can impede the passage of fish to their spawning and rearing habitats if not adequately sized or properly installed. Around 2012 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) assessed 668 road crossings within the Borough and found that 70% of the culverts were considered barriers to fish passage.

In 2013, the Borough Assembly adopted construction standards for design and installation of culverts to provide for adequate fish passage (Ordinance 13-097). Any new roads that cross anadromous (salmon) streams, must be constructed according to MSB standards for culvert design and installation.

The Borough, in partnership with ADF&G, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and other organizations have an ongoing program to identify and replace culverts that block fish passage. Over 100 culverts have been made passable through the fish passage program since 2001, and the work continues today. This

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effort has opened up a significant amount of waterway to fish including over 66 stream miles and 6,224 lake acres of fish habitat.

The Borough recently accepted and appropriated a grant renewal from USFWS for \$429,000 and allocated \$240,000 in Borough match for a total of \$669,000. Additionally, the Borough recently applied for an AK Sustainable Salmon Fund grant asking for \$962,000 in grant funds with a \$338,000 Borough match for a total of \$1,300,000. The cost of restoration of one waterbody crossing is generally between \$150,000 - \$500,000 depending on the size and complexity of the project. As an added benefit, installation of properly-sized waterbody crossings on new and existing road projects is a proactive means to save taxpayer money by saving future costs of road repair and/or culvert replacement in the event of a flood. For more information visit matsugov.us/fishhub.

Road Maintenance Analysis: During the Assembly strategic planning special meeting on February 20, 2021, the Assembly discussed road maintenance costs and there was interest in analyzing the cost of road maintenance. This discussion included potentially exploring a time and materials structure in lieu of a fixed, firm price contract. The attached document outlines our current mechanism, analyzes two other boroughs, and discusses costs along with a recommendation if the Assembly would like to explore a time and materials contract structure.

COVID-19 Update: Confirmed cases of COVID-19 have continued to rise. State reporting on COVID cases includes cases with recent specimen collection dates and ones that are “backlogged” or reported in previous weeks. The State had three big chunks of backlogged cases of about 700-800 reports/cases each that were entered last week. The State has reduced the known backlog by about 2/3 but have more they are working through due to the recent surge. 35,620 Borough residents are fully vaccinated.

Mat-Su Convention and Visitors Bureau (MSCVB) Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant Update: The EDA informed the Borough on September 29 that our application for the Gateway Visitor Center has been reviewed and selected for further consideration. This is intended to inform of EDA’s competitive preliminary selection of our project, but does not guarantee final approval. Subject to the availability of funds, our proposed project, estimated to cost \$8,370,038 will be considered for \$6,696,030 in EDA funding under the Economic Adjustment Assistance Program.

Swim Lessons Cancelled: Due to a staffing shortage, October swim lessons are cancelled. Currently the October 25, 2021 registration for the next session of lessons will occur. For more information visit <https://matsugov.us/swimmingpools> or call Palmer Pool at (907) 861-7670 or Wasilla Pool at (907) 861-7680. We apologize for the inconvenience.

Public Affairs Media Flyover:

Election

- [Borough mayor race down to two - Frontiersman](#)

State

- [Redistricting Board moves forward with new proposals House Seat in Susitna Valley - KTNA](#)
- [First Alaska dividends expected to go out week of Oct. 11 - Frontiersman](#)

Fisheries

- [Board of Fisheries meets Oct. 20-21 in Anchorage - The Cordova Times](#)

Infrastructure

- [FAA invests \\$42 Million in Alaskan Airports – Travepulse.com news](#)

Economy

- [Lots of jobs, few workers to fill them – Frontiersman](#)

Borough Facebook

- [Emergency Preparedness Expo Live Stream](#)