

MATANUSKA SUSITNA BOROUGH
350 E Dahlia Ave., Palmer, Alaska 99645

CHAIRPERSON

Ron Tracy

VICE CHAIR

Rob Brown



COMMISSION MEMBERS

Dane Crowley

Fred Elvsaaas

Bryan Scoresby

PORT COMMISSION AGENDA

LOWER LEVEL CONFERENCE ROOM, DSJ

REGULAR MEETING

3:00 P.M.

October 16, 2023

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - A. Regular Meeting, July 17, 2023
4. AGENCY AND STAFF REPORTS
 - A. Mr. Dave Griffin, Port Operations Manager
 1. Quarterly Update
 2. Business Development
 - B. Mr. Joe Metzger, Asset Manager
 1. Review Port Lease/Permit Activities
5. PERSONS TO BE HEARD
6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
7. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Discuss Port Commission
 - 1. Roles and Responsibilities
 - 2. Expectations
 - 3. Objectives
 - 4. Goals

8. ADMINISTRATION AND COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

9. CORRESPONDENCE AND INFORMATION

10. ADMINISTRATION AND COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

11. ADJOURNMENT

1. CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL; PLEDGE OF ALLIGENCE

The regular meeting of the Port Commission was held in the Port MacKenzie Conference Room and called to order at 3:36 p.m. by Chairperson Mr. Ron Tracy.

Commission members present and establishing a quorum were:

Mr. Rob Brown Mr. Ron Tracy
Mr. Fred Elvsaaas
Mr. Dane Crowley, arrived later

Commission members not present were:

Mr. Bryan Scoresby

Staff in attendance were:

Mr. Dave Griffin, Port Operations Manager
Ms. Sandy Lockett, Port Administrative Specialist
Mr. Joe Metzger, Asset Manager

There were no Assembly Members in attendance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A. The Port Commission approved the agenda as amended.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. The Port Commission approved the minutes from the following meetings:

- Regular Meeting, April 17, 2023

4. AGENCY AND STAFF REPORTS

A. Mr. Dave Griffin, Port Operations Manager

- Reported we have a bonus ship at port, the M/V Ise Harmony is unloading road salt from Peru for Northern Gravel & Trucking. This is the first ship of their five year contract. Northern Gravel is providing their own stevedoring and security for this operation.
- Stated Northern Gravel has purchased a 50T crane, scales and a few other pieces of equipment which will be available for lease (from Northern Gravel) to other companies at Port MacKenzie.
- Reported Quality Asphalt & Paving (QAP) has confirmed they will bring a cement ship to Port MacKenzie in May of 2024.
- Commented he is focused on business development which has primarily been alternative energy companies such as wind, solar, ammonia for e-fuel and wood waste conversion for aviation fuel.
- Stated we have 9000 acres of industrial zoned land with 4 miles of tidelands available for lease.
- Reported he attended the Sustainable Energy Conference in May.

- Distributed maps of Port MacKenzie showing alternative roads and land ownership status.
- Reported the Port MacKenzie website has been updated and well received, but we are still working on getting photos on the website.
- Commented he met with Totem Ocean Trailer Express (TOTE) who sent a planner out for a tour several weeks ago and Alaska Marine Lines (AML) and plans to meet with Matson. We need equipment infrastructure to attract these businesses to our port.
- Introduced Mr. Jim Baxter, owner of Northern Gravel & Trucking and presented him with a plaque of appreciation.
 - Mr. Baxter stated he brought in his first salt ship to the Anchorage port in 2006. All of the salt brought in had to be trucked to a staging area outside of the port. At Port MacKenzie he is able to convey the salt off the ship and stage it on the barge dock for transport throughout the State.
- Stated the Cell 1 repair is complete and he will have PND Engineers do an inspection of the entire barge dock.
- Reported the Barge Ramp RO/RO 35% Design Study has been completed with the rock revetment design as the most attractive option vs using sheet pile.

Discussion followed on outreach to the various shipping companies, cost comparison with the Anchorage port, the flexibility of Port MacKenzie and containerized shipping.

B. Mr. Joe Metzger, Asset Manager

- Stated we have one lease with Central Alaska Energy (CAE) for \$5,500 +/- per month. CAE has not done anything with their lease yet so we are looking to revise the terms of that lease.
- Reported we have two permits with QAP (formerly Colaska) for the old Alutiiq (white) and NPI (blue) warehouses totaling \$10,200 +/- per month for 18 months.
- Commented we share the revenue with NPI for their former lease until revenue reaches the agreed upon limit.

Discussion followed on increasing the cost of leases with a 3% escalator clause over 5 years vs using an appraisal and CAE's development clause in their lease.

5. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

A. Mr. Brian Murkowski, Energy Consulting, LLC

- Commented on a few observations he has made - TOTE uses mainly RO/RO for their operation and Matson uses mostly cranes. Matson has asked TOTE to share the cost of cranes which is not popular with TOTE and the Alaska Railroad (ARRC) has the availability to bond up to \$20 billion that is not required to be used for rail, however they have never used that option.
- Stated he was born and raised in Alaska and has worked in banking for many years but is now in the Energy business working with Ocean Renewable Power Company (ORPC).
- Reported ORPC is based out of Portland Maine and has been in business for 17

years in 47 counties working on renewable energy prospects converting energy in water currents to electricity.

- Reviewed the various potential projects they are working on including one 5 MW power system in Nikiski, 1-mile offshore. They require at least 3 knots to produce power, Knik Arm currents are between 5-7 knots.
- Commented the Port MacKenzie project could yield 40 KW to provide cathodic protection for our docks.
- Stated the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) requires approval before power can be supplied to the grid so to reduce cost most of their projects will not supply the grid.
- Stated they recently received \$25M from Hatch to which will fund the commercial phase of their projects with all work being conducted in Palmer, Wasilla and Nikiski.
- Reported they have the potential to produce 18GW of power which is 10 times what Alaska needs now.
- Commented the challenges of Alaskan waters have made it necessary to make the equipment stronger and better.

Discussion followed on lease/sale/own of equipment, maintenance costs, purchase price, grant opportunities, and life expectancy of units.

Mr. Brown cautioned against the MSB purchasing the device; ORPC should pay for and maintain each unit.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

7. NEW BUSINESS

MOTION: Mr. Crowley moved to extend the meeting time by 15 minutes, Mr. Brown seconded, the motion was approved unanimously.

8. ADMINISTRATION AND COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Brown inquired about the estimated revenue for the salt ship. Mr. Griffin stated the estimate is \$85,000 with 1 vessel per year and barge deliveries to Ketchikan, Thorne Bay, Juneau, etc.

Mr. Griffin commented plans are to remove the "A" frame from the trestle and lower the conveyor on the side of trestle for the next salt shipment. Northern Gravel is looking into shipping other products such as fracking sand, cement, and calcium chloride. Mr. Ray Wonders may bring in 1 or 2 ships this fall to support the oil and gas companies.

Discussion on the Jones Act, repurpose or disposal of the conveyor and the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension not being built. Trucking over road is better than rail if it is 150 miles or less, rail is more cost effective for anything over 150 miles.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

Sandy Lockett, Port Admin Specialist

Ron Tracy, Chairperson

Minutes Approved _____



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH Port MacKenzie

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October 3, 2023

The following information is provided to keep the Assembly apprised of ongoing operations, maintenance and business development at the Port during the 1st Quarter of FY24 (July-September).

FY24 Operating Costs and Revenues:

1st Qtr Operating Costs:	\$233,672.57
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1st Qtr Revenues:	\$		
Dockage	Wharfage	Storage	Leases/Permits
\$25,878.25	\$52,220.36	\$0	\$58,747.44

1st Quarter FY 24 Vessel Traffic:

Northern Gravel & Asphalt brought in the first salt ship from Peru to Port MacKenzie. The ship "Ise Harmony", Panamanian flag, came in on July 16th and departed a week later. Northern Gravel was able to reconstruct the conveyor and successfully convey 36,000 tons of Peruvian salt, as part of the State of Alaska Department of Transportation statewide road salt contract. Several barges were used to transport salt to Nikiski to fulfill the State contract.

Upcoming Vessel Traffic (1st Quarter FY 24):

Northern Gravel and Trucking plan to bring a barge into the port mid-October, and Cruz Construction is planning to bring a barge into port in late October.

Maintenance:

Barge Dock Cell 1 Repair

- Alaska Specialized will return when the tide is favorable to ensure the split in the seam is closed. We will have them weld straps on the interlock between the two sections that split as a pre-emptive measure.

Conveyor

- The temporary placement of the reconstructed conveyor on the trestle will remain in place until April 2024 for the next salt shipment or until another vessel needs to use the deep-draft dock.
- Exploring options to remove the A-frame from the trestle to allow for more diversified shipments at the deep-draft dock.

Pile Sleeves/ \$9.6M – Funded EDA \$7.6M and MSB \$1.9M

- The bid packet for the pile sleeve project has been advertised with bids due on October 10th.

RO-RO Ramp

- The Ro-Ro ramp was separated from the Pile Sleeve project funded by the EDA grant due to the change in SOW from a portable ramp to a permanent structure placed in the water. Port operating funds were utilized to cover the 35% design that was completed. Funding sources to complete the design and construction of the Ro-Ro Ramp are being investigated.

Items of Interest:

Hydrogen Fuel

- Applications received from five different companies seeking land use authorizations to perform due diligence activities for the purpose of hydrogen-based fuel production and fuel storage – DG Fuels, Knik Energy LLC, Pacific H2, HIF Global, and BAC Global.

US Department of Defense

- The Department of Defense has visited Port MacKenzie several times to assess whether the port could be used for off-loading ammunition and explosive ordinances.
- Warning lights and sirens were installed on the terminal building to meet the USCG requirements for transporting munitions and explosives.

NOAA Beluga Count

- HDR, Inc. participated in the NOAA Fisheries Annual Belugas Count event at Port MacKenzie. Staff reported zero belugas in late September as belugas were in Turnagain Arm at the time chasing salmon.

FEMA

- Port MacKenzie is being evaluated for its geographically strategic role in emergency planning and supply chain redundancy in the event that the Port of Alaska or Glen Highway bridges suffer a catastrophic disaster.

MARAD

- Port MacKenzie was awarded a \$1M grant from the US Marine Highway Program for the purchase of a 75-ton rough terrain crane that will be used to improve freight and cargo handling activities at the port.

Website Updated

- The Port MacKenzie website has been updated including the domain name. The new address is: <https://portmackenzie.matsugov.us>. Pictures will be added to the website soon.

Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators

- Port Operations Manager, Dave Griffin, participated in the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators Annual Conference that was in Ketchikan this year. Dave gave an update on Port MacKenzie, announced the grant award from the US Maritime Administration for purchase of a 75-ton rough terrain crane, and met with other port professionals, including staff from the US Coast Guard.

Uplands Leases and Permits:

Colaska Inc. Permits

- Storing super sacks of cement in the old NPI blue metal building and the old Alutiiq Manufacturing Company (AMC) white metal building for construction and maintenance projects.

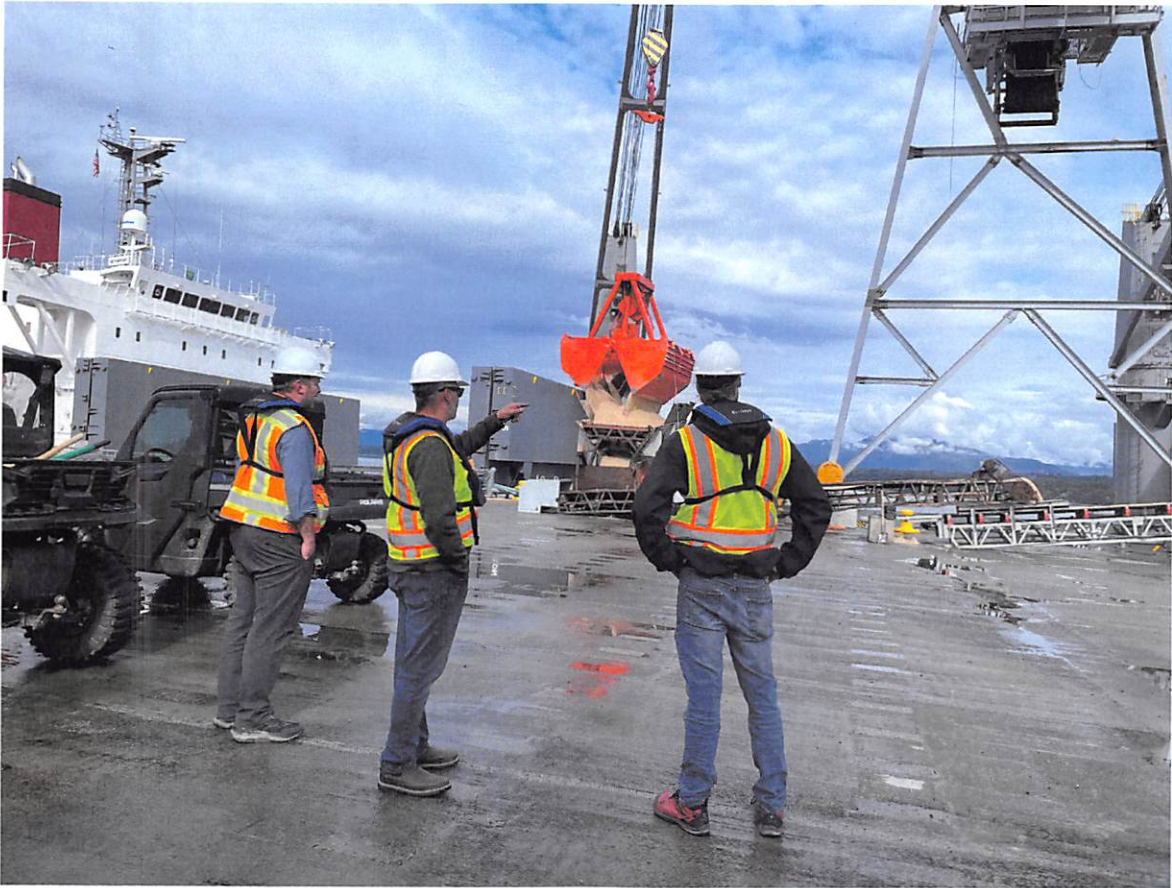
North Star

- Permit for 1 acre of the old NPI paved 5-acres pad for salt storage.

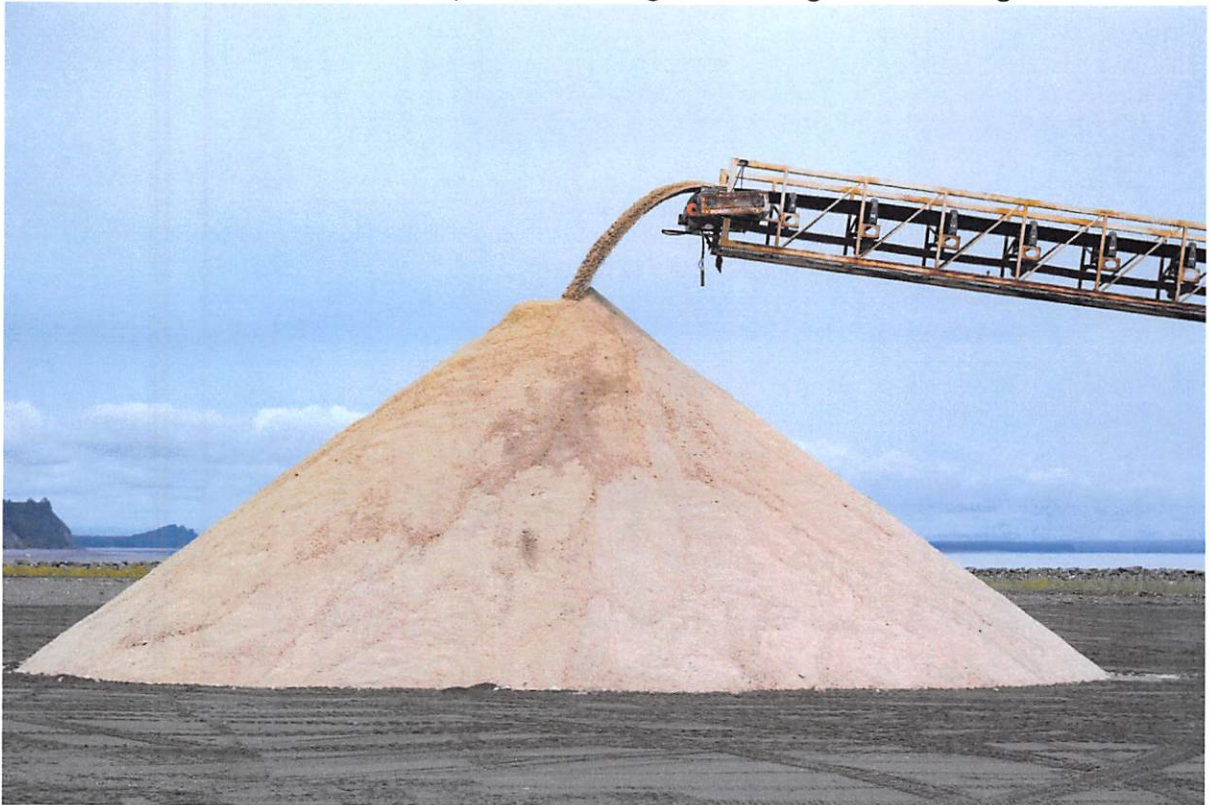
Central Alaska Energy (CAE) Lease

- Negotiations for a revised land lease with CAE have been stymied by volatile fuel prices. In the meantime, CAE will continue under the existing lease.

Dave Griffin
Port Operations Manager
Port MacKenzie



Dave Griffin, Dane Crowley and Joe Metzger observing the offloading of salt



36,000 MT of road salt conveyed onto the barge dock



Ise Harmony and salt pile



Ise Harmony leaves Port MacKenzie

**PORT MACKENZIE AND POA RATE COMPARISON
2023**

Wharfage		POA	POA	Port MacKenzie			
Commodity	Unit	2023	2024	2023	2024	2025	2026
Aggregates - rock, gravel, salt, sand and minerals	ST	\$1.39	\$1.43	\$1.32	\$1.35	\$1.40	\$1.44
Bulk Commodities - grain, peat, other ag products	ST	\$3.48	\$3.59	\$3.17	\$3.27	\$3.37	\$3.47
Cement - natural or Portland, drillers mud, fire clay, lime, slaked lime, hydrated or quick plaster, gypsum, stucco and magnesite	ST	\$6.25	\$6.44	\$3.17	\$3.27	\$3.37	\$3.47
Coal	ST	\$1.39	\$1.43	\$1.27	\$1.31	\$1.35	\$1.39
Explosives & Ammunition - powder, blasting caps, dynamite, high explosives, N.O.S., explosive ammunition, and other small arms ammunition	ST	\$20.83	\$21.46	\$17.38	\$17.90	\$18.44	\$18.99
Iron or Steele - angles, bars, beams, channels, joists, piling, pipe, structural, tanks and trusses	ST	\$6.25	\$6.44	\$4.63	\$4.76	\$4.91	\$5.05
Livestock - horses, cattle, hogs, sheep, goats	ST			\$11.57	\$11.92	\$12.28	\$12.65
Petroleum or Petroleum Products (Inbound/Outbound) - bulk, discharged or loaded direct from vessel's tanks to/from storage tanks	BBL	\$0.33	\$0.37	\$0.19	\$0.20	\$0.20	\$0.21
Fuel	GAL	\$0.02	\$0.02	\$0.01	\$0.01	\$0.01	\$0.01
Scrap Metal	ST			\$4.51	\$4.64	\$4.78	\$4.93
Wood/Logs	MBF	\$3.48	\$3.59	\$3.09	\$3.18	\$3.28	\$3.37
Wood/Lumber	MBF	\$6.25	\$6.44	\$3.24	\$3.33	\$3.43	\$3.54
Wood/Chips & Pellets	ST	\$4.17	\$4.29	\$3.17	\$3.27	\$3.37	\$3.47
Vans, Containers and Connexes	ST	\$4.17	\$4.29	\$3.08	\$3.17	\$3.26	\$3.36
- Empties returning	EA	\$13.89	\$14.31	\$9.55	\$9.83	\$10.13	\$10.43
Vehicles, Heavy Equip, Buildings and other articles	ST	\$13.89- \$15.27	\$14.31- \$15.73	\$11.57	\$11.92	\$12.28	\$12.65
Freight N.O.S.	ST	\$8.33	\$8.58	\$4.77	\$4.92	\$5.06	\$5.22
Note: Rates go in effect January 1st of each calendar year							
DOCKAGE							
250' vessel		\$1,094.61	\$1,127.56	\$772.50	\$795.00	\$820.00	\$845.00
300'		\$1,094.61	\$1,127.56	\$1,041.00	\$1,071.00	\$1,104.00	\$1,137.00
400'		\$1,673.30	\$1,723.67	\$1,696.00	\$1,748.00	\$1,800.00	\$1,852.00
500'		\$2,444.89	\$2,518.48	\$2,505.00	\$2,580.00	\$2,655.00	\$2,730.00
600'		\$3,585.16	\$3,693.07	\$3,468.00	\$3,576.00	\$3,678.00	\$3,786.00
700'		\$6,138.48	\$6,323.25	\$4,599.00	\$4,732.00	\$4,879.00	\$5,019.00

CHAPTER 18.02: PORT DISTRICT

Section

18.02.010 Management and use

18.02.020 Boundaries

18.02.010 MANAGEMENT AND USE.

(A) The area defined as port district shall be managed by the borough manager with due consideration of the recommendations of the port commission. The manager, in consultation with the port commission, shall be responsible for the promotion and lease of this land for commercial or industrial use. The use of port district land shall be in accordance with a master plan identified in MSB [15.24.030\(F\)](#).

(B) Notwithstanding other titles of the borough code, the form and substance of all leases in the port district shall be approved by the borough assembly by ordinance. All terms and conditions of proposed leases will be developed and forwarded by the borough manager to the assembly. Land use permits without assembly approval for a period of time under 18 months are allowed in addition to leases with manager approval.

(C) All proposed leases within the port district shall be presented to the assembly for consideration no more than 60 days following completion of the survey and appraisal of proposed lease.

(D) The borough manager and the chair of the port commission will provide an oral report to the assembly twice a year on port activities.

(Ord. 11-033, § 2, 2011; Ord. 97-175, § 4, 1997; Ord. 94-119, § 2 (part), 1994; Ord. 88-222 (part), 1988)

18.02.020 BOUNDARIES.

(A) *[Repealed by Ord. 02-208, § 2 (part), 2002]*

(B) *[Repealed by Ord. 02-208, § 2 (part), 2002]*

(C) Uplands in the Point MacKenzie Port District:

**Township 14 North, Range 4 West, Seward
Meridian, Alaska**

Sections 10 and 11 All

Section 12 Government Lots 3 and 4, W 1/2
W 1/2

Section 13 Government Lot 1, excepting
therefrom the Chugach Electric Association
leased land, Government Lots 2 and 3, W 1/2
W 1/2

Sections 14 and 15 All

Sections 20, 21, 22, and 23 All

Section 24 Government Lots 2, 3, and 4, SW
1/4 NW 1/4, SE 1/4 NW 1/4 NW 1/4, W 1/2 NW
1/4 NW 1/4

Section 25 Government Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4,
and Alaska Tideland Survey #1440

Sections 26, 27, and 28 All

Section 29 E 1/2, N 1/2 SW 1/4, NW 1/4

Section 33 N 1/2 NE 1/4

Section 34 NE 1/4, N 1/2 SE 1/4, N 1/2 NW
1/4

Section 35 W 1/2 NW 1/4 SW 1/4, W 1/2 NW
1/4

(D) Tide and Submerged Lands in the Point MacKenzie Port District:

**Township 14 North, Range 3 West, Seward
Meridian, Alaska**

Protracted Section 30 All tide and
submerged land lying northwesterly of the
southeasterly boundary of the Matanuska-
Susitna Borough.

**Township 14 North, Range 4 West, Seward
Meridian, Alaska**

Protracted Section 24 All tide and
submerged land of the S 1/2

Protracted Section 25 All tide and
submerged land easterly of Alaska Tideland
Survey #1440

Protracted Section 36 All tide and submerged land of the N 1/2 lying northwesterly of the southeasterly boundary of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

(Ord. 13-042, § 2, 2013; Ord. 02-208, § 3, 2002; Ord. 99-096, § 2, 1999; Ord. 94-119, § 2 (part), 1994; Ord. 90-86, § 2, 1990; Ord. 88-222 (part), 1988)

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Code is current through Ordinance 23-072, passed August 1, 2023.

Disclaimer: The borough clerk's office has the official version of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Code. Users should contact the borough clerk's office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

Borough Website: <https://www.matsugov.us/>

Borough Telephone: (907) 861-7801

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CHAPTER 18.03: PORT COMMISSION: ESTABLISHMENT OF POWERS, AUTHORITY AND DUTIES

Section

18.03.010 Establishment of powers

18.03.020 Delegation of authority [Repealed]

18.03.030 Duties

18.03.040 Compensation

18.03.010 ESTABLISHMENT OF POWERS.

The port commission is established pursuant to MSB [1.10.125](#) to provide advice to the assembly and manager on harbors, wharves, docks, elevators, storage yards and other related marine facilities.

(Ord. 90-42, § 5, 1990; Ord. 88-222 (part), 1988)

18.03.020 DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY. [Repealed by Ord. 90-042, § 6, 1990]

18.03.030 DUTIES.

- (A) The port commission shall advise the assembly and the manager on port development matters.
- (B) The port commission may:
- (1) submit an annual budget to the manager to be considered for inclusion in the manager's budget request to the assembly;
 - (2) prepare a strategic port development plan which shall include a marketing, management, financial and facility development strategy for approval by the assembly. The port development plan shall identify port commission goals, objectives and an anticipated course of action to attain those goals. The plan shall be updated annually and be submitted with the annual budget;
 - (3) submit a quarterly report to the assembly which includes a status report on progress towards goals identified in the strategic development plan;
 - (4) recommend to the assembly for approval of leases of port district land for beneficial industrial or commercial enterprises pursuant to MSB Title [13](#);
 - (5) encourage participation of private industry in port development and port-related projects;

(6) recommend to the assembly the establishment of tariffs, rental and ground lease rates consistent with the goal of providing equity among users and in accordance with MSB Title [23](#), except as provided in MSB [18.02.010](#);

(7) prepare a master plan for the port district which shall be reviewed and recommended by the planning commission to the assembly for approval;

(8) assist the borough, other jurisdictions and private industry to plan and promote the development of infrastructure necessary to transport commodities through a Point MacKenzie Port.

(Ord. 94-119, § 2 (part), 1994; Ord. 90-42, § 7, 1990; Ord. 88-222 (part), 1988)

18.03.040 COMPENSATION.

Commission members shall be reimbursed for mileage incurred in connection with meetings of the board in the same manner as borough employees are compensated for mileage expenses upon presentation of supporting documentation satisfactory to the appropriate director.

(Ord. 00-085 § 2, 2000)

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CHAPTER 18.04: PORT COMMISSION ORGANIZATION AND MEETINGS

Section

18.04.010 Reimbursement

18.04.020 Appointments and qualifications

18.04.030 Terms of members [Repealed]

18.04.035 Membership

18.04.040 Officials

18.04.050 Documentation

18.04.060 Vacancies and removal

18.04.070 Quorum

18.04.080 Meetings; scheduling; notice

18.04.090 Meetings; agenda; notice of meeting; order of business

18.04.100 Office and staff

18.04.110 Formal acts by resolution

18.04.120 [Repealed]

18.04.130 Conflict of interest; ex parte contact

18.04.010 REIMBURSEMENT.

Port commission members shall be reimbursed actual expenses incurred on authorized port commission business.

(Ord. 94-119, § 2 (part), 1994; Ord. 91-037AM, § 3 (part), 1991; Ord. 88-222 (part), 1988)

18.04.020 APPOINTMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS.

- (A) Appointments of port commission members shall be made pursuant to MSB [4.05.030](#).
- (B) Notwithstanding MSB [4.05.040](#), non-borough residents may be appointed to the port commission, but a majority of port commissioners will be Matanuska-Susitna Borough residents.
- (C) A port commission member is not eligible to hold the position of port director.

(Ord. 94-119, § 2 (part), 1994; Ord. 90-42, § 8, 1990; Ord. 88-222 (part), 1988)

18.04.030 Terms of members. [Repealed by Ord. 96-072, § 2, 1996 and recodified as MSB 18.04.035]

18.04.035 MEMBERSHIP.

- (A) The port commission shall be composed of five members and the seats shall be numerically designated.
- (B) Irrespective of the limits specified in MSB [4.05.050](#), a board member may serve up to three consecutive three-year terms.
- (C) A city official may be nominated and confirmed to one of the seats on the port commission.

(Ord. 23-009, § 2, 2023; Ord. 21-023, § 2, 2021; Ord. 10-103, § 2, 2010; Ord. 98-025AM, § 2, 1998; Ord. 96-072, § 3, 1996)

18.04.040 OFFICIALS.

The port commission shall annually elect a chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary. The vice-chairperson is to serve as chairperson in the chairperson's absence and the secretary shall prepare the journal of the port commission's proceedings.

(Ord. 94-119, § 2 (part), 1994; Ord. 88-222 (part), 1988)

18.04.050 DOCUMENTATION.

The port commission shall adopt a seal upon which appear the words "Matanuska-Susitna Borough Port Commission," "Seal" and "State of Alaska." It shall be retained in the custody of the secretary.

(Ord. 94-119, § 2 (part), 1994; Ord. 88-222 (part), 1988)

18.04.060 VACANCIES AND REMOVAL.

Vacancies occurring prior to expiration of a term and removal of port commission members shall be pursuant to MSB [4.05.030](#).

(Ord. 94-119, § 2 (part), 1994; Ord. 88-222 (part), 1988)

18.04.070 QUORUM.

A majority of the port commission membership constitutes a quorum. Any act of the port commission requires the majority of the entire body of the port commission.

(Ord. 94-119, § 2 (part), 1994; Ord. 88-222 (part), 1988)

18.04.080 MEETINGS; SCHEDULING; NOTICE.

(A) The port commission shall hold a regular, quarterly meeting on the third Monday of January, April, July, and October beginning at 3 p.m. Special meetings may be called by the port commission chairperson or upon the request of at least three port commission members.

(B) Regular and special meetings of the port commission shall be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation.

(C) During the month of January each year, the commission shall adopt a schedule of regular meetings to be held by the commission through January of the following year. The adopted schedule shall be provided to each member of the commission and shall be published at least once in a newspaper of general circulation within the borough.

(Ord. 21-009, § 2, 2021; Ord. 03-132(AM), § 2, 2003; Ord. 94-119, § 2 (part), 1994; Ord. 90-42, § 10, 1990; Ord. 88-222 (part), 1988)

18.04.090 MEETINGS; AGENDA; NOTICE OF MEETING; ORDER OF BUSINESS.

(A) The agenda for special and regular meetings shall be prepared by the port director. Items not on the agenda shall not be added to the agenda or discussed at a meeting over the objection of any two port commission members.

(B) At least five days prior to a regular meeting, the secretary at the direction of the port director shall mail or deliver to each port commission member a packet including information on the time, place of the meeting, and the agenda. Minutes of the previous meeting and any background materials pertinent to the agenda shall be included in the packet.

(C) The chairperson shall provide written or oral notice of special meetings to each port commission member at least 24 hours prior to the meetings. Notice may be provided at either the residence or the usual work place of the commission member. Notice of the special meeting shall include a statement of the subject for which the meeting is called. Attendance at a meeting is acknowledgement of the receipt of notice.

(D) At every regular meeting, the order of business shall be as follows:

- (1) call to order;
- (2) roll call, determination of quorum and approval of agenda;
- (3) approval of minutes of previous meetings;
- (4) agency and staff reports;
- (5) committee reports;
- (6) persons to be heard;
- (7) public hearings (immediately after persons to be heard);
- (8) unfinished business;
- (9) old business;
- (10) new business;
- (11) correspondence and information;
- (12) administration and commission member comments;
- (13) adjournment.

(E) Meetings shall be conducted under the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* except as modified by this chapter.

(F) The order of business at special meetings shall be prescribed by the chairperson.

(Ord. 03-132(AM), § 3, 2003; Ord. 97-038, § 9, 1997; Ord. 94-119, § 2 (part), 1994; Ord. 90-42, §§ 12 and 13, 1990; Ord. 88-222 (part), 1988)

18.04.100 OFFICE AND STAFF.

(A) The port commission may be provided office space suitable for its needs, adequate to file its journals, resolutions, records, reference materials, correspondence and drawings, all of which shall constitute public records of the borough.

(B) The manager shall appoint the port director and port staff, after consultation with the port commission.

(C) The manager may retain legal counsel to advise the port commission in the proper performance of its duties. (Ord. 94-119, § 2 (part), 1994; Ord. 90-42, § 14, 1990; Ord. 88-222 (part), 1988)

18.04.110 FORMAL ACTS BY RESOLUTION.

All formal actions of the port commission shall be by resolution.

(Ord. 94-119, § 2 (part), 1994; Ord. 88-222 (part), 1988)

18.04.120 [Repealed by Ord. 90-042, § 15, 1990]

18.04.130 CONFLICT OF INTEREST; EX PARTE CONTACT.

(A) A port commission member shall not participate in deliberation or vote on a question if:

(1) the port commission member or a member of the commissioner's immediate family has a financial interest in any property affected by the decision; and

(2) the port commission member or a member of commissioner's immediate family could foreseeably profit in any material way through a favorable or unfavorable decision.

(B) Port commission members shall be impartial in all administrative decisions, both in fact and in appearance. No port commission member may receive or otherwise engage in ex parte contact with the applicant or appellant, or other parties interested in the application or appeal, or members of the public, concerning the application or appeal or issues presented in an application or notice of appeal, either before the application or appeal hearing or during any period of time the matter is submitted for decision or subject to reconsideration. This subsection shall not prevent port commission members from discussing an application or appeal among themselves, or prohibit communications between borough staff and port commission members where staff members are not named parties to the application or appeal, or members of an organization which in its own name has become an active party to an application or appeal.

(Ord. 94-119, § 2 (part), 1994; Ord. 90-42, § 16, 1990; Ord. 88-222 (part), 1988)

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Code is current through Ordinance 23-072, passed August 1, 2023.

Disclaimer: The borough clerk's office has the official version of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Code. Users should contact the borough clerk's office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

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CHAPTER 18.10: POINT MACKENZIE PORT DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DISTRICT (DISTRICT)

Section

18.10.010 Intent and purpose

18.10.020 Establishment of district boundaries

18.10.030 Platting requirements

18.10.040 Road construction standards

18.10.050 Issuance of lease or other authorization

18.10.060 Performance bond or other form of surety

18.10.070 Terminal Tariff No. 1

18.10.010 INTENT AND PURPOSE.

(A) The intent of this chapter is to:

- (1) provide for timely development;
- (2) stimulate development of transportation and other infrastructure;
- (3) have the ability to spread road building costs among benefiting parties;
- (4) spread road building and improvement costs over a reasonable time;
- (5) implement the recommendations of the Point MacKenzie port master plan; and
- (6) allow leasing of land that encourages port development.

(B) The purpose of this chapter is to:

- (1) provide for orderly development of a commercial and industrial port district;
- (2) provide for the ability to issue land leases with road construction and development to occur over a scheduled period of time; and

(3) provide that road construction costs will be fairly allocated among the lessees.

(C) Development of land within this development district shall be in accordance with this chapter.

(D) The requirements of this chapter may not address all approvals, permits, and authorizations required for a use or development. It shall be the responsibility of the applicant to identify and comply with all necessary laws, regulations, policies and procedures of the borough, any applicable plat notes, or restrictions.

(Ord. 00-155(AM), § 2 (part), 2000)

18.10.020 ESTABLISHMENT OF DISTRICT BOUNDARIES.

(A) The boundaries for this district are established in MSB [18.02.020](#).

(B) The regulations, restrictions, and boundaries set forth in this chapter may from time to time be amended, supplemented, or changed. This chapter shall automatically apply to any such amendments.

(Ord. 00-155(AM), § 2 (part), 2000)

18.10.030 PLATTING REQUIREMENTS.

(A) Before any lease is issued a record of survey shall be prepared for the subject parcel by a land surveyor, and must be approved by the borough platting officer and recorded in the appropriate recording district.

(B) Physical construction of roads shall be performed in accordance with the terms of the lease or other authorization issued pursuant to MSB [18.10.050](#).

(Ord. 11-036, § 3, 2011; Ord. 00-155(AM), § 2 (part), 2000)

18.10.040 ROAD CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS.

The road construction standards applicable to the Point MacKenzie port development standard district are specified in MSB [17.23](#).

(Ord. 00-155(AM), § 2 (part), 2000)

18.10.050 ISSUANCE OF LEASE OR OTHER AUTHORIZATION.

(A) If a lease or other authorization is issued under the conditions of MSB [18.10.030](#), the lease shall reference that fact and state when road construction will take place.

(B) The lease shall state that failure to meet these standards shall be grounds for termination.

(C) No lease shall be issued until a record of survey is prepared and approved by the borough platting officer.

(D) Road maintenance will be the responsibility of the lessee until such time as the roads are upgraded to borough standards and are accepted by the borough.

(Ord. 11-036, § 4, 2011; Ord. 00-155(AM), § 2 (part), 2000)

18.10.060 PERFORMANCE BOND OR OTHER FORM OF SURETY.

In lieu of a subdivision agreement, a performance bond or other form of surety may be accepted by the borough manager. The amount of bond or surety may be adjusted to meet changed conditions such as further construction of the required road to acceptable standards, additional lessees that are located along the road that may contribute to its construction, or the establishment of a local improvement district and resulting assessment.

(Ord. 00-155(AM), § 2 (part), 2000)

18.10.070 TERMINAL TARIFF NO. 1.

The Port MacKenzie Terminal Tariff was adopted by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly for regulations, requirements, establishment of user fees, and safety in use of the Port Mackenzie Dock September 2000, as amended October 15, 2002, and April 4, 2006.

(Ord. 06-071, § 2, 2006; Ord. 02-160, § 2, 2002)

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Panel recommends renaming port after Don Young and reverting to 'of Anchorage'

By Jeremy Hsieh, Alaska Public Media - Anchorage - July 27, 2023



U.S. Rep. Don Young in 2016. (Wesley Early/Alaska Public Media)

"The Don Young Port of Anchorage."

That's what a panel **recommends renaming the city-owned Port of Alaska**. There are two changes there: An honorary thing for the man who represented Alaska for 49 years in the U.S. House of Representatives, and a reversion to the place name historically attached to the port – Anchorage, not Alaska.

The **proposed legislation** credits Young with helping to steer hundreds of millions of dollars to **port projects**.

The panelists said in **a letter** that switching the name back to "of Anchorage" better reflects industry practice.

The "of Alaska" moniker is only five years old. The Anchorage Assembly **changed the name in 2017 in a symbolic move**, in part to convey to legislators who fund infrastructure projects the port's importance to the entire state. Most freight, fuel and consumer goods that come to Alaska flow through the port.

The Assembly will hold a public hearing and is expected to vote on the name-change proposal on Sept. 12.

At a public hearing the renaming panel held in June, **no one from the public participated**. The **four panelists were appointed** last year by Mayor Dave Bronson and then-Assembly Chair Suzanne LaFrance.

The renaming process began after **Young died** on March 18, 2022. A **city code** requires a one-year waiting period after someone's death before the Assembly can rename a city facility after them.

State and federal officials have named several other things for the late Congressman. Gov. Mike Dunleavy **proclaimed March 18, 2023**, as Don Young Day. U.S. Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan **backed legislation** that renamed a volcanic mountain west of Adak, a job center in Palmer and a federal office building in Fairbanks after Young.



Jeremy Hsieh, Alaska Public Media - Anchorage

Jeremy Hsieh has worked in journalism since high school as a reporter, editor and television producer. He lived in Juneau from 2008 to 2022 and now lives in Anchorage.

Mat-Su

A long-shelved railroad to the Mat-Su's Port MacKenzie could instead become a road

By Amy Bushatz

Updated: September 14, 2023

Published: September 13, 2023





The Port MacKenzie Rail Extension leads to Port MacKenzie in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Photographed June 22, 2023. (Loren Holmes / ADN)

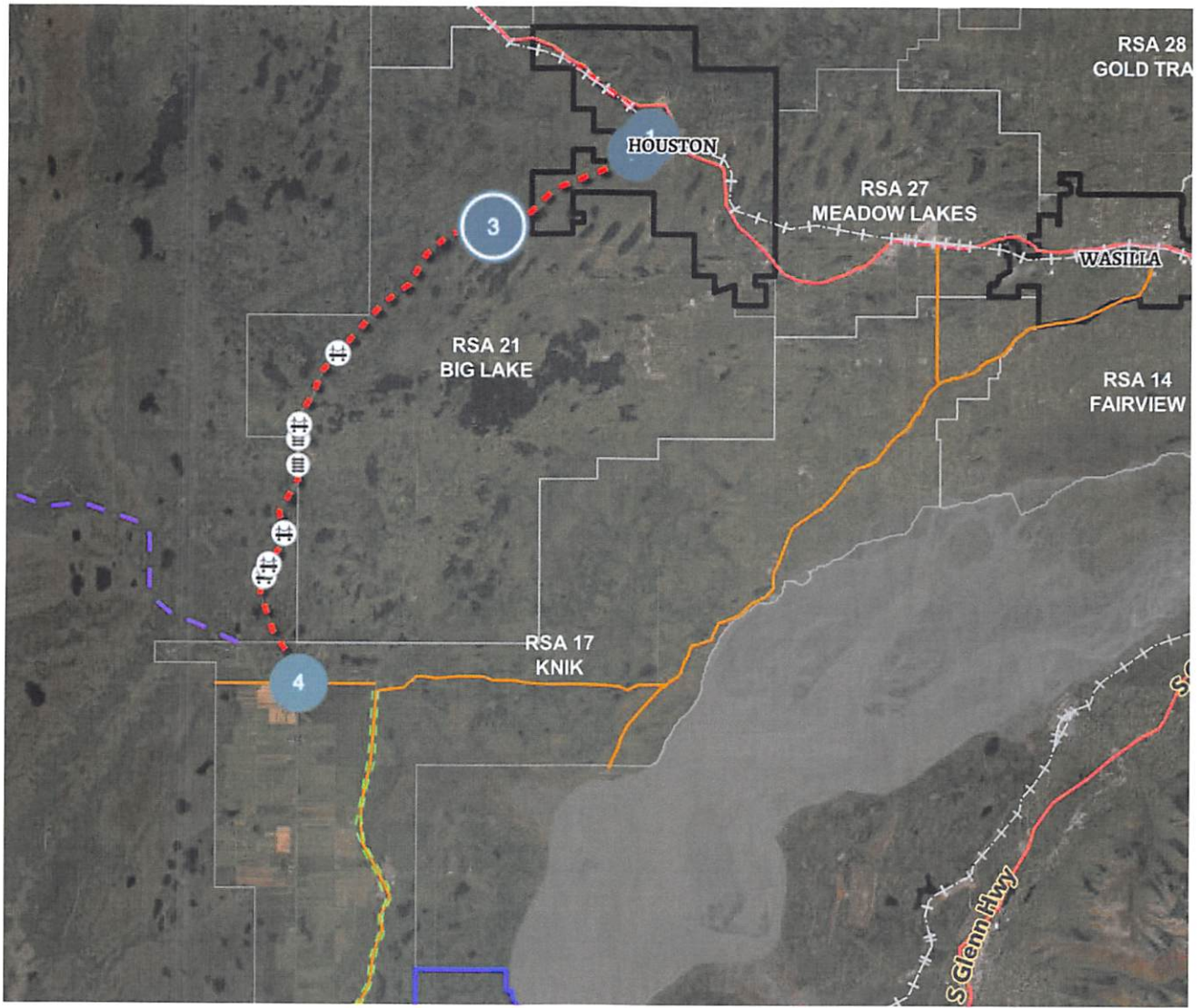
PALMER — Almost a decade after a Matanuska-Susitna Borough rail project that had consumed \$184 million in state funding came to a halt, a new push looks to restart work by converting a portion of the rail line into a public access road.

The rail project, first spearheaded by borough officials in 2005, sought to link the existing Alaska Railroad line in Houston to borough-owned Port MacKenzie, a little-used deepwater port across the Knik Arm from Anchorage first developed in 1999.

Envisioned as a way to move goods to and from the Interior and the port, the 32-mile rail line was projected to cost at least \$303 million. But work stopped and the project was shelved in 2017 when state funding ceased thanks to the budget crisis. Completing the rail project today would cost an estimated \$200 million, according to borough officials, bringing the total price tag to \$384 million.

When work ended on the spur in 2017, rights of way spanning the entire planned line had been purchased, and large sections of rail bed embankment and bridges had been completed.

Now the borough wants to use federal funds to shift an 18-mile stretch of the line to a comparatively cheaper \$70 million road project. Doing so would link the existing Port MacKenzie Road to Houston and the George Parks Highway via Miller's Reach Road and eliminate the rest of the rail project.





Map shows in dotted red the route of the unused railbed proposed to become a new road south from the Parks Highway in Houston to existing roads (orange) in the Point MacKenzie area. The dotted purple route at left is the proposed West Susitna Access Road. (Matanuska-Susitna Borough)

A federal grant application for the project was approved unanimously by the Mat-Su Borough Assembly on July 18. The Assembly held a special meeting Tuesday to explore the issue with the area's legislative delegation, state and railroad officials, and to hear public comments.

"There are essentially three options that we have discussed," Borough Manager Mike Brown said at Tuesday's meeting. "Number one, complete the rail project estimated at \$200 million; option two, convert to a road estimated at \$70 million; or option three, continue to do nothing. To be clear, the only option I'm opposed to is option three."

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The conversion project comes amid a series of other high-profile, state-funded transportation projects in the area, including a major widening project on Knik-Goose Bay Road currently underway and the controversial proposed [\\$350 million West Susitna Access Road](#). That would run 100 miles to the Yentna Mining District, ending near the same spot the rail conversion extension would join the existing road system. A borough rail conversion project would provide a short cut between the access road and the highway.

The state Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, which is currently spearheading the access road project, filed a letter of support with the borough's federal road conversion grant application.

While the projects are related, they aren't part of a coordinated effort to build out the road system in the area, Katherine Keith, DOT's deputy commissioner, said in an interview after the assembly's Tuesday meeting.

"This is one piece of a much larger puzzle of development in the area," she said. "In a case like this, we want to follow the borough assembly's decision in this process and be able to adjust the state needs."

[Mat-Su landfill offers 2 weeks of unlimited free dumping, but it could come at a cost]

Shifting to a road is seen by the borough as a way to rescue the aging infrastructure at Port MacKenzie from total waste, Brown said. [A 2021 report](#) predicted that going forward, the port would handle one ship and six barges per year, but would need significant improvements and maintenance to keep it functional.

"The primary concern I have from a management perspective with Port MacKenzie: We're on a clock," he said. "We're over 20 years old, and a lot of the dock facilities were constructed with 20, 25 years of usable life."

While state legislators attending the meeting said they support somehow moving the project forward rather than continuing to keep it on ice, they worry abandoning the railroad means Port MacKenzie will never be fully utilized.

"Turning this into a road, frankly, you can almost guarantee it will be the death of Port MacKenzie," said state Rep. Kevin McCabe, R-Big Lake, whose district includes the port. "We are not going to be able to drive enough trucks on the Port MacKenzie rail extension to support a port."

State Sen. Mike Shower, R-Wasilla, and Rep. Cathy Tilton, R-Wasilla, were also in attendance.

Betting on the port's ability to draw rail traffic for a line that is not finished and has no viable funding options is a risk the borough shouldn't take, borough assembly member Stephanie Nowers said at the meeting.

"It's very deeply frustrating to have a \$184 million project that's sitting there, and it just has to be maintained," she said. "You look like a genius if you invest right and the market follows you, but you look like a turnip if you put a bunch of money down and then it doesn't come through. I think the state has examples of turnips where we put a lot of money down."

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Amy Bushatz

Amy Bushatz is a veteran journalist based in the Mat-Su covering Valley news for the ADN.

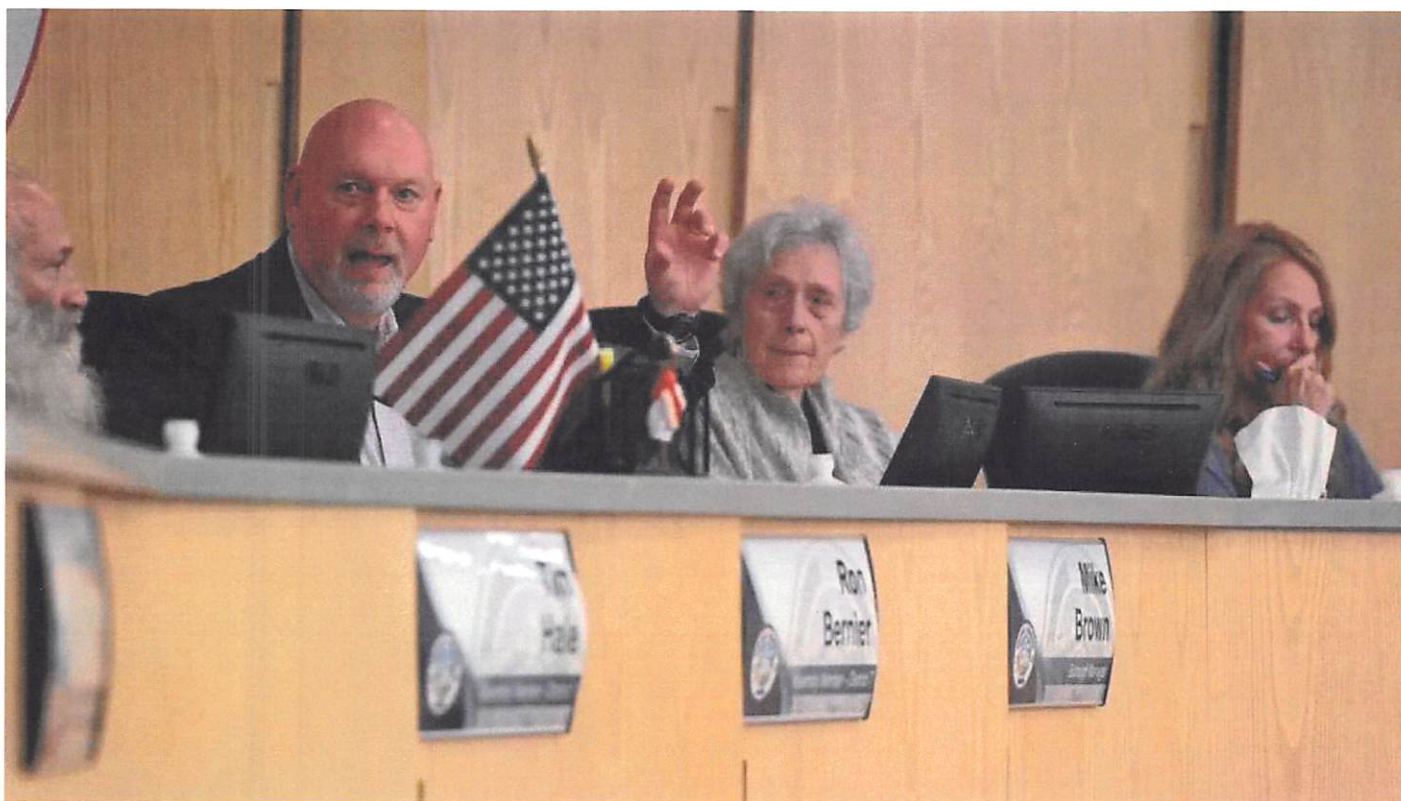


https://www.frontiersman.com/news/rail-or-road-heated-opinions-aired-at-sept-12-special-assembly-meeting/article_9236faac-568f-11ee-be0d-6f56fdfea4bd.html

Rail or road? Heated opinions aired at Sept. 12 special assembly meeting

By Tim Bradner For the Frontiersman

Sep 18, 2023



Debate continues on whether to convert the partially-complete Port MacKenzie rail extension into an 18-mile road. Mat-Su Borough officials say \$180 million has been sunk into the project so far and prospects for securing another \$200 million to finish it appear dim. The borough assembly held a special meeting Sept. 12 to air the issue.

Courtesy of the Mat-Su Borough

Debate continues on whether to convert the partially-complete Port MacKenzie rail extension into an 18-mile road. Mat-Su Borough officials say \$180 million has been sunk into the project so far and prospects for securing another \$200 million to finish it appear dim.

Others, including members of the region's legislative delegation, say the borough should press on with a quest for federal infrastructure funds.

The borough assembly held a special meeting Sept. 12 to air the issue. No decisions were made, and the assembly had already given Borough Manager Mike Brown permission to explore for money to do the road conversion, which is estimated at \$70 million.

Citizens as well as legislators weighed in: "I'm here to support the Port MacKenzie rail extension and I think converting the rail bed to a road is a terrible idea. It's like turning a diamond into a piece of coal. A train can carry 30 to 40 cargos at a time. A truck can carry only one," Jessica Wright told the assembly.

"We've spent \$180 million so far on the rail extension. We need \$150 million to finish it. Without rail, we have just a small, local port. This is something that just has to be done," she said.

There's more to it than freight, Steven Wright said. A rail connection would cut the travel time to Denali National Park by half, boosting tourism. Ron Johnson, another resident, said "We took a risk when we built the port. Now's not the time to back away."

An economic study of the prospects for Port MacKenzie done three years ago, "said the port is viable, but that we've done a poor job of marketing," said C.J. Kohn, another Mat-Su resident.

“If we turn it into a highway we’ll never get money to complete the rail. Yes, it’s expensive, but let’s put it in place and see what happens,” he said. The state took risks at Delta, “but now there are farms there. We’re now developing agriculture at Nenana,” he said.

A different note was sounded by Margaret Stern, of Talkeetna, representing the Susitna Coalition of people interested in environmental and other impacts. Stern said that the proposed road would mingle traffic with trucks and autos coming on the planned West Susitna road to be built from the port area to the Susitna River and eventually further west.

“The overlap with industrial (and public) use can create problems, as we’ll soon be seeing in the Interior with Kinross Gold trucking gold ore,” on public highways, she said.

In opening the discussion, Mat-Su borough manager Mike Brown laid out the background: The estimated cost to complete the rail link is \$200 million; the road conversion will cost about \$70 million. There’s been no progress on the project for eight years and great uncertainty as to getting support to finish the project or who will take the lead in doing it.

“On the other hand, a road is well within the borough’s capability,” to take on and manage, Brown said, and it would augment the current efforts to improve the overall road linkages in Mat-Su.

Embankments have been finished on three sections of the rail link, Sections 3, 4 and 5 along with six rail bridges. Section two, a 7.1-mile segment to the Point MacKenzie agricultural area has yet to be built but has had the right-of-way cleared. Section one, at Port MacKenzie, also has a completed embankment and Section six, at Houston on the Parks Highway, has its embankment and track actually laid. This is the only part of the project that is actually used by the Alaska Railroad. A communications tower has also been built there.

The plan is to convert the embankments into an 18-mile, 40-foot-wide road.

Brown said the \$200 million estimate to complete the link came from the Alaska Railroad, not the borough, and while it came up at different points in the extended discussion, Bill O'Leary, CEO of the state's Alaska Railroad Corp., said the figure given the borough was not a detailed estimate but a rough one based on the railroad's knowledge of construction and recent trends in costs.

O'Leary said the railroad has been working with Mat-Su on the rail extension since the idea evolved in 2007 but on informal basis. "It is a Mat-Su project," with the Alaska Railroad serving, possibly, as a project manager. There is no formal agreement between the borough and the railroad, O'Leary said. "It is just a 'handshake' arrangement."

While the railroad does have a capability to issue bonds the repayment on those must be done by a shipper. "We don't have the balance sheet (financial resources) to do the project ourselves," he said. The railroad's annual capital budget is committed to immediate operations needs, like maintenance and upgrades of existing track.

At that point borough mayor Edna DeVries, who presided at the meeting, asked O'Leary what it would take to get a more detailed, updated estimate for completing the project.

Brown also made the point, separately, that a "do nothing" approach, neither rail or road improvement, would complicate efforts to find commercial and industrial customers for the port and not put the burden of ongoing maintenance on the borough. "This cost would be squarely on the taxpayers," he said.

Some of the sharpest discussion of the rail-to-road conversion in the meeting came from two or the Mato-Su's legislative delegation.

State Rep. Kevin McCabe, R-Big Lake, whose district includes the port and planned rail link, was blunt in his remarks: "This (the rail) needs to be done. If this is converted to a road it is the death of Port MacKenzie," he said.

The port has potential, "but you can't find a major port in the U.S. today that isn't connected to railroad." Trucking won't substitute for rail in shipping significant volumes, he said. "We're 500 truck drivers short in Alaska right now."

“We’re halfway done with this (extension) but we’ve become timid,” in going after money to finish it. “President Biden loves rail,” McCabe said, because it is efficient and moves freight with fewer climate-damaging emissions. “We need to act now to see if we can get federal infrastructure money to finish the job,” he said.

State Sen. Mike Shower, R-Mat-Su, backed up McCabe, but from a different angle: As a former Air Force officer, Shower is trained to think of backup plans. “In 2018 an earthquake came very close to putting the Port of Anchorage out of commission. What’s our backup in getting goods into Southcentral Alaska? If we have a bridge out (across the Knik or Matanuska river” what’s our ‘plan B’ for getting consumer goods into Mat-Su?”

Shower also thinks the military could become a valuable ally. “The military would support a roll-on, roll-off capability at the port,” (an ability to drive vehicles on and off vessels),” and Port MacKenzie is closer to Interior Alaska military installations than Anchorage’s port.

“We need economic development, but it has to be by rail. There’s just not enough trucks available. You can’t put enough trucks on a road to load or unload a major vessel efficiently, Shower said.

The senator asked O’Leary, the Alaska Railroad CEO, if there had been discussions with the military on Port MacKenzie and the rail link, and if so what the response was.

Shower also asked if it was possible to do both, to have a rail link as well as road use.

Brown said it is possible at least in theory but it would need a larger land corridor, new permits and very likely a new Environmental Impact Statement.

McCabe asked Brown if the borough could pursue construction of the embankment and possible road use in the 7.2-mile Segment Two that reaches to the Point MacKenzie agricultural project. This could happen even as the rail-to-road discussion over the 18-mile planned rail extension continues, he said.

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Anchorage

Anchorage Assembly postpones vote on renaming the Port of Alaska after Rep. Don Young

By Emily Goodykoontz

Updated: September 27, 2023

Published: September 27, 2023



The bulk carrier Key West, the first ship to dock at the new Petroleum and Cement Terminal at the Port of Alaska, offloads a shipment of Portland cement from Bukpyung, South Korea at the Alaska Basic Industries storage dome in Anchorage on Tuesday, May 9, 2023. (Loren Holmes / ADN)

The Anchorage Assembly on Tuesday delayed until December [its vote on a proposal](#) to rename the Port of Alaska as the Don Young Port of Anchorage.

Several Assembly members said the citizen naming panel that recommended the new name did not follow city code. It failed to give proper notice to the public in order to gather input from residents during the panel's June meeting, when it voted on what name to recommend, the Assembly members said.

"Practically speaking, the public hearing wasn't properly noticed," Assembly Chair Christopher Constant said. "Therefore, it effectively didn't happen."

At Tuesday's meeting, in a 9-3 vote, Assembly members put off their vote on a recommendation to an upcoming Assembly meeting on Dec. 19. They also directed the four-person citizen naming panel to hold another public hearing and to then vote again on their recommendation for the Assembly's consideration at the December meeting.

Mayor Dave Bronson initially proposed renaming the port in remembrance of late U.S. Rep. Don Young after the longtime Alaska congressman [died last year](#) during a flight to Seattle on his way home.

Bronson and former Assembly Chair Suzanne LaFrance then each appointed two members to a citizen naming panel. In June, the panel [recommended](#) renaming the port as the Don Young Port of Anchorage in a 3-0 vote, with one panel member absent. No residents attended the meeting to testify, according to the [meeting minutes](#).

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Bronson's chief of staff, Mario Bird, pushed back on the postponement. Although the panel's meeting was not placed on the public notice calendar, it was noticed on the city's events page and mayor's events page, he said.

"I think is the administration's position that this was sufficient to to answer the public notice requirements," Bird said.

Assembly members Karen Bronga, Kevin Cross and Randy Sulte opposed the postponement of the Assembly's vote.

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Emily Goodykoontz

Emily Goodykoontz is a reporter covering Anchorage local government and general assignments. She previously covered breaking news at The Oregonian in Portland before joining ADN in 2020. Contact her at egoodykoontz@adn.com.



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Mat-Su assembly approves \$5.77 million in federal funds for Port MacKenzie improvements

By Tim Bradner For the Frontiersman

Oct 4, 2023



Matanuska-Susitna Borough assembly members approved the use of \$5.77 million in federal funds for further improvements at Port MacKenzie, the borough's cargo port on Knik Arm in upper Cook Inlet.

Courtesy of the Mat-Su Borough

Matanuska-Susitna Borough assembly members approved the use of \$5.77 million in federal funds for further improvements at Port MacKenzie, the borough's cargo port on Knik Arm in upper Cook Inlet.

The action was taken at the assembly's Tuesday, Oct. 3 regular meeting.

About \$1 million will be used in a project now underway to repair piling at the port damaged by corrosion while \$4.77 million is intended for a new “roll-on, roll-off” ramp for heavy cargoes and for barge operators to pull barges out of the water for maintenance or storage.

There’s an immediate market for the ramp, port and borough officials say: Barge operators who now operate in upper Cook Inlet and would like an alternate to Homer and Seward as a place to get their equipment out of the water for storage and repairs. Port MacKenzie will provide that.

Another ready market are with boat builders in Mat-Su who want to launch vessels without having to move them to Anchorage. Currently there is no place on the west side of the Inlet to put large boats into the water, said Dave Griffin, the borough’s port director.

Port MacKenzie has a deep-draft dock designed to load and unload bulk commodities such as cement and, this year, salt for use for winter highway maintenance. Large ships can call at the port to unload these cargoes and the ample land available for storage is an advantage as compared with the port of Alaska in Anchorage or smaller ports in Homer and Seward where adjacent “upland” is at a premium.

The roll-on, roll-off dock will essentially be a gravel ramp near the existing dock. Design and engineering will be underway and a final cost estimate will be made until that is done but the \$4.77 million in federal grant funds should cover all or most of it.

Barges to be brought out of the water will be moved into position on the lower part of the ramp at high tide and will be positioned above special “marine air bags” that are inflated. When the tide goes out the barge will rest on the air bags, which can be rolled, like huge, inflated hot dogs, Griffin said.

That will allow the barge to be pulled out of the water. The process is reversed when the barge goes back in.

The port has seen an uptick in activity this summer, Griffin told the assembly. Most of it is related to a large bulk carrier that unloaded 36,000 tons of salt this summer for winter highway use. A conveyor system at the port originally designed to load timber was adapted to unload the salt, which is now stored at the port. Salt is now being trucked and transhipped by barge to various points for use this winter.

Eight barges have been loaded with the salt in the last month for shipment, Griffin said. Seven were to locations in Southcentral Alaska with one barge going to Southeast Alaska.

The salt and cement shipments demonstrate the port's potential for bulk unloading and storage, Griffin said. Another shipper is now investigating the possibility of using Port MacKenzie for storage and transshipment of materials to be used in hydraulic fracturing on oil wells on the North Slope.

Most new producing wells on the slope are horizontal wells extending considerable distances laterally from the surface location of drill rigs, and are "fractured" by a high-pressure injection of water and solids to produce oil.

In other port-related developments, borough manager Mike Brown told the assembly that a final payment on debt for the port is being made this year. "The port is now debt-free," which will improve its economics, he said.

There was a question during the assembly meeting about the condition of the road to Port MacKenzie and whether some of the recent federal money could be used to repair it.

"The trucking time (from the port) is a concern and we now have work underway from Mile 0 to Mile 7 on the road, as well as the construction underway on the Knik Goose Bay road," Brown said.

However, improving access to the from the port is, "one of main reasons why we think a converting the railroad embankment to a road is a good thing. It would be built for larger loads and would be a more direct route to the Parks Highway," he said.

Eighteen miles of embankment have been built, and additional right-of-way cleared, for a proposed extension of Alaska Railroad tracks from its existing mainline at Houston to Port MacKenzie.

Brown also said the Alaska Railroad Corp. is giving the borough an updated cost estimate of converting the completed 18 miles of rail embankment to a road, and that would be brought to the assembly at its Nov. 21 meeting.

Meanwhile, the borough is continuing to look for possible federal funds to complete the rail extension. About \$200 million could be needed but the railroad corporation will provide a refined estimate in November.