Office of the City Manager 491 East Pioneer Avenue

Homer, Alaska 99603





citymanager@cityofhomer-ak.gov (p) 907-235-8121 x2222 (f) 907-235-3148

Memorandum

TO:	Mayor Lord and Homer City Council
FROM:	Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager
DATE:	June 4, 2025
SUBJECT:	City Manager's Report for June 9, 2025 Council Meeting

Meeting with Senator Sullivan

Senator Dan Sullivan stopped in Homer on Friday, May 30th as part of his recent visit to Alaska. Elaina Spraker, the Senator's Kenai Peninsula/Kodiak Regional Director, coordinated a meeting with City staff including Port Director Hawkins, Special Projects and Communications Coordinator Carroll and myself. Senator Sullivan shared about major topics of his agenda for Alaska including support for the US Coast Guard (USCG) and reopening the Adak Naval Base. He expressed his support for the Homer Harbor Expansion project and we discussed the project's importance for fisheries, Western Alaska, USCG, defense, and the Alaska LNG gas line project. He highlighted how the new administration is working to streamline Federal permitting and offered his assistance to respond to any permitting stalls we may experience in our port projects. He also shared that leadership for the US Army Corps of Engineering (USACE) will be going through confirmation hearings, as well as the ne Commandant for the USCG. We discussed the lack of commitment from the USCG related to the harbor expansion, and he said he'd like to bring the new Commandant to Homer for a tour of the harbor when he visits Alaska. He informed us that the Budget Reconciliation Bill has a massive recapitalization of \$22B for the USCG, which could make it more feasible for USCG to make a commitment to the harbor expansion. Discussion turned to Homer Spit Erosion and we alerted him to our work with Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (AKDOT&PF) to assist with initial planning/design concepts through State PROTECT formula funds they have programmed. We stated that previously, Homer Spit Erosion mitigation involved all three stakeholders (City, State and USACE) and that we would like to see a reauthorization of the Homer Spit Revetment General Investigation. The Senator said he would look in to whether reauthorization was possible, or if the study is deemed closed by the USACE. We spoke at the end about Homer Harbor Critical Float Replacement and our intention to submit a 2025 PIDP request, and he offered a letter of support. We thanked him and also asked for his support of project funding if it makes it to the Secretary's desk, emphasizing that until the new harbor is built, the current harbor floats are working double duty and that the impacts of condemning a float system are dire for Alaska's maritime transportation needs. We appreciate Senator Sullivan taking time to come to Homer and his interest these major projects for the City.

Kachemak Peatlands Project Parcels

The Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) has released their proposed list vacant land parcels for disposal as part of the KPB 2025 General Land Sale process. In their listings, they have included two of the eight properties that were being considered for the Kachemak Peatlands project. This has created some stir in the community, particularly with folks involved with the Homer Drawdown group who have distributed a Call to Action. One point they've raised is that the City and KPB need to come back to the table and try again. I want to take this opportunity to emphasize that this is an important project to the City of Homer; and the City, KPB, and our partners at the Kachemak Bay Estuarine Research Reserve (KBNERR) and Kachemak Heritage Land Trust (KHLT) have been and continue to communicate regarding the significance of these properties to the City for erosion mitigation, storm water treatment, and bird and moose habitat. As a bit of history, the KBP took the 8 properties in the peatlands proposal off their land disposal list in 2021 while we navigated the NOAA grant with the University of Anchorage, but no formal agreement to transfer properties was put

into place. Property appraisals were done on the KPB parcels as part of the grant requirements and the appraisals came in well below the KPB assessed value. In addition, the City Council acknowledged with 24-124(S) and accompanying memorandums that the cost to install the infrastructure, as proposed in the plan, is cost prohibitive for the City. Council expressed support for continued land acquisition through the grant to conserve the Kachemak Peatlands and recognizes there are likely more affordable opportunities for installing future infrastructure. The KPB recognizes the value of their properties and with the low appraisal value for the eight properties, they have reconsidered two lots that have value for resale, and are still considering the remaining lots for inclusion in the Kachemak Peatlands. Also, two additional privately owned properties are being appraised for potential inclusion in the project. We at the City look forward to continued partnership with the KPB, KBNERR, and KHLT on acquiring properties in the Kachemak Peatlands.

Grant Application Update

The City of Homer applied for a NOAA grant in the amount of \$1.5M to purchase land in the Bridge Creek Watershed Protection District and install weather monitoring equipment (Resolution 24-77). Staff was recently notified that NOAA has recommended the project for funding – great news – but this is not an actual award of funds. Under the current administration, the grant application requires minor revisions and then will undergo further review prior to an award decision. Staff is working hard to meet the very short revised application deadline. Final word on funding may come in September, with an October 1 project start date. If this grant is awarded, an ordinance will be brought forward to Council.

Trail Planning for Hornaday Park Area

Good news: last week the National Park Service notified the City they are now able to accept new project applications for the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program. This is a free program which offers technical assistance for open space projects such as trails and open space planning, and partnerships with area land owners. The City has participated in similar projects for the Kachemak Bay Water Trail, Woodard Creek Plan, and Western Library Lot. If the City wishes to submit an application, staff requests a Council sponsor for a future resolution.

Special Olympics Torch Run

On May 17th Homer Police Department hosted the Homer leg of the annual Alaska Law Enforcement Torch Run. At 10:00 a.m. that day law enforcement in participating communities of Anchorage, Central Peninsula, Craig, Delta Junction, Homer, Juneau, Kodiak, Nome, Seward, Sitka, Valdez, Ketchikan, Mat-Su Valley, North Slope, Tanana Valley, and Unalaska lead the 5k family fun run. Participants are encouraged to obtain pledges to raise funds for their communities to support participants with sports training and competition at the Special Olympics, Alaska. Thank you HPD for stepping up to support this great effort!!



Volleyball at the HERC

The volleyball nets and equipment have arrived and people are now playing volleyball at the HERC! This was a midbiennium FY25 budget capital request and we were able to purchase two long nets, one high quality net for the rolling volleyball poles, two custom weighted sand bags for the rolling volleyball poles, 8 new volleyballs, a volleyball cart, volleyball antennas, four durable carabineers, sand for weighted sand bags, and special floor tape (to mark the volleyball court). Special thanks to Rafael de la Uz from Community Rec and Patrick Houlihan from Public Works maintenance crew for their efforts to problem solve and install this very unique set up. With everything purchased, installed and a few more minor items to charge towards this project, the total cost should come to around \$3,600 which is \$900 under the \$4,500 capital budget allocation.



Even though the ceiling is low for traditional competitive play, the participants are very grateful and happy to have a place to play and we will be pursuing some youth volleyball programs very soon. We will still pursue to use the school gyms as the first option because of the higher ceilings and the ability to have two nets set up (sometimes there are up to 20 players!) but we will use the HERC gym as a last resort if there is time/space available. I will also share that this summer we needed to schedule evening volleyball at the HERC on Thursday evenings

because of conflicts high school programs at HHS and as a result we had to cancel an on-going pickleball event to accommodate this need. Certainly there were some citizens who were not happy with this change but we have very little time and space to accommodate all of the recreational needs of the community and this was a necessary change to try and serve all interests to best of our capacity.

Roadway Striping

Councilmembers Erickson and Parsons met with me to discuss roadway striping and traffic calming. The City has a maintenance agreement (Exchange of Responsibilities Agreement) with AKDOT&PF. In this agreement AKDOT&PF transfers obligation to perform maintenance work on Pioneer Avenue. This work includes snow plowing/removal, ice grading, slush removal, glacier control, wing back, steam thawing, and sanding in the winter; and sweeping and ditching in the summer. Although it's not called out in the agreement, AKDOT&PF also does the striping on City streets in the area, which is a significant savings for a task we can't complete on our own. The Councilmembers shared feedback on safety concerns and that some studies suggest that double yellow lines in residential areas can potentially encourage speeding and reduce safety. This is because they can signal to drivers that the street is a through route, leading to higher speeds. There is also value in considering that road markings are crucial for safety and traffic flow by providing guidance, warnings, and information to drivers and pedestrians. They help to maintain lane discipline, delineate boundaries of the road, guide drivers in parking and navigating traffic, and can also alert visually impaired pedestrians. Traffic calming is on the list of priorities that Council developed at the beginning of the year, and I look forward to working with Council and the citizens on a plan for our community. A copy of the City of Homer Road Striping map is included in this report.

Future Community Rec Center Location

A new Multi-Use Community Recreation Center has long been a city priority, as identified through previous and current comprehensive plans and other community surveys. Having ranked it #2 on the <u>City of Homer's Capital Improvement</u> <u>Plan</u>, the City Council appropriated 1.3 million dollars in 2024 toward its eventual construction. The next step is to select a location, and community member input is requested on the following property. More than a year of research by a dedicated working group has recommended it as the most advantageous location, taking into account proximity, availability, initial and long-term costs, utility considerations, and road access. Parcel ID 17719234 is a vacant lot already owned by the City of Homer. It is centrally located on over 4.5 acres to the south of Alice's Champagne Palace. Currently there is road access from 209 East Pioneer Avenue, but other routes are also under consideration.



We invite your feedback on this proposed location, at upcoming public meetings or by commenting on the City Website.

https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/planning/proposedproperty-future-community-rec-center

Tuesday, June 10, 2025 6:00pm Economic Development Advisory Commission

Wednesday, June 18, 2025 6:30 pm Planning Commission

Thursday, June 19, 2025 5:30 pm Parks, Art, Recreation, and Culture Advisory Commission

City Manager Meetings and Events:

May 29th – Attended the KPEDD Community Economic Development Strategy public meeting May 30th – Attended the Northrim Bank Annual Economic Summit, met with a resident regarding his natural gas assessment, met with Senator Sullivan

June 2nd – Met with our State Lobbyists and J&H Consulting

June 3rd – Attended KPB Land Committee Meeting and Borough Assembly Meeting (virtually)

Attachments:

- AKDOT&PF 2016 Maintenance Agreement and Homer Road Striping Map
- AKDOT&PF 2025 Construction Notice and Attachments
- June Employee anniversaries
- Memorandum from Public Works Director re: Heath Street Crosswalk



TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITIES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES AND CITY OF Homer

This Agreement is effective upon execution by the State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (hereinafter called the State) and the **City of Homer** (hereinafter called the City).

Section 1. Purpose

The City and Department have entered into a maintenance agreement (Exchange of Responsibilities Agreement for Pioneer Avenue) concerning the maintenance of Department owned road facilities located within Homer, Alaska.

Section 2. Transfer of Responsibility

The Department hereby transfers to the City all its right and obligation to perform maintenance work on the state route, Pioneer Avenue. The Department retains responsibility for the cost of operating and maintaining the existing street lighting system. The Department will continue to accomplish pavement marking in conjunction with the striping of other Department owned roads in the Homer area. The city agrees to maintain this roadway to a standard that is acceptable to the Department.

The Department shall retain full title and ownership of the specified state route and shall retain all rights incident to such ownership interest that are not expressly transferred to the City under this agreement.

Section 3. Consideration

In consideration of the receipt of the facilities, the city agrees to be responsible for the maintenance, operation, and repair described in Attachment "B" for the facilities after the effective date of this agreement.

In consideration of the receipt of the facilities, the Department agrees to reimburse the City for the maintenance, operation, and repair of facilities described in Attachment "A". The Department agrees to pay a total amount of \$34,000.00 to the City for the cost of roadway maintenance for the period from July 1 through June 30. Upon execution of this agreement, payment will be remitted to the city within sixty (60) days.

Section 4. Term of Agreement

- (A) This agreement shall become effective upon the date and time of final signatures and shall remain in full force and effect until amended or terminated.
- (B) This agreement may be amended, in writing, any time upon mutual consent of the parties thereto and this agreement may be terminated for cause by either party where the other party fails in any material way to perform its obligations under this agreement. Termination under this subsection is subject to the condition that the terminating party notify the other party of its intent to terminate, stating with reasonable specificity the grounds thereof, and the other party fails to cure the default within thirty (30) days after receiving this notice.

Section 5. Integration

This agreement and any writings incorporated by reference herein embody the entire agreement of the parties. This agreement shall supersede all previous communications, representations, or agreements, whether oral or written, between the parties hereto.

Section 6. Notices

Any notice provided for herein shall be given in writing and transmitted by personal delivery or prepaid first class registered or certified mail addressed as follows:

> Katie Koester, Manager City of Homer Soldotna District Homer, Alaska 995

Randy Vanderwood, P.E. M&O Chief **Central Region** P.O. Box 196900 Anchorage, Alaska 99519

or to such other persons or addresses as the City or Department may from time to time designate in writing.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this agreement as of the date first, here written

CITY OF HOMER

0 By: Date

Katie Koester **City Manager** Homer, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA, DEPARTMENT **OF TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC** FACILITIES

Randy Vanderwood, P.E. M&O Chief **Central Region**

Date

Attachment "A"

STATE ROAD FACILITIES TO BE EXCHANGED

(1) Pioneer Avenue - from Lake Street to Homer Bypass (.988 miles).

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Any work that goes beyond the scope of limited maintenance must be approved by both parties prior to starting work.

Attachment "B"

CITY OF HOMER ACTIVITY LIST

Winter Activities

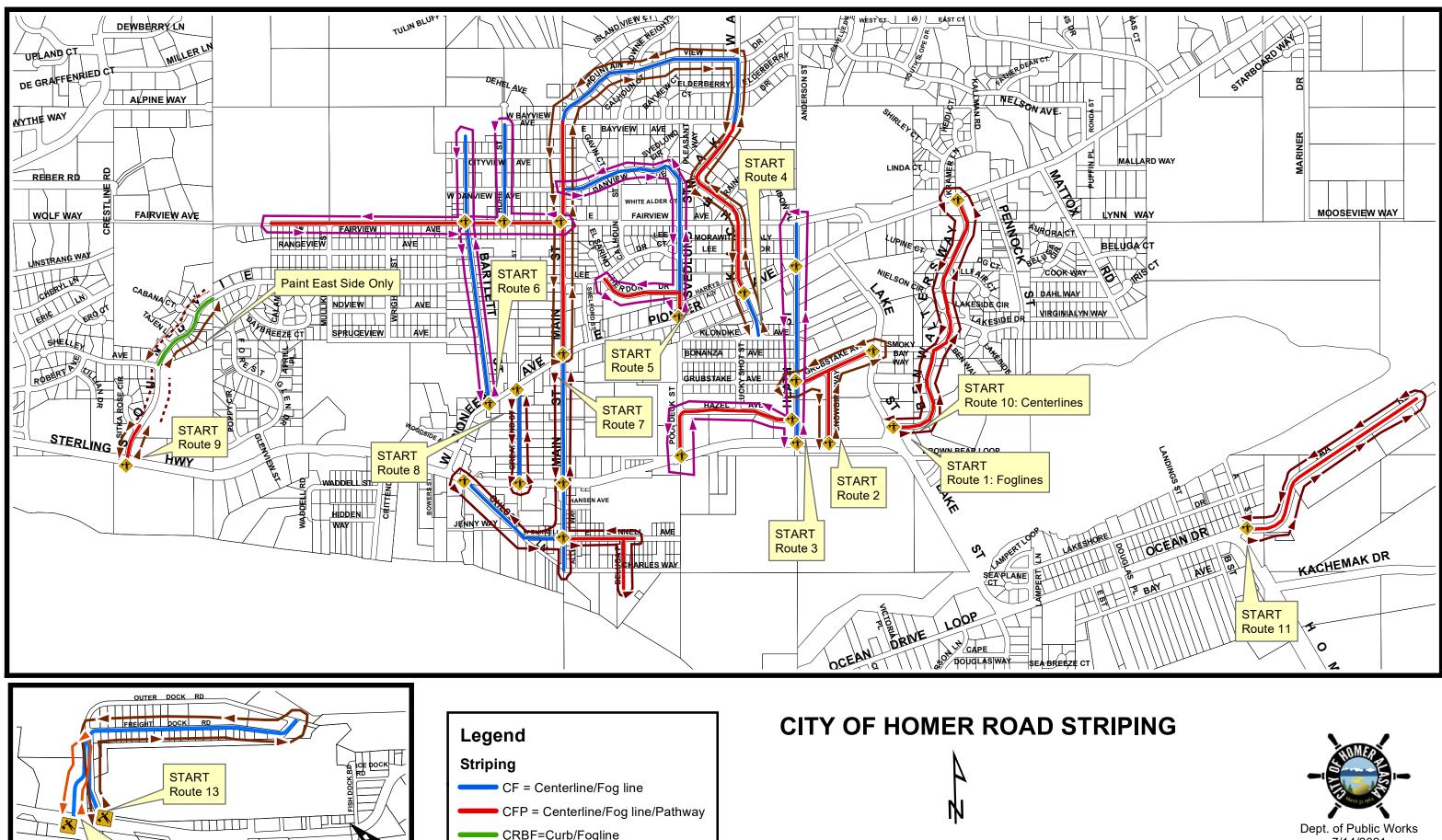
Snow Plowing / Removal lce Grading Slush Removal Glacier Control Wing Back Steam Thawing Sanding

Summer Activities

1

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Sweeping Ditching



CRBF=Curb/Fogline

START Route 12

7/14/2021

Feet 5,000

3,750

2,500

1,250

0





OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER Ryan Anderson, P.E., Commissioner

> PO Box 112500 Juneau, Alaska 99811-2500 Main: 907.465.3900 dot.alaska.gov

May 28, 2025

City of Homer 491 E. Pioneer Ave. Homer, AK 99603

Dear City of Homer:

As the 2025 construction season begins, we are pleased to share information about upcoming transportation projects in your community. This year's active season reflects a significant investment in infrastructure improvements across the state, with a continued emphasis on delivering safe, resilient, and modern systems that support Alaska's communities and economy.

Alaskans can expect continued progress in the way transportation projects are planned and delivered. Modern tools and strategies are expanding transparency, improving communication, and helping address challenges more effectively. Through ongoing engagement with communities and improved processes, Alaska's transportation program reflects local priorities—ensuring projects bring lasting value across the state.

The following projects are expected to be active in your community during the 2025 season:

- Homer Airport Improvements
- Kachemak Drive MP 0-3.5 Pavement Preservation
- Kenai Peninsula Bridge Deck Rehabilitations 2023
- Sterling Highway MP 157-169 Reconstruction
- Sterling Highway Milepost 169 to 175 Pavement Preservation

Enclosed with this letter are project information sheets that include an overview of each project, maps, schedules, and contact information.

To support your awareness and planning throughout the season, we also encourage the use of the following online resources:

2025 DOT&PF Construction Website: <u>https://dot.alaska.gov/construction</u> Explore an interactive map of road, airport, and facilities projects statewide. Click on any project to view scope, traffic impacts, schedules, funding information, and more.

Alaska 511 Traveler Information System: <u>https://511.alaska.gov</u> Access real-time road conditions, construction alerts, traffic cameras, and maintenance updates. You can also use the 511 Alaska mobile app or dial 5-1-1.

Please feel free to share these resources with others in your community. If you have any questions or require further information about a specific project, we encourage you to contact the project staff listed in the attached materials. You may also contact my office at any time by email at dot.commissioner@alaska.gov or by phone at (907) 465-3900.

We are honored to serve your community and remain committed to delivering a productive and successful construction season.

Sincerely,

RrAL

Ryan Anderson, P.E. Commissioner Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

Enclosure(s)



Albedro Porduce literatura

2025 Construction Project Overview

Homer Airport Improvements

Project Number: CFAPT00491

Project Description:

The purpose of the project is to improve safety for runway operations, taxiing, and aircraft parking, extend the service life of airport facilities, and increase availability of leased tie-down facilities for general aviation users.

Improvement work includes: rehabilitate the runway and runway safety area; remove terrain obstructing the runway object free area; rehabilitate taxiways A, B, and a portion of D; remove a portion of taxiway D and convert it to an airfield service road; construct a new turnaround taxiway (taxiway G) near the runway 22 threshold; rehabilitate and expand the general aviation apron; construct drainage improvements including replacement of culverts crossing the runway and taxiways; remove existing visual approach slope indicators and replace with precision approach path indicators; replace runway and taxiway lighting and sign systems.

Project Website:

https://dot.alaska.gov/creg/ homerairport/

Anticipated/Actual Start: 06-2023

Anticipated End: 06-2025

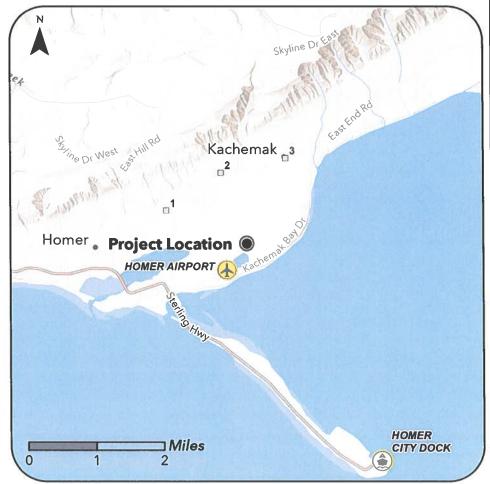
Project Contact:

Jason Baxley jason.baxley@alaska.gov 907-242-4889

Visit the APEX website:



https://dot.alaska.gov/construction









2025 Construction Project Overview

Kachemak Drive MP 0-3.5 Pavement Preservation

Project Number: CFHWY00602

Project Description:

Resurface Kachemak Drive from Sterling Highway to East End Road. This project will include: Pavement Preservation Roadside Hardware, Drainage improvements, Intersection improvements, ADA improvements (to include curb ramps) and Utilities.

Project Website:

https://tinyurl.com/ CFHWY00602

Anticipated/Actual Start: 2025

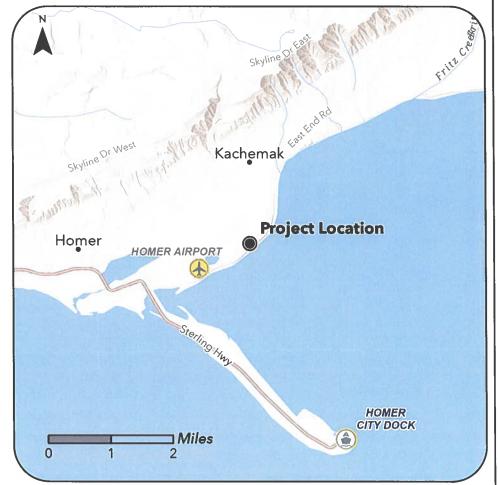
Anticipated End: 2026

Project Contact: Lorett Nabong lorett.nabong@alaska.gov 907-269-0450

Visit the APEX website:



https://dot.alaska.gov/construction









2025 Construction Project Overview

Kenai Peninsula Bridge Deck Rehabilitations 2023

Project Number: CFHWY00946

Project Description:

Rehabilitate Cooper Landing and Schooners bridge decks and perform other bridge preservation work, including bridge deck polyester concrete overlays, structural retrofits, miscellaneous structural repairs, expansion joints, bridge rail upgrades, guardrail and end terminals, paving, and striping.

Project Website:

https://tinyurl.com/ CFHWY00946

Anticipated/Actual Start: 04-2025

Anticipated End: 10-2025

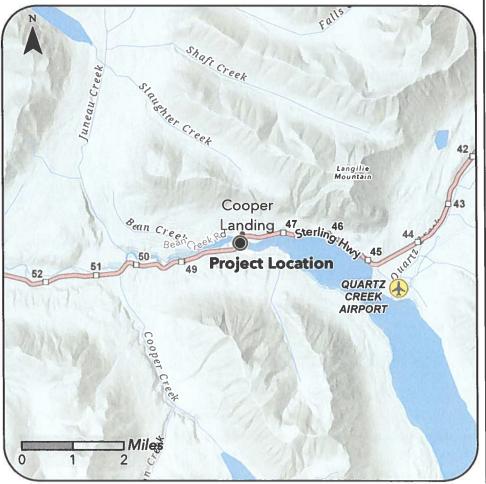
Project Contact:

Summer Garvey summer.garvey@alaska.gov 907-242-7142

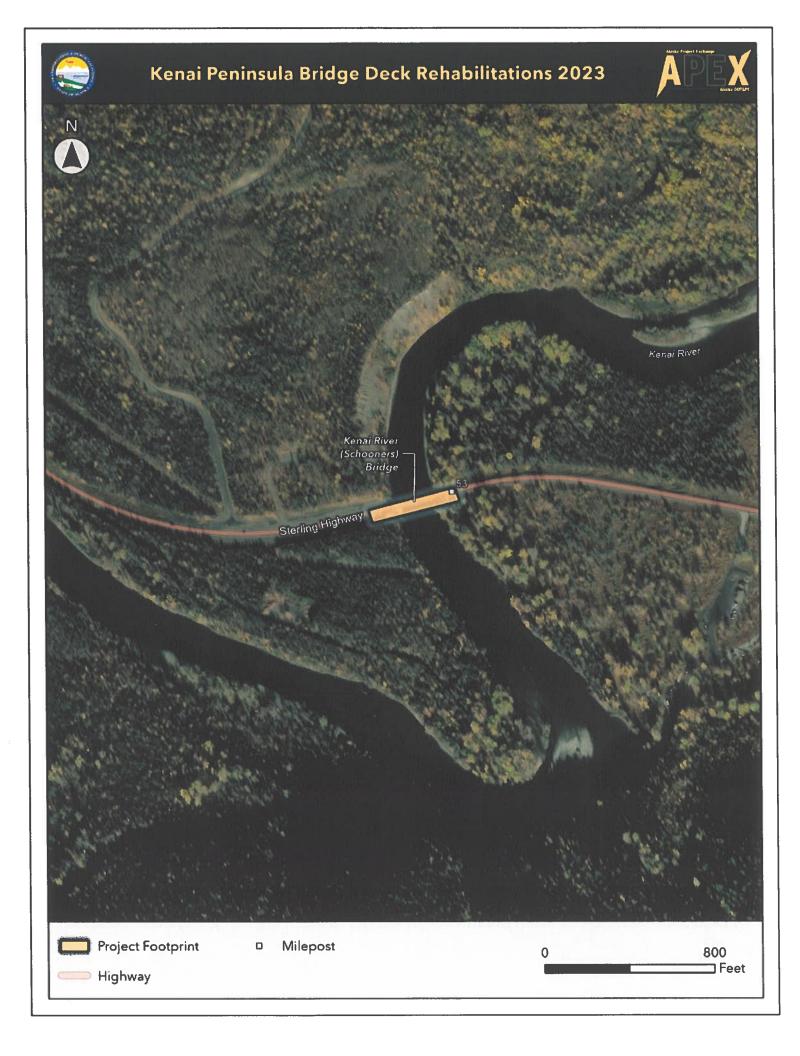
Visit the APEX website:



https://dot.alaska.gov/construction











2025 Construction Project Overview

Sterling Highway MP 157-169 Reconstruction

Project Number: CFHWY01210

Project Description:

Reconstruction and upgrading of 12 miles of Sterling Highway along existing corridor. Project upgrades include widening, construction of passing lanes, resurfacing, scenic turnouts, drainage improvements, minor realignment, and configuration to current AASHTO geometric standards. Also, rehabilitation/replacement of the North Fork Anchor River and Anchor River Bridges.

Project Website: https://tinyurl.com/ CFHWY01210

Anticipated/Actual Start: 10-2025

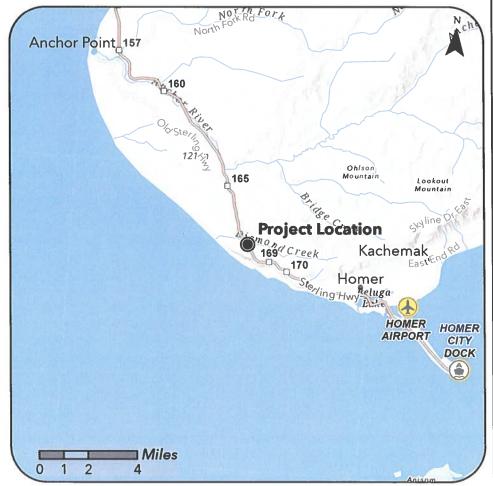
Anticipated End: 10-2027

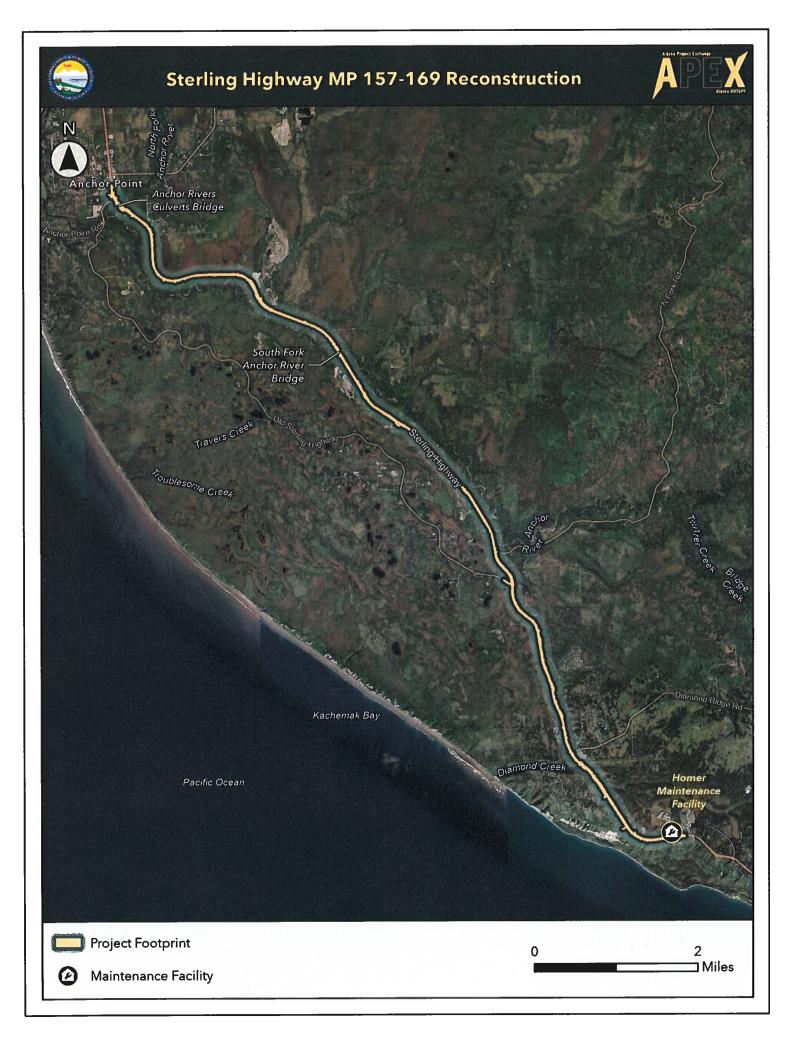
Project Contact:

Jacob Gondek jacob.gondek@alaska.gov 907-269-0445

Visit the APEX website:

https://dot.alaska.gov/construction









2025 Construction Project Overview

Sterling Highway: Milepost 169 to 175 Pavement Preservation

Project Number: CFHWY00857

Project Description:

This is a pavement preservation project for Sterling Highway from Homer Hill to Kachemak Bay Drive. This project includes resurfacing, roadside hardware, drainage improvements, ADA improvements, and utilities as necessary.

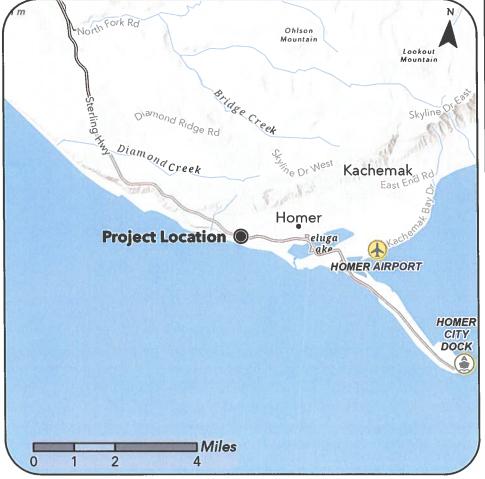
Project Website: https:// tinyurl.com/CFHWY00857

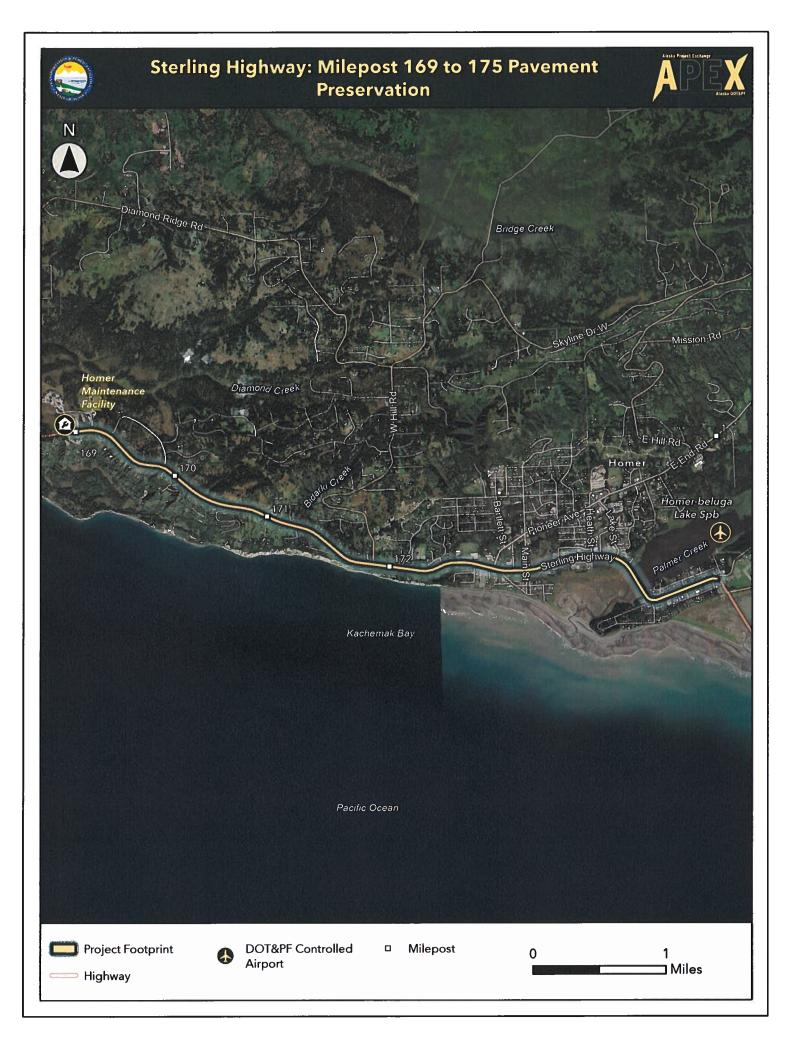
Project Contact: Julia Hanson julia.hanson@alaska.gov 9072690753

Visit the APEX website:



https://dot.alaska.gov/construction







MEMORANDUM

June City Employee Anniversaries

ltem Type:	Informational Memorandum
Prepared For:	Mayor Lord and City Council
Date:	June 9, 2025
From:	Andrea Browning, HR Director
Through:	Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager

I would like to take the time to thank the following employees for the dedication, commitment and service they have provided the City and taxpayers of Homer over the years.

Melissa Jacobsen	Admin	21	Years
Mike IIIg	Admin	19	Years
Mike Szocinski	Public Works	13	Years
Bethany Christman	Public Works	6	Years
Russell Anderson	Public Works	6	Years
Zach Pettit	Clerks	2	Years
Randon Birchette	Dispatch	1	Year



MEMORANDUM

То:	Mayor and Council
Through:	Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager
From	Daniel Kort, Public Works Director
Date:	June 2, 2025
Subject:	Heath Street Crosswalk

Background:

The City of Homer (City) did a design to reconstruct Heath Street in 2023. There have been several interested individuals within the community that have expressed interest in expediting the sidewalk crossing between the Post Office and the Library sooner than later. The Public Works Department has worked up a cost estimate to expedite this work for the sidewalk improvement only to fulfill this request.

Discussion:

The Public Works Department has worked up two parallel design options. Option 1 would exclude the signalized pedestrian crossing and leave the addition of the signal to the Heath Street Reconstruction project that is planned in the future, while Option 2 includes the signalized crossing as part of this effort.

Option 1 – Crosswalk without Signalized Crossing	\$110,987.50
Option 2 – Crosswalk with Signalized Crossing	\$143,987.50

In anticipation for all of the questions of "why this is so expensive", we will begin an explanation of what drives this cost. To begin with, you cannot construct a new crosswalk without an ADA ramp curb cut. Therefore, one must create the design to accommodate the ADA ramp for the crosswalk.

Secondly (and most importantly), the slope of Heath Street does not allow for the construction of an ADA compliant crossing without significant work done to decrease the slope of Heath Street at the crossing. The existing road profile (or slope) of Heath Street at this crossing is 9.48% slope. This 9.48% slope is perpendicular to the crosswalk, so the crosswalk itself will have a 9.48% sideslope. Federal guidance for crosswalk design is for the cross slope to be nearly level and allowing for a maximum cross slope of 2%. This means that the road profile must be adjusted up gradient and down gradient

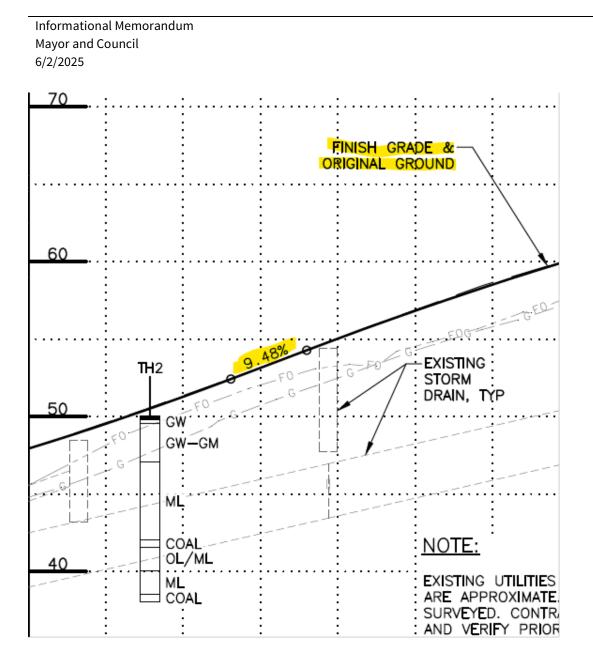
Informational Memorandum Mayor and Council 6/2/2025

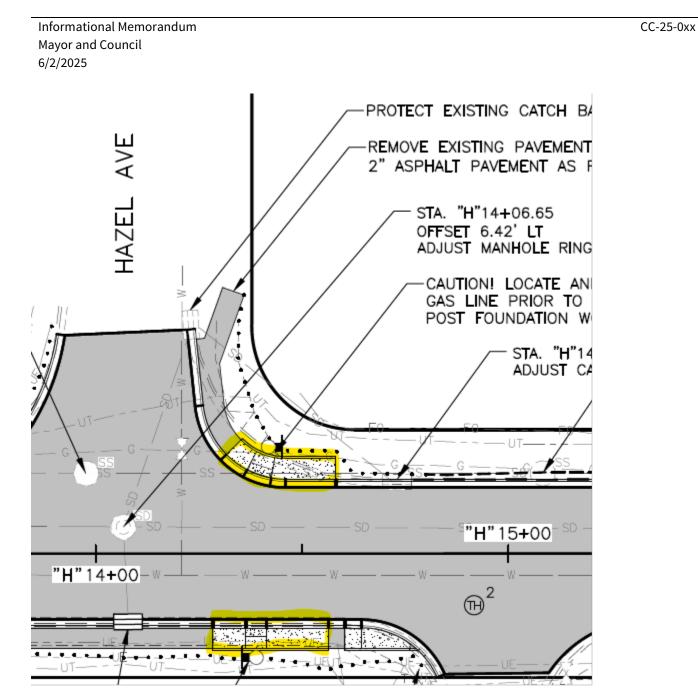
of the crosswalk to accommodate the proposed sidewalk. This essentially creates a "table top" that allows safe passage of the ADA person without risk of going downhill out of the crossing.

All streets modifications (including this one) need to keep in mind stormwater, and when you begin making adjustments to the geometry and slope of a road, you also need to make adjustments to the stormwater infrastructure so the new road is not subject to flooding or glaciation. Besides the slope modification that would be need to be made, the Heath Street design done in 2023 included a change in the radius and geometry of the northern radius entering Hazel Avenue. The existing radius of Hazel Avenue is wide and sweeping which creates an unsafe condition for the crosswalk and therefore was reduced to a much sharper radius for the 2023 design. It would not make sense to build a crosswalk "temporarily" and not include the changed geometry that was intended to improve safety.

One further issue to bring up is that Heath Street has significant deformation in the road surface (ruts) and potholes which is part of what is driving the Heath Street Reconstruction Project. The new asphalt that will be placed from this proposed project from installing the crosswalk will be demoed once we reconstruct Heath Street in a year or two. This is because the contractor will be forced during this effort to match the new asphalt surface to the existing asphalt surface deformation (ruts) because if they construct a clean new level surface down slope of the upper portion of the road that contains deformations, the water flowing downhill within the ruts will be dammed up causing ice and premature failure, and the winter maintenance equipment's blade will likely rip the new asphalt up.

Below are some images from the 2023 design that provide insight to some of these issues that were brought up in this memo.





Summary:

The cost estimate listed above is only a budgetary cost estimate, and the price of doing this small project could increase due to the small nature of the proposed project. Further, Council must keep in mind that this work is unlikely to decrease the future cost to reconstruct Heath Street, and it is more likely that the City will be incurring the cost to construct this crosswalk twice; once now; and once when we rebuild Heath Street. What would be gained is one or two years use of a crosswalk that is already planned as the City's next large scale construction project.