



MEMORANDUM

Ordinance 26-05, an Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska Amending the FY26 Capital Budget by Appropriating an Additional \$20,000 From the Homer Accelerated Roads and Trails (HART) Trails Fund and 20,000 from the HART Roads fund to the Purchase of the Trackless MT7 Municipal Sidewalk Tractor. City Manager/Public Works Director.

Item Type: Backup Memorandum
Prepared For: City Council and Mayor Lord
Date: January 13, 2026
From: Councilmember Davis

The existing background memo for Ordinance 26-05 does a good job explaining why the cost of the proposed equipment has increased (\$34K in new tariffs).

For the public hearing, however, I think it would be helpful for Council and the public to have a clearer understanding of why this specific machine is still the preferred option compared to reasonable alternatives, given the high tariff costs associated with this foreign-made equipment.

For the public hearing two weeks from now, I would appreciate some additional information—in a new memo from the City Manager or from Public Works—that addresses the following tariff-related topics. (For context, a major stated purpose of the tariffs was to encourage purchases by American individuals and entities of U.S.-made or U.S.-assembled products):

- Information on whether U.S.-manufactured or U.S.-assembled alternatives were evaluated, including options that would avoid or reduce tariff impacts (for example, Ventrac equipment, which is widely used by other municipalities).
- Information on whether a “stay with Toolcat” option was considered, either through continued use with upgraded attachments or replacement with a newer US-made Toolcat.
- At least three comparative quotes from suppliers not subject to tariffs, including Ventrac, another popular U.S.-assembled option and a Toolcat-based option.

I would also request that some comparative operational context be included, to help Council better evaluate performance, efficiency, and long-term value:

- A clear explanation of what the MT7 can do that the Toolcat cannot, or cannot do safely.
- Because one justification offered for the MT7 is that the Toolcat is not designed to travel long distances, a clearer explanation of why a tracked device such as the MT7 is better suited to travel from PWD's location to more distant sidewalk segments. From a lay perspective, it would appear that a wheeled device might travel faster and more efficiently than a tracked one.
- The total number of sidewalk miles the City clears and the typical time-to-clear following a snowfall.
- Current Toolcat performance data, including average hours per snow event, overtime costs, and any recent downtime due to breakdowns.
- A breakdown of which attachments are included in the proposed MT7 purchase price, vs. attachments we already have for the Toolcat.

Finally, recalling our earlier conversations at the time funds for the original tariff-free purchase were appropriated, I would appreciate confirmation that whichever equipment is ultimately selected will allow Public Works to pursue extending its current sidewalk clearing along Pioneer in two directions: out East End Road, to Paul Banks Elementary; and along the Sterling Highway to West Homer Elementary – in coordination with the State DOT as is currently done along Pioneer.

I believe this additional information would be helpful to Council and to the public as we consider the ordinance and work to ensure that the City is making the most informed and cost-effective decision possible. Thank you, as always, for your work on this.