

CITY OF UNALASKA
UNALASKA, ALASKA

RESOLUTION 2020-62

A RESOLUTION OF THE UNALASKA CITY COUNCIL IDENTIFYING THE CITY OF UNALASKA'S STATE PRIORITIES

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Transportation, US Department of Transportation, and Federal Aviation Administration are responsible for supporting safe and efficient transportation systems and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, air travel is the only way to reasonably access our island community. Direct, safe, reliable and affordable flights meeting regular and peak season demand is critical; and

WHEREAS, the Tom Madsen Airport in Unalaska, Alaska is owned and managed by the Alaska Department of Transportation; and

WHEREAS, the City of Unalaska calls upon state delegations and agencies to assist in creating an environment that allows for redundancy in aircraft in order to meet the transportation needs of our island community. Specifically, we request that the Alaska Department of Transportation continue with their Airport Master Plan for the Tom Madsen Airport and work to address runway improvements; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Marine Highway System provides an essential service to Unalaska and is necessary for our community health, safety, economic and social wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, regular ferry service provides a cost-effective way for community members, visitors, and businesses to travel and ship equipment and materials to and from our remote island; and

WHEREAS, the City of Unalaska's ability to fulfill the obligations of a local government is limited by available resources including State funding, specifically funding through the Community Assistance Program and the Shared Fisheries Tax Program, offsetting burdens that might otherwise be felt by the local tax base; and

WHEREAS, Unalaska's internet connection speeds thwart business growth, medical service, education, and overall quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the City of Unalaska continues to support programs and activities to bridge this digital divide; and

WHEREAS, Unalaska has several sites that were subject to the Department of Defense's Formerly Utilized Defense Sites environmental program due to contamination which occurred during WWII activities, as well as WWII related contamination that is discovered during construction projects today; and

WHEREAS, the City of Unalaska supports the creation of a federal funding mechanism that would allow reimbursement to land owners who remediate contaminated sites or the identification of an accessible funding source to allow for a timely response to contamination sites that are holding up construction projects and negatively impacting subsistence living; and

WHEREAS, support from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation is critical to managing these contaminated areas and ensuring Federal assistance and support; and

WHEREAS, habitat restoration on the local road system for Summer Bay Lake and Watershed, Morris Cove Lake and Watershed, and Unalaska Lake and Watershed will help to improve depressed salmon stocks; and

WHEREAS, Captains Bay Road is heavily used commercial corridor vital to the community's economic welfare; and

WHEREAS, this corridor has safety concerns and growth potential which require road improvements, water, sewer and electric utilities; and

WHEREAS, the Robert Storrs Boat Harbor A and B Floats have served the community for well over 30 years and in order to ensure the safety of those who use the dock and the vessels that moor at the Storrs Boat Harbor, the floats must be replaced and the dock redesigned.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Unalaska hereby identifies its state legislative priorities as:

State Legislative Priorities
<i>Critical Needs</i>
Stabilization of Commercial Flights at Tom Madsen Airport
State Ferry System
Community Assistance Program and Shared Fisheries Tax Program
Reliable and High Speed Internet
Environmental Remediation
Habitat Restoration for Salmon Stock Improvement
<i>Capital Project Funding Support</i>
Captains Bay Road and Utility Improvements Project - \$52 Million Total Estimated Cost
Robert Storrs Boat Harbor Improvements - \$9.5 Million


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Unalaska hereby identifies its top critical need is the support for the stabilization of commercial flights at Tom Madsen Airport.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Unalaska hereby identifies its top capital project funding priority the Captains Bay Road and Utility Improvement Project.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by a duly constituted quorum of the Unalaska City Council on September 22, 2020.


Vincent M. Tutiakoff, Sr.
Mayor

ATTEST:


Marjie Veeder, CMC
City Clerk



MEMORANDUM TO COUNCIL

To: Mayor and City Council Members
From: Erin Reinders, City Manager
Date: September 22, 2020
Re: Resolution 2020-62 (State Priorities)

SUMMARY: City Council identifies legislative priorities on an annual basis, typically in the fall. This memo provides an outline of Council's existing priorities and highlights changes to the updated priorities based on feedback from the lobbyists. Staff recommends approval of resolution 2020-62.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION: Identifying State and Federal priorities is a recurring Council action to express our support for certain initiatives, seek support for capital projects, and in preparation for Lobbying Trips.

On April 9, 2019, City Council approved Resolution 2019-15 identifying the Captains Bay Road and Utility Improvement Project as the City's number one State funding priority.

City Council discussed both State and Federal priorities at the August 27, 2019 work session. Council then approved Resolution 2019-52 identifying Federal priorities on September 10, 2019. After further discussion, Council approved Resolution 2019-51 identifying State priorities on September 24, 2019.

Council approved Resolution 2019-59 on November 12, 2019 amending the previously established State and Federal Priorities to include the stabilization of commercial flights between Dutch Harbor (DUT) and Anchorage (ANC) at the Tom Madsen Airport.

On January 14, 2020, at the Mayor's request, Council reviewed their priority statements and considered necessary adjustments. Council then approved Resolution 2020-10 identifying Federal priorities and Resolution 2020-09 identifying State priorities on February 11, 2020.

Council discussed existing priorities with both the State and Federal Lobbyist at the September 8, 2020 City Council meeting.

BACKGROUND: Taking the time to identify Council's legislative priorities allows for Council members, lobbyists, consultants and City staff to more effectively focus efforts and resources. Current Council legislative priorities are listed below. Council discussed these priorities on September 8, 2020.

STATE PRIORITIES	FEDERAL PRIORITIES
Stabilization of Commercial Flight at Tom Madsen Airport	
Captains Bay Road and Utility Improvements Project - \$52 Million	
Environmental Remediation Support	
Reliable and High Speed Internet Support	

Habitat Restoration for Salmon Stock Improvement Support	Unalaska Bay Entrance Channel Dredging Support
State Ferry System Support	Alternative Energy Support
Community Assistance Program and Shared Fisheries Tax Program Support	United States Coast Guard Presence
Robert Storrs Boat Harbor Improvements \$9.5 Million	Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Revenue Sharing Support

DISCUSSION: Below is an updated priority list based on the discussions at the September 8, 2020 City Council meeting and follow-up discussion with our lobbyists.

STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES	
<i>Critical Needs</i>	
Stabilization of Commercial Flight at Tom Madsen Airport*	
State Ferry System	
Community Assistance Program and Shared Fisheries Tax Program	
Reliable and High Speed Internet	
Environmental Remediation	
Habitat Restoration for Salmon Stock Improvement	
<i>Capital Project Funding Support</i>	
Captains Bay Road and Utility Improvements Project - \$52 Million Total Estimated Cost	
Robert Storrs Boat Harbor Improvements - \$9.5 Million	
*Bold indicates that Priority is also identified as a Federal Priority	

These legislative priorities are described in more detail below.

Critical Needs

1. **Stabilization of Commercial Flights at Tom Madsen Airport.** This item is City Council’s top critical need.

Air travel is the only way to reasonably access our island community. Direct, safe, reliable, and affordable flights meeting regular and peak seasonal demands of our community is critical. The airport and runway are owned and managed by the Alaska Department of Transportation. Furthermore, the Alaska Department of Transportation, US Department of Transportation, and the Federal Aviation Administration are responsible for supporting safe and efficient transportation systems and infrastructure. The grounding of the Saab 2000 for the DUT-ANC route in the aftermath of the crash of Flight 3296 highlighted the risk of having only one airline with one commercial aircraft authorized to fly passengers directly between Anchorage and Unalaska. This was again recognized when Ravn Air declared bankruptcy and stopped all air service in April of 2020. We call upon state and federal delegations and agencies to assist in creating an environment that allows for redundancy in aircraft in order to meet the transportation needs of our island community. We support the efforts of State of Alaska as they update their Airport Master Plan for the Tom Madsen Airport to address runway improvements. We support the Essential Air Service program as a critical tool to ensure the long term viability of air travel to and from Unalaska.

2. **Ferry System.** Ferry service to and from our remote island community is identified in the City’s Comprehensive plan as a community priority, stressing the importance of advocating for regular and consistent service to meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors. Alaska

Marine Highway System provides a cost-effective way for community members and businesses to travel and ship equipment and materials. The Ferry is how teachers move to this island, this is how our Aleutian Island neighbors access critical stores and services, this is how large families can travel off the island to visit loved ones, this is how the mobile mammogram van comes to our community to provide life altering healthcare. The Alaska Marine Highway System provides an essential service to Unalaska and is necessary for our community health, safety, economic and social wellbeing.

3. **Community Assistance Program and Shared Fisheries Tax Program.** The City of Unalaska works hard to fulfill its obligations as a local government. Our ability to do so is limited by statute, public interest and available resources. Traditionally those resources have included State and Federal funding, which offset the burdens that might otherwise be felt by a local tax base.
4. **Reliable and High Speed Internet.** Unalaska's internet connection speeds impede business growth, medical services, post-secondary education, and overall quality of life. Residents are unable to fully utilize cloud-based systems to improve efficiencies and effectiveness in personal, educational, medical, and business processes. Improving internet services remains a long standing priority, and the City supports programs and activities that help to bridge this digital divide.
5. **Environmental Remediation.** Unalaska has several sites that are subject to the Department of Defense's Formerly Utilized Defense Sites environmental program due to contamination, which occurred during WWII activities, as well as WWII related contamination that is discovered during construction projects today. The creation of a federal funding mechanism that would allow reimbursement to land owners who remediate contaminated sites or the identification of an accessible funding source to allow for a timely response to contamination sites that are holding up construction projects and negatively impact subsistence living would be of benefit to the community as a whole. Assistance and support from the state and federal levels is critical to managing these contaminated areas.
6. **Habitat Restoration for Salmon Stock Improvement.** Habitat restoration on the local road system for Summer Bay Lake and Watershed, Morris Cove Lake and Watershed, and Unalaska Lake and Watershed will help to improve depressed salmon stocks.

Capital Project Funding Support

1. **\$52 Million for Captains Bay Road and Utility Improvements.** This item is City Council's number one project funding priority. Staff is working to get this project on the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) for potential funding support, with a phased approach. We are exploring potential federal funding opportunities as well.

Captains Bay Road serves as a primary transportation route for Westward Seafoods, North Pacific Fuel, Northland Services, Offshore Systems Inc., and several smaller businesses as well as residential homes. The section of road making up this project is a high traffic area of heavy vehicles which are used by the fishing and support industries which are vital to the community's economic welfare. In September 2011 residents and industry representatives discussed the hazards at public meetings about the Road Improvement Master Plan. Although the road's high crown is needed for adequate drainage, it also creates a safety hazard for the large trucks and school buses traveling the road. The public expressed strong support for

improvements to Captains Bay Road. The area of Captains Bay Road is also an area of potential growth in the community as identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

This project will construct drainage, utilities, and pavement out Captains Bay Road to the entrance of the Offshore Systems, Inc. (OSI). This will involve approximately 2.5 miles of drainage improvements from Airport Beach Road to OSI, 2.5 miles of road realignment/paving/walkways/lighting from Airport Beach Road to OSI, and 1.3 miles of water/sewer/electric utility extensions from Westward to OSI.

2. **\$9.5 Million for Robert Storrs Boat Harbor Improvements.** The Robert Storrs Boat Harbor was inherited by the City of Unalaska from the State of Alaska. It has served the community well for over 30 years and in order to ensure the safety of those who use the dock and the vessels that moor at the Storrs Boat Harbor, the floats must be replaced and the dock redesigned. This is an existing Capital Project for the City of Unalaska. This project qualifies to be a part of State of Alaska's Harbor Facility Grant Program for funding support. This is a program that the City of Unalaska has long supported.

ALTERNATIVES: City Council can add to or delete from this listing of priorities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: No direct financial impact is associated with this action.

LEGAL: None needed.

PROPOSED MOTION: I recommend approval of Resolution 2020-62.