

DENALI BOROUGH

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Clay Walker, Mayor

May 2022 Mayor's Report to the Denali Borough Assembly

This report speaks primarily to non-agenda items. Agenda items will be discussed in meeting.

Denali Borough Redistricting Committee

- The Committee held its first meeting April 27th. We utilized an interactive map of the borough which includes each census block and associated populations while considering a few different potential districting options for the borough. Background information was presented on the necessity of proper apportionment, historical samples (the borough has used different maps and numbers, with 3, 4 and 5 districts, over the years) and proper process (yes, a charter amendment is required every time we need to do this).
- A point brought forward by a committee member which resonated was: “This has nothing to do with how we vote, only upon how we run for seats”. The committee will consider options at their next meeting which include districts for 9 member bodies and for 7 member bodies.

Legislative Update

- In the current version of the Capital Budget from the Senate, funding for the Department of Education and Early Development's Major Maintenance Grant Program is the highest in many years - \$100 million. If approved and signed as is, this funding level would provide the state's contribution for a lot of projects across the state including the Denali Borough School District's Anderson Roof Project and the District-wide Back-Up Power Generator Upgrades. We are supportive of the state returning to an active partner role in the major maintenance of our school facilities.
- Also contained within the in-progress Capital Budget is funding for identified Alaska Long Trail projects. These projects include one within the Denali Borough -- a paved separated path from Carlo Creek to Crabbie's Crossing. Eligibility and target cost estimates led to that section of “Community Connector Paths” to be pulled from the PEL Study and included in the request.

Solid Waste Updates

- The Denali Borough Landfill has transitioned to summer hours, which adds back the Thursday opening. So, the DBL is open Tuesday through Saturday 9 am – 4 pm.
- Recycling Trailers Pilot Program:
 - As snowmelt allows, the trailer in which cardboard is collected will be sited at Cantwell Transfer Station. Target date is May 15.
 - Equally, the trailer in which cardboard, #1 plastic, and aluminum cans are collected will be sited at Healy Transfer Station. Again, the target date for placement is May 15.
- Also dependent upon dry ground for access, the Brush Collection Program locations at all three Solid Waste facilities will be opening as conditions allow.

- Happy to announce an electronic waste special collection initiative this summer for residents. Fees for acceptance of TVs, computers, monitors, and other e-waste (currently \$15 per TV) will be waived from May 1st until August 1st. The borough has entered into an agreement with Backhaul Alaska, who has offered to haul and dispose this e-waste at no charge for the next few months.

DOT Project Updates

- Construction of the long-planned Parks Hwy MP 231 Enhancement Project is underway. This project adds a new National Park Wayside and Trailhead, turn lanes, turn pockets, an acceleration lane, a pedestrian pathway under the highway, and more. Expect delays in this area this summer of up to 20 minutes. The separated pedestrian bridge project across the Nenana River is funded through a different program and will follow on a later timeline.
- The Healy Spur Rehabilitation Project, which includes the addition of wide shoulders on both sides of the road, is in the design phase and is scheduled for construction in 2024.
- The Cantwell to Ferry Parks Highway Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) Study is final! Thanks to all those who provided input through this multi-year, multi-agency study. The 130-page Study (with 1,200 page appendix!) is available at: <https://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/parkshealypel/>

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Compliance Report

- The borough submitted our required compliance report to U.S. Treasury in a timely manner.

National Association of Counties (NACo) Western Interstate Region (WIR) Conference

- This year's spring conference is in Anchorage, AK May 17-20. As a member of the Board of Directors and the Public Lands Steering Committee who seldom makes the conferences in person, I am looking forward to attending this conference. Agenda can be found here: <https://www.naco.org/events/2022-western-interstate-region-conference>

Meetings of note this past month:

- I met with Governor Dunleavy's Chief of Staff Randy Ruaro to discuss borough priorities.
- April 28th and 29th I virtually attended Alaska Municipal League Joint Insurance Association's Spring Board of Trustees meetings.
- Met with a group of residents from the Rock Creek Road area who are interested in the Street Addressing project. They provided suggestions for how those roads should be identified, which they are sharing with Tri-Valley Fire and EMS.
- Participated in a NACO WIR/ Public Lands Steering Committee meeting on May 2.

Staffing

- The borough is reviewing applications received for the open Emergency Manager and Projects Coordinator position.

Public Thank You

- Kudos to Rodney Lee and others for their recognized selfless assistance to travelers in need. This public thank you was received via mail from Tennessee.

Happy May, happy meltdown. As always, feel free to contact me or staff with any questions.

- Clay