

2025 MOA Legislative Program – DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

The Municipality of Anchorage has three top priorities for the 2025 Legislative Session:

- 1. Adequately fund snow removal on state roads.** Many major roads in the Municipality are managed by the State. Keeping the system navigable year-round is a critical shared responsibility to support public safety, education, and our economy.
- 2. State reforms to implement crisis behavioral health services.** We need reform so the availability and expense of reliable behavioral health crisis services doesn't come at the cost of our limited public safety resources.
- 3. Raise the BSA and stabilize funding for public schools.** Strengthening our education system is our most valuable tool to build a future with a strong economy, developed workforce, and high quality of life.

Mayor Suzanne LaFrance and the Anchorage Assembly appreciate your support.

Mayor Suzanne LaFrance

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IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY AND SNOW REMOVAL

Transportation infrastructure in Anchorage is a patchwork of state and Municipal ownership and responsibility. Our priorities reflect the need to ensure roads are safe and functional year-round, for all types of users.

Budget Requests:

- **Adequately fund snow removal** on state roads and sidewalks within the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities' (DOT&PF) Central Region, which includes the Municipality. Reduce turnaround timelines for plow outs by adding equipment and increasing staff capacity.
- **Establish Road Safety Corridors:** Identify state roads in the Municipality that have high incidences of vehicle collisions and fund \$500,000 for data collection and enforcement.
- **Fully fund and staff the DOT&PF Central Region** to allow critical transportation priorities to move forward:
 - **Road safety:** Support the implementation of the Vision Zero Action Plan to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries.
 - **Pavement preservation:** Repairing the surfaces of roads and sidewalks.
- Allow the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to grant municipalities a right-of-way, or public use easement, permitting the Municipality to **bond for capital projects in state park units.**
- **Improve wildfire safety** in partnership with the Anchorage Fire Department by funding fuel breaks along egress routes, establishing/improving connections to accessible areas, and allocating UAS (unmanned aerial systems) funding to build a comprehensive all-risk support program.

STRENGTHEN THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND FIRST RESPONDER NEXUS

Too often, behavioral health crises result in a law enforcement response. We would like the State to enact a set of reforms that will allow behavioral health crisis services to gain a strong footing. This will reduce the use of limited Police and Fire resources and produce better outcomes.

Statutory Change:

- **Support the Crisis Now Key Legislative Priorities**, to strengthen behavioral health crisis services and offset the use of costly and less suitable public safety response. These include:
 - Enact a 988 telecommunications fee, to provide a sustainable revenue stream.

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- Require private health insurance to cover crisis behavioral health services.
- Stabilize the behavioral health workforce by allowing overtime exemptions and participating in multi-state licensure compacts.
- **Inflation adjust the E911 surcharge**, expand the allowable uses of the surcharge, and amend the statute so that the charge applies to voice over IP (VOIP) systems.

SECURE OUR ENERGY FUTURE

Declining natural gas production in Cook Inlet raises serious challenges for Anchorage and the Railbelt. We stand with communities throughout the state in our pursuit of affordable and resilient energy.

Budget Requests:

- **Fund Railbelt transmission upgrades** in the state capital budget to match federal funds, eliminating bottlenecks and enabling the deployment of new sources of generation.
- **Expand hydroelectric power generation**, starting with the Dixon Diversion Project in the state capital budget to offset natural gas usage with renewable power.
- **Fund weatherization, energy efficiency, and electrification** programs through state entities like Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) and Alaska Energy Authority (AEA).

Statutory Change:

- **Incentivize increased natural gas production in Cook Inlet** through the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) in the form of equity investment or lending. Ensure that incentives are evaluated accurately for their efficacy in increasing production.

SUPPORT EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Providing a strong education system is one of the core functions of government, from kindergarten through university and vocational training. Our economic success depends on a well-trained and prepared workforce that can meet their education and career goals without leaving the state.

Budget Requests:

- **Increase the Base Student Allocation for public schools** and adjust the statutory formula to account for inflation.
- **Fund the University of Alaska System**, to enable the continuation of all academic and vocational-technical programs.

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INCREASE HOUSING SUPPLY AND ADDRESS AFFORDABILITY

Like most of the state, Anchorage needs more housing of all forms. While we pursue a range of solutions locally to address homelessness and build more housing, the state can also play an important role by equipping communities with resources and tools.

Budget Requests:

- **Increase resources available to improve housing affordability statewide** through AHFC and Alaska Mental Health Trust programs such as the Special Needs Housing Grant.
- **Increase funding available to build infrastructure that supports new housing** development through DOT&PF and AHFC’s Supplemental Housing Program.

Statutory Change:

- Develop new mechanisms through AIDEA and AHFC to **provide gap financing and patient capital** for housing development. Allow the AIDEA Loan Participation Program to be used for financing multifamily housing development.
- Allow local governments to **designate and tax dilapidated properties** at a higher mill rate.

PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNMENT

Good government means delivering the high-quality services citizens expect, accountably and efficiently. This requires adequate funding for public schools, competitive compensation for public employees, and the resilience of the local government tax base.

- **Fund the Community Assistance Program:** Make a full contribution for 2025 and fully recapitalize the Community Assistance Fund.
- **Restore defined benefit pensions for public employees:** Create and fund a defined benefit option for public employee retirement.

Statutory Change:

- **Pass an election reform bill that amends AS Title 15 to address Anchorage voter concerns with voter registration.** Per AS 15, a voter does not go into list maintenance unless they have had no contact with the Division of Elections and have not voted for 4 years. The Municipality asks the State to amend AS 15 to decrease this period to 2 years, as well as to amend AS 15 to accept information from the Electronic Registration Information Center (or similar) and National Change of Address forms as direction to

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initiate the cancellation of voter registration when a voter registers in another state and doesn't respond to a SOA confirmation.

- **Refrain from expanding mandatory property tax exemptions** which would result in a net decrease in the local government tax base.
- **Allow senior and residential exemptions** to be claimed for individual units of a “cooperative property.”

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PORT OF ALASKA MODERNIZATION PROJECT UPDATE

The Municipality of Anchorage thanks the Alaska Legislature for state investment in the Port of Alaska Modernization Program (PAMP). This effort aims to replace Anchorage’s aging docks and related infrastructure to improve their operational safety and efficiency, accommodate modern shipping operations, and improve statewide supply chain resiliency and efficiency.

Our primary ask for the Port is that you continue to find avenues to promote and educate your constituents and colleagues on the importance of this project for Alaska’s economic future.

Some key facts about the Port:

- The Port of Alaska directly serves 90% of the state's population, including handling 75% of all non-petroleum in-bound marine cargo, and almost 40% of all refined petroleum products used in the state.
- The Port is one of eighteen Department of Defense designated commercial strategic ports, supporting critical military operations across Alaska, the Arctic, and around the world. It is the only strategic port in Alaska.
- The total cost of all phases of the PAMP is \$1.9 billion, paid for through a mix of past state capital funds, federal grants, federal loans, and revenue bonds back by surcharges. State and federal funds reduce the impact of surcharges, which directly impact the cost of consumer goods throughout the state.

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DISTRICT PRIORITIES

In addition to the Municipality's areawide priorities, there are also local needs that the State can address to improve the quality of life at the neighborhood level. These projects are all highly prioritized by the residents in the surrounding areas.

DISTRICT 1: NORTH ANCHORAGE

1. Peratrovich Park Pedestrian Plaza and Landscape Upgrades: 500 West Fourth Ave (HD 17 / SD I)
2. Tract J Park Master Plan (HD 18 / SD I)
3. Alley Paving for Mountain View and Fairview (HD 17 and 19 / SD I and J)
4. Public boat launch and boathouse at Westchester Lagoon for future boat rentals (HD 17 / SD 1)

DISTRICT 2: JBER, CHUGIAK AND EAGLE RIVER

1. Old Glenn Highway Railing Upgrade or Removal
2. Snow Disposal Site – Purchase and Construct
3. Loretta French Astro Turf Installation, Fields 1 & 2
4. CBERRRSA Road and Drainage Rehab
5. Farm Avenue Upgrade
6. Recreation Center Upgrade, Basketball/Racquetball/Soccer turf

DISTRICT 3: WEST ANCHORAGE

1. Bluff Erosion impacting Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport (TSAIA) facilities, Tony Knowles Coastal Trail, and Point Woronzof on State of Alaska-owned land (HD 16 / SD H)
2. West Anchorage Area Pavement Rehabilitation (SD E, G, H and I)
3. 88th Avenue Upgrade – Jewel Lake Park to Jewel Lake Road, adjacent to Dimond High School (HD 15 / SD H)
4. Country Woods Subdivision Area Road Reconstruction (HD 13 / SD G)
5. Dempsey Anderson Ice Arena Upgrades (HD 17 / SD I)

DISTRICT 4: MIDTOWN

1. 46th Avenue Area Street Light Improvements – Folker Street to Piper Street (HD 20, SD J)
2. 42nd Ave Upgrade – Lake Otis Pkwy to Florina Street (HD 20 / SD J)
3. 41st Ave Upgrade – Piper Street to Dale Street (HD 20 / SD J)
4. Sound Barrier Fence Project on Northern Lights (SD G / HD 14)
5. Midtown Chalet
6. Coventry Drive Drainage Project

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DISTRICT 5: EAST ANCHORAGE

1. Northeast Mixed-Use Transit/Community Hub (HD 20 and 21 / SD K)
2. Tudor/Muldoon Traffic Calming (HD 20 and 21 / 22, SD K and J)
3. Fire Egress on Military Boundary from Basher to the Glenn Highway (HD 12, 18, 20, 21, 22, and 23 / SD F, J, K, I)
4. Northern Lights Boulevard at Bragaw Street – Pedestrian Crossing Improvements (HD 19 / 20, SD J)
5. Centennial Park Upgrades (SD I, K, and L / HD 18, 22 and 23)
6. Moose Loop East, missing vulnerable road user connections for Boundary, Oklahoma and Patterson (between Chester Creek and Debarr), 36th Avenue between Patterson and Muldoon including Muldoon Overpass (HD 18, 21 and 22 / SD I & K)

DISTRICT 6: SOUTH ANCHORAGE, TURNAGAIN ARM AND GIRDWOOD

1. Reconstruct Old Seward Highway – Between Rabbit Creek Road and Potter Valley Road
2. Abbott Road Signalization at Ruth Arcand Park Entrance
3. Child, Pedestrian Safety Measures at O’Malley Road & Rockridge Drive
4. Birch Road Upgrade – Between O’Malley and Huffman Road
5. Ellen Avenue Area Storm Drainage
6. Reconstruct Upper De Armoun Road