North Spur Hwy Extension Project ~ Executive Summary

In January 2017 the Borough entered into agreements with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFL) to extend the North Spur Highway from its current terminus at Captain Cook State Park. The project is funded through the SAFETEA-LU “Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users” grant in the amount of $5,142,231.38. The SAFETEA-LU grant requires a 20 percent match. The Borough has met the match by way of the Apache Alaska Corporation engineering and permitting products, GIS imagery, Borough right of way, Leif’s Creek bridge construction, and the state grant of $94,651 to improve Jacob Ladder beach access.

The project will construct up to approximately 8.1 miles of gravel road to just north of Otter Creek. The project design will consist of a gravel surface constructed within the existing dedicated Borough right of way. The road will accommodate drainage and include intermittent turnouts for passage of large vehicles. A separate portion of the project is to construct Jacobs Ladder beach access trail near Leif’s Creek from the North Road Extension to the Cook Inlet Bluff using state grant funds of $94,651.

The Kenai Watershed Forum recently completed construction of a bridge at Otter Creek, so the design has been extended to include the bridge crossing and turnaround just beyond Otter Creek.

NOTE: Existing funds may not be sufficient to build the full design, so the project has been broken into a base bid and two additive alternates.

- Base Bid – Current paved terminus to just beyond Leif’s Creek – 4.4 miles
- Add Alt #1 – Add up to 2.5 miles beyond Base Bid
- Add Alt #2 – Add 1.4 miles and suitable turnaround beyond Otter Creek

Currently, the Borough is working with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) to update the permit and compensatory mitigation plan from an oil and gas project to a public transportation need. USACE re-permitting is substantial, and its outcome could have a significant cost to the budget. The USACE permitting budget cost could include mitigating damage and additional protection of wetlands, or payment to an environmental bank proportional to project wetland impact. However, the revised permit application submitted by the Borough justifies that no additional mitigation beyond construction of the project is needed. The USACE review process is anticipated to be completed in August 2017. In concert with the permitting, WFL is working through the National Environmental Protection Act process to have the project approved as a mitigation project with a categorical exclusion, which justifies no significant environmental impact to the project area. This document is anticipated in July 2017.

In closing, the federal funds have been awarded for the purpose of approving the road extension as a mitigation project intended to improve Leif Creek wetlands adjacent to Jacob’s Ladder beach access as well as reduce the impacts to wetlands and sensitive habitat currently created by off-road vehicles.

The project is anticipated to be bid in the fall of 2017.