



**April 2023**

Public Works Report:

## Status of the Department

The Public Works Department is currently staffed by three people, The Director, Lead Equipment Operator and a Clerk. The moral of the department is generally good, the low pay rates for city employees has been discussed and will need to be addressed in the future. Recruiting new employees with the required skills has been impossible due to the substandard rates of pay we offer. I hope to see this resolved as soon as possible.

The long term goals are to bring the cities road system up to MSB standards, I have developed a plan for road maintenance projects to begin fixing 5 years of neglect and mismanagement. This will take time and can't be done in one season. The near term goal is to make every city road safe and drivable, with having a good road grader to work the roads we can do the work as it's supposed to be done, cutting out potholes in problem areas, pulling materials from the ditches and building up the road surface with a proper crown to allow for drainage and reduce road damage. PW has identified locations where culverts should be installed to reduce water flow over the roads in several areas.

Plans for the coming season are to survey the road Rights of Way (ROW) and cut back all trees and brush within this zone and remove all obstructions, such as cars, woodpiles and fences that interfere with road maintenance activities. Several intersections have been identified as having pothole problems, this is occurring at the transitions of paved roads to dirt roads. We plan to cut out the broken pavement and resurface the dirt sections to create a clean transition. This summer we will be installing traffic counters to provide updated traffic counts on several city roads, this information will be used for planning and seeking funding to pave selected roads, notably King Arthur Drive past white rabbit St. this section is dirt and has a large amount of traffic including commercial trucks hauling gravel across the valley along this corridor. The MSB will begin surveys and ROW clearing along Cheri Lake road in anticipation of the realignment and paving of the road, this will extend all the way to Anthony road and connect to west King Arthur drive.

The little Susitna campground is popular for campers, this campground has not had any upgrades or maintenance done in many years, we plan to upgrade the road system and fill low spots to reduce flooding. We plan to clear dead trees and remove stumps left over from past tree cutters. We want to add materials to several sites and make a nicer campground for the public. I have been informed that the vault under one of the outhouses is cracked open (Earthquake Damage?) and will need to be replaced.

One of the issues with all the Fee areas the city has (3) is the theft and damage to property, I am looking into a cashless system that can be used and will be more secure so we stop losing money at these locations. One of the most visible issues that we face is the problem of Junk properties, we have sent

notices to multiple properties to get rid of Junk, Trash and excess vehicles, and we are now at the point of issuing heavy fines as permitted by code to the worst offenders. I anticipate that we will need court intervention for several of these properties.

One task this winter has been to identify property's within the city that is still claimed by the MSB, to date we have identified 24 properties and have secured 11 properties from the MSB, many of these properties are not suitable for building and are designated as park lands.

**Equipment Needs**, this summer we will have our new road grader and a dump truck to help us maintain and repair the road system. Road work requires more equipment that we currently possess. We are still in need of a small Dozer and an Equipment trailer. By having our own equipment we are not at the mercy of rental companies who may not have them available when we need them. Rental equipment is expensive and have limited availability. As an example the grader we rented was \$800 per day plus fuel, with our limited budget we could only rent it for a short time. We had to delay and cancel several projects due to lack of available rental equipment last year, notably a small dozer and a roller compactor.

**Funding**, PW has pursued several funding sources, for the Flood disaster we applied to FEMA and the State for help. We have worked with our legislators for our CIP list to be funded, these requests were sent to local, state and federal legislators for consideration. We are working with the MSB and Knik Autu for a fish passage project in the city. Many funding sources have been looked at to see if we qualify, sadly many are not for us and some have a matching fund requirement that the city would be unable to meet.

**Scheduled activities**, the main event for the city PW is Founders day, PW provides logistical support for the event and staff as needed to keep the event safe. The cities Clean up Days are coming the second week of May. We hope to open the campground the first week of June, with all the snow this year we still have several feet in the campground, we will be testing the water supply as soon as we can in May. As PW director I am involved with several committees that are working on issues that will affect the city, these are the Parks Highway Alternative Route committee (Wasilla Bypass), Point Mackenzie Rail Corridor road project and the Susitna Drainage recreational rivers plan (DNR), decisions made by these committees will directly affect our city.

**Training**, NC Cat has offered a class on the new road grader we are getting, Travis and myself will be attending. I am working with the Fire Chief to get the staff certified in First Aid / CPR and AEDs, we are upgrading our first aid equipment and will have an AED at city hall. PW staff is current with their OSHA certifications.

The cities new website will have forms and an information page to provide updates to PW activities.

Parks Report:

- Zero Lake Trailhead is open and has been active. Parking area has been partially cleared to allow through passage of vehicles.
- Little Susitna camp ground is closed for winter. Campground opening ETA is May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023
- PW will be making some upgrades to the Campground this spring, grading roads, removing stumps and debris, Replacing trash barrels with a dumpster, adding material to camp site pads.
- Little Su day park closed for winter.
- Planning underway for a walking trail from Day Park to millers landing.
- Reviewing land on Susitna Ct, for possible river access point and boat launch.

Permits Issued in April 2023

Type	Issued in April	Total Issued for 2023
Construction Permit	4	7
Driveway Permit	0	0
Utility Permit	12	14
Conditional Use Permit	0	0
Land Use Amendment / Re-zone	0	0
Variance	0	0
Firewood cutting permits	0	0
Other/Matsu Borough	0	0

Respectfully

*George Thompson*

---

George Thompson,  
Public Works Director