

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Fairbanks North Star Borough & FAST Planning



PIONEER PARK

Boat Launch | Parking Lot | Plug-Ins | Peger Road Bike Path

Project Number NFHWY00891/0002547

Pre-Environmental Document Public Engagement Summary

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Table of Contents

- Background4**
 - STRATEGY 5
- Project Website.....5**
- Vendor Consultations.....6**
- Community Leader and Interest Group Emails.....6**
- Constant Contact Email List7**
- Public Open House and Barbeque8**
 - OPEN HOUSE OVERVIEW 8
 - OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY 8
 - OPEN HOUSE MATERIALS..... 10
 - MEETING ADVERTISING..... 10
- Presentations to Committees, Commissions, and Other Groups 12**
- Comments Received to Date 13**
 - WRITTEN COMMENTS FROM OPEN HOUSE 13
 - WRITTEN COMMENTS VIA EMAIL 13
- Appendix A – Vendor Consultation Notes.....22**
- Appendix B – Community Letters & Emails27**
- Appendix C – Constant Contact Emails31**
- Appendix D – Public Open House Advertising Materials.....37**
- Appendix E – Public Open House Materials49**
- Appendix E – Presentations to Committees, Commissions, and Other Groups54**
- Appendix F – Earned Media60**

List of Figures

Figure 1. Map of project area.	4
Figure 2. Project website.	5
Figure 3. Canoe Alaska, a vendor in the project area.	6
Figure 4. Existing parking conditions can be crowded on a sunny day.....	7
Figure 5. Directional signs guided people to the open house.	8
Figure 6. Photos from the open house.	9
Figure 7. Attendees enjoy a barbeque and learn about the project.....	12
Figure 8. Notes from meeting with vendor Canoe Alaska.....	23
Figure 9. Notes from vendor consultation with Alaska Salmon Bake.	26
Figure 10. An example of a community leader letter.	28
Figure 11. An example of a community group letter.....	30
Figure 12. Constant contact email #1.	33
Figure 13. Constant contact email #2.	36
Figure 14. DOT&PF social media post #2.	37
Figure 15. DOT&PF social media post #1.	38
Figure 16. DOT&PF Facebook event.	39
Figure 17. FNSB social media reel.....	40
Figure 18. Fairbanks Daily News Miner print ad.....	41
Figure 19. Fairbanks Daily News Miner Print Ad affidavit.	42
Figure 20. Online public notice.	44
Figure 21. GIF screens from Fairbanks Daily News Miner digital ad.	45
Figure 22. Example of a flyer location, Justa Store in Fairbanks.....	46
Figure 23. Project open house and barbeque flyer.....	47
Figure 24. Website update with open house notice.	48
Figure 25. Banners at open house. Visit website to see full size files.	49
Figure 26. Conceptual parking lot rendering display from open house.	50
Figure 27. Project information sheet.	52
Figure 28. Project comment sheet.	53
Figure 29. Example presentation.....	59
Figure 30. Fairbanks Daily News Miner earned media article.	61

Background

[Pioneer Park](#) is a history-centered theme park, community gathering space, and tourist attraction located in central Fairbanks along the Chena River. It is owned and operated by the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB). Admission to the park is free and features a train, carousel, vendors, theaters, playgrounds, museums, an art gallery, and event spaces for rent. The Alaska Salmon Bake and Canoe Alaska, Pioneer Park vendors, are located adjacent to the project area.

The [Pioneer Park Master Plan](#), adopted by the FNSB Assembly in 2021, identified an improved parking area and entrance in the northwest corner of the park and an improved boat launch area at the Chena River as Phase 2 priorities. In alignment with the plan, Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning included a project to upgrade the north end parking lot and boat launch in its [2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program](#).

Two additional related projects are being developed simultaneously. FAST Planning and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) included the Peger Road Bicycle and Pedestrian Path project and the parking lot plug-in project in its Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program. All three projects (the parking lot and boat launch, Peger Road path, and plug-ins) were combined into one project for design development and were awarded together.

Through this project DOT&PF, FNSB, and FAST Planning are proposing to:

1. Expand the current parking lot to the south and double the current capacity to 103 parking spaces.
2. Add motor vehicle plug-ins to the parking lot (approximately 16 spaces).
3. Improve the riverbank and install a concrete ramp at the non-motorized boat launch.
4. Add a separated, non-motorized path on the east side of Peger Road from Airport Way to the Chena River.
5. Add a southbound left turn lane into the parking lot from Peger Road.



Figure 1. Map of project area.

STRATEGY

The public involvement strategy involves two primary components, the first focuses on using *high-engagement tactics* or leveled-up traditional tactics (for example, hosting an open house/barbeque instead of just a traditional open house), and the second focuses on outreach to highly impacted vendors. The goals were as follows:

1. Generate community support for the project
 - a. Achieve a high level of engagement from the community
 - b. Educate the community about how this project fits into the Pioneer Park Master Plan
 - c. Release targeted outreach to user groups with special interest in the new facilities
2. Collaborate with highly impacted vendors in Pioneer Park to mitigate negative impacts
 - a. Establish open two-way communication vendors
 - b. Incorporate feedback and needs into design and construction phasing plans to the greatest degree possible
 - c. Avoid impacts to project development schedule

The following tactics will be outlined in this document:

- Project website
- Vendor consultations
- Community leader and interest group emails
- Constant Contact email list
- Public open house / barbeque
- Presentations to committees, commissions, and other groups

Project Website

The DOT&PF project website went live on May 23, 2025, and included an overview of the project, a project schedule, contact information for the DOT&PF project manager, and an opportunity to sign up for the project email list.

The website has been, and will continue to be, updated throughout the life of the project and has a date last updated listed at the bottom of the page to ensure transparency with the public. Visit the website here:

<https://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/pioneerpark/>



Figure 2. Project website.

Vendor Consultations

On March 24 and April 1, 2025, the project team met on-site with Canoe Alaska and Alaska Salmon Bake respectively. These two vendors operate in the project area. The purpose of these meetings was to:

- Establish a working relationship with these vendors
- Humanize the project and provide “real people” that the vendors can contact with ideas or concerns
- Solicit feedback on proposed design elements

Notes from the meeting can be found in Appendix A – Vendor Consultation Notes



Figure 3. Canoe Alaska, a vendor in the project area.

Community Leader and Interest Group Emails

On August 8, 2025, the project team sent emails to 34 community leaders and eight interest groups. The email was sent via Constant Contact delivery service under the delivery name “John Netardus, DOT&PF,” and any responses would be delivered to the project email address: info@pioneerparkingproject.com. The community leaders included the FNSB Mayor, City of Fairbanks Mayor, Fairbanks area state representatives and legislators, Alaska House and Senate Transportation Committee chairs, FNSB Borough Assembly, and FNSB Planning Commission members. The interest groups included Fairbanks Paddlers; Fairbanks Cycle Club; Chena Riverfront Commission; Explore Fairbanks; FAST Planning Walk, Ride and Roll Advisory Committee; FAST Planning Technical Committee; Alaska Salmon Bake; and Canoe Alaska. The purpose of the email was to:

- Invite the recipient to the open house and barbeque
- Open a two-way line of communication with local leaders
- Introduce the project to help dispel any rumors or misunderstandings
- Provide a project schedule
- Give an overview of what they should expect from the project team moving forward

Additionally, a member of the project team hand delivered a printed version of the email content to other Pioneer Park vendors. They were not included in the email list due to difficulties compiling email addresses for all vendors. A full copy of the email is included in Appendix B – Community Letters & Emails.

Constant Contact Email List

People can sign up for an email distribution list to receive regular project updates. A sign-up link is available on the project website and was also distributed in the neighborhood letters and community leader emails. The Constant Contact platform allows the team to track metrics and ensure we are engaging with interested parties.

On August 14, 2025, the project team sent the first email distribution to introduce the project and let recipients know about the upcoming public open house and barbeque. The email was sent to nine people.

On August 19, 2025, the team send a reminder email invite to the project open house and barbeque. The email was sent to 11 people.

During the open house many attendees took advantage of the opportunity to sign up for the email distribution list, which as of September 2, 2025 includes 67 people.

Copies of the Constant Contact emails can be found in Appendix C – Community Letters & Emails.



Figure 4. Existing parking lot conditions can be crowded on a sunny day.

Public Open House and Barbeque

OPEN HOUSE OVERVIEW

Data and time: Wednesday, August 20, 2025, 5-7 p.m.

Location: Pioneer Park Wilderness Pavilion

Number of attendees (based on sign-in sheets): ~140

Number of written comments received: 8

Project staff in attendance:

- Lee Williams, FNSB Parks & Recreation Pioneer Park Superintendent
- Kimberly Diamond, FNSB Program Staff
- John Netardus, PE, DOT&PF, Project Manager
- Sarah Schacher, PE, MBI, Consultant Project Manager
- Malia Walters, MBI, Public Involvement Specialist

OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY

The public open house was hosted at the Pioneer Park Wilderness Pavilion, which is located within the project area. It took place in the evening to allow residents to attend after normal working hours. The project team posted two large directional signs at the other Pioneer Park gates to direct attendees to the event location.

It was set up as an open house-style meeting with several display boards and project staff available to answer questions. There was no formal presentation. One team member was available at the entrance to greet attendees, request that they sign in, and offer a printed copy of the project information sheet and optional comment sheet. Attendees were then able to walk around and view the materials at their own pace. See Open House Meeting Materials subsection for more information on each display board.

The *high engagement* tactic for this meeting was to advertise it as an open house *and* barbeque. The fun nature of a barbeque (and free food) made the meeting more enticing for people to attend. Many people came after work with their families to eat some dinner and learn about the proposed project. John Netardus, DOT&PF Project Manager, staffed the grill and had the opportunity to talk to every single person who passed through his line to get food. With a budget of \$500, we served 84 hot dogs, 60 hamburgers, and provided drinks, chips, and cookies. We acquired a temporary food service permit from the State of Alaska Division of Environmental Health Food Safety and Sanitation Program.



Figure 5. Directional signs guided people to the open house.



Notable attendees included members of the Borough Assembly, Chena Riverfront Commission, representatives from interest groups like the Fairbanks Cycle Club, local media, and members of the local community.

As a result of the open house and barbeque, one front page newspaper article about the project was earned in the Fairbanks Daily News Miner.



Figure 6. Photos from the open house. John Netardus grills (top left), Sarah Schacher talks to attendees (bottom left), over 100 people turned out (top right), cones helped people know where to go to sign in (bottom right).



OPEN HOUSE MATERIALS

All materials brought to the open house were also posted in digital formats on the project website before the meeting. Copies of all materials are available in Appendix D – Public Open House Meeting Materials.

Item	Description	Cost
Project Information Sheet	8.5"x11" double sided information sheet with a conceptual rendering of the preliminary design, a brief overview of the project, contact information for leaving a comment, project FAQs, and a URL and QR code directing to the website. These were available for all participants at the sign-in table.	Labor
Conceptual Parking Lot Rendering	A conceptual rendering of the preliminary parking lot design. Printed and mounted on a 33"x25" foam core board.	\$82.30 and labor
Project Map Banner	A 33"x85" roll-up vinyl banner showed a map of the project area. Key design features such as the expanded parking lot, new path, new turn lane, and improved riverbank were called out.	\$165.31 and labor
Project Overview Banner	A 33"x85" roll-up vinyl banner had information about project funding, schedule, a QR code to the project website, and background information about why a project was chosen for this location.	\$165.31 and labor
Comment Sheet	An 8.5"x11" comment sheet that was available for all participants at the sign-in table. Commentors could check if they wanted a response or not and were asked to leave their contact information if they did want a response. DOT&PF's address and the project email were listed at the bottom of the page so commentors could send in the comment sheet later if desired.	Labor

MEETING ADVERTISING

Copies of all materials are available in Appendix E – Public Open House Advertising Materials.

Format	Description	Cost
Website	The project website was updated on July 21, 2025, with a highlighted yellow box at the top of the page advertising the upcoming open house.	Labor
Online Public Notice (OPN)	The OPN was published on July 15, 2025. The OPN listed all details about the upcoming open house and invited people to submit their comments on the project until September 20, 2025. John Netardus' contact information and the project URL were also listed.	Labor
Newspaper Print Ad	The black and white quarter page ad, published on August 11 and 13, listed all details about the upcoming open house and invited people to submit their comments on the project until September 20, 2025. John Netardus' contact information and the project URL were also listed.	\$1,796.99 and labor
Newspaper Digital Ad	An eye-catching, colorful GIF ad ran on the digital Fairbanks Daily News Miner page starting August 11. The digital ad briefly said what the open house and barbeque would be for, provided date and time, and directed to the website for more information.	\$459.00 and labor

Format	Description	Cost
DOT&PF Social Media Event	A Facebook event for the open house and barbeque was posted on August 7, 2025. The event cover photo had photos of the project area, information on the meeting time, and highlighted the barbeque.	Labor
DOT&PF Social Media Post 1	This post was published to the DOT&PF Facebook and Instagram accounts on August 13, 2025. The graphic highlighted the open house. The text of the post provided a brief introduction to the public, listed details about the upcoming open house, and provided the project website URL.	Labor
DOT&PF Social Media Post 2	A reminder social media post was published to the DOT&PF Facebook and Instagram accounts two days before the open house on August 18, 2025. The graphic and text were the same as the previous post. Project staff used Meta’s advertising service to “boost” the post to local audiences, expanding reach.	\$40 and labor
FNSB Social Media Reel	The project team enlisted the help of the FNSB public information officer to create and post a reel advertising the open house and barbeque on their social media channels. On August 15 the FNSB social media Facebook and Instagram posted a humorous reel about the upcoming meeting, another example of a <i>high engagement tactic</i> .	Labor
Flyer	Hard copy flyers were posted around Fairbanks starting the first week of August. The flyer highlighted the fun barbeque, listed details about the upcoming open house, and provided contact information to reach out to for more information.	\$60.10 and labor
Constant Contact Emails	Two constant contact emails were sent to advertise the open house on August 14 and 19. More information on the Constant Contact emails see the “Constant Contact Email List” section of this document.	Labor
Chamber of Commerce Spotlight	Project staff attended the weekly Chamber of Commerce Luncheon the day before the meeting on Tuesday, August 19 to spotlight the upcoming meeting and barbeque. This short 5-minute spotlight allowed for a brief introduction to the project and invitation to the open house and barbeque.	Labor

On the sign-in sheet at the meeting the project team asked people how they heard about the meeting. Not everyone answered the question, but below are the results of those who did:

- **Facebook:** 30 people
 - Via either DOT&PF or FNSB account
- **News:** 15 people
 - Via either Fairbanks Daily News Miner Ads or Channel 11 feature
- **Flyers:** 7 people
- **Other:** 20 people
 - Including through friends or family, word of mouth, emails, radio, or work

Presentations to Committees, Commissions, and Other Groups

The project team shared information about the project at the following meetings:

- **FNSB Planning Commission Work Session, April 8, 2025**
 - General project overview and discussion
- **FNSB Chena Riverfront Commission, April 23, 2025**
 - General project overview and discussion
- **FNSB Chena Riverfront Commission, July 23, 2025**
 - Project update and solicit feedback on design
- **Chamber of Commerce Weekly Luncheon, August 19, 2025**
 - 5-minute project spotlight and invite to open house/barbeque
- **FAST Planning Technical Committee, September 3, 2025**
 - Project update and debrief on open house
- **FNSB Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting, September 15, 2025**
 - Project update and debrief on open house
- **FAST Walk, Ride, and Roll Advisory Committee, September 18, 2025**
 - Project update and debrief on open house

These presentations provided an opportunity for the project team to interface with community leaders, answer questions, and seek feedback on the proposed design. The presentation materials for these meetings can be found in Appendix F – Community Presentations.



Figure 7. Attendees enjoy a barbeque and learn about the project.

Comments Received to Date

As of December 15, 2025 the project team has received 20 comments. This includes eight written comments from the open house and 12 written comments received in the project email inbox, info@pioneerparkingproject.com. Not all commenters wished to receive a response, but the team has responded to all comments requiring a response. Appendix G includes original copies of comments and responses.

WRITTEN COMMENTS FROM OPEN HOUSE

1. I use the bike path under Peger Road every day. There is no maintenance to the path. Please provide snow removal and cut back the brush.
2. About time the made the parking lot bigger.
3. I think there needs to be a light for egress/ingress off Peger to the parking area.
4. Here are my comments regarding accessibility for persons with disabilities.
 - Retaining wall plaza: Assuming the transition from path to plaza is flat, ensuring a clear path for wheelchair users as well as picnic tables and benches that are inclusive.
 - Ramp to river: Cues changes in elevation or locations of travel should be indicated by textural changes on the ground so cues tell people with low vision or are blind that they are about to change elevations or that a potential hazard is present (walking down a ramp into the river)
 - Parking: I'm sure your parking is ADA compliant but consider moving it a little closer to the Peger Path or installing benches with arm rests between spaces and the ramp/pavilion to accommodate people who can't walk very far.
5. Replacement mirror for the Peger under bike path. (She wanted to let staff know that one of the mirrors is missing.)
6. The boat launch needs to be far enough out where it doesn't get filled in by sand like every ramp previously placed here. By Pioneer Park there is also a gravel bar just below the bridge that should be dredged. I live on Park drive.
7. Peger Road needs more lights! It's dark. Safety hazard for pedestrians, bikers, everyone.
8. I really like the conceptual designs. The expanded parking lot will be a big improvement, as will the riverfront area with the concrete boat ramp. I also like the idea of the parking lot being open during the winter. Additional winter access and activities will be very popular. DOT improvements to Peger should help with traffic flow, although with more parking available Peger could get congested at times. Altogether I'm excited to see the Park developed further. Great plan!

WRITTEN COMMENTS VIA EMAIL

1. This comment concerns the construction of a concrete ramp for launching non-motorized watercraft, for this project or any other. Granted that the beach at the Pioneer Park boat launch is extremely muddy, a concrete ramp is not a viable option, as these are unstable for boats as well as scratching or, at worst, puncturing the bottoms of boats. Alaska State Parks places concrete

ramps at launch sites for use by motorized boats on trailers, but I have never seen a non-motorized boat use one. We launch or land next to them, as that is a much safer option. It would be worth much more to us if you could somehow improve the mud on the beach; perhaps a load of gravel would do it. I launch canoes, kayaks, inflatable kayaks, and packrafts at this site. Thank you for your consideration.

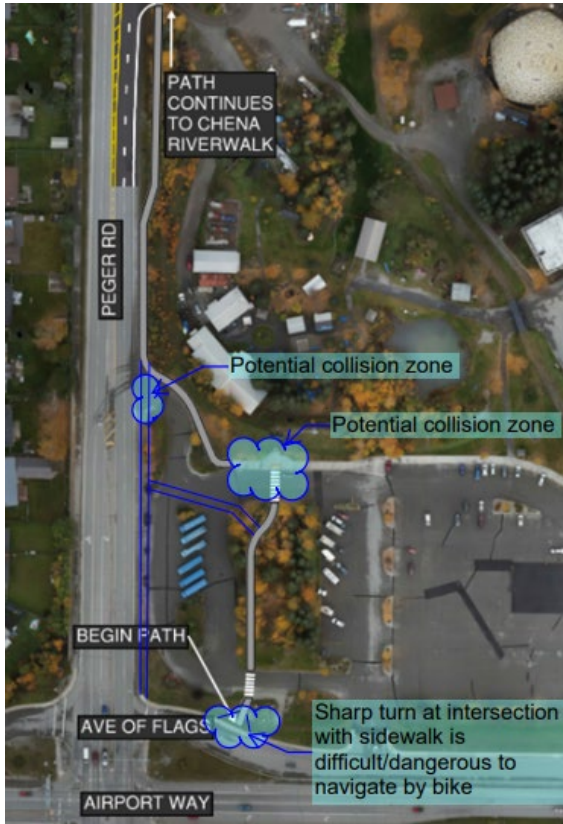
2. I'm concerned as bike and pedestrian access from the Johansson expressway to Pioneer Park along Peger Road is unsafe and I don't see where the project plan fully addresses the issue. Especially traveling south the tight 180 degree downhill turn off West side Peger Road bike trail and looping back north under the Peger road bridge is not and never has been workable or safe. I come from Aurora subdivision. I've crashed my bike several times trying to make that turn, one of which included a trip to the Emergency room. I would ride the west shoulder of Peger road southbound from the Spenard Bldrs traffic light and over the bridge waiting for a opportunity to cross Peger to the East shoulder to access Pioneer Park except for the Peger Road traffic is too fast to do that. The solution I see is to crossover to the East side of Peger at the traffic light by Spenard Builders and a bike/pedestrian path along the East side of the Peger bridge and connecting to Pioneer Park and the south bank Chena River bike trail. And since the East side bike/pedestrian access trail would be southbound, against traffic, it needs to be physically separate from the Peger road asphalt. Maybe you've already thought about that, but I see where the project maps stop at the south bank Chena River not even showing the south abutment of the bridge. And please do not tell me it is beyond the scope of the Project. It's unfortunate DOT recently redid Access to and thru the project area needs consideration to insure the safety of the users.
3. I appreciate the overall plan and encourage close attention to the details. The Chena river is a cherished element of our community and its beautiful needs to be preserved for generations to come
 - a. The selection of materials used in your project is especially important. Please ensure they are high quality, durable, and well suited to the environment. Natural materials that can withstand long term wear and tear are strongly preferred.
 - b. It is essential to preserve the view of the river from the roadway. The design should avoid outcomes such as those seen at the University Avenue bridge, where the view of the river is significantly obstructed and the fencing detracts from the landscape.
 - c. Landscaping along the path and parking area should be carefully considered. Incorporating trees, shrubs, and other low maintenance plantings will create a calming and welcoming atmosphere. While this may reduce the total number of parking spaces, the emphasis should be on quality and overall experience rather than maximizing capacity.
 - d. In addition, please consider vehicle access and the possibility of adding a few parking spaces on the north side of the bridge to facilitate boat launching and retrieval.
 - e. Thank you for your attention to these important details. I look forward to seeing the project move forward with these considerations in mind."
4. Thanks for the invitation. Unfortunately, I'll be away at that time, but I support the project as presented to the CRFC.

5. Apologies for the delayed response. I've had some time to consider the comment regarding the concrete boat ramp, and I respectfully disagree with the assessment.
 - a. From my perspective, a concrete boat ramp would significantly improve maintenance and provide much easier and cleaner access to the river. Regarding safety concerns, I don't foresee any issues beyond the inherent instability of a canoe or kayak on dry land. Even with the concrete ramp, there will still be ample space to launch non-motorized boats in ""Paddlers Cove.""
 - b. The primary challenge in Paddlers Cove is the extensive sediment buildup in the eddy. Over the past decade, I've observed as much as 8-10 feet of sediment accumulate, particularly beneath the area where the dock once stood. My understanding is that this area was dredged 10-12 years ago specifically to accommodate the dock. A concrete boat ramp would be beneficial as it would allow for the settled mud to be easily scraped out by machinery like a Bobcat when necessary.
 - c. Furthermore, my experience with gravel at this location has not been positive. About five years ago, Pioneer Park deposited a load of gravel on the beach where we typically launch during higher water levels (the proposed location for the concrete ramp). However, after the first high water event, the gravel was completely covered by sediment, reverting the area to a muddy state.
6. I would like to share my thoughts on this project as a member of the community.
 - a. I was happy to see the addition of vegetation along the streambanks rather than just rocks and happy to see that there won't be wasteful excavation of the river that will just refill with sediment in short order. I was also happy to see the greenspace and the relocation of the picnic shelter towards the river.
 - b. I always like to mention that a bike path on the East side of the bridge would be a huge safety improvement though I know it cannot be part of this project.
 - c. My only concern with this project is the routing the bike path through the parking lot of Pioneer Park.
 - d. I think it would be a better flow and overall much more safe and better utilized if the path were kept along the side of the road. Even if it is pushed to the far west edge of the parking lot and elevated like the path on the other side of Peger. This would maintain existing traffic flows and not have pedestrians popping in and out of the forest in the middle of busy traffic lanes in the parking lot.
 - e. Thank you for this project and your consideration of my feedback.
7. Hi, I recently attended your open house for this project and after seeing the proposed design, I have some comments. For reference, I live in the neighborhoods near the project, drive Peger on a nearly daily basis, and am a cyclist that rides through this area (occasionally commuting to work by bike) at least once per week.
 - a. The project includes no lighting improvements for Peger Road. It's notoriously dark on Peger and when it rains/snows/gets icy the painted lines are very difficult to see. If you have an astigmatism it's near impossible, especially in the dark or when the sun is low. This is a

public safety issue. It's hard enough to see the lines and oncoming traffic, let alone pedestrians, cyclists, or stray animals (like the ducks) that occasionally end up on the roadway. The project needs lighting for Peger. I was told at the open house that the other end of Peger doesn't have lighting and going from light to dark is difficult for drivers, but I would argue that you're doing that anyway because in order to access this stretch of Peger you must be coming from Airport or Johansen, which are both very well lit. I also know the residents of the Taku neighborhood are concerned about light infiltration into their back yards. I would suggest lighting the east side of the roadway and using lighting specifically designed to limit light pollution (similar to the orange streetlights on the Big Island of Hawaii). This would limit the light infiltration into their backyards while improving street visibility and safety. Additionally, the orange lighting is easier to transition into and out of in the dark, as demonstrated in Hawaii. I don't mind the path through the trees alongside the Salmon Bake, but the currently designed path dumps cyclists out at the entrance to the Salmon Bake. This is a problem because there is a very high potential for pedestrian/cyclist/bus collision. In the summer, there are often 1-2 tour busses parked at that entrance with dozens of people milling about waiting to enter the Salmon Bake. If a cyclist comes around the corner at 10-20MPH, they have nowhere to go to avoid the people, except into the lane in front of the tour busses. This is further compounded by the fact that the path continues through the trees in the parking lot, meaning that in order to use the path as designed a cyclist has to actively avoid people and busses to access the treed path to continue their commute/ride. This could be resolved by changing the routing of the path. (see attached) By keeping the bike path straight along Peger, it streamlines rides/commutes for pedestrians and cyclists. It also limits the potential for collisions at the Salmon Bake entrance by keeping cyclists out of the way of the tourists/pedestrians. Alternatively, moving the turn in the path to the other side of the bus lane in the lot, would also eliminate much of the potential for collision, as the busses on that side of the lot tend to remain parked for most of the day.

- b. There is a potential for collision at the Peger entrance to the Pioneer Park parking lot. Vehicles use the parking lot as a short cut to access the neighborhood and the Carlson Center. Closing this entrance would eliminate the potential for pedestrian/bicycle/vehicle collisions at this crossing. It would also alleviate the issue of vehicles trying to cut across Peger to bypass the light at Airport. This entrance isn't intended to be a short cut and the road does not appear to be designed for a turning lane there. I don't have access to the data, but I would be willing to bet that there are a fair number of collisions in this area caused by drivers taking this unintended short cut.
- c. As it is currently designed, the bike path ends at the sidewalk along the frontage road. The design includes a sharp turn in order to use the sidewalk in either direction. The sidewalk there is narrow and the turn will be difficult and potentially dangerous for bicycles to navigate (especially with the rising popularity of electric scooters and motorcycles on our sidewalks/paths). Widening this intersection into a triangle or funnel shape to allow for an

easier, less sharp turn onto the sidewalk would improve the usability for pedestrians and cyclists while making it safer for both. (see attached)



d.

e. I would request, as a cyclist, that if improvements are to be made to the area, that something be included to improve the path under the Peger bridge. Currently, it includes two blind corners and poses some serious safety concerns. Additionally, the safety mirror keeps getting stolen and the fencing along the riverbank is being washed out and damaged and is leaning into the path, threatening to injure anyone riding along it. If improvements are being made to the Pioneer Park side, including to the bike path, then it would be wise to consider removing the tight corner on the east side and using the right of way property to the west (currently being used by the adjacent property owner for grass) to widen the blind corner to make it safer for everyone. This area is especially dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists due to the increased prevalence of earbuds and headphones. A cyclist can ring the loudest bell they own, but it often goes unheard and people risk getting hurt.

f. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed design. I hope to see some tweaks when the final one comes out. Please let me know if you need any clarification or discussion on any of my comments. I love to see improvements and I think the boat launch and relocation of the pavilion are both excellent ideas, but the current design doesn't seem to really consider how pedestrians and cyclists use the area.

8. Congrats on your open house! We've heard a lot of positive feedback on the new boat launch area. We agree that the new area highlighted in yellow would be a better location for the path. Usually our buses drop off in front of the crosswalk and behind. The new location would be a better

setup for crossing over to the path. We really appreciate the opportunity to give feedback on the project!

9. Hello—Pioneer Park is so important to Fairbanks. I park in the Peger lot 3 times a week when the lot is open (April-October), to run on the river trail. It is good to improve the lot and river access.
 1. Has anyone considered implementing a plan that does not involve cutting down trees? That is a red flag to me in a park that we want to be beautiful. I do not favor cutting trees down to pave over and make a parking lot.
 2. Pioneer Park has an enormous parking lot out front. I find it hard to believe we need space for 100 cars along Peger. In my opinion space for 50 would work fine.
 3. It looks like the spot for moving the wilderness picnic shelter is down at the river level and would flood. It also would be even more exposed to the loud traffic noise on Peger.
 4. Did anyone consider using the utility/truck space behind the Canoe store for a new parking lot? There are other utility spaces in the park that could be more efficiently used for vehicles and equipment. I hope you will be able to canvas the canoe rental company and their customers, picnickers who use the shelter, church groups and music groups who use the area nearby, trail runners, dog walkers, baby carriage walkers etc.
10. The Fairbanks Cycle Club is pleased to see that cyclists and pedestrians have been considered with this project. Generally speaking, we like the new design and support the project. We are particularly pleased to see the separated bike/ped path on the east side of Peger Road. However, we do have concerns and have some suggestions.
 - a. Chena Riverwalk Reroute
 - i. Currently the Chena Riverwalk has a 90-degree turn where it goes under the Peger Road-Chena River bridge. This creates a blind corner. Cyclists and pedestrians cannot see if anyone else is coming. At times two or more people are using the whole path as they walk, cycle, or run side-by-side. It also makes it harder to see if the path is under water or covered in silt, which requires people to backtrack. We ask that the path be rerouted as part of the riverbank improvement so that it meets the underpass at a less severe angle.
 - b. Signalized crosswalk
 - i. The Chena Riverwalk underpass under Peger Road is a great option for foot and cycle traffic crossing Peger Road. This is especially nice because of the access to Riverview Drive (and the associated neighborhoods) through the gap in the fence. However, the underpass floods in spring and often in fall. It is unusable at those times. It also usually gets covered with silt during those floods, making it impassable, and the clearing of that silt takes time. (See attached photos.) During those times, the only legal option for cyclists and pedestrians is to detour to one of the crosswalks (Airport Way or Phillips Field Road). This is a long detour, especially for those walking. Sometimes people choose to cut across the four lanes of Peger Road, which is not safe. We ask that you install a signalized crosswalk in that area so that people can safely cross Peger Road when the underpass is unusable.
 - c. The “Salmon Bake Parking Lot”

- i. Note: For clarity we will refer to the most western part of the Pioneer Park parking lot as the “Salmon Bake” parking lot. It is somewhat isolated from the rest of the Pioneer Park parking lot and has two access points (roads) to the rest of the parking lot. While we like the addition of the new bike/ped path, the routing of the southern end of it in the current plan has it crossing the two access points between the “Salmon Bake” and Pioneer Park parking lots. It also dumps users directly onto the Frontage Road sidewalk and significantly offset from the Peger/Airport Way intersection. The northern access point is where Salmon Bake buses load and unload, at times creating a traffic jam. This can be dangerous and/or inconvenient for cyclist commuters who are often traveling at higher rates of speed. Also, this end of the Pioneer Parking lot is a notorious shortcut for drivers coming south on Peger Road and wanting to access either Pioneer Park, the Carlson Center, or the neighborhoods and facilities around them. Those drivers are often traveling at a higher rate of speed than is safe for parking lots. We have three suggestions:
 1. Our first choice
 - a. Close the Peger Road entrance to the “Salmon Bake” parking lot then route the bike/ped path to the west of the that parking lot (between the parking lot and Peger Road). This will solve several problems: 1) the bike/ped path will cross no roads/access points in that area; 2) drivers will no longer be able to shortcut across that parking lot; 3) the bike/ped path will make a much more logical connection to the Peger/Airport intersection.
 2. Our second choice
 - a. those access points (as they would not exist). It would also stop drivers from using the parking lot as a shortcut. If that solution is accepted, we ask that the southern end of the bike/ped path be rerouted so that it better lines up with the Peger/Airport Way intersection. Or, if that isn’t possible, for its intersection with the sidewalk to be redesigned so that users don’t have to make a 90-degree turn.
 3. Our third choice
 - a. Route the bike/ped path to the west of the “Salmon Bake” parking lot (between the parking lot and Peger Road). The bike/ped path would have one instead of two driving access points to cross and would better line up with the Peger/Airport way intersection.
 - ii. One caveat: If the bike/ped path is moved closer to Peger Road, please try to give some buffer between Peger and the path. This allows for some safety year round, but in winter a buffer would also help keep the path from being inundated with snow when state crews plow Peger.
- d. Better Lighting along Peger

- i. We would like to see better street lighting along Peger Road. While the new bike/ped path will give cyclists an option to ride off of Peger Road, they will still have the legal right to use the road. Some, especially commuters, will do so because it is quicker. Many drivers like to spend as little time commuting as possible. The same is true of many cyclists. Better lighting will help drivers better see cyclists using the road. It will also help drivers to see those using the bike/ped path where they are crossing parking lot entrance/exits to Peger Road.
- ii. Thank you for accepting our comments on this project.
- iii. On the next page are photos of the Peger underpass when flooded (Aug 2024 & 2025) and then covered with Silt (Aug 2024). While flooded the underpass is unusable. When covered in silt, it is difficult to use (and somewhat dangerous due to the possibility of slipping.) Unfortunately, we don't have any spring flooding photos easily accessible, but the flooding occurs even more regularly in the spring.



August 2024



August 2025



August 2024

iv.

11. Greetings, The Pioneer Park project is really exciting! It will have such a meaningful impact on the community. I am the race director for the Midnight Sun Run. Historically, the race course leaves the Riverview neighborhood, goes under the Peger bridge then back up to Pioneer Park, and ends within Pioneer Park near Centennial Hall. The project will disrupt the course this summer, and perhaps alter it even after the project is completed. I am the race director for the Midnight Sun Run. Historically, the race course leaves the Riverview neighborhood, goes under the Peger bridge then back up to Pioneer Park, and ends within Pioneer Park near Centennial Hall. The project will disrupt the course this summer, and perhaps alter it even after the project is completed. This coming summer is first on the list to tackle, though...figuring out an alternative route for the race to enter Pioneer Park and getting in place an approved traffic control plan. Please let me know the best way for us to figure out a plan, as even though the race is nine months away, time will go fast and planning for 2026 starts now.
12. We much prefer the new design of the "Salmon Bake" parking lot. We feel that will be safer and more convenient for cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers. However, there is one miscommunication. We prefer a physical barrier where the path shares asphalt with the parking lot. A physical barrier is important in summer as that is a higher traffic time of year. Physical barriers, especially something like jersey barriers, provide real protection for cyclists and pedestrians from collisions with motor vehicles. Even less sturdy physical barriers provide a better visual reminder of the path. In winter physical barriers mark the path when gore striping gets covered with snow. Also, physical barriers help keep paths from being covered by snow as they remind those plowing the parking lot that a path exists there. All that said, we understand that this is a low-volume motor vehicle traffic area and that winter maintenance is always a challenge. If permanent physical barriers can't work, then we would be open to seasonal physical barriers, with the barriers being removed in winter. If that happens, then we would like to see some sort of signage that reminds plow drivers a path entrance exists where the path enters and exits the parking lot. Too often, path entrances get covered by berms of hard-packed snow and become very difficult to use, if not impassable. As to the other items, those notes align with mine after my talk with Sarah. We would love to see a path under Peger Road that provides year-round unimpeded access, but we understand the challenges of dealing with and around Mother Nature. We look forward to the eventual extension of the Chena Riverwalk, as that will give people a new option. And eventually we look forward to replacement of the bridge so that a better path underneath can be constructed.
- Thank you for the detailed reply!

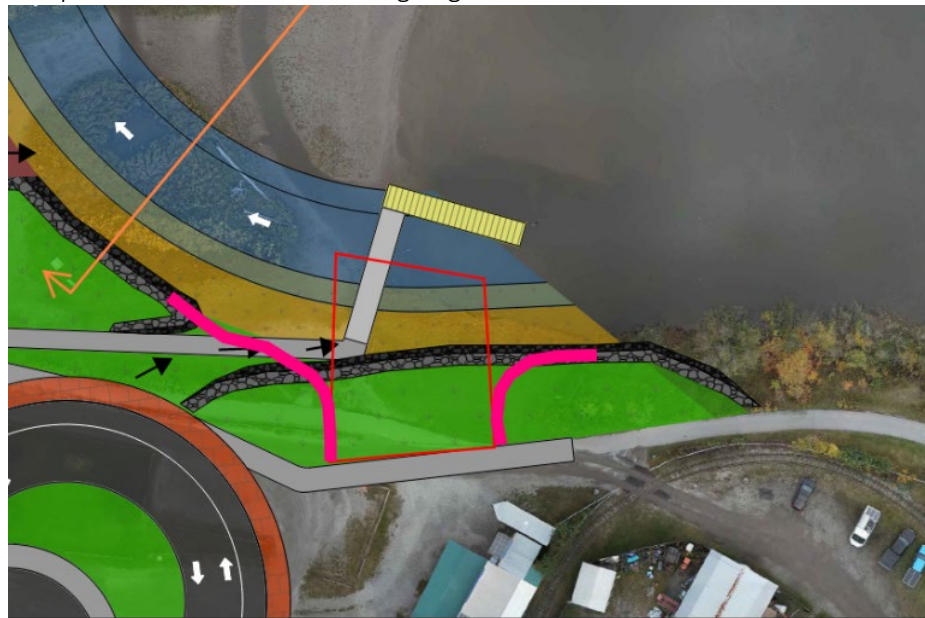
P^6 Riverbank/Lot discussion

March 24, 2025

Sarah Schacher, Travis Donovan (MBI), Lee Williams, Kimberly Diamond (FNSB), Mark Kimerer (BNI), Josh Davis, Nairn Davis (Canoe Alaska), John Netardus (DOT&PF)

Discussion items

- Introductions
- Purpose/goal of meeting – very early in design development, wanted input before we go too much further
 - Josh and Nairn have operated Canoe Alaska since 2015 and are familiar with river and paddler trends in this location.
 - They generally make runs with a 10-15 passenger van and ~25' trailer (tongue to back). Circulation currently is very difficult when lot is full- people get creative with parking. They generally pick up at Pump House and come back via Geist-Johansen-south on Peger.
 - Overview of P^6 project
- Josh and Nairn really like the concept generally. They need a very clear exit/entrance to their building so people don't block access if they pull over to park and load/unload themselves
- Travis envisions mountable curb in this area, but some delineation about loading/unloading so access points remain clear will need consideration.
- Updated on status of FNSB dredge/dock project
- Was planned for 2025, on temporary hold due to delayed DNR Permit
- FNSB wants public input but is not certain a dock going back is in the best interest for this area



- Additional discussion on bank:

- John – consider adverse travel, most people walking down to water will take shortest path (see graphic, maybe provide two access points, one near Canoe Alaska, one closer to Peger)
- Channel cut option looks good, but is going to silt in eventually. Team agreed, but it's a question of timing and the idea is picking up some velocity will reduce some of the deposition dropping out near the bank. Nairn loves the idea of the channel cut working, and maybe it would mitigate the back eddy that is an issue for inexperienced paddlers. Travis commented that even with the channel cut, H&H model indicates some extent of eddy will still exist. They are not concerned with the channel cut shown picking up too much velocity and view that as a good thing here.
- Dock – Canoe Alaska does not miss the dock at all and doesn't think this is a good location for one. Docks are not ideal for kayak launching, and in the past presented a hazard for people going under it. It's a pain for paddlers to get around it too.
- Josh and Nairn like the idea of a hardened launch only in that when it silts in, FNSB can remove silt more easily than they can from a soft bottom beach (As is currently). For ramp and path down to ramp, important to provide sandy area on either side of hard concrete or asphalt surface for easier kayak dragging.
- Electrical:
 - Sarah shared parking lot will have lighting and motor vehicle plug ins, and north end at least will be maintained year-round. They will take power from a new service drop on Peger Road and not tie in from Pioneer Park
 - Josh and Nairn interested in a way to update their electrical tie in if that's an option due to new electrical service drops in this project. Lee also interested so he can electrify gate. Important to keep access open to gate near RR tracks.
- Peger Road/access:
 - Nairn says lots of near misses and has seen crashes here. Many are right turners (headed north) on Peger.
 - They favor the concept of a southbound left turn lane to access the lot and urge its consideration especially if lot is open in winter months when things are slicker and dark. Sarah explained it's under consideration by DOT currently and our recommendation is it's not required – it is a nice to have, not a need to have. It would improve safety and flow but adds considerable cost to project, so will be DOT's decision. Discussed heavy traffic of years past on were due to Peger being a detour during construction of University Ave and GARS intersection. Generally this area probably has a peak hour time of day concerns for heavier traffic. Nairn said they could go around from Airport Way during busier times, but that is much less convenient with more signals and would take more time.
- In general, Josh and Nairn like the direction of the project and appreciate the opportunity to input. Asked construction year and Sarah shared plan right now is 2027.

Action Items/What's Next

- Josh and Nairn happy to answer questions in future if needed
- Team may send back new concepts for review and will stay in touch.
- Summer 2025 project open house planned – Wilderness Pavilion

Figure 8. Notes from meeting with vendor Canoe Alaska.

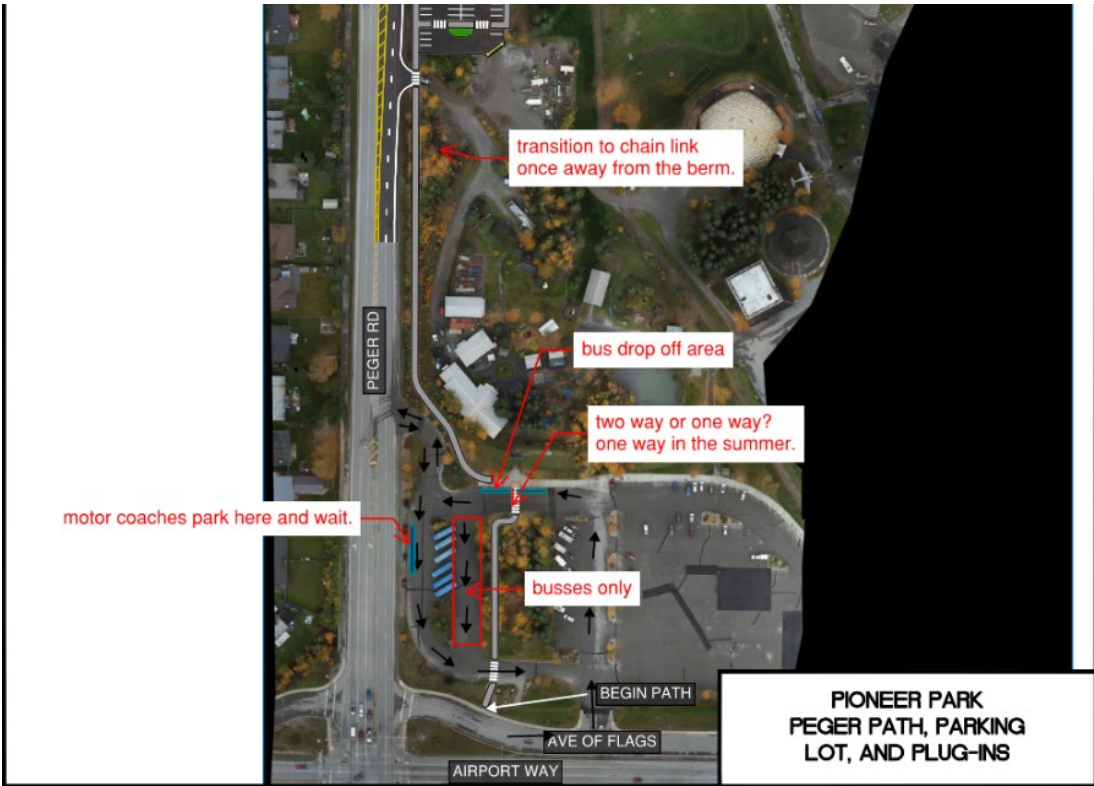
P^6 Path/South Lot discussion

April 1, 2025

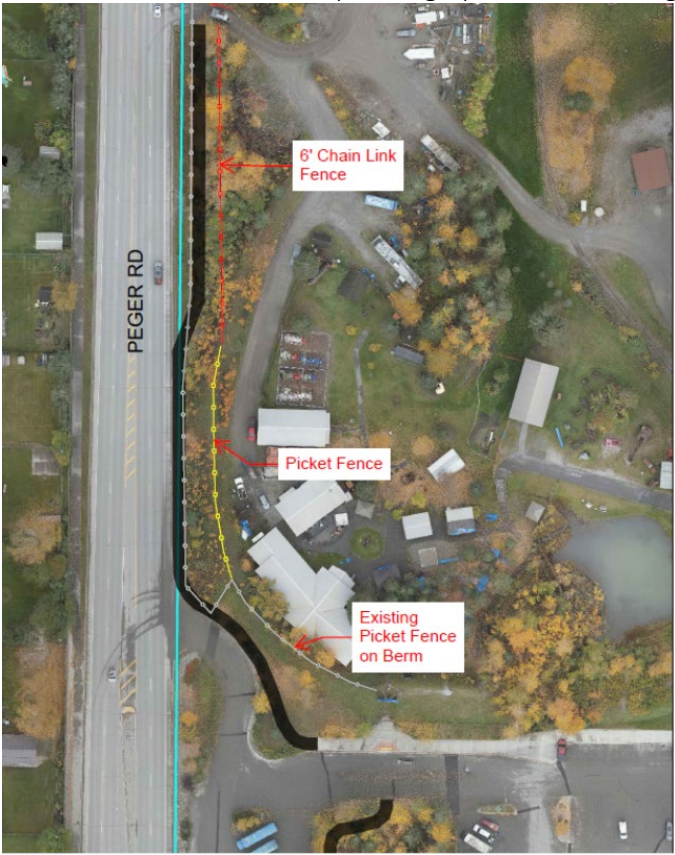
Sarah Schacher, Travis Donovan (MBI), Lee Williams, FNSB, Beth Winther, Jeremy Richards (Alaska Salmon Bake/Malemute, Inc.), John Netardus (DOT&PF)

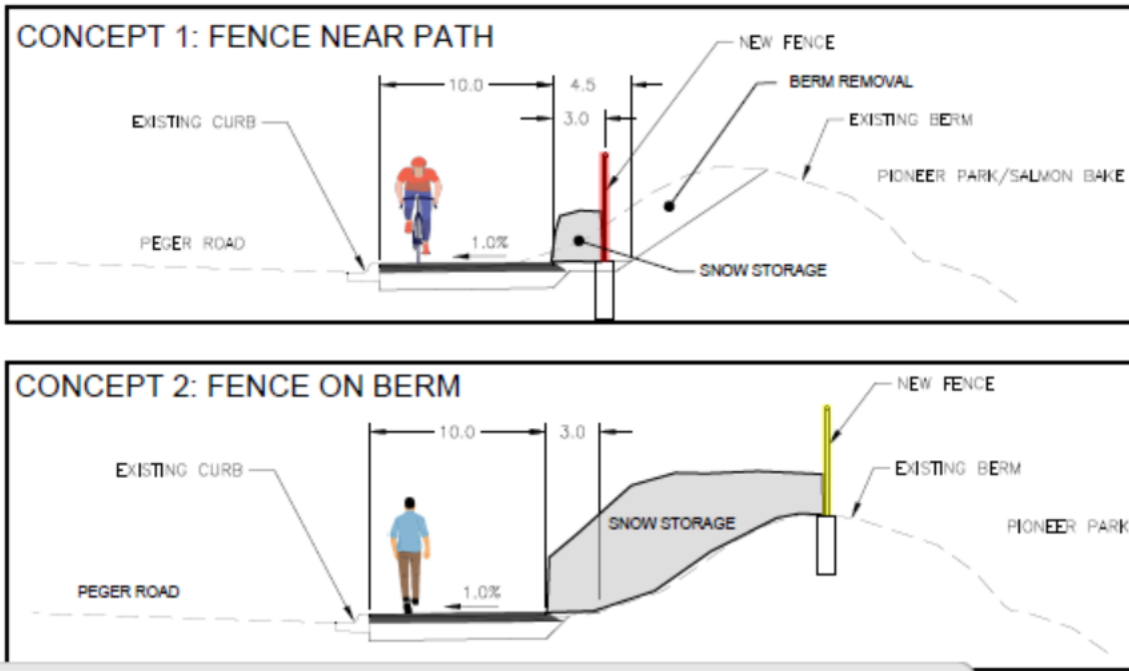
Discussion items

- Introductions
 - Jeremy Richards and Beth Winther (jrichards@akvisit.com; bwinther@akvisit.com) – owners of Alaska Salmon Bake, a family owned business since 1979
 - John Netardus, Alaska DOT&PF – funding and delivering the project for FSNB on behalf of FAST Planning
 - Lee Williams, Riverside Superintendent, FNSB Parks & Rec
 - Sarah Schacher, Travis Donovan, Michael Baker International (design consultant for DOT&PF)
- Purpose/goal of meeting – very early in design development, wanted input before we go too much further
- **Overview of P^6 project** – (Pioneer Park Boat Launch/Parking/Plug-ins & Peger Road Path is official title— with so many Ps, we call it P⁶, or P^6!)
 - Bike path/fence along east Peger Road:
 - Beth and Jeremy prefer fence concept 2 (**See Screen Shot 2**) with fence on top of berm, prefer picket style so it doesn't look like a prison. Height/style need evaluation, with possible addition of signs to keep people out/not climbing. Goal should be aesthetic and discouraging trespass, it is understood the area is not impenetrable
 - Can transition to chain link once off of berm/fence alignment goes back more into the Salmon Bake area. Consider putting slats in for privacy/blending with vegetation.
 - Think having a path here will be wonderful.
- **Salmon Bake parking area/circulation:**
 - Buses and tour buses/motor coaches generally enter from Avenue of Flags/Frontage Road and exit to Peger (see Screen shot below). Buses pull up headed west to drop off so that their doors face the sidewalk. The proposed bike path crossing is in the drop off area, which would use the same ADA ramp.
 - Motor coaches sometimes park parallel to Peger with enough room for traffic to get by (see screen shot.)
 - Lee thinks this whole parking area could use some work to improve circulation. It is intended to be one-way in parts for buses but people don't pay attention to signs. Would be interested in recommendations on how to improve even if they can't be funded on this project.
 - Lee would like to see the left turn lane (southbound Peger) into Pioneer Park removed and the median extended through here so it was only right in, right out. Challenge with this is there is no other access to Airport Way (or to go south on Peger) without going out to Wilbur Street. Could evaluate, may congest Airport/Peger intersection more with diverted traffic.
 - Jeremy and Beth grateful for opportunity to input early.



Screen Shot 1: Sketch developed on graphic shown during meeting with Salmon Bake





Screen Shot 2: Fence concepts shown. Salmon Bake prefers Fence concept 2 (yellow)

Action Items/What's Next

- Beth and Jeremy happy to answer questions in future if needed, will stay in contact.
- Summer 2025 project open house planned – Wilderness Pavilion

Figure 9. Notes from vendor consultation with Alaska Salmon Bake.

Appendix B – Community Letters & Emails



Dear FNSB Assembly Members,

The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is working with Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) Parks and Recreation and Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning on a project that proposes to

- expand the Pioneer Park parking lot off Peger Road near the Chena River,
- make improvements to the boat launch,
- install new vehicle head bolt heaters, and
- construct a new non-motorized path along Peger Road.

What will this project look like?

We are proposing to double the capacity of the existing gravel parking lot off Peger Road near the Chena River to over 100 spaces. A new southbound left-turn lane from Peger Road into the lot is planned due to the anticipated increase in traffic. Approximately 16 motor vehicle head bolt heaters will be added, and the lot will be maintained year-round. Improvements to the riverbank and the construction of a concrete ramp will facilitate easier launching of non-motorized watercraft such as kayaks, canoes, and rafts. Additionally, a separated path for bicycles and pedestrians will be constructed on the east side of Peger Road adjacent to Pioneer Park and tie into the existing Chena Riverwalk and existing Peger Road path.

The proposed expanded parking lot impacts the Wilderness Pavilion within Pioneer Park. The project team is working closely with FNSB Parks and Recreation to salvage and relocate the pavilion to a suitable location within the project area.

Why are we working on a project here?

Pioneer Park and the Chena River are central attractions in Fairbanks, serving both residents and visitors. The current boat launch area is hindered by silt build-up, shallow water, and an eddy making it difficult to use. The existing parking lot is often at capacity during summer and is not maintained in winter. This project addresses these issues by improving access, enhancing safety, and supporting future development as outlined in the [2021 Pioneer Park Master Plan](#).

Project Schedule and Open House

The project is currently in the design phase. Environmental review and public involvement will continue through 2025. Construction is anticipated to begin in the summer of 2027.

The project team is hosting a public open house and barbeque on Wednesday, August 20 from 5 to 7 p.m. We invite you to join us at the Pioneer Park Wilderness Pavilion off Peger Road to learn more about the project, meet our team, and enjoy free hamburgers and hot dogs.

What you and your constituents can expect from our team

We are committed to engaging with the community throughout the project's development. We have already met one-on-one with Canoe Alaska and the Alaska Salmon Bake, two businesses who operate in or near the project area, and solicited their feedback about the proposed design. We will continue to engage them and the community through one-on-one meetings, public events, social media, and the [project website](#).

How is this project funded?

This project is 91% federally funded through a mixture of funding types, including an allocation of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funding and Carbon Reduction Program funding specifically allocated to the Fairbanks area. The project qualifies for this funding because it could help improve air quality by adding non-motorized facilities and installing motor vehicle plug-ins, both of which reduce vehicle emissions. The FNSB is paying 9% matching funds on costs associated with the parking lot (including plug-ins). The State of Alaska is paying the 9% match on costs associated with the new separated path along Peger Road.

How does this relate to the Community Improvement Program (CIP) Project?

A Pioneer Park Chena River Boat Launch-Dock Repairs & Improvement project was included in the [Fairbanks North Star Borough CIP list for the 2024 fiscal year](#). That is a separate effort from this project. The scope of that project was to excavate the sediment directly under the dock and make any necessary safety improvements to the area or the dock. The project would also include improvements to the boat launch area and ramp. In July 2025, project staff briefed the Chena Riverfront Commission on the overlap in scope between the two projects. The Commission approved a motion to recommend that the DOT&PF project be prioritized over the CIP project, citing the DOT&PF project's greater alignment with the goals and policies of the Chena Riverfront Plan. The Commission also recommended not dredging this area and encouraged reevaluating a dock installation after the DOT&PF project is complete.

Questions?

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out directly to me at info@pioneerparkingproject.com, 907-451-5448, or the mailing address listed below. I also encourage you to visit our project website at dot.alaska.gov/nreg/pioneerpark. This website will be updated throughout the life of the project. We would also love to see you at the open house and barbeque at Pioneer Park on Wednesday, August 20 from 5 to 7 p.m.

Sincerely,
John Netardus, PE
Project Manager
2301 Peger Road
Fairbanks, AK 99709

ATTACHED: Information Sheet

Figure 10. An example of a community leader letter.



Dear Explore Fairbanks,

We are working on improvements to Pioneer Park, and we invite you to get involved! This project is a partnership between the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) Parks and Recreation, and Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning. The project team is proposing to

- expand the Pioneer Park parking lot off Peger Road near the Chena River,
- make improvements to the boat launch,
- install new vehicle head bolt heaters, and
- construct a new non-motorized path along Peger Road.

What will this project look like?

We are proposing to double the capacity of the existing gravel parking lot off Peger Road near the Chena River to over 100 spaces. A new southbound left-turn lane from Peger Road into the lot is planned due to the anticipated increase in traffic. Approximately 16 motor vehicle head bolt heaters will be added, and the lot will be maintained year-round. Improvements to the riverbank and the construction of a concrete ramp will facilitate easier launching of non-motorized watercraft such as kayaks, canoes, and rafts. Additionally, a separated path for bicycles and pedestrians will be constructed on the east side of Peger Road adjacent to Pioneer Park and tie into the existing Chena Riverwalk and existing Peger Road path.

The proposed expanded parking lot impacts the Wilderness Pavilion within Pioneer Park. The project team is working closely with FNSB Parks and Recreation to salvage and relocate the pavilion to a suitable location within the project area.

Why are we working on a project here?

Pioneer Park and the Chena River are central attractions in Fairbanks, serving both residents and visitors. The current boat launch area is hindered by silt build-up, shallow water, and an eddy making it difficult to use. The existing parking lot is often at capacity during summer and is not maintained in winter. This project addresses these issues by improving access, enhancing safety, and supporting future development as outlined in the **2021 Pioneer Park Master Plan**.

Project Schedule and Open House

The project is currently in the design phase. Environmental review and public involvement will continue through 2025. Construction is anticipated to begin in the summer of 2027.

The project team is hosting a public open house and barbeque on Wednesday, August 20 from 5 to 7 p.m. We invite you to join us at the Pioneer Park Wilderness Pavilion off Peger Road to learn more about the project, meet our team, and enjoy free hamburgers and hot dogs.

What you can expect from our team

We are committed to engaging with the community throughout the project's development. We have already met one-on-one with some businesses who operate in or near the project area and solicited their feedback about the proposed design. We will continue to engage them and the community through one-on-one meetings, public events, social media, and the **project website**. You can expect that if you request information from our team you will receive it in a timely manner. Please feel free to reach out to me directly with any questions or concerns.

How is this project funded?

This project is 91% federally funded through a mixture of funding types, including an allocation of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funding and Carbon Reduction Program funding specifically allocated to the Fairbanks area. The project qualifies for this funding because it could help improve air quality by adding non-motorized facilities and installing motor vehicle plug-ins, both of which reduce vehicle emissions. The FNSB is paying 9% matching funds on costs associated with the parking lot (including plug-ins). The State of Alaska is paying the 9% match on costs associated with the new separated path along Peger Road.

How does this relate to the Community Improvement Program (CIP) Project?

A Pioneer Park Chena River Boat Launch-Dock Repairs & Improvement project was included in the **Fairbanks North Star Borough CIP list for the 2024 fiscal year**. That is a separate effort from this project. The scope of that project was to excavate the sediment directly under the dock and make any necessary safety improvements to the area or the dock. The project would also include improvements to the boat launch area and ramp. In July 2025, project staff briefed the Chena Riverfront Commission on the overlap in scope between the two projects. The Commission approved a motion to recommend that the DOT&PF project be prioritized over the CIP project, citing the DOT&PF project's greater alignment with the goals and policies of the Chena Riverfront Plan. The Commission also recommended not dredging this area and encouraged reevaluating a dock installation after the DOT&PF project is complete.

Questions?

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out directly to me at info@pioneerparkingproject.com, 907-451-5448, or the mailing address listed below. I also encourage you to visit our project website at dot.alaska.gov/nreg/pioneerpark. This website will be updated throughout the life of the project. We would also love to see you at the open house and barbeque at Pioneer Park on Wednesday, August 20 from 5 to 7 p.m.

Sincerely,
John Netardus, PE
Project Manager
2301 Peger Road
Fairbanks, AK 99709

ATTACHED: Information Sheet

Figure 11. An example of a community group letter.

Pioneer Park Boat Launch, Parking, Plug-ins & Peger Road Path

Join us for a project open house and BBQ on
Wednesday, August 20 from 5-7 p.m.
at the Pioneer Park Wilderness Pavilion (near the
parking lot off Peger Road)

Pioneer Park Boat Launch, Parking, Plug-Ins, & Peger Road Path Project

OPEN HOUSE

(AND BBQ)

Enjoy **FREE FOOD*** and learn about the project to improve the parking lot and boat launch off Peger Road
**While supplies last*

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20

FROM 5 TO 7 PM

PIONEER PARK WILDERNESS PAVILION

Logos: STATE OF ALASKA TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC UTILITIES, FAST planning, FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH PARKS & RECREATION

Join us at the open house and BBQ to discuss the proposed design and project schedule, learn how this project is being funded, meet the team, and enjoy **free** hamburgers and hot dogs while supplies last.

We hope to see you there on Wednesday, August 20, from 5-7 p.m.!

What is this project?

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities is working with the Fairbanks North Star Borough and Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation Planning to expand the parking lot near the Chena River within Pioneer Park and enhance non-motorized access in the area.

Proposed work includes:

- Doubling the capacity of the parking lot to over 100 spaces
- Adding motor vehicle head bolt heaters
- Improving the riverbank and adding a concrete ramp for non-motorized boats
- Adding a separated path for bicycles and pedestrians on east side of Peger Road from Airport Way to the Chena River
- A new southbound left turn lane on Peger Road into the parking lot

[Click here to visit our website!](#)

Please forward this message to anyone you think will be interested!
We will send another email reminder as the event gets closer and the meeting materials are posted to the website.



It is the policy of the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) that no one shall be subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, regardless of the funding source, including Federal Transit Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and State of Alaska funds. Persons who believe they may have experienced discrimination in the delivery of these federally-assisted programs or activities may file a confidential complaint with: Alaska DOT&PF Civil Rights Office, 2200 East 42nd Avenue, Room 310, Anchorage, AK 99508. Telephone 1 907 269 0851, Toll Free in Alaska Only 1 800 770 6236, Fax 1 907 269 0847, or by calling Alaska Relay

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by DOT&PF pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated April 13, 2023, and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.



Figure 12. Constant contact email #1.

Pioneer Park Boat Launch, Parking, Plug-ins & Peger Road Path

The weather forecast says it will be **SUNNY** for our meeting tomorrow ☀️

JOIN US! Project open house and BBQ on **Wednesday, August 20** from **5-7 p.m.** at the Pioneer Park Wilderness Pavilion (near the parking lot off Peger Road)

Pioneer Park Boat Launch, Parking, Plug-Ins, & Peger Road Path Project

OPEN HOUSE

(AND BBQ)

Enjoy **FREE FOOD*** and learn about the project to improve the parking lot and boat launch off Peger Road
**While supplies last*

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20

FROM 5 TO 7 PM

PIONEER PARK WILDERNESS PAVILION

The poster includes three logos at the bottom left: the State of Alaska logo, the FAST planning logo, and the Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks & Recreation logo. It also features two inset photos: one of a parking lot with blue tarps and another of a boat launch on a river.

What is this project?

We are proposing to expand the parking lot near the Chena River within Pioneer Park and improve non-motorized access in the area.

Proposed work includes:

- Doubling the capacity of the parking lot to over 100 spaces
- Adding motor vehicle head bolt heaters
- Improving the riverbank and adding a concrete ramp for non-motorized boats
- Adding a separated path for bicycles and pedestrians on east side of Peger Road from Airport Way to the Chena River
- Constructing a new southbound left turn lane on Peger Road into the parking lot

This project is a collaboration between the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, and Fairbanks Alaska Surface Transportation Planning.

[**Click here to visit our website!**](#)

Please forward this message to anyone you think will be interested!



If you need reasonable accommodations for this meeting, please email info@pioneerparkingproject.com, reply to this email, call 907-451-5448, or to communicate by text telephone, dial TTY 711 or 1-800-770-8973.

It is the policy of the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) that no one shall be subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, regardless of the funding source, including Federal Transit Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and State of Alaska funds. Persons who believe they may have experienced discrimination in the delivery of these federally-assisted programs or activities may file a confidential complaint with: Alaska DOT&PF Civil Rights Office, 2200 East 42nd Avenue, Room 310, Anchorage, AK 99508. Telephone 1 907 269 0851, Toll Free in Alaska Only 1 800 770 6236, Fax 1 907 269 0847, or by calling Alaska Relay

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Figure 13. Constant contact email #2.

Appendix D – Public Open House Advertising Materials

Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities · Follow
August 18 at 10:40 AM · 🌐

👋 Hey, Fairbanks, you're Invited! 🍔 Join us for a sizzling summer evening at the Pioneer Park Parking Lot Project Open House & BBQ! 🍷🍌

📅 Date: Wednesday, August 20
🕒 Time: Drop in anytime from 5–7 PM
📍 Location: Wilderness Pavilion, Pioneer Park, Fairbanks (near the Peger Parking Lot)

Join us to learn about the Pioneer Park Boat Launch, Parking, Plug-ins & Peger Road Path Project. You know that parking lot off Peger Road that's always full of cars, kayaks, canoes, and kind of disorganized? Yeah, we're trying to help fix that! Come chat with the team, explore the vision for this project, and enjoy some delicious dogs and burgers while you're at it.

Curious about what's next for this beloved community space? We'd love to see you there!

🔗 Learn more about the project: dot.alaska.gov/nreg/pioneerpark
✅ Respond to the Facebook event here: <https://www.facebook.com/share/1BaHnMbr3d/>

Pioneer Park Boat Launch, Parking, Plug-Ins, & Peger Road Path Project

OPEN HOUSE

(AND BBQ)

Enjoy **FREE FOOD*** and learn about the project to improve the parking lot and boat launch off Peger Road
**While supplies last*

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20

FROM 5 TO 7 PM

PIONEER PARK WILDERNESS PAVILION

DOT.ALASKA.GOV

Pioneer Park Boat Launch/Parking/Plug-ins & Peger Road Path, Transportation & Public Facilities [Learn more](#)

👤 Sarah Schacher and 95 others 2 comments 38 shares

Figure 14. DOT&PF social media post #2.

 Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities · Follow
August 13 at 8:21 AM · 🌐

👋 Hey, Fairbanks, you're invited! 🍔
Join us for a sizzling summer evening at the Pioneer Park Parking Lot Project Open House & BBQ!

📅 Date: Wednesday, August 20
🕒 Time: Drop in anytime from 5–7 PM
📍 Location: Wilderness Pavilion, Pioneer Park, Fairbanks (near the Peger Parking Lot)

Join us to learn about the Pioneer Park Boat Launch, Parking, Plug-ins & Peger Road Path Project. You know that parking lot off Peger Road that's always full of cars, kayaks, canoes, and kind of disorganized? Yeah, we're trying to help fix that! Come chat with the team, explore the vision for this project, and enjoy some delicious dogs and burgers while you're at it.

Curious about what's next for this beloved community space? We'd love to see you there!
🔗 Learn more about the project: dot.alaska.gov/nreg/pioneerpark

Pioneer Park Boat Launch, Parking, Plug-Ins, & Peger Road Path Project

OPEN HOUSE

(AND BBQ)

Enjoy **FREE FOOD*** and learn about the project to improve the parking lot and boat launch off Peger Road
**While supplies last*

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20
FROM 5 TO 7 PM
PIONEER PARK WILDERNESS PAVILION

  Sarah Schacher and 21 others 15 shares

 Like  Comment  Share

Figure 15. DOT&PF social media post #1.

The image shows a Facebook event page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with icons for home, video, messages, profile, and a plus sign. The main event banner features a collage of images: a boat launch, a BBQ plate, and a scenic view of a river. The text on the banner reads: "Pioneer Park Boat Launch, Parking, Plug-Ins, & Peger Road Path Project", "OPEN HOUSE (AND BBQ)", "WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20 FROM 5 TO 7 PM", and "THE PIONEER PARK WILDERNESS PAVILION OFF PEGER ROAD". There are also logos for "FAST" and "DOT&PF".

Below the banner, a calendar icon shows the date "20". The event details are: "Wednesday, August 20, 2025 at 5 PM - 7 PM", "Open House & BBQ: Pioneer Park Boat Launch, Parking, Plug-Ins, & Path", and "Fairbanks North Star Borough Pioneer Park (Wilderness Pavilion)".

There are two tabs: "About" (selected) and "Discussion". A "Going" button is visible. The "Details" section shows "38 people responded" and lists the following information:

- Event by Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
- Fairbanks North Star Borough Pioneer Park (Wilderness Pavilion)
- Duration: 2 hr
- Public · Anyone on or off Facebook

A message says: "Hey, Fairbanks, you're invited! Join us for a sizzling summer evening at the Pioneer Park Parking Lot Project Open House & BBQ!". The date is "Wednesday, August 20" and the time is "Drop in... See more". The location is "Fairbanks, Alaska".

A map shows the location of the event at the intersection of Peger Road and Airport Way. Landmarks include St. Michael's Kashim, Chena Riverwalk, Denali Railcar, and Ruth B. Spc. Ha. The address is "Fairbanks North Star Borough Pioneer Park (Wilderness Pavilion), 2300 Airport Way, Fairbanks, AK 99701-4014, United States".

Figure 16. DOT&PF Facebook event.

BBQ @ PIONEER PARK Wilderness Pavilion for the P⁶ project



43
4
11
...

Figure 17. FNSB social media reel.

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

NOTICE OF PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE & BBQ:

Pioneer Park Boat Launch, Parking, Plug-Ins & Peger Road Path

Project number: NFHWY00891/0002547

Join us for a **project update** and summer **barbeque** for this project, which includes expanding the current parking lot off Peger Road, adding head bolt heaters, improving the riverbank for non-motorized watercraft, and adding a separated path for bicycles and pedestrians on the east side of Peger Road. See the proposed design, learn about funding and schedule, meet the project team, and enjoy free hamburgers and hot dogs while supplies last.



**Pioneer Park
Wilderness Pavilion**
at the Peger Parking Lot



Wed, August 20
5 to 7 p.m.



Meeting materials will be available on the project website, dot.alaska.gov/nreg/pioneerpark/ and comments or questions can be submitted during the meeting, online, or in writing to the following until September 20, 2025

QUESTIONS COMMENTS



John Netardus, P.E., DOT&PF
2301 Peger Road Fairbanks AK 99709
Telephone: (907) 451-5448 (TTY): 711
Email: info@pioneerparkingproject.com

The proposed project complies with the following Executive Orders (EO): EO 11990, Notice of Wetland Involvement, EO 12898, Environmental Justice, EO 11593, Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment, EO 11988, Floodplain Management, and EO 13112, Invasive Species. All public comments received will become a part of the public record and may be subject to Freedom of Information Act requests.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by DOT&PF pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated April 13, 2023, and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.

It is the policy of the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) that no one shall be subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, regardless of the funding source, including Federal Transit Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and State of Alaska funds. Title VI Nondiscrimination Policy: https://dot.alaska.gov/tvi_statement.shtml. To file a complaint: dot.alaska.gov/cvirts/titlevi.shtml.

If you require reasonable accommodation and/or special modifications to participate in this public open house, please contact the project manager listed above. You should make your request at least 10 days before the accommodation is needed in order to make any necessary arrangements. To communicate by text telephone, dial TTY 711 or 1-800-770-8973.

Figure 18. Fairbanks Daily News Miner print ad.

Affidavit of Publication

STATE OF ALASKA)
COUNTY OF FAIRBANKS) SS
NORTH STAR BOROUGH)

Teresa Knezek, being duly sworn, says:

That she is Affidavit Clerk of the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, a daily newspaper of general circulation, printed and published in Fairbanks, Fairbanks North Star Borough County, Alaska; that the publication, a copy of which is attached hereto, was published in the said newspaper on

August 17, 2025

That said newspaper was regularly issued and circulated on those dates.

SIGNED:

Affidavit Clerk

Subscribed to and sworn to me this 17th day of August 2025.

Kaira S. Lum, Notary Public, Fairbanks North Star Borough County, Alaska

My commission expires: February 11, 2026

STATE OF ALASKA
NOTARY PUBLIC

Kaira S. Lum

My Commission Expires February 11, 2026

00007674 00083292



MICHAEL BAKER INT
3900 C Street Ste 900
Anchorage, AK 99503

Affidavit of Publication

STATE OF ALASKA)
COUNTY OF FAIRBANKS) SS
NORTH STAR BOROUGH)

Teresa Knezek, being duly sworn, says:

That she is Affidavit Clerk of the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, a daily newspaper of general circulation, printed and published in Fairbanks, Fairbanks North Star Borough County, Alaska; that the publication, a copy of which is attached hereto, was published in the said newspaper on

August 11, 2025

That said newspaper was regularly issued and circulated on those dates.

SIGNED:

Affidavit Clerk

Subscribed to and sworn to me this 11th day of August 2025.

Kaira S. Lum, Notary Public, Fairbanks North Star Borough County, Alaska

My commission expires: February 11, 2026

STATE OF ALASKA
NOTARY PUBLIC

Kaira S. Lum

My Commission Expires February 11, 2026

00007674 00083291



MICHAEL BAKER INT
3900 C Street Ste 900
Anchorage, AK 99503

Figure 19. Fairbanks Daily News Miner Print Ad affidavit.

Notice of Intent and Open House - Pioneer Park Boat Launch/Parking/Plug-ins & Peger Road Bike Path

Notice of Intent to Begin Engineering and Environmental Studies and Public Open House
Pioneer Park Boat Launch/Parking/Plug-ins & Peger Road Bike Path
State/Federal Project Numbers: NFWY008910002547

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) invites you to join us for an open house to learn about the proposed project to improve access and amenities near the Chena River at Pioneer Park in Fairbanks, Alaska. The proposed project includes:

- Expanding the existing parking lot near the Chena River to more than 100 spaces.
- Adding approximately 16 motor vehicle plug-ins to support winter use.
- Constructing a southbound left-turn lane from Peger Road into the parking lot.
- Enhancing the riverbank to improve non-motorized watercraft access (e.g., kayaks, canoes, rafts).
- Developing a separated bicycle and pedestrian path along the east side of Peger Road, connecting Airport Way to the Chena River and the Chena Riverwalk path.

Construction is anticipated to begin in summer 2027.

The project is being developed in accordance with the following special purpose regulations including Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act; Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; and the following EOs: EO 11990 (Wetlands Protection); EO 12898 (Environmental Justice); EO 11593 (Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment); EO 13112 (Invasive Species); and EO 11988 (Floodplain Management). The proposed riverbank and non-motorized boat launch improvements are anticipated to place fill in the regulated floodway of the Special Flood Hazard Area Zone AE of the Chena River floodplain.

More information about the project can be found at [https://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/pioneerpark.\[551\]](https://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/pioneerpark.[551])

Open House

5:00-7:00 pm on Wednesday, August 20, 2025

Pioneer Park Wilderness Pavilion (closest access is from Peger Road)

2300 Airport Way, Fairbanks, AK

Project staff, including Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks & Recreation staff will be in attendance and available to answer your questions. Materials presented at the meeting will be available on the project website prior to the open house.

Comment sheets will be provided at the meeting, or comments outside the meeting can be made by contacting:

John Netardus, PE, Engineering Manager
2301 Peger Road, Fairbanks AK 99709-5316
Telephone: (907) 451-5448
Text Telephone (TDD): 771 or 1-800-770-8973
Email: info@pioneerparkingproject.com

Please submit comments by **September 20, 2025**

If you require reasonable accommodation and/or special modifications to participate in this public open house, please contact the project manager listed above. Please make your request at least 10 days before the accommodation is needed in order to make any necessary arrangements. To communicate by text telephone, dial TTY 711 or 1-800-770-8973.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by the Alaska DOT&PF pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated April 13, 2023, and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.

It is the policy of the DOT&PF that no one shall be subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, regardless of the funding source, including Federal Transit Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and State of Alaska funds. Title VI Nondiscrimination Policy: dot.alaska.gov/tvi_statement.shtml. To file a complaint, visit dot.alaska.gov/cvlrts/titlevi.shtml.

Attachments, History, Details

Attachments

None

Revision History

Created 7/15/2025 11:36:48 AM by emiller-chapman

Details

Department:	Transportation and Public Facilities
Category:	Public Notices
Sub-Category:	
Location(s):	Statewide
Project/Regulation #:	Pioneer Park Boat Launch/Parking/Plug-ins & Peger
Publish Date:	7/15/2025
Archive Date:	9/21/2025
Events/Deadlines:	

Figure 20. Online public notice.

FAIRBANKS
Daily News-Miner

a company of The Helen Snedden Foundation, a nonprofit corporation

 **WE'RE IMPROVING THE PIONEER PARK
PARKING LOT & BOAT LAUNCH**  

[Register Your Subscription](#) [Customer Services](#) [Local Events](#) [Careers](#) [Contest](#)

[Store](#) [Sponsored Content](#)

JOIN US **FREE FOOD!** **&** **PROJECT UPDATES!**

WED, AUG 20 | **5 TO 7 PM** | **@ PAVILION NEAR PEGER ROAD LOT**

 **CLICK FOR MORE INFO** 

Figure 21. GIF screens from Fairbanks Daily News Miner digital ad.



Figure 22. Example of a flyer location, Justa Store in Fairbanks.

Pioneer Park Boat Launch, Parking,
Plug-Ins, & Peger Road Path Project

OPEN HOUSE



(AND BBQ)



PROJECT NUMBERS NFHWY00891/0002547

WEDNESDAY,
AUGUST 20

FROM 5
TO 7 PM

PIONEER PARK
WILDERNESS PAVILION

Enjoy **FREE FOOD*** and learn about the
project to improve the parking lot and
boat launch off Peger Road **while supplies last*
QUESTIONS?

Email info@pioneerparkingproject.com
or visit dot.alaska.gov/nreg/pioneerpark

It is the policy of the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) that no one shall be subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, regardless of the funding source, including Federal Transit Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and State of Alaska funds. The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by DOT&PF pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated April 13, 2023, and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF. If you need accommodations to attend this meeting you should make your request at least 10 days before the accommodation is needed in order to make any necessary arrangements. Contact the project manager at the email listed above or (907) 451-5448. To communicate by text telephone, dial TTY 711 or 1-800-770-8973.

Figure 23. Project open house and barbeque flyer.

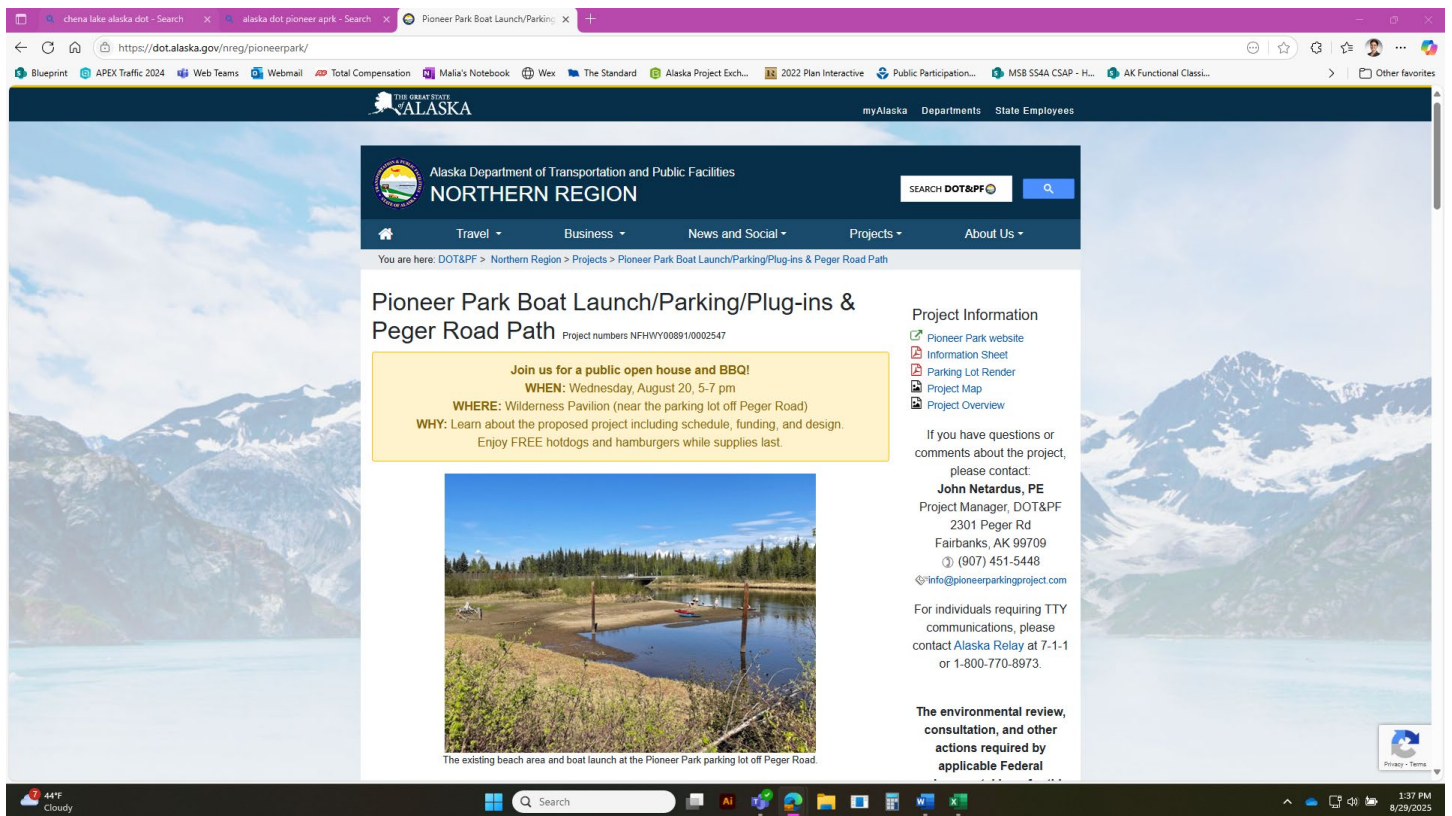


Figure 24. Website update with open house notice.

Appendix E – Public Open House Materials

Pioneer Park Boat Launch, Parking, Plug-Ins, and Peger Road Path

Also known as P⁶ Project numbers NHWY00891/0002547

Pioneer Park Boat Launch, Parking, Plug-Ins, and Peger Road Path

Also known as P⁶ Project numbers NHWY00891/0002547

WHY ARE WE WORKING ON A PROJECT HERE?

Improvements to the boat launch and Peger Road entrance were **priorities identified in the 2021 Pioneer Park Master Plan**.

READ THE FULL MASTER PLAN HERE!

The current non-motorized boat launch can be **difficult to use** due to shallow water with a rocky. The existing gravel **parking lot is often over capacity** during the summer, leading to congestion and prioritizations. There is currently **no sidewalk or path on the east side** of Peger Road between Airport Way and the river.

CONCEPTUAL RENDERING

WHO IS PAYING FOR THIS?

This project is 91% federally funded through a mixture of funding types. The **Fairbanks North Star Borough** is paying 9% matching funds on cost associated with the parking lot (including plug-ins). The **State of Alaska** is paying 9% local match on costs associated with the new separated path along Peger Road. The project is estimated to cost \$3-4 million to construct.

91% Federally Funded

U.S. Department of Transportation
Coastal and Waterways Program

Borough Pays 9% of Parking Lot Costs

State Pays 9% of Pathway Costs

SCHEDULE

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2026	2027
Public Involvement											
Environmental Review											
Design											
Construction											

dot.alaska.gov/nreg/pioneerpark/

Figure 25. Banners at open house. Visit website to see full size files.



Figure 26. Conceptual parking lot rendering display from open house.

Pioneer Park Boat Launch/Parking/Plug-Ins & Peger Road Path

Project numbers NHWY00891/0002547

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities is working with the Fairbanks North Star Borough and Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation Planning to expand the parking lot near the Chena River within Pioneer Park and enhance non-motorized access in the area.

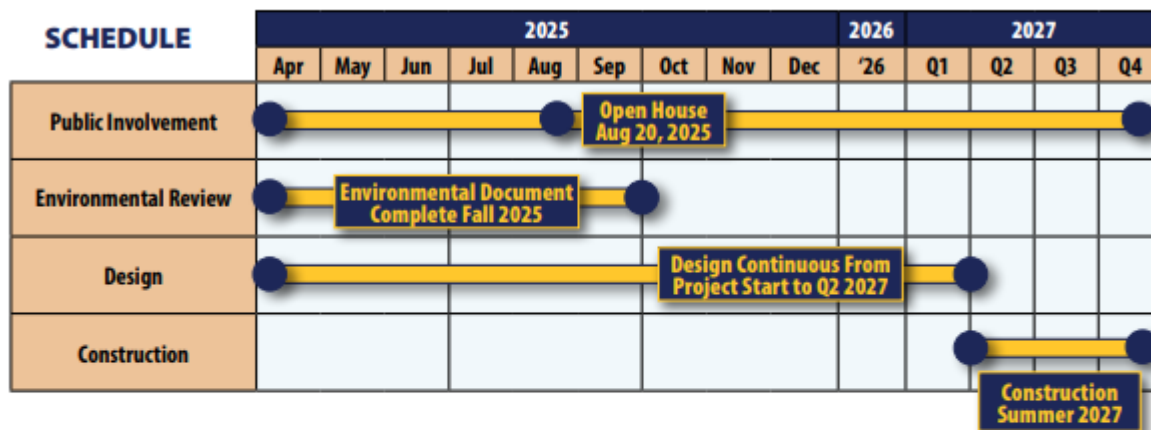
PROPOSED WORK INCLUDES:

- 1 Doubling the capacity of the parking lot off Peger Road to over 100 spaces
- 2 Adding motor vehicle headbolt heaters
- 3 Improving the riverbank for non-motorized boats to launch
- 4 Adding a separated path for bicycles and pedestrians on the east side of Peger Road from Airport Way to the Chena River that connects to the new parking lot and the Chena Riverwalk path

WHY THIS PROJECT?

Improvements to the boat launch and Peger Road entrance were **priorities identified in the 2021 Pioneer Park Master Plan**. The current non-motorized boat launch can be difficult to launch at due to shallow water with an eddy. The existing gravel parking lot is often over capacity during the summer leading to congestion and disorganization. There is currently no sidewalk or path on the east side of Peger Road between Airport Way and the river.





HOW IS THIS PROJECT FUNDED?

This project is 91% federally funded through an allocation of **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funding and Carbon Reduction Program funding** specifically allocated to the Fairbanks area. Projects that qualify for this funding include those that improve air quality by adding non-motorized facilities and installing motor vehicle plug-ins, both of which reduce vehicle emissions. The remaining 9% of funding is provided by the Fairbanks North Star Borough and the State of Alaska.

GET INVOLVED!

Please contact me any time with comments!

John Netardus, PE, DOT&PF Project Manager



info@pioneerparkingproject.com



(907) 451-5448



dot.alaska.gov/nreg/pioneerpark



Scan here to visit our website, sign up for our email list, and learn more!



The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by DOT&PF pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated April 13, 2023, and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.

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Figure 27. Project information sheet.

Appendix E – Presentations to Committees, Commissions, and Other Groups



Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

Pioneer Park Boat Launch, Parking, Plug-Ins, & Peger Road Path

John Netardus, PE, DOT&PF

Our mission is to *Keep Alaska Moving* through service and infrastructure.

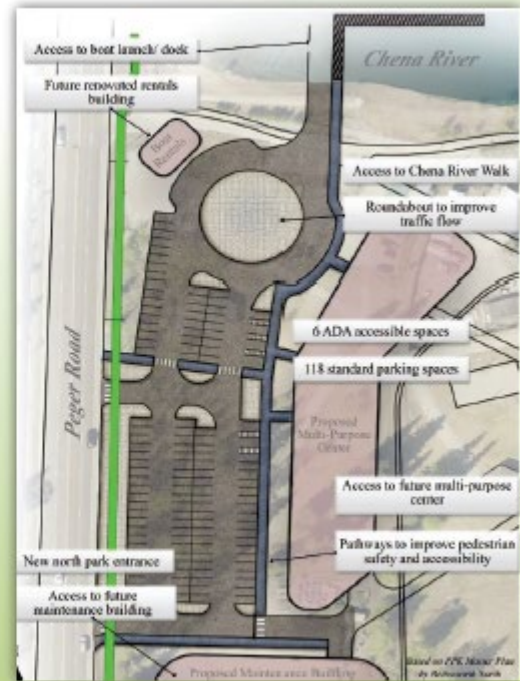


Also known as P⁶



Pioneer **P**ark Boat Launch, **P**arking, **P**lug-Ins, & **P**eger Road **P**ath

Background

- 2021 Pioneer Park Master Plan
- CRP/CMAQ call for projects 2023
- **Combined three projects:**
 - parking, path & plug-ins
- FNSB local match
- Design started November 2024



Design Goals

-  Expand parking and improve circulation
-  Improve riverbank
-  Address gap for non-motorized facilities
-  Minimize tenant impacts



Work So Far

- Key Pioneer Park business meetings
- Refined path alignment and parking lot concept
- Identified footprint and ROW impacts
- Preliminary hydrology and hydraulics analysis
- Environmental process
 - Scoping
 - Wetlands
 - Section 106
 - 4(f)



How people heard about the meeting

- Facebook (FNSB or DOT&PF) – 30
- News - 15
 - News Miner Ads (print or digital)
 - Channel 11 feature
- Flyers - 7
- Other – 20
 - Friends, word of mouth, emails, radio, work



Open House and BBQ Goals

- ✓ Demographics represent the community as a whole
- ✓ At least one news story each was earned at KUAC or the News Miner
- ✓ Project schedule was not delayed by public opposition
- ✓ At least 30 people attended the public barbeque
- ✓ Creative campaign is a monthly top performer on social media
- ✓ Highly impacted vendors support the project

What's Next?

- Respond to public comments
- Environmental document
- ROW acquisition
 - DNR & FNSB
- Construction 2027 goal



Figure 29. Example presentation.

Appendix F – Earned Media

Two dollars

FRIDAY, AUGUST 22, 2025

newsminer.com



Inside Today Movement made on Chena Riverwalk project • Page A3

Pioneer Park project aims to expand parking, improve river access by 2027

By Jack Barnwell

A large crowd gathered under a pavilion near Pioneer Park's boat launch on Wednesday for free barbecue and to get details on a planned \$4 million expansion project.

Wednesday's open house was the first public outreach on the borough's goal to expand the park's north parking lot along Peger Road, overhaul the boat launch, add vehicle headbolt heater plug-ins, add a south-bound left turn off Peger Road, and add a separated multi-use path east of Peger Road.

Sarah Schacher, Michael Baker International's transportation manager, said the separated path would run from Airport Way into the expanded parking lot and tie in with the Chena Riverwalk. The Wilderness Pavilion would be relocated closer to the river bank.

Michael Baker International was hired to consult on and assist with public outreach on the project.

The parking lot will be expanded to accommodate a hundred vehicles and improvements will be made to the riverbank.

"It will be more friendly like other riverbanks in town," Schacher said.

The most noticeable addition would be the installation of a concrete non-motorized boat launch. Schacher said the concrete ramp will vastly improve the sediment that has accumulated over the last decade.



BOTH BETTINSWORTH NORTH RENDERING

Conceptual renderings by Bettinsworth North depict an improved Pioneer Park area near the Chena River, including a new boat launch, pictured above, and expanded parking lot, pictured below.



PIONEER • A3



(Left) Residents gather at Pioneer Park's Wilderness Pavilion on Wednesday to review the concept designs for a planned project to expand the park's north parking lot, add a concrete boat launch on the Chena River, add a separated pedestrian/bicycle path along Peger Road and improve the Chena River bank at Pioneer Park. JACK BARNWELL/NEWS-MINER

Fair member petitions to remove half of the board

By Haley Lehman

A Tanana Valley State Fair Association member filed a petition to remove half of the board of directors Wednesday night.

David Leslie, a former board member and former fair employee, submitted a petition signed by 46 association members calling for the removal of five board members who were seated prior to the April 26 board of directors annual meeting. The petition named President Marla Lowder, Vice President John Tjemessen, Treasurer Linda Stanley, Director Priscilla Rice and Director Joey Taylor.

FAIR • A2

Board of Education member resigns, seat to remain vacant until October election

By Haley Lehman

The Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Board of Education accepted the resignation of member Brandy Harty Tuesday night after Harty moved from Fairbanks in July. The board signaled that it will not fill the vacant seat until after the municipal election in October.

The school board received a letter of resignation from Harty on July 28 and unanimously approved to accept her resignation during the board's meeting Tuesday night. Members said that Harty took a teaching position in Washington state.

Harty has a Master's Degree in special education and dual certification in elementary and special education. She taught at Hunter Elementary, Tanana Middle and Hutchison High School and as a substitute teacher. Harty won the election for Seat C in October 2022.

"It has been an honor to serve this community as a board member and advocate for the students, families, and educators of the Fairbanks North Star

HARTY • A2

Alaska attorney general Treg Taylor will resign, is expected to run for governor

By James Brooks
ALASKA BEACON

Alaska Attorney General Treg Taylor will resign Aug. 29, he told employees at the Alaska Department of Law in an all-staff email Thursday afternoon.

Taylor, who became the state's top attorney in 2021 after his two immediate predecessors resigned in disgrace,

is expected by political observers to join a competitive field of candidates running for governor in the state's 2026 general election.

Incumbent Gov. Mike Dunleavy is term-limited and unable to run for reelection, leaving the office open to challengers.

This week, former Alaska Revenue Commissioner Adam Crum formally

confirmed his plans to run for governor, and former state Sen. Tom Begich became the first Democrat to announce a run for the office. Bruce Walden of Palmer, who ran as a write-in candidate in 2022, filed for the office on Wednesday.

In addition to Crum and Walden, seven other Republicans have filed documents for a campaign: former state

Sen. Click Bishop of Fairbanks; current state Sen. Shelley Hughes of Palmer, Lt. Gov. Nancy Dahlstrom of Eagle River; Matanuska-Susitna Borough Mayor Edna DeVries; podiatrist Matt Heilala of Anchorage; former teacher James William Parkin IV of Angoon; and business owner Bernadette Wilson of Anchorage.

No independents have



JAMES BROOKS/ALASKA BEACON

Alaska Attorney General Treg Taylor speaks at a news conference on Dec. 15, 2022, at the Alaska State Capitol in Juneau.

While Taylor has not filed for the office, and Begich is the only Democrat who has filed.

TAYLOR • A2

Movement made on Chena Riverwalk project

By Jack Barnwell

Efforts to move a long-stalled segment of the Chena Riverwalk project forward could regain momentum soon, with a meeting between multiple parties scheduled for next month.

Jackson Fox, executive director of Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation Planning, told his policy board Wednesday that appraisals have been completed on Alaska Railroad-owned land needed for the riverwalk.

The project would expand the existing riverwalk by building a new walkway from the Pioneer Park pedestrian bridge northeast along the river to the Peger Road bridge, then up to Phillips Field Road. It also includes resurfacing an existing segment at Chena Landing, FAST Planning, the city of Fairbanks and the Fairbanks North Star Borough have long sought to complete the extension.

The Chena Riverwalk is a

multi-use pedestrian and bicycle path along the Chena River, running from the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center to a point near Pioneer Park.

Two parcels of land owned by the railroad complicate the federal funding tied to the project.

Fox said the appraisals outlined several options, including the purchase price for the entire property, the trail footprint only, and the remnants of land between the trail and the Chena River.

"We have a few different paths forward on that project," Fox said. "One would be the full acquisition of the property by one of our local governments, proceeding with the city's current permit with damages paid, or entering into a long-term land lease."

Any option requires involvement from the city of Fairbanks or the borough, both of which have been long-term partners on the existing riverwalk. Fox did not share the appraisal fig-

ures, citing Alaska Department of Transportation policy related to active right-of-way acquisition negotiations.

Alaska Railroad Corporation real estate personnel and DOT negotiators will attend the FAST Planning Policy Board's September meeting to discuss options in executive session at the DOT's request.

Fairbanks Mayor David Pruhs, a Policy Board member, noted the decades-long struggle.

"They've been looking at this property for 30 years, so what's the probability of any conclusion?" Pruhs asked. "I'm just curious."

Fox said some of the prices are reasonable in theory, while one option may not appeal to the Policy Board, the borough, or the city.

He added that the original correspondence between the Alaska Railroad and the multi-agency Chena Riverwalk partnership stated that "This land would be provided free

of charge." That was about 30 years ago, under different Alaska Railroad leadership.

The last cost estimate for building out the project was at least \$1.7 million, but construction expenses have risen over the past five years. The project received federal funding in 2017, but debate continues over whether a 30-year lease is necessary or if the railroad's standard permit process would suffice.

Fox said DOT hinted at a potential legislative solution, though that process could take longer. While the Alaska Legislature approved the sale of the parcels, the final decision rests with the Alaska Railroad Corporation Board of Directors.

Borough Mayor Grier Hopkins said alternatives such as land swaps or other non-monetary transfers would likely require legislation and cooperation with the railroad.

The railroad owns about 37,000 acres of land, half of which generates revenue

through long-term leases or permitted uses. Railroad officials have previously emphasized that the ARRC board reviews all real estate transactions carefully.

In February, the Alaska Legislature authorized the sale of a large tract of land along the Tanana River to the city of Nenana. The city had leased the land for decades but sought to purchase it outright to provide certainty for future investors and businesses.

At an Aug. 12 Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce luncheon, ARRC CEO Bill O'Leary said the deal remains in limbo until the city of Nenana makes a formal offer.

During Tuesday's policy board meeting, Hopkins raised concerns about long-term leases in general.

"It would be great if we were able to do a transfer, but it's a hard lift," Hopkins said.

Contact reporter Jack Barnwell at 907-450-7587 or jbarnwell@newsminer.com.

PIONEER

Continued from A1

According to the Alaska Department of Transportation, the borough hasn't utilized a floating dock for nearly a decade due to silt buildup along the Chena River. While the river access is still used to launch kayaks, canoes, and other watercraft, the sediment buildup and an eddy make it difficult.

The borough nominated the project to the Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning and was scored highly by the transportation organization's Technical Committee and Policy Board. FAST Planning allocated funding in 2023 and is slated to start construction in 2027.

Schaecher said the project "is a great launching off point" with the 2021 Pioneer Park Master Plan in a logical way.

"It's not a big \$100 million project," she said. "It's a \$4 million project that improves a beloved community space and makes it easier to gather."

While reviewing the concept renderings, Canoe Alaska owner Josh Davis said parking lot and river improvements are long overdue.

"I've been here since 2015 and the parking lot use has just been growing and growing," Davis said. "It can be quite a mess sometimes."

The concrete boat launch would significantly improve river access and solve issues caused by the eddy.

"They dredged the river 10 years ago and it was 10 feet deep around the dock," Davis said.

"Because of all the sediment, it's come up a lot since then."

Davis said the Parks and Recreation project team has done its due diligence over the last few years, consulting with user groups and asking essential questions.

"They've taken some of the ideas like the concrete boat ramp and improved on it," Davis said. "It won't be a motorized one, you're not going to be rolling trailers down there, but that's good because you'd be going across a bike path."

Davis added that the original concept was

to bring back a dock, which he considered an improper fit.

"It would be nice to stand on, but it hasn't been there for years and they would have to dredge the river continuously," Davis said. "There are other options in the future for the dock, but right now the concrete launch is nice."

Kimberly Diamond, the borough's Parks and Recreation project manager, said the open house has provided new perspectives.

"One of the big goals from the Pioneer Park Master Plan was a better interface with the winter," Diamond said. "The

park has the prime location next to the Chena River, but it doesn't have a lot of interaction. With these improvements, people could park along the river, enjoy a nice grassy area and use the river."

Parks and Recreation has presented the project to the Assembly, the Planning Commission and the Chena Riverfront Commission multiple times since 2022.

"A lot of the feedback we've heard has been about access onto and off Peger Road and wanting to turn out left," Diamond said. "So we'll look at how safety affects that."

Diamond said another surprising comment was about the headbolt heater outlets as Pioneer Park doesn't get a lot of winter tourists.

However, she noted the master plan calls for redeveloping Pioneer Park's north side over the next 10 to 15 years, including a proposed multi-use event center intended to replace the Alaska Centennial Center for the Arts.

"Most of the project will be funded by federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality and Carbon Reduction Program grants. The borough and the Alaska Department of Transportation will be

required to pay 9% of the project costs."

Diamond said the next steps will include additional public outreach, rights-of-way acquisition, and permitting.

According to the DOT's current timeline, the environmental document is expected to be completed this fall, while the design process is scheduled to run through early 2027. Construction is scheduled to start in summer 2027.

For more information on the project, visit dot.alaska.gov/nreg/pioneer-park.

Contact reporter Jack Barnwell at 907-450-7587 or jbarnwell@newsminer.com.

Celebration of Life for **Harold Woods "Woody"**

1:00 p.m. Saturday, August 23rd at RJ's Lounge

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FAIRBANKS 5-DAY FORECAST

Today	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
63/49 Cloudy	63/55 Periods of rain	60/54 Rain	60/51 Rain	62/52 Remaining cloudy

Almanac

Data through 2 p.m. Thursday

Temperature

High/low 62/43
Normal high/low 65/46
Last year high 54
Last year low 44
Record high 87 in 1977
Record low 30 in 1931

Precipitation

24-hour total 0.01"
Month to date 0.60"
Normal m-t-d 1.52"
Year to date 5.94"
Normal y-t-d 7.68"

Sun & Moon

Sunrise 6:00 a.m.
Sunset 9:45 p.m.
Length 15 hrs, 44 min, 53 sec
Daylight lost 6 min, 50 sec
Civil twilight starts 5:01 a.m.
Civil twilight ends 10:44 p.m.

The Region

Utagvik 43/25	Prudhoe Bay 45/37
Ketzebue 53/49	Bettles 57/49
Nome 53/48	Fort Yukon 61/50
Tanana 61/53	Fairbanks 63/49
Bethel 59/53	Tok 69/43
Anchorage 65/51	Valdez 68/44
Homer 63/47	Kodiak 60/47
Cold Bay 63/54	Alaska Extremes Yesterday: 72/55
	Ketchikan 72/55
	Klawock 72
	Eagle 36

The Nation

City	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Albany	72	48	s	71	49	pc
Albuquerque	67	43	c	67	52	sh
Anchorage	64	54	c	57	51	c
Atlanta	63	48	pc	62	55	pc
Boston	67	48	c	60	54	c

Summary: Thunderstorms will form from Texas to Florida along the Gulf coast today. Thunderstorms in the Southeast may be heavy enough to lead to flash flooding. Thunderstorms, some severe, are expected to stretch from Wyoming to Wisconsin. The Northeast and Great Lakes should be sunny. It will be hot from the Southwest to Idaho and Washington.

National Extremes: Thursday for the 48 contiguous states
Needles, CA 117
Canaan Lake, NV 64

Figure 30. Fairbanks Daily News Miner earned media article.