

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH

BOROUGH RESOLUTION NO. 3090 CITY OF KETCHIKAN RESOLUTION NO. 24-2940 CITY OF SAXMAN RESOLUTION NO. 09.2024.09

A Joint Resolution of the Assembly of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Council of the City of Ketchikan, and Council of the City of Saxman, Approving the Community's Fiscal Year 2026 Top 3 Priority Capital Project Requests for State Funding and Policy Issues for Submission to the Governor and Legislature.

RECITALS

- A. WHEREAS**, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, the City of Ketchikan, and the City of Saxman have identified several projects of a critical nature that have no immediate funding sources; and
- B. WHEREAS**, each of the projects included on the prioritized list meets at least one of the following criteria:
1. Projects that have already been started and need to be completed;
 2. Projects that create jobs;
 3. Life, safety and health improvement projects; and
- C. WHEREAS**, each year Community officials advocate for State funding for projects that benefit the residents of the Community; and
- D. WHEREAS**, at the request of the Alaska Legislature, the identified projects are submitted into the Legislature's Capital Project Submission & Information System (CAPSIS); and
- E. WHEREAS**, the Borough, City of Ketchikan, and City of Saxman are also responsible for providing necessary services to their citizens; and
- F. WHEREAS**, certain actions of the State of Alaska are needed to implement policies which directly affect the municipalities' ability to carry out those necessary services to their citizens; and
- G. WHEREAS** the Borough Assembly, City of Ketchikan Council, and City of Saxman Council find it is in the best interest of their citizens to urge Governor Dunleavy and the members of the Alaska State Legislature to take legislative and/or administrative actions on the policy issues addressed in this resolution; and
- H. WHEREAS**, the Borough Assembly, City of Ketchikan Council, and City of Saxman

Council wish to submit this list of prioritized capital projects funding requests to Governor Dunleavy and the Alaska State Legislature for consideration of funding in Fiscal Year 2026.

NOW, THEREFORE, IN CONSIDERATION OF THE ABOVE FACTS, IT IS RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH as follows:

Section 1. The Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly, the City of Ketchikan Council, and City of Saxman Council, hereby identify and prioritize Fiscal Year 2026 capital project requests for State funding as follows:

City of Ketchikan: Wastewater Treatment Permit	
Compliance Upgrades	\$20,000,000
City of Saxman: Waterline Replacement	\$10,000,000
Ketchikan Gateway Borough: Ketchikan International Airport	
New Small Passenger Vessel	\$27,000,000

Section 2. The Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly, City of Ketchikan Council, and City of Saxman Council embrace legislative and/or administrative actions to accomplish the following policies:

Urging Continuance of the Commercial Passenger Vessel Tax Program and Continuance of the Current Arrangement for Sharing of the Excise Tax

Urging Continuance of Funding for the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS)

Urging the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to Implement Pedestrian Safety Improvements Along Tongass Avenue

Opposing Actions by the State to Shift Costs of its Constitutional Obligation to Maintain a System of Public Schools Open to All Children of the State

Urging Appropriate State funding for Behavioral Health Services

Urging the State to transfer into Borough ownership certain parcels of land owned by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources per ADLs 109314 and 234300, and to transfer into private ownership any other parcels of land owned by various State agencies that are suitable for development of housing.

Urging Fiscal Impact Analyses of All Proposed Legislation to Assess Potential Costs to Local Governments to Avoid Unfunded Mandates

Section 3. The respective Governing Bodies hereby authorize the Managers and Administrators to submit the capital project priorities as appropriation requests and the

policy issues as requests for administrative and/or legislative actions to the Governor of the State of Alaska and to the Alaska State Legislature

Section 4. The respective Governing Bodies hereby authorize the Managers and Administrators to submit the full list of municipal, school and infrastructure projects into the Legislature's electronic capital project database (CAPSIS).

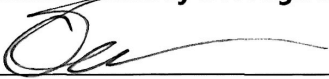
Section 5. Effective Date. This resolution shall be effective upon adoption by the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly, Ketchikan City Council, and Saxman City Council.

ADOPTED by the Borough Assembly the 16th day of September, 2024.

ADOPTED by the Ketchikan City Council the 19th day of September, 2024.


ADOPTED by the Saxman City Council the 25th day of September, 2024.

Ketchikan Gateway Borough Signatures:



Rodney Dial, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:



Kacie Paxton, Borough Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Glenn Brown, Borough Attorney

City of Saxman Signatures:



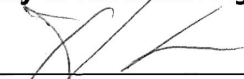
Frank Seludo, City Mayor

ATTEST:




Marissa Medford, City Administrator

City of Ketchikan Signatures:



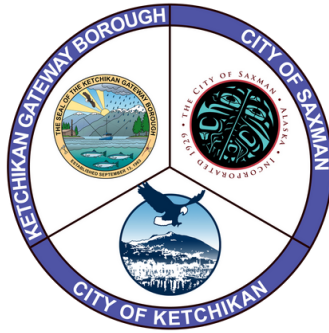
Dave Kiffer, City Mayor

ATTEST:



Kim Stanker, City Clerk

Greater Ketchikan Community Capital Priority Projects & Policy Issues FY2026

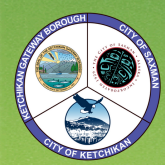


The Community Capital Priority Projects are Listed Below.
These Projects are Entered into CAPSIS.

Project	Agency	Community Priority	Agency Priority	Funding Request	Page Number
Wastewater Treatment Permit Compliance Upgrades	City of Ketchikan	1	1	\$20,000,000	6
Saxman Water Line Replacement	City of Saxman	2	1	\$10,000,000	8
Replace Small Passenger Vessel Supporting Link to Gravina	Ketchikan Gateway Borough	3	1	\$27,000,000	10

The Top Community Policy Issues are Listed Below

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Supporting Fiscal Impact Analyses of All Proposed Legislation to Assess Potential Costs to Local Governments to Avoid Unfunded Mandates	18



Greater Ketchikan Community Request for Fiscal Year 2026 State Funding

Community Capital Project Priority No. 1

Wastewater Treatment Permit Compliance Upgrades

FY2026 Funding Request: \$ 20,000,000



Applicant:

City of Ketchikan
Delilah Walsh, City Manager
334 Front Street
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

Phone: (907) 228-5603
delilahw@ketchikan.gov

Federal EIN: 92-6000082

Brief Project Description:

The City of Ketchikan Wastewater Treatment Plant currently discharges under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) with a 301(h) waiver. This permit is currently under review for renewal. In order to meet the State of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's requirements under the 401 Water Quality Certification it is expected that a major treatment plant upgrade will be required.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$ 20,000,000
Funding Already Secured:	0
State Funding Request for this Fiscal Year:	\$ 20,000,000
Funding Available from Other Sources:	0

Detailed Project Criteria:

This project is a critical part of an ongoing compliance with our wastewater discharge permit and would address public infrastructure deferred maintenance of the wastewater treatment system. This will require the study, design, and construction of a major capital improvement. A project of this magnitude, and resultant huge capital costs will have drastic, severe impact to the residents of Ketchikan. Given that this upgrade is a State of Alaska requirement, it makes sense that the State of Alaska would participate in the funding.

The project is of sufficient size that it would likely exceed the local contractor supply for labor. As such, the creation of additional construction jobs will be needed to complete this project.

Wastewater treatment is a key component of the life, safety, and health of every community. This project improves public safety as it will provide improved wastewater treatment before it is discharged into the environment.

This project is an investment in the future of the greater community of Ketchikan in that it will provide construction jobs, and improve existing infrastructure within the community.

Project Timeline:

The total length of the project is a minimum of 5 years after receiving approval for funding inclusive of design and engineering, bidding and award, and construction during the construction season.

Ongoing Operation & Maintenance:

The City of Ketchikan is responsible for ongoing operations and maintenance.



Greater Ketchikan Community Request for Fiscal Year 2026 State Funding

Community Capital Project Priority No. 2
Saxman Water Line Replacement
FY2026 Funding Request: \$ 10,000,000



Applicant:

City of Saxman
Marissa Medford, City Administrator
2841 S. Tongass Hwy, Route 2 Box 1
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

Phone: (907) 225-4166
cityadmin@kpunet.net

Federal EIN: 92-0041226

Brief Project Description:

The water line infrastructure within Saxman is very dated and much of it is beyond repair and needs replacement. There are several water line leaks throughout Saxman equating to a 60GPM loss of water from our water tank. This has put a serious hardship on the Water Plant in order to keep up with making and storing safe water and poses a significant risk of a water crisis within the community.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$ 10,000,000
Funding Already Secured:	0
State Funding Request for this Fiscal Year:	\$ 10,000,000
Funding Available from Other Sources:	unknown

Detailed Project Criteria:

The project would create jobs as Saxman does not have sufficient staff to handle the undertaking of a project of this magnitude.

The project is absolutely critical to the life, safety, and health of Saxman residents and businesses. There are several water line leaks throughout Saxman equating to a 60GPM loss of water from the water tank. This has put a serious hardship on the Water Plant in order to keep up with making and storing safe water and poses a significant risk of a water crisis within the community.

Project Description and Justification:

Deferred Maintenance: The water line infrastructure is very dated and much of it is beyond repair and needs replacement. Saxman does not have sufficient staff or resources to handle the frequency of breakage and repair.

Infrastructure: The water line infrastructure within Saxman is very dated and much of it is beyond repair and needs replacement. Saxman does not have the staff or resources to handle the frequency of breakage and repair. There are several water line leaks throughout Saxman equating to a 60GPM loss of water from the water tank. This has put a serious hardship on the Water Plant in order to keep up with making and storing safe water and poses a significant risk of a water crisis within the community.

Public Safety: There are several water line leaks throughout Saxman equating to a 60GPM loss of water from our water tank. This has put a serious hardship on the Water Plant in order to keep up with making and storing safe water and poses a significant risk of a water crisis within the community.

Private Sector Tools: Saxman Seaport has many private-sector growth opportunities / development possibilities—many are newly established with more on the horizon. It is imperative that Saxman update the water line infrastructure to be able to continue to promote growth opportunities and development for the community.

Investment in Future: Saxman Seaport has many growth opportunities / development possibilities—many are newly established with more on the horizon. It is imperative that the water line infrastructure is updated in order to continue to promote these growth opportunities and development for the community and investment in the future. Port Infrastructure Development to create an AMHS ferry terminal and to relocate the MV Lituya run / test electric ferries, a Food Hub to promote food security by KAPA, Three Bears grocery store, and Totem Harbor development.

Support for Essential Services: Water is one of the bare necessities for human survival. This project ensures the community will have access to safe water and drastically decrease the risk of a water crisis.

Culture and Recreation: The Saxman Totem Park is a major attraction for Ketchikan area visitors. The park includes a tribal house, a carving center, and a cultural hall for traditional Tlingit dance exhibitions.

Underserved Community: Organized Village of Saxman has a rural designation. Of the roughly 400 residents within Saxman, 75% are Alaska Native and have been an underserved community and disproportionately disadvantaged since colonization. There is significant risk of a water crisis without the water line infrastructure replacement.

Project Timeline:

The project would most likely be completed in phases, with the water lines in the worst condition being replaced first. From RFP process through completion, estimated to take 12-18 months (taking into account delays for adverse weather conditions / needing to pause for winter months).

Ongoing Operation & Maintenance:

City of Saxman Public Works / ANTHC / ARWA

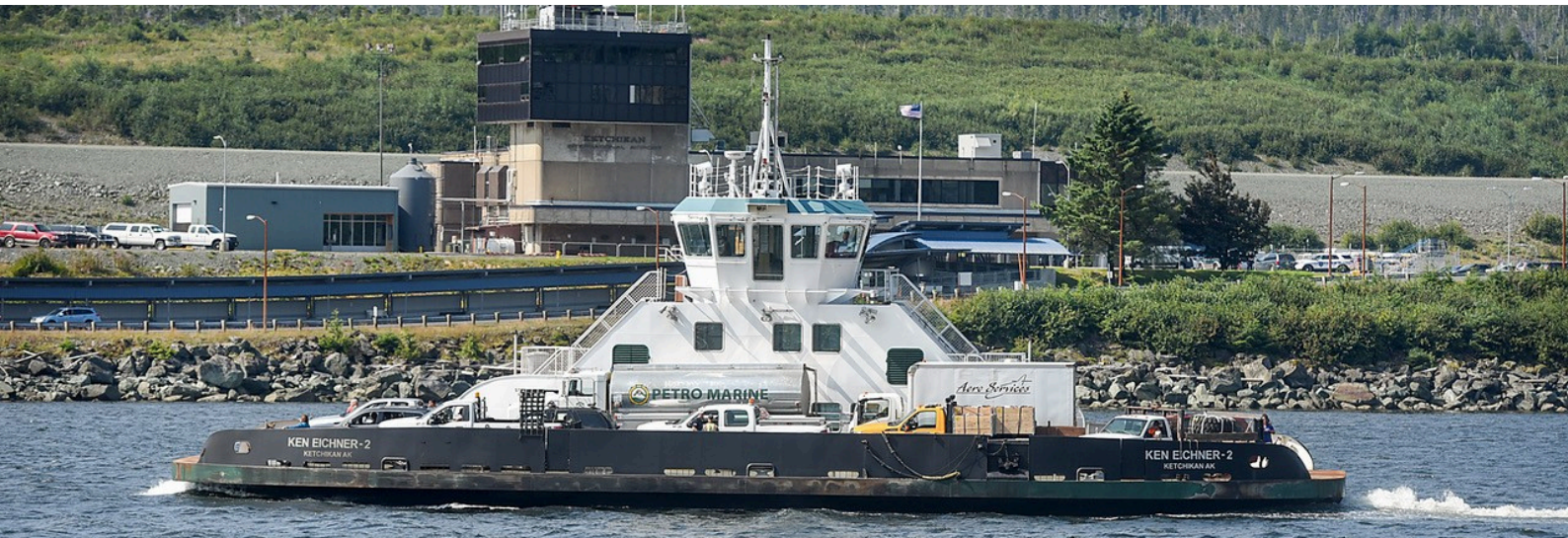


Greater Ketchikan Community Request for Fiscal Year 2026 State Funding

Community Capital Project Priority No. 3

Ketchikan International Airport Replace Small Passenger Vessel

FY2026 Funding Request: \$ 27,000,000



Applicant:

Ketchikan Gateway Borough
Ruben Duran, Borough Manager
1900 First Avenue
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

Phone: (907) 228-6625
email: managersoffice@kgbak.us

Federal EIN: 92-0084626

Brief Project Description:

Replacement of the Oral Freeman, a small passenger vessel constructed in 2002 that has surpassed its useful life, to enhance regional connectivity and provide reliable transportation services across Tongass Narrows to residents and businesses on Gravina.

Funding Plan:

Replacement of a small passenger ferry does not qualify for Airport Improvement Project funding, Passenger Facility Funds, or Federal Transportation Dollars. Outside funding is critical in ratifying the current system's capacity issues, which creates significant delays and risks, particularly for emergency medical transportation.

Total Project Cost: \$ 27,000,000
Funding Already Secured: 0
State Funding Request for this Fiscal Year: \$ 27,000,000

The Borough is actively seeking grants, specifically Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding for alternative fuel and low/no emission fuel vessels.

Detailed Project Criteria:

With the recent construction of new ferry berths linking Ketchikan to Gravina Island, there is a critical need for a replacement passenger ferry to operate alongside our existing vessel, ensuring that two ferries can run year-round. This ferry is essential because the Ketchikan International Airport, located on Gravina Island, serves as a critical transportation link for the region. Southeast Alaska is an area with limited transportation options for intercity travel, and the air taxi service is vital for the region's under-served communities. It is the quickest and easiest method of transportation, connecting these remote areas with essential goods, supplies, and medical services.

Impacts and Benefits:

- Enhance the safety, accessibility, and efficiency of regional transportation.
- Support under-served communities by ensuring reliable access to essential services.
- Relieve congestion and reduce wait times for passengers and vehicles.
- Generate jobs and stimulate the economy.
- Reduce delays, particularly for emergency medical transportation.

Project Description and Justification:

Transportation & Public Safety: This grant will enable us to meet the pressing transportation needs of our community while fostering economic growth and environmental stewardship. The additional ferry will play a crucial role in ensuring reliable year-round service, maximizing the benefits of the newly constructed berths, and supporting essential access to the region's primary airport, especially in emergencies.

Waterway transportation is a vital component of the local transit system. The construction of new ferry berths between Ketchikan and Gravina Island has significantly improved capacity to serve more passengers and routes. However, the increased traffic from both airport-related and non-airport activities has strained the current ferry system. The breakdown of one of the ferries would leave the community without access to the airport, creating a serious risk, particularly for emergency medical transportation needs. Replacing a small passenger vessel is essential to accommodate this growing demand, provide reliable transportation, and ensure continued access to essential services.

Project Timeline:

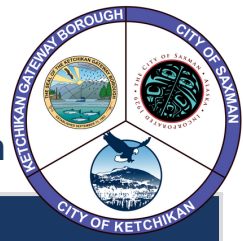
Upon acceptance of funding, design to completion is expected to take approximately 18-24 months.

Ongoing Operation & Maintenance:

Ketchikan Gateway Borough is responsible for ongoing maintenance and operational needs in accordance with the recently executed (2024) Airport Lease.

Community of Ketchikan Fiscal Year 2026

Policy Issues for State Administrative or Legislative Action



Community Policy Issue

Urging Continuance of the Commercial Passenger Vessel Tax Program and Continuance of the Current Arrangement for Sharing of the Excise Tax

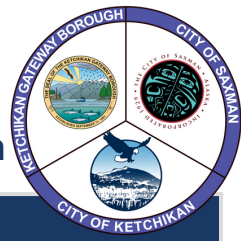
The community of Ketchikan encourages continuance of the current arrangement for sharing of the State Excise Tax on Commercial Passenger Vessels.

The community of Ketchikan expects to welcome and serve more than 1,400,000 excise-tax-paying cruise passengers each year, more than 100 cruise passengers for every resident of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough. State Commercial Passenger Vessel excise tax proceeds shared with the Borough and City are crucial in funding essential services to those visitors. These funds are used to finance capital improvements and vital services that directly benefit passengers and cruise ships that moor at four berths at the Port of Ketchikan and two berths in Ward Cove.

Continuance of the current arrangement is critical to the City of Ketchikan's need to meet debt service obligations and to provide funding for future waterside and upland improvements. As vessels increase in size, further strain is placed on Port of Ketchikan infrastructure, which must be maintained or enhanced to accommodate larger ships.

Corresponding increases in passengers necessitate solutions to pedestrian and vehicle congestion along the Port and throughout downtown, additional restrooms, improved directional signage, and other upland improvements to enhance safety and the visitor experience. Continuance of this funding is also critical for the Borough to provide transportation services which allow for the safe movement of passengers to and from the berths and emergency medical services outside the City of Ketchikan municipal limits. Fire and EMS services are provided on a service area basis outside city limits. The Ward Cove docks became operational in 2021, and service is provided by a service area of approximately 3,000 residents. Serving the ships and passengers has necessitated expansion into a second building and doubling the full time response staff.

**Community of Ketchikan Fiscal Year 2026
Policy Issues for State Administrative or Legislative Action**



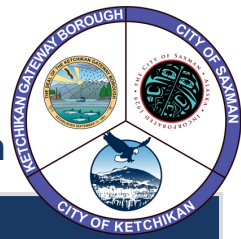
Community Policy Issue

Urging Continuance of Funding for the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS)

The Community of Ketchikan urges the State of Alaska to continue funding for the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). As noted in the 2024-2027 Alaska Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), “Alaska’s waterways are essential for transportation, especially where road access is limited or nonexistent. Enhancing these services is crucial for the mobility of residents and the transport of goods.” The continuation of the AMHS ferries is crucial for the economic viability of Southeast Alaska communities, and specifically for Ketchikan.

Further, the Community of Ketchikan urges the following:

- a) “All ships, all the time.”
- b) Continued efforts to increase planned service weeks and port calls, eliminate remaining service gaps, and provide consistent service levels to all communities throughout the year.
- c) Additional increases in the AMHS capital budget to minimize interruptions of service as a result of vessels being out of service for unplanned maintenance.
- d) Supporting the expansion of services on the AMHS Bellingham Ferry Route and legislation establishing regional transportation planning organizations as called for in Borough Assembly Resolution 2302.
- e) Promoting the priority of close economic, social, and cultural ties with Prince Rupert by upgrading or designing new ferries to be SOLAS compliant and working with the City of Prince Rupert or other appropriate organizations to repair or replace the Prince Rupert dock.
- f) Continuing to supply matching funds in the State budget to maximize Federal funding opportunities that will maintain or upgrade the fleet and associated facilities.



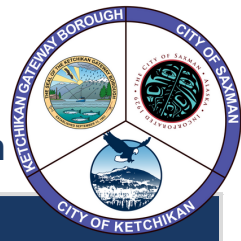
Community Policy Issue

Urging the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to Implement Pedestrian Safety Improvements Along Tongass Avenue

The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) controls and maintains Tongass Highway in Ketchikan. The Tongass Avenue corridor comprises the most heavily trafficked portion of the highway, connecting the downtown core to additional residential, commercial and essential services on the northern and southern ends of the City of Ketchikan limits. ADOT&PF is currently finalizing the construction permitting and bidding documents for the Tongass Avenue Improvements and Tongass Avenue & Water Street Viaducts projects (Project Nos. 0902042 and 0902045), with construction now anticipated to commence in the spring of 2025 and completed in phases by 2027 after first being announced in 2018. The projects will resurface the pavement and make improvements along Tongass Avenue between Hoadley Creek and the Ketchikan tunnel.

In recent years, several pedestrian-vehicle collisions have occurred along Tongass Avenue, two of which resulted in fatalities. The community of Ketchikan has long expressed to ADOT&PF as well as legislators and governors the dangers posed by the lack of adequate pedestrian safety measures along Tongass Avenue. This has resulted in minimal action on the part of ADOT&PF. The City has been left with little choice but to pay, install, and maintain three push-button actuated crossing signs along the State's highway in an effort to provide safer crossings at some of the highway's most problematic and heavily used pedestrian areas.

As ADOT&PF prepares to commence the Tongass Avenue projects, the Community of Ketchikan urges the State of Alaska to make pedestrian safety improvements along its corridor. The current design for the projects remains inadequate for pedestrian safety measures, and despite the investment and effort to improve the highway, crossings may still be dangerous and result in further pedestrian injuries or fatalities. The highway contains 30 established crossings, and additional push-button actuated crossings and other solutions are necessary components to make these projects successful and responsive to community needs.



Community Policy Issue

Opposing Actions by the State to Shift Costs of its Constitutional Obligation to Maintain a System of Public Schools Open to All Children of the State

The Community of Ketchikan opposes actions by the State of Alaska to shift the cost of its constitutional obligation to maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the state.

a) Calling on the Governor and Legislature to significantly increase the Base Student Allocation to adequately meet its constitutional obligation to provide a system of public schools open to all children of the State per the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's joint Assembly and School Board Resolution Nos. 2929 and 22-02.

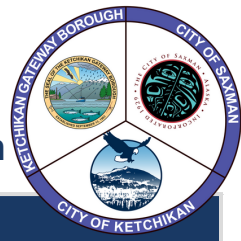
b) Calling on the Governor and Legislature to inflation-proof the Public School Funding Formula as defined in AS 14.17.410.

c) Opposing any effort by the State to shift its responsibilities for education to municipalities by reducing or allowing further erosion of the base student allocation by inflation, or by negatively altering the method of calculation of average daily membership (ADM), or the multipliers set forth in the public school funding formula contained in AS 14.17.410, et seq.

d) Opposing any legislation which would increase the burden on PERS and TRS employers beyond the current employer contribution limits of 22 percent for PERS and 12.56 percent for TRS, including reducing on-behalf rates, imposition of termination study costs, and efforts to shift more of the net pension liability for PERS or TRS onto municipalities.

e) Opposing the Required Local Contribution (RLC), which unfairly saddles some residents of the State with a requirement to fund a State obligation; and which selective imposition has no rational basis in law, and opposing any effort by the State to increase the RLC.

f) Urging continued full funding of the School Bond Debt Reimbursement (SBDR) program, with no further reduction in reimbursement levels.



Community Policy Issue

Urging Appropriate State Funding for Behavioral Health Services

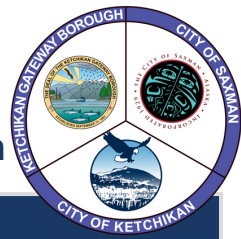
The City of Ketchikan faces a critical shortage of accessible and affordable behavioral health services for its residents. This shortage has a profound impact on public safety, economic development, and the overall well-being of our community.

While local efforts have been made to address this crisis, the scale of the problem necessitates robust state support and funding. Currently, available resources are insufficient to meet the growing demand for mental health and substance abuse treatment services. This lack of adequate support has resulted in overcrowded emergency departments, increased homelessness, and a strain on law enforcement resources.

To effectively address the behavioral health crisis in Ketchikan, the State of Alaska must prioritize increased funding for:

- **Prevention and early intervention programs:** Investing in youth mental health services, substance abuse prevention education, and community-based support systems can significantly reduce the long-term impact of behavioral health issues.
- **Expanded access to treatment:** Increasing the availability of mental health and substance abuse treatment services, including inpatient, outpatient, and crisis care, is essential to meeting the needs of Ketchikan residents.
- **Support for recovery and reintegration:** Providing comprehensive support services for individuals in recovery, such as housing, employment assistance, and peer support, is crucial for long-term success.
- **Workforce development:** Investing in the behavioral health workforce through education, training, and loan forgiveness programs is necessary to address the shortage of mental health professionals in Alaska.

By prioritizing behavioral health services in Ketchikan, the State of Alaska can make a significant impact on the lives of our residents and strengthen our community as a whole.



Community Policy Issue

Urging the State to Transfer into Borough Ownership Certain Real Parcels of Land Owned by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources per ADL's 109314 and 234300, and to Transfer into Private Ownership Any Other Parcels of Land Owned By Various State Agencies that are Suitable for Developing Housing

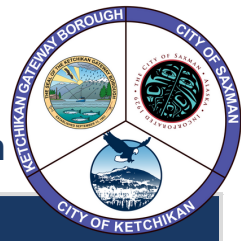
The Community of Ketchikan urges the State of Alaska to transfer into Borough ownership various parcels of land owned by State agencies to facilitate the development of housing as follows:

- a) Transfer into Borough ownership the green spaces inside the Mud Bight subdivision created in 1980 by the State through Alaska State Land Survey 79-243, Plat No. 80-35, which will enable the Borough to make progress towards completion of the subdivision, per Resolution 2952. The Borough has submitted an .810 conveyance application to the Department of Natural Resources, serialized as ADL 234300.
- b) Expedite Department of Natural Resources approval of the Borough's .810 Conveyance application ADL No. 109314, for lot 78 of the Mountain Point Group of Homesites which is the only parcel required for completion of a right of way between Roosevelt and Whitman drives.

The Community of Ketchikan further urges the State of Alaska to transfer into private ownership any parcels of land owned by various State agencies that are suitable for development of housing.

Community of Ketchikan Fiscal Year 2026

Policy Issues for State Administrative or Legislative Action



Community Policy Issue

Supporting Fiscal Impact Analyses of all Proposed Legislation to Assess Potential Costs to Local Governments to Avoid Unfunded Mandates

As a municipality striving to provide essential services to our residents, we face increasing challenges in meeting the demands of our community.

The imposition of unfunded mandates places an undue burden on our local government, forcing difficult choices between essential services and compliance with state-imposed requirements. Such mandates can divert limited resources away from crucial areas such as public safety, education, and infrastructure.

To mitigate the negative impacts of unfunded mandates, we urge the Alaska State Legislature to:

- Conduct thorough fiscal impact analyses on all proposed legislation and regulations to assess potential costs on local governments.
- Provide adequate funding or reimbursement for any new mandates imposed on municipalities.
- Establish a collaborative process involving local government representatives in the development of new state regulations to ensure consideration of local impacts.

By working together to reduce the burden of unfunded mandates, the State of Alaska can strengthen the capacity of its municipalities to deliver essential services to residents and enhance the overall well-being of our communities.