


d. Tongass Historical Museum Closure – March 17 to May 30, 2025



City Manager/General Manager | 334 Front Street, Ketchikan AK 99901 | (907)228-5603

TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM

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TO:	The Honorable Mayor & City Council	Initials:	
FROM:	Lacey G. Simpson, Acting City Manager	File #:	MGR25-169
DATE:	March 14, 2025	Mtg. #:	03/20/25 MRd
RE:	Tongass Historical Museum Closure – March 17 to May 30, 2025		

The attached informational transmittal memorandum was provided by Museum Director Samantha Forsko and informs the City Council and community of the extended closure of the Tongass Historical Museum to complete the scheduled Museum HVAC – Phase IV – Exterior Envelope capital improvement project. The nature of this long-awaited project necessitates the closure of the Centennial Building to the public from March 17 through May 30, 2025. Staff is very aware of the inconvenience of this closure to Museum patrons, residents, and visitors seeking a public restroom; however, as detailed by Ms. Forsko, some level of closure to achieve this project was always to be necessary. Staff has made every effort to ensure the project's completion and the reopening of the building as soon as possible to not further impact museum-users during the height of the visitor season.



MEMORANDUM

From: Samantha Forsko, Museum Director

To: Lacey Simpson, Acting City Manager

Date: February 28, 2025

Re: Museum Closure due to CIP Project “Museum HVAC – Phase IV – Exterior Envelope”

The approved CIP project, titled “Museum HVAC – Phase IV – Exterior Envelope” (project number 1420-2019-001), which seeks to tighten the Centennial Building’s envelope by replacing its windows and doors, necessitates a brief closure of the Tongass Historical Museum to ensure the completion of the work. This memo is intended to alert the City Council to the dates of that closure, which should span March 17th through May 30th.

The project was originally conceived of and approved in the 2020 budget but experienced its first delay due to the fiscal restraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. A design was completed in 2023 and then rescheduled for fall 2024. The project was then further delayed due to a variety of factors, including manufacturing delays, fiscal restraints caused by the August 2024 landslide disaster, and staff shortages in both Public Works and the Museum. The work was deferred to Spring 2025 without a solid timeline, though it was understood that the project would span approximately two to three months.

Once the new Museum Director began in fall 2024, the timeline for work began to come together as materials were finalized and ordered. In order to stay ahead of the tourist season as much as possible and limit the impact to the Museum’s open hours, Public Works and the Museum staff have opted to begin the project by replacing the doors first, which have already arrived, while waiting for the arrival of the windows. The door replacement work is slated to begin March 17th. Once the windows arrive in April, work will continue as quickly as possible, prioritizing the replacement of windows in the upstairs/public spaces, with a hard deadline communicated to the contractor of May 30th. This will allow the Museum to reopen by the height of tourist season, June 2025, while work is completed replacing the windows on the lower level in the non-public spaces of the building no later than June 20th.

This project would have always created some amount of closure to the public, but the finalized schedule limits that as much as possible given the constraints. This project continues to be vitally important to the care of the collections held by the Museum as well as to improve the efficiency of the Centennial Building.