



Municipality of Anchorage

Public Works

Road Service Area Administration

GLEN ALPS SERVICE AREA BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

DATE: June 27, 2022

Dear Members of the Anchorage Assembly, Mayor's Office, Residents of Glen Alps Service Area and Anchorage State Legislative Delegation:

The Glen Alps Road Service Area (GARSA) is responsible for the capital improvements and maintenance of the roads within its service area. This includes the two corridors that go to Chugach State Park through a) Upper DeArmoun/Canyon Roads to Rabbit Lake and the "Sunny Side" of Flattop, and b) Toilsome Hill/Glen Alps Road to Glen Alps/Flattop. In fact, most of the traffic on these corridors has the Park as its destination, from Anchorage residents who live outside the GARSA area. The most recent traffic study from a few years ago cited that 98% of the traffic on Glen Alps Road was park traffic. There have been no recent studies for Canyon road, but after the recent completion of the new "backside" or "Sunnyside" trail on Flattop, traffic has become unsustainable on this narrow almost 1 to 1.5 lane road to the park. A large majority of traffic is not local and is instead intending to hike, ski, walk the park trails beyond our service area.

The last mile or so of Canyon Rd before the Park is in poor shape. Last year we intended to direct \$300,000 of our own funds to upgrade the road as it fell within the service area. That money was "leftovers" from monies received through a state grant. Our contractor had to stop work early because of snowstorms in September and the work was left incomplete. When we attempted to resume the work this year, we were told by the Municipality that there were new onerous requirements regarding easements, variances, and design. Last summer, we were given the green light by Maintenance and Operations, as well as Right of Way, to complete this work as long as the affected property owners agreed that we would do our best to minimize damage to their properties. We came to terms and all parties signed an agreement allowing the work to commence. We spent approximately \$50,000 before the weather shut the project down. This means that in its current status, there is no drainage, and the road will further deteriorate. As part of our plan, we had enough funding to pave the last stretch of poor gravel right to the park boundary at a width that met the requirements dictated by the Muni Right of Way officer.

The GARSA area is relatively sparsely populated. A few number of properties pay for an abundance of use that originates outside our area. Beyond that GARSA residents do not consider this equitable, these new requirements would make the work financially prohibitive. In addition, as it is primarily those citizens who live outside the Service Area, and who use the Park, who would benefit from the upgrade, we believe it would be a breach of our fiduciary duty to our constituents to have them pay for it with money from our operating budget. As it is, we don't have enough funding to properly maintain the roads due to the low volume of residents in the area, and the high park traffic putting wear and tear on the roadways.

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Accordingly, if the residents of Anchorage, and visitors to our state want well maintained roads with smooth driving surfaces to this section of the Park, the funding for the Canyon Rd work will need to come from either Municipal or State sources outside of GARSA. Further, we'd like to remind all parties that according to the 1980 Chugach State Park Master Plan, the State at that time recognized the need to provide funding to our service area due to the high volume of park traffic using the road, even 40 years ago.

If you've made it this far and are wondering what the quick solution is – please let us finish the project we started with the state grant monies leftover. If the state or city is able to find more funding, we can do even more work and make it last much longer. We are in a position to make great progress. Without that permission, this road will further deteriorate to the point of expensive emergency repairs we will be unable to complete, closing all access to one of Chugach State Park's busiest trailheads.

Best regards,

Joe Connolly
Chair, Glen Alps Service Area Board of Supervisors
907-301-9400