

AIRPORT HEIGHTS COMMUNITY COUNCIL
RESOLUTION 2020-1

A RESOLUTION OF THE AIRPORT HEIGHTS COMMUNITY COUNCIL REGARDING THE
MIDTOWN CONGESTION RELIEF STUDY

WHEREAS, the Airport Heights Community Council (AHCC) has been closely involved with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF), Midtown Congestion Relief Study (MCR) over the past two years;

WHEREAS, ADOT&PF and its consultant DOWL, in a Draft Planning and Environmental Linkages Study Report dated November 2019, has identified a preferred concept;

WHEREAS, the preferred concept proposes to acquire nearly all its additional right-of-way from the east side of the existing Seward Highway;

WHEREAS, AHCC has been in communication with Rogers Park Community Council (RPCC) and agrees with their concerns of the disruption to the Rogers Park neighborhood, resulting in longtime neighbors being forced to leave, loss of friends and community, the potential for increased construction and traffic noise, and the potential for loss of property value;

WHEREAS, AHCC has not been provided sufficient information to evaluate the potential right-of-way acquisition between Northern Lights Boulevard and 20th Avenue;

WHEREAS, the most recent Metropolitan Transportation Plan currently places the depressed freeway portion of this project in the 2040 timeframe, potentially resulting in an interim project being in place for many years;

WHEREAS, AHCC is greatly concerned about the lack of ideas for the extensive median area in this "interim project" and the potential for it becoming an attraction for campers;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Airport Heights Community Council

- 1) Fully supports the elimination of any further consideration of an elevated freeway alternative in the PEL study and in future planning, design, and construction processes;
- 2) Concurs with a depressed freeway that is fully covered;
- 3) Concurs with a 30 MPH speed limit, enforced by signal timing, on the frontage roads;
- 4) Concurs with using a bridge to replace the Chester Creek culvert and the Chester Creek Trail culvert, such as at the A Street crossing of Chester Creek;
- 5) Encourages the restoration of the natural stream corridor for Chester Creek;
- 6) Concurs with maintaining the existing turning restrictions at Fireweed Lane;

7) Concurs with conveying northbound traffic from the proposed frontage road onto the depressed freeway south of Fireweed Lane as this will reduce noise and reduce traffic at the Fireweed Lane intersection;

8) Believes that it is vital that the entire project, for all phases, including the depressed freeway, be designed to at least a preliminary (e.g., 35 percent) level before any construction north of Tudor Road begins, as this will be necessary for right-of-way (ROW) acquisition and utility relocation, and it will help ensure that the final project can and will be constructed;

9) Believes that the Anchorage Traffic Model must be updated with the most recent Alaska Department of Labor population projections; that the MCR PEL report or subsequent “environmental” reports should be updated with the expected future traffic volumes, levels of service, traffic safety, and other traffic operations metrics based on the updated Traffic Model; that the reports should include a robust discussion of the effects of delaying the various phases of the project by five, 10, or 15 years; that the MCR PEL report or subsequent “environmental” reports should include a discussion of alternative safety improvement projects that could be done to mitigate traffic safety issues if one or more MCR phases is delayed by five, 10, or 15 years;

10) Believes that the design and construction of the depressed freeway must be tightly sequenced after the initial phases, and if that is not feasible, the interim project must be designed and constructed with the amenities of a “final” project;

11) Requests that ROW and sound barrier discussions with Ingra Street residents continue and that residents on both sides of Ingra Street be satisfied with the resulting solution, specifically:

a) A ROW plan must be developed, with input from the residents, that:

i) provides each homeowner on the west side of Ingra Street the option for full acquisition;

ii) illustrates sound barrier options (wall or earthen berm) including the materials, placement and height;

iii) takes sound barrier designs to a level of completion that is sufficient to demonstrate and ensure that future traffic sound levels on Ingra Street are the same or lower than they are today;

iv) includes a map of re-platted properties identifying which homes are proposed to remain, if re-platting is proposed;

v) includes concept-level drawings of each property showing proposed locations of the homes, outbuildings, driveways, sidewalks, etc., if the plan suggests that homes be relocated on existing or reconfigured lots;

b) That project reports and plans must include the cost of all amenities, including sound barriers and landscaping, as a required cost of the MCR project;

c) That residents on the east side of Ingra Street must be compensated for their home value losses due to the MCR project or given justification as to why the project will not impact the home values;

d) The sound barrier must:

i) be a minimum of 12 feet tall;

ii) be extensively landscaped on the residential side so that it is not obtrusive to residents;

iii) be constructed and landscaped shortly after right-of-way acquisition and prior to road construction, to mitigate construction noise and impacts;

e) If there is a sound barrier on the west (commercial) side of the highway, it must be designed to absorb and not reflect sound;

f) The numerous mature trees that are between the existing houses on the east and west sides of Ingra Street must be untouched;

12) Requests that street lighting along the highway corridor be low level and unobtrusive to residents;

13) Insists that the power transmission lines north of Northern Lights Boulevard must be undergrounded;

14) Requests that construction adjacent to residential areas be limited to standard daytime working hours;

15) Appreciates the provision of the "Community Place-making Project" and looks forward to participating; and

16) Appreciates the process through which this PEL report was prepared, but, due to lack of detail on the effects to residents of Ingra Street, the AHCC is unable to support the MCR project until the ROW plan is clear and acceptable to Ingra Street residents and RPCC.

THIS RESOLUTION WAS APPROVED by the Airport Heights Community Council on January 16, 2020 by a vote of: FOR 12, AGAINST 1, ABSTAIN 2.



Carolyn Ramsey
President