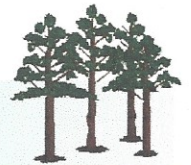


Correspondence



RABBIT CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL (RCCC) A Forum for Respectful Communication & Community Relations

1057 West Fireweed Lane, Suite 100 / Anchorage, AK 99503

Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Division of Program Development - ATTN: STIP
PO BOX 112500
Juneau, AK 99811-2500

October 13, 2020

Subject: Amendment 1, 2020-2023 State Transportation Improvement Program

The Rabbit Creek Community Council (RCCC) has previously submitted detailed comments on both State and Municipality (Muni) transportation plans. The 2020-2023 Amendment 1 on the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) includes changes to two projects of concern to RCCC and about which we have previously commented, as follows.

Need ID: 29731 for design - While not in our area, the Seward Highway, Dimond to O'Malley, reconstruction involves a major road used daily by a vast majority of our residents. The project feature which is of concern is the proposal to construct an underpass to connect 92nd Ave (Scooter Avenue) from west of the Seward Highway to east of the Seward Highway. RCCC has repeatedly recommended that this project feature be deleted. This project feature was proposed in the early 2000s to relieve congestion at the Dimond Blvd on/off ramps of the Seward Highway. Deleting the 92nd Ave underpass is justified for a number of reasons, including: (1) diminished traffic use and magnitude in the area; (2) it would significantly disrupt neighbors and neighborhood quality to the east of the Seward Highway; (3) it would eliminate existing low-income housing in the area; and 4) this feature's excessive cost when the state is in an extended and serious budget deficit. The Assembly has opposed this project. The Muni is already burdened by the need to repair and upgrade existing roads at a time of diminished budgets. The project would result in an excessive taking of land and has a poor cost/benefit ratio. If there is to be a project here, a pedestrian underpass would be an alternative that could provide safe transit for neighbors at a much reduced cost in dollars and land. Note, the amendment does not specify whether FY 21 design funds recommended for this project are for the larger Seward Highway work or include this underpass.

Need ID: 30689 – We were disappointed to see that Amendment 1 reduces funding by over 70% (from \$5.2 to \$1.5 million in FY 21) for statewide projects and activities such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school, and a variety of eligible community improvements. At a time when citizens need more non-motorized access to the outdoors (e.g., due to the need for social distancing during a pandemic) and we need to mitigate the impacts from CO₂-induced climate change, funding for these types of projects should be augmented, not significantly reduced. Compared to most, this project started with only a very minor cost.

We appreciate your attention to these concerns and request that you respond as to how our concerns can be incorporated in the final Amendment.

Sincerely,

Ann Rappoport, Co-chair
Rabbit Creek Community Council

Ky Holland, Co-chair
Rabbit Creek Community Council

cc: Anchorage Assembly, Mayor Berkowitz, PM&E Director, Energy & Sustain Dir., Rep. Johnston, Sen. Giessel,