

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

WATERSHED & NATURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 2014-03

A RESOLUTION ADDRESSING DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR WILDLIFE PASSAGE IN THE NORTHERN ACCESS CORRIDOR STUDY.

WHEREAS, the proposed Northern Access Road provides three pedestrian overpasses, but no wildlife-crossing structures and no fencing or other treatments to minimize at-grade crossings by moose; and

WHEREAS, moose currently use the wetland complex, which is to be bisected by the proposed road and will continue to do so after the road is built; and

WHEREAS, without a road-crossing structure, moose will cross the road at-grade; and

WHEREAS, the project's planning team hopes to minimize moose-vehicle collisions by providing lighting and restricting vehicle speeds; and

WHEREAS, moose are hit by motor vehicles on Anchorage streets with posted speed limits of 45 mph or less and many vehicle operators will drive faster than the posted speed; and

WHEREAS, because the curves and roundabouts are included in the road design, these could limit sight distances for vehicle operators compared to otherwise straight road sections; and

WHEREAS, the proposed road is likely to have moderate-to-heavy levels of traffic, especially on evenings when events are scheduled in the new arena and emergency traffic in the U-Med District; and

WHEREAS, although moose prefer overpasses to underpasses and overpasses greater than 165 feet wide, and narrower overpasses with flared ends have also proven effective; and

WHEREAS, wildlife-crossing structures are seldom effective without fencing or other means to channel animals onto the structure and minimize at-grade crossings; and

WHEREAS, research in several western states and Canadian provinces has found that boulders can be as effective as fencing at channeling ungulates such as elk or moose in some situations, and boulders are recommended as an innovative solution by the Federal Highway Administration, according to *Evaluation of the Use and Effectiveness of Wildlife Crossings*, National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 615; and

WHEREAS, a direct comparison study of fences and boulders found that rip-rap consisting of boulders 18–24 inches in diameter laid in a swath approximately 12–20 feet wide deterred at-grade crossing by elk and could be an attractive alternative to fencing according to *Evaluation of measures to minimize wildlife-vehicle collisions and maintain permeability across highways: Arizona Route 260*, prepared for the Arizona Department of Transportation; and

WHEREAS, boulder rip-rap is likely to reduce the growth of shrubs along the road margins that otherwise attract moose, restrict visibility, and require periodic maintenance; and

WHEREAS, data should be available on the effectiveness of boulder rip-rap at minimizing at-grade wildlife crossings on Martin Luther King Blvd.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that in order to minimize unpredictable at-grade crossings by moose and subsequent moose-vehicle collisions on the new road, the Watershed and Natural Resources Advisory Commission recommends that the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities consider and evaluate the addition of the following design features:

1. Widening the proposed Northern Access Corridor's middle pedestrian overpass sufficiently to accommodate passage by moose and other wildlife: and
2. Lining the road prism with 18-24 inches diameter boulder riprap in swaths approximately 20 feet wide to channel moose across the overpass.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Watershed & Natural Resources Advisory Commission this 25th day of June 2014.

Jerry T. Weaver, Jr.
Secretary

Tamás Deák
Chair