

Rogers Park Community Council

(Including Anchor Park, College Village, Woodside East and Rogers Park)

Janet Bidwell, President
rogersparkcc@gmail.com

Linda Chase, Vice-President
Steve Lindbeck, Secretary
Ric Wilson, Treasurer
Jim Wright, Past President

Date: January 13, 2020

RPCC Resolution 2020-01

To: State of Alaska – Department of Transportation
Dowl Engineering – Attn: Steve Noble

CC: Mayor Ethan Berkowitz, Mayor of Anchorage
Anchorage Assembly Members
Alaska State Legislature
Midtown Community Council
Tudor Area Community Council

Anchorage Municipal Clerk
Federation of Community Councils
Fairview Community Council
North Star Community Council
Airport Heights Community Council

A RESOLUTION OF THE ROGERS PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL REGARDING THE MIDTOWN CONGESTION RELIEF STUDY

WHEREAS, Rogers Park Community Council (RPCC) 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 (PEL) Study Report dated November 2019, have 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 and will greatly disrupt the Rogers Park community, 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 in property value;

WHEREAS, we have not been provided sufficient information to evaluate the potential right-of-way acquisition between Northern Lights 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, we are greatly concerned about the lack of ideas for the extensive median area in this “interim project” which could create additional swaths of unmaintained, underutilized, and un-programed public land in an area with high property values and growing population density;

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WHEREAS, the PEL construction cost estimate may be used for establishing future project budgets and funding, and we want to be certain that the PEL does not underestimate project costs;

WHEREAS, the ADOT&PF response to RPCC Additional Questions – Request No. 2:

- a) Said that *“sound walls are part of the depressed highway line item.”*
- b) Did not provide the requested unit prices associated with the MCR sound walls, the Glenn Highway/Muldoon interchange sound walls, or the unit price associated with cover over the depressed freeway.
- c) Said that *“the elevated freeway still needs to be evaluated during the environmental process to compare potential effects of either an elevated or depressed freeway in this area.”*
- d) Said that *“Proposed active transportation facilities running north-south through the project area will be separated from the edge of traveled way by a curb and 8-foot buffer. Additionally, the sidewalks are proposed to be widened to 10-feet”* but *“...cross streets will not be provided with a buffer between the sidewalk and traveled way.”*
- e) Said that the cost estimate for the proposed bridge over Chester Creek was based on bridge dimensions of 188 feet (E-W) and 36 feet (N-S).

WHEREAS, the A Street bridge over Chester Creek spans 120 feet (N-S);

WHEREAS, the RPCC advocates for non-vehicular/multimodal infrastructure to be more thoughtfully incorporated into the design and acknowledges this by insisting that the design include accessible, safe, buffered, well-lit, and year-round maintained multimodal transportation along and across the Seward Highway as it will promote health, safety and welfare for the overall community as well as reduce vehicular trips thereby reducing congestion in the region.

Now therefore, be it resolved that the RPCC:

- 1) Concurs with the elimination of any further consideration of an elevated freeway alternative in the PEL study and in future planning, design, and construction processes, and the RPCC requests that section 6.5 of the PEL report be revised to specifically state that the community *and the project team* do not support bringing an elevated highway forward for any consideration during the environmental process.
- 2) Concurs with a depressed freeway, with cover where feasible.
- 3) Concurs with a 35 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, and requests that the current PEL cost estimate for the bridge at Chester Creek be increased by a factor of two to account for a more realistic bridge north-south span.
- 5) Concurs with maintaining the existing turning restrictions at Fireweed Lane.
- 6) Concurs with conveying northbound traffic from the proposed frontage road onto the depressed freeway south of Fireweed Lane. This will reduce noise and reduce traffic at the Fireweed Lane intersection.
- 7) Requests 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. This will be necessary for ROW acquisition and utility relocation, and it will help ensure that the final project can and will be constructed.

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- 8) Requests that Anchorage Traffic Model be updated with the most recent Alaska Department of Labor population projections; that the PEL report or subsequent “environmental” reports 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 include a thorough discussion of the effects of delaying the various phases of the project by five, ten, or fifteen years; that the PEL report or subsequent “environmental” reports include a robust 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, ten, or fifteen years.
- 9) Requests that design and construction of the depressed freeway be tightly sequenced after the initial phases. If that is not feasible, we request that the interim project be designed and constructed with the amenities of a “final” project.
- 10) Requests that right-of-way (ROW) and sound barrier discussions with Ingra Street residents continue and that residents of 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, aesthetic features, height, and landscaping.
 - 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) Project reports, plans, cost estimates, budgets, and funding must include the cost of all amenities, including sound barriers and landscaping, as a required cost of the MCR project.
 - c) Residents on the east side of Ingra Street must be compensated for their home value losses due to 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’ tall.
 - ii) Be extensively landscaped on the residential side so that it is not obtrusive to residents and be landscaped on the highway side so that it is visually appealing.
 - iii) Be constructed and landscaped shortly after right-of-way acquisition and prior to road construction, to mitigate construction noise and impacts; that is, it must be included in the cost estimate for Project C (corridor widening and frontage road construction) not Project E (depressed freeway construction).
 - e) If the sound barrier is a wall, it must be visually appealing, such as the sound wall at the Glenn Highway and Muldoon interchange.
 - f) If there is a sound barrier on the west (commercial) side of the highway, we request that it be designed to absorb and not reflect sound.
 - g) The numerous mature trees that are between the existing houses on the west side of Ingra Street and Ingra Street must be untouched.
- 11) Requests that street lighting along the highway corridor be low level and unobtrusive to residents and consider multimodal traffic.

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- 12) Requests that power transmission lines north of Northern Lights Boulevard be undergrounded.
- 13) Requests that construction adjacent to residential areas be limited to standard daytime working hours.
- 14) Requests that the neighborhood entryway at Fireweed Boulevard be reconstructed during the project that widens the corridor (as described in section 10.2.3 of the draft PEL). The new entryway should match the existing entryways at Fireweed Lane and Latouche Street.
- 15) Requests that cross streets (E-W streets) and associated bridges be provided with buffers between the pathways and traveled ways. The buffers shall consist of either sufficient distance and pathway width (similar to the N-S pathways) or other features or barriers, so as to prevent the pathways from being used as de facto road snow storage areas.
- 16) Requests that the MCR PEL team demonstrate to the RPCC, no later than February 28, 2020, that the PEL cost estimate contains reasonable estimates for sound barriers, landscaping, the bridge over Chester Creek, and cover over the depressed freeway.
- 17) Appreciates the provision of the “Community Place-making” Project and looks forward to participating.
- 18) 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 RPCC is unable to support the MCR project** until the ROW plan is clear and acceptable to Ingra Street residents.

THIS RESOLUTION WAS **APPROVED** by the Rogers Park Community Council on January 13, 2020, by a vote of: FOR 23, AGAINST 1, ABSTAIN 1.

Janet Bidwell

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President
Rogers Park Community Council