

Project Title: Anchorage - Hidden Treasures - Stranded Pedestrian Easements

TPS Number: 67114

Priority: 2

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development
Grants to Municipalities (AS 37.05.315)

Grant Recipient: Anchorage

FY2023 State Funding Request: \$150,000

Future Funding May Be Requested

Brief Project Description:

Complete undeveloped pathways on existing unused easements that were platted or reserved but never built.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$900,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2023 State Funding Request:	(\$150,000)
Project Deficit:	\$750,000

Explanation of Other Funds:

\$150,000 FY 2023: Phase 1, CAPSIS for scoping, design.

\$500,000 FY 2024-25: Phase 2, Future funding, CAPSIS, federal and/or other grants for construction and signage.

Detailed Project Description and Justification:

Project Purpose/description:

Create designated, signed trails along stranded pedestrian easements, emphasizing several in south Anchorage. Many pedestrian easements have been platted or reserved to ensure neighborhood connectivity and access, as subdivisions were developed. However, these have never been developed or signed, remaining hidden treasures throughout our Rabbit Creek Community Council and neighboring areas.

This project is envisioned to encompass two phases. Phase 1 would be completed with funding from this CAPSIS request to include: inventory of unused easements and rights-of-ways, scoping, and surveys, emphasizing signage and improvements needed to formalize the pathways. Pathway improvements, construction (including bridging where necessary), and signage would be undertaken in Phase 2 with funded to be requested through future CAPSIS opportunities, and/or federal infrastructure and other grants.

Stranded Assets connections exist all over Anchorage. The inventory and scoping will determine which projects should be funded to completion. Priority examples include: a right-of-way from Bainbridge Road to DeArmoun Road (approximately .25 mi, partly paved, some fill to meet ADA standards, plus an unpaved path along DeArmoun to connect to bike path at 140th); approximately 1.5 mi connection from Golden View Drive to Bear Valley School with some mechanized construction and a footbridge); and a missing school/commute connection along Elmore Road south of DeArmoun to Riverton (short unpaved section plus a footbridge over the creek).

Justification:

This project is a priority of the Rabbit Creek Community Council and has been repeatedly recommended on our responses to the Municipality's annual Capital Improvement Projects Survey. Undeveloped easements are a maximally efficient way to connect the pedestrian network. These new through-routes and short-cuts will encourage walking and biking in lieu of driving. They offer safe, fast, and pleasant travel separated from traffic.

The inventory of Stranded Assets will reveal numerous safety opportunities across town.

The example projects in this application will divert bicyclists from prohibitively hazardous road segments such as the crash-prone

DeArmoun Road curve, crash-prone Golden View Drive and Rabbit Creek Road intersection, steep parts of Rabbit Creek Road, and other roads with fast through-traffic. Moreover, it will also reveal specific congestion reductions. They will alleviate acute congestion created by school-related driving. Safe walk- and bike-to-school routes will shift people away from driving, especially direct, fast connections such as these. Additionally, upgrades and signage for new, direct connections will shorten travel and keep bicyclists off hazardous roadways and intersections. Bicyclists with disabilities or low skills will be empowered to use these safe connections.

It should also be noted that increasing non-motorized travel options will reduce vehicular particulates and emissions by replacing vehicle trips with pedestrian and bicycle trips. Fewer vehicle miles traveled, and less traffic congestion both improve air quality, and will help meet Municipality and State goals to decrease greenhouse gas emissions and shift to clean energy sources of transportation. A modal shift from vehicles to bikes and walking is especially valuable for students, as the early example of non-motorized travel for youth can become a healthy, life-long habit.

By providing new, off the roadway connections, this project will improve off-street facilities and incorporate nature based solutions. It will include short-cuts and direct routes that the public does not know exist. They make non-motorized travel safe, convenient, and physically possible for the first time for many residents, especially the young, the old, and the less physically able who need to avoid busy roadways. The short distance and relatively narrow width of these trail connections (compared to roads) means minimal use of built infrastructure. Some trails can be built with native materials for the tread, and the drainage can be captured by native terrain and vegetation. There will not be a flush of run-off into the stormwater system.

Project Timeline:

FY 2023: \$150,000 - Phase 1 - Inventory unused easements and rights-of-ways, scoping, surveys, environmental review and design.
FY 2024-25: \$750,000 - Phase 2 - Improve the approved easements to construct rural trails, including a bridge, and add signage.

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Municipality of Anchorage

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This project has been through a public review process at the local level and it is a community priority.