

Correspondence



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



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Rabbit Creek Community Council – Recommended Projects for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2050

These recommendations are provided in three categories: (1) Motorized Projects and Studies; (2) Non-motorized Projects; and (3) Area-wide Studies and Plans.

Motorized projects and studies

Project description change for Rabbit Creek Road upgrade: Change the project description in the AMATS 2023-2026 TIP for the RC Road Upgrade from Seward Highway to Golden View Drive. This should be described as an upgrade with center turn pockets, not a center turn lane, which invites passing and is inherently dangerous. Also, specify separated non-motorized pathways because of the traffic speeds that make the use of the shoulders unsafe. Rabbit Creek Road is ranked as a medium priority for the bicycle network in the Non-motorized Plan.

Left turn pocket at Rabbit Creek Road and Old Seward Highway:

Note: this may be part of the RC Road upgrade that is already in the 2023-2026 TIP, so we might not need to submit it.

Need: hazard from cars stopping in the westbound lane to turn south onto Old Seward Highway. Westbound traffic has trouble stopping under icy conditions. There is illegal passing on the shoulder.

Golden View Drive and Rabbit Creek Road: intersection safety upgrade

Purpose: relieve congestion at peak traffic hours. Provide safe student walking/biking access to Golden View Middle School. Documented collision site.

Elmore Road at Rabbit Creek: intersection safety upgrades and speed moderation

Purpose: poor sight lines, high turning volume, and high speeds require traffic control and safety measures. There have been serious crashes and fatalities in vicinity.

Study and design for connectivity in Hillside District Plan (HDP) Special Study Area B: 156th Avenue connection from Mountain Air Drive to Golden View.

Purpose: secondary egress for neighborhood safety and efficient transportation coordination as large tracts are developed.

Need: Large tracts are being subdivided without a coordinated road access plan. New traffic is being squeezed onto grossly substandard roads. Emergency access is insufficient.

Old Seward Highway Upgrade from RC Road to Potter Valley Road as a Greenway Corridor

Upgrade this road as a greenway and recreation corridor that prioritizes safety for wildlife and non-motorized users, and that integrates into the natural setting of Potter Marsh/Alaska Coastal Wildlife Refuge:

Need: this route is a High-Priority Recommendation for the Non-Motorized Plan bicycle network. Current roadbed is inherently unsafe with poor sightlines,, no shoulders, and periodic flooding. Severe risk to nonmotorized users who share the traffic lanes with cars. Receives heavy use by walkers, runners, bikers, wildlife watchers, roller-skiers, etc.

Purpose: safe, multi-modal travel specifically designed as a greenway and recreation corridor. Integrate roadway into the setting of the coastal wildlife refuge; control speed; and protect non-motorized users, wildlife, and natural habitat.

Study and plan for low-cost emergency access connections across the Hillside:

Purpose: provide for evacuation and emergency responder routes in case of wild fire, without generating cut-through traffic that disrupts neighborhoods. Some of these emergency access connections may developed as non-motorized pathways, or may be gated until needed by emergency responders. This includes a need to improve the emergency connection to Golden View Drive at Portugal Drive, which has very steep grades. The Hillside District Plan shows a future connection from Portugal Drive to Potter Heights Road; currently England Drive serves as a connection and is inadequate.

Non-motorized projects

Schools on Trails: connecting Bear Valley Elementary School, Goldenview Middle School, neighborhoods, and Section 36 Park with non-motorized greenway-type trails, separated from roadways.

Purpose: implement the non-motorized connections shown in the HDP, the Area Wide Trails Plan, and the Anchorage Bowl Parks Plan. Support Community Council initiatives that are currently underway to use undeveloped easements to construct greenway-type trails.

Need: Bear Valley Elementary currently has zero safe walking zones—one of only two such Anchorage schools. Section 36 Park has no developed trails for neighborhood access. In addition, subdivision development in this area is erasing social trails without new connections to replace them. Title 21.08.040 promotes non-motorized connections to neighborhoods, schools, parks and other community destinations.

Non-motorized separated path on Golden View Drive, from Rabbit Creek Road to Romania
Safety for students and residents, and active transportation options

Need: This is a High Priority project in the Non-Motorized Plan and is a primary corridor in the HDP. Golden View Drive has almost no safe routes to school, and traffic on Golden View travels at over 40 mph despite 35 mph posting. There are no crossings. This will also be part of the Schools on Trails, by connecting to the Little Rabbit Creek pedestrian easement and the Section Line Easement along 156th Avenue.

Non-motorized connection from Golden View Drive south to Potter Creek Greenbelt and across to Potter Valley Road.

Purpose: Direct non-motorized connectivity to from Potter neighborhoods to parks and schools. Will promote active transportation and reduce vehicular travel.

Need: shown as a primary trail in the Hillside District Plan. Will minimize the extra distances of current travel down to Seward Highway or up to England Avenue.

School zone crossings for Golden View Middle School: pedestrian crossings on Golden View Drive for non-motorized access to Golden View Middle School at Prominence Pointe, 162nd and 156th, as well as a crossing of Bridgeview Drive. These crossings should be provided in the short term, regardless of the timeline for a full road upgrade. There is a pedestrian pathway

along only one side of Golden View Drive: students and residents need safe access to that pathway.

Inventory and mapping of undeveloped pedestrian easements and ROW across the Anchorage Bowl

Purpose: determine direct routes for low-cost connectivity for the non-motorized network of pathways and trails.

Need: to implement the Non-motorized Plan, various district plans such as the Hillside District Plan, and MTP goals for equitable, affordable, efficient, safe non-motorized travel and to reduce congestion and GHG emissions. Example: Jumar Drive extends along an undeveloped ROW to Cross Park, providing neighborhood non-motorized access.

Survey, signage and trail construction fund for undeveloped pedestrian easements and section line easements (see above)

Purpose: to secure existing public easements against encroachment; and to connect the non-motorized transportation network

Need: A non-motorized network best serves the public when it offers direct connections and a low-stress setting, which can be provided when the pathways are off-the-roadway. Pathways along easements offer convenience and safety, making non-motorized transportation a true alternative to driving.

Moen Trail historic trail development

Provide safe and scenic off-the-road way connection from Old Seward Highway/Potter Valley Road to Golden View Drive. Fits with economic investment for the proposed Community Forest. Could serve as emergency evacuation/fire suppression corridor. Shown in HDP as a priority trail; also in Area Wide Trails Plan. Parking exists for both termini of this historic trail (at Potter Valley Road pull-out and Potter Station, and at Moen Park).

Study/Design for primary east-west trail routes in Potter Creek area as shown in the Hillside District Plan

Need: implement the Hillside District Plan which shows several primary trail routes from the Old Seward Highway eastward through the Potter Creek and Golden View area to Chugach State Park. Non-motorized access, and access to Chugach State Park, are priorities of the HDP. There are no safe and practical non-motorized routes for east-west travel south of DeArmoun Road: collector roads lack separated pathways; and subdivision roads are often steep, narrow, and poorly maintained.

Purpose: evaluate potential alternative access to Chugach State Park, supported by the HDP and Chugach State Park access plans. This would tie together neighborhoods and community destinations at the Potter Road pull-out, Turnagain Arm Trail, Paradise Valley subdivision, Potter Creek subdivision, Potter Highlands, and Golden View Drive. This will also reduce traffic and parking pressure at Chugach State Park. There will be economic benefits from tourism/recreation, complimentary to public waysides at Potter Marsh and proposed Community Forest. Additionally, there may be connection opportunities with the proposed Alaska Long Trail.

Stewart Homestead Trail- surveying, signage, and construction of a pedestrian pathway to Chugach State Park if legal judgment is rendered to confirm public access.

Priority corridor on HDP, Area Wide Trails Plan, and CSP Access Inventory. High public demand for Chugach State Park access, and for this corridor specifically.

Elmore Road connection to Little Rabbit Creek Bluff Park

Elmore Road pathway south of Rabbit Creek Road to Southpark Bluff subdivision, Little Rabbit Creek Bluff Park to the Old Seward Highway

Purpose: a through-trail that will connect neighborhoods to Little Rabbit Creek Bluff Park and will serve as a safe, scenic non-motorized bypass of lower Rabbit Creek Road which has high traffic speeds and volumes that create a high-stress corridor for pedestrian. This will follow a Section Line easement and will be a scenic off-the-roadway non-motorized connection.

Need: there are no safe non-motorized routes on any main east-west roadways south of DeArmoun Roads.

Elmore Road Pedestrian/bike bridge across Rabbit Creek

This will allow non-motorized connection to DeArmoun Road and to South High School.

Purpose: School and park connectivity and commute route. This will allow cyclists commuting to the Rabbit Creek and Golden View area to avoid lower Rabbit Creek Road, which is extremely high stress and dangerous for non-motorized users.

Non-motorized crossing of DeArmoun Road at 140th Avenue, at terminus of DeArmoun pathway

Purpose: to connect DeArmoun Road multi-use path, which is on the north side of DeArmoun, to numerous neighborhoods and MOA parklands on the south side of DeArmoun road. The Multi-use path currently terminates at a curve with poor sightlines and a hill

Need: Safety for School and park access, and a safe commute route:

Bainbridge Road pathway link to DeArmoun Road pathway's terminus at 140th

Bainbridge Road is a cul-de-sac road that nearly connects Huffman Road to DeArmoun.

Purpose: Bainbridge Drive terminates just before the steep curve at DeArmoun. A road link is not safe, but a non-motorized link within the ROW would be an excellent connection of the non-motorized network. Shown on the Hillside District Plan.

Need: safe commute route and connection to neighborhood parks at Griffin Park and Rabbit Creek Greenbelt Park

School crossings at the intersections of DeArmoun Road and Elmore, and Huffman Road and Elmore

Need: high volumes of school-related traffic make dangerous walking/biking conditions at peak times. DeArmoun and Elmore pathways are heavily used by students and residents, and need safe intersections where they cross major high-traffic roads

School crossing at Rabbit Creek Road and Mountain Air Drive intersection

Need: Bear Valley Elementary School currently has zero safe walk-to-school routes. There is also a need for safe community access to Storck Park, Section 36 Park, and the emerging Little Rabbit Creek/Schools on Trails network. Rabbit Creek Road is a barrier to active transportation: a controlled crossing at the intersection of Rabbit Creek Road and Mountain Air drive will serve many community purposes.

Area-wide studies and plans

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions reduction plan:

Need: Climate change is undeniably causing economic shocks, suffering, and devastation worldwide. The Anchorage Climate Action Plan sets a target of 40 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the municipality by 2030, and 80 percent reduction by 2050. The transportation system within Anchorage currently generates 53 percent of Anchorage's

emissions. Anchorage can't meet its targets without a data-based strategy for GHG reductions from the transportation system.

Purpose: A data-based study to evaluate measures to reduce GHG emissions from the Anchorage transportation system. The study should rank the possible measures based on their quantitative GHG reduction potential. The study should provide a menu of strategies, policies, practices and monitoring to implement greenhouse gas emission reductions that will best meet ACAP targets. This should include, but not be limited to, measures such as: reducing the Vehicle Miles Traveled for commuter trips; switching trips from SOV to transit, vanpools, high-occupancy vehicle and non-motorized travel; reducing trip length through land use changes and more direct non-motorized connections; promotion of non-motorized travel to schools; promotion of micro-mobility in employment centers such as the U-Med district

Land use and transportation integration: study of best practices -

Need: The MOA has adopted land use plans that are intended to reduce then need to drive. These land use plans call for compact infill and re-development in core areas, and reduced trip distances, and alternatives to driving. This can't be achieved unless land use planners work closely with transportation planners to fund infrastructure that

1. reduces and tames vehicle traffic in infill and re-development areas;
2. avoids "induced vehicle travel demand", and
3. Invests in transit and non-motorized infrastructure so that these modes are as convenient and safe as driving. Numerous other cities use a team approach among land use and transportation agencies, and performance measures such as the 15-minute walkable neighborhoods. AMATS and the Municipality have nothing like this.

Purpose: Examine other cities' best practices for ensuring that transportation investments support infill and redevelopment in targeted areas, and avoid induced vehicle travel demand. Study will: 1. Recommend methods for evaluating whether specific transportation projects are effective and cost-efficient at encouraging urban infill and avoiding sprawl. 3. Vet the scoring for the TIP and CIP, so that scoring will not favor projects with added VMT or added traffic demand or parking demand. 3. Identify a team for integrated transportation and land use planning, to include staff in the land use planning department, community development, and transportation planning.