

Correspondence



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



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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #2. Rabbit Creek Community Council (RCCC) considered Amendment #2 at our February 8, 2024, meeting, and voted to submit the following comments on specific projects by a vote of 13 yeas, 1 nay and 1 abstention.

RDY00005 Rabbit Creek Road Rehabilitation – Amendment #2 proposes to reduce funding from \$31.65M to \$20.25M beyond 2026 to reflect current cost estimates.

RCCC has asked AMATS staff the reasons for the reduced cost estimate, and AMATS staff were unable to provide a clear explanation. RCCC is herein reiterating that request to AMATS Staff and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOTPF) to clarify the reduction. RCCC wants to ensure that the funding reduction will not jeopardize two critical safety features we have consistently supported: a separated non-motorized pathway; and safer turning (we continue to favor turn pockets and not a continuous center lane).

RCCC continues to rank the rehabilitation of Rabbit Creek Road from the Seward Highway to Golden View Drive as a top safety priority. This road carries high traffic volumes to numerous neighborhoods and to two schools, as well as providing direct driveway access along its entire length. RCCC looks forward to public involvement with the DOTPF project team to ensure that safety concerns and the context of the roadway are well-understood during the design phase.

RDY00010 Mountain Air Drive – RCCC supports the \$750K that has been added for design of this project in FY25. RCCC is glad to see this project moving forward. Mountain Air Drive provides critical secondary egress to numerous subdivisions in the Golden View Drive area. It will also provide a non-motorized, safe route to school for many children. RCCC advocates that the project includes traffic control at the intersection of Mountain Air Drive and Rabbit Creek Road, preferably a roundabout.

NMO00006 Potter Marsh Improvements – RCCC supports the \$100k for construction in FY24. Note that the table appropriates the funding for FY2024, although the text statement says FY25 – please clarify. Construction in 2024 would better coordinate with the expanded parking lot at the south end of Potter Marsh. That was partly constructed in 2023, and is expected to be completed in 2024, including installation of vaulted toilets for public health.

PLN00019 Non-motorized Facilities Inventory and Mapping – RCCC requests that AMATS retain funding for this project and find another funding source for PLN00023 AMATS Congestion Management Process (CMP) Update. Anchorage is handicapped in developing a convenient, safe non-motorized transportation system by the lack of an inventory and a complete map of non-motorized facilities. A map and an inventory are necessary to identify missing segments and opportunities, to sequence and

piggyback projects, and to promote active transportation. Inventories are already a key tool for Roadway Facilities and amenities, including culverts, signposts, and streetlights. RCCC requests that some of the non-motorized inventory funding be transferred to the Recreational Trails Plan (RTP) Update. Specifically, the RTP project deliverables should include maps and inventories of potential connections in areas significantly underserved by non-motorized pathways, including the RCCC area.

NHS0014 Seward Highway 36th Ave Interchange –RCCC encourages AMATS to re-evaluate the costs and benefits of this project compared to other much-needed infrastructure and not just add it to the TIP “at the request of DOTPF.” RCCC continues to ask for scrutiny of large freeway projects within the urban area that impact valuable residential and commercial land and may induce more driving. This proposed interchange at 36th Avenue requires a large footprint at a key commercial and retail area of Midtown. Projects of this magnitude and cost tend to squeeze out smaller scale projects that can deliver a better balance of mobility, safety, and livability for surrounding neighborhoods. RCCC requests further analysis of this interchange regarding emerging local concerns and adopted municipal policies. AMATS should score and rank this project in comparison to other roadway projects in the MTP 2050. Specific analysis and scoring should be based on:

- a. Updated traffic counts and projections (based on Anchorage’s growth and economic conditions).
- b. Compliance with Municipal land use plans: how this promotes or hurts infill, redevelopment, and pedestrian connectivity.
- c. The lifetime opportunity cost for the acreage involved in this interchange, versus commercial and other development.
- d. Public health: air quality, noise; first responders.
- e. Safety: vehicle speeds, separation of pedestrians, environment for pedestrian. The current signal intersection is used by many pedestrians and bikers. How would an interchange safely work for them?
- f. Cost-efficiency of this full freeway interchange relative to other circulation improvements at the intersection.

PLN0009 AMATS Safety Plan – RCCC congratulates AMATS on adopting a Safety Plan. We are told this is the reason for removal of further planning funds. Safety is an ongoing concern: traffic deaths within Anchorage are in the 22 to 25 range per year, which is about the same as the homicide deaths per year (19 to 30) (per MOA Traffic statistics and APD statistics for the past 5 years). We trust AMATS staff to monitor performance measures under the Safety Plan and request future funding when needed.

NHS0004 Seward Highway O’Malley Rd to Dimond Blvd Reconstruction Phase II – Thank you for removing this project from the draft 2024-2027 TIP because new funding has been delayed to 2027 or beyond. RCCC has repeatedly requested that AMATS and DOTPF scale this project back to a non-motorized underpass at 92nd with safety improvements along Brayton Drive, not a full interchange at 92nd Ave or a diverging diamond intersection at O’Malley. Traffic data do not merit a full interchange; there would be negative impacts to adjoining lower-income neighborhoods. This area has hazards to active transportation. We encourage studies and new designs that do not attract and induce high speed traffic.

Sincerely,



Ann Rappoport, Co-chair



John Riley, Co-chair