



# Municipality of Anchorage

## Public Works

### Road Service Area Administration

#### **GLEN ALPS SERVICE AREA BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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**DATE: July 1st, 2024**

To: Mayor Suzanne LaFrance, Members of the Anchorage Assembly

From: Joe Connolly / Chair, Glen Alps Service Area Board of Supervisors / 907-301-9400 /  
joe@chugachpeaks.com

Date: July 1st, 2024

Re: REQUEST FROM THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Dear Mayor LaFrance and Members of the Anchorage Assembly:

The following is a request from the Glen Alps Road Service Area (GARSA) to include \$2.3 million in capital upgrades to Upper DeArmoun Road in the 2025 Chugach State Park Access Service Area (CASA) bond package.

Upper DeArmoun Road is a one-mile long collector on the Upper Hillside, and is the sole access, via Canyon Road, to one of Chugach State Park's busiest trailheads, for the south Flattop (Sunny Side) and Rabbit Lake trails, and surrounding peaks.

Upper DeArmoun first was paved in the mid-1980's with funding obtained through the legislature. At the time, each legislator was provided a capital improvement budget for their district. Cost considerations meant that the road paving was not of the best quality, and over time, the road has deteriorated. Within ten years of its initial paving, the road began to slump, heave and fall apart. It has not been resurfaced in almost 40 years. The subsurface is substandard due to deteriorating drainage conditions.

Currently, this mile of roadway is a patchwork of cracks sealed over the years, intermingled with significant dips and frost heaves. There are currently two stretches from which crumbling asphalt has been removed due to severe frost heaves, and are now gravel. Traffic in these areas results in potholes, especially deep ones where the pavement restarts. Pot holes and wash-board conditions are now an ongoing maintenance expense in those sections. A new section of pavement is sinking, suggesting that there will be a third area in which pavement will be removed.

Poor soil conditions beneath Upper DeArmoun are due to ground springs, which are common in Rabbit Valley. Moreover, snowmelt, and seasonal rain on the ridges above the road, drain into Rabbit Valley, contributing to saturated soils along this corridor. Before re-paving, it is likely that the removal of poor soils below the roadbed, extensive ditching, and installation of new culverts, will probably be required.

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Much of the traffic on Upper DeArmoun is Park traffic, and this is a major cause of deterioration. With the increased Park traffic in recent years, the declining condition of Upper DeArmoun Road has accelerated. As a result, there are more and deeper frost heaves, large jarring cracks, slumping pavement, and pot holes. Photos of the current conditions are attached.

A new grant-funded State trailhead and parking area beyond Canyon Road, inside the Park, is now in the planning stages. The construction of this project as well as the upgrade to the final segment of Canyon Road, will result in increased use of the Park, and more pressure on Upper DeArmoun Road.

GARSA covers 100 percent of the seasonal maintenance cost for the roads within its jurisdiction, even though much of the traffic on Upper DeArmoun Road comes from outside the service area for purposes of accessing the Park.

Where GARSA works fine for de-centralized management of snow removal, and light summer maintenance, it was never meant to fund and manage Park access. Despite having the highest mill rate in the Anchorage Bowl, the low population density, coupled with the Municipality's comprehensive construction standards, make these necessary capital upgrades financially prohibitive.

Compare this to Upper Huffman Road, a similar and parallel collector corridor, less than a mile away, and a State maintained road, which leads to the Glen Alps and Upper Huffman trailheads. This road has needed to be re-paved numerous times over the same period, and it was, because State resources were there.

Per the 1980 Chugach State Park Master Plan, the State recognized the need to provide funding to GARSA due to the high volume of park traffic using the road, even over 40 years ago. But the State's capital budget is meager, and expected to remain so for the foreseeable future.

We believe the project could be completed for \$4 million. It is in the 2024-2029 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for \$5 million, as estimated by the Municipality. The legislature recently appropriated \$1.7 million for a portion of the road; the \$2.3 million requested here would complete the effort. To implement the project in a cost effective manner, it would be efficient for the funding from the State and the Municipality to occur as concurrently as possible.

This request has community council support. For two years in a row, voters throughout the entire Anchorage community, through the CASA process, have strongly signaled their affection for the Park, and their willingness to support suitable access; this is not just a Hillside issue. These upgrades are necessary in order to improve opportunities for outdoor recreation in Anchorage, for residents and visitors. Enhanced access to the Park will make it easier and safer for everyone to enjoy this spectacular Anchorage asset.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Joe Connolly  
Chair, Glen Alps Service Area Board of Supervisors  
907-301-9400

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