

DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Resolution 2025 - ##

A RESOLUTION RELATING TO THE SEWARD TO GLENN PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES STUDY REVISED ALTERNATIVES

Whereas, the Seward to Glenn Highway Connection Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study has developed multiple revised alternatives to connect the Seward and Glenn Highways; and

Whereas, the Downtown Community Council has a vested interest in this study, which includes a portion of the council boundary and is impacted by the project; and

Whereas, Fairview is a neighborhood with historically vulnerable populations and currently includes “disadvantaged census tracts” and “housing cost disadvantaged census tracts” where households earn less than 80% of the Area Median Income and are spending over 30% of that income on housing;¹ and

Whereas, the impacts of siting the highway through Fairview with the Gambell-Ingra couplet were well known with the city acknowledging the negative impact of the highway in 1965, that the corridor would “cut the neighborhood and create an island two blocks wide and ten blocks long;”² and

Whereas, the highway corridor through Fairview is one of the most dangerous stretches of the road in the state, with data from the PEL study documenting from 2008-2017, 136 major injury crashes and 19 fatalities, with an example of the highest crash rate of 145.7 fatal and major injury crashes per million vehicle miles traveled at Ingra Street between 5th and 6th Avenues;³ and

Whereas, the city and state have not enacted solutions to address the highway connection, including most recently the incomplete “Highway to Highway” (H2H) process (2011), which led to years of further disinvestment along the corridor and especially on Hyder Street where the proposed “cut and cover” alternative was identified but not implemented; and

Whereas, the purpose and need of the study does not include addressing congestion, but instead includes the purposes to address accessibility, safety, livability, and to “improve neighborhood connections and quality of life;” and

Whereas, the Seward to Glenn Highway Connection PEL Study has revised alternatives for public review and comment, which include two “no regional road connection alternatives” (MTP and MTP+), three “parkway alternatives” (AB, C, and D), and five “port options,” and

Whereas, every alternative includes long-term priorities for the Fairview neighborhood, including

¹ Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (December 2024). Alternative Refinement and Screening Report (draft), “Figure 10. Disadvantaged Census Tract” (p. 26).

https://sewardglennconnection.com/documents/Draft%20Screening%20Report_12-07-24.pdf

² Reamer, D. (2023, May 25). Why planners routed a highway through Anchorage’s Fairview neighborhood. Anchorage Daily News. <https://www.adn.com/opinions/2023/05/25/opinion-why-planners-routed-a-highway-through-anchorage-fairview-neighborhood/>

³ Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (January 2022). A Basic Description of the Environmental Setting. Seward to Glenn Highway PEL Study. https://sewardglennconnection.com/documents/B15_3_Seward-Glenn%20Basic_Description_Environmental_Setting%20Report_20220119-all_sm.pdf

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reducing lanes and speeds on both Gambell and Ingra Streets, restoring Gambell Street as a main street, a “trail connection” (or Woonerf) on Hyder Street as a Fairview Greenway, and

Whereas, the “Revised Level 1 Screening Criteria (Fatal Flaw)” was refined to prioritize the public’s major liability concerns regarding the “relocation” of hundreds of homes and businesses, including historic properties and community facilities;⁴ and

Whereas, based on this Level 1 screening, the preliminary alternatives A, AB1, AB2, B, C1, C2, and D are all recommended to be eliminated from advancing further, recognizing that a controlled-access freeway through a densely developed part of the Anchorage Bowl is unacceptable to the community; and

Whereas, the MTP 2050 and MTP+ Alternatives meet the overall purpose and need of the study by reducing speeds in the corridor, adding Complete Streets projects within the study area, and rerouting freight out of Downtown; and

Whereas, current best practices for transportation planning include less impactful solutions at lower costs to manage, including improving active transportation facilities, increasing transit, Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO), and Transportation Demand Management (TDM); and

Whereas, The Reconnecting Fairview planning effort will focus on the Gambell-Ingra Corridor through a robust public-involvement process to address land uses and transportation facilities within the corridor;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Downtown Community Council stands with the Fairview neighborhood to ensure a solution that reconnects the community and mitigates decades-long past and existing harms caused by the two one-way four-lane roads that were intentionally built through the neighborhood;

THEREFORE, BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, the Downtown Community Council supports the removal of the preliminary “highway” alternatives (A, AB1, AB2, C1, C2, and D), recognizing that a controlled-access freeway through a densely developed part of the Anchorage Bowl is unacceptable to the community; and

THEREFORE, BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, the Downtown Community Council supports the MTP 2050 and MTP+ alternatives with meaningful Traffic Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) and Traffic Demand Management (TDM) investments as long-term solutions, focusing lane reductions on Gambell and Ingra Streets with the potential for 5th and 6th Avenues if warranted. This approach for the corridor to achieves the purpose and need of the study and neighborhood priorities to increase safety along the corridor, removes uncertainty and disinvestment along the corridor, provides opportunity to revitalize the corridor and the neighborhood as a whole, and will better balance community needs to preserve residences, businesses, and parks; and

THEREFORE, BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, the Downtown Community Council recommends prioritizing port connection alternatives within the industrial Ship Creek area, rather than through Downtown, however

⁴ Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (December 2024). Revised Recommended Alternative Selection Criteria Memorandum. https://sewardglennconnection.com/documents/B13-6_SGPEL_Revised_Recommended_Alts_Memo_20241209.pdf

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additional analysis and outreach needs to be done to determine if these connections will solve the freight concerns without harming neighborhoods, and

THEREFORE, BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, the Downtown Community Council requests the Seward to Glenn PEL Study to not repeat the errors of the past by selecting one alignment and precluding others when there is significant fiscal uncertainty about future availability of funding for an extremely expensive capital project, and when the “parkway” alternatives will have significant impacts on neighborhoods and parklands, and

THEREFORE, BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, the Downtown Community Council requests the Seward to Glenn Highway Connection PEL Study to continue working closely with the Reconnecting Fairview planning effort to align its schedule and outcomes to recognize transportation and land use development must be treated in a holistic fashion.

THIS RESOLUTION WAS APPROVED by the Downtown Community Council on _____, 2025

Sivila Villamedes, DTCC President