



March 3, 2020

AMATS Policy Committee
Wolfgang Junge, Chair
4700 Elmore Road
PO Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519

Electronic Mail: amatsinfo@ci.anchorage.ak.us

Re: Public Review Draft for Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) 2040 for Anchorage and Chugiak Eagle River
Support for Short Term Project No. 409 - Campbell Creek Trail – Lake Otis Parkway Crossing

Dear AMATS Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the draft MTP 2040 Update.

The Anchorage Park Foundation is dedicated to developing healthy parks and healthy people by mobilizing public support for Anchorage parks, trails, and recreation opportunities. Our vision is for the people of Anchorage to recognize that parks and trails are vital for supporting healthy lifestyles, connecting neighborhoods to the natural environment, and contributing to a higher quality of life that increases prosperity for all.

Since 2011 we have co-chaired the Anchorage Trails Initiative as part of the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation's Live.Work.Play strategy to attract and retain a quality workforce to Anchorage. A destination trail system is an important piece of that strategy.

Anchorage's four main multi-use trails – the Lanie Fleischer Chester Creek Trail, Tony Knowles Coastal Trail, Campbell Creek Trail and the Ship Creek Trail can all be linked together to form a loop around Anchorage. A fifth trail, the Fish Creek trail, provides connectivity through the middle of the city, with plans to eventually connect to the loop.

Earlier this year, we realized that when you view these trails on a map, it looks like a MOOSE, and there just happens to be 1500 of these beloved creatures on the trail system. Children and adults love the MOOSE! Locals and visitors love the MOOSE! We think this fact will make more children, families, and adults from all walks of life want to complete the MOOSE LOOP – whether it's done in a day, over the course of a summer or over a lifetime in Anchorage.

While the MOOSE can be accessed in its current form, addressing the gaps in the route's connections will improve safety for users. Creating more points of access to existing trails and more neighborhood connections and wayfinding to the trails will increase safe and equitable access to more people across Anchorage. In May of 2016, after a lengthy public process, the

Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approved a suite of wayfinding signs to improve our existing assets, and our organization is raising funds to get them installed.

Connecting the Campbell Creek Trail at Lake Otis Parkway represents the last major obstacle to creating this active transportation network that can be an economic driver for Anchorage. Without this crossing, there is no way to host events like the Mayor's Marathon, Tour of Anchorage and other gatherings that locals and visitors love - because we cannot close Lake Otis Parkway. We need to safely travel over Lake Otis. Building this overpass fulfills all of the goals of the MTP 2040 plan to preserve the existing system, improve safety, improve travel conditions, support the economy, promote environmental sustainability and make sound public investments.

The time is now to build this overpass that links hundreds of millions of dollars in previous federal, state and local transportation infrastructure investments, including:

- Building the existing multi-use trails – the Lanie Fleischer Chester Creek Trail, Tony Knowles Coastal Trail, Ship Creek Trail and Campbell Creek Trails;
- Building an underpass along the Campbell Creek Trail at the Seward Highway;
- Building a non-motorized bridge over Tudor Road to connect the Campbell Creek Trail;
- Building a non-motorized bridge over Northern Lights to connect the Lanie Fleischer Chester Creek Trail;
- Passing voter-approved bonds to upgrade those existing trails;
- Building the sidewalks, trails and roads that connect these trails together.

Anchorage's Vision Zero committee lists Lake Otis Parkway and Tudor Road, located less than ½ mile away from the Campbell Creek Trail, as a High Injury Network.

It has been more than a decade that the people of Anchorage have been waiting for this critical infrastructure investment. As Anchorage continues to diversify its economy, and more independent travelers choose to travel to Alaska, let's give them one more reason to stay one more day in Anchorage. Let's give them the Moose Loop, where you can enjoy sweeping views of Cook Inlet, salmon fishing on Ship Creek, diverse neighborhoods offering rich cultural experiences, and everything in between.

Thank you again for your support for Project 409.

Sincerely,



Beth Nordlund, Executive Director
Anchorage Park Foundation