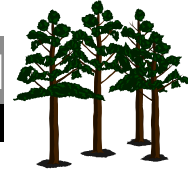




# Rabbit Creek Community Council

P.O. Box 112354, Anchorage, AK 99511-2354



May 30, 2014

Troy Swanson, Office of the Mayor  
632 West 6th Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

RE: Rabbit Creek Community Council Survey on proposed 2015 Capital Improvement Projects

Dear Mayoral, OMB, and Public Works Staff:

Rabbit Creek Community Council discussed and ranked the projects at our May 8 monthly meeting. Following are the Council's priorities.

Note that the Council strongly opposes several projects (for reasons such as non-conformance with the Hillside District Plan) and requests the Municipality to delete them from the CIP.

Note also that Rabbit Creek Community Council has nominated a new project: Pedestrian Connectivity – survey and signage. The CIP lacks any non-motorized transportation funding: this project fixes that oversight. Our Council area has several platted but undeveloped pedestrian easements that could provide short, off-the-roadway connections between long cul-de-sacs.

Finally, note that our Community Council finds it important to provide explanations when ranking the proposed Capital Improvement Projects (CIP). Therefore, we hope that the OMB online survey will be modified next year to encourage written comments rather than just a numerical ranking. In addition, it would be valuable to encourage all councils to comment on projects of citywide importance.

## **Municipal Road Projects (Project Management and Engineering)**

### **RCCC's high priority projects**

### **1. Golden View Drive Intersection and Safety Upgrades - Rabbit Creek Road to Romania Drive**

This project has been RCCC's top municipal road priority for several years. Safety hazards include: steep grades in three directions at the intersection; the peak hour traffic created by the middle school; high volumes of pedestrian, bike and vehicle traffic attracted to the school for community events; no safe pedestrian crossings. The intersection has had numerous accidents.

Traffic volumes and speeds continue to increase all along the road. Goldenview is the only road access for several thousand acres north and west up the Hillside (there are a couple of minor connections that are so steep and narrow that they become seasonally impassable.) Drainage from peat soils causes large glaciations along Goldenview Drive, costing thousands of taxpayer dollars in thawing.

The first half of the project is at the 65% design phase: continued funding is obviously needed.

### **2. Mountain Air Drive/Hillside Drive Extension**

Funding in the 2013 Legislature for this project was cannibalized to partly-fund other projects. The 65% design phase is complete: and until this project moves ahead, that public money is wasted. The Council stands behind the MOA's preferred alignment of 2013, which was a true collector/connector to serve the public purposes of diverting traffic from Golden View Drive and providing efficient ingress and egress, while minimizing impacts to the wetlands, creek, and school setting. The Council opposed a longer, circuitous alignment that required a more extensive creek crossing and served as a neighborhood street more than a collector.

### **3. Birchtree/Elmore LRSA Road, Drainage and Traffic Calming.**

This area has numerous seeps and substandard road beds. There is a persistent safety concern and disruption from cut-through traffic generated primarily by South High School.

## **Moderate, equally-ranked priorities**

Ranked 4 through 7

### **Goldenview Dr/Buffalo St/Elmore Rd/145<sup>th</sup> Chip Seal Surfacing**

These roads either carry school-related traffic or are direct routes, and wear out faster than most neighborhood roads in the council area.

### **Hillside LRSA Traffic Calming**

Last year, the CIP had proposed a specific project for Birchtree/Elmore LRSA. That LRSA has continuing needs: public safety concern, especially from cut-through traffic related to South High School. Severe grade of intersection with

142<sup>nd</sup> Ave is a risk. Traffic speed must be controlled. LRSA needs increased funding.

### **Bluebell Dr at Goldenview Dr intersection Safety Improvements**

Severe grade creates a winter collision hazard. This intersection needs a three-way stop as near-term safety measure. (This safety measure was used at Buffalo St and 142<sup>nd</sup> Ave.) The full reconstruction of the intersection should wait until the Golden View Dr safety upgrades – Phase II.

### **Municipal project to add to the CIP**

**Pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods and local destinations – survey, signage, improvements.** RCCC has several platted but undeveloped pedestrian easements. There is a need to survey and mark these easements so that pedestrians have convenient connections between neighborhoods and local destinations, particularly where the road system has long cul-de-sacs and switchbacks. In addition, there are creek corridors and public lands that require surveying before the public can use them for planned pedestrian access, including Little Rabbit Creek and Section 36. Some minor clearing may be needed. These pedestrian connections are part of the transportation network and do not fall under Parks and Recreation funding.

### **Other projects that are needed, but lower priority**

Hillside LRSA's Road and Drainage System Rehab

Hillside Drainage Improvements (It is unclear how this project differs from the above LRSA drainage system rehab.)

Potter Valley Road Surface Rehab

Potter Valley Road will bear a near-term surge in heavy vehicle traffic because of the recent platting of a new subdivision and the planned paving of an upper section of Potter Valley Road. This will further hasten the crumbling and cracking of the road. It offers community-wide health and economic payback by serving current recreation use as well as and future access to Chugach State Park.

Little Rabbit Creek Flooding and Glaciation Improvements

### **Municipal projects to delay or delete from the CIP**

**Delay** Golden View Drive Connection (west) – Romania Drive to Potter Valley Road

This is a low priority at present because it would generate new vehicle trips and create unfunded spillover effects onto substandard and hazardous road segments that should be upgraded first. The Hillside District Plan requires a Special Study Area that will include connecting roads and intersections, to resolve the traffic connectivity in a comprehensive way. It should be phased to occur after improvements to Goldenview Road, Potter Valley Road, and the Potter Valley/Seward Highway intersection as these are substandard parts of the road system.

**Delete** . Elmore Road Extension – DeArmoun Rd to Rabbit Creek Rd. This should be deleted and re-defined because the project scope jumps ahead of the specified traffic study area in the Hillside District Plan. The Hillside District Plan requires a sub-area traffic study is the first step. Predetermining the alignment of a connector road is piecemeal and not appropriate: any change in traffic flow will have spillover effects.

**Delete**. 164<sup>th</sup> Ave/Betty St Area Drainage Improvements

RCCC has repeatedly opposed this project. Drainage affects a few homeowners but the costs of a proposed drainage system would be pushed onto the surrounding neighborhood. Buyout of the houses that were erroneously built in the natural drainage swale has been suggested as a cheaper solution for taxpayers.

**Delete**. 164<sup>th</sup> Ave Upgrade (Or, revise scope to surface rehab only) - Golden View Drive to Betty Street

In 2014, this was proposed as a “surface rehabilitation project” The Council re-submits that resurfacing 164<sup>th</sup> Ave is a worthy project but it should be added to other roads slated for chip sealing. The vague title “164<sup>th</sup> Ave upgrades” should not be a pretense for a \$6 million drainage project that the Council opposes.

**State of Alaska**

**1. Restore this project. Rabbit Creek Road at Golden View Drive - Intersection Safety Upgrades**

This was a stand-alone project in the prior year’s CIP, and now has confirmed its importance. The 2013 DOTPF Hillside Intersection Study ranked this as the top DOTPF intersection in need of improvements. Safety hazards include: steep grades in three directions at the intersection; the peak hour traffic created by the middle school; high volumes of pedestrian, bike and vehicle traffic attracted to the school for community events; no safe pedestrian crossings. The intersection has had numerous crashes and injuries

**2. Rabbit Creek Rd Upgrade – Seward Hwy to Goldenview Dr**

This is a blatantly dangerous road and the highest safety concern in the Community Council area. There have been several fatal vehicle crashes. Rabbit

Creek Road has high and increasing volumes of traffic, excessive speeds, direct access driveways, and poor sight lines. Turning maneuvers are increasingly difficult at peak hours, not only at intersections but also at numerous driveways. The shoulders are unsuitable for many non-motorized users (especially children) because of the vehicle speeds as well as the grades. Rabbit Creek Road's traffic hazards will increase, because it is the main access for dozens of neighborhoods, and more large tracts of land are in the pipeline for development. The Council requests public involvement from the very earliest scoping stages: there is a desire to handle traffic with sensitivity to the context.

### **3. Old Seward Hwy Upgrade - Rabbit Creek Rd to Potter Valley Rd**

Old Seward Highway behind Potter Marsh is the only section of the original highway from Anchorage to Seward that hasn't been upgraded in 60 years. It is a potentially deadly situation with literally NO shoulders in most places, poor sight lines, and very steep embankments. The pavement heaves and crumbles regularly because of a poor road base. A quarter-mile of this road is flood prone much of the year because of poor drainage. The re-design of this road should be a model scenic and recreation-access corridor because it threads through Potter Marsh and adjoining open spaces. The Hillside District Plan calls for a road design that has rural character and is consistent with the existing public uses such as recreation and the adjoining wildlife refuge.

### **4. Elmore Rd at Rabbit Creek Rod Intersection Safety Improvements.**

The Council recognizes an extreme risk at this intersection, with no clear solutions. This safety project will move faster if separated from the proposed extension of Elmore Road, which requires a subarea traffic study and will take much more time and money. The project must include a public process.

### **Delete: Old Seward Hwy Rut Repair Potter Valley Road to Rabbit Creek Rd**

The annual patching and resurfacing on such a crude road bed is a perpetual waste of public money. The Council consensus was: to fix it, DOTPF must re-build it

## **Park and Recreation projects**

### **1. Section 36 Park Improvements**

This long-delayed park offers high benefits because of its proximity to schools, especially Bear Valley and Goldenview Middle School. It has citywide value for winter recreation

because of its elevation. Funding of trails per the Master Plan would yield a high return on investment because there is already adjacent parking.

## **2. Campbell Creek Greenbelt**

This trail has citywide public value.

### **Other Park and Recreation projects**

With regard to Forest Health, Rabbit Creek Community Council has long supported forest preservation and health, including wildfire protection.

With regard to multi-use athletic field rehabilitation, RCCC is on record from 2013 in support of funding the quality of the playing fields themselves: don't spend money on the deluxe package of paving and bleachers and flush toilets.

With regard to dog parks, several neighborhoods need them.

Thank you in advance for your responsiveness to these comments.

Nancy Pease  
Chair, Rabbit Creek Community Council

Cc:  
Christine Chesnut, Office of Management and Budget  
Gary Jones, Public Works  
DOTPF regional office