



North Lakes Community Council

3060 Lazy Eight Ct #2 PMB 449  
Wasilla, AK 99654

August 4, 2025

Andrew Strahler, P.E., Civil Construction Project Manager

Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Re: School Site Access Improvements (Project 35472-1800-1810)

Mr. Strahler,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the 35% design package for this project. We also appreciate the due date extension that allowed time for a letter to be prepared after discussion of this project at our August 31st NLCC Membership Meeting.

We acknowledge that the review package provided was limited to the following project elements:

- Phase 1 - Connecting E. Paradise Lane to E. Foxtrot Avenue
- Phase 2B - Reconstruction of E. Foxtrot to the west of Charley Drive

The 35% review package does not include any information on Phase 2A - Intersection improvements at Paradise and Wasilla Fishhook. We understand that we will be given an opportunity in the future to review that very important element of the overall project scope.

The NLCC provided earlier feedback on this project through the MSB Assembly on May 20, 2025 (attachment 1) and through NLCC Resolution 2025-004 on May 29, 2025 (attachment 2). Since that time, we have engaged in further dialogue with the Mat-Su Borough Public Works and Planning departments, and with the Mat-Su Borough School District to understand and try and influence the scope and timing of various project elements.

Before getting into specific feedback on the 35% design package, we want to share a few comments that take into consideration the learning that has occurred since the time of our resolution.

A. General Comments - Entire Project

1. Birchtree Charter School: We understand it is too late to affect the location or timing of the new Birchtree Charter school. This is unfortunate, because, from a safety perspective, the transportation infrastructure will not be adequate in either direction (east onto Wasilla Fishhook, or west connecting to Foxtrot and routing to an intersection on Bogard Road) before the school opens. Because it is a charter school with an expected 400-plus students who are driven to and from school in private vehicles on a daily basis, the traffic impacts are very significant. In the future, we hope that Community Councils are invited to provide input to the school site selection process.

2. On-Site Parking and Staging Areas at Shaw and Birchtree Schools: We are encouraged to hear that there will be modifications to the parking and staging areas at Shaw Elementary to accommodate existing drop-off and pick-up traffic and eliminate the staging of vehicles on Paradise Lane during those critical time periods. We are also encouraged that the design for Birchtree Charter School will address the same issue. The existing situation at Shaw (and at the existing Birchtree Charter School) results in an unsafe backup on active streets. We understand we will be given an opportunity to review and comment on those design elements when they have reached the 35% design level.

3. Bogard Road Intersection Safety: ***Our single greatest concern with this project is the negative impact to Bogard Road Corridor intersection safety.*** Traffic from the eastern core area going to and from the Birchtree / Shaw schools via Foxtrot Avenue must also travel the Bogard / Caribou / Charley corridor. The existing Caribou - Bogard intersection is already significantly under capacity and with the additional school traffic will simply become unacceptable for the safety of our residents and school children. For perspective, analysis of traffic studies provided back in May indicate that, with the additional school related traffic, the traffic volume at the Caribou-Bogard intersection would be similar to the existing traffic volume at the Engstrom-Bogard intersection. ***We do not recommend connecting Paradise Lane to Foxtrot until this downstream transportation infrastructure safety problem is resolved.*** We also recommend updated traffic counts be obtained on Caribou between Bogard and E. Beaver Avenue. There has been a lot of development on Caribou (including multi-family housing) since the last traffic count.

The Bogard-Seldon Corridor Access Management Plan (CAMP) has identified a solution with the installation of a controlled intersection to be located at Moose and Bogard.

The capacity and design of the existing Charley Drive to Moose to Caribou (or Moose) corridor is also inadequate to accommodate the expected additional Birchtree Charter School traffic and needs to be upgraded.

4. Additional Traffic due to new Development: We have learned there is now ongoing platting work to address additional new development for the private property north of Paradise Lane. If this new development incorporates connection of roads to Paradise, then our traffic concerns outlined in items 1 and 3 above are amplified and our recommended sequence of infrastructure improvements becomes even more serious.

B. Comments Specific to the current 35% Design Package:

1. Paradise / Foxtrot Connection: The NLCC supports the long term vision of Paradise Lane connecting to Foxtrot. We understand that the funding is in place to allow the design and construction of Phase 1A and Phase 2B to proceed, and we agree they should. However, we strongly recommend that the final connection should be postponed until

the downstream issues are resolved. This could be accomplished by the addition of a simple earthen berm at the connection point. If emergency vehicle access is an important priority, then a motor-activated gate with an emergency access code could be installed, allowing emergency access while prohibiting day-to-day through-traffic.

2. Traffic Calming: We are encouraged by the discussion of traffic calming measures and the incorporation of curves into the design of the Paradise Lane extension to keep traffic moving slowly. We suggest further consideration be given to the addition of speed bumps for the design of Paradise Lane and Foxtrot Avenue.
3. Bike & Pedestrian Paths: We are also encouraged to see inclusion of multi-use pathways along the length of Paradise Lane and Foxtrot. The inclusion of pedestrian path lighting along Paradise Lane and at the intersection of Charley and Foxtrot is also highly supported by our residents. The logic of providing pedestrian level lighting along the Paradise pathway applies equally to the pathway on Foxtrot, so we recommend inclusion of pathway lighting on Foxtrot to Charley.
4. Impact to Property Owners adjacent to Foxtrot: The 35% design documents indicate impacts to all but one of the existing adjacent property owners. Impacts show up in the form of additional permanent ROW acquisitions and temporary construction easements. In one case, a water well is identified as needing to be moved. As far as we know, there has not been any outreach yet to those affected property owners. We recommend minimizing the negative impacts wherever possible and an immediate outreach to that community to communicate the upcoming impacts and explain the process and timing.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. We are more than willing to meet with you in person to further discuss our concerns and explore recommendations.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rod Hanson".

Rod Hanson

President, North Lakes Community Council

907-841-8735

Attachment 1: [NLCC input to Mat Su Borough Assembly - May 20, 2025](#)

Attachment 2: [NLCC Resolution 2025-004 - May 29, 2025](#)

cc: MSB Planning Director  
MSB Public Works Director  
Alaska DOT - Mat Su District Chief  
Alaska DOT - Mat Su District Planner