

Assembly Decision on DOWL Contract Change Order - WFH / Paradise Intersection

1 message

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To: Tom Adams <Tom.Adams@matsugov.us>

Cc: Alex Strawn <Alex.Strawn@matsugov.us>, "North Lakes Community Council (board@nlakes.cc)" <board@nlakes.cc>

Tom, I had to leave the meeting after my testimony last night, and I missed all the subsequent dialogue about this change order and the project. I missed the fact it was "pulled" for discussion by McKee earlier. I was able to get caught up by watching the rest of the meeting via Facebook video. I was generally pleased with what I heard from you and the Assembly.

I am glad that the Assembly approved the contract extension without exception. It was great that you were there to answer questions. It's clear that not all assembly members understand the nature of engineering services contracts. It was also clear that Assemblyman Fonov had a misunderstanding on the position of the NLCC. I will reach out to him directly to clarify.

- We support the project.
- We acknowledge that both the WFH intersection and the Foxtrot extension are appropriate.
- We wish the WFH piece had been addressed as a first and higher priority.
- We are happy to see traffic calming is being seriously considered along Foxtrot / Paradise.
- We are pleased to see pedestrian facilities included in the scope.
- We are concerned about the impacts to Bogard intersections.

I would like to follow up on a few points that were discussed:

1. School Site Selection process for Birchtree Charter: I appreciate how you characterized this decision as a "failure" because they didn't adequately consider the traffic impacts. The comments by Gamble and Nowers at the end of the meeting suggest they understand this concern. I'll be reaching out to see if they can drive the implementation of more specific requirements for school site location decisions administratively or by code.

2. Discussion about temporary versus permanent solutions: I also appreciated the clarification you provided about why we didn't just jump into a "turn lane" solution for Wasilla Fishhook. I agree. However, I do believe there are some instances where temporary solutions are warranted when the time horizon for full solutions extends beyond 5 years. The NLCC will be coming forward to the State, MSB, and MVP/MPO with some suggestions along those lines for certain Bogard Road safety concerns.

3. WFH / Paradise Intersection Level of Service: I understand why the roundabout concept was chosen over the signalized intersection. You explained that well. I was surprised though with the future intersection only being a "C" Level of Service. Why wouldn't the goal be to target a "B" or "A" level design given expected growth and development in the area? My concern is that the LOS will drop to a "D" or worse LOS within only a few years of operation.

4. Lack of Visibility on Land Use: Assembly person Nowers had good questions about the proposed subdivisions. The ongoing frustration with the current process that doesn't allow the Borough to ask the developer whether the lots will be single family, multi family, or commercial continues. The NLCC has prior examples where this issue has resulted in commercial properties going in with residential grade road connections to our Borough roads. I think we will lobby Nowers and others to advance code changes that address this problem.

5. Traffic Data Gathering: Nowers also asked about gathering traffic data prior to the formal requirements that are project driven. The NLCC agrees that this should be pursued. It will then help all of us prioritize and focus attention on the most egregious problems first. I actually had a conversation about this earlier today with Jamie Taylor. She sent me a list of planned data gathering locations in our area, and it includes Bear, Moose, and Caribou. This is good news. We agreed that it would be good to establish baseline traffic information now, while school is in session, and then again after the new Birchtree Charter School is up and running. The ability to compare before and after may be very helpful in working with the State and MSB to best prioritize future projects. In our view, there may also be some justification for temporary solutions in some of these areas while waiting for the full blown solution in the distant future. I believe Nowers expects this data to be gathered and reported to the Assembly.

6. Sidewalks in neighborhoods surrounding schools: Sumner and Nowers brought this up. They seemed to believe there may be some existing code language that requires this, but that it isn't being implemented. Are you aware of such language? If it doesn't exist in code, perhaps there should be a code change sponsored by the Assembly.

Bottom line Tom ... we appreciate your efforts and this is an important project for sure. I wanted to capture my thoughts while they were fresh after the Assembly meeting and get them to you. Perhaps we can touch on some of these questions or issues in our next monthly Coordination Meeting.

My testimony from last night is attached.

Thanks again,

Rod Hanson
NLCC



20250902 Assembly Testimony - (Shaw _ Birchtree School Access - Foxtrot Extension) - Google Docs.pdf

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