



December 9, 2024

Ryan Anderson, Commissioner  
Katherine Keith, Deputy Commissioner  
Sean Holland, Central Region Director  
Noah King, Project Manager  
Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

Re: Status of Fish Creek Trail connection project, Project No. CFHWY00587

We are alarmed by information revealed during the December 5 AMATS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting regarding the Fish Creek Trail connection project. Specifically, we learned that **the project has been “put on hold” by the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF)** without prior warning or further explanation. This unexpected development raises serious concerns about the future of a project that has broad public support and significant benefits for Anchorage.

We call on DOT&PF leadership to provide an immediate and comprehensive explanation, specifically addressing the following questions:

- Is the Fish Creek Trail connection project officially on hold?
- Who made this decision, on what authority, and for what specific reasons?
- When was this decision made, and why was the public not informed until the December 5 TAC meeting?
- What are the next steps for this project, and how will public input be incorporated moving forward?
- Is there intent to discontinue this project? In such a case, how much federal funding would need to be repaid, and which entity would be responsible for the repayment?

The structure of the TAC meeting did not allow citizens to ask any of these questions. The Fish Creek segment of the meeting began with a presentation from stakeholder Marathon Petroleum, which operates a utility line in the project area; according to the TAC, **stakeholders do not present to this committee, and Marathon’s invitation was a highly unusual move directed by DOT&PF Deputy Commissioner Katherine Keith and Central Region Director Sean Holland.** It was followed by a presentation from Parks & Recreation staff as members of the project team. After all presentations and public comments were finished, **the committee**



**notified the room that the project had been put on hold by DOT&PF, and moved on with no further comment.** DOT&PF project team members were not present at the meeting, and it was stated that DOT&PF staff will not be participating in any public engagement or working on the project at this time.

Bike Anchorage is a nonprofit advocacy organization that has supported the Fish Creek trail connection project for many years, and we see it as a huge benefit to bicyclists and all residents of Anchorage. It will fill a necessary transportation safety gap as well as provide recreation and community enjoyment of a beautiful natural area to everyone. The project team has taken great care in designing and choosing a route that has the least impact to all stakeholders in the area including the estuary, the railroad, utilities, and residents near the trail. **Anchorage voters have approved bonds for the project every year since 2021, committing a total of \$450,000 thus far, and a petition in support of the trail has approximately 450 signatures as of this writing.**

Our members were among the many who attended the TAC meeting on December 5 to hear an update on this project and voice our support. We listened to concerns from one neighbor who is opposed and the Marathon presentation, which expressed support for the project in spite of some misgivings. The project team then presented their analysis of each challenge to the project and addressed each concern, providing thorough supporting documentation and photographs showing the current ownership and state of facilities to demonstrate that all legitimate stakeholder concerns would be appropriately mitigated.

After listening to their presentation, **there did not appear to be any valid cause for delay to this project.** The entire room was shocked to hear of the project's disruption, because it appears to have sidestepped the public process entirely. As of this writing, the official project website contains no information about the project being "on hold," and we can locate no press releases, social media posts, newsletters, interviews, or any other form of public communication indicating DOT&PF's change to the project status.

**This is a public project, funded by public dollars, intended to benefit the public. As such, it demands full public transparency.** We urge DOT&PF and all relevant parties to provide clear, written answers to the questions listed above and to ensure that any future decisions about this project are made openly and with input from the community.



We appreciate the hard work of the project team in bringing this project to this stage and look forward to working together to complete the Fish Creek trail connection with cooperation and transparency.

Sincerely,

Alexa Dobson  
Executive Director, Bike Anchorage  
With support from the Bike Anchorage Advocacy Committee

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