

TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Karl R. Amylon, City Manager
DATE: February 27, 2020
RE: **Tongass Avenue Pavement Deterioration**

By correspondence dated January 30 and February 19, 2020, Public Works Director Mark Hilson and I wrote to the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities regarding the advanced deterioration of sections of Tongass Avenue within City limits. By correspondence dated February 25, 2020, DOT&PF Regional Director D. Lance Mearig responded to my office and outlined two options to fund a "pavement preservation effort" to restore the road to a "more serviceable condition." Under a best case scenario a preservation project would be delivered by early summer. Under the worst case scenario completion of a preservation project would extend later in the summer. In the interim, Director Mearig suggests that Ketchikan residents "be careful and prudent, which means slow down."

I believe under present circumstances such a response is simply unacceptable. The current pavement conditions pose a significant risk to residents' safety and property. Given what Ketchikan residents have had to endure the last two years as Tongass Avenue was reconstructed between Deermount Street and the tunnel, attempting to undertake a pavement preservation project well into this year's cruise ship season is equally unacceptable. The attached letter to DOT&PF Commissioner John MacKinnon has been drafted for Mayor Sivertsen's signature.

A motion has been prepared for City Council consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the City Council adopt the motion authorizing the Mayor to submit staff's draft letter to Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Commissioner John MacKinnon requesting immediate attention and funding of Tongass Avenue pavement restoration within City limits.

Recommended Motion: I move the City Council authorize the Mayor to submit staff's draft letter to Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Commissioner John MacKinnon requesting immediate attention and funding of Tongass Avenue pavement restoration within City limits.



Robert Sivertsen, Mayor
334 Front Street
Ketchikan, AK 99901

(907) 228-5603 phone
(907) 225-5075 fax

February 26, 2020

Commissioner John McKinnon
Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
PO Box 112500
Juneau, Alaska 99811-2500

RE: Tongass Avenue Pavement Deterioration and Emergency Repairs

Dear Commissioner McKinnon,

By letters dated February 19 and January 30, 2020 addressed to Southcoast Regional Director Lance Mearig, the City of Ketchikan has implored the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) to develop and execute a plan to address the rapidly failing pavement along Tongass Avenue in advance of the busy summer cruise visitor season.

On February 25, 2020, the City received correspondence from Mr. Mearig regarding proposed interim measures for pavement preservation pending state general funds, anticipated to be delivered early this summer. If state funds are not available, federal funds will be sought which will push preservation work into the latter part of the summer. While the City is keenly aware of the state's fiscal challenges, both of these funding and project schedules are simply unacceptable. By our understanding, the earliest the City can expect to see significant progress would be late June when the highway will be choked with tour buses in addition to increased traffic in response to tourism-related activities. As evidenced in the Front, Mill and Stedman Streets repaving work performed during the 2019 summer season, eliminating one lane of the main arterial roadway connecting the north and south ends of the community has profound impacts. Delaying work until later in the summer is similarly ill advised. In addition to traffic impacts, the City strongly believes that based on the current condition of the roadway the deteriorated portions of Tongass Avenue will significantly expand well in advance of the scheduled work further exacerbating the negative effects seen today.

Transiting Tongass Avenue is a requirement of life in Ketchikan; there is no alternative. Asking residents to slow down or simply not drive on Tongass Avenue for months on end is unrealistic when the road's traversability is the responsibility of ADOT&PF to maintain. The State of Alaska must find funding and promptly remedy the community's main roadway until such time that the Tongass Avenue reconstruction project is fully designed and funded. The present state of the pavement poses risks to public safety, personal property, and is causing increased harm to state assets and as such qualifies as a public emergency. The City appreciates ADOT&PF's maintenance measures to patch failing portions as conditions allow but asks that this serious issue be resolved with far greater urgency.

Should you have any questions on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Robert Sivertsen
Mayor

Cc: Governor Mike Dunleavy
Senator Bert Stedman
Representative Dan Ortiz
City of Ketchikan Councilmembers
Karl R. Amylon, City Manager
Lacey Simpson, Assistant City Manager
Mark Hilson, Public Works Director
Kara Jurczak, Assistant Public Works Director
Ray Matiaschowski



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Transportation and
Public Facilities

SOUTHCOST REGION
Director's Office

6860 Glacier Highway
P.O. Box 112506
Juneau, Alaska, 99811-2506
Main: 907.465.1763
dot.alaska.gov/sereg

February 25, 2020

Karl R. Amylon
City Manager
City of Ketchikan
344 Front Street
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

Dear Mr. Amylon:

I am well aware of the pavement conditions on Tongass Avenue and South Tongass Highway. This year-to-date, our local maintenance crews have placed more than 32 tons of patching material in pothole repairs. Their best efforts notwithstanding, the results are not ideal. Applying asphalt patching material in winter conditions, such as wet, snow-covered, or frozen pavements that are frequent in Ketchikan, leads to a repair that is not durable and is likely to require additional patching in short order.

I join Commissioner MacKinnon with some displeasure in the schedule of upcoming reconstruction projects. The segment between Hoadley Creek and Water Street will likely not see construction until 2021. The segment from Deermount Street to Surf Street will have funding available in October 2021, with significant construction not occurring until 2022. The segment from Water Street to the tunnel is at least another year further out.

In the interim, we are investigating the feasibility of a pavement preservation effort to restore these highway segments to a more serviceable condition. If state general funds are available, we will deliver a preservation project early this summer. In the likely event that state funds are not available, we will pursue a federally funded preservation project, which will take longer to develop and may extend completion of the work to later this summer.

We at DOT&PF need to improve our performance and get our projects done more quickly so the public benefits sooner from planned transportation improvements. Every project we have, including the Alaska Marine Highway System, competes for the same limited federal dollars. Statewide, the needs far outstrip the funds available. I support the commissioner's initiative to develop and complete our projects faster; costs will go down and we can do more projects. One of the commissioner's goals is to improve our processes and performance. Had we done this in previous administrations, we would not be having this conversation.

Southcoast Region will keep the city informed as interim repair plans develop. In the meantime, our maintenance forces will continue to patch potholes as conditions allow. I want to reinforce

"Keep Alaska Moving through service and infrastructure."

the recommendation in the Ketchikan Daily News editorial from February 5th. We are asking drivers to be careful and prudent, which means "slow down," as we work to maintain the pavement surfaces.

Sincerely,



D. Lance Mearig, P.E.
Regional Director

Copy to: Senator Bert Stedman
Representative Dan Ortiz
Mayor Bob Sivertsen
John MacKinnon, DOT&PF Commissioner
Lacey G. Simpson, Assistant City Manager
Mark Hilson, P.E., Public Works Director
Kara Jurczak, P.E., Assistant Public Works Director
Ray Matiashowski



CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

334 Front Street, Ketchikan, AK 99901
PH (907) 228-5603 / FX (907) 225-5075

February 19, 2020

ADOT&PF - Division of Program Development
ATTN: Lance Mearig, P.E., Southcoast Region Director
PO Box 112506
Juneau, AK 99811-2500

Dear Mr. Mearig:

Re: Tongass Avenue Pavement Deterioration

With regard to the above referenced subject, this correspondence is a follow-up to Public Works Director Mark Hilson's letter and exhibits dated January 30, 2020, attached hereto. While the City of Ketchikan has received acknowledgement of the poor condition of Tongass Avenue pavement from your staff, we have not received a reply indicating how and when the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities intends to address this issue. In the meantime, the City of Ketchikan is very concerned because the roadway surface has continued deteriorating at an accelerated pace.

As of the date of this letter, there is still an opportunity to make more substantial early season repairs (Secon is already planning to be in Ketchikan in April) to this road before the increased traffic associated with the upcoming busy summer season. If you disagree that there is not enough time for this to occur, it is our request that the repairs move forward immediately with an accelerated procurement process, which could be accomplished after declaration of a public emergency. The condition of the road justifies such an approach.

While we will leave the design details to you and your staff, the City of Ketchikan believes nothing short of hot mix repairs (such as a skim coat or a milling and paving) are necessary to achieve a minimum level of service until the Tongass Avenue reconstruction project can be finished.

Thank you and your staff for the time and attention you give to transportation projects in Ketchikan. It is very much appreciated. Should you have any questions on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,

Karl R. Amylon
City Manager

cc: Mayor and Councilmembers
Mark Hilson, P.E., Public Works Director
Kara Jurczak, P.E., Assistant Public Works Director
Lacey G. Simpson, Assistant City Manager
Senator Bert Stedman
Representative Dan Ortiz
John Mackinnon, DOT Commissioner
Ray Matiashowski



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Administrative Offices / Engineering
2930 Tongass Avenue, Ketchikan, AK 99901
PH (907) 228-4727 / FX (907) 225-8721

SENT VIA EMAIL

January 30, 2020

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Design & Engineering Services
Attn: Lance Mearig, P.E., Southcoast Region Director
PO Box 112506
Juneau, AK 99801-2506

Re: Tongass Avenue Pavement Condition

Dear Lance:

Unfortunately this winter's freeze thaw cycles, snow storms, and winter maintenance activities have drastically deteriorated the aged Tongass Avenue pavement in the City of Ketchikan. This has resulted in large potholes and areas of pavement failure and has placed a substantial burden on the traveling public. While we look forward to the longer term improvements programmed with Mr. Tripp's Tongass Ave Reconstruction project, significant repairs are warranted as soon as the construction season begins. The attached pictures show that the damage is severe to the point that normal road patching with cold patch will not be sufficient. Therefore, on behalf of the City of Ketchikan, I am requesting that ADOT &PF contract hot mix repairs on Tongass Avenue as quickly as possible, preferably in advance of the 2020 cruise season.

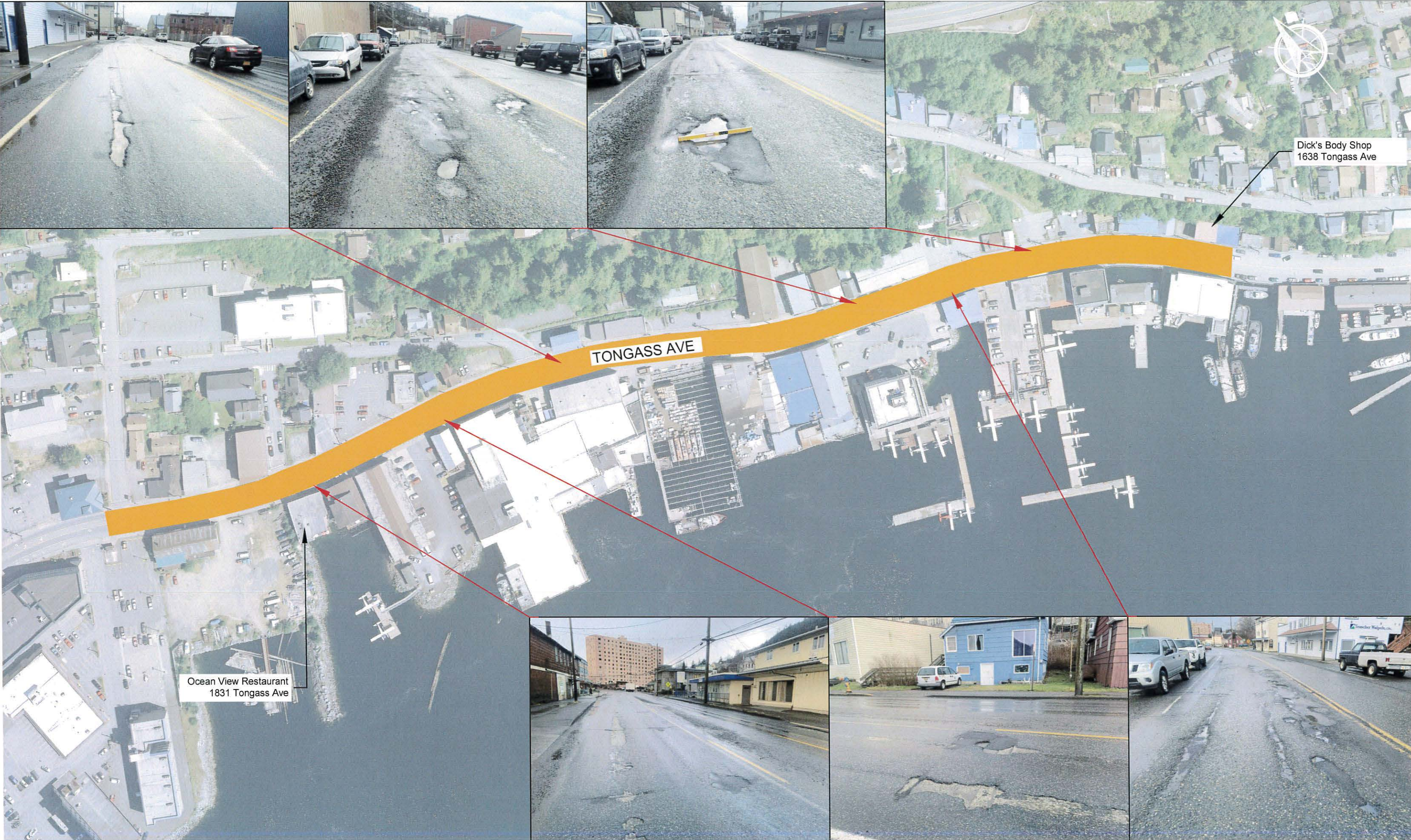
Thank you and your staff for the time and attention you give to transportation projects in Ketchikan. It is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Mark Hilson, P.E.
Public Works Director

cc: Lawrence P. Carroll, P.E., Division Director
Kirk D. Miller, P.E., Preconstruction Engineer
Charles M. Tripp, P.E., Project Manager
Karl Amylon, City Manager
Lacey Simpson, Assistant City Manager
Bob Sivertsen, Mayor and City Councilmembers

AREA OF ASPHALT FAILURE 2020



AREA OF ASPHALT FAILURE 2020

