



LOT
7a(10)

TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Karl R. Amylon, City Manager

DATE: February 27, 2020

RE: **Request for Substitute Letter - Tongass Avenue Pavement Deterioration**

By report dated February 27, 2020, my office submitted to the City Council a draft letter from Mayor Sivertsen to DOT&PF Commissioner John McKinnon requesting the state immediately address deteriorating pavement conditions on Tongass Avenue. The letter has been updated to reflect meetings that were held on Monday, March 2, 2020 in Ketchikan between local officials and DOT&PF staff.

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

March 04, 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, assuming that Federal Highway Administration concurs with the use of the funds.

ADOT & PF staff traveled to Ketchikan on March 2, 2020 in order to establish the limits and design of an interim repair project, and meet with City and Borough staff. It is my understanding that during this visit construction related input was sought from representatives of a paving contractor. With the field work done, it seems the engineering challenges of this project are behind us and the final design is imminent.

While the City greatly appreciates this progress as a result of ADOT & PFs most recent efforts, it is the project schedule that is alarming from the City's perspective. According to Mr. Mearig's letter, 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, paving an extremely busy arterial roadway connecting the north and south ends of the community has profound negative impacts. 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. Delaying work until later in the summer is similarly ill advised, and runs the risk that a hiccup on the way to construction can result in missing this year's construction window.

Transiting Tongass Avenue is a requirement of life in Ketchikan; there is no alternative in order to get to Berth IV and the businesses and neighborhoods along that road. 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 an urgent priority. Therefore, we are asking that the State take the steps necessary to fund the interim repairs without relying on federal money in order to place the project on an expedited schedule to be done in April when Secon is already scheduled to be in Ketchikan.

The City appreciates ADOT&PF's ongoing 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