

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development**Grants to Municipalities (AS 37.05.315)****Grant Recipient: Anchorage****Federal Tax ID: 92-0059987****Project Title:****Project Type: Remodel, Reconstruction and Upgrades**

Anchorage - Birchtree/ Elmore LRSA Road and Drainage

State Funding Requested: \$750,000**House District: Anchorage Areawide (16-32)**

One-Time Need

Brief Project Description:

This project will construct road and drainage improvements on East 142nd Avenue between Buffalo Street and the east end.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$750,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2013 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$750,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

Detailed Project Description and Justification:

This project will construct road, safety, and drainage improvements on East 142nd Avenue between Buffalo Street and the east end. East 142nd Avenue is a dirt/gravel road that is nearly impassable much of the year due to a poor surface and inadequate drainage. This section of road is particularly hazardous in the winter as nearly the entire road length is on a steep slope. The slopes are steepest at the intersections with Golden View Drive (12% grade) and Buffalo Street (15% grade). Without a "landing" zone before the stop signs at the intersections, many vehicles slide through the intersections during the winter. These safety issues prevent school buses from serving area residents.

Most residents have no alternative as East 142nd Avenue is the only connection from their homes to the road network. In the event of a wildfire on the Anchorage Hillside, 142nd Avenue is one of the few egress routes between the Seward Highway and Hillside Drive for the residents who live south of Rabbit Creek Road. Safety is a huge concern for these residents. Recent wildfire studies of the Anchorage Hillside have pointed out the importance of having multiple egress points for residents. Constructing a roadway that ensures access by emergency vehicles such as fire trucks and ambulances is essential to those who are connected to the outside world by East 142nd Avenue.

Buffalo Street and East 142nd Avenue are used by those who live on the Anchorage Hillside as a shortcut between De Armoun Road and Rabbit Creek Road. These streets provide the only north/south connection between the Seward Highway and Hillside Drive. Much of the traffic is generated by area schools and many of the drivers are students.

The road base was never constructed to Municipal standards. Therefore, the gravel surface doesn't last long as it mixes into the surrounding sediment to produce "muck" during break up and wet periods. Not all of the roadway has effective ditching so drainage tends to pool in spots acerbating the poor surface condition. Correcting the drainage and constructing a RAP surface will save the Birchtree/Elmore Limited Road Service Area a significant portion of their yearly budget. In addition, the road currently takes a financial toll to the vehicles of all who use it.

Proponents of this road improvement believe that this project is a life/safety issue that affects all road users. This project is the number 2 priority for the Rabbit Creek Community Council.

The grant funding may be used for utility work, obtaining rights of way and easements, and any work associated with upgrading the roadway and its amenities.

Project Timeline:

Design expenditures will occur in 2013 and construction spending is expected in 2014.

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

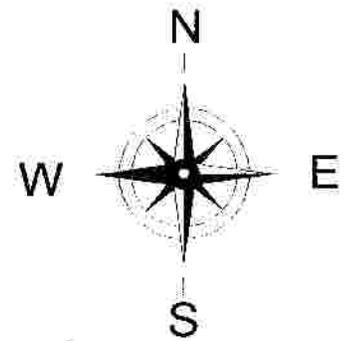
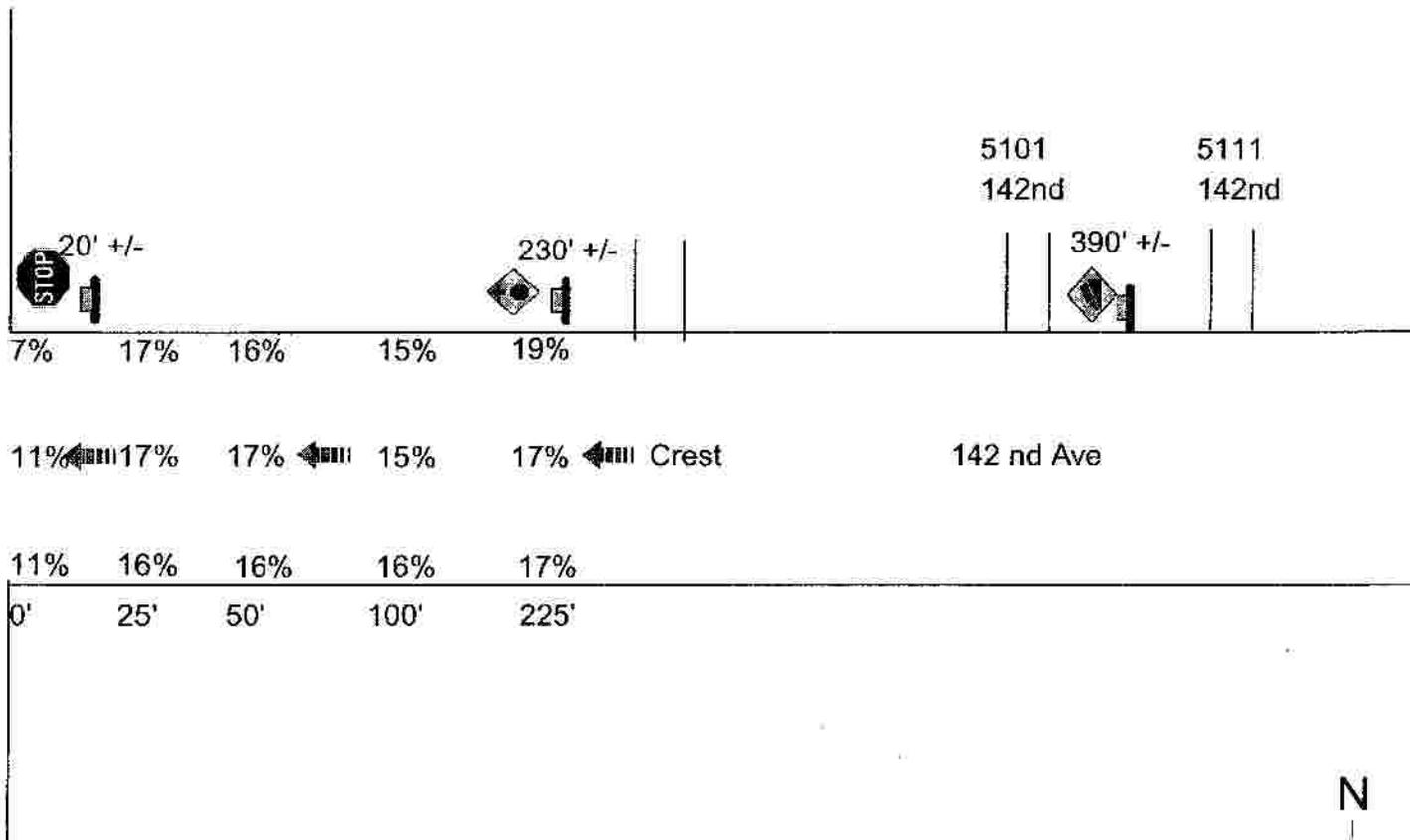
MOA: Birchtree/Elmore Road Service Area

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

Name: Gary Jones
Title: Capital Program Coordinator
Address: PO Box 196650
Anchorage, Alaska 99519
Phone Number: (907)343-8446
Email: jonesgb@muni.org

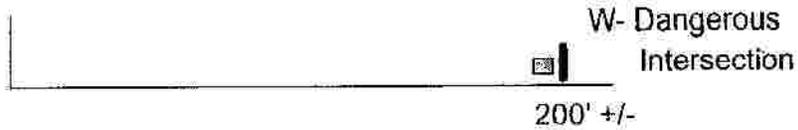
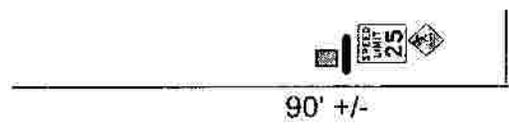
Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? Yes No

Buffalo



*Information with SmartLevel
Grade Measurements
Taken in 2000*

Grid 3037



142 nd Ave

200' +/-

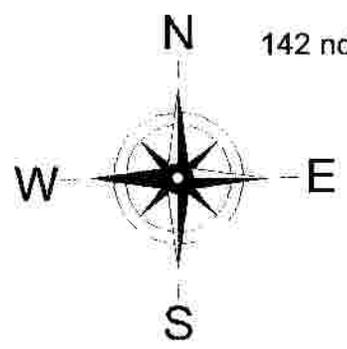
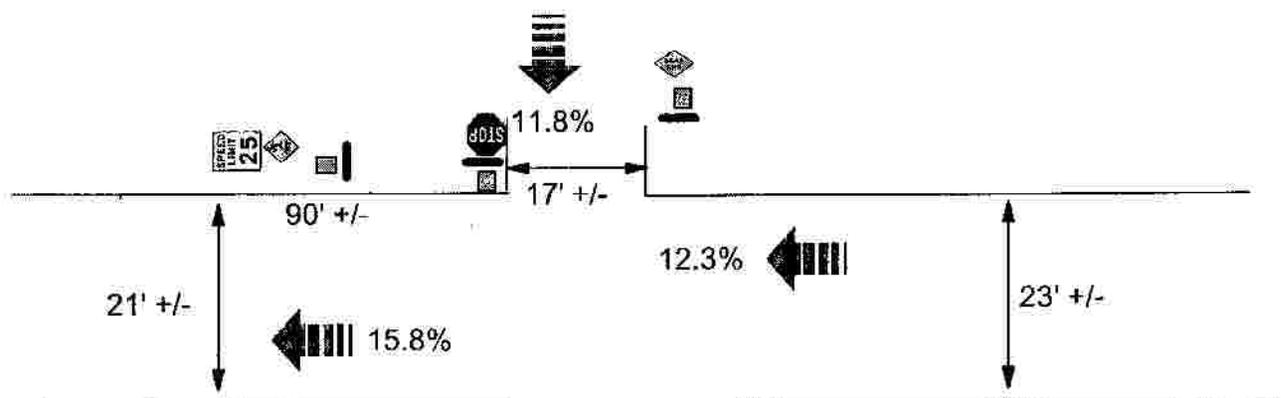
W- Dangerous Intersection

Golden View

150' +/-

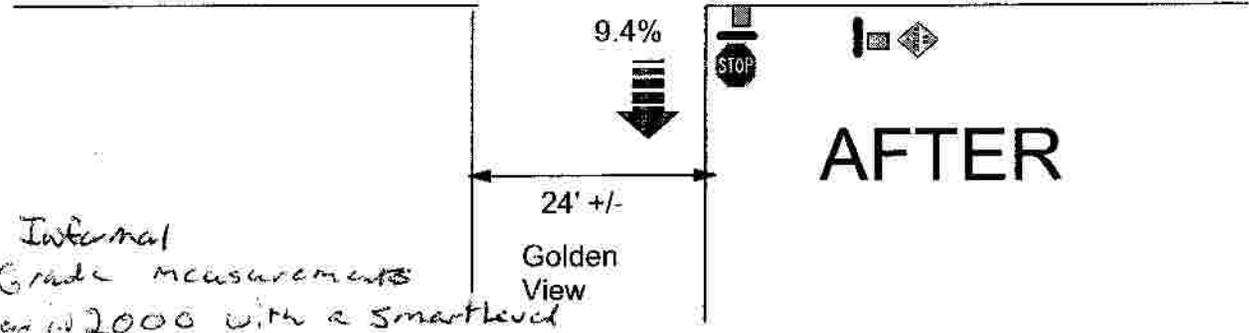
W- Dangerous Intersection

BEFORE



GRID 3038

*Informal
Grade measurements
taken in 2000 with a Smartlevel*

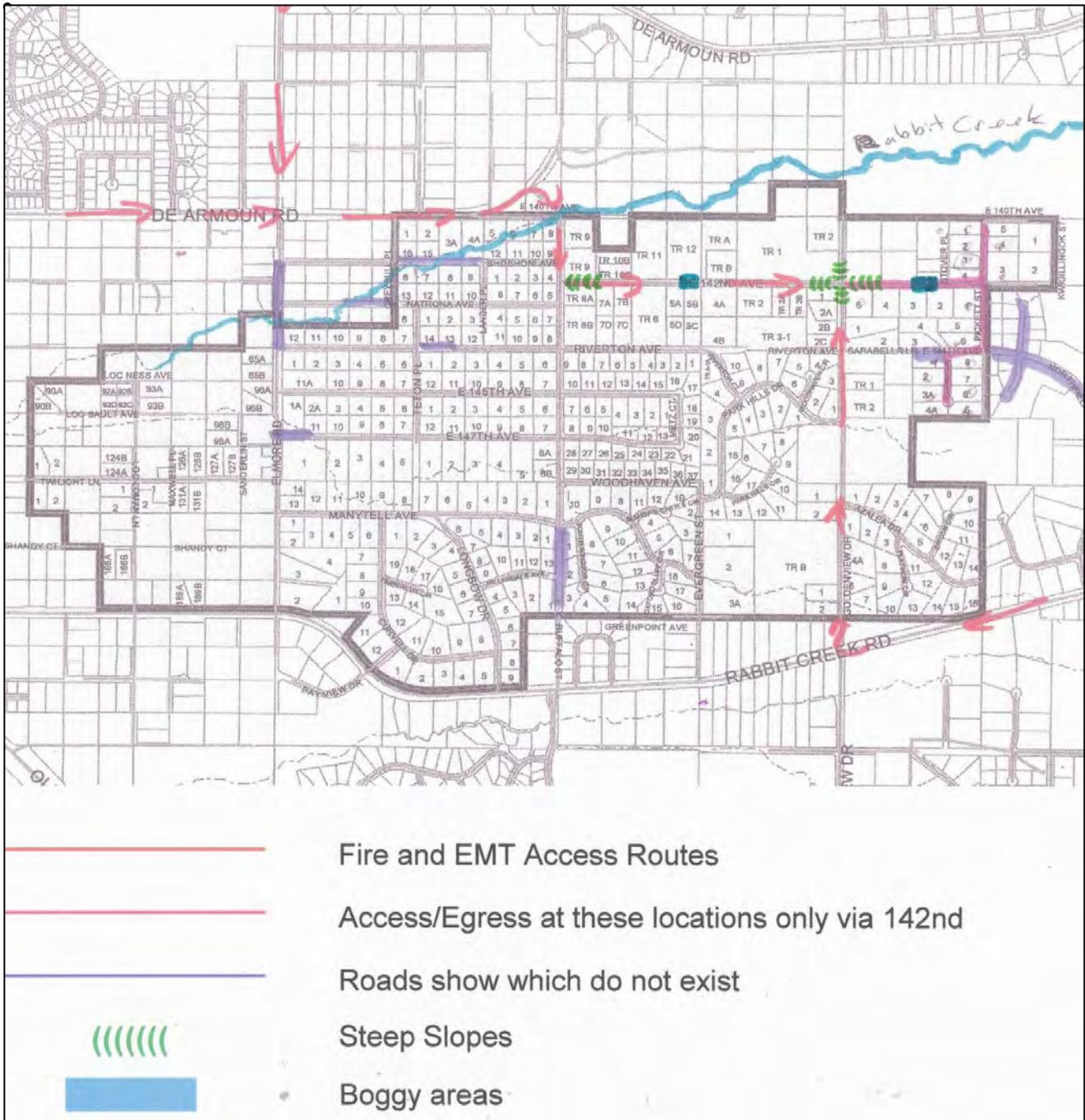


Anchorage -- BIRCHTREE/ELMORE LRSA ROAD AND DRAINAGE (TPS 51351) – Support Synopsis

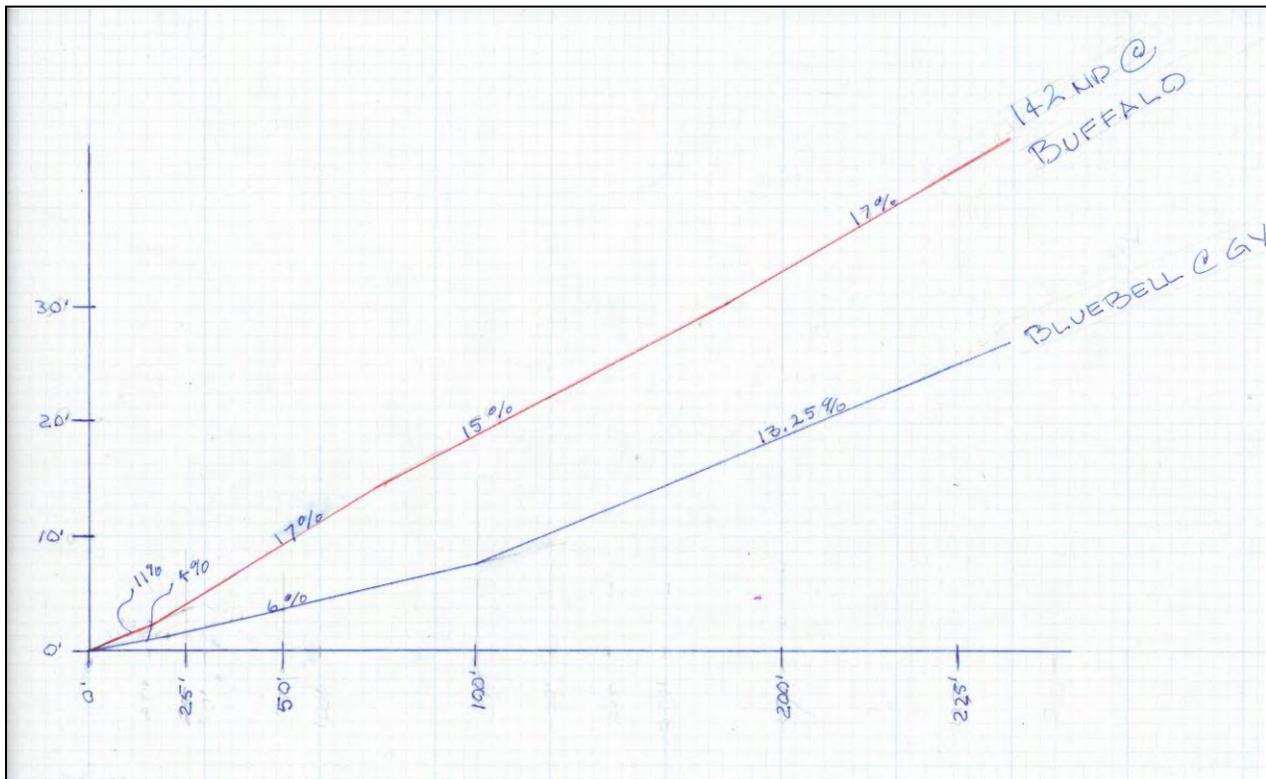
This project addresses 142nd Avenue, from Buffalo east to Pickett, where steep slopes and poor drainage combine to create Major Life Safety Issues for both local users and large portions of the Hillside area.

LIFE SAFETY ISSUES

The major issues are **Steep Intersections, Poor Visibility, and Boggy Road Conditions**—with their consequent *life safety and large-scale wildfire danger*. (See map below.)



Steep Intersections--Treacherous to impassable conditions in winter due to extremely steep slopes at intersections with Buffalo and with Golden View—both *exceeding* the slope at the Bluebell and Golden View intersection, for which State grant funds have been approved. (See graph below.)

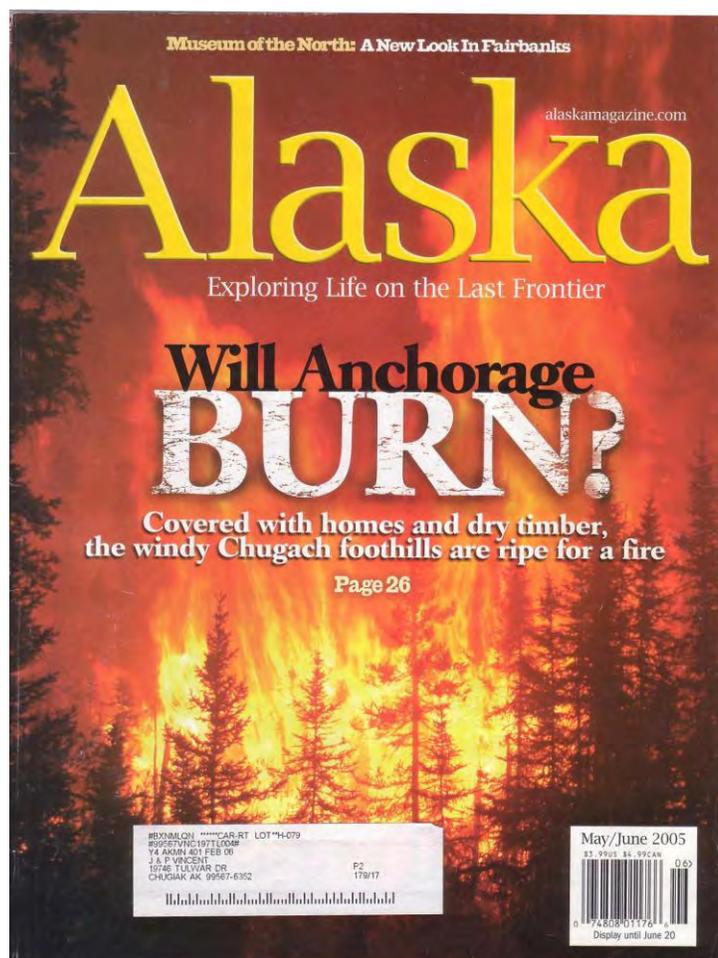


Issues of Steep Grades:

- Ditch diving accidents too numerous to mention, resulting in \$1000's of damage just in winter of 2010/2011, as well as lost work time, injuries, etc.
 - Collisions between vehicles and with obstacles, totaling tens of thousands of dollars over only a few years.
 - Use of 142nd as a cut-through by inexperienced drivers from South High School
 - Very real possibility of lack of access or fatally-reduced speed by emergency responders to fire, crime, and health emergencies
- **Poor Visibility**--Steep slope combined with extra narrow roadway, limiting visibility and space to avoid collisions, between Buffalo and Golden View. (South High School students have affectionately named 142nd "Dead Man's Hill" and love to try to "Catch Air" at this point, which acts somewhat like a ski jump, but with no visibility!)
 - **Boggy spring/early summer road conditions**--Poorly drained areas in both the Buffalo to Golden View and the Golden View to Pickett sections can cause **critically delayed or failed emergency responses, which are needed:**
 - --To stop **Wildfire Hazard** from an uncontained fire, which (according to Forest Service FARSITE analysis--see below) could readily (in 36 hours) spread to over 3800 acres and destroy up to 3,000 homes.

- –For **Life-Threatening Emergencies** with
 - Boggy conditions in the *lower* 142nd EMT route from the Huffman Station to homes on both 142nd and Golden View and their connectors
 - *Extremely boggy conditions on upper 142nd, where, for 31 homes, there exists no alternative route for Fire, Police, and EMT responders. Further, this situation could potentially cause these 31 homes to lose insurability. *The loss of just one home in this area could easily surpass the cost of this grant.**
- --For people using **Wildfire Egress Routes** from all of the mid-Rabbit Creek Road and South Golden View, as well as 142nd/North Golden View areas fleeing north and west to DeArmoun

PUBLIC SAFETY – WILDFIRE DANGER



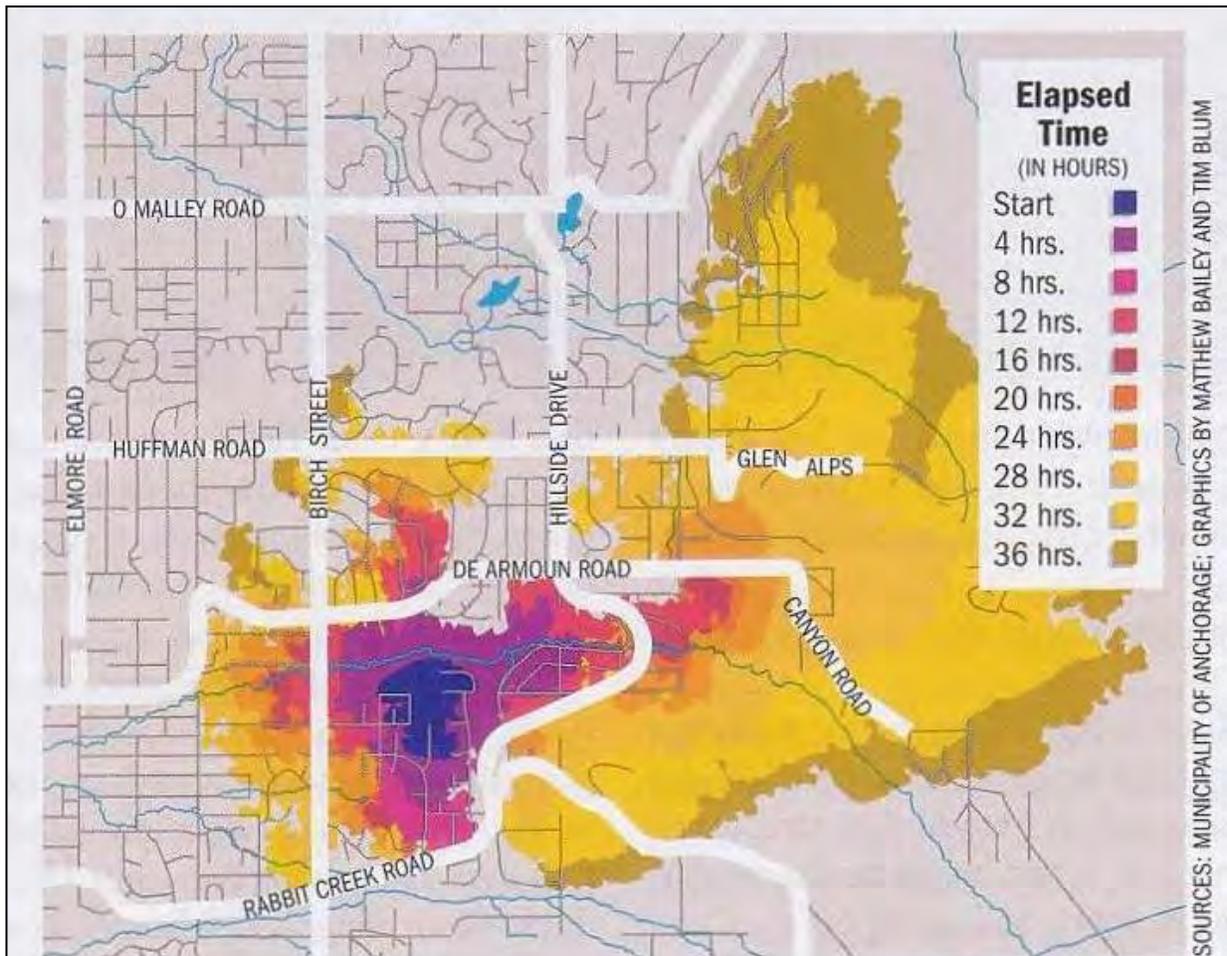
Alaska Magazine Cover Article “Will Anchorage Burn?” speaks directly to high wildfire danger in precisely the 142nd Avenue area affected by lack of access for firefighting equipment.

Article Highlights

Wildfire Danger—The article speaks to the likelihood of wildfire on the Hillside, especially due to excessive dead and dry timber which covered the area after the beetle-kill period in the late 90s and early 2000’s. A large amount of tender has been removed with the Fire Wise Program which the article also highlights. However, much tender remains and the Hillside is ripe in any situation for wildfire, due to the large amount of *live spruce, tender-dry grasses—new since the study, the prevailing winds, and the rising terrain.*

What is “Wild”?—The Fire Department staff, quoted in the article on Page 30, say that if a fire exceeded 1/4 acre in size, the Fire Department would *lose control* of it; thus, it would become a “wildfire” and within 48 hours spread to the entire Hillside, with catastrophic losses.

Upper 142nd Wildfires—The Wildfire Spreading Map, shown on the next page and in the article, just happens to have been “started” at the top or east end of 142nd. It is this upper end of 142nd that has the most critical problems with boggy areas in spring (from Mid-April to Mid-June), when wildfire danger is highest.



What if ...?

The FARSITE modeling program factors in topography, fuel conditions and typical weather conditions to determine possible fire scenarios. In this simulation, a June fire starting in the Rabbit Creek area of the Anchorage Hillside spreads to 3,888 acres and destroys 3,000 homes in just 36 hours.

This map shows “Birch Road” as going through to Rabbit Creek. Obviously, it does not, but Golden View Road is an “extension” of Birch, starting south of Rabbit Creek (the creek). The **dark blue** starting point for the fire is right at the “top” or east end of 142nd Avenue. As you can see, Lower 142nd is a crucial alternate egress for North GV, South GV, and Middle Rabbit Creek, and the effects of a fire would impact far more than habitual or even egress users of 142nd.

Why *this* boggy road is so dangerous:

- Most of 142nd was built before the Muni imposed any standards...sometimes by homeowners/homesteaders themselves. Non-existent drainage and perhaps poor surface and especially sub-surface materials cause failure in wet/break-up conditions.
- Several locations routinely become almost impassable for private vehicles during spring break-up. This condition can persist from mid-April to mid-June---at exactly the same time as the highest risk for wildfires.
 - Road Maintenance Can't Help! –Maintenance vehicles are prohibited from working the really bad areas until early to mid-June, because they will likely get bogged down, damaged, and/or have to

be extracted at great cost. (Graders weigh ~ 38,000 lbs. “Rollers” --needed to smooth out badly rutted surfaces or new material, brought in to try to sop up boggy roads—weigh a *little* less.)

- Emergency Vehicles Can't Get In! –To deal with critically ill/injured people or fight home fires or **wildfires**.
 - Maintenance vehicles weigh less than Fire Engines or Fire Tenders and are built to work in rough places.
 - Fire Engines weigh some 47,000 lbs. And Fire Tenders weigh 49,000 lbs. These vehicles would never make it in time, if at all, in emergency situations. Worse, they could get bogged down, blocking exit or access for other means of dealing with the emergency.
 - Fire Department Inspection--In late spring of 2008, Fire Department officials inspected the 142nd roadway when it was almost dried out on the surface, still slightly mushy underneath and had deep swells/standing waves. (That is, when it was more nearly passable than earlier, but still not able to support a road grader or roller). Their assessment was that the road would, at best, not allow the Fire Department to meet its minimum response times. They did not test it to see if they could actually make it through with a fire engine.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Support for this project has been unanimous amongst all involved.

BirchTree/Elmore Limited Road Service Area Board: Board members and residents of the 142nd area have long worked to solve some of the major problems presented by 142nd Avenue's steep slopes and poor drainage/subsurface materials. It has been a major headache for all. Residents of the entire LRSA will benefit from grant improvements, since more funds will be available for regular maintenance when the excessive maintenance now required for 142nd is no longer needed.

Rabbit Creek Community Council: The RCCC Resolution received unanimous support from all present at the January 2011 meeting. Attendees were amazed to learn that 142nd is actually way worse in its steepness than the Bluebell and Golden View intersection that has been such a problem for the area and was the subject of a grant approved by the Legislature in 2010. Later in 2011, the RCCC made this project its #2 Priority for roads in the Council area.

South High School PTSO Board and Members: The group present at the February Parent Teacher Student Organization meeting was soundly in support of the grant and many had horror stories of their own to tell about problems they or their children have encountered with the steep slopes of 142nd.

Golden View Middle School PTSA Executive Board and Members: Golden View Parent Teacher Student Association meeting attendees in February also were fully in support of the grant. It was at this meeting that a mother told of South High School students who have named 142nd “Dead Man's Hill” and who try to “catch air” when driving down the stretch between Golden View and Buffalo, where the roadway creates a sort of ski jump!

Huffman, Bear Valley, and Rabbit Creek Elementary School PTAs and Members: Early February PTA meetings at the listed elementary schools resulted in unanimous support for the grant and concern for conditions 142nd causes. Both the road itself and the resultant wildfire danger were major points of interest.

Resident Support Summary

The 142nd Improvements Committee have only a small amount of contact information among the residents of the larger LRSA; thus, support letters are, in the main, from LRSA residents most directly affected by the problems 142nd presents.

Both 142nd residents and those of the larger LRSA area speak to all the issues addressed in the Summary at Attachment 1.a.

- Some focus on steep or slick roads and/or poor visibility for private travel.
- Others stress emergency access response and emergency egress as well as wildfire danger.
- Still others complain most of poor maintenance that contributes to the severity of slope and bogging problems—these only point up the funding stress this poorly constructed, high maintenance road places on the limited resources of the LRSA.

Of course, not all those residents contacted were able to write letters. But all but one of those contacted spoke of very positive feelings for this grant—*that one person would like to discourage people from driving on the road by keeping it in bad condition!*

Letters by Residents of Upper 142nd

Althea S. Clapp (and Steve)

Susan A. Ross (and Pat)

John, Geraldine, and Kenneth Masneri

Georgia Tolbert & Michael Gagnon

Wray W. Kinard (and Cindy)

Catherine Johnson (and Troy)

Kyle Murphy

Scott and Barbara Sell

Ky Holland (and Sharon)

Pat Abney

Amy Cockerham (and Sean)

Ken Schoenberg and Guitta Corey

Maurice B. Lynch (and Alice J.)

(Rob & Sande Swanson--Mailed Directly to Legislators)

Letters by Residents of Lower 142nd

Keith and Rhonda Street

Tom and Kipany Upchurch

Letters by Residents of Greater LRSA

Peter Schilke

David and Barbara Tullis

Lyle and Susan Marchant

John and Brenda Brown (Mailed Directly to Legislators)



Rabbit Creek Community Council

P.O. Box 112354, Anchorage, AK 99511-2354

Reference: Municipality of Anchorage Roadway Improvements 2011 Grant Request :

BIRCHTREE/ELMORE LRSA ROAD AND DRAINAGE, (PME 77046) for \$750,000

BE IT RESOLVED that:

- 1) In light of the Rabbit Creek Community Council's past support for the state grant to improve the intersection of Bluebell and Golden View due to its unsafe slopes, and
- 2) In light of the facts that:
 - a. For 142nd Avenue between Buffalo and Pickett, two intersections are far more dangerous in their slopes, and
 - b. Traffic has increased on 142nd due to cross travel by students and parents of students at South High School and Golden View Middle School, and accidents have occurred at both intersections, some incurring thousands of dollars in damages, and
 - c. Un-drained areas exist in both upper and lower 142nd such that Spring conditions can make the roads impassable to road maintenance , fire, and rescue equipment, as well as for heavier personal vehicles.

The Rabbit Creek Community Council fully supports the Muni Roadway Improvement State of Alaska grant request to Upgrade 142nd per PME77046 for \$750,000 and urges the State Legislature fully fund this grant request. The Council further urges the Legislature to insure that all monies within this grant are committed to the work on 142nd and that the Legislature consider expanding the size of the grant to more fully address the upgrades required.

Resolution Adopted at its January 13, 2011 Council Meeting.

Attested to:

Pat Hansen
Chair, Rabbit Creek Community Council

Dated: January 27, 2010

BIRCH TREE/ELMORE LRSA

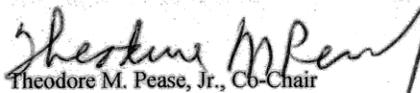
January 20, 2011

To: All whom it may concern

From: The Board of Supervisors, Birch Tree/Elmore LRSA

Re: Anchorage State grant request for 142nd

The Board supports the Municipality of Anchorage's request for a grant from the State of Alaska for \$750,000 to upgrade and improve 142nd Street, which is located in the Birch Tree/Elmore LRSA. 142nd is steep, with two hazardous intersections at Golden view and at Buffalo, and another very steep, narrow section half way up. To remedy these problems, money is needed for soil testing, engineering, ROW acquisition and construction. The LRSA does not have the funds to reconstruct 142nd to alleviate these problems, nor does it have authority to do so because its function is limited to maintenance, and it lacks the power to rebuild or relocate roads.



Theodore M. Pease, Jr., Co-Chair

Board of Supervisors

Birch Tree/Elmore LRSA

Reference: Municipality of Anchorage Roadway Improvements 2011 Grant Request :

BIRCHTREE/ELMORE LRSA ROAD AND DRAINAGE, (PME 77046) for \$750,000

BE IT RESOLVED that:

In light of the facts that:

- a. For 142nd Avenue between Buffalo and Pickett, two intersections are extremely dangerous in their slopes, and
- b. Traffic has increased on 142nd due to cross travel by students and parents of students at South High School and Golden View Middle School, and accidents have occurred at both intersections, some incurring thousands of dollars in damages,
- c. Un-drained areas exist in both upper and lower 142nd such that Spring conditions can make the roads impassable to road maintenance , fire, and rescue equipment, as well as for heavier personal vehicles, and
- d. The un-drained and potentially impassable areas of 142nd are part of the wildfire emergency egress route for a major portion of Rabbit Creek Road, Golden View and 142nd area homes,
- e. Wildfire escalation to large areas of the Hillside is extremely high from areas on upper 142nd which fire equipment must access via boggy portions of 142nd.

The *South High Parent Teacher Student Organization* supports the Municipality of Anchorage Roadway Improvement request for a State of Alaska grant request **Birch Tree/Elmore LRSA Road and Drainage** to Upgrade 142nd per **PME77046 for \$750,000** and urges the State Legislature fully find this grant request. The *SHPTSO* further urges the Legislature to ensure that all monies within this grant are committed to the work on 142nd and that the Legislature consider expanding the size of the grant to more fully address the upgrades required.

Resolution Adopted at its 2/2/11 *SHPTSO* Meeting.

Attested to:

Heidi Cook, President, South High Parent Teacher Student Organization

Dated: 2-2-11

Reference: Municipality of Anchorage Roadway Improvements 2011 Grant Request :

BIRCHTREE/ELMORE LRSA ROAD AND DRAINAGE, (PME 77046) for \$750,000

BE IT RESOLVED that:

In light of the facts that:

- a. For 142nd Avenue between Buffalo and Pickett, two intersections are extremely dangerous in their slopes, and
- b. Traffic has increased on 142nd due to cross travel by students and parents of students at South High School and Golden View Middle School, and accidents have occurred at both intersections, some incurring thousands of dollars in damages,
- c. Un-drained areas exist in both upper and lower 142nd such that Spring conditions can make the roads impassable to road maintenance, fire, and rescue equipment, as well as for heavier personal vehicles, and
- d. The un-drained and potentially impassable areas of 142nd are part of the wildfire emergency egress route for a major portion of Rabbit Creek Road, Golden View and 142nd area homes,
- e. Wildfire escalation to large areas of the Hillside is extremely high from areas on upper 142nd which fire equipment must access via boggy portions of 142nd.

The *Golden View Parent Teacher Student Association Board of Directors* fully supports the Municipality of Anchorage Roadway Improvement request for a State of Alaska grant request **Birch Tree/Elmore LRSA Road and Drainage** to Upgrade 142nd per **PME77046 for \$750,000** and urges the State Legislature fully find this grant request. The *Golden View Parent Teacher Organization* further urges the Legislature to insure that all monies within this grant are committed to the work on 142nd and that the Legislature consider expanding the size of the grant to more fully address the upgrades required.

Resolution Adopted at its *February 1, 2011 Golden View Parent Teacher Student Association Meeting*.

Attested to:

Goldenview PTSA Board Members

President

Julie Fate Sullivan
Julie Fate Sull

Dated: 2-2-11