



The Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce

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May 11, 2018

Honorable Mayor Ken Koelsch, and Assembly
City and Borough of Juneau
155 South Seward
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: North Douglas Crossing – Environmental Study Funding

The Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce is encouraged that a CIP project for a second crossing to Douglas Island has been placed on the Mayor's pending list for further consideration and inclusion in the FY19/FY20 budget.

A North Douglas crossing has been a longtime goal of both the Assembly and the Chamber and a critical component of the Juneau Economic Development Plan. A second crossing facilitates development of West Douglas as per our Comprehensive Plan as well as addressing community safety, congestion issues at the existing bridge, and allows further high-density housing on North Douglas Highway that is currently limited by traffic volume. Polling conducted in 2018 also indicates extremely high community support for this effort.

However, given the state's current fiscal situation, it is necessary that a community have "skin in the game" in order for a project to receive consideration and funding. A recent investigation by the Chamber indicates that for the goal of a North Douglas crossing to become a reality, the following steps must be taken:

1. The CBJ must formally request that the Alaska Department of Transportation (ADOT) place a study of the second crossing on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) list.
2. This study, a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study is estimated to cost \$2 million and must be funded by the borough for this project to make the STIP.
3. The PEL will take approximately 2 years and will study all potential options for the second crossing. It is important to know that the state will now be the agency that determines the class of federal action, a responsibility was recently delegated to the state by FHWA. The state will determine whether the final project will need an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). It will also save significant time and expense during the EA or EIS by having completed all of the environmental studies before project application.

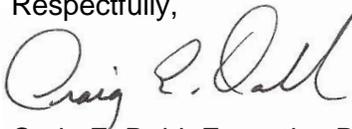
4. The CBJ must also begin negotiation with ADOT on committing federal matching funds as well as operating and maintenance responsibilities once the project is built.

Funding of this CIP will demonstrate to the state that this is truly a community priority and will jumpstart the engineering and environmental reviews, with the added bonus of putting our engineers in the Southcoast Region of ADOT to work. If we simply await other state and federal funding for this effort, we will be forced to compete with projects around the state and it may be years before work starts.

It is the recommendation of the Juneau Chamber of Commerce that one-time funding for the North Douglas crossing CIP be set to \$2 million, the funds for which should come from current fund balances.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig E. Dahl". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Craig E. Dahl, Executive Director
The Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce