

Nelson Road East At-Grade

This alternative will will not solve the connectivity for the community.
✓✓✓✓✓ ✓✓✓✓ Why or why not?

It is in the interest of one large developer. (Reference comment 2)

This gets the traffic out of the neighborhoods and there's a good flow as well, as good as it can be. (Reference comment 3)

Bike/pedestrian trails need to be considered on all new roadways. (Reference comment 7)

Not bad—easy access to school, short but still RR crossing (Reference comment 9)

This solves the immediate problem, but not the long term – call this Phase 1.

My Suggestion:

Phase I – Nelson East at-Grade

Phase II – Trunk Road

Phase III – Nelson extension to Seward-Meridian

This gives three access points to the area. Can be done over 5 years. (Reference comment 10)

Solves the primary problem of access for the Ranch without disturbing existing homes. Eventual routing of Fairview Loop traffic out Seward-Meridian separates it from Ranch traffic. A cost-effective option. (Reference comment 13)

It is the shortest route and the least expensive. The portions to Fairview Loop would be built by others. It minimizes the impact on Garden Terrace. It would eliminate a RR crossing and could be completed in the shortest time of all options. The realignment of Fairview Loop would require gaining property on the north side of the road. It would provide a shorter, less traffic flow to the Parks Hwy. (Reference comment 14)

Too many cons, safety items, cost and lengthy ROW. (Reference comment 15)

At-grade crossing could create a real bottleneck when trains are passing. (Reference comment 22)

This will not solve the problem because it adds to the already overloaded congestion problem that Fairview Loop is now experiencing. (Reference comment 31)

Seems like the less intrusive way to avoid existing homes and keeps school busses off sharp corner at Old Mat-Su/Fairview Loop intersection. (Reference comment 32)

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Valley Block Access: For the Valley Block and Abby Boulevard access points, a draft Railroad Diagnostic Team report addresses the railroad crossings and is ready for signature by all agencies. Intersection capacity still needs to be verified through a TIA under a DOT/PF Approach Road Permit. The current draft of the Railroad Diagnostic Team Report depended on the Lounsbury TIA and assumed traffic had two ways in and out of the school. If Valley Block is to be the only connection, vehicle storage will have to be reevaluated in an updated TIA.

Working with the Alaska Railroad, I do not support creating an at-grade railroad crossing at Valley Block with less than minimum storage requirements, especially for a new route to a school with buses, parents, and residents. Storage may have to be even longer if this is to be the only access. The Federal Railroad Administration's Railroad-Highway Crossing Handbook recommends a minimum of 100 feet of storage between railroad gates on a STOP controlled sidestreet and the main road. This setback will store one school bus and two vehicles. The sidestreet would be widened with shoulders, a left turn lane, and a right turn lane.

To provide less than minimum storage would require a traffic signal and mainline left turn lanes in order to preempt traffic and clear the train tracks. However, in this case a review of daily traffic volumes suggests this location is not close to meeting signal warrants. I do not support a traffic signal that is not warranted as it will be disruptive to mainline traffic all day, and as a signal it will create rear end collisions each year.

I did consider the Borough's request to examine another option to offset minimal storage, such as using gating or stop signs on Fairview Loop Road when a train is present. The goal would be to clear out the new school access road when a train arrives, and to strive for a less costly solution. After consideration, I find too many problems with this concept. Gating designs will not be able to fully block Fairview Loop Road, especially because "escape" routes are needed on two-way roads. Trains which cross during times when there is no sidestreet traffic would also require stopping Fairview Loop Road. The partial gating, and the times of trains are fully expected to lead to "cheaters" who question the gating purpose and go around it. Sidestreet users' subject to any uncertainty or confusion as to what other traffic is doing becomes at risk, increasing the potential for a vehicle to be trapped on the tracks. No such triple gating of the crossing and sidestreet is recommended by the Railroad-Highway grade Crossing Handbook. It is an unconventional design. A permanent All-Way Stop is also not warranted on Fairview Loop Road given the unbalanced traffic volumes, and would lead to the same "cheaters" that a gate system would create.