



# West Anchorage Snow Disposal Project

Project Management and Engineering No. 19-01

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is snow disposal ?

The process of snow plowing and clearing helps ensure that the roadways of West Anchorage are safe for travelers. Snow disposal is when snowfall in excess of what can be stored directly in the berms of parking areas and along roadways and sidewalks is collected and trucked to permitted areas for storage until it melts in the spring. Check out this video on how the snow in Anchorage is removed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsY33TmweSs&feature=share&app=desktop>

### 2. What is the Snow Disposal Project?

The West Anchorage Snow Disposal Project is a long-term snow storage solution for snow removed from West Anchorage streets during winter months. The Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) has selected a new location for the MOA West Anchorage Snow Disposal Site that is located in Connor's Bog.

The permitting and design phase of the project is underway.

### 3. How was the Connor's Bog Site selected?

The new site located in Connor's Bog went through a thorough site selection process that included significant public input. To learn about the process, please view the Final Site Selection Study under the Project Documents tab on the project website: [www.westanchoragesnow.com](http://www.westanchoragesnow.com).

### 4. What are some of the advantages and considerations of the Connor's Bog location?

There are several advantages to the Connor's Bog site location, including:

- Low impact on residents and neighbors
- No operational restrictions
- Sufficiently sized and available for use
- Adequate receiving waters

#### Considerations:

- Requires filling a portion of the Connor's Bog wetlands

### 5. What are the key features of the proposed snow disposal site design?

The Final Design Study Report is available for public review. This design meets operational needs along with MOA and State of Alaska requirements.

- Access to the new site will remain the same as access to the existing site to minimize disturbance to neighborhoods.
- The new site takes maximum advantage of existing vegetation and setbacks from highly used areas to reduce noise and visual impacts.
- The new site incorporates green infrastructure. The filtration and infiltration properties of the surrounding bog will be used to avoid creating artificial ponds and constructed wetlands. Snow melt will be detained by berms that provide a high degree of settlement and decrease flows to create more consistent outfall rates.

### 6. Why is the proposed site larger than the existing site?

The existing site is too small to meet current and future snow removal needs. Currently, the MOA Street Maintenance Department (Street Maintenance) must create very tall snow piles to accommodate all the snow. This is operationally inefficient, reduces meltwater quality, and can create safety concerns for Street Maintenance staff. Also, additional area is needed to implement required features such as landscaped berms and water quality management infrastructure. Minimizing the stacked snow also enhances the site's ability to meet water quality management best practices for treating the snow meltwater.

A larger site will improve operational efficiency and meet discharge water pollution prevention goals. Street Maintenance does not intend to increase the service area covered by this snow disposal site.

## **7. What are overall permitting steps for the new snow disposal site located in Connor's Bog?**

The project team will go through a five-step permitting process. Many of these permitting steps allow for continued public input on the project:

1. **Completed:** Rezoning - Classification change from Transitional (TR) to Public Lands and Institutional (PLI)
2. **Completed:** Comprehensive Plan Amendment - Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan Map
3. **Completed:** Approval for Other Municipal use of dedicated park land - 0.2 acre for the access road
4. **In Progress:** Variances of Title 21 and Municipal Design Criteria - as identified in the Design Study Report
5. **In Progress:** Conditional use permits - Land Reclamation and Snow Disposal Site

## **8. What is zoning and why did Project Management and Engineering (PM&E) need to rezone the entire site?**

Zoning refers to municipal or local laws or regulations that establish how a parcel of land can be used. The area known as Connor's Bog consists of multiple parcels. The preferred site is a 32-acre parcel on the eastern side of Connor's Bog that is currently zoned TR (Transitional), which was not meant to be a permanent zoning designation. A parcel can have only one zoning designation, so a rezoning of the entire parcel to PLI (Public Lands and Institutional) is being sought.

## **9. How is PM&E going to offset the impacts on the non-dedicated park land and the 0.2 acre of dedicated park land?**

PM&E is working with the MOA Parks and Recreation Department to identify measures to offset the loss of open space and the impacts on social trail access to Javier De La Vega Park, as well as buffers to offset the aesthetic impacts of the snow site.

## **10. Will the project implement mitigation for the impacts on Class A wetlands?**

Wetland mitigation is implemented by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). After a review of the project's jurisdictional request, USACE found that the Connor's Bog snow disposal site wetlands are non-jurisdictional under the Clean Water Act. Therefore, a USACE permit to place fill material and compensatory mitigation is not required.

Although formal wetland mitigation is not required, PM&E is managing the project development process with sensitivity towards this environmental resource. A thorough site selection process was performed under the guidelines of seeking the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative. Strategies of minimization were employed to identify the access route that minimizes additional impacts on wetlands. The project will strategically place culverts to direct snow meltwater from the snow disposal site to rehydrate the surrounding wetlands. This snow meltwater source will enhance the existing wetland function and help maintain the water level in Connor's Lake, which is a benefit to support wildlife habitat in this watershed. PM&E is exploring the possibility of winter construction, which would further reduce impacts on wildlife.

## **11. Is developing a new snow disposal site a good use of capital funding?**

Yes, Street Maintenance must pay for leased sites out of their snow removal budget. These lease payments reduce the funds available for actual snow removal. This snow disposal site facility is programmed to receive its project funding through future Anchorage Roads and Drainage Service Area bonds. Investing in an MOA-owned site ensures that Street Maintenance will be able to provide the essential service of winter road maintenance without being subject to the expense, uncertainty, and interruptions associated with lease term issues.

## **12. Why does road reconstruction increase the need for snow removal?**

When a road is reconstructed to meet current road design criteria and code requirements, typical improvements include increasing lane widths, adding turn lanes, and adding non-motorized facilities such as sidewalks and bike lanes. These improvements reduce the right-of-way available for roadside snow storage. These improvements also increase the paved area from which snow must be hauled.

### **13. What is the timeframe for this project?**

Construction is planned from 2023 to 2024, pending funding and permitting approvals. As of January 2022, the permitting and design phase of the project is underway.

The current plan is to construct the project using a phased approach. The first phase will include placement of fill material to provide a geotechnically stable site. The facility will be completed in subsequent phases.

### **14. Where can I find more information?**

The documents listed below are available on the Project website at [www.westanchoragesnow.com](http://www.westanchoragesnow.com).

- Project Fact Sheet
- Final Site Selection Study
- Phase One Public Outreach Summary
- Phase Two Public Outreach Summary
- Phase Three Public Outreach Summary
- March 8, 2021, Sand Lake Community Council Meeting Presentation
- Jurisdictional Determination Report
- Approved Jurisdictional Determination Form
- Approved Jurisdictional Determination Letter
- Final Design Study Report

### **15. How do I provide feedback or communicate with the project team?**

The project team welcomes stakeholder questions or concerns at any time. You can send a message to the project team via email or U.S. mail. You can also visit the project website to view updates, send a message to the project team, and join the project email list.



**Email:** [info@westanchoragesnow.com](mailto:info@westanchoragesnow.com)

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