

**University Area Community Council (UACC) Comments
Case No. 2018-0113
Site Selection for
Anchorage School District Transportation Facility**

Currently, over 124 school buses are located at site on the southwest corner of Elmore and Tudor. The site has been a long-term environmental and health hazard to local residents due to PM 10 and PM 2.5 diesel air pollutants from bus warm-ups.

As we understand it, the problem is that the site sits near the low lying areas of Campbell Creek and experiences severe atmospheric inversion conditions during calm winter days where the temperatures are below 20 degrees Fahrenheit. The diesel fumes are created first by starting buses early in the morning to verify that they will start. The buses are then started a second time (each running 15-20 minutes) to warm them up to temperature suitable for picking up the students. These actions create clouds of toxic fumes that spread over the western side of the University Area Community Council area due to the inversion. Residents have protested this situation for many years but the Anchorage School District has not been successful with remedial efforts taken to solve the problem. Furthermore, the air pollutants from the bus warm-ups disperse around nearby neighborhoods in normal, non-inversion conditions, albeit in a somewhat less concentrated form.

The Muni commissioned an ASD Student Transportation Maintenance Facility Relocation Public Facility Site Selection Study dated September 2018 to look at 27 potential alternate sites within northeast Anchorage where school buses could be located. The study has narrowed the field down to two sites. One is located between Elmore Road, Dr. Martin Luther King Junior Avenue and Tudor Centre Drive - east of the police station (site 27). The other is located near the southeast corner of East Tudor Road and Campbell Airstrip Road (site 18). While the study report was fairly comprehensive, it did not address the health problems during winter inversions associated with diesel fume concentrations from the warming of buses in the mornings from any of the sites.

This serious deficit should be corrected before any further action is taken on selection. Site 27 would seem to be most likely to produce the same air pollution problems mentioned in the first paragraph. That may also be the case for Site 18.

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The Muni should consider other options rather than moving the buses to another single site. The Muni should look at parking buses at high school locations, which might spread out the diesel fume pollution problem and the dilution effect might help alleviate the problem by not concentrating it in one area. The Muni should consider other sites that are away from residential neighborhoods. Also, the Muni should seriously consider accelerating conversion to electric school buses thereby solving the fume problem by removing the cause of the air pollution in Anchorage neighborhoods. In addition, the Muni should consider use of engine block heaters to help moderate the air pollutant discharges. Likewise, the Muni should consider building a structure to house the buses and contain and clean the air emissions or another method of filtering out/and or cleaning the buses' air pollutants.

If the Muni dismisses the UACC's recommendations and suggestions and decides that air pollution from the starting and warming of the school buses entering neighborhoods is of little or no concern, the UACC would be forced to take a "not in my back yard" approach and recommend Site 18. But this likely would just transfer the problem to the residents on and northwest of Notting Hill Drive in the Scenic Foothill's Community council area, but also likely affect, to a lesser degree, UACC residents in the area northwest of the intersection of Baxter Road and E Tudor Road. Thus, with either site, health problems would likely remain unsolved.

Finally, if the Muni is locked into the two sites, the Muni should do a thorough examination of the air pollution effects on nearby neighborhoods this winter, especially when such inversions occur. At a minimum, the Muni should monitor predicted weather conditions and when the next day's predicted temperature/wind conditions are expected to match those indicated above, the Muni should move half the buses to each site (18 and 27) or as close to each site as possible and monitor the air pollution results in a grid of homes within several blocks around each site to assess the concentrations and areal extent of the emitted pollution throughout the next morning and factor the results into the Muni's site selection

The UACC requests a substantive response to these recommendations from the Muni. Please send to Paul Stang, President, UACC, 3037 Widgeon Lane, Anchorage, Alaska 99508 (PaulRStang@gmail.com)