

Turnagain Community Council Resolution

Regarding Placement of a Wall/Barrier Fence in the Minnesota Drive Median Between Benson Boulevard and West Northern Lights Boulevard

WHEREAS, the Turnagain Community Council (TCC) is an all-volunteer, self-governing neighborhood organization recognized in the Municipality of Anchorage Charter that represents the interests of the residents and property owners of the Turnagain/West area of Anchorage; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of community councils is to provide direct and continuing means of citizen participation in government and local affairs; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Drive, Benson Boulevard (Benson), and West Northern Lights Boulevard (WNL) border Turnagain Community Council and are on the Municipality of Anchorage's "high injury network," meaning a high number of people have been killed and severely injured in traffic crashes, and the south side of the intersection of WNL with Minnesota Drive — with no designated pedestrian crosswalk — is particularly hazardous; and

WHEREAS, the portion of Minnesota Drive referenced above is part of the Spenard Corridor Plan (2020) and the plan vision includes Spenard being a "model for the region for its contribution to the citywide and regional transportation system and its network of urban active transportation facilities" and a "branded district;" and

WHEREAS, the Spenard Corridor Plan also includes goals to "create great public streets," to "create a safe pedestrian and bike network," to "accommodate safe and balanced roadway access," and to "design for Anchorage;" and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is intended to identify and fund highway safety projects that maximize lives saved and injuries eliminated per dollar spent; and

WHEREAS, this summer/early fall DOT&PF constructed two projects on Minnesota Drive at Benson and WNL, including the "Minnesota Drive: Tudor to 15th Avenue Pavement Preservation," and the "HSIP: Anchorage Pedestrian Lighting, Phase II;" and

WHEREAS, as part of DOT&PF's projects along Minnesota Drive, a tall, opaque, metal grid fence on top of a concrete barrier was installed in the median of the roadway between Benson and south of WNL, with no apparent outreach/discussion with the Spenard and Turnagain Community Councils prior to this barrier fencing installation as to its:

- Visual aesthetics;
- Effectiveness to address dangerous pedestrian mid-block crossings;
- Improvements to provide safe pedestrian intersection crossings; and
- Obstructed driver sightlines;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Turnagain Community Council concurs with Spenard Community Council in rejecting objects to the design and construction of the Minnesota Drive Barrier Fence, which does not meet the vision for the neighborhood, does not solve the pedestrian dangers at the Minnesota Drive, Benson Boulevard, and West Northern Lights Boulevard intersections, and, in fact, has the potential to increase the safety hazard by obstructing driver, pedestrian and bicycle rider visibility in this area; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Turnagain Community Council requests the following remedies for this project:

- Collaborate with community stakeholders (including Spenard and Turnagain Community Councils) and the public to identify effective solutions and pedestrian improvements along Minnesota Drive in this area, which may include:
 - Removal of the recently-installed center barrier fencing along Minnesota Drive between Benson Boulevard and West Northern Lights Boulevard (including the dangerous guy-wire at the north end of the median) and in its place:
 - Installation of a fixture that is transparent, attractive and that adequately addresses pedestrian and driver safety; and
 - Addition of two crosswalks to the “missing” sections (the fourth leg) at Minnesota Drive at both Benson and West Northern Lights Boulevards, which include adding time to the traffic light cycles to allow for safe pedestrian crossing; and
- Implement these safety and visual improvements as soon as possible.

RESOLUTION PASSED by the Turnagain Community Council at its regularly scheduled meeting this 7th day of December, 2023, by a vote of YES 13 NO 0.

Cathy L. Gleason

December 7, 2023

Cathy L. Gleason

Date

Turnagain Community Council Vice President and Acting President