

Municipality of Anchorage



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<http://www.muni.org/gbos>
Ethan Berkowitz, Mayor

GIRDWOOD VALLEY SERVICE AREA BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Jerry Fox & Mike Edgington, Co-Chairs
Eryn Boone, Christina Hendrickson, James Glover, Jr.

September 4, 2019

Wolfgang Junge, P.E.
Regional Director
Alaska Department of Transportation
4111 Aviation Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99519

Dear Director Junge,

Thank you for meeting with me, Girdwood Valley Service Area (GVSA) Manager Kyle Kelley and members of Girdwood Alliance on August 23rd to review the situation along the Alyeska Highway Multiuse Pathway which was rebuilt in 2017 under the Alyeska Highway Pedestrian Safety Corridor project.

As you are likely aware from our previous correspondence with the Alaska Department of Transportation (DOT)^{1,2} and from recent TV news reports, the Girdwood community has several continuing concerns about the multiuse pathway, and specifically the seven sweeps at intersections with side roads.

There is general agreement that the sweep design has improved sightlines for both path users and side road drivers and that by locating the pathway in front of the stop bar on the side road there is increased situational awareness from both groups. The community concerns are not really with the concept of sweeps, but in their particular execution in Girdwood. Our primary criticism remains the lack of separation between the pathway and the edge of traveled way (EOTW). Secondary effects of this lack of separation include southbound vehicles crossing into the northbound travel lane and frequent instances of vehicle traffic using the pathway as a frontage road. Vehicles use the pathway despite above eye-level signage indicating no vehicular traffic. We note that the non-separation design was deprecated immediately after the construction of the Girdwood pathway and that current DOT design standards recommend a minimum 6' separation between the pathway and EOTW (see Figure 1210-4 in "Alaska Highway Preconstruction Handbook").

Whittier Police Department (WPD) provides contracted police services throughout GVSA and regularly patrols Alyeska Highway each day. WPD has been very responsive to the community's concerns about excessive

¹ Letter from GBOS to then Commissioner Mark Luiken, February 20 2018,
<http://www.muni.org/Departments/operations/streets/Service/GBOS/GBOS%202018/Girdwood%20Pedestrian%20Safety%20Corridor.pdf>

² Letter from GBOS to Jim Amundsen, Chief of Highway Design January 2019,
<http://www.muni.org/Departments/operations/streets/Service/GBOS/GBOS%202019/Jan%2010%202019%20DOT%20Sweeps.pdf>

vehicle speed on the highway and of frequent vehicle traffic along the multiuse pathway. We understand that without effective enforcement any additional signage would have limited effect, so we are pleased that WPD is a committed partner in enforcement of traffic regulations along the highway and pathway.

During the August 26th field meeting when we walked along the northern section of the pathway, Kyle and I had the opportunity to discuss potential mitigation options with you and your staff, including additional eye-level signage on removable bollards, painting stencils on the pathway, and re-alignment of the pathway at the sweeps to maintain at shoulder-width separation from the EOTW. Subsequently, on August 26th, Scott Thomas shared draft drawings (ref CR-T-01.02M) with Kyle Kelley showing proposed changes to signage, painting and alignment. See attachment.

The Girdwood Board of Supervisors (GBOS) support these modifications along the pathway, and propose drawing up an agreement between the GVSA and Alaska DOT to implement these modifications. We delegate Kyle Kelley, GVSA Manager, to negotiate the final details of the pathway modifications.

The GBOS consider these modifications to be short term mitigation efforts to the pathway, and encourage the Alaska DOT³ to seek funds for redesign of the sweeps to meet current design standards, as presented by Mr. Amundsen.

Thank you again for listening to our community's concerns and partnering with us to move towards a mutually satisfactory solution.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Edgington
Co-chair and Land Use Supervisor
Girdwood Board of Supervisors

³GBOS Resolution 2019-12, August, 2019,

<http://www.muni.org/Departments/operations/streets/Service/GBOS/201912%20DOT%20Alyeska%20Highway%20CTP%20Grant%20application.pdf>