

Submitted by: Assembly Vice
Chair Zaletel,
Assembly Member
Brawley, and
Assembly Member Volland
Prepared by: Legislative Services Office
For reading: May 7, 2024

**ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
AR No. 2024-165**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY REQUESTING THE ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES CENTRAL
REGION CONSULT WITH ASSEMBLY MEMBERS, SPENARD COMMUNITY
COUNCIL, TURNAGAIN COMMUNITY COUNCIL, AND OTHER IMPACTED
STAKEHOLDER GROUPS REGARDING THE MINNESOTA BOULEVARD “CHEESE
GRATER” FENCE BETWEEN NORTHERN LIGHTS AND BENSON BOULEVARDS**

WHEREAS, transportation planning in the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) should reflect community goals and take into consideration how transportation projects may impact community stakeholders and the public; and

WHEREAS, pedestrian safety is an essential component of any transportation plan; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) installed new street lights as part of a project funded under the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) to address the safety concern of dark road conditions along Minnesota Drive between Benson and Northern Lights Boulevards; and

WHEREAS, in conjunction with the installation of new street lights, ADOT&PF created a fence along Minnesota Drive between Benson and Northern Lights Boulevards with the intention to address safety concerns for pedestrians; and

WHEREAS, the fence along Minnesota Drive between Benson and Northern Lights does not address pedestrian safety and creates an environment unsafe for pedestrians due to the lack of accessible crosswalks; and

WHEREAS, this area is designated as a Town Center in the 2040 Land Use Plan (LUP). The LUP describes Town Centers as “destinations for shopping, entertainment, and services in cohesive, pedestrian-friendly urban settings,” with character elements that are “integrated with adjoining compact and medium-density neighborhoods, with convenient, direct walking and bicycle connections to adjoining neighborhoods.”¹

WHEREAS, the Highway Safety Improvement Plan (HSIP) denotes the typical ways for engaging with the community before installing transportation interventions, however, there was no apparent outreach or discussion with the Spenard and Turnagain Community Council prior to the barrier fencing installation; and

¹Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan, section 2, page 43

1 **WHEREAS**, Spenard Community Council adopted Resolution 23-07 on November 1,
2 2023, requesting that ADOT&PF remove the structure, install crosswalks on the
3 segments of the intersections not currently with legal pedestrian crossings, and work with
4 community stakeholders to design more effective pedestrian safety interventions; and
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6 **WHEREAS**, Turnagain Community Council adopted a similar resolution on December 7,
7 2023, with the same requests;
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9 **WHEREAS**, given the strong community opposition and lack of public process, the fence
10 along Minnesota Drive between Benson and Northern Lights should be reviewed by the
11 ADOT&PF in conjunction with the community stakeholders and the public.
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13 **NOW, THEREFORE, THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY RESOLVES:**
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15 **Section 1.**

16 To call upon ADOT&PF, asking the agency to:

- 17 1. Remove the center wall structure along Minnesota Drive between Benson and
18 Northern Lights Boulevards as soon as possible. If removal of the center wall
19 structure is not feasible, the Assembly requests ADOT&PF change the
20 construction material to be more transparent and visually attractive.
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22 **Section 2.**

23 In addition to removing or replacing the structure, the Assembly further requests that
24 ADOT&PF:

- 25 1. Intentionally consult the Municipality's Land Use Plan Map and applicable
26 policies on the map for corridors, which should be consistent with plans as it
27 relates to transportation infrastructure in Anchorage;
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- 29 2. Meet with members of the Assembly, Municipal staff including from the Traffic
30 Engineering Department, and community stakeholders (including the Spenard
31 and Turnagain Community Councils) to find solutions that encourage non-
32 motorized uses that account for safety in this area;
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- 34 3. Work with community stakeholders and the public to design pedestrian
35 improvements including adding two crosswalks to the missing sections at
36 Minnesota Drive at both Benson and Northern Lights Boulevards; and
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- 38 4. Prioritize funding and construction of agreed-upon pedestrian improvements as
39 soon as possible.
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41 **Section 2.** This resolution shall be effective immediately upon passage and approval
42 by the Assembly.
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45 PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this 7th day of May, 2024.
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Chair of the Assembly

50 ATTEST:

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Municipal Clerk

Attached Exhibits:

- A. Spenard Community Council Resolution 23-07, approved November 1, 2023
- B. Turnagain Community Council Resolution, approved December 7, 2023

