

TURNAGAIN COMMUNITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2022-XX:
REGARDING THE AMATS FISH CREEK TRAIL CONNECTION PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Turnagain Community Council (TCC) is an all-volunteer, self-governing neighborhood organization recognized in the Municipality of Anchorage Charter; and

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

WHEREAS, for decades an informal trail used by the West Anchorage community existed in the Alaska Railroad (AKRR) right-of-way north of West Northern Lights Boulevard (WNL) to Fish Creek Estuary and coastal area — specifically, the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail (Coastal Trail) after it was developed in the 1980s — but access to this informal trail was closed to the public by the AKRR in 2015; and

WHEREAS, the TCC passed a resolution in 2016 supporting the purpose and intent of a Fish Creek Trail to the Ocean Working Group proposal to establish a non-motorized trail connecting the existing Fish Creek Trail to the Coastal Trail, with a specific trail route to be established at a later date; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solution (AMATS), the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), in collaboration with the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA), has initiated plans to construct a new multi-use trail connecting the Fish Creek Trail and Coastal Trail through the AMATS: Fish Creek Trail Connection Project and

WHEREAS, the Fish Creek Trail Connection Project Team is preparing a Design Study Report that will evaluate six potential route alternatives from WNL to the Coastal Trail, and is planning to identify a preferred alternative by December 2022; and

WHEREAS, the TCC Land Use Committee held two public work sessions to discuss the Fish Creek Trail Connection Project and participated in two site visits to alternative route locations — and members of the Project Team provided project information at two TCC general membership meetings; and

WHEREAS, TCC members and nearby Turnagain neighbors have expressed a strong preference for a trail connection route that would overlap the existing Anchorage Water & Wastewater Utility access road located within the AKRR ROW, as this alternative would minimize impacts to both property owners and the Fish Creek Estuary; and

WHEREAS, the TCC supports the comments submitted by the Great Land Trust, which opposes any trail route section located within the Fish Creek Estuary, and concerns expressed by residents along the west side of the Fish Creek Trail alternative routes; and

WHEREAS, the TCC will only support a specific trail route that minimizes/appropriately addresses potential adverse impacts to affected Turnagain property owners, and environmental concerns, including impacts to Fish Creek hydrology and water quality, stream setback widths and vegetation, Fish Creek Estuary wetlands and wooded uplands, waterfowl and wildlife that use this important habitat area; and

WHEREAS, Turnagain Community Council testified before the Assembly on February 12 and March 22, 2022 requesting that the Assembly postpone their vote on this ordinance until more thorough public notice to the neighborhood could be given, and community outreach be conducted by the Council;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Turnagain Community Council **hereby supports development of a Fish Creek Trail Connection between West Northern Lights Boulevard and the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail in the Turnagain area, subject to the following conditions:**

1. **AWWU Access Road:** The majority of the trail should be located on the AWWU Access Road (until it connects with the Coastal Trail at the north end). TCC deems this alternative as the most logical, likely least expensive route that would avoid locating any portion of the trail within the Fish Creek Estuary, and would have minimal impacts on adjacent Turnagain neighbors in this area. This option has almost unanimous support from both Turnagain and Spenard residents who have expressed their views at TCC-sponsored project meetings.
2. **West Northern Lights Boulevard to Fish Creek:** If Condition 1 is not feasible, TCC supports a

route that starts with Alternative S1—but instead of following the top of the bluff, it transitions down to along the fence line east of Resolution Dr. homes and adjacent to the AWWU access road to its connection with Alternative N3. This modified route avoids adverse impacts to the property owners to the west of the railroad right-of-way and minimize the clearance. Use of Alternative S2b. would be the preferable route connection between modified S1 and N3 in the Fish Creek area, as it avoids locating the trail within the Estuary.

3. **Fish Creek to the Coastal Trail:** TCC supports the N3 Alternative with the northernmost connection to the Coastal Trail. The specific location of this alternative should follow the cleared area of the AWWU Access Road, which would minimize removal of existing trees and vegetation and avoids the placement of fill in Class A wetlands.
4. **Coastal Trail to the North:** TCC opposes extending the connection trail north of the Coastal Trail and onto the mudflats, as shown in Alternative N3b and, instead, supports Alternative N3a-Switchback to Connection to the Coastal Trail in this area.
5. **TCC opposes all other Fish Creek Trail Connection routes,** based on the potential for significant environmental and social impacts. If the Project Team chooses any other trail connection route alternative than those expressed by TCC, an Environmental Assessment must be conducted to properly identify and address specific neighbor and environmental impacts associated with the proposal.

RESOLUTION PASSED by the Turnagain Community Council on this 3rd day of November, 2022.

Vote: ___ yes, ___ no, ___ abstain.

Anna Brawley, President
Turnagain Community Council

Date



AMATS
Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions

ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS FISH CREEK TRAIL CONNECTION PROJECT

Project No. CFHWY00587



ANCHORAGE TRAILS

TRAIL ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives have been separated into North (N) and South (S) routes with the break point approximately located where Fish Creek flows under the ARRC tracks.

Each south alternative can be connected with any of the north alternatives. If S1 were connected to N2 or N3 it would require a span across Fish Creek similar to S2a or S2b.



LEGEND

- Existing Trail / Pathway
- Alternative S1
- Alternative S2
- Alternative S3
- Alternative N1
- Alternative N2
- Alternative N3
- Fish Creek Estuary Boundary
- Alaska Railroad Corp. Right of Way

