# TURNAGAIN COMMUNITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2022-07:
## 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

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, <u>subject to the following conditions</u>**:

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—<u>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</u>. 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, <u>an Environmental Assessment must be conducted</u> 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: _19_ yes, _0_ no, _0_ abstain.
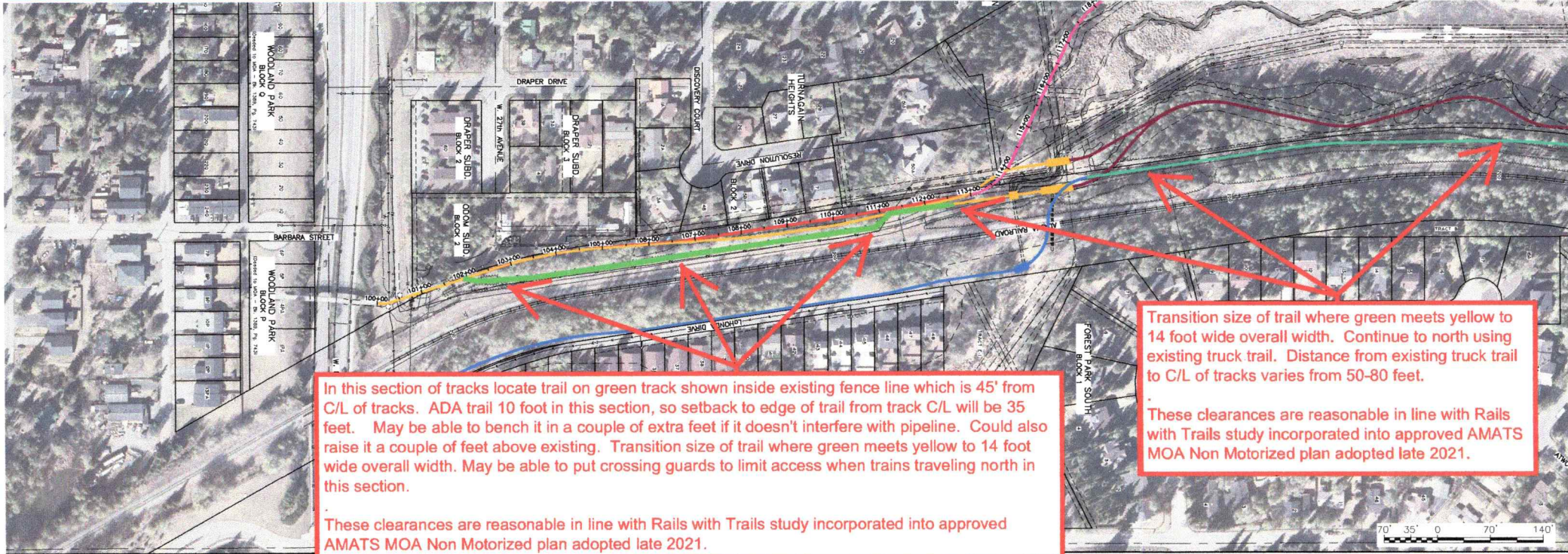

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Anna Brawley, President                                                        Date
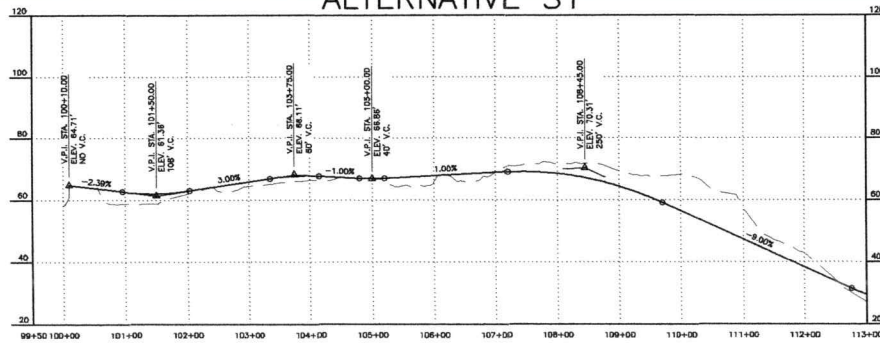Turnagain Community Council

In this section of tracks locate trail on green track shown inside existing fence line which is 45' from C/L of tracks. ADA trail 10 foot in this section, so setback to edge of trail from track C/L will be 35 feet. May be able to bench it in a couple of extra feet if it doesn't interfere with pipeline. Could also raise it a couple of feet above existing. Transition size of trail where green meets yellow to 14 foot wide overall width. May be able to put crossing guards to limit access when trains traveling north in this section.

These clearances are reasonable in line with Rails with Trails study incorporated into approved AMATS MOA Non Motorized plan adopted late 2021.

Transition size of trail where green meets yellow to 14 foot wide overall width. Continue to north using existing truck trail. Distance from existing truck trail to C/L of tracks varies from 50-80 feet.

These clearances are reasonable in line with Rails with Trails study incorporated into approved AMATS MOA Non Motorized plan adopted late 2021.

ALTERNATIVE N3A

Stay on existing truck trail, transitioned to 14 feet wide overall width. No tree disturbance around McCarey property. Duck under McCarey driveway with tunnel to connect to coastal trail. Distance to C/L of tracks is 50-80 feet. Nothing into estuary.

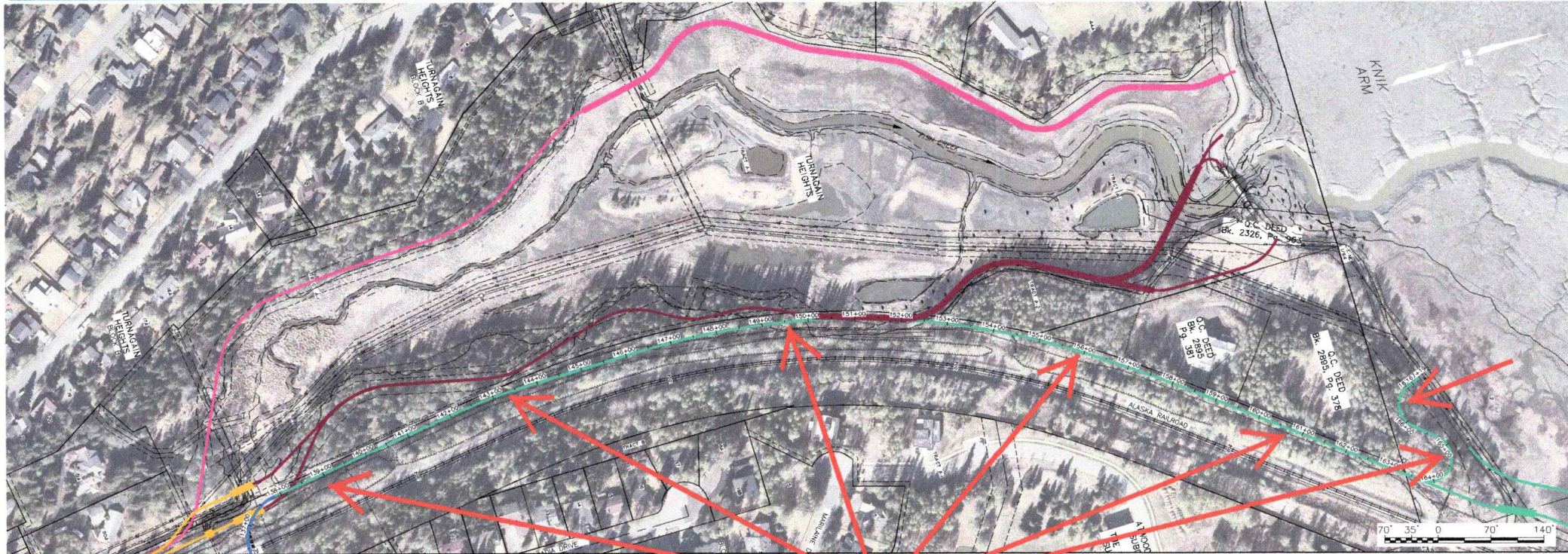These clearances are reasonable in line with Rails with Trails study incorporated into approved AMATS MOA Non Motorized plan adopted late 2021.