

# Spenard Community Council Resolution

2024-02

## A Resolution on Spenard Road 65% Design

WHEREAS, the Spenard Community Council (“SCC”) is an organization representing the interests of the residents of the Spenard area of Anchorage; and

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

WHEREAS, the 2040 Anchorage Land Use Plan designates Spenard Road as a “neighborhood center” and “main street corridor,” and with overlays for growth-supportive features including “transit-supportive development” and “traditional neighborhood features;” and

WHEREAS, the AMATS Non-Motorized Plan identifies Spenard Road as a priority bicycle network with a separated bikeway in the section from Minnesota Dr. to Benson Blvd., and as a secondary pedestrian network corridor; and

WHEREAS, the Spenard Corridor Plan identifies the transportation projects that interface with land use to meet the vision and overarching goals to make Spenard a vibrant model for the region and business district, and a place that is grounds for experimentation and a place to call home; and

WHEREAS, the Spenard Corridor Plan identifies Spenard Road as a primary non-motorized network and identifies priorities for the Central District of Spenard Road to include enhanced connectivity for non-motorized travel and public transit improvements; and

WHEREAS, Spenard Road is the anchoring roadway that connects our neighborhood and is a foundation for neighborhood identity, and this redesign should prioritize improvements for safety, connectivity, and accessibility within Spenard; and

WHEREAS, the Spenard Road 65% Design Study was released on January 18, 2024;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Spenard Community Council recommends the following improvements to the proposed design to meet the overall goals in the Spenard Corridor Plan and for the community:

- **Reduce the design speed of the project and the posted speed limit to 20-25mph.** Vehicles traveling at a higher rate of speed generate more noise, more exhaust fumes, and more danger. Making Spenard Road more pleasant for everyone demands lower speeds. Without a buffer or separating non-motorized travel from the driving lanes, the speed limit reduction is necessary and will improve safety without adding to congestion. Much of this section of the road is deeply curved and is already posted at 25mph; in fact the section from West 36th Avenue to Minnesota has been historically known as “Dead Man’s Curve”. There is no possibility of taking the curve

out of the road (we are not asking for that), but the sight lines are very short and going at higher speeds will be dangerous no matter what changes happen to the road itself.

- **Include 5-foot wide bicycle lanes.** The current design of 4-foot bicycle lanes with a 1.5 foot gutter pan does not make a 5.5-foot bike lane for safe, year-round facility. A winter bike handle bar is about 2 feet wide, making the buffer between vehicles inadequate. By designing the road to a speed of 20-25mph, it is possible to reduce the driving lanes or turning lane to enhance the non-motorized facilities. The community council is advocating for a speed reduction, but would like to note, without a speed reduction, the design would require a safety buffer or a separated bicycle facility.
- **Continue bicycle lanes through the Minnesota Dr. intersection.** The current design has the south-bound bicycle lane terminating onto the multi-use pathways somewhere between Minnesota Dr. and McCain Loop. Minnesota & Spenard is one of the most dangerous intersections in Anchorage, which is exactly where safe crossings for people on foot and bike are most needed. With the future design for Spenard Road from Minnesota Dr. to Northwood Dr. to likely include a lane diet following the northern sections, this current phase must provide continuous bicycle access through the Minnesota intersection in anticipation of this final segment of Spenard.
- **Access to cross streets needs to be incorporated in the design.** Recent development, such as along Chugach Way and 34th Avenue, and improvements to the non-motorized network along 30th Avenue need to be incorporated into the design based on increased use in these areas. Successful examples of this are along McRae Rd.
- **Include safe and ADA compliant pedestrian crossings between traffic lights.** ADA requirements for pedestrians at crosswalks should be adhered to, such as audible signals for those with hearing impairments. Again, there are the curves which makes it extremely hazardous for people to cross anywhere other than at Benson Blvd. or 36th Avenue.
- **Incorporate pedestrian signals to cycle with lights 24 hours per day with priorities for pedestrians.** The use of “beggar” buttons to activate the pedestrian walk signals is unnecessary, prioritizes vehicle traffic over pedestrian traffic, spreads germs, and increases opportunity for component failure and malfunction.
- **Winter maintenance should be factored into design.** We want all seasons of the year to be considered and snow is a problem for everyone: the Municipality snow removal and maintenance crews, vehicle traffic and especially pedestrians and bicyclists. We do not want to see snow storage in bicycle lanes or on sidewalks, but instead recommend modeling snow storage in the center turn lane within sections to also support slowing down traffic as has been successful in other cities. This may sound strange, but we do this every year for Fur Rondy, so it can be done.
- **Narrowing the driving lanes and center turn lanes.** The space saved by reducing the lane widths should be dedicated for active transportation, such as widening the bicycle lanes to not include the gutter pans .
- **Better incorporate art and placemaking into the design.** The design now has landscaping and a plaza area near Chugach Way. The council does not want to see an unused area with benches, but instead wants to better incorporate the 1% for art program to design a usable community space. Any landscaping should also include hearty, native plants, shrubs, and trees.

Resolved, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2024.

---

Spenard Community Council President

---

Date

Vote: \_\_\_\_\_ in favor, and \_\_\_\_\_ opposed.