

## Turnagain Community Council Resolution

To OPPOSE THE DISPOSAL OF ANY PORTION  
of the Municipally-Owned Dempsey-Anderson Ice Arena Facility Campus

*And*

To REQUEST REZONE  
of the Dempsey-Anderson Ice Area Facility Campus to  
PLI (PUBLIC LANDS AND INSTITUTIONS)  
to Accurately Reflect Its Current And Intended Use

### Resolution #2021-2

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, in response to receiving interest from the private sector to acquire the below-referenced property for development of a shopping center, on April 12, 2021, the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) Real Estate Department sent out an MOA agency review to determine present and future facility needs of **the southern portion of the Dempsey-Anderson Ice Arena (Dempsey/Dempsey Campus)**, stating they are considering the concept of **disposing 1.29 acres of the southern portion of the Dempsey Campus**, located at 1741 West Northern Lights Boulevard (WNL); and

WHEREAS, the entire Municipally-owned Dempsey Campus — **including the southern 1.29 acres of the Dempsey Campus** that features a portion of the arena parking lot (which provides both parking and winter snow storage), an infiltration basin, landscaping and a wooded, vegetative buffer along WNL — is located within the Turnagain Community Council boundaries; and

WHEREAS, Dempsey is one of the premiere cultural institutions completed in 1983 during the “Project ‘80s” era when the State of Alaska used its new oil earnings to significantly invest in Anchorage public facilities — and is a highly-valued, public recreational facility in West Anchorage that accommodates indoor ice hockey for all skill levels as well as indoor public ice skating and lessons; and

WHEREAS, the following subsequent improvements to the Dempsey Campus have contributed to protecting this State’s original investment that has served Anchorage and Alaska so well, including:

- **1996**—Approval was given to add a new ice rink, move the existing parking as well as **add parking and landscaping** to the Dempsey facility — and the USKH Landscaping Plan (Sheet No. 1) for these improvements **delineates the treed buffer in the southern portion of the Dempsey Campus along WNL as a “Do Not Disturb Existing Vegetation” requirement/condition**; and

- **2013**—the Alaska State Legislature approved \$10,000,000 to construct “deferred maintenance” upgrades to Dempsey — **including \$150,000 for parking lot expansion**; and
- **2014**—Dempsey campus improvements funded by the Legislature were approved by the Assembly — including the **addition of 131 parking spaces in the southern portion of the lot** — that addressed “**elimination of the existing parking shortage for this high use facility** and will provide required space for future projects, as this area expands” (AIM 127-2014); and the Dempsey “high demand for use by the public and this project will provide **much needed parking for this site, as well as for sports fields located at West High School and Romig Middle School**” (UDC Resolution No. 2014-010); and included a detention pond and surrounding landscaping **in the southern portion of the Dempsey Campus, east of the wooded buffer area**; and

WHEREAS, currently **all of the parking lot areas within the Dempsey Campus** are used during high-attendance ice hockey events and tournaments — and, as per a long-time, joint-parking agreement between the Anchorage School District and the MOA (originally signed in 2014) — the **Dempsey parking lot is used for overflow parking** during school hours and high-attendance school-related events held at the West High School/Romig Middle School campus just north of and adjacent to the Dempsey Campus; and

WHEREAS, the below-referenced West/Romig Master Plan identifies challenges for access, parking and internal circulation at the joint-school campus, and includes **options to develop potential additional access lanes** between the West/Romig Campus, through **the southern portion of the Dempsey Campus** — and to WNL to help address these circulation issues; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Wolverines, a new Junior hockey team as part of the North American Hockey League that will be using the Sullivan Arena as early as October 2021, will likely contribute to an increased demand by youth teams/recreational use of ice time (**and parking needs**) at various facilities in the Anchorage Bowl — including at Dempsey; and

WHEREAS, **the southern portion of the Dempsey parking lot is also used, when needed, to support community functions**, including currently as a COVID-19 vaccination site; and

WHEREAS, there are **significant traffic flow/circulation safety issues** in the heavily-used, one-way major arterial stretch of WNL between Minnesota Dr. and Lois Dr.:

- Currently, there are six access points on the north side and five on the south side in this roughly one block span of WNL. Existing businesses creating high traffic flow include Carrs/Safeway Grocery Store and Gas Station, SafeLite Auto Glass, Wing Stop, Panda Express, former Shell Gas Station and soon-to-open Vitus Energy Gas Station facility, Spenard Post Office, Dempsey-Anderson Ice Arena and the Lutheran Church of Hope; and
- To add to the traffic flow complexities in this short distance, many vehicles coming out from the access points north of WNL — **including Dempsey** — are crossing the three thru-lanes to get to the ‘drive-thru’ lane within the Carrs/Safeway parking lot that connects with Benson Blvd. — or crossing two-thru lanes to get to the left-only turn lane for access onto Lois Dr. Many times, drivers in the far left-hand lane who do not want to turn onto Lois Dr. are merging to the right into a thru-lane at the same time, in this same, constricted area; and

- Depending on what type of stores/eateries (and hours of operation) would be located in a potential shopping center on **the southern portion of the current Dempsey Campus**, this type of development could **generate a significant amount of additional traffic** in this already busy section of WNL; and

WHEREAS, even though the Dempsey Campus is currently zoned R-O (Residential-Office), multiple Assembly-adopted MOA planning documents clearly indicate **the current and intended future use of all of the Dempsey Campus is to be used for public purposes**, including:

- **1982**—Monthaven Subdivision Plat, Tracts 1A & 2A (location of Dempsey Campus) states, “Acceptance of Dedication: Anchorage hereby **accepts for public uses and for public purposes** the real property dedicated on the plat, including but not limited to easements, rights-of-way, alleys, roadways, thoroughfares, and parks shown hereon”; and
- **2010**—The West High School/Romig Middle School Master Plan (West/Romig Master Plan) specifically identifies **future use** of the Dempsey parking area as “Overflow Parking” — **including the southern portion of the lot** — in the Site Plan: Circulation/Parking During School Hours and the Site Plan: Circulation/Parking During Events; and
- **2012**—The West Anchorage District Plan Map (Exhibit 4-1a) and West Anchorage District Plan Turnagain/Spennard Land Use Plan Map (Exhibit 4-1c) identifies the **entire Dempsey Campus as “Schools and Community Institutional”** — and this land use designation is intended “for small- to medium-size institutions to integrate at the local neighborhood scale and provide a *community* service or focus for the surrounding area.” (WADP, pg. 83); and
- **2013**— Monthaven Subdivision Resubdivision of Tracts 1A & 2A into Tract 3A (approx. 9.629 acres) Preliminary Plat (location of Dempsey Campus) retains the 1982 plat note referencing the “Acceptance of Dedication: ...**for public uses and for public purposes...**”
- **2017**—The Anchorage 2020 Land Use Plan Map identifies the **entire Dempsey Campus as “Community Facility or Institution”** and the zoning designation for this land use is **PLI** (2040 LUP pg. 53); and

WHEREAS, disposal by the Municipality of **the southern portion of the Dempsey Campus** to a private entity for development purposes (office/residential or, if rezoned to B-3, retail/dine-in, etc.) would result in **numerous negative impacts**, including:

- Conflicts/nonconformance with multiple adopted MOA planning documents that clearly **show intent for ALL of the Dempsey campus to be retained for public use**; and
- Loss of the wooded buffer/berm area along WNL in **the southern portion of Dempsey** that currently **provides an aesthetic contrast** to the concrete/asphalt nature of development in this area where the land uses transition from commercial to residential — and retention of this wooded area along WNL was specifically included as a condition of the Dempsey Campus approved design plans; and
- Reduction of on-site snow storage capacity — currently both **the southern parking area** as well as **the wooded area** are used for snow storage — and necessitating off-site snow hauling that would result in more cost, and truck noise exposure to neighborhood; and

- Elimination of the current use of **the southern portion of the parking lot** area for Dempsey users and West/Romig overflow parking — and ironically, **require more parking** in this exact area, if developed for residential and/or commercial businesses; and
- Potentially creating more traffic congestion/safety circulation issues at the Dempsey ingress/egress site along WNL.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Turnagain Community Council **opposes** the Municipality of Anchorage **disposal of ANY PORTION of the Dempsey-Anderson Ice Arena Campus acreage** — **including the southern portion** identified in the Municipality of Anchorage April 12, 2021, Memorandum to Municipal Department Directors and Mailing List Distribution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Turnagain Community Council requests the **rezoning of the entire Dempsey-Anderson Ice Arena Campus acreage from its current R-O (Residential-Office) District to PLI (Public Lands and Institutions)**, to conform and comply with the intended use of this **public** land, as identified in the above-referenced adopted Municipal Land Use Planning documents — and to **accurately reflect the current use** of this valued community, public recreational amenity in the Turnagain neighborhood.

RESOLUTION PASSED by the Turnagain Community Council on this day, Thursday, June 3, 2021, by a vote of YES - \_\_\_\_\_, NO - \_\_\_\_\_.

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Cathy L. Gleason  
Turnagain Community Vice President/Acting President

June 3, 2021