

Turnagain Community Council
April 27, 2007

Lori Schanche
Transportation Planning Department
Municipality of Anchorage
PO Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519-6650

Dear Ms. Schanche,

The Turnagain Community Council submits the following comments regarding the Draft Anchorage Pedestrian Plan for consideration.

Please note that at our April 5, 2007 meeting, a motion was passed asking for an extension of the comment period. The date of the release of the Draft Anchorage Pedestrian Plan did not allow adequate time for review prior to our April 5, 2007 meeting. A committee has reviewed the plan. The Turnagain Community Council Board has approved the comments submitted today. These comments will be considered for formal council approval at the meeting scheduled for May 3, 2007. We may make modifications or changes to today's comments, if directed to do so by those members participating in the May 3, 2007 Turnagain Community Council meeting.

We generally support the goals of the plan. Thank you for promoting safe and inviting pedestrian ways, addressing pedestrian safety issues in all areas of the city and encouraging healthy and environmentally friendly habits.

Within the comments specific to projects in or near the Turnagain Community Council area, we have recommended changes in priority for some of the items. Special consideration should be given to projects that are part of the West High School - Romig pedestrian and traffic circulation area. This is an area of high use by youth and adults from all over the city.

We understand that the West High School PTSA is also submitting comments more specific to the schools. Some of the same items are included

within our comments. We have seen the draft comments of the West PTSA and generally support their recommendations.

Thank you for considering our comments. We look forward to the final plan and the completion of projects. If you need additional information on any item we have commented on, please contact us.

Sincerely,



Pat Redmond

Turnagain Community Council Anchorage Pedestrian Plan Review Committee

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Attachment: Turnagain Community Council Comments on the
Draft Anchorage Pedestrian Plan

**Comments on specific projects in or near the boundaries
of
Turnagain Community Council**

- **Turnagain Street:** Sidewalk on at least one side of Turnagain Street from W. Northern Lights to W. 34th or W. 35th should be added to Plan Project List and given the highest priority within TCC boundaries. This busy street was the site of a serious pedestrian/vehicle accident a few years ago. TCC does not want to wait until the road is upgraded through the Capital Improvement Program to address this pedestrian safety issue.
- **#39 W. Northern Lights Blvd. - path on south side, La Honda to Lois Drive:** TCC supports this project and the high priority it is given in the Plan. A worn, narrow path indicates pedestrians have long used this as a walking route. Because of the constraints of the area, a narrower walkway, rather than a sidewalk, may be more appropriate. We do want to make sure that any design does not impair/impact Fish Creek in this immediate area.
- **#50 Seppala St. - W. Northern Lights Blvd. to Balto Seppala Park:** TCC supports this project and the priority it is given in the Plan.
- **#55 Balto Seppala Park-Lloyd Steele Park to school:** TCC recognizes that students cut across Balto Seppala Park from Milky Way to Turnagain Elementary School, but we have not discussed a specific sidewalk project in this parkland area. We need more information before supporting the project.
- **#66 Turnagain Elementary School - W. 29th, Wisconsin to school:** TCC supports this project and the priority it is given in the Plan.
- **#67 DELETE Aero Avenue - W. 36th Ave. to W. 44th Ave.:** TCC requests that this sidewalk project be deleted from the Plan. By the Plan's own definition (page 6), a sidewalk is "an improved surface within a vehicular right-of-way, aligned with a road..." Aero Ave. is a dead-end at W. 36th Ave. There is no road south to W. 44th Ave. The city proposed the extension of Aero several years ago, but withdrew

its U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit application after receiving feedback from the Corps that the city did not provide adequate public need to justify filling Turnagain Bog wetlands for this road project. Also, the extension of Aero south of 36th Ave. is not included in the city's Long-Range Transportation Plan.

- **#68 Hillcrest Dr. - Atwood Dr. to Spenard Rd.:** TCC supports this project and requests that it be given a HIGHER priority in the Plan. This area, near West High/Romig Middle schools, receives a substantial amount of student pedestrian traffic and TCC has consistently expressed pedestrian safety concerns in this area for many years. Some specific recommendations, including a well-marked crosswalk at Wildwood and Hillcrest Dr. and improved crossings at the Hillcrest off-ramp and Hillcrest Dr., are included in the comments submitted by the West PTSA.
- **#69 Fish Creek Trail - Barbara Drive segment 29th Ave.- 32nd Ave.:** TCC supports this project and requests that it be included in the Trails Plan when it is updated by the city.
- **#81 Lake Spenard/Lake Hood - pedestrian facility along lake:** TCC generally supports this project, but provides the following specifics:
 - 1) This project should be a multi-use trail, rather than a sidewalk, and should be included in the Trails Plan when it is updated. Currently, non-motorized use around the lakes includes walkers, runners, roller-bladers and bicyclers. A sidewalk would not serve those multiple uses.
 - 2) Almost the entire project falls within the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport (TSAIA) boundaries. A proposed pathway project located in this general area was included in the "General Aviation Master Plan for Lake Hood Seaplane Base and Anchorage International Airport" (September 2006). For these reasons, TCC feels this project should be funded by the airport under their General Aviation federally-allocated budget.
 - 3) Regardless of which entity spearheads this project, community, aircraft owners and pilot input is critical to ensure the project design does not conflict with aviation use of the area and provide a safe and

appropriate recreational asset to non-motorized users near the Turnagain neighborhood.

- **#87 Forest Park Dr. - pedestrian route between W. Northern Lights Blvd. and Hillcrest Dr.:** While TCC acknowledges a definite need to address pedestrian safety along Forest Park Drive, a walkway project along this road will generate substantial neighborhood controversy due to the right-of-way take necessary to construct the project. Currently, TCC is on record opposing any improvements along Forest Park Drive and we would advocate for minimal residential property impact if a walkway project is included in the final Plan.
- **#126 Benson Blvd. & Minnesota Dr., #9 Crash Location:** While not technically within TCC's boundaries, Turnagain residents use this area everyday to leave our residential neighborhood. We fully support a pedestrian safety corridor study at this crossing and feel it should be given a higher priority in the Plan, due to its #9 pedestrian/vehicle crash ranking (Appendix A).
- **#153 Minnesota Dr. & W. Northern Lights Blvd., #2 Crash Location:** TCC sees that this pedestrian crossing project is listed under "Funded Projects" and fully supports the concept, though we would like to know details of the project. Specifically, we want to see signage indicating that right-hand turning vehicles must yield to pedestrians. TCC strongly feels this project should receive a much higher rating due to its #2 pedestrian/vehcile crash ranking (Appendix A). TCC has consistently expressed concern regarding the safety of pedestrians at this intersection for years. Now that a dedicated right-hand turn lane has been added to Minnesota Dr. at this extremely busy location, TCC feels pedestrians are at an added risk, which needs to be promptly addressed.
- **#204 Postmark Dr. - trail through airport area - Lake Spenard to Earthquake Park:** TCC needs more information before we can support this project in the final Pedestrian Plan. Specifically,
 - 1) TCC notes this is under "Funded Projects," but we have not been made aware of this project.

2) We are confused as to the actual project: in the project title, it is referred to as a "trail," but under Improvement Type it is listed as a "sidewalk."

3) While we are aware pedestrians use Postmark Dr., this road has very wide shoulders that adequately accommodate the amount of usage it gets.

4) Would the project scope include pedestrian crossing features at Pt. Woronzof Dr., such as flashing lights and signage, and a trail connection on the north side of Pt. Woronzof Dr. to the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail? If a pathway/trail/sidewalk were constructed, but does not include these necessary components, adding a pedestrian amenity along Postmark Dr. would encourage more usage of the area, resulting in a potential pedestrian road crossing hazard at the north end of Postmark Dr. where it would suddenly dead end.

5) TCC is also concerned that any kind of trail project separate from the existing road would necessitate filling Turnagain Bog wetlands, which currently provide a multitude of valuable functions to the area.

6) Because this is completely within the TSAIA boundaries, does the airport support this project? If so, it would be more appropriate for the airport to fund this project.

- **ADD: W. 36th Ave. from Minnesota to Fish Creek: A** pedestrian/non-motorized way on at least one side of W. 36th Ave. This would complete a connection with the Fish Creek Trail and provide a safer pedestrian access to the Boys & Girls Club. If changes are made in the W. 36th Ave. and Minnesota intersection, a safe pedestrian crossing area will need to be provided.