

John Rodda, Director
Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department
P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Subject: Resolving congestion of routing numerous events through Bootlegger's Cove.

Dear Mr. Rodda:

Bootlegger's Cove residents have brought to the attention of the South Addition Community Council that the growing number of races, walks and other group events and activities that route hundreds of participants through streets of Bootleggers Cove neighborhoods are raising safety and other concerns. We are reaching out to ask you to assist the Council by bringing together the appropriate municipal departments to coordinate with user groups (event sponsors) and neighborhood residents to resolve these concerns. The goal is to encourage continuation of the runs and events, while finding solutions to avoid the congestion caused by routing numerous events through a concentrated area of South Addition.

The summer of 2013 brought an increase in the number of runs, walks and other pedestrian events starting at or near the Park Strip and routing hundreds of participants through the Bootlegger's Cove streets. In particular, it resulted in increased pedestrian traffic and parking congestion in the streets near the corner of 12th Avenue, U Street and Bootlegger's Cove Drive, which don't have sidewalks. To compound the situation, the increased use happened simultaneously to repaving the coastal trail, which caused re-routing of more walking and running events through this neighborhood. Of twenty-two weeks this summer, residents noted that at least one event per week used this area. This is in addition to the well-attended bi-weekly evening runs that begin and end near the Park Strip.

Now that the Coastal Trail repaving is completed, it seems a good time to find a means to coordinate future events to avoid recurrence of the congestion and overuse of certain routes. We have listed the main areas of concern and suggestions that may help resolve them.

1. Over-concentration of events using the same routes: Events that begin at or near the Park Strip and route through South Addition (particularly Bootlegger's Cove) to the Coastal Trail have increased in frequency and numbers. As a result, some routes are being overused resulting in safety and neighborhood concerns.
2. Suggested solution: To help limit too-frequent use of the same streets as routes, require all events to register with the Municipality and be listed on a master calendar that is available on the municipal web site. This would enable the Municipality to determine if events were concentrated in certain areas or if certain routes are overused and events should be redirected to other routes. The master schedule of all events could be an addition to the runner's master calendar or a new master calendar.
3. Obstructed access to homes during events: During events access to the area may be restricted and, even if traffic is not restricted, access is made difficult because the streets are congested with event participants and cars. This raises concerns of lack of a safety plan for access by emergency vehicles and in-home care givers during the events.

Suggested Solution: To address local access problems, require sponsors of all events that use the streets and sidewalks as routes to provide access plans for residents and emergency vehicles during the event.

4. Insufficient notice of the events: Some residents feel that they do not have access to adequate notice to plan better for the impact of the events on their neighborhoods.

Suggested solution: Require event sponsors to provide advance notice along the route of the event with fliers. This, in addition to a publicly available Municipality master calendar of all events that use the public streets and sidewalks, could provide adequate notice.

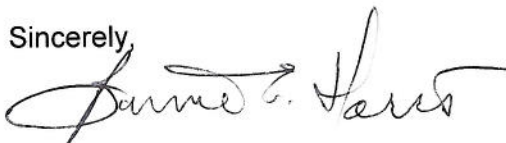
5. Lack of parking for event participants: During events there is increased parking pressure near the access points to the Coastal Trail. Since there are few access points, none of which have adequate parking areas for the amount of cars, the result is excess street parking that clogs the streets making traffic unsafe.

Suggested solution: Require event sponsors to provide parking safety information to event participants in advance. In the longer term, providing additional parking areas for the Coastal Trail and more Coastal Trail access points would help to alleviate the parking congestion.

6. Event markings and trash left on streets: Spray paint or chalk used to mark routes is not always cleaned up after the events; it may be left to for weeks or until it wears off. Litter is not always picked up after the events.

Suggested solution: Require event organizers to use chalk, not paint, and provide adequate trash receptacles. Require also that they clean up after the events, removing all markings and trash. A required deposit for cleaning may be a helpful reminder to clean up.

We are optimistic that a meeting among the municipal departments that coordinate and permit these events, the event sponsors and the community, will be a good start to resolving these concerns. We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to meeting with you soon; Cathleen Hahn will be calling in the next few days to organize a meeting.

Sincerely,


Bonnie Harris, President
South Addition Community Council

Sincerely,


Cathleen Hahn, Secretary
South Addition Community Council

Cc: The Honorable Daniel Sullivan
Mayor, Municipality of Anchorage

Patrick Flynn, Anchorage Assembly

Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department
Holly Spoth-Torres, Parks Superintendent
CB Stewart, Special Permit

Shane Locke, Municipal Traffic Division
Darrel W. Hess, Municipal Ombudsman