

## TURNAGAIN COMMUNITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2017-03

### RESOLUTION OPPOSING PROPOSED PROJECTS IN THE DRAFT ANCHORAGE FREIGHT MOBILITY STUDY (OCTOBER 2016) RELATED TO UPGRADES OF PT. WORONZOF DRIVE/WEST NORTHERN LIGHTS BOULEVARD

WHEREAS, the Turnagain Community Council (TCC) is an all-volunteer, self-governing neighborhood organization recognized in the Municipality of Anchorage Charter, with the purpose of providing a direct and continuing means of citizen participation in government and local affairs; and

WHEREAS, on January 12, 2017, a representative of the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) and an HDR project consultant provided a presentation to TCC attendees about the Draft AMATS Freight Mobility Study (Draft Study), including a prioritized list of future transportation projects intended to improve local infrastructure for better facilitation of freight movement in Anchorage; and

WHEREAS, the Draft Study includes Table 10.2 “Immediate (0-10 Years) Freight Projects Identified for Implementation” (pages 59 & 60) that identifies three proposed projects located within TCC boundaries:

- Page 59 — “Improved TSAIA Access – North”: Improve freight access from TSAIA’s North Airpark to Minnesota Drive (*High Priority*);
- Page 60 — “Postmark Drive and Point Woronzof/West Northern Lights Boulevard Intersection”: Improvements to address stop signs, tight intersections, and left and right turns (*Medium Priority*); and
- Page 60 — “Northern Lights Boulevard – Postmark Drive to Nathaniel Court”: Improve access along Northern Lights Boulevard to TSAIA; rehabilitate pavement and add shoulders where needed; wetland impacts are anticipated (*Medium Priority*); and

WHEREAS, the Draft Study “Comment - Response Transmittal February 10, 2017” document states, “Smaller freight vehicles, such as those used by parcel delivery services, use Northern Lights Boulevard to travel to/from TSAIA. ***There is a desire by the freight community to INCREASE THE USE OF NORTHERN LIGHTS BOULEVARD*** (our emphasis) because it provides more direct, quicker access between TSAIA and downtown Anchorage (and other destinations along the Glenn Highway); and

WHEREAS, the Draft Study “Comment - Response Transmittal February 10, 2017” document also states, “At this time, West Northern Lights is not considered a key freight route because of the residential development along this corridor. ***This corridor currently, and for the foreseeable future, FUNCTIONS AS A SECONDARY FREIGHT ROUTE.***” (our emphasis) However, the Legend in Figure 7.5 of the Draft Study “AMATS Freight Movement Problem Areas” (page 43) identifies Secondary Truck Routes and **WNL/Benson Blvd. between Lake Hood Dr. and Minnesota Dr. is NOT identified as a “Secondary Truck Route” — nor is it identified as a “Permitted Truck Route”**; and

WHEREAS, the Draft Study projects listed above propose significant upgrades to Pt. Woronzof Dr./West Northern Lights Blvd. — and the intent of these projects are to support and accommodate increased freight truck vehicle traffic that may also move at faster speeds due to the upgrades from North Airpark and other areas at TSAIA through Earthquake Park dedicated parkland and to the Turnagain residential neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, the Freight Mobility Study is a Modal Plan that falls under the Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Plan and the 2035 Interim Anchorage Metropolitan Transportation Plan May 2012 (MTP) — and Draft Study Table 3.1 “Relationship between the FMS and Interim 2035 MTP Goals” (page 12) refers to a comparison of select MTP goals and Draft Study goals; and

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WHEREAS, Table 3.1 of the Draft Study does *not refer to/provide an evaluation of how the study meets the following MTP goal objectives*:

- MTP Goal 1 Objective (Chapter 3, page 2): “Minimize cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods”;
- MTP Goal 2 Objective (Chapter 3, page 2): “Minimize conflicts between freight and passenger and non-motorized travelers;
- MTP Goal 8 Objectives (Chapter 3, pages 5-6): “Minimize adverse impacts on the community, such as neighborhood through-traffic movements” & “Balance the benefits of improvements against the impacts on the natural environment, such as water resources, fish habitat, watersheds and wetlands, and parklands”;
- MTP Goal 8 text (page 3-6), “Goal 8 is also about protecting neighborhoods...The relationship between how travel is conducted and where residents live is evident in air quality issues, as well as in the effects of traffic on neighborhoods, including detractions such as cut-through vehicles and heavy traffic on arterials that surround neighborhoods;” and

WHEREAS, while the Municipality of Anchorage Official Streets and Highways Plan October 2005 (OS&HP) designates WNL between Wisconsin St. and Postmark Dr. as a Minor Arterial, when upgrades were made to WNL between Wisconsin St. and Nathaniel Ct. in the mid 2000s, this 2/3-lane section of WNL was specifically developed with Collector Street design standards — due to its location in a completely residential neighborhood, and based on the Collector Streets OS&HP description: “The collector system should be designed so that through traffic is discouraged between larger residential areas and major activity areas” (which would include TSAIA’s North Airpark where major freight facilities are located), and Collector Streets are not designed to accommodate a large volume of freight truck and other airport-generated commuter traffic; and

WHEREAS, while the OS&HP designates WNL between Nathaniel Ct. and Postmark Dr. as a Minor Arterial, a large segment of this road runs through Municipal dedicated parkland (Earthquake Park) and Class A Turnagain Bog wetlands, and is currently much more compatible with the OS&HP Country Lane designation, which is described as a two lane road and “a special type of local or collector street having unique scenic attributes”; and

WHEREAS, Turnagain residents have tolerated WNL delivery freight truck traffic and its associated air quality, noise and other negative impacts to our neighborhood since the early 1990s when North Airpark was developed, but over many years TCC has consistently opposed any proposed road upgrades on WNL between Nathaniel Ct. and Postmark Dr. (other than appropriate maintenance and existing pavement rehabilitation), due to the fact that major upgrades would result in more delivery freight traffic and related traffic congestion, noise, air quality and safety concerns and impacts along West Northern Lights Boulevard, a residential neighborhood with an elementary school directly facing the street;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Turnagain Community Council opposes inclusion of the three specific proposed projects listed below, and requests the removal of these projects from Table 10.2 of the Draft Anchorage Freight Mobility Study as well as the forthcoming update to the Anchorage Metropolitan Transportation Plan:

- Improved TSAIA Access — North
- Postmark Drive and Point Woronzof/West Northern Lights Boulevard Intersection
- Northern Lights Boulevard – Postmark Drive to Nathaniel Court

because these projects are intended to accommodate and support increased use by TSAIA-generated traffic, including freight truck traffic, of Pt. Woronzof Dr./West Northern Lights Boulevard, and this traffic increase

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would result in increased negative health, safety, environmental and quality of life impacts on the Turnagain residential neighborhood and on Turnagain Elementary School, as well as negative impacts on the high value natural areas of Earthquake Park and Turnagain bog Class A wetlands; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that while the following request DOES NOT address the negative impacts being experienced by Turnagain residents from TSAIA-generated freight truck traffic traveling through our residential neighborhood on West Northern Lights between Nathaniel Ct. and Minnesota Dr., Turnagain Community Council requests that the following be added to the Freight Mobility Study as a recommendation, as this freight truck route from Airport facilities to West Northern Lights Boulevard provides a viable alternative to directing this traffic on WNL between Postmark Dr. and Lake Hood Dr. — and would allow the proposed \$14.9M upgrades to WNL between Postmark Dr. and Nathaniel Ct. (2010 MTP estimated cost) to be spent elsewhere in the city on more appropriate, permitted freight route project/s:

**RECOMMENDATION:** To avoid development of major upgrades to Pt. Woronzof Dr./West Northern Lights between Postmark Dr. and Nathaniel Ct., **North Airpark delivery freight truck traffic should be diverted north on Postmark Dr. to Lake Hood Dr., which still provides access to West Northern Lights Blvd. at the intersection of Lake Hood Dr. and WNL.**

This recommendation would maintain north access freight truck traffic and direct it onto a safer, flat, well-maintained two-lane road with wide shoulders that falls completely on TSAIA property — and eliminates costly road upgrades through a Municipal dedicated park and Class A high value wetlands that are proposed in the Draft Study.

RESOLUTION PASSED by the Turnagain Community Council on this 2nd day of March 2017.

Vote: 13 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain.



Cathy Gleason, Acting President  
Turnagain Community Council



Date