
Spenard Community Council

1057 West Fireweed Lane, Suite 100
Anchorage, AK 99503
SpenardCC@gmail.com

February 2, 2022

Spenard Road Rehabilitation Team

Sean Baski, DOT PE, Project Manager
Travis Holmes, DOT, PE, Project Engineer
www.spenardroad.com
Via email: spenardroad@dowl.com

RE: Spenard Road Rehabilitation design comments

To Whom It May Concern:

We, the Spenard Community Council, hereby provide our comments for the planning of the Spenard Road Rehabilitation (Benson to Minnesota) while it is early in the planning stage. Our council has been advocating for years to make this section of Spenard safer and better connected throughout our community. We support slowing down vehicle traffic without causing congestion, providing protected bicycle lanes, and wide sidewalks to provide better accessibility for all residents.

Rather than selecting a road cross section, below are broad comments to capture our vision for the roadway related to the Spenard Corridor Plan and throughout the years. This is a multiyear project that will have profound implications for the neighborhood, the Spenard community and the users of the road. We have been meeting with a group of our membership, concerned citizens and stakeholders. These are our suggestions which we would like to see taken into account and addressed by the planners and engineers:

- **Speed limit:**
 - We would like to see the speed reduced to 20-25 mph. Much of this section of the road is deeply curved; 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.
 - We would like the planners and engineers to consider how to reduce the overall travel by vehicles on Spenard. We want it to be a road that will encourage people to slow down and think of it in terms of the community and what we have to offer, such as our local businesses, and not as a quick cut through.
- **Road Diet:**
 - We support three lane alternatives and would like to see an alternative with protected bike lanes and wide sidewalks. Creative solutions might involve a two

driving lane alternative with a median in sections, such as what has been done on West 9th Avenue and the southern section of Spenard Road. We would like this considered in the design along the corridor.

- We recommend a narrower 11-12' center turn lane so as to free up extra space for the pedestrian and bike accommodations on the sides of the road.
- **Bicycle facility:**
 - We need to increase the width of the separated bike lanes. Even at 4.5 feet, the bike lane is too narrow (especially for fat tire bikes and including the gutter pan) for safety reasons. The reduced size of the turning lanes will make it possible to have wider bike lanes and pedestrian trails. The additional width should not be taken from the multi-use path.
 - The bike lanes should be separate and protected from both motorized traffic and pedestrians. They should be well marked, painted and with signage, all in keeping to the highest and best practices and standards.
- **Access and cross-streets:**
 - More work needs to be done to include the higher traffic counts that will accompany the construction currently happening with the CIHA project and future planned development farther east on Chugach Way. This includes the need for safe non-motorized access for pedestrians, bicyclists, people using wheelchairs or other modes of transportation onto and out of Chugach Way.
 - There needs to be a higher concentration of attention to how the road will interface with Chugach Way, West 30th Avenue, West 32nd/33rd and so on. How will the spillage from the improved road impact the side streets that have no sidewalks or trails? How will the improvements to West 32nd and 33rd interconnect with Spenard?
 - The planners and engineers need to take into account the higher use of West 36th by vehicles between Spenard and Minnesota. The road there is underdeveloped with sidewalks that disappear and a narrow right of way. We can only assume this part of the road will be more heavily used in the future.
 - The SCC has opposed the routing of northbound traffic from Minnesota to Spenard and a couplet at West 36th in the past and continues to do so. This is contrary to our desires for a safer, slower road that will be friendlier to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **Integrate transit:** The plan is considered a "Transit Corridor", so it should include bus turnouts and ways for passengers to safely cross Spenard Road throughout the corridor to get on and off the bus.
- **Safe crosswalks:**
 - There need to be safe pedestrian crossings. Again, there are the curves which makes it extremely hazardous for people to cross anywhere other than at Benson Blvd. or 36th Avenue.
 - Can the idea of motion lights or weight pads be included on Chugach Way that will allow cars to exit without a planned lighting signal? There is a concern that having a signal at Chugach will cause traffic to back up on Spenard even further towards 36th, but having an "as needed" light might assist as a safer alternative.

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- **Winter maintenance:** 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. How will the road be maintained and how will there extra sidewalk/trail space and bike lanes not be utilized as a convenient snow storage space?
 - **Minnesota Drive:** The designers, planners and traffic engineers need to take into consideration the huge impact Minnesota Drive will have on this project. The Spenard Community Council would like to see future plans, studies and improvements that address Minnesota Blvd. also look into how it interacts with Spenard Road. Minnesota bifurcates Spenard neighborhoods and the community. The sheer size of the Minnesota with multiple lanes, fast speeds and narrow sidewalks that are used as snow storage make it a challenge to the non motorized public. This is a huge commitment of time, resources and public monies. We want the project to be a success for everyone concerned.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our thoughts on this project and we look forward to a fruitful collaboration with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lindsey Hajduk". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Lindsey Hajduk, President

Resolved, this 2 day of February 2022.

Vote: 23 in favor, and 0 opposed.