



Municipality of Anchorage

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Mayor Mark Begich

Office of the Mayor

December 17, 2007

Bob Curtis-Johnson
Neighbors for a Safe Community
2900 W 35th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99517

Dear Bob,

Thank you for your letter of April 23 that notes your group's general agreement with our final project proposal for improvements to 35th Avenue and McRae Road and seeks to clarify certain aspects of that agreement. I am grateful that through hard work and level-headed discussion we could reach an acceptable compromise. This has been a unique collaborative process between your ad hoc community group and the Municipality.

Noting your concerns, this letter serves to preserve the work of that process, including some 1,100 plus hours of volunteer time by your group. It also records the Municipality's agreement with you and the community on how best to proceed with improvements to these two streets. I hope that your group will stay involved through this project's completion and welcome their continued collaboration as called upon by the project team. As the project team approaches final landscaping decisions, and similar issues, I trust that a future administration will rely on the body of hard-earned knowledge developed by your organization and the relationships you have developed with the project team. A citizen design committee, customarily used on this type of project, should reflect this unusually educated and involved citizenry.

Understanding that construction of this project is currently not scheduled until 2011, I commit the Municipality to moving forward with the compromise we achieved. The salient points are described below:

- **Collector Status:** Despite its designation as a collector road, the terms below will govern the design and construction of the project where they differ from those municipally defined standards.

Community, Security, Prosperity

- **Design and Posted Speed:** The road will be constructed with a 30 mph design speed and will be posted with a maximum speed of 25 mph.
- **Road Width Including Travel Lanes and Shoulders:** The overall road width, from back-of-curb to back-of-curb will be 31' narrowing to 28' on 35th Avenue from Turnagain to Vintage Circle. Neckdowns, bulb-outs, and other traffic calming devices may narrow the roadway further in places. In both the 31' and 28' width areas, the travel lanes will be 10' wide. Fog line stripes will be wider than standard to calm traffic, and will thus leave approximately 3' for shoulders on each side.
- **Trees Generally:** The road corridor currently boasts a number of high value trees which add both aesthetic value and some measure of traffic calming. The traffic calming effect of the trees results from their proximity to the roadway. This proximity does, in several circumstances, restrict sight distance, and sight distance is a key component of safe road design, particularly at intersections. Consistent with the sight distance required for a 30 mph design speed, the Municipality will attempt to preserve as many existing trees as possible in the construction process. Some trees will necessarily be cut to provide adequate sight distance and to provide a safe and predictable road alignment. However, the Municipality recognizes and agrees with the community's desire to preserve the existing character of the neighborhood and park-like setting of the road corridor.
- **The Trees Between Vintage and Turnagain Specifically:** A number of older, high value trees grow on this stretch of the road. In particular, five large spruces trees grow on the border of the Deal property and Municipal right-of-way. Their root system and canopy extend well into the right-of-way. From the beginning of discussions about this road project, neighbors and project managers have recognized and appreciated the value of the trees in this section of the road. They typify some of the unique characteristics of this roadway. Accordingly, the Municipality commits to consulting with professional arborists and using alternative, low-impact design and construction techniques to limit adverse effects on these trees. However, some careful pruning of the lower branches will undoubtedly be required, and any construction process will necessarily change their growing environment, potentially resulting in some unavoidable damage or loss.

- **Intersection Realignment:** The road improvement project will “square-up,” or re-align the intersection of eight roadways with 35th Avenue and McRae Road. Those are: Turnagain Boulevard East, Abbey Lane, Forest Road, Barbara Drive, Arkansas Drive, Iowa Drive, Northwood Drive, and Carolina Drive. Currently, Forest Drive and McRae form the most problematic, or acutely angled, intersection. The Municipality will judiciously acquire any necessary right-of-way to accomplish these intersection realignments. With the right-of-way information in hand, the Municipality fully believes that we can design and construct a safe intersection without damage to the private well near this location. In the remote chance that the well should fail as a result of road construction, the Municipality will take steps to provide domestic water on both a temporary and permanent basis.
- **Pedestrian Facilities:** This road improvement project will include a continuous 6’ wide asphalt path attached to the curb on the north side of the roadway by a 2’ wide patterned concrete buffer. Additionally, mid-block trail crossings of the Fish Creek Trail and the Boys and Girls Club Trail will have flashing crossing lights. Right-of-way will be acquired to accommodate these facilities. Conversely, the Municipality will not acquire right-of-way specifically necessary for future sidewalk or trail construction on the south side of the roadway.
- **Traffic Calming:** The project design will include a number of traffic calming elements including raised intersections, a chicane or lateral shift, chokers, colored crosswalk, variable speed compliance signs, and flashing lights at two pedestrian crossings. The intersections at Vintage Circle, Turnagain Boulevard East, Barbara Drive, and Northwood Drive will be raised. The exact height and run of these intersections will be determined after testing in the forthcoming years. In particular, several intersection alternatives will be investigated for Turnagain Boulevard East because the roadway rises over a hill and curves. The lateral shift in the roadway will be between Vintage Circle and Turnagain Street. As described under road width, the long choker will be from Vintage Circle to Turnagain Street and additional choker will be placed in conjunction with the raised intersection at Northwood Street. In addition to the raised intersections, the intersection at Turnagain Street will include a colored and textured concrete crosswalk. Two variable speed compliance signs will be placed at an appropriate location in the project area and the mid-block trail crossings for the Fish

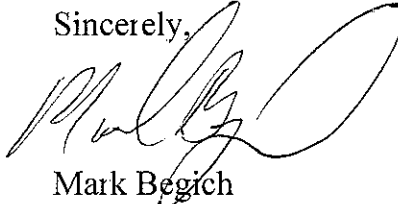
Creek Trail and the “Boys and Girls Club Trail” will include flashing pedestrian lights.

- **Supplemental Traffic Calming Measures:** The project budget will include contingency funds set aside to pay for additional traffic calming measures should they prove necessary. The current 85th percentile speed is 32 mph between Wisconsin Street and Turnagain Street and 35 mph between Turnagain Street and Spenard Road. If this project fails to reduce the 85th percentile speed along the entire project length to 27 mph, then the contingency funds will be used to add sufficient flashing lights at all pedestrian crossings and up to three speed humps, each of which would be safely navigable by all vehicles from the adjacent fire station. The Municipal Traffic Department will conduct a speed study after completion of the project and after the public has had time to adjust to the new conditions. This study will also measure traffic volume as well as speed.
- **Parking:** The Municipality will provide as much on street parking as is safe and practical. This is generally expected to be located in three areas, all on the south side of the roadway: immediately west of Vintage Circle, between Barbara Drive and Arkansas Drive, and just east of Northwood Drive. If land becomes available from willing sellers or if the final design process indicates room for additional parking spaces, the Municipality will consider other alternate parking arrangements
- **Mailboxes:** To reduce vehicle-vehicle and pedestrian-vehicle conflicts as well as facilitating easier snow removal, the Municipality will provide cluster mailboxes throughout the length of the road corridor. Placement will be guided by safety and ease of use concerns. Every attempt will be made to accommodate safe and easy access.
- **Fish Creek Improvements:** In order to address flooding issues, reduce maintenance costs, and address habitat and water quality concerns, this project will generally improve the Fish Creek channel. This will include replacing undersized piping, re-channelization, re-vegetation, and road alignment and intersection improvements. As previously noted, these will require significant right-of-way acquisition.
- **Neighborhood Gateways:** The project design team will work with the neighbors to establish gateway treatments at both the west and east ends of

the project corridor that will be aesthetically pleasing, helpful in traffic calming, and easily maintained.

I believe the agreement contained in this letter concludes a fair and beneficial process and the resulting road improvement project will be a helpful addition to our community. Thanks for your thoughtful participation.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich
Mayor

cc: Matt Claman, Anchorage Municipal Assembly
Dan Sullivan, Anchorage Municipal Assembly
Jason Bergerson, Spenard Community Council
Mark Wiggin, Turnagain Community Council

Concur:



12/17/2007

Bob Curtis-Johnson
On behalf of Neighbors for a Safe Community