



MEMORANDUM

TO: File: 3907.05 Spenard Road Safety Improvement Project
FROM: Kathy Burgess and Anne Brooks
SUBJECT: Project Advisory Committee Meeting
July 20, 2000, 12 noon @ Frigid North
DATE: July 21, 2000

The first meeting of the Spenard Road Safety Improvement Project opened with a welcome from Anne Brooks of Brooks & Associates, an introduction to the project by Chet Halcomb of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF), and an introduction of the project team by Jim Sawhill of Lounsbury & Associates. The Committee will provide a sounding board for roadway safety recommendations, public transportation and pedestrian improvements and street amenities or enhancements. The general limitations of the solutions for Spenard's problems are space (minimal existing of right of way) and money available to implement and maintain the design.

Anne introduced the committee members present and requested that in the coming weeks they review the information in the notebooks provided. A section of the notebook sets out the roles and expectations of the committee members and the project team.

Jim went over the accident diagrams and drew the Committee's attention to the clusters of traffic accidents they show. These areas may benefit from changes in the road's design. Jim also noted that an error was found in the data requiring an update to the accident diagrams provided. New diagrams will be sent to the Committee.

(Comments made by committee members will be given *in italics*. Comments of the project team will be in standard type.)

How can we deal with the high concentration of crashes at the Northern Lights and Benson intersections?

Our analysis will try to do just that—to deal with that high concentration. It is not possible to mitigate all accidents to changes in the roadway design.

These diagrams don't show all the accidents that almost but didn't quite happen. I see near-misses all the time. That's why we need the input of the people here [committee members] who have daily experience on the street.

The diagrams show accidents only from 1996 to 1998. The 1999 data is not available until October of this year.

There are accident clusters at 34th and at 30th that we need to look into. The two driveways at the REI store are a hazard.

Can a left turn lane be made at Benson & Spenard since the Department of Transportation owns the right of way?

If we need that right-of-way it will be financially easy to get. Both the southwest and northeast corners are owned by the DOT.

The 27th Avenue intersection legs are offset which creates another problem area.

There was a traffic light there before. Should it be put back now that the Bear's Tooth is generating so much traffic?

Perhaps there should be some all-way stops instead of lights. They force people to slow down to stop rather than accelerating to try to make the light.

There is a cluster of collisions at Chilkoot Charlie's. Times are usually late at night, presumably patrons on their way home.

I can move fast as a pedestrian, but I have close calls there all the time.

'Koots sometimes uses barricades at night to organize right-turns-only out of the parking lot exits.

Will the curves in the road be straightened? The cost of acquiring the necessary right of way would be too great.

In the winter there is a problem at the curve in front of the Wave (currently the Alamo). Snowplows don't plow it properly causing vehicles to travel in the opposing inside lane.

Bike traffic is increasing on Spenard and it's hard for motorists to see cyclists from street entries.

I had a friend who got a ticket for riding his bike in the street when he was crowded off the sidewalk and was hit by a vehicle's rear view mirror.

This will be an important issue for Spenard—safely accommodating pedestrians and bicycles. *It is important for snow storage to be a part of the design.*

It seemed to me during Fireweed Lane discussions that a 3-lane plan would work here on Spenard. Accidents went down on southern Spenard after the 3-lane plan was implemented.

At this level of the project we won't be doing much analysis of individual driveways. That will be part of design in the next phase.

We need a handle on the cut-through use of side streets. There may be a need for traffic calming measures to deal with that.

There's a need for some mid-block pedestrian crossings. The places that come to mind are bus stops mostly—the Sunrise Bakery and Chilkoote's (25th Ave.). People cross midblock there now because it's safer than at the corners.

What will the city be doing with the 36th Avenue/Spenard Road intersection? Unofficially, all solutions are expensive. It doesn't look like much will be done very soon.

Something needs to be done at Minnesota & 36th.

The development of this project is waiting on traffic analysis data. We will draft a Traffic and Safety Analysis with recommendations, show it to the DOT and bring it to this committee, to the Spenard businesses and to the wider public for comment.

Is there a summary of the Fireweed Lane work? Yes, and we can get it. The difference in the two projects is that we started with better sidewalks on Fireweed. The project recommendation was an 8-foot sidewalk on one side but there was disagreement on bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Public comment provided late in the project may influence the final design of pedestrian facilities.

Anne requested a final round of comments and reactions from the committee members:

People don't pay attention driving. We need to get them to do so. Three lanes would improve safety. I do see accidents from turns in double lanes. Traffic cuts through from Minnesota on 33rd.

Speed limits—there should be more signs. Snow should be cleared for pedestrians; there should be better sidewalks.

I'd like safety and enhancements. We should focus on winter safety of pedestrians. This area is a great place to walk to businesses, but the elderly, especially, have a hard time getting around.

I like the way 3-lanes works on south Spenard. Curves are a problem here and speed on curves. People are in a hurry and don't pay attention.

It would be great to get a GPS device to record the position of community patrol pickups on Spenard. Probably they are concentrated near bus stops.

I support the Northern Lights Center becoming a good shopping center. (REI will stay there and the building will be remodeled.) Maybe there could be some artwork on the long blank REI wall.

Some traffic calming is needed; perhaps some rumble strips or the closure of some cutoff streets. Perhaps turn lanes should be added at Northern Lights and Benson intersections.

I like blocking off side streets for traffic calming. It is also a way to beautify the area.

I want a good bikeway. I'm not sure about the 3-lane idea. I think we should pursue more money for beautification because it makes people pay attention when they pass through an area.

We park in front of my store and pull off over the curb into the street and it's not safe. I like bike lanes on the street. Rumble strips are hard on bikes.

I met my neighbor here at this meeting! The bike map given out at the Visitors Center does not designate Spenard as a bike route because it's not safe. The official lane is on Minnesota. We'd like to have a good bike route here because we feel it could be safer than on the big through roads.

The next meeting of the Project Advisory Committee will be in about a month; there may be a change of venue. Members are requested in the meantime to read the materials provided in the notebooks and to talk to people who use Spenard to hear their ideas.

Attendees:

Tom Bichsel, Spenard Community Council	Dave Krehmeier, Lounsbury & Associates
Kris Conquergood, Spenard Community Council	Ken Morton, ADOT&PF
Bill Gee, Hickel Investments	Jim Sawhill, Lounsbury & Associates
Mike Huelsman, Midtown Inebriate Task Force	
Bruce Irvine, National Bank of Alaska	
Barbara Johnson, North Star Community Council	
Tom McGrath, Frigid North	
Sam O'Connor, Westside Community Patrol	
Woodrow Sanders, Anna's Place	
John Weddleton, Bosco's	
Anne Brooks, Brooks & Associates	
Kathy Burgess, Brooks & Associates	
Linda Cyra-Korsgaard, Tryck Nyman & Hayes	
Tom Garrett, Lounsbury & Associates	
Chet Halcomb, ADOT&PF	