



Meeting Notes

SUBJECT: Parks Highway, MP 44-52
PROJECT NO.: IM-04-1(23)/57178
GROUP: Big Lake Community Council
DATE: January 10, 2007
TIME: 7-9:00 PM
LOCATION: Volunteer Fire Station, South Big Lake Road
MEETING OUTREACH: N/A
MEETING ATTENDANCE: 30 (approximate)
MEETING MATERIALS: 1) Graphics –annotated aerial photos showing the proposed alignment.
STAFF PRESENT: *ADOT& PF:* Paul Wescott
HDL: Jeff Fuglestad;
Brooks & Associates: Betty Caudle

MEETING INFORMATION:

In October 2004, the State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) began seeking comments on environmental and design activities for the Parks Highway from milepost 44, Lucas Road, to milepost 52.3, Big Lake Road. The project team requested the opportunity to speak to the Big Lake Community Council at their January, 2007 meeting concerning the project to provide an update of the project, present the preferred alternative developed by the engineering consultant, Hattenburg Dilley & Linnell (HDL) and answer any questions council members may have.

After being introduced by the council president, Jeff Fuglestad from HDL began by giving a brief introduction and status of the project. The project is a rehabilitation of the Parks Highway from Lucas Road to just past the intersection with South Big Lake Road. A preliminary engineering report for the project has been submitted to the Department of Transportation for their review and comment. Once the comments have been addressed, the Preliminary Engineering report will be published and open to review and comment by the public. Part of the Preliminary Engineering Report includes results from an in-depth traffic study and the recommendation of the preferred alternative.

Jeff then referred to the annotated aerial photo to discuss the preferred alternative and the recommended improvements broken down by intersection, segment or key landmark.

Lucas to Church – widen to a 5-lane roadway (2-lanes in each direction, with a middle turn lane) for part of the road segment.

Church to Big Lake – widen to a divided 4-lane highway where the center is depressed. This segment would be similar to the Glenn Highway. The temporary traffic signal at Church Street would be made a permanent traffic signal.

Stanley Drive – install a traffic signal at Stanley.

Frontage Roads - where feasible, the existing frontage roads will be improved, extended and linked with access to the Parks Highway every half-mile or so. A bridge will be added over the railroad crossing.

Museum Drive - realign Museum Drive down to the Highway.

Vine Road – install a traffic signal

Pittman Road - will still have a traffic signal.

Marigold - extend frontage road for continuous link.

Potter Road - no traffic signal at the intersection.

Johnson Road - no traffic signal at the intersection. Access to the highway will be part of the half-mile grid.

South Big Lake Road - no traffic signal needed or warranted at this time. To facilitate the free right turn, a pork chop will be installed, there will also be a northbound acceleration lane.

Explained the indirect left turns – if a driver wants to make a left they make a right turn then make a u-turn within a half-mile or so to go in the other direction. These access points will be installed where needed.

Jeff then asked if anyone had any questions or comments. The question or comments is typed first with the project teams' response in *italics*.

A bridge over the railroad is a big deal.

Any kind of lighting? *We are recommending continuous lighting along the project corridor.*

Great!

Why did you opt not to put a traffic light at Big Lake Road? *It is a T-intersection. A traffic signal will not be warranted at this time. Drivers will have a free right turn and a northbound acceleration lane.*

How far away are we from needing a signal? *These improvements should last until 2030. However, a traffic signal may be needed at Big Lake Road before then. No one can really say, but it can be looked at in the future when traffic increases.*

How long will construction take? *Should be two construction seasons.*

When is it slated to go? *2010-2011. It will depend on when the environmental documents are completed and the available funding.*

We have natural game trails in the area. Anything being done for lighting? *We are recommending continuous lighting along the 4-lane divided section. That will help visibility.*

What about an undercrossing? *The area is flat, no natural low spots, we're not limiting access by fencing, so the animals can cross where they want. Lighting will be a big help.*

What about the Pittman Road mess? *The alternative does call for raising it 4-6' to help flatten out the steep grade or dip on Pittman.*

Why delay the building? *An environmental document takes approximately 2-years to complete. We have to gain approval from interest group; various agencies; public; etc. It will probably begin design in 2009, which takes a couple of years to complete.*

What about right-of-way? *Yes, we will need some right-of-way. Acquisition takes approximately 1-year and can happen while going through the other approval processes.*

We are looking at this today. Seems it should be built today. Why didn't we look at it sooner? What is future vision to make projects like these happen quicker? *Board Member responded: This is an important reason why we need to participate in the Mat-Su Long Range Transportation Plan. We have to identify the chokepoints and push the projects that we want done in our area. It takes the whole community to make noise to start projects.*

How can community be pro-active, not re-active? *Board Member responded: Lean on politicians; provide input to transportation plan every year; we pushed for South Big Lake Road, we still need to push for it; we need the infrastructure; check the web site about the bypass.*

Will there be an interchange (at Big Lake)? *It was looked at, but determined that it was not needed at this time.*

How many additional signals? *Currently, there are two existing traffic signals. The signal at Vine will be made permanent this summer bringing the total existing signals to three. The design has two additional signals bringing the total to five along the project corridor.*

Restricted access? *No. Traffic will collect along the frontage road. If there is no frontage road, it will be right-turn in/right-turn out only. At the unsignalized intersections, driver will turn right and then make a u-turn no more than a half-mile down the road. Potter Road, Johnson Road, for example, will have indirect left-turns. No crossing opportunity unless it's at a signalized intersection.*

What's in next 8-10 years? *As the area builds up, you may need additional traffic signals.*

How many cars can wait to make the u-turn? *The left-turn pocket is 480' long, which holds plenty of cars.*

During the project, will traffic be blocked? Will there be 40-minute waits? *There shouldn't be. The existing 2-lanes will be part of the embankment in the new design. The contractor could easily build*

the additional two lanes on the north side, then move the traffic over and complete the improvements on the existing road with minimal disruption. However, it is ultimately the contractor's decision.

Will we lose the bar at Pittman? *At this time, we are anticipating taking the bar and the cabins.*

Will this affect the pedestrian trail? *The trail will be moved. However, it will be kept in the same basic configuration.*

Was pedestrian crossing taken into account? *Only at Pittman. Meadow Lake Community Council asked about a pedestrian undercrossing. However, drainage will be an issue and it is not feasible at this time.*

What about an overpass? *An overpass requires a lot of room. It is probably not feasible with the right-of-way that's available.*

Is the existing road in the center of the existing right-of-way?
It hugs the right-of-way on south side. We will build the additional lanes on the north side.

Is there 120' of right-of-way? *I don't recall. I do know that it's not consistent. We are in the process of identifying preliminary right-of-way impacts. Some property between the RR right-of-way and the highway right-of-way are only 30'-40'.*

Don't like to see put a bike trail somewhere and then end up moving it in a few years. Want community to be pro-active on roadways. *It has been 13 years since improvements were done to this road.*

Will you take stuff (right-of-way) at Vine? *At this time, we are anticipating taking the remaining strip from the existing railroad crossing to Pittman.*

No overpass on any of this? *Correct.*

There were no further questions from the community council, so discussion was concluded.

Related documents on file:
Meeting graphics