

Meeting Notes

SUBJECT: Parks Highway, MP 44-52
Project No. IM-04-1(23)/57178
GROUP: Public
DATE: February 23, 2006
TIME: 6:00 PM
LOCATION: Wasilla Multi-Use Sports Complex, 1001 South Mack Drive

MEETING OUTREACH: Postcard mailer to residents and property owners along the project corridor (2016+); Display advertising in the *Frontiersman* (February 14 and 21, 2006), *Anchorage Daily News* (February 16 and 23, 2006)

MEETING ATTENDANCE: 107 (from sign in sheets)

MEETING MATERIALS: 1) Handouts: Agenda and comment sheet (copies attached);
2) Graphics – annotated aerial showing comment received at 10/28/04 meeting; annotated aerial photos showing the proposed alignment.

STAFF PRESENT: ADOT& PF: Miriam McCulloch, Tony Boneta, Tana, Stone, Brad Sworts; HDL: Dennis Linnell, Jeff Fuglestad; Green Engineering: Ellen Green; Jentek: Jenni Kuentzl; Brooks & Associates: Anne Brooks, Kathy Burgess

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. At this February 2006 meeting the team presented alternatives developed by engineering consultant, Hattenburg Dilley & Linnell. The purpose of the meeting was to receive public input to enable the team to modify the alternative(s) and begin the environmental assessment for the project.

The public was greeted at the door, asked if they would sign the sign-in sheets and provided with a comment sheet and agenda. Project materials were available for review. A formal presentation was made by the project team beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The comments and questions recorded on flip charts during the question and answer session following the presentation are noted below.

- Check the ¼ section line at Blondell, I don't think this is accurate.
- Rainbow Road is now called Lilly Lake Road.
- Right turns – provide them where needed
- There have been crashes at Hollywood & Pittman

- Didn't we originally consider access roads?
- Depressed median does not help for safety. What I think works are – slow traffic down
- Climate changes are affecting the highway – there is more ice on highway now, icy patches along the highway, especially at mile 47 and mile 51/Houston H.S.
- Look at the Meadow Lakes Comprehensive Plan – your alternative dissects the community center – with a median
- Pittman Road/Parks Highway intersection, something needs to be done here. There are 2 schools, a bar and the train. Soon a State trooper station and the grocery store. The businesses are growing – how will you handle in future?
- Trains block the Pittman Road crossing when loading gravel and emergency vehicles can't access the Parks Highway.
- We need access at Meadow Lakes Loop.
- Add right turn lanes
- Consider an overpass or interchange at Pittman. The project team said an interchange needs lots of \$\$ and Right Of Way (ROW)
- Did any \$ go away because of the bridge [Knik Arm Crossing]?
- What is the cost of 4-lane roadway and divided roadway with an interchange at Pittman Road?
- What's to prevent barrier medians in the future?
- Why don't you consider alternate route shown on far wall (refers to aerial photo with comments from scoping meeting)? We didn't consider the alternative because of it's cost, ROW needs and impacts. In addition it doesn't serve the community, and may require a major investment study
- Why can't we consider concrete barriers instead of the medians?
- Meadow Lakes is a flourishing business area; I'd like to see frontage roads on both sides of road – near fireplace shop. This would stimulate business growth.
- Put stoplights in when highway is built. Don't come in with patches and tear up the pavement. Pre-wire the intersection before lights are in – poor maintenance/highway degrades.
- The team explained the rationale for ½ mile spacing – the spacing allows for better signal timing when and if traffic signals are added.
- Project out of date before built
- What will be done at moose crossing areas? Lights at street/crossings use lights like in the Palmer Highway flats
- Parks Highway should be a freeway, without traffic lights at every ½ mile.
- Where do we best spend \$20 million?
- The adjacent land is a large area which could be used for development

- Sterling Highway operates at 35/45 mph in the area where the highway passes through the community
- Design speed should be 45 mph – it is the only north/south thoroughfare. We want 45 mph – reflects our community – schools
- The corridor—Parks Highway, MP 44 (Lucas Road) to MP 52 (Big Lake Road)—had 13 fatalities, 912 crashes between the 1993 to 2004 time period. [Note: the commenter referenced a number of accidents, however, the source and time period were not identified. These notes reflect the number shown in the project traffic and safety analysis.]
- What are the interim plans – reduce speed limit; add signals?
- Length of turn lanes will need to be considered when turning at 55 mph
- One commenter was concerned with how the big trucks will access business with limited access at ½ mile spacing.
- A commenter announced a Saturday meeting to talk about safety concerns at the Mat-Su Legislative Information Office – 1:30-3:00 p.m., Saturday – DOT Safety folks will be there. In addition there will be a Meadow Lakes Community Council Meeting at 9:30 in morning on Saturday.
- The no-build is an option
- Why can't you scrap this project and build bypass? What would trigger a route change to Big Lake?
- Consider building controlled access as far as you can [with the available money] and do the rest later [when funds are available].
- What do you do at Parks/Pittman for pedestrian access? Need overpass, pedestrians would cross at signal
- One commenter felt that a by-pass [around Wasilla] was needed for the through traffic.
- Traffic projections provided by project team. Some say it won't take that long to reach #'s Dennis mentioned
- Are you considering trucks in your design?
- More access needed in the business – 5 lanes near Pittman Road – 5 lanes in the business sections.
- Several commenters felt the project team needs to meet with Meadow Lakes Community Council – we want to meet with you about this design
- We want experts to give us a safe answer that matches our community vision.
- The group was directed to look at the Mat-Su Borough's Long Range Transportation Plan which programs other corridors parallel to the Parks Highway and other North/South roads. The team noted that these would take pressure off the Parks Highway.
- One commenter suggested that the project team take a close look at the Meadow Lakes Comprehensive Plan – the Meadow Lake population expected to double

- The commenter further noted that Meadow Lakes growth is such that the infrastructure [road system] is already 10 years behind schedule, this improvement should have been done 10 years ago
- The project is no help to mobility/safety. Are we developing one continuous city from Wasilla—Fairbanks?
- Think big and do it right the first time.
- Consider using the cross-section like the DOT built through Sterling for the segment of the Parks Highway near Pittman
- More lights (signals)— does this equate to slower traffic?
- Contact info(?): www.dot.state.ak.us, 269-0555
- One commenter asked how ATV/Snow machine/small vehicle use was addressed. He noted that there is a lot of ATV, snow machine traffic on road and felt that the alternative presented will encourage more use on road
- Bike paths – what is the interface with the highway?
- Fatal accidents in this section
- One commenter felt that the project would be outdated the year it is constructed.

Related documents on file:

Sign in Sheets
 Handouts (Comment Sheet)
 Comment Sheets received at meeting
 Meeting graphics
 Mailing List
 Postcard Mailer