



FIREWEED LANE/LATOCHE STREET UPDATE

MEETING NOTES

SUBJECT: Fireweed Lane/LaTouche Street Upgrade W.O. D58819
Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting No. 2

DATE/TIME: Thursday, October 27, 2005 / 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

LOCATION: DOWL Engineers, Training Room

GROUP: *MOA, PM&E* - John Smith
MOA, Traffic - Bob Kniefel
MOA, Planning - Sharon Ferguson
MOA, Street Maintenance - Shawn Dooley and Dan Southard
Residents - Joe Bernardini, Bill Rice, Bob Butera, and David Evans

STAFF PRESENT: *DOWL Engineers* - Steve Noble, Brad Melocik, Kevin Doniere, and Kelly Brown

MEETING MATERIALS: PowerPoint presentation, Informational binder updates, and Sign in sheet

MEETING INFORMATION: Thirteen members attended the second Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting on Thursday, October 27, 2005 at DOWL Engineers (DOWL). Comments and questions submitted by the CAC members are summarized in the following pages. Project staff's responses to questions are shown in italics.

Steve reminded the committee that the purpose of the CAC is to advise DOWL and the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) on the problems and improvements that members see are necessary, and provide feedback on the effects of the proposed improvements on the community. The MOA is the ultimate decision-maker.

Steve reviewed the public comments received to date. The most common comment has been to reduce the speed on Fireweed Lane/LaTouche Street and reduce cut-through traffic. Some of the other comments include improving pedestrian facilities, improving drainage, analyzing the Northern Lights Boulevard/LaTouche Street intersection and the Seward Highway/Fireweed Lane intersection.

Steve reviewed the collector criteria class and explained an existing typical section for a collector road.

Steve explained three alternatives for cross-sections of the right-of-way (ROW).

- *Alternate 1* - Based on existing conditions, this alternative would avoid the existing utility poles. The poles are at the back of the sidewalk on the south side. There is mobility between the poles. After meeting with Municipal Light and Power (ML&P), we should know by mid-November whether we will relocate these poles or live with them.
- *Alternate 2* - This cross-section is in response to public comments. Based on the comments, the public wants to have more than seven feet between the trail and the curb to do something nice in the buffer. The purpose of this section is to put a ten-foot buffer

between trail and the path. Steve explained that this alternate is only feasible if the utility poles on the south side are under-grounded.

- *Alternate 3* - This option addresses treading the drainage in a bioswale. Steve explained that a ten-foot swale is as narrow as it can be to get the water level low enough to stay out of the roadway prism. According to the road design manual, pedestrian facilities must be on both sides because it is a collector road. Therefore, ROW would be required for the sidewalk on the south side to build this alternative.

Steve discussed the three intersections included in the study:

- Bannister Drive - Possible to leave it as is. One option would be to put in a roundabout; also looked at creating more of a curvilinear road to get the driveways a little bit further away from the intersection.
- LaTouche Street and Northern Lights Boulevard - No survey data yet. Comments received to date have asked for the school zone to be changed around. A sketch shows the southbound approach having a through lane, a right-hand turn only, and then a northbound approach having a thru lane and a left-hand turn only lane.
 - A CAC member asked if project staff had looked at the traffic volumes. *Yes. Steve explained that the volume is at a Level of Service B at this intersection. The northbound approach is already at Level of Service F.*
 - A CAC member commented that people do not use their turn signals, therefore making it difficult to make a left-hand turn off northbound LaTouche Street onto Northern Lights Boulevard. *Steve asked that Brad retrieve the data analysis for this intersection.*
 - An additional comment suggested installing left-hand turn signals for both Northern Lights Boulevard and Benson Boulevard. This would allow five or six cars to go through, and would relieve congestion within those intersections. *Steve said he would take a look at that.*
- Fireweed Lane and Seward Highway - Steve showed that a possible option is to have a sign in the dedicated turn lane that reads, "Do Not Stop." This lane is not subject to a signal. Steve mentioned that this intersection has a safety problem - the signal for pedestrians is outside of the curb, which directs pedestrians to cross that dedicated lane. He said it is an inappropriate use of a signal. Two options to correct it: 1) Put a stop sign at that dedicated lane, that way when pedestrians cross, it is okay. This is the cheapest way to fix this problem. This means there would not be a free right lane. 2) Move signal to median. Make the free right lane outside of the signal so it is not subject to the signal.

Brad discussed the drainage issues. The survey along Chester Creek Trail is complete. Project staff acquired a video of the storm drain system from the street maintenance and learned that a lot of the storm drains need repair. He said we would be replacing a lot of the storm drain systems along the corridor. The bioswale drainage option would require ROW easements and therefore may be costly. Brad will also address an option for storm drain treatments without the use of a swale and use a wet area at the north end of Juneau Street. Brad also explained two graphical options he passed out to the members: 1) Culvert Extension Concept: access would be provided for maintenance to the manhole, grading at the bottom with 3:1 side slopes, and he plans to drop the invert of the culvert six inches so it

doesn't stick up in the soccer field and give it a little cover. Brad showed a section view, and finally he explained that the new filled area would be landscaped. 2) Step-Pool Concept: Brad explained there would be one-foot steps, a plunge pool at the end of the culvert, and that these pools will capture sediments, and reduce the velocity of the water through the ditch.

A CAC member asked: The 24-inch CMP that crosses the park, do we need to provide access to that line for maintenance? *Yes, we will come down the Chester Creek Trail.*

Traffic Calming Toolbox. Steve discussed several options for reducing speed. He also discussed some of the challenges that go along with each of the traffic-calming options. A CAC member commented on the roundabout and explained that the roundabout located in Southport is an effective traffic calming measure that has helped reduce vehicle speeds.

- **Chokers** - Steve showed the plan view. Challenges: Street maintenance does not want bollards (it is a challenge to keep sidewalks clear). It is important to repeat chokers every 300 to 500 feet.
- **Speed bumps, raised crosswalks, or raised intersections** - Reduces speed four to five mph within vicinity of speed bumps. Increases response time of emergency vehicles.
- **Chicanes** reduce speeds by one to two mph.
- **Volume reductions** - The most aggressive example are diverters, which is a street that is no longer a thru street. Challenge: Increases time for emergency response vehicles. Inconvenience to residents as well.
- **Partial Closures** - Solves the cut-thru problem.

Specific discussion regarding bicyclists included Steve mentioning there are existing portions of road that are 26 feet to 38 feet wide. Shoulders are not really good for cyclists. However, quite a bit of the road and buffer is used for snow storage. A CAC member commented that the shoulder should be used for landscaping.

Kevin Doniere provided a rough sketch of his concept, which entailed a narrow roadway section with ten-foot lanes. This provides room for snow storage on shoulder and landscaping.

There was a comment that project staff keeps talking about traffic calming but in reality, no one is speeding. There is a cut-thru problem. Speeding is usually a perception. USKH traffic study shows speeding. Juneau Street and 27th Street are the only places that need a choker. *Steve remarked that chokers are also used for pedestrian issues.*

There was discussion as to what speed limit to assign to the road (either 25 mph or continue 30 mph). Additional discussion regarding the lane width ensued. The majority of the public CAC members are in support of narrowing the lane width to 10 feet. They would like to take the conservative approach that measures how to keep average daily traffic (ADT) the same or lower. There are also pedestrian safety issues because of school crossing.

Attachments: Sign-in sheet