



FIREWEED LANE/LATOUCHE STREET UPDATE

MEETING NOTES

SUBJECT: Fireweed Lane/LaTouche Street Upgrade W.O. D58819
Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting No. 3

DATE/TIME: March 9, 2006 / 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

LOCATION: DOWL Engineers, Training Room

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

STAFF PRESENT: DOWL Engineers - Steve Noble, Brad Melocik, Kevin Doniere, and Brent Hove

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

MEETING INFORMATION: Nine members attended the third Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting on Thursday, March 9, 2006 at DOWL Engineers (DOWL). Comments and questions submitted by the CAC members are summarized in the following pages. *Project staff's comments and responses to questions are shown in italics.*

Previous requests were made to investigate the use of a cul-de-sac at the end of Juneau Street instead of the turnaround shown on the conceptual plans. Although the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) regulations state that the minimum diameter of the cul-de-sac planned for the end of Juneau Street is supposed to be 70 feet, MOA Street Maintenance believes that 60 feet will meet the needs and will fit within the existing right-of-way (ROW). Project staff may look at using some of the parkland as a cul-de-sac as an option if necessary. The project staff will meet with the fire department to make sure that a 60 foot diameter cul-de-sac is sufficient for their needs.

Where is CRW with upgrading the pedestrian trail that goes down the hill? *The available funding has decreased, and plans to construct the trail are approximately two years out. However, project staff will get an update and let Bill Rice know.*

How does the MOA decide what to do with a dead-end street (in this case Juneau Street)? *In the case of Juneau Street, the agencies requested project staff install a cul-de-sac for maintenance and emergency services, since they will be rehabilitating Juneau Street and bringing it up to standards.*

Will the new lane configuration planned at Northern Lights Boulevard (NLB) and Juneau Street have an impact on the traffic? *An analysis was run through the traffic model software. There could be a slight delay, but there will not be any changes in the level of service at the intersection.*

The project staff should consider installing dedicated left-hand turn arrows, even if they are only five seconds long for the LaTouche Street/NLB intersection? Joe drives through these intersections everyday and cars get backed up because of traffic trying to access Fred Meyers. *The traffic model will be able to detect what is happening there. This could be more of an operation issue, rather than an intersection design issue. The Municipality is currently upgrading the whole Midtown traffic signal timing and is developing a new plan. Bob Kniefel will take this issue into consideration.*

It appears from the PowerPoint presentation that there is landscaping planned in the median at NLB and LaTouche Street. Be careful not to plant trees right up to the end of the median or there could be line-of-sight problems.

Will the southwest vegetation at the Bannister intersection be removed? The existing vegetation consists of a berm and a few trees in planters. *The berm will remain, and the trees/planters will be removed, and new landscaping is proposed for this area.*

What will be done with the driveway on the east side of Bannister? *The project staff needs to determine where the access points will be and how many there should be. The proposed access for this area is from Bannister Drive.*

There was some discussion regarding how the change in the choker elevation at LaTouche Street and 27th Avenue would affect traffic during icy conditions. Concerns were expressed that the choker is too narrow for winter conditions, and a change in elevation could affect cars stopping at the choker during icy conditions. The radius has been increased at the choker sections to allow easier turns for vehicles. Also, it may be too difficult to get two cars through at one time if the street has not been plowed. Although the lane-width varies, at the narrowest point it is 12 feet wide. John Smith stated that the planned choker is at least two feet narrower than the choker on Timberlane Drive, and questioned if there are traffic issues at these chokers during snowy conditions. *Brad, who drives on Timberlane everyday, said the maintenance operators do an excellent job of removing snow at the choker.*

A question was posed to CAC member Sharon Ferguson whether or not she would see a problem with spinning out at the choker on 27th if the elevation were raised. She did not think this would be a problem.

Does the MOA use bollards? *The present thinking is not to use bollards, because they hinder street maintenance operations. Originally they were used to delineate the curb. Delineators are recommended, since they do not hinder maintenance operations.*

The project staff will consider reducing the cross slope on the pathway on the east side of 27th Avenue.

Kevin said he needs to determine exactly where pedestrians are crossing at Juneau Street/Fireweed Lane intersection and will create a textured pavement, similar to what is in place at Airport Heights and 15th Avenue. Colored concrete at this intersection. The MOA has a certain standard that they use on the tactile panels at the ramps. They use four-foot red tactile panels.

There was discussion about the transformer at the Bannister Drive intersection. DOWL has given Municipal Light and Power (ML&P) their construction schedule for the Fireweed/LaTouche project so ML&P can coordinate their schedule accordingly. ML&P will pay for the design and construction of their utility under grounding project themselves, and it would be under a separate contract. The project staff has not heard from ML&P recently regarding their plans to underground utilities, and will make sure to coordinate with them before the next submittal. Steve stated that they are planning

for the Fireweed/LaTouche project. Furthermore, ML&P have always been very prompt and responsive on projects that DOWL has worked with them on in the past.

Brad gave an update on the Fireweed/New Seward intersection. Bob asked if the new plan is to bring one lane straight across the Seward Highway. *This is correct – there will one through-lane and a forced right turn when crossing the New Seward Highway east on Fireweed.*

There was some discussion about extending the median north a little farther on New Seward Highway. There was also some concern that inefficient snow removal and storage along the median could restrict lane widths in the winter if the streets are not properly plowed. *Steve mentioned the radius might be too narrow for people turning to the north, and could conflict with the pedestrian traffic crossing the road. The project staff will check this, and revise the design as needed.*

There are plans to install pedestrian lighting along both Fireweed and LaTouche. At this point there are no decisions yet regarding spacing and height of the poles, or the type of light that will be used (i.e. high pressure sodium, white lights, or another type).

How involved can the community be with the designs for the Rogers Park sign and gateway features? *Kevin has a couple designs in mind, but he is certainly open to suggestions at public meetings. It is important to think about features that will be low-maintenance and do not interfere with street maintenance operations.*

Regarding drainage across the soccer field, the project staff is recommending:

- *Replace the storm drain pipe along the corridor,*
- *Increase the size of the pipe under the soccer field,*
- *Extend the storm drain downhill at Juneau Street, and*
- *Grade the remaining portion of the ditch and add riprap to decrease further erosion.*

Would the pipe on Juneau Street need to be replaced? *A portion of the area will need to be replaced when the road upgrades are done. There are no problems with the manhole; in Juneau Street however, the catch basins at the end of Juneau Street may need to be moved and upgraded.*

Shawn will check if the concrete pipe on Juneau Street should be replaced and will let Brad know.

Steve stated the biggest risk to wholesale changes would be if ML&P decides to keep some poles on the south side of Fireweed Lane.

The homeowners are concerned that the trail along Juneau Street could interfere with the portion of the adjacent yards in the ROW. The project staff will address this concern when they review comments with the MOA, and will let the MOA know that residents prefer the trail not be built.

The next progress meeting is scheduled for early May 2006.

Attachments: Sign-in-Sheet
Presentation