

**SUBJECT:** Parks Highway: Lucas to Big Lake Road MP 44-52

**PROJECT NO.:** Federal: IM-0A4-1(25/26); State: 52914/52929

**GROUP:** Public Hearing Open House

**DATE:** May 5, 2011

**TIME:** 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Houston High School, 12501 W. Hawk Lane, Houston, AK

**MEETING OUTREACH:** State of Alaska Online Public Meeting Notices (4/13/11); Post card mailer sent to 2427 individuals, elected officials, regulatory and government agencies (4/18/11); Display ad in *Anchorage Daily News* (4/27/11); Display ad in *Frontiersman* (4/29/11); Constant Contact email notice to the Parks Highway subscribers on 5/3/11 and on 5/4/11 to all Mat-Su projects (Parks Highway MP 44-52, South Mack Dr. Extension, Parks Connectors: Museum Dr & Machen Rd, Fairview Loop Rehabilitation).

**MEETING ATTENDANCE:** 102 individuals signed in

**MEETING MATERIALS:** Aerial photo with design overlay, project fact sheets for Parks Highway 44-52, Parks Highway Connectors: Museum Drive and Machen Extensions; South Mack Drive Extension; Fairview Loop Road Rehabilitation, comment sheets; notice of Fall 2011 Mat-Su Transportation Fair

**STAFF PRESENT:** *DOT&PF:* Jim Amundsen, Clint Basham, Al Burton, Robert Devassie, Renee Forque, Angela Hunt, Allen Kemplen, Linda Mathis, Jill Reese

*HDL:* Dennis Linnell, Jeff Fuglestad, Danielle Fay, Trevor Strait, Whitney Strid

*Kinney Engineering:* Randy Kinney

*Brooks & Associates:* Anne Brooks, Heather Ireland

**MEETING INFORMATION:**

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Attendees were greeted at the door and ask to sign-in and briefed on the open house format, location of materials, and availability of project staff to answer their questions. Staff members were on hand to answer questions.

Individuals impacted by right-of-way issues were able to discuss concerns with DOT&PF Right-Of-Way staff.

The Mayor of Houston attended the meeting, as well as representatives from the Mat-Su Borough and a Legislative Aide to State Representative Linda Menard.

The following comments were submitted in writing at the meeting or via the project web site; or the project team received them orally at the meeting:

- A large culvert needs to be added underneath the highway to allow moose to safely cross the highway.
- Curious as to what will you do with the current Bridge over the railroad area by Wasilla Airport?? Will that remain two lanes or do you have plans to make it also 4 lanes?? (Comment submitted to project web site) *Team Response: A new bridge will be constructed to accommodate the two (2) new lanes to be added to this highway. The remaining two lanes will continue to accommodate Parks Highway traffic.*
- We live at \*\*\*\*Mallard Lane. Access to the Parks Hwy is either off Swan Drive or Rainbow. Highway access now going either direction is extremely difficult due to traffic. Our concern is that there needs to be an access road built in order to go over to Pittman and tie in to the Parks from Pittman. This could be accomplished by cutting a road in as our drawing shows. Traffic is currently terrible in more avenues to get around without having to go directly onto the highway is getting NECESSARY. Also, these roads need to be maintained, most definitely paved (Swan, Mallard, Rainbow) if these improvements take place. This is a residential area served by school buses. Increased traffic will necessitate paving for road integrity. East end of Swan Drive will need to be upgraded between Rainbow and the new access road to Meadow Lakes Loop.
- The frontage road at Mile 52 to the Johnson Rd. intersection splits the 9.2 parcel of land the FD is in the process of acquiring to build a new station. The frontage road needs to be re-designed to allow construction for the station and to provide direct access to the Parks Hwy in both directions for emergency response. There is currently an interim station on Spring Rd. Your plans will block current access to the parks for emergency vehicles in both directions. The Mat-Su Borough would like to meet and discuss the alternatives to the design to accommodate the new fire station and direct access to the Parks Hwy. Thanks.
- The final road grade @ the Pittman Rd. intersection should reflect what will be done to change the present grade at crossing. It is dangerous and presents a problem if there is a rail accident. The railroad should probably be raised slightly and an underpass place there getting rid of the steepish hill between the railroad and the Parks. Thank you.
- Turning left from Big Lake Road onto the Parks Highway is very difficult, especially in the late afternoon/early evening. Would be nice to solve that problem with this project. When turning left from Meadow Lakes Road, onto the Highway, there needs to be enough room for cars to cross the northbound and southbound for a break in traffic to enter going southbound. Or maybe an acceleration lane going southbound?

- Traffic at Museum Rd and Parks Hwy is very bad. Consider a traffic light at the new intersection west of existing Museum Road. Also, consider heavy summer traffic from airport and narrow gauge railroad. Thanks.
- We are most anxious to see the cabins and flea market property cleaned up. Very pleased to hear that is acquisition property for this project!!! The rest of the design looks good! Will be nice to drive on a four lane instead of two lane.
- We desperately need a stop light at Big Lake Road & Parks Hwy. Now! The drawings don't show one yet.
- (1) It is difficult to turn left off Big Lake Road. A light would help at that intersection. (2) The new Meadow Lakes Road looks great. We just want to make sure there is enough room in the center to turn left. Traffic is very heavy in this area. (3) Will there be access from the Holiday Station to Pittman Road?
- Move the bottleneck. From a firefighter's perspective, it is illegal to narrow traffic at the intersection. Senior citizens (Mid-Valley Senior Housing & Mid-Valley Senior Center) and youths (Houston High School) are turning into same traffic.
- This is a very necessary project. It is long overdue. This should be bid ASAP. Funding is critical, so it should be included with the State matching funds in the capital budgets.
- Bus stops/service needed along the corridor. Coordinate with public transportation. Lots of people are walking on the road edge. Left turn pockets are needed with heavy traffic.
- We would like to meet with designers and DOT to discuss the driveways, their location & amount plus the divided median v. 5 lanes. North of Big Lake we represent all of the firework stands and we have very significant concerns. Thank you.
- Big Lake and Parks needs a "Traffic Light."
- Not sure that a signal at Stanley is best option. Lamont St has a lot of traffic especially with new restaurant.
- The current design of Phase 3 shows no left turn access or frontage road access to our veterinary hospital (Big Lake-Susitna Veterinary Hospital.) If left turn access is not possible onto Elizabeth Street, please consider a frontage road from Ridge Crest to Elizabeth (along the front of EZ Rent). Signage for northbound traffic indicating "U-Turn at Johnson for Veterinary Hospital." Also consider a widened shoulder or right turn lane for right-hand turn onto Elizabeth.
- As a business owner and resident of AK R&R Laundromat and RV Park, we are deeply concerned about the proposed new roadway connection of Marigold and Meadow Lakes Dr. This roadway currently shows as going thru our business, this would displace persons residing in our RV Park, our cabins, and our residence. Also, this was purchased

as a family business and hopefully your office can find an alternate route as not to disturb our property.

- In Phase I of the project, for the section of highway between South Mack Drive and Lucas Road, please consider raised center medians, instead of an open center lane. This would provide drivers with controlled left hand turns & decrease the chances of conflicts with oncoming traffic. Muldoon Road has seen similar improvement which has been very successful. It also enhanced local beautification. Thanks for planning the new separated highway.
- Need to add lighting ASAP between the Church Rd intersection & McAllister Rd. Very dark, almost tunnel-like road. Add pavement striations [rumble strip] on bridge over RR by access to the airport (or Mile 47).
- Please put a light at Rainbow & the Parks Hwy as the Post Office is there--a curve -- needs to be a light.
- I am sad to see the Valley changing so dramatically, but if it has to, I think your plans are effective ways to deal with the growth. Thanks.
- 1. Make sure seeding is non-invasive plants. 2. We are still rural despite increase population. Bike paths need to be multi-use which includes ATV's, Horses, side by side (for us old people) dogs, etc, snow machines. 3. Please try for increased frontage roads. Some businesses (Holiday for example) will be affected by lack of access.
- A commenter expressed concern about what materials were going to be used for paving the new bridge over the railroad. He has experienced that the existing bridge is icy in the winter. Is there any material that can be used to help alleviate this problem?
- A commenter was concerned with the at-grade crossing of the railroad at Pittman. He is concerned because school buses are required to stop before the tracks and, with the steep grade; he sees them have a difficult time to start back up in the winter on the snow and ice.
- The pastors of the Big Lake Baptist Church were in attendance. They are interested in what is going to happen at the Big Lake Road intersection. They see a need for improvements at this intersection and they imagine that there may be more right-of-way acquisitions from their parcel. If there are more acquisitions, the project will most likely impact their church. They are unsure of what to do or where to go because a second location they had planned to move their church is the parcel at the corner of Marigold and the Parks, where Marigold is slated for realignment through their parcel.

The following comments related to Mat-Su Borough projects and were forwarded to the Borough:

- I am concerned with the Museum Dr. extension as it goes right behind my homes and I would like a privacy fence put up on the back of my properties to help buffer the noise and so I have some privacy in my back yard.
- I live on Full Curl. Museum will be going across the back of our property. What about our privacy and flooding from the road? How are you going to protect us from that? And what about Bear Hide that runs along the side of my property with Museum Drive going in? There is no need for that road. Please don't put it in.

Comments written directly on Phase 3 figures. (No comments were written on Phase 1 & 2 figures)

- Parks & Big Lake Road Intersection: 14' noted (ADF&G requirement for separation with bodies of water.)
- Spring Dr: MEA District Office. Heavy truck traffic. Current fire station location noted. Has grant to buy adjacent parcel (potentially divided by proposed North Frontage Road).
- Elizabeth Drive: Vet clinic location noted. Consider frontage to improve access to vet clinic.
- Meadow Lakes Road: Alternative Route is drawn on the map. This property is for sale. (Name and Contact Info listed).

Upon leaving the meeting, attendees were asked if the meeting was helpful. Three people stated they liked the open house format, as opposed to a presentation style meeting. Two people said thank you for coming to Houston. Two people expressed frustration that the construction would not start sooner because they are concerned about safety. Many of the attendees said they were glad to have an update about the project.

Related documents on file:

- Sign-in sheets
- Handouts
- Comment sheets received at meeting
- Meeting graphics
- Mailing list
- Postcard mailer and e-mail reminders
- Ad Affidavit of Publication