

5 Comments and Coordination

5.1 Scoping

During the initial stages of the environmental process, federal, state and local regulatory agencies, local governments and tribal organizations and the public were consulted about the project to identify potential concerns, mitigating measures and alternatives. Outreach included a combined public/agency scoping meeting, an additional public meeting, presentations to agencies and community groups, stakeholder interviews, and public information meetings.

Mailing lists were developed for the agencies and the public. The agency list included contact information for federal, state, and local resource agency representatives who might have a permitting responsibility, interest, or concern about the project. The public list, which contained approximately 2,000 names, included contact information for all residents and property owners adjacent to the highway within the project corridor, elected officials, emergency service providers, local governments and community councils, chambers of commerce, transportation providers, and utility companies. The mailing lists are included in the Scoping Summary Report (Appendix J).

A project website (www.parkshighway44-52.info) was launched in 2004 to provide residents, property owners, and other stakeholders with up-to-date information, provide notification of upcoming meetings and involvement opportunities, and allow online commenting. The site includes a project overview, maps and photos, frequently asked questions, project reports and documents, and links to related projects, local agencies, and community councils. The project site is updated as new information becomes available.

Project Scoping: October 2004 to March 2006

Agency Scoping

A combined public/agency scoping meeting was held October 28, 2004, at the Wasilla Multi-Use Sports Center. The list of invited federal, local, state and federal agencies is included in the Scoping Summary Report. Agencies were notified of the meeting by telephone. Representatives from the DOT&PF, ADF&G, USFWS, MSB, and City of Wasilla attended the meeting.

A scoping letter was sent to 11 federal, state, and local agencies on December 8, 2004, to provide information and to solicit comments about the proposed project. The letter described the proposed project, project status, and the results of preliminary environmental research. As a result of the agency scoping letter and follow-up telephone calls, comments were received from three additional agencies not represented at the scoping meeting: NMFS NOAA, ADNR DCOM, and ADF&G, Division of Habitat

Table 20 summarizes agencies' comments by areas of concern. The Scoping Summary Report includes all written correspondence, comments received, and telephone records.

Table 20: Agency Comments by Category, 2004

| Category | Issue |
|--------------------|--|
| Fisheries | Agency contact information provided; fish habitat information provided; project work below ordinary high water will require a habitat permit; Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Habitat, would like to see stream simulation used and a bridge installed at Little Meadow Creek; work at an unnamed stream at milepost 47.5 will require a habitat permit. |
| Moose | Moose-vehicle collisions a concern; three main moose crossings occur in the project corridor |
| Waterfowl | Look into presence of nesting loons in nearby water bodies; lakes in the project are not very productive for nesting waterfowl, in part because of limited emergent vegetation; waterfowl nesting does occur in the Little Meadow Creek drainage |
| Cultural Resources | SHPO would like to review the project cultural resources survey |
| Flood Hazards | Project team was encouraged to continue coordinating with MSB Planning and Public Works, along with the District Coastal Coordinator, particularly regarding work within the coastal zone and access. |
| Facility Type | MSB supports a limited or controlled access facility and encourages park-and-ride lots to facilitate carpooling and other commuting options. |

Public Scoping

A combined public/agency scoping meeting was held October 28, 2004, at the Wasilla Multi-Use Sports Complex. The public was notified scoping was beginning and of the meeting date via a mailed postcard, a flyer hand-delivered to local businesses, radio announcements on three local stations, the project website, Notice of Intent to Begin Engineering and Environmental Studies and Notice of Wetlands Involvement published in local newspapers; the *Frontiersman* and the *Anchorage Daily News*.

The meeting was held in an open-house format and included a short presentation and a workshop exercise. Those participating in the workshop discussed project issues in small groups and wrote their comments and suggestions on cards. The cards were displayed on a wall for all to view and were captured in a table for documentation purposes. All public comments received during scoping meetings, stakeholder interviews, and the website are included in the Scoping Summary Report.

A second public scoping meeting was held February 23, 2006, at the Wasilla Multi-Use Sports Complex to inform the public on the status of the project, to collect comments, and to discuss the alternatives under consideration. The public was notified of the meeting via advertisements published in the local newspapers; the *Frontiersman* and the *Anchorage Daily News*. Those on the mailing list were sent a postcard inviting them to the meeting. One hundred and seven people signed-in at the meeting.

Meeting materials included the agenda and comment sheets, an annotated aerial photo showing comments received at the October 28, 2004 meeting, and aerial photos showing the proposed alignment. The project team, which included HDL and DOT&PF representatives, made a formal presentation. After the presentation, attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments. Comments and questions were recorded on flip charts

and comment sheets. The verbal and written comments received are included in the Scoping Summary Report. Table 21 shows the chronology of outreach for public scoping meetings. Table 22 summarizes the public comments received during these meeting by category. Copies of all comments received during the scoping period are included in the Scoping Summary Report.

Table 21: Public Involvement Chronology

| Date | Activity/Location | Purpose |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Ongoing | Internet site www.parkshighway4452.info | Provide vehicle for public/team communications |
| Ongoing | Receive and respond to public questions and comments; document for project record | Continue dialogue with public throughout project development |
| 10/2004, various dates | Flyers (8 1/2 x 11): sent to or posted at various local businesses | Provide notice of public meeting |
| 10/12/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Louis Friend III, MASCOT, Mat-Su Transit | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 10/13/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Kathy Wells, Friends of Mat-Su | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 10/14/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Bill O'Hara, Big Lake Community Council | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 10/14/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Betty Vehrs, Mat-Su Assembly Representative, Meadow Lakes Area | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 10/14/2004 | Postcard mailer to mailing service | Notice of public meeting |
| 10/15/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Paddy Coan, Greater Wasilla Chamber of Commerce | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 10/15/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Marguerite Bogert, Big Lake Chamber of Commerce | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 10/15/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Angela Rosas, Houston Chamber of Commerce | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 10/18/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Mary Kvalheim, MSB Borrow Assembly, District 4 | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 10/19/2004 | Display advertisement in the <i>Frontiersman</i> | Notice of public meeting |
| 10/20/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Darland Forshen, Director, Public Works, City of Houston | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 10/20/2004 | Stakeholder interview: William Brown, President, Meadow Lakes Community Council | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 10/21/2004 | Display advertisement in the <i>Anchorage Daily News</i> | Notice of public meeting |
| 10/22/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Sandra Garley, Planning, City of Wasilla | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 10/25/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Bruce Carr, ARRC | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 10/25/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Rob Wells, Mat-Su Resource, Conservation & Development Council, Inc. | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 10/26/2004 | Secured radio airtime to run public service announcement for public meeting on KDBZ, KQEZ and KRPM. | Notice of public meeting |
| 10/26/2004 | Display advertisement in the <i>Frontiersman</i> | Notice of public meeting |
| 10/26/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Jody Simpson, Mat-Su Borough Assembly, Big Lake District | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 10/27/2004 | Display advertisement in the <i>Anchorage Daily News</i> | Notice of public meeting |
| 10/28/2004 | Public meeting in Wasilla (7-9 pm) | Project scoping meeting |
| 11/30/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Steve Totten, Service Oil and Gas | Solicit input from stakeholder |

| Date | Activity/Location | Purpose |
|------------|---|--------------------------------|
| 12/3/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Robert Hall, Gorilla | |
| 12/3/2004 | Fireworks | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 12/3/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Mike Allen, Gator Glass | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 12/3/2004 | Stakeholder interview: Christa Bailey, Bailey's | |
| 12/3/2004 | Furniture | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 12/3/2004 | Stakeholder interview: R. Brooke Clements, Hartley | |
| 12/3/2004 | Motors | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 12/08/2004 | Meeting with Agnew Beck regarding Meadow | Solicit input, exchange input |
| 12/08/2004 | Lakes Comprehensive Plan | on projects |
| 12/08/2004 | Meadow Lakes Community Council presentation | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 01/10/2005 | Stakeholder interview: Ben Cruz & Jess Marcott, | |
| 01/10/2005 | Hartley Motors Snowmachine Dealership, Palmer | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 01/10/2005 | Stakeholder interview: Tom Dowell, Sno-Trac | |
| 01/10/2005 | Snowmachine Sales and Repair | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 01/19/2005 | Stakeholder interview: Gary Dumdei, owner, Min- | |
| 01/19/2005 | Alaska Transport | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 01/19/2005 | Stakeholder interview: Art Reed, Sourdough | |
| 01/19/2005 | Express | Solicit input from stakeholder |
| 2/14/2006 | Display advertisement in the <i>Frontiersman</i> | Notice of public meeting |
| 2/16/2006 | Display advertisement in the <i>Anchorage Daily</i> | |
| 2/16/2006 | News | Notice of public meeting |
| 2/21/2006 | Display advertisement in the <i>Frontiersman</i> | Notice of public meeting |
| 2/23/2006 | Display advertisement in the <i>Anchorage Daily</i> | |
| 2/23/2006 | News | Notice of public meeting |
| 2/23/2006 | Public meeting in Wasilla (6-8 pm) | Present proposed |
| 2/23/2006 | | alternatives and get public |
| 2/23/2006 | | input |

Table 22: Public Comments by Category

| Category | Issue |
|---|---|
| Alternative routes | Consider alternate route shown on far wall [refers to aerial photo with comments from scoping meeting]. |
| Accommodating off-highway vehicles and all-terrain vehicles | Plan does not accommodate ATV and snow machine traffic. There is a concern with how plan accommodates emergency vehicles and school buses. There is a concern about timely fire response to the south side of Parks Highway with a median in place. |
| Accommodation of emergency vehicles and school buses | Trains block the Pittman Road crossing when loading gravel and emergency vehicles can't access Parks Highway. |
| Big Lake Baptist Church | How will the project affect the Big Lake Baptist Church. There is concern about the project limits and inclusion of the entrance/road into Big Lake. Need traffic light at Big Lake Road. |
| Big Lake Road | What is the potential for an interchange (at Big Lake)? |
| Bike paths | There is concern about how the bike and pedestrian pathways interface with the highway. |
| Budget | Where do we best spend \$20 million? |
| | Merchants with businesses along the roadway are concerned about access. Merchants expressed concern about people just driving through [the area] if they don't have left turn access to their businesses. Merchants were against the divided highway. Merchants in Meadow Lakes will be injured if the four-lane divided highway goes through. They need a turning lane (a five-lane section). |
| Business impacts | Center turn lanes are safer. Center median serves no one. No median — that is not community building, but community killing! What is to prevent barrier medians in the future? |
| Center medians versus center turn lane (also see five-lane roadway configuration below) | Why can't we consider concrete barriers instead of medians? A depressed median is unsafe. |
| Construction | There is concern about construction, sequencing and construction impacts to traffic and business. |
| Drainage at a specific location | There is blue clay on all ground between Day Street and Stanley on eastside. Water table is from 1 foot to 4 feet. Large drainage pipe is a must as this drains over 100 acres. During heavy rain, I estimate over one million gallons of water in a 24-hour period. |
| five-lane roadway configuration | Why can't you do 5 lanes through the Meadow Lakes area? |

| Category | Issue |
|---|--|
| | Hates the five-lane through Wasilla. |
| | Sterling Highway (five-lane) is very nice and does not divide the community. |
| | Need to understand why the first part of the project is a five-lane road and not a four-lane. |
| Freeway, divided highway and controlled access | When did DOT decide this would become a divided highway? Use more frontage roads and fewer traffic signals; signals will further congest traffic. |
| | Consider a frontage road between Vine Road and Pittman Road on the side opposite the Alaska Railroad. |
| Frontage roads | Why didn't the frontage road go all the way to Pittman Road from Meadow Lakes Road? |
| Future traffic not accommodated | This plan does not address current needs, let alone 5 to 10 years from now. |
| | Natural game trails exist in the project area. What is being done to accommodate them? |
| Game trails and moose crossings | Accommodate moose crossings. What about an underpass for wildlife? |
| Intersection configuration along the project corridor | What is the configuration of intersections along the project corridor? [Stanley Road, Lamont Way, Museum Road, Vine Extension, Sylvan Road, Pittman Road, Meadow Lakes Road, Buttercup Drive, Rainbow Street, Potter Road] |
| Intersections, Rainbow Street | The right turn lane at Rainbow Street at Meadow Lakes discount center (the Post Office) creates a very dangerous corner when exiting either way. We need alternative roads to enter and exit our Pittman Road/Meadow Lakes Road area – and a bypass for truck/travel traffic around this area. Parks Highway needs to be widened and repaved and enter/exits. But we need to remember we are a community area. We need a bypass! |
| Intersections, Pittman Road | Something needs to be done at the Pittman/Parks intersection. There are two schools, a bar and the train. Soon a state trooper station and grocery store. Businesses are growing — how will you handle in the future? The hill at Pittman is unsafe This project may not be needed if direct traffic flow does not run through east Mat-Su. |
| Knik Arm Crossing | How much of the '70s Dames and Moore study still influences the decision tree now. [Knik Crossing – Anchorage/Fairbanks traffic flow]? Did any dollars go away because of the Knik Arm Crossing? |
| Lighting | What type of lighting is being considered for the project corridor? |
| Limited access | What does limited access mean as it relates to the proposed four-lane and five-lane configuration? |
| Meadow Lakes community | Do not divide the highway through Meadow Lakes community; use five-lanes as per Wasilla, and time the lights. |

| Category | Issue |
|---|--|
| | <p>There is concern that the Meadow Lakes Community Plan is injured by the proposed medians.</p> <p>The DOT, the Borough, or Wasilla is shoving this down our throats.</p> <p>The Meadow Lakes community prefers more of a boulevard appearance to the roadway in the Meadow Lakes area, near the town center.</p> <p>We want experts to give us a safe answer that matches our [Meadow Lakes] community vision.</p> <p>We need access at Meadow Lakes Loop.</p> |
| Meadow Lakes, existing and future level of service | <p>There is concern with the level of service [amount of congestion] in the Meadow Lakes area, now and in the future.</p> |
| Multi-modal | <p>We want the project to accommodate park-and-rides, transit access, and commuter rail.</p> <p>Is the project considering a park-and-ride near the railroad at Pittman Road?</p> |
| Multi-use pathways and pedestrian crossing of Parks Highway | <p>What is the plan for pedestrians and bicycles?</p> <p>Need a pedestrian overpass at Pittman Road with a signal.</p> <p>Need an ATV or snowmobile tunnel at Pittman Road.</p> <p>Bike path interface with highway needed.</p> <p>A "no right turn on red" signal at Pittman will help pedestrians cross safely.</p> <p>Provide a trailhead at Pittman Road that connects to established trails.</p> |
| Oppose the project | <p>Scrap this project and build a bypass around Wasilla for through-traffic to Big Lake.</p> <p>No-build is an option.</p> <p>We hate it; put the money into a bypass.</p> <p>Bad design, waste of time and money, does not solve safety issues, build a bypass.</p> <p>This project is outdated before it's built.</p> |
| Pittman Road overpass | <p>This project doesn't address current needs.</p> <p>What happened to the [talked about] overpass at Pittman Road?</p> |
| Pittman Road pedestrian accommodations | <p>An overpass at Pittman Road is a priority; the whole project is a waste of money unless you do this right.</p> <p>Consider a pedestrian overpass at Pittman Road.</p> |
| Public process and comment | <p>Establish Pittman Road/Parks Highway as a school zone.</p> <p>When will the comment period end, and will the project team</p> |

| Category | Issue |
|---------------------------------|---|
| handling | <p>mail the information to the commenter?</p> <p>Please ensure my address is not sold or used for another mailing or e-mail purpose besides the DOT.</p> |
| Project schedule | <p>What is the project schedule?</p> <p>Concern about when the construction will begin.</p> <p>There is concern with the width of right-of-way for the project and the process taken to obtain right-of-way. Do you have to go to court to get right-of-way?</p> |
| Right-of-way | <p>There is concern whether the existing highway is in the center of the existing right-of-way.</p> |
| Right-of-way encroachments | <p>Will the project include cleaning up encroachments/eye sores between the road and the railroad near Pittman Road?</p> |
| Safety | <p>There are accidents every few days where someone rear-ends someone making a turn.</p> <p>Install traffic lights and four-way stop signs now.</p> <p>Pre-wire the intersection before putting lights in.</p> <p>Install a traffic signal at Vine Road.</p> |
| Signals | <p>Make it a freeway, without traffic lights every half mile.</p> <p>Slow down the traffic.</p> <p>Lower the speed limit to 45.</p> <p>Why won't a 45 mph zone work in the Meadow Lakes area?</p> <p>Lower the speed limit [near Meadow Lakes]</p> |
| Speed | <p>People do not slow from 55 mph when they pass turning vehicles [on the right].</p> |
| Speed at Vine Road intersection | <p>Suggestion that for now and the next few years, just lower the speed limit and add a light at Vine Road.</p> |
| Super elevation | <p>Try not to make the super elevation so high because when the roads are really icy and travelers slow down, the vehicles will actually slide sideways down the slope of the curve.</p> <p>Would like to see four-lanes and frontage roads with limited access points to the main Parks Highway. Center turn lane is suicidal at the highway speeds in the area.</p> <p>Construct the controlled access as far as you can [with the available money] and do the rest later [when funds are available].</p> <p>Parks Highway should be a freeway, without traffic lights every ½ mile.</p> <p>We need four lanes with frontage roads.</p> |
| Support the project | <p>Making the road four lanes is needed; on any given day you can barely muster 45 mph due to traffic.</p> |
| Traffic | <p>Request that the team observes traffic on a really busy weekend – during the July 4th weekend, or Willow Restart of the Iditarod</p> |

| Category | Issue |
|--|--|
| | By the time this project is built, we will have either Spruce or Seldon through to Pittman Road, and the traffic will be greatly reduced and so will most of the problems. |
| Traffic, parallel corridors planned | <p>Whatever happened to widening Schrock and Bogard, and extending Church Road (Station 153+00) to Mack?</p> <p>There is concern that the traffic study did not look at the amount of traffic going from the north side of the Parks to the south side of the Parks.</p> |
| Traffic study | <p>There is concern about how far out the traffic study looks at accidents and if serious accidents are considered. There is concern about how far out the traffic study looks at accidents and if serious accidents are considered.</p> |
| | Consider a turning lane at McCallister (Station 187+00) (MP 45.1). |
| Turn lanes, specific locations | Request for a turn lane at MP 48.2 (Station 345+00) — 122 sites RV park opening in April 2006. |
| U-turn pocket length and vehicle accommodation | There is concern about the number of vehicles that will be accommodated in the left turn pockets of U-turns and the length of the left turn pockets. |
| U-turn comparison to other locations | Question whether the team is familiar with the U-turn at the Palmer-Wasilla Highway. |
| | <p>There is concern that U-turns are not designed properly for large trucks/trailers or vehicles towing trailers to make the turn safely and then get back into the driving lanes.</p> <p>There is concern about the length of time it takes to get a large truck that has come to a total stop to start moving/rolling then doing a U-turn (where the U-turn area is not constructed to accommodate the size of vehicle) during heavy rush hour traffic and back safely into a lane ... the traffic is heavy now and only getting worse each day.</p> |
| | <p>What about doubles – meaning double trailer units – traveling on a road at 55 mph? How ancient is this design, how are you going to accommodate those? At Tesoro there are a lot of lowboys and lots of heavy traffic, also accessing Fisher Fuel.</p> <p>There is concern about stacking of vehicles at turning points and reentry into traffic on other lanes.</p> |
| U-turn and indirect left turn design | <p>There is concern about recreational vehicles pulling trailers trying to turn to the other side of highway.</p> <p>Does DOT plan to do the bypass? A bypass would remove the need for this high-speed highway.</p> <p>We hate it [the improvement]. Put the money into a bypass.</p> |
| Wasilla bypass | Scrap this project and build a bypass. |
| Water quality | There is concern about maintaining quality of ground and surface water in the project area. |
| Website | When will you make the project overview and other details available on the website? |

Public Involvement: December 2006 to July 2009

In response to several requests, public involvement continued after the initial scoping period. Subsequent public involvement included presentations to several stakeholder groups, a field driving demonstration/exercise and two public meetings.

The project team gave presentations to the following stakeholder groups between December 2006 and July 2009 to provide updated information on the status of the project and collect comments:

- Meadow Lakes Special Land Use District Planning Team
- Big Lake Community Council
- Meadow Lakes Community Council (twice)
- MSB Transportation Advisory Board
- Holiday Service Stations/Stores
- Susitna Rotary Club

During scoping, the public and agencies voiced concern over the ability of vehicles to move through the proposed U-turns (indirect left turns). As a result, a full-size mock-up of a typical U-turn was staged on May 16, 2007, at the Wasilla Sports Complex. Eight agencies tested 12 vehicles numerous times. All vehicles successfully navigated the course with the exception of a Wasilla Fire Department ladder truck that is slated to be retired from service, according to the fire department. A list of agencies that participated, a list of the vehicles tested and a photo log of this exercise is included in Appendix H. Since then, indirect left turns were eliminated from the project design.

Project information was also presented at two public meetings that featured multiple transportation projects in the MSB. On September 25, 2008, project information was available at the MSB Transportation Fair, which was held at the Alaska State Fairgrounds in Palmer. The DOT&PF, the MSB and other sponsoring agencies hosted a press conference on projects to be featured at the fair on September 8, 2008, at the Mat-Su Community Transit facility in Wasilla. Display ads were printed in local newspapers the *Anchorage Daily News* (Valley edition) and the *Frontiersman*. Postcard and flyer invitations were mailed to 4,365 people on the mailing lists for two of the area projects featured at the fair. Additional notice included a flyer distributed during the Alaska State Fair (August 21 to September 1, 2008), community calendar listings in local newspapers, online notices, and project presentations to community groups and transportation officials. One hundred and fifty-nine people signed in at the fair. Parks Highway meeting materials included a project fact sheet, an aerial photo with preferred alternative overlay, and a desk copy of the draft Preliminary Engineering Report.

On July 23, 2009, the project was featured at a public meeting which provided information about several transportation projects in the area. The meeting was held at the Curtis D. Menard Memorial Sports Center in Wasilla. Postcard invitations were mailed to approximately 2,075 business and property owners, local government representatives and organizations on the project mailing list. A press release was e-mailed to local newspapers the *Anchorage Daily News* and the *Frontiersman*, and to four radio stations. A public notice was placed on the DOT&PF website as well as on each of the four featured projects'

websites. An additional 3,480 flyers were mailed to people on the mailing lists of the related area projects. Twenty local, state and federal agency personnel were notified by postal service and e-mail. A display ad ran in the local newspaper the *Frontiersman* on July 7, 14, and 21, 2009.

Aerial photos showing the project corridor were displayed and attendees were encouraged to write comments on the photos. Attendees were also provided with comment sheets and the FHWA brochure *Safe Access if Good for Business*. A computer station was set up for people to view the corresponding video during the meeting. One hundred and forty-six people signed in at the meeting. Table 23 shows the outreach chronology for meetings and presentations between December 2006 and July 2009. Table 24 summarizes public comments by category taken subsequent to the scoping period. All public comments are included Appendix K.

Table 23: Public Involvement Chronology

| Date | Public Involvement Activity /Location | Purpose |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| 12/19/2006 | Meeting with Meadow Lakes Special Land Use District Planning Team, 7-9 pm | Present the project |
| 1/10/2007 | Meeting with Big Lake Community Council, 7-9 pm | Update on preferred alternative |
| 2/14/2007 | Meeting with Meadow Lakes Community Council, 7-9 pm | Update on preferred alternative |
| 2/28/2007 | MSB Transportation Advisory Board meeting | Report on project progress by project engineer |
| 3/29/2007 | Meeting with Holiday Companies Real Estate | Discuss access to Holiday gas station in project area |
| 4/30/2007 | Meeting with Susitna Rotary Club | Report on project progress by project engineer |
| 5/16/2007 | Demonstration of indirect left turn for review of road maintenance, emergency services, school district, and other agencies | Address concerns about vehicle movements through proposed U-turn in project area |
| 8/22/2008 | Project flyer passed out at the DOT&PF booth at Alaska State Fair | Advertise projects to be featured at the 9/25/08 MSB Transportation Fair |
| 8/27/2008 | Staff report to Matanuska-Susitna Transportation Board | Topic: DOT&PF projects |
| 9/03/2008 | Postcard mailer to Glenn Highway project contact list (2,890) | Advertise projects to be featured at MSB Transportation Fair |
| 9/02/2008 | Postcard mailer to N. Lucille Street project contact list (1,475) | Advertise projects to be featured at MSB Transportation Fair |
| 9/08/2008 | Press conference hosted by MSB, MASCOT facility | Topic: Projects to be featured at MSB Transportation Fair |
| 9/09/2008 | Central MSB Transportation Forum meeting | Presented the project to the forum |
| 9/2008, various dates | E-mailed flyer on MSB Transportation Fair to Wasilla, Palmer, Big Lake chambers of commerce; flyers passed out at chambers luncheons | Advertise projects at the MSB Transportation Fair |
| 9/12/2008 | Submitted MSB Transportation Fair notice to community calendars in the | Advertise projects to be featured at the MSB Transportation Fair |

| Date | Public Involvement Activity /Location | Purpose |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| | <i>Anchorage Daily News, Alaska Star, Frontiersman</i> | |
| 9/12/2008 | Published MSB Transportation Fair notice on State of Alaska Online Public Notice site | Advertise projects to be featured at the MSB Transportation Fair |
| 9/18/2008 | MSB Transportation Fair notice published on Alaska State Fairgrounds reader board from Sept. 18-Sept. 25 | Advertise projects to be featured at the MSB Transportation Fair |
| 9/19/2008 | Display advertisement in <i>Anchorage Daily News</i> (Valley edition), <i>Frontiersman</i> | Advertise projects to be featured at the MSB Transportation Fair |
| 9/23/2008 | Wasilla Sunrise Rotary meeting | Project presentation, Brad Sworts, MSB |
| 9/24/2008 | Display advertisement in <i>Anchorage Daily News</i> (Valley edition) | Advertise projects to be featured at the MSB Transportation Fair |
| 9/2008, various dates | Outreach by other projects participating in the MSB Transportation Fair (for example, Highway2Highway, Palmer Couplet) | Advertise projects to be featured at the MSB Transportation Fair |
| 9/25/2008 | MSB Transportation Fair, 4-9 pm., Alaska State Fairgrounds | Information distributed at project table |
| 7/06/2009 | Postcard mailer to residents and property owners, community councils; MSB elected officials, boards and commissions; City of Wasilla elected officials, boards and commissions; City of Houston elected officials, boards and commissions; area state legislators. (2,075) | Invitation to 7/23 public meeting |
| 7/07/2009 | Display ad printed in the <i>Frontiersman</i> | Advertise 7/23 public meeting for Parks Highway MP 44-52 and related area projects |
| 7/08/2009 | Newsletter distributed to MSB Community Transit (MASCOT) | Announce public open house |
| 7/8/09 | Meadow Lakes Community Council | Introduce the project and invite council members to the 7/23 open house |
| 7/08/2009 | Request to Meadow Lakes Community Council | Coordinate notice of 7/23 public meeting on council website (www.meadowlakeschatter.com) |
| 7/09/2009 | Press release e-mailed to the <i>Frontiersman</i> , <i>Anchorage Daily News</i> , and radio stations KMBQ, KASH, KGOT, KSKA | Inform the media about the projects and public meeting for possible coverage |
| 7/09/2009 | Online notices posted on the DOT&PF, City of Wasilla, and MSB websites | Advertise 7/23 public meeting |
| 7/16/2009 | Flyers for Parks Highway MP 44-52, Parks Highway Connectors & South Mack Extension sent to environmental agencies | Invitation to 7/23 public meeting |
| 7/17/2009 | Press release e-mailed to environmental agency personnel | Invitation to 7/23 public meeting |
| 7/14/2009 | Display ad printed in the <i>Frontiersman</i> | Advertise 7/23 public meeting |
| 7/21/2009 | Display ad printed in the <i>Frontiersman</i> | Advertise 7/23 public meeting |
| 7/23/2009 | Public meeting in Wasilla, 4-8 pm., Curtis | Provide project update |

| Date | Public Involvement Activity /Location | Purpose |
|------|--|---------|
| | D. Menard Memorial Sports Center. Held in conjunction with meetings on Parks Highway Connectors (Machen Road and Museum Drive extensions) and South Mack Drive Extension projects. | |

Table 24: Public Comments by Category

| Category | Issue |
|-----------------------------|--|
| | <p>Indirect left turns don't support business traffic in Meadow Lakes area.</p> <p>This design caters to semis and tour buses, not Meadow Lakes businesses and residents.</p> <p>Medians at Big Lake Road will restrict access to fireworks vendors in Houston.</p> <p>At milepost 52 [Houston], access to local on-highway businesses will be severely restricted. Little Gorilla will have no southbound access; Black Cat no northbound access; TNT no southbound access. Customers will have no way in from those directions, and no direct access to exit in the opposite direction.</p> <p>The project will reduce access to a planned business development just west of the railroad overpass, milepost 47.</p> <p>A four-lane split highway with a median will limit access to businesses.</p> <p>Consider the established businesses along the way and give them access so as not to damage their traffic flow.</p> |
| Business impacts | New businesses will not open, and established businesses will close, in the area of S. Lamont Circle because of limited or poor access. |
| Center turn lane | Center turn lane will cause snow removal and storage problems. |
| Construction | <p>Plan better traffic control during construction.</p> <p>Need frontage roads on both sides of highway.</p> |
| Frontage roads | <p>Need more frontage roads all along the road.</p> <p>Route left turning traffic up and over the Parks to solve issues at Big Lake Road intersection.</p> |
| Intersection Big Lake/Parks | With the ferry system coming online, we need an interchange at Big Lake. |
| Intersection Pittman | What happened to the plan to have an overpass at Pittman with on- and off-ramps? |
| Knik Arm Crossing | In the long-term, traffic will use the Knik Arm Crossing to and from Fairbanks. |

| Category | Issue |
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| | <p>Four lanes are adequate in most places; need 5 lanes from Vine Road to Johnson Road.</p> <p>Need 5 lanes through Pittman.</p> <p>Need 5 lanes through Meadow Lakes area.</p> <p>What is the trigger that specifies a four-lane divided highway instead of a five-lane?</p> <p>For safety reasons, the upgrade should be a five-lane road with center turning lanes and a 45 mph speed limit. A four-lane highway with median will be a disaster because: Higher speeds will cause constant conflicts with children and ATVs, pets and moose. DOT will change the limit from 55 mph to 65 mph because traffic will travel at 65 mph. High speed in summer and high speed combined with snow and ice in winter will make stopping and accelerating at designated intersections difficult and dangerous.</p> <p>How about going to five-lane at the end of the project (Big Lake Road) instead of having the median taper out?</p> <p>Five-lane is a very bad idea.</p> <p>From Lucas Road to the railroad trestle, need a five-lane with left and right access.</p> <p>The mayor's request for a five-lane through Houston is ridiculous and dangerous.</p> <p>The owner of Alaska Fireplace & Accessories, milepost 50.2, prefers a two-way north and a two-way south, with middle lane for turnoff.</p> <p>90-plus percent of residents as well as Meadow Lakes and Houston governments want a five-lane road, with two lanes in each direction and a turning lane in the center. DOT is only concerned with moving traffic as fast as they can.</p> <p>An extra lane in either direction and a turning lane would alleviate problems and still provide safety and access for the community to [get to] their homes and businesses.</p> |
| Lane configuration | <p>The project is not consistent with Meadow Lakes Community vision.</p> <p>The highway divides the Meadow Lakes Community.</p> <p>High-speed traffic and controlled access will kill the community.</p> <p>Meadow Lakes wants a five-lane, like through Wasilla.</p> <p>Meadow Lakes community desires a "boulevard" appearance.</p> |
| Meadow Lakes community | <p>Project does not meet the Meadow Lakes community's vision; DOT is imposing a cookie-cutter solution and not listening to our concerns.</p> |
| Multi-modal facilities | <p>Project design and construction should include community transit accommodations, i.e. pullouts for buses, parking for park-and-rides, integrated trails.</p> |

| Category | Issue |
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| Multi-use pathways and pedestrian crossing of Parks Highway | Provide a tunnel within a mile of Pittman intersection for dogsled, horse, pedestrian, ATV, and snowmobile access. |
| Oppose the project | DOT is wasting money on a project most people oppose. Property owner (ROW relinquish #R-35-1-006-1) is concerned about right-of-way close to her home and limited access; recommends shifting the highway north. She needs to move her home, and project impacts could allow her to make improvements. Potential acquisition. |
| Right-of-way | Correctly align the physical road with legal easement at W. Sems Street. How do you redirect traffic after an accident on a divided road? For safety reasons, the upgrade should be a five-lane road with center turning lanes and a 45 mph speed limit. A four-lane highway with median will be a disaster because: Higher speeds will cause constant conflicts with children and ATVs, pets and moose. DOT will change the limit from 55 mph to 65 mph because traffic will travel at 65 mph. High speed in summer and high speed combined with snow and ice in winter will make stopping and accelerating at designated intersections difficult and dangerous. The mayor's request for a five-lane through Houston is ridiculous and dangerous. Four-lane with frontage looks good. The sooner it's completed the better as present traffic patterns are dangerous. This project is a top priority for the area — many accidents and lots of traffic. Left turn design is a problem; any U-turn should be at a controlled intersection. |
| Safety | |
| Sight distance | Clear trees in the ROW to increase vision, safety, where moose cross Reduce speed limit to 45 mph through Meadow Lakes area. Reducing speeds from 65 mph to 45 mph through a town is common in the Lower 48. A freeway and high speeds are not an upgrade for safety in a populated environment. |
| Speed | In 2005, a young person on an ATV was killed at milepost 46 while trying to cross the highway. A high-speed freeway is not the answer. Love the idea of a divided highway. I totally support the new road being designed and built. A few lights are sorely needed. My customers need access to my business at milepost 50. Will I be compensated for lost business during construction? I like the four-lane divided. Hurry up and build it. |
| Support the project | Four-lane with frontage looks good. The sooner it's completed the better as present traffic patterns are dangerous. |

| Category | Issue |
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| | <p>Coordinate traffic signals at Pittman, Vine, Church Street and Lucas.</p> <p>There should be a signal at the Big Lake Road cutoff.</p> <p>Need a light or a roundabout at Big Lake Road.</p> <p>The possibility that this intersection [Big Lake Road] may not get a traffic signal until 2020 is unacceptable, and a four-lane, divided highway will make it worse.</p> <p>Need a signal at Stanley Road and one at Big Lake Road.</p> |
| Traffic signals | <p>A limited access highway should be safe to access without stopping traffic. Where are the cloverleaf and non-traffic light intersections?</p> |
| Traffic study | <p>Did the study consider the number of people who live on the north side of the highway in Wasilla who want to make left turns to go south?</p> <p>Did the study consider the response time of emergency vehicles coming from the south side?</p> <p>Indirect left turns will be a problem on weekends with heavy motor home travel.</p> <p>Emergency vehicles will lose precious time when negotiating indirect left turns.</p> <p>By law, school buses can't make U-turns [indirect left turns].</p> <p>Large trucks hauling trailers won't be able to negotiate indirect left turns.</p> <p>Five-lane with right- and left turn movements needed at RV park to accommodate long RVs towing SUVs.</p> <p>Holiday Companies prefers right-in, right-out movement at Pittman.</p> <p>Most commuters want to speed through at 55 mph; turning right and then getting across to the left turn lane [indirect left turns] will be a difficult maneuver.</p> <p>Trucks won't be able to get into the left turn lane; will require more time and space to make turns.</p> |
| U-turn and indirect left turns design | <p>Need: left turn dedicated from Parks Highway onto South Mack Drive; left turn dedicated (from Houston) from Parks Highway onto Lucas.</p> |
| Wasilla bypass | <p>DOT should encourage a bypass around Wasilla, as well as a bridge from Anchorage to Point Mackenzie and connections to the Parks Highway at Willow</p> |

Summary

Comments received during the scoping period indicate most stakeholders support the project and recognize the need to enhance safety on the Parks Highway. However, the public is concerned about business access, frontage roads, traffic signals and the accommodation of pedestrians, ATVs, emergency vehicles, school buses, and commercial and recreational

vehicles. Safety concerns include speed limit, pedestrian and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) traffic, moose crossings, and lighting. Safety at the intersection of the Parks Highway and Pittman Road, Big Lake Road and Rainbow Street arose as recurring concerns.

Stakeholders are divided over the benefits and drawbacks of a four-lane divided versus five-lane highway. Some perceive a divided highway with median as less safe. Some expressed doubt that indirect left turns can be successful. The indirect left turns were eliminated from consideration and are no longer a part of the project's scope. A number of people advocated for more frontage roads and fewer traffic signals.

The Meadow Lakes community said they would like slower traffic speeds, unrestricted access to businesses, and a trail system that accommodates pedestrians, bicycle riders, ATV drivers, horse riders, and snowmobilers. They also stated a desire for a corridor that accommodates their vision for the community as discussed in the Meadow Lakes Comprehensive Plan. The following goals for traffic circulation stated in the plan's executive summary support this project:

- “Create a controlled access, four-lane highway to reduce congestion, provide for efficient flow of through traffic, and maximize safety. Minimize driveways and intersections”;
- “Encourage the majority of commercial and industrial uses in the Meadow Lakes area to concentrate in several discrete districts, rather than spread along the length of the Highway”.

The public expressed limited opposition to the proposed project during scoping. Numerous people favored a bypass around Wasilla. The Knik Arm Bridge, the ferry from Point MacKenzie to Anchorage, and the Wasilla bypass were cited as major projects that, if and when they are built, would lessen the need for this project. Stakeholders also cited the extension of parallel corridors such as Spruce and Seldon as projects that would lessen the need for this project.

Public involvement following the scoping period reiterated all of the concerns voiced during the scoping phase. Access to fireworks businesses along the Parks Highway at the north end of the proposed project corridor surfaced as a new concern. However, feedback continued to show support for a four-lane, divided highway with limited access, with less opposition than during the scoping period.

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