



PUBLIC MEETING NO. 2

MEETING NOTES

SUBJECT: Bogard Road Extension East

DATE: April 5, 2007

TIME: 7:00 to 9:00 P.M.

LOCATION: Colony Middle School

Presentation Comments and Questions

Stewart Osgood (DOWL Engineers [DOWL]) gave a PowerPoint presentation on the project at 6:00 and 7:00 p.m. during the public meeting. The public raised the following comments and concerns during and after the presentation. *Staff comments are shown in italics.*

- How would the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) compensate landowners who would lose their homes?

In cases of eminent domain, there are specific steps that would be taken. The MSB would contract with independent assessors to determine the value of the property. An offer is then made to the property owner based on this assessment. If the property owner does not like the offer, then they can request a second offer. Once the assessed value of the property is established and the offer has been accepted, the MSB will work with the owner on issues related to replatting, curing costs incurred as a result of the acquisition, planning and paying for moving costs, etc. The system is set up to respect the rights of the property owners and make a difficult situation easier. As the route is selected and the time of acquisition gets nearer, we will work with the individual property owners to address the concerns and the issues on a case-by-case basis.

- Could the roadway alignment be adjusted to minimize impacts to homes?

The project team will look at many things (such as terrain, roadway grades, and driveway locations) in an effort to design the roadway to achieve the objectives and avoid/minimize/mitigate impacts on adjacent properties.

- What type of compensation would be available if the road alignment impacts only part of a lot?

This would be handled on a case-by-case basis. The project team would look at each individual affected property to decide if it is necessary to take a portion of the lot or the entire lot and would compensate the property owner accordingly. A major consideration in determining this is whether the property would still be considered usable after the necessary right-of-way acquisition for the roadway.

- Are there any statistics available on the increased likelihood of pedestrian/motor vehicle collisions in front of Colony Middle and High Schools?

If the roadway alignment passes in front of the schools, the project team will collect pedestrian and vehicle traffic data and decide what measures are appropriate to address the safety of students.

- In the past, roadways have been developed to accommodate planned communities that were never constructed. Taking this into account, it is possible the projected traffic numbers used to justify the project purpose could be inaccurate.

It is possible that the project vehicle traffic forecast for 2030 could change. They are forecasts and by definition there are some error bars on the projections. However, this is the best available estimate of volumes.

- Please try to keep the planned extension from having strip malls along both sides, as is common on the main route through Wasilla.

The roadway would be designed as a parkway with limited direct access, which will be a deterrent to this type of development. However, the project team is not involved with zoning along the planned extension.

- The planned Bogard Road Extension will not solve the traffic problems on the Palmer-Wasilla Highway (PWH).

The traffic modeling done for this area indicates that while it will not solve the traffic problems on the PWH, it will help alleviate the congestion by providing an alternate route. Murph O'Brien with the MSB provided an update on planned PWH improvements. The MSB has requested \$20 million in state funds to start construction upgrades along the Palmer-Wasilla Highway. There are quite a few improvements needed along this roadway which will be expensive, and the MSB is working with the state to get funding for these improvements. One plan is to install more traffic signals along the PWH.

- When will Trunk Road be connected to Bogard Road?

This project is in the right-of-way acquisition stage right now. The MSB hopes to have funding by FY08 or FY09 with construction planned for FY10.

- What cross-streets will tie into the Bogard Road Extension?

It depends on the chosen alignment, but the project staff has a general assumption of what streets would tie into the red and yellow alignments. Project cost estimates include upgrades for those cross streets that would tie into Board Road.

- There may be some roadway upgrades in front of the school, depending on the preferred alignment, but it would still be a two-lane road, not a four-lane road in front of the schools. Enough right-of-way would be purchased to expand to a four-lane roadway in the future if necessary.
- The type of improvements that may be made to the existing portion of Bogard Road between Trunk Road and 49th State Street will depend on which alignment is chosen.

- Why was the road extension alternative shown at the last public meeting that tied into Scott Road dismissed? Consider looking at this alignment again; could put an overpass at the connection of Scott Road and the Old Glenn Highway intersection to mitigate the steep grades in this location.
- Please consider snow maintenance issues when designing the extension. Consider a raised roadway with an area in-between the lanes to store snow.

The project team will be mindful of snow maintenance issues. A raised roadway is planned for most of the proposed extension; there may be an urban section for a short distance with landscaping in-between the lanes.

- The proposed northern alignment should be dismissed based on wetlands impacts. The proposed middle and southern alignments seem to best meet the project purpose and need.
- Why was the northern alignment dismissed? Your reasons for dismissing this alignment (cost and permitting challenges) do not seem strong enough considering the impacts of the other alternatives on homes and schools.
- Would the bridge for the northern route cross just the streams, or would it span the streams and the wetlands?

The cost estimate for the northern alignment included bridging the stream and the wetlands. Based on initial discussions with agency staff that indicated these are important wetlands that would need to be avoided if at all possible.

- Are passing lanes planned along the proposed two-way roadway extension?

The traffic projections do not indicate a strong need for passing lanes, and none are planned along the extension.

- Why was a 45-mph speed limit chosen over a 55-mph speed limit for the planned extension?

Typically 55-mph speed limits are reserved for major arterial roadways.

- Why would the project team need 200 feet of right-of-way if the planned extension is only going to be two lanes?

The purpose is to reserve space now in the event the roadway needs to be widened to a four-lane roadway in the future, beyond the project's 20-year planning period.

- Why is routing the extension behind the schools not being considered?

Routing the planned extension behind the schools would be very disruptive to the school property. Also this route would require significant right-of-way acquisitions in area neighborhoods behind the schools.

- What is the closest distance the planned extension could be located to a home before the MSB would take the home under eminent domain guidelines?

The process of eminent domain is based on specific individual homes and lots and their relation to the planned roadway. Decisions regarding taking homes are made on an individual case-by-case basis.

- Concerns about aesthetic impacts resulting from the planned extension.

Open House Comments and Concerns

During the open house portion of the meeting; project staff was available to address public comments and concerns. A summary of the comments and concerns heard during the open house portion of the meeting are listed below. *Staff responses are in italics.*

- Will there be tweaking of the alignments in order to minimize impacts?

Yes. Once a preferred alignment is chosen, the project team will analyze the specific areas where the alignment needs to be adjusted.

- Has the increased traffic in front of the schools and the potential for an increase in accidents been looked at?

This issue is being studied and once the project team is further along in the process, certain mitigation measures can be taken to address the safety concerns in front of the school.

- What are you doing to ensure that this road does not become the next PWH?

This roadway will be designed to have limited access to control the amount of turning movements on and off from Bogard Road.

- What will the connector road between the PWH and Bogard Road be?

This will depend on which alignment is chosen. It could be Hemmer Road, or another north-south road that connects to the PWH currently.

- Why are you not planning to construct a four-lane road with this project?

The project is planning on buying the right-of-way for a four-lane road in order to prepare for future growth, but constructing a four-lane road with this project is outside the 20-year planning.

- Why did you decide not to move forward with the Scott Road alignment?

There were two main reasons for dismissing this option. From a geometric standpoint, the slopes at this intersection are too steep, and this intersection would not provide convenient access to the Old Glenn Highway.

- Please consider making at least one of the pedestrian facilities unpaved. If not unpaved, then please provide an unpaved path next to the paved trail.

- Do not put the road through wetlands.
- Do not put the road near schools. It is a safety issue.
- Property owner adjacent to the northern alignment in favor of this alternative and willing to donate substantial wetlands to be placed into a permanent conservation easement as mitigation for this project. Have already coordinated with resource agencies regarding proposed mitigation plan for this area that would open up new salmon rearing habitat.