



## **PUBLIC MEETING NO. 4**

### **MEETING NOTES**

**SUBJECT:** Bogard Road Extension East

**DATE:** October 29, 2008

**TIME:** 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Colony Middle School

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### **PRESENTATION OVERVIEW**

Stewart Osgood (DOWL HKM) opened the public meeting with a presentation to update the public on the Bogard Road Extension East project including the project schedule, road design efforts and access management issues. He explained that the Bogard Road Extension East project is a part of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's (MSB) Long-Range Transportation Plan and is intended to provide an alternate east-west roadway across the MSB, ease some of the traffic pressures on the Palmer-Wasilla Highway, and service subdivisions and residential areas being developed more than a mile away from the Palmer-Wasilla Highway.

Stewart explained that the MSB Assembly formally chose the "red route" as the path for the project. This route extends from the North 49th State Street and Bogard Road intersection, travels west past Palmer High School, enters into a small S-curve through potato fields, before intersecting with Arctic Avenue. He explained there was some alignment modification to minimize noise impacts and to minimize right-of-way (ROW) impacts.

He explained that the extension is classified as an arterial roadway, meaning it is forecast to have traffic levels of approximately 8,000 trips a day by 2030. Stewart stated that this is similar to the traffic levels currently present on Seldon Road. He also said the extension is being built with two lanes, but that enough ROW is being purchased so that if traffic levels increase, the extension can be made into a four-lane highway. Stewart said this typically happens when traffic volumes reach approximately 18,000 trips a day (He noted that the Palmer-Wasilla Highway currently has a traffic volume of approximately 17,000 trips a day).

Stewart said the posted speed on the Bogard Road extension will be 45 miles per hour, 35 miles per hour in front of the high school and the more urban sections on the east end of the project. There will be a lane width of 12 feet and a shoulder width of 4 to 6 feet that will be striped with a bike lane. There will also be landscaping to control access and to provide a more parkway-type feel.

In planning for the Bogard Road Extension East project, Stewart said that DOWL HKM used a demand model, which looks at traffic volumes and development in the MSB 25 years to the future and then projects likely traffic volume demands. He explained that this is where the number of 8,000 trips a day came from. He also stressed that if alternate routes are developed

off of the extension, it could reduce the traffic volume demand on the extension. These alternate routes include a new Trunk Road and a Hemmer Road extension. He explained it will be a rural section on the west side and will change into a curb-and-gutter section with separated pathways and 150 feet. ROW in front of Palmer High School with locations for utilities on the sides.

Stewart said access management was another issue DOWL HKM considered when creating the design for the Bogard extension, specifically limiting the number and locations of driveways that would feed into the new roadway.

As for ROW, Stewart explained there were 8 full property takes and 23 partial acquisitions. For the eight full takes, the owners have been contacted and the acquisition offers are moving forward. For the partial acquisitions, Stewart noted that those appraisals are currently being conducted by independent appraisers hired by the MSB.

In discussing noise analysis, Stewart said noise data has already been collected in 6 to 10 locations along the corridor and that more analysis will be done in the winter. He said the changes in this data will dictate noise mitigation.

Stewart said there are some cultural resources and archeology that the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is concerned about in regards to this project and some mitigation will be required on those parcels. He also noted that there are not any wetlands impacted by the corridor extension.

He said construction is expected to start in 2010 with the design probably completed in May 2009. The ROW acquisition process will subsequently be completed and then the project will move on to construction. He said it will probably be a one-and-a-half to two-year construction period and that it will be open for use in fall 2011. Below is a summary of questions and comments that were raised during the first presentation. Staff responses are in italics.

**How many overhead streetlights are going to be located along the road? My main concern is how these lights will affect the residents that live along the corridor.**

*The current plan is to have street lighting primarily along the urban sections of the roadway. There will be predominately more overhead street lighting around intersections for safety reasons. However, overhead streetlights will not be continuous along the entire alignment.*

**What about collector routes? There is not any information provided regarding the collector routes and intersecting side streets.**

*There are currently only two or three intersecting streets with the design of Bogard Road. If there are comments regarding if there should be more or less, we urge you to comment so the design team can take those suggestions into consideration.*

**The two connecting streets are in poor shape, what will these look like after construction is complete on Bogard Road?**

*Improving the connecting roads is not in the plan under the Bogard Road design. These improvements would have to be localized.*

**Between the schools and the Glenn Highway, the new road would prevent me from making it into my neighborhood. If this happens, Montgomery, the next street up, still prevents me from getting to my house. This road will make it more difficult for me to get to my house.**

**I have a problem with the fact that I ask your staff members questions and the only answer I have been given is "I don't know."**

**Where can a person go to find the Federal Highway Standards on noise mitigation?**

**I see Arabian becoming one of the collector roads. If so, what will be done to the road to make it acceptable for traffic? Will there be a light? Widening?**

*There are currently no plans in the Bogard Road plan to improve Arabian all the way back to its origins.*

**No new information has been provided to the public. What will be done to the feeder roads? What will be done for the roads that will be feeding into the main Bogard Road? If Arabian is not going to be fixed, why is there even a public meeting when nothing new is provided to us?**

*The current plan is not to improve feeder streets, but to improve traffic levels on the Palmer-Wasilla Highway. Any improvements done to Arabian and feeder streets will have to be a localized project.*

**In the plans, it shows 800 dwellings in five neighborhoods for the two roads that will connect to Bogard Road. I have a concern with cut-through traffic. How will the arterial flow be handled? If improvements to the collector and feeder roads are not in the plan, we need to be informed of this.**

**When is the noise testing done?**

*The testing is typically done in the winter after the vegetation is gone.*

**What type of vehicles will people be driving in the future and how does this relate to the traffic projects in 2030?**

*The traffic projections do not reflect any type of purchase of any type of vehicle.*

**Where Arabian comes in, will there be an intersection with a traffic light?**

*Current warrants do not show that the intersection is meeting warrants for a signal. If in the future, the intersection does have significant traffic, warrants might me met for a signal to be installed.*

**So it will be a standard T intersection?**

*Yes.*

**What about the utilities? Will there be plans for the utilities to be overhead or underground in the future if needed?**

*We are currently purchasing enough ROW to accommodate future utilities. If area is needed for utility services, ROW will be available for this.*

**Do you anticipate that people will be able to go north on Arabian towards the intersection and turn left, right or go across? Can you even do that with a two-lane road? The new intersected streets traffic volumes will spike. What can be done to alleviate the traffic volumes?**

*As of now, traffic volumes for Monte Vista and Arabian do not currently meet the warrants for a traffic signal. However, there will be a re-distribution of traffic volumes going to either Bogard Road or the Palmer-Wasilla Highway. We understand that we need to be careful where we will be connecting the collector roads to avoid any type of increased traffic congestion.*

*People coming through Snow Goose to go to Bogard Road will not have to go through the southern portion of Arabian Lane. However, the area between Scott Road and Snow Goose will still have a substantial amount of cut-through traffic, and maybe measures can be taken to discourage this.*

*A suggestion by Stewart was to put traffic volume meters on intersecting side streets and pick up all numbers on those.*

**Why don't you take the advice of the planning commission and not build the road at all. Or build it along the section line like it had been proposed in the past.**

**I have a concern about the access for emergency vehicles to get to homes. Will there be a reduction in response times?**

*In the studies conducted, Stewart stated that we have not found that there will be a reduction in response times.*

**Will there be a light at Felton for when it extends in the future?**

*A signal is in the plan in preparation for when a Felton connection is available.*

**If there is another meeting like this, there should be a large map in the presentation room so people can describe and point to where they are talking about.**

**There are 6 subdivisions being affected. Many people specifically build their houses on a cul-de-sac so there would not be any freeway noise. This is what I am upset about.**

**Will all of the road be within the 200-foot ROW?**

*Yes.*

**I don't understand. How are the standards for collector roads determined? Just because it accesses Bogard doesn't mean you can refer to it as a collector?**

*Stewart stated that it would not be referred to as a collector. Just because a road connects to an arterial road does not mean it is a collector.*

**One thing I think you are forgetting is that you will be changing the volume on a regular basis. Everyone's route has to go to the Palmer-Wasilla Highway currently. When Bogard is opened, an alternate route is available and everyone might choose to go that way instead. With only two choices, those two choices will get more traffic because of the change of traffic patterns to avoid the Palmer-Wasilla Highway. It is not just that people will go one way and some will go the other. As other people are saying, there will definitely be cut through traffic on Arabian which would raise traffic volumes.**

**This could make north Arabian more of a problem now. The re-distribution of routes will not stay the same and the change will not decrease the traffic volumes.**

*Stewart stated that he did not think traffic would increase, but he does agree that people will choose alternative routes.*

### **Public Meeting, Second Presentation**

A second presentation was given later in the evening. Below is a summary of the questions and comments from the second presentation.

**In collecting your noise data, you were actually back behind the subdivisions where there are no roads?**

*Stewart stated that this was correct, and further explained that on a noise meter 35 to 40 decibels is considered to be virtually silent and that this was the range that was being gathered in those areas.*

**What is considered to be an acceptable noise level?**

*Between 38 to 40 decibels is considered acceptable. In addition, there are standards for how much the noise environment can change in a residential area and at what level the noise environment can be for a residential area.*

**Downtown Manhattan has an acceptable noise level.**

*Stewart explained that the acceptable noise level for downtown Manhattan would not be the same acceptable level for a rural residential environment. He also explained there are federal standards in regards to noise levels in rural residential environments.*

*Stewart further stated that DOWL HKM considered what the change in noise level would be with this extension and if that change would be consistent with acceptable noise levels for a rural residential environment. He said in modeling this change, DOWL HKM considered the traffic volumes, the types of vehicles, and the age of the vehicles that would travel along the road.*

**This is a noise model?**

*Stewart said that DOWL HKM did use a model to determine potential noise levels along the extension and that it is a federal model used all over the country. He said it was developed by the Federal Highway Administration to help determine noise mitigation efforts.*

**If the model says this noise level is unacceptable, then that determines the mitigation efforts that are built into the project?**

*Stewart stated that this was correct and that the MSB has committed to using the federal standards for noise mitigation as part of this project. He said these are the strictest standards that can be applied.*

**Trunk Road did not meet those federal noise standards.**

*DOWL HKM was not involved in the Trunk Road project and therefore does not know about the noise standards that were applied to the project.*

**That is why you are going through our neighborhoods - to avoid impacting wetlands.**

**Can you tell us what or where these historical sites are?**

*Stewart stated that there are some farm buildings along the route and there is also a historic wood stave waterline.*

**Can we hold up the project because of the historical sites?**

*Stewart explained that DOWL HKM works closely with SHPO on projects so that they are not held up because of historical sites. He also said there are different levels of historic sites and that in this case DOWL HKM may just need to document a site or tweak the alignments in order to comply with SHPO. He said he was doubtful going through SHPO would be the best avenue to delay the project. Further, he said that DOWL HKM also works to comply with Section 106 requirements which outline what an organization must do if their project affects a historical property.*

**Where is the waterline?**

*Stewart offered to show the resident the location of the waterline on the large plot map that was on display.*

**The access roads - Arabian, Monte Vista - what are the plans for them? Is there nothing in the budget to modify them in any way? They are not two lanes, they are little roads and people will be using them. We have 49th State Street and hopefully people will jump off there or Hemmer, but people will be jumping off and jumping on all throughout the extension. What plans do you have for those roads?**

*DOWL HKM has no plans to chase those roads back and improve them back off of Bogard Road. There will be intersection improvements locally, but they will not extend all the way back into neighborhoods to the point of origin or destination. While some people have asked if signals will be installed at those locations, DOWL HKM's signal warrants study show that the traffic volumes on those side streets will not increase to the point where they warrant a signal.*

**What about turning lanes at those intersections?**

*Stewart stated that at the local intersections with Bogard Road, DOWL HKM may consider having right-turn lanes, left-turn lanes and through lanes. He said a resident in his earlier presentation predicted a 10-fold increase in traffic volumes along the side streets, but that DOWL HKM does not foresee that type of traffic volume increase.*

**Where are all these people going?**

*Stewart said most of the traffic on the side streets is residentially driven. People are using the side streets to go south to the Palmer-Wasilla Highway. He said with the extension, there may be some re-distribution of traffic, but that it could either be a 10 and 20 percent increase or decrease. He said DOWL HKM does not plan on installing a signal unless there is a significant increase in cut-through traffic along those side streets.*

**What would constitute a significant increase or decrease?**

*Stewart explained that a significant increase would be if thousands of additional cars drove through neighborhoods via those side streets. He said this type of traffic volume is highly unlikely unless the roads are upgraded to the point where it makes it very convenient to cut through on them.*

**Ever since they connected Snow Goose to Arabian there has been a significant increase in traffic on Arabian Road. People from Fishhook come down and snake through there and jump on the Palmer-Wasilla. We get a lot more trucks coming through there already and it stands to reason that if you put another road there you'll have more traffic coming through.**

*Stewart stated that some of that traffic will be intercepted by the Bogard Road extension and drivers will no longer need to go through neighborhoods to get to the Palmer-Wasilla Highway.*

**Is Trunk Road going to be completed before this project?**

*Stewart stated that when the Bogard Road extension project began, Trunk Road was scheduled to be completed first. However, he said now the projects look like they will be on the same construction schedule of 2010-2011.*

**In the plot map out in the commons area, it seems like the alignment dips down towards Colony High School more. Is that true?**

*Stewart offered to have a closer look at that map with the resident after the presentation.*

**How are they going to handle traffic during construction near the school?**

*DOWL HKM will have a construction phasing plan in the documents that are bid on by the contractor. These documents will require certain segments of the extension to be constructed and finished within a set amount of time. This is typically done around school schedules.*

**So basically you'll try to do most of that work in the summer when the kids aren't there.**

*DOWL HKM will try to do most of that work in the summer, taking into account the needs of both the school district and emergency services. DOWL HKM will work with these entities on the phasing plan to make sure the school can remain safely operative even during construction.*

**Are either of the schools changing their entrances?**

*Stewart stated that DOWL HKM has worked through some of the school circulation issues that were raised during the public involvement process. He said this is particularly true at Palmer*

*High School where there were some suggested modifications about access into and out of the school and access to the other side of the school.*

**What did Wal-Mart have to do with the selection of this particular route? How much were they considered? Palmer has known that Wal-Mart has had their eye on this project for a while. I still have a problem with this route not going north and sticking to Scott Road which is what they have told us for years; and when I brought my property that is what they told me – that they are probably going to extend Bogard Road but that it is going to follow the Scott Road section line.**

*Stewart explained that he had heard this concern raised prior in the night. He said he has also heard the concerns surrounding Wal-Mart and that those concerns have been recorded.*

*He went on to explain that at the start of this project the MSB directed DOWL HKM to look at route alignments when considering a route for the Bogard Road extension. He said each of the proposed alignments were weighed against the purpose, need, and objectives of the project. He said DOWL HKM thinks it is important for the extension to tie in to the Old Glenn Highway at Arctic Avenue, but that to connect to the Old Glenn Highway up on the hill was not a good idea from a mobility or traffic circulation standpoint. Ultimately, Stewart explained, DOWL HKM makes a recommendation but follows the direction of the MSB.*

**We know you are doing your job, we just feel like this has been an issue for the last two years.**

**It is just interesting that Wal-Mart said they were going away because of the access and, surprise, a month later the red route was chosen. That is why the red route got pushed. When the red route was chosen, Wal-Mart was back.**

*Stewart stated that it was not surprising that Wal-Mart wanted to put their store where people would have access to it. However, DOWL HKM had absolutely zero contact with Wal-Mart about the selection of this route.*

**We are not going to let you off one-inch on this. You are not going to hurt our kids; you are not going to raise our noise levels.**

**Maybe it is more expensive to go through swampland than to keep Bogard completely straight across and keep it north up until you get closer to Palmer; but I feel like my kids are more valuable than swampland, but you have already made that decision.**

*Stewart stated that everyone would agree that children are more important than swampland.*

**But why choose an alignment that is by all these schools and subdivisions.**

**What do we do next? Do we help to design it? It is our dollar buying this road. I think there is a point where we as a community get to say, “No, you cannot do that.” At some point we should get to say “no,” or is this just on a freight train now and we might as well sit back and see what happens.**

*Stewart explained that DOWL HKM will be reporting back to the MSB and to the elected officials on the design of the extension. He said DOWL HKM may also go back before the*

*Planning Commission. He encouraged residents to stay involved and that if they felt like DOWL HKM was ignoring them, to get their elected officials involved.*

**How far ahead are you going to actually know what this design looks like before it is the approved design?**

*Stewart said by May of next year, the design should be completed and that everything should be nearly final. He said there are some residents who chose not to give DOWL HKM access to their property, but that the company is working through that. Stewart said that, at present, DOWL HKM has aerial LiDAR information, but that the company really needs to do ground-based survey work in order to complete the design. However he did stress that most residents had been cooperative.*

*Stewart said once all of the information is collected, DOWL HKM will finalize the design and continue to move forward on ROW acquisitions. If everything stays on schedule, in a year to 15 months, the project will be put out to bid, the contract will be awarded by the MSB and construction will start in spring 2010.*

**Is this project fully funded? How is it funded? How are funding requests established?**

*Stewart explained that the project is not fully funded and that the monies come from the State of Alaska's general fund. He said his guess as to how the project was funded was that the MSB established a priority list and asked for funding. He said to date; the MSB has gotten approximately \$12 million for this project but that it needs around another \$25 million.*

**I would rather the issue of funding not be so unknown and that people can see where the funds are and then we can sell our houses again. Right now we cannot sell our houses because there is too much of an unknown.**

**On the topic of more turning lanes down Arabian, if you are acquiring enough land for a four-lane highway, you should have plenty of room for turning lanes.**

*Stewart stated that DOWL HKM's intent is to acquire enough land so that the company does not have to come back and acquire more in 5 to 10 years.*

**What are the chances of, on Arabian and Monte Vista, that if they are going to be improving the roads, that we could have bike trails going down at least one side of those roads. That will at least get kids off the road when you have cars going by. It will also help if you have horses as well.**

*Stewart inquired as to how far the resident envisioned those trails extending:*

**I would think they would extend from Bogard Road to the Palmer-Wasilla Highway – a strip down each side. That way you do not have kids and animals on the roads with cars.**

**I use Monte Vista all the time to get to the Palmer-Wasilla and two cars can barely fit, let alone a truck. If you can at least get the kids and bikes off the roads.**

**We are just very disappointed that we were so involved and we failed.**

**We never had a chance. That is just how these things go.**

*Stewart asked if the resident saw any advantages to the road extension:*

**Yes, because it hooks up the north end of Big Lake all the way down to the Glenn Highway. I totally understand what you are doing...we should be suing the developers, that is who we should be suing because they knew it, too, and they sold the land real quick before the road went through.**

**Are you hooking up to Pittman?**

*Stewart stated that this extension project will not hook up to Pittman.*

**In your subdivision, in your covenant you are not allowed to have a business, now that our subdivisions are sliced in half can people put businesses up along the road?**

*Stewart said he did not think so, but that there may be a process for changing your covenant and suggested that the resident look into whether their covenant could be relaxed.*

**We cannot have four wheelers in our neighborhood, how are we going to have bike trails behind our houses. We cannot have all those vehicles in our subdivision. It is really an issue. If you are going to put a bike trail in the back end of Equestrian Acres, how are you going to tell people that do not live in the subdivision that they cannot go through there with four wheelers?**