



Scoping Summary Report

40th Avenue Extension/Upgrade
Lake Otis Parkway to Dale Street

May 2007

SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT
40TH AVENUE EXTENSION/UPGRADE

Prepared for:

Municipality of Anchorage
Project Management and Engineering
4700 South Bragaw Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99519

Prepared by:

DOWL Engineers
4041 B Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99503
(907) 562-2000

W.O. D59432

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

The Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) is initiating the 40th Avenue East Extension project. The project will extend 40th Avenue from Lake Otis Parkway to Piper Street and upgrade 40th Avenue from Piper Street to Dale Street. (Figure 1)

This project represents the highest priority recommendation of the Tudor Area Traffic Calming Study, which was a collaborative effort between area residents, Providence Alaska Medical Center, MOA Traffic Department, and DOWL Engineers (DOWL). The 40th Avenue extension will increase connectivity through the area, relieve pressure on 42nd Avenue, and decrease University Medical (U-Med) traffic congestion at the Tudor Road/Piper Street and Providence Drive/Piper Street intersections. The MOA is using the 40th Avenue Extension as a pilot effort for improved Public Involvement.

The process of gathering information from the public and agencies on the purpose and need for a project, potential alternative, and possible issues and concerns that need to be addressed during the environmental review and design is called “scoping.” This report, with its appendices, summarizes the public and agency scoping methods, identifies issues and concerns, and lists comments received to date along with their sources. Comments were received from a variety of stakeholders (or interested parties) including local residents, resource agency representatives, and interested organizations.



Figure 1: Project Location Map

1.2 Project Team

The project team for this project is listed below.

Contracting Agency

MOA

- John Smith, P.E., Project Manager
- Julie Makela, P.E., Project Administrator
- Bob Kniefel, P.E., Traffic Engineer

Prime Consultant

DOWL

- Stewart G. Osgood, P.E., Project Manager
- Steven K. Noble, P.E., Project Engineer
- Matthew Korshin, P.E., Design Engineer
- Stephanie Mormilo, E.I., Project Engineer
- Jennifer Payne, Public Involvement Manager
- Kristi Stuller, Public Involvement Planner

1.3 Scoping Method

The following scoping methods are included in the Public Involvement Plan and were used to inform the public and local, state, and federal resource agencies about the project and its objectives and the environmental and design processes.

- Project E-mail/Mailing Address
- Advertisements
- Community Council Meetings, throughout project

- Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Meetings, February 5, 2007, March 5, 2007, and May 7, 2007
- Project Website
- Project E-mail Address
- Project Flyer and Comment Forms
- Public Scoping Meeting, November 13, 2007
- Agency Scoping Meeting, February 22, 2007
- Project Walk Through, November 11, 2007
- Business Roundtable Meeting, March 7, 2007
- PowerPoint presentations and Display Boards

1.3.1 Mailing List of Potentially Affected Interests

Mailing and e-mail contact lists have been developed for the project. They include a General Public list, an Agency/Officials list, and a CAC list. The General Public list was assembled by identifying all residents and property owners within the vicinity of the project corridor and adding to it those persons, who, through the course of advertisements and scoping, showed an interest in this project or had expressed an interest in previous projects in this area (Appendix A). In total, the list includes about 1,500 names/household contacts.

In addition to the General Public mailing list, a General Public e-mail distribution list has also been created. The e-mail list contains approximately 120 e-mail addresses. A map of the mailing list boundary and mailing lists are included in Appendix A.

1.3.2 Advertisements

Advertisements for the scoping meeting public walk through notification of the initiation of environmental and design studies appeared in the Anchorage Daily News on November 6 and November 14, 2006. In addition, a project flyer announcing the meetings was distributed at Community Council meetings and sent to the project distribution lists. A copy of the public meeting advertisement and flyer is included in Appendix B.

1.3.3 Community Councils

The project area includes two community council areas. DOWL contacted the presidents of these Community Councils (University Area and Tudor Area) to request inclusion of an announcement regarding the public scoping meeting in their monthly newsletter. This information was also passed on to the Federation of Community Councils for inclusion in their announcements. In addition, DOWL staff attended the following community council meetings, passed out the meeting flyer, and announced the public scoping meeting and project walk through:

- University Area Community Council - October 4, 2006
- University Area Community Council - November 1, 2006
- Tudor Area Community Council - November 2, 2006

Meeting notes from the Community Council are listed in Appendix C.

1.3.4 Citizens Advisory Committee

The CAC is a working citizen advocate group to provide input on project elements for the good of the community. The CAC members were selected by reassembling select area residents who participated in the Tudor Area Traffic Calming Study and nominees from affected Community Council areas. Additionally, a few impacted business participants were invited to participate in the CAC.

The February 5, 2007, and March 5, 2007, meeting notes are listed in Appendix D.

1.3.5 Project Website

A project website (www.east40th.com) was developed to provide specific information regarding the project area, objectives, schedule, project documents, and team members, as well as provide a place to review and make public comments. Copies of the project website pages are included in Appendix E.

1.3.6 Project E-Mail Address

For persons wanting to communicate about the project via e-mail, an e-mail address (east40th@dowl.com) was created. This address was included in the public scoping meeting mailer announcement, the newspaper announcement, the comment forms passed out at meetings, and announced at both the public scoping and agency scoping meetings.

1.3.7 Project Flyer and Comment Forms

To help the public understand the purpose of the project and to announce the public scoping meeting and project walk through, a flyer (Appendix B) was sent to all persons on the mailing list, e-mail distribution list, and posted to the website. The project team also hand-delivered the flyer to all residents and business owners directly along the project corridor. In addition, a project comment form was developed and distributed at the public scoping meeting and all other meetings project staff attended to solicit public comments. The form includes an area to add contact information for those that wish to be added to the project mailing and e-mail lists. A copy of the comment form is included in Appendix F.

2.0 PUBLIC SCOPING

2.1 Project Walk-Through

In addition to a typical public meeting held in a public facility, the project team flagged the potential project right-of-way (ROW) and held a project walk-through on November 11, 2006, along the corridor of the project. The project team used this as an opportunity to listen to concerns and answer questions about the project. The project walk-through meeting notes are listed in Appendix G.

2.2 Public Scoping Meeting

The public scoping meeting was held at Wendler Middle School, 2905 Lake Otis Parkway, on Monday, November 13, 2006.

The public scoping meeting began at 6:30 p.m. and concluded at 9:00 p.m. About 35 Community members signed in and met with the project staff one-on-one to discuss individual issues and concerns. At 7:00 p.m., project staff made a half-hour presentation

about the project. A copy of the presentation used for the public scoping meeting is included in Appendix H. The following topics were covered in the presentation:

- Meeting Purpose
- Project Description
- Project Purpose and Need
- Design Criteria
- Planning/Design Considerations
- Project Schedule
- Public Involvement Opportunities

At the conclusion of the presentation, the meeting was opened up for public questions and concerns. At the end of the question and answer period, the one-on-one discussion with individuals resumed and lasted until 9:00 p.m. The meeting notes and sign-in-sheets are included in Appendix H.

2.3 Business Meetings

The project team also met with State of Alaska and other business interests in the area to discuss ROW and other issues that may arise as the project progresses. The stakeholders' meeting was held November 7, 2006. Meeting notes are listed in Appendix I.

In addition, the project team held a Business Roundtable meeting on March 7, 2007. DOWL sent invitation postcards to businesses near the project area. For select businesses directly affected by a proposed diverter at 42nd Avenue and Folker Street, a separate letter was included with the postcard invitation. The postcard invitation and letter and are included in Appendix J. The Business Roundtable began at 11:30 a.m. and concluded at 1:00 p.m. A copy of the presentation is included in Appendix J. The following topics were covered at the meeting:

- Meeting Purpose
- Project Description

- Project Purpose and Need
- Design Criteria
- Planning/Design Considerations
- Project Schedule
- Public Involvement Opportunities
- Preliminary Baseline Presentation

During the presentation, the project team answered questions and took comments. The meeting notes and sign-in-sheets are included in Appendix J. Approximately 20 business representatives, not including project team members, attended the meeting.

2.4 Documentation of Public Comments

All written and verbal public comments received as of February 28, 2007, (the conclusion of the scoping period), have been reviewed and are included in Appendix K. Comments received have also been paraphrased and listed below. The list attempts to group the comments into common issues and concerns.

- General Project Comments
 - Do not cut 40th Avenue through from Piper Street to Laurel Street. Like hills and trees.
 - Road serves no purpose, improve 42nd Avenue instead. Some residents would rather see more cars on 42nd Avenue.
 - Divert traffic to Tudor Road, not 40th Avenue.
 - Do not cut Wright Street or Folker Street through to 40th Avenue.
- Quality of Life Issues
 - Traffic quantities and speed increases.
 - Noise concerns.
 - Air quality concerns.

- Property acquisition (shift development north).
- Provide adequate buffers.
- Open space.
- Design Issues
 - Provide sidewalk only on north side of 40th Avenue.
 - Provide pedestrian facilities on both sides of 40th Avenue.
 - Connect all cross streets in with 40th Avenue.
 - Make 40th Avenue look like Piper Street.
 - Piper Street is too hard to plow. Do not design to match.
 - Do not provide on-street parking on 40th Avenue.
 - Design road to be as narrow as possible.
 - Construct roundabout at Piper Street.
 - Do not construct a roundabout at Piper Street.
 - Employ traffic calming (speed humps) on 40th Avenue.
 - The sidewalk on the south side of 40th Avenue will reduce parking for residents.
 - Divorter at 42nd Avenue and Folker Street will hurt some businesses on Tudor Road.
- Landscape Suggestions
 - Provide scaled down lights.
 - Provide more lights on 40th Avenue.
 - Incorporate small gardens and buffers.
 - Plant ornamental trees that have color.
 - Provide extensive tree planting between neighbors and road between Piper Street and Lake Otis Parkway.

- Adjacent Neighborhood Comments
 - Upgrade pedestrian facilities on 42nd Avenue.
 - Extend city water to 41st Avenue.
 - Spruce up Lake Otis Parkway from Tudor Road to Northern Lights Boulevard.

3.0 AGENCY SCOPING

3.1 Agency Scoping Meeting

The project team sent out scoping letters on January 24, 2007, to discuss the project and announce the meeting on February 22, 2007. A few days before the meeting, a follow-up call to agency members was made to remind them of the meeting. The agency scoping meeting was held at DOWL headquarters, 4041 B Street, Anchorage Alaska.

The agency scoping meeting began at 10:00 a.m. and concluded at 11:30 a.m. The project team gave a PowerPoint presentation and took comments and answered questions. A copy of the invitation letters, mailing list, presentation, and meeting notes are listed in Appendix L. The following topics were covered in the presentation:

- Meeting Purpose
- Project Description
- Project Purpose and Need
- Design Criteria
- Planning/Design Considerations
- Project Schedule
- Public Involvement Opportunities

After the initial scoping meeting, an additional project element was added for consideration to the project, a diverter at 42nd Avenue and Folker Street. The project team sent out an addendum e-mail on March 14, 2007, announcing the change and inviting comments. A

copy of the e-mail addendum is listed in Appendix L. As of March 21, 2007, no agency comments have been received.

3.2 Documentation of Agency Scoping Comments

All written and verbal public comments received as of February 28, 2007 (the conclusion of the agency scoping period), have been reviewed and are included in Appendix M. Comments received have also been paraphrased and listed below. The list groups the comments by agency.

State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources

- Part of the proposed project appears to lie within the coastal zone boundaries of the State of Alaska and the MOA Anchorage Coastal Plan.
- Submission of a completed Coastal Project Questionnaire (CPQ) and Certification Statement is requested.

Action taken: A CPQ will be submitted prior to construction.

United States Army Corps of Engineers

- Mentioned a small area of the project ROW near Lake Otis Parkway that may be jurisdictional wetlands.
 - It may be necessary to apply for a Nationwide Permit.
- Wetlands have been mapped between Piper Street and Dale Unit 18E (Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan, 1996, designated “B”). However, these wetlands may have been filled.

Action taken: In the spring, a wetland determination will be made.

Anchorage School District

- Believes the project will be beneficial to improve connectivity and reduce traffic on 42nd Avenue which has school bus stops for all grade levels.

No action needed.

Alaska Communication Systems (ACS)

- Provided a large cable map to the project team.
- Identified a vault, duct, and cabling within the 40th Avenue Extension ROW.
- Requested further coordination.

Action taken: The project team will coordinate with ACS.

Municipal Light and Power (ML&P)

- ML&P has underground facilities running parallel to 40th Avenue from Lake Otis Parkway to Folker Street and from Wright Street to Dale Street.
- Field locates must be obtained to establish accurate locations.
- Provided a large gridmap of to the project team.
- Would like to identify and resolve conflicts during design, not construction.
- Any new electrical service requires a Service Extension Agreement.
- ML&P outlined the procedures for construction near ML&P facilities.

Action taken: The project team will coordinate with ML&P.

4.0 SUMMARY

The above public and agency comments provide valuable insight into the issues to be resolved during the project. Comments received after the end of the scoping period (February 28, 2006) will also be reviewed by the team.