



**40th AVENUE EXTENSION/UPGRADE
CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 2**

March 5, 2007

MEETING NOTES

ATTENDEES: ***Municipality of Anchorage (MOA)***
John Smith, P.E., Project Manager
Julie Makela, P.E., Project Administrator
Bob Kniefel, P.E., Municipal Traffic Engineer
Michelle Westin, Anchorage Fire Department

DOWL Engineers (DOWL)
Matthew Korshin, P.E, Project Engineer
Jennifer Payne, Public Involvement Manager

Community Participants
Beau Bassett
Barbara Garner
Ed Leonetti
Dale Rahn
Alison Smith

Not in attendance
Michelle Sturdy
Jerry Jenkins

Matthew Korshin (DOWL) began the meeting with introductions of those in attendance.

Matthew reminded CAC members of the role of the CAC and what level of participation members may have on various project elements.

- Collaborate on elements that are not predetermined: landscaping and parking.
- Consult regarding elements that are somewhat flexible: traffic calming features, pedestrian facilities (must have facilities on each side of the street), lighting, utilities, and shoulder/buffer width.
- Information sharing regarding elements that are not subject to change: collector roadway, 11 foot lane width, posted speed, signage, and striping.

Beau Bassett said he wondered how the “standards” are set and why pedestrian facilities must be on both sides of the street. He said he remembered another project that was in the media where the standard lane-width was challenged and the public succeeded.

Bob Kniefel said the project Beau was referring to is 35th and McRae. Bob said that project is still being decided. He went on to say the lane-width deviation is very minimal. He said that this interim decision is still being discussed and may fail. He said it's still possible the lane widths will be back to the standard of 11-feet.

Matthew said the standards the project team is using comes from the January 2007 Design Criteria Manual.

There was a question about the section of 40th Avenue from Dale to Piper and if it's classified as a collector or residential street.

John Smith (PM&E) said that section is currently a residential street but the MOA is looking to get a revision to the Streets and Highways Plan to make it a collector. He said it functions as a collector and would not be eligible for bond funding if it was not classified as such.

Beau asked what the standard street width is for a residential street.

John said that there was about a four-year period where the MOA was working on its standards. In that time period, several projects went through the design and construction phase. He said what the city learned from that time when the standards weren't in place that an 11-foot collector standard works best—that 10-foot is not adequate.

Business Roundtable, Wednesday March 7

Matthew discussed the business roundtable that the team would be having for businesses around the corridor.

Matthew went on to discuss the proposed 42nd and Folker diverter which is a late addition to the project. He invited the CAC members to comment on the proposed diverter if they'd like.

He said that it is not included in the basemap he brought because the team just finished surveying the area.

Basemap Discussion

Matthew discussed the basemap that was presented and what is, and is not, currently included.

- What is currently in the project basemap
 - Road
 - Sidewalks
 - Trail
 - Curb

- What is not yet in the project basemap
 - Traffic Calming
 - Landscaping
 - Lighting
 - Utilities
 - Drainage
 - Roundabout

Matthew discussed the goal of the CAC work session. He said it's a way for the group to take a first look at what engineers have placed on paper and give the team some feedback on issues, concerns or other items the designers may not be aware of.

Ed Leonetti said that the U-Med District Master Plan didn't show 40th going through. He wondered if the plan would need to be amended in order to move forward.

Julie Makela (PM&E) discussed that the MOA Planning Department will need to make this decision. She noted that in the U-Med Plan 40th was shown as a dotted line.

Barbara Garner said her recollection of what happened when the plan was crafted that there were openings based on what development happened in the area. She said the Anchorage Assembly added an amendment that there would be a traffic study before any roads were built. She said the Tudor Corridor Traffic Study met that requirement.

Julie noted that when there are incongruous development plans, the most recent plan takes precedent and that the Tudor Corridor Study was after the U-Med District Plan.

Alison Smith said that it was her recollection that the Trust Land Office always knew 40th Avenue would go through. She said they even put building setback on new Renal Care facility for the road.

Matthew walked the group through the very preliminary design layout and began at the Lake Otis and 40th end of the project.

Matthew said the alignment is offset on each side of Lake Otis and that they need to be lined up to have a safe intersection. The project team preserved the straight line on 40th all the way to Piper and shifted 40th west of Lake Otis to the north a bit. Matthew said that the west side of Lake Otis on 40th has low traffic volumes so the shift has less impact to that area.

Barbara said the road is used for the medical offices on that road. Matthew agreed and that the intersection should improve their access.

Matthew shifted his focus to the east side of the Lake Otis 40th intersection. He said that there will be left turn arrows off of 40th onto Lake Otis.

He said that in 20 years there will be a substantial amount of traffic off of 40th onto Lake Otis—projected 600 right-turns an hour. He said that there could be one left-turn bay with two right-turn bays.

Beau said that he is skeptical of numbers that are “projected.”

Bob Kniefel (PM&E) commented that projected numbers are usually low.

Beau mentioned a movement afoot to reduce traffic by encouraging mass transit/shuttle services.

Barbara asked how the team was going to widen the ROW on 40th by Lake Otis to accommodate for all the traffic lanes.

Matthew said as it's shown, there are only minor impacts right now to adjacent property owners.

Michelle Westin mentioned that she understand the Blood Bank is looking to move.

Barbara asked about the TLO and if they want to put development on the hill and if they want access off of 40th.

Alison Smith (TLO) said it's very likely they will want to develop in the future but that they did not currently have plans. She went on to say that when the land was conveyed to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) it had a deed reverter that if the track of land was used for anything other than mental health beneficiary services, it would revert back to the TLO. This road triggers that reversion clause—that's why the project will need to pay ROW costs to TLO and not DNR.

She went on to say that the parcel was envisioned to be used for a group home or to bring the kids home but access is an issue. She said that for a cottage facility it would be best to keep as much of the hill and tree stands as possible as those facilities would work better if they're tucked away from the other development.

Matthew said that the Design Study Report will discuss traffic and potentially offer more than one option for access to the property.

Beau asked if the design presented reflect input from public meeting.

John said that, while the team has been mentally incorporating all of the various comments received, once the Scoping Summary Report is finished it will give the team a full look at all of the comments received in one document. It will help the team move forward with its preferred alternatives in the Design Study Report.

Matthew said that many of public comments are related to items not represented on the basemap like landscaping, etc.

Matthew continued with his description of the alignment layout. He said that east of the Lake Otis/40th Intersection the road necks down to two lanes with shoulders.

Matthew explained that the ROW takes near the hill are currently about 90 percent from TLO property, not property from the south. He said it was the intent from the beginning to get ROW from the north along the entire corridor whenever possible.

Matthew said the grade on the road slope where the TLO hill currently sits is shown at a five percent grade.

Bob said that the standard is being currently proposed at eight percent for collector streets.

Matthew said a steeper grade would minimize the impact on hill. He said five percent may not be the final design.

Matthew discussed the 2 to 1 cut slopes that are envisioned past the base of the trail. He said with those cuts it's a pretty wide swath, about 190 feet.

There was discussion about the option of a retaining wall and Matthew said that in order to stabilize the wall, it would need some very large tie-back strips that would also create major cuts into the hill. Plus, that section of property with the underground strips would likely be undevelopable because the project would likely need permanent easements to maintain those straps.

Ed asked if the cut-slope option is used, what advantage would that be to the property owner.

Matthew said access off of 40th would be easier.

Alison said she thought, in any case, the TLO would use Laurel as it is less steep.

John reminded the group that the current alignment shown is a very preliminary look at one option. He said one option may be to have an eight percent grade. He said that if the team used a retaining wall it would be taller than the one currently at Lake Otis and Tudor.

John asked Alison if anyone ever looked at the TLO property to try to design an ingress/egress route.

Alison said they had not that when the land was conveyed to DNR then TLO stopped looking at it. She said if any health groups had requested use they would have looked at options.

Dale asked if there was ever any thought of a tunnel with a park on top.

Matthew said the team has preliminarily looked at, what is called a cut and cover, and he said there was a very large cost.

John said it is something the DSR will address.

Matthew went on to discuss the two structures adjacent to the hill. He said the team will need to look at the buildings respective foundations to see how they are constructed before they are able to determine the best way to deal with those properties.

He said the worst case scenario for the property is if the team needs to construct a cantilever wall with no tie backs. This wall would need to be very thick. Matthew went on to say it's simply too early to go into very much detail about what the team will need to do with those properties.

Matthew asked the CAC what they thought about incorporating a roundabout, chicanes, and other traffic calming measures into the project.

Barbara said that many residents near Wright Street are very adamantly opposed to opening the street up to traffic. She suggested the team consider emergency crash gates for AFD instead of opening it up to the public.

She went on to say the Parks Department didn't like the diverter proposal because it would ruin their flower bed at 42nd and Folker.

Matthew said he has not seen the survey data so it's too early to say what it may affect.

Ed said that it was important for the group to remember that this area will be growing more in the next several years and that the group should be forward-thinking and realize the importance of building for the future, not just for today. He said the residents have a valid concern with not wanting connections but it was important to look to the future when making decisions.

John said it's important to make sure we ask folks to articulate WHY they don't want streets connected. If residents articulate their concerns, the design team may be able to employ mitigation measures to help offset the possible negative impacts.

Beau said that when he was part of the traffic calming study he didn't remember EVER commenting that he wanted sidewalks on both sides of the street. He said when he saw the report and it recommended pedestrian facilities on both sides of the street he was disappointed and wants to make sure everyone is aware that he does not endorse sidewalks on both sides of the street.

Julie Makela (PM&E) discussed the approval process for the 40th Avenue design. She said she believes the Planning and Zoning Commission would require the team to make the road connections and provide pedestrian facilities on both sides of the street due to various approved plans that discuss these standards.

Ed said that sidewalks would help residents keep an eye on those from out of the neighborhood. If someone were walking anywhere but the sidewalk it would alert the residents to the fact that this person isn't where he/she is supposed to be.

Beau disagreed. He said that pedestrian facilities only on the north side of the street would be adequate and would take people away from the homes. He went on to say that if the sidewalk were put in on the south side of the street, some residents would lose parking. He said waivers are for special circumstances and he felt that, in this case, it warrants a waiver.

There was substantial discussion about mitigation options:

- Move centerline to the north to get the road and sidewalk farther away from homes
- On-street parking options

Beau said he surveyed the neighbors and they do not want a sidewalk on the south side of the street.

John said this is an issue the MOA faces on many road projects—neighbors don't want sidewalks in front of their homes. He said the problem is, there are many, many missing sidewalk links around the city. He said the city has a Miscellaneous Sidewalk Improvement program where it puts in the missing links—they've recognized the need. He said it's been shown that if there are pedestrian facilities on both sides, they will be used. He said the project team needs to balance the homeowner concerns with the needs of all of the users of the ROW, including pedestrians. He said that even if every one of the 10 homeowners don't want a sidewalk, the team needs to balance the needs of the entire city when it decides what to do.

Beau said he didn't think the sidewalk would be that useful because homeowners will park over the sidewalk.

Ed said that Beau had a point that in most instances there are homes on both sides, that this project just has homes on the south side of the street. He said most of the walkers will be for the institutional facilities to the north anyway.

Matthew reiterated that the standard is pedestrian facilities on both sides of the street.

Beau said that that you don't build quality communities by just standardize everything. He thought the team should focus on making the pedestrian facility on the north world-class while honoring the values of the residences to the south.

Dale asked how residents would get to the pocket park.

Beau suggested walking on the shoulder or crossing the street to the pedestrian facility.

Dale said that Providence House is near the area and he would like the families of sick patients who stay there to be able to safely access the park, and that would necessitate a pathway on the south side of the street.

Beau reminded the group that it's really only 14 residents who would likely need to get to the park and they would have corner access sidewalks on both sides of the street.

Beau reiterated his points that residents don't want pedestrians closer to their homes and that the sidewalk would reduce their parking. He again stressed that he would like the group to consider waiving the standard for this project.

Matthew said Beau had made some good point but went on to say he was concerned that just because there wasn't a sidewalk, it would not preclude people from walking on the south side of the street. From a design standpoint, he is concerned about safety. He asked if mitigating for the issues Beau discussed may help residents feel more comfortable with pedestrian facilities on the south side of the street. What if the road and sidewalk were moved farther away from the homes? What if there were screens or buffers incorporated into the design?

Julie said that the fact is, grade separated pedestrian facilities are safer. She said she lives on a road without pedestrian facilities and the Anchorage School District will not allow her middle-school aged son to walk a block and a half to school because there is no sidewalk.

Beau said that if safety doesn't accommodate locals and owners he questions if it's the most reasonable thing to do.

Matt asked Beau to see if the neighbors he's talking to would think mitigation efforts would help.

Beau said he would report back.

Barbara asked if students walk to the bus stop in that area.

Beau said even if there are sidewalks they will not be used in the winter because the sidewalks will not be maintained.

Ed said the group should think about future generations when making decisions, not just what's happening today.

John said the MOA is doing some pretty innovative design for pedestrian facilities around the city.

Matthew said the team will look at on-street parking in this section but they may need additional ROW to achieve it.

Ed suggested that if the separation from sidewalk to curb isn't at least eight-feet the team should make it be back of curb. He said all of the ones he's seen that have been closer aren't maintained and look bad.

Julie said that around town the city is moving toward a green textured concrete for those sections.

Barbara asked if there is room to do some aesthetic undulation with trail.

Matthew said there is a little curve incorporated between Piper and Dale.

Matthew continued with his description of the basemap layout. He said that, in the design, Folker is shown as connected. He said in the next layout, the CAC will see the diverter at 42nd and Folker. He said that the team will need to address the fire-lane issue behind API. Currently, the road alignment directly impacts their fire lane.

Barbara asked if the team could choke the road near Folker.

Matthew said Wright is already fairly narrow but that the team might be able to put in a choker on 40th.

Matthew discussed the virtues of traffic calming features and that 40th is such a straight road that, without them, drivers will inevitably go much faster than the speed limit.

Julie discussed the benefit of traffic calming measures on pedestrians. She said that if chokers are used, it puts the sidewalks/trails closer to each other and puts the pedestrians in a better line-of-sight for motorists.

Matthew said chokers also increase landscape possibilities.

There was discussion about the difference between the Piper project and 40th Ave.

Ed said he likes vertical elements, like on Piper, so it makes people think they're going faster than they are.

Matthew said at the next meeting there will be some landscape elements to comment on.

Matthew continued with his discussion of the proposed route and said, as shown, Piper and 40th is a two or four way stop. He said at the next meeting, he would like to show the group a roundabout.

Barbara said a roundabout is good for air quality as it keeps motorists moving.

Beau also said he support air quality measures and the roundabout.

Michelle said the AFD likes wide roundabouts.

Ed said he supports a roundabout but would like to avoid spending more money for ROW.

Matthew said he didn't see a large acquisition, just corner strips.

Matthew went on with his description of the road alignment. He said that between Piper and Dale the design team has brought the road back to the south to get it to line up with existing ROW.

He said the team will identify two or more concepts for the next meeting. He said they will include a concept that tries to increase the separation between the sidewalk and homes.

There was discussion regarding the end of the project area and if the Dale intersection is in the project boundary.

Dale said it would be nice if it was included so that the trail heads could match. He said Providence is going to landscape that area this summer and it would be nice to know how/if this project will affect the area.

Matthew said he believed the project would extend to the end.

Ed discussed concerns with water quality in the area. He said his house is on 41st and he has a well 54-55 feet down. He said he realized this project probably could not help him but that it would be good for the project to consider providing water to those on 40th that aren't currently in the grid.

There was discussion about AWWU Water Improvement District process that mandates a majority of homeowners vote to approve the improvement and then levy a cost-per-house fee.

John said sometimes if a connection is in AWWU's water improvement plan they will incorporate it with an existing road project but AWWU fronts the costs, not the project. He said the only way he's seen that the process is circumvented is if there is a health issue due to poor water quality.

Julie said that the project team has been in contact with Brian Baus at AWWU to let him know about the project.

Beau said he would like to get in touch with Brian to find out about the process.

Matthew discussed the challenges with drainage for this project because the alignment is so flat—half-percent grades for most of the alignment.

Matthew said at the next meeting the CAC would look at the pre-Design Study Report alignments which will include the roundabout, landscaping, etc.

Ed said he could not attend and wanted to know how he could comment.

Matthew suggested he call Jennifer Payne (DOWL) a few days before he was to leave town to see if she could set up a little time with him to discuss the options.

Barbara asked if the team could consider a flashing solar-paneled stop sign be considered for 40th and Piper.

Barbara asked if the diverter on Folker would affect the proposed changes to 42nd?

Bob said that 42nd is a local street and there is currently no plan to make improvements on 42nd because the MOA can't use bond funds to improve a local street.

Barbara said she was told it was a residential collector.

Bob said the key is to get the diverter in and then and get 40th built and the residents should see a huge calming affect on traffic. The condition of pavement, drainage, etc. is similar to other residential streets in Anchorage.

Tentative Next CAC Meeting

[Monday, May 7, 2007 at 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.](#)