

# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

December 2009

*Spruce Street Extension/Upgrade  
Downling Road to 68th Avenue*

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN**  
**SPRUCE STREET EXTENSION/UPGRADE -**  
**DOWLING ROAD TO 68TH AVENUE**  
**PROJECT NO. 08-08**

**Prepared for:**

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### LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALCC.....	Abbott Loop Community Council
AMATS.....	Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions
CAC .....	Citizens Advisory Committee
DSR.....	Design Study Report
MOA .....	Municipality of Anchorage
P&ZC .....	Planning and Zoning Commission
PAIs.....	potentially affected interests
UDC .....	Urban Design Committee

## **1.0 OVERVIEW**

The Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) is initiating the Spruce Street Extension project to extend Spruce Street from 64th Avenue to the newly constructed East Dowling Road and to reconstruct the existing Spruce Street from 64th Avenue to 68th Avenue. This project will be designed to meet urban collector standards.

### **1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to design and construct an extension of Spruce Street from East 64th Avenue to East Dowling Road and reconstruct the existing Spruce Street to urban collector standards. The Abbott Loop Community Council (ALCC) identified the Spruce Street corridor as a top priority for traffic calming in their ALCC Traffic Calming Study (DOWL, 2006). This project aims to retain the neighborhood feel along the reconstructed portion with the speed limit remaining at 25 miles per hour with improved pedestrian facilities. The proposed extension is intended to improve connectivity by completing the traffic grid, relieving traffic on Norm Drive, providing access to a new snow disposal site, creating a more thorough linkage of pedestrian facilities, and improving response times for emergency vehicles.

### **1.2 Need**

The existing Spruce Street is in need of upgrades to pedestrian facilities, street lighting, and storm drain facilities. The pavement on the existing roadway between 68th Avenue and 64th Avenue is deteriorated and nearing the end of its useful life. Ponding occurs, particularly at the interface with the existing driveways. Other major modifications needed include construction/reconstruction of the roadway subbase and new pavement.

The recent construction of Elmore Road and East Dowling Road has shifted travel patterns and provided alternate routes into the neighborhood. The collector grid in the Abbott Loop area needs to be completed to reduce traffic on surrounding neighborhood streets with particular emphasis on relieving cut-through traffic on adjacent local streets such as Norm Drive and 64th Avenue. The extension of Spruce Street, a collector road, will complete the grid system by providing direct access to East Dowling Road, a major arterial. The traffic volumes on Spruce

Street currently average 1,900 vehicles per day and are expected to increase to 2,500 by 2015 with the completion of the extension.

## **2.0 PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN**

It is essential for communication with the public and agencies to remain open throughout the duration of the project. This plan will provide the MOA and the project team with an outline of tools and methods for achieving public input during the project's development. Spruce Street will also provide the only access to a proposed snow disposal site located on currently undeveloped property east of Spruce Street and 64th Avenue.

### **2.1 Context Sensitive Design**

A context sensitive design is a collaborative effort between the project team and all affected stakeholders to achieve an economic and socially enhanced transportation system while maintaining safety and mobility. This must be done by approaching all potentially affected interests (PAIs) at the earliest phase in the public process to gather information on current land use, community needs, and individual interests. The guidance of the Federal Highways Administration is that “transportation projects remain in harmony with communities and preserve environmental, scenic, aesthetic, and historic resources.”

#### Context Sensitive Solutions help to:

- Solve the right problems.
- Save time and money.
- Conserve environmental and community resources.
- Balance competing values.
- Develop better projects, thus adding value to the community.
- Create better decisions due to stakeholder contribution.
- Identify applicable plans that provide guidance for development in the area.

#### As a result of Context Sensitive Solutions, the project benefits by:

- Improving and sharing the definition of the problem scope.

- Early involvement of stakeholders.
- Considering all stakeholders' opinions.
- Communicating clearly to stakeholders about project aspects they can influence.

### **3.0 CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT**

The existing Spruce Street is located in the east half of the ALCC. The Spruce Street Extension project proposes to provide an improved connection for many in the surrounding neighborhoods by eliminating unnecessary cut-through traffic generated by the recent road improvement projects of East Dowling Road and Elmore Road. Due to neighborhood traffic concerns, the ALCC initiated a traffic calming study to identify motorized and non-motorized transportation improvements that would help to maintain quality of life in local neighborhoods. On the heels of recent upgrades to 72nd Avenue, 80th Avenue, Lore Road and the southern portion of Spruce Street, the traffic calming study also recommended the portion of Spruce Street between 68th Avenue and East Dowling Road be connected to provide collector level access to the new arterial road network.

#### Existing Area Conditions

- Surrounding subdivisions along the corridor such as Chugach Estates, Campbell Heights, Carriage Estates, and Virda Lee Estates are long-standing, established neighborhoods.
- The segment from 64th Avenue to East Dowling Road is currently undeveloped open space owned by Heritage Land Bank.
- Undeveloped open space abuts residential homes.
- Class A wetlands exist along the proposed extension.
- The existing pavement on Spruce Street from 68th Avenue to 64th Avenue was placed in the 1990s. The pavement is in fair to poor condition for its age, with discontinuous segments of sidewalk, and curb and gutter.
- The majority of the community consists of young adults<sup>1</sup> with children.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of Census

- An estimated 15 percent of individuals 5 years of age and older do not speak English at home.<sup>2</sup>
- The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of both single- and multi-family homes.
- An estimated 60 percent own their homes in the area, while 40 percent rent.<sup>3</sup>
- The area is on the eastern boundary of the development portion of Anchorage, with Far North Bicentennial Park to the east and Campbell Creek Park to the north.
- The employment and income rate is equal to the average rate of the MOA.<sup>4</sup>

#### **4.0 POTENTIAL ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED**

The following is a list of issues that may be raised by local residents and other MOA citizens.

Other issues may be raised beyond those listed:

- Loss of quiet “park like” setting adjacent to residential homes.
- Potential impacts to property values.
- Potential increase in traffic.
- Potential increase in crime associated with increased traffic.
- Perceived impacts from recent road projects in the area (Elmore Road, East Dowling Road, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue).
- Concerns about pedestrian safety.
- Concerns about changes to existing primary and secondary driveways.
- Concerns about impacts to current uses of ROW.
- Concerns about impacts to the existing community character.
- Hydrology impacts to the wetlands.
- Hydrology impacts to residential yards and crawl spaces.
- Noise impacts to adjacent neighborhoods.

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<sup>2</sup> U.S. Bureau of Census

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Bureau of Census

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Bureau of Census

- Concerns about cumulative effects of road improvements and proposed snow disposal site.

## **5.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN**

This public involvement plan will clearly outline the project's goals and methods for involving all stakeholder's in a collaborative effort to design a project that will meet the goals of the neighborhood, the Abbott Loop Traffic Calming Study, and the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

### **5.1 Stakeholders**

The public involvement process for the project will include, at a minimum, the stakeholders listed below:

#### General Public

- The general public mailing list includes all businesses, property owners and residents within the project study area (Figure 1). During the project, members of the public living outside the area that comment on the project or attend public meetings will be added to the mailing list.

#### User Groups

- ALCC
- ALCC Transportation Committee
- Federation of Community Councils

#### Federal Government

- United States Army Corps of Engineers
- Environmental Protection Agency
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service

State of Alaska

- State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
- State of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
- State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Office of Habitat Management and Permitting
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Alaska State Troopers
- Senator Kevin Meyer
- Representative Charisse Millett

Municipality of Anchorage

- Mayor Dan Sullivan
- Project Management and Engineering
- Traffic Department
- Anchorage Planning Department
- Anchorage Fire Department
- Anchorage Police Department
- Anchorage Public Transportation
- Street Maintenance
- Heritage Land Bank
- Assembly member Elvi Gray-Jackson
- Assembly member Dan Coffey
- Urban Design Commission (UDC)
- Planning and Zoning Commission (P&ZC)
- Watershed Management Department

### Other Interested Parties

- Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS)
- Anchorage School District

### Local Utility Companies

- Alaska Communications Systems
- Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility
- ENSTAR Natural Gas Company
- GCI Phone and Cable
- Chugach Electric Association

## **5.2 Comprehensive Mailing List**

An expanded mailing list will be developed that incorporates the above PAIs and additional listings of groups or individuals that have been asked to be included in all project mailings.

## **5.3 Public Involvement Methods**

Numerous methods of reaching the public for input and involvement will be employed on this project.

### **5.3.1 Project Site Visit**

We will conduct a project site visit and walkthrough at the scoping stage of the project. Interested members of the public will be invited to walk the project corridor with the project team. The site visit will be announced through the ALCC and by door hangers for properties adjacent to the project corridor.

### **5.3.2 Public Meetings**

Multiple public meetings will be held during the course of the project. The first will be held during the scoping phase of the project before the Concept Report is completed. The second meeting will be held in coordination with the monthly ALCC meeting following the completion of the Concept Report. A third meeting will be held following the submittal of the draft Design

Study Report (DSR) and before the 65 percent submittal to provide more detailed design information to the public. Additional public meetings may be held depending on the public response to the project, particularly regarding design elements such as landscaping, lighting, etc.

### 5.3.3 Contact E-Mail Address

A project-specific contact e-mail address of sprucestreetextension@dowlhkm.com has been established to collect public comments and questions. It will be checked each business day. Comments and questions will be passed along to the project team and answered promptly.

### 5.3.4 Project Website

A project-specific website has been developed and will be maintained for the duration of the project. The address will be [www.sprucestreetextension.com](http://www.sprucestreetextension.com). The website will provide a source for current project information including newsletter content, meeting announcements, meeting agendas/minutes, maps, drawings, and project documents. All information will be placed on the project website as it becomes available.

### 5.3.5 Community Council and Other Interest Group Meetings

DOWL HKM will attend the ALCC meetings at key milestones during the project to provide status updates on the project and announce upcoming meetings.

### 5.3.6 Project Flyers

Project flyers will be written to announce public meetings and significant milestones during the project. Flyers will also be handed out at the ALCC meetings prior to the public meetings. Flyers and newsletters will contain graphics and text explaining the project status, informing the public of meetings, directing them to the project website to view information and make comments, and asking for public feedback on the proposed solutions.

### 5.3.7 Agency Presentations

DOWL HKM will give presentations to the UDC and P&ZC at the Draft DSR stage. A final landscape plan review presentation will be made to UDC at the 95 percent completion stage.

### 5.3.8 Citizen Advisory Committee

The need for a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) will be determined after the completion of the public and agency scoping efforts. If needed, the CAC meeting may be combined with the monthly ALCC Transportation Committee meetings.

## 5.4 **Public Involvement Plan Implementation**

Guidelines for a successful public involvement process under context sensitive solutions requires a strong commitment from all members of the project team to reach out to PAIs. Below are goals developed for obtaining public outreach throughout the progression of the project.

- The MOA and DOWL HKM will commit to a public involvement process that is fair and without bias to a design alternative.
- The roles of the project team and the public will be defined.
- A working relationship between the community and the project team will be formed.
- Goals and expectations will be clearly defined.
- The MOA and DOWL HKM will keep an open mind on all points of view.
- The MOA and DOWL HKM will keep the public informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, and provide feedback on how public input has influenced project decisions.
- Information will be shared openly and directly to help the public become familiar with the issues and the public process.
- Milestones in the process will be clearly defined, acknowledged, and communicated to the public.
- Visualizations and illustrations will be used to convey design alternatives.
- The MOA and DOWL HKM will encourage the public to provide feedback on elements of design that are affected by input (landscaping, lighting, etc.).
- Feedback opportunities will be designed in a way that each stakeholder can communicate in their desired form.

- The MOA and DOWL HKM will follow-up on all inquiries and comments during project development.

## **6.0 PROJECT TEAM**

Key personnel from the project team that will be involved in the public and agency involvement portion of the project include:

### Municipality of Anchorage Project Management and Engineering (PM&E)

- John Smith, P.E. - Project Manager
- Tammie Wilson - Project Administrator

### Municipality of Anchorage Traffic Department

- Bob Kniefel, P.E. - Traffic Engineer

### DOWL HKM's Project Team

- Steve Noble, P.E., PTOE - Project Engineer
- Michael Spitz, P.E. - Assistant Project Manager and Engineering Lead
- Brad Melocik, P.E. - Design Engineer, Hydrology
- Stan Ponsness, PLS, CFedS - Survey Lead
- Maria Kampsen, P.E. - Geotechnical Investigation
- Kristen Hansen - Environmental Clearance Lead
- Kevin Doniere, PLA, LEED AP - Landscape Architect
- Maryellen Tuttell, AICP - Public Involvement Lead
- Alison Lohrke - Public Involvement Planner

**7.0 SCHEDULE**

**Table 1: Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Public Involvement Tool (Activity)</b>	<b>Project Purpose</b>	<b>Time and Location</b>
Throughout project	Project Mailing List	Provide updates by mail and continuously update	N/A
Throughout project	Project Website Development	Provide information on all phases of the project – updated at milestones.	www.sprucestreetextension.com
Throughout project	Public Involvement Plan	Used to cover public outreach during all project phases.	N/A
09/24/2009	ALCC	Introduce project to community council and invite to project walkthrough.	4th Thursday, 7:00 p.m., Abbott Loop Community Church
10/02/2009	Door Hangers along Project Corridor	Invite residents to the neighborhood walkthrough.	2:00 p.m., Spruce Street corridor
10/10/2009	Neighborhood Walkthrough	Brief residents about project and determine potential issues.	10:00 a.m., Spruce Street corridor
November	Postcard/Newsletter #1	Announce upcoming public meeting.	To mailing list and e-mail distribution list.
11/26/2009	ALCC	Announce upcoming public meeting.	4th Thursday, 7:00 p.m., Abbott Loop Community Church
TBD	<i>Anchorage Daily News</i> advertisement	Announce upcoming public meeting.	N/A
November and December	“What’s Up” Newsletter	Announce upcoming public meeting.	N/A
November and December	AMATS Newsletter	Announce upcoming public meeting.	N/A
December	Public Scoping Meeting	Introduce project, seek public input on design alternatives and project scope. Determine the issues.	5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., Kasuun Elementary School
December	Concept Report	Develops a full range of available solutions for the public.	N/A
TBD	CAC (If needed)	Gather issues and solutions from residents in the community.	5:30 p.m., DOWL HKM Kobuk Room
TBD	ALCC	Update council on outcome of public meeting and the current design.	4th Thursday, 7:00 p.m., Abbott Loop Community Church
TBD	CAC (If needed)	Gather input from members on design alternatives.	5:30 p.m., DOWL HKM Kobuk Room

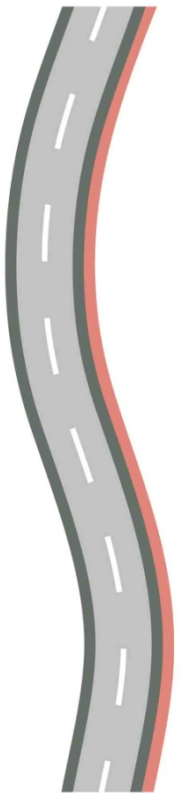
<b>Date</b>	<b>Public Involvement Tool (Activity)</b>	<b>Project Purpose</b>	<b>Time and Location</b>
TBD	Postcard/Newsletter #2	Announce upcoming public meeting.	To mailing list and e-mail distribution list.
TBD	ALCC	Announce upcoming public meeting.	4th Thursday, 7:00 p.m., Abbott Loop Community Church
TBD	<i>Anchorage Daily News</i> advertisement	Announce upcoming public meeting.	N/A
TBD	“What’s Up” Newsletter	Announce upcoming public meeting.	N/A
TBD	AMATS Newsletter	Announce upcoming public meeting.	N/A
TBD	Public Meeting #2	Present information gathered from residents for the Concept Report.	5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., Kasuun Elementary School
TBD	CAC (If needed)	Gather input from members on preferred alternative.	5:30 p.m., DOWL HKM Kobuk Room
TBD	Postcard/Newsletter #3	Announce upcoming public meeting.	To mailing list and e-mail distribution list.
TBD	ALCC	Announce upcoming public meeting.	4th Thursday, 7:00 p.m., Abbott Loop Community Church
TBD	<i>Anchorage Daily News</i> advertisement	Announce upcoming public meeting.	N/A
TBD	“What’s Up” Newsletter	Announce upcoming public meeting.	N/A
TBD	AMATS Newsletter	Announce upcoming public meeting.	N/A
TBD	Public Meeting #3	Present the Draft DSR to the public.	5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., Kasuun Elementary School
TBD	Urban Design Commission	Present design and alternatives.	TBD
TBD	Planning & Zoning Commission	Present design and alternatives.	TBD
TBD	ALCC	Announce upcoming public meeting.	4th Thursday, 7:00 p.m., Abbott Loop Community Church
TBD	<i>Anchorage Daily News</i> advertisement	Announce upcoming public meeting.	N/A
TBD	“What’s Up” Newsletter	Announce upcoming public meeting.	N/A
TBD	AMATS Newsletter	Announce upcoming public meeting.	N/A
TBD	Public Meeting #4	Present PS&E Design.	5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., Kasuun Elementary School
TBD	Citizen Survey	Evaluation of the finished product and the project development process.	N/A

**APPENDIX A**

**FIGURE**



Figure 1: Project Study Area



**DOWL HKM**