
PALMER WASILLA HIGHWAY EASTERN TERMINUS

**Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting Summary
August 13, 2009
Red Beet Café and Bakery
4:30 to 6:30 p.m.**

INTRODUCTIONS

Thank you to the Red Beet for hosting us and providing a light snack, coffee and tea.

Everyone provided their name, where they live and work, and what they hope to contribute to the process. Introduced Jim Amundsen as ADOT&PF Project Manager. The sign in sheet is attached.

GROUND RULES

- Everyone is encouraged to participate.
- All views will be respected. Everyone's input is valuable.
- Everyone deserves to be heard. No one person should dominate the conversation.
- Stay on topic.
- Disagreements will not be personalized – No labeling, personal attacks, or name calling will be tolerated.
- Audience must be invited to participate.
- Facilitator has the right to "refocus" conversation in order to use time effectively and efficiently.

No additions or deletions were proposed.

CAC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Serve as sounding board and advise on design ideas and alternatives. This is not a voting body.
- Reflect the concerns and issues of the stakeholders and larger community interest
- Educate the larger public and stakeholders with factual and accurate information about the project
- Read, learn, and absorb information!
- Listen, gather and share feedback from other stakeholders
- Focus on the big picture – Look to the future and beyond your front door

- Be solution-oriented, participate constructively in group discussions, and work towards consensus

There were no questions about the roles and responsibilities.

THE PROCESS: CONTEXT SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS

Reviewed guiding principles (See attached handout)

In summary CSS is not about getting everything you want. CSS is a process so that everyone gets heard. There will be trade offs for both ADOT&PF and the public. Public safety is one item that is not negotiable for ADOT&PF and it will be evaluated by the Engineers.

CSS will provide for the framework for the CAC meetings. Meetings will generally cover the following. Some topics may take more than one meeting to reach consensus.

- Problem to be Solved
- Evaluation Criteria
- Alternatives
- Preferred Alternative

Questions

How does funding impact the “problem to be solved?” If the solution is outside of the project corridor will ADOT&PF still fund it? Jim Amundson reply: As long as solution can be directly tied to the Palmer Wasilla Highway, it could be included as part of this project if the legislators and local governments (city and borough) who own the facility agree.

HOMEWORK

Walk the Palmer Wasilla Highway corridor. Walk it during rush hour and on a Sunday morning. Watch traffic at the Glenn Highway/Palmer Wasilla Highway intersection. Watch other routes in and out of Palmer.

3 WORDS TO DESCRIBE PALMER

What are the values that make Palmer, Palmer

Mountains
Small town (5)
Farmland (2)
Friendly (5)
Scenic (4)
Historic charm (7)
Quiet (5)
Colony (2)
Family (3)

Pioneer Peak
Sense of community
Quaint (2)
Home
Destination
Investment
Railroad
Opportunity
Beautiful
Comfortable
Green/nature
Diversification
Walkable
Planned (2)

These values will be posted at every meeting. They serve to remind everyone why they are here and that all the people around the table have something in common.

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

- ADOT&PF's Perspective: Palmer Wasilla Highway and Glenn Highway
 - There are too many accidents. Safety needs to be addressed
 - Delays are too long
 - Forecasted traffic shows there will be a more traffic in the future, making today's problems worse
- The problem is only for 2 hours a day
- There is no problem
- There is no problem. Data shows traffic is decreasing.
 - 17,000 in 2005
 - 15,000 in 2006
 - 13,000 in 2007
 - 14,000 in 2008

New highway projects currently in design will solve the problem. People use other routes to avoid the Palmer Wasilla Highway.

- As Glenn Highway gets more congested, the vehicles on PWH and Evergreen will have difficulty getting across the Glenn
- The modeling doesn't consider Bogard Road improvements. There is not a signal by Spenard's Builders Supply
- A 2 lane couplet may be ok
- Modeling only considers worst case scenario. It needs to be more realistic
- There is no problem
- Traffic from Industrial Road is going downtown. Need lights at Industrial and Springer so it can avoid downtown

- Traffic has increased in Palmer
- Two employment centers 1) State, Court, and Borough offices 2) Industrial Park. They both use the same streets (Evergreen)
- Can't get west to neighborhoods
- To get to and from Fairgrounds, must go through neighborhoods
- There aren't good enough alternate routes
- There are 1,800 school district employees that are on the roads between 6 and 9 am. Plus there are the parents and kids that drive.
- Change is happening. High level of development. Congestion is growing.
- A lot of accidents on PWH and the Glenn
- There is no problem. Not much congestion
- Need long-term planning
- Even with Springer Loop signal, Bogard and Hemmer, the traffic model shows a problem. The signals are in the model. If peripheral improvements were feasible, ADOT&PF would likely adjust PWH/Glenn intersection accordingly
- Speeding
- Problem is poor distribution of traffic
- Lack of pedestrian/bicycle connectivity
- Pedestrian and bicycle crossings unsafe at Glenn Highway intersection
- We need more information about where the eastbound PWH traffic is going (counts as well)

How will values be maintained in the future if no improvements are made now? How are traffic and pedestrian circulation working in "downtown Palmer?"

- Traffic on Evergreen (left turns) will get worse. Developing property on PWH is not feasible due to traffic. It will decrease development over time.
- Growing problem getting into town
- Left into Post Office and Fred Meyer very difficult
- From Bailey to turn left onto Evergreen very difficult. Sight distance problem
- Palmer is growing
- There is one road out – north
- There is a pressure to shape Palmer – make it bigger, more touristy
- Need to identify which Palmer values are non-negotiable/high priority
- Going south on Cobb and across Evergreen is difficult. Drivers avoid this street and go to a signalized (controlled) intersection
- Palmer is a tourist town. People park and walk
- Perception of parking needs is higher than what may really be needed
- Maintain parking

- At the Palmer Wasilla Highway and Ellen the left turns going into the Atrium must stop in the fast lane
- No crosswalk across Fran Park. Speeding is a problem
- Palmer Wasilla Highway has changed from a through road to a local road
- Will Evergreen be part of the project (ADOT&PF response – Possibly. Need to go through process and evaluate alternatives)
- These aren't "problems." 2 extremes: ignore the problem or accommodate the problem. Problem is too strong. Better words would be "room for improvement"
- Need to define "Preservation of Palmer." It means west of the railroad tracks to some. Doesn't consider Evergreen and Cobb as a historic destination route.
- The CAC needs to know what the minimum PWH/Glenn intersection will be.
- Need to improve east/west pedestrian movement
- Building a solution for a future problem is a problem
- Need to improve mobility
- Traffic distribution is a problem
- Evergreen is a through road, where will future traffic go
- Solutions will take a long time (more than a year).
- Can ADOT&PF provide the maps showing alternatives from the last open house

Consensus on Problems to be Solved Summary

Note: These are areas that have "room for improvement." The magnitude of the "problem" is not defined but rather these are areas that could benefit from improvements.

- Speeding
- Pedestrian and Bicycle safety
- How to maintain Palmer community values
- Traffic Distribution
- Vehicular Safety
- Mobility – how to get from A to B

Next Meeting

Red Beet – Upstairs Meeting Room

Thursday, September 10, 2009

4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

CLOSING COMMENTS – ANYTHING GOES

- Historic Palmer, Individuals, Businesses
- Solutions. Plan ahead
- Realistic approach
- Participation

- Go slow, analyze (see how other projects change traffic)
- Need to recognize past and future
- What will the value be in 20 years
- Sees consensus in Palmer Values
- Growth, phasing, planning, notice (goes back to planning)
- Don't forget about snow and wind patterns
- Don't forget big picture of Palmer Wasilla Highway, Glenn Highway and other roads
- Hopeful, excited, integrity of Palmer (don't want Anchorage's Midtown)
- Appreciative of ADOT&PF for the process

PARKING LOT

The parking lot is for items that are likely outside the scope of discussion. They will be addressed as time permits.

- Walkway from Palmer to Fairgrounds

Solutions will address the transportation need, be an asset to the community, and be compatible with the Natural and Built Environment.

CSS Guiding Principles

1. The project satisfies the purpose and needs as agreed to by a full range of stakeholders. This agreement is forged in the earliest phase of the project and amended as warranted as the project develops.
2. The project is a safe facility for both the user and the community.
3. The project is in harmony with the community, and it preserves environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, and natural resource values of the area, i.e., exhibits context sensitive design.
4. The project exceeds the expectations of both designers and stakeholders and achieves a level of excellence in people's minds.
5. The project involves efficient and effective use of the resources (time, budget, community) of all involved parties.
6. The project is designed and built with minimal disruption to the community.
7. The project is seen as having added lasting value to the community.