
PALMER WASILLA HIGHWAY EASTERN TERMINUS

Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

February 16, 2010

Red Beet Café and Bakery

4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Next meeting dates:

Palmer City Council Presentation - TBD

CAC Meeting: TBD 4:30 to 6:30 @ the Red Beet

Open House Debrief

Overall, reports were positive from the public. Questions and comments reported include:

- Why is there a ramp across the Wal-Mart property?
- Inner Springer Loop/Moore Road connection positive. It will help with Industrial traffic.
- Evergreen – desire to keep it at 4 lanes. Traffic will fix itself using other roads when it gets too congested to use. No drastic changes are necessary.
- 5 lane Evergreen. The improvements don't go far enough east.
- Loss of businesses on Evergreen with the wider footprint.
- Many comments on the Glenn project and increasing it to 4 lanes.
- Slip lane at the Bogard/Glenn intersection. How would you turn left into Fred Meyer and the gas station?
- Move more incrementally with improvements.
- Which is better – Cottonwood or Dogwood?
- Dogwood goes through one of the last wooded areas.
- Bypass cuts Wal Mart property. This property may be better used as a drainage basin.
- Alternatives A and B are good. D1 with the ramp, not as positively viewed.

CAC Discussion

- New Safeway store will need a light on the PWH for access. How does that work with the proposed light at Felton on the PHW? *A Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) would be required and Safeway would have to pay for the light if the TIA indicates it's necessary.*
- How do the Alternatives fit with the values the CAC identified? Not sure they do? How do we answer that question? Responses from CAC:
 - Not going east of Cobb is a big part of it to preserve the downtown.
 - No couplet.
 - Looking 25 years into the future. Planning for change.
 - The design will do more. Paths, landscaping etc.

Alternatives

DECISION POINT

1. Select Preferred Alternative – Begin Design
2. Continuing Reviewing Alternatives?
3. What is the point of Diminishing Returns?

- Alternatives can be phased and prioritized. What will this project be?
- What is the committed network? *The committed network has been identified through the Borough and City transportation planning process as priorities and as funding becomes available those roads will be next in line for the money.*
- Why is this project ruining downtown? Downtown city streets will be operating at Level of Services E and F? This is not acceptable and the City will not support this plan. The CAC needs to be looking at the community interests, not individual agendas. This plan will hurt Palmer.
- Would a signal at Alaska Way improve the LOS? It is a 4-way stop with a flashing light now but it used to be signalized. *It would probably be a LOS C or better with a signal.*

New Alternative Information

Some members of the CAC requested additional information.

- **Model Evergreen as 4 lanes east of the Glenn.** *It does not meet the LOS of C required by ADOT at the Glenn intersection and would have negative impacts on other intersections. For example Dogwood would go from a C to a D.*
- **Model Evergreen as 6 lanes.** This makes the Glenn a LOS C at the PWH/Evergreen, Dogwood, and Arctic. The right-of-way impacts are the same as they would be for 7 lanes and impact the gas station, DQ, and the Fred Meyer driveway.
- Felton North at PWH. What would it look like? (3 lanes with turning lanes where necessary)
Northbound – Right, through, and left – one receiving.
Southbound – Left, through, and free right – on receiving
Northbound Felton D – ROW impacts- utilities, ROW is 60 feet.
3 signals from Felton to Glenn
- Did a slip lane on Felton hurt or help the PWH/Glenn LOS? *The slip lane essentially does the same thing as a ramp and did not have a significant effect on the LOS either way. The model isn't that detailed.*
- What growth rate was used in the model for the traffic projections? *The model is more tied to planned/future development. Future development was the basis of the growth from now until 2025. For example, growth is expected where new water and sewer services became available along the Glenn associated with construction of the new Hospital. From 2025 to 2034, population growth comes into play more. A 3% per year growth rate was used.*
- What can we do to keep Evergreen at 4 lanes? There are alternatives. Build Hemmer south to provide traffic another option. Go across tracks at Cottonwood or Dogwood. There are other answers but the Engineers and Planners won't tell us. There is no planning being done.

Alex's – Alternative B – A Preferred Alternative Starting Point

Makes a box around Palmer.

1. North corridor
 - a. Dogwood west across the Glenn to Felton
 - b. Felton south to PWH
2. South corridor
 - a. Inner Springer to Helen/Moore
3. Evergreen/PWH
 - a. Can be expanded and walkable.
 - b. Limit property impacts to Chevron
 - c. Narrow to 4 lanes at DQ
 - d. Cobb intersection – don't know what to do yet

CAC Feedback

- Some agreement and nods
- Helen to Glenn provides for a good connection to Hemmer.

- Hemmer should be built next. What is the priority of the committed network?
- Would ADOT build Felton between Dogwood and PWH? *If it can be shown there is a direct connection to improving the LOS at the Glenn/PWH intersection.*
- Phase Alternative B.
 1. Build Dogwood
 2. Build Inner Springer to Helen/Moore
 3. Slip Lane on Felton
- Small town values are not only jeopardized with a 5-lane intersection at Evergreen, they are also jeopardized with stacked up traffic. It is a decision to be made.
- When design begins can it be broken into phases with some portions included as Additive Alternates. *Typically, ADOT designs to the budget available. If need more, better to go ask the legislature.*
- The struggle is between values, the future, and available money.
- Should there be a future phase east of Cobb? Should Felton or Hemmer be identified as a future phase.
- Glenn – on the west side there is a proposed frontage road. This makes Springer more critical. It will create a by pass route, especially if the short segment of Industrial is built. Downtown main street to Glenn to frontage and by pass Evergreen.
- Balance phasing. What about Bogard and Hemmer. What happens if they don't get built?
- Cross the tracks at Dogwood or Cottonwood.
- Is the trade off 5 lanes or across the tracks. Better to cross the tracks.

Cottonwood versus Dogwood Debate/ East of Tracks

- Dogwood already exists. How do we explain the cost of a new intersection?
- Don't go east of Tracks. Can't solve all of the city's problems with one project. What can we do with resources available at this time.
- Some properties east of tracks are historic and would be impacted by the extension of Dogwood across the tracks. Tents were pitched there by colonists. The road would cut the center of town/greenbelt in half. There railroad is there. It is against the values identified early in the process.
- How can a decision be made about Cottonwood versus Dogwood. There is no planning being done. This group is not informed enough.
- Dogwood to the west has already been approved by the residents when they passed the Borough bonds. ADOT would ask if the Borough would contribute the bond money for Dogwood to this project.

CAC Preferred Alternative Summary (Not prioritized in any order)

1. PWH – 5 lanes (4 + center turn lane) from Hemmer to the Glenn
2. Inner Springer Intersection (Connect with Moore/Helen)
3. Industrial Way south to Inner Springer (check to see if ROW exists)
4. Felton - 2 lanes with a slip lane on southbound Felton to westbound PWH. Build Felton from Bogard to PWH if enough money, Dogwood to PWH if not. Evaluate need for signalization
5. Dogwood – 2 lanes with left turns where needed. Build from Glenn to Felton
6. Do not go east of Cobb. Looking at traffic control for the Evergreen/Cobb intersection is acceptable. Signal, 4-way stop, flashing light
7. 5-laning of Evergreen is ok. Keep the length of the 5 lane segment as short as possible. Recommended that it does not go east of Chevron property but CAC understands this is only a recommendation and it may not be feasible
8. Signal at Arctic at either Denali or Valley Way

Straw Vote

12- yes

0 - no

1 - abstain

Palmer City Council

The CAC will present the "Preferred Alternative to the City Council". Alex, Jack, and Al were selected as the spokespersons for the City Council presentation. All CAC members were encouraged to attend to show support. Wende will set up the meeting and let everyone know. Once that date is set, a follow up CAC meeting will be scheduled.

Preferred Alternative/ Design

A preferred alternative does not mean there cannot be changes as the project moves forward. There are often tweaks to the alternative to better address design issues and community concerns. ADOT has committed to keeping the CAC involved through design. Meetings would typically be at key milestones or other decision points – 35% design, 65% design, 95% design, and after Bids Open but before construction starts. The last meeting would include the selected contractor.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

Palmer City Council - TBD

Next CAC - TBD

PARKING LOT (SUMMARY OF ALL MEETINGS)

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

- ~~Future of Glenn Highway through Palmer. What are ADOT's plans? Addressed Dec 10, 2009~~
- Walkway from Palmer to Fairgrounds
- ~~Frontage Road with limited access along west side of Palmer Wasilla Highway (Discussed during alternative development)~~