
PALMER WASILLA HIGHWAY EASTERN TERMINUS

Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

December 2, 2010

Palmer City Hall

4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Guests

Mayor DeLena Johnson

City Manager Doug Griffin

Design Elements – Continued Discussion

General

- What are the minimum lane widths? Can they be narrowed? *The typical lane width for roads with this level of traffic is 11 or 12 feet wide. Truck traffic has to be accommodated as well as RVs.*
- Would narrowing the lanes encourage thru-truck traffic to use more preferred truck routes? *It might but remember that local businesses also depend on trucks for deliveries.*
- Use signage to direct drivers to Chevron and Fred Meyer via the Glenn Highway.

Right-of-Way (ROW)

- Decisions can't be made unless the ROW costs are known. *There are many factors that go into how ROW acquisition decisions are made and costs are determined including impacts to utilities, historic buildings, the potential presence of contamination, and so on. ROW acquisition is a highly regulated process and based on confidential negotiations between ROW agents and private property owners. ADOT&PF will minimize ROW acquisition to the extent possible as it is costly, time consuming and controversial.*

The Mayor encouraged CAC to help design a project that is the best for Palmer and not focus on costs and ROW impacts as constraining factors.

Evergreen – West of Glenn

- 5 lanes
- 5 lanes
- No to 5 lanes. It does not meet the Palmer Values. It's not walkable, enjoyable or "small town"
- 4 lanes better meets Palmer Values

Going out of Palmer

- 3 lanes. 2 thru and 1 left turn
- 4 lanes. 2 thru and 2 left turn
- 3 lanes. 1 thru and 1 right turn, 1 left turn

Coming into Palmer

- 2 thru

- Only 1 lane into Palmer will create congestion. Vehicles turning into businesses will back up traffic.
- A median with one lane would stop left turns.
- Right turns would still cause stop and go traffic.
- Need a raised median that stops at Chevron (short as possible to prevent left turns into Chevron) and then stripe the median to Diamond. No left turns in this segment.

- Open the striped median so westbound traffic can make lefts into businesses on the south.
- Allow only right in and right out at Fred Meyer
- Can Chevron be a right in, right out only without using a center median?

What is the goal for this section?

No left turns to Chevron, no left turns to Fred Meyer (not all in agreement about Fred Meyers).

Isn't this a question about balancing business access and Palmer Values?

- Like C1.8 but extend raised median to block left turns to Chevron. Add pork chop to DQ with a slip lane.

Straw Poll

1. No left turn access to Chevron. General Consensus achieved. 1 Against.
2. No left turn out of Fred Meyer. General Consensus achieved.
3. Left turns permitted into Fred Meyer from a center turn lane. (means 5 lanes to Fred Meyer access). No Consensus. Split.
4. 5 lanes. Leaning towards consensus but not quite there. Medians still a concern.
 - a. Like C.1.1 but block left turns to Chevron
 - b. Like C.1.3 – No turns blocked at Fred Meyer/DQ

One member expressed concern that all of the CAC time throughout this process has been spent on this small section of Evergreen and there is much more to the project. He would like to see that equal time be given to the other segments.

There was some disagreement as some CAC members felt this was most important section and impacted adjacent businesses. The CAC was reminded that they represented the community at large, not just special interests. Many decisions were being made to avoid impacts to one property at the expense of another. This would be difficult to defend in a larger public forum. Because the same issues continue to be discussed on the Evergreen section without resolution, the majority of the CAC agreed to table the Evergreen discussion and focus on other road sections to be respectful of the "community" view.

Palmer Wasilla Highway – West

5 lanes, 2 in each direction, with a center turn lane/pockets

- Why no frontage road? *It was not considered in part because it wouldn't address the problem and because of ROW impacts and business access.*

A median is shown at the approximate City Limits. It doesn't have to be there but it could be an opportunity for a gateway

- How wide is the median? *It be up to 16 feet wide.*
- Why a center turn lane and not just turn pockets at businesses? *There are a lot of driveways and the center turn lane handles it better.*
- What is the shaded green area on the drawings? *This is the estimated area of impact but at this stage it is really a swag. Retaining walls and other modifications can be used to minimize the size.*
- Put pathways on both sides of the PWH. Consensus

PWH at Felton

- Both 4A and 4B should show the intersection of the PWH and Felton as signalized.
- Like 4B. It anticipates the future residential growth along Felton.
- Why no slip lane? *The slip lane didn't help much and had big ROW impacts. Also it is not as good for pedestrian crossings.*
- The CAC talked about culverts under the road here to accommodate pedestrians? What happened to those?
- Could a pork chop be added with the slip lane to improve the pedestrian crossing?
- Why is all the ROW taken from the north? *There is an expensive utility relocate on the south side.*
- 4b. The residences along Felton won't like this. There will be more traffic.
- Propose 4A with pork chop and slip lane
- Propose 4A for the south and 4B for the north with slip lane and pork chop. General Consensus Achieved (1 abstain)

Dogwood/Felton

- Like 1A.3. Has the roundabout, center grassed median and pathways. It meets Palmer Values.
- Like 1A.3 but no roundabout, just a curve.
- B.1 has the curve. Can the radius be made tighter? *No, otherwise cars going to fast will not make the turn.*
- Go with B.1. It's too early for the roundabout but enough ROW should be acquired to build it in the future. General Consensus Achieved.

Dogwood West

- Carrs doesn't really like the 90 degree turn in their driveway!
- Why can't the Carrs access be moved further west from the Glenn? *Topography constraints make the access to Carrs challenging.*
- What about future development on the north side of the road? The design needs to consider this as well.
- Carrs wants full access to their property.
- B2 shows 2 lanes side by side with no center median. Is this better? *Both are fine but a center grassed median is safer.*
- The LOS is poor on Dogwood? What does that mean for access to Carrs if eastbound traffic backs up and blocks the access? In 25 years the LOS is projected to be E. *It's a trade-off. Can you live with that as a community? Dogwood could be widened on the east side for an improved LOS.*
- Can ROW be purchased on the west side for a future 4 lane Dogwood? *4 lanes are needed and ADOT&PF would not be able to justify the expenditure of funds.*
- How wide the can the grassy center median be made?
- Glenn/Dogwood porkchop with right turn slip lane. 2A works for Carrs (General Consensus Achieved)
- Dogwood in front of Fred Meyers shouldn't have a signal. Its too much, too soon and does not meet Palmer Values. *The signal is warranted until 2034. A 2 or 4 way stop would work in the interim.*
- What about Cobb and Evergreen signal? *A signal will be necessary in 5 years.*

In Closing

It was expressed by one member that they have been asking for the details on Evergreen since day one and they were not provided and now the CAC is being rushed through them. At least 4 or 5 additional meetings should be held to work on Evergreen. It was noted that the Design Team provided the CAC with a wide range of alternatives to address the full range of options for the CAC to comment on, yet only 5 committee members turned in the homework which intended to help move this meeting along. Two CAC members said they had too many questions. The CAC was also reminded that questions can be sent in at any time.

The Mayor presented the idea that the City could facilitate the Evergreen discussion. It was noted by the Facilitator and CAC members that this process has been going on for more than a year and there is a lot of history. Most CAC members did not see the need for additional discussion on Evergreen and felt it was time for the Design team, as

professional road engineers, to take all the information and develop the alternatives. The CAC was also reminded that continued delays could jeopardize funding.

Next Steps

In the spring, the Design team will come back with a Pre-Draft Design Study Report (DSR). This Pre-Draft DSR will document how the alternatives were developed. In addition to addressing the CAC and other stakeholder input, it will include an analysis of existing and future conditions for:

- Utilities
- Traffic and pedestrian safety
- Planning and Design Documents
- Design Standards and Criteria
- Soils and drainage
- Environmental (including potential contamination)
- Right-of-way impacts
- Land use
- Emergency access
- Historic buildings
- Costs

Upon completion of the Pre Draft DSR, the Design Team will present the information to the CAC and ask for feedback. Once the feedback is evaluated and incorporated as appropriate, the Draft DSR will be distributed for public and agency review and an Open House will be held for community input. Again, all comments will be evaluated and incorporated as appropriate and a Final DSR and Preferred Alternative will be identified for design.

ADOT&PF and the Design Team have a mission to balance the diverse interests and work towards a design that best serves the overall community. Palmer values and all of the hours that the CAC has put into this project will guide their decisions during alternative development. The Design team understands that the CAC does not have consensus on all of the design elements at this time. Compromises have to be made.

Action Item Summary

Homework

- To be sent out again.

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)~~
- *Noisy Goose ROW impacts*
- ~~Medians~~
- *Water and Sewer Extensions/Upgrades*