
PALMER WASILLA HIGHWAY EASTERN TERMINUS

Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

December 16, 2009

Red Beet Café and Bakery

4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Next meeting date is Thursday, January 7 – 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

The original agenda included:

1. Review of new data presented by Kinney Engineering.
2. Identification of alternatives the CAC would like to present to the public for comment. (DRAFT Recommended CAC Alternatives)
3. Setting dates for the Open House and follow up CAC meetings
4. Discussing the Open House Format – the CAC Message to the Public.

In the week since the last meeting, there has been a lot of activity regarding the fact that the CAC is still evaluating one-way alternatives as part of this process. Agenda modifications were requested to address the concerns. As a point of clarification, one-way alternatives are being evaluated at the request of CAC members, not ADOT or Kinney Engineering.

Michelle and Lori also each requested time to make a statement and to present results from a questionnaire they distributed (Note: the questionnaire was not developed by the CAC). Notices were also posted inviting the public to the meeting to discuss the one-way alternatives.

Process Review

A brief summary of the CAC process was provided for the public attending the meeting. Over 45 applications were mailed/e-mailed to find potential interested members to serve on the CAC. The list came from the original Open House on the Palmer Couplet project. Additional applications were distributed by the selection committee. Everyone who returned an application was selected to serve on the CAC.

Past Meeting Overview

1. What is valued about Palmer? What are the problems that need to be solved? Where is there room for improvement?
2. Existing traffic data presentation. Defining Context Zones – can different “zones of Palmer” be treated differently? What are some screening criteria that can be used to help determine which alternative is best? What are the committee member’s hopes and fears regarding this project?
3. More existing traffic data. Refinement of the screening criteria. Description of the decision making process.
4. Alternatives. CAC asked ADOT and Kinney Engineering to generate a range of alternatives to begin the CAC discussion. At that meeting 10 were eliminated from further discussion.
5. CAC brainstormed additional alternatives.
6. CAC groups presented their alternatives. Discussed the Goods, the Bads, and the Uglies of each “alternative.”

7. Preliminary modeling data was presented for the CAC generated alternatives which included one-way options. No decisions were made by the CAC regarding an alternative that should be carried forward to the public.

During the discussion tonight, remember the ground rules and think about the following:

- Is it the truth?
- Is it fair?
- Will it build goodwill?
- Will it be beneficial?

Also remember that one-way alternatives are only on the table for discussion because it has been a direct request by this CAC. Concern was expressed that only one or two people requested that one-ways be evaluated and they should have never been carried forward because there was not a majority or consensus. As documented by the meeting summary, during the initial brainstorming of alternatives, the CAC did reach consensus on the process for screening out the first round of alternatives and that is why the one-ways were initially included. The process was:

- If no one supported the alternative it was removed from further evaluation.
- If only 1 or 2 people were in support of the alternative but no positive comments were recorded, the alternative was removed from consideration.
- All other alternatives are carried forward.

Statements

Attached.

Discussion

- What are the Wal-Mart plans? Have there been any commitments? *To the best of everyone's knowledge, there have no commitments from Wal-Mart to develop the property.*
- Bill Allen publicly said that the one-way was off the table. The public has tasked us to find a two-way solution.
- Do not remember there being rules about banning one-way alternatives from discussion by this CAC.
- We should look at all options or the money may go elsewhere.
- It is ok if money goes elsewhere (under context of one-way).
- We should not just reject the project but should look at 3 to 4 options to expand.
- The public that filled out the questionnaire rejected the one-way. 19 of 22 graded a one-way street option as "F".
- We have tried to get a public vote during the Palmer Couplet process but were told it could not be put on a Palmer ballot.
- Against one-way, have lived here a long time and watched businesses grow; don't believe a one-way would work for the businesses. Feels like one-way is being unfairly pushed.
- What comments were received at the Transportation Fair from the public? *Only one comment form was turned in.*
- If we are trying to make Palmer a place for commerce then a-way does not work. Mall location studies have shown one-way does not work. Establishing East-West connectivity is the key to connect town together.
- Agree 99% with above comment. If nothing happens what is the minimum project (question to DOT)? *Funds will be used on PWH most likely around Trunk Road and the Glenn Highway project will address the PWH/Evergreen intersection.*
- With the exception of one-way the CAC has made a number of good improvements and suggestions and hopefully we can agree on a direction. I don't think the couplet alternative will win because it won't pass the Palmer Value test but it should be evaluated using the same criteria as other alternatives.

- We need to weigh all options equally.
- There is a lot of fear of the one-way option will get selected because it keeps being brought up.
- Al - I have an idea includes a one-way portion that I have discussed with Dave. There would only be a short one-way stretch. Extend Dogwood to Felton, one-way ramp from this intersection to the PWH. Downtown and everything east of the Glenn would not be changed. We may want strategic lights.
- Under the impression that the one-way on ramp would go through the Wal-Mart property. Would that work? *Right-of-way acquisition would be the same for Wal-Mart as any other Right-of-way acquisition.*
- Would like to know the feasibility of an overpass. *With enough money it would work.*
- Would like to know geographically if the overpass would work?
- In case light does not work, could we just widen PWH to 3-lanes?
- We need all kinds of options; Al's idea is one option.
- A number of people live in the area that would be impacted by a Dogwood extension. Residents have expressed their concerns and do not want Dogwood to be extended. It is important that their concerns are heard in this process as well.
- We specifically said no to one-ways east of the Glenn. Our alternative was a two-way for the current design now and possibly it could be one-way in the future.
- The traffic expert that Lorie few in said that a future one-way could be an option if needed.
- The "fly-in/ramp" is critical to a two-way Dogwood.
- The steep hills and what that means to truck traffic are not understood by people. These intersections can be difficult for truck traffic. A Springer to Helen Drive connection would be good planning for the future.
- No need for one-way today if it can be revisited in the future.
- A yes-no vote for a one-way by the public was not possible according to the City lawyer because it was a Borough issue not a City issue due to the long range planning documents.
- Cottonwood would go away (with Al's alternative)
- Would the one-way ramp on Al's alternative be needed if Felton was constructed?

Is there a hazard in evaluating one-way alternatives as part of this process?

- Leave the one-way term in the dialog, DOT will need to justify ROW acquisition and could need the one-way to justify a take.
- Don't see the need to justify the need if the one-way is so decisive. Benson and Northern Lights were two-way but they were changed to one-way without ROW takes. Benson and Northern Lights were two-ways in *the 60s*.
- We may need a one-way to make an alternative work.
- Strong preference is for 2-way.
- Don't like one-way.
- A one-way option puts a cloud over this process.
- Feel like a puppet discussing one-way options. It should not even be talked about.
- It seems that there is an opportunity to merge a couple of projects. PWH issue is the ROW costs. Bogard needs to take the traffic. Work on a connector between Bogard and PWH to divert traffic.
- Should go through the same evaluation as the others and brought to the public.
- It seems that a two-way to one-way conversion would not be good to plan for.

One-way – In Closing

The CAC was asked how they wanted to proceed. Should a vote be held on whether to continue evaluating the one-way alternatives or remove them from further discussions?

- The CAC was asked what keeps an alternative alive. *That is a CAC decision.*
- CAC group decided to vote.

Results:

Helen Munoz:	Yes	Jeff Johnson:	Undecided
Al Strawn:	Yes	David Lundin:	Yes
Jack Snodgrass:	No	Richard Best:	Yes
Michelle Kincaid:	Yes	Jim Colver:	Yes
Lorie Koppenberg:	Yes	David LeClair:	Yes
Robert Thom:	Yes	Kip Coyne:	Yes
Julie LeMay:	Yes	Gary Wolf:	Yes
Sandra Garley:	Undecided	Cindy Lynch:	Yes
George Strother:	No	Stacey Buzby:	Yes

Yes: 14

No: 2

Undecided: 2

Comments

Jeff and Sandra: Will not vote, not educated enough about the alternatives to make the decision at this point.

George: The data has not been presented yet to make a good decision about removing alternatives from the discussion.

Design team would like clarification, is it ok to present one-way data for A1's Alternative with the ramp? *Group preference was for 2-way but "Dave won't get shot if a one-way ramp is evaluated and it works."*

Work Session

We have 1-hour left what does the group want to do with the remaining time? – Back to Alternatives

- Threw out idea to provide eastbound PWH traffic with an exit ramp that would go under the PWH (grade separated) and connect to Felton to make Dogwood more attractive going north than turning left at the PWH/Glenn intersection.
- Would like to see data from engineers regarding the ramp option.
- Would like to hear about evaluation of 3 southern routes.

Randy presented Kinney Engineering's analysis:

**LOS C at intersections (Glenn, Dogwood, Arctic) with Dogwood extension,
LOS D at intersections without Dogwood extension.**

- Road to airport is up in volume (800)? *Why? Results are preliminary, will take a look at that number.*
- Basically, a 4-Lane Bogard, Dogwood, and PWH upgrade with LOS C intersections would meet Purpose and Need of project.
- What happens when Dogwood goes to 4-Lanes? We do not want 8-Lane intersections. *A 2 lane Dogwood reduces the Glenn by 5,000 vehicles and a 4 lane Dogwood reduces the Glenn by 9,000.*

Dogwood goes to Hemmer in the model. The volumes would change if Dogwood was cut off at Felton.

- What is the assumption on the East Side? *2-Lane Dogwood on the east side.*

We have not looked at the numbers with A1's alternative.

- Would like to see South Valley Way lights in model, and see South Alaska Street queues. *We did not analyze individual signals, that work is not typically done until later in the process.*
- Does the signal at Dogwood need to be reworked with a 4-Lane of the Glenn? *Yes*

Randy showed the intersection graphics for 5-lane and 7-lane approach alternatives.

- Suggest that the CAC would like a maximum of 5-lanes
- Look at numbers assuming that Dogwood does not go across the tracks.
- Limit scope to east of Cobb and take Dogwood across the tracks out of the scope.
- Would not like to take east of Cobb off the table.

- Data on Dogwood – does it take the south corridor into account? *South Corridor took pressure off PWH / Glenn intersection.*

Where do we go from here?

- Ask Kinney to come back with more data
- We could put weight on the links with numbers.
- On the southern route is Inner Springer preferred? *General consensus on yes to Inner Springer....*
- The Goal is to take pressure off the PWH/Glenn intersection, so which southern route does that?
- Do not take the southern route past Hemmer, it will never fly because of the Crevasse-Moraine trails.
- Look at Industrial Extension.

Summary of alternatives to be evaluated for next meeting

1) Alt A:

- Use 4-lane Bogard model, but remove the Dogwood connection across the RR-tracks.
 - Bogard is 4-lanes
 - PWH is 5-lanes
 - Evergreen is not altered east of Cobb, except as needed to install a functional signal at Cobb.
 - Dogwood is not altered east of Cobb (no crossing of the RR tracks)
 - 2-lane (with intersection turn pockets as needed) Dogwood is extended west to Felton.
 - 2-lane Felton is constructed between PWH and Dogwood.
- Check to make sure all three Glenn signals will work at LOS C.
- Check to make sure that Evergreen WB approach is just 5-lanes.
- Check for congestion problems in the vicinity of the intersections at Alaska, Evergreen, and Valley Way.

2) Alt B:

- Use model from Alt A as starting point.
- Extend 2-lane Springer Loop west to Hemmer
- Extend Industrial Way south to Springer.
- If Alt A worked, then instead of checking, try to quantify magnitude of improvement (LOS, delay, # lanes, reduced trip adjustment) for the following
 - Check to make sure all three Glenn signals will work at LOS C.
 - Check to make sure that Evergreen WB approach is just 5-lanes.
 - Check for congestion problems in the vicinity of the intersections at Alaska, Evergreen, and Valley Way.

3) Alt C (one-way ramp):

- Use model from Alt A as starting point.
- Add a one-way dogleg “ramp” west from Dogwood/Felton that allows WB Dogwood cars to merge with the WB PWH traffic.
- Quantify how this Alternative is different than Alt A. Quantify the magnitude of improvement (LOS, delay, # lanes, reduced trip adjustment) for the following
 - Glenn signals will work at LOS C.
 - Evergreen WB approach is just 5-lanes.
 - Congestion problems in the vicinity of the intersections at Alaska, Evergreen, and Valley Way?

4) Alt D (two-way ramp):

- Use model from Alt C as starting point.
- Add a separated grade link that parallels the “ramp” to bring eastbound PWH traffic to the Dogwood and Felton intersection without slowing or stopping any traffic.
 - Evaluate potential for off ramp from PWH that leads under PWH or flies over PWH. The end result of this is that the “ramp” would be two-way, but without conflicts where the ramp merges with the PWH.
- Quantify how this Alternative is different than Alt A. Quantify the magnitude of improvement (LOS, delay, # lanes, reduced trip adjustment) for the following
 - Glenn signals will work at LOS C.

- ii. Evergreen WB approach is just 5-lanes.
 - iii. Congestion problems in the vicinity of the intersections at Alaska, Evergreen, and Valley Way?
- 5) Can a Two-way left turn lane be substituted for a separated grade crossing?

Wende announced that husband was hired by DOT effective January 5, 2010, and asked if it was ok with the CAC group for her to continue with here roll. He would not participate in any projects that she works on. No objections were voiced.

Is it ok for the design team to take alternatives further than discussed here? *ok if presented why the original idea does not work then present in steps of why another direction was taken.*

TENTATIVE FUTURE MEETING DATES

Next meeting Jan 7th.

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)~~