



Memo

Meeting Date: **April 6, 2018**

Project: **Seward Hwy MP 25-36
Seward Hwy MP 17-22.5**

To: **Cynthia Ferguson, DOT&PF
Clint Adler, DOT&PF**

From: **Katherine Wood, HDR**

Subject: **Summary: Moose Pass Advisory Planning Commission Meeting**

Project Staff/Agency Attendees:

Cynthia Ferguson, DOT&PF
Clint Adler, DOT &PF
Katherine Wood, HDR

Stakeholder Attendees:

Moose Pass Advisory Planning Commission (requested by Bruce Jaffa)
Bruce Wall, Kenai Peninsula Borough Planner
Area residents and landowners

Event Summary:

At the request of the Moose Pass Advisory Planning Commission, DOT&PF presented a project update on the Seward Hwy MP 25-36 project at the April meeting of the planning commission. The meeting was held at the Moose Pass Community Hall, with a 6pm start time. The Moose Pass APC gavelled in and then suspended regular business for DOT&PF's presentation. Printed materials were available for two additional projects: Seward Hwy MP 17-22.5 (Clint Adler provided a brief update) and Sterling Highway MP 45-60.

Advertising

The event was advertised by the Moose Pass Planning Commission to their membership and shared with the email list for the Seward Hwy MP 25-36 project. The meeting was also noted on the DOT&PF Central Region Public Involvement Calendar.

Attendance

A total of 14 individuals signed in at the meeting.

Event Materials

- Standard ROW brochures
- Standard Title VI brochures
- Sign in sheet

Seward Hwy MP 25-36

- Handouts (project fact sheet, FAQs, comment sheets)
- Power Point presentation (PPT)

Seward Hwy MP 17-22.5

- Handouts (project fact sheet, FAQs)

Sterling Hwy MP 45-60



- Handouts (project fact sheet, FAQs, comment sheets)
- Final EIS Executive Summaries

Presentation

Cindy Ferguson gave a PPT presentation on the Seward Hwy MP 25-36 project. Key points included:

- Schedule update
- Improving passing opportunities with Slow Vehicle Turnouts and alignment improvements
- A pavement preservation project has been initiated to extend the life of the pavement until the larger rehabilitation project can be completed. Timed with the Seward Highway 17-22 project

Discussion

No comment forms were submitted during the meeting. The following is a summary of the questions and comments provided verbally.

- Why are you doing a pavement preservation project when you'll come back in a few years? Seems like a waste of money.
 - The pavement preservation extends the life of the road for about five years until we can come back and do the full reconstruction
- What is the life of the rehabilitation project?
 - About 20 years.
- When will you come back and do another meeting?
 - When 65% design is complete, about another year from now.
- I'm distressed about the short life of roads in Alaska. Why can't we make them last longer?
 - The short life of pavement is caused primarily by studded tires. DOT has done many studies on different types of pavement and the ones we use are the most cost effective.
- We are seeing more truck use of the highway in the winter b/c the ARRC isn't hauling anymore.
 - The traffic counter on the road does include the size of vehicles and reflects truck use.
- What does traffic calming mean? At the last meeting you were talking about different options, but it sounds like all those are out now. What is the traffic calming study based on—national data?
 - Traffic calming is techniques to get drivers to comply with the posted speed limits such as radar signs that show how fast you're driving, roadway stencils. There are lots of options. The traffic study we did was done right here in the community, where we used radar guns to measure traffic speeds before and after painting on the roadway. We observed people slowed down by about 2 mph. So there is a small benefit.
- Building passing lanes allow people to go faster. Narrower road sections make people slow down. What will you do through town?
 - We are keeping the existing width through town; there will be no passing lanes in town.
- Will you be removing rock faces on the way into town? Those help slow down drivers naturally. If you remove them will people drive faster?
 - We may add need to do some blasting of rock to make room for the full road width.



- Was the traffic study done during the day or night? We have trucks coming through town at night driving at 55mph.
 - The study was done during the day. Speeding is also an enforcement issue.
- What about sound—will there be rumble strips in the residential areas?
 - Yes, where we are adding shoulder in the 55mph area, there will be rumble strips.
- Will there be any changes to vegetation, such as cutting trees? I have clump of trees in my yard that really helps reduce highway noise.
 - We don't have that level of detail yet in the design, but we will later on. Likely there will be clearing of vegetation at spots where we are widening the highway to accommodate the larger shoulders or Slow Vehicle Turnouts.
- I've heard that federal regulations require that road projects include a certain portion of funding be used for pedestrian improvements. Are you going to extend the bike path? That is a community priority.
 - We're not aware of any regulation that requires a certain amount of funding be used for pedestrian improvements. Extending the bike path is not included in this project. The 6.5' wide shoulders are considered to be usable for bikes and pedestrians. You can nominate the pathway project for inclusion in the STIP (State Transportation Improvement Program) by making a recommendation to the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB).
- Where is the scope of the project defined?
 - In the STIP.
- Federal rules are changing. Community plans need to be considered. How will that change in the future? When was this project's scope set?
 - We recognize there are lots of needs, but we can't always realize the full plan. We have more needs than we have funding. The scope for this project was set 3-4 years ago.
- Did the pathway get scoped-out to reduce impacts and get through the environmental process more quickly?
 - No.
- Will there be mitigation for property impacts and what is that process?
 - There can be mitigation, but we don't have that level of detail yet. That will happen during later stages of design and during the Right-of-Way process.
- Where will ROW acquisition occur? Downtown?
 - That depends a lot upon the results of the geotechnical investigation. We're not anticipating much impact through downtown Moose Pass. We're planning to stay within the existing ROW in that section. The ROW is now mapped and that is available on the website.
- We acquired the old DOT site for our Fire Hall. The surveyed centerline was 30-40 feet off. Is the centerline of this ROW correct?
 - Yes, and we have maps here if you'd like to look at that.
- What is the current lifespan on the road? What conditions require pavement preservation?
 - There are different components that go into the analysis of doing a pavement preservation vs a full rehabilitation including culvert failure, pavement rutting, smoothness, etc. There is a benefit to doing the pavement preservation project in the short term.
- Wasn't the pavement just replaced two years ago?



- In the Moose Pass area, the pavement was replaced in the early 2000s. The MP 17-22 project area was repaved two years ago.
- Many of the bridge surfaces are pitted, like on the Snow River bridges. What can DOT&PF do about that?
 - The Snow River bridges will be rehabilitated as part of the MP 17-22 project, planned for construction in 2019. The bridges on MP 75-90 will be replaced in the next few years.
- What's the road material south of Primrose? It's brighter and grips better.
 - That is a high friction surface treatment that was an experiment. It does work well but it is considerably more expensive.
- When DOT&PF does experiments are there public reports? A better road surface would really help. The troopers talk about the 5 Es of safety, but there is zero enforcement which places a bigger burden on engineering and education. We need long term solutions, not band-aids.
- You said passing lanes were removed because of their impacts. What does that mean?
 - It's based on the footprint and cost. The road is constrained due to terrain and a transmission line—moving those elements is costly. Also there would be greater impacts to the railroad and to private property.
- Can you use flashing signs to show slow speeds?
 - Flashing speed sign will show travel speed.

Follow-On: Alaska does have the ability to establish minimum travel speed (see AAC below), but we are not aware that this has been done on a highway.

- 13 AAC 02.295. Minimum speed regulation
- (a) No person may drive a motor vehicle so slowly as to impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic, except when reduced speed is necessary for safe operation or in compliance with statutes, regulations, or ordinances.
- (b) When the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, or a municipality, in their respective jurisdictions, determines under sec. 280 of this chapter that slow speeds on a highway or part of a highway unreasonably impede the normal movement of traffic, the respective authority may determine a minimum speed limit not in excess of 55 miles per hour for that highway or part of a highway below which no person may drive a vehicle, except when necessary as prescribed in (a) of this section. The limit is effective when posted on fixed or variable signs.
- The inability to pass makes people frustrated when they are coming through town. I like the slow vehicle turnouts and anything you can do to make sure they are used.
- Why do the passing lanes have to merge back into the fast lane of traffic? It's backwards from how it is done in most states.
 - We haven't seen that method. We are using the national traffic standards.
- Before construction starts, can we get the speed limit stencils repainted in Moose Pass?
 - I can ask about that. It will definitely be done during the pavement preservation project.
 - Follow-on: M&O has purchased the stencils and has the repainting on their list of work for this summer.
- Culverts were flagged during your survey. Will water flow change?
 - Yes. There will be changes but we don't have any details right now.
- How do you determine speeds zones? Can we have permanent flashing light signs?



- Alaska statute establishes speeds. Changes are studied, documented, and a speed order directs the speed zones. Determining the posted speed limit is a big topic of discussion. Generally we want everyone traveling at the same speed. DOT&PF also designates safety corridors. For more information on that program and setting speed limits, take a look at the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) website: <http://www.dot.alaska.gov/stwddes/dcstraffic/hsip.shtml>
- Follow-on:
- 13 AAC 02.275. Basic rule and maximum limits
- (a) No person may drive a vehicle at a speed greater than is reasonable and prudent considering the traffic, roadway, and weather conditions.
- (b) Except when a special hazard exists that requires a lower speed for compliance with (a) of this section, the limits specified in this subsection are the maximum lawful speeds throughout the state, and no person may drive a vehicle at a speed in excess of these maximum limits, unless otherwise posted:
 - (1) 15 miles per hour in an alley;
 - (2) 20 miles per hour in a business district;
 - (3) 25 miles per hour in a residential district; or
 - (4) 55 miles per hour on any other roadway.
- (c) Repealed 6/28/79.
- (d) Repealed 6/28/79.
- (e) The maximum speed limits set forth in (b) of this section may be altered as authorized in 13 AAC 02.280.
- Another good resource: Policy and Procedure 05.05.020 Establishment of Speed Limits and Zones
http://www.dot.state.ak.us/admsvc/pnp/assets/chapt_5/05_05_020.pdf
- Bruce Jaffa: I'm on a citizen's advisory committee and the idea is to have citizens look over the DOT&PF's shoulder. We need more community involvement. I'm taking notes on tonight's meeting and the issues are ROW, bike paths. The community trail is a no-brainer. We want collaboration. Where should we put that energy?
 - Connect with Jocelyn Biloon, who is the DOT&PF's Kenai Area planner.
- How can we achieve the bike path?
 - You could fund it locally or through the KPB. If you want it to be managed by the DOT&PF, then you will need to nominate it through the KPB in the STIP process. Or if the land is owned by the USFS, then you could potentially pursue a recreation trail through them.
- We are frustrated that the community has wanted a pathway for 30-40 years but we don't have one. There are plenty along the Seward Highway by Girdwood and in other places.
 - Lots of the Girdwood path is old road bed.
- I'm concerned about the birds at Tern Lake. The trees at the south end of the lake are critical for the birds. Don't cut those down and watch out for birds during design and construction.

Presentation

Clint Adler gave a brief verbal update on the Seward Hwy MP 17-22.5 project. Key points included:



- We are 95% design, so plan to bid the project and construct starting in 2019.
- Updates on FAQs and the Fact Sheet are available here today.
- Our project has the same type of Slow Vehicle Turnout lanes as Cindy described, and no passing lanes.
- The project will include some widening, straightening out curves, and other changes.

Discussion

No comment forms were submitted during the meeting. The following is a summary of the questions and comments provided verbally.

- Is this project budgeted?
 - Yes, it is in the current STIP.
- Is the 6' shoulder sloped?
 - Yes, at 2% grade
- What will close the gap between the two projects?
 - The area in between the projects has already been rehabilitated by other recent projects.
- Where is the overburden going? I heard it would be used for the airstrip in Seward.
 - It's up to the contractor what happens to the overburden. It is not currently planned for the Seward airport as part of this project.
- So that means 80,000 cu yds will be hauled away. Which way will it go? It may be going through Moose Pass which would be a huge impact on the community.
 - It's up to the contractor to determine where it goes
- What will you do in the construction contract to protect the traveling public? There was a project on the Old Seward Hwy that used shot rock for base and lots of people got their tires popped.
 - We're not aware of that occurring—that may have been some time ago.
- At Crowne Point, will the road be the same elevation?
 - No, it will change.
- What will happen to driveways? Will they be cut off?
 - If a driveway needs to be moved, we will make sure access is still provided. No one will be cut off.
- How many years will it take to construct? Will you go all seasons?
 - 2 years. We plan to continue through the seasons as much as possible, but it will be slower in winter.
- What's the budget?
 - \$60M
- On the Snow River Bridges will there be a pedestrian pathway?
 - No.
- You should add a tab for a cantilevered walkway.
- The Sterling Hwy 45-60 project includes a Snow River pedestrian bridge as a mitigation for the Juneau Creek Alternative.

Presentation

The group asked for info on the Sterling Hwy MP 45-60 project. Katherine Wood introduced herself as the outreach lead for the Sterling Hwy MP 45-60 project and gave a brief summary of the status. Key points included:

- The Final EIS is now published and identifies the Juneau Creek Alternative as preferred. Lots of information is available online at www.sterlinghighway.net.
- What changed since the Draft EIS? We heard a lot of comments indicating that we needed to give more value to the Kenai River and moving the highway away from

the river. Also, the USFWS and CIRI have indicated they are going to pursue a land trade authorized under the Russian River Land Act that would mean the land used by the Juneau Creek Alternative at the west end is no longer Wilderness, which makes it easier to move forward.

- The decision on the alternative is not final until the Record of Decision, which is anticipated in May/June. The public comment period is open through April 16, 2018.

Photos



Figure 1 Moose Pass Community Hall room set up

Follow Up

All attendees who provided contact information will be added to the mailing list and e-mail list.