

Fireweed Lane



Fireweed Lane Reconstruction: Minnesota Drive to Minnesota Drive On-Ramp

MOA PM&E Project No. 03-20
ADOT&PF Project Number HES-0001(050)/58488

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Prepared for:

Municipality of Anchorage
Project Management and Engineering
PO Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519-6650

and

Lounsbury & Associates
5300 A Street
Anchorage, AK 99518

Prepared by:

Brooks & Associates
1704 Bannister Road
Anchorage, AK 99508

October 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 PROJECT PROCESS	2
3.0 DRAFT PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED	2
3.1 Purpose	2
3.2 Need	3
4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN	3
4.1 Public Outreach and Notification	4
4.2 Individual and Group Public Input	5
4.3 Special Considerations	5
4.4 Public Involvement Activities	5
4.4.1 Team Workshop	5
4.4.2 Identify Stakeholders/Prepare Mailing List	5
4.4.3 Public Meetings	7
4.4.4 Citizens' Advisory Group	8
4.4.5 Business and Property Owners' Meetings	8
4.4.6 Public Meetings	8
4.4.7 Project Comments	8
4.4.8 Documentation	8
3.0 SCHEDULE	9
4.0 PROJECT TEAM LIST	1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) are proposing improvements to Fireweed Lane between Fireweed Lane and the Seward Highway. The MOA Department of Project Management and Engineering (PM&E) will be developing the environmental approval, preliminary design, plans, and specifications for the changes and eventually supervise the construction of the improvements.

PM&E has retained Lounsbury & Associates (Lounsbury) to lead the design and planning effort. Lounsbury will be assisted by specialist technical design consultants and Brooks & Associates (B&A) to provide public involvement support. Travis/Peterson Environmental, Inc. will pursue the environmental approval necessary for the project.

This public involvement plan outlines a process to supporting development of a context sensitive solution (CSS) or context sensitive design (CSD). Qualities of projects, in terms of design and process, that achieve a context sensitive solution include:

Transportation design qualities:

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ The project is a safe facility both for the user and the community.
- ✓ The project is in harmony with the community and preserve environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, and natural resource values of the area.
- ✓ The project exceeds the expectations of both designers and stakeholders and achieves a level of excellence in people's minds.
- ✓ The project involves efficient and effective use of resources (time, budget, community) of all involved parties.
- ✓ The project is seen as having added lasting value to the community.

Process characteristics:

- ✓ Communicate with all stakeholders in a manner that is open and honest, early and continuous.
- ✓ Tailor the highway development process to the circumstances. Employ a process that examines multiple alternatives and that will result in consensus on approaches.
- ✓ Establish a multi-disciplinary team early with disciplines based on the needs of the specific project and include the public.
- ✓ Seek to understand the landscape, the community, and valued resources before beginning engineering design.
- ✓ Involve a full range of stakeholders with transportation officials in the scoping phase. Clearly define the purposes of the project and forge consensus on the scope before proceeding.
- ✓ Tailor the public involvement process to the project, Include informal meetings.
- ✓ Use a full range of tools for communication about project alternative (e.g. visualization).

- ✓ Secure commitment to the process from top agency officials and local leaders.¹

2.0 PROJECT PROCESS

The project, following a context sensitive solutions process, includes the following steps:

- ✓ Step 1: Develop Community/Agency Involvement Program – as described in this document.
- ✓ Step 2: Identify project issues and define the problems to be solved – several tools identified in this plan will help the project team identify project issues and problems to resolve in the project development process. The process is greatly served if all parties bring the issues to the project early in project development. These issues and problems are fully described in the in the project’s purpose and need.
- ✓ Step 3: Determine evaluation criteria – prior to coming up with alternatives and in concert with the all project stakeholders, determine how the alternatives will be evaluated. What community values are important? What elements of the street may be a priority over another? This is an important step before you identify alternatives.
- ✓ Step 4: Develop Design Options – what options are available within the project limits? What are the design details? How do they fit together? What are the pieces of the design – sidewalks, bicycle lanes, lane widths, right of way widths, etc. The design options are joined in different combinations and become distinct alternatives to be evaluated and documented in the preliminary engineering and design study documents.
- ✓ Step 5: Develop and Select the Preferred Alternative – by applying the evaluation criteria to the design options in an iterative process with project stakeholders. The selected preferred alternative will reflect compromise. Compromise arrived at through multiple conversations, use of simulations and illustrative graphics, etc.

3.0 DRAFT PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The draft purpose and need contained in this public involvement plan reflects the MOA and ADOT&PF thoughts as of this writing.

3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this project is to reconstruct Fireweed Lane to current MOA minor arterial standards and enhance safety for drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and other users of this roadway

¹ *A Guide to Best Practices for Achieving Context Sensitive Solutions, National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Report 480, Transportation Research Board, p3*

while still maintaining acceptable levels-of-service to accommodate traffic during the 20-year design life of this project.

3.2 Need

- *Current Standards:* Roadway elements such as, pavement, drainage, lighting, driveways, curb cuts, sidewalks and curb ramps do not meet current MOA and national standards;
- *Safety:* Fireweed Lane has a documented history of repeating collision frequency and patterns. The frequency and type of collisions result in collision rates that exceed what are considered acceptable for this type of roadway; and
- *Pedestrian/Bicycle/Transit:* The Fireweed Lane corridor has one of the highest pedestrian presence and transit use within the Municipality of Anchorage. Current pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities along the corridor are minimal or non-existence.
- *Capacity:* The improved corridor must accommodate the year 2028 traffic levels at an acceptable level of service.

4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

The public involvement plan provides PM&E and ADOT&PF with an outline of the methods to obtain public input as the project development occurs. The plan contains a listing of the tools and methods as well as a schedule of their use. Many of the public involvement activities will be conducted jointly with the Spenard Road project because these streets intersect, their stakeholders overlap, and the project needs and the range of solutions are similar.

Before any public involvement activities can begin for either project, PM&E, in consultation with Lounsbury Associates Inc and Brooks & Associates, will determine the questions to be resolved by public participation and the level of public input it will support on the spectrum developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). (What is the spectrum?) <http://iap2.org/practitionertools/index.shtml>

This PIP has been based on an public participation at the INVOLVE level, which states the following goal:

To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. © IAP2 2005

This level also includes the following Promise to the Public:

We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. © IAP2 2005

Increasing Level of Public Impact →				
INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and /or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:
We will keep You informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advise and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example Tools:	Example Tools:	Example Tools:	Example Tools:	Example Tools:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fact Sheets ✓ Web Sites ✓ Open Houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Public comment ✓ Focus groups ✓ Surveys ✓ Public Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Workshops ✓ Deliberate polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Citizen Advisory committees ✓ Consensus-building ✓ Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizen juries Ballots Delegated decisions

At this level of participation, the public is provided opportunities to influence the project design; however, final decisions rest with the PM&E and the ADOT&PF.

4.1 Public Outreach and Notification

Public outreach and notification will be accomplished using the following tools:

- ✓ Door-to-door Personal Introduction along the Corridor
- ✓ Project Web Site
- ✓ Newsletters and Other Print Media
- ✓ Public Meetings
- ✓ Citizens Advisory Group Meetings
- ✓ Local Business Owners' Meetings
- ✓ Public Service Announcements
- ✓ Community Council Meetings

- ✓ *Anchorage Daily News* Advertising

4.2 Individual and Group Public Input

The project will affect those neighborhoods, businesses and residents with direct access to Fireweed Lane. The project team will contact these individuals using the following tools:

- ✓ Adjacent Tenant, Homeowner and Business Meetings
- ✓ Community Council Meetings
- ✓ Door-to-Door Visits / Door Hangers
- ✓ Newsletters
- ✓ Individual Door-to-Door/Face-to-Face Discussions
- ✓ Telephone, Fax, Email and U.S. Postal Service Communications

The project team will document verbal and written communication from the public in a summary. Copies of the summary will be distributed to the PM&E Project Manager.

4.3 Special Considerations

Fireweed Lane is an established corridor with many businesses fronting on the street. Non-English speaking populations own a significant number of the businesses. We will be working with the Alaska Emergency Language Bank, the Korean American Association and others as necessary to provide project information in languages appropriate to our stakeholders. Translators may also be needed for public meetings and citizen's advisory group meetings.

4.4 Public Involvement Activities

4.4.1 Team Workshop

The project team will schedule and meet with internal MOA stakeholders and staff prior to the first public meeting to decide the elements of the projects which public input may influence and the areas and issues it cannot. In this way, a consistent request for input can be made to the public, and they will be more likely to have realistic expectations of the process and to see their comment thoroughly considered in the projects' outcomes.

4.4.2 Identify Stakeholders/Prepare Mailing List

Mailing lists will be developed for both Fireweed and Spenard project mailings—newsletters, notices, etc. The project is within the boundaries of the North Star, Midtown and Spenard Community Councils. State legislators, Senator Johnny Ellis, Senator Hollis French, Representative Les Gara and Representative Eric Croft represent the area. Residents represented by Anchorage Municipal Assembly members Dick Traini, Dan Coffey, Dan Sullivan and Pamela Jennings. Each of these individuals will be included in the mailing list developed for the project.

The following is a preliminary list of potential user groups that may have an interest in this project and will be included in project mailings. This list will be expanded as research and input identifies others.

The following is a preliminary list of potential user groups that may have an interest in this project and will be included in project mailings. This list will be expanded as research and input identifies others.

The public involvement process for the Fireweed Lane Reconstruction will include the following potentially affected interests (PAI).

General Public

The general public using the facility fall into this group of potential affected stakeholders. Community members that frequently or occasionally use the roadway. The mailing list includes business, property owners and residents with the mailing list boundary.

Special Interest Groups

Alaska Center for the Environment
Alaska Truckers Association
Anchorage Citizen's Coalition
Anchorage Road Coalition
Anchorage Trails and Greenways Coalition
Transit Works

Agencies

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
U. S. Corps of Engineers (USCOE)
State of Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, Central Region (ADOT&PF)
Alaska Department Natural Resources (ADNR)
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)
State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
Federal Highway Administration

Local Government

Mayor Mark Begich's office
Project Management & Engineering (PM&E)
Anchorage Fire Department (AFD)
Anchorage Police Department (APD)
Anchorage Public Transportation Department (People Mover, Anchorage Rides, Share-a-Ride)
Anchorage Municipal Assembly Members
Anchorage School District (ASD)
Anchorage Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Environmental Services

Utilities

Alaska Communications System (ACS)
Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility (AWWU)
Chugach Electric Association (CEA)
ENSTAR Natural Gas Company (ENSTAR)
GCI Cable (GCI)
Municipal Light and Power (ML&P)

The initial mailing list will include mail recipients in the area within the boundaries shown on map below (Figure 1). In addition to the stakeholder mailing list, two other lists will be prepared. The first will be officials (state, municipal entities and state legislators) who would receive project correspondence as noted above. The second is a listing of agencies and agency contact individuals (see below). Individuals will be added to the stakeholder list throughout the project from requests and sign-in sheets at meetings.

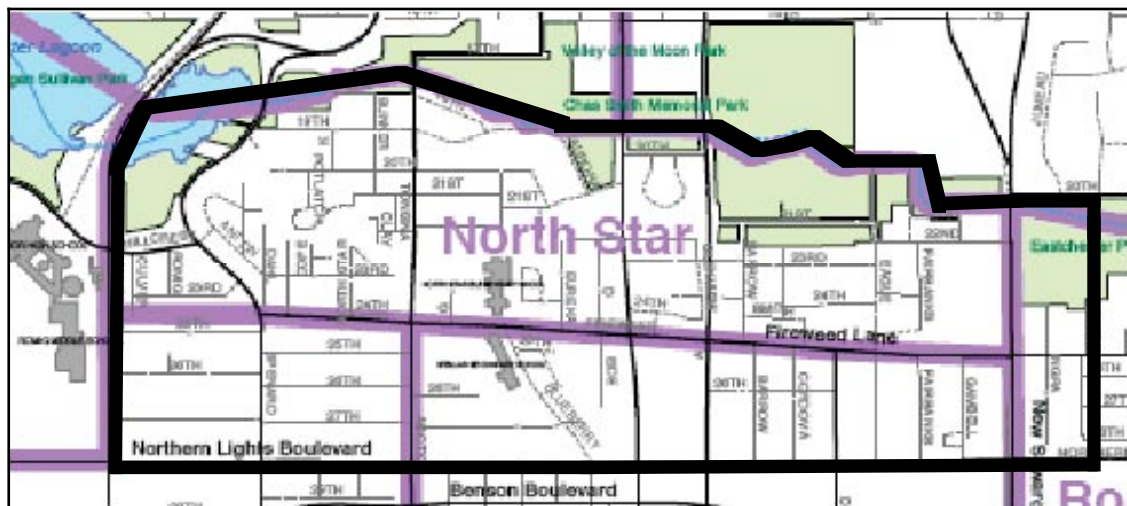


Figure 1. Mailing List Area

4.4.3 Public Meetings

For all meetings, materials will be reviewed by PM&E prior to the meeting and comment will be summarized for project records after the meeting.

The initial public meeting will introduce the project team, the project, the proposed public participation opportunities and schedule to the public. The project team will have basic background information available at this time including: aerial photography, existing rights-of-way, existing cross-section, utility locations and other pertinent data. Emphasis will be on the project team communicating the need for and the constraints of the project and on eliciting from the public the goals they wish to see met by the project's outcome.

4.4.4 Citizens' Advisory Group

A Citizens' Advisory Group will be assembled with representatives of affected community councils, corridor businesses, residents, transit, pedestrian, and vehicular users. This group will meet multiple times both to learn about the progress of the project and also to give focused and informed input to the project plans. It is hoped the group's members will also serve as a conduit to and from the project's stakeholders.

4.4.5 Business and Property Owners' Meetings

A meeting will be convened especially for representatives of the corridor's businesses in order to discuss their concerns and needs.

4.4.6 Public Meetings

A meeting will be convened especially for residents and interested public to discuss their concerns and needs.

4.4.7 Project Comments

The Public Involvement Coordinator, Anne Brooks, P.E., is the designated contact for the public for this project. She can be reached via email, telephone or fax. All public communications will also include contact information for the MOA, ADOT and Consultant project managers. All requests will be coordinated with Lounsbury and/or MOA PM&E and ADOT as deemed appropriate. Public responses will be documented in project records.

4.4.8 Documentation

This task includes documenting the public involvement efforts. The documents will be presented chronologically to provide future project phases with the complete project history. Comments and responses will be summarized. The project team will publish a Notice of Intent to Begin Engineering and Environmental Studies in the Anchorage Daily News.

3.0 SCHEDULE

Fireweed Lane Reconstruction: Spenard Road to the Seward Highway

Public Involvement Plan

All items marked with an asterisk () will be joint with Fireweed Lane project*

Date		Public Involvement Tool (Group/Activity)	Project Phase/Purpose	Time and Location
Throughout Project				
6/05thru EOP ¹	S, F	Mailing List	All Phases—continuously updated	N/A
6/05thru EOP ¹	S, F	Web Site Development	All Phases—continuously updated	www.midtownroads.com/fireweed www.midtownroads.com/spenard
Step 1: Develop Public Involvement Plan				
6/05 thru EOP	S, F	Public Involvement Plan	Covers public outreach all phases.	
Step 2 & 3: Identify Issues, Determine Evaluation Criteria				
09/2005	F	Corridor Walk	Introduce project in person to corridor businesses, obtain contact details	One with project team, one to distribute information to corridor businesses.
10/05/2005	S, F	Spenard Community Council	Announce project, invite community to public meeting	1 st Wednesday 7 pm Spenard Recreation Center
10/12/2005	S, F	North Star Community Council	Announce project, invite community to public meeting	4 th Wednesday 7 pm North Star Elementary School
10/12/2005	S, F	Midtown Community Council	Announce project, invite community to public meeting	
10/20/2005	F	Postcard #1	Announce project, gather information from the public	Mailed to mailing list (see boundary map attached)
10/24/2005	F	Business' Meeting	Introductory, gather information from corridor businesses	To be determined
11/3/2005	F	Public Meeting #1	Scoping workshop--Gather information from the public	To be determined
TBD	S, F	Newsletter #1	Summarize scoping input	
Step 4: Develop Design Options				
TBD	F	Citizens' Advisory Group Meeting #1	Introductory, current status, agenda for CAG's work	To be determined
TBD	F	Citizens' Advisory Group Meeting #2	Pre-DSR to gather ideas	To be determined
TBD	F	Newspaper Publication	Notice of Intent to Begin Engineering and Environmental Studies	TBD
TBD	F	CAG Meeting #3	Draft DSR	

Date		Public Involvement Tool (Group/Activity)	Project Phase/Purpose	Time and Location
TBD	F	Businesses' Meeting	Draft DSR	

Step 5: Develop and Select Preferred Alternative				
Draft Design Study Report				
TBD	S, F	Newsletter #2	Present Draft DSR/Prelim Design	To be mailed to mailing list (see boundary map attached)
	S, F	Public Meeting #2	Present Draft DSR & solicit comment on design elements	To be determined
	F	CAG Meeting #4	Final DSR & Pre-design	To be determined
TBD	F	Categorical Exclusion	Present Draft CE to ADOT&PF	TBD
	F	CAG Meeting #5	Final Design	
TBD	F	CE	Finalize CE	
FINAL DESIGN				
	S, F	Newsletter #3	Present Final Design, Design & Bidding Phase, introduce contractor	
	S, F	Public Meeting #3	Present Final Design	
	F	Newsletter #4	Announce beginning of Construction Phase,	

CAG = Citizen Advisory Group

CE = Categorical Exclusion

DSR = Design Study Report

¹EOP = End of Project

²The project team will meet with any group or individual upon request.

TBD = To Be Determined

F = Fireweed Lane

S = Spenard Road

4.0 PROJECT TEAM LIST

Contracting Agencies

Municipality of Anchorage

Project Management & Engineering

4700 Bragaw Street/POB 196650

Anchorage, AK 99519-6650

Fax: (907) 343-808

Project Manager, John Smith, 343-8422, smithj@ci.anchorage.ak.us

Project Administrator, Rand Gaynor, 343-8279, gaynorjr@muni.org

Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

P.O. Box 196900

Anchorage, AK 99519-6900

Fax: (907) 243-4409

Project Manager, Judy Dougherty, 269-0566, judy_dougherty@dot.state.ak.us

Consultant Team

Lounsbury & Associates (Project Lead)

5300 A Street
Anchorage, AK 99501
Telephone (907) 272-5451
Fax (907) 272-9065

Project Manager, David Krehmeier, P.E., d.krehmeier@lounsburyinc.com
Principal in Charge, Jim Sawhill, P.E., j.sawhill@lounsburyinc.com

Travis/Peterson Environmental Consulting, Inc (Environmental Lead)

3305 Arctic Boulevard, Suite 102
Anchorage, AK 99503-4575
Telephone (907) 522-4337
Fax (907) 522-4313

Environmental Engineer, Michael Travis, P.E. mtravis@tpeci.com

Brooks & Associates (Public Involvement Lead)

1704 Bannister Road
Anchorage, AK 99508-4021
Tel: (907) 272-1877
Fax: (907) 743-6087

M. Anne Brooks, P.E., Public Involvement Coordinator, annebrooks@ak.net
Kathy Burgess, Public Involvement Support, kbc@ak.net
Jan Hazen, Graphics & Web Site Design, jhazen@gci.net

Tryck Nyman & Hayes, Inc. (Landscape Design)

911 W. 8th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501-3497
Tel: (907) 279-0543
Fax: (907) 276-7679

Luanne Urfer, Landscape Architect, lurfer@thn-inc.com