



Meeting Notes

SUBJECT: **Spenard Road Reconstruction Project:
Benson Boulevard to Chester Creek**

PROJECT NO.: MOA Project No. 03-022

GROUP: Public

DATE: April 8, 2008

TIME: 2:00-3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Centerpoint Building Training Room
3801 Centerpoint Drive

MEETING OUTREACH: Invitation letter to businesses/residences/property owners along project corridor

MEETING ATTENDANCE: 19

MEETING MATERIALS: *Handouts:* Agenda and comment sheet
Graphics: PowerPoint Presentation and electronic voting

STAFF PRESENT: *MOA-PM&E:* John Smith, Rand Gaynor
MOA-Mayor's Office: Michael Johnson
Lounsbury & Associates: Jim Sawhill, Dave Krehmeier
Tryck Nyman Hayes: Jill Kovalsky, Lyle Austin
Brooks & Associates: Anne Brooks, Betty Caudle, Rose Cox

MEETING INFORMATION:

Anne Brooks welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the team to the audience.

John Smith provided background information on upgrades to Spenard Road from Benson Boulevard to Chester Creek, which are now in the design phase. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2009.

The project will reduce the existing four lanes to three lanes between Northern Lights Boulevard and Hillcrest Drive. Reducing lane widths and center-turn widths will allow for 8-foot-wide, multiuse pathways on both sides of the road for pedestrians and bicycles within the available right-of-way.

A raised median will be installed between Benson Boulevard and Northern Lights Boulevard due to the poor results of a less radical safety improvement project completed in fall of 2007. Off-street bus stops are planned in coordination with Municipality of Anchorage Public Transportation, where it is feasible and land sellers are available. Parking configurations that require vehicles to back into the street will be eliminated. Improvements outside of the right-of-way will be considered where property owners are interested and funding allows. Hard landscaping will be used instead of trees to reduce maintenance costs. Plans include realignment

of 27th Avenue where it crosses Spenard Road. Tangential issues include rehabilitated pavement and utilities where needed, and upgrades to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

An audience member asked how the project will address parking problems for businesses near Bear Tooth Theatre, where theatre-goers sometimes fill up other businesses' parking spaces. *The project will assess existing parking, consider opportunities to acquire property for additional parking, and engage business owners in discussions about joint-use parking lots.*

Another concern was bicycle traffic.

In addition to the 8-foot multiuse pathways on either side of the road, the project will include 3- to 5-foot-wide shoulders for bikes in the street.

The primary goal of this meeting was to gather feedback from business and property owners along the corridor on landscaping issues related to the project.

The audience used hand-held keypads to vote for their preferences on project theme, color, lighting, furnishings, fencing, seating and trash receptacles, opportunities to integrate art and character into the project, and sidewalk, crosswalk and median treatments. The results of their votes are attached.

One audience member expressed concern about lighting intensity along the north side of the street.

Although we don't have all the specific answers now, the intent is to employ the latest technology and work with residents so lights don't shine into their bedrooms or otherwise infringe upon them.

When shown the choices for crosswalk treatment, an audience member asked if there is an international standard for white striping on crosswalks to protect visitors from other countries. *Both choices that were displayed adequately delineate a crosswalk.*

Discussion about design elements such as banners revolved around who would be responsible for maintaining them. "When they get tattered, they look worse than no banner at all," an audience member said.

One option is to choose metal banners like those in the Kincaid Park area. These simply need to be power-washed every couple years.

There was also a concern expressed that words on banners may distract drivers.

Banners could simply convey color, not information, and are not expected to distract drivers.

"I'd like to see banners announcing the ends of the corridor, with flowers hung on light poles in between," suggested one audience member. "We could sponsor baskets through the municipal program."

When voting on the type of fencing to be installed, an audience member said he preferred a fence too tall to jump. "Right now people cross wherever they feel like it, regardless of traffic." There

was concern expressed about the number of inebriates that have migrated from downtown to Spenard.

Particular consideration was given to the type of fence to be installed along the pedestrian path leading from Hillcrest Drive to Chester Creek. “Isn’t there something better looking than Jersey barriers?” one person asked. Another suggested stained concrete would look nicer than typical gray concrete. Another suggested treating the barriers so graffiti could be washed off easily. *The concrete barriers installed at Piper Street to calm traffic were pointed to as an aesthetically pleasing choice.*

Other questions were: Will pedestrians be channeled to the west side of the street?

Yes.

Could we plant trees as a barrier?

No, as there’s not enough space for trees and the barrier needs to be strong to protect pedestrians and bicyclists on the trail from errant vehicles.

When voting on seating options at bus stops, one audience member requested choosing a style designed to discourage loitering.

The audience also voted on the type of trash receptacles they’d prefer. One man noted bus stops as the messiest areas on the street with their wrappers and cigarette butts. He asked if there was a way to encourage people to use the trashcans.

The audience acknowledged there is limited space for art along the corridor, and suggested tall, decorative sculpture as a way to maximize the space. One pointed out the windmill near Chilkoot Charlie’s as a good example. Another topic was the “Gateway to Spenard” archway over the road that was proposed at earlier meetings.

Incorporating the archway is expensive and would require securing additional right-of-way.

One audience member asked if we could combine the street lighting and sidewalk lighting into the same fixture, and the light poles installed in Mountain View were pointed to as a solution.

One audience member asked about snow removal. “You can’t walk on the sidewalk if it isn’t separated from the street,” he said.

The bike lane on the street would allow for temporary snow storage.

Discussion about improvements outside of the right-of-way led to the issue of businesses that offer pull-in parking in front of their establishments. “Are we going to take away their parking entirely?”

Business owners whose property is acquired for right-of-way would have the final say, as bond money tends to be less restrictive than use of federal funds. “It’s pretty open at this point, but it takes cooperation.”

WRITTEN COMMENTS

Project Theme

“Have fun in Spenard” is more futuristic than those proposed.
“More than a destination” is pretty subjective (though it sounds good). What will this mean?

Accent Pavement

Four-foot to five-foot sidewalks seem more realistic than an 8-foot walkway.

Heated sidewalks.

I prefer no accent on pavement – save some money.

Heated sidewalks.

Sidewalk texture: occasional touches are nice; cost is an issue.

Leave path for roller bladers, without edges and smooth.

Lighting

Brighter lights for safety.

One light, but aimed downward to reduce glare to neighboring houses and businesses.

For street traffic lighting, use a lower-height standard with lower intensity lighting than is currently used. Mountain View standard looks good.

The nice traditional lights, in addition to the luminaires, create too much clutter, can you combine low level light with the luminaires?

The higher, the brighter.

Lighting direct into pavement.

Light location

Over street hanging lights (with) lighted crosswalk pavement.

Avoid light standards obstructing walkers/bikers in pathway.

On an 8-foot walkway, having the light at the edge is fine, but I wouldn't do it if it requires sidewalk lighting plus streetlight.

Banners/flowers/art

Banners and flowers can co-exist. Both are in order.

Maintenance-free banners look good and the combination of banners and flowers is a good idea.

Banners and lights OK; Banners wear out and aren't replaced, metal banners good; Option for flowers and banners on a pole.

Sculpture: Archway over the road? Something to define beginning and end of area.

Combination of banners and flowers.

Banners should be done by local artists (i.e. Cindy Shake, Sheila Wyne/metal sculpture) to reflect the Spenard theme rather than commercially produced.

Site Furnishings: More shrubs.

Site furnishings different – bus stops have benches, other locations can have something more interesting.

More shrubs.

Fencing

Fencing more durable.

Limited fencing that does not interfere with measurable parking.

A better Jersey barrier is needed for Spenard Hill – decorative, or etched. If wire on top, it should not be cage-like.

The Jersey barrier needs much improvement for looks, etc. What else would work?

Jersey barrier? Yuk. Texture, color, something better.

Barriers down the hill to Chester Creek need to be decorative – Jersey barriers are a big no!

Decorative barrier from Hillcrest to Chester Creek – Jersey barrier is very unattractive.

Need better looking barriers on Romig Hill, need a meeting to discuss issues on the hill, need a bridge over Chester Creek.

Other comments:

More water fountains.

I feel that landscaping should be used wherever possible.

Sculpture should be low and representational, not high and intrusive.

Parking is a big issue – how to manage.

Can you send or e-mail the questions out prior to the (April) 16 and 17 meetings? Charlene ([email on file](#))

On-street parking brings customers closer to the building.

Don't confuse cyclists with random lines that might look like lanes.

Related documents on file:

- Sign in Sheets

- Meeting graphics

- Comment Sheets

- Summary of Landscaping Workshop audience voting