

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #1 SUMMARY

March 8, 2022, 11:00a.m. – 12:30p.m., via Teams

Meeting Objective

To reintroduce the project and technical stakeholders, discuss the project vision, review map studies and other data, and discuss draft purpose and need statement.

Attendees

Kelly Summers (DOT&PF)
Renee Whitesell (DOWL)
Kristen Hansen (DOWL)
Donna Robinson (DOWL)
Sam Klump (DOWL)
Rachel Steer (DOWL)
Morgan McCammon (DOWL)
Jovie Garcia (DOWL)
Adam Bradway (Mat-Su Borough)

Kevin Jackson (DOT&PF)
Allen Kemplen (DOT&PF)
Brad Sworts (Mat-Su Borough)
Claire Dougherty (Kittelson & Associates)
Andrew Ooms (Kittelson & Associates)
Bob Charles (Knik Tribe)
Douglas Campbell (DOT&PF)
Clint Adler (DOT&PF)
Danielle Bischoff (City of Wasilla)
Brian Lindamood (ARRC)

Summary

DOT&PF Project Manager Kelly Summers welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

DOWL Project Manager Renee Whitesell acknowledged the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members in attendance and reviewed the agenda outline. She reintroduced the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) process, purpose of the PEL, significance of the Purpose and Need (P&N) Statement, review of preliminary schedule (including OH #1) and overview map of project area in consideration.

Environmental Lead Kristen Hansen provided an overview of baseline data/existing conditions (environmental baseline research).

Transportation Planner Sam Klump outlined land use changes in this area over time, provided an overview of the origin/destination study and system performance analysis – safety, mobility, volume and speeds, travel time reliability, and pavement condition.



Renee provided a brief overview of baseline population and traffic forecast. She referenced the Department of Labor (DOL) Historical Population and Growth Projections, which forecasts MSB growth at 1.7 percent annually to 2045. The DOL forecast will be used for the P&N informed by Mat-Su LRTP high growth areas.

All the baseline information helps inform the PEL study's P&N. Renee explained What a P&N statement is, and its importance to the project. She provided an overview of emerging themes which form the P&N for this PEL study.

Emerging Themes Discussion

The TAC members were moved into two moderated break-out rooms facilitated by Donna Robinson (NEPA Specialist) and Kristen. A volunteer team captain reported back to the group on the Emerging Themes:

- Do you agree or disagree with the emerging themes?
- Why/Why not?
- Are we missing anything, in terms on potential P&N for this project?

EMERGING THEMES: PURPOSE & NEED



Parks Highway Function:

Local, regional, and through trips all using Parks Highway through Wasilla.



Travel Time Reliability:

Delay experienced by all trips; significant delays for truck trips vs. comparable facilities.



Safety:

Fatal and serious injury crash rate well above targets and levels on comparable facilities.



Land Use:

Pace of land uptake for development increasing.



Delay:

Speeds reduce during peak travel times and add hours of delay to trips. As population and volumes grow, more hours of delay are likely.



Economic Impact:

Travel time delay reduces supply chain reliability, impacts function of Wasilla urban core.



Population increase in the Mat-Su:

Population has grown by 20% between 2010 and 2022.

Breakout Room 1, Discussion:

- Consider Wasilla Comprehensive Plan and land use plans within the Parks Corridor. The Comprehensive Plan focuses on densifying the area around the Parks corridor, increasing the amount of people that live and work in that area. This will increase the number of people walking and biking in that area.



- When considering a no-build alternative, keep in mind the right-of-way limitations due to the railroad and Lake Lucille to the south of the Parks. Also need to be consider the historic buildings along the Parks corridor, limiting options for expansion (for a no-build alternative).
- The travel time reliability section uses technical language, the team should consider using simpler language for the public.
- Add a theme on pedestrian, bicycle, and transit opportunities. The Parks Highway lacks north/south pedestrian and bicycle connections in the corridor. More connections could be added to increase pedestrian and bike use. Current park-and-ride facilities are well used, and future facilities would likely also be well used, which would decrease the volume of traffic on roads.
- There is one existing pedestrian and bicycle facility under crossing the Parks Highway near Lake Lucille that is gated and locked due to a high-water table flooding the facility. While this facility does not function properly, more options like this at high-density housing and commercial/retail locations could be considered with an alternate corridor.
- Wasilla has a new multi-modal transit site planned west of Lake Lucille at a former gravel pit.

Breakout Room 2, Discussion:

- Understanding of how much delay is in corridor, and how much is projected (travel time reliability). What are the implications of this for destinations? Is delay from through traffic or created by destinations?
- Scenarios – are we considering a scenario where there will be ongoing increase in population, or is there a possibility for slower growth, reduced growth?
- Consider multimodal use of the corridor – specifically with the railroad, bicycles, and pedestrians.
- Increased traffic creates increased pressure on maintenance crews for the City of Wasilla.

Renee captured the discussion, live in the presentation, and reviewed the TAC schedule of upcoming meetings. She concluded the meeting with closing comments and thanked the members for their participation. She reiterated the project contacts, project website and project email.

Action Items/Next Steps

Project team:

- Post meeting materials to project website
- Distribute online survey to committee members for additional comments on the emerging themes discussion.

Committee members:

- Provide any additional feedback using online survey.
- Participate in the Virtual Public Meeting #1 on March 29, 2022, and upcoming committee meetings.
- Monitor email for future project updates.

