



OPEN HOUSE #2 SUMMARY

December 8, 2022, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m., Wasilla Public Library

The open house was held in person in the multi-purpose room at the Wasilla Public Library. Attendees began lining up outside the event room around 4:05 p.m. and were admitted at 4:15 p.m. The meeting format was an open house style, and no formal presentation was made. All attendees were greeted at the sign in desk with frequently asked questions and a fact sheet for the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study, and then they were shown into the event room where project boards lined the perimeter of the room. Informational poster boards depicted the project background and history, study area, schedule, PEL process, purpose and need statement, preliminary alternatives, alternative screening and criteria, and additional information on the next steps in the study process.

The project team were available throughout the meeting to answer questions posed by the public on the preliminary alternatives and helped to respond to unclear information about the project schedule and funding. The project team gathered comments and feedback at a comments table and via an online survey that was available on the virtual StoryMap. The survey will be open for additional comments through February of 2023.

More than 100 people signed in, including members of the project team.

Summary of Questions and Comments Received During the Open House:

- Property impacts:
 - Concerns about the implications of an alternative Parks Highway corridor on property values
 - Clarification on how the eminent domain process works
 - Concerns about residential displacement occurring by a future alternative Parks Highway corridor
- Consider alternative corridors along the following routes:
 - Building a bridge in inner Wasilla to ease downtown traffic
 - Using the existing Knik-Goose Bay Road that reaches down to Point Mackenzie
- Consider multimodal transportation.
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian connections in areas south of Wasilla.
- Schedule: When will construction take place? The team explained that this project is currently a PEL study, which will be completed in winter 2023/24. The study will conduct an alternative evaluation process that may lead to a future project, but construction would be part of a future project development and delivery process. Several participants were anxious for construction to happen, and voiced frustration that previous studies have not resulted in an alternative corridor being constructed.
- Funding: Where is it coming from? The team responded that the study is a federally funded project led by DOT&PF, and that only the study has received funding at this point.



- Several participants sought clarification on how the preliminary alternatives may be paired with a transmission line being contemplated by the Matanuska Electric Association. This line is separate project outside of the scope of the PEL study.
- Environmental impacts
 - Enstar has a large gas line that runs parallel along Fern Street connecting Knik-Goose Bay Road and Fairview Loop.
 - Leota Street near Fairview Loop has a 20-inch gas pipeline running underneath and a natural spring that floods it regularly.
 - Leota Street intersects with Fern Street and is about the midpoint between Knik-Goose Bay Road and Fairview Loop. There are some wetlands in the area also.
- Comments on preliminary alternatives
 - Green and yellow routes received the most favorable feedback during the meeting
 - Light blue, pink, and no build alternatives are favored by participants who'd like Fairview Loop to be avoided due to it being a highly residential area, prone to slipping in the event of an earthquake, and for the distance it would place the highway from Wasilla
 - Several participants commented that they considered that widening the existing Parks Highway would be the most effective option. Participants were directed to the no build alternative board and assured that widening the existing Parks Highway is being considered in this PEL study.
- Comments on Purpose & Need Statement
 - Several attendees enquired about the purpose and need for the alternative corridor. It is important to emphasize that this is a statewide facility, and the project is needed as a statewide transportation solution (rather than being exclusively focused on transportation in and around Wasilla).

The team thanked everyone for their participation and the robust discussion. The team concluded the open house by letting participants know that their comments would be summarized and would help inform the PEL study, there will be two more open houses as part of the PEL study process, and public comments are welcome throughout the study.

Action Items/Next Steps

Project team:

- Update Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) to comments from public.
- Post meeting materials to project website.
- Distribute online survey for additional comments to the project team.
- Distribute public comments to the project team and respond to feedback.

