



# STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 3 MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 18, 2023, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m., via Teams

## Attendees

- Clint Adler – DOT&PF Project Manager
- Renee Whitesell – DOWL
- Jovie Garcia – DOWL
- Joe Taylor – Lounsbury
- Camden Yehle – Meadow Lakes Community Council
- Crystal Smith – MSB School District

## Meeting Objective

Review the alternative corridor routes recommended to progress to detailed alternative development. Discuss why these alternatives have been selected.

Outline the next steps for alternative development and evaluation to identify the recommended alternative(s) and wrapping up the PEL Study process.

## Summary

Due to few participants, the format of the meeting shifted to a one-on-one discussion with the project team and participants: Camden Yehle, Meadow Lakes Community Council, and Crystal Smith, Matanuska Susitna Borough (MSB) School District.

## Discussion and Feedback:

### Camden Yehle (Meadow Lakes Community Council):

- As the Parks Highway cannot easily be widened, the Meadow Lakes Community Council (MLCC) was advocating more for improvements to specific areas of the existing Parks Highway.  
*Response: The project team has found over the course of this PEL study, with the combination of traffic growth and movement seen in the Origin-Destination Study and the forecast population growth, the purpose and need could not be met by widening the Parks Highway. There could be short-term improvements on the Parks Highway until an alternative corridor could be constructed.*





- MLCC is concerned that an alternative corridor would create another divider in the community between north and south Wasilla. As more roads are built for more traffic, driving becomes the only comfortable way to get around Wasilla. Materials shared so far do not illustrate a pathway.  
*Response: A pathway is required on all new DOT&PF facilities, including this proposed alternative corridor. The preliminary design typical sections the project team is developing focus on the roadway facility, but it is specifically noted that multiuse pathways are included with any potential project.*

*Car-based transportation is the key mode of transportation in and around the project area and from a statewide perspective. Major investments and funding would be needed to explore a transit alternative, which are not part of the PEL Study. However, the project team could receive comments on this idea to get further guidance from DOT&PF.*

- According to the Origin-Destination Study, only 3% of the traffic was traveling through the study area. The alternative corridor would only solve a problem for 3% of traffic because the remainder in traveling to, from, and within Wasilla.  
*Response: The Origin-Destination Study models the amount of traffic that may move to an alternative corridor. Currently there is a condition where the local traffic and the through traffic are mixing on one facility, the Parks Highway. Some of the through traffic is not focused on a Wasilla location. It could be originating from somewhere in the broader study area. The models show a substantial amount of traffic moving to a new corridor, significantly easing the congestion conditions on the existing Parks Highway. The models illustrate benefits for both local and through traffic yielded through the alternative corridor, with the key being interchange placement to maximize the benefit of traveling on the controlled access facility to move to the destination.*

*The purpose of an alternative corridor would not leave two highways, it would create an opportunity for Wasilla to develop as a “downtown style.”*

- The Seward Meridian has an interchange over the Parks Highway, what would happen with this interchange with an alternative corridor?  
*Response: This interchange is at the far eastern side of the project area. If it becomes a situation where this interchange needs to be reevaluated and improved, that could be suggested as part of a future project.*

*Additionally, there are 14 at-grade intersections along the Parks Highway in the project corridor that could be improved with an alternative corridor.*

- It is unlikely that the preliminary alternatives proceeding to detailed alternative development would be supported by MLCC. These alternatives cause concerns with a high-speed corridor through neighborhoods, impacting trees, wetlands, and homes.  
*Response: The project team appreciated the feedback. The project team is mindful of the balance of a broad range of issues as alternatives move through the development and screening process.*





*The project team would be willing to talk again with MLCC members to answer questions and hear that feedback after the May 25, 2023, public meeting.*

- MLCC will plan to submit membership comments as well as encourage members to submit comments individually. Should members email the project team, or will there be a survey? What is the deadline for comments?

*Response: MLCC members can email the project team. Following Open House No. 3, a survey will open requesting feedback. The project team would like feedback from advisory committee members by June 16, 2023, on the Parks Highway Alternative Corridor Level 2 Screening Results. Additionally, there will be a video presentation on the project website available starting May 25, 2023, along with the meeting materials.*

- Would it be possible to get a version of the preliminary alternatives with satellite view showing parcels and wetlands?

*Response: At this point, the project team is working with larger, over-scaled lines illustrating the preliminary alternatives conceptually. As part of detailed alternative development, the team is evaluating specific property impacts that will be shared with the advisory committees and the public later in the project. Maps showing wetlands within the project area are posted on the website.*

## Action Items/Next Steps

Project team:

- Contact Crystal Smith (MSB School District) and schedule follow up comments/questions.

Committee members:

- Continue to provide any additional feedback.
- Participate in the Open House No. 3 on May 25, 2023, and upcoming committee meetings.
- Monitor email for future project updates.

