

HOMER NEWS

Public turns out to hear of planned DOT projects

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By McKibben Jackinsky

Staff writer

When the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities held an open house at Homer City Hall Aug. 5, Homer area residents showed up, eager to hear about the seven area projects being planned by the state.

“The open house was a huge success. We had a great turnout, with almost 60 individuals signing the sign-up sheet,” said DOT&PF Project Manager Sean Baski.

“It’s always a good sign when we have that many people show up. It was really exciting to have an opportunity for the public to see so many projects coming from the department.”

Baski was aware resurfacing work on the Sterling Highway currently underway between Anchor Point and Homer has raised the public’s interest in DOT projects; however, he said comments extended beyond travel delays.

“We heard there was excitement about opportunities for jobs and everything that comes with a construction project,” said Baski. “Granted, it’s painful when it comes and everyone realizes there’s delays here and there, but the end product is such an improvement that it’s well worth the heartache.”

Comments on upcoming projects are still being accepted, unless otherwise noted in the following list. They should include observations about the area’s current condition, safety concerns and suggestions for improvement.

“We always encourage people to comment at any time, but as we move further in the process it becomes harder to incorporate or to try to handle people’s comments,” said Baski.

Sterling Highway and North Fork Road overhead beacon

The project includes installation of an overhead flashing beacon and signing supporting a two-way stop at the Sterling Highway and North Fork Road intersection in Anchor Point. Survey and design work are in progress; construction is anticipated for summer 2015. Direct comments to Carla Smith, DOT&PF project manager, carla.smith@alaska.gov, 907-269-0544 or 4111 Aviation Ave., Anchorage, AK 99502.

Pioneer Avenue and Main Street overhead beacon

The project will install an overhead all-way stop, flashing beacon and signage at the intersection of Pioneer Avenue and Main Street. Survey and design work are currently being conducted. Construction is anticipated for summer 2013. Direct comments to Carla Smith, DOT&PF project manager, carla.smith@alaska.gov, 907-269-0544 or 4111 Aviation Ave., Anchorage, AK 99502.

As it exists, the intersection is a two-way stop, but Smith has received one comment asking it be made a three-way stop.

“Actually, we’re going to create a four-way stop there, stopping from every direction,” said Smith.

Sterling Highway and Main Street intersection improvements

The scope of this project includes upgrading the intersection to a roundabout or a signal. Surveys and field studies will be conducted this fall, with an environmental document to be completed in 2014. Construction is anticipated for the summer of 2015-2016, with the schedule depending on the improvement chosen. Direct comments to Carla Smith, DOT&PF project manager, carla.smith@alaska.gov, 907-269-0544 or 4111 Aviation Ave., Anchorage, AK 99502.

“I received the most comments during the open house for the Sterling Highway and Main Street intersection,” said Smith. “They were pretty much half and half, with maybe a little more weighted toward the community wanting the signal more than the roundabout.”

Smith said another public meeting would be scheduled for the project later this year.

Lake Street rehabilitation

Working with the Federal Highway Administration, DOT&PF is proposing rehabilitation of Lake Street between the Sterling Highway and Pioneer Avenue-East End Road.

It includes improvements to 2,500 feet of pavement; adding a bike lane to the west side, with a bike lane for the east side being investigated; re-establishing existing ditches; improving drainage on the west side of the street; replacing existing cross-culverts and relocating utilities as necessary. The geotechnical exploration, ground survey and right-of-way survey has been completed. The environmental document is expected to be completed by this fall, and then final design efforts will begin. Construction is expected to begin in 2016.

Direct comments to Sean Baski, DOT&PF project manager, sean.baski@alaska.gov, 907-269-0547, 4111 Aviation Ave., Anchorage, AK 99502.

Baski said he had received comments from one property owner concerned about drainage issues along Lake Street.

Beluga Lake floatplane facilities improvements

With no public access available between Homer Airport and Beluga Lake, aircraft must be trailered from the lake along Lake Street-Sterling Highway to Ocean Drive, down Homer Spit Road and along Kachemak Drive to the airport aviation tie-down and hangar areas. This project provides direct access between the lake and airport in support of floatplane and emergency boat access.

It includes design of a new access road, a turnaround area and a ramp into the lake. An environmental document is included in the project. Design work is scheduled to be done between August 2013 and Sept. 2014, property rights to be addressed between September 2013 and August 2014, and construction between May and September 2015. Direct comments to Jon Knowles, DOT&PF consultant coordinator, jon.knowles@alaska.gov, 907-269-0612, 4111 Aviation Ave., Anchorage, AK 99502.

Sterling Highway milepost 173-174 pavement preservation

In cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, DOT&PF plans to repave this one-mile section of the Sterling Highway in Homer that is locally known as the by-pass. Surveys have been complete; environmental documents and design plans are being prepared. Construction is anticipated for 2014, and may extend into 2015. The project will not change the look of this area, nor does it require private property acquisition. Direct comments to Sean Baski, DOT&PF project manager, sean.baski@alaska.gov, 907-269-0547, 4111 Aviation Ave., Anchorage, AK 99502.

Sterling Highway milepost 174-179 pavement preservation

Working with the Federal Highway Administration, the state plans to address this five-mile stretch of the Sterling Highway between Beluga Lake and end of the Spit. The project includes repairing shoulders damaged by erosion, adding a pedestrian crossing near Lake Street and improving an existing crossing at Kachemak Drive, re-establishing existing ditches, improving drainage of existing culverts and replacing signage and guardrail ends. The design work is almost complete and a request for funding from the Federal Highway Administration is being prepared. Construction is expected to begin in 2014.

Because of the progress already made on this project, Baski said, "This comment period is virtually over."

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