



GLACIER HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS PUBLIC COMMENT RESPONSES

(Note: Public comment period closed May 12, 2012)

Thank you for your input!

We received over 140 written and e-mailed comments from our April public meeting. Thank You. A summary of those comments was e-mailed out last month and is now posted on the project website. We have categorized the most frequent comments below, and provided our responses.

BACK LOOP ROAD ROUNDABOUT

In an effort to keep DeHart's, and minimize impacts to their access, the Design Team has investigated another alternative. In this alternative, the roundabout has been moved further away from DeHart's and into the UAS vacant lot. See figure (thank you to the couple of people who recommended this location). We have met with the adjacent property owners and this new roundabout location is now the proposed alternative. Please see the project website for a higher resolution Figure of this new location for the roundabout. <http://dot.alaska.gov/sereg/projects/abcorr/index.shtml>



Proposed Roundabout at Back Loop



The Design team looked at traffic signal alternatives in 2003 and 2011. These alternatives would require a retaining wall along side of DeHart's and would eliminate DeHart's direct access onto Glacier Highway. Some of the main reasons for using a roundabout at this location include; a roundabout is safer than a traffic signal, it will have fewer vehicles backing up on the steep grade of Back Loop Road and it will cost less to operate and maintain. Many communities prefer roundabouts because they are more environmentally friendly, slow traffic, and when accompanied with landscaping they are more aesthetically pleasing.

SPEED LIMIT

Glacier Highway is designated as an Urban Principal Arterial. Therefore, its main function is to move traffic from one area to another. Decreasing speeds is not an objective of this project—improving safety and providing for future traffic growth are the objectives. The proposed road improvements are designed to be safe at the design speed and will include several improvements that will increase safety including; sidewalks on both sides of the street, 8-foot shoulders, left turn lane at Auke Bay Lab, center lane from Back Loop to Bay View, continuous street lighting, eliminating parking on the shoulders, and improved bus stops at better locations.

AUKE BAY COMMUNITY AND PROJECT PROCESS

We heard from the public the importance that DeHart's has to the local community. In response, we have developed a new alternative that will maintain DeHart's and provide them reasonable access. We have met with UAS, CBJ, Auke Bay Elementary, and Capital Transit several times to coordinate this project with their plans.

As part of the Auke Bay Corridor Study from 2002 to 2004, there was an extensive public involvement program that included many public meetings and a Citizens Advisory Committee. The outcome of that planning process was a set of short term and long term recommendations. This project is the implementation of many of those short term recommendations, albeit with some revisions to reflect current traffic volumes and growth rates. We held public meetings in January 2011 and April 2012 where we received 250 written comments. The local community has played an important role in the development of this project and many of the design features are specifically based on public feedback. Balancing the needs of motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and the adjacent residents and businesses is always a challenge. We feel that the project will be a great improvement to the community and will continue to keep the public involved as the design continues.

FRITZ COVE ROAD INTERSECTION

We understand that the indirect left turn is an unfamiliar turning movement for Juneau drivers, so was a roundabout until just a few years ago. It is important to remember that 90% of motorists will not need to use the indirect left turn. The indirect left turn is provided for drivers who do not want to wait for a gap in the traffic to make a standard left turn. Traffic design analysis indicates the only ones that may need to wait longer than recommended at this intersection are the 27 vehicles turning left out of Auke Lake Way during the peak afternoon hour (4:30 to 5:30). When compared to the other 1,093 motorists using this intersection, we do not feel that other intersection configurations that have large impacts to Auke Creek, construction cost, and the majority of motorists, are justified.



PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AT FRITZ COVE ROAD

We investigated pedestrian crossings at this intersection and design standards indicate there are not enough pedestrians to justify a crossing. In addition, UAS has plans and funding to build a pedestrian overpass from the Anderson Building to the main campus. This will provide a protected crossing for UAS students and faculty. In addition, the bus stops are being relocated toward the Auke Lake wayside to improve sight distance for the pedestrians crossing the Glacier Highway.

BACK LOOP ROAD

Funding appropriations do not include direct improvements to the Back Loop – UAS intersection. However, some improvements will be made including; adding paved shoulder and sidewalks, which will improve visibility for drivers coming out of UAS. We also investigated left turn lanes on Back Loop Road and determined that the numbers of left turning vehicles do not warrant adding left turn lanes, at this time.

Other comments we heard with corresponding responses, are summarized below:

- Drainage problems in this area
 - *Drainage will be improved throughout the project.*
- Widen the approach at Auke Lake Way
 - *The approach will be widened enough to allow a bus to turn up Auke Lake Way.*
- What happens if harbor improvements don't get constructed before parking is eliminated on Back Loop Road? (and other concerns about losing the on-street parking on Back Loop Road)
 - *Construction of these projects will be an inconvenience to many. We appreciate your patience and look forward to having better facilities when the work is completed.*
- Better coordination with Transit
 - *We have met several times with Capital Transit and will continue to do so through design.*
- More pedestrian crosswalks
 - *Pedestrian crosswalks will be constructed on all three legs of the roundabout. There will continue to be a school crossing near Auke Bay Elementary School. We are also adding crosswalks at the UAS/Back Loop intersection.*

FUTURE PROJECT UPDATES

Project updates will be posted to the project website and will also be sent to everyone who has provided an e-mail address. If you received this project up-date by e-mail, you are already on the project e-mail list. If you would like to be added to the project e-mail list, or know of someone who wants to be added, you can subscribe to future project updates by going to this web address and entering your e-mail address.

<http://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/d.jsp?llr=vphfazjab&p=oi&m=1110014336501>