

MEMORANDUM



Date: April 14, 2022

To: Matt Edge, CRW Engineering Group, LLC (CRW)

From: Olivia Cohn, Solstice Alaska Consulting, Inc. (SolsticeAK)

Re: March 2022 Virtual Public Open House and 65% Design Public Involvement
E. 48th Avenue and Cordova Street Upgrades

A virtual public open house meeting regarding the E. 48th Ave and Cordova Street Upgrades 65% project design was held on Wednesday, March 24, 2022. The purpose of this memorandum is to document outreach prior to the meeting, meeting details, public comments received, and follow-up outreach and discussions.

Outreach Preceding Open House Meeting

In advance of the virtual open house, the public was notified via a March 2022 Midtown Community Council (MTCC) in-person meeting announcement, a postcard mailer, electronic notices via the project listserv and Federation of Community Councils listserv, and an announcement on the project website (www.48th-cordovareconstruction.com).

Project team representatives (Matt Edge, CRW and Olivia Cohn, SolsticeAK) attended the March 9, 2022 MTCC meeting held from 12:00 PM to 1:30 PM in the 3000 C St. 1st Floor Conference Room in Anchorage. Mr. Edge announced the open house and invited the midtown community to attend. In addition, he provided a summary of the project process and schedule, informed attendees that the E. 48th Ave corridor 65% draft design was underway with anticipation that the Urban Design Commission would review it in early summer 2022, and offered individual meetings for those who were interested. Approximately 15 people attended this meeting, and 10 comments were verbally provided during discussion (Table 1).

An electronic notice regarding the open house was distributed via the project email list to approximately 60 individuals on March 16, 2022; a postcard was mailed to the project listserv of approximately 600 recipients on March 17, 2022; and an announcement was communicated via the Federation of Community Councils listserv on March 17, 2022 and again as a reminder on March 23, 2022.

In response to outreach, three comments were received electronically prior to the public open house meeting. The verbal and written comments are summarized by topic in Table 1. *See Appendix 1 for MTCC meeting documentation (project handout and meeting agenda), outreach that occurred prior to the open house, and written comments received preceding the meeting.*

Table 1. Feedback Received During 3/9/22 MTCC Meeting and Before the Open House

Topic	Comment (comment source)
Snow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice is a mess on sidewalks. Where will snow be moved and stored? (Meeting attendee A) • Take into consideration what the City is going to do with the snow. (Meeting attendee B)
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There seems to be a trend of the City taking business easements when improving roads such as Fireweed Lane pedestrian facilities that would result in less parking. This is destroying businesses in the process of improving the city. (Parcel 124 representative meeting attendee) • There is not enough parking at businesses. I do not want sidewalks, and I want rolled curbs. The street has numerous uses. (Parcel 124 representative meeting attendee) • Salvation Army Alaska owns the 660 E. 48th Ave property, which has been used as a 69-bed adult drug and alcohol rehab center since 1985. A review for non-conforming determination completed and recorded on March 10, 2022 states that of the 16 parking spaces on the property's north side, and 8 are not legal conforming spaces. They are critical to facility operation. Requested that E. 48th Ave improvements allow for rolled curb along the property's north side to allow for continued parking space use. (Parcel 123 representative March 21, 2022 email)
Bicycles/ pedestrians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Midtown, bikes and pedestrians are not the bulk of the traffic. (Meeting attendee A) • I ride my bicycle on 48th Ave, which is not a busy street. The 12-foot lanes are unsafe for bikes. The shared use pathway is not practical in this low volume area with side streets. Wider lanes with shoulders would be practical. Many will ride on the road even with a 10 ft pathway. Reduce sidewalks to 5 ft wide, as there are few pedestrians. Use the remainder for wider lanes. This will be safer, provide for more effective car and cycle traffic flow, and cost less. (Member of public March 23, 2022 email)
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the land that borders Alaska Village Electric Cooperative (AVEC) property, I recommend placing two No Parking signs at STA. 16+60 and STA. 18+25 rather than one at STA. 17+48 R8, which would obstruct off street parking AVEC currently uses and is in an area that drivers would rarely consider a parking space. (Parcel 127 representative March 17, 2022 email)
Right-of-way (ROW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per the MTCC meeting, the City might want additional ROW from the south side of E. 48th Ave along Providence's parcel. I would like our design team to connect with the City to confirm this need. (Parcel 105 March 17, 2022 email)
Impediment to business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses are not accommodated and will be bankrupted. (Parcel 124 representative meeting attendee)
Project support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for improving the road. (Parcel 127 representative March 17, 2022 email)
Schedule/ public involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When will construction happen? (Meeting attendee B) • I would like a separate meeting. (Parcel 124 representative meeting attendee) • MTCC would like to have you back to speak about the project. (Meeting attendee B) • When does the public comment period close? (Meeting attendee B)

March 24, 2022 Public Open House Meeting

On March 24, 2022, the public open house meeting was held via Zoom from 6:00 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. Representatives from the project team who attended the meeting included: Julie Makela and Melinda Tsu, Municipality of Anchorage (MOA); Matt Edge, CRW; and Olivia Cohn and Kennedy Kruchoski, SolsticeAK. Six members of the public attended the meeting..

After a brief introduction and virtual meeting participation instructions, the project team presented an overview and update regarding the project that included the following information:

- *Project timeline:* The project is currently at the 65% design phase for the E. 48th Ave corridor, and it will move into final design development next winter. Utility relocation agreements and ROW acquisition will occur in 2024, with construction of the E. 48th Ave corridor occurring in 2025 at the earliest, contingent on funding.
- *Project area:* Upgrades were split into phases due to funding availability. The E. 48th Ave corridor was prioritized over the Cordova Street corridor in order to upgrade the storm drain.
- *Purpose and need:* The project purpose is to upgrade E. 48th Ave to current MOA Collector Roadway standards. It is needed because existing roadways and drainage systems have aged and are outdated, and proposed corridor development needs infrastructure updates.
- *Project area conditions and proposed developments:* Current conditions include driveway heaving, an aging storm drain, deteriorating asphalt surfaces, and a lack of pedestrian facilities and continuous street lighting. This phase’s developments are limited to E. 48th Ave.
- *Project phases and public outreach:* An overview of the outreach for the project’s concept report, design study report, and design phases was provided.
- *Proposed roadway corridor:* The 65% design drawings with project specifics were reviewed, and it was reiterated that the plan is not final and comments may be submitted through April 2022.
- *Next steps:* Stakeholder and public comments will be collected through April, and the 65% design will be presented to the Urban Design Commission in May or June 2022. The 95% design will be modified and updated, and another public house may be held in 2023 to discuss it. Individuals or businesses that would like more information or who would like to discuss something specific about their property, may schedule individual project team meetings.

In response to the presentation, 16 comments were received verbally during the meeting, and 1 was received via email after the meeting. No other written comments were received as of April 12, 2022. Comments are summarized by topic in Table 2 with project team responses. *See Appendix 2 for meeting materials and documentation (including the presentation) and the comment received after the meeting.*

Table 2. Feedback Received During and Following 3/24/22 Virtual Public Open House Meeting

Topic	Comments (comment source)	Project Team Responses
Snow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about snow removal? What is the budget? Landscaping is planned for areas where businesses currently store snow. (Parcel 124 representative) • Design will require cleared snow to be hauled away instead of stored on site. Plowing sidewalks will result in berms and the need to remove snow. The road is currently a mess, down to a single lane because of berms. Ice holes are damaging vehicles. Expect needing an additional \$300k for street maintenance budget for this street alone. (Parcel 124 representative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed landscaping is designed to withstand snow piles. The street maintenance department will provide direction on design. The project will not direct snow clearing methods, which are unlikely to change substantially. Grass areas provide a place for snow storage, which is difficult with full frontage driveways since there is no place where storage would not impede vehicles. • The project will not necessarily solve problems in a year. The project team is documenting where snow is currently stored and the road’s year-round uses.

Topic	Comments (comment source)	Project Team Responses
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All businesses have asked for rolled curb. Anything else will significantly impede parking. (Parcel 124 representative) • This project does not leave room for 48th Ave parking and no room to double park. Turnagain Herb uses all of its parking and rents only half the building. (Parcel 124 representative) • Do not do landscaping. The space should be used for business parking. Landscaping impedes visibility, safety, and parking; is not wanted by businesses; and is a waste of money and space. (Parcel 124 representative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOA Traffic Department is determining feasibility of the received rolled curb comments. After meeting with the Traffic Department, the public will be informed about the rolled curbs outcome. The project team is open to meet business owners and stakeholders on site. • We understand that the landscaping comment is meant to include the entire project area.
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses need construction to move quickly. Last year a sign was in the road for months with no work done. Some work should be done at night, when businesses are closed. Businesses have gone bankrupt because of this. (Parcel 124 representative) • Consider contractor incentives to finish the job quicker than scheduled. (Parcel 124 representative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project is attempting to understand and account for business needs and will minimize construction impacts as possible. Unfortunately, construction will cause impacts. The contractor will have a set number of days and scope. Contractor details will be identified further in design. • Incentives have been done for large projects, including a Northern Lights Boulevard culvert replacement.
Impediment to business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project is detrimental to businesses, prioritizing residential development. It follows an Anchorage trend that negatively impacts businesses when improving roads. Due to the project, I am unable to sell my business. It will not work to turn a semi-commercial area into a residential area. Businesses are leaving the area due to this project and homelessness. The project is making land and businesses worthless. (Parcel 124 representative) • The project is taking land that businesses used for over 50 years. I did not realize when I bought my business, though I do now, that I do not own it. (Parcel 124 representative) • Is money budgeted for loss of business during construction? (Parcel 124 representative via March 30, 2022 email) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project team has attempted to accommodate businesses to the extent possible. Conversations with businesses are still underway. The plans have been changed significantly to minimize negative impacts to businesses. • The project will improve Six Robblees' currently steep driveway. Driveways are wider than how they may appear on the design map and are wider than the road. • There is no money budgeted for loss of business due to this project. Business access will remain available throughout construction, and we will coordinate with businesses to schedule temporary closures to reduce impacts as much as possible.

Topic	Comments (comment source)	Project Team Responses
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are utility relocations and agreements funded out of the bond? (Parcel 124 2nd representative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, regarding funding. Impacts will be minimized through directional drilling and other methods. Municipality roads do not leave much room for moving utilities. The 65% design phase allows for understanding utility impacts and identifying which to relocate.
Project support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I support everything you are doing. My property is mostly used for large equipment storage. Better roads would be great. Excited for this work to get done. It will look better. (Parcel 109 representative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thank you for the support and information.
Schedule/ public involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I did not have time to talk to all 48th Ave businesses and assume they do not know about the meeting. Request a 30-day notice in the future. Did not receive an email until the day before the meeting. Will there be another chance for comments? (Parcel 124 representative) Some photos in the slides are not of 48th Ave. (Parcel 124 representative) I would like a copy of the map in the presentation printed. (Parcel 124 representative) Because 48th Ave has many businesses and homes, not all stakeholders will be able to get what they want. (Parcel 109 representative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announcements are timed so they are not too early, causing people to forget, and not too late, so that sufficient notice is provided. However, we can try to send future notices earlier, since not many folks attended the meeting. We want to hear from property owners and are open to individual meetings. Each 48th Ave photo was taken on the project corridor. We can provide a copy of the map. It is also on the project website, under the "Documents & Resources" tab, with a legend.

Meeting Follow-Up

Following the meeting, the presentation was made available on the project website. A link to the project website directing the public to the meeting materials and an announcement of continued opportunity to provide comment through April 30, 2022 was distributed via the project listserv on March 29, 2022.

To ensure that local property area interests were engaged and accounted for, Matt Edge, CRW, held individual meetings with property owners within the project area. A total of 10 individual meetings took place and are summarized in Table 3. *See Appendix 3 for the notice distributed and web announcement.*

Table 3. Meetings with Project Team (Matt Edge, CRW) and Project Area Property Owners

Property	Mtg. Date	Discussion Summary
Parcel 107	3/28/22 via phone ¹	Mr. Edge said that MOA will not seek a public utility easement (PUE) for Parcel 107. Representative noted that future development would connect to the storm drain and water and sewer within 48th Ave. He will send the building permit package to Mr. Edge when it is submitted.

¹ Meetings were in-person, on site unless otherwise indicated.

Property	Mtg. Date	Discussion Summary
Parcel 118	3/29/22	Property owner would like a wider than 34 ft driveway and would like pavement between the end of the sidewalk and driveway. Mr. Edge will generate a drawing showing how the box truck could access the garage with the current design.
Parcel 121	3/30/22	Manager would like the driveway moved 10-12 ft east for easier garage access/turning. He is happy with the planned landscaping as it will provide snow storage. He likes the maintained access to the back gate and that on street parking will remain, as tractor trailers occasionally park on the north side of the roadway.
Parcel 122	3/30/22	Business manager and lead technician were satisfied when Mr. Edge stated that “nose-in” parking on the south side of the road would be lost, but north side on-street parking would remain. Their main concern is access during construction, which Mr. Edge said would be accommodated. Mr. Edge highlighted needing a PUE for sidewalk construction.
Parcel 119	3/30/22	Business manager would like the driveway moved west to line the western curb with the center of the western overhead door, noting that people cut through their driveway to avoid a stop sign. He would like a more defined driveway from Gambell Street. He is not opposed to trees in the current landscaping plan.
Parcel 125/126	3/30/22	Manager stated that they are slowly expanding to take over the otherwise vacant building. He understands that double parking will be unavailable after project.
Parcel 122	3/31/22 via phone	Business owner is happy with the curb and supports the project. He has no problem with the PUE.
Parcel 124	3/31/22 via phone	Mr. Edge informed property owner that he has spoken to businesses along the corridor and documented concerns, noting that businesses should comment directly. He is printing a copy of plans and forwarding presentation materials to them. Mr. Edge addressed the comments received in a March 30, 2022 e-mail.
Parcel 106	4/4/22	Property owner would like a wider driveway and believes the current plan would not work. Owner and Mr. Edge reviewed a driveway that would extend approximately two-fifths of the property width and agreed that it would likely accommodate driveway use. Owner does not like the grass buffer between the proposed trail and parking lot and does not want to maintain it.
Parcel 124	4/11/22 via phone	Owner called to request a visit to observe parking west of her lot. Stated she is coordinating with roadway businesses. Mr. Edge reiterated that individuals should comment directly. Owner stated that she intends to contact mayor’s office and emphasized that the project will destroy her business, and she will seek recompense from the City.

Enclosures:

Appendix 1 – Pre-Meeting Outreach, Midtown Community Council Meeting, and Pre-Meeting Comments

Appendix 2 – March 24, 2022 Meeting Documentation and Post-Meeting Comment

Appendix 3 – Meeting Follow-Up

Appendices available upon request