

**Subject: Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan – Public Meeting**

**Date: September 20, 2016**

**Time: 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM**

**Location: East High School, Anchorage, AK**

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### **Meeting Notes**

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and DOWL conducted a public meeting for the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan on Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at East High School in Anchorage, Alaska. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the project purpose and need, present the project development process and schedule, and gather information the public. Ten people attended the meeting in person. DOWL also live streamed the meeting via Facebook. Twenty people viewed the presentation via Facebook.

DOWL advertised the meeting via the Alaska Dispatch's online calendar, constant contact email to community members, local governments, community councils, local and state politicians, the DOT&PF Facebook website, and through a Public Service Announcement (PSA) on 28 different local radio stations.

The meeting started with an open house from 5:00 PM to 5:45 PM. Project materials included display boards with thoughtful questions about bicycle and pedestrian topics, large maps of the state of Alaska, and copies of the presentation. The public was encouraged to provide feedback to project team members, on written comment forms, or via email at the project website.

At 5:45 PM DOWL provided a PowerPoint presentation with an overview of the project goals, history, and project area. After the presentation the public engaged in a dialogue with project team members. The following is a summary of the public questions/comments and project team responses:

### **Public Notification**

DOWL's public involvement lead discussed the project team's plan to conduct outreach in the rural communities by traveling to engage stakeholders in public meetings, working with tribal councils, city councils, and tribal organizations. There will be digital ways to access meetings as well for those in surrounding communities.

### **Maintenance**

Discussion about how communities can maintain bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure throughout the winter and summer seasons year while keeping budgets small during the State of Alaska's looming budget deficit. Locally maintained roadways and paths especially need maintenance. The public asked

about DOT&PF and the Municipality reprioritizing road plowing and selling most of the machines doing sidewalk removal. The planning team expressed that there are good examples of well-maintained pedestrian facilities like Elmore Road's bike lane, but there aren't enough of those examples throughout the state. Policy for major road projects providing for bike lanes/pedestrian facilities will be part of this Plan. As far as winter maintenance, the term has different meanings to different people; the planning team cannot know for sure what this will look like in the plan until we have more outreach and conduct our analysis. One attendee noted that DOT&PF recently said trails are Tier 4, which means a cul-de-sac on the Hillside has the same priority as a trail along Benson Boulevard – This needs to be reevaluated. There were also numerous ideas about how to maintain bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure during construction by going curb to curb to keep sidewalks in tact throughout construction. Ultimately the DOT&PF gets a lot of federal help to build projects, but none to maintain projects. Communities rely on advocacy and activism of passionate people to support bike/pedestrian infrastructure.

### **Policy**

The public asked if this plan will identify projects or set policy. There were multiple suggestions from participants and ideas about how to collect data. The planning team went on to explain that this is a policy document that will set out objectives, standards and goals which will enable consistency in future projects as part of the STIP process. The planning team is looking into specifics like the 3 foot rule carried out in Washington, and collecting bike and pedestrian counts to establish needs. This plan will ultimately be approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the DOT&PF Commissioner before it is adopted.

### **Project Implementation and Execution**

The public asked how DOT&PF is currently accommodating other existing bike/pedestrian plans that are developed by other entities, and how DOT&PF works with other state agencies to procure funding and make sure connectors are consistent. The planning team expressed that local policy documents will be most useful in specific project areas. The planning team wants to support these documents but also doesn't want to water down good work those groups are already doing. The goal is to save money and resources to be as effective as possible, recreating work that is already done is not in the plan. The planning team is aware that there are other agencies like Parks and Recreation, The Alaska Railroad Company, etc. and the project team has engaged with these groups to make sure stakeholder feedback is all encompassing.

### **Funding**

The public asked how the plan will work from a policy standpoint if funding is not coming from federal government or the State of Alaska. The planning team responded stating that it is very difficult to strictly enforce, but are hopeful that if we are developing a document with a statewide focus that can be implemented by various entities, including tribal and local governments. The plan will create policies that are realistic and enhance opportunities to get funding from various sources.

### **Accessibility and Shared Use:**

The public asked about public transit and accessibility for disabled and elderly people. The planning team will include people mover and other transit stakeholders as part of the steering committee and transit planners within DOT&PF will be integrally involved in development of the master plan. Additionally, the project team has engaged organizations that represent disabled and elderly adults in Alaska and welcome recommendations on other people to include. This plan will aim to address all pedestrian infrastructure users.