



## Meeting Notes

**SUBJECT:** 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue: Patterson Street to Muldoon Road & Oklahoma Street Upgrade

**PROJECT NO.:** MOA PM&E 05-02

**GROUP:** Northeast Community Council

**DATE:** October 18, 2007

**TIME:** 7 pm

**LOCATION:** Muldoon Community Center

**MEETING OUTREACH:** Usual and Customary Meeting Notice by Northeast Community Council

**MEETING ATTENDANCE:** Approximately 25

**MEETING MATERIALS:**

- 1) Handouts: Flyer with project information and landscape plan drawings
- 2) Comment Sheets
- 3) Large-scale Landscape Drawings on boards

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Lounsbury Associates: Joel Stout; Tom Garrett  
Land Design North: Dwayne Adams  
Brooks & Associates: Betty Caudle

### MEETING INFORMATION:

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The 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Upgrade Project is on the Agenda for the November 19, 2007 Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission meeting. The project team appeared before the community council to provide an update to the Northeast Community Council about the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue project so the community council could submit their formal comments about the project to the commission.

Joel Stout from Lounsbury Associates began the presentation by introducing the team members who were present at the meeting. He went on to provide background about the project to the council members. The project began in May 2006 and since that time there have been public meetings or appearances at the Northeast Community Council, appearances at school events, a couple of newsletters or post cards and one-on-one conversations with the neighbors along the street about the coming changes to 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The reason for this extensive outreach is to give folks plenty of opportunity to comment on the design now, while changes can be made in response to comments or feedback received. The project is currently at the end of the Design Study phase. The next phase will be design, and then construction. As we get closer to construction, it will be harder and harder to make changes. The presentation covers the recommendations of the Design Study Report. Joel pointed out that consultants can make recommendations in a study or in a design, however, the Municipality will make the decisions and have final say about what will be done on a project.

We expect construction to happen in 2009. There is tentative construction budget of \$4 million. Construction and funding will depend on the passage of the road bond in the 2009 municipal election.

The project is from Muldoon Road to the Patterson Street right-of-way. There is no proposal for any extension down Patterson Street. Joel pointed out the hammerhead turnaround area at the end of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the Patterson Street right-of-way. Currently, fire trucks, ambulances, and especially, the snowplows, turn around at the end of the street and have to use the neighbor's driveway. By providing this turnaround area, it will keep the turnaround traffic in the public right-of-way and off of private property.

In response to comments received and requests from the public and the community council, upgrades to Oklahoma Street as far as 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue were added to this project. A choker proposed in the area traffic calming study for the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Oklahoma intersection will be constructed with this project.

Concerning the parking for Creekside Park, the design provides for parallel parking along the street. We heard from neighbors that when there is a game or sport activity, people park near the park and at the school. We were also told that people are going to park where they want to park anyway, no matter what you do.

Joel then introduced Dwayne Adams from Land Design North and asked him to talk about the landscaping and amenities for the project.

Dwayne pointed to the drawings and stated that as people study the drawings they will see that this project corridor is not a typical one-size road width. Starting at Muldoon Road the road width is a little wider on one side to accommodate a turning lane and a bus stop, then it maintains a consistent width as you travel towards the school, narrowing at Idaho, then it widens again at Creekside. The reason for this is to calm the traffic. As a roadway narrows, drivers react by slowing down. Also where it narrows, it moves pedestrians into better view of the driver and provides a shorter street crossing for the pedestrians.

Engineers like features like this to manage traffic. Landscape designers like features like this because it gives us opportunities to provide landscaping, texture and visual interests for drivers and pedestrians alike.

Because of the number of driveways along this corridor we are limited in what we can do. However, there are several bus stops, which we can make interesting with benches, provide color and give them the full treatment.

After we started the project, Oklahoma Street was added. It made sense to extend the same traffic calming features into Oklahoma Street to provide for pedestrian safety.

The light fixtures used are the standard type selected by the Northeast Community Council. Again, we are limited to what we can do because of driveways and power lines. Wherever there is an opportunity for an amenity, we will use it.

At Creekside Elementary we will have entry signage as a way-finding feature. This will help folks find the school entrance easier.

The street signage is a bit different also. It has a thematic element designed to pop out more than the usual green street sign that you see now.

For the entrance to Creekside Park an element is provided to highlight the park entrance. This is to provide texture and pattern as you look along the street.

There will be planting along the northside away from the power lines. Wherever we can, we want to gain color, texture and pattern.

Joel clarified that the project on Oklahoma was extended to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue to solve drainage problems on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and to continue some of the traffic calming features as well. There is another project for Oklahoma Street, per Jim Lamson's Capital Improvement Project (CIP) list. However, that is in the future and not a part of this project.

Joel asked if anyone had any questions about the project. The questions and comments from the community council are shown below with the project team answers in *italics*.

Where the Anchorage Fire Department turns around, doesn't that require a lot of space? Won't you have to acquire the land? *The right-of-way exists now. We do not have to take any land. In fact we have spoken to the neighbor at the end of the street and he likes the idea of the trucks and snowplows turning around on the street and not in his driveway. In addition, there is a storm drain nearby that is wearing out and will be reconstructed with a new water quality vault in the Patterson Street Right-of-Way. We would need to pave an area for the maintenance trucks to be able to make remove accumulated sediment from the storm drain vault, and that would be approximately ½ of the hammerhead anyway.*

Could you re-connect 4<sup>th</sup> and Patterson walkway? It used to be there, it is BLM (Bureau of Land Management) right-of-way and was blocked off. It is important for the school and the park that it be re-opened. Peggy Robertson, NECC President, noted that she thought this was mentioned in the Anchorage Pedestrian Plan. *The design team did not have a response for this issue.*

Joel also mentioned that this project was to appear before the Urban Design Commission meeting on October 10. However, they did not have a quorum, so it would have to be re-scheduled for review at the next UDC meeting.

I thought all walkways are to be separated from the street by a grassy area. *With this project, we are right on the edge of the right-of-way. We pull away where we can. In some locations—at steep driveways—we moved the path towards the curb so drivers would have a better opportunity to see the kids walking to school. In other cases, we move the pathway if we can create an opportunity for plantings. In some places along the northside we are close to the curb. We used a 2' strip of textured walkway, a kind of "rumble strip" to alert the kids that they are close to the street.*

Do we need to vote on this project? Peggy answered that yes, we need to make a motion and recommendation for the Planning and Zoning Commission.

A council member made a motion that the council accept the plan as presented. Peggy asked if anyone had any discussion about the motion.

I have a question about the vegetation strips. How does that work with the homeowners? I used to live in the area and know that some have extensive gardens and some do not. *After the landscaping is installed, the contractor will maintain trees for one year and will maintain the grass until it grows in. After that it will be up to the individual homeowners to maintain. As we see with the snow shoveling of sidewalks, some are good about it and others couldn't care less. I have lived here for 30 years. I can say that it is a lot better now than it has been in the past. This says to me that we are maturing as a community and appreciating the landscaping. 25 years ago the attitude was "why bother", now communities are demanding that we install landscaping. It is a better investment in our neighborhoods.*

There was no further discussion about the project. The motion to support the plan was seconded and passed by a majority.

Joel thanked the community council for their time.

Related documents on file:

Handouts