Dowling Road / Seward Highway
Interchange Reconstruction

EVENT NOTES

SUBJECT:	Dowling Road/Seward Highway Interchange Reconstruction
PROJECT NUMBER:	CFHWY00359
GROUP:	Public
DATE:	Wednesday, June 27, 2018
TIME:	4 to 6 p.m.
LOCATION:	Dimond Center Hotel, 700 E Dimond Blvd, Anchorage
OUTREACH:	See Table 1. Event Outreach
ATTENDANCE:	38 people signed in
MATERIALS:	Fact sheet, comment sheet, alternative concept graphics
STAFF PRESENT:	*DOT&PF:* Kevin Jackson, Jon Knowles
	Lounsbury & Associates: Joseph Taylor, Susan Acheson
	Kittelson & Associates: Wende Wilber, Andrew Ooms
	Brooks & Associates: Anne Brooks, Camden Yehle

EVENT INFORMATION:

Staff greeted attendees at the door and asked them to sign in. Each person received a fact sheet and comment sheet and were encouraged to ask questions of the team and provide comments.

During the event, the team recorded the verbal comments summarized below.

- Favorable comments about roundabouts in general.
- Would rumble strips increase noise for local residents?
- Concern about pedestrian and bicycle safety with both alternatives but more so with the roundabout.
- Many stated they liked the roundabout as a driver and the signal as a pedestrian.
- The trucking company identified the need to make a U-turn and use the current roundabout to accommodate that movement.

Attendees submitted the following responses on comment sheets, at the online open house, and by phone and email. The responses are organized by question and summarized below. Any emphasis is the commenter's own.

How does the tight diamond alternative meet your needs?

Comments in favor: Better for pedestrians/bicyclists; favors through traffic; stops traffic; moves traffic; pedestrian signal; lots of lanes; straight forward; easy access to New Seward Highway from the east side; safer.

Comments opposed: Difficult to turn onto Rowan Street; less safe; higher cost; not as good as roundabout for moving traffic; stopping traffic not good for fuel economy; has problems typical of traffic lights where folks may run red lights; creates traffic; opposed to traffic signals; may cause increase in crashes; needs bike lanes; changes to business access off of Dowling; stopping traffic creates traffic.

What potential issues do you see with the tight diamond alternative?

Issues in favor: Better access for snow removal equipment; better for pedestrians/bicyclists because of signalized crossings; no issues.
Issues opposed: Sitting, waiting, polluting; increase bike/pedestrian crashes with vehicles; don't need more signals on Dowling Road corridor; like the roundabout better for emergency response; better if islands separated turning and straight lanes; increase in traffic crashes; brings all the hazards of signalized intersections; the Municipality of Anchorage has a poor record of synchronizing signals; more difficult to U-turn than in roundabout; no bike lanes; more severe types of collisions than with roundabout; too expensive; traffic will still backup during rush hour due to volume and stoplights; might be difficult for large trucks.

Do you have issues or comments about the bicycle and pedestrian facilities incorporated into the tight diamond alternative?

Comments in favor: Better access for snow removal equipment; better for pedestrians/bicyclists except when motorists run red lights; more separation is always welcome; signals clarify all yielding issues; nice pathways; standard and predictable intersection; improvement over current setup.
Comments opposed: Neither option provides safety for pedestrians; increased bike/pedestrian crashes; would prefer more separation for pedestrians/bicyclists; very long six-lane crossing; would not ride a bike near Dowling no matter the design; no bike lanes; need tunnels or bridges for people to cross.

How does the roundabout alternative meet your needs?

Comments in favor: Larger circumference roundabouts will help; never had a problem with existing roundabouts; prefer roundabouts for both vehicle and pedestrian/bike traffic; provides access while minimizing delays; keep traffic moving, more efficient; best way to accommodate large vehicles turning left onto Dowling Rd off Rowan St; will shorten wait time in busy corridor; better for emergency response; safer; switching back to inefficient lighted intersections would be a step back; reduces speeds with less conflict points; roundabout seems more familiar; like the number of lanes; keeps traffic exiting the Seward Highway from backing up onto the Highway; don't put in stop lights; traffic lights kill; less severe collisions; no negative issues with roundabout.
Comments opposed: It dramatically fails to meet my needs; roundabouts do not work unless speed is controlled; install traffic cameras; exceeds needs; still presents bikes/ pedestrians with confusing situations and unprotected interactions with motor vehicles; considers non-motorized users as afterthought; requires more right-of-way; changes to business access off of Dowling; issues with motorists not yielding to pedestrians/bicyclists.

What potential issues do you see with the roundabout alternative?

Issues in favor: The striping, signage, and roll-out of this change would need to focus on clarity and consistency, unlike the previous roll-outs and modifications to this intersection; previous website animation did not match the actual design; original striping did not clearly indicate when outside lanes were expected to exit (current striping is much better); speed humps on roundabout exits (rather than entrances) was incredibly counterproductive; people slowdown in the larger diameter roundabouts; larger diameter roundabouts are great; non-motorized facilities seem to be afterthought; smoother traffic flow and fuel cost savings; other larger roundabouts in Anchorage work well; no issues with the roundabout alternative.

Issues opposed: Anchorage drivers have a difficult time with roundabouts; bike/pedestrian use of the roundabouts can be scary; keep vegetation and landscaping clear of Rowan Street and Dowling intersection for better visibility; traffic circles cause accidents; dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists and anybody with visual impairment; takes up too much space; will cost more; won't save a lot of time; traffic will still back up at rush hour because of volume; more accidents as drivers switch lanes; not sure how pedestrians get right-of-way when crossing; still too small; needs lights; trail route is circuitous, users will take short cuts; image does not show bike infrastructure; drivers who don't know how to navigate roundabouts cause accidents.

Do you have issues or comments about the bicycle and pedestrian facilities incorporated into the roundabout alternative?

Issues in favor: Looks like a good set up to me; separating bikes and pedestrians from traffic is good; design should allow easy flow with bicycle traffic and safe passage for pedestrians; appreciate the orthogonal road crossings; bike/pedestrian facilities situated in a manner that allows drivers to see them and provide safe crossings without expensive signal maintenance; good to have a path through the intersection outside of the roundabout itself; safer in theory but traffic accelerates across the crosswalk when leaving the roundabout; prefer roundabouts as pedestrians can cross when safe and not have to wait for long lights; safety of pedestrian crossing is important even if it takes more time.

Issues opposed: Concern that traffic will not cooperate with the facilities and yield appropriately; pedestrian tunnel would make more sense; crossing Brayton dangerous because you cannot see the cars quick enough; confusing; only solution is to separate cars from bikes; busy multi-lane roundabouts are dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians; don't see bike/pedestrian facilities in the image; will not ride through this intersection until there are flashing lights, noise, something to alert drivers.

Do you have any other questions or comments that would help the team as we continue our work?

- Provide bike lanes through (on) Dowling and frontage roads.
- Go with the safest and most cost-effective solution.

- Sell excess right-of-way back to private sector so it gets back on tax rolls.
- Keep the roundabout – everyone has finally gotten the hang of them and like them.
- I prefer the larger roundabout, but you would need to pay meticulous attention to detail in rollout to ensure an accurate and consistent message.
- Need good signage in roundabout to guide drivers through it.
- Double diamond interchange keeps traffic of all kinds simpler.
- I don't believe any sort of roundabout configuration is a good option for this location and believe the signalized tight diamond could be a better alternative to make the road safer and less congested.
- I rarely have issues with other roundabouts across town, including during peak times, and believe a modified roundabout on Dowling will just lead to the same issues.
- Consider the pedestrians/bikes first and then figure out how cars fit in.
- The traffic light design appears to be almost identical to the O'Malley/Seward intersection. That one is terrible 24/7 mainly because Anchorage does not know how to coordinate traffic flow using traffic signals.
- As you move ahead on Brayton to the merge lane with the ramp off north bound New Seward, it's a real disaster. Most people getting off of New Seward, want to turn right at the roundabout. Which means chaos as they need to cross over the traffic coming off of Brayton. Now that you all at DOT have decided that the ramp traffic should stay in the left lane and made it nearly impossible to get to the right hand turn lane, it forces people in the left lane wanting to go right, to enter the roundabout and go around so they can be headed east on Dowling. It's crazy.
- I really enjoy driving through the roundabout design.
- I have driven through roundabouts in other countries and I don't seem to have as much of a problem with them as I do in Anchorage. Maybe it's the drivers, or maybe the layouts, or the type or mix of vehicles or all the above, I don't know.
- I have kids that are unable to walk or ride to Polaris K-12 due to the current roundabout setup. Please strongly consider the signalized tight diamond option for improved safety for cyclists and pedestrians.
- The sight distance if you are on 64th onto Brayton is very difficult. There are so many almost accidents from people wanting to get onto Brayton.
- Add a signal light at 64th and Brayton that meters traffic onto the merge with the north bound Seward Highway off ramp. This will prevent the traffic from Brayton overwhelming the roundabout and keeping the ramp traffic from entering the roundabout. It will also enable the people from the ramp to get over into the right-hand lane to turn, instead of entering the roundabout to go right (east) on Dowling.

- Online open house doesn't work well for much more than pictures. Example: page 2 brief list of rejected alternatives is too complicated for anyone not already familiar with road designs.
- The traffic light option is NOT a solution as it replicates the original problem. Magical thinking about how these lights will be coordinated to solve the heavy traffic flow during rush hours and still allow normal wait times at other times is childish and naïve.
- I think people drive much too slow through this intersection more often than not. I don't see people driving too fast.
- I see 2040 is the design year. Is that sufficient enough if traffic exceeded the expected rate over the past decade?
- Connect the bike lanes along the Dowling Road between Lake Otis and Old Seward.
- Signs with a suggested speed limit of 15 or 20 mph are IMPERATIVE to avoid vehicle/pedestrian collisions. Vehicles must be traveling at a rate of speed that is conducive to yielding for pedestrians who are already in the crosswalk.
- I have seen many bicycle/pedestrian users nearly hit by vehicles in the roundabouts. Drivers seem focused on the challenge of the roundabout, not other users.
- This project should be put on hold until the new 76th underpass has been in use for 2 years. The underpass will reduce traffic through the Seward/ Dowling roundabout, the question is by how much. It may render reconstruction unnecessary.

Table 1. Event Outreach

Date	Outreach method	Description
05/24/2018	State of Alaska Online Notice	Email invitation to State of Alaska Online Notice subscribers
05/30/2018	Event notice to websites	Event notice posted to the project website http://dowlingsewardinterchange.com/
06/08/2018	Postcard	Postcard to area residences, businesses, orgs, and elected officials
06/13/2018 06/21/2018	Email notice and reminder	Email invitation to project stakeholders
06/15/2018 06/22/2018	Federation of Community Councils notice	Notice of event sent to all Anchorage community council memberships
06/20/2018	Newspaper advertisement	Advertisement run in the *Anchorage Daily News*
06/20/2018	Public service announcement	Request sent to KBBO-FM, KNBA-FM, KSKA-FM, KWHL-FM, and GCI
06/21/2018	Community calendars	Request sent to the *Anchorage Daily News* to post the event on online calendars
06/22/2018	Facebook boosted post	DOT&PF sponsored post targeting Anchorage area residents

Date	Outreach method	Description
06/26/2018	Request for special interest groups and elected officials to invite stakeholders	Inviting the public to the event

Related documents on file:

Sign-in sheets, comment sheet, fact sheet, project graphics, and outreach.