



Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting #15

Location: Rabbit Creek Community Church Auditorium

Date: November 19, 2007 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

AGENDA

CAC

- John Weddleton
- Dave Lappi
- Dee High
- Carol Fries
- Vic Mollozzi
- Lori Davey

Staff

- Joann Contreras, MOA Planning
- Brian Baus, AWWU
- Sara Wilson Doyle, LDN
- Heather Stewart, Agnew::Beck
- Chris Beck, Agnew::Beck
- Dan Billman, HDR
- Kristi Bischofberger, PM&E Watershed
- Mel Langdon, PM&E Watershed
- Bob Butera, HDR
- John McPherson, HDR

Public

- Bob Miller
- Dianne Holmes
- (woman from Bear Valley CC)

1. Introduction – agenda review, introductions of CAC, consultants, guests, public attendees; confirm Dec meeting (17th) (Vic Mollozzi - vice chair 10 minutes)
2. Update on overall schedule and process
 - District-wide issues
 - Lower Hillside land use and infrastructure alternatives
 - Upper Hillside land use and infrastructure alternatives

Chris gave an overview of bullets above, emphasizing focus on drainage and roads, trails with a need to respond to what the community has been saying.

3. Options to pay for needed drainage and transportation improvements (presentation and discussion by Drainage and Transportation DCONs). Topics discussed:
 - Strategies for new development – means to plan, reserve rights-of-way, pay to construct and maintain required improvements related to new development, including requirements for off-site improvements

- Strategies for existing developed areas – options to pay for upgrades to existing but substandard infrastructure, options to deal with local roads becoming de facto collectors; strategies for 40% of Hillside roads not in any road service district
- Options for new, district-wide and/or watershed-wide drainage/road/trail service area(s) - structure, responsibilities, funding; lessons from Eagle River
- Options for changes in roles, number, extent of service areas (LRSA's vs. ARDSA, link to state roads); benefits of combining vs. separating road, drainage and trail issues

Presentation

John McPherson and Bob Butera presented on the bullets above, with the goal of identifying which options presented have the most merit to be explored further, with an eye toward identifying one option or some combination that will be recommended in plan.

Discussion/Questions:

- Will you talk about the financial requirements of these options or just in general?
 - Just a general overview for now. We want to focus on 2-4 of these options and then outline the general terms of a solution, for example, the a new drainage district might be structured and administered, how it might related to existing LRSAs.
 - Even if there is no new growth on the Hillside, the current mechanisms for maintaining roads and drainage are not working, so you might as well start rethinking them now.
- Is it politically feasible to be proactive (i.e., to build infrastructure to serve demand that is likely to be there in the future) rather than respond to needs as they evolve?
 - Prevention is cheaper than repair, so it's in the community's interest to think ahead.
 - Planners would rather be logical and proactive, but we know that we may not have the political willpower until it comes to repairing problems.
 - Seems like we're hearing that there is already a need for "repair," that current infrastructure is already failing to meet existing needs.
 - In ARDSA, bonds are passed to pay for roads and drainage that have useful lives, in anticipation of 20 years growth, needs, and maintenance.
 - South Goldenview LRSA plans ahead as much as their budget allows, but they don't have the resources to anticipate more than 5 years in the future. However, they know that spending extra on prevention comes back in dividends as less maintenance in the future.
- In percentages, how much of the Hillside road system is under independent service provision? What are the other types of road maintenance designations?
 - 40 percent – HDR is checking and verifying the numbers.
 - Other: Anchorage Roads & Drainage Service Area (ARDSA), Limited Road Service Area (LRSA), Rural Road Service Areas, State of Alaska. Again about 40% of the area is in none of these categories. In most of these areas, neighbors have informal systems to pay for maintenance and snow plowing

John McPherson passed out a matrix and set of maps that outlined different options for addressing road maintenance. (ATTACHED). Discussion of the various options is below:

Option 1 – One HDP Rural Roads and Drainage Service Area

- Is that how it works in Eagle River-Chugiak?
 - Yes
- Do they address drainage?
 - Yes, they have responsibility for drainage
 - This option would have a uniform levy across the district but could be administered and managed on a watershed basis.
- Why would you envision a different rate for different watersheds?
 - Some watersheds might have problems that require more work than others.
 - We can have Special Assessment Districts within a larger unified district, enabling planning for improvements within certain watersheds, which could choose to tax themselves more.
- Do these plans also incorporate the idea of building trails?
 - They could include trail capital projects as part of the authorities if this is something that you would want the district/authority to take on.
- How would that relate to the taxes we're already paying for recreation?
 - We would have to figure out how that fits with areawide parks – maybe it goes into a local parks fund instead of a general parks fund.
 - Those are the details that would be worked out if you choose to pursue this idea.
 - We'll try to get someone from Chugiak-Eagle River to come talk about their experiences and lessons learned.

Option 2 – One HDP Rural Road Service Area - Overlay for Capital Maintenance.

- Who prioritizes capital improvements? Who deals with summer maintenance so you can do snowplowing?
 - Those are details we'd work out. Prioritization would happen through some sort of road board; you'd have to decide how much you want retained by LRSAs and how much by the district-wide entity
 - This might be a way of getting around the problem of LRSAs not being able to get capital improvement funds for major roads;
- If they don't have snow-plowing, how do we consider that road maintained in the winter? It's a problem we deal with already – the state won't help if only summer maintenance is done.
 - Yes, that is a drawback. Also, locations outside of service areas might do a shoddy job of winter maintenance and let the areawide entity do capital improvements when it gets bad enough.
- Areas without a responsible group to take care of it might end up having to pay more.
 - This option is an attempt to get the best of both worlds: maintain local control and get access to capital improvement funding

- Part of the reason people like the independent service areas is that they can build narrow roads that are not built to MOA standards. Would the roads have to be built to MOA standards under this option?
 - There will be more needs than money for improvements, so they will have to prioritize capital improvements. The ‘cons’ include the issue of people having to pay taxes for unwanted services.
- Areas that haven’t had maintenance for all these years will need greater improvements than those that have been under road service groups.
 - Regarding the issue of state roads intersecting with local roads (e.g., Rabbit Creek & Goldenview), the MOA can’t do anything. An areawide service organization would have to compete/lobby for State attention versus other road projects.

Option 3a – Add Hillside to ARDSA

- Have there been any recent additions to ARDSA in the last 20 years that would be a model?
 - Believe there has, but can’t think of specific example; probably small private roads.
- I tend to like this, but there’s a concept that once the MOA takes over, service is slower and more expensive. Snowplowing is an example. But looking at Mountain View, in the long run, city takeover seems not to be a big issue.
- My roads are plowed and sanded much sooner than in the Bowl; it’s a very tangible difference; I don’t see it selling.
- The problem is that people are looking at snowplowing and roads; they’re not looking at all the other issues (drainage, etc.). Will people give up their personal luxury for the benefit of the whole area? Think not.
- Proposals from the MOA don’t recognize the reality of the neighborhood physical conditions that locals are aware of, so there’s no way they’d give up local control. Capital projects would shift the problem, not solve it. People in central authority are often not aware of local issues/conditions.
- You’re forgetting that we can have RRSA’s. They should absolutely be a part of this. Roads will not be built to ARDSA standards.

Option 3b ARDSA Expanded to Cover Only Collectors, Arterials, DOT roads & Drainage

- Do we have any idea how much the State spends to maintain roads on the Hillside? Would this mean we have to pay more?
 - Yes, we have to pay more locally, but we have more local control because we don’t have to compete with other parts of the state.
- Can we get Federal money with this option?
 - Yes, the State does pass through Federal funds to the Muni.
- Can we trade off who maintains the roads?
 - It has occurred in rural communities: the State brings roads up to State standards then hands them over. It doesn’t happen in Anchorage too often.

- The State is happy to get rid of roads they think should be a local responsibility. It may be a way to get them accelerated on the needs priorities list.

Option 3c 100% coverage by ARDSA or RRSA's

- Can you explain more?
 - In areas where ARDSA went in, ARDSA could help with administration, planning.
- Any of this option seems to violate numerous policies within Anchorage 2020.

Option 4 Expand/Consolidate RRSAs – 100% coverage

- How would you handle planning and constructing the watershed part?
 - There would be a watershed plan done within each watershed. We could do subdistrict transportation planning or some way to identify and prioritize needs if we draw boundaries to approximate watersheds. Watershed boundaries are fairly easy but travel patterns may not fit that – do you expand out and grab those cars even if the drainage goes somewhere else?
 - We tried to separate out roads and drainage, but probably it's better not to because you have the same person dealing with both anyway.
- But the reason these local road service areas work is because there is someone they can call and get immediate service (the board member calls people to come out and fix the problem), but we don't have planning expertise.
 - You could coordinate with others (MOA, for example) to do the drainage planning for you. Those are the kinds of decisions that have to be made if we think about this as an option.

Option 5 Coverage in Priority Watersheds

- No comments.

Option 6 – Do Nothing/Status Quo

- No comments.

General Discussion:

- Can you explain how implementation mechanisms vary by option
 - Each entity would have to decide how to determine their tax rates and raise levies. You could set up something by watershed with a standard road mill rate, or a separate mill rate for drainage by watershed
- Would these mechanisms make bonding an option?
 - Yes.
- Depending on the size of the entity, is there a difference/advantage to the size the bonds that could be floated?
 - There would be some economies of scale for larger bonds than smaller bonds.
 - Not sure whether the rate would be better or not; the MOA still backs the bonds.
- What about impact fees?

- (This question led to a discussion of impact by density vs. numbers and the impacts of schools on roads)
- There is currently no mechanism to ensure that roads are being paid for equitably.
- We can add impact fees, but: 1) politically not sure we could sell the idea; 2) they do not address the cumulative impact of development – if the next developer causes the road to break down, does that developer have to pay for all of it? Can't necessarily rely upon impact fees to be equitable.
- Example – Proposition 13 in CA set limits on property taxes, communities switched to impact fees because they no longer had the ability to raise taxes city wide to pay for the next generation of growth. Now impact fees have become popular because politically they're easier than taxing, but they don't equitably spread costs among all who are affected by growth and who benefit from new infrastructure.
- But this raises an important issue, which is the need to address the question: who pays?
- There is a concern about the urban-rural boundary: you're not going to get people to pay into a large service association that isn't serving just them. If you could combine some of these options, you might get more support.
 - Option 4 comes closest to what you're talking about.
- Where do we go from here? What are the next steps?
- I don't think road systems are broken, and I'm not convinced we need a whole new funding process. However, I am convinced that drainage is an issue that needs to be handled in some new fashion. I see another option: leave the roads as they are and form an entity for drainage.
- I agree: the road systems work; we just have a few isolated problem areas. Drainage needs help, but combining the two is going to kill support. Can we keep them separate: deal with roads as is and deal with the drainage system area by watershed with fees based on impact (e.g., how much impervious surface you have)?
- Downhill residents aren't going to be happy about paying for problems that new uphill development is causing. We need to make sure this doesn't keep happening.
- I see two issues that we have to deal with: 1) if there was no new development ever, there are certain areas where fixes are still needed; 2) incremental growth and how that impacts the overall system. We need to be proactive about drainage, but let's not bite off more than we can chew.
- But there has got to be a way to bring the independents (non-service area roads) into some sort of service area; we need continuity for future consolidation.
 - We could do a Hillside-wide road improvement area for roads and trails
- We need a mechanism to improve state roads.
 - Eagle River district is successful because they can provide a local match, so their projects score higher, and needed improvements get made
- Was there any negative feedback on drainage at the workshop(s) about whether they would pay into a drainage service entity?
 - (Kristi) Even if the Hillside is not willing to pay now, we should go forward on plans because someday we will have to face the issue of drainage.

- (Kristi) It's tough for us in building a drainage plan for the Hillside because we don't know how much we could spend; we don't know how much funding would be available.
- (Kristi) We could figure out an estimate of the cost per household on the Hillside to have a drainage program.
- Here's what I see as the "real" issues here:
 - maintenance in the gaps (getting independents into the fold; dealing with drainage problems on local roads)
 - capital improvements in the gaps (addressing issues like the intersection of state and LRSA roads; the need to push priority for state road problems)
 - drainage
- A drainage service area by watershed would be good; some sort of Hillside-wide road service area would be ok (to set up a system for road improvement districts and get matching funds for state road improvements). We should keep drainage and roads separate – we can combine them later if/when it makes sense and there is political support. We need a mechanism to fix Goldenview and Rabbit Creek, but people who want their roads dirt can keep them that way (so basically, Option 2 for roads with drainage handled by watershed). Form an overlay district/entity that collects from everyone but handles capital improvements on major arterials. All other road maintenance and improvement should be handled as it is today.
- What are the limits on this Hillside RSA? How are mill rates set? If the State is maintaining roads, why would we be making improvements to them?
 - The State knows about the problems, but they get shoved to the backburner. In the State scoring system, if you come in with a local match, you can score higher; you bump up your priority if you come in with local money.
- So maintaining LRSAs within that framework maintains local control/autonomy, but is there a way to integrate the two structures (LRSAs and an area-wide entity)?
- From a government point of view (MOA), do you have a preference about which option(s) might be easiest to implement?
 - Any of the options could work if set up thoughtfully.
 - The smaller the subdistrict definitions, the more money, resources, etc. to manage.
- With one drainage service area and one taxing mechanism applied across the board, it should work.
 - From a drainage perspective, systems that cut across basins don't work; as long as you define the district to encompass basins, it's ok.
- Girdwood is one example of dealing with drainage, roads, trails, etc. comprehensively.
- Chugiak-Eagle River is another model for dealing with roads and drainage.
- We might have to look at a separate drainage overlay because some areas have more problems than others.
- Smaller road service areas would collapse into the area-wide one (if choosing Option 2).
- It is important to be able to call somebody at night if you can't get home, but it takes a force greater than small road service areas can muster to deal with these larger issues.
- I still would like to keep impact fees on the table

- There needs to be some equitable way to make sure new development pays its weight.
- Impact fees could be enacted through stricter design standards.
- Make sure this can be done under the tax cap
- Dirt road standards are also important.
- Bottom line: widest support for
 - Option 1 (more or less) – a new, comprehensive, Hillside-wide Road and Drainage District, similar to Eagle River
 - Variation on Option 2 – an area wide road district focused on generating funding to improve major roads (state roads and/or arterials and collectors), plus a separate drainage district based on watersheds.
 - Other points of agreement:
 - a. develop Hillside-specific road standards
 - b. be sure that individual developers pay their fair share of whatever road & drainage requirements they generate, e.g. through impact fees
 - c. be aware of tax cap restrictions when looking at all of these

4. (Optional –most likely delay till 26th) Brief overview of drainage DCON’s approach to drainage modeling and strategies for upper Hillside drainage issues

Chris Beck gave an overview of what’s to come for the next portion of the process.

5. Agree on CAC members to serve as liaison to each DCON

Drainage/roads liaisons: Dee High, Dave Lappi, Carol Fries

6. Brief overview of approach to lower Hillside land use and infrastructure options

Chris Beck gave an overview of this topic. Assignments deferred to a later time.

7. Wrap-up (5 min)

- Assignments
- Next meetings – 11.26.07 (topics: more drainage, “5 of 9/nitrate issue); 12.17.07 (topics: water/wastewater, commercial, upper and lower hillside land use and infrastructure alternatives)