

## Downtown Streets Engineering Study: May 2024 Informational Update

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Hello everyone,

Radhika Krishna at ADP made a great suggestion that it might be useful to get semi-regular updates on the [Downtown Streets Engineering Study project](#). I am going to try to put something out at least monthly—if you would prefer not to receive these emails please let me know.

Over the past few weeks we've been having some great conversations with a wide range of stakeholders downtown about how the streets are functioning or where they could be improved.

### Groups we've talked to so far:

- ACDA/Easy Park
- Visit Anchorage (including a number of members like Anchorage Trolley Tours, Salmon Berry Travel and Tours, Holland America)
- People Mover
- Municipality of Anchorage PME
- Downtown Community Council
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Radicals
- State of Alaska Forestry Division
- AKDOT&PF
- AMATS
- Northern Compass Group

### Groups we are still planning to talk to:

- AWWU
- AKDOT&PF
- JBER
- Alaska Trucking Association
- Bike Anchorage
- Parks & Rec
- Chugach Electric, Solid Waste Services, Port of Alaska
- [Any other suggestions]?

### A few insights so far:

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- All stakeholders we have talked to have emphasized the need to slow down vehicular traffic downtown: “experience downtown at human speed”.
- Many stakeholders have an interest in curb space for a variety of activities: loading, parking, or temporary storage/use during construction. Curb space is valuable! Sometimes there is not enough flexibility in how curb space is allocated or designated.
- There are a few different perspectives on one way vs two way streets. For some users, two-way streets would be more convenient, for other users with large vehicles (some of the bigger vehicles), one way streets make it easier to provide access.
- Radhika at ADP had a great idea about thinking about actively managing the right-of-way as a “loss leader” to serve the community. Many discussions with a number of stakeholders about using pilot projects to try new things.
- There are concerns about preserving the economic environment to keep downtown businesses stable and maintain the conditions for them to be able to thrive.
- People mover has talked about their plans for potential new transit center, and how access to that site (whatever it may be) could be an opportunity to look at bus-only streets or limited access streets
- Street design and maintenance have of course been a frequent topic. Do we always have to design streets the same way? Could large sidewalks be on one side or another? Can we design streets to incorporate trees that will survive? Can we design streets and sidewalks that are both pleasant and easy to maintain?
- Discussions of what’s *under* the streets---rights of way hold a lot of other types of infrastructure like electric, stormwater, and water lines.
- There have been a lot of discussions about downtown streets in their regional context: how roads going through downtown are part of a larger system for freight, national defense needs, or the Seward/Glenn PEL project.
- There have been a lot of discussions about cost and time: what it would cost for the MOA to take over management of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, what changes might be expected and when. Generally it seems like people would like to see some positive changes in a shorter time.
- There have been a lot of discussions about Anchorage roads in the context of a larger system: what can we afford, and where do we want to allocate the community’s limited funding? How do we fund road infrastructure? Are investments on 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> more important than investments in another part of the city?

**Coming up Next: June 2024:**

## **Downtown Streets Engineering Study: May 2024 Informational Update**

- Our consultant team is putting together a built environment memo which will provide the context for the downtown streets environment, including information about road ownership (historical and actual), current management, management requirements in the future, transfer requirements, design opportunities, and other information. We hope to have this out sometime in June.
- We've been asked if it's possible to prepare a draft document by the end of the summer in order to facilitate making some initial changes as early as next year, we are striving for this but can't say for certain yet.