

Sitka Traffic Corridor Has Bike Options



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The Alaska Department of Transportation is proposing two options for revamping Sawmill Creek Road between the roundabout and Jeff Davis Street, one of them creating designated bike lanes.



Engineers and members of the public look over alternatives for paving a section of Sawmill Creek road from the roundabout to Jeff Davis Street, Monday at Centennial Hall. (Sentinel Photo)

Staff members from the DOT office in Juneau were at Harrigan Centennial Hall Monday for an open house on the planned upgrades.

"We're just looking for public input, what people like and what people don't like," said Colleen Ivaniszek, a designer and engineering assistant with the DOT.

Option One is similar to the existing road design, with the 12-foot driving lanes widened to 13.5 feet. It keeps the 8-foot parking lanes on both side of the street, relocates some power poles, and makes upgrades to the sidewalk and curb ramps.

Option Two creates 5-foot bicycle lanes on both sides of the street by narrowing the driving lanes to 11 feet and eliminating the parking lane on the south side.

Both options include a remodel of the Sawmill Creek Road intersection with DeGroff Street. With the redesign, cars inbound on Sawmill Creek Road will have to make a 90 degree turn to get onto DeGroff. At present, the inbound intersection is more like an off-ramp, with drivers able to enter the residential DeGroff Street at highway speed.

Another change calls for the bike path that crosses Jeff Davis Street to be moved closer to the highway.

The path as it is now is set back from Sawmill Creek Road, which means cars on Jeff Davis sometimes have to pull into the lane to see traffic on the highway.

This improvement will give better visibility for drivers and make it safer for bike riders, Ivaniszek said.

One other addition in both proposals is to improve the sidewalk by Monastery street, she said.

The Department of Transportation is accepting public comments on these options for the next 30 days. They can be emailed to Chris.Schelb@alaska.gov or mailed to P.O. Box 112506, Juneau, Alaska 99811-2506.