

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY (Draft) SPENARD CORRIDOR STRATEGIC PLAN

Over the next year, the Municipality of Anchorage will engage the community in a planning process to identify a clear vision for the future of the Spenard Corridor. The Spenard Corridor Strategic Plan (SCSP) process will explore the potential for new activities and uses in the area, consider the types of buildings that might be appropriate and devise solutions to more seamlessly connect Spenard internally and to outside destinations through improved transit, pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities and roadways. This important project will only reach its full potential if the community is intimately involved. Residents, businesses owners, employees and other stakeholders throughout Spenard and Anchorage are all critical to the Plan's success.

This Community Outreach Strategy provides an overview of the principles and methods that MOA staff and the consulting team will utilize to ensure that the community is informed, engaged and integrated into this important project.

## ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The project team, including MOA staff and their consultants, will follow a set of basic engagement principles intended to maximize participation and inclusivity. The engagement principles for the SCSP are as follows:

### LISTEN

The project team will listen closely to residents, business owners and other stakeholders to hear their hopes, concerns and vision for the Spenard Corridor. We will document input and ideas in the Plan. Comments and ideas from participants will be acknowledged and reported in workshop summaries that will be available for posting on the project website.

### BE ENGAGING

All meetings and workshops will be structured with agendas that define the topics for discussion. Workshops will be designed to be lively, fun and encourage interaction among participants. Events will encourage participants to work together to find common ground and consensus around challenging and important issues.

### BE INFORMATIVE

The events, conversations, meetings and other forms of activities that occur as part of the process will be targeted at soliciting input, but also will focus on educating and informing participants about what is known about the area and what the realistic possibilities are for its future. Thorough background information will be provided so that participants can engage in meaningful and influential conversations. Where appropriate, the project team will provide information for participants to "study" prior to critical community events by providing agendas, memoranda, reports and other materials ahead of project events.

### BE TRANSPARENT

It is important to the project's success that MOA staff remains transparent and accessible to the public. All meetings will be noticed to the public and the results from those meetings will be made available. Project schedules, background documents, deliverables and other technical reports associated with the project will be available for viewing, review and comment by the community.

## QUICK INFORMATION

### FOR INFORMATION, QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, CONTACT:

Joni Wilm – Senior Transportation Planner  
Municipality of Anchorage  
[wilmjc@ci.anchorage.ak.us](mailto:wilmjc@ci.anchorage.ak.us)  
907-343-7957

Thede Tobish – Senior Planner  
Municipality of Anchorage  
[tobishtg@ci.anchorage.ak.us](mailto:tobishtg@ci.anchorage.ak.us)  
907-343-7920

### PROJECT TEAM:

Municipality of Anchorage  
<http://www.muni.org/Departments/OCPD/Pages/default.aspx>

Winter & Company  
<http://winterandcompany.net/>

Kittleson & Associates  
<http://www.kittelson.com/>

KPB Architects  
<http://www.kpbarchitects.com/>

CRW Engineering Group, LLC  
<http://www.crweng.com/>

Alta Planning+Design  
<http://altaplanning.com/>

Urban Advisors Ltd.  
<http://www.urbanadvisors.com>

Brooks & Associates  
<http://brooks-alaska.com/>

Solstice Advertising  
<http://www.solsticeadvertising.com/>



Youth participate in a workshop at a special "Kids Table."

**EMBRACE DIVERSITY**

The Spenard Corridor is one of the most diverse areas in Anchorage and even in the country! This diversity is one of the key attributes that make the area special. The SCSP process will seek to embrace this diversity throughout the process. If language barriers present a problem, the project team will seek out a translator. If mobility presents issues, MOA staff is committed to meeting with community members in their neighborhoods, community centers or other convenient locations. Children that attend events can work together at a "kids table." Throughout the process, the project team is dedicated to removing barriers to participation.

**CLOSE THE LOOP**

Meetings and events held for the SCSP will always include "closing the loop" on preceding events. This means that input and community concerns that led to a decision will be clearly articulated so that participants can understand how input received is being carried forward into action.

**RESPECT THE COMMUNITY'S TIME**

While the SCSP is an important event for the Municipality, it is important that the project team is sensitive to the participant's busy schedules and important community events. Events will be strategically planned to maximize participation and reduce conflicts with other Anchorage activities and holidays. We will strive to limit our public events to 2 hours or less so that participants do not have to deviate from their routine schedules.

**PROJECT BRANDING AND IDENTITY**

The Spenard Corridor Strategic Plan will benefit from a professional branding process conducted by Solstice Advertising, who is located in the Spenard Corridor. The branding effort undertaken by Solstice will attempt to capture the spirit and qualities of Spenard that make it unique.

This effort will result in a recognizable logo, color scheme and identity for the project. All publications, reports and outreach materials produced and distributed by MOA staff and the consultant team will follow a standard format and have a consistent appearance so that participants know right away when they see something associated with the project.

**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION LEVELS**

Community participation for the SCSP goes beyond just holding a meeting. To ensure an inclusive process, the project team must approach community outreach for the SCSP at multiple levels so that people with different lifestyles, work schedules and interest levels all have opportunities to participate. The three levels of participation are intended to work together to maximize community involvement as shown to the left.

**INFORMATION AND AWARENESS**

Raising public awareness about the project and participation opportunities is essential to achieve adequate attendance and representative input. Announcements and updates must be distributed through multiple avenues. Digital media has the potential to reach many more community members than conventional outreach strategies. The project website is the primary clearinghouse for information and updates related to the project, but additional outreach may include the following:



### **SCSP Website**

The project website will serve as the official clearinghouse for schedule, content and other information associated with the SCSP. The website will be regularly updated so that it remains current and provides the most recent news on the project. Meeting announcements and reminders will be posted.

### **Social Media Posts**

Announcements and invites will be provided via social media posts on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook to augment the project website and other outreach mediums.

### **Direct Mailing**

MOA staff will directly mail announcements to persons residing in the Spenard Corridor to provide important updates, workshop invitations and other communications. The direct mailing method will not be used for all events, but rather for the most critical SCSP events. Direct mailings may include letters, postcards, flyers or other media. All mailings will include the SCSP logo and color scheme so they are easily recognizable.

### **Community Council and Assembly Meetings**

MOA staff will provide periodic project updates at Community Council and Anchorage Assembly meetings throughout the life of the project. These meetings are open to the public and will provide an additional opportunity to increase awareness of the SCSP.

### **Newspaper Announcements**

MOA staff will announce major SCSP events in local newspapers to help get the word out. Publications could include the Anchorage Dispatch News, Anchorage Press and potentially other on-line publications to be determined.

### **Updates in Outside Publications**

MOA staff will seek to provide updates on the SCSP in outside publications, such as newsletters, mailers and other materials prepared by outside agencies, advocacy groups and others. A short project description and announcement was included in the Bike Anchorage newsletter in April. MOA staff will continue to seek opportunities like this to increase project awareness.

### **Direct Networking**

MOA staff and the project team will seek to directly contact key community leaders in the Spenard Corridor to get the word out. This targeted, direct outreach will notify key stakeholders of project updates and events. Those community leaders and stakeholders will then help to further spread news and information to the broader community.

### **HANDS ON OUTREACH**

Public outreach will be planned strategically to engage participants in a meaningful dialogue. Plan-related events will be designed to empower participants to be creative, share their ideas candidly and work with their fellow community members to envision the future of Spenard. Outreach events and hands-on opportunities will be scheduled around critical project milestones to maximize the value of community input. As the dates and logistics of outreach events are established, this information will be posted on the project website. Hands-on outreach will be organized in three general categories. Collectively, these outreach methods are designed to appeal to a broad range of participants.



*Community members report their ideas at a workshop for the Government Hill Neighborhood Plan.*



Community members participate in an interactive workshop exercise.

### **Community Workshops**

There are two major community workshop events planned for the SCSP process in addition to all the other participation opportunities highlighted in this memo. Community workshops will be one of the primary sources for gathering public information and input. These sessions will be designed to be engaging through presentations, education, interactive exercises and idea sharing. Workshops will be designed to have meaningful and tangible end products.

### **Spenard Advisory Committee (SAC) Meetings**

The SAC is a group of Spenard Corridor stakeholders that will volunteer their time to serve as a sounding board for the process and deliverables devised by the project team. Their role is an advisory body only, so they won't directly dictate content or make direct decisions regarding what is included in the Plan or other materials. However, the discussion and dialogue that occurs among SAC members at their scheduled meetings will be strongly considered by the project team. SAC meetings will be open to the public.

### **Focus Groups and One-On-One Interviews**

MOA staff and the consultant team will periodically hold focus group sessions or one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders to attain more specific input from stakeholder groups who may have more particular concerns or knowledge of the area. Potential stakeholder groups that may be asked to participate in focus group or one-on-one meetings include advocacy groups, residents, local designers, landowners, Anchorage developers or others.

### **DIRECT FEEDBACK**

Direct feedback provided by community members to MOA staff is the final level of community participation. Direct feedback opportunities are intended to create a means for community members to provide individual thoughts, concerns and ideas to the project team for consideration. MOA staff will forward comments as appropriate to the consultant team. The following direct feedback opportunities will be available to community members.

#### **Staff Interaction**

Community members and other stakeholders are free to email, write or call MOA staff regarding the SCSP at any time. Staff is committed to providing timely responses and ensuring that feedback is forwarded to the appropriate parties for consideration.

#### **Community Survey**

A community survey will be developed for the project in the early stages. The survey will be designed to solicit input and responses to specific questions regarding the Spenard Corridor. Responses from this survey will be tabulated and made available to the community, however individuals will remain anonymous.

#### **Comment Forms**

The project team will provide "comment sheets" intended to solicit open-ended feedback from attendees at each community workshop. Participants can provide feedback on any topic they like and submit the completed forms to the project team at the end of the event.

#### **Social Media Posts**

The project team will consistently provide updates on social media sites for the project to augment the project website and appeal to community members and

stakeholders that more use social media more heavily for communication purposes. Project social media sites will be developed in Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. Links to the Spenard social media pages will be provided on the project website.

**ANTICIPATED PROJECT SCHEDULE**

The SCSP process is anticipated to take place on a timeline of a little over one year with an expected finish sometime in late Spring 2017. However, the schedule may change throughout the project if necessary. An up-to-date schedule will be maintained on the SCSP website so that community members and other stakeholders can stay informed about important project milestones and upcoming participation opportunities. A general project schedule is described below and illustrated to the right.

**STEP 1: UNDERSTAND SPENARD**

Step 1 focuses on understanding the Spenard Corridor as it is today. This will include identifying key issues and opportunities in the Corridor.

**STEP 2: CONSIDER FUTURE POSSIBILITIES**

Step 2 focuses on working with the community to envision opportunities to improve the Spenard Corridor. This may include identification of potential new land uses and activities, additional buildings types and improved transportation connections.

**STEP 3: ANALYZE POTENTIAL CHANGES**

With a broad vision in hand, the project team will study and analyze how these new ideas could be incorporated into the Corridor, including consideration of the impacts associated with change. For example, analysis will consider the traffic impacts associated with the infusion of specific new land uses.

**STEP 4: PREPARE A PLAN**

In Step 4, the project team will document the community’s vision for the Spenard Corridor in a user-friendly, comprehensive document addressing topics like future land use, urban design, transportation improvements, parking and implementation.

**STEP 5: REVIEW WITH THE COMMUNITY**

In Step 5, the draft SCSP will be made available to the community for review. A series of meetings will be utilized to solicit input on the policies and concepts for the Corridor. Draft documents will be accessible on the project website.

**STEP 6: ADOPT THE PLAN**

As a final step, the Anchorage Assembly will consider the SCSP in its draft form and move forward with an adoption process. The Assembly’s meetings on the SCSP will be open to the public, providing a final opportunity for community members to comment on the Plan.

**NOTIFICATION PROTOCOL**

Notifications for meetings and events must be prepared and disseminated in a timely manner. Community members must receive announcements with enough advance notice that they can reasonably plan for attendance. All SCSP announcements and invitations should be distributed a minimum of two weeks ahead.

