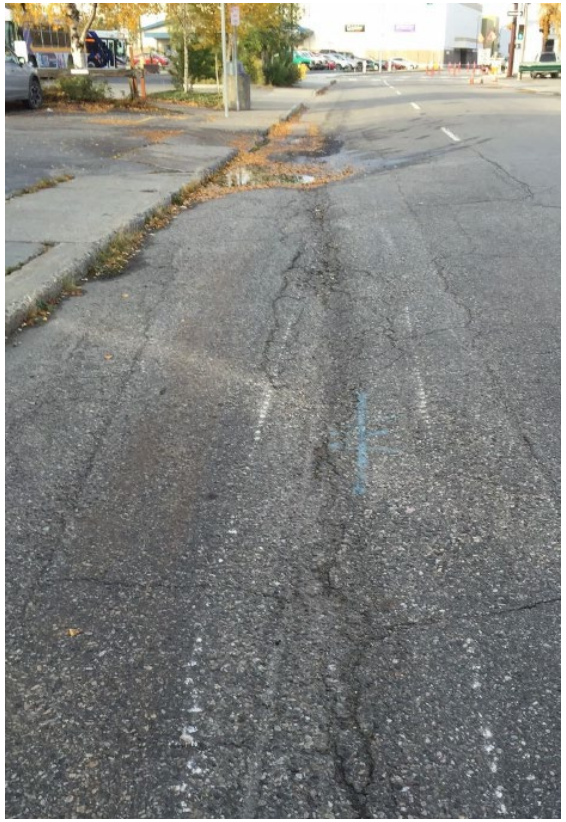






Fairbanks 5th Avenue

FAST Planning Technical Committee

November 4, 2020

From the attachment to FMATS 5th Avenue Project Nomination Form

DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION FAIRBANKS
Promoting. Preserving. Revitalizing Downtown

There are businesses and public facilities on 5th Avenue that generate a great deal of traffic and pedestrian activity. Pedestrians experience degraded sidewalks, many sloped curb cuts (which are a hazard in winter) – and probably too many curb cuts in general – puddles, high curbs and obstacles that inhibit ADA and pedestrian travel as well as snow removal. Motorists experience bumpy surfaces, those same narrow, steep curb cuts, puddling and an inefficient use of the ROW with respect to the potential for on-street parking. There is an overall lack of ADA facilities – on a street with so many public facilities – and no bike facilities at all.

5th Avenue is a major cross street for the downtown core. By virtue of fronting the Sadler's parking lot, it holds a good deal of downtown's future development potential. It has been an abiding priority of this organization to see 5th Avenue converted to 2-way circulation to *greatly* improve navigation downtown. A 2-way conversion was a major tenet of the (recently repealed) Vision Fairbanks plan and was intended to occur along with the Cushman Complete Street Project. As this project proceeds, we respectfully request that a 2-way conversion be studied for inclusion in this project, seeing as a project such as this is a long-term capital investment.

Fairbanks Downtown Association's requested considering 2-way conversion as part of this project.

Public Outreach To Date
(discussed 2-way traffic conversion)

4 stakeholder meetings
(January – March 2020)

- Meetings 2, 3, and 4 advertised on Online Public Notice

- Graphics depicting alternatives for 1-way and 2-way traffic were developed (slides to follow)

- There was no consensus on 1-way vs. 2-way traffic pattern

Online Open House & Survey
(30 days, June – July 2020)

- Advertised on Fairbanks Daily News Miner, Online Public Notice and social media (86 participants)

- Online Open House used graphics generated during Stakeholder meetings

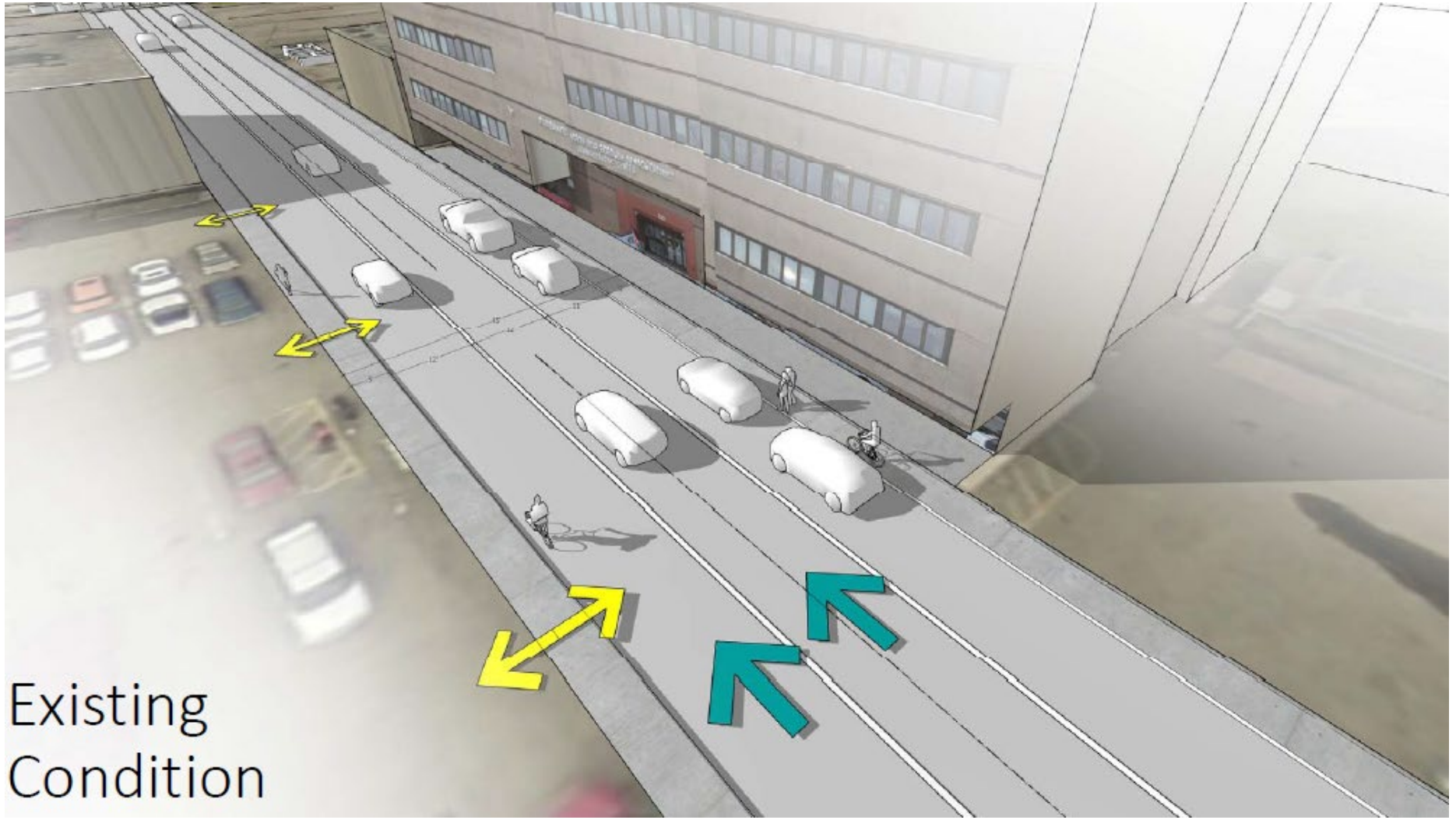
Stakeholder Group meetings outcome:

- ✓Reconstruct 5th Ave roadway and sidewalks
- ✓Improve pedestrian facilities by widening sidewalks
- ✓Provide on-street parking and loading zone where warranted
- ✓Provide green infrastructure and landscaping where ROW allows
- ✓Reduce existing striped 2 lanes to maximize one-way traffic flow and provide space for all users

From Stakeholder Group meetings:

Existing Condition

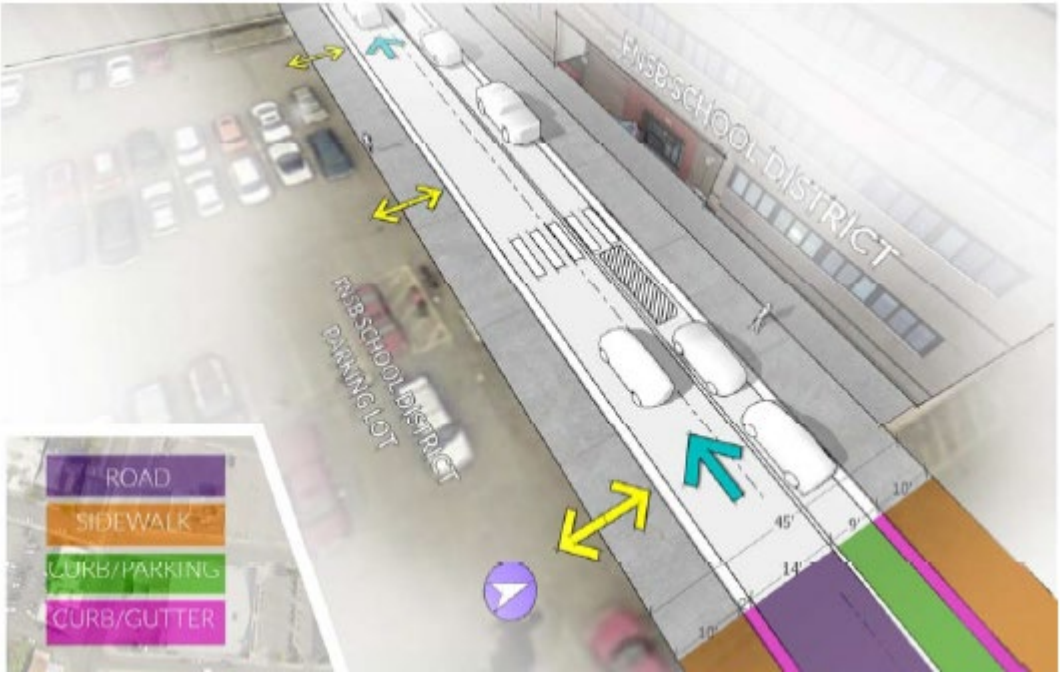
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From Stakeholder Group meetings:

Concept 1

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Variations of this concept will be considered during detailed design:

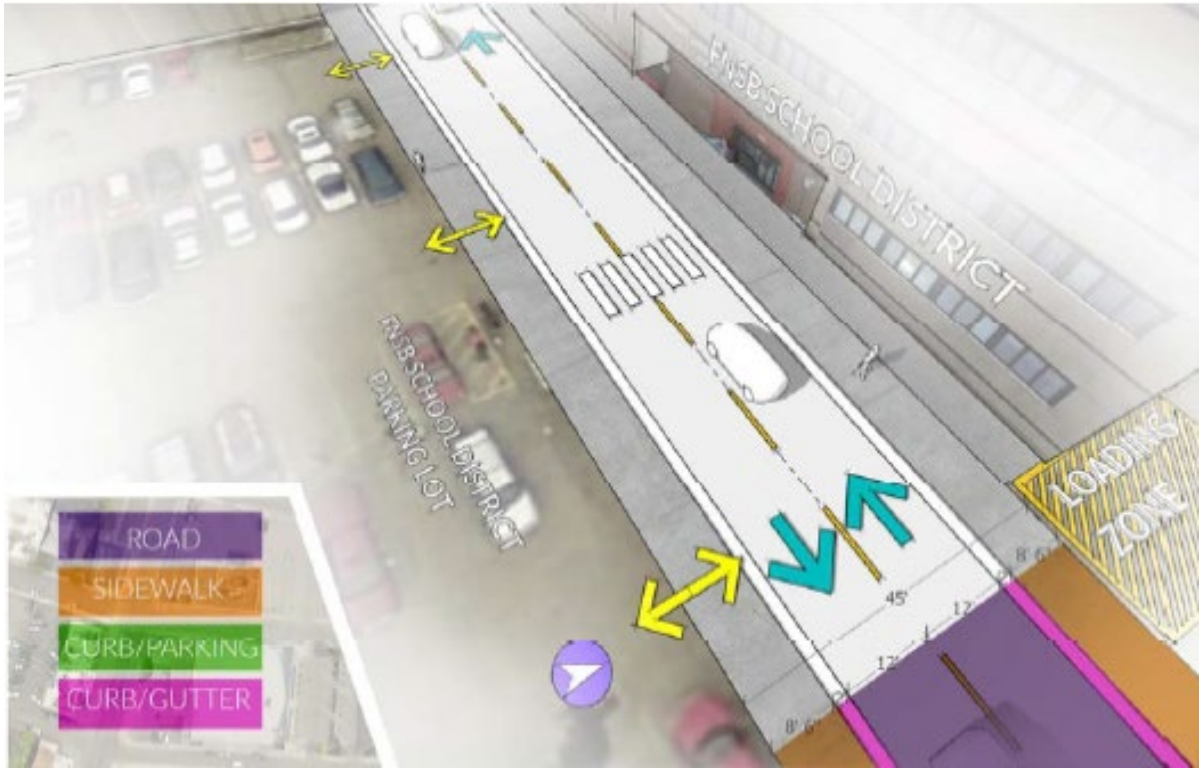
- Pavement wide enough for future 2-way conversion
- Reconstruction to accommodate only 1-way traffic and on-street parking with wider sidewalks
- Reconstruction for 1-way and bike lane for future bike route connections between Barnette and Lacey Streets with widened sidewalk



From Stakeholder Group meetings:

Concept 2A

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Why this concept was eliminated

- FNSB School District expressed that the loading zone off the street is only for authorized personnel (other deliveries such as UPS use the on-street loading zone)
- Eliminates loading zone and on-street parking (including 2 ADA spaces) and reduces space for bus maneuvering
- On-street parking and loading zone in front of FNSB SD was witnessed having constant use during site visit

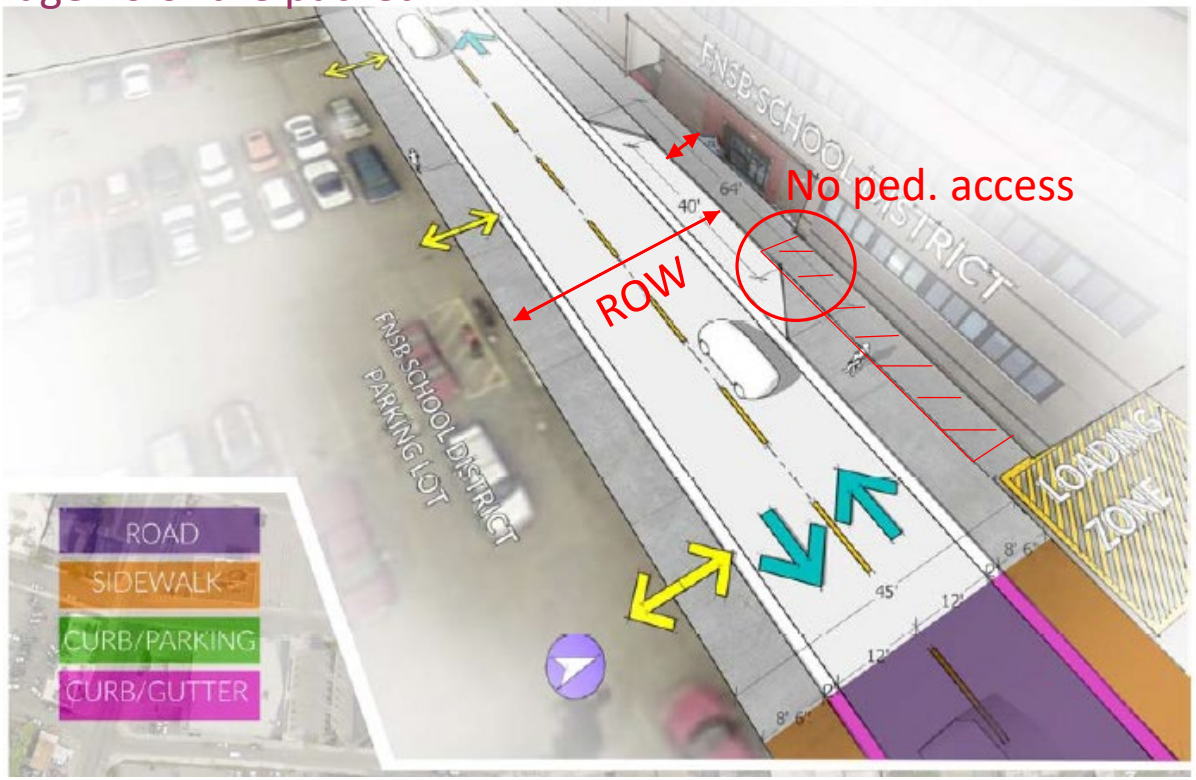
From Stakeholder Group meetings:

Concept 2B





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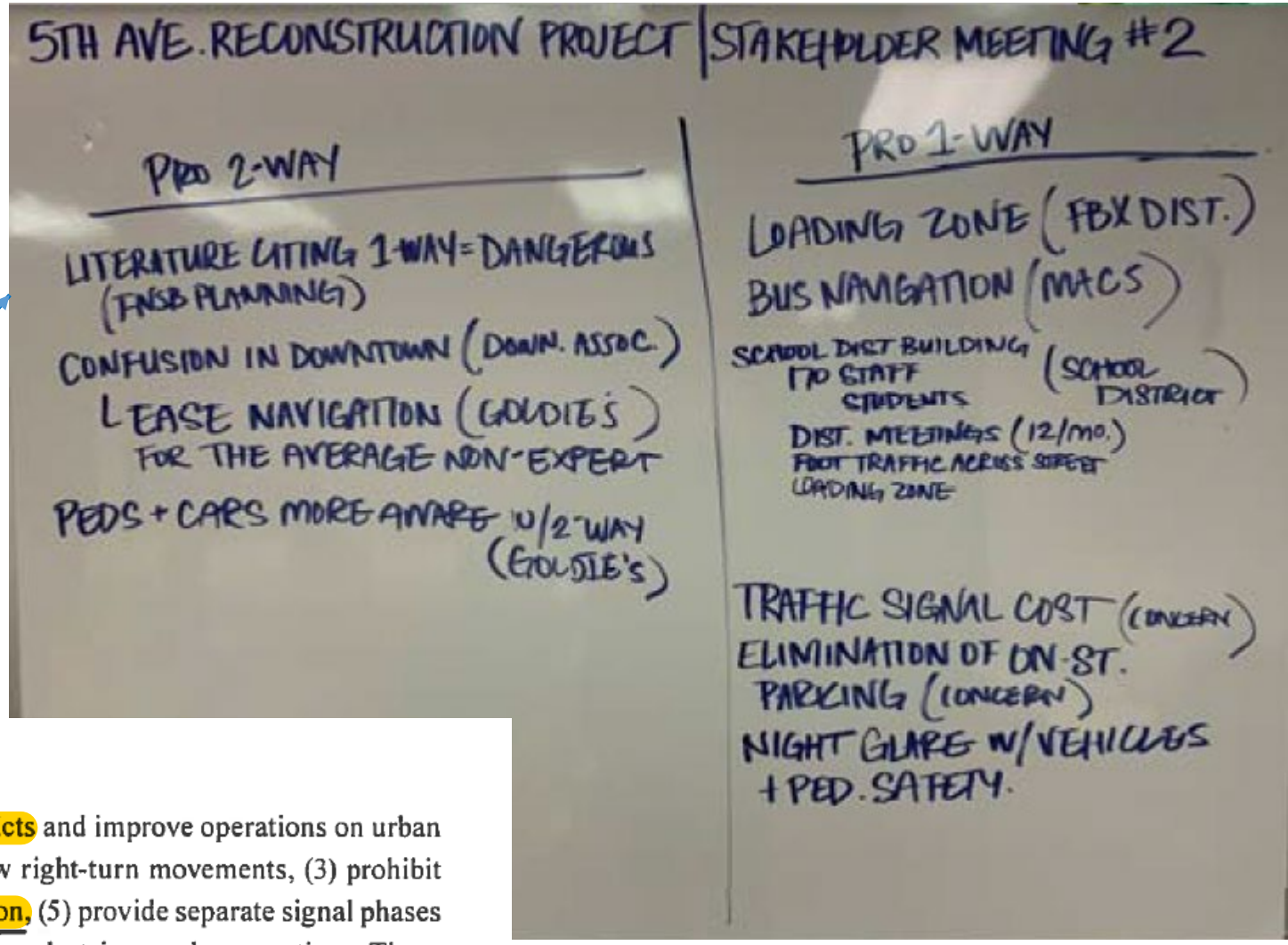


Why this concept was eliminated:

- ❖Eliminates sidewalk within public ROW
- ❖Where sidewalk is shown to transition to loading zone, there are obstructions preventing pedestrian access through this area
- ❖Eliminates on-street parking (including handicapped), FNSB SD on-street loading zone, and reduces space for bus maneuvering

From stakeholder meetings

From page 11 of the packet



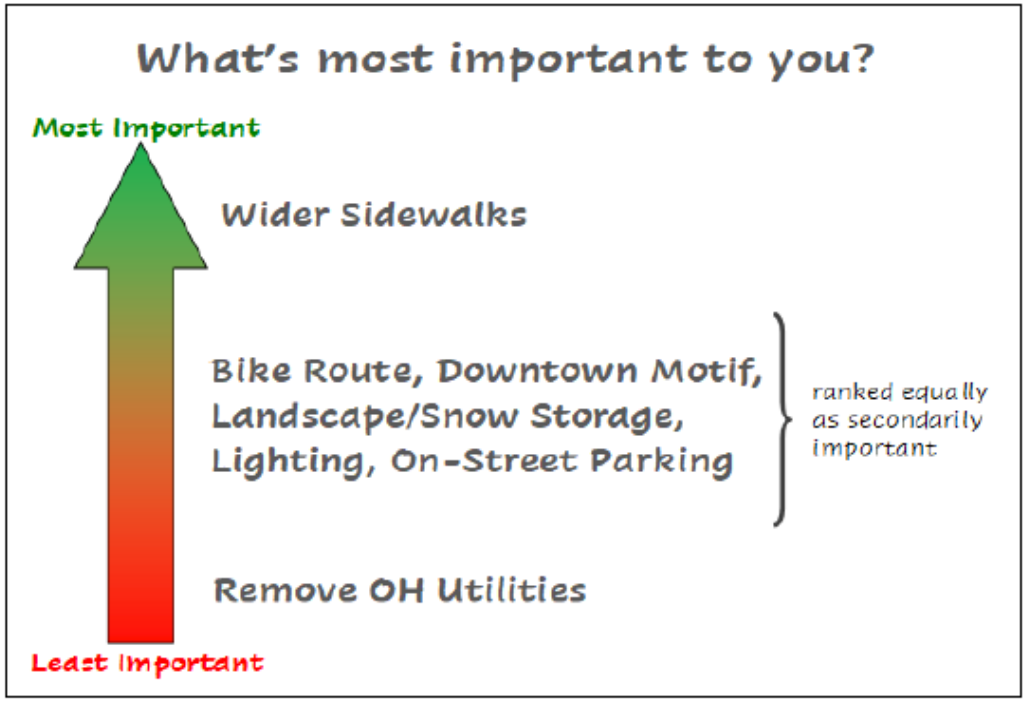
Literature for both cases exist

Guidance From AASHTO Green Book:

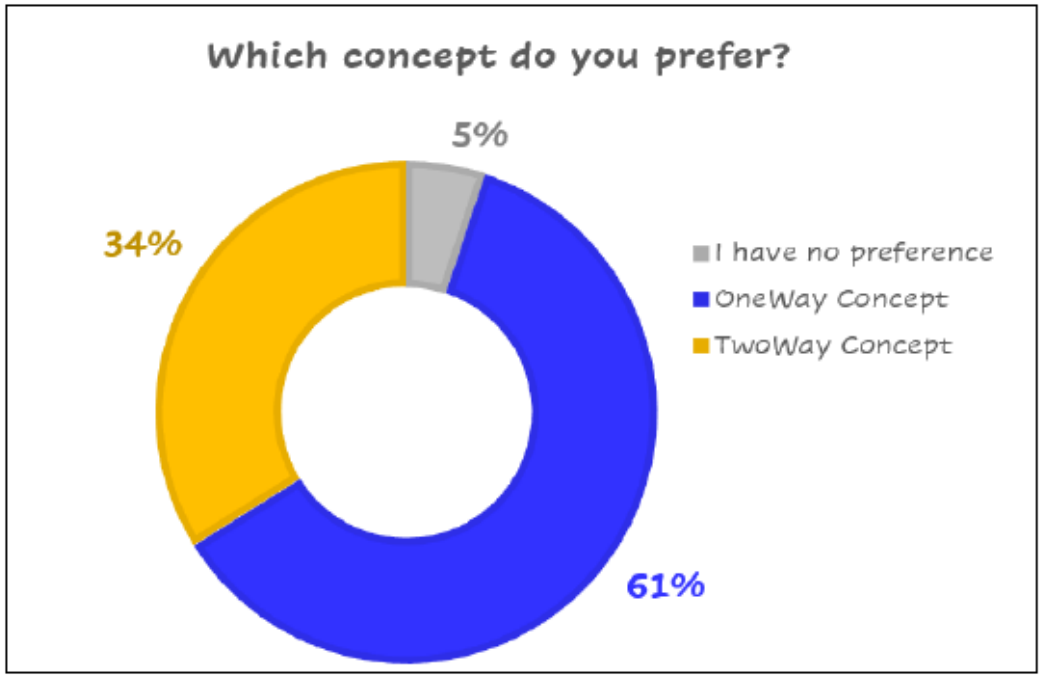
2.6.6 Reducing Pedestrian-Vehicular Conflicts

The following measures may help reduce pedestrian-vehicular conflicts and improve operations on urban highways: (1) eliminate left and/or right turns, (2) prohibit free-flow right-turn movements, (3) prohibit right turn on red, (4) convert from two-way to one-way street operation, (5) provide separate signal phases for pedestrians, (6) eliminate selected crosswalks, and (7) provide for pedestrian grade separations. These and other pedestrian considerations are detailed in subsequent chapters and in the AASHTO *Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities* (*4*).

Online Open House & Survey Results







Received comments from Fairbanks Downtown Association, FNSB Planning, and 3 property owners along 5th Ave

- Majority of the comments are for maintaining one-way

What was considered for the decision of 1-way versus 2-way on 5th Ave

- ROW between Noble and Cushman is not wide enough to provide the desired sidewalks width, on-street parking, and 2 lanes for two-way traffic wide enough to accommodate vehicles in all seasons (ROW acquisition would not solve this issue because building lines are adjacent to ROW)
- To provide wider sidewalks to encourage pedestrian movement
- Reduction of pedestrian-vehicle conflicts
- Maintain on-street parking, loading zones
- Consider winter maintenance of the roadway

Other considerations:

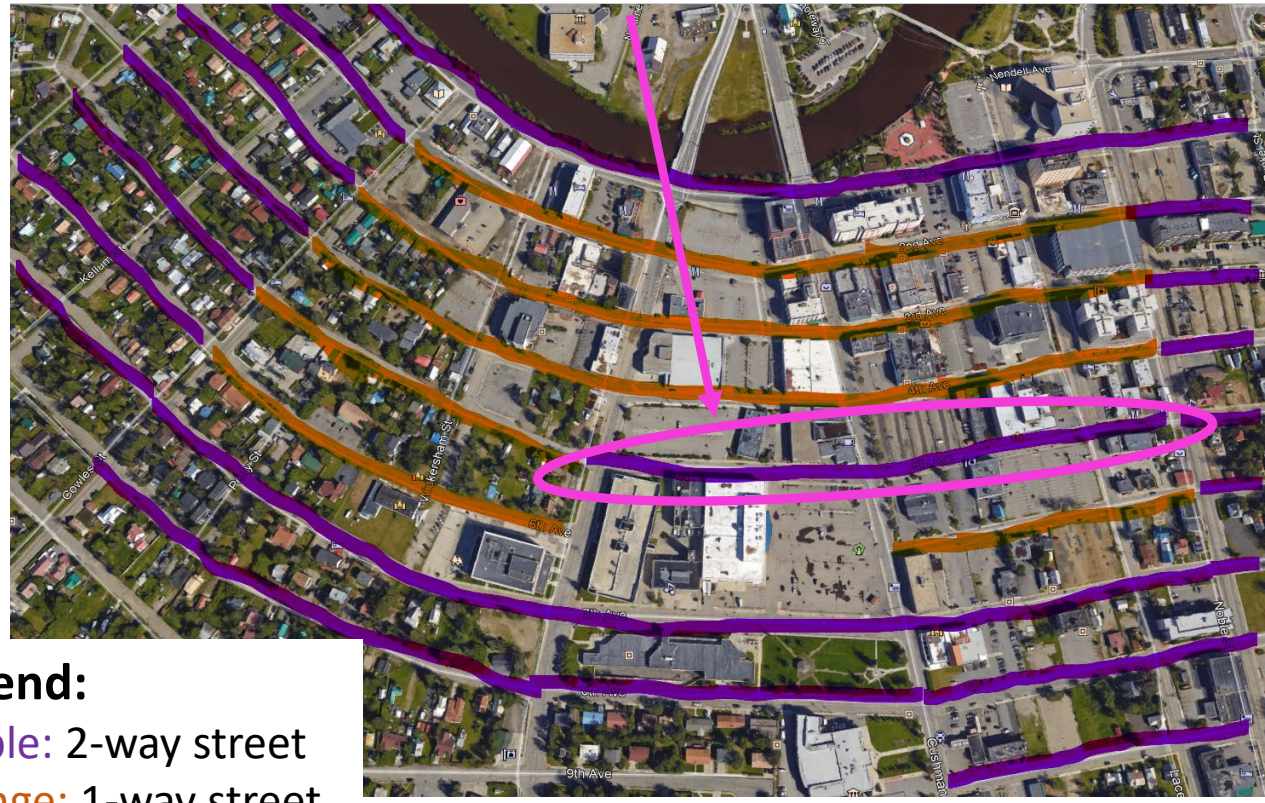
- Stakeholder group did not agree on 1-way or 2-way alternative
- Online Open House survey shows preference for maintaining 1-way traffic
- Vehicles using the roadway (Transit busses, School busses)
- City Department Heads of Public Works, Police and Fire support one-lane, one-way traffic pattern
- Many individual property/business owners and operators, as well as Online Open House Survey participants, prefer to maintain 1-way traffic on 5th Ave
- Reviewed project nominations (FAST and TAP), programmed budget, match and maintenance agreements, City of Fairbanks resolution, and the project's schedule (construction year)
- One-way alternative could be designed for future 2-way conversion while in meantime offering on-street parking and meeting FAST Planning Green Streets and Complete Streets Policy

Existing:
2nd through 6th Avenues are 1-way between Cowles and Noble



2-way conversion would change existing traffic patterns within Fairbanks Downtown:
2nd through 6th be 1-way except for portion of 5th Avenue between Noble and Barnette

Consideration:
To make navigation Downtown less confusing as recommended by the Fairbanks Downtown Association, conversion of the rest of the 5th Avenue and conversion of 6th Avenue should be considered – this would increase project cost and extend project from what it was nominated to be



Legend:
Purple: 2-way street
Orange: 1-way street

City of Fairbanks' Decision to maintain 1-way traffic pattern

Dear Mr. Fox:

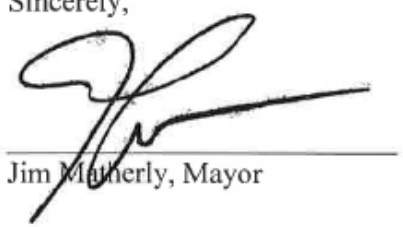
After consideration of design alternatives presented at the four stakeholder meetings over the course of the last few months for 5th Avenue (Noble St. to Barnette St.), City staff advise that the one-way traffic alternative for 5th Avenue be promoted to final design. Staff have considered the potential advantages of a two-way traffic pattern (vehicle speeds, shorten travel distance/VMT to destination properties, storefront exposure, and reduction of conflict at intersections and on-street parking via elimination of parking areas), and have determined that the operational improvements of a two-way 5th Avenue are minimal, while the costs of conversion to a two-way corridor outweigh known benefits of maintaining the one-way pattern.

Property owners/stakeholders along the corridor have voiced steady support for maintaining on-street parking and loading zones (one-way traffic is less disruptive to curbside loading activity). The recent survey results from the public also indicated that over 63%—the largest proportion of respondents—choose a design with wider sidewalks as their *number one* priority. Importantly, the Noble St. to Cushman St. ROW segments are width-constrained such that providing adequate on-street parking *and* wider sidewalks (>7' wide) is not feasible with a two-way design for much of the corridor. Additionally, a two-way design for this segment of 5th Avenue causes potential issues with exiting transit traffic at the MACS Transit Center and would require additional costs to adapt the existing signals at Cushman St. and Barnette St., and thereby reduce 'green time' for traffic on these busier north-south streets.

It is also important to note that these two primary intersections are both one-way in both directions, therefore a transition to two-way on 5th Avenue at Cushman St. and Barnette St. would *not* result in a reduction in the number of vehicle/pedestrian conflict sequences. Further, it is the City's contention that a one-way traffic pattern with on-street parking will result in a safer travel way for all users due to the narrower (13' wide), traffic-calming, vehicular travel way.

We appreciate the time and detailed effort invested in receiving input from both downtown stakeholders and the general public for the future design of 5th Avenue. Please feel free to contact me or any of the City staff cc'd below to further clarify our position related to specific design elements discussed herein.

Sincerely,

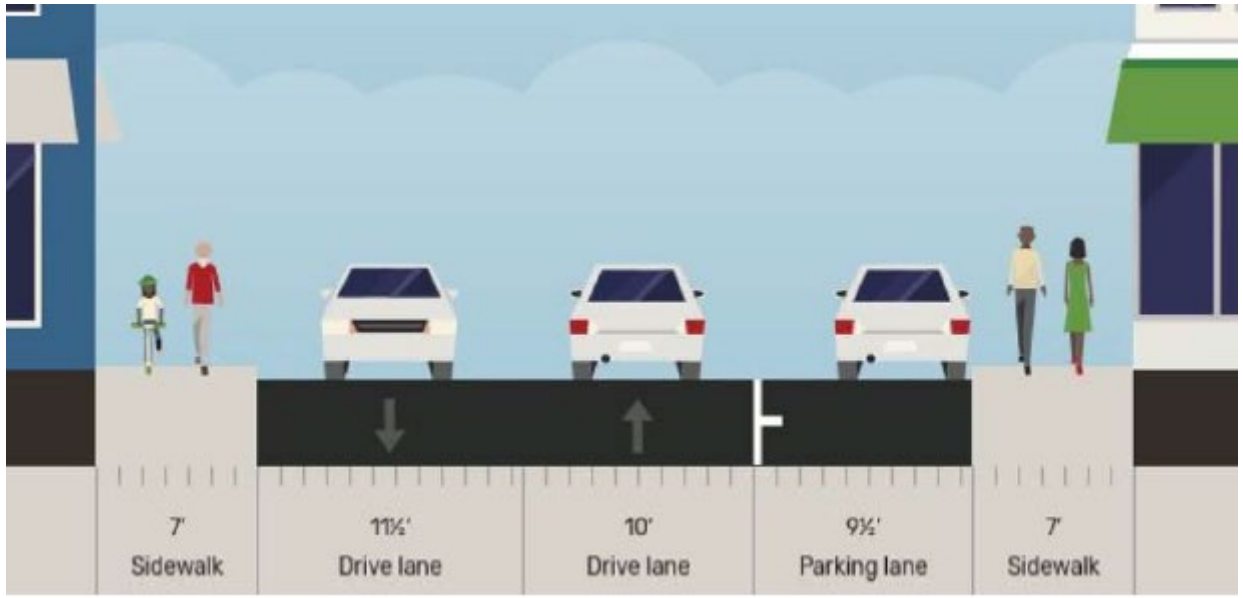


Jim Matherly, Mayor

5th Avenue - Two Way Alternative

45' width · Add location · by djgardino · September 29

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Both side have 2-ft curb and gutter

6.5’	10’	10’	8’	6.5’
Sidewalk	Drive Lane	Drive Lane	Parking Lane	Sidewalk

Why this alternative was eliminated:

- ❖ Sidewalks are not wide enough
- ❖ Traffic lanes are not wide enough

National Association of City Transportation Officials

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Transit Street Design Guide

RECOMMENDATIONS

Bus lanes may be 10–11 feet wide when offset, and 11–12 feet when configured curbside or in transitway adjacent to an opposing lane of bus traffic.



BPAC Motion

Page 7 of the packet

Amended Motion: BPAC recommends to the Technical Committee to extend the public process and require an interactive online open house on the 5th Avenue Reconstruction project to include:

- Examination and discussion of alternative 2-way typical sections that were not previously presented that optimizes the right of way for all users, and
- Examination of alternative one-way typical sections that slow speeds, encourage mobility for all modes and does not include a bike lane.

Six in favor. Two opposed. (Heim, Stern). Approved.

- City of Fairbanks believes there has been adequate time allotted for consideration of 2-way alternative. Due to the limited ROW, additional analysis would not change the City's decision to maintain 1-way traffic.
- Elimination of roadway features (e.g. bike lane) at this point is not consistent with the design process.

Next steps

- ❑ Finish the Environmental document
- ❑ Work on Design Study Report
  - ❑ Will determine typical section for 5th Avenue
  - ❑ Will consider whether designing for a future 2-way conversion is the right approach
- ❑ Local Planning Approval from FNSB
- ❑ Prepare Review PS&E
- ❑ Finalize PS&E

Possible Alternative to BPAC Motion

Continue public outreach for typical section(s) during final design of the 5th Avenue Reconstruction project based on available funding.