

Doubling of Bike Path Cost Gives Council Pause

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

The Kodiak City Council met for a work session last night and talked at length about the proposed bike path from downtown Kodiak to Deadman's Curve. The project received legislative funding in 2011 for \$384,000 that would match a city contribution, but this was when the estimated cost of the project was somewhere around \$2.9 million. City Manager Aimée Kniaziowski said that cost has almost doubled since then.

-- (Bike Path 1 :47 "At that point in time that was a... preliminary is \$4.5 million.")

Kniaziowski said the city council will have to sign a draft agreement with the State Department of Transportation on the project before the definitive costs can be provided; meaning the \$ 4.5 million still isn't set in stone. She said the DOT said the cost could swing higher or lower, but they won't know until the design and planning starts, a process that cannot be enacted without the draft agreement.

Almost a dozen community members gave up a portion of their Tuesday evening to come out and support the bike path project, citing health and wellness reasons among many others. A few spoke out against the project and Councilman John Whiddon said he's received many calls that mirror those.

-- (Bike Path 2 :41 "As many people that were in support... I am concerned about the cost.")

During the discussion the council raised many questions about the project and how funding could be generated to cover the new cost estimate, many of which were left unanswered. City Mayor Pat Branson said she doesn't feel comfortable signing an agreement with the DOT without a solid cost estimate and said the council needs a lot more answers.

-- (Bike Path 3 :33 "Well it seems like we have some questions here... can get from DOT")

The meeting ended with no decision made on whether or not to sign the draft agreement, but Branson made sure to say that the project is absolutely still on the table and will certainly be on the agenda for meetings to come.

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