

Western Alaska Access Planning Study
Elim Public Meeting Notes
October 12, 2010

Open House	11:00-11:30 a.m.
Presentation	11:30-12:15 p.m.
Question & Comments	12:15-1:00 p.m.

Project Team Representation

AK DOT&PF:	Jeff Roach
Kawerak, INC.:	Pearl Mikulski
DOWL HKM:	Steve Noble, Brandon Telford

Attendance

18 attendees recorded on the sign-in sheet (not including those from the project team).

Open House

Attendees were able to visit project display stations, view project information, ask questions, and share comments on the Western Alaska Access Planning Study.

Presentation

Jeff Roach, AK DOT&PF, opened the meeting, welcomed those in attendance, introduced the project team representatives, and introduced the purpose of the public meeting, the project goals and objectives, and schedule.

Steve Noble, DOWL HKM, presented an overview of the Corridor Planning Report.

Questions & Comments

Q = Question R = Response C = Comment

Q: What does your presentation mean when it says the project will improve community sustainability?

R: *It means that reducing costs of goods and services could have a positive impact on the ability of residents to maintain a rural lifestyle.*

Q: What price did you assume for propane in your report?

R: *The report assumed an average barged diesel cost of \$18.416 per MMBtu, and an average trucked propane cost of \$6.27 per MMBtu.*

Q: Who are you working with within the Elim community?

R: *We coordinated with the Elim Native Corporation, City of Elim, and Native Village of Elim to organize the public open house. We came to the Elim community to*

solicit public comments on the proposed road corridor developed by DOWL HKM and the Alaska DOT&PF.

Q: The corridor is shown passing through Elim Native Corporation lands. We've just acquired some of those lands after fighting for over 80 years. Are you planning on taking those lands for highway right-of-way?

R: ***The alignment shown on the figure is conceptual. The exact alignment has not been determined and ROW ownership and the need for acquisition will be determined during future phases of the project.***

C: You're presentation suggests that the project will reduce costs in Villages. The port project in Nome promised to reduce costs in Villages and that didn't happen.

C: The road project will affect the postal bypass system, reducing the effectiveness of the current system. The Postal Service will be mandated to switch to truck transportation, which will end subsidized air transportation and result in poor service to rural communities.

C: The cost of transporting goods to Elim will not change if a spur road is not built between Elim and the new highway.

C: Elim opposes uranium mining at Boulder Creek. The community has held demonstrations opposing uranium mining during the Iditarod. This project may lead to the development of mining resources along the corridor. If the highway is developed Elim may lose its voice to oppose mining development.

Q: Could contracts be given to communities close to the corridor for construction and maintenance of the highway?

R: ***The way the contracts can be written depends on how the Legislature decides to fund the project. If Federal Highway funds are used on the project, local preference cannot be included in the contract.***

Q: Have the effects of this project been evaluated by anthropologists and social scientists?

R: ***Northern Economics prepared a study entitled "The Economic Benefits and Socioeconomic Effects of the Yukon River Road Corridor." It is available as Appendix I of the January 2010 Corridor Planning Report. The study looked at effects to employment and income, public services, population and out-migration, and subsistence. Before the project can move to the design and construction phases a more detailed assessment of the environmental and social impacts of the corridor will be performed.***

Q: Where are your offices located?

R: ***The office of DOWL HKM is located at 4041 B Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. The office of Northern Region DOT&PF is located at 2301 Peger Road, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709.***

Q: Did you notify the community of this meeting ahead of time?

R: *This meeting was coordinated through the City of Elim, the Native Village of Elim, and the Elim Native Corporation. Advertising materials were provided to all three entities and announcements were made over UHF radio prior to the meeting.*

C: You should mail meeting announcements to every resident prior to conducting a meeting in a community.

C: The road corridor could increase unwanted access to our hot springs and Elim Native Corporation lands.