

Western Alaska Access Planning Study
Golovin Public Meeting Notes
January 19, 2011

Open House	4:00-4:30 p.m.
Presentation	4:30-4:55 p.m.
Question & Comments	4:55-6:00 p.m.

Project Team Representation

AK DOT&PF:	Alexa Greene
Kawerak, INC.:	Denise Michels
DOWL HKM:	Steve Noble, Alison Lohrke

Attendance

21 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

Alexa Greene, 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 and the work completed to date. He emphasized that the project is in the planning stage and is not just about the Nome objective, but for all of Western Alaska.

Questions & Comments

Q = Question R = Response C = Comment

Q: Who owns most of the lands on the proposed route? BLM? Corporations?

R: ***Most of the land that the road crosses is on Federal or State land. When you get close to the villages, there are some locations where the road needs to access or cross corporation lands. We tried to minimize the impacts to Native owned lands and stay away from right-of-way (ROW) issues, but it also depends on the village. Some villages want the road to come close to their community and some want the road to stay 5 to 10 miles away from their community. The alignment will be adjusted based on public feedback and the desire to minimize impacts to private property.***

Q: The impacts to private lands – what would happen then? Would there be easements?

R: *If the State chooses a route that impacts private lands, the State then follows the Federal ROW acquisition process. The goal on any acquisition effort would be to give the property owner the fair market value for the land, or to work out some kind of mutually agreeable price or easement of some sort that would also be compensated. It is possible that there could be a land trade.*

Q: Would the route be a State-maintained route?

R: *Yes, whichever route is chosen would likely be a State-maintained corridor.*

Q: Would the ROW process be the same if going through Federal Reserve lands?

R: *If it is a Federal Reserve, it is a different ROW process. It is much harder, and it does influence the route chosen. These types of acquisitions, rights and protections affect the road alignment.*

C: This project could mean more competition for more subsistence resources.

C: Small villages like Golovin oppose outside access, but we need to start living in the future and welcome in new projects like this one.

C: I think if the road is built, it should be built starting at Nome, Fairbanks and in between. This would open up resource development for Western Alaska and create new jobs as well.

Q: Would material to build the road be obtained throughout the route?

R: *As of now, we need a further geotechnical report to define if material is suitable along the route. However, it would be ideal to obtain material along the preferred route to minimize haul costs.*

Q: What is the general feeling towards the road in the other villages you have visited?

R: *There is nothing scientific about what we have heard so far. We have asked for people to give us their views on the project and we have heard a full spectrum of comments. We have heard comments from both sides and comments from people that are on the fence. Some see the benefits of the road and that it will reduce the costs of their goods and services. Some see the negative aspects of the road, which can negatively impact their subsistence resources and want to know what protections will be placed on the land.*

We have received many comments about building a rail line, but many people don't know that a rail line would be almost three times more expensive than a road. With a rail line, the slopes cannot be as steep as what you can design with a road so it is much harder to design a rail line that will be able to travel through what a road can. The materials for a rail line are also in high demand and are more expensive than road materials.

Q: I know that Governor Parnell is currently considering upgrades to various Ports. Is this related to this project?

R: *It certainly is related to access to the communities and access and uses for the road. We haven't done a thorough analysis of the ports as part of this project. This project has assumed there will be a tie-in with Council and essentially Nome. We are aware of research being done for Cape Darby and Nome as potential port sites, but it has not been a part of this analysis.*

Q: Have you been to Koyuk yet? How do they feel about the preferred route?

R: *We have been to Koyuk. In general, they have had the same thoughts as the other villages visited, in that some are in favor and some are not.*

Q: During feasibility studies, you must be thinking that this project will be long-term?

R: *This is correct. This project is not something that will be done in 5 years. This is a long-term project that can take 20 to 30 years.*

Q: Will it be like the haul road to Prudhoe? Will it have a fee?

R: *The haul road is a good proto-type for what this road will look like, so trucks will be able to use it. Passenger cars will be able to use it as well.*

Q: Along the route, will the State develop material sites, quarries, maintenance sites, etc?

R: *If a road corridor is selected and the State chooses to move forward, there will need to be maintenance stations every 50 to 60 miles along the road. There would be quarry sites developed and there would be jobs for maintenance activities.*

C: I am in complete agreement with the State developing the road like the haul road to Prudhoe.

Q: I'm wondering about working on the road. Will the State be contracting the work out to local villages, or will there be more jobs?

R: *Construction methods and local hire opportunities will depend on the requirements of the funding source.*

Q: In your current plan, is there a spill prevention plan?

R: *It is currently not addressed, but a spill prevention plan would be developed later on in the planning and design process when a route is chosen.*

Q: Would there be a no-net loss concerning water quality and wetlands?

R: *During the environmental and design phases, these two issues would be evaluated. Any waterways with fish in them have to have detailed analysis completed for them in order to have the roadway pass over the waterway. The water quality impacts are also evaluated. The Clean Water Act regulates the amount of pollution that can be discharged to waters, particularly those that have fish and those that are navigable. During and after construction, there would need to be mitigation measures placed in order to prevent pollution and degradation of the water quality.*

As far as the quality of the wetlands, typically the way wetlands are dealt with is through wetland restoration, or fee-in-lieu to a wetlands bank to preserve wetlands in another location.

Q: Do you set up meetings with the Tribal Councils, IRA's and the City?

R: *It depends on each village. When setting up meetings, we try to set up a meeting with each, but most villages typically want us to meet with all at the same time on the initial meeting. There will be more publications, newsletters and visits depending on which route is chosen.*

Q: On any of the routes, are there any Native allotments?

R: *We believe we have avoided Native allotments, but our route is strictly conceptual as of now. If we design further and find that the roadway crosses a Native allotment, we will likely adjust to avoid the allotment.*

Q: Can you legally transport alcohol through a dry village on a State-maintained roadway?

R: *We are not sure if alcohol can legally be transported through a dry village on a State-maintained roadway. This is something we will have to research.*

Q: What have you heard from the airline and freight companies?

R: *Since this is just the planning phase of the project, we haven't solicited comments from the commercial or industrial companies just yet.*