

**Western Alaska Access Planning Study
Koyuk Public Meeting Notes
October 11, 2010**

Open House	4:00-4:30 p.m.
Presentation	4:30-5:15 p.m.
Question & Comments	5:15-6:00 p.m.

Project Team Representation

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

Attendance

26 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: How did you arrive at the fuel cost figures in the presentation? Fuel prices fluctuate a great deal based on barge access and other factors.

R: *The study used data from the Alaska Department of Commerce to determine the annual price of fuel in several communities in the study area. The data was recorded by the Alaska Department of Commerce between 2002 and 2008.*

Q: Are tunnels more expensive to construct than bridges?

R: *Tunnels are generally more expensive to construct than bridges.*

Q: Did you study the corridor's impacts on tourism and big game hunting? Were these impacts included in the cost studies?

R: *The study assumed the economic effects of increased tourism and big game hunting would be minimal in comparison to the impacts to mining and the price of goods*

and services. The impacts to tourism and big game hunting were not looked at in detail when deciding the preferred corridor; however, there will be some positive economic impacts.

Q: Will the highway create new job opportunities in the communities located along the corridor?

R: *Yes. Numerous opportunities will arise from resource development, road maintenance, inter-village transportation, material transport, etc.*

Q: Is it possible to guarantee local hire for the construction 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 hire cannot be guaranteed in the contract.*

Q: How far will the road corridor be from Koyuk?

R: *The straight line distance between the Yukon River Corridor and the community of Koyuk is 1 mile. This distance will likely change during the design phase of the project and can be adjusted based on the desires of the community.*

C: The corridor would be easier to construct if it went behind Grand Mountain, but this would result in negative impacts for subsistence hunters.

Q: How long will it be before this project is ready to construct? The community can get training to do the construction if they know when the construction will be taking place.

R: *Start of construction is several years out and will depend on the availability of funding, support from the public, and State/Legislative support.*

Q: How likely is it that mines will be developed as a result of this project?

R: *Development of mines cannot be guaranteed and will depend on market conditions and private investment.*

Q: Will the highway be maintained for year-round use?

R: *The corridor study assumed that the highways would be maintained year-round. The estimated operations and maintenance costs are based on year-round maintenance.*

Q: How many maintenance stations will be required to keep the highway open year-round?

R: *The corridor study looked at the Dalton Highway as an example for maintenance requirements. It was assumed that a maintenance station for the Yukon River Corridor will be required for every 50-60 miles of highway for year-round maintenance.*

Q: Does the project include providing spur roads to communities along the corridor? If so the spur roads should be built before the main highway is constructed.

R: *The study compared the costs of providing spur roads to communities within 20 miles of the corridor. It was found that the average cost per person for access roads is lowest for the Yukon River Corridor. The cost of the spur roads was not included in the project cost estimate.*

C: It's easier to get funding to improve existing roads than it is to construct new roads.

Q: Would the communities along the corridor be contracted to maintain sections of the highway or will the DOT&PF keep all O&M in-house?

R: *DOT&PF will be responsible for O&M but will establish maintenance stations that will likely utilize local resources to the extent available.*

Q: Will there be a rail system located next to the highway?

R: *A rail system along the corridor was not proposed by the study but the development of a highway corridor would make addition of a rail system more affordable if one is needed in the future.*

Q: Is the highway proposed with a paved surface or a gravel surface?

R: *The study assumes that the highway is surfaced with crushed aggregate, not asphalt pavement.*

Q: Will communities further from the corridor also get spur roads?

R: *The study did not compare the cost of connecting communities further than 20 miles from the corridor. If a community further than 20 miles from the corridor wants a spur road they could request the connections through the STIP process.*

Q: Did the study consider tying the highway into the sub-Bering tunnel?

R: *No, the study compared corridors with Council as the western tie-in point.*

Q: How will the comments on the questionnaire be handled or counted?

R: *DOWL HKM will prepare a report detailing and providing analysis of the comments received during the public meetings, the questionnaires received at the meetings, by mail, and online, and the comments received in the project email. The report will be submitted to the AK DOT&PF and will be used to determine if the project should move forward.*

Q: How wide are you proposing the highway be?

R: *The study assumed a 24 foot wide driving surface with 3 foot wide shoulders. The total width of the highway would be 30-feet.*

C: The highway should be wider than what is being proposed.

Q: Would it be prudent for the community to develop gravel sources in preparation for selling gravel to this project?

R: *Construction of this project is many years in the future. Planning for gravel sources will be part of the future phases of this project if the State chooses to move*

to the next steps. Locally owned and tribal gravel sources will certainly be considered in that analysis, but we do not recommend spending local resources on developing gravel sources for this project until the project certainty and schedule are known.