

**Western Alaska Access Planning Study
Manley Hot Springs Community Council Public Meeting Notes
November 11, 2010**

Presentation	3:30-4:10 p.m.
Question & Comments	4:10-5:10 p.m.

Project Team Representation

AK DOT&PF: Alexa Greene
DOWL HKM: Tom Middendorf, Alex Prosak

Attendance

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

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.

Tom Middendorf, DOWL HKM, presented an overview of the Corridor Planning Report.

Questions & Comments

Q = Question R = Response C = Comment

Q: You indicated that the biggest economic factor for opening the road is mineral extraction, is this just gold? Can you be more specific on what types of minerals will be mined?

R: *The report details specifically what minerals can be found at each of the potential mine locations within the study area, they are not all just gold mines but vary from precious metals such as gold and silver to other precious metals, rare earth minerals, and uranium.*

Q: The map shows the road to Nome beginning near the end of Manley Hot Springs Road, do you know more precisely how close the road will be to the town?

R: *We have heard that the community desires that the road does not go right through Manley Hot Springs. Details about where the road starts will occur during design and after further public input. We only have a rough idea now.*

Q: Will the road go through or access villages?

R: *It will vary and at this point everything is just conceptual. Based on our preliminary concept, the closest the road will get to any village will be Tanana. Typically access to villages will be via connector roads and not the primary roadway.*

Q: You still haven't answered the question on how close the road will be to Manley Hot Springs?

R: *At this point we do not know exactly where the road will begin but it will likely be around 3.5 to 8 miles outside of Manley This is still very early in the planning phase of the project so we don't have an exact location at this time. If the project does go into the environmental phase we will be back out here having additional meetings with the community to help determine where the road would begin.*

Q: What percentage of the project funding is federal and how much for the state?

R: *We don't know this at this time. There is currently no funding now for anything beyond the current study.*

Q: How much is this study costing?

R: *About one million dollars.*

Q: If the road is constructed, is it assumed that it will be a 12-month road?

R: *Yes, we assume the road will be usable throughout the entire year and not just seasonally.*

Q: Will the road have a gravel surface?

R: *Yes.*

Q: Are these corporate mines you are talking about?

R: *We have only estimated mineral values for larger mines.*

Q: So individual mine owners would not benefit from the road?

R: *Everyone would benefit from the road as spurs can be constructed that will ultimately benefit all users.*

C: Individual mine owners would also benefit through lower freight and fuel costs.

Q: Historically, do you know if there was more of an 'anti' feeling toward the road project?

R: *We don't know.*

Q: What or who will make the final decision on whether or not the road will be constructed?

R: *Many will be involved in the decision, from the Legislature and Governor who would be involved in funding decisions to environmental agencies who will be control environmental approvals.*

Q: Would the project be built in segments, starting at one end and working toward the other?

R: *Due to the size of the project it would probably have to be built in segments, generally connecting either to communities or mineral sources. It could start with a Manley to Tanana segment or from Nome to the east or perhaps in the middle*

section. At the point we just don't know where it would begin, but we will be giving DOT&PF some options as part of this study.

C: Rail is an excellent idea as it would restrict access.

Q: Funding to build and maintain the road is not available yet?

R: Correct, this study will help determine if further work should be funded.

Q: Where is the funding from the current study coming from?

R: The current funding is from the State of Alaska general fund.

C: Alaska is the biggest state and we are two hundred years behind the rest of the country in terms of infrastructure.

R: Other communities have also noted this.

Q: Would standards require that some of the Elliott Highway be upgraded? It is in BAD shape.

R: We don't know; this has not been looked at yet.

C: The State should invest money from the Permanent Fund Dividend into building this road and replenishing the PFD with money generated from construction of the roadway.

C: I'm eighty and will never see the benefits of the road but my grandchildren will.

C: The cost of this project will fall on the shoulders of our children and grandchildren and we're already \$14 trillion dollars in debt.

C: Having lived in Manley prior to the road being constructed to the town, I can speak to how much the community has benefitted from the road. We used to have to plan for one year of food in bulk in advance via the barge as air shipments are too expensive. Medical emergencies were also a major concern as it was not feasible to get in or out by air. Vehicles can get in or out at any time.

C: A road will provide additional access to hunters allowing them to take resources that villagers desperately need. It used to be that there would be a moose for everyone in town; since the road has been built and brought an influx of hunters it is becoming more and more difficult to find moose.

C: Alaska has an outstanding airport system throughout the remote communities for getting freight in and out and the cost of air freight has been coming down.

C: If people have moved to Manley specifically for the subsistence lifestyle, the road will absolutely kill the lifestyle. Rail would be much better.

C: Run the road through a protected wilderness area, I'd like to see what one looks like.

Q: Are the areas designated as mineral sources developed mines or just areas identified as having the noted minerals?

R: *Most are areas that have been noted to contain the presence of minerals, but without active mines, primarily because road access is lacking.*

Q: If the road goes through will it be along the Tofty Road at all?

R: *It will overlap Tofty Road to some extent but the road itself will probably begin prior to Manley to keep out traffic that does not have Manley as a destination.*

C: We agree it should not go through Manley

C: We don't have the ability to patrol, enforce, and maintain the roads we currently have. We don't need another road to add to the problems we already have.

C: The population in Manley has steadily declined since road access has become available.

C: The road will ultimately bring much needed jobs.

C: Unless someone actually wants to come to Manley they could bypass the town so long as the road begins north of the town.

Q: Is there a separate meeting tonight for the Tribe?

R: *Yes.*

Q: Why?

R: *Because the Community Association requested a separate public meeting.*

Q: Why?

R: *I don't know.*

C: This process is promoting the very thing we're trying to fight against; the tension between the natives and non-natives.

Q: Is anyone here tonight welcome at the tribal meeting?

R: *Yes, it is open to the public*

(Note – The separate meeting was not requested by the Tribal Council but by the Community Association. The Tribal Council indicated that everyone was welcome to attend the meeting at the Tribal Hall.)

C: When building the road, stay on high ground, the valleys and other low ground areas are very poor soils and can be up to 120' of muck.