

**Western Alaska Access Planning Study
Unalakleet Public Meeting Notes
October 13, 2010**

Open House	10:00-11:00 a.m.
Presentation	11:00-11:45 a.m.
Question & Comments	11:45-12:15 p.m.

Project Team Representation

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

Attendance

9 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: Did the study consider inter-community connections?

R: *The study compared the costs to tie communities into the corridor but did not consider the cost of inter-community connections beyond what is provided by the corridor.*

C: Over the long term it seems that air and barge costs have evened out, with the less expensive mode becoming more expensive until they are nearly equal.

Q: What is the address of the project webpage?

R: *www.westernalaskaaccess.com*

C: The corridor alignment addresses mineral development more than community access. The State could serve almost as many people by constructing a road connection between Unalakleet and Kaltag.

C: If the corridor connected to a deep water port other than Nome it would provide cheaper barging.

Q: Why does Route 3 not pass through Unalakleet?

R: *The route was not intended to connect every village along the way, but was intended to provide access between the Nome area and Fairbanks area. Secondary roads connecting villages that are not immediately adjacent to the route will eventually be needed.*

Q: Does the alignment of Route 3 purposely avoid the Unalakleet Wild and Scenic River?

R: *Yes, permitting a highway crossing of the Unalakleet Wild and Scenic River was assumed to be optimistic, so for the sake of conservatism, the road goes around the river.*

Q: Is there a reason that the Yukon River Corridor does not pass through all the communities along the corridor?

R: *The corridor was routed using USGS mapping and aerial photography in an attempt to balance resource access, community access, avoiding environmentally sensitive areas, constructability, and project cost. Some communities may not want to be connected.*

Q: How will you acquire the right-of-way needed for the project?

R: *The State will negotiate land swaps or the purchase of land for right-of-way. This will occur much later in the development of the project.*

Q: How will the design address fish passage?

R: *All fish streams/crossings will be designed to meet agency required fish passage criteria.*

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: What is the long term plan for paying maintenance costs?

R: *Funding for operations and maintenance (O&M) will need to be appropriated by the Legislature, just as it is for all other highways in the State. There are no O&M funding sources currently assigned to this corridor.*