

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

Open House	10:00-10:30 a.m.
Presentation	10:30-11:15 a.m.
Question & Comments	11:15-12:00 p.m.

Project Team Representation

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

Attendance

14 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

C: Our community already has trouble with people trespassing on our hunting grounds.
This project will make it easier for people to trespass.

Q: Did the study consider access to alternative energy sources?

R: ***Yes, the March 2009 Western Alaska Access Planning Study Inventory Report outlined alternative energy sources within the study area.***

Q: Was a train corridor considered as an alternative to the road corridor?

R: ***Yes, as a general rule, a train corridor is four times more expensive than a highway corridor to construct and maintain. One of the goals of the study was to identify corridor alternatives that could minimize construction and maintenance and operations costs, for this reason a road was selected over a railroad.***

Q: We're concerned about a water shed area north of the White Mountain community. The corridor is shown just north of the water shed area. Will the corridor affect that area?

R: *If the State chooses to move forward with the project, a hydrology and water quality analysis would be performed as part of the environmental documentation effort to determine the best routing of the corridor through or around this area.*

Q: Will the project result in higher taxes on communities close to the corridor?

R: *The Legislature will appropriate the funding for maintenance of the corridor, just as they do on the other State roads.*

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: Will the project include training locals to work on the construction of the highway?

R: *Construction training programs for communities along the corridor were not considered in the analysis.*

Q: Would communities and non-profits know about the construction schedule and staffing needs far enough in advance to provide training to locals?

R: *The State will be back to meet with the public and local communities many times if the project moves forward.*

Q: What impact will the highway have on airlines?

R: *Air travel will continue as the communities are far from most destinations and some people will not have the time to drive the long distances. If the road stimulates economic and community development and jobs, air travel could even increase in some communities.*

Q: Is this highway actually going to be constructed?

R: *Construction will depend on support from the public, funding availability, and priority in relation to other projects.*

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: Does the project include providing spur roads to communities along the corridor?

R: *The study compared the costs of providing spur roads to communities within 20 miles of the corridor for each of the route options. It was found that the average cost per person for access roads is lowest for the Yukon River Corridor.*

C: The community would like a written statement from the State of Alaska detailing the intentions of the project. The statement should include a detailed explanation of the economic factors that are influencing the project, especially the mining influences.

R: ***Much of this information is in the report and on the web site.***

Q: Are you meeting with the regional corporation as part of the public involvement phase?

R: ***The Regional Corporation was contacted prior to this meeting and they agreed to a combined meeting with the City and the Tribe. If additional meetings are desired one on one with the Council, please let us know.***

Q: Will public comments be compiled for public review?

R: ***Yes, 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. We encourage you to complete a questionnaire so we are certain to get your comments.***