



Public Comment & Response Summary
9/18/2020 – 10/9/2020
 STIP NID: 32960
 Fed/State Project No. 0002470/NFHwy00522

The following document summarizes the public scoping comments received by email, comment sheet, in person, and phone from September 18, 2020 to October 9, 2020.

Comment	Response
<p>The current trail is so special because unlike most trails in Alaska, you start to get great views almost immediately. I would like to see the current trail preserved with access by trail under the Bison Gulch bridge and parking expanded on the same side and down the road as Stan Justice has suggested. It's a long hike to get to Mt Healy and doesn't need extra ugly miles added at the trailhead.</p>	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. I understand that you think removing access to the existing parking lot will not improve access to the existing un-official Bison Gulch trail. We will be looking more depth into options that do not block the parking lot on the east side of the road while still constructing a new parking lot on the west side as shown in Option 1 and Option 2. You can follow project updates on the project website (http://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/bison-gulch/) or reach out to me at any time.</p> <p>Please let me know if there is anything else you would like to discuss. The photos are great, thank you.</p>
<p>I have examined quad maps and google earth of the proposal to “improve” access to Mt Healy and have concluded that the current proposal does the exact opposite – access to Mt Healy will be worse under either of the two proposals. Putting the trailhead further from Mt. Healy does little to improve access beyond the road crossing issue. And the road crossing issue at Bison Creek could be resolved by constructing a trail under the Bison Creek bridge. The start of the Mt. Healy trail is a classic social trail mess. Going up people bash their way to the first hill only to have to go down through a swampy seale. Coming</p>	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. I understand that you think removing access to the existing parking lot will not improve access to the existing un-official Bison Gulch trail. We will be looking more depth into options that do not block the parking lot on the east side of the road while still constructing a new parking lot on the west side as shown in Option 1 and Option 2. You can follow project updates on the project website (http://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/bison-gulch/) or reach out to me at any time.</p> <p>It is not in the scope of this project to enhance other trailheads in the area, but I do know that the community and project partners have future plans to enhance hiking in the area. The best contact for more information on that is Trena</p>

down people end up down in the brush with a maze of bad options. If a nice trail went under the bridge then along the bluff above Bison Creek before cutting over to the ridge trail people would use it.

Please also consider the options to hike to Nenana Canyon from the Bison Gulch parking. This would be another great hike with views of a spectacular section of the Nenana Canyon.

An Antler Creek trailhead might be worthwhile in its own right but only if a trail gets constructed to the Antler Creek Trail. Tell me more about the Antler Creek Trail – is it a wheeler trail? If so you are doing a disservice to the hikers and to the wheelers.

We need more trailheads. Please leave the Bison Gulch Trailhead as is and build a trail under the bridge.

On Saturday I went to the Healy area and examined the Antler Creek and Bison Gulch areas. It would be possible to put a trail under the bridge at Bison Gulch so people would not have to cross the road. There is a ratty existing trail that goes under the bridge. There is also a wide gravel shoulder on the Mt. Healy side of the road so if the Bison parking

Haugen who works for Denali Borough (or at least she can get you in the right direction); I have copied her on this email.

Please let me know if there is anything else you would like to discuss.

I just responded to your first email and I believe that addresses most of your comments from both emails. Originally we were hoping to keep the new parking lot closer to MP243 and have our project partners connect to Bison Gulch via a benched trail as you have seen concept drawings of. Based on their field review this spring, they did not believe that was possible which is why the location of the new parking lot was moved further north, in addition to the site distance issues.

As I stated in the previous email, I appreciate the feedback on the project and as such, we are going to further review the option to leave the existing parking lot near MP 243 in place while also adding a new lot on the west side of the highway near MP245.

Please let me know if you have any other comments.

gets closed (because it is on a hill and a curve) there will still be adequate parking, unless DOT blocks it off.

We also parked at the RV campground and hiked the lower part of Antler Creek Trail. There is also a trail from the Antler Creek bridge but no good place to park at the bridge. The location of the proposed new parking will be good for the Antler Creek Trail but does not work for the Mt. Healy Trail from Bison Gulch.

FNSB Trail Planner Bryant Wright shared to concept document that had the new parking closer to Bison Gulch in a location where it would be feasible to cut a bench trail angling up the slope to connect with the Bison Gulch ridge. I assume the highways vertical curve in that area limited sight distance so the parking options got pushed further North.

I would point out that the Bison Gulch “trail” was never intended to be nice 10% grade trail. It is a climbing route to gain as much altitude as fast as possible. I don’t think climbers would mind if something like what was done on the NPS side of Mt. Healy happened on the north side – a 10% grade trail to the first shoulder. But first parking options needed to be retained near Bison Gulch.

<p>I am in favor of a parking lot on the west side!</p> <p>I cannot tell which of the two lots proposed would be better.</p>	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. You can visit the project website for further updates: http://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/bison-gulch/</p>
<p>Hi I would like to sign up for project updates and be added to the mailing list for the Bison Gulch Parking Area and Trail Enhancements Project.</p>	<p>Called and left a message 10/6/2020.</p>
<p>In the proposal for the new parking area, what is the proposal for the existing parking area at Bison Gulch? Will people still be able to use it, or are there plans to block it off? Also, were there any discussions for other safety measures for that section of road, such as pedestrian signs, lowering the speed limit, or providing access to the trail by running it under the bridge....similar to the trail that runs under the Sterling Highway to access the Skyline Trail on the Kenai Peninsula?</p>	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The project was initially intended to relocate the existing parking lot (i.e. remove the current lot and build a new one on the west side of the highway). We will be looking more depth into options that do not block the parking lot on the east side of the road while still constructing a new parking lot on the west side as shown in Option 1 and Option 2. There is also ongoing discussions about additional signage in the area. You can follow project updates on the project website (http://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/bison-gulch/) or reach out to me at any time.</p> <p>Please let me know if there is anything else you would like to discuss.</p>
<p>Re the new parking area near Antler Creek which will replace the dangerous one at Bison Gulch: Will the Bison Gulch parking lot be dismantled completely? If so, how will you connect the Antler Creek Tr. with the BG Tr.? Has the 3.3 mile Antler Creek Tr. been completed to the top?</p> <p>I am glad you are replacing the parking lot at BG.</p> <p>I am in favor of Option 2, with the diagonal parking.</p>	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. The project was initially intended to relocate the existing parking lot (i.e. remove the current lot and build a new one on the west side of the highway). We will be looking more depth into options that do not block the parking lot on the east side of the road while still constructing a new parking lot on the west side as shown in Option 1 and Option 2. You can follow project updates on the project website (http://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/bison-gulch/) or reach out to me at any time.</p> <p>Please let me know if there is anything else you would like to discuss.</p>