



## Tetlin to Fort Knox Corridor Study

### Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting #2

#### Notes

May 26, 2022

**Attendees:** A table listing the Advisory Committee members who attended this meeting is attached.

**Meeting Purpose/Introductions:** The purpose of the meeting is to begin framing and refining topics for the corridor study request for proposal (RFP) scope of work.

The Committee members introduced themselves and shared what they have heard about the corridor study since the last meeting:

1. Mixed opinions about the number of trucks Kinross plans to use for hauling ore.
2. The Richardson Highway needs repair.
3. Winter traffic - snow is a huge concern. Passing lanes may not be the solution.
4. Seasonal weigh restrictions and heavy loads may damage fragile pavement.
5. Gas prices are high and could cause changes in business plans.
6. There is an air quality/pollution control committee at the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB).
7. Questions regarding if Kinross's plan to haul ore is typical within the industry.

8. There are many unknown details regarding the Kinross business plan.

**Info Moment – Local Government Power:** CRW explained the importance of multiple jurisdictions in implementing future plan recommendations. The purpose of the request for proposal (RFP) and 3rd party consultant is to develop a corridor level study and recommendations that may be the responsibility of multiple government, agency, or other decision-making bodies.

CRW further discussed the layers of governmental and planning, zoning, permitting powers city and borough governments has within the study area. It was emphasized that the geographic scope of this corridor study is bigger than a single community, planning organization, or state agency. All of these entities may have action items or recommendations identified in the final study report.

CRW referred to the government information sheet that was provided to the TAC prior to and at the meeting. The info sheet is high level and discusses the land use and planning responsibilities of local governments and tribes. (This will also be posted on the project website with the notes from this meeting.) Each body may have responsibility for implementing study recommendations. It is going to be important to document existing government powers, laws and regulations in the corridor study so an analysis on what can be done and by whom, as well as any regulation changes necessary, can be analyzed for implementing improvements recommended in the corridor study.

Committee members discussed the following:

1. Responsibility for connector roads. How can there be more coordination for planning, development, and maintenance on these connector roads that have different ownership (city/state).
2. The corridor study needs to document:
  - a. Land and facility ownership. Where is the overlap?
  - b. Laws and regulations for each government located within the corridor study.
3. Crash data – Describe the crash data/fatalities and variables that affect driver behavior.
4. Air quality analysis – urban vs. rural impacts. Bifurcation segmentation.
5. Need to have military representation at these meetings.
6. Alternative freight routes.

**Opportunities and Challenges – Envisioning the Future Corridor:** CRW led the discussion regarding the vision for the study corridor. Ultimately, the corridor study is a planning tool that can be used by agencies and organizations to pursue funding and project opportunities, it's a way for community development organizations to support economic development, and it's a way for private businesses to think about how to be a good neighbor.

The plan will be big picture as well as specific. But most of all, it's an important opportunity to shape the future we want to see.

The Committee members shared ideas on what they envision the corridor to look like in 2024:

1. Scenic Byway with pullouts and wayfinding.
2. Rail extension with options for freight, military, and visitor transport.
3. Safe highway – reduced number of crashes and fatalities.
4. Desirable transportation route for visitors, year-round.
5. 4 lane highway between Delta Junction and Fairbanks.
6. Managed access – more access = less safe because of variation in speed and lane crossing.
7. Level of service = "A".
8. Road segments and intersections.

**Request for Proposal Topics and Prioritization:** CRW led the discussion regarding what needs to be included in the RFP for the consultant to complete the corridor study. The Committee also discussed the importance of providing a consistent name to the plan that meets funding requirements. It was determined that the name "Action Plan" will be included in the title.

The Committee members recommended the following elements be included in the RFP:

**Data Assembly** – Review and analyze existing planning documents such as:

1. State Rail Plan
2. Air Quality Plan
3. FAST Freight Mobility Plan (2019)

4. FAST Non-motorized transportation plan
5. Existing Safety Plans

**Existing conditions** - Documentation of:

1. Existing facilities along the corridor, including, but not limited to scenic byways, bridges, pavement conditions, freight limits and restrictions.
2. Emergency and public safety response facilities, capacity, and resources (indirect and direct).
3. Tourism facilities and resources (indirect and direct).
4. Land ownership, land use, laws, and regulations.
5. Right-of-way requirements and options.
6. Crash data, including current locations of crashes and fatalities.
7. Access points.
8. Speed limits.
9. Population and traffic growth.
10. FAST letter elements (alternative freight routes, impacts to level of services, road/rail crossing, infrastructure capacity for large loads, road maintenance, air quality)
11. Rail crossings.
12. Military operations and facilities.
13. Facility operation and maintenance responsibilities, capabilities, and costs.
14. Regulatory authorities.

**Analysis**

1. Cost benefit and risk analysis. What is the return on existing and forecasted spending?
2. Population/traffic volume/tourism forecasts.

## Recommendations

1. Need to consider short- and long-term recommendations.

**Wrap Up and Next Steps:** CRW asked the Committee about the timeline for the RFP development advertisement, the corridor study schedule, the process for advertisement and review, and the desire for public input prior to the contractor being hired.

The Committee agreed not to rush the timeline for the RFP advertisement and corridor study. The RFP will be developed by CRW and shared with the Committee for comment prior to advertising. The proposed schedule for the consultant should allow for a 12- to 18-month schedule. The Committee agreed a lot of documentation, public outreach and analysis that needs to be conducted and it is preferred to have a quality document that can be implemented.

CRW explained that the RFP review committee will require three DOT&PFF staff (licensed P.E.s) and can include two non-voting members from the Committee. The Committee voted on and selected committee members Jackson Fox (FAST) and Donald Galligan (FNSB Transportation Planning Department) to serve as non-voting proposal review members.

**Public Comment:** Members of the public attending the meeting were invited to share brief comments.

**Next Advisory Committee Meeting** – The next meeting will take place at the FAST office in Fairbanks after the contractor has been hired (estimated August 2022).

**Action Items:** Advisory Committee Members to provide bios for the project website; review website and sign up for newsletters, encourage others to do the same; and provide a list of technical topics they would like to learn more about at future meetings.