



Alaska/Richardson/Steese Highway Action Plan

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting #3

Notes

October 31, 2022 – 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Attendees: Approximately 50 individuals attended the meeting in person and via Zoom. A table listing the Advisory Committee members who attended this meeting is attached.

Meeting Purpose/Introductions: The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the contractor selected to develop the Action Plan and discuss the preliminary scope of work.

Julie Jessen (CRW) thanked the TAC members and members of the public for coming to the meeting and provided a brief review of the Action Plan background and roles and responsibilities.

The TAC confirmed the use of “Action Plan” at its May 9, 2022 meeting because this is a term used by many federal funding agencies as they review project-level funding proposals. The Action Plan will look at short, medium, and long-term needs throughout the corridor and make actional recommendations for projects that can be pursued not only by DOT&PF, but also Tribes, local governments, and other organizations. Having this plan gives weight and justification for future opportunities and corridor improvements.

The TAC is an advisory group for the planning process, representing a diverse group of organizations and interests with a vested stake in the outcome of the Action Plan. As a project advisory committee, the TAC’s role is to provide information and feedback to the planning contractor and help communicate the plans, processes, and action items back to your respective groups. The TAC was integral in developing the RFP scope of work and will be asked to review and comment on the draft and final plan documents.

Kinney Engineering is the contractor selected to develop the Action Plan, and they will be developing a scope of work based on the RFP and additional input from the TAC. They will be

undertaking the data collection, modeling, public involvement, and analysis efforts which will be included in draft and final plans of action.

CRW Engineering is the neutral facilitator for the TAC. While we helped DOT&PF draft the RFP scope of work, CRW is not connected to the larger planning process.

DOT&PF is the contract manager.

Kinross's mine expansion proposal is the impetus for this planning effort, and their business decisions – as well as those of other industries and interests – will have an impact on the corridor.

The Committee members and members of the public introduced themselves and shared their connection to the project/project corridor.

RFP Review Process: Judy Chapman, CRW thanked the TAC for their input on the Request for Proposal (RFP) scope of work from the May 26, 2022, meeting and review of the draft scope.

The RFP was developed according to DOT&PF procurement processes. Two proposals were received.

TAC members Donald Galligan (FNSB) and Jackson Fox (FAST) participated in the proposal review.

Project Understanding and Scope Discussion: Randy Kinney (Kinney Engineering) introduced the planning team and shared a PowerPoint presentation of their scope of work (attached). High-level elements of the scope included: Conditions Inventory, Future Planning, Traffic Forecasts, Traffic and Safety Analysis, Impacts, Recommendations, and Funding Opportunities. Public Involvement, including the TAC, affected interests, and general interests, is interwoven throughout the planning effort.

The TAC then reviewed each element and provided comments on desired outcomes and data gaps.

Conditions Inventory: Plans and conditions to consider

- Hazardous materials/chemical levels in the corridor
- Road pavement conditions and useful life
- Bridge conditions
- Maintenance and operation levels of service
- Known freight bottlenecks
- Air quality

- Bus stop locations

Future Planning: incorporate

- Land use plans
- Interchange plans
- Impacts from current/near term proposed projects (e.g., GARS intersection upgrades)
- Performance measures
- Relation to Northern Rail Extension
- Water quality measures
- Load covering/dust control

Traffic Forecasts

- Don't just look at the preferred trucking route (through the urbanized area). Also consider bypass opportunities to avoid the air quality attainment area and populated areas.
- A break bulk facility is being considered in Fairbanks. Trucks will need to break down from two trailers to one.
- Need to work with military, Ft. Wainwright in particular, to get information on convoy traffic.
- Consider seasonal differences in use.
- Consider land use as part of the planning process.
- Look at bike and pedestrian traffic as well as vehicle traffic.

Traffic and Safety Analysis

- Look at access points, driveways, and rail crossings. Where are there current and future areas of concern.
- Identify school bus stops and routes.
- Look for conflicts related to intersections and turning movements.
- What are opportunities for crash modifications, such as passing lanes.
- Consider difference between urban and rural conditions.
- Look at wildlife corridors.
- Driver behaviors
- Weather/snow conditions/seasonal conditions
- Crash types and locations

Impacts

- Include cumulative impacts (not just direct impacts)
- Noise and light pollution
- M&O/plowing costs
- Public safety

Public Involvement: purpose and suggested outreach

- Verify current understanding
- Define evaluation measures
- Identify what's missing/changed
- Wait until there's information to present
- Use a variety of communication tools
 - Online surveys (issue identification, rank alternatives)
 - Community hearings (not just open houses)
 - Direct mail with QR code to survey
 - Hard copy of survey and other materials at community centers, senior centers, etc.
 - Online mapping
 - Prepaid flyers to Tribal offices
 - Prizes
- Consider differences between urban and rural participation

Public Comment: Members of the public attending the meeting in person and via Zoom chat were invited to share brief comments focused on the Action Plan scope of work as time allowed and to submit comments for the record via the project website (<https://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/tetlinfofortknox/engage.shtml>). Comments submitted via Zoom chat are included below.

Next Advisory Committee Meeting – TBD following final contractor scope of work.

The meeting ended at 3:20 p.m.

Comments submitted via Zoom chat:

13:35:48 From Karl Monetti to Everyone:

Mahn Choh supposedly has among the highest grade ore in the world. And I understand there are other rich deposits nearby. If that's the case an ore processing plant built on or near the proposed mine(s) would seem to be much more economical for the company and eliminate most of the issues with the current plan.

13:57:09 From Dana Platta to Everyone:

I would ask that the driving conditions in the different seasons, both for the level of traffic (military convoys, RVs, buses, etc) and weather conditions (ice, ice fog, blowing snow). Impact on safety, air quality, road durability, etc.). There are varying conditions across the

proposed route and the specific sections need to be considered individually.

14:02:48 From Alex & Sabrina to Everyone:

What part of the cost will be covered by KinRoss (in response to limited budget for study, etc.?)

14:04:21 From Garrison to Everyone:

I think that was a great comment about monitoring background water metal levels. That should absolutely be the centerpiece of the inventory stage. Clean water is our most valuable resource.

The Planning should not just consider this as affecting five communities...there is a highway community that spans the entire propose route.

14:06:11 From Mary Farrell to Everyone:

Schoolbus routes!

14:08:15 From Garrison to Everyone:

Well, I think the entire North Star Borough is basically a freight bottleneck when you're talking about trucking resources through town.

14:10:36 From Alex & Sabrina to Everyone:

Actuarial studies including increased trucking in both directions.

14:23:28 From Alex & Sabrina to Everyone:

Will anyone representing Ft WW speak to military mission constraint in relationship to the Serious NonAttainment status for air quality? No new air pollution is allowed into the non attainment area until the overall air quality comes into compliance with the Clean Air Act.

Or in other words.....

Will trucking at such high numbers of round trips and the associated emissions impact the military mission with respect to constraint?

14:28:18 From ron johnson to Everyone:

Following Karl Monetti's comment, I'd like to see a long range plan that looks at the LCC

of (1) 200 + mile xpirt many times a day from Tetlin to Fbks such that a new processing plant is not needed compared with (2) building a new plant on-site that can process ores from multiple nearby sites which eliminates the 200 + mile transport plus enhanced road damage costs. With the M-C ore 10 x the quality of existing Kinross ore, much more can be processed with the same work force thus allowing higher profits even after xsport costs factored in.

14:29:26 From Alex & Sabrina to Everyone:

An EIS for the entire project route (the entire route is part of the project) needs to be completed, not just the few acres at Tetlin. Who is responsible to make sure this gets done?

14:33:55 From Mary Farrell to Everyone:

Curious if this analysis will be scalable? If Kinross starts with 60 trucks in 2024, but more mines come on and possibly the Ambler Road happens, will this analysis look at higher truck traffic impacts?

14:38:43 From Northern Center to Everyone:

Need to assess noise & light pollution impacts from the increased traffic, & fugitive dust from trucks.

14:39:59 From S G to Everyone:

Regarding truck passing and accident causes: This summer drove up Parks. Two side dumps from around Cantwell basically would not allow traffic to pass: couldn't pass on the hills where the trucks were slow; on the flats, trucks went as fast as possible, side by side in the two two passing lanes at "legal" speed limit, so passing speed would be over 80mph. From Healy could not pass till past Nenana in the hills where the trucks slowed to 30 mph with a long line of vehicles behind them. . How do we address this problem?

14:45:51 From Alex & Sabrina to Everyone:

Who has priority in "affordable"? Alaskans? Or private foreign business?

14:52:14 From Mary Farrell to Everyone:

Please also consider the whole funding picture, not just what the American taxpayer can contribute. For profit businesses can and should contribute to their portion of road/environmental/safety damage done by their operations! You can be sure if an Alaska company wanted to do a major operation in Canada, there would be these costs.

14:52:14 From Alex & Sabrina to Everyone:

All local grant monies that might potentially support the KinRoss trucking plan (road improvements, mitigations, etc.) will not be available for other worthy, local projects.

14:54:42 From Bob McHattie to Everyone:

Regarding safety, the six months of winter is the elephant in the room. A few days of midwinter rain may require completely different haul vehicles/plans for long periods. How safe are double-trailer rigs generally for routine hauling on extremely slick roads?

14:57:33 From iPhone Michelle's 6s+ to Everyone:

How many trucks will be coming down from the Ambler road each day, and where they will be going? Also, mine traffic from the Parks highway into Fairbanks. These should be taken into consideration for recommendations.

If we have such short time considerations, maybe the scope of this plan should be more immediate and related to the ore haul, and then broaden to a regional plan to follow this study.

14:57:49 From Northern Center to Everyone:

This transportation plan sets a precedent for other proposed projects across Interior/Arctic Alaska. Projects such as Golden Summit (Cleary Summit) & other exploration along Fairbanks' domes and in the Alaska Range that may eventually be developed include intent for ore be hauled to/through Fairbanks for processing at the Ft. Knox mill. Additionally, should the Ambler Road be approved, the transportation plan for the Ambler Mining District projects includes hauling ore to Fairbanks for transfer to the railroad. All of these projects would turn Fairbanks into a massive industrial corridor/hub for mining, greatly impacting the quality of life for Fairbanksans & affecting the quality of air, water, land, public infrastructure and safety. In the long-term assessment for the Manh Choh transportation study, Kinney should consider scaling up the cumulative impacts of transportation through Fairbanks on all of these areas and how this project opens the gate for further use of public highways for industrial use.

15:04:17 From John Bennett to Everyone:

Is there baseline data available for PM 2.5 and CO along all of the possible haul routes?

15:07:21 From John Bennett to Everyone:

So there is a strong possibility that the ore haul will commence, prior to completion of the corridor study?

15:09:00 From Alex & Sabrina to Everyone:

Apologies- Sabrina and Alex iPad is Patrice Lee

15:09:02 From Barbara Schuhmann to Everyone:

How can any study be undertaken without the actual plan and truck details from Kinross? Kinross must provide the details of the trucks, trailers, its transportation plan and safety plan.

15:09:44 From Northern Center to Everyone:

Will this analysis consider a longer-term ore hauling plan beyond the current 4-5 years? As with most mines, exploration continues & mine life extends, which would necessitate more years of use of the transportation corridor to haul ore to Ft. Knox?

15:11:43 From Gary W to Everyone:

Barbara Schuhmann. You are exactly right. We can't move ahead without the developer coming forward.

15:12:11 From mariaberger.al@gmail.com to Everyone:

Given the effort to bring on more electric-powered busses to decrease Fairbanks winter air pollution which frequently exceeds EPA's pm 2.5 standards, will this improvement not be totally negated by the passage of these huge diesel- powered trucks every 7 minutes along whichever route they take through town.? This anticipated pollutant contribution should be estimated as part of the study.

15:13:50 From Corey DiRutigliano to Everyone:

(point of correction, I believe the new MACS busses will be natural gas, no electric is planned for at this time)

15:19:19 From mariaberger.al@gmail.com to Everyone:

Re: the above, then should there not be a comparison of decreases to winter pollutants via natural gas use by. Busses vs contribution to pm 2.5 by these trucks

15:19:51 From Barbara Schuhmann to Everyone:

This meeting does not meet the requirements of the Open Meetings Act for public input.

15:20:31 From iPhone Michelle's 6s+ to Everyone:

Kinross would not read my questions on their zooms either, which were informational.

15:21:54 From Alex & Sabrina to Everyone:

Barbara is correct. Public input is clearly defined in the open meetings act

15:21:55 From Barbara Schuhmann to Everyone:

Misreading the chat comments, and then having the leader minimize them, is not public input.

15:23:07 From Barbara Schuhmann to Everyone:

After a truck is purchased is too late to provide details about the configuration of what is being considered or has been decided upon.

15:23:15 From Mary Farrell to Everyone:

Open meetings act requires more notice on public meetings Please advertise the next meeting earlier for the public to participate