



Alaska-Richardson-Steese Highway Corridor Action Plan

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting NOTES

Thursday, January 26, 2023; 1:00 – 4:00 PM

Carlson Center Pioneer Room, 2010 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska and via Zoom

**Objective**

- To provide an update on and seek input and insight for the Alaska-Richardson-Steese Highway Corridor Action Plan.

**Invited Participants – TAC, Non-TAC: Project Team & Others**

**TAC Members – In order of representation (local, state, federal, groups) and specific organization**

Name	Entity	Participation (√ = present; method)	
<b>Local</b>			
Ken Greenleaf	City of Delta Junction	√	In-person
Mary Leith	City of Delta Junction	√	In-person
Crystal Tidwell	City of Fairbanks	√	In-person
Mayor Michael Welch	City of North Pole	×	Absent
Alexa Green	Eielson Air Force Base (EAFB)	√	In-person
Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor Bryce Ward	FAST Planning	√	In-person
Don Galligan	FNSB	√	Virtual
To Be Named	Fort Wainwright	----	----
Darrel VendeWeg	Salcha Fire & Rescue	√	Virtual
Marina Evans	Tanana Chiefs Conference	×	Absent
John Rusyniak	Tok Chamber of Commerce	×	Absent
Chief Michael Sam	Tetlin Village	×	Absent
<b>State</b>			
Brian Lindamood	Alaska Railroad	×	Absent
Emma Pokon	Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	√	Virtual
James Cockrell	Department of Public Safety	×	Absent
Pam Golden	DOT&PF	√	In-person
Jackson Fox	Technical Transportation	√	In-person

<b>Federal</b>			
Katherine Hensley,	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration	×	Absent
Sandra Garcia Aline	Federal Highway Administration	×	Absent
<b>Advocacy &amp; Industry Groups</b>			
Jenny Campbell	Advocates for Safe Alaska Highways (ASAH)	√	In-person
Dave Waldo	ASAH	×	Absent
Joe Michel	Alaska Trucking Association (ATA)	√	Virtual
Scott McCrea	Explore Fairbanks	√	In-person
Anna Atchison	Kinross	√	In-person

### **Non-TAC Members\***

\*Please see end of this document for complete list of other participants that were in-person or joined via Zoom.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Entity</b>	<b>Participation (√ = present; method)</b>	
David Pruhs	City of Fairbanks	×	Absent
John Binder	DOT&PF	√	In-person
Judy Chapman	DOT&PF	√	In-person
Joseph Kemp	DOT&PF	×	Absent
Sara Lucey	DOT&PF	√	In-person
Shannon McCarthy	DOT&PF	√	In-person
John Perreault	DOT&PF	√	In-person
Danielle Tessen	DOT&PF	√	In-person
Kaitlin Williams	DOT&PF	×	Absent
Jim Matherly	Governor Dunleavy's Office	√	Virtual
Andrew Crook	Kinross	√	Virtual
Jeanne Bowie	Kinney Engineering	√	Virtual
Phoebe Bredlie	Kinney Engineering	√	Virtual
Randy Kinney	Kinney Engineering	√	Virtual
Shelly Wade	Agnew::Beck Consulting	√	Virtual

## **Summary of Meeting Presentations, Discussion, and Public Comments**

### **1. Welcome – Julie Jessen, CRW**

- Purpose/role of the TAC – The TAC represents the community at large. It is critical in sharing information back to the community and providing recommendations to the CAP planning team.
- Contractor Transition – Kinney Engineering (KE), led by Randy Kinney, is officially onboard as the contractor leading the CAP process. Phoebe Bridle of KE is leading CAP Public Involvement. TAC facilitation is transitioning from CRW to Kinney subcontractor, Agnew::Beck Consulting, led by Shelly Wade.

- Changes/new members on the TAC:
  - Pam Golden – DOT&PF representative
  - Ken Greenleaf – City of Delta Junction representative
  - Crystal Tidwell – City of Fairbanks representative
  - Katherine Hensley – Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association representative

**TAC Member Introductions – Name and Response to Question: “What would you like to get out of this meeting/this process?”**

Name	Summary of Responses
Ken Greenleaf (Delta Junction)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better understanding of what the potential impacts of increased truck traffic will be to communities along the corridor.</li> <li>• To know how unexpected costs (e.g., emergency response) will be managed.</li> <li>• A collaborative discussion and to understand how other communities are addressing issues like financial impacts.</li> </ul>
Crystal Tidwell (Fairbanks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to understand safety concerns for residents.</li> </ul>
Jackson Fox (SOA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to learn more about the detailed scope of work and how the TAC fits in.</li> </ul>
Mayor Bryce Ward (FAST Planning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to understand the needs of the community and address them.</li> </ul>
Don Galligan (FNSB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want an understanding of where the consultant is with the analysis.</li> </ul>
Darrel VandeWeg (Salcha Fire & Rescue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interested in how emergency services will be addressed for the entire route.</li> </ul>
Emma Pokon (DEC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to ensure the environmental analysis is performed appropriately, scrutinized, and needed changes are addressed. Also, would like to share the Draft FAST Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Air Quality Conformity Analysis is available for comment through February 21<sup>st</sup>: <a href="https://fastplanning.us/mtupdate/">https://fastplanning.us/mtupdate/</a>.</li> </ul>
Pam Golden (DOT&PF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just starting project, so focus in on getting up to speed.</li> </ul>
Jenny Campbell (ASAH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assurance that Kinney Engineering (KE) understands the issues.</li> <li>• A thorough, unbiased analysis, particularly on safety issues and impact to the state and state budget.</li> </ul>
Joe Michel (ATA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch issues and process.</li> </ul>
Scott McCrea (Explore Fairbanks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to hear from the community.</li> </ul>
Anna Atchison (Kinross)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to support infrastructure for generations to come.</li> <li>• Want to diversify economy.</li> </ul>

**2. Project Transition – John Binder, DOT&PF**

- DOT&PF's role in this project is to bring stakeholders together be a neutral facilitator in the discussion. The agency's DOT's larger role is to maintain public transportation systems for the state and provide expertise and oversight of those systems.

### 3. Public Comment Guidelines – Danielle Tessen, DOT&PF

- There will be more opportunities for public comment throughout the CAP process.
- Comment period guidelines for this meeting (developed by TAC):
  - Three-minute time limit.
  - Be respectful.
  - Allow TAC to ask clarifying questions of public (but no disputing or discussion of public comment.)

### 4. Verbal Public Comments, Round 1 – Summary of Topics by Individual\*

*\*Individual comments, verbal and written, will also be logged into the project public comment tracker.*

Name	Comment topics
Bill Ward	Concerned about the ability to drive such heavy vehicles, damage to road, how regular vehicle traffic will be disrupted, dangers, finding qualified drivers for the ore truck.
David McDowell	Concerned about noise. Submitted concerns to TAC in fall 2022 asking if there will there be a noise assessment conducted.  Discovered noise report done by consultant Michael Minor & Associates, in November 2021, but it did not propose any noise mitigation and believe this is an error.
Sue Wilken	Concerned about safety at school bus stops and driveways along the corridor.
Eric Muehling	Concerned about safety and odds of accidents due to increased traffic with addition of truck.  Opposes the trucking plan, not the mine.
Mary Farrell	Concerned about safety and costs to the State of Alaska.
Lynne Cornberg	Concerned about adverse health effects of the increased noise levels, especially at night. Proposed three mitigations" 1) No ore haul; 2) Don't allow as many trucks per hour; 3) Don't allow ore haul at night.
David Cornberg	Believes benefits of this plan go to a few and negative impacts are experienced by many more people.  Mentioned there will be a new road built from the mine to the Alaska Highway because the existing road into Tetlin isn't suitable for the vehicles.  Believes the Alaska Highway is not suitable. It has minimum shoulders, minimal pullouts, and many places with poor sight distance.
Bob McHattie	Described using the roads as a haul route as the world's longest conveyor belt, and the user doesn't have to maintain it.  Concerned that the trucks at highway speed won't be safe.  How is compliance with the trucks ensured?

Al Vezey	Community leaders need to consider the jobs this project will create for young people.
Patrice Lee	Representing Citizens for Clean Air. Kinross's air quality analysis is outdated and uses poor assumptions. This project will add to current air quality issues. The FAST Panning Air Quality Analysis is not using the most current data.
Clark Milne	TAC will have to evaluate the impacts. This project/plan should be allowed as long as the vehicles/loads are legal and safe. The engineering evaluation/analysis needs to be "dispassionate." The state needs and relies on natural resource extraction.
Christina Moore	Current passing lanes are not adequate for this plan. Would like to understand how Black Gold (trucking company) will train their drivers. Want to know stopping distance for these extremely large heavy vehicles. How will the weight stations be used? Why is the route through Fairbanks so convoluted?
Deborah Ryan	Does not want to sacrifice safety of others for the benefits to Tetlin. Fairbanks residents do not feel benefit of Fort Knox. Tourism is important and creates jobs; community needs a diversity of jobs not just mining.

## 5. Update: Scope of Work – Randy Kinney, Kinney Engineering (KE), LLC\*

\*Please see attached guiding slides for additional detail.

- Since the TAC last met, changes have occurred with the scope. It will be completed in two phases:
  - Phase 1 – Will examine conditions over a five-year and 10-year timeframe. KE will evaluate corridor uses, safety, and operations under existing conditions.
  - Phase 2 – Will examine conditions over a 20-year timeframe.
- KE will look at conditions, operations, and safety of road without ore hauling vehicles in each phase and then super-impose the haul plan on that to evaluate impacts of Manh Choh mine ore haul vehicles and examine whether mitigation is necessary.
- KE is an independent and neutral entity conducting a data-driven study.
- Timeline of Tasks:
  - Public Involvement Plan will be developed with outreach methods – this is in the works now.
  - Data Assembly will start immediately.
  - Existing Conditions (gathering engineering data, crash data, etc.) is underway.
  - Forecasts and Travel Demand research begins in March.
  - Analysis begins in April.
  - Recommendations and Report due in June/July 2023.

- Public Involvement Plan:
  - Public hearings and meetings are planned for communities along the route; specifics to be worked out later.
  - Ideas discussed re: how best engage with the public:
    - Team will draw up a schedule of monthly TAC meetings; those meetings will be adjusted with at least two weeks' notice, if necessary, based on topics and materials ready to present.
    - Salcha stays engaged effectively on social media. Mailings would also be helpful.
    - Create a comment map.
    - Suggested the public involvement plan includes targeting specific stakeholders, like schools and the visitor industry. Offer presentations at luncheons of specific stakeholders.
    - The scope of work includes holding community meetings at communities along the corridor; suggested those communities include Tok, Delta Junction, and Dot Lake (more can be added.)
    - Official Public Hearings (along with general community meetings) will also be held (require official noticing.)

**6. DOT&PF Communications Memorandum of Agreement – Judy Chapman, DOT&PF\***

*\*This item was not discussed at the January 26th meeting. Consider for future TAC agenda.*

**7. DOT&PF Projects on the Haul Route – Pam Golden, DOT&PF\***

*\*This item was not discussed at the January 26th meeting. Consider for future TAC agenda.*

**8. Transport Route – Andrew Crook, Kinross\***

*\*Please see attached guiding slides for additional detail.*

- Planned route is approximately 240 miles along Alaska, Richardson, and Steese Highways passing through Tok, Delta Junction, and Fox but bypasses downtown Fairbanks.
- Trucks will deliver rock from the Manh Choh mine near Tok to the Fort Knox mill north of Fairbanks.
- Trucking operations are expected to begin in 2024 and continue for 4-5 years.
- Plan calls for an average of 60 round trips per day, a truck every 24 minutes with highway tractors pulling two covered side-dumps trailers with total vehicle length of 95 feet – like the double fuel and cargo trailers used in Alaska.
- Safety management plan highlights:
  - Andrew detailed the planned route through Fairbanks and access to Black Gold Transport's shop in North Pole (between MP 353 and 354.)
  - Still examining alternatives on Steese Highway from Fox to Fort Knox to address public's safety concerns.
  - There have been discussions with DOT&PF about maintenance at Tenderfoot but there is not specific concern about the trucks navigating that hill at this time.
  - More information on route and project online at [manhchoh.com](http://manhchoh.com).

**9. Verbal Public Comments, Round 2 – Summary of Topics by Individual\***

*\*Individual comments, verbal and written, will also be logged into the project public comment tracker.*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Comment topics</b>
Gabriele Larry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roads are congested and route is poor.</li> <li>• More of the public needs to be engaged in this plan.</li> </ul>
David Frey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would like to see safety plan for Goldmine Trail intersection and Hagelbarger Road (visibility is poor, merge is too short – will not work with frequent, large vehicles passing).</li> <li>• Concerned about noise northbound downhill from Hagelbarger.</li> <li>• Concerned about Chena Hot Springs bridge. Is it strong enough? Will trucks bypass it? What will be the effect of that on the traffic?</li> <li>• Support mining, but not trucking the ore – ore should be processed on site.</li> </ul>
Sandra Zirnheld	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerned about safety – this is unprecedented use of the road.</li> <li>• Concerned truck drivers will be inexperienced because of difficulty in hiring them.</li> <li>• Concerned money will have to be spent on maintenance instead of more important projects.</li> </ul>
Theresa Ahrens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough of the public know about this plan.</li> <li>• Noise is a concern.</li> </ul>
Robert Grove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerned about crashes and accidents.</li> <li>• Concerned about poorly maintained roads.</li> </ul>
James Squyers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Johnson and Gerstle Bridges are not in STIP for replacement.</li> <li>• Seems to be favoritism in prioritizing Johnson bridge but it doesn't appear Gerstle Bridge is on STIP. It is narrow already for traffic.</li> </ul>
Kerri Mulls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridges are an issue.</li> <li>• Some people who must travel this road for health reasons are elderly or timid drivers. Having whiteout conditions with trucks on the road could be dangerous.</li> </ul>
Don Grey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TAC needs to also consider economics of the project and its benefits.</li> </ul>
Ken Miller	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerned about safety and military bus drivers and tour bus drivers with ore trucks on the road.</li> <li>• Mining jobs do not motivate this generation.</li> </ul>
Daniel Hancock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerned about safety, environment, and how traffic impacts will impact tourism.</li> </ul>
Ronald Davis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The preponderance of comment here today has been against trucking.</li> <li>• Has the company considered a processing facility closer to the site instead and eliminate the trucking issue? Could the public help in the funding of a processing plant?</li> </ul>

Gary Wilken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This process should follow the open meetings act.</li> </ul>
Jo Schlotfeldt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern about safety.</li> <li>How much would it cost to build a processing plant instead of trucking?</li> </ul>
Steve Hovenden (read aloud by Shelly Wade)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask the TAC to analyze the cumulative impact on our military of heavy industrial use of the same two-lane highway. Impact to training</li> </ul>

## 10. Discussion: Future Meeting Topics

- Preliminary results from Tasks 3, 4 and 5: Public Involvement Plan, Data Assembly & Existing Conditions

## 11. Closing Comments & Next Steps:

- Comment from John Binder, DOT&PF: Thank you for your input. We are aware of many issues – this study will help us get a big, overall picture.
- Question from Public Participants: Will Black Gold Transport be invited to join the TAC?
  - Response from Judy Chapman, DOT&PF: We will ask DOT&PF Commissioner Anderson if another person can be appointed.
- Action Items for TAC and considerations for future meetings:
  - Set monthly meeting schedule – may vary depending on what needs to be shared and to get feedback from the TAC.
  - Share process and guidelines for providing public comments, in general and at TAC meetings.
  - Get additional TAC feedback on public process – other ideas for engaging community, industry, and other stakeholders.
  - Confirm TAC roles and responsibilities, expand on summary posted on the project website.
  - Review/confirm meeting requirements (e.g., Open Meetings Act.)
  - Identify a single point of contact for the TAC members.
  - Suggestion to create a shared calendar for TAC members to access where other shared materials can also be available.

**REMINDER – Current Project Website:** [dot.alaska.gov/nreg/tetlinfofortknox](http://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/tetlinfofortknox) and includes more information on TAC and a place to submit comments. In the coming weeks, the website will be updated as we transition teams to focus on the CAP.

### **Other Meeting Participants (translated from sign-in sheets and Zoom attendance log)**

Name	In-person or Zoom
Bill R. Ward	In-person
David McDonald	In-person
Betty Pixley	In-person
Sue Wilken	In-person
Eric Muehling	In-person
Mary Farrell	In-person



Gary Parsons	In-person
Lynn Cornberg	In-person
David Cornberg	In-person
Dan Schwitert	In-person
Kitty Lancaster	In-person
Marge Thompson	In-person
Mary Leith	In-person
Bob McHattie	In-person
Gary Wilken	In-person
Marilyn Biagi	In-person
Al Vezey	In-person
Rich Hughes	In-person
Patrice Lee	In-person
Lou Brown	In-person
Lynn Stanley Coe	In-person
Jack Barnwell	In-person
Carol Shafford	In-person
Clark Milne	In-person
Stephen Gemmell	In-person
Rita Leake	In-person
Christina Moore	In-person
Steve Houewide	In-person
DeeDee Dalen	In-person
Rick Smith	In-person
Patrick Filbin	In-person
Ken Miller	In-person
Tom Benjamin	In-person
Deborah Ryan	In-person
Daniel Hancock	In-person
Ralph Hollard	In-person
Jo Schlotfeldt	In-person
David Frey	In-person
Theresa Ahrens	In-person
Bob Keyes	In-person
Diana Lingle	In-person
Mike Musk	In-person
Pamela Wetz	In-person
Susan Sprill	In-person

Linda Bara	In-person
Judy Shiffler	In-person
Wendell Shiffler	In-person
Ronald Davis	In-person
Marie Mcgavan	In-person
Gabriele Larry	In-person
Eugen Ho	In-person
Hal & Carol Meyer	In-person
Bill Lovoy	In-person
Robert Grove	In-person
Don Gray	In-person
Ken Miller	In-person
Tim Ristow	In-person
Mary Lista	In-person
Don Gray	In-person
Jeff Adams	In-person
Sarah Keller	In-person
Sandra Zirnhelf	Zoom
James Squyers	Zoom
Kerri Mullis	Zoom
Phillip Tannehill	Zoom
Leon Lynch	Zoom
Derek J. Lakey	Zoom
Mickey Henton	Zoom
Buzzy Chiu	Zoom
Alexandria Pacho	Zoom
Matthew Fagnani	Zoom
Ron Martindale	Zoom
Allan Morotti	Zoom
Valerie Demming	Zoom
Jaenell Manchester	Zoom
Eleanor Ransdell-Green	Zoom
Gary Knuepfer	Zoom
MK Romberg	Zoom
Jean Trainor	Zoom
Rachel James	Zoom
Laura Kolasa	Zoom
Jeanne Olson	Zoom

John Shauer	Zoom
James Marks	Zoom
Barbara Schumann	Zoom
Pam Goode	Zoom
Alaska Ammonia	Zoom
Dana Platta	Zoom
Jeremy Huffman	Zoom
Nathan Smith	Zoom
Michael Paschall	Zoom
Peter Forsling	Zoom
Nathan Smith	Zoom
Barbara Haney	Zoom
Matt Wilken	Zoom
Keith Baxter	Zoom
Matt Nunnally	Zoom
Maria Berger	Zoom
Abby Lutmer	Zoom
Kayla M Smith	Zoom
Jeremy Huffman	Zoom
Susan Smith	Zoom
Nathan Smith	Zoom
Charles Whitaker	Zoom
James Sampson	Zoom
Tim Ellis	Zoom
Tom Ervin	Zoom
Jon Cook	Zoom
Vicky Bealer	Zoom
Randi Bailey	Zoom