



Meeting Notes

Subject	Agency Scoping	Sheet	1	of	14
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Project Number	21132
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Meeting Date	April 25, 2005	Meeting Location	4 th Floor Conference Room, HDR Alaska
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Notes by	Terry McConnell	Office	Anchorage
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Attendees:	See List Below		

Topics Discussed	Purpose and Need update	Engineering Concepts	Indirect and Cumulative Effects
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Attendees:

<i>First</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Organization</i>
Dennis	Mattson	3CES/CEVP (Elmendorf AFB)
Greg	Schmidt	3CES/CEVP (Elmendorf AFB)
Steve	Ribuffo	Alaskan Command
Jim	Cantor	Attorneys (AG) General Office
Larry	Dugan	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)
Mark	Fink	Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)
Matthew	LaCroix	Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)
Mark	Somerville	Alaska Department of Natural Resources Office of Habitat Management and Permitting (DNR OHMP)
Marcie	Menefee	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Kim	Rice	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)
Michael	Rylko	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Elaine	Somers	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Kevin	Gardner	Fort Richardson Army Base
Allan	Lucht	Fort Richardson Army Base
Murph	O'Brien	Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB)
Fred	Carpenter	Municipality of Anchorage Planning (MOA)
Larry	Peltz	National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
Joan	Darnell	National Parks Service (NPS)
Glen	Yankos	National Parks Service (NPS)
Larry	Peltz	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries



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James	Helfinstine	U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
Frances	Mann	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Edrie	Vinson	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
William	Greene	Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority/Alaska Department of Transportation (KABATA/DOT&PF)
Dale	Paulson	Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority/Alaska Department of Transportation (KABATA/DOT&PF)
Louise	Smart	CDR Associates
Rosetta	Alcantra	HDR Alaska
Tom	Brigham	HDR Alaska
Bill	Chopyk	HDR Alaska
Kevin	Doyle	HDR Alaska
Duane	Hippe	HDR Alaska
Ann	Kulik	HDR Alaska
Terry	McConnell	HDR Alaska
John	McPherson	HDR Alaska
Robin	Reich	HDR Alaska
Sarah	Schoen	HDR Alaska
Jon	Houghton	Pentec
Paul	Kendall	PND
Doug	Kenley	PND
Lindsey	Holmes	RISE Alaska
Steve	Braund	Stephen R. Braund & Associates
Richard	Stern	Stephen R. Braund & Associates
Karen	Brown	URS Corporation
Jack	Colonell	URS Corporation
Jim	Glaspell	URS Corporation
Lisa	Loy Gray	URS Corporation
Robin	Senner	URS Corporation

Lunchtime Open House Poster Stations

Louise Smart(CDR) Welcome

Introductions around the room

Sarah Schoen (HDR) Boat trip Tuesday April 26. Sign up on yellow sheet

Duane Hippe (HDR) Bus tour Thursday April 28. Sign up on pink sheet.



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Louise Smart (CDR)

This meeting is a follow up to the previous agency scoping meeting. Changes have been made to the Purpose and Need statement

We will cover Indirect and Cumulative Effects methodology and ask for feedback.

We will discuss our next step. We will request your commitment to work with the project team to find a reasonable range of alternatives to discuss by our next meeting on May 11, 2005

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

We have worked on the following items since last meeting:

Purpose and Need

The team has been updating the Statement of Purpose and Need with agency comments

Environmental

- The team and FHWA met with NOAA Fisheries about beluga whale permitting and essential fish habitat. The project will likely seek regulations for “Incidental Take” of beluga whales.
- No additional studies, other than the bird study, were formally requested from agencies.
- A contract is now in place to begin bird studies.
- The team met with EPA -Michael Rylko and Elaine Summers regarding Indirect and Cumulative effects.

Engineering

- The team met with Port of Anchorage three times.
- PND met with the Mat-Su Borough Port Commission and discussed alignment concepts on the west side of the Knik Arm.
- On April 27, the team will meet with Alaska Command to discuss routes through military land.
- Met with the SHPO to discuss the Section 106 consultation process
- PND worked on some design concepts for the end of the abutment to assist with fish and beluga passage
- PND is currently reviewing seismic issues
- The team has been investigating pedestrian access possibilities along the alignment.
- The team has been studying safety and security requirements along the alignment with regard to the Port of Anchorage and the military property.



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Public Involvement

- The team attended LRPT meetings and set up a booth with project information.
- Team representatives attended a Downtown Community Council meeting.
- The team hosted or attended three Government Hill Community Council meetings (one general meeting and two with the Governmental Hill Knik Arm Crossing Working Group). There were concerns brought up at the meetings regarding the study areas and range of alternatives.
- The Team hosted two public scoping meetings (one in the Mat-Su and one in Anchorage).
- The team hosted one Tribal Consultation meeting.

Planning

- The team has been working with the State Historic Preservation Office on the Area of Potential Effect (APE) and secondary (indirect) effects area

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

The team updated the Statement of Purpose and Need to read:

Purpose

To provide improved, regionally significant vehicular access and intermodal surface transportation connectivity between the Municipality of Anchorage and the Port of Anchorage/Ship Creek industrial area and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and its Port MacKenzie District with a financially feasible crossing to meet the regional transportation infrastructure needs

Need

- Efficient transportation infrastructure to support existing and projected population growth and economic development for the Upper Cook Inlet region, and as directed by the Alaska State Legislature in Alaska Statutes chapter 19.75
- Redundant overland route for access to regional airports, ports, military bases, hospitals, and fire, police and disaster relief services for emergency response and evacuation
- Efficient and direct surface transportation connectivity for the movement of people and the movement of freight and goods to, between, and distribution from the Port of Anchorage/Ship Creek industrial area and the Port MacKenzie District



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Steve Ribuffo (Alaskan Command)

Are the “needs” in order of priority? I would say that 3 (efficient and direct transportation connectivity) is more of a need than 2 (emergency response and evacuation).

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

The needs are not in order of priority.

For a review, the EIS is on an 18 month timeline (reference process flow poster). Scoping for this project will be through development of the reasonable range of alternatives.

There are numerous constraints associated with where the project will be constructed (reference constraints map).

Robin Reich (HDR) – Abutment Engineering Concepts

We’ve heard about the importance of the near shore environment for salmon and beluga whales. At first we thought a breach would help mitigate the problem, but after talking with Jack Colonell (URS-hydrologist), we learned that a breach would sediment in over one to two years. We then consulted with Jon Houghton (fisheries consultant) and another HDR engineer/commercial fisherman/biologist. Currently we are looking at trying to mimic a natural point with either a step bench option or a consistent slope all the out (reference figures showing these options).

Francis Mann (USFWS)

Do these options work? We need to survey the literature and determine whether or not they will work.

Jon Houghton (Pentec)

Benching is used in Puget Sound successfully. In Knik Arm it could produce a salt marsh which gives enhanced productivity. Mid-tidal benches with riprap could collect silt.

Francis Mann (USFWS)

You should still look at bridge design with pilings and no fill out into Knik Arm.

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

A bridge completely supported by piling is an option.

Robin Reich (HDR)

We’ve heard concerns about increased velocity the end of each abutment.

Jack Colonell (URS)

We are creating a shallow, slow flow area. In general, the velocity will be very similar to what is there now.



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Francis Mann (USFWS)

With both designs?

Jack Colonell (URS)

Yes.

Larry Peltz (NMFS)

The closer you can come to what exists in Knik Arm, the better it will work.

Robin Reich (HDR)

We have heard that a gradual constant slope is preferred.

Matt LeCroix (ADF&G)

I am not sure whether either option shown will recreate what is going on in Knik Arm now. It may work for adult fish but not juveniles. What happens if the calculations are incorrect? Fill is essentially permanent. Who will monitor and report on impacts? The concept needs to be shown at a real scale to properly evaluate.

Louise Smart (CDR)

Matt, do you have the expertise to help model this?

Matt LeCroix (ADF&G)

No

Jim Helfinstine (USCG)

The Joint Pipeline Office and oil companies will tell you fill is not forever due to hydrology and ice flows. My concern would be regarding the type of fill and rip rap used. If it shifts it can cause structural integrity issues.

Michael Rylko (EPA)

Is velocity a concern for both fish and beluga?

Matt LeCroix (DNR OHMP)

Yes, the beluga seek out that area for prey.

Doug Kenley (PND) – Engineering Concepts

We have almost an exact model from the Port MacKenzie dock. Kevin covered most of the engineering material. We met several times with the Port of Anchorage to show them concepts. The feedback was very positive. We looked at interchanges. We should have some alignments to show at the next meeting. The Mat-Su Borough has a long term master plan for their port. We presented concepts and got their feedback.



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Murph O'Brien (MSB)

We are interested in where and how the Crossing will intersect the Port District. The transportation system on the Mat-Su side is limited, so we want to see the concepts.

Robin Senner (URS) – Indirect and Cumulative Effects Methodology

The goal of the Indirect and Cumulative Effects assessment approach is to comply with NEPA. Larry Canter recommended integrating the NCHRP Steps with the CEQ Steps. (See Table 1)

Jon Houghton (Pentec)

Do you have a definition of cumulative effects?

Robin Senner (URS)

The Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act defines a cumulative effect as the impact on the environment, which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time. (reference 40 CFR 1508.7).

Key features of integrated approach that the team is using for this project:

- Socioeconomic, cultural, biological, and physical resource components are selected for impact analysis.
- Public scoping and agency consultation provide the basis for selecting the resource components.
- Geographic scope determined by characteristics of resource components and may vary from one resource component to another.
- Temporal scope extends from past environmental reference point (EPA 1999) to design year 2030.
- Resource specialists conduct direct, indirect, and cumulative effects assessments on resource components.
- Affected Environment describes baseline (present) condition.
- Indirect effects assessment includes broad spectrum of induced indirect effects.
- Cumulative effects assessment incorporates a backward-looking component to explain how the baseline condition has been historically shaped from environmental reference point to present.
- Persisting effects of past actions are combined with predicted direct and indirect effects.
- Reasonably foreseeable future actions (RFFAs) are incorporated, identified from scoping process, agency interviews (permitting), and comprehensive plans.
- Potential additive and synergistic effects are captured and described in terms of context and intensity (T 6640.8A).



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- Team members conduct interdisciplinary sessions to identify cross-cutting cumulative effects.

Jim Helfinstine (USCG)

Who makes the determination for a “reasonably foreseeable future action (RFFAs)?”

Robin Senner (URS)

It is a judgment call. We have 1915 environmental reference date for Anchorage. The historical review is not exhaustive, just the main events; World War II, Point MacKenzie dairy project, gradual development of the Port of Anchorage, the establishment of high tension electrical lines.

Jim Helfinstine (USCG)

I was talking about future, not past.

John McPherson (HDR)

We are now interviewing with realtors, developers, and Borough and Municipal planners to determine RFFAs. We must estimate what will change and how much with and without the project. We are looking such things as population and employment. We are getting some information from the household surveys. There were 400 contacts in the Mat-Su Borough and 400 in Anchorage. The proposed methodology was mailed out.

To determine what is there now for the affected environment, we are:

- Researching existing information
- Completing GIS mapping
- Interviewing real estate, banking, travel, and government professionals
- Reviewing formal plans for the areas involved including:
 - Anchorage land use allocation model
 - Mat-Su Borough LRPT (Long Range Transportation Plan)– committee considering the “with bridge” scenario

To determine how much areas will change and how they could change, we are:

- Completing a housing/travel survey
- Conducting interviews
- Forming an Economic Working Group and holding meetings
- Updating the ISER Model
- Developing scenarios with reasonably foreseeable future actions (RFFAs)

To determine where the growth will shift from and to, we are:

- Completing housing/Travel surveys
- Conducting interviews
- Using the Anchorage land use allocation model



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- Convening an Economic working group
- Working with the Mat-Su Borough LRPT Committee
- Using the GIS based program “Plan Builder”

To determine what the effects will be, we are:

- Developing scenario development based on RFFAs Using a new traffic model
- Employing Plan Builder
- Completing noise modeling
- Completing air quality modeling

The Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) takes into account such things as the opening of ANWR and the price of oil. We are also looking at the No Action Alternative.

Morning Break

John McPherson (HDR)

Data from interviews and other sources is entered into Plan Builder, a GIS tool to determine how/where growth will occur. In Mat-Su Borough, there is no zoning for most of the project area so therefore Plan Builder must be run using:

It is based on constraint mapping, such as land ownership, slope of the land, building suitability, and rivers and water bodies.

Mapping scenarios for “mitigated” vs. “unmitigated growth” can be developed when adding waterbody buffers and other limitations on development.

Francis Man (USFWS)

At what point does reality come into scenarios. For example, could wetlands be developed because it is cheaper land?

John McPherson (HDR)

We will have one fairly open development scenario. We also have a second separate scenario with 100 foot buffer around water bodies and restricted growth on wetlands. We can then test the difference between the two scenarios.

Francis Man (USFWS)

I like that idea. It’s really good. We would like to participate in the process.

Murph O’Brien (MSB)

The Mat-Su Borough recently passed wetlands banking. Some of the land is in the project area and is now protected. Agricultural land cannot be subdivided to less than 40-acre parcels.



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Larry Dugan (ADEC)

Will water supply be added as a GIS layer? What is the aquifer level? Funds should be provided to USGS to look at it.

Murph O'Brien (MSB)

Water supply is a factor in the Mat-Su Borough. There is more and more arsenic showing up in the wells.

Elaine Somers (EPA)

Does this water supply issue undermine part of your Purpose and Need?

Murph O'Brien (MSB)

Growth is occurring now. Most developers are building on smaller lots with community water supplies.

John McPherson (HDR)

Traffic Modeling is the objective. Anchorage is using TransCad. Mat-Su Borough is using QRSII. Plan Builder will do comparative analysis. Travel time chart compares bridge with no bridge

Robin Reich (HDR) Natural Environment

We tend to focus on the impacts of a project (direct impacts) on resources. For indirect and cumulative impacts it makes sense to look at valued or notable resources first. We call them "Resource Components." For this project we have developed a preliminary list of Resource Components that will be examined for indirect and cumulative impacts. We want your comments on whether these resource components are correct and whether others are needed.

- Socioeconomic resource components
 - Land use
 - Population
 - Employment
 - Community Services
 - Farmland
 - Subsistence
- Cultural resource components
 - Cultural sites
 - Historical sites
 - Recreation areas

Matt LeCroix (ADF&G)

What is the difference between socioeconomic and cultural?

Robin Reich (HDR)

We have the resource components organized like an EIS table of contents.



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Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

Can you define subsistence?

Robin Reich (HDR)

Subsistence harvest of beluga whales by Alaskan Natives in the area is not longer allowed. Subsistence hunting and fishing is based on whether an area is urban or rural. Subsistence harvest is allowed in rural areas. Anchorage and the Mat-Su Borough are non-subsistence use areas because they are considered urban.

Stephen Braund (Stephen R. Braund & Associates)

Cook Inlet is a non-rural zone in federal regulations, therefore subsistence activities are not allowed.

Robin Reich (HDR)

Continuing list of Resource Components

- Biological resource components
 - Wetlands
 - Watershed/floodplain
 - Wildlife
 - Beluga whales
 - Salmon and other fish species
 - Moose
 - Shorebirds and waterfowl
- Physical resource components (preliminary)
 - Water quality
 - Marine hydrology
 - Air Quality
 - Energy

Murph O'Brien (MSB)

Water quantity should be added.

Elaine Somers (EPA)

We will want to see ecological connectivity addressed, like the interactions between subsurface and surface hydrology.

Steve Ribuffo (Alaskan Command)

Are you looking at air space use? Also, could you add recreational and commercial development and their noise levels?

Larry Dugan (ADEC)

You should establish baseline information for watershed functions and geomorphology.



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Greg Schmidt (3CES/CEVP – Elmendorf AFB)

In addition to noise levels you should look at electromagnetic levels.

Francis Mann (USFWS)

Raptors should be added. Problems with eagle nest abandonment has occurred in the Valley.

Mark Fink (ADF&G)

Wildlife should include bears, not just moose.

Steve Ribuffo (Alaskan Command)

There are areas we would like to be unattractive to birds for flight safety.

Jim Helfinstine (USCG)

Navigational impacts to the waterways should be added.

Robin Reich (HDR)

We have a preliminary list of Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions (RFFA). We would like your input to add to or subtract from this list.

- Port of Anchorage expansion
- Port MacKenzie development
- Mat-Su Road/Rail Corridor
- Knik Arm Railroad Bridge
- Burma/Point MacKenzie Road upgrades
- Fish Creek Road
- West Mat-Su Access Road (Little Su Crossing)
- Cargo Airport expansion
- MacKenzie Airpark for small aircraft
- Increased cruise ship calls at POA
- Public boat launch at Port MacKenzie
- Hatcher Pass Ski Resort
- South Denali Implementation Plan (major destination facility)
- Knik Arm Ferry
- 1,200 bed prison at Sutton creating 500 jobs
- 200 MW gas fired power plant built by MEA in MSB
- 200 MW coal fired power plant at Beluga built by Chugach
- Gas pipeline spur to Glenallen
- New Airborne Brigade at Fort Richardson (net gain of 2600 soldiers)
- USCG adding 110 people to new base
- Eklutna residential development



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- Residential development around lakes in MSB
- Gravel extraction in the Mat-Su Borough
- Gravel mining operation at Port MacKenzie
- Timber harvesting in the Mat-Su Borough
- Mat-Su Agricultural Lands (covenants lifted?)
- Fish Creek Agriculture

Louise Smart (CDR)

We would like your feedback on the feedback form. Please note that scoping comments are due May 12 and that the next agency meeting May 11. We will be looking for closure on indirect and cumulative effects and draft evaluation criteria for alternatives.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

We have a lot of input for a well refined Purpose and Need which we will send to you.

Murph O'Brien (MSB)

Are we narrowing alternatives on May 11?

Louise Smart (CDR)

Some intermediate narrowing, but it will not be final.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

At the last meeting, fatal flaw alternatives were introduced with the constraints map.

Elaine Somers (EPA)

Prior to May 11, we need to have the background information to substantiate the Purpose and Need.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

That was sent out to the EPA.

Elaine Somers (EPA)

I will look for it.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

Looking ahead, if we meet on May 11, should we meet again in early June? The team will contact you to see what works for your schedule.

Frances Mann ((USFWS)

We appreciate the openness and commitment of the project team.

Table 1: Integrated ICEA Approach: Relationship of NCHRP Indirect Effects Analysis Steps to CEQ Cumulative Effects Assessment Steps

Steps from NCHRP 466 (2002) ¹	Steps from CEQ (1997)
Conduct scoping for the IEA-CEA Sections of the EIS	
1. Conduct scoping for the indirect effects analysis: identify need and purpose for the proposed action, key resource issues, and any likely indirect effects already apparent at the outset. Also, determine the general indirect effects study approach, the level of effort required, available resources, and the geographic and temporal scope of the assessment.	1. Identify the significant cumulative effects issues associated with the proposed action and define the assessment goals.
2. Assemble information about trends and goals in the study area, through data collection and public involvement.	2. Establish the geographic scope for the analysis.
	3. Establish the time frame for the analysis.
	4. Identify other actions affecting the resources, ecosystems, and human communities of concern.
Describe the Affected Environment for the IEA and CEA	
3. Develop an inventory of notable features in the study area.	5. Characterize the resources, ecosystems, and human communities identified during scoping in terms of their response to change and capacity to withstand stresses.
	6. Characterize the stresses affecting these resources, ecosystems, and human communities and their relation to regulatory thresholds
	7. Define a baseline condition for the resources, ecosystems, and human communities.
Determine Indirect and Cumulative Effects, and Assess Their Context and Intensity	
4. Identify impact-causing activities of the proposed action and alternatives. Emphasize three categories of indirect effects: encroachment-alteration, access-alteration, and induced growth.	8. Identify the important cause-and-effect relationships between human activities and resources, ecosystems, and human communities.
5. Identify indirect effects that should be carried forward for further analysis, and the analytic methods and tools to be used. The guidance for this step includes basic questions that can be applied with a structured decision tree to decide whether a potential indirect effect should be analyzed in detail.	9. Determine the magnitude and significance of cumulative effects.
6. Conduct the detailed analyses of the selected potential indirect effects. Here, resource-specific analytic criteria and tools come into play, including trends analyses, forecasting, simulation modeling, and field study techniques.	
7. Evaluate the results of the indirect effects analyses in terms of the underlying assumptions, predicted intensity, and context from scoping.	
Develop Appropriate Mitigation	
8. Assess the consequences and develop mitigation and enhancement strategies for the predicted indirect effects. How will unacceptable indirect effects, including potential violations of regulatory standards, be addressed?	10. Modify or add alternatives to avoid, minimize, or mitigate significant cumulative effects.
	11. Monitor the cumulative effects of the selected alternative and adapt management.

Sources: The Louis Berger Group, Inc. 2002. *Desk Reference for Estimating the Indirect Effects of Transportation Projects*. NCHRP Report 466. Transportation Research Board, National Washington, D.C. *Proposed Research Council.*
 Council on Environmental Quality. 1997. *Considering Cumulative Effects under the National Environmental Policy Act*. Washington, D.C.

¹ Summarized by Robin Senner, April 2005