



KABATA

KNIK ARM CROSSING

DOT&PF



Meeting Notes

Subject	Interdisciplinary Team Meeting	Sheet	1	of	15
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Project Number	21132
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Meeting Date	September 27, 2005	Meeting Location	O'Malley's On The Green Anchorage, Alaska
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Notes by	Terry McConnell; Robin Reich
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Attendees:	See List Below
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Topics Discussed	Comments Received	Screening Criteria	Alternatives Carried Forward
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Greg	Schmidt	3CES/CEVP (Elmendorf AFB)	
Ken	Walters	3WG (Elmendorf AFB)	
James	Spell	Alaskan Command (ALCOM)	
Bobby	Stone	Alaskan Command (ALCOM)	
Mel	Langdon	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)	
Mark	Fink	Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)	
Amanda	Henry	Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Coastal Management Program (ADNR, ACMP)	
Mark	Somerville	Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Office of Habitat Management and Permitting (ADNR/OHMP)	
Doug	Gaser	Alaska Department of Natural Resources, State Historic Preservation Office (ADNR, SHPO)	
Kim	Rice	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facility (ADOT&PF)	
Barb	Hotchkin	Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)	
Jim	Canter	Attorney General's Office (AG)	
Natalie	Cooper	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	
Rodney	Huffman	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	
Valerie	Payne	Elmendorf Air Force Base	
Allan	Lucht	Fort Richardson	
Howard	Holtan	Municipality of Anchorage (MOA)	
Tom	Nelson	Municipality of Anchorage (MOA)	
Brian	Lance	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries /National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	
Barbara	Mahoney	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries /National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	
Larry	Peltz	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries /National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	
Glen	Yankus	National Parks Service (NPS)	
Steve	Duncan	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	
Elaine	Somers	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	
Phil	Brna	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	



Meeting Notes

Mary Lynn	Nation	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Jeff	Conaway	U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
Edrie	Vinson	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Al	Ewing	Consultant for Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority / Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facility (KABATA/ADOT&PF)
William	Greene	Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority / Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facility, Attorney General (KABATA/ADOT&PF, AG)
Dale	Paulson	Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority / Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facility (KABATA/ADOT&PF)
Henry	Springer	Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority / Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facility (KABATA/ADOT&PF)
Louise	Smart	CDR Associates
Rosetta	Alcantra	HDR Alaska
Kevin	Doyle	HDR Alaska
Duane	Hippe	HDR Alaska
Terry	McConnell	HDR Alaska
John	McPherson	HDR Alaska
Robin	Reich	HDR Alaska
Carla	SlatonBarker	HDR Alaska
Paul	Kendall	PND
Doug	Kenley	PND
Lindsey	Holmes	RISE Alaska
Stephen	Braund	Stephen R. Braund and Associates (SRB&A)
Elizabeth	Grover	Stephen R. Braund and Associates (SRB&A)
Rich	Stern	Stephen R. Braund and Associates (SRB&A)
Karen	Brown	URS Corporation
Jim	Glaspell	URS Corporation
Jon	Isaacs	URS Corporation

Lunchtime Open House to Visit Poster Stations

Louise Smart (CDR) Welcome

Introductions around the room

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

Thank you for the excellent scoping participation. We have heard your comments and responded. We want to get all the issues in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that are important to making decisions. All of the agencies participating in the scoping process since the first meeting in January of this year have made a real contribution to the project's scoping process and the identification of significant issues.

Louise Smart (CDR)



Meeting Notes

This meeting will cover alternatives to be carried forward, alternatives not carried forward, and the issues to be addressed in the DEIS. First Kevin will report on our thought on the alternatives to dismiss and bring forward

Alternatives Discussion

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations require the exploration and evaluation of all reasonable alternatives that are practical and feasible from the technical and economic standpoint. For those that are eliminated, a brief explanation as to why they are dismissed is required. The range of alternatives have been distilled through a screening process based on purpose and need criteria and technical criteria. The matrix on the screen (Screening Criteria to Identify Reasonable Alternatives slide in presentation) shows the result of screened alternatives listed on the handout by number. The alternatives all met most of the criteria, however there were six criteria that made a difference: travel efficiency, constructability, permitting, navigation, construction costs, and military mission, which includes, among other items, mission, impact costs and security.

Matanuska-Susitna Alternatives

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

The Mat-Su (Matanuska-Susitna Borough) approach is a 14 mile long roadway (See Mat-Su Approach Corridors slide in presentation) starting at the intersection of Burma Road and following the existing Point MacKenzie Road, with two corridor variants near the port (the Northern Corridor and the Point MacKenzie Road Corridor). The Mat-Su Borough asked us to look at a northern corridor to avoid impacts to the port operation. Both the Northern Access Corridor and the Point MacKenzie Road alternatives will be carried forward in the DEIS, with the Northern Access Corridor as the preferred alternative. Both of these alternatives are estimated to cost approximately \$70 million and are estimated to have 44,900 daily trips as you can see on the Mat-Su Approach Corridors Screening slide in the presentation.

Elaine Somers (EPA)

Will this project include improvements to the 9 mile section of roadway along Point MacKenzie Road?

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

Yes, the roadway will be a high level facility with controlled access. It will be improved to NHS (National Highway System) and ASHTO (Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) standards for 65 miles an hour urban arterial within a 300 ft of right-of-way.

Louise Smart (CDR)



Meeting Notes

The selection of terminus was the result of agency feedback. The Central Region DOT&PF (Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities), KABATA (Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority), and Mat-Su Borough are in agreement to make this section part of the National Highway System.

Elaine Somers (EPA)

Does the study area for direct effects cover this whole area?

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

Yes.

Elaine Somers (EPA)

How does the \$70 million affect the \$600 million cap? Also, how does the rail option fit?

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

The cost is \$70 million from the total \$600 million for this 14 mile section of road. The Mat-Su Borough formally adopted a study looking at a road/rail corridor between Port MacKenzie and the Parks Highway to the west of the Point MacKenzie Road as part of their comprehensive plan. The Mat-Su 800 ft road/rail/utility corridor to Houston is a separate project. This project is not about rail.

Ken Walters (3WG)

Has the Mat-Su Borough seen this?

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

Yes, KABATA has been meeting with the Mat-Su Borough and these alternatives are the result.

Kim Rice (DOT&PF)

How did you arrive at Burma Road as the terminus?

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

The Mat-Su Borough has planned improvements from Burma Road to the Parks Highway. This project will make the improvements up to that point. State ownership starts at Burma Road.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

If we can fit this project into long range plans of Mat-Su Borough and the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA), it builds out over time.

Kim Rice (DOT&PF)

Are you studying four-lane controlled access road to Burma Road?



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Kevin Doyle (HDR)

Yes.

John McPherson (HDR)

The traffic analysis includes all the Mat-Su Borough planned construction.

Elaine Somers (EPA)

Does the scope of the DEIS secondary effects include the Mat-Su Borough long range transportation plans?

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

Yes.

Mark Fink (ADF&G)

We don't have a lot of information about terrestrial wildlife migration through that area.

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

The area will be fenced through the Port MacKenzie district.

Crossing Alternatives

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

Mr. Doyle noted the existence of the deep marine trough, shipping needs, beluga usage of the Knik Arm, the geographic widening in the Knik Arm north of the crossing area and continued his presentation with the Knik Arm Crossing Corridors slide as follows:

For the Knik Arm Crossing Corridors, we have shown you a perpendicular and a skewed alignment. We now have a Southern Alignment, which is an optimized corridor. It combines the best attributes of the other two alignments. Through our study, we have learned the perpendicular may adversely affect military communications installations, so it is now considered not reasonable. The skewed corridor presents design difficulties for tide currents and ice flow and is now considered not reasonable. The Southern Alignment does not cause adverse impacts to military mission and is also beneficial to beluga habitat. It does not present the design difficulties of the skewed alignment so the Southern Alignment will be the preferred alternative carried forward. There will be design variants (differing bridge lengths) of this alternative.

Mark Fink (ADF&G)

How did you arrive at the Southern Alignment curve?

Doug Kenley (PND)



Meeting Notes

The design criteria is set to vehicle travel speed and future railroad compatibility standards for the minimum curve.

Barbara Mahoney (NMFS)

We have concerns about the amount of fill in that area, as well as construction time and erosion.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

The design is yet to be decided. I attended a conference that addressed fill versus pile driving and prefer that the issue should be left open and fully considered in the DEIS. Please write your concerns on your feedback form.

Tom Nelson (MOA)

Are downstream siltation patterns being considered for all bridge designs?

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

Yes, the in-field data collection is complete and we are within a few weeks of the hydrology model data becoming available. We have determined that for optimal engineering and cost the minimum length of bridge is now 8,200 ft. We will also include a 14,000 ft span. We understand that the intertidal zone is important, so we will be looking at a variety of fill approaches.

Louise Smart (CDR)

We would like your feedback on the crossing location.

Steve Duncan (EPA)

Fill also affects the flow channel and wetlands.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

This shows why it was not yet time to make the decision on design. This will all be in the DEIS.

Brian Lance (NMFS)

It looks like the Southern Alignment needs more pilings than the other two.

Paul Kendall (PND)

There is not an increase in pilings on the Southern Alignment. It is a 70 mile per hour design curve.

Kevin Doyle (HDR)



Meeting Notes

Looking at bathymetry, the Southern Alignment impacts the narrowest spot in the intertidal zone.

Phil Brna (USFWS)

Does the Southern Alignment have the possibility of needing more fill than the other crossing options?

Mark Fink (ADF&G)

I suggest you make it clear in the document that the blue line indicating the Southern Alignment crossing does not indicate how much fill will be used.

Steve Duncan (EPA)

I am okay with the Southern Alignment crossing as long as it does not push the design towards more fill.

Duane Hippe (HDR)

It is the lack of depth in the water that would push a design towards more fill. The Southern Alignment has deeper water.

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

The Southern Alignment has the smallest intertidal zone, which is beneficial.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

I have decided that the perpendicular crossing is not reasonable because of the potential to interfere with military mission. The skewed crossing has potential problems with scour and ice flow, so it is also not reasonable. The Southern Alignment is further away from the military areas of concern, it is better for belugas, and does not present the scour and ice flow problems. Because of these facts, I have decided the Southern Alignment will be the crossing corridor carried forward. I have not decided on the design, so the amount of fill vs. bridge remains to be determined. We have decided that the bridge will not be less than 8,200 ft long. Earlier we were looking at a 7,000 ft bridge, but that has gone away.

Barbara Mahoney (NMFS)

I am disappointed that you will not keep more than one crossing alternative.

Louise Smart (CDR)

Would it be helpful for NMFS (National Marine Fisheries Service) to be walked through the constraints in a one-on-one meeting?

Bill Greene (KABATA/AG)



Meeting Notes

The question I am hearing is whether or not the location of the corridor limits design variations (fill versus piling).

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

The further north of Cairn Point you go, the shallower the water, and the longer the tidelands go out into Knik Arm. Farther south gets to deeper water more quickly, which is better.

Henry Springer (KABATA)

The best location for the bridge has been determined by the physical constraints. There is a hole between the points of land which pushes the crossing 1,400 ft north of the hole. Thirty years of study have shown stable soils there, so it becomes a mathematical equation.

Howard Holtan (MOA)

The Southern Alignment is a better option because the deeper the water, the sooner a structure (bridge) is needed, so the less fill is used.

Anchorage Alternatives

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

The Anchorage Approach Corridors slide shows the corridors that we have been studying. These include Below the Bluff, Hiland Road, Boniface Parkway, Post/Reeve, Above the Bluff, with variants that go around, through, or under Government Hill. The corridor originally continued into the A/C Couplet. The MOA has requested that we connect to Ingra/Gambell Extension which will be part of the highway-to-highway connection but does not yet exist. In the Anchorage Approach Corridors Screening slide the travel demand shows 45,000 to 46,000 daily trips in the design year. The traffic would eventually overload A/C and would ultimately need to go to Ingra/Gambell by the year 2020-2022. We found the highest travel demand going to downtown and midtown. Hiland Road had very low travel efficiency and potential impacts to military mission, therefore has been determined to be not reasonable.

Louise Smart (CDR)

Is there anyone who thinks it is not reasonable to eliminate Hiland Road corridor?

Response: None

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

The military has given us an order of magnitude assessment and potential impact to military mission for the Boniface and Muldoon corridors. The Principals Group thought Boniface was a good alignment, but the combination of cost and disruption to future base plans and military impacts have made those two corridors not reasonable.



Meeting Notes

Louise Smart (CDR)

Does anyone object to this reasoning?

Tom Nelson (MOA)

It would be useful to have one alternative through military land. We would also like a viable alternative to Ingra/Gambell (upon construction, not at year 2020).

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

The military did not say we could not go through military land. They have been neutral and unbiased and provided us with a great deal of useful information from which Edrie, for FHWA (Federal Highway Administration), has made the decision.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

After talking with the military, I was totally convinced that the corridors on military land were getting too close to jeopardizing military mission, and we are just not going to go there. There are no advantages to going there. We are focusing on what we can do.

Louise Smart (CDR)

Tom, what would help that decision be acceptable to you?

Tom Nelson (MOA)

Just more details and state the reasons it is unreasonable such as it is a national security issue. There is recognition that there will be impacts to the port and Government Hill. We at the MOA are not convinced you can't tie into Ingra/Gambell before the highway-to-highway project is complete. The issue of travel also needs to consider the type of trips, like truck/tanker traffic in downtown. We would rather see tying into Ingra/Gambell now rather than later.

Dale Paulson (KABATA)

There has been some discussion between KABATA and Gordon Keith (DOT&PF) about joint funding for the future connection to Ingra/Gambell.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

We are not closing any of these discussions. We can continue working to accommodate your concerns.

John McPherson (HDR)

The alternatives should be able to go to both A/C and Ingra/Gambell in 2030. Studies show one third of the traffic goes to A/C and two thirds to Ingra/Gambell.



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Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

We will deal with phases as needed.

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

The Above the Bluff corridor has been deemed not reasonable because of potential impacts to military mission and mitigation costs which do not include construction or right-of-way costs.

Tom Nelson (MOA)

I have port and rail access concerns with the Below the Bluff corridor.

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

Actually, the Below the Bluff corridor will go through military land in that area.

BREAK

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

The military gave us a cost of \$218 million for the Below the Bluff corridor based on the perpendicular alignment. They have informed us if we use the Southern Alignment, two thirds of those costs related to mitigating communications interference go away. The remaining one third would be for disturbing the closed landfill. Our intentions are not to disturb the landfill but to hard armor it, which will stop the erosion and brings the military cost for this alignment to zero. With a sliver of right-of-way on military land, we avoid the port. The West Bluff variant and Elmendorf variant cannot maintain the design speed, so they will not be carried forward. The Degan variant and the Erickson variant are left to carry forward with a cut and cover tunnel. We will be meeting with the port, military, Government Hill, and the railroad in the near future to discuss this decision. We will also be working on a context sensitive design for Government Hill.

Barb Hotchkin (ARRC)

The model you have displayed in the back of the room goes through the new railroad operations center.

Duane Hippe (HDR)

Yes, we are aware of that and are planning on working with the Railroad.

Louise Smart (CDR)

Do you have issues to raise about eliminating all the Anchorage Approach Corridors except Below the Bluff and variants to Erickson, Degan, A/C Couplet and Ingra/Gambell?

No comments



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Louise Smart (CDR)

Do you have any advice for the project team?

Barb Hotchkin (ARRC)

Is the Below the Bluff wide enough for rail?

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

We intend to get into the bluff as wide and stable as possible. It may be necessary, however, for rail to have a spur off the existing rail line on Elmendorf.

Barb Hotchkin (ARRC)

I recommend this be discussed with Bruce Carr (at ARRC). The alignment of piers on a viaduct across railroad property should also be discussed.

Ken Walters (3WG)

The CDAA (Circular Disposed Antenna Array) is not the worst impact to the military. Other things create deeper issues.

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

These alternatives will be covered in the DEIS, including analysis in all 33 NEPA categories.

Steve Duncan (EPA)

You should keep an option with an intermediate bridge length.

Kevin Doyle (HDR)

We will absolutely look at that.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

We are only eliminating the 7,000 ft bridge length. I am prepared to make a decision that these alternatives that we have just presented are the ones to be carried forward in the DEIS.

Non-Road Alternatives

John McPherson (HDR)

A ferry crossing is part of the Mat-Su programmed improvements. It will be operational in 2007. We expect to see a second ferry in the Long Range Transportation Plan. It will dock at Port MacKenzie and go to the Port of Anchorage. The improvements to Point MacKenzie Road are not up to the 4-lane or design speed that we have been talking about making. On the Anchorage side, the ferry landing would be near Ship Creek Point.



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Another option that has been discussed is a Mat-Su Borough freight rail and bridge. Freight rail does not meet the Purpose and Need of this project. Commuter rail has been presented as an option to move people from Anchorage to the core of the Mat-Su Valley (Wasilla/Palmer area), but does not meet the Purpose and Need of this project. The Knik Arm Crossing is not about moving people to and from the core of the Mat-Su Valley.

We were also asked to look at a combination of systems to come up with a viable non-road alternative. We looked at combining ferries, commuter rail, van pools on the Glenn Highway, and express buses on the Glenn Highway. We increased the capacity of the ferries to 200 cars, rather than the 25 that are planned. The MOA does have improved commuter modes to the core Mat-Su Valley which are already a part of the travel demand model. The most optimistic travel demand for the larger faster ferries would be 5,000-6,000 demand trips. Adding in rail, bus, and van pools brings the demand up to 12,000. Studies show less than 10% of people would be attracted to a system like that, which is well below the demand. Because of these facts, we will not be carrying forward an enhanced non-road alternative.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

We met with the NGOs (non-government organizations) and had Mat-Su Borough and MOA experts present information on alternative transportation. We are also having another firm look at our findings and do another analysis evaluating a possible multi-modal alternative. I have not yet seen the second evaluation. It would have to meet the Purpose and Need of this project to be carried forward.

Elaine Somers (EPA)

Why not look at the option of freight and commuter rail bridge crossing? It would encourage concentrated growth.

John McPherson (HDR)

A heavy rail bridge, which is what would be required for freight, would be \$400-\$500 million over the cost of a roadway bridge. It would likely be nearly \$1 billion for the whole system.

Elaine Somers (EPA)

If you put in a commuter rail system it would encourage "smart growth."

John McPherson (HDR)

Studies show that a commuter rail attracts less than 10% of the ridership of a road and nearly doubles the cost.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

Robin Senner is writing the Indirect and Cumulative Effects Assessment Technical Report. Would you (Elaine) be willing to review it?



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Elaine Somers (EPA)

Yes.

John McPherson (HDR)

There will be documentation in the DEIS as to why this is not considered a reasonable alternative.

Steve Duncan (EPA)

Induced growth impacts from a road seems to be a direct impact.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

FHWA has a very specific definition of indirect effects that can be found on our website. We do not have jurisdiction over land use. That is up to the Mat-Su Borough. We are including the Indirect and Cumulative Effects Assessment in the DEIS.

Key Issues to Be Addressed in Detail in the DEIS

Robin Reich (HDR)

To be brief, I think it would most useful to talk about what you are not going to see in the document. (See Not Applicable Issues slide in presentation) There is no “unique and prime” farmland, so you will not see farmland in the document. It will not cover aviation transportation, wild and scenic rivers, coastal barriers or threatened and endangered species, or amphibians or reptiles. Belugas will be addressed, but not under threatened or endangered species, since they are not listed under that designation but are considered “depleted.” We will be addressing belugas under wildlife, as well as birds. There is no subsistence in the study area, but we will be covering traditional uses.

Steve Duncan (EPA)

I would like to see better identification of wetlands as well as functional assessment.

Robin Reich (HDR)

We did that along the alignment.

Steve Duncan (EPA)

A better assessment of functions of wetlands outside the direct project footprint is needed.

Phil Brna (USFWS)

There are amphibians in the area –wood frogs.

Elaine Somers (EPA)



Meeting Notes

We have raised the issue of drinking water.

Robin Reich (HDR)

The Mat-Su Borough has raised this as well. It will be covered under water quality.

Elaine Somers (EPA)

I think there are consequences of the loss of farmland even though the farmlands are not prime and unique. The distance of sources of fresh produce should be addressed.

Robin Reich (HDR)

This can be addressed in the land use section.

Phil Brna (USFWS)

Is a fuel pipeline included on the bridge? If so, impacts to threatened and endangered species found farther south in Cook Inlet is needed.

Robin Reich (HDR)

A fuel pipeline is not part of this project.

Barb Hotchkin (ARRC)

The railroad will want to look at traffic and land use patterns and the location of pilings in the railroad property.

Greg Schmidt (3CES/CEVP)

There may be an issue of noise in the Mat-Su with low flying jets.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

When you receive the DEIS for review, likely to be in November, would you like to have another meeting before we go to the public meetings?

(Phil Brna and Steve Duncan affirmative)

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

We have prepared technical reports throughout the study period. Would you like to receive a particular report for review?

Mel Langdon (ADEC) – Water and Hydrology

Phil Brna (USFWS) – Fish and Hydrology

Larry Peltz (NOAA Fisheries) - Fish and Hydrology

Steve Duncan (EPA) – Wetlands and Aquatic Resources

Elaine Somers (EPA) – Indirect and Cumulative Effects Assessment

Barbara Mahoney (NOAA Fisheries) – Hydrology



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Agency response: Post reports on website if possible.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

FHWA will receive the document for review later this month along with the Scoping Report. The Scoping Report is the Administrative Record of the entire scoping process which shows how we got to decisions as we move forward.

Elaine Somers (EPA)

I think it would be worthwhile to look at the effects of global warming.

Edrie Vinson (FHWA)

The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and FHWA made the decision a couple of years ago that that issue would be handled at the headquarters level, not on the project level, so it will not be included.

Meeting Adjourned