



Meeting Notes

Subject	Government Hill Small Group Meeting	Sheet	1	of	7
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Project Number	21132
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Meeting Date	April 6, 2005, 7:00 p.m.	Meeting Location	4 th Floor Conference Room, HDR Alaska
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Attendees:			
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Stephanie Kesler, resident
 Susanne DiPietro, resident
 Thomas Pease, resident
 Diane Miller, resident
 Charles Scott, resident
 Bob French, resident
 Stu Hall, resident
 Mark Musial, resident
 Don Hunter, Anchorage Daily News
 Richard Stern, Stephen Braund & Associates
 Dale Paulson, KABATA/DOT
 Kevin Doyle, HDR
 Lisa Loy Gray, URS
 Lindsey Holmes, RISE Alaska

Topics Discussed	Introduction to Knik Arm Crossing project
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The project team was introduced and presented the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, the project timeline, purpose and need, constraints, the proposed approaches and corridors.

Richard Stern introduced himself, described their role in studying cultural resources, and announced they would be in the neighborhood conducting a study.

Government Hill questions, comments and concerns:

Q. Does the concentration of historically significant buildings affect the project?

A. We would certainly try to avoid impacting historically significant buildings and a grouping of them would certainly add some margin of additional significance.

Comment. Mary Berry and Bobby Bianchi should talk to Stephen Braund and Associates.



Q. When are minutes from the agency meetings going to be published? We would like them (or at least a summary) prior to the public meetings.

A. Soon, they are being reviewed internally and we will get them to you soon as they are available.

Q. So AMATS (Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions) and Mat-Su L RTPs (Long Range Transportation Plans) would have to include the bridge?

A. Yes, we would want local concurrence.

Q. Have there been any talks with Elmendorf about crossing the base north of the CDAA (Circularly Disposed Antenna Array)?

A. KABATA staff have met with Elmendorf representatives. The indications we have heard are that crossing the base would adversely impact military missions.

Comment. It strains credulity that you couldn't construct a secure corridor through Elmendorf. You seem worried about private property in Mat-Su, but not in Anchorage and Government Hill.

Comment. Anchorage doesn't seem like the logical terminus on the corridor map. It's a narrow corridor down the bank.

Q. You should look at the North port Access study. You know, inverse condemnation suits will be the result in Government Hill if you go through or near the neighborhood.

A. The Northern Port Access Study was determined to be unacceptable to the military.

Q. When have ports asked to be connected? Who established the needs and how? Is port/industrial are connectivity really a need?

A. Port plans and port directors have indicated the need. Industrial area connectivity would promote economic development.

Comment. I think the study area is too narrow. You're only talking about the A/C Couplet, what about Gambell/Ingra?

Comment. If this is the scoping phase, you need to determine an approach *can't* be done before you take it off the table. I heard a high ranking military officer say secure corridors *can* be created across the base. Lackland Air Force Base has highways through it.

Comment. I'm concerned that people won't ask questions beyond what you've set as the parameters of the study.



Q. This is where cost analysis comes in. Won't a downtown tie-in drive up costs? The A/C Couplet looks like a done deal.

A. It's a starting point to looking at meeting project objectives and trying to tie into the existing transportation network.

Q. Can you expand the study area for the public meetings?

A. That is what scoping is all about; if you have those comments.

Comment. The A/C is already saturated.

Comment. Mayor Wuerch was against bringing more port and traffic into downtown as mayor. Now he's for it. Now with the Glenn/Seward connection, Fairview is upset, and we don't want to make more problems for them.

Comment. We understand the military doesn't have to play by our rules. But we should include this option (of going across military land) at scoping.

Comment. How you structure the question and the visuals affects the comments you get. Narrow questions lead to narrow answers.

Comment. The Alaska Railroad tracks are incorrect on the corridor map.

Q. Are you taking into account marine traffic? Their movement up and down the Arm?

A. Yes, we are trying to locate a crossing north of the major shipping channels and port operating areas.

Q. Can you tell us about the depth and width of the tunnel? Will traffic be heard or felt on the surface?

A. It is too early in the process to talk about tunnel dimensions-we haven't gone that far yet-this is just an idea.

Q. Are you talking about a 2 lane bridge? 3 lanes? What about the tunnel and approaches?

A. Based on preliminary projections, it is estimated that four lane approaches and a 3 lane bridge with a reversible center lane could adequately handle traffic volumes. This will need to be verified by the travel demand model.

Q. What about the Railroad? Will they be on the bridge?

A. Not as part of this project. We are, however, setting up the geometrics so that the rail can be added in the future if the Alaska Railroad decides to do so.



Q. A cut and cover tunnel would totally disrupt access to Alascom and the school. Have you considered a bored tunnel?

A. Bored tunnels are significantly more expensive but we are still in the early stages of alternatives development.

Q. We've heard talk of Erickson Street. Have you thought of a Degan Street option? With a cut and cover tunnel it would be really disruptive. Inverse condemnation suits would be inevitable. A/C was well designed to minimize noise by staying below the bluff.

A. Degan Street was looked at by DOT (Department of Transportation) in the 2003 update study. It works well with the Ingra-Gambell connection.

Q. I have questions about needs. Why do ports need to be connected? What is the need? Why not a north port access? Where do the needs come from? Who created them? The new Palmer hospital eliminates some emergency needs.

A. Needs come from local plans: Mat-Su and the Municipality-port plans, master plans, economic development plans, land use plans, etc.

Comment. Mat-Su is fast growing. Mat-Su is creating its own infrastructure. The need to connect to Anchorage will reduce over time, as jobs and infrastructure are created. A doubled Mat-Su population doesn't necessarily mean double the number of commuters. The bridge won't serve Palmer and Wasilla—it will serve Big Lake cabins and recreation.

Q. Will commuters pay the toll? The Whittier tunnel is heavily subsidized but hasn't created more need.

A: We are studying tolls.

Q. Your purpose and need doesn't say draft, it's presented as fact. People might not know to criticize it or question it.

A. We will mark it draft for the scoping meeting.

Comment. The amendment to AMATS that stated the need for the bridge was an afterthought.

Q. Is funding driving the need for the project?

A. No, the locally stated needs are driving the need for the project.

Q. Who owns the land on Mat-Su side? I think Anchorage residents have heavily invested in Mat-Su side and this project is designed to bail them out.

A. (Referring to land use map) A lot of the land is Mat-Su or state-owned land in the Point MacKenzie area.



Comment. The bridge will adversely affect Hollywood Vista.

Comment. The bridge could be built to truck Mat-Su milk to Anchorage.

Q. Are any University lands on Mat-Su on the disposal list?

A. I don't know at this point.

Comment. Make sure you invite people to comment on purpose and need.

Comment. East and west Government Hill are separated by Loop Road. It's hard to imagine how to make it better. Going around the east side of Government Hill might be better. The school and Alascom are in the middle of one of your corridors. On and off ramps will take up more land. Our park extension plan would be compromised.

Comment. A bored tunnel might be better. A cut and cover could be done and buried with a greenbelt.

Q. What about a tunnel with a pedestrian route on top?

A. That could be accomplished.

Comment. There's a gray cloud over the Government Hill commercial district now because of KABATA (Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority). Anchorage Neighborhood Housing said this.

Comment. The tunnel is a good option. You can minimize impact of cut and cover, it doesn't have to be an open ditch. Seattle did this. Some were bored and some were cut and cover. They cost money, but they can be done well.

Q. I'm worried about the Port expansion tie-in with a road under the bluff. Will this affect Cherry Hill? The bluff may be unstable there.

A. We will need to do some geotechnical investigations and check into this.

Q. Is there a need to connect to downtown and the Port, as opposed to Muldoon?

A. Downtown is a destination employment center.

Comment. I know we're seen as naysayers, but this is our home.

Q. Where and when are the public meetings?

A. April 12 at the Wasilla Multi-Use Sports Complex, 6 p.m.; and April 13 at the Egan Convention Center, 5 p.m.



Q. Do people look at alternatives in a cost-benefit analysis? Do you look at a bridge, a commuter rail, a no-build?

A. Different alternatives have different benefits-Start a new sentence we will look at a full range of alternatives and the no-build will remain viable throughout the draft EIS process.

Comment. Isn't Mat-Su investing in intermodal and mass transit? Why no answer?

Q. Is the land ownership map available? Can I get a copy?

A. It is the Mat-Su GIS database. We can get a copy to you.

Q. What are the funding sources for the project?

A. This is still being worked out but options include federal earmark, bonds, tolls, state and local funds, and user fees.

Q. Is the Wilbur Smith study subject to public comment?

A. Some of it may be somewhat confidential to KABATA since it is outside of the EIS process, but whatever is legally public material could be reviewed.

Q. Will there be public input on costs and whether we want to spend our money on this?

A. Absolutely.

Q. I'll be very surprised if it can be built for \$600 million. I expect we'll be going back to the Feds for more. What about maintenance? We don't want to get partway through construction, run out of money, and not have Stevens or Young around at that point to bail it out.

A. Maintenance is projected to be handled by toll revenues.

Comment. Isn't there a better, more cost-effective way to meet whatever needs are out there? Can you achieve the same benefits for lower cost?

Q. Is the Wilbur Smith process separate from the EIS process?

A. Yes it is separate.

Q. Who hired Wilbur Smith?

A. KABATA.

Comment. If you want to deteriorate a city, you're doing a good job. Most cities try to keep industry and people outside of downtown, you're trying to put it all in. Putting all this traffic into A/C is cancerous.



Q. Can the A/C bridge handle this traffic? Is it strong enough? We're told it's not strong enough for an additional bike path, how will it handle more traffic and tanks? Or the Stryker Brigade? The bridge is deteriorating.

A. We will need to thoroughly look into it. We are still in the early phases.

Comment. Let's all go home before the A/C bridge crumbles! I don't think the A/C will withstand a big earthquake.