



STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING No. 1

April 27, 2022, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm, via Teams

Meeting Objectives

- Introduce the study, stakeholders, and the PEL study process.
- Discuss the study vision, review background materials and other data, and discuss the emerging themes that will form the purpose and need statement.

Attendees

Marie Heidemann, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)
Christy Gentemann, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)
Joanne Schmidt, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)
Chrissy McNally, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)
Greg Lockwood, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)
Irene Gallion, City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ)
John Bohan, City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ)
Katie Koester, City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ)
Adam Anderson, Alaska Marine Lines
Edric Carrillo, Senator Kiehl's Office
Kamal Lindhoff, Douglas Indian Association
Steven Sahlender, Goldbelt
E. Cody Salter, Fritz Cove Neighborhood Association (FCNA)
Rebecca Bellmore, Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition (SAWC)
Winston Smith, Audubon Society
Kristin Bartlett, City and Borough of Juneau School District (CBJSD)
Wade Bryson, Juneau Assemblymember
Christine Woll, Juneau Assemblymember
Mike Stanley, North Douglas Neighborhood Association (NDNA)
Teri Tibbett, Douglas Advisory Board and Bonnie Brae Neighborhood Association (BBNA)
Brian Holst, Juneau Economic Development Council (JEDC)
Daniel King, Juneau Economic Development Council (JEDC)
Brenda Taylor, Community Member
Ryan Beason, Territorial Sportsmen
Robert Venables, Southeast Conference
Laura Martinson, Community Member
Ron Summerville, Mendenhall Wetlands Study Group (MWSG)
Greg Green, Community Member
Margaret Custer, Southeast Alaska Land Trust



Steve Noble, DOWL
Theresa Dutchuk, DOWL
Nina Keller Horne, DOWL
Jovie Garcia, DOWL
Morgan McCammon, DOWL
Michael Hornvedt, Parametrix

Summary

Marie Heidemann (DOT&PF Project Manager) and Steve Noble (DOWL Project Manager) welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Marie and Steve provided team introductions, asked the Stakeholder Advisory Committee members to introduce themselves, and reviewed the agenda.

Steve introduced the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) process, reviewed the preliminary schedule (including Open House No. 1), PEL study background, existing conditions, and a map of the study area. He also provided an overview of the recent population observations including traffic and housing in the Juneau area and explained that this information helps inform the PEL study's Purpose and Need (P&N).

Steve explained what a P&N statement is and its importance to the study. He provided an overview of emerging themes for this PEL Study's P&N.

Emerging Themes Discussion

After the presentation, the meeting participants were moved into three (3) moderated breakout group facilitated by Nina Keller Horne (DOWL Planning), Theresa Dutchuk (DOWL Environmental), and Steve. A volunteer team captain reported back to the group on the Emerging Themes:

- Which are the most important issues to you?
- Why?
- Are we missing anything? (In terms on potential P&N for this project.)

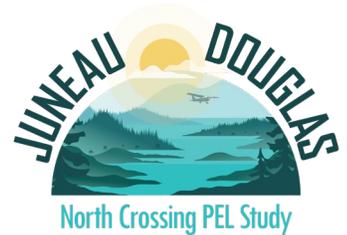
EMERGING THEMES FOR PURPOSE & NEED

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Economic Impact |  Developable Land |
|  Emergency Response |  Redundancy |
|  Travel Time and Congestion |  Population |
|  Active Transportation Facilities and Recreation |  Utilities |

The following summaries reflect the discussion and opinions shared in the breakout groups.

Breakout Group 1, Discussion:

- All themes have equal priority, but the main focus is on developable land and utilities. It will be expensive for those who want to live there.
- Would like to see a cost-effective way to address emergency response time, congestion, and redundancy to lessen economic impact.
- Redundancy:
 - A ferry is unlikely to return to provide an alternative crossing between Douglas Island and Juneau, so redundancy is very important.
 - Only having one crossing between Juneau and Douglas Island has the potential to cause delays responding to medical emergencies.



- Developable Land and Utilities:
 - Potentially developable land is available at west Douglas, past the three-mile road. There have been regular discussions with CBJ about extending the road, but development of this land is considered challenging and expensive due to utilities that only extend to the boat ramp.
 - There is a view that as soon as the road is built, people will move there and develop the land.
 - There are no recent plans for developing the area.
 - Find a way to share the high cost of getting water and sewer to west Douglas.
 - Electricity is likely to be the least expensive utility to extend to north and west Douglas.
- Recreation:
 - Eaglecrest is worth the long drive.
 - North Douglas has plenty of recreation trails.
 - Fish Creek and Sandy Beach are both very popular, especially for families.
- Population and Areas for Future Development:
 - North and west Douglas are good options for housing. The area has great views and opportunities for growth, but it depends on what type of housing.
 - It may or may not help with the current housing crunch if new developments are not affordable.
 - Land is likely to be high value at north and west Douglas, and development potentially frees up other housing in Juneau. There was a proposal for a golf course on west Douglas, which would be beneficial for recreation, but this has not moved forward.
- Travel Time and Congestion:
 - There is a morning traffic peak, another at lunch, and from 4:00-6:00 pm.
 - If construction projects are occurring, it is “a nightmare” often backing up past the high school and federal building.
 - Hauling rock to north Douglas is likely to be expensive, which could impact the viability of development.
 - The crossing will help with congestion. It is important to consider where a crossing would tie into the road system on the Juneau side. One participant considered a location near the airport would work best for connection between Eaglecrest and locations surrounding Costco.
 - It is very difficult to leave North Douglas when there is a constant flow of traffic, which appears to be caused by confusion at the roundabout. It will be worse if commercial traffic increases at peak travel times.
- Location of Crossing:
 - Opinions vary widely on a preferred location for a north crossing.
- Emergency Response:
 - Whenever the bridge is struck, it highlights the lack of alternatives in the case of an emergency.
- Eaglecrest Ski Area:
 - A gondola is being installed to attract more skiers and expand to include summer operations. North Douglas Road is already congested so a second crossing would alleviate traffic congestion.

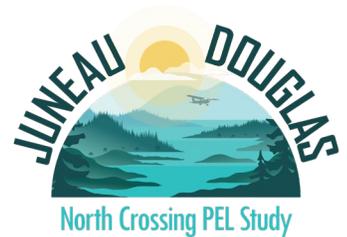


Breakout Group 2, Discussion:

- Recreation Opportunities:
 - Access to recreation opportunities on North Douglas is of concern now.
 - Consider Eaglecrest’s future plans for summer activities, increased tourism to Douglas Island.
 - Hunting and fishing are popular activities in the state game refuge. Concerns were raised with a north crossing impacting those activities.
- Redundancy and Safety Impacts:
 - The team was urged to consider safety concerns with only one crossing.
 - Consider hospital access in case of existing bridge closure.
- Environmental Impacts:
 - The team should evaluate mitigation sites surrounding the refuge within the study area, and make sure recommended alternatives forwarded accommodate those obligations.
 - The location and impacts of a crossing are top priorities for the community.
 - Consider in-kind mitigation for the Juneau airport expansion as it is in the study area.
 - Consider climate change impacts.
 - Consider surface water and wetlands impacts.
- Impacts to Residents and Neighborhoods:
 - The team was urged to consider neighborhood impacts when developing alternatives.
- Future Development:
 - Developable land on North Douglas and access to the area are a challenge.
 - Long-term economic development should be a consideration for any north crossing.
 - The team should consider construction timing to use federal funds made recently available.
- Participants were not aligned on congestion and travel time being considered a problem in the area.
 - One participant noted that travel time does not seem to be an issue between North Douglas and downtown.
 - Another participant was concerned with congestion and access to North Douglas.
- Concerns were voiced about the process, level of transparency, and inclusion.
- Some participants noted that there are few affordable housing options available in Juneau.
- A crossing at Vanderbilt Hill was the preferred option last time there was a study, however, it may not meet all the needs of this study.

Breakout Group 3, Discussion:

- Environmental Impacts:
 - Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition and Southeast Alaska Land Trust noted the need to consider wetland mitigation-in lieu of a second crossing.
 - Concerns were raised about impacts to wetlands, wildlife, and fish habitat.
 - The University of Alaska Fairbanks has been undertaking research on wildlife conservation, in conjunction with the Audubon Society.



- Future Development:
 - Development at North Douglas will be more likely to proceed if there is a second crossing.
 - Infrastructure investments need to be well planned and integrate with other infrastructure and land uses in the area.
 - Participants requested an assessment of the road needs on the west side of Douglas Island.
 - The location of a second crossing should consider access to educational facilities.
 - The implications for a north crossing on the boat launch need to be considered.
- Crossing Locations:
 - In previous studies, the recommended crossing location was close to downtown and was consequently not pursued.
 - A north crossing is less desirable close to the existing bridge.
 - One participant sought clarification on what is meant by a north crossing.
 - Geophysical hazards could impact access.
 - Planning should consider the traffic impacts of a north crossing, and where it would connect to the existing highway.
- Traffic and Congestion:
 - A north crossing could distribute traffic and reduce congestion more effectively.
 - Concerns were raised about traffic and congestion.
- North crossing would address safety concerns and lack of redundancy.
- North crossing would support tourism.
- North Douglas Considerations:
 - North Douglas Neighborhood Association’s representative noted they are very active. A survey has previously been completed on the need for a second crossing, which showed a strong mix of opinions and a view that more planning was needed to support development in the area and the location selection for a north crossing.
 - A subarea planning approach should be considered.
- Participants sought an assessment of why the previous alternatives did not progress.
- Participants voiced concerns that the long-term benefits of a crossing may not be realized because the cost could be prohibitive.

Steve provided a summary of the schedule of upcoming meetings, including the Alternatives Development Workshop. Marie and Steve concluded the meeting with closing comments and thanked the members for their participation.

Action Items/Next Steps

Project team:

- Post meeting materials to project website.
- Distribute online survey to committee members for additional comments on the P&N emerging themes discussion.



Committee members:

- Provide any additional feedback using online survey.
- Participate in the Virtual Public Meeting #1 on May 11, 2022, and upcoming Advisory Committee meetings.
- Monitor email for future project updates.