

JOINT TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE | MEETING 6

October 17, 2024, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. via Zoom

Zoom, Meeting ID: 820 3301 3027, Passcode: 209049

Meeting Objective

Present update on Level 2 Screening results, share new information, and receive comments.

Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

Schedule Update

Level 2 Screening – Update

New Information

Discussion

Wrap Up and Next Steps

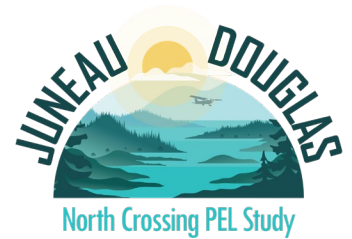
Attendees — PEL Study Team

Name

Greg Lockwood, Project Manager
Jill Melcher, Planning
Christy Gentemann, Environmental
Brett Nelson, Planning
Sam Dapcevich, Information Officer
Doug Kolwaite, Statewide Environmental Office
Nina Keller, Statewide Environmental Office
Benjamin Storey, Environmental
Jill Taylor, Environmental
Leslie Daugherty, Bridge Design
Bridget LaPenter, Project Manager
Ashley Heimbigner, Grant Manager
Nate Rumsey, Deputy Director
Steve Noble, Project Manager
Renee Whitesell, PEL Study Lead
Kristen Hansen, Environmental

Organization

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
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Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
City and Borough of Juneau Engineering and Public Works
City and Borough of Juneau Engineering and Public Works
City and Borough of Juneau Engineering and Public Works
DOWL
DOWL
DOWL



Theresa Dutchuk, Environmental	DOWL
Jovie Garcia, Public Involvement	DOWL
Morgan McCammon, Public Involvement	DOWL

Attendees — Technical & Stakeholder Advisory Committee

Members

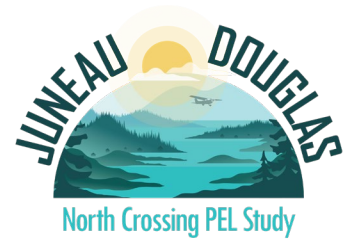
Name

Beth Weldon
 Christine Woll
 Dave Hanna
 Aaron Brakel
 Adeyemi Alimi (Yemi)
 Alex Wertheimer
 Barb Mecum
 Brian Holst
 Cathy Schlingheyde
 Ellen Ferguson
 Franke Rue
 J. Mitchell
 Jesse Lindgren
 Kristen Bartlett
 Margaret Custer
 Mason Auger
 Matt Robus
 Michael Williamson
 Michael Stanley
 Molly Zaleski
 Nathan Newcomer
 Randal Vigil
 Rebecca Bellmore
 Ron Somerville
 Roy Churchwell
 Sarah Markegard
 Stephanie Banua
 Teri Tibbett
 Tyler Breen
 Unidentified phone user

Organization

City and Borough of Juneau Mayor
 City and Borough of Juneau Assembly
 Access Alaska
 Southeast Alaska Conservation Council
 Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Air Quality
 Mendenhall Wetlands Study Group
 Friends of Fritz Cove
 Juneau Economic Development Council
 Senator Khiel's office
 North Douglas Neighborhood Association
 Mendenhall Wetlands Study Group

 Alaska Department of Fish and Game
 Juneau School District
 Southeast Alaska Land Trust
 Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Mining, Land, and Water
 Territorial Sportsmen and Mendenhall Wetlands Study Group
 Goldbelt
 North Douglas Neighborhood Association
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries
 Southeast Alaska Conservation Council
 United States Army Corps of Engineers
 Southeast Alaska Watershed Council
 Mendenhall Wetlands Study Group
 Alaska Department of Fish and Game
 US Fish and Wildlife Service
 Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
 Bonnie Brae Neighborhood Association and Douglas Advisory Board
 Southeast Alaska Conservation Council



Presentation Summary

Welcome and Introductions

Greg Lockwood, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) Project Manager, opened the meeting by welcoming committee members, sharing Zoom requests and functions, reviewing the agenda, introducing the study team, and establishing the meeting purpose.

Schedule Update

Steve Noble, DOWL Project Manager, presented an updated schedule, highlighting the previous milestones, public meetings, and listening sessions. He shared the status of the additional fieldwork, noting most fieldwork to be conducted during the PEL study is complete.

Level 2 Screening — Update

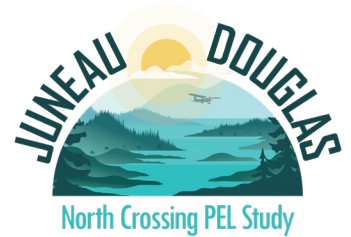
Renee Whitesell, DOWL PEL Study Lead, summarized details of the level 1 and level 2 screening processes. She explained the alternative screening process was designed to incorporate new information discovered throughout the PEL study. After reviewing the process details, she reviewed the scoring timeline, including the dates of project activities and comment timing. The timeline also noted level 2 screening is ongoing awaiting further information.

Theresa Dutchuk shared revisions to level 2 screening results, modified based on feedback received during level 2 screening. Changes to the screening include:

- Weighted scoring for impacts within the Mendenhall Wetland State Game Refuge (MWSGR).
- Important migratory bird habitat updated to only include acreage of impact within the MWSGR.
- Acreages of direct impact updated to include bridge deck.
- Functional assessment used to evaluate impacts to high value wetlands.
- Steam and riparian impacts adjusted from acreage to linear feet calculations.
- Included Hendrickson Point as a potential 4(f) resource, which will be confirmed during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.
- Added Hendrickson Point to the category of “protected lands”.
- Removed overlapping counts between residential uses directly affected and within 100 feet of residential property. Same for commercial.

A question in the chat from J. Mitchell followed this review asking: “What’s a 4f resource?”. Theresa answered 4(f) is a provision under the United State Department of Transportation (US DOT) act which creates protection for recreational resources, refuges, and sanctuaries. In this case, it would focus on recreational resources in the MWSGR.

Theresa continued sharing revised scoring with a table showed preliminary level 2 scoring and the revised scoring for comparison. Theresa specified the scores within the MWSGR dropped significantly due to the



newly applied scoring weight. The Salmon Creek alternative is pending due to ongoing research, but Theresa indicated the Salmon Creek alternative would score more highly under the revised scoring.

New Information

Steve presented new information regarding the Salmon Creek Dam from AEL&P, which was not previously considered, describing hazards of the dam potentially impacting the Salmon Creek alternative and Egan Drive. Hazards included potential flooding should the dam release. The study team requested additional information from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to supplement the floodplain map shared. He said the study team hopes to have the response within a few weeks.

Steve presented the “sunny day” scenario, which showed two-foot water flood contours during a magnitude eight earthquake. Steve further shared the velocity of the flood and depth in the flooding scenario and next reminded committee members of the landslide and avalanche hazards closer to downtown Juneau.

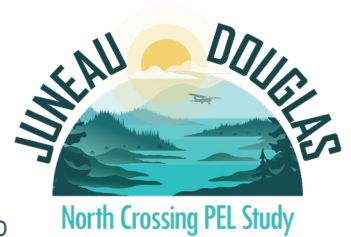
The PEL study is paused pending additional risk analysis. Steve summarized the status on obtaining information for the Salmon Creek Dam and actions needed after information is provided to determine whether the study team has enough information to include or exclude the Salmon Creek alternative moving forward to the NEPA process, if additional studies are needed, and in consultation with the DOT&PF Statewide Environmental Office (SEO).

After presenting area hazards, Steve shared what is coming next. The study team is planning a seventh joint advisory committee meeting tentatively scheduled for December 2024, and the final open house tentatively scheduled for January 2025, with a comment period ending in February 2025, to share the draft PEL Study report. The target date for finalizing the PEL Study report is March 2025. This timeline would be dependent on when the study team receives a response to the FIOA request for additional information about the Salmon Creek Dam.

Group Discussion

The group discussion began with reviewing questions typed in the chat, and Renee invited participants to ask questions and encouraged the hand raise function.

- Q: J. Mitchell asked in the chat “is negative scores better or worse, ie is -23 better or worse than -12?”
A: Rebecca Bellmore answered in the chat “more negative is worse.” Theresa expanded negative scores indicate the alternative performed poorly against a particular criterion. The more negative a score is, the poorer it performs against environmental, social, and economic criteria.
- Q: Margaret Custer, Southeast Alaska Land Trust (SEALT), asked in the chat: “Has FERC been contacted for their opinion on the safety of the dam, other than submitting a FOIA request to request documents? Is there any indication that either FERC or AEL&P believe that the dam is unsafe, and if so, is CBJ preparing to put all available resources into mitigating the increasingly complex flood risks to the community? This is more important than a sidebar in a second crossing study.”
A: Steve answered DOWL does a lot of FERC licensing and dam site reviews across the western United States. He shared his personal experience about working with FERC, describing FERC as very risk averse. The information regarding specific dams is mostly considered confidential information. One must



meet certain requirements to achieve certain levels of access to that information. Meaning simple phone calls to FERC requesting information will not achieve getting the desired information, only the process on the proper channel to obtain requested information. Steve said the study team has gone through their process of obtaining information. Greg added there have not been additional discussions about potential flooding from the Salmon Creek dam with the CBJ.

- Q: Alex Wertheimer, Mendenhall Wetlands Study Group, asked for additional information on why the study team scored the Twin Lakes alternative but not the Salmon Creek alternative, as a catastrophic flood event could impact access to the hospital for these and other alternatives. He further asked if this issue would be resolved with this FERC information or would the issue be carried on into NEPA to be resolved.

A: Theresa answered the study team is waiting for additional information about the Salmon Creek Dam before scoring the Salmon Creek alternative as that would lead to the most accurate scoring. Steve added much of the northern section of Egan Drive would remain above the flood elevation according to the model; however, if a flood were to occur, it would be likely to wash out southern sections of Egan Drive, Channel Drive, and the bridges around Salmon Creek. The bridge structure in that location could be designed to withstand a potential flood at Salmon Creek, but it would remain inaccessible from Egan Drive coming from the north. This is where the Salmon Creek alternative is questionable to meet the purpose and need. Purpose and need of this study focus on redundancy and ability to serve Juneau residents in the event of traffic impacts on Egan Drive. If it takes months for infrastructure to be re-established, regardless if a crossing at Salmon Creek were to survive, the infrastructure around it would not. Whereas at Twin Lakes, Egan Drive stayed above that projected flood level in the model.

- Q: Matt Robus, Territorial Sportsmen and Mendenhall Wetlands Study Group, speculated if a flood impacts Egan Drive at Salmon Creek, none of the alternatives would meet the purpose and need under that situation because the hospital would not be accessible from the north. He then asked for clarification on Hendrickson Point being a 4(f) resource, and if the MWSGR is considered a protected area.

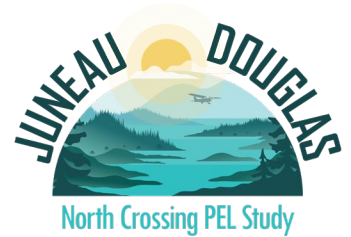
A: Theresa confirmed the MWSGR is considered a 4(f) resource, having a management plan and being managed by the State of Alaska as a recreational resource. Hendrickson Point will require additional research to determine whether it is a 4(f) resource.

Steve shared a crossing constructed at Twin Lakes or further north would provide access during a flood from Lemon Creek or Auke Valley to the hospital by traveling south on Egan Drive, across the inlet to Douglas Highway, south to the Juneau Douglas bridge crossing to downtown, and then north on Egan Drive to the hospital.

Dave Hanna, Access Alaska, added the CBJ is currently working on alternate access to the hospital in the event Egan Drive was inaccessible.

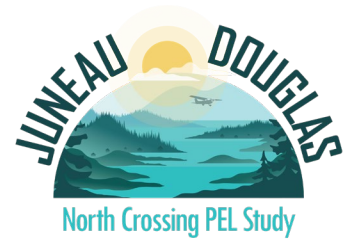
- Q: Dave Hanna, Access Alaska, added the CBJ is currently working on alternate access to the hospital in the event Egan Drive was inaccessible. He then asked if new information on Goldbelt's upcoming development on the backside of Douglas Island would affect the PEL study traffic analysis. He noted the development with increased commercial and residential usage could change the analysis on traffic use.

A: Renee responded the study team had just received the news release as well. Steve shared the study team considered the PEL process may be far enough along the PEL study will be completed, and the NEPA process will address this new development. He continued, the information in the news release has the potential to impact the purpose and need. Whether this is addressed during the PEL study the NEPA process is yet to be determined.



Greg added the study team is interested to find out more, seeing how it could affect the PEL study and traffic models.

- Q: Margaret Custer asked in the chat: “Is ADOT&PF considering improvements to Egan Drive, and the hospital area infrastructure, so that it would not be impacted by a flood from AEL&P's dam? Sounds like the concerns are more for existing infrastructure than a future bridge.”
A: Greg responded DOT&PF is not looking at that during this PEL process; the focus is identifying risks. The CBJ may be working on alternate access to the hospital, but the PEL study and DOT&PF are not. This may be explored more in the NEPA process.
- Q: Dave Hanna made a follow up comment in the chat: “I would think it might weight the Mendenhall option higher. In regards to the North Douglas development.”
A: Renee said that was interesting feedback and the study team is evaluating the new information further.
- Q: Alex Wertheimer asked if the revised scoring incorporated the construction and maintenance costs as part of the evaluation.
A: Theresa answered, yes, the maintenance and construction costs were included in the revised scoring.
- Q: Alex Wertheimer asked if this presentation would be shared on the study website.
A: Steve answered, yes, all presentations and discussion materials for advisory committee meetings were shared on the study website.
- Q: Margaret Custer asked in the chat: “Did AEL&P reach out independently to share concerns about dam safety, or were they contacted by the study team in level 2 screening? If the study team reached out first, why did they wait until level 2, and then propose to modify the previously finalized level 1 results as a consequence of that conversation?” She followed up in the chat: “Please answer my second question relating to whether AEL&P flagged the dam safety concerns.”
A: Steve Noble answered he did not think the study team reached out to AEL&P. He recalled AEL&P reached out to the study team as a response to the more general public outreach. Greg answered AEL&P asked if the study team considered the Salmon Creek Dam, and the study team asked to meet with them. AEL&P shared the modeling, and the study team decided to evaluate it further.
- Q: Brian Holst, Juneau Economic Development Council, asked how the Mendenhall Valley flooding might impact the analysis. Juneau had flooding impacting 30 homes last year and 300 homes this year. Scientists at the University of Alaska Southeast explained this is a multi-decade phenomenon, with some suggestions flood levels could be higher. Brian speculated this would point to reasonable concerns about further development and investment in the Mendenhall Valley, where most single-family housing stock exists. Brian said he would imagine people who would want to stay in Juneau would want to look to the next best alternative: the North Douglas area. Brian asked how this would be incorporated into the PEL study analysis.
A: Steve shared this was more of a CBJ planning question to be incorporated into the discussion. He continued, maybe when the NEPA process occurs, a greater discussion surrounding the purpose and need could occur. During the NEPA process, that project team will revisit the purpose and need. The purpose and need as it is currently written is focused on congestion on the Juneau Douglas bridge and Douglas Highway and redundancy of transportation facilities based on Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) criteria. There are some additional goals in the PEL study purpose and need including economic and development concerns. The housing concern has been mentioned a lot and not just the Mendenhall Valley,



which is a new concern not yet discussed. Steve added the CBJ may be considering updates to their comprehensive plan, which would address those issues.

Steve then asked Bridget LaPenter, CBJ Project Manager, if the comprehensive plan update was in development. Bridget said the comprehensive plan update has not yet started but it is planned. It was her understanding the CBJ was moving away from area plans and wanted to instead look at the community as a whole, working on the comprehensive plan moving forward. The CBJ identified areas on North Douglas that are not wetlands, are city-owned property, and look reasonably accessible to possibly develop for housing. North Douglas is a sparsely populated area that could be something the CBJ looks at further for development.

Renee shared her thoughts as a planner, noting it is a good approach to look at the comprehensive plan as a way for the community to comprehensively consider issues, including changing environment, the ongoing challenges with housing, and land use. Those issues would need to be considered as the study team completes the PEL study and in a future NEPA process.

- Q: Margaret Custer commented in the chat: “If AEL&P is volunteering concerns about increased likelihood of a catastrophic event with an 8.0 earthquake, maintaining water levels outside of their FERC license, and subsequent failure of the entire Salmon Creek dam structure, CBJ needs to be taking action on this new flood risk to the community.”

A: Steve corrected the study team has no information to suggest that AEL&P is maintaining water levels outside of their FERC license. They have controls in place to keep the Salmon Creek Dam at a certain elevation or less. Greg added that he does not think this is a new risk to AEL&P, rather something they recently pointed out to the study team. They have information on their website regarding this issue. Greg said he thinks AEL&P also puts notices out to the residents there each year for potential flooding awareness. Additionally, there is a siren system in the event of a dam break.

- Q: Michael Stanley, North Douglas Neighborhood Association, noted in the chat: “I am advised that a CBJ staff member has acknowledged initiating the inquiry to AELP. Would someone from CBJ confirm if this is correct?”

A: Bridget responded she has no knowledge of someone from CBJ contacting AEL&P and asked if Michael knew who. Michael did not respond.

- Q: Frank Rue, Mendenhall Wetlands Study Group, commented in the chat: “The need for a bench road being evaluated as part of the West Douglas development and a second crossing seems even more important given the Goldbelt development and Mendenhall flooding.”

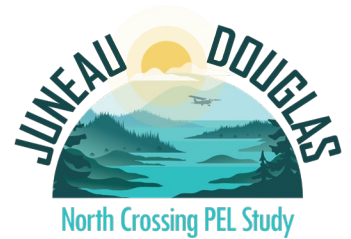
- A: Steve noted the comment and said the study team has heard many comments concerning the bench road. The bench road is being addressed to the extent possible in the PEL study.

- Q: J. Mitchell commented in the chat: “Note there is a number of public notices for growth on N Douglas already”.

- A: Renee thanked J. Mitchell for the comment.

- Q: Margaret Custer asked in the chat: “When were wetland functional assessments conducted, what protocol was used, and when will that report be published?”

A: Theresa answered that she could provide Margaret with all the updates via email or an additional meeting.



- Q: Margaret Custer commented in the chat: “The scenario you discussed in the dam flood would require them to be operating with water levels higher than their license allows. I have reviewed AEL&P’s plan, so this is an informed question”.

A: Steve responded if that is the case, Margaret knows information that the study team does not. The study team will ask AEL&P about that specific information being referenced.

- Q: Dave Hanna commented the dam flooding scenario is not just a question of the earthquake or the water levels, rather there is a big sediment load behind the dam. For example, a big land slide into the lake or something similar could impact the stability of the dam. Dave confirmed notices posted on North Douglas being correct. The CBJ is already asking for a significant amount of acreage on North Douglas to be zoned for a higher density level. A higher level of development on North Douglas needs to be considered. Dave additionally commented the CBJ has already started on a revision to subdivision requirements, and revisions to the comprehensive plan will be starting shortly.

A: Renee thanked Dave for the feedback. She said the study team will continue to factor in the development as we wrap up our evaluation and recommendations in the PEL study. It will be relevant in a future NEPA process as well.

- Q: Margaret Custer noted in the chat: “I would prefer that the entire advisory committee group receive those answers.”

A: Theresa responded that she would discuss this issue with DOT&PF and the study team. She said some questions do not have specific answers yet, so that is why another meeting outside of this one is recommended.

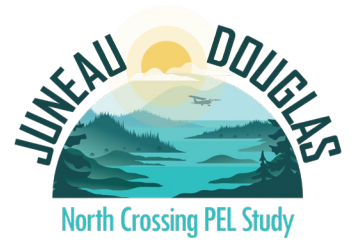
Steve suggested the study team provide a written response to the advisory committee in an email after an answer is received. Theresa agreed with this approach.

- Q: Margaret Custer provided feedback in the chat: “A major piece of feedback in the comments we submitted in April was that DOWL has not answered or responded to most technical advisory committee members’ questions in a group setting, or posted information so that all can review it. Scheduling a 1:1 with me to get into questions that we all need to know answers to is not helpful to this study’s forward progress.”
- A: Renee responded to Margaret the study team is continuing to revise the level 2 screening results, to respond to the comments and questions, and respond to further information. The intention of today’s meeting was to update advisory committee members on the status of the PEL study. Theresa added the study team has a list of all the comments received for the level 2 screening and have responses drafted. But they have been on hold because some responses are pending the resolution of Salmon Creek alternative meeting the purpose and need. Theresa said it is not the case the study team has not responded or considered all the comments. The study team has not shared the responses yet and will.
- Q: Margaret Custer requested in the chat: “The next meeting we have, please send an agenda and materials ahead of time.”

A: Renee thanked Margaret for her feedback.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Steve closed the meeting by reviewing study team contacts, email address, and website, and thanked participants for their involvement in the process. Greg added there are drainage improvements being done around the hospital separate from the PEL study and did not want to confuse people with the earlier answer.



Greg and Renee concluded the meeting. Morgan McCammon, DOWL Public Involvement, commented in the chat the contact information for the study team.

Alex Wertheimer commented in the chat: “Thank you for the update.”

Action Items

Study Team:

- Post meeting materials and meeting recording to the study website.
- Update the Advisory Committees on the wetland functional assessment.

Committee Members:

- Provide additional feedback.
- Participate in the next meeting, tentatively scheduled for December 2024.