

Seward Highway Corridor Study, MP 0-90

Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) Meeting #2 Notes

Focus: Brief review of project, SWG purpose/schedule; share/discuss initial findings; identify next steps

When: August 19, 2020 | 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Invited Participants (alpha by first name; *indicates present on 8/19/20):

First

Name	Last Name	Entity/Community
Brian*	Lindamood	Alaska Railroad Corporation
Bruce*	Jaffa	Moose Pass Advisory Planning Commission
David*	Phillips	Chugach Alaska
David*	Post	Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) – Central Region
Eric*	Miyashiro	DOT&PF – Central Region
Eric*	Taylor	DOT&PF - Headquarters
Griff	Berg	United States Forest Service/Chugach National Forest
Jackie*	Wilde	City of Seward
Stephen*	Sowell	City of Seward
Jerry*	Fox	Girdwood Board of Supervisors
Jim*	Hunt	City of Whittier
Jim*	Skogstad	Hope/Sunrise Advisory Planning Commission
John*	Linnell	DOT&PF – Central Region
Joselyn*	Biloon	DOT&PF – Central Region
Kurt*	Hensel	Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Marcus*	Mueller	Kenai Peninsula Borough
Mike*	Edgington	Girdwood Board of Supervisors
Rob*	Earl	DNR
Scott	Meszaros	City of Seward

Project Consultant Team:

- PDC Engineers: Pat Cotter*, Keith Hanneman*, Alex London*, Heather Estabrook*, Natalie Lyon*
- Agnew::Beck Consulting: Shelly Wade*, Molly Mylius*

Welcome, Land Acknowledgement & Introductions

- Shelly introduced participants, conducted a land acknowledgement and gave a short orientation to the purpose of today's meeting.

Stakeholder Engagement Update

- Plans + Reports Crosswalk: no comments or observations
- Additional Interview Themes Summary: comments and observations
 - Yes, Girdwood stakeholders would like to see phones/call boxes placed in areas without reliable cell reception to aid in emergency response efforts.

Initial Findings – Key Themes & Gaps

- Traffic: comments and observations
 - Slide 40 – The drop in Turnagain Arm traffic in 2018 is surprising. Why the drop? Was this due to construction?
- Safety: comments and observations
 - Slide 47 – It appears there is one section of the corridor with fewer collisions: the area with reduced speed limits around Moose Pass.
 - Slide 48 – There is lower traffic in January, but also many more crashes in January.
 - It would be interesting to see crash severity by month. It seems likely the winter crashes are mostly single vehicle (e.g., people sliding off the road); would be interesting to know if that is true.
- Access: comments and observations
 - Would it be possible to juxtapose crash data with other data such as speed limits, driveways, etc?
 - Yes, that is possible.
 - Stakeholders would like to see the data in more detail. For example, Bruce Jaffa (Moose Pass) would be interested to review the data from milepost 30 to milepost 40, since the initial data does not appear to correlate with his memory of collisions.
 - At times, DOT&PF has made it challenging to get access/driveway permits. In other parts of the state DOT&PF has put in access roads to make private access safer. Due to the narrow right-of-way that is not always possible along this corridor but would be good to create a better solution.
- Additional Topics, Data Sets, Gaps: comments and observations
 - Would like to see data on bike paths.
 - Would like to see traffic camera locations, weigh-in motion sites.
 - Consider reaching out to Arctic Bicycle Club to see if they have additional data and willingness to participate in an interview.
 - The City of Seward does not have pedestrian counts but does have some data for transit and walkable trails; Jackie can provide if desired.
 - Is there data available regarding wildlife collisions?
 - Yes, there is moose collision data, but not shared in the slide set today.
 - Would be interesting to compare moose collision locations with the placement of moose signage.
 - Does the Alaska Department of Fish and Game have additional data regarding human-wildlife conflicts and collisions?

Next Steps and Meeting Date

- Distribute slides and meeting notes.
- Create project website.
- Stakeholder Working Group members are invited to send additional comments or questions based on the slides.
- Agnew::Beck will send out a Doodle poll for an SWG meeting in November.

Closing Comments

- Overall a very good presentation on traffic.
- Some SWG members would like to spend additional time looking at the slides.
- Would be interesting to examine the correlation between speed limits and crashes. The actual speed limit (70-80) is considerably more than the posted speed limit, so that likely factors into crashes. Are there clusters of unsafe speed circumstances on any segments in the corridor?
- In Girdwood, recreation and economic activity are integrally related and connected, not necessarily distinct or in conflict. Recreation and tourism are a big driver of the economy. It will be important to distinguish when we are using the term “economic development” to focus specifically on the movement of goods/cargo, versus broader economic development functions of the corridor.