

# TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 2

## MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 9, 2022, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m., via Teams

### Attendees

- Kelly Summers – DOT&PF Project Manager
- Kevin Jackson – DOT&PF
- David Post – DOT&PF
- Scott Thomas – DOT&PF
- Erich Schaal – City of Wasilla
- Andrew Ooms – Kittelson & Associates
- Renee Whitesell – DOWL
- Jovie Garcia – DOWL
- Kristen Hansen – DOWL
- Adam Bradway – Matanuska-Susitna Borough
- Danielle Dance – DOWL
- Morgan McCammon – DOWL
- Ryane Gray – DOWL
- Talli Vittetoe – DOWL
- Doug Campbell – DOT&PF
- Clint Alder – DOT&PF
- Brad Sworts – Matanuska-Susitna Borough
- Richard Martin – Knik Tribe
- Bob Charles – Knik Tribe
- Claire Dougherty – Kittelson & Associates
- Donna Robinson – DOWL
- Rachel Steer – DOWL
- Emily Anderson – DOWL
- David Gamez – Lounsbury
- Jeremiah Gingrich – Lounsbury
- Kristen Hansen – DOWL
- Shae Talley – DOWL
- Shane McCoy – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

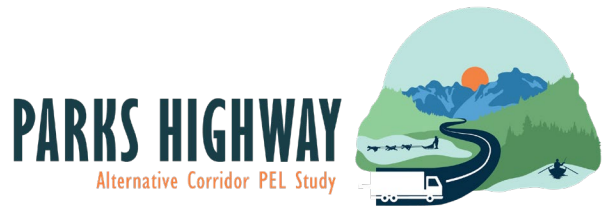
### Summary

Kelly Summers (DOT&PF Project Manager) opened the meeting. Renee Whitesell (DOWL Project Manager) welcomed committee members, introduced the team, and shared an overview of the meeting agenda. Renee opened the presentation with a refresher of the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) process and benefits, an overview of the study area, and the Purpose and Need Statement.

Renee then presented on the Preliminary Alternatives and how major project elements (such as the Open House, Origin-Destination Study, and Alternatives Workshop) guided corridor planning and the preliminary alternatives presented.

**Bob Charles (Knik Tribal Council)** asked about the specifics of the study area and if the team considered alternatives north of the Parks Highway. Renee explained this PEL study is taking a fresh look at the area, although there have been other studies throughout the years. The 2015 Study considered if a viable corridor option existed north of the Parks Highway, but concluded that areas north of the Parks Highway would have significant residential, commercial, and environmental impacts due to dense area development and a chain of lakes. In setting the study area for this PEL study, the





project team reviewed the material and agreed with this conclusion which led to the study area being focused on the area south of the existing Parks Highway.

Dave Gamez (Lounsbury) gave a brief overview of the Alternatives Workshop and how the ideas sketched during the workshop form the basis of the preliminary corridor alternatives presented. The themes emerging from the workshop for routes included using existing infrastructure, using greenfield areas (i.e., undeveloped or underdeveloped areas), or a combination of both approaches. Dave shared the eight preliminary alternative corridors as well as a widen existing Parks Highway alternative and a “no build alternative” that would proceed through the PEL study as a baseline.

Dave shared additional information on why the team started with 300-to-500-foot corridor width. Considering the hierarchy of roads and using existing infrastructure where possible will help provide connections to existing roadways with interchanges. Finalizing these design considerations and elements will help narrow right-of-way (ROW) potential needs as the preliminary alternatives move forward through the screening process and into more detailed alternative development.

**Bob Charles (Knik Tribe)** shared that in his opinion, the alternative with the most public support would involve using greenfield land and have the least impact to existing infrastructure and neighborhoods and he shared a PDF of a possible corridor for consideration. The suggested corridor shares similarities with several of the preliminary alternative alignments.

**Bob Sworts (Matanuska-Susitna Borough)** recommended that any route recommended should extend as far west towards Big Lake Road as possible.

**Adam Bradway (Matanuska-Susitna Borough)** asked if the Seward Meridian Interchange was considered as a starting point. Renee noted that certain identified routes start at Seward Meridian Parkway. Because of development around Seward Meridian Parkway, however, most alternatives start around Hyer Road/Fairview Loop.

Renee and Dave engaged with the freight industry early in the project as the Parks Highway has been identified as a high priority concern for freight delay. The preliminary routes use a design speed of 70 miles per hour (mph) to reflect a controlled access, high mobility corridor that addresses the industry’s needs for moving freight.

Renee asked Dave to discuss how non-motorized users (people walking or bicycling) were considered in design elements. Dave explained that how non-motorized users would travel from one end of the corridor to the other as well as across the corridor are important design features when creating the route concepts. One possibility is a separated pathway with connections across the corridor at interchanges.

**Richard Martin (Knik Tribe)** asked for clarification about the ROW measurements. Renee reiterated that the team is initially considering 300 to 500 feet ROW but as the PEL study moves through the process, the ROW could be narrowed down.



**Erich Schaal (City of Wasilla)** mentioned that Hyer Road is very congested, and the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) may have purchased that ROW for a future project. Renee said that the topic of vacating ROW has not come up yet, but that information is useful when considering if Hyer Road is a feasible terminus for the alternative corridor. Adam Bradway shared in the chat that he believed the railroad is planning on keeping that ROW as a siding.

Brad Sworts requested in the chat that, in setting the western termini for this project, for the team to please consider how it would tie into a future interstate highway project in the Houston area. The Parks Highway Visioning document may provide some insight.

Renee presented on the phased alternatives screening process and how it is designed to identify one or more recommended alternatives. Phase 1 screening criteria will examine qualitative data, such as safety and mobility, while Phase 2 screening criteria focuses on more quantitative data to evaluate impacts. Renee noted that the Alternative Screening Memo would be ready for the Committee to review in the next few weeks.

**Bob Charles** shared that there are unrecorded cultural resource sites throughout the PEL study area. He offered that the Knik Tribe has the capacity and expertise to conduct a cultural resource survey and would coordinate accordingly with Chickaloon Village Tribal Council.

Renee concluded the meeting with final remarks, invited the committee members to attend Open House No. 2 on December 8, 2022, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. at the Wasilla Public Library, and thanked the members for their participation. She reiterated the project contacts, project website, and project email.

## Action Items/Next Steps

Project team:

- Post meeting materials to project website.

Committee members:

- Provide any additional feedback using online survey.
- Participate in the Open House No. 2 on December 8, 2022, and upcoming committee meetings.
- Monitor email for future project updates.

