



# Seward Highway: MP 105-107 Windy Corner

Project No. 56631/NH-0A3-1(34)

## MEETING NOTES

---

**SUBJECT:** Seward Highway: MP 105-107 Windy Corner

**PROJECT NO.:** DOT&PF: 56631/NH-0A3-1(34)

**GROUP:** Public

**DATE:** Thursday, April 24, 2014

**TIME:** 6 pm to 8 pm, presentation at 6:15 pm

**LOCATION:** Girdwood Community Room

**MEETING OUTREACH:** See Table 1. Meeting Outreach

**MEETING ATTENDANCE:** 29 people signed in

**MEETING MATERIALS:** Aerial photo with proposed project overlay, comment sheets, fact sheets, crash statistics posters, cut and fill posters, overall Seward Highway improvement schedule poster, presentation

**STAFF PRESENT:** *DOT&PF:* Tom Schmid, Quinten Arndt  
*DOWL HKM:* Steve Noble, Aaron Christie, Rachel Steer, Kristen Hanson, Bill Evans  
*Brooks & Associates:* Anne Brooks

## MEETING INFORMATION:

---

Attendees were greeted at the door, asked to sign-in, and briefed on the meeting format, location of materials, and availability of project staff to answer their questions. An overview of the current status of the project was given in presentation format. Questions were taken before, during and after the presentation.

The following feedback was submitted on comment sheets. Any emphasis was the commenters own.

Prompt: Does the current design meet your expectations for this important safety project?

- I would encourage the project group to reconsider the bike path inclusion.
- Passing lanes key. Year-round parking/year-round access to trail.
- The Seward Highway along the Turnagain Arm is lacking enough passing lanes. It is a huge safety issue. People passing when they shouldn't and cars not pulling out of the way when they drive too slow cause accidents.
- Nice design to this project = I understand the multiuse "busy" area but a passing lane should be added North of this project! 20 miles of no passing lane is dangerous! I drive this road daily and see people pass in dangerous areas taking chances with their life and mine! Please consider a passing lane closer to Potter Marsh so people may pass safely.

- Thanks so much to the Project Team for your presentation to us in Girdwood on April 24th. I appreciate the opportunity to comment. I commend you for your progress since your presentation last year. Your plan is achieving the primary objective of a safer highway. Incorporating the input from last as to provide recreational access to both the mountain and water sides along with the emergency rescue access is much appreciated.

We all recognize this project will come at a high impact in terms of the high cost, area for the roadway; cutouts to the mountain for fill source rock, and encroachment out into the waterway and to the marine system.

To reduce the extent of these impacts a proposal to the plan is:

- 1) Utilize the existing 2 lane roadway for the northbound roadway. It can provide a thru lane with turn/acceleration lanes for the North bound traffic.
- 2) Keep the railroad where it is now.
- 3) Route the southbound traffic over the railroad to the water side and straighten it to achieve the desired curve radiuses.

All the benefits of access to both sides and parking achieved by the current plan can be provided. Although the existing curve radius will still exist for the Northbound lane it will be as safe or safer than the existing plan with the extra lane and separation from oncoming traffic. And even though it will require crossings on each end over railway for the Southbound roadway this plan could be achieved with much reduced rock fill mining and excavation resulting in 1) reduced impact to the mountainside, 2) reduced impact out into the water, 3) reduced impact to the marine system, and 4) lower overall cost (\$\$\$\$).

**The following comments were submitted within two weeks of the public meeting. Team responses are shown in *italics*.**

---

These comments combine my personal observations as well as being representative of priorities expressed by the Girdwood 2020 Seward/Highway Safety Task Force.

1. Safety is the topmost priority.
2. Within the project, roadway and trail alignments requiring any direct crossing of active traffic lanes defeats the purpose of the project. I thought I saw at least one place where turning vehicular traffic crosses oncoming traffic.
3. Keep access to restrooms open in the winter, as is being done in the Bird Creek parking area.
4. Prohibit access to tidal flats to avoid people being stuck in the mud or stranded by tidal inflows. This access should only be available to emergency vehicles.
5. Provide safe access to Turnagain Arm waters for sport use only in areas where users do not have to cross on the mud flats.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

---

I just learned of the Windy Corner realignment project and meetings in Girdwood. Why is there not a meeting in Anchorage?

---

To whom it may concern:

I am completely opposed to this project.

Here's why.

1. Improved vehicle safety systems, such as (Google "vehicle safety technology"):

- Adaptive cruise control,
- Departure lane warning,
- Blind-spot and collision warning
- Rollover prevention

will, reduce traffic accidents along the entire highway to an extent that will dwarf any effect that physical changes in the roadway over only 2 miles is going to do. Note that only 12% of "Major Injury Crashes" and 11% of fatalities from Girdwood to Potter Marsh occurred in the 2-mile project zone; see Figure 1 from last year's AK DOT presentation. I would also note that the accidents/fatalities at mile 105-17 are not particularly worse than the surrounding 2-mile sections.

Put these undeniable technology improvements that are probably going to fix most of the problem together with the fact that the project fixes 2 miles that is responsible for only 12% of the problem at a cost of about \$70 million, and the project makes absolutely no sense. You can save a lot more lives with \$70 million directed somewhere else.

2. I see from a source on the web (DOWL HKM) that the proposed construction project intends to use material from the sites shown in Figure 2 below. Figure 3 shows what one of these sites looks like (Bird Creek parking area) after the materials have been removed. In my opinion it is as about as ugly as you can get. The highway is currently a National Forest Scenic Byway, an Alaska Scenic Byway and All-American Road.

I don't want Turnagain Arm scarred in this way for no good reason.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

---

I was unable to attend the Open House last night in Girdwood and I am interested in the Windy corner upgrade project. I tried the website [www.dowlhkm.com/projects/windycorner](http://www.dowlhkm.com/projects/windycorner) and it will not give me access to the page.

Could you please send me the correct link to the project or fix the link. Thanks. *Sorry about that!*

*Please try this shortened link: [www.windycorner.info](http://www.windycorner.info). Let me know if you have any problems.*

---

The Seward Highway Safety Task Force is having our annual meeting in Girdwood the day before the Windy Corner meeting.

If you haven't already received an e-mail - the meeting starts at 10 AM on the 23rd in the Community Center. Hope to see you there. *Thanks for the heads up Hank. I'll be there.*

---

We've decided to postpone the Highway Safety meeting scheduled for the 23rd. I'll look for at your meeting on the 24th. *Thanks for letting me know. We hope to see committee members at the meeting Thursday and get your thoughts on the current design of the Seward Highway between milepost 105 and 107.*

---

The one addition that I have is to encourage the use of the mile 104 as a borrow site (it's in the plan) to enhance the sightline safety of that corner as a result of this project. And to take advantage of that work to improve the dangerous condition at Mile 104 at the same time.

---

I just learned of the Windy Corner realignment project and meetings in Girdwood. Why is there not a meeting in Anchorage?

---

Preserve the current wildlife habitat as it is, add parking on the west side, along with spotting scopes and 45 mph speed limit section through this area.

---

**Comment Sheet Survey.** The comment sheet asked commenters to rank amenities. The comment sheet prompt stated: “The design identifies amenities for viewing wildlife, access to trails, parking and interpretive kiosks, etc. Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) may not obtain sufficient funds to operate and maintain all these features. Please rank these features in order of importance to you.” The following is a compilation of the responses.

Feature	Most Important 1	Somewhat Important 2	Neutral 3	Less Important 4	Least Important 5
Bicycle Racks		✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	
Emergency/Search and Rescue Water Access	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	
Interpretive Displays		✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓
Kiosks		✓✓	✓✓	✓	
Non-motorized Public Access to Turnagain Arm	✓✓✓ Prohibit except for sport use	✓	✓		
Parking	✓✓✓✓	✓✓			
Parking for oversize vehicles	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	
Restrooms	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓	
Separated multi-use pathway	✓	✓✓✓✓		✓	
Spotting Scopes		✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓
Trailhead access to Turnagain Arm Trail	✓✓	✓✓✓		✓	
Trash Cans	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓		
Other (add your own):	✓(Passing lanes)				

**Table 1. Meeting Outreach**

Date	Outreach method	Description
4/09/14	Meeting notification on project website	Meeting notice on home page <a href="http://www.dowlhkm.com/projects/windycorner/index.html">http://www.dowlhkm.com/projects/windycorner/index.html</a>
4/16/14	Display advertising in <i>Anchorage Daily News</i>	Inviting the public to the open house
4/13/14	Display advertising in <i>Peninsula Clarion</i>	Inviting the public to the open house
4/17/14	Display advertising in <i>Turnagain Times</i>	Inviting the public to the open house
4/16/14	Public service announcement request sent to: KBBO-FM, KNBA-FM, KWHL-FM, KEUL-FM, GCI Cable	Sent with request to broadcast announcement inviting public to meeting
4/14/14	Postcard	Approximately 1,470 postcard invitations mailed to local businesses, residents, and agencies
4/10/14	State of Alaska Online Notice	Inviting the public to the open house
4/10/14	DOT&PF online calendar	Meeting listed on the DOT&PF online public meeting calendar <a href="http://dot.alaska.gov/creg/calendar.shtml">http://dot.alaska.gov/creg/calendar.shtml</a>
4/10/14 and 4/23/14	Constant Contact email and reminder	Provide email invitation to the meeting to project stakeholders
4/10/14	Facebook Update	Post about the meeting on the project Facebook page <a href="https://www.facebook.com/pages/Seward-Highway-MP-105-107-Windy-Corner-Project/450234331728338">https://www.facebook.com/pages/Seward-Highway-MP-105-107-Windy-Corner-Project/450234331728338</a>
4/15/14	Facebook ad campaign	Sponsored Facebook posts to invite people to the meeting and drive up likes for the project Facebook page
4/20/14	Federation of Community Councils notification	The Federation of Community Councils sent a meeting notification to their subscriber list

**Related documents on file:**

Sign-in Sheets  
 Handouts (Comment Sheet, Fact Sheet)  
 Comment Sheets received at meeting  
 Postcard Mailer  
 Public Service Announcements and Advertising Presentation