

Foothills West Transportation Access Meeting Summary

Public Meeting in Anaktuvuk Pass 6/23/2009

DOT&PF conducted a public meeting in Anaktuvuk Pass for the Foothills project on June 23rd, 2009 at 7:00pm. DOT&PF personnel introduced themselves and discussed project information contacts. A presentation was then given about the proposed project that described the proposed study activities and scheduled fieldwork. An emphasis was made that we are early in the preliminary design process and have not started the NEPA process. The project study area was described, and maps were presented showing current study areas and data collected to date. Questions and comments were solicited after the presentation. A translator was utilized for communicating the project to the Elders at the meeting. Approximately 20 residents were in attendance.

The following State of Alaska personnel and its contractors were in attendance:

Ryan Anderson, DOT&PF	Paul Karczmarczyk, DOT&PF
Casey Adamson, DOT&PF	Steve Reidsma, 3PPI, Inc.
Liz Sears, Stephen Braun and Assoc.	Dave McMahan, DNR SHPO

Community Comments (Direct Comments Recorded)

1. The decision about the road will be made by the State of Alaska, and we (Anaktuvuk Pass residents) will not have an impact on whether the road is built.
2. The State of Alaska should inform the community whenever decisions about the road are being made.
3. Residents are concerned about the prospect of an all-season road, rather than an ice road.
4. The State of Alaska should involve the community in fieldwork and research; hire local community members to inform researchers about the area, including important drainages, caribou migration routes, bear dens, fish runs, etc. Many local residents are very knowledgeable about these things.
5. Residents are concerned about dust caused by a gravel road, and contamination caused by the chemicals used to spray the gravel roads.
6. Where will the State of Alaska get the gravel to build the road? If you mine gravel from the area, what will you do with the permafrost? Will you fill the area back in, or hollow it out? The habitat on the North Slope is very delicate.
7. The road and bridges could disrupt the caribou as they migrate south toward Anaktuvuk Pass. The caribou migrate south (toward Anaktuvuk Pass) in the fall. Caribou (including the Central Herd) migrate through the Colville River and could be disrupted.

8. Residents are aware of the potential benefits of the project, but there also could be impacts on the caribou migration. Residents rely heavily on caribou for food, and cannot always afford food from the store.
9. Burial sites should be avoided; do not let archaeologists disturb or dig up the bodies.
10. The State of Alaska should fly some residents along the proposed corridor before construction and research begins.
11. If the caribou stop migrating through the Anaktuvuk Pass area because of the road, will the community receive impact funds for losing their main source of food?
12. The proposed road corridor was an important fishing, and trapping, and caribou hunting area for our ancestors.
13. If the road is built, will local residents have access to it?
14. Oil companies are often wrong in predicting how development activities will affect wildlife.
15. If the state builds bridges across major rivers, the community may look into legal action to stop the road.
16. The community should get a portion of the revenues the State of Alaska receives for leasing the land.
17. The caribou migration comes from the north to the south toward Anaktuvuk, and the fish also migrate up the rivers; the bridge could jam up the rivers and disrupt migratory routes for both the caribou and the fish. A lack of caribou would be a major hardship for the community.
18. The road is only being built for the oil companies. What is the benefit for Anaktuvuk Pass?
19. If the State of Alaska is going to build a road to Umiat for industry, then the community should benefit by getting natural gas, similar to Nuiqsut.
20. The State of Alaska should not take all of the oil and gas out of the area without providing benefits, such as natural gas and lower prices on goods, to Anaktuvuk Pass. Anaktuvuk Pass is closer to oil and gas development than many other communities, but gasoline here costs over \$8.00 per gallon. The cost of living in Anaktuvuk is very high.
21. Will ASRC benefit from the road?
22. If the community were to get a natural gas line, where would the gas line originate from, and would it be accompanied by an ice road?
23. It took Nuiqsut nine years to natural gas in each household. Would it take that long for Anaktuvuk Pass to get natural gas?
24. Perhaps the IRA could get funding to start a road (and pipeline) from Umiat to Anaktuvuk Pass.
25. If the community has no choice about the road, the State of Alaska should also conduct a feasibility study on an ice road and gas line to Anaktuvuk. Otherwise, residents do not see a benefit to the community.
26. There are families that have Native Allotments in the area of the road corridor; the State of Alaska should avoid these allotments.

27. The Dalton Highway (Haul Road) has been in poor condition since maintenance responsibilities were turned over to the State of Alaska. The state should fix the Haul Road before they plan a road to anywhere else.
28. If the road goes through, the area will be another Prudhoe Bay, another Deadhorse. The community does not want a “Prudhoe Bay” so close by.
29. The road will open up the whole area. How will the State of Alaska guarantee that there won’t be any sport hunting camps along the road, like there are along the Dalton Highway? Local residents already have problems with sport hunters.
30. Before the state begins planning this road, it should be brought before the Borough assembly, and then put up to the voters to choose whether or not they want the road.
31. Perhaps the State of Alaska, as part of the funding for the road, could fund energy efficient housing in rural villages.
32. There are so many entities involved with this project. Who should the community contact to ensure that the community benefits from the oil and gas activities and the road?
33. Has the State of Alaska thought about building this road in a manner similar to the Red Dog Road, where the state finances the industry, and the industry controls the road?
34. The road crosses state, federal, and corporate lands. Who will be liable if there is damage to the environment – for example, a tundra fire – from the road or related oil and gas development? The tundra fire affected the caribou migration and impacted residents’ subsistence. The caribou stayed on the other [north] side of the burn.

DOT&PF closed the meeting, and offered to come back again in October to describe the progress of the project, and provide another chance for community members to office comments and ask questions. In the meantime, DOT&PF will provide updates in the form of newsletters and on the project website.