

**Juneau
Second Channel
Crossing**

PRELIMINARY SCOPING REPORT

NOVEMBER 2004

PROJECT NUMBER 68540/HP-0954 (18)



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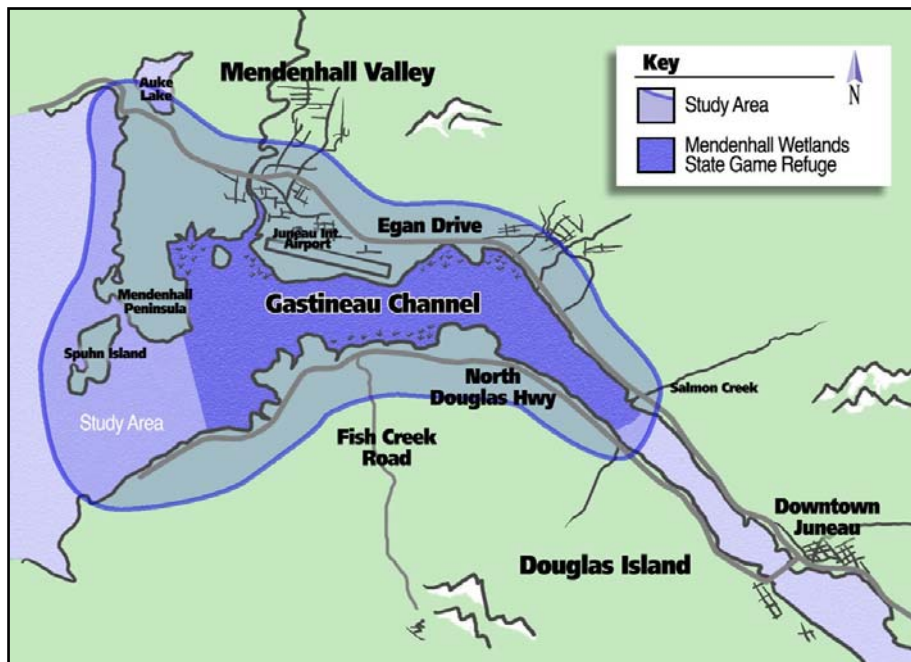
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) has partnered with the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to determine the location and conceptual design of a proposed second Gastineau Channel crossing connecting mainland Juneau with Douglas Island for motor vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

The core project study area encompasses an approximate 9-mile segment of the Gastineau Channel extending from the vicinity of Salmon Creek to the vicinity of the Mendenhall Peninsula/North Douglas Island.

Project Study Area



The purpose of the Juneau Second Channel Crossing project is to improve access between the Mendenhall Valley on mainland Juneau and North Douglas Island with a transportation facility for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists that is cost reasonable¹ and efficiently meets the existing and future transportation needs of the Juneau community.

¹ DOT&PF systematically evaluates and prioritizes all projects state-wide to determine whether the cost is reasonable, given the transportation parameters involved, needs served, economic and safety benefits, funding source(s), and projected financial capability to provide the funds. Cost is defined as total project cost, or life-cycle cost, and includes initial construction cost, along with long-term operation and maintenance costs.

Primary needs identified for the project include:

- Improved Access and Travel Efficiency
 - Improve network connectivity for shorter travel times, recreational access, and non-motorized trips
- Redundant Access for Public Safety and Emergency Response
 - Improve access for public safety and emergency response
- Planned Growth Areas
 - Locate the Second Channel Crossing to efficiently serve the CBJ planned “New Growth Areas” on Douglas Island

The current purpose and need statement is a result of a preliminary scoping process conducted for the Juneau Second Channel Crossing EIS project. The November 4th and 5th, 2003 scoping meetings presented draft concepts regarding project needs to include redundant access relating to safety improvements and implementation of the project to meet the planned CBJ economic development objectives related to the New Growth Areas on North and West Douglas. The purpose and need statement now includes refinements and language clarification to those project needs as a result of public and agency comments gathered during and after the scoping meetings. For example, based on numerous public comments, the purpose and need statement now places added emphasis on improving access to North Douglas Island recreational resources.

The economic development of Douglas Island deserves special mention. Although the CBJ has an ultimate economic goal to develop North and West Douglas Island, the Juneau Second Channel Crossing EIS project is only concerned with locating the project to efficiently serve this future planned growth area, should it actually occur. Because FHWA and DOT&PF have a primary transportation mission, refinements to the purpose and need statement were incorporated to clarify the transportation purpose of the project. The project will not actually implement the development of Douglas Island. The Juneau Second Channel Crossing EIS project has “independent utility” as a transportation improvement with multiple need objectives. Although the development on North and West Douglas Island will need to be addressed in the EIS as indirect/secondary impacts resulting from the project, it is not a direct impact related to the comprehensive transportation improvement objectives of the project. The purpose and need statement is now further clarified to state this distinction

1.2 SCOPING PURPOSE & GOALS

Scoping is the first stage in the development of a comprehensive environmental document that meets the statutory requirements for the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The federal Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulates the NEPA process. The outcome of the scoping phase will help to determine a range of reasonable alternatives that will be examined in the Environmental Impact Statement. In accordance with 40CFR1508.25, CEQ requires that agencies and the public be provided the opportunity to review and comment on the issues, the alternatives, and the impacts of a project.

The purpose of this “Preliminary Scoping Report” is to capture the results of the public and agency outreach activities conducted for the Juneau Second Channel Crossing from June 2003 through December 2003. The development of the full range of alternatives was not scoped during this period, but will be conducted during the next project phase. Similarly, impacts were not fully discussed because there were no alternatives to evaluate. A future document will place the study area in an environmental context to begin the alternatives scoping process.

The purpose of scoping is to:

- Invite the participation of local, state and federal agencies as well as the public;
- Provide an opportunity for agencies and the public to discuss the project with DOT&PF, CBJ, and project staff;
- Provide forums and other opportunities to gather input, ideas, questions, and concerns;
- Ensure early data gathering from coordinating agencies and entities;
- Define the “scope” of study required for the NEPA process;
- Determine cooperating agencies and their roles;
- Focus preliminary engineering efforts; and
- Refine the Purpose & Need statement.

The goals for the Juneau Second Channel Crossing scoping process include:

- Inform area residents, businesses, the media, and interest groups of the EIS process;
- Develop an interested parties’ mailing list to be used and updated throughout the process;
- Provide forums and other opportunities to gather input and ideas; and
- Provide opportunities for local, state, and federal agencies, and the public to be involved.

This document is the public record of the scoping activities undertaken for the Juneau Second Channel Crossing project. Appendix A contains the project’s scoping outreach materials, Appendix B contains the stakeholder interview summary, Appendix C contains the public and agency scoping meeting summaries, and Appendix D contains the public and agency correspondence received.

1.3 SCOPING OVERVIEW

A Public Involvement Plan was implemented during the scoping phase of the Juneau Second Channel Crossing project to engage stakeholders in the study process. The Plan included: stakeholder interviews, media releases, newspaper advertising, a website, online survey, newsletter, newspaper insert, project video, and public meetings. These activities resulted in 202 individuals, organizations, and agencies providing comment via comment forms, letters, emails, and completed online surveys.

Although the comments reflected a wide variety of opinions about the proposed project, the following issues/concerns were most frequently cited:

- Purpose and Need
 - Need for redundant access
 - Safety/Emergency response
-

- Environment / Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge
- Economic development
- Recreation

1.3.1 Purpose and Need

A majority of people commenting expressed the opinion that a second crossing is strongly needed and long overdue. “Build it now!” was frequently stated.

Those with concerns about the purpose and need focused on the following issues:

- Funding - value of a second crossing compared to other local funding priorities.
- Land Use - the Second Crossing’s role in the development of West Douglas Island and generating sprawl.
- Equity –Goldbelt benefiting at the perceived expense of the community.
- Growth assumptions - questions about projected population growth and transportation demand.
- Environmental cost – tradeoff of having a new bridge not worth impacts to the wetlands/environment.

1.3.2 Improved Access

The need for additional transportation access to Douglas Island was of primary interest to those favoring a second crossing. Many people described a second crossing as a “missing link” in the area’s transportation network. Deficiencies of the existing Douglas Bridge and travel time from North Douglas and the New Growth Area on West Douglas Island to the Mendenhall Valley were also frequently cited as underscoring the need for additional access.

Those opposed to the second channel crossing felt that the existing bridge was sufficient for the current population, and that improvements to the existing bridge would satisfy future growth needs.

1.3.3 Safety/Emergency Response

This issue was another significant factor for people supporting a second crossing. Current travel time from Douglas Island to Bartlett Hospital was often mentioned as a concern. The lack of an alternate route for police/fire/rescue was mentioned as a safety issue for the entire community, particularly in the event of a natural or human disaster affecting the existing bridge.

There were a few comments from people who felt that ferries and helicopter service could take care of Douglas Island residents in the event a disaster took out the existing bridge. Other people suggested that it would be more cost effective to construct additional police/fire/medical facilities on Douglas Island than building an additional crossing.

1.3.4 Environment/Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge

Those supporting the second channel crossing tended to believe that impacts to the wetlands/refuge were worth the tradeoff of having a new bridge. There were several comments about minimizing wetland impacts to the extent possible. Others in favor of a second crossing suggested that it be placed closer to the existing bridge in order to avoid the wetlands. Many people felt that a new bridge would also provide additional opportunities to access the refuge.

Impact to the environment and refuge was most often mentioned as a chief concern by opponents to the second crossing. Concerns were focused on degradation to water quality, wildlife habitat, and wildlife populations. Comments were received that described the refuge as a sanctuary that should be off-limits to development under any scenario.

1.3.5 Economic Development

Many people expressed a desire for continued economic growth in the community and felt that a second crossing would facilitate the development of West Douglas. Supporters view the New Growth Area on West Douglas as a logical place to expand by building a bridge and opening up a new area of the CBJ for development.

Those opposed to a second crossing also tended to be against any development of West Douglas. They view this as a land use issue and would prefer that the CBJ grow through infill development before expanding to new areas. Several comments expressed the desire that the second crossing EIS also include development impacts on West Douglas since the new bridge and development of the New Growth Area are inter-related. These people tend to view the second channel crossing in a larger context about the future growth of the community and what that means for land use and livability.

1.3.6 Recreation

A second crossing was mentioned by some as an opportunity to provide better access to Eaglecrest Ski resort and the planned golf course on West Douglas Island. Some also saw a potential to increase recreational access to the wildlife refuge. Others saw a chance to create viewing opportunities of the Gastineau Channel and refuge.

There were a few comments from people concerned that the second crossing would impede hunting on the refuge. Some North Douglas residents were concerned about the additional traffic from people driving to Eaglecrest or the new golf course.

2. SCOPING ACTIVITIES

2.1 TASKS OVERVIEW

The public outreach approach for the Juneau Second Channel Crossing project included the following tasks conducted during the scoping phase:

- Task 1. Develop a Public Involvement Plan/Approach and budget.
- Task 2. Develop a Key Messages document.
- Task 3. Schedule, conduct and document Tier I interviews (CBJ staff).
- Task 4. Schedule, conduct and document Tier II interviews (key stakeholder groups).
- Task 5. Conduct editorial briefing (press release #1).
- Task 6. Develop and maintain an interested parties' mailing list.
- Task 7. Develop distribution methods for public information materials.
- Task 8. Coordinate development of a project website.
- Task 9. Coordinate development and distribution of a project video.
- Task 10. Coordinate, develop materials for, conduct and document Project Development Committee meeting #1.
- Task 11. Publish Federal Register Notice.
- Task 12. Develop and distribute press release #2.
- Task 13. Develop a public scoping Meeting Plan.
- Task 14. Develop and distribute newsletter #1.
- Task 15. Develop and distribute display ad #1.
- Task 16. Coordinate, develop materials for, conduct and document Oversight Panel meeting #1.
- Task 17. Develop, post, and document online survey.
- Task 18. Distribute newsletter #1 as a newspaper insert.
- Task 19. Coordinate, develop materials for, conduct and document agency scoping meeting #1.
- Task 20. Coordinate, develop materials for, conduct and document public scoping meetings #1 (daytime and evening).
- Task 21. Develop and distribute press release #3.
- Task 22. Develop, conduct, and document a Waterway User survey.
- Task 23. Develop, conduct, and document a Household survey.
- Task 24. Coordinate and document communication with interested parties, agencies and neighborhood groups and businesses.
- Task 25. Develop, distribute, and document agency scoping letter and attachments.
- Task 26. Prepare scoping summary report.

2.2 TASKS DETAIL

2.2.1 Task 1. Develop a Public Involvement Plan/Approach and Budget

The goals of the Public Involvement Plan/Approach for the Juneau Second Channel Crossing EIS include:

- Offer a variety of meaningful participation opportunities for agencies, interest group representatives, and area residents in the EIS process;
 - Provide consistent, accurate, and timely information using a variety of media to convey the process steps, issues, opportunities, and constraints;
 - Engage partner and cooperating agencies at appropriate points in the process;
 - Work closely with technical experts to understand and convey technical information as it is developed; and
 - Document public and agency issues, questions, ideas, and concerns.
-

Task headings in the Public Involvement Plan include: Public Information; Stakeholder Interviews; Project Development Committee; Oversight Panel; Agency Scoping Meeting; Public Scoping Meetings; and Scoping Summary Report. A full copy of the Public Involvement Plan can be found in Appendix A.

2.2.2 Task 2. Develop a Key Messages Document

Project key messages were developed to ensure a consistent base of information to share with the public as well as provide a basis for the website home page, newsletter, and initial communications with stakeholders. Key messages included: Project Background, Overview, Frequently Asked Questions, and Information Contacts. A copy of the Key Messages document is included in Appendix B.

2.2.3 Task 3. Schedule, conduct and document Tier I interviews (CBJ staff and Juneau Empire)

Seven representatives from both the City and Borough of Juneau and the Juneau Empire newspaper were interviewed between August 6, 2003 and August 8, 2003. The interviews provided an opportunity for key CBJ staff, the Mayor and the media to: find out about the project in an informal setting; offer input into the public process design; identify issues to address and others to involve; and inform the project team about how they would like to be involved in the project as it develops. A copy of the Tier I interview summary is included in Appendix B.

2.2.4 Task 4. Schedule, Conduct and Document Tier II Interviews (key stakeholder groups)

Thirty-seven people representing a range of local and regional interest groups, neighborhood associations, civic organizations, and community facilities were interviewed in fifteen separate meetings between September 9, 2003 and September 16, 2003. In addition, a presentation and discussion was held with the North Douglas Island Neighborhood Association at their regularly scheduled meeting on September 16 and was attended by over 25 people. The information obtained from that meeting is included in the Tier II summary. The meetings provided an opportunity for community leaders and residents to: find out about the project in an informal setting; offer input into the public process design; identify issues to address and others to involve; and inform the project team about how they would like to be involved in the project as it develops. A copy of the Tier II interview summary is included in Appendix B.

2.2.5 Task 5. Conduct Editorial Briefing (Press Release #1)

An editorial briefing was held with Masha Herbst, state reporter for the *Juneau Empire*, on August 7, 2003. The meeting was attended by Jamie Damon of JLA and Sam Kito of the CBJ. The purpose of the meeting was to establish a relationship with the newspaper, explain the project, and review the key messages. A newspaper article resulted from this

meeting, which constituted the first “press release” for the project (August 10, 2003). A copy of this newspaper article can be found in Appendix A.

2.2.6 Task 6. Develop and Maintain an Interested Parties’ Mailing List

Mailing addresses and emails of everyone who was interviewed, attended an open house, or provided a comment were collected for an interested parties’ mailing list. The interested parties’ mailing list will be used for future newsletter distribution and to announce upcoming public meetings.

2.2.7 Task 7. Develop distribution methods for public information materials

Due to the broad nature of the study area and the community-wide interest in this project, the distribution of newsletter #1 was conducted using carrier route mailings through the U.S. Post Office as well as inserts in the *Juneau Empire*. A saturation mailing to the City and Borough of Juneau reached 16,400 households and the Sunday *Empire* has a circulation of 8,000 copies. Copies of the newsletter were distributed at the public and agency scoping meetings and made available on line. Information materials for the Agency Scoping Meeting were distributed using the DOT&PF agency mailing list. Stakeholder interview summaries were distributed using the interested parties email list created from the interviews.

2.2.8 Task 8. Coordinate development of a project website

A project website www.seconddcrossing.alaska.gov was developed to post public information materials, meeting summaries, maps, technical documents, and an online survey. Copies of the website pages are included in Appendix A.

2.2.9 Task 9. Coordinate development and distribution of a project video

A 10-minute project video was developed with Metcalfe Communications and KTOO to visually document the project study area and community, as well as describe the project’s purpose and need, issues, and constraints. The video was used as a convening tool during the scoping meetings and it was also made available for public checkout through the Juneau Public Library branches. A copy of the video script can be found in Appendix A.

2.2.10 Task 10. Coordinate, develop materials for, conduct, and document Project Development Committee meeting #1

The PDC is considered to be a staff working group and is made up of lead DOT&PF, CBJ and consultant team staff. The PDC serves the role of providing technical direction at key points in the process (ex. refining Purpose & Need, developing alternatives, evaluating alternatives). The first meeting of the PDC was held on October 8, 2003 from 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm in Juneau at the DOT&PF 7-Mile Facility conference room. A copy of the PDC meeting summary can be found in Appendix A.

2.2.11 Task 11. Publish Federal Register Notice

A Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register, Volume 68, No. 203 on Tuesday, October 21, 2003. A copy of the notice can be found in Appendix A.

2.2.12 Task 12. Develop and distribute press release #2

Press release #2 was distributed to local media outlets on October 31, 2003 to remind the local area of the public scoping meetings on November 5. A copy of the press release can be found in Appendix A.

2.2.13 Task 13. Develop a public scoping Meeting Plan

A Meeting Plan for the public open houses was prepared for internal use by the project team. The Plan described the meeting purpose and format, and contained a matrix that highlighted station topics, materials and displays needed, and who was responsible for bringing various items. A copy of the Meeting Plan can be found in Appendix A.

2.2.14 Task 14. Develop and distribute newsletter #1

The first newsletter described the project background, purpose, study area, and schedule. It invited readers to the first public scoping meetings, and included contact information as well as a comment form. Newsletter #1 was distributed via the Mendenhall Post Office in a community-wide mailing on October 24, 2003 using the distribution methods outlined above. A copy of Newsletter #1 is included in Appendix A.

2.2.15 Task 15. Develop and distribute display ad # 1

A ¼-page display advertisement for the November 5, 2003 open houses was placed in the *Juneau Empire* on Thursday, October 30, 2003 (high circulation day due to coupon inserts) and Wednesday, November 5, 2003 (the day of the meetings). The same ad was placed in the *Capital City Weekly* on November 5, 2003. The *Capital City Weekly* has a circulation of 5,000. Copies of the display ad from both publications are included in Appendix A.

2.2.16 Task 16. Coordinate, develop materials for, conduct, and document Oversight Panel meeting #1

The Oversight Panel consists of the Chairs and Directors of the CBJ partners and DOT&PF and provides policy level direction as appropriate at project milestones. The first meeting of the OP was held on October 28, 2003 from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm in Juneau at the DOT&PF 7-Mile Facility conference room. A copy of the OP meeting summary can be found in Appendix A.

2.2.17 Task 17. Develop, post, and document online survey

A public preference survey was developed and posted to the project website from October 3, 2003 to December 5, 2003. The survey was very similar to the comment form distributed in the community mailing and through the *Juneau Empire*. One-hundred twelve (112) people entered information in the online survey. A copy of the survey and a summary of the survey results can be found in Appendix D.

2.2.18 Task 18. Distribute newsletter #1 as a newspaper insert

The newsletter that was distributed in the community-wide mailing on October 24, 2003 was also included in the Sunday, November 2, 2003 issue of the *Juneau Empire* (circulation 8,000).

2.2.19 Task 19. Coordinate, develop materials for, conduct, and document agency scoping meeting #1

The first agency scoping meeting was held on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 from 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm, at the Juneau International Airport Aurora conference room. Agency representatives and project team members viewed displays from 1:30 – 1:45 pm. Discussions began at 1:45 pm. The agenda included discussions about project background, Purpose & Need, and environmental data collection. Twenty-eight (28) people participated in the meeting.

A complete summary of the meeting including sign in sheets and meeting displays is included in Appendix C.

2.2.20 Task 20. Coordinate, develop materials for, conduct, and document public scoping meetings #1 (daytime and evening)

Two public scoping meetings were held on Wednesday, November 5, 2003. Both meetings had an open house format with a presentation and Q&A repeated at several points in the meeting. The first meeting was held from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Baranof Hotel in downtown Juneau. Fifty-two people signed in as attending the meeting. The second meeting was held from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Mendenhall Mall. Seventy-seven people signed in as attending this meeting. The purpose of the meetings was to provide participants with an overview of the project and to hear their input regarding issues that should be addressed and potential ideas for the channel crossing. The open houses included a PowerPoint presentation that ran continuously through the meeting.

A complete summary of the meetings, sign in sheets, comment forms, meeting graphics and PowerPoint slides is included in Appendix C.

2.2.21 Task 21. Develop and distribute press release #3

Press release #3 was distributed to local media outlets on November 18, 2003 to publicize the deadline to receive public scoping comments. A copy of the press release can be found in Appendix A.

2.2.22 Task 22. Develop, conduct, and document a Waterway User survey

The McDowell Group of Juneau conducted a survey of waterway users in the fall of 2003. Three telephone surveys were conducted to stall renters (202), commercial gillnetters (38), and commercial trollers (26) to determine waterway user's frequency of travel through the Mendenhall Bar, as well as their preferences for access and vessel specifications. Key findings revealed that 2/3 of all respondents report transiting the Mendenhall Bar at least once in the past 12 months, and that waterway users report an average number of between 3 and 4 trips across the Mendenhall Bar in the last year. A complete copy of the Waterway User survey results can be found in Appendix B.

2.2.23 Task 23. Develop, conduct, and document a Household survey

The McDowell Group also conducted a telephone survey of randomly selected Juneau households. The survey measured support for or opposition to a Second Channel Crossing, reasons for that support/opposition, preferred crossing location, concerns regarding impacts of a second crossing, and other issues. Key findings revealed that 2/3 of Juneau residents support building a second Gastineau Channel crossing, with 35% saying they "strongly support" and 28% saying they "support" the concept. 16% of local residents are opposed to building another bridge and 22% are neutral. A complete copy of the Household survey results can be found in Appendix B.

2.2.24 Task 24. Coordinate and document communication with interested parties, agencies, neighborhood groups, and businesses.

The majority of communication received from interested parties came from the stakeholder interviews, comment forms completed at the scoping meetings, and through the online survey. However, several comments, agency letters and inquiries were received by phone, email, and mail and are included in Appendix D.

2.2.25 Task 25. Develop, distribute and document agency scoping letter and attachments.

A formal Agency Scoping Letter packet was distributed to agencies requesting written comments in November 2003. The scoping letter and letters received are included in Appendix D.

2.2.26 Task 26. Prepare scoping summary report

This scoping summary report is the official record of public involvement for the Juneau Second Channel Crossing scoping phase.

3. SCOPING MEETINGS

Two variations of scoping sessions were conducted for the Juneau Second Channel Crossing project: Stakeholder interviews and scoping meetings (public and agency). Stakeholder interviews provided an early, informal opportunity to meet with community and agency representatives to assess their expectations for involvement and to begin identifying specific issues and concerns regarding the project.

3.1 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS (TIER I AND TIER II)

Stakeholder interviews were divided into two tiers: Tier I kicked off the interview process and consisted of key CBJ staff (including the mayor) and the major newspaper (*Juneau Empire*); Tier II consisted of key stakeholder groups, community organizations, and individuals. Tier I included the following eight people who were interviewed between August 6, 2003 and August 8, 2003:

Organization/Agency & Title	Name
CBJ Mayor	Sally Smith
CBJ City Manager	Rod Swope
CBJ Community Development Director	Dale Pernula
CBJ Transportation Planner	Sam Kito
CBJ Transit Manager	John Kern
CBJ Public Works Director	Joe Buck
CBJ Engineering Director	Roger Healy
Juneau Empire Newspaper, State Reporter	Marsha Herbst

Eight questions were asked and while responses to the questions varied according to the individual, some common themes did emerge from those interviewed:

- Perception that there is broad community support for a second channel crossing.
- Public safety and economic development were cited as the primary reasons for the crossing.
- All expressed support for the partnership approach to the project with the CBJ and DOT&PF.
- Wetlands impacts and funding were cited as the top two constraints for the project.

The Tier II list was developed from conversations with DOT&PF, HDR Alaska, Inc., and information gleaned from the Tier I interviews. The following 38 people participated in one of 16 interviews conducted between September 19, 2003 and September 16, 2003 (this number does not include the 25+ members of the North Douglas Island Neighborhood Association):

Organization/Entity	Name/Title
Goldbelt	Chair, Carl Nelson; Board member, Randy Wanamaker Planner, David Goade
Douglas Island Indian Association	Norman Sarabia, Chair; Evelyn Meyers

Organization/Entity	Name/Title
Juneau Convention and Visitors Bureau	Lorene Palmer, CEO

Sierra Club Juneau Group	Local Chapter Director, Mark Rorick; Richard Hellard; Michael Sakarias (also on N. Douglas N.A.); Anne Fuller (also on N. Douglas N.A.) Mark Rorick, Local chapter director (also member of Refuge Advisory Group)
Eagle Crest Ski Resort & Friends of Eagle Crest	President of Board, Gary Hogins; Manager, Paul Swanson Friends of Eagle Crest – Debbie Hart
Emergency Services	Mike Doyle, Fire Chief; Richard Gummow, Police Chief
South Project Neighborhoods: Sunny Point (Downtown, Telephone Hill, Mountainside Estates were invited but did not attend.)	Stephen Sorenson, James King, Frank Rue, Deedie Sorenson, Mary Lou King, Jim King, Don Abel, Billie Jo Secrist
Juneau Chamber Of Commerce	Chris Wyatt Deputy Dir.; Jim Scholz, Chair
Planner/Consultant	Murray Walsh, Chair Elect of Southeast Conference, Transportation Chair for Chamber of Commerce.
Former Chair Mendenhall Wetlands Refuge Advisory Board	Joseph W. Geldhof, Attorney
Audubon Society	Brenda Wright, Local President; Steven Zimmerman Laurie Ferguson Craig
North Douglas Island Neighborhood Association	Ellen Ferguson and 25+ participants
Juneau School District & A.B.G. Bus Lines	Superintendent Peggy Cowan, ABG Mgr. Stan Cass, Zach Hanna, Transportation
Juneau Economic Dev. Council	Lance Miller, Exec. Director
North project area neighborhood associations: Riverwood Homeowners Association. (Montana Creek & W. Mendenhall Valley were invited but did not attend.)	Marilyn Clark, Chair
Totem Creek Golf Association	Peter Metcalfe

Eight questions were asked in each interview and while responses to the questions varied according to the individual or group, some common themes did emerge:

- Everyone interviewed highlighted the wetlands as the most difficult issue to address for a second channel crossing.
- Many people were concerned about finding funding for construction once the EIS was completed.

- Many people had concerns about how the Purpose and Need would be defined.
- Wetlands, Funding, and Economic Development were cited by the majority of people as the top issues to address in the EIS.
- Cost/benefit questions were the most frequently raised area of concern.
- There is broad support from the project among civic and business organizations and less support for the project among environmental and community organizations.
- Everyone was very aware of the project and about previous community discussions regarding the need for the second channel crossing.
- The majority of people want to be kept informed and actively involved.

Complete documentation of the Stakeholder Interviews can be found in Appendix B.

3.2 AGENCY SCOPING MEETING: NOVEMBER 4, 2003

The first agency scoping meeting was held on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 from 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm, at the Juneau International Airport, Aurora conference room. Nineteen federal, state, and local agencies were invited by DOT&PF to attend the scoping meeting, of which twenty-eight (28) agency representatives and project team members participated. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the project, answer any agency questions, provide a forum for collecting environmental data that is needed for the EIS, and assist agencies to focus their subsequent written scoping responses. The meeting resulted in numerous questions about the project's Purpose & Need and the development of West Douglas. In addition, HDR Alaska, Inc. staff reviewed the environmental data collected to date and asked for any data gaps to be identified by meeting attendees.

Complete documentation of the Agency Scoping Meeting can be found in Appendix C.

3.3 PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS: NOVEMBER 5, 2003

Two public scoping meetings were held on Wednesday, November 5, 2003. The first meeting was held from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Baranof Hotel and the second was held from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Mendenhall Mall. A total of 129 people signed in as attending both meetings. The purpose of the meetings was to provide participants an overview of the project and to hear their input regarding issues that should be addressed and potential ideas for the channel crossing.

The open houses included a PowerPoint presentation that ran continuously throughout the meeting. The 10-minute project video was used as a convening point every hour on the half hour to open the presentation/Q&A session. Eight stations of information were available:

- Welcome/sign –in
 - PowerPoint slide show Overview
 - Potential crossing types
 - Where do you live? “Dot” exercise
 - Goals and Objectives
 - Transportation Planning
-

- Engineering
- Environmental
- Public Comment/Issues – “Dot” exercise

The meetings were announced through a newsletter mailed to every postal customer in the City and Borough of Juneau, a Sunday newspaper insert in the *Juneau Empire*, display ads that ran in the *Empire* and the *Capital City Weekly*, as well as press releases distributed to TV and radio outlets.

Meeting participants were given a red sticky dot as they registered for the meeting and asked to place it on a large aerial map of the CBJ in proximity to where they live. The results showed approximate equal representation from Douglas Island, the Mendenhall Valley, and Downtown Juneau areas. A copy of this graphic is contained in Appendix C.

Participants also were asked to fill out a comment form and identify the issues they considered to be most important to be addressed in the EIS process. A total of 29 comment forms were collected. The top issues identified by respondents in comment forms as the most important for consideration in the EIS include:

- Wetlands / Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge
- Social impacts
- Environmental impacts
- Roadway access/safety/traffic.

An issues list from the stakeholder interviews was enlarged on paper and posted to the wall. Meeting participants were asked to review the list, identify any new issues, and then place a sticky dot next to the issues they considered to be most important. The top issues identified by respondents in the dot exercise as the most important for consideration in the EIS include:

- Wetlands / Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge
- Land use
- Social impacts
- Traffic/Transportation

Complete documentation of the Public Scoping Meetings can be found in Appendix C.

4. SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED

Two-hundred and two (202) individuals and agency representatives have provided comments about the Juneau Second Channel Crossing project. These include:

- Agency scoping comments: 7
 - Public comments (letters, emails): 11
 - Newspaper insert comment forms: 43
 - Open House comment forms: 29
 - Online survey comments: 112
-

4.1 AGENCY COMMENTS

Federal, state and local agencies were invited to submit comments as either a Cooperating Agency or as a commenting agency. Agency comments were provided through the stakeholder interviews in August 2003, in one-on-one meetings throughout the scoping period, through participation in the agency scoping meeting on November 4, 2003, and in response to the agency scoping letter distributed in October 2003.

The following table outlines the agencies that have participated and how they have participated:

Agency	Invited to Agency Scoping Meeting	Invited to be Cooperating Agency	Agreed to be Cooperating Agency	Submitted Written Comments	Comment via Interview	Attended Agency Scoping Meeting
Federal Aviation Administration	✓	✓				
National Marine Fisheries Service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
US Army Corps of Engineers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
US Coast Guard 17 th District	✓	✓	✓*		✓	✓
US Environmental Protection Agency Reg.10	✓	✓			✓	
US Fish and Wildlife Service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
US Forest Service	✓					
Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation	✓			✓		
Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game	✓	✓	✓*	✓	✓	✓
Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources-Division of Mining, Land and Water	✓	✓	✓*		✓	✓
Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources-Project Management and Permitting	✓					✓
Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources-Office of Habitat Mngt. And Permitting	✓			✓	✓	

Agency	Invited to Agency Scoping Meeting	Invited to be Cooperating Agency	Agreed to be Cooperating Agency	Submitted Written Comments	Comment via Interview	Attended Agency Scoping Meeting
Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources- Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation	✓					
CBJ-Coastal Coordinator	✓			✓		✓
CBJ-Port of Juneau					✓	
CBJ – Community Development	✓				✓	✓
CBJ - Mayor	✓				✓	
CBJ – Juneau Harbormaster					✓	
CBJ-Juneau Int'l Airport					✓	

* Denotes agreement verbally, not in writing.

4.1.1 COOPERATING AGENCIES

The following agencies received a letter on October 21, 2003 inviting them to participate as a Cooperating Agency:

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Coast Guard
- Federal Aviation Administration
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources

The following agency comments were received in response to the October letter, in small group meetings, and in the Agency Scoping Meeting. Copies of complete letters and summaries of meetings are found in Appendix D.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service

- Agreed in writing to be a cooperating agency
- Incorporate Essential Fish Habitat information as per NMFS statutory requirements into the EIS
- Include an evaluation of the impacts of the proposed West Douglas development within the scope of the Second Channel Crossing EIS including increased traffic;

- proposed road improvements; proposed commercial, port, and recreational development; timing of development with infrastructure extensions
- Expand Study Area to include Point Hilda due to significant EFH in Fritz Cove and the North and West sides of Douglas Island
 - Consider known fish/invertebrate “hot spots” in Fritz Cove and North and West sides of Douglas Island
 - Consider cumulative impacts, such as airport expansion, Sunny Point intersection improvements, and the proposed DOT&PF transportation plan for SE Alaska
 - Mendenhall Peninsula crossing option would impact overwintering area used by social feeding humpback whales (social feeding requires large amount of room)
 - Outlined several areas of additional research needed (see Appendix D)
 - Outlined specific known Hot Spots for Fish/Intvertebrates (see Appendix D)

U.S. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

- Agreed in writing to be a cooperating agency
- Evaluate practicability of alternatives that would not involve a discharge of dredged or fill material into project waters, or utilize designs that would minimize such impacts; Consider alternative with least impact to aquatic ecosystems
- Outline how compliance with 404(b)(1) mitigation sequence would occur
- Include an evaluation of the impacts of the proposed West Douglas “New Growth Area” and improvements to North Douglas Highway within the scope of the Second Channel Crossing EIS to comply with Corps Regulatory Program Regulations at 33 CFR.1(d)(2)
- All drawings in the EIS and included with a DA permit should show the proposal relative to pertinent jurisdictional boundaries (high tide line, ordinary high water, or wetland boundaries) pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act
- Conduct analysis or pre-project and post-project hydrological conditions
- Provide an analysis of the proposed project to aquatic resources and include a functional assessment of those resources both before and after the project
- Provide an analysis of the proposed project to navigation, including dock and harbor facilities, resulting from discharge of any fill material
- Corps will need to know material sources and construction impacts

US Coast Guard, Waterways and Management Branch

- Agreed verbally to participate as a Cooperating Agency
- Navigational determination of a waterway is evaluated on USCG Bridge Program and Waterway Users for Alaska – project needs to consider this
- Bridge permit process has two key steps: a) Approval of the navigational opening of the structure and site location; and b) NEPA review of environmental impacts, including secondary and cumulative impacts on navigation
- Data must be captured from commercial/industrial users in addition to individual users
- USCG jurisdiction is the entire floodplain and USCG permits the entire structure crossing

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Juneau Office

- Not aware of any Superfund or hazardous waste sites in project study area
- Important to consider impacts to Mendenhall Refuge on a regional scale in SE Alaska
- Important to address secondary impacts from a proposed second channel crossing

U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service

- Concerns about further encroachment upon or degradation of the wetlands
- Concerns about potential of disturbance to waterfowl, shorebird, eagle, anadromous fish, seal, and sea lion habitats. Minimize any disturbances
- Effects of new structures on bird passage
- Provide detailed information and mapping of fish and wildlife habitat types occurring in the project study area
- Provide information about how project features (i.e. bridge types, crossing locations, termination points) impact fish and wildlife habitat
- Provide for fish passage at any channel crossing location

Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Habitat and Restoration Division

- Agreed verbally to participate as a Cooperating Agency
- Concurrence with Office of Habitat Management and Permitting comments
- Encourage a full review of alternatives that would avoid the refuge
- Alternative routes and designs for the second crossing must be evaluated for impacts on refuge resources and goals, including wildlife and fish populations/habitat, and human use and access
- Any damages must be mitigated in accordance with 5 AAC 95.900 and AS 16.20.034(i)
- Cumulative impacts related to the refuge should be addressed in the EIS, including: accretion, decreased tidal flushing, dredging impacts, airport expansion, excess chlorine and warmer water from Mendenhall sewage plant, small fills along refuge edges, development contributing contaminants, and invasive species (e.g., squirrel tail grass) in the project area.

Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources-Division of Mining, Land and Water

- Agreed verbally to participate as a Cooperating Agency
- ADNR's primary involvement related to the Refuge is through right-of-way authorizations and permit authority for use of state lands.
- ADNR holds all state land fee titles and has several lease holdings within the Refuge
- To utilize Refuge lands, ADF&G would need to issue a Special Use Permit and ADNR would need to issue a Public Easement Permit

Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Office of Habitat Management and Permitting

- Clarify, rank, and fully document the project purposes and needs
 - Incorporate environmental goals in the Purpose and Need statement
 - Broaden geographic scope to include reasonably foreseeable impacts
 - Realistically assess potential benefits, beneficiaries, and costs
 - Fully explore off-refuge alternatives, including water-based transport
-

- Consider interchange sites other than those existing
- Work within the guidelines outlined in the MOU between DNR and ADF&G dated 10/16/03 regarding habitat/review responsibilities
- Evaluate alternatives pursuant to the *Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge Management Plan* goals and policies
- Inform and involve the Mendenhall Refuge Citizen Advisory Committee
- Analyze biological and hydrological functions and impacts
- Conduct a comprehensive cumulative impacts analysis
- Consider “pilings only” design options
- Analyze effects of alternatives on bird habitat
- Consider human use of wildlife resources on Douglas Island and surrounding area
- Highlighted additional information available (see Appendix D)

4.1.2 *Commenting Agencies*

The following summarizes comments received from commenting agencies through letters received, participation in the Agency Scoping Meeting, and in small group meetings. Copies of complete letters and summaries of meetings are found in Appendix D.

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Air Nonpoint and Mobile Sources Email comment

- Mendenhall Valley is classified as an air quality nonattainment area for particulate matter and any final decision to place a second crossing in the Valley region may require an analysis of air quality impacts.

City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) – Juneau Coastal District

- Comply with Juneau Coastal Management Program and Juneau Wetlands Management Plan enforceable policies
- Evaluate potential impacts to salmon streams and consider effects of a bridge structure on migratory routes of salmon
- Model for hydrological impacts, including seasonal currents and tidal flow
- Assess secondary and cumulative impacts of West Douglas development by including a literature review and identification of sensitive marine and upland habitats in West Douglas

City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) - Juneau International Airport

- The Airport is an exclusion zone and should not be impacted by any proposed second channel crossing
 - A second crossing should not interfere with the potential for future parallel runway as part of a future master plan update
 - The Airport is conducting its own EIS for runway expansion and this process should be factored into the second channel crossing EIS. Environmental data already collected can be made available to JSCC EIS.
 - The dike trail is classified as a 4(f) property
-

CBJ – Police Department and Fire Department

- Support a second channel crossing to reduce response times to North Douglas (can take up to 20 minutes currently)
- Will save money by reducing wear and tear on emergency vehicles
- Easier access for more preventative patrols
- Redundant access is very important from a public safety perspective

CBJ – Port of Juneau / Juneau Harbormaster

- A new bridge crossing located between the existing Juneau-Douglas Bridge and the vicinity of Salmon Creek would have to equal or exceed the existing Juneau-Douglas Bridge navigational clearances in order to handle more cargo
- Gillnetters require 40-foot vertical/horizontal clearance due to poles/booms when elevated or lowered to the side
- There would be more justification to build a North Douglas harbor if a second crossing was in the vicinity
- There is some interest in dredging the Gastineau Channel if funding was available and this would affect the EIS

Informational briefings were held with:

- CBJ – Public Works Committee (July 30, 2003)
- CBJ – Economic Development Committee (Sept. 3, 2003)
- CBJ Wetlands Review Board (August 14, 2003)
- MWSGR Citizens Advisory Group (August 14, 2003)
- Juneau Chamber of Commerce (Nov. 21, 2003)

4.2 PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following are issues and comments that have been collected from 11 emails and letters received. Copies of these documents can be found in Appendix D.

- Questions about the potential location of a second channel crossing
- Expansion of the Second Crossing EIS should include the proposed development of West Douglas
- Traffic impacts on North Douglas Hwy. from a second crossing.
- Interest in a bench road on North Douglas Hwy.
- Effect on the wetlands and wildlife habitat
- Questions about Purpose and Need
- Impacts to hunting and mitigation of any loss to hunting opportunity
- Questions about assumptions made in past documents/studies that are being used to justify a second crossing
- Increase island emergency services rather than build a new bridge

4.3 NEWSPAPER INSERT COMMENT FORMS

The following issues were most frequently cited from the 43 newspaper insert comment forms received. Copies of these forms and a complete summary can be found in Appendix C.

- Transportation connectivity and access (27)
 - Wetlands/ Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge (18)
-

- Transportation safety (18)
- Emergency service response times (18)
- Neighborhood impacts (14)

4.4 OPEN HOUSE COMMENT FORMS

The following issues were most frequently cited from the 29 open house comment forms submitted. Copies of these forms and a complete summary can be found in Appendix C.

- Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge (14)
- Social Impacts (14)
- Environmental Impacts (13)
- Roadway Access/Safety/Traffic (11)
- Funding for Project (8)

4.5 ONLINE SURVEY COMMENTS

One hundred and twelve people (112) completed the online survey that was linked to the project homepage. The following table summarizes the responses to the main question, which asked respondents to select the issues that were most important to them for study in the Second Channel Crossing EIS:

Roadway Access/Safety/Traffic	72
Marine Transportation/Navigation	27
Funding for Project	32
Economic Development	41
Social Impacts	25
Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge	52
Environmental Impacts	48
Aesthetics/Visual Resources	28
Recreation	40
Utilities	18
Other	17
Total Respondents	99
(skipped this question)	14

When asked if they believed that additional access between Juneau and Douglas Island is needed, the following responses were given:

Yes	77
No	18
I'm Not Sure	13

A copy of the online survey questionnaire and a complete listing of responses can be found in Appendix D