

NORTH DOUGLAS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION SECOND CROSSING COMMITTEE

ISSUES OF CONCERN

PREMISE: A second crossing will have major impacts to North Douglas Island, including increased traffic and infrastructure that will change the character of our neighborhood and our quality of life. The committee has identified the following issues, concerns, and questions that need to be addressed:

1. THE EIS MUST INCLUDE THE BENCH ROAD

The EIS should not be limited to analyzing a second crossing, but must factor in other projects, in particular, the bench road. The CBJ Comprehensive Plan identifies a second crossing and the bench road as the two “primary proposals” to improve access in North Douglas and recognizes that both may “be required.” The Plan provides that a “comprehensive traffic evaluation should be completed *before* either of the two alternatives is pursued in detail. The study should analyze the efficiency of each option, *as well as combinations of the two*, in solving transportation problems associated with increased development in North and West Douglas (Emphasis added).” These transportation problems must be addressed because of the increased traffic and subsequent concern for safety of pedestrians, bikers, runners, walkers, children, dogs, etc.

- *How will planning for a bench road be integrated into the EIS for the second crossing?*
- *How can the bench road be deemed a “near term priority”?*
- *What is the current limit for traffic use on North Douglas Highway that ensures safety for the drivers, pedestrians, children, dogs, bikers, runners, school buses, etc., and how will that safety be impacted by the increased traffic associated with the second crossing and proposed developments in West Douglas?*

2. THE DECISION PROCESS MUST BE TRANSPARENT AND INTEGRATE THE PUBLICS' INPUT

The entire planning and decision process involving the second crossing must be transparent and explained to the public in detail. Some of the specific issues related to the process include:

- (a) The development of West Douglas was identified as the top priority in 1996. Recognizing the changes that have, or have not, occurred over the last 8 years, reevaluating priorities in an open forum with the CBJ community is needed.
 - *What criteria were used in identifying the development of West Douglas as the top priority in 1996?*
 - *How will a re-evaluation of the development of West Douglas now occur, with the public's input?*
- (b) NEPA requires an EIS to evaluate community and environmental issues but does not require decisions to be driven directly by the outcome of the evaluation. Thus, although

the consequences and concerns will be considered they are not required to be weighted in the decision; i.e., NEPA is essentially about process rather than substance.

- *How will the public's concerns be integrated into the EIS decision process, and what assurance will be provided that indeed such integration will occur?*
- *Will the CBJ Assembly make a formal recommendation on which EIS alternative it believes is the best for the Juneau Community?*
- *How will the CBJ Assembly integrate the public's concern in making their recommendation?*
- *Will the CBJ Assembly accept the alternative selected by the federal government in the final EIS, or will the CBJ assembly use the final EIS as one source of information in making their own decision on this critical issue for the Juneau community?*

3. IS GROWTH BEING PROMOTED OR IS A REAL NEED FOR GROWTH BEING ADDRESSED?

The rate of population growth in Juneau has been much lower than predicted in earlier studies, including the 1984 study of the second crossing. In establishing the purpose and need for the second crossing, the distinction must be made between promoting growth versus identifying a real and substantive need and demand for growth.

- *What is the problem that the second crossing is the solution for?*

4. HOW WILL THE LOCATION OF THE SECOND CROSSING ON NORTH DOUGLAS ISLAND BE DETERMINED?

Deciding where the second crossing reaches North Douglas Island will be a critical component in the planning process. To date, no specific information has been provided to the public on how that decision will be made, and no proposed 'termini' have been disclosed. The public needs to be informed of specific criteria that will be used in determining where the termini will be located. Additionally, the public must have the opportunity to express their concerns and ideas relative to the numerous factors that need to be considered in determining possible termini. For example, safety, pedestrians, children, school bus stops, dogs, runners, walkers, bikers, etc.

- *What specific criteria will be used to decide the location of the second crossing on North Douglas Island, and how will the public's interests and concerns be involved in that decision?*

5. INFORM THE PUBLIC OF ALL COSTS AND WHAT THEY WILL BE REQUIRED TO PAY

Information published in relation to the second crossing project states that a primary purpose is to accommodate a "New Growth Area" on West Douglas in accordance with the CBJ Comprehensive Plan. This area is beyond the end of the North Douglas Highway and can only be developed if the highway is extended. In addition, substantial infrastructure must accompany development of West Douglas; e.g., running water, sewer, other utilities, police and fire protection, health and other services. The public must be told what those cost estimates are such that they can evaluate the impact of this development.

- *What is the total estimated cost of this development, and how much of these estimate costs will be paid for by the residents of CBJ?*

6. MINIMIZE IMPACTS AND ENHANCE THE NORTH DOUGLAS COUMMUNITY

The impact of the proposed development of West Douglas needs to be included in the EIS. In addition to environmental impacts on the wetlands, impact on the community of North Douglas must be evaluated. If a real need exists for new development of West Douglas, it should be pursued in a manner that enhances the North Douglas community rather than degrading it. One specific enhancement that should be considered is designating the stretch of road between the boat launch and Outer Point Trail as a National Scenic Roadway. This stretch of road opens to the Mendenhall Glacier, Fritz Cove, Stephens Passage, and Lynn Canal and is arguably one of the most scenic drives in Alaska that is used year-round by pedestrians, campers, bikers, picnickers, runners, boat and kayak users, and fishers, etc. We believe it is in the best interest of CBJ and visitors to our area to acknowledge this special area and ensure it is well taken care of.

- *How will the CBJ Assembly pursue the enhancement of the North Douglas community in the planning for the second crossing?*
- *What steps will be taken to establish a North Douglas Recreation Area between the boat launch and the end of the road that would maintain and enhance the multi-use opportunities currently available before proposed developments and the accompanying increased traffic transform the area?*