



Ambler Road Environmental Impact Statement

Shungnak Public Scoping Meeting

MEETING NOTES

December 8, 2017

Shungnak School, Shungnak, Alaska

Project Team Participants

Bureau of Land Management (BLM): Laurie Thorpe

HDR: John McPherson, Katherine Wood

National Park Service (NPS): Joe Durrenberger

US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE): Melissa Riordan

Public Participants

Approximately 19 people attended the meeting.

Meeting Purpose

To share information about the BLM's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, and to gather input from the public.

Meeting Topics

1. Welcome and Introductions by Shungnak Tribal Chief

Welcome by Shungnak Tribal Chief, and prayer by Alex Sheldon followed by introductions.

2. Presentation by Laurie Thorpe (BLM)

We are here today to talk about a right-of-way permit request received by the BLM to build a road across BLM lands from the Dalton Highway over to the Ambler mineral belt.

Other Cooperating Agencies:

- US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Northwest Arctic Borough (NAB)
- National Park Service (NPS)

- Allakaket wants to join as a Cooperating Agency
- Alatna wants to join as a Cooperating Agency

Background

The purpose of today's meeting is to get input from the local communities. Without that input, the EIS process will not be effective. Public input about issues and concerns is very important.

Project Background - In the 1950s mineral exploration efforts discovered significant mineral resources on the south side of the Brooks Range. In the 1980s The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) was established. Congress passed the law recognizing the mineral potential in the Ambler Mining District and the need for transportation access. Section 201(4)(b) provides for surface transportation access through Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, but did not address access across BLM lands. There is no mention of BLM and the effort to evaluate the road in this area. That's why we are here today, to address it with you as we respond to the application for the right-of-way. In 2009-2010 Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) began evaluating multiple road and rail routes that could provide access to the Ambler Mining District. In 2013, project ownership was transferred from DOT&PF to Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA). In 2015, AIDEA submitted an SF-299 application requesting right-of-way for the road. In 2016 AIDEA spent the first half of the year responding to requests for additional information from the application recipients (BLM, NPS, USCG, and USACE). The application was complete by June 30, 2016, which triggered a timeline for BLM action on the application. BLM filed a Notice of Intent (NOI) on February 28, 2017, to prepare an EIS, initiating a 90-day public scoping period. We knew that would not allow enough time for public scoping through all the affected communities. BLM did not want to impact your subsistence activities during the summer months so extended the public scoping period through January 31, 2018. In 2017, NPS began a separate but parallel Environmental and Economic Impact Analysis (EEA) for the portion of the road on National Park Service land. That road must connect to other lands managed by BLM, the State, and Native corporation land to reach the Ambler Mining District.

Proposed Project

The right-of-way application from AIDEA proposes a road across public and private land to the Ambler Mining District to increase job opportunities and otherwise encourage the economic growth of the state, including the development of its natural resources.

According to AIDEA, without that access, the mineral assets associated with the Ambler Mining District would remain unused, and AIDEA would not be able to support economic development and increase job opportunities within a region known for high unemployment rates.

Road Elements

Maps are available to see the route. AIDEA's proposed alignment begins at the Dalton Highway Milepost 161 and extends 211 miles westward along the south side of the Brooks Range to the south bank of the Ambler River.

The type of land crossed by the road includes State lands (61 percent), Federal land managed by BLM and NPS (24 percent), and lands associated with two Alaska Native Corporations (15 percent).

The road would be 211 miles long, all-season gravel two-lane road with industrial access only. It would not be open to the public. It includes bridges, material sites, maintenance stations, airstrips, and related infrastructure and utilities.

Vehicles using the road would be designed to accommodate two-way traffic for large semi-trailer trucks.

The proposed project area begins at Milepost 161 of the Dalton Highway. It is 211 miles long, and ends at the Ambler mineral belt area as shown on the Proposed Project Area Map (see handout). Additional maps were presented that showed a close-up of each section of the route.

Agency Roles

Comment from John Lincoln

Sorry to interrupt, but this might be a good time emphasize that the Tribal government of Shungnak can choose to be a Cooperating Agency. That doesn't necessarily mean you're cooperating or in favor to build the road, but you're cooperating with the EIS, and that means you get access to information that you wouldn't otherwise.

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

Yes, Cooperating Agencies are part of the team writing and working on the EIS, providing information, and reviewing the EIS information before it's distributed to the public for review.

Comment from John Lincoln

So any Tribal leadership here in Shungnak that's interested in doing that, that's a good option for you, and [if] you want more information you can get in touch in touch with me, and I can help if you'd like.

Question from Unidentified Individual

Do you have anyone cooperating from Bettles and Evansville?

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

They requested to be a Cooperating Agency, but they are a corporation. Corporations, like NANA is a corporation, they're not allowed to be according to the laws that govern, because they are a corporation. It's only government entities that can be Cooperating Agencies. Tribal governments can be a Cooperating Agency.

Question from Unidentified Individual

But did you guys ask them?

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

We haven't been there yet. There were letters sent last April to all the regions. Bettles and Evansville, we'll be there next week, but they did receive letters inviting them to be Cooperating Agencies. Any of the tribal entities, but also the corporations were sent letters inviting them to be consulting. So we did send letters to corporations to do consultations, and we have done consultations. We've had one consultation meeting with NANA, and we've had one consultation with Doyon, as well. And as we move the project further along, we'll have other meetings as the project develops with the corporations as well as the Tribal interests.

Comment from Katherine Wood, HDR

I think your questions though was for Bettles and Evansville, and whether the tribal governments have asked to be Cooperating Agencies and they have not. I want to jump in here and maybe add that you may have been to other meetings about this project put on by AIDEA or the DOT&PF. I just want to clarify that this is a new stage in the process, and now this is the first time that BLM has been involved so it's a different entity leading the EIS process. So if you said something before to DOT or to AIDEA make sure to say it again to BLM. Just to give you context.

Agency Roles, continued

BLM is the lead federal agency, and is required to prepare the EIS with the authority to grant permits across BLM lands. BLM must also comply with ANILCA Section 810 to hold subsistence hearings as well as the Nation Historic Preservation Act Section 106 to address cultural and historic resources.

USACE is a Cooperating Agency, and would be responsible for the wetlands permits that would be required. The USACE would evaluate the project application under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and use the EIS as the basis for its permit decisions.

USCG is a Cooperating Agency, and would be responsible for bridge permits over navigable waters, and would also use the EIS as a basis for its decisions.

DNR is a Cooperating Agency, and would be responsible for state permits. DNR would make land management decisions for right-of-way access across State-managed lands.

NAB is a Cooperating Agency. NAB will provide traditional knowledge, and input on subsistence, cultural resources, and coordination with Tribal members and affected communities. The NAB would also enforce local permitting requirements and advise the BLM on NAB's responsibilities under State law and NAB regulations. Allakaket and Alatna will also be able to provide input on those subjects once they are added as Cooperating Agencies.

After scoping meetings have finished, a Memorandum of Understanding will be developed to add Allakaket and Alatna as Cooperating Agencies.

NPS, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are all Participating Agencies.

What is an EIS?

This EIS is about whether or not BLM should issue a right-of-way for the proposed Ambler Road. An EIS is a document required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which requires federal agencies to assess the environmental consequences of their decisions. An EIS includes the following:

- Project Purpose and Need
- Issues raised during scoping (internal/external)
- Project alternatives
- Description of potentially affected environment, which would be impacted by this project
- Environmental consequences of all the alternatives
- Proposed mitigation

BLM must also include a no-action alternative where a permit for right-of-way would not be issued. It gives a good baseline to compare all the other alternatives.

So where are we now?

We published the Notice of Intent to produce an EIS in February 2017, and are now in the Scoping Process.

Draft Purpose and Need

Project need is based on the requirement for the BLM to respond to a right-of-way application from AIDEA for surface transportation access to currently inaccessible, economically valuable mineral deposits in the Ambler Mining District.

The project purpose of the BLM action is to provide AIDEA with: (1) technically and economically practical and feasible surface transportation access across BLM-managed lands for mining exploration and development in the Ambler Mining District, and (2) authorization to construct, operate, and maintain associated facilities for that access.

BLM Decisions to be made

The BLM must decide whether a right-of-way shall be granted, and if so, the terms and conditions that will be included in the right-of-way.

What is Scoping

Scoping is the process used to get input on the issues, impacts, and potential alternatives that will be addressed in the EIS. The intent of scoping is to:

- Inform agencies and the public about AIDEA's application and the proposed project.
- Identify resources, impacts, and issues of concern to be addressed in the EIS.
- Obtain input to help refine the purpose and need and the alternatives to study.
- Identify potential mitigation measures that may be needed to avoid, minimize, or mitigate for project impacts.

- Obtain information to help evaluate the project with applicable laws.

The EIS document will cover many issues (see handout), and we want your input about them.

ANILCA Section 810

ANILCA Section 810 addresses subsistence issues and impacts.

Under Section 810 of ANILCA, the BLM must determine whether the project “may significantly restrict subsistence uses.” This analysis will be included in the EIS.

If alternatives may significantly restrict subsistence uses (either abundance, access, or availability), then this will be identified in the analysis, and ANILCA Section 810 hearings will be held at the same time as public meetings upon release of the Draft EIS.

National Historic Preservation Act Section 106

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and places of religious and cultural significance.

Tribal entities, the State Historic Preservation Officer (Judy Bittner), and other interested parties are consulted to identify significant places and ways to reduce or mitigate potential effects.

A cultural resources management plan is developed to help resolve adverse effects that were identified during the consultation process.

NPS EEA

NPS EEA Process focuses only on the NPS-managed lands. The AIDEA proposal includes two alternative routes across NPS lands (North and South). Under ANILCA, NPS is legally required to permit access across NPS lands, and prepare an EEA to evaluate which route is preferable based on environmental, social, and economic effects, and develop permit terms and conditions.

EEA Public Input

NPS seeks comments on NPS route selection and permit terms and conditions. Comment Period is open through January 31, 2018. To Comment go to <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/Ambler>.

Comment from Joe Durrenberger, NPS

Where we want the folks in the communities to help, we have our values, and other folks have their values. We want folks to consider values before we make a decision. Help us understand what is important to you so we consider that when we try and make a decision between the two options that have been given to us. We want to make sure that our decision reflects the interests, concerns, and values of the folks in the area.

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

Thank you, Joe. That's a great question. Thanks for asking that. So the EEA will help the Park Service determine the route through the Park Service land, and the input will help the Park Service determine what is the best option. Their comment period ends the same time ours does, and we're sharing comments with each other. Any comments the Park Service receives, they'll share it with us. Any comments the BLM receives, we'll share with the Park Service. We're trying to be as transparent as possible so everyone has as much information as possible to make a decision. So the comment for the EEA, this is the website.

Comment from Joe Durrenberger, NPS

And I have comment forms available to it.

Schedule

Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register [on] February 28, 2017. Scoping concludes January 31, 2018. A Draft EIS will be developed by March 29, 2019, followed by public review. We would also be holding subsistence hearings during this time. A Final EIS, based on public and agency review of the draft will be produced by December 30, 2019, and the Record of Decision is targeted to be completed by January 30, 2020.

What's Next?

BLM is collecting comments and feedback. You are not limited to commenting once. You can submit comments throughout the scoping period. BLM will consider input received to potentially refine the Purpose and Need, determine issues and impacts to be studied, determine alternatives to be studied, and potentially identify mitigation measures to apply to the project.

Substantive Comments

- Writing substantive comments assists BLM to make good decisions.
- Be as specific as possible about what you are concerned about.
- Present new information.
- Share issues relevant to the environmental analysis.
- Suggest alternatives to the proposed project and the reason(s) why they should be considered.
- "I don't like this" or "I do like this" is not useful. Explain why.

You are welcome to comment on the proposed project. You can submit comments in the following ways:

- Submit a comment form in the box
- Submit comments via the website: <http://www.blm.gov/AmblerRoadEIS>
- Fax to: (907) 271-5479
- Email to: blm_ak_akso_amblerroad_comments@blm.gov
- Mail to: 222 West 7th Avenue, Stop #13, Anchorage, Alaska 99513

3. Comments

Below are a compilation of verbal comments received at this meeting.

Comment and Questions from Fred Sun, City Council and School Board Representative

I serve on the City Council and the School Board. A lot of the concerns I hear about this road. Once we're done with it, people have a lot of concerns about using it for private use. So my question is how can we guarantee that will never happen? Will there be road blocks, bridge removal, tree planting so that people won't be able to drive through there? Can we get something in writing stating that this will never be a private-use road once we're done using it?

Question from Joe Durrenberger, NPS

So when you say private, what does that mean?

Comment from Fred Sun

Like hunting, and people not associated with mining being on the road. Once we're done with the mining. I've heard that people say there's no guarantee.

Comment from Katherine Wood, HDR

Just so you know, we're not going to try and answer your question right now, because that's something we have to look at in the EIS.

Questions and Comment from Fred Sun

If the road does get the go ahead, how can the local villages get a guarantee that there will be local hire for the road construction? And when the road gets through NANA-owned land with gravel will NANA be able to sell to that project? Or if there are villages nearby, do those villages get to sell gravel to the project or provide equipment rental? If it does get built, we want to be able to benefit any way we can. Let's say that road gets the okay. Who do we look to get our children trained to become geologists and equipment operators? Who can we look to for help in those areas? We want to be able to benefit. Another question I have is I heard from another meeting, maybe it was an AIDEA meeting, that possibly our Tribe would be able to ship freight through that road because our cost of living is so high and that was one of my questions. Would we be able to ship fuel to our Tribally-owned store and freight into our community to lower the cost of living? That would benefit us as well. When you go to villages, showing main migration caribou routes and the history of the migration routes would help a lot with how villages feel about this road. Because I know right now our main migration route is west of this proposed road and west of the proposed mining site. Our main caribou route doesn't go through this area. People need to know that, I think. They might feel differently about this road if they were initially against the road. Showing the main migration route of the caribou would help a lot. Let's say the different agency can't come to a consensus on the project. Let's say they are at a deadlock. Is there a possibility of a statewide vote on this road? Or a regional-wide vote on this road? What if the different agencies can't decide to build it? How else can we decide? That's all.

Question from Nellie Griest, Shungnak elder

How will we know that the road is safe to travel on? For instance Kobuk [residents] say they have a lot of bears behind their village, or say they have caribou in the village. How will we know the road is open especially winter time after a big storm?

Question from Anthony Norris, Red Dog Mine Employee

I live here, and work at Red Dog Mine. What if you do get the road in place and trucks are moving. But what are your guys plans on, let's say, doing trailers over on the road. Then we have a lead, or zinc, or copper spill. What are your thoughts on cleaning that up especially if that's on a road?

Response from Katherine Wood, HDR

We're just taking questions and comments. We're not necessarily answering things right now because that's what we're doing in the Draft EIS. So the purpose of this meeting is to take a hard look at the questions in that study.

Comment and Question from Linda Lee

I traveled with you a couple weeks ago to Alatna and Allakaket and Anaktuvuk Pass. I'm speaking as a resident with ancestors from here, and Alaska is one of the last pristine states in the nation. We live most of our lives on subsistence, fishing, berry picking. We love our clean air. We don't have pollution that the lower 48 may or may not have. As of right now, we have climate change upon us. We have a migration difference or a variation in our migration patterns so this fall we weren't able to get at all caribou to eat. Our river was very high this summer from excess rain for a month and a half so there was not really fishing or fish put up. So with the combination of global change, climate change, and the impacts that we have collected information for, I would say as an Aboriginal descendent from my ancestors' spirit I oppose development in the future. That would be my statement. It is too early to say whether or not [the road] will make money in the future. Are we even going to get a benefit out of the road? Or are we going to be left secluded, and can't get on the road, and the caribou cannot pass over here if it becomes a barrier, and can become detrimental to the survival of the community and the caribou? As a resident of Shungnak, thank you for being here.

Comment from Crystal Tickett, President of Shungnak

On the engineering part, you have many ways of constructing the road and how to prevent construction and impacts on the land.

Question and Comment from Fred Sun

We're heard estimates from the mine people exploring back there with possibly how long the mine might be there. And I'd like to hear estimates from other agencies on how long this road is going to be, and how long this road would be used. How long would this road be open to industrial access, I'd like to know. And the next comment, another thing that is useful for other villages is to get information from Red Dog. Because right now, Red Dog would tell you that caribou cross the road. And what they do in Red Dog when a truck driver sees a caribou, he stops and waits no matter what until the caribou crosses the area. I think sharing this information of a road that is already on our land with people talking about this road, I think it would help a lot. Because I know I've worked at Red Dog

for six years. I've seen caribou feeding on the mine site. I've seen caribou crossing the haul road, and they cross with no problem as long as you don't disturb them. I think getting that information and sharing that information from Red Dog would help. That's a 50-mile-long road right there, and I'm sure they have a lot of good information to share with ideas on how to prevent disturbing the herd. That's all.

Question and Comment from Anthony Norris

What are our actions on keeping that fugitive dust down? You're going to have more accidents, but in the summer there will be a lot longer road, and it's going to have more dust going in the air. There's a lot of wildlife refuges are right along that road and berries and stuff there too.

Comment and Question from Linda Lee

In the very far future if this road ever was developed, if there was a huge spill and accident [and] it flowed into our headwaters where our fish spawn and come down river, and it migrated down river where families are raised. We just have to think about these things and the future of your children's survival for they become subsistence users also. Would cleanup happen? And were it to happen, and that land would not go back to its normal state for maybe 1,000 years. Thank you.

Comment from Fred Sun

Another thing I'd like to see if this road does get built, first of all [is] local hire. And there's also going to have to be maintenance on that road so also I'd like to see local hire for maintenance of that road. Because like I said in the very beginning, if that road does get built we want it to be able to benefit local people as much as possible. I'd like to find out ways we can ensure we can benefit. We'd like our people to build the road and we'd like our people to maintain it. We don't want out-of-state drivers or non-natives to get all the jobs while we get nothing. We want to see local hire from all areas and local training and sending our kids to college. We want to see that if it gets built.

Comment from Miles Cleveland, Northwest Arctic Borough

I represent you at the Borough. The first question I get to ask when something like this happens, what are my people going to benefit from this, and what is the best way they can benefit like say local hire? When you say local hire, anybody from the US and anyone from another country in one month and can be local. If you go further, and you say someone born in Shungnak, born in Kobuk, and born in Ambler, that cuts it down to you folks and your children. We're not talking about us, we know that. Especially me, I am getting too old. We're talking about our grandchildren and great grandchildren. That's their future. We must set it right in words to whomever to get whatever we want out of it. Even if it's just to get on the road to hunt or pick berries. That land we have back there, we have NANA land back there. We can negotiate with whoever is going through there through NANA. We can make our people use that road to wherever. There's a lot of stuff we can put into this before it starts happening. You know as well as I do when something like this happens, it will happen. EPA will come and tell us a different story. I was trying to tell a friend of mine on Facebook when it's hard time for those folks that come and live here in our area, they move away and live on the road system. And they start telling me what to do because I live here. I can't take that. You have to live here day-to-day to know what you're talking

about. That's how government works. If we don't put our two cents in now they will come in here with their ideas, and we'll have to live by it. That's the kind of idea you have to put in your mind for the people that you represent, you work with, you live with. Thank you.

Comment from Fred Sun

Along with those same lines Miles mentioned, instead of saying local hire we could say "local Tribal members" or "NANA shareholder hires." Something like that. And this Red Dog has another example. Right now people that live in Kivalina and Noatak, they are allowed to use that road. They're allowed to drive it with their four wheelers if they want to, and I'm not sure if that was negotiated. I'm sure it was with an agreement. If we wanted to go hunting and we'd like to cross the road, we'd have a crossing area where we'd put signs up telling truck drivers this is where snowmachines cross. There is possibilities for us to be able to use parts of it. I just don't want to see someone getting on their four wheeler and driving from here all the way to Bettles. But I want to be able to see them cross the road and get to a hunting site.

Comment and Question from Linda Lee

This is Linda Lee again speaking as a descendent of my ancestors. The more we move into a money environment where we are making money, and this is hard for me to discuss because of the health and well-being of our future. Are we going to be well-people, or are we going to slowly descend into more perilous despair? Money can buy you a lot of things, and can bring a lot of drugs and alcohol here. We're struggling with that right now. We have spurts of money right now with the PFD [Permanent Fund Dividend] and NANA dividend checks. We have people that do descend upon our village, and take advantage of them and enjoy their money and enjoy their life only to struggle again. The future well-being of our children. You really have to think about "are we ready" if this becomes developed. Right now they hear it, they see it, they smell it. How are we going to start educating people about their personal well-being and your association and corporation with other people? Right now I think we are getting into something that is perilous, and right now we have to think of these things and our children, your entire village, and the future. Suicide rates are up several years ago and the local people and Tribe need to tell ourselves, are we ready for the explosion of work if it happens? Thank you.

Comment and Questions from Raymond Woods, Shungnak Resident and Member of the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Commission

We're talking about something that is going to be very critical for us being from the local area. Like the Borough representative said, it is important the local people get out and give you the input you are trying to collect. The biggest thing is the animals and the land are going to be the way it is now and how it has been. Now, talking to a few of the guys that had been building the Haul Road (and that has been there for 40 years). Now it's halfway paved. Now talking to residents and the people who live along the Haul Road, they're saying 'Raymond, I can't even go hunt through the same hunting areas I used to hunt sheep for ten years ago. There's campers from all over the Lower 48 camping out. They got State licenses. They can do that.' Now, the potential for opening a new road through this wilderness, the Last Frontier of the United States, where natives live. How much solitude are they

going to have? To have that access to control it? We have Tribal members here. How much will we have control and say so to still live here as Natives after it's been built? After the Haul Road's been built 40 years later, it's State-controlled. Its BLM controlled. It's the agency that owns the land that controls. We only got some knowledge with what's going on now, with the resources that we would gain, and benefit from this road that's going to be built. But how far are you guys going to listen to the guys who are local that can govern this place by Tribe and Tribal? Thank you.

Comment from Fred Sun

I think another good idea is to ask other villages to ask them to decide the road. Educate them first. Not only ask us adults, but go to the schools and ask them how would you feel about a road being built in your backyard that would provide you jobs? That would provide income? That would provide hindsight? Because Miles said we're not really talking about us. We're talking about the kids sitting in that school over there, and who are we to decide whether or not to give them options? Right now, people who are against this road are saying 'don't build it at all,' and that's like not even giving our kids a choice. And when they say 'are we all ready for money?' it's not whether we are ready for it or not, it's how we raise our own children. It's for them to decide. Just because somebody doesn't know how to spend their money, or doesn't know how to budget their money, doesn't mean we have to end it for everybody else. You have got to give them options like what was said earlier by the Park Service. They'd rather have options than no option at all. Who are we to decide for our children whether they want the jobs or not. I think a good idea would be to say educate every adult around here, every child, and then do elections, and see how the majority of our villages would feel, including the children. Give them a vote. Ask them 'would you like jobs available? Would you like a mine site back here in the mountains?' And go from the village to village. Let's say once all our villages get educated, students and adults have a region-wide mock election just to get a consensus of how everyone feels about it initially, because we shouldn't be the ones to decide whether there should be jobs available here or not.

Comment from Raymond Woods

This village really pulls together, and we're not sided on who gets to do what or makes the decision. That's what Fred is talking about. Whatever agreement we make right now with the road construction, we need it to work towards our kids' future. Twenty years or twenty-five years from now, we're opening the gate to our big open land. There are a lot of hunters with campers that are ready to come up. They're ready to do that once we open up. It's going to be open access to everybody since the Haul Road is open now. At the beginning of the Haul Road they told us it was all for the pipeline, industrial road for transport supply. And now it's open. Tourists can get on a bus and go all the way to Prudhoe Bay. And if that happens here 30 years from now or whenever, what is the Tribe going to do then? If you agree to do something like Red Dog, you have another 30 years, however they use the money with NANA. But we don't want that. We're being cautious as a whole here to make sure we do the right thing.

Comment and Questions from Fred Sun

Years ago there was discussion about this. Years ago there was a proposed building of a railroad to the Nome area to haul concentrate out of Bornite. I'm not sure how that fell through, but while we were talking about that someone brought up Aerocat. I guess it's a huge air freight system that can fly concentrate out. At the time we were talking about it, it wasn't cost effective to fly concentrate out of there. Is it still not cost effective to fly concentrate out of there? Or could this road be a railway system not a road? We could run trains back and forth, but we don't need to have a road. There's not enough drivers to be on the road. Why can't we have a railway system from there to here and back? We can haul the concentrate out with trains so it would be a narrower road not as wide. Is that option not cost effective? I'm just wondering why it's not there anymore.

Comment from Crystal Tickett

This is a good opportunity. My job is helping people with education, training, jobs. And this will be a good opportunity for children to learn the jobs you have, and how they could be sitting in your spot in making the decisions and getting people's opinions and everything. I think this is a good opportunity to show our children all of the opportunities Alaska has and the United States.

Comment from Katherine Wood, HDR

I want to say to if you are not comfortable speaking in public that's fine. If we can get something from you in writing, we give it the exact same weight as speaking now. So there's some comment sheets back there. If you want to write something and mail in and take it home and think about it, we're certainly open to that. The other thing that is also possible, you don't have to put your name down in the comment. You don't have to. If you'd like to that's great, but it's not required so there are a lot of different ways you can share your opinion.

Comment and Question from Fred Sun

Going back to my comments about using the rail. I think educating our people there's a lot of people right now when you think about change, you read a lot about what is in those old western movies. You don't know what kind of hijack stuff they have now. Now, educating people about the options because there's quieter options that we might not know. We might not know when you mention change to people it's a big smoke cloud. What about conveyor belts? An enclosed conveyor belt? I've seen miles and miles of conveyor belts at works sites. I used to walk by conveyor belts. Miles and miles of it. When you walk by a conveyor you only hear the wheels turning because the only sound is where the motor is. I'd like to hear all the options that we have besides a haul road and truck hauling.

Questions and Comment from Anthony Norris

Have you guys ever thought about connecting to the Red Dog port road instead of connecting to the main Haul Road connecting towards the Fairbanks area? Connecting to Red Dog and using that port facility and building another storage unit? More for the company that does this but tie it with storage the unit, and have it tied in down there.

Comment from Unnamed Individual

That would cross right through the caribou migration. This one [road] doesn't go through caribou migration routes at all, or with the migration routes they've used now, or the migration routes they've used in the past.

Comment and Questions from Miles Cleveland, NAB

Me again for a minute. You know we could talk with interior folks and come to an agreement with what we're looking at. People over there, some are for it. They want the road. They see the benefit from it. They see us as a borough where we'd benefit finely from the mine. And we learned from Red Dog our mistakes. To open a mine back here just north of us, we can negotiate better with that mine in the future. Remember 9/11? Planes were not flying all of a sudden for four or five days. What did we do? There was nothing coming in. We have no place to go. What if that happened for a longer time? How do we get our groceries in? Where do we go for help? Those are the kind of things we need to think about. Although some of us may not want the road, we have to think of our children. The health, the groceries that they need. Thank you.

Comment from Fred Sun

Another comment is that unfortunately, our children didn't grow up like some of the older people around here. Some people say, 'oh what if you can't get anything to come in?' We live off the land then. Unfortunately, our kids probably wouldn't be able to, because I know I've lost a lot of what my parents and grandparents know about living off the land. My kids are not learning from me, because I lost it to begin with and we're getting less and less. The way I feel about it is that it's going to happen sooner or later, and we might as well benefit from this, especially with the president we have right now. I think a lot of things like this will happen eventually no matter what. He's already opening up land in ANWR [Arctic National Wildlife Refuge] to be developed. There's people that bid on that already and people have been interviewed that's against it, but who knows what's going to happen in the future.

Comment and Question from Raymond Woods

I think where we're headed with this is we somewhat agree with it. This village anyway. But our surrounding villages, they're all our relatives and we need to listen to them. But I think we as a whole here are pretty much in favor, but we are being very cautious. We want to make sure we're part of it, and it benefits us. That's what we're looking at. We need to educate our kids now. They need know what's going on and what kind of agreement we make in this room, whatever or whoever shows up today. I can actually see everybody here that's residents is from a leader perspective. I think we need to get more information out to think about. Is there a date already for the start of construction?

Response from Laurie Thorpe, BLM

A decision hasn't been made whether it will happen or not yet.

Comment from Raymond Wood

I think we're leading into what we can benefit out of it and then we can go into with that.

Comment from Crystal Tickett

What about if you guys make a video? An educational video for people to watch? We can take it to the meetings so some can watch.

Comment from Raymond Wood

That's a good idea to show what's possible with the road.

Comment from Katherine Wood, HDR

Is there anything else? Any parting comments before we close off? We're going to leave all the papers and the comment sheets out so if there's anybody that you know that was not able to make it to the meeting today, please take those and share with them. Our plan from here forward is do our best to answer as many of these questions as we can. And that's what will hopefully be in the Draft EIS, is a full look of the pros and what are the cons. How is this going to change our environment? And at that point, we'll share that information with everybody around March of 2019. And at that point, we will come back again and ask you if we got it right, and whether you agree with the way our pros and cons are presented.

Comment from Crystal Tickett

Did you guys do this with the pipeline in North Dakota?

Response from Katherine Wood, HDR

A similar NEPA process? I think so. (Are they moving forward with it?) That's not part of our project, so I don't know. Does anybody know? [inaudible conversation].

Comment from Michael Tickett

We may accept this, but we have a [Inaudible comment]. We get together. We all started from one village. We started from Kobuk. We moved to there. From that, Shungnak to Ambler. It's like we're all one family. We must have a tri-village meeting next time.

4. Closing

The meeting was adjourned.