



# Public Outreach Summary

## Online Open House and Virtual Public Meeting

Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority

West Susitna Access Road Project

Anchorage, Alaska  
November 13 – December 20, 2020

West Susitna Access Road Project



### Welcome!

The West Susitna Access Road Project meeting will  
begin shortly.

Webex Help: 866.229.3239

Visit us online: [westsusitnaonline.org](http://westsusitnaonline.org)

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## Introduction

This public outreach summary is used for tracking and documentation of public involvement activities. It outlines some of the public involvement strategies and tactics used to engage the public on the West Susitna Access Road Project. The summary includes a description of the November 13 to December 20, 2020, Online Open House and Virtual Public Meeting on December 3, 2020.

## Online Open House and Virtual Meeting

On Friday, November 15, 2020, the West Susitna Access Road Project team kicked off an online, interactive, self-guided public open house on the project website that was available through Sunday, December 20, 2020. The Online Open House consisted of a total of 13 sections that outlined project information and 1 section that included ways to comment on the project. The purpose of the Online Open House was to invite the public to learn about the project and provide feedback on the upcoming project phases.

In conjunction with the Online Open House, the project team hosted a Virtual Public Meeting on Thursday, December 3, 2020, from 4:00pm to 6:00pm at which 44 members of the public interacted with the project team through a WebEx Event (Attachment A).

## Attendance

A total of 162 users visited the Online Open House on Thursday, December 3, 2020, with a total of 44 users (peak of 25 users at 5:00pm) visiting the site during the Virtual Public Meeting from 4:00pm to 6:00pm (Attachment B). For the duration of the comment period (November 13 through December 20, 2020), the site was viewed 1,327 times (Attachment B).

## Advertising

The Online Open House was advertised in the following ways:

- Meeting information on the project website:  
<http://www.aidea.org/Programs/ProjectDevelopment/WestSusitnaAccess.aspx>
- Postcard mailer to residents near the project area (total of 198; Attachment C)
- One advertisement in the *Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman* newspaper (Attachment D)
- Two E-Blasts sent to the project distribution list (total of 59 contacts; Attachment E)
- Personalized calls and email notifications, containing the meeting flyer (Attachment F), were sent to local stakeholders including the Alaska Chamber of Commerce, Alaska Alliance, Alaska Miners Association, Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly, Resource Development Council, and Associated General Contractors of Alaska.
- Radio Public Service Announcements (Attachment G) played from December 1, 2020 through December 4, 2020 on KAYO 100.9 Classic Country and Kool 97.3.
- Announcements of the Online Open House and Virtual Public Meeting were delivered at the November 11, 2020 Mat-Su Borough Assembly Meeting and the November 19, 2020 Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting.

## Summary of Comments

The comments received during the Online Open House and the Virtual Public Meeting (Attachment H) focused primarily on the details of the estimated project cost, mining claims, environmental impacts, outreach to affected landowners, and agency collaboration.



# Attachment A

## Virtual Meeting Transcript











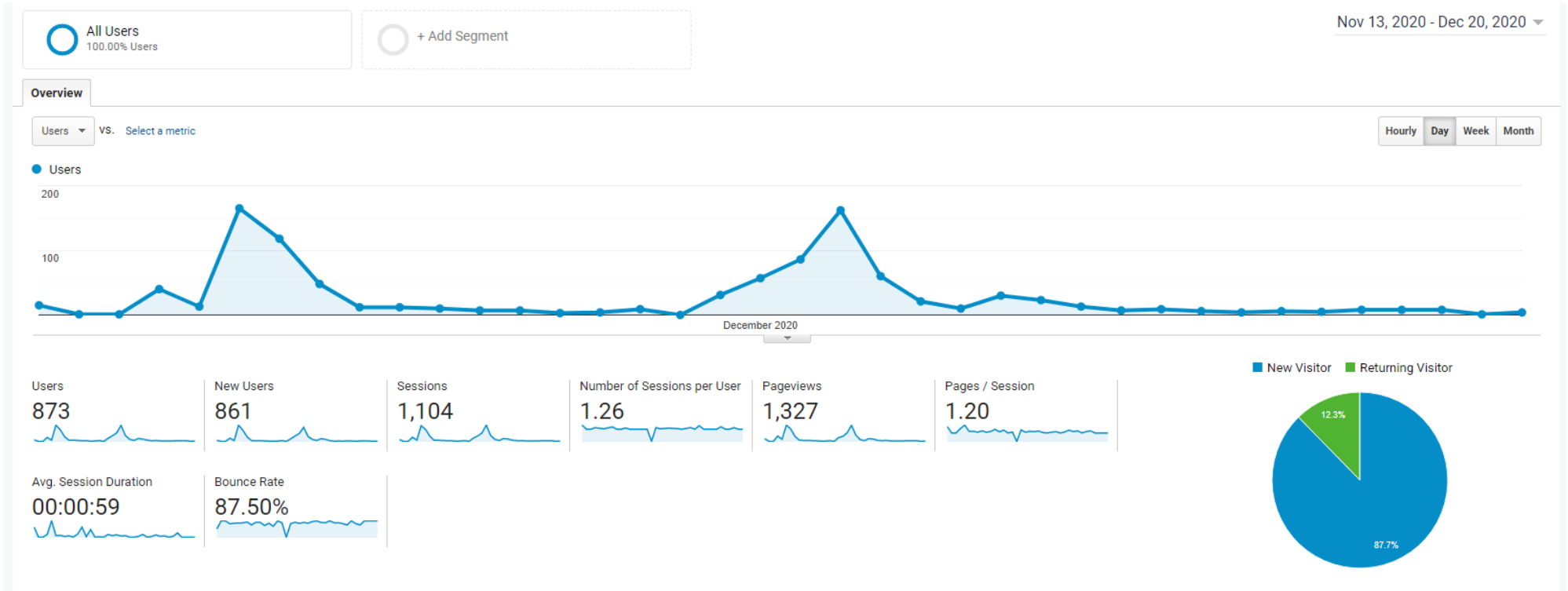
48	December 3, 2020	4:00 pm Alaska Time	Kirsten	Dixon	Within The Wild Adventure Co	kirsten@withinthewild.com	4:22 PM	5:41 PM	78.0 mins	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
49	December 3, 2020	4:00 pm Alaska Time	Kirsten	Dixon	Within The Wild Adventure Co	kirsten@withinthewild.com	5:53 PM	5:59 PM	5.0 mins	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
50a	December 3, 2020	4:00 pm Alaska Time	Kevin	Masterson		contactkevinhere@yahoo.com	3:51 PM	6:09 PM	137.0 mins	N/A	N/A	There are 100s if not thousands of cabins and homesteads in the area of the proposed road. They are largely off-grid and cannot comment via email or web submission. You need to find another way to do outreach to those land owners.	5:50 PM	All Panelists	N/A	This question has been answered verbally.	5:55 PM	Kristi Shepherd	Publicly
50b												This area is the playground for Mat-Su and the greater Anchorage area; most of	5:52 PM	All Panelists	N/A	This question has been answered verbally.	5:55 PM	Kristi Shepherd	Publicly
51a	December 3, 2020	4:00 pm Alaska Time	Eric	Lubell		lubellski@gmail.com	3:55 PM	6:03 PM	128.0 mins	N/A	N/A	Alan just mentioned a 2nd email address. Can you pls verify that address and speak to if it is a better or worse place to comment than the westsusitnaaccess.org email address? Which one is guaranteed to make the public record?	5:40 PM	All Panelists	N/A	This question has been answered verbally.	5:46 PM	Kristi Shepherd	Publicly
51b												omits and under deliver on resource impacts and mitigation, how can the public be certain they are not left holding the bag on cleaning up the mess that is left behind once the private corporations and lease holders finish extracting resources and move on?	5:53 PM	All Panelists	N/A	This question has been answered verbally.	5:57 PM	Kristi Shepherd	Publicly
51c												Being embroiled in years of expensive litigation isn't an option. The public does	5:54 PM	All Panelists	N/A	This question has been answered verbally.	5:57 PM	Kristi Shepherd	Publicly
51d												Sorry, first part of question: If and when the project proponents over promise...	5:54 PM	All Panelists	N/A	This question has been answered verbally.	5:57 PM	Kristi Shepherd	Publicly
52	December 3, 2020	pm Alaska Time	Dan	Graham		dan@tfsengineering.com	4:05 PM	6:03 PM	118.0 mins	N/A	N/A	Thanks panel. Well handled.	5:59 PM	All Panelists	N/A	This question has been answered verbally.	6:01 PM	Kristi Shepherd	Publicly



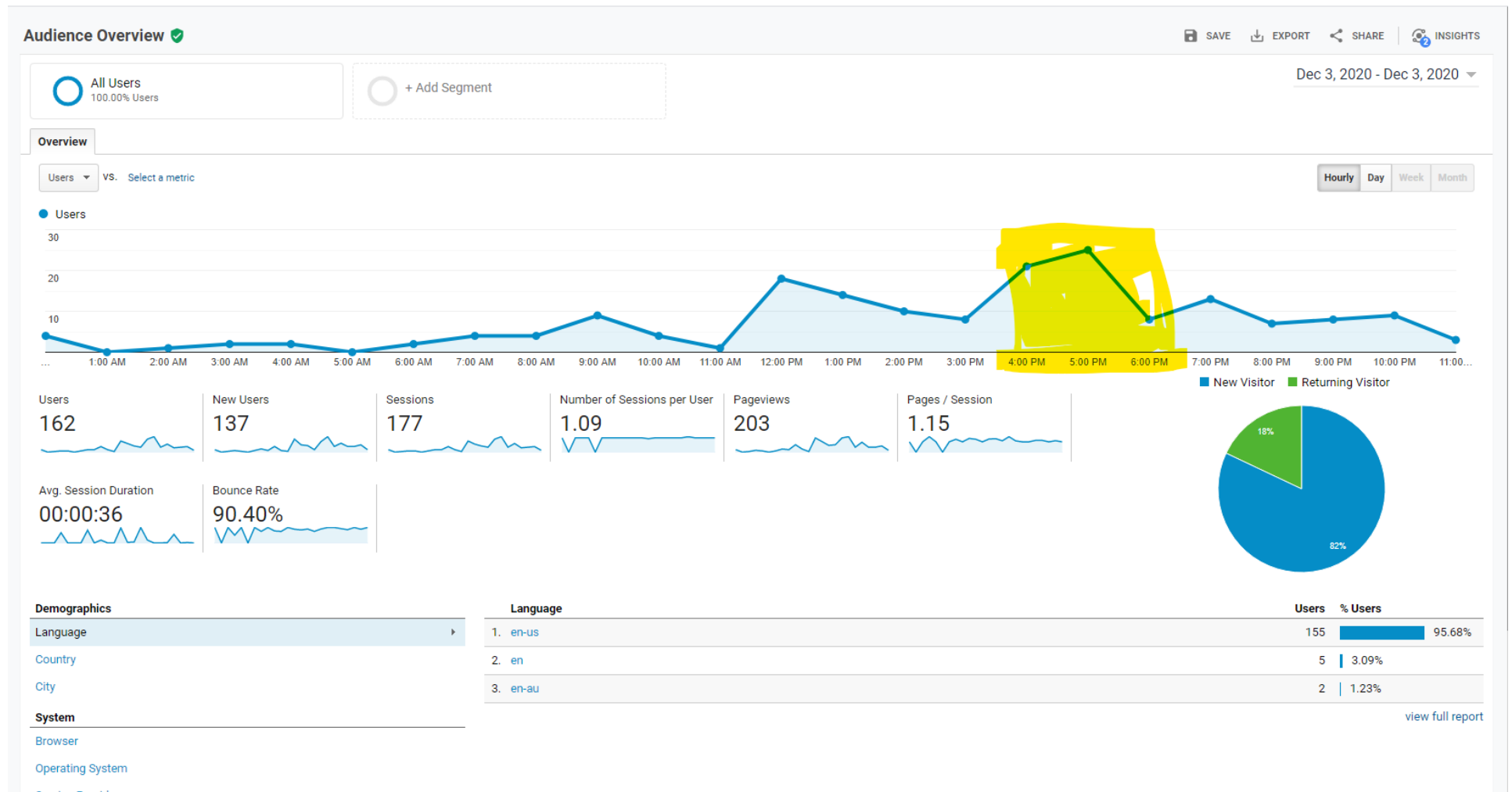
## Attachment B

### Online Open House and Virtual Meeting Data

# Participation during the Online Open House comment period (November 13 through December 20, 2020)



Day of the Virtual Public meeting (December 3, 2020). There were a total of 25 users at peak time (5:00 PM) and an overall total of 162 users for the day.





# Attachment C

## Postcard



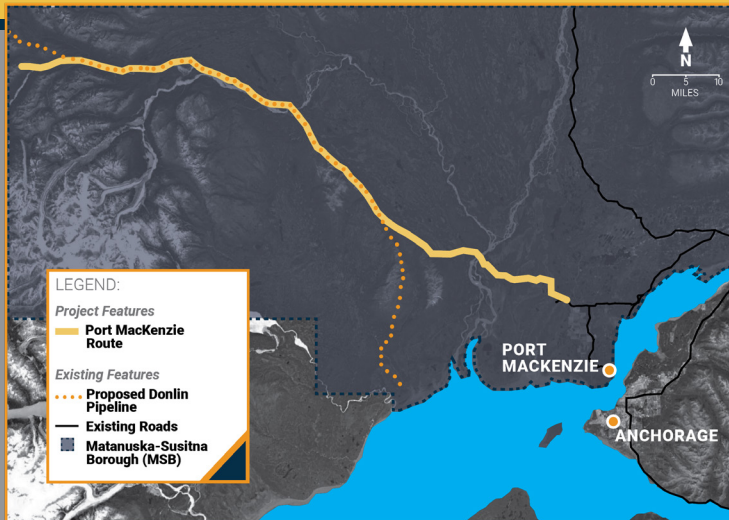
# ONLINE OPEN HOUSE NOTIFICATION

## West Susitna Access Road Project

Thursday, December 3, 2020



West Susitna Access  
Road Project  
C/O Alaska Industrial  
Development and Export Authority  
813 West Northern Lights Blvd.  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503



[www.westsusitnaaccess.org/Programs/ProjectDevelopment/WestSusitnaAccess.aspx](http://www.westsusitnaaccess.org/Programs/ProjectDevelopment/WestSusitnaAccess.aspx)

# West Susitna Access Road Project

Scan Me!



## Online Open House Notification

Virtual Public Meeting  
Join the project team live!

**Thursday, December 3**  
**4 p.m. to 6 p.m.**



Please Join the Team by going to this link at the time of the meeting:



[bit.ly/WSARP2020](https://bit.ly/WSARP2020)

**Meeting Number (Access code):** 146 816 6093 | **Password:** WSARS2020

**To Join by Phone Call:** 1-408-418-9388

**Meeting Number (Access code):** 146 816 6093



Can't join us on December 3? An online open house will be available to review project materials and submit comments between **November 13 and December 20, 2020**, at [www.westsusitnaaccess.org/Programs/ProjectDevelopment/WestSusitnaAccess.aspx](http://www.westsusitnaaccess.org/Programs/ProjectDevelopment/WestSusitnaAccess.aspx)



**Interested in receiving project updates? Join our mailing list!**

[projectinfo@westsusitnaaccess.org](mailto:projectinfo@westsusitnaaccess.org)

*If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Josie Wilson, Public Involvement Lead, at (907) 644-2000.*



## Attachment D

Advertisement in the  
*Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman*

# Palmer closes facilities to slow the spread of COVID-19

BY TIM ROCKEY  
Frontiersman.com

**PALMER** — On Friday, Palmer Manager John Moosey announced the closure of most city facilities as a precaution to slow the spread of COVID-19 in support of Gov. Dunleavy's emergency action.

The MTA Event Center, Train Depot, City Hall, and visitor information center are all closed to the public. The visitor information center restroom will remain open to the public and the library will be closed to in-person reading but will offer curbside delivery. The buildings will remain closed from November 13 until December 1.

"Please, be aware that additional impacts to the City services may occur. The city of Palmer will strive to provide full service in the safest way practical," wrote Moosey.

On Tuesday, the Palmer City Council will hold a special meeting at 6 p.m., for public hearing on Ordinance 20-016 that would enact a mask mandate in Palmer. The ordinance is sponsored by Deputy Mayor Sabrena Combs and Councilwoman Dr. Jill Valerius.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has generated a public health emergency that threatens to overwhelm our health system, endangering the lives and well-being of our cit-



izens. The Governor has issued an emergency alert asking citizens to remain diligent in social distancing and masking. The CDC recommends wearing masks or face coverings in public settings in addition to maintaining six feet physical distancing. In line with his recommendation, the city puts forth this emergency ordinance to preserve the health and safety of our community," reads the ordinance.

There were 584 new COVID-19 cases among Alaskans on Friday and there have been 21,275 total residents that have tested positive. In the Mat-Su, the 82 cases announced on Friday were tied for the second highest day since the start of the coronavirus pandemic with October 25. There have been 2,224 COVID-19 cases among Mat-Su residents. Of those, 626 were from Palmer and 247 of those remain active.

# 119 inmates test positive in Goose Creek COVID-19 outbreak

BY TIM ROCKEY  
Frontiersman.com

**POINT MACKENZIE** — The largest prison in Alaska now has the largest outbreak of inmates who have tested positive for COVID-19.

After an inmate initially tested positive for COVID-19 on October 28, 119 inmates have now been confirmed as positive at Goose Creek Correctional Center, which houses over 1,300 inmates. Inmates have been required to quarantine after transferring facilities since the spring, but additional protocols have been put in place at Goose Creek due to the outbreak.

"All transfers in and out of Goose Creek have been suspended for the time being. Additionally, staff are now required to wear surgical face masks (not cloth coverings) as they provide a higher degree of protection. Finally, testing of the quarantine and isolation mods is being conducted every three days until no positive results are received for 14 days instead of on an as needed basis," said Department of Corrections Public Information Officer Sarah Gallagher.

An inmate at Goose Creek was the



FRONTIERSMAN FILE PHOTO

**The Goose Creek Correctional Center.**

first housed inside Alaska correctional facilities to test positive for COVID-19 in late April and the effort to limit the infection to just one inmate was commended by Gov. Mike Dunleavy. Now two weeks after the first inmate tested positive, 119 have now also tested positive. Of the housing mods that each contain approximately 100 inmates, one mod is quarantined and another mod is isolated with confirmed positive or symptomatic inmates. There have been 618 tests conducted on inmates. Only one member of the Goose Creek staff has tested positive thus far.

"Staff are advised to seek testing in the community," said Gallagher.

## West Susitna Access Road Project Virtual Public Meeting



### Virtual Public Meeting Details:

**Date:** December 3, 2020

**Time:** 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.



Please Join the Team by going to this link at the time of the meeting:



**bit.ly/WSARP2020**

**Meeting Number (Access code):** 146 816 6093

**Password:** WSARS2020



**To Join by Phone Call:** 1-408-418-9388

**Meeting Number (Access code):** 146 816 6093

The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, in coordination with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and industry partners, is in the pre-development feasibility stage of planning for a multi-use public access road leading to resource development opportunities, that will diversify the state and borough economy and lead to job creation.

Can't join us on December 3? An online open house will be available to review project materials and submit comments between November 13 and December 20, 2020 at

**www.westsusitnaaccess.org/Programs/ProjectDevelopment/WestSusitnaAccess.aspx**



### Interested in receiving project updates?

Join our mailing list at  
projectinfo@westsusitnaaccess.org.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Josie Wilson, Public Involvement Lead, at (907) 644-2000.



Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District  
School Board Meeting  
**November 18, 2020**  
Regular Meeting 6 PM  
MSBSD Central Office  
501 N Gulkana, Palmer

Occupancy may be limited due to distancing

## Tentative Agenda

Call to Order/Quorum/Pledge of Allegiance/Approval of Agenda  
Oath of Office for Member Elected November 3, 2020  
Reorganization of the Board – Selection of Officers

Persons to be Heard on Non-Agenda Items (as governed by BP 9323)  
Borough and City Reports

Administrative Reports  
A. Education Support Professional Recognition  
B. Federal Programs

Superintendent Update /Student Advisory Board Report

Consent Agenda  
A. Minutes, October 21, 2020  
B. Request for Grant Acceptance – All Federal Funds

Action Items

Non-Action Items  
A. Houston High School 95% Design  
B. FY21 Legislative Priorities

Persons to be Heard on Non-Agenda Items – (as governed by BP 9323)

Future Items/Future Business  
December 2, 2020 6 PM Regular Board Meeting, MSBSD Central Office

Correspondence/Board Committee Reports

Comments from School Board and Administration

Executive Session (AS 44.62.310 & BP 9321)

All regular School Board meetings are broadcast on Radio Free Palmer KVRF 89.5  
Live streaming is also available at [www.matsuk12.us](http://www.matsuk12.us) - School Board page

Publish: November 13 & 15, 2020

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FRONTIERSMAN  
ARCTIC WARRIOR  
THE PRESS  
THE EAGLE

CALL TODAY 352-2264

Frontiersman  
Publishes:  
Wednesday  
Friday - Sunday  
Web Publishes: Everyday  
Arctic Warrior: Every Friday  
Anchorage Press: Every Thursday  
The Eagle: Every Thursday

**102,000 READERS**  
BETWEEN GRIERWOOD AND TALKKEENA



# Attachment E

## E-Blasts

[View this email in your browser](#)

# West Susitna Access Road Project



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The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, in coordination with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and industry partners, is in the pre-development feasibility stage of planning for a multi-use public access road leading to resource development opportunities, that will diversify the state and borough economy and lead to job creation.

## **Online Open House**

**When:** November 13 to December 20, 2020

**Location:** <https://westsusitnaonline.org/>

## **Virtual Public Meeting**

**When:** December 3, 2020 from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

**Location:** Visit this link to join the meeting: [bit.ly/WSARP2020](https://bit.ly/WSARP2020)

**Meeting Number:** (Access code):146 816 609

**Password:** WSARS2020

Interested in receiving project updates? Join our mailing list at

[projectinfo@westsusitnaaccess.org](mailto:projectinfo@westsusitnaaccess.org)

**PROJECT WEBSITE**

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HDR

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Anchorage, AK 99503-2651

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# West Susitna Access Road Project



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## **REMINDER:** **December 3, 2020** **Virtual Public Meeting**

The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, in coordination with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and industry partners, is in the pre-development feasibility stage of planning for a multi-use public access road leading to resource development opportunities, that will diversify the state and borough economy and lead to job creation.

### **Online Open House**

**When:** November 13 to December 20, 2020

**Location:** <https://westsusitnaonline.org/>

### **Virtual Public Meeting**

**When:** December 3, 2020 from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

**Location:** Visit this link to join the meeting: [bit.ly/WSARP2020](https://bit.ly/WSARP2020)

**Meeting Number:** (Access code):146 816 609



**Password:** WSARS2020

Interested in receiving project updates? Join our mailing list  
at [projectinfo@westsusitnaaccess.org](mailto:projectinfo@westsusitnaaccess.org)

**PROJECT WEBSITE**

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Anchorage, AK 99503-2651

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# Attachment F

## Project Flyer

# West Susitna Access Road Project

## Virtual Public Meeting Join Us!

The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, in coordination with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and industry partners, is in the pre-development feasibility stage of planning for a multi-use public access road leading to resource development opportunities, that will diversify the state and borough economy and lead to job creation.



### Online Open House

**When:**

November 13 to December 20, 2020

**Location:**

<https://westsusitnaonline.org>

**Project Updates:**

Interested in receiving project updates or have questions, email the project team at [projectinfo@westsusitnaaccess.org](mailto:projectinfo@westsusitnaaccess.org)

### Virtual Public Meeting

**December 3, 2020  
from 4 to 6:00 p.m.**

**Visit this link to join the meeting:**  
[bit.ly/WSARP2020](https://bit.ly/WSARP2020)

**Meeting Number (Access code):**  
146 816 6093  
**Password:** WSARS2020

**Join by Phone Call:**  
1-408-418-9388

**Meeting Number (Access code):**  
146 816 6093

### Project Website:

<http://www.westsusitnaaccess.org/Programs/ProjectDevelopment/WestSusitnaAccess.aspx>



# Attachment G

## Radio Public Service Announcement

## 1.0 West Susitna Access Road Project Radio PSA

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Join the West Susitna Access Road Project team at the upcoming virtual public meeting to provide input and learn about the project. The meeting will be held on Thursday, December 3, 2020 from 4 to 6 p.m. Visit [bit.ly/WSARP2020](https://bit.ly/WSARP2020) and use the access code: 146 816 6093 with password: WSARS2020 to participate in the meeting. The public is invited to view the online open house on the project website and provide comments from November 13, 2020 to December 20, 2020. Project website is: [www.westsusitnaaccess.org/Programs/ProjectDevelopment/WestSusitnaAccess.aspx](http://www.westsusitnaaccess.org/Programs/ProjectDevelopment/WestSusitnaAccess.aspx)



# Attachment H

## Comment Log

Comment Number	Date	Comment Type	Commenter	Contact Information	Organization	Comment
1	11/18/2020	Email to Project Email Address	Tom Harris	a.tom.harris@gmail.com	Public	Please place me on your contact list to receive West Susitna Access information. Thank You Tom Harris Sent from my iPhone
2	11/27/2020	Email to Project Email Address	Steve H. Perrins II	Guide88@hotmail.com	Public	Can you please add me to your mailing list and include me in any project updates. Thank you very much, Steve H. Perrins II
3	12/1/2020	Email to Project Email Address	Russell Joyce	mail@westsusitnaonline.org	Public	Russell Joyce Rjoyce@mtaonline.net Please add me to any mailing list you compile in support of this project.
4	12/1/2020	Email to Project Email Address	Glenn Helmuth	helmuth@gci.net	Public	Glenn Helmuth helmuth@gci.net I support this, Alaskans need more access to our state, not everyone owns a plane or boat
5	11/23/2020	Email to Project Email Address	Willi Prittie	willi@mtaonline.net	Public	Dear AIDEA, Mat-Su borough, and others, I will log into your online open house and try to keep an open mind. But for now, I cannot imagine a worse use of public money in a difficult economic time than building a new long-distance road into an roadless area of Alaska, one that will only benefit large mining corporations. If this is such a great thing for Alaskans, then let the corporations in question build their own road with their own money and go through whatever permitting process is necessary to do so. Pebble is not even approved yet, and I sincerely hope it will never be approved. Make no mistake about it, this is simply another project to benefit the infrastructure that Pebble wishes to put in. I am not anti-mining per se, but I believe there are deposits that should remain in the ground until our grand kids or great grand kids are smart enough to figure out how to get it out of the ground without totally f___ing up everything in the process. To put a mine of the scale and type that Pebble would be in the middle of the watershed of the richest wild salmon spawning in the world is the ultimate in human hubris and folly. . .or perhaps it is being proposed only by people who really don't give a s_it because they don't live here and they really could care less about what kind of a mess they will leave and what impact it will have on an already stressed changing climate and environment? When are all you planner and development types going to get the message that we humans need too be doing and developing things VERY differently in the future? Sincerely, Willi Prittie Sunshine, Alaska
6	11/16/2020	Email to Project Email Address	Ted Eischeid	Ted.Eischeid@matsugov.us	Matanuska-Susitna Borough	Subscribed. Thank you.
7	11/21/2020	Email to Project Email Address	James C Golia	jagolia909@aol.com		Please add me to this list Property Owner James C Golia 714-420-3225
8			Mark Miller	<a href="mailto:mark@talaheimlodge.com">mark@talaheimlodge.com</a>	Talaheim Lodge	I would like to comment on the upcoming virtual meeting on the access road. I hope that this road planning doesn't continue until we can have a real live meeting. A virtual meeting can't cover real live bodies in a room discussing this issue. Most of the tourist businesses in the valley and many of the private businesses have been hurt by the covid lockdowns and travel restrictions. The only people that haven't been hurt are state and local employees. I think it's about time you suffer with us and plan on a real meeting sometime this spring when interested parties can all group together and perhaps ask questions to the developers that this road will benefit. Good Fishing, Mark Miller Lodge Owner PO Box 1072 Willow, Alaska 99688 talaheimlodge.com (907) 440-0614

9	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Rachel James	<a href="mailto:rachelannjames@gmail.com">rachelannjames@gmail.com</a>		Thank you for the presentation. Please give some specifics regarding the 3000 mining claims you mentioned earlier in the presentation: Who holds the claims and are they Alaskan? If not, where are they from, please provide details on the company/companies.
10a	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Jason Rockvam	<a href="mailto:jrockak@yahoo.com">jrockak@yahoo.com</a>	Wilderness Place Lodge	The are is mainly wetlands, and a volatile floodplain. Surface water contamination is unavoidable. How can you convince the public that this is environmentally responsible? Not just the road, but logging, gas, development are inevitable future threats.
10b						Overall, the road development is of minor concern. After the road is built, it is built. That opens access to many people for many uses. There must be guidance and a plan for the area at large before you propose access to this special, wild area.
11	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Lynn Fuller	<a href="mailto:lfuller@mtaonline.net">lfuller@mtaonline.net</a>		You indicated that this project is driven by both resource industry interest and by signigicant interest from the public for the road. Do you have any documentation of the public interest?
12	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Eric Booton	<a href="mailto:ebooton@tu.org">ebooton@tu.org</a>		On station 6, which part of the process are me at? Is it MSB Assembly Approval?
13	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Brittany Hartman	<a href="mailto:brittany@agcak.org">brittany@agcak.org</a>	Associated General Contractors of Alaska	Hey Josie! It's Brittany with AGC. I have a brief comment to put on record simply stating taht AGC looks forward to watching this project proegress. How do I get in the queue?
14	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Ted Eischeid	<a href="mailto:ted.eischeid@matsugov.us">ted.eischeid@matsugov.us</a>	Matanuska Susitna Borough (MSB)	What's the rationale for not allowing participants being able to seei who else is on the meeting? Not allowing this does not help build trust.
15	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Melissa Heuer	<a href="mailto:melissa@susitnarivercoalition.org">melissa@susitnarivercoalition.org</a>	Coalition For Susitna Dam Alternatives	Do you know when this will be posted?
16	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Kendra Zamzow	<a href="mailto:klzamzow@chickaloon-nsn.gov">klzamzow@chickaloon-nsn.gov</a>		Will AIDEA commit to having an independent third party, possibly through the MSB, to review the estimated costs?
17	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Israel Payton	<a href="mailto:israelbof@gmail.com">israelbof@gmail.com</a>		Pretty easy, to find the stakeholders, get on Mat su bourgh website tax map and send mail outs.
18a	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Bob Loeffler	<a href="mailto:bobl@jadenorth.com">bobl@jadenorth.com</a>		I'm just curious. How many attendees are there?
18b						You are estimating the cost of the road in Ph II. What is the width of the road you are designing to? And what is the width of the bridges you are cost-estimating? Thanks.
19	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Wayne Brosman	<a href="mailto:pccwhb@gmail.com">pccwhb@gmail.com</a>	Pacific Consulting Group	Thank you for your hard work team! I am looking forward to this project working for everyone locally and for all of Alaska.
20a	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Tom Harris	<a href="mailto:a.tom.harris@gmail.com">a.tom.harris@gmail.com</a>	KI Energy for Alaska Village Initiatives	If this is a public meeting, why are the names of the attendees hidden?
20b						Please listen to the concerns of the private land owners. The track record you boast of does not exist. Where are the salmon going. If you reallly want to brag about wildlife just take the time to compare the wildlife harvests of other states vs. Aaska.
20c						When you have time the data to compare is available.
21	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Steve Perrins	<a href="mailto:guide88@hotmail.com">guide88@hotmail.com</a>	Rainy Pass Lodge	I sent in a comment email but never ehard back a response, can you check if it was received at your end?
22	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Jillian Jablonski	<a href="mailto:jjablonski@ttcd.org">jjablonski@ttcd.org</a>	Tyonek Tribal Conservation District	N/A
23	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Jok Bondurnat	<a href="mailto:n3829j@yahoo.com">n3829j@yahoo.com</a>		will any attempt be made to prevent decimation of game in the road area?
24a	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Kevin Materson	<a href="mailto:contactkevinhere@yahoo.com">contactkevinhere@yahoo.com</a>		There are 100s if not thousands of cabins and homesteads in the area of the proposed road. They are largely off-grid and cannot comment via email or web submission. You need to find another way to do outreach to those land owners.
24b						This area is the playground for Mat-Su and the greater Anchorage area; most of the State's population. A road through it to largely benefit a few commercial mine operations and find a mission for Port Mackenzie.



25a	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Eric Lubell	<a href="mailto:lubellski@gmail.com">lubellski@gmail.com</a>		Alan just mentioned a 2nd email address. Can you pls verify that address and speak to if it is a better or worse place to comment than the westsusitnaaccess.org email address? Which one is guaranteed to make the public record?
25b						omise and under deliver on resource impacts and mitigation, how can the public be certain they are not left holding the bag on cleaning up the mess that is left behind once the private corporations and lease holders finish extracting resources and move on?
25c						Being embroiled in years of expensive litigation isn't an option. The public does not want to be stuck subsidizing the profits of a few private corporations or lease holders.
25d						Sorry, first part of question: If and when the project proponents over promise...
26	12/3/2020	Virtual Public Meeting	Dan Graham	<a href="mailto:dan@tfsengineering.com">dan@tfsengineering.com</a>		Thanks panel. Well handled.
27	12/4/2020	Email to Project Email Address	Denis Ransy	<a href="mailto:denisnak@gmail.com">denisnak@gmail.com</a>		<p>I request that you put me on the stakeholder list to notify me during this process and send communications to my postal mail address. I listened to your December 3, 2020 virtual public meeting.</p> <p>I am completely opposed to this proposed project. There is no way that the plentiful fish and game in the West Susitna area will maintain itself with this industrial development throughout the area. Many folks have concerns about maintaining salmon runs and putting in the right culverts for fish passage and such things. Well, as of now in December 2020, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has gone public with a possible shutdown of the Cook Inlet commercial fishery. As a retired gillnetter in several areas in Alaska, I find this completely unacceptable. Since well before statehood, the headwaters and wetlands above all fisheries were very remote and undeveloped visited only by occasional pilots and wilderness travelers. This is why fisheries survived. No one was upstream dumping arsenic, bringing thousands of gallons of fuel, diverting water flows, creating sewage, and so on. This is exactly why Pebble Mine is being shut down. Headwaters and wetlands have to be preserved. Fish are ultimately floating belly up. Spawning grounds are trashed.</p> <p>The West Susitna area is accessible right now. There are aircraft, boats, snow machines, ATVs, and recreational trails. Hunting and fishing is available year round. Thousands of Alaskans have property as homesteaders, recreationists, clients, and just plain wilderness travelers. Some folks do want better access. They want to cruise out in comfort in their highway pickups and RVs keeping clean and dry all the way and never missing a meal or a convenient rest stop or campground. That is not the essence of traditional, last frontier, traditional wilderness travel. And you can be sure that they will complain when the fish and wildlife populations become more regulated due to human impacts. Game will gradually be diminished. Fishing creeks will be wiped out. I have already seen areas that get so-called "improved" access. The fish and wildlife always gets hurt in the long run.</p> <p>The road will be a gift to a few industrial developers namely out of state corporations with money to burn. And we, the public, will be left with dealing with the negative impacts.</p> <p>Off grid residents and property owners of the area may never get a chance to testify. Their lives will be turned upside down with little to no say in the matter.</p>
28	12/10/2020	Email to Project Email Address	Pat Daniels	<a href="mailto:patdinalaska@yahoo.com">patdinalaska@yahoo.com</a>		<p>Please see the attached. If anyone has any questions, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience. Thank you in advance for your time.</p> <p>Thanks, Pat Daniels 907-315-3301 patdinalaska@yahoo.com</p>
29	12/12/2020	Email to Project Email Address	Blythe Marston	<a href="mailto:blythe.marston@gmail.com">blythe.marston@gmail.com</a>		<p>Dear Sirs,</p> <p>Although I have previously commented on the West Susitna Road Project I was unaware of the virtual open house held last week. Could you please provide me all information that was presented at that meeting and a status report on the project? Also, I would like to be placed on your outreach list as an interested party so that I will be notified of future developments, requests for comments, and meetings regarding the West Susitna Access Project.</p> <p>Thank you, Blythe Marston</p>

30	12/14/2020	Email to Project Email Address	Robin Song	<a href="mailto:robinsong2004@yahoo.com">robinsong2004@yahoo.com</a>	<p>Greetings~I just finished reading the report about the onproposed road on the West side of Cook Inlet. I live in Talkeetna and have been an active participant in fighting against the building of the Su Dam. It is with heavy heart that I read what is being proposed with this road and the impact it would have on the relatively pristine wilderness on that side of the Inlet, the wildlife, salmon streams, and the pressure- once again- to raise the issue of the dam.</p> <p>Human greed is indeed insidious, and knows no bounds. The future of the wilderness, its wildlife, the safety of salmon, migratory birds... all of that vanishes in the face of what money can be made from extracting minerals, oil, and whatever else humans decide is more valuable.</p> <p>It was a long, exhausting fight to get the Su Dam project scrapped. And it wasn't because of the devastating impact on Salmon or the concerns of all the down-river communities that the dam could collapse in a big earthquake. Ultimately it was the pricetag to build the monstrosity that wasn't needed in the first place.</p> <p>And here we are again; having to 'fight the good fight' to get humans to see that building a road, bridges, culverts, etc., in sensitive habitats where fish, birds, plants, and mammals will once again lose out to man-made destruction and pollution, is the wrong thing to do, just to bring more money to those who have no interest in preserving Alaska's beautiful wilderness for the future.</p> <p>It is with weary but hopefully heart that sane minds will prevail and this nightmare of a ecologically disastrous road will never be built.</p> <p>Sincerely, Robin Song Talkeetna</p>
31	12/10/2020	Email to Project Email Address	Eric Anderson	<p>MTA   1740 S. Chugach Street   Palmer, Alaska 99645 office: 907-761-2795   mobile: 907-355-2795  eanderson@mtasolutions.com</p>	<p>MTA</p> <p>Hello, I noticed the West Susitna Access Road Project on the Borough website on Monday. Unfortunately I missed the presentation but the website has a lot of good information. Roads are critical for the development and expansion of industry and a community but along with the road the broadband infrastructure is also vital. I would like to propose for your planning the placement of conduit along the right of way for future fiber optics. This would be used in the future to help speed development in the area by provided the lowest cost possible to place a fiber network. The borough could either sell or lease the conduit to a provider or a mine operator. Donlin mine has plans to place fiber along the proposed gas pipeline for the purpose of monitoring but also for their our broadband needs. As identified in this project there is an extensive section where the pipeline and road are in the same route and a conduit for fiber optic would be valuable to the pipeline project. Further in order to gain access to the existing fiber optic network the road provides the shortest path. In the Palmer and Wasilla area Donlin and any other future develop would have access all fiber networks owned by MTA, ACS, GCI and AT&amp;T, which together provide access to five fiber optic routes through Alaska and out of the state to multiple point in the lower 48 states. Conversely fiber extended to the Beluga and Tyonek area will dead-end. The is currently no existing fiber connecting Beluga and Tyonek to the rest of the state.</p> <p>MTA has the largest fiber optic network in the Matanuska Susitna Valley and as the local co-operative is very interested in the expansion of economic opportunity. If MTA can be of any assistance in the plan process please let me know.</p> <p>Thank you, Eric</p>

32	12/21/2020	Email to Project Email Address	Jok Bondurant	<a href="mailto:n3829j@netscape.net">n3829j@netscape.net</a>	Public	<p>Greetings; The Mat-Su Borough has areas served by roads, and also a lot of the kind of wild, roadless area that makes Alaska the awesome place we have long appreciated. It would be unwise to permanently convert the Susitna and Yentna into another place penetrated by roads and the massive changes that follow them. It is especially sad when the proponents want to do this for the nebulous benefit of possible resource development that can't even make it's presence and Greetings;</p> <p>The Mat-Su Borough has areas served by roads, and also a lot of the kind of wild, roadless area that makes Alaska the awesome place we have long appreciated. It would be unwise to permanently convert the Susitna and Yentna into another place penetrated by roads and the massive changes that follow them. It is especially sad when the proponents want to do this for the nebulous benefit of possible resource development that can't even make it's presence and identity known in the public eye.</p> <p>A good example of the value of this wild area is the Iditarod Trail and sled dog race who's mystique comes from the wild undeveloped areas it passes through. Wildlife will be another inevitable victim of the proposed road, as it has near every road pushed through the back country so far in our state. When masses of the urban population can quickly access and put pressure on the resources there, it will have a dramatic negative effect. It is disingenuous to list timber as a resource that justifies the road, considering the disastrous record of timber production in the upper Susitna Valley. The mines in the area impress me as being mom and pop level deposits. The moms and pops are probably there because there isn't a road through their country. There is no Prudhoe Bay-like resource that demands nor justifies a road.</p> <p>In short, there is no reason for the road that would justify the great harm done. There is mainly an abstract desire on the part of some folks to "develop" a large swath of Alaska, without much respect for the great pristine value that many of us find in the area's wildness.</p> <p>Sincerely, Jok Bondurant</p>
33a						<p>To whom it may concern at AIEDA, Please accept the attached comments on behalf of Trout Unlimited as part of the Online Open House for the West Susitna Access Road Project. Thank you, Eric Booton</p>
33b						<p>Thank you for hosting the Open House and Virtual Public Meeting for the proposed West Susitna Access Road Project. Please accept the following comments regarding the proposed project on behalf of Trout Unlimited (TU). We encourage AIEDA, and the State, to not move forward with the West Susitna Access Road Project because of the significant adverse impacts it will have to the area's important fish and water resources, its impacts to local businesses that rely on the remote character of the region, and the unnecessary costs and financial burden this project will cause for the State of Alaska's already short budget. Trout Unlimited has strong local roots -- with approximately 1,100 members and 20,000 supporters throughout the state that are passionate anglers, lodge owners, fishing and hunting guides, and commercial fishermen, among various other occupations. TU is dedicated to conserving, protecting and restoring coldwater fisheries and their watersheds, and has long participated in efforts to protect and conserve fishery resources within southcentral Alaska. Many of our members and supporters frequent the Susitna River's west-side tributaries and other nearby areas for hunting, fishing and extended wilderness trips. Additionally, our business members operate lodges, guiding and outfitting operations, fly-in trips, or multiple-day rafting trips on the very rivers that will be impacted if this road is built. These businesses are viable because the region is wild and difficult to access, where clients can get a remote wilderness experience with healthy habitat, intact river systems and robust fish and wildlife populations.</p>
33c						<p>Improve Public Notice &amp; Engagement Public notice for the West Susitna Access Road Project has been minimal and ineffective so far, as reiterated numerous times during the December 3rd Online Open House. TU would not have known about the proposal had it not been for the Susitna River Coalition. Similarly, many of our business members who own sportfishing lodges or operate in the area were unfamiliar with the proposal until contacted by TU. TU also requests to be included on your stakeholder list and would appreciate being notified of upcoming meetings, comment periods, and release of documents and studies. Please re-visit your public notice strategy to help better disseminate information about this proposal and associated comment periods to the public. The west Susitna River basin is a popular destination for hunters and anglers throughout southcentral Alaska, please ensure that an effort is made to notify individual hunters and anglers throughout the region as well.</p>

33d						<p>Study Economic Loss The numerous hunting and fishing lodges and operators in the west Susitna River basin are viable not only because of the healthy fish and game populations of the area, but because they offer a remote wilderness experience. Remote recreation is an important economic driver for the region, and creates a demand that few others can meet. Several lodges commented during the Online Open House that this project has the potential to severely alter or terminate their business. These are serious concerns that must be taken more seriously. Trout Unlimited highly encourages AIEDA to conduct an economic loss study during the Feasibility Study for the West Susitna Access Road Project.</p>
33e	12/21/2020	Email to Project Email Address	Eric Booton	<a href="mailto:Eric.Booton@tu.org">Eric.Booton@tu.org</a>	Trout Unlimited	<p>Impacts to Fish Habitat Impacts to fish habitat as a result of building the West Susitna Access Road Project is a large concern for Trout Unlimited and our supporters. Intact river systems and healthy fish habitat are a dwindling resource. The West Susitna Access Road Project would cross through an area rich in wetlands and rivers and require 24 bridges and approximately 440 culverts. The road will have sprawling impacts to our rivers, streams and wetlands. And as we have seen before, each culvert, stream crossing and disturbed stream or wetland adds up to a much larger cumulative impact as sedimentation and erosion increases, and access for salmon to important spawning and rearing habitat is blocked or impeded. The consequences of improperly constructed or poorly maintained culverts has been observed throughout the MatSu Borough. Studies have found that 80% of the borough's culverts failed to allow adequate fish migration and affected access to more than 400 miles of rearing habitat for juvenile fish. The Borough and State have spent more than \$18 million in recent decades replacing around 115 of these culverts that blocked salmon migration, and that's only a portion of the culverts that need replaced. While recent road construction projects have sought to meet state standards for allowing salmon passage, there is a large backlog of problematic culverts and growing costs associated with road maintenance that continue to draw from the already thin budgets of local governments and state agencies. The West Susitna Access Road would need to be built to the fish friendly culvert standards of the Matanuska Susitna Borough, at a minimum, in order to best limit impacts to fish and their habitat. This means that adequate fish passage and culverts for nearly 500 stream, river, and wetlands crossings would need to be researched, designed and constructed for the full extent of the 108-mile road and draws into question the economic viability of the proposed project.</p>
33f						<p>Transparency As a "road to resources", the impacts to fish habitat and water quality associated with the West Susitna Access Road Project are not limited to those associated with only the development of the road. There is an untold amount of impacts that will occur as a result of this road and the development projects it will support. These future impacts need to be simultaneously weighed when determining whether or not the proposed project is in the best interest of Alaskans. Little has been made public about what industries and projects intend to utilize the West Susitna Access Road other than Nova Minerals, a foreign mining company, who as we heard from businesses and area landowners during the December 3rd Online Open House, has proven to be a bad actor so far. All of the industries and projects interested in utilizing the road need to be released to the public for transparency, to have any idea what the true impacts of the proposed project, aid in analysis of the proposal, and judge the economic potential. The West Susitna Access Road Project is being proposed for the benefit of private industries to access development projects for their gain, while simultaneously impacting an unknown amount of public lands and resources. Additionally, it is unclear as to whether the road will be private, public or some sort of hybrid. This needs to be clarified for all parties and stakeholders. If the road is built, it should inherently be public, however its construction would still clearly be for the benefit of resource development projects. Public money should be reserved for clear, public benefit and not be spent to subsidize roads for the benefit of private industry, especially as we experience routine budget shortfalls.</p>
33g						<p>Conclusion Thank you for accepting and considering these comments from Trout Unlimited. The construction of the West Susitna Access Road Project will come at a large cost to existing area businesses, the regions fish and their habitat, and be an unnecessary expense to the State of Alaska's limited budget and should not be further pursued. Should AIEDA move forward with the West Susitna Access Road Project, we ask that the necessary measures be taken to provide appropriate public notice and time for stakeholders to learn about the project and provide meaningful comments. Additionally, please include adequate fish passage in the preliminary engineering and an economic loss study in Phase II research and disclose the potential resource development projects that may come of this road and whether it will be public, or not - decision makers and the public cannot truthfully weigh the cost and benefits of the West Susitna Access Road Project without having accurate information</p>

34	11/23/2021	Email to Project Email Address	Michael & Paula Williams	7362 W Parks Hwy, #501 Wasilla, AK 99623 907-733-5239 eagle@eaglesongalaska.com	EagleSong Family Peony Farm	<p>As fulltime residents of the West Susitna region (Trail Lake) for over 26 years we hold a focused interest in the West Susitna Access Road Project. We have raised our family here and created one of the few businesses in the region that are still operating today. This region is very deeply intertwined in our lives.</p> <p>During our 26 years here we have seen numerous starts and stops to resource development in the Susitna Valley. We've always known that someday there would be a serious push to open the region with a road. Our only question was would it happen in our lifetime. It now appears that may come to pass.</p> <p>The area west of the Susitna River has been in an economic freefall for over 20 years. The 2010 census is a good indicator of the decline in population and we fully expect the 2020 census to show the decline has not slowed.</p> <p>When we made this our home in the early 90s it was a vibrant tourism area with dozens of lodges offering hunting and fishing opportunities. Recreational parcels were being bought at a brisk pace, cabins were being built and winter recreation was starting to boom, with improved access to the Susitna River. In the early 2000s that started to change rather rapidly. It is due largely to the invasion of the non-native northern pike. This prehistoric predatory fish decimated the abundant salmon runs that were the economic engine of the area. It was like the company town where the factory closes. Lodges started boarding up, the support industry being developed to support winter tourism couldn't survive on winter alone. People started abandoning the recreational properties and the area economically went into a steep decline.</p> <p>The few people that still call this region home subsist, work seasonal jobs or remote jobs like the Slope. Only a handful of businesses exist in the region today. It became even more difficult to develop or hang on to our existing economy as basic services required to sustain infrastructure disappeared. Matanuska Telephone Association pulled its services around 2016 even though they were receiving millions of federal dollars to develop broadband connectivity in remote areas such as ours. Today there are zero basic services that the west Susitna area can depend on.</p> <p>Now there is to be a 100 mile long road to the foot of the Alaska Range. How is this going to impact the residents and property owners? I hope you take a very close look at that question. This road will destroy the remote way of life that most came here to live. On the other hand it may...may...bring some economic opportunity. Either way the lives of those that live here <u>are</u> going to be changed <u>forever</u>. It is that fact that I am concerned will not be adequately evaluated. We are but a handful of residents and have very little voice. Our local governments don't pay us much attention because, quite honestly, we don't matter in the grand scheme of things. We don't generate much in the way of taxes. Our votes aren't needed to sway any elections. We don't get any basic services, no fire protection, schools, utilities, mail, not even telephone service. So, historically we have been an afterthought at best.</p> <p>One of my major concerns is we will be steamrolled by a big project that is deemed "good for the State". We the few will be sacrificed for the benefit of the majority. It has always been part of our history, will it continue as part of our future? To the people living west of the Susitna, the solitude and sanctity of this wild land is a major part of our existence. That is going to be irreparably damaged, if not destroyed. Our subsistence way of life will change with the easy access the road will bring. Will our opportunities to harvest moose, bear, fish and other wildlife be threatened? Many of us Non-native invasive species continue to threaten the region. Northern pike continue to spread unabated while millions of dollars are being spent to slow their spread. Will this project exacerbate the issue? A spruce bark beetle infestation has killed 10s of thousands of spruce trees throughout the Susitna Valley over the past 2 years. Will this project speed up their spread or transport them to areas they wouldn't have normally traveled to? Thousands of dead spruce trees present a very significant wildfire danger. Will there be an increased risk of wildfire during road construction? And next there is the recent threat of an invasive plant known as Elodea. It currently threatens an area adjacent to the midpoint of the road project. The potential of spreading this invasive to other waterways/bodies of water is significant.</p> <p>I encourage you to seek out the unique knowledge of those along the project route. You should seek them out individually, not in a free-for- all public forum. There are many things project managers could not/do not know about the region. There are historic and cultural sites that are likely not known by the State Historian or other agencies. Why? They have never been threatened by development and/or in a position to be evaluated. Do you know where the last dozen or so holdouts of a once mighty sockeye salmon run that inhabited the Sucker Creek/Lake drainage cling to life? Of course you don't, but I do, and have kept that a secret for over 20 years to protect them. This project could easily destroy them. You need to seek out the knowledge of locals if you truly care about doing this project right.</p> <p>The area will most certainly be overrun with snowmachine and atv traffic. It will become the new Petersville Road, where people will flock to recreate. If mining is developed heavy equipment and trucks will thunder up and down the road year round. Undoubtedly large areas of timber will be cut to ship out to the Pt. MacKenzie Port. Sections of old growth forest will disappear potentially replaced by clear cut swaths. You say there is 64,000 acres of agricultural land identified over here. All of these things will undoubtedly benefit the whole, but what is to come of us?</p>
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I know we can be easily swept aside. The requirement for public notices for the project can easily be met by printing a legal notice in the Alaska Journal of Commerce or some other obscure publication. You can lay low and wait for the appropriate period of time to elapse and push on. Check off the square and don't look back. I am pleased, in this particular instance, this has not been the case - so far. You can ask for public input and take in responses like this one, file it away and be done with it. Yet another requirement completed as legally required. You can talk about economic opportunity for the region and proceed to exploit the land for outside benefit, ultimately ignoring the meager voices of a handful of people that live here and truly love and respect all this land has provided.

I am not saying this is all going to happen, but history bares out my concerns. This project will impact those that call the west Susitna area home. There is no way around that fact. Again, how are you going to deal with that fact? We all know that change is inevitable. For the 26+ years I've lived here I've waited for the bull dozers to arrive. It has been a reoccurring nightmare all that time. Today I am faced with the very real possibility the time has come. You will decide if it is a nightmare or the beginning of a different, but brighter day ahead.

We have all seen how the Pebble Project spiraled out of control. After years of Pebble dragging along, the public is leery, to say the least, when it comes to mining projects. In this region we are already years into the potential of a Donlin gas pipeline project running thru the same area. Now we add the potential of Nova Mineral bringing a second mining operation to the area. That is a lot to digest, requiring a lot of trust.

At one point in one of the documents I read on the project it was stated the road right of way would be 1000 feet either side of a center line. If a 2000 feet right of way is correct I would like to know why so large? Also, is there any discussion of a rail spur running adjacent to the road to support heavy industry (mining/timber)?

I don't want to sound too melodramatic, but I hope you understand the gravity of the situation. On a slightly smaller scale, this is the equivalent of the building of the Alaska railroad. The railroad ushered in a new era and changed Alaska forever. There are few of us left in this country that live as we do, and I feel our days are numbered.

I beg you to look closely at what this project is going to do to those that live here. Make this project an example of what can be and should be in the development of Alaska's resources. Give us, the residents and property owners of the west Susitna region a reason to support this project and usher in a new era for this land we call home.

Sincerely,

Michael & Paula Williams

EagleSong Family Peony Farm

Comment Number	Date	Comment Type	Commenter	Contact Information	Organization	Comment	Response Date	Responded By	Response	Documentation
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These comments are sent to HDR, AIDEA, and Mat-Su Borough (MSB).

I request that you put me on your stakeholder list to receive your public process communications.

I participated in the 12/03/2020 virtual public meeting. I hope these meetings will continue. My questions were not answered adequately.

The West Susitna Access Reconnaissance Study/West Susitna Access to Resource Development Transportation Analysis Report dated January 2014 was prepared by HDR for the Alaska Department of Transportation. My original 2014 public comments to that study stated that the major study flaw was the lack of consideration of environmental impacts. The direct loss of upland and aquatic habitats, altered stream flows, air and water pollution, acid mine drainage, metal leaching and catastrophic failures of systems designed to contain or transport product or waste are not mentioned. These are just a few of the impacts that can happen. Also ignored were the increased risks of forest fires and invasive species transmission. Only rarely has it been possible in Alaska to build roads that have no negative effects on streams.

Just as with the Ambler Mining Road proposal, this proposal has passed from ADOT to AIDEA. The phased approach of the Memorandum of Understanding between AIDEA, MSB and Alaska Operations (Nova Minerals subsidiary) cannot make the same mistake of not mentioning the environmental impacts.

The Mt. Susitna Region of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources' 2010 Susitna Matanuska Area Management Plan is one of the major areas that would be impacted by the proposed access. The Mt. Susitna Region encompasses the Mt. Susitna, Little Mt. Susitna, Beluga Mountain uplands, the drainages of the Skwentna, Talachulitna, Beluga, Theodore and Lewis Rivers, and the eastern edge of the Alaska Range above the Hayes River Pass. Of the 26 subunits:

- 21 subunits have a variety of anadromous streams,
- 18 have important moose wintering concentrations, calving and rutting places,
- 11 have bear habitat including spring concentrations for brown bears,
- 16 have dispersed nesting sites and brood rearing areas for trumpeter swans and other waterfowl.

This access will affect thousands of acres of public land and also private land. Not to mention hauling potential hazardous contaminants on an industrial road. From the very beginning, we need to remain vigilant about the process and what is being proposed. *Our diverse "portfolio" of habitat types in the West Susitna River watershed is key to our fish and wildlife resources, rural and remote lifestyles, and the economies and subsistence uses that are already established.*

1. Wetlands Mitigation: **The public insists that there be no unmitigated wetlands destruction.**

The currently proposed Point MacKenzie route would cross Anderson, Alexander, Upper Sucker, Pierce, Bear and Wolverine Creeks to name a few tributaries as examples. Crossing the Skwentna River watershed would be a big part of the route. The black spruce wetlands that border the Fish Creek area in the southern part of the route are ranked as among the most valuable Mat-Su wetlands. They filter water for salmon bearing streams. The MSB Wetland Management Plan states that studies have shown that the Mat-Su is losing its wetlands faster than any other place in Alaska.

The US Army Corps of Engineers 404 Clean Water Act Permit for the proposed Donlin Gold natural gas pipeline right of way (ROW) only required wetland mitigation for 4 acres. This resulting federal action is outrageous. The pipeline would eliminate 1363 linear feet of streams and 200 acres of wetlands. The MSB has 800 acres in its Wetland Mitigation Bank that could have been used for offsets. Even former MSB Manager Moosey has said without offsets the disappearance of aquatic resources are inevitable. This shows the federal Army Corps of Engineers process cannot be trusted to protect our valuable wetlands. *We cannot let what happened with the pipeline wetlands mitigation happen with West Susitna proposed access.*

Wetlands and the activities associated with them are key components of the Mat Su economy. Conservation, protection and careful management with no net loss of wetland function and values is necessary. We can't depend on the 404 Clean Water Act permitting process to do this. And we cannot depend on the MSB to do this. A wetlands ordinance to provide for supplemental wetland mitigation for large development projects in the borough is stalled out in the MSB administrative process. Such an ordinance would provide mitigation measures for impacted wetlands and fisheries habitat. This stalling is due to politics and the influence of large developers and their tie in with the proposed state bill SB 204.

SB 204 would eliminate the 5 state designated Recreational Rivers and their management plans that are in the access area. These are the Little Susitna River, the Deshka River, Talachulitna River, Lake Creek and Alexander Creek. The act would also eliminate the borough platting authority on state lands. The 5/20/2020 memorandum from the MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission to the MSB Mayor and Administrations states that SB 204 and phase II MOU for West Susitna are closely related. I believe that they tied in together. One must conclude that SB 204 would pave the way for unfettered development in the West Susitna watershed. The resulting negative impacts would fall on the borough and the public to fix

Thus, the public is faced with a conundrum. Without a borough wetlands ordinance, we are forced to tell AIDEA that this access cannot happen unless there is no unmitigated wetlands destruction. *This is the cost of doing business in the remote lands of the Mat Su.*

2. Cumulative Impacts of Proposed West Susitna Access with Donlin Gold (Donlin) Natural Gas Pipeline Must be Considered

The Donlin Pipeline State ROW permit ADL 231908 does NOT even include an ADL ROW for their proposed future optic fiber line. And cumulative impacts must include the supposed "temporary" winter construction routes.

From the HDR West Susitna Access overview map, it looks like the Port Mackenzie route will parallel the Donlin pipeline route for at least 50 miles. Unfortunately, the Donlin Natural Gas Pipeline Cumulative Effects Analysis Summary dated June 2020 does NOT consider the pipeline ROW impacts along with the West Susitna access. So their analysis is incomplete and cannot be depended on to provide complete information.

Page 1 of that Summary stated that Donlin's material sites would not conflict with any other known gravel uses along the pipeline route. Well, that now is changed. Obviously with consideration of West Su access, there will be significant gravel uses in this whole area. Gravel pits, water extraction sources, and construction crew camps will be needed for two and perhaps a third project (optic fiber line).

Will AIDEA/MSB be using some of the same areas for the gravel, water, airstrips and crew camps as Donlin will use? This question was not answered in the December 3 public hearing. For instance, with the gas pipeline construction there will be 20 water extraction sites in the Susitna Valley for ice road construction. How many water extraction sites will be needed for West Su access ice roads during construction?

### 3. Engineering Issues to Consider

#### A. Permafrost

According to the generalized map on page 4-70 of the Alaska LNG FEIS the general West Susitna access area shows isolated permafrost which is 0-10%, sporadic permafrost 10-50% along with some discontinuous permafrost which is 50-90% permafrost. AIDEA/MSB will have to determine the amounts of discontinuous permafrost, thaw stable permafrost soils, and thaw unstable soil conditions that are expected to settle more than 1 foot when thawed over time.

Specifications and procedures to manage the effects of permafrost thaw settlement on the roads, culverts and bridge integrity will be needed. Considerations are needed to reduce permafrost thaw and facilitate re-establishment of seasonally active layers. Thaw equilibrium includes backfill placement or ground installations and/or rolled erosion control products.

#### B. The Emerging Hazard of Thawing Permafrost

Thawing permafrost is an emerging hazard in Alaska. Southcentral Alaska is thawing dramatically especially in alpine areas. Once frozen slabs of rock, dirt, and ice are releasing trapped liquids. Such releases mean the land is prone to sliding down from the higher elevations. Plus, with climate change impacts, there is more water in the atmosphere. Precipitation becomes more intense. Extreme rain storms may occur. Rain more than earthquakes are prone to trigger landslides. With this new emerging hazard, it is urgent for the road engineering to assess where there will be unstable slopes and where it will be a hazard to road use. We need to know the risk. And we need slope stabilization.

### 4. Cultural Heritage Resources

The Open House materials show the importance of the preservation of sensitive cultural historic sites. It states if there is an adverse impacts on such sites, it will be necessary to resolve the adverse effects through mitigation. *So what exactly does this mean?*

Construction should NOT begin until cultural resource surveys and National Register of Historic Places evaluations, treatment or avoidance plans have been reviewed by the appropriate agencies. A project plan for Unanticipated Discovery of Cultural Resources and Human Remains must be in place. Such would identify procedures to be implemented when such occurs.

Direct impacts on significant cultural resources that are unavoidable must have mitigation such as recovery of the data and curation of the materials pre-construction. One example of what should be done pre-construction is the consultation of the Alaska Gasline Development Corporation (AGDC) did with the Knik Tribal Council. They met on 10/16/2015 to address tribal council concerns about LNG project impacts on their traditional lands, cultural heritage sites and water resources. AGDC modified their route to avoid areas of concern and invited tribal members to participate in a cultural resource survey within the tribe's traditional lands. There needs to be consultation with the Knik Tribal Council and others.

Of note is the statement of the Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan regarding heritage sites. The Talachulitna River Management Unit has high potential for heritage sites. This is mentioned for the mouth and middle part of the river, Talachulitna Creek and Judd Lake. The Alexander Creek Management Unit has high heritage site potential in upper Alexander Creek and Alexander Lake. Lower Alexander Creek has high potential due to historic subsistence use and the proximity to the village of Alexander near the mouth.

### 5. Revegetation of Material Sites Must Be Considered.

This must be considered from the very start of the process. Segregation and replacement of the organic layer at material sites must happen in order to reduce the permanent loss of vegetation. This measure would improve the revegetation at material sites. The excavated area would not likely be fully covered by topsoil since the excavation increases the surface area at the site. This is a downside. In addition, material sites fill up with water and prevent plant establishment. For material sites hydrologically connected to sensitive fish habitats, aquatic and riparian revegetation would have to be established to minimize long term impacts in consultation with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

### 6. Project Financing

What will pay for the development and construction of this proposed access? Will AIDEA or state obligation bonds be used?

On July 2019 Moody's Investors Service downgraded AIDWEA's bond rating. Overall, a suite of Alaska State Debt Bonds have been downgraded by Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's. At least \$724 million worth of General Obligation bonds, \$1.1 Billion state appropriation bonds and \$1.1 Billion of Alaska Municipal Bonds have been downgraded. This information should probably be checked for current updates. The downgrading of our bonds is concerning to the public.

The reasons behind the downgrades are the anemic state budget operating revenues. FY 2020 budget has deep cuts in services with little change for FY2021. *Fitch's analysis states that the substantial reductions in the state's health care and university budgets may increase the state's susceptibility to the volatility in the natural resource industry. How will this affect the bonds if used for this access proposal?*

The public knows from previous studies that there are always cost overruns in big Alaska projects in remote regions particularly due to the difficult terrain. This must be taken into account.

### 7. Clean-up Costs from Mining Closure and Catastrophic Accidents

The main impetus for this proposed road access is to benefit the mining industry. Right up front, the public wants early consideration of what is necessary for mining closure and accidents. Historically in the U.S., the actual direct and indirect costs of "walkaway" restoration have typically proven to be 1.5 to 2 times the original estimate for mines without acid drainage. It is 10 times the estimate for mines with acid drainage. It is a big uncertainty. And it is almost never predicted accurately in advance whether mine production will produce acid drainage.



The mining companies need to be able to demonstrate that they can afford the clean-up costs in order to remove the financial burden from the public. Historically, many mining companies avoid clean-up costs by declaring bankruptcy and transferring assets to other companies controlled by the same overall company. Then it becomes a shell game of using different companies to avoid clean-up costs.

We want to prevent this from happening in West Susitna watershed.

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