



NORTHERN ACCESS TO THE UNIVERSITY AND MEDICAL DISTRICT
RECONNAISSANCE STUDY REPORT

DOT&PF Project No. 51838

Appendix A

Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report

November 2011





**Northern Access to the University Medical District
Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)**

Comment	Comment By
Thanks for the great report. It is thorough and explores many good options and evaluation criteria. It appears to me that Alternative G best meets the purpose and need (mobility and safety) for the U-med district and the overall community as a whole. I want to encourage our city and state officials to keep the process moving and not take 10-20 years to get the project constructed. (10/4/11)	Dennis R. Linnell
Thanks for the report. Please point me to the section that discusses commercial vehicle access to the institutions in the U-Med District. I know it is in the report somewhere but I must have missed it. Thanks. (10/4/11)	Aves Thompson
Dear AMATS: As a retiree of UAA and someone who enjoys walking in the Goose Lake and University Lake areas, my 'vote' is for Option C. (10/5/11)	Sandra Knight
Thanks for the notice. One comment on the project website—you might consider including the title of each chapter to the listing/links. This would make it a bit more user friendly. (10/5/11)	Alison L. Smith
I have read most of the report. Rather technical in places but a generally good effort to make it readable for the general literate public. I prefer the G and H corridor concepts because it looks the most because there is not much year round activity in that area. Unfortunately, it is rather boggy between Elmore north and the intersection of Elmore south and Providence Drive, or over to the UAA campus along the theatre/arts parking lot. Maybe an elevated roadway on piling is the way to disturb hydrology, wildlife, and recreational use the least. My biggest concern is who is going to pay for this. The biggest beneficiary of this improved northeast access will be the Providence Health System, which is among other things a massive real estate development activity that has a minor interest in charity health care. Yet they pay no municipal property tax, state corporate tax or federal tax. They should pay for this road corridor and all the amenities required to mitigate the impacts and to improve pedestrian and recreational opportunities in that green area so that when it is over, the development obstructionists will have to admit that we trail users and other non-motorized, non-medical folks will have to admit that it was a good thing after all. There will be an uphill battle to get bond approval for this if Providence doesn't chip in. Folks are starting to take note of how many hundred million dollars Providence doesn't pay into Muni coffers. I know that is not your area of interest but it goes into the calculus of how much to fight this invasion of open space. (10/5/11)	Bradley Cruz
Page 49 of the Final Recon Report says that there is a "Traffic Analysis" report on the website. We can't find it on the project website. Please direct us to it, or post it soon, so that we and others have sufficient time to review and comment on it before the end of the comment period. (10/10/11)	David and Diana Evans
I lean to the no action or TDM alternatives. This area of Anchorage is unique and valuable in that it is not about moving cars around, but about walking and recreating outdoors. The green spaces in our city are dwindling fast and we need to be proactive about keeping them intact. I do not believe a road bisecting UAA and APU will do anything to help the traffic. I live in this district and travel to UAA every day during peak hours. The traffic is a little heavy, but not outrageous. I really don't understand what the fuss is about. This area has a wonderful collegiate feel in a large part due to the green space connecting the campuses. Tudor road is already set up to be a high volume road and should be utilized to relieve the district traffic. I don't see any alternatives that will actually help and not destroy what makes this area unique and valuable. (10/12/11)	Anne Richards

**Northern Access to the University Medical District
Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)**

<p>Of the four concepts recommended for future consideration, my FIRST CHOICE is "Concept – G" (i.e., direct connection of Elmore Road to S. Bragaw Street), for it clearly seems to best meet the needs of the Anchorage Community. In addition, Concept "G" is the only one of the alternative routes which is considered "Favorable" with regard to all three of what I think are the most critical design criteria; namely, (1) Traffic Operations, (2) Engineering Challenges, and (3) Meets Purpose and Need. Each of the other three concepts (i.e., Concepts "I", "J", & "K") falls short of full compliance with so many of the design criteria as to arguably place them out of contention when compared to Concept "G". My SECOND CHOICE of the four concepts is "Concept K", because (a) It is the only concept without a single "Not Favorable" criteria ranking, (b) It is the least costly alternative, (c) It provides the most direct route from North Anchorage to Providence Hospital, and (d) It is the least environmentally disruptive alternative. My LAST CHOICE of the four concepts is "Concept I", because (a) It includes a potentially disruptive – even dangerous -- traffic intersection with Northern Lights Boulevard, (b) It is the most environmentally disruptive alternative, and (c) By not effecting a direct connection to S. Bragaw Street, it inhibits the efficiency of the U-MED connection to North Anchorage. Do not hesitate to contact me if there are any questions regarding my comments. Thanks for this opportunity to comment upon this traffic initiative. (10/13/11)</p>	<p>Steve Paliwoda</p>
<p>I am a homeowner in the College Alps condominium complex off of Wesleyan Drive. I disagree strongly with Concept C as it would dramatically affect me, placing a road directly behind my condo, instead of the woods and APU trail system that currently exists. The trails were a major factor in my attraction to this condo complex. Since living here, I frequently see wildlife in the area where the Concept C would cut through. This wildlife includes moose, black bear, and lynx, as well as the other small creatures that frequent all Alaskan woods. My condo was recently valued at a higher appraised rate than similar condo complexes due to the "proximity to greenbelt" (per appraisal document). The placement of a busy road so near would greatly decrease the value of the condos. As condo owners, we spent last year dealing with the construction for a new paved trail in the same area. This construction was dusty, loud, and turned my once pleasant walks into an obstacle course of construction equipment, not to mention the "moat" that was dug to place the trail. Since the paved trail has been in place, there has been increased activity near the condo complex. This activity has decreased my level of personal safety, as people utilize the trail at all hours – this increased activity resulted in my vehicle being broken into recently while parked in my assigned parking spot on the condo complex grounds. I can only imagine the negative impact of a road system of any sort. I implore those involved to choose an option that does not involve decreasing the amount of wildlife habitat that is so quickly dissipating in the Anchorage bowl. Please choose a less detrimental option. Use of existing roads, without increasing infiltration into open space, is the obvious solution. Thank you for your consideration. (10/21/11)</p>	<p>Annie Santiago</p>
<p>Here we go again. Traffic and projected traffic provoke the Pavlovian response to build more roads. We build the roads at the expense of neighborhoods and parks and open space, but we still have traffic problems, both real and imagined. Roads invite cars and encourage traffic. This time, let's try another solution and get over the idea that people have a right to drive their cars wherever they want to go in the straightest line possible. Tudor provides good access to U-Med, and access could be improved with only modest work from Tudor north. Shuttle buses and other public transportation can also be part of the solution. For the moment, the best alternative is "no action" while we work to solve the problem with far less negative impact than is being proposed in the preferred alternatives. Thank you for considering my views. (10/24/11)</p>	<p>Julian Mason</p>
<p>Dear DOWL HKM, As a resident in Airport Heights who bike commutes into the U-Med District for work as well as uses the unpaved trails for recreation I wanted to comment on some of the conclusions contained in the recent Northern Access to U-Med District Final Report. Impact to parks and trails should be rated as one of the higher criteria for the proposed Concepts. Specifically, any proposed Concepts which go through areas of unpaved trails (upland areas) or which would disrupt existing paved trails with new roads are undesirable. These trails provide one of the few areas of town where biking is not dependant on waiting at traffic lights for cars to go by before being able to proceed. We should be encouraging more biking and walking and skiing as transportation options, not cut off existing trails with roadways. That being said, of the Concepts G, I, J, and K that were proposed for future consideration, I would suggest that Concepts G and K would have the least disruption to existing trails. (10/25/11)</p>	<p>Diana Redwood</p>
<p>Dear Folks at DOWL, I have reviewed the various concepts for adding road access to the U-Med district and find that only one of them would benefit the U-Med district while not greatly negatively impacting surrounding neighborhoods and/or recreational opportunities. That is Concept G. A nearly direct route from Bragaw to Elmore makes sense if it includes ample underpasses and/or overpasses for ski/hike/bike trails. All of the other options either strongly impact the College Gate neighborhood or would cause too much destruction of the existing recreational trails. The University area trail system is one of Anchorage's greatest assets. Any impact on it should be as minimal as possible. Please keep this in mind when deciding which concept to pursue. (10/27/11)</p>	<p>Jack Curtiss</p>
<p>Alaska Pacific University (APU) does not support a Northern Access Road. We vehemently oppose the routes that bisect our campus (C,D, E, H, I, F). Since the new UAA Sports Arena will have a major impact on traffic in the U-Med District, if there must be a road, then APU's position is that it should be on UAA's campus i.e., alternatives L, J, and/or K. Several years the UA Board of Trustees position was that, if they built a Sports Arena, they would favor the Elmore Road extension (the G-H) route. The G-H Route would have a major impact up on the entry to APU's campus and access to our endowed properties and would require commitments from UAA, state, and Municipality to ensure that APU would not be unduly harmed. Thank you. (10/27/11)</p>	<p>Don Bantz</p>

**Northern Access to the University Medical District
Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)**

<p>Given that the purpose of this plan is in large part to provide access to medical facilities, I think it fitting that the plan should abide by the philosophy of "Premium non nicer (First, do no harm)." The areas potentially affected by this plan are highly valued by students, residents, employees and others for a host of reasons, and the first criteria in determining the appropriateness of any individual plan should be ensuring that it does not adversely affect the existing values of the land as enjoyed by a significant proportion of the population. To me those plans which bisect the UAA/APU lands on routes which are located between Bragaw and Elmore roads are the most damaging to the current uses and benefits of the land. Trails in this parcel are used year round for recreation, for training of athletes who range from Tuesday Night Racers to Olympians, and for commuting by bicycle or on foot. These uses would all be negatively affected by a major road running through the middle of this corridor, especially during the winter when bike lanes and/or sidewalks get plowed in with snow and slush from the roadway. Wildlife surely benefit from this intact piece of undeveloped land as well. Moose are abundant, particularly during the winter months, and seem to congregate in the open area crossed by section A-A' in Figure 19 of the Reconnaissance Report. The Report is correct in showing that plans G, J, and K will have major negative affects on the intrinsic value of the area, while these plans and plan I will have major negative affects on wildlife and on wetlands. I strongly recommend that these plans be rejected due to these adverse affects. Remember that people do not choose to live in Anchorage because of the rapid commutes. We choose to live here because of the quality of life, particularly the ability to enjoy outdoor recreation year-round in wonderful open areas such as the UAA/APU lands. Visitors choose to come to Anchorage for the same reason, as well as for the opportunity to see wildlife such as moose. No plan should be considered that will hurt our "Big, Wild, Life". P. S. I think you should consider the impact of a more minor change, in making UAA Drive a one-way connector between Northern Lights and Providence Drive during rush hour periods. Using a "reversible lane" concept, all traffic could go south during the morning rush and north in the evenings, essentially adding a lane to this road with only minor construction needed. In my experience this has been both successful and safe other locations ranging from interstate HOV lanes to smaller roads with high commuter volumes and limited room for expansion and alternative routes (a prime example being the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, in Washington DC). (10/27/11)</p>	<p>Eric Moore</p>
<p>My name is Michael Black and I am commenting as a resident of College Village neighborhood. I have lived in this abutting neighborhood to the U-Med District for 30 years and my wife for 45 years. We treasure the amenities available to us from both the medical facilities and the fine Universities located in the U-Med District as well as the fine green spaces and bike trails. We believe that this section of Anchorage is and should remain as a model for future development within the Municipality. We hope that any transportation improvements will also be a model that reflect the best technology, science and thinking available. The U-Med Reconnaissance Study serves as an excellent planning document for the discussion of road options as a way of better accessing the Universities and the current and future Medical Facilities. I do have some concerns however about the options or more appropriately the lack of options discussed in the document. Everyone recognizes this area of town to be a major employment nexus and the future plans of the University and the Alaska Native Health community along with Providence will substantially increase the issues of traffic and parking. In turn this will increase pressure on existing roads, gobble up valuable and increasingly scarce vacant land and threaten the adjoining neighborhoods. The U-Med destination facilities attract Southcentral Alaska populations and indeed State populations. These facilities will only become more attractive as new facilities are built and student and patient populations increase. This provides the basis for the problem being investigated in your Study but it might provide solutions as well. These organizations are forward thinking and should represent an opportunity for unique collaboration when it comes to transportation and future development. The resources for this collaboration were provided in the last session of the Legislature through the work of Senator Ellis and others. The U-Med Planning Effort was funded by the State at \$500,000 but has yet to be initiated. I would hope the effort could be allowed to bear fruit before a decision on road extensions into this District proceeds. I would also recommend that sharing of parking facilities be discussed as a way of avoiding a large portions of available property being sacrificed to empty parking garages and spaces. The new UAA Sports Complex and its planned parking spaces will be right next to the ANTHC/South-central Foundation business parking lots and spaces. Sports Center activity is likely to occur when those spaces are emptied after business hours. Shuttle buses should be coordinated to minimize the number of vehicles having to enter the District. Currently there is little coordination and cooperation on the use of shuttles. If we ever are to set a model for the use of mass transit it would appear this is the time and place. Speaking of parking, why not allow private development of a paying parking garage and not commit more public dollars to parking? UAA charges for parking and yet many of the institutions in this District don't, which only encourages illegal parking by students and more cars to enter the District. If you charge enough for parking and enforce parking rules you reduce the problem and save money while generating revenue. Funding for roads may also be a problem with the cut back in Federal Budgets and the competing proposals before the legislature for funding a Knik Arm Bridge, na Anchorage Harbor and Dock and the enormous financial commitments from the large Energy projects being considered by the State. What is the likelihood that Anchorage can get even more of the State's financial budget when it is already digging deeply into the State Treasury at the obvious concern of the rest of the State. Since none of the facilities in the U-Med District pay property tax the financial commitments for road extensions will be, in part (difficult to determine how much), borne by private properties. The main observation is that this document looks to more roads as the solution while many would say they can be the problem. If we build in the wrong place, create unnecessary pavement over valuable and limited property, increase the numbers of vehicles and increase their speeds in a U-Med environment, disrupt established neighborhoods and generally rely on one solution to a complex problem, we aren't being smart. More facets of the problem should be discussed and the ability for these institutions, the Municipality, and the State transportation planners to envision solutions that go beyond roads should be tested. Whatever we do in this District will serve as a model we either will be proud of or we will be making excuses for our mistakes in the future. Thank you for the opportunity to comment (10/27/11).</p>	<p>Michael Black</p>

**Northern Access to the University Medical District
Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)**

<p>I think it is a bad idea to put a road through the U-MED district. I walk and ski in that area a lot and have for over twenty years. This spring we saw Sandhill Cranes in the H, I, J, K area the road would disturb this habitat. It is a bad idea to put more roads and not better trails and pedestrian access instead. Please do not destroy more park land by building a road through it. I know a lot of people who work in that area who now commute by walking or biking. The Black spruce forest there is an awesome sight I would be heartbroken to see destroyed. My suggestion before as now is to develop the existing roads better and improve alternative transit beside cars! Please don't destroy this park area which has been saved for so many years from development threats. Thank You (10/27/11).</p>	<p>Clyde Vicary</p>
<p>As primary stakeholders in the activities and investments of Alaska Pacific University, we, the Associated Students of Alaska Pacific University (ASAPU), must express our concerns over a certain proposed road expansion into the U-Med District. It has come to our attention that a new road is being considered to directly connect north and east Anchorage with the U-Med District. Some people argue that a new road would be beneficial for the U-Med District, as well as for the Municipality of Anchorage as a whole. However, we do not believe that a road bisecting any portion of APU owned land would benefit the interests of students at the university. To gauge the feelings of both on campus and off campus students, a survey was created and sent out with questions regarding the road proposal. The first question listed the twelve different options and asked the students to choose the one that they thought would be best for the future of APU. To aid them in their decision, they were given the option explanations, as well as the map specifying where each would be located. The following two questions asked for a short response from each student, detailing why or why not a road on campus would be beneficial. The responses to the first question are detailed below. The most preferred options are options A, B, K, J, and L. (graph attached). This graph shows the general feeling of both on campus and off campus students. The general trend was increased popularity amongst the options that do not run through the APU campus. The options with the least amount of votes were the ones that bisect the APU campus or the APU trail system. The general feeling of the student body was unanimous; any road running through APU would be terribly destructive, and a disgrace to the university. A road must not be constructed on APU land. (Twenty percent of the APU student body participated in the survey which is broadly inclusive of the many types of students present on our campus.) Alaska Pacific University is a private institution. Compared to our neighbor to the west, the University of Alaska Anchorage, we are but an extremely small piece of the U-Med District. It is sometimes easy to overlook the "little man," but APU is a significant economic force in the heart of the U-Med district and is worth its weight in gold. APU is an oasis of forested land in a city booming with busy industries and busy people. Not only does our campus provide a quiet and peaceful atmosphere for students hard at work, but it also serves as a getaway for Anchorage residents. Our extensive trail system and adjacent dog park brings recreationalists from all over the city, including bikers, skiers, Olympic athletes, hikers, and people who just love being in nature. As students of APU, we pride ourselves on being directly connected with nature. With the amount of forested land we have on campus, it is easy for us to interact with the natural environment. A potential road cutting through campus would not only destruct the extensive habitat for various forms of wildlife, but it would also severely damage our quality of education. Alaska Pacific University is a unique and rare type of institution. In order to protect our integrity and the APU name, we, ASAPU, must express our disapproval of a road bisecting any segment of our land. If we wanted the typical university experience, we would have gone to other schools in Alaska or elsewhere in the country. The proposed road threatens everything we love about APU. (10/27/11)</p>	<p>The Associated Students of Alaska Pacific University</p>
<p>The traffic on Northern Lights Boulevard (NL) is already horrible. I live in College Gate and I have driven on Northern Lights almost every day for over 20 years. I think this gives me at least as much insight as a traffic engineer into the driving conditions on NL. The proposed Bragaw extension would pull a lot more traffic onto NL. Vehicles coming from NE/Eagle River/Mat-Su and going to U-Med (who used to go via Tudor) would likely come down Muldoon to NL. Vehicles coming from downtown/west would also likely come down NL. This would just make the inadequacies of NL even worse. Now that both Lake Otis and Tudor have been so nicely upgraded and made noticeably safer, traffic should be encouraged to access U-Med from Tudor, not from NL. The existing intersection at NL and Bragaw is particularly bad, though all of Bragaw is congested and unsafe, with poor options for turning, particularly on the stretch between NL and DeBarr. The DOWL study didn't really address East High because it is "just outside the study area." Why wasn't East High included in the study area? Have you ever tried to get in or out of the front entrance (on the Bragaw side) to East High? It can be extremely slow, not to mention dangerous, especially if you need to get onto Northern Lights after leaving East. In that case, you have to make a left out of the front parking lot onto Bragaw. How much worse would this be with additional traffic flowing down Bragaw to and from the U-Med core? If you try to avoid Bragaw by parking in East's small visitor lot on the NL side, you can only go right on NL when exiting and then you must make a U-turn somewhere to be able to proceed in an easterly direction. But if that visitor lot is full, the internal road is one-way, so you end up in the Bragaw lot and then have to make a left to get out. This would be so much worse with a Bragaw extension. By the way, East starts at 7:30 and ends at 2, but the DOWL study did not look at delays prior to 7:30 am. I also wonder whether the investigation of traffic on Tudor and Lake Otis took into account the significant improvements that were completed this summer. It does not seem valid to project reduced traffic on Northern Lights by 2030 due to H2H (Figures 4 and 5), since there is no guarantee that the H2H project will come to fruition. In fact, the DOWL report concedes that future traffic would be worse on NL if H2H is not built (pp. 21 and 32). The study correctly notes (p. 59-60) that routes C, D, E, F and I (Figure 18) are undesirable because of the curve on NL and the increase in left-turn volume from NL. With or without a new traffic signal, any of these routes would increase delay, congestion and safety hazards on NL. Two large parking lots at the Bragaw and Northern Lights intersection would make that intersection less safe than it is now. Traffic moves very fast on NL, and cars entering and leaving a parking lot would increase the hazards, especially when the road is icy. The study talks about reduction in delay for vehicles going to and from the U-Med core. It does not address the increase in delay that will result for vehicles using Northern Lights to get to and from places other than the U-Med core. The stretch of NL eastbound between Latouche and UAA drive is always extremely congested and the effect of northern access on <u>all</u> of NL needs to be considered. I live in the College Gate Subdivision and Northern Lights is the only reasonable way for me to get where I need to go. Don't sacrifice the interests of the people who live in and near the U-Med District to benefit people who live far away. People in Eagle River and the Mat-Su have chosen to have longer commute times in exchange for other perceived benefits of living far from their jobs and other institutions. They can continue to go a little bit farther and access the U-Med core from Tudor. (10/25/11)</p>	<p>Margaret Kugel</p>

**Northern Access to the University Medical District
Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)**

I will NEVER support more roads in the U-Med district, I don't even care what the options are at this point. Employers need to adjust schedules to decrease road crowding and the public needs to pretend that gas always costs \$5+ per gallon so that people will carpool. Many of us in the U-Med neighborhood try to walk/bike/bus more, so the MORE you chop up our byways, the less we can. Stop the Madness! (10/30/11)	
I oppose any road into the UAA Med District, and will actively work to prevent it. (10/30/11)	Machara McCoy
One of the reasons UAA and APU are so wonderful is because of the adjacent trails and wildlife. The solution to congestion is not more pavement & cars but better commuter choices available. I'm a summer & winter bike commuter that chooses & cherishes the quiet trails in this area over the traffic on Lake Otis. I also ski on the APU trails, and sincerely hope that you will NOT destroy this beautiful area. If you must make a route through there, please select option C WITHOUT the university drive connection or select the L, K, or J options. They will least impact the most beautiful, wild-life areas that many bikers, skiers and runners seek. When this area is void of beauty the attractiveness of the universities will also diminish. (10/30/11)	Kevin Banks & Paula Davis
Dear AMATS, Thank you for your work on the U-Med northern access project. Please give preference to the concept that has the least impact on the cross-country ski trails. This looks like concept "K" to me...As a U-Med District resident (2754 E. 20th Ave.), student (UAA) and patient (Providence) the preservation of the trail system is extremely important to me. Thank you for your consideration. (10/30/11)	Jesse Carlstrom

**Northern Access to the University Medical District
Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)**

DOWL -

I would like to comment on the Northern access to the U-Med district reports and analysis. I have commented before, and will again now, that I think the best traffic solution for the area is to make a mini overpass or underpass for people turning left (from either direction) at UAA drive and Northern Lights Boulevard, similar to scenario B. An overpass at UAA drive and Northern Lights Boulevard would have many advantages over your other scenarios, particularly scenarios 3-6. This would allow faster access between U-med and Northeast and Northwest Anchorage, solving the problem identified in the goals. The benefits would be keeping the U-med area from being a major north-south cut through (which would happen with many of the scenarios in the report). The real beneficiaries of scenarios 3-6 seem to be people commuting from South Anchorage to North Anchorage, not people in North and East Anchorage going to the U-med area (according to the traffic analysis in your report, it is the intersections south of U-med that see the most benefit from the scenarios connecting Elmore to Bragaw).

The disadvantages of scenarios 3-6 are as follows.

- 1) disrupts the separated from Anchorage feel of the university and hospital campuses...geography matters.
- 2) Disruption of natural areas and recreational trails.
- 3) An unintended consequence: new roads might actually bring more traffic to the area, especially cut through traffic that is not related to the U-med district.
- 4) More traffic by East High. When East High was built it was the end of a dead end. Your scenario for a 4-way intersection at Bragaw and Northern Lights would make Northern Lights 7 lanes wide next to East High. East High should not be a "highway" school. No other high school in Anchorage is directly this close to this much traffic. Preserve what is left of the character of East High, a school that was once built in the woods. Many students and pedestrians frequent East High and the last thing it needs is a bigger intersection near it.
- 5) Scenarios 3-6 will slow east-west traffic on Northern Lights. I compiled data from your traffic analysis (below, summed from the intersections listed) to compare the scenarios for their impact on east-west traffic, an analysis left out of your report (unfortunately). Alleviating traffic through the U-med district might sound great, but would most citizens trade that for a slower commute on Northern Lights? Many people travel this corridor from East Anchorage to mid-town. It is currently pretty quick from Lake Otis to Boniface. Your scenarios 3-6 slow this traffic down. I feel this data and impact needs to be shared with the public EQUALLY to any information about improved traffic through U-med. It basically trades one problem for another. I doubt it is good for traffic to slow down a major route that is already crowded.

Northern Lights/Lake Otis - UAA Dr - Bragaw - Boniface AM peak totals 2030

Delay	Volume/Capacity Ratio at Northern Lights and Bragaw	
Scenario 1 - 213.7		0.75
Scenario 2 - 239.9		0.83
Scenario 3 - 328.6		0.78
Scenario 4 - 296.8		0.76
Scenario 5 - 269.7		0.91
Scenario 6 - 264.3		0.94
Scenario 7 - 250.6		0.86

Northern Lights/Boniface - Bragaw - UAA Dr - Lake Otis PM peak 2030

Delay	Volume/Capacity Ratio at Northern Lights and Bragaw	
Scenario 1 - 241.9		0.65
Scenario 2 - 256.7		0.68
Scenario 3 - 283.5		0.61
Scenario 4 - 280.5		0.6
Scenario 5 - 282.8		0.95
Scenario 6 - 267.9		0.96
Scenario 7 - 298.2		0.91 (continued on next page)

Gary Snyder

**Northern Access to the University Medical District
Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)**

<p>(continued from previous page)</p> <p>Data from Traffic Analysis Anchorage, Alaska Northern Access to the U-Med District DOT&PF Project No. 51838 Pages 58-59.</p> <p>In sum, I think your analysis should include east-west traffic times on Northern Lights under all scenarios. Putting an overpass of some sort at UAA drive would help traffic flow to U-med while avoiding many of the disadvantages of your scenarios. There isn't much development at this corner now, so it would be relatively simple for an overpass to be built. It speeds traffic all directions. It might be expensive, but so is building a road through a wetland, many parts of scenarios 3-6. Please consider not putting a new road through the U-med area, rather improve what we have now (11/1/11).</p>	<p>Gary Snyder</p>
<p>My wife and I, as close neighbors of UAA, object to the proposed north/south road through the university. We regularly use the trail system for walking or bicycling and would be immediately effected by such a road. Additionally, the road would create yet another obstacle to creating a true college campus in the heart of our city. Please consider other transportation options rather than laying down more pavement that only disrupts the larger community (11/2/11).</p>	<p>David Pelto and Judith Anderegg</p>
<p>I am opposed to this extension. I drive through this area several times a week at morning peak times and rarely find congestion of any issue. I also use this area for skiing and walking and the idea of losing this area to a road is simply incomprehensible. It is one of the last green spaces in the middle of Anchorage and is far more effective as a recreational space than for another road (11/3/11).</p>	<p>Rob and Judy Stohl</p>
<p>To Whom it may Concern:</p> <p>I live in the Airport Heights neighborhood and chose to live in that area because of the trail system and wildlife in the area. Many of the proposed U-Med Access plans will greatly disrupt these and will greatly change the character of the area. The University-Medical district shouldn't have more and bigger roads running through it. It needs to have better public transportation and more trail access. Putting a major road link right through the university will totally disrupt the campus atmosphere. And putting a major road link through the wilderness will totally disrupt my enjoyment of the area. This is where I walk, bike and ski. If the wilderness area is disrupted, then there's no reason for me to live in the neighborhood anymore. Most people in the neighborhood feel this same way, so our desires need to be taken into account. A major road link should skirt the city, not run right through it and disrupt it. Please develop a plan that allows the U-Med district to retain its neighborhood charm and not make it into a thoroughfare (11/3/11).</p>	<p>Karen Walker</p>
<p>University Lake is very important to my dogs and I. Thanks (11/3/11).</p>	<p>Lynne Curry</p>
<p>Please send any updates you have on the U-Med improvements to my office at.... I was regularly receiving updates on the MLK drive as it affected the Far North Bicentennial Park. I would like to continue to be informed. I was regularly receiving updates on the MLK drive as it affected the Far North Bicentennial Park. I would like to continue to be informed. I LOVE my new route to work!! (11/3/11).</p>	<p>Margo Marsh</p>
<p>It is my understanding the proposed northern access to the u-med district, also known as the bragaw extension my seriously impact the dog park as currently operating in the area known as University Lake. It is my intention in writing to you today to state that this dog park is very important to a very large number of people and that significant modifications to the dog park as a result of building the bragaw extension would significantly reduce the quality of life for a large number of Anchorage residents. However the bragaw extension is implemented, please do everything possible to mitigate whatever effects it may have on the University Lake Dog Park. Thank you for this opportunity to submit my comments regarding the Bragaw extension (11/4/11).</p>	<p>Matthew C Cohen</p>
<p>IMO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Bragaw extension - is not necessary now, and may not be required for 20 years. Constructing it would be putting the cart ahead of the horse. Anything beyond implementation of Concept A and TDMs should follow - not precede - a MOA Assembly approved long term plan (for the U-Med District). Which should be after the Assembly's P&Z Commission approves long term plans for each of the four major stakeholders (ANMC, APU, PAMC, and UAA). 2) Concept A should be built - soon - along with increases to parking capacity and shuttle services from the North Parking Lot. (UAA gaining control of the adjacent ASD property (KCC) would greatly enhance/extend operations.) 3) A park and (shuttle) ride operation should be programmed for the UAA Sports Complex parking lots. (continued on next page) 	<p>Matthew Magsino/Arens</p>

**Northern Access to the University Medical District
Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)**

<p>(continued on previous page)</p> <p>4) Another park and ride complex could be constructed at or near the intersection of Bragaw and Northern Lights. (Shuttle "paths" supporting this facility could be linked to UAAs Alumni Drive and APUs Faculty Ridge Road for wheelchair/handicapped access, cyclists, maintenance, and emergency vehicles.</p> <p>I live in and drive around the U-MED District. It's a great place to live and the traffic isn't bad. We should take prudent steps and draft plans to keep traffic "not bad". Punching a hole through the heart of our economic engine is unwarranted and might not be good for it. After we have a plan we should determine the infrastructure (required to support it). Determining infrastructure before we have a plan is foolish - and (usually) more expensive (11/3/11).</p>	<p>Matthew Magsino/Arens</p>
<p>Thank you for reading my comment. I just wanted to say that that the woods in this area are a beautiful and important recreational site in East Anchorage. The unfragmented ski trails and habitat extending from Northern Lights to the University are one of these pockets of wild-ness that make Anchorage so special. In addition, the University Lake dog park is an incredibly popular site for a community that loves its dogs. Please consider this in your decision making (11/3/11).</p>	<p>Rebecca King</p>
<p>I support the Traffic Demand Management option because I favor a plan that encourages public transit, that makes walking and biking safer by adding more sidewalks and improving trails - a plan that is more in alignment with the U-Med Master Plan. The other options that are recommended to be carried forward in Table 10 on page 78 of the report (G, I, J, & K) encourage more traffic into the U-Med District. Each will encourage severe "cut through" traffic through the U-Med District for automobile travel driving between North and South of the area that have no interest in stopping in the U-Med District. Each of these four options would have a negative impact on the integrity of the district. Once Bragaw Street is extended from E. Northern Lights Blvd., regardless of the initial extension, such an extension will in time lead to an increased extension that will destroy the integrity of the two university districts. The overall goal should be to discourage vehicular traffic that leads to congestion. This can be achieved by park and ride options that encourages mass transit, including short trip mini-buses to transport students and employees through the campuses.</p> <p>Options A and B should be considered as alternatives along with TDM since they do not destroy the integrity of the two university districts while providing for increased traffic while not encouraging "cut through" traffic. They are also favorable or somewhat favorable to the environmental criterion, which cannot be said of G and I options. Again, I oppose the roadway improvement concepts that are being recommended (11/3/11).</p>	<p>Barbara Karl</p>
<p>I do not support a new road for northern access to the U-Med District. This notion/idea needs to be moved to the long range or illustrative projects list so other possibilities can be addressed. Existing boundary streets, such as Lake Otis, Tudor, and Bragaw, need to be enhanced first. We also need to evaluate and improve adjacent intersections at UAA Drive and Northern Lights, Northern Lights and Bragaw, and Lake Otis and 36th Avenue/Providence Drive.</p> <p>I oppose cutting a new road through for northern access to the U-Med District. More roads only encourage continued and additional use of single occupancy vehicles. Build it and they will come, in ever increasing numbers. (There will be more cut through traffic; I know because I own a home in a neighborhood plagued by cut through traffic.) The cost of owning and operating a personal vehicle (purchase price, registration and fees, insurance, gasoline, and maintenance) is becoming so prohibitive, however, that many will be forced to abandon this mode of transportation, myself included. We need to start addressing mass transit - especially for movement within a campus or district. People need to leave their cars and board light rail (as exists at many airport campuses in the U.S.) or buses into the U-Med District then walk or use the rail or bus for movement within the District. Think OUTSIDE the MORE ROADS BOX.</p> <p>We will all benefit by people using their cars less. We will become healthier with a return to more daily activity. The costs associated with the nationwide epidemic of obesity and associated illnesses such as heart disease and cancer will be reduced. The air, waterways, and the overall environment will be cleaner. We will be able to protect more open space from being paved over with asphalt (11/3/11).</p>	<p>Marilyn Houser</p>
<p>This letter is in response to the Northern Access to the University and Medical District, Reconnaissance Study Report. We are a part of a small community of professionals who were drawn to the area around Goose Lake for its peaceful and natural setting. Since we purchased our property in 2006, we have seen the rise of the Integrated Sciences Building, which is totally incongruent with the Goose Lake environment. This architectural monstrosity puts its one good side to the campus and flaunts its factory-like backside at what was one a beautiful natural setting. The droning noise, light and all-too-numerous-to-count soaring vent stacks have significantly diminished the tranquility of the lake. As you must know, the lake is used for swimming, canoeing, kayaking and paddle boating when it is warm and for ice-skating, skiing, and snow shoeing in the winter. The touting by UAA of the Sciences Building, as being in harmony with the environment, is a clear misrepresentation. It instead is an industrial-like intrusion. We do not want to see more of this type of shortsighted, unnecessary design in future U-Med building projects. Several aspects of the Northern Access to the University and Medical District, Reconnaissance Study Report disturb us: (continued on next page)</p>	<p>Susan Share and Paul Stang</p>

**Northern Access to the University Medical District
Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)**

<p>(continued from previous page)</p> <p>1) It puts UAA student housing and support services and facilities in our "back yards" and adjacent to Goose Lake Park. The park is a treasure for families and the Anchorage community. It would be endangered and likely scarred by a dense student population close to the lake. Several issues would almost certainly arise with the close proximity of students - theft, drinking, partying on the lake and its shoreline and cutting across the lake.</p> <p>2) It also puts student housing on top of a hill to the east of Goose Lake that could further interrupt the natural skyline and serenity of Goose Lake Park and the Goose Lake residential area. Furthermore, putting housing on both sides of the lake would promote additional transit across and along the lake.</p> <p>3) We oppose any cut through from Northern Lights to Elmore Rd. However, if this must occur, we strongly recommend a "cut and cover" approach to preserve the natural environment and minimize further degradation of Goose Lake Park, including noise, loss of habitat, and barriers to wildlife crossings and recreational trails</p> <p>4) UAA Drive expanded to 4 lanes. We oppose making UAA Drive a thoroughfare any more than it already is. Now, it is busy with auto and bus traffic, students biking and walking and crossing.</p> <p>We support UAA meeting the needs of student and faculty, and offering a quality higher education. Any expansion should have a clearly defined aesthetic for all sides of its buildings. Only facilities that are in harmony with the natural setting of Goose Lake and the residential neighborhoods should be considered. As such, we could support a chancellor's home and academic building that do not have an evening population.</p> <p>Please put us on an email list for all notifications, plans and meetings about U-Med development issues. Please confirm by email that you will do so (11/3/11).</p>	<p>Susan Share and Paul Stang</p>
<p>Thank you very much for taking my call today regarding the Northern Access proposal. I am a frequent user of University Lake Multi-use Trail system. It is very important to me that the trail that encircles University Lake is not negatively impacted by the Northern Access Proposal. I have read that the construction cost estimates are extremely low and do not include costs for pathway bridges or tunnels which would protect the integrity of the trail system. I am AGAINST any proposal that would negatively affect my ability to enjoy University Lake Park (11/3/11).</p>	<p>Cindy Edlund</p>
<p>I appreciate the addition of TDM measures to the list of alternatives but am disappointed not to find other non invasive measures addressed. Following are my recommendations. The values that inform my comments are that I place I higher priority on desirable residential areas, parkland, and open space than on a few seconds of traffic delay in the two hours of rush hour traffic per day. Further planning re a north access or improved access to U Med should wait until the U Med District Plan in the FY 2012 budget is completed. I do not know the official position of the institutions in the area but I understand that they are interested in finding other ways to improve traffic flow than cutting a road thru or between the campuses. It is premature to conclude that a north access is necessary, certainly in the near term. Alternatively it could go to AMATS with a recommendation that it go into the illustrative (preferably) or long term categories in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The cost estimates do not include the context sensitive design features that are absolutely critical if a north access road is ever built and hence are much too low. Any north access should be designed as a two lane collector, primarily to provide better access to UAA, APU and the Providence complex. Elmore, Dowling, Martin Luther King, and Boniface were designed to provide necessary access to the south and west for traffic coming from the northeast. Several LRTPs ago this was the alternative to the north access. Highway to highway is supposed to also provide faster/improved access between the northeast and the south west. The traffic growth rate assumed in this study seems much too high and therefore overstates the need for a north access. (ISER's projected population growth is 0.78% whereas this study projects a traffic increase of about 2%.) The study dismisses upgrading UAA Drive and the intersection of UAA Drive and Northern Lights boulevard. We drove through it last night shortly after 5:30 pm. First, we had no problem. Second, we commented on how much more turn lanes, perhaps in each direction, would improve the traffic flow. One of my neighbors has suggested upgrading that road to three lanes with the middle lane being a reversible flow, two lanes going into the area in the morning and two lanes exiting the area in the evening. Just improving that intersection would improve the flow (which is not a problem most of the day). Why isn't that part of the solution? Another problem identified for upgrading UAA Drive is right of way costs. I think most of that land on the west side is undeveloped institutional land. If we always take open space for roads we will end up with none. And yes, the student at grade crossing is a problem. I am supportive of pedestrian options but if needed to prevent a new road through the campuses the students should perhaps use the overhead crossing. (continued on next page)</p>	<p>Helen Nienhueser</p>

**Northern Access to the University Medical District
Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)**

<p>(continued from previous page)</p> <p>A few pedestrian options were not considered. One is a pedestrian/bike path between Wendler and the Career Center. I proposed this long ago and it made it into a draft of a plan but was later dropped, perhaps because of School district objections. The School District should be reproached on this. People do this now. There is a "people path" there which is now probably covered up by snow. In winter UAA completely blocks it with snow storage. For walkers, it cuts off 5 to 10 minutes of walking down to the north road entrance to UAA that is also the access to the Career Center. Such a path would work well with bus routes that have a stop near Lake Otis and Northern Lights. People in my neighborhood (what I call "south Anchor Park) work at or go to classes at UAA and other institutions in the area. Some of us would walk or ride bikes year round if this path were easier to use and better known. Yes, now it probably requires the school district to move a fence and UAA to change their snow storage slightly. That results in fewer vehicle trips into/out of "U-Med". Isn't that worthwhile? A second option that would reduce at least a few vehicle trips is storage for cross country skis on the UAA campus. Perhaps it now exists but if it doesn't it should. It is possible now to ski to that campus from many parts of town but there is or was no place to store skis. Again, a small thing that would reduce some vehicle trips.</p> <p>On figure 16, please remove the road shown on the north side of Northern Lights between 41 and 37. It does not exist and will never exist. This is now part of Chester Creek Greenbelt.</p> <p>I really do not understand the emergency vehicle access argument given that we have hospitals both north of the U Med District and at the south part of the District. Maybe Fire?? Is this really a good argument for a north access road?</p> <p>I hope my comments are helpful in continuing work to find a way to both protect neighborhoods, campus integrity, parkland, and open space and provide reasonable access into and out of the area (Not THROUGH the area!), (11/3/11).</p>	<p>Helen Nienhueser</p>
<p>Thank you for taking public comments.</p> <p>I hope you find the best solutions for this area. I have only one concern and that concerns the proposed road which passes closely by the Marriott Hotel, University Lake, and then by the APU soccer field. It is important to me and many others that it be adequately landscaped to maintain the ambiance and safety for the park users. Two separate studies by APU students have found that about 1,600 off-leash dog walkers go to this park every week. Beyond that there are, of course, runners, walkers, skiers, cyclists, children, etc. A survey before this area was established as an official off-leash area found that 97% of those asked wanted a place to exercise with their dogs. A much smaller number wanted an open area for doggy play or retriever activists, and about the same wanted water access for their water dogs. With a trail of a 1 1/4 miles, a pond, an open meadow, University Lake Park has all these and thus has great drawing power. Please keep this park as in tact and safe as possible (11/3/11).</p>	<p>Kayla Epstein</p>
<p>Our comments in this letter on the Reconnaissance Study Report (RSR) describe a number of significant omissions and discrepancies in the RSR that substantially invalidate its recommendations. Under separate cover, we submitted comments on the Public Review Draft of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan's Project No. 125, North Access to U-Med District. Those comments were based on our review of the RSR. As mentioned in our previous letter, we recommend that the North Access project ranking in the MTP be adjusted downward and that the project be moved to the illustrative category of the MTP (or at least the long-term category). In addition, no future work on this project should be performed until the update of the U-Med District Framework Master Plan and parking study is completed. That Plan should be the primary driver for future access development. Future access development should first consider phased, low-cost, low-impact solutions. According to the project time-line in DOWL/HKM May 2011 presentation materials, it might take six to nine years to complete a new road alternative. The study end-point, 2030, is almost twenty years out—that's two to three times the time it would take to design and build a new road. Given the minor improvements in delays that even the best new North Access road concept provides, and given the uncertainties in gas prices, population and traffic predictions, land use, etc., solutions with minimal effect on the environment and community--such as the RSR's Concept B (add lanes to UAA Drive), or District perimeter road and intersection improvements, should be considered first. Or, consider delaying any action for another five to ten years. The following pages contain our comments on specific aspects of the RSR.</p> <p>1) RSR does not comply with ADOT&PF directive to examine all technically feasible solutions. The RSR does not comply with the Alaska Department of Transportation directive that an engineering reconnaissance report examine "all technically feasible" alternatives.</p> <p>A project "Need" statement in Section 1.2 states that "arterial streets surrounding U-Med District are over capacity and operate at poor levels of service during peak hours." Another is that "Several of the U-Med District intersections have elevated road and intersection crash rates." RSR Section 2.1.3 acknowledges that a comprehensive solution is needed for those issues, yet the RSR did not include a comprehensive suite of technically feasible alternatives which address them.</p> <p>(continued on next page)</p>	<p>Diana and David Evans</p>

**Northern Access to the University Medical District
Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)**

(continued from previous page)

For example, the RSR did not include:

- Project 111 of the 2035 MTP – extending a third eastbound lane from Lake Otis Parkway to Bragaw Steet, with possible intersection improvements at Lake Otis Parkway and UAA Drive.
- Any other projects similar to Project 111, whether or not “on the books,” such as adding lanes to other U-Med District perimeter streets. Also, perhaps adding multi-directional lanes would be a good solution for some roads with distinct inbound/a.m. and outbound/p.m. peaks; UAA Drive might fit that description.
- Improvements of perimeter intersections as stand-alone projects or as projects to be combined with other projects. These might include adding turn lanes, extending turn pockets, changing signal timing, replacing traffic signals with roundabouts, adding pedestrian bridges or tunnels, and the like.
- A phased approach consisting of lower impact alternatives (TDM and/or Concept B), followed by re-consideration of the need for additional improvements in the future.

The lack of a comprehensive approach gives us the distinct impression that this study did not seek to find the most effective or appropriate solution to the overall traffic and safety needs but was instead intent on justifying a pre-determined conclusion: a road, some road, any road, that connects Elmore and Bragaw.

A wider net should have been cast. A comprehensive suite of perimeter road and intersection alternatives should have been evaluated.

2) RSR does not comply with ADOT&PF directive to sufficiently develop alternatives for cost comparison

The RSR does not comply with the Alaska Department of Transportation directive that an engineering reconnaissance report “sufficiently develop those alternatives that appear feasible so that they can be compared according to alignment, grade, width, length, cost...” and discuss “...all technically feasible alternative solutions, including comparison of their engineering characteristics, environmental impacts, and cost.”

The RSR cost estimates for the alternatives do not include many significant costs. At best, the estimates are misleading; at worst, the omitted costs might affect the ranking of the various concepts and change the concepts recommended to be carried forward.

Excluded costs include those associated with:

- Wetlands mitigation
- Dealing with “specific soil and groundwater” problems (the alternative with the alignment shown in the Public Review Draft of the MTP and all of the other alternatives the RSR recommends for further consideration would have many such problems, since they pass through wetlands)
- Dealing with specific utility conflicts (the alternative with the alignment shown in the MTP has water, sewer, high-voltage electric power, and communication conflicts)
- Pedestrian bridges or tunnels (several should be included to ensure the safety of non-motorized traffic)
- Vehicular bridges – perhaps needed as well to deal with wildlife corridors, wetlands, or non-motorized trail user conflicts
- Landscaping
- “Context sensitive” design features
- Environmental permitting

We would not be surprised if the costs of some of the alternatives are 50% to 100% higher than the estimated costs—especially those that would pass through wetlands. On the other hand, estimated costs of some other concepts, such as Concept B (widening UAA Drive) might be closer to the mark, or even too high. Such discrepancies skew project ranking. (continued on next page)

Diana and David Evans

**Northern Access to the University Medical District
Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)**

(continued from previous page)

3) RSR assumptions regarding future road development are flawed

The report traffic modeling is based on the assumption that two major projects in the 2027 L RTP will have been constructed by 2030: the full Highway-to-Highway project and the connection of Lake Otis Parkway to the Glenn Highway.

However, the PHD of the 2035 MTP does not include the Lake Otis Parkway extension to the Glenn Highway. In addition, considering the current economic climate, low likelihood of strong Federal financial support, and the inevitable delay associated with mega-projects, it seems unlikely that the Highway-to-Highway project will be fully built by 2030.

The RSR did include an abbreviated modeling study of U-Med District traffic conditions without the 2027 L RTP projects, but the RSR conclusions were based on modeling the full build-out. The RSR conclusions should have been based on a more realistic future.

4) Unreasonably high growth in U-Med District traffic demand

Future traffic demand, and therefore future congestion and delay, is grossly overestimated.

The total growth in U-Med District traffic demand over the study period is not stated in the RSR, so we estimated it using the AADT and turning movement information given in the report. We calculated a total growth rate from 2011 to 2030 of between 40 and 47 percent.

That's equivalent to an annual increase of about 2.1 percent for the period from 2011 to 2027 – two to four times as high as the actual 2000 to 2007 U-Med traffic growth of 0.5 to 1.0 percent per year, two times higher than the “conservative” (i.e., high) 1.0 percent annual growth rate the RSR used to escalate the 2027 traffic to 2030, and to escalate 2007 traffic to 2011. And it's about three times higher than the ISER projected base case 2010 to 2035 annual growth rate of 0.78% for the Anchorage population. U-Med traffic is projected to grow faster than Anchorage in general, but it is highly unlikely to be two to four times faster than recent growth.

5) Concepts G, I, J, and K inconsistent with UAA Master Plan vision and recommendations

In Section 4.2.2 on “context sensitive solutions,” the RSR remarks that public concerns have largely focused on the potential effects of new roads on open space, trails, and recreation. It goes on to flatly say that the UAA and APU campuses are not designated as public parks.

In fact, it is not just the “public” that is concerned about the effects of new roads on open space, trails, recreation, and wildlife habitat.

The RSR fails to note that the 2009 UAA Master Plan recommends that development of the north and northeast extremities of the campus should be postponed “...until re-development of previously disturbed land has been exhausted....By this means, the largest natural areas of the campus will be reserved for recreation and as viable wildlife habitats” (our emphasis) and “In the immediate future, the greatest value of the northern reaches of the campus to the University is as wilderness, wildlife habitat, and a place to hike and ski. As such, it contributes much to the image and character of UAA as an archetypal Northern University of distinction” (our emphasis).

Concepts G, I, J, and K would destroy UAA's vision for its property.

6) Concepts J and K conflict with future housing in 2009 UAA Master Plan

Two of the alternatives recommended to be carried forward, Concepts J and K, conflict with UAA's 2018-2028 plans for housing development on the birch knob northeast of the Conoco Phillips Science

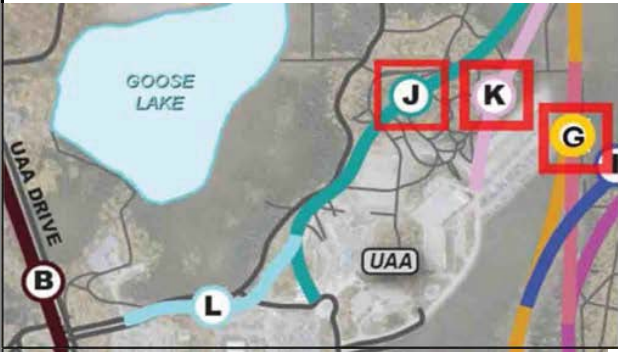
Building parking lot. See Figure 1 and Figure 2 on the next page. The RSR does not mention this conflict.

The proposed roads could be re-routed around the proposed housing development, but that would not be in keeping with the UAA Master Plan's goals of “respecting pedestrian priority,” “preventing conflicts with automobiles as much as possible,” and providing a “tranquil” setting for that housing. Concepts J and K do not appear to be viable alternatives. (continued on next page)

Diana and David Evans

Northern Access to the University Medical District Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)

(continued from previous page)



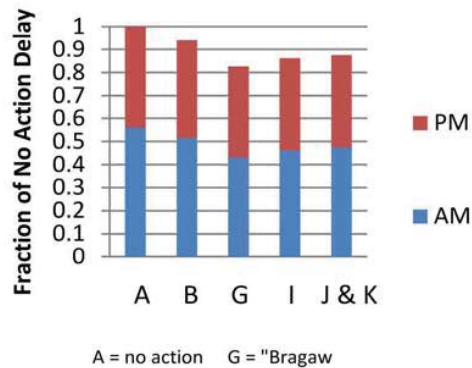
7) RSR predicted “improvements” in delays are small and within margin of error. The report attempts to justify the need for a north access road by comparing the expected “delay” for the various concepts relative to the “No Action” concept. The expected improvement due to the very best concept, Concept G, the “Bragaw Extension,” is 20 seconds for a vehicle trying to get to the District from Northern Lights and Boniface at the “peak hour” in the morning, 1 minute and 40 seconds for a vehicle.

Furthermore, the reductions in delay time are presented as matters of fact and with great precision, but there is no accompanying discussion of the sensitivity of the results to the input variables or the confidence intervals associated with the results. This is a significant technical deficiency.

Also, considering the tremendous uncertainty in predicting population and traffic growth, future land use, population density, and human behavior, we suspect that the margin of error of the 2030 traffic simulation in general, and the delay calculation in particular, is huge and that the variations in expected delay are negligible in comparison. trying to get to Northern Lights and Boniface from the District at the worst time of day in the afternoon or evening. So much for significantly improving “north access.”

Diana and David Evans

Figure 3 shows the total delay of various concepts relative to the “No Action” delay; there’s not much difference between them.



(continued on next page)

Northern Access to the University Medical District Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)

(continued from previous page)

Furthermore, the reductions in delay time are presented as matters of fact and with great precision, but there is no accompanying discussion of the sensitivity of the results to the input variables or the confidence intervals associated with the results. This is a significant technical deficiency. Also, considering the tremendous uncertainty in predicting population and traffic growth, future land use, population density, and human behavior, we suspect that the margin of error of the 2030 traffic simulation in general, and the delay calculation in particular, is huge and that the variations in expected delay are negligible in comparison.

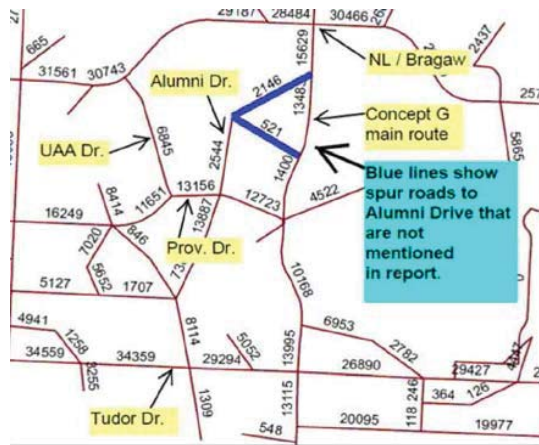
8) RSR traffic model problems

8.1) Model network contains hidden links for Concept G

A figure buried in the 827 page Appendix B to the report indicates that Concept G includes two new spur roads to Alumni Drive – see the blue lines in Figure 4. These spurs are not discussed anywhere in the report. They would tend to reduce delay for Concept G and make it look more favorable relative to the other concepts, but they would cross high-value wetlands, might introduce unacceptably high traffic on Alumni Drive, and affect UAA development plans. None of those issues are discussed in the report.

Whether the cost estimate for Concept G includes the cost of the spurs is unknown .

Figure 4 - Concept G spur roads – colored lines and annotation by Evans.



(continued on next page)

Diana and David Evans

**Northern Access to the University Medical District
Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)**

(continued from previous page)

8.2) Model input “peak hour factor” biased against Concept “B” – upgrading UAA Drive

According to the Traffic Analysis report portion of the RSR, “Due to the existing congestion on UAA Drive, its peak hour factor was lowered to 0.75 for all concepts to simulate a longer sustained peak. Actually, it seems a smaller peaking factor will simulate a shorter, more intense peak, relative to the peak hour volume, not a longer sustained peak, as claimed..” The analysis used 0.85 for all other locations.

That seems very odd in light of the fact, according RSR Appendix B, the existing peak hour factors for UAA Drive turning movements range from 0.80 to 0.91; the average is exactly 0.85 in both the a.m. and p.m. All of the other intersections have similar, if not worse, PHFs. Why not “penalize” those? For example, E. Tudor Rd & Boniface 2011 a.m. PHFs range from 0.40 to 0.91 and the average is 0.78.

A peak hour factor of 0.75 was even used for modeling Concept “B,” a scenario that ought to stand on its own in the model, with a 0.85 factor as used for all other locations.

8.3) Model input “travel speed” parameter for UAA Drive adjusted without proof of calibration

In what seems to be somewhat of a double-dip (in addition to the peak hour factor adjustment), the TransCAD travel speed for UAA Drive was reduced to 24 mph (from the posted speed of 35 mph)— also to account for “observed congestion.”

But the RSR offers no quantitative justification or proof that this apparently ad hoc calibration is needed, that the adjustment achieves its objective, or that similar adjustments are not needed for any other existing roads in or around the District.

9) U-Med District Plan inaccurately quoted and update not mentioned

Sections 1.3.2 and 5.2.3 say that the 2003 U-Med District Plan “acknowledges that additional access is needed from the north and east in the next 20 years and recommends that new access locations be determined by emerging development patterns.”

That is not accurate.

Actually, the U-Med Plan says that the “...2003 EAST plan (our emphasis) has identified a need for access from the north and east in the next 20 years.” That’s not necessarily the same as the U-Med District

Plan acknowledging the need. This might be a fine point, but it is clear that the U-Med Plan steering committee, which included all interests in the District, opposed access from the north: “The conclusion of this Plan, and of the Steering Committee for the study that represented all interests in the District, was that Bragaw Street should not be extended across the District.” Considering that opposition, the RSR should have accurately quoted the Plan.

The U-Med Plan does go on to say that vehicle access from Northern Lights is not precluded (by the U- Med Plan), but it says that the location of any new access would be determined “...in part by emerging development patterns...” (our emphasis). Again, that’s not the same as saying the plan “recommends” that new access be determined by emerging development patterns.

In addition, the RSR does not mention that the U-Med Plan concludes that “It is anticipated that the need for new District access will be re-evaluated at each five-year review of the Plan...” and it does not say that an update of the U-Med District Plan by the MOA Planning Department was funded in the FY2012 budget and is scheduled to begin in 2012 (continued on next page)

Diana and David Evans

**Northern Access to the University Medical District
Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)**

<p>(continued from previous page)</p> <p>10) Recommended concept promotes significant cut-through traffic near East High School</p> <p>According to the RSR, all four of the road concepts recommended to be carried forward would result in significant cut-through traffic, and over a quarter of the traffic on the alignment shown in the draft MTP would be cut-through traffic. The RSR also predicts that the alignment shown in the draft MTP would result in 50 percent more daily traffic on South Bragaw than the “No Action” alternative. The RSR did not evaluate how that would affect the safety of East High School students or delays in East High drop-off/pick-up traffic.</p> <p>11) RSR gives lip service to context sensitive solutions</p> <p>The RSR does not contain a realistic discussion of “context sensitive solutions” and fails to include any in the construction cost estimates.</p> <p>Section 4.2.2 of the RSR says “Any road improvements proposed for the U-Med District would need to (include) context sensitive design measures to reduce the potential for adverse effects on the surrounding environment and uses.” That’s true, but then Section 5.2.2 contains the ambiguous assertion that “The complexity of these context sensitive ideas is considered to be neutral with regard to the concepts because they are largely interchangeable between the concepts and will have to be evaluated in further detail during future design phases.”</p> <p>The project team appears to be trying to say that context sensitive solutions are needed, but they are so complex that the team will just leave them for future planners and engineers to deal with; and that anyway, some or all of the solutions could be included in all of the concepts, so there’s no point in including any of them in the construction cost estimates. The latter point is not substantiated. In fact, there might be significant differences between the costs of suitable context sensitive “design measures” for the various concepts, and those measures might be a significant fraction of the total project cost.</p> <p>The RSR offers up a number of appealing graphics of tunnels and bridges, but fails to explain the engineering challenges and cost challenges associated with those features. This brings us back to the second comment of this letter: the RSR’s failure to comply with the ADOT&PF mandate to develop alternatives sufficiently to allow comparison of their costs.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment (11/2/11).</p>	<p>Diana and David Evans</p>
<p>As a UAA student, I support alternative B, because it uses a corridor through UAA that has already been created. No new intrusions in campus connections or the natural environment would be required. Dumping traffic into the road system at the new UAA science building would be very detrimental to the campus and to safety. The B alternative does connect to Providence, even if it is slightly offset from the intersection the plan identifies as the epicenter. Adjustments to traffic patterns on the Providence campus would be easier and less detrimental than creating a new road barrier further splintering the UAA campus (11/4/11).</p>	<p>Margie MacNellie</p>
<p>The threat to compromise the campus of the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and DOWL HKM is understatedly not in the public’s best interest.</p> <p>It is over-reaching and absurd for state and federal transportation agencies to assume they have the latitude to address short-term travel flows by building a high-volume, traffic attracting roadway across an inviolate university campus. Proposing to resolve large-scale municipal traffic flow problems by crossing the small UAA campus, already greatly limited by wetlands, is not acceptable.</p> <p>Recommended Alternatives G, I, J, and K are gross, invasive insults to the campus and its sensitive natural setting. Proceeding in this manner would be irresponsible and will be met by the strongest possible opposition. Comments submitted on September 30, 2009 are re-emphasized and included by reference. Advise: Go Around UAA! (11/4/11).</p>	<p>Robert Baldwin</p>

Northern Access to the University Medical District Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)

<p>1) Any additional engineering or planning work on "north access" should not be done until the U-Med District Plan update and parking study is completed. Reference: State of Alaska budget FY2012 Reference No. 53922, "Reappropriation to DCCED for MOA for U-Med District Plan and parking utilization study."</p> <p>2) The traffic growth rate appear to be unrealistically high and therefore the predicted traffic delays and need for the project are overstated. The study predict an 45% increase in U-Med district traffic from 2011 to 2030 (that's an annual growth rate of about 2%). In stark contrast, a 2009 ISER population study predicts an average annual population growth rate of 0.78% (base case) for the next 25 years (and the rate of growth is decreasing). If U-Med traffic increased at the ISER population rate, in 2030 it would only be 16% over 2011 levels, and delays would not be much worse than they are now. Granted, U-Med district growth might be faster than the average population growth, but no doubt there are limits. This is another good reason to delay any decisions until after the U-Med District Plan is updated.</p> <p>3) The construction cost estimates in the report are much too low. They do not include costs for: re-routing trails; vehicular or pathway bridges and tunnels; building roads on poor soils; landscaping; or environmental permitting and mitigation. Low-balling the estimates will reduce the likelihood that features essential to the community (trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, pathway bridges) are included in the project. Low-balling might change the relative ranking of the alternatives and therefore change which ones should be carried forward.</p> <p>4) DOWL's mandate was to evaluate all technically feasible alternatives for improving access; we think they left a number of those out, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Evaluating perimeter intersection improvements (e.g., at Elmore/Tudor, Lake Otis/36th/Providence, Northern Lights/Bragaw, UAA Drive/Northern Lights) b. Evaluating perimeter roadway improvements (the bounding streets: Tudor, Lake Otis, Bragaw) c. Expand UAA Drive to be a three-lane road, with two lanes going south in the a.m. and two going north in the p.m. This would be similar to Concept "B," but at reduced cost. d. The study does not quantitatively address the effect of the alternatives on non-vehicular safety. <p>5) The study demonstrated that the "Bragaw Extension" would significantly increase cut-through traffic on U-Med roads and a quarter of the traffic on the new extension would be "cut-through." That would increase the hazard to pedestrians (including East High students) and recreational and commuting bicyclists who attempt to cross "at grade (11/4/11).</p>	
<p>University Lake is one of the few public-access lakes in the Anchorage bowl. It is a very important recreational asset to the urban Alaskan lifestyle we all enjoy. Please preserve it in its entirety - there are many other options available (11/4/11).</p>	
<p>Before commenting on the plan that we have downloaded, which is called the Reconnaissance Study Report, I would like to explain that my comments come from having served the Greater U/Med District for the past 10 years in the Alaska State Legislature. I have been a homeowner, and lived in the area for the past 32 years. My citizen service has been to many of the organizations and institutions in the area for more the 40 years as an employee, contractor, student or volunteer. I bring many perspectives that are added to because of constant contacts from people who live, work and study in the area in addition to my own.</p> <p>The Greater U/Med District came into being as one of the final chapters as the rebuilding of API came to a close. A number of people within the major land-owners of the area joined with other health and institutions within the area generally within the boundaries of Lake Otis to Boniface, DeBarr to Tudor Road worked to win a final solution for API's reconstruction in 2000 to 2003. Those institutions included the private and public industry, including Providence, Alaska Regional, Northstar Adolescent Hospital and the Native Medical Center's Hospitals, UAA, APU, McLaughlin Youth Center, as well as many of the Social Services Non-profits of the area. Their combined strength was a strong force in lobbying for the final funding that built the new API building near the original site. During the final years of that push there was a process that developed that meant that the jockeying of land ownership and land planning was driven to a more public recognition. Institutions, large and small, recognized their need to work together.</p> <p>As a result the first 'Greater' U-Med Neighbor meetings of the institutions in the area started on January 11, 2002 at McLaughlin Youth Center. The meeting agenda had reports from the institutional neighbors, talking about common themes such as workforce, program and leader introductions, and preparing to send group letters in support of agreed-upon legislation. At that meeting the group agreed to call themselves the U/Med after the Municipal name for the formal planning group.</p> <p>One year later, at UAA, those invited expanded to those who lived and worked in the university, education, medical and social service area. They to talk discussed the dramatic changes known to begin, and how the neighbors would work together to maximize the beneficial impacts. Goals and missions held by a majority of those service-providers and residents were agreed to. October 2003, the meeting was held at APU and students were added to the residents and workforce of the U/Med. A large group came to the meeting, partially because in that time period the punch-through of Providence Drive (36th) to Boniface had been proposed. The Mayor, many assembly members, Legislators, as well as students, health, education and community council leaders attended. The result was a verbal commitment by all to stop the proposed recommendation.</p> <p>(continued on next page)</p>	<p>Representative Sharon Cissna</p>

Northern Access to the University Medical District Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)

(continued from previous page)

May, 2004, at ANMC Hospital people from all community councils and neighborhoods, medical, educational providers met. Neil Freid, State Labor Economist, laid out the importance of the U/Med to the Anchorage economy. The Mayor discussed transportation, Community concerns, roads/traffic/transit, parks, trails, Chester Creek and the need for increased quality for pre-school through technical and professional training were reviewed. Providence Hospital hosted the March 2005 U/Med meeting and there were proposals discussed for alternative transportation possibilities. Scott Goldsmith outlined the many institutions that built the knowledge economy in Anchorage. The Alaska Tribal Health Consortium, health services and educational strength add to a promising future for this center's growth for the Anchorage economy. The impact of UAA and college students on the economic strength of the U/Med District was included in this Favorable reactions followed a presentation on the need to build a medical school. The group discussed the need to carefully work as a group to solve land-use, transportation and essential service challenges.

The meetings in 2006 at the Anchorage School District Building had a comprehensive presentation by all of the Municipal departments with services in U/Med, and helped frame additional issues that would be included in the programs of the area's community councils as well as adding awareness for all neighbors. 2007 U/Med Neighbors heard summaries from a large percentage of the institutions and service organizations of the area. At that meeting, as in so many others, people who had buildings across the street, or next door, realized the similarity and complimentary needs they shared. At later meetings we would find out how partnerships between the neighbors were building because of learning about what each service did and stood for. That meeting was at East High School. The auditorium at Out North Theatre was the site for April 2008 introduction to various Neighbor projects, such as U-Med/Fest, and the student leadership creating a festival focused on healthy activities in a local park. The role of healing and learning was underlined in hearing the work done by neighbors and students as well as professional corporations and institutions.

Agenda subjects for the UAA hosted meeting January 2009 were on the recent designation of U/Med as Alaska's first 'Green' District, with the institutional pledge to excellence in area resource use and management. Three of the agreed on categories of excellence studied at the meeting were: Transportation (with the People Mover program presentation,)

Recycling, Energy use and efficiency. Both universities' sustainability groups acted as co-hosts of the meeting. January 2011, the last meeting was held at the Consortium Library, which is the joint university library for both UAA and APU. The group of representatives from all residential, student, and institutional leaders discussed issues that required focus during the coming year, and for a major meeting to be held. The serious problems growing from traffic cut-through, over-stressed parking lots in some locations, and vast areas of unused parking in others are joined by other problems that grow from a lack of study and planning. In the 2011 Legislative Session, a request from the major institutions in the U-Med, through the Anchorage Mayor led to a Reappropriation of the left-over funding given the U-Med Northern Access project under the State Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. That request passed the House and Senate as an addition to the 2012 Capitol Budget in the closing week of the 2011 Session. The recipient State manager will be from the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. That request is for the balance of money left over from the Northern Access Study to be spent for a parking utilization study.

Representative Sharon Cissna

An additional effort on behalf of the immediate need to secure traffic, parking and transportation issues of the level of quality previously agreed to is to hold a U/Med Neighbor Summit in March of 2012. In preparation for that summit, work has begun with ISER (Institution for Social and Economic Research.) Other research and professionals have been contacted to expand previous discussions to study this issue comprehensively. The financial economic issues will be studied, as will social capitol. Options, local community and student participation in solutions will be sought. Updates on the timing and place of this upcoming summit will be announced a month before March's event.

This report of the U/Med Neighbor's meetings is given because that process included community stakeholder and worked with the amazing diversity and quantity of local commitment and interest in the planning and construction of community. The history of this community ownership has been present for decades.

1) The U-Med District is one of the largest employment centers in Anchorage and will grow. The special and prominent role of the district, the work product...health and education point to an analysis that requires comprehensive understanding how best to reach solutions to give incentives for those who work in the specific industries in the district. Healthy activity, study of alternative methods in communities that operate with the challenge the U-Med district faces must be made. Deciding routes, ways to find solutions must involve A611 the many members of a district that often states common goals and purpose, that work with each other from one side of the area, to the other, and beyond.

2) The comments made in #1 points to the need to understand the people and their role as stakeholders in the U-Med. Public opinion gathering needs to enhance the leadership that is a part of each of the stakeholder groups. A very strong sense of not being heard is included in many of the comments that have been made in many of the meetings I have attended. A process that is collaborative will enhance the listening process.

3) Study area: U-Med is an economic hub. The hub as an economic zone places its importance in the same category as the airport or the city center. Universities and other predominant use areas demand treatment to recognize their goals and purpose as key features. Economic success requires depth in understanding the sources of strength to safeguard the continued growth of success, and survival for who each hub, each zone gives to the whole. It is important to recognize that the health AND education system spans the area from Tudor beyond DeBarr and both sides of Lake Otis to Boniface. Without involving the whole area that covers so many complimentary roles in building health and education quality in Alaska, and the people within that area, not only the professionals, but the para-professionals that operate assisted living, foster care, day care and many hundreds of small self-employed support service need to be able to contribute to final planning. (continued on next page)

**Northern Access to the University Medical District
Comments Received on Reconnaissance Study Report (September 2011)**

(continued from previous page)

4) Who are the stakeholders? The study of the U-Med District that will solve transportation challenges must be of what the district offers that is unusual and vital for its promise. Public, private, non-profit all blend in each of the health and education sectors. Alaska leads the nation in many indicators pointing to expensive and dangerous conditions that jeopardize the entire state economy and survival as an independent State in the United States. Health and education each are areas that Alaska does not rank well in comparison with other states. The U-Med district has the tools and talent to answer that. The people who work within these fields, the people they serve, all are a part of this area. They must be made to feel of major importance in finding the solution. Roads are important, but who uses those roads are more important.

5) The mission of the U-Med must not be pitted against motorists racing to get into quickly so-as to pass through quickly and beyond the district (11/4/11).

Representative Sharon Cissna