

APPENDIX E

Agency Meeting Materials

► Northern Access to U-Med District



Agency Scoping Meeting

May 20, 2009 ■ 2:30 p.m. - 4:30p.m.

The State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is initiating a reconnaissance study on access and circulation needs between northeast Anchorage and the U-Med District. The Northern Access to U-Med District project will evaluate alternatives for a northern access to the U-Med District from Northern Lights Boulevard in the two-mile stretch between Lake Otis Parkway and Boniface Parkway.



Over the last two decades, growth in the U-Med District has been rapid; construction of new medical offices, university buildings, and hospital wings is continuing, and the area's roads are experiencing increased traffic pressure. An access route that improves traffic flow to the U-Med District from the northeast will increase connectivity in the area, reduce out-of-direction travel, relieve congestion on adjacent area roads and arterial streets such as Northern Lights Boulevard, Lake Otis Parkway, Boniface Parkway, and Tudor Road. In addition, a proposed northern access could improve emergency services access between northeast Anchorage and the medical services in the U-Med District.



This reconnaissance study includes public scoping, preliminary environmental fieldwork, and reconnaissance level engineering to identify and quantify access and circulation needs and evaluate potential improvements. The objective of the scoping process is to work directly with the interested public to ensure that their issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.





www.umednorthernaccess.com

We Need Your Input!

The DOT&PF invites you to an agency scoping meeting for the project on Wednesday, May 20, 2009, at 2:30 p.m. at DOWL HKM, 4041 B Street, Anchorage, Alaska. The meeting will provide an overview and information on the project and allow for public input, comments, and questions. The project team has also scheduled a public meeting on Tuesday, May 19, 2009, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Wendler Middle School, 2905 Lake Otis Parkway, Anchorage, Alaska.

Early agency input is essential to ensure that all environmental and permitting issues are taken into account. Please attend and share your thoughts.

Submit Your Comments

Scoping comments will be accepted on the project through June 20, 2009.

To submit comments, or for additional information visit the website at www.umednorthernaccess.com

Mail to: Kristen Hansen
DOWL HKM
4041 B Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Phone: 907-562-2000
Fax: 907-563-3953
E-mail: khansen@dowlhkm.com

**Wednesday
May 20, 2009**

**Agency Meeting
2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

**DOWL HKM
(Kobuk Room)
4041 B Street
Anchorage, Alaska**



**▶ Northern Access
to U-Med District**



**Reconnaissance Study
Agency Scoping Meeting
May 20, 2009**



Project Overview

The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) has initiated a Reconnaissance Study to evaluate northern access to the U-Med District.



What is a Reconnaissance Study?

A reconnaissance study:

- Identifies project purpose & need and potential alternatives
 - Collects data on these alternatives
- Recommends which alternatives (including multi-modal solutions e.g. bus, bike, and pedestrian) should be carried forward into future environmental documentation and preliminary engineering
- Does not recommend a preferred alternative





Purpose and Need

PURPOSE

- Evaluate access alternatives that would improve traffic circulation in the U-Med District and reduce congestion on nearby roads

Improved access is NEEDED because:

- The U-Med District is one of the highest density employment areas in the MOA
- Major institutions in the area continue to expand and increase employment
- Access is limited to three points that are poorly located to accommodate demand from the north or east
- The existing access points are over capacity, resulting in traffic congestion and increased accident rates



Vicinity Map





Location Map





Study Area Background

- The U-Med District is one of Anchorage's largest and fastest growing employment areas
- District employs about 16,000 people or 11% of the Anchorage workforce

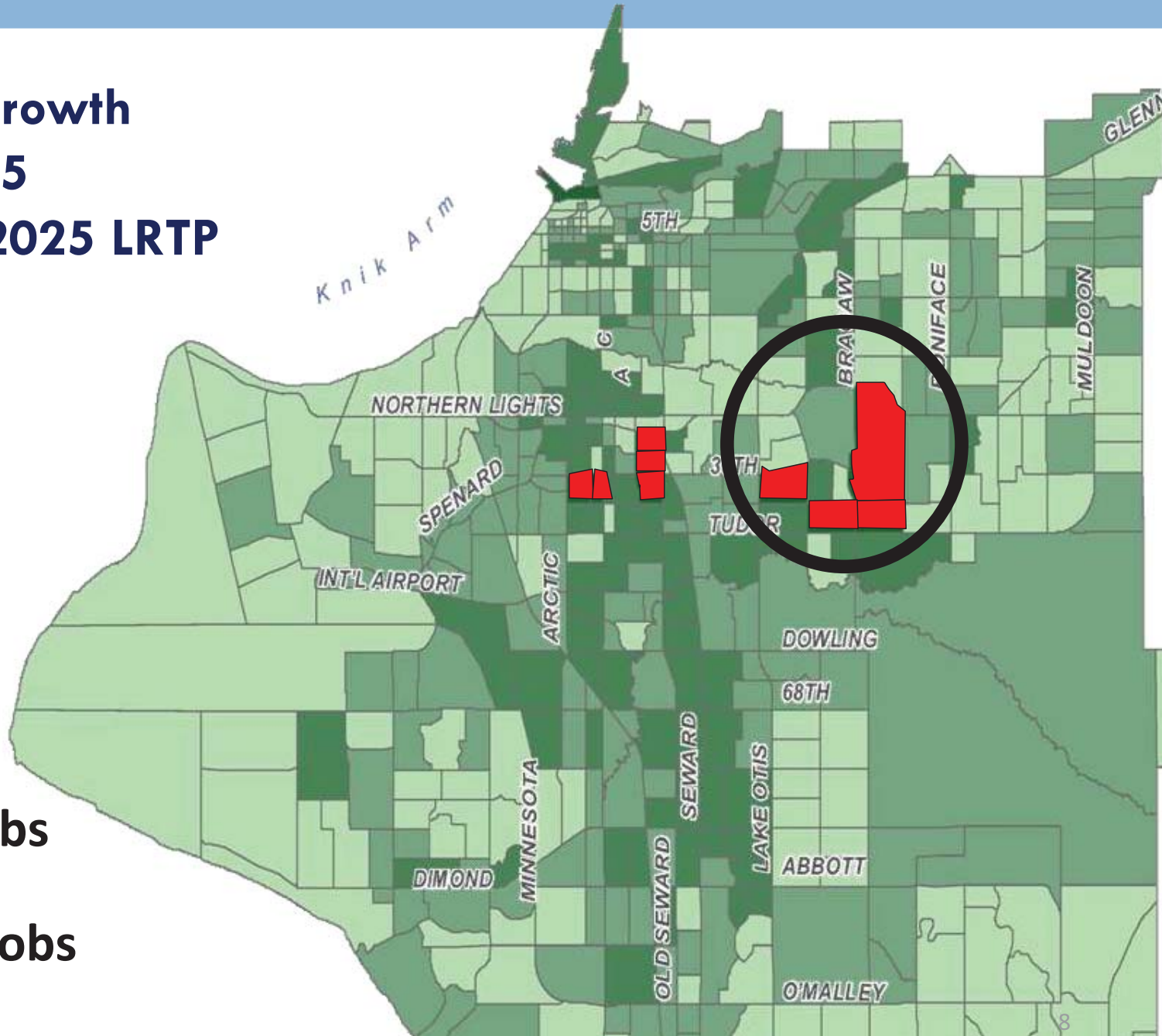
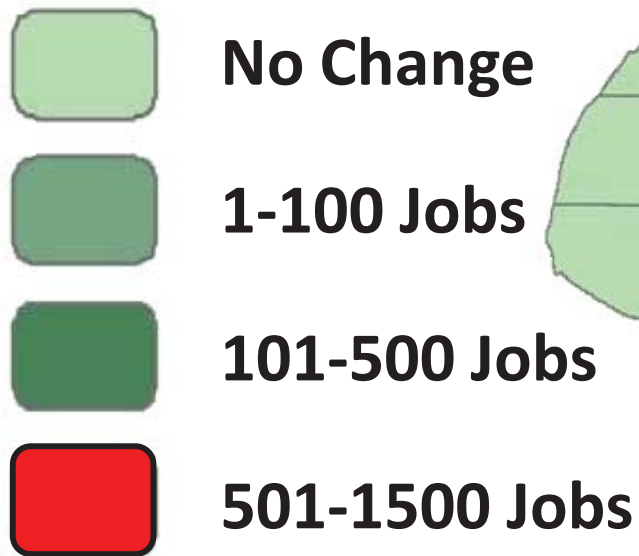
The Municipality Of Anchorage's Comprehensive Plan:

- Identifies the U-Med district as a major employment center
- Designates the U-Med district for increasing employment density



Study Area Background

**Employment growth
2002-2025
Anchorage Bowl 2025 LRTP**





Existing Traffic Conditions

- East Anchorage Study of Transportation (EAST-2003) indicates the district is one of the busiest destinations in Anchorage
- Traffic delays and significant congestion at existing U-Med access corridors
- No direct routes from the center of the U-Med District to north and east Anchorage
- Traffic congestion and out-of-direction travel complicate access to the largest medical complex in Alaska and its emergency facilities
- Elevated crash rate at UAA Drive/Northern Lights Boulevard



Out-of-Direction Travel



Blvd



Development Considerations

- Anchorage Bowl 2020 Comprehensive Plan
- U-Med District Plan
- UAA, APU and PAMC Master Plans
- Emergency Response
- ASD School Bus Routes
- Planned U-MED District Development
- Public Transit Service



Planning Considerations

- Ecological Resources –
Wetlands, habitat, wildlife
- Social Resources –
Recreational trails and open space on
university property
- Alternate modes of transportation –
High use of buses, bikes and pedestrian facilities



- Project Context –
Major institutional campuses
Major employment center

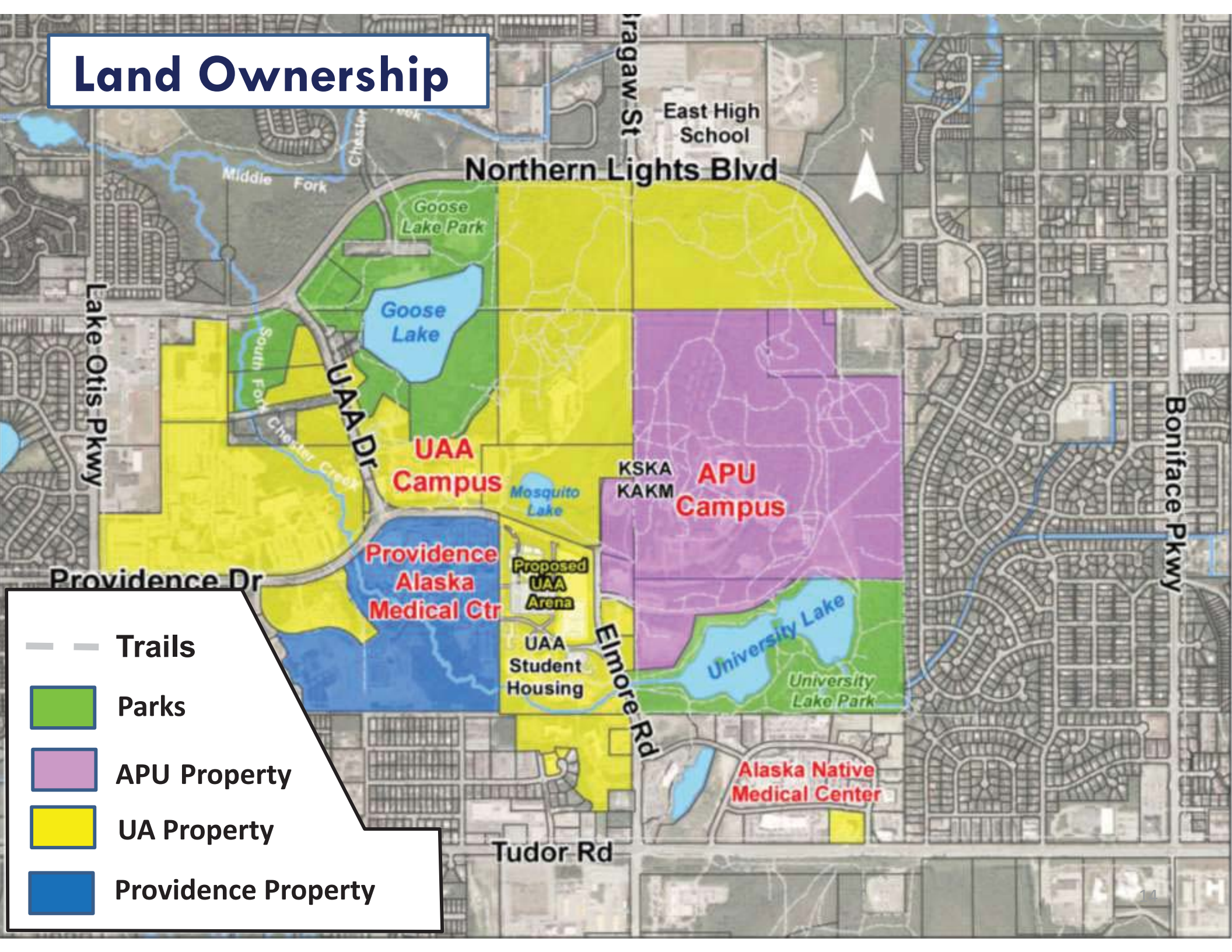


Engineering Considerations



- Hydrology
- Geotechnical Conditions
- Traffic Demand
- Utilities
- ROW ownership and acquisition
- Geometric elements (i.e. speed, number of lanes, rural vs. urban)

Land Ownership



Trails

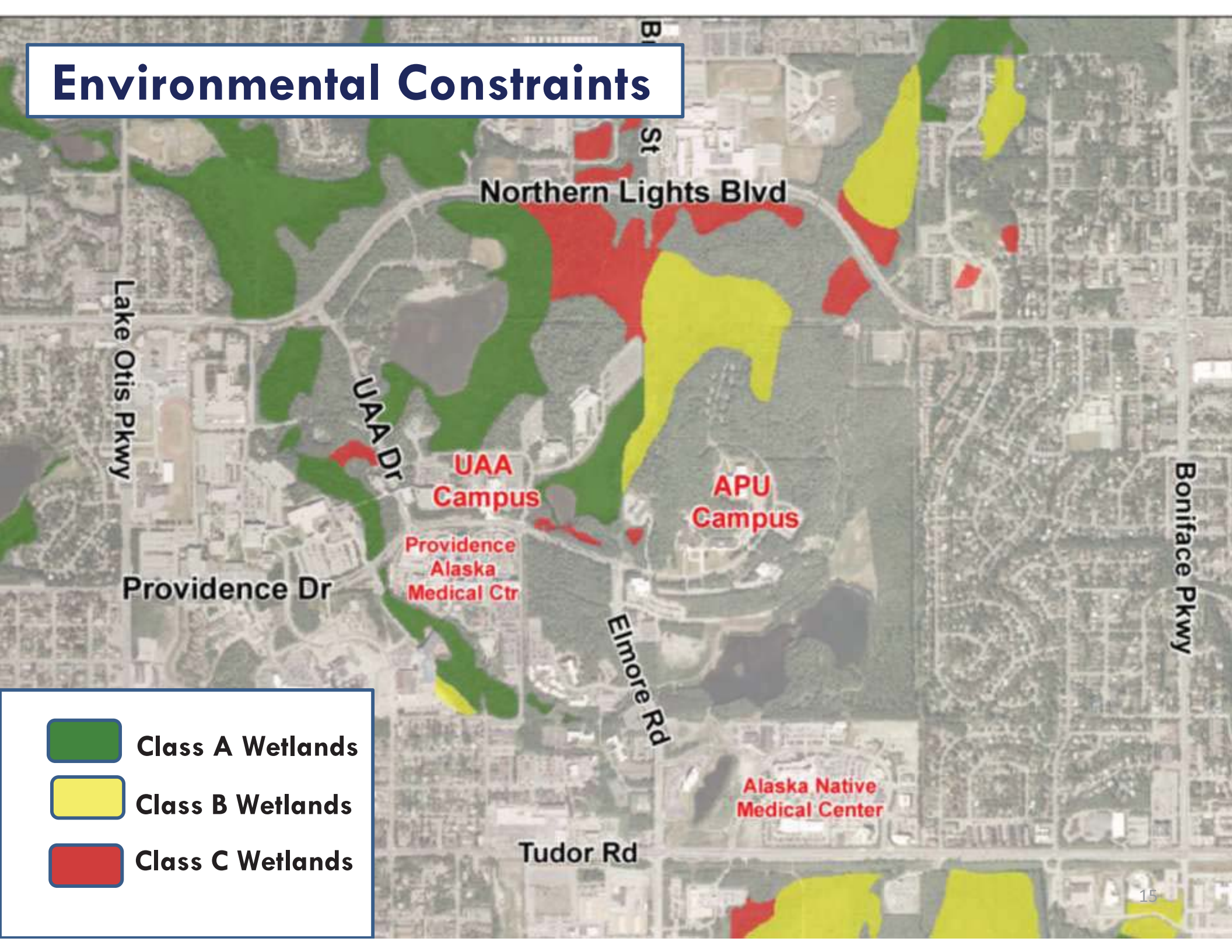
Parks




APU Property

UA Property

Providence Property

Environmental Constraints



-  Class A Wetlands
-  Class B Wetlands
-  Class C Wetlands

Environmental Considerations

- Modest value for urban wildlife habitat
- Movement corridor for wildlife
- A, B and C wetlands
- Historic buildings
- Noise
- Air/water quality





Meetings so far

University of Alaska Anchorage

Alaska Pacific University

Providence Alaska Medical Center

Anchorage Fire Department/Emergency Medical Services

Alaska Public Telecommunications, Inc. (KSKA/KAKM)

MOA People Mover

Anchorage School District Transportation Division

Alaska Regional Hospital

Community Council Presentations

Airport Heights

Russian Jack

University Area

Campbell Park

Rogers Park



Future Meetings

Community Council Presentations

Mountain View

Northeast

Other Entities

East High School

Anchorage Police Department

Southcentral Foundation

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium



What We Have Heard So Far

Common Themes

- What is the purpose of the project?
- What is the need for the project?
- Concerns about maintaining recreation use of undeveloped university lands
- Concerns about pedestrian safety (on & off campus)
- Consideration of traffic impacts to roads outside U-Med



Ideas From Previous Studies/Discussions

- Tudor Center Drive extension
- Build 36th Avenue from east of U-Med
- Pine Street connection
- Bragaw Street extension
- Upgrade UAA Drive
- Transit/non-motorized solutions
- Remote parking/shuttles



Public Involvement

- Public & Agency Scoping Meetings
- Meetings with land owners, major institutions, interested groups
- Local government interaction
- Community Council meetings
- Project flyers/newsletters
- Newspaper notices of meetings
- Mailing list of residents, property owners, and interested groups
- Project website: www.umednorthernaccess.com
- Project e-mail: umednorthernaccess@dowlhkm.com



Schedule

Notice to proceed

Spring 2009

Scoping

Spring – Winter 2009

Public Scoping Meeting

Spring 2009

Agency Scoping Meeting

Spring 2009

Scoping Summary Report

Summer/Fall 2009

Environmental studies

Spring – Winter 2009

Reconnaissance Engineering

Summer 2009 – Spring 2010

Alternatives Analysis

Summer – Winter 2009

Draft Report

Winter 2009

Final Report

Spring 2010



Scoping

Please submit your comments by June 20, 2009
through the project website at
www.umednorthernaccess.com

Or to:

Attn: Kristen Hansen
4041 B Street
Anchorage, AK 99503

(907)562-2000 (ph)
(907) 563-3953 (fax)
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Scoping

If you have a question regarding the project you may contact:

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DOWL HKM
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NORTHERN ACCESS TO U-MED DISTRICT

AGENCY SCOPING MEETING

MAY 20, 2009

NOTES

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Stewart Osgood (DOWL HKM) began the meeting by outlining the scope of the project, explaining that DOWL HKM is working for the State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) on a Reconnaissance Study to evaluate northern access to the University-Medical (U-Med) District.

Stewart explained that a Reconnaissance Study identifies a project's purpose and need, collects data and identifies potential alternatives. He stressed that a Reconnaissance Study does not recommend a preferred alternative.

Stewart explained there are many development, planning, and engineering considerations for the Study. Development considerations include:

- land ownership, and
- institutional master plans.

Planning considerations include:

- ecological resources,
- social resources,
- wildlife,
- recreational trails, and
- open spaces.

Engineering considerations include:

- hydrology,
- geotechnical conditions, and
- utilities.

Stewart said that DOWL HKM has already begun meeting with potentially affected stakeholders, including the major institutions in the study area. Common themes from these conversations included a need for better definition of the purpose and/or need for the project, concerns about maintaining recreational use of undeveloped University lands, concerns about pedestrian safety and interest in the traffic benefits and impacts to roads outside of U-Med.

After outlining previous development ideas for the area, Stewart explained how the agencies can stay involved in the project. He then opened up the floor to questions and comments. The following is a

summary of what was discussed. It is not intended to be a verbatim record of all the questions and answers. Project team responses are in italics.

There was a question about how the traffic numbers will be affected by the new sports arena. Stewart explained another consulting firm is doing a traffic impact analysis and they're looking at making some modifications to support the additional traffic (e.g. roundabouts at intersections with Elmore Road).

Rick Sinnott (ADF&G) said that the U-Med district is an area with moose, bear, coyote and smaller mammals living in the vicinity. He was mostly concerned with interface between traffic and moose which use the area as a pass through. Kristen Hansen (DOWL HKM) asked Heather Dean (EPA) and Karen Keeseden (EPA) if they were aware of any wetlands fieldwork conducted previously in the area. Kristen noted that DOWL HKM will begin doing a wetland delineation this year.

Heather said she could not think of any other fieldwork that had been conducted; though a document on Mosquito Lake seemed to come to mind.

Tom Korosei (MOA Parks & Recreation) recalled a study that looked at the lake water source.

Heather said there is an outlet at the northeast corner of Goose Lake, which drains along the trails between the lake and Northern Lights Boulevard. There are also some wetlands on the southwest side that parallel UAA Drive. Would those be impacted? She also felt that this project presents a good opportunity to look at more innovative ideas to address traffic congestion, given the area has been designated as the first "green district".

There was a discussion as to what the "green district" designation entails.

Tim Potter (DOWL HKM) stated that it meant that the institutions would look at ways to conserve energy and resources. Maryellen Tuttell (DOWL HKM) added that the institutions have signed a charter to make better use of resources and reduce waste.

Tim noted that Providence and UAA have been looking to share parking next to the proposed athletic facility. This would allow them to have a cooperative expansion of the shuttle system.

Heather asked if the project could also get funding to provide an internal shuttle system and not just a new roadway.

Miriam McCulloch (DOT&PF) noted that if an alternative was picked to go forward, the funding source would depend on the nature of the alternative (e.g. FTA funding could be sought for a transit project vs. FHWA funding for a road project).

Heather felt that the idea of helping movement within the campus would be a good idea.

Megan Marie (ADF&G Habitat) pointed out that people would be more likely to use a shuttle system if it ran on a more frequent schedule.

Megan asked if DOWL HKM has any soil data from the project area.

Kristen responded that she had some old data from around Mosquito Lake, but that DOWL HKM had also performed work on recent UAA projects in the area and could have more recent data.

It was suggested that the utility companies might also have some data.

Kristen noted that the utility companies are interested in the project as there is a need for additional facilities in the area and a roadway corridor could be followed to minimize the impacts.

Tom asked if routing a road underground would be a feasible option.

Stewart noted that it might work, but that the cost would be extremely high. The high water level in the area would create problems for a cut and cover project.

Maryellen commented that DOWL HKM was aware that if a roadway did go through, people would like trails elevated over the roadway.

Tim noted that a few people had indicated that they would support a version of the Bragaw extension.

Megan felt that it would be important to see how much congestion could be relieved with shuttles and upgrades of existing roads (such as UAA Drive) first, before considering other options.

Maryellen noted that we are discussing things such as shuttles and off-site parking with Providence and the Universities. Tim stated that UAA had said they would only entertain a connection if UAA Drive was shut down and used only for pedestrians or transit.

Tom asked if the Highway 2 Highway project would have any impact on the out-of-direction traffic.

Steve Noble (DOWL HKM) said that it will have some benefits, but could also make some areas worse such as traffic diverting from northern accesses to increase pressure on 40th Avenue and Piper Street. In 2025, traffic volumes in the U-Med area have been shown to continue to be problematic in the model even with the H2H project.

Tim noted that the U-Med study had also considered one-way access into the district. It would allow emergency services to access the area more quickly but would not address other traffic congestion.

Megan thought that data on Anchorage Fire Department routes and travel times would be helpful.

At the end of the meeting Kristen thanked everyone for their participation and noted that comments for the scoping period should be submitted by June 20, 2009.

