

## **Appendix H**

### **Public Scoping Comments**

Note: Due to privacy concerns, the actual letters and e-mails received are not posted on the Internet. A list of persons commenting and a summary of comments received by topic are included here for review. Actual comments received are part of the public record and can be requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

## **Comments Received**

Childers, March 1, 2006  
Anonymous, March 1, 2006  
Laura Walter & Michael Packard, March 1, 2006  
Art Eash, March 3, 2006  
Mark Skolnick, March 9, 2006  
Bill, last name unknown, March 10, 2006  
Lynda Paquette, March 10, 2006  
Lisa Wharton, March 13, 2006  
John Gallup, March 13, 2006  
Pat Preis, March 13, 2006  
Paul Warton, March 13, 2006  
Michelle Wilson Nordhoff, March 14, 2006  
Carl Madson, March 16, 2006  
Jeff Brown, March 17, 2006  
Fred and Edith Byers, March 21, 2006  
Jim Cabana, March 23, 2006  
Barabara Pape, March 25, 2006  
Konrad Mittelstadt, March 28, 2006  
Bill Reiner, March 29, 2006  
Doug and Donna Knutson, April 7, 2006  
Lisa Taylor, April 11, 2006  
Peter Brondz, April 12, 2006  
Brian Glaspell, April 12, 2006  
Chris Wiita, April 12, 2006  
Darwin Biwer, Jr., April 18, 2006  
Lisa Taylor, April 20, 2006  
John Tichotsky, April 24, 2006  
Martina Steinmetz, April 24, 2006

**SEWARD HIGHWAY MILEPOST 99 to 105  
BIRD TO INDIAN COMMENT SUMMARY**

Comment Number	Date Received	Mode	Comment
1.	3-1-2006	Comment Form	<p>Plan for railroad stops for local residents or tourists. This would reduce local commuter traffic to Anchorage by allowing local people to ride the train.</p> <p>Very concerned about belugas.</p> <p>Save millions in construction and pay for more Troopers – people need to slow down. Straighter roads make people just go faster.</p>
2.	3-1-2006	Comment Form	<p>Beluga whales often gather in shore-side eddies on falling (and probably rising) tide. Do not put road out where serious coast effect is lost.</p> <p>Divided road – please low concrete barrier would be a <u>big</u> help.</p> <p>Plan for rail commuter stops at Indian and Bird.</p> <p>Whatever you do – please do not settle for three-lane road. Two or four okay with me.</p>
3.	3-1-2006	Comment Form	<p>We have to upgrade road! Count how many people stop at the businesses and how many drive past. What percentage actually stop at the businesses? If it is only 1 in every 100 cars, does that justify keeping the traffic in the community? My guess is that fewer than that number stop. I would say more people commute <u>PAST</u> Bird and Indian.</p> <p>Safety! Safety! Safety! Look ahead! Look ahead! Look ahead! This cannot be said enough! We don't want it outdated one year after it is built!</p> <p>Anchorage to Bird – This is one of the <u>most</u> highly traveled roads that <u>needs</u> an upgrade in the state. Very few people use the bike path and trails (I am one who does) but thousands of people a day drive the highway. Thousands! (Put a counter on the bike path.) Business concerns? The Double Musky and Crow Creek Mine have <u>NO</u> shortage of people at their doorsteps.</p> <p>Miles 105 to 115 existing two lanes northbound, two new lanes next to railroad for southbound. Design the road for the peak capacity 25 years from now! Need to look 20 years ahead – minimum! Look ahead! <u>Railroad hauling fill disrupts traffic very little!</u> Four-lane divided highway along inlet. Yes. All the extra rock coming out of miles 105 to 116 could be used to fill into tidal areas miles 99 to 105 (I understand that not all the rock from the Bird Creek parking lot was even used for Bird Flats – that extra was <u>given</u> to the contractor. Could have been stock piled.).</p> <p>More important than Knik Arm Crossing – There is already an excellent four-lane divided highway to the Valley.</p>

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4.	3-3-2006	E-mail	<p>Sometime in 2006, the Municipality will probably receive title from the State of Alaska to approximately 105 acres lying north of the Seward Highway and east of a rustic road appearing on some maps as "Indian Creek Way" in Indian. Please be aware that it is the eventual intent of the Municipality to develop this area, or sell it for development, along with the adjoining platted parcels now owned by MOA. At this time, cluster housing is under tentative consideration for the large parcel, featuring large amounts of open space. The eight platted lots will be replatted into larger lots, for sale in the next year or so.</p> <p>Public process and planning in earnest for the large parcel would not take place before 2007; however, pursuant to a resolution of the community council reinforced by the Anchorage Assembly. We have no projections as to the possible number of homes that may be developed after that time.</p>
5.	3-9-2006	E-mail	<p>Suggest concrete barriers on the blind turns and higher penalties for reckless driving. Make the road a special hazard zone with double the fines, similar to a construction or school zone.</p>
6.	3-10-2006	Phone Record	<p>Would prefer to see the highway moved off its current route for safety reasons, even though it's recognized it could have an impact on local businesses. Also noted that there have been many times where [he] has been nearly rear-ended making the turn off the highway.</p>
7.	3-10-2006	E-mail	<p>Since it seems that most of the fatal accidents that occur on this highway (anywhere on the highway, not just the Indian to Bird section), are the result of people crossing the center line, it would seem the most prudent, life saving thing we could do would be to divide the highway with those concrete segments they make for such application. I know, as soon as I say that, someone starts yelling, "what about passing"? I don't believe this is a valid argument. Passing on this particular highway should be limited to areas where there are passing lanes, for traffic moving in the same direction. Traffic forced to move only in one direction within the confines of the lanes provided should virtually do away with all the head-ons and T-bone accidents. At least then, if the only accidents that can happen are with vehicles moving in the same direction, we have some hope that they would be less severe.</p> <p>Additional funding could then be applied for to build more passing lanes where needed. Under no circumstances should someone have to pull into a lane designed for on-coming traffic in order to pass. Maybe 50 years ago, or even 25, but not today, not with the incredible increase in traffic on that highway. We are a modern society, yet we have let some things, particularly this Highway, be neglected, or improved for the wrong reasons, like accommodating a particular industry.</p> <p>If you were to separate the highway with those concrete barriers so it would become a "divided</p>

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			<p>highway" you could save many, many lives, with very little expense.</p> <p>Since those objects are in sections, and extremely heavy, installation is a breeze...just drive down the highway and place them. It's something that could be done very quickly, right away! After that's done, then you can figure out how to accommodate all the people who want to speed and all the slow pokes who can't go the limit. But I'd tell you, I'd rather have to drive behind a slow person for a long distance then get killed in a head on because someone was passing.</p>
8.	3-13-2006	E-mail	<p>My question is: How heavily traveled does a highway need to be before it is made into 3-4 lanes?</p> <p>I think driver awareness is fine, however if roads are not improved to sustain heavy traffic and poor weather conditions then accidents will increase no matter how safe drivers are. The bottom line is funds need to be allocated to improve the Seward Highway between Anchorage and Girdwood increasing the number of lanes and number of curves.</p> <p>The road between Wasilla and Anchorage has seen far more improvements, and the portion between Anchorage and Girdwood deserves the same attention. Thank you for your clear direction on this matter.</p>
9.	3-13-2006	E-mail	<p>I am an elected member of the Girdwood Board of Supervisors. More importantly for this project, I have been a commuter to Anchorage on the Seward Highway, and will be for many years to come. In addition, I have extensive experience in the biological and earth sciences and ecosystems, and I currently teach these and other subjects for the Anchorage School District. I have also had, for over 20 years, a second career in construction of utilities and roads. My main concern is alignment of the highway. I feel strongly that it should not be re-located onto the intertidal areas as other parts of the Seward Highway have been. I would like it to remain on stable uplands because of the poor performance of roads installed on silt during the 1964 earthquake.</p> <p>I also want the curvilinear aspect of the road to be maintained, so that the "natural speed limit" of the road remains low. We have a single chance when a road is designed (or redesigned, in this case) to establish the speed at which vehicles will travel. Keep it curvy, and speeds will stay low. Straighten it out, and speeds will be higher, with the increased incidence of serious accidents. We can expect that enforcement will continue to be lacking and that traffic will continue to travel at the "natural speed limit" of whatever we build.</p> <p>Travel directions must be separated by, at a minimum, jersey barrier, and at a maximum, an attractive, wooded highway median. Two lanes each way, of course. Speed limit 55 or lower. As to whether it</p>

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			<p>travels through or bypasses the existing Bird Creek and Indian commercial strip – that should be up to local residents, who of course, feel the largest impact of the project and the highway.</p> <p>Finally, It should leave entirely intact the mature stand of trees, which constitute the Bird Creek campground, and minimize the taking of all other trees. My vision for the entire Seward Highway is that of a "parkway" similar in nature to Interstate 70 in Glenwood Canyon, Colorado, where the road blends with that natural world around it, as opposed to the most recent upgrade, where the road slashes across Turnagain Arm in a straight line, and the quarry is a miserable eyesore more fitting for a West Virginia mountaintop removal exercise than as an example of modern engineering. Let's build something we can really be proud of!</p>
10.	3-13-2006	Comment Form	<p>The Seward Highway is a high traffic volume road used by a large percentage of the Alaska population. Not only the mile 99 to mile 105 section deserves attention. To do it “right” at least the mile 75 to mile 115 section should be considered as a whole and built to the same standard. I think three lane roads are death traps (especially on curves – like some sections of the mile 90 to mile 99 section). I would like to see a four-lane highway (but two is safer than three).</p> <p>“All it takes is money.” Please consider how much of the state population (plus tourists) use this highway. Money spent on the Seward Highway would benefit a <u>lot</u> more people than the bridges “to nowhere.” Consider how much was spent on the Whittier Tunnel and the airport train station and how many (<u>few</u>) people those transportation projects benefit. Let’s put the money where the people and traffic are!</p> <p>Our legislators (federal and state) could/should obtain/earmark enough funds to make the whole Seward Highway a state “treasure” that is safe for all travelers.</p>

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11.	3-13-2006	E-mail	<p>How many deadly head on collisions are required before the Seward Highway is upgraded to four lanes? The traffic volume, particularly in the summer, has overwhelmed the existing road. The weather and road conditions in the winter make it hazardous as well. The time has come to make the road between Anchorage to Girdwood a modern four-lane highway. I think this project should be fully funded and promoted to the head of the list without delay.</p> <p>In connection with this upgrade I suggest that the road be re-routed around Bird and Indian communities out onto the mud flats. The owners of some roadside establishments in Bird/Indian may complain, but we should not let the safety and travel needs of the state of Alaska (and the thousands of tourists who visit each summer) be held hostage to a few local businesses. This re-route would keep deadly traffic away from Bird/Indian neighborhoods and speed traffic flow through this congested area.</p>
12.	3-14-2006	E-mail	<p>What is the deadline for commenting on this? Is this scoping phase pre-EIS? Are you following NEPA for the MP 99-105 phase of the project?</p>
13.	3-16-2006	Letter	<p>Provided below is a list of my concerns and comments related to any new construction that occurs not only between mileposts 99 and 105, but along the whole Seward Highway corridor. During construction minimize impacts to commuters (lengthy delays) and local businesses (maximize access).</p> <p>Design in multiple techniques to move traffic turning patterns off, above, or below the main road.</p> <p>Increase the number of lanes to four lanes that are divided to help reduce head on collisions. If the final design does include a four-lane divided highway, I would be in support of raising the speed limit to 65 mph.</p> <p>Minimize the use of rumble strips especially around local communities as an abatement method for noise levels.</p> <p>Design the railroad and highway grades so the Alaska Railroad trains do not continue to blind oncoming traffic with their extremely high-intensity headlight.</p> <p>Ensure that scenic enhancements that are provided remain free for the public to use. Too often has federal money been used to build new highways and provide pullouts and rest areas than Chugach State Park charges to access areas that have traditionally been free to access. Plan the highway for future use so we don't have to waste money on re-doing what we should have done right in the first place.</p>

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14.	3-17-2006	E-mail	<p>First, let it be known that I prefer either of the bypass routes depicted at the meeting over the upgraded urban section along the existing alignment.</p> <p>If either of the bypass routes are chosen a source for the embankment must be identified. From past experiences large amounts of embankment will be required. The prospect for large amounts of embankment through the project corridor (milepost 99 to milepost 105) are slim. There is an over abundance of material north of milepost 105. Unless you are willing to increase the project limits to cost effectively allow importation of embankment material, your two bypass options have no legs to stand on.</p> <p>Second, if you can overcome the embankment issue, the bypass routes do not mean that the ARRC has to be relocated. The Department spends a large percentage of its budget to continually upgrade the Alaska Railroad. This is not a bad thing, but it does lessen the amount of highway improvements because of the large amount of money spent to up grade the Railroad. If the Railroad is left in it's present location and a highway is built outboard of the existing tracks it means that two Seward Highway overpasses above the railroad would be required, one at milepost 99 and one at milepost 105. The cost for the overpasses would be off set by not having to relocate the existing tracks. This option also allows for easy incorporation of Seward Highway access to the communities of Bird and Indian by utilizing these same overpasses to provide safe entrance and exit to the old highway and the communities. The overpass at milepost 105 would allow southbound exit and northbound entrance from the new highway. The overpass at milepost 99 would provide northbound exit and southbound entrance from the new highway.</p> <p>Third, construction impacts from all three routes must be taken into consideration. From past experience I know that construction now days on the Seward Highway must use innovative methods, new routes, or off-season schedules. Normal one-lane construction scenarios and nighttime road closures no longer work on the Seward Highway between May 1 and Oct. 1, there is just too much traffic. I know from past experience that a simple gravel section of 300 feet can and will queue traffic for many miles in both directions. This is with no construction activity – just a section of gravel. Motor homes and people towing trailers and boats will slow to 5 to 10 mph when grave is present. Traffic will snarl from Girdwood to Potter. I've seen it happen.</p> <p>As traffic volumes increase it will only get worse. If a bypass route is selected and a source of material is located the best option is to use the Alaska Railroad to haul the material. This was utilized on the last</p>
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			<p>Seward Highway project milepost 96 to 102. About 1.4 million cubic yards were hauled with the train and side dump cars. It was a win-win, the Alaska Railroad bragged about the profits they made, the traveling public was happy because over 100,000 truckloads of rock did not have mingle with them. The Department was happy because they were able to reduce the amount of wear on the existing pavement. In summary, if either of the bypass routes are selected construction impacts would be reduced and only occur at the tie in locations.</p> <p>Fourth, what ever route is selected one must always keep in mind, the Seward Highway is the only route to the entire Kenai Peninsula, it is the life line to a lot of people when upgrades are considered it is hoped that they will be done for the long term. A three-lane option may satisfy the current traffic demands but what about 10 years from now? Design and build a divided four-lane facility. This will be the final reconstruction on this stretch of highway for evermore. Why continue to put half of the people of the state through many years of further construction delays? Do it right.</p> <p>Lastly, please don't let people fool you in to believing that the Seward Highway's scenic beauty has to do with a narrow, curvy country road. The scenic by-way designation is not about the road but about the scenic beauty surrounding the roadway. Why not build a road that allows people to safely negotiate it and enjoy the scenic beauty surrounding them? Thank you all for the opportunity to express my thoughts.</p>
15.	3-21-2006	E-mail	<p>The Public Scoping meeting at Indian was very informative and well presented. Appreciated the handouts so we could take them home and think on them. As I understood it, three possible routes were presented: 1. Leaving the highway in its present position and improving it – widen it with passing lanes on the straight-aways; well-posted speed limits of 55 mph; and turnoffs for businesses, parks and roads. This one seems to be most cost effective and retains the beauty of the drive without adding noise to the community; 2. Move highway to coastal line-still need turnoffs and passing lanes – keep highway high enough so the railroad does not cut off view of the Arm, and keep present section from Rainbow to 99 a two-lane highway for access and egress. This puts highway and railroad susceptible to damage from earthquakes or tsunamis; 3. Move highway out into the Arm. This would be the most expensive. It would also allow much more noise up the valleys. It would also ruin the view of the Arm from many of the homes up on the hills.</p> <p>Access to the Indian, Rainbow, and Bird areas would still be needed.</p>

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16.	3-23-2006	Telephone Record	<p>He would like the highway to be upgraded right the first time. He is in favor of a divided highway for the Bird to Indian section.</p>
17.	3-25-2006	E-mail	<p>Listed below are several comments regarding the preliminary design between MP 99 to 105. I should add note that I commute the road section between Girdwood and Anchorage usually 4 times per week and have had several near misses over the past few years – usually by people trying to pass someone in the last 100-ft before the 3 lane section condenses back to two (both at Bird Flats and the Potter weigh station).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Design capacity information for the 20-year +/- design life should be provide for public information and review. Along with this information, the recommended number of lanes for the anticipated traffic should also be presented. Peoples’ perception of the acceptability of the proposed alignments might change depending on design requirements. There has been no mention of the potential impacts to this area with the increasing population trends along many of the Kenai Peninsula communities.</li> <li>2. One lane each direction with a middle lane for turn on/turn off would be a dangerous design. Often when people try to turn in or out of the existing businesses (e.g., gas station) drivers pass full speed on the shoulders. As there are no existing transition lanes, when you then add people entering from the recreation camping area across from these businesses, the potential for accidents increase. I’m surprised there have not been more accidents in this area. I think a four-lane highway (two each direction) would better suit the future traffic volume.</li> <li>3. I’m also surprised that when the state has been adding and modifying recreation areas along this road segment that they have not been required to allow more adequate transitions. I see lanes for turning off, but there should also be added transition lanes for coming out of these areas and achieving speed prior to entering the main traffic lane. Additionally, with the new Bird Creek parking area the turn off lane is too short and often people break in the main traffic lane.</li> <li>4. The alignment should be kept either at its current location, or against the coastline. Placement of the road section further out in the inlet would ruin the aesthetics of the area. This decision should be more heavily weighted on the comments from the Bird community, as this will impact these people more, especially if the design recommendation does end up being four lanes.</li> <li>5. A frontage type road may be appropriate along the north side of the highway through this segment to reduce the number of accesses directly along the highway. It may also be appropriate to recommend a reduced speed limit (50 mph) through this area if the accesses remain. In the past few months I've seen</li> </ol>

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			<p>drivers slow to 55 mph as they come up to the police mileage tracking sign, and immediately past this sign increase their speed significantly.</p> <p>6. At the scoping meeting you had available a color map with other road segments currently in design. Can you please provide a link to information on these other segments on this project website? I have not found these on the DOT site. At the scoping meeting the importance of the transitions between the other road segments was brought up.</p>
18.	3-28-2006	E-mail	<p>There is no safe way right now to get to the bike trail from north of the Seward Highway, especially from residences from Oceanview Drive and Indian Valley Road. How to we fix that? A tunnel would help.</p> <p>Moving highway to the railroad track bed and moving RR out would be a solution. Moving highway out will create huge build up of marsh. Hunters would want to go and kill ducks. What about homes around area? Backing up water up Indian Creek would create more problems. You can kiss good-bye the salmon runs.</p> <p>Passing lanes would help, but to where? Mile 103 – Old John's Road – is too close to the bridge for a center lane. Speeding would increase with this solution.</p> <p>Bridge over Arm to Point Possession would help get south moving traffic moving away from local areas. Tidal power can be harnessed and provide Southcentral with cheap power.</p> <p>Belugas are endangered. This will impact a lot of construction into the Arm.</p>
19.	3-29-2006	Comment Form	<p>Highway as is causes line of cars to traveling together has what I call “yo-yo” effect – when lead car comes to a curve then slows down – then comes to straightaway (passing lane) the whole group will accelerate – making passing impossible or very difficult.</p> <p>The illusion of lane size to right side shoulder size.</p> <p>Education of different user groups needs and abilities – left turns to business and resident access.</p> <p>Use of shoulders for “Alaska Pass” left turns.</p> <p>The slip side of a straight road encourages higher “fudging of the speed limit.”</p> <p>I’m not for center dividers.</p> <p>Bridge Turnagain Arm to west side mountain on Kenai Peninsula. Good access to town of Hope.</p>

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20.	4-7-2006	E-mail	<p>I think that some type of gate or stop sign at the beginning of this section (as approached going both ways) along with strictly enforced no passing and speed limit, would be a good idea. Also, a daily commuter train would be a good investment, at least in the winter.</p>
21.	4-11-2006	E-mail	<p>I live in Bird Creek a block off of the highway. Last night I was putting my daughter to bed and listening to the rumble of trucks as they passed on the highway. We added on to our house and installed acoustical board and triple pane windows and the sound seems at times as if it is going to drive into our house. My hope for the highway is to move it into the inlet. Far enough out so that it creates a marsh that would be attractive for the bike path and the campground. I would not like to see it moved into the inlet only to hug the coastline. Although that would eliminate the noise pollution it would ruin the beauty of the bike path. A marsh could be used for migratory birds and could be used as a skating area for the winter. A marsh could add to the tourism potential of the area.</p> <p>However, I understand that the cost may prohibit the construction of a bypass. In which case I would like to suggest that the highway be dug further into the ground so that a natural sound barrier would be created by the sloping hills, essentially an earth berm. Especially from Bird Creek to the end of Bird Creek, the highway could be kept level at the creek level and then you would neither climb up the hill toward the gas station, nor would you drop down to the flats. One exit ramp with a walkway could be constructed at the gas station/restaurant, which would allow for access to these services as well as safe crossing for pedestrians across the highway.</p> <p>In addition this exit would naturally connect to the entrance of the park, which is currently serving as more the exit, but it is directly across the street from the gas station. So this on/off ramp would serve several purposes and address several concerns: access to commercial businesses, access to the campground, and a pedestrian walkway across the highway.</p> <p>Either option, the State should go ahead and build a four-lane highway. Eventually it will be needed and there is no sense in building it twice. If the money is not available to build a four-lane then you must reduce the speed with no passing zones through the communities of Indian and Bird. Every time I start to turn left off the highway, I wonder if tonight may be the night I get crushed by some inattentive driver.</p>

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22.	4-12-2006	E-mail	<p>I have lived in Bird Creek since 1979 one block from the highway and close to the gas station. The increase in traffic levels since 1979 is huge and the noise level and danger level is proportionate. Many of my friends have been rear-ended while waiting to turn into one of our many small roads. When a family is killed, will a new road design address the problem? We have tried many times to reduce the speed of cars to 45, but are told that is not possible as there is no school here. I would suggest a person from DOT spend part of a summer Saturday at the gas station to get a real handle on the scope of the safety problem. I can appreciate the data, which you have collected that averages out summer and winter traffic and arrives at numbers that do not support a four-lane road. However, this does nothing to address the reality of a busy weekend when the fish are running on the Kenai, or a dark, slippery day in December with the Girdwood commuters blasting by at 65. I think the road should be a four-lane divided highway with a local access road. This would solve most of the safety problems we have now. I realize it would be expensive, but so is tearing up the road every 5 or 10 years. Regarding the noise issue, we sleep with earplugs, especially in the summer. When I first moved to Bird I woke to the sound of birdsong. I own a small business here and think the best road route would be a total bypass out into Turnagain Arm. The current highway could become the local access road. This would greatly enhance the lives of everyone living in our community. Thank you for the time and consideration.</p>
23.	4-12-2006	E-mail	<p>I am writing on behalf of the Chugach State Park Citizen's Advisory Board to comment on the design of Seward Highway upgrades between mileposts 99 and 105. The Advisory Board is composed of 15 volunteers who represent a broad cross-section of Park uses and users. We meet regularly to plan and conduct work aimed at ensuring that the legislated purposes of the Park are met. Those purposes include providing recreational opportunities and wildlife viewing areas, and protecting areas of scenic value, among others.</p> <p>Chugach State Park is among the most popular outdoor attractions in Alaska. Nearly half a million people visit each year, and many of them access the Park from various points along the Seward Highway. Countless others enjoy viewing the Park as they travel the Highway to other destinations. As you develop a plan for upgrading the Highway, we urge you to consider the Park and its users in all of your design alternatives. In particular, please consider the following:</p> <p>Aesthetic impacts associated with large materials sites like the one near Bird Ridge; safety for Park visitors and wildlife viewers as they enter and exit the Highway; opportunities to create or enhance roadside wildlife viewing and/or scenic viewing areas; American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.</p>

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24.	4-12-2006	E-mail	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment - I was unable to attend the public meeting.</p> <p>In general, I feel the rebuild option that most completely removes the highway from the communities of Indian and Bird is the best for the communities involved. Indeed, if Indian and Bird are to continue to remain and grow as communities, it is essential that the effects of the highway be eliminated or mitigated. The town of Sterling immediately comes to mind - I would not argue that the Sterling Highway through Sterling is designed to handle virtually any conceivable traffic flow, but it was constructed at the cost of the community itself - Sterling has been turned into a perversion of a strip mall fronting 5 lanes of barren asphalt. Cooper Landing is struggling with this issue as we speak - I do not wish to see this happen to Indian and Bird.</p> <p>In light of this, options 3 (inlet alignment) and 4 (shoreline alignment) should be fully investigated, with sufficient access to the communities. These 2 options create incredible opportunities for those looking at the entire picture, 'out of the box' so to speak. Increased park and camping areas, wildlife habitat (i.e. Potters Marsh), and perhaps actual tourism <u>destinations</u> are only a few of the possibilities - again, the whole picture has to be taken into account to see the possibilities. Yes, it would be more expensive - an almost universal truth in this world is that truly good things do cost money, sometimes quite a bit more. They also generally are of higher quality, and add to the quality of life of those associated with them - it all depends on what you value. I absolutely do not buy the argument that local businesses would suffer drastically - most I am familiar with in the 2 communities are of such quality that they are destinations on their own, and any quality, desirable business in the communities would benefit from Indian and Bird becoming more of a destination rather than a roadside collection of buildings.</p> <p>In so far as option 2 (current alignment) is concerned, I just cannot conceive of 5 lanes blasting through the area ala Sterling. Some ideas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Are 5 lanes necessary (2 north/2 south/1 turn)? No matter what the posted speed limit is, a smooth, straight, 5 lane highway is going to encourage excessive speed. The highway becomes an effective barrier to pedestrian access to the inlet side.</li> <li>2) Could access to the communities be limited, with increased connectivity within the communities? (frontage roads, or better yet connecting/improving the back roads paralleling the highway)</li> <li>3) Has lowering/'sinking' the highway through the communities been considered? Along with limited community access this would significantly reduce the noise impact, and provide opportunities for pedestrian access across to the inlet side. Physically it seems feasible, as the highway is higher than a</li> </ol>

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			<p>majority of the side roads.</p> <p>4) If any additional clearing of right of way is required, I would request that it be taken from the park/inlet side of the highway - the strip of undisturbed growth on the private side is all that protects us from the noise and view of the road, and every little bit helps. How about the idea of barrier fences for noise and view preservation?</p> <p>This project, even more so than most highway projects the department undertakes, presents a splendid opportunity to create something truly unique and worthy of the money spent on it - and an opportunity to consolidate Indian and Bird as true communities, perhaps even destinations in their own right. It requires some innovative, mold-breaking thought and design, but then, what thing of quality does not???</p> <p>Again, thank you for the opportunity.</p>
25.	4-18-2006	E-mail	<p>I commented publicly at your hearing on the Bird to Indian, Seward Highway redesign, but would like to elaborate to make my suggestions clear. Having been a 27-year resident of Girdwood and a daily commuter to my business in Anchorage most of that time, I have studied the matter from many perspectives. We've all suffered through the last 25 years of Seward Highway construction utilizing different designs and different companies with sometimes less than desirable methods and results.</p> <p>You stated in your presentation the need to look to the future and create a design that will address traffic concerns for the next 20 to 30 years. I wholeheartedly agree with that statement. Unfortunately, long range planning is seldom incorporated in projects such as this. I applaud your attempt at this most difficult of tasks.</p> <p>A two-lane highway is impractical as we can now see. A three-lane highway is better than a two-lane but encourages drivers to race around slow traffic and beat the other driver to the narrowing highway. This behavior has caused some very severe accidents in the past and the cause should be avoided</p> <p>I would start with a four lane divided highway. This will obviously be the most expensive alternative but safer and more enduring for long range traffic expectations. If the expense of a four lane divided highway had been the primary design years ago, we wouldn't be faced with these current design decisions nor this additional expense. Even though it would have been more expensive at that time, the overall long-term cost would have been considerably cheaper.</p> <p>The Seward Highway is a beautiful drive and will only attract more traffic as our population ages and increases. I would place this new section of highway only slightly offshore but as direct a route as is</p>

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			<p>practical while still accommodating the salmon, hooligan and Beluga migrations without any interference. This location would also give designers the flexibility to adjust the route for whatever practical design problems arise. With the old highway you are already locked into a route and changes are expensive, disruptive and don't allow for the overall beauty and cohesiveness of the design.</p> <p>The offshore design would accomplish two major objectives. First would be the safety inherent in the more direct route. We would not have the sharp and badly designed corners we experience now. Construction equipment, fishermen, boaters, snow machiners and campers bound for the Kenai Peninsula would bypass the old highway. In bypassing the old highway, high-speed commuting traffic would be eliminated from the Turnagain Recreational Area. This six-mile stretch of old highway could then become a destination that could be enjoyed by locals and Anchorage area commuters alike in safe, aesthetic surroundings, capitalizing on the natural beauty of the area.</p> <p>If local residents and other interested parties embraced this area concept, the possibilities are unlimited for both commercial and recreational entertainment. With the railroad tracks moved out, along with the new highway, the old railroad bed could become the new bike trail linking it to Girdwood and possibly Anchorage. Perhaps a railroad spur could remain for a commuter train station at the Turnagain Recreational Area and thereby further reducing highway traffic.</p> <p>The area between the old shoreline and the new highway could be environmentally converted. It could be made into a marsh-like area similar to Potter marsh for wildlife viewing or into ponds for stocking trout for fishing by the very old and very young such as is done in Juneau along the Egan Highway there.</p> <p>Commercially, the area already has several classes of restaurants and bars, a liquor store, a gas station, a chapel, a botanical garden, a fish and game processing facility and an auto repair shop. Recreationally, there are also: a historical mine, day and overnight camping facilities, and creeks with sustained salmon and trout fishing. There are trailheads for hiking and mountain biking and a designated hiking/bike trail. Commercial development along the old highway also has many possibilities. Park-like settings would be encouraged. Business would increase, not decrease, because travelers would purposely be attracted to this area destination not just whizzing through. We don't want the "hodgepodge", recklessly abandoned development prevalent in the Matanuska Valley. The old Bird House Bar property is an example of this beginning to occur. Through no fault of the current owner of the property but due to State intervention, some landscaping was incorporated, but only in the right-of-way portion of the property. The rest is an unsightly "junkyard" mess. We don't want that type of development to</p>
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			<p>continue.</p> <p>Could you imagine the improvement to that ugly gravel area in front of the gas station and the café next door being landscaped with grass, flowers, trees, and curbed drive ways? Parking could be situated in the back of the businesses out of sight. Sidewalks and picnic areas would abound with boutiques and shops offering everything from handcrafts, to ice cream to bike rentals. A landscaped RV park would provide areas for tourists to Alaska rather than having to settle for some Wal-Mart parking lot.</p> <p>Beautiful, intelligent development will take foresight and the cooperative planning and action by the local community council and the government agencies responsible for its implementation. The slow pace of traffic and life itself within the <u>Turnagain Recreational Area</u> would enhance the utilization and enjoyment of this valuable, scenic and intrinsic part of Alaska.</p>
26.	4-20-2006	E-mail	<p>The noise level of the highway has always bothered me quite a bit. We remodeled our house and added triple pain windows and acoustic board and the noise still penetrates. There is also the fear of having my daughter cross the highway to the bike path and the fear of being rear ended as we are making a left hand turn into our road.</p> <p>I would love to see the highway moved out into the inlet. But the State would have to move it far enough to create a marsh that would be as scenic as the inlet is now. The bike trail and campground would benefit from a marsh that would have migratory birds in the summer and ice skating in the winter. If you move the highway into the inlet and just hug the coast, it would ruin the beauty of the bike trail but enhance our noise levels in the community. So I support the highway being moved off far into the inlet.</p> <p>I also recognize that cost constraints might prohibit this option. If the decision is to keep the existing roadway through the community. I would like to suggest that the highway be dug down into the earth to create an earth berm. From Bird Creek the highway currently climbs up then runs through Bird only to drop down again at Bird Flats. An exit on/off ramp with a bridge overpass could be constructed at the gas station/restaurant. This would provide access to the businesses in the community and also provide a sidewalk with an overpass over the highway. An overpass at this point could also connect to the south entrance of the Bird Creek campground. The local access road could be power line road. The power line road would have to be completed from Connickson Road to Aurega with some fill, which could come from digging down into the ground.</p> <p>I am not in support of just widening the current road. The highway is eventually going to need four</p>

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			lanes with a turn lane, which would be a huge mass of asphalt within our lovely community. I have no view on the stretch through Indian.
27.	4-24-2006	E-mail	<p>I am writing to you to ask you to recommend CONCEPT 3 (Tidelands) in your design to improve the Seward Highway in front of the communities of Indian and Bird.</p> <p>This is the best option for many reasons, including:</p> <p>The <b>most progressive concept to alleviate traffic congestion</b> for the next 25 years.</p> <p>This would be a <b>convenient alternative during construction</b>, since it would avoid shutting down Seward Highway for road for construction, while the road would be constructed in the tidal flats,</p> <p><b>Safest alternative</b>, since a straighter road would likely help alleviate accidents similar to the fatal and near-fatal recent road accidents last year along this stretch of road.</p> <p>The creation of a bypass would <b>create a year-round recreation destination out of the existing road</b>, which would serve as a road around a fresh water body of water within 15 miles of the “core” of Anchorage. Additionally, the existing road would serve as a significant access to the Chugach State Park and the famous Indian to Flattop Mountain “Powerline” pass.</p> <p>As a destination described in Point 4 this would likely lead to an <b>economic benefit for all the businesses</b> in the area.</p> <p>Concept 3 would <b>greatly enhance the residential experience</b> for the Indian and Bird community, including for new residents (the Chugach Park View 35-lot residential subdivision that will likely double the population of the community of Indian). Residences currently along the highway would likely benefit from a <b>better view, and quieter experience</b>.</p> <p>The body of water described in Point 4 would <b>enhance the environment and be an ideal place for wildlife</b>.</p> <p><b>The two roads would ideally serve two very different major stakeholders simultaneously</b>. The newly created Seward Highway in the tidal flats would serve Alaskans who require an efficient, safe and convenient route to Girdwood and the Kenai Peninsula, while the existing road would be ideal for local residents.</p> <p>I would also encourage a four-lane highway for safety and congestion reasons.</p> <p>It is extremely easy to conclude that Concept 3 is the most consistent with the environmental and</p>

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			<p>community values of the area, as well as being the most efficient and economically beneficial for the area.</p> <p>I have an interest as a future resident and community member, a business-owner and an informed citizen in seeing Concept 3 made a reality. I am one of the developers of the Chugach Park View subdivision (35 lots). My family and I intend to build a home and reside on one of the lots within the next year. The subdivision is likely the current single-most valuable economic asset in the Indian-Bird area. My partners and I have invested almost \$4 million dollars into the area and four years of our time. Moreover, I have spoken to many buyers and potential buyers and I have only received positive feedback when I relate the concept that would put the Seward Highway out on the tidal flats in front of the subdivision. Finally, during the subdivision process, we acquainted ourselves with the environmental issues and values of the area, as well as the planning documents created over the last twenty-five years.</p> <p>Thank you so much for considering my comments.</p>
28.	4-24-2006	E-mail	<p>During the last few years the traffic on the Seward Highway has increased tremendously and will do so even more after the planned Girdwood and Indian subdivisions will be done. Our communities were told that turning lanes would be unnecessary, as the Highway would be totally changed anyway - BUT that won't happen for years. Meanwhile we fret for our safety every day, when we try to left-turn off the Highway into our communities. There have been lots of rear-enders and a lot of hairy situations. Do we really need fatalities before DOT starts to care (if then)?</p> <p>Please, reconsider putting in turning lanes for Bird Creek and Indian now – before some of our community members come to harm!</p>