

## 2.0 STAKEHOLDERS

### 2.1 Stakeholders Involved

The proposed project has numerous stakeholders—businesses, local government representatives, communities, Alaska Native corporations, Tribal entities, resident and non-resident landowners, local citizens, and recreational users—each with a different level of understanding and perception of the positives and negatives of the project. Communities impacted directly by the proposed project may include Wasilla, Big Lake, Houston, Knik, Point MacKenzie, and Willow. Landowners in the project area also include many weekend or vacation property-owners who live outside the project area but who may have a vested interest in the planning process. The public involvement process, by design, brought out a wide spectrum of voices and interests.

Stakeholders in the project included, but were not limited to:

- Advisory Committees
- ANCSA Corporations
- Alaska Native Tribes and Tribal Entities
- Businesses and Business Councils
- Elected Officials
- Conservation Organizations
- Landowners
- Municipal and Borough Governments
- Community Councils
- Recreation and Trail Groups

The stakeholder groups were further refined into sub-groups to discuss localized concerns such as, recreational use, small business impacts, and historic and cultural issues. The sub-groups are categorized as Small Groups, Landowners and Local Government in sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4.

## **2.2 Small Groups**

A number of small groups and organizations were initially identified by the MSB and ARRC as stakeholders that would have an interest in the project from varying perspectives, ranging from historic preservation to recreational opportunities. This list was based on previous experience and local knowledge of the area. The intent of outreach to the small groups and organizations was to share project information and to answer questions. A letter was sent on September 14, 2007 to 26 small organizations.

The letter introduced the project and offered an opportunity for individual meetings with the MSB and ARRC upon request (see Appendix A). Organizations included statewide non-governmental organizations, historic preservation committees, local community councils, recreational user groups and Tribal and Native corporation entities. Of the 26 groups that received the letter, 5 responded requesting a meeting.

Table 2.2-1 provides a summary of the individual meetings, which varied in content and meeting style. Copies of correspondence and meeting materials are included in Appendix A.

**Table 2-1 Small Group Meetings/Activities**

<b>Meeting/Activity</b>	<b>Date (2007)</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Willow Area Community Organization*	August 6	Introduce the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension project and answer questions from community members
Small group invitation letter mailed	September 14	Introduce the project and invite the organizations to meet with the project team and discuss their concerns. The Willow Dog Musher's Association received an emailed copy of the letter.
Area legislators	September 17	Provide an update and information on the project to the local area legislators. A slide presentation was provided to legislators at the Legislative Information Office in Wasilla, Alaska
Willow Dog Musher's Association and Alaska Snow machine Association	October 24	Project team meeting in response to request by Willow Dog Musher's Association (letter to Patty Sullivan, MSB, dated October 12). The project team provided answers to questions asked by the association and provided a trails map for the participants to comment on. In addition to the map a trails comment form was provided to the participants
Iditarod Trails Committee, Inc.	October 24	Project team members met with the committee's Executive Director to discuss the Iditarod National Historic Trail and concerns from the committee relating to crossings
Houston City Council	October 25	The council invited the project team to discuss the project at the regularly scheduled Houston City Council meeting. A short slide presentation was provided with a brief question and answer period
Knik Tribal Council Historic Preservation Committee	November 5	The project team coordinated a meeting with the Federally recognized Knik Tribal Council. The meeting consisted of members from the Knik Tribal Council, the Knik Tribal Council Historic and Cultural Committee, the MSB Cultural Resource staff, and members of the Project Team. The purpose of the meeting was to provide a project introduction, discuss the project timeline, and to review the archeological probability map generated by the MSB and HDR Alaska.

a. This meeting happened prior to the project invitation letter, but is noted as an outreach effort to the Willow community.

### 2.3 Landowners

There are many landowners in the project area ranging from the State of Alaska and MSB to individual property owners. The project team identified the major property owners as the State of Alaska, MSB, University of Alaska, The Trust (Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority), Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI), and Knikatnu, Inc.<sup>2</sup>. These property owners were identified as stakeholders with potential commercial and industrial interests. Meetings were held with the landowners between September and November 2007. Table 2.2 provides a summary of the interaction with the landowners.

Meetings with the major land owners were arranged via e-mail and telephone. The project team met with the entities listed in Table 2.2-1 to introduce the project, provide notice that the project would consider alternatives that could impact individual parcels, and to discuss Right-of-Way concerns. Materials presented at the meeting included sign in sheets, an alternatives map, and owner parcel maps showing the alternatives (Appendix A). The maps were used to discuss areas of concern and to identify potential issue areas or areas for future development.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 2-2 Landowner Meetings**

<b>Landowner</b>	<b>Date (2007)</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
University of Alaska Lands Office	September 24	Review project area maps, individual maps with alternatives and provide a project overview
Knikatnu, Inc.	September 25	Review project area maps, individual maps with alternatives and provide a project overview. A follow-up letter requesting additional information regarding future land development was sent to Knikatnu, Inc. by ARRC on October 16
Mental Health Trust, The Trust Land Office	September 25	Review project area maps, individual maps with alternatives and provide a project overview
CIRI	September 28	Review project area maps, individual maps with alternatives and provide a project overview
Knikatnu, Inc.	November 3	Review project area maps, individual maps with alternatives and provide a project overview to the Board of Directors

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<sup>2</sup> Eklutna, Inc. was also contacted to determine if they owned land in the area. Telephone correspondence on September 9, 2007 indicated Eklutna Inc. does not own land in the vicinity.

<sup>3</sup> Surface and mineral (subsurface) estates were a topic of special interest, particularly regarding lands owned by The Trust (Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority), CIRI, and Knikatnu, Inc. For example, in the circumstance of The Trust, language that is used to reserve the subsurface rights in Trust lands is stated in Alaska Statute 38.05.125. If the lands were received via the Statehood Act of 1959, The Trust has to keep the subsurface rights. If the lands were received through the Mental Health Enabling Act of 1956, there are no restrictions on keeping the subsurface rights. However, The Trust policy is to keep the subsurface, especially in areas with known reserves of gas and coal. The Project Team, through a data exchange with The Trust, was able to establish the lands where The Trust owned the subsurface estate, which will be important as the project is further refined. In addition, CIRI, as a regional Native corporation, owns subsurface rights, and the village corporation, Knikatnu, Inc. owns surface rights. It was explained in general terms by CIRI that the regional entity would be supportive if the village corporation were to develop the surface rights. Coordination between the three entities will be critical if the preferred alternative involves village corporation lands.

## 2.4 Local Government

Local government departments and municipal governments involved during this initial phase included the following entities.

MSB Assembly is the legislative power of the MSB and is comprised of seven members elected from districts for staggered three-year terms for no more than two consecutive full terms. The Assembly approves the budget, sets the mill rate for taxation, and appropriates funds to provide for MSB services. The Mayor presides at meetings and is the ceremonial head of the MSB.

MSB Transportation Advisory Board is responsible for transportation planning, implementing the preliminary design and environmental phase of transportation projects, reviewing development/subdivision applications, collecting and analyzing traffic and traffic calming data throughout the MSB. The advisory board is also responsible for securing federal, state, and local funds for road, bridge, railroad, ferry, transit, and airport projects.

MSB Planning Commission is comprised of seven volunteer community members that work with the Planning Division to develop long range plans, including land use, transportation, and public facilities plans; plans concerning the development and growth of the MSB; and the development of the capital improvement program.

MSB Historic Preservation Commission enables citizens to provide input on issues important for the protection of historic properties and cultural resources. The Historic Preservation Commission is comprised of nine volunteer community members who work with the MSB Cultural Resources Section.

City of Houston is an incorporated second-class city located within the MSB. The City of Houston is governed by a City of Council comprised of five elected community members, Deputy Mayor, and Mayor.

Meetings with these local government entities are summarized in Table 2.3 and materials presented during the meetings are located in Appendix A.

**Table 2-3 Local Government Meetings/Activities**

<b>Meeting &amp; Activity</b>	<b>Date (2007)</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Mailed letters to the City of Wasilla, City of Palmer, City of Houston	September 14	Introduce the project and offer the opportunity to meet with the Project Team
Port Commission	September 17	Introduce the project and upcoming public outreach efforts
MSB Planning Commission	October 15	Introduce the project and discuss the preliminary corridors
MSB Transportation Advisory Board	October 24	Provide an update on project development and overview of the public meetings
City of Houston	October 25	Provide an overview of the project and answer questions
Joint MSB Assembly/Planning Commission	October 30	Provide an update regarding the project and to give an update on the comments received to date
Port Commission Special Meeting Re: Port MacKenzie rail extension	November 5	Provide update on project activities relating to public involvement and the schedule for the application process
MSB Planning Commission	November 5	Provide project update
MSB Historic Preservation Commission	November 9	Provide project introduction and answer questions from the Commission members
MSB Assembly Regularly Scheduled Meeting	November 20	Provide an update on the project and answer questions. During the meeting the Assembly called for a special work session to discuss the project in greater detail
MSB Assembly Work Session	December 11	Provide the assembly with information relating to how the alternatives were developed and the methods used to measure preliminary impacts
MSB Assembly	December 11	MSB Assembly passed a resolution to send to the STB