



PO Box 863, Cooper Landing, AK 99572  
walkcooperlanding.org  
[walkcooperlanding@gmail.com](mailto:walkcooperlanding@gmail.com)

## MEETING NOTES REP. ELAM AND CLT

**DATE:** 03/18/25

**WHERE:** Video conference

**TIME BEGUN:** 3:28 p.m.

**PURPOSE:** To share information about Cooper Landing, the Town Road and Walkable Community Project, and the DOT Planned 2027 MP 43-56 Pavement Preservation project

**PRESENT:** Bill Elam, AK State Representative, David Story, CLT Chair, Janette Cadieux, CLT Secretary

### DISCUSSION:

- A packet of information about the Cooper Landing Town Road pathway planning and other Cooper Landing roadway concerns was emailed to Rep. Elam.
- J. Cadieux and D. Story gave an overview of the Walkable Community Project and other roadway concerns.
- Some of the problems with the roadway could end up costing more in the long term if they are not dealt with properly now.
- See packet for details about the complex layers involved in the condition of the existing Sterling Highway for both motorized vehicles and all other users.
- Sen. Bjorkman and Director Holland of DOT have both spoken of a Kenai Peninsula planning effort.
- The 2027 resurfacing project is planning to put a band aid on the problems.
- If the State of Alaska paid for that band aid project of MP 43-56 then federal dollars would remain available to plan and build a more comprehensive travel solution that will last for many more years than the simple resurfacing project would accomplish.
- The 2027 project is currently planned as a 1 R but really a 3R project is needed to deal with the substrate under the road and other issues.
- Traffic will only increase over time even if as a proportion of total traffic through the valley.
- BE:
  - Has met in the past few weeks with DOT about our stretch of road. The proximity to the river is a major obstacle to any project. The permitting process is far more complex when doing anything above a 1 R project.
  - Eliminating the ongoing holes has been a priority.

- We may get surface repair work done soon. But more that would involve permitting could limit the action happening sooner rather than later.
- We are hoping that we can take a broader perspective to utilize monies that may be available for different pieces e.g. hazard mitigation monies for the landslides at MP 51 or bridge pathways that might come through funds available to Kenaitze Tribe that would lead to partnership for planned access to tribal assets or protective routing around sensitive cultural sites.
- KPB Safety Action Plan: CL #6:20 communities in those that are included.
- Cooper Creek bridge is one of the oldest in the State. It's too narrow for some vehicles to meet e.g. BE described having to back up to allow a wide load truck to cross the bridge.
- BE:
  - Think about getting tourism groups to help lobby for funding.
  - BE will add the component of tribal funding for bridges and include the slide area in his future discussions with DOT.
  - Permits can be sought so that projects can be shovel ready when monies are obtained.
  - Please include advocacy for a ROW study in 2027 repave project so that is one less thing we will have to find funds to pay for. BE: Yes, he can advocate for that.
- Monies for 2027 resurfacing is going to come from maintenance. Means it won't be in the STIP.
- Look for ways to leverage federal dollars for a larger project vs. the currently planned resurfacing.
- HB26: Amends language to include into statute an Act relating to the duties of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; and relating to inclusion of public, tribal, and community transit programs.
- BE:
  - Experience on the KPB Assembly makes him doubtful that KPB will actually change their involvement if HB26 were passed. DS: It will be important in the future to remove the obstacles that rural communities face to be included in these kinds of infrastructure plans.
  - Bussing projects have been passed over because KPB hasn't wanted to be involved in that type of activity.
  - He'll look into HB26 more. He's not on either of the committees that have it at present.
- Scenic Byway status: It is important that the existing town road sustains that status once the new alignment of the Sterling Hwy. opens.
- The pathway on the new alignment is wonderful but it doesn't complete the transportation system by tying into the existing roadway so folks can accomplish more than recreation e.g. get to the school or post office safely without a car.
- FLAP and Denali Commission are possible sources of funding for us.
- Economically this project could become a large driver.
- Active transportation: Anything to do with walking, biking or adaptive transport e.g. wheelchair or stroller.
- BE:

- Tourism groups have not been expressing ideas about Cooper Landing when they speak to Rep. Elam about other projects e.g. Seward harbor project, etc. CLT will reach out to them again. BE will also bring up CL when he next speaks to them.
- Latent demand exists. You don't build a bridge based on how many people you see swimming the river. Example of the Kenai 250 Mountain Bike Race. Other bikers who would not consider entering the race are planning trips on the same route spread over a longer period of time.

**TIME ENDED:** 4:22 p.m.