

Community Councils

From: Melinda Gant [mgant@anchorageparking.com]
Sent: Friday, April 28, 2006 2:11 PM
To: councils@ak.net
Cc: Stephanie Kesler
Attachments: GHCC resolution 2006.04.28.doc

FCC – Can you send out this email (see below) and attachment to our immediate members? Thanks for your help! Melinda Gant, GHCC Secretary

Dear Government Hill Residents and Business Owners.

Why are we sending out this resolution? The Government Hill Community Council (GHCC) is dedicated to representing all of the Government Hill Residents and Businesses, not just those who show up to our regular Monthly meetings. This is just another chance to provide the GHCC's KABATA committee with your input, as this resolution will be voted upon during the next GHCC meeting on May 17, 2006.

As you are undoubtedly aware, the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA) is working on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the proposed Knik Arm Crossing that would construct a bridge from Anchorage to Point Mackenzie in the Mat/Su Borough. KABATA's proposed routing on the Anchorage side is presently limited to a choice between a "cut and cover" tunnel that would wipe out homes along Degan Street, and a similar "cut and cover" tunnel that would wipe out homes along Ericson Street. Either route will destroy parks and homes and cause a major change to our neighborhood. Yes, KABATA has the power of Eminent Domain, and they can simply buy out the homeowners and dig a huge trench to run a new 4 or 6 lane toll road through our neighborhood.

Your neighbors from the Government Hill Community Council have been working diligently since the summer of 2003 trying to represent the interests of the Government Hill Community when faced with this threat from KABATA. It has been a long and mostly frustrating experience, with KABATA missing many opportunities to adequately analyze alternate routes (including the Boniface route that is supported by Mayor Begich and Senator Lisa Murkowski) that would not require the destruction of our neighborhood. As part of the GHCC's actions, members of the GHCC's KABATA committee attended a Context Sensitive Solutions workshop back in December 2005 to look at the mitigation efforts that have taken place in similarly affected neighborhoods around the country, and to try to come up with similar options that would help alleviate some of the impacts on our neighborhood. One of the options that we came up with at that meeting was one that simply relocated the cut and cover tunnel from the middle of the neighborhood to one that would go through the present business area along Loop Road (the road that goes over the A/C Bridge to the Elmendorf Gate), and also relocates the proposed intersection with Loop Road to a location north of the Government Hill Elementary School. We dubbed this alternative route the Anchorage Access Solution (AAS). The AAS has only minor impacts on housing or parks. The route loops behind AT&T and Government Hill Elementary School and then goes through the business district via a "cut and cover" tunnel and then connects with the A-C couplet. The "cut and cover" would actually improve traffic, make the Business core area more Kid and Pedestrian friendly and provide an opportunity to revitalize the existing business district. The AAS will require relocation or changes to the existing military housing around the Elmendorf Gate. One major feature of the AAS, is that it eliminates a highly dangerous "T" intersection where the Tunnel meets the existing Loop Road, in the middle of icy and dangerous "Curling Club Curve".

As we have seen from the impacts from the closing of the Elmendorf Gate, the existing businesses would be unlikely to survive the construction period for the Degan or Erickson routes, and the Anchorage Access Solution would let them be either directly bought out by KABATA, or be compensated during the construction until their businesses can be re-built at the "New and Improved" Government Hill Business Core.

KABATA has thus far indicated that they are unwilling to study and analyze the AAS, which is actually only a minor deviation from their chosen "alternatives" when measured against the totality of the Knik Arm Crossing.

So, why this resolution? So far, KABATA has stated that they will not include the AAS in their draft EIS. The

GHCC KABATA Committee feels that the AAS offers an important alternative that fixes many of the problems with the "alternatives" chosen by KABATA, and wants to put pressure on KABATA to include the AAS in the Draft EIS. However, because this resolution speaks with the voice of the entire Government Hill Community Council, we want everyone to have a chance to provide their input. The potential transfer of the impacts to the business core from the neighborhood is also a factor, and we want everyone to have their chance to participate in the discussions for this resolution.

Please take the time to read and comment on this document. If you have any questions, you can leave a message at 868-1213 and one of your hard working volunteer representatives will be able to answer your questions. You can mail your comments to skesler@gci.com or you can just show up at the May 17, 2006 meeting to discuss it.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

Stephanie Kesler and Bob French, Co-Chairs of the GHCC KABATA Committee.