

Knik Arm Bridge Fact Sheet

Feb. 12, 2007

There is an immediate and well funded effort underway to get the Anchorage Assembly to recommend that the Knik Arm Crossing project (“KAC”) be added to Anchorage’s list of necessary transportation projects (the “LRTP”). This quick-moving process is a real and essential step towards building the bridge. *Please tell your Assembly member to recommend AGAINST this proposal*, because it’s a bad project for Anchorage. Check out the reasons below.

No Time Saved

A preliminary traffic and toll revenue study commissioned by the bridge’s sponsor (KABATA) shows that commuters living anywhere between Wasilla and Anchorage would NOT SAVE TIME by taking the bridge.¹ Skeptical? Look at the road maps in the Wilbur Smith study and see for yourself how the bridge route will be longer.

Going to Wasilla? Taking the bridge instead of the Glenn would *add* over 10 minutes to your commute, you’d end up driving an extra mile, and you’d have to pay a toll.

No Bridge = More Money for Other Road Projects

This \$600-million-plus mega-project has grabbed \$93.6 million in federal highway funds, \$9.3 million in state matching funds, and \$15.4 million in state capital improvement funds. That money could be used for other road projects you know we need to the Glenn, Seward, and Parks highways. This cost does not begin to address the many 100’s of million dollars needed for connecting roads on both sides of the bridge. Nor does it address the ongoing costs of maintaining the new road system. Let’s put that money where it’s needed: for traffic congestion relief.

Say “no” to the bridge, and we can use the money for other road projects like expanding lanes on the Glenn, Highway to Highway, or filling potholes!

A Drain of People, Jobs and Money

Ask your Assembly members to explain why we should build a project that would cause Anchorage to lose tax revenue and economic vitality.

If the bridge is built, Anchorage will lose people, jobs and money to the Mat Su Borough that otherwise would have come to Anchorage.

- ✓ **People:** at least 4,900 households or 12,900 people, and
- ✓ **Jobs:** 5,800 jobs²
- ✓ **Money:** Warehousing, tourism, and recreation business activity will shift to the Mat-Su.³

Sadly, the bridge will NOT increase overall regional employment or population growth—it will just redistribute development from Anchorage to Mat-Su.⁴

**Were you hoping that the bridge
would take traffic off the Glenn Highway?**

Too bad! MOA transportation planners say that the bridge will not decrease traffic on the Glenn.

¹ Wilbur Smith Associates’ *Knik Arm Bridge Preliminary Traffic and Toll Revenue Study* at page 3 (Nov. 2005).

² MOA Transportation Planning Division, *Transportation Planning Factors Analysis* (Jan. 22, 2007) at p. 2.

³ AMATS Staff *Comment/Issue Response Summary Memo* to Planning and Zoning Commission, Jan. 22, 2007 at p. 7.

⁴ Knik Arm Crossing Draft EIS (8/30/06) at Chapter 4 at p. 4-7.

More Traffic Congestion in Anchorage The bridge will *increase* traffic congestion, especially in Downtown and Midtown. By cramming bridge traffic onto the A-C couplet, the project will undermine the new Anchorage Central Business Plan. It increases trucks and cars going into Downtown by almost 300%, (from 16,000 trips per day to 44,000 trips per day).⁵ After the bridge opens, traffic will overwhelm the A/C couplet, and we will need to build some kind of connector road to Ingra/Gambell (\$219 million).

Follow the Lack of Money This project will cost at least \$600 million for just the first part (but other estimates were as high as \$1.2-\$1.4 billion). Even at the low-ball figure, KABATA needs at least \$500 million more just to get started. It wants to get this money from private investors (called a “public private partnership”). This type of financing scheme has never been tried in Alaska, and has had mixed results elsewhere.

Australia’s Cross-City-Tunnel is a PPP that shows what can happen if toll revenues don’t meet projections: That Tunnel was put in receivership 16 months after it opened with debts of \$560 million, and the government is resisting calls to buy it out.

After the bridge opens, KABATA wants to use toll revenues to pay back the private investors AND to pay for

operation and maintenance (cost unknown), AND to fund future road connections necessary to merge bridge traffic into the Anchorage road system (about \$391 million for the Ingra/Gambell connection and other upgrades). Will toll revenues be enough? Well, KABATA’s own financial model shows that it can’t afford to build the needed Ingra/Gambell connection until 2023, even though the city’s estimates show it would be needed earlier.

How realistic are KABATA’s toll revenue projections? Consider the Whittier Tunnel toll road: In 2006 it required \$2 million in operating subsidies. Actual usage of that road is about half of what was predicted (an all-time high of 240,514 users in 2005, compared to predictions of 430,000 to 1.2 million).

Don’t be taken in by KABATA’s promise that the bridge will be self-sustaining! In the likely event that toll revenues are lower than predicted, or design changes cause construction cost overruns, KABATA won’t have enough money. If that happens, there will be intense pressure for the city or state to step in and save it. But you will not get to vote on that, because money for Anchorage transportation projects could be reallocated to the bridge any time that three members of the AMATS committee decide to do so.

A Lot of Pain, But No Gain This fact sheet shows losses to the entire city, but some people will lose more than others. In the Government Hill neighborhood, 14-16 families will lose their houses through eminent domain.⁶ Neighborhoods near the A-C couplet, from Government Hill through Downtown to Midtown, will experience increased noise and air pollution. The list of problems is extensive. Learn more at www.knikbridgefacts.org.

Did You Know? Anchorage has been rejecting this bridge for 40 years. Let’s keep up the good work. Contact your Assembly members by February 27!

⁵ AMATS Staff, *Comment/Issue Response Summary Memo* to Planning and Zoning Commission, Jan. 22, 2007 at p. 7.

⁶ Data from Knik Arm Crossing Draft EIS (8/30/06) Chapter 4 at pp. 4-5 and 4-6.