

## **4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

### **4.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OVERVIEW**

Public involvement for the project includes public, KRPC, and agency meetings, and the collection of public opinion and comment. Public meetings will be held in the village of Kivalina and may involve a combination of presentations and open house format. Residents of the village will be given the opportunity to comment on the project through other means as well.

### **4.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PURPOSE AND NEED**

It is crucial to receive public input to successfully complete this project in part because of the need for community acceptance of a new town site and the controversial nature of the project itself. The task of site selection ultimately falls to the residents of the village, who must consider issues such as physical environment, social factors, construction and utilities, cost factors, and access to subsistence areas while making their decisions. Public meetings for this project are particularly important not only because of the project's significance, but because of its time frame and the potentially contentious nature of the site selection process.

Public involvement is an important part of the site selection process. It includes meetings with the KRPC, public meetings, house-to-house visits, discussions with community leaders and facility operators, and meetings with classes at the McQueen School.

## **4.3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES**

### **4.3.1 Public Meetings**

Village suggestions on site comparison factors and characteristics were solicited during three meetings: a public meeting in December 2004, an Elders Council meeting in September 2005, and a public meeting in December 2005. Given the amount of information presented at the December meeting, it was difficult to obtain comments on the strengths and weaknesses of specific sites. Consultation with the Native Village of Kivalina resulted in the suggestion to use the Kivalina Elders Council to provide their knowledge and experience with regard to the alternative relocation sites.

An Elders Council Meeting was held on September 15 at 6 pm. Approximately 25 elders were present. The intent of the meeting was learning from the elders any traditional knowledge they have about the six proposed sites for village relocation, specifically with regards to the physical environment and subsistence activities.

Elders were asked to help answer a series of questions for each of the relocation sites under consideration. Information learned on each of the sites is summarized in "Strengths" and "Weaknesses" table below.

Site	Strengths	Weaknesses
Kivalina (no action)	Good subsistence access.	Extreme erosion taking place – has become a public safety issue.
Imnakuk Bluff	No flooding around this site.	Rocky shoreline along the river that is hard on boats.
	No known erosion problems.	Water has potential to be salty below the bluff due to tidal influences.
		Wind is much stronger at this site.
		Subsistence access is a problem due to the shallow lagoon and preferences to use the Wulik River over the Kivalina River.
		Barge access would be a problem; a road would have to be built from the site.
		Higher cost of living due to increased transportation (gas) needs.
Kuugruaq	Gravel is in the area, but is on a Native allotment.	Area floods during spring breakup.
	Existing water source is near Kuugruaq	
Tatchim Isua	Above flood levels.	Water supply would have to be pumped from further up the Kivalina River or a different creek.
	No known erosion problems.	Wind and snowfall is stronger than at Kivalina.
		Area would not be good for subsistence due to difficulty of transport through the shallow lagoon.
		Higher cost of living due to increased transportation (gas) needs.
Kiniktuuraq	Water supply would be similar to Kivalina (pumping from a source upriver).	Site is sinking – would have to add gravel every year.
	Original relocation site chosen by the people.	Lots of erosion along the coast.
	Would result in the least amount of cultural change for the community.	Soils are just mud and ice – very swampy; Deep drainage ditches on site

Site	Strengths	Weaknesses
Kiniktuuraq		Not as much water access for subsistence.
		Area was flooded during recent storms Gravel pad would have to be put in place to raise the site above flood level.
Igrugaivik	Doesn't flood that often.	Soils are a mixture of silt/ice or gravel/ice. Higher areas are mostly ice.
	Not a lot of erosion – primarily during the high waters in the spring.	
	Subsistence access is good.	
Simiq		No community support for this site.

The strengths and weaknesses of the existing Kivalina site were not discussed in any detail. Most community members in attendance felt that the Kiniktuuraq site was very similar to the current Kivalina village site. They were concerned with the potential for the same levels of erosion and flooding, however felt that Kiniktuuraq would get much calmer weather. The subsistence access from Kiniktuuraq was felt not to be quite as good as from around Kivalina.

August 2004 Community Visit and Public Meeting: Members of the planning teams from COE, URS, and TNH took part in a community visit and public meeting on August 23, 2004. The purpose of the visit was to hold the public meeting, conduct an agency meeting, and conduct site visits to the potential town sites.

Members of the planning team attended a joint meeting (the KRPC, the City of Kivalina, NVK, and NWAB) held at the city hall offices on August 23, 2004. Attendees discussed the current status of the project. Issues involving project progress and community concerns were also discussed.

The community public meeting was held at 7pm at McQueen School. The meeting

presented the scope of work, introduced representatives from involved agencies, and presented plan objectives to the community. The meeting also included discussion of planning efforts and tasks for the current phase of planning.

December 2004 Community Visit and Public Meeting: The second meeting was held on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2004 and was comprised of a review of the October 28<sup>th</sup> agency meeting in Anchorage, review of steps in the relocation process and schedule, a site comparison workshop, and a discussion of the next steps in relocation. A KRPC meeting was held at City offices prior to the public meeting. A National Environmental Policy Act training workshop was held the morning following the public meeting.

December 2005 Community Visit and Public Meeting

On December 12, 2005, a community meeting was held at 7 pm at McQueen School. The meeting presented the draft report and recommendations.

#### 4.3.2 Agency Meetings

October 2004 Agency Meeting: On October 28, 2004, the USACE, TNH, and URS held

an agency meeting on the Kivalina Relocation Plan studies. Attendance generally included representatives of various state and federal agencies that would likely have a role in relocating the community of Kivalina, and included representatives of the Kivalina IRA, the City of Kivalina, the KRPC, and the Northwest Arctic Borough (NWAB) (see attached sign-in sheets).

The intent of the meeting was to provide a briefing on the progress of studies associated with the relocation of Kivalina, specifically initial considerations regarding the phasing and schedule for relocation. Given the potential funding resources, program jurisdictions and requirements, and expertise of the agency participants, it was felt that they could provide important review and feedback regarding the information being presented. There were four items that were listed as agenda items:

- Overview of Project and Current Scope of Work
- Review of Phasing and Funding Considerations for Master Schedule Development Items
- Presentation of Draft Master Relocation Schedule for Discussion
- Suggestions and Revisions for Draft Master Relocation Schedule

#### **4.4 SUMMARY OF COMMENTS**

##### **4.4.1 Public Comments**

Among the most significant concerns brought forth by the people of Kivalina are the following:

###### **4.4.1.1 Gravel**

The residents of Kivalina are concerned about the amount of gravel necessary to construct a new town site. During past public involvement activities, residents were advised that the gravel requirements for a new town site make the move barely feasible. The need for large amounts of

gravel has led to significant community distress.

###### **4.4.1.2 Costs**

The costs of the project are daunting. Availability of funding is questionable, and residents are concerned that if there is no funding, they may not be able to move their village regardless of the problems they have with the current site.

###### **4.4.1.3 Time frame**

Some residents have worked on the relocation project for over ten years. The current schedule shows that completion is not possible within the next seven years. Lack of progress on the project is an enormous concern for residents.

###### **4.4.1.4 Sanitation, Health, Water and Sewer**

Currently the village of Kivalina has no water and sewer. Sanitation and health are difficult for residents to maintain while using honey buckets and dumpsites. Residents have expressed their strong desire for more efficient sanitation for the village