

7.0 Community Opinion Survey

A statistically reliable telephone survey of 501 Juneau residents was conducted in February 2007 to determine residents' level of support for a North Douglas crossing and their preferred location. Appendix G presents the *North Douglas Crossing Household Survey* report including a copy of the survey instrument (McDowell Group, 2007). Methods and key findings are summarized in this section.

The telephone survey included 501 randomly-selected Juneau households. McDowell Group used a random-digit-dial method, which ensured inclusion of both listed and unlisted households. The survey was fielded in mid-February 2007. Calls were made during daytime, evening, and weekend hours to allow participation from a wide array of Juneau residents. To ensure statistical reliability, sample selection and fielding were closely monitored. The resulting data closely mirrored the Juneau population in terms of gender and residential neighborhoods. The data was weighted before analysis to ensure that adult age groups were proportionally represented as well. The maximum margin of error at the 95 percent confidence level is ± 4.5 percent for the full sample.

The data was analyzed for differences between residents living in six areas of the community: Mendenhall Valley; Salmon Creek/Lemon Creek/Switzer Creek/Twin Lakes; Downtown/Thane; Douglas/West Juneau; North Douglas; and Mendenhall Peninsula/Auke Bay/Glacier Highway beyond Auke Bay. Any statistically significant differences in residents' opinions by area are mentioned in the text of the full report. A summary of responses for each area of the community is included as an appendix of the full report. Information about sample sizes for each area, and corresponding statistical tolerance levels, is also provided. The survey instrument was designed by McDowell Group, with review and input from project team members and the CBJ project manager.

7.1 Support for North Douglas Crossing

Three-quarters of Juneau residents strongly support or support construction of a North Douglas crossing.

Do you strongly support, support, oppose or strongly oppose construction of a North Douglas Crossing for Gastineau Channel?

	% of Total
Strongly support	34%
Support	42
Oppose	12
Strongly oppose	3
Don't know	8

Residents of the following areas express the strongest support:

- Mendenhall Peninsula/Auke Bay/Glacier Highway beyond Auke Bay (86% strongly support or support);
- Douglas/West Juneau (83% strongly support or support); and
- North Douglas (79% strongly support or support).

When asked the *primary* reason they support the project, improving access and travel convenience is the leading reason (39%), followed by easing traffic congestion on the Juneau Douglas Bridge (10%). When residents are given an opportunity to cite a *second* reason for supporting the crossing, facilitating West Douglas development is the leading response (30%).

Fifteen percent of Juneau residents oppose or strongly oppose the crossing project. The leading reason given for opposing the project is that a second bridge is not needed (31%). Sixteen percent are concerned about impacts to wetlands and habitat.²⁰ Opponents also cite cost (13%) and that other public projects are more important (11%). Of the 15% of people who oppose the project, over half say that there were no changes that could be made to the project that would cause them to support it, while 31% say that their opinion could be changed to one of support. Avoiding wetlands and the Refuge is the most frequently mentioned recommendation for a project change that would convert them to a crossing supporter.

7.2 Opinions Regarding Alternative Crossings

Of the 76% who support a crossing, three quarters favor one of the alternative crossing locations that are the focus of the CBJ's current study (Vanderbilt Hill Road, Sunny Point or Yandukin Drive areas).

Crossing supporters were asked their preferred alternative crossing location early in the survey, before receiving any information the relative project cost, wetland impacts and Airport impacts associated with each alternative. At this *initial* query about their preferred location, respondents gave strongest support to Yandukin Drive (47%), followed by Vanderbilt Hill Road (23%) and Sunny Point (20%). The main reason residents preferred one location over another was related to improving traffic and convenience of travel. People gave the following top reasons why they initially supported a particular alternative:

- Yandukin Drive: Reduces travel times to Eaglecrest; farther from existing bridge; closest to Mendenhall Valley.
- Vanderbilt Hill Road: Less Refuge/wetlands impact; improve traffic/convenience.
- Sunny Point: Improve traffic/convenience; would connect to new Sunny Point grade-separated interchange; central location.

²⁰ Closely-related responses included impacts to the environment, Refuge, wildlife and hunting.

The last section of the survey provided crossing supporters with additional information on the relative project costs, wetland impacts and potential impacts to the airport of the Vanderbilt Hill Road, Sunny Point and Yandukin Drive alternatives. After considering this information, respondents preferred crossing locations changed. Vanderbilt Hill Road became the preferred alternative among crossing supporters (44%), followed by Sunny Point (24%) and Yandukin Drive (19%).

**Based on all the information I have given you,
what is your preferred alternative?**

Base: 434	% of Base
Vanderbilt Hill Road	44%
Sunny Point	24
Yandukin Drive	19
Mendenhall Peninsula	3
North/west of airport	2
Other location	2
Don't know	3
Refused	3

Ninety-five percent of respondents who prefer the Vanderbilt alternative initially continue to support it after hearing additional information about relative costs, wetland impacts, and potential airport impacts. In contrast, more than half of the respondents that preferred Yandukin Drive initially changed their preferred alternative. People who switched their support from Yandukin to another alternative were equally influenced by information about cost, wetlands, and airport impact in making that decision.

Of those who support a North Douglas Crossing, eighteen percent prefer a location other than the alternatives that are the focus of the CBJ's current study. Mendenhall Peninsula is the most frequently mentioned alternative location (42%), followed by West of the Airport (19%), Industrial Boulevard (18%), any non-Refuge alternative (9%), and Salmon Creek (7%). The primary reason residents prefer another location is to avoid the MWSSR (25%), while 11% percent want the crossing closer to West Douglas.

7.3 Factors Important in Selecting a Community-Preferred Alternative

Survey respondents were asked the extent to which the following evaluation factors were important to them in evaluating and selecting a community-preferred location for the North Douglas Crossing. These responses, as well as responses from the public comments, were considered by the project team in determining which key evaluation factors were most relevant to identifying a community preferred alternative (see Section 8.0). People gave the following responses:

- Environmental impact on the Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge: Seventy-eight percent of crossing supporters said Refuge impacts were important or very important in their selection of a preferred location.
- Project cost: Seventy-one percent said project cost was important or very important.
- Potential impacts to Airport operations: Sixty-seven percent of crossing supporters said potential impacts to the Airport was important or very important.
- Potential North Douglas Highway neighborhood impacts: Forty-nine percent of project supporters said potential impacts to the North Douglas neighborhood was important or very important.