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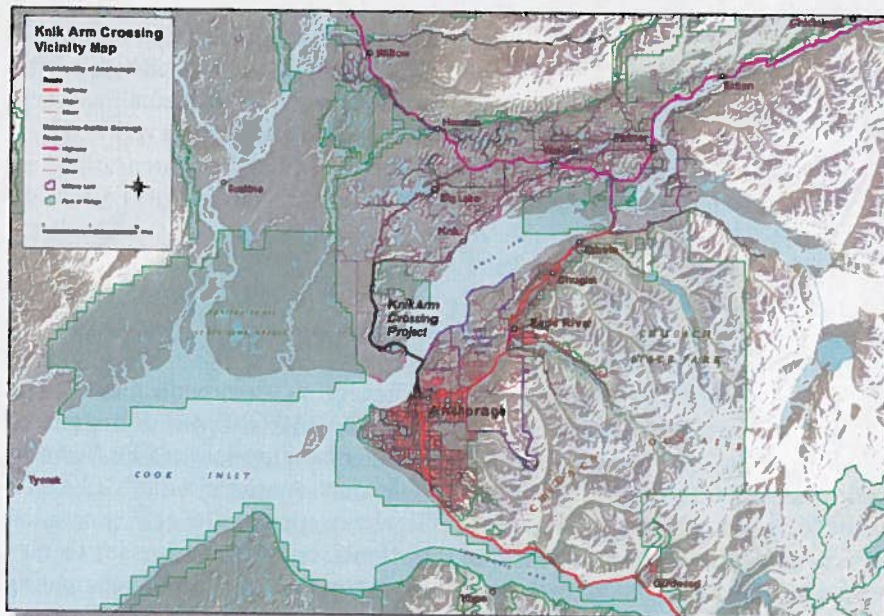
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Man: KARATA

Build the Bridge Already

Stop writing checks for studies and plans. Start writing checks for concrete and steel. It is time for the state to build the bridge across Knik Arm. Since the bridge will be owned by the state, the state should use its own money and build it.

Like Henry Springer told me about 10 years ago, "We're just building a simple pile-supported bridge...A half-billion dollar bridge is not a world class project anymore."

Well, then it was a \$500 million project, now that we've waited so long, probably double, including access roads. So build the bridge already before another year passes.

Take a billion dollars of state money and break ground. Put thousands of people to work. Create a new north-south transportation corridor—it's a good idea. As the bridge is built, also build a new four-lane divided highway on the Mat-Su side to create access for the thousands of daily drivers using the Glenn Highway every day. Somehow I don't see the current two-lane blacktop out that way as an ideal roadway for commuters or truckers.

Schedule delivery of the concrete and arrange extraction of the aggregates. Buy the steel, get it ordered and on its way to the ports—ship half to the Port of Anchorage and half to Port Mac. Start working from both sides and meet in the middle.

Another thing, don't just make it a two-lane bridge, do it right the first time—four lanes, with rails. Also, it was suggested to me that when the bridge is built, it should be an innovative design with a tidal power generator incorporated—another good idea.

Line up the heavy equipment and sign the project labor agreements. Make this the next great project. Do it right and do it now. Build the bridge already!

Stop writing checks for studies and plans. Start writing checks for concrete and steel.

—Susan Harrington, Managing Editor