



**State of Alaska
Department of Transportation & Public Facilities**

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DOCUMENTATION FORM
(NEPA Assignment Program Projects)

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by the applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been carried out by the DOT&PF pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated April 13, 2023 and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.

I. Project Information

A. Project Name: Hermon Road Extension and Upgrade: Parks Highway to Palmer-Wasilla Highway

B. State Project Number: CFHWY00799

C. Federal Project Number: 0001729

D. Primary/Ancillary Project Connections: N/A

E. COA Determination: Unlisted CE

F. Project Scope:

TIP or STIP: STIP

Need ID: 32722

Project Scope:

Project will extend and upgrade Hermon Road from the Parks Highway frontage road (Sun Mountain Avenue) to the Palmer-Wasilla Highway, approximately 0.80 miles. Improvements will include travel and turn lanes, shoulders, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, drainage and safety items along with a new traffic signal at the Palmer-Wasilla Highway intersection.

G. Project Purpose And Need:

The purpose of this project is to upgrade and extend Hermon Rd north to the Palmer-Wasilla Highway providing an alternative north/south route connecting the local road grid network and drawing traffic away from the highly congested Parks Highway and Palmer-Wasilla Highway intersection via this new collector route.

H. Project Description:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT) is proposing to upgrade and extend Hermon Road from the Parks Highway to the Palmer-Wasilla Highway in Wasilla, AK (Figure 1). The proposed project would include the following (Figure 2a-c):

- Upgrading approximately 0.35 mile of existing two lane, shoulder-less section of Hermon Road to a two-lane road with a center two-way left-turn lane and attached pathway from Sun Mountain Avenue to Whispering Woods Drive
- Extending Hermon Road from Whispering Woods Drive to the Palmer-Wasilla Highway by constructing approximately 0.45 mile of new two lane road with shoulders and separated pathway
- Adding pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Drainage improvements, including curb and gutter for the upgraded section
- Installing new or upgrading safety and roadside hardware features, including signing, striping, and traffic signals
- Utility relocations
- Vegetation clearing and grubbing

Attachments

Environmental Consequences

Project Plans & Location Information

- Project Plans and Location Info CFHWY00799.pdf

Right-of-Way Impacts

- ROW Relocation Study CFHWY00799.pdf

Environmental Justice Impacts (E.O. 12898)

- Environmental Justice Report.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

Historic Properties and Cultural Impacts

- Consultation Initiation.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf
- Streamlined 106 Form.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf
- Consultation Findings.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf
- SHPO_Agreement.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf
- 106_Investigations.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

Floodplain Impacts (23 CFR 650, Subpart A)

- Floodplain Map.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

Wetland and Waterbody Impacts

- Wetland Delineation.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

Fish and Wildlife Impacts

- Eagle Survey.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

Water Quality Impacts

- DEC_Drinking_Water_Consultation.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

Noise Impacts (23 CFR 772)

- Hermon_Rd_Noise_Analysis.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

Comments and Coordination

Public Involvement

- Newspaper_Notices.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf
- SOA_Public_Notice.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf
- Public Events_and_Comments.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

Agency Involvement

- Agency_Scoping_Letter.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf
- Scoping_Responses.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

II. Environmental Consequences

A. Land Use and Transportation Plans

Yes No

1. Were land use plans for this area reviewed? If yes, include source, link, and date accessed.

☒ ☐

- Matanuska-Sustina Borough Comprehensive Development Plan, 2005
- City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan, 2011
- Matanuska-Susitna Borough Core Area Comprehensive Plan, 2007

a. Is the project consistent with land use plan(s)?

☒ ☐

2. Were transportation plans for this area reviewed?

☒ ☐

- Alaska Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) 2020-2023 Need ID: 32722 (Amendment 5 Approved November 21, 2022)
- Community Transportation Program (CTP) 2020-2023
- Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

a. Is the project consistent with transportation plan(s)?

☒ ☐

3. Would the project induce adverse indirect and cumulative effects on land use or transportation?

☐ ☒

Summary

Summarize how the project is consistent or inconsistent with land use and transportation plan(s).

The proposed project is identified in the 2020-2023 Alaska STIP as Need ID #32722, Hermon Road Upgrade and Extension and the 2020-2023 CTP with a Project Evaluation Board score of 118.7. The Hermon Road Reconstruction and Extension project is identified in the MSB 2035 LRTP as a short-term roadway recommendation for congestion relief. The project is consistent with the City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan (2011) and the MSB Comprehensive Plan (2005) which both state goals of supporting transportation networks and promoting efficient movement throughout the area.

B. Right-of-Way Impacts

Yes No

1. Are there any temporary right-of-way (ROW) impacts (e.g., Temporary Construction Easements (TCEs), Temporary Construction Permits (TCPs), utility relocations, construction staging area)?

☒ ☐

2. Is additional permanent ROW required?

☒ ☐

a. Are there any full parcel acquisitions?

☒ ☐

b. Are more than 25 partial parcel acquisitions required?

☐ ☒

c. Are business or residential relocations required?

☒ ☐

Attachments

- ROW Relocation Study CFHWY00799.pdf

i. Number of residential relocations: 1

B. Right-of-Way Impacts

Yes No

ii. Number of business relocations: 0

3. Will there be property transfer from a local, state, or federal agency?

☐

☒
4. Will the project require an ANILCA Title XI approval?

☐

☒

Summary

Summarize ROW impacts, if any. Include any project-specific commitments or mitigative measures in Section V.

The proposed project will require widening of the current footprint of Hermon Road and an extension to connect the road to Palmer-Wasilla Highway. The proposed widening and extension is primarily through private land parcels, both residential and commercial. The proposed right-of-way (ROW) width is at minimum 100-feet (ft). The proposed project will require acquisition of 17 partial parcels and three full parcels (Figure 3a-c) totaling approximately 8.3 acres (Table 1). The 17 partial parcel acquisitions will all be "strip takes" and will not impact property owners beyond diminished lot size. The three full parcel acquisitions will include three total building takes, including one residence. The residence is observable via satellite imagery, however the other two buildings do not appear on satellite imagery. According to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) My Property database the two structures that are not observable are listed as a trailer and a cabin.

The proposed project is anticipated to require only require 1 relocation. Relocating that residence to a comparable location is not expected to be difficult. If the trailer and the cabin are confirmed to exist, relocation would be evaluated for the two properties as well. No conceptual stage relocation study was done due to the limited project scope and alternatives. As there were no other properties to evaluate, there was no need for a study to compare relative impacts among alternatives.

All acquisitions and relocations would be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act), as amended. Relocation resources are available to all property owners without discrimination. Compliance with the Uniform Act is designed to mitigate the adverse effects of relocation and persons not satisfied with the relocation payments or assistance offered by the Department may file an appeal.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) EJ Screen, accessed January 2023, residents within one-quarter mile of the proposed project do not significantly exceed state & national percentiles for minority or low-income populations. The proposed project will not have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations.

Table 1: Proposed ROW Acquisitions in the Project Area

Lot ID	MSB Parcel No.	Partial or Full	Acreage	Building Acquisition?
5	71590	Partial	0.30	No
6	86795	Partial	0.14	No
7	14698	Partial	0.08	No
8	28331	Partial	0.53	No
9	83995	Partial	0.68	No
10	82722	Full	1.00	Yes
11	11215	Partial	0.08	No
12	536933	Partial	0.21	No
13	40495	Partial	0.65	No
13	78589	Full	0.31	Yes
14	1007	Full	1.89	Yes
14	75985	Partial	0.03	No
17	45807	Partial	0.12	No
18	539124	Partial	0.14	No
19	539123	Partial	0.23	No
20	535343	Partial	0.16	No
21	535342	Partial	0.19	No
22	34124	Partial	0.15	No
23	27000	Partial	0.94	No
24	20356	Partial	0.43	No
Total	NA	3 Full / 17 Partial	8.3	3 Building Acquisitions

C. Environmental Justice Impacts (E.O. 12898)

Yes No

1. Is there potential to affect environmental justice (EJ) populations?

☐ ☒

Summary

Summarize EJ population impacts and mitigation, if any. Include any project-specific commitments or mitigative measures in Section V.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Environmental Justice Screening Tool, accessed May 2023, residents within one-quarter mile of the proposed project do not significantly exceed State or National percentiles for any listed environmental justice population category. The report also lists several pollutant exposure rates local residents experience. These rates of exposure do not significantly exceed State or National averages. The proposed project will not disproportionately impact any environmental justice population or adversely impact the health & safety of those residing near the proposed project.

Attachments

- Environmental Justice Report.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

D. Historic Properties and Cultural Impacts

Yes No

1. Is a National Register of Historic Places listed or eligible property in the proposed Area of Potential Effect (APE)?

☐ ☒

2. Was a programmatic allowance processed for the project under the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement?

☒ ☐

Attachments

- Streamlined 106 Form.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

3. Was Section 106 consultation initiated or a Direct to Findings worksheet completed?

☒ ☐

a. Was a direct to findings worksheet completed?

☐ ☒

b. Date Consultation Initiation Letters sent

7/21/2022

Attachments

- Consultation Initiation.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

c. List consulting parties:

Chickaloon Moose Creek Native Association, Inc.

Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI)

Knikatnu, Inc.

Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Historical Preservation Commission

The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)

Knik Tribal Council

Chickaloon Village Traditional Council (CVTC)

City of Wasilla

Wasilla-Knik Historical Society

D. Historic Properties and Cultural Impacts**Yes** **No****d.** Were any comments received?☐ ☒**4.** Was a Section 106 "Finding of Effect" completed?☒ ☐**Attachments**

- Consultation Findings.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

a. Date "Finding of Effect" Letters sent:

2/2/2023

b. State "Finding of Effect":

- No Effect

c. Were there any changes to consulting parties?☐ ☒**d.** Were any comments received?☒ ☐

Knik Tribe agreed with the findings of no historic properties affected on February 2, 2023.

5. Date State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurred with "Finding of Effect":

2/16/2023

Attachments

- SHPO_Agreement.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

6. Will there be an adverse effect on a historic property?☐ ☒

Summary

Summarize impacts to historic properties and mitigation, if any. List affected sites (by AHRS number only) and any commitments or mitigative measures. Also include any project-specific commitments or mitigative measures in Section V.

On July 21, 2022, consultation was initiated with the SHPO and consulting parties. Initial identification efforts included a desktop review of known sites and previous surveys, preliminary screening of Hermon Road using the Methodology for Assessing National Register of Historic Places Eligibility, and a review of MSB property records. Additional identification efforts included a field inventory for cultural resources conducted in coordination with the CVTC. In summary, the field inventory identified and evaluated one previously unrecorded historic site consisting of a former building/structure foundation and activity area (ANC-04732), four buildings (ANC-04733 through 04736) over 45 years old, and nine roadways, one of which is a segment of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway (ANC-04178) which intersects with the project Area of Potential Effect. None of the identified resources are recommended as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

No historic properties were identified in the direct or indirect APE. A findings of *no historic properties affected* was submitted to SHPO and consulting parties on February 2, 2023. SHPO concurred with the finding of no historic properties affected on February 16, 2023. Knik Tribe agreed on the findings of no historic properties affected on February 2, 2023.

Following completion of the 106 consultation, the project team identified an omission in the scope of work which was listed for the consultation. Geotechnical investigations would be needed for the proposed project but were not specifically listed in the scope of work. This work item qualified for a streamlined review and the assigned Cultural Resource Specialist completed this form, which is included in document.

Attachments

- 106_Investigations.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

E. Section 4(f)/6(f) Impacts

Yes No

1. Section 4(f) (23 CFR 774)

a. Was detailed Section 4(f) resource identification conducted for this project, other than that required for Section 106 compliance?

☒ ☐

b. Does a Section 4(f) resource exist within or adjacent to the project area?

☐ ☒

2. Section 6(f) (36 CFR 59)

a. Does a Section 6(f) Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCFA) resource exist within or adjacent to the project area?

☐ ☒

Summary

Summarize Section 4(f)/6(f) involvement, if any.

A review of the MSB Parcel Mapper, USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation mapper, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game list of Refuges, Sanctuaries, Critical Habitat Areas & Wildlife Ranges, and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources Alaska Mapper indicates no publicly available parks, recreation areas, wildlife or waterfowl refuges occur within the project area. A review of the Land and Water Conservation Fund project list (2014) indicates no 6(f) protected lands exist in the project area. Additionally, as discussed above in Section E, no historic properties are known in the project area.

F. Contaminated Sites and Hazardous Materials Impacts**Yes No**

1. Include source, link, and date accessed of databases used.

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) Contaminated Sites Map was accessed in January 2023. A URL for the database is included here:
<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=315240bf84aa0b8272ad1cef3cad3>

2. Are there known or potentially contaminated sites within or adjacent to the existing ROW? ☐ Yes ☒ No
3. Would a documented hazardous material site be acquired? ☐ Yes ☒ No
4. Are there contaminated sites within 1,500 feet of where excavation dewatering is anticipated? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Summary

Summarize the contaminated site impacts and mitigation, if any.

A review of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) Contaminated Sites Mapper (January 2023) indicates there are no active or cleanup complete with institutional controls within 1500-ft of the project area. Five cleanup complete sites are adjacent the project area, the sites do not pose a threat to human health and the environment and are unlikely to be impacted by construction activities due to the distance.

Table 2: ADEC Contaminated Sites within 1500 ft of the Project Area

Hazard ID	Site Name	Status	Approximate Distance
22935	Tax Parcel B-4	Cleanup Complete	200 ft
24786	Nye Frontier Ford	Cleanup Complete	1,300 ft
23734	Nye Frontier Ford	Cleanup Complete	1,100 ft
25318	Former Valley Country Store & Motel	Cleanup Complete	250 ft
3329	Nye Ford Wasilla UST	Cleanup Complete	200 ft

G. Floodplain Impacts (23 CFR 650, Subpart A)**Yes No**

1. Does the project encroach into a mapped base floodplain or a potential unmapped base floodplain? ☐ Yes ☒ No
2. Does the project conform to local flood hazard requirements? ☒ Yes ☐ No
3. Is the project consistent with E.O. 11988 (Floodplain Protection)? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Summary

Describe any encroachments into mapped and unmapped floodplains and summarize impacts. For c(26, 27, or 28) CE classifications describe whether encroachments are functionally dependent.

A review of the Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) Flood Maps show there is a Zone A floodplain (one-percent annual chance flood hazard) adjacent the proposed project area. The floodplain is associated with Cottonwood Creek and Wasilla Lake. The proposed project is located outside the Zone A floodplain (Figure 5), however the tie-in to North Betts Street, north of the Palmer-Wasilla Highway, is close to a floodplain encroachment. This area should be evaluated closely as design progresses, however at this time there is no floodplain encroachment anticipated.

Attachments

- Floodplain Map.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

H. Wetland and Waterbody Impacts

Yes No

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Would the project affect wetlands or other Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS), as defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) (Section 404). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Is a USACE authorization anticipated? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Will the project involve navigable waters as defined by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) (Section 9)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Will the project affect a designated Wild and Scenic River or land adjacent to a Wild and Scenic River, including those on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

a. Estimated fill quantities below:

Summary

Summarize wetland and waterbody impacts and mitigation, if any.

A review of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory and MSB Wetlands Viewer identified a portion of the northern project area as palustrine wetlands. For regulatory purposes, a wetland delineation was performed on July 14, 2022, to confirm and delineate wetlands within the project area. Based on field observations the proposed project area does not contain wetland vegetation, soil, or hydrology; three indicators of the presence of wetlands. The project area is dominated by paper birch and balsam poplar with an understory of prickly rose and field horsetail. Soils consist of a thin organic layer and are typically underlain by sandy loam or loamy mineral soil. The project area habitat typically lacked primary wetland hydrologic indicators, even in low lying areas which could concentrate surface runoff. The field delineation determined the project area consists entirely of uplands. The wetland delineation report is included in the document.

Attachments

- Wetland Delineation.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

I. Fish and Wildlife Impacts

Yes No

1. Anadromous and resident fish habitat.

a. Include source, link, and date accessed of databases used.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game anadromous waters catalog indicates no anadromous or resident fish habitat intersects the proposed project. The database was accessed in January 2023. A URL to the database has been included here:
<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/1a4eb07b42ff4ebb8c71ba45adaedf0c/>

I. Fish and Wildlife Impacts**Yes No**

b. Is anadromous or resident fish habitat present in project area (Title 16.05.841 and 16.05.871)?

☐ ☒

2. Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).

a. Include source, link, and date accessed of databases used.

No essential fish habitat is found within or immediately adjacent to the proposed project footprint. A URL to the applicable database has been included here:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/1a4eb07b42ff4ebb8c71ba45adaedf0c/>

b. Is EFH present in project area?

☐ ☒

3. Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species

a. Include source, link, and date accessed of databases used.

No threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat is known to be within or adjacent to the proposed project. A URL to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service IPaC website, which delineates this information has been included here: <https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/>

b. Are listed threatened or endangered species present in the project area?

☐ ☒

4. Marine Mammals.

a. Is the project located in the marine environment?

☐ ☒

5. Wildlife Resources:

a. Is the project in an area of high wildlife/vehicle accidents?

☐ ☒

b. Would the project bisect migration corridors?

☐ ☒

c. Would the project segment habitat?

☐ ☒

6. Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.**Attachments**

- Eagle Survey.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

a. Include source, link, and date accessed of databases used.

The project is located near an active Bald eagle nest. A URL of the database containing this information has been included here:

<https://gis.data.alaska.gov/maps/d0be8220447747f2bb25e43a36513482/about>

b. Is the project visible from an eagle nesting tree?

☒ ☐

c. Is the project within 330 feet of an eagle nesting tree?

☒ ☐

d. Is the project within 660 feet of an eagle nesting tree?

☒ ☐

e. Will the project require blasting or other activities that produce extreme loud noises within 1/2 a mile from an active nest?

☐ ☒

I. Fish and Wildlife Impacts

Yes No

f. Is an eagle permit required?

☒ ☐

7. Is the project consistent with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act?

☒ ☐**Summary**

Summarize fish and wildlife impacts and mitigation, if any.

The project area intersects with the 660ft buffer of three nest locations and the 330ft buffer of one USFWS mapped nest location, however a field survey could not confirm a nest at the location where the 330ft buffer intersects with the project area. Two nests can readily be observed from the stretch of South Hermon Road that is located between East Quiet Road and East Whispering Woods Drive. A USFWS Incidental Take Permit would be required prior to construction if any nests are determined active during a construction year. Because the nests are located outside of the proposed project boundaries, no Eagle Nest Take Permits are required. See the attached document for the Eagle Nest Survey memo.

The proposed project area is potential habitat for a variety of species including migratory birds, moose, bear, small furbearers, and upland game birds. No aquatic habitat exists in the proposed project area. The southern portion of the proposed project will consist of improvements to existing transportation facilities. As such, no permanent impacts to terrestrial wildlife are anticipated. The northern portion of the project area has forested habitat that will be impacted by the road extension. The current habitat is discontinuous and surrounded by urban developments, as such, the proposed project is not expected to bisect a migration corridor or segment habitat.

The project would clear and grub undisturbed areas with potential migratory bird habitat. Mitigation of impacts to migratory bird habitat would be to conduct vegetation clearing and grubbing activities outside of the USFWS *Timing Recommendations for Land Disturbance & Vegetation Clearing* of May 1st through July 15th.

J. Invasive Species Impacts

Yes No

1. Include source, link, and date accessed of databases used.

The Alaska Exotic Plants Information Clearinghouse (AKEPIC) was accessed in January 2023. It indicated several exotic/invasive plant species within or near the project area. A URL to the database has been included here: <https://accs.uaa.alaska.edu/invasive-species/non-native-plants/>

2. Are invasive species present in project area?

☒ ☐

3. Does the project include all practicable measures to minimize the introduction or spread of invasive species, making the project consistent with E.O. 13112 (Invasive Species)?

☒ ☐**Summary**

Summarize invasive species impacts and mitigation, if any.

According to AKEPIC, there are three reported instances of invasive European bird cherry (*Prunus padus*) identified near the project area. To minimize the risk of introducing or spreading invasive species, the area of ground disturbance would be limited to the extent possible for the purposes of the project and weed-free soil would be used to reestablish vegetation after construction. Disturbed areas would also be reseeded and revegetated with native species in accordance with Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) Revegetation Manual. The use of locally produced erosion control materials would be recommended to minimize potential importation of new weeds propagules from outside Alaska.

K. Water Quality Impacts**Yes No**

1. Will there be temporary degradation of water quality?

☒ ☐

2. Is a public or private drinking water source or protection area within or adjacent to the project?

☒ ☐**Attachments**

- DEC_Drinking_Water_Consultation.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

3. Would the project result in a discharge of storm water to a WOTUS? [40 CFR 230.3(o)]

☐ ☒

4. Would the project discharge storm water into or affect an ADEC-designated Impaired Waterbody?

☐ ☒

5. Will the project involve more than one (1) acre of ground-disturbing activities?

☒ ☐

6. Is there a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) APDES permit, or will runoff be mixed with discharges from an APDES permitted industrial facility?

☐ ☒**Summary**

Summarize the water quality impacts and mitigation, if any.

The proposed project corridor crosses the drinking water protection areas for the three identified public drinking water systems (AK2220424, AK2224476, and AK2220634). DEC drinking water staff was consulted about possible project related impacts to these public water systems. The agency provided a list of recommendations for general project activities near public water sources. This list of recommendations can be found in the attached drinking water consultation. Based on review of water table depth information from nearby groundwater wells via the ADNR Well Log Tracking System, the proposed project is not expected to encounter groundwater or impact any public water system(s). Nearby wells have static water at 30 to 70 feet from the top of the casing according to ADNR well logs.

A Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit is in process and is anticipated cover the project area. If the MS4 is implemented, a future NEPA reevaluation will address project impacts.

Cottonwood Creek is an ADEC impaired waterbody with a Total Maximum Daily Load for fecal coliform. Cottonwood creek is approximately 740-ft from the proposed project and is not likely to receive unattenuated runoff. Additionally, roadside runoff is not a common contributor of fecal coliform and subsequently the proposed project would not increase the contaminant in Cottonwood Creek.

The proposed project is expected to have drainage ditches to attenuate stormwater runoff. The receiving bodies for attenuated stormwater runoff are dependent on an Hydraulic and Hydrologic Analysis, but are expected to be Cottonwood Creek and Wasilla Lake.

L. Air Quality Impacts**Yes No**

1. Will there be temporary degradation of air quality?

☒ ☐

2. Is the project located in an air quality maintenance area or nonattainment area (CO or PM-10 or PM-2.5)?

☐ ☒**Summary**

Summarize air quality impacts and mitigation, if any.

A review of the EPA's Green Book for Nonattainment and Maintenance Areas and the EPA's AirData Air Quality Monitors online mapper on February 22, 2023, showed the proposed project is not within a nonattainment or maintenance area. The proposed project would not dramatically increase traffic capacity and would reduce congestion at the intersection of the Parks Highway and Palmer-Wasilla Highway and subsequently would result in a reduction of vehicle air emissions.

M. Noise Impacts (23 CFR 772)**Yes No**

1. Will there be temporary noise impacts?

☐ ☒

2. Does the project involve any of the following Type I project actions listed below (23 CFR 772.5)?

☒ ☐

- Construction of highway on a new location.

3. Are any lands listed in 23 CFR 772.11(c) adjacent to the project? Identify all below.

☒ ☐

- Category B: Residential.
- Category E: Hotels, motels, offices, restaurants/bars, and other developed lands, properties or activities not listed above.

4. Does the noise analysis identify a noise impact?

☐ ☒**Summary**

Summarize noise impacts and mitigation, if any.

The proposed project consists of construction of highway on a new location, subsequently the project requires an analysis of noise impacts under 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 772. This noise study was performed to identify impacts to noise-sensitive areas caused by the proposed project and to examine potential abatement measures in conformance with the Federal Highway Administration noise regulations and the 2018 State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Noise Policy. The Noise Analysis identified seven Activity Category B (Residential) lots, four Activity Category E (e.g., hotels, motels, offices, restaurants, etc.) lots, eight Activity Category F (e.g., retail, maintenance, airports, industrial, etc.), and 10 Activity Category G (i.e., undeveloped) lots as front-row receivers. The Noise Analysis predicted the existing noise in A-weighted decibels (dBA) and compared the existing to the predicted noise conditions of a 2042 no-build scenario and a 2042 build scenario.

A noise impact is defined as approaching or exceeding the FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) for each Activity Category, or an increase in 15dBA over existing noise levels. The noise analysis concludes that no receivers approach or exceed the NAC for 2042 build and no build conditions. Additionally, no receivers show an increase over existing exceeding 15 dBA. No permanent noise impacts are expected to result from construction of the proposed project. Temporary noise impacts associated with construction will be described in Section P: Construction Impacts.

Please see the attached appendix for the Hermon Road Extension and Upgrade: Parks Highway to Palmer-Wasilla Highway noise analysis.

Attachments

- Hermon_Rd_Noise_Analysis.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

N. Social and Economic Impacts**Yes No**

1. Would the project affect neighborhoods or community cohesion?

☐ ☒

2. Would the project affect school boundaries, recreation areas, churches, businesses, police and fire protection, etc.?

☐ ☒

3. Would the project affect the elderly, handicapped, non-drivers, transit-dependent, minority and ethnic groups, or the economically disadvantaged?

☐ ☒

4. Would the project affect travel patterns and accessibility (e.g., vehicular, commuter, bicycle, or pedestrian)?

☒ ☐

a. Would the project include temporary delays and detours of traffic?

☒ ☐

N. Social and Economic Impacts

Yes **No**

5. The project will have adverse economic impacts on the regional and/or local economy, such as effects on development, tax revenues and public expenditures, employment opportunities, accessibility, and retail sales.

☐ ☒

6. The project will adversely affect established businesses or business districts.

☐ ☒

a. Would the project have temporary impacts on businesses?

☒ ☐

Summary

Summarize social and economic impacts and mitigation, if any.

The proposed project crosses through the City of Wasilla and the MSB community South Lakes. The parcels along the project corridor are about an even mixture of private residential and commercial properties, some of which are developed parcels, others are undeveloped. Tightly spaced parcels connected by residential roads occur east of the project area, but do not continue through the project area. As such, the proposed project is not expected to bisect or interrupt an established residential neighborhood and no impacts to community cohesion are expected. Community services such as recreation areas, churches, and emergency services are not expected to change as a result of the proposed improvements and road extension.

The Hermon Road improvement and extension is intended to reduce traffic congestion and trip times and improve traffic efficiency and safety. The non-motorized and motorized improvements will improve connectivity for both local residents and those that regularly travel Palmer-Wasilla Highway and the Parks Highway.

The proposed project would result in long-term benefits to the economy of the region by reducing traffic congestion at the Parks Highway and Palmer-Wasilla Highway intersection and improving connectivity. Traffic is expected to increase on Hermon Road, with travelers inclined to avoid traffic delays associated with the Palmer-Wasilla Highway and Parks Highway intersection. Increased traffic along Hermon Road is expected to benefit the local businesses through greater visibility. Creating a through-road between two main thoroughfares may encourage development along the corridor and therefore increase local tax revenues, and potentially employment opportunities. Construction of the proposed project may create temporary delays for those commuting to and from businesses or residential properties. Access for locals is expected to be maintained throughout construction.

III. Comments and Coordination

A. Public Involvement**Yes No**

1. Was public involvement for project completed?

☒ ☐

2. Was the project public noticed?

☒ ☐

a. Newspaper name and date of notice:

☒ ☐

Anchorage Daily News 1/30/2022

Frontiersman 2/2/2022

Attachments

- Newspaper_Notices.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

b. Alaska Online Public Notice date:

☒ ☐

State of Alaska Public Notices Website

Attachments

- SOA_Public_Notice.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

c. Were public notices completed for specific resource impacts (e.g., floodplain, Section 4(f))?

☐ ☒

3. Was a public meeting held?

☒ ☐

a. Date(s), time(s), and location(s):

A public open house was held at the Wasilla Public Library on 2/21/2023 from 4-6pm. The project was also presented at the MatSu Transportation Fair on 10/20/2022.

4. Is there any unresolved controversy on human, natural, or economic grounds?

☐ ☒**Summary**

Summarize public comments and coordination efforts for this project. Discuss pertinent issues raised.

Public scoping was completed through publishing a Notice of Intent to Begin Engineering and Environmental Studies in the Anchorage Daily News, the Frontiersman, and on the Alaska Online Public Notice system between January 28 and February 2, 2022. The notices allowed for a 30-day public comment period. No public comments were received during the 30-day comment period.

An open house was held at the Wasilla Public Library on February 21, 2023 to provide a project update and receive feedback. Three comments were received at the open house and are included in the attached appendix. The comments included recommendations for capacity, active transportation, alignment grade, intersection geometry, drainage improvements, and concerns about the Hermon Road connections with Palmer Wasilla Highway and Parks Highway.

Additional public involvement included fact sheets posted at the MatSu Transportation Fair on October 20, 2022. Although the project team was available for discussions with attendees, formal comments were not received during the Transportation Fair.

Attachments

- Public Events_and_Comments.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

B. Agency Involvement**Yes No****1. Was an agency scoping conducted?**☒☐

An agency scoping letter concerning the proposed project was sent to agency and tribal representatives on 4/19/2022.

Attachments

- Agency_Scoping_Letter.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

2. Was an agency scoping meeting held?☐☒**3. Was a field review completed with agencies?**☒☐

A site investigation was conducted as part of the 106 consultation. Chickaloon Village Traditional Council participated in this field investigation, the results of which are thoroughly discussed in the Section 106 portion of the document and affiliated appendices.

Summary

Summarize agency coordination efforts for this project.

Agency scoping letters and preliminary environmental impacts were sent on April 19, 2022. One comment was received from the Department of Environmental Conservation Drinking Water Program on May 27, 2022. The comment recommended the project adhere to ADEC "Recommendations for General Project Activities near a Public Water System Source", available on the ADEC website. DOT&PF will provide the recommendations document to the Construction Project Manager and/or Project Engineer upon certification of the project. Comments were also received from CVTC and SHPO, they are included in the attached appendix.

Attachments

- Scoping_Responses.pdf CFHWY00799.pdf

IV. Permits and Authorizations

A. Permits and Authorizations**Yes No**

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. USACE, Section 404/10 Includes Abbreviated Permit Process, Nationwide Permit, and General Permit | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Coast Guard, Section 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. ADF&G Fish Habitat Permit (Title 16.05.871 and Title 16.05.841) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Flood Hazard | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. ADEC Non-domestic Wastewater Plan Approval | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Requires 401 Cert | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. ADEC APDES | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Eagle Permit | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Incidental Take Authorization | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Local (Borough or City) permit (e.g., noise) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Other Permits | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Summary

No additional environmental permits are expected to be required for the proposed project. Permits for construction such as a construction general permit or excavation dewatering permit would be obtained by the contractor, if necessary.

V. Environmental Commitments**A. Environmental Commitments and Mitigation Measures [23 CFR 771.109(b)]****Yes No**

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Are there project-specific environmental commitments for this project? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|

Summary

Summarize changes to environmental commitments and mitigation measures from original environmental document.

DOT&PF and their Contractor(s) shall:

A single pair of bald eagles seasonally utilizes two nests and one former nest tree in the vicinity of the proposed project. Each tree is within the 330ft and/or 660ft primary or secondary disturbance buffers from the proposed project. Each nest tree has varying amounts of vegetation between the nest and proposed project. Uncertainty about Bald Eagle nest site selection for a given nesting season will remain, up until the eagles begin compiling nesting material in February and incubating in March. The review period for incidental take permits is approximately 6-months, therefore DOT&PF anticipates submittal of an incidental take permit application before being able to confirm which, if any, nest the pair of Bald Eagles is utilizing during the construction season. DOT&PF shall adhere to all terms and conditions set forth by the USFWS in the incidental take permit, if issuance of such a permit is required to complete the proposed project.

VI. Environmental Documentation Approval

A. Environmental Documentation Approval**Yes No**

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Do any unusual circumstances exist, as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Does the project meet the criteria of one of the following DOT&PF Programmatic Approvals authorized in the Nov. 13, 2017 "Chief Engineer Directive - Programmatic Categorical Exclusions"? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Summary

The proposed project is anticipated to require 3 full parcel acquisitions. Additionally, the Categorical Exclusion is not classified under the allotted 23 CFR 771.117 (c) or (d) listed actions. Therefore, the Categorical Exclusion does not qualify for programmatic approval under the Nov. 13, 2017 "Chief Engineer Directive - Programmatic Categorical Exclusions".

VII. (e) Constraints**A. 23 CFR 771.117(e) Constraints****Yes No**

Does the project involve any of the following? Supporting information for responses must be provided in the impact discussions for each of the applicable impact categories. *If YES is selected for any item, the project cannot be approved under 23 CFR 771.117(c)(26-28).*

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. An acquisition of more than a minor amount of right-of-way or that would result in any residential or non-residential displacements. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. An action that needs a bridge permit from the U.S. Coast Guard, or an action that does not meet the terms and conditions of a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers nationwide or general permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and/or Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. A finding of "adverse effect" to historic properties under the National Historic Preservation Act. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. The use of a resource protected under 23 U.S.C. 138 or 49 U.S.C. 303 [Section 4(f)] except for actions resulting in de minimis impacts. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. A finding of "may affect, likely to adversely affect" threatened or endangered species or critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Construction of temporary access, or the closure of an existing road, bridge, or ramps, that would result in major traffic disruptions. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Changes in access control. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. A floodplain encroachment other than functionally dependent uses (e.g. bridges, wetlands) or actions that facilitate open space use (e.g. recreational trails, bicycle and pedestrian paths). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Construction activities in, across or adjacent to a river component designated or proposed for inclusion in the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Summary

Environmental Documentation Approval Signatures

Prepared by:  Date: 7/26/2023

Theresa Dutchuk
Environmental Consultant

Reviewed by:  Date: 7/27/2023

Chris Bentz
Project Manager

Approved by:  Date: 7/27/2023

Brian Elliott
Central Region Environmental Manager

Recommended by:  Date: 7/28/2023

Matthew Dietrick
NEPA Manager