March 12, 2014

Project: Beaver Loop Road Improvements and Pedestrian Pathway
Project No.: 53456

Re: Request for scoping comments

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) has assumed the responsibilities of the Federal Highway Administration under Section 326 of amended Chapter 3 of Title 23, United States Code (23 U.S.C. 326), and is soliciting comments and information on a proposed 3R project that would improve Beaver Loop Road and add a pedestrian pathway from milepost (MP) 0.0 to MP 3.75 in Kenai, Alaska. The proposed project is located within Sections 1-2, 4, 9-11 and 36, Townships 5N and 6N, Range 11W, Seward Meridian, USGS Quad Maps Kenai C-3 and C-4; latitude 60.3236°N, and longitude 151.106°W (Figure 1).

Existing Site Conditions and Highway Facility
Beaver Loop Road connects Kenai Spur Highway and Bridge Access Road. The current configuration of the road is two, 12-foot driving lanes with narrow shoulders, roadside ditches and drainage features, and a posted speed of 45 miles-per-hour. The road corridor is primarily residential with some small businesses, a riverfront city park and industrial areas at either end. There are no built pedestrian facilities.

Purpose and Need
The purpose of the proposed project is to improve safety and extend the useful life of the roadway. The road currently exhibits potholes, cracking and wheel path rutting. Several drainage and in-stream culverts are reaching the end of their useful life and demonstrate rusting, and damaged inlets and outlets. Roadside ditches, where present, are overgrown with vegetation or filled with debris. The roadway is nearly level with surrounding terrain, contributing to drainage problems. Pedestrians must share the roadway due to the lack of constructed facilities. Construction of the proposed project would enhance safety and drivability, improve drainage within the corridor, and provide connectivity to the City of Kenai’s pedestrian pathway system.

Proposed Action
In addition to resurfacing Beaver Loop Road, proposed work would include the following (Figure 2):

- Raise the vertical road profile by up to two feet
- Construct a pedestrian pathway along either the north or south side of the roadway
- Replace existing drainage and in-stream culverts, including fish passage, as necessary
- Improve drainage, clear vegetation, and replace/install guardrail, signs, and striping as needed
- Relocate utilities as needed
Preliminary Environmental Research
The proposed project is not expected to involve any significant environmental impacts and a Categorical Exclusion document will be prepared (23 CFR 771.117). DOT&PF conducted preliminary research using the most current available data to identify environmental resources within the proposed project vicinity (enclosed). To ensure that all factors are considered in developing the proposed project, please provide your written comments, recommendations, and the additional requested information to our office no later than March 31, 2014.

If you have any questions on the engineering aspects of the proposed project please contact Tom Schmid, P.E., Project Manager, at 907-269-0543 or tom.schmid@alaska.gov. If you have any questions on the environmental effects, please contact Kathy Shea, Environmental Analyst, at 907-269-0530 or kathy.shea@alaska.gov.

Sincerely,

Brian Elliott
Regional Environmental Manager

Enclosures:

- Figure 1: Location and Vicinity Map
- Figures 2a-2g: Plan View
- Preliminary Environmental Research

Cc:

Tom Schmid, P.E., Project Manager, DOT&PF PD&E
Kathy Shea, Environmental Analyst, DOT&PF PD&E
TaraLyn Stone, Environmental Team Leader, DOT&PF PD&E
BEAVER LOOP ROAD IMPROVEMENTS AND PEDESTRIAN PATHWAY
PROJECT NO. 53456
PLAN VIEW
KENAI, AK

LEGEND

RIGHT OF WAY

STREAM

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES
PRELIMINARY DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP

SCALE: SEE GRAPHIC
DATE: 2/20/14
BY: K. SHEA

FIGURE 2a
BEAVER LOOP ROAD IMPROVEMENTS AND PEDESTRIAN PATHWAY
PROJECT NO. 53456
PLAN VIEW
KENAI, AK

LEGEND

RIGHT OF WAY

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES
PRELIMINARY DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP

SCALE: SEE GRAPHIC
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FIGURE 2b
MATCH LINE 2f
CUNNINGHAM PARK

BEAVER LOOP ROAD IMPROVEMENTS AND PEDESTRIAN PATHWAY
PROJECT NO. 53456
PLAN VIEW
KENAI, AK

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES
PRELIMINARY DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP

LEGEND
RIGHT OF WAY
STREAM

FISH CULVERT REPLACEMENT
UNNAMED STREAM 2

FIGURE 2e
Air Quality
A review of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) Air Pollution in Alaskan Communities website on February 3, 2014, indicated the proposed project is not located within an air quality non-attainment or maintenance area.

Contaminated Sites, Spills, and Underground Storage Tanks
A review of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) Contaminated Sites Database on February 26, 2014, indicated one Cleanup Complete site located in the project area near the intersection of Beaver Loop Road and Ames Road. Waste oil was discovered on the ground surface during installation of a fence on the property of Buddy’s Garage (Hazard ID 986) in 1990. Approximately 10 yards of TPH contaminated soil was detected. Site closure was approved in 1991. ADEC would be consulted prior to any excavation of the area.

Fish and Wildlife
A review of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Anadromous Fish Streams Interactive Mapper on February 26, 2014, identified three anadromous and resident fish streams in the project area. See Table 1 below for additional information.

Table 1. Anadromous Stream Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream Name</th>
<th>AWC Code</th>
<th>Species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unnamed Stream 1</td>
<td>244-30-10010-2025-3011</td>
<td>Coho and Sockeye rearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnamed Stream 2</td>
<td>244-30-10010-2015</td>
<td>Coho and Sockeye rearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnamed Stream 3</td>
<td>244-30-10010-2007</td>
<td>Coho rearing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the streams described above, the removal of a berm to replace an overflow culvert near the end of project during construction could potentially connect an overflow channel with an unnamed stream. Consultation with ADF&G on the berm removal and culvert design for fish passage will be conducted. An ADF&G Fish Habitat permit would be required.

The proposed project is located on the Kenai Peninsula which is home to a wide variety of wildlife. No adverse impacts to wildlife are anticipated because the proposed project would not substantially alter existing conditions. Adjacent habitat is already bisected by the existing road corridor and the proposed project would not further bisect or segment wildlife habitat.

Flood Plain and Regulatory Floodway
The proposed project is located on Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Panel 020012 2035A. The panel shows the bulk of the proposed project area within Zone C, defined as minimal risk areas outside the 100-year floodplain. A portion of the project area near Beaver Creek lies within Zone A, defined as areas within the 100-year floodplain. The proposed project would likely raise the road profile to improve drainage. A hydrologic analysis and floodplain permit would be required.

Historic Properties, Archaeological and Cultural Resources
A review of the Alaska Heritage Resource Survey on February 7, 2014, identified several sites
adjacent to the project corridor. Due to the ground disturbance required to construct a pathway, a cultural resource survey of adjacent historic buildings and archaeological resources will be conducted. Project development will proceed in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

**Invasive Species**
A review of the University of Alaska Anchorage, Alaska Exotic Plants Information Clearinghouse on February 7, 2014, identified several invasive species near the project area. The DOT&PF would comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding invasive species during construction of the proposed project.

**Land Use and Transportation Plans**
Land uses adjacent to the project corridor consist of primarily residential, industrial, institutional and vacant parcels. With exceptions at either end of the project corridor, the 2013 City of Kenai Comprehensive Plan designates future land-use along Beaver Loop Road as Rural Residential. The following land use and transportation plans will be considered in the development of this project:

- Comprehensive Plan – Imagine Kenai 2030 (April, 2013)
- Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (June, 2005)
- Kenai Peninsula Borough Transportation Plan (December, 2003)
- Alaska Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (2012-2015)

**Material and Disposal Sites**
The Contractor would be responsible for obtaining material and disposal sites. If the Contractor elects to use an undeveloped material site, contract language would require the Contractor to acquire all necessary permits and clearances for the site(s) and provide copies to the DOT&PF Project Engineer prior to development. Per DOT&PF specifications, the Contractor would also be responsible for implementing a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. Material from a borrow site that has not received the appropriate permits and clearances would not be accepted for project construction.

**Bald Eagles and Other Migratory Birds**
Suitable nesting habitat such as mature trees exists adjacent to the proposed project corridor. Eagle Surveys would be conducted during project design and prior to construction to determine if any active nests are located within the primary and secondary protection zones for eagles (660 feet). If active nests are discovered, DOT&PF would coordinate with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to determine an appropriate course of action.

Several species of migratory birds have the potential to occur in the project area. The contractor would be required to follow the USFWS recommended times for avoiding vegetation clearing in Southcentral Alaska.

**Noise**
Although the proposed project would add shoulders and a pedestrian pathway to the corridor, the project is not in a new location, would not alter the horizontal alignment of the existing roadway, and would not increase traffic capacity. Drainage improvements would require raising the road profile by up to two-feet. This would not be considered a substantial vertical alteration because
only a scatting of trees would need to be removed and adjacent receptors already have line-of-sight to the traffic noise source because there is no dense vegetation or other sound barriers separating adjacent uses from the roadway. No noise related impacts are anticipated.

**Right-of-Way**
Current right-of-way (ROW) is 100-feet wide throughout the corridor. At milepost (MP) 3.6, near the end of project on the south side of the road, the paved roadway and clear zone partially overlap a private parcel. This parcel would likely be acquired as part of the proposed project. Depending on final design, additional partial parcel acquisitions could be required on either the north or south sides of the project corridor in order to accommodate the pedestrian pathway.

**Publicly-Owned Parks, Recreation Areas, Wildlife and Waterfowl Refuges**
A review of the City of Kenai website on February 24, 2014, indicated Cunningham Park is located adjacent to the project corridor. The park offers public access to the Kenai River. A Section 4(f) consultation would be required to determine if the proposed project would result in a use of the park.

**Social**
No adverse impacts to neighborhoods, community cohesion, or disadvantaged social groups are anticipated as a result of the proposed project. Residences and businesses are located in the vicinity of proposed work, but access to these properties would not be impacted by the proposed project. The proposed project is not expected to adversely affect the local economy and the public is expected to benefit from new pedestrian facilities and safer road conditions.

**Threatened and Endangered Species**
The USFWS and ADF&G Endangered Species Lists (reviewed on February 24, 2014), indicated two species that could occur in the project area: Short-Tailed albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*) and Yellow-Billed loon (*Gavia adamsii*) have known ranges near the project area. The Short-Tailed albatross is listed as endangered with the USFWS. The species’ specific geographic and seasonal distribution patterns are not well understood, but it is known that they breed in the Western Pacific from October to June. The Yellow-Billed loon is listed as a candidate species by the USFWS. The species breed in the arctic tundra from June to September and may be found in more southern Pacific waters during the remainder of the year. Non-breeding birds remain in marine waters throughout the year. Because the proposed project is located more than 1.5 miles from marine waters, no adverse effects to either species or their critical habitat are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

**Water Quality and Ground Disturbance**
A review of the ADEC Impaired Waters mapper on February 7, 2014, indicated that none of the receiving waters from the project area are impaired. Temporary water quality impacts during construction would be mitigated through implementation of stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs)
The proposed project would disturb more than five acres of ground and require stormwater discharge coverage under the ADEC Alaska Pollution Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit. Ground disturbing activities would include grading, pavement removal, utility relocation, embankment and pathway construction, and vegetation clearing.

**Wetlands and Other Waters of the U.S.**
A review of the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory on February 7, 2014, identified four areas of wetlands within the project area. Raising the road and constructing the pedestrian pathway would require work outside the existing embankment and would result in the discharge of fill material into the wetlands. In addition, culvert replacements at three unnamed streams would require the discharge of fill below Ordinary High Water of the streams and within adjacent wetlands. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would be consulted and a Section 404 Permit would be required.