



Central Region

Director's Quarterly

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Summer Edition

June 2015

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



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Central Region Director, is a lifelong Alaskan. He has a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from Oregon State University, and a Master's degree in Engineering Management from the University of Alaska, Anchorage. He has worked at DOT&PF for more than 30 years.

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When considering this season's newsletter, a theme appeared—boundaries. Whether actual or metaphoric, boundaries provide an important overarching structure in life, providing accountability, fairness, safety, and expanded opportunity.

One of the boundaries discussed in this issue is the regional boundary changes, which continues to evolve, evening out the work load of staff and creating better organization of services. Other boundaries include safety boundaries, such as traffic control in construction zones and the expansion of designated bike paths. Also addressed are the legal boundaries regarding property owners' rights during DOT&PF's acquisition of properties. We also touch on the moving boundaries of the Tununak Airport relocation project and our latest public outreach efforts across Central Region to expand the boundaries of our communication.

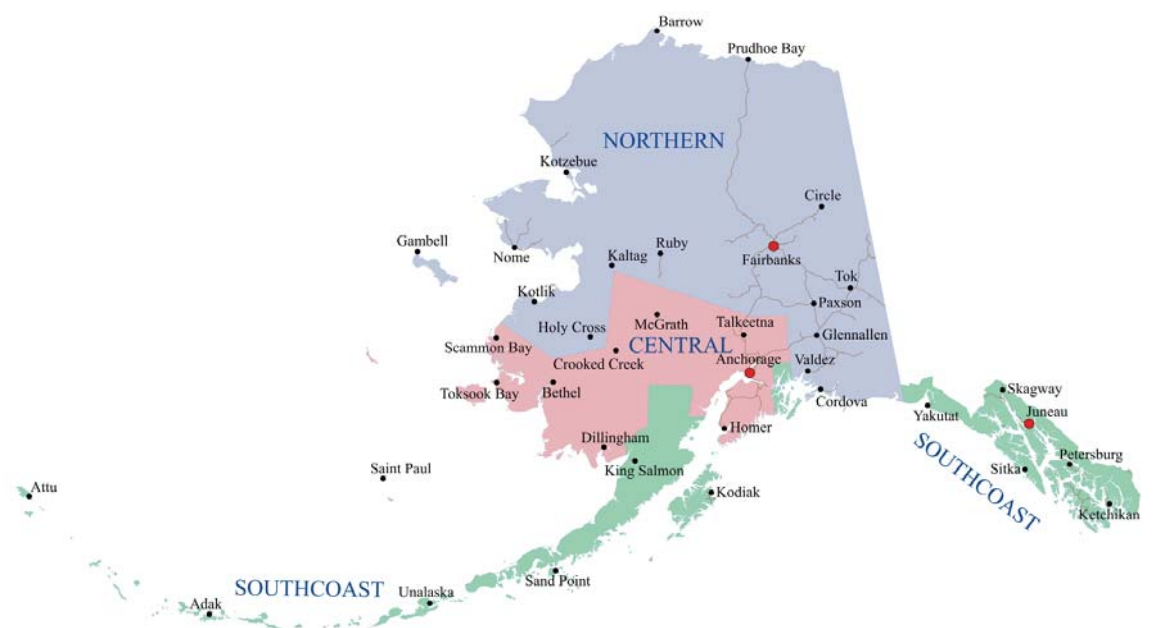
In this issue I hope you gain additional understanding of what boundaries DOT&PF incorporates into its daily work to guide its actions, expanding opportunities and safeguarding the public from physical harm. Boundaries define and direct the Department's activities toward the goal of providing the most efficient and productive public service to keep Alaska moving, while protecting and enlarging the lives and rights of individuals.

BOUNDARY SHIFT UPDATE

Work continues on implementing the recently adopted boundary changes for Central and the newly formed Southcoast regions. The four boroughs being transferred to Southcoast from Central are: Lake and Peninsula, Aleutians East, Bristol Bay, and Kodiak. The Dillingham Census Area will remain in Central Region.

While some duties have already shifted, there remains a large amount of responsibility to transfer. The current goal for each section is to have a plan in place to begin the process of repositioning projects and responsibilities to Southcoast by July 1st.

Staff in both regions will continue to work together until all details are successfully in place to ensure that the process of transitioning workload from Central to Southcoast is done in a systematic and well planned way as we move forward as "One" DOT&PF.



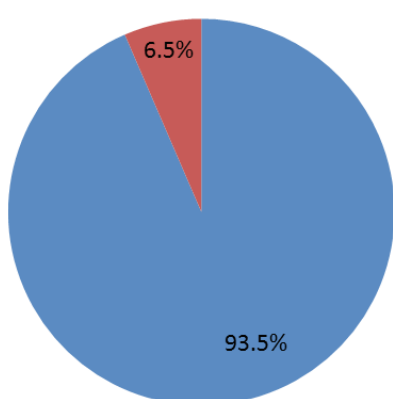
EMINENT DOMAIN: DOT&PF PROPERTY ACQUISITION TOOL OF LAST RESORT

Many people have the misconception that DOT&PF obtains most private property needed for a project through the power of eminent domain. This is simply not the case. DOT&PF works diligently with property owners to reach a fair agreement for any necessary property. Using eminent domain to acquire property is a stressful, lengthy, litigious, and expensive process—not taken lightly.

The Fifth Amendment of the US Constitution states that, "private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation". To provide uniform and equitable treatment of persons whose property is acquired for public use and to ensure their "just compensation", Congress passed the "Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970" (also known as the "Uniform Act").

The Right of Way (ROW) section of DOT&PF is responsible for ensuring enough public property is available for construction, operation, and maintenance of each DOT&PF project. When more is needed, the acquisition of the property falls to them. The ROW acquisitions process generally includes the following steps:

Properties Acquired by DOT&PF in FFY 2012-2014



■ Standard Acquisition
■ Eminent Domain

- ROW notifies the owner of DOT&PF's intentions to acquire the property.
- An appraiser visits the property; the owner is invited to accompany them.
- The appraisal is submitted to the Department's Review Appraiser for approval.
- Just compensation is determined for the property.
- ROW provides the owner with a summary of the property to be acquired, including a written offer.
- ROW negotiates with the owner for the purchase of the property. The owner is never offered less than full market value (according to the current arms-length appraisal), plus relocation benefits and sometimes additional funds for extenuating circumstances.
- If negotiations are successful, ROW completes the acquisition and pays the property owner.
- If negotiations are unsuccessful, the parties may consider an administrative settlement (usually additional funds or terms relating to unusual circumstances) to complete the acquisition.

If an agreement cannot be reached after this process, DOT&PF will then invoke eminent domain, though this is rarely required. For the Federal Fiscal Years 2012-2014, Central Region DOT&PF acquired 339 parcels for capital projects with only 22 requiring eminent domain action.

IMPORTANT LINKS

Where can I go to...

- Find information about road construction projects and road closures?
- Find information about road conditions?
- Locate the Central Region Public Involvement Calendar?
- Find websites for Central Region Projects?

<http://alaskanavigator.org/>
<http://511.alaska.gov/>
<http://dot.alaska.gov/creg/calendar.shtml>
http://dot.alaska.gov/creg/project_info/

CENTRAL REGION BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS



Bike lane

DOT&PF is working with local governments to improve the bike and pedestrian facilities throughout Central Region. These improvements can include bike lanes, signing, striping, and pathway work. Below is a list of projects with an expected completion of summer 2015:

- Dowling Road Reconstruction – bike lanes and separated trails on both sides.
- 6th Avenue at A Street Channelization Improvements – curb-bulbs to reduce pedestrian crossing time.
- Northern Lights at UAA Drive – constructing a pathway connection on UAA Drive
- 88th Avenue Upgrade, Spruce Brook to Elmore Road – grade to add pedestrian facilities.
- Eagle River Road Rehabilitation: MP 5.3 to MP 12.6 – shoulders widened for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Homer: East End Road Reconstruction MP 3.75 to MP 5.5 – construction of a pedestrian pathway.
- Parks Highway MP 43.5 to 44.5 Reconstruction, Lucas to Church – improve the existing pedestrian pathway.

In addition to the projects that include these larger upgrades, pavement preservation projects also include upgrades to the curb ramps to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

TUNUNAK AIRPORT RELOCATION

The community of Tununak, located on Nelson Island (approximately 115 miles northwest of Bethel), is getting a new airport. In cooperation with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the new Tununak airport will be located a safe distance from the residences to meet current FAA standards, which the current airport does not. The project includes construction of a community class airport consisting of a 3,300 foot runway and future crosswind runway, a new apron, taxiway, a ½ mile airport access road, 2-bay storage building for snow removal equipment, navigational aids, and airport lighting.

Most of the property required for the new airport was acquired from the local Newtok Native Corporation. QAP, the contractor, began the \$19.9M project in December of 2013 and expects completion by October of 2015.



New Tununak Airport embankment

PUBLIC OUTREACH

DOT&PF staff strives to visit the communities we serve. Here's the highlights from March through May:



CONSTRUCTION WORK ZONE SAFETY

DOT&PF gives special focus to work zones; safety is paramount. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the construction field has the highest occupational fatality rate for any industry. According to the Federal Highway Administration, highway construction workers suffer twice the fatality rate of any other type of construction. In addition, over 80% of all work zone fatalities are drivers.

Planning for traffic control starts at the beginning of a project: gathering information and feedback from the public, and noting how the road functions and what traffic patterns currently exist. DOT&PF considers what drivers will see and experience when traveling through the work zone. The balance is to minimize confusion and distraction, maximize driver and worker safety, while keeping traffic moving as quickly and efficiently as possible.

DOT&PF is sometimes asked why we do not change traffic patterns to open more flow during rush hours. However, physically changing the site twice a day is

not only impractical and prohibitively expensive, but keeping the construction area as consistent as possible minimizes driver confusion and distraction—conditions that lead to crashes. Additional restrictions, lane closures, detours, and reduced speeds are implemented as necessary to maintain safety and allow construction to continue as expeditiously as possible; on busy roads, much work occurs at night (if noise is not a problem for residents) or work may occur on weekends to minimize traffic interruption. Although, the reasons for each traffic control step may not be obvious, DOT&PF's goal is to get the project finished timely and impact the traveling public as little as possible, while still maintaining a safe work zone.



Work site construction

DOT&PF has developed several tools the public can use to receive construction updates, including AlaskaNavigator.org, GovDelivery email alerts, and 511.alaska.gov. Utilizing these resources allow drivers to make adjustments to their route in case of delays or new detours.