

O'MALLEY ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT  
NEW SEWARD HIGHWAY TO HILLSIDE DRIVE  
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES  
PROJECT No. STP-0512(5)/53935  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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June 2004

## SUMMARY

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is investigating alternative ways to improve O'Malley Road between the New Seward Highway and Hillside Drive (Figure 1). O'Malley Road is located in the southeast portion of Anchorage, Alaska; an area locally referred to as the "Hillside." As an east-west corridor, O'Malley Road connects the upper Hillside area in Anchorage to major north-south roadways such as New Seward Highway and the Minnesota Bypass, both of which provide access to the rest of Anchorage. This road also provides access to the Alaska Zoo and the Anchorage Golf Course.

The project corridor follows O'Malley Road eastward from its intersection with the New Seward Highway for 6.0 kilometers (3.7 miles) ends just uphill of Hillside Drive. O'Malley Road currently has two lanes with minimal shoulders and a separated pathway exists only on the north side of O'Malley Road between the New Seward Highway and Lake Otis Parkway. The road grade ranges between 1.0 percent and 7.0 percent. O'Malley Road has not been reconstructed since 1962, except for adding turning lanes, safety projects at major intersections and maintenance pavement overlays. Current and future traffic levels require a larger facility, left-turn lanes, and pavement improvements.

During the scoping for this project, the public identified congestion, trails and pathways, poor roadbed conditions, lighting, moose habitat, and safety as being important issues relevant to O'Malley Road. In addition, agency involvement introduced wetlands, fish passage, and water quality as important issues.

Three alternatives were investigated for O'Malley Road: two build alternatives and the no-action alternative. Alternative One widens the existing two-lane roadway in two segments: a four-lane divided roadway between the New Seward Highway and Lake Otis Parkway and a three-lane roadway between Lake Otis Parkway and Hillside Drive. The second build alternative, Alternative Two, also widens the existing two-lane roadway in two segments: a four-lane divided roadway between the New Seward Highway and Lake Otis Parkway and a two-lane roadway with left-turn lanes at major intersections between Lake Otis Parkway and Hillside Drive. Both build alternatives include a separated multi-use pathway, to be constructed concurrently with the roadway improvements, for the full length of the project and a sidewalk from New Seward Highway to Lake Otis Parkway. The third alternative investigated was the no-action alternative. The no-action alternative would maintain O'Malley Road in its current condition.

Compared to the no-action alternative, the build alternatives would increase capacity, enhance pedestrian and non-motorized transportation, increase safety, improve air quality, reduce the possibility of moose collisions, improve fish habitat, and lower total energy consumption. Both build alternatives meet the project purpose and need, and address public and agency concerns.

Construction of either build alternative would have minor adverse permanent impacts including increased noise, fill in wetlands, changes to the visual character of the roadway due to clearing within the right-of-way and lighting. A detailed noise analysis (Appendix C) found that noise

abatement is not considered feasible or reasonable. Either build alternative would impact about 0.2 hectares (0.4 acres) of wetlands. The build alternatives will relocate two residences and one business. A private school and a private non-profit organization will also be affected by the project. Temporary impacts during construction of either build alternative would include noise generated by construction equipment and traffic delays related to detours and lane and/or road closures.

Proposed mitigation for project impacts includes:

- Improve fish passage at Little Campbell Creek;
- Install a rock drain under the Moose Meadows crossing to promote drainage;
- Enhance water flow into Moose Meadows; and
- Steeper side slopes to minimize wetland fills.

Alternative One is the alternative preferred by DOT&PF, however a final alternative will not be selected until after comments received from the public and agencies on the environmental assessment are evaluated. Numerous comments were received during the development of this Environmental Assessment. Copies of this correspondence and the DOT&PF responses appear in Appendix A.

After discussions with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Environmental Protection Agency and others; this project was removed from the merged process as outlined in the "Interagency Working Agreement to Integrate Section 404 and Related Permit Requirements Into the National Environmental Policy Act." All agreed verbally that this project could be expedited outside the merged process.

The following permits are needed for the project to continue and will be acquired during the design phase: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 Wetland Fill Permit; Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) Section 401 Water Quality Certification; Division of Governmental Coordination, Coastal Zone Management Consistency Determination; and Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Title 16.05.840 Fish Passage Permit.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND SYMBOLS

AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ac	Acre/Acres
ACMP	Alaska Coastal Management Plan
ACS	Alaska Communications Systems
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADCED	Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development
ADEC	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
ADF&G	Alaska Department of Fish and Game
ADGC	Alaska Division of Governmental Coordination
ADNR	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
ADPOR	Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
AHRS	Alaska Heritage Resource Survey
Alt./Alts.	Alternative/Alternatives
AMATS	Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (formerly Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation System)
AOR	Abbott-O-Rabbit
AWWU	Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CE	Categorical Exclusion
CEA	Chugach Electric Association, Inc.
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CO	Carbon Dioxide
CTWLT	Center Two-Way Left-Turn Lane
Cu yd	cubic yard/cubic yards
DA	Department of Army
dBA	A-weighted sound level (Frequency weighted sound pressure level approximating the frequency response of the human ear.)
DOT&PF	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
EA	Environmental Assessment
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat
ESA	Environmental Site Assessment
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
Ft	Feet
GIS	Geographical Information System
ha	hectares
HALO	Hillside Area Land Owners
HCM	Highway Capacity Manual
Hwy	Highway
in	Inch
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act
km	Kilometer
kph	kilometers per hour

LOS	Level of Service
LRTP	Long-Range Transportation Plan
m	meter/meters
mi	Mile
mph	Mile per Hour
MOA	Municipality of Anchorage
mm	Millimeter
PER	Preliminary Engineering Report
Pwy	Parkway
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
ROW	Right-of-Way
SOV	Single Occupancy Vehicle
STA	Station
TDM	Travel Demand Management
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TSM	Transportation System Management