



Old Richardson Highway Intersection Improvements

Project Overview

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is examining alternatives to improve traffic operations, pedestrian facilities, and safety of the 5th Avenue/Santa Claus Lane, 5th Avenue/Old Richardson Highway, and 8th Avenue/Old Richardson Highway intersections.

The purpose of the project is to improve pedestrian connectivity, increase vehicular safety at the intersections and at the railroad crossings, reduce traffic congestion during school dismissal, and improve the Level of Service (LOS) for future traffic.

Project Background

An analysis of the existing conditions determined a few insufficiencies within the project area.

5th Avenue/Old Richardson Highway

- There is a lack of pedestrian connectivity along 5th Avenue between Santa Claus Lane and the Old Richardson Highway.
- There are obstructions blocking sight of southbound trains at the railroad crossing.
- Westbound traffic stopped at Old Richardson Highway may queue across railroad tracks.

5th Avenue/Santa Claus Lane

- Drivers fail to adhere to the stop sign on the southbound approach, resulting in near-miss crashes.

8th Avenue/Old Richardson Highway

- The pedestrian delay across Old Richardson Highway during peak hours may prompt pedestrians to make risky crossing maneuvers.
- The intersection experiences an above average crash rate.
- Eastbound traffic stopped at cross walk on 8th Avenue/Snowman Lane may queue across railroad tracks.
- Vegetation blocks view of southbound trains at railroad crossing.
- At school dismissal, drivers experience high delay and queuing due to school bus interaction with railroad.
- Eastbound left movements are expected to experience a LOS F in the design year 2040.



5th Avenue/Old Richardson Area Existing Conditions



8th Avenue/Old Richardson Area Existing Conditions



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Alternatives

Alternative	Issues Addressed				Requires ROW?
	Pedestrian Connectivity	Vehicular Safety	Congestion at School at Dismissal	2040 Vehicular Delay	
New pathway north of 5th Avenue between Santa Claus Lane and Old Richardson Highway	✓	✓			N
Enhance visibility of stop sign at Santa Claus & 5 th Avenue		✓			N
New pathway north of 8th Avenue between Snowman Lane and Old Richardson Highway	✓	✓			N
New Roundabout at 8th Avenue and Old Richardson Highway	✓	✓		✓	Y
Reroute school bus traffic along Patriot Drive and add right-turn only lane on Old Richardson Highway between Patriot Drive and 8th Avenue			✓		Y
Meter school bus traffic from North Pole High School to ease congestion at NPHS Boulevard/Old Richardson Highway intersection			✓		N
New bus lane along NPHS Boulevard between North Pole High School and North Pole Middle School			✓		Y
Shift Old Richardson Highway at 8th Avenue west and construct offset left turn lanes		✓			Y
Remove vegetation between Old Richardson Highway between 5 th Avenue and 8 th Avenue			✓		N

Funding

The project will be funded by the FHWA through FMATS.

Schedule

Selection of a preferred alternative will occur in early 2019. Design and right of way acquisition will take place from 2019 through 2020, with construction anticipated in 2021.

Contact

If you would like more information, or to share your ideas, please contact us!

<http://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/oldrich/>

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