



**Haines Highway Improvements  
MP 3.5 to 25.3 – Airport to Bluffs  
ADOT&PF Project 68606/SHAK-095-6(28)**

**Public Involvement Plan**

**Prepared for:**

Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities



Prepared by:

DOWL Engineers  
and  
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November 2005

This public involvement plan provides a framework for soliciting public input on the proposed Haines Highway Milepost 3.5-25.3 project (see attached location / vicinity map).

## **OBJECTIVE**

The public and agency involvement process for Haines Highway MP 3.5 to 25.3 project is a joint effort between the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) and the DOWL Engineers team (DOWL). The team members are committed to keeping the public informed, have no lapses in coordination, maintain a brisk project pace, be ready to respond to pertinent comments and questions in a timely manner, and use state of the art tools and approaches.

This public involvement plan in conjunction with the project-scoping plan fulfills the public process requirements for all elements of the NEPA process. Other tools may be added as necessary to insure the public is involved in this project. The estimated dates are subject to change as the project evolves.

## **SPECIAL ISSUES AND AREAS OF CONCERN**

The existence of the State Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve within the project area, and the area's status as an internationally known eagle viewing location will create special areas of concern for this project. Local subsistence hunting, fishing and gathering will be of concern, as several well-used subsistence fishing areas are located along the highway within the project area. Tour businesses and others traversing the area will likely have concern about disruption of travel during construction.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION**

In addition to our targeted contact list, we will post project information and meeting notices in high traffic areas in Haines and areas of particular connection to the project, and with media accessible to Haines residents and other interested parties.

### Contact List

There will be two separate contact lists; one for the agencies involved and the other one for public parties. The contact list shall include, but not be limited to, community and business leaders, interested agency representatives, owners and renters/leasers of properties adjacent to the project area, businesses that traverse the project area in their normal business routines (such as trucking companies, highway and river tour businesses, etc.), utilities along the highway, and any other interested parties. Both the U.S. and Canadian customs offices along the Haines Highway, and the AMHS ferry terminal in Haines will be included in the list. Participants in public meetings and others who wish will be added to the contact list. This list will be continually updated and added to by project staff.

A list of property owners along the project area stretch of the Haines Highway has been obtained from the Haines Borough (property tax roles), and will be included in the public contact list. We will attempt to obtain contact information for any parties leasing or renting any of that property from local sources. If we are not able to obtain a complete list of leasers and renters from those sources, we will contact the property owners (likely via mail) and ask them to give us contact information for their tenants, or ask them to pass on meeting information to those tenants.

### Dissemination of Project Information

Project newsletters and notices for public meetings will be mailed to the interested parties on the contact list. In addition, they will be posted (and will be available for distribution) at the Haines Post Office, Haines AMHS terminal, both the U.S. and Canadian customs offices, the Haines Public Library, the Klukwan Community Hall, and possibly other central and well visited locations. Posting information at the Haines Post Office will be especially effective because Haines does not have mail delivery within the town site, so all residents must go to the Post Office to obtain mail.

### Public Meetings

ADOT&PF will sponsor two public meetings over the course of the project. The first will be during the scoping phase of the project, and the second will be upon release of the draft Environmental Assessment (EA). Public meetings will be held within a few days of agency meetings. Agency meetings may be held in Juneau as many of the agencies are located there.

Public meetings will be held in accessible buildings in Haines. The typical meeting format will include an informal “open house” discussion between the public and project team/staff. Maps, photographs, fact sheets, newsletters, and other information will be available for discussion and dissemination.

### Advertisements for Public Meetings

Advertisements for project public meetings will be published two times beginning at least 14 days prior to the meeting, with opportunities to comment up to 14 days after the meeting. Announcements will be run in the Chilkat Valley News and the Juneau Empire using an attractive, project specific format and the project logo. Public service announcements (PSAs) will be run on local public radio station (KHNS), on the local cable television scanner channel, and possibly on KINY-AM, located in Juneau and heard in Haines through a local repeater. Meeting announcements will also be posted in the locations identified previously.

### Public Input

The type of public input sought will vary by the phase of the project. At the public scoping meeting, the project team will be seeking initial comments and information about sensitive areas and potential issues with the project that need to be addressed in the EA (additional information regarding the scoping is included in the project Scoping Plan). At the meeting presenting the draft EA, the team will seek information regarding the accuracy and completeness of the study information, and unresolved concerns about the project.

In addition to public meetings, other opportunities for public input will be provided. The project website and newsletters and other project information will contain contact information for comments to be sent via mail, telephone, or e-mail.

### Documentation of Public Input

Accurate and timely documentation of all public involvement activities, and particularly the public meetings, will be a priority. All comments received will be documented and any oral comments will be written down for inclusion in the meeting documentation. The scoping summary report will be included on the project website, and will be appended to the EA.

### Project Newsletters

Newsletters will be developed for the project and disseminated through the contact list and at central locations and public meetings, and will be available on the web site and via mail upon request. These information pieces will target the average citizen and explain the project, its purpose and need, the project schedule, the study process, and results of technical evaluations of the study area, and possibly other information related to the project. Each information piece will include project contacts and the web site address and request comments. At least two newsletters are envisioned: one near the beginning of project scoping and one with release of the draft EA.

### Project Web Site

ADOT&PF will maintain the project web site, with input and assistance from the DOWL team. The site will identify the project scope and area, the objective, the schedules with meeting dates, copies of the project documents and meeting materials, and project team members and their contact listings. It will also solicit public comment at all phases of the project.

### Agency Input

The project team will inform affected agencies about the project and seek their input. Representatives of these agencies will be included in the agency contact list. Input from these agencies will be actively sought. The agencies that will be involved in the permitting for the project will be brought into consultation for the project, and meetings (likely in Juneau) with representatives of these agencies will be held in close proximity to the two public meetings planned for the project. (Refer to the project Scoping Plan for additional information regarding coordination with the resource agencies.)

### Tribal Coordination

Concurrent with general agency scoping, we will prepare the "Initiation of Consultation Letters" for the State Historic Preservation Office and tribal organizations, pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Millennium Agreement. ADOT&PFs standard templates will be used for these letters, as well as the "Findings Letters", which will be sent along with the final archaeological report. The project team will meet with representatives of Native groups, as warranted.

## **PROGRAM MONITORING**

Project staff will monitor the public involvement program during the course of this project. Periodic evaluations of the effectiveness of the program will be held and adjustments to the program will be made where warranted. DOT&PF staff will also be asked to evaluate the public involvement program. It is the intent of the consultant team to keep a flexible public involvement program so to be able to adjust to conditions, issues and attitudes surrounding the project.

## **PROJECT SCHEDULE**

The project schedule is as follows. Schedules are subject to change as the project progresses.

<b>PROJECT PHASE</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMING</b>
Environmental Fieldwork	Aug. - Oct. 2005 and Summer 2006
Reconnaissance Study	Sept. - Nov. 2005
Draft Design Study Report / Local Review Documents	Nov. 2005 - May 2006
Public/Agency Scoping	Nov. 2005 - Dec. 2005
Environmental Documentation	Jan. 2006 - Feb. 2007
Plans and Specifications	March 2007 - Feb. 2008