

# HAINES HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

MILEPOST 3.5-25.3

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION AND POTENTIAL WETLANDS AND FLOODPLAIN INVOLVEMENT

### PUBLIC MEETING SCHEDULED

The State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) invites you to attend a public meeting on the Haines Highway Improvements (Mile Post 3.5 – 25.3). The meeting will give an update on the project, present the revised alignment analysis, and report progress on the environmental analysis and documentation. It will also give you the opportunity to discuss the project one-on-one with the project team.

### DATE, TIME AND LOCATION

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

- 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Open House
- 7:00 - 7:30 p.m. Presentation and Q&A
- 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. Open House

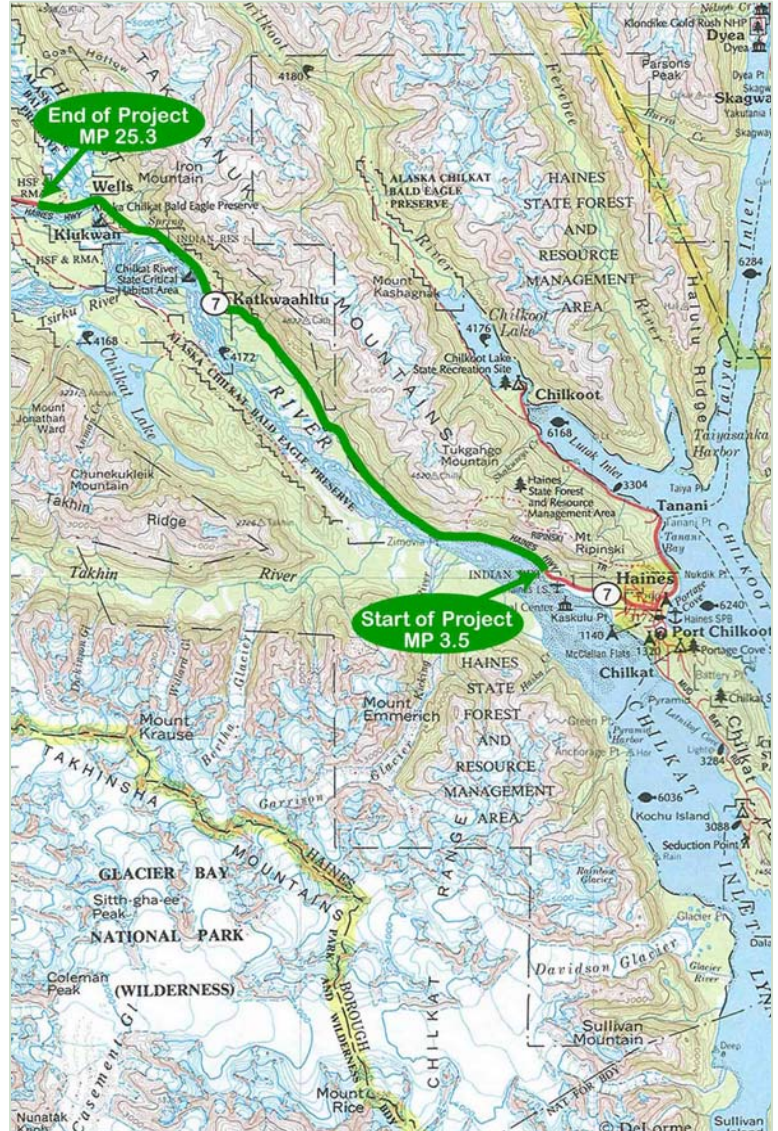
**Chilkat Center** - Theatre Drive, Haines, Alaska

The public meeting will be held in an open house format from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. A short presentation will be given by the project team promptly at 7:00 p.m. The presentation will be followed by a question and answer period. Project personnel will be available to answer your questions and take your comments. This is an excellent time to review the project and provide meaningful guidance to the designers and planners that are designing the improvements.

*"This project is being developed in compliance with the Executive Orders on wetlands (E.O. 11990), floodplains (E.O. 11988), and Environmental Justice (E.O. 12898), as well as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act, and the Endangered Species Act."*

**We look forward to hearing from you!**

We will provide upon request, accommodations for persons with special needs or disabilities.



### PROJECT WEBSITE

[www.dot.alaska.gov/haineshighway](http://www.dot.alaska.gov/haineshighway)



## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

DOT&PF, in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is proposing to upgrade the Haines Highway from Milepost 3.5 to 25.3. The Haines Highway, a designated Scenic Byway, connects the communities of Haines, Alaska and Haines Junction, Yukon Territory. This highway is one of two major highways out of the Southeast Alaska region, and is an important international transportation system connecting the Alaska Marine Highway System in Haines with Canada.

The proposed improvements include straightening curves, widening the roadway to add shoulders, improving sight distances, and generally upgrading the two-lane roadway to current 55-mph design standards. Some curves may be posted down to lower speeds if the environmental impacts and/or cost of straightening the curves are determined to be prohibitive. Also under consideration is the relocation/replacement of the bridge across the Chilkat River at Mile Post 23.8, and improvements at two debris flow areas (Mile Posts 19 and 23) where intensive maintenance is a concern. DOT&PF and the FHWA will evaluate the social, economic, historic preservation, and environmental impacts of this project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

## WHY WAS THIS PROJECT PUT ON HOLD?

The preliminary engineering and environmental activities for the project began in August 2005 but were subsequently suspended in September 2006 due to shortfalls in state transportation funding. The work was restarted in November 2008 and is currently scheduled for completion in March 2010. The project team is now updating and finalizing their alignment analysis and continuing on the environmental analyses and documentation. The draft Environmental Assessment (EA) report is scheduled for public review in early 2010.

## WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO DATE?

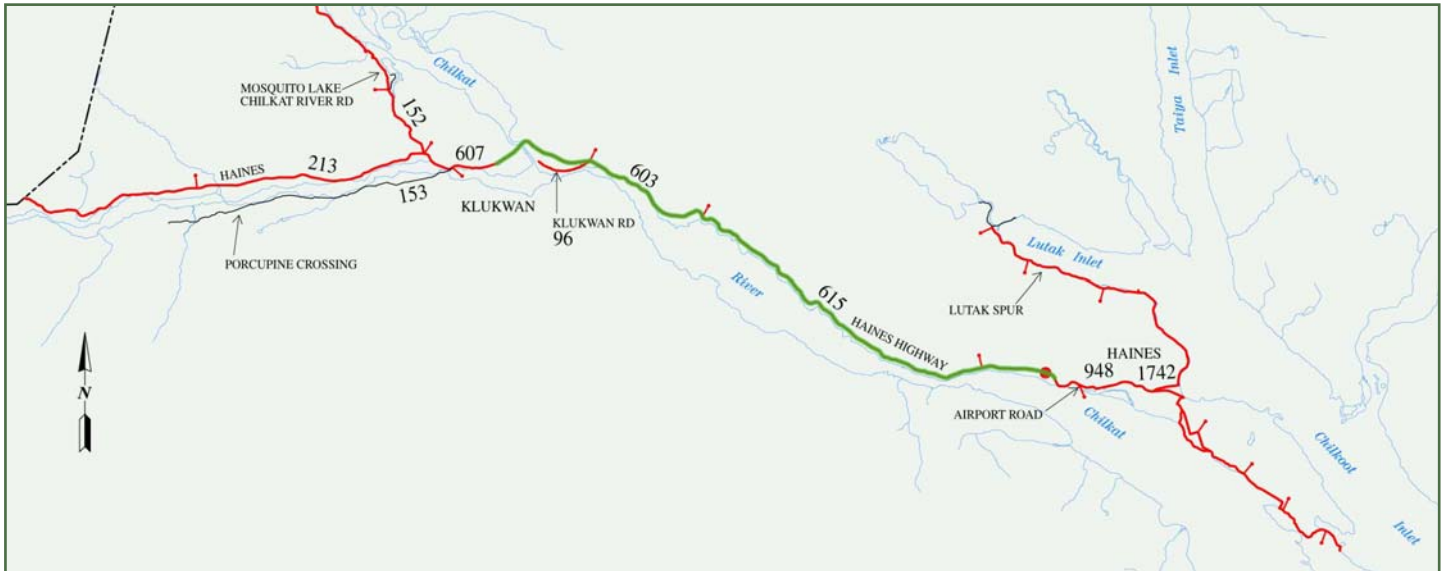
The DOT&PF has been working on gathering project information for the design and environmental documentation efforts. This work has included the following:

### Project Information/Research

- Completed baseline survey and developed project base maps
- Defined existing right-of-way
- Gathered geotechnical and soils information
- Evaluated wetlands and mapped vegetation communities
- Completed an environmental site assessment
- Analyzed fish habitat, hydrology, Bald Eagle nests and archeological resources
- Submitted Conceptual Mitigation Plan
- Submitted Alignment Study Report

### Public Involvement

- Public Scoping Meeting - December 6, 2005
- Agency Scoping Meeting - December 5, 2005
- Tribal Consultation Meeting - December 7, 2005
- Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve Advisory Council Meeting - December 6, 2005
- Summary Scoping Report - March 2006
- Project Website [www.dot.alaska.gov/haineshighway](http://www.dot.alaska.gov/haineshighway)



## PROJECT SCHEDULE

**Public Involvement** – Discussions with local residents familiar with the area began in December 2005. The next public meeting is scheduled for March 4, 2009. Project managers will present information to and solicit comments from the public at that meeting.

**Technical/Environmental Studies** - The project team is working to complete studies by September 2009, so the environmental document can be out for public review by early 2010.

**Project Design** - The design team is currently updating the alignment analysis and preparing a Preliminary Engineering Report, which will include additional design details the environmental document.

**Final Design and Construction** - Final design and construction can begin after completion of the environmental process. Construction is expected to occur in three or more stages and is not included in the current Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). Final design and construction cannot begin until funding is identified.

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| ● Updated Alignment Study to DOT&PF for Review          | Spring 2009               |
| ● Final Alignment Study                                 | Spring 2009               |
| ● Public and Agency Meetings (Project Update)           | March 2009                |
| ● Finalize Cultural Resources Report                    | Spring 2009               |
| ● Draft Detailed Mitigation Plan – Spring               | Summer 2009               |
| ● Draft EA and Permits to DOT&PF for Preliminary Review | Fall 2009                 |
| ● Revised Draft EA to DOT&PF                            | Fall 2009                 |
| ● EA and Revisions to FHWA for Review                   | Fall - Winter 2009        |
| ● Release Draft EA to Public                            | Winter 2009 - Spring 2010 |
| ● EA Open House   | Spring 2010               |
| ● EA/Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI)           | Spring - Summer 2010      |
| ● Permitting - Fall 09                                  | Spring 2010               |

## HOW DO I SUBMIT COMMENTS OR CONCERNS?

Although the scoping comment period closed on December 23, 2005, we strongly encourage you to continue to provide your comments and concerns. We want to hear from you. You can use one of the following methods to submit comments on this project or submit written comments during the public meeting. Your comments will be reviewed and considered during the EA preparation.

Via the Project Website: [www.dot.alaska.gov/haineshighway](http://www.dot.alaska.gov/haineshighway)

Environmental Comments by mail or e-mail to:

**Jim Scholl**

6860 Glacier Highway  
PO Box 112506  
Juneau, AK 99811-2506  
[jim.scholl@alaska.gov](mailto:jim.scholl@alaska.gov)  
(907) 465-4498  
Fax: (907) 465-3506

Other inquiries by mail or e-mail to:

DOT&PF Engineering Manager

**Jim Heumann, P.E.**

6860 Glacier Highway  
P.O. Box 112506  
Juneau, AK 99811-2506  
[jim.heumann@alaska.gov](mailto:jim.heumann@alaska.gov)  
(907) 465-4456  
Fax: (907) 465-4414



## HAINES HIGHWAY MP 3.5 – 25.3

Jim Heumann, P.E.  
DOT&PF  
6860 Glacier Highway  
P.O. Box 112506  
Juneau, AK 99811-2506