

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT REGARDING  
ALASKA'S HIGHWAY SYSTEM ROADS AFFECTED BY THE FEDERAL-AID  
HIGHWAY PROGRAM IN ALASKA**

**October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016**

**Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
Statewide Design and Engineering Services  
Environmental Office**

**November 2016**

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# ANNUAL REPORT

## Implementation of the Programmatic Agreement Regarding Alaska's Highway System Roads Affected by the Federal-Aid Highway Program in Alaska

October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016

### I. Background

The *Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Regarding Alaska's Highway System Roads Affected by the Federal-Aid Highway Program in Alaska* (Alaska Roads PA) went into effect on February 23, 2010. This report for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2016 documents the *Alaska Roads PA Stipulation 4 Annual Reporting Requirements*, as amended. In addition to the stipulated reporting, this annual report also provides updates on other aspects of the Alaska Roads PA implementation.

### II. Interim Guidance: Summary of FFY2016 Project Reporting

The Alaska Roads PA provides for an efficient, systematic approach for evaluating the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) eligibility of roads through the development of historic context and guidance tools. While these tools are being developed and tested, historic road eligibility and project effects are being considered through Interim Guidance screening procedures.

The Interim Guidance went into effect through the Second Amendment to the Alaska Roads PA on June 8, 2012. The Interim Guidance identifies fifteen roads to be treated as eligible for the National Register (TE List Roads) and provides mechanisms for assessing project effects to these roads. Most projects involving TE List Roads proceed through one of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities' (DOT&PF's) regular Section 106 review processes, which documents the assessment of project effects to the TE List Road. These projects do not require any additional reporting regarding the TE List Road.

Section 5.1 of the Interim Guidance allows certain limited projects on TE List Roads to proceed with an internal DOT&PF review by a DOT&PF professionally qualified individual (PQI) staff person who meets the Secretary of the Interior Professional Qualifications Standards. Section 5.1 applies to projects with activities specified under Appendix 4 of the Interim Guidance, when no other historic properties are present in the project's Area of Potential Effect (APE). Under Stipulation 4 of the Alaska Roads PA, the DOT&PF is required to submit an annual report to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on these Section 5.1 projects for the FFY that has just concluded. During FFY16 there were no projects processed under Section 5.1.

### III. Alaska Roads PA Accomplishments

#### 1. *Alaska Historic Transportation Route Booklet*

Stipulation 6 of the Alaska Roads PA requires DOT&PF to develop a historic roads booklet for the general public. During this reporting year, DOT&PF established a Reimbursable Services Agreement with the Office of History and Archaeology (OHA) for preparation of this booklet's text and layout. OHA has completed a draft, which was distributed for stakeholder review on September 23, 2016.

#### 2. *Planning for Implementation of the Roads DOE Methodology and Transition from Interim Guidance Processing*

As noted in last year's report, the FHWA, the DOT&PF, and the SHPO have recognized that efficient transition will involve agreements on guidance for incorporating the Roads DOE Methodology (RDM) into project environmental workflows and for assessing project effects on historic roads. The parties agreed that this would be best addressed within the existing *Programmatic Agreement... Regarding Implementation of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for the Federal-Aid Highway Program in Alaska* (Section 106 PA, executed October 14, 2014). This approach allows for previous Interim Guidance agreement on topics such as assessing effects to be retained and updated, and can formalize agreement on the types of projects that would trigger the application of the RDM. The target date for incorporating this guidance into the Section 106 PA was originally April 2017 but an implementation date later in 2017 is now expected.

The parties also recognized that the complete Roads DOE Methodology had only been applied on a single pilot road to date, and agreed that prior to implementing the Roads DOE Methodology, a broader test application would be carried out on selected roads (see appendix.) During FFY 2016, DOT&PF contracted with a consultant to complete DOEs on approximately sixteen roads as part of the Alaska Historic Roads Eligibility Planning project. Roads being addressed are:

- Dalton Highway
- Palmer-Fishhook, Willow-Fishhook, and Wasilla-Fishhook Roads
- Richardson Highway, non-Interstate segment
- South Tongass Highway
- Edgerton Hwy/McCarthy Road/Old Edgerton Loop
- Sterling Highway, non-Interstate segments
- Denali Highway
- Old Glenn Highway segments
- Nome Council Road
- Seward Highway, non-Interstate segments
- Steese Highway
- Taylor Highway segment O'Brien Creek to Eagle

Fieldwork on all roads has been accomplished on schedule, and draft reports are pending. Representatives from both DOT&PF and OHA are participating on the project review team.

3. *Interim Guidance Refresher Training*

During this FFY, no formal refresher training was conducted specifically for the Interim Guidance. DOT&PF PQIs have been consulting with SEO cultural resources staff and the OHA liaison in cases where individual project application questions arise.

4. *Interagency Partnership*

As noted in previous annual reports, the development and processing of the Alaska Roads PA deliverables has involved extensive consultation among the project review team members which strengthened the working relationship among the FHWA, the SHPO, and the DOT&PF. This close relationship will continue with the coordination that will occur with the completion of the historic roads booklet and DOE reports, as well as on the transition from the Interim Guidance to the use of the Roads DOE Methodology.

#### **IV. Alaska Roads PA Forthcoming Tasks**

1. *Alaska Historic Transportation Route Booklet*

In coordination with DOT&PF, OHA will revise the booklet draft and layout in response to comments received, with delivery of print-ready booklet content from OHA planned for early 2017. DOT&PF will arrange for printing and distribution in coordination with FHWA and OHA.

2. *Transition from Interim Guidance*

The DOE project is on target for completion at the end of March 2017. Draft reports are scheduled for batched reviews from October 2016- March 2017.

The parties plan to amend the Section 106 PA in 2017 to include an additional appendix for *Historic Road Consideration in Project Development*, which would incorporate guidance for transitioning to the Roads DOE Methodology and for assessing effects to National Register-eligible roads. The parties will also consider amending existing appendices for streamlined project review where necessary to incorporate historic road consideration. It is anticipated that the Section 106 PA amendments would occur by fall 2017.

#### **V. Conclusion**

The Alaska Roads PA has been in effect since the end of February of 2010. The strong working partnership that has been developed among the FHWA, the DOT&PF, and the SHPO is fostering good faith efforts to resolve historic road eligibility issues and providing guidance and assistance to assess project effects on historic properties, while promoting successful and expedited delivery of the State's transportation projects. The DOT&PF Statewide Environmental Office looks forward to the successful implementation of the Roads DOE Methodology.

## **Appendix**

**Letter, Roger Healy to Sandra Garcia-Aline, November 18, 2015**



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

## Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Design & Engineering Services  
Chief Engineer's Office

3132 Channel Drive  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-2500  
Main: 907-465-2960  
Toll free: 800-467-6955  
Fax: 907-465-3124

November 18, 2015

Sandra Garcia-Aline, Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
Alaska Division, Room 851  
709 West 9th Street  
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1648

Dear Ms. Garcia-Aline:

Federal-Aid Highway Program (FAHP) project processing under the *Interim Guidance for Addressing Alaska Historic Roads* (Interim Guidance) was to expire at the end of the 2015 calendar year. This letter extends the use of the Interim Guidance until the *Alaska Roads Methodology for Assessing National Register of Historic Places Eligibility* (Roads DOE Methodology) transitioning procedures are established.

The Interim Guidance and the Roads DOE Methodology were developed under the *Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, and the Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding Alaska's Highway System Roads Affected by the Federal-Aid Highway Program in Alaska* (Alaska Roads PA). Per the Alaska Roads PA, the Interim Guidance is to be in effect until the Roads Historic Context (Stipulation 5.C) and Final Guidance [i.e., Roads DOE Methodology] (Stipulation 5.B.2) are completed.

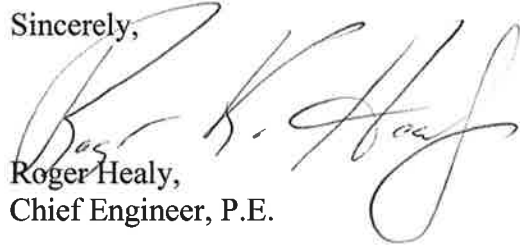
The *Alaska Roads Historic Overview Applied Historic Context of Alaska's Roads* (Roads Historic Context) was final in February 2014 and the Roads DOE Methodology was final in December 2014, meeting the requirements of the Alaska Roads PA. However, the Roads DOE Methodology has only been applied on a single pilot road to date; the full application is still untested on a wider scale.

Consensus among the Federal Highway Administration Alaska Division (FHWA), the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) on September 8, 2015, confirmed that the Roads DOE Methodology will not be complete until it has been tested and that the testing is to be accomplished before the Roads DOE Methodology is implemented. That testing will occur on selected roads under a separate project during 2016.

*"Keep Alaska Moving through service and infrastructure."*

Until further notice, anticipated by March 31, 2017, the Interim Guidance will remain in effect for the processing of FAHP Program projects, at which time it will be superseded by the Roads DOE Methodology transitioning procedures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Healy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Roger Healy,  
Chief Engineer, P.E.

cc: Taylor Horne, Statewide Environmental Program Manager  
Laurie Mulcahy, Statewide Environmental Cultural Resources Manager  
Kathy Price, Statewide Environmental Cultural Resources Specialist