

IM No. 12-04: Update on Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Projects

Agenda of: February 27, 2012
Originator: Public Works Director

Date: February 17, 2012

Route to:	Department	Signature	Date
X	Public Works Director		2/17/12
X	City Clerk		2/19/12

REVIEWED BY MAYOR VERNE E. RUPRIGHT:

FISCAL IMPACT: yes or no Funds Available Yes or No

Attachments: Wasilla Multi-Modal By-Pass Project Fact-Sheet (1 page)
 Wasilla Main Street Rehabilitation Project Fact-Sheet (1 page)

SUMMARY STATEMENT: HDR Alaska, Inc. is currently under contract with the Alaska Department of Transportation to identify feasible roadway alignments south of Wasilla to relieve congestion on the Parks Highway. A conceptual alignment is expected by the end of 2012 (see attached fact sheet). The short term goal is to identify and acquire the needed right-of-way. This is a long-range project for construction (10-20 year time frame), but right-of-way acquisition now is critical before available corridors are built-out.

HDR Alaska, Inc. is also under contract to advance the engineering design of the Main Street Couplet (see attached fact sheet). The City has received a grant in the amount of \$5 million to help expedite the project. This funding is being held in reserve until 2013 when the required decisional document is complete. At that point, the City's grant funds will be used for right-of-way acquisition and project development.

Date Presented:	2/27/12	Initials:	KS	Comments:	
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Wasilla Multi-Modal By-Pass Project

PROJECT UPDATE
2-15-2012

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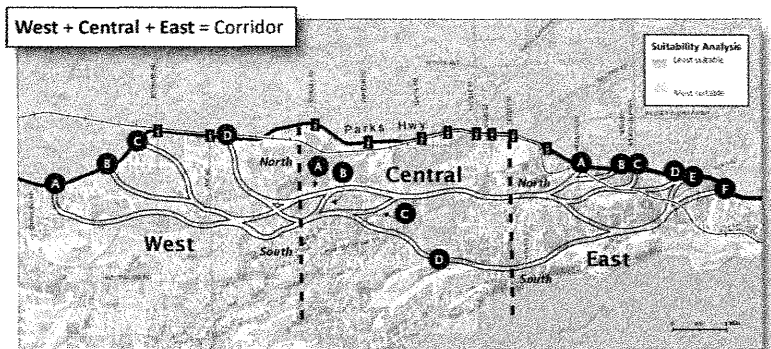
Background: The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) received a \$2 million Legislative appropriation to advance development of a transportation solution to the congested Parks Highway corridor between Big Lake and a point east of Wasilla. The project started as a partnership between the Alaska Railroad (ARR), City of Wasilla, Mat-Su Borough and the DOT&PF. The original scope was for a single multi-modal corridor. However, the pace of sub-division activity and the more mature development of potential railroad alignments resulted in the ARR dropping out of the agreement in early 2009. The ARR intends to proceed separately on development of an alternative corridor to meet their needs.

Current Status: The Consultant (HDR Alaska, Inc.) under contract with DOT&PF has completed Phase I of a multi-phase process. Phase I consisted of: review of all previous analytical efforts exploring the need for the project; interviews with approximately 60 policy-makers in the Mat-Su Valley to determine local support; and recommendations for future project advancement. Phase II is currently underway. A project financing White Paper has been produced. Phase II will also produce a Conceptual Alignment Report that shall: define all feasible roadway alignment alternatives; identify potential right-of-way needs and acquisition costs; calculate a project Break-Even Point (Bypass vs. No-Build); identify conceptual roadway corridors that merit more detailed environmental and engineering analysis and conduct public involvement. Detailed information can be found at the project website: <http://www.parkshwyalternative.com>.

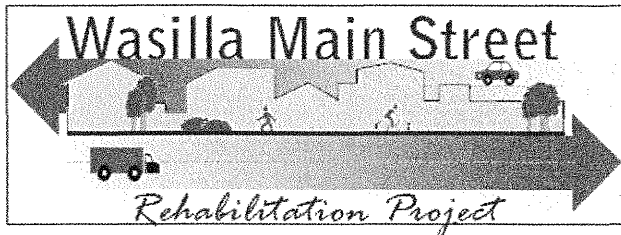
Project Development: The Consultant is conducting corridor specific research. Suitability Analysis of alternative conceptual corridors is almost complete. Upon completion of the analysis, the project team will share this information with the Project Steering Committee, local policy makers and the general public approximately mid-year. It is anticipated that Phase II will develop sufficient information to show:

1. viable roadway conceptual alignments
2. the purpose and need for the project
3. viable financing options for a controlled-access corridor
4. benefits to the City of Wasilla, Mat-Su Borough and the State of Alaska

Project Schedule	
2005-2008	Start-up and Phase I Technical Memos produced
2009-2012	Phase II Conceptual Alignment Report
Late 2012	Phase III Begin Preliminary Engineering



Preliminary alignments identified to date



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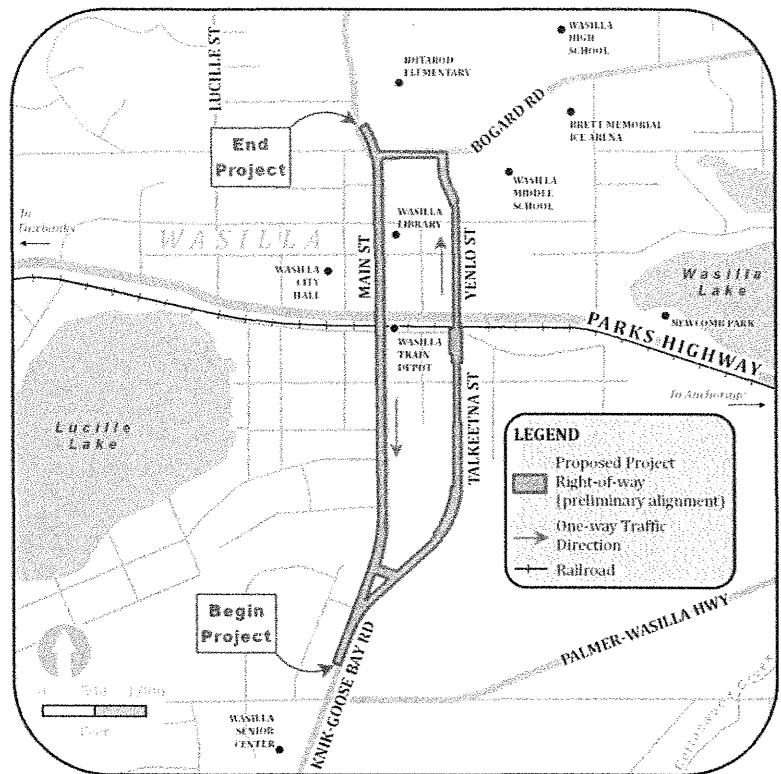
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Project Description

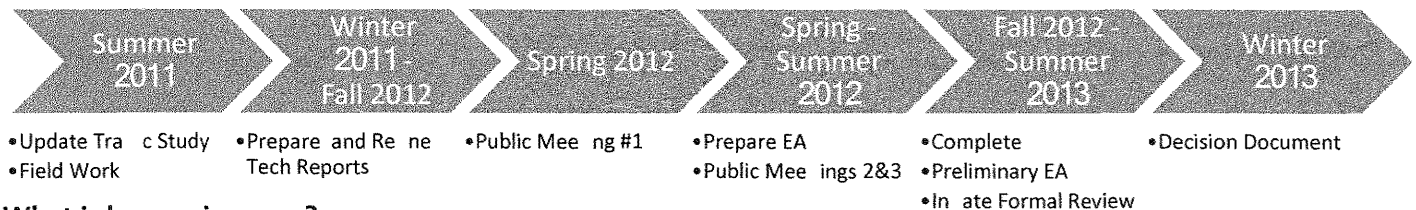
The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Wasilla Main Street Rehabilitation project following the guidance of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The DOT&PF has hired HDR Alaska, Inc. to provide support to develop the environmental study.

The DOT&PF, through its Wasilla Main Street Traffic Study (2006), has identified a proposed project to improve traffic flow and relieve congestion in downtown Wasilla. More specifically, the project will address the following problems:

- Congestion
- Safety
- Capacity
- Railroad conflicts
- Long waiting lines



Project Schedule



What is happening now?

The project is now in the data collection phase. This past summer/fall the project team conducted field work and initiated preparation of the following studies:

- Noise
- Traffic Analysis
- Cultural Resources evaluation
- Right-of-Way
- Environmental Phase I