



Seward Highway Milepost 105-107, Windy Corner

**Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Project No. 56631/NH-0A3-1(34)**

Public Involvement and Scoping Plan



Prepared by:

DOWL HKM and
Brooks & Associates
1704 Bannister Road
Anchorage, AK 99508-4021
(907) 272-1877

February 4, 2013



Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
LIST OF ACRONYMS	3
1. GENERAL INFORMATION	4
2. PURPOSE OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND SCOPING	6
3. IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS	7
4. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT METHODS	10
5. PROJECT COMMUNICATION	14
6. PLAN EVALUATION	16



LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADEC	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
ADF&G	Alaska Department of Fish and Game
ADNR	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
AFD	Anchorage Fire Department
ARRC	Alaska Railroad Corporation
AST	Alaska State Troopers
AMATS	Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions
APD	Anchorage Police Department
AWWU	Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility
BA	Brooks & Associates
CAC	Citizen's Advisory Committee
CE	Categorical Exclusion
CSP	Chugach State Park
DOT&PF	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
DOWL HKM	DOWL HKM
DSR	Design Study Report
EA	Environmental Assessment
ENSTAR	ENSTAR Natural Gas Company
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions
FCC	Federation of Community Councils
GBOS	Girdwood Board of Supervisors
GCI	GCI Telecommunications Company
ML&P	Municipal Light and Power
MOA	Municipality of Anchorage
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOAA Fisheries	National Oceanic and Fisheries Administration
PIH	Plans in Hand
PIP	Public Involvement Plan
PS&E	Plans, Specifications and Estimates
P&ZC	Planning and Zoning Commission
ROW	Right Of Way
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
UDC	Urban Design Commission
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service



1. General Information

1.1. Project Scope

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) Seward Highway Milepost (MP) 105-107 Windy Corner project is located in the Municipality of Anchorage on the Seward Highway between Rainbow and Indian as shown below. The project will construct safety improvements within the segment of Seward Highway that is a designated safety corridor. The focus will be on developing a divided 2-lane highway, pullout areas for viewing wildlife, and associated acceleration/deceleration lanes to access new recreational pull offs and parking areas on both sides of the highway. Included in the project is relocation of the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) tracks and development of access and infrastructure for Chugach State Park (CSP).

The project will develop plans, specifications, estimates, environmental documentation, as well as public and agency outreach, final design, and permitting for the proposed improvements.

The project is proposed to be completed using a combination of State and Federal funds in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).



Figure 1. Location Map



1.2. Project Team

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Highway Design
4111 Aviation Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99519
Tom Schmid, P.E., Project Manager, (907) 269-0543, tom.schmid@alaska.gov
Mark Boydston, Environmental Impact Analyst, (907) 269-0524,
mark.boydston@alaska.gov

DOWL HKM
4041 B Street
Anchorage, AK 99503
Telephone: (907) 526-2000
Steve Noble, P.E., Project Manager, snoble@dowlhkm.com
Aaron Christie, P.E., Project Engineer, achristie@dowlhkm.com
Maryellen Tuttell, AICP, Public Involvement/Environmental Lead,
mtuttell@dowlhkm.com
Kristen Hansen, NEPA/Permitting Lead, khansen@dowlhkm.com

Brooks & Associates (BA) (Public Involvement Coordinator)
1704 Bannister Road
Anchorage, AK 99508-4021
Telephone: (907) 272-1877
Anne Brooks, P.E., Public Participation Coordinator, a.brooks@brooks-alaska.com
Camden Yehle, Public Involvement Associate, camden@brooks-alaska.com

Homestead Graphics (Web Design, Graphic Support)
9401 Homestead Trail
Anchorage, AK 99507
Telephone: (907) 344-0410
Jan Hazen, homesteadgraphics@gmail.com



2. Purpose of Public Involvement and Scoping

This Public Involvement and Scoping Plan (PIP) sets forth strategies for communicating with the public, other interested parties, regulatory and permitting agencies about the project as required by DOT&PF and NEPA. It defines the tools, timing and strategies for obtaining public and agency input. The plan presents a range of strategies that may be used during the course of project scoping and development. The project team will use this document to guide the process of conducting the public and agency outreach for the Seward Highway MP 105-107 Windy Corner project.

The environmental documentation will be conducted in accordance with the NEPA. A Categorical Exclusion (CE) prepared for Project 56631 (Seward Highway Safety Improvements, Indian to Potter Marsh, MP 105-115) was approved in 2004 and will be reevaluated during preparation of the design plans, specifications and estimates for this project.

2.1. Public Involvement Goals

The project team set the following goals for public participation for the Seward Highway MP 105-107 Windy Corner project. The project team will:

- Provide timely and accurate information to the public regarding the project through a variety of means, such as public meetings, advertisements, email, telephone, written correspondence, news articles and website frequently-asked-questions (FAQs).
- Acknowledge comments and concerns in the format received and provide feedback on how the input influenced project decisions,
- Share information in a transparent way so that members of the public become familiar with the issues and the team's response to them,
- Clearly state how, when and where people can be involved in project decision-making,
- Clearly outline the project development process,
- Reach out to include a broad group of stakeholders in project decisions, and
- Seek out and engage applicable Federal, State and local government entities in project development.

2.2. Plan Development

This public involvement and scoping plan was developed in collaboration with DOWL HKM and DOT&PF. The team reviewed the public involvement conducted for the Seward Highway Safety Improvements, Indian to Potter Marsh, MP 105 to MP 115, and the resulting CE to identify stakeholders, issues and environmental commitments.



3. Identification of Stakeholders

Below is an initial list of stakeholders. These entities will be included in the project outreach/ mailing list. This list will expand throughout the project.

Public

Property owners
Business owners
Visitors
Commuters
Residents in adjacent communities/neighborhoods
Kenai Peninsula residents

Government Entities

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR), Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)
Alaska State Troopers (AST)
Anchorage Federation of Community Councils
Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS)
Anchorage School District
Area legislators and elected officials
Girdwood Board of Supervisors (GBOS)
Girdwood Fire Department
MOA Fire Department (AFD)
MOA Non-Motorized Transportation Coordinator
MOA Police Department (APD)
MOA Public Transportation (People Mover)
MOA, Mayor and Assembly
National Marine Fisheries Service



National Parks Service
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Utility Companies

Alaska Communications System
GCI Telecommunications (Phone, Cable) (GCI)
Chugach Electric Corporation

Other

Alaska Trucking Association
Anchorage Chamber of Commerce
Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau
Arctic Bicycle Club
Area Community Councils (Anchorage Bowl plus Girdwood, Turnagain and Portage Valley)
Bicycle Commuters of Anchorage
Friends of Chugach State Park
Girdwood 2020
Holland America/Princess Alaska-Yukon (HAP)
Homer Stage Lines

3.1. Issues

The following table identifies issues that will be addressed in the public involvement and agency scoping process.



Table 1 – Public Involvement Issues

Issue	Project Approach
Natural Experience/Aesthetics for the Seward Highway Scenic Byway and Chugach State Park (CSP)	Work with public/agencies to explore potential mitigation options if warranted.
Safety for all users – motorized, non-motorized, ARRC, Anchorage School District	Emphasize safety elements of the project: project origin is from safety corridor studies
Impacts to intertidal areas of moving the tracks/highway and creating recreational areas	Work with agencies and team to mitigate impacts and to extent possible, creation of wetland ponded areas
ARRC design: grades, curves, public trespass issues etc.	Team to work with ARRC to develop design criteria for track change elements of the project
Construction considerations, traffic control during peak season	Work with public, agencies and others to develop construction phasing plan
Source of embankment materials, location, haul distance, etc.	Work with team to identify sources that minimize impacts
Wildlife impacts – beluga, salmon, hooligan, sheep, goats and other species as directed by the resource agencies.	Work with agencies to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts
Visual impacts, existing viewpoints, cumulative impacts	Work with DNR and CSP and others to identify and mitigate impacts
Impacts to commercial and private land uses, public utilities, property values	Inform and involve adjacent land uses, utilities and others in developing project
Access to trails, creeks and recreation	Identify recreation access and mitigate or enhance access in project area
Agreements between CSP, DOT&PF and ARRC	Revise and renew agreements as applicable to this project



4. Public Involvement Methods

The following table identifies the methods we propose to use to reach the stakeholders or potentially affected interests with project information. The table will be expanded to document public involvement during all project phases.

Table 2 – Public Involvement Tools

Public Involvement Tool	Use of Tool
Mailing list	To allow the project team to inform interested entities, regulatory and environmental agencies and the public about the project.
Website www.windycorner.info	Develop for length of project, post all project documents, background, photos, schedule and contact information.
Attend regular group meetings, community councils, etc.	Get on the agendas for regularly scheduled meetings of organizations in the area, such as GBOS, Girdwood 2020, AMATS Committees, etc.
Stakeholder interviews	Interview various stakeholders prior to the first public meeting to gain insight into issues and concerns.
General public meetings	Public meetings provide an opportunity to share the current status of the project with the public and explain any developments or changes caused by agency, design or other interaction. Typically open house meetings with a presentation followed by a question and answer session
Agency and Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meetings	Convened to provide information to agencies with direct authority over aspects of the project or resources to be affected by the project development. The first is an agency scoping meeting. Subsequent Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meetings will be scheduled as needed.
Informal meetings	Set up informal meetings to discuss issues related to a specific group, i.e., adjacent businesses, railroad, etc.
Informational flyers and newsletters	Prepare and distribute to give notice of public involvement opportunities. Newsletters and/or postcards are planned; the first to announce the project and the others to announce public meetings. Additional newsletters may be required and will be determined at a later date. Delivered via postal mailing list, email, and website; extra copies are delivered to local businesses.
Chronological list of scoping and public involvement activities	Provide a comprehensive list of activities undertaken to deliver information and seek input from the public.
Comment and response summary	Provide a comprehensive list of issues brought forth by stakeholders and track their resolution during project development.



Public Involvement Tool	Use of Tool
Print media, press releases on project for Anchorage Daily News, Turnagain Times and other regional publications	Prepare and distribute for publication articles describing the project, schedule and process. Advertising will be placed in regional publications, i.e., <i>Turnagain Times</i> , <i>Anchorage Daily News</i> , <i>Peninsula Clarion</i> , <i>Homer News</i> , <i>Homer Tribune</i> , <i>Seward Phoenix Log</i> and <i>Seward Journal</i> . Public service announcements will be sent to KMXS, KBEAR, KBFX, KSKA and KEUL radio stations.
Routine communications Project email: windycorner@dowlhkm.com	Regular communication via telephone, fax, email and US mail will be responded to in kind according to established protocols in Section 5.

4.1. World Wide Web Site

The project warrants a stand-alone project website. The website will conform to the DOT&PF look and feel and contain basic pages for scope, schedule, public involvement, contacts and documents. DOT&PF will approve all content and the site layout before posting.

Initial template or design to include:

Home/Background

Schedule

Public Involvement

Project Contacts

Comments

Frequently Asked Questions

Documents

Links to USDOT/FHWA, ADOT&PF

4.2. Single Point of Contact

The Public Involvement Coordinator will be the single point of contact for the public comments on the project and will be responsible for all public involvement documentation. See the Communications section below for details on approval handling of communications with the public and media. Project comments will be sent to the Public Involvement Coordinator with copies to DOT&PF and DOWL HKM.

The DOT&PF Environmental Lead shall be the single point of contact for the resource agencies including phone calls, emails, responding to agency comments, meeting coordination, and other coordination. Communication with the agencies will be coordinated with the DOT&PF and DOWL HKM Project Managers and the Public



Involvement Coordinator. DOWL HKM and BA will be copied on all correspondence and included in teleconferences with the agencies as needed.

4.3. Meetings

Three public meetings are planned at the time of this PIP development: one to kick off the project scoping at project startup, one when the Plans-in-Hand (PIH) drawings are complete, and one when the pre-plans, specifications and estimate (PS&E) plan set is complete. Each meeting will be held in two locations.

An agency scoping meeting will be held with regulatory and permitting agencies during project scoping to seek agency input, permit requirements and documentation needs. We anticipate having additional Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meetings to discuss data collection, analysis, and permitting issues.

Typically the public meetings will be held in an open house format. In some cases, DOT&PF's and DOWL HKM's Project Managers will make a short introductory presentation. Informal meetings will be held with GBOS and other stakeholders as dictated by project needs. Meeting notes will be prepared documenting all meetings for project records. The records will indicate attendance, meeting materials, presentations and summarize oral and written comment.

Standing community meetings offer opportunities to present the project. Table 3 is useful for participating in existing meetings and for avoiding conflicting days and times.

Table No. 3 — Meeting Planning Schedule

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
1st	MOA Planning & Zoning	MOA Assembly		
2nd	MOA Planning & Zoning	MOA Assembly GBOS Land Use Committee (LUC)	AMATS Technical Advisory Committee Turnagain Arm CC*	
3rd	GBOS		MOA Federation of Community Councils	
4th			AMATS Policy Committee	

*February, May, September and December
 Portage Valley has no scheduled meetings at the time of this writing.



4.4. Mailing List

Contact lists will be developed for the project including a postal mail list and an email list. The postal mailing list will be prepared to enable the project team to sort by location, business or interested parties. Where possible, the list will be carrier-route certified to reduce costs when preparing bulk mailings. The initial list includes the agencies listed above and property owners, businesses and others within reasonable limits of the project corridor as determined by DOT&PF, DOWL HKM, and BA.

The email list will be developed to provide notice to stakeholders of input opportunities, website updates, etc., via an email marketing program. Both lists will be continually updated throughout the project.

4.5. Chronology of Public Involvement Activities

BA will maintain a table documenting public involvement activities throughout the project.

4.6. Comment Documentation

A scoping summary report will be prepared to document comments received and issues raised during the scoping meetings.

In addition, the team will prepare a chronology of public involvement to document all outreach activities and a comment/response summary to track public comment and make sure comments are acknowledged and resolved through the process. Issues are added to the summary as they are received from the public via written and oral communications. The comment summary evolves during the course of the project. Similar issues are combined, issues that will be resolved in design are passed on to the design team and so noted on the summary, and some issues are outside the scope of this project. The purpose of the comment and response summary is to give input to the public on how their comments are being considered in the project development and allow the project team to ensure comments and issues are resolved.

4.7. Other Methods

Other outreach methods will be deployed if needed to achieve project public involvement goals.



5. Project Communication

This section spells out the protocols for the project including contacts with the client, public, project team, media, press, elected officials, sub-consultants, and local, state and federal agencies.

5.1. Media Communications

Regular media communication will keep the public informed throughout each phase of the project to encourage continued input during all project phases. The single point of contact for all external communications is Tom Schmid, DOT&PF Project Manager. Media communications will include press releases, media briefings, telephone interviews and communication with elected officials.

5.2. Communications with DOT&PF

Tom Schmid, P.E., the DOT&PF Project Manager, will handle day-to-day communications with DOWL HKM. The DOWL HKM Public Involvement/Environmental Lead will review all public involvement communication and written communication with the client and public. DOT&PF shall initiate communications (primarily email and phone) with all agencies for scoping. DOWL HKM review of agency communication will be at the DOT&PF Project Manager/Environmental Lead request. The DOWL HKM Project Manager shall approve all correspondence with agencies before transmittal to the DOT&PF Project Manager for review and delivery to the agencies.

5.3. Telephone Communications

All public involvement telephone communications will be documented with copies distributed to the DOT&PF Project Manager, the DOWL HKM Public Involvement/Environmental Lead, and the Public Involvement Coordinator. Copies can be provided to other interested team members as appropriate. The original record of the telephone communication shall be located in the DOWL HKM files.

All agency telephone communications will be documented by the DOT&PF Environmental Lead with copies distributed to the DOWL HKM and DOT&PF project managers, BA and other team members. The original telephone communications record shall be located in the DOT&PF Environmental Section files.

5.4. Electronic Communications

All public involvement electronic communications will be saved as PDF files with copies distributed to the DOT&PF Project Manager, the DOWL HKM Project Manager, the DOWL HKM Public Involvement/Environmental Lead, and the Public Involvement Coordinator. Copies can be provided to other interested team members as appropriate. The original record of the electronic communications shall be located in the DOWL HKM files.



All agency electronic communications will be documented by the DOT&PF Environmental Lead with copies distributed to the DOWL HKM and DOT&PF project managers, BA, and other team members as appropriate. The original electronic communication record shall be located in the DOT&PF Environmental Section files.

5.5. Communicating with the Public

Following the protocols indicated above, we will respond promptly and in kind to all communication from the public. For instance, if we receive a comment via email, we will respond by email. If we receive a letter, we'll respond by letter.



6. Plan Evaluation

Public dialogue is very important to the success of the project. The goals to inform, educate, solicit and respond to input must be monitored to ensure that an appropriate level of input is being received, that we are answering the public's questions, and that we are resolving issues and conflicts. DOT&PF, DOWL HKM and BA will monitor the public participation effectiveness and revise the plan if necessary.

6.1. Record Keeping

Throughout the project, all incoming and outgoing communications with the public and other project stakeholders will be filed electronically. The documents are coded to indicate how they were received. For example, an email from John Smith on Sept. 23, 2013, would receive a "20130923emSmith" file name. For consistency, the DOT&PF Environmental Lead will use the same document coding for all incoming and outgoing agency communications. All documents will be filed electronically in the DOT&PF Environmental project folder. For all newsletters or postcard mailers, a snapshot of the ever-changing mailing list is saved with the newsletter file. For each project mailing, we will track how many newsletters, flyers or surveys were mailed or distributed, and how many calls, surveys or comment sheets were returned in the period following the mailing or distribution. The website will feature a counter to track the number of hits (the number of times the site has been accessed).

The Public Involvement Coordinator will discuss the public involvement activities with the respective the DOT&PF and DOWL HKM Project Managers and select other tools for involving the public if the feedback is considered insufficient.

6.2. Communication

Another method for evaluating the Public Involvement Plan's effectiveness will be through our conversations with the public, agencies and potentially affected interests. If our plan is effective, we will see these indicators during the process: 1) we will not have to answer the same questions over and over — the public is getting the information and understanding the process; 2) we will be receiving a new level of input — the public will feel an issue is resolved and move on to another; 3) meetings and input will become less contentious; 4) groups polarized on either side of the fence will begin to work through issues among themselves and offer suggestions.