



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

Scoping Plan

Prepared for:

Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities



Prepared by:

DOWL Engineers

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OBJECTIVES

This scoping plan provides a framework for soliciting public and resource agency input on the scope of the environmental analysis of the Haines Highway Milepost 3.5-25.3 project (see attached location/vicinity map). The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and as an integrated part of the project development process. The scoping process will aid the preparation of the EA and the final roadway improvements design by gathering and incorporating the public's concerns and comments, as well as identifying important information resources. Key components and milestones of the scoping process are identified below.

The purpose of scoping is to solicit the input of agencies, organizations, and the general public regarding the environmental analysis of the Haines Highway project, and to integrate these views into the NEPA and design process. This scoping process will identify the issues and alternatives to be identified and analyzed in the EA, and determine the need for special studies.

SCOPE OF WORK

Public and Agency Scoping

Scoping materials and process components will include the following:

- Scoping letter/meeting notice mailed to the project mailing list;
- Publication of combined "Notice of Environmental Evaluation" and "Notice of Wetlands and Floodplains Involvement" in the Chilkat Valley News, and in the Juneau Empire;
- Post the project and scoping meeting notice with the State On-Line Public Notices and on the ADOT&PF project website;
- Post fliers at public places in Haines (i.e. post office, library, and Klukwan Community Hall);
- One public scoping meeting in Haines;
- One agency scoping meeting in Juneau, with an optional site visit along the project corridor in Haines the following day.

The scoping letter/meeting notice will provide a brief description of the following:

- project purpose and need,
- alternatives currently under consideration,
- summary of potentially impacted resources,
- design process and schedule,
- environmental assessment process and schedule,

- scoping meeting time and location, and
- information regarding how to provide comments on this project.

The scoping letter to agencies will be posted to ADOT&PFs website, and an electronic link to the letters will be sent to the resource agencies, along with questions that are specific to each agency's purview. The website will also include a hyperlink that allows agency staff members to submit comments immediately via e-mail. With the use of electronic scoping, the process is expedited, enabling a more efficient method for the agencies to respond to scoping letters, and to provide specific input that helps in the development of the environmental document.

The public scoping meeting will include an informal "open house" discussion between the public and project team/staff. The agency meeting will include a project overview by project team/staff regarding the proposed road improvements, with focus and discussion on the environmental considerations and permitting issues. Project maps, boards, photos, fact sheets and other information will be available for discussion and dissemination. The DOWL team will arrange for meeting times, locations, and facilities, prepare materials and graphics, moderate the proceedings, provide support to DOT&PF staff in responding to questions and requests for additional information, and prepare written summaries of the meetings, including all verbal comments received at the meeting.

Scoping meetings will be held approximately 14-calendar days following publication of meeting notices and mailing of scoping letters. The opportunity to provide written comments following the meeting will be provided. A minimum 14-calendar days comment period will be provided for agencies and the public to provide scoping comments after the meeting is held. Agencies and the public will be asked to submit written comments to ADOT&PF. DOWL will assist ADOT&PF in addressing specific questions from the public, as appropriate.

ADOT&PF will forward copies of all comments received on this project to DOWL, and DOWL will maintain a complete record of the scoping process, including copies of all public notices (including proof of publication), summaries of public and agency scoping meetings, copies of written and verbal comments received, and any responses provided by the project team. These activities will be summarized in the "Coordination" section of the EA and the materials will be included in an organized scoping summary report attached as an appendix to the EA document. Comments and concerns voiced by the public and agencies, both at the meetings and through written comments, will be included and addressed in the EA.

Inter-Disciplinary Team

During the initial agency-scoping meeting, DOWL will inquire as to whether the level of interest from the resource agencies is great enough to form an Inter-Disciplinary Team (IDT). Assuming there is sufficient interest, ADOT&PF will invite representatives of agencies or organizations with expertise and/or jurisdiction to participate. The role of the IDT will be to discuss project design issues as they relate to permitting and avoidance, minimization and compensatory mitigation. DOWL will organize and document periodic IDT meetings to discuss the methods and results of environmental analyses, project design details, permitting issues, and mitigation ideas. The IDT will advise ADOT&PF with the goal of designing successful mitigation.

Coordination with Alaska Department of Natural Resources

ADOT&PF will coordinate with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation (ADNR) and the Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve Advisory Council regarding this project in accordance with Preserve Management Plan and the Cooperative Agreement between the ADOT&PF and the ADNR dated November 8, 1987. This coordination will be an important aspect of the project scoping, particularly for any work proposed with the Preserve.

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.

Tentative Scoping Schedule*

MILESTONE	DATE
Publication of meeting notice	Late Nov. 2005
Mail scoping/Section 106 consultation letters	Mid to Late Nov. 2005
Agency scoping meeting in Juneau	Early December 2005
Public scoping meeting in Haines	Early December 2005
Scoping comment deadline	Late Dec. 2005 / Early Jan. 2006
Scoping summary report	Early Jan. 2006

* *These dates are subject to change as the project develops.*