

STATUS: Active

DOT&PF Notice of Project Update: Ketchikan South Tongass Highway Rehabilitation

State Project #67571/67685

Federal Project # 0902031/0902039

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is proposing to rehabilitate approximately three miles of South Tongass Highway and related non-motorized facilities from Deermount Street in Ketchikan through Saxman to Surf Street. The South Tongass Highway is an undivided, two-lane roadway with many private driveways, limited shoulders, and an adjacent multi-use pathway along most sections.

The South Tongass Highway Rehabilitation project would improve the highway from just south of its Deermount intersection through Saxman to Surf Street. The project would widen the highway to current design standards, reconstruct the multi-use pathway, extend the pathway through Saxman, improve drainage (including new inlets, storm drains, ditches, and culverts), and relocate utilities. Rock cuts will be needed to widen the road in some locations. Bus stop turnouts and bus flag stops are being constructed at locations determined in coordination with the Borough Transit Manager and the City of Saxman. The 8-foot-wide multi-use path will expand and improve the pedestrian and bicycle corridor in addition to being ADA compliant.

The proposed project would include:

- Modification of horizontal and vertical alignment where warranted and cost effective to improve safety
- Rock excavation/blasting to accommodate realignment and widening
- Excavation and reconstruction of the existing embankment at select locations
- Construction of mechanically stabilized earth walls or other wall structures as appropriate
- Drainage improvements, including culvert replacement and ditching
- Construction of a fish passage culvert at Saxman Creek
- Removal and replacement of guardrail as warranted
- Replacement of handrails and chain link fence
- Replacement of public and impacted private staircases for access to adjacent properties
- Resolution of right-of-way (ROW) encroachments (removal or permitting)
- Relocation of overhead or underground utilities
- Construction of bus stop turnouts

The project will tentatively be largely constructed over two seasons, potentially starting in 2024. The construction schedule will fully comply with environmental permit conditions. These conditions restrict work near three eagle-nesting trees during the nesting and fledging season from May through August. Permit conditions also restrict work within Saxman Creek from June 1 to August 1. The construction start dates are contingent on the completion of ROW tasks, acquisition of required permits, and other factors.

Floodplains

The proposed project does not involve a regulatory floodway but will necessitate encroachments to the unmapped floodplain. The project will encroach into the base 100-year floodplain, however the intertidal fills proposed will not raise the estimated 1% flood elevations. The project would involve longitudinal encroachments, with riprap fills proposed along the highway embankment in some areas which extend into intertidal waters and potentially the 1% floodplain in places. Alternatives would include structural walls or realigning the road inland, which would in turn impact personal residences or rock bluffs. Of the potential alternatives riprap already exists along much of the highway embankment and represents the most practical alternative to stabilize the highway along the Tongass Narrows. The project is not anticipated to increase the base flood elevation by one foot or greater. The project is located within an area protected by local flood hazard ordinances and a flood hazard permit is required from the local government. The proposed project conforms to applicable federal, state, and local floodplain protection standards.

Controlled Blasting

Controlled Blasting will occur within the areas shown in the online public notice as well as the project website: <https://dot.alaska.gov/sereg/projects/southtongass/>

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by DOT&PF pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated November 3, 2017, and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.

Development of this proposed project follows a process required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Based on project location and scope of work, the environmental document is anticipated to be a categorical exclusion (CE). Possible affected resources include wetlands, waters of the U.S., bald eagles, endangered species, marine mammals, fish habitat, and cultural or historic properties.

The proposed project would comply with all applicable authorities including:

- EO-11988 (Floodplain Management)
- EO-12898 (Environmental Justice)
- Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
- Clean Air Act and Clean Water Acts
- Endangered Species Act
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Management Act
- National Historic Preservation Act - Section 106
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

At this time, DOT&PF is soliciting comments on the proposed projects regarding impacts to floodplains and the activity of controlled blasting. Your comments on these two items will assist with evaluating their potential impacts to the environment.

Please submit your written comments to:

Joseph Galgano, Environmental Impact Analyst
DOT&PF Southcoast Region
P.O. Box 112506
Juneau, AK 99811-2506
Phone: (907) 465-4447
Fax: (907) 465-4414
Email: joseph.galgano@alaska.gov

To ensure that all possible factors are considered, please provide comments via email, fax, or mailing address by March 10, 2022.

It is the policy of the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) that no person shall be excluded from participation in, or be denied benefits of, any and all programs or activities we provide based on race, religion, color, gender, age, marital status, ability, or national origin, regardless of the funding source including Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and State of Alaska funds. DOT&PF complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

If you or someone you represent requires special accommodations in order to respond to this public notice, please call or email the project coordinator listed above, or call Alaska Relay at 711, or call (800) 770-8973 for TTY, (800) 770-8255 for voice, (800) 770-3919 for ASCII, (866) 355-6198 for STS. Ask the communications assistant to call the project coordinator listed above so arrangements can be made to assist you.

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[Attachments, History, Details](#)

Attachments

[Draft blasting figures.pdf](#)

Revision History

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[\[Details\]](#)

Details

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