

**FINAL SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT**

**HUFFMAN ROAD  
OLD SEWARD HIGHWAY  
TO LAKE OTIS PARKWAY  
PROJECT NO. STP-0534(1)/53933**

**Prepared for:**

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**FIGURES**

Figure 1: Project Corridor

## **ATTACHMENTS**

### Attachment 1 – Public Scoping

- 1A. Mailing list (residents and agencies)
- 1B. Public meeting advertisement
- 1C. Hotline messages
- 1D. E-mail messages
- 1E. Bowman Elementary School comment form
- 1F. Public comment sheets on Bowman Elementary form
- 1G. Public meeting information packet (August 26, 1999)
- 1H. Public meeting attendance list (August 26, 1999)
- 1I. Public comment documentation sheets (August 26, 1999)
- 1J. Business Public Meeting Information Packet (September 23, 1999)
- 1K. Business meeting attendance list (September 23, 1999)
- 1L. Public comment documentation sheets (September 23, 1999)
- 1M. Summary of Community Council meeting presentations
- 1N. Verbal Communication records
- 1O. Huffman Road Public Comments from the O'Malley Road Project Files
- 1P. Huffman/O'Malley Community Council Survey

### Attachment 2 – Agency Scoping

- 2A. Agency scoping meeting invitation (Letter sent August 4, 1999)
- 2B. Agency meeting attendance list (August 26, 1999)
- 2C. Agency follow-up letter
- 2D. Agency comments

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This report with its attachments summarizes scoping methods, identifies issues and concerns, and identifies sources of comments. Comments were received from local residents, agency representatives, and organizations. This information will be used by the project team to develop alternatives for improvement to Huffman Road between Old Seward Highway and Lake Otis Parkway (see Figure 1).

The project team includes:

### **Contracting Agency**

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

- Miriam Tanaka, P.E.
- Donna Rice, P.E.

### **Prime Consultant**

DOWL Engineers

- Stewart G. Osgood, P.E., Project Manager
- Kurt R. Hulteen, P.E., Project Engineer
- Timothy C. Potter, Public Involvement

### **Specialty Subconsultants**

- Ellen Green, P.E., Green Engineering  
Environmental Document
- Jacques Boutet, P.E., The Boutet Company  
Traffic Capacity and Safety
- Edward Powell, P.E., CH2M Hill  
Noise and Wetlands

## **2.0 SCOPING METHODS**

The following scoping methods were used to inform the public and the state, federal, and local resource agencies about the project, its objectives, and the current status:

- Public Meetings
- Agency Meetings

- Informational mailings
- Newspaper advertisement
- Calls to Community Council Chairpersons
- Presentations at Community Council meetings
- A project hotline
- A project e-mail address
- A project website

## **2.1 Mailing List**

Two mailing lists have been developed; a General Public list and an Agency and Officials list. The General Public list includes those persons (Owners and Residents) who either own property or reside within 150 meters of the project right-of-way. The Agency and Officials list includes state, federal, and local resource agencies and officials who might have an interest or concern, environmental or otherwise, in the project. The Agency and Officials list included Assemblypersons Tremaine and Abney and Legislators Ward, Parnell, Green, and Bunde. The Agency and Public entities on these lists form the Potentially Affected Interests (PAIs).

Approximately 380 public scoping meeting announcements were-mailed to property owners and residents. Approximately 50 public scoping meeting announcements were-mailed to agencies and officials. The-mailing lists are included in Attachment 1.

## **2.2 Advertisements**

Advertising for the Public Scoping Meeting appeared in the Anchorage Daily News on August 19 and 24, 1999. A copy of the Public Meeting advertisements is included in Attachment 1.

## **2.3 Community Council**

DOWL Engineers (DOWL) contacted each of the community council chairpersons in the affected area (Huffman/O'Malley, Old Seward/Oceanview, and Bayshore/Klatt) and asked them to announce the Public Scoping Meeting date, time, and location at their monthly community council meetings. DOWL was invited to make a brief presentation to the Huffman/O'Malley Community Council at their August 19, 1999 meeting. We stated the project objectives and asked people to provide comments on the project area and attend the public meeting on August 26, 1999. We followed up with all of the community council chairpersons requesting additional comments and opportunities to present the project at their October 1999 meetings. All three councils added a Huffman Road project presentation to their October meeting agenda (refer to summaries in Attachment 1).

## **2.4 Project Hotline**

A project hotline was established to provide updates to the public on project status and to elicit comments on the project. The hotline number is 222-ROAD which is a central number

servicing all three Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) hillside projects. The caller is given a general introductory message and given the opportunity to comment on the Huffman Road, O'Malley Road, or Abbott Road projects.

The telephone number for the project hotline was included in the Public Scoping Meeting Notice published in the Anchorage Daily News. The project hotline is checked daily for messages. As of January 31, 2000, five telephone messages had been received. The telephone messages are transcribed daily and become part of the project record and are included in Attachment 1.

## **2.5 Project e-mail Address**

An e-mail address has been established ([huffman@dowl.com](mailto:huffman@dowl.com)) to provide an electronic avenue for making comments. The e-mail address was included in the Public Meeting announcement, posted on the website, and was announced at the Public Meeting and Community Council Meetings. The project e-mail address is checked daily for messages. As of January 1, 2000, six e-mail messages had been received. The e-mail messages are printed daily and become part of the project record. Copies are included in Attachment 1.

## **2.6 Project Website**

A website was established on September 24, 1999 ([www.hillsideroads.com](http://www.hillsideroads.com)) to allow electronic access to project information. The website was announced to the public in the Hillside Roads newsletter. The website, like the project hotline, provides a link to the O'Malley and Abbott Road projects, as well as to the ADOT&PF home page. The website includes a summary of the project scope, a listing of the project team, a description of the problems to be solved, a project schedule, a listing of upcoming meeting dates, photographs of the project area, and a listing of work products available for review.

## **2.7 Bowman Elementary School Take Home Notice**

The Public Scoping Meeting was held at the Bowman Elementary School on August 26, 1999 at the same time as the school picnic. As a result, several Bowman Elementary School parents and staff stopped by the scoping meeting during the picnic and provided input. Most of them identified the difficulties of left turning movements eastbound on Huffman Road at Gregory Road (the southern access to the school) and identified this intersection as an area to review closely. Attendance at this meeting was not as high as anticipated. To gain input from parents and staff at the school, it was decided to send a Comment Request Form home with each of the Bowman Elementary School students. The form provided a brief description of the project objectives, requested comment on conditions along Huffman Road, and was formatted to allow it to be-mailed back by folding and adding a stamp. The form was reviewed and approved by the Anchorage School District and distributed to the students on Thursday September 30, 1999. A copy of the Comment Request Form and comments received are included in Attachment 1.

## **3.0 PUBLIC SCOPING**

### **3.1 Public Scoping Meeting**

The Public Scoping Meeting was held at the Bowman Elementary School, 11700 Gregory Road, Anchorage, on Thursday, August 26, 1999. The meeting began at approximately 5:30 PM and concluded at approximately 8:00 PM. The Public Scoping Meeting was an open

house style format. A PowerPoint presentation was prepared and displayed on a movie screen in a scroll mode throughout the meeting. The PowerPoint presentation provided information on the project objectives and scope and the general schedule for the project, as well as introducing the key team members and their function on the project. A hard copy of the PowerPoint presentation was available to the public (see Attachment 1). Members of the project team were available for question/answer discussion and to document concerns of the community on this project. Aerial photographs and site photographs mounted on boards were available for review during the meeting. The aerial photos were displayed around the room where people could locate their properties and make notes regarding issues and concerns. Project comment sheets were available for written comments and project team members wrote down verbal comments received at the meeting. Sixteen individuals attended the Public Scoping Meeting which included four representatives from ADOT&PF, three from DOWL, one from CH2M Hill, and one from Green Engineering. See Attachment 1 for list of non-project team attendees.

### **3.2 Local Business Scoping Meeting**

The local Business Scoping Meeting was held at the Tanglewood Lakes Golf Club, 11701 Brayton Drive, Anchorage, on Thursday September 23, 1999. The meeting began at approximately 2:00 PM and concluded at approximately 4:00 PM. Business and commercial property owners (primarily located between the Old and New Seward Highway) were invited to this meeting. The meeting was an open house style format. A PowerPoint presentation, similar to the one presented at the August 26, 1999 meeting, was prepared and presented at 2:15 PM. The PowerPoint presentation provided information on the project objectives and scope, and the general schedule for the project, as well as introducing the key team members and their function on the project. A hard copy of the PowerPoint presentation was available as a handout (see Attachment 1). Members of the project team were available for question/answer discussion, and to document concerns. Aerial photographs and site photographs mounted on boards were available for review during the meeting. The aerial photos were spread out around the room where people could locate their business properties and make notes regarding issues and concerns. Project comment sheets were available for written comments and project team members wrote down verbal comments received at the meeting. Ten individuals attended the local Business Scoping Meeting which included one representative from ADOT&PF, two from DOWL, and one from The Boutet Company. See Attachment 1 for list of non-project team attendees.

## **4.0 DOCUMENTATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

### **4.1 Most Frequently Occurring Public Comments**

All written and verbal responses received to date have been reviewed and are included in Attachment 1. The comments that were made more than once are listed below in descending order of occurrence to isolate the issues of most concern to the respondents. This is not the official polling process and will not necessarily dictate the specific improvements to be undertaken.

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Approximate Occurrence</b>
Add sidewalks and paths along Huffman Road	15
Add a left turn on Huffman Road at Gregory Road	12

Expressed concerns about exiting Carrs southeast driveway onto Huffman Road	8
Identified concerns with “free right turn” coming off New Seward Highway southbound onto Huffman Road	5
Requested a landing on Gregory Road approach to Huffman (currently too steep)	4
Add a right-turn lane eastbound on Huffman Road at Lake Otis	4
Expand Huffman Road to 4 lanes	4
Extend Huffman Road to Hillside Drive	3
Reduce number of driveways in commercial area	2
Add a right-turn lane westbound on Huffman Road at Lake Otis	2

#### **4.2 Summary of Public Comments Sorted by Category**

This summary includes all comments received to date sorted into categories. This listing provides additional detail of public concerns.

##### **General**

- Signal at Huffman Park Drive helped.
- Huffman Road widening helped.
- Add a signal or turn lane at Silver Spruce.
- Change timing of traffic signal to improve platooning of traffic.
- Speed limit (45 mph) too fast; should be 25 mph.
- Trying to merge two lanes to one is difficult driving eastbound from New Seward Highway.
- Add a center turn lane east of New Seward Highway.
- Include landscaping in project.
- Traffic noise is a concern.
- Need new signing.
- School buses stop on Huffman Road. They back up traffic and create a dangerous condition for the students.
- There are too many driveways along Huffman Road within the commercial district. This creates many driveway and road crossings for pedestrians. The reduction of driveways should be considered to help with traffic movement, but primarily as a means of creating a safer environment for pedestrians.

- Keep luminaire poles shorter, more focused on roadway, and use a full-spectrum light rather than the orange lights (high-pressure sodium). Main concern seemed to be light pollution.
- The general comment was made that we need to be undergrounding utilities as part of these projects.
- It was requested that ADOT&PF look at extending Huffman Road all the way up the hill (to the east) as far as Hillside Drive and to the west to the west side of the railroad tracks.
- It was reinforced that we need to look at a 20-year planning horizon when projecting traffic counts and looking at development scenarios around Huffman. People asked that we make sure we consider major projects such as the new high school when developing our numbers.
- Look at the cut-through traffic that approaches Huffman from the north on Old Seward Highway that uses Industry Way and Huffman Park as bypass routes.
- One lady asked for bus pullouts along Huffman. She said there is currently no transit service on Huffman but they are trying to get it reinstated.

### **Gregory Road**

- High volume of traffic utilizing Gregory Road. It is not clear what drivers are supposed to do at this intersection. Are left turns illegal?
- Sight distance exiting Gregory Road onto Huffman Road is a concern.
- Provide a left-turn lane on Huffman Road at Gregory Road. Take expansion of Gregory Road into consideration.
- Gregory Road near the Huffman Road intersection is a steep and slippery cut.
- Buses have been routed to Lake Otis Parkway to avoid problems at Gregory Road.
- Gregory Road approach to Huffman Road is too steep. Add a landing.
- Many left turning vehicles at Gregory Road. Significant vehicle stacking problem.
- It is difficult to make a left turn onto Gregory Road at Huffman Road.
- Provide a left-turn lane into Gregory Road for access to school. Now, illegal left turns are frequently made from New Seward Highway to Gregory Road. Sometimes two or three cars are stacked there waiting to make left turn.
- Pedestrian overpass needed at Gregory Road.
- Re-route Gregory Road to the east to intersect Huffman Road opposite Meander Road.

### **Pedestrian Facilities**

- Pedestrian travel is difficult. More pedestrian facilities are needed (especially along commercial segment between Old Seward Highway and the New Seward Highway).
- Pedestrian facilities throughout the corridor need improvement.
- Need trails on both sides of Huffman Road.
- Tie Hillside Trails to South Anchorage Trails.
- Many kids go from Bowman Elementary to McDonald's and need better pedestrian facilities.
- Provide grade-separated pedestrian crossings—prefer underpass.
- Need more sidewalks for children travelling to school.
- Seen bicycle/vehicle accidents.

### **Carrs Parking Lot Driveway**

- There is always a line of cars trying to exit Carrs southern driveway to the east - this is a dangerous exit.
- Eliminate left turn option exiting the east driveway of Carrs
- East driveway at Carrs is not good. It is difficult to get out of, so people take chances. Also, merging to get into Carrs is sometimes difficult.
- Would be good to block off east driveway at Carrs. That would make all traffic go to the existing traffic signal.
- Make Carrs' east driveway a right in/right out only.
- Carrs driveway entrance is a mess.
- People traveling in the free right-turn lane, westbound near Carrs, that are not going to enter the Carrs driveway are often cut off by people exiting Carrs who assume all vehicles in the free right turn lane are planning to enter Carrs.
- People travelling out of town stop at Carrs because it is the last major grocery store heading south. Then they decide they also need fuel and try to cross all lanes of Huffman Road to get from the Carrs driveway to the Williams gas station on the south side of Huffman. This creates traffic problems.
- Exiting Williams Express and Carrs is difficult because the driveways are lined up across from each other.

### **New Seward Highway Intersections**

- Many accidents are observed at the traffic signal just east of New Seward Highway where vehicles do not yield to on-coming traffic.
- “Free” right turn onto Huffman Road westbound at New Seward Highway is a concern. (We have since learned that the free right turn onto Huffman has been removed (now a yield) and the striping has been removed from Huffman westbound under the bridge so that there is now two through lanes in this direction.)
- Open up extra lane under New Seward Highway westbound.
- Off ramp southbound on New Seward Highway at Huffman Road is steep and causes slipping accidents.
- Saw three car accidents at signal just east of New Seward Highway—one was smashed badly. Police were on scene. This was today, August 26, 1999.

### **Old Seward Highway Intersection**

- Old Seward Highway is steep as it approaches Huffman Road from the north and causes slipping vehicle accidents.
- Look at a westbound left turn lane into mall near Old Seward Highway.
- Don’t work on Old Seward Highway and Huffman Road reconstruction at the same time.

### **Lake Otis Intersection**

- Need right-turn lanes on east and west approach at Lake Otis Parkway and sidewalks on Huffman Road and Lake Otis Parkway.
- Need larger curb return radii at Lake Otis Parkway and Huffman Road to accommodate construction equipment and trucks with trailers. There was also some comment about lane widths on Lake Otis Parkway versus Huffman (11 feet versus 12 feet).

### **Construction**

- Concerned about access during construction.
- Limit construction duration.
- Don’t close down the commercial district completely during construction.
- Consider night construction to minimize traffic disruption.
- Traffic in the commercial area increases as school starts in the fall.

### **Lane Configuration**

- Need a three-lane section from Old Seward Highway to Lake Otis Parkway.
- Dual left creates problems at merge on Huffman eastbound, east of New Seward Highway.
- Need five lanes from Old Seward to New Seward Highway.

### **Industrial Road/Huffman Road Intersection**

- The driveway east of Industrial Road is a big left turn problem.
- Need a left-turn lane at Industrial Road and Huffman Road.

### **Huffman/O'Malley Community Council Survey**

The Huffman/O'Malley Community Council conducted a survey of their members (see Attachment 1) and found respondents in favor of:

- Adding sidewalks to the north and south side of road: 133 in favor, 32 opposed.
- Keeping "free right turn" at New Seward Highway off ramp to Huffman Road: 122 in favor, 20 opposed.
- Adding signage to New Seward Highway regarding lane usage at off ramp: 97 in favor, 31 opposed.

## **5.0 AGENCY SCOPING**

### **5.1 Agency Scoping Meeting**

The Agency Scoping Meeting was held Thursday August 26, 1999, at DOWL's office at 4040 B Street. A letter was sent to the agencies on the mailing list (see Attachment 2) inviting them to the scoping meeting. The announcement was sent to the agencies on August 4, 1999; 22 days prior to the meeting.

DOWL provided an overview of the project goals, methods, and objectives. The agency representatives were asked to identify potential concerns based on their knowledge of the project area. See Attachment 2 for list of attendees. A follow-up letter was sent on September 15, 1999 to all agency representatives invited to the meeting. The letter requested comments on issues important to them and requested the comments within several weeks. See Attachment 2 for a copy of follow-up letter.

## **6.0 DOCUMENTATION OF AGENCY COMMENTS**

This summary includes all comments received to date. This listing provides additional detail of agency concerns. Copies of the comments are included in Attachment 2.

## **6.1 Federal Agencies**

### **United States Fish and Wildlife Service**

- Try to avoid impacts to wetlands.
- If wetland impacts are unavoidable, be prepared to compensate for the impacts.

### **National Marine Fisheries Service**

- There are no threatened or endangered species within the project corridor.
- There are no anadromous fish in Furrow Creek.

### **United States Army Corps of Engineers**

- There are “B” and “C” wetlands near the project corridor. Do not rely on the existing wetland mapping. Field evaluation and delineation will be required to accurately identify existing wetland areas.
- Propose mitigation methods based on Anchorage Debit/Credit Methodology for any unavoidable wetland fill.
- Consider avoidance of impact to aquatic environment through reduction of vehicular demand, vehicle platooning, use of turn pockets in place of center turn lane, use of lower AASHTO design guidelines for lane widths, and elevating trails over wetlands.
- The project is within an area that falls under the jurisdiction of the Alaska Coastal Management Plan (ACMP).
- Project is not within the 100 or 500-year floodplain.

### **Environmental Protection Agency**

- Do not restrict flow of Furrow Creek and do not alter the hydraulics at the intakes where the main stream goes under Huffman.
- Maintain existing surface and subsurface drainage patterns.
- Incorporate measures such as swales to slow runoff and filter pollutants.
- Minimize work area.
- Provide short term and long term erosion control measures.

- Determine debits and credits for unavoidable wetland fills. Possible options to consider:
  - Provide a fee to Great Land Trust in lieu of mitigation for wetland fill.
  - Provide storm water retention and storage to reduce creek channel incising.
  - Expand the Furrow Creek Greenbelt. This measure could be combined with building storage capacity.
  - Daylight some piped sections of Furrow Creek.
- Coordinate with O'Malley project to restore north fork of Furrow Creek. Environmental Protection Agency to provide further direction and feedback.

## **6.2 State Agencies**

### **Department of Natural Resources, Office of History and Archaeology**

- The State Historic Preservation Office has reviewed the project, checked their inventory, and found that there are no known historic properties within the project area.

### **Department of Fish and Game**

- Wetlands are located within the project area.
- Avoid impact to wetlands.
- Treat storm water to maintain water quality in Furrow Creek.
- Fish and Game has not documented any fisheries resources in the section of Furrow Creek upstream of the New Seward Highway.

## **6.3 Local Agency**

### **Municipality of Anchorage, Department of Public Works**

- There is a safety concern about vehicles turning left on to Gregory Road from Huffman Road.
- The westbound Huffman Road lane at the end of the southbound off ramp from the New Seward Highway off ramp is an area of concern.
- There is a concern about the difficulty of exiting the east Carrs parking lot heading eastbound.

## **6.4 Observations during Agency Meeting**

The most likely wetlands impact will occur on the north side of Huffman Road across from Meander Road and on the south side of Huffman Road where Furrow Creek

enters the piped storm drain system. The impact, on the north side of Huffman Road near Meander Road, will vary depending on the type of pedestrian facility constructed. If a sidewalk is constructed adjacent to the road at the top of the back of curb, the impact will be minor. If a separated trail is constructed, the impacts will likely be greater.

Facilities sensitive to disturbance from noise need to be identified during the noise analysis.

Merging of the NEPA and Section 404 process will be considered during the permitting process if an environmental assessment is prepared.

## **7.0 SUMMARY**

Using the information obtained through the Public and Agency Scoping process, the DOWL team believes that we have a good understanding of the issues surrounding the project and the concerns and desires of the public. We will utilize this information in compilation of subsequent project documents.