

**NEPA Environmental Assessment
South Wasilla Track Realignment
ARRC MP 154-158**

ADDENDUM – November 2005

This Addendum presents changes and corrections to the Environmental Assessment (EA) dated August 2005 for the South Wasilla Track Realignment project. The changes were identified by either agency or public comments on the EA during the public comment period. Each change or correction states the section, page, and paragraph in the EA that is being updated. In each case, words being added are underlined and words being deleted are denoted by ~~strikeout~~.

Section 3.0

Section 3.3.1, Page 3-8, 2nd paragraph

Regarding the City's goal to relocate the ARRC tracks out of downtown, the Proposed Action roughly follows the corridor ~~of in the City's preferred study option (Option E) (City of Wasilla 2002)~~ on the east end of the City's corridor, and would not preclude the eventual completion of that alignment west of this project's study area. The project is consistent with the ongoing planning efforts of the City and Borough regarding their studied realignment.

Section 3.3.5, Page 3-11, 4th paragraph

Several road improvement and rehabilitation projects in the Wasilla area are called for in recent DOT&PF planning projects (DOT&PF 2003 and DOT&PF 2002). The extension of Seward Meridian Parkway to Old Matanuska Road was completed this past summer. Pending the acquisition of project funding, upcoming ADOT&PF projects in the area include:

- Parks Highway rehabilitation from Crusey Street to Lucas Street in 2006
- Crusey Street 5-laned in 2006-2007
- Seward Meridian Parkway 4-laned in 2007-2008
- Trunk Road 4-laned in 2007-2008

~~The Mat Su Borough Long Range Transportation Plan (1997) discusses the upgrading of Old Matanuska Road as a necessary enhancement to be completed in the next decade. These future road needs are anticipated because travel demand is expected to exceed roadway capacity. The extension of Seward Meridian Parkway to Old Matanuska Road is one project anticipated to be built in the near future.~~

Section 3.3.5, Page 3-11, 5th paragraph

~~As mentioned previously, †~~The City of Wasilla has previously studied realigning the railroad through the study area (City of Wasilla 2002). The City of Wasilla passed a resolution in 2003 to include the 2002 Railroad Reconnaissance Study into the amended City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan. (While the study is not in an adopted plan, the City's preferred corridor roughly follows The Proposed Action alignment roughly follows one of the routes – “option E” – in the adopted study.

Section 3.3.5, Page 3-11, 6th paragraph

Impacts: The Proposed Action would have a beneficial impact on local road networks. The grade separation of Fairview Loop Road and the grade separated crossing to the City's sewage treatment plant

would enhance safety, with the decreased risk of train and motor vehicle collisions and reduction of curvature, which leads to a decreased risk of derailment. Realigning Old Matanuska Road is consistent with adopted plans and would improve safety by reducing roadway curvature. The road design should be coordinated with a DOT&PF project to extend Seward Meridian Parkway to Old Matanuska Road to ensure a compatible design and minimize potential conflicts during construction. Impacts to the traveling public could include temporary road closures and delays during construction (see more in Section 3.4).

Section 3.3.5, Page 3-11, 7th paragraph

~~The Proposed Action alignment is consistent with the City's preferred study option.~~ The grade separated crossings providing access to the gravel pits would be designed to have the right clearances and dimensions to accommodate a two-lane local road for future residential road access. The existing track between MP 154 and MP 156.6 would remain in place as a siding for temporary use. Alternatives 2 and 3 would have transportation impacts similar to the Proposed Action.

Section 3.5.1, Page 3-19, 1st bullet

- Parks Highway and local Wasilla Area Road Improvements. Several nearby Parks Highway improvements are identified in the 2004-06 approved Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Improvements, such as turn lanes and signal upgrades, are called for at the Palmer Wasilla Highway Parks Highway intersection of Seward Meridian Parkway and Palmer Wasilla Highway (STIP ID #2481). The 2004-06 approved STIP also calls for the following improvements just west of the immediate project area: rehabilitation and resurfacing of Wasilla-Fishhook Road (STIP ID #2503); construction of an intermodal passenger terminal and parking area near the Wasilla Airport (STIP ID #12739); extension of Church Road south from the Parks Highway to the Wasilla Airport, which includes possible signalized intersection with the Parks Highway and a grade separated crossing of the ARRC tracks (STIP ID #2461). Within the direct project area, DOT&PF ~~plans to extend the~~ Seward Meridian Parkway to Old Matanuska Road this past summer; this is not in the STIP, but is considered a reasonably foreseeable project.

Section 3.5.1, Page 3-19, 3rd bullet

- Alternative Parks Highway Corridor. Discussion for an alternative Parks Highway (and railroad) corridor to bypass Wasilla has been ongoing for several decades. Planners have ~~examined conceptualized~~ alternative highway and railroad corridor routes between south of the existing Parks Highway and further south towards Point MacKenzie. The Alternative Parks Highway Corridor is currently in the update of the Wasilla Comprehensive Plan as well as the update of the Mat-Su Borough Long Range Transportation Plan. Federal funding and NEPA analysis would be needed for ~~this these~~ these planning efforts to progress. ~~These past planning efforts for realigning both the railroad and the Parks Highway outside of downtown Wasilla have occurred for some time but are large, expensive projects that are not currently in any long range (20 year) plans and are not anticipated to occur within the 10 year timeframe.~~ In September 2005, the ADOT&PF, ARRC, City of Wasilla, and the Mat-Su Borough signed a Memorandum of Understanding to become partners in pursuing an environmental impact statement that would investigate alternative alignments for a multimodal corridor (rail and highway) around downtown Wasilla for through-traffic. The South Wasilla Track Realignment is not related to efforts to realign the rail outside the middle of downtown Wasilla; it is a project with separate utility and addresses immediate needs with regard to safety and operational efficiency. The South Wasilla Track Realignment does not preclude any of the options that would be under consideration for rail/highway realignment around Wasilla.

Section 6.0

Section 6.0, page 6-1, Add the following reference to the list:

City of Wasilla. 2003. Wasilla Planning Commission Resolution Serial No. 03-25. *A Resolution of the Wasilla Planning Commission Recommending the Inclusion of the January 24, 2002 Railroad Reconnaissance Study into the amended 1999 Wasilla Comprehensive Plan.* As adopted December 9, 2003.