HATCHER PASS RECREATIONAL AREA ACCESS, TRAILS AND TRANSIT FACILITIES

Environmental Impact Statement FAQs

About the project area

Where is this project?
Hatcher Pass is located approximately 12 miles north-east of Palmer, about 14 miles east of Wasilla, and 55 miles north of Anchorage, Alaska, in the heart of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The topography is best described as a glacially carved alpine valley.

Who owns the land in the project area?
The Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) owns over 3,000 acres where the main developments and improvements will be located.

Environmental Impact Statement

What is the purpose of the Project and the Environmental Impact Statement?
The Matanuska-Susitna Borough has received federal funds to improve access to the area by developing roads, parking areas, trails and transit facilities.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies providing project funding to evaluate the possible environmental impacts due to their decisions and the improvements. Since the Federal Transit Authority is providing funds for transportation improvements; they must comply with NEPA by completing an environmental review of this project**.**

What are the steps that must be taken before we see the transit facilities?
An Environmental Impact Statement must be completed and a Record of Decision (ROD) issued by the federal agency.

What does Environmental Impact Statement include?
The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has funding available for construction of road improvements, parking, trail access, and transit facilities for phase 1 of this project. As part of the National Environmental Policy Act, the FTA must conduct an environmental study to look at the impacts of any improvements that will be funded by the FTA.

In addition, as part of the federally-funded environmental study, there is a section called the cumulative impact analysis. This study will determine the possible impacts of "reasonably foreseeable" MSB planned projects in the area for Phase 1: for the Alpine area this is one lift, one lodge, downhill trails, and parking; for the Nordic area this is trails and access. Other phases

that are part of the MSB's larger ski area development project (phases II-IV) will not be covered in the environmental study as the FTA does not consider these later phases to be "reasonably foreseeable".

Funding

Where is the funding coming from?
The Borough is receiving federal funding from the Federal Transit Administration to prepare the Environmental Impact Statement and for development of the road improvements, parking areas, transit facilities for MASCOT service, and access trails to the ski areas. Funding sources have not yet been identified for the remainder of Phase I. The Borough is seeking additional funding sources for the other components of the project, such as developing the trail network, ski lifts and chalets.

Public Participation/More Information

How can I stay informed?
Visit the hatcherpass.com website and click on the EIS tab to review studies, fact sheets, presentations and other materials as the project progresses. You can also sign up for e-mail updates about the project. Public meetings will also be advertised in the local paper and listed on the project website.

How do I share my opinion with the project team regarding the project?
The official scoping period for this project ended on January 16, 2009, however, the project team will continue to accept and consider comments throughout the duration of the project. In addition, there will be additional comment periods on alternatives in the spring of 2009 and on the complete environmental document and its recommendations in the fall 2010. Comments can be submitted through the project website at www.hatcherpass.com, via e-mail at hatcherpass@dowl.com or by calling Michela Spitz at DOWL HKM 907-746-7600.

What types of comments are most useful?
We want to hear about issues that are important to you. Your comments will be used to help shape the development and outcome of the project. Each comment received is reviewed by project team members and becomes part of the project's official public record. Your comment is not a ballot and is not used as a means to measure the degree of support for the project. The most useful types of comments may include the following:

- Alternative approaches and ideas for accomplishing project goals.
- Information and issues that need to be considered.
- Information on how you use the area and how a project might affect that use.
- Identify incomplete or inaccurate information.
- Opinions and discussion regarding a particular element or alternative.