

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

CENTRAL REGION DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
PRELIMINARY DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTAL SECTION

Project File Copy
55012

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September 6, 2007

Project: West Dowling Road
Connection
Project No.: STP-0532(5)/55012

Re: Section 6(f) Conversion of Use
And Compensation Commitment

Kristy Gray
Alaska Department of Natural Resources-DPOR
550 W, 7th Avenue, Suite 1380
Anchorage, AK 99501-3561

Dear Ms. Gray:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is developing an environmental document for the West Dowling Road Connection Project. This project will extend and reconstruct Dowling Road between Raspberry Road and the Old Seward Highway (see Figure 1). This project would improve roadway connectivity and accessibility in the West Dowling Road area of the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA). The project area is bounded by Old Seward Highway to Minnesota Drive between Dowling Road and 68th Avenue. The purpose of the West Dowling Road Connection Project is to provide a continuous east-west arterial roadway connection between International Airport Road and Dimond Boulevard that connects Old Seward Highway to Minnesota Drive.

As part of this project, the bridge over Campbell Creek will be replaced. The new bridge will accommodate 4 travel lanes, a sidewalk, and a separated multi-use trail. The clearance under the bridge will also be increased so the Campbell Creek Trail can be re-aligned to go under the bridge. The existing Dowling Road right-of-way is not wide enough to accommodate these improvements. Consequently, the project is seeking to acquire additional right-of-way from the Campbell Creek Greenbelt (see Figure 2) The project will require approximately 0.08 acres of Lynwood Park and 0.13 acres of Foxtree Park land to accomplish the necessary improvements (see Figure 3). This acreage includes the parkland used by the roadway, the bridge footprint and overhang.

To compensate for a total loss of approximately 0.21 acres of park land, DOT&PF proposes to develop a trailhead adjacent to the Campbell Creek Greenbelt (see Figure 4). The trailhead site is approximately 0.49 acres and is currently used as residential land. A new local road will be created to provide access to the trailhead. The pedestrian improvements located on or under the bridge as well as the local road are not included as potential 6(f) mitigation. We believe that the

0.49 acres of land we propose to transfer to the MOA are of equal or greater value than the 0.21 acres of parkland the project will require.

This land transfer will constitute a conversion of Park property under Section 6(f)(3) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. We realize that the actual conversion and replacement of land cannot be approved by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) or the National Park Services (NPS) until after property appraisals have been completed and it has been demonstrated that the replacement parcel(s) provide equal or greater monetary value and recreational usefulness as the property taken. In regards to Section 6(f) land conversion and replacement, DOT&PF is proposing to follow a similar agreement to that enacted on the Seward Highway MP 97-99 project.

To allow our environmental document approval process to continue during the appraisal process, we propose the following. DOT&PF agrees to provide an additional replacement parcel of land to compensate for any difference between the aforementioned two parcels, if the appraisal indicates the converted property is more valuable than the property added to the Campbell Creek Greenbelt. The replacement property will be selected in coordination with MOA.

Your concurrence with this plan is requested. If you concur, we will document our commitment to the MOA in the environmental document and Programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation. If you require any further information please call Brian Elliot, Environmental Team Leader at 269-0539.

Sincerely,

Brian Elliott For Jerry O. Ruehle

Jerry O. Ruehle
Environmental Coordinator
Central Region

Enclosures: Figure 1 Proposed Action
Figure 2 Existing Recreational Resources
Figure 3 Impacts to Section 4(f) Resources
Figure 4 Proposed 6(f) Mitigation

Cc w/o enclosures: Miriam McCulloch, PE, DOT&PF Project Manager
Jeff Dillon, MOA Parks & Recreation