

# **Noble Street Reconstruction**

## **Agency Scoping Attachment A**

### **Socioeconomic/Right-of-Way**

The project does not propose any realignments or new roads that could affect community cohesion. Pedestrian and bicyclist safety would improve with the reconstruction of Noble Street and its sidewalks.

Existing destinations accessed by Noble Street include government offices, hotels, two health care centers/clinics, and numerous businesses and residences. According to the 2000 Census, the Fairbanks Downtown area has a population of 1,540 residents, of whom approximately 17 percent are Native, 23 percent are elderly, and 19.5 percent are below the poverty level.

Access for pedestrians and disabled persons would improve. The project would add sidewalks and curb ramps where they are missing and bring the corridor into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

According to the Fairbanks Downtown Transportation Study (August 2000), "The couplet (Lacey/Noble Streets) offers an excellent opportunity to improve circulation from hotels and residential areas to downtown shops and riverfront activities. Improvement of pedestrian amenities would facilitate movement along these corridors for residents and visitors and could entice more pedestrian travel." The accessibility improvements of this project are likely to improve the economics of downtown.

Land acquisition is not expected to affect available parking or building access for any location within the project area. Many businesses have on-site parking, but parking is also available on most side streets. Business parking is accessed either from Noble Street or side streets. No residential or business relocations would be required. Temporary construction easements would be needed; permanent easements may be needed for power pole relocation; and DOT&PF may also have to acquire some small areas of land in localized spots to provide pedestrian access meeting ADA standards.

### **Local Land Uses and Transportation Plan**

The area surrounding the project corridor is zoned general commercial and central business district. A variety of uses from residential to commercial are permitted within these zones, although residences on the ground floor are not permitted in the central business district. Griffin Park is located to the north of the project area, and Myrtle Thomas Park is located east of Noble Street at 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The proposed project is included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) and listed as a FY2011 construction project in the Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System Long-Range Transportation Plan.

## Historic Properties

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) website and the latest published version of the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) were consulted for the presence or absence of historic properties in or near the project area.

The online version of the NRHP was reviewed on August 29, 2007. No properties are currently listed within the project area. The Wickersham House, built in 1904, is a NRHP site that was originally located within the project area and later relocated to Pioneer Park; the Wickersham Monument at the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Noble Street marks the original historic site but is not considered to have historic significance in its own right at this time.

Northern Land Use Research (NLUR) has been retained to survey the historical and archeological potential of the project area. As part of Phase I of this research, NLUR has identified two sites within the project area that are listed in the AHRS database and twelve other sites that were constructed over 45 years ago. During the Phase II investigation, NLUR will review these structures, as well as a potential historic district that overlaps the study area, in more detail.

## Wetlands

The project area is in a highly developed urban setting with no known wetlands.

## Fish & Wildlife

The downtown area is highly developed, with minimal wildlife beyond birds and an occasional moose passing through. There are no known golden or bald eagle nests in the project area.

The project area does not contain any waters that support resident or anadromous fish, nor does it contain areas of essential fish habitat (EFH). The nearest river that does support fish is the Chena River, which is directly north of the project area.

## Threatened and Endangered Species (T&E)

### *ESA-Listed Species*

A search of the USFWS Threatened and Endangered Species System (TESS) database on August 28, 2007, indicates that the project area is not within the identified range of any species currently listed as Threatened, Endangered, Candidate, or Proposed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

### *State-Listed Endangered Species and Species of Special Concern*

According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game website on August 29, 2007, there are no State-listed endangered species located in the project area. The project area is within the range of six State-listed Species of Special Concern, but habitat for these species is not found in the project area.

### *Designated Species of Tribal or Local Importance*

The Tribal and local governments in the Fairbanks area have not designated any species of Tribal or local importance.

### Water Body Involvement

The project area does not contain navigable water bodies under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the U.S. Coast Guard. The closest water body is the Chena River about 450 feet north of the project area.

### Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP)

The project area is not located within a coastal zone or coastal district boundary.

### Hazardous Materials

Because of the relatively long history of commercial and public use of the Noble Street area, there are numerous records of environmental contamination within the proposed project boundaries.

The following table shows Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUST) and Contaminated Sites (CS) that are directly adjacent to or within the proposed project area and may be encountered during construction and affect construction cost. This information comes from a 2005 Environmental Data Resources Inc. DataMap™ report and from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) CS and LUST Databases. During the preparation of the environmental document, an updated EDR report will be acquired and ADEC site files will be reviewed to identify possible changes.

Site Name	Location
Ron's Service and Towing (Reckey #1991310013602)	101 Noble Street
Rabinowitz Courthouse (Reckey #1993310121601)	416 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue
Rabinowitz Courthouse (Former Gold Exchange PIC Bldg.) (Reckey #1998310028901)	500 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue
City of Fairbanks Garage, Block 39 (Reckey #2001310118101)	Between Noble and Lacey Streets and between 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenues
Westmark Fairbanks Hotel (Reckey #1991310121301)	813 Noble Street
Sunshine Travel (Former Texaco Station) (Reckey #1994310029901)	1200 Noble Street
Wilbur Bros. Mechanical (Reckey #1999310029401)	1241 Noble Street
Tesoro – Northstore #105 (Big Al's Pizza) (Reckey #1989310029203)	1246 Noble Street
Carr's Foodland Heating Oil Tanks (Reckey #1991310126001)	513 12 <sup>th</sup> Avenue
Gaffney Road Area-Wide (Reckey #1997310931001)	Gaffney Road between Noble and Turner Streets

### **Air Quality (Conformity)**

Due to topographical and meteorological factors, the Fairbanks area is subject to strong and persistent temperature inversions during the winter. This inversion creates a stagnant air pool, resulting in an accumulation of high concentrations of pollutants for the duration of the inversion. Three pollutants are of primary importance: carbon monoxide (CO), particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), and water vapor.

The Fairbanks area is currently designated as an attainment area for all the criteria pollutants for which the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) apply. Although Fairbanks has a prior history of violations of the NAAQS for carbon monoxide (CO), none have occurred since 1999. Monitoring of PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations is a current priority.

An air quality analysis of the project area, conducted by Sierra Research, Inc. in April 2006, indicates that the project would not result in any violations of the NAAQS and therefore conforms to Clean Air Act requirements for transportation projects.

All intersections are expected to operate at Level of Service (LOS) C or better.

### **Floodplains (23 CFR Part 650m, Subpart A)**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Rate Insurance Map (Community-Panel No. 025009 0182G) indicates the project area is within the 500-year floodplain, but outside of the 100-year floodplain.

### **Noise (23 CFR Part 772)**

The FHWA criteria for noise abatement are a function of land use (23 CFR 772, *Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise*, April 2007). The two land use categories present within the project area are Categories B and C. Category B includes lands such as picnic areas, playgrounds, parks, residences, motels, hotels, schools, churches, libraries, and hospitals. Category C lands are developed lands, properties, or activities not included in Category B. The project area is generally considered commercially developed, but a few sensitive receptors such as residences and two parks are nearby; therefore, FHWA land use Category B applies. The hourly equivalent sound level allowed for Category B lands is 67 decibels (dBA). For Category C lands, the allowed noise level is 72 dBA.

The existing traffic conditions include a 30 mph posted speed limit; traffic composed mostly of passenger vehicles and 2 percent large 2- and 3-axle trucks; and average daily traffic (ADT) volume of 7,100 on Noble Street (2004). As part of the proposed project, the speed limit would be reduced to 25 mph. This lowered traffic speed is expected to result in minor or no lowering of tire noise.

No change of traffic mix or vehicle capacity or increase in the number of through traffic lanes is anticipated. The project would not result in a highway on a new location or in significant changes in horizontal or vertical alignment.

## Water Quality

### *Drinking Water Sources*

Drinking water in the project area comes from piped water systems operated by Utility Services of Alaska, Inc.

### *Impaired Water Bodies*

There are no impaired water bodies within the project area. The nearest impaired water body is the Chena River, approximately 450 feet north of the project area, which is listed as a Category 5 water body in *Alaska's Final 2006 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report* (ADEC, 2006). The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) has not yet been determined for the Chena River, but this is scheduled for completion in 2007 (ADEC website, September 6, 2007). Storm drains in the project area currently discharge to the Chena River.

### *NPDES and MS4*

The EPA's Storm Water Phase II Final Rule extended coverage of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program to cover certain small municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) located in urbanized areas. The EPA issued Storm Water Management NPDES Permit No. AKS-053406 to the City of Fairbanks in conjunction with the City of North Pole, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and DOT&PF Northern Region for the Fairbanks urbanized area, which includes the project area. The storm drain system is and will continue to be owned and maintained by the City. As a co-permittee on the MS4 permit, the City will likely provide specific design requirements to assure compliance with the associated plans and ordinances.

The proposed project may increase the volume of storm water collected within the project area due to more efficient collection and transportation of the storm water. In addition, the storm drain system in Noble Street may be sized to allow increased volume capacity to accommodate the City's long term drainage area plans.

## Permits and Authorizations

- ADEC Storm Water Plan Review
- City of Fairbanks construction permits such as excavation, sidewalk, driveway, and utility Right of Way (ROW) permits
- NPDES General Permit for construction activities

## Construction

The proposed project is scheduled for construction in 2011. Impacts associated with normal construction activities (e.g., storm water runoff, dust, noise, traffic detours) are generally short in duration, but can be of high intensity and can result in substantial impacts if mitigation measures are not taken. Appropriate practices to mitigate construction impacts will be incorporated into the contract specifications. The contractor would comply with the City of Fairbanks Code of Ordinance, Article II Offenses Against Public Peace and Order, Sec. 46-42 Disturbing the Peace. Additionally, the contractor would be required to comply with the EPA NPDES General Permit for Construction Activity, including developing and implementing a SWPPP.

### **Section 4(f) / 6(f)**

The only Section 4(f) property in the project area is Myrtle Thomas Park at the southeast corner of Noble Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. No take is anticipated with this property, though there may be some limited construction at the intersection. Improvements that complement the proposed streetscape and park, such as new fencing, signs, or planters, may be considered on the park property.

No Section 6(f) properties are located within the project area.