

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

NORTHERN REGION, PRECONSTRUCTION

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July 3, 2007

RE: Nome Roads AK066
Project SDP-0002(185)/62067
AGENCY SCOPING REQUEST

To Whom It May Concern:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is seeking comments and information on a proposal to rehabilitate selected roads within the City of Nome, Alaska (Figure 1). This will be accomplished by restoring the structural integrity of the embankment, improving drainage, and improving dust control. The level of the environmental document expected is a Categorical Exclusion.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Nome Roads project is to improve drainage of city streets and enhance health due to dusty roads. The roads under consideration for rehabilitation have settled and/or deteriorated, and as a result hampers safety and produce a lot of dust.

The roads are gravel, and in Nome's dry climate (annual average precipitation of 18 inches), a lot of dust is produced. The City of Nome has listed the following reasons for dust reduction:

- Dust has been identified as a public health risk due to the inhalation of fine particles that irritate the lungs.
- Dust is a nuisance to the community, adversely affecting quality of life issues, negatively impacting businesses by affecting critical electrical and communication equipment.

Project Background

Nome is located on the Seward Peninsula in northwest Alaska, about 522 miles west of Fairbanks. The community is approximately 120 miles south of the Arctic Circle (Section 26, Township 11S, Range 34W, Kateel River Meridian). Approximately 3,500 people live in Nome, of whom about 60% are Inupiat Eskimo.

The roads in need of restoration, drainage, and dust control are shown in Figure 2. They are listed below in order of priority for restoration and drainage improvements as funds allow:

- East K Street from Front Street to East 7th Avenue
- West 5th Avenue from Bering Street to Steadman Street
- East 5th Avenue from Steadman Street to East N Street
- East G Street from East 3rd Avenue to East 7th Avenue
- East H Street from East 3rd Avenue to the alley between East 6th and East 7th Avenue
- East 3rd Avenue from Bering Street to its east terminus
- East 1st Avenue from Steadman to its east terminus
- N Street from East Front Street to East 7th Ave

Adjacent land use is mostly residential, with some general use at the west end.

East K Street and 5th Avenue take priority. These streets are major north-south and east-west traffic corridors and also provide access to the elementary school and local hospital. They were previously paved, but have degraded to essentially a gravel surface due to poor foundation soils, pavement failure, and pavement removal for replacement of water/sewer lines.

The other selected streets, listed above, need surfacing and dust control improvements.

Project Description

East K Street and 5th Avenue:

Restoration will be accomplished by rehabilitating the subgrade and road surface, which may include subexcavation and backfilling over the settled utility installation areas (Figure 3). The drainage system will include ditches and/or storm drains as is determined most suitable considering construction cost and any ROW or easement requirements. Dust control improvements will include the application of a dust palliative or surface treatment which may include pavement where the ground is suitable and as funds allow.

East G, East H, N Streets and East 1st and East 3rd Avenues:

As funds permit, dust control measures will be implemented on these other streets. This may require resurfacing as well as the application of a dust palliative.

No material source will be offered under the project contract. The project would require contractor-furnished material from available commercial sources in the area.

Meeting Opportunities

Members of the project team will be available to discuss the project at a Public Meeting on July 11, 2007 from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM in the City Hall. The meeting is open to the public, and agency representatives are encouraged to participate.

An agency scoping meeting has not been scheduled. If you feel a meeting is necessary to discuss the potential effects of the road improvements, you may request one. A meeting could be arranged in Fairbanks with the option for agency representatives to teleconference. Please advise as soon as possible if you would like to request an agency scoping meeting so that we can make the arrangements.

Preliminary Research Results

Preliminary research results on environmental resources in the project area are described in Appendix A. A project website has been set up at www.pdcprojects.info to provide project information and allow you to comment.

In addition to identifying any concerns and/or issues your agency might have with the proposed project, the links on the project website request agency-specific information. The website will take you to a list of questions specific to your agency purview and allow you to provide comments via email.

Your comments will assist us in evaluating possible impacts related to the project. To ensure that all factors are considered in the Categorical Exclusion, your comments are requested by August 4th. If you have questions regarding the project, you may contact Nina Valadez, Environmental Impact Analyst, by telephone at (907) 451-5106 or send email to nina.valadez@alaska.gov.

Thank you for your assistance with this project.

Sincerely,



Bruce Campbell
Environmental Coordinator

Attachments: Figure 1 – Location and Vicinity Map
Figure 2 – Project Area
Figure 3 – Typical Section
Appendix A

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