



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Transportation and  
Public Facilities

SOUTHCOST REGION  
Design & Engineering Services  
Preconstruction

P.O. Box 112506  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-2506  
Main: (907) 465-1799  
Fax: (907) 465-2030  
TTY-TDD: (800) 770-8973  
[dot.state.ak.us](http://dot.state.ak.us)

In Reply Refer To:

Juneau (Mendenhall) Loop Road -Valley Boulevard Intersection Safety Improvement HSIP  
Project No. SFHWY00403/0966030  
Consultation Initiation

February 12, 2025

Forrest Courtney, City Planner, HRAC Liaison  
City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ)  
Historic Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC)  
155 Heritage Way, Juneau, AK 99801  
[forrest.courtney@juneau.gov](mailto:forrest.courtney@juneau.gov)

Dear CBJ Historic Resources Advisory Committee,

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) has assumed the responsibilities of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) under 23 U.S.C. 327, and is proposing to improve the intersection of Mendenhall Loop Road with Valley Boulevard and Mendenhall Boulevard through construction of a roundabout under the proposed Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Project in Juneau, Alaska. The proposed project is located in Sections 19 and 20, Township 40 South, Range 66 East, Copper River Meridian on United States Geological Survey (USGS) Quadrangle Map Juneau B-2, and is shown on the attached project figures.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by DOT&PF pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated April 13, 2023, and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.

For purposes of the National Historic Preservation Act, the DOT&PF, acting as a Federal agency, is initiating this consultation with you to assist us in identifying historic properties that may be affected by the proposed project. Consultation is being conducted in accordance with the 2017 *First Amended Programmatic Agreement...for the Federal-Aid Highway Program in Alaska*.

#### **Project Description**

The project proposes to construct a single lane roundabout at the juncture of Mendenhall Loop Road with Mendenhall Boulevard and Valley Boulevard in place of the currently existing four-way intersection. Project activities will include:

- Replacing the current single lane four-way intersection with a one-lane roundabout
- Reconstructing curbs and sidewalks within the roundabout facility footprint
- Reconstructing and relocating existing bus pullouts and bus stop shelters
- Expanding the right-of-way (ROW) to accommodate the new intersection footprint
- Installing new lights around the roundabout footprint
- Installing new signage around the intersection
- Widening road segments that approach the roundabout
- Adding splitter islands near the roundabout
- Adjusting underlying hydraulic systems/storm drains to fit the new footprint
- Adjusting driveway approaches to match reconstructed roadway
- Possible relocation of electrical utilities within the project area

ROW acquisition is anticipated along the two lots adjacent to Mendenhall Loop Road on the north side of the intersection.

### **Preliminary Area of Potential Effects**

The preliminary area of potential effects (APE) includes a direct APE covering the project footprint, all areas of ground disturbance, equipment access, staging areas, and proposed areas of ROW expansion throughout the intersection of Mendenhall Loop Road, Mendenhall Boulevard, and Valley Road (Figure 2). This includes construction activities within a portion of the Valley Road and Diane Road intersection, and the Valley Road and Kiowa Drive intersection which are being reconstructed to accommodate roundabout access. The preliminary APE also includes an indirect APE covering all first-tier properties where the project may have visual impacts through the installation of a new roundabout and associated traffic features at the intersection. The APE will be finalized after comments are received from your organization and other consulting parties.

### **Identification Efforts**

DOT&PF contracted with DOWL for cultural resource services to identify historic properties within the preliminary APE. Identification efforts included a desktop review by DOWL of known sites and previous cultural resource surveys. The desktop review included all modules and files held at the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology (OHA) accessed through the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) Portal.

Two AHRS sites are located within a 1-mile radius of the preliminary APE and one AHRS site lies within the preliminary APE. The AHRS site within the preliminary APE is the Carl G. Weimer & Sharilee A. Weimer Site (JUN-01266), a one-story, Ranch style wood frame, residential building constructed in 1964 and located at 4101 Mendenhall Boulevard. DOT&PF determined this site not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurred in 2017. Since 2017 this building has also been demolished and this site is now a vacant lot. The two other AHRS sites have not yet been evaluated for the NRHP but are located over 1,000-ft from the APE and are described in Table 1 below.

Table 1. AHRS sites within 1.0 mi of preliminary APE

<b>AHRS Number</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Description and Distance from Preliminary APE</b>	<b>Resource Type</b>	<b>NRHP Status</b>

JUN-00131	Thunder Mountain Sawmill	Juneau gold miner site including remnants of a cabin and sawmill machinery, located approximately 1,375 ft (419 m) east of preliminary APE.	Site	NDE*
JUN-0668	Historic Cabin Remains	Remains of an old collapsed cabin with milled lumber including rotted 6 x 6 lumber, cedar clapboards, and round nails, located approximately 3,400 ft (1,036 m) west of the preliminary APE.	Site	NDE*
JUN-01266	Carl G. Weimer & Sharilee A. Weimer Residence	A former one-story, wood frame, residential building. This site is located within Preliminary APE.	Building	Not Eligible

\* NDE: No Determination of Eligibility

During the desktop review DOWL identified a total of seven cultural resource investigations that have been conducted in the project location (Table 2). These investigations include five letter reports/desktop reviews and two cultural resource surveys.

Table 2. Previous cultural resource investigations near the location of the preliminary APE

Year	Investigation	Document Title	Reference
2003	Letter Report	RE: Purchase And Development Of 8 Lots for a Multi-Family Housing, Juneau	Kazama 2003
2004	Letter Report	RE: Chinook Apartments, Juneau	Hunter 2004
2004	Letter Report	RE: Dobson Communication Telecommunication Tower, Juneau	Wright 2004
2006	Letter Report	RE: Rehabilitation Of Single-Family Home At 8606 Hayes Way In Juneau	Lee 2006
2006	Letter Report	RE: Rehabilitation Of 9236 Emily, 9950 Stephen Richards #135, 9950 Stephen Richards #131, 3057 Wood Duck Avenue, 5860 North Street, And 8924 Sleepy Court	Tombleson 2006
2010	Cultural Resource Survey	Juneau Stephen Richards Safety and Capacity Improvements Cultural Resource Survey	Kell 2011
2017	Cultural Resource Survey	Juneau Mendenhall Loop Road Capacity Improvement Project*	Kell 2017

\* Located in the preliminary APE

One cultural resource survey had been completed within the preliminary APE for the proposed project. In May 2017, DOT&PF conducted a cultural resources inventory for the Juneau-Mendenhall Loop Road Capacity Improvement Project (No. 67622). A literature review, pedestrian survey, and subsurface testing were conducted. Two shovel test pits were excavated and were negative for cultural material. Eight soil probes placed across the project area yielded only fill context soils, with no intact soils. DOT&PF Cultural Resources Specialist Michael Kell evaluated the Carl G. Weimer & Sharilee A. Weimer Residence (JUN-01266) for NRHP eligibility. DOT&PF determined JUN-

01266 not eligible for listing in the NRHP on July 10, 2017 and provided supplemental information on July 27, 2017. SHPO concurred that this site is not eligible on August 10, 2017.

### **Additional Identification Efforts**

Review of properties within the indirect APE for the proposed project showed 26 buildings that are older than 45 years of age<sup>1</sup> are present within the preliminary APE boundaries (Figure 3). DOWL staff that meet Secretary of Interior Professional Qualifications in Architectural History and Archaeology conducted a cultural resources survey of these properties during the 2024 field season to evaluate if any of these properties are eligible for listing on the NRHP. DOT&PF will incorporate the results of this survey in our upcoming finding of effect for the proposed project.

### **Consultation**

Initiation of consultation letters are being sent to the following parties:

- State Historic Preservation Officer
- Douglas Indian Association
- Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska
- Goldbelt, Incorporated
- Sealaska Corporation
- Sealaska Heritage Institute
- City and Borough of Juneau, Mayor's Office
- City and Borough of Juneau, Historic Resources Advisory Committee
- Gastineau Channel Historical Society

If you have questions or comments related to this proposed project, I can be reached by telephone at (907) 799-4845, or by e-mail at [amy.russell@alaska.gov](mailto:amy.russell@alaska.gov).

Your timely response will greatly assist us in incorporating your concerns into project development. For that purpose, we request that you respond within thirty days of your receipt of this correspondence.

Sincerely,



Amy J.K. Russell  
DOT&PF, Southcoast Region Professionally Qualified Individual (PQI)-History

Enclosures:

Figure 1: Project Location & Vicinity

Figure 2: Preliminary APE

Figure 3: Architectural Survey Map

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<sup>1</sup> Although a property needs to be at least 50 years old to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (unless it has exceptional significance under Criterion Consideration G), DOT&PF policy is to evaluate buildings 45 years old or older due to the time required to complete projects, and the desire to ensure that cultural resources are adequately protected.

Electronic cc w/ enclosures:

Benjamin Storey, DOT&PF Southcoast Region, Regional Environmental Manager

Nathan Purves, P.E., DOT&PF Southcoast Region, Project Manager

Connor Brown, DOT&PF Southcoast Region, Environmental Impact Analyst

Holly McKinney, DOT&PF Statewide, Cultural Resources Manager (FHWA)

## References

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Kell, Michael. 2011. "Juneau Stephen Richards Safety and Capacity Improvements Cultural Resource Survey: Township 40S, Range 66E USGS JUN B-2 Copper River Meridian State Project 68740 Federal Project NA." Juneau, AK.

Kell, Michael. 2017. "Cultural Resources Inventory for the Juneau - Mendenhall Loop Rd Capacity Improvement Project." Report on file at the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology, Anchorage Office. Juneau, Alaska.

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Tombleson, Marla. 2006. "Letter Re Rehabilitation of 9236 Emily, 9950 Stephen Richards #135, 9950 Stephen Richards #131, 3057 Wood Duck Avenue, 5860 North Street, and 8924 Sleepy Court." Anchorage, AK.

Wright, Eddie. 2004. "Letter Report Re: Dobson Communication Telecommunication Tower, Juneau." Anchorage, AK.