



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

## Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

NORTHERN REGION  
Design and Engineering Services

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In Reply Refer To:  
Nome Center Creek Road Rehabilitation  
State/Federal Project Numbers: NFHWY00397/0135003  
No Historic Properties Adversely Affected

March 25, 2021

Ken Hughes, Chair  
Alaska Certified Local Government  
Nome Planning Commission  
P.O. Box 281  
Nome, AK 99762

Dear Mr. Hughes:

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 rehabilitate Center Creek Road in Nome, Alaska. The proposed project area is legally described in Table 1 and shown on Figure 1.

Table 1. Project location

| Township | Range | Section(s)     | USGS Quad Map1:63,360 | Meridian     |
|----------|-------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 011S     | 034W  | 11, 14, 23, 26 | Nome C-1              | Kateel River |

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 November 3, 2017, and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.

Consultation for this project is being conducted in accordance with the 2017 *First Amended Programmatic Agreement... for the Federal-Aid Highway Program in Alaska*. The DOT&PF, acting as a Federal agency, finds no adverse effect on historic properties by the proposed project

pursuant to 36 CFR 800.5(b), implementing regulations of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This submission provides documentation in support of this finding, as required at 36 CFR 800.11(e).

### **Project Description**

The DOT&PF is proposing to rehabilitate Center Creek Road between Seppala Drive and Nome-Teller Road (see Figures 1-3). Project activities include:

- Realignment of Center Creek Road at the FAA/Doyle Road Intersection.
- Raise the road grade where needed to minimize aufeis<sup>1</sup> and snow drifting.
- Rehabilitate and pave the roadway surface.
- Repair roadway embankment in areas of distress and settlement.
- Install new signage.
- Improve drainage by installing and replacing culverts as needed (temporary diversions and/or half-width construction may be necessary for the larger diameter culverts).
- Relocate buried utilities (power and communication) where necessary.
- Additional ROW will be acquired at the southern end of the project to accommodate the new alignment (see Figure 2- bound in green).

### **Area of Potential Affect (APE)**

The Project APE includes the entire Right-of-Way (ROW) of Seppala Drive (25 feet either side of the center line) between Center Creek Road and Cemetery Road; the entire ROW of Cemetery Road (25 feet either side of the centerline) to its intersection with Center Creek Road and; the entire ROW of Center Creek Road (25 feet each side of the center line) to its intersection with the Nome-Teller Road to the north. Please note that the Project APE is reduced in size as compared to the Preliminary APE. As the project details developed, it was determined that ROW acquisition was only necessary in the southern portion of the APE between Cemetery Road and Center Creek Road (see Figure 2). Therefore, with the exception of the southern portion of the project, the APE does not include first tier properties. Material sources for this project will be contractor-furnished; there are several commercial material sources available in Nome. The staging area is expected to be in the existing ROW along Center Creek Road. Raising of the road grade was found to not have potential visual effects to cultural resources and is reflected in the boundary of the APE.

### **Identification Efforts**

A search of the Office of History and Archaeology's (OHA) Alaska Heritage Resources Survey-IBS (AHRs) database on April 6, 2020 and on March 18, 2021 indicated that there is one (1) AHRs site (NOM-00141, Seward Peninsula Railroad) within the Project APE. There is an additional AHRs site (NOM-00176, Nome Cemetery) that is outside the Project APE, but is included here because it is a cemetery and directly adjacent to the Project APE. The following sites are briefly described below.

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<sup>1</sup> Aufeis is ice that forms in layers from success flows of ground water or on top rivers and streams during freezing temperatures. This ice builds up around and causes damage to the roads through ice damming, drainage blocking and flooding at spring breakup.

*NOM-00141 Seward Peninsula Railroad-* The railway was constructed in 1906. The railroad operated regularly until 1910. From 1911-1921 it was owned, leased and used by many different private entities. The Territory of Alaska purchased it in 1921 and it was a public tramway maintained by the Alaska Road Commission until the Nome-Taylor Road was built in the late 1950's. Most of the rails have been removed and salvaged from along the 70 mile route or destroyed by road construction and maintenance along or adjacent to the railway's location. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (Mack 2014) determined that the segment of the railroad within the boundary of the Native Allotment, which is several miles north of the Project APE, retains enough integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association to maintain significance under criteria A and B; SHPO concurred with that finding on 05/16/2014.

*NOM-00176 Nome Cemetery-* This AHRS polygon is a community cemetery with wooden and stone grave markers and some unmarked graves. Originally, portions of the cemetery were occupied by the remains of members of community groups such as: The American Legion, The Fraternal Order of Eagles, The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Alaska, The Loyal Order of Moose, and The Odd Fellows and the Pioneers of Alaska. As of 2018, the cemetery is under the stewardship of the City of Nome and has a caretaker assigned to the grounds. The cemetery was determined to be not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP, and SHPO concurred with that determination on 03/22/2012.

#### **Additional Identification Efforts**

A search of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Mining, Lands and Water Revised Statute (RS) 2477 database of public right-of-ways did not show any associated resources within the Project APE.

A review of the DOT&PF Northern Region Cultural Resources Library revealed that southern portion of the APE has had multiple cultural resource reconnaissance surveys (Carlson et al., 2011; Mobley and Mobley, 2009; Meinhardt et al., 2018). The presumed location of the Seward Peninsula Railroad Bed within Nome and areas to the north of the Project APE were surveyed by Buzzell and Gibson (1986) and Gibson (1984); the northern end of the APE was included in a survey by McMahan (1995); and Orth (1967) provided some additional information. The DOT&PF Archaeologist-Cultural Resource Specialist (PQI) believes that this is an adequate level of investigation for this project.

**Finding of Effect** *NOM-00141 Seward Peninsula Railroad-* This linear AHRS feature, intersects with the Project APE along the northern third of Center Creek Road, for approximately one mile. The railroad begins within the ROW on the western side of Center Creek Road, just north of the intersection with Foot Trail. The railroad continues north within the western ROW for approximately 0.39 miles, and then it crosses Center Creek Road and follows to the north in the eastern ROW for approximately 0.23 miles. The railroad crosses Center Creek Road again and then roughly follows the same alignment as the road for approximately 0.38 miles until it intersects the Nome-Teller Road and extends outside of the Project APE. The Seward Peninsula Railroad

DOE was based on intact portions of the railway on a Native Allotment located several miles away from the Project APE (see Mack 2014). Although the railroad as a whole, which is approximately 70 miles in length, was found to retain enough integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association to maintain significance under Criteria A and B; the portion within the Project APE lacks integrity. The railroad is not visible on satellite imagery within the Project APE. The exact origin point and where the railway ran through the project APE is speculative, since no sign of the railroad has been identified within the road ROW. It is likely that the rail bed is beneath the road and has been removed from the landscape by the construction and maintenance of the road. The ties and rails were likely removed at some point after the railway was abandoned. Activities associated with the construction and maintenance of Center Creek Road have affected the integrity of this approximately 1 mile-long segment of the railroad. Therefore, the DOT&PF Northern Region PQI finds that there are **no historic properties adversely affected** by the proposed Nome Center Creek Road Rehabilitation Project as presented.

### Consultation Efforts

Comments were received regarding the April 10, 2020 consultation initiation letter from the SHPO office on April 30, 2020 (File No. 3131-1R FHWA/2020-00468). The SHPO indicated that they had no objections to the preliminary APE, however they suggested that it may be necessary to pursue further identification efforts, which may require more than a desktop review of existing literature. They also suggested that the City of Nome's Planning Commission be added to the Project's consulting parties list. No other comments were received from any of the other consulting parties. In addition to the Alaska SHPO the following identified potentially interested parties are being sent findings letters regarding this project: Bering Straits Native Corporation; City of Nome; City of Nome Planning Commission; King Island Native Corporation; King Island Native Community; Nome Eskimo Community; Nome Museum and Library Commission; and Sitnasuak Native Corporation

If you wish to comment on this finding, I can be reached at the address above, by telephone at 907-451-2227, or by e-mail at [holly.mckinney@alaska.gov](mailto:holly.mckinney@alaska.gov).

Sincerely,



Holly J. McKinney  
Cultural Resource Specialist -Archaeologist (PQI)  
State of Alaska DOT&PF, Northern Region

Enclosures:

- Figure 1. Location, Vicinity and APE Map
- Figure 2. Realignment Section Map.
- Figure 3. Example of Road Rehabilitation and Realignment Cross-Sections.

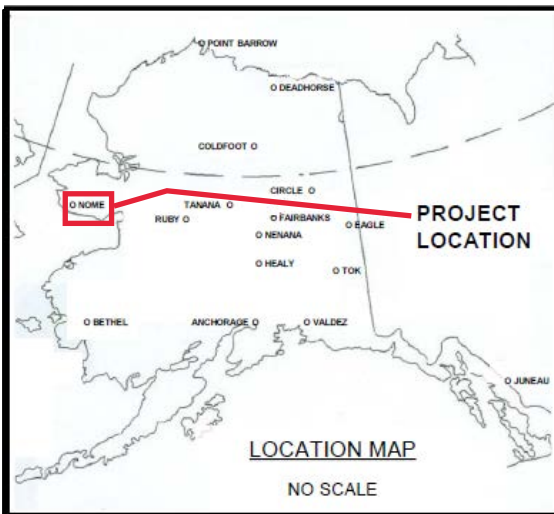
References:

- 1986 Buzzell, R.G. and D. Gibson: Alaska Archaeological Survey Nome-Taylor Road: Cultural Resources Survey along Mile 21 to Mile 68, Seward Peninsula, Alaska. Report prepared by State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys.
- 2011 Carlson, E.S. et al.: Cultural Resources Survey of Nome Airport Runway Safety Area Expansion, Nome, Alaska. Report prepared by Northern Land Use Research for DOT&PF project number Z614160000.
- 1984 Gibson, D.E.: Cultural Resources Survey of the Nome-Taylor Road, Mile 13 to 21. Report prepared by the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys.
- 2014 Mack, S. Section 106 Review for the Irene Merchant Alaska Native Allotment (F-19496) and Determination of Eligibility for AHRs Sites 49NOM-016, 49NOM-075, and 49NOM-141.
- 1995 McMahan, J.D.: Cultural Resources Survey of a Proposed Road Corridor: Nome-Teller Highway MP 6 to Glacier Creek. Report prepared for DOT&PF project number Z659840000. Office of History and Archaeology Report Number 49.
- 2018 Meinhardt, R.L., A. Ramirez, J. Lambin, and M. Daniels: 2017 Historic Structures Survey (HSSR) for the Nome Seppala Drive Rehabilitation Project, Located in Nome, Alaska. Report prepared by True North Sustainable Development Solutions, LLC for DOT&PF Project number Z620030000.
- 2010 Mobley C.M and C.O. Mobley: Nome Snake River Bridge Replacement. Report prepared by Mobley and Associates for DOT&PF Project number Z767450000.
- 1967 Orth, D.J.: Dictionary of Alaska Place Names. Geological Professional Paper No. 567, U.S. Geological Survey, Washington D.C.

Electronic cc w/ enclosures:

Melissa Jensen, DOT&PF Northern Region, Environmental Impact Analyst  
Brett Nelson, DOT&PF Northern Region, Regional Environmental Manager  
Christopher Johnston P.E., DOT&PF Northern Region, Project Manager  
Kathy Price, DOT&PF, Statewide Cultural Resources Manager





### Legend

--- = Preliminary Area of Potential Effect (APE)

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0 0.5 1 2 Miles

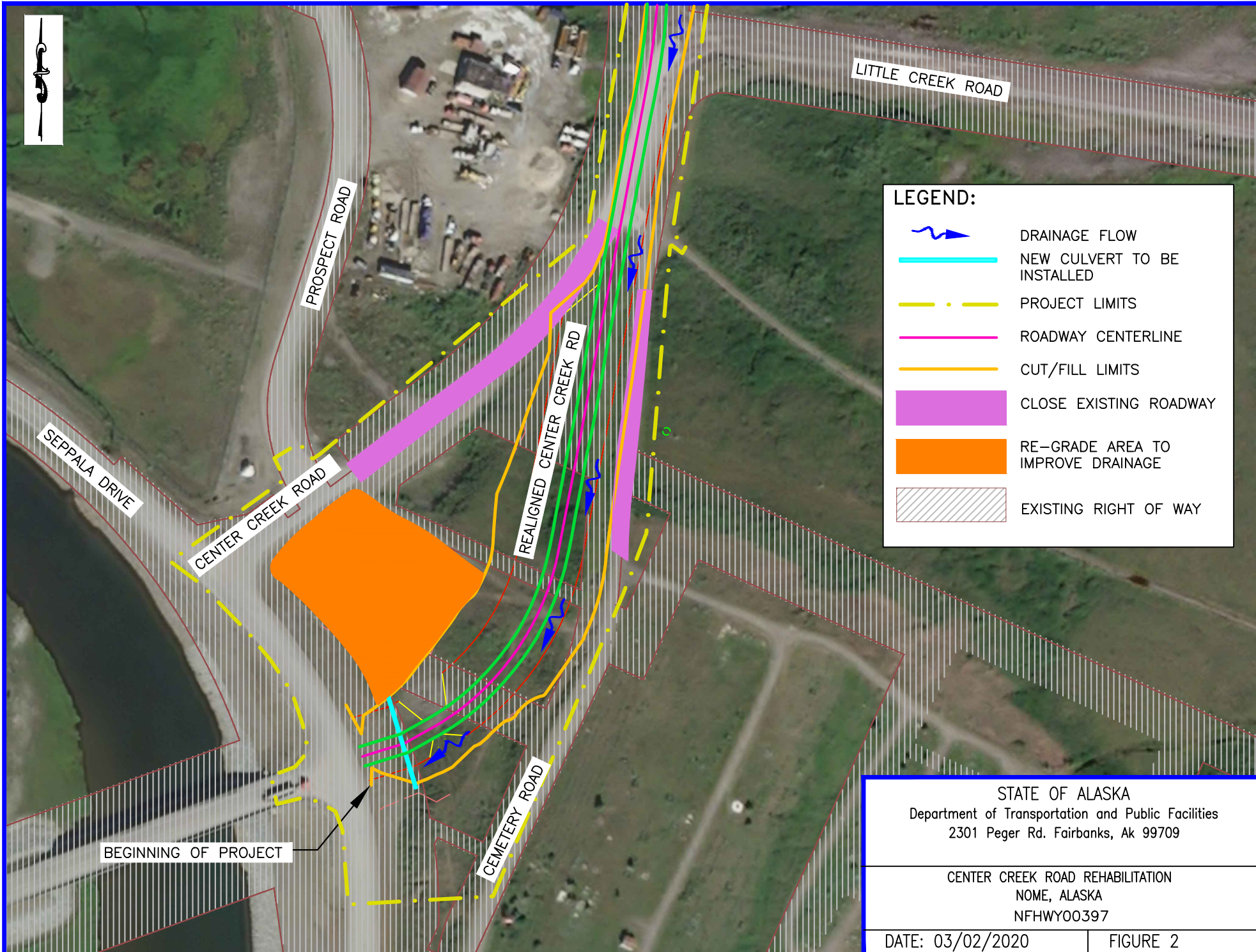
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2301 Peger Road Fairbanks, AK 99709

State/Federal Project Number(s): NFWY00397/Pending  
Center Creek Road Rehabilitation  
T.011S, R.034W, Secs.11, 14, 23 & 26  
USGS: Nome C-1, Kateel River Meridian

DATE: April 2020

FIGURE 1





**LEGEND:**

- DRAINAGE FLOW
- NEW CULVERT TO BE INSTALLED
- PROJECT LIMITS
- ROADWAY CENTERLINE
- CUT/FILL LIMITS
- CLOSE EXISTING ROADWAY
- RE-GRADE AREA TO IMPROVE DRAINAGE
- EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY

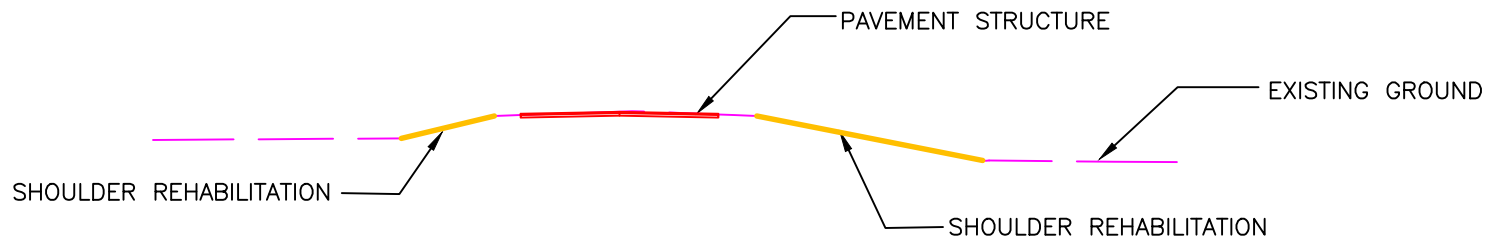
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CENTER CREEK ROAD REHABILITATION  
NOME, ALASKA  
NFHWY00397

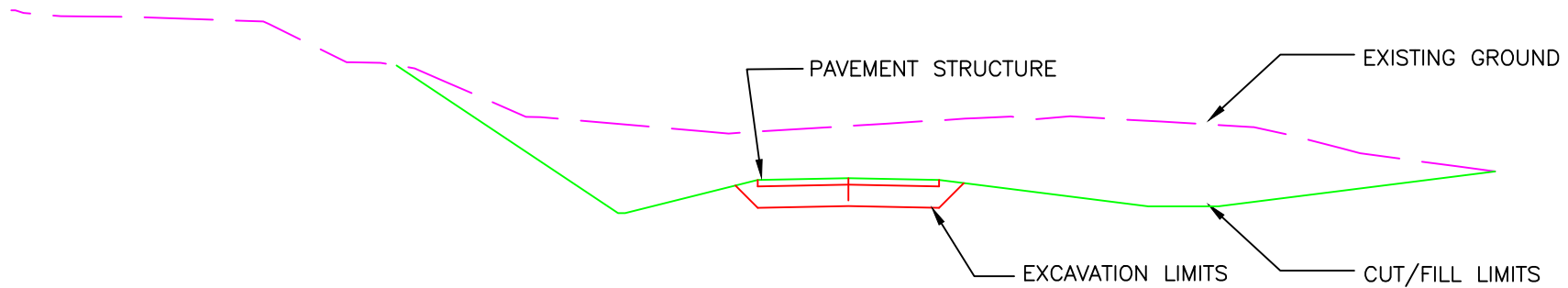
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DATE: 03/02/2020 | FIGURE 2



## REHABILITATION

12+75 - 136+79



## REALIGNMENT

0+00 - 12+75

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CENTER CREEK ROAD REHABILITATION  
NOME, ALASKA  
NFHWY00397

DATE: 03/18/2020

FIGURE 3