

Department of Transportation  
and Public Facilities



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
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In Reply Refer To:  
4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Signal and Lighting Upgrades  
ADOT&PF Project #CFHWY00555  
Consultation Initiation  
November 28, 2023

Silvia Villamedes, President  
Downtown Community Council  
645 G Street  
Anchorage, Alaska 99504  
[downtown.c.council@gmail.com](mailto:downtown.c.council@gmail.com)

Dear Ms. Villamedes:

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 modernize the signal and lighting hardware on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Cordova and Ingra Streets in Anchorage, Alaska under the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Signal and Lighting Upgrades Project, #CFHWY00555. The project is in downtown Anchorage, Alaska (Figure 1). It is located within Sections 17 and 18 of Township 13 North, Range 3 West of the Seward Meridian and within the USGS Anchorage A-8 NW, Alaska topographic quadrangle. Enclosed are location and vicinity maps and the *Desktop Review and Workplan for the AMATS: 4th Avenue Signal and Lighting Upgrades Design Service State/Federal Project Number CFHWY00555 Located in Anchorage, Alaska*. 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*.

*"Keep Alaska Moving through service and infrastructure."*

### **Project Description**

The project will install pedestrian and roadway lighting along the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor between Cordova and Ingra Streets, and modernize the signal and lighting hardware at the Gambell Street and Ingra Street intersections. Where necessary, sidewalk and curb ramps will be replaced. Project activities will include signing, striping, drainage, paving, pedestrian amenities consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), utility relocation, and installation of roadside hardware.

### **Project Study Area**

The proposed direct area of potential effects (APE) is identified as the area that will be directly impacted by construction activities, including the areas of the right-of-way (ROW) that will be subject to the actual construction work being proposed. The proposed direct APE measures approximately 0.44 miles of public ROW, stretching east to west along 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue from its intersection with Cordova Street extending just past its intersection with Ingra Street. To accommodate for the upgrades themselves and any areas of construction, staging, or possible pedestrian or vehicle traffic impacts during construction, the stretch along 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue also extends northward and/or southward at the various traffic intersections. At Denali Street, the direct APE stretches south one-half block; it stretches north one-half block at Hyder Street. At Eagle, Gambell, and Ingra Streets, the direct APE stretches north one-half block and south one-half block (Figure 2).

The indirect, or visual APE is identified as the area that could potentially be affected visually by the signal and lighting upgrades. The APE for visual effects is defined as the geographic area in which an undertaking has the potential to introduce visual elements that diminish or alter the setting, including the landscape, where the setting is a defining and/or qualifying characteristic of a historic property that makes it eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The proposed indirect APE includes all the tax parcels that abut the direct APE (Figure 3). It encompasses an outward extension of the project's direct footprint to accommodate for any potential visual changes in the project's vicinity.

### **Identification to Date**

To date, identification efforts include a desktop review of previous cultural resource investigations in the project location. OHA's Integrated Business Suite (IBS) portal, National Parks Service's NRHP database, other online archives, and libraries were searched to identify any relevant cultural resources investigations or reports within and around the proposed APEs. The Municipality of Anchorage's Property Tax Information database revealed which properties' construction predates 1978, the 45-year cut-off age for NRHP evaluation. The Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRs) module of the IBS database was searched to identify previously documented sites, buildings, structures, and/or districts located within the proposed APEs.

Background research and current AHRs data indicates that there are no recorded cultural resources within the project's proposed direct APE, and eight previously recorded cultural resources recorded within or adjacent to the proposed indirect APE (Figure 4). Of the eight AHRs sites within the proposed indirect APE, one resource has a determination of eligibility. ANC-01422, McKinley Tower Apartments, was determined eligible for inclusion in the NRHP under Criteria A and C in 2004 and was listed in 2008; the other seven AHRs sites have no determinations of eligibility (Table 1).

*Table 1. Cultural Resources within APE.*

AHRs #	Site Name	Resource Type	DOE Status	NRHP Status
<b>ANC-00311</b>	Gus Seaburg House	Building	None	None
<b>ANC-00312</b>	Hans Elvig House	Building	None	None

AHRS #	Site Name	Resource Type	DOE Status	NRHP Status
ANC-00334	430 East 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Building	None	None
ANC-00355	Old Suomi Hall	Building	None	None
ANC-00406	334 East 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Building	None	None
ANC-01422	McKinley Tower Apartments	Building	Eligible – 2004	Listed – 2008
ANC-02250	730 East 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, The Raven Bar	Building	None	None
ANC-02255	704 East 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Building	None	None

\*Data synthesized from AHRS Database (OHA 2023).

The 1964 Good Friday Earthquake split 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, displacing and shifting the earth horizontally and vertically within the project area. It forced the reconstruction of much of downtown Anchorage and the roadbed of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue itself, efforts which took more than a decade to complete. Thus, downtown Anchorage, and therefore 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, has not been subject to much previous cultural resources investigations, as much of the built environment within the proposed APEs has only come of age for consideration within the past decade or so. As such, previous cultural resources investigations were searched in an expanded search area that considers an expansion of four city blocks from the proposed APEs (Figure 5). From this search, the IBS database identified 12 previous cultural resources investigations in the project area of downtown Anchorage (Table 2). Within the expanded search area, the AHRS identified 75 previously identified historic resources, three of which have been determined eligible for listing to the NRHP, six of which have been determined not eligible for NRHP listing, and two which are listed on the NRHP. The attached *Desktop Review and Workplan for the AMATS: 4th Avenue Signal and Lighting Upgrades Design Service State/Federal Project Number CFHWY00555 Located in Anchorage, Alaska* summarizes these findings.

Table 2. Previous Cultural Resources Investigations within 4-block expanded search area.

Record ID	Report Title	Source Author(s)	Date	Prepared For
16117972	Pioneer School House National Register of Historic Places Nomination	Michael E. Carberry	1979	MOA Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission
N/A	Patterns of the Past: An Inventory of Anchorage’s Historic Resources	Michael Carberry and Donna Lane	1986	MOA
16112465	Anchorage Cemetery National Register of Historic Places Nomination	John P. Bagoy	1993	MOA
3772	Alaska Native Medical Center National Register of Historic Places Nomination	Paula M. Poncho	1997	Indian Health Service, Alaska Area Native Health Service

Record ID	Report Title	Source Author(s)	Date	Prepared For
<b>16068544</b>	Determination of Eligibility for Houses on Lots 1, 7, and 8 of Block 47, Anchorage Original Townsite	Rogan Faith, Amanda Welsh, and Michael Yarborough	2002; revised 2003	Herrera Environmental Consultants
<b>4484</b>	Glenn Highway Rehabilitation Project: Gambell Street to McCarrey Street	Edrie Vinson	2005	DOT&PF
<b>4487</b>	Documentation for Determinations of Eligibility for Merrill Field (ANC-01946), The East Runway (ANC-01936), and the North-South Runway (ANC-01937)	Rogan Faith, Michael R. Yarborough, and Catherine Pendleton	2005	HDR Alaska, Inc.
<b>7856</b>	An Evaluation of Buildings in the Lower Yard, Anchorage, Alaska	Rogan Faith and Historic Walrussia	2006	Alaska Area Native Health Service/Indian Health Service
<b>15917422</b>	McKinley Tower Apartments National Register of Historic Places Nomination	William G. MacRostie	2008	EGAE, LLC and Marlow Manor Downtown, LLC
	Alaska Railroad Ship Creek Fencing Project	Linda Gehrke	2010	DOT&PF
<b>N/A</b>	Cultural Resources Assessment Survey of the Proposed Telecommunications Site Verizon Wireless AK Ranger Station and Determination of Eligibility for the Cordova Building (ANC-03742), located at 555 Cordova Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501	Robert L. Meinhardt and Amy Ramirez	2012	TriLeaf Environmental and Property Consultants
<b>16268575</b>	Cultural Resources Literature Survey for Inlet Towers Telecommunications Tower, Anchorage, Alaska	DOWL HKM	2015	Alaska Wireless Network, LLC

*\*Data synthesized from AHRs Database (OHA 2023).*

### **Proposed Identification Efforts**

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) contracted Kinney Engineering, LLC, to provide services for the 4th Avenue Signal and Lighting Project Number CFHWY00555 (Project). Kinney Engineering, LLC, subcontracted True North Sustainable Development Solution, LLC, (TNSDS) to

provide cultural resource management support for Section 106 compliance of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, and its implementing regulations found in 36 CFR §800.

In the attached *Desktop Review and Workplan for the AMATS: 4th Avenue Signal and Lighting Upgrades Design Service State/Federal Project Number CFHWY00555 Located in Anchorage, Alaska*, TNSDS proposes further identification efforts beyond the desktop review and outlines their proposed methods, protocols, analysis, and reporting.

Following the completion of permitting, TNSDS conducted a Phase I Cultural Resources Survey, which included both architectural and archaeological survey. Because the proposed APE is located within a previously disturbed and built environment, archaeological survey included visual inspection of the ground surface and an intensive pedestrian survey of the proposed APEs to identify any exposed ground. The architectural survey encompassed both the direct and indirect APEs and included a windshield survey for all properties within the proposed APEs. Properties over 45 years of age underwent an intensive survey and TNSDS applied the National Register Criteria for Evaluation and evaluated properties for historic significance and integrity. Following survey, TNSDS conducted further archival and in-depth historic research, particularly for properties with the potential to be eligible for listing on the NRHP. Further research included investigations of newspaper archives, historical photographs, and the Alaska State Library system. Given 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue's entire reconstruction in the 1960s, the street itself may warrant even further research and consideration.

TNSDS is developing a comprehensive final cultural resources survey report that describes in detail the results of the architectural survey and archaeological survey, including any ground disturbing activities, within the proposed APE. Background research from the attached desktop review and workplan will be included again in the final report. The final report will contain a project description, background research, prehistoric and historic context statements, and results of both the architectural and archaeological survey. The daily survey reports will be included in the appendices, along with all field forms utilized during survey. The report is currently in the review phase with DOT&PF.

### **Consulting Parties**

Initiation letters have been sent to the following consulting parties: the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO); Municipality of Anchorage; Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI); Cook Inlet Tribal Council; Chickaloon Moose Creek Native Association, Inc (CMCNA); Eklutna, Inc.; Native Village of Eklutna; Chickaloon Village Traditional Council (CVTC). Anchorage Community Development Authority; Anchorage Downtown Partnership; Downtown Community Council; Alaska Historical Society; Cook Inlet Historical Society; Library and Archives; Alaska Association for Historic Preservation; EGAE, LLC; McKinley Tower Apartments; JBG Memorial, LLC; Office of Children's Services, Regional Offices; Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters; Carpenters Local 1281; Fourth & Gambell, LLC; Alpha Quest Inc.; and Fourth Avenue Boutique.

If you have questions or comments related to this proposed project, I can be reached at the address above, by telephone at 907-269-0527, or by e-mail at [mark.rollins@alaska.gov](mailto:mark.rollins@alaska.gov).

We request your input on our proposal so that we can incorporate your concerns into project development. Your timely response will greatly assist our compliance efforts and the preparation of any required environmental documentation. For that purpose, we request that you respond within thirty days of your receipt of this correspondence.

Sincerely,

*Mark W. Rollins*

Mark W. Rollins, MA  
Cultural Resources Specialist – Archaeologist (PQI), DOT&PF CR

Enclosures:

- Figure 1: Location Map
- Figure 2: Proposed Direct APE
- Figure 3: Proposed Direct and Indirect APE
- Figure 4: AHRs Sites within Proposed Indirect APE
- Figure 5: AHRs Sites within Expanded Search Area

Office of History and Archaeology Coversheet

*Desktop Review and Workplan for the AMATS: 4th Avenue Signal and Lighting Upgrades Design  
Service State/Federal Project Number CFHWY00555 Located in Anchorage, Alaska*

Electronic cc w/ enclosures:

- Julia Hanson, P.E., DOT&PF Central Region, Project Manager
- Brian Elliot, DOT&PF Central Region, Regional Environmental Manager
- Matt Dietrick DOT&PF Statewide NEPA Manager
- Molly Proue, DOT&PF Statewide Cultural Resource Manager
- Roy Dahlstrom, DOT&PF Central Region, Environmental Analyst