



South Mack Drive Extension

City of Wasilla Project No. 54987

Public Involvement Plan and Scoping Plan

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Document Version:	0.0
Date:	9/2/10 12:45 PM



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1. General Information

1.1. Project Scope

South Mack Drive is an existing two-lane road west of Wasilla. It has an at-grade crossing of the Alaska Railroad and continues two-thirds of a mile to the Curtis D. Menard Memorial Sports Center. The South Mack Drive Extension project will extend the road 1.5 miles south to Knik-Goose Bay (KGB) Road.

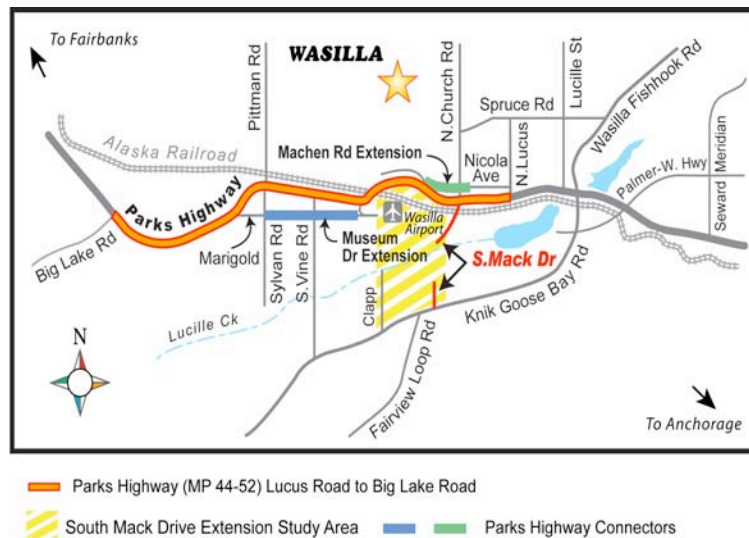
Currently, KGB Road and South Vine Road provide the most direct routes for travel between the Knik-Fairview area and Wasilla, and points north. The extension of South Mack Drive will improve connectivity for residents in the Knik-Fairview area, and facilitate a future realignment with Fairview Loop to improve its intersection with KGB Road.

The project includes environmental, geotechnical, surveying, traffic and safety, and other studies to help determine the preferred alignment to extend South Mack Drive to KGB Road. The studies will result in a preliminary engineering report.

The extension of South Mack Drive as a major collector road from the sports center to KGB Road is recommended in the City of Wasilla Official Streets & Highways Plan FY 2005-2025, the City of Wasilla Transportation Plan and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's 2007 Long-Range Transportation Plan.

The State of Alaska awarded \$4 million in grants to the City of Wasilla to fund environmental clearances, project design, right-of-way acquisitions, and a portion of the project construction. Consulting with the public when a project is publically funded is important. Public involvement measures include consultation with tribal entities and outreach to low-income and Limited English Proficiency populations.

Project Location Map





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1.2. Project Team

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David Lundin, P.E., Project Manager, (907) 746-5230, dlundin@hdlalaska.com
Katrina Moss, Environmental Manager, kmoss@hdlalaska.com

- **McClintock Land Associates (Surveying and Mapping)**
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Eagle River, AK 99577
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- **Kinney Engineering, LLC (Traffic and Safety)**
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Anchorage, AK 99515
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- **Northern Land Use Research, Inc. (Cultural Resource Assessment)**
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- **Hoefler Consulting Group (Environmental Site Assessment)**
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- **EDC, Inc. (Illumination)**



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- **ABR Inc.** (Wildlife & Fish Habitat Assessment)
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- **Brooks & Associates** (Public Involvement)
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Anne Brooks, P.E., Public Involvement Coordinator, a.brooks@brooks-alaska.com

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Jan Hazen, jan@homestead-graphics.com



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2. Purpose of Public Involvement

The public involvement plan for the South Mack Drive Extension project sets forth strategies for communicating with the public, agencies and other interested parties about the project. It defines the tools, timing and strategies for obtaining public and agency input. The plan presents a range of strategies that may be used during the course of project scoping and development. The City of Wasilla will use this document to guide the process of conducting the public and agency outreach for South Mack Drive Extension project.

2.1. Public Involvement Goals

The project team set the following goals for public involvement for the South Mack Drive Extension project.

- ❑ Provide timely and accurate information to the public regarding the project through a variety of means. For example: public meetings, advertisements, e-mail, telephone, written correspondence, news articles and Web site frequently-asked-questions posting.
- ❑ Acknowledge comments and concerns in the format received and provide feedback on how the input influenced project decisions.
- ❑ Share information in a transparent way so that members of the public become familiar with the issues and the team response to them.
- ❑ Clearly state how, when and where people can be involved in project decision-making.
- ❑ Clearly outline the project development process.
- ❑ Reach out to include broad group of stakeholders in project decisions.
- ❑ Seek out and engage local government entities in project decisions.

2.2. Public Involvement Plan Development

Stakeholder interviews helped shape the strategies and methods identified in this Public Involvement Plan. These one-on-one conversations helped the project team learn about local issues, concerns and methods to help them plan for and conduct public and agency outreach.



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3. Identification of Stakeholders

Below is an initial list of stakeholders. These entities will be included in the project outreach/ mailing list. This list will expand throughout the project.

❑ **General Public**

- Airport users/tenants
- Business owners
- Commuters
- Curtis D. Menard Memorial Sports Center and users
- Mat-Su Regional Medical Center
- Meadow Lakes Seniors
- Off-road vehicle drivers
- Property owners
- Residents in adjacent neighborhoods
- Trail users
- Visitors
- Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc.
- Wasilla Chamber of Commerce

❑ **Government Entities**

- Alaska Railroad
- Alaska Waste Management Services
- Area Community Councils (Knik/Fairview Community Council, Meadow Lakes Community Council)
- Area legislators and elected officials
- Area Utilities
- City of Wasilla Mayor and Council
- Emergency Services (police and fire)
- Mat-Su Borough Mayor and Assembly
- Mat-Su Resource Conservation and Development
- Matanuska-Susitna Community Transit (MASCOT)
- Road Service Area

❑ **Agencies**

- Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation
- Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game/Habitat Division
- Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources/Division of Coastal and Ocean Management
- Alaska State Troopers
- Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning & Zoning Commission
- Matanuska-Susitna Borough Platting Board
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Alaska District Regulatory Division
- U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Alaska Region

❑ **Special Interest**



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Alaska Center for the Environment
 Cook Inlet Tribal Council
 Friends of Mat-Su
 Knik-Atnu, Inc.
 Mat-Su Hockey Association
 Valley Board of Realtors

3.1. Issues

Table 1, below, lists the issues that may be raised during the public involvement process, and the anticipated impact that each issue will have on the study team’s actions.

<i>Table 1 – Anticipated Issues</i>	
Issue	Impact (the study team will...)
Neighborhood noise, access to property, increased/decreased traffic near property, child safety	Communicate with the project’s neighbors and identify issues and mitigation measures
Property — changes for developed property, undeveloped property	Communicate with most-affected stakeholders directly adjacent any proposed route, understand and document future plans for property use
Right-of-way acquisition	Inform the public about the right-of-way acquisition process used by the MSB and/or City of Wasilla
Wetlands	Explain wetland identification and Corps of Engineers wetland permit process
Wildlife, moose	Provide overview of environmental studies needed for the project, solicit input from public
ATV/snowmachine drivers	Recognize potential use within corridor to the extent possible
Road ownership – who owns, who maintains, who pays	Help the public to understand the impact of proposed routes to area taxpayers. Depending on the final alignment. (whether within the City or outside of the City) maintenance costs may be paid by City residents or by MSB Road Service Area residents.
Area trails	Work with the public to identify informal trails on private property in the project area that may be impacted by construction of this project.
Not-in-my-back-yard (NIMBY) concerns	This project as envisioned will affect many “backyards.” Work with the public to identify all impacts and explore solutions that can mitigate impacts to the extent possible.



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Table 1 – Anticipated Issues

Issue	Impact (the study team will...)
Accommodating area growth; planning for development, population and traffic	The Mat-Su Borough is the fastest growing area in the state. Clearly communicate to the public how this project will plan for and help accommodate the traffic impacts of growth, particularly safety on corridors such as Knik Goose Bay Road and the Parks Highway.
Historic properties in area	Explain research and evaluation of historic resources incorporated into environmental approvals.
Funding	Explain how state grant funding through the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development allows this project to be delivered differently than a federally funded project. Include information about how the funding may affect decisions regarding scope, phasing, etc., in the design phase.
Routing the new corridor	Acknowledge that a new road corridor will affect some property owners, and that some impacts will be favorable and some will not. Explain the reasons for road network improvements and the long-term benefits for the wider community.



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4. Public Involvement Methods

The following table identifies the methods we propose to use to reach the potentially affected interests with project information. The table will be expanded to document public involvement during all project phases as shown in Attachment A: Public Participation Activities.

Table 2 – Public Involvement Tools

Public Involvement Tool	Use of Tool
Mailing list	Develop and maintain mail and e-mail lists of project stakeholders, elected officials and other interested stakeholders to allow project team to inform interested parties and the public about the project.
Web site www.parkshighway44-52.info/southmack	Develop and maintain an informational Web site for the length of project; post background information, all project documents, photos, schedule, public involvement information and contact information. Update regularly.
Attend regular group meetings of Road Service Area, community councils, etc.	Get on the agendas to present the project at regularly scheduled meetings of the Knik/Fairview Community Council, Meadow Lakes Community Council, Knik Road Service Area, Fairview Road Service Area and Meadow Lakes Road Service Area.
Stakeholder interviews	Seek out and interview pertinent stakeholders prior to the first public meeting to gain insight into issues and concerns.
General public meetings/hearings	Three public meetings are planned: scoping, agency workshop, and draft PER.
Agency meetings	Set up and attend an agency workshop. Attend meetings of the Community Transportation Coalition and/or the Mat-Su Borough Transportation Advisory Board to coordinate.
Informal meetings	Set up and attend informal meetings to discuss issues related to a specific group, i.e., Valley Board of Realtors, area residents, adjacent businesses, railroad, etc.
Informational flyers and newsletters	Prepare and distribute to give notice of public involvement opportunities. Four newsletters/postcards are planned to announce public meetings. Additional newsletters may be required and will be determined at a later date. Delivered via mailing list and Web site; extra copies available at local businesses.



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Table 2 – Public Involvement Tools

Public Involvement Tool	Use of Tool
Chronological list of scoping and public involvement activities	Provide a comprehensive list of activities undertaken to deliver information and seek input from the public.
Comment and Response Summary	Provide a comprehensive list of issues brought forth by stakeholders and track their resolution during project development.
Print media, press releases on project for Frontiersman	Prepare eight display ads to announce public meetings.
Routine communications	Regular communication via telephone, fax, e-mail and U.S. Postal Service mail will be responded to in-kind according to established protocols in Section 5.

4.1. Web Site

The South Mack Drive Extension project is one of four related projects in the area. Brooks and Associates will host a page for the South Mack Drive Extension project on our Parks Highway Milepost 44-52 Web site. From that site, readers will be able to learn more about the Parks Highway Milepost 44-52 project, and also choose to visit the South Mack Drive Extension, Museum Drive Extension or Machen Road Extension sites. The site will provide access to information for all four projects to anyone with a computer and modem. The proposed outline for the South Mack Drive Extension project Web page follows:

Internet Site Outline (www.parkshighway44-52.info/southmack)

- ❑ Project Overview (2 pages)
- ❑ Photos
Map/aerial photo of project area (1 page)
- ❑ Frequently Asked Questions (1 page)
- ❑ Documents (1 page) — Available reports (PDF and plain text)
Draft Preliminary Engineering Report
Flyers and newsletters
Special Studies (if prepared)
- ❑ Public Involvement
Comment and Response Summary (periodic updates)
Public input opportunities/meeting dates (1 page)
- ❑ Links
City of Wasilla, www.cityofwasilla.com
Mat-Su Borough (<http://ww1.matsugov.us/>)



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Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
(www.dot.state.ak.us/)
ADOT&PF Highway Safety Office
(www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/hwysafety/index.shtml)
ADOT&PF Highway Safety Corridors
(http://dot.alaska.gov/comm/pressbox/safety_corridors.shtml)
Parks Highway Safety Corridor Maps
(www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/hwysafety/safety_corridors_maps.shtml)

- Contact Us
 - Team names and contact information
 - On-line comment sheet
 - Mailing list input form

4.2. Meetings

The public involvement coordinator will attend coordination meetings with HDL, City of Wasilla and other sub-consultants on the project. Project presentations will be made to Knik/Fairview Community Council and Meadow Lakes Community Council, and to Knik/Fairview Road Service Area and Meadow Lakes Road Service Area. Three public meetings are planned: 1) scoping, 2) agency workshop, 3) draft Preliminary Engineering Report.

Standing community meetings offer opportunities to present the project. Table 3 is useful for tapping into existing meetings to present information on the project, and for avoiding conflicting days and times.



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Table No. 3 — Monthly Standing Meeting Schedule

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
1st	MSB Planning Commission, 6 p.m.	MSB Assembly, 6 p.m. Wasilla Chamber of Commerce, noon	MSB School Board, 6 p.m. Knik-Fairview Community Council, 7 p.m. (Feb/May/Aug) Valley Board of Realtors, general membership 9 a.m.; board follows	
2nd	Wasilla City Council, 7 p.m.	MSB Assembly, 6 p.m. Palmer City Council, 7 p.m. Wasilla Planning Commission, 7 p.m. Wasilla Chamber, noon Mat-Su Resource & Conservation Development executive committee, 10 a.m.	Meadow Lakes Community Council, 7 p.m.	
3rd	MSB Planning Commission, 6 p.m.	Wasilla Chamber, noon	MSB School Board, 6 p.m. Knik/Fairview CC board meeting, 6:30 p.m.	Road Service Area Advisory Board, 6:30 p.m.
4 th or last	Wasilla City Council, 7 p.m. Parks, Recreation & Trails Advisory Board, 5 p.m.	Palmer City Council, 7 p.m. Wasilla Planning Commission, 7 p.m. Wasilla Chamber, noon	MSB Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), 1:30 p.m. Wasilla Chamber After Hours, 4:30-6:30 p.m.	RSA Board of Supervisors, 6:30 p.m.

1. All dates are typical, check with group for current schedule.
2. Additional groups to consider:
Meadow Lakes Road Service Area
Knik-Atnu, Inc.



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4.3. Mailing List

A mailing list will be prepared for the project that enables the project team to sort by location, business or interested parties. Where possible, the list will be carrier-route certified to reduce costs when preparing bulk mailings. The initial list includes the agencies listed above and property owners, businesses and others within reasonable limits of the project corridor as determined by HDL, Brooks & Associates and City of Wasilla. The list will be continually updated throughout the project.

4.4. Chronology of Public Involvement Activities

Brooks & Associates will maintain a table documenting public involvement activities throughout the project. The template for the table is shown in Attachment A.

4.5. Comment and Response Summary

A comment summary is a method of tracking public comment and making sure comments are acknowledged and resolved through the process. Issues are added to the summary as they are received from the public via written and oral communications. The comment summary evolves during the course of the project. Similar issues are combined, issues that will be resolved in design are passed on to the design team and so noted on the summary, and some issues are outside the scope of this project. The purpose of the comment and response summary is to give input to the public on how their comments are being considered in the project development and allow the project team to ensure comments and issues are resolved.



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5. Agency Scoping Methods

The project team set the following goals for scoping for South Mack Drive Extension project:

- Identify and call agencies
- Send letters with background information to agencies
- Invite agencies to public scoping meeting July 23, 2009
- Convene a scoping session with agencies once preferred alternative identified
- Follow up to identify permits and environmental requirements



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6. Project Communication

This section spells out the protocols for the project including contacts with the client, public, project team, media, press, elected officials, sub-consultants, and local, state and federal agencies.

6.1. Media Communications

There will be regular communication with the media to keep the public informed throughout each phase of the project, which will allow for continued input and keep everyone informed of project progress.

The single point of contact for all external communications is Archie Giddings, Public Works Director, City of Wasilla. Media communications will include press releases, media briefings, telephone interviews and communication with elected officials.

6.2. Communications with City of Wasilla

David Lundin, P.E., the Hattenburg, Dilley and Linnell (HDL) Project Manager, will handle day-to-day communications with the City of Wasilla Project Manager, Archie Giddings. The HDL project manager will review all public involvement communication and written communication with agencies, the client and public. The HDL project manager shall approve all correspondence with agencies before transmittal to the City of Wasilla project manager for review and delivery.

6.3. Telephone Communications

All telephone communications will be documented with copies distributed to the City of Wasilla project manager, the HDL project manager, and the public involvement coordinator. Copies can be provided to other interested team members as appropriate. The original record of the telephone communication shall be located in the HDL project files.

6.4. Electronic Communications

All electronic communications will be saved as PDF files with copies distributed to the City of Wasilla project manager, the HDL project manager, and the public involvement coordinator. Copies can be provided to other interested team members as appropriate. The original record of the electronic communications shall be located in the HDL office project files.

6.5. Communicating with the Public

Following the protocols indicated above, we will respond promptly and in kind to all communication from the public. For instance, if we receive a comment via e-mail, we will respond by e-mail. If we receive a letter, we will respond by letter.



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7. Plan Evaluation

Public dialogue is very important to the success of the project. The goals to inform, educate, solicit and respond to input must be monitored to ensure that an appropriate level of input is being received, that we are answering the public's questions, and that we are resolving issues and conflicts. HDL and Wasilla will monitor the public involvement effectiveness and revise the plan as necessary.

7.1. Record Keeping

Throughout the project, all incoming and outgoing communications with the public and other project stakeholders will be filed electronically. The documents are coded to indicate how they were received. For example, an e-mail from John Smith on Sept. 23, 2008, would receive a "080923emSmith" file name. For all newsletters or postcard mailers, a snapshot of the ever-changing mailing list is saved with the newsletter file. For each project mailing, we will track how many newsletters, flyers or surveys were mailed or distributed, and how many calls, surveys or comment sheets were returned in the period following the mailing or distribution. The Web site will feature a counter to track the number of hits (the number of times the site has been accessed). The public involvement coordinator will discuss the returns with the respective project manager and City of Wasilla and select another tool for involving the public if we feel the feedback is insufficient.

7.2. Communication

Another method for evaluating the Public Involvement Plan's effectiveness will be through our conversations with the public, agencies and potentially affected interests. If our plan is effective, we will see these indicators during the process: 1) we will not have to answer the same questions over and over — the public is getting the information and understanding the process; 2) we will be receiving a new level of input — the public will feel an issue is resolved and move on to another; 3) meetings and input will become less contentious; 4) groups polarized on either side of the fence will begin to work through issues among themselves and offer suggestions.



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Attachment A: Public Participation Activities

The following table will be updated as the project progresses to summarize all public participation activities completed during project development.

Table No. 4 — Public Participation Activities

Date	Public Participation Tool (Group/Activity)	Project Phase/Purpose	Time & Location
06/2009	Seek out and interview key stakeholders	To gain insight into issues and concerns.	Not applicable
07/2/2009	Establish and maintain mailing list	All Phases; send outreach materials through US Postal Service	Ongoing
Ongoing	Web site (www.parkshighway44-52.info/southmack/)	All Phases; provide project information, public involvement opportunities, outreach materials and documents	Not applicable
06/2009	Project Fact Sheet	Provided to property owners with right-to-entry requests and to all project team members conducting field work and key stakeholders following interviews	Not applicable
07/07/2009, 07/14/2009, 07/21/2009	Display Ad, Frontiersman	Invite the public to the 7/23/09 open house	Frontiersman
07/08/2009	Introductory Project Newsletter	Announce public open house to area residents and businesses; community councils; MSB elected officials, boards and commissions; City of Wasilla elected officials, boards and commissions; City of Houston elected officials, boards and commissions; and area state legislators.	Mail to residents within mailing list boundary
07/08/2009	Meadow Lakes Community Council	Introduce the project and invite council members to the 7/23 open house	7-8 p.m. meeting, Meadow Lakes Senior Center
07/08/2009	Request to Meadow Lakes Community Council	Coordinate notice of 7/23 open house on council Web site (www.meadowlakeschatter.com)	Not applicable
07/08/2009	Newsletter distributed to Mat-Su Community Transit (MASCOT)	Announce public open house	Not applicable



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Table No. 4 — Public Participation Activities

Date	Public Participation Tool (Group/Activity)	Project Phase/Purpose	Time & Location
07/09/2009	Press release to the Frontiersman and Anchorage Daily News	Inform the media about the projects and open house for possible coverage	Not applicable
07/09/2009	Online notices posted on City of Wasilla, Mat-Su Borough and ADOT&PF sites	Announce public open house	Not applicable
07/23/2009	Public open house	Combined meeting of area projects: Parks Highway Connectors (Museum Drive scoping, Machen Road), South Mack Drive Extension scoping, Parks Highway MP 44-52	4-8 p.m., Curtis D. Menard Memorial Sports Center
10/08/2009	Mat-Su Transportation Fair	Present project information at regional public meeting	4-8 p.m., Raven Hall, State Fairgrounds
TBD	Knik/Fairview Community Council Meadow Lakes Community Council	Present the project and give updates to community councils	To be determined (TBD)
TBD	Knik Road Service Area Fairview Road Service Area Meadow Lakes Road Service Area	Present the project and give updates to road service area personnel	TBD
02/17/2010 02/24/2010	<i>Frontiersman</i> display advertising	Announce public meeting for draft Preliminary Engineering Report (PER)	N/A
02/12/2010	Postcard Mailer	Announce public meeting, draft PER	N/A
02/24/2010	Mat-Su Borough Transportation Advisory Board	Provide briefing to TAB on the preliminary engineering report	1 p.m.
02/23/2010	Online notices sent to City of Wasilla	Announce public meeting, draft PER	N/A
02/25/2010	Public Meeting for draft PER/DSR	Provide opportunity for public to comment on draft Preliminary Engineering Report (PER)	4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., Curtis D. Menard Memorial Sports Center
03/24/2010	Mat-Su Borough Transportation Advisory Board	Provide briefing to TAB on the preliminary engineering report, seek resolution to support PER recommendation.	1 p.m.
04/13/2010	City of Wasilla Planning Commission	Provide briefing on the preliminary engineering report, seek resolution to support PER recommendation.	



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Table No. 4 — Public Participation Activities

Date	Public Participation Tool (Group/Activity)	Project Phase/Purpose	Time & Location
TBD	Meadow Lakes Community Council	Attend meetings to give project updates on draft PER	TBD
TBD	Meadow Lakes Road Service Area	Attend meetings to give project updates on draft PER	TBD
TBD	MSB Planning Commission meeting		
Ongoing	Comment/Response Summary	Receive and respond to public comment. Document for comment project record. Incorporate into comment/response summary.	Not applicable
Ongoing	Regular communication via telephone, fax, e-mail and U.S. Postal Service	All Phases	Not applicable



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