



Comment Response Summary February 2018

HSIP: Richardson Highway MP 351 Interchange
Project No. 0A24034/NFHwy00097

The following document summarizes the comments received by email, phone, comment sheet, and public open house through February 2018. A public open house was held on September 27, 2017 at Hotel North Pole, 449 North Santa Claus Lane, North Pole AK.

Category	Comment	Response
Corridor Vision	The entire Richardson Highway from Eielson Air Force Base to Airport Way needs to be evaluated from a corridor perspective to identify appropriate safety improvements moving towards a limited access interstate type highway.	The Department is evaluating starting a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study for the Richardson Highway from Salcha to the 6-Mile Badger Road Interchange and would identify short, medium, and long range solutions to problems identified in the corridor.
Preferred Alternative	Median closure is the quickest solution to the crash problems. Any option that makes this area safer is fine.	The median closure has unfavorable impacts to trucking distances and may negatively impact adjacent interchanges. We will proceed with the half-interchange at 12 Mile Village which alleviates the safety concerns in the area in a timely and cost-efficient manner.
Preferred Alternative	Building 2A or 2B (full or half-interchanges at 12 Mile Village), a full interchange connecting the areas around MP 351.75 will never be built. 2A or 2B are piecemeal solutions that are quick and cheap but miss the mark for long term performance of the corridor.	The draft 2018-2021 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) includes a project for managing access along the Richardson Highway between MP 350 and 353, this project would be more appropriate to determine access modifications for the MP 351.75 area. See discussion above regarding why MP 351.75 was determined not the most appropriate location for the interchange.
Preferred Alternative	I prefer the concept that has the least acquisition of private property.	The preferred alternative is Concept 2A (half-interchange at 12 Mile Village). This has the least impact to private property and business and neighborhood disruption.

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Preferred Alternative	Concept 2B (full interchange at 12 Mile Village) is preferred. The intersection is very dangerous and tanker trucks have tipped there.	<p>We have selected the half-interchange at 12 Mile Village (Concept 2A) as the preferred alternative as it has reduced impacts to area neighborhoods based on the frontage road location.</p> <p>We will continue to refine the design so as not to preclude a future full interchange at this location.</p>
Preferred Alternative	Having a full interchange (MP 351.75) is an appropriate treatment to resolve the severe crash problem currently experienced at this intersection and is the most long-term approach to resolving safety, as well as modernizing the corridor.	<p>The Department completed a value analysis to determine the preferred alternative. Based on the results of the value analysis, Concept 2A (half-interchange at 12 Mile Village) was determined the most appropriate solution for the project based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal impacts to existing established businesses and neighborhoods, • Ability to connect MP 351.75 area to 12 Mile Village via frontage in the future, • Lack of existing crashes at the MP 351.75 area, • Volume of traffic originating at 12 Mile Village vs. traffic originating at MP 351.75 (significantly higher volumes coming from North Pole than from the 351.75 area), • Cost effectiveness.
Preferred Alternative	Concept 3A (full interchange at MP 351.75) appears to be the best option. Concept 2A (half-interchange at 12 Mile Village) is also partially acceptable, depending on property owners' reaction to right-of-way acquisition.	Concept 2A (half-interchange at 12 Mile Village) has been selected as the preferred alternative as it has the least amount of private property impacts and disruption of neighborhoods and businesses of the build alternatives. Concept 2A allows for future frontage connections from the north to the 12 Mile interchange.
Side Streets	Please contract property owners before selecting final frontage road routing.	We will coordinate with impacted property owners and users during detailed design to ensure frontage roads meet user needs.

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Side Streets	I like the idea of keeping frontage road traffic in the slow neighborhood areas.	We will construct new frontage to connect Keeney Road to the Old Richardson Highway to minimize impacts to neighborhoods. Speed limit on the frontage road will likely mirror that of the Old Richardson Highway.
Side Streets	Keeney Road is very dangerous at the Richardson Highway intersection.	The preferred alternative will connect Keeney Road to the proposed interchange via the new frontage road and eliminate the at-grade approach, improving safety for Keeney Road users.
Side Streets	Eliminate the s-curve on Keeney Road.	This portion of Keeney Road is outside the scope of the project based on the preferred alternative, and would require additional property acquisition. As such it will not be addressed by this project. If future projects identify a need to address the s-curve on Keeney Rd there will additional opportunities to comment.
Side Streets	Please pave the White Spruce Trailers frontage road.	This frontage road is outside the scope of the project. As such it will not be addressed by this project. If future projects identify a need to address the s-curve on Keeney Rd there will additional opportunities to comment.
Side Streets	Future development is planned for the north side of the Richardson Hwy near MP 351.5. Please consider access to the interchange for this property.	The preferred alternative will not facilitate further access on the north side of the highway. The presence of the Alaska Railroad between the Richardson Hwy and properties on the north side prevents the Department from connecting them at this time.
Peridot Street	The median closure option could create cut-through traffic impacts at Peridot and exacerbate crashes at the Peridot/Richardson Hwy intersection.	The median closure will not be pursued further for the 12 Mile Village intersection.

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Peridot Street	Consider interchange or other fix for high number of crashes seen at Peridot Street/Richardson Highway intersection this year (2017).	<p>The current HSIP funding accounts for crashes from 2010-2014. HSIP works on a 5 year crash history and projects must meet certain cost/benefit criteria. Crashes at Peridot Street for the period of analysis did not meet the HSIP funding threshold.</p> <p>The Department will continue to monitor the Peridot/Richardson Hwy intersection and work with local officials and law enforcement to identify interim fixes if needed.</p>
Railroad Impacts	Several of the alternatives appear to have significant encroachments into the ARRC right-of-way (ROW). Any project development will need to comply with the ARRC ROW Standards.	We will continue to coordinate with the railroad to define impacts and refine the preferred alternative to minimize ARRC ROW encroachment.
Schedule	What is the construction schedule?	Construction is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2021.
Business Impacts	Seasonal businesses in the area overlap with construction, how will access be maintained to minimize impacts to businesses during construction?	We will coordinate with residents and businesses on proposed improvements and traffic management during construction to minimize traffic impacts. The current preferred alternative allows for much of the construction to take place off the existing roadways, reducing traffic impacts during construction.
Business Impacts	Make sure the final alternative does not impact glide slopes and runaway approaches for the runway in the project area.	Glide slopes and runaway approaches have been evaluated for the preferred alternative and will not impact them at this time. As the design progresses we will continue to verify that there are no adverse impacts to the runway.