

CHAPTER 10: RECOMMENDATIONS

I. ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

For the 1996 LRTP, the traffic model for Chugiak-Eagle River identified future roadway (NHS and Non-NHS) congestion problems from which a list of roadway improvement projects was developed. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities is responsible for developing the National Highway System within Alaska, and has primary authority for setting project priorities. Thus, while the 1996 LRTP made recommendations for improvements to the NHS, the Community Advisory Committee did not rank those projects.

In addition to the recommended improvements for congested roadways, the Community Advisory Committee identified seven non-NHS roadways which need to be upgraded by either expanding the width, adding shoulders, or making other operational improvements. One of the recommended roadway improvements did not fall into either category. Homestead Road, which was recommended for construction between Oberg Road and Voyles Road, was a new roadway segment project identified at that time needed to improve east-west circulation in the North Peters Creek area, and to improve emergency response for the area.

In order to ensure that the most important Non-NHS projects could be funded, the Citizen Advisory Committee prioritized the 10 non-NHS eligible roadway projects based on a set of eight criteria, which reflected the transportation plan goals as well as the planning requirements in effect at that time. The non-congested roadway improvement projects included:



Recent Improvements: Old Glenn Highway

- Old Glenn Hwy. Improvements - North Eagle River Access Rd. to the Peters Creek Interchange (Rural)
- Eagle River Road Improvements - Mile 6 to the Eagle River Nature Center
- Business Boulevard Improvements
- Hiland Road Improvements - Mile 1 to end of road
- North Birchwood Loop Rd. Improvements
- South Birchwood Loop Rd. Improvements
- Eklutna Lake Rd. Improvements
- Homestead Rd. Improvements - Oberg Rd.. to Voyles Blvd.

Table 7 provides the current status of the Non-NHS roadway recommendations from the 1996 LRTP.

TABLE 7
1996 CHUGIAK – EAGLE RIVER LRTP
MAJOR NON-NHS ROADWAY RECOMMENDATIONS
STATUS AS OF JUNE 2002

1996 Roadway Projects	Rank	Status*
Eagle River Loop Rd. Improvements	1	Included in FY 2001-03 TIP, project # 12 Noise Barrier Analysis complete.
Old Glenn Hwy. Improvements (Downtown)	2	See ** Below
Old Glenn Hwy. Improvements (Rural)	3	Included in FY 2001-03 TIP, project # 16 ROW, Utilities ongoing
Eagle River Rd. Improvements	4	Included in FY 2001-03 TIP, project # 23 ROW mapping. Need survey info to prepare CE.
Business Blvd. Improvements	5	Included in FY 2001-03 TIP, project # 2a; (combined with Enhancement Project #1a) Essentially complete.
Hiland Road Improvements	6	Nominated for, but not included in FY 2001-2003 TIP (ranked #32 of 62 projects nominated; 29 were selected)
North Birchwood Loop Rd. Improvements	7	Not nominated for inclusion in FY 2001-2003 TIP
South Birchwood Loop Rd. Improvements	8	Not nominated for inclusion in FY 2001-2003 TIP
Eklutna Lake Rd. Improvements	9	Not nominated for inclusion in FY 2001-2003 TIP***
Homestead Rd. Improvements	10	Not nominated for inclusion in FY 2001-2003 TIP***

*Note: for projects 1, 3, 4 and 5, please see Appendix A for more detailed project status information.

**Note: Part of the needs identified in the 1996 LRTP are being addressed in the Old Glenn Highway repaving project (See Appendix A.) Access management will have to be analyzed during a downtown circulation study.

***Note: While the Community Advisory Committee recommended projects 9 and 10, these two projects were not part of the financially constrained recommendations in the 1996 LRTP. Cumulative costs for projects 9 and 10 were believed to exceed the projected amount of funding available in the following 20 years (\$35,880,000).

Based on results of the Transportation Model for the 2003 LRTP Update, one project was added to the 1996 list of Non-NHS roadway improvement recommendations (Eagle River Road from Mile Point 0 to approximately Greenhouse Street.) Also added to the 1996 list of recommendations is a project to restore / rehabilitate the Eklutna River Bridge on the Old Glenn Highway. Due to structural deterioration, weight limits were imposed on the bridge in 1996, and the need to rehabilitate the bridge was identified from an inspection in October, 1999.

Recommended roadway improvements shown below are in priority order. Projects 1-4 are programmed for funding in the 2001-2003 Transportation Improvement Program. Ranking of projects 5-10 followed a public review and comment period, and is based on each project's relative merits according to approved AMATS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Roadway Ranking Criteria.

The following is a description of the scope and location of all the major road improvement needs identified in the previous chapters (congestion-related as well as non-congestion-related). Trail and sidewalk improvements are recommended in conjunction with many of these roadway projects and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. Map 4 also provides information on the location and scope of these road improvement needs. It should be noted that all of the projects might be modified depending on the results of detailed engineering analysis.

Non – NHS (in Priority Order):

1. Eagle River Loop Road Improvements

Description: Reconstruct 1.88 miles of Eagle River Loop Road from the Old Glenn Highway to Eagle River Road. The scope of the project includes improved shoulders, turn lanes, pedestrian amenities, lighting and landscaping.

2. Eklutna River Bridge, Old Glenn Highway, Improvements

Description: Rehabilitate or replace the existing bridge. A new structure would have a design life of 50+ years and would include two travel lanes, shoulders, one pathway, and railing.

3. Old Glenn Highway Improvements (Rural)

Description: Reconstruct 7.57 miles of roadway from North Eagle River Access Road to the Peters Creek Interchange with the Glenn Highway to current standards. This project will evaluate the existing alignment, pavement conditions, shoulders, and pedestrian facilities. A portion of this project was broken out to expedite reconstruction between NERI and Fire Lake Elementary School access. This section will include a 3-lane cross section, pedestrian accommodations, and curb and gutter on one side.

4. Eagle River Road Improvements

Description: Reconstruct 7.3 miles of Eagle River Road from Mile 5.3 to Mile Point 12.6 at the Eagle River Nature Center. Improvements may include adding shoulders for pedestrians and bicycles, improving visibility, and repaving.

5. Hiland Road Improvements

Description: Reconstruct 7.32 miles of the existing two-lane Hiland Road from Mile 1 to end of road to current standards. Improvements may include widening roadway, adding shoulders, improving visibility, reducing grades, and possible trails, where practical and feasible. A possible realignment of the existing roadbed between Riverview Estates Subdivision and Eagle River Loop Road may also be a part of the project depending on the outcome of the proposed alternative route study. (Note: The Hiland Road corridor should be studied as a whole, with the intent that an appropriate first project that meets the greatest needs of the public shall be identified.)

6. Homestead Road Improvements

Description: Construct 0.66 miles of new collector roadway from Oberg Drive to Voyles Boulevard. The project may include construction of trail.

7. Eagle River Road Improvements

Description: Reconstruct approximately 6 miles of Eagle River Road from Mile Point 0 to the vicinity of Greenhouse Road to provide improved access and reduce congestion. This project may expand the existing roadway to 3 lanes with turn pockets, widened shoulders, and improved pedestrian and bicycle connections, and reconstruct trail and extend to Eagle River Lane or Greenhouse Road. (Project will be ranked with other Non-NHS projects after the formal public review and comment period.)

8. North Birchwood Loop / Birchwood Spur Road Improvements

Description: Reconstruct 2.98 miles of roadway from the Old Glenn Highway to the Birchwood Airport to current standards. Improvements may include widening roadway, adding shoulders, and possible trails, where practical and feasible.

9. Eklutna Lake Road Improvements

Description: Reconstruct 10 miles of roadway from the Old Glenn Highway to Eklutna Lake to current standards. Improvements may include paving, widening narrow roadway and shoulders, improving visibility, and possible trails, where practical and feasible.

10. South Birchwood Loop Road Improvements

Description: Reconstruct 5.05 miles of roadway from the Old Glenn Highway to North Birchwood Loop Road to current standards. Improvements may include widening roadway, adding shoulders, and possible trails, where practical and feasible.

NHS (Not in Priority Order):

Glenn Highway / Hiland Road Interchange

Description: Conduct level of service analysis to identify possible deficiencies of existing three-lane bridge portion of the interchange. Reconstruct interchange as required to current standards.

Glenn Highway / Artillery Road Interchange

Description: Conduct level of service analysis to identify possible deficiencies of existing interchange configuration. Reconstruct interchange as required to current standards.

Glenn Highway Improvements (Hiland Road to Artillery Road)

Description: Expand 1.4 miles of freeway to six lanes. Improvements may include construction of a new bridge over Eagle River and interchange improvements at Hiland Road.

Glenn Highway Improvements (Artillery Road to North Eagle River Access Road)

Description: Reconstruct 2.19 miles of freeway from four to six lanes. Improvements may include upgrades to the Artillery Road Interchange.

Glenn Highway Improvements (North Eagle River Access Road to South Birchwood Loop Road)

Description: Reconstruct 2.03 miles of freeway from four to six lanes. No interchange improvements are anticipated.

Glenn Highway / Proposed New Interchange (approximately midway between North and South Birchwood Loop Roads)

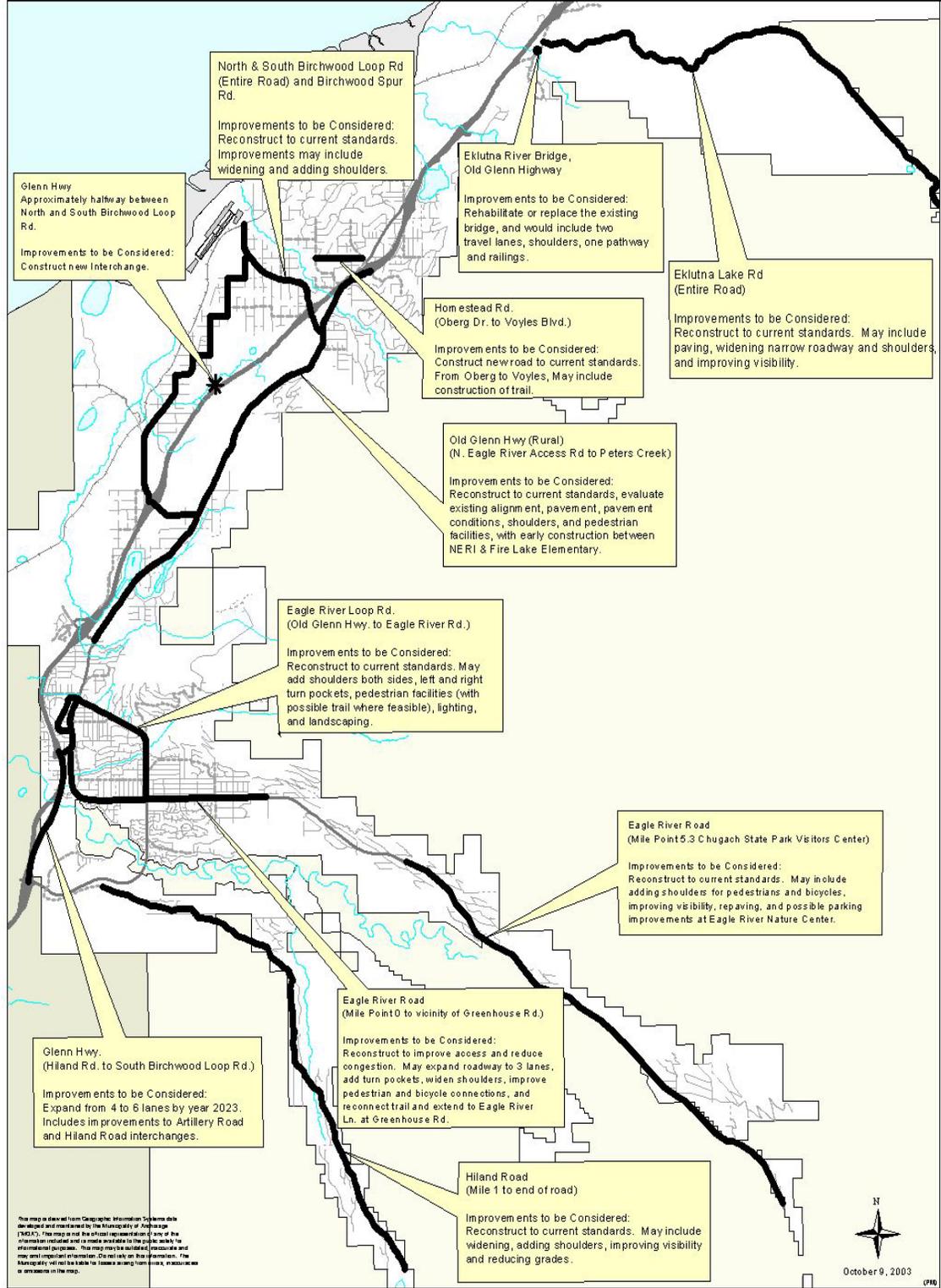
Description: Project would study best location, spacing, and most cost-effective site for construction of a new interchange.

Recommended for Study:

Glenn Highway Frontage Roads Analysis (Hiland Road to Muldoon Road)

Description: While this portion of the Glenn Highway is outside the Chugiak/Eagle River study area, operation of this roadway segment is of concern to Chugiak/Eagle River residents, particularly in the event of major accidents. Study would review frontage roads for emergency response purposes.

Major Roadway Improvements Needs



Map 4

II. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

From Chapter 5, the following recommendations for the Chugiak-Eagle River area are made. These recommendations are provided for concept only. Additional analysis of the Chugiak-Eagle River area is needed in order to finalize the long-range public transportation recommendations.

1. Implement convenient public transportation service that combines the predictability of a fixed route system with the accessibility of a dial-a-ride/community circulator system.
2. Maintain large bus service, oriented to the Glenn Highway, to provide transportation for area residents into Anchorage.
3. Provide connectivity between Chugiak-Eagle River and destinations in Anchorage other than downtown.
4. Explore expanding People Mover service to serve the high-density residential development in Tract A, Powder Reserve when development is nearing completion, either through park & ride or through community circulator service.
5. Explore additional Share-A-Ride program alternatives, particularly the vanpool program in the Chugiak-Eagle River area.

III. TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS RECOMMENDATIONS

The 1997 Areawide Trails Plan lists the top 50 trail projects that are to be implemented within the next 20 years. Among the top 50 trail projects listed, fourteen are located in the study area for the Chugiak-Eagle River LRTP. Several have already been completed. For purposes of this LRTP Update, recommendations for individual trails projects include those listed in the Trails Plan which have not yet been completed. These include:

Coastal Trail - Mouth of Peters Creek Beach Lake Park to Eklutna

Eagle River Greenbelt – connect to Hiland Road

Eagle River Loop Road – Eagle River Road to Old Glenn Highway

Eklutna Waterline – dedicate trail

Fire Creek Trail

Glenn Highway- Peters Creek to Mat-Su

Hillside Trail – Chugach Rim

North Birchwood Loop / Old Glenn Highway – North Birchwood interchange to Loretta French Park

Old Glenn Highway: Chugiak to Eagle River

For this LRTP Update, the short-range recommendations include committed trail projects that are expected to be constructed within the next six years through the Transportation Improvement Program. Three stand-alone projects currently programmed for inclusion in the AMATS Transportation Improvement Program FY 2001-2003 are included in Appendix B under Transportation Enhancements. These include Eagle River Greenbelt Access and Pathway, Glenn Highway Trail Rehabilitation (Muldoon Road to North

Birchwood Loop Road), and Glenn Highway Trailhead Improvements (at Thunderbird Falls, Peters Creek, and south Fork of Eagle River). Improvements to trails are also included in several of the roadway improvement projects listed, including Old Glenn Highway Rehabilitation (Artillery Road to North Eagle River exit), and Old Glenn Highway Reconstruction (North Eagle River exit to Peters Creek.)

In addition to the specific projects listed above, trails and sidewalks along major roadways, as well as pedestrian access to schools, are and should continue to be a focus of transportation enhancements in Chugiak-Eagle River.

The Anchorage Area Trails Plan is a guide and the recommendations of that plan serve as a source for trail and pedestrian improvements in the AMATS area. Projects developed in the Eagle River urban core should reference and utilize, where feasible, findings of the Central Business District Revitalization Plan, when it is approved. The locations of trails / pedestrian accommodations on the Areawide Trails Plan maps are approximate, and are subject to available right-of-way, project budgets, terrain and other constraining factors. Recommendations will be analyzed for feasibility and suitability as projects are developed.

IV. CONGESTION MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

A recommendation of this LRTP update is to continue to monitor the roadway segments and intersections in the Chugiak-Eagle River area which have been identified by the analysis in Chapter 4 as currently overcapacity, or projected to be overcapacity in the future (Table 3), as part of the ongoing Congestion Management System data collection and monitoring effort.

V. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Concerns expressed during the development of the 2003 LRTP Update point to the need to identify problem locations for emergency responders, including gaps and missing links in existing routes, prioritize the needs, and develop a list of recommendations specifically targeted for improving emergency response. Where these connections affect streets designated collector and above, the Chugiak-Eagle River LRTP and Official Streets and Highways Plan Map should be amended. For future needs, it is critical and in the best interest of the community as a whole, to ensure during the review of private development proposals, particularly subdivision and master plans for Planned Communities, that neighborhood connectivity be required.

VI. FREIGHT MOBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Truck volumes on the Old Glenn Highway near Klondike Concrete should continue to be monitored for increases which might indicate the need to add a truck climbing lane. Artillery Road and Hiland Road Interchanges, as well as the entire length of the Glenn highway, should be analyzed to address oversize freight movements. Traffic volumes along North Birchwood Loop Road should be monitored, particularly after the Birchwood Airport Master Plan is completed, which may indicate future needed

improvements along North Birchwood Loop Road. Eagle River should continue to be included in future data collection and monitoring efforts concerning movement of freight vehicles. The proposed comprehensive CBD circulation study should also address the movement of freight vehicles.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY: CBD CIRCULATION

It is a recommendation of this 2003 LRTP Update to conduct a comprehensive circulation study for the entire road network within the downtown core of Eagle River. The study will include an assessment of pedestrian improvement needs, access management alternatives, the need for improved connectivity between the Old Glenn Highway and Business Boulevard, and traffic flow along the Old Glenn Highway, including the movement of freight vehicles. A rigorous alternatives analysis will also address improved connections between the Powder Reserve and the Central Business District (CBD). The proposed study should reference and utilize, where feasible, the findings of the Draft Eagle River CBD Revitalization Study.

