### ASTAR TRIANGLE COMMUNITY ROAD PEL STUDY

#### **Community Meeting No. 2**

Utqiaġvik, AK

January 9, 2025





TRIANGLE COMMUNITY ROAD PEL STUDY







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.

#### AGENDA



- Invocation
- Welcome and Introductions
- Project Overview
- PEL Study Schedule
- Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Process Overview
- Purpose and Need
- Preliminary Alternatives
- Evaluating Alternatives
- Wrap Up and Next Steps

### **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

### **PEL STUDY AREA**





#### **ARCTIC STRATEGIC TRANSPORTATION AND RESOURCES (ASTAR)**

**ASTAR** is a partnership between the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), and the North Slope Borough (NSB).

**Mission and Purpose:** Identify, evaluate, and advance opportunities to enhance the quality of life and economic opportunities in NSB communities through infrastructure development.

**Goal:** Prioritize community needs and identify infrastructure opportunities that offer the most cumulative benefit and best enhance the quality of life for the region.

## ASTAR



TRIANGLE COMMUNITY ROAD PEL STUDY



### **ASTAR AND THE COMMUNITIES**





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#### Collaboration between ASTAR and North Slope communities and stakeholders

#### Identify infrastructure projects and services that offer the greatest cumulative benefits for the region



#### **ASTAR FIELD STUDIES CONDUCTED**

- Gravel surveys
  - Eastern NPR-A, Atqasuk, Utqiaġvik, Wainwright, Point Lay
  - Anaktuvuk Pass
- ASTAR Coastal Hazard Mapping (erosion and flooding)
  - Wainwright, Utqiaġvik, Point Lay
- NPR-A lake studies
- Stream gauging
- Riprap survey (Cape Lisburne)
- Weather station installation
- Flew LiDAR (Atqasuk and Utqiaġvik)







#### ASTAR UPCOMING PROPOSED WORK

- Winter Geotech program for potential road alternatives
- Work with communities to identify grant and other funding opportunities to advance community-supported projects





### PEL STUDY SCHEDULE

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#### PEL STUDY PROCESS OVERVIEW

### **PEL PROCESS**

A collaborative and integrated approach to transportation decision-making.

#### **Stakeholders and Agencies:**

- Led by DOT&PF, DNR, and NSB (ASTAR Team)
- Stakeholders:
  - Community Residents and Leadership
  - State and Federal Permitting Agencies





#### **PURPOSE AND NEED**

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#### PURPOSE

Why the project is being proposed and the positive outcomes intended





The key problems to be addressed and explanation of underlying causes of those problems

#### PURPOSE





An all-season gravel road connection between the three communities would meet the following objectives:

- Lower the cost of energy, basic goods, utilities and other services
- Create opportunities to strengthen cultural exchange, share traditional knowledge, enhance community and family connectivity, and potentially improve emotional well-being
- Improve health and wellness through improved access to medical and health facilities and services
- Provide an evacuation route to higher elevation areas, allowing efficient transportation away from the coast, in case of severe storm surges and/or coastal flooding.
- Reduce fossil fuel use through reduction of reliance on air travel and advancing the opportunity for energy alternatives to diesel fuel

#### NEED





The lack of an all-season surface transportation connection between the communities continues the following undesirable conditions:

- Lack of year-round, reliable, and cost-efficient transport of goods and services
- Uneconomical and unreliable access to family and friends between communities
- Difficult and costly access to subsistence resources
- Prolonged response times for some medical emergencies
- Lack of evacuation route to allow efficient transportation of residents away from coastal communities that are threatened by increasingly substantial coastal storm surges and flooding.
- Limited / uneconomical access by Wainwright and Atqasuk residents to educational opportunities, training, and workforce development available in Utqiaġvik

#### PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES

### **ASTAR REPORTS**



- All season Community Route Analysis
  - Utqiaġvik, Atqasuk, Wainwright



## **STUDY AREA BACKGROUND**



#### Desktop Analysis of Study Area (2018 – 2020)

- Land Status
- Hydrology
- Geology
- Cultural Resources
- Paleontological Resources
- Subsistence Patterns
- Wetlands
- Fish and Wildlife

- Existing Infrastructure
- Bridge Crossings
- Engineering Considerations
- Preliminary Construction Cost

## **STUDY AREA BACKGROUND**



#### Desktop Analysis of Study Area (2018 – 2020)

- River/Stream Hydrology and Potential Crossing Locations
  - Major factor in potential road alignments
  - Little historical survey data or streamflow records for streams and rivers
  - Streambank stability assessment for crossing locations needed
- Gravel resources
  - Limited gravel, abundant sand
  - Several bedrock outcrops
  - Further geotechnical surveys needed

## **ASTAR IDENTIFIED ROUTES**





# **ASTAR IDENTIFIED ROUTES**





- Original study area investigated routes connecting Utgiaġvik to Atqasuk
- Community benefit expanded the study to include a road connection to Wainwright

Study Area



### **ASTAR IDENTIFIED ROUTES**





#### **EVALUATING ALTERNATIVES**

## **EVALUATION PROCESS**



#### Initial Screening Criteria and Range of Alternatives

- What routes will best meet the identified needs?
- Review the routes for a range of environmental, physical, social, cost constraints
- Identify whether the community wants to proceed with an allseason community road
- PEL Study Screening Will Help Evaluate Alternatives and Narrow in on Recommendations



## **DRAFT EVALUATION CRITERIA**



Purpose and Need	To What Degree Does the Route
Lowers Costs of Energy, Utilities, Goods and Services	Lower the cost of energy, basic goods, utilities, and other services. Accommodate semi-trucks and lower the cost of large freight.
Supports Community Connectivity	Increase emotional wellbeing and community connectivity through year-round reliable and economical roadway access between the communities. Create or enhance the capability to join together in various activities.
Improves Public Safety Conditions	Improve public health through direct access to medical facilities and services, Search and Rescue personnel, and law enforcement. Increase sustainability of necessary utilities. Create evacuation route to quickly move residents inland and to higher elevations, in case of natural disasters (e.g. coastal storm surges, flooding, etc.)
Infrastructure Resiliency	Provide a resilient year-round surface transportation alternative.
Promotes Reduction of Fossil Fuel Use	
Provides Year-Round and Convenient Transport of Goods and Services	Provide year-round reliable, economical and durable surface transportation for vehicles between the communities.
Improves Economic Growth	Provide economic stimulus to the communities by providing opportunities for new businesses, commercial activities, and trade. Reduce the cost of goods and services, supporting opportunities for greater economic wellbeing for community members.
Preserves or Enhances Subsistence Conditions	Improve safety and lower the cost of local community access to subsistence resources while protecting those resources from outside pressure
Improves Access to Education Opportunities	Create year-round and cost-efficient access to education facilities, training centers, and cultural centers/activities
Enhances Workforce Development	Provide temporary and long-term jobs, provide access to skills training, workplace experience, etc.

## **DRAFT EVALUATION CRITERIA**



Constraint	To What Degree Does the Route
Land Status	Consider land ownership, leases, rights-of-way, federally designated Special Areas, etc.
Hydrology	Minimize river and stream crossings, locate crossings with stable bank conditions, consider BLM Best Management Practices, setbacks, etc.
Geology/ Geotechnical	Minimize haul routes for material sources, avoid geohazards, where possible route over favorable (less icy) in situ soils
Existing and Proposed Infrastructure	Take advantage of existing infrastructure where possible, consider synergies between proposed road and other existing or proposed infrastructure
Roadway Engineering Considerations	Consider topography, bridges, culverts, design criteria, material needs and haul distances, in order to minimize construction and maintenance & operations costs
Vehicle Bridges	Minimize the number and length of bridges and culverts
Cultural and Paleontological Resources	Avoid impacts to historic properties or paleontological resources
Subsistence Patterns	Avoid impacts to mapped subsistence use areas and avoid or minimize encroachment on Native allotments, camps, or cabins
Wetlands	Avoid or minimize impacts to wetlands that would require compensatory mitigation
Threatened and Endangered Species	Avoid critical habitat for eiders, Polar Bears, and Yellow-billed Loons and reduce incidental takes
Terrestrial Mammals	Avoid or minimize impacts to habitat and migration corridors of terrestrial mammals. Consider wildlife vehicle collisions.
Fish and Fish Habitat	Consider anadromous streams and crossing modes
Avian Resources and Habitat	Avoid eider and Yellow-billed Loon nesting locations and waterfowl nesting concentration areas
Environmental Compliance and Permitting	Minimize environmental and compliance permitting challenges; avoid BLM designated Special Areas, etc.
Construction Cost Estimate	Minimize overall construction cost to the extent practicable

#### WHAT'S NEXT

#### PEL STUDY COMMUNITY MEETING SCHEDULE





#### WHAT'S NEXT AFTER PEL STUDY DECISIONS



#### PEL Study Complete in Winter 2025/26



#### THANK YOU - QUYANAQ

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