

General Project and Funding

1. Where does Phase One start?

The rail line for Phase One begins roughly at the northern boundary of the former Bradbury property, but also includes work along Tom Bear Trail and levee construction between Salcha Fire and Rescue and the Old Richardson Highway.

2. How was Phase One funded?

The funding comes from the Department of Defense (\$104.2MM) and the state of Alaska (\$84.0MM).

3. What is the anticipated schedule for the extension project?

Phase One is anticipated to take three years to complete (2014). Construction of phases two through four is funding dependent.

4. Will cleared wood be made available?

The Salcha Fair is selling ARRC-donated firewood as a fundraiser for its programs. Cords of wood, cut in 8-foot lengths, are available for \$100 each. Contact Peggy Burns at 907-488-4556 for details. The ARRC will make additional firewood available later this fall.

Design

1. How long will the levee be?

The levee will be approximately 11,000 feet long.

2. Why is so much of the levee away from the riverbank?

Engineers developed the alignment to minimize the impact to private home owners. Even so, the Tanana River has been actively migrating to the north. Design and regulatory limitations have prevented ARRC from moving the levee any closer to the banks.

3. With the levee and erosion control measures, how will water get back to the Tanana River after flooding?

Floodwater resulting from groundwater upwelling will flow down-stream using existing flow paths as it does today.

4. How many bridges will be built over Piledriver Slough on Tom Bear Trail?

One bridge (32 feet wide) will be constructed over Piledriver Slough.

5. Will Tom Bear Trail be widened?

Following improvements, Tom Bear Trail will be 32 feet wide. The two travel lanes will be 10 feet wide, and the two shoulders will be 6 feet wide.

6. What is the width of the Tanana River Bridge?

The Tanana River Bridge is designed for one-way rail and military vehicle traffic. The travel way will be 12 feet, 4 inches wide.

Construction

1. What is the work schedule?

On-site construction will occur 20 hours per day, six days per week through October 2011. Construction will resume in the spring.

2. How will construction impact traffic on the highway?

Construction traffic will increase along the Richardson Highway between North Pole and Salcha, particularly while rip-rap is being hauled to the site (through summer 2012).

3. What is the schedule for adding deceleration lanes?

The deceleration lanes will be completed in summer 2012.

4. What about traffic control coming out of the construction area?

Traffic control plans are available on the project website:

<http://northernrailextension.com/PhaseOne.htm>

5. Will Tom Bear Trail be highway grade?

Tom Bear Trail has not been designed as highway grade and will not be paved. It will be surfaced with 6 inches of crushed rock.

6. Where is the rock source? How many loads of rip-rap will be hauled per day?

Rock is coming from a gravel provider in North Pole. Rip-rap will be hauled to the project site through summer 2012.

7. Will mailboxes be moved back to their current location after the project?

All mailboxes at the Tom Bear Trail/Richardson Highway intersection will be permanently relocated to the southwest corner of the intersection. Mailboxes in the vicinity of the Richardson Highway, just north of the intersection of the Old Richardson, will also be permanently relocated.

Employment Opportunities

1. Who is the contractor?

Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. (formerly Kiewit Pacific Co.) of Anchorage will provide construction management and general contracting services for Phase One. Kiewit has employed a number of subcontractors, a list of which is available on the project website: <http://northernrailextension.com/PhaseOne.htm>

2. Where can I find information about job opportunities?

Call Kiewit's office at 907-488-7727.

3. Is there a commitment to local hire?

Kiewit is a union contractor, hiring is through the local halls in Fairbanks.

Access

1. Will there be access across the bridge?

The military will control access across the bridge, and traffic will be limited to military truck traffic until the rail extension is completed. Generally, however, residents and hunters will continue to have access opportunities as before the bridge is constructed.

2. Will the bridge restrict boat traffic?

No. The bridge is designed to allow boat traffic, with a minimum of 10 feet of clearance depending on water levels.

3. Will the military continue to build ice bridges?

The military may elect to continue to construct ice bridges as required to provide additional access to the Tanana Flats Training Area.

4. Will there be a gravel bike path on Tom Bear Trail?

A number of requests were made at public meetings asking the ARRC to include a bike path as part of the improvements to Tom Bear Trail. This idea is under consideration.

Maintenance and Operations

1. Who will maintain the levee?

The ARRC will maintain the levee following construction.

2. How will maintenance costs be divided between the State and the military?

The State of Alaska, through the ARRC, will take responsibility for maintenance costs of the levee and bridge following construction.

3. Will the State maintain Tom Bear Trail after construction?

Tom Bear Trail is a developed section line easement and is maintained by local residents. No plans exist for any government agency to assume the maintenance of Tom Bear Trail.

Impacts

1. Will the levee change the wetlands status/flood plane behind it?

No. For more information on Fairbanks North Star Borough flood zones, visit http://www.co.fairbanks.ak.us/CommunityPlanning/flood_zone_self_help.htm.

2. Will the project alleviate flooding on the Salcha side of the river?

The levee will attenuate the overland flooding frequency for a portion of the area between Tanana River Bridge and the New Richardson Highway. It will not alleviate existing groundwater upwelling.

3. Will there be impacts to drainage?

Piledriver Slough will continue to absorb runoff after the levee is built. Groundwater flow should not be impacted.

4. Will the bridge cause impacts upstream during flood events?

The Tanana River Bridge will increase water levels immediately upstream of the bridge. The levee has been constructed to mitigate any back-water effects from the bridge.

5. Will the project impact property taxes or zoning?

No.

6. What will be done to limit construction-related debris on the highway?

All on-highway truck traffic is the responsibility of the responsible trucking company. Rip-rap, at 25 pounds or more per rock, is less likely to come off the truck than lighter products, such as gravel.

7. What kind of noise impacts can be expected?

Residents closest to the construction site will hear noise from logging and wood chipping this fall. Noise from truck and heavy equipment will also increase along Tom Bear Trail and the Old Rich. Noise and vibration will increase during bridge construction and pile-driving, anticipated to begin in spring 2012.

8. Will the staging area be restored after construction?

Portions of staging area not anticipated to be used for future maintenance or construction activities will be revegetated using native plants. On-site borrow sources will be restored to ponds.

Contacts

1. Where can I find more information?

For general information on the ARRC, contact Stephenie Wheeler at 907-265-2449 or public_comment@akrr.com. For questions regarding Phase One construction, contact Mark Peterburs at Peterbursm@akrr.com.