



Ship Creek ITC EA Reevaluation - Quyana Park/Section 4(f) Analysis

PROJECT FACTS

The Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) worked with the Municipality of Anchorage Department of Parks and Recreation during preparation of the original 2003 Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Ship Creek Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC) project. During preparation of the EA, a Section 4(f) Evaluation was undertaken to assess potential impacts to Quyana Park, which is located along the buttress slope between 1st and 3rd Avenues near the ARRC Anchorage Depot. Since that time, design has progressed (*See Figure 1 - Facility Site Plan*), various changes to the project scope have been identified, and an EA Reevaluation is being conducted. This fact sheet describes the changes relevant to Quyana Park, summarizes current U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) requirements for impacts to parkland, describes the intent to make a determination that the project will have a *de minimus* impact on Quyana Park, and requests public comment related to that determination.

Project Modifications Affecting Quyana Park since the Original Section 4(f)

Parking Garage

The scope of the project originally included constructing a parking garage with a rooftop park on the footprint of the existing parking lot along 1st Avenue immediately south of the Historic Anchorage Depot and extending up the buttress slope into Quyana Park to 2nd Avenue. As design progressed, construction of the parking garage at the planned location was determined not feasible, primarily because the slope (the Buttress) was constructed after the 1964 Good Friday earthquake in order to stabilize the 4th Avenue slide area and there are numerous building restrictions on the slope that make construction on the slope prohibitively expensive.

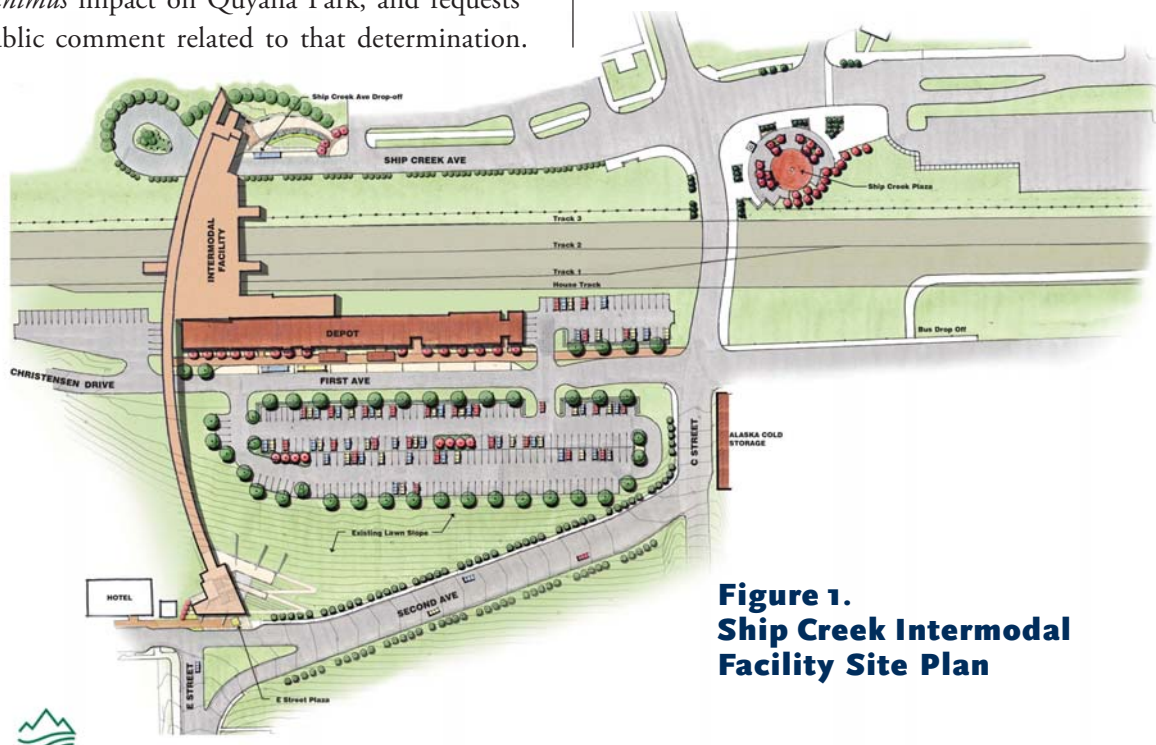


Figure 1.
**Ship Creek Intermodal
Facility Site Plan**

Since constructing a parking garage is not feasible, upgrades to the existing parking lot have been designed. To meet current municipal standards for parking lots, including size of parking stalls and adequate circulation and access, and to provide landscaping to enhance the appearance and provide a buffer between the parking lot and the park, a small area of the Quyana Park (approximately 0.25 acres) would be used.

Eisenhower Memorial/ Pedestrian Overpass

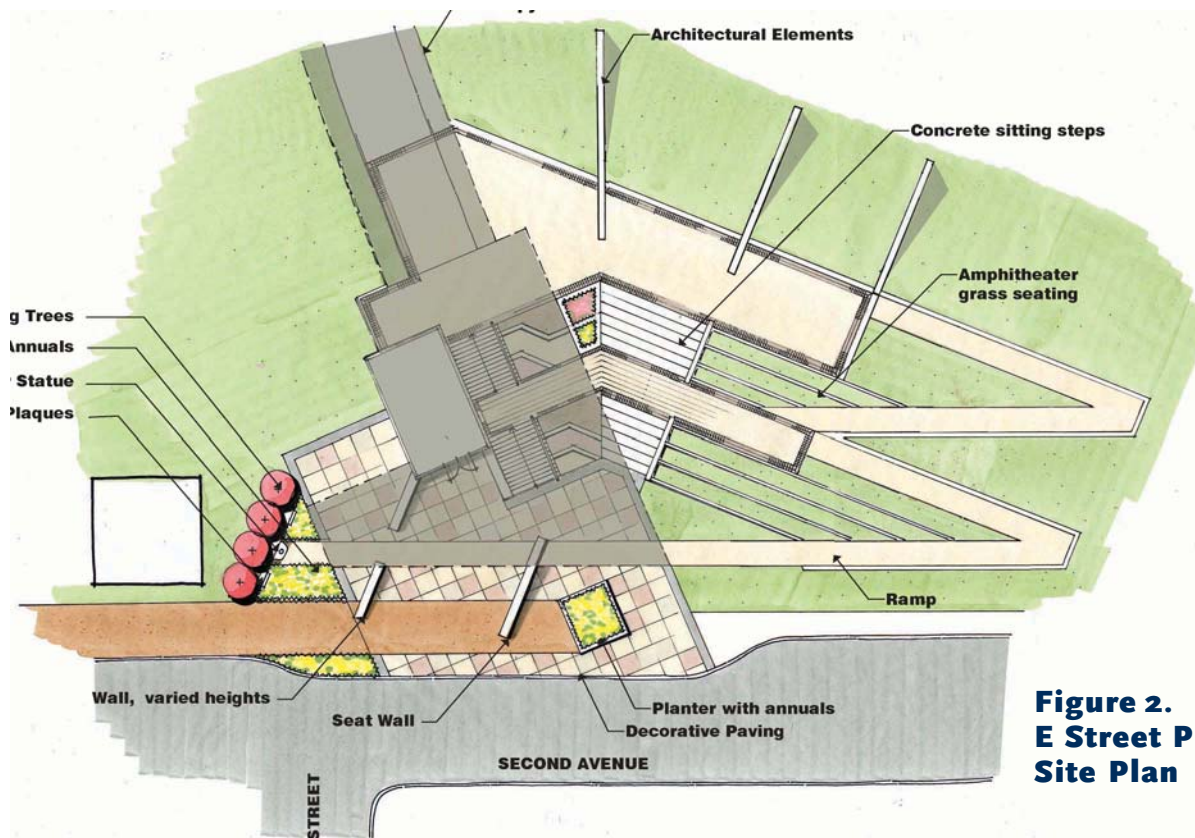
The original project included construction of a bus stop and pedestrian drop off at the intersection of E Street and 2nd Avenue; incorporation of the Eisenhower Memorial into the rooftop park; and a grade-separated pedestrian overpass between the Eisenhower Memorial plaza and Ship Creek Avenue.

In the current plan, the grade-separated pedestrian overpass would still be constructed, with minor use of the park for the structural supports for this overpass. Also, to mitigate for the

use of 0.25 acres of Quyana Park for the parking lot and these structural supports, enhancement of the area near the existing Eisenhower Memorial would be incorporated into the project. The Eisenhower Memorial area would be rehabilitated and upgraded to be somewhat larger than it is now, and access to the memorial would be improved. The area would serve as the primary entrance to the pedestrian overpass between E Street and Ship Creek Avenue and over the expanded railroad tracks at the intermodal facility. The bus stop would be located along 1st Avenue in front of the ARRC depot. (See Figure 2 - E Street Plaza Site Plan)

Section 4(f) Requirements and De Minimus Impacts

Section 4(f) refers to the original section within the Department of Transportation (DOT) Act of 1966 that set the requirement for consideration of park and recreational lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites in transporta-



**Figure 2.
E Street Plaza
Site Plan**

tion project development. Section 4(f) resources include any publicly owned public park, recreation area, or refuge or any publicly or privately owned historic site.

Since the time the original Section 4(f) Evaluation for this project was completed, the USDOT issued Guidance for Determining De Minimis Impacts to Section 4(f) Resources (December 13, 2005). Impacts of a transportation project on a Section 4(f) resource, such as Quyana Park, may be determined to be de minimis if:

- The transportation use of the Section 4(f) resource, together with any impact avoidance, minimization, and mitigation or enhancement measures incorporated into the project, does not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes that qualify the resource for protection under Section 4(f);
- The official(s) with jurisdiction over the property are informed of the intent to make the de minimis impact finding based on their written concurrence that the project will not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f); and
- The public has been afforded an opportunity to review and comment on the effects of the project on the protected activities, features, and attributes of the Section 4(f) resource.

Use of, and Impacts to, Quyana Park

The park is currently used primarily by residents and visitors for enjoying views to the north and northwest, as the park offers a wonderful view of Cook Inlet and the Alaska Range, including Denali. As the park is on a steep slope, uses for other types of recreation are limited. During the summer, downtown residents, workers, and visitors occasionally sit on the grassy slope and eat lunch. Tourists visit the Eisenhower Memorial on its southern edge. A very limited amount of skiing, snowboarding, and sledding occurs. Second Avenue bisects the park diagonally, substantially

reducing the function of the park for recreational activities.

Use of and impacts to Quyana Park associated with the project have been avoided and minimized to the extent possible. As noted above, the project would use approximately 0.25 acres at the northern edge of the park to expand the parking area and provide a landscaped buffer between the park and the parking lot. Minor additional area will be required to accommodate the structural supports for the pedestrian overpass. Mitigation or enhancement measures that will be incorporated into the project include addition of landscaping to improve the appearance of the parking area, rehabilitation of the Eisenhower Memorial, and expansion of the plaza area of the memorial.

Public Comments Requested

ARRC encourages the public to submit comments regarding our determination of *de minimis* impacts to Quyana Park. The Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department requests comments be submitted by January 26.

- Comments may be submitted to
Parks and Recreation Department
P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519
Fax to (907) 278-6595
Email to koroseitj@muni.org.
- Comments may be submitted to
Alaska Railroad Corporation
Attn: Project Public Comment
P.O. Box 107500
Anchorage, AK 99510-7500
Fax to (907) 265-2365
Email: public_comment@akrr.com



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Your input is important to the Alaska Railroad as we finalize the Re-Evaluation of the Environmental Assessment for the Ship Creek Intermodal Transportation Center. Please write legibly (printing is appreciated). Attach additional sheets if necessary.

Name

Phone

Address

Email

Your Comments:

The Alaska Railroad welcomes your input. Please send your written comments:



Capital Projects - Public Comment
Alaska Railroad Corporation
P.O. Box 107500
Anchorage, AK 99510-7500



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or voice 265-2494
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COMMENT FORM