



# South Wasilla Rail Line Relocation

## PROJECT FACTS

### Project Scope

The Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC), in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), plans to straighten curves along the mainline track in South Wasilla, between ARRC Mileposts 154 and 158. This is part of a larger ARRC effort to reduce track curvature and improve safety along the main line track between Girdwood and Wasilla.

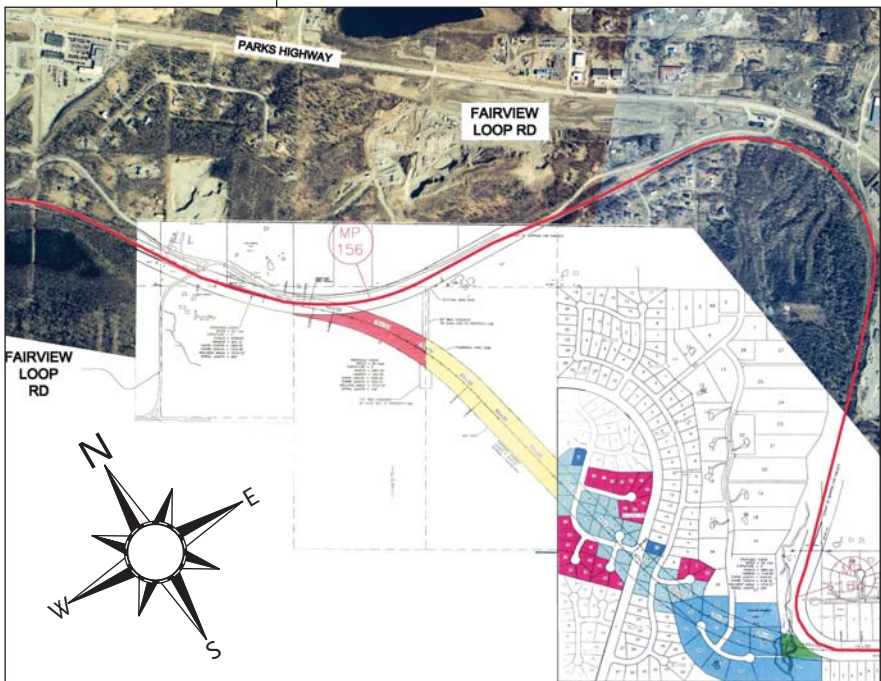
### Project Benefits

- The new alignment will eliminate five at-grade (same level) road-rail crossings, thereby improving crossing safety.
- Straighter track reduces the risk of derailment, thereby improving operational safety.
- Reducing track curvature will allow trains to travel safely at increased speeds, thereby shortening passenger train travel times, as well as improving freight train efficiency.
- Shortened passenger travel times will help make commuter rail service between Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley a viable option.
- Straighter track reduces operating costs for fuel and labor, and decreases wear-and-tear on train wheels and rail, lowering maintenance costs.
- Does not preclude a City of Wasilla rail bypass in the future, if funded.

### Status

- In spring 2003, a joint steering committee (formed in 2002 and including ARRC, Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities [ADOT&PF], City of Wasilla, Matanuska-Susitna Borough [MSB], and the Mat-Su Community Transit [MASCOT]) identified the South Wasilla Rail Line Relocation as one of six area projects to move forward for engineering and environmental analysis work.
- In late spring 2003, FTA approved advance right-of-way acquisition, so that land needed for the relocation can be purchased. ARRC is coordinating with area land owners.
- In June 2003, ARRC began developing an environmental assessment (EA). Initial public and agency scoping meetings were held July 23, 2003, in Wasilla.

### Phase One: ARRC Milepost 154 to 156



*Relocation would eliminate the large curve between Milepost 154 and 156.*

- Four initial alternatives were analyzed, including a no-build option. One build alternative was identified as the preferred alternative. It is recommended that the project be constructed in two phases: Phase One is approximately from MP 154 to 156; Phase Two is from MP 156 to 158.
- The EA was completed in late September 2005. A public meeting followed on October 18, midway into a 30-day public comment period that ended on November 2, 2005.
- The FTA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact in late January 2006.
- ARRC has also been participating in the MSB diagnostic team to evaluate options for the South Trunk Road Extension.
- ARRC is in the process of acquiring right-of-way for the Phase One corridor. Land acquisition is expected to be complete in 2010.

## Cost and Funding

Total funding dedicated to this project thus far is approximately \$4.9 million.

- The initial \$246,000 budget for conceptual engineering and the EA, was funded 80% by the FTA and 20% by ARRC, City of Wasilla and ADOT&PF.
- FTA granted \$2.72 million for preliminary engineering and land acquisition. This is funded 91% by FTA and 9% by ARRC.
- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) granted \$1.9 million to continue land acquisition. This is funded 91% by FHWA (via FTA) and 9% by ARRC.
- The remaining cost for engineering, land acquisition and construction for Phase One is estimated at \$30 million. Funding has not been identified.

Figure 1. Preferred Alternative.

