



Memorandum

Date: 10/14/2025
Project Name: Kodiak Sargent Creek and Russian River Bridges PEL Study
To: DOT&PF
From: HDR
Subject: Draft Purpose and Need Statement

Purpose

The purpose of this Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study is to identify a long-term and sustainable solution for replacing the Sargent Creek and Russian River bridges, and identify flood mitigation options.

Needs

The Project would address the following needs:

Replace two bridges that are in poor condition and have superstructure deficiencies

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) bridge inspections have found that both the Sargent Creek Bridge #0989 and Russian River Bridge #0990 have cracks in the concrete girders resulting in a “poor” superstructure rating. Both bridges are narrower than the adjoining Rezanof Drive roadway, in poor condition, and structurally deficient. The DOT&PF evaluated both bridges and determined that rehabilitation is not preferred because:

- The narrow width of the existing bridges would not be improved;
- Hydraulic capacity under the bridge would not be improved;
- Superstructure replacement is not common in Alaska; and
- A detour bridge for construction would likely be needed.

Replacement of these two bridges would reduce the number of bridges in Alaska categorized as poor, reduce the total person miles traveled over bridges in poor condition, and reduce the number of bridges that do not meet current geometric design standards.

Reduce flooding in the Bells Flats and Russian Creek Subdivisions and on Sargent Creek Road

The community has expressed concern about the repetitive flooding in the Bells Flat and Russian Creek Subdivisions as well as Sargent Creek Road, the only road that provides access to and from these subdivisions. These subdivisions are located partly in the Sargent Creek and

Kodiak Sargent Creek and Russian River Bridges PEL Study

Memorandum

Russian River floodplains, upstream of the two bridges, and have experienced increased flooding and erosion of property and roads in recent years. Sediment (gravel) accumulation behind the bridges has forced the stream and river to enter the bridges at an angle, and may be contributing to the flooding and channel instability upstream. Replacing these bridges to better align with flows, provide increased capacity to move water and sediment, and implement a sediment management plan, if needed, would help reduce the likelihood of these structures contributing to neighborhood and Sargent Creek Road flooding.

Improve safety, efficiency, and reliability for moving people and goods between Kodiak and the area beyond Womens Bay

The existing bridges on Rezanof Drive provide the only access between Kodiak proper and the area to the south, an essential link for local businesses, and a neighborhood with approximately 800 residents. Additionally, these bridges are used to access recreational and subsistence areas. The loss of these bridges would also pose life and safety threats as it would limit the provision of emergency services. These bridges do not have pedestrian or multimodal facilities.

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of this PEL Study are:

- **Provide a 75-year service life after construction.** The replacement bridges will be designed to current design standards, meet load and traffic requirements typical for regional traffic, and provide accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **Improve flood resilience.** Local residents report that roads and buildings in the area are flooded multiple times every year. Bridges with adequate hydrologic capacity to minimize flooding in the area are less vulnerable to extreme weather events.
- **Enhance active transportation and recreational opportunities.** The Womens Bay area is used for fishing, wildlife viewing, and trail access. Currently, the area has one dedicated parking area. Vehicles are often parked along the side of the road, which results in pedestrians walking along the edge of the road; this is especially a problem with bears present. The community desires having a dedicated space for pedestrians to cross both bridges. Koniag, the Alaska Native corporation for this region, plans to develop the Russian River Use Area, which would include a parking area and boardwalk in the Russian River/Sargent Creek area to provide people with additional wildlife viewing opportunities. The southernmost section of the planned Kodiak Short Trail project terminates at Sargent Creek.
- **Identify partnership opportunities.** A long-term solution requires cooperation from multiple agencies due to land ownership, environmental concerns, and permitting needs. The PEL will engage the State of Alaska (DOT&PF), Kodiak Island Borough, the U.S. Coast Guard, Leisnoi Incorporated (the Alaksa Native village corporation), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and other stakeholders in the process.

Kodiak Sargent Creek and Russian River Bridges PEL Study

Memorandum

- **Reduce project delivery costs and time.** Design and construction of replacement bridges could take 3 to 4 years. The information gathered as part of the PEL can be used to reduce design and construction costs and duration.
- **Minimize construction impacts on local residents and businesses.**