

**Seward Highway: Milepost 101.5 Bird Creek Parking Lot****FY2001 Request:****\$1,000,000****Reference No:****33455****AP/AL:** Allocation**Project Type:** Construction**Category:** Transportation**Location:** Bird Creek**Contact:** Tom Brigham**House District:** Hillside (HD 18)**Contact Phone:** (907)465-4070**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2000 - 06/30/2004**Appropriation:** Surface Transportation Program**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

This project, at Milepost 101.5 on the Seward Highway, will channel through traffic safely within this popular recreational destination and fishery at Bird Creek. It will develop a parking area that provides for anglers as well as safe pedestrian routes to fishing opportunities. There will also be turning pockets to separate recreational users of the area from through traffic and improved pedestrian connections to the fishery. This project will decrease congestion and traffic conflict caused by overflow parking on highway shoulders where pedestrians mingle with highway traffic.

<b>Funding:</b>	<b>FY2001</b>	<b>FY2002</b>	<b>FY2003</b>	<b>FY2004</b>	<b>FY2005</b>	<b>FY2006</b>	<b>Total</b>
Fed Rcpts	\$1,000,000						\$1,000,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

**Operating & Maintenance Costs:**

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Additional Information / Prior Funding History:****Project Description/Justification:**

The goal of this project is to create a highway corridor that channels through traffic safely within this popular recreational fishery at Bird Creek and to develop a parking area that provides adequate parking for anglers and safe pedestrian routes to fishing opportunities. Seward Highway traffic is interrupted or delayed at the project location as a result of vehicles entering and leaving the highway travel lanes to park on the road shoulders during the salmon fishing season. Pedestrians walk across and immediately adjacent to this 55 mile per hour highway. They access their vehicles, walk to the creek and create a conflict for themselves and the traveling public. In addition, sight distance is limited through this busy area due to roadway geometrics.

The Seward Highway traverses a narrow corridor between the Turnagain Arm of Cook Inlet and the Chugach Mountains. It is literally caught between tidally influenced waters and basalt cliffs. The Seward Highway is classified as a principle arterial highway and in the project location is comprised of two 12-foot travel lanes with 8-foot paved shoulders. This highway is the only surface transportation facility for motorized vehicles for access between the Kenai Peninsula and the rest of Southcentral Alaska. As such, it is a vital surface transportation link for the majority of travelers. The Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) in the area of the project is only 6,705. However, that does not give one an appreciation for the seasonal variation (summer) when this two-lane highway approaches 14,200 Monthly Average Daily Traffic. The highest daily count for 1998 is 19,364 with an average of the ten highest days at 17,197. Consequently, conflict between through travelers and Bird Creek Fishery users is highest during the highest use months (summer).

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Approaching the project area from the southeast, the highway passes through the village of Bird Creek, population 800, and crosses over Bird Creek on a 40-foot wide steel reinforced concrete bridge with pedestrian accommodations on both sides. After crossing the creek, the highway grade rises and curves north around a rock headland towards Anchorage. The existing right-of-way corridor is 300 feet wide and is bordered by the Chugach State Park on both sides. The Alaska Railroad is adjacent to the highway on the Turnagain Arm side of the road.

Chugach State Park operates a campground and two parking facilities just off the Seward Highway, southeast of Bird Creek. The existing Chugach State Park facilities were developed in part to accommodate the vehicles associated with the very popular salmon fishery at Bird Creek. These facilities are not large enough to accommodate demand and overflow parking occurs on the shoulders of this important north/south highway.