

FAIRBANKS FIELD OFFICE Regulatory Division (1145) CEPOA-RD 1046 Marks Road Fort Wainwright, Alaska 99703

Public Notice of Application for Permit

PUBLIC NOTICE DATE: January 16, 2024

EXPIRATION DATE: February 15, 2024

REFERENCE NUMBER: POA-2023-00555

WATERWAYS: Nenana River, Little Nenana

River, East Middle River, West

Middle River, Wetlands

Interested parties are hereby notified that a Department of the Army permit application has been received for work in waters of the United States as described below and shown on the enclosed project drawings.

All comments regarding this Public Notice should be sent to the address noted above. If you desire to submit your comments by email, you should send it to the Project Manager's email as listed below or to regpagemaster@usace.army.mil. All comments should include the Public Notice reference number listed above.

All comments should reach this office no later than the expiration date of this Public Notice to become part of the record and be considered in the decision. Please contact Carolyn Farmer at (561) 785-5634 or by email at carolyn.h.farmer@usace.army.mil if further information is desired concerning this notice.

<u>APPLICANT</u>: Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), 2301 Peger Road, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709.

<u>LOCATION</u>: The project site is located at Latitude 64.580985° N., Longitude -149.302400° W.; west of the City of Nenana, Alaska.

<u>PURPOSE</u>: The purpose of the proposed project is to widen Totchaket Road and install additional cross-drainage culverts along the roadway. This project is needed to standardize the road width to accommodate an American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standard, 24' driving surface and alleviate seasonal flooding of the roadway due to snow melt through raising of the road elevation in areas experiencing settlement and providing adequate drainage structures for movement of water from one side of the road to the other.

<u>PROPOSED WORK</u>: The DOT&PF is proposing to rehabilitate the existing 12.1-mile Nenana-Totchaket Road consisting of a one-lane dirt road that is experiencing degradation due to springtime snow melt. The proposed Nenana-Totchaket Road Rehabilitation Project is entirely State funded.

The existing approximately 12.1 miles of Totchaket Road is proposed to be widened from the current variable 15-24 feet width to a standard 24-foot driving surface. Widening of the driving surface of the roadway will result in a widening of the overall footprint of Totchaket Road from approximately 24 feet to a maximum extent of approximately 40 feet. The road widening will be accomplished using the same materials used to construct the original road; sand will be used for the road base and crushed aggregate will be used to surface the road. Road widening in delineated wetlands will be minimized to the furthest extent practicable by filling in uplands when only one side of the road has been delineated as wetland except in cases where fill in wetlands is required in order to maintain road alignment and to account for settling of road embankments adjacent to wetlands. Road embankments will be built at 3:1 for sections of the road that traverse wetlands in order to reduce overall road footprint and to reduce the amount of fill placed in these areas.

In addition, the installation of approximately ten (10) new cross-drainage culverts and replacement of approximately seven (7) existing cross-drainage culverts is proposed to help alleviate seasonal flooding where the current road alignment bisects wetland features. Newly installed and replacement culverts are anticipated to be 24-inch diameter corrugated metal pipes. Culvert locations have been determined through site visits during spring break up in 2022 and 2023. Some adjustments to exact culvert locations may be required during construction but are not anticipated to deviate significantly from the proposed locations. By adding cross-drainage culverts to the proposed areas, connectivity of wetland complexes will be promoted and siltation of wetlands due to water overtopping the road will be reduced.

The proposed project is anticipated to result in the permanent loss of approximately 1.625 acres (70,806 square feet) of Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) through the placement of approximately 5,326 cubic yards (cy) of sand extracted from existing material sources along Totchaket Road. Permanent impacts to WOTUS will result from widening of the existing Totchaket Road in areas where settlement has occurred and where the road surface is less than the standard 24 feet width.

Additionally, the proposed action is anticipated to result in approximately 2.669 acres (116,262 square feet) of temporary impacts to WOTUS. Temporary impacts will result primarily from clearing of vegetation from the toe of the road embankment out approximately 10 feet. Temporary impacts may also result from the need for temporary work zones around the ends of each proposed new and replacement culvert. Temporary work zones will be used in cases where trenchless culvert installation is preferred over closing road access and excavating the road prism for trench installation. Temporary work zones will be established as a 10 feet (W) x 20 feet (L) area extending from the ends on each proposed and known culvert location. Temporary impacts are not anticipated to result in temporary placement of fill material in WOTUS.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Previous projects were authorized by the Corps along Totchaket road. They were determined to have independent utility from the proposed road widening and include the replacement of the existing bridges crossing the Little Nenana River, West Middle River, and East Middle River were permitted under POA-2023-00248, POA-2023-00249, and POA-2023-00250 respectively. In addition, work associated with the improvement and stabilization of the section of Totchaket Road crossing 5-Mile Slough was authorized under POA-2023-00091.

<u>APPLICANT PROPOSED MITIGATION:</u> For each project action with permanent and/or temporary impacts, avoidance and minimization measures are proposed and summarized below.

During the process, DOT&PF made efforts to avoid and minimize impacts to WOTUS in the project area to the greatest extent practical through the following measures:

- Road widening in delineated wetlands will be minimized to the furthest extent practicable by filling in uplands when only one side of the road has been delineated as wetland except in cases where fill in wetlands is required to maintain road alignment and to account for settling of road embankments adjacent to wetlands.
- Drainage facilities have been designed to maintain, replicate, or improve existing drainage conditions to reduce the likelihood of water overtopping the roadway, leading to sedimentation of adjacent wetlands.
- Roadside slopes will be constructed with a maximum slope of 3:1 to minimize the overall footprint of the roadway while still ensuring stability of road embankments.
- No fueling or maintenance of vehicles or construction equipment will occur within 100' of wetlands or waterbodies.
- Construction vehicles will be cleaned of vegetative debris prior to entering the limits of construction to limit the spread of invasive species.
- A 25-foot vegetative buffer beyond temporary work zones/vegetation clearing areas will be maintained in wetland areas along the length of the proposed project area.
- Vegetation clearing in wetland areas outside of the proposed footprint will be accomplished while soils are frozen or by hand using only low-pressure, wheeled ATVs for access in order to minimize temporary impacts to wetlands.

• Mechanical vegetation clearing activities will be conducted outside of the USFWS recommended timing window for land disturbance and vegetation clearing in order to avoid take of migratory bird nests within the project area.

Given the steps provided above to avoid and minimize unavoidable wetland impacts, DOT&PF is not proposing compensatory mitigation for this project.

<u>WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION</u>: A permit for the described work will not be issued until a certification or waiver of certification, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (Public Law 95-217), has been received from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

<u>CULTURAL RESOURCES</u>: AKDOT&PF contracted with Stantec Consulting Services Inc. to conduct a cultural resource survey for the existing road segment of the Nenana-Totchaket Road Improvement Project, and the permit area for this undertaking falls within the area of potential effects inventoried as part of that investigation. On August 18, 2022, DOT&PF submitted a finding of effect letter to the Office of History and Archaeology (OHA) with a finding of no historic properties adversely affected for the Nenana-Totchaket Road project. On August 26, 2022, the Chief of OHA conditionally concurred with the portion of the August 18, 2022, findings.

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), this application is being coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Federally recognized Tribes, and other consulting parties. Any comments SHPO, federally recognized Tribes, other consulting parties, and ACHP may have concerning presently unknown archeological or historic data that may be lost or destroyed by work under the requested permit will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

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<u>ENDANGERED SPECIES</u>: According to a search of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPAC) database, there are no federally listed species or their designated critical habitats within or adjacent to the project area. The database does note that Bald and Golden Eagles may be found in the project area. A survey for eagle and raptor nests was completed during field studies on June 7, 2022, no nests were found in or near the project area as a result of the effort.

Any comments the USFWS or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) may have concerning endangered or threatened wildlife or plants or their critical habitat will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

<u>ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT</u>: The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996, requires all Federal agencies to consult with the NMFS on all actions, or proposed actions, permitted, funded, or undertaken by the agency, that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).

No EFH species are known to occur within the project area.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION: The Corps fully supports tribal self-governance and government-to-government relations between Federally recognized Tribes and the Federal government. Tribes with protected rights or resources that could be significantly affected by a proposed Federal action (e.g., a permit decision) have the right to consult with the Alaska District on a government-to-government basis. Views of each Tribe regarding protected rights and resources will be accorded due consideration in this process. This public notice serves as notification to the Tribes within the area potentially affected by the proposed work and invites their participation in the Federal decision-making process regarding the protected Tribal right or resource. Consultation may be initiated by the affected Tribe upon written request to the District Commander during the public comment period.

<u>PUBLIC HEARING</u>: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, reasons for holding a public hearing.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity and its intended use on the public interest. Evaluation of the probable impacts, which the proposed activity may have on the public interest, requires a careful weighing of all the factors that become relevant in each particular case. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. The outcome of the general balancing process would determine whether to authorize a proposal, and if so, the conditions under which it will be allowed to occur. The decision should reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal, must be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. For activities involving 404 discharges, a permit will be denied if the discharge that would be authorized by such permit would not comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's 404(b)(I) guidelines. Subject to the preceding sentence and any other applicable guidelines or criteria (see Sections 320.2 and 320.3), a permit will be granted unless the District Commander determines that it would be contrary to the public interest.

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

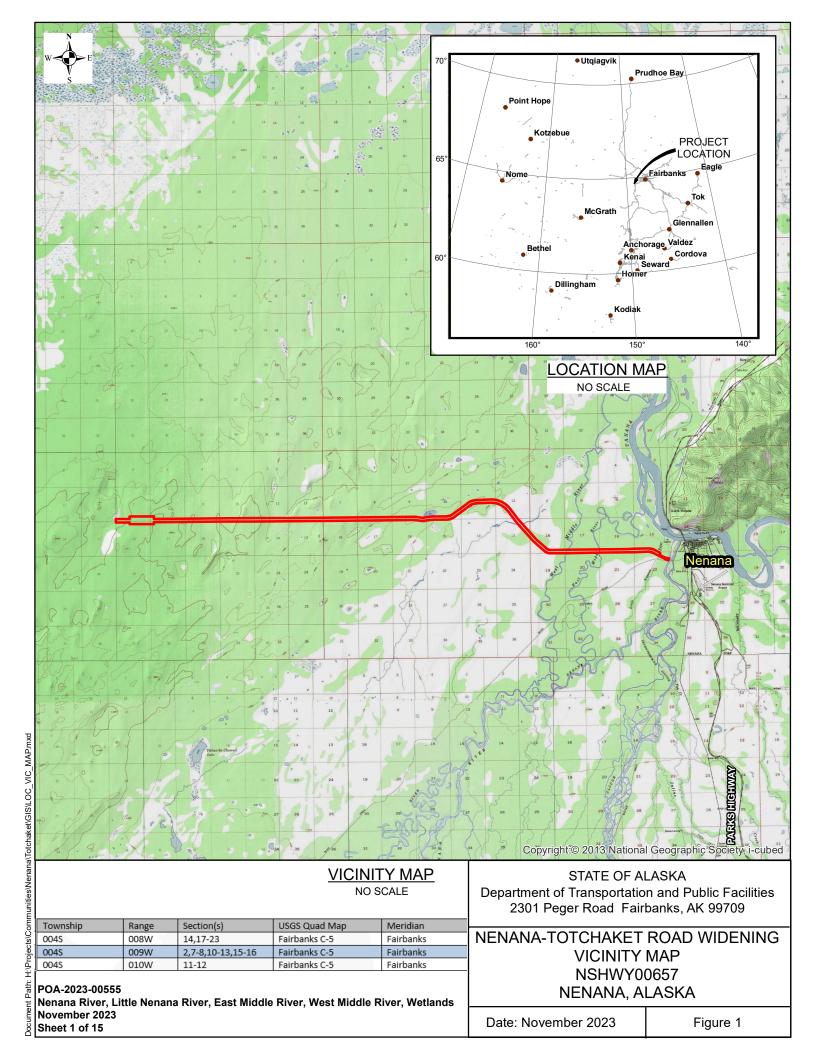
<u>AUTHORITY</u>: This permit will be issued or denied under the following authorities:

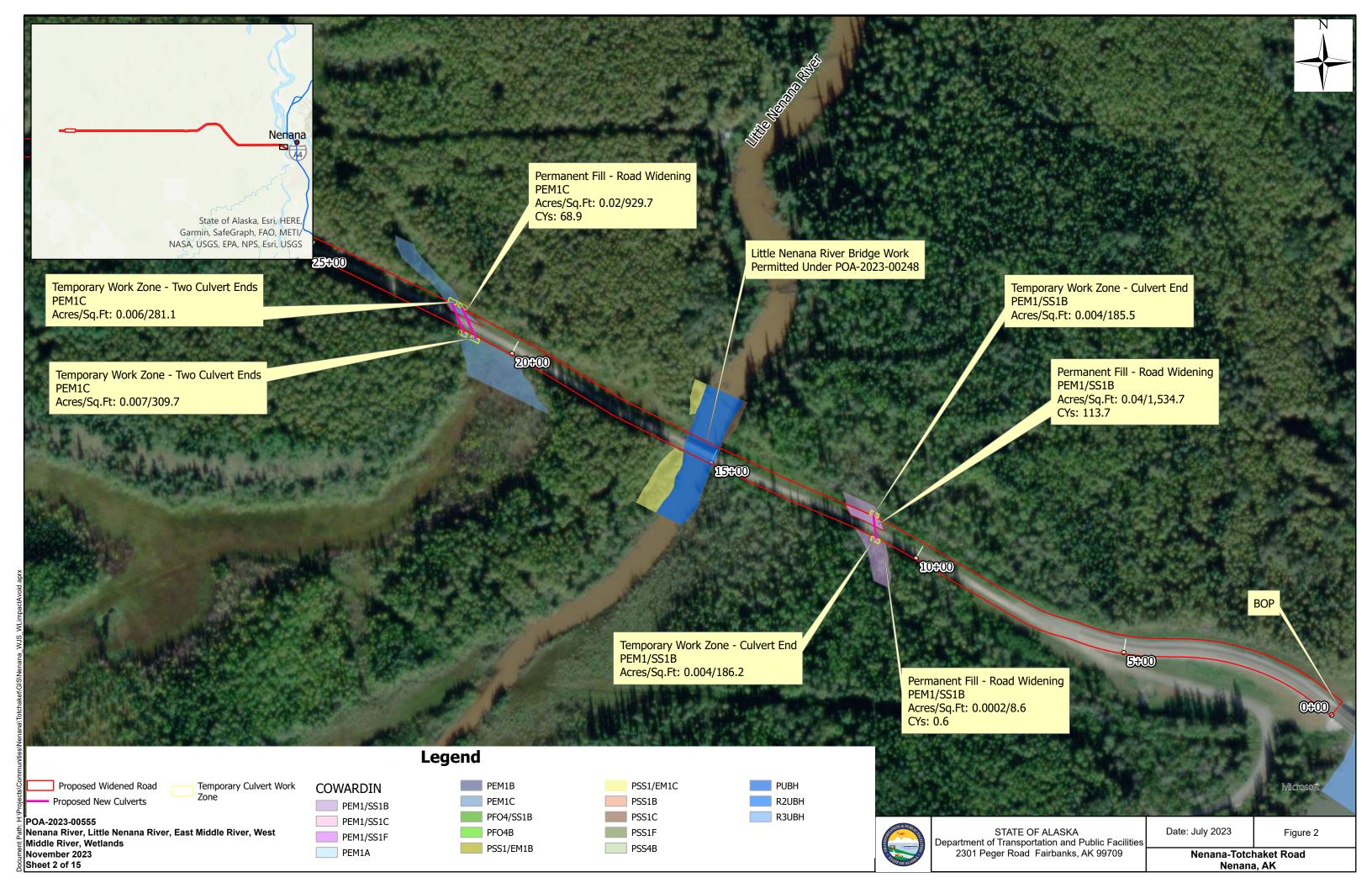
(X) Discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States – Section 404 Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). Therefore, our public interest review will consider the guidelines set forth under Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR 230).

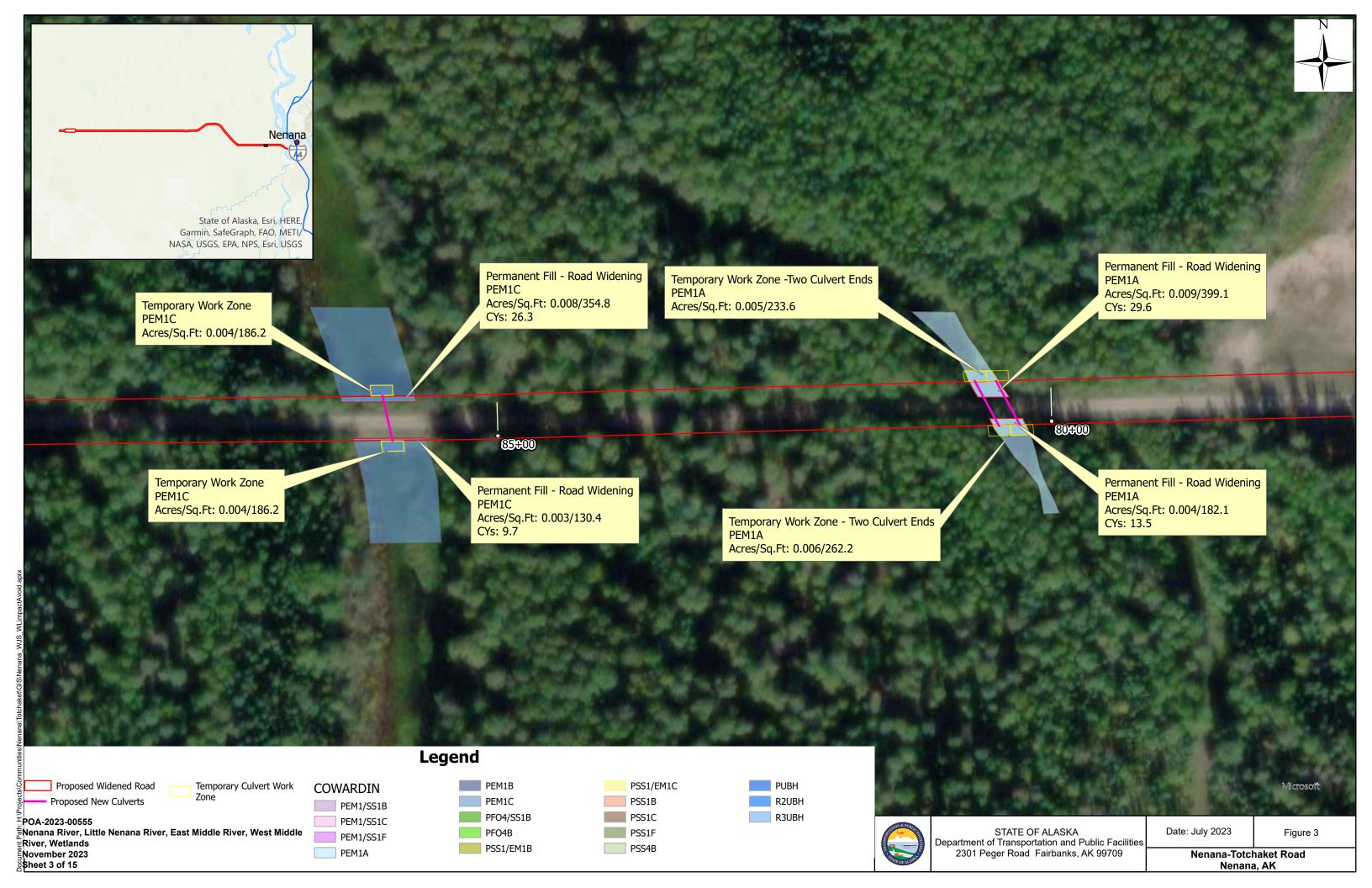
Project drawings are enclosed with this Public Notice.

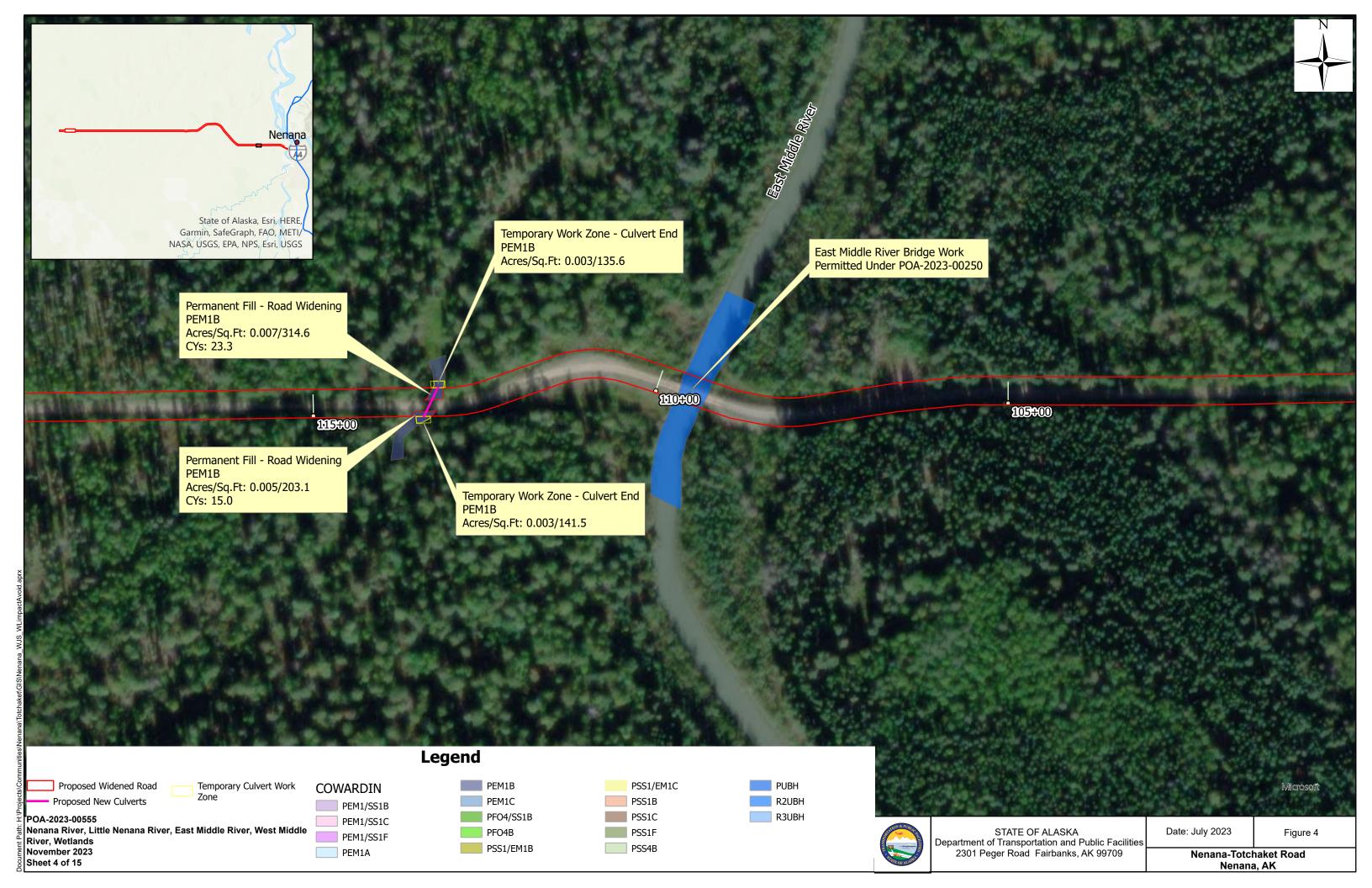
District Commander U.S. Army, Corps

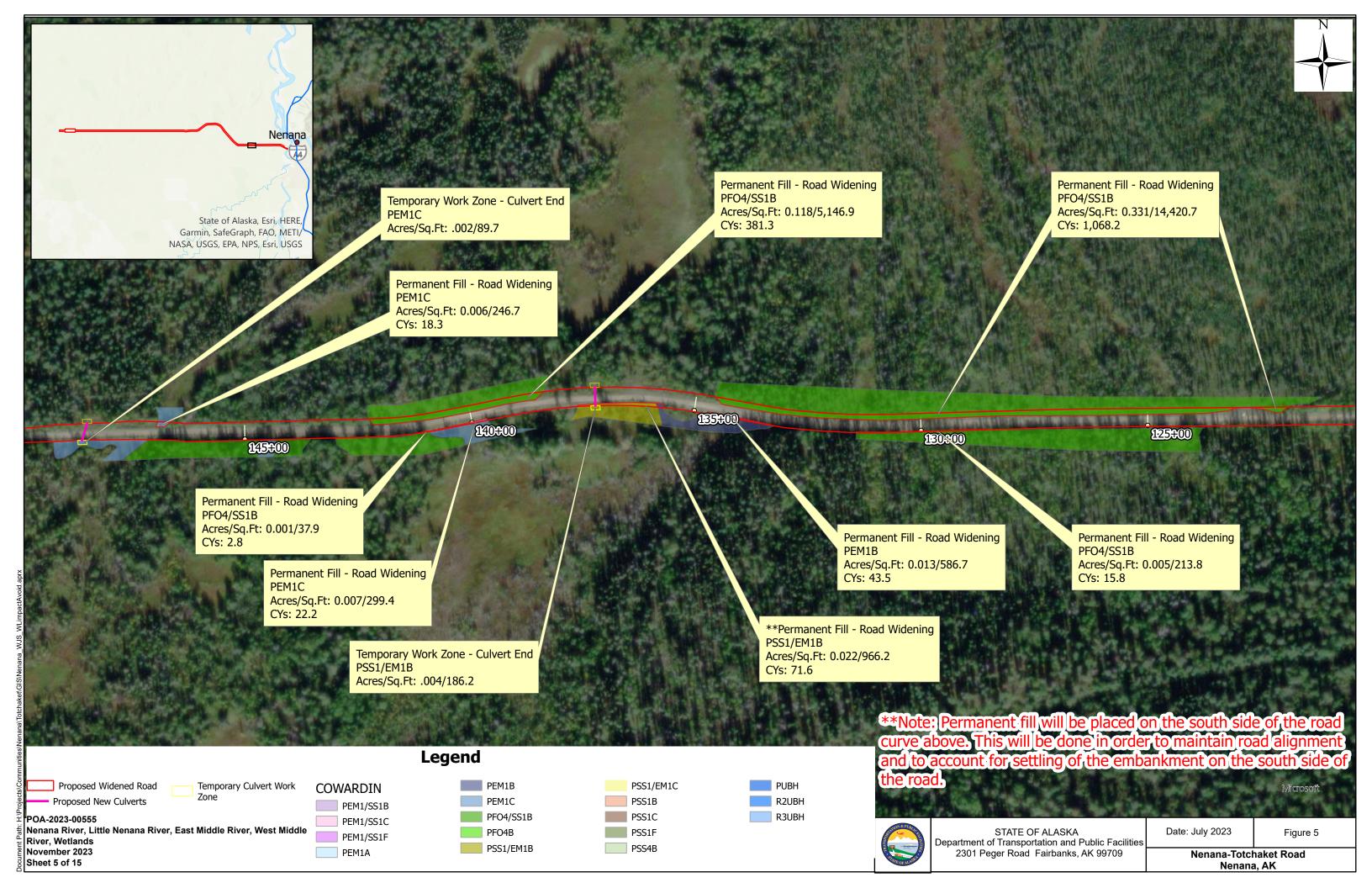
Enclosures

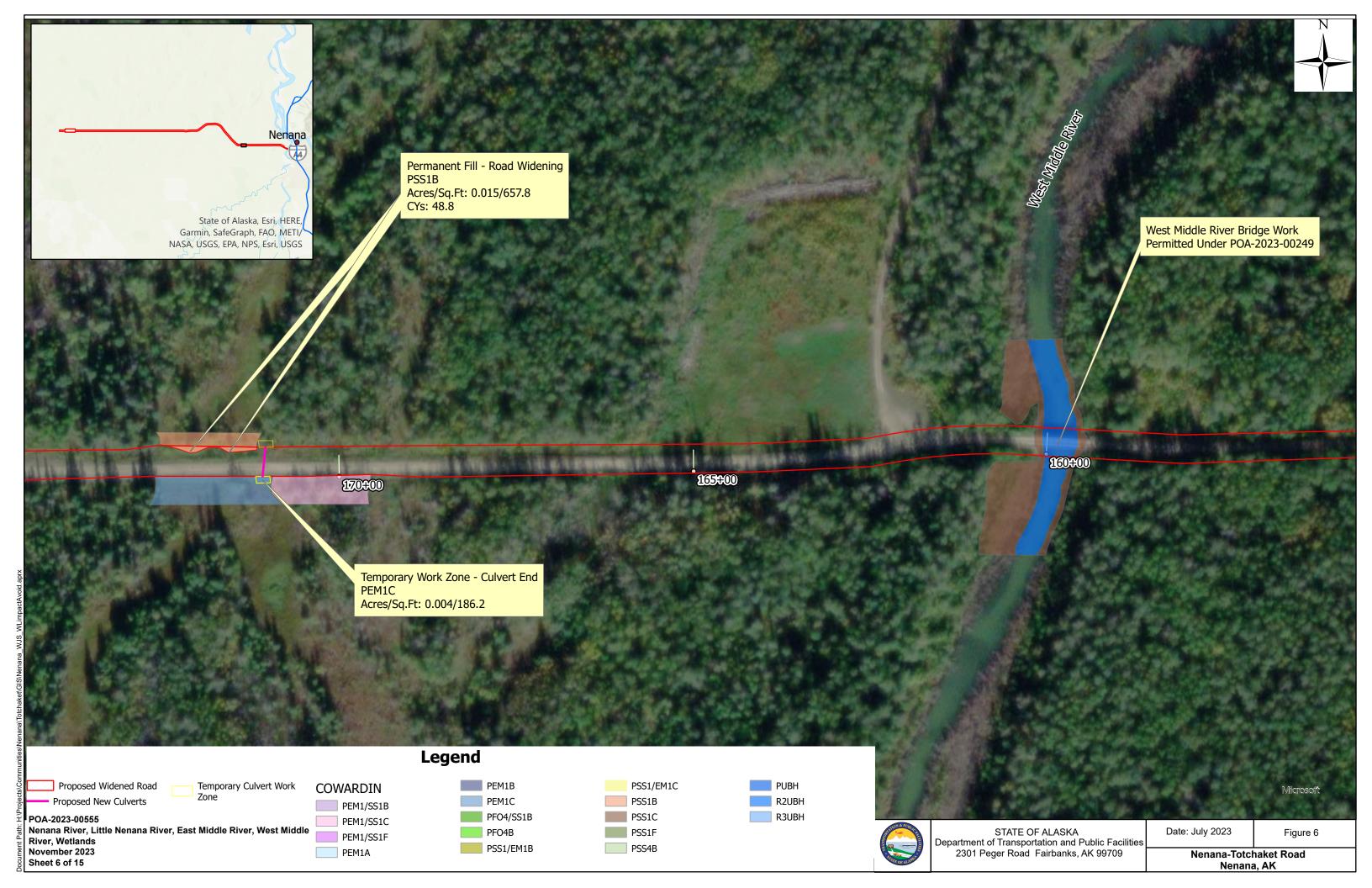


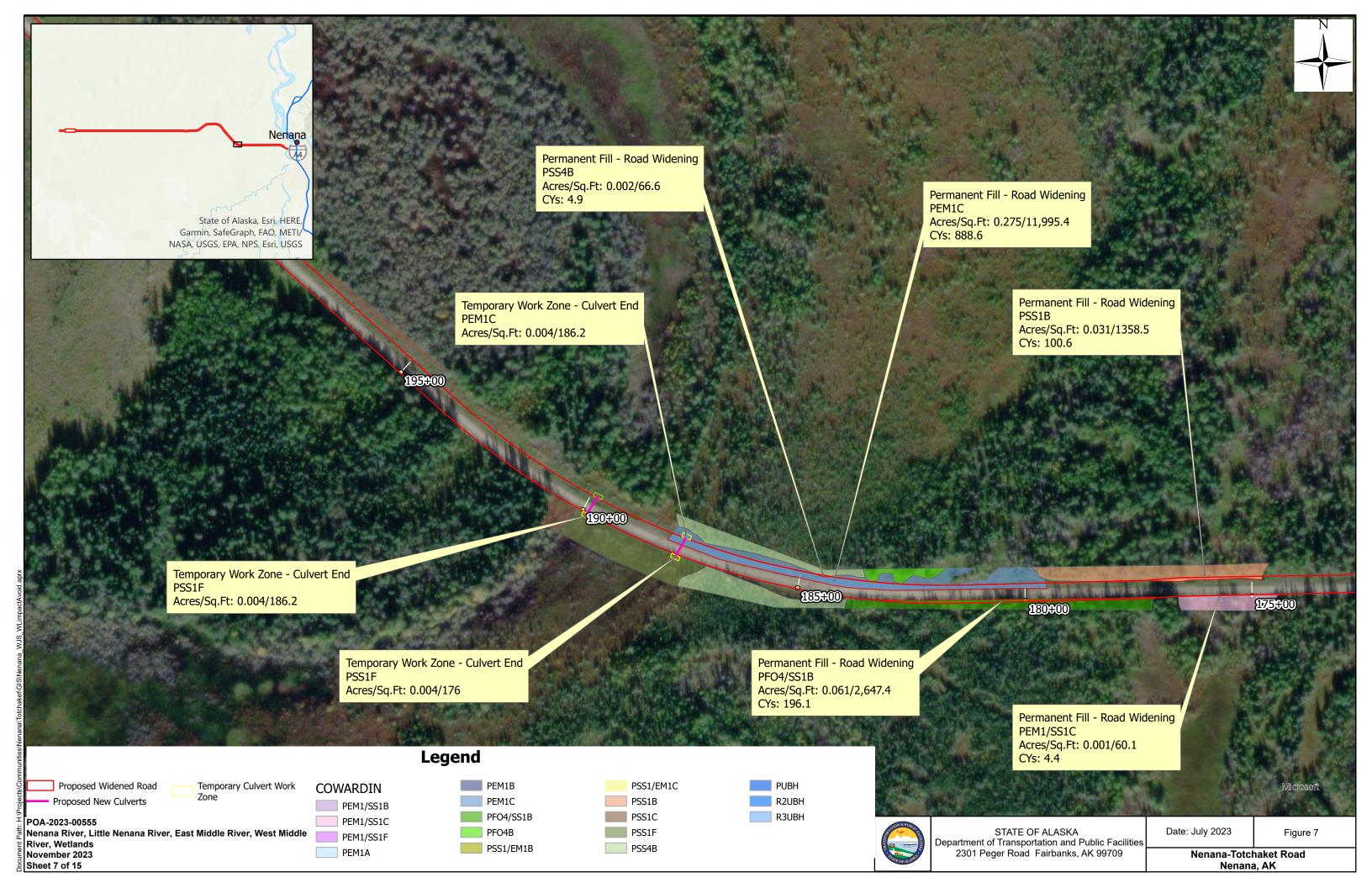


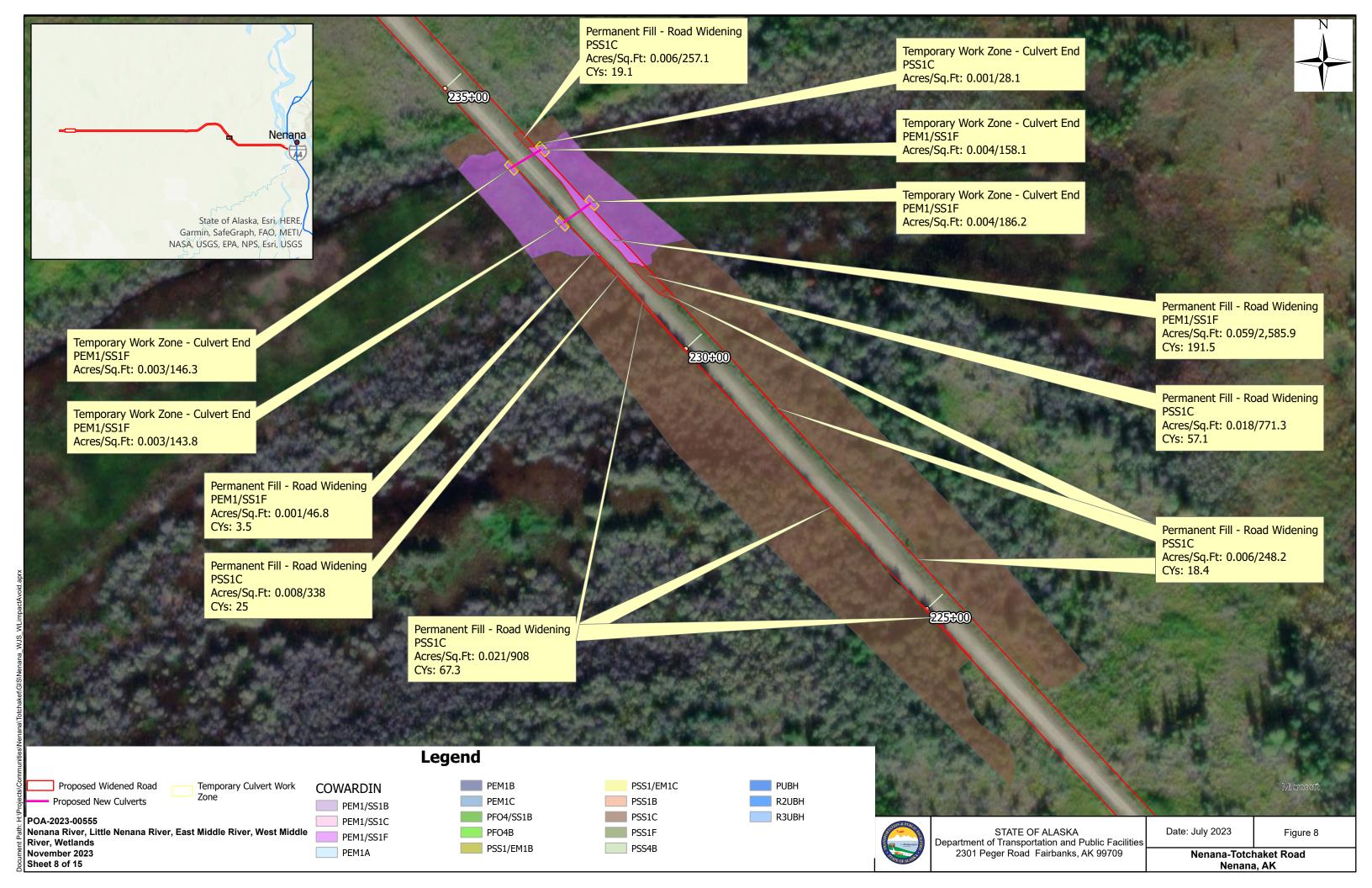


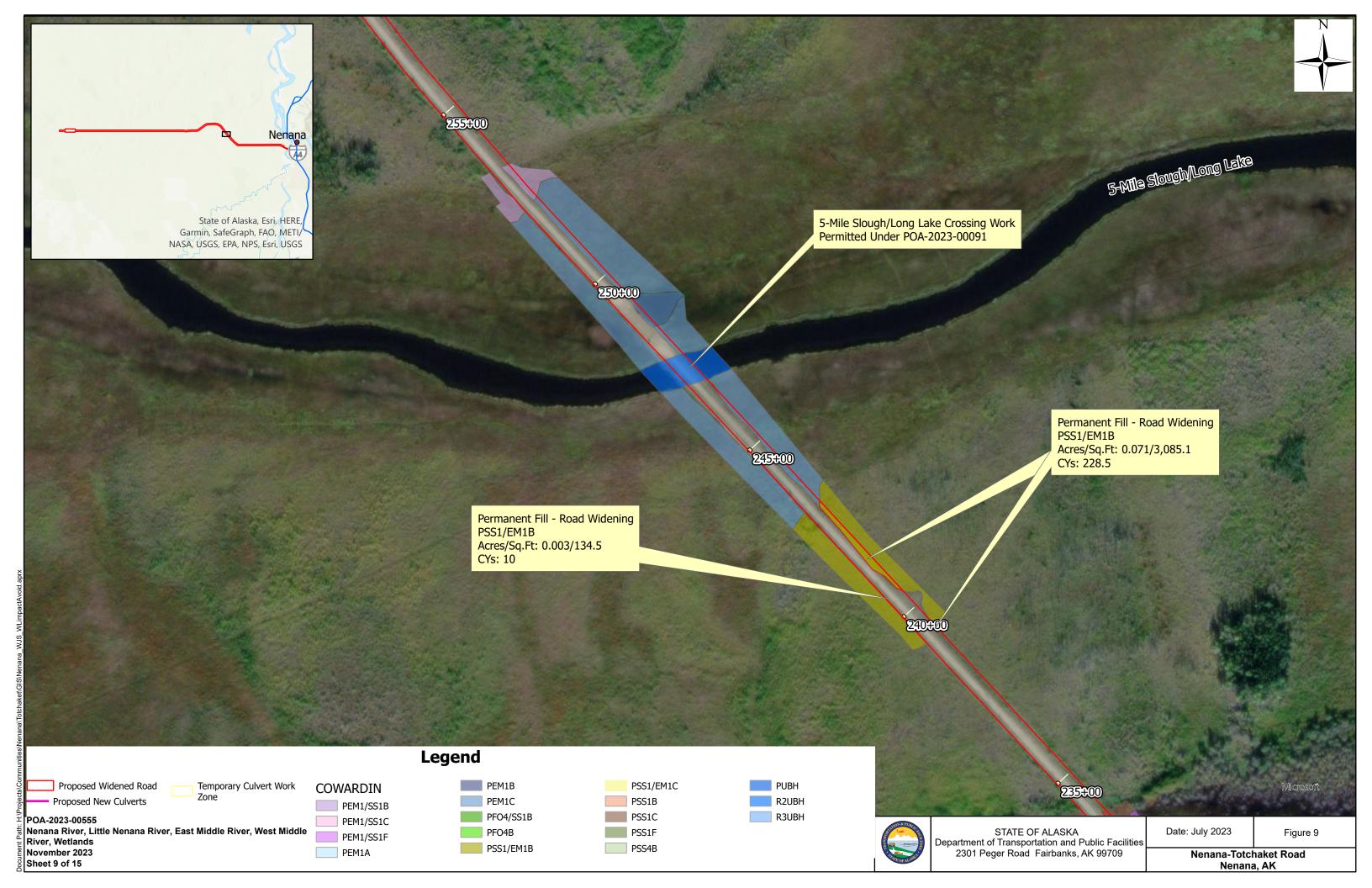


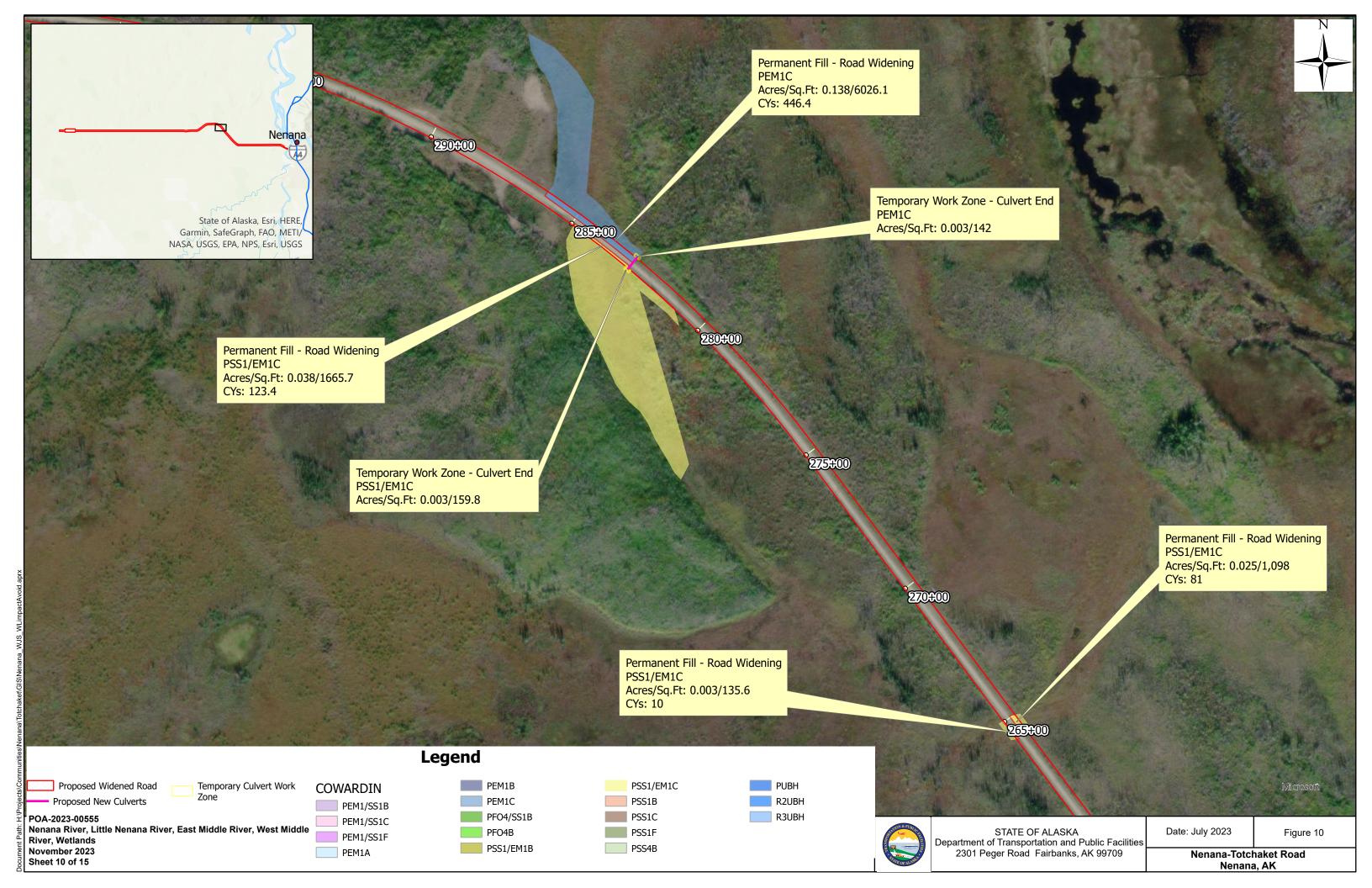


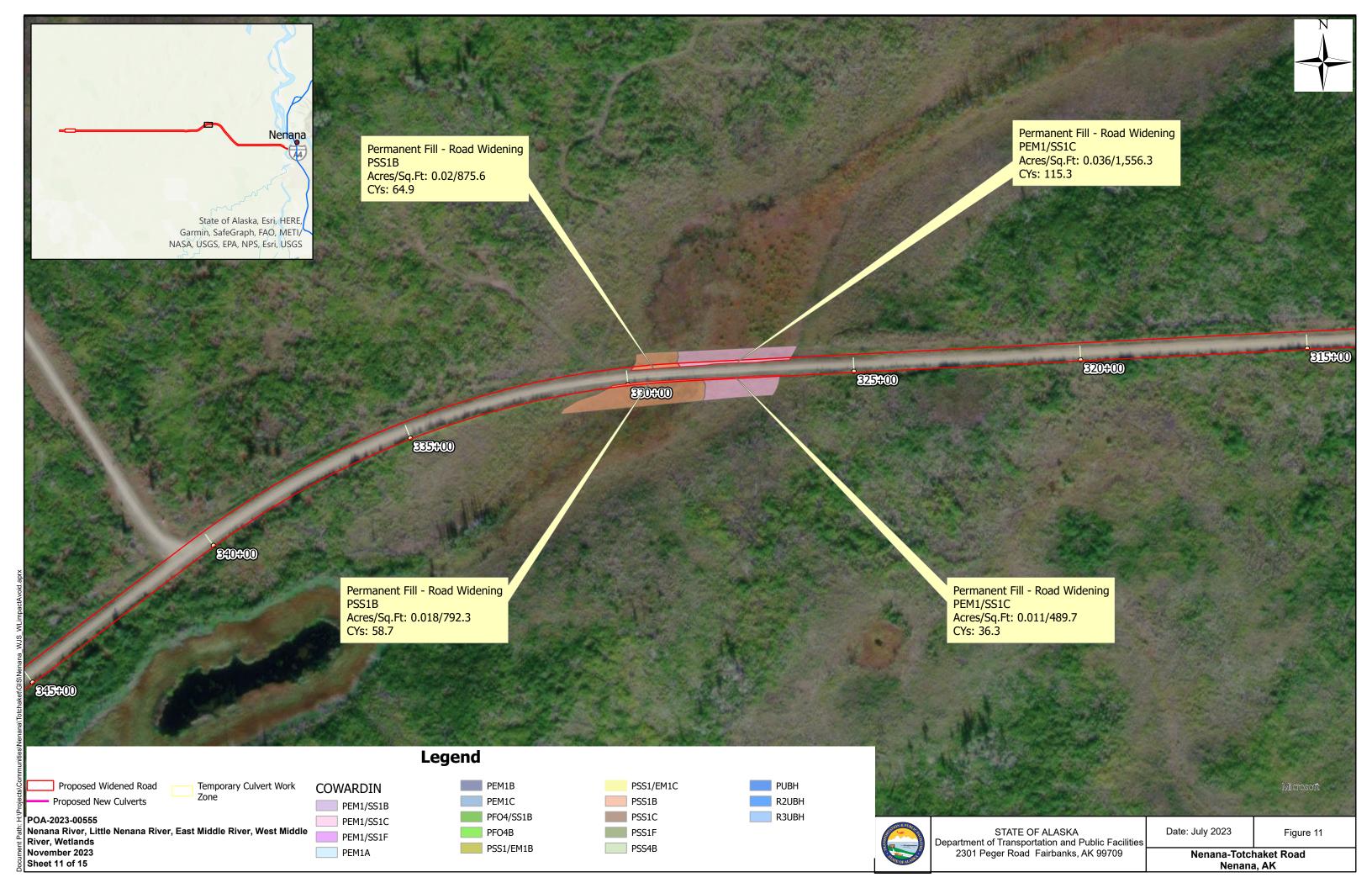


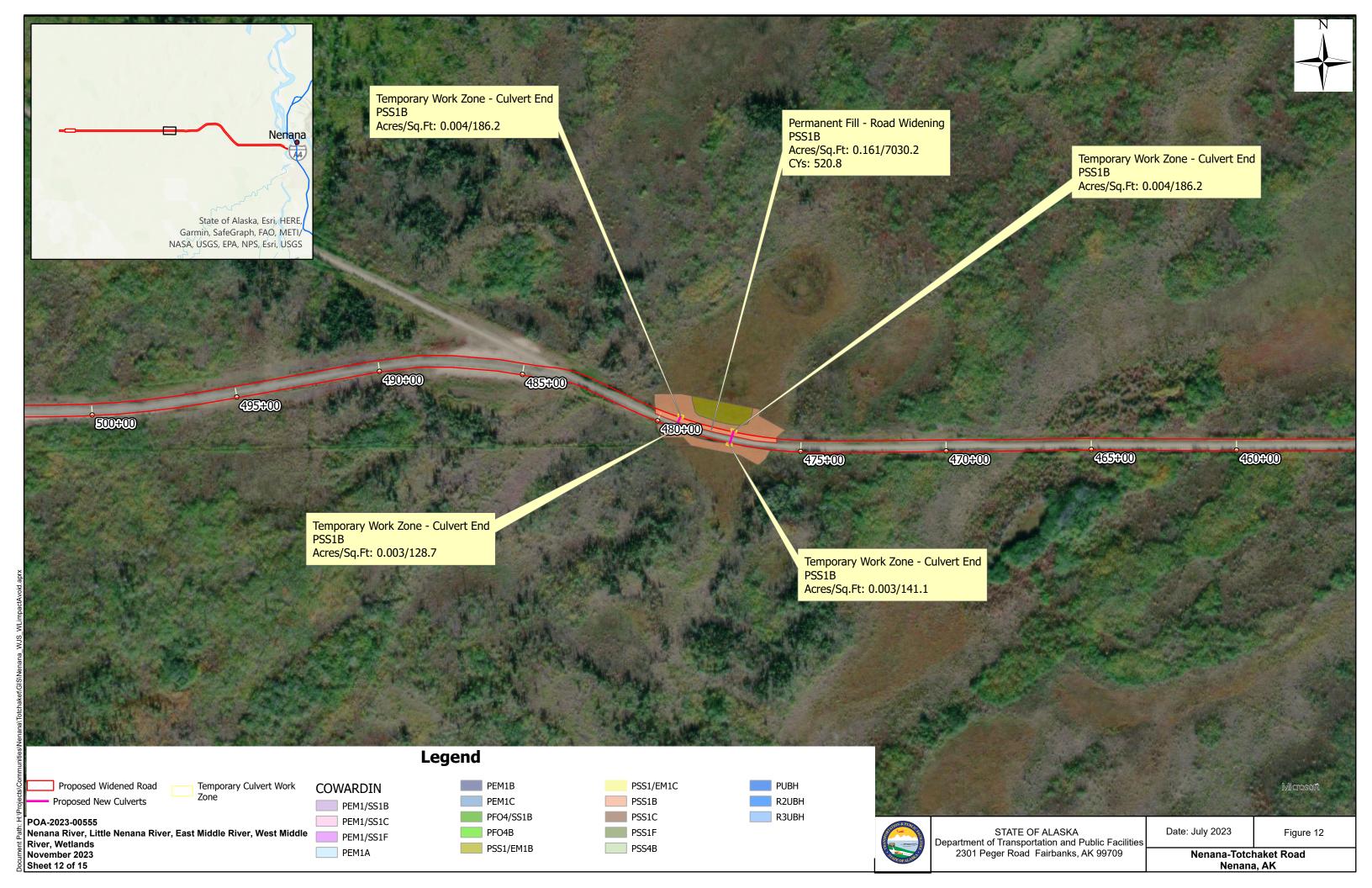




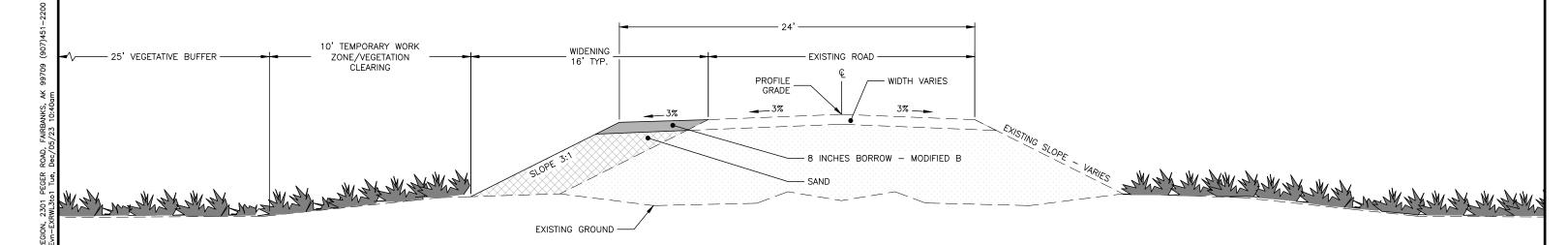








NO.	DATE	REVISION	STATE	PROJECT DESIGNATION	YEAR	SHEET NO.	TOTA SHEE
			ALASKA		####		####



TYPICAL SECTION A
WIDENING EXISTING ROAD (ONE SIDE)

NOTES:

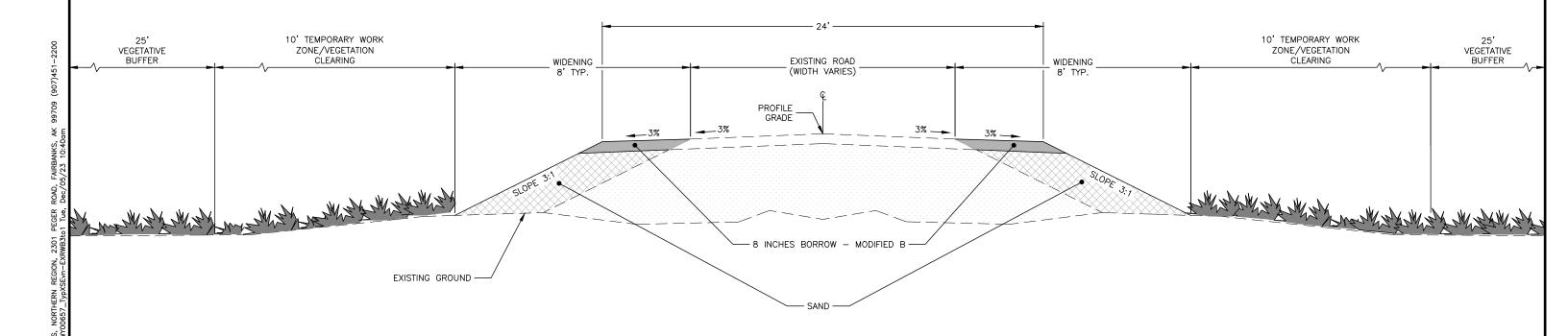
- 1. TRANSITION IN AND OUT OF EXISTING ROAD AS DIRECTED BY ENGINEER.
- 2. IF STANDING WATER OR EMERGENT WETLANDS ARE WITHIN THE 10' WORK AREA OR 25' VEGETATIVE BUFFER, CONTRACTOR SHALL INSTALL PERIMETER CONTROL BMPS.
- 3. TEMPORARY WORK ZONE EXTENDS 10' BEYOND TOW OF ROAD. THIS AREA WILL BE FOR EQUIPMENT ACCESS RELATED TO INSTALLATION OF NEW CROSS-DRAINAGE CULVERTS.
- 4. VEGETATIVE BUFFER EXTENDS OUTWARD 25' FROM THE TEMPORARY WORK ZONE. THIS AREA WILL SERVE AS A NATURAL VEGETATIVE SCREEN DURING CONSTRUCTION.

Figure 13



NO. DATE REVISION STATE PROJECT DESIGNATION YEAR SHEET TOTAL SHEETS

ALASKA ---- #### ---- ####



TYPICAL SECTION B

NOTES

- 1. TRANSITION IN AND OUT OF EXISTING ROAD AS DIRECTED BY ENGINEER.
- 2. IF STANDING WATER OR EMERGENT WETLANDS ARE WITHIN THE 10' WORK AREA OR 25' VEGETATIVE BUFFER, CONTRACTOR SHALL INSTALL PERIMETER CONTROL BMPS.
- 3. TEMPORARY WORK ZONE EXTENDS 10' BEYOND TOW OF ROAD. THIS AREA WILL BE FOR EQUIPMENT ACCESS RELATED TO INSTALLATION OF NEW CROSS—DRAINAGE CULVERTS.
- 4. VEGETATIVE BUFFER EXTENDS OUTWARD 25' FROM THE TEMPORARY WORK ZONE. THIS AREA WILL SERVE AS A NATURAL VEGETATIVE SCREEN DURING CONSTRUCTION.

WIDENING EXISTING ROAD (BOTH SIDES)

Figure 14



NO.	DATE	REVISION	STATE	PROJECT DESIGNATION	YEAR	SHEET NO.	TOTAL SHEETS
			ALASKA		####		####

CULVERTS TABLE				
STATION	DIAMETER (IN)	LENGTH		
11+40	24	55		
21+20	24	75		
21+51	24	85		
80+33	24	45		
80+58	24	45		
85+92	24	90		
113+34	24	90		
137+27	24	45		
148+49	24	55		
171+20	24	55		
187+75	24	45		
189+75	24	45		
232+50	24	45		
233+50	24	45		
282+89	24	40		
477+52	24	65		
479+50	24	40		

NOTE:

DATA COLLECTED BY FIELD MAP ON SITE VISIT. CULVERT LOCATION IS APPROX. STATION ON THE ALIGNMENT AND MAY BE ADJUSTED TO FIELD FIELD CONDITIONS.

BY: STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC FACILITIES, NORTHERN REGION, 2301 PEGER ROAD, FAIRBANKS, AK 99709 (907)451-2200 unities\Nendana\totchaket\Design\stage 1b_road widening\NTP1\2 CAD\NSHWY00857_TypXSEvn-Culverts Tue, Dec/05/23 10:40am

Figure 15