

Statement of Significance

Spenard Road

Prepared for

**Alaska Department of
Transportation and Public
Facilities**

December 2014

*DOT&PF Note October 2015:
Rept does not address integrity;
NRHP eligibility status not determined*

Statement of Significance

Spenard Road

Prepared for

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Prepared by



www.meadhunt.com

December 2014

Table of Contents

	Page
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Description of the Road.....	2
3. Historic Context.....	4
4. Significance	10
A. <i>Criterion A: Events</i>	<i>10</i>
B. <i>Criterion B: Persons</i>	<i>11</i>
C. <i>Criterion C: Design/Construction.....</i>	<i>11</i>
D. <i>Criterion D: Information Potential.....</i>	<i>12</i>
5. Recommendation	13

1. Introduction

This statement of significance was prepared as a component of the Applied Historic Context of Alaska Roads Project completed in 2012-2014 for the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF). The project began with the development of the *Alaska Roads Historic Overview: Applied Historic Context of Alaska's Roads* (Roads Overview) (February 2014) and the *Methodology for Assessing National Register of Historic Places Eligibility* (Roads Methodology) (December 2014).

For the project a select number of roads with potential for individual National Register of Historic Places (National Register) eligibility were identified for evaluation of significance. This study is limited to the evaluation of the road's significance. If a road meets one or more areas of significance, identification of essential physical features and an assessment of integrity needs to be completed to determine National Register eligibility. These statements of significance apply the Roads Methodology and utilize contextual information from the Roads Overview. The Roads Methodology outlines that the entire length of a road should be considered when evaluating significance. The entire length of the road was considered in the development of this statement of significance.

This report identifies and describes the important historic themes associated with Spenard Road. It summarizes these important themes to place the development of Spenard Road within an appropriate historic context to evaluate its historical significance.

2. Description of the Road

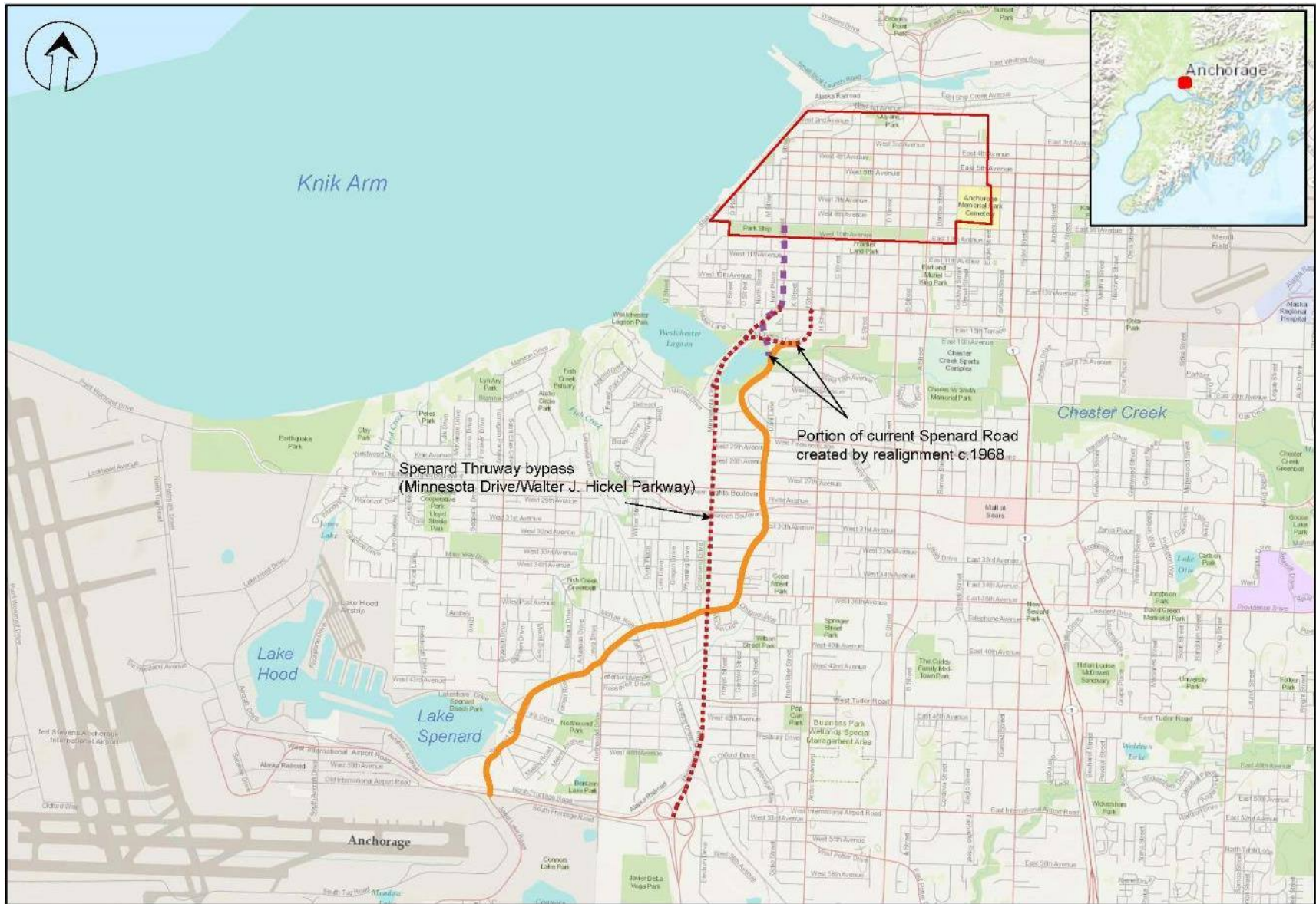
Spenard Road (Alaska Heritage Resources Survey [AHRs] number ANC-04070; Coordinated Data System [CDS] number 134310), located within the Municipality of Anchorage, is approximately 3.4 miles long and currently extends from International Airport Road to Minnesota Drive. Historically, Spenard Road extended further north of present Minnesota Drive to 9th Avenue. The northern portion of the road between Hillcrest Drive and Minnesota Drive is owned by the Alaska DOT&PF, while the remainder is owned and maintained as part of the Municipality of Anchorage.

Spenard Road was constructed in 1916 by a private developer to provide access to a recreational area at Lake Spenard. At this time, Anchorage had not yet expanded beyond the original 1915 plat and the road ran through undeveloped land. The original narrow corduroy and earth road was taken over by the Alaska Road Commission (ARC) by 1922 and was soon widened and improved to an average width of 28 feet. Subsequent growth in the Anchorage area resulted in the superimposition of an urban residential street grid pattern in much of the area surrounding Spenard Road. Although Spenard Road has been improved and upgraded numerous times, its alignment remains visibly distinct from the surrounding streets through which it passes.

Spenard Road also provided primary access to the Lake Hood seaplane base, constructed in 1940, which provided the Anchorage area with a facility that could accommodate more heavily laden floatplanes during a time when this type of travel was increasing in popularity. Following the construction of Anchorage's International Airport (now Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport) in 1950, additional road construction provided alternate routes to both the new airport and the existing seaplane facility. Spenard Road was bypassed by a controlled-access expressway (today known as Minnesota Drive/Walter J. Hickel Parkway) in the late 1960s, which provided a quicker connection to both aviation facilities. Spenard Road continues to carry local traffic and runs through a corridor characterized by a mix of commercial and residential land uses for much of its length. The entire route is asphalt surfaced, and the northern portion between Hillcrest Drive and Minnesota Drive is a one-way, one-lane road carrying northbound traffic only, with a divided bicycle and pedestrian path on the west side. South of Hillcrest Drive, Spenard Road is generally a four-lane, two-way facility with some segments divided by a median or central turn lane.

A map illustrating the location of Spenard Road in relation to other major features is provided on the next page.

Section 2
Description of the Road



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

Current Spenard Road

Base map © OpenStreetMap (and) contributors, CC BY SA
Sources: Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, TomTom, Intermap,

Original Plat (c.1915), City of Anchorage

Approximate location of former northern portion of Spenard Road

3. Historic Context

At the turn of the twentieth century, Alaska's transportation system was largely dependent on water-borne travel and overland pack and sled trails. In order to increase access to the territory's rich natural and mineral resources, the federal government began to investigate the possibility of constructing a railroad from a year-round port to the interior near Fairbanks. The Alaska Engineering Commission began survey work on a proposed route between Seward and Fairbanks in 1914 and selected a site at the mouth of Ship Creek, on Cook Inlet, for its field headquarters. When the survey team first arrived, it found a small number of homesteaders in the vicinity, along with cabins of the two foresters assigned to the vicinity. The area surrounding Ship Creek was within the original boundaries of the Chugach National Forest, established in 1907. Subsequently these lands were withdrawn from the forest by Presidential Executive Order in 1914 to create a town site. The General Land Office platted the town, consisting of the area 1.5 miles north and south of Ship Creek and 2 miles east from the shoreline. In anticipation of the availability of jobs on the new railroad, would-be workers had already begun to pour into the area, although President Woodrow Wilson did not formally approve the route of the railroad through Ship Creek until 1915. Within a few months of this announcement, over 2,000 people had arrived and a tent city sprang up on the north side of the creek.¹ Town lots were sold at auction later that year, and by 1916 the newly renamed town of Anchorage was the largest in Alaska, with a population of 6,000.²

Just outside the newly established town, land was still largely undeveloped. A homesteader by the name of Thomas Jeter built a cabin near one of the lakes (now known as Lake Spenard) southwest of Anchorage, settling on land that fell within the National Forest boundary. As a result, Jeter was forced to leave after losing a court battle in 1915, although the area was later opened to homesteading and the lake bore his name for several years.³ The following year, entrepreneur Joe Spenard arrived in Anchorage with one of the few automobiles in the area. Establishing himself in the delivery business, Spenard hauled and sold wood and discovered Lake Jeter while searching for a source of timber. Recognizing the scenic qualities of the lake, Spenard homesteaded 160 acres near the lake and began to construct a resort with a dance pavilion on the shore and swimming beach.⁴ In order to access his new resort, Spenard recruited members of the Bills' Club, a local fraternal organization, to assist him in clearing and constructing a corduroy trail to the lake from the city's boundary at 9th Avenue and L Street.⁵ Spenard's resort quickly became a popular destination for Anchorage residents, despite the fact that it was constructed illegally on National Forest land. Spenard's pavilion burned down the following year and he left Alaska shortly thereafter, but residents continued to use the road to access the beach and the lake. In 1919 the City of Anchorage persuaded the U.S. Forest Service to officially designate the area for

¹ Michael Carberry and Donna Lane, *Patterns of the Past: An Inventory of Anchorage's Historic Resources* (Anchorage, Alaska: Municipality of Anchorage Community Planning Department, 1986), 1-2.

² Evangeline Atwood, *Anchorage: An All-American City* (Portland, Ore.: Binford & Mort, 1957), 12.

³ Carberry and Lane, 199.

⁴ John Strohmeyer, *Historic Anchorage: An Illustrated History* (San Antonio, Texas: Historical Publishing Network, 2001), 20.

⁵ Elizabeth A. Tower, *Anchorage: From Its Humble Origins as a Railroad Construction Camp* (Fairbanks, Alaska: Epicenter Press, 1999), 47.

recreational purposes, after which the Boy Scouts of America and the Elks' Club maintained facilities on what was by then known as Lake Spenard.⁶

The ARC was established in 1905 and was responsible for construction and maintenance of roads and trails within the territory. By 1922 the ARC had taken over the road and it was designated as Route 75A. The ARC graded the entire road and installed 117 feet of fir planking across a swamp, but in doing so noted that the road was too narrow and recommended it be regraded and widened by 10 feet. Route 75A was known as the Anchorage-Lake Spenard Road, and the ARC noted that the large number of people driving to the beach at Lake Spenard constituted the primary use of the road. The agency also noted that the road passed through what was regarded as promising agricultural land.⁷ While visiting Anchorage in 1923 to dedicate the newly completed railroad, President Harding also stopped at Lake Spenard, a measure of the importance of the lake to local residents.⁸ As automobile use increased in Alaska after World War I, a heightened demand for higher-quality roads resulted. By 1922 the Anchorage-Lake Spenard Road was used by "hundreds of autoists in the summer time," and two years later the ARC widened the road to an average of 28 feet and constructed two small timber bridges (presumably across Chester and Fish Creeks). The ARC noted that although the road served six farms, it was "used principally as a pleasure drive both winter and summer."⁹

The use of airplanes in Alaska increased after World War I. The City of Anchorage constructed the area's first airfield in 1923 at what is now Delaney Park, with flights from Anchorage to Fairbanks commencing the following year. The ARC constructed an airfield on the northwest shore of Lake Spenard in 1928, which was sited to take advantage of the lake so that planes could be changed from wheeled landing gear to pontoons.¹⁰ Seaplane use in particular provided important access to remote locations throughout Alaska, as no landing strips were required so long as enough open water was available. Seaplane technology advanced substantially in the 1930s and 1940s, and this type of aircraft became increasingly popular.¹¹ Ever larger loads carried by seaplanes required a longer open water for takeoff; other than Knik Arm itself, the Anchorage vicinity lacked a large enough body of water until 1939, when the ARC began work on a canal between Lake Spenard and Lake Hood, located immediately to the west. Civilian Conservation Corps workers may have performed some of the labor for the construction of the canal.¹² When completed, the 1,800-foot canal was approximately 200 feet wide and was designated as Route

⁶ Tower, 47.

⁷ Board of Road Commissioners for Alaska, *Annual Report of the Alaska Road Commission, Fiscal Year 1922*, Part II (Juneau, Alaska: 1922), 46.

⁸ Carberry and Lane, 200.

⁹ Board of Road Commissioners for Alaska, *Report Upon the Construction and Maintenance of Roads, Bridges, and Trails, Alaska*, from Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers, 1924 (Washington, D.C.: US GPO, 1925), 122.

¹⁰ Board of Road Commissioners for Alaska, *Report Upon the Construction and Maintenance of Roads, Bridges, and Trails, Alaska*, from Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers, 1928 (Washington, D.C.: US GPO, 1928), 64; Board of Road Commissioners for Alaska, *Annual Report of the Alaska Road Commission, Fiscal Year 1929*, (Juneau, Alaska: 1929), 108-109.

¹¹ "Will a Lake Be Your Postwar Landing Field?" *Popular Science* (February 1945), 134–135.

¹² Carberry and Lane, 200.

75N in the ARC's 1940 annual report.¹³ A 2,200-foot gravel airstrip was constructed along the south side of the lake.¹⁴ Spenard Road provided access to the seaplane base and adjacent airstrip. At the time, few buildings were located on the shores of Lake Spenard, although at least one establishment is noted as providing dancing and banquet facilities.¹⁵

By 1940 fears of a potential military threat by the Japanese led to a buildup of military forces in Alaska. In April of that year, Congress appropriated \$12.8 million and construction started on Fort Richardson/Elmendorf Army Air Base; an executive order in 1939 set aside land for the future military facility.¹⁶ The influx of military personnel associated with the wartime defense buildup increased Anchorage's population to 12,000.¹⁷ Anchorage was designated a defense area in 1941, enabling builders to construct large blocks of housing under the provisions of the Federal Housing Authority Act.¹⁸

Military expansion continued with the onset of the Cold War, and Anchorage's population continued to grow. Although housing was in extremely short supply during World War II, the late 1940s saw a boom in residential development as construction materials became more readily available. In 1944 Anchorage annexed the South Addition, located between C and L streets south of 11th Avenue. Chester Creek formed the southern boundary of the South Addition near the northern terminus of Spenard Road.¹⁹ The area between Lake Spenard north to the new municipal boundaries remained separate from the city, but became part of the Spenard Public Utility District in 1949.²⁰

As Anchorage grew during the post-World War II years, homesteaders took up lands outside its boundaries along the Anchorage-Spenard Road. This corridor was particularly desirable as it provided residents with access to Anchorage's city services and schools without having to pay city taxes.²¹ By the time Spenard first appears as a designated place in the 1950 U.S. Census, it had a population of just over 2,100.²² Along with residential development and what was by then a publicly owned recreation area on the lake, a number of businesses including bars and massage parlors were established along the

¹³ Alaska Road Commission, *Annual Report 1940* (n.p.: Alaska Road Commission, 1940) 37; Carberry and Lane, 200.

¹⁴ McDowell Group, *Economic Benefits of Lake Hood Seaplane Base*, prepared for Anchorage Economic Development Corporation and Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, September 2013, 5.

¹⁵ Atwood, 32.

¹⁶ Atwood, 33-34, 109.

¹⁷ Lauren Hummel, "The U.S. Military as a Geographical Agent: The Case of Cold War Alaska," *Geographical Review* (January 2005), 48.

¹⁸ Atwood, 35.

¹⁹ Atwood, 41.

²⁰ Strohmeyer, 21-22.

²¹ Strohmeyer, 21.

²² United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940* (Washington, D.C.: US GPO, 1942), 1193; United States Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1950* Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: US GPO, 1952), 51-4 - 51-6.

Anchorage-Spenard Road.²³ Postwar residential development along the road was varied and occurred haphazardly as early homesteaders subdivided and sold land because the area was not governed by City of Anchorage building regulations.²⁴ As the city began to annex more of the surrounding area in the 1950s, Spenard was the only one of the four public utility districts whose residents resisted annexation.²⁵

Throughout the 1950s the greater Anchorage area enjoyed an economic boom due to huge construction projects such as the Army's Fort Richardson installation, a massive rehabilitation of the Alaska Railroad, and numerous housing developments in the city.²⁶ As more land was annexed south of Anchorage's original plat, the portion of Spenard Road between the original northern terminus at 9th Avenue south to Chester Creek was incorporated into the city of Anchorage and it is unknown if this former section of Spenard Road was realigned to fit with the city's street grid. The population of Spenard more than quadrupled during the decade, which had a significant effect on traffic along what became known as the Spenard Road.²⁷ The ARC began a program of highway striping on the most heavily traveled roads in the Anchorage vicinity, including the Spenard Road. By 1953 it was listed as a through route.²⁸ By the following year, a traffic counter at Mile 1 of Spenard Road recorded the highest total traffic in the Anchorage district of the ARC, which further increased by 30 percent between 1955 and 1956.²⁹

Aviation-related activity in Anchorage expanded in the postwar period as well, including the construction of the \$12.5-million International Airport (now known as Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport). By the mid-1950s nearly 300,000 flights went in and out of the city's three civilian airfields annually, which included International Airport, Merrill Field Airport, and the Lake Hood seaplane base.³⁰ The Lake Hood seaplane complex was enlarged in the 1950s and an air traffic control tower was constructed in 1954.³¹ By 1957 over 450 small private planes operated out of Lake Hood.³² Spenard Road provided access to both the International Airport and Lake Hood seaplane base from downtown Anchorage. Construction of the Seward Highway in 1951 created an alternate route south from downtown Anchorage, enabling drivers to reach both airports by connecting to International Airport Road.³³ By the late 1960s local traffic

²³ Strohmeyer, 21.

²⁴ Carberry and Lane, 140.

²⁵ Dr. Richard Ender, Jan Gehler, Susan Gorski, and Susan Harper, *Anchorage Socioeconomic and Physical Baseline*, prepared for the Bureau of Land Management Alaska Outer Continental Shelf Office, June 1978, 7-8.

²⁶ Atwood, 42-44.

²⁷ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1960* Vol. 1, Part 3 (Washington, D.C.: US GPO, 1961), 3-11.

²⁸ United States Department of the Interior, *Alaska Road Commission, Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1953*, (Juneau, Alaska: Alaska Road Commission, 1953), 29, 32.

²⁹ United States Department of the Interior, *Alaska Road Commission, Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1956* (Juneau, Alaska: Alaska Road Commission, 1956), 29.

³⁰ Atwood, 73.

³¹ McDowell Group, 5.

³² Atwood, 73.

³³ United States Geological Survey, *Anchorage A-8 Quadrangle*, 1953 edition.

on Spenard Road was still high enough to warrant the construction of a new bypass. The Spenard Thruway (now incorporated into the Minnesota Drive/Walter J. Hickel Parkway designation) extended from 15th Street south to International Airport Road, and with the extension would provide through access to areas south of downtown, including the International Airport.³⁴ The portion of Spenard Road between 15th Avenue and Chester Creek was realigned to create thruway on and off ramps to L Street and I Street, and a short portion of new alignment was created at the new northern terminus at Minnesota Drive. The remaining portion of the old Spenard Road alignment south of Chester Creek was bypassed completely and continued to carry local traffic.³⁵ This first segment of the thruway, a \$3.3-million project, opened in 1968 and work on the southern portion extending to International Airport Road was advertised the following year, when the Department of Highway's annual report described the Spenard Thruway as a "major contribution to moving traffic in the Anchorage area."³⁶

During the 1970s a number of additional improvements expanded the capacity of the Lake Hood seaplane base, including the dredging of a second parallel channel, the construction of an additional gravel airstrip, and additional tie-down slips for planes. The Lake Hood seaplane base is now the busiest seaplane base in the world.³⁷ Despite the increased use of the seaplane facility on Lake Hood, residents continued to utilize Lake Spenard for recreational purposes. Spenard Beach Park, located on the north shore, was developed as a swimming beach by the Spenard Lions Club in 1969. Although previously city property, Spenard Beach Park continued to provide public recreation to residents after it was acquired by the state as part of the nearby aviation facilities. The park is now leased from the state by the Municipality of Anchorage.³⁸

The discovery of large oil deposits at Prudhoe Bay on Alaska's arctic coast led to another economic boom for Anchorage and Alaska as a whole. Construction on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline occurred in the mid-1970s, bringing an influx of workers to the state. Many pipeline employees traveled to and from Alaska through Anchorage's air travel facilities, and this period is marked by a growth in the number of commercial establishments along Spenard Road that served workers returning from isolated construction camps. The Department of Highways completed several projects on Spenard Road during this period, including intersection improvements at Hillcrest Drive and reconstruction and paving between Hillcrest Drive and W. 20th Avenue under the Local Service Roads and Trails program.³⁹

³⁴ State of Alaska, Department of Highways, *Annual Report 1967* (Juneau, Alaska: Department of Highways, 1967), 39.

³⁵ United States Geological Survey, Anchorage A-8 NW Quadrangle, 1979 edition.

³⁶ State of Alaska, Department of Highways, *Annual Report 1968* (Juneau, Alaska: Department of Highways, 1968), 9; State of Alaska, Department of Highways, *Annual Report 1969* (Juneau, Alaska: Department of Highways, 1969), 22.

³⁷ McDowell Group, 5.

³⁸ Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department, "Spenard Beach Park," Municipality of Anchorage, <http://www.muni.org/Departments/parks/Pages/Spenard%20Beach%20Park.pdf> (accessed 10 July 2014).

³⁹ State of Alaska, Department of Highways, *Annual Report 1974* (Juneau, Alaska: Department of Highways, 1974), 4, 20.

Section 3 Historic Context

In 1975 the City of Anchorage united with the Greater Anchorage Area Borough, which included the community of Spenard, resulting in the creation of the Municipality of Anchorage.⁴⁰ Spenard Road remained an important commercial corridor, and the 1986 *Spenard Commercial District Development Strategy* was one of the earliest redevelopment projects in Anchorage.⁴¹ In the 1990s additional efforts by the Municipality of Anchorage resulted in improvements to the road itself, including conversion of some portions to a three-lane road section with separate pedestrian facilities.⁴²

⁴⁰ Municipality of Anchorage, Office of Community Planning and Development, “West Anchorage District Plan: Setting,” http://www.muni.org/Departments/OCPD/Planning/Projects/WestAnch/Documents/A.Setting-WestAnchorageProfile_15Mar10.pdf (accessed 10 July 2014), A-6.

⁴¹ Municipality of Anchorage, Spenard Corridor Technical Report April 2011, 2.

⁴² Spenard Corridor Technical Report, 3.

4. Significance

The Roads Methodology provides guidance on the application of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, identifying areas of significance, and evaluating significance under *Criteria A, B, C, and D*.

A. Criterion A: Events

To meet the threshold for significance under *Criterion A*, a road must possess a direct and important association in one or more supplemental areas of significance as identified in the Roads Methodology in addition to *Transportation*. This evaluation of significance under *Criterion A* considered all potential areas of significance identified in the Roads Methodology. Based on research and context development, only the applicable areas of significance for this road are addressed below.

Transportation

Spenard Road has an association with *Transportation* because its construction c.1916 and subsequent improvements by the ARC beginning in the 1920s improved local access. The road provided initial access to Lake Spenard and was used for pleasure driving by 1924. As Anchorage expanded, the road served as the main commercial artery providing area residents south of Anchorage access to city services. Following its introduction in Alaska, air travel quickly became a vital means of accessing remote communities. The first airstrip was established at Lake Spenard in 1928, and the 1940 construction of the canal between Lake Hood and Lake Spenard enabled the facility to develop into a seaplane base. Spenard Road provided the primary access to this facility, which contributes to its significance under *Transportation*. By the mid-1950s Spenard Road was a heavily traveled road in Anchorage, and this connection facilitated the growth of Spenard, which along with Anchorage experienced population growth in this period contributing to its significance under *Transportation*. The period of significance for *Transportation* will relate to the historical purpose this road had in the conveyance of people and goods as defined in one or more supplemental areas of significance.

Entertainment/Recreation and Conservation

Spenard Road is significant at the local level in the area of *Entertainment/Recreation and Conservation* as it provided direct access to an important early recreation area for Anchorage residents. Beginning in 1916, the beach at Lake Spenard was the site of a popular bathing area and dance pavilion, despite the fact that these facilities were constructed illegally on what was then land in the Chugach National Forest. Within three years, the City of Anchorage persuaded the U.S. Forest Service to officially designate the area for recreational purposes and the Boy Scouts and the Elks' Club maintained facilities on the lake. Spenard Beach Park was developed by the Spenard Lions Club in 1969 and recreational use continues to the present day. The period of significance is 1916 to 1951, encompassing the period in which the road provided primary access to a locally important recreation area. It begins with the establishment of Joe Spenard's resort and continues until the construction of the Seward Highway in 1951, which together with Airport Road created an alternate route south from downtown Anchorage to reach this area.

Community Planning and Development

Spenard Road is significant at the local level in the area of *Community Planning and Development* as it played a direct and crucial role in the urban development of Spenard, which occurred along the road corridor, and the expansion of Anchorage in the early to mid-twentieth century. Spenard was the first

important settlement beyond Anchorage's original townsite boundary. Spenard and the area south of Anchorage reached via Spenard Road were desirable locations for settlement and accommodated the influx of federal and military personnel settling in the Anchorage area in the late 1930s, a trend that continued following World War II. Beyond providing access to a growing area outside of Anchorage, the curvilinear pattern of Spenard Road is physically distinguishable, reflecting its early development that does not conform to the surrounding urban grid in Anchorage. Spenard Road served as a vital and distinguishable link to Anchorage and influenced development trends leading to the annexation of Spenard into the community of Anchorage. The period of significance begins in 1939 when military and federal facilities were established in the Anchorage area in advance of World War II. The period of significance encompasses the period in which the road facilitated the continued growth and settlement of Spenard to accommodate the population growth of Anchorage. The period of significance ends in 1975 when the City of Anchorage united with the Greater Anchorage Area Borough, which included the community of Spenard, resulting in the creation of the Municipality of Anchorage.

B. Criterion B: Persons

As outlined in the Roads Methodology, a road is not likely to qualify for National Register significance under *Criterion B* for association with a significant person. To qualify under *Criterion B*, the road would need to best exemplify a person's contribution to history. Mere association with a road, such as involvement in design or construction, or roads named for an individual that is commemorative in nature, would not render a road significant under *Criterion B*. Spenard Road is named for Joe Spenard, an early Anchorage entrepreneur who initially established the recreational area and constructed the road, along with members of a local fraternal organization. Spenard left Alaska within a few years and was not associated with any further development of the lake area or Anchorage. Therefore, Spenard Road is not significant for an association with Joe Spenard under *Criterion B*. No other individuals were identified through research to have played a significant role in Spenard Road that would qualify it under *Criterion B*.

C. Criterion C: Design/Construction

The Roads Methodology explains how a road would meet the threshold for significance under *Criterion C*. Roads will generally reflect patterns of features common to a particular road type, and under the Roads Methodology this does not convey significance on its own. In order to possess significance, a road must also reflect other important or distinctive design features and/or construction practices or be a surviving example of a rare type.

Spenard Road was constructed c.1916 as a narrow corduroy and earth road was subsequently taken over by the ARC by 1922. The ARC widened and improved the road, gradually adding surfacing. The methods of construction and subsequent improvements of Spenard Road are typical of many early roads that later developed into main thoroughfares, and the road is an example of a common type. Although its alignment does not follow the grid pattern of some of Anchorage's streets, it does not represent a rare road type related to engineering.

A review of the ARC's annual reports and other materials from the period in which the road was constructed and improved yielded no evidence of any engineering design or construction features important in road engineering that serve to distinguish it from other roads. The road does not represent

extraordinary challenges or solutions that transcend normal methods of road construction as the road's design and construction appear to fall within the ARC's established standard practices of the time and it does not represent innovative developments in road construction or contain segments that are surviving examples of a rare road type. As a result, Spenard Road does not meet the threshold for significance in the area of *Engineering*.

D. *Criterion D: Information Potential*

Criterion D is most often applied to archaeological properties. As outlined in the Roads Methodology, roads in vehicular use are not likely to be significant under *Criterion D* for the ability to yield information. Spenard Road is in vehicular use and remains an above-ground property type. No evidence was found for potential significance under *Criterion D*.

5. Recommendation

Spenard Road possesses significance at the local level under *Criterion A* for its direct and important association with *Transportation* and under the supplemental areas of significance of *Community Planning and Development* and *Recreation/Entertainment and Conservation*. Spenard Road has an association with *Transportation* because its construction improved local access to recreational areas around Lake Spenard and the seaplane base that was developed.

Spenard Road provided direct access to an important early recreation area for Anchorage residents. Beginning in 1916, the beach at Lake Spenard was the site of a popular bathing area and dance pavilion, and within three years the City of Anchorage persuaded the U.S. Forest Service to officially designate the area for recreational purposes. Spenard Beach Park was developed by the Spenard Lions Club in 1969 and recreational use continues to the present day. The period of significance is 1916 to 1951, encompassing the period in which the road provided primary access to a locally important recreation area. It begins with the establishment of Joe Spenard's resort and continues until the construction of the Seward Highway in 1951, which together with International Airport Road created an alternate route south from downtown Anchorage to reach this area.

Spenard Road meets the requirement for significance in the area of *Community Planning and Development* at the local level. Spenard Road served as a vital and distinguishable link to Anchorage and influenced development trends leading to the annexation of Spenard into the community of Anchorage. The road was vital in providing direct access to Spenard and the area south of Anchorage for settlement to accommodate the influx of federal and military personnel settling in the Anchorage area the beginning in the late 1930s. The road is physically distinguishable by not conforming to the surrounding urban grid in Anchorage. The period of significance is 1939 to 1975, beginning when military and federal facilities were established in the Anchorage area in advance of World War II and ending when the City of Anchorage united with the Greater Anchorage Area Borough, which included the community of Spenard, resulting in the creation of the Municipality of Anchorage.

Spenard Road does not possess significance under *Criteria B, C, or D*.