



Denali Commission
510 L Street, Suite 410
Anchorage, AK 99501

907.271.1414 *tel*
907.271.1415 *fax*
888.480.4321 *toll free*
www.denali.gov

May 16, 2007

Matthew Dixon, P.E.
Director Central Engineering Services
ANTHC/DEHE
1901 Bragaw, Suite 200
Anchorage, AK 99508

Dear Mr. Dixon:

RE: Notice of Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact
(FONSI) for the Fort Yukon Health Center.

This letter is written by the Denali Commission (Commission) to indicate to the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) that the course of action outlined in the attached FONSI has been prepared by the Denali Commission for the Fort Yukon Health Center clinic project (attached). This action is needed to allow ANTHC authority to proceed in funding with the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) for this project. This letter is the second letter sent to ANTHC, and is necessary for the FY07 project completion funding to proceed. Additionally, the course of action outlined in the environmental memoranda (attached) is appropriate for the Ft. Yukon clinic project.

In this case, the following mitigation measures shall be incorporated into the proposed project's design consistent with the FONSI:

1. Section D-1, Vegetation, states a mitigating measure that controls to be provided during construction to minimize ground disturbance and erosion outside construction areas in accordance with the project's EPA Storm-water Permit including silt fences, construction entrance, etc.
2. Section D-5-d-i, Floodplain location states that purchase of flood insurance on the building and contents is required, unless the building fill pad is removed from the floodplain by action of the Federal Emergency Management (REMA) sometime in the future. Participation in the NFIP is required.
3. Section D-5-d-ii states that an evacuation plan shall be implemented to evacuate patients from the clinic during times of flood, and to accommodate incoming patients via airplane for care.
4. Section D-5-d-iii states that elevation of the clinic is required to be built at 447', as 445' is the Base Flood elevation.

These requirements are cited directly from the Denali Commission FONSI dated July 20, 2006 and signed by Mr. George Cannelos.

Please contact Ms. Denali Daniels of my staff, ddaniels@denali.gov, 271.1189, with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denali Daniels for Tessa Rinner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tessa L. D. Rinner, MPA
Director of Programs

Attachments

CC: Paul Morrison ANTHC (via e-mail)
Lona Ibanitoru, CATG (via email)

File: Chronological
Award file/288-07/Correspondence



ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM
Division of Environmental Health and Engineering
1901 Bragaw Street, Suite 200
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 11, 2007

FROM: Environmental Coordinator

SUBJECT: Fort Yukon Primary Health Care Facility – Environmental Review
Project No. AN 05-GE8, Amendment No. 2

TO: FOR THE RECORD

Federal funding for this project requires an environmental review in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) has considered all potential environmental concerns (specific and cumulative effects) associated with the project in consultation with applicable Federal, State and local authorities. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed in July 2001 with respect to the proposed primary health care facility construction at the City of Fort Yukon, Alaska. The Denali Commission issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on July 21, 2001. In August 12, 2005, ANTHC and the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments received authorization from the Denali Commission to revise the design to decrease the size of the facility to cover construction costs. This revision will not change the scope of work outlined in the EA, and therefore no additional environmental review is necessary at this time.

ANTHC will revisit this environmental review to determine if potential environmental concerns have been addressed if the scope of work is changed.

Riki Lebman



**Notice of Availability of Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Fort Yukon Clinic New Construction Project
July 2006**

AGENCY: Denali Commission in Partnership with the State of Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED), the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

ACTION: Notice of Availability of Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Denali Daniels, Program Manager, Denali Commission, 510 L Street, Suite 410, Anchorage, Alaska 99501, telephone: (907) 271-1414, telefax: (907) 271-1415, email: ddaniels@denali.gov.

Substantial information, including the complete Finding of No Significant Impact, is provided with this notice. You may contact the above individual to obtain a copy of the entire Environmental Assessment.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Introduction

The Denali Commission is considering providing funding to the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) for the construction of a primary care health facility to be located in the community of Fort Yukon, Alaska. Introduced by Congress in 1998, the Denali Commission is an innovative federal-state partnership designed to provide critical utilities, infrastructure, and economic support throughout Alaska.

II. Environmental Assessment

A. Proposed Action

The proposed regional clinic would be 13,946 sq. ft. in size with an additional 1,470 sq. ft. mezzanine floor. The main floor would house various administration offices, examining rooms, rest rooms, a waiting area, and lobby. There would be dedicated urgent care beds, a radiology department, procedure and casting area, laboratory, dental

clinic, conference area, and a community service division. The mezzanine would house the mechanical room, telephone room, generator, boiler, and also serve as an extra storage area.

B. Need for Proposed Action

Existing clinic in Fort Yukon is inadequate both in physical condition and size to meet the current needs and grant requirements. The building was not suitable for continued use and is not designed for a clinic. The current building, which was remodeled in 1985 as an addition to an old FAA trailer facility, cannot be economically renovated or upgraded for current or future uses in health care. The building has major deficiencies that cause the health center to be out of compliance with medical accreditation requirements.

The Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) is a regional non-profit tribal organization that provides comprehensive medical, dental, emergency medical and social services for 1,439 residents in the Yukon Flats region in Alaska. CATG is owned and operated by ten Athabascan Tribal villages. The ten Gwich'in and Koyukon Athabascan tribes are Arctic Village, Beaver, Birch Creek, Canyon Village, Chalkyitsik, Circle, Rampart, Stevens Village, Venetie and Fort Yukon. CATG has been responsible for providing these and surrounding communities with comprehensive primary health care since 1995.

C. Clinic Site Environment

Fort Yukon is located in the confluence of the Yukon River and the Porcupine River, about 145 air miles northeast of Fairbanks, Alaska. It lies at approximately 66.564720 degrees North Latitude and - 145.27389 degrees West Longitude. Fort Yukon is located in the Fairbanks Recording District. The area encompasses 7.0 sq. miles of land and 0.4 sq. miles of water. The winters are long and harsh and the summers are short but warm. After freeze-up the plateau is a source of cold, continental arctic air. Daily minimum temperatures between November and March are usually below zero. Extended periods of -50 to -60 are common. Summer high temperatures run 65 to 72 degrees. Total annual precipitation averages 6.58 inches, with 43.4 inches of snow fall. The Yukon River is ice-free from the end of May through mid-September.

Fort Yukon lies with the floodplains of the Yukon and Porcupine Rivers. The Yukon Flats, consisting of 6.5 million acres consists of mostly flats to undulating lowlands dotted with shallow lakes, sloughs, and meandering streams.

Elevation is about 300 feet in the west and 600 to 900 feet in the north and east. The Yukon River is the principal drainage. Fort Yukon is flooded to some extent annually and is considered to have a high flood hazard. Flooding during the Spring is caused mainly by ice jams.

The City of Fort Yukon is eligible to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), designed to offset dependency on National Disaster Relief in times of flood.

D. Alternatives

The No Action Alternative was considered. Under No Action Alternative the CATG would not build a new clinic facility in Fort Yukon, Alaska. Local health care services would remain limited to those provided in the existing clinic. Residents from the nine other villages requiring advanced health services would continue to travel to Fairbanks for their advanced health care needs.

E. Affected Environment

The following impacts were detailed in the Environmental Assessment:

1. Vegetation
 - a. A minimal adverse, long term impact to habitat, trees, shrub communities and herbaceous plants would be compacted within the approximate 60,000 sq. ft. footprint of the building site.
 - b. Mitigating Measure: Controls to be provided during construction to minimize ground disturbance and erosion outside construction areas in accordance with the project's EPA Storm-water Permit including silt fences, construction entrance, etc.
2. Wildlife
 - a. Proposed action would have a small negative impact on wildlife including birds, mammals, fish and amphibians. However, impact is minimal due to the significant surrounding open space to easily accommodate any small wildlife that may be displaced.
3. Impacts on Surface Water and Ground Water
 - a. Limited or no impacts from proposed alternative would result to surficial geology and soils, surface water, ground water or drinking water.
4. Wetlands
 - a. No wetlands will be affected by the project by the proposed action.
5. Floodplain location
 - a. Environmental Assessment states that the Fort Yukon does not participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The Commission has found that community does participate in the NFIP, so flood insurance is available.
 - b. Flooding occurs in Fort Yukon on an annual basis from ice jams in the river. The Commission has found that this factor involves risks to patients potentially receiving medical care or arriving from other communities to receive medical care.
 - c. Elevation of the new clinic as proposed in the Environmental Assessment is only 1.5 ft. above the required 6.0 ft. Base Flood Elevation 445 ft NAVD88 base map produced by ANTHC 1"=140' scale. Equivalent to BFE 435 ft NGVD1929 Corps of Engineers flood elevations. ANTHC and DCCED recommend fill pad be at our above 445 ft NAVD88 with the lowest finished floor level at 447 ft.

- d. Mitigating Measures:
 - i. Purchase of flood insurance on the building and contents is required, unless the building fill pad is removed from the floodplain by action of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) sometime in the future. Participation in the NFIP is required.
 - ii. An evacuation plan shall be implemented to evacuate patients from the clinic during times of flood, and to accommodate incoming patients via airplane for care.
 - iii. Elevation of the clinic is required to be built at 447', as 445' is the Base Flood Elevation.
6. Coastal Zones
 - a. Coastal zones would not be adversely affected under the proposed action alternative since the project is not located within a coastal zone management area.
7. Socioeconomic Factors
 - a. The proposed alternative would have a positive long-term impact on employment, income, population, housing, public health and safety, and social services.
8. Cultural Resources
 - a. Environmental Assessment indicates that an immediate halting of construction activities is required if workers discover a cultural site or cultural artifacts, and to follow procedures as directed by NAGPRA and NHPA. Additionally, Appendix A documents no historic properties affected by the proposed action.
9. Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species
 - a. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service no threatened, endangered or rare species are normally found in the Fort Yukon area therefore no impacts would occur.
10. Noise
 - a. Noise during construction is a concern, however construction activities would be temporary and would generally occur between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., limiting the impact.
11. Air Quality
 - a. Minor, short term impacts to air quality due to dust would be anticipated during times of dry weather, however impacts would be temporary.
12. Land Status
 - a. The site has been leased by CATG from Gwitch'yaa Zhee Village Corporation and the Native Village of Fort Yukon for 25 years with renewal for additional terms of 15 years.

F. Agencies Consulted

Alaska Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, the Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

G. Conclusion

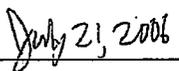
Based on its review and consultation with partner agencies, the Denali Commission has concluded that under the conditions stated in this document as mitigating measures, the environmental impacts associated with the proposed action will not significantly affect the human environment and funding should be provided to the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium for the purpose of funding the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments to construct the regional primary care clinic in Fort Yukon, Alaska.

H. Preparer

Denali L. Daniels, Health Facilities Program Manager, Denali Commission, 510 L Street, Suite 410, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.



George Canhelos, Federal Co-Chairman
Denali Commission



Date