



WELCOME

Project No. 0A31034/ Z566310000

Safer Seward Highway

Seward Highway MP 98.5-118, Bird Flats to Rabbit Creek

WINTER 2023 PUBLIC MEETING

PLEASE SIGN-IN



ABOUT THE PROJECT



The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is proposing to construct improvements along the Seward Highway between Bird Flats and Rabbit Creek. This major infrastructure project will make highway safety improvements to allow decommissioning of the Traffic Safety Corridor between Anchorage and Girdwood.

The Seward Highway has a long history of vehicle crashes that result in serious injuries and fatalities. Due to the safety concerns, the Seward Highway was designated a Highway Safety Corridor in 2006. Since 2006, Anchorage area traffic traveling the Seward Highway to destinations such as Girdwood, Seward, and the Kenai Peninsula has increased, with 2021 Annual Average Daily Traffic between 7,000 and 10,000 vehicles. Seasonal traffic peaks in the summer further exemplify the problem, with daily traffic exceeding 15,000 vehicles per day during June, July, and August on this primarily two-lane highway.

We initiated this project with a scoping phase earlier this year. We received lots of input on important things to consider and what you think we need to do to make the highway safer. Since then, the project team has been doing some environmental field work, developing engineering concepts and investigations, and hosting a stakeholder working group and summer outreach.

We took all that information gathered and developed a few concepts that we need your feedback on!



SAFETY DATA



236

Crashes

4

Deaths

8

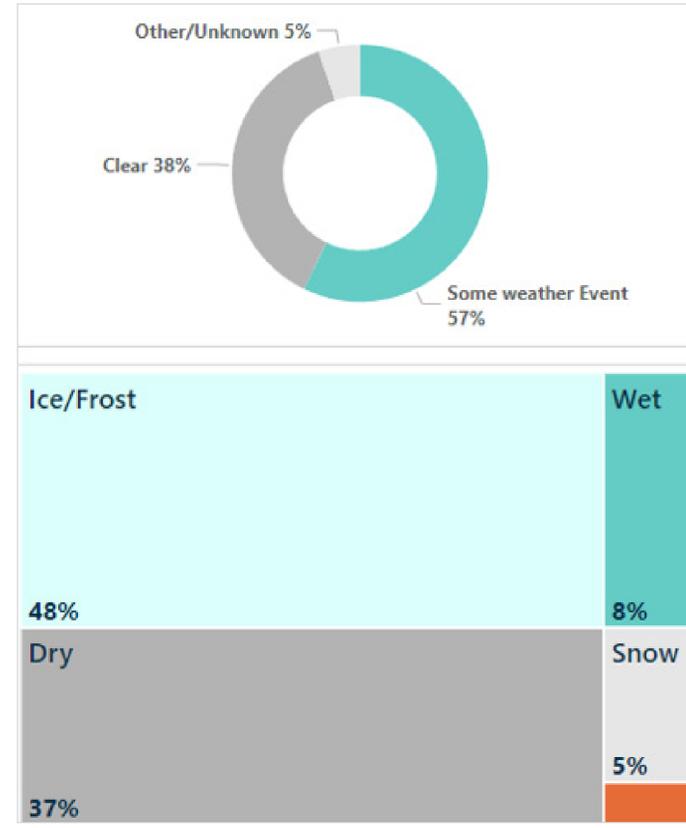
Major Injuries

26

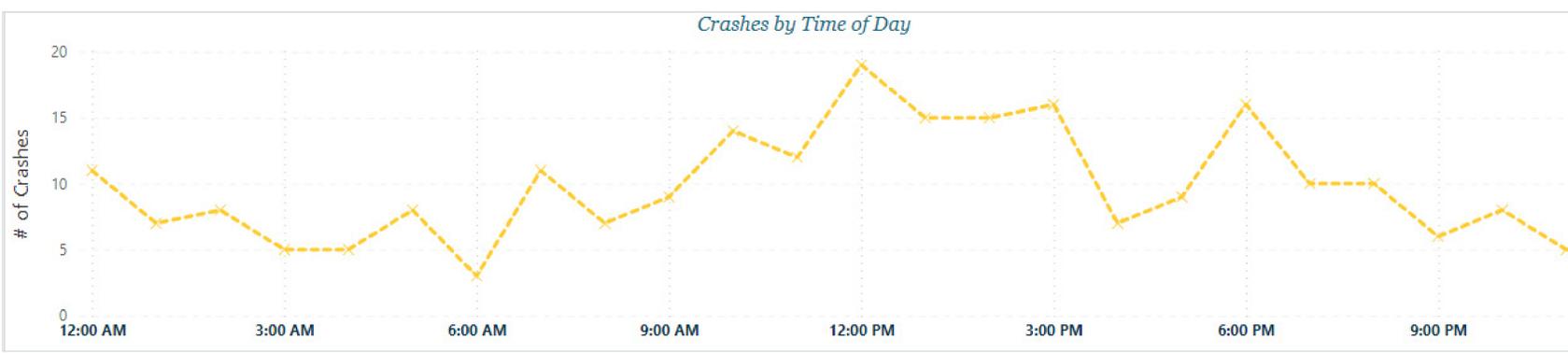
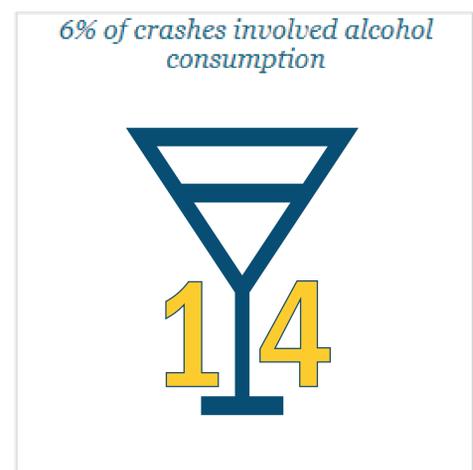
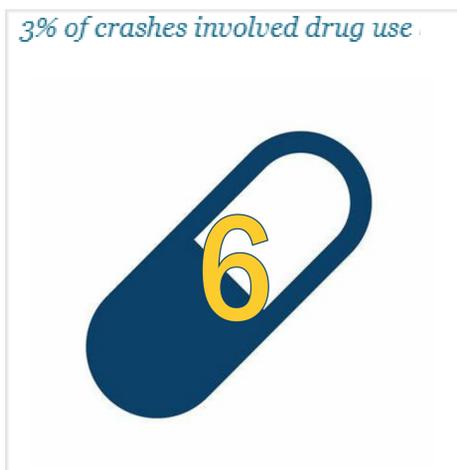
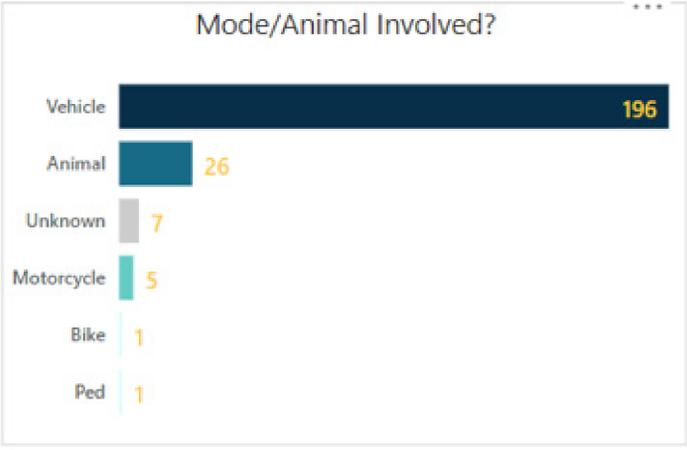
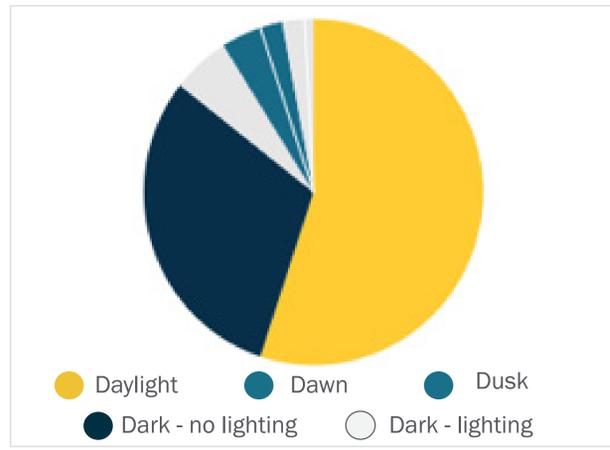
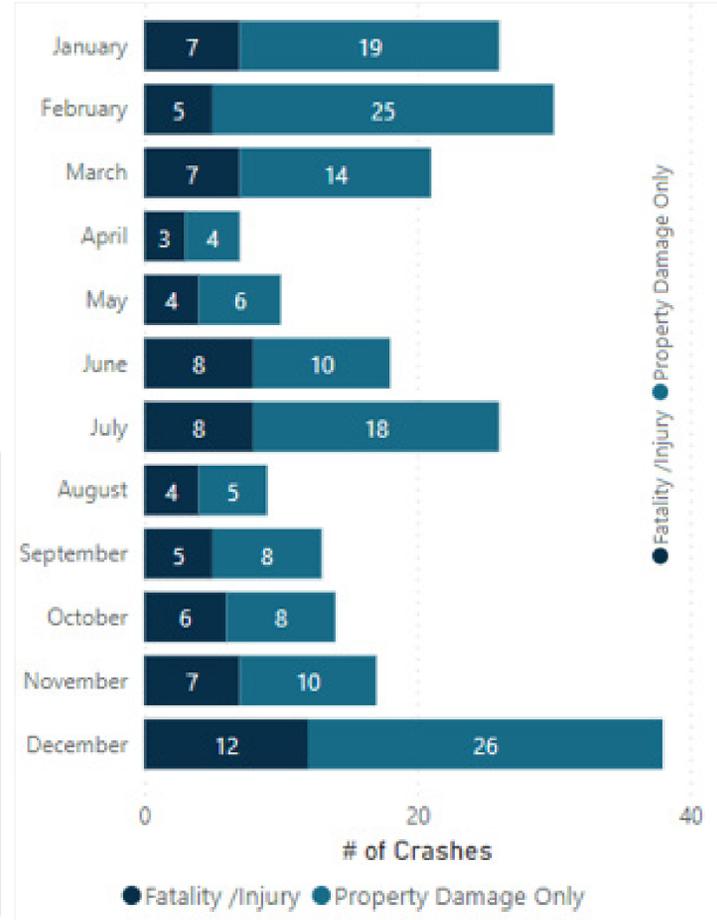
Animal Involved

2

Bike/Ped Involved



Data is based on 5-year crash history 2017 - 2021



Injuries in the bar graphs include both major and minor injury crashes. Major injuries are those where a permanent life change results from the crash where as a minor injury would result in full recovery. Definitions for these crash types can be found on the FHWA KABCO Injury Classification Scale: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsip/spm/conversion_tbl/pdfs/kabco_ctable_by_state.pdf

SCOPING RESULTS: Public Feedback



“ Dedicated left turn opportunities at popular pullouts north of Indian. ”



“ Safety should be the number one priority. ”



“ There needs to be turn lane at McHugh Creek. ”



“ I support making the Seward Highway safer. ”



“ I would love to see a paved bike path from Anchorage to Girdwood. ”



“ Highway expansion can have negative impacts on communities and the environment. ”

“ Avalanche mitigation should also be considered. ”



“ The project funding will be a huge challenge as well. ”



“ Consider not putting rumble strips anywhere. ”



“ Maintain the visual aesthetics. ”

“ The project should include maintenance burden. ”



“ I am happy that the prospect for creating a safer Seward Highway is moving forward. ”

“ Design for the long term. ”



“ It's important to keep pushing back on the rocks for safety. ”



“ The current bike path runs into pull offs/parking areas which is not safe. ”



SCOPING RESULTS: Draft Purpose and Need



PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of the Seward Highway MP 98.5 to 118, Bird Flats to Rabbit Creek, Reconstruction project is to reconstruct this segment of the highway corridor to improve safety for all users, to meet current design standards for a component of the Interstate Highway System and eliminate the current designation as a Highway Safety Corridor.

Project Need

Reduce High Crash Rate and Severity



Possible Improvements

- » Improved roadway signage
- » Improved scenic and recreational pull-offs
- » Increased line of sight
- » Divided highway

Measurable Result

- » Reduction in severe and fatal crashes
- » Removal of the Safety Corridor designation

Project Need

Update to Meet Current Design Standards



Possible Improvements

- » Curve flattening
- » Wider shoulders
- » Rock and ice fall mitigation
- » Additional/new guardrails

Measurable Result

- » Curves, shoulders, guardrail, and clear zones that meet current design standards

Project Need

Increase Mobility and Reliability



Possible Improvements

- » Separated multi-use pathway
- » Additional lanes/space
- » Adding turning lanes
- » Adding space for emergency response

Measurable Result

- » Decrease in time spent following (platooning of traffic) and traffic delays



STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUP

We know there are no easy fixes, but there are opportunities.

We are working with a group of agency, organization, and community representatives to help us figure out some of the thorny issues. This corridor has so many unique challenges; the steep mountains of the Chugach State Park on one side and the waters of the Turnagain Arm on the other are challenging enough. Add to that the diverse uses, the railroad and recreation that happen throughout.

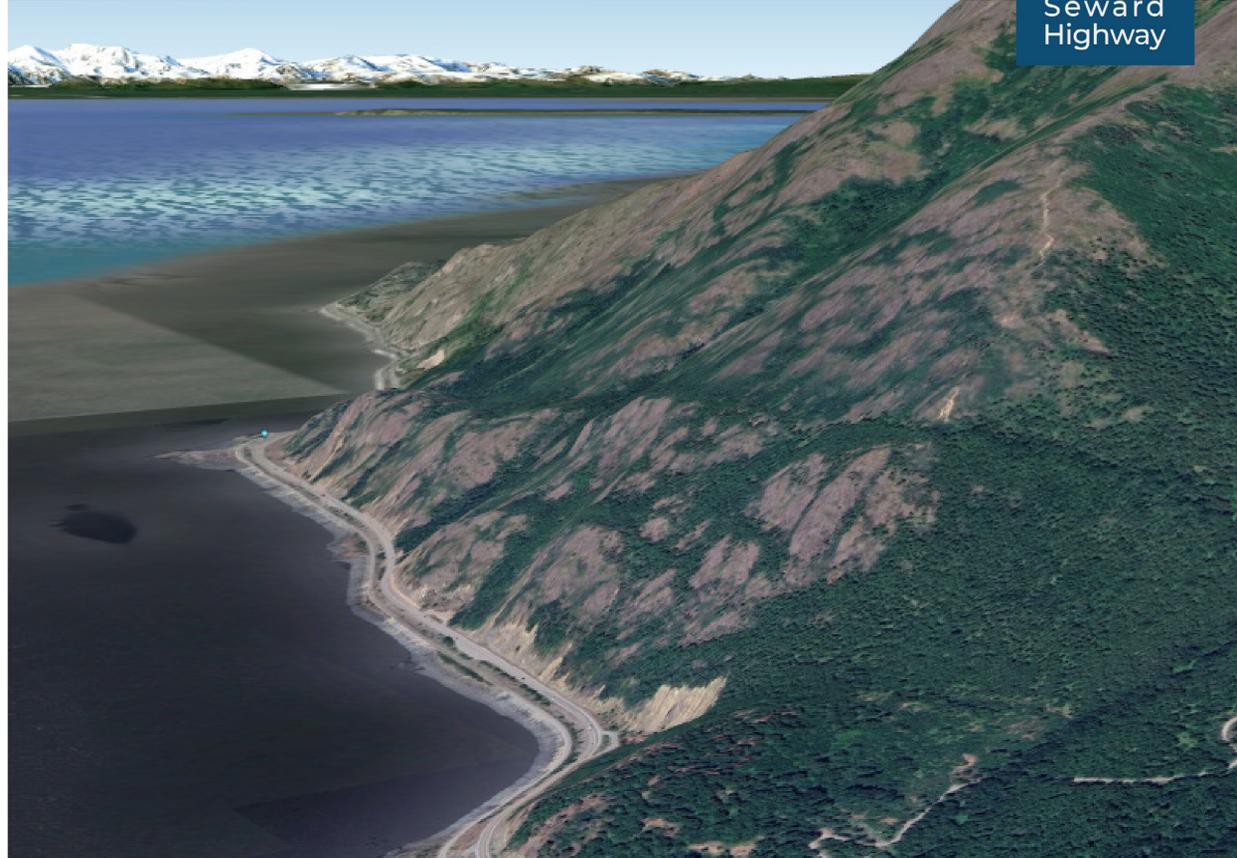
We are asking this group to help us identify issues and compromises we can all agree on... all with the goal of a safer Seward Highway in mind.

Organizations:

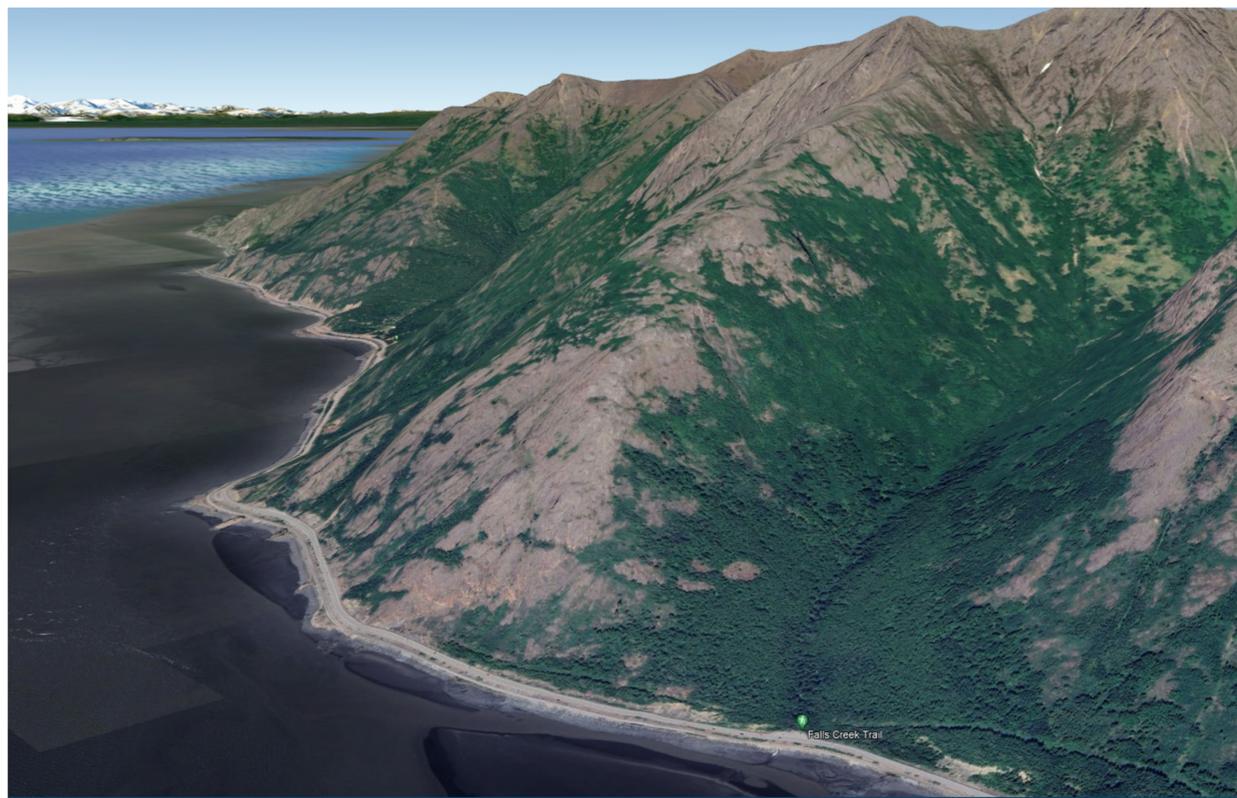
- Municipality of Anchorage
- DNR, Chugach State Park
- Alaska Railroad Corporation
- Alaska Department of Fish & Game
- Girdwood Board of Supervisors
- State Historical Preservation Office
- NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Services
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Turnagain Arm Community Council
- Rabbit Creek Community Council
- Bike Anchorage
- Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions
- Alaska Trucking Association
- Alaska Travel Industry Association

CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS

RECREATIONAL ACCESS



WILDLIFE



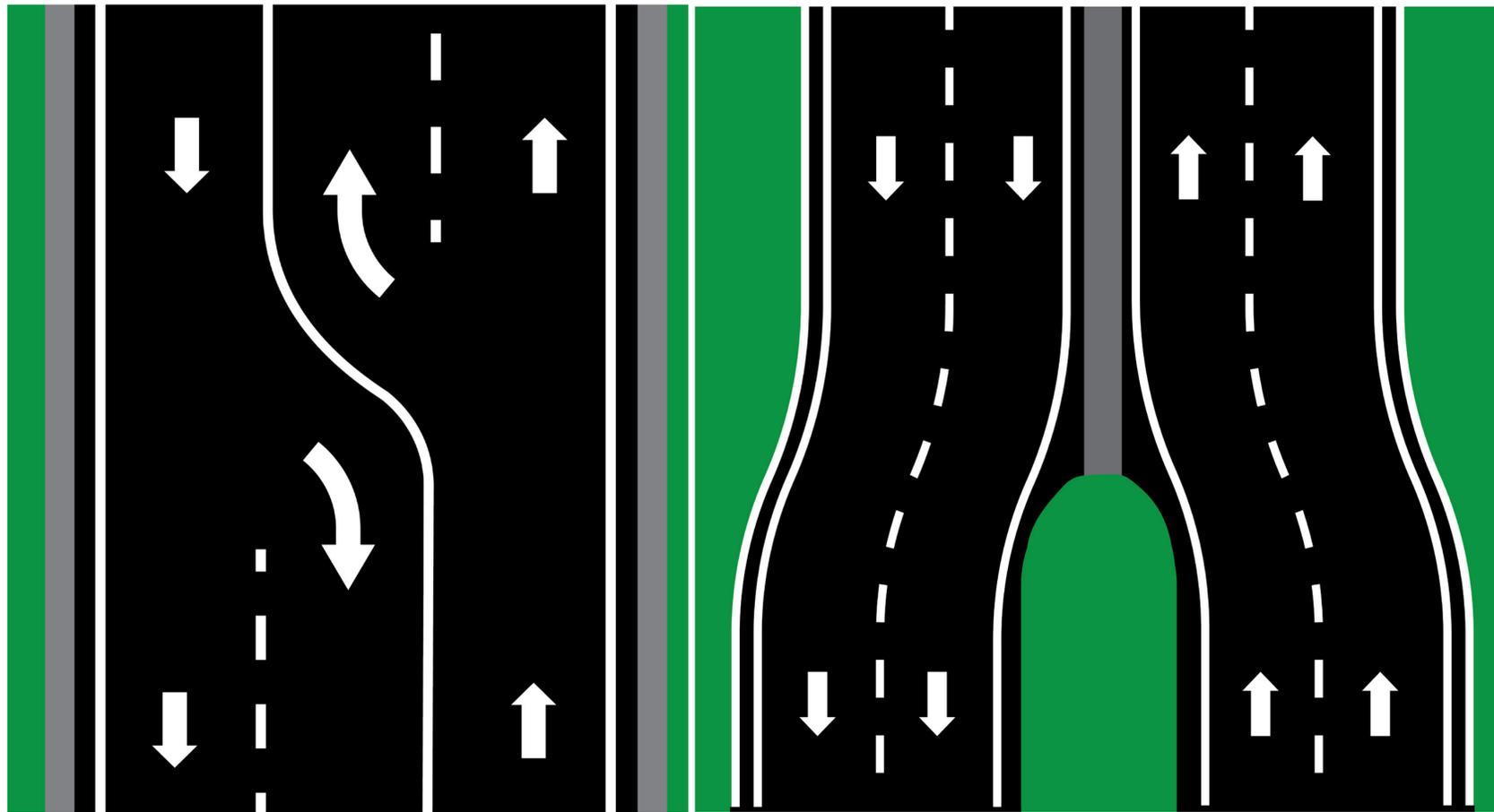
TOPOGRAPHY

WHAT NOW? DESIGN CONCEPTS

3-Lane

Alternating Passing

- Smaller footprint/ fewer impacts, although in areas where left-turn lanes are needed, potential for similar footprint to the 4-lane
- Would likely still contain a median barrier to maintain separation of northbound and southbound traffic.
- Potential to be two lanes during heavy snow
- May need another widening project in the future
- Less expensive



4-Lane

Barrier or Median Divided

- Wider footprint / more impacts
- Snow storage available in a median section, and quicker, more efficient snow removal
- Median allows for space needed to add in left-turn lanes where needed
- Median would allow for enhanced visibility in tight curve areas
- Median would allow for more recovery area for run-off-the-road vehicles, without hitting a barrier
- Balances through traffic vs local access traffic better by providing continuous passing opportunities
- Less likely to need additional improvements in the future
- More expensive

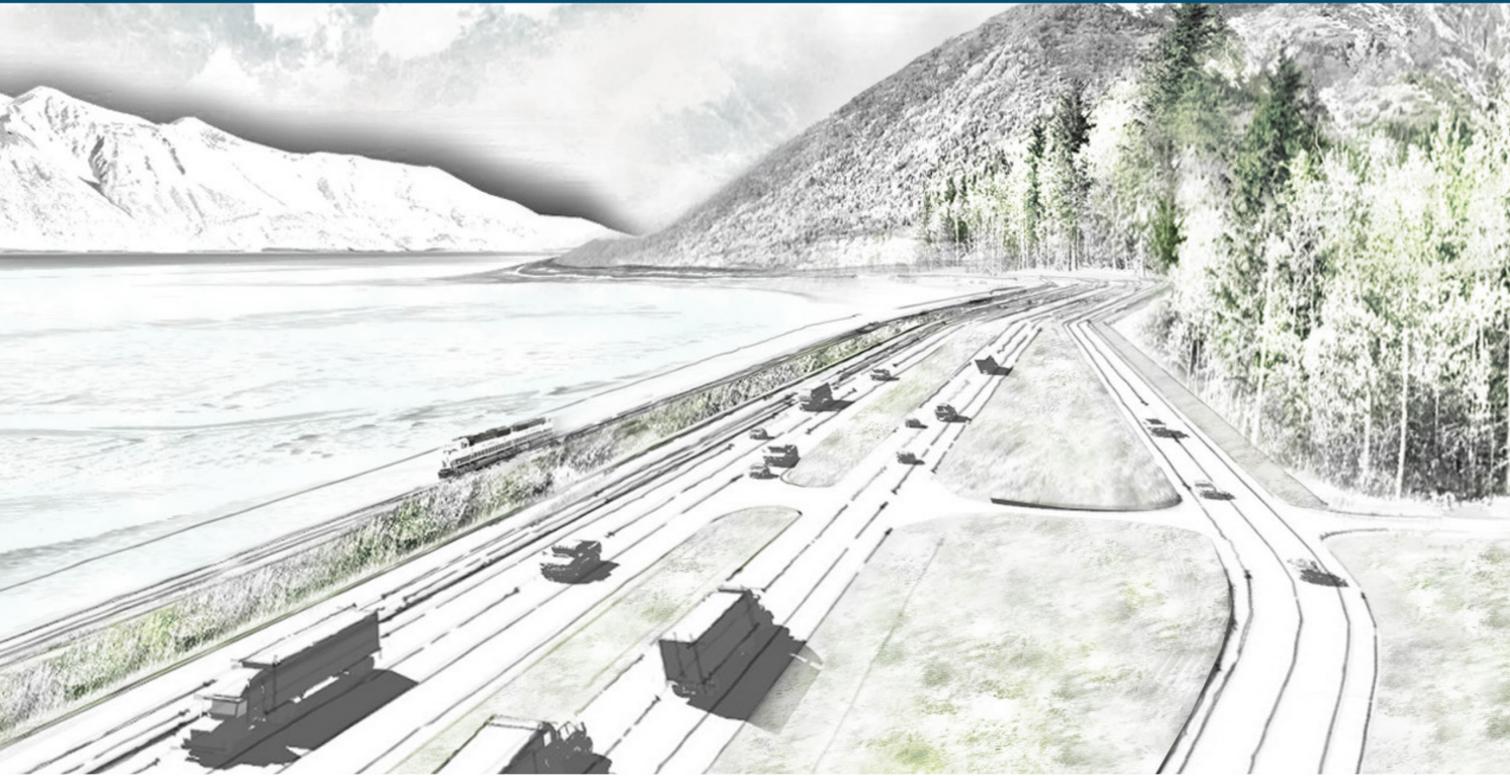
The team has also been investigating tunnels to see where they might be feasible from an environmental and practicability standpoint.



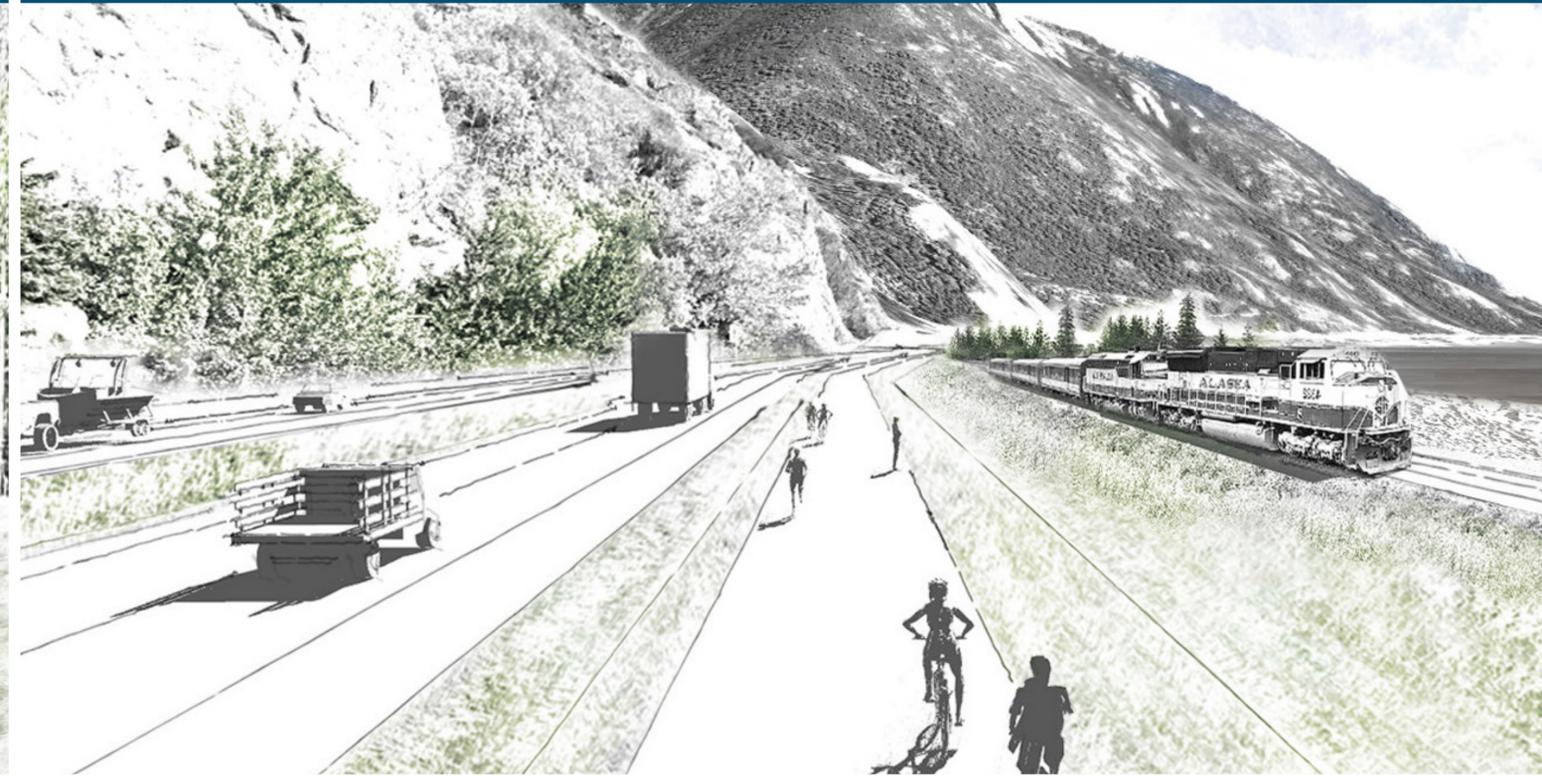
These maps and images are a tool we use to develop and explore ideas to see how they would fit. They contain about 10% level of engineering design, meaning, it is conceptual and meant to be used as a visual tool. **Questions? Ask a project team member with a name tag.**

WHAT NOW? DESIGN CONCEPTS

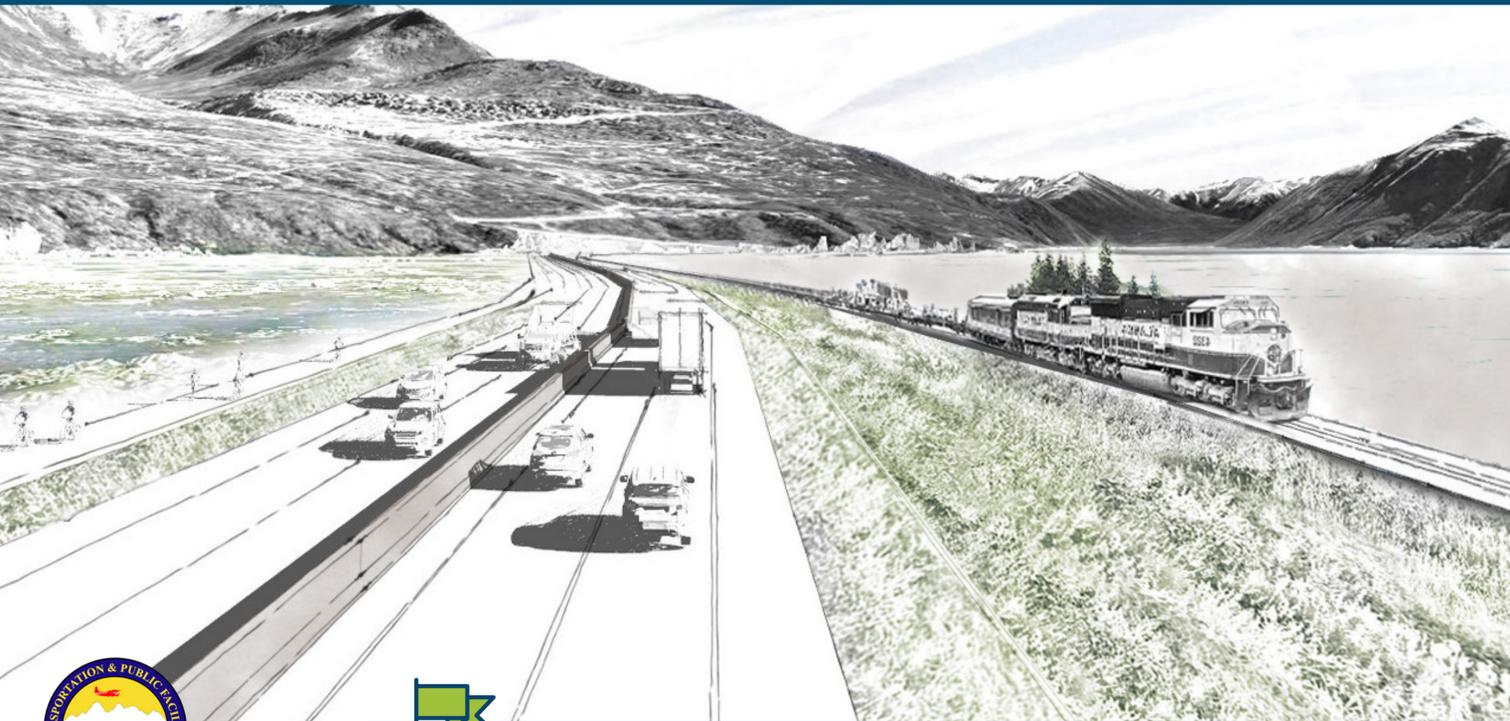
4-lane median divided with frontage road at Indian



Multi-use pathway near Beluga Point



4-lane barrier divided at Potter Marsh



2-lane existing at Potter Marsh



These are conceptual visuals to give some perspective on the ideas being discussed - what do you think?

POTTER MARSH



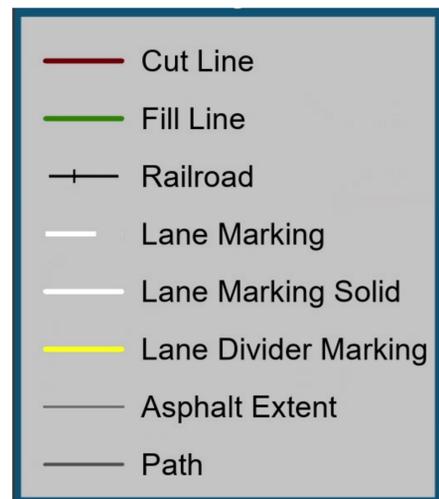
3-Lane

- Less impacts to adjacent wetlands
- Left turn lane at Potter Valley Road
- No need to move ARRC tracks at Potter Valley intersection
- Several direct access locations to the Seward Highway

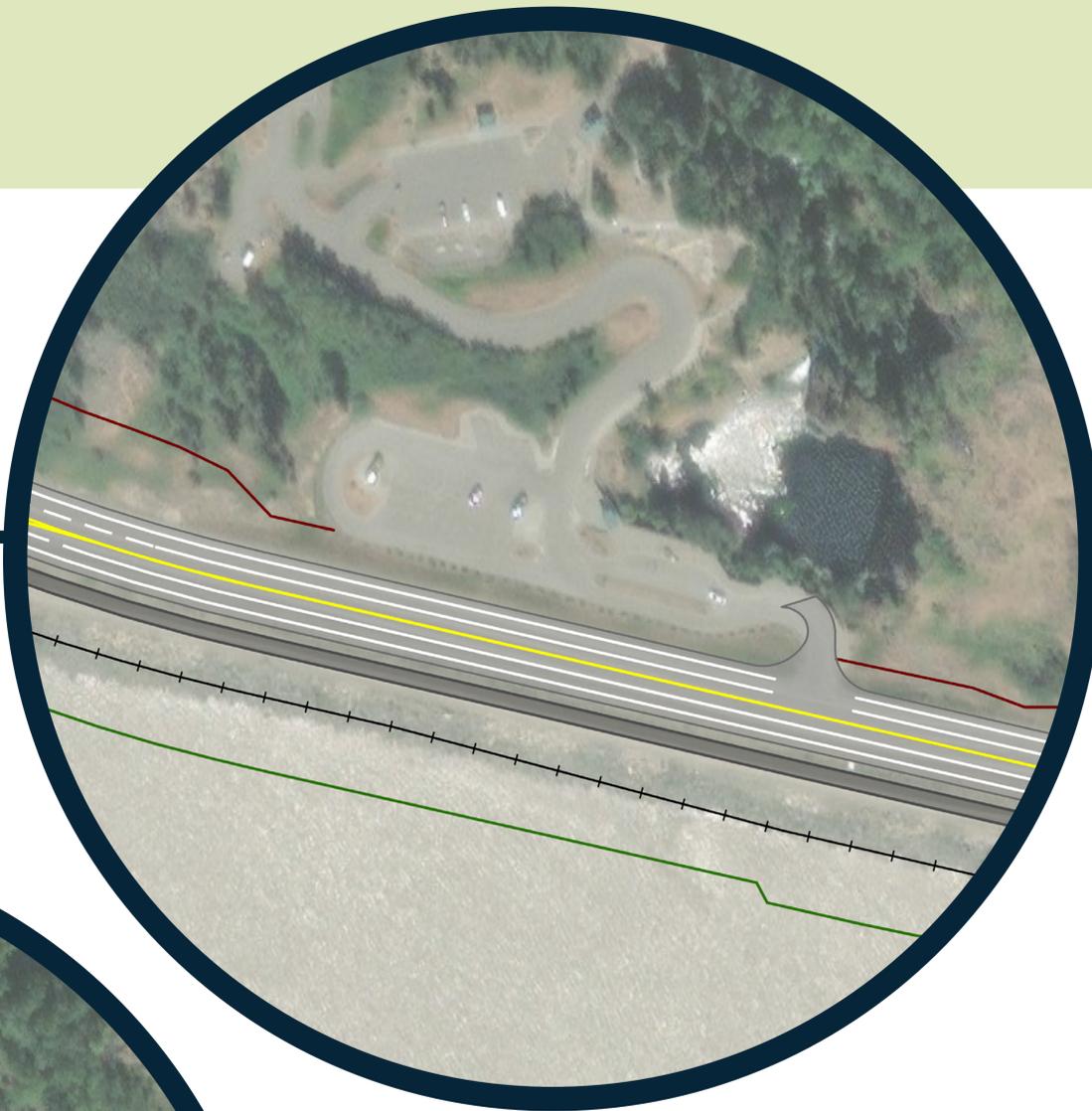


4-Lane

- Potter Valley becomes only access to the Turnagain Arm Trail, consolidated access improves safety
- New frontage road to access trailheads and parking south of Potter Valley intersection
- Left turn lane at Potter Valley Road
- More impacts to the refuge on the west
- Must move ARRC tracks out
- Impacts historic Section House building



MCHUGH CREEK



3-Lane

- Dedicated turn lane for turning left into parking lot

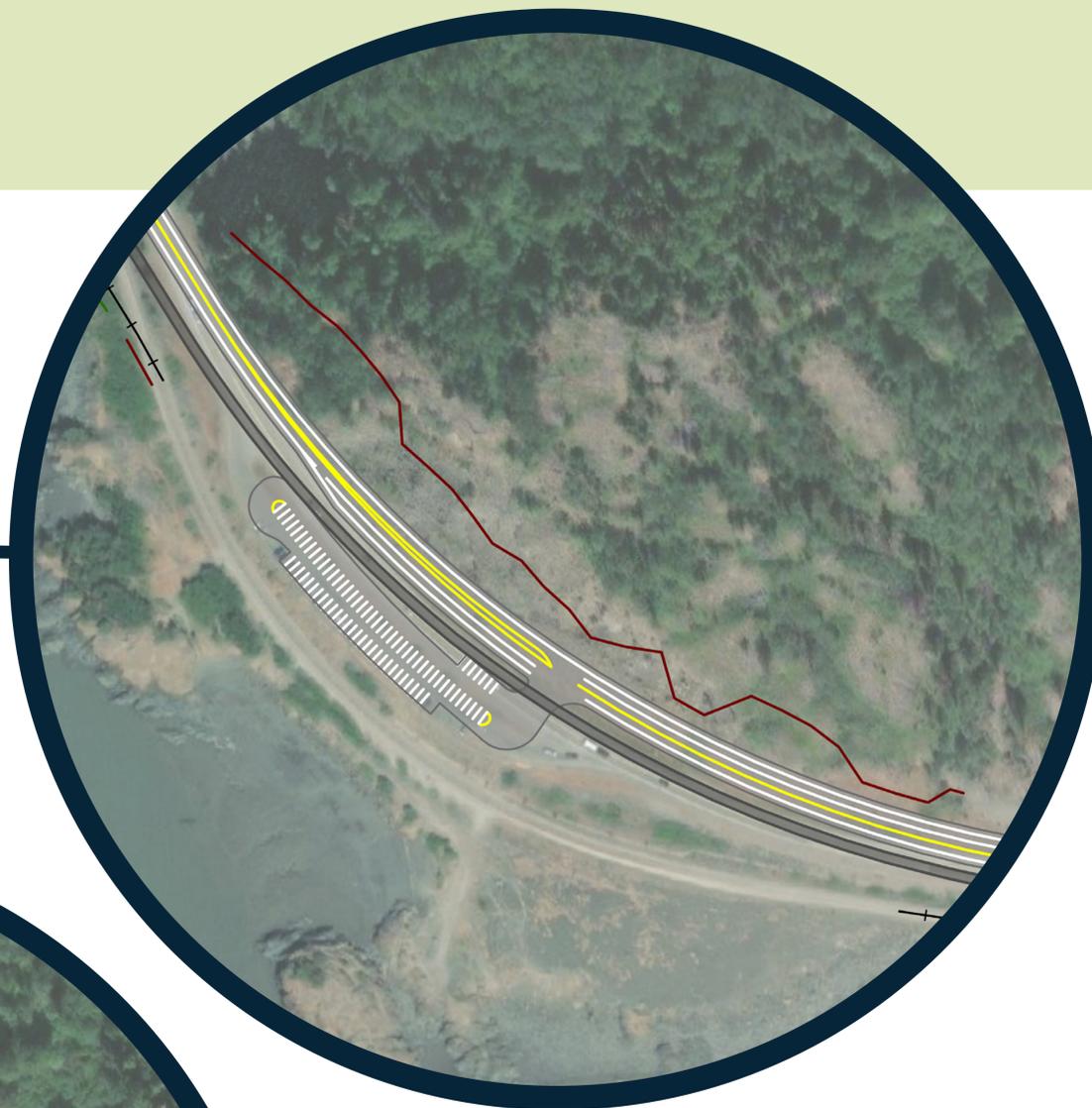


4-Lane

- Dedicated turn lane for turning left into parking lot

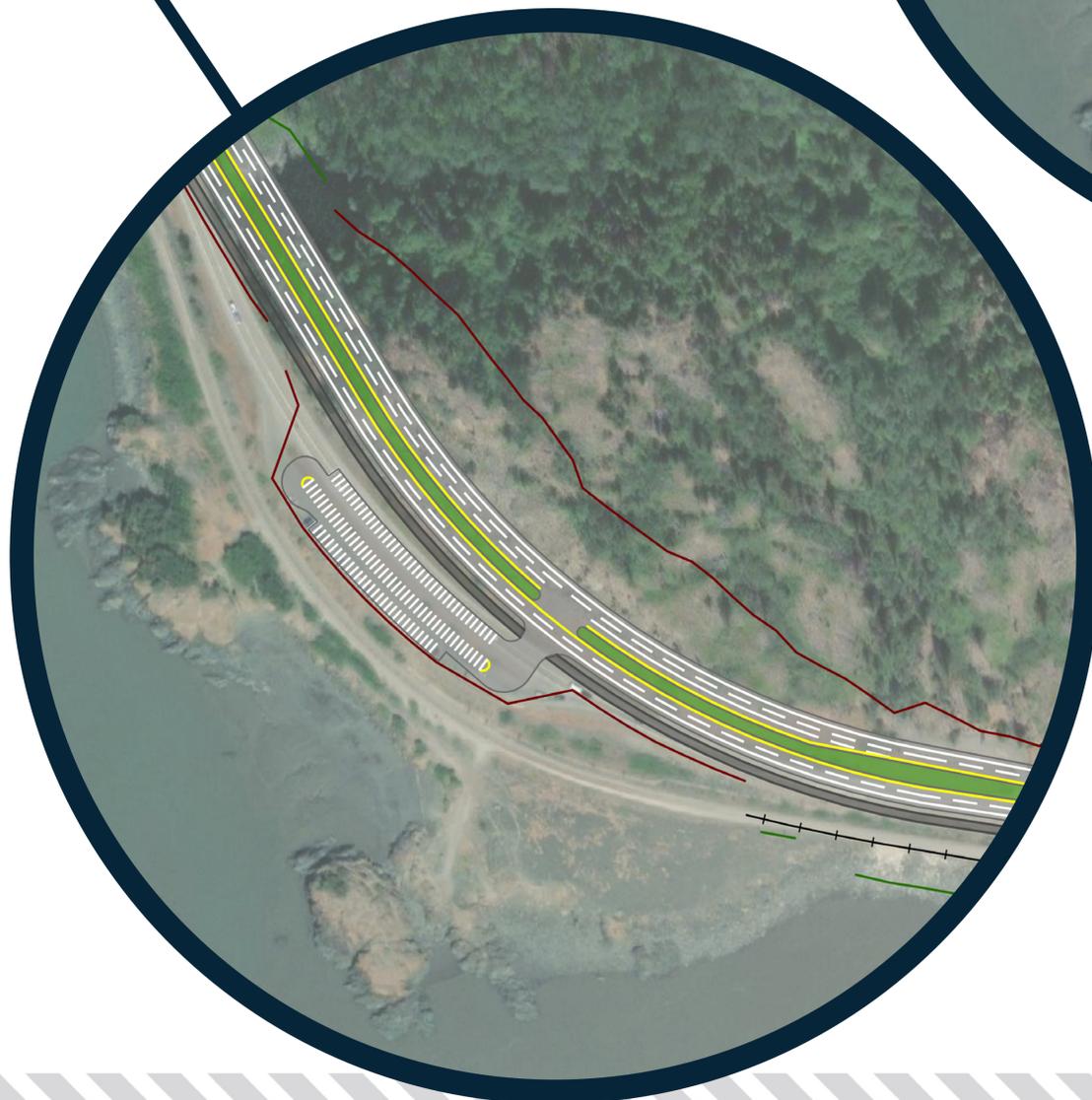
	Cut Line
	Fill Line
	Railroad
	Lane Marking
	Lane Marking Solid
	Lane Divider Marking
	Asphalt Extent
	Path

BELUGA POINT



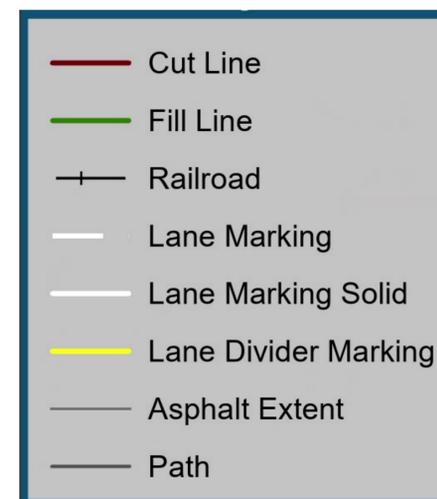
3-Lane

- Single entry / exit from parking
- Pedestrian crossing
- Prevent ARRC trespass
- Likely access from northbound and southbound
- Turning movements moved out of the travel way

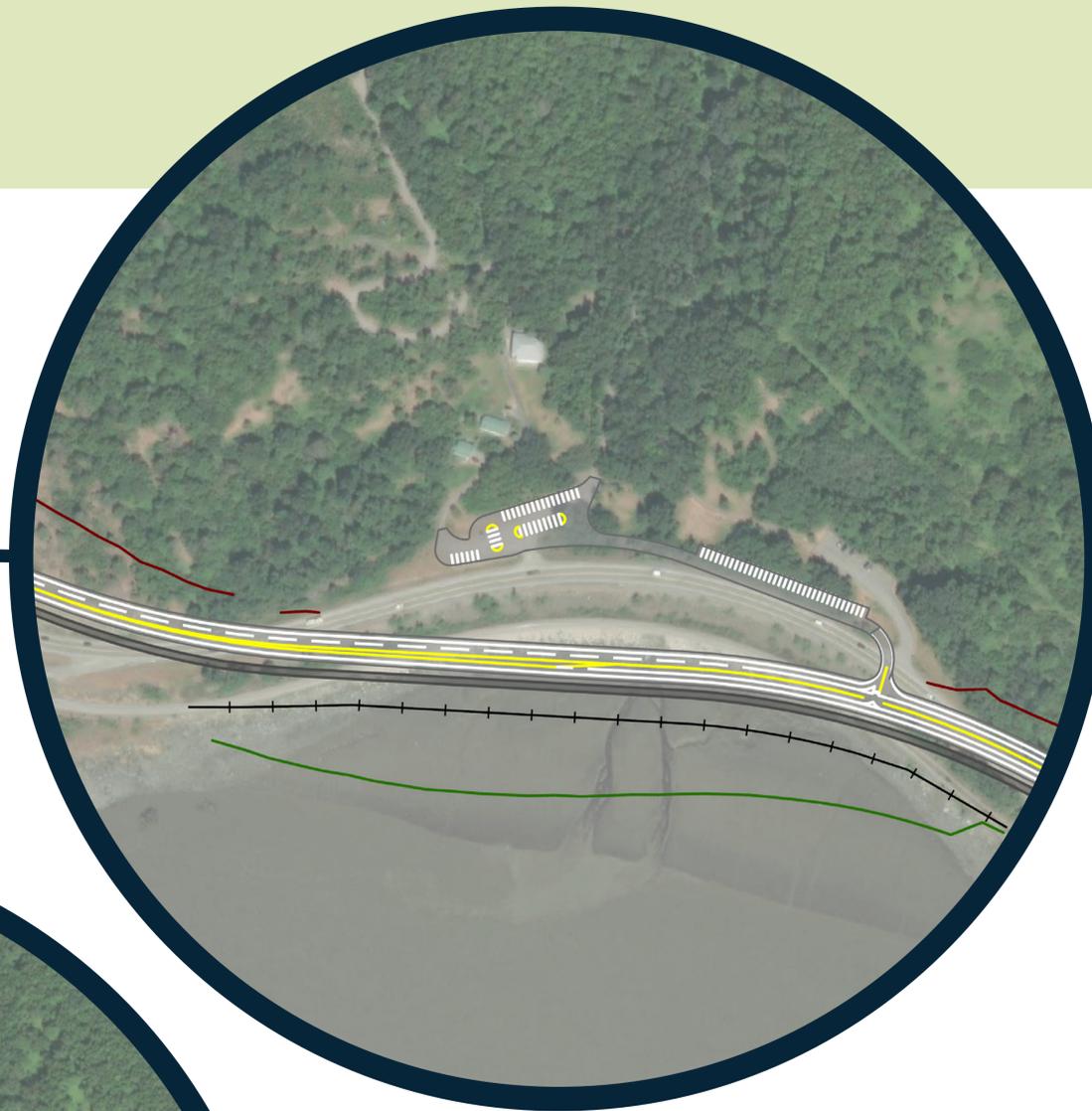


4-Lane

- Turning movements moved out of the travel way
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- Pedestrian crossing
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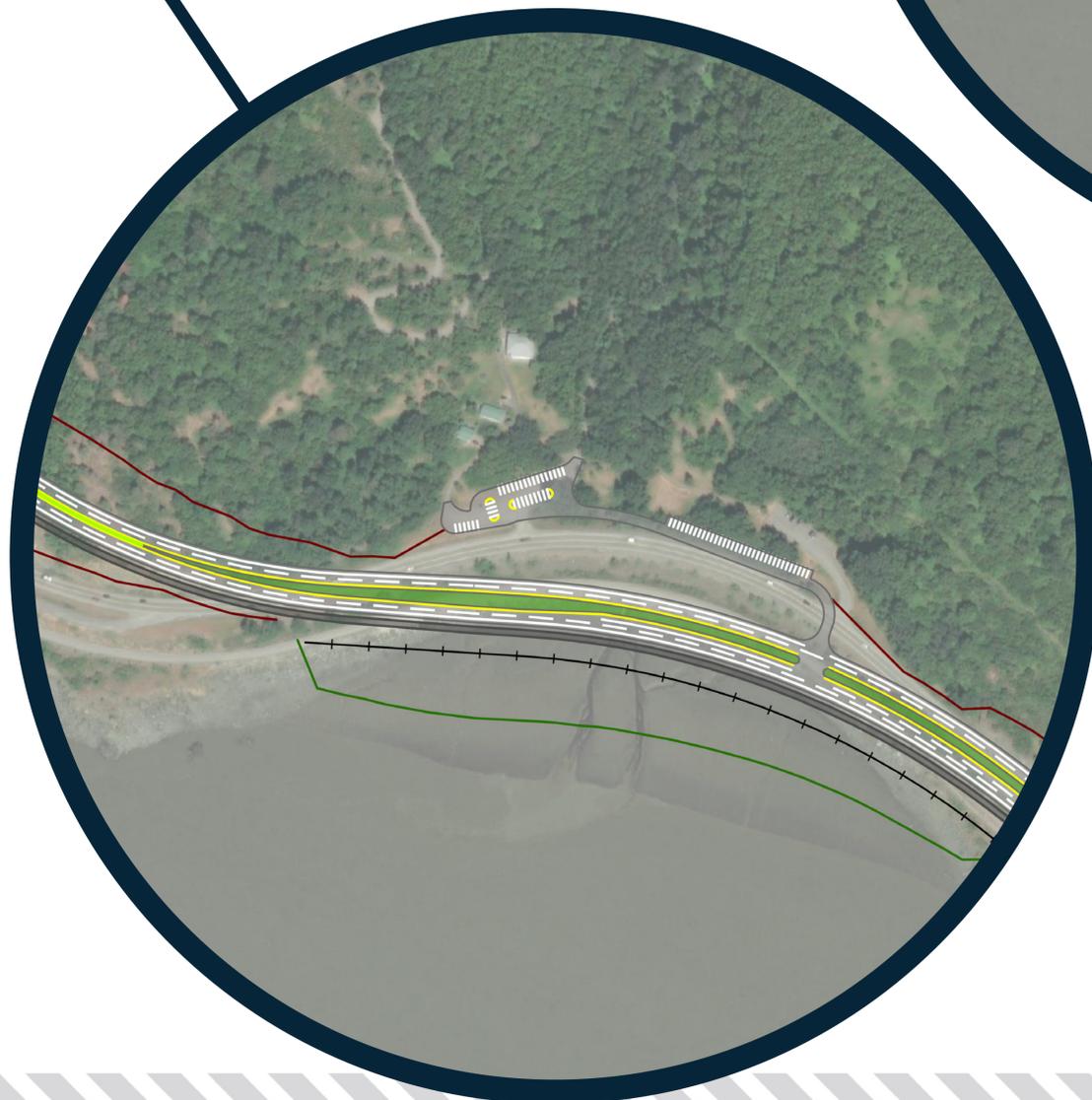


RAINBOW



3-Lane

- Single entry / exit from parking
- Likely access from northbound and southbound
- One lane of through traffic in both directions due to turn lanes

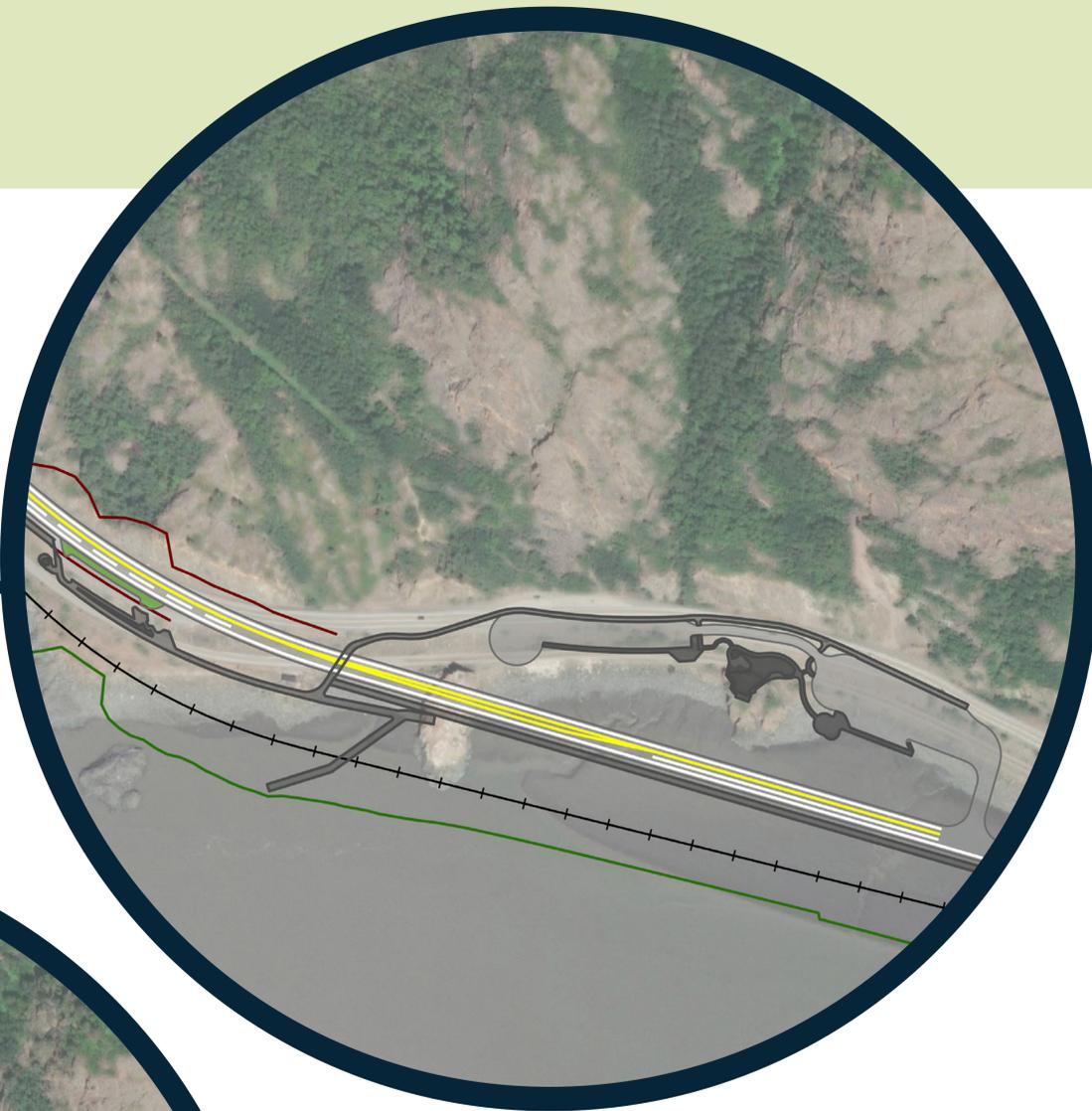


4-Lane

- Single entry / exit from parking
- Likely access from northbound and southbound

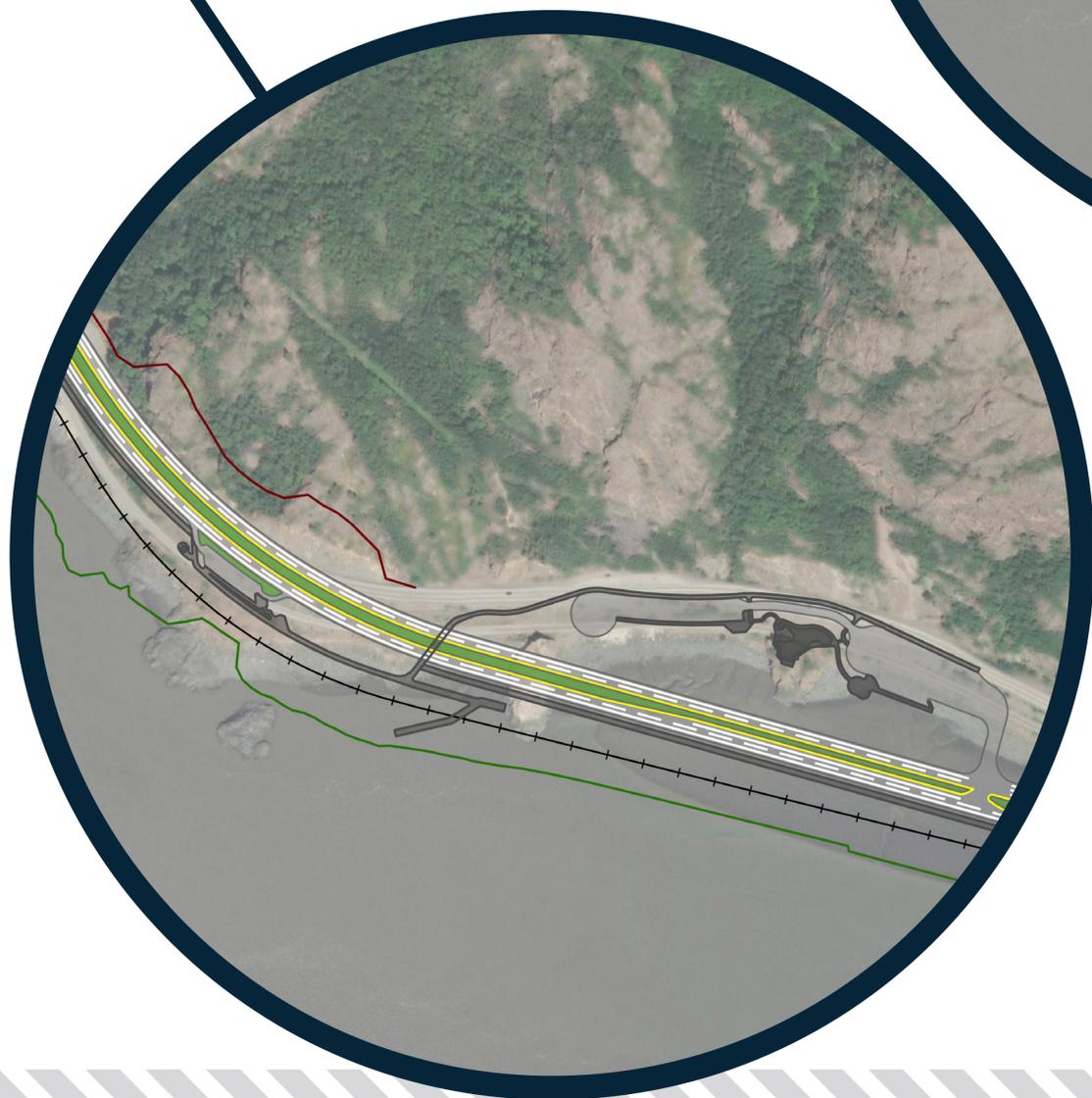
	Cut Line
	Fill Line
	Railroad
	Lane Marking
	Lane Marking Solid
	Lane Divider Marking
	Asphalt Extent
	Path

WINDY CORNER



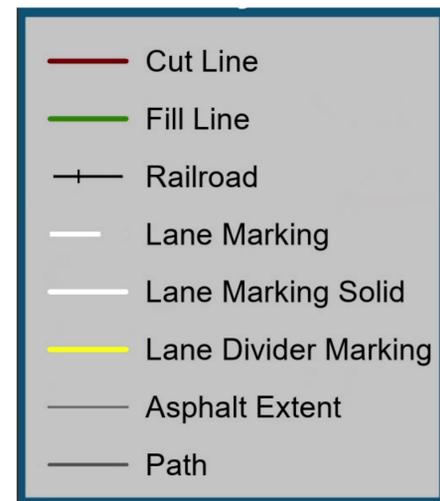
3-Lane

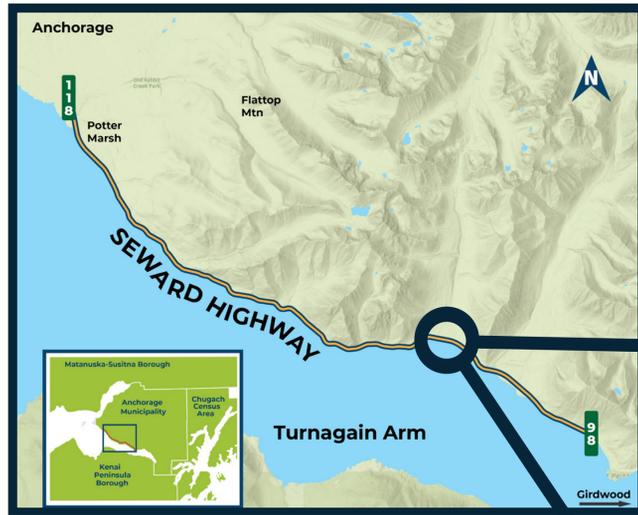
- Passing only for southbound traffic
- Waterside pathway access
- Expanded parking



4-lane

- Turning movements have dedicated deceleration, turning bays
- Waterside pathway access
- Expanded parking





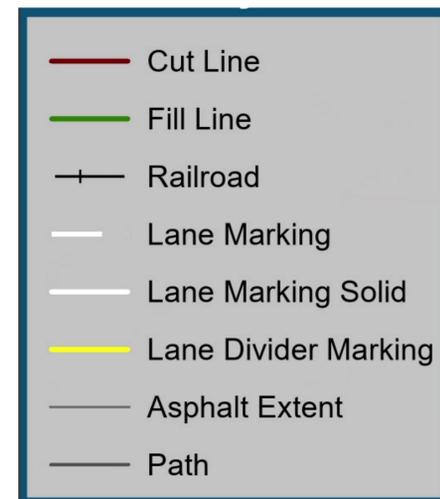
3-Lane

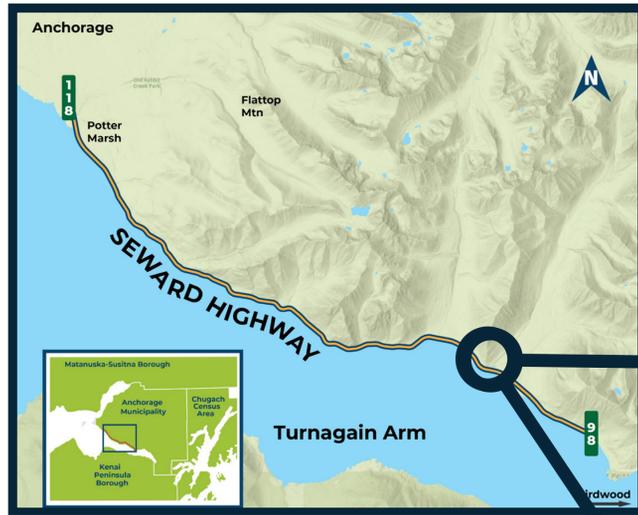
- Mostly on existing alignment
- Impacts the ballpark
- Does not consolidate access points



4-Lane

- Frontage road provides additional separation from the highway
- Impacts the ballpark
- Frontage road reduces direct access points, improving safety





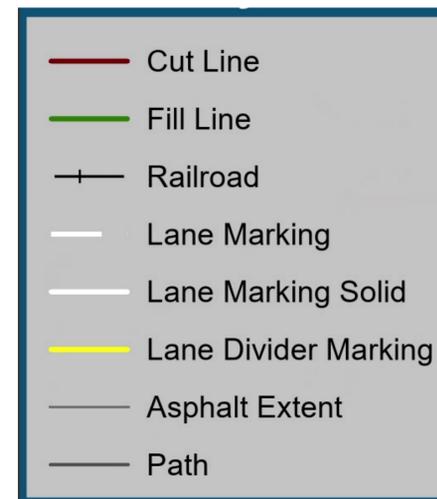
3-Lane

- Minimal impacts to Bird Campground
- Does not consolidate access points



4-Lane

- Community frontage road, provides for additional separation from the highway
- Minor impacts to the Bird Campground
- Frontage road reduces direct access points, improving safety



SCREENING PROCESS




Concept Ideas

- Engineering
- SWG
- Public
- Agencies
- Prior studies
- Constraints

We Are Here



Screening Factors

- Purpose & Need
- Traffic analysis
- Safety analysis
- Project Goals
- Practicable and Reasonable


Alternatives in the EA

- No Build vs Build (1+)
- Detailed environmental impacts analysis
- Public and agency comment period

Environmental Analysis

- NEPA (environmental impacts)
- Section 404 (wetlands & waters of the US)
- Section 4(f) & 6(f) (parks)
- Section 106 (cultural & historic properties)
- Endangered Species Act (Beluga whales and habitat)

Preferred Alternative

- Design speed, design criteria (lanes/widths)
- Mitigation measures
- Permitting requirements



Final EA

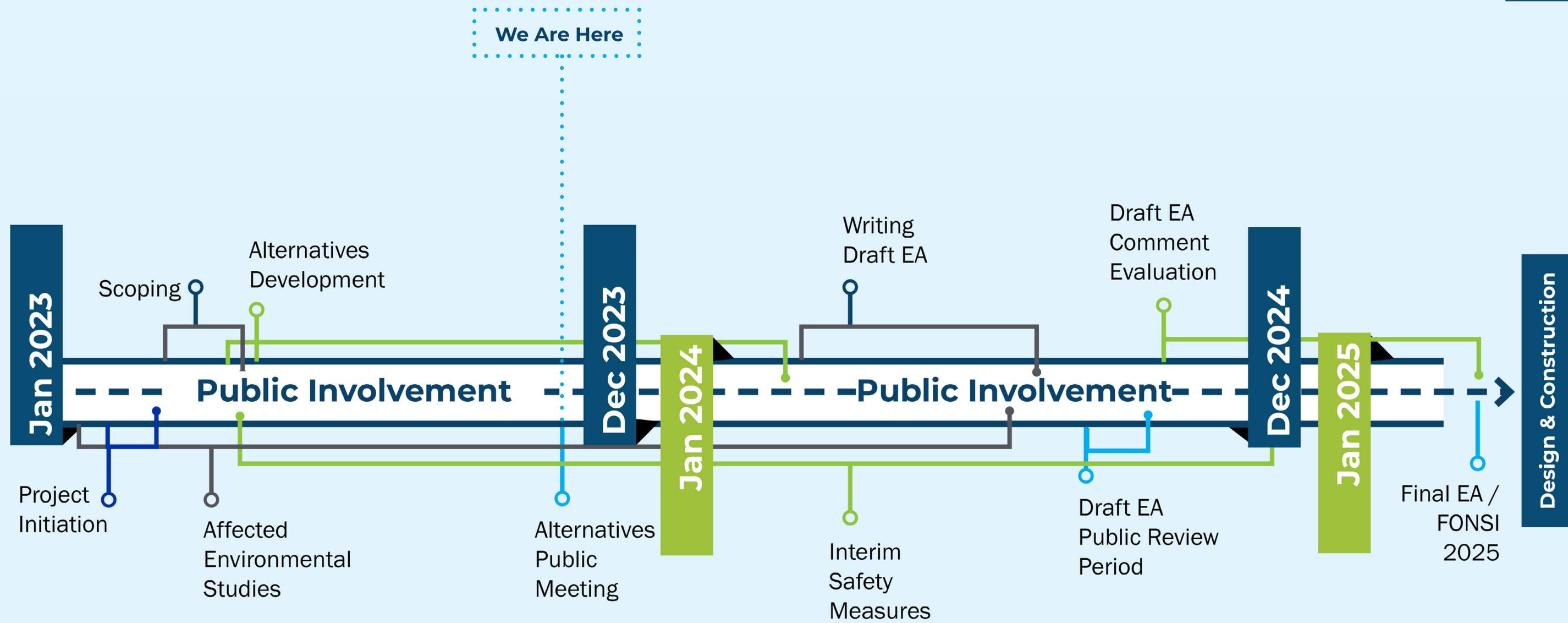
Design Phase
 Intersection Details, Final Location of Features (i.e. Pathway) Final Footprint



Construction



TIMELINE



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK



You can participate in the Safer Seward Highway Project in several ways. Scan the QR codes below with your smartphone to instantly:

SIGN-UP FOR EMAILS

Receive meeting notices, project announcements, and other up-to-date information in your email inbox!



LEAVE A COMMENT

Leave a comment using forms available here tonight or use the QR code below to submit them electronically.



EMAIL US DIRECTLY

You can email the project team directly.
info@safersewardhighway.com



CALL US

If you have any questions or require additional information, please leave a message for the project team. (907) 802-3656



We would like your feedback. Here's what we want to know:

- » Concepts – any improvements?
- » Other ideas we should look at?
- » Issues we should study?



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