



WELCOME

PROJECT NO. 0A31034/ Z566310000

Safer Seward Highway

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

SPRING 2023 PUBLIC MEETING

PLEASE SIGN-IN



ABOUT THE PROJECT



DOT&PF is proposing to construct improvements along the Seward Highway between Bird Flats and Rabbit Creek. This major infrastructure project will make long-term permanent highway improvements to allow decommissioning of the Traffic Safety Corridor between Anchorage and Girdwood.

We are beginning this new project with environmental scoping, studies, and assessment of impacts. This process will lead to the design, development, and ultimately construction of long-term improvements. Input and participation from interested parties is critical to the success of this project.

The initial idea on how to solve a problem and satisfy the purpose and need is a proposed action. In this case, DOT&PF has identified a four-lane divided highway with a multi-use pathway as the proposed action. Additionally, the Municipality of Anchorage Contact Sensitive Solution (CSS) process will be kicking-off and will provide another opportunity for engagement and development of solutions.



HISTORY

2004

First proposed safety improvement project: Indian to Potter Marsh, MP 105-115.



2006

MP 90-117.5 designated Alaska's first Safety Corridor due to the elevated rate of fatal and major injury (high-severity) crashes.



SAFER



2017

Public feedback and consultation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) resulted in the Class of Action being revised to an Environmental Assessment (EA).

EA



2013

Seward Highway MP 105-107 Windy Corner Project.

2020

DOT&PF extended the project 2.5 miles between Windy Corner and Rainbow Point (MP 105-109.5) to address concerns raised by public and agency comments on the Draft EA.



2022

Seward Highway MP 98.5-118, Bird Flats to Rabbit Creek project included in STIP. Expanded project area covers the 20-mile section of the Traffic Safety Corridor closest to Anchorage, including Windy Corner.



2023

New EA process for the project MP 98.5-118 begins with public and agency scoping.



What is NEPA?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 establishes a national environmental policy and provides a framework for environmental planning and decision making by Federal agencies. NEPA requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions.

What is an Environmental Assessment (EA)?

An EA is prepared for projects when the significance of the potential environmental impacts is uncertain. Major components of an EA include:



Purpose
and Need



Alternatives



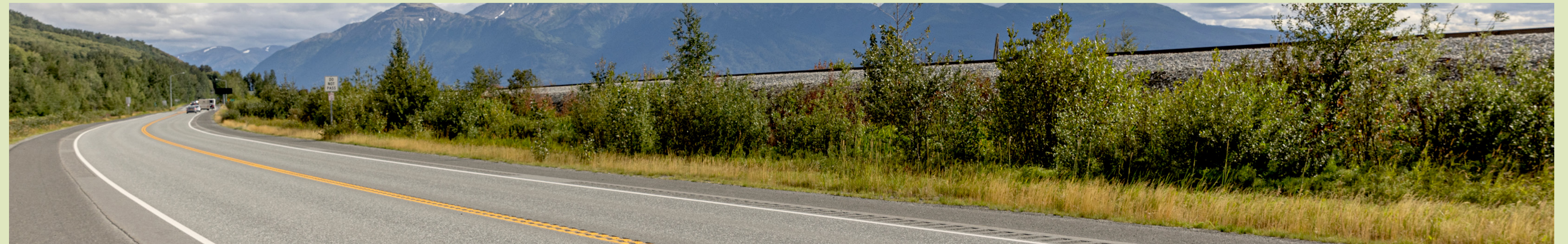
Affected
Environment



Environmental
Consequences



Mitigation
Measures



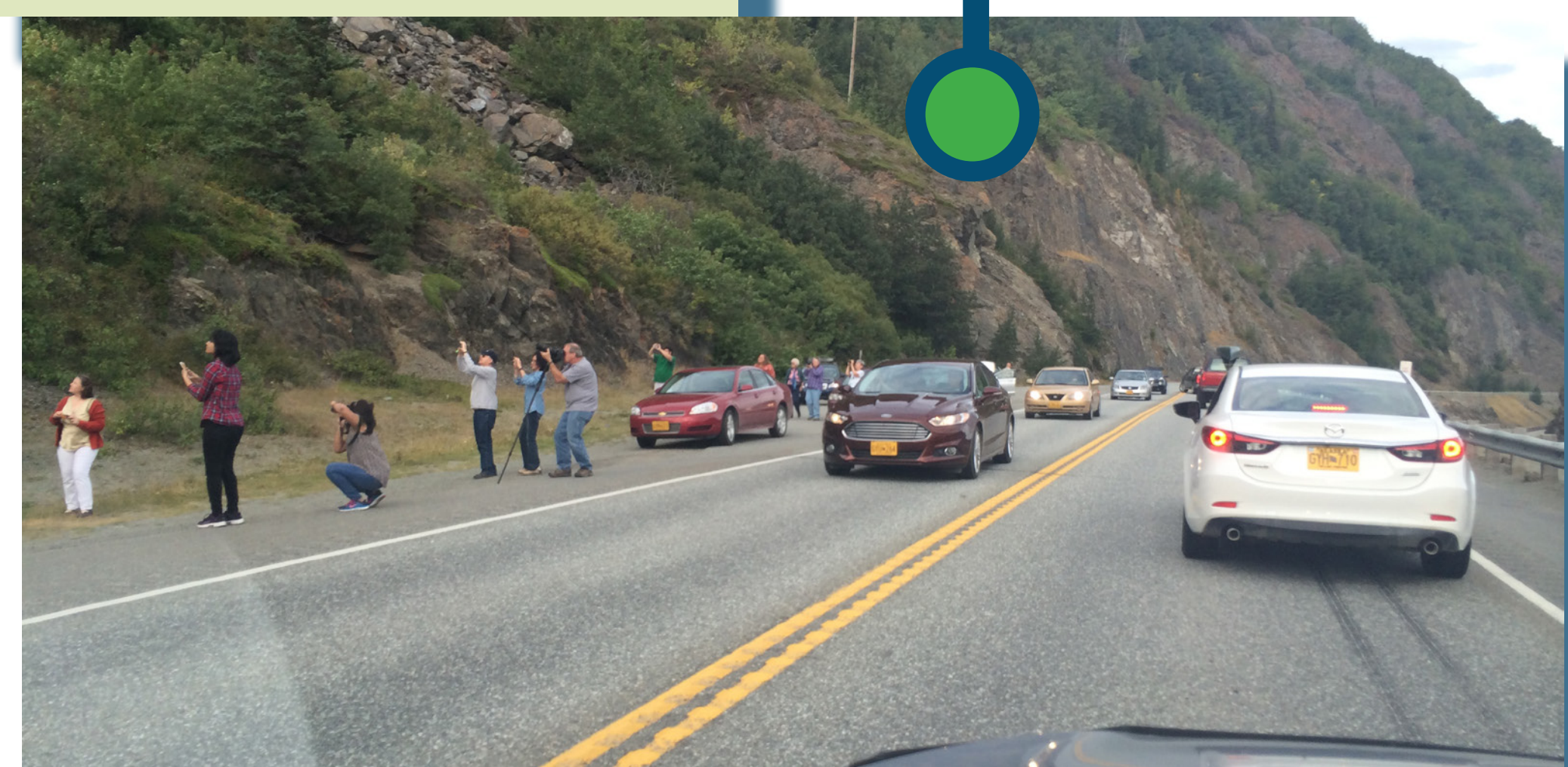
Effective November 3, 2017, the DOT&PF has entered into the NEPA Assignment Program through an MOU with FHWA to assume responsibilities under NEPA and all or part of FHWA's responsibilities for environmental review, consultation, or other actions required under any Federal environmental law with respect to one or more Federal Highway projects within Alaska.

PURPOSE AND NEED

Purpose

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 to meet current design standards for a component of the Interstate Highway System and eliminate the current designation as a Highway Safety Corridor. The project purpose can be achieved by improving safety for all users, correcting roadway deficiencies, and reducing roadway congestion.

Need



Improve Safety

In 2006, this segment of the Seward Highway was designated as the state's first Highway Safety Corridor in recognition of the fatal crash rate. Improvements that reduce the crash rate must be completed to remove the Safety Corridor designation.



Correct Roadway Deficiencies

The roadway does not meet current design standards for its function and traffic levels.



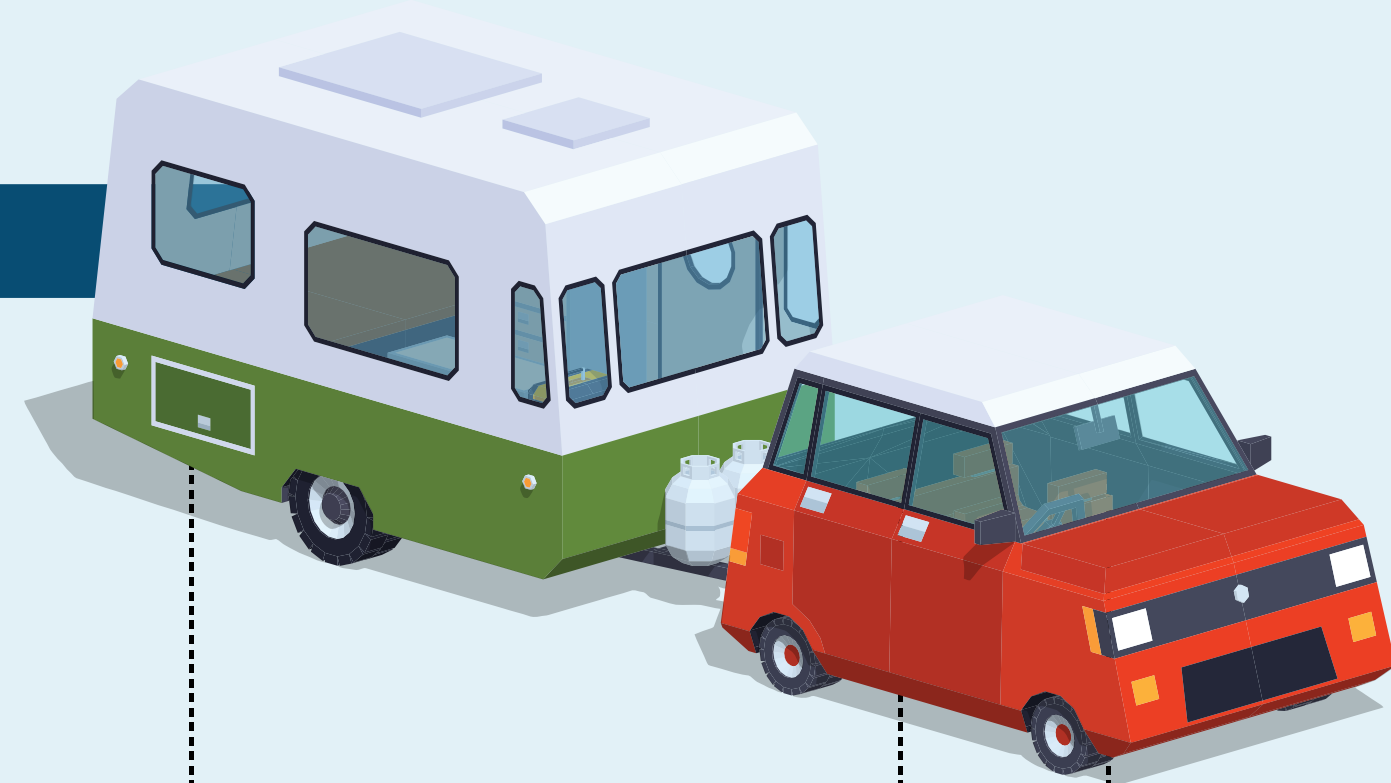
Reduce Congestion

The highway becomes congested resulting in reduced travel speeds, long platoons (lines) of vehicles, and a degraded level of service. The Seasonal (summer) peak traffic is predicted to exceed the capacity of the highway by 2027. Local access (intersections and pull-offs) further worsens roadway congestion due to the prevalence of recreational activities in the corridor.

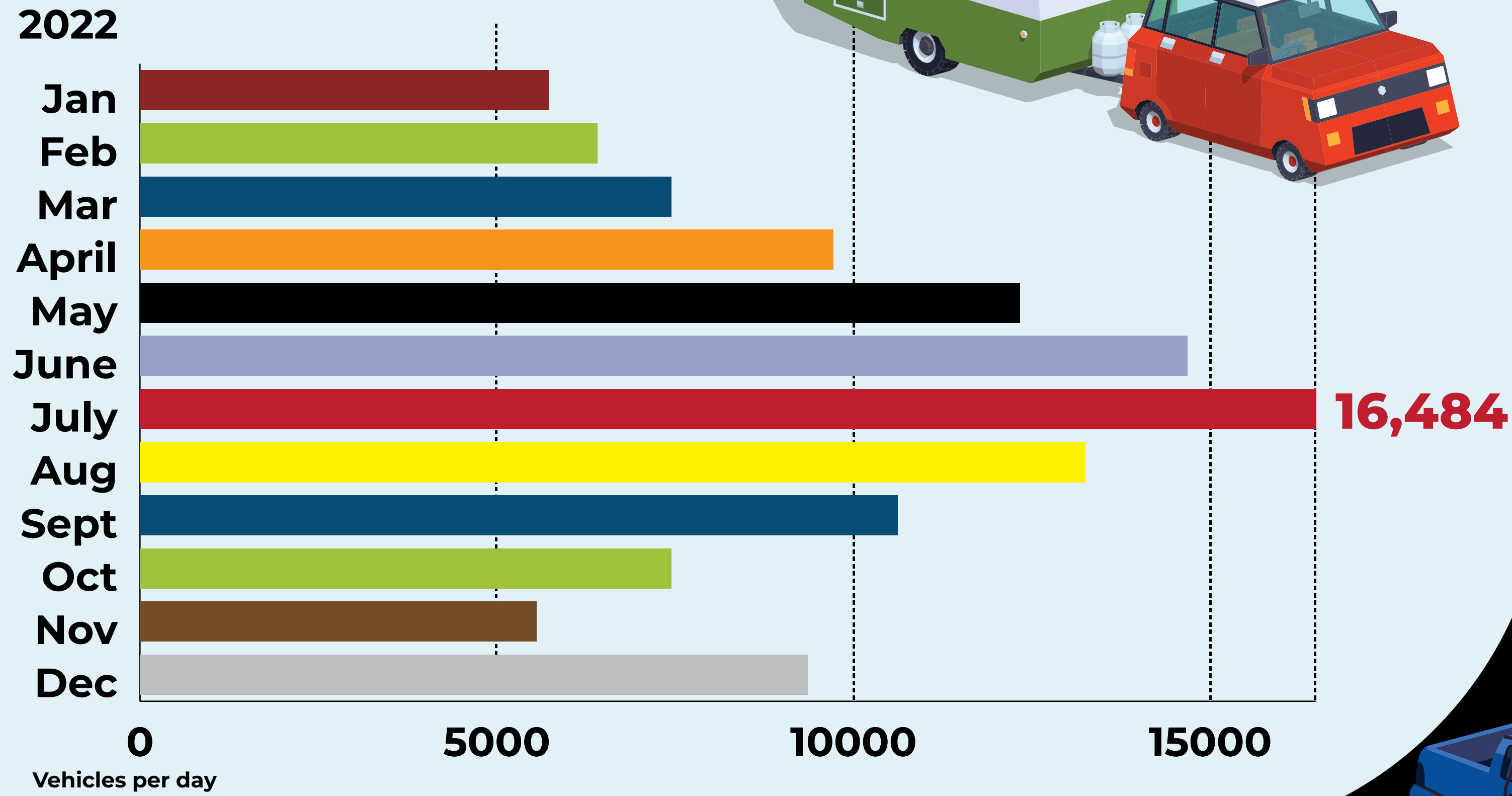
? What suggestions do you have for the purpose & need statement? What other safety or travel problems do you encounter in the project area?

Traffic

3 million annual trips



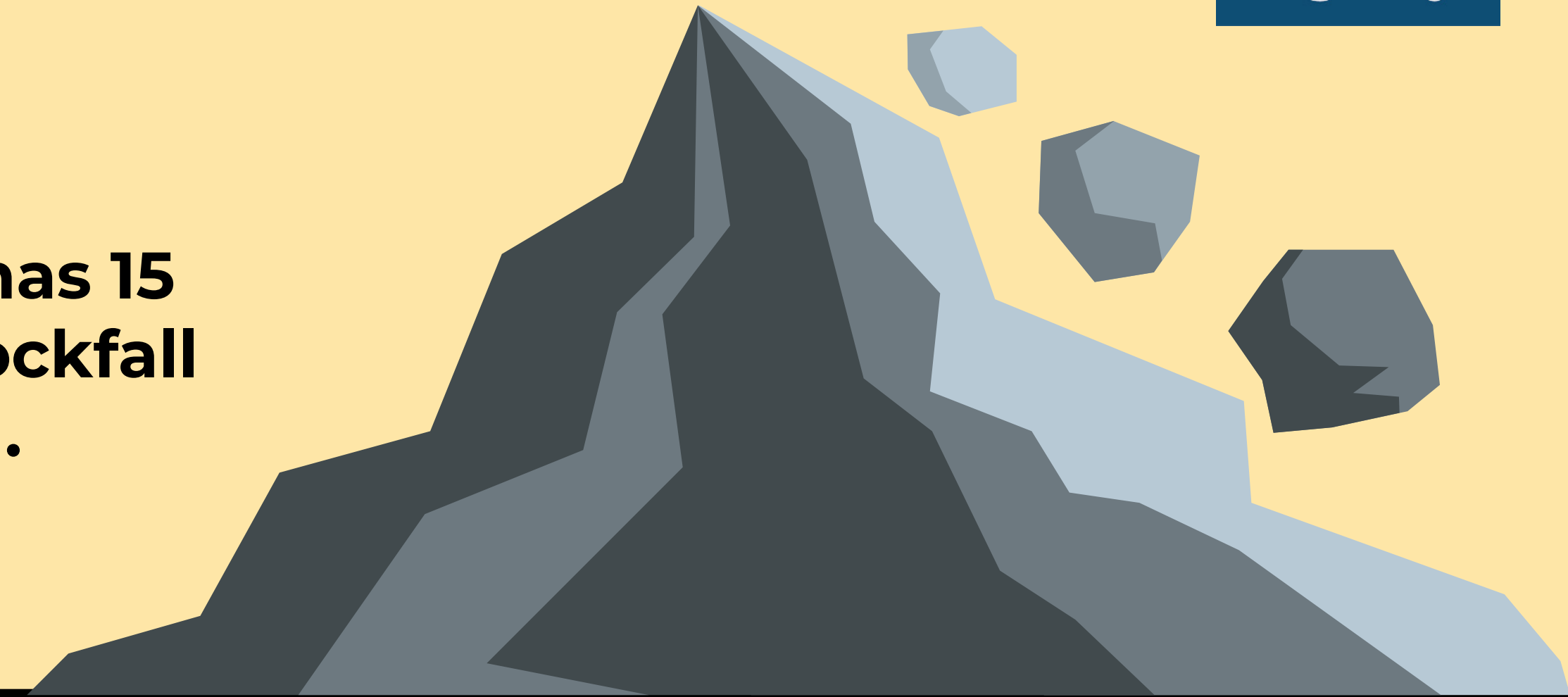
Monthly average daily total at Potter Marsh:



Rockfall

Rockfall occurrence has increased nearly x3 after the 2018 7.1M earthquake on the Seward highway between MP 113-114.

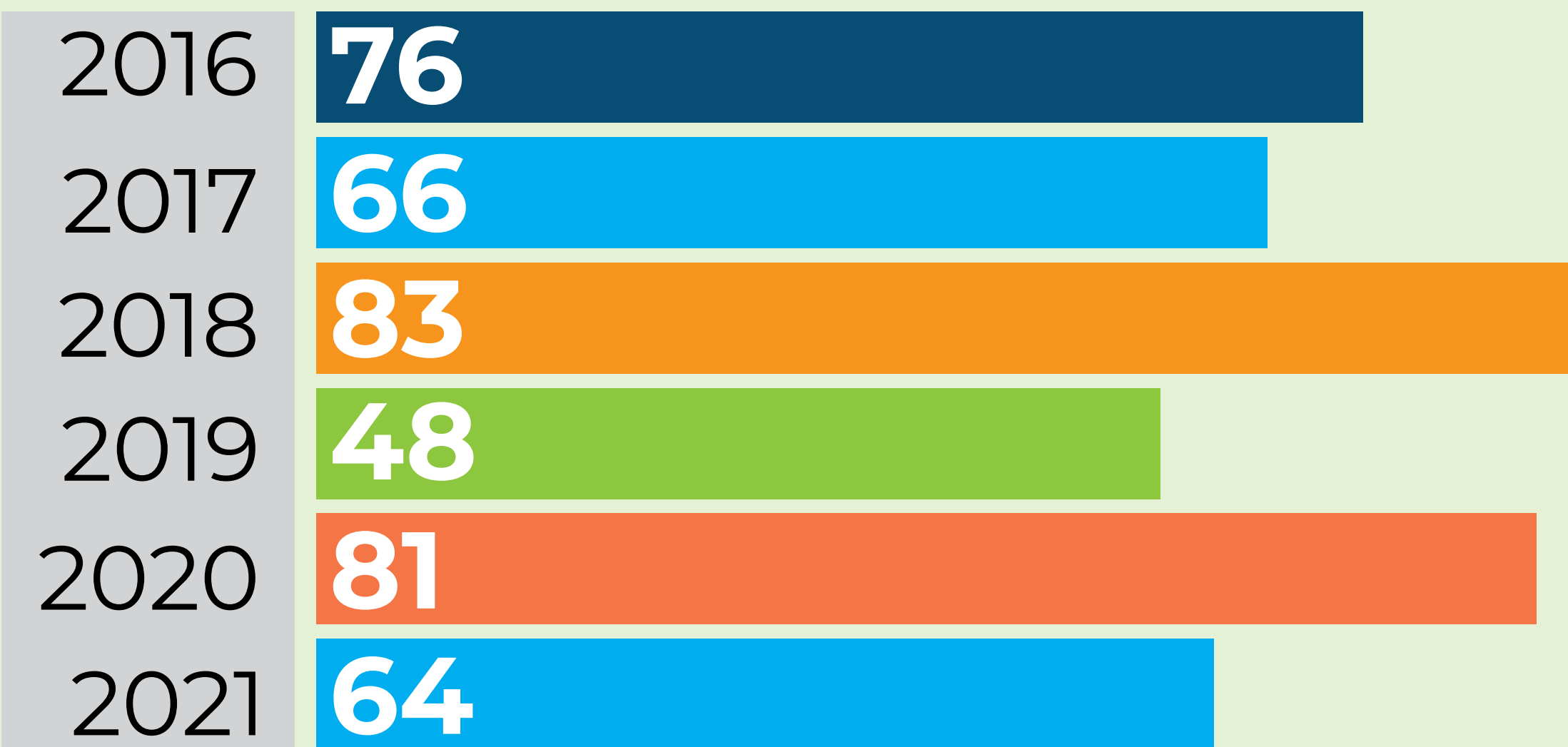
The project corridor has 15 identified roadside rockfall zones (HSIP findings).



14 crashes associated with rockfall from 2016 - 2021.

Crashes

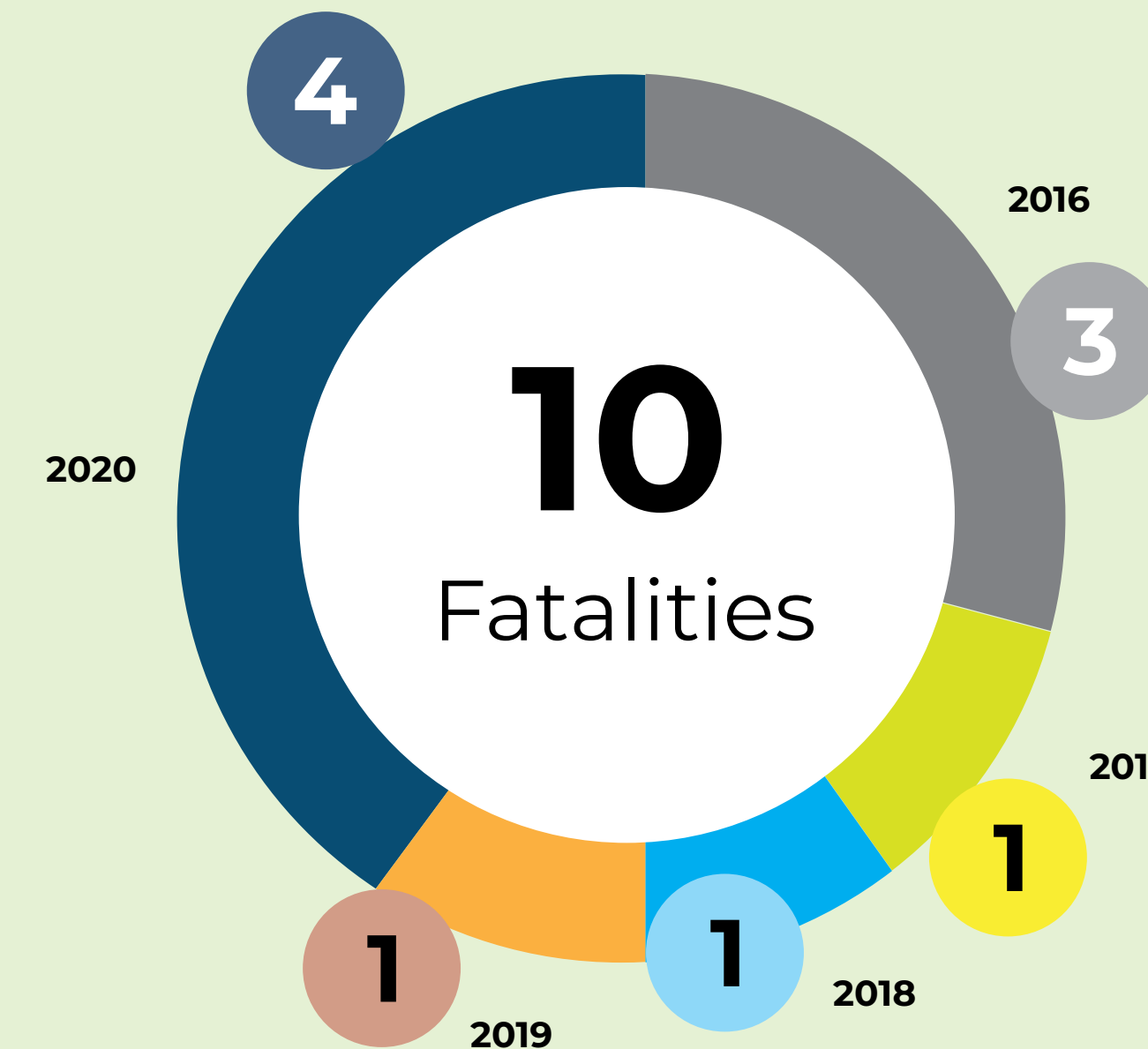
418 crashes between 2016-2021, average of **70** per year



MYTHS & DATA

- Myth:** Darkness is what makes the road so dangerous. **Data:** 59% of crashes happen in the daylight.
- Myth:** There are a lot of drunk drivers causing crashes on the road. **Data:** Only 6% of crashes were suspected to have involved drugs and alcohol (less than 0.01% confirmed).

10 fatalities in 5 years



FACT

- 49 head-on collisions were recorded in 2016-2021 totaling 12% of crashes.
- 70% of the 10 fatalities were head-on collisions.

23 Serious injuries



FACT

- An average of 5 high-severity crashes occur in the corridor every year.



KEY ISSUES

? Which of these resonates the most with you? What ideas do you have for other issues we should study?



LEGEND

- MILEPOST
- KEY ISSUE
- TRAILHEAD
- PULLOUT/SCENIC OVERLOOK OR SLOW VEHICLE TURNOUT
- INTERSECTION
- SIGNIFICANT ROCK CUT/TOPOGRAPHY
- DEFICIENT CURVE RADII

Here's what past studies have shown us about key issues in the corridor. These will be analyzed in the Draft EA:

- » Steep mountainsides
- » Turnagain Arm
- » Beluga whales, sheep, and other wildlife
- » Alaska Railroad tracks
- » Pedestrians, bikes and other users
- » Trailheads
- » Viewpoints
- » Potter Marsh
- » Local access (Bird, Indian)

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!



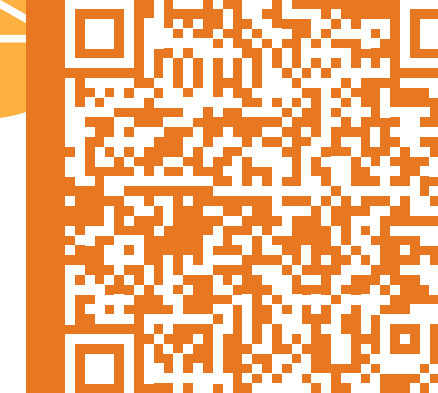
LEAVE A COMMENT

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:



- » Purpose and Need – suggestions for additional needs?
- » Alternatives – any improvements? Other ideas we should look at?
- » Issues we should study?
- » Tunnels?

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**Comments due
by April 20.**

