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# WELCOME

Project No. 0A31034 / Z566310000

## Safer Seward Highway

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

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
DRAFT INDIVIDUAL SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION  
2026 PUBLIC HEARINGS

**PLEASE SIGN-IN**



# STATION 1: ABOUT THE PROJECT



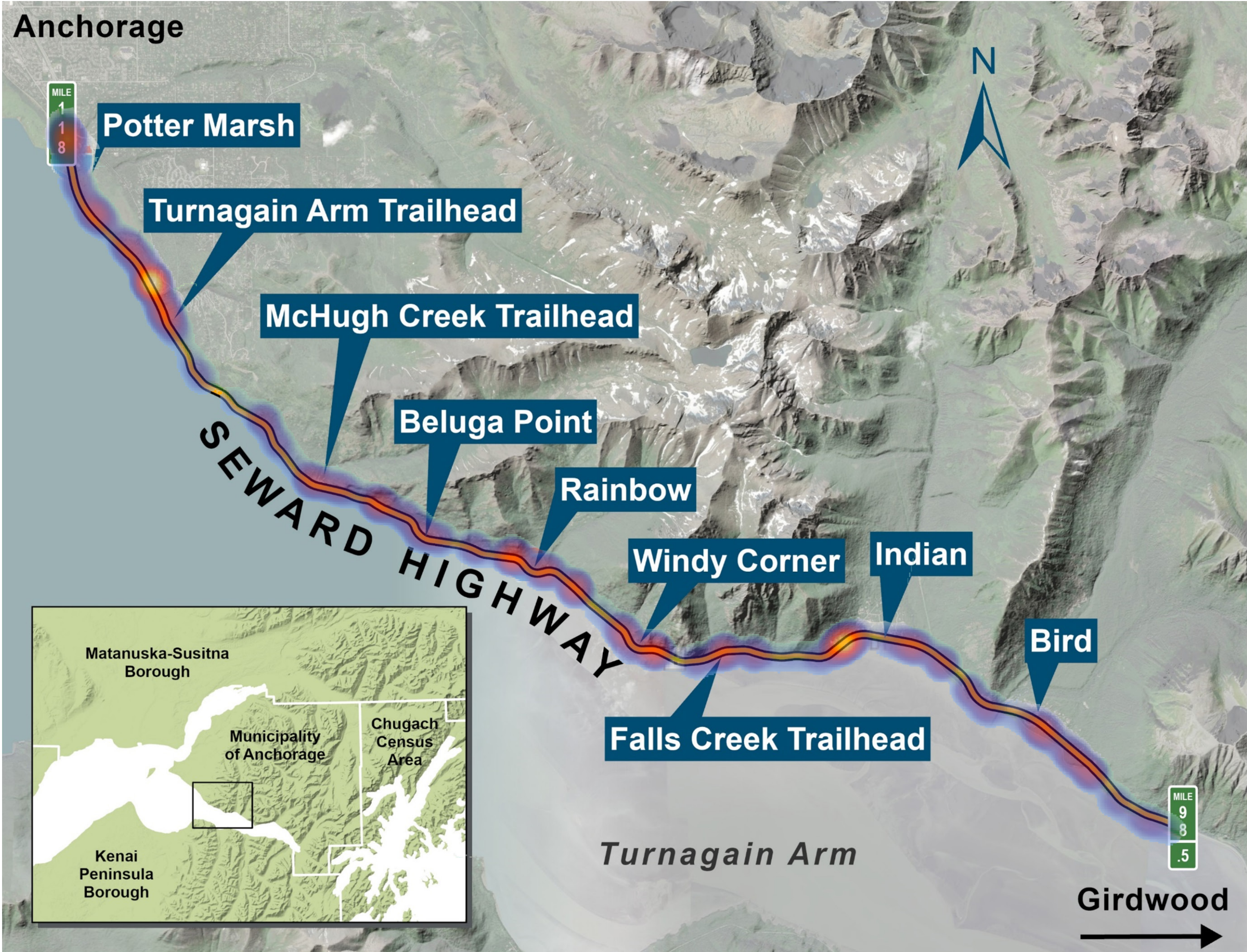
The Seward Highway has a long history of crashes that result in serious injuries and fatalities. Due to these safety concerns, it was designated as a Highway Safety Corridor in 2006.

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) proposes to construct a 4-lane divided highway and separated Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant pathway along the Seward Highway between Mileposts (MP) 118 and 98.5.

DOT&PF initiated this project in 2023.

Now, we are sharing the [Draft Environmental Assessment](#) and [Draft Individual Section 4\(f\) Evaluation](#) and want your comments. Your feedback will help us finalize these documents and inform DOT&PF's decision.

 Heat map of crash data.



# STATION 1: 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 improve safety by reducing crash rates and severity, improve mobility and reliability, and safely accommodate mixed uses in the corridor.

### Project Need

### Reduce High Crash Rate and Severity



#### Proposed Improvements

- » Curve flattening
- » Rock and ice fall mitigation
- » Wider shoulders
- » Divided highway
- » Increased line of sight
- » Adding turning lanes and acceleration/merge lanes

#### Measurable Result

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

### Project Need

### Increase Mobility and Reliability



#### Proposed Improvements

- » Frontage roads
- » Emergency services turnarounds and shoulders
- » Additional passing lanes/spaces
- » Improved wayfinding signage
- » Adding space for emergency response
- » Adding deceleration and acceleration lanes

#### Measurable Result

- » Decrease in traffic delays and time spent following (platooning of traffic), faster emergency response, and improved incident management.

### Project Need

### Safely Accommodate Mixed Uses in the Corridor



#### Proposed Improvements

- » Pedestrian highway undercrossing
- » Separated multi-use pathway
- » Improved scenic and recreational pull offs
- » Consolidated and improved trailhead parking

#### Measurable Result

- » Preservation of the highway's outstanding scenic designations while improving safety for all users.



The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by DOT&PF pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated April 13, 2023, and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.

# STATION 1: ALTERNATIVE SCREENING PROCESS



## Concept

**First, we developed many potential solutions through:**

- » Prior studies such as Windy Corner
- » Constraints analysis
- » Engineering feasibility studies
- » Traffic analysis
- » Stakeholder Working Group meetings
- » Small group meetings with comments from focus groups such as trucking associations, first responders, and rock climbers
- » Public meetings and comments
- » Agency meetings and comments

**1**

## Screening Factors

**Next, we evaluated these ideas on how well they:**

- » Solved the purpose and need
- » Managed the magnitude of cost
- » Were practicable and reasonable

**2**

## No Action versus Proposed Action

**Then, we analyzed impacts under laws:**


- » National Environmental Policy Act (overall environmental and social impacts)
- » Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (wetlands and waters of the United States)
- » Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act and Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act (parks, wildlife refuges, historic sites)
- » Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (cultural and historical resources)
- » Endangered Species Act (Cook Inlet beluga whales and critical habitat)

**3**

## Comment Period

**With the publication of the Draft Environmental Assessment and Draft Individual Section 4(f) Evaluation, we will:**

- » Share project-related information with you
- » Consider to your comments

**4**  **WE ARE HERE**

## Selected Alternative

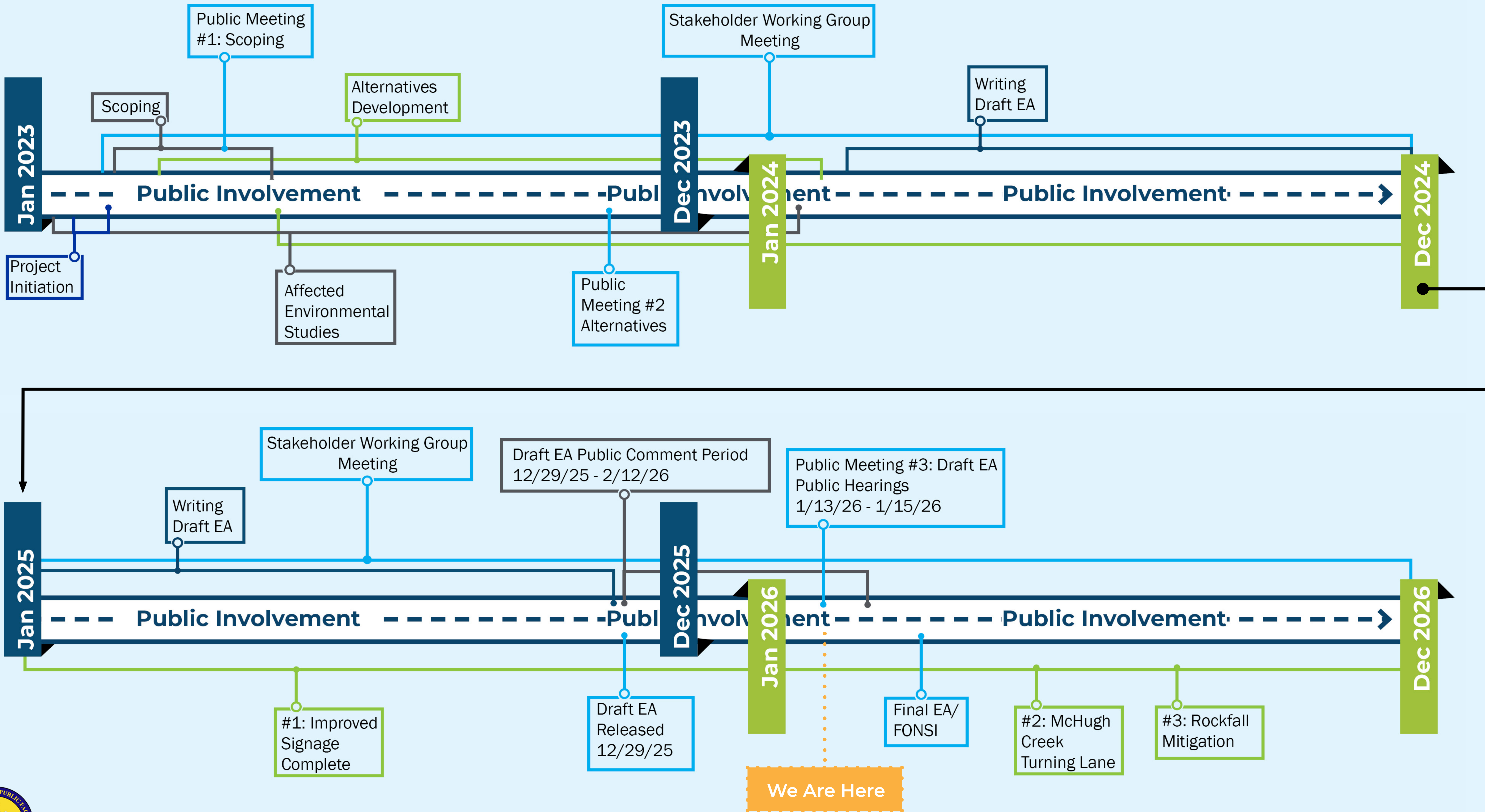
**Once your comments are reviewed, we will decide which alternative to advance and finalize mitigation commitments, then we will:**

- » Publish the Final Environmental Assessment and Final Individual Section 4(f) Evaluation

**5**



# STATION 1: EA TIMELINE



# STATION 1: NO ACTION

SAFER



Seward Highway

A No Action, or No Build, alternative is required as a baseline for comparison to action alternatives and helps evaluate the extent of potential project impacts.

Under the No Action alternative, the Seward Highway would remain in its current two-lane configuration with no corridor-wide safety or mobility improvements. Crash rates, congestion during peak travel periods, and limited non-motorized access would remain unchanged or possibly worsen, leaving existing hazards and reliability issues unresolved.

## Why this is important:

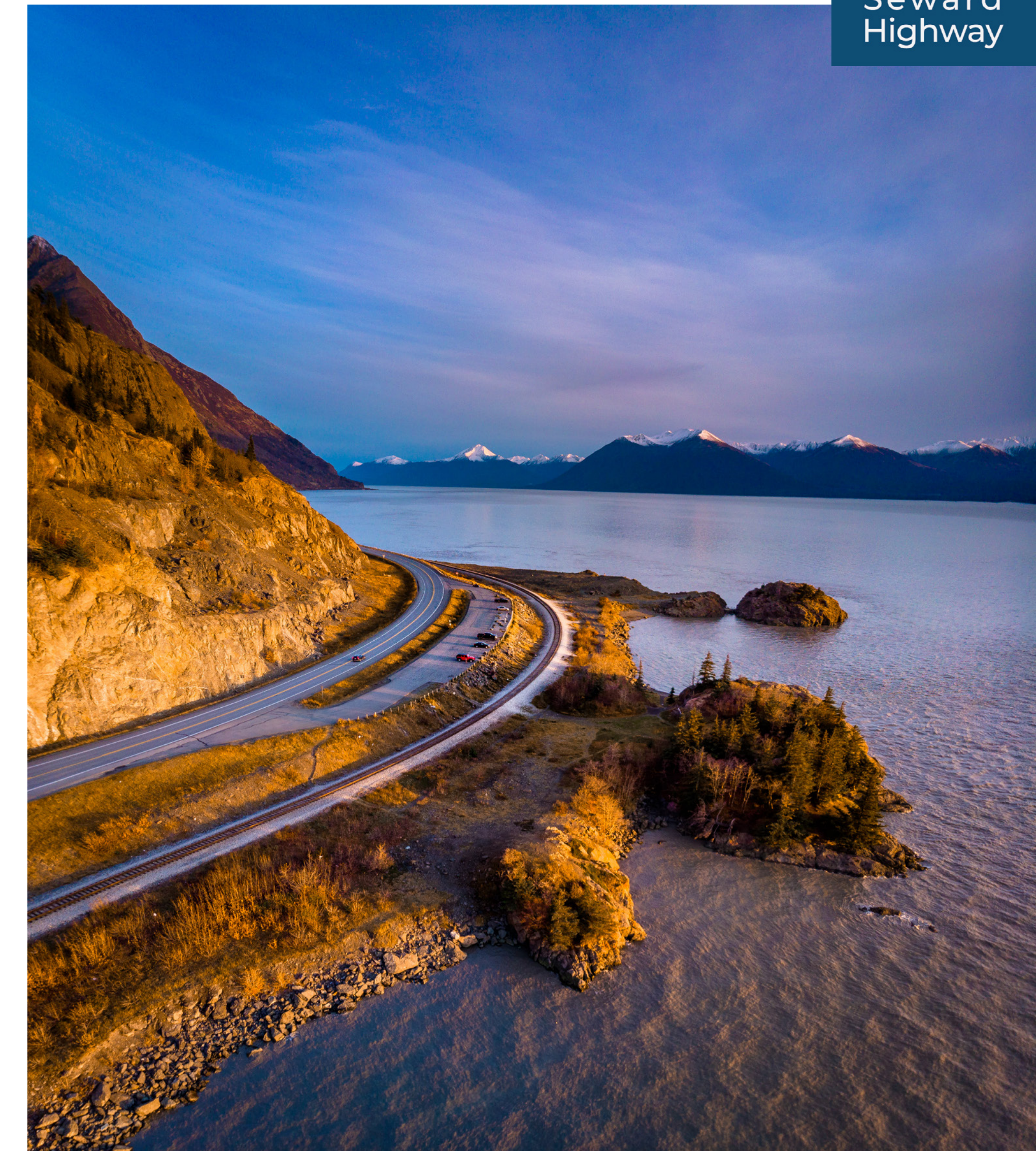
Under a No Action alternative, the highway would remain similar to current conditions:

- **No reconstruction:** The highway stays as-is, remaining a two-lane highway; only routine maintenance and small, spot improvements occur.
- **Safety risks persist:** High crash rates and severity remain due to limited passing opportunities and road geometry that do not meet current standards. Rockfall continues to the roadway due to insufficient rock catchment or slope stabilization. Left turning movements continue to occur from the travel lane, with motorists continuing to pass on the right shoulder to bypass turning vehicles or outside designated passing zones.
- **Congestion continues:** Summer traffic delays and unreliable travel times worsen as volumes grow.
- **Limited access improvements:** A new multi-use pathway is not developed; pedestrians and cyclists continue using highway shoulders from MPs 104 to 118. No expansion occurs of popular park pullouts such as Beluga Point, Windy Corner, or the Rainbow Trailhead.
- **Environmental footprint unchanged:** Fill placement into Turnagain Arm waters does not occur and parklands have no conversion to transportation use.

For more information on the *No Action alternative*, see the Draft EA Section 2.



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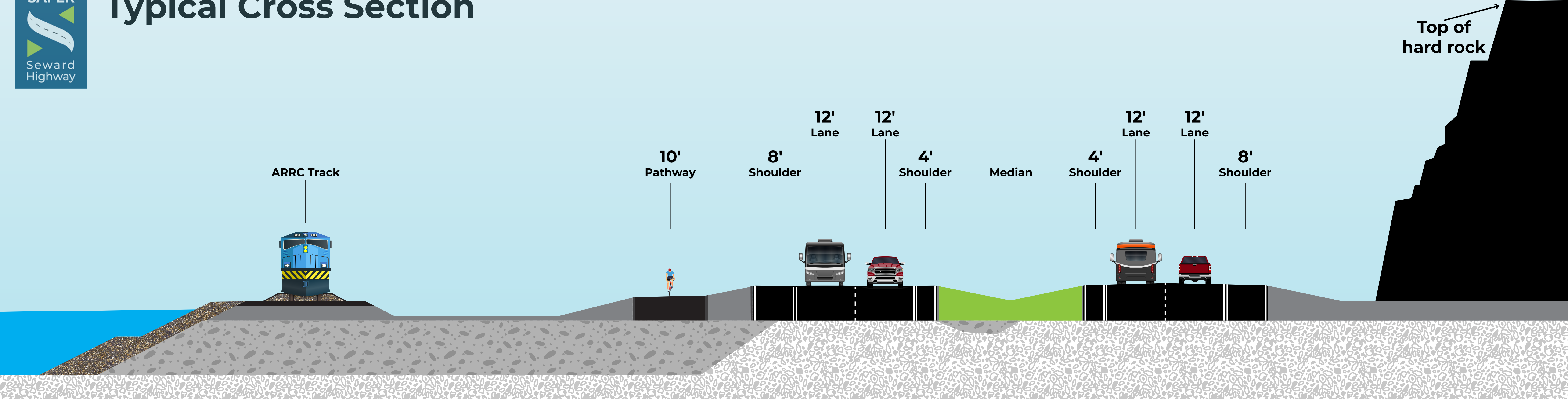
# STATION 1: PROPOSED ACTION OVERVIEW



The Proposed Action is to construct a four-lane divided highway with a separated pathway. This alternative would reduce/resolve persistent safety hazards along the Seward Highway by reducing crash risks, improving travel reliability, and creating safer access for all users.



## Typical Cross Section



Typical cross sections within the corridor will vary. The directional lanes may be separated with a median, physical barrier, or vertical separation between directions of travel.

*Disclaimer: This graphic is for visual purposes only and is not a final design. Elements shown may change during the design process and should not be interpreted as engineering plans or construction details.*

For more information on the **Proposed Action**, see the Draft Environmental Assessment Section 2, Appendix D. Alternatives Development Memorandum and Appendix E: Highway Configuration Development and Selection Memorandum.



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# STATION 3: PROPOSED ACTION DETAILS



### Highway Reconstruction:

Four-lane, divided highway with a 55-mile-per-hour (mph) design speed.



### Non-Motorized Facilities:

A 14-mile separated, paved, multi-use Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant pathway from Rabbit Creek Road to connect with the existing Indian-to-Girdwood Bike Path, includes undercrossings and pedestrian overpass to cross the railroad at Beluga Point.



### Access Improvements:

Turn-lanes, consolidated pullouts at strategic locations, improved intersections at specific locations with high turning movements (northern and southern ends of Potter Marsh, McHugh Creek, Beluga Point, Rainbow, Windy Corner, Bird Creek, Indian (Boretide Road), Bird [Sawmill Road]), emergency services and pedestrian water access at Windy Corner, frontage roads with consolidated access points in Indian, Bird, and Potter Creek Trailhead.



### Frontage Roads:

Frontage roads in Indian, Bird, and to the Potter Creek Trailhead to improve safety and reduce turning across oncoming traffic.



### Construction Details:

Estimated total project cost of approximately \$1.4 billion, phased over 15 to 20 years.



### Railroad Realignment:

7 miles of Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) track and embankment shifts to accommodate the widened highway and required separation distance between the road and tracks.



### Rock Catchment and Ditches:

Features sized to meet current standards and catch falling rock, ice, or water before it hits the roadway.



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For more information on the *Proposed Action*, see the Draft Environmental Assessment Section 2, Appendix D. Alternatives Development Memorandum, and Appendix E: Highway Configuration Development and Selection Memorandum.



### Mountain Cuts:

Cuts along roughly 40% of the route, with the majority being 30 to 90 feet high.



### Fill:

Fill placement into the waters of Turnagain Arm to avoid greater impacts on Chugach State Park.



### Fencing along ARRC:

Fencing along the ARRC right-of-way to reduce trespassing.



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# STATION 4: DRAFT EA IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

## Topography, Earthwork, and Blasting



Seward Highway 98.5 - 118 Public Map

Legend Layers

- Milepost
- 4(f) Identification Points
- Proposed Action
- Future ROW
- Trails
- MOA Parcel
- Managed by Chugach State Park
- Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge
- Streams

**Alignment and Earthwork:**  
Fill placement into wetlands and waters of the United States.

**Blasting, Excavation, and Fill:**  
Roughly 40% of the route includes mountain cuts of varying heights, with half of these cuts 30 to 90 feet high, and the remainder taller; less than 1 mile of the cuts exceed 200 feet.

Pictured is a snapshot from our interactive map called the Sandbox, where you can explore the entire corridor and toggle on and off Proposed Action features to learn what it would look like. Try it yourself by scanning the QR Code!



For further details about *topography, earthwork, and blasting*, see the Draft Environmental Assessment Appendix H: Geotechnical Data Review.

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<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=ea53838b88104749abf72bfd81c87d83>



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# STATION 4: DRAFT EA IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

## Visual Characteristics of Proposed Action

### Beluga Point Looking North



### Bird Creek Looking North



### Beluga Point Looking South



### Bird (Sawmill Road) Intersection Looking North



**Disclaimer:** Renderings are for visual purposes only and are not final design. Elements shown may change during the design process and should not be interpreted as engineering plans or construction details.

View the full details on *visual impacts*, see the Draft EA Section 3.3.1 and Appendix N: Visual Impacts Assessment.



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# STATION 4: DRAFT EA IMPACTS HIGHLIGHTS

## Wildlife, Habitat and Marine Mammals



Wildlife and habitat impacts include 17 acres of Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge and marine habitat fill in intertidal areas near Potter Marsh, McHugh Creek, Beluga Point, Rainbow, Windy Corner, Falls Creek, and Indian.

Resource	Impact	Mitigation
<b>In-water Fill</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 120 acres of wetlands/water fill is unavoidable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimize through alignment selection</li> <li>Construct during low tide</li> <li>Provide compensatory mitigation to a wetland bank or in-lieu-fee provider, per U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</li> </ul>
<b>Fish</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bridge and culvert construction</li> <li>In-water fill (see above)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design culverts for fish passage; mitigation per Alaska Department of Fish and Game</li> </ul>
<b>Birds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>300 acres of vegetated habitat cleared for construction</li> <li>Fill into intertidal mudflats that is seasonal foraging habitat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid the Potter Marsh high-value habitat (deep water)</li> <li>Follow U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service guidance to avoid vegetation clearing during nesting windows</li> </ul>
<b>Wildlife</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>300 acres of habitat loss is unavoidable</li> <li>Habitat fragmentation</li> <li>Construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoided Windy Corner mineral lick</li> <li>Use trained observers during construction</li> </ul>
<b>Belugas / Marine Mammals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to 105 acres of in-water fill in to shallow water is unavoidable, but the impact is considered minor</li> <li>No adverse effect on marine mammals (per the National Marine Fisheries Service)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule blasting and fill placement to avoid when mammals are present (low water and not during summer)</li> <li>Use trained observers during construction</li> <li>Use trained observers to identify and halt construction when mammals are present, as required the by National Marine Fisheries Service</li> </ul>

View full details on *wildlife and habitat impacts* in the Draft Environmental Assessment and pertinent appendices.



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# STATION 4: DRAFT EA IMPACTS HIGHLIGHTS

## Parks and Section 106 Resources



Resource	Impact	Mitigation
<p><b>Cultural and historical resources (Section 106)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No adverse effects to historic properties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid through routing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Parks and Recreation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Converts 132 acres of Chugach State Park lands to transportation use</li> <li>Converts 68 acres of Chugach State Park waters to transportation use (fill for shifted railroad embankment)</li> <li>Impacts the Indian Ballfield</li> <li>Removes many small or informal pullouts used for scenic viewing and recreation</li> <li>Cuts and blasts the mountainside</li> <li>Eliminates some rock-climbing areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a paved, Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant pathway</li> <li>Replace the Indian Ballfield in a new location in Indian</li> <li>Relocate/expand parking for scenic viewpoints and park trailheads</li> <li>Construct a pedestrian overpass of the railroad tracks at Beluga Point</li> <li>Preserve important rock-climbing areas</li> <li>Pave and electrify Bird Creek Campground sites</li> <li>Replace parkland, in consultation with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources and Chugach State Park</li> </ul>

View full details on *cultural resources and parks impacts* in the Draft Environmental Assessment Sections 3.3.5 and 3.3.11, Appendix S for the Section 4(f) Evaluation, and Appendix Q for Section 106 consultation details.



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# STATION 4: DRAFT EA IMPACTS HIGHLIGHTS



## Draft Individual Section 4(f) Evaluation

“Section 4(f)” refers to a key component of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 U.S. Code 303 and 23 Code of Federal Regulations 774), which protects significant public lands, including parks, recreation areas, wildlife refuges, and historic sites from being used for federal transportation projects unless there is no feasible alternative and all minimization measures are taken.

For this project, the Section 4(f) evaluation:

- Identifies the Section 4(f) resources within the project corridor:
  - » Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge
  - » Chugach State Park
  - » Historic sites
- Describes the Proposed Action’s use of Section 4(f) resources
- Assesses alternatives to determine if there is a feasible and prudent avoidance alternative
- Describes coordination with the land managers (“officials with jurisdiction”)
- Describes measures to minimize harm and mitigate impacts on Section 4(f) resources, including:
  - » Rebuilding/enhancing affected trailheads, parking areas, and viewpoints
  - » Providing grade-separated crossings connecting parking areas to the new multi-use pathway
  - » Replacing park land lost to the project with land of equal or greater value under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Section 6(f) requirements.

Resource	Impact	Mitigation
<b>Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquisition of 17 acres of intertidal mudflats to widen highway and railroad embankment and re-establish transportation rights of way.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widen seaward to avoid the constructed wetlands of Potter Marsh</li> <li>• Maintain existing Potter Marsh water levels</li> <li>• Develop an agreement between DOT&amp;PF and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to address proposed pathway and facility maintenance</li> </ul>
<b>Chugach State Park Land</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquisition of 132 acres of land</li> <li>• Acquisition of 68 acres in water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand parking and amenities at trailheads, replace the ballfield, and pave and electrify the Bird Creek Campground</li> <li>• Replace Section 6(f) land: proposed location in the Basher Trailhead/ Stuckagain Heights area, in consultation with Chugach State Park/Alaska Department of Natural Resources</li> </ul>
<b>Private Property</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquisition of 0 full residential or commercial properties</li> <li>• Acquisition of 1 partial residential lot for pathway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route to minimize and avoid impacts</li> </ul>

View the full details of the *Section 4(f) evaluation* in the Draft Environmental Assessment Appendix S.



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# STATION 5: WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE OVERALL PROJECT? WHEN IS CONSTRUCTION?



Design can only begin once the environmental document is complete and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is issued for the Proposed Action. Both design and construction are anticipated to be completed in phases over 10 to 20 years, keeping traffic flowing as much as possible. The highway would be divided into phases/sections, each delivered as a stand-alone project to allow phased construction and minimize disruption. Each project would have its own design, public involvement, and Municipality of Anchorage Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) review process, in alignment with the mitigation measures approved in the Environmental Assessment (EA) and subsequent permitting.

Final phasing and section boundaries would be determined during design. Each section includes roadway widening, curve straightening, a new separated multi-use pathway, and improved access to recreation sites, as described in the EA as the Proposed Action.

Here's the plan broken down in three simple steps:



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# STATION 6: 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](mailto: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



**Draft EA + Draft Individual Section 4(f)  
Evaluation Public Comment Period**

December 29, 2025 - February 12, 2026



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