

WELCOME

PUBLIC MEETING #2

DECEMBER 5-7, 2023



Photographer: Logan Maddox

Welcome

What we are going to cover:



Why this project?



What has been done?



What now?



What's next?

Presenters:



Katherine Wood
Communications Lead



Chris Hughes
Project Management



Taylor Horne
Environmental Lead



Edith McKee
Engineering Lead

WHY THIS PROJECT?

Anchorage

118

Potter
Marsh

Old Rabbit
Creek Park

Flattop
Mtn



Turnagain Arm Trailhead

McHugh Creek Trailhead

Beluga Point

Rainbow

Windy Corner

Indian

Bird

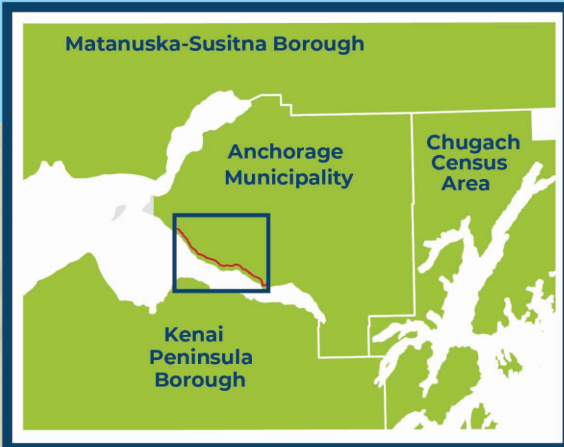
SEWARD HIGHWAY

Falls Creek Trailhead

98

Turnagain Arm

Girdwood
→



PROJECT 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.



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.



Safety Data

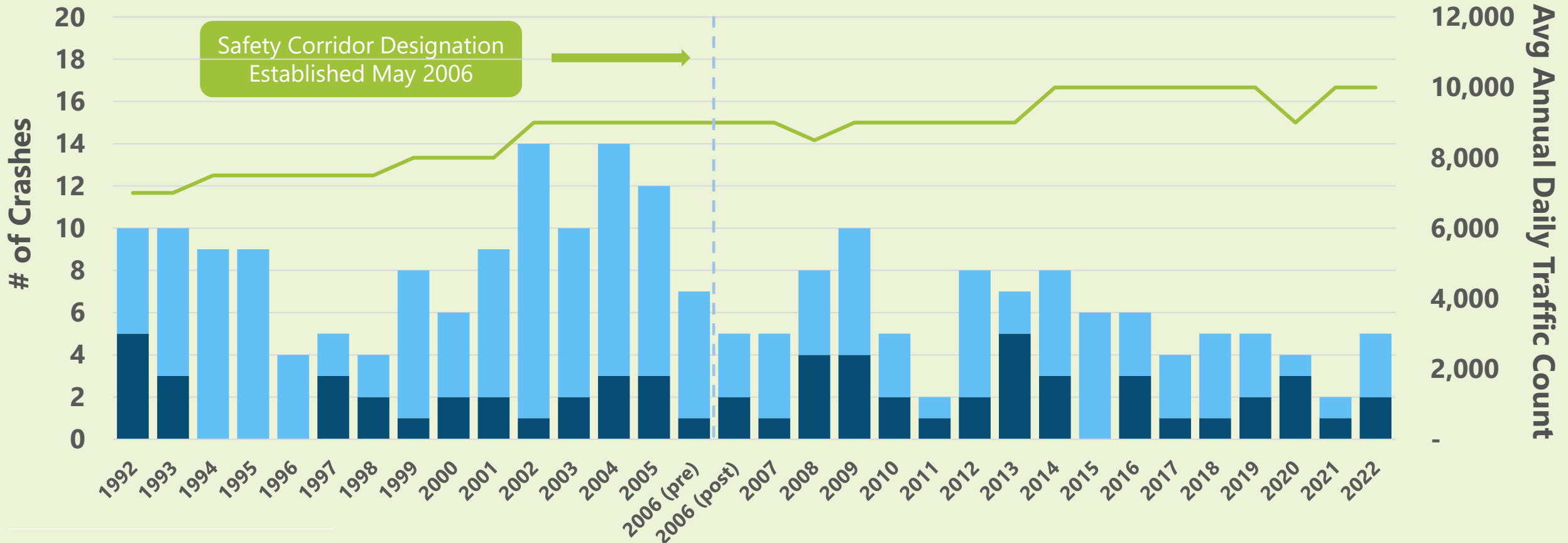
Why this project?
Safety is a corridor wide issue

5-year safety data (2017 – 2021)



Safety Data

Seward Highway Traffic Safety Corridor
 Fatal and Major Injury Crashes, 1992 - 2022



Fatal Crashes
 Major Injury Crashes
 Avg Annual Daily Traffic at Potter Marsh

Purpose & Need

The purpose of the 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

PROJECT NEED

Update to Meet Current Design Standards

PROJECT NEED

Increase Mobility and Reliability

Environmental Assessment (EA)

National Environmental Policy Act

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**

Scoping Results

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

“ I support making the Seward Highway safer. ”

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

“ Safety should be the number one priority. ”

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

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

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

“ Consider not putting rumble strips anywhere. ”

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

“ Avalanche mitigation should also be considered. ”

“ Design for the long term. ”

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

“ Maintain the visual aesthetics. ”

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

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

“ The project should include maintenance burden. ”

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?



Photographer: David Schaff

Stakeholder Working Group

- Kicked-off June 15th
- What have we been doing?

Purpose: An active working group to represent the interest of direct stakeholders of diverse interest.

Organizations:

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

Constraints Analysis

We are balancing a lot.

- Through-traffic and in-corridor use
- Tight Corridor: Steep topography, Inlet, Railroad, Chugach State Park
- Beluga Whale Habitat
- Scenic Byway – Interstate Highway, part of the National Highway System

Constraints Analysis – Wildlife

Wildlife Constraints

- ★ Beginning of Project
- ★ End of Project
- Animal Related Crashes**
 - Low Frequency
 - High Frequency
- Habitat Constraints**
 - Birds
 - Sheep
 - Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Critical Habitat



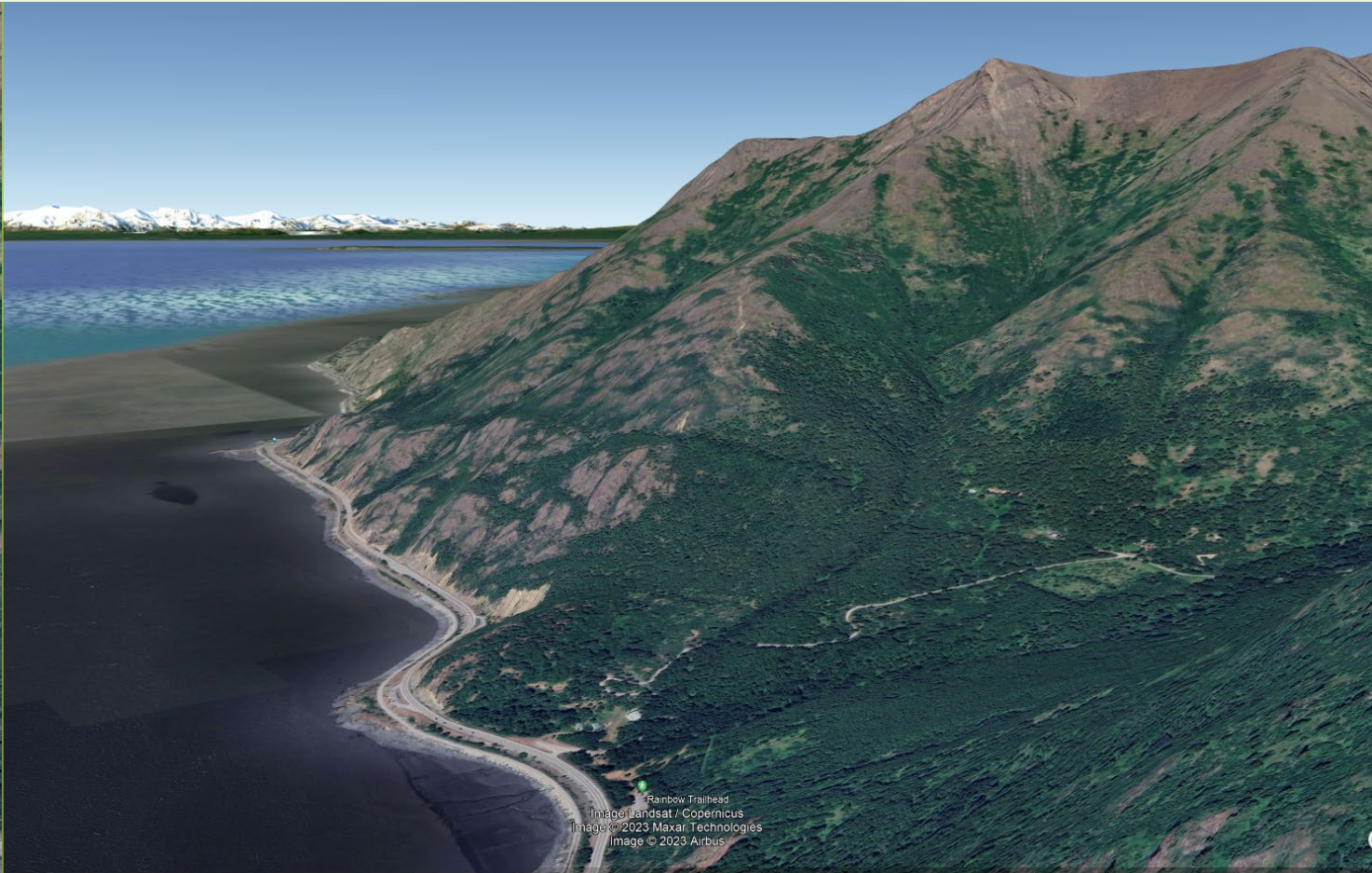
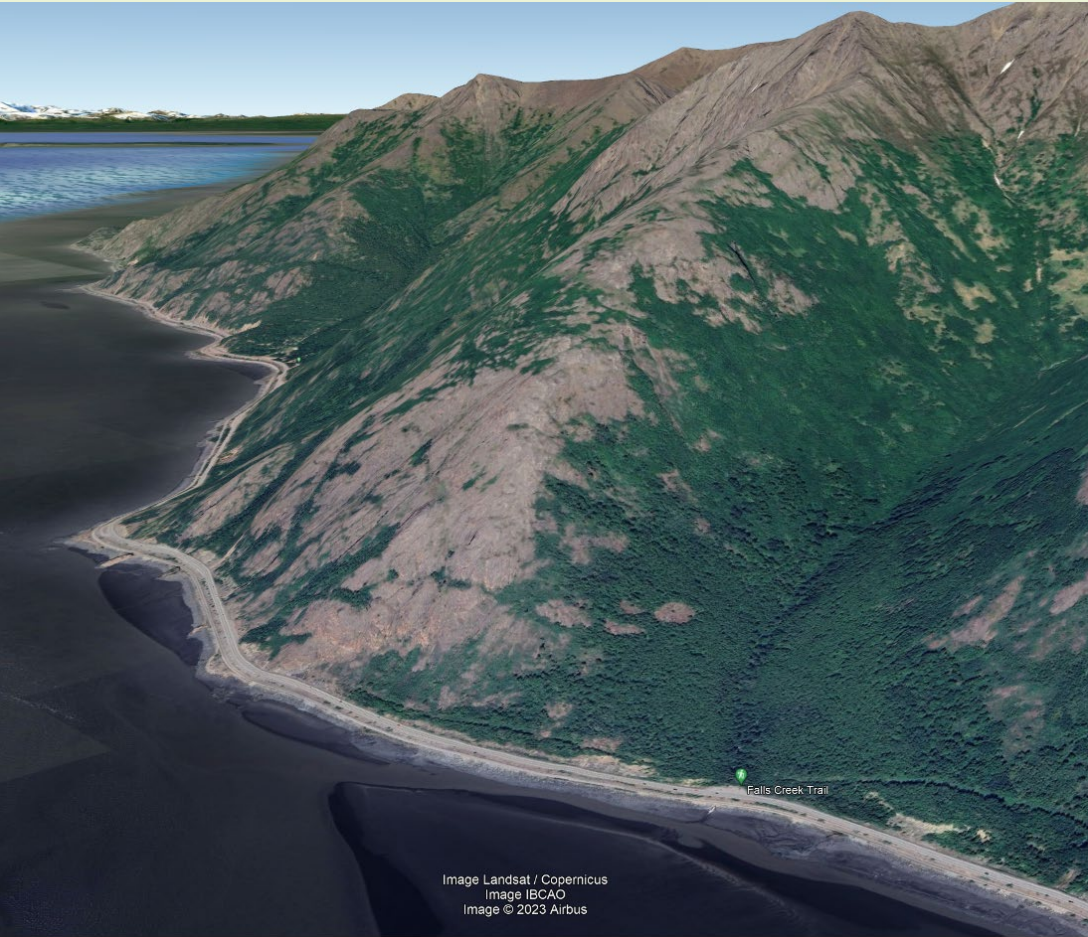
Constraints Analysis – Recreation

Recreational Constraints

★	Beginning of Project		Trailhead
★	End of Project		Climbing
□	Turnout/Pulloff		Surfing
—	Chugach State Park Trail		Fishing
■	Chugach State Park		Indian Ballfield
			Bird Campground



Constraints Analysis – Topography



Environmental Field Work

- Wetlands mapping
- Fish presence survey
- Noise (existing conditions)
- Cultural Resources survey
- Bald and golden eagle surveys



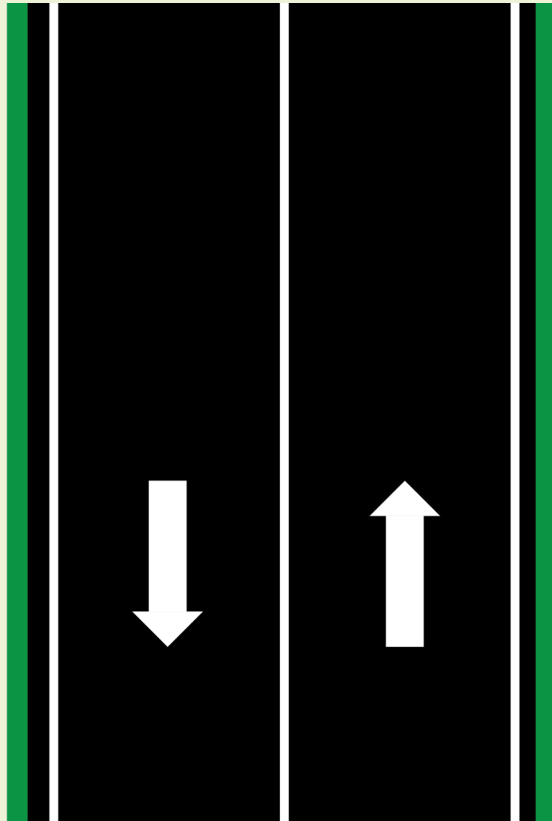
WHAT NOW?



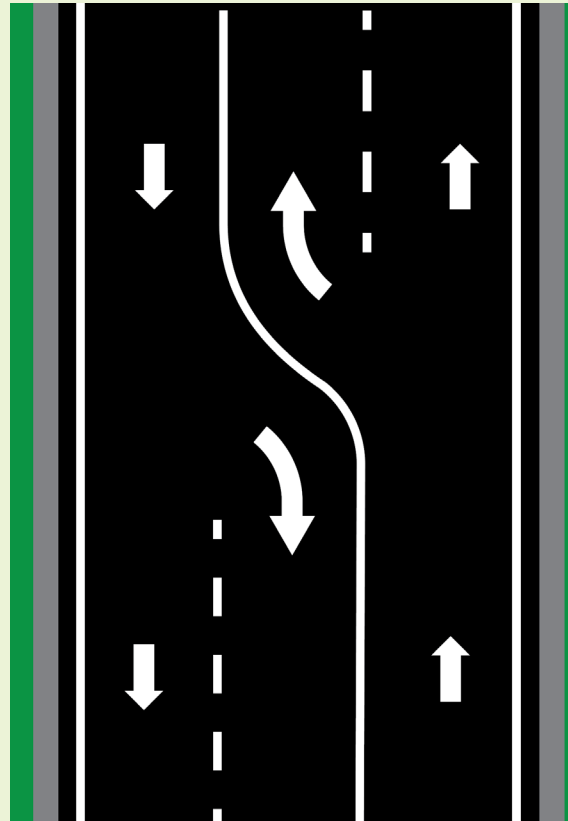
Design Concepts

- Left / right / center
- Pathway included on 3-lane and 4-lane concepts

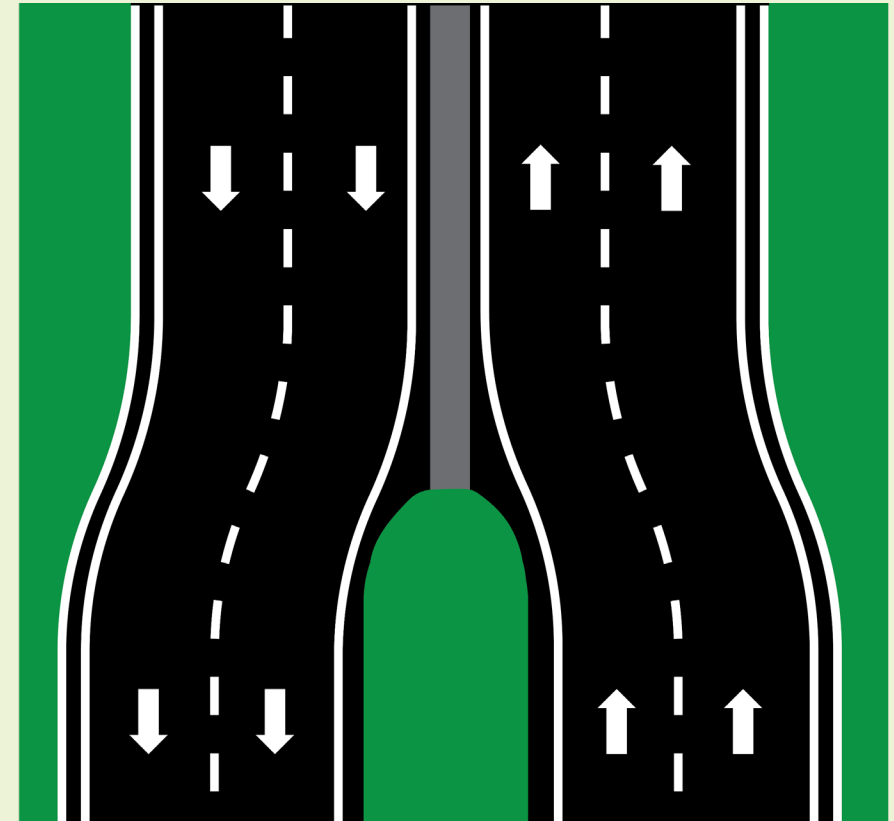
2-Lane
Existing



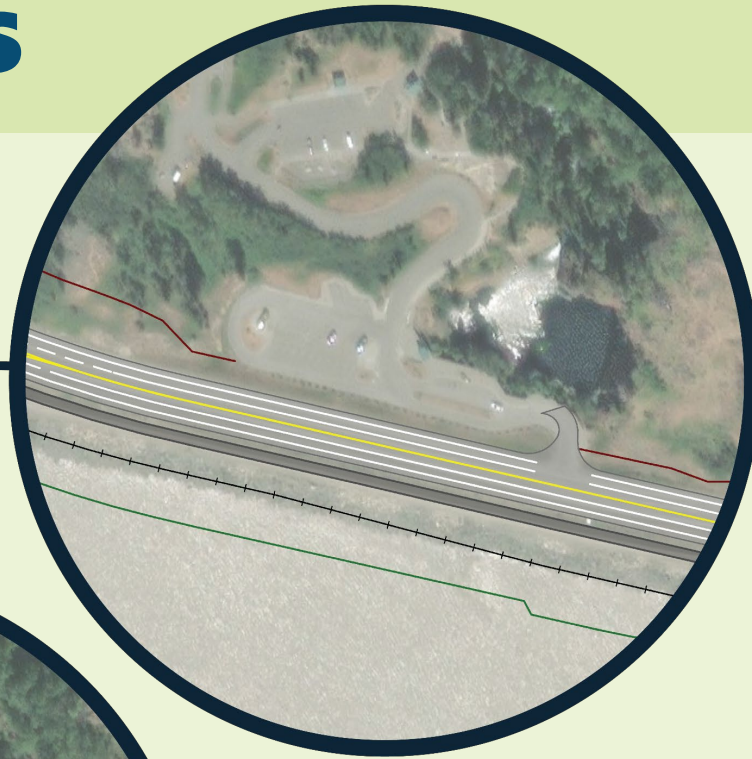
3-Lane
Alternating Passing



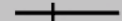







4-Lane
Barrier or Median Dividend



Design Concepts



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

WHAT'S NEXT?



Photographer: Tracy Try

Screening Discussion



Concepts
Ideas

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



Alternatives
in the EA

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



Preferred
Alternative

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

We Are Here



Screening Factors

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

Environmental Analysis

- NEPA (environmental benefits & impacts)
- Section 404 (wetlands & US waters)
- Section 4(f) & 6(f) (parks)
- Section 106 (cultural & historic properties)

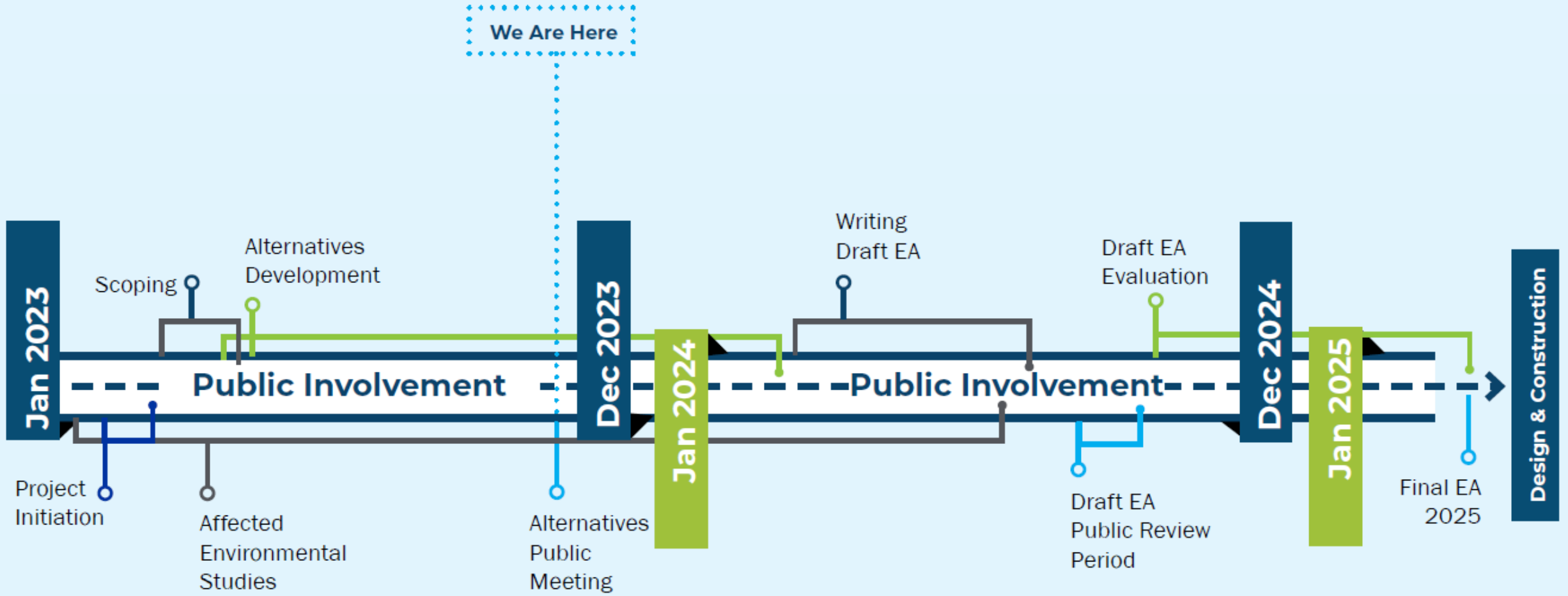
Final EA

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



Construction

Timeline

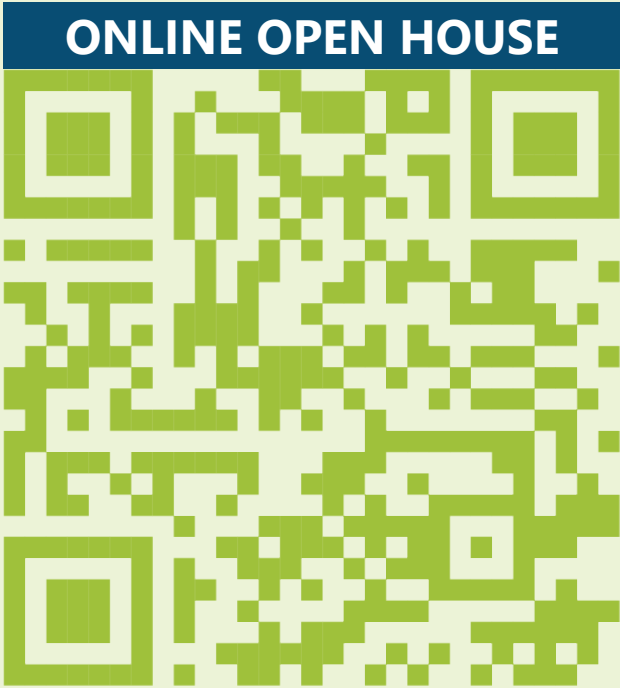


Feedback & Online Open House

Online open house at
SaferSewardHighwayOnline.com
Open December 5, 2023 – January 4, 2024


Or visit the
comment
table in the
back

SCAN WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE CAMERA





Thank you!

Have questions? Find a team member!
Or contact us at info@safersewardhighway.com