

SEWARD HIGHWAY

MP 105-107



January 2015 Update

The Seward Highway Milepost (MP) 105 to 107 Windy Corner project team crafted this newsletter to keep you informed about a project in your area. This project is one of many developed by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) to address traffic safety concerns on the Seward Highway.



The project includes separated northbound and southbound traffic in an area experiencing high crash rates, new roadside recreational facilities and wildlife viewing areas, acceleration and deceleration lanes for traffic turning into roadside facilities, a pedestrian tunnel under the highway, and emergency access to Turnagain Arm beneath the railroad. To provide space for the improvements, the railroad tracks will be realigned.

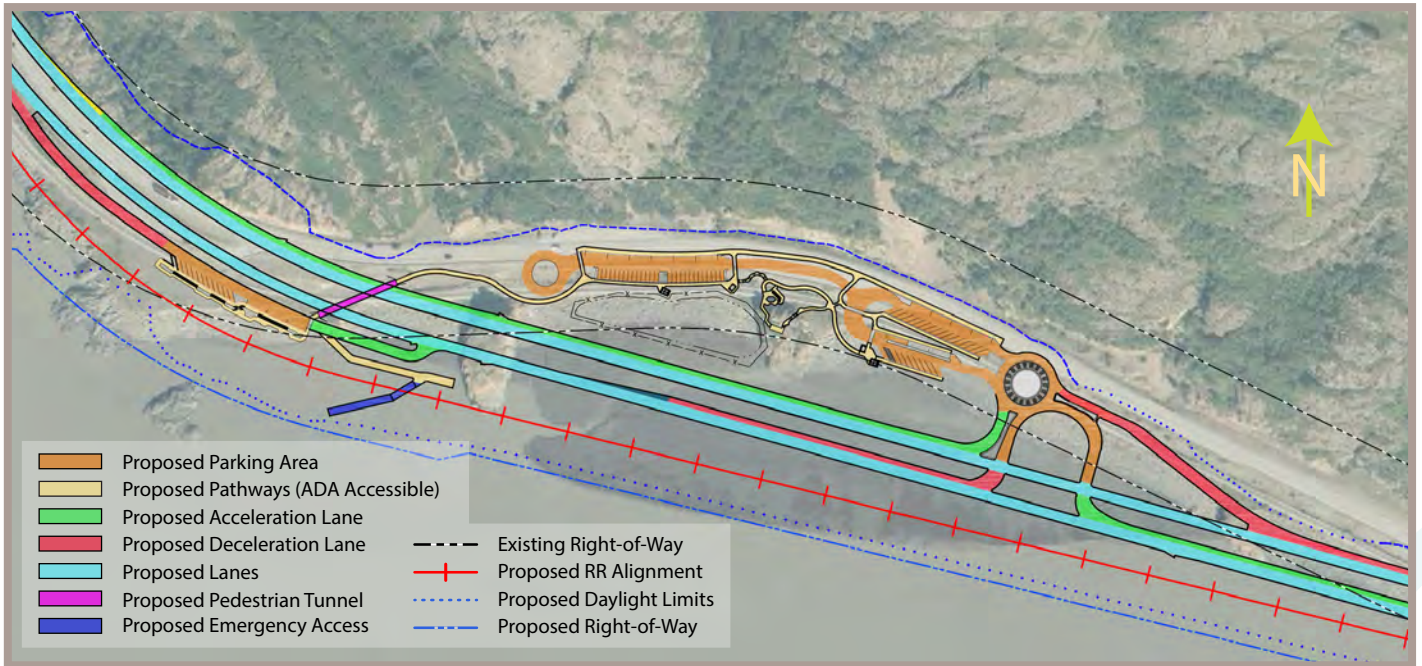
Improvements to this section of the Seward Highway are necessary for the following reasons:

- The highway segment from Anchorage to Girdwood is a designated Safety Corridor due to the elevated rate of high severity (e.g., fatal/major injury) crashes,
- Traffic operations between MP 105 and 107 are frequently disrupted by motorists slowing and parking along the highway shoulder to access recreational areas in Chugach State Park and to view wildlife, and
- Curves do not meet current standards and contribute to the corridor's elevated crash rate.



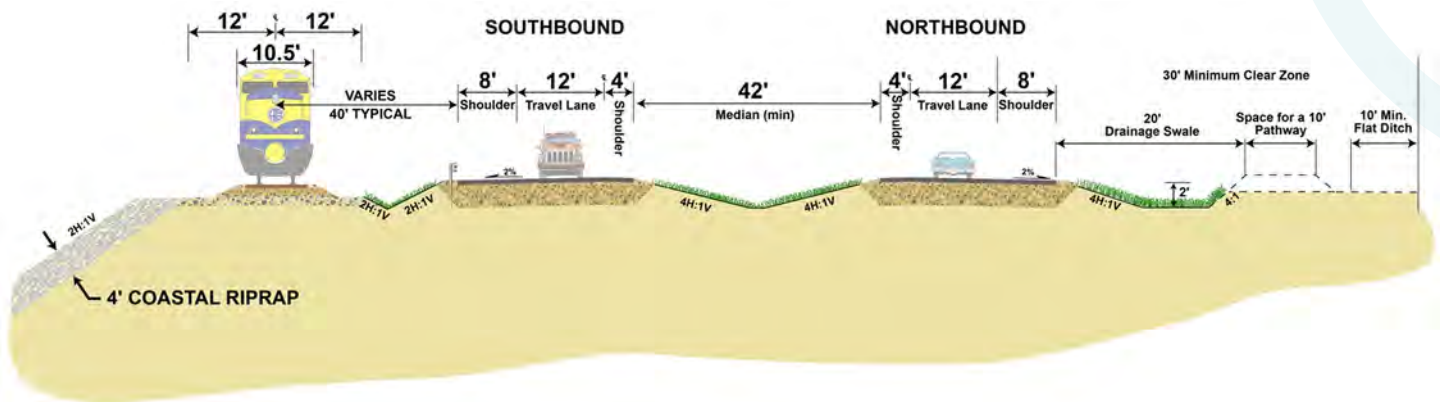
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Overview



What are the design concepts?

The project team continues the complex job of incorporating public and agency feedback into the project design—all while balancing overall project costs and environmental impacts. The design concepts are shown in the graphic below.



What are the challenges?

Challenges associated with the proposed project include:

- Limited space between the mountainous terrain and the inlet requires significant fill material to realign the road and railroad, and careful phasing to maintain traffic during construction,
- Changes to the visual experience for motorized and non-motorized users,
- Minimizing and mitigating impacts to marine mammal/fish and sheep habitat, and
- Right-of-way acquisition and access impacts to Chugach State Park.

Who is involved?

The proposed project is being completed using a combination of state and federal funds. Project development is in accordance with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines. The team is developing the design with input from the public as well as local, state and federal agencies, including the Alaska Railroad Corporation, Alaska Departments of Natural Resources and Fish and Game, Chugach State Park, National Marine Fisheries Services, US Army Corps of Engineers, Anchorage Fire Department, and others.

Public Involvement

Two public meetings have been held, as well as four Technical Advisory Group meetings. The project team has also met with the Girdwood Board of Supervisors, Turnagain Arm Community Council, and Girdwood 2020. Comments will continue to be accepted throughout the design development. Some of the key issues expressed by project stakeholders are bulleted below. As issues arise the team endeavors to quickly respond.

- **Bike/Pedestrian Facilities:** Space for a future separated pathway is included in the current design.
- **Maintenance:** Maintenance for amenities such as trashcans and bathrooms will be undertaken by Chugach State Park to the extent allowed by available funding.
- **Material Site Selection:** Commenters expressed concern that material extraction sites for the approximately 1.8 million cubic yards of material needed could damage the natural beauty of the corridor. In collaboration with Chugach State Park, the team is exploring material site locations at MP 109 and MP 104.5, and methods to mitigate visual impacts.
- **Parking:** The design includes parking for northbound and southbound traffic to address one of the safety concerns at Windy Corner.
- **Railroad Trespass:** The design includes a tunnel below the railroad tracks and other features to reduce Alaska Railroad trespass. The tunnel also provides safe access to the inlet for emergency response personnel and recreational users.

Schedule

Design Study	Winter 2013 - Fall 2014
Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Documentation	Winter 2013 - Winter 2015
Design	Spring 2014 - Fall 2015
Right of Way Acquisition	Summer 2014 - Spring 2016
Construction*	2016 - 2017

* Depends upon availability of funding

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Visit the project booth at the Anchorage Transportation Fair to talk with project team members.

Anchorage Transportation Fair



February 4, 2015, 4 pm to 8 pm
Alaska Airlines Center
3550 Providence Drive, Anchorage

Continued Public Involvement

The project team will continue design development and begin permit applications and right-of-way acquisition over the next 18 months. The next public meeting is scheduled for summer 2015. Watch for opportunities to comment on permits and land exchanges on the project website.

Contact Us

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Seward Highway MP 105-107: Windy Corner Project

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