

**APPENDIX D**

**Public Comment Summary**

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<b>Issue</b>	<b>Comment(s)</b>	<b>Team Response</b>
Material site locations	Where are the materials sites going to be located?	The team is identifying the location of potential material sites and preparing summer 2013 site investigations.
Material mining practices and reclamation	How will the blasting be done? Consider the aesthetics of the final material site.	Agreements with property owners, contractor best practices, public comment and permit requirements will dictate mining practices and aesthetics.
Balancing material site needs with design	Commenter was concerned that the cut and fill balance for the project as it relates to construction material requirements.	The proposed action is expected to require more material than what is available within the project limits.
Access to Turnagain Arm	Commenters expressed interest in enhancing access to Turnagain Arm in the project area for both recreational uses (hiking, windsurfing, parasailing, surfing, etc.) and emergency response. Commenters noted the two most dangerous parts of access included: 1) driving the highway and 2) climbing up to get in and out of the water.	The first priority for the project is enhanced safety for Seward Highway road users. The team will consider emergency response access to Turnagain Arm in the design and include enhanced recreational access should funding permit.
Recreational access to Turnagain Arm under railroad tracks	Comments pertain to the safe water access issue. Specifically access up and over (or under?) the railroad tracks to the water. Consider a reasonable rock slope and rock placement to provide a path to the water.	The first priority for the project is enhanced safety for Seward Highway road users. The team will consider emergency response access to Turnagain Arm in the design and include enhanced recreational access should funding permit.

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Emergency Response access to Turnagain Arm.	Arm Windsurfers have gained pride in being self-sufficient by sailing with partners and carrying signal devices, fins to perform self-rescues or rescue each other. But we also realize that access to enable emergency rescue equipment to put in the water from Windy Point-Gorilla Rock would enhance the capability of the Girdwood or Anchorage Emergency Rescue Departments to meet situations arising from the growing recreational community of windsurfers, kite surfers, standup paddle boarders, kayakers, and bore wave surfers. The only current access points are from the Anchorage Boat Harbor and Twenty Mile River- both of which are tide dependent in their ability to move up or down Turnagain Arm.	The first priority for the project is enhanced safety for Seward Highway road users. The team will consider emergency response access to Turnagain Arm in the design and include enhanced recreational access should funding permit.
Minimize the railroad extension out into the water	<p>Commenters who wanted to minimize the railroad extension were concerned about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of sandbar</li> <li>Minimizing costs</li> <li>Minimizing impacts to marine life</li> </ul>	The team will consider these impacts while developing design concepts for the project.

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Gorilla Rock access location	Gorilla Rock is one of two primary Turnagain Arm windsurfing spots because of its relative safe access in and out of the water (compared to other locations), the waves that form there against the incoming tide, and because the wind that is concentrated there.	The team will consider the recreational use while developing design concepts for the project.
Turnagain Arm recreational access disruption	Carrying windsurfing equipment down the embankment to the railroad track, crossing them (with a permit from the ARRC), and then down the riprap to the water's edge is very workable in the present state. Commenter concerned about having workable access upon completion of this project.	The team will consider the recreational use of the area while developing design concepts for the project.
Mining location mitigation	Commenters expressed their belief that blasting done several years ago to create a parking area near Bird Creek is an eye sore. They suggest mitigating the visual impact of blasting with terraces and trees on the terraces. The forestation process could be hastened by depositing some organic soil on the terraces upon completion of the blasting.	To be considered during preparation of mining and mitigation plans.

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Lighting	Commenters expressed opposing opinions of lighting in the corridor. Some commenters desired continuous lighting; others preferred current levels of lighting.	Continuous lighting will not be considered for this small segment of the Seward Highway. A future long-range transportation plan for the full Seward Highway corridor is the appropriate place to address corridor lighting.
Turnagain Arm access facilities	Commenters suggested that a firm, protected gravel bar where a small zodiac or rescue jet ski could be launched from a small trailer pushed by hand to the water and a connecting small path be considered in the design.	The team will consider the emergency response use in the area while developing design concepts for the project.
Proposed action configuration	The major problem with the proposed action is that the railroad is aligned outside the highway. Since tourist and locals love to stop at Windy Corner, perhaps the railroad should remain where it is (with a slight realignment). This would make it so tourist could walk all along the shoreline and out to the true Windy Point and not cross the railroad tracks, which will obviously occur.	To be considered during design.
Short term project and long term goals	The project should consider the long-term safety goals/configuration so that a minimum of reconstruction will be necessary in the future.	To be considered during design.
Rock Slides in the project area	Several rock slides occur in the Windy Corner area (MP 106 mentioned) of the Seward Highway. Consider this during design.	To be considered during design.

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Funding and ADOT&PF budgets	Commenters wanted to know the ADOT&PF budget.	DOT&PF annual budget ranges from \$135-\$150 million in federal funding. The amount of state funding depends on the level of bonding and appropriations from the state legislature.
Roadway design features – horizontal curves	Commenters wanted to know the current highway curve radius at Windy Corner and what impacts the curve radius.	The existing curve at Windy Corner is 1000 feet. The design curve for the project is based on factors such as design speed and safety analysis.
Railroad design features – embankment slopes	What is the slope on the railroad embankment?	The railroad and highway will be designed to meet current design criteria.
Design Features – sea level rise	Has there been any consideration for sea level rising in the coming years? Particularly the lower-level railroad tracks and the road itself once it's put into place.	The design will consider a 20-year life for the facility.
Project design	Consider leaving the railroad tracks where they are.	The project team is working with a proposed action based on previous preliminary design work.
Alternate solutions, experimental medians	Try experimental medians on the existing 3 and 4 lane stretches (MP 90-95 and around MP 99-102). Something to keep the cars going opposite directions divided from each other, try it on that stretch for 5 years, see what the statistical results reveal.	The project team is working with a proposed action based on previous preliminary design work. A future Seward Highway Long-Range Transportation Plan may look at innovative solutions and applicability to more areas along the corridor.

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Funding appropriated for project	How much money is appropriated already and how much federal dollars will be leveraged with that funding for this project? It would be good to use a portion of the appropriation and then leverage Federal highway dollars to it.	Approximately \$42 million in state dollars is appropriated for the project. The ADOT&PF is leaning towards funding this project to the greatest extent possible with state funding. It may allow the ADOT&PF to deliver the project in a more timely fashion.
Maintenance	Commuters indicate the road striping is nonexistent in the presence of blowing snow and dark wet pavement. On wet days it's difficult to find the road.	Maintenance is considered during design development. Maintenance personnel provide review of project documents.
Maintenance, slow vehicle turnouts	Plow slow vehicle turnouts.	The comment will be shared with DOT&PF maintenance personnel.
Natural shoreline, Gorilla Rock	<p>Commenters expressed interest in Gorilla Rock including:</p> <p>Will it be impacted by the project?</p> <p>It had already been blown up by the ARRC?</p> <p>Why spend the money working around it?</p> <p>Part of the natural shoreline should be protected?</p> <p>The project as currently envisioned changes the character of the shoreline and preservation of Gorilla Rock doesn't seem economical.</p>	To be considered in design alternatives.

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Parking	Seems like the southbound parking would be more popular than the northbound parking due to tourism from Anchorage. If one lot could be larger, shouldn't it be the southbound lot?	To be considered in design alternatives and park impact mitigation.
Parking at Falls Creek trailhead	What improvements are planned for the Falls Creek trailhead pullout/parking? What happened to the mile 79-area realignment to make ingress/egress to the railroad and the wildlife park safer?	To be considered in design alternatives and park impact mitigation.
Non-motorized facilities, bicycle and pedestrians	The Seward highway is a well-used bike corridor between Anchorage and Girdwood. Please include a bike path on the plan.	To be considered in design alternatives.
Non-motorized facilities, bicycle organized events	During the summer months there organized bike rides, usually on the weekends. Consider a bike path easement for future improvements separating cycles from the motorists to enhance safety. In addition it may stimulate the desire for some to cycle to Anchorage rather than drive, therefore decreasing vehicles on the highway.	To be considered during design.



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Commuters, Commuter Rail	I also commute every day and want to know if there's any interest in commuter rail.	The Alaska Railroad Corporation continues its efforts to find a funding source for operations because a public transportation system needs operating subsidies. The ARRC has been upgrading track and making changes to make commuter rail feasible in the future.
Safety	Commenters support improved safety along the Seward Highway corridor and this project.	The project focus is safety.
Safety improvement delivery	Commenters were making the improvements into more of a combined effort for the whole Seward Highway and about how to get more funding to speed up the process. Commenters were concerned that the Seward Highway improvements are being approached in a piecemeal fashion.	The project focus is safety.
Funding source(s)	One commenter was concerned that the Seward Highway is being improved in a piecemeal fashion. He would like to see the state funding leverage federal dollars as a way to expedite improvements to more of the Seward Highway.	The project is being developed to allow all sources of funding.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Comment(s)</b>	<b>Team Response</b>
Support for the project	I would like to say how glad I am to see a proposal for a divided highway at Windy Corner. Having lost a family member in a crossover crash near this area, I know what a difference this will make in bad winter weather and in summer for passing/overtired drivers. This will save lives.	The project focus is safety.
Seward Highway corridor projects	Commenters desired information on other projects in the Seward Highway corridor.	Project fact sheets contained information about other corridor projects.
Turnagain Arm access for emergency response	<p>Access could be gated for Anchorage or Girdwood Fire Department use only.</p> <p>Commenters introduced the concept of including a semi-improved boat launch as part of the road and railroad realignment associated with the project. The boat launch would be designed for the exclusive use of rescue personnel, not for public use, in order to launch small rescue watercraft and inflatable boats. Use would be coordinated with the Alaska Railroad to authorize and limit access across their tracks.</p>	To be considered during design.

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Wildlife habitat	Southbound lane outside Gorilla Rock would affect large eddy used for feeding by belugas. Are there hydraulic studies of eddy in post-construction alignment? This seems like potentially fatal conflict.	Habitat studies are planned and impacts will be considered in design.
Wildlife habitat, Beluga Whales	During periods of rising tide at Windy Point [Windy Corner] a large eddy is created that is used by beluga whales. The southbound lane may be in conflict with this eddy.	The team indicated that cross sections would be taken into the inlet for hydrologic assessment and for railroad design. In addition LIDAR mapping at extreme low tide will help determine how the inlet is changing over time and will also help with design.