



West Susitna Access Road Project

Anchorage Public Meeting
Wednesday, August 14, 2024

STIP ID: 34461





Meeting Schedule

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. | Open House |
| | Private Testimony |
| 4:30 p.m. | Presentation, followed by |
| to 6:15 p.m. | Public Testimony |





Welcome

Project Team Introductions

Agenda

Meeting Purpose

What WestSu Access IS and is NOT



Project Team Introductions



Shannon McCarthy
Special Assistant to the
Commissioner
DOT&PF



Jacob Gondek
Project Manager
DOT&PF



John McPherson
Environmental Director
HDR



Alex Sonnabend
Project Manager
HDR



Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Project Overview
3. Proposed Action
4. Building on Previous Work
5. Presentation Wrap-Up
6. Public Testimony
7. Closing

Meeting Purpose

- Share information on the environmental document (an Environmental Assessment), the work being done on the project, and the proposed action.
- The project team is here to listen
 - **We want your comments on the project's purpose and need, proposed alignment, and the issues and concerns that will help shape the project.**



What WestSu Access IS and is NOT



It IS...

- *A public road*
- *~22 miles long*
- *~24 ft wide*
- *Constructed from gravel*
- *Able to accommodate legal highway vehicles*
- *Intended for recreation, tourism, food gathering, settlement, and economic activities*

It is NOT...

- *An industrial route*
- *> 100 miles long*
- *Part of a larger project*



Project Overview

Project Introduction

Project Purpose & Need

Schedule & Phases



Project Introduction

The WestSu Access Project would open-up more than 6 million acres of public lands for recreation and other purposes, enhancing the region's transportation infrastructure and economy.





Purpose



The purpose of the West Susitna Access Project is to **provide a safe public road linkage from the existing highway system west to public lands** owned by the State and Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB). This improved access would allow for increased recreation, guiding and settlement opportunities, and economic development of State and MSB resources including forestry, agriculture, minerals, and energy.

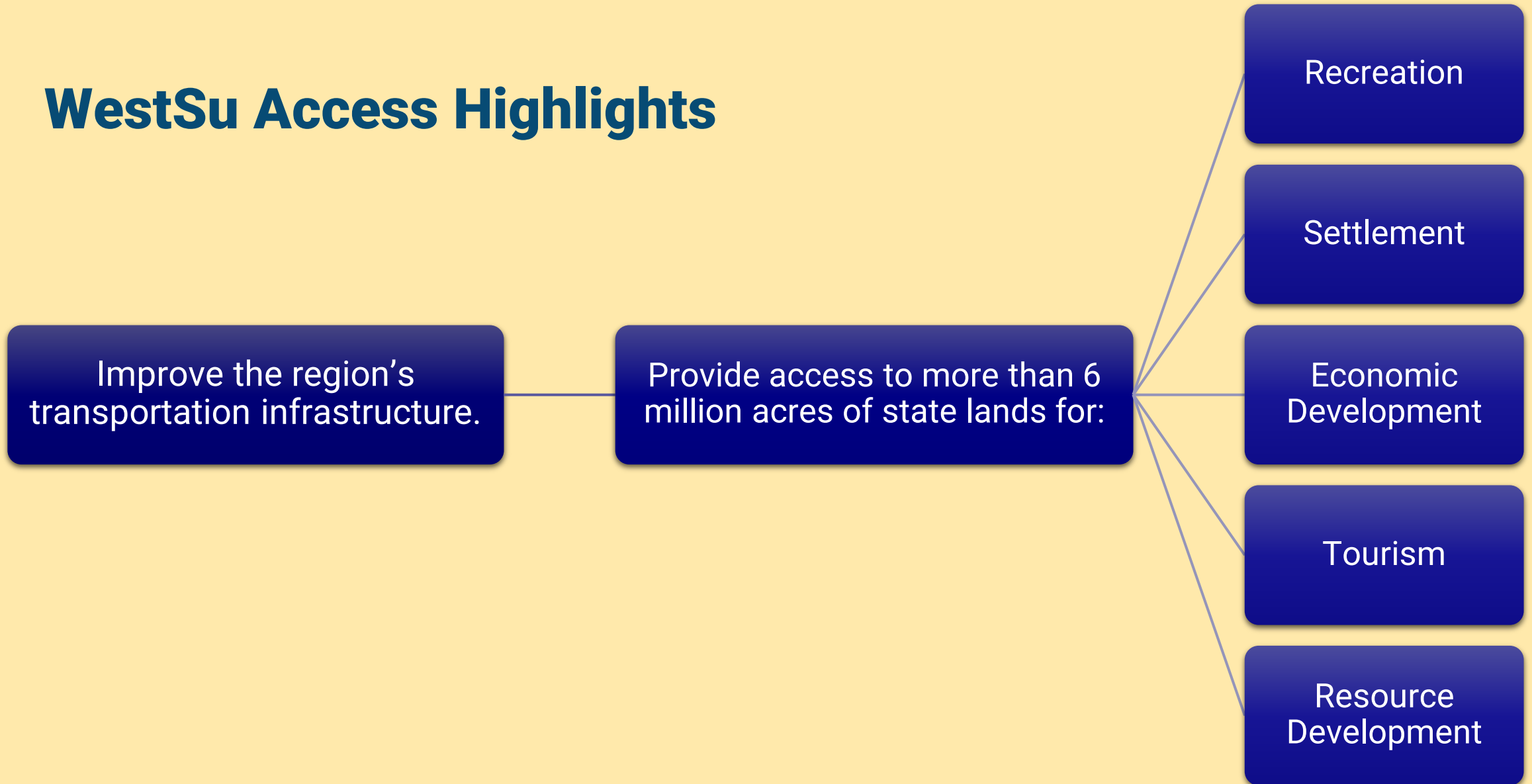
Need



The absence of road access **inhibits Alaskans' ability to utilize lands selected and planned for recreation, settlement, and economic/resource development.**

Adopted management plans for the state- and local government-selected lands in the study area identify and plan for development of these opportunities.

WestSu Access Highlights





Proposed Action

Proposed Action

Land Use

Preliminary Design Elements

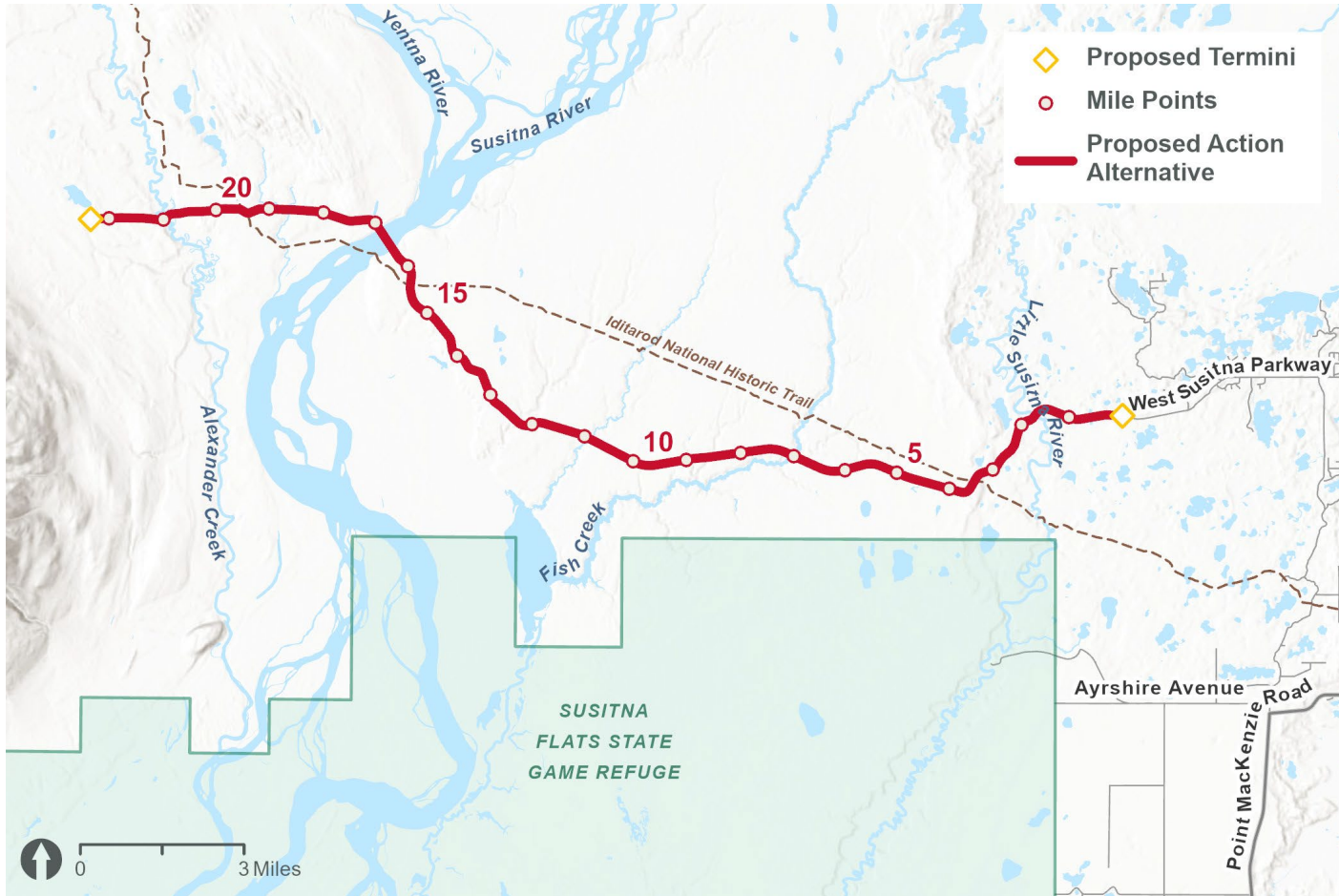




Proposed Action

West Susitna Parkway Alternative

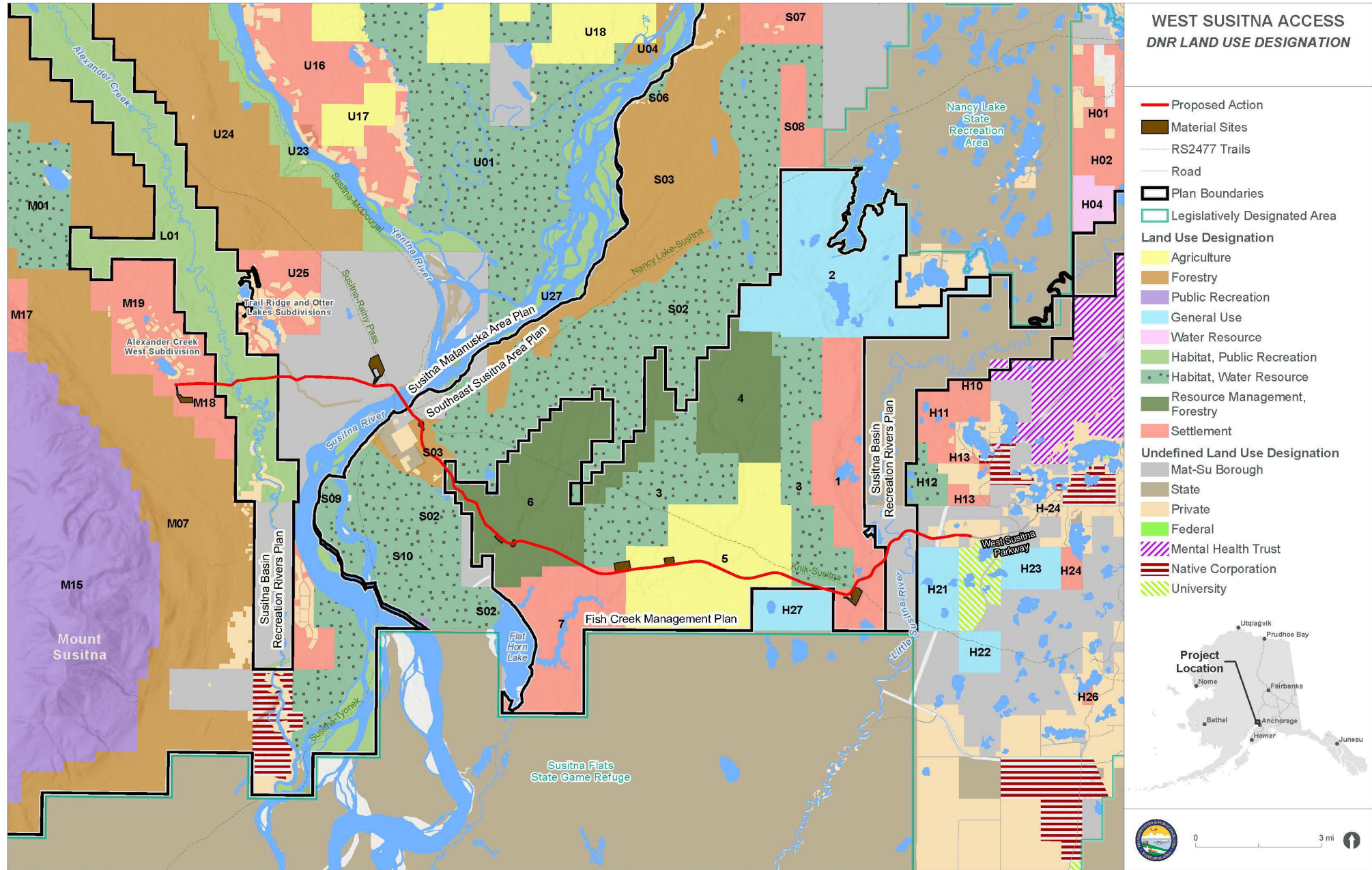
- Leverages existing Department of Natural Resources clearing and Mat-Su Borough right-of-way
- Avoids Susitna Flats Game Refuge & private property
- Ends near previously platted properties





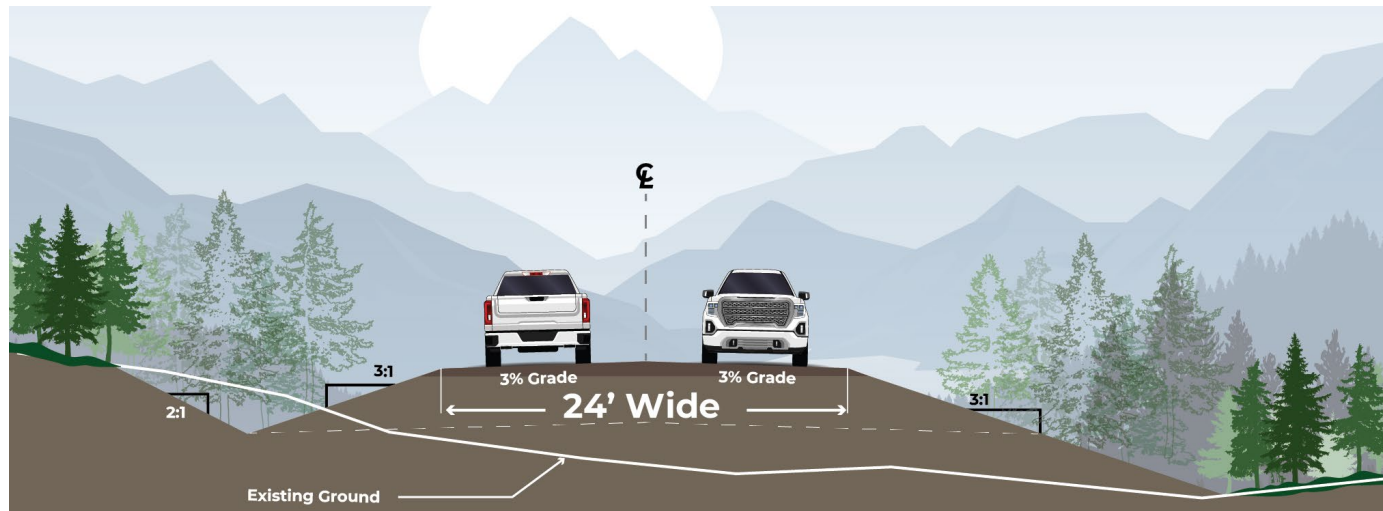
Land Use

- Southeast Susitna Area Plan
- Susitna Matanuska Area Plan
- Susitna Basic Recreation Rivers Management Plan
- Fish Creek Management Plan





Preliminary Design Elements



- *A public road*
- *~22 miles long*
- *~24 feet wide*
- *Gravel driving surface*
- *Able to accommodate highway-legal vehicles*
- *Intended for recreation, tourism, food gathering, settlement, and economic activities*
- *Includes crossings over the Little Su, Fish Creek, Susitna River, and Alexander Creek*



Building On Previous Work

Background Overview

Data Collection & Considered Alternatives

The 2014 DOT&PF Reconnaissance Study

The AIDEA West Susitna Access Project

East End Connections Alternatives

New Data

NEPA Overview & Scoping



Project Background


- 2014 Little Susitna All-Season Road Feasibility Study (DNR)
- 2014 Roads to Resources Study (DOT&PF)
- 2019 West Susitna Access Project (AIDEA and MSB)
- 2023 West Susitna Road Access Project (DOT&PF)

Data Collection: 2014 Reconnaissance Study

West Susitna Access Reconnaissance Study
West Susitna Access to Resource Development


Transportation Analysis Report

Prepared for:



Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Division of Program Development

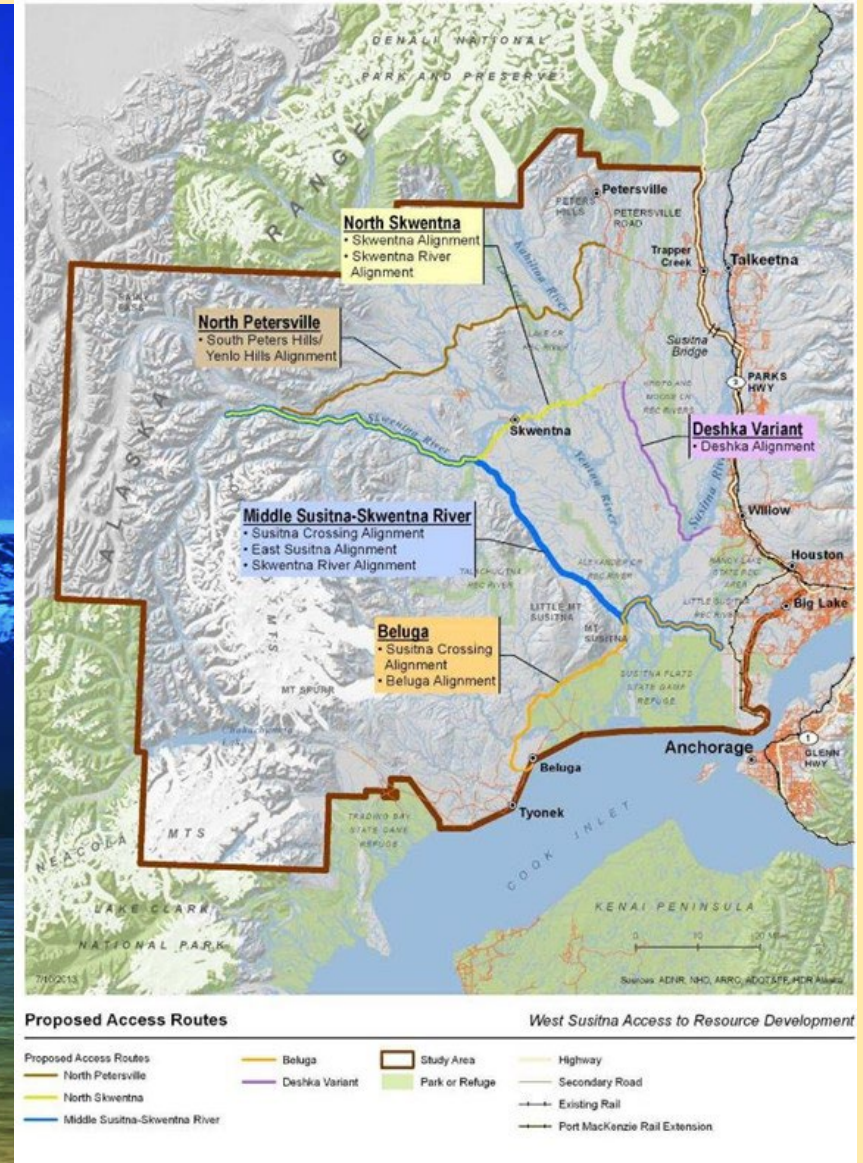
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In Association with:
Shannon & Wilson, Inc.
Sisyphus Consulting

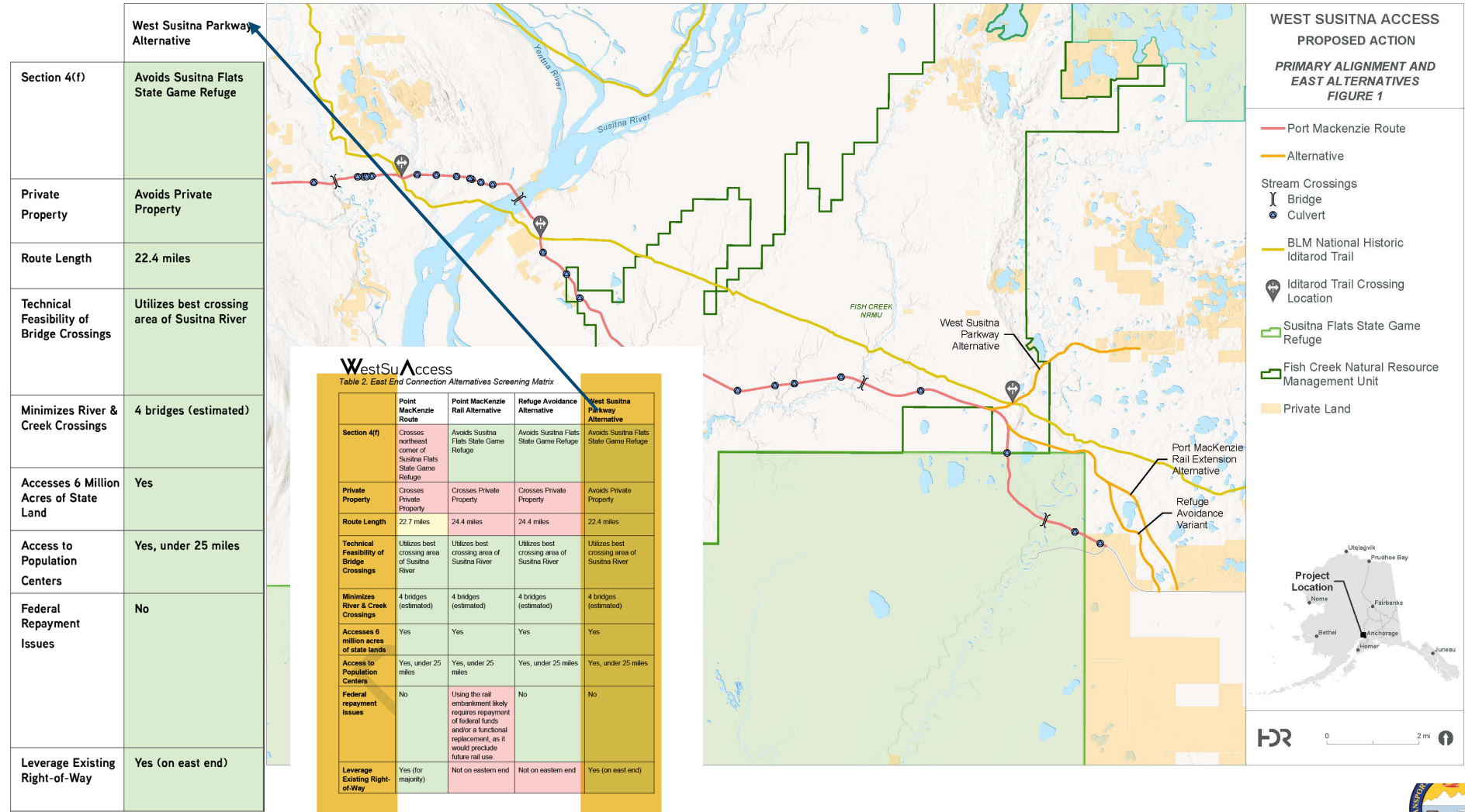
January 2014





East End Connection Alternatives Considered

- Point MacKenzie Rail Extension
- Refuge Avoidance Variant
- Point MacKenzie Route
- **West Susitna Parkway**
- No Action (no-build)



Additional Cultural, Environmental & Design Work 2024/25

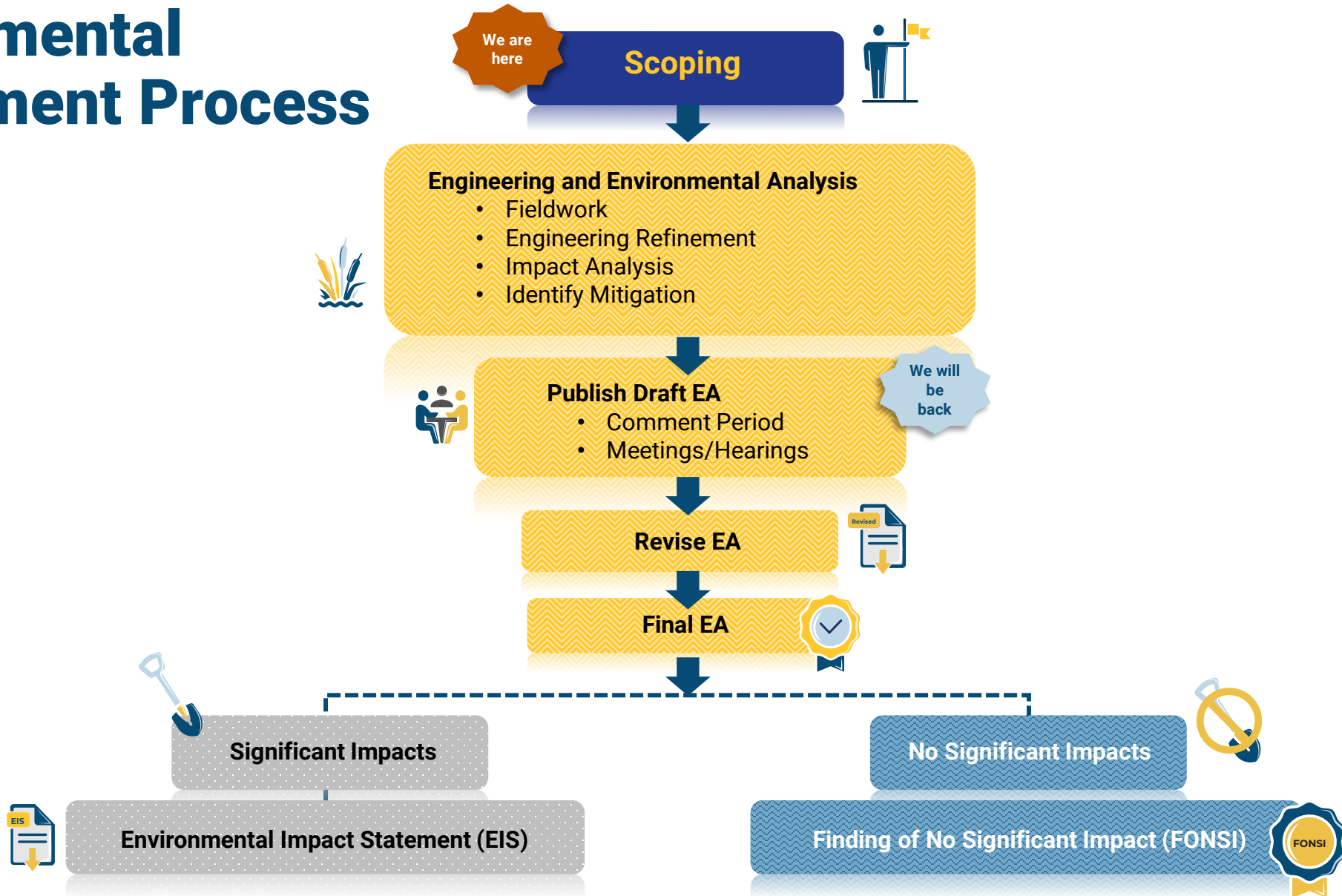
Plus Public Involvement!



- In addition to using the data from these previous studies and projects to guide this WestSu Access project, the project team is pursuing data collection and design specific to the current effort.



Environmental Assessment Process



Scoping

We Are Here To listen!

We want to hear your comments on impacts, opportunities, or concerns about:

- + Purpose & Need
- + Proposed Action
 - *Impact Concerns*
 - *Alternatives*
- + Trails or Recreational
- + Other Opportunities



Presentation Wrap-Up

Scoping – We Are Here to Listen
Ways to Make A Scoping Comment



Anticipated Schedule



We are Here!

Through August 23:
Scoping Public
Comment Period

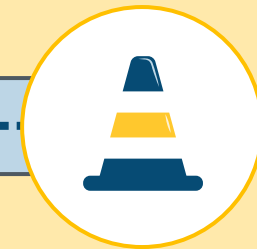


March 2025:
Draft EA and Design
Study Report
*30-day public comment
period*

Public Involvement



April 2025:
Final Environmental
Document



Summer 2025:
*Phase 1 Construction
(proposed)*

Summer 2026:
*Phase 2 Construction
(proposed)*

Public involvement available throughout project; comments welcomed anytime.

Ways to Make A Scoping Comment

Scoping Public Comment Period: July 23 – August 23, 2024



Please remember there are multiple ways to provide comments. DOT&PF will consider all comments equally.

Ways to comment:

- **Court Reporter, Public Meeting Only (Today)**
complete, was available at the start of this meeting
- **Public Testimony, Public Meeting Only (Today)**
sign up at the sign-in table (We'll get through as many as we can before 6:15 p.m.)
- **Mail:**
West Susitna Access Road Project, c/o HDR, 582 # 36th Ave, Ste 500, Anchorage, AK 99503
- **Email:** comments@westsuaccess.com
- **Phone:** (907) 331-3878
- **Online form:** westsuaccess.com/comments/



Public Testimony until 6:15 p.m.

Making Helpful Scoping Comments

Public Testimony Ground Rules

Public Testimony Session



Making Helpful Public Comments



Including these elements can help the project team:



Talk about specific impacts



Identify new or unknown information



Reference data or specific language that you are concerned about



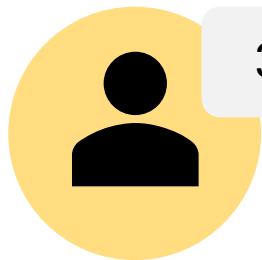
Describe specific actions for agencies to take

These types of comments will help shape the NEPA review process.

Verbal Comment / Public Testimony Ground Rules



DOT&PF's goal is to provide a respectful atmosphere that allows all voices to be heard. To do this:



3:00

3 minutes
per speaker



5:00

5 minutes
per group



We will use a
timer to keep
track

Ground Rules

- Be respectful, courteous, and patient.
- Remain quiet while others are giving testimony.
- Refrain from addressing the audience or asking for audience participation.
- Turn off cell phones or set to vibrate.



Public Testimony Session

3-Minutes Per Person
5-Minutes Per Group
Names Will Be Called





Closing

Next Steps / Contact Us

Thank You



Next Steps / Contact Us



Phone

(907) 331-3878



Web

westsuaccess.com



Email

comments@westsuaccess.com



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THANK YOU!

