



# PROJECT BRIEFING

## Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

June 18, 2024

# PROJECT TEAM



**Jake Gondek, P.E.**  
Project Manager

**Julia Hanson, P.E.**  
Design Manager

**Devki Rearden**  
Assistant Project Manager



A **COLAS** COMPANY

**Jeff Schock**  
Construction Project  
Manager

**Daron Underwood**  
Construction Manager



**Steve Noble, P.E.**  
Design Project Manager

**Erica Jensen, P.E.**  
Assistant Project Manager

**Richard Pribyl, P.E.**  
Project Engineer



**Stephanie Queen**  
Public Involvement Lead

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

## DESCRIPTION, PURPOSE & GOALS



- Federally-funded project to reconstruct Sterling Highway between Sterling and Soldotna
- Purpose: **improve safety** and **reduce congestion**
- Goals:
  - Provide a safe and reliable roadway
  - Allow for decommissioning of the Traffic Safety Corridor
  - Accommodate the seasonal traffic increases
  - Uphold the trust of stakeholders and the public
  - Balance needs to maintain access
  - Begin construction in 2026
  - Phase construction to maximize benefits from available funding

*Photo by AA Roads, 05/10/23*

# PROJECT AREA

## VICINITY & OVERVIEW MAP



# PROJECT BACKGROUND

## CORRIDOR HISTORY



**1950**

Sterling Highway constructed

**1983**

Environmental Assessment to widen highway from MP 79-94

**1991**

MP 79-83 (within Sterling) widened to 4 lanes with center left-turn lane

**1991**

MP 83-94 improved 2-lane section with widened shoulders

**2009**

Traffic Safety Corridor designation

**2015-2021**

Preliminary Engineering Report and Environmental Assessment completed

- 4-lane divided highway was preferred alternative

**2022**

Design-Build project started but cancelled after significant public input

**2024**

Project restarted using Progressive Design-Build delivery



# PROJECT FOCUS: SAFETY & CONGESTION

## WHY THIS PROJECT IS NEEDED

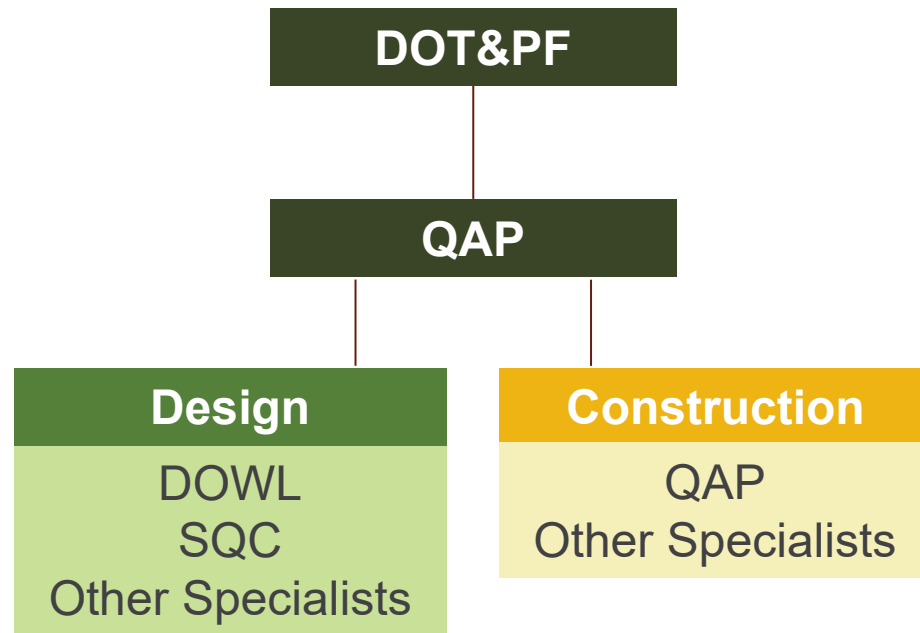


*Photo by Erin Thompson/Peninsula Clarion, 2021*

- Fatal and major injury crash rates remain above national averages
- Most fatal and major injury crashes occur during winter months
- Head-on collisions account for nearly half of fatal and major injury crashes
- Traffic volumes have increased >400% since the 1970s
- Traffic exceeds current 2-lane roadway's capacity
- July traffic is more than double winter traffic

# WHY IS THE CONTRACTOR INVOLVED ALREADY?

## PROGRESSIVE DESIGN-BUILD (PDB) DELIVERY



## Why did DOT&PF choose PDB process?

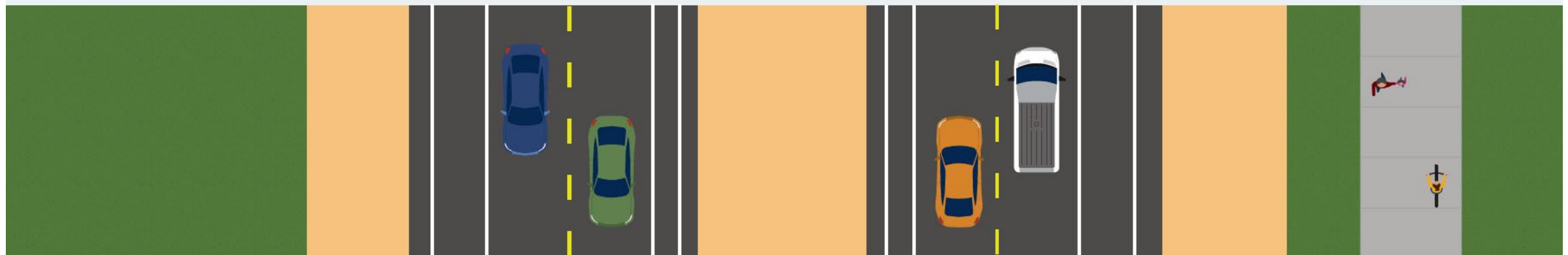
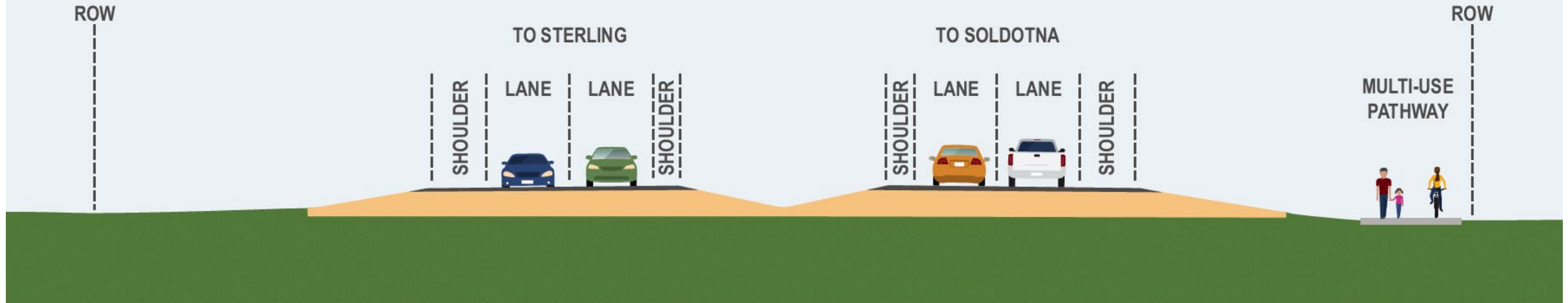
- More collaborative
- Fosters engineer/contractor innovation
- Lower risk of budget overrun
- More flexible construction schedule
- Greater ability to phase construction
- Continuity of project knowledge through construction

# EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

PREVIOUS PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE



## ALTERNATIVE A: FOUR-LANE HIGHWAY WITH DEPRESSED MEDIAN





# EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

## PREVIOUS PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE



### Recommended in 2021 Environmental Assessment

- 4-lane divided highway through most of corridor
- 5-lane highway with center left-turn lanes on each end of the corridor

### Advantages

- Substantially reduces head-on crashes and improves safety
- Reduces read-end crashes by providing left-turn lanes
- Provides safe passing opportunities
- Increases capacity

### Challenges

- Restricted access and required U-turns to many properties
- Wider corridor for pedestrians to cross
- Increased lanes – higher travel speeds and more exposure to animal-vehicle crashes
- Utility relocation / impacts

**Broad range of public support and opposition**

# OBSERVATIONS AND INPUT

## PREVIOUSLY VOICED CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES



- Large number of fatal crashes, injury crashes, and near misses
- Passing on the right, speeding, tailgating, and lack of headlight use
- Perceived lack of law enforcement
- Tourists driving slowly with no passing options
- School busses stopping in the lane of traffic
- Poor pedestrian amenities and inability to cross safely
- Competing uses: local vs through, recreational vs commercial, tourist vs resident
- Congestion and high seasonal traffic
- Impacts to emergency responders
- Noise from rumble strips
- Corridor lighting impacting quality of life
- Off-road, ATV, and snowmachine use
- Planning fatigue – decades of study without action

# NEW TEAM – FRESH PERSPECTIVE

## UPCOMING OUTREACH AND DATA COLLECTION



**1** Continue to gather input from the public and stakeholders

**2** Schedule stakeholder meetings on specific topics:

- Public safety and emergency response
- KPB school district
- Business owners, tourism, and economic interests
- Trucking, freight, and transportation
- Wildlife and environment

**3** Collect and analyze engineering data

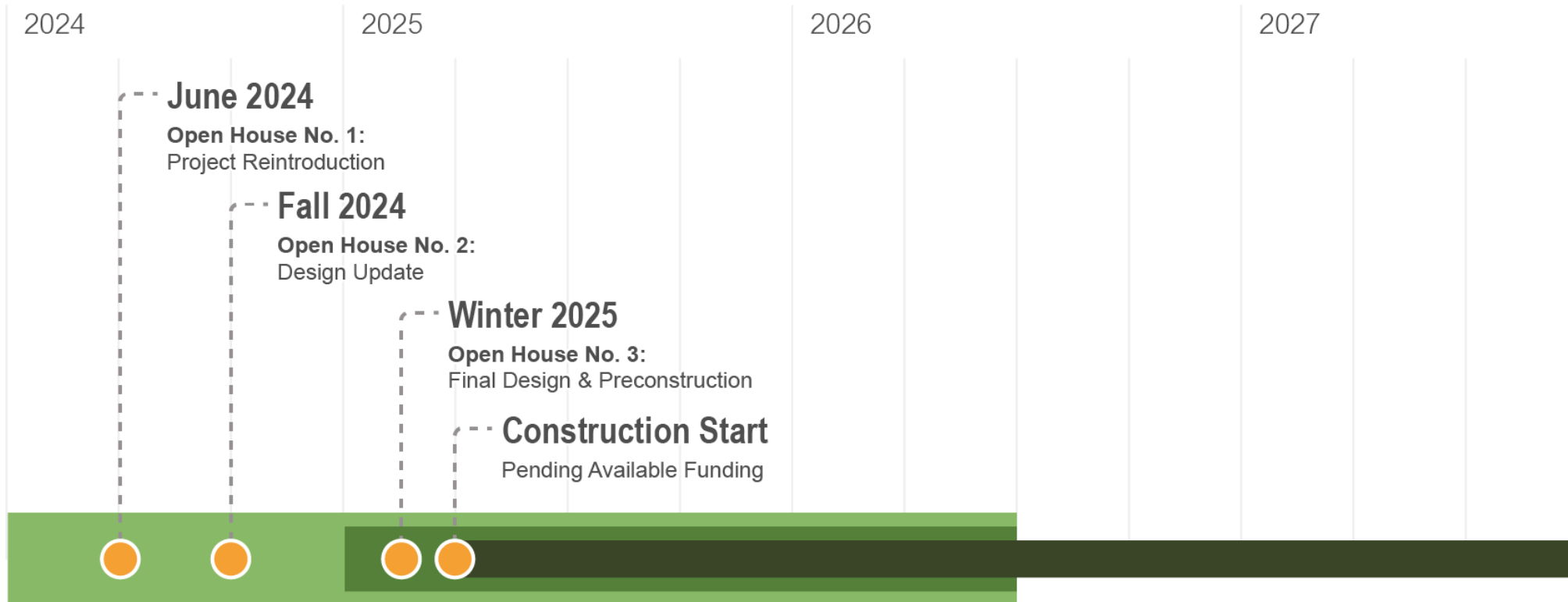
- Survey
- Traffic
- Geotechnical
- Utilities

**4** Develop and evaluate design alternatives

**5** Begin permitting and preparation construction

# PROJECT SCHEDULE

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTINUED PUBLIC INPUT



Public and Stakeholder Involvement

Ongoing

# JOIN US AT ONE OF THE OPEN HOUSES



**TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 2024,  
5:00 – 7:00 P.M.**

**Sterling Community Center, Gym**

38377 Swanson River Rd, Sterling, AK

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 2024,  
5:00 – 7:00 P.M.**

**Soldotna Public Library, Community Room**

235 N Binkley St, Soldotna, AK



# PROJECT CONTACTS

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**THANK YOU!**