

Seward to Glenn Connection PEL Study



Preliminary Alternatives

MOA Assembly Work Session
March 29, 2024



PEL Description & Benefits

PEL = "Planning & Environmental Linkages"



Robust public involvement throughout the PEL process

- Agencies, tribes, & community input



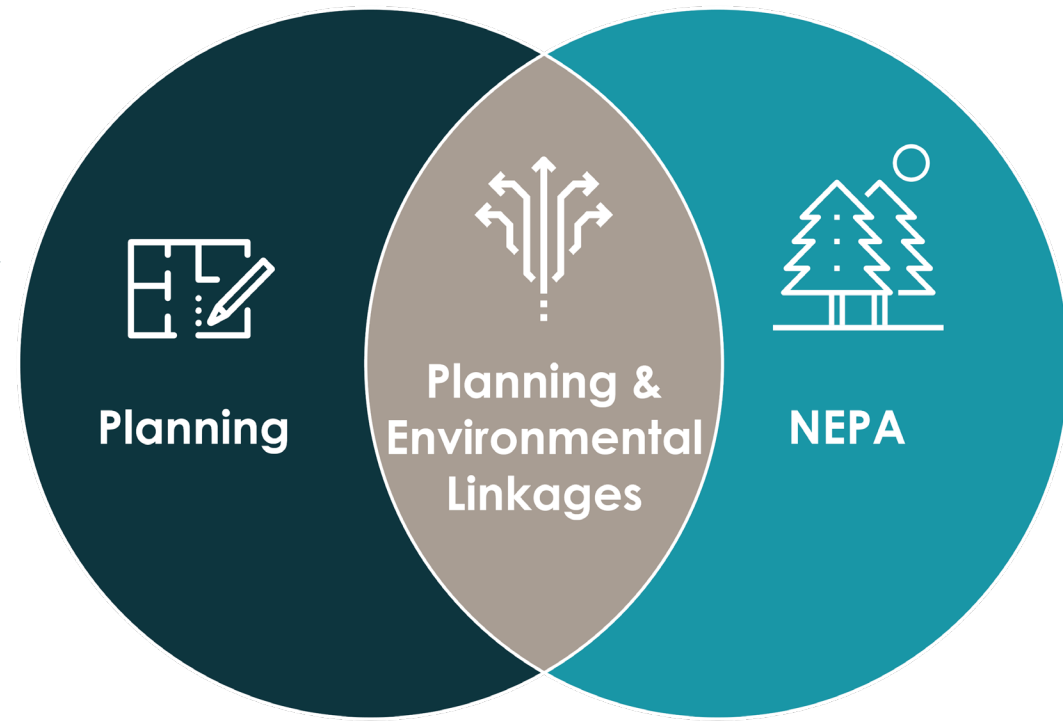
Accelerate project delivery

- Carry work & decisions forward into NEPA
- Eliminate duplicate work

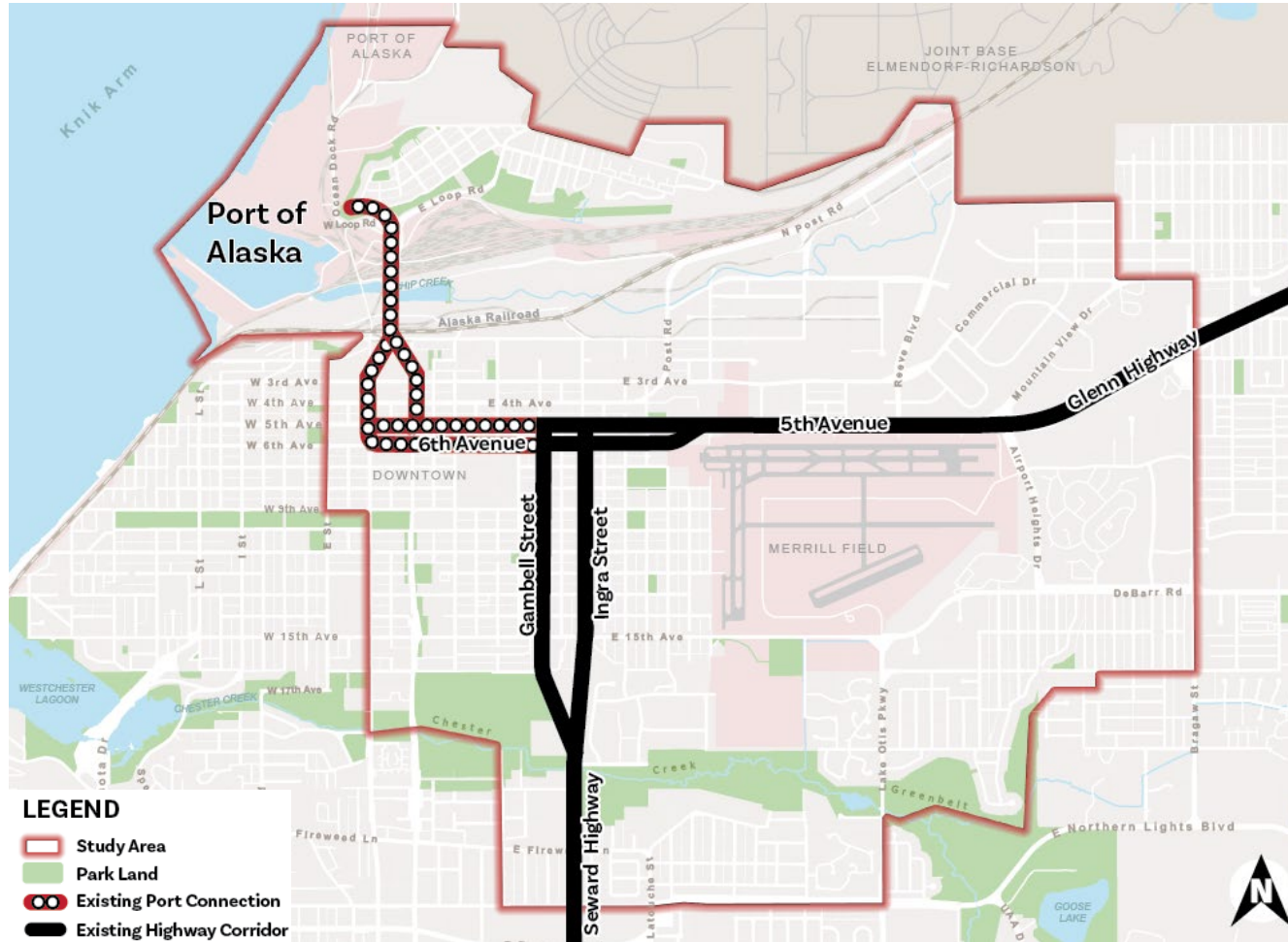


Flexibility

- Size & type of solutions
- Implementation planning
 - Project phasing & funding plan



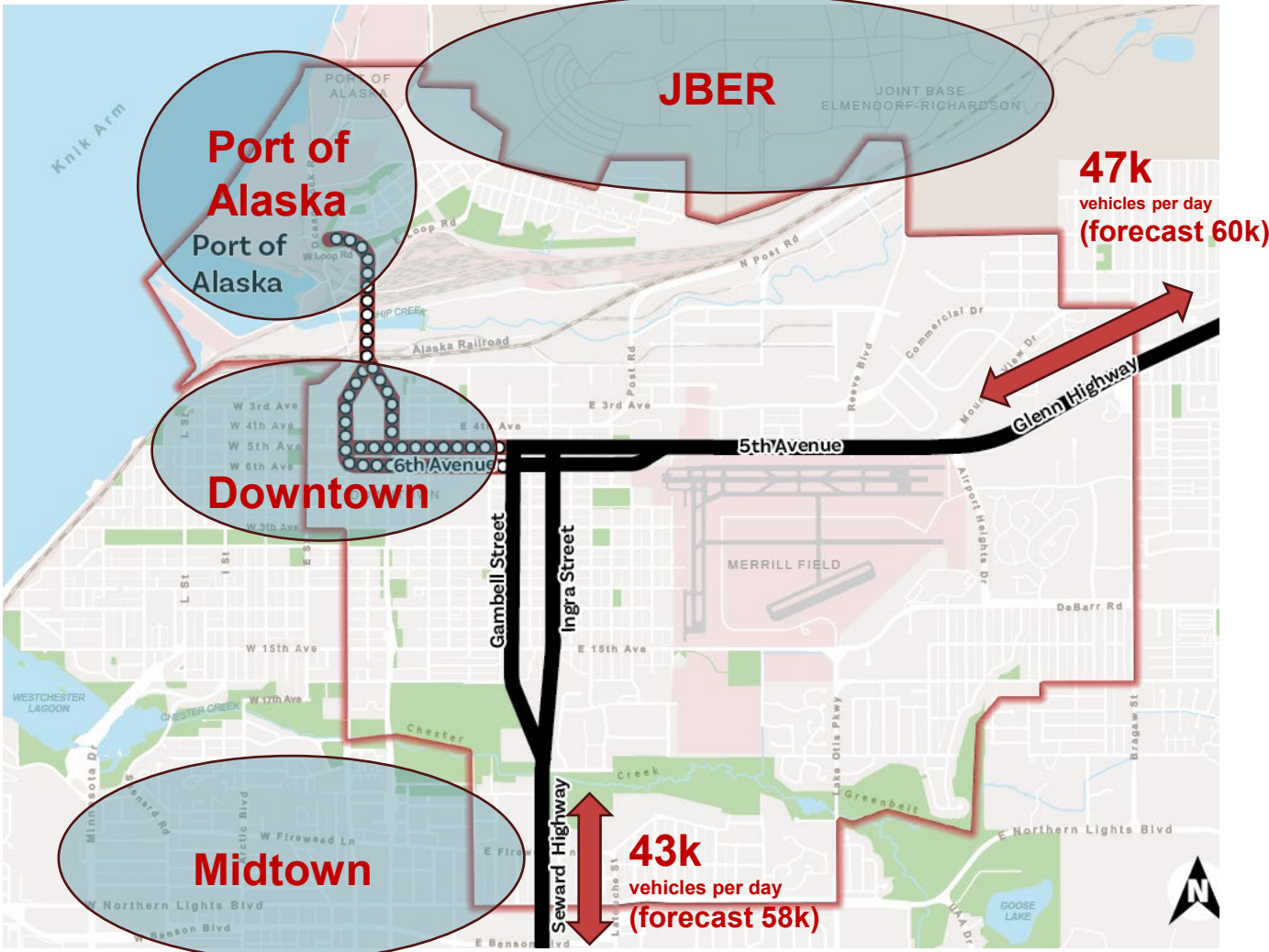
PEL Study Area & Context



Interstate Highway System & National Highway System

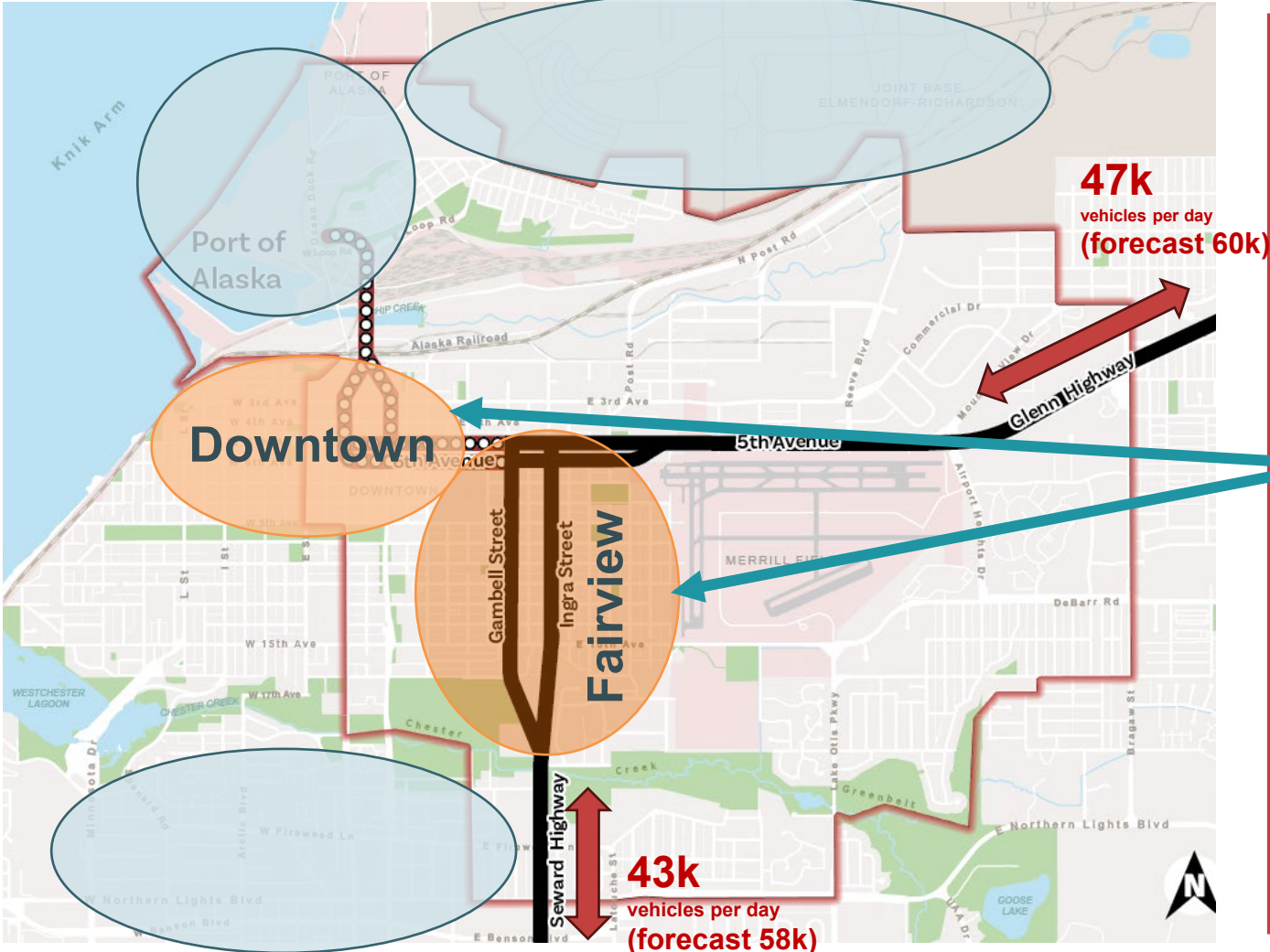
- Serve major activity centers
- Carry a high proportion of total urban travel
- Accommodate trips entering and leaving urban areas and movements through urban areas
- Serve demand for intra-area travel between a central business district and outlying residential areas

Reducing Regional Traffic Impacts to Downtown and Fairview



- Land use developed over 100 years
- Transportation network developed to serve major destinations
- System developed completely to serve NHS/IHS regional traffic

Reducing Regional Traffic Impacts to Downtown and Fairview



- Regional and local travel conflicts
- Safety issues
- Inconsistent w/ local plans
- Fairview has shouldered the burden for 50+ years



Ingra Street



Gambell Street

Fairview Neighborhood Plan

PRIORITIES OF THE PLAN

The top five priorities for this plan are:

I. TRANSPORTATION

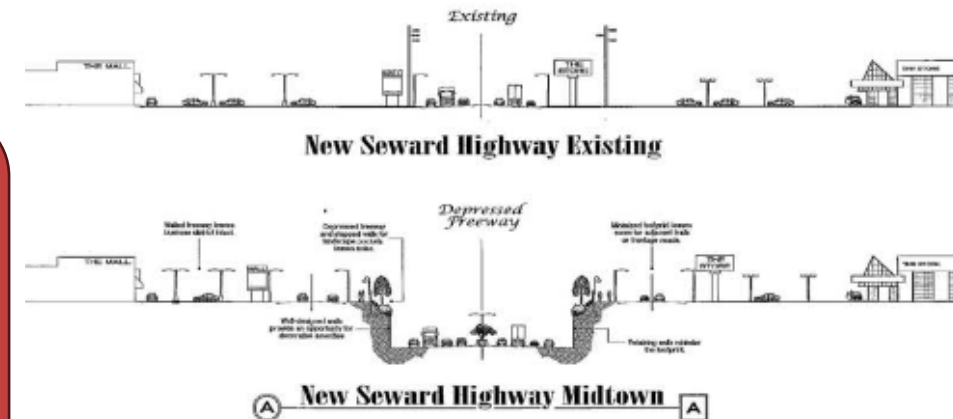
Resolution of long-standing transportation system impacts: The lack of coordination and clarity on the future of the Seward Highway, Glenn Highway, and Knik Arm Crossing has resulted in a **flight of capital from Fairview's core**. This plan calls for a **resolution** of the transportation, land use, and planning issues related to this corridor to enable the redevelopment of Gambell Street, amenities that would enhance the community and encourage investment, and provide **clarity for property owners** as to the future of their lands. Funding and implementation of the Gambell Street Redevelopment Project will enable these goals. Secondly, consolidation of the Glenn and Seward highway connection into one project that would receive funding to **finalize the corridor study** and Environmental Impact Statement to facilitate the identification of required mitigation, and enable the preliminary design process to move forward. Finally, by having the State of Alaska make this corridor its top priority, this vital connector can be planned, funded and improved to the extent that is required for future growth in the fastest growing area of the State.

2. CONNECT PEOPLE TO PLACES (JOBS, BUSINESSES, SCHOOLS, PARKS, AND DOWNTOWN)

- 2.4 Implement the Gambell Street Redevelopment and Implementation Plan – **reduce Gambell to three lanes, improve sidewalks, underground utilities, add street amenities**, study and adjust zoning to allow for more pedestrian interaction, perhaps establishing maximum setbacks for commercial development.
- 2.5 Fund and plan for the Seward to Glenn Highway connecting network. **Maintain the integrity of Fairview, by following a cut and cover approach, creating a greenway connection between Ship and Chester Creek with a Hyder Street alignment** or alternatives that reduce impact on the neighborhood, while providing needed neighborhood street and pedestrian improvements that support mixed-use and other land-use redevelopment and development identified on the approved land-use plan map.

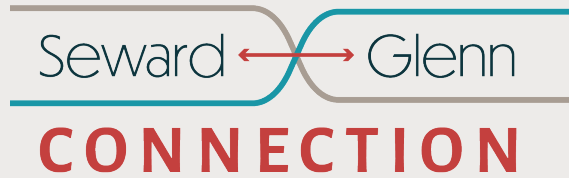
- “Lack of coordination and clarity... has resulted in flight of capital from Fairview’s core
- This plan calls for resolution... related to this corridor
- ...consolidation of the Glenn and Seward highway connection into one project that would receive funding to finalize the corridor study...”

- “Reduce Gambell to three lanes, improve sidewalks... add street amenities
- Fund and plan for the Seward to Glenn Highway connecting network...
- Creating a greenway connection... with a Hyder alignment”



MTP 2040:

Seward Highway/Glenn Highway Connection PEL



Seward-Glenn Connection study area scope & study area defined by MTP 2040 & TIP:

- MTP 2040 identifies PEL to “define a vision for the future of this connection, identify...resource concerns and opportunities and develop reasonable alternatives...”
- MTP 2040 plan also calls to construct a freeway connection between 20th Ave. and Airport Heights Interchange... Reconstruct Ingra/Gambell Street...

MTP 2040 & TIP PEL Description

The intent of this PEL is to define a vision for the future of this connection, identify environmental and resource concerns and opportunities in the study area, and use the information to develop reasonable alternatives through consultation with the affected agencies and the public.

MTP 2040 Project 214

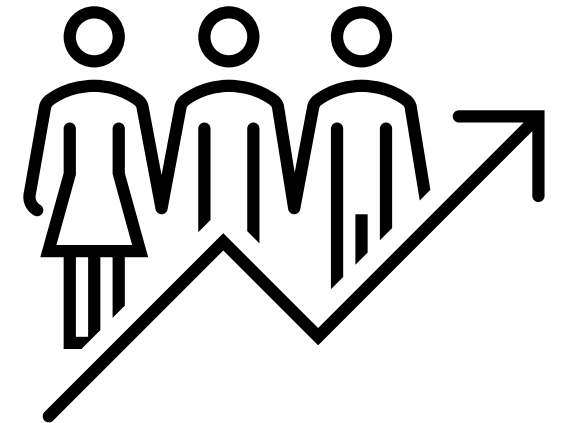
Construct freeway connection between Seward Highway/20th Avenue and 13th Avenue with freeway access and egress ramps onto Ingra/Gambell Streets near the northern termini of the project. Reconstruct Ingra Street/Gambell Street and construct separated grade crossings of the freeway to reconnect portions of the east-west street system. Construct an interchange at Airport Heights Drive and Glenn Highway Intersection. Project would include non-motorized improvements and consider adjacent land use.

MTP 2040 Project 316 (illustrative)

Construct freeway connection between 13th Avenue and Airport Heights Interchange with freeway access and egress ramps along the alignment. Reconstruct Ingra Street/Gambell Street. Project would include non-motorized improvements and consider adjacent land use.

Study Objectives

- Reduce conflicts and improve safety
- Reduce regional and local travel conflicts and improve connections for all modes
- Provide economic and redevelopment opportunities to remedy impacts that Fairview has suffered for more than 50 years
- Help implement adopted plans
 - MTP 2040 (to MTP 2050)
 - Anchorage Land Use Plan Map
 - Downtown and Fairview plans



The Study is Not About Congestion or Commuter Drive Time

Misconceptions:

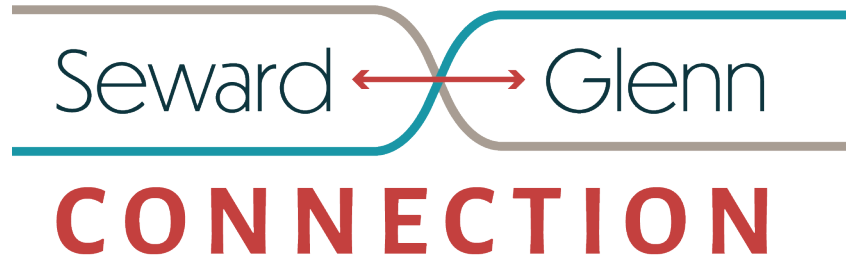
- Congestion is a problem
 - Congestion is **not** in the study's Purpose and Need nor is it a problem
- Study tries to reduce travel times, particularly for commuters
 - Already experiencing acceptable trip durations



Objectives - Define Vision:

- Multi-modal
- Separate highway traffic from neighborhoods
- Improve livability/reduce noise and air pollution
- Improve safety
- The study seeks to answer the question:
"Is a highway connection needed and, if so, where?"





Preliminary Alternatives

- **No Freeway Connection**
 - No Action
 - MTP 2050
- **Freeway Connection Ideas**
 - Grade Separation
 - Bypass



No Action Required

- No highway connection
- Gambell and Ingra remain an 8-lane couplet
- 5th and 6th Avenues remain 6 lanes
- No new port connections
- All other MTP 2050 projects are assumed to occur

MTP 2050

Ingra/Gambell Couplet (Boulevard):

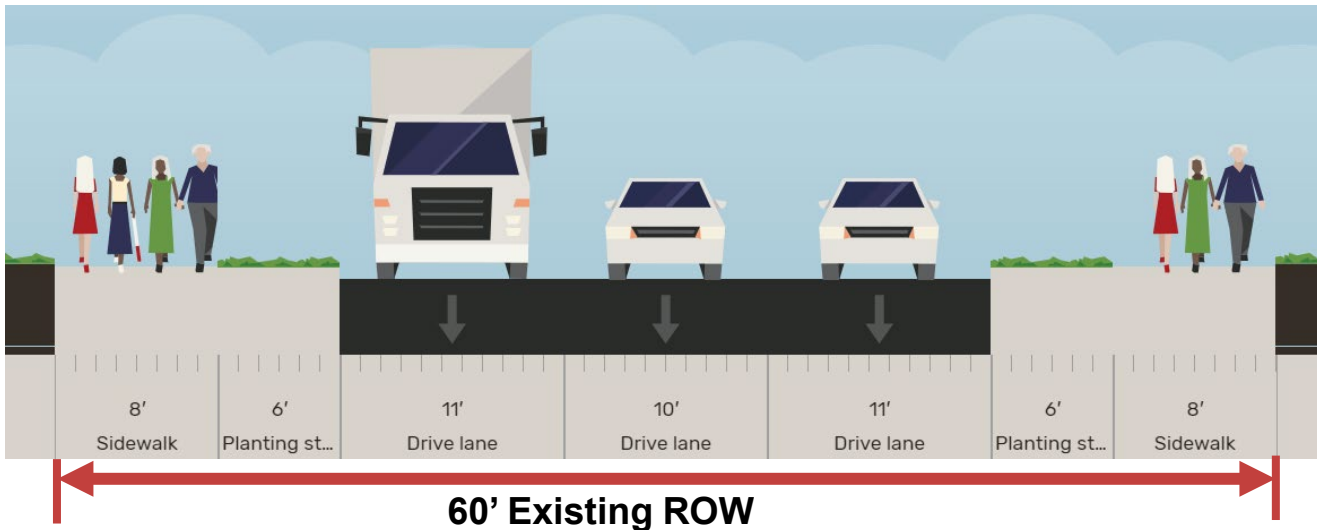
- Reduce from 4 to 3 lanes each direction
- Non-motorized & snow storage improvements
- Potential interim solution

Road Diet 5th & 6th Avenues

- Reduce from 6 to 4 lanes
- Non-motorized & snow storage improvements

Fairview Greenway/Woonerf

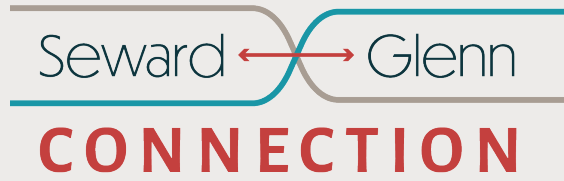
- Connection from Chester Creek to Ship Creek



Roadway Example for Ingra/Gambell

Our Approach...

Reduce Fairview and Downtown Regional/Local Traffic Conflicts



Through grade separation

- Regional & port connections depressed
 - Local roads & non-motorized go over
- Lane reductions + non-motorized improvements on local streets



Alternative A

Alternative B

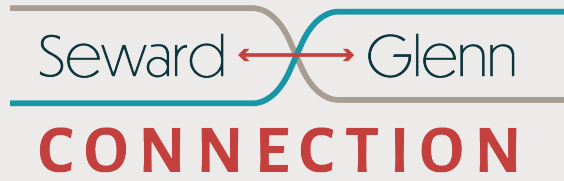
Alternative AB1

Alternative AB2



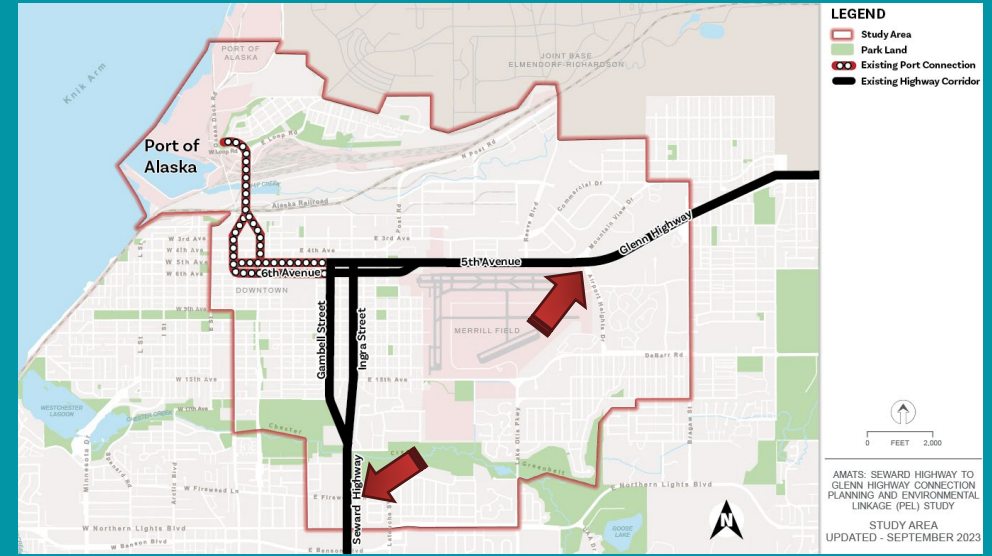
Our Approach...

Reduce Fairview and Downtown Regional/Local Traffic Conflicts



Or through a bypass south of Merrill Field

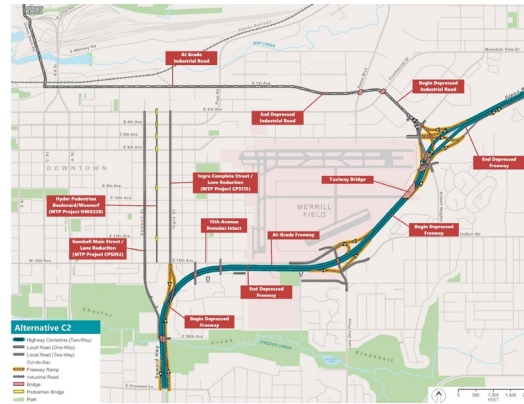
- Reduce or avoid bisecting neighborhoods
- Reduce (or significantly reduce) residential and business relocations



Alternative C1



Alternative C2

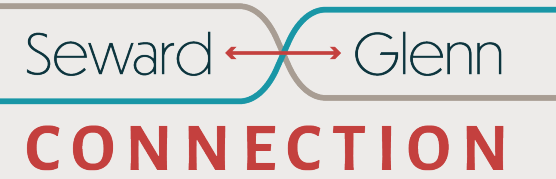


Alternative D



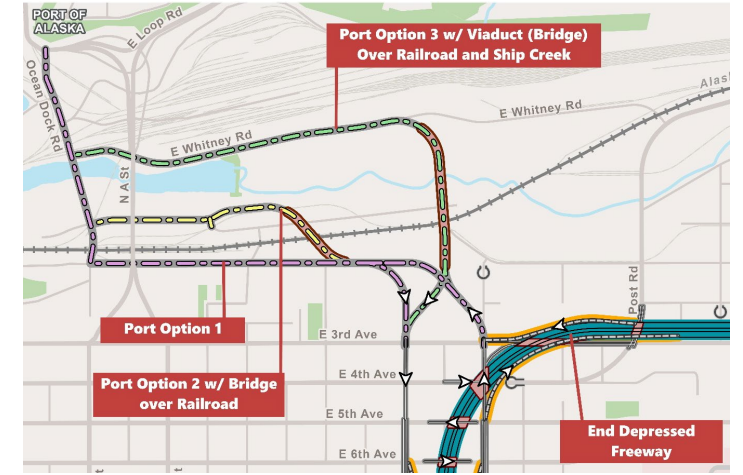
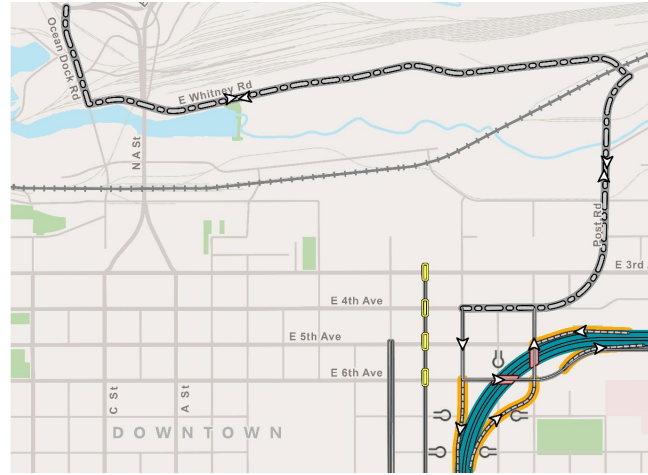
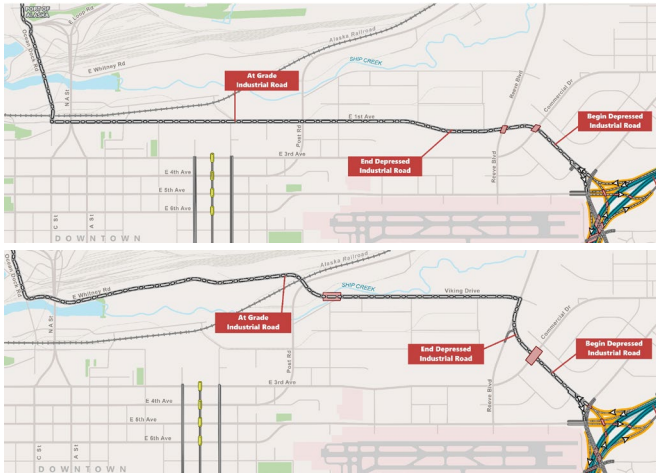
Our Approach...

Reduce Fairview and Downtown Regional/Local Traffic Conflicts



Diverting port traffic to a highway interchange

- Reducing industrial traffic through commercial and residential areas

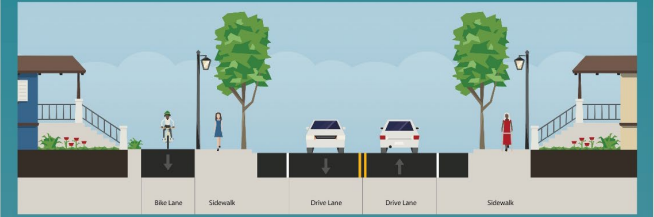


Improve Local Street and Nonmotorized Connections

Make room for complete street projects



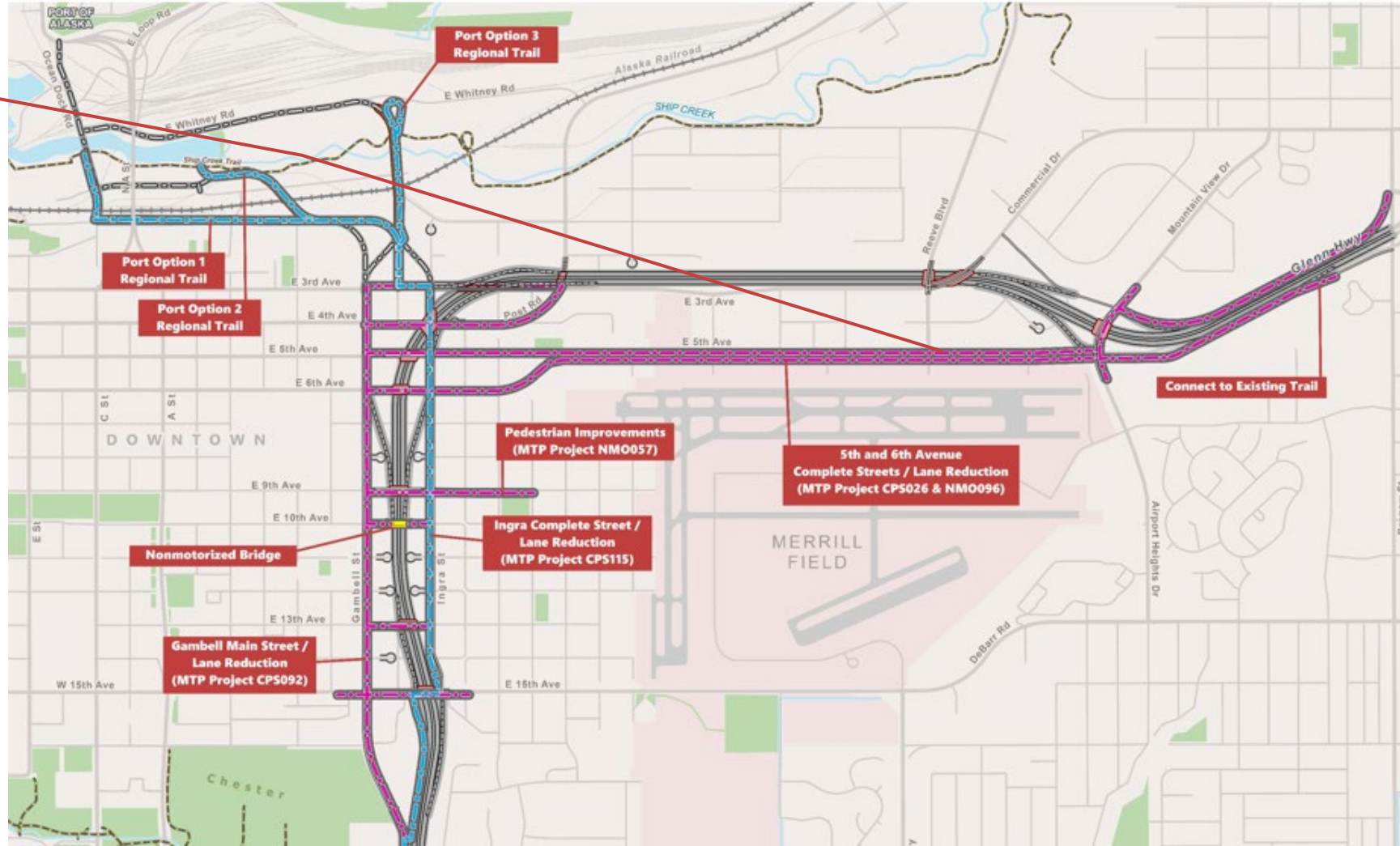
Complete Street Center Turn Lane Example



Complete Street Greenway Example

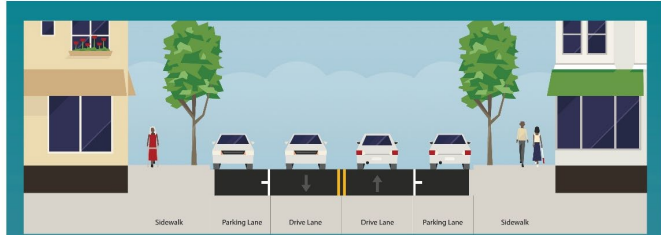


Spenard Road, Anchorage Example

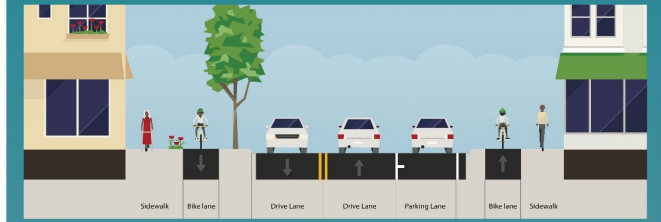


Improve Local Street and Nonmotorized Connections

Make room for a Gambell Main Street



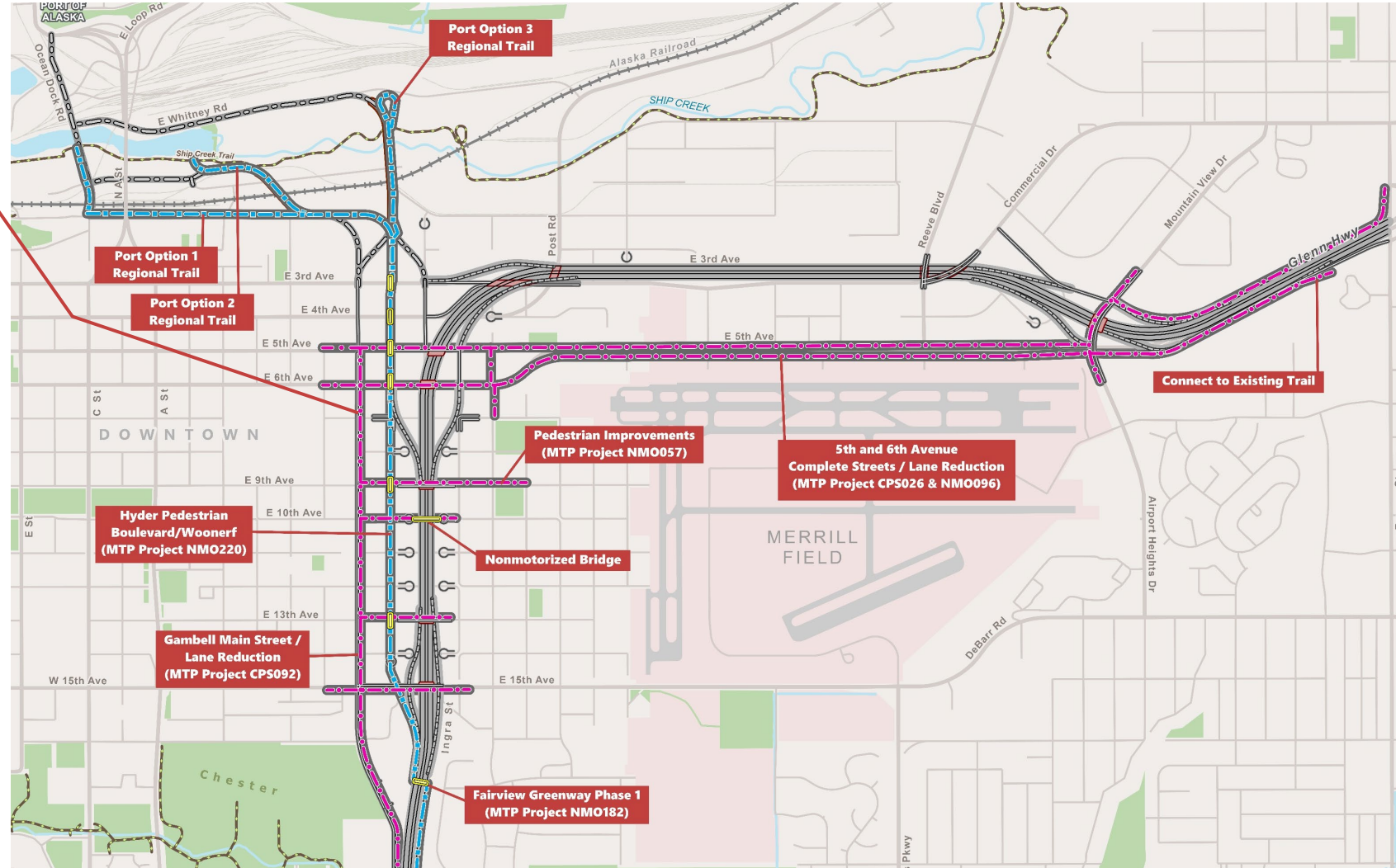
Main Street Example



Main Street Example



West Fourth Avenue, Anchorage

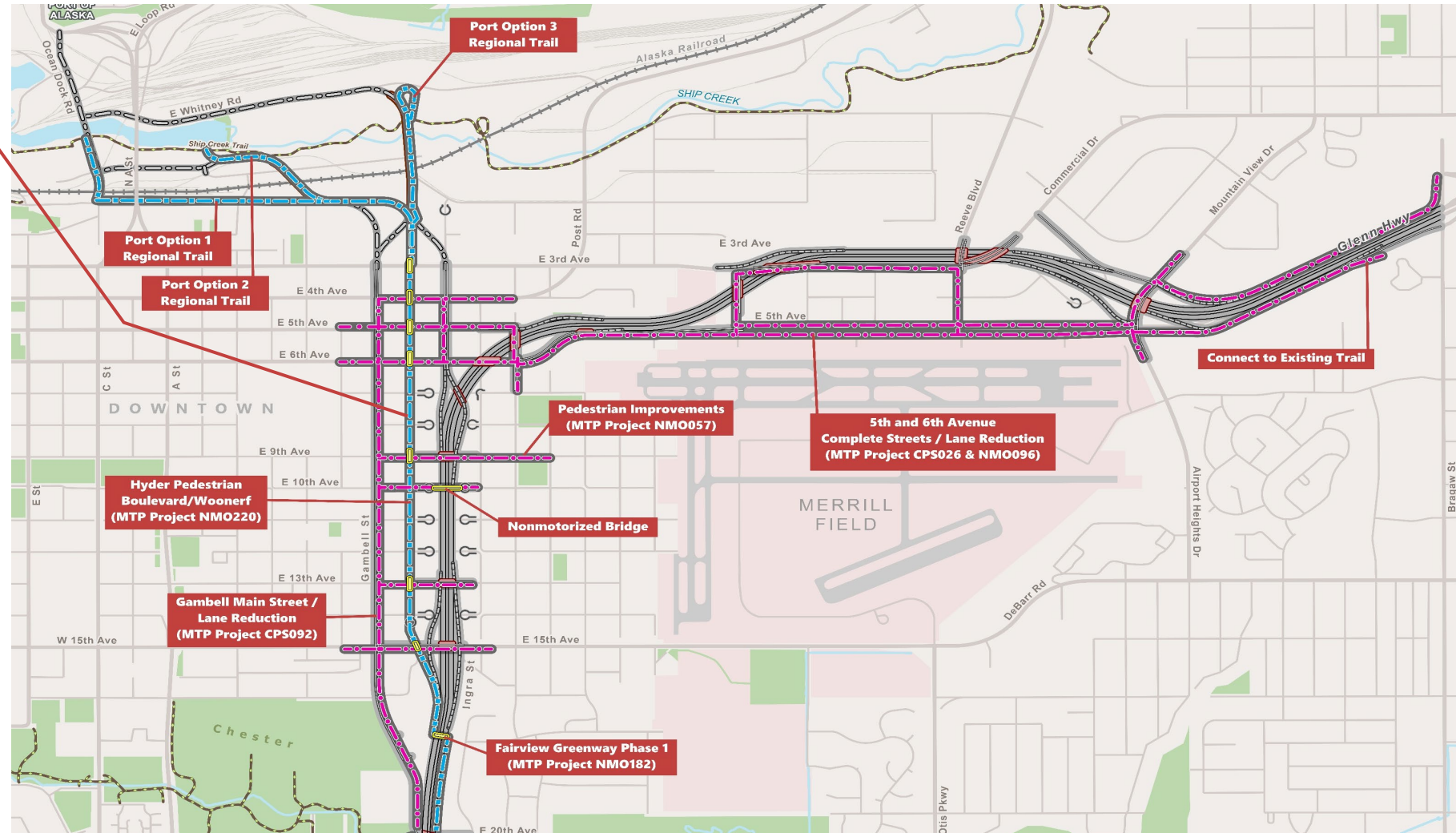


Improve Local Street and Nonmotorized Connections

Create a regional trail connection

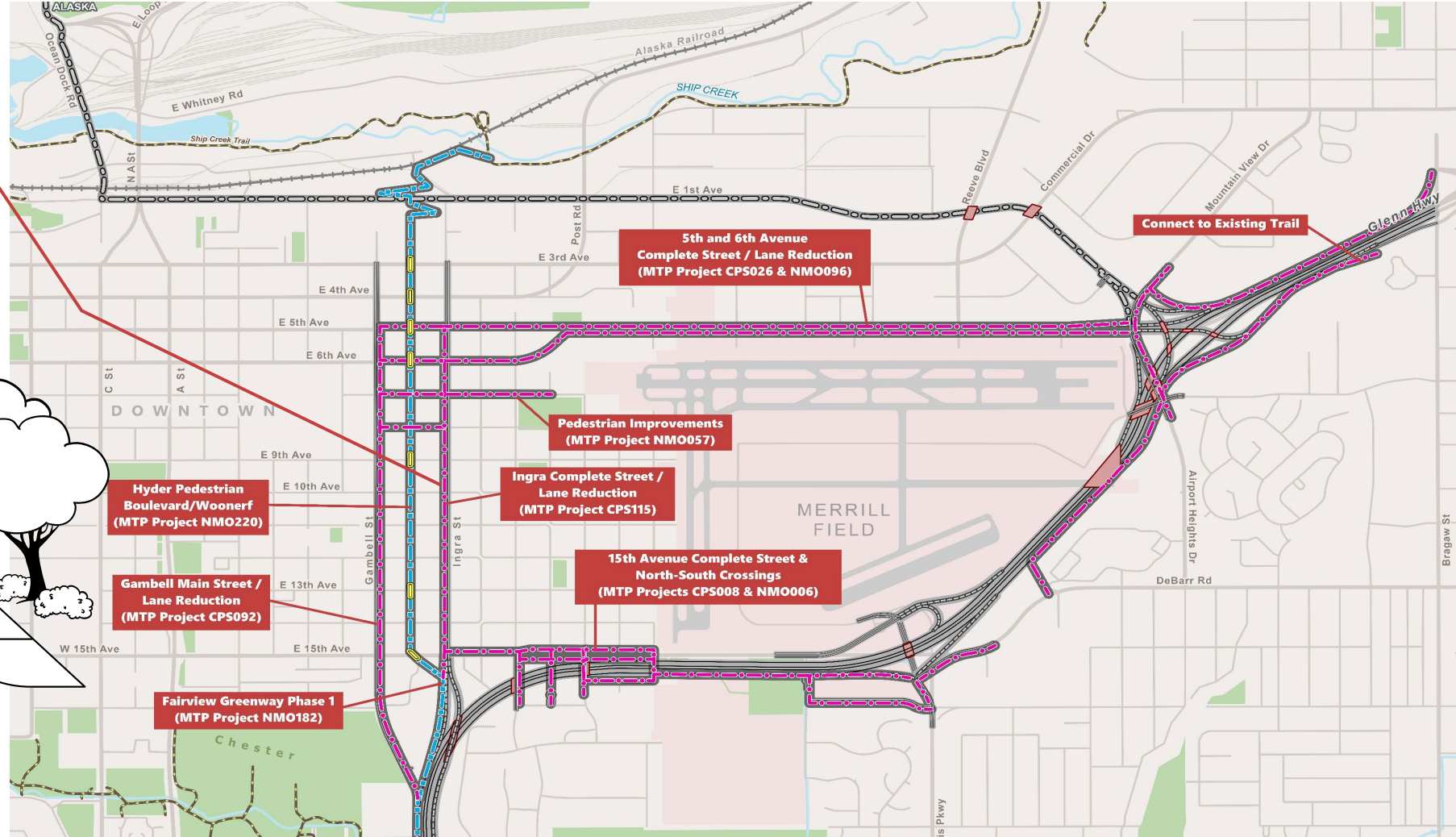
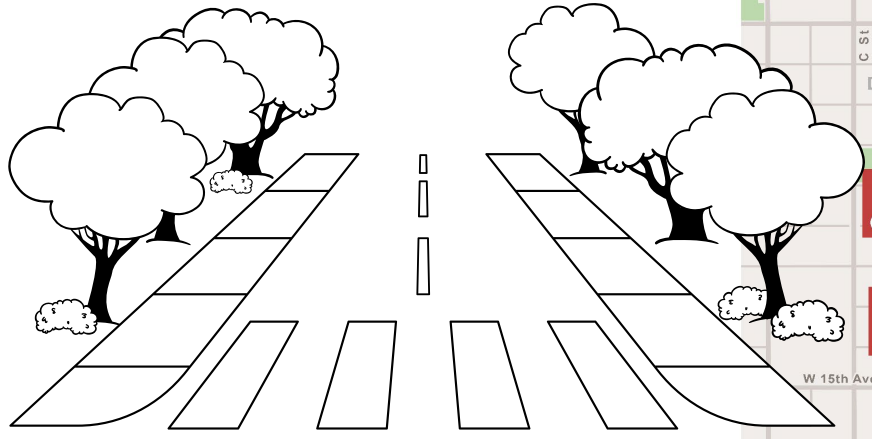
Regional Trail Connections

- All recommended alternatives will align with the Municipality of Anchorage recommendations for greenway-supported development.
- Alternatives will incorporate natural open spaces, creek corridors, and pedestrian routes.
- Every Seward to Glenn Connection PEL alternative includes connections to the regional trail system.



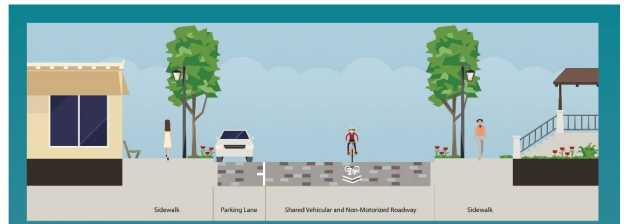
Improve Local Street and Nonmotorized Connections

Make safer local street connections

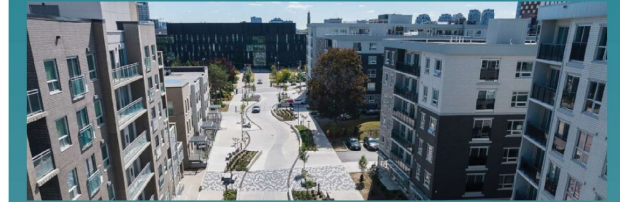


Improve Local Street and Nonmotorized Connections

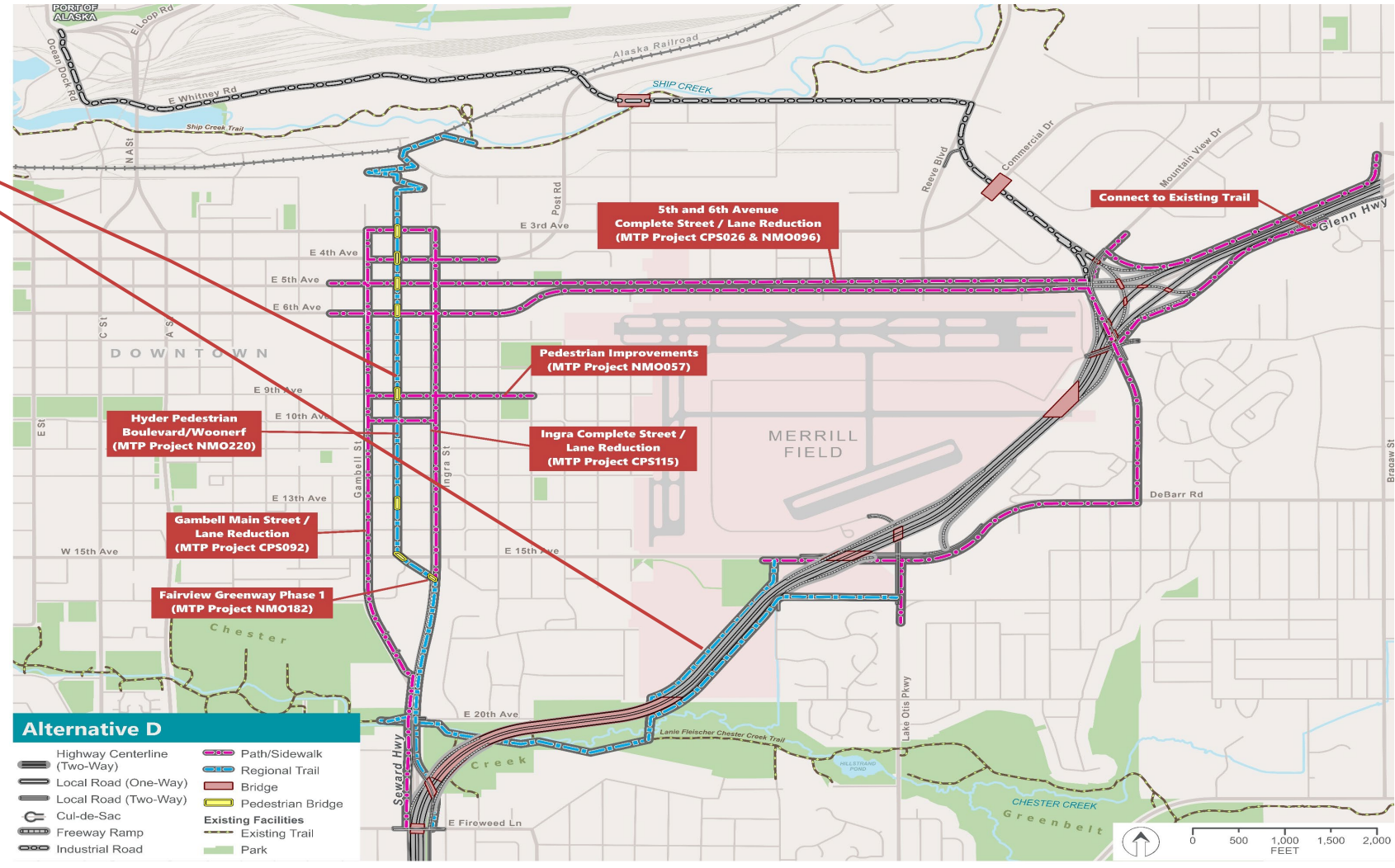
Explore woonerf ideas and create other connections



Woonerf Example



Modern Woonerf Example



Highlights: What We've Learned

>300 comments and dozens of meetings

Feedback:

- Emphasize we are studying no-freeway
 - MTP 2050
 - Desire for creative solutions (rail, transit, demand mgnt.)
- Project cost/impacts may result in no improvements
- Interest in connections outside the study area
- Loss of housing (primarily A & B alternatives) is a concern
- People question project need due to low/no congestion
- More information desired (right-of-way, environmental impacts, schedule, and cost)
- Alternative D is getting considerable attention
 - Park impacts vs. residential/business impacts



Alternatives Development Process

Much More to Come



YOU are here!

Preliminary Alternatives Released: Public Comment by April 7



- **Refine alternatives based on public input**
- **Impacts analysis & screening** (highlights)



Homes & businesses
Historic properties
Parks
Safety
Accessibility and mobility
– *Pedestrian, bicycle, port, vehicle*
Traffic flow performance
Livability & community cohesion
Cost \$



- **Stakeholder workshop**

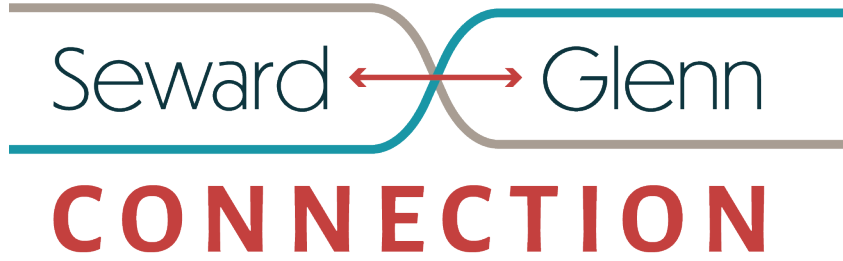


- **Eliminate some alternatives**

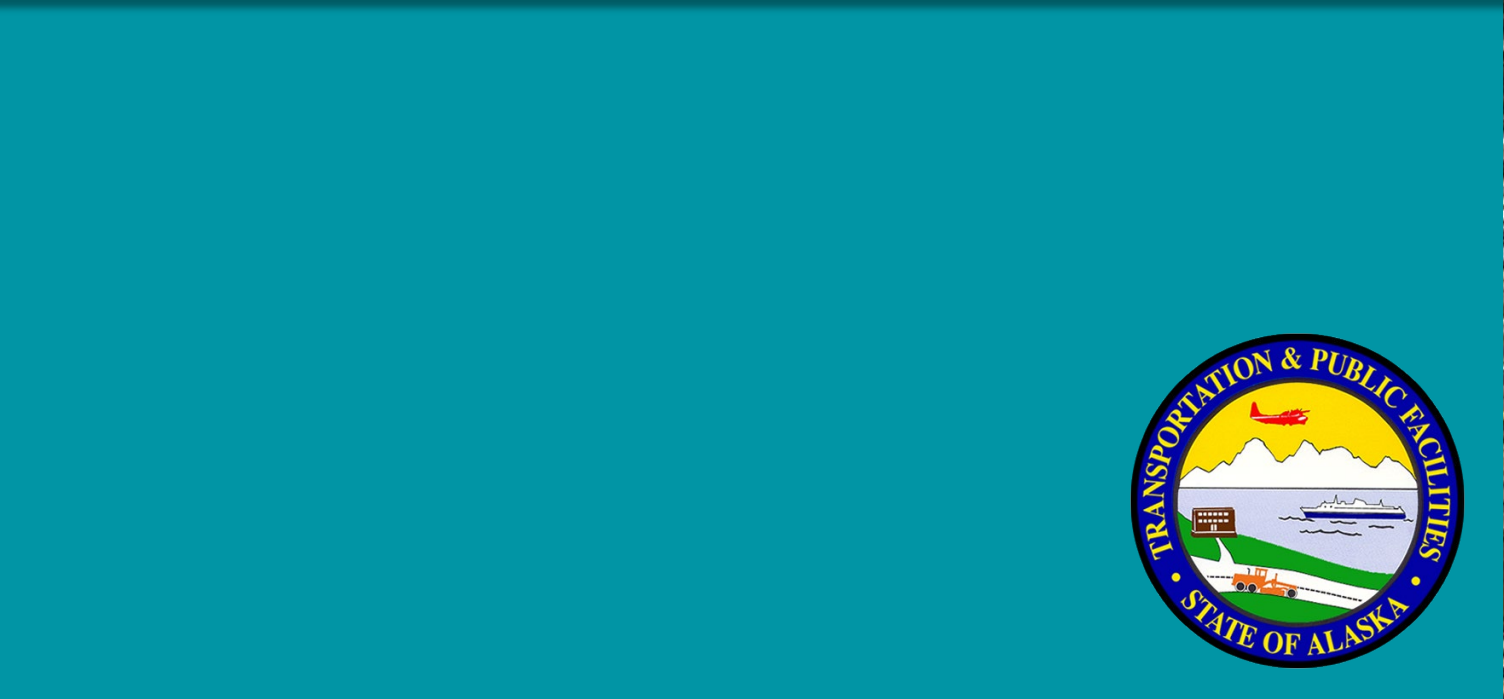
Based on public input & screening analysis
Detailed alternatives development

- **Public open house #5 & public comment**



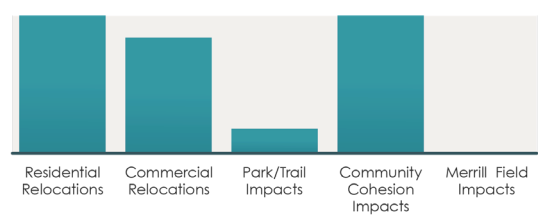
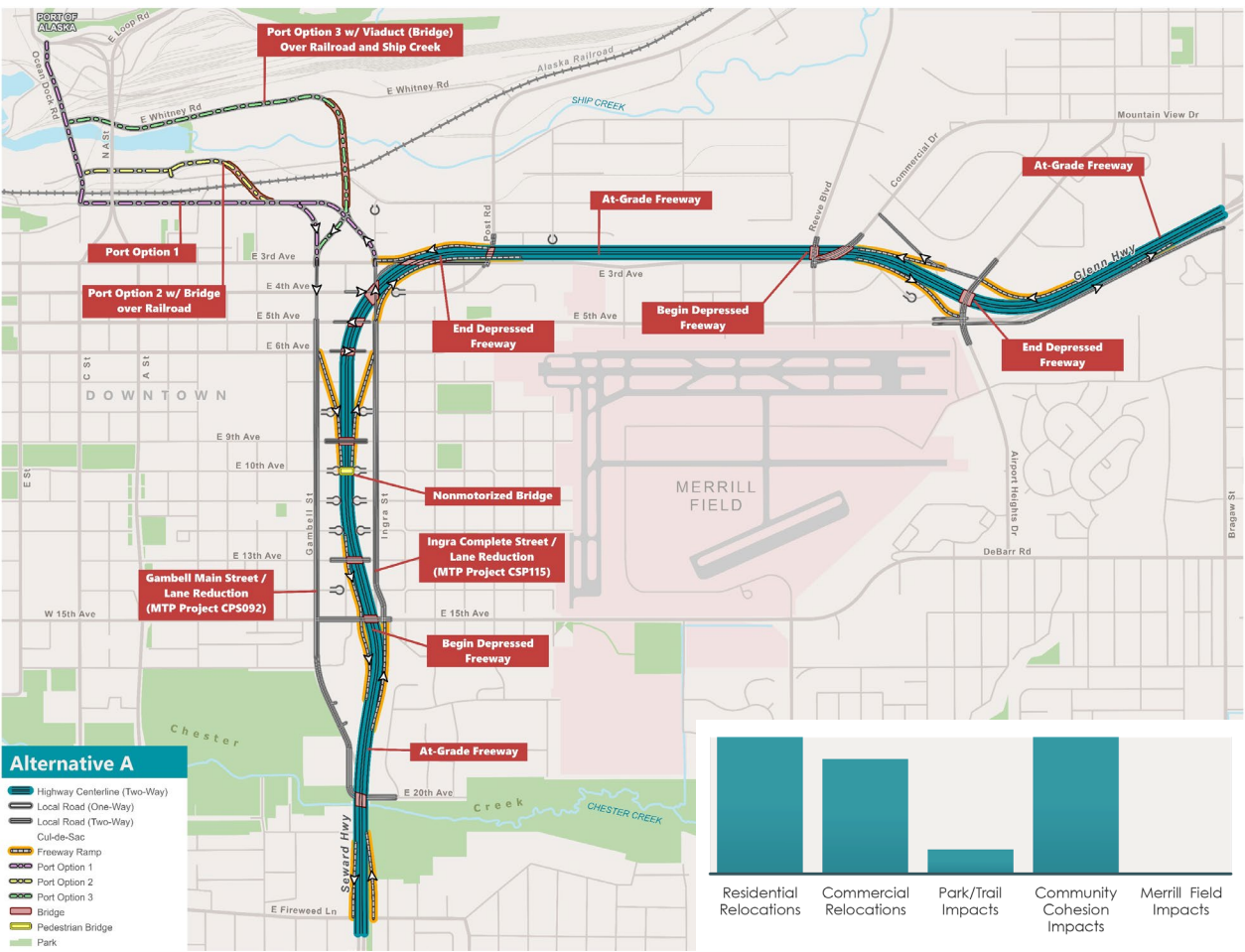


Freeway Connection Preliminary Alternatives

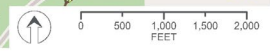
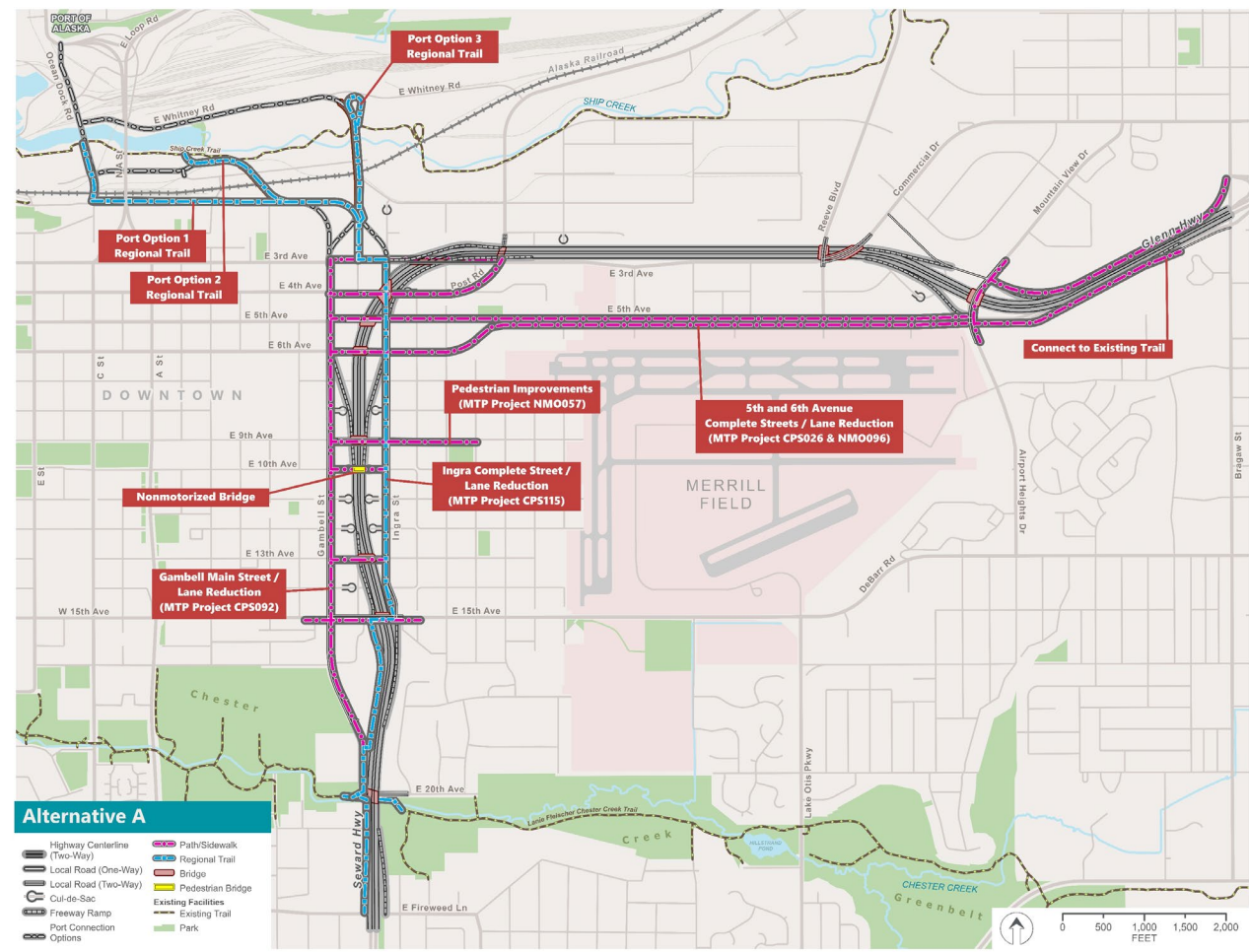


Alt A: Hyder St to along 3rd Ave

Motorized

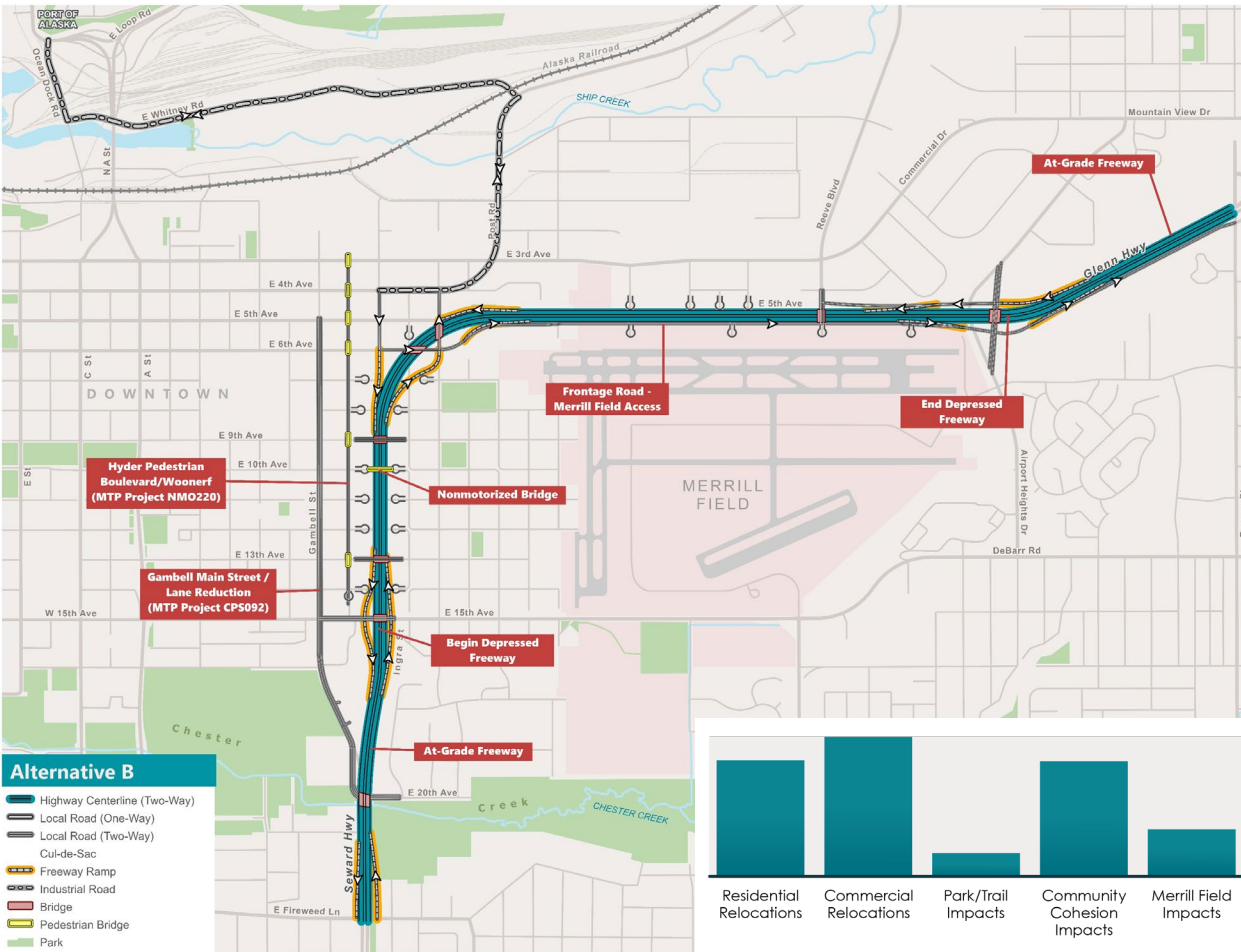


Non-Motorized

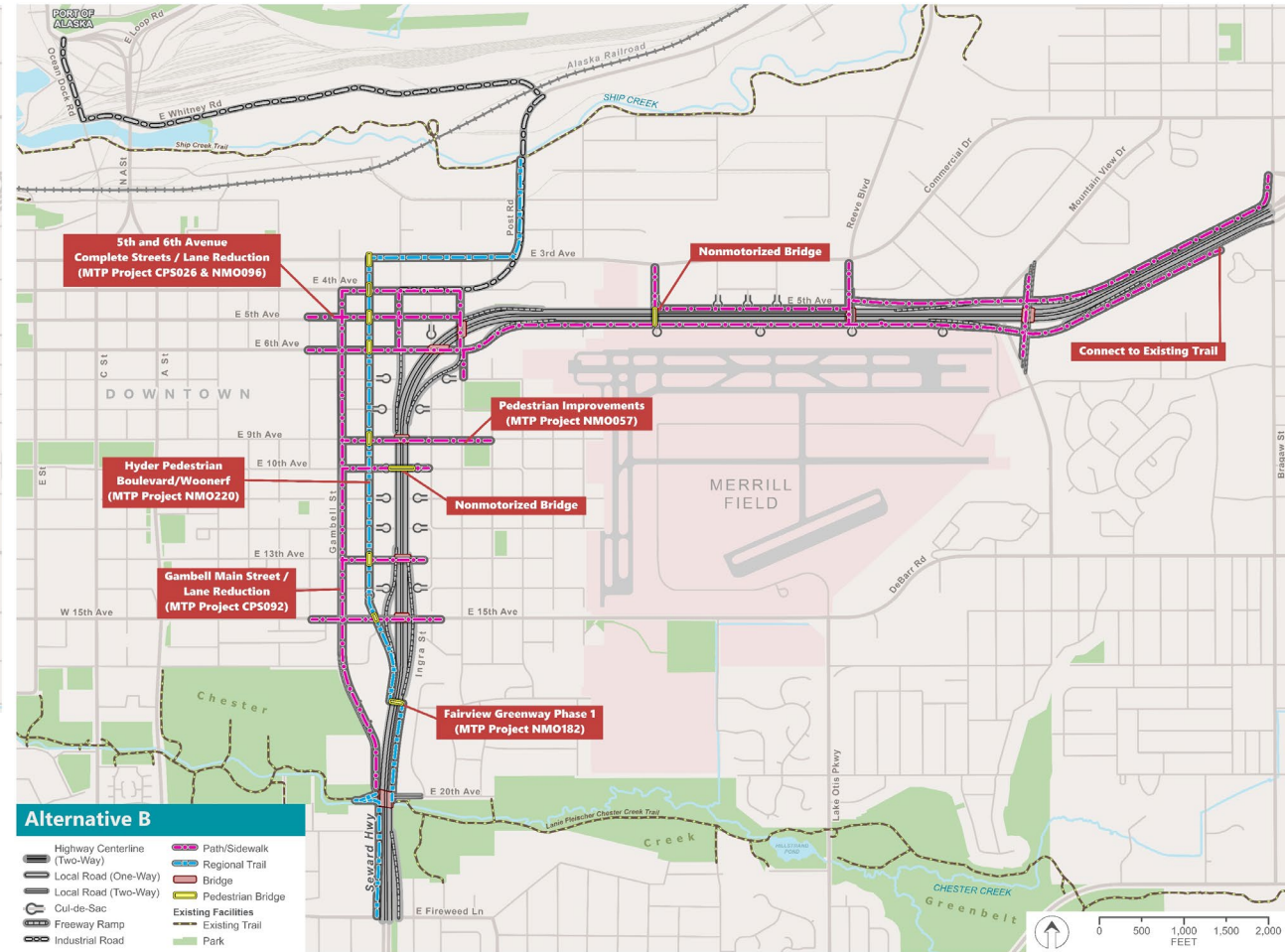


Alt B: Ingra St to 5th Ave

Motorized



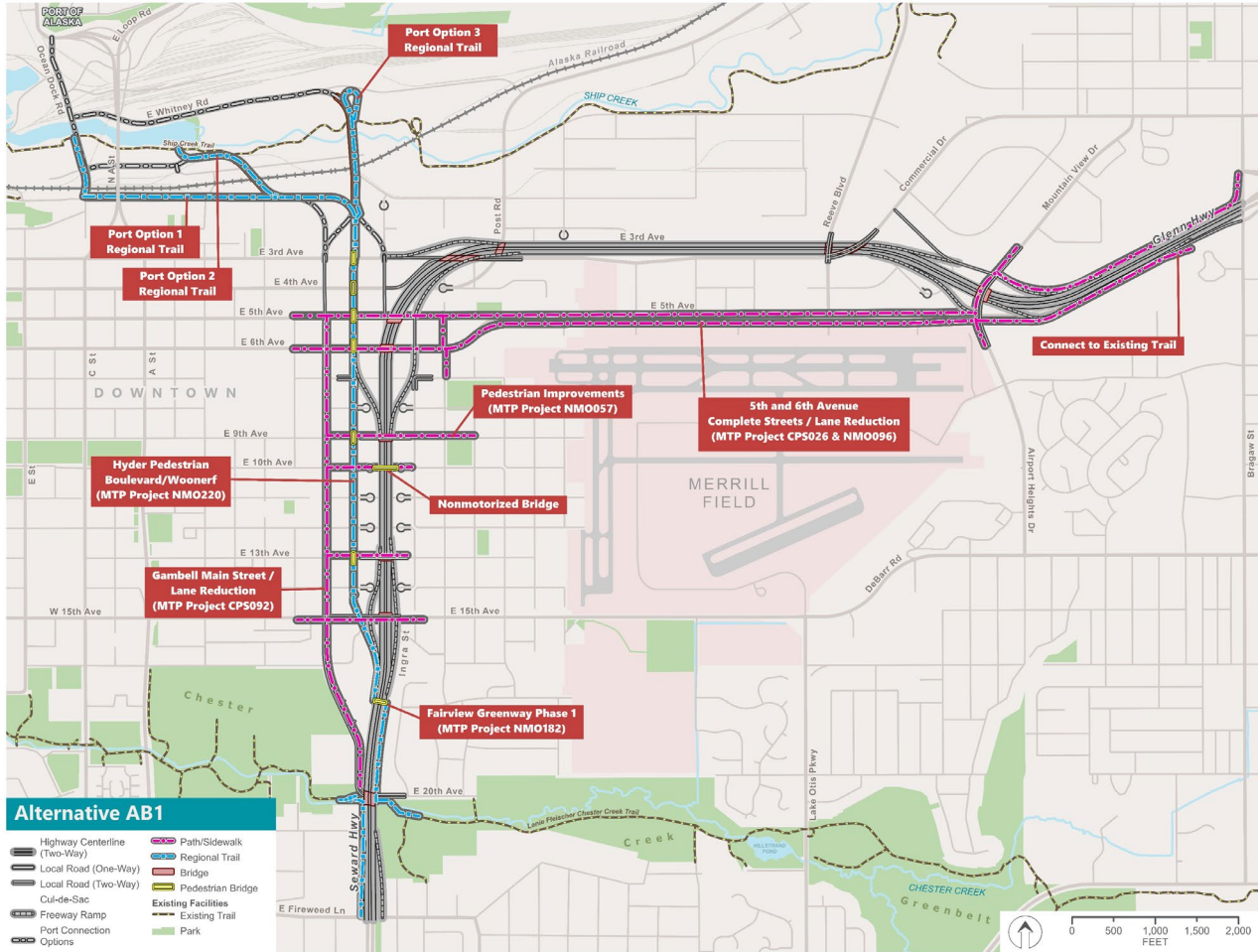
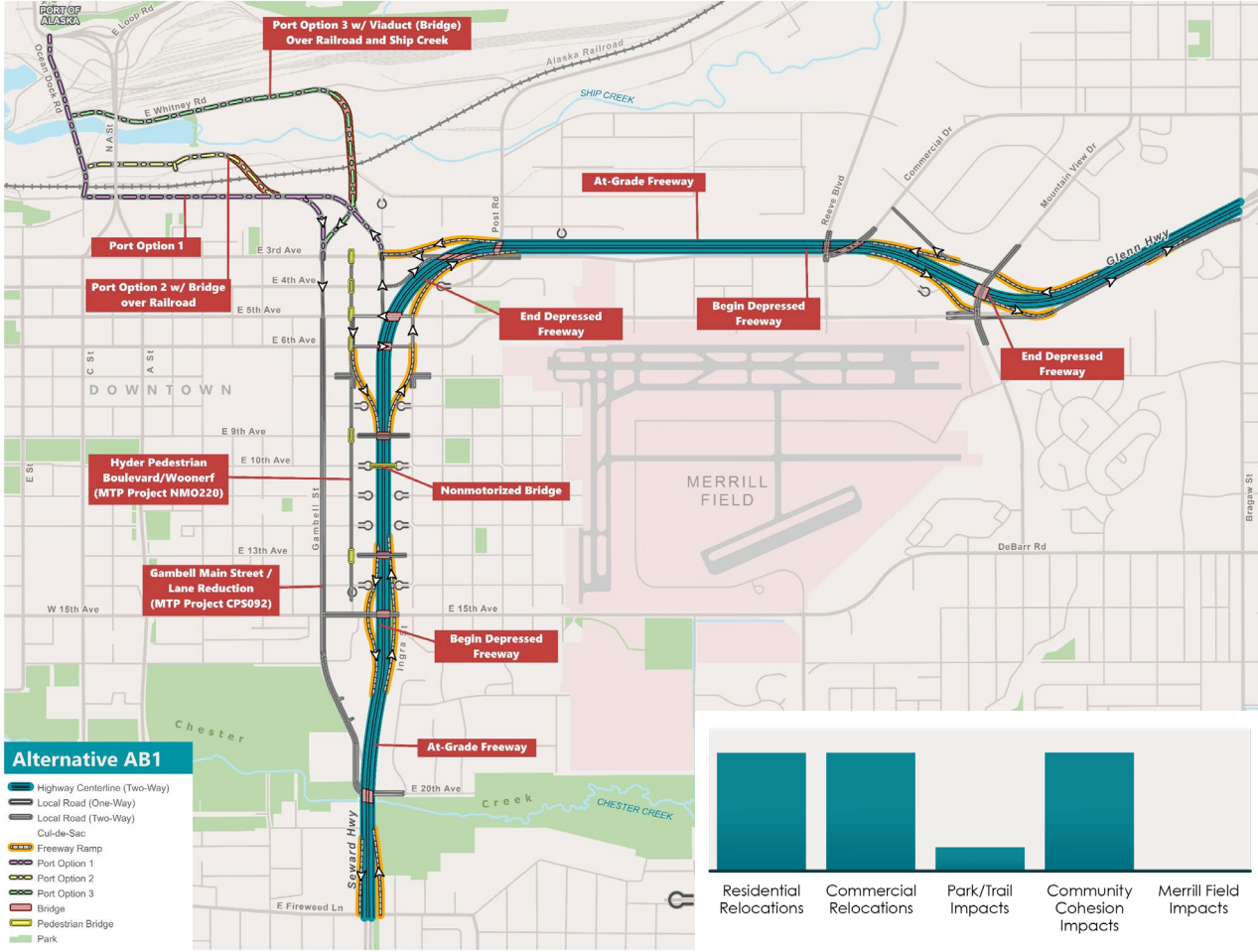
Non-Motorized



Alt AB1: Ingra St to 3rd Ave (v1)

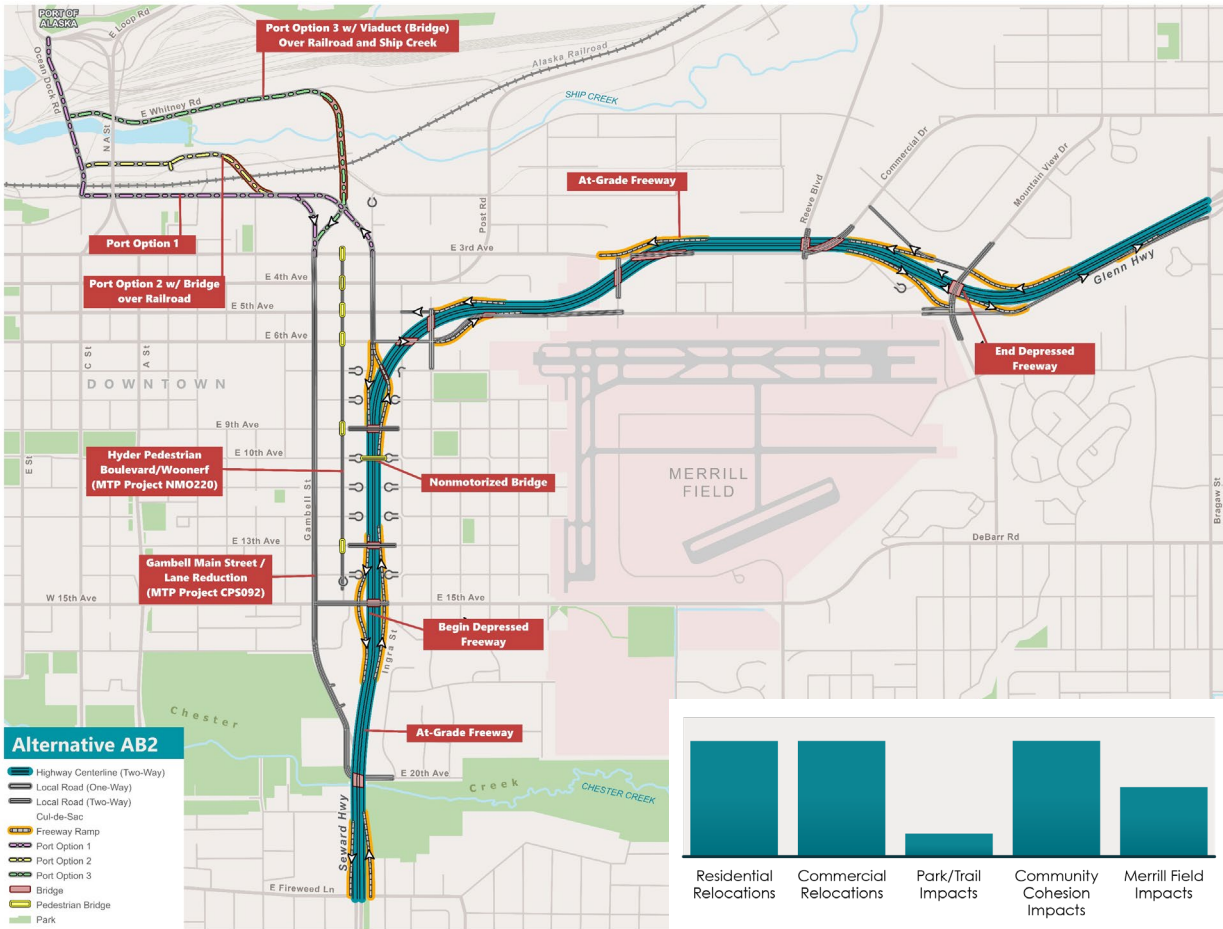
Motorized

Non-Motorized

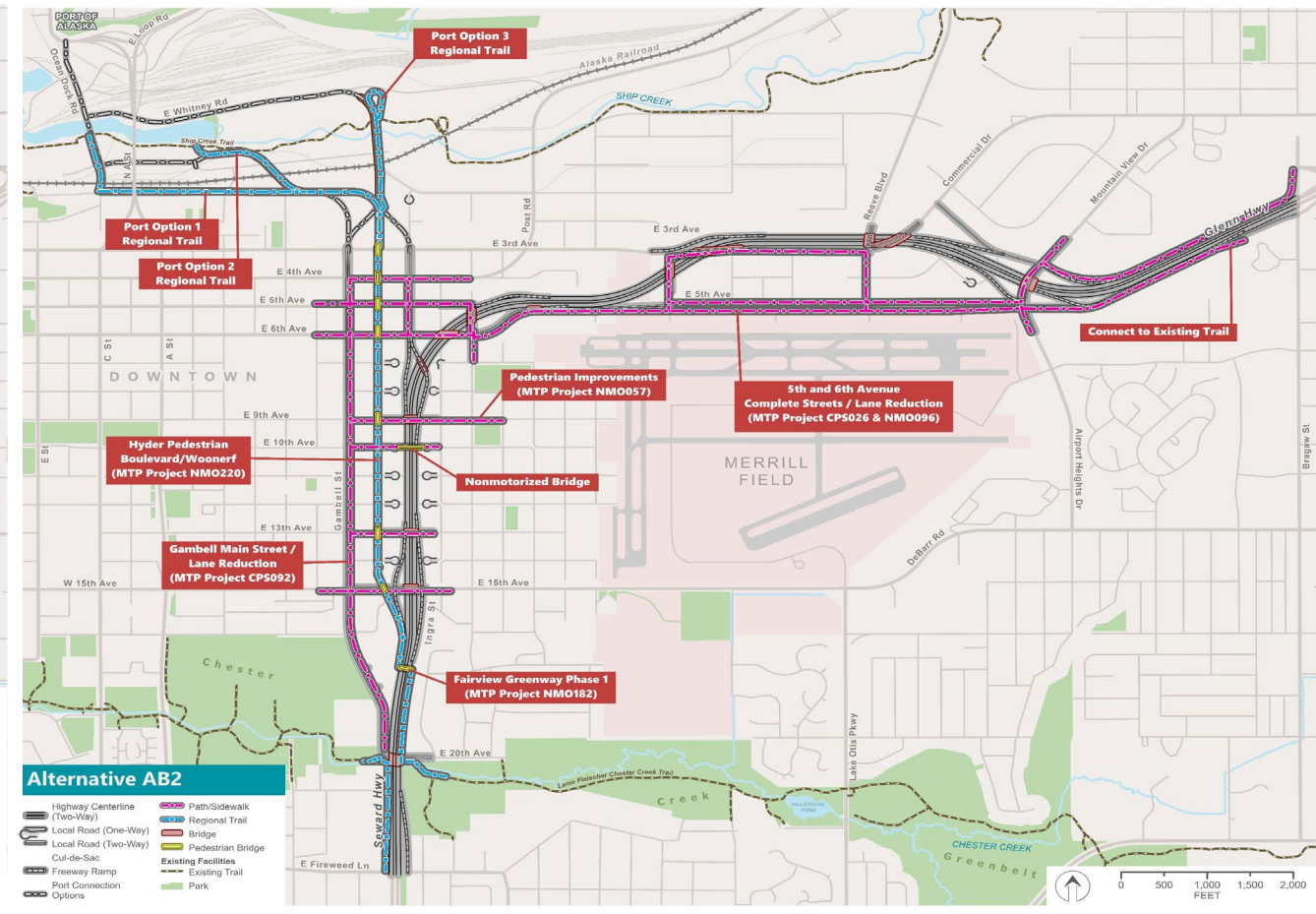


Alt AB2: Ingra St to 3rd Ave (v2)

Motorized

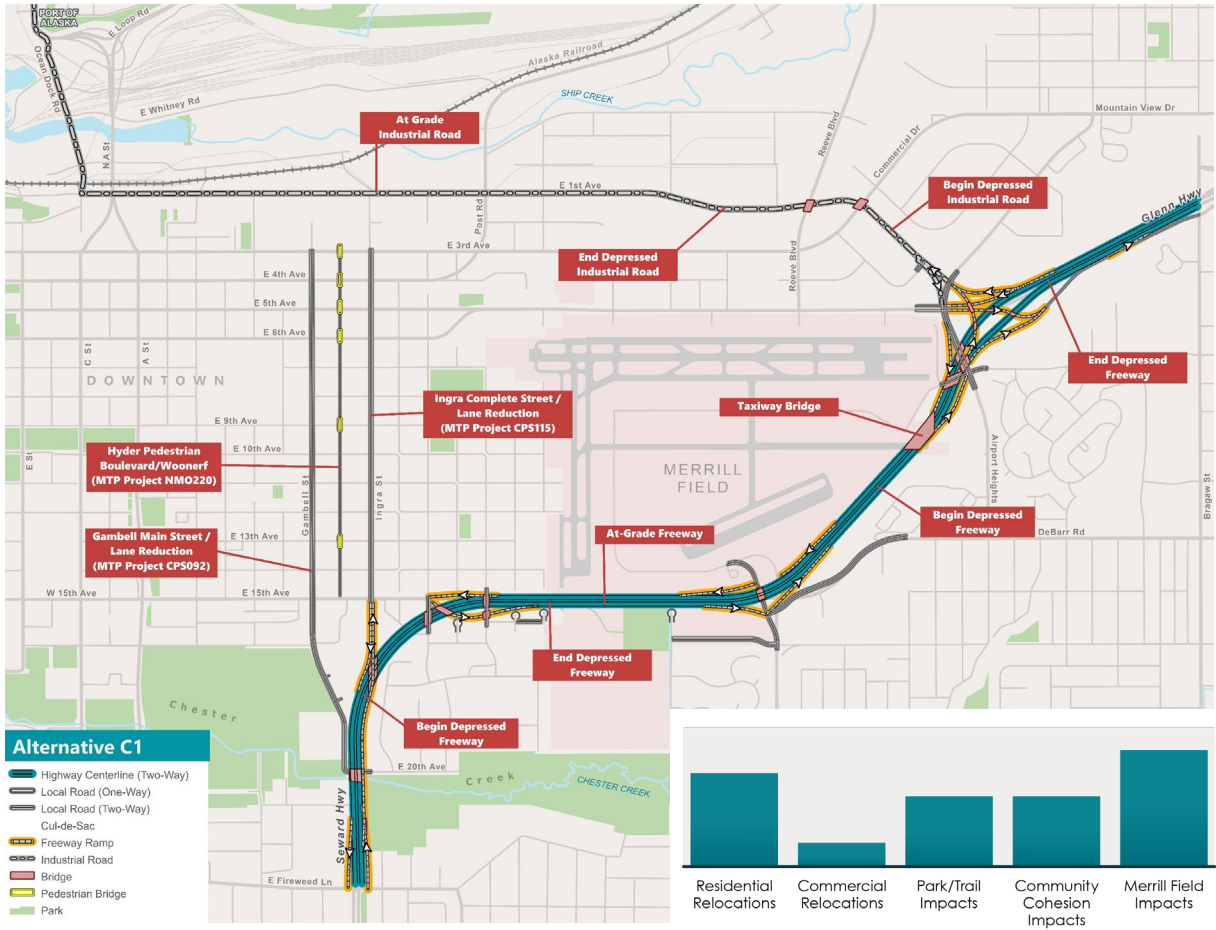


Non-Motorized

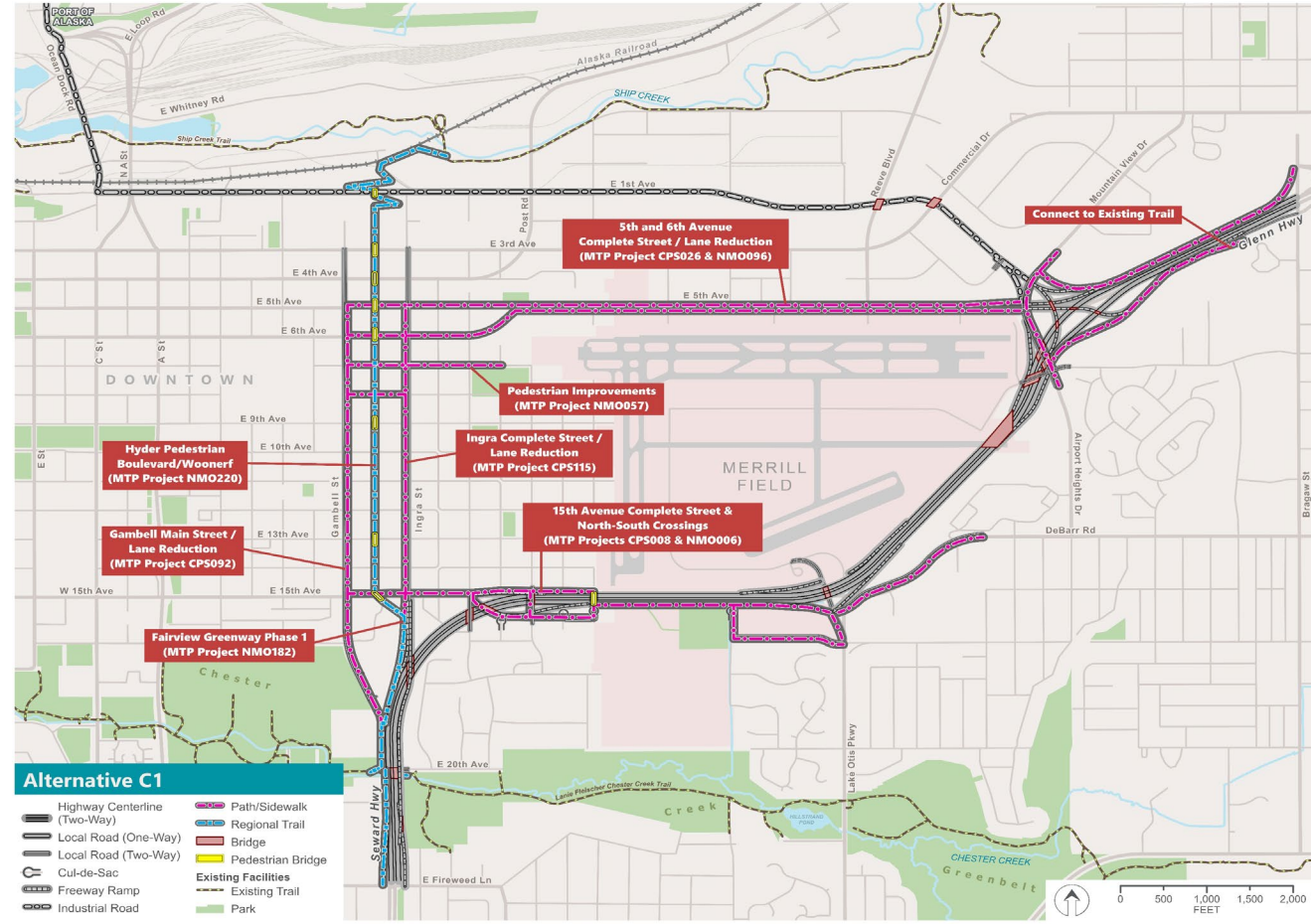


Alt C1: 15th Ave Bypass (v1)

Motorized

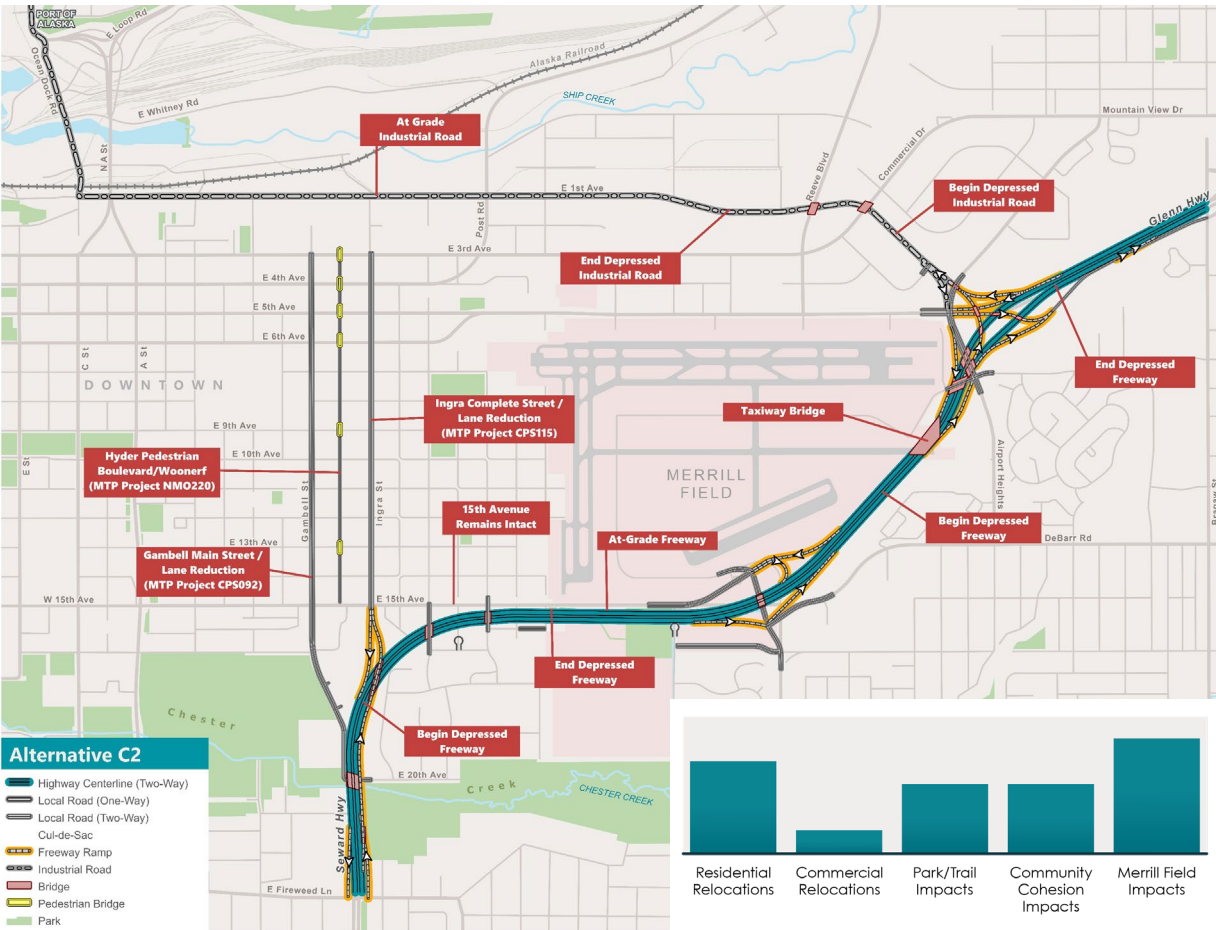


Non-Motorized

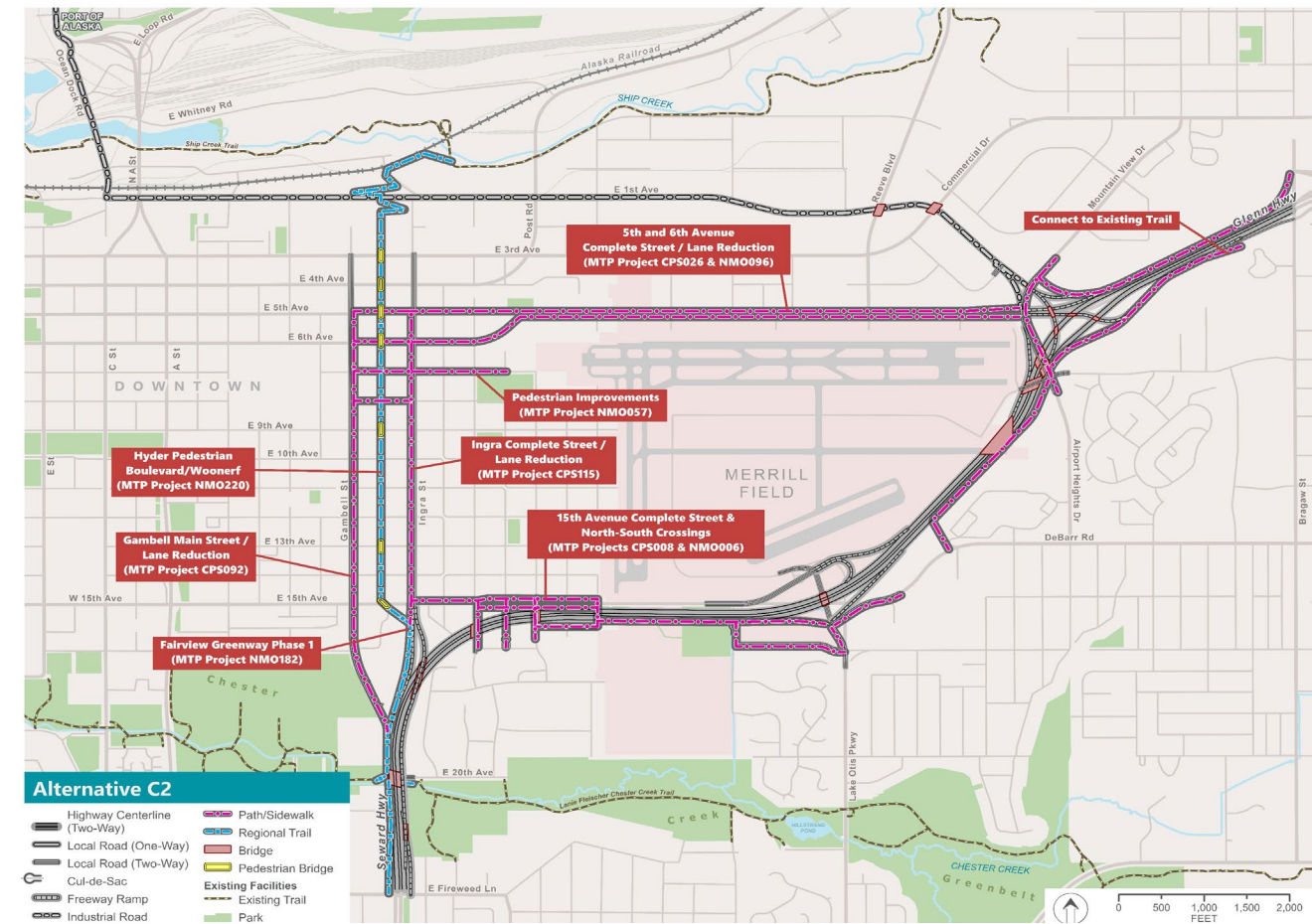


Alt C2: 15th Ave Bypass (v2)

Motorized

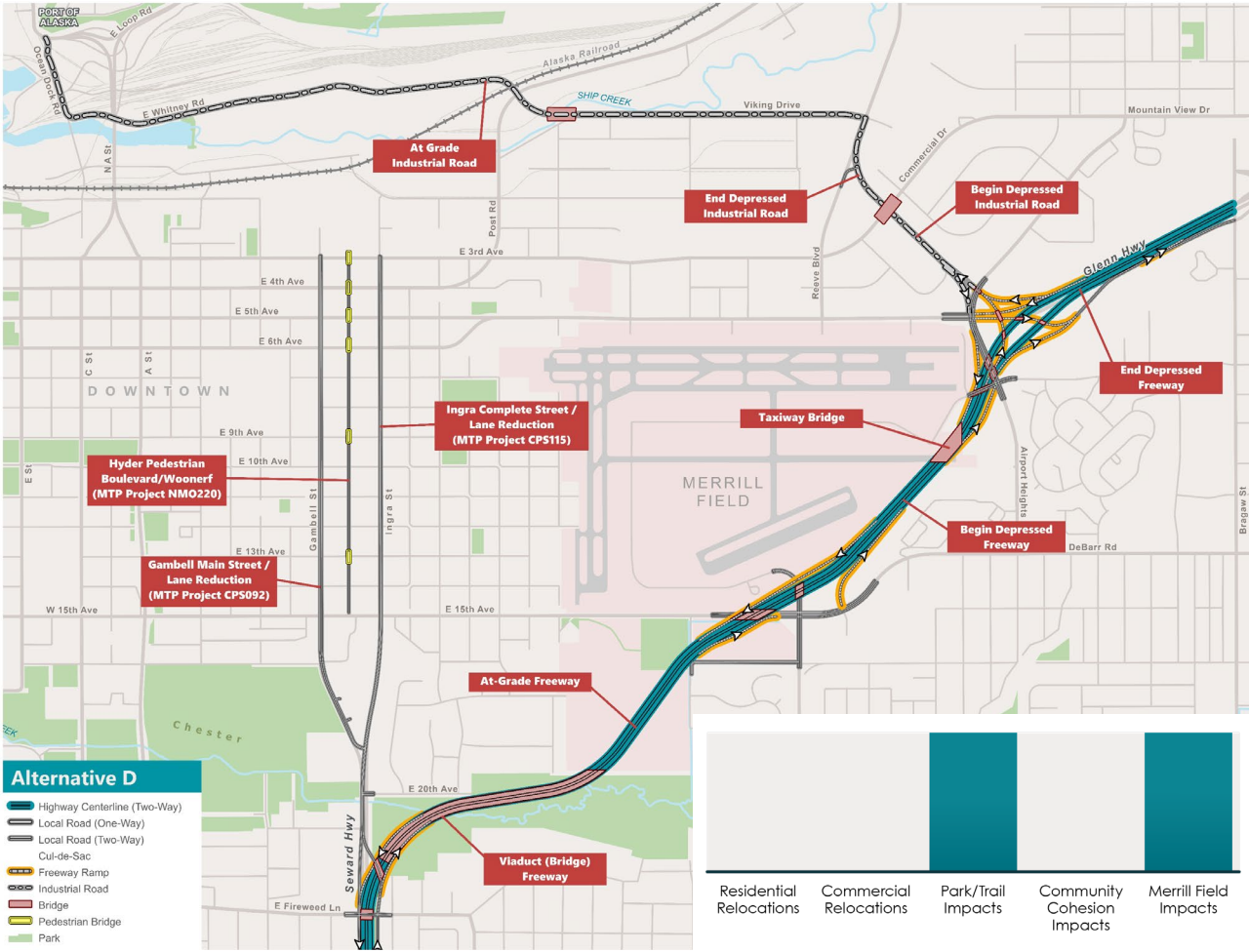


Non-Motorized

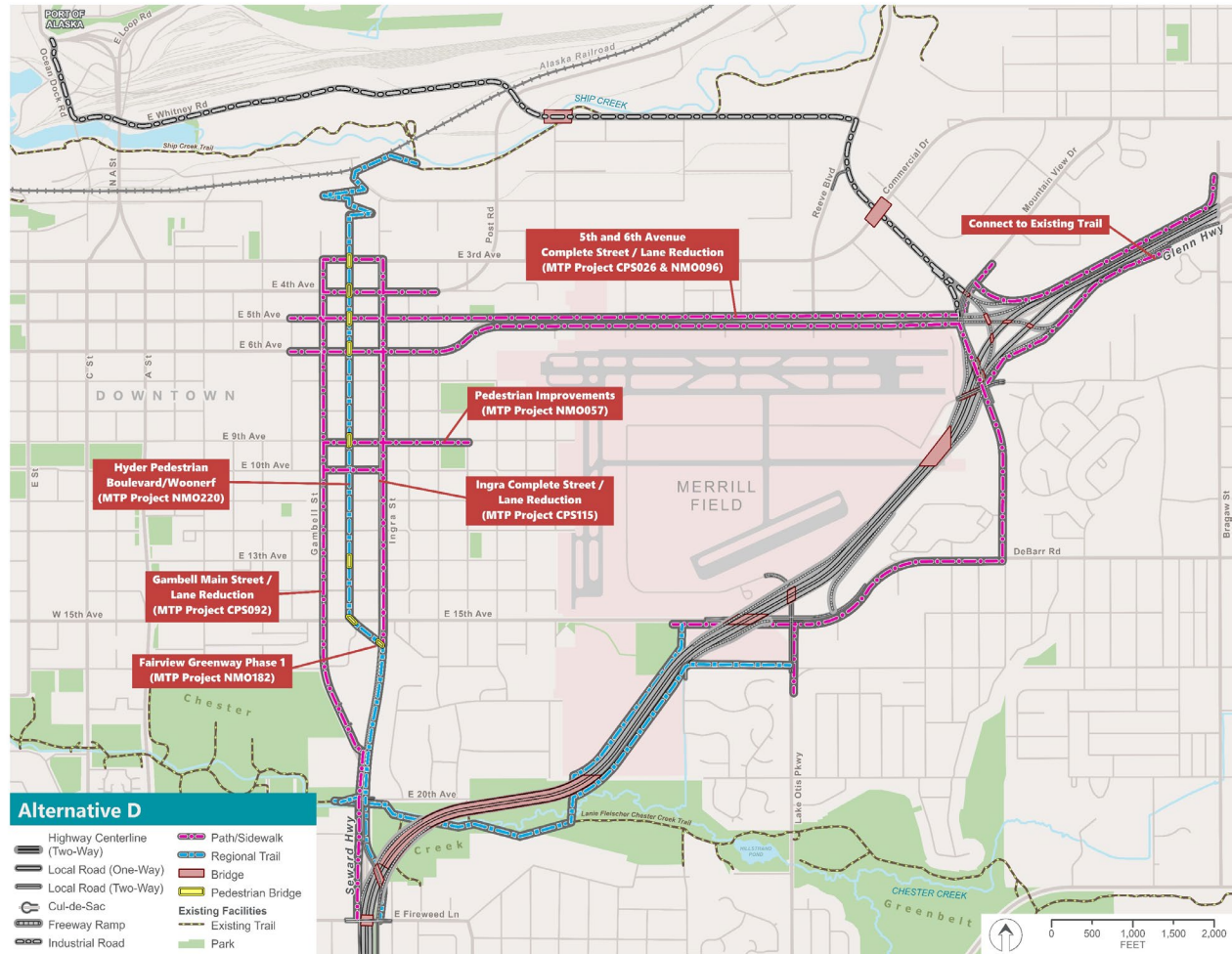


Alt D: Eastchester Bypass

Motorized



Non-Motorized



Backup Slides

We want your input!



PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

February 7, 2024 –
April 7, 2024

60 DAYS



VISIT OUR ONLINE OPEN HOUSE AND COMMENT USING THE INTERACTIVE MAP

*Draft Alts and Ped Study Reports Available Online



ONLINE *

sewardglennconnection.com

BY EMAIL

info@sewardglennconnection.com

BY PHONE

(907) 206-2289

PEL Process: What's next?!

Draft Timeline

- **April 7 = Official public comment period ends**
 - PLEASE COMMENT. Your comments matter!
- **April-May = Alts impacts analysis & screening**
- **May-June = Key stakeholder workshop(s)**
 - Share traffic modeling and proposed refinements to preliminary alternatives based on public comment and get input
- **May-July = Detailed alternatives development**
- **July = Public open house #5 & public comment**
 - Share which alternatives screen out and which (likely 1-3) move forward based on modeling & feedback/screening results
- **Aug-Oct = Final alternatives refinement**
 - Development of document to finalize recommendations
 - Alternative recommendation delivered in Oct.

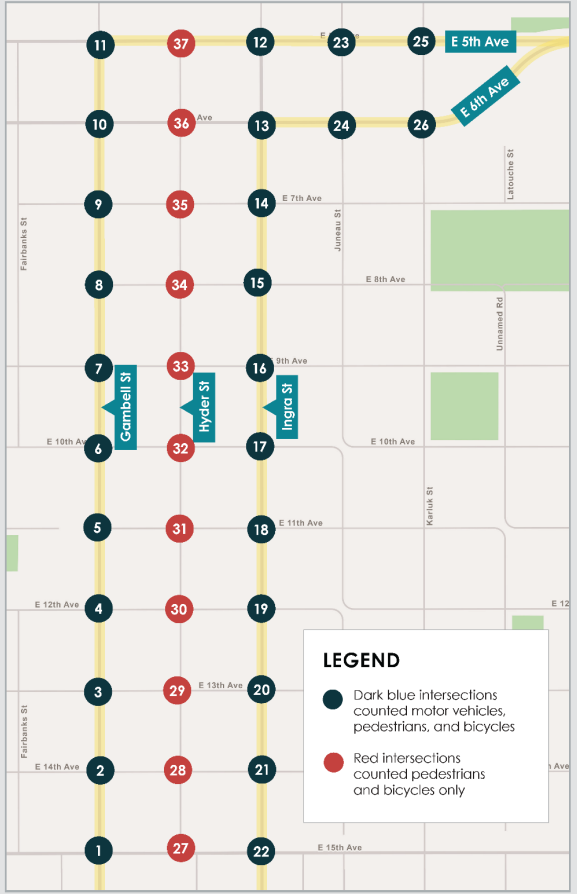



- **October = Stakeholder workshop(s)**
 - Discuss phasing, mitigations, & refinements
- **Oct-Nov = Construction phasing & funding plan**
- **December = Draft PEL Development**
- **January '25 = Public open house #6 & public comment**
 - Solicit public input on draft PEL recommendations, project phasing, and implementation plan
- **Jan-Apr '25 = Agency and committees review**
 - Finalizing the PEL
- **April '25 = Final PEL released**





Pedestrian and Bicycle Study

Pedestrian and Bicycle Count Locations



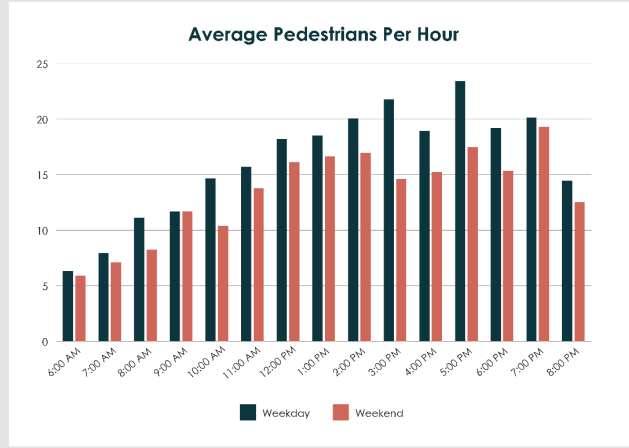
 First attempt besides annual "bike to work day" to comprehensively count pedestrians and bicyclists

 37 locations studied, including mid-block street crossings (between intersections)


 Counts were done using digital video cameras

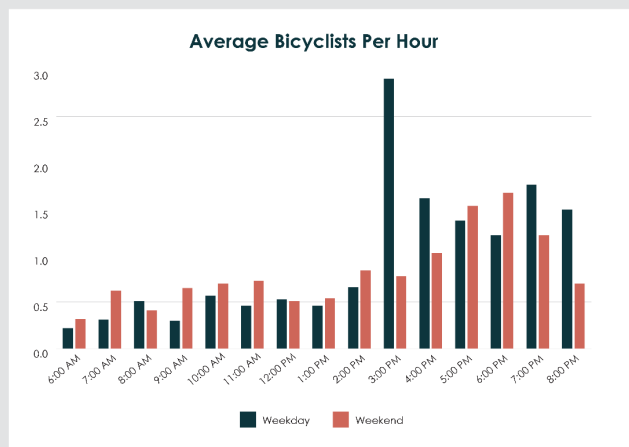
 Data was collected during two weekdays and one weekend day, between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m., while schools were in session and prior to the onset of winter

Average Activity Per Hour



 Pedestrian and bicycle activity was generally highest in the afternoon and early evening

 Pedestrian activity was generally higher on weekdays than on the weekend



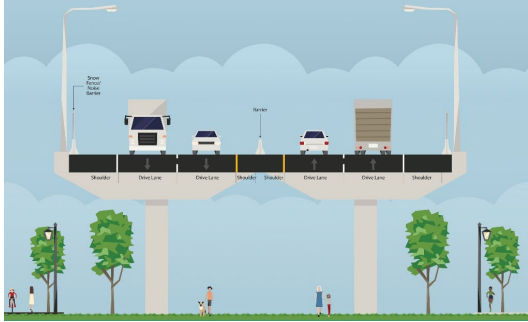
 Pedestrian and bicyclist activity was generally highest on Gambell Street

How is this info being used?

- Inform nonmotorized crossing locations over depressed freeway alternatives
- Alternatives' impacts to existing nonmotorized activity
- Verify existing nonmotorized crash patterns to inform design decisions
- Set baseline conditions for modeling future non-motorized conditions for designs

Park Impacts Mitigation Opportunities

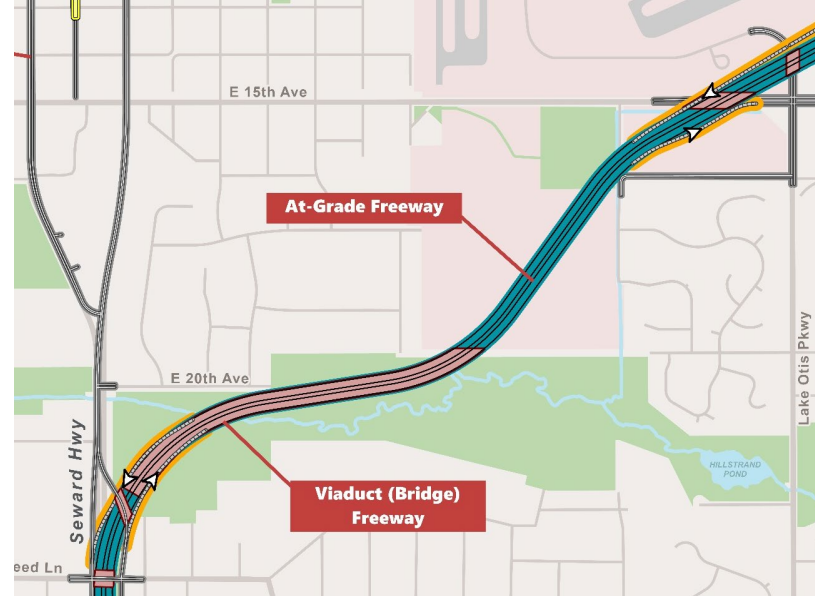
Viaduct w/ Trail Connections



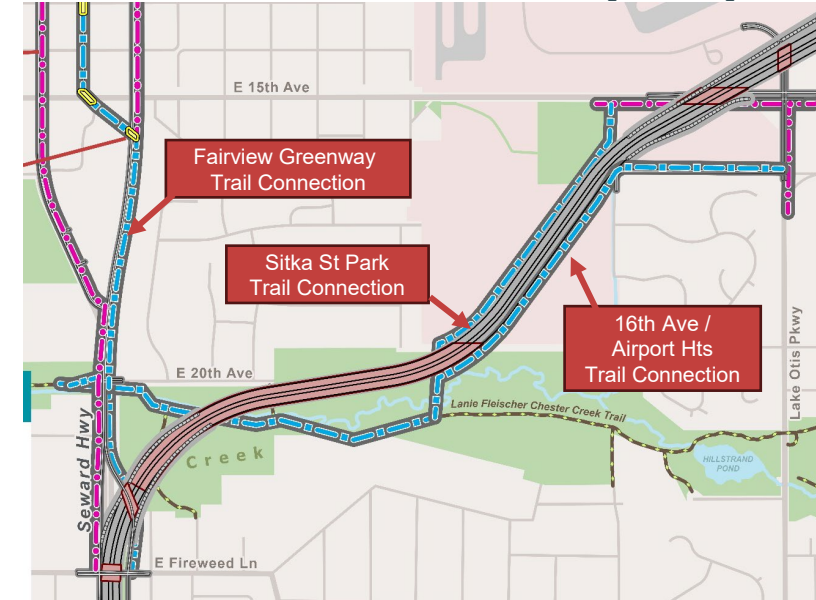
Viaduct Example



Alt D: Motorized (inset)



Alt D: Non-Motorized (inset)



Opportunities/Ideas

- Roadway Noise Barriers (existing and proposed roadways)
- Sitka St Park trail connection
- Fairview Greenway Trail Connection to Ship Creek Trail
- 16th Ave / Airport Hts Trail Connection
- Food trucks, markets, and pop-ups under viaduct
- Recreational parking upgrades under viaduct
- Interpretive signage for historic Eastchester Flats neighborhood
- Woodside Park play area improvements (school age + adults)
- Utility relocations
- 20th Ave traffic calming and access improvements
- Restore Chester Creek to natural settings under Seward Hwy
- Replace pedestrian tunnel with creekside trail crossing under bridge

Balancing Issues and Challenges



Improve safety.



Reduce regional and local travel conflicts.



Consider the needs of all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, and freight).



Maintain National Highway System (regional) functionality.



Improve the ability to move safely and efficiently when accessing key destinations.



Port access routing: Improve access between the Port and the highway while also reducing neighborhood impacts.



Livability: Help reconnect the neighborhood (physically and socially) by removing or separating regional and Port traffic from local traffic, improve quality of life, and promote economic development.



Accommodate ideas from adopted plans:

- Gambell Main Street Redevelopment
- Ingra Greenway Supportive Development Corridor
- Improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Reconnecting Communities Grant (forthcoming)



Solutions should consider the needs of all user groups (pedestrians, bicyclists, local and regional vehicles, and freight).