



# McCarthy Road

Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study



## Newsletter Issue #1

November 2023

### McCarthy Road PEL Study is Underway

The Federal Highway Administration—Western Federal Lands (WFL) Highway Division, in partnership with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and the National Park Service (NPS), are working together to conduct a Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) study for the McCarthy Road. This study will provide an opportunity over the next two years to evaluate transportation-related needs and opportunities along the road, identify and evaluate potential improvements, and propose recommendations for future implementation.

#### Why conduct a PEL?

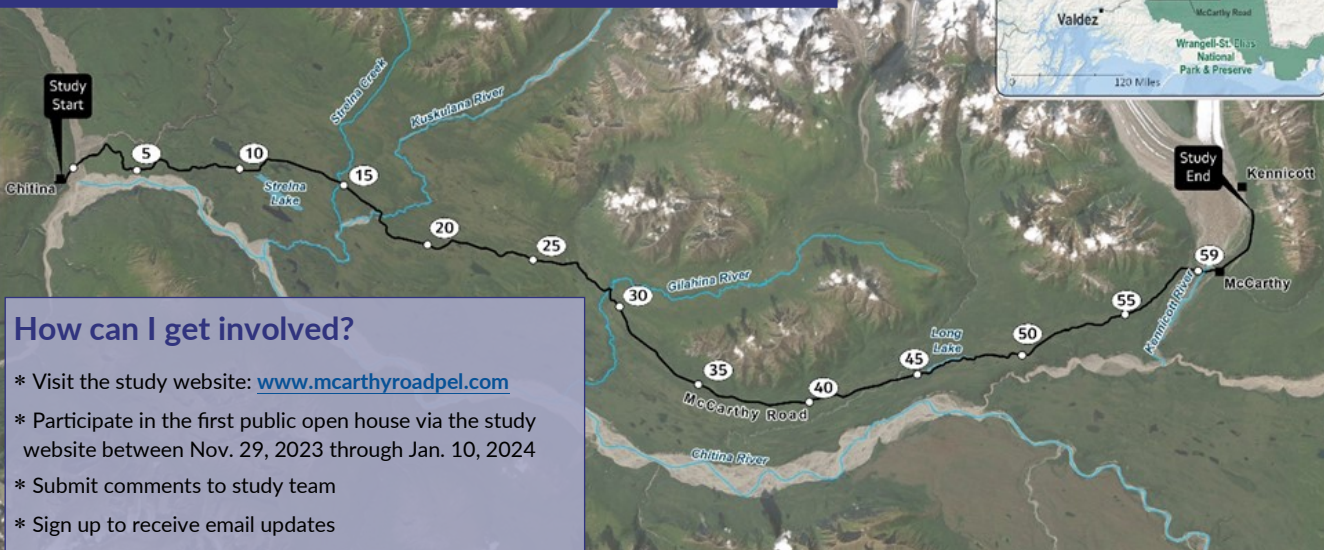
Over the years, local residents and visitors to the road corridor and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve (Park) have provided feedback to DOT&PF and NPS that emphasize the need to evaluate the reliability of access and public safety along the road. The NPS and DOT&PF joined together to obtain funding through WFL's Federal Lands Access Program to prepare this study.

PEL studies provide a flexible framework that encourages decision-makers to incorporate environmental considerations, community, and economic goals early in the transportation planning process. PELs are intended to better link the planning and environmental review phases; therefore, products and decisions made during this PEL study may be incorporated by reference during a future environmental review process.

#### Where are we in the study schedule?

We are in the first phase of the PEL process: assessing needs & opportunities. As a user of the roadway, what areas are important to you? What needs improvement? What do you vision the corridor to be? Are there waysides or trailheads that could be improved? Are there areas where safety is a concern? In the upcoming public open house, the team wants to hear from you. Your input is important. We have the opportunity to identify and prioritize projects for the future that will enhance the road corridor.

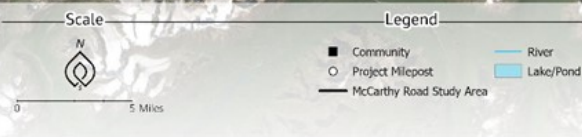
### Tell us what you think the McCarthy Road needs today, and in the future



- #### Corridor Characteristics
- \* 64 mile corridor: Begins east of Chitina. Ends 4 miles east of the Kennicott River crossing (south of the Kennicott Subdivision & National Historic Landmark)
  - \* Key gateway to Parkland, recreation, & wilderness opportunities
  - \* Seasonal (summer) road maintenance
  - \* Rolling terrain
  - \* Seasonal population uptick
  - \* Natural hazards, including landslides & erosion issues

#### How can I get involved?

- \* Visit the study website: [www.mccarthyroadpel.com](http://www.mccarthyroadpel.com)
- \* Participate in the first public open house via the study website between Nov. 29, 2023 through Jan. 10, 2024
- \* Submit comments to study team
- \* Sign up to receive email updates

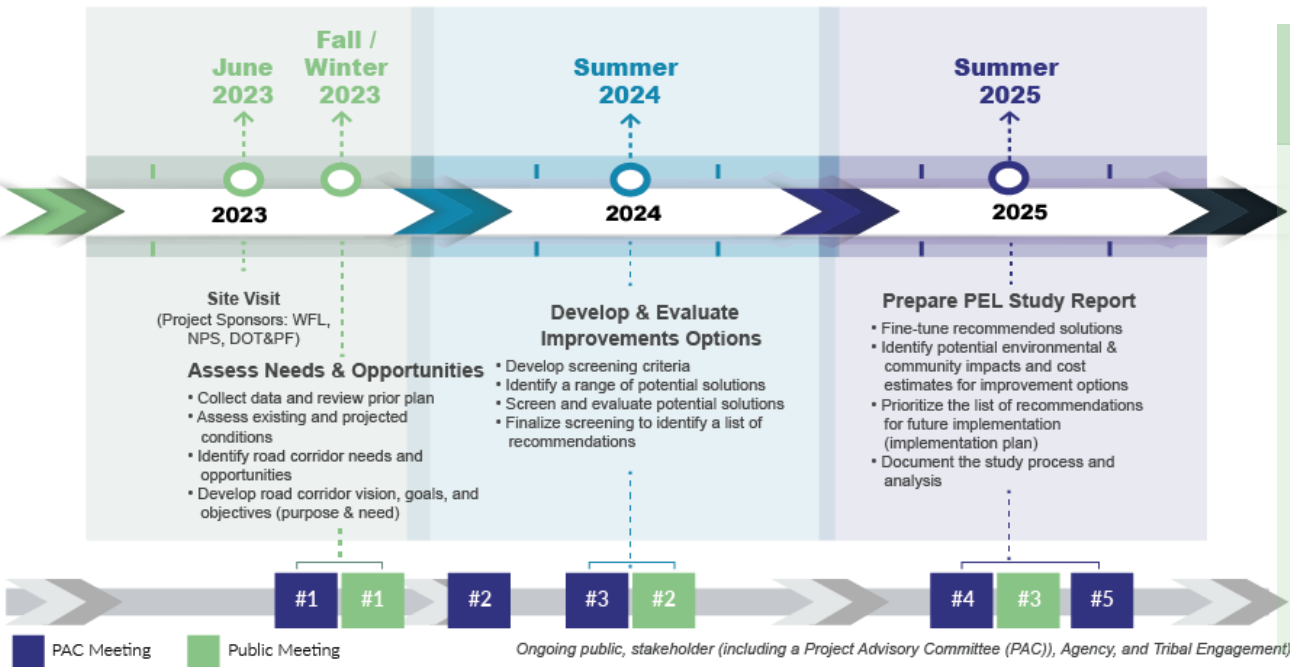


Study Area  
McCarthy Road PEL Study





### PEL Study Process and Key Phases



#### Study Goals and Desired Outcomes

A documented framework that identifies a list of prioritized transportation and access projects along the McCarthy Road and creates a plan for future implementation of those projects.

A process that brings together stakeholders and users of the McCarthy Road to improve communication and build collaboration for identifying transportation and access needs.

We want to hear from you! Public Meetings will be held during three main phases of the study:

- **Meeting #1** - Assessing needs and opportunities  
Online open house: Nov. 29, 2023 through Jan. 10, 2024  
Access via the study website at [www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com](http://www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com)
- **Meeting #2** - Developing & evaluating conceptual improvement options (Chitina/ McCarthy and virtual online open house: Summer 2024)
- **Meeting #3** - Preparing the PEL Study and draft recommendations (Online open house: Spring 2025)

To request accommodations for the in-person meeting, alternative formats for project information, or interpretation, please contact Kim Wetzel at (907) 440-1591 or [kim.wetzel@jacobs.com](mailto:kim.wetzel@jacobs.com).

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*This PEL Study is in partnership with Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities and National Park Service.*