



Subject: Public Meeting #2 (Identifying Potential Solutions) Summary
Project Name: McCarthy Road Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study
Notes by: Jacobs
Location: Online and in-person in Glennallen, Chitina and McCarthy, Alaska
Dates: Online: July 25 to August 25, 2024; In-person: July 30 and 31, 2024

1. Public Meeting #2 Summary Overview

The McCarthy Road Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study began in 2023. The team leading the PEL Study consists of the Federal Highway Administration Western Federal Lands (WLF) Highway Division, Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), and the National Park Service (NPS). This document summarizes the series of in-person public open houses and second online open house (Public Meeting 2). This is the second of three public meetings series planned for the PEL study.

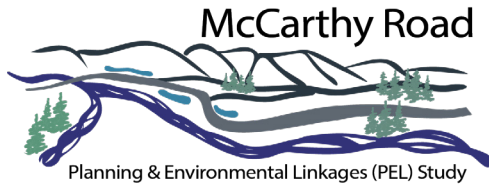
Online Open House: The team held an [Online Open House](#) that ran from July 25 to August 25, 2024. The purpose of the online open house was to present initial potential solutions for improvements currently under consideration for the PEL (based on the first online open house feedback), seek input on identified focus areas and suggested enhancements, and identify public priorities. The online open house was set-up using ESRI StoryMaps software, which weaves project narrative with multimedia content that includes maps, photos, and comment/survey fields. This format was used so that public comment could be solicited in multiple ways. The site also contained a set of survey poll questions to solicit additional public comment.

In-person Public Open Houses: The study team held in-person open houses in Glenallen and Chitina on July 30 and in McCarthy on July 31.

Public Comments: The public submitted comments via several methods during Public Meeting #2. This included through the online open house, emails sent directly to the study team, and at the in-person open houses either verbally or in writing via hard copy comment forms or sticky notes on a large map. These are listed verbatim in Section 3, **Attachment C**, and **Attachment E**.

Contents: This summary includes the following:

- Section 1: Summary overview
- Section 2: Overall attendance and participation
- Section 3: Online open house: survey and poll results
- Section 4: Outreach tools and techniques
- Section 5: Public comment themes
- Attachment A: Main project website (screenshots)
- Attachment B: Online open House website (screenshots)
- Attachment C: In-person public open house materials (poster boards, meeting summaries, public comments, sign-in sheets)
- Attachment D: Advertising and social media content (examples)
- Attachment E: Other public comments verbatim



2. Overall Attendance and Participation

2.1 Project Website

The public accessed the online open house through a link on the top of the main project website (www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com), which will remain accessible throughout the duration of the PEL study process. The project website was revamped July 25 since its launch in November 2023. A total of 1,800 unique users visited the website from inception up until the launch of the second online open house. There were 828 unique visitors to the project website from July 25 to August 25, 2024. Screenshots of the main project website are provided in **Attachment A**.

The public can submit names to the mailing list from the main project website at any time during the PEL study process. An additional 51 people were added to the study mailing list based on requests from the project website, online open house, and in-person meetings during the Public Meeting #2 timeframe. While the online open house was available, the opportunity to comment from the main project website was disabled.

2.2 Online Open House

The [Online Open House](#) was available from July 25 to August 25, 2024. During this period, there were 295 views of the open house website by 203 unique visitors. **Attachment B** provide screenshots of the online open house website.

The quantity of public comments submitted during the online open house was high considering the remoteness of the study corridor and low number of year-round populations and road traffic volumes. However, the volume of participation was slightly lower than received during the initial open house as part of Public Meeting #1 (325 views) because some people may have attended the in-person meetings instead.

2.3 In-Person Public Open Houses

Open house style public meetings were held in the following three communities:

- Glennallen: July 30 from 9 to 11am; Location: Copper River School District Conference Room
- Chitina: July 30 from 6 to 8pm; Location: Chitina Community Hall
- McCarthy: July 30 from 6 to 8pm; Location: EMS Hall

The presentation materials (8 poster boards), three meeting summaries, and sign-in sheets from the meetings are provided in **Attachment C**.



McCarthy Road PEL Study
Public Meeting #2 Summary
July to August 2024

The following photos were taken during the in-person open houses.



Glennallen Public Meeting (July 30, 2024)



Glennallen Public Meeting (July 30, 2024)



Chitina Public Meeting (July 30, 2024)



Chitina Public Meeting (July 30, 2024)



McCarthy Public Meeting (July 31, 2024)



McCarthy Public Meeting (July 31, 2024)



3. Online Open House: Survey and Poll Results

The online open house contained several simple polls and questions about priorities intended to solicit more detailed responses. Approximately 35 people took one or more of the polls and surveys. The verbatim poll responses are provided in **Attachment D**.

3.1 Focus Areas and Enhancements (Visitor, Recreation, and Environmental)

Question: Please order the Focus Areas in order of your priority.

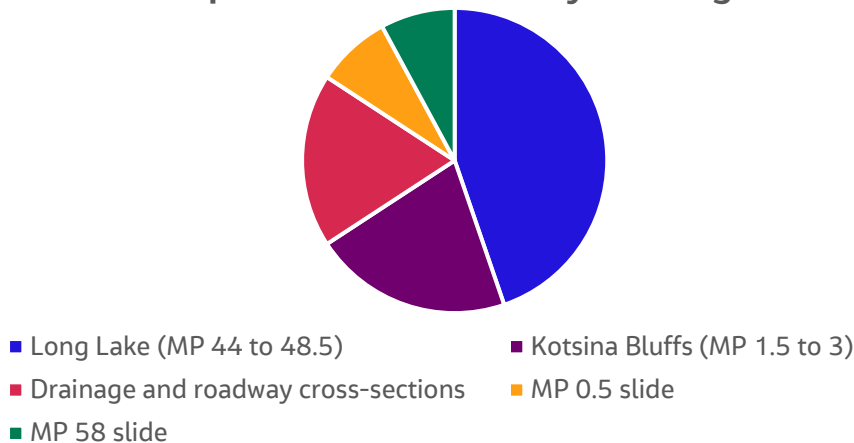
The following ten focus areas were listed for ranking to gain an understanding of what improvements the public would like prioritized.

- Drainage and roadway cross-section improvements throughout the corridor (specific locations to be determined)
- MP 0.5 slide
- Kotsina Bluffs (MP 1.5 to 3)
- Gilahina Bridge (MP 29)
- MP 35 slide
- Long Lake (MP 44 to 48.5)
- MP 58 slide
- Kennicott River Bridge crossing (MP 59.3)
- Swimming hole vicinity (MP 59.5)
- Slide south of Kennicott Subdivision

The top 5 highest-ranking responses are shown in the following figure and list.

- Long Lake (MP 44 to 48.5)
- Kotsina Bluffs (MP 1.5 to 3)
- Drainage and roadway cross-sections
- MP 0.5 slide
- MP 58 slide

Top 5 Focus Area Priority Ranking





Question: Do you agree with these suggested VISITOR Enhancements? Do you have other ideas? Tell us what visitor enhancements you would like to see prioritized?

The list of suggested visitor enhancements came from the public during Public Meeting #1 and includes pullouts, parking areas, and signage. Overall, there was support for various visitor enhancements if there is a balance between preserving area character and ensuring sustainable development.

Responses to this question included the following:

- The road definitely needs work and you guys have gotten a great overview of the major concerns. I am for all of the updates barring the potential of a vehicle bridge across the Kennecott river. I think tourist vehicle access to this community is not something we are remotely prepared for. Adjusting the bridge to better facilitate peds and atvs is a good idea but should not be taken further than that.
- Hiking and biking trails offset significantly away from the DOT roadway.
- I would like to see public recreation at Long Lake.
- The Long Lake bypass will create a much improved visitor recreation opportunity so brushing rather than any visitor enhancements is best.
- Parking should be the only solo prioritized enhancements. Visitor enhancements would naturally arise incidental to improvements such as parking at swim hole, the Long Lake reroute, and a vehicle bridge with parking below Kennicott.
 - Blackburn Heritage Foundation has identified suitable land for parking between the airstrip and the Kennicott Subdivision. A deal could be worked with the state to either acquire this property or the Foundation would be willing to clear it for parking as long as the state maintained plowing/grading up to it. This would resolve summer and winter parking issues that congest the area by the museum. This would support evacuation needs as well.
 - Access limitations create vehicle congestion. A 2 lane vehicle bridge separate from the pedestrian bridge is the only feasible long term solution. Limiting access creates vehicular congestion, which has been greatly improved by the ATV bridge and the Rowland bridge. Prior to those, we had to have vehicles on both sides.
- Winter parking In vicinity of Kennicott bridge and museum.
- outhouses and trash collection; pullout at Clear Creek for water collection.
- Generally yes
- Agree
- Agree
- Many of these enhancements sound good. I suspect that there will not be enough funding to do all of them, but I'm not ready to prioritize them in detail.
- Enhancements are good. Renaming the road to Wrangell St Elias Park Highway would increase funding opportunities with name recognition.
- Yes
- NO. The swimming hole has plenty of current parking. If there's not room to park, take a shuttle, walk or ride your bike.
- Yes. trash at mile 1.1.
- Mile 17 doesn't need 'more' parking. Just tidy up what currently exists.



- You can enhance visitor experience by KEEPING access across the Kennicott River to current PEDESTRIAN/ATV limit with service bridge option. Creating public vehicle access would devastate the character of the Kennicott Valley and communities and have severe negative impacts. This would be a very destructive change - and even re-opening the debate would unnecessarily return the community to a painful and divisive controversy. Just fix what is needed for safety - the approach and decking - and whatever else is needed, but don't create problems that don't currently exist. There is a current harmony. Let it remain.
- yes, in general I agree with these enhancements
- The Long Lake project is the most significant improvement that could be done to the road.
- I would be good to see more parking as to keep the roadways clear. A lot of vehicles have a tendency to stop on the Copper River Bridge for no apparent reason and endanger other drivers.

Question Do you agree with these suggested RECREATION ACCESS Enhancements? Do you have other ideas? Tell us what recreation access enhancements you would like to see be prioritized?

The list of suggested recreation access enhancements came from the public during Public Meeting #1 and includes ideas and opportunities to access lakes, rivers, and trails throughout the road corridor. Public sentiment was generally supportive of the suggested recreational enhancements if they were not directly adjacent to the road, did not cause undue environmental harm, and did not take away funding for needed safety improvements. Several comments suggested focusing on safety and maintenance improvements over enhancements.

Responses to this question included the following:

- There are only a few days a year that parking is an issue at all at the swimming hole. This should be very low priority.
- Money is much better spent on road improvements such as drainage and ditching than on trails. Especially if you re-route the road by Long Lake since that will create a fun place for visitors to stop off
- Recreational enhancements will be created as you install parking near the swim hole and re-route Long Lake, which are safety improvements.
- Safety and maintenance need to be more of a priority than spending more funds on other recreation for now. As needs grow, and once safety and road reliability are resolved, they can be added independent of safety improvements.
- Yes
- I favor site-specific improvements. A full length separated trail is not realistic. Since you have identified a separated trail from the Kennicott River to the McCarthy turnoff, please add an alternative to add a separated trail to Kennecott as there are MANY more bikes, pedestrians, vans and 4-wheelers on that short stretch than on the main part of the McCarthy Road.
- I agree with some but not all.
- I am okay with most of these. There are better places to put recreation trails than along the road side.
- Yes, in general I support these recreation enhancements.
- I strongly think that a pedestrian/bike trail that is off the road way should be created from Mike 59, at the NPS McCarthy Road Information Station to the Kennicott river, across the footbridge and to the junction of McCarthy and then on to the airstrip (utilizing the old wagon road in that zone)



- The proposed trail at long lake if the road is re-routed is the type recreation access we need. An area to park that is not vulnerable to the risk and dust of through traffic is essential for any serious recreation opportunities. I do however strongly disagree with the proposed public access to long lake. It is home a sensitive salmon habitat and would NOT benefit in any way from increased public access. There are plenty of lakes with public access along the corridor that do not have such environmental concerns.
- Long Lake should not be opened to the public as it is a salmon spawning ground. Along with the salmon, there is a large bear and coyote population that subsist on the salmon. Making for higher probability of animal encounters.

Question: Do you have ideas for other ENVIRONMENTAL Enhancements in the corridor? Please share your ideas.

This question received the least public comment. There was agreement on the recommendations of the Copper River Watershed Project to replace culverts and support to improve water quality. Responses to this question included the following:

- The Copper River Watershed Project has correctly identified passage areas that are in need of work. Please follow their lead and make any installed culverts fish friendly (where applicable).
- I completely agree that fish passage needs to be prioritized when replacing culverts. The watershed team has done a great job.
- Protecting water quality from vehicle traffic pollutants in vicinity of clear creek.
- Improved fish passage
- All good

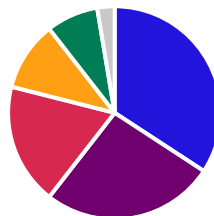
3.2 Additional Poll Results

Additional polls were offered in the online open house to collect data about the respondents and confirm the comments and findings from the first online open house.

Question: What is your CONNECTION to the McCarthy Road corridor (choose all that apply)

This poll question was intended to understand the respondent’s connection to the road corridor. Top responses came from corridor year-round residents and property owners, similar to the respondents in the first online open house. Respondents could choose more than one option.

Connection to McCarthy Road



- Live year-round
- Live seasonally
- Work in corridor
- Property owner
- Visit frequently to hunt or fish
- Live or work in Copper Valley

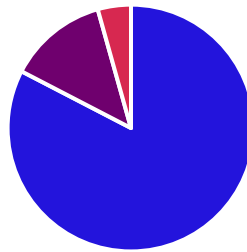


Question: Based on input from the Project Advisory Committee and stakeholders during the first public online open house, this is how GOALS for the corridor were ranked from highest to lowest. Do you agree?

- Improve safety (highest)
- Improve road / infrastructure conditions (maintenance)
- Maintain intrinsic values of corridor (scenic, visual, natural, rural)
- Improve road reliability (resiliency)
- Promote environmental stewardship
- Enhance access and supporting land uses in corridor
- Accommodate multiple modes of travel
- Promote economic vitality (lowest)

Twenty-two respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the order of how corridor goals have been ranked; only one respondent disagreed.

Corridor Goals Rankings List



■ Agree ■ Strongly agree ■ Disagree

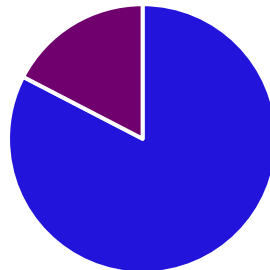
Respondents provided the following comments in response to the prompt "let me explain my selection":

- Move "Maintain intrinsic value...." down below "Promote environmental stewardship" and then this ranking is solid.
- Move "Maintain intrinsic values" down in the ranking below "Promote environmental stewardship"
- I mostly agree. In that I don't see a need for the lower ones at all.
- I do not support changes in land uses within the corridor.
- I would move the "intrinsic values" up to the # 2 spot.
- Improvements to non-motorized means of access and public shuttle services should be the highest priorities for areas east of the Kennicott River.

Question: During the first public online open house, we found most people want the McCarthy Road corridor to remain similar with a few amenities. Do you agree?

Nineteen respondents agreed the road should remain relatively similar with a few amenities.

McCarthy Road should remain similar with a few amenities



■ Agree ■ Disagree

Respondents provided the following comments in response to the prompt “let me explain my selection”:

- I believe funding is best used to maintain the road and repair damaged sections.
- Replace the word amenities with safety improvements and you've got it.
- Replace the word amenities with safety improvements
- A gravel road costs less to maintain. The high float surface that went into the Kuskulana predictably started frost heaving and breaking immediately and those heaves and potholes are way worse than gravel ones. A few more gradings a year, brushing for safer visibility more often, and dealing with the current problem spots would be ideal. That already is a lot considering the bluff sluff over the Kotsina and the mud slump near the McCarthy end (mile 58 or so?). Long lake area could use some widening and drainage like the excellent work that was done at the Chokosna bluff- that was really effective. That section used to get pretty scary sometimes in the winter and it's great now. I don't see a need for more amenities.
- I do NOT want the road to be paved as I think that this would increase speed and danger to all corridor users. I do think that focusing on improvements to some problem areas of the road is wise.
- I do NOT think that there should be a vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River. McCarthy and Kennicott do not have the infrastructure to accommodate an influx of vehicles. In fact they don't really have infrastructure for the current number of vehicles on the east side of the Kennicott.
- Basic maintenance to allow access is fine, but also results in increased vehicle speed. This jeopardizes safety.
- I do not want a public vehicle bridge into McCarthy. I believe the town would struggle to deal with the increased number of vehicles.
- I own a home at mile 56.5. I want the road to stay slow 20-30mph. This year I saw many flipped vehicles, more so than any other year. they are coming to a national park so it makes the most sense that the road is designed to slow things down, respect the wildlife and keep it safe.
- I am in support of improving the McCarthy Road but opposed to constructing a public vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River. We simply don't have the infrastructure on the East side of the river to accommodate additional cars--there's nowhere to park, turn around, or pull over safely in most places. Adding parking and the additional cars will impact what makes the area unique and attractive for tourists. It will be congested, dusty, and will have negative impacts on the community.



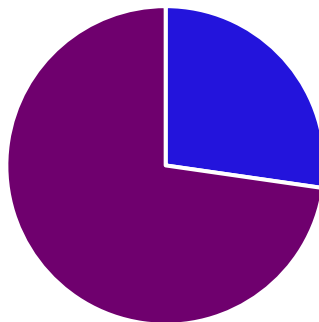
- I think the road could use improvement, but should retain the gravel. A few more pullouts, view spots, regular brushing of the brush and trees.
- I believe that there is room for improvement beyond a few amenities for the McCarthy Road. Adequate drainage throughout the length of the corridor, improved visibility with brush cutting, and rerouting portions of the road through sensitive habitats are more serious propositions. Safety and fish passage are my biggest concerns.
- would like to see a new corridor that goes around long lake
- I do not want the road widened- it would be unsafe if traffic could travel faster. There should not be a public vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River.
- I want to see better drainage and culverts to prevent water crossing the road in the summers and glacier formation in the winter. Along with more permanent fixes to the potholes and washboard that surfaces in the summer when there is longer rainy periods
- Additional brushing for improved sight distance and blind corner warning signage would be helpful for increased safety. Construction of a public vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River should be removed from consideration. There are many reasons that construction of such a bridge would create immediate and uncontrollable negative effects on the McCarthy and Kennecott communities. The question of ownership of the streets of the McCarthy Townsite are currently being litigated in Alaska Superior court. Now is not the time to consider making an already complicated even more complicated by opening up McCarthy to every driver who visits the area. There is no management oversight of the streets of McCarthy and construction of a public vehicle bridge would create a parking nightmare in McCarthy and ruin the character of the town.

Question: Based on the vision and goals of past studies and plans of the McCarthy Road, the following CORRIDOR VISION STATEMENT was written for Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study.

"To provide a safe roadway and reliable access for residents and travelers on the McCarthy Road that embraces the scenic and cultural values of the surrounding environment and communities."

All respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the identified corridor vision statement.

Corridor Vision Statement



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree



Respondents provided the following comments in response to the prompt “let me explain my selection”:

- The safety of the drivers being able to access their National Park is my biggest concern and the first three road reroutes need to be addressed first.
- Yes. This is very broad so it could be interpreted many ways. As long as it is interpreted to mean "don't change much, just fix the problem spots and maintain it reliably" then I agree.
- Strongly opposed to public use vehicle bridge
- The McCarthy Road should be maintained so that people can travel safely, but not at high speeds. It should continue to be a gravel road
- Improving safety is universally supported. The cultural value of supporting a quieter, pedestrian preferred experience for the McCarthy Townsite and Kennecott should be paramount for planning decisions regarding areas east of the Kennicott River.

4. Outreach Tools and Techniques

The high volume of public interest is due to the strong and vibrant communities and communication network of the communities along the corridor. **Attachment D** contains a sampling of the methods used to reach the public.

Emails were transmitted to those included in the PEL study contact list to keep them updated on the PEL Study progress and invite them to the online open house and in-person meetings. The PEL study team and Project Advisory Committee (PAC) members reported forwarding these emails to their constituents.

A State of Alaska public online notice ran on July 29, 2024.

Other updates were provided via the MAC listserv, social media posts by the partner agencies, and the What's up nonprofit listserv.

The KCHU radio station ran a public service announcement.

The Copper River Record ran newspaper advertisements.

Posters were mailed to volunteers in Chitina, McCarthy, and community facilities in Glennallen. They were posted on bulletin boards in community gathering places like the post office/mail shack, community centers, and stores.

Representative poster locations are shown in the following photos.



Glennallen Visitor Center



Native Village of Chitina Community Hall



Kennecott River Bridge Phone Booth



Kennecott Mine Recreation Hall

5. Public Comment Results

Public comments were submitted via the following methods during Public Meeting #2:

- online open house
 - Focus Area and Enhancement Polls (refer to verbatim comments in Section 3 earlier)
 - “Get Engaged” general online comment submission section (**Attachment E**)
- emails sent directly to the study team (**Attachment E**)
- in-person open houses
 - verbal comments written down by study team members (**Attachment E**)
 - hard copy version of comment forms (**Attachment E**)
 - sticky notes on a large map (refer to **Attachment C** for verbatim comments in bulleted lists as well as captured in photos)



Attachment E contains the remainder of the public comments that have not been presented in other sections of this summary or in the other attachments.

The proposed improvement options presented during Public Meeting #2 generated substantive public and stakeholder interest and comment, highlighting a range of priorities as well as concerns. Comments generally reflect the public's desire to balance infrastructure improvements with maintaining the unique character of the area and environmental preservation. For example, one major issue is the potential solution to construct a public vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River, which many commented on would lead to increased traffic, congestion, and a loss of the area's unique character. Other comments submitted focused on priority areas such as Long Lake, Kotsina Bluffs and MP 58.

Topics receiving the most comments included the following:

- **Kennicott River Bridge:** Many commentors strongly opposed the potential option to construct a public vehicle bridge. Related top concerns included increased traffic, lack of infrastructure (e.g., parking) to accommodate the influx of vehicles, and the impacts to the area's unique character. Other commentors favored retaining the existing bridge crossing set-up (e.g., pedestrian/ATV bridge and a private bridge) and improving the pedestrian/ATV bridge condition.
- **Long Lake:** Many commentors favored a reroute of the road near Long Lake, which would enable recreation enhancements. However, others were concerned about increased recreation access and environmental impacts to Long Lake.
- **Drainage and Roadway Cross-sections:** Public comment suggested strong support for improving drainage and roadway cross-sections. Landslides as well as road glaciers were common concerns mentioned to address.
- **Safety Improvements:** Comments highlighted the need for safety improvements, which included the need for better signage, addressing narrow road widths, and regular road maintenance. Some commentors suggested increasing year-round maintenance to include winter rather than prioritizing new improvements. Others recognized the financial constraint of DOT&PF's maintenance budget. The trade-offs between improved road condition and a tendency to increase vehicle speeds was also a concern.
- **Fish Passage:** Comments also highlighted the desire to ensure new culverts allow for fish passage.
- **Visitor Enhancements:** Public comment suggested general support for these types of enhancements, but in the context of balancing those improvements and preserving the area's natural and cultural values. Others commented on the desire to first focus on safety-related issues rather than making additional enhancements.



McCarthy Road PEL Study
Public Meeting #2 Summary
July to August 2024

Attachment A: Main Project Website Screenshots

Welcome!

McCarthy Road Planning And Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study

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 corridor study along the McCarthy Road.

Thank you for taking the time to visit the McCarthy Road Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study website. This study will identify transportation-related improvements for the McCarthy Road corridor. This could include improvements related to road condition and drainage issues,

hazards such as landslides, and bridges and culverts. Enhancements related to visitor and recreation access will also be considered. The study corridor extends 60 miles from the eastern end of Chitina to the Kennicott River, and another four miles to the southern end of the Kennicott subdivision.

Be a part of the study!

We are hosting in-person public open houses to share information related to potential solutions under consideration during this phase of the study.

Glennallen

Tuesday, July 30
9 to 11am
School District Office

Chitina

Tuesday, July 30
6 to 8pm
Chitina Community Hall

McCarthy

Wednesday, July 31
6 to 8pm
McCarthy EMS Hall

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE ONLINE OPEN HOUSE FROM JULY 25 To AUGUST 25.](#)



About

Over the years, residents and visitors have provided feedback that calls for the need to improve the reliability of access and public safety along the McCarthy Road Corridor. In response, the Federal Highway Administration - Western Federal Lands (WFL) Highway Division partnered with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and the National Park Service (NPS) to prepare the McCarthy Road PEL study. The study is funded through the Federal Lands Access Program.



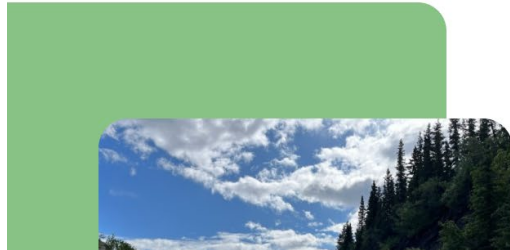
McCarthy study team and community meet-and-greet in June 2023



Chitina study team and community meet-and-greet in June 2023

The PEL framework encourages decision-makers to incorporate environmental considerations, community, and economic goals early in the transportation planning process. Through a PEL process, this study will:

- ✓ Explore existing opportunities along the McCarthy Road
- ✓ Identify and evaluate potential transportation and access improvements; and
- ✓ Propose recommendations for future improvement projects.



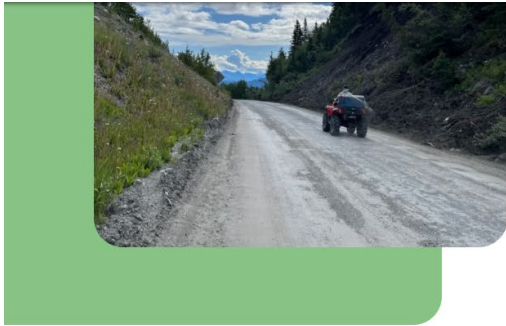
The McCarthy Road PEL study will have two outcomes:



A framework that identifies prioritized transportation-related projects along the McCarthy Road, and a plan to complete those projects.

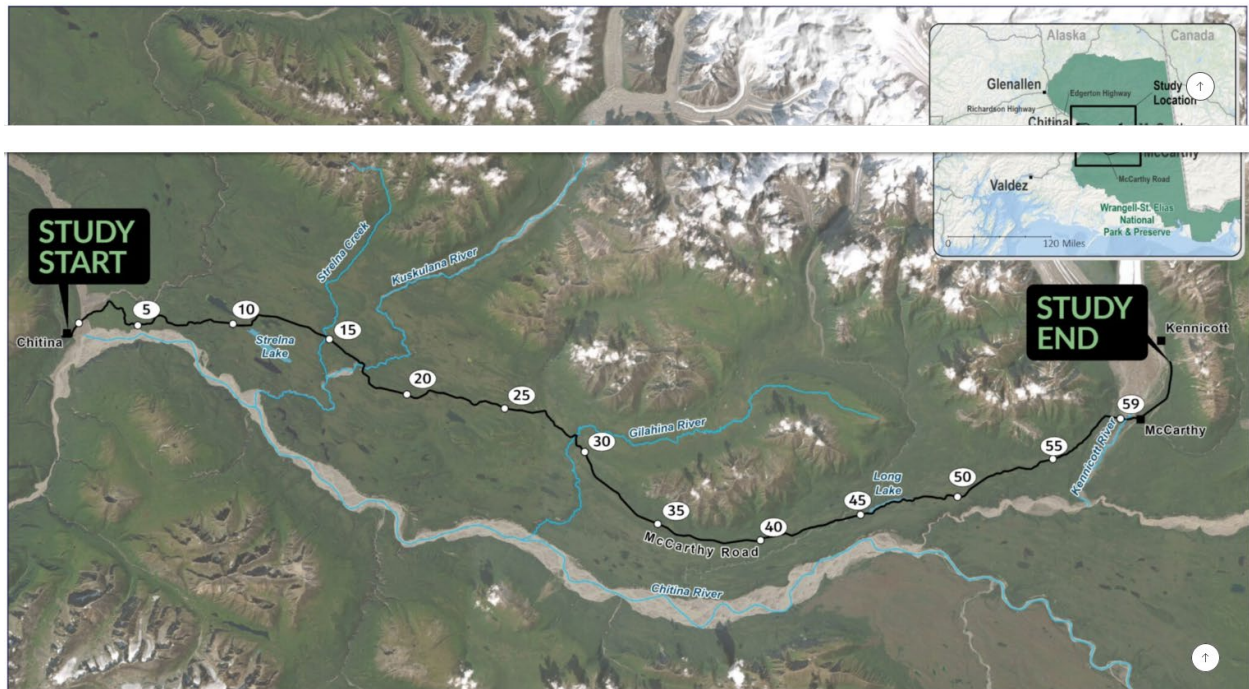
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McCarthy Road PEL Study Website July to August, 2024



Bring together stakeholders and users of the McCarthy Road to improve communication and build relationships to identify transportation and access needs.






Public and stakeholder involvement will be integrated throughout the PEL process. Stakeholders, such as the DOT&PF, Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Ahtna, local businesses, and the public will come together to identify current and future needs within the study area. WFL will consult directly with Native Village of Chitina.





The Road

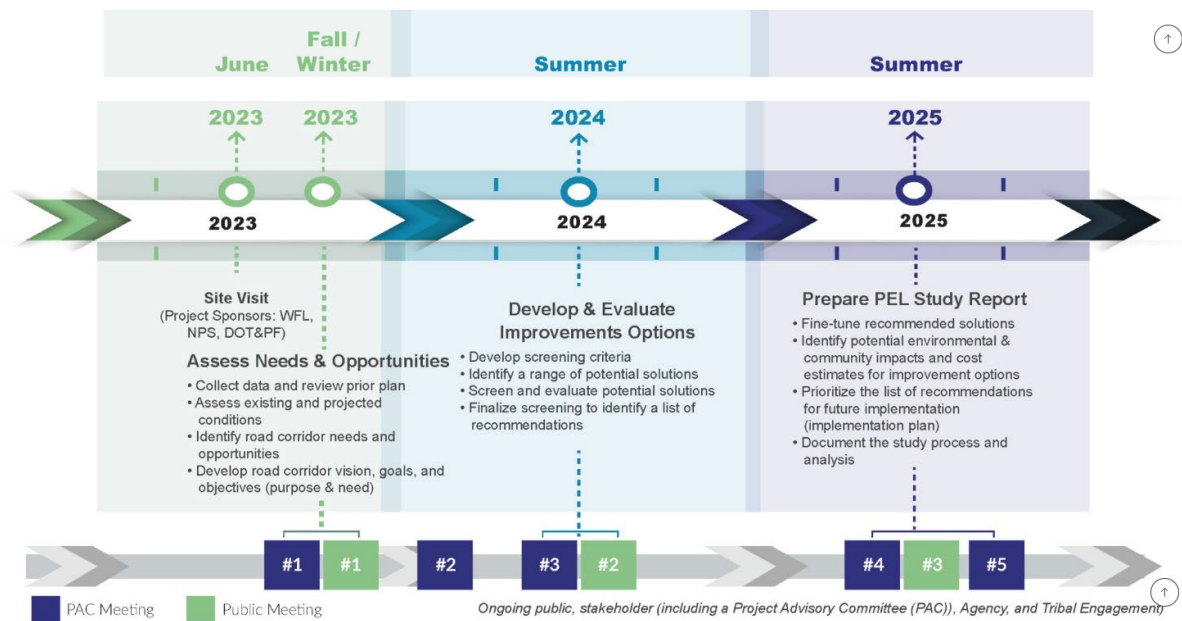
McCarthy Road Fast Facts

 <p>Main Access</p>	 <p>Population</p>	 <p>Daily Vehicles</p>	 <p>Peak Vehicles</p>	 <p>Road Maintenance</p>
<p>The McCarthy Road is the main overland access into Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve.</p>	<p>Approximately 100 people live in the Chitina area, 100 people live in the McCarthy area year-round, and at least a dozen families within the road corridor in-between.</p>	<p>Historic annual average daily traffic on the McCarthy Road (at Chitina) is 205 vehicles.</p>	<p>During the peak season, average daily traffic jumps to 400 vehicles.</p>	<p>The road is owned by DOT&PF and maintained seasonally from May 15 to October 1.</p>

Schedule

The PEL Study started in Summer 2023 and will be completed in Summer 2025. The PEL process and study will be done in partnership with Native organizations, the public, stakeholders, and federal and state resource agencies.

PEL Study Process and Key Phases



Get Involved

Be a part of the study! Public meetings will be held during each phase of the study:

1. Assessing needs and opportunities (Meeting #1 – Late 2023) – Completed
- 2. Developing and evaluating potential improvement options (Meeting #2 – Summer 2024) – We are here!**
3. Preparing the PEL Study and draft recommendations (Meeting #3 – Spring 2025)

Our next public open houses are an opportunity to help identify and prioritize potential solutions.

In-person public open houses:

<p>Glennallen Tuesday, July 30 9 to 11am Location: Copper River School District Office</p>	<p>Chitina Tuesday, July 30 6 to 8pm Location: Chitina Community Hall, off the</p>	<p>McCarthy Wednesday, July 31 6 to 8pm Location: The new McCarthy EMS Hall</p>
Conference Room, 1967 Aurora Drive	Edgerton Highway	

In addition to the in-person events, our [online open house](#) is available until August 25, 2024. To learn more about this phase of the project and provide your feedback.

Stay up-to-date with project news and ways to engage.

[Click here to join our mailing list](#)

Your name

Your email

Submit

Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Formation

The McCarthy Road PAC will meet throughout the study to provide guidance and input. The PAC consists of representatives from DOT&PF, NPS, Native Village of Chitina, Ahtna, local residents, and organizations representing tourism, economic development, and regional planning organizations.

Previous Engagement

The goal of the first round of public engagement was to identify needs and opportunities along the McCarthy Road corridor. The first of the project's three public meetings was held as an online open house, available from November 29, 2023, to January 10, 2024. Prior to the online open house, the team hosted the first PAC meeting on November 16, 2023, and launched a project website. We also held an informal study team meet-and-greet with the public in Chitina and McCarthy in June 2023.

The first online open house allowed for public comments to be gathered in multiple ways, including an interactive mapping tool that allowed visitors to tag their comments to specific locations along the study corridor. The online open house also contained a link to a poll intended to solicit more detailed input on corridor vision, purpose statement, and goals.

McCarthy Road PEL Study Website July to August, 2024






More than 300 comments were collected throughout the first engagement period. Popular comment themes included:

- Access (e.g., road reliability, parking, bridge access)
- Road design and road character
- Bridge condition (e.g., Gilahina, Kennicott River)
- Road condition/maintenance (e.g., drainage, culverts, chip seal, glaciation, brush clearing, sight distance, potholes, erosion, winter maintenance)
- Hazards (e.g., landslide, avalanche, bluffs)
- Safety (e.g., speeding, emergency services)
- Community considerations and economic development
- PEL process
- Visitor experience (e.g., pullouts, waysides, signage)
- Recreation opportunities (e.g., trails, lake access, boat ramp)
- Multi-modal accommodation (i.e., bicyclists, pedestrians)




A detailed report on the first round of engagement can be viewed [here](#).

Documents

PEL Study Documentation

-  **Solutions Development & Evaluation: Screening Process Overview (July 2024) [1.3MB]**
-  **Needs & Opportunities Assessment Report (March 2024) [File size 25MB]**
-  **Needs and Opportunities Assessment Report Appendices (March 2024) [File size 46MB]**
-  **Public Meeting #1 Summary (January 2024)**
-  **Newsletter 1 (November 2023)**

Other Resources

-  **McCarthy Road Reconnaissance Study (1989)**
-  **McCarthy Road Scenic Corridor Plan (1997)**
-  **McCarthy Road / Chitina Valley Roundtable Project Recommendations Report (2002)**



Contact Us

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Planning products produced during this PEL study may be adopted or incorporated by reference during a subsequent environmental review process.

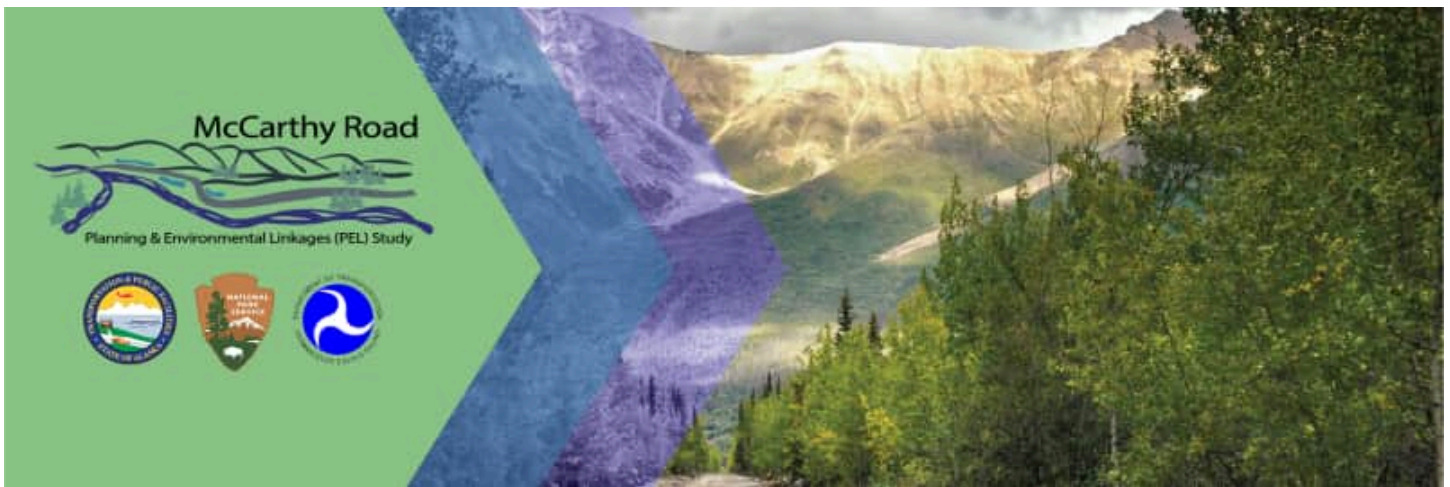




McCarthy Road

McCarthy Road PEL Study
Public Meeting #2 Summary
July to August 2024

Attachment B: Online Open House Website Screenshots



McCarthy Road Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study

Online Public Open House 2 – Identifying Potential Solutions

Scroll down to get started

Welcome

Welcome to the “Identifying Potential Solutions” online open house for the McCarthy Road Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study. This online open house will run from July 25 through August 25, 2024.

Background

Western Federal Lands Highway Division, in partnership with Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities and the National Park Service, is preparing a PEL Study for the

McCarthy Road. The 64-mile study corridor begins near Chitina and extends to the southern end of the Kennicott subdivision (before the Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark).

Public and stakeholder input collected this past winter and a review of prior studies and existing conditions helped to identify “needs and opportunities” in the corridor. The results are summarized in the [Needs and Opportunities Report](#). You can catch-up on the developed corridor vision and goals for the PEL Study at the first online open house ([click here](#)). A summary of the public outreach can be reviewed on the main website ([click here](#)).



To address identified needs and opportunities, the Study Team has developed a list potential solutions and a screening process to evaluate these solutions. The purpose of the second online open house is to seek public input on the proposed solutions and get feedback on which ones should be a priority.

Feedback will help to evaluate whether a potential solution should move forward as a recommendation in the PEL Study. The Draft PEL Study will be released to the public for comment in Spring 2025.

How do I use the Online Open House?

- ***Deep dive:*** Scroll down to view all the content, beginning with the **PEL Study Process** highlights.
- ***Review Potential Solutions:*** Jump to the **Potential Solutions** tab where you can review initial solutions for key focus areas along the road corridor that are under consideration.
- ***Review Suggested Enhancements:*** Jump to potential visitor and recreation enhancements that are under consideration for the road corridor, as suggested by the public during the last PEL public meeting.
- ***Provide input*** through a series of Polls to help prioritize potential road corridor solutions and enhancements. These can be found at the end of the **Potential Solutions** and **Suggested Enhancements** tabs of this website. **Additional polls** can be accessed from the Poll tab.
- ***In a hurry?*** Skip the details and provide general comments about any issue or potential solution here!

PEL Study Process



© 2024 Microsoft Corporation, Earthstar Geographics SIO, © 2024 TomTom

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How will the PEL Study be used?

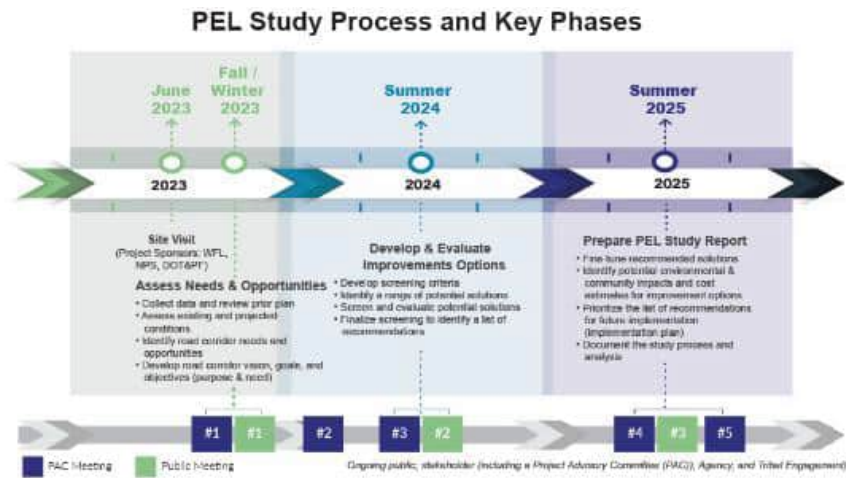
Over the years, feedback from residents and visitors using McCarthy Road have emphasized the *need to evaluate the reliability of access and public safety* along the corridor.

The PEL Study will identify prioritized transportation-related projects along the McCarthy Road and lay out a *plan describing how recommended projects could be implemented in the future*. Bringing together stakeholders and users of the McCarthy Road corridor to encourage communication and build collaboration for identifying transportation and access needs is an important part of the PEL process.

Schedule

The PEL study is being prepared in 3 key phases:

- Assess needs and opportunities (completed)
- Develop and evaluate potential solutions (currently underway)
- Prepare a PEL study report that documents the process, decisions, and recommendations for future improvements (Spring 2025)



Your input is important! Input from this online open house will help us evaluate and prioritize potential solutions. We also listen closely to a project advisory committee (PAC) that provides guidance and input throughout the study. The third public online open house in Spring 2025 will be an opportunity to review all the recommended solutions chosen for consideration in the PEL Study.

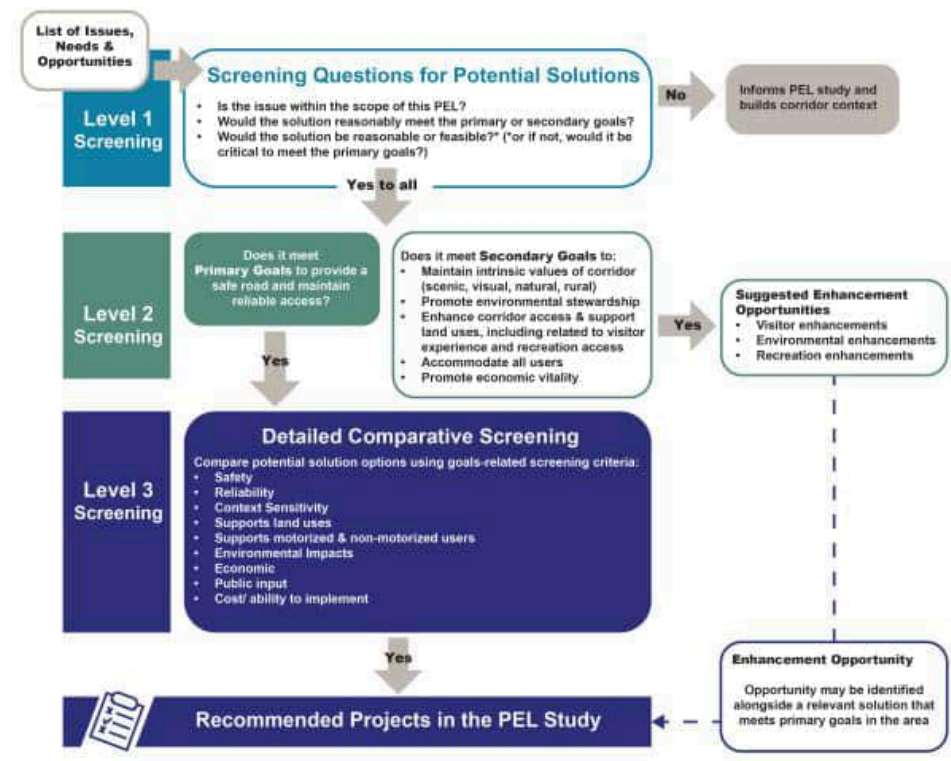
Screening Process

Drawing from public comments and the data included in the Needs and Opportunities Report, a screening process was developed to evaluate whether an issue, need, or opportunity might result in a potential recommended solution to be included in the PEL Study.

Potential issues, needs and opportunities will be screened through the process shown in the following flowchart graphic. Initial questions we asked included the following:

- Is the issue within the scope of this PEL?
- Would the solution meet the primary or secondary goals?
- Would the solution be reasonable or feasible?

Details on how potential solutions will be screened can be found in an initial [Screening Process Memo](#).

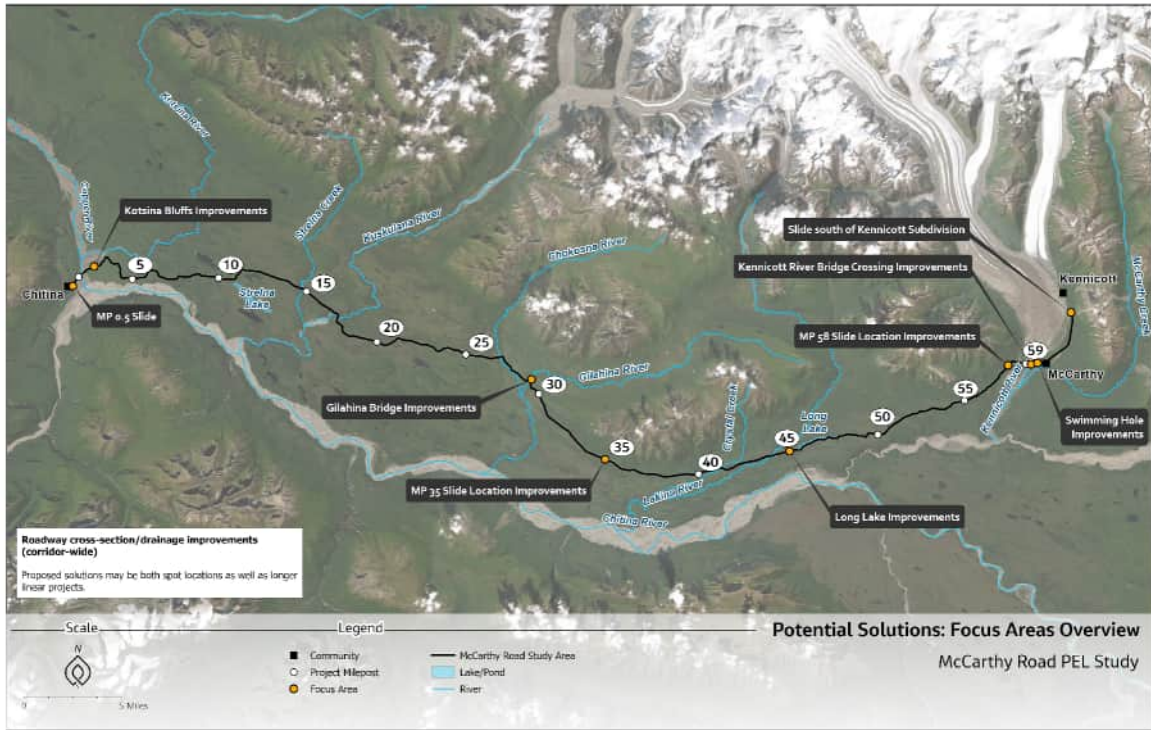


Potential Solutions

Identifying potential solutions are the result of taking [hundreds of public comments on ideas, needs, and opportunities](#) and running them through a screening process.

Developing a corridor vision, goals, and objectives also help to guide the identification and development of potential solutions; refer to the [Screening Process Memo](#) to review these from the earlier PEL phase. [Goals highlight the need for transportation and access improvements.](#)





Locations of potential solutions

Range of Potential Solutions

The study team has identified a range of potential solutions. These are grouped into two main categories: focus areas and suggested enhancements.

Potential Solutions Overview

Type of Solution	Description	Examples
 Focus Areas	Select geographic spots along road corridor that have key needs related to safety and keeping the road open and reliable (primary goals)	Improvements related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage • Narrow road width • Bridges • Addressing hazards, such as slide areas • Potential road realignments
 Suggested Enhancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential opportunities to enhance visitor experience, recreation access, and the environment. • These solutions support the roadway but are not "must haves." • Suggested enhancements came directly from the public and stakeholder input. 	Improvements related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pullouts • New parking • Signage • Recreation access, including trails, lake access, and trailheads • Fish passage improvements at culverts

Focus Area Solutions

Solutions for the focus areas meet the primary goal to provide a safe road corridor and reliable access for residents and travelers on the McCarthy Road. The focus areas are geographic spots that generally need several improvements or a specific type of improvement that is needed throughout the corridor (e.g., drainage or road cross-section improvements).

The study team has identified the following ten focus areas.

1. Drainage and roadway cross-section improvements throughout the corridor (specific locations to be determined)
2. MP 0.5 slide
3. Kotsina Bluffs (MP 1.5 to 3)
4. Gilahina Bridge (MP 29)
5. MP 35 slide
6. Long Lake (MP 44 to 48.5)
7. MP 58 slide
8. Kennicott River Bridge crossing (MP 59.3)
9. Swimming hole vicinity (MP 59.5)
10. Slide south of Kennicott Subdivision

Based on public and stakeholder priorities, some of these solutions will receive additional analysis, such as conducting some conceptual design, calculating project costs, and evaluating impacts.

Focus Area: Drainage Improvements at various locations

Issues	Potential Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of ditches • water on road/nowhere for water to go • glaciation • lack of culverts or damaged culverts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raise the road • culverts • ditching



Focus Area: Roadway Cross-section Improvements at various locations

Issues	Potential Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • narrow road • high cut banks • steep banks (drop-offs) • road condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • widen roadway • raise the road • reduce road curvature • reduce steep grades • vegetation clearing



Examples of no ditches along McCarthy Road

Focus Area: Drainage and Roadway Cross-section improvements at various locations

See adjacent image for a list of issues and potential solutions at this location.

Throughout the road corridor, neglect in drainage issues contributes to poor road condition.

Drainage solutions are likely to be proposed in conjunction with resolving roadway cross-section issues. Proposed solutions may be both spot locations as well as longer linear projects.

Approximately half of the PEL study corridor has a road width of 22 feet or narrower. The desired standard for the road is 24-foot wide.

Focus Area: MP 0.5 Settlement



Issues

- settlement
- road failure in June 2024

Potential Solutions

- geo-technical monitoring
- geo-textile embankmentwork & drainage improvements



Focus Area: MP 0.5 Slide/Settlement

See adjacent image for a list of issues and potential solutions at this location.

Earlier this summer, the road settled about 10 to 15 feet within two days, temporarily closing the road.

Focus Area: Kotsina Bluffs (MP 1.5 to 3)



Issues	Potential Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• substantial land slide hazard• constant road slope failures• narrow road• road sinking/sluffing off• steep banks (drop-offs)• thawing permafrost uphill of road• numerous drainage issues, including shedding of bluffs due to over saturation of unconsolidated material• frequent DOT&PF maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "no action" option: leave road as-is on the bluff• protect road in existing alignment• re-route road (north along riverbed)• re-route road (south away from bluff)



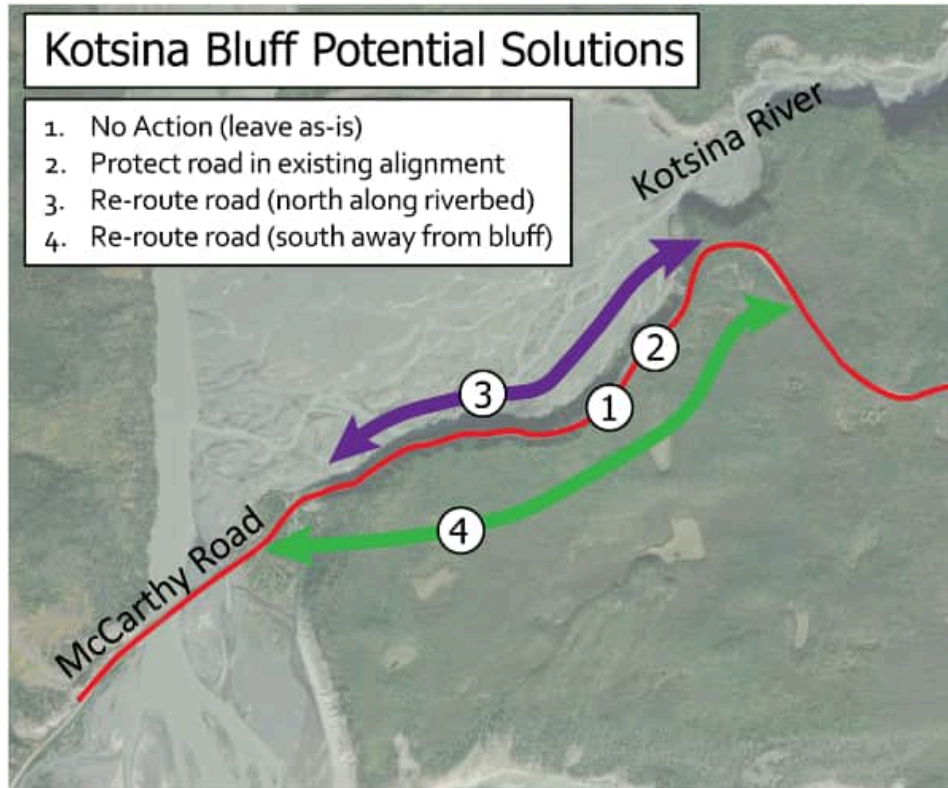
Focus Area: Kotsina Bluffs (MP 1.5 to 3)

See adjacent image for a list of issues and potential solutions at this location.

The DOT&PF and the public have previously indicated the Kotsina Bluffs area as a high priority of concern for the road corridor, due to historic landslides and the continuing hazard. A solution along the Kotsina riverbed would require substantial diking and riprap. Should a re-route solution move forward, the DOT&PF still might need to maintain the abandoned alignment.

Kotsina Bluff Potential Solutions

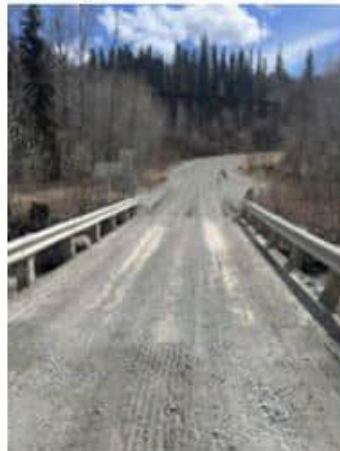
1. No Action (leave as-is)
2. Protect road in existing alignment
3. Re-route road (north along riverbed)
4. Re-route road (south away from bluff)



Focus Area: Gilahina Bridge (MP 29)



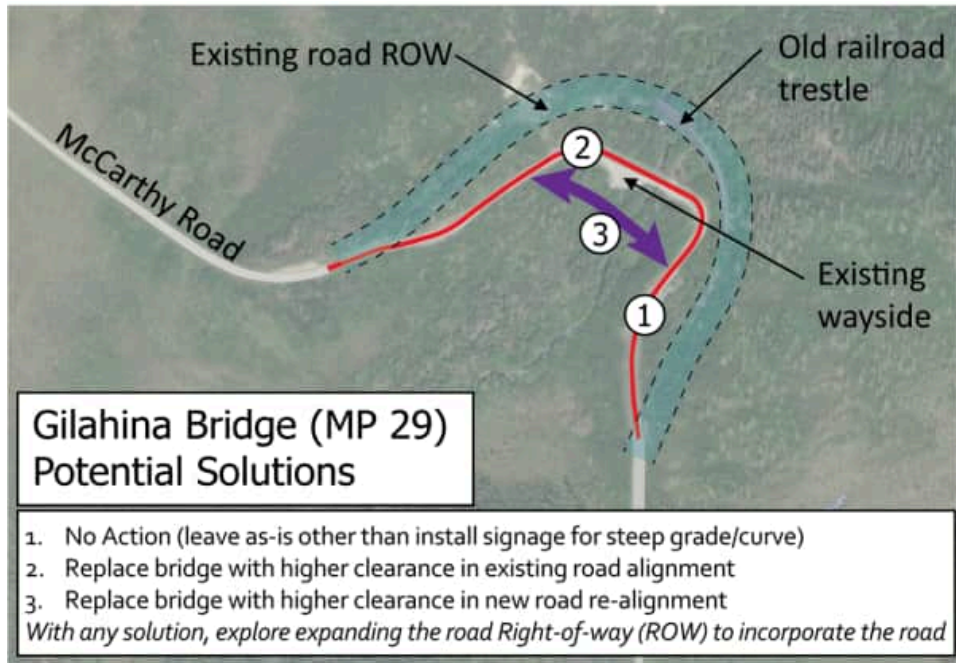
Issues	Potential Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor sight distance (blind approach to bridge on east side)/road curve • steep road grade • low bridge clearance • scour at abutments • highest bridge load restriction in corridor • road is not in the road ROW • old railroad trestle located within road ROW boundary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "no action" option: leave as-is other than install signage for steep grade/curve • Replace bridge with higher clearance in existing road alignment • Replace bridge with higher clearance in new road re-alignment



Focus Area: Gilahina Bridge (MP 29)

See adjacent image for a list of issues and potential solutions at this location.

With any solution, explore expanding the road ROW to incorporate the road.



Focus Area: MP 35 Slide



Issues	Potential Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> landslide hazard recent landslide and water over roadway, causing road closure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> construct improvements in existing road alignment (e.g., construct berm, ditching/ excavation)




Focus Area: MP 35 Slide

See adjacent image for a list of issues and potential solutions at this location.

A recent debris flow/ landslide covered the road by approximately 10 feet of material.

Focus Area: Long Lake (MP 44 to 48.5)

Issues	Potential Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• speed• dust• road curvature• drainage issues• narrow road width• high cutbanks, steep banks (drop-offs)• Long Lake is important salmon spawning habitat• Lack of formalized recreation access point to lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• improve road in existing alignment• re-route road off existing alignment to south



Focus Area: Long Lake (MP 44 to 48.5)

See adjacent image for a list of issues and potential solutions at this location.

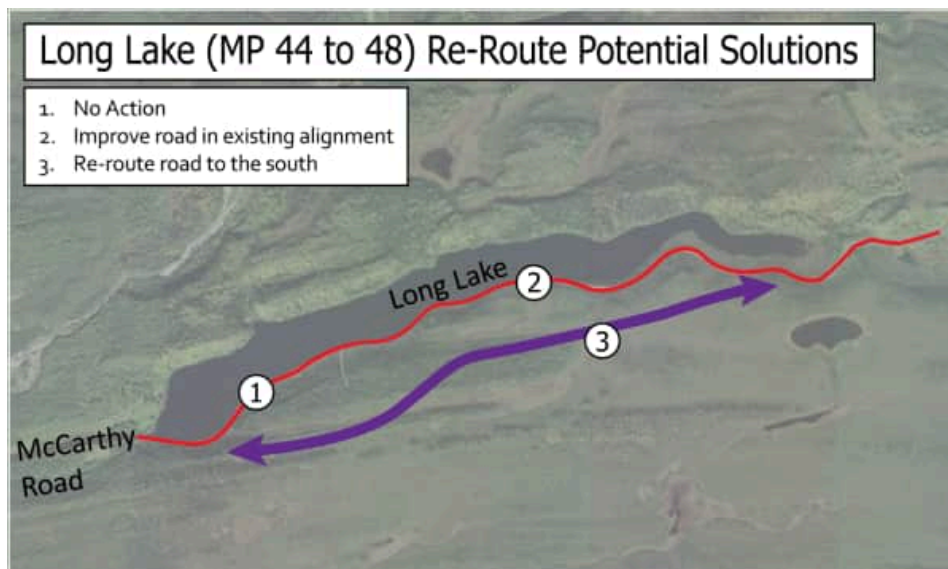
During the first PEL public meeting, the public suggested numerous enhancements, including:

- Improve fish passage and protect habitat
- enhance recreation access

- construct a trail in the abandoned road alignment, if the road is re-routed
- construct a dedicated access point to Long Lake

Other Considerations:

- Local community members previously submitted a grant application for the re-route option.
- Substantial wetlands are located in a proposed re-route location.





Focus Area: MP 58 Slide

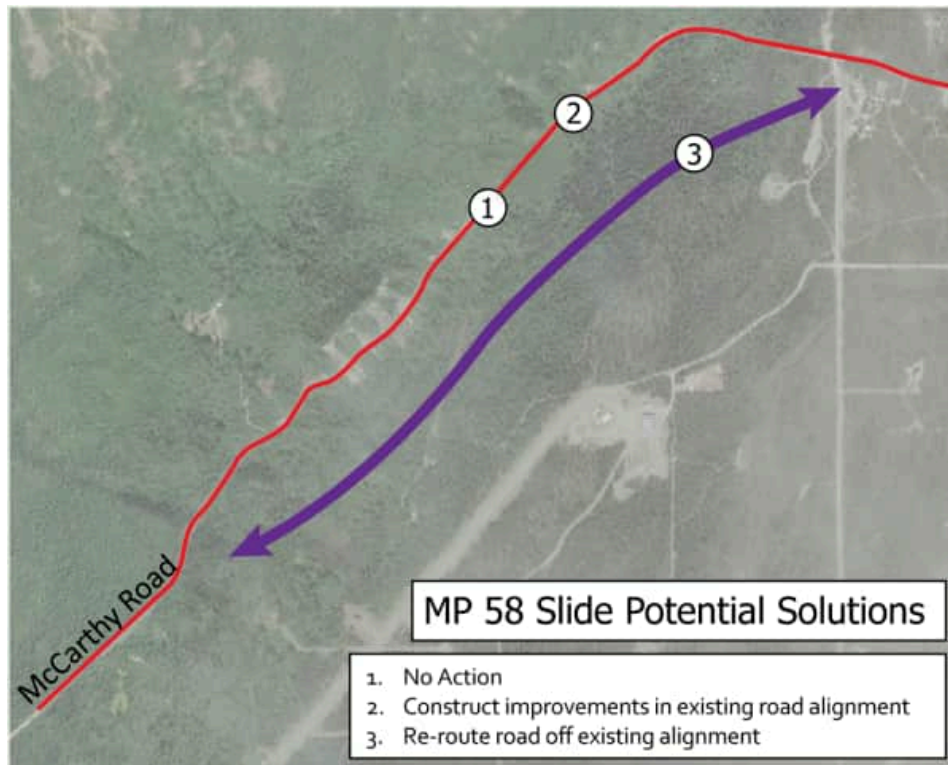
Issues	Potential Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• substantial land slide hazard (historic landslides)• potential for landslide to impact private property• rockslides• narrow road• road sinking/sluffing off• high cutbanks, steep banks (drop-off)• road condition: cracks on road/road damage• numerous drainage issues, including glaciation• road condition: soft spots	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• construct improvements in existing roadway alignment• re-route road off existing alignment



Focus Area: MP 58 Slide

See adjacent image for a list of issues and potential solutions at this location.

This is one of the highest risk slide areas in the corridor, as is the Kotsina Bluffs. The PEL project partners – DOT&PF and NPS – are conducting additional geotechnical drilling this summer to obtain more information about this slide area.



Focus Area: Kennicott River Bridge Crossing (MP 59.3)



Issues:

- erosion/scour
- poor condition of ped bridge decking
- pedestrian/ATV conflict
- only vehicle access east of river is via private vehicle bridge (a positive or a negative, depending on viewpoint)
- lack of community consensus for or against public vehicle bridge access to McCarthy
- Kennicott Glacier lake outburst flooding (annually) (Jökulhlaup)

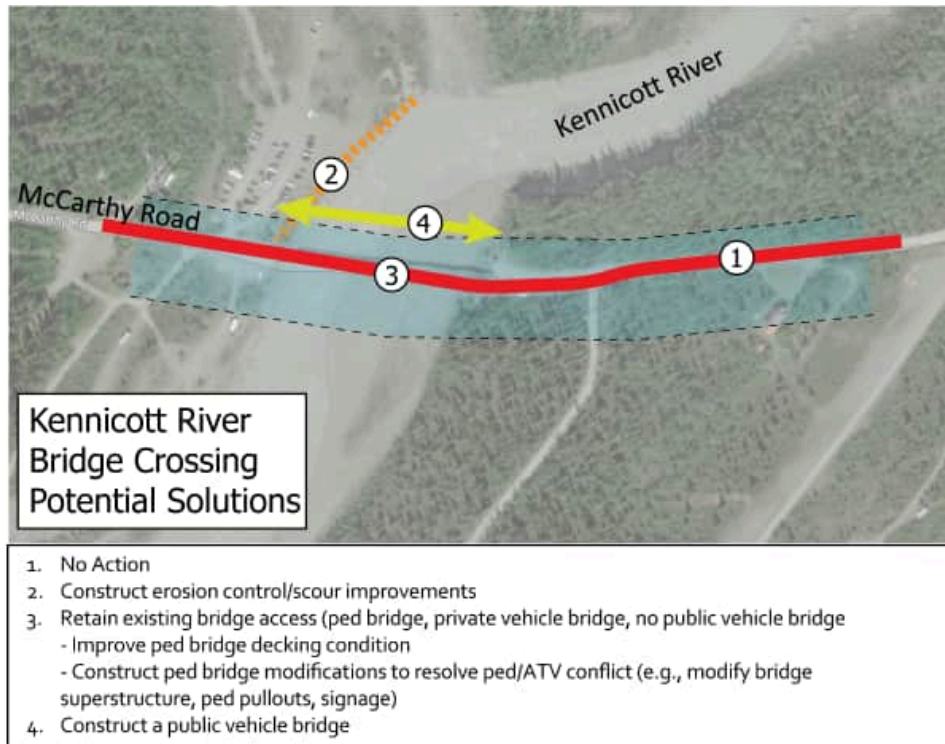
Potential Solutions

- construct erosion control/scour improvements
- retain existing bridge access (ped bridge, private vehicle bridge, no public vehicle bridge)
 - improve ped bridge decking condition
 - construct ped bridge modifications to resolve ped/ATV conflict (e.g., modify bridge superstructure, pedestrian pullouts, signage)
- construct a public vehicle bridge



Focus Area: *Kennicott River Bridge Crossing (MP 59.3)*

See adjacent image for a list of issues and potential solutions at this location.



The Kennicott River Bridge crossing received the most public comments during the first PEL public meeting. We are exploring solutions ranging from erosion/scour protection near the “ped” bridge to ped bridge improvements to consideration of a public vehicle bridge.

Other considerations will include community impacts and lack of existing parking east of the bridge.

Focus Area: Swimming Hole vicinity (MP 59.5)



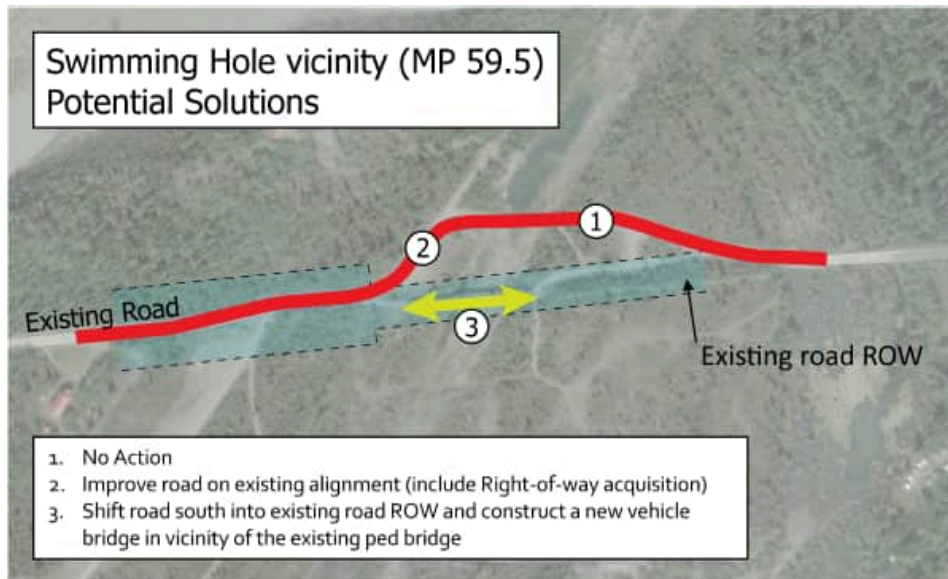
Issues	Potential Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• drainage• poor roadbed condition• damaged culvert• previous flooding• road is not in the road ROW• important public recreation area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• improve road on existing alignment (include ROW acquisition)• shift road south into the existing road ROW along with the construction of a new vehicle bridge in the vicinity of the existing ped bridge



Focus Area: *Swimming Hole vicinity (MP 59.5)*

See adjacent image for a list of issues and potential solutions at this location.

During the first PEL public meeting, the public suggested an enhancement of adding a parking area for accessing the swimming hole.



Focus Area: Slide south of Kennicott Subdivision

Issues	Potential Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> substantial slide in 2002 continuous drainage issues, including standing water road base is failing due to excess water avalanche concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> raise the road construct improvements in existing road alignment

Focus Area: Slide south of Kennicott Subdivision

See adjacent image for a list of issues and potential solutions at this location.

During the first PEL public meeting, the public suggested an enhancement of adding a pullout or parking between McCarthy and the Kennicott subdivision.

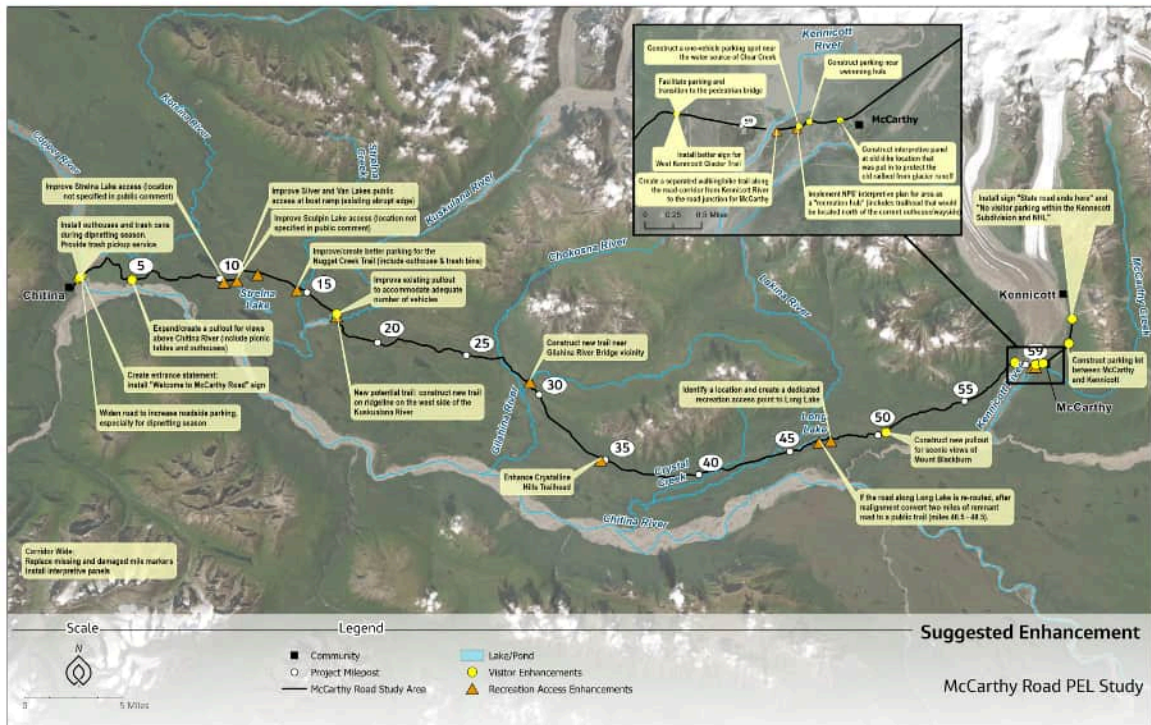
Focus Area Ranking

Funding resources are limited. Not all issues and needs in the corridor can be addressed. What areas do you think the PEL should prioritize? Please rank the focus areas. Feel free to write in other focus area options.

McCarthy Focus Ranking

Suggested Enhancements

Suggested enhancements came directly from public and stakeholder input during the first PEL public meeting. Potential enhancements within the road corridor would not necessarily make the road safer and more reliable, but they may contribute to the scenic and cultural values of the surrounding environment and communities. These have been categorized into visitor, recreation access, and environmental enhancements.





Visitor Enhancements: Pullouts

Location (milepost [MP])	Suggestions
1.1	Install outhouses and trash cans during dipnetting season. Provide trash pickup service.
5	Expand/create a pullout for views above Chitina River (include picnic tables and outhouses)
17	Improve existing pullout to accommodate adequate number of vehicles
50.5	Construct new pullout for scenic views of Mount Blackburn
60	Construct interpretive panel at old dike location that was put in to protect the old railbed from glacier runoff

Visitor Enhancements - Pullouts

Suggested visitor enhancements included pullouts, parking areas, and signage.



View near MP 5



Visitor Enhancements: Parking

Location (milepost [MP])	Suggestions
1	Widen road to increase roadside parking, especially for dipnetting season
58.5	Facilitate parking and transition to the pedestrian bridge
59.5	Construct parking near swimming hole
59.6	Construct a one-vehicle parking spot near the water source of Clear Creek
60 to 64	Construct parking between McCarthy and Kennicott

Visitor Enhancements - Parking



Looking north towards the swimming hole and road.



Visitor Enhancements: Signage

Location (milepost [MP])	Suggestions
1.5	Create entrance statement: install "Welcome to McCarthy Road" sign
58.5	Install better sign for West Kennicott Glacier Trail
60	Construct interpretive panel at old dike location that was put in to protect the old railroad bed from glacier runoff
63	Install sign "State road ends here" and "No visitor parking within the Kennecott Subdivision and National Historic Landmark"
Corridor-wide	Replace missing and damaged mile markers
Corridor-wide	Install interpretive panels

Visitor Enhancements - Signage



Existing interpretive panel at Kuskulana River Bridge pullout



McCarthy Visitor Survey



Recreation Access Enhancements

Location (milepost [MP])	Suggestions
10.3	Improve Strelna Lake access (location not specified in public comment)
11.0	Improve Silver and Van Lakes public access at boat ramp (existing abrupt edge)
12.3	Improve Sculpin Lake access (location not specified in public comment)
14.5	Improve/create better parking for the Nugget Creek Trail (include outhouse & trash bins)
17.0	New potential trail: construct new trail on ridgeline on the west side of the Kuskualana River
28.8	Construct new trail near Gilahina River Bridge vicinity
34.6	Enhance Crystalline Hills Trailhead
46.5 to 48.5	If the road along Long Lake is re-routed, after realignment convert two miles of remnant road to a public trail (miles 46.5 - 48.5).
47.4	Identify a location & create a dedicated recreation access point to Long Lake
59.4	Create a separated walking/bike trail along the road corridor from Kennicott River to the road junction for McCarthy
59.6	Implement NPS' interpretive plan for area as a "recreation hub" includes trailhead that would be located north of the current outhouse/wayside)
corridor-wide	Construct a multi-use trail paralleling the roadway between Chitina and McCarthy

Recreation Access Enhancements

The public and stakeholders suggested ideas and opportunities to access lakes, rivers, and trails throughout the road corridor. Some ambitious ideas included new trails and even a separated walk/bike path the entire length of the corridor.





McCarthy Rec Survey



Environmental Enhancements

Suggested environmental enhancements by the public and stakeholders were largely related to improving fish passage, particularly related to culverts. Refer to the [Screening Process Memo](#) for a complete list of locations and potential culvert improvements.

McCarthy Environmental Survey

Additional Polls

Thank you for your time verifying what we heard during the first public open house we held over the winter. Developing a corridor vision, goals, and objectives helped guide us in

identifying and developing potential solutions. With your input, we will have strong guidance on the screening and prioritization process of potential solutions that will result in a set of recommended projects in the PEL study. With limited resources, not all improvements can be constructed. We are seeking public input on which solutions should be prioritized. If anything seems unfamiliar, please reference the Documents section of the project website www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com

McCarthy Additional Surveys

Get Engaged

Thank you for visiting the McCarthy Road PEL study online open house. The study team appreciates your interest and feedback. Please use this form to add your name to the mailing list and/or submit your comments and questions.

McCarthy Get Engaged

Contact Information:
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This PEL Study is in partnership with Alaska DOT&PF and National Park Service.



Planning products produced during this PEL study may be adopted or incorporated by reference during a subsequent environmental review process.

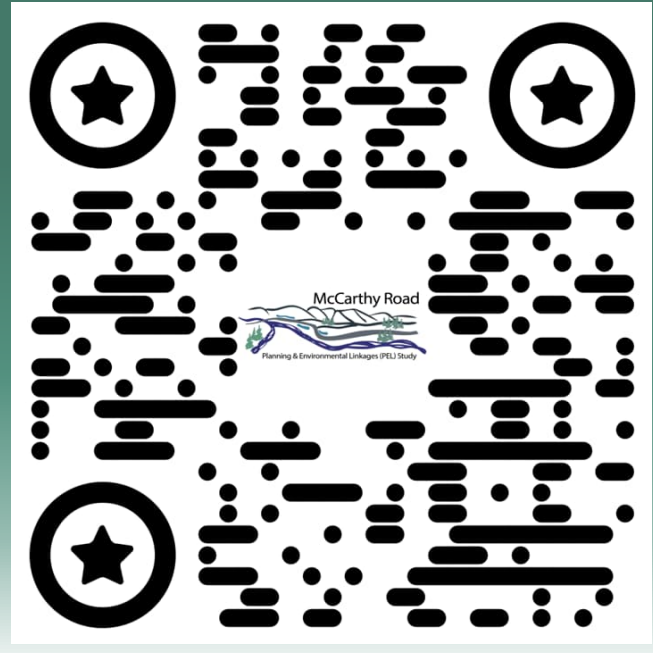
To request accommodations for persons with disabilities, information in alternate formats, or to request interpretation, please contact Kim Wetzel at (907) 440-1591 or kim.wetzel@jacobs.com.



McCarthy Road PEL Study
Public Meeting #2 Summary
July to August 2024

Attachment C: In-person Public Open House Materials and Results

- Poster boards
- Public meeting summaries for Glennallen, Chitina, and McCarthy (includes public comments and sign-in sheets)



Visit the Online Open house between July 25 to Aug 25 to review materials, take some polls, and submit comments.

Public Meeting #2 *Identifying Potential Solutions*

WELCOME

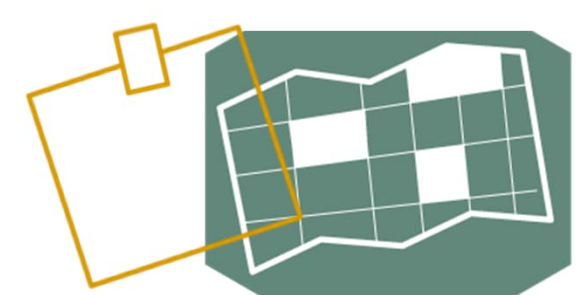
Thank you for stopping by the open house!

Join us for a brief presentation 15 minutes after the hour to introduce our team and today's materials.

Today we will:

- Explore potential solutions for improvements currently under consideration for the PEL.
- Seek input on identified focus areas and suggested enhancements.
- Identify your priorities.

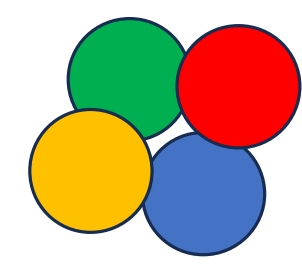
How to provide comments today?



Write & place sticky notes on the large map



Write on the flip charts



Place stickers on the large map to show your priorities



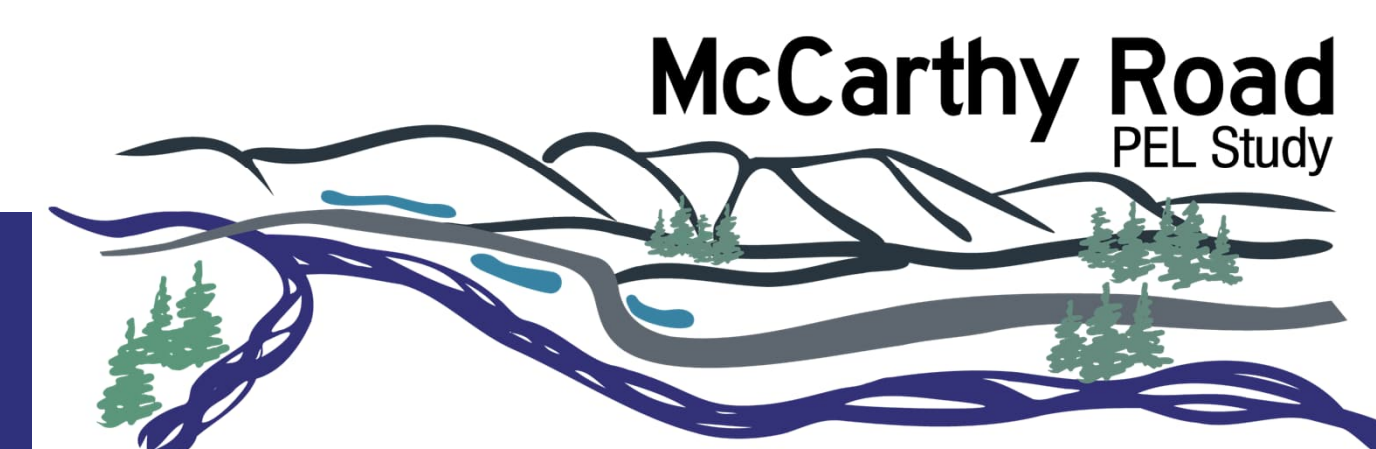
Fill out a comment form



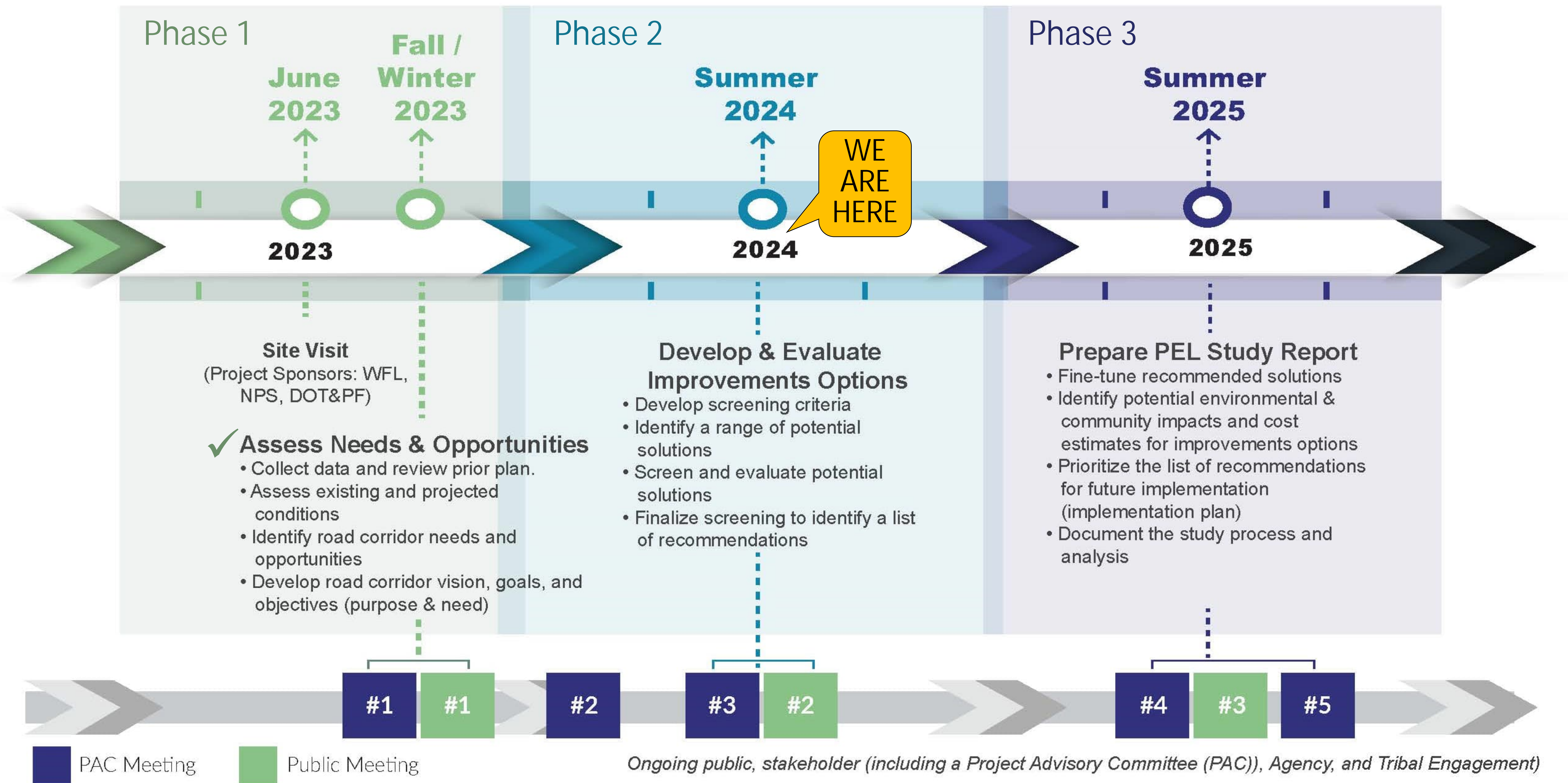
Talk to the study team

Are there other solutions (e.g., focus areas, enhancements) we should (or shouldn't) consider?

Not everything can be funded. What's most important to you?



PEL Study Process and Key Phases



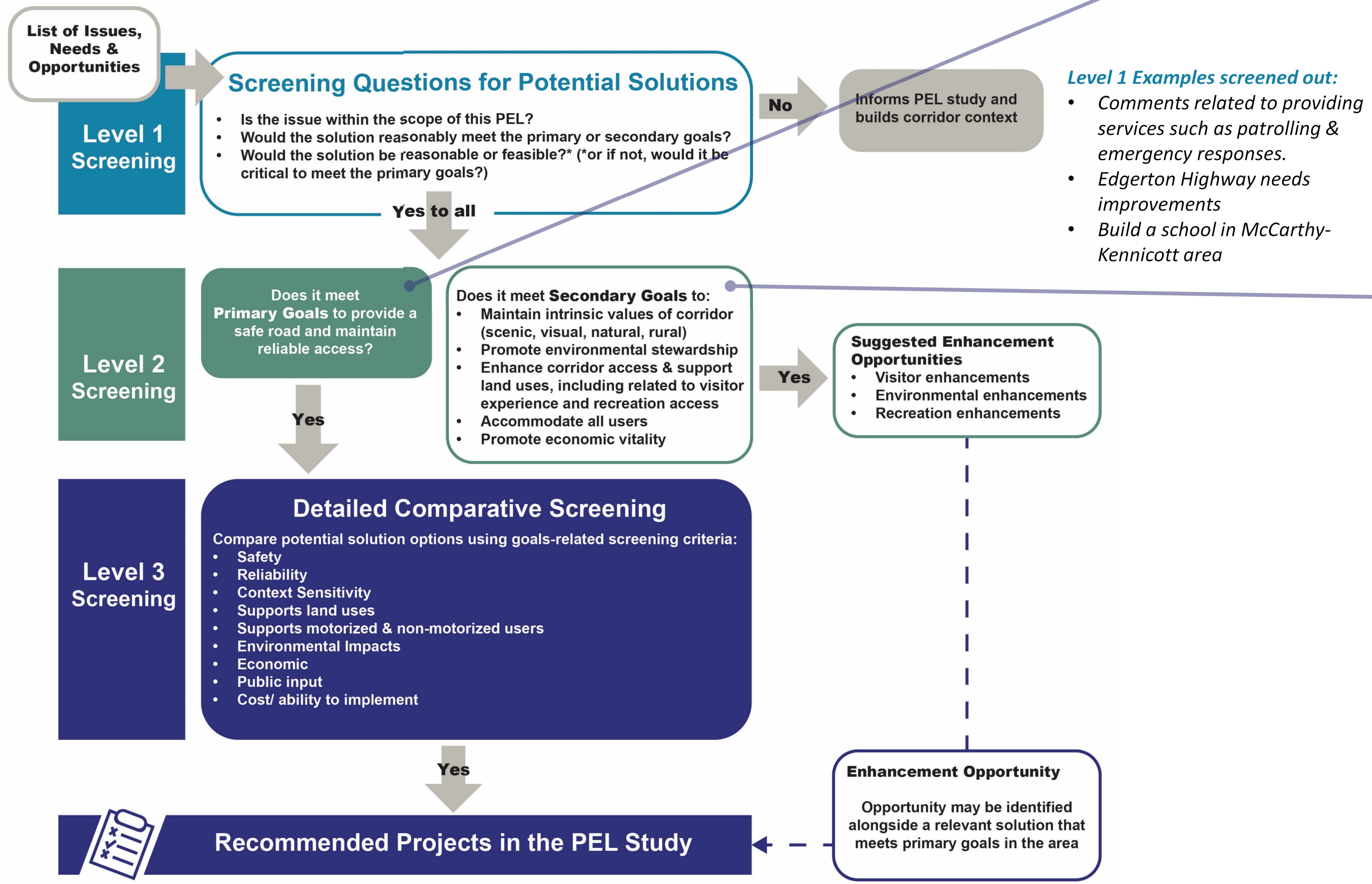
Phase 2 Developing & Evaluation Potential Solutions

Why do vision & goals matter (from Phase 1)?

Helps identify criteria to screen potential solutions.

How do we get to **proposed recommendations in the PEL?**

The PEL screening process:



Range of Potential Solutions Focus Areas

Geographic spots along road corridor that have key safety needs to keep the road open & reliable (primary goals)

Example improvements:

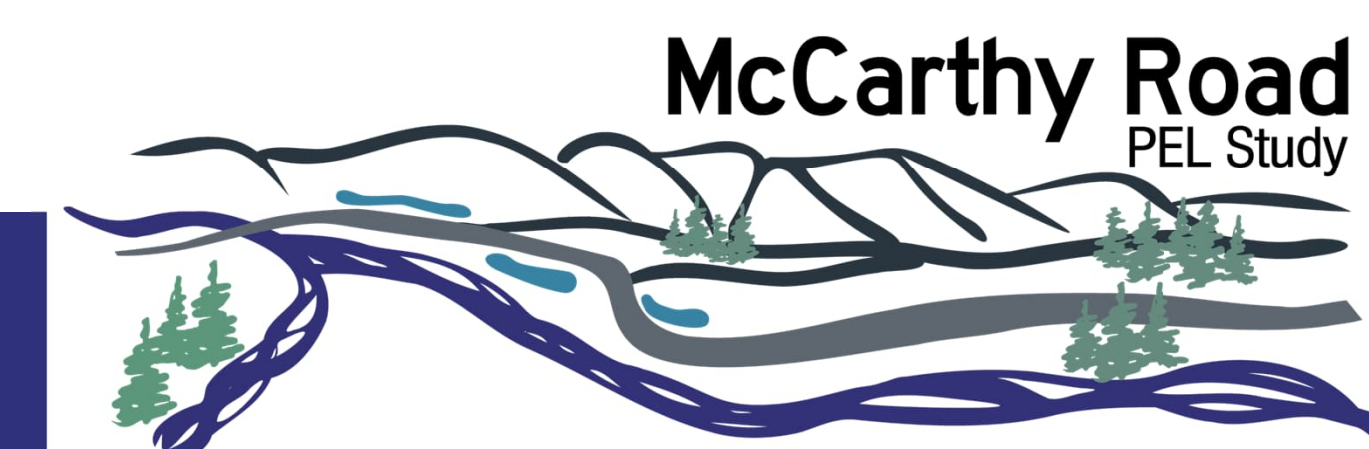
- Drainage
- Narrow road width
- Bridges
- Addressing hazards, such as slides

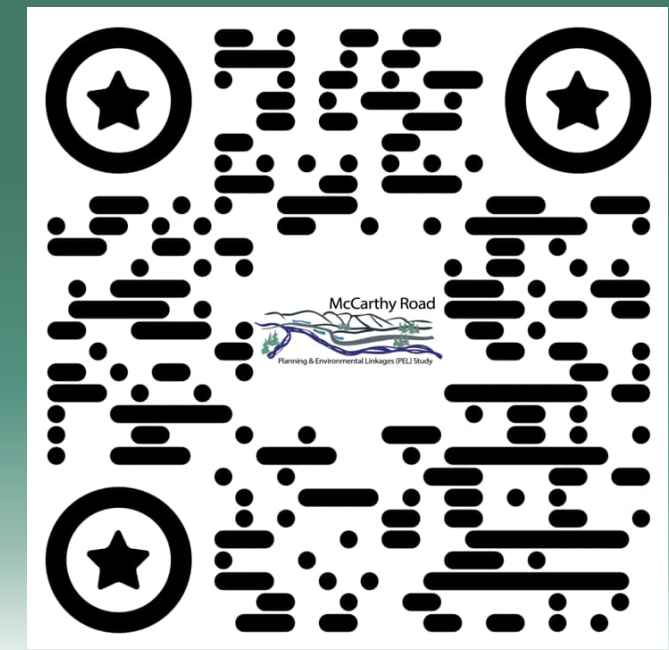
Suggested Enhancements

Potential opportunities to enhance visitor experience, recreation access, and the environment.

Example improvements:

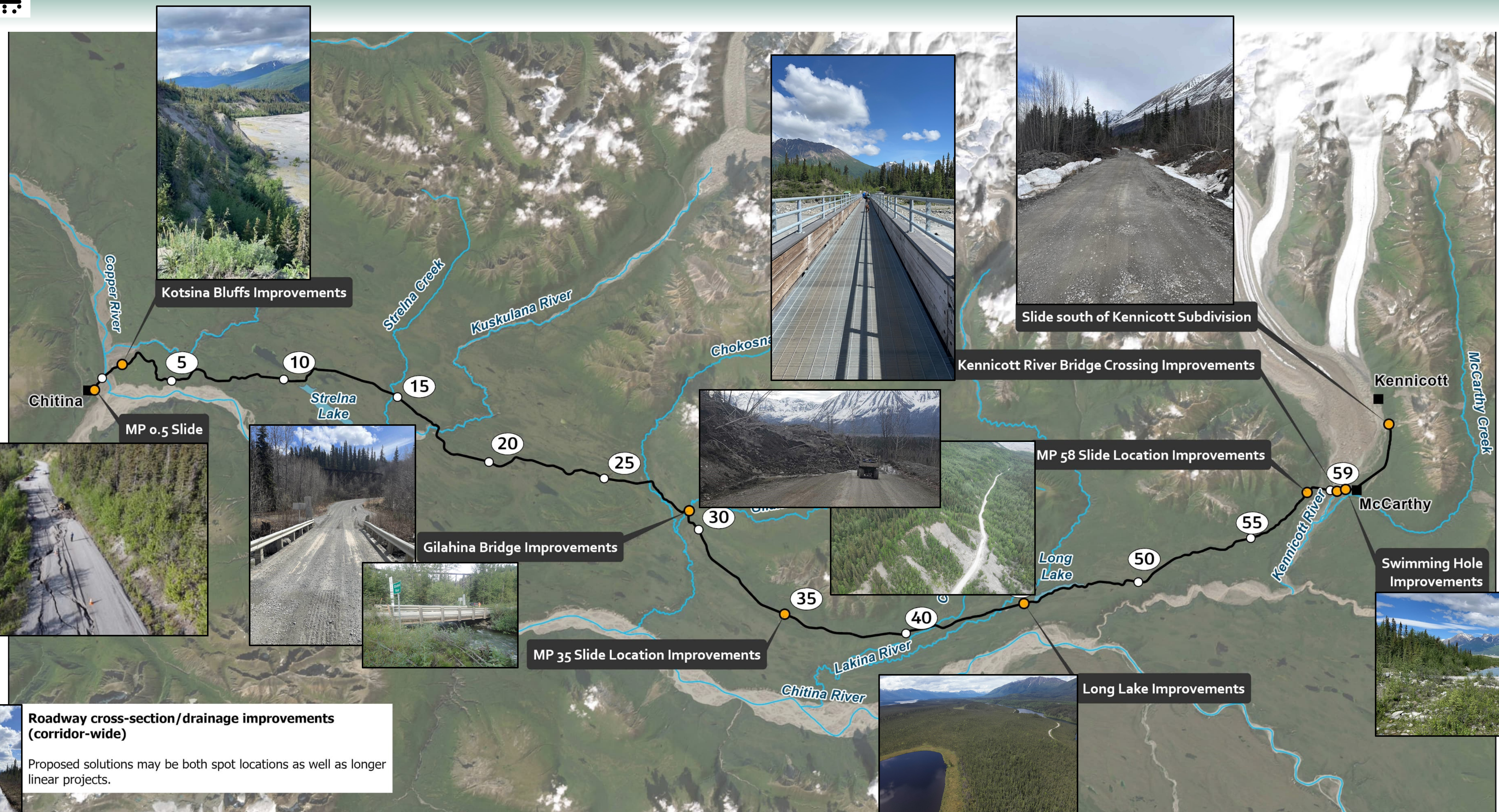
- Pullouts
- New parking
- Signage
- Recreation access, including trails, lake access, and trailheads
- Fish passage culvert improvements





Visit the Online Open house between July 25 to Aug 25 to review materials, take some polls, and submit comments.

Potential Solutions Focus Areas Locations



Kotsina Bluffs Improvements



Kennicott River Bridge Crossing Improvements



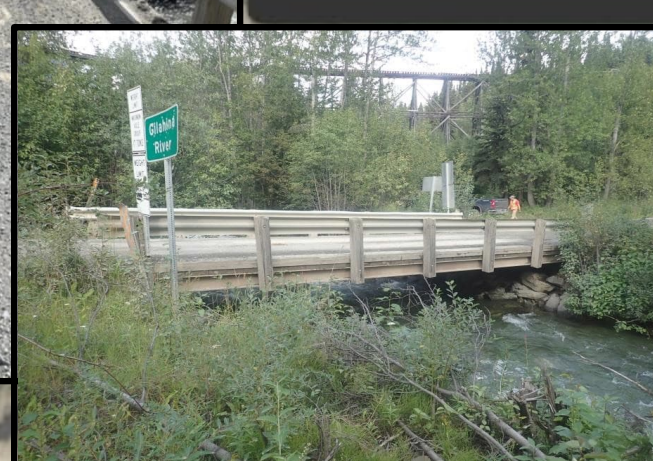
Slide south of Kennicott Subdivision



MP 58 Slide Location Improvements



Gilahina Bridge Improvements



MP 35 Slide Location Improvements



Long Lake Improvements

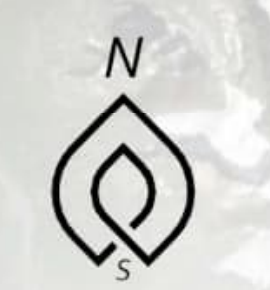


Swimming Hole Improvements



Roadway cross-section/drainage improvements (corridor-wide)
Proposed solutions may be both spot locations as well as longer linear projects.

Scale



0 5 Miles

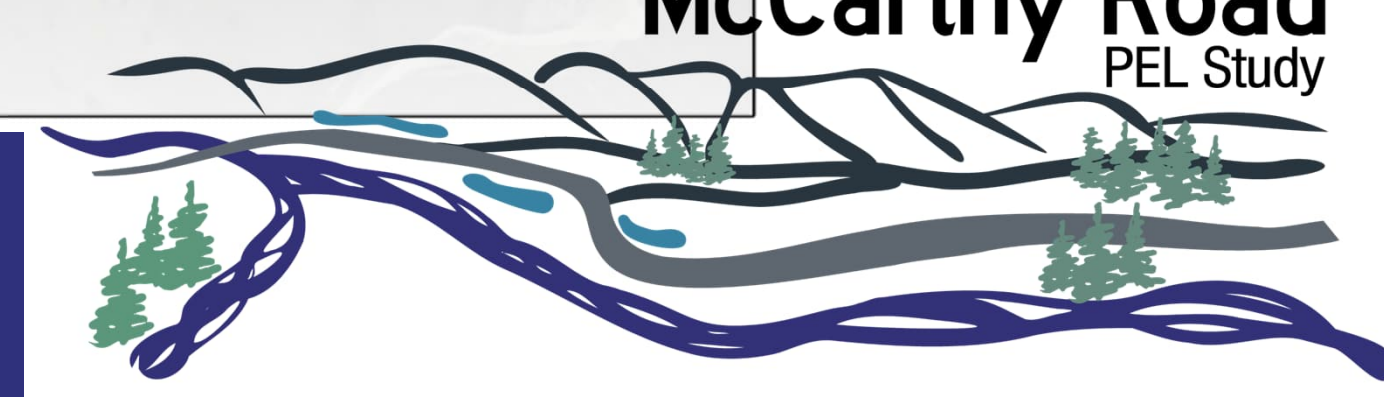
Legend

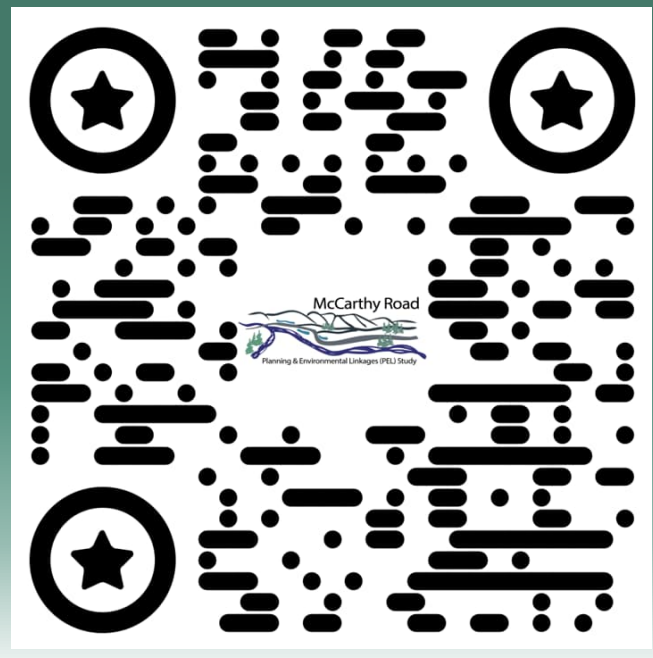
- Community
- Project Milepost
- Focus Area
- McCarthy Road Study Area
- Lake/Pond
- River

Potential Solutions: Focus Areas Overview

McCarthy Road PEL Study

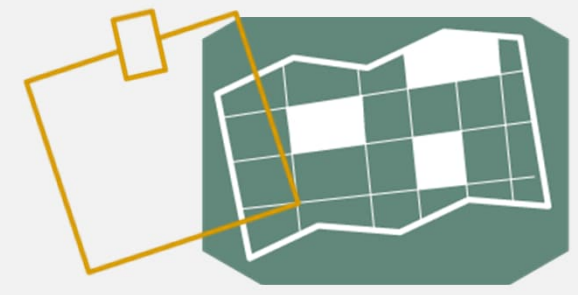
McCarthy Road
PEL Study





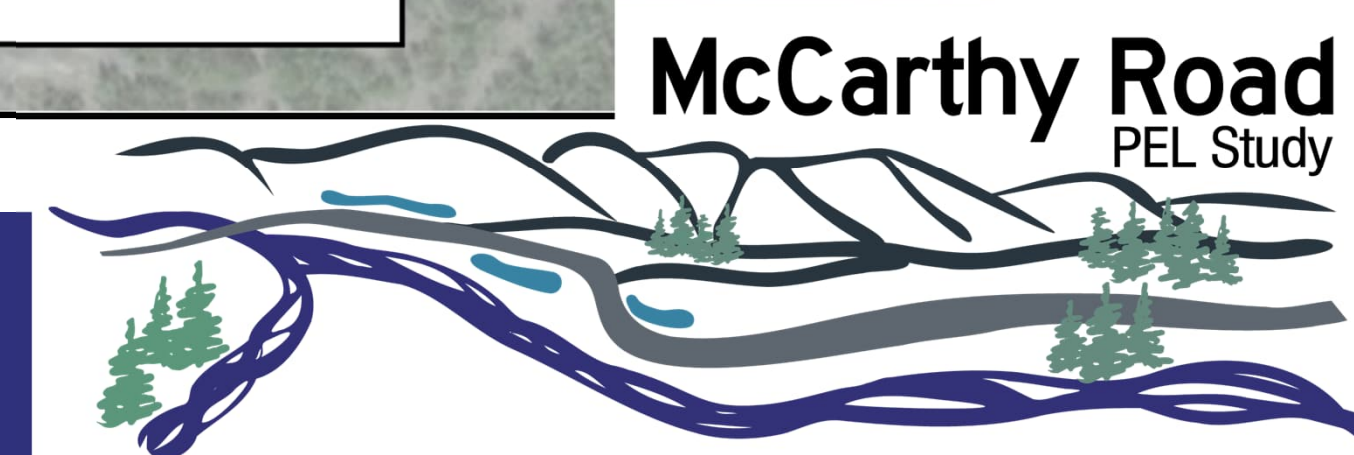
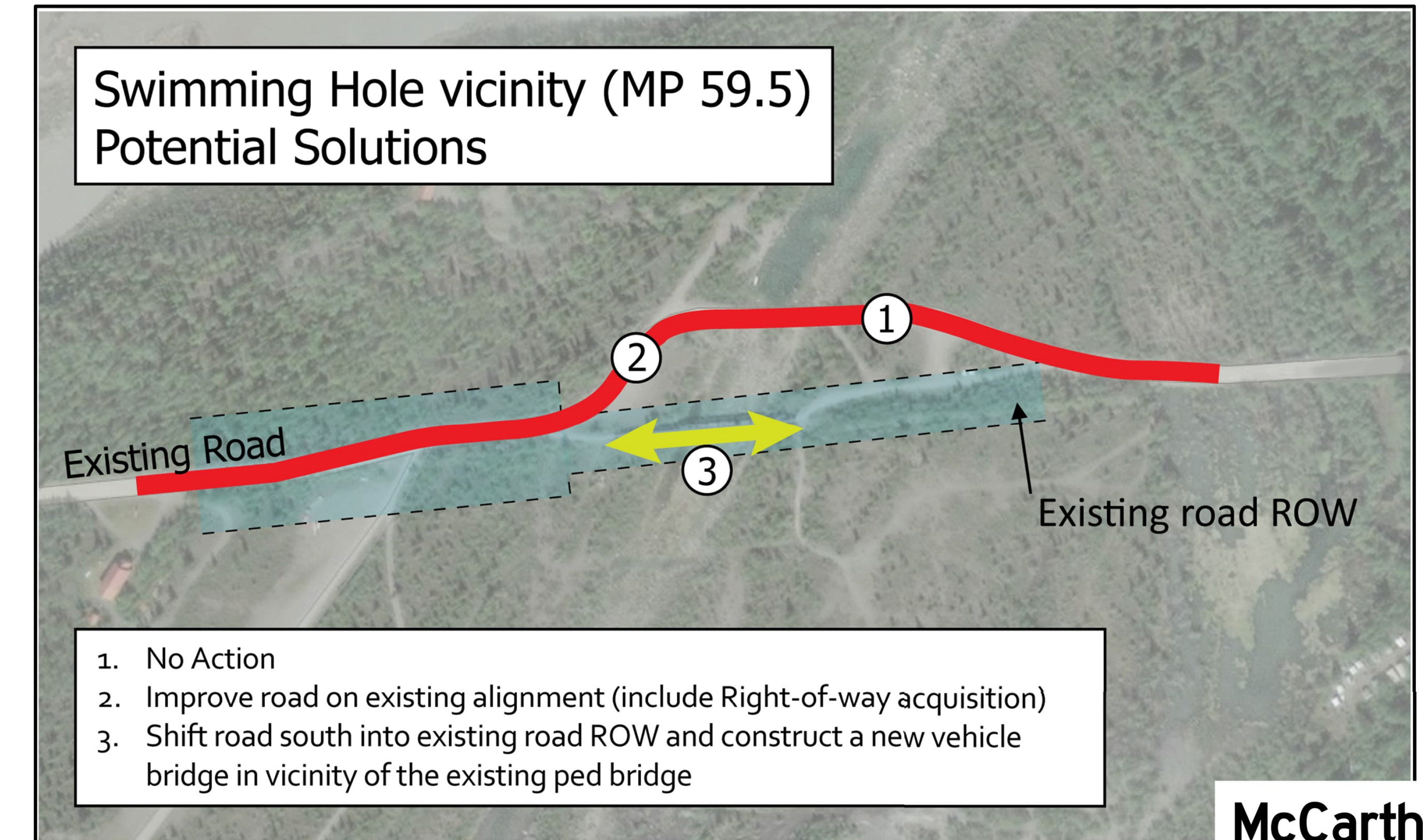
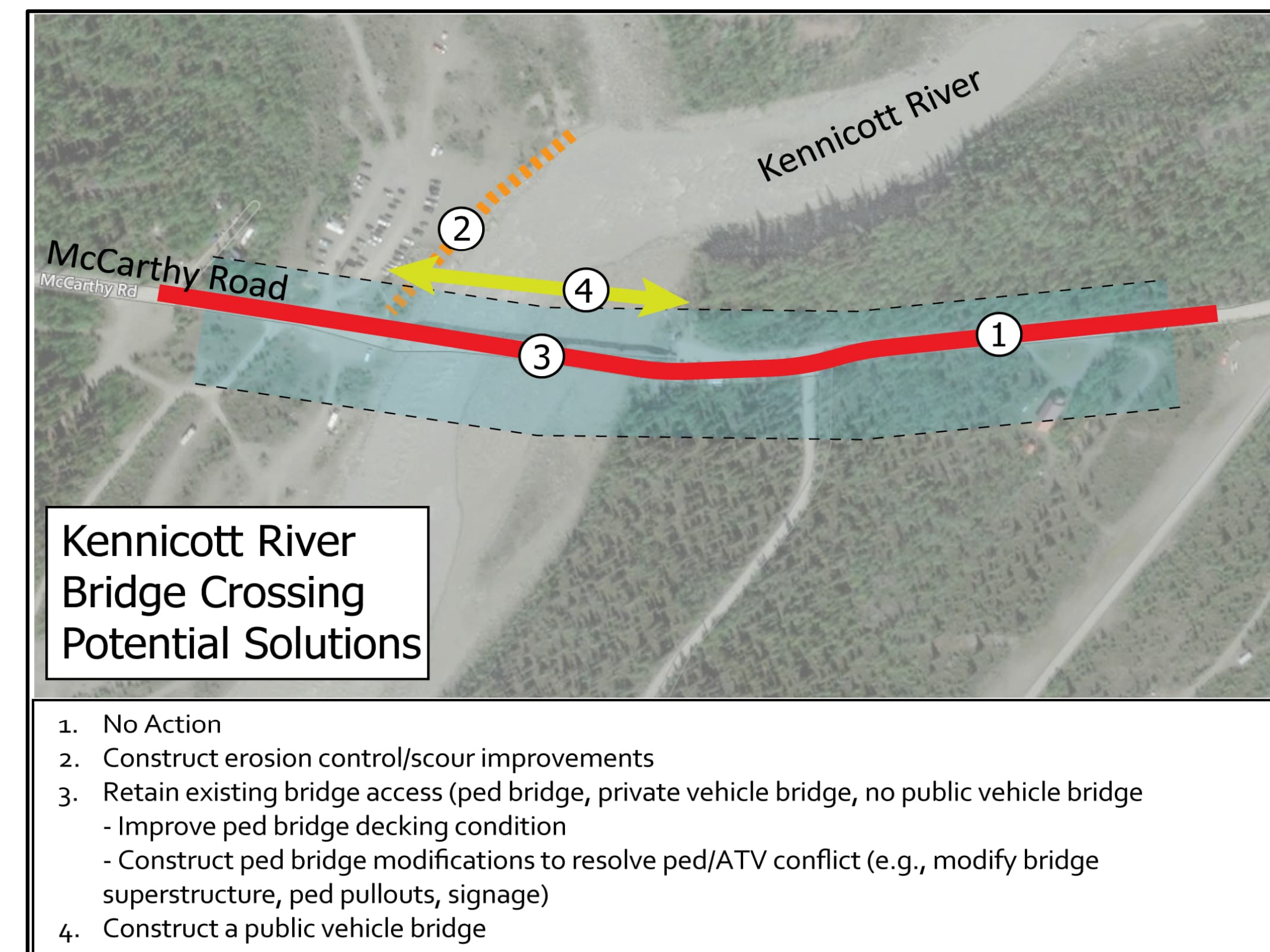
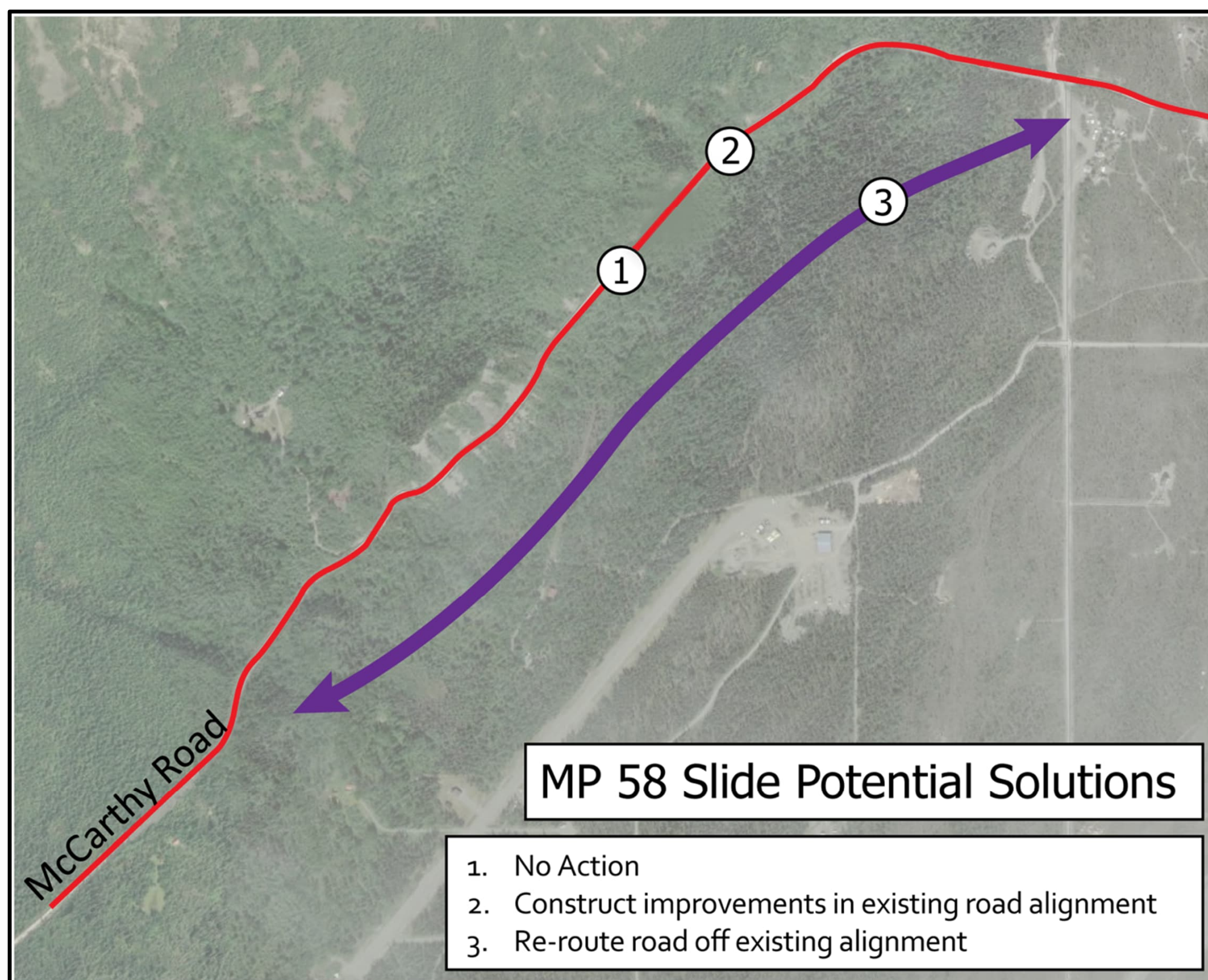
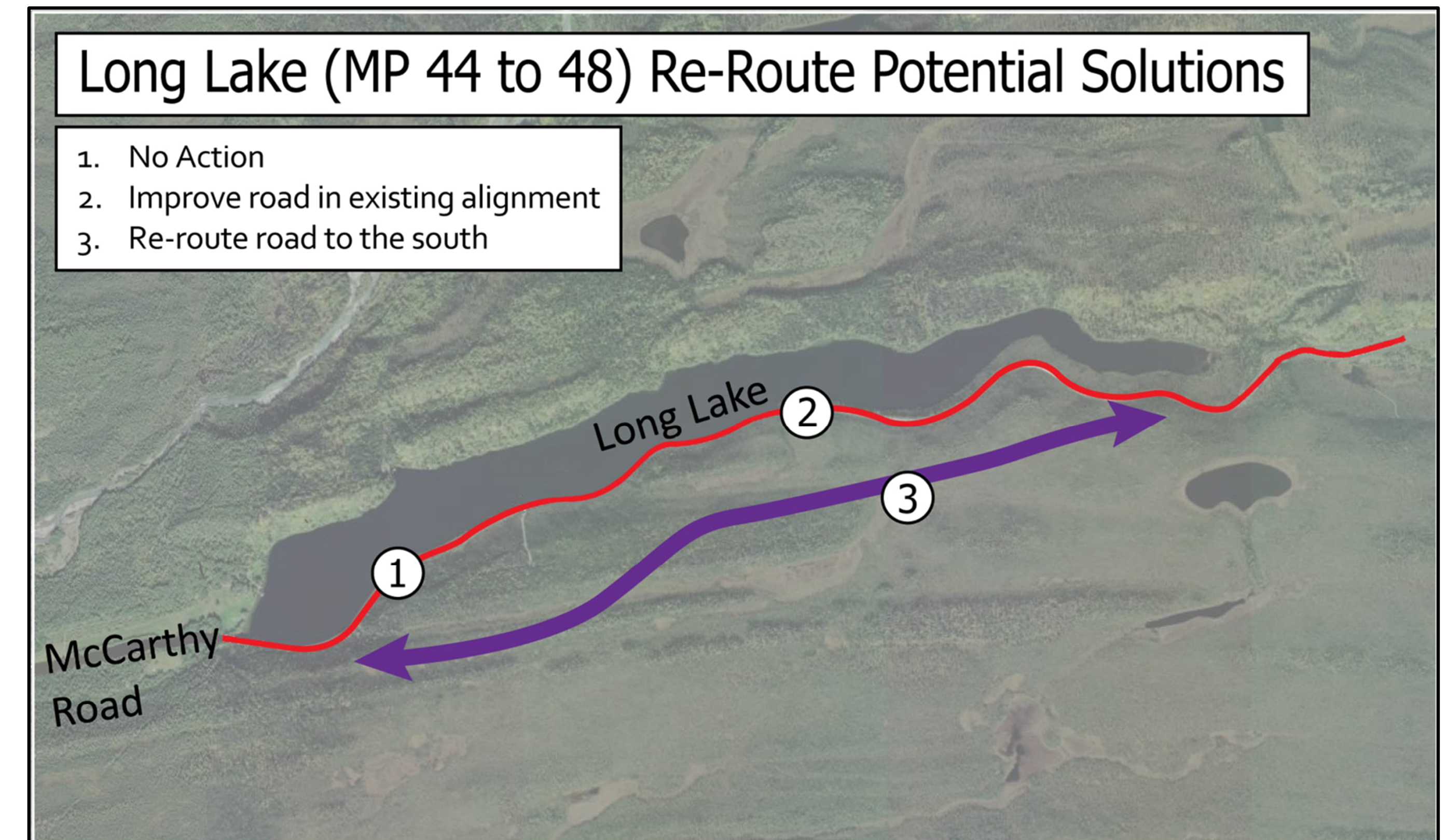
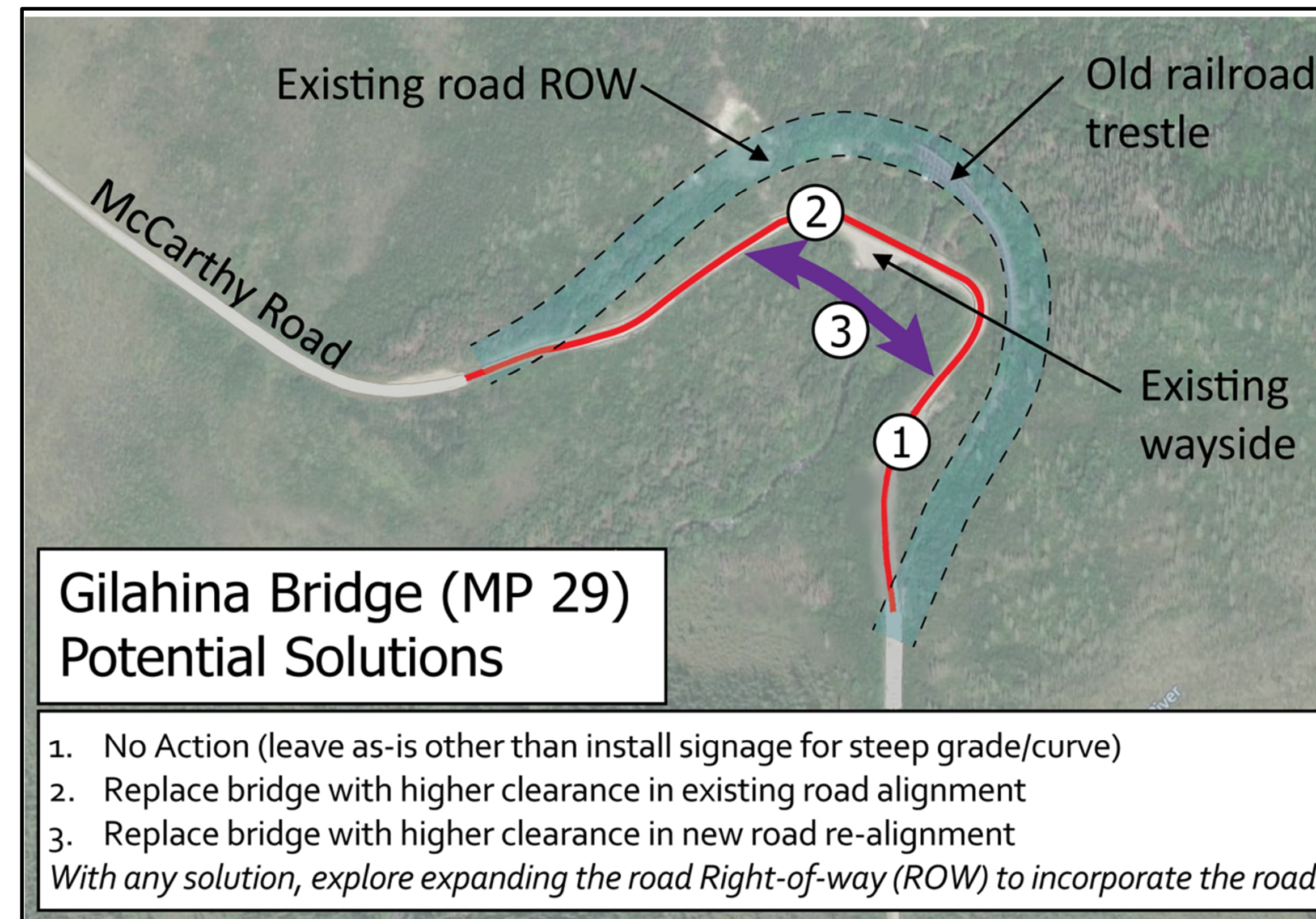
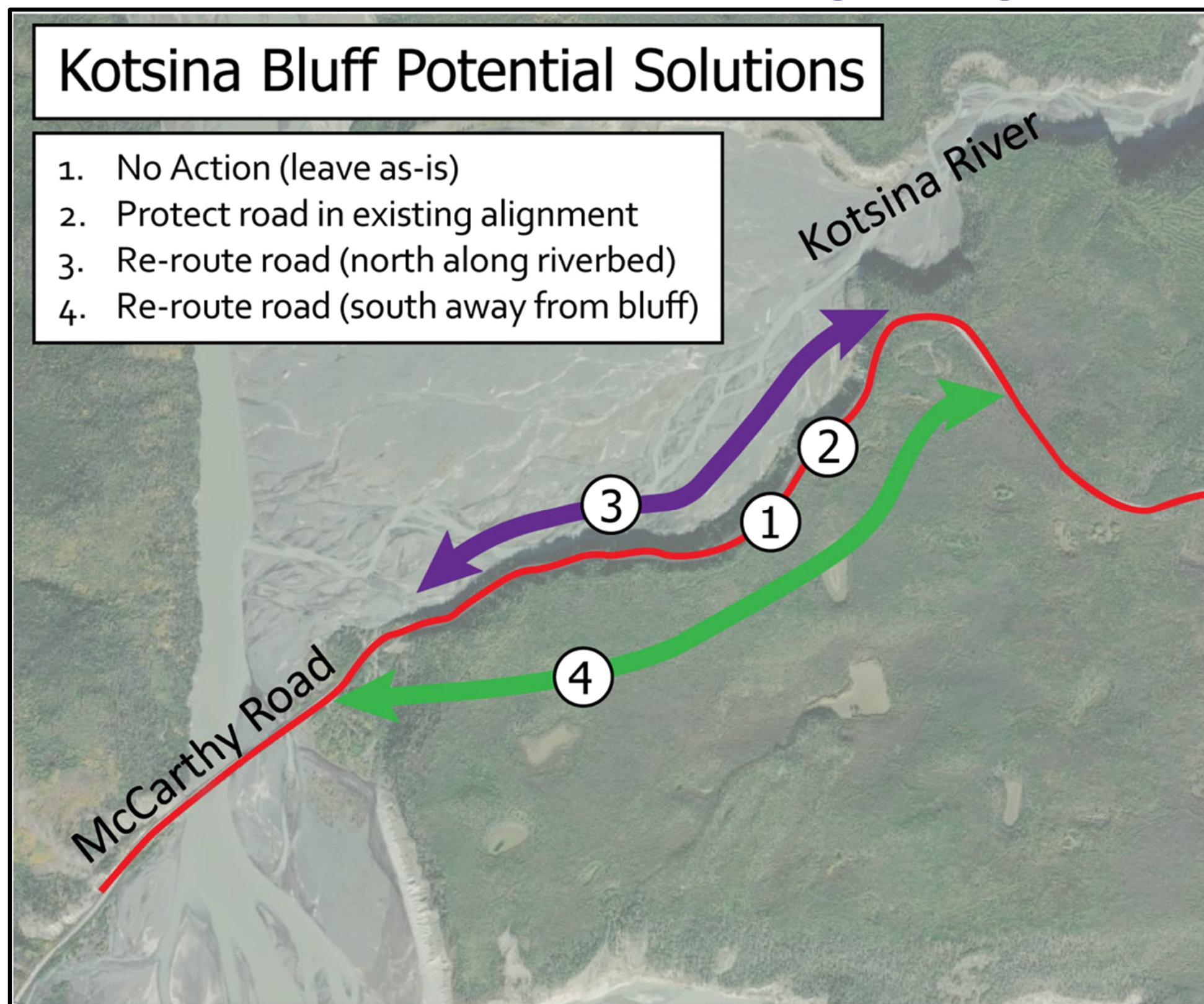
Visit the Online Open house between July 25 to Aug 25 to review materials, take some polls, and submit comments.

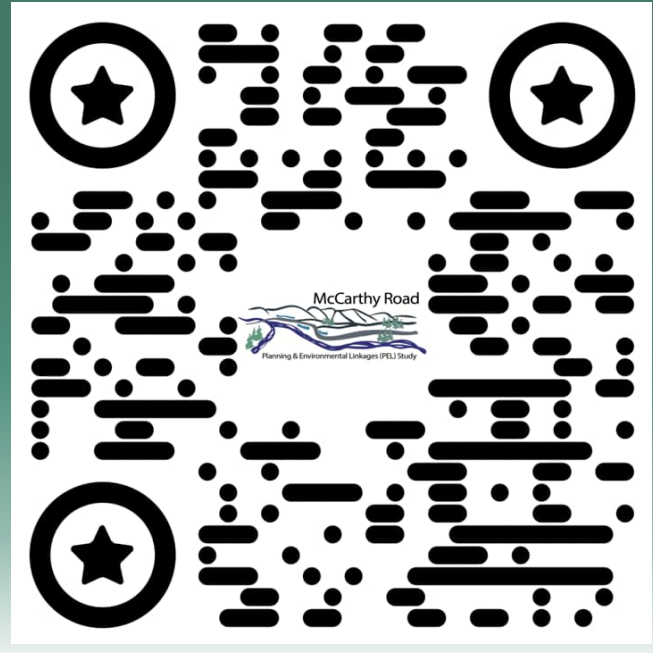
Potential Solutions Focus Areas Detail



Have comments? Write it on a sticky note and post on the large map.

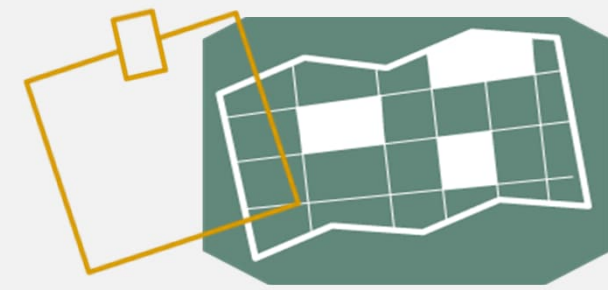
Specific geographic focus areas with more than one solution under consideration.





Visit the Online Open house between July 25 to Aug 25 to review materials, take some polls, and submit comments.

Potential Solutions Suggested Enhancements



Have comments? Are there other enhancements you think are important or that are missing? Write it on a sticky note and post on the large map.

Suggested Visitor Enhancements

Milepost (MP)	Pullouts
1.1	Install outhouses and trash cans during dipnetting season. Provide trash pickup service.
5	Expand/create a pullout for views above Chitina River (include picnic tables and outhouses)
17	Improve existing pullout to accommodate adequate number of vehicles
50.5	Construct new pullout for scenic views of Mount Blackburn
MP	Parking
1	Widen road to increase roadside parking, especially for dipnetting season
58.5	Facilitate parking and transition to the pedestrian bridge
59.5	Construct parking near swimming hole
59.6	Construct a one-vehicle parking spot near the water source of Clear Creek
60 to 64	Construct parking between McCarthy and Kennicott
MP	Signage
1.5	Create entrance statement: install "Welcome to McCarthy Road" sign
58.5	Install better sign for West Kennicott Glacier Trail
60	Construct interpretive panel at old dike location that was put in to protect the old railbed from glacier runoff
63	Install signs "State road ends here" and "No visitor parking within the Kennecott Subdivision and National Historic Landmark"
Corridor-wide	Replace missing and damaged mile markers
Corridor-wide	Install interpretive panels

Other suggested enhancements: Environmental (e.g., fish passage improvement)

Suggested Recreation Enhancements

Milepost (MP)	Trails, Lake Access, Trailheads
10.3	Improve Strelna Lake access (location not specified in public comment)
11.0	Improve Silver and Van Lakes public access at boat ramp (existing abrupt edge)
12.3	Improve Sculpin Lake access (location not specified in public comment)
14.5	Improve/create better parking for the Nugget Creek Trail (include outhouse & trash bins)
17.0	New potential trail: construct new trail on ridgeline on the west side of the Kuskualana River
28.8	Construct new trail near Gilahina River Bridge vicinity
34.6	Enhance Crystalline Hills Trailhead
46.5 to 48.5	If the road along Long Lake is re-routed, after realignment convert two miles of remnant road to a public trail (miles 46.5 - 48.5).
47.4	Identify a location & create a dedicated recreation access point to Long Lake
59.4	Create a separated walking/bike trail along the road corridor from Kennicott River to the road junction for McCarthy
59.6	Implement NPS' interpretive plan for area as a "recreation hub" (includes trailhead that would be located north of the current outhouse/wayside)
Corridor-wide	Construct a multi-use trail paralleling the roadway between Chitina and McCarthy



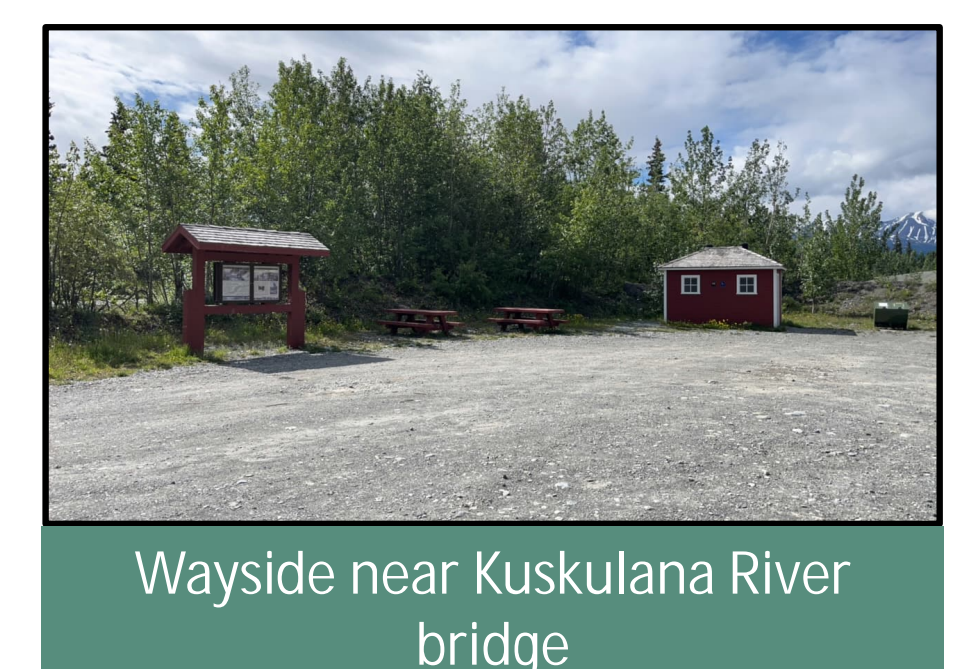
View at MP 5



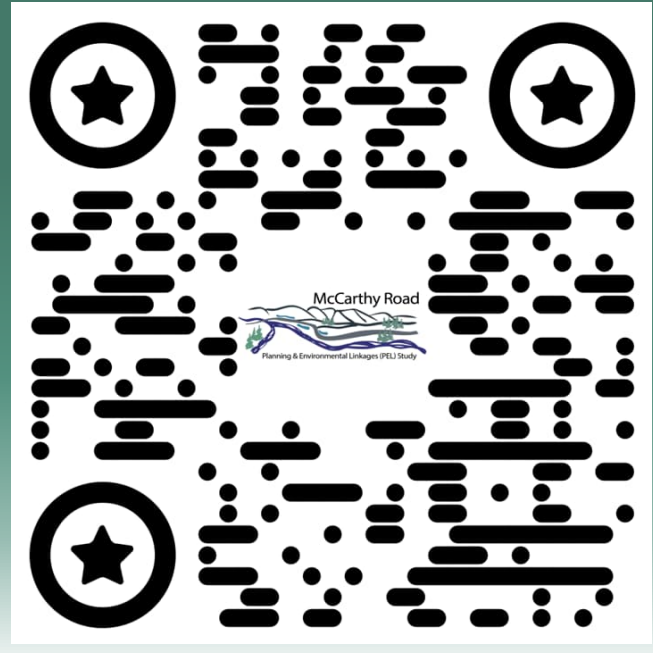
Interpretive panel along corridor



Suggested Long Lake recreation access improvements



Wayside near Kuskulana River bridge



Visit the Online Open house between July 25 to Aug 25 to review materials, take some polls, and submit comments.

Other Questions/Comments



Have questions or comments not covered today? Write them here or fill out a comment form.



**McCarthy Road Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study
Public Meeting #2 (Identifying Potential Solutions): Open House Notes
Location: Glenallen
July 30, 2024, 9:00 to 11:00am**

This meeting was one of three in-person public open houses held during the last week of July 2024, either near or within the McCarthy Road PEL study corridor. The purpose of the meeting was to seek public on the potential solutions that are under consideration for inclusion in the PEL study and the screening process that will be used to evaluate the potential solutions, which will result in a list of recommended projects to move forward in the PEL study.

The two-hour open house format included a brief presentation. The presentation consisted of study team introductions and descriptions of the content of the eight poster boards that were scattered within the room. Poster board contents included the following: welcome/overview; PEL process overview and schedule; recap of Phase 1; overview of Phase 2, including screening; potential solutions: focus area locations; focus area detailed maps; and suggested enhancements (visitor, recreation, environmental).

The public was encouraged to provide public comment in several ways, including:

- Write sticky notes and comments on the large map of the study area and potential solutions.
- Place dot stickers on the large map to indicate which potential solutions should be a priority.
- Fill out a comment form.
- Talk to the study team.
- Visit the online open house which runs for a month from July 25 to August 25.

About 10 people signed in.

Notes

The study team introduced themselves; this consisted of representatives from Western Federal Lands Highway Division, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), National Park Service, and Jacobs. Leslie Robbins (Jacobs) walked through the content of the posters. She said getting public input is important in this process and there are many ways to provide comments today and through the month-long online open house. After the brief

presentation members of the public provided comments and questions verbally. The potential solutions at Long Lake was one of several topics that was discussed.

Bob Behrens described that McCarthy Road along Long Lake is unsafe due to curves and the permafrost causing ongoing maintenance cost. A couple and their dog drove into the lake at least 20 years ago. He mapped all 14 private property corners to capture the outer private property boundary for a potential reroute around Long Lake that he said property owners are ok with. He did not address the engineering feasibility of construction on that path.

He's spent 20 years investigating and advocating the reroute. About 1.5 years ago, Bob helped a motorhome that was leaning over. If he hadn't helped right them, he believes they would have fallen off the road. He said the benefits of his proposal are: fixing glaciation, it has local support, recreational enhancement opportunities, revegetate the headwaters of a salmon stream, provides a fire break, and provides continuous access to Long Lake and Long Lake residents. He would like the figures to show his route and not the fat purple line because it will agitate people who are ok with the route he proposes. He's not concerned with the route beyond MP 46.5 because the route transitions from being adjacent to private land into just state land.

Another member of the public described that the state sale of properties on the north side of Long Lake was a big failure because the property owners don't have access to their property. Landowners have to park along the McCarthy Road to cross over the lake in winter. The McCarthy Road is a parking lot for them essentially.

Bruce Cain said the regional planning organization (RPO) formed for this kind of issue. It can advocate for projects in an official form. He had asked Bob to share the solution that has group consensus as long as there is no engineering reason not to use the proposed route.

Jennifer Bowman explained the Copper Valley Development Corporation provides administration for the RPO. Bowman stated the Long Lake project touches all the goals of the PEL. It is one of the high priorities for the region. She also mentioned that the Long Lake Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant lost to the PEL Study grant. However, Judy Chapman, DOT&PF Statewide Planning Chief, explained that moving a project forward at Long Lake would be the "cart before the horse" since the PEL study would be looking at the corridor, as a whole.

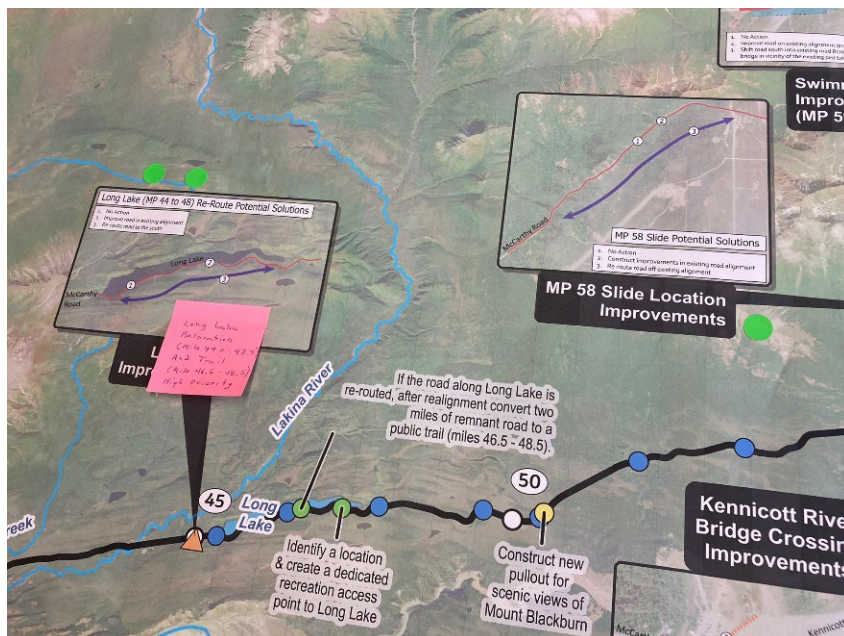
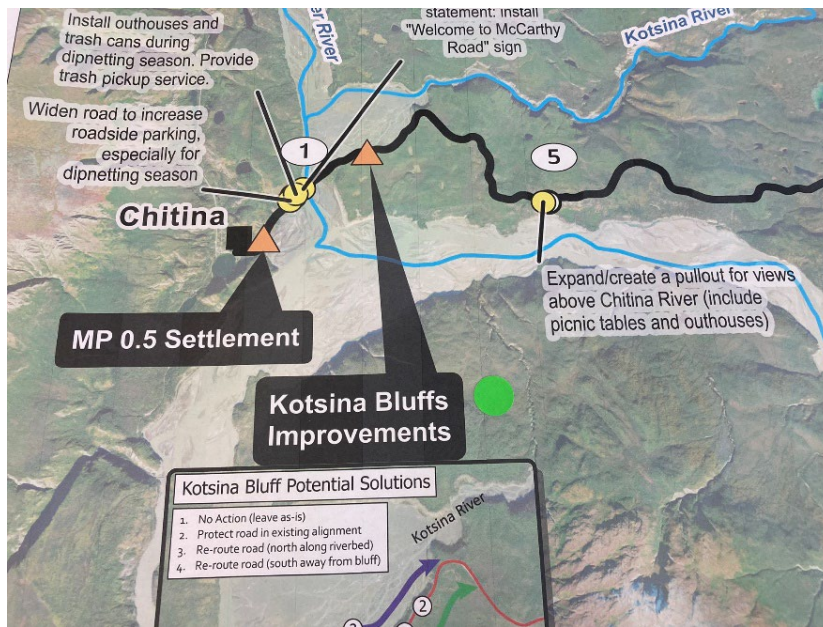
Brett Nelson (DOT&PF) understands there are unsafe winter driving conditions, but the state does not maintain the road in the winter. Unless the state turns it into an all-weather road, the state is not responsible for winter road maintenance. Unless the state gets crash data, it is difficult to score high in grants with low volume traffic and an accident from a long time ago. In regards to competing for maintenance funds, immediate concerns like slides take away maintenance and operations (M&O) dollars. Being creative with resources makes all the difference in being able to fund M&O and projects.

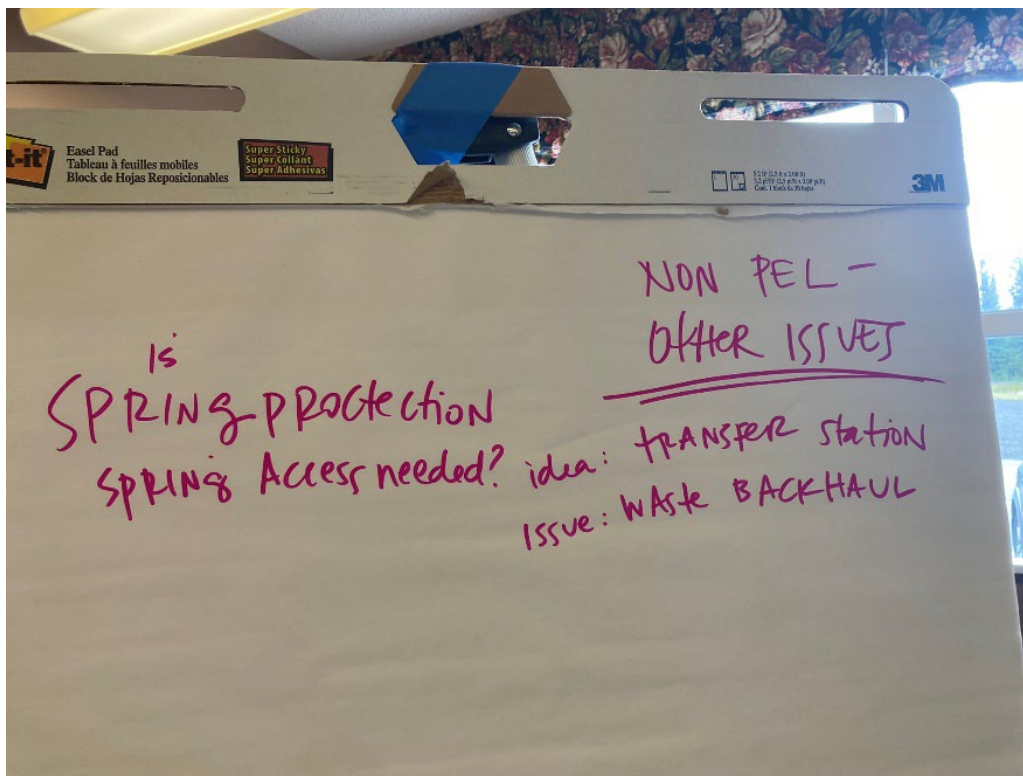
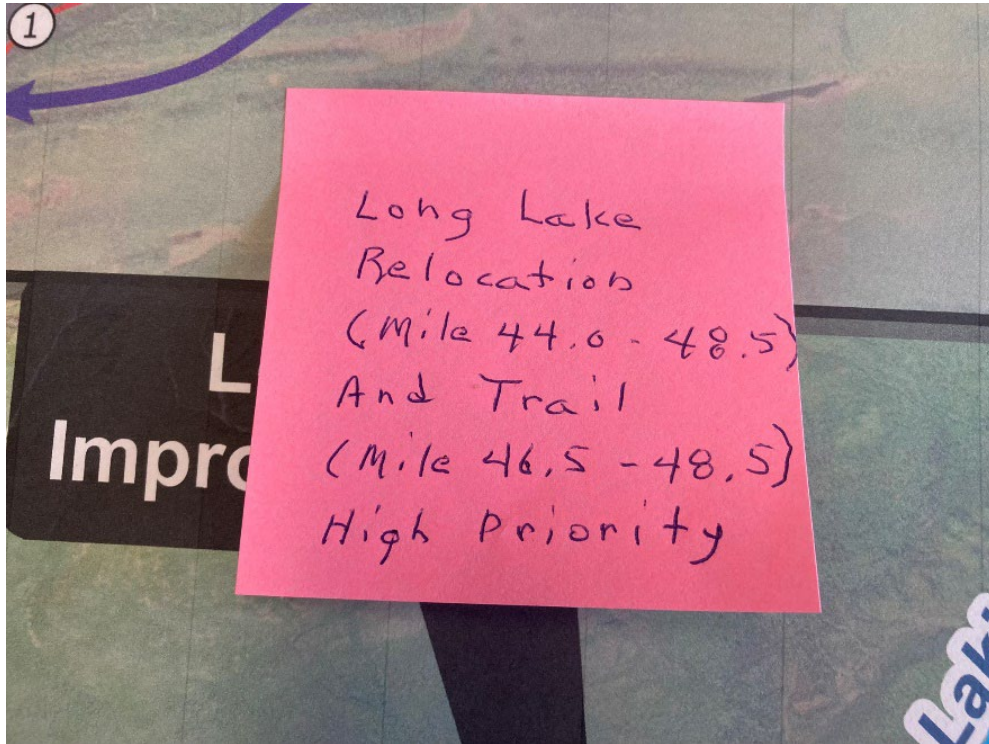
Jennifer: How do you decide what safety issue is more severe? Answer: The McCarthy Road corridor has limited data indicating vehicle crashes and other safety issues. With no data, we need to collect stories that can be compelling. And just because an issue may not be a priority for some potential sponsors, doesn't mean you can't pursue funding. It just depends on the pot of money and the advocates.

Representatives from Copper Valley Telecom, proponents of the proposed fiber optic cable project attended the meeting. They stated that they would want to coordinate their fiber route to take approximately the same path as Bob's proposed Long Lake reroute.

Large Roll Plot Map Comments

The following photos show the results of the sticky dot map exercise. Attendees were asked to place dot stickers next to the potential solutions shown on the map to indicate which solutions should be a priority. The dot exercise was not a voting exercise but an indication of focus areas the public is interested in prioritizing. Photos also show the sticky note comments provided by the public.



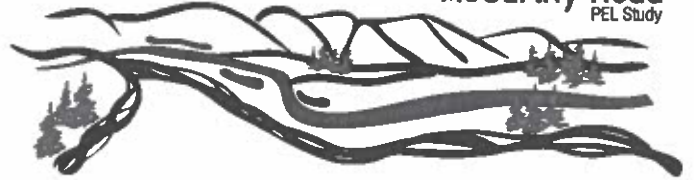


McCarthy Road Planning
and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study

Sign-In Sheet

Meeting: Glennallen

7/30/24



Name, Organization (if relevant)

Email (to be added to project mailing list)

Kim Wetzel, Jacobs

kim.wetzel@jacobs.com

ROBERT Cyr

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Jennifer Bauman

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valley.org

Bob Behrends

rwbehrends@gmail.com

David Hooper

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SCOTT FOSTER

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Brett Nelson

brett.nelson@alaska.gov

BRUCE CAIN

BCAIN@ATHNA.NET

JOE BOVER

jbover@athna.net



**McCarthy Road Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study
Public Meeting #2 (Identifying Potential Solutions): Open House Notes
Location: Chitina
July 30, 2024, 6:00 to 8:00pm**

This meeting was one of three in-person public open houses held during the last week of July 2024, either near or within the McCarthy Road PEL study corridor. The purpose of the meeting was to seek public input on the potential solutions that are under consideration for inclusion in the PEL study and the screening process that will be used to evaluate the potential solutions, which will result in a list of recommended projects to move forward in the PEL study.

The two-hour open house format included a brief presentation. The presentation consisted of introducing the study team and describing the content of the eight poster boards that were scattered around the room. Poster board contents included the following: welcome/overview; PEL process overview and schedule; recap of Phase 1; overview of Phase 2, including screening; potential solutions: focus area locations; focus area detailed maps; and suggested enhancements (visitor, recreation, environmental).

The public was encouraged to provide public comment in several ways, including:

- Write sticky notes and comments on the large map of the study area and potential solutions.
- Place dot stickers on the large map to indicate which potential solutions should be a priority.
- Fill out a comment form.
- Talk to the study team.
- Visit the online open house which runs for a month from July 25 to August 25.

About 22 people signed in.

Notes

The study team introduced themselves; this consisted of representatives from Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFL), Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), National Park Service, and Jacobs. Seth English-Young (WFL) welcomed the public and explained why a PEL study is being conducted. Leslie Robbins (Jacobs) walked through the content of the posters. Leslie said getting public input is important in this process and there are

many ways to provide comment today and through the month-long online open house. After the brief presentation members of the public provided comments and questions verbally.

Question or Comment (Q): Do you consider socioeconomic impacts?

Yes, environmental impacts will be a consideration.

Q: How do you prioritize projects when some are long-term?

The PEL study will look at near- and long-term solutions.

Q: If you don't fix the Kotsina bluff slide issue, all the other projects don't matter. Another audience member agreed.

Q: With reference to the historic railroad, in the rocks there are still cracks where they blew up the historic railroad route. This seems unstable. For the Chitina rock cut, we need to realize how it was built.

Q: Will you pay state-trained monitors for work on Tribal Lands? Maybe a local monitor could be used for each local area. We need to put this on the minds of the planners. It will bring local engagement [to have local hire/jobs].

Judy Chapman (DOT&PF) explained there are a few ways to do this. , Federal contracting requires that we follow appropriate policy and guidance. To meet this kind of need, the State has brought local union representatives to communities to explain their future needs; e.g. "post award conferences" where the number of licensed drivers or rooms they'll need. Some projects are so big they require labor from out of state.

Q: What are last year's road traffic counts?

Available historic traffic counts for the McCarthy Road can be found in the Needs & Opportunities report. This is available on the project website.

Q: When the road is much busier in summer, the drivers are reckless.

Q: Fishermen stop in Chitina. People speed on the Edgerton Highway, Chitina and McCarthy. They hit our moose and baby moose.

Q: Your study needs to address the source of [roadwork construction] material. One location is not enough. Judy agrees this should be included in an appendix of the PEL. The Kotsina material was good for high float but not for packing the road. Haul distances are a limiting factor for contractors. They should be given other material pit options.

Q: We had 9 villages here in the past in the region. We were a Nation. Now we have to say "Village" but we were a nation! Chitina was almost the capital of Alaska. There were 2,500 people back when Anchorage was just a tent city. No matter where you cut, where you reroute the road, you are going over our people [gravesites]. Concern over burial sites at O'Brien Creek could be repeated with any changes to McCarthy Road.

Large Roll Plot Map Comments

The following photos show the results of the sticky dot map exercise. Attendees were asked to place dot stickers next to the potential solutions shown on the map to indicate which solutions should be a priority. The dot exercise was not intended to be a voting exercise but to indicate focus areas the public is interested in prioritizing. Photos also show the sticky note comments provided by the public.

Sticky Notes Comments:

Kotsina Bluffs: Glad that the bluff is a top priority. If that slides, no other project matters.

Kotsina Bluffs: Favor #3 (re-route road north along riverbed) if protecting road (option #2), the road needs to be widened so the constant dirt slides don't come onto the road as far.

Kotsina Bluffs: The road needs to be wider with additional pullouts.

Kotsina Bluffs: Widen the road where bluffs are. Slide material comes out onto road.

Between MP 10 and 15: [look at mark-ups on map for correct lake labels for Strelna, Sculpin, Silver and Van lakes]

Between MP 10 and 15: Three graves on south side as marked on map.

Between MP 10 and 15: This is walk in access only – boats not likely to be pulled in – but a friendlier foot access would be nice.

Between MP 10 and 15: We need speed limit signs.

Between MP 10 and 15: Better parking at Sculpin Lake at Mile 12.0. People park in the ditch now or on the road.

Near Kuskulana River bridge. Bluff areas on north side of Kuskulana need to be pushed back to keep material from coming on to road.

Mile 35.8: Road will have to be raised. Water on both sides of road and poor drainage.
Ditching/channeling water to new/existing culverts

Mile 40: Creek from mountains keeps changing channels. Ditching needs to take place to route water to culverts.

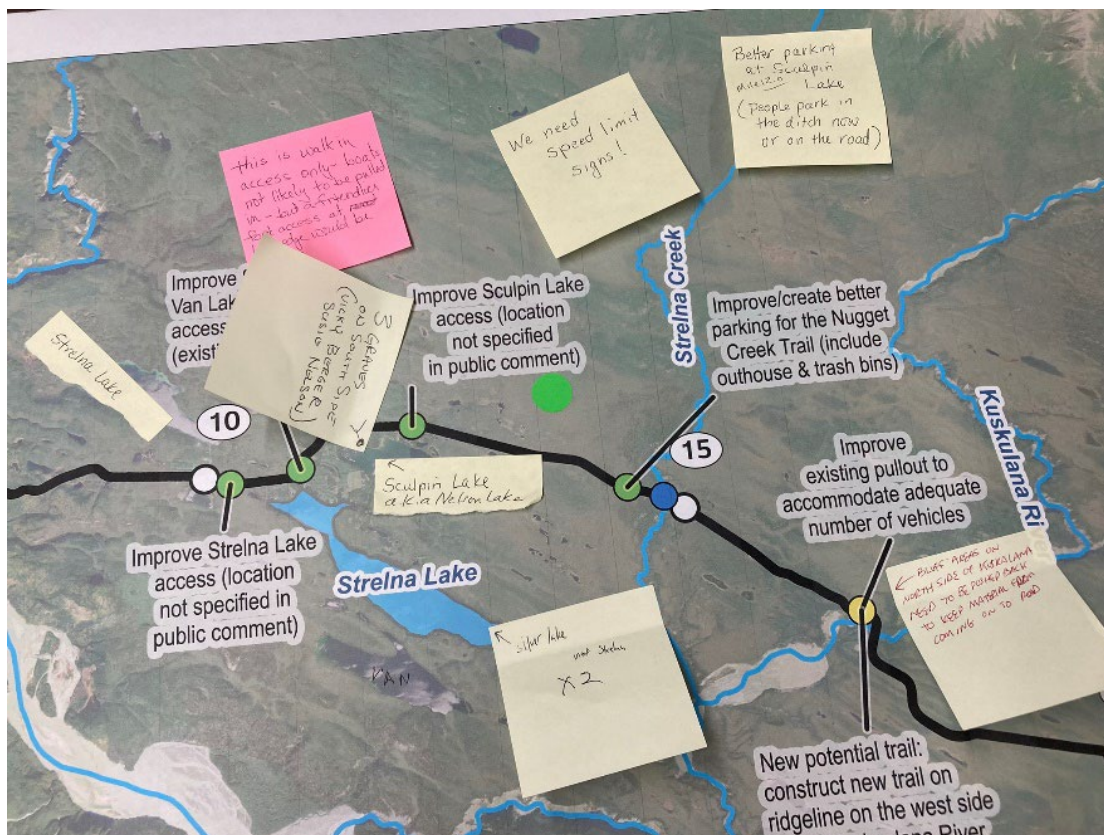
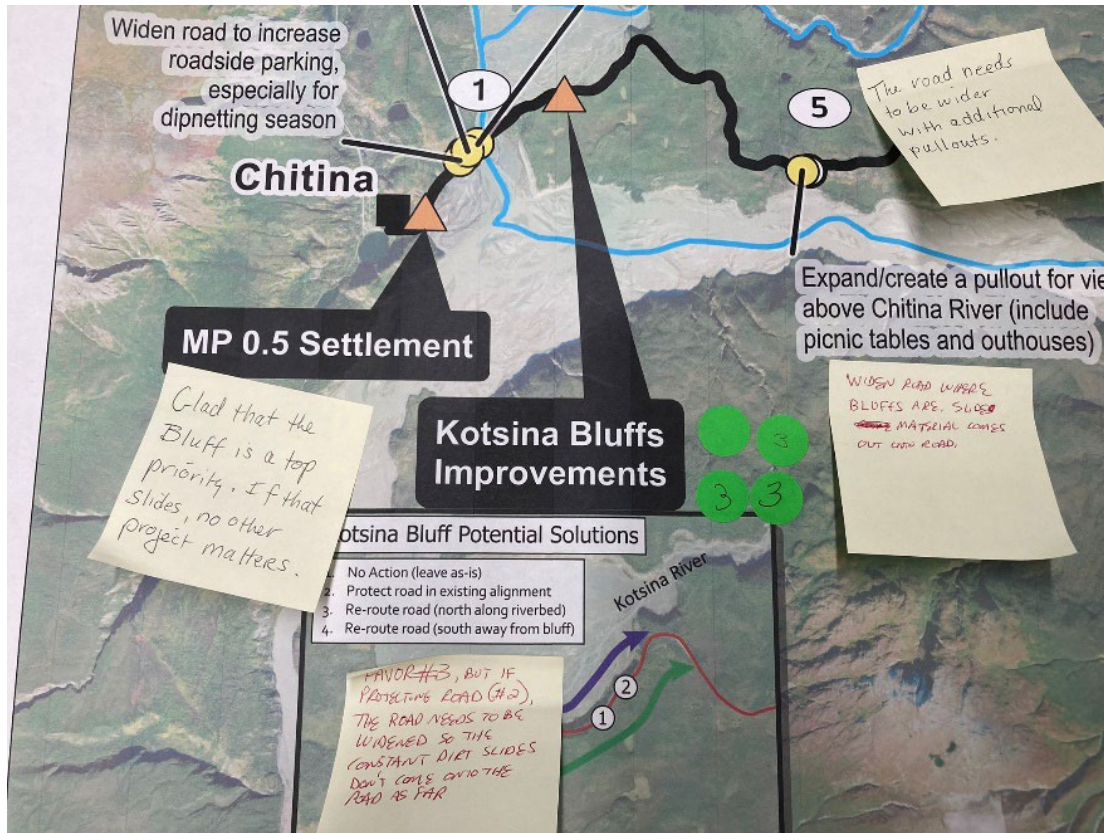
Mile 41: Crystal Creek bluff. Road is very narrow and steep drop-off. Widening here is critical.

Long Lake: Please show the project title of the Long Lake reroute (mile 44.0 to 48.5) and trail (mile 46.5 to 48.5) to reflect both the reroute and trail. All people and organizations that know and are in favor of this project know they are both part of the project. Thank you.

Mile 48.4 to 49.5: no ditch on north side of road

MP 58: Favor #3 (re-route road off existing alignment) as that whole hillside is moving. If road is widened, it will just cause more sliding.

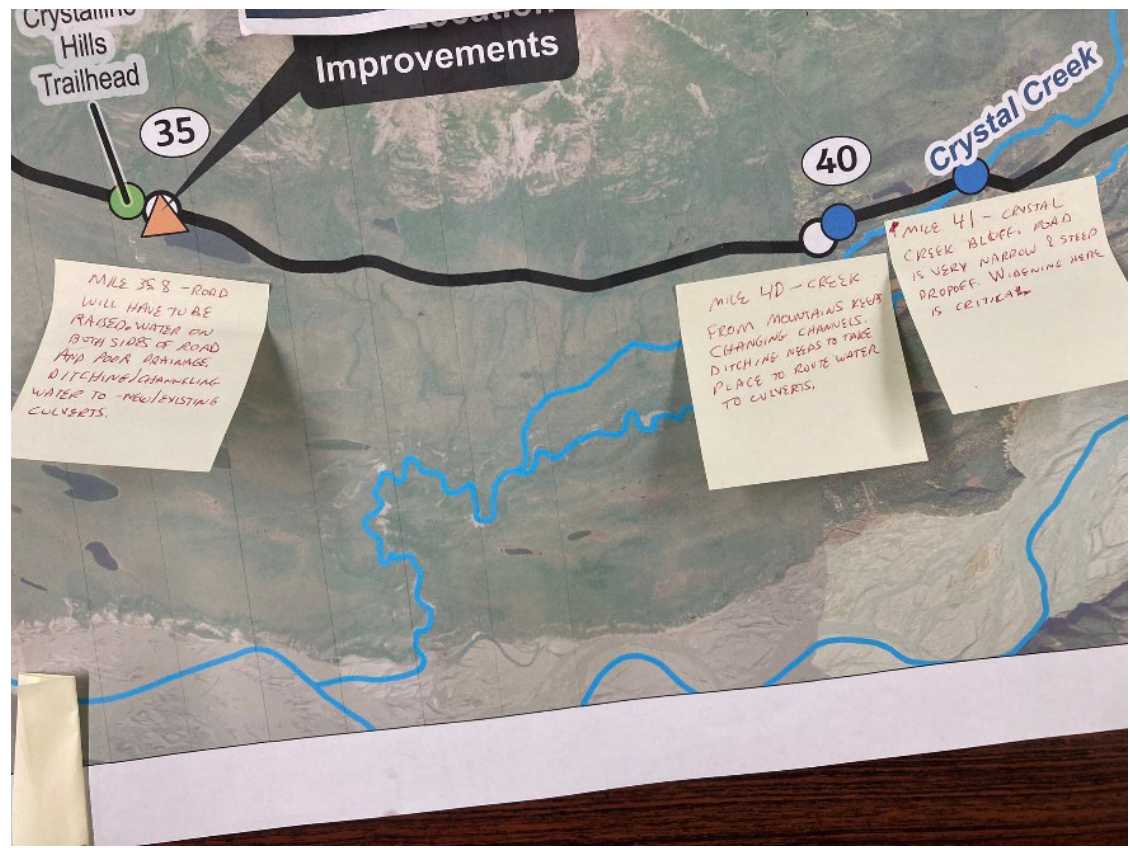
Kennicott River crossing: not enough room for full public vehicle access in McCarthy. Serious negative impacts.

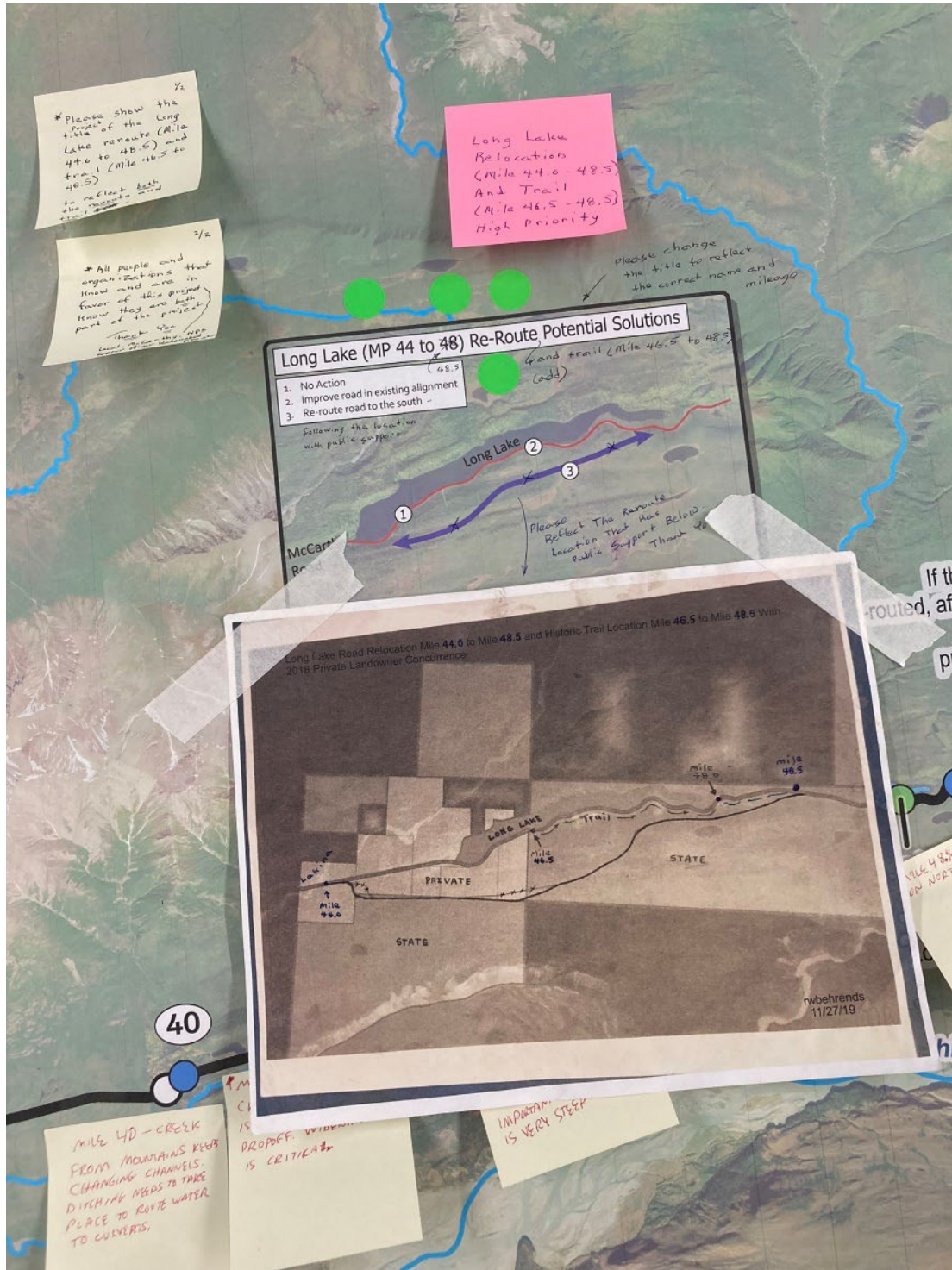


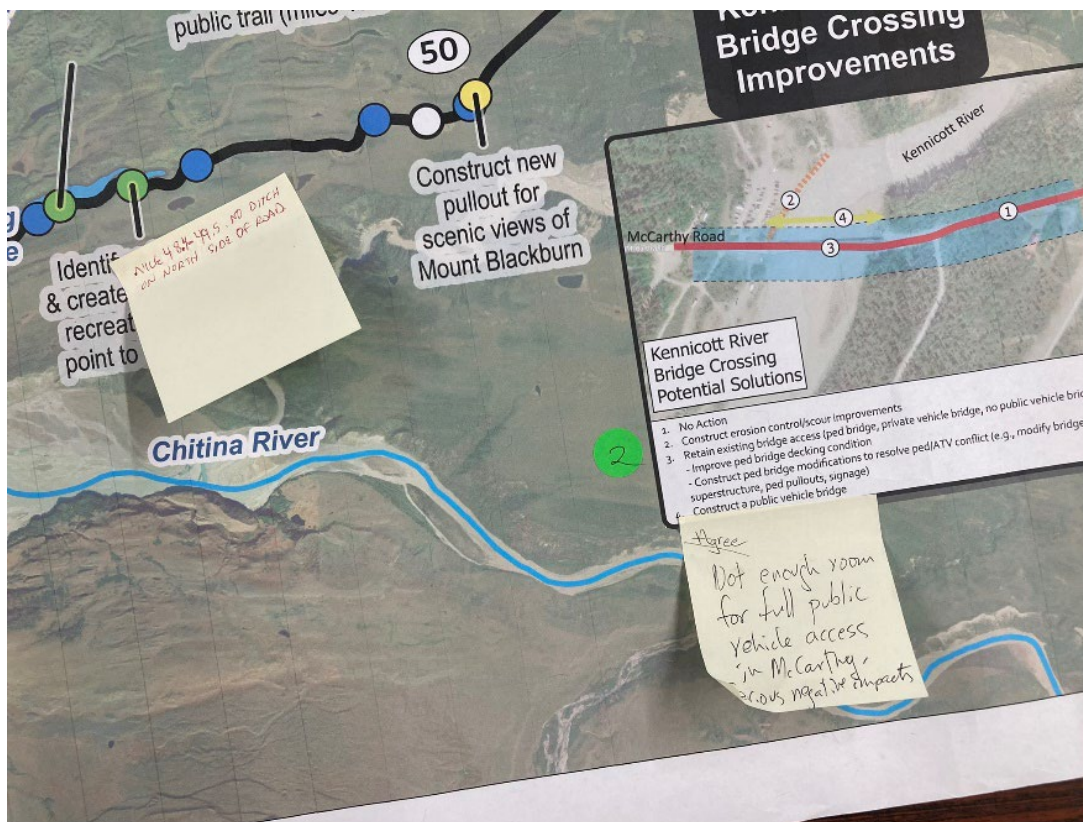
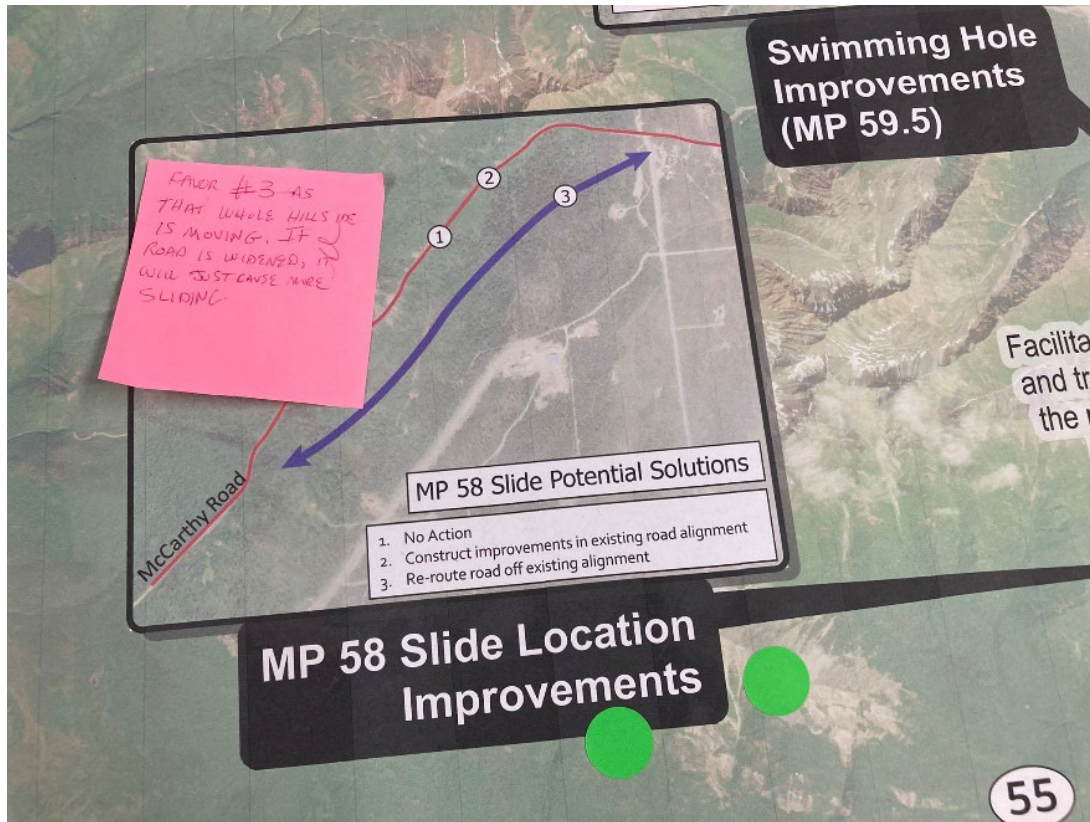
Suggested Recreation Enhancements

Milepost (MP)	Trails, Lake Access, Trailheads
10.3	Improve Strelna Lake access (location not specified)
11.0	Improve Silver and Van Lakes public access at boat ramp
12.3	Improve lake access (location not specified)
14.5	Better parking for the Nugget Creek
17.0	Trail: construct new trail on ridgeline
28.8	Construct new trail near Gilahina River Bridge vicinity
34.6	Enhance Crystalline Hills Trailhead
46.5 to 48.5	If the road along Long Lake is re-routed, after realignment remnant road to a public trail (miles 46.5 - 48.5).

Public Access to Sculpin Lake is at Mile 12.0







McCarthy Road Planning
and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study
Sign-In Sheet

McCarthy Road
PEL Study



Chitna Public Meeting

Name, Organization (if relevant)

Email (to be added to project mailing list)

Shannon Monear

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Tony (Julie) Knutson

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Daniel E. Stevens

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Francis and Kirsten Nelson

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Bob Behrends

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Angelina Alexander

John Wilson

Sean IRIS

Judy

chitina_dan@yahoo.com

Brett

CORDOVA BILL

Paul

spar w/ Cassius Clay

Jon

Leslie

Kimi

Dean, Tribal Administrator
Everett



**McCarthy Road Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study
Public Meeting #2 (Identifying Potential Solutions): Open House Notes
Location: McCarthy, EMS Building
July 31, 2024, 6:00 to 8:00pm**

This meeting was one of three in-person public open houses held during the last week of July 2024, either near or within the McCarthy Road PEL study corridor. The purpose of the meeting was to seek public input on the potential solutions that are under consideration for inclusion in the PEL study and the screening process that will be used to evaluate the potential solutions, which will result in a list of recommended projects to move forward in the PEL study.

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- Fill out a comment form.
- Talk to the study team.
- Visit the online open house which runs for a month from July 25 to August 25.

More than 50 people attended the meeting; 20 comment sheets were submitted.

Notes

Seth English-Young (Western Federal Lands Highway Division) introduced why we're doing the PEL and the study team.

Judy Chapman (Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities [DOT&PF]) described future funding opportunities.

Jonathan Shafer (National Park Service [NPS], Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve) described the NPS' interest in hearing from the public this evening.

Leslie Robbins (Jacobs) walked through the content of the posters while answering questions. She said getting public input is important in this process and there are many ways to provide comments this evening.

Audience member said he was confused and angry that a public vehicle bridge is shown as being proposed.

Audience member was confused whether the green dots on the roll plot represent taking an action or no action at a particular focus area. Seth explained the dot exercise is a way to help visualize where the greatest interest lies.

Attendee said the planning team did a great job with the online open house. She was glad to see the raw comments from the first public meeting. She knows that she was heard.

Q: What is the best way to comment if we have more comments or attachments than the online open house allows? Leslie explained that emailing is a good strategy; an email address was included in the online open house for that purpose.

Q: Is there a way to still add suggestions? Why isn't brushing on the focus areas list? He suggested a 5, 10 or 20-year brushing plan. Leslie explained yes; part of the reason for the open house is to seek input from the public: *are there any focus areas or issues that are missing that should be addressed?*

Audience member described a feeling of anxiety about the dots like an action is happening. Seth explained the dots are a visual tool.

Who prioritizes? Leslie explained that getting public input now is a critical part of identifying priorities. She said the team would be reaching out to the public once virtually more next spring.

Attendee explained that there was a lot of development in the 1990s including the installation of telephone service. But for people new to the area, it felt like so much! So this presentation of a lot of changes; it can feel like a lot to new people.

Q: If the community agreed on something but NPS had a different priority what would happen? Jon Shafer from NPS explained the reality is we're all neighbors. We'd have a conversation about what we can accomplish together. We think of it as a "yes...and.." conversation. I completely understand the anxiety. It's not a place of arbitrary or rash decisions. Leslie suggested thinking of a Venn diagram where the place of overlapping agreement is where we want to be. An attendee asked about the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). Paul Eckman described the composition and role of the PAC.

Long Lake resident (Bob Behrens) described the car that rolled into Long Lake in the 1980s. A woman added that one of the people was her nephew who worked for DOT. Bob gave his reasons supporting the Long Lake reroute and trail potential solution.

An audience member described that the reason for the community's anxiety is the potential for open access to McCarthy. A vigorous planning process landed on a footbridge. He wants the planning team to walk away knowing the McCarthy community does NOT want an open access vehicle bridge. We'll all agree on the other safety projects for the McCarthy Road. The controversial issue will tank the plan. He asked for a raise of hands.

A woman countered that she lives on the west side, and she wouldn't get EMS response since there is no bridge.

A man countered that the Rowlands did not hesitate to open their gate for the private vehicle traffic when it was needed during past emergencies.

Seth described "how the sausage is made" in funding PEL study recommendations and not to expect drastic changes to result from the planning process. Seth explained that this is a planning study and does not provide any funding to implement any of the recommendations that may result from the PEL process.

Q: Is all this info [from the posters] available on the Online Open House? Yes.

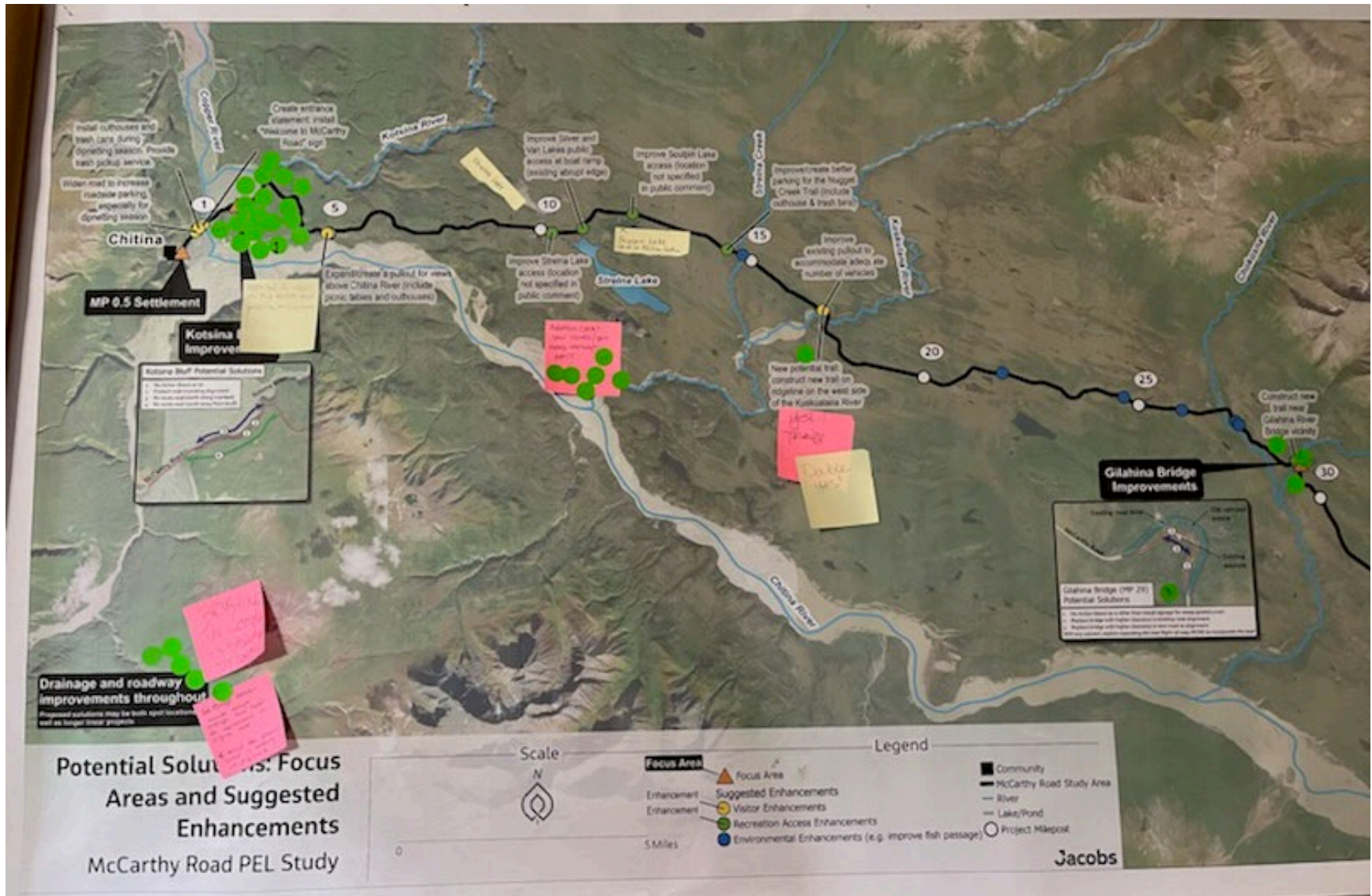
Q: Who will be involved in the process? Getting input from the public and PAC.

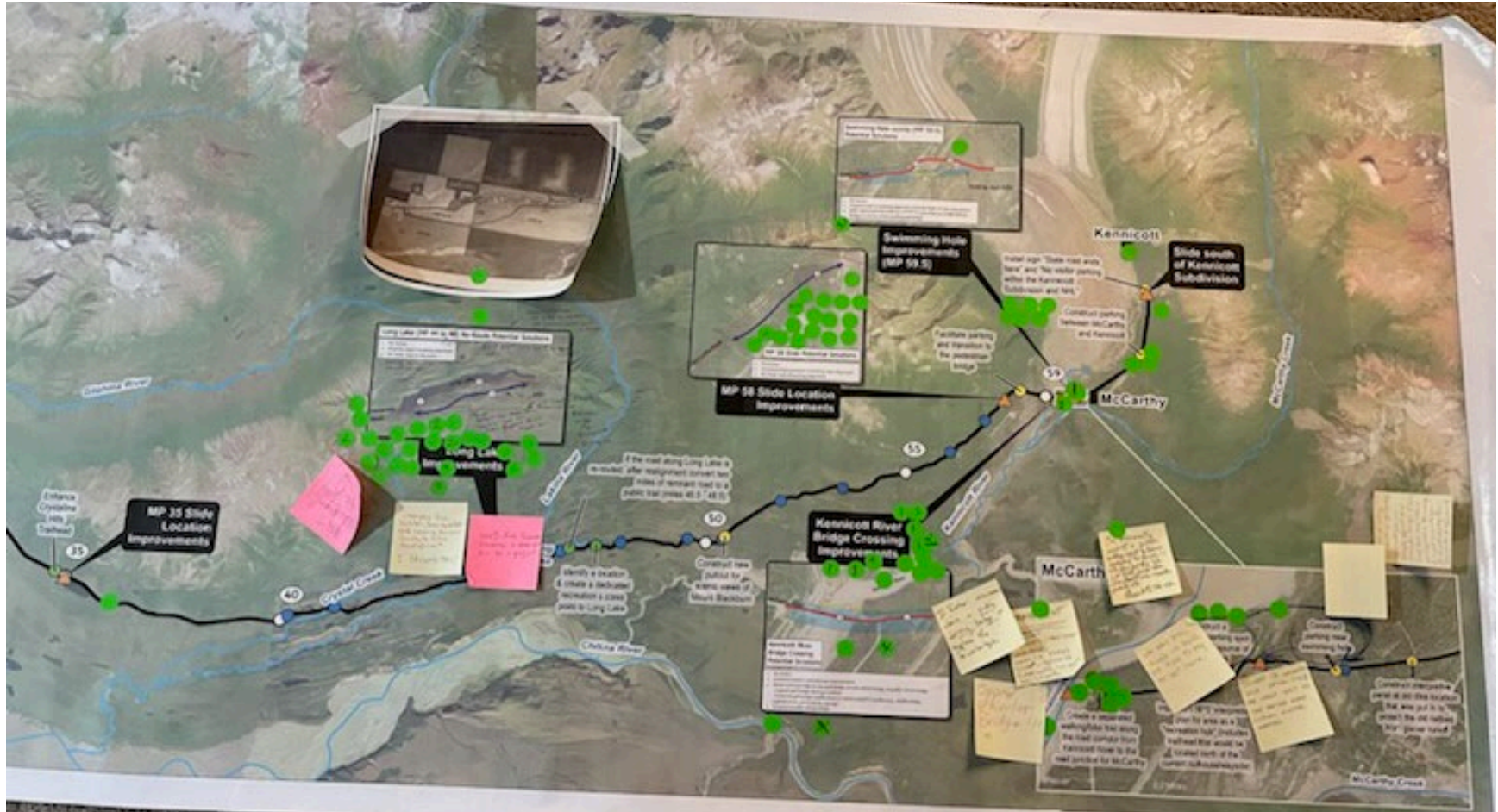
Q: Is the PAC information on the website? Yes.

Sticky Dot Exercise

The following photos show the results of the sticky dot map exercise. Attendees were asked to place dot stickers next to the potential solutions shown on the map to indicate which solutions should be a priority. The dot exercise was not intended to be a voting exercise but to indicate focus areas the public is interested in prioritizing.

Subsequent photos show the sticky note comments provided by the public.





Sticky Notes Comments:

Brushing the corridor is essential two times per year.

Fish passage concerns: Include culvert rankings and needs for improvement on project map.

Use weed free gravel used in entirety of project.

Yes – trails. Double yes.

Kotsina Bluffs segment: critical to access on the entire road. Possible realignment.

Address chip seal issues / potholes through MP 17.

Gilahina bridge: have you looked at re-routing the Gilahina bridge above the trestle instead of below?

Rename to: Long Lake (MP 44 to 48.5) Re-Route and trail (Mile 46.5 to 48.5)

Long Lake: Interrupting fish habitat, bear habitat and opening too much country to future development. I second this!

Long Lake: 100% fish passage crossing is designed for this project.

Enhancement: Mile 56.2, Community/ cabin owner, water access, water line through culvert. Options of future water line and new culvert.

Kennicott River Bridge: I favor discussion about a public driving bridge to replace the foot bridge.

Kennicott River Bridge: oppose vehicular bridge!!! +1

Kennicott River Bridge: I'm vehemently against a public bridge that allows everyone to drive into McCarthy. We just don't have the infrastructure – roads, parking etc. +1

Kennicott River Bridge: No public highway bridge across river +1

Kennicott River Bridge: We need public access. We should not have to pay to get home.

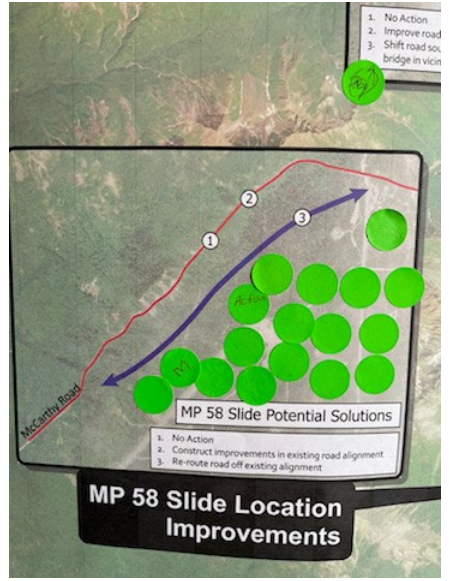
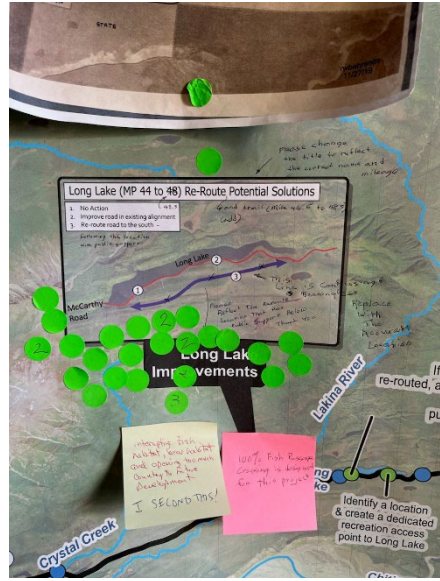
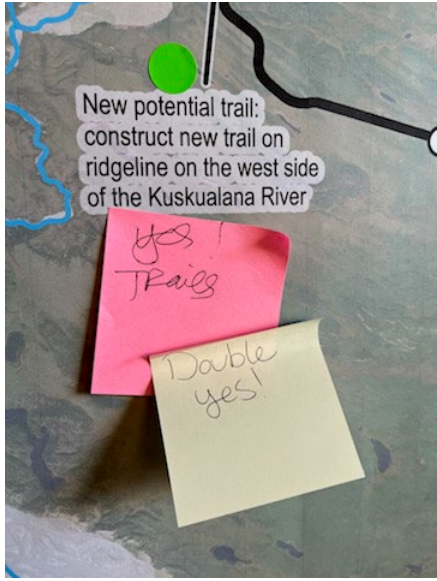
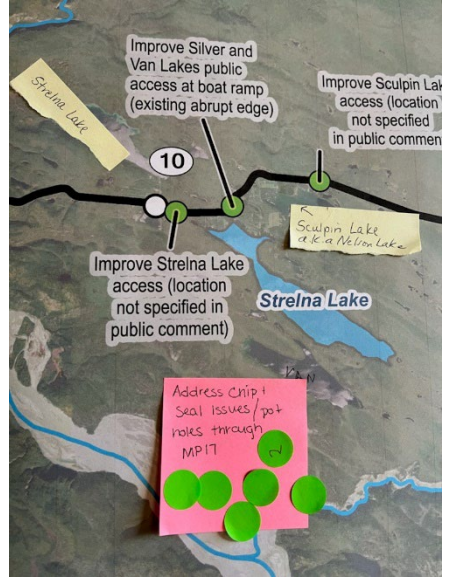
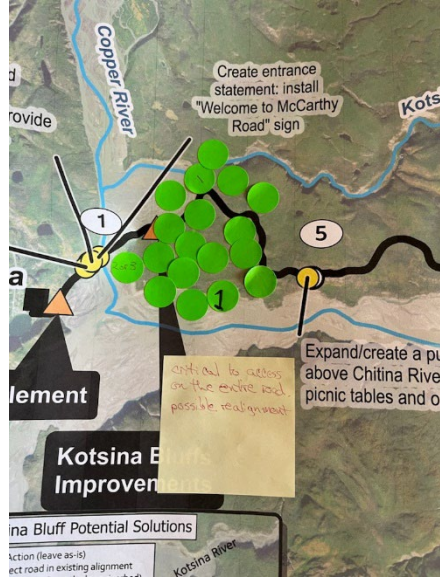
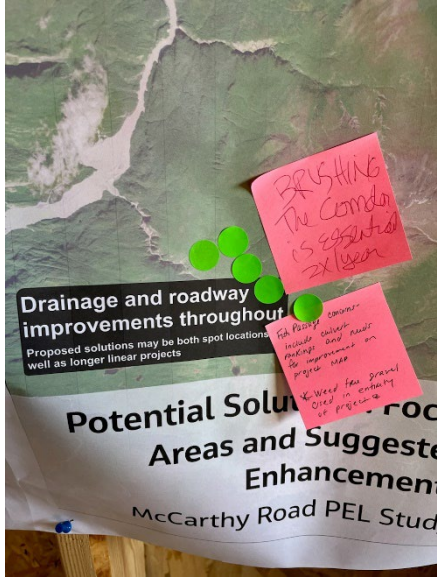
Kennicott River Bridge: I am in favor of discussing a public bridge.

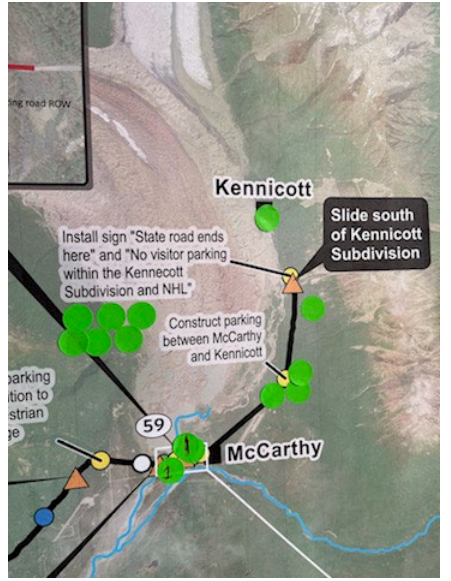
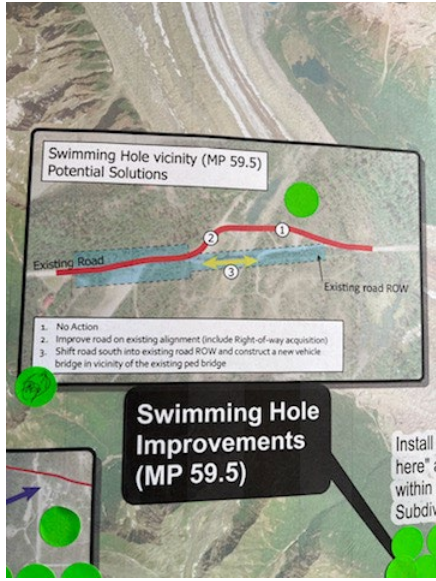
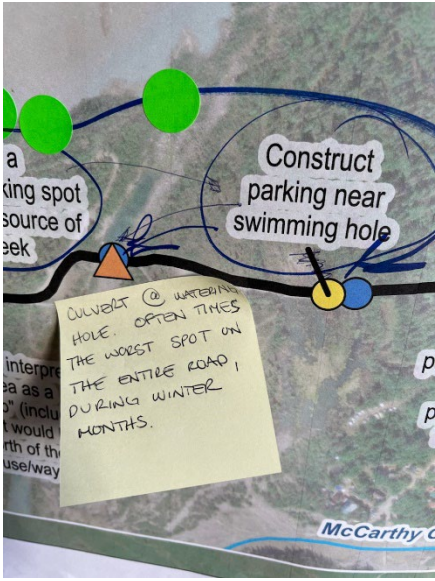
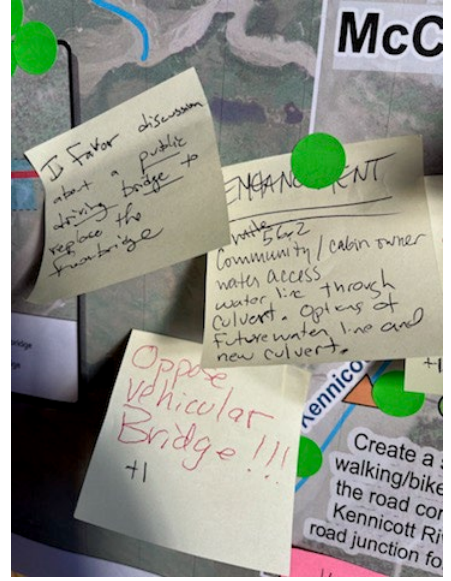
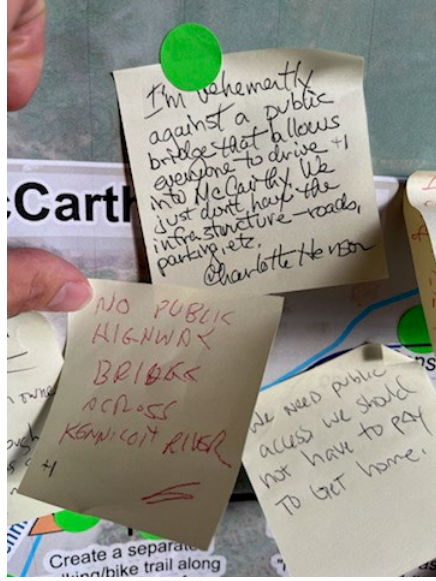
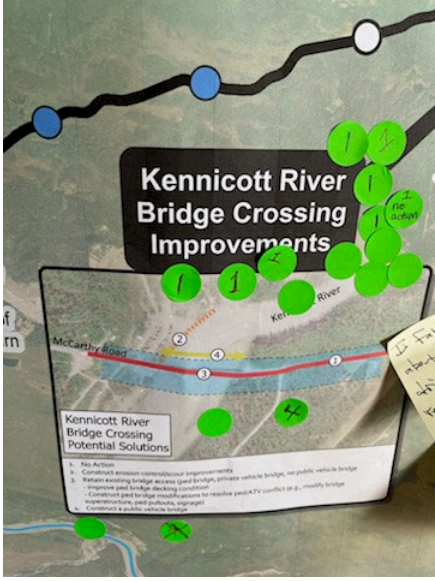
Kennicott River Bridge: I know of many residents in McCarthy/Kennicott who are strongly opposed to a vehicular bridge. I have lived here since 1993 & participated in the meetings for a pedestrian access bridge. It would destroy the character of our community to have a vehicular bridge. McCarthy would become a dangerous parking lot. No thank you. Our community is healthier and safer due to the ped access bridge & the limited access of the private bridge. The McCarthy Road, including the ped bridge, is a healthy filter for growth in our community. +1

Trail between Kennicott River and McCarthy: Yes, pedestrian/bike trail.

Culvert at watering hole: often times this is the worst spot on the entire road during winter months.

Question regarding water access. We have a water line in the culvert. When new culverts go in can there be discussion regarding water lines and water usage?





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Our community is healthier due to and safer

the ped access bridge of the limited access of the private bridge. The McCarthy road, including the ped bridge, is a healthy filter for ~~the~~ growth in our community. +1

to review materials, take some polls, and submit

Other Questions

Have questions or comments not covered today? Write them

Question Regarding water access we have a water line in the Culvert - when new culverts go in can there be discussion regarding water lines and water usage.

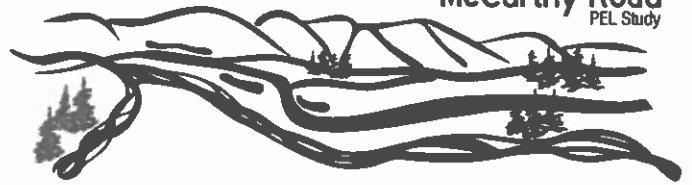
Public Bridge
I am in favor of discussing a public bridge

Did you look at rerouting along a above trestle instead of below?

McCarthy Road Planning
and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study
Sign-In Sheet

McCarthy

McCarthy Road
PEL Study



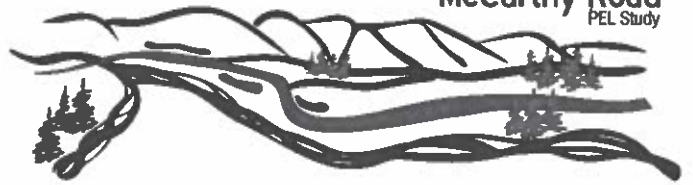
Name, Organization (if relevant)

Email (to be added to project mailing list)

Stephens Harper		sharperalaska@gmail.com
Mie Truskowski		#
Robert Cyr	CVTC	rcyr@cvtc.org
Shannon Monear	CVTC	shannon.monear@jisitel.com
Bill Crown		SagehenMeadow@gmail.com
Lori Stender		Lstender4443@gmail.com
Neil Danish		office@McCarthyLodge.com
Sarah Gilman		sarahgilmanwrites@gmail.com
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Brittany Rowland		burbermybritt@gmail.com
Mark Vail		
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Jodie Pruessner		
Kurt Jensen		
Mike & Dan Frost		MTNGT-LLC@outlook.com
David Rowland		
Meghan Seifert		meghanseifert@yahoo.com
BEN SHAINÉ		benshaine@gmail.com
Wendy Pellod		drowendypellod@gmail.com

McCarthy Road Planning
and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study
Sign-In Sheet

McCarthy Road
PEL Study



McCarthy

Name, Organization (if relevant)

Email (to be added to project mailing list)

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Michelle Lindsay	michelle0623@gmail.com
Elizabeth Schaefer	
Amy Scudder - Copper River Watershed Project	partnership@copperriver.org
Lilly Goodman-Allwright	Lgoodman@mtaonline.net
Sophie Littee	Sophielittee@yahoo.com
Cynthia Shidner	cshidner@gmail.com
Michelle Latvala	already on list
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Matt Smith	kennico@Matt@yahoo.com
Zack Barrett	Zackgetsit@yahoo.com
Searra Rodman	Searra.R.Rodman@gmail.com
Jacob Shultz	Shultz.jacob@gmail.com
ARIA THOMASES	aria.thomas88@gmail.com
Dianne Milliard	dianne.milliard@yahoo.com



McCarthy Road PEL Study
Public Meeting #2 Summary
July to August 2024

Attachment D: Advertising and Social Media Content

- Alaska Public Notice
- PEL study email updates
- Poster/ flyers
- Copper River Country Journal And Northcountry News article
- Copper River Record Newspaper Ads
- What'sUP listserv email notice
- Social Media posts (Copper Valley News and Info; Alaska DOT&PF; NPS Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve)
- McCarthy Area Council (MAC) Listserv email notice

McCarthy Road Study Public Open Houses July 30-31, 2024

Public open houses for the McCarthy Road Planning and Environmental Linkages Study will be hosted in:

Glennallen, Tues., July 30, 9am to 11am at the Copper River School District Office Conference Room, 1967 Aurora Drive)

Chitina, Tues., July 30, 6pm to 8pm at the Chitina Community Hall

McCarthy, Wed., July 31, 6pm to 8pm at the new McCarthy EMS Hall)

Federal Highway Administration-Western Federal Lands Highway Division, Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve are seeking input on potential improvement options that may address the McCarthy Road corridor needs and community priorities.

The study corridor extends 60 miles from the eastern end of Chitina to the Kennicott River, and another four miles to the southern end of the Kennicott subdivision (before the Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark).

Comments can also be provided through the online open house at www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com through August 25.

Attachments, History, Details

Attachments

None

Revision History

Created 7/29/2024 10:53:37 AM by jmperreault
Modified 7/29/2024 10:54:20 AM by jmperreault

Details

Department:	Transportation and Public Facilities
Category:	Public Notices
Sub-Category:	
Location(s):	Statewide
Project/Regulation #:	
Publish Date:	7/29/2024
Archive Date:	8/1/2024
Events/Deadlines:	

Wetzel, Kim

From: Wetzel, Kim
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 2:31 PM
To: Wetzel, Kim
Cc: Wilcox, Christopher J; McCurtain, James; Sobek, Morgan E; Cervantes, Ravyn CTR (FHWA); Sorbel, Kara B; Nelson, Brett D (DOT); Scott, Joshua M; Chapman, Judy (DOT); LeMieux, Katrina K (DOT); Doniere, Kevin M; Loso, Michael G; Eckman, Paul P (DOT); Robbins, Leslie; English-Young, Seth (FHWA)
Subject: McCarthy Road PEL Study Update - May 2024



Study Update

Federal Highway Administration - Western Federal Lands (WFL) Highway Division, in partnership with the Alaska DOT&PF and the National Park Service are working together to conduct a Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) study for the McCarthy Road. This study will evaluate transportation-related needs and opportunities along the McCarthy Road, identify and evaluate potential improvements, and propose recommendations for future implementation. The PEL study will be completed by summer 2025.

Assessing Needs and Opportunities

A tremendous amount of thoughtful feedback was received during first the online open house held in late November 2023 to January 2024. Thank you!! A summary of the public comments about issues and needs for the 63-mile corridor can be found on the study website: [Online Open House Summary](#). This input as well as data collected since the start of the PEL Study is summarized here: [Needs & Opportunities Report](#) and available from the "Documents" section of the website [McCarthyRoadPEL.com](#).

Developing & Evaluating Potential Improvement Options

We're moving onto the next phase of the planning study which includes developing and evaluating potential improvement options. The study team will be hosting a series of public open houses this summer to get more public input. The questions we want you to consider: ***What improvement options should be recommended to address the identified road corridor needs? What should be the priorities?***

Mark your calendars for the in-person public open houses. More details to follow!

GLENALLEN, Tuesday, July 30, 9am to 11am (Location: Copper River School District Office Conference Room, 1967 Aurora Drive, past the post office)

CHITINA, Tuesday, July 30, 6 to 8pm (Location: Chitina Community Hall, off the Edgerton Highway)

MCCARTHY, Wednesday, July 31, 6 to 8pm (Location: the new McCarthy EMS Hall)

Gone in late July? A month-long online open house will be available too.

Please contact us with any comments or questions, and options or priorities for the study. Seth English-Young, WFL project manager at seth.english-young@dot.gov or 360-619-7803 or Kim Wetzel, PEL Study Public Involvement Lead at Kim.Wetzel@Jacobs.com.

Planning products produced during this PEL study may be adopted or incorporated by reference during a subsequent environmental review process.

Kim Varner Wetzel, AICP (she/her) | [Jacobs](#) | Environmental Planner
+01.907.440.1591 | kim.wetzel@jacobs.com

From: [Wetzel, Kim](#)
To: [English-Young, Seth \(FHWA\)](#); [Eckman, Paul P \(DOT\)](#); [Shafer, Jonathan M](#)
Bcc: [Alaska Coach Tours](#); [Alaska Travel Industry Association](#); [Alexandra Teeter](#); [Allison Sayer](#); [Amy O'Connor](#); [Andy Shider](#); [Andy Shidner](#); [Antlers Rest Hotel](#); [Armond Dube](#); [Ashley Dale](#); [Barry Sullivan](#); [Ben Shaine](#); [Bernadette Martel](#); [Bill Crum](#); [Britt Rowland](#); [Bryan Campbell](#); [Caribou Hotel](#); [Carmen Russo](#); [Carol Stober](#); [Carrie Wittmer](#); [Charlie O'Neill](#); [Chitina Native Corporation](#); [Copper River Watershed Project](#); [Copper Valley Chamber of Commerce](#); [Copper Valley Community Library](#); [Courtney Kreis](#); [Dan & Heike Frost](#); [Danny Rosenkrans](#); [Dave Syren](#); [David Lanni](#); [david@ahnatribal.org](#); [Davod Rowland](#); [Denise Schleif](#); [Diane Ludwig](#); [Don Welty](#); [Donna Weagel](#); [Doug Walker](#); [Elizabeth Schafer](#); [Emily Hjortstorp](#); [Eric Yould](#); [Eugene Gregory](#); [Geoffrey Downes](#); [Greater Copper Valley Chamber](#); [Gulkana Native Village](#); [H Bengtson](#); [H Jacobsen](#); [Howard Mozen](#); [J Williams](#); [Jackson Hurst](#); [Jason Masse](#); [Jeremiah Hampton](#); [Jessica Speed](#); [John Becker](#); [John Conroy](#); [John MacCheyne](#); [John Tierney](#); [Kaleb Rowland](#); [Karen Linnell](#); [Katrina Church-Chmielowski](#); [KCHU](#); [Kellen Zale](#); [Kelly Bay](#); [Kenneth Smith](#); [Kevin Charley](#); [Ki Jung Lee](#); [Kim Meck](#); [KS Bobowski](#); [Linda Weld](#); [Lori Stender](#); [Lyn Plomaritis](#); [Marie Thorn](#); [Mark Vail](#); [Mark Wacht](#); [Marlon Collova](#); [Marnie Graham](#); [Mary Golden](#); [Matt Vial](#); [Matthew Obermeyer](#); [Max Neale](#); [Meg Jensen](#); [Michael Chambers](#); [Michael Moody](#); [Michelle Lindsay](#); [Michelle McAfee](#); [Mike and LeAnne Christensen](#); [Mike Christenson](#); [Mike Norris](#); [Mike Townsend](#); [Monica Dutra](#); [Native Village of Chitina](#); [Native Village of Gakona](#); [Neil O'Donnell](#); [Nicholas John Begich](#); [Nik Merlino](#); [Olivia Lantry](#); [Patrick Proden](#); [Paul Delys](#); [Peyton Costa](#); [R Carlson](#); [R William](#); [Ray Kreig](#); [Roger DuBrock](#); [Ross Oliver](#); [Roy Becker](#); [Sara Lucey](#); [Sara Sayre](#); [Shawn Bayless](#); [Sierra Carmello](#); [Sound and Valley News](#); [St Elias Guides](#); [Stephanie Sever](#); [Steve Davidson](#); [Steve Wells](#); [Tamara Harper](#); [Tara L](#); [Tayleah Clayton](#); [Tazlina Native Village](#); [Thea Agnew Bemben](#); [Tim Brabets](#); [Tim George](#); [Ton Perelli](#); [tribaladministrator@tsedina.org](#); [UAA Copper Basin Extension Center](#); [Wendy Pollock](#); [Wrangell Mountain Technical Services](#); [Zack Barrett](#)
Subject: Meetings Tues & Wed! RE: McCarthy Road PEL Study: Public Open Houses, July 30-31, 2024
Date: Monday, July 29, 2024 9:02:09 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Starting Tuesday, In-Person Public Open Houses: Identifying Potential Solutions

The McCarthy Road Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study team used public and stakeholder input gathered since last summer to understand the road corridor needs and opportunities. Now we are seeking public input on potential solutions for key focus areas and suggested enhancements for road corridor improvements.

We hope you can come in person to provide input on: ***What improvement options would address the road corridor needs? What should be the priorities?***

Glenallen, Tuesday, July 30, 9am to 11am (Location: Copper River School District Office Conference Room, 1967 Aurora Drive). A brief presentation will be given at 9:15am.

Chitina, Tuesday, July 30, 6 to 8pm (Location: Chitina Community Hall, off the Edgerton Highway). A brief presentation will be given at 6:15pm.

McCarthy, Wednesday, July 31, 6 to 8pm (Location: the new McCarthy EMS Hall). A brief presentation will be given at 6:15pm.

Gone in late July? A month-long **Online Open House** will be available until **August 25** [HERE](#) or linked from www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com.

Study Recap

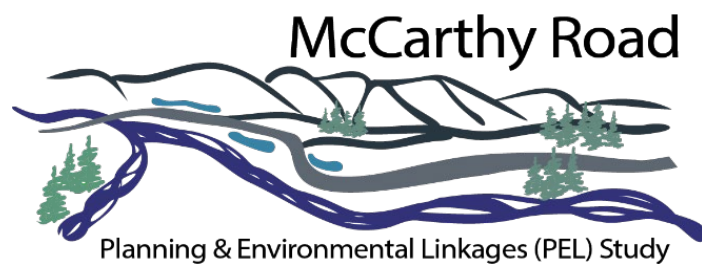
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A tremendous amount of thoughtful feedback was received during first the online open house held last winter. A summary of the public comments about issues and needs we received can be found on the study website: [Online Open House Summary](#). This input as well as data collected since the start of the PEL Study is available from the “Documents” section of the website www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com.

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In-person Open House



Tell us what you think about proposed McCarthy Road improvements

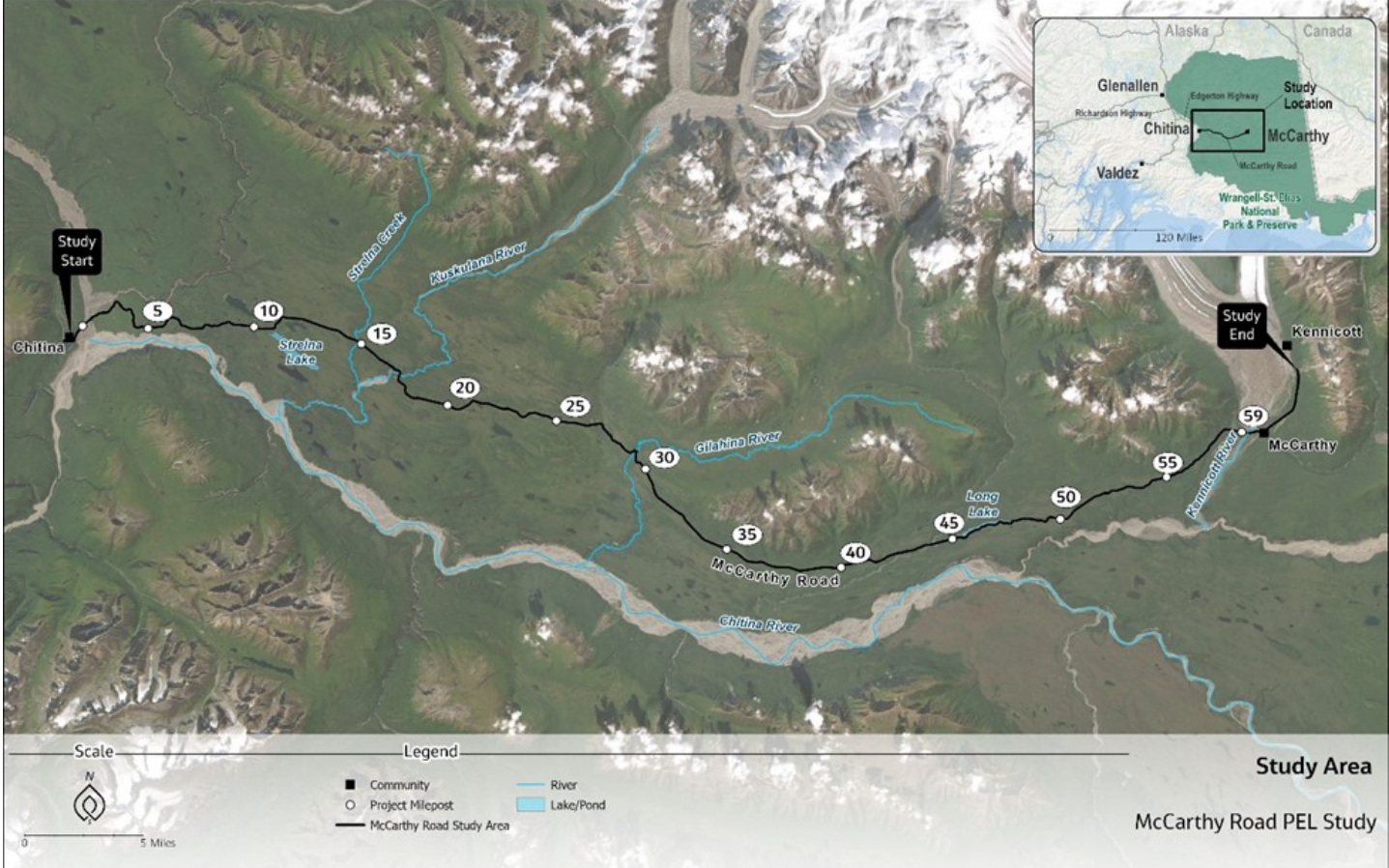
Come learn about potential solutions to issues provided by the public to improve safety, access, and resilience of the road corridor.

Tuesday, July 30 GLENALLEN—9 to 11am,
School District Conference Room

Tuesday, July 30 CHITINA—6 to 8pm,
Chitina Community Hall

Wednesday, July 31 McCARTHY—6 to 8pm,
new EMS Hall

Please share your ideas at www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com



Seth English-Young, seth.english-young@dot.gov (360) 619-7803
FHWA, Western Federal Lands, Highways Division

Submit comments using an online mapping tool found at:
www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com



Online Open House

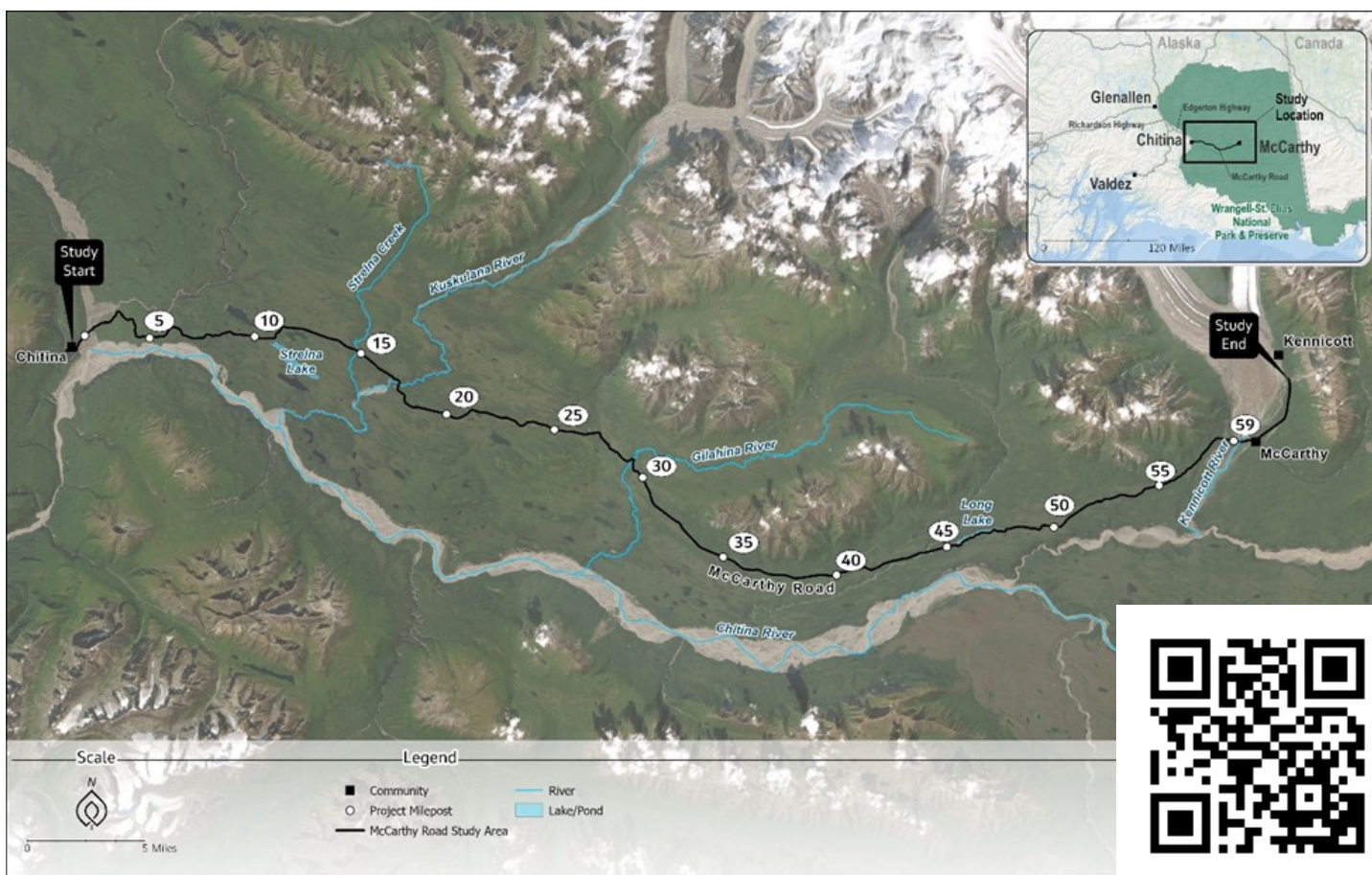


Tell us what you think about proposed McCarthy Road improvements

Comment by August 25!

Visit the Online Open House to learn about potential solutions to issues and road corridor enhancements provided by the public to improve safety, access, and resilience of the road corridor.

Please share your ideas at www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com



Seth English-Young, Planning Team Lead, seth.english-young@dot.gov
Federal Highway Administration - WFL, Highways Division

Review potential solutions at key focus areas and suggested enhancements at:
www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com

COPPER RIVER COUNTRY JOURNAL AND NORTHCOUNTRY NEWS

Message From DOT Regarding McCarthy Road Plans & Meetings In July, 2024
<https://www.countryjournal2020.com/2024/07/message-from-dot-regarding-mccarthy.html>

FROM DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JULY 17TH, 2024



"I think I'll just walk, honey." The Kukulana Bridge on the McCarthy Road. (Photo, Copper River Country Journal)

Invitation to Public Open Houses

Identifying Potential Solutions

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seth.english-young@dot.gov

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kim.wetzel@jacobs.com

or 907-440-1591.

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COPPER RIVER COUNTRY JOURNAL AND NORTHCOUNTRY NEWS

Planning Meetings & Open Houses About McCarthy Road Will Stretch Into August

<https://www.countryjournal2020.com/2024/07/planning-meetings-open-houses-about.html>

Starting Tuesday, In-Person Public Open Houses:

Identifying Potential Solutions



*ABANDONED GILAHINA TRESTLE AS SEEN FROM MCCARTHY ROAD.
(PHOTO, COPPER RIVER COUNTRY JOURNAL)*

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Study Recap

Federal Highway Administration-Western Federal Lands (WFL) Highway Division, in partnership with the Alaska DOT&PF and the National Park Service are working together to conduct a Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) study for the McCarthy Road. This study will evaluate transportation-related needs and opportunities along the McCarthy Road, identify and evaluate potential improvements, and propose recommendations for future implementation. The PEL study will be completed by summer 2025.

A tremendous amount of thoughtful feedback was received during first the online open house held last winter. A summary of the public comments about issues and needs we received can be found on the study website: [Online Open House Summary](#). This input as well as data collected since the start of the PEL Study is available from the "Documents" section of the website www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com.

Please contact us with any comments or questions, and options or priorities for the study. Seth English-Young, WFL project manager at seth.english-young@dot.gov or 360-619-7803 or Kim Wetzel, PEL Study Public Involvement Lead at kim.wetzel@jacobs.com or 907-440-1591.

Planning products produced during this PEL study may be adopted or incorporated by reference during a subsequent environmental review process.

 A drawing of a landscape Description automatically generated



COPPER RIVER RECORD

**NEXT ISSUE:
AUGUST 1**
\$1.50
Periodical Postage
paid, Glennallen, AK
USPS # 022164

Vol. 37 Issue # 15

Published Thursdays

Glennallen, AK - 'Atna' Nene'

July 25, 2024

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AK Population Drop Predicted

JAMES BROOKS
- ALASKA BEACON

Alaska's population is set to significantly decline by 2050, according to a new forecast from the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

The department publishes population forecasts every two years, and the new document estimates the state will drop by nearly 2% before 2050.

The prediction, which reverses decades of optimistic forecasts by the department, is based upon more than a decade of outmigration, rising death rates and falling birth rates. The state's

forecast is critical for urban planners and others who need to calculate demand for schools, transportation, utilities and commerce.

State Demographer David Howell said the department bases its forecast on a 30-year average and extends current trends into the future. That results in the state's population falling from 736,812 to 722,806 residents by 2050.

"We've now had 11 straight years of negative net migration, and it's just pushed that 30-year average down enough that our natural increase, which is just

Continued Pg. 5

June MAC Meeting

MICHELLE MCAFEE
- CRR STAFF

The McCarthy Area Council (MAC) met on June 27 at the EMS building with 34 members present and seven on Zoom. President Nik Merlino introduced the meeting with a statement that MAC meetings are meant to encourage a safe space for discussion and participation, and to help neighbors find consensus. Merlino asked members to be respectful, consider each other's points of view, and remember that they are all neighbors in a small town who rely on each other in hard times.

Merlino then gave the president's report and announced MAC was notified by the State of Alaska that another McCarthy entity is applying for state community assistance program (CAP)

funds and that MAC is under audit through the CAP Program again this year. He said representatives from the other organization were in attendance and would present later in the meeting.

The audit aims to determine which organization is best equipped to manage and distribute the funds and how the organization is representative of the community.

After last year's audit, MAC completed a community survey. Based on the survey results, the top three community priorities for expenditures of state funds were EMS, the fire department, and roads, which tracked with the top three MAC expenditures.

Treasurer Matthew Shidner stated he felt this year's audit should go "smoothly" because of his experience

Continued Pg. 3

Salmon Strings 2.0



Photo by Carol Cozzen

A double rainbow shone over the crowd enjoying the music at Salmon Strings 2.0.

CAROL COZZEN
- CRR STAFF

On July 20, Alaska Copper River B&B hosted the second annual Salmon Strings Music Festival at Mile 111 on the Richardson Highway. The Salmon Strings 2.0 Music Festival was a blast!

There was music, community, dancing, camping,

food, friends, and fun. Wave Train kicked the day off with the Whiskey Jack following.

The lineup continued with new bands taking the stage every hour. Shake City String Band, Evolution of a Thursday, Cody Rose, Zen Trembles and Blackwater Railroad performed, and the night ended rocking with

The Chris Craig Band.

The day was a scorcher and so was the music. There was a range of choices of food and drink venues.

I have to say I was impressed with all of the amenities attending this festival for the first time. I look forward to next year's event.

Empty. Clean. Sort. Let's Recycle Right

ASHLEY HICKS-MARTIN
- ROAR COORDINATOR

Garbage ending up in recycling bins and at the local recycle center is a growing problem. What happens when you do not properly recycle? Garbage that is tossed into the recycle bin contaminates the whole batch and instead of decreasing waste, it goes straight to the landfill. ROAR is your local recycle center and is widely dependent upon

proper recycling measures, our hardworking volunteers, and donations. ROAR is supported through the sale of aluminum cans. The proceeds from the aluminum offset most of the cost of transporting materials to Palmer. Therefore, ROAR depends on you making the effort to properly recycle.

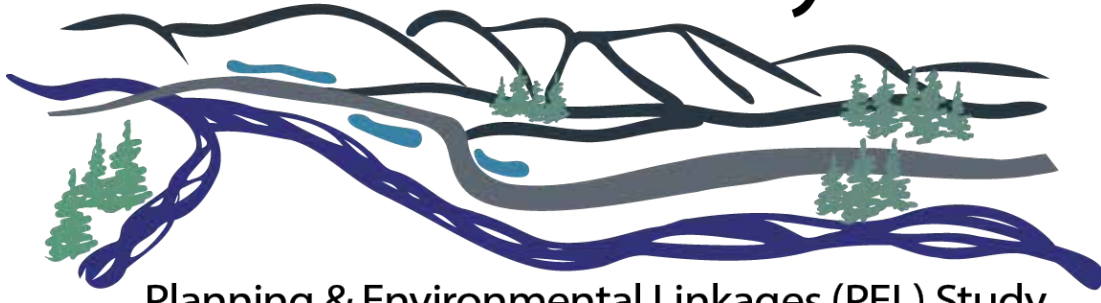
Pre-sort by category according to the following guidelines. If it's not recyclable, it ends up in the landfill! If you follow the

guidelines, your recycling gets a new life.

Rinse, crush and pre-sort recyclables. Help our volunteers by bringing your recyclables sorted and free of trash and contaminants. Please do not leave boxes, plastic or paper bags when you drop aluminum off. Please place the aluminum and paper into marked bins and keep your bags and tubs for future recycling at home.

Continued Pg. 4

McCarthy Road



Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study McCarthy Road Study Public Open Houses

Western Federal Lands (WFL) Highway Division, in partnership with the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities and the National Park Service, are working together to conduct a planning and environmental linkages study for the McCarthy Road.

The 2nd online open house is available from the study website www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com from July 25 to August 25, 2024.

We hope you can come in person to provide input on: **What potential improvement options would address the road corridor needs? What should be the priorities?**

- Glennallen, Tues., July 30, 9 to 11am (Location: Copper River School District Office Conference Room, 1967 Aurora Drive, past the post office)
- Chitina, Tues., July 30, 6 to 8pm (Location: Chitina Community Hall)
- McCarthy, Wed., July 31, 6 to 8pm (Location: new McCarthy EMS Hall)

These in-person meetings and virtual open house is an opportunity to provide input on potential transportation-related solutions for key focus areas and suggested enhancements for the McCarthy Road corridor. Please provide share your comments in-person and online!

Planning products produced during this Planning & Environmental Linkages study may be adopted or incorporated by reference during a subsequent environmental review process.

THE GAKONA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT AND THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER PRESENT THE

9TH ANNUAL GAKONA Firefighter Fundraiser



11:00 DESSERT COMPETITION
11:30 KID ACTIVITIES - FREE COURTESY OF THE CAC
12:00 BBQ LUNCH - \$10 PER PLATE
1:00 DUNK TANK - \$5 FOR 3 BALLS

JULY 27, All proceeds fund the local
GAKONA PARK Volunteer Fire
11:00 - 2:00 Department!

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Wetzel, Kim

From: Peg Tileston via whatsapp list <whatsup@npogroups.org>
Sent: Saturday, July 27, 2024 5:00 PM
To: What's Up
Subject: [EXTERNAL] [whatsup] What's Up 7/27/2024

What's Up July 27, 2024

Compiled weekly by Peg Tileston on behalf of Trustees for Alaska, The Alaska Center, and The Alaska Conservation Foundation.

****Marks added items in this issue.**

CONFERENCE, WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS, SPECIAL EVENTS

****August 16 – 18; August 30 – September 1**

Three- day **MUSHROOM WORKSHOPS** will be held in the following locations:

August 16 -18 – DELTA JUCTION at the Delta Career Advancement Center,

August 30 – September 1 – PALMER at the at the Matanuska Experiment Farm & Extension Center, 1509 S.

Georgeson Road.

Mycologist **GARY LAURSEN** will lead these workshops that are hosted by the UAF Extension Service. The weekends begin with a three-hour lecture on Friday night, during which Laursen will share his wealth of information on wild mushrooms, their eco-physiological roles and ways to identify them in the field. Participants will learn how to collect, identify, prepare and/or preserve wild edible and non-edible mushrooms. Participants can register for these Friday night lectures as standalone events or as the introduction to the full workshop, which includes two days in the field and lab gathering, identifying and preparing mushrooms. Both Friday night lectures are scheduled for 6 to 9pm and cost \$20. The field and lab sessions are from 9am to 4pm on Saturday and Sunday. Participants are asked to bring a sack lunch and water. The cost for the full three-day workshop in each community, which includes the Friday night lecture, is \$100. full. For more information, contact Eve Karczmarczyk at 907-895-4215 or email EEKARCZMARCZYK@ALASKA.EDU. Registration links for all four options [can be found online](#).

****August 23 - 25**

SIERRA CLUB SUMMER CAMP will provide a weekend of outdoor fun filled with hiking, canoeing, and activities for all! Families, friend groups, couples, and individuals are all welcome. We will be hosting this event at the **WARRIOR LODGE CAMPGROUND in SUTTON**. There are cabin, car and tent camping spots available. The campsite also has a lake with canoes, a bathroom/shower house and a dining hall. The cost is \$50 per person and that covers your cabin or campsite and all meals and activities. This event is FREE for military members, veterans, and their immediate families. Please email [alaska.chapter@sierraclub.org](mailto:ALASKA.CHAPTER@SIERRACLUB.ORG) for the coupon code to apply at check out. For more information, go to

https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q0000029rx6AAA&_gl=1*nfs7hm*_gcl_au*MTk4ODg5NTMzMS4xNzIwNTUyMDMx*_ga*MTU4NTQ2Mzg1OC4xNjMwMDkyMTYz*_ga_41DQ5KQCWV*MTc5MTY4MDQ0NS43NS4xLjE3MjE2ODA0OTMuMC4wLjA.

September 3

Drawing will be held on the **ALASKA SEALIFE CENTER'S HAWAII TRAVEL RAFFEL**. The winner will receive a one-week state at a Kauai Condo and Alaska Airlines Tickets for two. Click here for details

<https://my.onecause.com/event/organizations/sf-001C000001hFCYIA4/events/vevt:3559b98d-811d-4ecb-bf5e-286d498036c1/home/story>.

****September 21 – 22**

HOMER - MUSHROOM ID & MYCOLOGY WORKSHOP will be held at the Carl #. Wenn Visitor Center. In this special weekend workshop, you'll join mushroom enthusiast and mycologist **CHRISTIN SWEARINGEN** for a deep dive into the different fungi that inhabit this corner of Southcentral Alaska! This workshop is geared toward adult participants, however mature kids and teens are welcome if accompanied by an adult. The cost for this two-day workshop is \$60/person. Saturday, Day One Session runs 9am-Noon followed by a half-hour break, then resumes 12:30 to 3pm. Sunday Day Two Session runs 11am to-1pm, followed by a half-hour break, then resumes from 1:30 to 3pm. [Learn more.](#)

January 27-31

ANCHORAGE - ALASKA MARINE SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM (AMSS), Alaska's premier marine research conference, will be held at the Hotel Captain Cook. The Symposium will bring together scientists, educators, resource managers, students, and interested public to discuss the latest marine research being conducted in Alaskan waters. Each day of the conference highlights important Alaskan marine ecosystems: Gulf of Alaska, Arctic, and the Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands. Research topics discussed range from ocean physics, fishes and invertebrates, seabirds, marine mammals, to local traditional knowledge. Since its inception, NPRB has been a proud sponsor and one of the leading organizers of AMSS. [Event Link](#)

WEBINARS

July 30 & 31 (Webinar)

SPRUCE BEETLES UNDER CHANGING CLIMATE CONDITIONS will be presented at 11am on July 30 and at Noon on July 31 AKDT/ by **NANCY FRESCO**, UAF Scenarios Network for Alaska + Arctic Planning. Historically, Alaska's cold climate has protected much of the state from major outbreaks of spruce beetles. Interior Alaska has primarily been protected by rapid fall cooling and extremely cold winters, while other regions have been protected by cool summers that limit beetle maturation. A new integrated model suggests that ongoing climate change will remove these protections across large parts of Alaska. Northern forest managers will increasingly need to undertake management planning that no longer relies on the protection of historically cold climate. [Register Here.](#)

August 6 (Webinar)

PROTECTING CHILDREN'S DEVELOPING BRAINS: HAZARDS in PLASTICS and CHEMICALS in PLASTICS will be presented from 9 by Alaskan Community Action on Toxics (ACAT). The global crisis of plastic production and waste is growing exponentially, and today's babies are born with their brains and bodies already burdened by plastics: micro- and nano-plastic particles have been found in the placenta and in newborns' first stool, and they are further exposed through breastmilk and infant formula. A discussion with **Dr. LINDA BIRNBAUM, Dr. CARMEN MARSIT, and MAUREEN SWANSON** will explore how plastics and the toxic chemicals in them harm children's developing brains and the urgent need for stronger global regulations on plastic production and waste. Register now at <https://www.akaction.org/webinars/15868-8/>

PUBLIC HEARINGS/MEETINGS/OPEN HOUSE

July 30 & 31

GLENNALLEN/CHITNA/McCARTHY - Federal Highway Administration-Western Federal Lands (WFL) Highway Division, in partnership with the Alaska DOT&PF and the National Park Service are hosting an Online Open House and a series of in-person public open houses in the following locations for the **MCCARTHY ROAD PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES (PEL) STUDY:**

July 30 – GLENNALLEN from 9 to 11am at the School District Office

July 30 - CHITINA from 6 to 8pm in the Chitina Community Hall

July 31 - MCCARTHY from 6 to 8pm at the new McCarthy EMS Hall)

July 25 – August 25 – the Online Open House will be available at www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com.

This study will evaluate transportation-related needs and opportunities along the McCarthy Road, identify and evaluate potential improvements, and propose recommendations for future implementation. Public and stakeholder input

gathered since last summer established an understanding of needs, opportunities, and goals for the road corridor. Now we request information on: What improvement options would address the road corridor needs? What should be the priorities? For more information or to submit comments, contact Seth English-Young at 360-619-7803 or email seth.english-young@dot.gov or Kim Wetzel at kim.wetzel@jacobs.com or call(907-440-1591).

August 13 & 14

FORT YUKON/FAIRBANKS - Public meetings will be held on the **NORTHEAST ALASKA AREA PLANNING PROCESS INITIATED** in the following locations:

August 13 - FORT YUKON from 3 to 5pm at the City Hall

August 14 – FAIRBANKS from,5:30 to 7:30pm at the Noel Wien Library

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has initiated the development of the Northeast Alaska Area Plan (NEAAP). When adopted, NEAAP will serve as the basis for management of state land and waters for approximately 4.5 million acres of state-owned and state-selected lands within the plan boundary. The purpose of these meetings is to seek input on how Alaskans want to use state lands now and in the future; to encourage the public to provide written comments; and to provide the public with information about the planning process and answer questions related to the planning effort. Please come to one of the meetings to tell us how you use state lands, how you would like to see them used in the future and discuss issues regarding the use of state lands and resources. Your written comments are encouraged during this scoping phase and can be submitted until **September 6**. Submit comments to <https://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/planning/areaplans/neaap/> For more information, contact Rob Earl or Diana Sevier at (907) 269-8533 or (907) 269-8593or email neaap.comments@alaska.gov.

****August 14 &15**

ANCHORAGE & WASILLA - Public meetings will be held the **WEST SUSITNA ACCESS ROAD PROJECT** on the following dates:

August 14 - ANCHORAGE from 3:30 to 6:30pm at the Loussac Public Library

August 15 – WASILLA from 3:30 to 6:30pm at the Wasilla Public Library

This project proposes to construct an approximately 22-mile public road to open 6 million acres of land for recreation, tourism, and potential future development. This road is proposed to extend from the existing roadway system in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough to State lands planned for settlement, public recreation, and resource development. The WestSu Access project team is launching a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Your input during the formal scoping process will help us identify potential environmental, social, cultural/historic, and economic effects and mitigations for this project and identify and refine road the road alignment. View all materials at the in-person meeting at www.westsuaccess.com.

****August 14 – 23**

An online open house will be held on the **WEST SUSITNA ACCESS ROAD PROJECT** at www.westsuaccess.com via the public involvement page. This project proposes to construct an approximately 22-mile public road to open 6 million acres of land for recreation, tourism, and potential future development. This road is proposed to extend from the existing roadway system in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough to State lands planned for settlement, public recreation, and resource development. The WestSu Access project team is launching a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Your input during the formal scoping process will help us identify potential environmental, social, cultural/historic, and economic effects and mitigations for this project and identify and refine road the road alignment. View all materials at the in-person meeting at www.westsuaccess.com.

****August 16 (In-person or virtually)**

PALMER - ALASKA COMMUNITY FOREST COUNCIL to meet from 8:30am to 4pm in the DNR, Div, of Forestry & Fire Protection Conference Room at 101 Airport Road. Agenda items include Division of Forestry & Fire Protection State and Federal updates, committee updates, ongoing and proposed grants, and other items relevant to council business. To attend the meeting virtually, contact communityforestry@alaska.gov for more information. The council promotes the management of trees and forests within communities to maximize the economic, environmental, and social benefits that trees provide. Information about the council and the Division of Forestry & Fire Protection’s Community Forestry Program is available at <http://forestry.alaska.gov/community/council>.

Social Media Posts



Copper Valley News and Info | Alaska
Michelle Raven · 2 days ago · 🌐

Today, Sunday Aug 25 is the last day to participate in the PEL road study Open House Public Comments period.
The study starts at the Chitina cut and goes approximately 63 miles to just before Kennicott.
This link will take you to the comment portal for the road study. The open house which offers opportunity for feedback/comments works better on a computer than on a phone.... See more



MCCARTHYROADPEL.COM

Welcome
Welcome! McCarthy Road Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study The Federal High...

👍❤️ 5 5 comments 1 share

👍 Like 💬 Comment 📧 Send ➦ Share



Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

August 5 at 7:35 AM · 🌐



8/7/24: Edited to correct link to website.

McCarthy Road users! If you missed the in-person meetings last week, you can still comment on the proposed solutions for the McCarthy Road online at <https://mccarthyroadpel.com/> until August 25th.



👍👎 37

6 comments 8 shares



Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve

July 22 · 🌐



McCarthy Road Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study Update -- Public open house meetings:

GLENNALLEN, Tuesday, July 30, 9am to 11am (Location: Copper River School District Office Conference Room, 1967 Aurora Drive, past the post office).

CHITINA, Tuesday, July 30, 6 to 8pm (Location: Chitina Community Hall, off the Edgerton Highway).

McCARTHY, Wednesday, July 31, 6 to 8pm (Location: the new McCarthy EMS Hall).

More info: <https://ow.ly/5zvx50RHs2O...> See more



👍 49

2 comments 3 shares



Like



Comment



Share



Tell us what you think about proposed McCarthy Road improvements

Come learn about potential solutions to issues provided by the public to improve safety, access, and resilience of the road corridor.

Please share your ideas at www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com

Tuesday, July 30 GLENALLEN—9 to 11am,
School District Conference Room

Tuesday, July 30 CHITINA—6 to 8pm,
Chitina Community Hall

Wednesday, July 31 McCARTHY—6 to 8pm,
new EMS Hall



Seth English-Young, seth.english-young@dot.gov (360) 619-7803
FHWA, Western Federal Lands, Highways Division

Submit comments using an online mapping tool found at: www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com



Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
July 22 ·

Hello, #mccarthyroad users!

Public open houses for the McCarthy Road Planning and Environmental Linkages Study will be hosted in:

- Glennallen, Tues., July 30, 9am to 11am at the Copper River School District Office Conference Room, 1967 Aurora Drive)
- Chitina, Tues., July 30, 6pm to 8pm at the Chitina Community Hall
- McCarthy, Wed., July 31, 6pm to 8pm at the new McCarthy EMS Hall)

Federal Highway Administration-Western Federal Lands Highway Division, #Alaskaka Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, and #wrangellsteliasnationalpark and Preserve are seeking input on potential improvement options that may address the McCarthy Road corridor needs and community priorities.

We hope to see you!

Comments can also be provided through the online open house at www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com through August 25.





Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

July 22 · 🌐



Hello, #mccarthyroad users!

Public open houses for the McCarthy Road Planning and Environmental Linkages Study will be hosted in:

-Glennallen, Tues., July 30, 9am to 11am at the Copper River School District Office Conference Room, 1967 Aurora Drive)

-Chitina, Tues., July 30, 6pm to 8pm at the Chitina Community Hall

-McCarthy, Wed., July 31, 6pm to 8pm at the new McCarthy EMS Hall) ... See more



Tell us what you think about proposed McCarthy Road improvements

Come learn about potential solutions to issues provided by the public to improve safety, access, and resilience of the road corridor.

Please share your ideas at www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com

Tuesday, July 30 GLENALLEN—9 to 11am,
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Chitina Community Hall

Wednesday, July 31 McCARTHY—6 to 8pm,
new EMS Hall



Seth English-Young, seth.english-young@dot.gov (360) 619-7803
FHWA, Western Federal Lands, Highways Division

Submit comments using an online mapping tool found at:
www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com

👍 2

2 comments 9 shares



Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve

August 16 at 11:01 AM · 🌐



Welcome to the "Identifying Potential Solutions" online open house for the McCarthy Road Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study. This online open house will run from July 25 through August 25, 2024. Visit the storymap website to submit your comments:

<https://ow.ly/1aJm50SZFMY>

Photo: AK DOT/Workers accessing the road damage.



👍 34

🔗 1 share

From: [MAC secretary](#)
To: [Secretary McCarthy Area Council](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] McCarthy Road Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study - Online and In-Person Public Open Houses
Date: Saturday, July 27, 2024 2:32:00 PM

Happy weekend all,

Please take a moment to look over this announcement from NPS for the upcoming PEL open houses.

Hello,

The Federal Highway Administration-Western Federal Lands (WFL) Highway Division, in partnership with the Alaska DOT&PF and the National Park Service are hosting the second public Online Open House and a series of in-person public open houses for the McCarthy Road Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) study. This study will evaluate transportation-related needs and opportunities along the McCarthy Road, identify and evaluate potential improvements, and propose recommendations for future implementation. Public and stakeholder input gathered since last summer established an understanding of needs, opportunities, and goals for the road corridor. Now we request information on: What improvement options would address the road corridor needs? What should be the priorities?

Glennallen: Tuesday, July 30, 9am to 11am (Location: Copper River School District Office Conference Room, 1967 Aurora Drive, past the post office)

Chitina: Tuesday, July 30, 6pm to 8pm (Location: Chitina Community Hall, off the Edgerton Highway)

McCarthy: Wednesday, July 31, 6pm to 8pm (Location: the new McCarthy EMS Hall)

The second month-long Online Open House will be available July 25 to August 25 from the study website www.McCarthyRoadPEL.com.

Any comments or questions can be directed to WFL project manager:

seth.english-young@dot.gov (360-619-7803) or PEL Study Public Involvement Lead kim.wetzel@jacobs.com (907-440-1591).

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve
PO Box 439/ 106.8 Richardson Highway
Copper Center, AK 99573
Visitor Services and Information: (907) 822-7250

To stop your subscription or change your email address, please respond to this email. Thank you for subscribing to the Wrangell-St. Elias Locals Listserv!

Thanks,

Amy



McCarthy Area Council
P.O. Box MXY #31
Glennallen, AK 99588
mccarthyareacouncil.secretary@gmail.com
www.mxycouncil.org



McCarthy Road PEL Study
Public Meeting #2 Summary
July to August 2024

Attachment E: Public Comments Verbatim

Verbatim public comments included in this attachment are from the following sources:

- Online open house: "Get Engaged" general online comment submission section
- Emails sent directly to the study team
- In-Person open houses: verbal comments written down by study team members and hard copy version of comment forms submitted by the public

Other verbatim comments from the online open house polls and sticky notes on maps at the in-person open houses are located earlier in Section 3 of the summary and Attachment C, respectively.

McCarthy Road PEL Study

Public Meeting #2

July to August 2024

Public comments verbatim (source: online open house "Get Engaged" comment submission section; verbally or via comment forms at the in-person open houses)

Submission Method	Comment
McCarthy Public Meeting	Kennicott River Bridge Crossing - No action with erosion control measures. Keep pedestrian only. First 16 miles - remove pavement to allow grading maintenance. Bridge crossing: no action; allowing public access will destroy the peaceful quiet nature of the Kennecott neighborhood and the National Park.
McCarthy Public Meeting	Kennicott River Bridge - keep pedestrian only. Do erosion control. First 16 miles - remove pavement to allow grading maintenance
McCarthy Public Meeting	Thank you for being here to talk with our community! I am in great favor of the reroute of the road at Long Lake to border the state land as described in the visual that Bob taped to the map. I am also very opposed to an open access bridge. The community can not handle the traffic that open access would enable - not to mention the infrastructure is inadequate. Please consider pedestrian and bicycle access in all improvements. Thank you! p.s. I rolled sideways at Long Lake once on ice- very scary!
McCarthy Public Meeting	I feel strongly that we need to maintain the unique character of this community, which to me, means no vehicle bridge over the kennecott River. We all moved here knowing about the restricted access and we chose to live here knowing this or because of this. I don't want to lose the unique character here and a vehicle bridge will help destroy it. Keep the footbridge as is! I also support any improvements in safety to the road - brushing, reroutes and maintenance to make safer. But no pavement. Thanks!
McCarthy Public Meeting	Thank you for seeing the importance of this corridor and for valuing community input. Certainly at the top of my list is no vehicular bridge the reasons are abundant. General maintenance of McCarthy Road/the corridor is important. I am a year round resident and maintenance in winter and keeping the road open would be great. Mile 58 poses consistent challenges and many of us get stuck there when it slides. Seems it could have a major burp/slide and drop away someday. Yes, Lake Long is challenging. I like the idea by leaving it where it is and adjusting the slope on the road versus requiring a new road up the hill. I'm always an advocate of hiking trails. Again, thank you for caring and for listening. Great meeting format which fostered genuine input from community.
McCarthy Public Meeting	The baselines may have shifted in this community, but not necessarily the values. All value the beauty and the unique qualities of the area. Sadly the increased vehicle traffic has drastically reduced the positive unique characteristics. There is no safe and pleasant way to travel between the footbridge and "downtown". This paucity increases vehicle use. A creative and positive solution to restoring pedestrian ease and thus the adored unique qualities of this town is non-motorized bike/ped trail from the bridge to mccarthy, especially by the "swimming hole". Less not more vehicle parking. Free NPS shuttle service to Kennecott and to McCarthy. Finally, not related to the above-please ensure DOT equipment is cleaned before brushing. I pulled invasive sweet clover from the roadside a couple years ago. This invasive would be devastating.
McCarthy Public Meeting	Please put signs on the road that warn people about the risks of rolling off the road due to narrow road width, soft shoulders and fast incoming traffic. I spoke with Judy about this issue as well - many thanks! We are seeing more and more vehicles rolling off the road, especially in the last 3 years. People come to our place at Mile 56.7 to receive help after rolling off the road.
McCarthy Public Meeting	Long Lake reroute is very high priority. My wife and 4 children were involved in a head-on collision and 47 mile in april of 2022. The road was very narrow, sloped toward the lake and very icy. She got over as far as she could but the other vehicle could not stop or steer away. Thankfully no one was hurt...this time! She also had a near miss with a park service van going too fast and out in the middle of the road at the exact same location! The reroute is the best solution! In the mean time, improving drainage and road cross-section along the entirety of long lake is needed.
McCarthy Public Meeting	I am a year round resident. The road, while rough in the summer, isn't that bad. I would like to encourage the PEL managers to drive the road in the winter when it has been six weeks since the previous plowing. Then you can experience two feet of snow on the roadbed, road glaciers that will either get you stuck, slide you off the road, or rip an axle off when it catches you off guard. This to me is the real issue and has major health and safety implications. Long Lake is a serious problem area. the road slopes toward the lake and in winter time is a major problem. In the two mile section along the lake the road typically has up to a dozen road glaciers that are sloped even more than the road already is.

McCarthy Road PEL Study

Public Meeting #2

July to August 2024

Public comments verbatim (source: online open house "Get Engaged" comment submission section; verbally or via comment forms at the in-person open houses)

Submission Method	Comment
McCarthy Public Meeting	<p>A public vehicle bridge into McCarthy is the fastest way to destroy what makes this community unique and special. We will immediately be overwhelmed with traffic that has nowhere to go and nowhere to park.</p> <p>Predicably the "high float" 15 miles of road was a terrible idea. This surface was falling apart before it was done being installed. Better to add additional gravel that will insulate from timbers and rail spikes and improve the ability to grade the road more frequently to maintain a quality driving experience.</p> <p>Do not install trash cans along the road. Instead help the community develop a waste mangement plan/transfer site because otherwise visitorsa nd locals will fill the trash cans with household trash.</p>
McCarthy Public Meeting	<p>The sooner a public vehicle bridge option for the Kennicott River is dropped from consideration the better. This is the only highly controversial part of this planning process. The majority of the mccarthy/Kennecott community is highly opposed to a public vehicle bridge. the reasoning behind the opposition to a bridge that was expressed in the 1996 process that landed on pedestrian access only is still valid.</p> <p>Installing rip-rap along the river ks at the footbridge was part of the original plan that was never implemented. Moving forward with engineered pretentions of the existing footbridge is very important.</p> <p>Regular brushing along the entire road corridor is needed to improve sight distance and safety. Signs warning drivers of soft shoulders is also needed. IMprovements to the road surface will increase the speed at which people drive. Without implementing additional safety measures the vehicle accidents will only become more frequent and more deadline. Focus on safety. Ditch the driving bridge. A walking path/bike/path from the footbridge into downtown option, McCarthy would be great.</p>
McCarthy Public Meeting	<p>I favor a serious discussion about putting in a public, DOT driving bridge across the Kennicott River.</p>
McCarthy Public Meeting	<p>Please remove the option #4 of the Kennicott River bridge crossing. Our community could not handle the number of visitors vehicles that would pour into our limited geographic area of McCarthy/Kennicott. I understand that it is strange for a community to have private parking lots on the west side and a private bridge for limited access However, the majority of residents in this area value the slower pace of life with fewer vehicles and the private companies that are providing parking, shuttle services, eBikes, limited vehicle access, etc. Please don't allow a minority of vocal residents to create a situation in which we are arguing and fighting about a vehicle bridge. Even though it creates some limitations in the short term. We can create a relatively vehicle free community for visitors to enjoy for decades, centuries to come.</p>
McCarthy Public Meeting	<p>No public vehicle bridge over Kennicott River! There is nowhere for all those cars and campers to go. We would have a traffic jam through McCarthy, up to Kennicott, everywhere. It would ruin the feel of town and frustrate everyone as they are stuck in the traffic jam.. PLease just addres the urrent problem areas - muslides and both ends (Kotsina Bluffs and Mile 58) and do more maintenane (maybe) be we don't need other major changes. Thanks!</p>
McCarthy Public Meeting	<p>My priorities in order of importance are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Kotsina Bluffs- I like the rerouting option 2) Long Lake - I like the rerouting and trail option 3) Drainage improvements, road glaciers 4) MP 58 mudslide 5) Mudslide south of Kennecott Subdivision 6) More brushing and grading <p>Enhancements: If you build a new trail, I like the Kuskulana option.</p>
McCarthy Public Meeting	<p>Throughout the McCarthy road corridor, there are multiple culverts and fish passage concerns/improvement areas. It's disappointing to see that salmon habitat concerns, particularly as it pertains to the spawning ground around Long Lake is not included on the public maps.</p> <p>Please include culvert maps, rankings and incorporate how many fish passage improvements would be impacted project-wise. Simply stating "drainage" is not an environmentally or culturally appropriate designation. Also, please include on the map archaeological and culturally significant places and place names.</p>

McCarthy Road PEL Study

Public Meeting #2

July to August 2024

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Submission Method	Comment
McCarthy Public Meeting	The trail ideas are excellent. Please create them. Also the bike path is so needed due to dust! Air quality for bikes is poor due to dust. Not to mention pot holes. The big picture is reroute road at Long Lake, fix the landslide area and don't make the Kennecott River Bridge public or all xxxx in town with kids and dogs getting run over.
McCarthy Public Meeting	I strongly feel that maintaining the community feeling and the safety of McCarthy-Kennecott depends on maintaining a slow speed road from Chitina with only minimal improvements. Also, no vehicle bridge into McCarthy.
McCarthy Public Meeting	please leave the road as is with just a little bit of maintenance, i.e., brushing and grating. If we greatly improve the road it will bring more people than we can handle, drugs, crime, etc. Thank you.
McCarthy Public Meeting	Since tramping over in 1985, this area has struck me as pecial because of limited access across the Kennicott River. I want it to stay with limited access into McCarthy/Kennicott. I am opposed to any public vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River. Thanks.
Email	He has a BIA land claim at Moose Lake. Dean's uncle has 20 acres too.
McCarthy Public Meeting	Signage - more signage is not the answer; use corridor context sensitivity when it comes to adding more signage; be effective but not too much. Long Lake Glacier - slid in winter. Consider just [dust] suppressant that the NPS is using along the entire corridor Collecting paper comments sheets - next time use a comment box Brushing is an issue
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	Looking forward to a better road for locals and visitors alike! My one take away and major concern is the idea of a public vehicle bridge into town. I cannot overstate how much that would change the town and how ill suited our current infrastructure is to handle a change of that nature. I appreciate your time!
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	Of that large group that showed up and "voted" on leaving the bridge exactly the same as it is now, that was a set-up. I only recognized ONE person as a year round resident. The others were all summer visitors who may or may not own land, but they do not live here. Access into McCarthy can not be controlled by one family. How can DOT think that is OK? Control of all local economy through assess crushes the little guys. Nobody can compete in business with them. The current set up with ATVs dodging pedestrians is not a reasonable solution. Anyone across the Kennicott who wants a well for safe drinking water has to pay for a bridge pass PLUS pay \$1000 well tax on top of that. The Blackburn Herritage Foundation has land they have offered up as a parking lot between the airport and the Millers house where the study ends. Put in a parking lot, shuttle visitors from there. Maintain road access to it year round. That resolves winter parking, and unfair monopolies over all industry.
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	Improvement of the K-cott river crossing is essential. Reverting to ped bridge across the K-cott River would be disasterous. Prior to being able to take motor vehicles across the K-cott river, vehicle congestion was EVERYWHERE. Many people weren't here to see that but I remember those days. We had to have multiple vehicles staged in order to get around; with a tram, the DOT ROW was a mess on the east landing of where the ATV/ped bridge is now. With the current population and continued growth which is happening, that would be completely unsustainable. Parking, which can be constructed on land now owned by the Blackburn Heritage Foundation between the airport and K-icott subdivision can be managed by the state or privately call [REDACTED] for info. Fears of vehicle congestion are counterintuitive. Signage can control vehicle traffic. Visitors lodging in K-cott park below K-cott, those staying in McCarthy could still park on the west side and winter vehicle storage could addressed.
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	As I have noted in comments above, I believe that doing less is better than doing more when it comes to the road corridor. I would favor some basic safety improvements and dealing with the two areas of frequent landslides, but not much more. Other thoughts are: a) I would discourage vehicle on the McCarthy-Kennecott road link, rather than building a parking lot near Kennecott b) I would not favor rerouting the road at Long Lake. This seems an expensive and unnecessary change and, as the PEL indicates, would add new impacts to freshwater areas, in particular.

McCarthy Road PEL Study

Public Meeting #2

July to August 2024

Public comments verbatim (source: online open house "Get Engaged" comment submission section; verbally or via comment forms at the in-person open houses)

Submission Method	Comment
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	I said what I need in the above part, but the website is being glitchy and keeps flashing away then coming back, so I don't trust it to deliver what I wrote. I'll give a second try to double my chances of success here. Basically, I think that both ends of the road have significant issues that need to be addressed, ie: planning done for the potential of catastrophic failure at the Kotsina bluff and the mudslide at mile 58 or so. Long lake would benefit greatly from the kind of widening and drainage work that was done at the Chokosna bluff a few years ago. That spot used to get quite scary in the winter sometimes with the road glacier slanted severely to a large drop-off. It's good now! Successful fix. The whole moving the road idea at Long Lake seems a bit extreme and unnecessary. Other than that, just a couple more gradings a year, reliable plowing and road glacier cleanup in the winter, and brushing a little more often for safety would be great.
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	Please focus on improving problem spots along the corridor. Please do NOT pave the road. Increased road speed would decrease safety. Please do NOT provide a public vehicle bridge across the Kennicott R. The towns of McCarthy and Kennicott do not have the infrastructure to support an influx of vehicles.
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	Like the overwhelming majority of my neighbors in McCarthy and Kennecott, I am strongly opposed to a public vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River, which would severely damage the unique character of the area for residents and visitors alike. We already have shuttle bus businesses to move visitors around. We do not need traffic jams and accidents on the east side of the river, and there is simply no place for visitors to park private vehicles in McCarthy or Kennecott (where the roads are private easements, not public). The community has been consistently opposed to such a bridge for all of the 30+ years I have spent in the area. In addition, I am opposed to road "improvements" aimed at increasing the speed of traffic on the road, which will only compromise safety and further erode the unique experience for visitors. By all mean, add culverts to prevent flooding and deal with mudslides as they occur, but otherwise leave the road largely as it is. Major rerouting is not needed.
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	My family and I spend our summers at our cabin in Kennicott. We are opposed to a public road of the Kennicott River. McCarthy has no facilities or parking for guests. It would change the character of the town. Please listen to the residents and seek other options to encourage visitors. Thanks.
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	A vehicle public bridge across the Kennicott River is a bad idea. Traffic and parking are already a problem and a bridge would create a unsolvable problem. Regular maintenance on the stretch of road along Long Lake is an appropriate solution to that problem. DOT has done a fantastic job of maintaining the road over the past decade. The road is not the problem it is that some drivers exceed the speed limit and thus endanger others. Perhaps some speed bumps along the strait ways might slow the traffic down to safe speeds.
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	I am strongly opposed to a public-use vehicle bridge, and I am also opposed to road widening and improvements that will result in higher traffic speeds.
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	I do not support a public vehicle bridge into McCarthy. We own houses on in the center of town and already struggle with vehicles parking in front of our property. I can't imagine the demand for parking in town and Kennicott a public access bridge would place on property owners.
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	I live along the road at mile 56.5. I believe the road should be slow and safe -20-35 mph. I believe the foot bridge works great to manage tourist traffic on the McCarthy/Kennicott side of the bridge. It is a creative solution that has worked very well!!
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	Motorized access needs to be continued whether it be cars or continued atv access. There are a lot of people who need access to mail, the airstrip, local businesses etc. it seems illegal to have to pay to cross a private bridge for this.

Submission Method	Comment
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	I am a Kennicott landowner and have lived seasonally in the area for 20 years. I feel strongly that "improving" the McCarthy road and adding a vehicle bridge will have negative consequences that diminish the safety of the area for visitors and locals alike, and will have irreversible impacts on wildlife and habitat. An improved road will lead to more visitors, driving faster, and increased automobile accidents in a remote area of the state with poor access to medical care. Similarly, more cars and trucks on the East side of the Kennicott River will lead to more dangerous conditions for pedestrians, especially near Kennicott where families and their dogs walk on narrow and steep roads. We simply don't have the infrastructure on the East side of the river to accomodate additional cars--there's nowhere to park, turn around, or pull over safely in most places. Adding parking will impact what makes the area unique and attractive for tourists. Thanks for listening to our concerns!
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	I have lived seasonally near in Kennecott for my entire life. The pedestrian, bike, and kid-friendly atmosphere in the McCarthy-Kennecott community relies on low vehicle numbers and the relatively low number of visitors we experience. I strongly favor not changing the road configuration so that the road to Chitina continues to be slow. I also would favor no change to the current footbridge across the Kennicott River, as adding unlimited vehicle access would have terrible consequences for the community.
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	I am a life-long seasonal resident in Kennicott. I do not favor any significant changes to the Chitina-McCarthy road and I also oppose any consideration of making a vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River. Even the current number of visitors to the area stretch the limits of the community resources, and have negative impact on the experiences of visitors and residents. And the unique pedestrian-friendly community would be destroyed by more access.
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	My biggest concern is access across the DOT Kennicott River bridge This Bridge needs to remain usable by four-wheelers. I live on the west side and need to cross in order to check my mail, get water go to the store or any other west side activitie. A large portion of the McCarthy population lives on the west side and has no reason to drive a full size vehicle like a car or truck into McCarthy. We don't need or want to have to have to purchase a bridge key for the commercial bridge. Thank you for your time and consideration.
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	My husband and I are McCarthy landowners and have spent time at our cabin since 2001 and worked seasonally in the area starting in 1997. I am against constructing a public vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River. We simply don't have the infrastructure on the East side of the river to accommodate additional cars--there's nowhere to park, turn around, or pull over safely in most places. Adding parking and the additional cars will impact what makes the area unique and attractive for tourists. It will be congested, dusty, and will have negative impacts on the community. Thanks for listening.
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	I might have submitted this comment already, apologies if this is duplicate. My husband and I are McCarthy landowners and have spent time at our cabin since 2001 and worked seasonally in the area starting in 1997. I am against constructing a public vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River. We simply don't have the infrastructure on the East side of the river to accommodate additional cars--there's nowhere to park, turn around, or pull over safely in most places. Adding parking and the additional cars will impact what makes the area unique and attractive for tourists. It will be congested, dusty, and will have negative impacts on the community. Thanks for listening.
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	Thank you to all of the PEL members for all of your good work you are doing on the McCarthy Road PEL. As a 37 year government employee I know how much a small thank you of appreciation goes a long ways. Thank you. As you know among other good and worthy projects on the McCarthy Road Corridor my number one priority to see moved forward is the Long Lake Road Relocation (M44.0-48.5) and Trail (Mile 46.5-48.5). This project has support of Copper River Watershed, RPO, WSENP, ADOT&PF, local Long Lake residents, local McCarthy PEL committee, regional fisheries ADF&G, and others. This proposal benefits Long Term Public safety, protects critical Long Lake salmon spawning habitat, provides a wildfire break for local safety, converts two miles of road into a trail, increases recreation opportunity for WSENP, Kennicott, McCarthy, and local residents, continues to provide access to local residents and public access to Long Lake. Please show my accurate digital map in the PEL. Thank You.

McCarthy Road PEL Study

Public Meeting #2

July to August 2024

Public comments verbatim (source: online open house "Get Engaged" comment submission section; verbally or via comment forms at the in-person open houses)

Submission Method	Comment
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	<p>With all of the proposed road improvements, please realize that vehicular traffic has a corrosive effect on everything that makes this community special, particularly in downtown McCarthy and Kennicott.</p> <p>The absolute worst offense would be a public-use vehicle bridge. This would be catastrophic for this community.</p>
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	<p>I've owned property south of McCarthy Creek for 25 years. A public vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River cannot be supported by current infrastructure, and creating necessary infrastructure would destroy unique qualities of the resident and visitor experience in the McCarthy area. The majority of residents and visitors I've spoken with over the years consistently express their appreciation of not having vehicular public bridge access to McCarthy/Kennicott, and I agree. Despite being state right-of-ways, most road maintenance east of the Kennicott River has been funded/conducted by residents and is a constant struggle. The state proposes "improving" and expanding road and bridge service in McCarthy when there has been little to no funding to maintain what already exists. Where will ongoing maintenance funding for expanded roads and bridges come from? Will residents have to foot those bills as well? Expanding without reasonably guaranteed future funding is poor planning.</p>
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	<p>Appreciate the attempt to offer public input. This survey is buggy. I scroll away and my answers have been erased multiple times. Frustrating.</p>
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	<p>I live in Kennecott in summer with my parents. I am 7 years old. I would not like to have a lot more cars in Kennecott and McCarthy. So I don't think anyone should build a car bridge across the Kennicott River that anyone could use. I think having a lot more cars would not be nice and might not be safe for me and my friends in Kennecott and McCarthy. Thank you.</p>
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	<p>In general I feel supportive of the information and objectives in the PEL study, there is a lot of potential useful and long reaching improvements listed here.</p> <p>I strongly disagree with the premise of a vehicle bridge being built across the Kennicott River. This study lists 'building a vehicle bridge' across the river as one of the options. If that is to be seriously considered as an option, then this study does not come close to addressing the needs of the roads and communities on the east side of the river. Congestion, lack of parking, lack of reasonable turnarounds, visitors who don't know better driving on the airstrip, pollution to clear creek and our water supply, etc etc. I think this study needs to remove 'vehicle bridge' as an option, or you have to revisit the entirety of what that would look like. It's not just a bridge, it what happens to the 100 to 200 more vehicles per day in the busy part of the season. And that is not addressed</p>
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	<p>I am available for comment at any time. Obviously I'm in favor of the Long Lake project.</p>
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	<p>thanks for coming to MXY, i hope it was clear that we do NOT want a vehicle bridge over the kennicott river. we heard that you felt it was 50/50 for and against the bridge, but you could see unanimous opposition at the last open house. i am curious where you are getting the idea that's it's evenly split for/against a bridge? it's the most important issue in this study and 100% of the show of hands at the open house were opposed, so that shows our strong community opposition. i hope that it taken seriously. other than no bridge, i support safety first along the road and also a pedestrian corridor from the kennicott river to the wagon road, to get pedestrians off the roadway and make it safer for walkers/bikers along that very busy dusty stretch into mccarthy town. a separate pathway parallel to the road, but aways off the road surface would make walking and biking to town much safer and more pleasant. we need to accommodate others besides cars and motor vehicles. thanks.</p>
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	<p>The comment that there is no Public parking on the east side of the Kennicott River seems to skim over the fact that there is no public parking on the west side either. The current private parking/private bridge arrangement means that a few individuals almost automatically garner a "tax" of one sort or another from everyone visiting or living in McCarthy, despite their being a state right of way into the popular community. A vehicle bridge at the Kennicott River would serve to distribute this wealth around the valley as private land owners could sell parking closer to town and local businesses and residents would be able to conduct business and life without a subscription fee to enter.</p> <p>The experience for tourists and the opportunities for local commerce would be greatly enhanced</p>

McCarthy Road PEL Study

Public Meeting #2

July to August 2024

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Submission Method	Comment
Online open house "Get Engaged" general comment submission	<p>Improvements to the road surface promotes people to drive faster resulting in decreased safety. Pot holes are literally our speed bumps. Pot holes slow people down which is critical for safety with so many blind corners and steep, loose road shoulders. With no local or regional government, the McCarthy community has no legal ability to manage parking and other motor vehicle management issues in downtown McCarthy. A public bridge across the Kennecott River would create an unmanageable congestion and parking nightmare in McCarthy. National Park Service management has been ineffective at management of motor vehicles in Kennecott. The NPS and the Kennecott residents must create an agreement regarding motor vehicle management within the Kennecott Subdivision. Motor vehicle management options exist for Kennecott but they have not been implemented consistently. A Kennecott River vehicle bridge would ruin the existing visitor experience and quality of life for Kennecott residents.</p>

Wetzel, Kim

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: Saturday, August 24, 2024 5:15 PM
To: Wetzel, Kim
Subject: [EXTERNAL] McCarthy Road PEL

Based on 90% of the written comments and a 99% showing of hands at the McCarthy town meeting this summer, I think it is clear the community of McCarthy does NOT want a vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River. Please take NO ACTION regarding changes to the existing footbridge. My preference is that the Alaska DOT&PF enforce the intended "pedestrian only" operation of the bridge as designed and built. Please add width restricters back to the bridge.

Regarding changes to the road along Long Lake, I think a little widening and a slower speed zone would address any existing safety concerns. I am against a rerouting of that section of road.

[REDACTED]
Kennecott Resident

Sent from my iPhone

Wetzel, Kim

From: English-Young, Seth (FHWA) <seth.english-young@dot.gov>
Sent: Monday, August 26, 2024 9:40 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Wetzel, Kim
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Comments on McCarthy Road potential improvement options

[REDACTED] Your comments have been received and will be reviewed by the project team.

Seth

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, August 24, 2024 2:04 PM
To: Kim.Wetzel@jacobs.com; English-Young, Seth (FHWA) <seth.english-young@dot.gov>
Subject: Comments on McCarthy Road potential improvement options

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To
Kim Wetzel, Public Involvement Lead
Seth English-Young, Planning Team Lead
McCarthy Road Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study

August 24, 2024

Kim and Seth,

Please include these comments in the record of response to your open house on developing and evaluating potential improvement options for the McCarthy Road.

Much has been accomplished by the PEL study, including identification of an array of doable projects on and along the road and several key major maintenance concerns deserving attention at the Kotsina, Long Lake and the potentially unstable 58 mile slide. Thank you for that useful work, and for the opportunity to comment on options.

However, raising the possibility of a Kennicott River public highway bridge introduces complexities that would require investigation in the PEL study beyond what it can undertake. And, not addressing the implications, bring a level of public controversy likely precluding deserved attention to the many other aspects of the study. Public highway bridge not be on the list of options for the Kennicott River crossing.

My views are consistent with those expressed at the McCarthy PEL public meeting this summer. The meeting space was crowded with people who came because the Kennicott public bridge option was on the agenda. A participant asked for a show of hands of those who opposed such a bridge. Almost all hands raised. Then he asked for show of hands by those favoring a bridge. None raised. The PEL record should clearly report this result.

I have watched McCarthy, the McCarthy Road corridor, and then Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve develop since the state highway bridge over the Copper River at Chitina opened, was present for the celebratory ribbon-cutting there July 4, 1971. I was part of the community that saw the negative consequences of temporary public vehicle bridge access across the Kennicott River in 1974, and the subsequent responses to that including opposition to a federally funded vehicle bridge, advocacy for the community constructed trams, then the footbridges, now supplemented by the private toll bridge for vehicles. I have observed and contributed to the growth and changes occurring during this period, and continue to do so.

Opening of a public highway bridge across the river would likely reduce economic activity in the McCarthy area by making it less attractive. The character and economy of McCarthy-Kennecott and the surrounding area in significant part results from and depends on the carefully thought-through access across the river, including limitation on vehicle access by the general public. Much of the attractiveness of the area is defined by tourist access across the footbridge and what visitors find as consequence in McCarthy and Kennecott.

Because the streets in McCarthy are public and methods for controlling traffic in Kennecott are limited, as a practical matter the effective way to maintain the attractiveness of these places is through the well-functioning present system of Kennicott River footbridge, private toll bridge and air access. If a public highway bridge is built, no combination of east-side parking lots will compensate for the loss of this attractiveness for residents, businesses and visitors alike.

If the PEL final report includes a highway bridge option, it should describe feasible solutions for these involved issues. It's not realist to do that, and a public bridge option should not be included in the report.

Some time ago, I had a chance to visit the Swiss towns of Zermatt and Sass Fee, where vehicle access by the general public is not allowed, with similarities to McCarthy-Kennecott. I talked with local municipal officials, tourism promotion organizations, and owners of tourism businesses. They are members of an association of Swiss car-free municipalities, [https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://www.myswissalps.com/planning/places/car-free-towns/__;!!B5cixuoO7ltTeg!GcF92Jb8ZVwVOWugWB2eiFhKPNiWKWLDUTLxn6NjdQzcW2yPx14W-ICDkT7BeUp4mCzMRpz7I93s-uFYkTHECHzsJHpycng\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://www.myswissalps.com/planning/places/car-free-towns/__;!!B5cixuoO7ltTeg!GcF92Jb8ZVwVOWugWB2eiFhKPNiWKWLDUTLxn6NjdQzcW2yPx14W-ICDkT7BeUp4mCzMRpz7I93s-uFYkTHECHzsJHpycng$)

They recognize that their businesses and communities depend on and grow from the specified access they have defined with long-term history of success. In Switzerland, tourists' vehicles can be excluded by placing a small sign at the entrance to the towns saying "no public vehicle access," while allowing local residents and businesses suitable motorized access. Legally and practically, we can't do the same in Alaska. But we have achieved similar through the existing crossing methods at the Kennicott River, including no public highway bridge.

The PEL study will be remembered either as the initiation of a program of well thought-through McCarthy Road maintenance, or as the launching of a polarizing, destructive controversy about a Kennicott River public vehicle bridge, bringing that option to the table without solutions for the implications. Your choice, but the better decision is evident.


McCarthy

What Kind of Access Would Best Serve Our Community? The Time Has Come for a Community Conversation

Like the wild rivers that surround us, the decades have rolled along, and over the many years the Kennicott-McCarthy community has had many lively discussions and debates regarding access and bridges. Historically, this has been a question of access-or-no-access (for vehicles). There was a time, in the past, when many in our community advocated for no access, arguing that access would change the town so much that all of our distinctive qualities would be lost in a sea of vehicles.

About two decades ago, residents resumed vehicle access to town after a period of time in which the town relied on a hand-powered tram. The new private bridge significantly increased business and traffic flow, and today a few dozen vehicles (or more) can be found in town at a given time. After two decades, residents are accustomed to vehicle access. I know of few residents who would seriously advocate for eliminating all access. The current discussion is no longer about access-or-no-access but about what kind of vehicle access. Yet a truly open and honest discussion only occurs between residents when neighbors cross paths to parry opinions. There is currently no formal, comprehensive community-wide discussion.

After two decades, we are overdue to ask a basic question: *What kind of access would best serve our community?* It's funny how such a basic question can get submerged beneath the rippling currents of time.

With all of the changes, with the passing of two decades, I suggest that the time has come for such questions and discussions. Yet there are important obstacles. These obstacles are, in fact, the reason why there has been no community-wide conversation.

One obstacle is the simple fear of change, an anxiety that the character of town would be altered and the town become unrecognizable. Yet if we compare the town of today with the past, a strong case could be made that this has already occurred, at least in McCarthy's downtown. Loud concerts blast music every night of the summer weekends. I live on the west side of the Kennicott River, at quite some remove from downtown McCarthy, and on weekends I can hear the sounds of drums and amplified electric guitars long after midnight. I wear earplugs.

Along with noise, vehicles are now ubiquitous. Cars, trucks and wheelers are now a fixture in town, complete with a fleet of shuttle vans.

Access has already changed town in all of the ways that residents of the past feared it would, for better or worse, depending on one's perspective. Many of us, myself included, appreciate the addition of a new restaurant and the increased opportunity for social intercourse and cultural activity. Yet like many, I have mixed feelings.

The town would benefit from a renewed discussion, one that accepts the reality of change. Armed with a realistic appraisal of our current situation, I submit that we would be well-served to ask: *What kind of access would best serve our community?*

I recently had a passing discussion with a town resident on just this issue. He argued against any renewed debate. I sensed much anxiety driving this desire to avoid discussion. This resident was fearful of change, and his argument boiled down to these seven words that he repeated to me several times: "If it ain't broke don't fix it."

But it is broke, and not simply because of the noise pollution and traffic. These are the most notable changes, surface level alterations that we can all see and hear. Below the surface, though, there have been seismic shifts in the economics of our community.

Bridge access has allowed for easier and cheaper building. This has led to an influx of wealthy people building second, third, fourth or fifth homes in our community. These are million dollar cabins, occupied for a few weeks each year, placed in prime locations for all to see, like a suburban McMansion on a hill that to my eyes seems so out of place given the homesteading tradition in our community. And our homesteading tradition truly is in peril.

Like many places in the United States, property rates have been ratcheted up so high that property is now financially out of reach for the kinds of hardscrabble homesteaders who used to form the backbone of this community. Such enterprising individuals must look elsewhere as property continues to be bought up by those with large amounts of capital.

Deeper still, all (or almost all) economic development is now controlled by the Rowland family because they control access by way of two private bridges. It is a monopoly that is used to stifle competition and to extract money from development activity.

Any development that might directly compete with Rowland business is either strictly prohibited or becomes cost prohibitive due to bridge fees. Even development that does not directly compete is penalized with large fees. Here is one example where I am familiar with the details. The Rowlands do not drill wells, but when the local well-driller, Luke, recently put in a \$12,000 well, there was an additional \$900 charge on the bill. This was a one-time charge from the Rowlands for one crossing to drill a fairly low-cost well. This is a 7.5% increase in the cost of business that is passed directly on to the consumer, a line item on the bill. Every well that Luke drills east of the Kennicott River incurs such charges. Even if Luke keeps his rig on the east side, the Rowlands take a cut of the earnings.

Personally I think this example is reason enough for alarm, but from my discussions with other neighbors I fear that charges like this are on the low end.

Beyond the admittedly moral discussion of pricing, there is the issue of how a monopoly on access can discourage honest ambition. Some young local residents have been prevented from starting businesses by the Rowland monopoly. Most infamously this occurred a few years back

when Jason Esler attempted to start a waste management business. Trash removal is a much needed service to the local community, but Esler's honest efforts were frustrated by Rowland refusal to grant bridge access.

Though this all may sound nefarious, this is nothing done in secret. The Rowlands charge more because they can, and they are upfront about this. They have the power and use it. They suck huge amounts of money from businesses and can block enterprising individuals from achieving their dreams.

There are also passes for individual residents. Those with Kennicott River bridge passes, for example, saw their rates increase from \$375 to \$575 in only one year, a huge jump in price from last summer to this summer. How much farther will the Rowlands raise these rates? Nothing stops them from going ever higher.

These are important but difficult issues that urgently need community attention and discussion. These are tough issues that beg even tougher questions.

What kind of economic power dynamics will continue to grow, over the years and through the decades, when one family holds all the cards and completely monopolizes access to the community?

What are the true impacts of those of my neighbors who have been adversely impacted, economically, by a private monopoly on access, which has been weaponized to stifle competition and new business development? Can we hear directly from those of our neighbors whose dreams of bettering themselves and their community have been frustrated or even thwarted?

There are also critical questions about the evolution of our local culture. What long-term social and cultural damage will be incurred in our community when one family monopolizes access as property rates continue to rocket skyward?

And lastly I present a question that I believe drives to the heart of the matter: Do we feel that our local economy is as robust and healthy as it could be, given the limitations imposed by this economic monopoly?

With property values so high, will such rate increases — along with property rates that are reaching obscene levels — drive out homesteaders? There is evidence that this has already occurred, leaving me to wonder if our community will simply become a place where only the wealthy can afford to live, a community where the mostly-unoccupied cabins of wealthy vacationers sit alongside businesses and others with excess disposable income pushing out those who wish to reside here as salt-of-the-earth homesteaders.

Much is at stake, and having an honest and open discussion is problematic in such an environment where power and wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few. A simple refusal to

issue a bridge pass can change a life and destroy a dream. So even having an open discussion might not be possible, for fear of Rowland reprisals.

While I think the time is overdue for a robust and prolonged community conversation, two important things must happen for this to occur.

First and foremost, the State of Alaska must demonstrate a substantial interest in putting in a public bridge. A State bridge must be a viable option. In the absence of serious interest from the state, our community options dwindle. Many will likely feel that there is no point in having a discussion if there are no viable options. Why put yourself on the line if the State isn't serious?

The second ingredient for a healthy discussion is to have no fear of reprisals from the Rowland family. Myself and many others appreciate the Rowlands as neighbors and greatly value our relationships with members of the family. Many of us admire their ambition, focus and intelligence. I have no hostility toward any individuals in the family; I simply believe that they have been narrowly focused on the interests of their growing clan and need to be reminded of their impact on the community and their neighbors — and they need to hear that directly from those most impacted. Losing sight of the best interests of the community is actually quite typical in instances of economic monopoly.

The most ideal community discussion would be one in which the Rowlands were active participants who affirm that they have the best interests of the community at heart and assure community residents that there will be no reprisals from those who express frustrations and speak to the harm done by the bridge monopoly.

If these two conditions are met, I believe that the community will be capable of a healthy and comprehensive conversation that could take account of the current circumstances and address all of the community changes that have taken place in the last two decades. *What kind of access would best serve our community?*

Change is a fact of life, and the community is always evolving, just like the wild rivers around us. We are best served when we have discussions and debates in an intentional way, as a community working together for the common good. The alternative is to allow things to follow a frustrating trajectory and agenda set by a small minority of residents. A community is better when everyone has a voice in a democratic, inclusive process. I believe in the intelligence and goodwill of all of my neighbors, including and especially the Rowland family. I feel honored to be included among such an exceptional and inspiring group of people and to call them neighbors and friends. As such, I believe that we have an important opportunity, at this specific point in time. The moment is now. We must engage in a positive discussion that can tackle the tough questions and ensure that our community is healthy and preserves our values and ways of life for the next generations.

Wetzel, Kim

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, August 25, 2024 9:16 PM
To: Wetzel, Kim
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PEL Study: Comments on proposed McCarthy Road improvements

August 25, 2024

Dear Kim,

I moved to Kennicott as a seasonal resident in 1995 and became a year round resident in 2003. I subsequently bought property in Kennicott and began homesteading with my wife. I fully agree with my neighbors [REDACTED] on the Kennicott River public bridge issue. There is not sufficient parking or infrastructure on the East side of the Kennicott River for any influx of non-local traffic. At this point, there isn't even sufficient parking in Kennicott for local visitation. Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

[REDACTED]
Kennicott [REDACTED]

August 25th, 2024

Dear Kim,

I'm a seasonal resident of the Kennicott Valley since 1992 and landowner since 1999. I have not been able to engage as much with this process as I would have liked, but did submit public comments in the previous opening and it is important to me. I did just complete the survey and wanted to flag in particular my concerns with the inclusion of a public vehicular crossing of the West Channel of the Kennicott River.

I would be surprised if this suggestion/issue came up in any volume in your previous call for public comment and suggest that there is a current harmony and ability for all to cross the Kennicott River via a variety of means and there is no need to revisit this complex and consequential topic. Reopening the question of vehicular access to McCarthy – seemingly needlessly, I think will promote a revisiting of painful tension and divisions within the community. Also, opening McCarthy and Kennicott to public vehicular access would serve to destroy the character and the very values that attracts visitors and residents to the area. There is not the space or infrastructure to support increased vehicle traffic and people that would come with public vehicular

access. I would urge you to remove this highly destructive option from your list in recognition that it's not currently needed, is vastly more complex than the PEL is set up to effectively support and is counter so to many of the values expressed in previous McCarthy Road plans you noted. I agree that the PEL seems like it has the potential to create an effective list of project needs to fund and address, but that the public vehicle bridge crossing is not appropriate to be included.

Below I have included a letter from McCarthy resident [REDACTED] I concur 100% with the points he has raised. I am also including parts from a letter from Kennecott landowner [REDACTED] I am including excerpts from [REDACTED] letter as I was not at the public meeting this summer and am concerned about some of the points she has raised – included below.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Seasonal Kennicott resident and landowner

August 24, 2024

Kim and Seth,

Please include these comments in the record of response to your open house on developing and evaluating potential improvement options for the McCarthy Road.

Much has been accomplished by the PEL study, including identification of an array of doable projects on and along the road and several key major maintenance concerns deserving attention at the Kotsina, Long Lake and the potentially unstable 58 mile slide. Thank you for that useful work, and for the opportunity to comment on options.

However, raising the possibility of a Kennicott River public highway bridge introduces complexities that would require investigation in the PEL study beyond what it can undertake. And, not addressing the implications, bring a level of public controversy likely precluding deserved attention to the many other aspects of the study. Public highway bridge not be on the list of options for the Kennicott River crossing.

My views are consistent with those expressed at the McCarthy

PEL public meeting this summer. The meeting space was crowded with people who came because the Kennicott public bridge option was on the agenda. A participant asked for a show of hands of those who opposed such a bridge. Almost all hands raised. Then he asked for show of hands by those favoring a bridge. None raised. The PEL record should clearly report this result.

I have watched McCarthy, the McCarthy Road corridor, and then Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve develop since the state highway bridge over the Copper River at Chitina opened, was present for the celebratory ribbon-cutting there July 4, 1971. I was part of the community that saw the negative consequences of temporary public vehicle bridge access across the Kennicott River in 1974, and the subsequent responses to that including opposition to a federally funded vehicle bridge, advocacy for the community constructed trams, then the footbridges, now supplemented by the private toll bridge for vehicles. I have observed and contributed to the growth and changes occurring during this period, and continue to do so.

Opening of a public highway bridge across the river would likely reduce economic activity in the McCarthy area by making it less attractive. The character and economy of McCarthy-Kennecott and the surrounding area in significant part results from and depends on the carefully thought-through access across the river, including limitation on vehicle access by the general public. Much of the attractiveness of the area is defined by tourist access across the footbridge and what visitors find as consequence in McCarthy and Kennecott.

Because the streets in McCarthy are public and methods for controlling traffic in Kennecott are limited, as a practical matter the effective way to maintain the attractiveness of these places is through the well-functioning present system of Kennicott River footbridge, private toll bridge and air access. If a public highway bridge is built, no combination of east-side parking lots will compensate for the loss of this attractiveness for residents, businesses and visitors alike.

If the PEL final report includes a highway bridge option, it should describe feasible solutions for these involved issues. It's not realist to do that, and a public bridge option should not be included in the report.

Some time ago, I had a chance to visit the Swiss towns of Zermatt and Sass Fee, where vehicle access by the general public is not allowed, with similarities to McCarthy-Kennecott. I talked with local municipal officials, tourism promotion organizations, and

owners of tourism businesses. They are members of an association of Swiss car-free municipalities, <https://www.myswissalps.com/planning/places/car-free-towns/> They recognize that their businesses and communities depend on and grow from the specified access they have defined with long-term history of success. In Switzerland, tourists' vehicles can be excluded by placing a small sign at the entrance to the towns saying "no public vehicle access," while allowing local residents and businesses suitable motorized access. Legally and practically, we can't do the same in Alaska. But we have achieved similar through the existing crossing methods at the Kennicott River, including no public highway bridge.

The PEL study will be remembered either as the initiation of a program of well thought-through McCarthy Road maintenance, or as the launching of a polarizing, destructive controversy about a Kennicott River public vehicle bridge, bringing that option to the table without solutions for the implications. Your choice, but the better decision is evident.

██████████
McCarthy

Excerpts from letter from ██████████

Dear Kim,

Comments on proposed McCarthy Road improvements:

I. No action on the vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River proposal. I DO NOT support a vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River. McCarthy and Kennecott do not have the infrastructure to support the increased traffic and the majority of the community is against the bridge as evident in your community open house. People come to this area to enjoy the peaceful, quiet atmosphere. Vehicles in McCarthy would ruin the community. Vehicles in Kennecott are impossible. Thus, a public vehicle bridge across the river should not even be an option. There are other projects more worthy of PEL's attention.

I have a few comments after attending the recent open house in McCarthy.

1. I, along with many others, were confused about the purpose of the colored dots that were to be placed at three proposed McCarthy Road improvements that were most important to us. Of major importance to me is the suggested vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River. I placed a dot there, along with others, because it is highly important that a vehicle bridge is NOT built across the river. So, how does your study differentiate the dots as one who does not want the bridge or one who does want the bridge or improvements to the bridge?

2. It seemed to me the PEL study is pushing someone's agenda for a vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River. I feel you should be impartial and just gather the information. When I asked one of your representatives how to use the dots on the map concerning the bridge and how to show it was a major concern and that I did not want action, she said with all the comments that came in the community was divided 50/50 for/against. I commented that unless the PEL study committee did not post online all the public comments received, it was clear from what I read that most people were against the vehicle bridge. The PEL is making it difficult to express our concern and spreading the word that 50% of the community wants the bridge. It was clear by the showing of hands at the open house, in which not one person raised a hand in favor of the bridge, that the community does not want the bridge. The PEL committee needs to seriously hear what the community is telling them.

Again, the PEL committee should have a representative from Kennecott. We are not McCarthy. The road leads to both towns, yet we don't have representation. A person from McCarthy does understand the Kennecott community concerns and issues.

Wetzel, Kim

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, August 25, 2024 9:11 PM
To: Wetzel, Kim
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] McCarthy Road PEL Comments

We have found the study so far to be broad reaching and with a lot of potential for being a guide to some really positive and safe improvements to the McCarthy Road corridor for residents and visitors alike.

Some further thoughts:

1. What ever realignments, ditching, culvert work, straightening of the McCarthy Road may happen, the construction needs to take it consideration the winter conditions. particularly the road glaciers and how they develop, and melt out, for the best long term winter use patterns with the view in mind that there will be low/to no winter maintenance along the road corridor. Having lived out here since 1995 and 1985 respectively, we have seen varied DOT winter maintenance along the road depending on the states budget and the administration of sitting governor. The road work needs to be able to withstand low maintenance levels, because that is likely to be an issue again.

The State of Alaska has a history of building/improving roads, that they then cannot maintain. Let's not do that here.

2. We strongly believe that the present footbridge across the Kennicott River is the best and most correct answer to access to the east side of the river. (The decking could use some repair though) We live in Kennecott, and have been here since the era of the trams. We both signed the grassroots community petition in the mid 1990s asking the state to build a footbridge to replace the deteriorating trams. We still believe that this uniform state access is best for the vibrant communities that make up 'McCarthy'. It creates a a legal access for all visitors and residents, and keeps vehicular traffic from over taking and destroying the aspects of this community that make it a unique and much beloved tourist, summer seasonal, and residential destination. The access across the present privately owned vehicle freight bridge, that allows residents and businesses to purchase a pass if they desire, helps keep the community a pedestrian tourist friendly local. Much of what makes this a popular summer destination, brings in \$ and provides many locals with their entire years earnings, depends on the small town quaint feel of the place.

The PEL survey suggests that 'building a vehicle bridge' across the Kennicott River is one of the options. I do not see how this study can offer that up as an option without doing a deep dive into what that would actually look like if one was built.

An option to build parking for 100 plus vehicles near the McCarthy junction so not everyone would literally drive thru town and then back out?

Where would large vehicles turn around?

How to protect the airstrip from unknowing visitors from driving out onto the runway and causing aviation safety issues?

Where would visitors park once they got to the boundary of State HW and the private subdivision that is the Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark, that has no parking for more than 10 visitor vehicles?

Protecting our community water supply in Clear Creek from pollution?

Without truly looking into the options of how to handle what a vehicle bridge brings to the east side of the Kennicott pRiver, and how to mitigate that, it should not be an option.

3. CVT broad band

Copper Valley Telecom is actively working on installing a cable from Chitina into the townsite of McCarthy. Very little has been said about collaboration between the State of Alaska DOT and CVT about their project and how it will/will not

affect some of the future road improvements. I encourage DOT to be working closely with CVT to hopefully prevent some future screwup because a broadband internet cable was laid in the 'wrong' place.

Thank you for the opportunity to write in.



Permanent Residents of Kennecott

Sent from my iPad

Wetzel, Kim

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, August 25, 2024 2:37 PM
To: Wetzel, Kim
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PEL Study: Comments on proposed McCarthy Road improvements

August 25th, 2024

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Wetzel, Kim

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, August 24, 2024 5:56 PM
To: Wetzel, Kim
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PEL Comments McCarthy Road

Dear Kim (sorry if this is a repeat. Please disregard my email from [REDACTED] That email is wrong.)

Comments on proposed McCarthy Road improvements:

1. No action on the vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River proposal. I DO NOT support a vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River. McCarthy and Kennecott do not have the infrastructure to support the increased traffic and the majority of the community is against the bridge as evident in your community open house. People come to this area to enjoy the peaceful, quiet atmosphere. Vehicles in McCarthy would ruin the community. Vehicles in Kennecott are impossible. Thus, a public vehicle bridge across the river should not even be an option. There are other projects more worthy of PEL's attention.
2. Long Lake improvements. I do not support altering the road to bypass Long Lake. The financial cost is too much when simple solutions of guardrails and slower speed limits will be effective.
3. Concerning the mile 58 slide area, construct improvements in existing road alignment.

I have a few comments after attending the recent open house in McCarthy.

1. I, along with many others, were confused about the purpose of the colored dots that were to be placed at three proposed McCarthy Road improvements that were most important to us. Of major importance to me is the suggested vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River. I placed a dot there, along with others, because it is highly important that a vehicle bridge is NOT built across the river. So, how does your study differentiate the dots as one who does not want the bridge or one who does want the bridge or improvements to the bridge?
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difficult to express our concern and spreading the word that 50% of the community wants the bridge. It was clear by the showing of hands at the open house, in which not one person raised a hand in favor of the bridge, that the community does not want the bridge. The PEL committee needs to seriously hear what the community is telling them.

Again, the PEL committee should have a representative from Kennecott. We are not McCarthy. The road leads to both towns, yet we don't have representation. A person from McCarthy does understand the Kennecott community concerns and issues.

Note: I tried to submit my comments online but found it very difficult. When doing the survey it kept refreshing and would wipe out my responses.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Roads and Access Public Meeting Notes 7/13/24

Despite the pouring rain, we had strong turn out, with long-time locals from Kennicott, Nizina, McCarthy, McCarthy West and Long Lake in attendance. I have added clarifying notes to the summary of our group discussion where they would be helpful.

Increased year-round maintenance of the existing corridor should be of higher priority than improvements. However, a few safety improvements should be a focus for available funding; the Long Lake corridor being at the top of that list. Improvement of road cross-sections could be done in mileage increments as DOT has the funding. Improvements are needed road-wide particularly in areas that experience significant drainage issues.

In the community's opinion, new amenities should have low funding priority; road funding would be better focused on safety-minded re-routes and drainage issues. Drainage should focus on eliminating areas of icings a.k.a. "road glaciers"; these areas identify problematic summer and winter passage sections. Please see the attached images showing the challenges that road drainage issues create for local residents during winter travel.

The Long Lake area was identified as top priority for available funding. Long Lake residents presented their "Long Lake Relocation and Trail" proposal; it was unanimously considered to be an excellent solution to the array of issues and challenges that the Long Lake corridor presents. Adoption of this proposal should be a funding priority for the PEL study. Here is an image of this proposal, which was unanimously championed at our meeting.



Any new amenities along the corridor should be focused on parking as opposed to new facilities along the MXY road corridor. With regard to volunteerism or community adoption of new facilities, community road funds available through other sources (CAP for example) are better spent elsewhere and tourist amenities should be funded by NPS. The majority of the local roads are not maintained by the DOT and what limited funding we have needs to support local infrastructure. Volunteer support or community funding of amenities like trash and

outhouses is extremely unlikely. We have no means of handling trash as a community and what little the NPS does provide, is off limits to locals. Many businesses encourage visitors to take trash out with them and any facilities provided along the way are likely going to be where visitor garbage will end up. Trash amenities and outhouses along the corridor will get filled by park visitors, be problematic and need constant summer attendance. Crystalline Hills Trail would be a good candidate for amenity improvement if the NPS and DOT are looking for one. Specifically, it should have sufficient parking.

Winter parking west of the DOT bridge, winter parking near the museum and year-round parking below Kennicott all need to be addressed whether or not there are any alterations to access into the McCarthy area (across the Kennicott River.) Brushing the corridor every 3-5 years would go a long way towards increasing safety, along with the Long Lake, Chokosina and Gilahina improvements outlined below.

Corridor-wide drainage improvements would greatly benefit year-round road travel. Two culverts along the east channel of the Kennicott need to be replaced; one is at the “swimming hole” and the other is at the “water hole.” The Copper River Watershed team has likewise, identified these two culverts as being in need of repair. The Watershed team’s road-wide assessment of drainage issues is supported locally. Of lesser priority, but still of note, are the collapsed wooden culverts between Kennicott and the McCarthy Airstrip.

With regards to the swimming hole area, it is of local cultural value and access to it should be preserved. However, it creates a road hazard as traveling east to west, visibility is very challenging and at times, bikes and pedestrians present road obstacles. The National Park Service should give to the DOT the land that is now used as a primary road so that the state’s ROW at this area is wider. The actual ROW has historic value as the last remaining intact section of historic landmark that visitors can easily experience. Ownership of the existing ROW should remain State of Alaska so that in the future, if funds become available and straightening that section of roadway becomes a DOT priority, they are not prevented from doing so. This should not be a land trade with NPS, but rather an expansion of the existing ROW. For now, improvements should be cost-effective with PEL funding being prioritized elsewhere first.

The Chokosina bridge at MP 26 While not as high a priority as Long Lake, this is an area with serious drainage issues. French drains need to be installed and or culverts need to be larger so they can handle the layers of ice created by seasonal freeze-thaw cycles.

The Gilahina hill realignment should also be a priority as an effort to address safety concerns.

The group diverted into talking about access into McCarthy, and wanted to press the point that any consideration on this topic must somehow address the parking needs that would be a natural consequence of improved access.

Providing of the following information would be appreciated at the public meeting on the 31st in McCarthy:

1. What does NPS anticipate for tourist numbers at 5, 10, 20, and 50 year increments?
2. What are the DOT and NPS plans for parking around the DOT bridge, McCarthy and Kennicott as this is problematic now?
3. Is all of this participation going to be meaningful, and will we see changes to the areas the community has identified here for you, or is this just being done for appearance?
4. What is the plan for potential bridges/access into McCarthy. What is NPS’s best-case, what is the DOT best-case?

ATTACHMENT IMAGES

Photos taken by various community members at locations along the McCarthy Road demonstrating road icings, which are often referred to as “road glaciers.” The danger in driving across them comes not only from breaking through and then being forced to try to jack and winch out of the collapsing ice, but also in sliding off and ending up down a bluff at temperatures that can be colder than -40F.





Wetzel, Kim

From: English-Young, Seth (FHWA) <seth.english-young@dot.gov>
Sent: Monday, August 26, 2024 9:40 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Wetzel, Kim
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: McCarthy Road Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study

Thank you, [REDACTED] Your comments have been received and will be reviewed by the project team.

Seth

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, August 24, 2024 5:28 PM
To: Kim.Wetzel@jacobs.com; English-Young, Seth (FHWA) <seth.english-young@dot.gov>
Subject: McCarthy Road Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Kim and Seth,

Thank you for collecting feedback on the PEL study and adding these comments to the public record. I will get right to the point: By including a potential Kennicott River public vehicle bridge in an otherwise constructive and straightforward safety, habitat protection, and recreational amenities process, the bridge issue will highjack all the attention away from the issues the PEL study was originally intended to address. This is so unfortunate. Throwing a Kennicott vehicle bridge into the equation threatens all the underlying assumptions about how and why the McCarthy/Kennecott area, including the adjacent national parklands, are special to locals and visitors alike. Visitors currently must get out of their personal vehicles and directly engage with the place, the people, and the many local businesses who have all evolved to serve this special type of visitor, who then take pride in their unique experience. I predict that if people are able to blithely drive across the Kennicott River, they will drive around the block in McCarthy in grid lock conditions, then drive up to Kennecott, encountering even worse grid-lock traffic for a quick look-see, and then drive back across the bridge in day-trip mode, all the while complaining about the dust and traffic. They will dutifully check off their McCarthy/Kennecott "experience" without much, if any, meaningful engagement except for perhaps an ice cream cone or a burger – if they can figure out where to park. Trying to limit vehicles to designated parking lots anywhere on the east side of the river is problematic at best. There are few easily conceived legal authorities to address even local vehicle traffic and congestion, much less an invasion of car-centric day-tripping visitors. Please remove the Kennicott River bridge from the scope of the PEL process. If the Kennicott River vehicle bridge were not on the table, I would have spent my time giving you more meaningful feedback on the numerous, interesting options within the original scope of the PEL study.

[REDACTED]
McCarthy and Anchorage, Alaska

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

We hope you can come in person to provide input on: ***What improvement options would address the road corridor needs? What should be the priorities?***

I am a retired DOT foreman from Chitina camp. Your email question above encouraged me to put down a few thoughts regarding improvement options and priorities on the McCarthy Road. I am part owner of a piece of property at Silver Lake, Mile 11 McCarthy Road.

Just like any house, the interior rooms can be in excellent shape and decorated well but if a foundation is bad, it's only a matter of time before the house caves in.

In my opinion, there are four priorities that need to be addressed for the McCarthy Road. They will provide the proper foundation for whatever happens to the road in the future. These four things I believe are necessary no matter if the road is paved or gravel, if more waysides are put in, if more bathrooms put in, or any other improvements. The four things are a source of roadbed material, brushing along the road, drainage control, and ditching/widening/rerouting specific bluff areas on the McCarthy Road.

SOURCES OF MATERIAL - Currently there is one gravel pit in operation along the McCarthy Road. It is at the Kuskulana river, approximately mile 17.5 on the McCarthy Road. In the past, material from there has been crushed and turned into mostly D1 material. For any improvements on the roadbed, material will be needed. If Kuskulana is the only source of material, it will take more time, it will take more equipment and manpower resources, and it will cause more maintenance on the road to transport the material from this location only to various places along the McCarthy Road. The Lakina River at mile 44 could possibly be used for a source of material but I realize agreements would have to be made with the National Park Service and/or private property owners.

BRUSHING THE MCCARTHY ROAD – It takes a lot of manpower and equipment to properly brush the ditches and right of way along the McCarthy Road. Brushing makes travel much safer for the public. It helps to eliminate blind spots, keeps the road from getting narrower, and improves visibility for the majestic scenery along the route. It also helps DOT maintenance workers who maintain the McCarthy Road. If brushing is not performed, it interferes with ditching, drainage, and causes roadbed material to be lost on the edges. A grader cannot pull gravel material from the ditch when brush is growing there.

DRAINAGE CONTROL – There are many places along the road where water has no place to go. The ditches are not deep enough, and in some areas the road is about the same height as the water level next to the road. An example of this would be mile 35.8 near Moose Lake where the muskeg and topography don't allow the water to drain away from the road. New culverts are needed and channeling/ditching the water flow to a culvert along the edge of the road is necessary because sometimes the stream changes its course coming off the mountains and will come out to the road in a different area than it had the previous year (an example would be Mile 39.9 to 40.3). Directing the water along the ditch to a culvert would help immensely. During the winter, glaciers form on the road, sometimes as many as 100 over the length of the McCarthy Road. They can make the road impassable and/or dangerous. Building up the roadbed, adding new culverts, and controlling how the water flows to those culverts are critical items to maintain a proper surface for driving on safely.

DITCHING/WIDENING/REROUTING -There are areas where the McCarthy Road travels along a bluff. Usually where there is a bluff, the road is narrow and there is no ditch between the road and the bluff. Slides caused by erosion and/or increased water movement/soil saturation usually go onto the road because there is no ditch to accommodate the extra material. The road has been closed many times because of this. Widening the road, ditching, and drainage control are very critical in these areas. Depending on ongoing studies by DOT, rerouting the road might be the answer in the long run. But at the very least the road needs to be widened and ditches put in specific areas.

MILE(S)	AREA	PROBLEM	Possible SOLUTION
.2-.7	Just past rock cut all the way to the start of guardrail along Copper River.	No ditches for drainage and slide material along bluff. Narrow parts of road needs widening.	Ditches to accommodate slides, snow or runoff. Widen road.
1.5-2.8	Along Kotsina River	No ditches for drainage and slide material along bluff. Narrow parts of road needs widening. Existing culverts buried and new ones needed.	Ditches to accommodate slides, snow or runoff. Widen road. Add culverts where necessary for drainage control.
5-5.2	Overlook of Chitina River	No ditch for drainage and slide material along bluff. Narrow road needs widened.	Ditches to accommodate slides, snow or runoff. Widen road.
16.9-17	Kuskulana River bluff on north side of the river, first exposed bluff on right side of road when heading towards Chitina	No ditch for drainage and slide material along bluff.	Ditch to accommodate slides, snow or runoff.
40-40.1	Crystal Creek drainage	Narrow road. More than one vehicle has gone off the steep bluff in this area.	Widen Road.
43.5-44	Lakina River bluffs.	No ditches for drainage and slide material along bluff. Narrow parts of road needs widening.	Ditches to accommodate slides, snow or runoff. Widen road.
45.5-48	Long Lake	No ditches for drainage. Narrow parts of road needs widening.	Ditches to accommodate slides, snow or runoff. Widen road.
57.5-58.2	Kennecott River bluffs	No ditches for drainage and slide material along bluff. Narrow parts of road needs widening. Existing culverts buried and new ones needed. This is a major slide area that may need a reroute.	Ditches to accommodate slides, snow or runoff. Widen road. Add culverts where necessary for drainage control. Reroute? This area is a challenge.

If these items are addressed, it will provide the foundational structure to maintain the current road and allow future improvements a higher chance of success.

Acquisition of funds to maintain or improve the road will require cooperation between the state and the federal government. The McCarthy Road is a main route for visitors to enter the Wrangell/Saint Elias National Park. The state should not be solely responsible for funding the work needed to maintain and improve the road.

Respectfully and thankful for the work you do,

██████████

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Wetzel, Kim](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] McCarthy Road Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study
Date: Sunday, August 25, 2024 9:46:56 PM

Dear Kim,

We are writing to comment on the PEL study, specifically the idea of possibly developing a public access vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River.

We are property owners in Kennicott, have lived and worked here seasonally since 1994, and have a home on Silk Stocking Row which we built in 2004.

Part of the wonder of arriving in McCarthy and Kennicott is that you can't drive your personal vehicle straight to it if you are a visitor. The challenges of arriving are well rewarded by the wonders of the place, and for many visitors the concept of seeing and experiencing this place by pedestrian means is a cherished memory when they return to the life left behind. Imagine all of the visitors driving to the end of the road in Kennicott.

There is no parking in Kennicott, and it would cause a nonstop traffic nightmare on all of the roads on the east side of the Kennicott River, not to mention numerous safety and environmental factors. The quality of the experience for residents and visitors would be negatively impacted and the place would no longer be what it is. We sincerely hope that the current access via the private vehicle and pedestrian bridges and via flight will remain the only access, preserving what we know is the very unique historic character of this place.

The concept of a public vehicle bridge was considered many years ago, and after many meetings and discussions the resolution was what we have now, and to most people it has been a solution we are happy to live with.

Please don't approve a public vehicle bridge across the Kennicott River.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]