

1. What is the Seward to Glenn Connection PEL Study?

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), Central Region, is conducting a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study to consider potential transportation improvements in Anchorage, which will improve:

- safety
- livability
- regional travel between the Seward and Glenn Highways
- local travel within the surrounding neighborhoods

The PEL Study process gives DOT&PF an opportunity to engage the community and stakeholders in identifying transportation needs, developing potential solutions, and narrowing down the list of alternatives that will be carried into future environmental review and design processes.

2. Who is conducting the study?

The study is managed by DOT&PF in cooperation with Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) staff. AMATS is the Metropolitan Planning Organization responsible for transportation planning for the Anchorage Bowl and Chugiak-Eagle River areas.

3. What are the limits of the study area?

The study area generally follows Bragaw Street on the east, Northern Lights on the south, C Street on the west, and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson on the north. It includes areas where potential transportation improvements could be developed between the Glenn and Seward Highways and to and from the Port of Alaska. The study area (**Figure 1** on the following page) is broad enough to also gauge how traffic levels on parallel routes may be affected.

4. What is a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study?

According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), a PEL Study represents a collaborative and integrated approach to transportation decision-making that (1) considers environmental, community, and economic goals early in the transportation planning process; and (2) uses the information, analysis, and products developed during planning to inform the environmental review process.

Learn more by visiting:

- Federal Highway Administration PEL information ([dot.gov](https://www.fhwa.gov/pe/))¹
- The Alaska DOT&PF PEL Guidebook ([alaska.gov](https://www.alaska.gov/pe/))²

5. What are the potential benefits of a PEL Study?

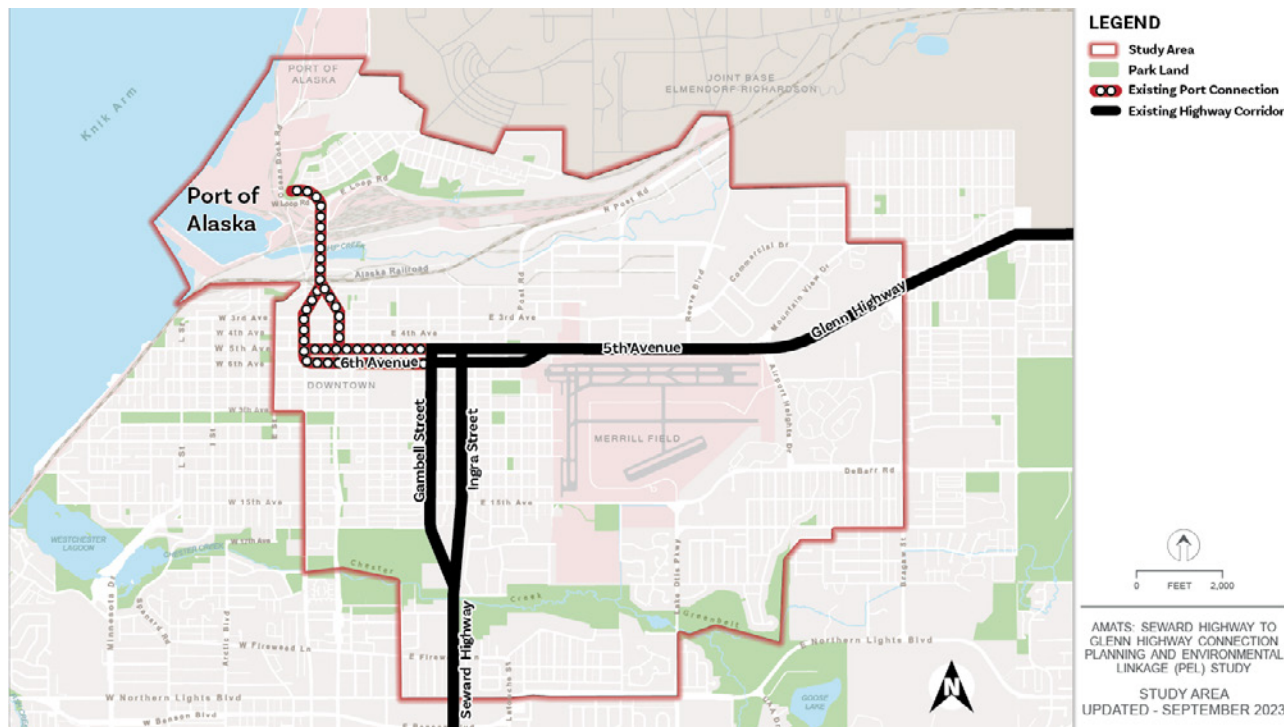
The PEL process aids the transportation decision-making process. The PEL Study will:

- **Identify potential benefits and impacts to communities**, the environment, and the economy early in the planning stage, making the project more efficient and cost-effective.
- **Engage partner agencies, stakeholders, and the public**, building project awareness and support through transparent and consistent communication.
- **Provide opportunities early and often for the public to provide input** that shapes the project.
- **Narrow down the range of project alternatives** to carry into future environmental review, design work, and construction project steps.

¹ https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/env_initiatives/PEL.aspx

² https://dot.alaska.gov/stwddes/desenviron/assets/pdf/procedures/pel_guidebook.pdf

Figure: 1 Project Area Map



6. What is the PEL Study schedule?

The PEL Study process began in June 2021. It is expected to take about 36 months, finishing in 2025 (see **Figure 2 below**). Please note that dates are subject to change. A detailed schedule may be viewed on the Study’s website at sewardglennconnection.com.

Community outreach efforts are underway to develop and collect feedback on the preliminary alternative designs. The project team has also been working to collect baseline data and conducting motorized and non-motorized traffic study work.

Once the final PEL Study is complete, the project may move into additional environmental review and design through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Funding for construction projects would be determined after the PEL Study is complete.

7. What is the study’s background?

Connecting the Seward Highway to the Glenn Highway was discussed as early as 1972 in the Anchorage Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

In 2001, AMATS conducted the East Anchorage Study of Transportation. It determined that connecting the Seward and Glenn Highways was important to solving traffic congestion in the Anchorage Bowl.

In 2005, the Seward Highway to Glenn Highway Connection (H2H) project was adopted as part of the Anchorage Bowl 2025 LRTP. DOT&PF started an environmental impact statement (EIS) process for the H2H project, but the EIS was canceled in 2010.

In 2020, DOT&PF in partnership with community organizations (i.e., Fairview Community Council) recognized the continuing need to address transportation issues in this corridor. DOT&PF then included the PEL Study as part of the AMATS Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) 2040.

Figure: 2 Project Schedule



8. What prompted the PEL study?

This PEL Study is identified in MTP 2040, the adopted metropolitan transportation plan for Anchorage. The plan indicates that the study's intent is to define a vision for a potential future highway connection, identify environmental and resource concerns and opportunities in the study area, and use the information to develop reasonable alternatives through consultation with the affected agencies and the public. This PEL Study is officially titled the Seward Highway to Glenn Highway Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (IRIS Program No. CFHWY00550 | Federal Project No. 0001653).

9. Didn't you already study this project in the H2H EIS? Why are you studying it again?

DOT&PF started an EIS for the H2H project, but it was canceled in 2010. Connecting the Seward and Glenn Highways remains a priority in the AMATS MTP 2040. In a previous PEL Study (Midtown Congestion Relief PEL), DOT&PF evaluated the Midtown section of the H2H project along the Seward Highway (between Tudor Road and 20th Avenue). This current PEL Study is examining the area from 20th Avenue to Airport Heights Drive. Considerable time has gone by since 2010, when the need for connecting the Seward and Glenn Highways was last studied in detail. The current study is re-examining the corridor's transportation needs by looking at new traffic forecasts and new origin-destination travel studies, and will examine potential alternatives and their impacts.

10. What is different about this study?

DOT&PF is conducting this PEL Study as a re-examination of a long-standing project in the AMATS MTP that calls for connecting the Seward Highway and the Glenn Highway through Anchorage. The Seward to Glenn Connection PEL Study will go beyond a strict examination of a "highway connection" to consider a broad scope of ideas, including:

- Re-examining anticipated traffic levels to determine if a "highway" is still the right facility type.
- Identifying potential access improvements to and from the Port of Alaska.

- Considering community and neighborhood viewpoints in identifying problems and potential solutions.
- Starting the PEL Study without a predetermined solution (i.e., highway connection), but rather taking a fresh look at the transportation needs and community goals, objectives, and visions in plans adopted since the last time this project was studied.

11. What has changed in the area since highway mobility needs and alternatives were last studied in detail?

When the project area was last studied in detail, the Knik Arm Crossing project and a viaduct roadway connecting Gambell/Ingra to the Port of Alaska were still in the adopted municipal transportation plan. Since then, economic conditions such as the ongoing recession are vastly different, and growth and land use development patterns are now subject to a newly adopted land use plan map. For these reasons, traffic patterns and congestion levels are anticipated to be different from those studied in 2010. It is important to re-examine the transportation needs in light of these changes to ensure that the improvements are addressing the existing needs.

12. What problems will the study examine?

The study is intended to address safety, congestion, access, connectivity, and freight needs on the Seward and Glenn Highways and to the Port of Alaska within the study area. The Study will also improve livability and local travel within the surrounding neighborhoods. To accomplish this, the project team will conduct planning and environmental studies, perform traffic forecasting and travel demand modeling, and document purpose and needs for any transportation improvements. Alternatives will be developed to address identified problems based on engineering analyses. As a PEL Study, the efforts will integrate community and environmental factors into the decision-making process, with a strong emphasis on public involvement.

13. How will the study be used?

Once the final PEL Study is complete, multiple projects (or components of the overall plan) may move forward for additional environmental review and engineering design through the NEPA process. The results of the study may also feed into the update of the MTP 2040, potentially updating needed improvements, cost estimates, and timing and phasing of improvements.

14. How will the project team engage stakeholders and the public in the PEL process?

Feedback from the community and stakeholders is required by the PEL Study process and is central to the development of design alternatives. The project team will provide opportunities at each stage of the process for the public to learn about the study and provide input. See the image below for the primary outreach methods we will use.



The process will involve many individuals and groups to inform the study, develop and screen alternatives, and review the Draft PEL Study Report. This includes agencies, Tribes, elected officials, utilities, emergency responders, businesses, nonprofits, community organizations, and the public. A Technical Advisory Committee, Community Advisory Committee, Agencies and Tribes Committee, and Executive Committee have been established and are providing input to the project team.

DOT&PF is committed to conducting a process that is equitable and responsive to the needs of traditionally underserved communities. This means:

- Providing accessible, inclusive, and convenient opportunities to engage.
- Reaching out to and integrating feedback from individuals and groups that are traditionally underserved and underrepresented by existing transportation systems.
- Communicating with the public regarding the feedback we have received.

15. How can I get involved?

If you'd like to stay updated or share your thoughts on the project...

- Visit sewardglennconnection.com, where you can sign up for email updates and find information on upcoming events.
- Follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/AlaskaDOTPF
- Reach out to the project team via phone at (907) 206-2289 or email at info@sewardglennconnection.com