



# WELCOME

Seward ← → Glenn

**CONNECTION**

Seward to Glenn Connection PEL Study

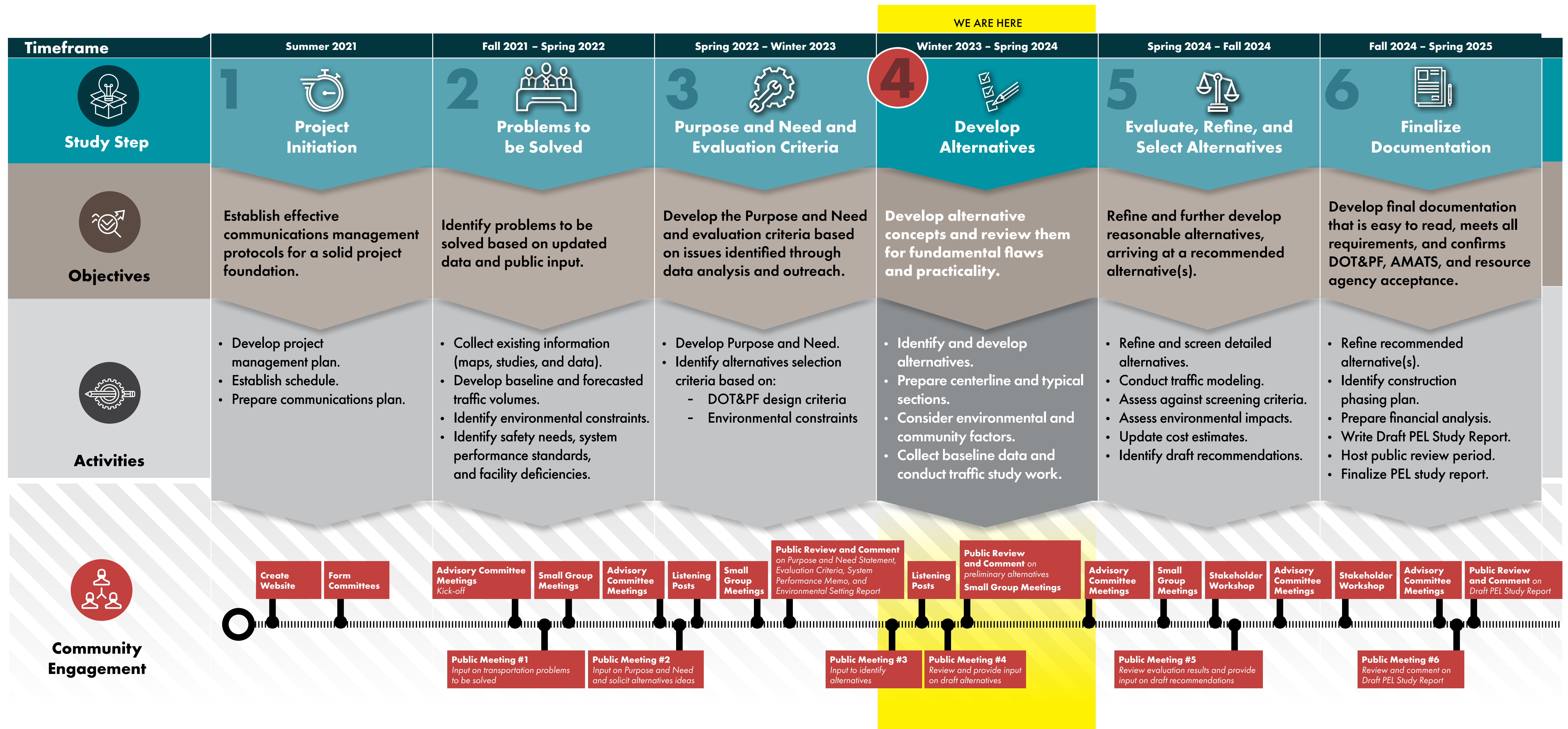
**Public Open House #4**

**February 7, 2024**



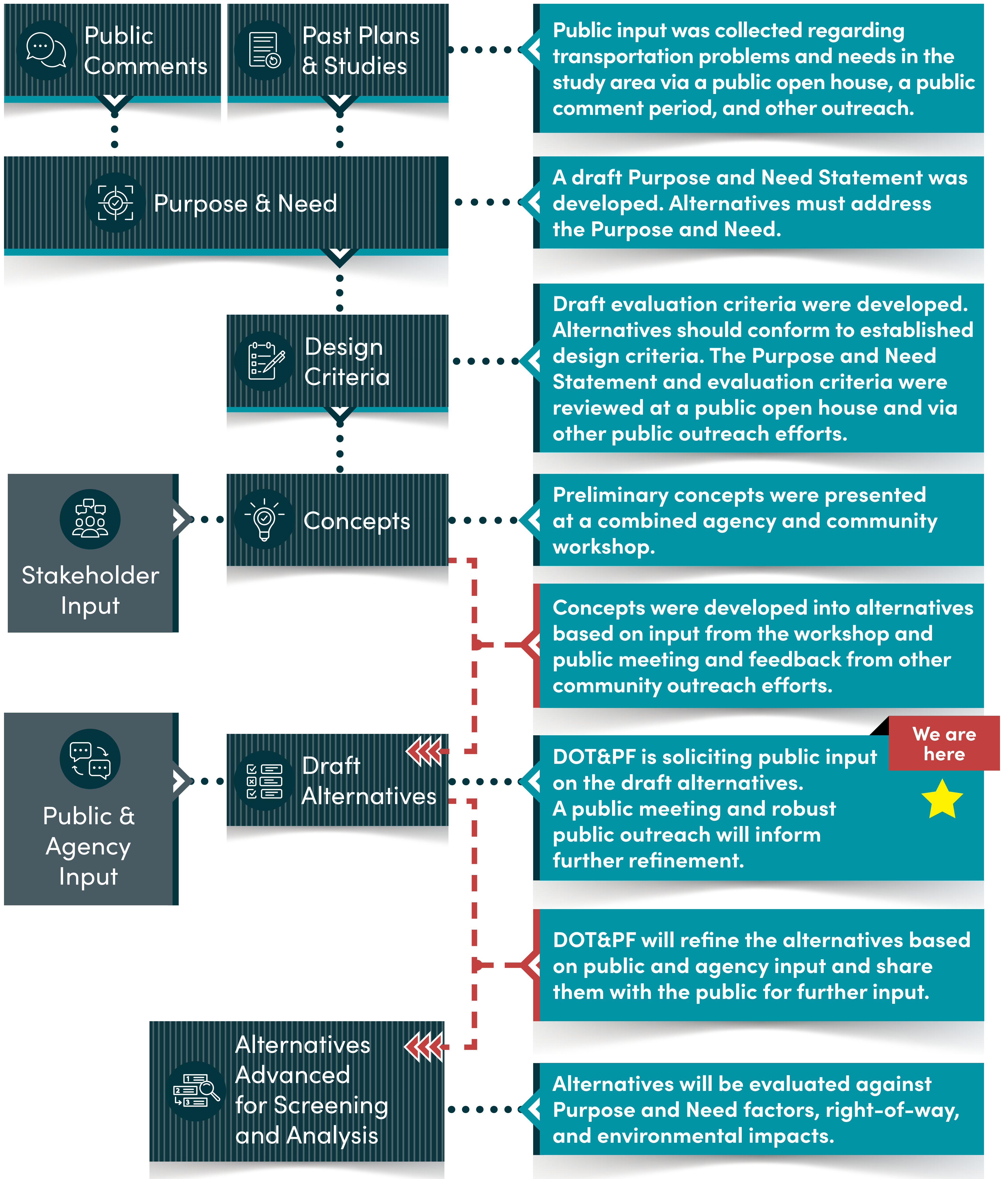
# Project Schedule

We are now in Phase 4 of the PEL Study. During this phase, a range of alternatives will be developed and reviewed for fatal flaws and reasonableness.





# Alternatives Development Process





# The Study

## What is the purpose of the PEL Study?

Its purpose is to “identify and evaluate options to improve **livability, safety, access, and connectivity** between the **Seward Highway, near 20th Avenue** and the **Glenn Highway, east of Airport Heights and Mountain View Drives**. The project will also identify ways to **improve access to and from the Port of Alaska** to the interstate highway network.”



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

A PEL Study considers environmental, community, and economic goals during planning so that the information and analysis can be used in the environmental process.





# Pedestrian and Bicycle Study

## Pedestrian and Bicycle Count Locations



**LEGEND**

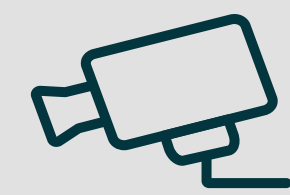
- Dark blue intersections counted motor vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles
- Red intersections counted pedestrians and bicycles only



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



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

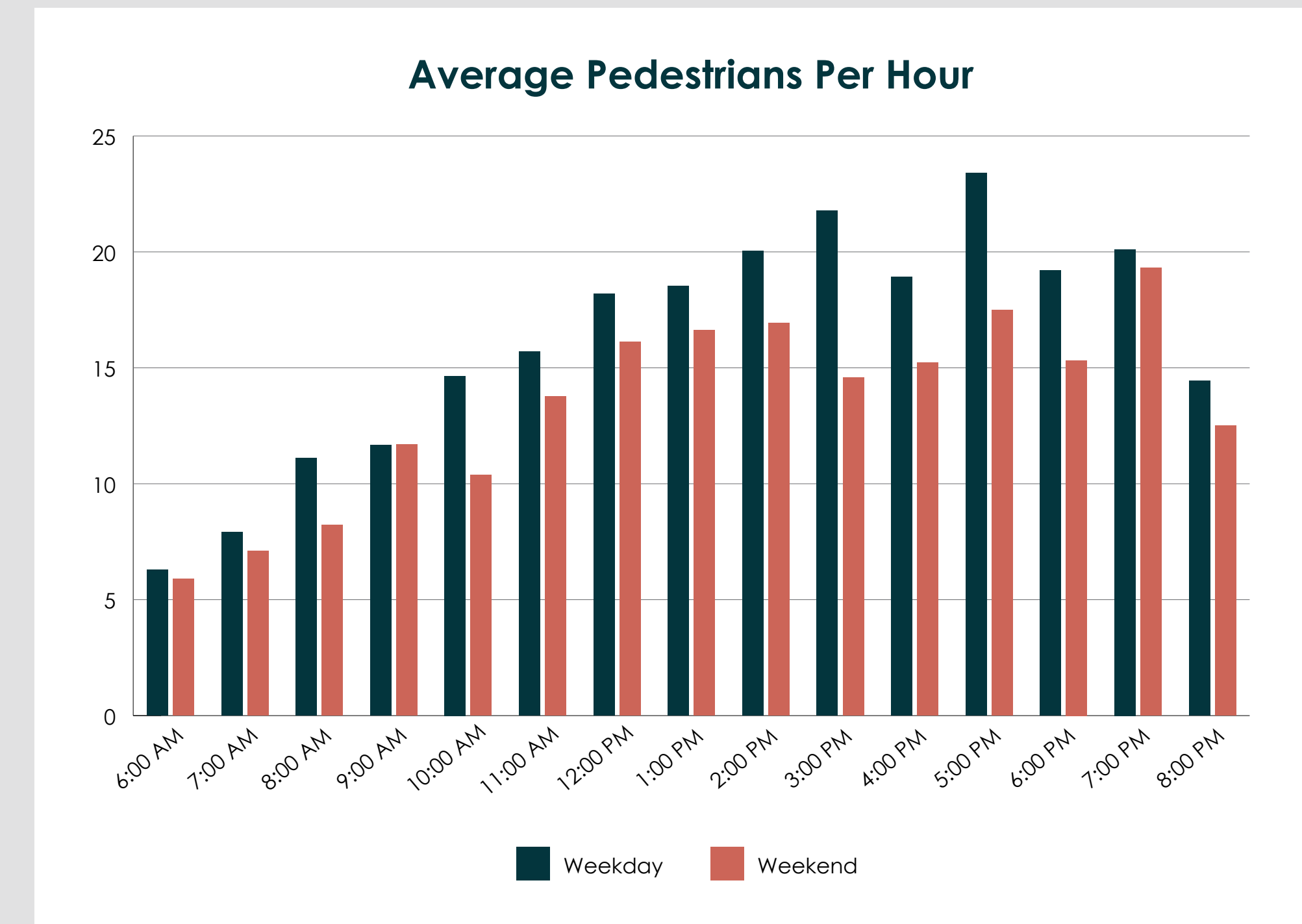


Counts were done using digital video cameras

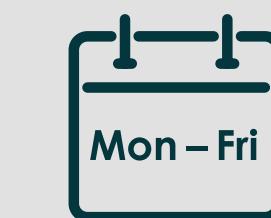


Data was collected during two weekdays and one weekend day, between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m., while schools were in session and prior to the onset of winter

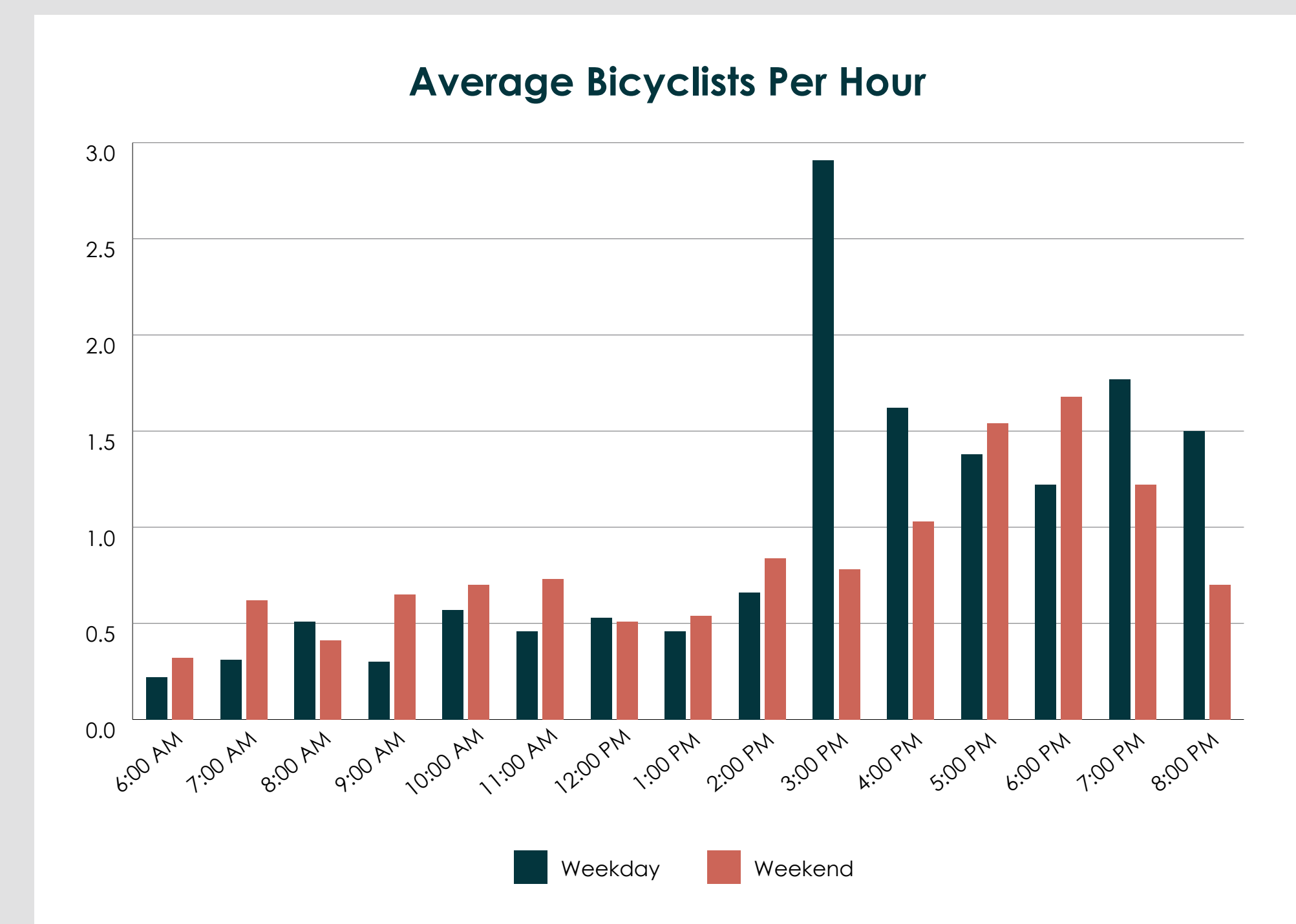
## Average Activity Per Hour



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



Pedestrian activity was generally higher on weekdays than on the weekend



Pedestrian and bicyclist activity was generally highest on Gambell Street





# Purpose & Need

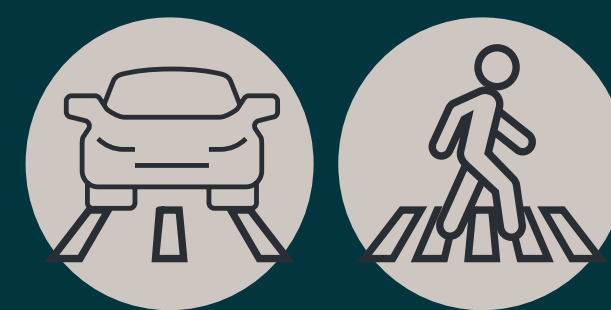
The proposed purpose is to improve mobility, accessibility, safety, and livability for people and goods traveling on or across the roadway system connecting the Seward Highway, Glenn Highway, and Port of Alaska by all modes (including people on foot, bicycles, and buses) while improving community cohesion. The intent is to (1) maintain the functionality of the National Highway System while meeting the local travel needs of residents who live, play, and work in the area and must safely travel across or along those roadways; and (2) improve neighborhood connections and quality of life and accommodate adopted plans as practicable.

## Reduce Conflicting Travel Functions



Serving competing regional and local travel functions on the highway network in the study area leads to conflicts that reduce mobility, safety, and accessibility for all users.

## Improve Safety



Crashes between vehicles and people walking or bicycling are elevated at several study area intersections.

## Promote Social Equity and Economic Development



Current highway and arterial design on the Seward/ Glenn Highway corridor in the study area is inconsistent with the vision expressed in recently adopted plans. Those plans envision improving neighborhood redevelopment, community cohesion, and quality of life.

These needs are presented in neither order of importance nor order of priority.

*This planning document may be adopted in a subsequent environmental review process in accordance with 23 USC 168, Integration of Planning and Environmental Review. The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by DOT&PF pursuant to 23 USC 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated November 3, 2017, and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.*





# Public Input Meeting #1

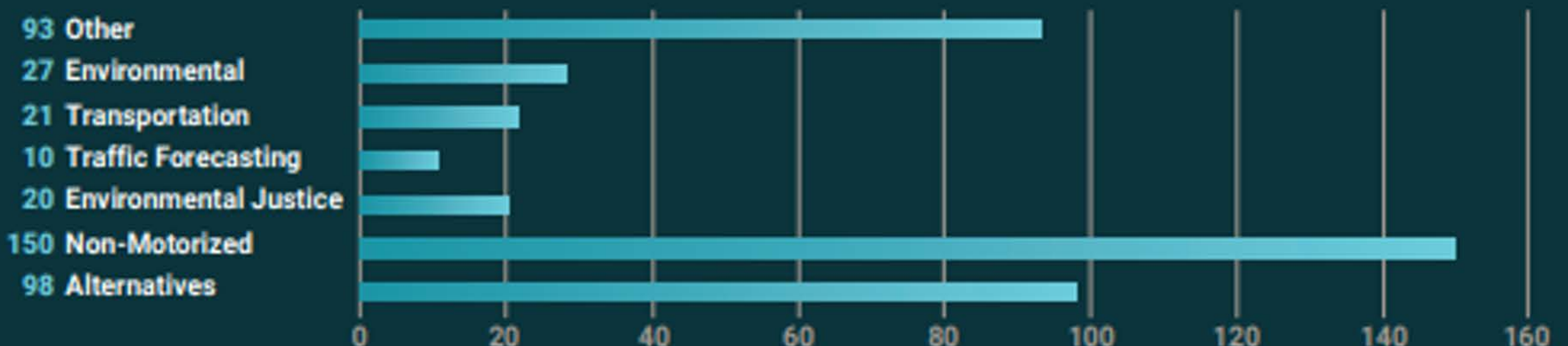
## Meeting #1: Problems to be Solved

A study that considers environmental, community, and economic goals during planning so the information and analysis can be used in the environmental process.

### COMMENTS

Comment Period: January 24 - February 28, 2022

The public submitted a grand total of 419 comments focused on the following themes:



60

received at the  
Virtual Public Meeting

203

received through the  
Online Open House  
Interactive Comment Map

63

received through the  
online comment form

4

received through phone

89

received through email

#### General Comments:

“ The biggest problems with the current Gambell/Ingra configuration are the physical, social, and economic health burdens borne by Fairview, NOT any inconvenience to wealthy commuters from South Anchorage. If the N-S traffic is redesigned, mitigating Fairview's unfair burden should be the top priority. ”

“ Freight traffic from the port area and highway often causes challenges for all road users, especially non-motorized. ”

“ The Ingra-Gambell corridor has been an economic dead zone for thirty years. Between the lack of certainty as to alignments for a highway upgrade, and the mismatch between land use designations (R4 and B3) and location (between two legs of a federal interstate highway), there has been a dearth of investment in residential or commercial construction. Evaluation criteria should include economic impacts on the surrounding areas. I've submit an email outlining proposed evaluation criteria based on these conditions. ”

“ Walking on Ingra and Gamble is dangerous any time of year. In winter the sidewalks are not cleared. They plow the snow onto the sidewalks making uneven icy conditions that require mountaineer gear to navigate. The sidewalks are narrow with no buffer between pedestrians and traffic. Summer isn't much better. Street lights are short and don't give enough time to cross 4 lanes. The corners are very close to high speed traffic. ”

Comments are not edited — all are copied verbatim.

To view all comments and responses from each Public Meeting, scan the QR code below.





# Public Input Meeting #2

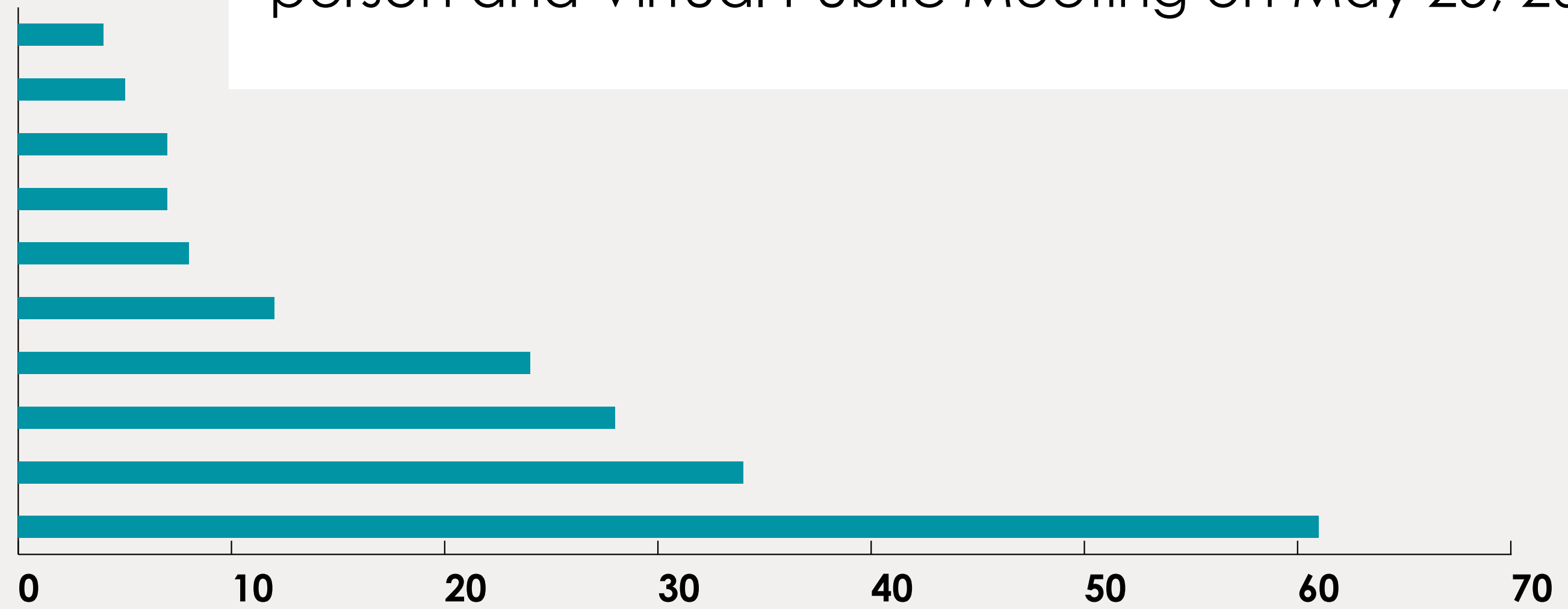
## COMMENTS

May 25, 2022 In-person and Virtual Public Meeting

### Meeting #2: Purpose and Need

DOT&PF in collaboration with AMATS, hosted an In-person and Virtual Public Meeting on May 25, 2022.

- 4 - Want Pedestrian Data
- 4 - Administrative Questions
- 7 - Traffic Forecast/Model Questions
- 7 - Environmental Concerns
- 8 - System Performance Report
- 12 - Stakeholder Engagement
- 24 - Process/Scope of Study Questions
- 28 - Evaluation Criteria
- 34 - Suggestions for Alternatives
- 61 - Purpose and Need



*I would like to believe that this time we can leverage the political will to create a piece of design and engineering that will be a source of pride instead of embarrassment for all Alaskans. This piece of highway is arguably the most important and yet probably the most neglected and undervalued in our state. Many like myself feel it is a vestige of the kind of engineering that puts the convenience and needs of stakeholders living in the shadow of these pieces of infrastructure. Almost with a certainty causing harm to those most vulnerable — to the detriment to us all eventually.*

— Anchorage Resident

### Example public comments from previous Seward-Glenn PEL Public Involvement efforts:

*“Already suggested 3 lanes of traffic NOT 4 going through Ingra and Gamble Streets. Wider separation of traffic from the sidewalks.”*

*“The only solution that allows Fairview to recover from the blight of this highway is the cut and cover plan. It allows pedestrians to move safely and the highway traffic trying to move through the area can go fast. I don't see any other equitable or safe solutions.”*

*“This project should really be more about quality of life, other than level of service. Level of service being how efficiently we move vehicles through this corridor. And so, when you mentioned what we want to see, and what we don't want to see people said, we want to see the cut and cover project, we want to see the quality of life be restored to this area not be severed by this massive roadway.”*

*“Commuting from south Anchorage to base or from the valley into Anchorage is slowed significantly by the fact the Seward and Glen are not connected. By creating a thoroughfare, bypassing the Merrill Field corridor, straight to 20th Ave (eventually bypassing 36th, Benson, Northern Lights, and Fireweed would be nice too), commute times would be significantly decreased, allowing not only for a speedier, but safer commute.”*

*“I don't care about cars. Let's get rid of cars and trucks in the center of valuable part of our city and make it more accessible for people across town to bike from southside to downtown or vice versa, or for walking or for people who use mobility it's like wheelchair or crutches, make this a walking infrastructure.”*

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# Public Input Meeting #3

## Meeting #3: Public Meeting and Interactive Workshop

### ADVERTISING & PUBLIC OUTREACH



**76** Public Meeting attendees



**3,713** postcards mailed



**2** ads placed in the Anchorage Daily News



**2** E-Blasts sent to **228** recipients



Meeting information distributed to the What's Up and Federation of Community Council listservs

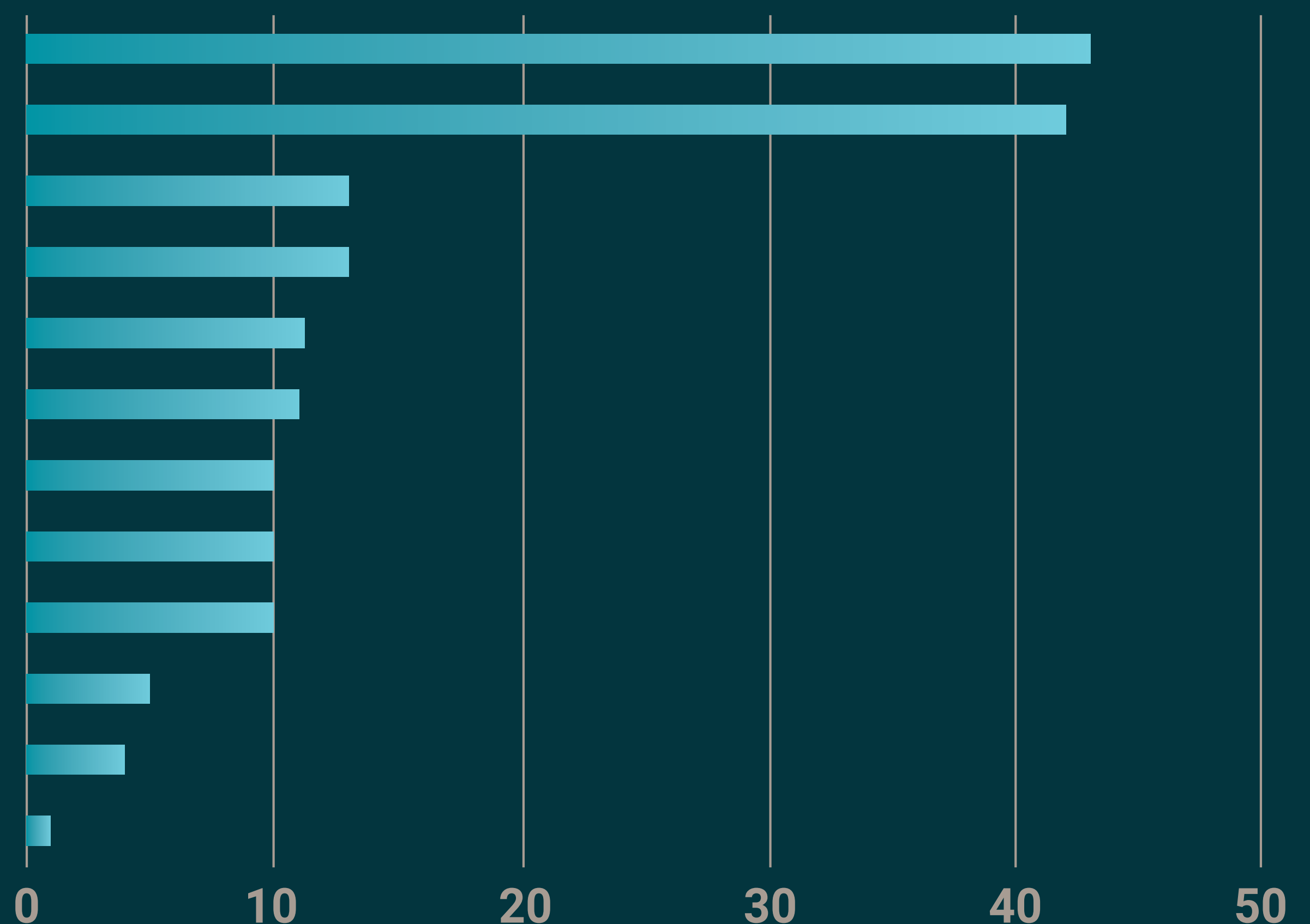


**2** DOT&PF Facebook posts

## COMMENTS

The public submitted comments focused on the following themes:

- 43 Pedestrian & Bike Improvements
- 42 Alternative Ideas
- 13 Constraints / Impacts
- 13 Other
- 11 Public Outreach
- 11 Transit
- 10 Maintenance
- 10 Land Use
- 10 Safety
- 5 Environmental
- 4 Visual Design
- 1 Scheduling



### SAMPLE COMMENTS:

“ Bike traffic is an issue in the area. Please make it safer for bikes and cars. ”

“ Will we have access to businesses during construction? ”

“ Suggested solutions for industrial traffic without impacting Fairview and Mountain View. ”

“ Pedestrian access at Sullivan Arena. ”

“ Restore sidewalks between Ingra and Gambell. ”

“ Freight and truck traffic should route through the industrial port area. To bypass downtown entirely, east to approximately Merrill Field (i.e., Airport Heights). ”

“ These issues can't wait. There is a real life-safety issue along Ingra and Gambell that can't be put off for another 20-50 years. Wider sidewalks need to happen now. The facilities can support less lanes as they currently exist. This should be a high priority, low cost, high impact project high in the TIP [Transportation Improvement Program]. ”

“ For realignment, taking of housing and businesses is inevitable, but not having a final plan for the alignment has been devastating for the neighborhood. Let's get it done, decided, and give people the security to invest in their property. ”

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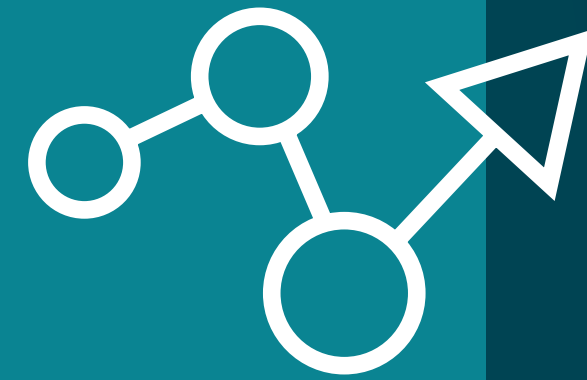
# Balancing the Issues & Challenges



**Please provide your feedback on alternatives** that solve and balance the corridor's transportation issues and challenges:



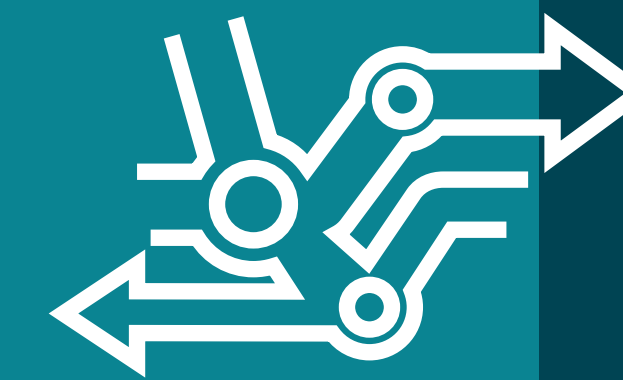
Improve safety.



Reduce regional and local travel conflicts.



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



Maintain National Highway System (*regional*) functionality.



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



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



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



Accommodate ideas from adopted plans:

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



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





# Overall Design Approach

We incorporated the following ideas into every alternative to the extent possible:



## Improve Local Travel, Livability, and Economic Development

- A main street design on Gambell Street
- Complete street or woonerf design on Ingra Street and/or Hyder Street
- Reduce lanes on 5th and 6th Avenues and Gambell and Ingra Streets as described in the MTP 2050
- Pedestrian bridge (over depressed freeway alternatives) or nonmotorized upgrade on 10th Avenue



## Improve Nonmotorized Travel and Livability

- Regional trail connecting Chester Creek Trail to Ship Creek Trail to form a loop around Anchorage's urban core (via proposed Fairview greenway connection, Ship Creek Trail, Coastal Trail, and Chester Creek Trail)
- Pedestrian bridges or tunnels across major roadways
- Roadway bridge over Chester Creek at Seward Highway to improve pedestrian undercrossing and return creek to natural conditions for fish passage
- Trail connections from Bragaw Street to Reeve Boulevard



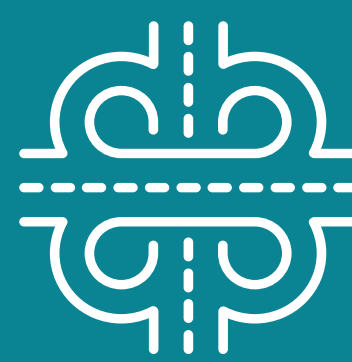
## Improve Freight Movement, Reduce Conflicts, and Improve Safety

- Reduce truck traffic on local streets by connecting the Port of Alaska directly to a highway interchange
- Increase freight mobility by keeping trucks on freeways and rerouting them to industrial streets without stop lights



## Reduce Travel Conflicts and Improve Safety

- Reduce local and regional travel conflicts by depressing the highway or routing it to bypass neighborhoods
- Remove Port traffic from neighborhoods



## Improve Regional Travel

- A free-flow highway connection from the Seward Highway to the Glenn Highway
- Fill in the gap between existing controlled-access freeways, improving connectivity for regional travelers



## Consistency with Adopted Plans

- Accommodation/promotion of planned improvements from:
  - Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2050
  - Anchorage Land Use Plan Map
  - Fairview Neighborhood Plan
  - Gambell Street Redevelopment and Implementation Plan





# Alternative A

## Roadway Improvements

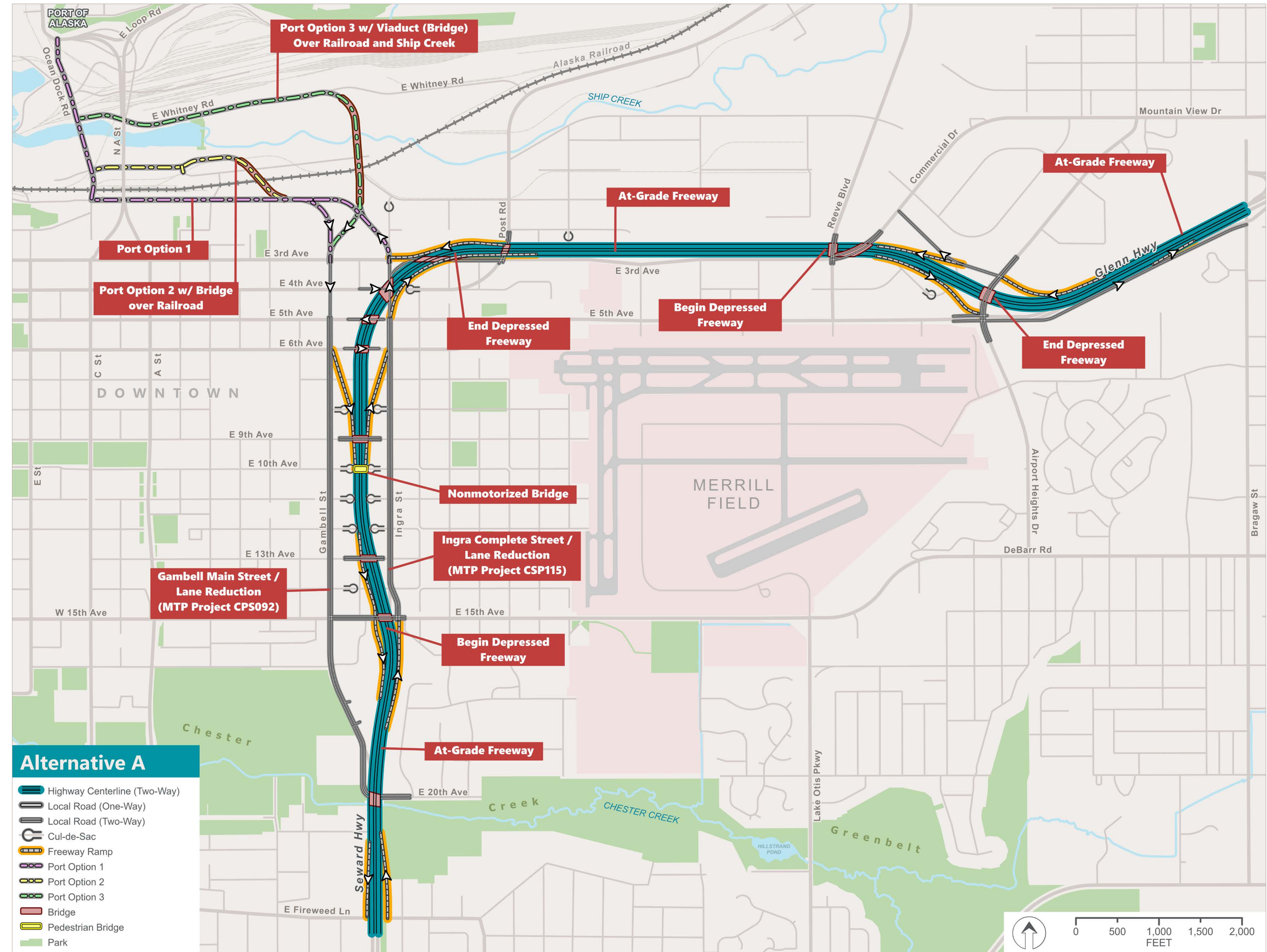
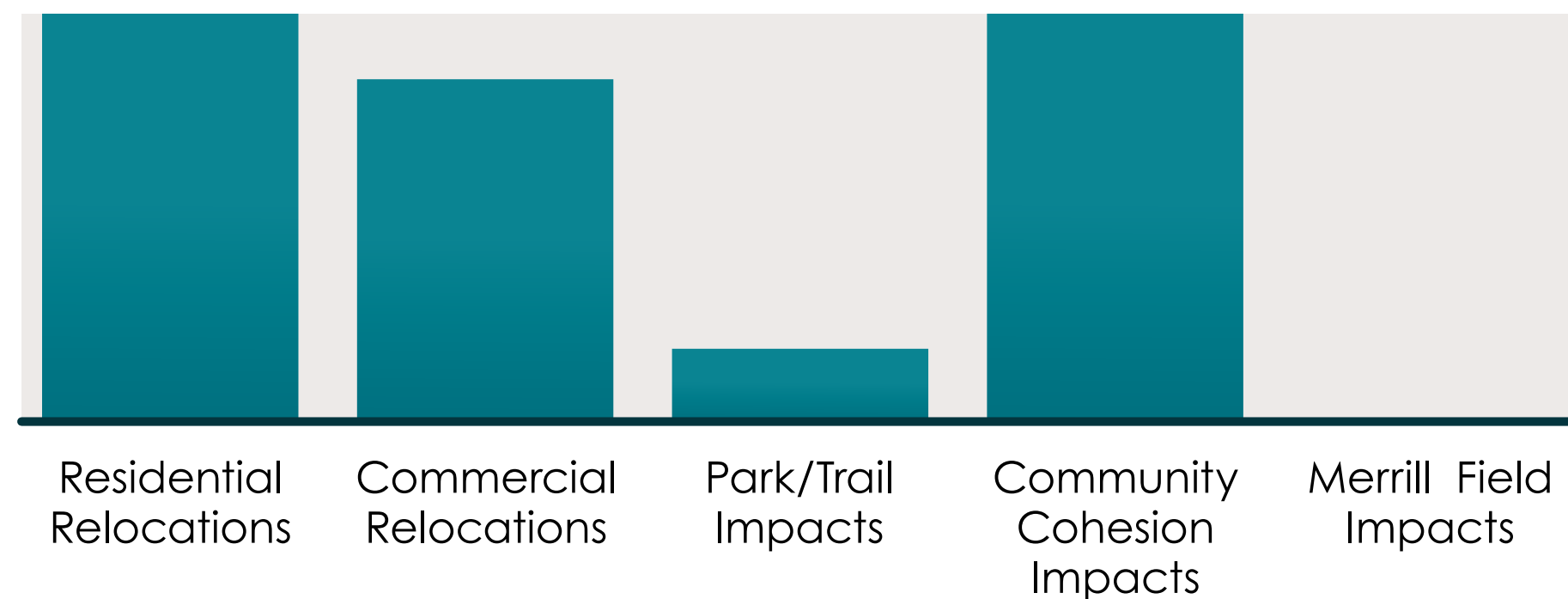
### Design Approach

- Test Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2040 highway connection alignment
- Allow Ingra Street to be utilized as a collector road to accommodate local traffic circulation in Fairview

### Features

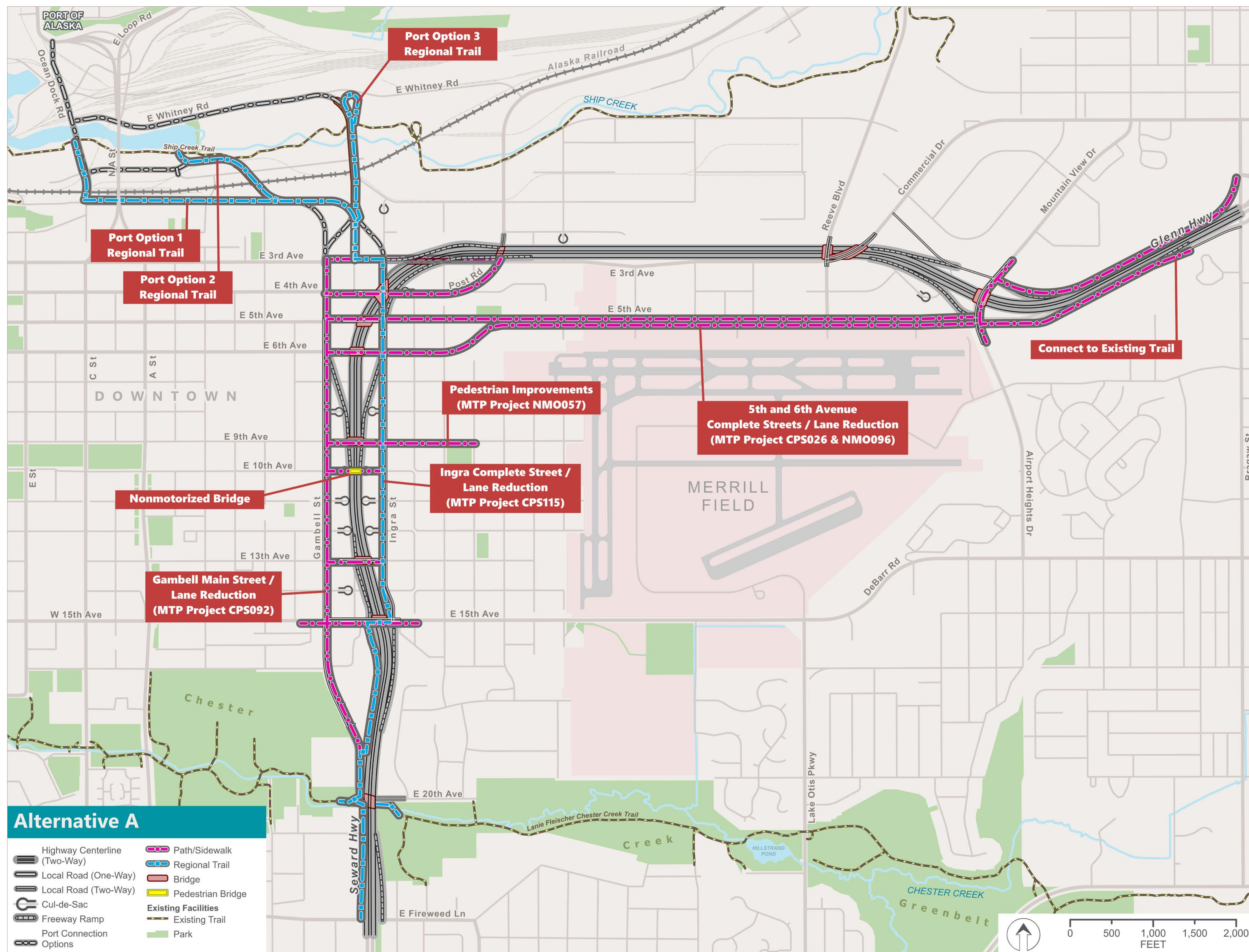
- Depressed alignment on Hyder Street to separate regional and local traffic to reduce conflicts
- Interchange to directly access Downtown
- Multiple options for Port access using an extension of Gambell and Ingra Streets
- Uses alignment ideas from past adopted plans
- Greenway trail connection along Ingra Street

### Trade-offs





# Alternative A Nonmotorized Connections





# Alternative B

## Roadway Improvements

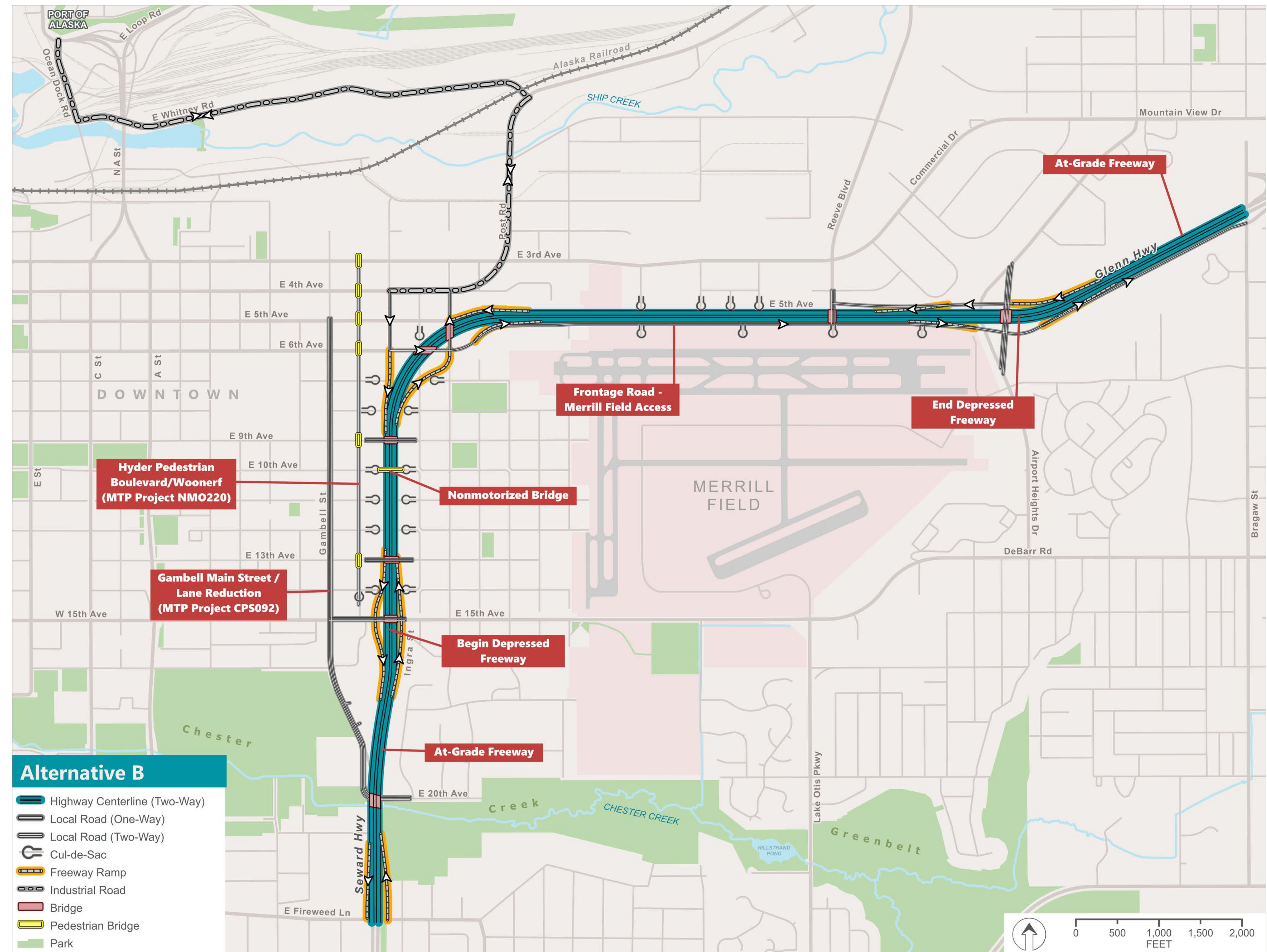
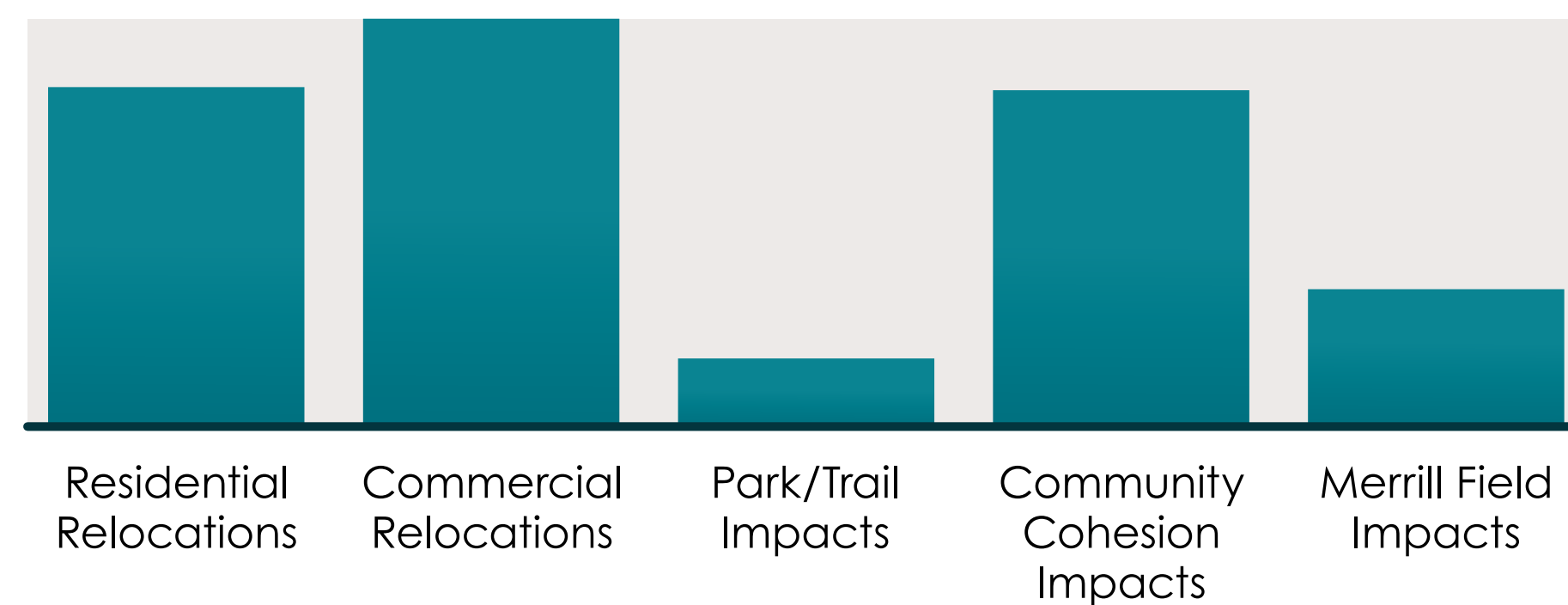
### Design Approach

- Maximize use of existing DOT&PF right-of-way (on 5th Avenue and Ingra Street)
- Allow Hyder Street to be utilized as a woonerf and greenway connection between Ship Creek and Chester Creek Trails
- Shorter version of a highway connection through Fairview with reduced business relocations at the north end

### Features

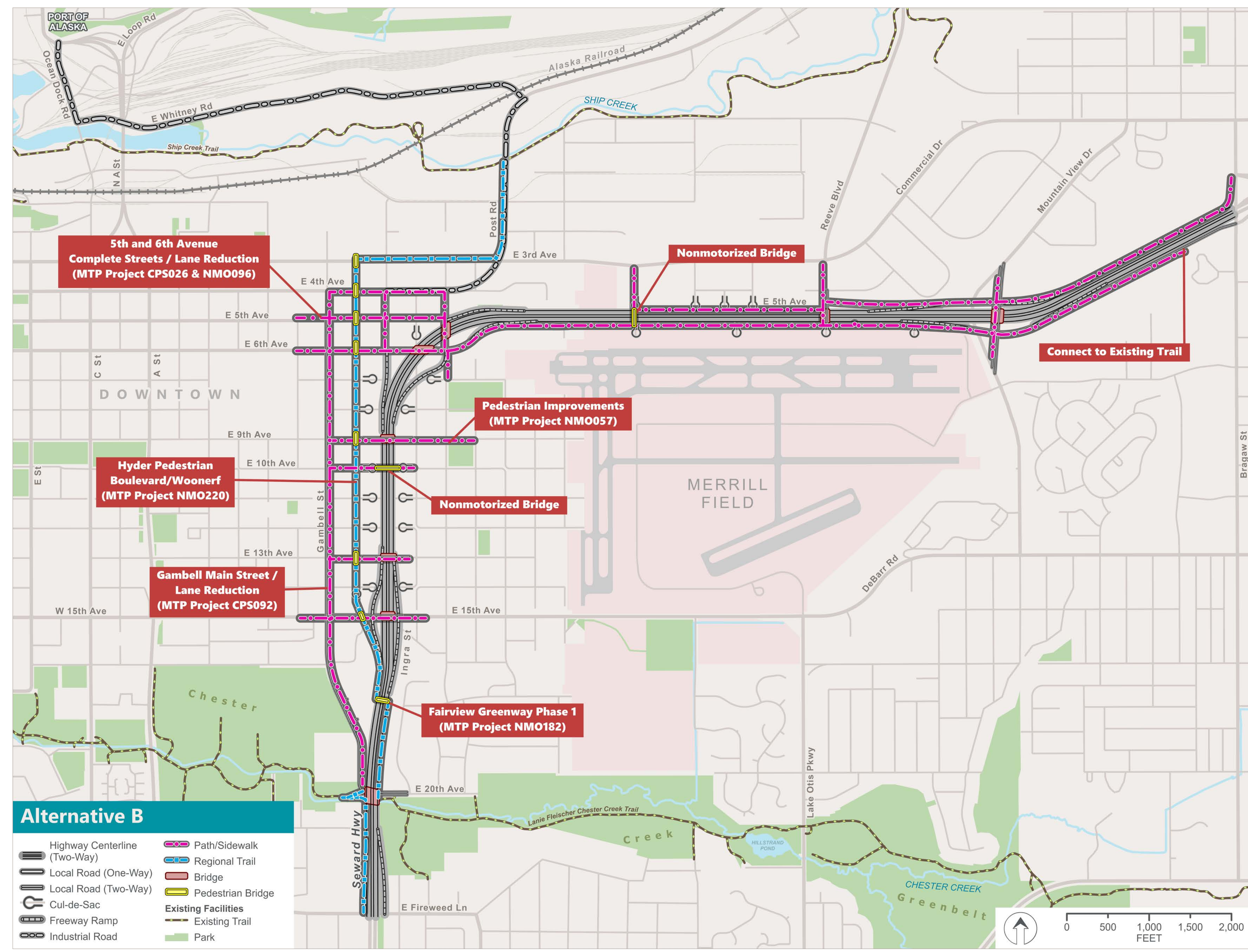
- Depressed alignment on Ingra Street to separate regional and local traffic to reduce conflicts
- Interchange to directly access Downtown
- Frontage road for Merrill Field access
- Port connection upgrade via Post Road-Whitney Road to a new interchange
- Greenway trail connection and woonerf on Hyder Street

### Trade-offs





# Alternative B Nonmotorized Connections

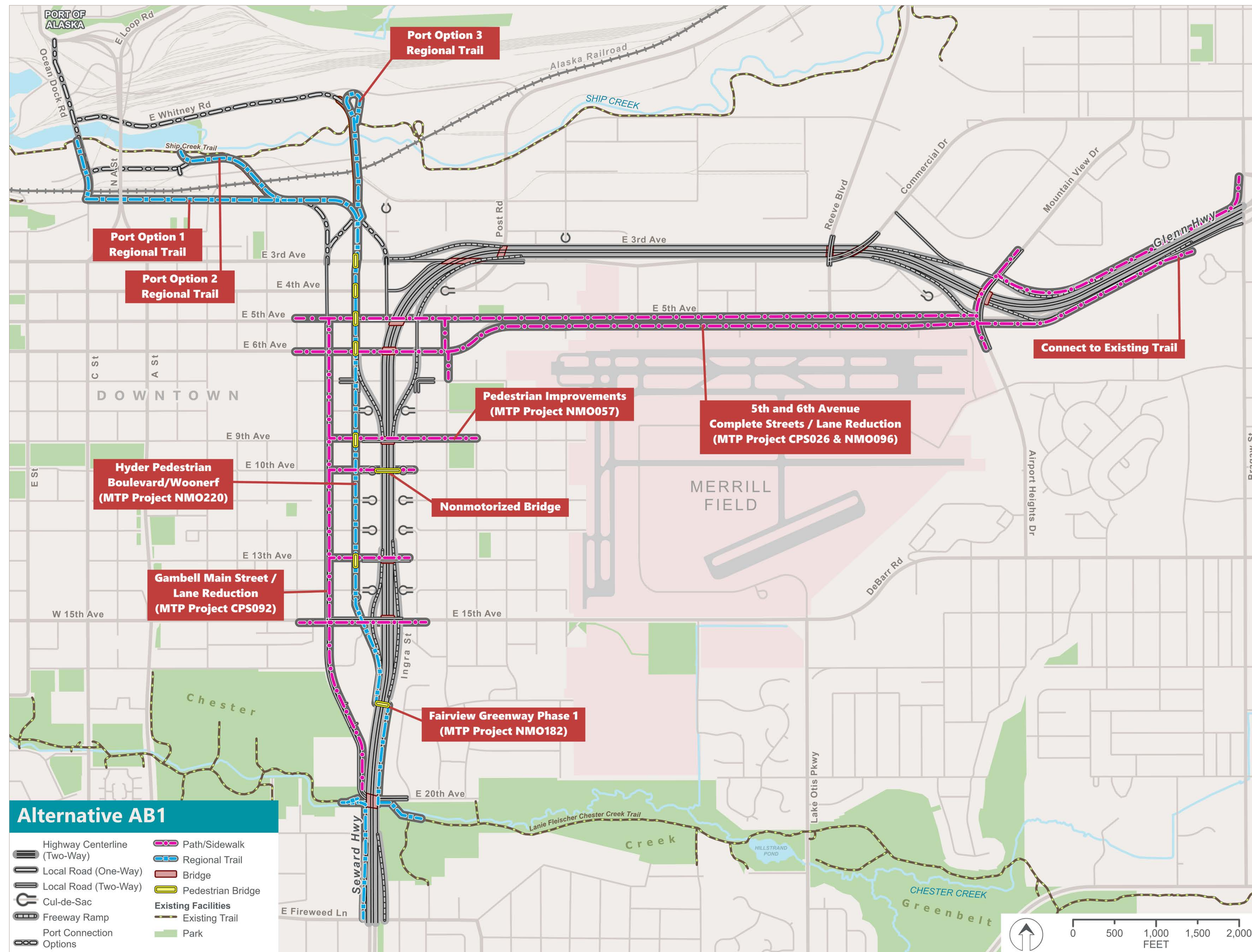








# Alternative AB1 Nonmotorized Connections





# Alternative AB2

## Roadway Improvements

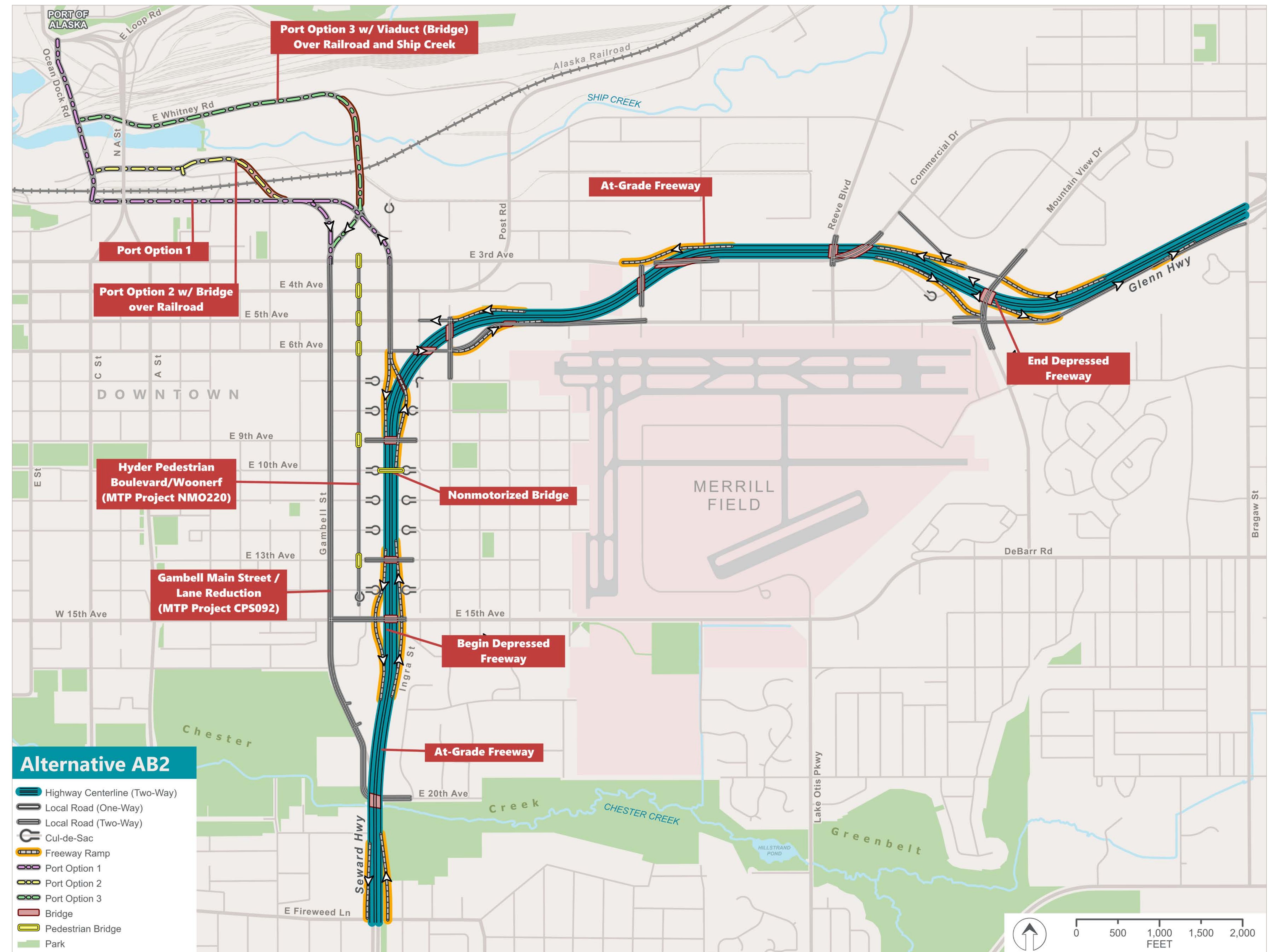
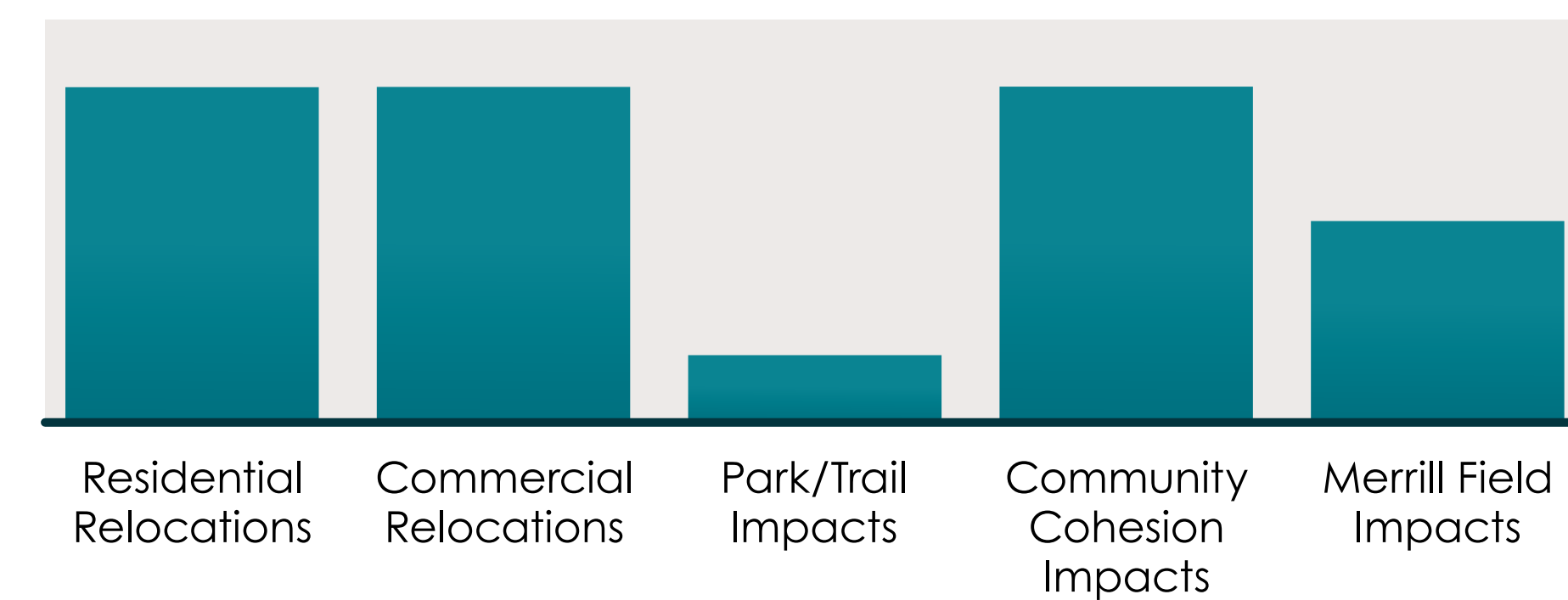
### Design Approach

- Utilize existing DOT&PF right-of-way (on Ingra Street)
- Use parts of Alternatives A and B to try to reduce commercial impacts
- Eliminate Merrill Field north access impacts
- Utilize Merrill Field north RSA to reduce commercial impacts along 3rd Avenue

### Features

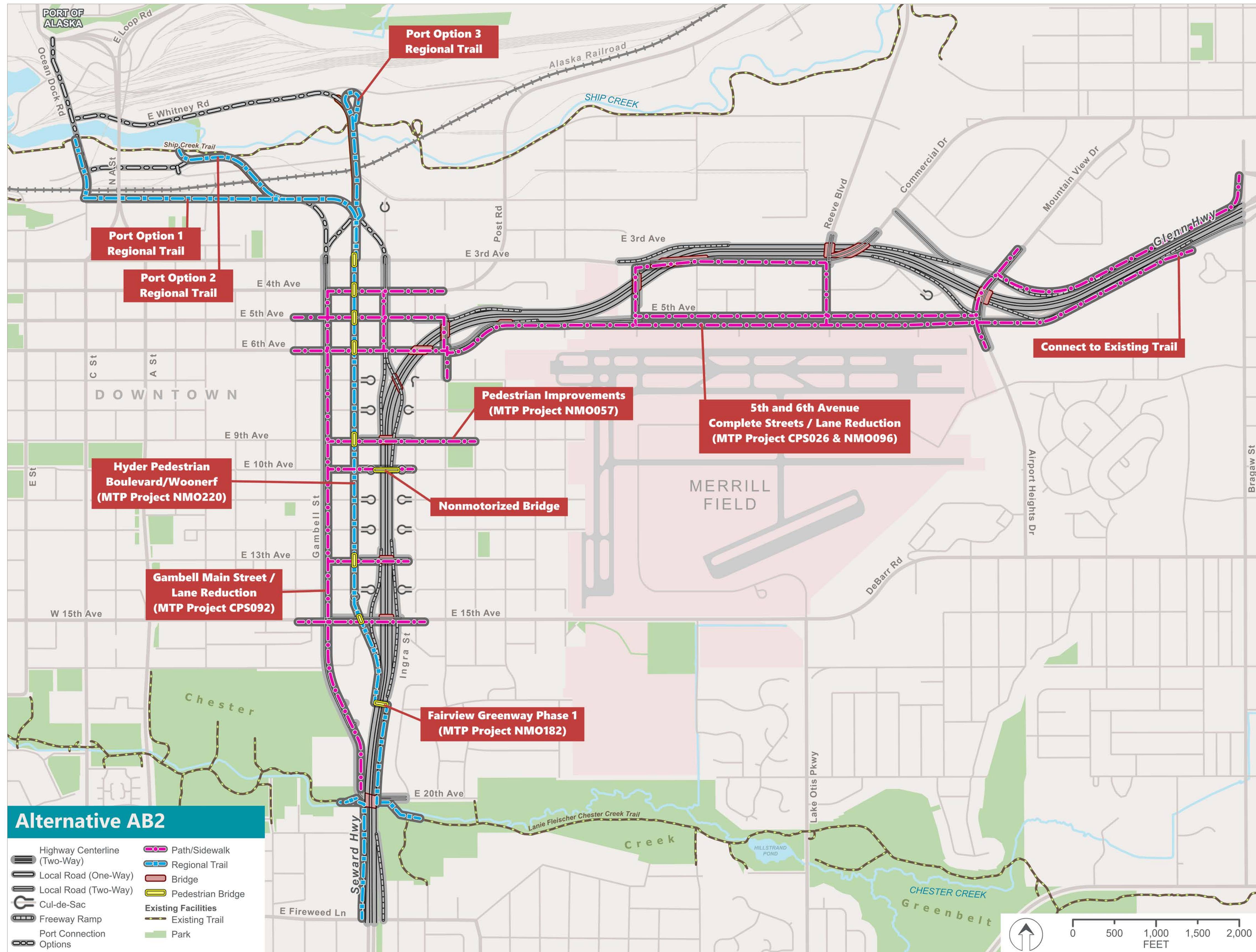
- Airport Heights interchange and routing from Alternative A to reduce commercial impacts along 5th Avenue
- Cross through Merrill Field runway protection zone to connect Alternatives A and B
- Interchange to directly access Downtown
- Depressed alignment on Ingra Street to separate regional and local traffic to reduce conflicts
- Port connection upgrade
- Greenway trail connection and woonerf on Hyder Street

### Trade-offs





# Alternative AB2 Nonmotorized Connections





# Alternative C1

## Roadway Improvements

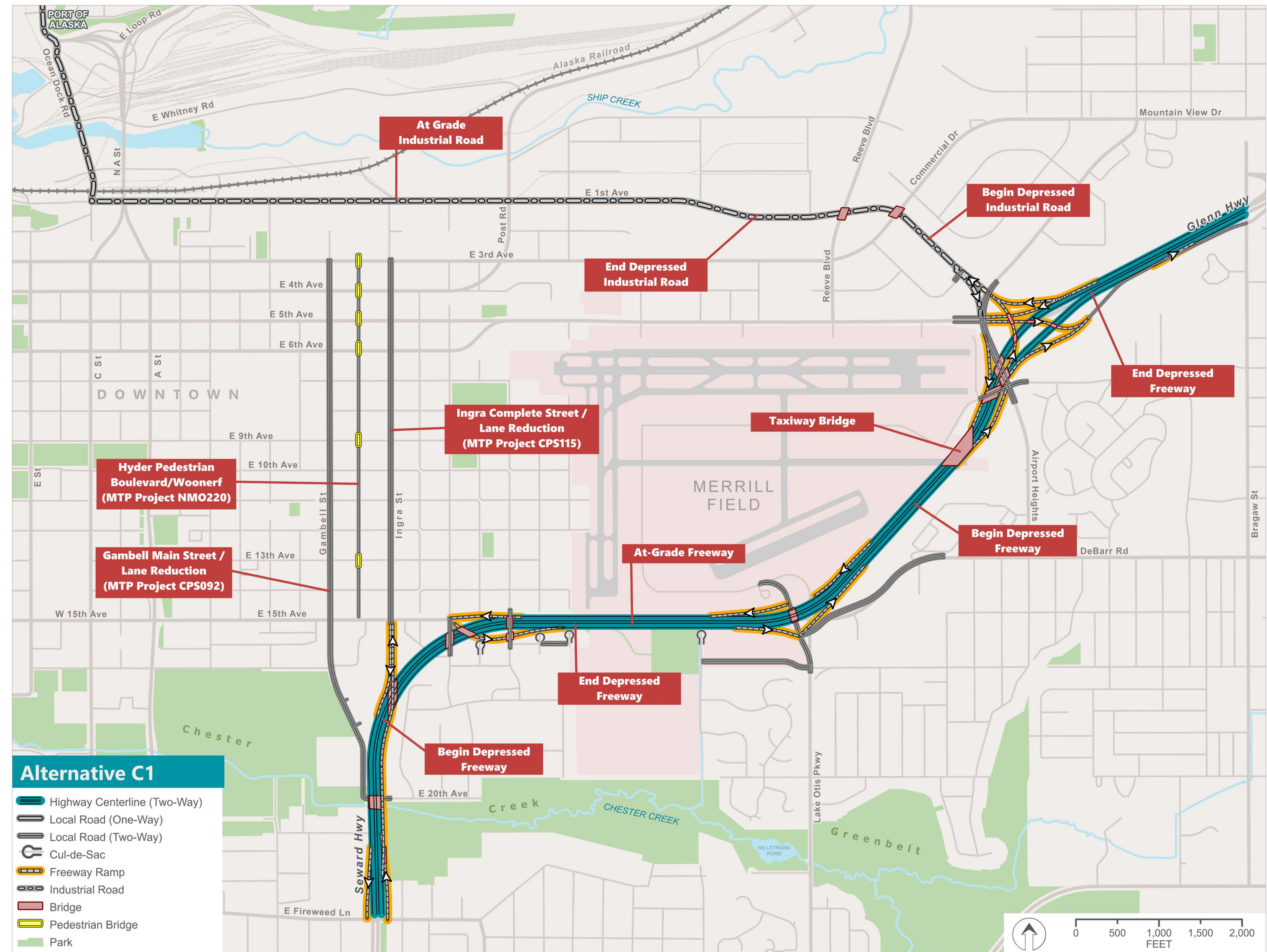
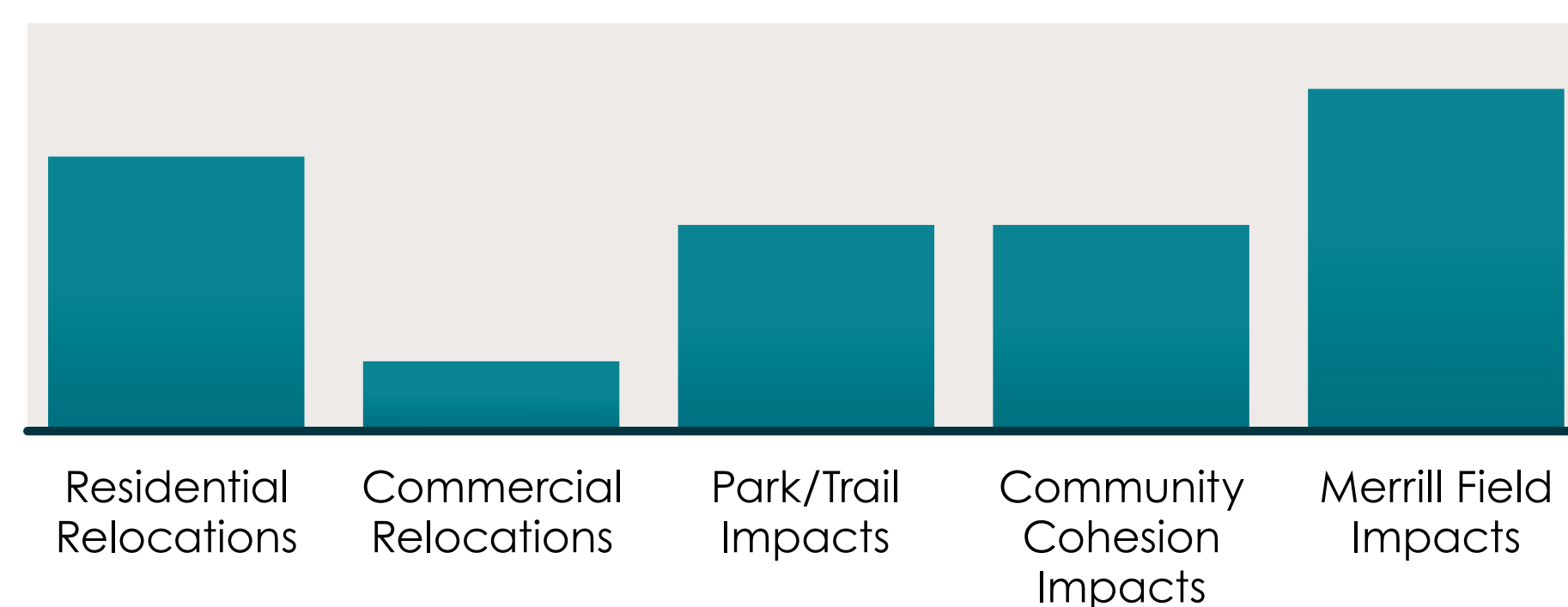
### Design Approach

- Reduce relocation impacts by using underutilized land and public right-of-way south and southwest of Merrill Field
- Reduce length of physical barrier (depressed freeway) through Fairview neighborhood
- Largely bypass Fairview and Downtown to reduce regional trip lengths

### Features

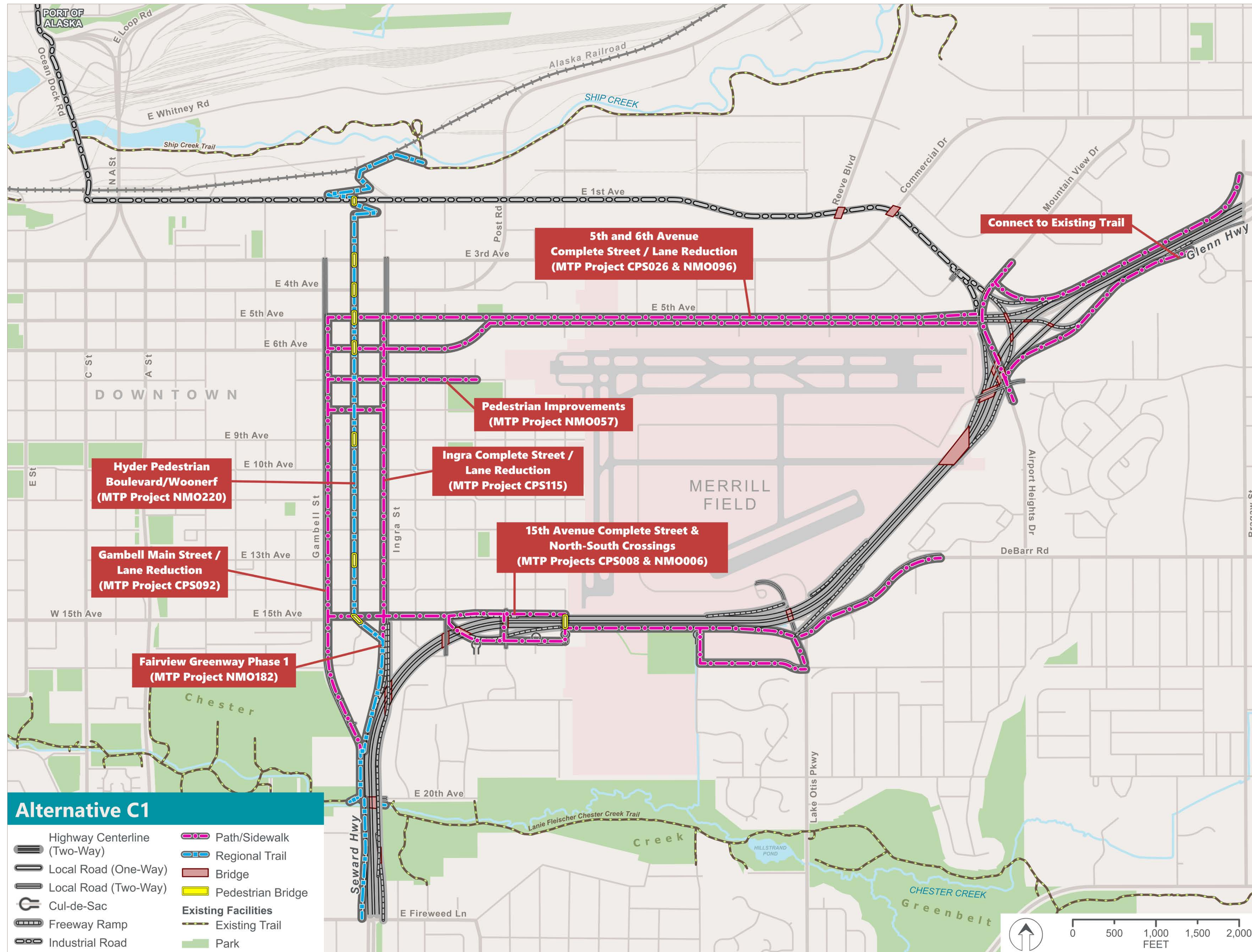
- Make use of public right-of-way south of Merrill Field and on 15th Avenue
- Make use of vacant Northway Mall
- Interchange to access U-Med via Lake Otis Parkway
- Depressed alignment on 15th Avenue to separate regional and local traffic to reduce conflicts
- Port connection upgrade via 1st Avenue, under Reeve Boulevard and Commercial Drive to a new interchange
- Greenway trail connection and woonerf on Hyder Street

### Trade-offs





# Alternative C1 Nonmotorized Connections





# Alternative C2

## Roadway Improvements

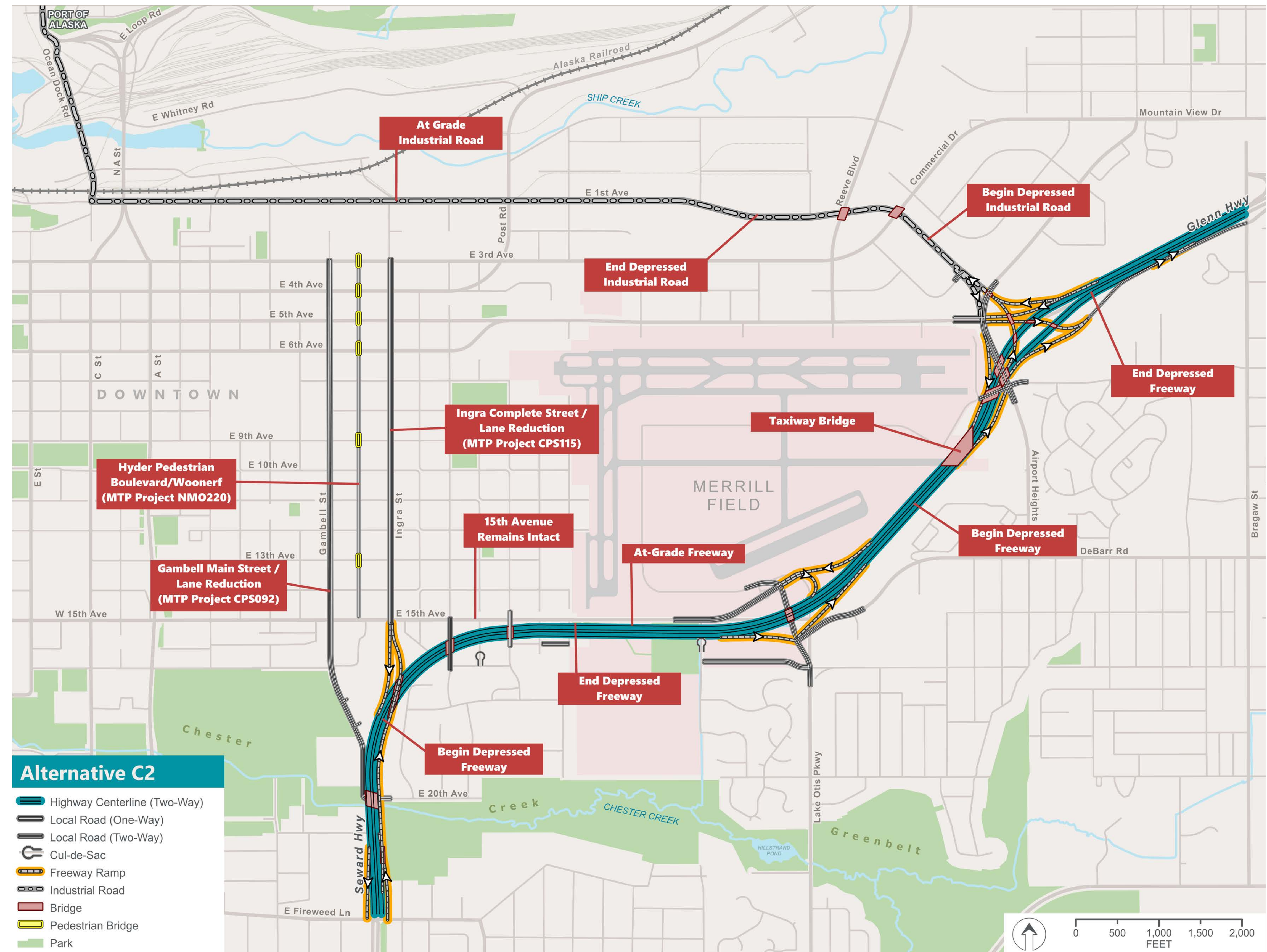
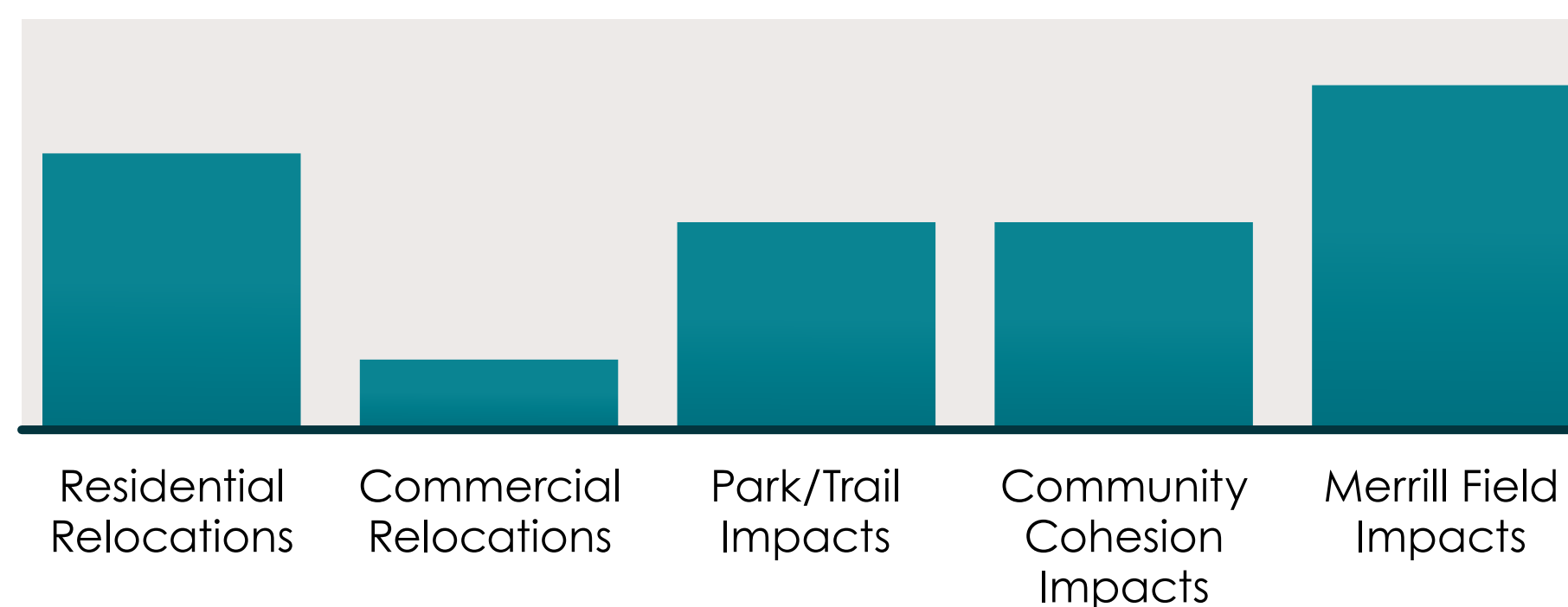
### Design Approach

- Same as C1 Alternative, but alignment shifted south of 15th Avenue to keep 15th Avenue continuous
- Eliminate impacts to existing 15th Avenue complete street
- Allow local traffic to utilize the existing east-west connection on 15th Avenue and not be required to utilize the proposed freeway for short trips

### Features

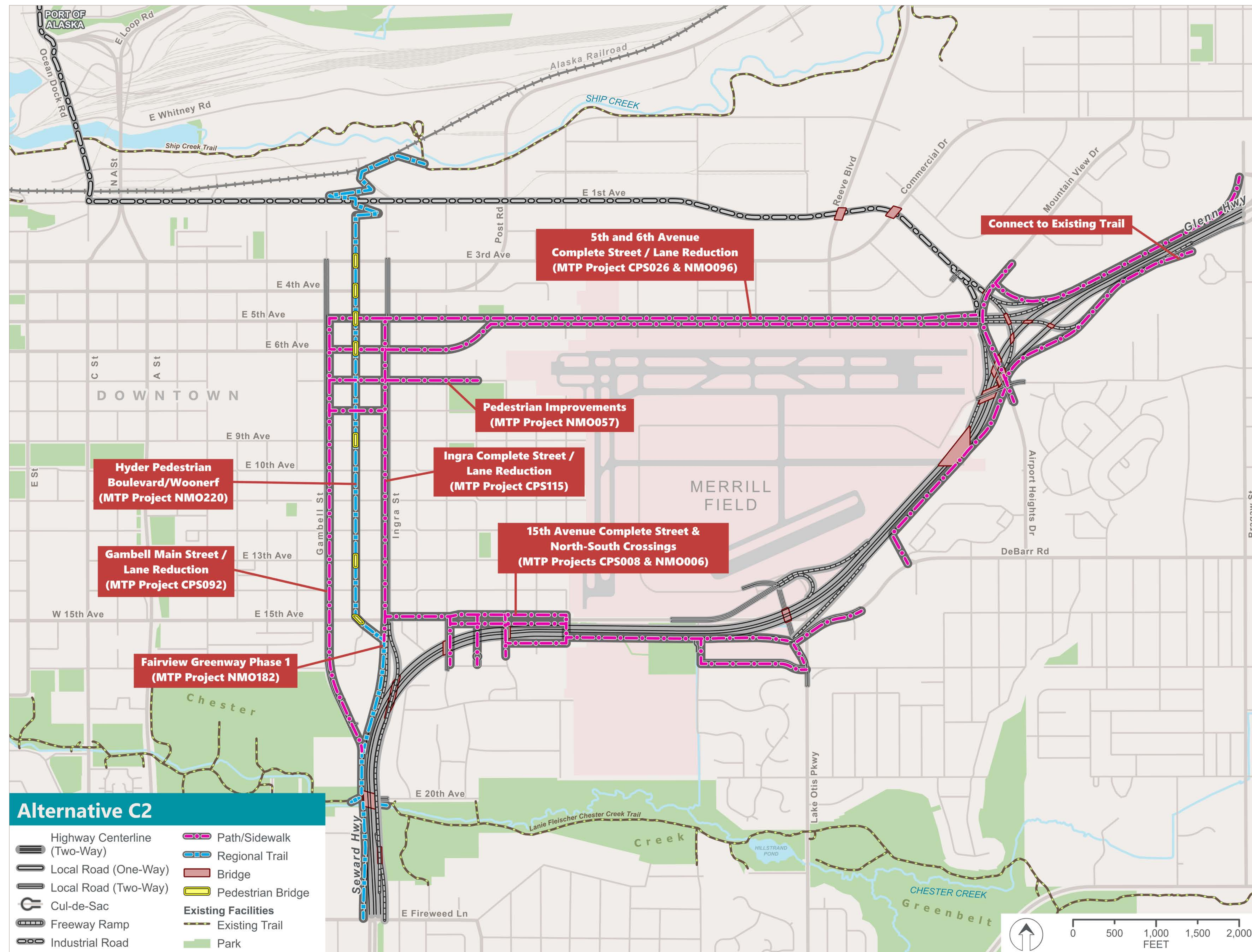
- Depressed alignment along 15th Avenue to separate regional and local traffic to reduce conflicts
- Make use of public right-of-way south of Merrill Field and on 15th Avenue
- Make use of vacant Northway Mall
- Interchange to access U-Med via Lake Otis Parkway
- Port connection upgrade via 1st Avenue, under Reeve Boulevard and Commercial Drive to a new interchange
- Greenway trail connection and woonerf on Hyder Street

### Trade-offs





# Alternative C2 Nonmotorized Connections





# Alternative D

## Roadway Improvements

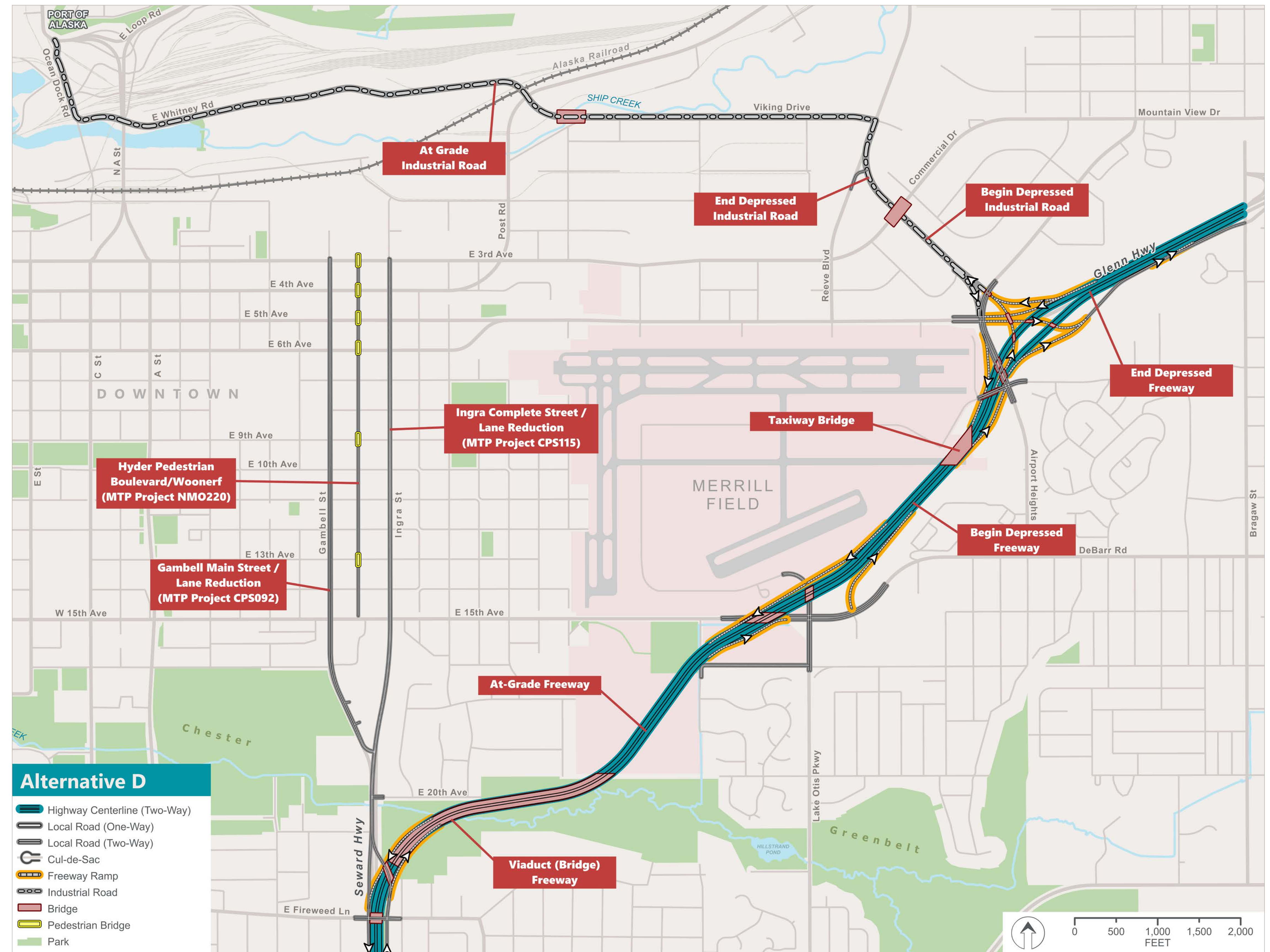
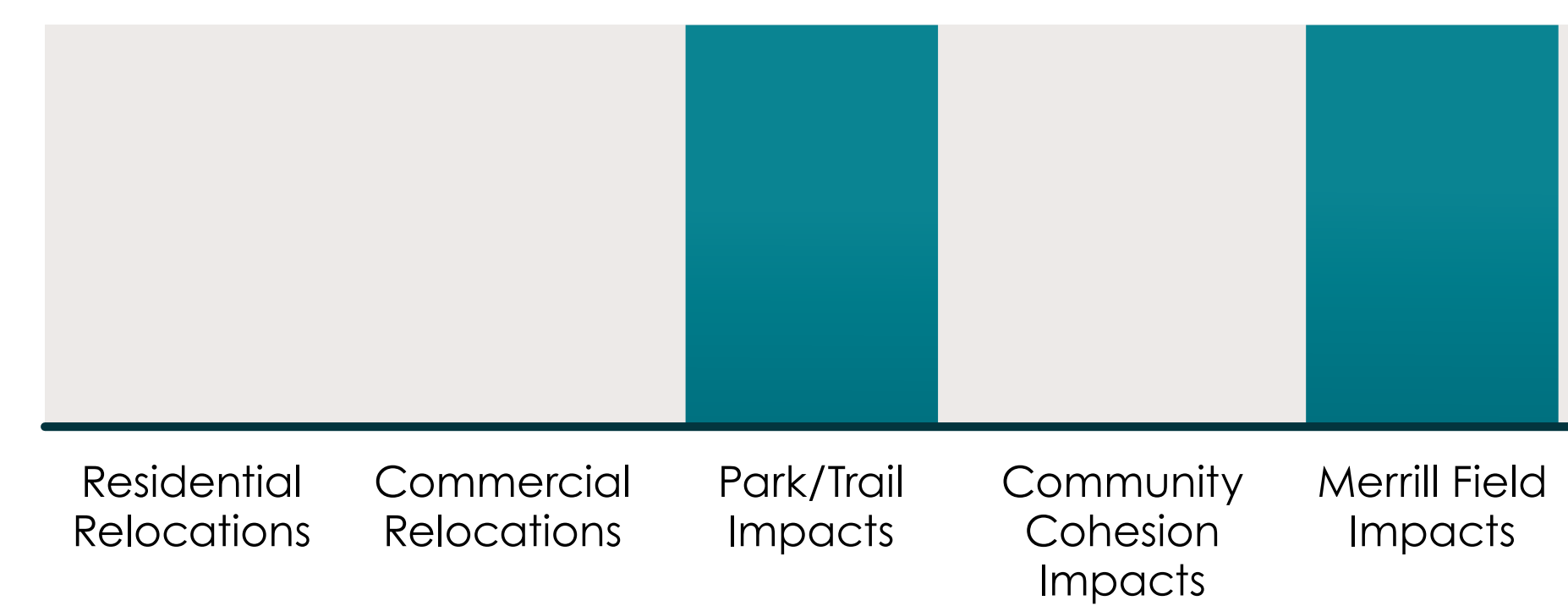
### Design Approach

- Maximize use of public land to minimize relocation impacts
- Completely bypass Fairview and Downtown to minimize regional travel impacts trip lengths
- Eliminate physical barrier (depressed freeway) through Fairview neighborhood

### Features

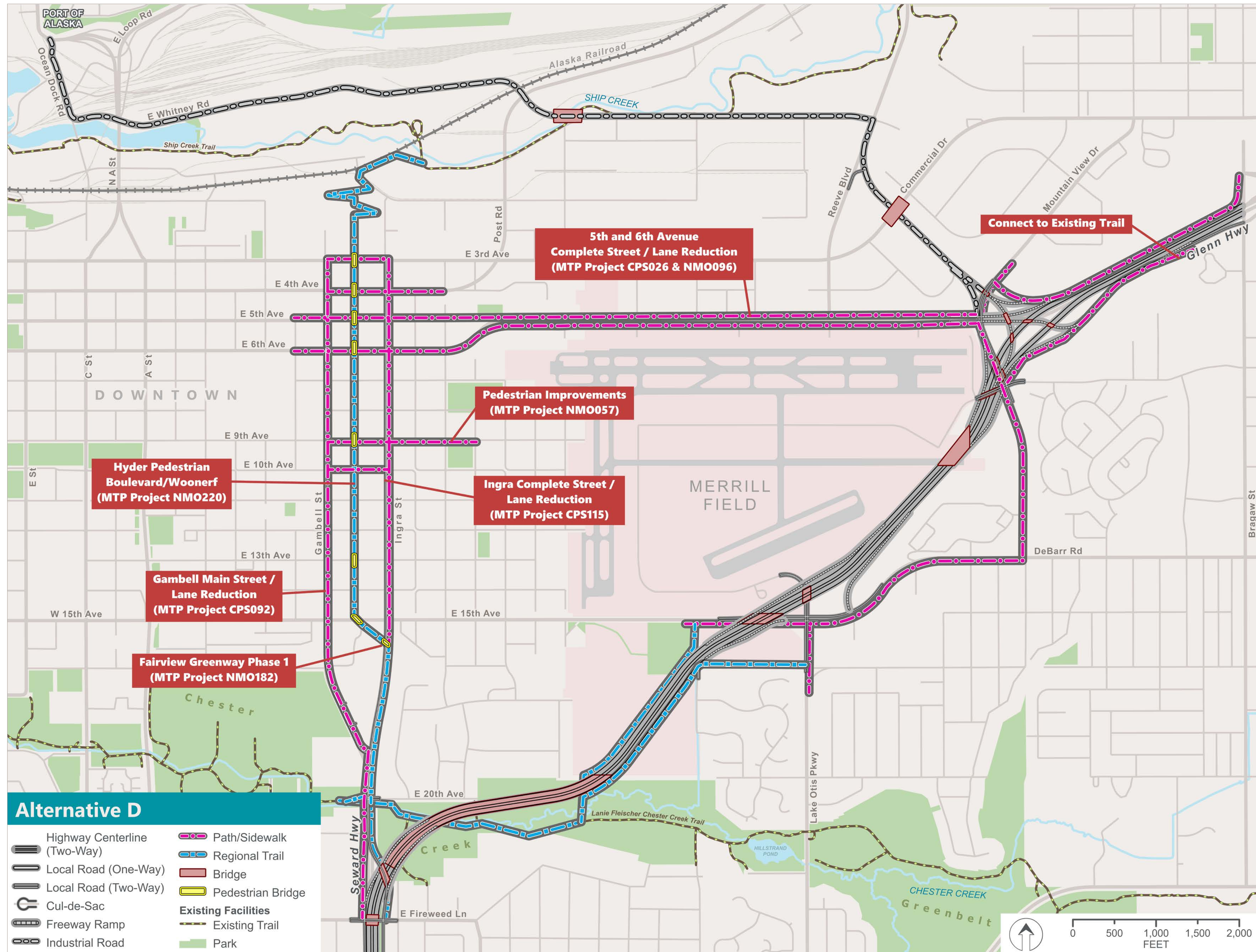
- Make use of vacant Northway Mall
- Make use of public land south of Merrill Field and south of 15th Avenue
- Cross over Chester Creek Greenbelt on a viaduct (long bridge) to reduce park/trail impacts
- Interchange to access U-Med via Lake Otis Parkway
- Port connection upgrade via Whitney Road-Viking Drive and then under Commercial Drive to a new interchange
- Greenway trail connection and woonerf on Hyder Street
- Adds trail connection from Chester Creek to DeBarr Road

### Trade-offs





# Alternative D Nonmotorized Connections



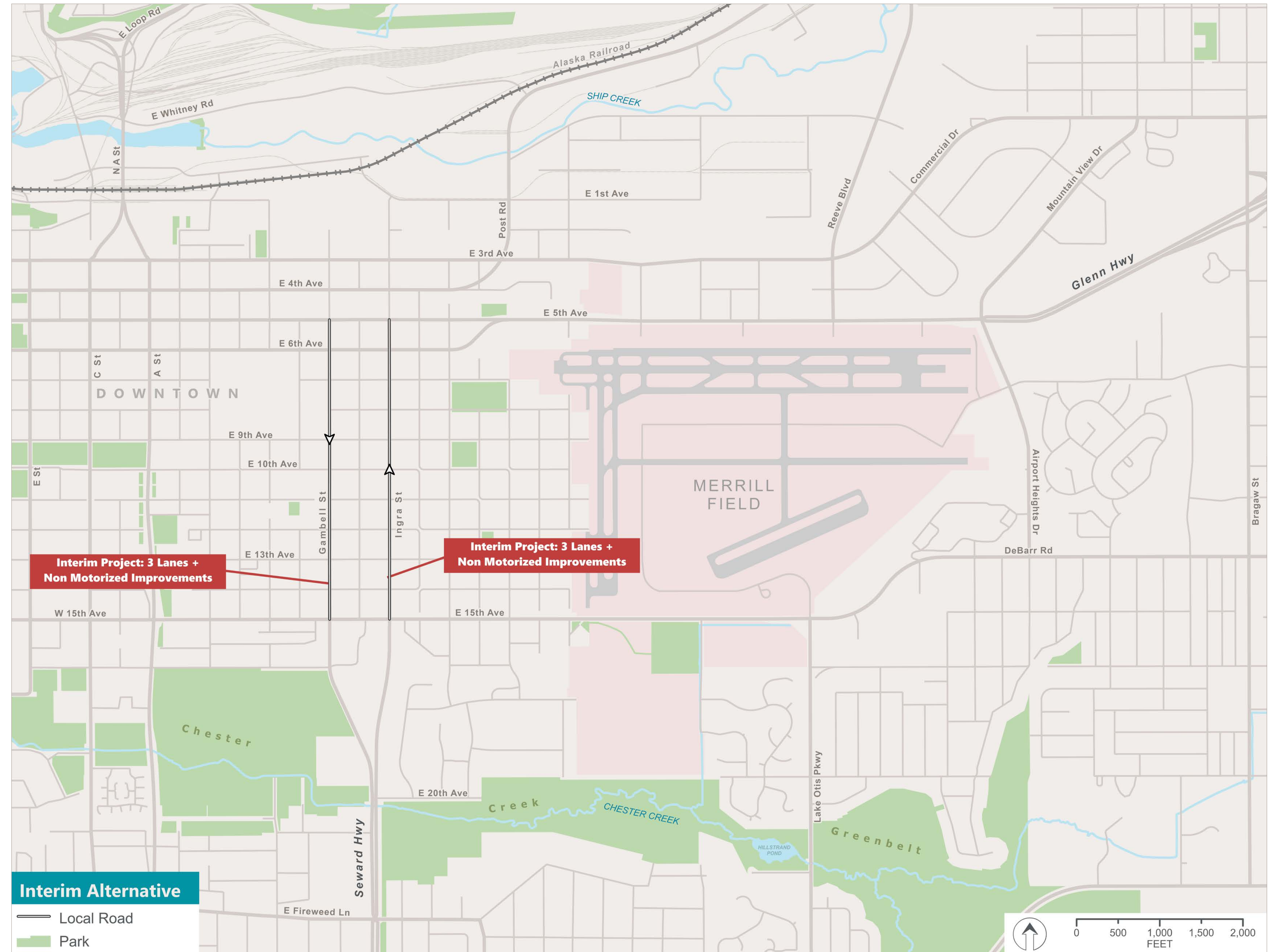


# Interim Alternative

## Roadway and Nonmotorized Improvements

### Design Approach

- Possible interim solution for addressing project goals within the Fairview neighborhood
- Reduce Ingra and Gambell Streets by one lane to increase:
  - separation between vehicles and nonmotorized users
  - snow storage
- Traffic modeling will determine if and for how long this option might work without a freeway connection before traffic congestion becomes an issue



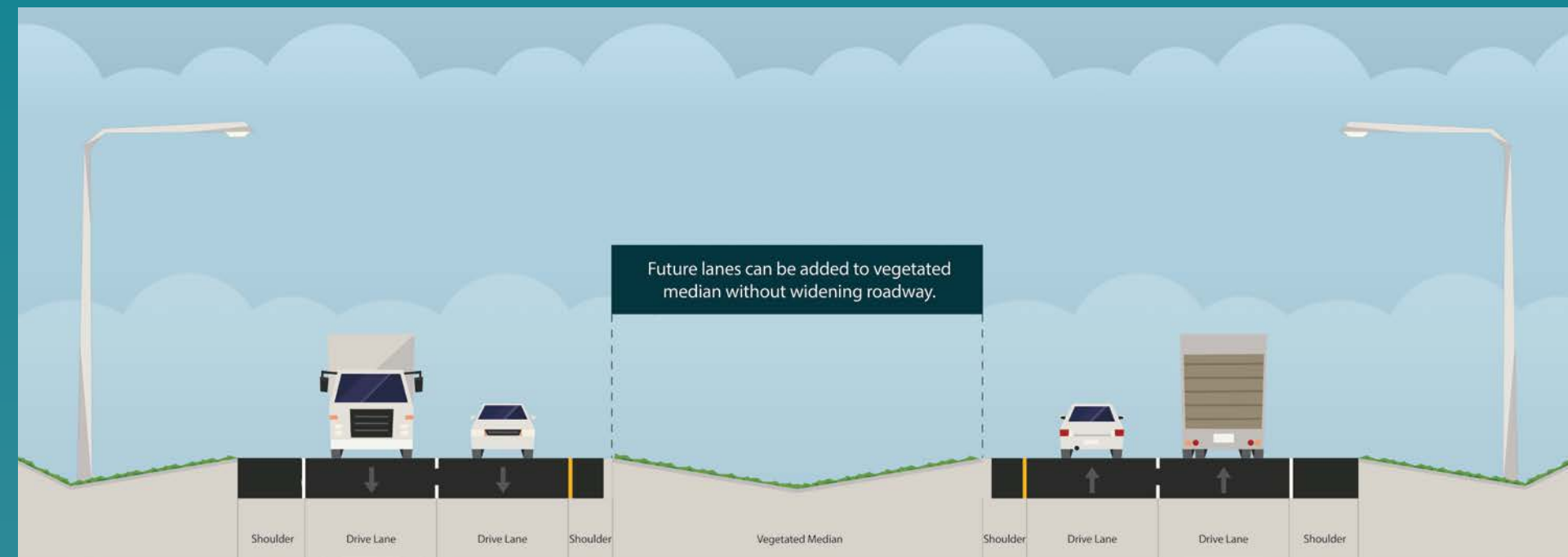


# Regional Roadway Options

## Freeway

The Municipality of Anchorage has defined freeways as limited access, high-speed roadways with grade-separated interchanges. These streets provide a potential solution where more than 40,000 trips per day need to be served. They should be built to freeway design standards, with full grade separations at intersecting streets and a minimum right-of-way width of 150 feet.

### At-Grade



Vegetated Median (Initial Build-Out)

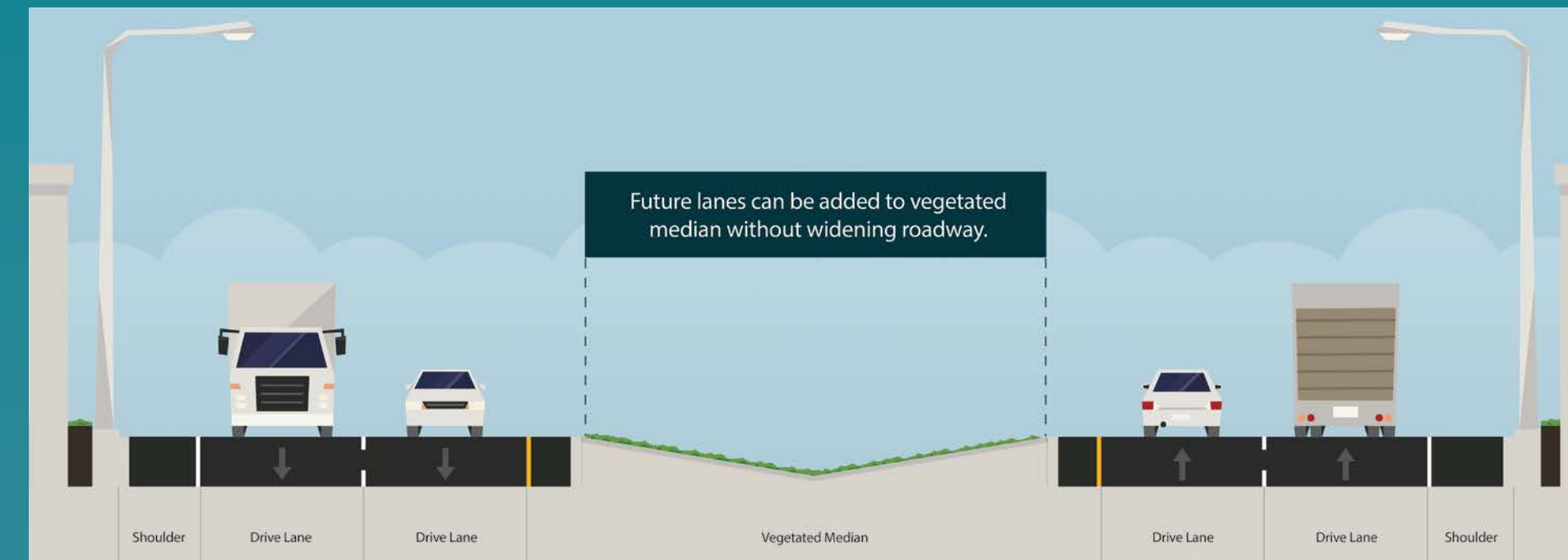


Concrete Barrier Median (Potential Future Build-Out)

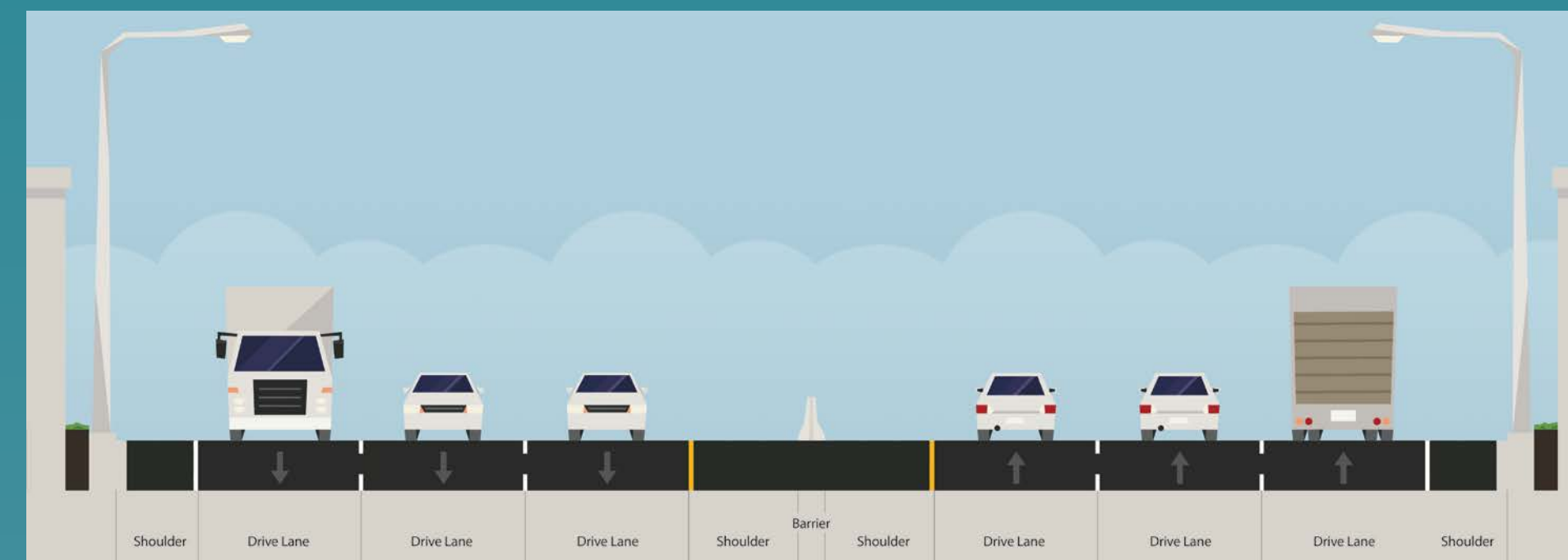


Glenn Highway, Anchorage

### Depressed



Vegetated Median (Initial Build-Out)



Concrete Barrier Median (Potential Future Build-Out)



Minnesota Boulevard, Anchorage

### Viaduct (Bridge)



Elevated Section with 4 Lanes



Viaduct Example



Viaduct Example





# Local Roadway Options

## Main Street (Gambell)

Provide for commercial and mixed uses, are pedestrian-oriented, and are transit-served. On-street parking offers benefits including better land usage than dedicated parking lots, slower traffic, and better business access. On-street parking can also have drawbacks including being less bike and pedestrian friendly, and being hard to access when the road is congested.



Main Street Example



Main Street Example



West Fourth Avenue, Anchorage

## Woonerf (Hyder)

A woonerf, sometimes called a living street, allows drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians, and others to share the space simultaneously. These are typically viewed as social spaces rather than purely vehicle spaces. The four vital elements of a woonerf are (1) well-defined entrances, (2) a shared and well-marked space, (3) physical barriers to slow traffic, and (4) landscaping.



Woonerf Example



Modern Woonerf Example



F Street, Anchorage

## Complete Street (Ingra)

Two-way, left-turn lanes provide a center lane for left-turning vehicles. Lanes separate turning traffic from through-traffic, reducing congestion and improving safety and travel times, as well as providing space for emergency vehicles and snow storage.



Complete Street Center Turn Lane Example



Complete Street Greenway Example



Spenard Road, Anchorage Example





# Port and Trail Connections

## Industrial Streets

- Industrial streets provide access to and from the Port of Anchorage for large vehicles such as trucks, trailers, and other delivery vehicles.
- Industrial streets typically consist of two to four wide travel lanes.
- Bicycle and pedestrian travel should be accommodated as well.



## Regional Trail Connections

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





# We Want Your Input!



## **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:**

**February 7, 2024 –  
April 7, 2024**



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*This planning document may be adopted in a subsequent environmental review process in accordance with 23 USC 168 Integration of Planning and Environmental Review.*

*The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by DOT&PF pursuant to 23 USC 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated November 3, 2017, and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.*

