SUMMARY

Seward Hwy/Alyeska Hwy Intersection Improvements

Z546190000

Public Open House #2

Date | Time: April 22, 2021 (6:00pm - 8:00pm) |

Location: Virtual Meeting Via Zoom |

Project Team

- Christina Huber, PE, Project Manager, DOT&PF
- Van Le, AICP, Stakeholder Coordination/CSS Process Lead, R&M
- Marc Frutiger, PE, PTOE, Lead Civil Engineer, R&M
- Derek Christianson, PE, Intersection Design Lead, Michael Baker
- Jeanne Bowie, PE, PhD, PTOE, Traffic Engineering Analyst, Kinney Engineering

For a full list of project team members, see slide two of the attached presentation.

Attendees

The meeting was attended virtually via Zoom or conference call. Attendees signed in and out throughout the meeting, with 21 attendees at 6:10 PM during the first presentation, and 19 attendees after the second presentation at 7:00 PM, including project team members. Emails were collected from attendees who provided them to the project team via chat or email.

Meeting Materials

The following materials were presented during the Public Meeting and were also posted to the project website (www.sewardalyeskahwyintersection.com) prior to Open House (see attachments):

- PDF Presentation which included
  - Study Area Aerial Graphic
  - Traffic Data and Graphic
  - Identified Issues Graphic
  - Concept Alternative Graphics (11 alternatives)
  - Video by North Carolina DOT on Continuous Flow Intersections
  - Project Schedule
  - Contact information

Meeting Summary

The Zoom meeting opened 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of 6:00 PM. The meeting was recorded for an accurate summary and to make available to those who couldn't attend. The recording is available on the project website. Participants mainly joined the meeting via the app but were also able to join by phone.

The meeting began at the scheduled time of 6:00 PM and the presentation began with introductions prior to 6:10 PM.

Van opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees and announced that the meeting was being recorded. Marc introduced the Seward Hwy & Alyeska Hwy Intersection Improvements project and the project team. Marc then gave an overview of the project's scope and objectives and described the study area. He also reminded participants that the project is funded for engineering, environmental and public involvement activities through the selection of a preferred alternative and development of the design to the 30% level, including compliance with the Municipality of Anchorage's Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) Policy and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Marc then presented the concept alternatives and the criteria the project team is planning to use to evaluate the alternatives and recommend a preferred alternative.

Since the project's start in August 2020, the following outreach has occurred:

- Two presentations to the Girdwood Board of Supervisors (GBOS)
- Girdwood Alliance Board
- Anchorage Transportation Fair in November 2020
- Public Open House 1 in December 2020
- Stakeholder meetings including two meetings with the Girdwood Tesoro Station
- Alaska Trucking Association (ATA)
- Kenai Peninsula Transportation Fair in February 2021

At 7:00 PM, Marc gave the presentation again to inform community members who had joined the meeting after the first presentation and round of discussion. The meeting concluded at 8:00 PM, consistent with the schedule end time. Stakeholder's input gathered during and after the meeting will help reduce the number of alternatives from 11 to 4-5 that will move forward for detailed engineering analysis.

The project is scheduled to go to the Planning and Zoning Commission in October 2021 with the draft environmental document which includes the preferred alternative. Prior to that, the project team will return to GBOS for an updated on the alternatives analysis. The Project team will notify the community through the website, emails and GBOS of the upcoming meetings.

The following is a summary of the comments (grouped roughly by topic), questions and answers that were provided during and after the meeting:

Alternative Design:

- There is appreciation that all alternatives (except no build) extend Gold Ave up to Alyeska Hwy.
- Is there an option to provide the secondary roundabout in all modified options for the Gold/Alyeska Hwy intersection? This would decrease the traffic light requirements.
- There is resistance to alternatives that use any stoplights or alternatives that significantly reduce traffic speeds on the Seward Hwy.

- **Alternative 5** features unimpeded southbound Seward Hwy flow, but at the end of many weekend the traffic volumes reverse (people traveling back to Anchorage from the Kenai Peninsula or Turnagain Pass) which can make a left turn from Alyeska Hwy to southbound Seward Hwy hazardous.

- **Alternative 7 (Trumpet)** was a top preference by the public because it allows both northbound and southbound traffic on the Seward Hwy to flow unrestricted, has no stop lights, accommodates future expansion of the highway and appears to be more straight forward for snow removal operations.
- **Alternative 7 (Trumpet)** and other elevated overpass alternatives are a concern for maintaining viewshed due to the elevation needed for the crossing.
    - Countering opinions were also expressed, supporting grade-separated solutions to address the Seward Hwy/Alyeska Hwy intersection conflicts, as getting through the intersection safely is more important and the focus of drivers as they navigate the area.
- Elevated overpasses are concerning due to maneuverability (of emergency response vehicles) and emergency access onto the highway (not concerned about sightline).
- Concerned about **Alternative 7** (Trumpet) and potential roll hazard of large apparatus. A comparison between the size, loop/curve angle, and mph expected of this alternative and the Eagle River to Anchorage on ramp would be helpful. If the loop/curve angle is mitigated or described as a much larger radius than the Eagle River example, this would be my (Girdwood Fire Deputy Chief) number 1 priority because it would increase the ability for turning mobility more than the 'high speed approach' roundabout.

- **Alternative 8 (Roundabout)** received significant positive feedback during meeting, as 'the most effective, safest, and lowest maintenance option provided.'
- **Alternative 8 (Roundabout)**; concerned about the delay and back up on the Seward Hwy this could create, suggest running a flow analysis to show the number of vehicles per min/hour through the primary intersection and compare that to the number of vehicles at peak travel on the Hwy.
-

- **Alternative 9 (Tight Diamond)** has similar benefits to Alt. 7, perhaps with less impact on wetlands?
- **Alternative 9** (**Tight Diamond**); concerned about the retaining walls and snow removal, access to southbound Hwy during an emergency. Would the retaining walls provide enough view clearance for those traveling under the overpass to see an apparatus with lights taking the on ramp making access to the Hwy with plenty of time and distance to slow (even in winter conditions)?

- **Alternatives 10 and 11** seem to solve the problem but appear more expensive and environmentally-impacting than Alts. 7 and 9.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Improved safety should be the determining factor for any change to the highway
- Emergency Use Access should be an evaluation criterion (suggested by Girdwood Deputy Fire Chief): Taking in to the consideration we will have to retro fit all the apparatus with "Opticom" Traffic light control systems along with the concern of our larger apparatus navigating the intersections. I understand that the Trucking industry will hopefully also provide some feedback on this along with DOT standards and evaluation. Other concerns include the ability for vehicles to move aside when approaching under emergency conditions (Lights & Sirens) and providing enough room for winter conditions i.e. snow along the road with the space accounted for the emergency vehicles to pass.
- Impact to the residential neighborhood of Old Girdwood should be added to the evaluation criteria.
- Consistency with other Girdwood Plans should be added to the evaluation criteria.
    - There are multiple plans under current development, including the Girdwood Trails Plan which envisions a "valley entrance" trailhead in this general area (right now thought to be immediately north of the railroad).
- If not already assumed under "maintenance", snow removal and icing hazards should be added.

Traffic:

- What safe speeds can be expected and maintained through the control in both the location options of the "Highspeed Approach Roundabout"?
    - Modern roundabout design prescribes a maximum circulating speed of 30 mph.
- Concern from some residents of Old Girdwood about the potential impact of directing all of the Tesoro Mall traffic along the western part of Gold Ave; could turn a low volume local access road into a much higher volume connector and isolate Old West Road from the rest of the neighborhood.
- Speeds should be reduced in front of the gas station and intersection from 55 mph to 45 mph.

Access & Parking:

- Straightening the intersection and providing improved control options for the Tesoro mall is a must for safety in the community.
- Toadstool is the primary access for DOT and has the Hwy control barrier arms for shutting down the road while providing avalanche control on the Anchorage side. There are control barrier arms just south of the Main St./Seward Hwy intersection as well. If Alternatives 10/11 are considered further with a frontage road, this should be taken into consideration.
- How will large tractor trailers and double trailers access/approaches into the Tesoro parking area be accounted for and how will these large rigs be prevented from parking along the Seward Hwy across from the Tesoro Mall?
- Access to Glacier Creek needs to be maintained via the Seward Hwy Bridge pull off, as it is a drafting sight for large water operations during a major fire at/near Tesoro Mall, and is a fishing hole. (Unless you can also place a 10-20K gallon water cistern into the plan allowing for access ideally on a corner that can be used to refill or supply emergency operations as this is in a non-hydrated area – which would be amazing.)
    - Girdwood Fire Department's primary Tender is 42' long, 11' 11" tall and GVWR of 68,000lbs and carrier 2500gal of water that would serve as that primary pumper in a water relay operation; the ability to have a primary water source at the intersection would be amazing.

Public Open House #2

Concept Alternatives

Seward Hwy & Alyeska Hwy Intersection Improvement Project

Project No. Z546190000

April 22, 2021 @ 6:00 PM via ZOOM

PROJECT OVERVIEW

SCOPE

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is working on the Seward Hwy & Alyeska Hwy Intersection Improvement project which seeks to improve the capacity, operation and safety of the intersection.

Scope: DOT&PF has funded the project for engineering, environmental and public involvement activities through the selection of an alternative and development of the design to the 30% level, including compliance with the Municipality of Anchorage's Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) Policy and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

PROJECT TEAM

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC FACILITIES:

- Christina Huber, PE, Project Manager
- David Post, Surface Transportation Planning Manager
- Shawn Gardner, Anchorage Area Planning

R&M CONSULTANTS, INC:

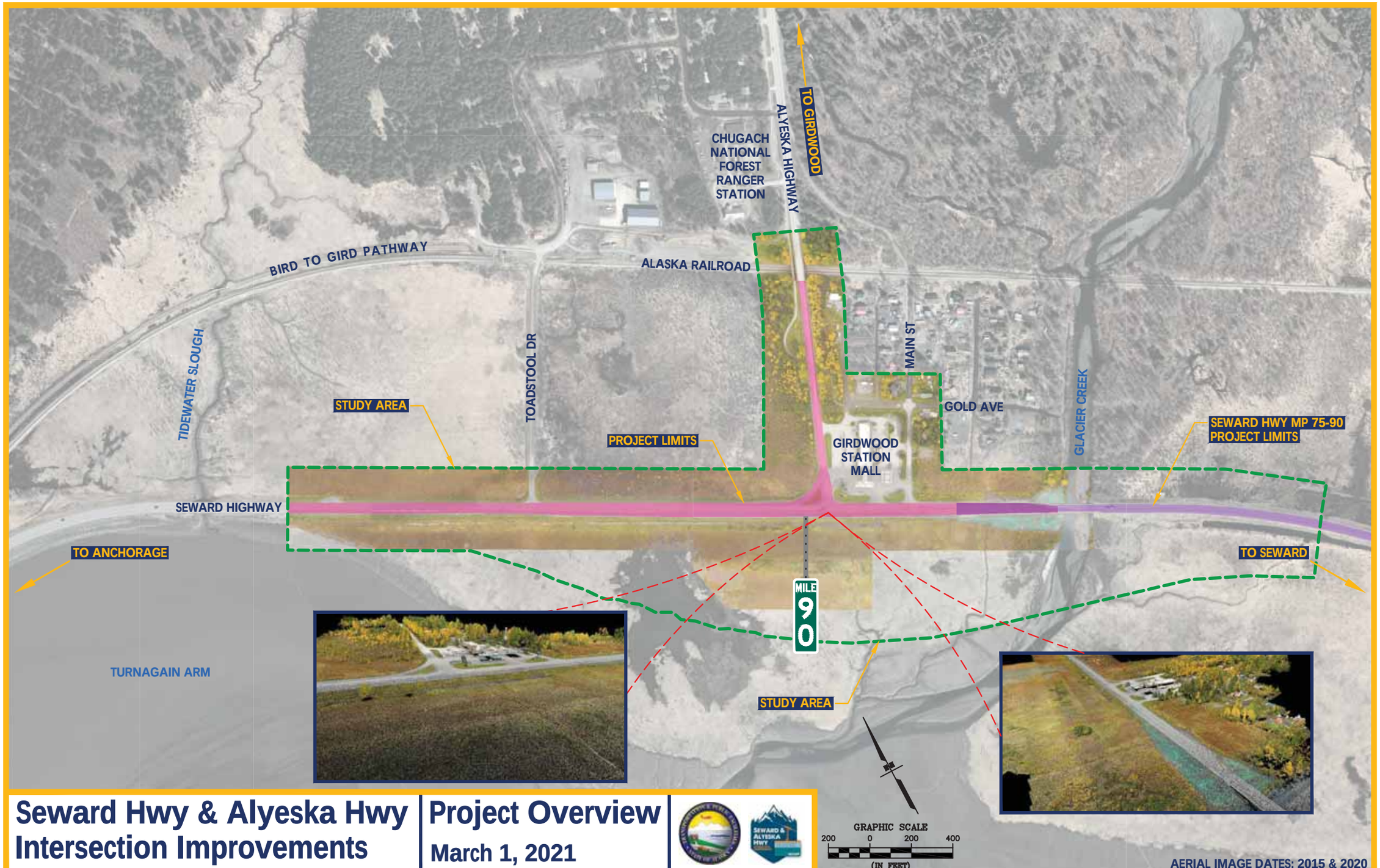
- Tim Grier, PE, Project Manager
- Marc Frutiger, PE, PTOE, Engineer Lead
- Van Le, AICP, Stakeholder Coordinator/CSS Process Lead
- Taryn Oleson-Yelle, AICP, Stakeholder Coordinator

KINNEY ENGINEERING

- Jeanne Bowie, PE, PhD, PTOE, Traffic Engineering Analyst

MICHAEL BAKER INTERNATIONAL

- Derek Christianson, PE, Intersection Design Lead



Seward Hwy & Alyeska Hwy Intersection Improvements

Project Overview

March 1, 2021

WHAT WE KNOW

EXISTING CONDITIONS & DATA COLLECTED

Traffic data

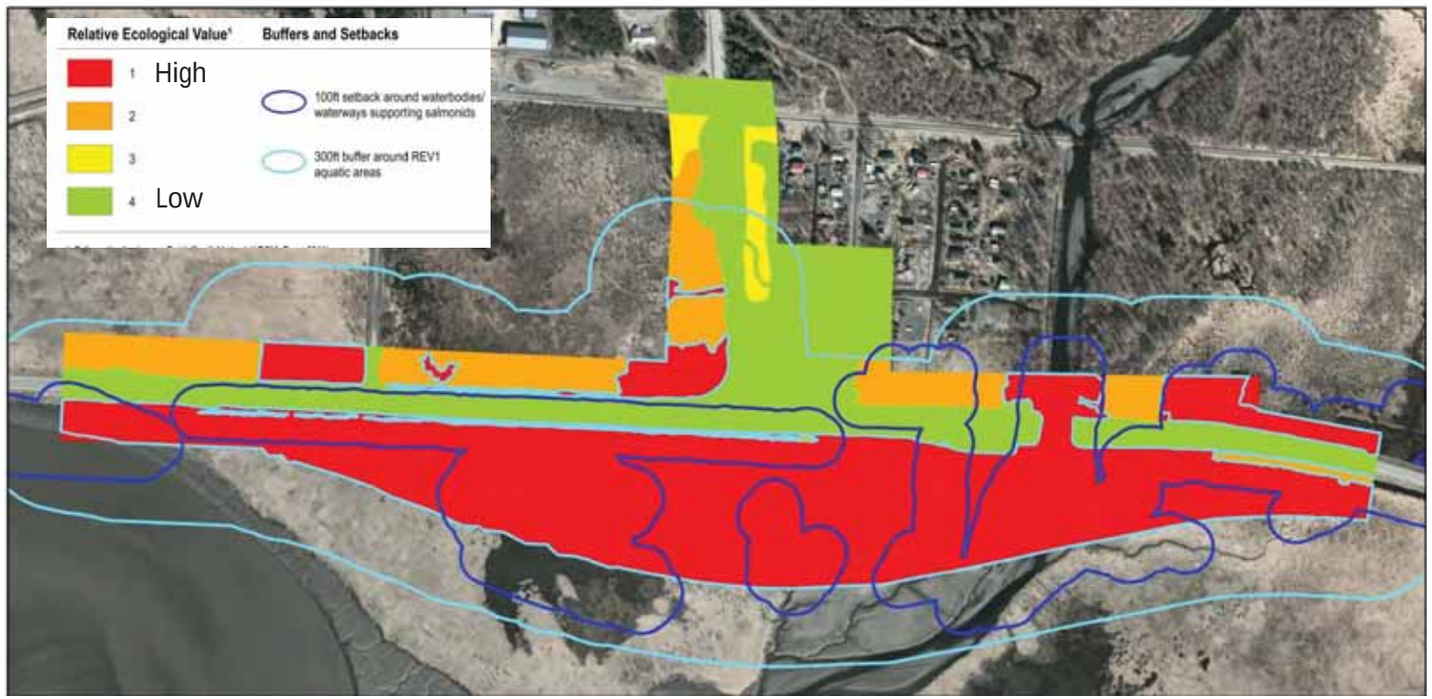
- Crashes:
  - 64% Property Damage only
  - 28% Minor Injury
  - 6% Major Injury
  - 2% Unknown
- Speeds
- Volume
- Turning movements
- Non-motorized

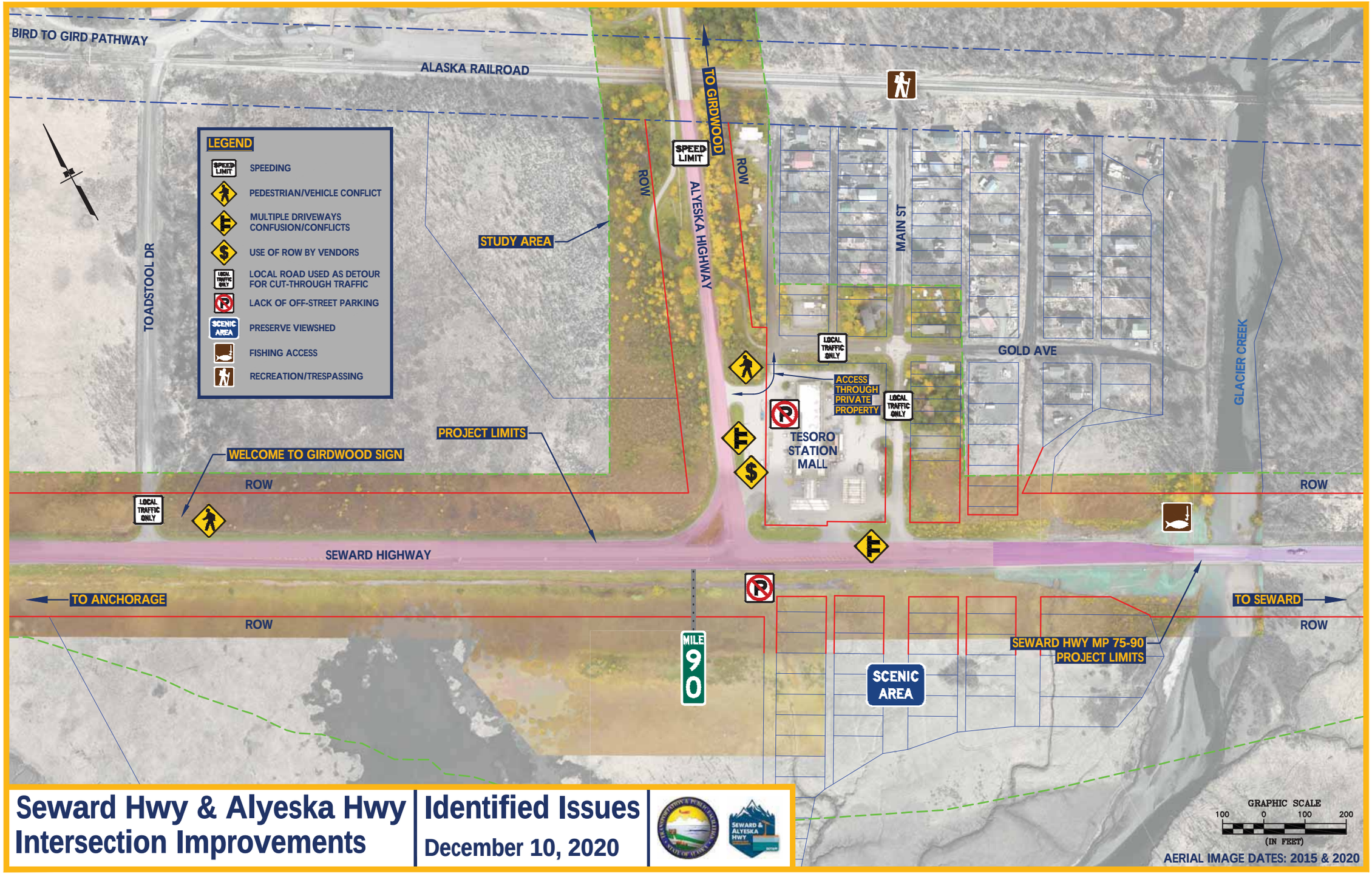
Environmental Constraints

- Wetlands

Topography

- Field survey
- Aerial data acquisition





Seward Hwy & Alyeska Hwy Intersection Improvements

Identified Issues

December 10, 2020

WHAT WE PROPOSE
CONCEPT ALTERNATIVES

1: No Build

2: Signalize Existing

3: Signalize Improved

4: Continuous Flow

5: Continuous Green

6: Grade Separated Intersection & Future Divided Hwy

7: Trumpet Interchange

8: Roundabout

9: Tight Diamond

10: Frontage Road

11: Diamond

NOTICE:
THIS DRAWING REPRESENTS A PRELIMINARY CONCEPT DEVELOPED BY THE DOT&PF AS OF 03/09/2021. IT DOES NOT REPRESENT DETAILED ENGINEERING OR ANALYSIS.


ALASKA RAILROAD
ALYESKA HIGHWAY
GOLD AVENUE
MAIN STREET
GLACIER CREEK
TOADSTOOL DRIVE
SEWARD HIGHWAY
SEWARD HIGHWAY
N
NOTICE:
THIS DRAWING REPRESENTS A PRELIMINARY CONCEPT DEVELOPED BY THE DOT&PF AS OF 03/09/2021. IT DOES NOT REPRESENT DETAILED ENGINEERING OR ANALYSIS.
• SIGNAL AT SEWARD HIGHWAY/ALYESKA HIGHWAY INTERSECTION
100'
0
100'


ALASKA RAILROAD
ALYESKA HWIGHWAY
GOLD AVENUE
SEE OPTIONAL DRIVEWAY CONSOLIDATION FIGURE FOR DRIVEWAY ACCESS DETAILS
MAIN STREET
GLACIER CREEK
TOADSTOOL DRIVE
SEWARD HIGHWAY
SEWARD HIGHWAY
N
NOTICE:
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• SIGNAL AT SEWARD HIGHWAY/ALYESKA HIGHWAY INTERSECTION
• SIGNAL AT ALYESKA HIGHWAY/GOLD AVENUE INTERSECTION
100'
0
100'


ALASKA RAILROAD
ALYESKA HWIGHWAY
GOLD AVENUE
SEE OPTIONAL DRIVEWAY CONSOLIDATION FIGURE FOR DRIVEWAY ACCESS DETAILS
MAIN STREET
GLACIER CREEK
TOADSTOOL DRIVE
SEWARD HIGHWAY
SEWARD HIGHWAY
N
NOTICE:
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• ALSO KNOWN AS A DISPLACED LEFT TURN INTERSECTION
• MORE EFFICIENT INTERSECTION OPERATIONS AND IMPROVED CAPACITY VERSUS CONVENTIONAL SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
100'
0
100'

WHAT WE PROPOSE
CONCEPT ALTERNATIVES

Continuous Flow Example Video:

[NCDOT: What is a Continuous Flow Intersection? - YouTube]


ALASKA RAILROAD
ALYESKA HWIGHWAY
GOLD AVENUE
FREE FLOW OPERATIONS FOR SOUTHBOUND SEWARD HIGHWAY
SEE OPTIONAL DRIVEWAY CONSOLIDATION FIGURE FOR DRIVEWAY ACCESS DETAILS
MAIN STREET
GLACIER CREEK
TOADSTOOL DRIVE
SEWARD HIGHWAY
SEWARD HIGHWAY
N
NOTICE:
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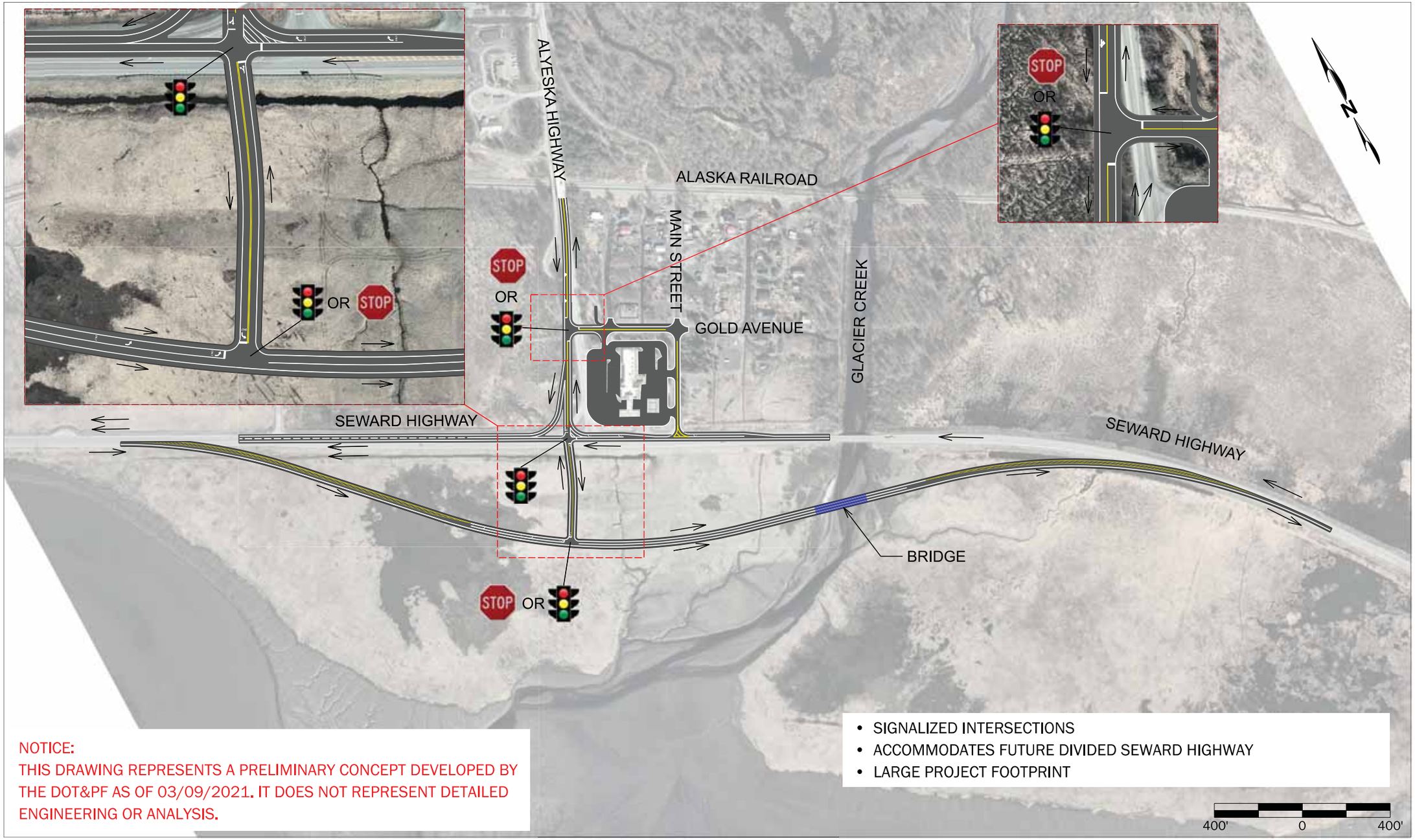
• SIGNAL AT SEWARD HIGHWAY/ALYESKA HIGHWAY INTERSECTION
• SOUTHBOUND SEWARD HIGHWAY IS A CONTINUOUS GREEN SIGNAL
• SIGNAL AT ALYESKA HIGHWAY/GOLD AVENUE INTERSECTION
100' 0 100'


ALYESKA HIGHWAY
ALASKA RAILROAD
MAIN STREET
GOLD AVENUE
GLACIER CREEK
SEWARD HIGHWAY
SEWARD HIGHWAY
BRIDGE
STOP
OR
STOP
OR
STOP
OR
STOP
OR
N
NOTICE:
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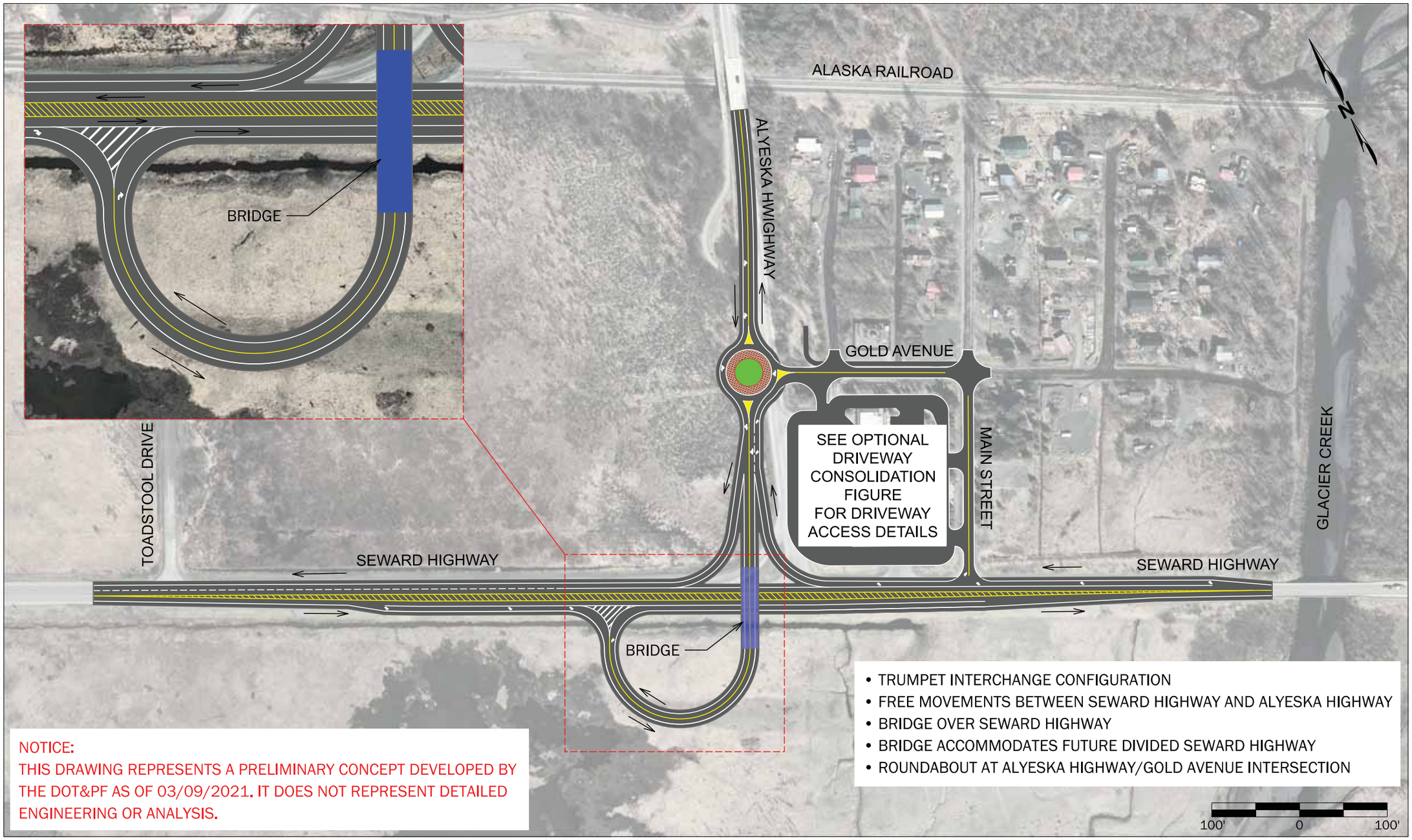
• SIGNALIZED INTERSECTIONS
• ACCOMMODATES FUTURE DIVIDED SEWARD HIGHWAY
• LARGE PROJECT FOOTPRINT
400'
0
400'


ALASKA RAILROAD
ALYESKA HWIGHWAY
GOLD AVENUE
BRIDGE
TOADSTOOL DRIVE
SEWARD HIGHWAY
SEE OPTIONAL DRIVEWAY CONSOLIDATION FIGURE FOR DRIVEWAY ACCESS DETAILS
MAIN STREET
GLACIER CREEK
SEWARD HIGHWAY
BRIDGE
N
NOTICE:
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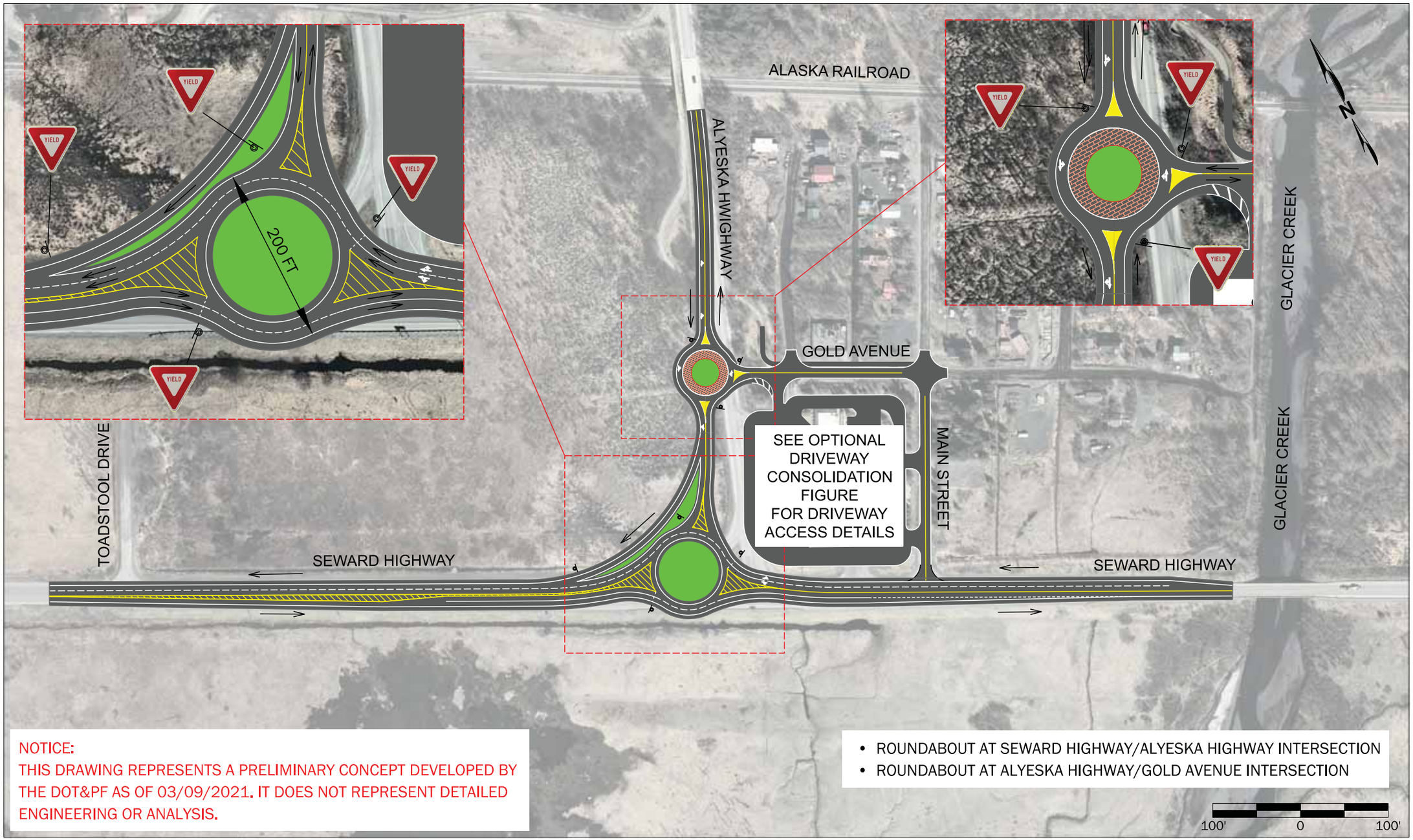
• TRUMPET INTERCHANGE CONFIGURATION
• FREE MOVEMENTS BETWEEN SEWARD HIGHWAY AND ALYESKA HIGHWAY
• BRIDGE OVER SEWARD HIGHWAY
• BRIDGE ACCOMMODATES FUTURE DIVIDED SEWARD HIGHWAY
• ROUNDABOUT AT ALYESKA HIGHWAY/GOLD AVENUE INTERSECTION
100' 0 100'


YIELD
200 FT
ALASKA RAILROAD
ALYESKA HWIGHWAY
GOLD AVENUE
SEE OPTIONAL DRIVEWAY CONSOLIDATION FIGURE FOR DRIVEWAY ACCESS DETAILS
MAIN STREET
GLACIER CREEK
TOADSTOOL DRIVE
SEWARD HIGHWAY
SEWARD HIGHWAY
N
NOTICE:
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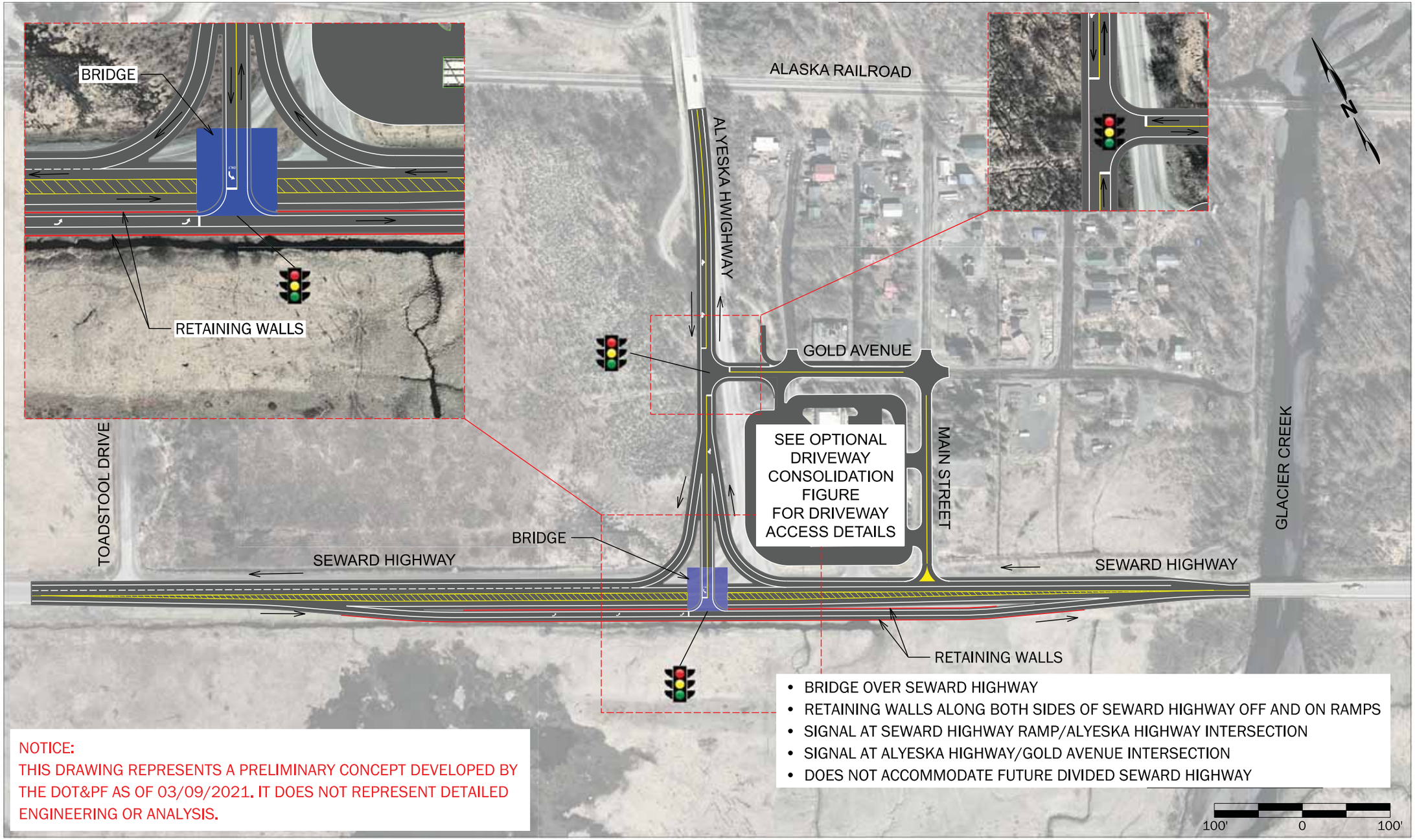
• ROUNDABOUT AT SEWARD HIGHWAY/ALYESKA HIGHWAY INTERSECTION
• ROUNDABOUT AT ALYESKA HIGHWAY/GOLD AVENUE INTERSECTION
100' 0 100'



NOTICE:
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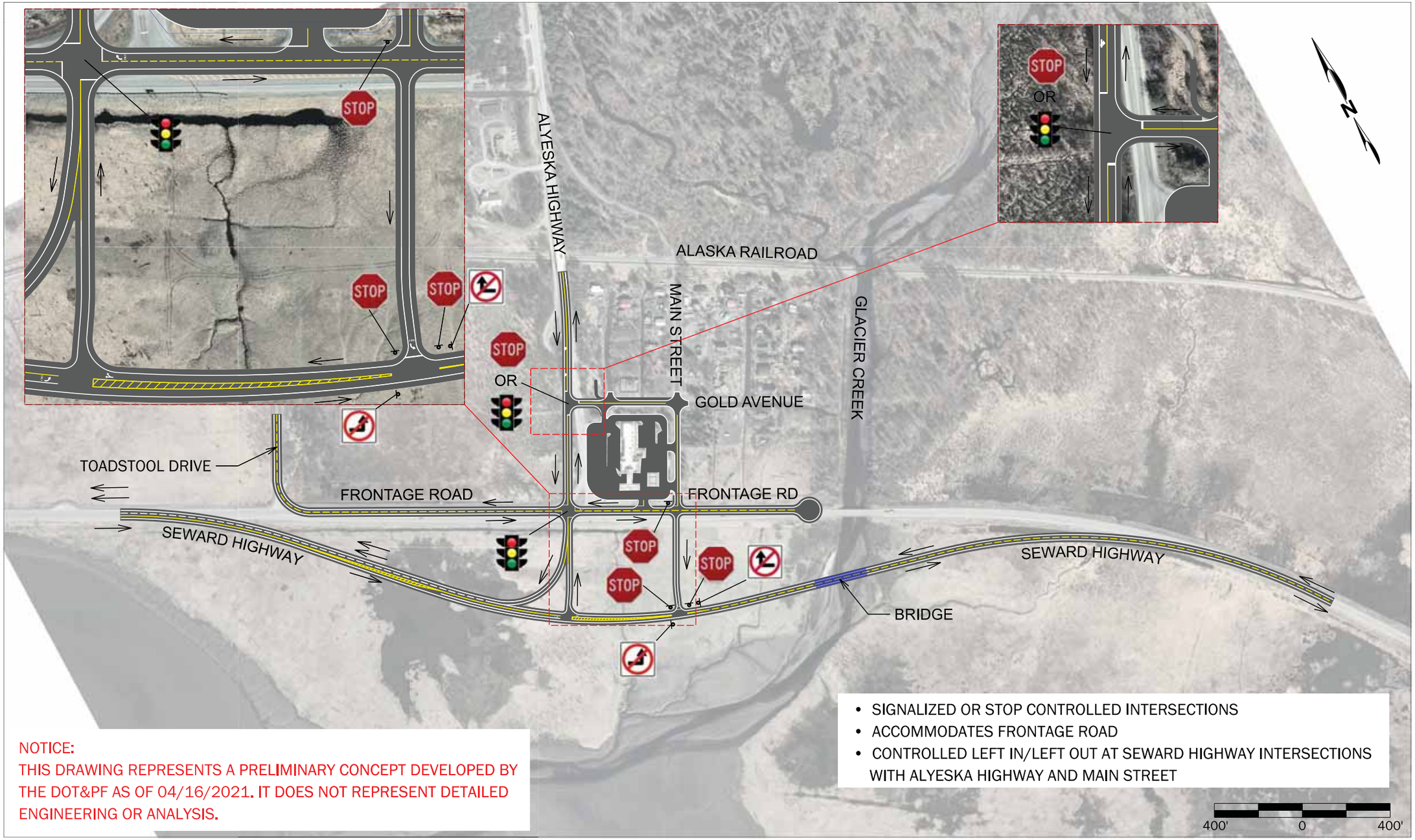
- BRIDGE OVER SEWARD HIGHWAY
- RETAINING WALLS ALONG BOTH SIDES OF SEWARD HIGHWAY OFF AND ON RAMPS
- SIGNAL AT SEWARD HIGHWAY RAMP/ALYESKA HIGHWAY INTERSECTION
- SIGNAL AT ALYESKA HIGHWAY/GOLD AVENUE INTERSECTION
- DOES NOT ACCOMMODATE FUTURE DIVIDED SEWARD HIGHWAY


STOP
OR
STOP
STOP
STOP
ALYESKA HIGHWAY
ALASKA RAILROAD
MAIN STREET
GLACIER CREEK
GOLD AVENUE
TOADSTOOL DRIVE
FRONTAGE ROAD
FRONTAGE RD
SEWARD HIGHWAY
SEWARD HIGHWAY
BRIDGE
N
NOTICE:
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• SIGNALIZED OR STOP CONTROLLED INTERSECTIONS
• ACCOMMODATES FRONTAGE ROAD
• CONTROLLED LEFT IN/LEFT OUT AT SEWARD HIGHWAY INTERSECTIONS WITH ALYESKA HIGHWAY AND MAIN STREET
400'
0
400'


OR
STOP
STOP
OR
ALYESKA HIGHWAY
ALASKA RAILROAD
MAIN STREET
GLACIER CREEK
TOADSTOOL DRIVE
GOLD AVENUE
EXISTING BRIDGE
SEWARD HIGHWAY
ON-RAMP
BRIDGE
OFF-RAMP
OFF-RAMP
ON-RAMP
BRIDGES
STOP
OR
N
NOTICE:
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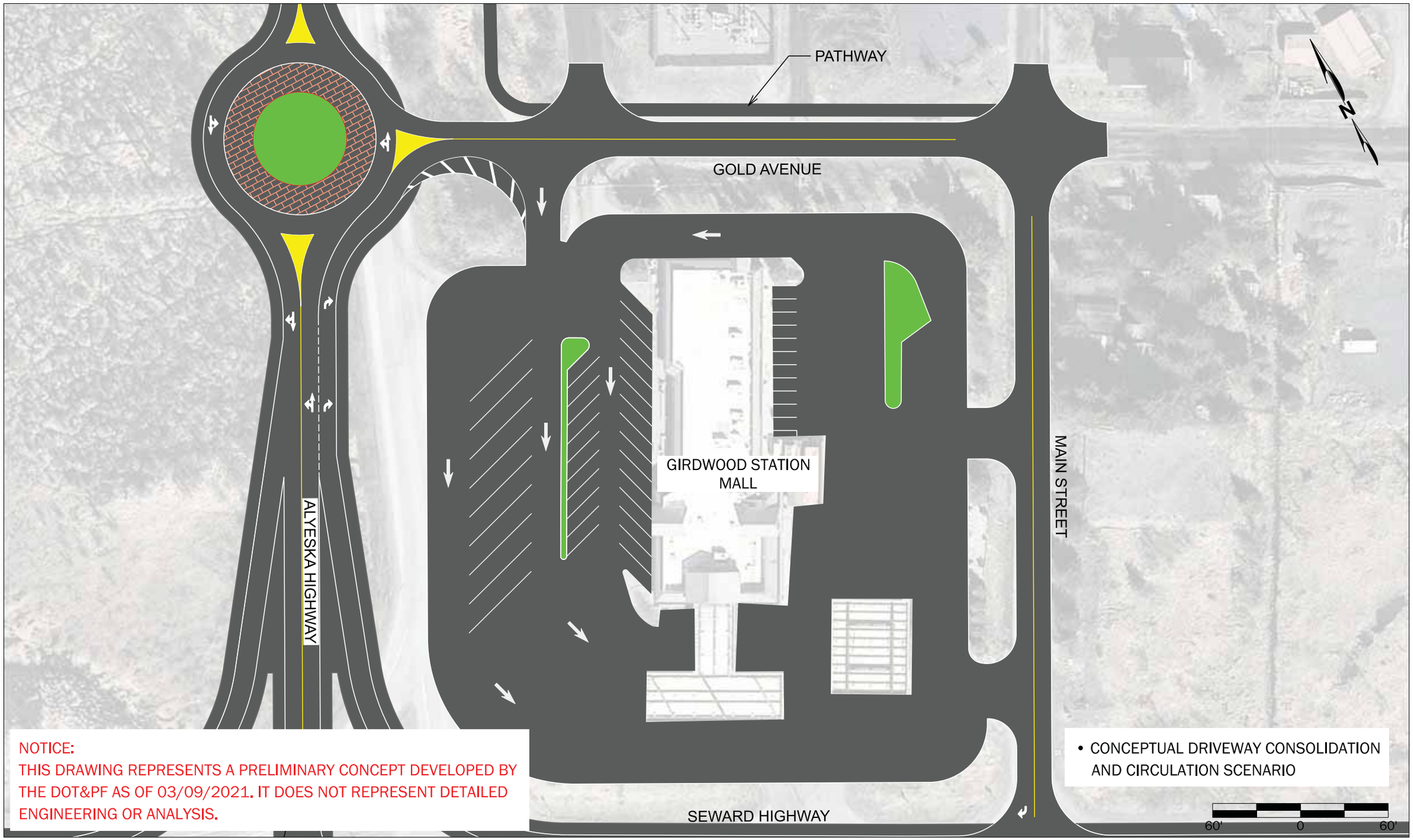
• SIGNALIZED OR STOP CONTROLLED INTERSECTIONS
• SEWARD HIGHWAY IS ELEVATED
• LARGEST APPARENT PROJECT FOOTPRINT
400'
0
400'


PATHWAY
GOLD AVENUE
GIRDWOOD STATION MALL
MAIN STREET
ALYESKA HIGHWAY
SEWARD HIGHWAY
N
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• CONCEPTUAL DRIVEWAY CONSOLIDATION AND CIRCULATION SCENARIO
60'
0
60'

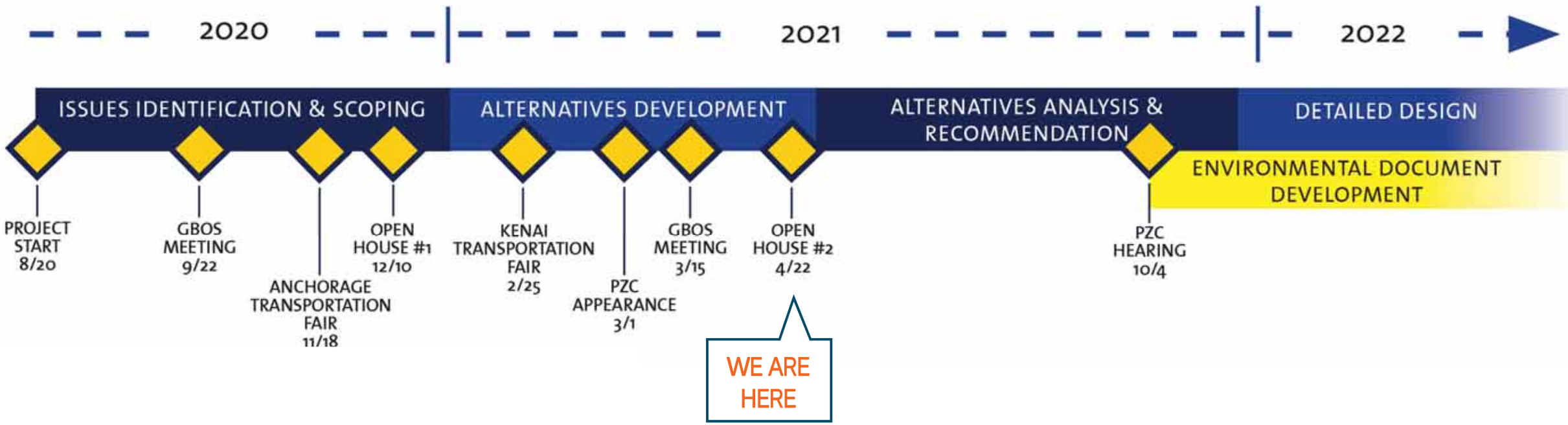
WHAT WE PROPOSE

CONCEPT ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION

CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT		
Turning Delay	Minimal	Low to Moderate	Significant
Seward Highway Delay	Minimal	Low to Moderate	Significant
Conflict Point Reduction	Very few conflicts	Fewer	Same as existing
Accommodates Non-Motorized Users	Separated crossing	Controlled crossing	No crossing
Construction - Phasing	Simple	Moderate	Complex
Construction - Duration	Short	Medium	Long
Construction Cost	Low	Medium	High
ROW Impacts	Low	Medium	High
Accommodates future divided highway	Simple	Moderate	Difficult
Truck Accommodation	High	Medium	Low
Maintenance Cost	Low	Medium	High
Project Footprint	Low	Medium	High
Viewshed	Maintains	Somewhat Limits	Limits
Resource Impacts	No/Minimal	Minor to Moderate	Substantial
Meets Purpose and Need	Yes	Somewhat	No

WHERE WE ARE GOING

PROJECT SCHEDULE



QUESTIONS & COMMENTS WELCOME

PROJECT WEBSITE:
www.sewardalyeskahwyintersection.com

CONTACT:

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vle@rmconsult.com

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907.269.0572
christina.huber@alaska.gov