



OPEN HOUSE #1

October 30, 2024

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Welcome to the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities' first open house for the AMATS: Fireweed Lane Rehabilitation project.

Project Team



DOT&PF

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Project Manager

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Project Engineer



MOA

Russell Oswald, PE
Project Manager

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Project Engineer



AMATS

Aaron Jongenelen
Transportation Planning Manager

Lounsbury & Associates

- Lead Consultant
- Project Management
- Civil Engineering
- Hydraulic Engineering

DOWL

- Traffic Engineering
- Public Involvement

Kittelson & Associates

- Non-motorized Transportation
- Traffic & Safety

This is a federally funded project and the DOT&PF is working in close coordination with the Municipality of Anchorage. The engineering consultant team is led by Lounsbury & Associates and includes DOWL and Kittelson & Associates.

Project Overview

- Rehabilitate Fireweed Lane from Spenard Road to the Seward Highway
- Improve safety for all users
- Bring the roadway and non-motorized facilities up to current design standards
- Improve business circulation and access



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This project proposes to rehabilitate Fireweed Lane from Spenard Road to the Seward Highway to improve safety and to bring the roadway and non-motorized facilities up to current design standards. The project team will analyze and design alternative roadway configurations to improve motorized and active transportation needs, as well as business circulation and access along the corridor.

Project Overview

Project Funded Through AMATS

- Project will follow federal aid funding constraints:
 - NEPA
 - Federal ROW process (Uniform Act)
 - AMATS Complete Streets Policy



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Federal funding for this project is coming through Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions, or AMATS, program. This means the project must follow federal aid funding constraints such as:

- The National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA;
- The Federal right-of-way process known as the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act, or the Uniform Act; and
- The AMATS Complete Streets Policy.

Project Overview

Road Ownership

- Jointly owned by DOT&PF and MOA



The MOA owns and maintains Fireweed Lane from Spenard Road to Arctic Boulevard. DOT&PF owns and maintains Fireweed Lane from Arctic Boulevard to the Seward Highway.

Project Overview

Road Ownership

- Post-Construction: MOA will assume ownership and maintenance
- Design will follow MOA standards

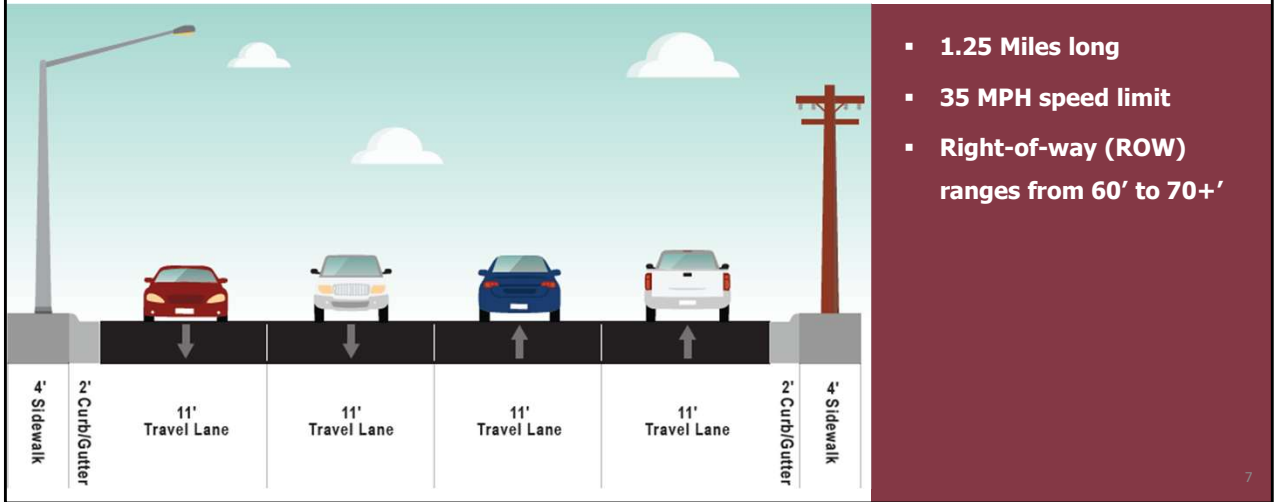


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It is anticipated that at the conclusion of this project, the MOA will assume full ownership and maintenance responsibilities for Fireweed Lane. As a result, the project team will follow MOA standards for design.

Existing Conditions

Fireweed Lane



This road is a 4-lane minor arterial with a speed limit of 35 miles per hour. Generally, there are four 11-foot vehicle lanes, two in each direction, 2 feet of curb and gutter, and 4-foot sidewalks. The existing right of way ranges from 60 to 70 feet. Fireweed Lane is one and a quarter miles long and is densely populated with three schools, residences, industrial, commercial, and retail businesses, and many restaurants.

Existing Conditions

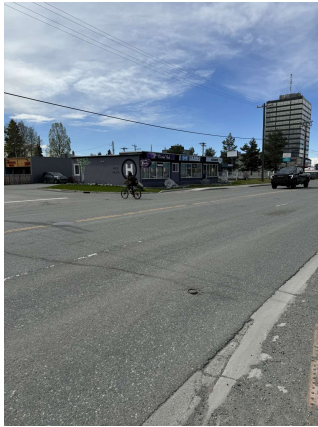
Dense driveways, narrow sidewalks, and utility pole conflicts



There are more than 100 driveways, narrow and aging sidewalks that are not ADA compliant, and utility pole conflicts throughout the corridor.

Existing Conditions

Wide/challenging non-motorized crossings



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Non-motorized crossings are wide and challenging.

Existing Conditions

Buildings and parking lots abutting the ROW



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And many buildings and parking lots abut the right-of-way.

Safety: 2013-2022

533 Crashes in Corridor

- 31% Injury crashes
- 85% Occurred at three signalized intersections
 - A Street
 - C Street
 - Seward Highway

11 Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes

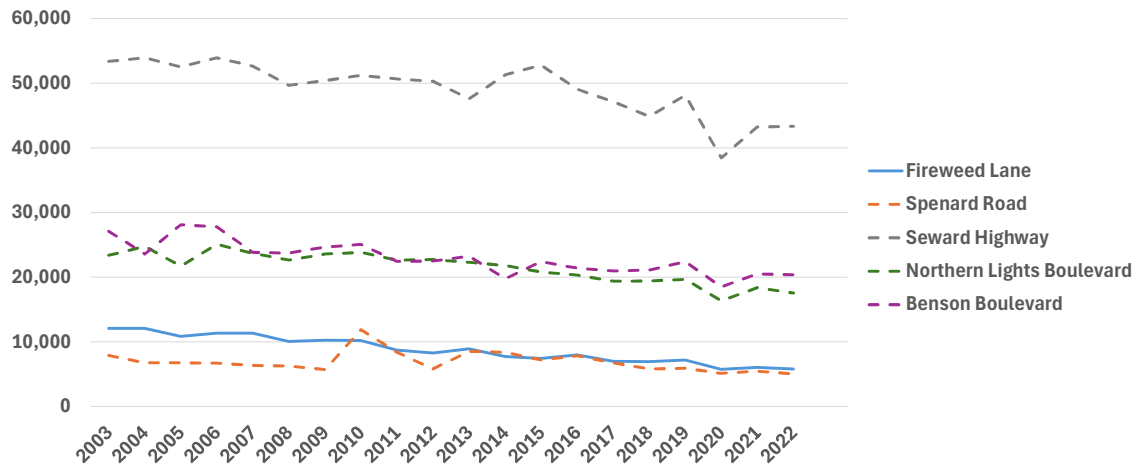
- A Street: 3
- Seward Highway: 2
- Spenard Road: 1
- Denali Street: 1
- C Street: 1
- Remainder occurred on segments of Fireweed Lane

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The project team is studying a ten-year record of crashes on the corridor to better understand where crashes occur so that improvements can be designed with an aim to improve safety. A specific emphasis has been placed on studying bicycle and pedestrian crashes and looking for ways to improve safety in the corridor for non-motorized users.

Historical Traffic Trends

20-Year Annual Average Daily Traffic

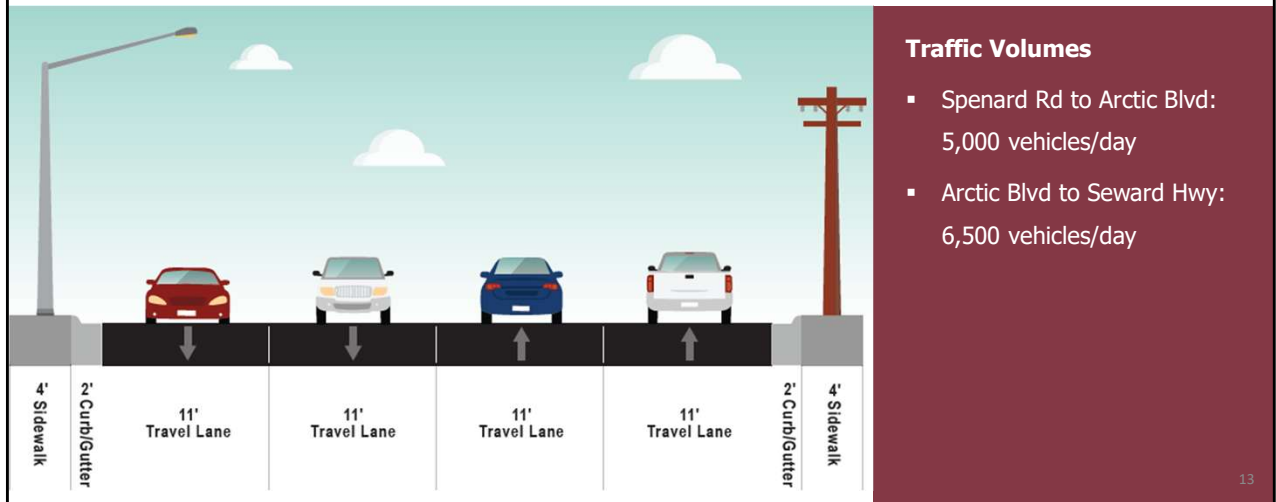


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Traffic volumes throughout the Anchorage Bowl have been dropping over the past twenty years. This includes on the Seward Highway, Spenard Road, Northern Lights Boulevard, Benson Boulevard, and Fireweed Lane.

Existing Conditions

Fireweed Lane



The average annual daily traffic on the segment between Spenard Road and Arctic Boulevard is about 5,000 vehicles per day. Between Arctic Boulevard and the Seward Highway, there are approximately 6,500 vehicles per day.

Project Overview

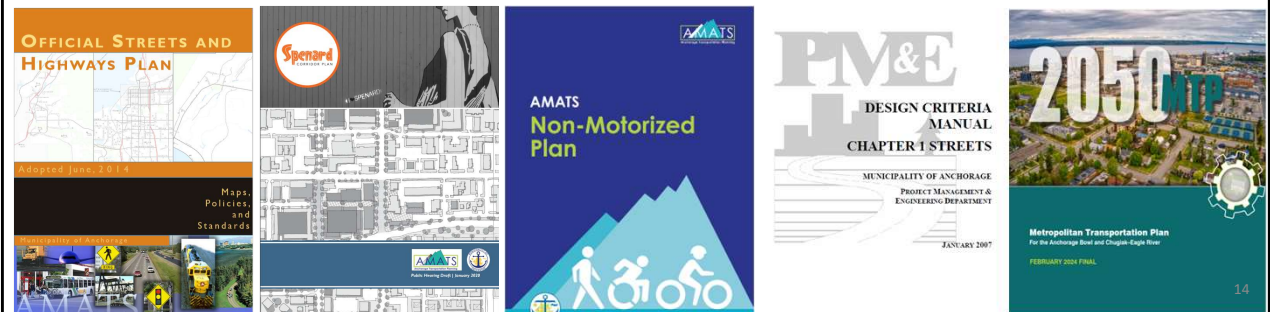
Guiding Documents

AMATS

- Complete Streets Policy
- Non-Motorized Plan
- 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Official Streets and Highways Plan

Other

- Spenard Corridor Plan
- MOA Design Criteria Manual



The project team is focused on designing improvements that balance the needs of all users while minimizing impacts to property owners. Guiding documents include the AMATS Complete Streets Policy and Non-Motorized Plan, the Spenard Corridor Plan, and the MOA Design Criteria Manual.

Public Involvement

What We've Heard

- Concerns about:
 - ROW impacts (especially to businesses)
 - Construction impacts
 - School access/crossings and school-related traffic
 - Lack of parking
 - Aging utilities (desire to underground)
 - Drainage issues
 - Snow removal
- Desire for improved non-motorized facilities and ADA-compliant sidewalks



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In the eight months since the project kicked off, we've:

- Presented to area community councils;
- Conducted an agency bike and walk audit;
- Participated in the Anchorage Transportation Fair; and
- Met with more than 40 property owners along the corridor.

We've heard a range of concerns about:

- Potential right-of-way and construction impacts to businesses;
- School-related traffic and access;
- Lack of parking; and
- Snow removal.

Comments include a desire for improved non-motorized facilities and ADA-compliant sidewalks and concerns that non-motorized users were being prioritized over business interests.

Some business owners said that more than half of their employees walk, bike, or scooter to work while other business owners noted that they rarely see non-motorized users in the corridor.

Alternatives Under Consideration

Considerations when selecting an alternative:

- Right-of-Way requirements and impacts to adjacent properties
- Safety concerns, corridor speeds, and crash rates
- Driveway and side-street spacing
- Accessibility improvements
- Non-motorized facilities
- Utility undergrounding and reconstruction

Three families of alternatives

- 4-Lane
- 3-Lane
- 2-Lane

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The NEPA process requires that early in the design, multiple alternatives are considered. That is the focus of this first public meeting. Building off of existing publicly adopted plans, the project team has started by evaluating three families of alternatives: 4-lane, 3-lane, and 2-lane.

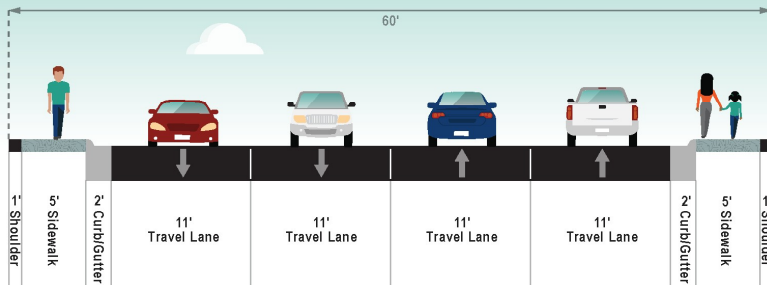
Considerations when selecting an alternative include:

- Right-of-way requirements and impacts to adjacent properties;
- Safety concerns, corridor speeds, and crash rates;
- Driveway and side-street spacing;
- Accessibility improvements;
- Non-motorized facilities; and
- Utility undergrounding and reconstruction.

There is probably not a perfect one-size fits all solution for this corridor and it's important to note that a combination of these configurations could be used for the project.

Alternative Options

4-Lane



PROS

- ✓ No impacts to existing ROW
- ✓ Extends life of infrastructure and reduces future maintenance
- ✓ More than enough capacity for current and future vehicle traffic
- ✓ Existing access to adjacent properties is maintained

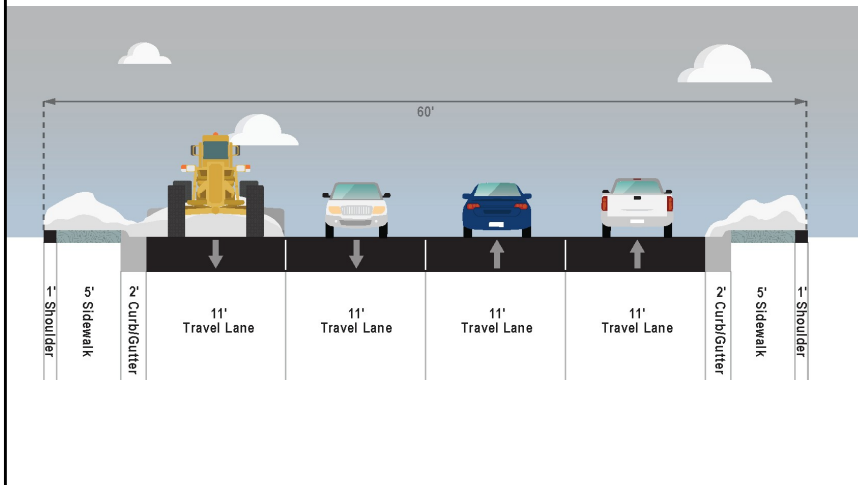
CONS

- ✗ Non-motorized users are not well-served
- ✗ No space for temporary snow storage
- ✗ More travel lanes than needed for current or future vehicle traffic
- ✗ Contributes to higher-than-expected angle crashes

The project team is evaluating one 4-lane option that replicates the existing condition. It includes slight improvements to the sidewalk, expanding it from 4 to 5 feet wide by converting a portion of the existing right-of-way shoulder into sidewalk. This alternative fits entirely within the existing 60-foot-wide right-of-way and has more than enough capacity for current and future vehicle traffic. This configuration does not serve non-motorized users well and it contributes to higher-than-expected angle crashes.

Alternative Options

4-Lane: With Temporary Snow Storage



PROS

- ✓ No impacts to existing ROW
- ✓ Extends life of infrastructure and reduces future maintenance
- ✓ More than enough capacity for current and future vehicle traffic
- ✓ Existing access to adjacent properties is maintained

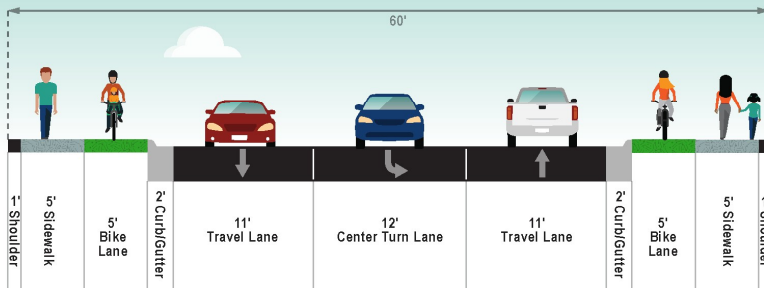
CONS

- ✗ Non-motorized users are not well-served
- ✗ No space for temporary snow storage
- ✗ More travel lanes than needed for current or future vehicle traffic
- ✗ Contributes to higher-than-expected angle crashes

In winter, the sidewalks would be used for temporary snow storage. This would eliminate safe and reliable routes for non-motorized users in winter.

Alternative Options

3-Lane Option 1



Source: AMATS Non-Motorized Plan

PROS

- ✓ Reallocation of space to serve all users
- ✓ Expected reduction in crash rates
- ✓ Expected reduced average speeds & right-angle crashes
- ✓ Fewer lanes for pedestrians to cross; opportunity for refuge islands
- ✓ Provides space for temporary snow storage in the bike lane
- ✓ Option fits within existing ROW

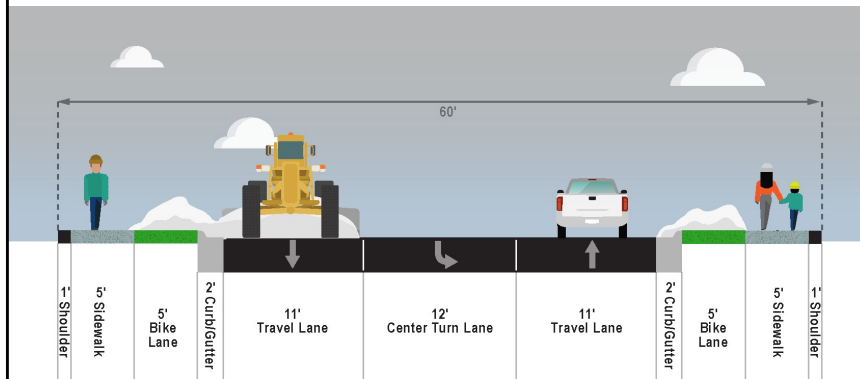
CONS

- ✗ Perception that traffic volumes are decreased, impacting businesses
- ✗ No space available for on-street bike lanes

The project is considering two 3-lane alternatives using a technique called a “road diet”. In this scenario, the roadway is converted from four through lanes to two through lanes with a continuous two way left-turn lane in the middle. A recent example of this is on Spenard Road between Hillcrest Drive and Benson Boulevard. Road diets are recognized as a way to reduce the average speed of traffic, rear end, and angle crashes without reducing the number of vehicles using the roadway. Three-lane roadways can accommodate annual average daily traffic of up to 20,000 vehicles, far exceeding the traffic volumes on Fireweed Lane now and in the future.

Alternative Options

3-Lane Option 1: With Temporary Snow Storage



PROS

- ✓ Reallocation of space to serve all users
- ✓ Expected reduction in crash rates
- ✓ Expected reduced average speeds & right-angle crashes
- ✓ Fewer lanes for pedestrians to cross; opportunity for refuge islands
- ✓ Provides space for temporary snow storage in the bike lane
- ✓ Option fits within existing ROW

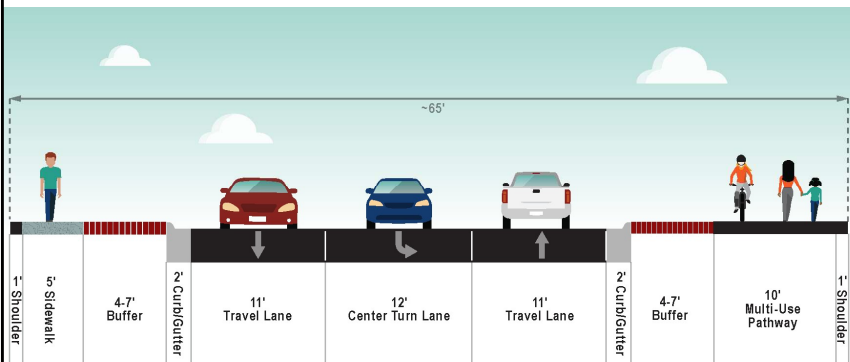
CONS

- ✗ Perception that traffic volumes are decreased, impacting businesses
- ✗ No space available for on-street bike lanes

Option 1 comes from the AMATS Non-Motorized Plan. It fits within the existing 60-foot right-of-way and accommodates non-motorized users with a 10-foot-wide space protected behind the curb. Access to properties is preserved by a dedicated turn lane. The turn lane can also be used for median refuge islands that shorten and simplify pedestrian crossings or to channelize traffic in specific areas that experience congestion. In winter, portions of the non-motorized space would be used for temporary snow storage, and the remainder would be preserved for non-motorized users.

Alternative Options

3-Lane Option 2



Source: MOA Design Criteria Manual

PROS

- ✓ Reallocation of space to serve all users
- ✓ Expected reduction in crash rates
- ✓ Expected reduced average speeds & right-angle crashes
- ✓ Fewer lanes for pedestrians to cross; opportunity for refuge islands
- ✓ Provides space for temporary snow storage in the buffer space
- ✓ Buffer space width can vary

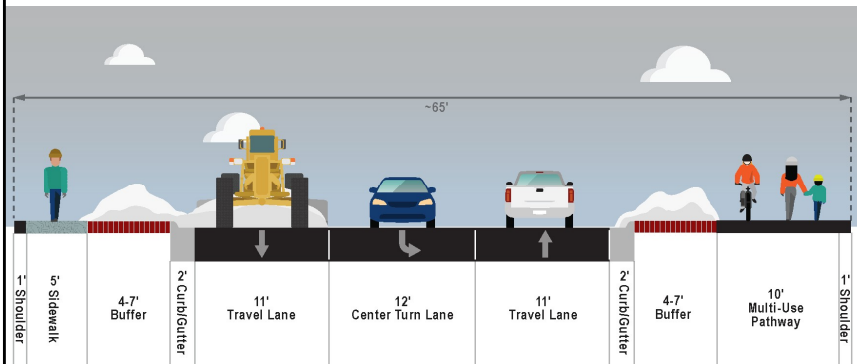
CONS

- ✗ Perception that traffic volumes are decreased, impacting businesses
- ✗ Option requires additional ROW
- ✗ Bike facilities are only provided on one side of the corridor

Option 2 comes from the MOA's Design Criteria Manual. It features a variable-width buffer space that can be expanded or reduced as the right-of-way width varies. This option would require a minimum of 63 feet of right of way and cyclists are only accommodated via a multi-use pathway on one side of the corridor.

Alternative Options

3-Lane Option 2: With Temporary Snow Storage



Source: MOA Design Criteria Manual

PROS

- ✓ Reallocation of space to serve all users
- ✓ Expected reduction in crash rates
- ✓ Expected reduced average speeds & right-angle crashes
- ✓ Fewer lanes for pedestrians to cross; opportunity for refuge islands
- ✓ Provides space for temporary snow storage in the buffer space
- ✓ Buffer space width can vary

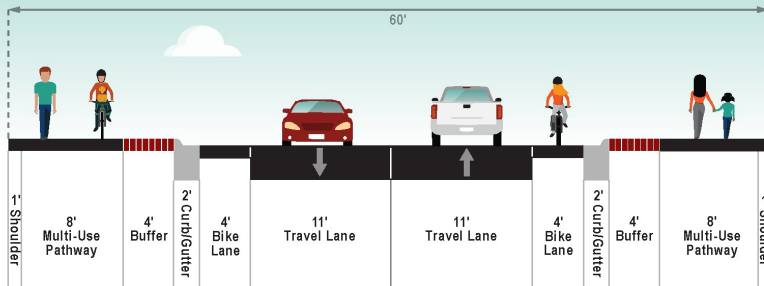
CONS

- × Perception that traffic volumes are decreased, impacting businesses
- × Option requires additional ROW
- × Bike facilities are only provided on one side of the corridor

In winter, the buffer would provide space to temporarily store snow while preserving sidewalk and multi-use pathway for non-motorized users.

Alternative Options

2-Lane Option 1



Source: Spenard Corridor Plan

PROS

- ✓ Space is available for on-street bike lanes on both sides
- ✓ Additional space available for buffer/temporary snow storage
- ✓ Option fits within existing ROW

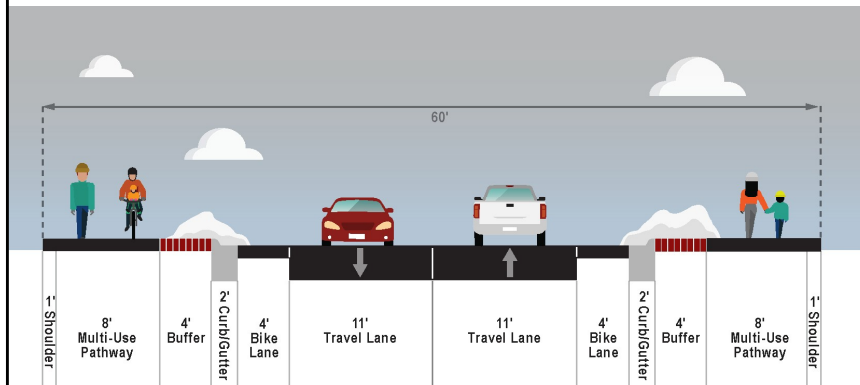
CONS

- ✗ Does not address congestion around schools during peak periods
- ✗ Pedestrians must cross two lanes at once with no refuge islands
- ✗ No storage for vehicles waiting to turn left, concern about queues blocking driveways and intersections
- ✗ Strong opposition from business community

The final family of typical sections under consideration feature two travel lanes. These 2-lane alternatives come from the Spenard Road Corridor Plan, which recommended converting the segment of Fireweed Lane from Spenard Road to Arctic Boulevard to two lanes. The project team is considering these alternatives, or a combination of alternatives for the entire corridor. Option 1 converts two roadway lanes into pedestrian and bicycle elements and buffer space. Here, cyclists have a dedicated on-street bike lane as well as a pedestrian and cyclist-friendly multi-use pathway separated from traffic by a buffer space.

Alternative Options

2-Lane Option 1: With Temporary Snow Storage



Source: Spenard Corridor Plan

PROS

- ✓ Space is available for on-street bike lanes on both sides
- ✓ Additional space available for buffer/temporary snow storage
- ✓ Option fits within existing ROW

CONS

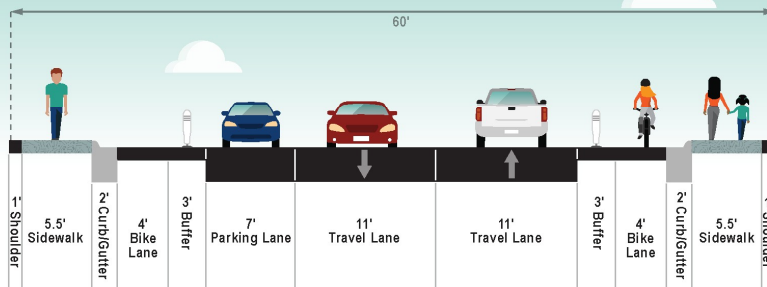
- ✗ Does not address congestion around schools during peak periods
- ✗ Pedestrians must cross two lanes at once with no refuge islands
- ✗ No storage for vehicles waiting to turn left, concern about queues blocking driveways and intersections
- ✗ Strong opposition from business community

In winter, the 4-foot buffer would provide space for temporary snow storage. Traffic is accommodated by two through lanes, but the lack of dedicated turn lanes means that a 2-lane option may not work in highly congested areas such as the Steller/NorthStar school zone or at the approach to the Seward Highway.

For pedestrians, crossing the roadway can be challenging. They must cross two lanes and two directions of traffic at once and there is not space for pedestrian refuge islands.

Alternative Options

2-Lane Option 2



Source: Spenard Corridor Plan

PROS

- ✓ Space is available for seasonal on-street bike lanes on both sides
- ✓ Some on-street parking is provided
- ✓ Additional space available for buffer/temporary snow storage
- ✓ Option fits within existing ROW

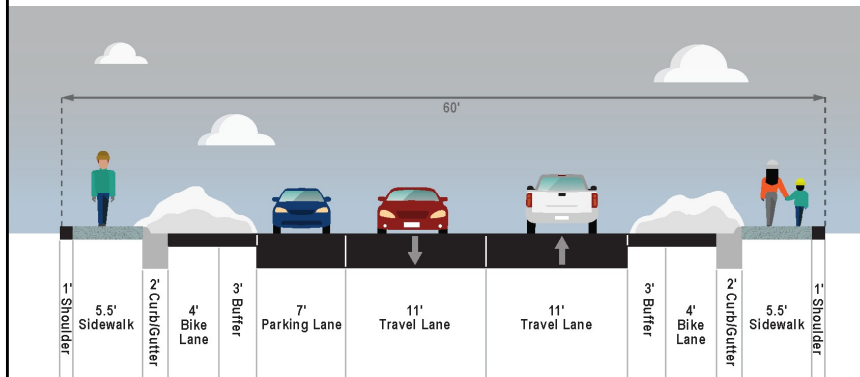
CONS

- ✗ On-street parking is difficult to plow and maintain
- ✗ Does not address congestion around schools during peak periods
- ✗ Pedestrians must cross two lanes at once
- ✗ No storage for vehicles waiting to turn left, concern about queues blocking driveways and intersections
- ✗ Strong opposition from business community

Option 2 features dedicated on-street parking on one side of the road. This may provide a benefit to adjacent properties that have limited parking. In summer, cyclists are accommodated via a buffered bike lane, and pedestrians have a 5.5-foot sidewalk on either side of the road.

Alternative Options

2-Lane Option 2: With Temporary Snow Storage



Source: Spenard Corridor Plan

PROS

- ✓ Space is available for seasonal on-street bike lanes on both sides
- ✓ Some on-street parking is provided
- ✓ Additional space available for buffer/temporary snow storage
- ✓ Option fits within existing ROW

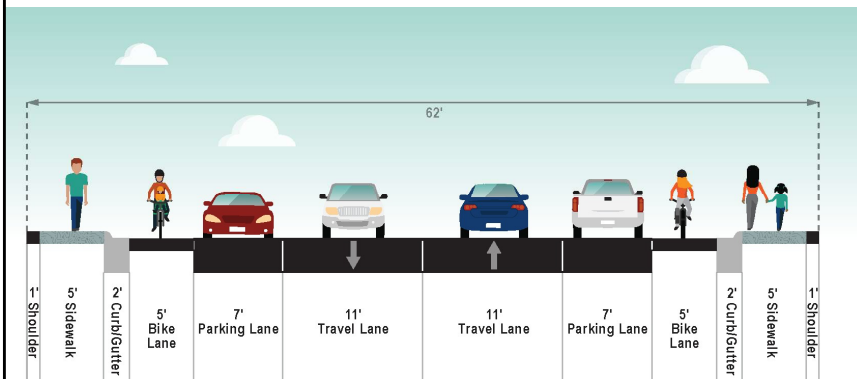
CONS

- ✗ On-street parking is difficult to plow and maintain
- ✗ Does not address congestion around schools during peak periods
- ✗ Pedestrians must cross two lanes at once
- ✗ No storage for vehicles waiting to turn left, concern about queues blocking driveways and intersections
- ✗ Strong opposition from business community

In winter, protective barriers in the buffer area would be removed and that space would be used for snow storage. On-street parking can complicate snow removal and would likely require nighttime parking closures so plows can clear the road and parking lane. This would reduce the flexibility of maintenance crews to clear the road.

Alternative Options

2-Lane Option 3



Source: Spenard Corridor Plan

PROS

- ✓ Space is available for on-street parking on both sides
- ✓ Additional space available for on-street bike lanes on both sides

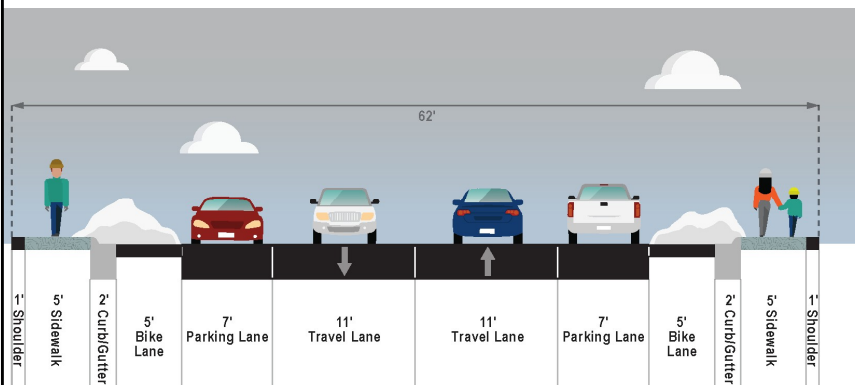
CONS

- ✗ On-street parking is difficult to plow and maintain
- ✗ Does not address congestion around schools during peak periods
- ✗ Pedestrians must cross two lanes at once
- ✗ No storage for vehicles waiting to turn left
- ✗ Strong opposition from business community
- ✗ Option requires ROW

Option 3 features on street parking on both sides of the roadway and a 5-foot bike lane. This option provides an enhanced benefit to business that have limited parking and separates bicyclists from the vehicle travel lanes.

Alternative Options

2-Lane Option 3: With Temporary Snow Storage



Source: Spenard Corridor Plan

PROS

- ✓ Space is available for on-street parking on both sides
- ✓ Additional space available for on-street bike lanes on both sides

CONS

- ✗ On-street parking is difficult to plow and maintain
- ✗ Does not address congestion around schools during peak periods
- ✗ Pedestrians must cross two lanes at once
- ✗ No storage for vehicles waiting to turn left
- ✗ Strong opposition from business community
- ✗ Option requires ROW

In winter, the bike lane would be used for temporary snow storage. Like option 2, on-street parking would complicate snow removal and likely reduce the flexibility of maintenance crews to clear the road. This option would require 62 feet of right-of-way.

Intersection Alternatives

Examine Five Intersections Along Corridor:

- Arctic Boulevard
- Denali Street
- A Street
- C Street
- Seward Highway

Evaluate Ways To:

- Improve safety
- Reduce maintenance costs
- Simplify non-motorized user crossings

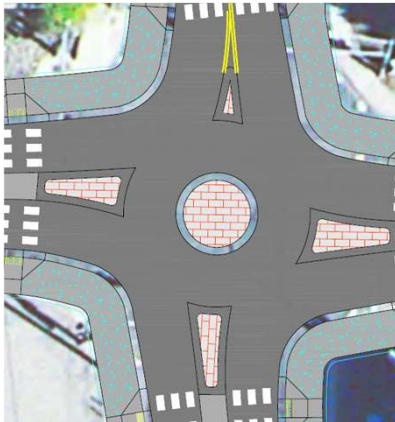
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The project team has been asked to look at five specific intersections along the corridor to evaluate ways to improve safety, reduce maintenance costs, and simplify non-motorized user crossings.

Intersection Alternatives

Single Lane Mini Roundabouts

Arctic Boulevard



Denali Street



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Single-lane mini roundabouts are being considered at Arctic Boulevard and Denali Street.

Intersection Alternatives

Single Lane Mini Roundabouts

Arctic Boulevard



Denali Street



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These roundabouts can be used to reduce crash rates at intersections and calm traffic by reducing speed. They also have reduced long term maintenance costs when compared to a signalized intersection.

Intersection Alternatives

New Lane Configurations

- Remove dedicated right turn lanes onto Fireweed Lane from A Street and C Street
- Shorten pedestrian crossing distances and simplify crossings



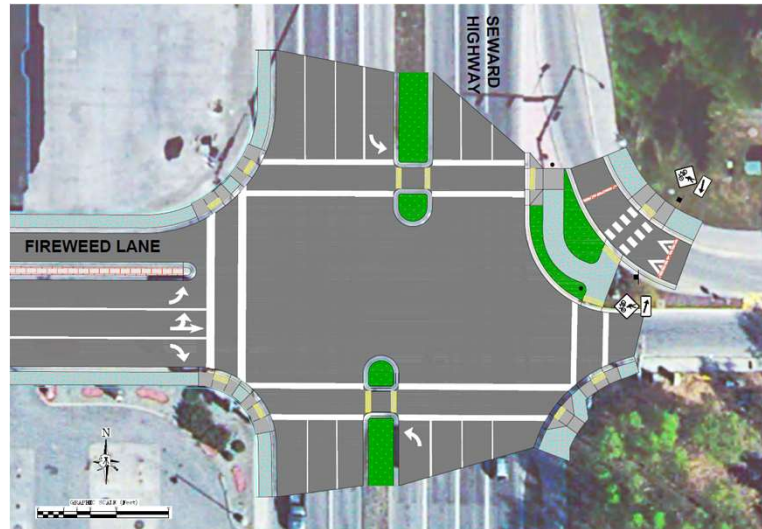
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The project team is also looking at removing the dedicated right-turn lanes on A Street and C Street. This would shorten and simplify pedestrian crossings at these locations.

Intersection Alternatives

Seward Highway Pedestrian Improvements

- Add a pedestrian crosswalk on the north side of the intersection
- Simplify the crossing on the east side



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Improvements at the Seward Highway could include a pedestrian crosswalk on the north side of the intersection and changes to simplify and enhance the existing crossing on the east side of the intersection.

Schedule & Next Steps



The project team will continue to refine the design with a goal towards balancing motorized and non-motorized needs, business and property access, and minimizing impacts to property owners. Public outreach and input is an important component of this project. The project team will continue to provide regular updates to stakeholders. Next steps include incorporating public feedback from the open house, determining a preferred alternative, and submitting an alternatives analysis to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Final design and right-of-way acquisitions would likely occur between 2025 and 2028, and construction would start sometime after 2028, pending funding availability.

We Need Your Feedback!

- Which alternative(s) do you prefer?
- Why?

fireweedlane@dowl.com

www.fireweedlane.com

Your feedback will be considered as the project team continues to evaluate the alternatives.



Tell us what you think about the 2, 3, and 4-lane options for the corridor. Your feedback will be considered as the project team continues to refine the design.



THANK YOU

Questions or comments?

 fireweedlane@dowl.com

 www.fireweedlane.com

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That concludes our presentation. Stay informed by visiting www.FireweedLane.com. Submit questions and comments via email at FireweedLane@DOWL.com or by using the comment form on the project website. Thank you.