

# PARKS HIGHWAY

## Alternative Corridor PEL Study

# STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MEETING #1



March 10, 2022

# STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE INTRODUCTIONS

We have invited representatives from:

- State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
- Access Alaska
- Alaska Travel Industry Association
- Alaska Trucking Association
- Big Lake Community Council
- Cook Inlet Region, Inc.
- Gateway Community Council
- Iditarod Trails Committee
- Knik'atnu Inc.
- Knik-Fairview Community Council
- Knik Tribal Council
- MSB School District
- Meadow Lakes Community Council
- SCF Bentah Nuutah Valley Native Primary Care
- Valley Transit
- Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc.
- Wasilla Chamber of Commerce

# AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions
- Committee Charter
- Project Introduction
- PEL Process
- Project Area and Existing Conditions
- Purpose and Need Statement
  - Breakout Rooms
  - Feedback/Group Discussion
- Wrap up and Next Steps



# COMMITTEE CHARTER



# PEL PROCESS, PROJECT AREA, SCHEDULE

# PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES (PEL) PROCESS

Planning and Environmental Linkages is a collaborative and integrated approach to transportation decision-making that:

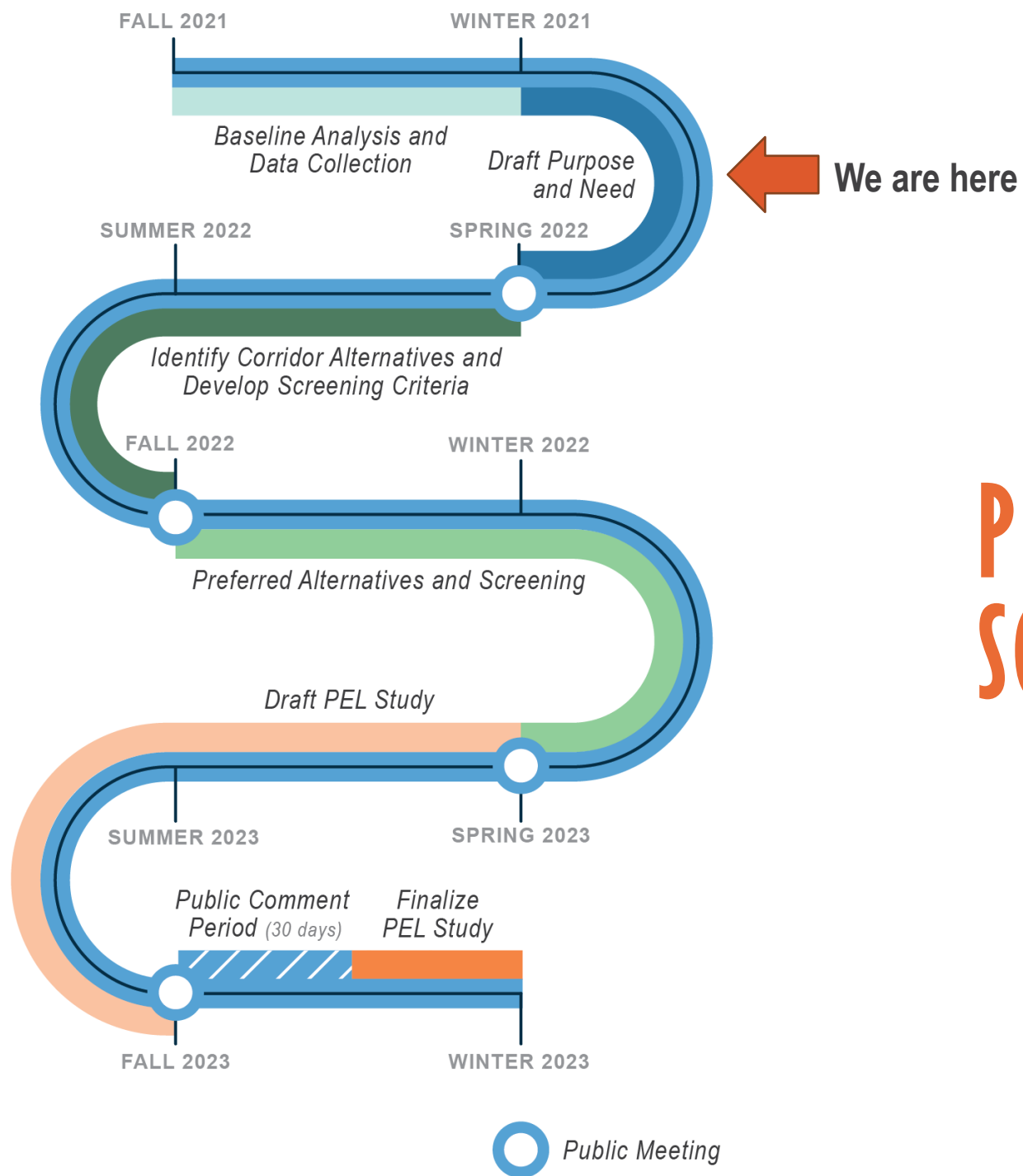
1. Considers environmental, community, and economic goals early in the transportation planning process
2. Uses the information, analysis, and products during planning to inform the environmental review process

*The PEL process can ease the path as transportation programs and projects move from planning to design and implementation*

# PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES (PEL) PROCESS

The benefits of stronger linkages between transportation planning and NEPA/project development processes can include:

- Improved project delivery timelines
- Stronger agency and public relationships
- Earlier identification of key environmental resources
- Better funding and project development information for programming funds
- Build project with better outcomes
- Flexible approach that allows more holistic development of transportation improvement strategies



# PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE





HOUSTON

WASILLA

PALMER-WASILLA HIGHWAY

PARKS HIGHWAY

BIG LAKE ROAD

P R O J E C T A R E A

KNIK-GOOSE BAY ROAD

PALMER SLOUGH

K N I K A R M

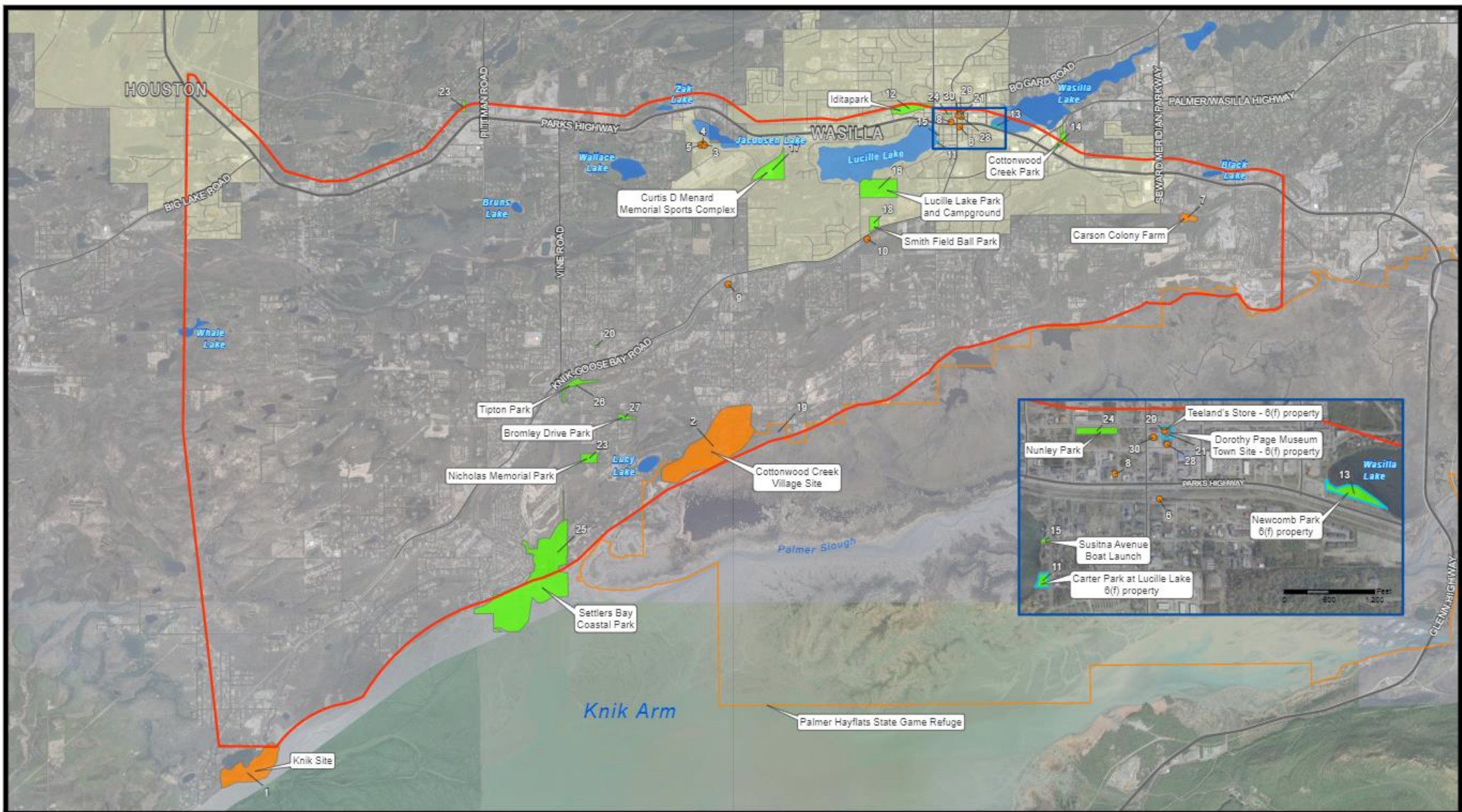
GLENN HIGHWAY





# **BASELINE DATA / EXISTING CONDITIONS**

# SECTION 4(F) & 6(F) RESOURCES



▬ Probable Limit of Alternatives   
 ▬ City Boundary (MSB)   
 ■ Section 4(f) Property Type   
  Section 6(f) Property

● Historic Site   
 ■ Park   
  Refuge

\* AHRs data are confidential and not for public distribution

### SECTION 4(F) AND 6(F) PROPERTIES

SEC 1 - 11, 16 - 19, T 16N, R 2W; SEC 1-2, 13, 24 T 16N, R 3W  
 SEC 7, 17 - 20, T 17N, R 1E; SEC 6-24, 26-32 T 17N, R 1W  
 SEC 1, 7-36, T 17N, R 2W; SEC 1, 12-13, 23-26, 35-36, T 17N, R 3W

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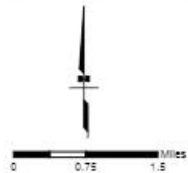
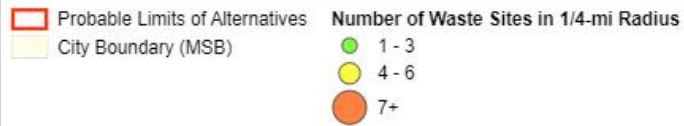
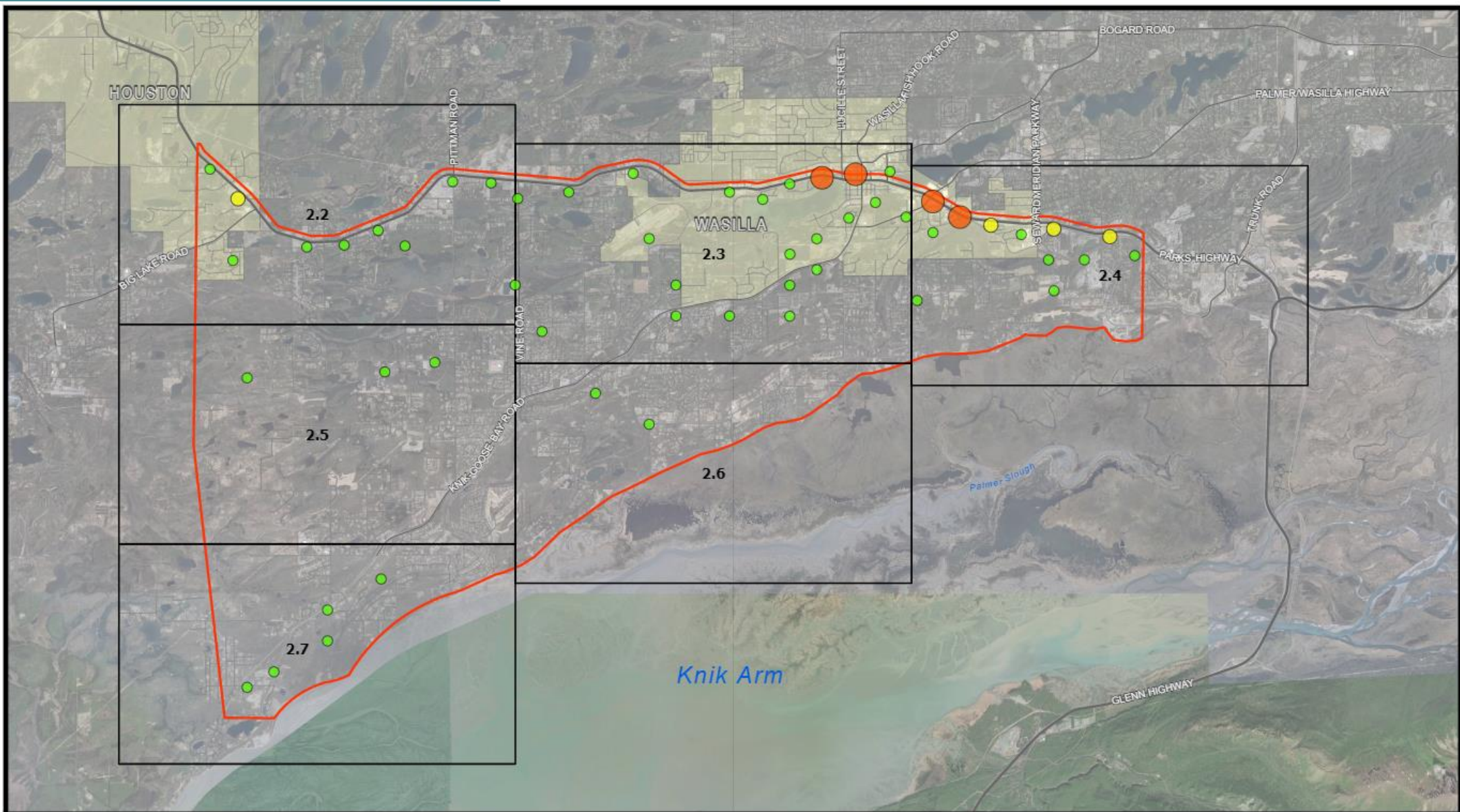
**STATE OF ALASKA**  
 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
 AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

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 PARKS HIGHWAY ALTERNATIVE CORRIDOR PEL STUDY

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH, ALASKA

NOVEMBER 09, 2021      FIGURE 4

# CONTAMINATED SITES



**NUMBER OF REGULATED HAZARDOUS SITES & NON-REGULATED WASTE SITES**

SEC 1 - 11, 16 - 19, T 16N, R 2W; SEC 1-2, 13, 24 T 16N, R 3W  
 SEC 7, 17 - 20, T 17N, R 1E; SEC 6-24, 26-32 T 17N, R 1W  
 SEC 1, 7-36, T 17N, R 2W; SEC 1, 12-13, 23-26, 35-36, T 17N, R 3W

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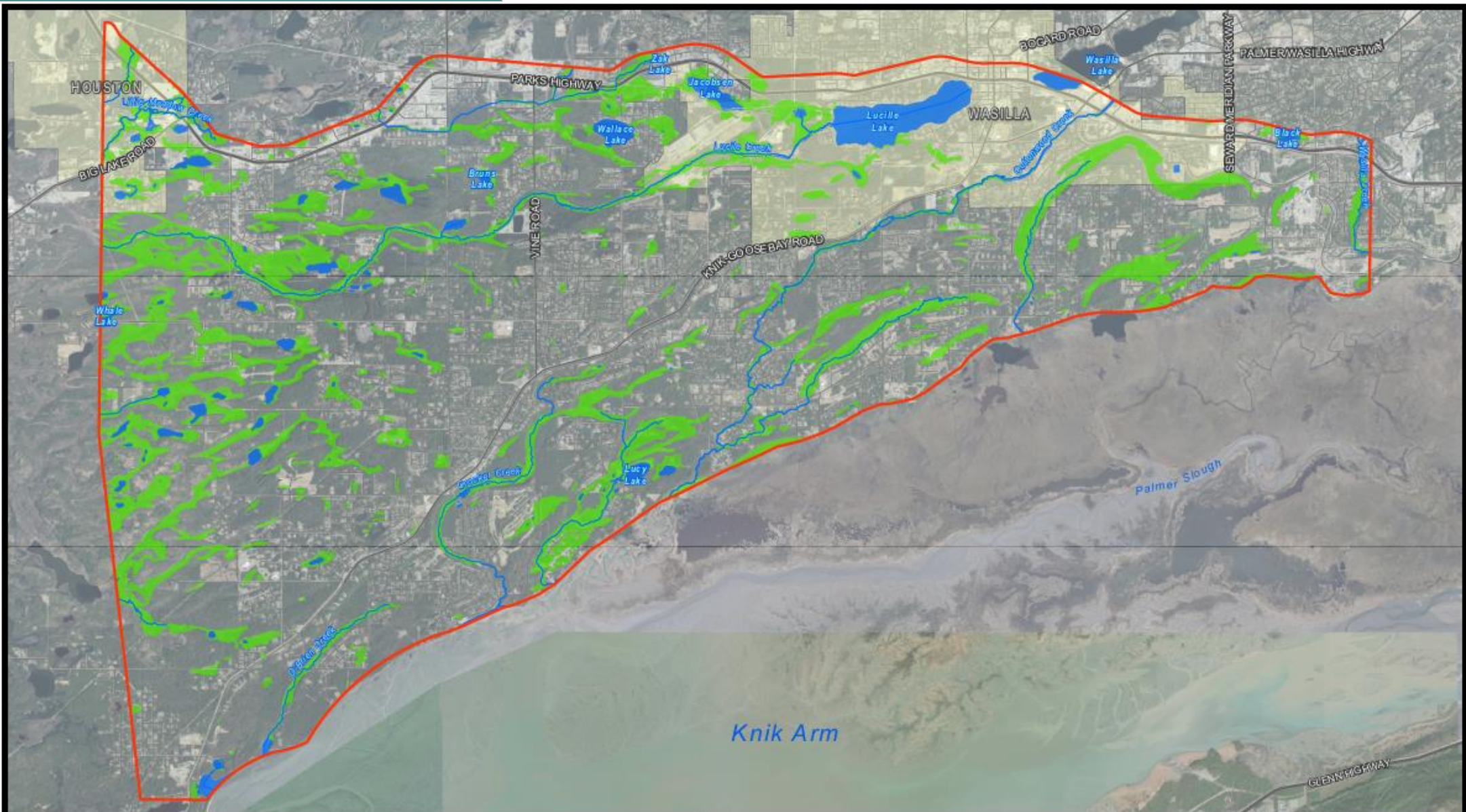
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NOVEMBER 08, 2021	FIGURE 2.1
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# WETLANDS



- Probable Limits of Alternatives
- City Boundary (MSB)
- Waterbodies and Waterways
- Wetland



**WETLAND MAPPING**

SEC 1 - 11, 16 - 19, T 16N, R 2W; SEC 1-2, 13, 24 T 16N, R 3W  
 SEC 7, 17 - 20, T 17N, R 1E; SEC 6-24, 26-32 T 17N, R 1W  
 SEC 1, 7-36, T 17N, R 2W; SEC 1, 12-13, 23-26, 35-36, T 17N, R 3W

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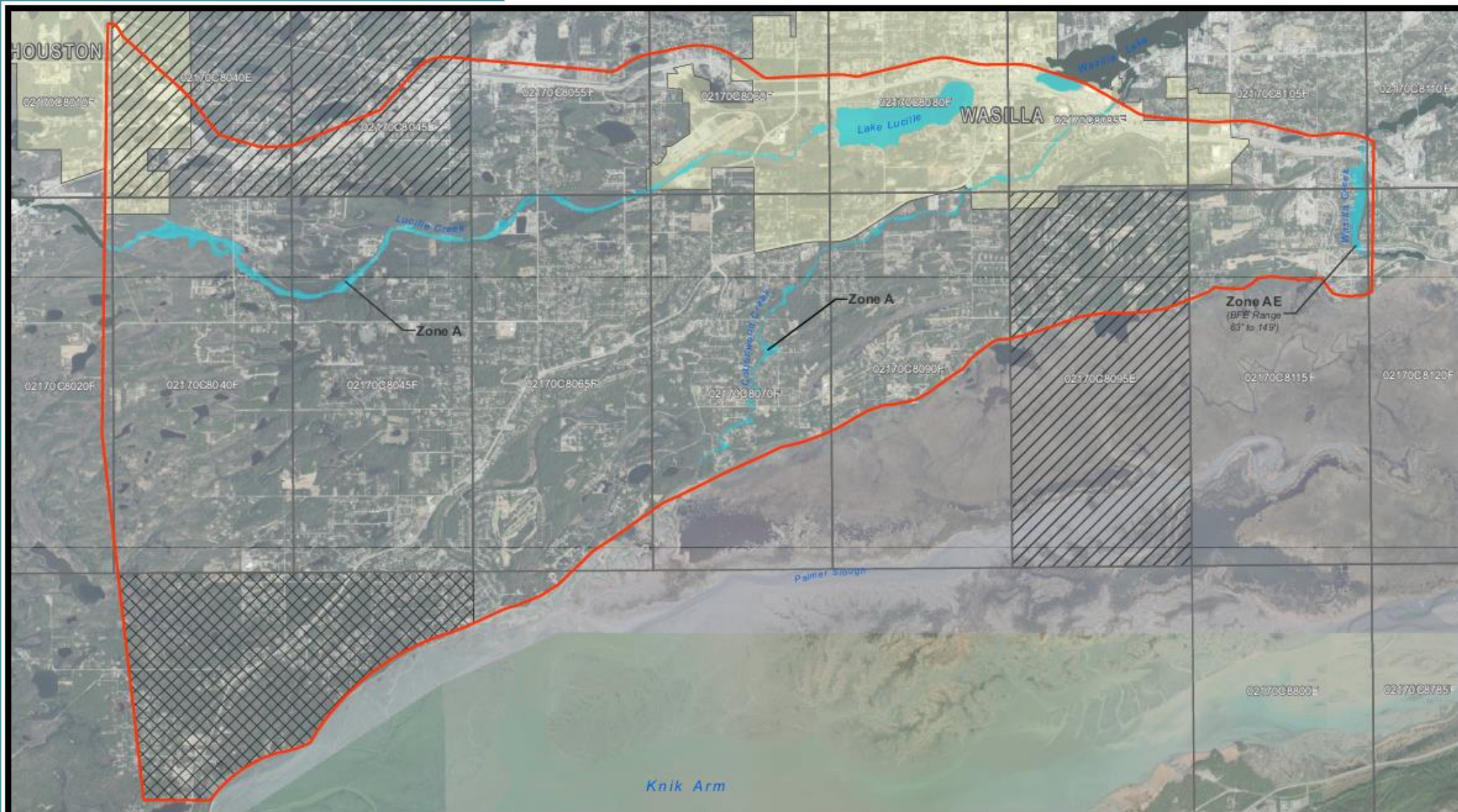
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MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH, ALASKA

FEBRUARY 02, 2022

Note: Wetland mapping is a compilation of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory and Cook Inlet wetland mapping. Boundaries have been modified based on aerial interpretation (i.e., roads, buildings). Boundaries shown are for planning purposes. Mapped wetlands, waterbodies, and waterways may be jurisdictional under the Clean Water Act per 33 CFR 328.3

# FLOODPLAINS



Probable Limits of Alternatives	<b>Flood Hazard Zones (FEMA)</b>
City Boundary (MSB)	Zone A (without Base Flood Elevation)
	Zone AE (with BFE or Depth)
	Flood Zone Outside Project Area
	FIRM Panel Not Printed (No Special Flood Hazard Areas)
	Area Outside Flood Insurance Study
	FIRM Panel

**FLOODPLAIN MAP**

SEC 1 - 11, 16 - 19, T 16N, R 2W; SEC 1-2, 13, 24 T 16N, R 3W  
 SEC 7, 17 - 20, T 17N, R 1E; SEC 6-24, 26-32 T 17N, R 1W  
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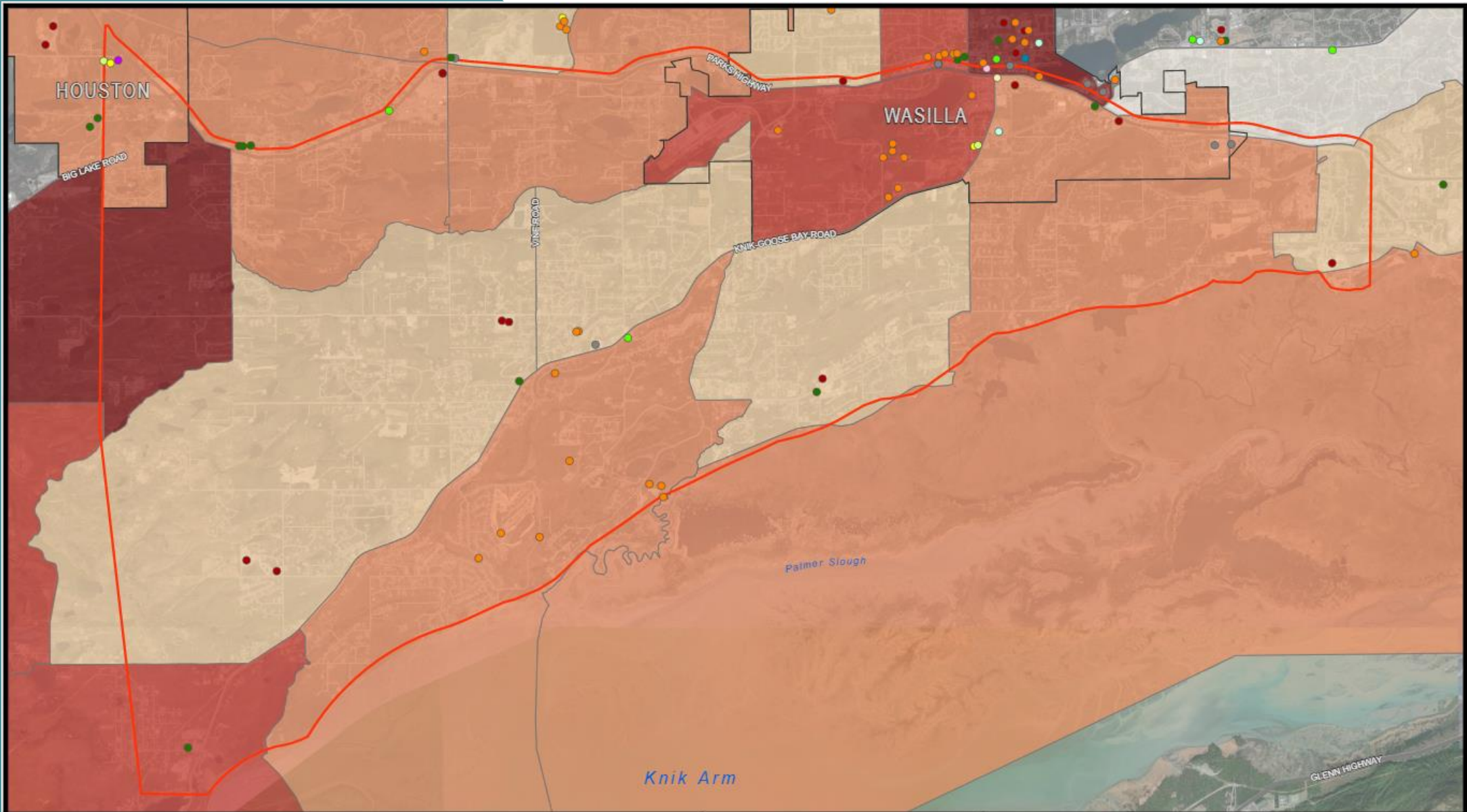
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MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH, ALASKA

FEBRUARY 11, 2022	FIGURE 2
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# DEMOGRAPHICS (EJ POPULATIONS)

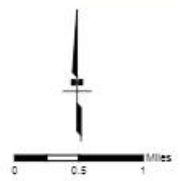


- Probable Limits of Alternatives
- City Boundary (MSB)
- US Census Block Group

- Grocery Store
- City Hall
- Community Center
- Library
- Medical
- Post Office
- Public Safety
- Senior Comm Center
- Senior Housing
- Train Depot
- Recreational
- School

- Average Pop. % Disabled, Elderly, Low Income, and POC\***
- 13 - 15%
  - 15 - 17%
  - 17 - 21%
  - 21 - 24%
  - 24 - 27%

\* Population represented by US Census Block Groups



## SOCIAL GROUPS: DEMOGRAPHIC MAP

SEC 1 - 11, 16 - 19, T 16N, R 2W; SEC 1-2, 13, 24 T 16N, R 3W  
 SEC 7, 17 - 20, T 17N, R 1E; SEC 6-24, 26-32 T 17N, R 1W  
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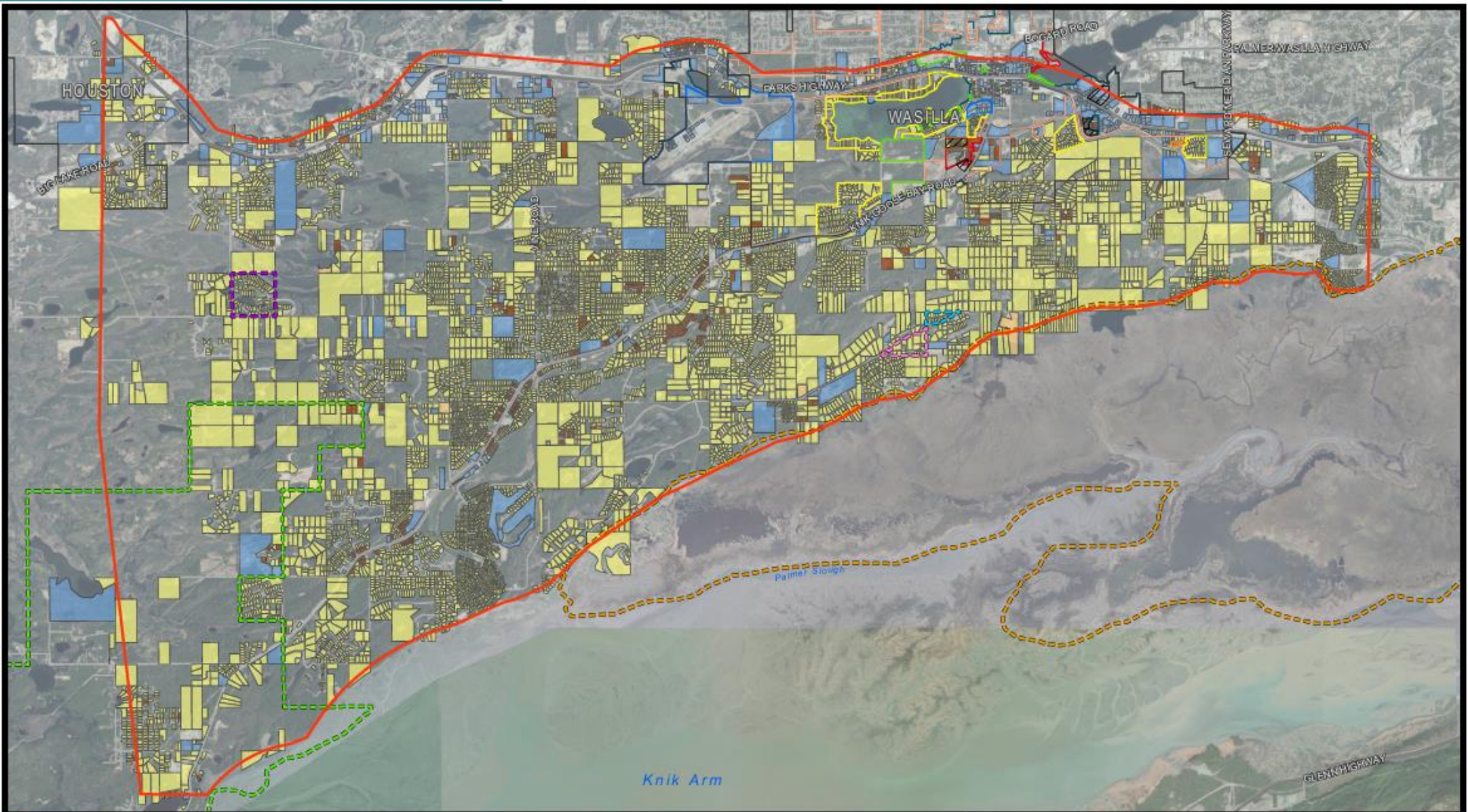
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NOVEMBER 08, 2021

FIGURE 2

# ZONING AND LAND USE



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Probable Limits of Alternatives</li> <li>City Boundary (MSB)</li> </ul>	<b>City of Wasilla Zoning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned Unit Development</li> <li>I_Industrial</li> <li>P_Public</li> <li>R1_Single Family Residential</li> <li>R2_Residential</li> <li>RM_Multi-family Residential</li> <li>RR_Rural Residential</li> <li>C_Commercial</li> </ul>	<b>Land Use (MSB)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial</li> <li>Condominium</li> <li>Duplex</li> <li>Low-Income Housing</li> <li>Tax Credit</li> <li>Multi-family</li> <li>Residential</li> </ul>	<b>Special Use Districts (MSB)*</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dawn Lake Estates No 1</li> <li>Fairview Estates Addition #1 Block 2 Lot 1 thru 22</li> <li>Hay Flats Recreation Area</li> <li>Jack Fish Landing Subdivision</li> <li>Knik Sled Dog and Recreation</li> </ul> <p><small>*Special use districts subject to regulations in Matanuska-Susitna Borough Code Title 17</small></p>
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**SOCIAL GROUPS:  
ZONING AND LAND USE MAP**

SEC 1 - 11, 16 - 19, T 16N, R 2W; SEC 1-2, 13, 24 T 16N, R 3W  
SEC 7, 17 - 20, T 17N, R 1E; SEC 6-24, 26-32 T 17N, R 1W  
SEC 1, 7-36, T 17N, R 2W; SEC 1, 12-13, 23-26, 35-36, T 17N, R 3W

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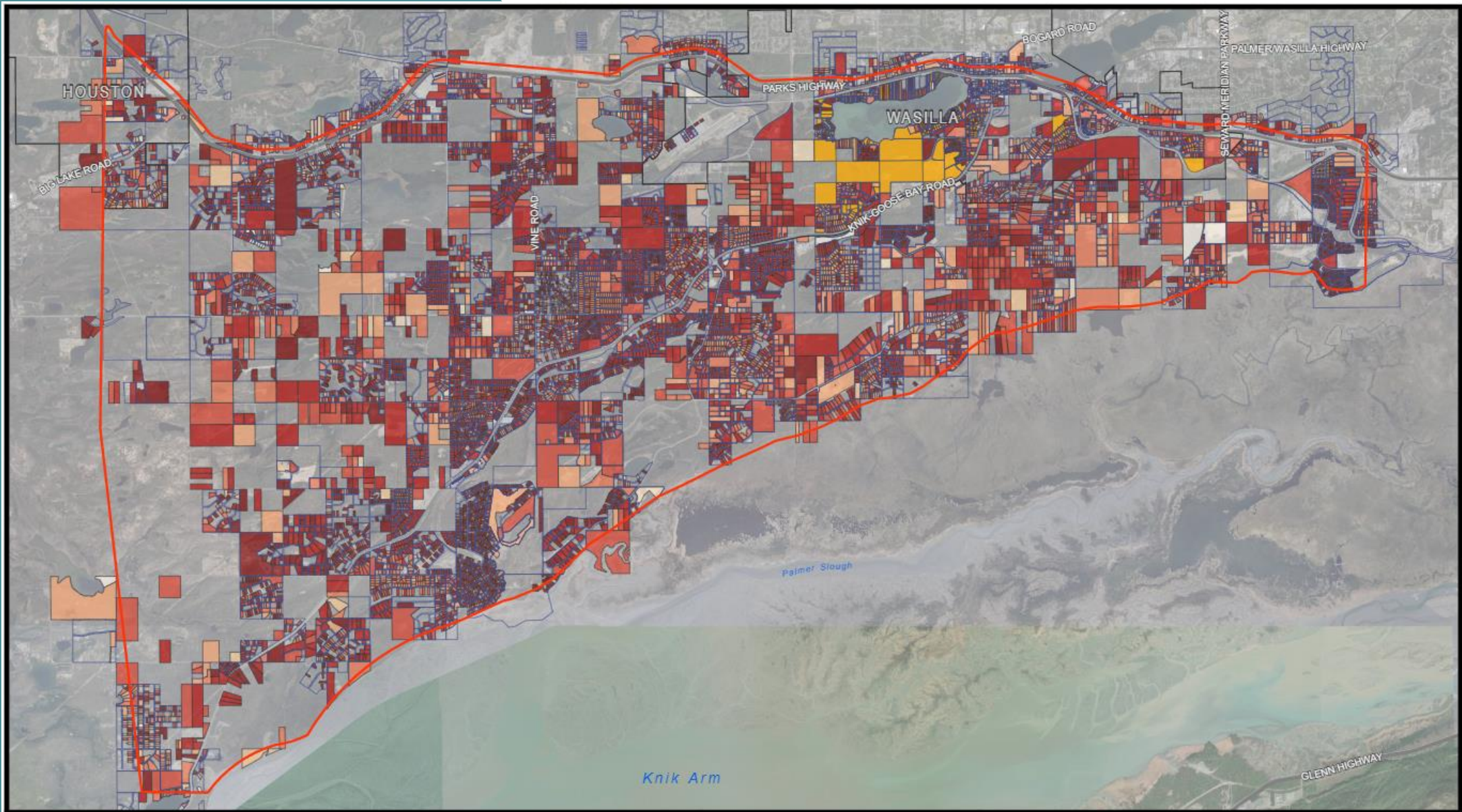
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MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH, ALASKA

FEBRUARY 17, 2022 FIGURE 4



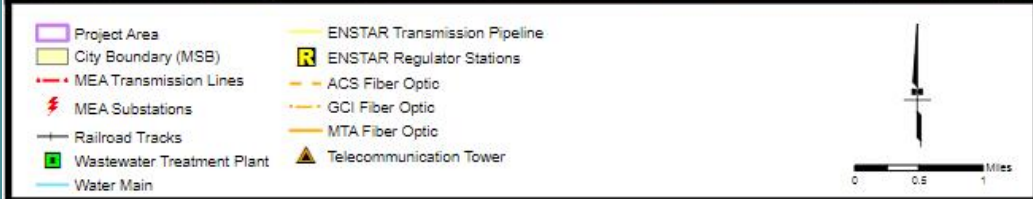
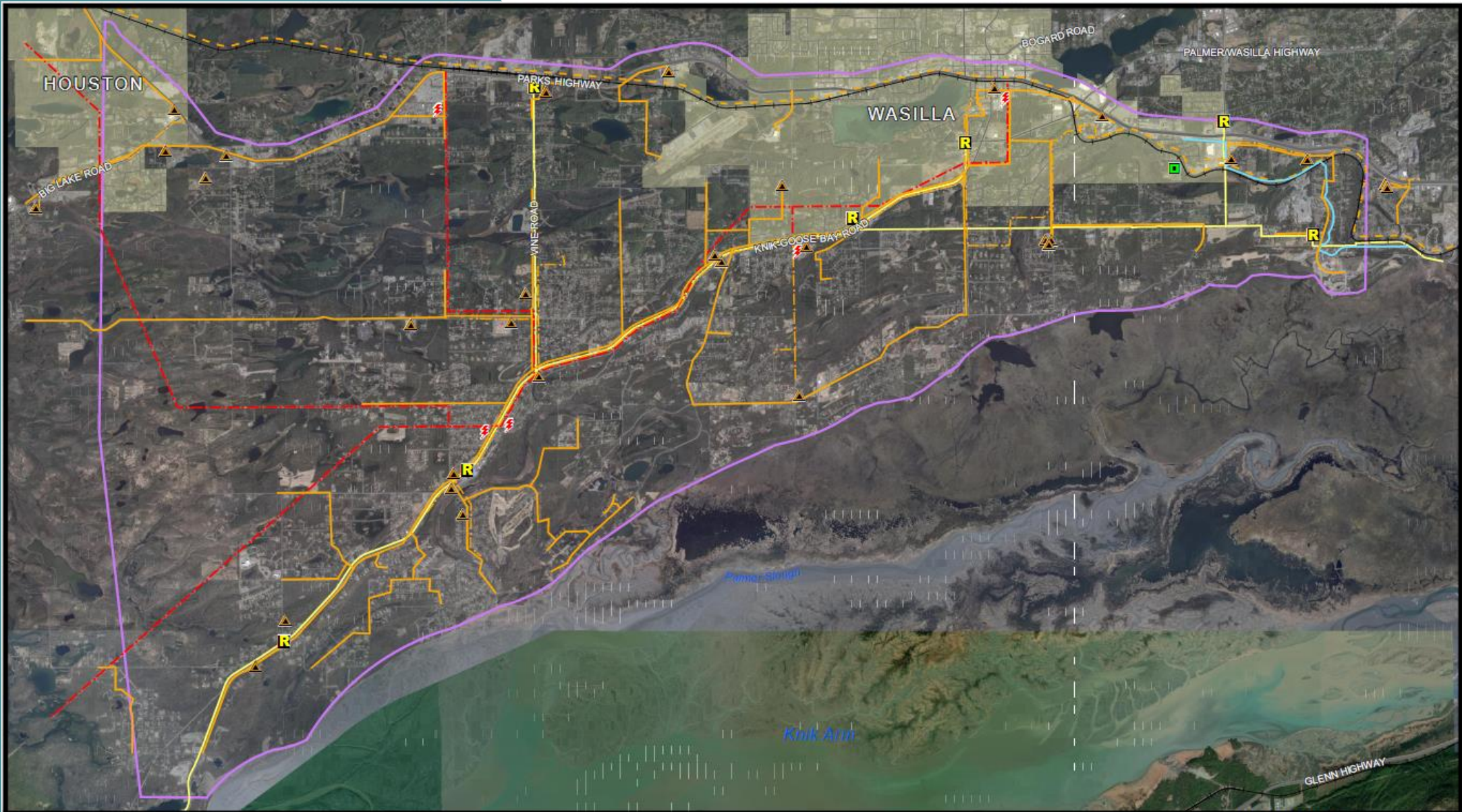
# DEVELOPMENT OVER TIME



<p>City Boundary (MSB) Subdivision (MSB)</p> <p>Building-less Parcels within Residential Zone</p>	<p><b>Average Building Year</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Pre-1950</td> <td>1981 - 1991</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1951 - 1961</td> <td>1991 - 2001</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1961 - 1971</td> <td>2001 - 2011</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1971 - 1981</td> <td>2011 - 2021</td> </tr> </table>	Pre-1950	1981 - 1991	1951 - 1961	1991 - 2001	1961 - 1971	2001 - 2011	1971 - 1981	2011 - 2021	<p><b>SOCIAL GROUPS: DEVELOPMENT OVER TIME MAP</b></p> <p>SEC 1 - 11, 16 - 19, T 16N, R 2W; SEC 1-2, 13, 24 T 16N, R 3W SEC 7, 17 - 20, T 17N, R 1E; SEC 6-24, 26-32 T 17N, R 1W SEC 1, 7-36, T 17N, R 2W; SEC 1, 12-13, 23-26, 35-36, T 17N, R 3W</p> <p>SEWARD MERIDIAN, ALASKA</p>		<p>STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES</p> <p>DOT&amp;PF PROJECT NO. CFHWY00421/0A41039 PARKS HIGHWAY ALTERNATIVE CORRIDOR PEL STUDY</p> <p>MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH, ALASKA</p> <p>NOVEMBER 08, 2021   FIGURE 6</p>
Pre-1950	1981 - 1991											
1951 - 1961	1991 - 2001											
1961 - 1971	2001 - 2011											
1971 - 1981	2011 - 2021											

\* Population represented by US Census Block Groups

# MAJOR UTILITIES



**MAJOR UTILITIES MAP**

SEC 1 - 11, 16 - 19, T 16N, R 2W; SEC 1-2, 13, 24 T 16N, R 3W;  
 SEC 7, 17 - 20, T 17N, R 1E; SEC 6-24, 26-32 T 17N, R 1W;  
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NOVEMBER 08, 2021	FIGURE 2
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# ORIGIN/DESTINATION STUDY



**104 MILLION**  
DATA POINTS  
WERE COLLECTED

**13M** DURING AM PEAK  
**25M** DURING PM PEAK



**907 THOUSAND**  
VEHICLE TRIPS  
WERE RECORDED

**126K** DURING AM PEAK  
**253K** DURING PM PEAK



**20.3**  
AVERAGE TRIP TIME  
IN MINUTES

TOTAL TRIP DISTANCE  
MEASURED IN MILES

**17 MILLION**

**3M**  
DURING  
AM PEAK

**5M**  
DURING  
PM PEAK

THAT'S EQUIVALENT TO



DRIVING AROUND  
THE EARTH  
**700 TIMES**

TOTAL TRIP TIME IN MINUTES

**27 MILLION**

**4M**  
DURING  
AM PEAK

**9M**  
DURING  
PM PEAK

.....  
THAT'S EQUIVALENT TO  
.....



DRIVING CONTINUOUSLY  
FROM 1971 TO NOW

SUMMARY OF PEAK PERIOD TRIP DATA

TOTAL TRAVEL SAMPLE

50% PEAK PERIOD DISTANCE

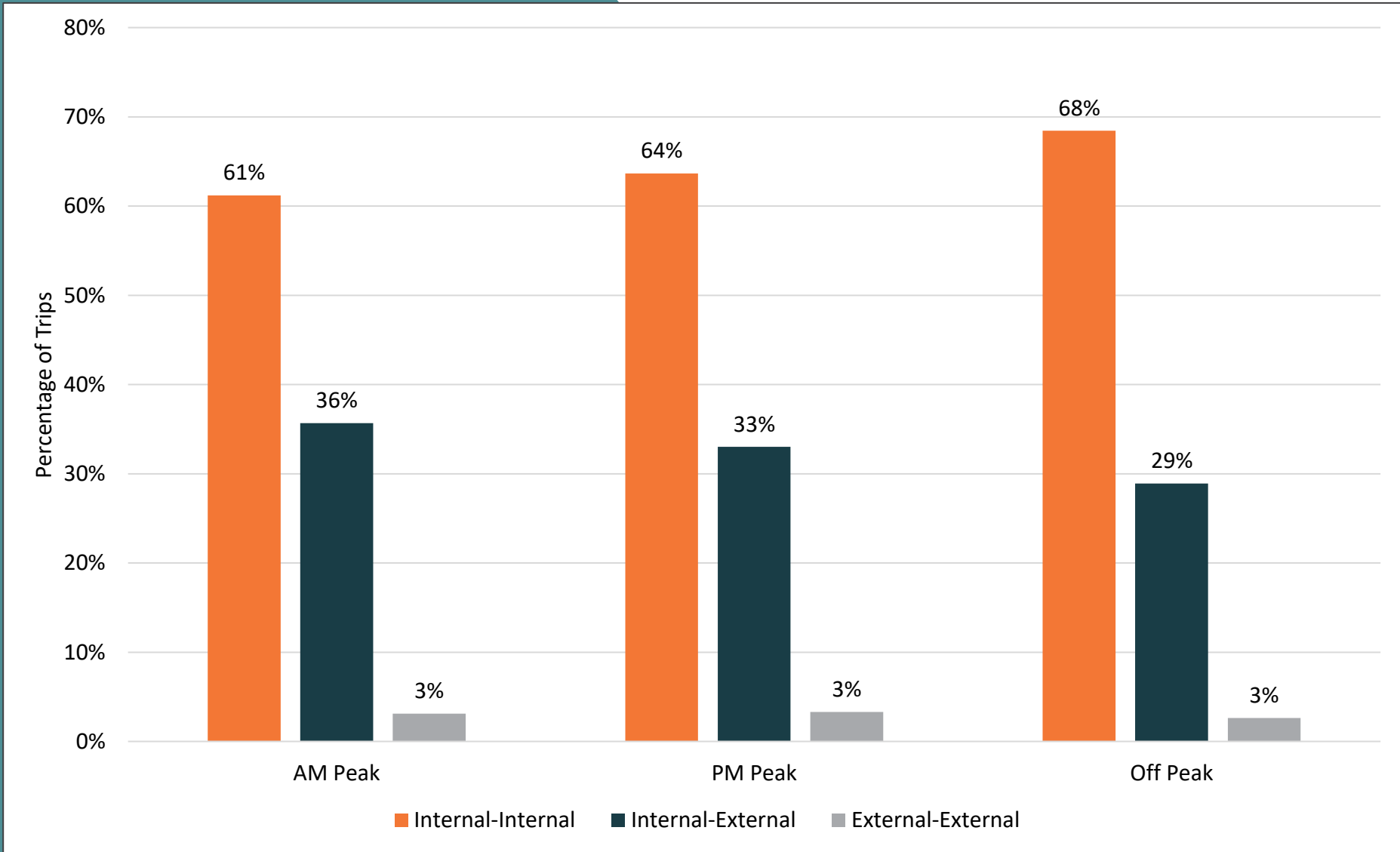
50% PEAK PERIOD TIME

40% PEAK PERIOD TRIP COUNT



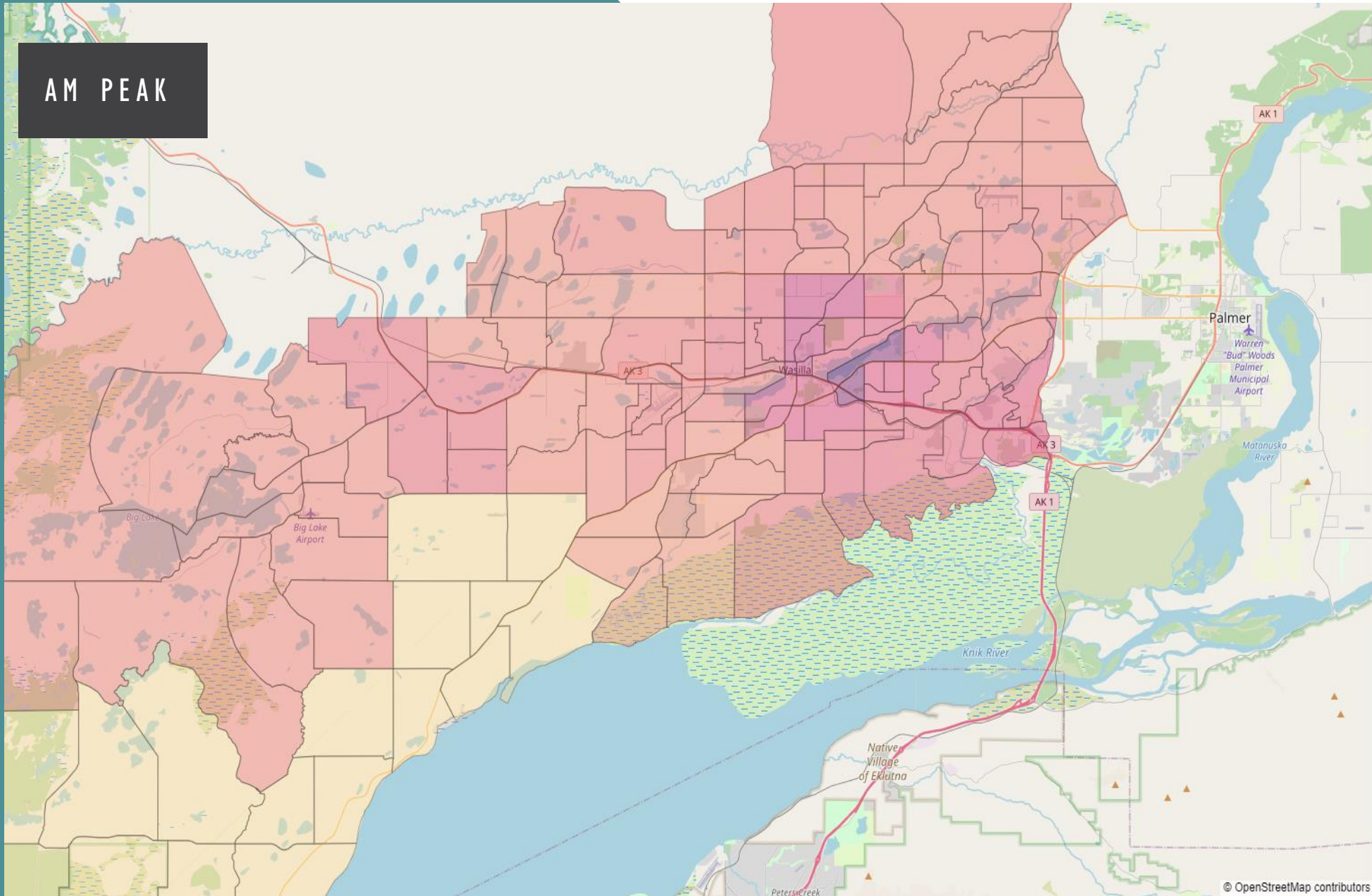
**9.4**  
AVERAGE TRIP LENGTH  
IN MILES

# ORIGIN-DESTINATION TRIPS



# ORIGIN-DESTINATION TRIPS

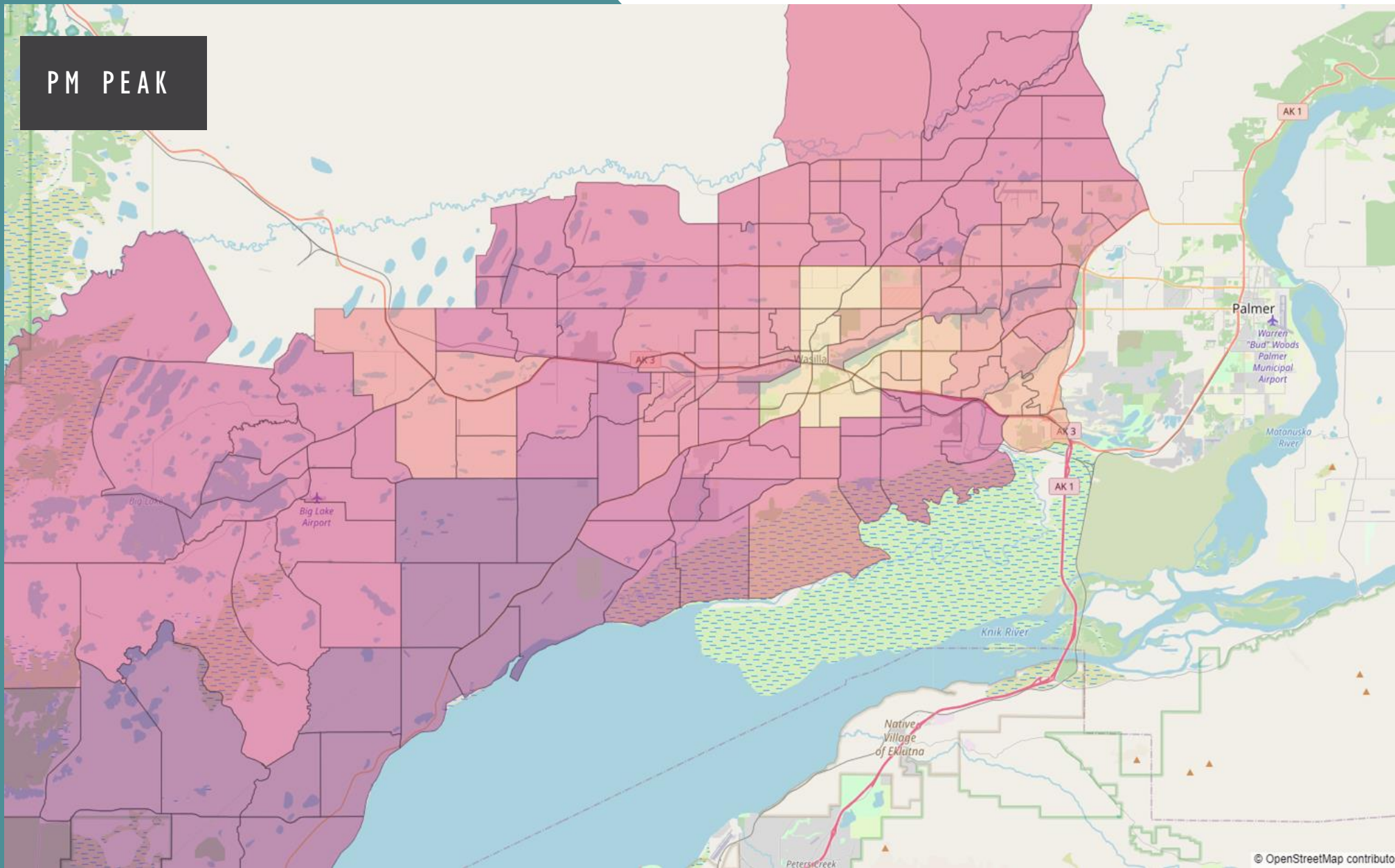
AM PEAK



© OpenStreetMap contributors

# ORIGIN-DESTINATION TRIPS

PM PEAK



Trips

100

50

0

-50



# SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

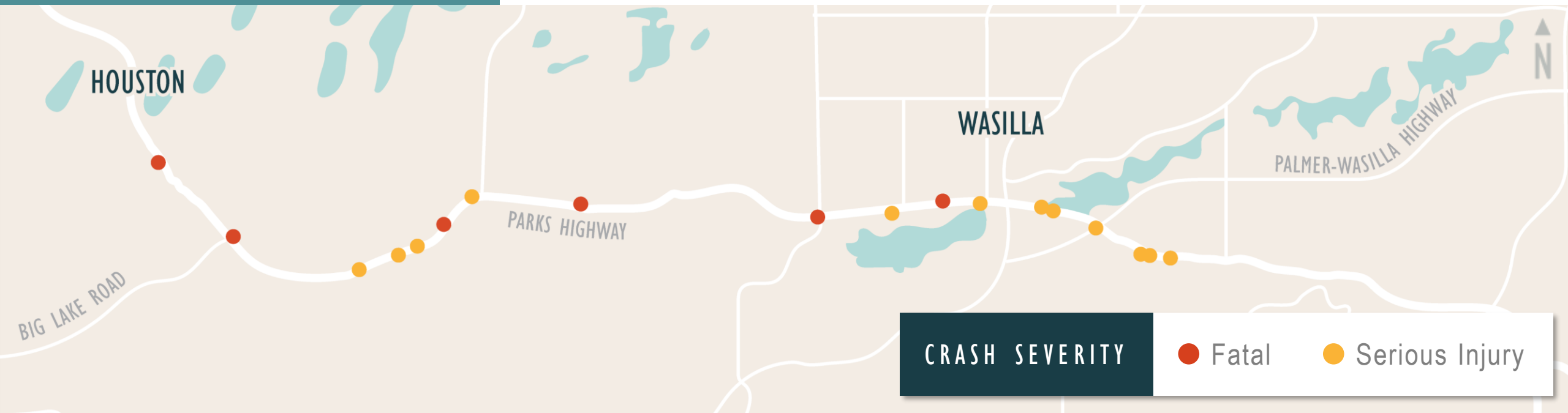


# SAFETY

## Sources:

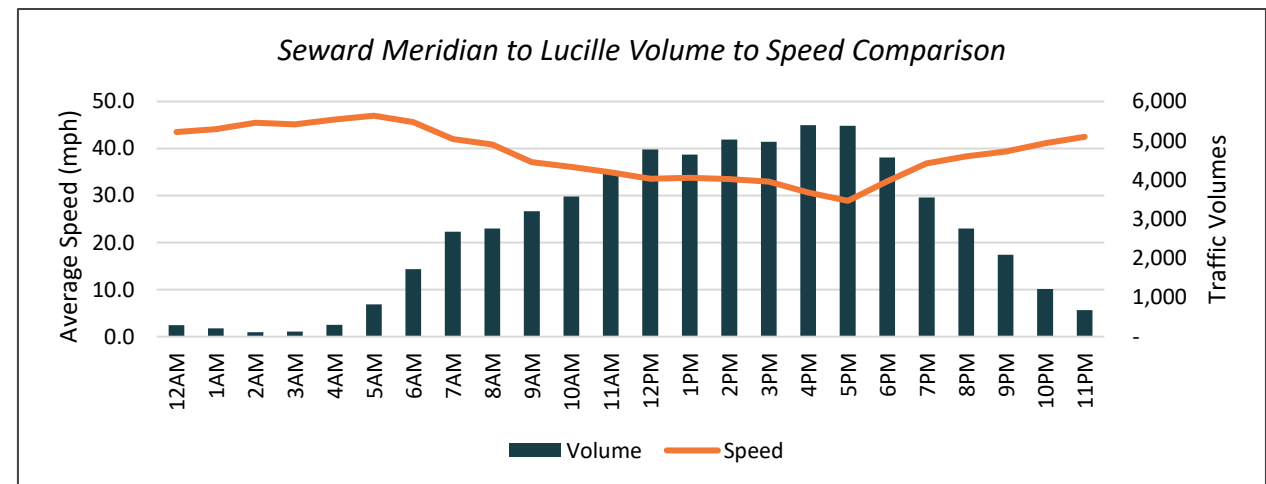
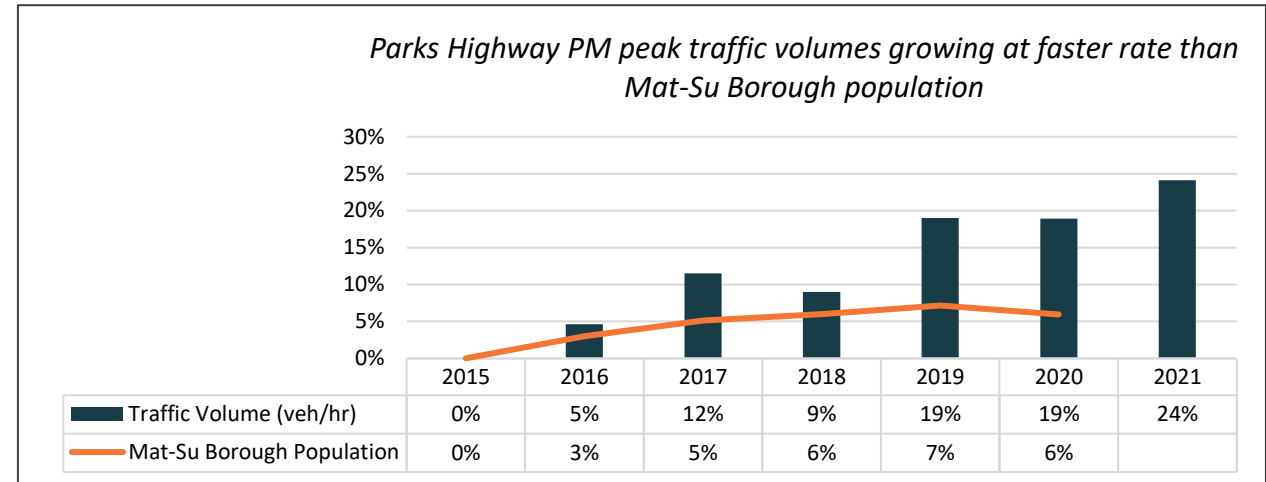
Email correspondence  
with DOT, FARS 2019

- 6 fatalities, 25 serious injuries (2017-2019)
- Fatality rate
  - 2x controlled access facilities
  - 2x statewide interstate average
  - Statewide, principal arterial rate 2.5x interstate rate
- Serious injury rate 3x controlled access facilities
- High traffic volumes make non-motorized facilities uncomfortable, deter use



# VOLUME & SPEEDS

- 7-year trendline: peak hour volumes double by 2040, much faster than population growth
- Speeds drop by 10 mph during peak hour (Seward Meridian to Lucille)
  - 4 mins delay/trip
  - 12,000 vehicle-hours delay in May alone
- As volumes grow, more hours at lower speeds
- Freight travel relies on 50 mph average speed travel; below this creates supply chain disruptions



# EXISTING PARKS HIGHWAY



# TRAVEL TIME RELIABILITY

- During peak periods, long travel times 20% more than average travel times
  - Controlled access: long times 6% more
- Trucks travel times vary by 120% (long times are more than 2x average times)
  - Controlled access: long times 30% more
- Negative impacts on local economy, freight deliveries, quality of life (hard to plan reliably)



# PAVEMENT CONDITION



- Trucks cause higher deterioration of pavement from hard stopping events and heavy axle load sitting still at red lights
- More time and resources for snow removal at intersections compared to controlled access facilities



# POPULATION & TRAFFIC FORECAST

# BASELINE POPULATION & TRAFFIC FORECAST

- Department of Labor (DOL) Historical Population and Growth Projections forecasts MSB growth at **1.7 percent annually to 2045**.
- The DOL forecast will be used for the Purpose and Need.
- A separate DOT&PF project (Mat-Su Intraregional Corridor Study) is evaluating population and traffic growth scenarios for the future.
- Data from the Mat-Su Intraregional Corridor Study will be incorporated into the forecast as it becomes available.



**ALL THESE BASELINE CONDITIONS  
HELP INFORM THE STUDY'S  
PURPOSE AND NEED**



# WHAT IS THE PURPOSE AND NEED?

- **Purpose:** Why the project is being proposed and the positive outcomes intended.
- **Need:** The key problems to be addressed and explanation of underlying causes of those problems.

# WHY IS PURPOSE AND NEED IMPORTANT?

- Helps identify a reasonable range of project alternatives
- Creates a shared understanding of the transportation problems, objectives, and possible solutions
- Defines project scope, guides development and evaluation of alternatives
- Helps streamline environmental analysis
- Helps identify potential context sensitive solutions
- Justifies impacts and spending of funds
- Helps with project programming

# EMERGING THEMES: PURPOSE & NEED



## Parks Highway Function:

Local, regional, and through trips all using Parks Highway through Wasilla.



## Safety:

Fatal and serious injury crash rate well above targets and levels on comparable facilities.



## Multi-Modal Transportation:

Facilities for walking and bicycling deter use of these modes; access to transit can be challenging.



## Delay:

Speeds reduce during peak travel times and add hours of delay to trips. As population and volumes grow, more hours of delay are likely.



## Travel Time Reliability:

Unreliable peak travel times vary widely from day to day, complicate logistics for freight deliveries and arriving at destinations on time.



## Land Use:

Pace of land uptake for development increasing.



## Economic Impact:

Travel time delay reduces supply chain reliability, impacts function of Wasilla urban core.



## Population increase in the Mat-Su:

Population has grown by 20% between 2010 and 2022.



# MODERATED BREAKOUT ROOMS (20 MINUTES)

## Emerging Themes Discussion:

1. Do you agree? Disagree?
2. Why/Why Not?
3. Are we missing anything?

***Assign a Team Captain for each room to report back***



**BREAK OUT ROOM REPORT BACK**

# SUMMARY — ROOM 1

- Improving Connectivity: surrounding network of neighborhood and local streets so people are not using Parks Highway as a local streets
- Improving Transit: Rapid Transit, more Park & Ride
- Highway: Not just building a bigger highway, but improving function so Parks Highway is a highway
- Safety & Connectivity for Multimodal: particularly facilities for biking
- Historic Properties: Protect data as we work with the public as there are many sites in project area – be aware of regulations

# SUMMARY — ROOM 2

- Bypass Project: Cooper Landing is another bypass project; interest in corollaries/lessons learned that can be gleaned from this project (projects have differences, but good to take a look at themes)
- Traffic Over Time: Volumes have increased, traffic improvements are hugely helpful to ease traffic issues
- Impacts to Businesses: Bypasses can impact businesses; but the existing conditions also impact businesses as travelers do not want to stop because traffic is so bad, it can take time to enter/exit corridor
- Crashes: major issues over time
- Maintenance: contributes to highway safety
- Commercial development: space is limited along the main corridor – commercial is likely to expand beyond the Parks Highway Corridor
- Railroad corridor: constraint to widening existing highway
- Infrastructure Act: potentially assist with funding highway (but may not be a significant infusion of funds)
- Additional Impacts: environmental costs/impacts of congestion need to be considered
- Alternate financing methods: consider whether stakeholders might have an interest in alternative ways of financing development (i.e., land value recapture financing to constrain urban sprawl, and incentivize investments in areas that are near infrastructure investments already – Transportation Research Board)

# STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

Meeting #	Focus	Indicative Date
1	Vision, purpose and need statement	March 10, 2022
2	Range of alternatives, alternatives screening process, screening criteria	Fall 2022
3	Preliminary alternative screening results and detailed alternative screening criteria	Spring 2023
4	Detailed alternative screening results and recommended alternatives	Summer/Fall 2023



## Project Contacts:

- Kelly Summers, PE, DOT&PF Project Manager  
(907) 269-0546
- Renee Whitesell, PTP, DOWL Project Manager  
(907) 865-1161
- Rachel Steer, DOWL Public Involvement  
(907) 562-2000

## Project Email:

[parkshighwayalternative@dowl.com](mailto:parkshighwayalternative@dowl.com)

## Website:

[Parkshighwayalternative.com](http://Parkshighwayalternative.com)



# THANK YOU!