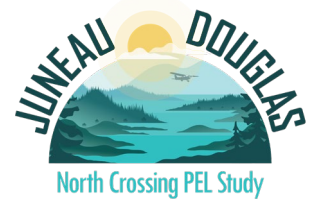


# Frequently Asked Questions

State/Federal Project No: SFHWY00299/0003259



## 1. What is the Juneau Douglas North Crossing PEL Study?

The City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) has partnered with Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) to study the potential for a transportation corridor to connect Juneau with the north end of Douglas Island.

DOT&PF has chosen the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) process to identify and evaluate a purpose and need for connecting Juneau with Douglas Island. The PEL process will provide opportunities for public input and involvement. The analyses conducted may be incorporated into a future National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

## 2. What is a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Process?

A PEL Process is a collaborative and integrated approach to transportation decision-making that:

1. Improves outreach and coordination by considering environmental, community, and economic goals early in the planning process.
2. Saves cost and time; focuses expenditures on viable options.

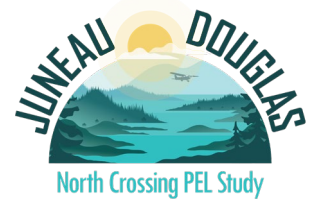
## 3. What are the benefits of a PEL Process?

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

- **Stronger agency and public relationships:** Regulatory and resource agencies are involved early. Collaborative working relationships with the public support more involvement and opportunities.
- **Improved project delivery timelines:** The PEL process can avoid duplication of effort and speed up project delivery.
- **Earlier identification of key environmental resources:** Knowing which resources are present can help alternative selection and save time and money by moving forward alternatives that minimize impacts to environmental resources and the built environment.
- **Better funding and project development:** Engineering team involvement produces more reliable cost estimates and project schedules.
- **Build projects with better outcomes:** Knowledge of agency and community concerns help developers design projects that better serve the community's needs.
- **Flexible approach for development of transportation improvement strategies:** The PEL Study can propose solutions to develop a series of smaller independent, fundable projects that can be implemented over time while fitting within a larger or longer-term context.

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## 4. There have been studies in this area for over 40 years. What happened to those studies and why do a new one?

A north crossing between Juneau and Douglas Island has been the subject of numerous studies and analyses since the early 1980s, with multiple alternatives being evaluated and recommended. However, none have advanced beyond preliminary analysis.

Douglas Island Bridge accommodates over 14,000 vehicles per day. Delay is apparent during morning and evening peak periods also impacting intersection operations on either side of the bridge. When road closures are needed for maintenance or in an emergency, there are limited alternative accesses available between Douglas Island and Juneau. Active transportation facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists are only provided on one side of the bridge.

Land to accommodate future population development in Juneau is constrained by topography and local geological conditions. Land on the west side of Douglas Island is viewed as promising areas for future development. Studies indicate that the design and congestion of the existing highway, and the distance between developable lands on Douglas Island and the existing Juneau Douglas bridge, have been impediments to development.

## 5. What is the study area?

The study area considers potential crossing locations between Douglas Island and Juneau in the area north of the existing Douglas Island Bridge. The study area is shown below:



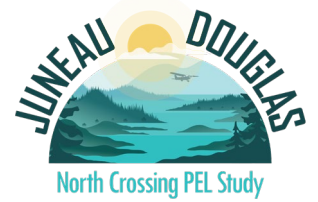
## 6. What issues will the study address?

The study will consider:

- Purpose and need for a north crossing between Juneau and Douglas Island
- Range of alternative locations for a north crossing

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- Transportation improvements needed to support a north crossing on Douglas Island and mainland Juneau
- Impacts to environmental resources, particularly recreational areas, wetlands and waterways, and the Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge
- Impacts to neighborhoods and residents
- Financial Strategies to fund a potential crossing

Issues will continue to be added as the PEL study progresses.

## 7. What is the Purpose and Need of this study?

The **purpose** of the Juneau Douglas North Crossing PEL Study is to identify ways to improve the connection between Douglas Island and Juneau. The secondary purposes are to identify ways to improve transportation for non-motorized users and reduce transportation related energy consumption.

An improved connection to Douglas Island should address the following **needs**:

### **Alternate access and transportation infrastructure resilience**

The community has expressed concerns regarding the lack of an alternate access during emergencies and the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) has identified the issue in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan. In the event of the Douglas Island Bridge or another single route travel corridor in the area (North Douglas Highway or Egan Drive) being inaccessible or out of service, emergency response would be delayed, and residents cut off from the access to workplace and critical resources.

### **Decrease traffic pressure on Douglas Island Bridge and its intersections**

The traveling public is currently experiencing delays and congestion on the Douglas Island Bridge and its intersections during the peak travel times. Analyses indicate that the intersections operate at or over capacity during peak travel times and will continue to deteriorate based on estimated future traffic counts.

The identified alternative(s) should also strive to meet these **additional goals**:

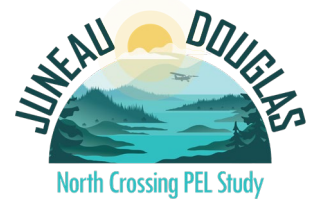
- Improve connection to North and West Douglas Island by creating additional traffic capacity to support the future development of affordable housing and economic development opportunities.
- Enhance and protect the public health and safety of travelers and the communities that transportation facilities traverse and serve.
- Transportation improvements should avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to the environment and to residential areas.
- Transportation improvements should maintain the visual, cultural, and scenic identity of Juneau and Douglas Island.

## 8. How is this PEL Study being funded?

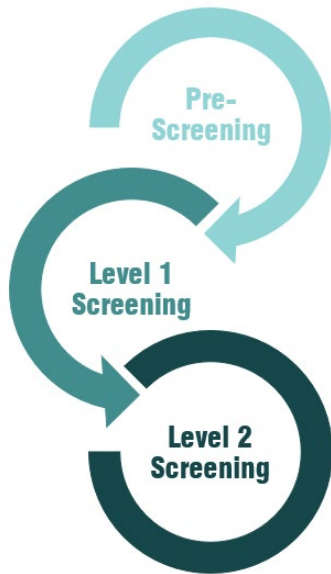
This is a federally funded project led by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) in cooperation with the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ).

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## 9. What is the Alternative Screening Process?



- Elimination of alternatives that are not feasible based on professional judgement and available data
- Assessing alternatives based on location and buildability
- Merge similar alternatives as variants

**PRE-SCREENING RESULT: Preliminary alternatives**

- Elimination of alternatives that do not meet P&N
- Elimination of alternatives that do not meet specific regulatory requirements
- Early engineering and environmental evaluation to identify alternatives that are technically feasible, practical, implementable, and reasonable

**LEVEL 1 SCREENING RESULT: Detailed alternatives**

- Screening remaining alternatives using a broad range of qualitative and quantitative criteria
- Compare and rank the detailed alternatives

**LEVEL 2 SCREENING RESULT: Recommended alternative(s) and project(s)**

## 10. How and when will public input be considered?

Public input will influence PEL process and the recommendations of the PEL Study. This study outlines three (3) Public Open House meetings:

- Open House No. 1 occurred on Wednesday, May 11, 2022, virtually
- Listening Sessions at Discover Eaglecrest Day and Safeway occurred on Saturday, September 17, 2022
- Open House No. 2 on Monday, December 12, 2022, 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the Juneau Arts and Culture Center (JACC)
- Open House No. 3 will be held in Spring 2023

In addition to the Public Open House meetings, the study team will accept comments throughout the PEL study process. The earlier input is received, the easier it is for the study team to incorporate it into the alternatives, analysis, and recommendations. Email your comments to the team at [JDNorthCrossing@dowl.com](mailto:JDNorthCrossing@dowl.com).

## 11. How can I find out more about and be involved in the PEL Study?

- Visit the PEL study website: [www.JDNorthCrossing.com](http://www.JDNorthCrossing.com)
- Sign up to receive study update emails from the website
- Contact the PEL study team: [JDNorthCrossing@dowl.com](mailto:JDNorthCrossing@dowl.com)
- Participate in Public Meetings

*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 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated November 3, 2017 and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.*