# ALASKA RAILROAD

# Portage Station Improvements

A collaborative project will improve transportation and recreation facilities at Portage Station, about 10 miles south of Girdwood. The facility is situated along the Seward Highway and along the Alaska Railroad mainline at the juncture with the ARRC Whittier Branch track.

## Partners

- **Alaska Railroad (ARRC)** — owns the Portage Station facility and fulfills the project management role. Most of the project is within ARRC right-of-way (ROW).

- **Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (ADOT&PF)** — a small portion of the station facility lies within the ADOT&PF ROW. The department is leading the project's environmental documentation. ADOT&PF is also concurrently pursuing a Seward Highway improvement project that is co-located with the Portage Station project.

- **U.S. Forest Service (USFS)** — Portage Station is an access point for people entering and traveling through the USFS-managed Chugach National Forest (CNF). For the station project, USFS is providing CNF trailhead interpretive signage. The station facility will also tie into a pending USFS Portage Multimodal Connector trail. USFS is the underlying landowner of ADOT&PF's ROW.

While no ROW acquisitions are needed, ARRC, ADOT&PF and USFS will execute an agreement reflecting development and land use for co-located activities.

## Purpose

Portage Station provides an entrance for people of all abilities to enjoy and experience public lands. Facility improvements will enhance traveler safety and accessibility. The project is timed to maximize mutual benefits and to avoid potential conflicts associated with adjacent transportation and recreation projects.



*The Portage Siding will be upgraded into an interlaced (gauntlet) siding to accommodate a full-level passenger platform.*



*The existing passenger platform will be relocated south and expanded. Limited gravel parking areas will be expanded, paved and striped.*

# PROJECT FACTS

## Project Scope

- **Road, Parking and Pedestrian Improvements:** Facility land will be raised to improve drainage, roadway access and traffic flow. The parking area will be paved and striped to delineate vehicle spaces, and will incorporate a bus loading/unloading zone. Sidewalks and crosswalks will encourage safe pedestrian-vehicle interaction.

- **Passenger amenities:** the existing rail platform and station will be relocated south to facilitate construction of a concrete full-level boarding platform. The project will add shelters with covered seating and vault (waterless) toilet restrooms. A forest trailhead kiosk will be added on the highway side of the facility.

- **Track upgrade:** the existing siding track will be improved and reconfigured as an interlaced (or gauntlet) track to support a full-level passenger platform.

## Status

In recent years, ARRC and USFS have been collaborating on concept development and preliminary engineering, while coordinating with ADOT&PF to avoid conflicts with nearby highway projects.

Preliminary engineering, environmental work and documentation, and construction traffic planning will continue through 2021 and into 2022. Final design will follow results of environmental studies and concept approval.

Construction could begin as soon as 2022, pending plan/design approval and funding availability. Construction must be completed by 2024.
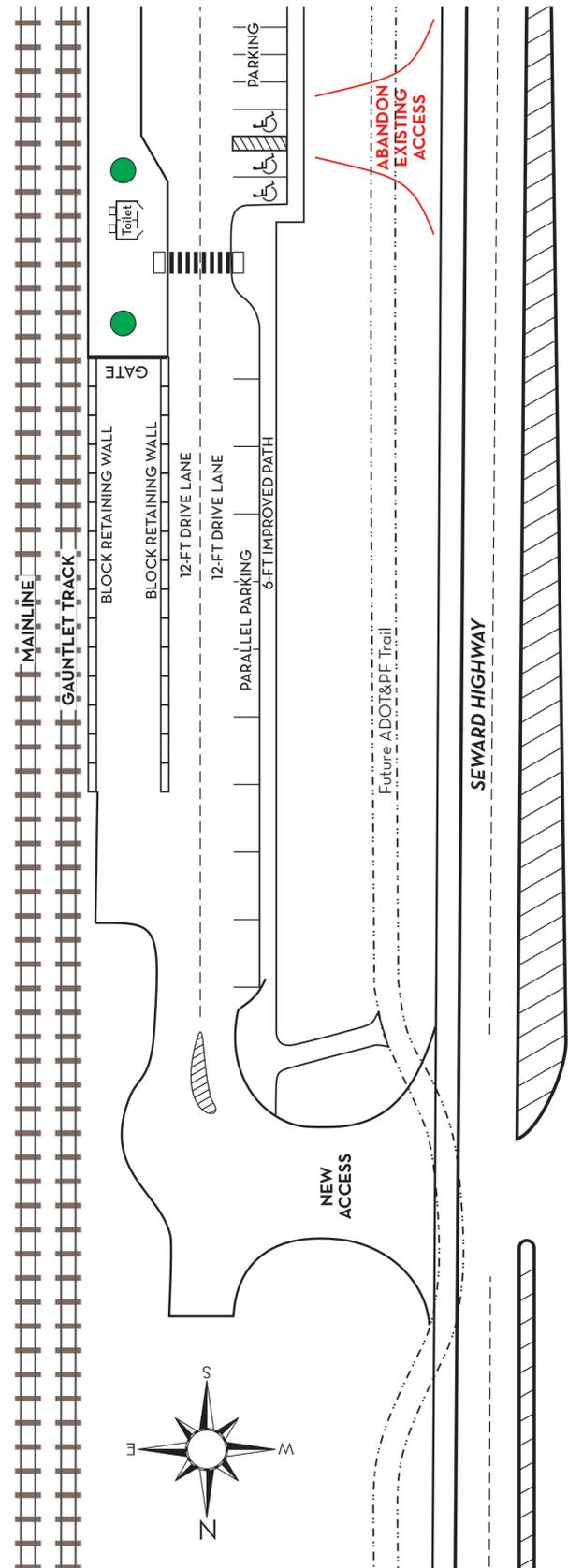
## Cost and Funding

The project budget is about $4 million.

Preliminary engineering, environmental and traffic planning will be funded by $320,000 in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant money, which includes a 20% match ($64,000) from ARRC as the grantee.
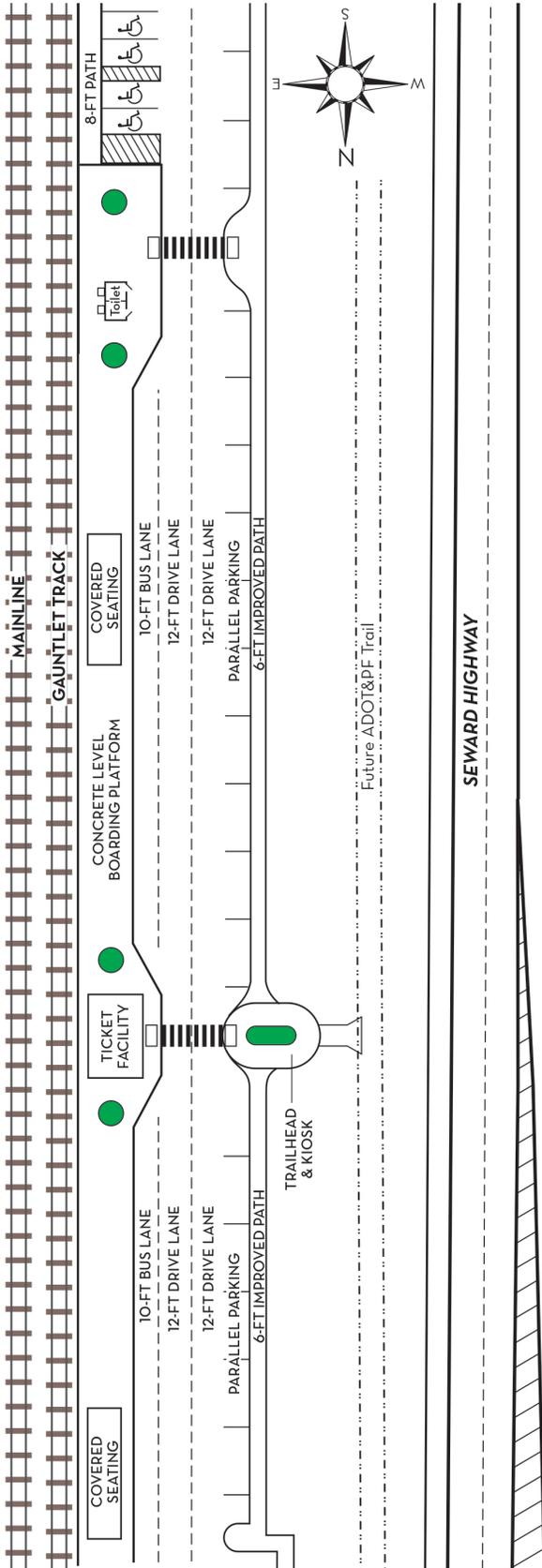
Facility / Road design and construction will be funded by nearly $2.75 million in Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) grants provided to ADOT&PF. Anticipated FHWA grant funding includes a 9% match ($248,000) from ARRC as a grant sub-recipient.

Track construction is estimated to cost $935,000. Funding has not yet been identified.

## Site Conceptual #1: North End

## Site Conceptual #2: Center

MAINLINE

GAUNTLET TRACK

8-FT PATH

COVERED SEATING

Toilet

10-FT BUS LANE

12-FT DRIVE LANE

12-FT DRIVE LANE

PARALLEL PARKING

6-FT IMPROVED PATH

Future ADOT&PF Trail

*SEWARD HIGHWAY*

CONCRETE LEVEL BOARDING PLATFORM

TICKET FACILITY

TRAILHEAD & KIOSK

10-FT BUS LANE

12-FT DRIVE LANE

12-FT DRIVE LANE

PARALLEL PARKING

6-FT IMPROVED PATH

COVERED SEATING

## Site Conceptual #3: South End

NEW ACCESS

MAINLINE

GAUNTLET TRACK

Landscape Island

Future ADOT&PF Trail

*SEWARD HIGHWAY*

8-FT ADA-COMPLIANT IMPROVED PATH

PARKING

PARALLEL PARKING

6-FT IMPROVED PATH