

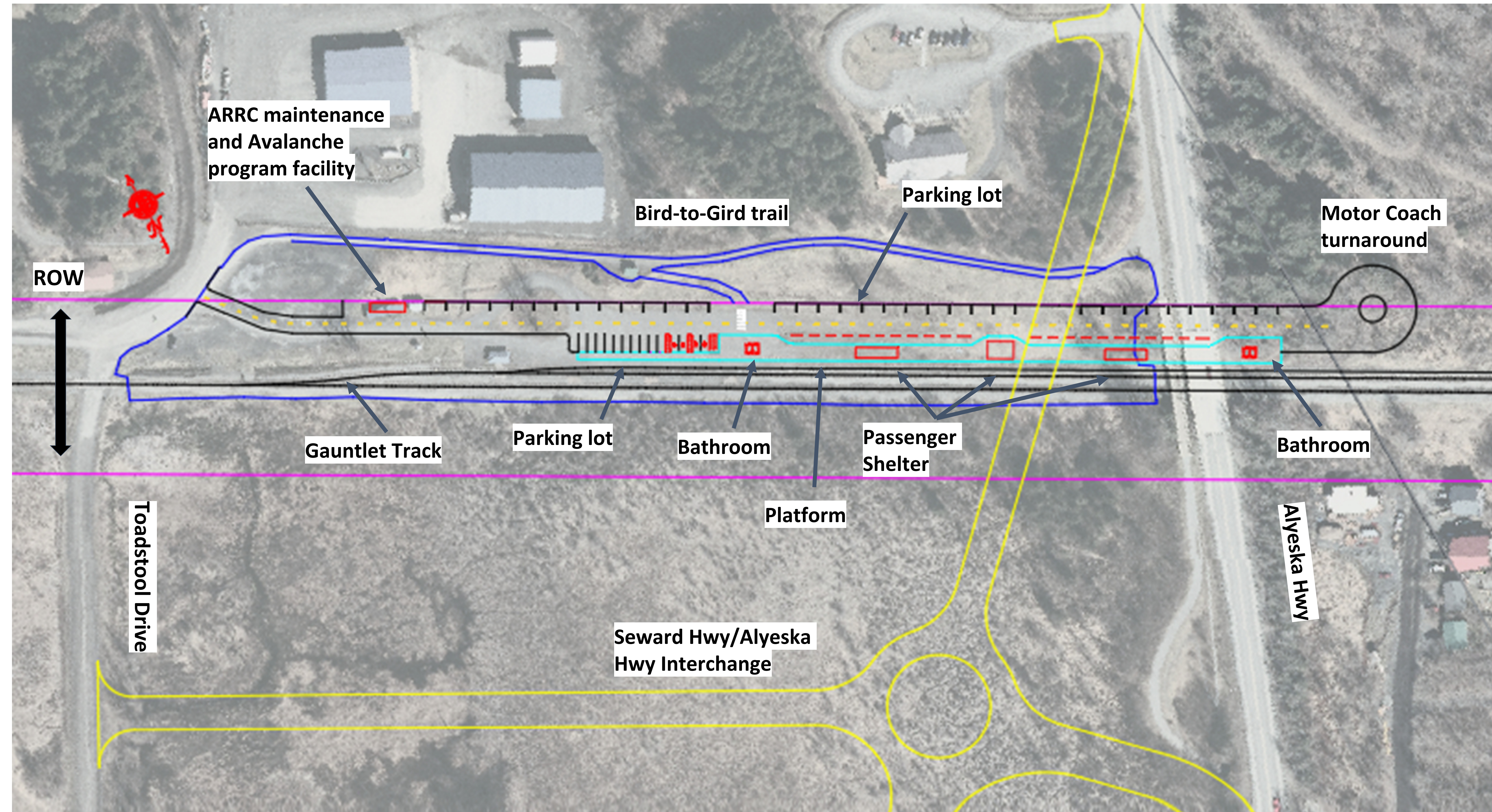


Girdwood Station Improvements:

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Introduction

Girdwood, AK is a popular destination for tourists and state residents alike. The existing Alaska Railroad Company (ARRC) station in Girdwood is insufficient to meet the desired level of service for an increasing number of passengers. Our project developed design alternatives for the site and selected a preferred alternative based on the design criteria given by our client.



Project Background

The existing Girdwood depot consists of a small shelter for passengers, two Conex buildings that serve as ARRC maintenance and Avalanche Program facilities, and a turnaround that does not have a sufficient radius for easy maneuverability by tour buses. The only passenger vehicle access is via Toadstool Drive, an unpaved road that abuts the Seward Highway on the Northbound side, near Milepost 90.

Project Criteria

Criteria provided by the client included:

- Provide ample room for ARRC facilities
- Accommodate up-to a 1200-foot passenger train
- Provide for a connection to the Bird-to-Gird trail
- Provide for parking based on future ridership, Bird-to-Gird trail users, and the general public
- Improvements should remain within the ROW as much as practicable
- Provide a throughway or turning feature of sufficient size for the design vehicle (a tour bus)

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Project Challenges

The project location lies within a narrow Right-of-Way (ROW) spanning 200 feet from the railway centerline on either side. Additionally, the ROW is adjacent to properties belonging to Alaska DOT&PF, the Municipality of Anchorage, and the United States Forest Service. Feasibility analysis of alternative designs needs to take into account the slope leading to the Bird-to-Gird trail on the north side, and wetlands on the south side.

Preferred Alternative

Three alternatives were developed and analyzed along with the no-build option, and the preferred alternative is pictured above. This alternative was chosen for meeting the most of the project criteria while remaining economically feasible. This alternative provides new facilities for the ARRC avalanche program, an approximately 1000 foot passenger platform with 3 shelters and 2 bathrooms, an additional gauntlet track, a connection to Bird-to-Gird trail, 42 parking spaces meeting ADA guidelines, a turnaround sufficient for motor coach buses, and accommodation for future expansion to the East.