



**South Dakota Department
of Transportation**

U.S. Highway 85 Roadway Design Stakeholder Group

Project Location: Wyoming Border to Cheyenne Crossing

NH 0085(106)0 PCN06J8

Date: Sept. 9, 2025

Purpose of the Meeting

Involve stakeholders in
the design process

Review project
background and goals

Gather input and
comments



- ✓ Background information
- ✓ Design project changes
- ✓ Project schedule & next steps

Why a Stakeholder Group?

Represent varied
interests along the
project corridor

Provide input on
proposed road design

Identify and consider varied
priorities of stakeholders and
impacted residents



- ✓ Engage in design process
- ✓ Provide information to share with neighbors/networks

Stakeholder Group Timeline

Today: Introductory Meetings



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graph TD; A[Today: Introductory Meetings] --> B[Late 2025: Reconvene with updated design and additional information]; B --> C[Early 2026: Final stakeholder meeting]; C --> D[Spring 2026: Design Public Meeting]; D --> E[TBD: Assemble Construction Focus Group];
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Late 2025: Reconvene with updated design and additional information

Early 2026: Final stakeholder meeting

Spring 2026: Design Public Meeting

TBD: Assemble Construction Focus Group

Introductions

SDDOT Project Team

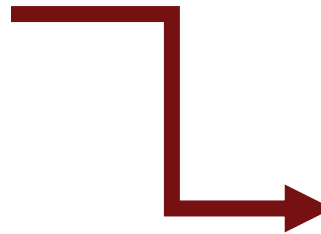
Todd Seaman – Project Lead

Mark Malone – Design Project Manager

Steve Palmer – Design/Construction Engineer

Mike Carlson – Construction Project Manager

Tom Horan – Project Team Member



Your Turn!

Please Share:

- Name
- Organization/interest group
- How familiar are you with this project?

Organizations

Adjacent Landowners

Black Hills Badland Tourism Association

Cheyenne Crossing

Eagle Cliff Ski Association

Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe

Lawrence County Commission

Lawrence County Highway Department

Lawrence County Sheriffs Department

Lead Chamber of Commerce

Lead-Deadwood School District

Local Residents

Rochford Volunteer Fire Department

S.D. Department of Tourism

S.D. Highway Patrol

S.D. Trucking Association

Spearfish Canyon Fire Department

Spearfish Canyon Fly Fisherman

Spearfish Canyon Owners Association

Thunderhead Episcopal Church Camp

Trailhead Lodge

U.S. Forest Service

Wickiup Cabins

Project Background

Project Limits



Construction History

Grading

1950, 1953, 1966



Resurfaced

1954, 1981, 1994, 2006, 2010



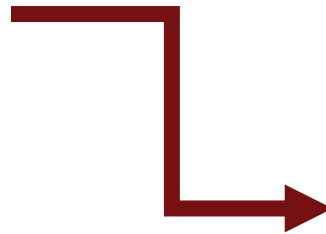
Structure repairs

1982, 2002

Current Project Background

Project Needs

- Reduce crash rates
- Replace pavement
- Replace drainage structures



Project Goals

1. Protect the integrity of the corridor, protect the beauty of the Black Hills, while enhancing the experience for all users
2. Improve alignment and add shoulders where possible
3. Reduce impacts on the natural environment during construction

Black Hills Context Sensitive Corridor Study

Highway 85 from Wyoming Border to Cheyenne Crossing has been identified as a “Context Sensitive Corridor”.

Context Sensitive Corridor = Context Sensitive Design Process

Highway 85 Context (From Study)

- Implementing **safety measures** has a high potential to reduce crash rate
- Current roadway **widths and some geometry** do not support function of the roadway.
- **Improvements** identified in the study include improve shoulders, add/improve pullouts, improve passing.
- Supports **movement of goods and people**

What Does “Context Sensitive” Mean?

Design based on environmental features and scenic values.

Protect the integrity of the corridor, protect the beauty of the Black Hills, while enhancing the experience for all users.

Design Considerations

- Mile-by-mile approach
- Flexible design standards
- Spearfish Creek
- Rock Formations

**Optimizing design to
minimize impact**

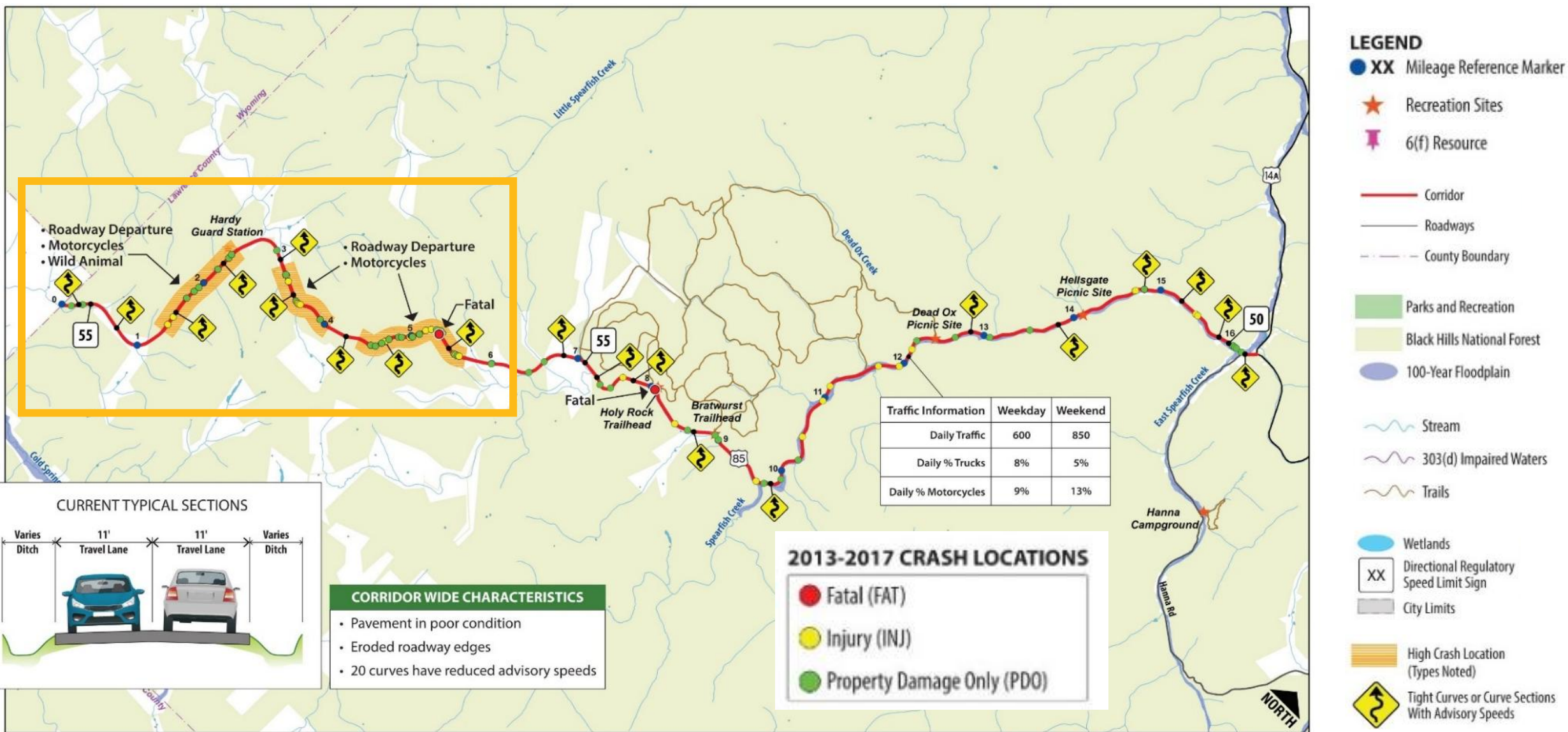
Pause for Discussion



Safety



Corridor Characteristics



Highway Deficiencies

Poor pavement
conditions

Eroded roadway
edges and
shoulders

20 curves with
reduced advisory
speeds

High crash
volume



**Crash rate 4x higher
than state average**

Crash History (2018-2022)

61 Reported Crashes

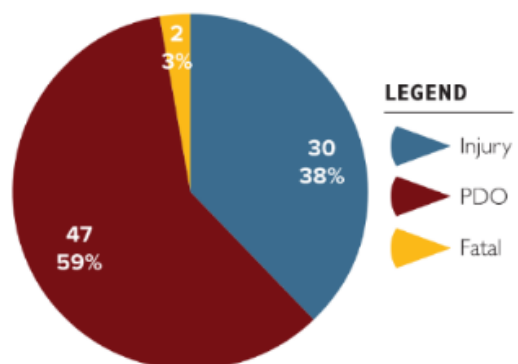
- 42 road departure
- 23 involved motorcycles
- 1 fatal crash
- 26 injury crashes

- **Reported Weighted Crash Rate = 8.5 crashes per MVMT**
- **Exceeds statewide average crash rate for similar facilities (1.46 crashes per MVMT)**
- **High potential for crashes**

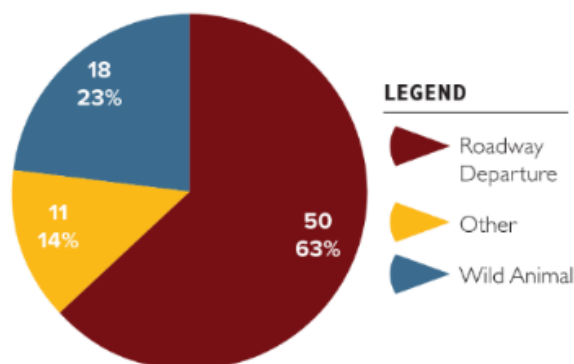
Crash Data



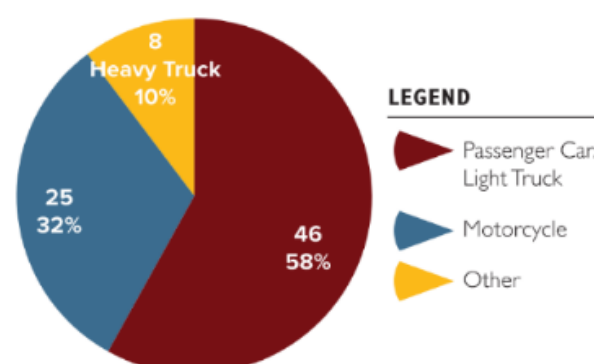
SEVERITY



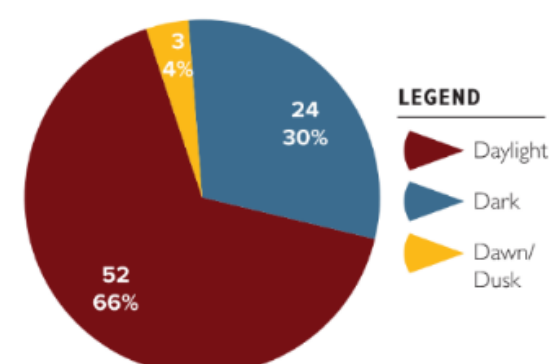
CRASH TYPE



VEHICLE TYPE



TIME OF DAY



*Total Crashes for 5 Years (2013 through 2017)

SDDOT US85 - WY to Cheyenne Crossing 122311-01 11/10/2023

	TOTAL	SEVERE
POTENTIAL FOR CRASH REDUCTION	HIGH	HIGH

Speed Data



Pause for Discussion




Design



Project Timeline to Date

February 2018: Black Hills Context Sensitive Corridor Study identifies U.S. 85 as a focus corridor. Safety concerns identified due to high crash rates.



May 2020: Study Advisory Team evaluates improvements needed for corridor.



June – August 2021: Project website live and first public meeting held.



December 2023: Design public meeting held.

2023 Public Meeting: What We Heard

- Involve public in the design process
- Reduce impacts to adjacent land and properties
- Add shoulders to the roadway
- Maintain scenic value of the roadway
- Questions about construction sequencing and road closures

Start of Project

SPEED
LIMIT
65

85

SPEED
LIMIT
65

SPEED
LIMIT
55

SPEED
LIMIT
65

SPEED
LIMIT
55

O'Neil Pass

SPEED
LIMIT
55

SPEED
LIMIT
65

SPEED
LIMIT
55

SPEED
LIMIT
50

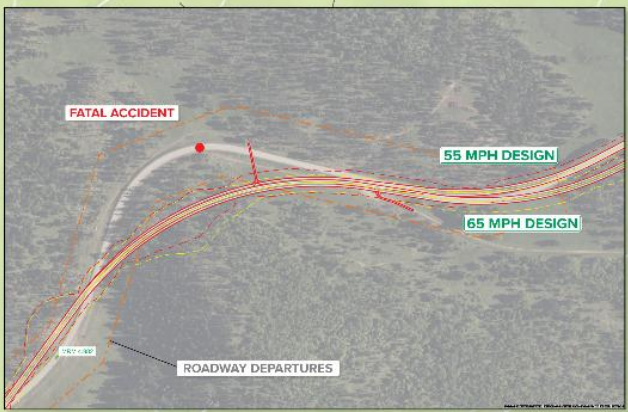
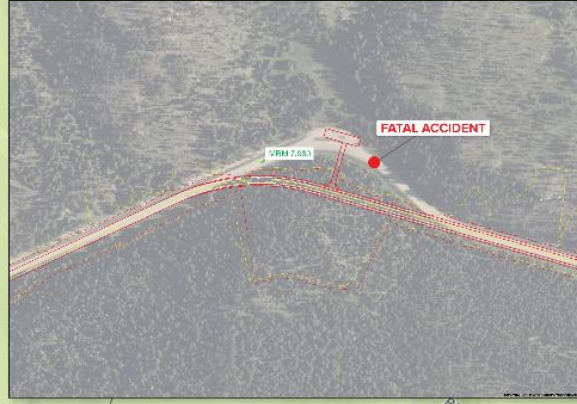
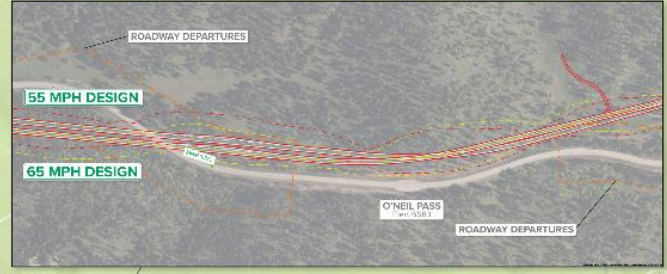
85

SPEED
LIMIT
50

SPEED
LIMIT
45

Start of
Spearfish Creek

SPEED
LIMIT
40

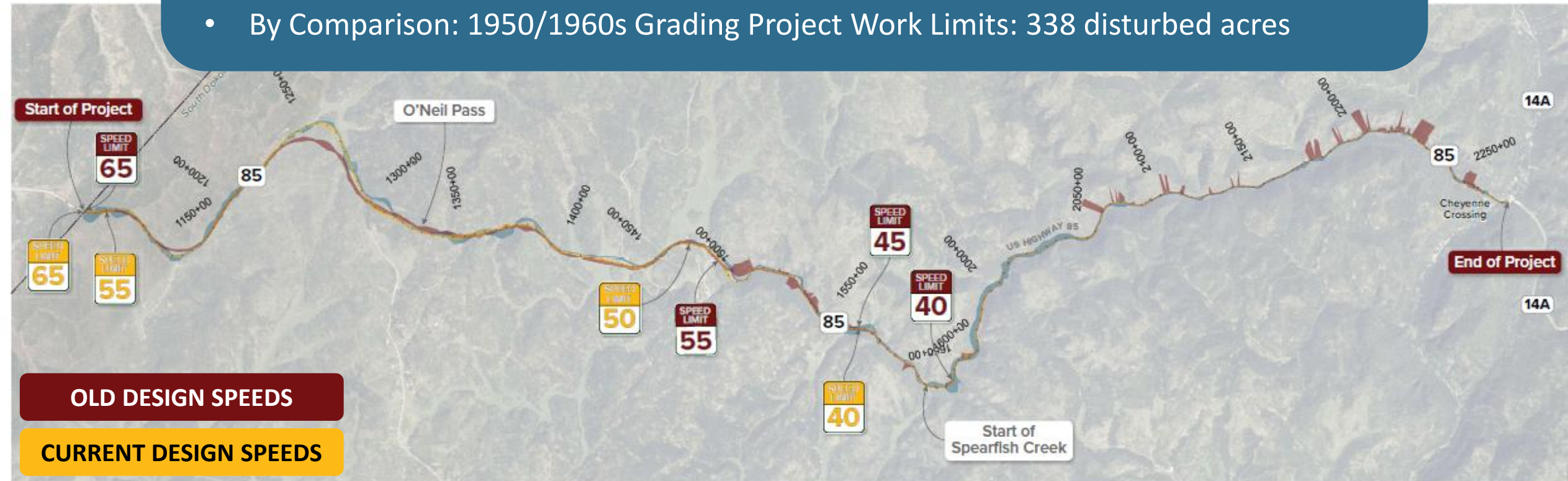


- LEGEND
- Proposed US 85 Highway 55 MPH Alternative
 - Proposed US 85 Highway 65 MPH Alternative
 - Existing US 85 Highway

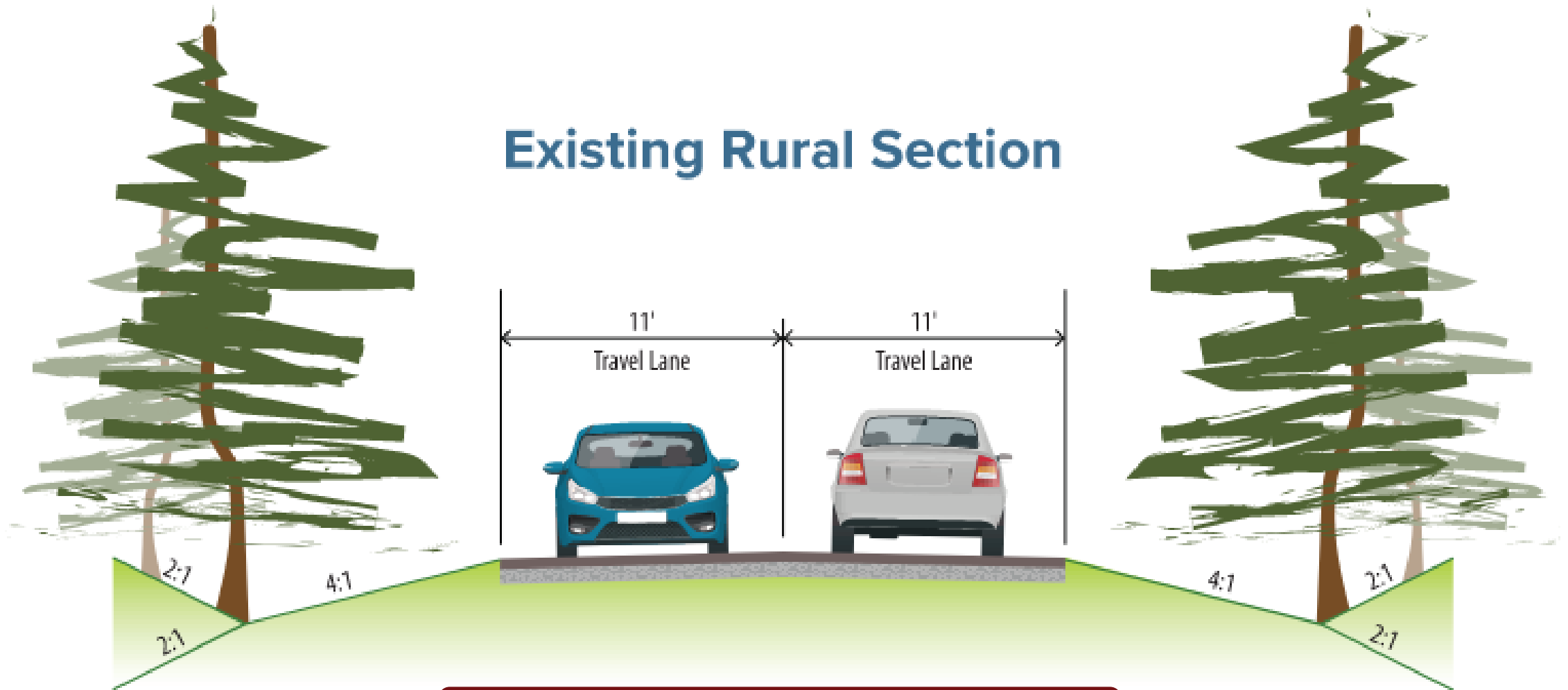
Design Updates

Reduced the Number of Acres Disturbed During Construction

- Pre-2023 Public Meeting: 290 disturbed acres
- Current Preliminary Design: 201.5 disturbed acres
 - **30.5% decrease** in disturbed acres as a result of comments received in 2023.
- By Comparison: 1950/1960s Grading Project Work Limits: 338 disturbed acres



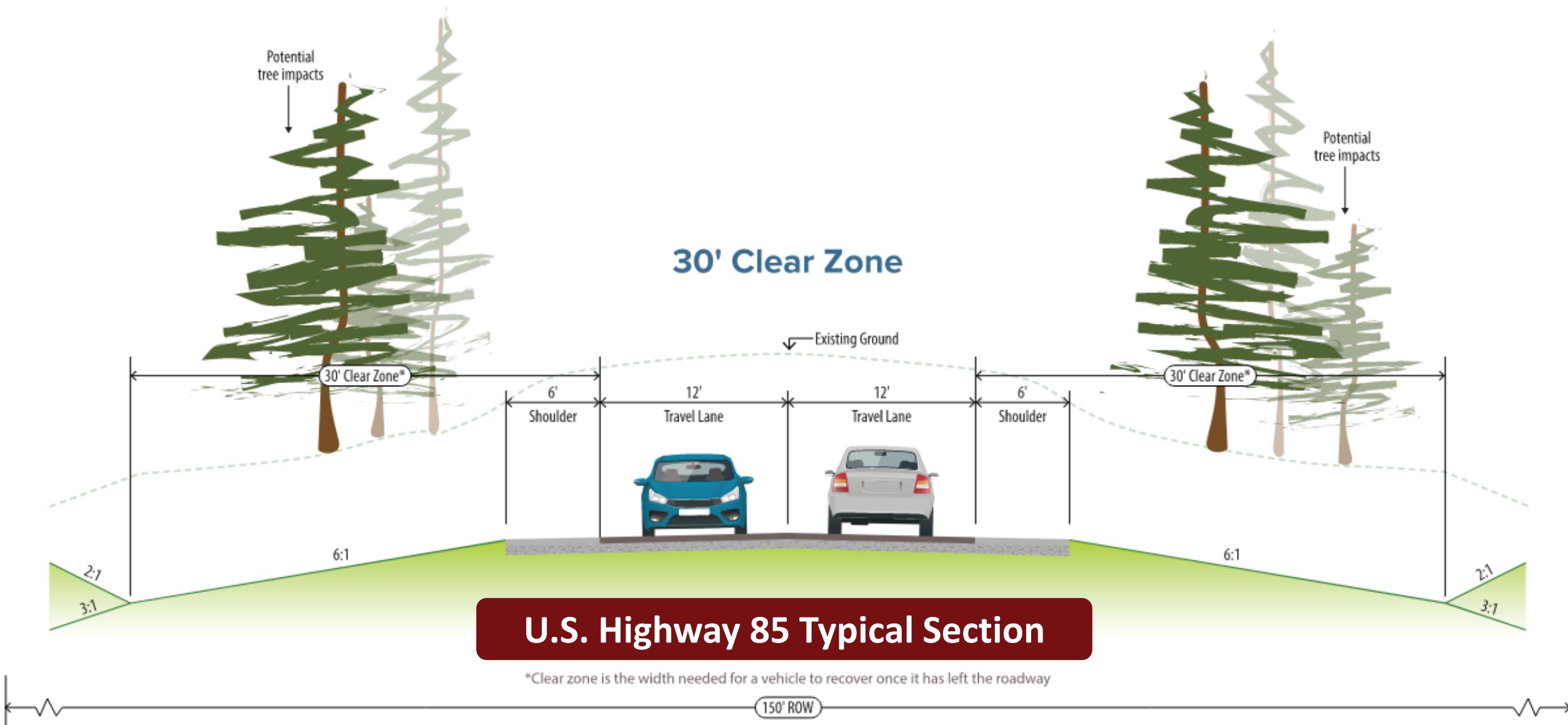
Existing Rural Section



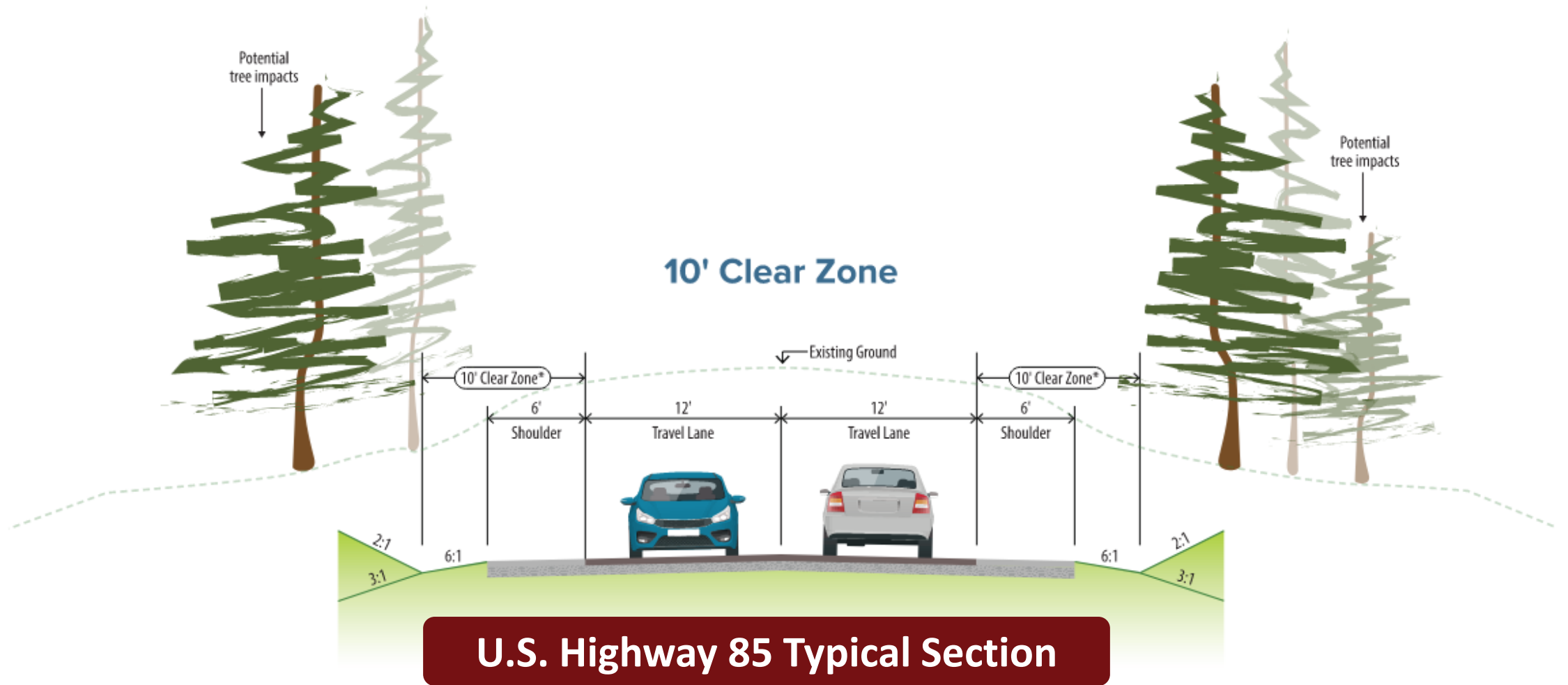
U.S. Highway 85 Typical Section

*Clear zone is the width needed for a vehicle to recover once it has left the roadway





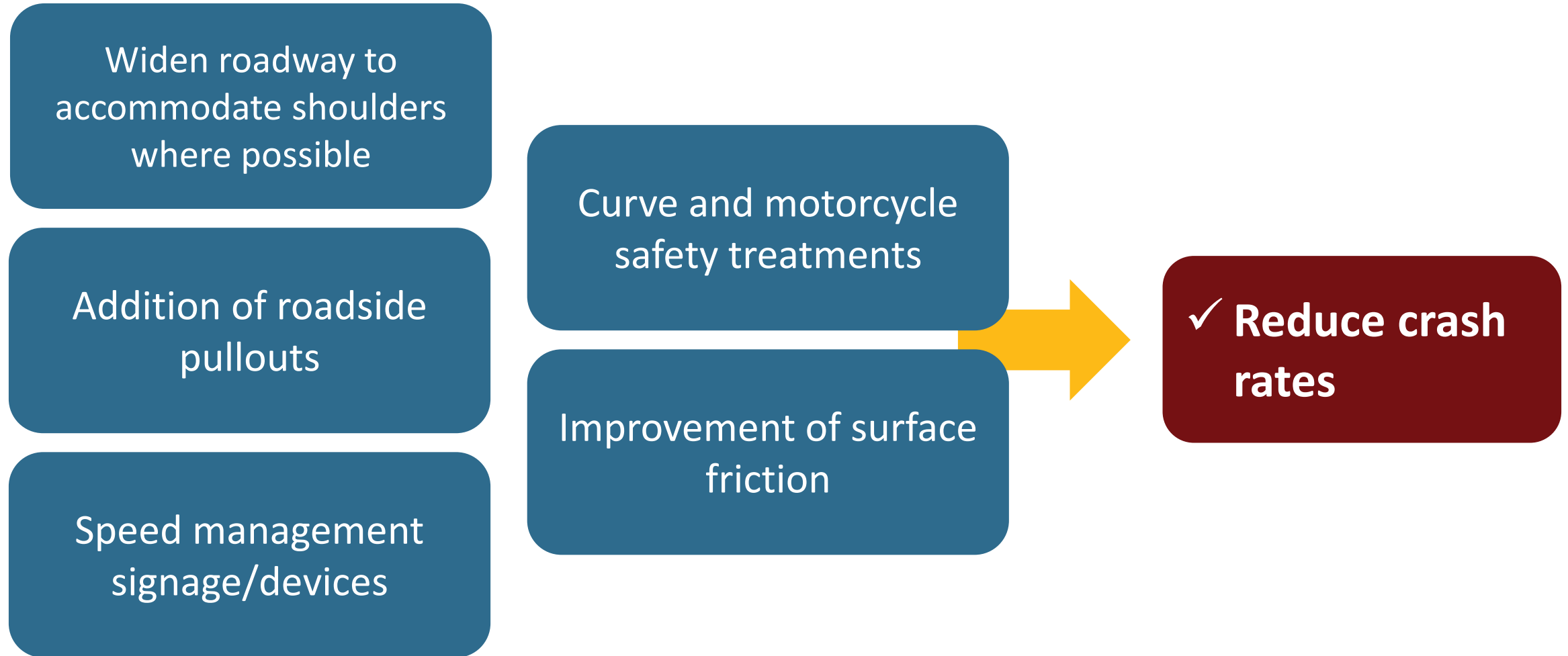
10' Clear Zone



*Clear zone is the width needed for a vehicle to recover once it has left the roadway

150' ROW

Proposed Safety Improvements



Pause for Discussion: Guardrail



Pause for Discussion: Guardrail

Benefits

- Prevent cars from entering Spearfish Creek
- Potential to reduce rollover crashes

Considerations

- Guardrail could block the view of Spearfish Creek
- Potential changes in creek access for some areas



Data-Backed Design

Increasing Safety & Preserving Natural Characteristics

U.S. Highway 14A Curve Reconstruction (2019-2020)

Before Construction 2014-2018
13 crashes (1 fatal, 4 injury, 8 PDO) 2.6 crashes per year
After Construction 2021-2024
2 crashes (1 injury, 1 PDO) 0.5 crashes per year



Highway 14A Curve Reconstruction



Before Construction



After Construction

Highway 14A Curve Reconstruction



Before Construction



After Construction

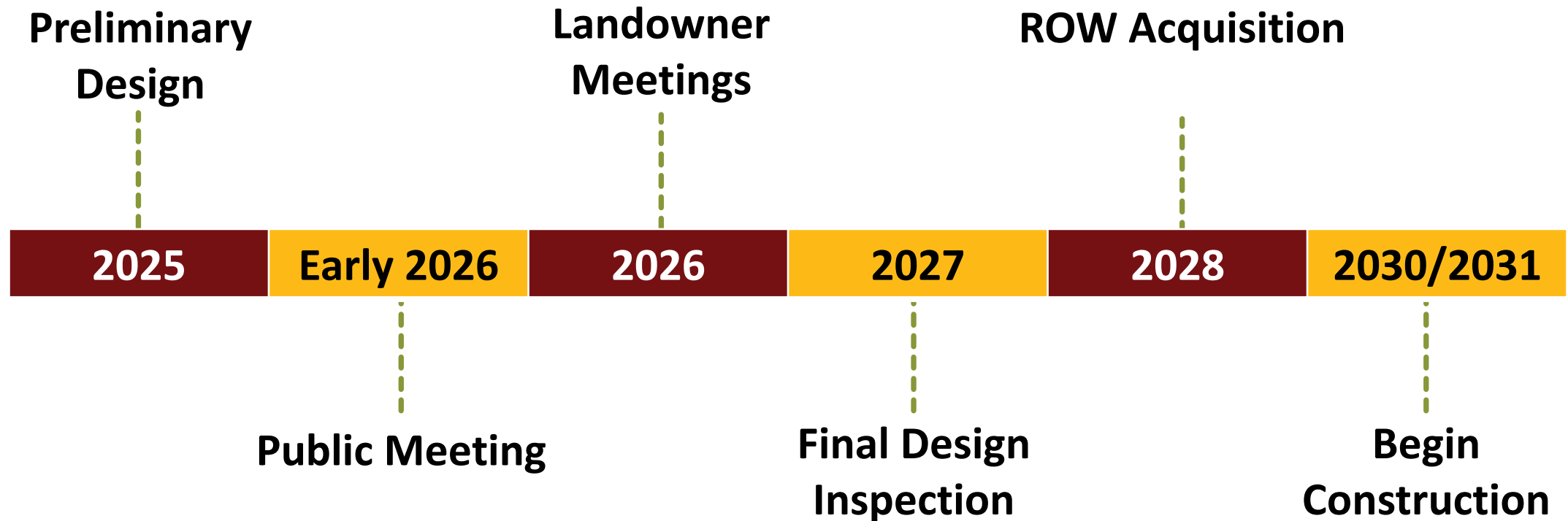
Design Decisions = Safety Benefits

What We ARE NOT Doing	What We ARE Doing	Safety Benefits
Removing all the trees	Removing trees to support a 30' clear zone where possible	Reduces the number of trees that could be struck at high speed after leaving the roadway. Goal is to allow space for a car to come to a stop before striking any objects and causing a more serious crash.
Straightening out every curve	Reducing the severity of the curves where possible	Increased sight distance More regular speed through corridor, reducing possibility for human mistakes
Realigning the entire roadway	Minor modifications at spot-specific locations to enhance safety where appropriate. Lowering the roadway to reduce angle of ditches where appropriate	Changing the angle of the roadway/clearzone will reduce the occurrence of run-off-the-road roll-over crashes

Tentative Project Schedule

Dependent on federal funding

Estimated cost: \$57.6 million



Pause for Discussion

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THANK YOU!

Extra Slides

QUESTION

Is the SDDOT going to be Raising the speed limits on U.S. Highway 85?

U.S. HIGHWAY 85 FAQ'S!

Wyoming Border to U.S. Highway 14A

Lawrence County



ANSWER

Overall this section of roadway will continue to be the same speed limit. The SDDOT is proposing curve improvements that would result in higher speed advisories around curves with the aim to increase safety in these areas.



<https://dot.sd.gov>