

2011/2012 Update to Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan Ketchikan, Alaska / Meeting Summaries

Introduction

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) issued a Scoping Report in August 2011 for public review as part of the update the Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan (SATP). ADOT&PF held an open house at 5:30 pm and a public meeting at 6:30 pm on October 11, 2011, at the Ted Ferry Civic Center in Ketchikan, Alaska to discuss the SATP Scoping Report. Also on October 11, 2011, ADOT&PF met with Ketchikan Borough staff at Borough Offices at 10:00 am and with Ketchikan Indian Community staff at its office at 1:00 pm.

A combined total of 17 people attended one of these meetings (see attached attendance list).

ADOT&PF Presentation at Open House/Public Meeting

The public meeting began with a PowerPoint presentation that reviewed:

- The ADOT&PF statutory obligation to conduct overview of the Southeast Alaska transportation planning
- The last SATP was prepared in 2004, then 1999
- The purpose and need of this SATP update is to ensure there is continued opportunity to travel by maintaining a financially sustainable transportation system. This includes addressing the need to replace three aging ferries within the next 20 years.
- The comment period for this Scoping Report is open until November 4. ADOT&PF will then review comments, conduct a user/benefit analysis, and prepare a Draft SATP that identifies a single Preferred Alternative. The draft SATP will likely be issued in late spring/early summer 2012. There will be another round of public meetings on the draft SATP document. The final SATP will be published in late 2012.
- In 1992, six Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) ferries carried 373,000 passengers and 97,000 vehicles. In 2010, ten ferries (including both AMHS and Inter-Island Ferry Authority [IFA] vessels) carried 304,000 passengers and 92,000 vehicles.
- The SATP Scoping Report identifies six preliminary alternatives:
 - 1 – Baseline: Maintain the Existing System
 - 2 – Ferry Capacity Management
 - 3 – Maximize Use of Existing Roads
 - 4 – Alaska Class Ferries
 - 5 – Highway Route 7
 - 6 – No Action

These six preliminary alternatives were designed to “test” very different transportation scenarios. There is no preferred alternative identified in the Scoping Report. The preferred alternative that will be identified in the Draft SATP will likely combine elements from these preliminary alternatives. Among other factors the six preliminary alternatives consider:

- Seasonality in use of ferry system and related excess capacity during the spring, fall and winter
 - Alaska and Southeast population projections
 - Funding forecasts (federal and state)
 - The fact that 43% of the travel within the region is by ferry, 8% of the travel from the region to the Lower 48 is by ferry, and 2% of the travel from the region to northern parts of the state is by ferry.
 - Replacing mainline ferries with Alaska Class ferries and/or roads and shuttle ferries
- The capital costs (1st column from left), annual operation and maintenance costs (2nd & 3rd column), and annual refurbishment costs (4th and 5th columns), and total annual costs in 2010 dollars (excludes capital costs) were reviewed for each of the preliminary alternatives, as shown in the table below.

Alternative	20 year Capital Costs	Annual M&O	% Change from 2010	Annual Refurbishment	% Change from 2010	Total Annual Cost	% Change from 2010
2010 Actual		131		47		178	
2032 Estimates	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
1 – Baseline: Maintain Existing	796	126	-4%	46	-3%	172	-4%
2 - Ferry Capacity Management	526	111	-16%	44	-7%	155	-13%
3 - Maximize Use of Roads	501	95	-28%	41	-13%	136	-24%
4 – Alaska Class Ferries	737	118	-10%	48	1%	166	-7%
5 – Highway Route 7	1,030	97	-26%	44	-7%	141	-21%
6 – No Action	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

- The presentation concluded with ADOT&PF representatives asking the public to provide written comments by November 4, 2011 on matters such as:
 - Your preferred alternative and why – and/or ideas for *additional* alternatives or options that you recommend ADOT&PF consider;
 - What communities do you make most of your trips each year;
 - What method of transportation do you use most and why – air, road and ferry;
 - What attributes are most important to you when you consider how you travel (such as cost, speed, service frequency, reliability, convenience, comfort, etc).
- This information will help ADOT&PF as it assembles the Draft SATP because it will need to consider trade-offs between these factors.

Questions, Answers

In response to questions raised at the meetings, ADOT&PF offered the following information and clarifications:

Fuel Consumption and Carbon Emissions

- ADOT&PF is reviewing fuel consumption, which is linked to carbon emissions.

Consideration of Customer Demand and Preferences

- ADOT&PF knows that the better the system can address the type and level of service that customers want the higher use (and revenue) will be. The challenge, however, is that each “unit” of capacity added to the system to address a customer desire adds about 35-134 vehicle spaces (depending on ferry) and significant fuel and labor costs. To address customer demand AMHS management does research and looks at tariffs and charges. The SATP, however, is generally reviewing the Southeast Alaska transportation system at a higher planning level and not delving into this detail. The system has enough excess capacity to address future route changes, and, if shuttle ferries making shorter runs (such as in alternative 5) are part of the preferred alternative there is flexibility to add additional runs using smaller ferries between points in response to need.

Ferry Refurbishment versus Replacement.

- There is a limit to the money that can go to refurbish almost 50 year vessels (the three mainliners and the Tustumena). At some point it costs too much and is too inefficient. Both US Coast Guard rules and enforcement influence decisions AMHS makes in this regard.

Profitability of Bellingham or Summer Ferry Runs

- The Bellingham ferry may do well in one direction when it is full, but it is often not full in both directions, and, refurbishment costs are never taken into account. Also, summer tourist traffic does not create system profitability.

2004 SATP

- The 2004 SATP’s preferred alternative with roads and shuttle ferries is similar to the current Alternative 5, though this is a scaled back version given fiscal realities.
- The Bradfield Canal, “Back Ketchikan” and other road routes are not in the preliminary alternatives in this Scoping Report because they do not meet the purpose and need for financial sustainability (need to replace three old mainline ferries) and are outside the 20-year planning period. These road options will appear in the appendices under essential road corridors.

Key Comments made during Ketchikan Meetings

Comments are grouped by topic.

Comments offered during the **Open House/Public Meeting** are noted by (OH/PM)

Comments offered during the meeting with the **Ketchikan Borough** are noted by (KB)

Comments offered during the meeting with **Ketchikan Indian Community** are noted by (KIC)

Growing job base in region will create additional travel demand

- To what extent is industry being considered in SATP process? For example, Bokan Mnt Mine on Prince of Wales Island could mean 150+ FT jobs, which would create more population and more travel demand between Prince of Wales Island & Ketchikan. (KIC)

Travel between Ketchikan - Prince of Wales Island and Ketchikan - Prince Rupert are most important routes locally

- Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC) focus is ferry traffic between Prince of Wales Island and Ketchikan. Outlying areas feeling pinch of lost barge service. Also important are tribal connections and desired travel among people of Ketchikan and Prince of Wales Island, and between Ketchikan and First Nations in Prince Rupert. Want to facilitate travel between Ketchikan and Prince of Wales Island for job training and education opportunities too. KIC members take jet if in a hurry, but often are traveling without time constraints for subsistence or cultural reasons and want car. (KIC)
- The convenience of twice/day Prince of Wales Island-Ketchikan ferries service is missed. Now, it takes two days to come and go between Ketchikan and Prince of Wales Island via ferry (even for a short meeting); a frustratingly long time. (KIC, OH/PM)

Water is the public highway in Southeast Alaska.

- Water routes are our transportation corridors here, reauthorization of federal transportation bill should recognize this and facilitate direction of funding this way. (KIC)

Support Prince of Wales Island infrastructure

- Support Coffman Cove ferry, Kasaan Access road, and expansion of Kasaan harbor and port. (KIC)

Do not completely eliminate Bellingham runs.

- Ferry only realistic alternative with car for those who cannot travel through Canada by road either because carrying weapons, have a DUI, cannot longer drive, etc. (OH/PM)
- If must alter number of sailing to and from Bellingham, reduce, rather than eliminate, number of trips. (OH/PM)

Decision-making for Preferred Alternative

- If ferry system will never break even, even if ferries run full, then decisions should be based on factors other than revenue; such as services that AMHS provides and other factors. (OH/PM)

Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan Scoping Report

Attendance at Ketchikan, Alaska meetings October 11, 2011

Open House and Public Meeting

1. Mike Salazar
2. Tom Miller
3. Charles Pool
4. Deanna Garrison
5. Anita Hales
6. Dick Coose
7. Jim Rhodes
8. Frances Rhodes
9. Glen Thompson
10. Agnes Moran

Ketchikan Borough Meeting

1. Tom Williams
2. Cynna Gubatyo
3. Ed Schofield
4. Dan Bockhorst
5. Kyan Reene
6. Leslie Jackson

Ketchikan Indian Community Meeting

1. Joel Azure

ADOT&PF Team

Verne Skagerberg, ADOT&PF

Jim Potdevin, ADOT&PF

Barbara Sheinberg, Sheinberg Associates

Donovan Bell, Sheinberg Associates