

2011/2012 Update to Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan Tenakee Springs, Alaska / Meeting Summary

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 gave a presentation, answered questions and took comments during a teleconference with the City of Tenakee Springs at 10:00 am on October 25, 2011. Six Tenakee Springs residents attended the teleconference.

ADOT&PF Presentation

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 by the audience, ADOT&PF offered the following information and clarifications:

Alternative 3

- Northland Services will ship vehicles by barge for a lower price than AMHS though it can take 7-8 days to receive vehicle.
- The highest expense for operating ferries is labor; eliminating staterooms reduce labor costs.

Alternative 5

- The shuttle ferries in Alternative 5 will be similar in size and carrying capacity to the Le Conte. They will be able to hold between 30 and 45 vehicles. They would be designed to travel year round in Southeast Alaska.
- Under Alternative 5, maintenance and operation expenses would increase for highways and decrease for ferries. Overall operations and maintenance costs for the system would be lower than with current costs.

Alaska Class Ferry Crew Size

- The Alaska Class ferry is expected to run as a day boat that would not go on routes over 12 hours long. A 12 hour day boat has to have a crew of 23. If the ferry runs for 18 hours, it needs approximately 28 crew members.

Key Comments made during Tenakee Springs Teleconference

Alternative 1

- Maintaining the existing system is our best option. If funding gets tight and a ferry has to be dropped, the system will still be able to function.

Alternative 3

- The ferry to Bellingham is our lifeline to the lower 48 and it is necessary for transporting vehicles.

Alternative 5

- Additional roads will increase operating and maintenance expenses and be dangerous.
- There are sporting events that gather hundreds of children from around the region. The ferry system makes these kinds of events possible and it would be challenging to transport teams by vehicle.
- The Lynn Canal Highway goes through many avalanche areas and would require very high maintenance expenditures every year.

- Alternative 5 is a huge project that will require lots of time and money. It is outside of the scope of this plan.

Non-Vehicle Owners

- There are many residents in small communities that don't own cars. It would be harder for them to travel if the transportation system contained more roads.

Staterooms in Alaska Class Ferries

- Every ferry should have a certain number of staterooms for people who need rest. There are people who are sick, injured or elderly that can't handle longer ferry rides without lying down. I am worried that the Alaska Class ferries don't have an adequate amount of resting area.

Juneau to Hoonah Ferry Service

- A ferry should be dedicated to Icy Strait travel between Juneau and Hoonah. This ferry could also provide service to Gustavus and Pelican.

User Convenience

- The convenience to the user should be considered when making the transportation plan. Shipping your car by barge and then flying down south by plane is a huge inconvenience.

Winter Travel

- During the winter, the ferry is the only reliable mode of transportation. Last winter we went ten days straight with no airline service.

Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan Scoping Report Attendance for Tenakee Springs, Alaska Teleconference October 25, 2011

City Teleconference

1. Terry Kennedy
2. Carlene Allred
3. Beret Barnes
4. Beverly Miller
5. Beverly Patch
6. Don Pegues

ADOT&PF Team

Jim Potdevin, ADOT&PF

Marie Heidemann, ADOT&PF

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