

2011/2012 Update to Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan Pelican, 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 Pelican at 10:00 am on October 26, 2011. Two Pelican residents attended the teleconference.

ADOT&PF Presentation

The teleconference 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:

Transportation Plan Process

- When the comment period ends, we will review all comments and begin to form an alternative/alternatives for the Draft SATP. After the draft SATP is issued ADOT&PF will hold another round of public meetings and accept comments before the final SATP is prepared.

Alternative 4

- The Alaska Class ferries are about the size of the Taku, but they won't have staterooms or the amenities of the larger ferries. They are designed to be day boats. They would have less crew and would have 12 hour or less routes.

Key Comments made during Pelican Teleconference

Pelican Ferry Service

- Pelican depends on ferry service for groceries and building materials. Any cut to the amount of service we receive would be disastrous to community.

Population

- The closer you get to the coast in Southeast Alaska, the higher the cost of living gets. This high cost of living keeps the populations low.

Operation and Maintenance Costs

- Road and ferry systems are two completely different modes of transportation and should be considered separately. Ferries provide a service and therefore have a higher cost.

Alternative 3

- The Bellingham and Cross Gulf ferry services only carry a small percent of the people traveling outside of the region. If ferry service must be cut, it should be done on these routes.

Alternative 5

- Alternative 5 focuses on transportation within the region. This seems to be the best Alternative for Southeast Alaska as a whole.

Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan Scoping Report Attendance for Pelican, Alaska Teleconference October 26, 2011

City Teleconference

1. Clint Bean
2. Kelly Chapman

ADOT&PF Team

Verne Skagerberg, ADOT&PF
Marie Heidemann, ADOT&PF
Donovan Bell, Sheinberg Associates