



Alaska Long Range Transportation Plan Transportation Stakeholders Group, Meeting #1

March 5, 2014
1:00 PM–4:00 PM

HDR Alaska
2525 C Street
Fourth Floor Conference Room
Anchorage

Staff Attendees:

Michael Crabb (DOT&PF)
Jeff Ottesen (DOT&PF)
Eric Taylor (DOT&PF)
Mike Vigue (DOT&PF)

Alan Meyers (Parsons Brinckerhoff)
David Rose (Parsons Brinckerhoff)
Keyur Shah (Parsons Brinckerhoff)

Tom Brigham (HDR Alaska)
Jessica Conquest (HDR Alaska)
Julie Jessen (HDR Alaska)

Stakeholder Attendees:

Captain John Falvey, AMHS
Roxanne Bash, WFL
Denise Michels, City of Nome
Sandra Muller, AEA
Jennifer Witt, DOT&PF
Robert Venabauls, MTAB
Chris Hladick, City of Unalaska
Brian Lindamood, ARRC
John Lohrey, FHWA
Lori Schanche, MOA
Phillip Worth, Kittelson
Josh Howes, MTAB
Judy Chapman, DOT&PF
Andy Hughes, DOT&PF
Craig Lyon, MOA-AMATS
Jimmy Smith, DCCED/DCRA

Stakeholder Attendees on the Phone:

Marcheta Moulton, DOT&PF
John Moller, Office of the Governor
Jim Shine, DNR
Paul Metz, UAF
John Kern, CBJ
Lee Ryan, DNR
Kellen Spillman, FNSB
Brad Sworts, MSB
Don Perrin, DNR

Meeting Overview

A meeting was held with the Transportation Stakeholder Group (TSG) on March 5, 2014 to introduce the purpose and role of the Alaska Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and to identify current and emerging concerns about the performance of the Alaska transportation system so that they may be considered during development of the LRTP. To start the meeting, Eric Taylor, Project Manager from DOT&PF, introduced the policy framework supporting the plan and the role of MAP-21 in the project's development. A presentation was then given by David Rose, Parsons Brinckerhoff, consulting team Project Manager, to introduce the purpose of the plan, provide an overview of the planning process, and to describe the role of the transportation stakeholder group.

The central component of the meeting was discussion. The meeting's discussion and activities were facilitated by Julie Jessen, HDR Alaska, and focused on five main themes: identifying what stakeholders currently value, current conditions, current problems, what does not need to be changed, and what stakeholders foresee in the future for Alaska transportation systems. Following the group discussion, David Rose provided another short presentation regarding funding. This final presentation covered historical revenues, the state general fund forecast, and the highway trust fund forecast. The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:30 PM.

Note: Questions and comments from stakeholders and the planning team in this summary are a synopsis of the meeting's dialogue. When appropriate, planning team responses have been supplemented to supply complete responses.

Meeting Materials

- Handouts
 - Agenda
 - 11x17 Diagram of Public Participation Schedule
- PowerPoint presentation

Meeting Summary

Introductions

Julie Jessen (HDR Alaska) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for taking part in this important process. Julie explained that this discussion is important because it will shape where the State will go over the next couple of years and thanked participants for being a part of that process. She explained that because the stakeholders know about the challenges that face our communities, agencies, and businesses, their input and suggestions will help make the plan a living document.

Julie (HDR Alaska) then introduced Eric Taylor (DOT&PF), who provided an overview of the policy framework supporting the project and the role of MAP-21. Eric concluded by introducing David Rose, Project Manager from Parsons Brinckerhoff, who then made a brief PowerPoint presentation providing an overview of the project.

Meeting Presentation

During the course of the meeting, David (Parsons Brinckerhoff) provided two short presentations: one prior to the discussion that introduced the purpose of the plan, provided an overview of the planning process, and described the role of stakeholders; and a second, following the group discussion, that discussed historical and projected funding availability for transportation improvement projects.

During the first presentation, Brian Lindamood (ARRC) asked if the planning team had considered a stand alone freight plan. The planning team responded that freight will be incorporated into the LRTP in order to promote the integration of freight as a component of Alaska's long range transportation needs. It was noted that, because both plans needed to be created at around the same time, the close timing of the two projects supported the decision to integrate the two documents as well.

Julie (HDR Alaska) noted that although the focus is presently on receiving technical and expert-level input, the planning team will also be soliciting input from the general public. Julie noted that meetings are planned in Fairbanks, the Mat-Su Valley, Anchorage, and that the team will also be meeting with Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System (FMATS) and Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS). Julie requested that if anyone knew of any advisory boards or other organizations that might have an interest in this process, to please let the planning team know. She noted that later in the planning process, online meetings will be held to promote additional public participation.

Roxanne (WFL) stated that land management agencies typically look 5 years into the future when it comes to improvement projects. She said that it was her impression that this plan would be focusing on the next 5 to 10 years and therefore might influence short-term outcomes.

David (Parsons Brinckerhoff) noted that it is plausible that the LRTP could influence projects by calling attention to costs associated with deferred projects, resource constraints, and changes in level of service (LOS). However, the purpose of looking at the next 5 to 10 years is not to preclude or constrain currently planned projects, but rather to forecast what could be funded during that timeframe assuming steady funding and a couple years of project delay.

Roxanne (WFL) replied that she does not anticipate any huge projects on any of the Park Service, BLM or FWS lands, but that there are potentially some minor ones that should be considered.

David (Parsons Brinckerhoff) explained that the purpose of the plan is to assess how the system is performing today and how will it perform over the planning horizon. He stated that the planning team will predict the performance of the projects that are in the pipeline and how the overall transportation system will likely perform in 10 years. From this information, the LRTP will facilitate the conversation as to whether or not the level of performance that will be provided is acceptable.

The project team then presented a Venn diagram describing the different transportation modes used within the state. David (Parsons Brinckerhoff) asked the panel if any modes were missing. To this Lori Schanche (MOA) replied that bikes and pedestrians were missing for whole complete streets. Others chimed in suggestions such as All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and snow machines. Roxanne (WFL) inquired if the category "state motor vehicles" included all vehicles. Keyur Shah (Parsons Brinckerhoff) confirmed that category does.

At this point in the meeting Julie (HDR Alaska) asked if there were any additional questions for David (Parsons Brinckerhoff) and the team prior to the main discussion and brainstorming session. Brian (ARRC) asked if the LRTP is only looking at the next 5-8 years of projects and next 10 years of funding, is it really long range planning? David replied that it is long range planning because that timeframe is

critical to getting through the planning process. To this, Brian inquired if the first half of the plan would cover the planned projects and funding for the next 5-8 years and 10 years, respectively, and if the second half of the plan would cover the second half of the 20-year period based on known and forecasted growth constraints. David (Parsons Brinckerhoff) replied that you can deduce whether or not that level of service is acceptable and if not how it is going to be accommodated. Brian stated that he believes that the stakeholder group will come up with a huge list of improvements. David replied that brainstorming ideas is the first step in the process and that later on the team will become realistic about prioritization by taking into account the fact that there are multiple modes with differing needs that have to be met.

Stakeholder Discussion

Note: Questions and comments from stakeholders and the planning team in this summary are a synopsis of the meeting's dialogue. When appropriate, planning team responses have been supplemented to supply complete responses.

Julie (HDR Alaska) started the stakeholder discussion by outlining what topics would be discussed. This included:

- What stakeholders value in an LRTP
- Current Conditions of Alaska's Transportation Systems
- What is Working
- The Future of Alaska's Transportation Systems

What Stakeholders Value in a LRTP

Julie (HDR Alaska) started the discussion of stakeholder values by asking everyone to close their eyes and imagine the year 2020. She illustrated a scenario where each stakeholder has been asked to develop a long range transportation plan for their own division, organization, agency, or company. She asked them to consider that situation and imagine what about the LRTP would provide value and why.

Some cursory ideas were suggested, such as identifying maintenance needs for existing resources. Then Andy Hughes (DOT&PF) suggested that identifying what the projected transportation needs are would be of value. Andy explained that the reason he brought this point up was that often power lines and telecommunications are connected to transportation. He posed the question "where do you draw the line?" Andy noted that we need to think about the bigger picture, which takes into account that passengers are moved by the ferry system and that freight is moved by barge and air. He concluded his point by stating that it is important to identify what areas transportation is supposed to serve.

Roxanne (WFL) noted that she would be considering coordination between stakeholders and how they are working together to promote the overall transportation system in Alaska. She explained that this would include considering bikes and ATVs as modes of transportation and giving villages a greater voice in the conversation.

Paul Metz (UAF) added that identifying opportunity cost would also be of value. He noted that Fort Knox provides money to Fairbanks and that absence of an adequate transportation system may translate into a loss in opportunities.

LRTP characteristics that were considered to have value were:

- Consistency and standardization
- Clarity and transparency on policy by which the state makes decisions

- A coordinated effort among agencies

L RTP components that were considered to have value were:

- Strategy for implementation
- Identification of State's values of different modes
- Assessment of baseline conditions
- Trends report
- Defined set of performance measures and targets
- Goals, strategies, and policies that provide direction
- Description of the components of the overall plan
- Directory providing contact information for key individuals associated with different modes
- Identification of weak areas that need to be improved
- Identification of challenges
- Identification of transportation needs that should be addressed
- Identification of the division between routes and corridors
- Assessment of opportunity costs of not having a connection to a community (absence of system)
- List of actions
- Identification of revenue streams and funding
- Identification of transportation needs that are addressed in the plan
- Identification of linkages to other systems (big and small)

Current Conditions

Julie (HDR Alaska) then redirected the discussion to have stakeholders identify what the current conditions are for each of the transportation modes. She asked that each person use a sticky note and pen to list current conditions within each stakeholder's mode, region, or industry. General themes that were discussed were connectivity, congestion, maintenance & funding, safety, and capacity.

Connectivity

The conversation was opened with a discussion of connectivity issues, with Juneau Access as the primary example. Roxanne (WFL) noted that all of her sticky notes had to do with connectivity issues. She added that the State of Alaska is the backbone for getting people to public lands, with 14 national parks made accessible via the state transportation system. Judy Chapman (FNB) noted that Lake Clark National Park does not have public access. Roxanne expanded upon this, stating that the issue is greater than just providing access to state-owned facilities, and that connectivity needs to be improved to lands held by all agencies.

Brad Sworts (MSB) added that connectivity in the Mat-Su Borough is a huge issue. He noted that all traffic feeds into the State highway systems. Brad added that if this issue is not addressed, the Parks Highway will require 12 lanes through Wasilla in the next 15 to 20 years. He added that widening the highway to that extent is not a desirable outcome because it would essentially wipe out the business corridor in Wasilla.

It was noted that, in addition to road connectivity, there is also a need for connectivity infrastructure for maritime operations. Captain John Falvey (AMHS) added that presently there are new ports that are taking away service from existing ports.

Jennifer Witt (DOT&PF) mentioned that presently there is a lack of controlled access, and that this results in added congestion and safety issues.

Paul Metz (UAF) added that connectedness needs to be thought of as having three components:

1. Legal Access
2. Physical Access
3. Economic Access

He added that the probability of success in increasing connectivity is reliant upon the success of each of these components. Therefore, they should all be considered together.

Brian (ARRC) noted that connectivity is also dependent on whether or not it is correctly linked to land use. Andy (DOT&PF) responded that federal land can be a barrier to connecting communities, so it depends on your perspective.

A summary of the identified current conditions of transportation connectivity within the State is provided in the bulleted list below:

- Lack of an interstate (controlled access) system
- ANILCA/ANCSA hindering road construction
- Adequate docks in rural areas
- Low intercommunity mobility of area residents
- The need for improved connectivity with secondary roads
- The need to increase connectedness in terms of legal access, physical access, and economic access
- The need for deep draft ports in rural Alaska
- The need for docks, harbors, dead heads, etc. in rural Alaska
- Poor connectivity between communities
- Lack of roads connecting villages in rural Alaska
- Some key federal lands with no public transportation access (ex. Lake Clark National Park)
- 82% of Alaska communities have no road/ surface connection
- Some major transportation links are absent (ex. Turnagain Arm Crossing)
- Bike and pedestrian connections have missing links
- There is no road connecting western Alaska to existing urban road system
- There are ongoing requests for new additional service to coastal communities
- Land use ownership
- Forest service provides connectivity in Southeast Alaska communities
- There is limited road access throughout state
- There is a need for connecting infrastructure

Congestion

Brad (MSB) suggested that congestion be discussed as an existing condition. Brian (ARRC) noted that there are physical constraints that make rail terminals congested. It was noted that some systems are trying to be all things to all people, but how are urban and rural issues being addressed for all?

A summary of the identified current conditions of transportation congestion within the state is provided in the bulleted list below:

- The State lacks a stable state-funded transportation program
- Railway terminal facilities are congested

- Port facilities are near capacity and many need capital improvement
- The State's population is primarily based on the location of the rail corridor
- Air/Aviation congestion
- High use of two lane rural highways has created safety congestion concerns (safety corridors)

It was noted that there is currently a need for a regional seaplane base in the Mat-Su Valley due to the fact that air aviation congestion is increasing as the population continues to grow.

Maintenance & Funding

Jimmy Smith (DCCED/DCRA) suggested that maintenance back log be added as a current condition. Current conditions discussed with regards to maintenance included:

- Backlog
- Aging infrastructure
- Snow removal underfunded
- Flat maintenance budget
- Winter conditions for pedestrians

It was mentioned during the discussion that the Northern Region needs maintenance and that ARRC infrastructure is aging and not meeting capacity.

Andy (DOT&PF) noted that ferry boats require maintenance and replacement because ferry boats have a finite life. Craig Lyon (AMATS) brought up the matter of unfunded mandates and that if there isn't any money allocated for improvements and maintenance then nothing can really be done.

Terminals, docks, and lifts were all mentioned as infrastructure that needs to be maintained. John Kern (CBJ) added that winter maintenance is an issue in Juneau, particularly for pedestrian facilities. Brad (MSB) added that this is most likely the result of a lack of funding.

Lee Ryan (DNR) noted that maintenance of airports is related to staffing. In addition, rural airport contracts go to the lowest bidder and are not based on the quality of work. He suggested that this method inhibits the standardization of maintenance. Lee also suggested that runway classification standardizations be examined and asked the group if having super huge runways everywhere is really necessary.

A summary of the identified current conditions of transportation maintenance within the State is provided in the bulleted list below:

- Deferring maintenance costs to AMHS ships and terminals and docks (AMHS has ageing mainline vessels)
- Bridge conditions – A large number of bridges were built in the 1970s and are getting old.
- Railway facilities are very aged
- Staffing challenges
- Funding to maintain existing infrastructure
- Winter maintenance
- Tightening federal mandates affecting limited maintenance funding
- Flat maintenance budgets negatively impact snow clearing – most evident for pedestrian mobility
- Maintenance is underfunded so snow removal is slow and often inadequate
- What we have should be maintained first before adding new
- Not enough maintenance funding to keep up with needs for pavement replacement

- Limited or no funding available for pathway maintenance: snow removal, spring sweeping, crack repair
- Bridge conditions are fair, but loading capacity severely constrained; this leads to bridge replacement needs
- Tunnel maintenance condition is marginal
- ARRC track is in good condition, but room for improvement, especially at intersections with roadways
- Need maintenance of rural state roads
- Rural road dust issues
- Airport conditions maintain narrow rural land use

The discussion of maintenance led into the discussion of funding. Lori (MOA) noted that funding for pedestrian infrastructure is not included in roadway projects funds. John (CBJ) said that Juneau has been able to construct pedestrian paths and bike paths. Lori (MOA) suggested that maybe bicycle taxes should be added to help pay for infrastructure construction and maintenance.

The discussion of funding was closed with Roxanne noting that there is transportation funding available through WFL and Denise Michels (City of Nome) adding that there is an opportunity to fund transportation improvements that provide access to tribal lands.

A summary of the identified current conditions of transportation funding within the State is provided in the bulleted list below:

- Lack of attention on how to procure funding for improvements to roadway system and airports
- Lack of money for urban trail – type projects, per MAP-21
- Lack of funding for community-type local transportation (road) projects into future, per MAP-21
- US postal service raising mail/shipping rates to deal with revenue deficit (bypass mail)
- A weak transportation enhancement program
- Dramatic decrease in STP funds for urban and rural roads
- Need to leverage state and tribal money for projects
- High-level costs in terms of money and time
- Underdeveloped road system
- No bicycle ‘road’ taxes
- New funding source federal lands access program (FLAP)
- Pedestrian facilities in road projects are often not included or cut or ignored due to budget or politics
- Unfunded federal mandates (PTC and others)
- Tax-averse population

Safety

While not discussed by any one stakeholder in great detail, the group as a whole came up with a number of safety conditions for consideration:

- More trail staking is needed between villages
- There should be protected access onto the main highway for school pick-up and drop-off traffic
- Need intersection improvements near schools
- Old AMHS ships should be updated or replaced to increase safety
- Need to increase the number of safety corridors

- No formal regional organization structure to work on together
- Increased weather events affect assets
- Permafrost and its affect on northern roads
- Lack of shoulders on stated-owned collectors
- New techniques often ‘experimental’ are not tried or accepted
- Drivers and bicyclists need to know rules of road
- Appropriate facilities (bike lanes) do not exist on many of roadways (safety issues)
- Lack of sidewalks and pedestrian connectivity (and maintenance of those facilities) in many urban areas (excluding Anchorage)

Capacity

While also not discussed by any one stakeholder in great detail, the group as a whole came up with a few capacity conditions for consideration:

- Certain types of rail car fleet ~~is~~are near capacity
- Some rail cars for new businesses unavailable
- Bridge load capacity
- Deficient and functionally obsolete bridges
- Most Part 139 runway lengths inadequate for new Alaska air fleet. 737-700s & 800s and 900s

The conversation on existing conditions ended with a brief discussion on the changing climate and how changes in permafrost patterns and availability of ice roads have implications for the State’s transportation system, both in terms of access and maintenance.

What is Working

Julie (HDR Alaska) noted that now that the current conditions have been identified, it would be beneficial to emphasize currently successful components of the State’s transportation system.

Craig (AMATS) noted that we understand the problems and issues and work cooperatively to solve them. Roxanne (WFL) stated that this cooperation occurs between the State and Federal governments and Denise (City of Nome) added that such coordination also occurs between the State and Tribal governments. Brad (MSB) suggested that a regional discussion is needed as well.

It was noted that Alaska does not have congestion to the degree of other States. That we fix things, make the necessary safety improvements, and are equipped to deal with extreme weather events. Brian (ARRC) noted that we have the tools necessary and just need to utilize cross-agency coordination.

It was agreed by the group that the State of Alaska has a mutual support system across modes, but the challenge is keeping the State’s interest in mind.

Another identified strength of the existing transportation system is the coordination that occurs with the Department of Defense (DOD). It was noted that the State has provided essential infrastructure to the DOD and as a result the DOD has provided monetary incentives to the State. An identified goal is to maintain the DOD’s presence in Alaska.

A summary of the identified successful current conditions is provided in the bulleted list below:

- We understand the problems and issues

- Cooperation between State, federal government, tribes, and local government
- Comparatively less congestion than other states
- We fix things
- We are equipped and trained to deal with weather
- We have a lot of tools in the toolbox (cross-agency support)
- Implementing safety projects (improving intersections)
- Willing to build new things
- Cooperation with military
- Able to take advantage of opportunities (quickly)

Future Conditions

Meeting participants were invited to form groups of 3 or 4 people to work together to identify the future state of the Alaska transportation system in 2035.

The results of this discussion are provided in the bulleted list below:

- Decreased funding
- Dedicated State transportation funding is in place
- More multiuse paths
- Better connectivity throughout modes and across the state
- 0 fatalities for all modes
- Improved access to and through public lands
- Increased facilities throughout
- New infrastructure – Northwest Passage, RR to Arctic Ocean, improved connections, etc.
- Fixing existing infrastructure
- Increased tourism
- Better travel information (congestion, weather, 511 works, etc.)
- Increased telecommuting
- Freight moved off highways and onto rail
- Different modes used by aging population (RR to Denali, Cruise Ships)
- A growing aging population touring through Alaska
- Increased use of alternative energy fuels
- Improved bike infrastructure making it a safer mode of transportation
- New ship technologies – Design and Fuels
- Bike path from ANC to Fairbanks
- More travelers using different modes (mass transit multimodal)
- Connectivity to and between communities and resources to access resources
- Improved access to commercial hubs for rural locations
- More pedestrian connections in communities
- Pathway linking Seward to Fairbanks
- Driverless vehicles
- Aging population driving more and to more destinations
- Improved access to and across public lands
- More southeast roads to provide more marine highway/ road connections
- Road from Glennallen to Delta Junction straightened
- Cycle tracks provided as separate lanes
- Continued decrease in funding streams
- State-funded transportation program exists

- Crumbling infrastructure from WWII era; no more deferring maintenance
- More roads constructed to promote resource development - Testing dirigibles with a smaller footprint to resources
- Graphite mining
- Increase in Arctic shipping
- Big projects currently considered will be completed and the State will be funding the implementation
- Increased population growth in the rail belt
- More development will occur on key corridors, such as the Dalton Highway
- Railroad to the Arctic ocean
- Increased number of facilities (ports, harbors, roads, ferries)
- Airships
- More telecommunication
- Light rail connections to the Mat-Su Valley and Girdwood
- Corridor development to North Slope
- Road to Cordova
- Transportation corridor created west across Susitna
- Route improving access to Juneau
- Road to Galena
- Bridge to Hope
- DOT is almost finished with EIS for Cooper Landing
- Ports within Northwest passage for shipping

The group agreed that past decisions will need to be considered when it comes to determining future needs and funding. As the time was nearing for the meeting to adjourn, Julie (HDR Alaska) requested that meeting attendees continue to think about potential solutions and email her their ideas. She stated that this would be the starting point for the next stakeholder meeting in June.

Presentation on Funding

David (Parsons Brinckerhoff) then provided a second short presentation about transportation funding. This presentation covered both historical trends and the potential for future funding availability for transportation improvement projects. Andy (DOT&PF) inquired if one of the considerations during the prioritization phase of the project will be if resource development will eventually pay for the transportation improvement. David replied that for public transportation we need to know how much we can afford and how much will be available to fund. One question posed was if all of the funding considered would be capital funding. David replied that the LRTP will consider capital and operating funding.

It was noted that this is an election year and that DOT&PF may need to execute layoffs and stop projects due to lack of funding. Another stakeholder noted that the President is going to close tax loopholes and that the House of Representatives is agreeing with this plan. David (Parsons Brinckerhoff) agreed that the likelihood that a funding solution is found is higher than it has been in the past, but that it is difficult to make a long range plan in this area of uncertainty.

It was mentioned that when federal funds are pulled, most State DOTs are unable to fund their projects. However, due to the fact that the State of Alaska works out of its general fund, and reimburses it with federal dollars, it is in a better place.

Jennifer Witt (DOT&PF) asked if in the next stakeholder meeting it will be assumed that there will be stable state funding in the future. David replied that solutions will be approached from both scenarios: one where funding is available and one where it is not. David said that this will allow us to understand what our priorities are if there is additional revenue. The goal is for a long range plan that also identifies additional areas of performance and what added revenue will buy if it is available.

Andy (DOT&PF) asked if the LRTP will identify what is going to be required to preserve what we have over the next 20 years. David (Parsons Brinckerhoff) replied that it will. Denise (City of Nome) ask if much information is provided to deduce what will be necessary to preserve what we have over the next 20 years and if technological advances will be considered. David replied that the planning team has some of the information needed for pavement and structures, and that structures tend to be bigger ticket items than pavement. He added that the team will look at maintenance and operations, asset preservation, additional connectivity, and developing the system looking at different modes. This assessment, he assured the group, will be good enough for planning purposes. Andy (DOT&PF) asked if productivity and cost efficient measures will be used to compare different modes. David replied that the project team has not been thinking about it in those terms, but could look into it, analyzing use (effectiveness) above and beyond cost. He added that the team has the data necessary to conduct such an analysis.

Andy (DOT&PF) added that if we are going to have scarce resources, we need to know where we can be most effective with those resources with regards to moving people/ freight/ etc. Brian (ARRC) added that we should look at where stuff is going. Everything that is utilizing our transportation modes has somewhere else to go. We need to compare this against what funding is going to be available. David (Parsons Brinckerhoff) responded that the project team has no preconceptions and is open to doing things differently. It was noted that the emphasis will be on the National Highway System and that roads to rural areas will be tough. David agreed that once you get off the NHS it is a challenge.

At this point in the discussion, Julie Jessen noted the time and closed the discussion.

Key Issues and Opportunities Summary

In general, it was agreed that the LRTP should provide consistency and standardization, be a clear and transparent document, and be the result of a coordinated effort between agencies. It was suggested that the plan take a holistic view at Alaska's transportation system, rather than considering system vitality based on the sum of the conditions of each mode. It was agreed that all modes should be evaluated as a component of the overall network, with the success of the network being based on its ability to move freight and people quickly and cheaply to their intended destinations.

Some of the broad themes discussed during the meeting were:

- Access
- Connectivity
- Congestion
- Capacity
- Maintenance
- Funding
- Safety
- Economic Opportunity

Access and connectivity were identified as primary components to be considered. Improvements to access and connectivity that were discussed included: providing better access to public lands, relieving

congestion in populated areas by providing additional routes, and improving access to and between isolated communities.

Maintenance and funding were also raised as key issues. With a backlog of maintenance issues, aging infrastructure, flat maintenance budgets, and winter conditions plaguing all modes, the ability to fund critical maintenance projects is a major concern for all stakeholders. Climate change was also identified as a potential consideration due to the fact that changes in permafrost patterns and the availability of ice roads have implications for the State's transportation system, both in terms of access and maintenance, as well as its economic vitality. The TSG agreed that it is likely that funding available for transportation will decrease during the life of the LRTP. It was suggested that the age and suitability of current infrastructure for all modes should be documented and that solutions for maintenance funding should be identified.

Although safety was not discussed in as much detail, the group agreed that improving safety is an essential component of the LRTP, including non-motorized forms of transportation. Another key theme from the discussion was how transportation improvements might be used as a means of strengthening Alaska's economy. The Roads to Resources program, and similar projects, were used as examples of where transportation improvements have been funded by their ability to provide access for resource extraction. It was suggested that similar opportunities be identified and documented in the LRTP.

Additional input and suggestions will be made during the solutions conversation that will be held on May 28th, 2014.

Next Steps

The next TSG meeting will be held May 28th, 2014. The next meeting will provide updated information and cover performance tracking, prioritization towards plan goals, and identification of strategies and actions.

Notes by: HDR Alaska