

Juneau Access Improvements Project
Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
CHOOSING A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The original 1997 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Juneau Access Improvements (JAI) Project did not identify a preferred alternative. Two years later, a comprehensive summary document was prepared to compare the original five build alternatives from the Draft EIS, plus four new proposals based on comments received on the Draft EIS. A review team of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) engineers and planners evaluated that summary, and rated Alternative 2, the East Lynn Canal with Katzechin Ferry Terminal, the highest of all alternatives and proposals. Alternative 2 consisted of a road link between Juneau and Skagway with a ferry terminal at Katzechin providing ferry service to Haines.

In 2000, Governor Tony Knowles declared Alternative 2 the State's preferred alternative, but decided that it would not be actively pursued at that time. The DOT&PF Commissioner confirmed the selection of Alternative 2 to the FHWA, along with a plan to continue gathering data for completion of a Final EIS. In 2003, newly elected Governor Frank Murkowski revived the project.

The 2005 Supplemental Draft EIS again identified Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative, based on its ability to meet the purpose and need elements. Alternative 2 was dropped from consideration in the 2006 Final EIS after the FHWA determined it would impact protected lands within the Skagway and White Pass District National Historic Landmark (NHL). The 2006 Final EIS identified Alternative 2B: East Lynn Canal Highway to Katzechin, with Shuttles to Haines and Skagway as the preferred alternative.

After careful review and consideration of the updated analyses conducted for this 2014 Draft Supplemental EIS, FHWA and DOT&PF continue to believe that Alternative 2B best meets the project's purpose and need. This preference is based on ability to meet traffic demand, provide

The purpose and need for the Juneau Access Improvements Project is to provide improved surface transportation to and from Juneau within the Lynn Canal corridor that will:

1. Provide the capacity to meet transportation demand
2. Provide flexibility and improve opportunity for travel
3. Reduce travel times between the communities
4. Reduce State costs for transportation
5. Reduce user costs for transportation

improved flexibility and opportunity to travel, and provide the shortest travel times, the greatest reduction in user costs and lowest cost to the State on a per-vehicle basis.

Figure 1: Alternative 2B (Preferred): East Lynn Canal Highway to Katzeihin with Shuttles to Haines and Skagway

