

# 2011/2012 Update to Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan Craig, 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 12, 2011, at the Craig City Hall in Craig, Alaska to discuss the SATP Scoping Report. Also on October 12, 2011, ADOT&PF met with City of Craig staff at City Hall at 10:30 am and with representatives from Craig Tribal Association (CTA) and Organized Village of Kasaan at the CTA office at 1:15 pm.

A combined total of 8 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 (1<sup>st</sup> column from left), annual operation and maintenance costs (2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> column), and annual refurbishment costs (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 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	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
<b>1 – Baseline: Maintain Existing</b>	796	126	-4%	46	-3%	172	-4%
<b>2 - Ferry Capacity Management</b>	526	111	-16%	44	-7%	155	-13%
<b>3 - Maximize Use of Roads</b>	501	95	-28%	41	-13%	136	-24%
<b>4 – Alaska Class Ferries</b>	737	118	-10%	48	1%	166	-7%
<b>5 – Highway Route 7</b>	1,030	97	-26%	44	-7%	141	-21%
<b>6 – No Action</b>	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

- 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:

### Capital Improvement Funding

- In response to a question about capital improvement funding sources, ADOT&PF noted that federal, state and other funding will be used. Currently federal aid is the primary source of funding.
- The amount of funding for Southeast Alaska capital improvements (and operations and maintenance) compared to other regions is based on many factors: need, population served, , alternatives and more.

### Statewide Planning

- A question was raised about whether there is a statewide transportation plan that the SATP is part? Answer: ADOT&PF noted that the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) evaluates projects statewide, and, there is an overarching- though general- State Transportation plan. The regional plans, such as the SATP, are more detailed. Regional or area plans are adopted as components of the “Alaska Statewide Transportation Plan.”

### Filling Excess AMHS Capacity in Winter

- In response to a question about whether discounts can be offered in the off-season to add van traffic and fill capacity, ADOT&PF notes that there are programs such as rider goes free in winter, specials such as See Pelican day trips, and more. However, AMHS must consider unintended consequences of competing with commercial freight carriers.

## Key Comments made during Craig 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 **City of Craig** are noted by (CC)

Comments offered during the meeting with **Craig Tribal Association and Organized Village of Kasaan** representatives are noted by (CTA/OVK)

### Bradfield Canal

- If the Bradfield Canal Road is not in SATP it could jeopardize future funding as these days every capital need must be in a plan or risk funding denial. (CTA/OVK)
- Why isn't Bradfield Canal Road in an alternative? CTA believes this is needed to help get resource commodities from central and southern southeast Alaska (like fresh fish) cost effectively to the road system. This connecting road segment is more important than Juneau Access segment. (CTA/OVK)
- ADOT&PF notes that Mid-Region Access/Bradfield Canal did not meet the purpose and

need for financial sustainability (need to replace three old mainline ferries) and is outside the 20-year planning period. It will appear in the appendices under essential road corridors.

#### Prince of Wales Island Road Needs

- A primary road link to Bokan Inlet and NiBlack mining areas is needed. Just got addendum to roadless rule signed two weeks ago to allow Reynolds Creek power corridor and road; this is needed for Bokan and NiBlack Mine. If a road doesn't get built allowing access from Prince of Wales Island communities and mines then the jobs and provision of services will come from Ketchikan not Prince of Wales Island. This infrastructure is critical to economic development for Prince of Wales Island. This must be part of SATP and Governor's "Roads to Resources" plans/infrastructure. (CTA/OVK)
- Kasaan Access Road has been accepted into US Forest Highway system recently, would like to see this in SATP. (CTA/OVK)

#### Types of ferry users

- There are two types of AMHS travelers/users from Prince of Wales Island including the "2<sup>nd</sup> home" folks who are here in summer and want service to and from Bellingham or Prince Rupert, and, residents who want to travel to places within the region for shopping, school sports, medical and other service needs. (CC)
- There are two different types of travelers using the AMHS, and they have different needs. Hard to design a system to meet both needs. One type are the through-travelers with vehicles who get on in Bellingham and want to get through Southeast quickly to Haines/Skagway. The other type are "linkers" who want to go from one destination in the region to another. (OH/PM)

#### Transportation between Ketchikan - Prince of Wales Island - British Columbia

- There is good ferry service now between Prince of Wales Island and Ketchikan. It would be nice to have two ferries a day again, but compared to pre-IFA days, service is great. (CC)
- Ferry service from North Prince of Wales Island is needed. Without a ferry service between northern Prince of Wales Island and Central Southeast, charter jet boats have stepped in to fill gap carrying groups (like school kids) from Coffman Cove to Wrangell/Petersburg. This is a concern as Clarence Strait has big, treacherous water at times that can overpower a jet boat. We need ferry service north from Prince of Wales Island. (CC)
- Travel in ferries for cultural exchange is desired between south Prince of Wales Island and British Columbia, through/near Chomondeley Sound. USFS may be looking at this? (CTA/OVK)
- Island Air is making a dent in both float plane and IFA traffic between Prince of Wales Island and Ketchikan. Their schedule works well for coming and going in the same day, flights are timed to connect with jets, and with IFR capability it is more reliable than alternatives. (OH/PM)

### IFA Funding

- Good to include IFA ferries in SATP. Would like an outcome be a predictable annual operating appropriation from State to ensure IFA can make its debt service payments. (CC)

### How will Comments be used?

- How is ADOT&PF using, addressing and weighting the comments they get as they prepare the draft SATP? (CTA/OVK)

### Do Not End Bellingham Ferry Run

- Do not end ferry run to Bellingham, some cannot drive through Canada now and need a cost effective way to get themselves and vehicles to US. Don't forget Canadian blockade during Pacific Salmon treaty. (CTA/OVK)
- Why is there a Bellingham ferry run if it is often not full and costs so much, must be fulfilling another need? (CTA/OVK)

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**Open House and Public Meeting**

1. Gerald Hilden
2. Brian Templin
3. Otis Gibbons

**City of Craig Meeting**

1. Jon Bolling., City Manager
2. Brian Templin, City Planner

**Craig Tribal Association/ Organized Village of Kasaan**

1. Sam Thomas, Organized Village of Kasaan Tribal Transportation Director & Infrastructure Specialist
2. John Huestis, Craig Tribal Association, Transportation Director
3. Richard Peterson, POWTEC Solutions

**ADOT&PF Team**

Verne Skagerberg, ADOT&PF  
Jim Potdevin, ADOT&PF  
Barbara Sheinberg, Sheinberg Associates  
Donovan Bell, Sheinberg Associates