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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

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Preconstruction – Special Projects*

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October 9, 2008

RE: Coordination Plan
Gravina Access Project

Dear Participating Agency representative and other interested parties:

On behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), I am providing your agency with the attached Gravina Access Project Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) Coordination Plan. Section 6002 of The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) requires the development of a Coordination Plan by the lead agencies for communicating and implementing the environmental review process.

The purpose of the Coordination Plan is to clearly identify the roles, responsibilities, opportunities, procedures, and schedule that will be used to coordinate the environmental review and decision-making processes. The plan supports timely and collaborative involvement with the public, tribal governments, and federal, state, and local governmental agencies at key milestones; it also identifies key milestones in the environmental review process. Please note the following agency coordination points that will occur in the next few months:

- Opportunity for Participating Agencies to Comment on the Range of Alternatives to be screened
- Scoping Summary Report Provided to Agencies, Tribes, and Public
- Collaborate on Impact Assessment on Methodologies with Participating Agencies
- Agency Review/Comment on Reasonable Alternatives to be evaluated in the SEIS

Updates to the Coordination Plan will be provided to you as the project progresses.

Thank you for your continued participation in the Gravina Access Project. For more information, please feel free to contact me or visit the project website at www.gravina-access.com.

Sincerely,



Reuben Yost
Special Projects Manager

Enclosures: Coordination Plan with Schedule

cc: Mike Vanderhoof, FHWA
Mark Dalton, HDR
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Gravina Island Access Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Coordination Plan



Prepared for:
Alaska Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

**FHWA-AK-EIS-03-01-F
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1.0 COORDINATION PLAN DESCRIPTION AND REQUIREMENTS

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) have initiated a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Gravina Access Project. The Project or “proposed action” is to improve access to Gravina Island from Revillagigedo Island in Ketchikan, Alaska.

On August 10, 2005, President Bush signed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) into law. SAFETEA-LU authorized the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period 2005-2009.

SAFETEA-LU also established a new environmental review process, or project development process inclusive of the permitting phase, to be followed for transportation projects developed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. SAFETEA-LU supplements existing practices, but does not supersede any previous guidance or regulations promulgated under NEPA. The new environmental review process is intended to promote efficient project management by lead agencies and enhance opportunities for coordination with the public, tribal governments, and other federal, state, and local governmental agencies during the project development process.

Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU prescribes changes to existing FHWA procedures for implementing the NEPA process, as amended, and for implementing the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), 40 CFR parts 1500 through 1508. All Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for which the Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the *Federal Register* after August 10, 2005, must follow these new SAFETEA-LU requirements. The FHWA issued Final Guidance for the SAFETEA-LU Environmental Review Process on November 15, 2006 (Section 6002 Guidance).

Section 6002 Guidance requires the development of a “Coordination Plan” by the lead agency as the cornerstone for communicating and implementing the environmental review process. The purpose of the Coordination Plan is to clearly identify roles, responsibilities, opportunities, procedures, and schedule that will be used to coordinate the environmental review and decision-making processes. The Coordination Plan supports timely and collaborative involvement with the public, tribal governments, other federal, state, and local governmental agencies at key milestones. The Coordination Plan identifies key milestones as Coordination Points in the environmental review process. The Coordination Points indicate a timeframe where information will be made available for review by the involved entities.

Section 6002 Guidance for the Coordination Plan focuses on the different elements of the environmental review process and provides information on:

- Project initiation.
- Roles and responsibilities of the lead agency, joint lead agency, and participating and cooperating agencies.
- Development of project purpose and need.

- Analysis of alternatives.
- Identification and design of the preferred alternative.
- Opportunities for involvement by the public, tribal governments, other federal, state, and local governmental agencies.

In addition, Section 6002 Guidance establishes maximum deadlines for the public and agencies to submit comments; establishes a 180-day statute of limitations (SOL) on claims against FHWA and other federal agencies for certain environmental and other approval actions, including NEPA documents and permits; and provides for a formal issue resolution process.

The Gravina Access Project SEIS Coordination Plan has been prepared pursuant to 23 USC 139 and will be distributed for public, tribal government, and other federal, state, and local governmental agencies for review as part of scoping and project development. Updates to this Coordination Plan will be provided as the project progresses.

2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

2.1 Project Background

The FHWA, in cooperation with DOT&PF, identified a need to improve access between Revillagigedo Island and Gravina Island in Southeast Alaska. The Gravina Access Project was one of 17 high priority projects funded in the state by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century.

The purpose of this project is to improve surface transportation between Revillagigedo Island, home of the City of Ketchikan and the City of Saxman, and Gravina Island, the location of the Ketchikan International Airport and adjoining lands that offer recreation and development potential. Currently, a small ferry provides the only regular access to Gravina Island with a terminal at Ketchikan International Airport. Access to the remainder of Gravina Island is available by watercraft and the Lewis Reef Road. The recent opening of the Gravina Island Highway now provides access to some private lands and the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's developable lands north and south of the airport reserve, and to the Bostwick Lake Road and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Forest Service's timber lands.

The FHWA, in cooperation with DOT&PF, evaluated six bridge alternatives, three ferry alternatives, and the No Action Alternative in the Gravina Access Project EIS. The Final EIS, which was distributed to the public and federal and state agencies on July 30, 2004, identified Alternative F1 as FHWA's and DOT&PF's Preferred Alternative. Alternative F1 would cross Tongass Narrows via Pennock Island with two bridges: a 200-foot bridge over the East Channel and a 120-foot bridge West Channel. FHWA issued a Record of Decision on September 15, 2004, that identified Alternative F1 as the Selected Alternative. More information can be found at the project website: www.gravina-access.com.

Alternative F1 included a 3.4-mile road segment, known as the Gravina Island Highway, which would connect the bridge over West Channel with the Airport Access Road and Lewis Reef Road. Of the nine build alternatives considered in the EIS, only two, Alternatives F1 and F3,

included the Gravina Island Highway. Lewis Reef Road was part of all nine build alternatives evaluated in the EIS with the purpose of providing access to the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's Lewis Reef development area.

The DOT&PF has moved forward with the first phase of the Gravina Access Project: construction of the Gravina Island Highway. The work includes the site grading, placing embankment, constructing bridges over Government Creek and Gravina Creek, installing drainage structures, and other improvements. Construction of the Gravina Island Highway is expected to be complete in fall of 2008.

On September 21, 2007, Alaska Governor Sarah Palin stated that funding for the development of Alternative F1 was \$329 million short of the required amount and "it's clear that Congress has little interest in spending any more money on a bridge between Ketchikan and Gravina Island." The governor directed the DOT&PF to look for the most fiscally responsible alternative for access to the airport and Gravina Island instead of proceeding further with Alternative F1 (Gravina Access Project Redirected 07-192).

FHWA informed the DOT&PF in October 2007 that if it were to select a different alternative that does not include the Gravina Island Highway, all or part of the monies expended on construction of the highway may be declared ineligible for federal participation. Not all of the reasonable alternatives in the Final EIS included the Gravina Island Highway, which DOT&PF began constructing in 2006. So, DOT&PF is now preparing a Supplemental EIS to consider all reasonable alternatives with the inclusion of the Gravina Island Highway. The No Action Alternative will also be considered. The SEIS will result in a new Record of Decision issued by the FHWA.

2.2 SEIS Process

According to FHWA's Environmental Impact and Related Procedures (23 CFR Part 771), an EIS shall be supplemented whenever FHWA determines that changes to the proposed action would result in significant environmental impacts that were not evaluated in the EIS, or new information or circumstances relevant to environmental concerns and bearings on the proposed action or its impacts would result in significant environmental impacts not evaluated in the EIS. In the case of the Gravina Access Project, the changes requiring the preparation of an SEIS are the uncertainty of funding levels and the consideration of construction of the Gravina Island Highway for all reasonable alternatives. The SEIS will review and update information presented in the FEIS and supplement the environmental analyses of the alternatives to incorporate the Gravina Island Highway. The SEIS may consider new alternatives if the results of scoping or new cost criteria (as per Governor Palin's September 21, 2007, directive) present reasons to do so. The FHWA and DOT&PF are lead agencies for the Gravina Access Project SEIS.

3.0 AGENCY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities specified in Section 6002 Guidance are an important component of the regulatory and governmental obligations for the lead and participating agencies (defined below) to work cooperatively to improve the environmental review process. Section 6002 Guidance outlines specific roles and responsibilities for each entity and requires the Coordination

Plan document the methodology in which interaction is conducted with the public, tribal governments, and other federal and state agencies.

3.1 Lead Agency and Joint Lead Agency Roles and Responsibilities

3.1.1 Lead Federal Agency Role and Responsibilities

Section 6002 requires FHWA take the role of the lead federal agency for all highway projects that receive federal funds or require FHWA approval. FHWA has the responsibility and decision making authority for the proposed federal action. As the lead agency, FHWA oversees the NEPA process, consults with other agencies, maintains the government-to-government relationships with potentially affected tribal governments, and is ultimately responsible for the scope and content of the SEIS. Because DOT&PF is the direct recipient of the federal funds, it must serve as a joint lead agency (see Section 3.1.3). FHWA provides guidance to the joint lead agency during the development of the environmental analysis and SEIS document. FHWA must ensure the joint lead agency implements mitigation measures appropriate to the scope and scale of impacts.

Key responsibilities of FHWA as the lead federal agency include:

- Review and approve the Coordination Plan.
- Consult with DOT&PF and approve invitations to participating and cooperating agencies.
- Invite federal agencies and tribal governments to become participating and/or cooperating agencies, as appropriate. Table 1 provides a list of agencies that participated in the development of the draft and final EIS and which have been invited to participate in the SEIS. Table 1 reflects the responses provided to date by the agencies.
- Conduct government-to-government consultation with tribal governments as described in Federal Executive Order 13175 “Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments.”
- Oversee, manage, and facilitate the environmental review process to ensure efficiency and compliance with NEPA, SAFETEA-LU, and other applicable laws and regulations.
- Furnish guidance in the preparation of environmental documents.
- Enforce schedules and establish deadlines for comments during the environmental review process in accordance with SAFETEA-LU and CEQ requirements.
- Provide information to the participating and cooperating agencies as early as practicable in the environmental review process regarding potentially affected resources located within the project area.
- Collaborate with DOT&PF in scoping and public involvement processes.
- Work cooperatively with participating and cooperating agencies to identify and resolve issues that may delay the project or result in a denial of a required permit for the project.
- Take actions as necessary and proper within the authority of the lead agency to facilitate the expeditious resolution of the environmental review process for the project.

- Provide opportunity for involvement by the public, tribal government, and participating and cooperating agencies in reviewing the purpose and need for the project and the range of alternatives.
- Collaborate with participating and cooperating agencies on the methodologies and level of detail for alternative analysis and evaluation of impacts to address changes or new information not addressed in the previous EIS.
- Conduct appropriate and required consultation and coordination processes for NEPA, and other applicable laws, Executive Orders, regulations, and policies pertaining to the public, tribal governments, and other federal, state, and local governmental agencies.
- Make final decisions regarding purpose and need, range of alternatives, methodologies for analyses of alternatives, screening methodologies for alternatives, identification of reasonable alternatives for detailed study in the SEIS, and selection of the preferred alternative, in consultation with DOT&PF, and after considering input from the public, tribal entities, and participating/cooperating agencies.
- Facilitate dispute resolution process.
- Review requests from DOT&PF to develop the preferred alternative to a higher level of detail.
- Review and approve environmental documents in accordance with NEPA, SAFETEA-LU, and other applicable laws and regulations.
- Ensure the project sponsor, DOT&PF, complies with all design and mitigation commitments.

3.1.2 Joint Lead Agency Role and Responsibilities

DOT&PF is the direct recipient of federal funds for this project and will therefore serve as the joint lead agency. As the joint lead agency, DOT&PF will collaborate with FHWA on all public and agency coordination for the Gravina Access Project SEIS.

Key responsibilities of the DOT&PF as the joint lead agency include:

- Develop the Coordination Plan.
- Provide recommendations to FHWA for participating and cooperating agencies. See Table 1.
- Invite state and local agencies to become participating and/or cooperating agencies, as appropriate.
- Provide information to the participating and/or cooperating agencies as early as practicable in the environmental review process regarding potentially affected resources located within the project area.
- Conduct baseline engineering and environmental inventories and assessments.
- Prepare draft purpose and need statement and range of alternatives information.

- Provide opportunity for involvement by the public, tribal government, and participating and/or cooperating agencies in reviewing the purpose and need for the project and the range of alternatives.
- Collaborate with participating and/or cooperating agencies on the methodologies and level of detail for alternative analysis and evaluation of impacts to address on changes or new information not addressed in the previous EIS.
- Work cooperatively with participating and/or cooperating agencies to identify and resolve issues that may delay the project or result in a denial of a required permit for the project.
- Prepare engineering drawings in accordance with alternatives development.
- Conduct cost and impact assessments.
- Prepare environmental documents for FHWA review and approval.
- Present recommendations to FHWA on the preferred alternative, including level of design detail.

3.2 Participating and Cooperating Agency Roles and Responsibilities

To enhance interagency coordination and ensure issues of concern are identified, SAFETEA-LU created a new category of involvement in the environmental review process termed “participating agency.” The intent of the new category is to encourage governmental agencies at any level with an interest in the proposed project to be active participants in the NEPA evaluation, especially at key decision points in the process.

Section 6002 Guidance requires the lead agencies to invite all federal, state, tribal, regional, and local government agencies with an interest in the project to be participating agencies. Nongovernmental organizations and private entities cannot serve as participating agencies.

The key responsibilities of the participating agencies include:

- Identify, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding the project’s potential environmental impacts that may substantially delay the project or result in a denial of a required permit for the project.
- Provide meaningful and timely input on the purpose and need and on the determination of the range of alternatives. This also includes the methodologies and level of detail for the analysis of alternatives.
- Participate in appropriate coordination meetings, workshops, scoping meetings, and field review meetings.
- Work cooperatively and participate in issue resolution processes.

Invitations to become a participating agency for a project are made by the lead agencies by mail. A federal agency must decline in writing if it does not intend to participate. The written response must be sent to the lead federal agency and state the reason for declining the invitation. The federal agency must specifically state in its response that it:

- has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project,
- has no expertise or information relevant to the project, and
- does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If the invited federal agency's response does not state the agency's position in these terms, or if no agency response is provided within 30 days, then the federal agency will be treated as a participating agency.

A tribal government, state or local agency must respond affirmatively to the invitation to be designated as a participating agency. If the tribal government, state, or local agency fails to respond within 30 days or declines the invitation, regardless of the reasons for declining, the agency should not be considered a participating agency.

Agencies that choose not to accept participating or cooperating agency status will be supplied with project information at major milestones. Agencies are invited to be participating and cooperating agencies during scoping to ensure that issues are identified early and incorporated into the environmental review process. An agency may request participating or cooperating agency status at any time, usually because they learn that they have an interest or compliance requirements. The lead agencies will consider any requests and will revisit issues, if appropriate, to ensure efficient project delivery.

The roles and responsibilities of cooperating and participating agencies are similar, but cooperating agencies have a higher degree of authority, responsibility, and involvement in the environmental review process. SAFETEA-LU does not change the traditional CEQ concept of "cooperating agencies." In accordance with CEQ (40 CFR 1508.5), cooperating agencies are agencies that have jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to potential environmental impact to be addressed in the project. Federal and state agencies, tribal entities, and regional and local governmental agencies that meet these requirements, by agreement with the lead agency, may become cooperating agencies.

Cooperating agencies have the same responsibilities as participating agencies. In addition, cooperating agencies are given the opportunity to provide timely, coordinated review and comment on the pre-Draft and pre-Final SEIS, environmental documents, and technical reports to reflect their views and concerns. In addition, CEQ regulations permit a cooperating agency to adopt, without recirculating, the EIS of a lead agency when, after an independent review of the statement, the cooperating agency concludes that its comments and suggestions have been satisfied. By Section 6002 definition, cooperating agencies serve as participating agencies, in addition to their traditional CEQ roles as cooperating agencies.

A list of potential cooperating and participating agencies, along with their jurisdiction or potential interest in the Gravina Access Project, is provided in Table 1: Potential Cooperating and Participating Agencies. The agencies were invited in July 2008. Table 1 reflects how the agencies responded. Identification of cooperating and participating agencies will be updated in the Coordination Plan as the project progresses.

Table 1: Potential Cooperating and Participating Agencies

Cooperating Agency	Jurisdiction/Project Interest	Invitation Response
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	NMFS is responsible for enforcing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the Magnuson Stevens Fishery and Conservation and Management Act under which essential fish habitat (EFH) is managed. NMFS also administers the Endangered Species Act for marine species.	No response to invitation – treat as Participating Agency
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	USACE is responsible for issuing permits under Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act for impacts to wetlands or waters of the United States, and under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 for areas subject to the ebb and flow of the tide.	Accepted
U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)	USCG is responsible for approval of the location and plans of bridges and causeways constructed across navigable waters of the United States under Section 9 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.	No response to invitation – treat as Participating Agency
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	EPA is responsible for reviewing, rating, and publicly commenting on the environmental impacts of major federal actions, including actions that are the subject of EISs under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. USEPA also has a strong role in the Clean Water Act Section 404 process.	Declined as Cooperating Agency, accepted participation as a Participating Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	USFWS administers the Endangered Species Act for non-marine species, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, and conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands. Migratory birds and wetlands are located in the project area. USFWS may have special expertise regarding the project area environment.	Declined as Cooperating Agency, accepted participation as a Participating Agency
Participating Agency	Jurisdiction/Project Interest	Invitation Response
Federal		
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service	USDA Forest Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.	Declined
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)	FAA administers activities at airports and in airspace, and is responsible for safe and efficient air travel throughout the U.S.	Accepted
State		
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)	ADEC is responsible for issuing Water Quality Certifications under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, implementing and permitting under the 1970 Federal Clean Air Act, and managing the cleanup of contaminated soil and groundwater in Alaska. The project will require a 401 certification.	No response - not participating

ADFG Office of Habitat Management and Permitting (OHMP)	OHMP is charged with protecting Alaska's fish and wildlife resources and their habitats.	No response - not participating
Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) The Trust Land Office	The Trust Land Office manages Mental Health Trust land to generate income, which is used by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to improve the lives and circumstance of Trust beneficiaries.	The Division of Forestry accepted on behalf of The Trust Land Office. They will act jointly as a participating agency.
ADNR Division of Coastal and Ocean Management	The Division of Coastal and Ocean Management administers the Alaska Coastal Management Program, which provides stewardship for Alaska's rich and diverse coastal resources to ensure a healthy and vibrant Alaskan coast that efficiently sustains long-term economic and environmental productivity.	No response - not participating
ADNR State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)	SHPO is consulted during the process for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Executive Order (EO) 13175: Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments. This project must comply with Section 106 and EO 13175.	No response - not participating
Local		
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	The Borough is the planning authority for the project area. It has engaged in plans to promote development on Gravina Island for over 20 years.	Accepted
City of Ketchikan	The City of Ketchikan is the largest city and population center for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough. The City relies on access to Ketchikan International Airport on Gravina Island to support the local economy.	Accepted
City of Saxman	The City of Saxman is just south of the City of Ketchikan, and the second largest population center in the borough.	No response - not participating
Tribal Governments		
Organized Village of Saxman	Federally recognized tribal membership corporation located in Saxman, Alaska, with an interest in cultural, archaeological, and historic properties in the project area.	No response - not participating
Ketchikan Indian Corporation (IRA)	Federally recognized tribal membership corporation located in Ketchikan, Alaska, with an interest in cultural, archaeological, and historic properties in the project area.	No response - not participating
Metlakatla Indian Community	Incorporated tribe located on Annette Islands Reserve, a federal Indian reservation, with an interest in cultural, archaeological, and historic properties in the project area.	No response - not participating
Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA)	Regional Native non-profit Tribal Government representing approximately 26,000 Tlingit and Haida Indians worldwide. CCTHITA is a sovereign entity and	No response - not participating

	has a government to government relationship with the United States. CCTHITA is located in Juneau, Alaska, and has an interest in cultural, archaeological, and historic properties in the project area.	
Hydaburg Cooperative Association	The Hydaburg Cooperative Association is a federally recognized tribal membership corporation located on Prince of Wales Island in Hydaburg, Alaska.	No response - not participating
Craig Community Association	The Craig Community Association is a federally recognized tribal membership corporation located on Prince of Wales Island in Craig, Alaska.	No response - not participating
Klawock Cooperative Association	The Klawock Cooperative Association is a federally recognized tribal membership corporation located on Prince of Wales Island in Klawock, Alaska.	No response - not participating
Organized Village of Kasaan	The Organized Village of Kasaan is a federally recognized tribal membership corporation located on Prince of Wales Island in Kasaan, Alaska..	No response - not participating

4.0 COORDINATION WITH AGENCIES, TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS, AND THE PUBLIC

Section 6002 Guidance states the Coordination Plan should identify key coordination points and which persons, organizations, or agencies should be included for each of those coordination points. The plan should also explain how the coordination is conducted and the timeframes for input by those persons, organizations, or agencies involved.

Table 2 identifies key coordination points for the Gravina Access Project SEIS, along with timing and methodologies for those coordination points.

Section 6002 Guidance establishes maximum deadlines for the public and agencies to submit comments, including:

- Maximum 60 days Draft SEIS comment period (minimum 45 days).
- Maximum 30 days for other key coordination points (including purpose and need, range of alternatives, etc.).

Longer time periods may be set if agreed to by lead agencies and all participating agencies. Conversely, shorter time periods will be implemented commensurate with the volume and complexity of materials to be reviewed. No reduction of any time period will occur for public comment stipulated by federal law or regulation.

At the end of comment periods, agencies, tribal governments, or individuals that have not provided comments or requested an extension of the deadline will be assumed to have no comments on the material distributed and to be in agreement with the analysis completed to date, and the SEIS process will move forward.

4.1 Agency Coordination

The majority of agencies consulted during the previous project studies were invited to be participating or cooperating agencies under Section 6002 Guidance (see Section 3.2).. Agency

coordination was initiated during the scoping process and focuses on identifying issues, identifying what additional studies are needed and method of analysis, review and discussion on the purpose and need, and review of the range of alternatives. These topics were discussed in one-on-one scoping meetings with individual agencies when possible, and through correspondence when meetings could not be arranged. The agencies were provided a 30-day comment period following the scoping meeting or written notice.

Following is a list of tools that will be used to coordinate with participating, cooperating, and other federal, state, and local governmental agencies during development of the SEIS.

Communications

The lead agencies will communicate with cooperating and participating agencies through email, phone, fax, mail, and scoping meetings. Written communications have included the invitation letter from the lead agencies to participate either as a “participating or cooperating” agency and to provide scoping comments, and notice of the agency scoping meeting.

Agency Scoping Meetings

The agency scoping meetings were conducted as one on one agency meetings. This provided an opportunity to efficiently and effectively meet with the agencies, as the agencies commenting on the project are located in Anchorage, Juneau, and Ketchikan. Scoping meetings covered the following coordination points: 1) Identify Issues and Concerns, 2) Purpose and Need Statement, 3) Initial Collaboration on Methodologies and Level of Detail for Analysis of Alternatives, 4) Preliminary Identification of the Range of Alternatives, and 5) Screening Process to Identify Reasonable Alternatives.

Coordination Packet

At project scoping initiation, the lead agencies sent coordination packets to the cooperating and participating agencies. The packet included the following project information:

- Project history
- Draft study area and map
- Known issues
- Draft purpose and need statement
- Initial range of alternatives
- Preliminary screening criteria
- Draft coordination plan

Agency Comment and Response Database

The lead agencies are responsible for maintaining a comment database to track all comments made in scoping, on the Draft SEIS, and on the Final SEIS. All agency comments will be responded to and taken into consideration at each project phase. The record of response will be included in the database and made available to agencies.

Scoping Summary Report

The Scoping Summary Report will summarize the scoping and project development activities undertaken by the lead agencies. In addition to summarizing input provided by the public, tribal governments, and federal, state, and local governmental agencies, the Scoping Summary Report will describe the process used to develop the range of alternatives, establish screening criteria, and identify reasonable alternatives for the proposed project, including those alternatives that

will be carried forward for further evaluation in the Draft SEIS and those that are eliminated from further consideration.

Pre-Draft SEIS and Pre-Final SEIS Review

Cooperating agencies have the additional opportunity of reviewing a pre-Draft SEIS and pre-Final SEIS to provide comments. Documents will be circulated to cooperating agencies with a 30-days comment period deadline.

Draft SEIS and Final SEIS Review

Notice of the Draft SEIS availability for public, agency, and tribal government review will be published in the Federal Register. Copies of the Draft SEIS will be circulated to cooperating and participating agencies for their review. Comments will be requested. All agency comments will be responded to, and responses will be provided in the Final SEIS.

Notice of the Final SEIS availability for public, agency, and tribal government review will be published in the Federal Register. The Final SEIS will respond to all comments on the Draft SEIS. Copies of the Final SEIS will be circulated to cooperating and participating agencies for their review. The responses to comments on the Final SEIS will be provided in the Record of Decision, anticipated to be made in the spring of 2010.

4.2 Tribal Coordination

The approach to coordination with the tribal governments within the project area is similar to the approach used with the federal, state, and local governmental agencies. However, the lead federal agency recognizes the sovereignty of the tribal government and will coordinate communication and outreach efforts under Executive Order (EO) 13175 *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*. EO 13175 uses Indian tribe to describe an Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, or community that the Secretary of the Interior acknowledges to exist as an Indian tribe pursuant to the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994, 25 U.S.C. 479a. A recent Omnibus Act expanded the definition to include native corporations. EO 13175 outlines how each federal agency must ensure that it operates with a government-to-government relationship with the Indian tribe and also directs agencies to consult with the Indian tribe before taking action that affects tribal lands, resources, and members.

The FHWA invited the tribal governments listed in Table 1 to become participating agencies for the project.

The FHWA initiated contact and will attempt to establish an ongoing relationship with tribal governments. The ongoing relationship is the foundation of government-to-government consultation and coordination, and will be maintained throughout the life of the project. In addition to this special relationship, consultation with the tribal government will be conducted as part of the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 process. In order to provide ongoing project information, DOT&PF, as project co-lead, met with potentially affected tribal entities during scoping.

Section 106 requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic and cultural properties. The Section 106 process must also be conducted in accordance with EO 13175. FHWA will coordinate with the tribal governments in the project area and the

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to determine the potential impacts, area of potential effect, and mitigation requirements for impacts on cultural, historic, and archaeological resources. Tribal governments will assist in identifying religious and cultural significance of historic properties that may be affected. Section 106 consultation will occur in parallel with coordination under NEPA.

The tools for agency coordination described in section 4.1 also will be used to coordinate with tribal governments during development of the SEIS.

4.3 Public Coordination

The public involvement process is governed by 23 USC 128 and 40 CFR 1500 to 1508. Both Federal and state regulations require public involvement in the environmental review process. It is the policy of FHWA, and by extension of DOT&PF, to “proactively support public involvement at all stages of planning and project development.” This policy includes:

- early and continuous involvement;
- reasonable public availability of technical and other information;
- collaborative input on alternatives, evaluation criteria, and mitigation needs;
- open public meetings where matters related to Federal-aid highway and transit programs are being considered; and
- open access to the decision-making process.

SAFETEA-LU requires that the public be given opportunity to comment specifically on purpose and need and the range of alternatives. In addition, NEPA requires that the public be invited to comment during scoping and on the Draft SEIS. At the time the Draft SEIS is made available, an open house will be held to present the document. A formal public hearing will be held immediately following the open house to allow the public to provide comments to FHWA and DOT&PF.

In addition to ongoing outreach and feedback, key coordination points during scoping at which public input will be solicited include: 1) Identify Issues and Concerns, 2) Purpose and Need Statement, 3) Identification of the Range of Alternatives, and 4) Screening of Alternatives to Identify Reasonable Alternatives.

5.0 PROJECT SCHEDULE

The project schedule is provided in Appendix A and includes key coordination points. Updates to this schedule will be provided as the project progresses.

Table 2: Coordination Points throughout Environmental Review Process

Environmental Review Phase	SEIS Coordination Point	Description	Participating Agencies		
			Agencies (Cooperating & Participating)	Tribes	Public
Project Initiation and Scoping Activities	Notice of Intent (NOI) Publication	Publication of NOI in the <i>Federal Register</i> --Inform agencies, tribes and general public on the initiation of an SEIS and the scope of the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May 2008 – Phone calls and emails alerting agencies regarding a pending agency scoping meetings. June 2008 – NOI published in <i>Federal Register</i>. August 19, 2008 - Scoping comments due 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 2008 – NOI published in <i>Federal Register</i>. August 19, 2008 - Scoping comments due 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 2008 –NOI published in <i>Federal Register</i>. August 19, 2008 - Scoping comments due
	Identify Issues and Concerns	Identify and discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed action. Issues and concerns regarding potential environmental or socioeconomic impacts. Why SEIS is being prepared. What has changed since publication of ROD? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April – July 2008 – One-on-one meetings/contacts. July 2008 – Invitation letters for participating and cooperating agencies and request for scoping comments. July – August 2008 – Coordination packet (project history, study area and map, known issues, draft purpose and need statement, initial alternatives, preliminary screening criteria, draft Coordination Plan) goes out with invitation letter. April – July 2008 – Communications (emails, letters, comment forms, etc) soliciting input and communicating pertinent project information. July - August 2008 – Comment period (30 days). August 2008 – Develop comment database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April – July 2008 – One-on-one meetings/contacts. July 2008 – Government-to-government consultation letters, including invitation to participate, request for scoping comments, and Section 106 consultation. June 2008 – Coordination packet (project history, study area and map, known issues, draft purpose and need statement, initial alternatives, preliminary screening criteria, draft Coordination Plan) goes out with government-to-government Letter. April – July 2008 – Communications (emails, letters, comment forms, etc) soliciting input and communicating pertinent project information. July - August 2008 – Comment period (30 days). August 2008 – Develop comment database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July - August 2008 – Comment period (30 days). August 2008 – Develop comment database.
	Purpose and Need Statement	Identify the project purpose. Confirm the need for the proposed action. Provide supporting information for how the proposed action could address the problem(s), issues, and concerns identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April – July 2008 – Continue one-on-one meetings/contacts. April – June 2008 – Communications (emails, letters, comment forms, etc) soliciting input and communicating pertinent project information. July – August 2008 – 30-day comment period. September 2008 – Update comment database. October 2008 – Comment on Range of Alternatives to be screened January 2009 – Comment on analysis methodologies January 2009 – Comment on Reasonable Alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April – July 2008 – Continue one-on-one meetings/contacts. April – June 2008 – Communications (emails, letters, comment forms, etc) soliciting input and communicating pertinent project information. July – August 2008 – Public and tribal scoping meeting. July – August 2008 – 30-day comment period. September 2008 – Update comment database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2008 – Publish notices in local print media and community flyers for public and tribal scoping meeting. July 2008 – Public and tribal scoping meeting. July – August 2008 – 30-day comment period. September 2008 – Update comment database.
	Collaboration on Methodologies and Level of Detail for Analysis of Alternatives	Determine how alternatives should be analyzed and to what level of detail the analysis should be developed such that the agencies, tribal governments, and public understand the magnitude of impacts and can reasonably compare alternatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April – July 2008 – Continue one-on-one meetings/contacts. April – June 2008 – Communications (emails, letters, comment forms, etc) soliciting input and communicating pertinent project information. July – August 2008 – 30-day comment period. September 2008 – Update comment database. October 2008 – Comment on Range of Alternatives to be screened January 2009 – Comment on analysis methodologies January 2009 – Comment on Reasonable Alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April – July 2008 – Continue one-on-one meetings/contacts. April – June 2008 – Communications (emails, letters, comment forms, etc) soliciting input and communicating pertinent project information. July – August 2008 – Public and tribal scoping meeting. July – August 2008 – 30-day comment period. September 2008 – Update comment database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2008 – Publish notices in local print media and community flyers for public and tribal scoping meeting. July 2008 – Public and tribal scoping meeting. July – August 2008 – 30-day comment period. September 2008 – Update comment database.
	Identification of the Range of Alternatives	Identify the range of alternatives that could potentially satisfy the purpose and need. Includes No Action, activities that maximize the existing system, and reasonable and feasible bridge and ferry alternatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April – July 2008 – Continue one-on-one meetings/contacts. April – June 2008 – Communications (emails, letters, comment forms, etc) soliciting input and communicating pertinent project information. July – August 2008 – 30-day comment period. September 2008 – Update comment database. October 2008 – Comment on Range of Alternatives to be screened January 2009 – Comment on analysis methodologies January 2009 – Comment on Reasonable Alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April – July 2008 – Continue one-on-one meetings/contacts. April – June 2008 – Communications (emails, letters, comment forms, etc) soliciting input and communicating pertinent project information. July – August 2008 – Public and tribal scoping meeting. July – August 2008 – 30-day comment period. September 2008 – Update comment database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2008 – Publish notices in local print media and community flyers for public and tribal scoping meeting. July 2008 – Public and tribal scoping meeting. July – August 2008 – 30-day comment period. September 2008 – Update comment database.
	Screening of Alternatives to Identify Reasonable Alternatives	Develop screening criteria and determine the range of reasonable alternatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April – July 2008 – Continue one-on-one meetings/contacts. April – June 2008 – Communications (emails, letters, comment forms, etc) soliciting input and communicating pertinent project information. July – August 2008 – 30-day comment period. September 2008 – Update comment database. October 2008 – Comment on Range of Alternatives to be screened January 2009 – Comment on analysis methodologies January 2009 – Comment on Reasonable Alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April – July 2008 – Continue one-on-one meetings/contacts. April – June 2008 – Communications (emails, letters, comment forms, etc) soliciting input and communicating pertinent project information. July – August 2008 – Public and tribal scoping meeting. July – August 2008 – 30-day comment period. September 2008 – Update comment database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2008 – Publish notices in local print media and community flyers for public and tribal scoping meeting. July 2008 – Public and tribal scoping meeting. July – August 2008 – 30-day comment period. September 2008 – Update comment database.
	Conclusion of Scoping Activities—Scoping Summary Report	Scoping Summary Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of scoping activities Final purpose and need statement Significant issues and concerns Method of analysis and level of detail Alternatives for screening Screening of alternatives Identify reasonable alternatives for study in SEIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> August – November 2008 – Scoping Summary Report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> August – November 2008 – Scoping Summary Report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> August – November 2008 – Scoping Summary Report.

Environmental Review Phase	SEIS Coordination Point	Description	Method of Coordination		
			Participating Agencies		Public
			Agencies (Cooperating & Participating)	Tribal Governments	
SEIS Document Development	Completion of Draft SEIS	Provide a description of significant environmental impacts resulting from the proposed action and its alternatives, including avoidance, minimization, and preliminary mitigation measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2009 – Distribute Pre-draft SEIS to cooperating agencies. August 2009 – Distribute Draft SEIS. August 2009 – Publish Notice of Availability in Federal Register (establish public hearing date and initiate comment period) and local print media. August 2009 – Public hearing/open house August - September 2009 – 45-day comment period. September - October 2009 – Continue communications (emails, letters, comment forms, etc) soliciting input and communicating pertinent project information. October 2009 – Update comment database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> August 2009 – Distribute Draft SEIS. August 2009 – Publish Notice of Availability in Federal Register (establish public hearing date and initiate comment period) and local print media. August 2009 – Public hearing/open house. August - September 2009 – 45-day comment period. September - October 2009 – Continue communications (emails, letters, comment forms, etc) soliciting input and communicating pertinent project information. October 2009 – Update comment database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> August 2009 – Distribute Draft SEIS. August 2009 – Publish Notice of Availability in Federal Register (establish public hearing date and initiate comment period) and local print media. August 2009 – Public hearing/open house. August - September 2009 – 45-day comment period. September - October 2009 – Continue communications (emails, letters, comment forms, etc) soliciting input and communicating pertinent project information. October 2009 – Update comment database.
	Identification of Preferred Alternative for Draft SEIS (if applicable)	Explicitly describes the preferred alternative and the basis for the decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 2009 - Send written communication with updated project information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 2009 – Send written communication with updated project information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 2009 – Update the project website with a public notice.
	Completion of the Final SEIS	Identify the preferred/recommended alternative and the basis for the decision, discuss impacts and regulatory compliance issues, and prepare draft permit applications, and present mitigation and commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document and respond to comments. January 2010– Distribute Pre-Final SEIS with draft Corps permit application and draft 404(b)(1) analysis to Cooperating Agencies. March 2010 – Distribute Final SEIS. March 2010 – Publish Notice of Availability in Federal Register of Final SEIS. December 2009 – February 2010 – On-going communication tools. January 2010 – 30-day review period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document and respond to comments. March 2010 – Distribute Final SEIS. March 2010 – Publish Notice of Availability in Federal Register of Final SEIS and local print media. December 2009 – February 2010 – On-going communication tools. January 2010 – 30-day review period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document and respond to comments. March 2010 – Distribute Final SEIS. March 2010 – Publish Notice of Availability in Federal Register of Final SEIS and local print media. December 2009 – February 2010 – On-going communication tools. January 2010 – 30-day review period.
	Completion of the Record of Decision (ROD)	Explains the basis for the project decision and summarizes mitigation measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2010 – Publish ROD notice in local print media. August 2010 – Publish Statute of Limitations (SOL) in Federal Register. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2010 – Publish ROD notice in local print media. August 2010 – Publish Statute of Limitations (SOL) in Federal Register. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 2010 – Publish ROD notice in local print media. August 2010 – Publish Statute of Limitations (SOL) in Federal Register.
Permits	Completion of the Permits, Licenses or Approvals after the ROD	Prepare draft and final permit applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for comment on permits provided by permitting agencies during agency permitting process. TBD – Publish Statute of Limitations (SOL) in Federal Register for Federal permits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for comment on permits provided by permitting agencies during agency permitting process. TBD – Publish Statute of Limitations (SOL) in Federal Register for Federal permits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for comment on permits provided by permitting agencies during agency permitting process. TBD – Publish Statute of Limitations (SOL) in Federal Register for Federal permits.

**APPENDIX A
Project Schedule**

GRAVINA ACCESS PROJECT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
PROJECT SCHEDULE



