

2011/2012 Update to Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan Angoon, 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 a public meeting at 11:30 am on October 24, 2011, at City Hall in Angoon, Alaska to discuss the SATP Scoping Report.

A total of 13 people attended the meeting (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 (1st column from left), annual operation and maintenance costs (2nd & 3rd column), and annual refurbishment costs (4th and 5th columns), and total annual costs in 2010 dollars (excludes capital costs) were reviewed for each of the preliminary alternatives, as shown in the table below.

Alternative	20 year Capital Costs	Annual M&O	% Change from 2010	Annual Refurbishment	% Change from 2010	Total Annual Cost	% Change from 2010
2010 Actual		131		47		178	
2032 Estimates	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
1 – Baseline: Maintain Existing	796	126	-4%	46	-3%	172	-4%
2 - Ferry Capacity Management	526	111	-16%	44	-7%	155	-13%
3 - Maximize Use of Roads	501	95	-28%	41	-13%	136	-24%
4 – Alaska Class Ferries	737	118	-10%	48	1%	166	-7%
5 – Highway Route 7	1,030	97	-26%	44	-7%	141	-21%
6 – No Action	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

- The presentation concluded with ADOT&PF representatives asking the public to provide written comments by November 4, 2011 on matters such as:
 - Your preferred alternative and why – and/or ideas for *additional* alternatives or options that you recommend ADOT&PF consider;
 - What communities do you make most of your trips each year;
 - What method of transportation do you use most and why – air, road and ferry;
 - What attributes are most important to you when you consider how you travel (such as cost, speed, service frequency, reliability, convenience, comfort, etc).
- This information will help ADOT&PF as it assembles the Draft SATP because it will need to consider trade-offs between these factors.

Questions, Answers

In response to questions raised at the meeting, ADOT&PF offered the following information and clarifications:

Funding

- The AMHS has been receiving \$22 million a year in federal funding in the form of recurring annual earmarks plus match. This funding source will no longer be available and must be made up from the highway program. The AMHS must now compete directly with highway projects for existing funding.
- The AMHS cost as much to operate and maintain as the entire state maintained road and airport system combined

Angoon Ferry Terminal

- The turning basin at the Angoon ferry terminal is too small for the Alaska Class ferries to dock. In the original plans, the Alaska Class ferry would have been able to dock in Angoon, but the ferry size increased through the design process.
- Upgrades underway will allow the Fairweather in addition to the LeConte to use the Angoon terminal.
- Upgrading the terminal to allow use by additional ferries would eliminate the need for a contractor (usually Allen Marine) to provide ferry service when the LeConte is undergoing annual maintenance.

Barge Landing

- There is currently funding to design the new barge landing adjacent to the ferry terminal; funding for construction has not yet been secured.

Local Hire

- State projects that are federally funded are awarded to the lowest bidder. There is no provision to hire locally under the current rules.

Fast Ferry

- ADOT&PF expects another 18-20 years of service from the fast ferries. There are currently two lawsuits against the manufacturers of the engines; one related to the extension of the warranty, the other regarding engine replacement.

Road Across Admiralty Island

- Project was considered in the 70's, but has not been included in recent plans as most of Admiralty Island is a designated Wilderness Area.

Key Comments made during the Angoon Meeting

Comments are grouped by topic.

Alternative 5 is Preferred

- Becoming a central ferry service hub will improve Angoon's economy and employment opportunities, and be good for the entire region.
- Shuttle ferries will be cheaper to run and maintain, and will make it possible to manage capacity more effectively.
- The small shuttle ferries may have difficulty running during bad weather.
- Building more roads will decrease dependence on ferries, and lower fuel and maintenance costs making the transportation network more sustainable.
- Alternative 5 would bring additional visitors to Southeast Alaskan communities, allow residents to access cheaper goods and services, and spark economic development.
- Final plan should focus on elements of Alternative 5 that fit within ADOT&PF budget.
- Alternative 5 improvements should get underway as soon as possible as construction costs will continue to rise over time.

Angoon Ferry Service and Schedule

- Ferry schedule in Angoon is not convenient; many feel that other communities such as Hoonah and Tenakee Springs routinely get better ferry service and schedules.
- Schedule is consistently biased toward larger towns, while the needs of smaller communities are neglected.
- In small isolated communities people are more dependent on the ferry service than in larger communities that have access to a wider range of transportation choices.
- Current schedule makes it very difficult, especially for elders and those with health problems, to get to larger communities for health or other professional appointments.
- Highways seem to get lots of funding for capital projects, whereas the ferry system constantly struggling to maintain funding. This decrease in funding can be detrimental for communities that depend on ferry service.
- Ferry schedule and service needs to be set based on traffic counts on each route so that ferries are not running empty.
- As mainliners age, more frequent and time consuming maintenance is required, which leads to increased service disruption for small communities.
- As the fast ferry is not reliable in bad weather and requires frequent maintenance, it will not lead to big improvement in service to Angoon.

Population and Economic Growth in Region and Angoon

- Construction of the Alaska Class ferries in Ketchikan could lead to population growth and more jobs throughout the region. This in turn, could increase ferry passenger

numbers.

- Improving ferry service to Angoon could improve local economic conditions and lead to more local jobs and population growth.

Maintain Cross-Gulf and Bellingham Service

- Mainline service from Bellingham allows those traveling between Alaska and the Lower 48 to remain in the US and is the preferred route for many military families heading to interior Alaska. This could work to retain support from legislators in other districts.
- Mainline ferries running from Bellingham to Haines, with stops in every port in each direction would increase the number of travelers.

Angoon Ferry Terminal

- Moving the ferry terminal to a new location or removing the existing rock barrier would allow larger ferries to stop in Angoon and improve service and benefit the local economy.
- Angoon is currently working on a plan to expand the parking lot at the ferry terminal and Alternative 5 would help support this project. The City of Angoon and ADOT&PF should continue to collaborate on this project.
- Extending the water lines to the ferry terminal would allow for the provision of fire suppression.

Barge Landing

- Angoon needs a barge landing, and plans are underway to design one adjacent to the ferry terminal.
- Barge landing should be designed to further objectives of Alternative 5.
- A barge landing would make shipping cheaper and safer and would make transportation improvements and other construction projects more feasible.

Local Hire for Transportation Improvement Projects

- Increasing the number of local hires on transportation improvement projects would be good for the economy.
- Hiring locally could reduce costs of large construction projects.

Final SATP Should Focus on Needs of Local Travelers

- Although tourists are important, plan should focus on needs of Southeast Alaskan resident travelers.

Final SATP Should be within Budget

- Planning process often results in projects that are too expensive to justify in communities with small populations. Need to focus on plans with realistic budgets.

Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan Scoping Report
Attendance at Angoon, Alaska meetings
October 24, 2011

Open House and Public Meeting

1. Richard George
2. Joyce Frank
3. Kevin Frank Sr.
4. Maxine Thompson
5. Albert Howard
6. Joseph L. Thompson
7. Amy Nelson
8. Ed Gamble Sr.
9. Wally Frank Sr.
10. George Nelson Jr.
11. Albert M. Kookesh III
12. Shayne Thompson
13. Everett Jamestown

ADOT&PF Team

Andy Hughes, ADOT&PF
Marie Heidemann, ADOT&PF
Zoë Morrison, Sheinberg Associates
Donovan Bell, Sheinberg Associates