

Subject:	Technical Advisory Group Meeting			
Client:	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities			
Project:	Alaska State Rail Plan	Project No:		
Date:	February 26, 2013; 1:00pm – 4:50pm	Location:	Dreams Salon, Embassy Suites Anchorage	
In Attendance:	<p>Technical Advisory Group Attendees: Steve Clapp – AFGE, AKRR Workers Local 183 Darsie Culbeck – Haines Borough (t) Todd Dudinsky – US Army David Evans – Denali Borough Donna Gardino – FMATS (t) David Goade – Cook Inlet Region, Inc. David Levy – Alaska Mobility Coalition Thomas Llanos – Bureau of Indian Affairs Craig Lyons – AMATS Curtis McQueen – Eklutna, Inc. Paul Metz – University of Alaska, Fairbanks (t) Derek Musto – Teamsters Local 959 Kellen Spillman – Fairbanks North Star Borough (t) Brit Szymoniak – Port of Anchorage Paul Taylor – Municipality of Skagway Aves Thompson – Alaska Trucking Association Doug Thompson – Holland America, Princess Tours Mark Toews – on behalf of Minister Dixon, Yukon (t) Scott Walden – Kenai Peninsula Borough Bryce Ward – Mayor of North Pole (t) Lance Wilson – City of Houston</p>	<p>Agency Advisors: Jennifer Adleman – AK Dept. of Commerce (t) Bruce Carr – Alaska Railroad Corporation Mike Catsi - AIDEA Judy Chapman – Alaska DOT&PF Andy Hughes – Alaska DOT&PF Jeff Jeffers – Alaska DOT&PF Bob Laurie – Alaska DOT&PF (t) Kris Riesenbergl – FHWA (t) Murray Walsh – Alaska DOT&PF</p> <p>Project Staff Tom Brigham – HDR Julie Jessen – HDR Jessica Abbott – HDR</p> <p>Other Attendees Bill Kurz – Haines Port Development Council (t) Barbara Mulford – Haines Chamber of Commerce (t)</p>		

Meeting Overview:

On Tuesday, February 26, 2013, the Alaska State Rail Plan (ASRP) hosted the first of four Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meetings. The purpose of this event was to introduce the rail plan and team, to explore the future of rail transportation in Alaska, and to develop a recommended Vision for rail in Alaska. Presentations were given by Murray Walsh, Bruce Carr, and Tom Brigham, and the meeting’s discussion and activities were facilitated by Julie Jessen. The meeting ended at 4:50pm.

Introductions:

Julie Jessen, HDR Alaska, ASRP Public Involvement Lead, welcomed participants to the TAG’s Kick-Off Meeting. A quick safety moment was discussed and then Julie led the group in a round of introductions. She asked all attendees to state their name; agency, company or organization; and if they were interested in a particular aspect of the plan.

Meeting Presentations:

1. Rail Plan Background and Goals – Murray Walsh
 - Rail plan description and purpose
 - DOT&PF, Steering Committee, and Technical Advisory Group roles
 - Technical Advisory Group Guidance

Question:

Q: What is the project's timeline?

A: The project team plans to host a series of public meetings between mid May and the beginning of June, the next Steering Committee and TAG meetings are scheduled for mid June, and the plan is scheduled for completion by the end of 2013.

2. Alaska Railroads Background –

- a. Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC), Bruce Carr
 - Freight and passenger rail services
 - Positive Train Control (PTC)
 - ARRC Project News
- b. White Pass & Yukon Route (WP&YR), Murray Walsh

Questions:

Q: If ARRC cannot implement positive train control (PTC), what does that mean for passenger service?

A: Passenger service will not be operated.

Q: Is there discussion of PTC implementation for the WP&YR?

A: No. This route is considered excursion/passenger rail, not freight rail, and therefore is not required to adopt PTC.

Q: Are charter trips included in the 415,000 passenger trips in 2012? Are you able to identify different types of trips and where people get on/off the train?

A: Yes. Yes, ARRC tracks all of this data from year to year.

Q: What is the vision for passenger service after the connection with Delta Junction?

A: ARRC would like to provide safe, daily transportation for Delta Junction residents, especially during trying weather conditions.

Q: Does ARRC haul liquefied natural gas?

A: No, not at this time.

Q: Do you transport passengers and their vehicles anywhere throughout the state?

A: No, this service stopped when the Whittier Tunnel opened to dual traffic; ARRC has never offered this option between Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Q: Has ARRC looked at developing rail service into Haines?

A: ARRC has begun looking at the possibility of extending rail to Haines, but there is a lot to consider. Tok is where the break comes when determining whether to head east or south. ARRC is in support of Yukon development, however ARRC does not have to own all the routes – privately owned routes are also possible.

Q: Have passengers for rail increased or decreased at the same rate as cruise passengers?

A: Yes, there is a direct correlation. Anchorage to Seward is the most popular route.

Q: If Alaska plans to take on commuter services, is it likely the state will hit a volume where an additional track is needed?

A: ARRC lines have capacity to address potential future growth without the need for an additional track at this time (60 trains /day).

3. Economics of Rail – Tom Brigham

- Rail history and development
- Improvement in rail economics nationally since 1980
- Economic advantages and constraints of rail
- New Alaska Connections: Where rail could make sense.

Questions:

Q: Alaska Railroad has a unique business model with passenger and freight. Are there other examples?

A: No. Passenger service outside of Alaska is run by Amtrak.

Q: How do the construction and maintenance costs differ for rail vs. road?

A: Railroads are more expensive to construct than roads, but rail can be less expensive over the long-term, especially if high volumes are shipped. Railroads have a longer life cycle and are cheaper to maintain with less wear and tear.

Brainstorm Session: Future Landscape – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Exercise

Julie Jessen discussed the need to shape a long-term vision for rail in Alaska to describe where the state would like to be in 20 years. Prior to creating the actual vision, Julie asked the group to brainstorm potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats or challenges, present both now and in the foreseeable future, that might impact rail infrastructure or operations as well as multimodal transportation systems. The following lists are what the group came up with for each category.

<p><u>STRENGTHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Limited access through the corridor- Environmental friendliness- Economies of scale- State ownership- Dual utility	<p><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Future native land development- Development of SE Alaska and Canada- Resource Development- Bulk people and commodities- Development of new transportation corridors (geography)- Recovery task force- Additional corridors- Economic benefits to the population- Return on investment- Education
<p><u>WEAKNESSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Time- Lack of commuter between Girdwood and Mat-SU- Tremendous capital and funding- Lack of a loop- Military resizing- Funding- Competing economic interests	<p><u>THREATS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Increased congestion on the Seward and Glenn Parks Highways- Inconsistent political environment- Taxes, tariffs, tolls and fees- Fiscal uncertainty-Leadership / Follow-through

Visioning Session: Freight and Passenger Rail

Julie shared examples from other of state rail plan vision statements. Building on the SWOT elements identified above, she asked the TAG to think about shaping Alaska's Vision for freight and passenger rail. Julie encouraged the group to brainstorm a vision that would help Alaska overcome its weaknesses and threats, build upon its strengths and opportunities, and to connect or support other means of transportation. She stressed that the Vision should be simple, far reaching, and ambitious. The following are themes suggested for Alaska's vision statement:

- Year round commuter and passenger service
- A railroad should accommodate double stack containers on flat cars
- Safe and efficient movement of freight and people in high level intermodal / technology / geographic vastness
- Up to date on modern rail / mobility
- Advanced intermodal connectivity
- Direct connections (continental rail)
- Tag line / Getting things connected to most things Alaskan

- Railroad key to future growth / diversification
- Resource development
- Cost efficient / affordable / viable (Alaskans vs. tourists)
- Interior resources , coastal communities, deep water, develop entire state
- Leader in interstate transportation
- Alaska rail is a link to economic prosperity
- Alaska promotes/provides safe, reliable, efficient and affordable rail transportation for the development and support of AK's people, economy and resources.
- In the end, what does it look like?
- Imaginative and technologically innovative, a leader in rail technology
- Competitive

Planning Session: Information Needs

Focusing on the Rail Plan Elements identified earlier, Julie asked what advice each member of the TAG, based on their individual areas of expertise, would give the team regarding sources of information that may need further research. Responses included the following:

- Private industry, local government, borough, native organizations participation, transition points
- Interconnectivity of public transportation
- How railroads feed into other corridors /access points/ports
- Skills development basis that allow continued operations/maintenance (specifically, support for Alaska hire)
- Whether Tribes can enter into agreement with rail company for potential funding partnerships
- Maintenance facilities/viable maintenance plan
- History of Alaska railroad/infrastructure
- Inventory/map of other projects. Map of known resources
- Yukon rail connections
- Future military needs and development
- Integrated systems that partners the modes (intermodal) freight and people
- Education and outreach
- Previous Alaska/Canada rail studies, Commonwealth North, DOT studies
- Resource development -> economic development, map overlays
- Data to support efficiency and affordability, trucking vs. rail
- Land status, air modes, air ship opportunities
- At-grade crossings and maintenance, congestion and air quality
- Future needs, policy changes, management and prioritization of investments
- Prioritize the treatment (safety, at grades, etc.)
- Public awareness of process to tidewater
- Type of resources rail could or could not target (volume, time, duration)
- Community plans as they relate to the ASRP
- Energy delivery
- Yukon needs
- Balance of freight, tourism and Alaskan resident use

Next Steps:

Public open house meetings are planned for Haines, Skagway, Anchorage, Seward, Mat-Su, Fairbanks, and Nome between the middle of May and the beginning of June. Dates will be posted on the project website once they become finalized. Other future open house meetings will be held online.

The next TAG meeting will be scheduled in mid to late June to coincide with an ASRP Steering Committee meeting.