



ASRP Open House Summary

Following project initiation and the creation of a draft Vision Statement, the Alaska State Rail Plan (ASRP) hosted a series of seven public open houses in Skagway, Haines, Wasilla, Seward, Anchorage, Fairbanks and Nome between May 21, 2013 and June 6, 2013. The purpose of these events was to inform the public about the ASRP's development and to seek input on the plan Vision Statement, plan goals, and potential system-wide needs. Comments regarding the Vision Statement and overall statewide rail needs were collected at the open houses, as well as continuously online, and will be used to assist the planning team in updating the ASRP.

Each meeting was held between 5:00PM-8:00PM and featured posters (Appendix A) with ASRP information including rail plan elements, a map of Alaska's current rail system, and a map of Alaska's resource locations. A PowerPoint slideshow (Appendix B), followed by questions, was presented at each open house. The presentation can be viewed in its entirety here: http://dot.alaska.gov/railplan/docs/Spring_2013_OH_Pres.pdf.

Station boards were hung on the walls at each venue for members of the public to peruse at their leisure. Members of the staff were available to answer any questions that arose and actively engaged the public on their thoughts and ideas regarding rail for Alaska's future. The station boards can be viewed in their entirety here: http://dot.alaska.gov/railplan/docs/Spring_2013_OH_Posters.pdf.

Staff/Agency Attendees:

Murray Walsh (DOT&PF)
 Bob Laurie (DOT&PF)
 Jim Potdevin (DOT&PF)
 Sara Mason (DOT&PF)
 David Post (DOT&PF)
 Bruce Carr (ARRC)

Tom Brigham (HDR)
 Julie Jessen (HDR)
 Laurie Cummings (HDR)
 Jessica Abbott (HDR)

Meetings: Sign-in Sheets (Appendix C)

	Date	Venue	Staff	# of Attendees
Skagway	May 21	Skagway Assembly Chambers	Potdevin, Laurie (DOT&PF) Jessen, Cummings (HDR) Carr (ARRC)	10
Haines	May 22	Haines Borough Public Library	Potdevin, Laurie (DOT&PF) Jessen, Cummings (HDR) Carr (ARRC)	15
Wasilla	May 29	Menard Memorial Sports Center	Laurie (DOT&PF) Jessen, Cummings, Abbott (HDR) Carr (ARRC)	10
Seward	May 30	Seward Community Library	Laurie (DOT&PF) Brigham, Jessen (HDR) Carr (ARRC)	20
Anchorage	June 4	Loussac Library	Walsh, Laurie (DOT&PF) Brigham, Jessen, Abbott (HDR)	35
Fairbanks	June 5	FNSB Assembly Chambers	Walsh, Laurie, Mason (DOT&PF) Brigham, Jessen (HDR)	39
Nome	June 6	Old St. Joe's Hall	Walsh, Laurie, Mason (DOT&PF) Jessen, Abbott (HDR) Carr (ARRC)	6

Advertising:

The open houses were advertised in local print media, via post card and e-mail announcements to individuals on the project mailing list, fliers posted by the ASRP Technical Advisory Group members, and information posted on the project website.

Postcard invitations were mailed to approximately 1200 individuals; an e-mail with a pdf attachment of the postcard was sent to nearly 800 individuals.

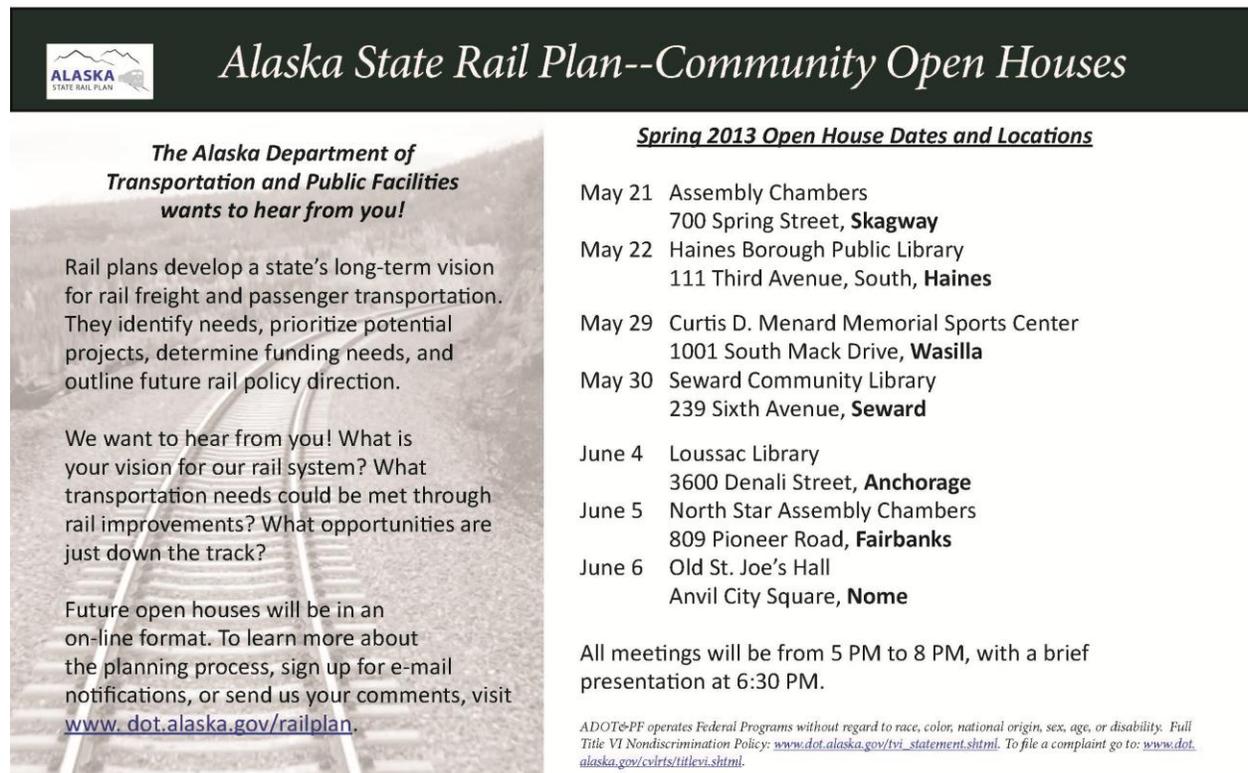


Figure 1: ASRP Open House Invitation Post Card

Newspaper ads were published in local newspapers generally one week in advance of the local open house pending individual print cycles.

- Chilkat Valley News (May 16)
- Skayway News (May 10)
- Juneau Empire (May 15)
- Talkeetna Good Times (May 23)
- Frontiersman (May 26 and May 28)
- Anchorage Daily News (May 29 and online ad May 23 - June 6)
- Seward Phoenix Log (May 23 and May 30)
- Fairbanks Daily News Miner (May 30 and June 5)
- Arctic Sounder (May 30)
- Petroleum News (Weeks of May 20 and May 27)
- Alaska Dispatch (Online ad May 17 – June 6)



Alaska State Rail Plan—Community Open Houses

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities wants to hear from you!

Rail plans develop a state's long-term vision for rail freight and passenger transportation. They identify needs, prioritize potential projects, determine funding needs, and outline future rail policy direction.

We want to hear from you! What is your vision for our rail system? What transportation needs could be met through rail improvements? What opportunities are just down the track?

Future open houses will be in an on-line format. To learn more about the planning process, sign up for e-mail notifications, or send us your comments, visit www.dot.alaska.gov/railplan.

Sign up for our e-mail notification list today!

Spring 2013 Open House Dates and Locations

- May 21** Assembly Chambers
700 Spring Street, **Skagway**
- May 22** Haines Borough Public Library
111 Third Avenue, South, **Haines**
- May 29** Curtis D. Menard Memorial Sports Center
1001 South Mack Drive, **Wasilla**
- May 30** Seward Community Library
239 Sixth Avenue, **Seward**
- June 4** Loussac Library
3600 Denali Street, **Anchorage**
- June 5** North Star Assembly Chambers
809 Pioneer Road, **Fairbanks**
- June 6** Old St. Joe's Hall
Anvil City Square, **Nome**

All meetings will be from **5 PM to 8 PM**, with a brief presentation at **6:30 PM**.

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Figure 2: Sample Newspaper Ad

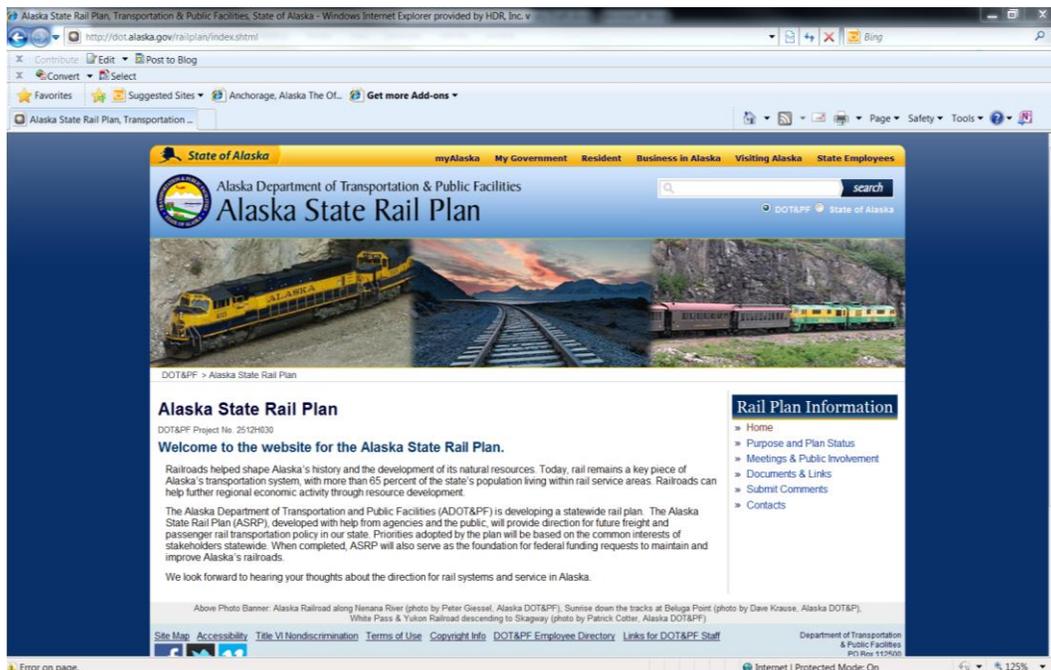


Figure 3: Project Website (<http://dot.alaska.gov/railplan>)

Attendance

A total of 135 people signed in to the seven open houses. The sign-in sheets resulted in a number of additional email addresses that have been added to the distribution list for future ASRP online open houses.

Handouts Provided

An ASRP Fact Sheet, Frequently Asked Questions, and comment forms (Appendix D) were available at the sign-in table. Comment forms were available at a designated comment table/station.

Other Presentations

The presentation used at each of the seven public open houses (Appendix A) was also presented at the FMATS Technical Committee meeting in Fairbanks on June 5, 2103 and at a combined meeting of the Kenai and Soldotna Chambers of Commerce in Kenai on June 19, 2013. There were 15 people present at the FMATS Technical Committee meeting (Appendix E) and 28 people at the Kenai and Soldotna Chambers of Commerce meeting (Appendix F). Attendees at these meetings were given the same opportunities to participate in the rail planning effort as those who attended the programmed public meetings.

Media Coverage

In addition to paid display ads, local news outlets provided earned media for the plan before and after the open houses.

- Prior to the start of the Open House series, the Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman published an online notification within their Local Events section on May 18, announcing the meeting taking place in Wasilla on May 29.
- A few days after the May 21 Open House in Skagway, Skagway News published a story related to the ASRP. It ran on May 24.
- The Seward Phoenix Log attended the May 30 Open House, resulting in a news story published on June 6, 2013: <http://www.thesewardphoenixlog.com/story/2013/06/06/business/arcc-and-dot-on-same-track/1505.html> (accessed July 9, 2013).
- Murray Walsh was interviewed live on KTUU Channel 2 by Mike Ross at the Anchorage Open House on June 4: <http://www.ktuu.com/videogallery/76171332/News/Interview--Alaska-Rail-Plan-Public-Open-Houses#pl-62893695> (accessed July 9, 2013).
- Emily Schwing of KUAC Morning Newscast included an audio clip regarding the Alaska State Rail Plan: <http://fm.kuac.org/post/newscast-wednesday-060513> (beginning at minute 4:10; accessed July 9, 2013).
- Diana Haecker of The Nome Nugget, attended the Open House on June 6 and published a story on June 13, 2013: <http://www.nomenugget.net/archives/2013/06.13.13%20NN.pdf> (page16; accessed July 9, 2013).

Comments Received

A total of 77 comments have been received from the public via written comment forms, project website submissions, and emails with 23 different topic areas identified (Appendix G). Each of these comments will be shared with the planning team for consideration in the ASRP. Some of the comment topics include:

- Economic Development
 - Maintain existing services first, expand later
 - Bush hubs (i.e. Nome) would benefit from vehicle use on railcars
- Finance
 - G7G has funders ready to finance the \$12 billion building and rolling stock
 - Make sure that there is a financing plan in place to operate any new line before building any new trade.
- Freight Rail
 - Extend rail from Fairbanks to resources further north
 - Transition freight from truck to rail
- Goals and Objectives
 - Instead of 'Roads to Resources' or 'Rails to Resources' we would like to see 'Corridors to Resources'
 - Most important concept of ASRP should focus on 'intermodal transport'
 - First priority should be the continued investment in existing freight and passenger service before just laying track into new regions of the state.
- Infrastructure
 - Relocate Fairbanks rail yard
 - Reduce number of at-grade railroad crossings
- Intermodal Connectivity
 - Ports and intermodal connectivity for freight transportation
 - Policy that establishes guidelines to assure a seamless integration of all rail with other forms of transport including marine highway and other public transport.
- Operations
 - Ensure Positive Train Control (PTC) is enforced
 - Connections through Canada to lower 48
 - Reroute rail corridors used for the transport of hazardous materials away from residential and densely populated areas.
 - Improve safety and reliability of railways.
- Passenger Rail
 - Commuter service between Anchorage and Mat-Su / Girdwood
 - Rail service to Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport
 - Anchorage to Fairbanks commuter service (late night/early morning)
 - Commuter costs for Alaskans