

Appendix G-1

**Alaska State Rail Plan
Comment Summary**

Comment	Commentor Name	Source	Venue	Date	Issue Area	Issue Area 2	Issue Area 3
...is there a proposed route passing close to Tok on the way to the Yukon Territory?	J Jernigan	Public Comment	Other E-mail	1/21/2013	New Line		
Has the Alaska railroad ever considered a rail line from either Anchorage or Fairbanks to Bethel? Maybe with connecting lines to all villages? Maybe this would lower the costs of delivery of fuel and supplies to the bush and allow our native villages to grow and create in-state employment, it would be less invasive than a road as it would only stop at villages?	Evelyn Thomas	Public Comment	Website	4/3/2013	New Line	Economic Development	Rural Development
Culverts are killing young salmon and making it hard for adults to get back to their spawning grounds. ADFG documented this decades ago. Your thoughts on taking out culverts (some that are rusted and collapsed) and putting in small bridges letting streams flow naturally. This is especially important on the Turnagain arm streams that flow directly into salt water. I also reviewed the summary of the new plan and not much is addressed on the environmental impacts of the Alaska Railroad.	Konrad Mittlestadt	Public Comment	Website	4/4/2013	Environment	Bridges	
More frequent passenger rail service--current schedules are skeletal at best, particularly in the winter. Optimize schedules to serve local and commuter interests, as well as the successful tourist interests.	Eric Schneider	Public Comment	Website	4/5/2013	Passenger Rail	Operations	Service Needs
Explore commuter/shuttle rail service--in conjunction with bus, taxi, and walking/biking options. The majority of Fairbanks North Star population lives within a few miles of the railroad between Eielson AFB and Murphy Dome. While I do not live in the Anchorage area, it seems to me that similar patterns are present there, as well, from north of Wasilla clear down to the Potter Marsh, with the branch to Palmer. There is a large amount of road traffic between Anchorage and Girdwood, as well.	Eric Schneider	Public Comment	Website	4/5/2013	Passenger Rail	Intermodal Connectivity	Service Needs
Efforts should be made to increase track speeds to make passenger travel more comparable to driving time. However, as experienced elsewhere in the country, reliability and frequency of passenger service is more important than actual speed of such service.	Eric Schneider	Public Comment	Website	4/5/2013	Infrastructure	Passenger Rail	Service Needs
Consider "mixed" trains with both passenger and freight cars to provide frequent service and maximize efficiency of locomotive and crew usage.	Eric Schneider	Public Comment	Website	4/5/2013	Operations		
Seek better rail passenger connections with airports--the tracks and a nice station are in place in Anchorage, and the tracks are in place (albeit not currently used) to Fairbanks airport. Aggressively seek the rail connection via Canada to the rest of the North American railroad network. As I understand it, the value in mining alone makes this economically viable immediately; other connections, such as long distance passenger rail and some through freights (some freight may still ship more cheaply via barge) will have added value.	Eric Schneider	Public Comment	Website	4/5/2013	Intermodal Connectivity	Passenger Rail	
Natural gas powered trains may significantly improve the economics of railroading--see research past and current by the BNSF railroad in natural gas powered trains.	Eric Schneider	Public Comment	Website	4/5/2013	New Line	Economic Development	Freight Rail
Natural gas powered trains may significantly improve the economics of railroading--see research past and current by the BNSF railroad in natural gas powered trains.	Eric Schneider	Public Comment	Website	4/5/2013	Infrastructure	Financing	
Continue efforts to improve and enlarge the port of Anchorage, noting recent engineering problems. The Port MacKenzie rail extension should benefit the freight service of the Alaska Railroad (there could be a role for passenger service, as well, to decrease automobile commuting distance for port personnel).	Eric Schneider	Public Comment	Website	4/5/2013	Intermodal Connectivity	Freight Rail	
Use rail to move Wishbone Hill coal to port or Alaskan power plants. Upgrade and extend the Palmer branch as needed to maximize rail efficiency and minimize the negative impact of this project on area roads. Take advantage of rail's inherent efficiency over trucks/autos. As oil prices rise in the future, the difference will only magnify.	Eric Schneider	Public Comment	Website	4/5/2013	Freight Rail	Infrastructure	Economic Development
The railroad is already in place and already hauls oil, so a pipeline from Fairbanks to Anchorage is redundant and not nearly as safe as transport by rail. Make one from Prudhoe to Fairbanks, but no further.	Tristan Maxwell	Public Comment	Website	4/10/2013	New Line	Safety	

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Comment	Commentor Name	Source	Venue	Date	Issue Area	Issue Area 2	Issue Area 3
The state should invest in commuter rail instead of an overly costly Kink Arm Bridge. It's time to step into the 21st century and start acting like a city instead of a redneck town. With these investments, the railroad can rely upon profits instead of federal dollars. The RR is looking at serious financial difficulty with the FRA mandate of positive train control. Invest in local business that employs hundreds of Alaskans, not out of staters. Lets keep ur money here.	Tristan Maxwell	Public Comment	Website	4/10/2013	Passenger Rail	Financing	Operations
It seems like commuter rail between the Valley and Anchorage would help with Glenn Highway congestion and would provide a consistent revenue source for the AK RR (although I am sure they would incur greater costs). Train service seems to have greater appeal to some people as it is often less affected by uncertainty in traffic and thus can stay on-time more. I don't know if it is feasible to have commuter trains on the current rail system, but that sounds better than a bridge across Knik to me.	Wendy Loya	Public Comment	Other E-mail	4/11/2013	Passenger Rail	Financing	
Request to have a TAG and SC meeting in Fairbanks	Fairbanks North Star Borough	Public Comment	Other E-mail	4/11/2013	Public Involvement		
In regard to the proposed railway connection linking the Alaska Railroad to Canadian National's system in British Columbia, I was please wanting to ask about one major feature of the plan: Would the land necessary for the right-of-way be donated by the State, Federal and Provincial governments involved (as was done during the building of the U.P. - C.P. transcontinental railroad in 1869), or would it all have to be purchased by the railroad-building organization?	Lindsey Jauregui	Public Comment	Other E-mail	4/16/2013	Right of Way	New Line	
Expedite getting ur rail service into Point MacKenzie.....U need to be operational before a gas line or other big development on the North slope occurs.	Gerald Timmons	Public Comment	Website	4/17/2013	Freight Rail	New Line	
The Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau would like to see winter service between Fairbanks and Denali offered as a day trip option.	Deb Hickok	Public Comment	Website	4/22/2013	Passenger Rail	Operations	
The Regions and areas of Alaska with no rail system should be prioritized. In Western Alaska, we're faced with high cost of living with heating and gasoline costs unimaginable. Our communities in western Alaska don't even benefit from the oil being pumped from our very own state. Yes, funds availability through taxes, etc. we benefits. Bethel, Alaska is a hub town for the Yukon and Kuskokwim Delta villages, and where the cost of living is the highest in the nation and the world. A rail system to Bethel would have huge benefits for our region. We're voting citizens of Alaska and the United State of America, we shouldn't be overlooked for ideas for constructing rail systems for our state.	Howard T. Amos	Public Comment	Website	5/16/2013	Rural Development	New Line	Economic Development
The Anchorage Regional ITS Architecture Implementation Plan includes real-time Highway-Rail Intersection (HRI) warnings. This should be included in your document review and needs assessment, along with a review of the DOT&PF lways Architecture. Bruce Carr with AKRR may wish to share his thoughts as well for specific HRI deployment. Implementation Plan: See Chapter 6 at bottom of link below: http://www.muni.org/Departments/OCPD/Planning/AMATS/Pages/ITS1.aspx	Vivian Underwood	Agency Comment	Other E-mail	5/16/2013	Safety	Crossings	Operations
Would love to see rail from Kenai Peninsula (Soldotna/Kenai) to Anchorage in future. Would be nice alternate to driving to Anchorage for residents of the Peninsula.	Sue Essert	Public Comment	Website	5/16/2013	New Line	Passenger Rail	

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Comment	Commentor Name	Source	Venue	Date	Issue Area	Issue Area 2	Issue Area 3
There should be a high speed passenger rail for Wasilla, Palmer, Eklutna, Chugiak, Eagle River and Anchorage that makes regular trips during each day. There should be parking areas at each of these locations for people who use the rail to commute. This arrangement would reduce the need for greater highway expansion and the Knik bridge thereby reducing those costs which could be diverted to establishing the passenger rail system. By relieving commuter traffic on the road system, it would save lives of people and animals from auto crashes, and it would free the highways for commercial traffic.	John Angell	Public Comment	Website	5/17/2013	Passenger Rail	Intermodal Connectivity	Safety
Further, as Southcentral population increases a high speed commuter rail system will become a necessity, so why not begin the building process now by establishing the policy, plans and beginning the upgrades to the rail system. America is so far behind other developed countries in this transportation area that we are damaging our economy by trying to retro fix our outdated highway and road system. We need a transportation policy change.	John Angell	Public Comment	Website	5/17/2013	State Policy	Infrastructure	
Native Village of Nunam Iqua council members are interested in seeing how the rail plan could possibly effect freight costs and even fuel shipments.	Aaron Brown	Public Comment	Website	5/20/2013	Freight Rail	Rural Development	
Will this plan provide any solutions for Mat-Su/Anchorage commuters?	Valerie	Public Comment	Open House	5/21/2013	Passenger Rail		
Have you considered establishing ports on major rivers were the track crosses the river? At these sites, freight and fuel can be brought in by rail and stored for transport along the river system just before the ice breaks apart to allow for earlier first shipments of goods to the rural communities. These ports also have the possibility of more freight shipments to some communities along the river system then once a year. With new rail lines going to the towns of Nome, Bethel, and Dillingham, new hub communities could be established along the rail route for the airplane industry. New freight hubs give the option of airplanes flying shorter flight plans and increase safty for supplies. Along with the freight and fuel being shipped into the area, rail would allow an increase of building supplies to assist in rebuilding homes in rural Alaska. To assist in some electric production, one option is to use coal from the Usibelli Coal Mine. Another option is to buy fuel from Flint Hills Refinery at North Pole. The Flint Hills Refinery is capable of produing 220,000 barrels of fuel per day.	David K. Beals	Public Comment	Open House	5/21/2013	Economic Development	Intermodal Connectivity	New Line
1.) Please consider the historical value of the original Iditarod Trail which starts in Seward and crosses through railroad property. Dan Seavey has approached the Seward Council in preserving the trail.	Mayor David Seaward	Public Comment	Open House	5/22/2013	Environment		
2.) Please consider the value of Seward's impact and contribution to passenger market. Seward represents approximately 40 plus % market of railroad passenger service during cruiseship season. During the winter, there are no railroad service to Seward which hurts Seward's economy.	Mayor David Seaward	Public Comment	Open House	5/22/2013	Passenger Rail	Economic Development	
Please provide service directly to the Ted Stevens International Terminal. Please support communities by eliminating the use of pesticides and defoliantes.	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	5/22/2013	Passenger Rail	Environment	Intermodal Connectivity
Please provide railroad day programs in Seward similar but to equal to those experienced in Anchorage. Please allow the extension of the bike path along Seward Highway in your right-of-way.	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	5/22/2013	Operations	Right of Way	
Provide light rail service point-to-point like Anchorage to Wasilla/Palmer - get cars off road as a service. Work towards sustainability, good stewardship, protect wetlands and critical habitat.	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	5/22/2013	Passenger Rail	Environment	

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Comment	Commentor Name	Source	Venue	Date	Issue Area	Issue Area 2	Issue Area 3
As the Seward Master Plan Project progresses: 1.) Road to resources - Ship material / ores to Seward for transfer to vessels. 2.) Haul Seward's (and vicinity's) nuisance - the high tensile strength gravel north and load vessels. Very few places in AK have this quality rock.	Jim Hunt	Public Comment	Open House	5/22/2013	Intermodal Connectivity	Freight Rail	Economic Development
3.) Double-stack containers. 4.) Build a railroad ___(illegible)___ on bench land overlooking bay. Seward appreciates the railroad.	Jim Hunt	Public Comment	Open House	5/22/2013	Operations	Right of Way	
Through Canada, up to Coldfoot, out to west	Anonymous	Public Comment	Website	5/28/2013	New Line		
Connect WP & YR to other transportation connections in Carmacks, YT, Canada.	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	5/29/2013	New Line		
Underground like tracks paralleling I-25 between Santa Fe, NM and Albuquerque, NM. Maybe it goes well to the east and loops back. - Big Boy	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	5/30/2013	Infrastructure	Environment	
I don't believe that we can build prosperity; I think prosperity is the indirect <u>Result</u> of good economic decision-making. I would prefer that the vision statement be pared down to focus on the <u>efficiencies</u> of rail in getting resources to market.	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	5/30/2013	Vision Statement		
Trains! Yes! Let's do it.	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	5/30/2013	General Support		
It seems to me that if the primary purpose of the train to haul resources, those resources belong to some corporation and the corporation is who should be paying for the train. Or perhaps a public/ private partnership?	Sally McGuire	Public Comment	Open House	5/30/2013	Financing	Economic Development	
I would like to see rail and highways put on a level playing field when the state initiates a transport project in response to a resource access need.	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	5/30/2013	State Policy		
Corridors to resources - I encourage AK DOT to give railroad alternatives to road development greater & more upfront (earlier in the project) consideration	Debra Schnabel	Public Comment	Open House	5/30/2013	Freight Rail	Goals and Objectives	State Policy
The State of Utah (UTA) seems to have a great rail system from passenger standpoint. I'm interested in seeing freight and passenger rail service connecting Haines or Skagway to the interior & North America.	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	5/30/2013	Freight Rail	Passenger Rail	New Line
I feel very strongly that our railroad should be a viable transportation option for Alaskan residents - not just used for freight or for outside visitors on Holland America/Princess Cruise railcars. I think the railroad can be a real player in transit oriented development - where vibrant mixed use communities are built around rail stops. I think focusing on building a commuter train route from Wasilla/Palmer and from Girdwood into Anchorage should be a priority. I also think the rail line could be an amazing opportunity to redevelop Anchorage's neighborhoods. Imagine if Anchorage residents could commute downtown or to the airport with a stop in Ocean View, the Diamond Mall, Spenard, etc. Also, imagine if a resident of Alaska could actually take the train to the Anchorage International Airport. It is an embarrassment that our airport train depot is primarily used as a venue for fundraisers and black tie events. I also support programs like the whistle stop option to Spencer Glacier and Grandview. For examples of transit oriented development look at how development of the trolley system in San Diego helped spur revitalization.	Tanya Iden	Public Comment	Website	6/4/2013	Passenger Rail	Intermodal Connectivity	
Very disappointed I was not sent an invitation to the Open House until it was over. This was not a Public friendly way to do business.	B Weing	Public Comment	Website	6/4/2013	Public Involvement		

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The railroad is a dinosaur!! It is useless except in a few instances. Let us not waste any more money on expanding it. Just take a look on the value added benefit of the airport extension that dear old Ted Stevens gave us. What a boondoggle that is. And now you are talking about extending the line to Nome??? Please, let's get real. If the oil companies, miners, natives or anyone else wants access let them provide it. The rest of us should not be underwriting their projects.	Rich Melms	Public Comment	Website	6/4/2013	Financing	General Opposition	
Please consider a policy that establishes guidelines to assure a seamless integration of all rail with other forms of state transport including marine highway and other public transport.	Michael Powell	Public Comment	Open House	6/4/2013	Intermodal Connectivity	State Policy	
First priority should be the continued investment in existing freight and passenger service <u>before</u> just laying track into new regions of the state. Make sure that there is a financing plan in place to <u>operate</u> any new line <u>before</u> building any new trade.	Mark Butler	Public Comment	Open House	6/4/2013	Operations	Financing	
Update costs for operating commuter rail from Mat-Su to Anchorage	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	6/4/2013	Financing	Passenger Rail	
New 126 and 129 cars, greater 89 car capacity, convertible 126 and 129 cars to pipe carriers, bunk cars. Port of Seward expansion: Double dock face (lay down) Improve restrictive vessel security to 'best practice' STDs.	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	6/4/2013	Infrastructure	Operations	
Glad to see "coordination with other T.P" as being part of vision. As rail goes through boroughs/cities - such opportunities to create 'stops'/'stations' that allow users to utilize rail, bus, bicycle, etc. Multi-purpose travel stops.	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	6/4/2013	Intermodal Connectivity	Vision Statement	
What can be done to use the rail station at the airport more? It is an under used station. Commuter rail between Mat-Su Valley - Anchorage - Girdwood - needs to be a priority.	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	6/4/2013	Intermodal Connectivity	Passenger Rail	
Rail connection to Canada - to open up trade, and tourism would be great.	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	6/4/2013	New Line	Economic Development	
What large resources are identified to be moved by rail? Identify those resources and make sure the beneficiary of that resource helps pay for rail extension to move their resources to market.	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	6/4/2013	Economic Development	Freight Rail	Financing
Extend rail from Fairbanks to Ambler mining district - open up mining potential to NW and Western AK. Mining companies would then have year round access (via rail) to deep water ports. Ice free in the case of Whittier.	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	6/4/2013	New Line	Economic Development	Intermodal Connectivity
City of Whittier is interested in becoming an ore trans- shipment terminal. Rail to mining districts solves two problems --> energy --> diesel fuel in and transportation route out for ore. Added benefit - ability to ship heavy items (and expensive).	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	6/4/2013	Economic Development	Freight Rail	Intermodal Connectivity
All of the lower 48's major west coast seaports (plus at least one in Mexico) are often operating above capacity. Inbound cargo ships often have to wait for a turn to unload. Existing rail systems are also stretched to carry all these containers inland. If Anchorage-Seward-Whittier (and Port MacKenzie) had rail access to the rest of the continental system, they could take a share of this backlog of traffic.	Tim Coahran	Public Comment	Website	6/5/2013	Intermodal Connectivity	Economic Development	
They would also become the closest American seaport to the vast Asian market. I would like to see the Alaska Railroad and Canada build the final leg of infrastructure required to make this possible. Such a line could also provide another alternative for shipping Liquified Natural Gas south, and would fill one of the requirements for any future rail construction toward Nome or the Bering Strait.	Tim Coahran	Public Comment	Website	6/5/2013	New Line	Economic Development	
I would also like to see fast commuter service between Anchorage and the Mat-Su.	Tim Coahran	Public Comment	Website	6/5/2013	Passenger Rail		

Appendix G-6
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Comment Summary

Comment	Commentor Name	Source	Venue	Date	Issue Area	Issue Area 2	Issue Area 3
We have rails, let's use them! How many residents do you know that have never been on our train? Vision: ARRC expands its passenger service with a balance of (out-of-state) tourist and (local) passenger service.	Kimberly Varner Wetzel	Public Comment	Website	6/5/2013	Passenger Rail	Goals and Objectives	
The State should subsidize passenger service provided by ARRC because the savings or net benefits captured from reduced road maintenance, reduced parking lot construction (for instance, at parks and trailhead), reduced road widening, and increased tourism. There are commuter opportunities using hard rail and an unmet demand for recreational travel by locals to public lands via rail.	Kimberly Varner Wetzel	Public Comment	Website	6/5/2013	Passenger Rail	Financing	State Policy
I just have a gut sense that ARRC's core competency is the movement of goods and passengers. ARRC owns a lot of property. I don't know if they manage it because they have to or because it was land-granted to provide revenue. At any rate, I'm not sure land management should be one of their core competencies. There may be a better organization to maximize the use of their lands for the public good.	Kimberly Varner Wetzel	Public Comment	Website	6/5/2013	Right of Way	Financing	Operations
Outstanding idea and one that needs State backing and cooperation, all working towards the same goal of creating world class rail transportation system for a world class State and resource development.	Jim Simko	Public Comment	Website	6/7/2013	Vision Statement		
A cargo train with a passenger caboose from a 'big city' like Anchorage or Fairbanks would help. It would help ship items needed during the winter because our main supply comes from a barge which can't transport during the winter. Also, we won't have to ship a bunch of stuff to be prepared which would save resources. Another thing is that it would be a more reliable system, for example: the barge wasn't able to get this year's school supplies here.	Brayden Bahnke & Shyloah Shannon	Public Comment	Open House	6/5/2013	Passenger Rail	Freight Rail	Rural Development
To bush hubs such as Nome; there may be significant vehicle use or traffic on rail cars - both directions.	Jim Hansen	Public Comment	Open House	6/5/2013	New Line	Freight Rail	Rural Development
We want to make sure rail is considered for the Bering Strait Region and the Western Access Corridor study ie road to Nome. Rail has a long history in the Nome census area with mining.	Denise Michels (Mayor of Nome & Transportation Director of Kawerak)	Public Comment	Open House	6/5/2013	Rural Development	Freight Rail	New Line
A VISION THAT'S TIME HAS COME ---- In the mid 1980s ownership of the Alaska Railroad (ARR) was transferred from the Federal Government to the State of Alaska. Around that time the technical committee for the Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System (FMATS) under the leadership of Mim Dixon, Director of Planning for Alaska Department of Transportation Northern Region (AKDOT), undertook an assessment and review of the location and operation of Alaska Railroad (ARR) facilities in Fairbanks. As a result of that effort a report was issued with the conclusion that ARR facilities, railroad yard, and train operations should be relocated from its current location in the heart of Fairbanks to an area South and/or East of town. Specifically train operations should be rerouted south of town eliminating the major at-grade crossings and increased train and vehicle conflicts that would result from the continued inevitable growth of the community and train traffic. In 2007 a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed between the ARR and Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) to comprehensively reroute train traffic south of town dramatically decreasing the numerous at-grade crossings and more importantly the growing number of train and vehicle conflicts from Sheep Creek Road to Moose Creek. A copy of that MOU was provided at the recent scoping meeting for the State's Rail Master Plan held in the FNSB assembly chambers.	JC Phillips	Public Comment	Website	6/16/2013	Operations	Infrastructure	Safety

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Comment	Commentor Name	Source	Venue	Date	Issue Area	Issue Area 2	Issue Area 3
<p>The logical first step in addressing the intent of the MOU, which should be included in the State Rail Master Plan, is identifying and establishing the new rail bypass corridor from beginning to end along with identifying an area for a new and expanded railroad yard adequate for the next 100 years. Then and only then should phase construction proceed. <u>The greatest concentration and number of train and vehicle conflicts occur within the City of Fairbanks along a one mile section of the Eielson Spur.</u> Also, due to recent and continuing retail development along this section, it will be the area of greatest growth of train and vehicle conflicts in the future. <u>This one mile section is located just east of the railroad yard beginning at the College Road at-grade crossing continuing through the Old Steese at-grade to the Steese Expressway at-grade crossing.</u> In addition to these three heavily trafficked multi lane at-grade crossings <u>a fourth at-grade crossing will be constructed this summer</u> to facilitate the continuing traffic growth and circulation needed in the growing retail area known as North Town. This is the area bounded by College Road, the Johansen Expressway and the Steese Expressway and bisected by the Eielson Spur. Arguably even another at-grade crossing will be needed to handle inevitable future traffic growth and associated congestion. The average daily traffic (ADT) for the three existing multi lane at-grade crossings and the one being constructed this year will be in the range of 100,000 vehicles or more.</p>	JC Phillips	Public Comment	Website	6/16/2013	New Line	Safety	Crossings
<p>The highest priority goals of the State of Alaska with regard to its railroad should be: 1. Proactively improving and ensuring the safety and reliability of the rail system. These are not just problems within the ARR. They are failures of the leadership and people of Alaska to prioritize our financial resources to address technically well understood problems. These failures will not be overcome if the policies and goals adopted by the state do not demand action and provide guidance to our future legislators and administrators as to how to progress, including:</p>	Cole Sonafrank	Public Comment	Website	6/14/2013	Safety	Goals and Objectives	State Policy
<p>A. Move the industrial railroad out of the middle of Fairbanks to a safe distance. It is unconscionable that this has not been done decades ago. The risks to Fairbanks should have been deemed unacceptable long before now and they will only increase as Fairbanks grows and its role of supplying the development of rural Alaska continues. Factoring a catastrophic mass casualty event into the cost of the railroad's doing business is in effect the status quo which, again, is utterly unconscionable.</p>	Cole Sonafrank	Public Comment	Website	6/14/2013	Safety	Infrastructure	
<p>B. Eliminate at-grade railroad crossings of public roads. One of the most heinous failures of American public policy is our deliberate choice to minimize public understanding of the real risks associated with driving. To the degree possible, we hide rather than publicize the cost benefit analyses that include probabilistic determinations of lives lost which our transportation planners necessarily have to consider. This is a far greater problem for the road system than for rail. However, as a matter of policy it should no longer be acceptable for new track to intersect public roads at-grade. Nor should any increased rail traffic be allowed through existing at-grade crossings. Fix the problems. Do not allow them to get worse.</p>	Cole Sonafrank	Public Comment	Website	6/14/2013	Crossings	Safety	

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<p>C. Improve, replace and maintain the track wherever necessary to increase reliability. If those responsible for operating the Alaska Railroad do not already have well developed and robust predictive models enabling them to access the probabilities of problems of any conceivable nature at any point along the rail system, it is only to enable plausible deniability. Even without appropriate mathematical models, the intelligence, expertise and experience of the ARR professionals ensures that they have a good idea of all the potential problem areas of the track, how those problems should be remedied, and a stronger desire than most to get that work done. Yet Alaska's railroad continues to have what should be deemed an unacceptably high rate of derailments and washouts. Alaska's standards must be raised before our rail system is expanded. (To be clear, safety and reliability are even more problematic with regard to Alaska's roads.)</p>	Cole Sonafrank	Public Comment	Website	6/14/2013	Infrastructure	Safety	
<p>2. Diversifying Alaska's economy and creating local jobs. Transportation infrastructure development and maintenance are two of the most significant engines driving local economies. Their effectiveness is largely determined by public policy. This makes it especially important that the goals and policies included in Alaska's official plans emphasize increasing the long-term, progressive impacts of all public projects on local economic development.</p>	Cole Sonafrank	Public Comment	Website	6/14/2013	Economic Development	Goals and Objectives	State Policy
<p>A. Coordinate with the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) and other agencies to develop supporting businesses within Alaska whenever possible. Money invested in public projects in Alaska should not leave the state if a competitive, viable business can be established in Alaska that can get the job done. This is particularly true for infrastructure projects that typically have a long enough lead time for the local business potential to be investigated and developed. Any legally sound preferences should be given to Alaskan businesses.</p>	Cole Sonafrank	Public Comment	Website	6/14/2013	Economic Development	Financing	
<p>i. Railroad Sleepers (aka Ties) Can and Should Be Manufactured in Alaska Using Locally Produced Geopolymer Concrete. Locally producing economically competitive, sustainable and superior cement, concrete and derivative products like railroad sleepers in Alaska develops Alaska's economy rather than exporting our investments outside. Locally manufacturing such a fundamental product as cement at significantly reduced cost makes the local manufacturing of a myriad of additional products economically viable. The local production of geopolymer concrete ties is an ideal initial driver for the development of an Alaskan concrete and derivative product industry.</p>	Cole Sonafrank	Public Comment	Website	6/14/2013	Economic Development	Infrastructure	

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B. Proactively expand Alaska's rail system to enable the development of natural resources necessary to America's prosperity and human progress. Supporting the increasing human population in the face of global change requires advanced technology. This technology requires strategic and rare-earth elements that are known to exist in remote areas of Alaska. Even perfect recycling of these elements can not meet the growing need; therefore more resources must be mined and processed. In Alaska this can be done diligently with due regard for environmental protection, but this requires advancing along every available avenue toward reducing the cost of prudent practices. This means using rail rather than roads or river. The higher reliability of rail should be a State requirement, despite its up-front cost, whenever it would significantly increase the environmental protection from potential industrial (e.g. mining) impacts. To the degree the rail development can be demonstrably construed to contribute to long-term local economic development, its higher cost should be offset by government investment through AIDEA.	Cole Sonafrank	Public Comment	Website	6/14/2013	Economic Development	State Policy	New Line
3. Decreasing the cost of transportation infrastructure maintenance. Alaska needs to shift its transportation infrastructure economic engine away from maintenance by investing in more durable and reliable systems. The sustainability of Alaska's economy requires that the progressive development of low-maintenance, long life-cycle infrastructure becomes a more effective engine than perpetual, premature maintenance that could only be afforded while federal subsidies were abundant. A. Adjust the relative costs of rail and truck freight such that they reflect the total true relative costs of maintaining the rail and road systems. The public needs to be educated regarding the true total costs of Alaska's transportation systems. The lack of any appreciation for how heavily our consumer prices are subsidized through the federal government's funding of our road maintenance has led to egregious transportation policies that stymie Alaska's economic development. The necessity for continued government subsidy, increasingly more from Alaska, is certain. Its focus must shift toward being more sustainably effective in the long-term. Among other things, this means more State funding should subsidize rail freight to reduce truck traffic.	Cole Sonafrank	Public Comment	Website	6/14/2013	Infrastructure	Financing	State Policy
B. Build more rail and decrease truck traffic on roads built to higher standards. The decrease in trucking jobs should be offset by new rail development and upgrading roads to higher quality standards.	Cole Sonafrank	Public Comment	Website	6/14/2013	General Support		
C. Decrease the construction and maintenance cost of the railroad. Geopolymer concrete, more properly known as Alkali-Activated Alumina-Silicate Concrete, can be produced in Fairbanks for approximately 30% less cost than Portland-cement-based concrete. Geopolymer concrete is stronger and more durable than Portland-based concretes yielding more reliable railroad sleepers with a longer working life. Geopolymer sleepers are presently used in Spain, Australia and Finland.	Cole Sonafrank	Public Comment	Website	6/14/2013	Infrastructure		

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**Alaska State Rail Plan
Comment Summary**

Comment	Commentor Name	Source	Venue	Date	Issue Area	Issue Area 2	Issue Area 3
<p>4. Decreasing CO2 emissions and other pollution while recycling whenever possible. The long-term environmental impact of all public projects must be beneficial. Past practices of postponing solutions to environmental problems can not continue for any new development.</p> <p>A. Transition freight from truck to rail. While this is (literally) a particular problem in Fairbanks with its PM2.5 non-attainment problem, it can be a problem wherever trucks (and cars) are used. It continues to be exacerbated by our refusal to require lower sulfur fuels. In other situations, such as ore transport (e.g. Red Dog mine), fugitive toxic dust issues could be mitigated through the use of rail rather than trucks.</p> <p>B. Use geopolymers rather than Portland cement. Traditional Portland cement is limestone-based, geopolymers are not. 80% less CO2 is released in the production of geopolymers than of Portland cement. The fly ash from the coal-fired power plants in Interior Alaska has been proven to produce excellent geopolymer concrete. Fly ash, among other locally available waste products, such as mine tailings and ground glass, can and should be recycled into cements that will decrease the environmental impact and cost of infrastructure development in Alaska. If coal-fired power generation is phased out rather than its CO2 production mitigated, geopolymers can be made using alternatives to fly ash such as readily available clays.</p>	Cole Sonafrank	Public Comment	Website	6/14/2013	Environment		
The State Rail plan should include several areas of focus. The goals should be broken into immediate intermediate and long range plans. I also believe that the plan should have a commuter focus and a separate commercial/industrial focus.	Bryce Ward (Mayor of North Pole)	Public Comment	Website	6/17/2013	Goals and Objectives		
When it comes to identifying goals I think that safety should be the number one concern with expansion and market penetration being the close second. Tending to the existing infrastructure will be crucial to any future plans, as well as connecting the networks and projects. Some of the goals I think that would help short term would be realignment of existing track to better fit the communities that have grown around the rail.	Bryce Ward (Mayor of North Pole)	Public Comment	Website	6/17/2013	Goals and Objectives	Safety	Economic Development
Expansion to existing markets along roadways would also be important. I also believe that connection of the Alaska Rail system to the Canadian system and the Lower 48 would be of great benefit to Alaska and the Connectivity of the North American Continent. Long term plans should include an International expansion to Canada and also to the European Market. A Rail connection to Russia through the land bridge although not immediate would require many years of careful planning. International and continental connections can be highly controversial and expensive but should be part of a Alaska Statewide Rail and general transportation plan.	Bryce Ward (Mayor of North Pole)	Public Comment	Website	6/17/2013	Economic Development	New Line	
RELOCATION: 1 - Support the relocation of the main rail line around the Fairbanks Area. 2 - Encourage the relocation of the Alaska Railroad yard outside of the Fairbanks urban core in accordance with the Fairbanks Area Rail Line Relocation plan. A - Develop a long-term land-use plan for the existing Railroad Industrial area. B - Investigate development of a railroad depot at the south end of Peger Road as an aspect of the Fairbanks Area Rail Line Relocation Project. 3 - Acquire land for new railyard(s) and begin transfer elements of Terminal use, especially hazardous materials storage transfer. A - Investigate FNSB owned Section 36 as possible location. B - Investigate the western Goldstream Valley area. C - Investigate Eielson Farm Road/ Moose Creek area.	Mayor Luke Hopkins (Fairbanks North Star Borough)	Public Comment	Letter	6/5/2013	Infrastructure	Right of Way	

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**Alaska State Rail Plan
Comment Summary**

Comment	Commentor Name	Source	Venue	Date	Issue Area	Issue Area 2	Issue Area 3
PASSENGER SERVICE: 4 - Ensure that Positive Train Control is implemented to legally continue passenger service to the interior. 5 - Reduce the travel time between Fairbanks and Anchorage to better compete with other modes of transportation. 6 - Investigate the use of commuter trains for transportation and commuter purposes for the rail belt communities and between the City of Fairbanks, the City of North Pole, Eielson Air Force Base, Salcha and Delta Junction. 7 - Continue the development of winter passenger service through self propelled diesel motor units, which are insulated for winter use.	Mayor Luke Hopkins (Fairbanks North Star Borough)	Public Comment	Letter	6/5/2013	Passenger Rail	Operations	Infrastructure
8 - Develop a pedestrian connection between the existing railroad depot and downtown Fairbanks. 9 - Develop a railroad depot in the City of North Pole.	Mayor Luke Hopkins (Fairbanks North Star Borough)	Public Comment	Letter	6/5/2013	Intermodal Connectivity	Infrastructure	
EXPANSION: 10 - Develop and maintain Fairbanks as the transportation hub for the Interior by encouraging the expansion of the rail system to: A - Delta Junction. B - Canada. C - Northern Alaska. D - Western Alaska (Nome).	Mayor Luke Hopkins (Fairbanks North Star Borough)	Public Comment	Letter	6/5/2013	Goals and Objectives	New Line	
11 - Incorporate the possibility of a rail corridor into the Western Alaska Access Planning Study. 12 - Coordinate future rail expansion projects with the development of natural resources locations. A - Investigate the possibility of a rail line to Livengood in support of limestone and gold mining industries. 13 - Investigate and plan for the possibility of a gas-to-liquids site within the FNSB serviced by rail line.	Mayor Luke Hopkins (Fairbanks North Star Borough)	Public Comment	Letter	6/5/2013	New Line	Economic Development	
SAFETY/NOISE: 14 - Construct the railbed to the standards of a certified levee as an aspect of the second phase (Eielson to Tanana River Bridge) of the Northern Rail Extension project.	Mayor Luke Hopkins (Fairbanks North Star Borough)	Public Comment	Letter	6/5/2013	Infrastructure	New Line	
15 - Reroute rail corridors used for the transport of hazardous materials away from residential and densely populated areas. 16 - Reduce the number of at-grade railroad crossings; create separate grade crossings for the remainder, when possible. A - Construct the North Pole Road / Rail Reduction project. B - Construct railroad overpass / highway interchange in the vicinity of Ft. Wainwright's current 3-Mile Gate rail access. C - Construct railroad overpass over University Avenue to eliminate serious traffic problems experienced at the present at-grade crossing. D - Construct auxiliary stop lanes on the Richardson Highway crossings to facilitate the legally mandated stopping of fuel trucks and buses.	Mayor Luke Hopkins (Fairbanks North Star Borough)	Public Comment	Letter	6/5/2013	Safety	Crossings	Infrastructure
17 - Minimize right-of-way acquisition if the Parks Highway alignment is the preferred alternative for main line relocation (i.e., single-track). 18 - Maintain motorized and non-motorized access to areas on and past the Tanana River Levee, when the ARRC main line is relocated in the area.	Mayor Luke Hopkins (Fairbanks North Star Borough)	Public Comment	Letter	6/5/2013	Right of Way	Access	
Attached (on file at HDR) is the Memo of Understanding between the FNSB & ARR agreeing to define a new rail corridor around metro Fairbanks dated 25 June 2007. Also attached are just 2 of the many resolutions approved by the City of Fairbanks and the FNSB encouraging ARR to relocate or construct new track and trains around, south, of the metro area. This is due to conflicts of the railroad and the trains with our roads and streets. The number and magnitude of the conflicts is growing (this was received at a public meeting as a comment form).	JC Phillips	Public Comment	Open House	6/5/2013	Infrastructure	Crossings	Safety

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**Alaska State Rail Plan
Comment Summary**

Comment	Commentor Name	Source	Venue	Date	Issue Area	Issue Area 2	Issue Area 3
GOAL: Satisfy visitor needs by offering flexibility in schedule/route year round. STRATEGY #1: "Denali Express" for charter service / schedule Fairbanks - Denali in Winter. Construct winter facility in Fairbanks for passenger cars. Revive: tour offerings, independent tourism, stock promotions. STRATEGY #2: "Denali Express" Fairbanks - Denali in Summer. More robust schedule to offer tour excursions and independent trips - flexible schedule. STRATEGY #3: More frequency ANC - FAI service in winter (5 year plan: Offer service late February through March).	Deb Hickok	Public Comment	Open House	6/5/2013	Goals and Objectives	Passenger Rail	Operations
An Anchorage to Fairbanks commuter service, late night/ early morning service	Victor Apudaca	Public Comment	Open House	6/5/2013	Passenger Rail		
Plan must make a connection to proposed links through Canada to the lower 48!	Dave Lanning	Public Comment	Open House	6/5/2013	New Line		
How about a bullet train "shinkansen" between Anchorage and Fairbanks :)	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	6/5/2013	Passenger Rail		
Rather than 'Roads to Resources' or 'Rails to Resources' we would like to see 'Corridors to Resources' - corridors that would incorporate the physical constraints of rail transport - and utilizing only one tract through typically undeveloped areas of the state for both road & rail. Secondly, I think one of the most important concepts of the plan should be the focus on 'intermodal' transport - leading to Alaska as a forerunner in international transport.	Kathy Marx	Public Comment	Open House	6/5/2013	State Policy	Environment	Intermodal Connectivity
Consider PTC and how that would affect potential freight movement on White Pass & Yukon. Fairbanks Rail yard has run out of room (land) for potential growth. Any growth will be difficult to accommodate without it.	Katrina Martolano	Public Comment	Open House	6/5/2013	Operations	Infrastructure	Freight Rail
I think the railroad should provide passenger service between Anchorage and Fairbanks that is competitive to driving an automobile between the two destinations in terms of time. Passenger service should take 6 to 7 hours.	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	6/5/2013	Passenger Rail		
Please get the stupid model railroad out of the Fairbanks Depot!	Anonymous	Public Comment	Open House	6/5/2013	Opposition		
I'd like to see an improvement in passenger service, especially from Fairbanks to Anchorage. Currently the trip is too long and costs too much.	Jerry McBeath	Public Comment	Open House	6/5/2013	Passenger Rail		
At the present time G7G is working hard to serve the \$40 million required to facilitate our feasibility study. We have prospective funders ready to finance the \$12 billion build and rolling stock. We would appreciate formal discussions to being with Alaska Rail.	Matt Vickers	Public Comment	Open House	6/5/2013	Financing	New Line	Economic Development
As the result of rapidly thinning arctic sea ice the City of Nome is in an excellent position for maritime development as a regional hub for Alaskan and United States commerce.	Gary Kasper	Public Comment	Website	6/20/2013	Intermodal Connectivity	Economic Development	

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**Alaska State Rail Plan
Comment Summary**

Comment	Commentor Name	Source	Venue	Date	Issue Area	Issue Area 2	Issue Area 3
The State of Alaska current developmental policy calls for an increased development of mineral, oil, and gas resources in the arctic region. The Alaskan Governor's Program has implemented the program of "Roads to Resources" for unlocking the State's resources for the Nation's energy needs for the coming future. In order to build such a highway infrastructure, vast amounts of road building material will be needed to achieve this vision. Building a railroad first would supply the highway project with the necessary materials while servicing the port of Nome with reasonable access to interior Alaska and interconnecting commerce. Alaska Deep Draft Arctic Port Study listed Nome highly favorable as a future development site for increased maritime activity. Our world is changing rapidly, the opportunities for Alaskans is great. The coming era will demand greater resources and the necessary infrastructure to facilitate world commerce. The City of Nome will be sitting on a super international maritime highway of commerce. Will Alaska be ready?	Gary Kasper	Public Comment	Website	6/20/2013	State Policy	Economic Development	Intermodal Connectivity
The City of Nome supports the State of Alaska's efforts to update the State of Alaska's Rail Plan and requests that Nome, Alaska be included for future development. The City of Nome has been identified on DOTPF's short list for a deep draft port study along with Port Clarence. Intermodal transportation is key to economic and resource development in the Bering Straits region.	Denise Michels (Mayor of Nome & Transportation Director of Kawerak)	Public Comment	Letter	6/21/2013	Intermodal Connectivity	Economic Development	General Support
The City of Nome supports the State of Alaska's Western Access Study and has requested that rail be considered for that project. The route opens access for mineral exploration and resource development (rock, quarries, mines) and alternative energy development (geothermal, wind, etc.)	Denise Michels (Mayor of Nome & Transportation Director of Kawerak)	Public Comment	Letter	6/21/2013	Economic Development	New Line	
During the gold rush days in Nome (Bunker Hill and Dixon) rail played an important role in moving ore to the docks of Nome. Graphite One Resources has announced the discovery of a graphite desposit at Graphite Creek 40 miles north of Nome (April 29, 2013 press release announced high purity of 99.2% on first test). There are other exploration activities happening within the Bering Strait. Infrastructure is required to access those deposits and it is our belief that rail could play an important role with exploration and resource development.	Denise Michels (Mayor of Nome & Transportation Director of Kawerak)	Public Comment	Letter	6/21/2013	New Line	Economic Development	
With the increase in Arctic shipping, this year the cruise ships have scheduled an additional stop in Nome. Having a rail to Fairbanks would increase tourism opportunities and job creation.	Denise Michels (Mayor of Nome & Transportation Director of Kawerak)	Public Comment	Letter	6/21/2013	New Line	Passenger Rail	Economic Development
Adopted and draft land use planning elements of the Municipality of Anchorage Comprehensive Plan include references to rail and its relationship to planned future growth and development. The Municipality has also completed studies of future residential and commercial growth projections and is scheduled to complete an updated land use plan. There may be use in providing this information, summarized, for consideration by the State Rail Plan project planners. The rail plan will also be likely to affect ongoing draft plans, including the Anchorage Bowl Land Use Plan.	Tom Davis, MOA Planning	Public Comment	Website	6/25/2013	Service Needs		
Perhaps Alaska and United States should seriously consider the importance of transportation to the arctic coast. For Alaska railroad from Fairbanks to the north slope Might be most productive. That with the Alaska Canada Rail link including to the Haines port would open arctic trade to the whole northern hemisphere.	Bill Kurz (Haines Port Development Council -TAG Member)	TAG	Other E-mail	6/26/2013	New Line	Economic Development	
Consider the relocation of the main rail line around the Fairbanks Area.	Ronald M. Johnson (Department of the Army)	Agency Comment	Letter	6/17/2013	New Line		

**Alaska State Rail Plan
Comment Summary**

Comment	Commentor Name	Source	Venue	Date	Issue Area	Issue Area 2	Issue Area 3
Develop and maintain Fairbanks as the transportation hub for the Interior by encouraging the expansion of the rail system to Delta Junction.	Ronald M. Johnson (Department of the Army)	Agency Comment	Letter	6/17/2013	New Line	Economic Development	
Construct railroad overpass/highway interchange in the vicinity of Ft. Wainwright's current 3-Mile Gate rail access. These goals would support safe railroad operations and reduce existing safety hazards on the installation and support Army movement of people and/or equipment.	Ronald M. Johnson (Department of the Army)	Agency Comment	Letter	6/17/2013	Safety	Crossings	
Do you foresee using rail for commuters in the Anchorage area? We live in Fairbanks but have always been disappointed that the very expensive train terminal at the Anchorage airport, built with public funds sits mainly unused because it was built for the express use of a tour company so cannot be used, apparently, for public transportation as an airport rail link to downtown Anchorage. How can this be justified and are there any plans to have a commuter rail car operate between there and downtown Anchorage, similar to what Seattle and Portland have? Please consider using this wonderful terminal for the public.	John Unruh	Public Comment	Website	7/3/2013	Intermodal Connectivity	Passenger Rail	Infrastructure
I would love to see AK RR put the Airport spur to use. I am a volunteer at Visit Anchorage and often get questions regarding taking the train from the airport to your terminal at Ship Creek. I have no answer. I refer those visitors to you. That facility was built with considerable fanfare and expense - and for what? It was great publicity at the time and provided great jobs for AK RR employees. To date, I can see no other benefit. Hosting AK Salmon tasting? Really? Please take the politics out and make the asset available! What a great advertisement and PR boon for Anchorage, the airport, and of course, YOU! Until that happens I see no reason for the RR to waste its time touting other expansion as the likely end result is more hype.	Sandra Knight	Public Comment	Website	7/11/2013	Intermodal Connectivity	Infrastructure	
I would like the following to be considered in the plan: 1. Expanded passenger and commuter rail service. 2. Preservation of the existing railroad depots and trackage in downtown Fairbanks, to ensure access for passenger and commuter trains, even if freight rail traffic is relocated. 3. Incentives for small private operators of passenger or commuter service, as a possible supplement to service operated by the Alaska Railroad. 4. Non-chemical means of vegetation control, e.g. brush cutting rather than the use of herbicides which may cause environmental contamination.	Jay Baxter	Public Comment	Website	7/11/2013	Passenger Rail	Infrastructure	Environment
Recommended vision Statement: The State of Alaska will implement policies, programs and projects for future rail development that foster growth of existing and emerging businesses, build prosperity, support communities and provide efficient, reliable and safe freight and passenger service in coordination with other transportation modes. Also, did the State consider having two vision statements with goals, objectives, strategies and performance measures tied to each: one for freight and one for passenger service? State and Efficiency. The plan should address the relocation of the main line rail and railroad yard around the Fairbanks area. There has already been extensive study by the Alaska Railroad on this project and over 50 at-grade railroad crossings in the core of Fairbanks and North Pole are safety issues. The potential for train/vehicle is a very real safety concern. Traffic congestion results from vehicles and public transportation waiting for slow moving trains to clear the crossing resulting in considerable delay and degradation to air quality, a significant issue in Fairbanks. The efficiency of the delivery of freight and passengers would also be a positive result of this realignment.	Donna Gardino	Agency Comment	Letter	7/17/2013	Vision Statement	Goals and Objectives	
	Donna Gardino	Agency Comment	Letter	7/17/2013	Crossings	Safety	

**Alaska State Rail Plan
Comment Summary**

Comment	Commentor Name	Source	Venue	Date	Issue Area	Issue Area 2	Issue Area 3
Opportunities for Growth, Economic Development and Prosperity: Expand service for the development and extraction of natural resources. Develop a railroad depot in North Pole. New Passenger Rail Services: Consider commuter service between Fairbanks, North Pole, Eielson Air Force Base, Salcha and Delta Junction. Consider inclusion of possible passenger rail between Pioneer Park and Downtown Fairbanks, most likely as a seasonal service. Consider the development of winter passenger service.	Donna Gardino	Agency Comment	Letter	7/17/2013	Economic Development	Infrastructure	Passenger Rail
FMATS has already contributed \$1 million to complete the Environmental Assessment for the North Pole Road/Rail Crossing Reduction segment. Implement Positive Train Control to ensure passenger service continues in Alaska.	Donna Gardino	Agency Comment	Letter	7/17/2013	Crossings	Operations	Safety