

Gravina Access Project Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Public Involvement Plan

November 2008

Prepared by:



HDR Alaska, Inc
2525 C Street, Suite 305
Anchorage, AK 99503

Prepared for:



Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Federal Highway Administration

FHWA-AK-EIS-03-01-F
DOT&PF Project 67698
Federal Project ACHP-0922(5)

Executive Summary

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

This document is the Gravina Access Project SEIS Public Involvement Plan, and it identifies an initial list of potentially affected interests, public involvement strategies and methods, and a schedule for exchanging information with the public to help determine the scope of and purpose and need for the Project. The DOT&PF will use this public involvement plan to guide the process of conducting public outreach for the development of the SEIS. The project’s approach to coordination with tribes and the state and federal agencies is described in detail in the *Gravina Access Project SEIS Coordination Plan* (November 2008).

This public involvement plan is a dynamic document that will be updated in consultation with the DOT&PF Project Manager and FHWA, as the need arises.

Table of Contents

Section	Page No.
Executive Summary	Ex 1
1 Distribution and Updates	1
2 Project Background and Description	1
3 Purpose of the Public Involvement Plan	2
4 Project Communication	3
4.1 Project Contacts	3
4.2 External Communications.....	4
4.3 Communications with DOT&PF	4
4.4 Written Communications	5
4.5 Telephone Communications	5
4.6 Record of Meetings.....	5
4.7 Filing of Correspondence.....	5
5 Identification of Potentially Affected Interests.....	5
6 Methods and Evaluation	7

Tables

Table 1 Potentially Affected Interests.....	6
Table 2 Public Involvement Strategies	8

Figures

	Following page
Figure 1 Project Schedule	13

1 Distribution and Updates

One copy of the Gravina Access Project SEIS Public Involvement Plan is located in the HDR Alaska Anchorage office, 2525 C Street, Suite 305, Anchorage, 99503. Electronic project files can be found in the HDR ProjectWise electronic filing system

Copies of the public involvement plan have been distributed to the project team, DOT&PF Project Manager, and the FHWA Environmental Coordinator. The plan is a living document and will be updated as necessary throughout the life of the project.

2 Project Background and Description

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 Ketchikan Gateway Borough, 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 opening of the Gravina Island Highway also 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 need for improving access is threefold:

- To provide the Ketchikan Gateway Borough and its residents with more reliable, efficient, convenient, and cost-effective access for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians to Borough lands and other developable or recreation lands on Gravina Island in support of the Borough's adopted land use plans.
- To improve the convenience and reliability of access to Ketchikan International Airport for passengers, airport tenants, emergency personnel and equipment, and shipment of freight.
- To promote environmentally sound, planned, long-term economic development on Gravina Island.

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 the 3.4-mile road segment, Gravina Island Highway that 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 completed the first phase of the Gravina Access Project: construction of the Gravina Island Highway. This first phase included the site grading, placing embankment, constructing bridges over Government Creek and Gravina Creek, installing drainage structures, and other improvements. The Gravina Island Highway is now open and provides public access to lands on Gravina Island.

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. FHWA informed the DOT&PF that if it were to construct an alternative that does not include the Gravina Island Highway, all or part of the funds expended on construction of the highway may be declared ineligible for federal participation.

Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

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 FHWA and DOT&PF are lead agencies for the Gravina Access Project SEIS.

3 Purpose of the Public Involvement Plan

The Gravina Access Project Public Involvement Plan is developed to document the approach and methods of exchanging information with the public. This public involvement plan will document the techniques used to engage the public, tribes, and agencies in major project decision milestones and program scheduling. Detailed coordination with the agencies and tribes is presented in the Gravina Access Project SEIS Coordination Plan (November 2008). It will be updated as public outreach requirements transition from scoping and environmental analyses to possible future design and construction phases.

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 five-year period of 2005-2009. Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU prescribes changes to existing FHWA procedures for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as amended, and for implementing the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality, 40 CFR parts 1500 through 1508. All EISs for which the Notice of Intent 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.

SAFETEA-LU specifies that the public must be given the opportunity to be involved in the development of the purpose and need statement and the range of alternatives to be considered. The public involvement plan explains how public outreach will occur to ensure these requirements of SAFETEA-LU are met.

Section 6002 guidance requires the development of a “Coordination Plan” by the lead agencies as the cornerstone 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 to support timely and collaborative involvement with the public, tribes, and other federal and state agencies at key decision milestones. The Coordination Plan is a public document that must identify key coordination points in the environmental review process for involvement with the public, tribal governments, and federal and state agencies and be made available for their review.

4 Project Communication

The lead agencies will conduct all aspects of communication with the public, tribes, and federal/state agencies. All aspects of public involvement, including meeting format, location, timing, exhibits, handouts, mailers, will be developed in consultation with and approved by the lead agencies. Mark Dalton, the consultant Project Manager is the primary contact between the consultant team and DOT&PF. DOT&PF will communicate and coordinate with the FHWA.

4.1 Project Contacts

The points of contact for the Gravina Access Project SEIS include:

- Michael Vanderhoof, FHWA Environmental Coordinator.
- Jim Lowell, DOT&PF Project Manager.
- Reuben Yost, DOT&PF Southeast Environmental Coordinator
- Mark Dalton, HDR Alaska, Inc., Consultant Team Project Manager.

Contact Information		
FHWA Michael Vanderhoof, Environmental Coordinator 709 West 9 th Street., Rm. 851 Juneau, AK 99802	michael.vanderhoof@dot.gov	Phone: 907.586.7464 Fax: 907.586.7420
DOT&PF Jim Lowell, P.E. Special Projects Southeast Region 6860 Glacier Highway Juneau, AK 99801	Jim.lowell@alaska.gov	Phone: 907.465.1799 Fax: 907.465.2030
DOT&PF Reuben Yost, DOT&PF Southeast Environmental Coordinator 6860 Glacier Highway Juneau, AK 99801	Reuben.yost@alaska.gov	Phone: 907.465.1774
HDR Alaska, Inc. Mark Dalton, Project Manager 2525 C Street, Suite 305 Anchorage, AK 99503	mark.dalton@hdrinc.com	Phone: 907.644.2000 Fax: 907.644.2022

4.2 External Communications

External communications (e.g., press releases, media briefings, telephone interviews, as well as communications with elected officials) will be made by the lead agencies. Mr. Vanderhoof, Mr. Lowell, and Mr. Yost will be the points of contact for their respective agencies. Members of the consultant team will not have direct contact with external agencies except to arrange meetings, verify existing information, or collect other available data. Upon request, the consultant Project Manager, Mark Dalton will provide support for the agencies' external communications.

The lead agencies anticipate regular communication with the media throughout each phase of the project, which will allow for continued public participation and keep the public informed of project progress.

4.3 Communications with DOT&PF

Mark Dalton, HDR Alaska, Inc., Project Manager, is the primary contact for communication between the consultant team and DOT&PF. Mr. Lowell and/or Mr. Yost will coordinate all communications with federal/state agencies, tribal governments, and the public with FHWA. Exceptions to this protocol would be permitted for arranging meetings, verifying existing information, and other approved communications. Mr. Dalton will provide quality review of all correspondence before transmitting it to Mr. Lowell and Mr. Yost for review and use.

4.4 Written Communications

External public involvement correspondence, including correspondence with local, state, and federal agencies, shall originate from the lead agencies' project managers. The lead agencies will be signatories for all written communications going to the public and agencies. Communication with tribal governments will be initiated by FHWA in accordance to government-to-government protocols as determined by the FHWA.

4.5 Telephone Communications

All project team members' telephone communications regarding public involvement tasks will be documented on a telephone conversation record form with copies distributed to the consultant Project Manager. The consultant Project Manager will then distribute to the DOT&PF Project Manager, the public involvement coordinator, and other interested team members as appropriate.

The DOT&PF Project Manager will forward telephone communications to other DOT&PF management sections as appropriate.

4.6 Record of Meetings

All external and substantial public meetings will be recorded. All meeting records will be distributed to the consultant Project Manager, who will distribute to other team members as appropriate.

4.7 Filing of Correspondence

Project files will be maintained and managed primarily in an electronic format. All project communication will be either retained electronically (i.e. email) or scanned and appropriately filed and tracked with a project specific database. Each piece of original written correspondence, including telephone, e-mail, comment forms, and other correspondence generated to support project public involvement will be scanned and saved to the administrative record.

5 Identification of Potentially Affected Interests

After reviewing documentation and correspondence from earlier planning, engineering, and environmental studies, a preliminary list potentially affected interests has been compiled. The list is presented in Table 2. This list will expand throughout the project.

Table 1
Potentially Affected Interests

General Public

Commercial Fishing Interests
 Limited English Proficient Community
 Private Pilots
 Property Owners
 Recreators
 Residents

Business Entities

Aero Services
 Airport Shuttle
 Alaska Airlines
 Alaska Appraisal Association
 Alaska Coastwise Pilots
 Bed and Breakfast Establishments
 Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska
 Cruise Lines
 Family Air Tours
 Greatland FBO Aviation Services
 Hotels and Motels
 LAB Flying Service
 Misty Fjords Air and Outfitting
 Pacific Airways
 Pilots (Private and Commercial)
 Pro Mech Airlines
 Seabourne Aviation
 Seawind Aviation
 Southeast Alaska Petroleum Resources
 Organization (SEAPRO)
 Southeast Alaska (SEA) Pilots
 Taquan Air
 Taxi Companies
 Tour Operators

Special Interests

Alaska Forest Association
 Alaska Public Interest Research Group
 Alaska Rainforest Campaign
 Alaska Transportation Priorities Project
 Alaska Wilderness Recreation & Tourism
 Association
 Earthjustice
 Herring Bay Lumber
 Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce
 Ketchikan Economic Development Authority
 Pennock-Gravina Island Association
 Sealaska Timber Corporation
 Southeast Alaska Conservation Council
 Sierra Club Alaska Field Office
 Tongass Conservation Society

Governmental Entities

Alaska Mental Health Lands, Trust Office
 City of Craig
 City of Hydaburg
 City of Kasaan
 City of Ketchikan
 City of Klawock
 City of Saxman
 City of Thorne Bay
 Elected Officials
 Inter Island Ferry Authority
 Ketchikan Gateway Borough
 Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District
 Ketchikan International Airport
 Ketchikan Public Utilities
 University of Alaska Southeast

Agencies

Alaska Dept. of Environmental
Conservation
Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game
Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources
Alaska Marine Highway System
Alaska State Troopers
Federal Aviation Administration
Immigration & Naturalization
NOAA
Postal Service
State Historic Preservation Office
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Customs Service
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service

Tribal Governments & Native Corporations

Cape Fox Corporation
Haida Corporation
Klawock Heenya Corporation
Sealaska Corporation
Shaan Seet, Inc.
Craig Community Association
Hydaburg Cooperative Association
Ketchikan Indian Corporation
Klawock Cooperative Association
Native Village of Kasaan
Organized Village of Saxman
Tlingit & Haida Central Council
Metlakatla Indian Community

6 Methods and Evaluation

The techniques and tools devised for the scoping process for the SEIS are intended to stimulate meaningful public involvement. The objective is to engage the public, agencies, and tribal entities in the process and obtain valuable input to the environmental study. This will result in a decision making process that is objective, transparent and available to the public. Each of the techniques will allow the lead agencies to evaluate the effectiveness of reaching the public and interested stakeholders.

The public involvement strategy is outlined below in Table 2. The table shows the tool(s) used, the purpose of the tool and the timeframe in which it will be implemented. Following the table is a charted project schedule.

**Table 2
Public Involvement Strategies**

All public involvement tools will be subject to review and approval protocols established in this document. Input received through the project will be documented and transmitted to FHWA and DOT&PF for review and to coordinate responses if necessary. This information will be result in a Scoping Summary Report for the SEIS.

Public Involvement Tool	Time Frame	Objective of the Public Involvement Tool
Mailing List	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2008 – duration of project. 	<p>To allow project team to inform interested parties and the general public of the project. The mailing list includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ketchikan Gateway Borough (KGB) households/property owners • Identified Potentially Affected Interests • Agency contacts • Business entities • Tribal governments • Elected officials (local, congressional and state)
Postcard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2008 • Announce availability of Scoping Report • Announce availability of Draft SEIS • Announce schedule for public hearing 	<p>To provide time sensitive information and to solicit input from the general public. Time sensitive topics include: project initiation, availability of new information, and comment opportunities.</p> <p>The initial postcard was mailed prior to the public meeting in July 2008. The purpose of this postcard is to invite the public to the scoping meeting and to request individuals or groups to characterize their interest in further involvement in the project, which would help refine the mailing list.</p> <p>Subsequent postcards will be sent in accordance to project milestones.</p>

Public Involvement Tool	Time Frame	Objective of the Public Involvement Tool
Open House Public Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2008 – project kick-off, scoping, review of purpose and need statement, review of construction cost estimates and alternatives. • June 2009 –public hearing on Draft SEIS. 	<p>To engage the public, agencies and Tribes at key milestones in the NEPA process. The lead agencies held scoping meetings and informational meetings in June and July 2008 to seek public, agency and tribal input on the purpose and need for the project, the range of alternatives to be considered, the issues of concern related to the alternatives, and the methods of analyzing alternatives. A public scoping meeting was held in Ketchikan, and the individual agency and tribal meetings were conducted in Ketchikan, Saxman, Anchorage, and Juneau. Input from the various groups was collected in the form of written comments, electronic comments, interaction with project team members, and written letters.</p> <p>The public scoping meeting was advertised in advance with newspaper display ads and flyers posted in the community.</p> <p>The combined open house/public hearing to be held in May 2009 will be an opportunity for public release of information in the Draft SEIS and to obtain comment on the Draft SEIS. The open house/public hearing will be similar in format to the scoping meetings and will include an opportunity for public testimony.</p>
Newsletter/News Insert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 2008 – review of public scoping meeting and issues. • December 2008 – review of construction cost estimates and overview of alternatives. • August 2009 – Announce the availability of the Draft SEIS. • August 2009 – Announce public hearing for Draft SEIS and the proposed schedule for Final SEIS and ROD. 	<p>To distribute updated project information at key milestone to keep all the stakeholders informed of status and progress of the project. The newsletter is intended to reach stakeholders who may not come to meetings and to make sure they see and receive important information. Newsletters will be delivered via mailing list, web site, and hard copies made available at local businesses, tribal and governmental offices.</p>

Public Involvement Tool	Time Frame	Objective of the Public Involvement Tool
Project Web Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2008 – duration of project. 	<p>To reach people who will not attend the meetings and to have information available anywhere and any time to anyone with an Internet connection. The web site will be maintained regularly by the DOT&PF and will be promoted in other project outreach material. The web site will host a mechanism for the viewer to provide comments and to request to be added to the mailing list.</p>
Information Locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2008 – duration of project. 	<p>To provide hard copy and CD Rom information to local information areas such as public libraries, government offices, and visitor locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KGB Planning office • KGB Mayors office • Ted Ferry Civic Center • Tribal governments • City of Ketchikan • City of Saxman <p>These locations will be convenient to the community members, especially those without Internet access. Hard copies will be made available upon request and at the discretion of the lead agencies.</p>
Scoping Summary Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 2008 	<p>To provide comprehensive listing of issues brought forth by Potentially Affected Interests, including governmental agencies, tribes, organizations, and individuals, and to document how the issues will be addressed in the SEIS. This will serve as a tool to demonstrate the transparency of the public process and to document public input.</p>

Public Involvement Tool	Time Frame	Objective of the Public Involvement Tool
Advertisements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2008 (scoping meeting) • August 2008 (remind the public about the comment deadline and solicit input regarding historic and cultural properties and comments related to the project Purpose and Need) • August 2009 (Announce DSEIS Public Hearing) 	<p>To post meeting dates, times, agenda, and changes to informational displays. Advertisements include retail display ads, public service announcements, and the local Cable TV Bulletin Board. Advertisements will be broadcast through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juneau Empire • Ketchikan Daily News • SITNEWS • What's Up announcement • Email correspondence • Meeting flyers
Speakers Bureau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2008 – duration of project. 	<p>To get on the agendas of regularly scheduled meetings of groups and organizations in Ketchikan and other areas. The speakers bureau allows for the opportunity to reach people at their meetings where attendance would be reasonably high. The purpose of the speakers bureau is to present project information and to provide an opportunity for input. These engagements will be conducted at the discretion of the lead agencies and could include presentations at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KGB Assembly • City of Ketchikan • City of Saxman • Chamber of Commerce • Fishing association • Tribal governments • Local radio call in shows

Public Involvement Tool	Time Frame	Objective of the Public Involvement Tool
Informal Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March – August 2008 • As needed through duration of project. 	<p>To conduct informal one-on-one meetings to discuss specific issues related to a specific group. This tool will provide vocal stakeholder groups with an opportunity to discuss their concerns relating to specific subject with the lead agencies. Possible informal meetings could be held with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tongass Aircraft Pilots Association • Tribal governments • Local business groups • Nongovernmental organizations
Informational Flyers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2008 – duration of project. 	<p>To distribute project information specifically targeted to special group, i.e., Tongass Aircraft Pilots Association, Limited English and potentially affected interests identified above.</p>

Figure 1 Project Schedule

