

Ketchikan - Shelter Cove Road Public Comment Summary

Introduction:

September 7, 2011 The DOT&PF conducted an open house at the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's Assembly chambers to provide information on the project and to receive public questions and comments. Afternoon and evening sessions were held, to which more than 50 people attended. In response, more than 20 comments were received to date.

Four alternatives were presented, plus a no-build option. Below are summaries of the public comments and the respective issues.

Alternative I – High Road (Reciprocal Easement):

Three commenters were in favor of the Alternative I-High Road Corridor and its variations, one of which was also in favor of Alternative IV.

Reasoning and issues of concern:

- Opens up access to land locked up by USFS
- Improves recreational opportunities
- Provides better opportunities for logging
- Should build road to logging standard for Saddle Lake timber sale and for recreation, upgrade later
- Provides access to Naha LUD II Reserve for recreation
- Provides access to mature timber

Alternative II - Low Road:

Nine commenters were in favor of the Alternative II-Low Road Corridor and its variations; five of which were also in favor of Alternative IV, and one of which was in favor of Alternative III.

Two of the commenters were also in favor of a route informally called "Nichol's Passage" which is a variation of Alternatives II & IV.

Reasoning and issues of concern:

- Provides access to Swan lake power line ROW for clearing trees
- Provides access to State timber
- Has low elevations requiring less maintenance, road is open longer
- Provides access for George Inlet property owners
- Has minimal need for Federal approvals
- Avoids Naha LUD Reserve, and issues with national environmental groups
- Has a potential tidal energy site near tide race at rapids at mouth of Salt Lagoon
- Can build bridge at mouth of Salt Lagoon

Alternative II - Low Road (Continued):

- If built, Salt Lagoon needs a buffer from road development to protect Coho, Sockeye and waterfowl habitat in Leask Lakes meadow
- Could link up with other logging roads

Alternative III – High-Low Road:

Two commenters were in favor of the Alternative III-High Road Corridor and its variations. One of which was also in favor of Alternative II.

Reasoning and issues of concern:

- Has low elevations requiring less maintenance, road is open longer
- Provides access for George Inlet property owners
- Provides access to Leask Lakes
- Gives opportunity for a boat launch in upper George Inlet
- Provides access to Swan Lake power line ROW for clearing trees

Alternative IV – Low/High Road:

Six commenters were in favor of the Alternative IV-Low High Road Corridor and its variations; three of which were also in favor of Alternative II and one in favor of Alternative I.

Two commenters were in favor of a route informally called “Nichol’s Passage” which is a variation of Alternatives II & IV.

Reasoning and issues of concern:

- Should build road to logging standard for Saddle Lake timber sale and for recreation, upgrade later
- Provides access to Naha LUD II for recreation
- Provides access to mature timber
- Gives opportunity for boat launch in upper George Inlet
- Provides opportunities for view-routes with camp sites, biking, hiking.
- Has low elevations requiring less maintenance, so road is open longer

No specific Route, but in favor:

Three comments were in favor but suggested no specific route.

Reasoning and issues of concern:

- Provides more recreational opportunities for elderly, and those who can’t afford to fly or boat out
- Provides opportunities for campgrounds and boat launch
- Gives access for firewood and subsistence hunting and gathering
- Provides opportunities for commercial tourism
- Costs less compared to other Alaska projects

No Build Alternative:

Two comments were not in favor of the project, preferring the No Build Option.

Reasoning and issues of concern:

High Road Corridors:

- Has steep slope and erosion potential of alternatives
- Costs too much to build and maintain
- Naha LUD II Reserve and old growth forest have sensitive environments

Low Road Corridors:

- Purchasing ROW from Cape Fox would be too expensive
- Salt Lagoon is rich in wildlife, long term erosion would impact water life
- ORV's have damaged environments in Lake Harriet Hunt area
- George Inlet is low elevation wildlife corridor and estuary is fragile habitat
- Cost of building the road would subsidize remote homeowners

In General:

- Single lane road would be problematic requiring turnouts
- Expansion to a larger road system needs thorough impacts study before linking up with Cassiar.
- Recreational opportunities exist in other areas
- Roads would be too costly to build and maintain, while there is a backlog of deferred maintenance and not enough bike paths.
- The area has already been over-logged and already sensitive habitats are dwindling

Of those in favor, the following ideas were mentioned:

(number in support in parentheses)

- Recreation, campgrounds, hiking, biking (8)
- Subsistence and firewood (2)
- Commercial tourism (1)
- Boat launch in upper George Inlet (3)
- Support for logging and timber industry, timber sale and mature timber access (6)
- Access to power line and increased hydro-electric opportunity (3)
- Low roads would require less maintenance and would be open longer (5)
- Keep costs low, link up with logging roads (5)
- Build ASAP, build now and upgrade later (5)
- Access for George Inlet property owners (3)
- Bridge over mouth of Salt Lagoon (2)
- Open up federal lands for recreation USFS or Naha LUDII Reserve (3)
- Access to Leask Lakes (3)