

Skagway Marine Access Commission
Box 1076
Skagway, Alaska 99840

September 29, 2014
Andy Hughes
Southeast Regional Planning Chief
Alaska Dept. of Transportation and Public Facilities
PO Box 112506
Juneau Alaska 99811-2595

Dear Mr. Hughes,

The Skagway Marine Access Commission (SMAC) is a non-profit corporation of small businesses and community leaders dedicated to the promotion of marine transportation in Lynn Canal. We submit for your consideration the following comments regarding draft 2014 Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan (SATP).

- The Commission concurs with the comments submitted by the Municipality of Skagway on the draft SATP. (see attached)
- We urge you to remove the Juneau Access Project from the Plan. The communities of Skagway and Haines have consistently opposed the construction of this mega-project on the grounds that it will not meet the criteria of safe, reliable and cost-effective transportation between communities. We are submitting for the record the attached Skagway News article "SATP Slammed" which clearly demonstrates community sentiments on this issue have not changed.
- At the time that the draft SATP was released it contained very little data to substantiate its determination of Juneau Access Project as the preferred alternative. Now that the draft EIS has been released, the plan should incorporate its findings. Two examples follow from the Executive Summary:

Maintenance Cost: *With regard to annual maintenance and operating costs, the No Action Alternative would have the lowest cost of all alternatives.*

Total Cost: *All action alternatives would have greater total project life cost relative to the No Action Alternative.*

- The Commission is concerned that the Juneau Access mega-project will drain much needed transportation dollars from critical local and regional infrastructure

projects. The plan uses the transportation equivalent of “fuzzy math” in explaining how limited construction dollars will pay the half-billion dollar plus price tag for Juneau Access without sacrificing other important projects in the region.

- In previous public meetings and presentations on the SATP, Alaska Route 7 was presented as the long-term transportation vision for the region. This alternative would effectively dismantle an existing mass transit system forcing foot passengers onto an elaborate series of short ferry routes connected by hard road links. Students traveling from Skagway to Ketchikan for sporting events would be burdened with taking five shuttle ferries and driving over four road links. Although we were told at the public meeting that this alternative was no longer in the Plan, it is referenced on numerous maps within the plan. The plan should specifically state that this alternative was rejected due to public and legislative opposition.
- The Katzeihin alternative needs to be examined in greater depth. The costs and inconvenience to foot passengers traveling from the Katzeihin terminal to Juneau should be quantified; the mechanism for transporting passengers should be identified.
- Safety concerns have been raised about the unmanned terminal at Katzeihin and the Juneau Access Road. How will homeland security and emergency services be provided for? How will the issues of snow, ice and avalanche be dealt with?

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Jan Wrentmore, President
Skagway Marine Access Commission



Municipality of Skagway

GATEWAY TO THE KLONDIKE

P.O. BOX 415 SKAGWAY, ALASKA 99840

(PHONE) 907-983-2297 – Fax 907-983-2151

WWW.SKAGWAY.ORG

MUNICIPALITY OF SKAGWAY

Comments

2014 Draft Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan (SATP)

September 19, 2014

SAFETY

Safety is always Skagway's top priority. Concerns have been raised about building a remote unmanned terminal in the uninhabited area of Katzehin. How will Homeland Security and emergency services be handled at this remote terminal? What are the plans for dealing with icing and avalanche hazards on the East Lynn Canal Road?

FOOT PASSENGERS AND STUDENTS

Additional costs and inconvenience to foot passengers traveling between communities without a vehicle has been an ongoing concern for the Municipality. The plan should provide more detail than merely stating it is assumed a commercial bus or taxi system will be created. Proposed Alaska Route 7 would be particularly onerous to school children traveling between communities for sporting events.

CONCERNS ABOUT ALASKA ROUTE 7

Unlike the earlier version of the transportation plan, this version of the SATP does not go into much detail about the proposed Alaska Route 7 but references it in several of the maps. From previous plans and hearings it is understood that Route 7 would create a series of short road and ferry links to connect southeast Alaska communities. This alternative appears to give communities in close proximity to each other good access but makes it much more difficult for travelers and students moving throughout the region. It would be exceptionally hard for persons traveling without vehicles unless public transportation is provided on all road links. In 2012, in public hearings on the SATP, this alternative was presented as the Department's long-term goal and preferred transportation model for Southeast.

UNSUBSTANTIATED ASSUMPTIONS

The SATP should provide data and statistics to support the following assumptions: visitation would be increased tenfold by the construction of a hard link between Juneau and Katzehin; and construction of the hard link would be the most economical way to go.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Replacing mainline ferries and maintaining our existing roads and infrastructure should be listed as top priorities (Rep. Sam Kito III raised concerns in the Juneau Empire about road building when the State already has a large maintenance commitment). Both the population of Southeast and forecasts for transportation funding are experiencing downward trends. In light of these trends,

the plan should include a discussion of alternatives which are the most likely to be funded over the next 20 years. In other words, how realistic is this plan and wouldn't it be prudent to scale back to what is within reach? The draft plan calls for replacement of mainliners only "if the funding becomes available." Mainliner service from Bellingham and across the Gulf serves an important function to communities and travelers. The strategy of retiring mainline vessels without plans for their replacement jeopardizes this important service.

FISCAL DISCREPANCIES and COST OVERRUNS

The plan makes the completion of the East Lynn Canal Road a top priority and assumes it would be completed in 2020 (SATP p. 12). The plan also assumes that during that time \$61 million per year will be available for all new construction (p. 14) for a total of \$366 million over the six years.

However the most recent estimates for construction costs for Juneau Access exceed this figure by \$200 million. The Municipality of Skagway is concerned that many transportation projects of local and regional importance will be postponed or cancelled for a road which cannot be completed even if every available transportation dollar is spent on that one project. The plan should also consider the issue of cost overruns which historically have been incurred on mega-projects. What will be the impact on projected savings should the project go over budget?

SKAGWAY FERRY FLOAT

The floating dock associated with the Skagway Ferry Terminal is an example of critical transportation infrastructure that will need to be refurbished and/or replaced within the timeframe of the plan. Use of the float is shared between the Municipality of Skagway and the State of Alaska and serves an important economic function for the community as well as the Alaska Marine Highway System. It is the Municipality's understanding that \$4.5 million of Federal dollars has been appropriated for replacement of the float. The SATP should provide specific detail as to how the state plans to maintain this type of infrastructure.

It is our understanding that the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) is conducting a system-wide fare equalization study to review the equitability of Marine Highway fares statewide. In the past, Skagway has raised concerns about the unusually high cost of travel in northern Lynn Canal. Per-mile passenger and vehicle fares for the 13-mile Haines-Skagway link remain the highest in the Southeast System and are about 50 percent above the next highest per-mile fare. For this reason we would request that the AMHS fare study be included in the SATP. We are enclosing the 2014 North Lynn Canal Ferry Analysis conducted by the McDowell Group for the Municipality of Skagway for inclusion in the public record.

SATP slammed

Residents decry road plans by DOT

Skagway News September 12, 2014

By KATIE EMMETS

The draft Southeast Area Transportation Plan, which includes a Juneau Access road, was met mostly with opposition from Skagway residents at an open house Tuesday.

The SATP is a working document that is revamped about every five years to reflect the transportation needs of Southeast Alaska. Once in its final form and adopted, SATP projects are implemented into Alaska's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program to receive funding.

Southeast Region Planning Chief Andy Hughes said DOT&PF is in the process of revising the plan, which was last updated in 2004. In 2011, a scoping process was performed in which officials traveled around Southeast presenting a range of options while receiving feedback from communities based on their needs. The draft SATP plan is a direct result of that process, Hughes said.

One part of the plan is the support of three major projects that are undergoing Environmental Impact Statements that include an Angoon airport, a road between Kake and Petersburg, and the Juneau Access project.

The Juneau Access road, which Hughes acknowledged was of particular interest to Skagway, would be an extension of Juneau's Glacier Highway. The road would end at Katzechin River, about ten miles south of Skagway, where drivers would put their vehicle on one of the Alaska Class Ferries and travel to Skagway or Haines.

The draft plan considers the three aging mainliners, the Malaspina, the Matanuska and the Taku, while also considering the cost to maintain the existing system, regional transportation needs, current priorities and funding forecasts.

Though there were two other options which could save the state 15 percent and 16 percent respectively each year, DOT&PF chose a third option that will save the state only 3 percent each year in order to reflect the wants of Southeast residents, which include keeping Bellingham and cross Alaska Gulf service.

According to the plan, the first change to Alaska Marine Highway Service would occur in the form of two Alaska Class Ferries, which Southeast Region Marine Systems Planner Jim Potdevin said would be modeled most closely to the Tustumena, a 269-foot-long ferry that can carry 211 passengers and 36 cars.

The first ferry would come online in 2016. While the Malaspina would still sail from Juneau to Haines during this year, the first ACF would run passengers between Haines and Skagway. When the second ACF comes online in 2017, it would replace the one of the mainliners.

"In 1963, we built three ships that are utterly fantastic," Potdevin said. "Those ships are reaching the end of their lives, and we have to replace them with something. There's no way we can make them run longer."

The other need to replace the mainliners comes from an attempt to save money, as funds are dwindling and so is ridership.

Two line graphs shown during the meeting showed a slow but overall decline of passengers system-wide since 1991, however the graph that depicted the Southeast region shows a slow incline since 2010.

According to the draft plan, data collected by DOT&PF shows a 10 percent increase in travelers if a road were constructed.

The proposed road, if built, would undergo construction as early as 2020. When finished, one ACF would run passengers from Katzechin to Skagway and the other would run

passengers from Katzechin to Haines.

Hughes said the ferries would run six to ten times per day depending on traffic and need. According to the draft plan, replacing the Malaspina with the two ferries would have a total cost savings of 48 percent.

In 2025, the Alaska Marine Highway would build a new mainline ferry, with the potential for a second to follow if funds and demand allow for it, while retiring the remaining oldest mainliners. In 2028, the fast ferry Fairweather will be replaced.

The draft plan quotes the total maintenance and projects cost over the next 20 years to be about \$2.5 billion.

About 30 residents attended the meeting, and immediately after the presentation questions about the validity of the proposed road began flying.

Skagway resident Sam Palmersten said the road to Katzechin would not serve the Skagway community.

"Please don't do it, please don't put us through this Katzechin thing."

He questioned how walk-on traffic would be served between Juneau and Katzechin.

Potdevin said if there is enough foot traffic, the state would provide public transportation in the form of a shuttle bus.

After strongly stating his opposition to road, resident Wade Ghrul questioned that solution for Lynn Canal travelers who don't have cars.

"We're going to have less service than we have now," he said. "The road is going to be closed for avalanches and planes won't be able to fly and we won't be able to go anywhere."

Potdevin said if the road was closed for a long period, there would be ferry service from Haines and Skagway all the way to Juneau.

"The Alaska Class ferries are capable to go all the way to Juneau, so you will still have that access," he said.

Several times during the meeting a question was asked by a Skagway resident and a straight answer wasn't given.

When Shelby Surdyk asked about cost savings between operating a road and operating the Malaspina, Hughes answered that the road would offer the opportunity of increased travel as residents would be able to travel to the road via shuttle ferry between 6-10 times per day.

When Nola Lamken asked about travel time from the Skagway ferry terminal to downtown Juneau, Hughes gave several answers including "the same amount of time it takes now," to "a couple of hours," to "three hours from Katzechin to downtown Juneau going at 30 miles per hour."

But Gruhl still wasn't buying it.

"I'm finding your responses to be disingenuous and not backing anything up with data," Gruhl said. "I feel for you for having to come here and deal with us because your positions aren't based on anything. It's amazing that you guys are coming here and saying these things with a straight face."

Both Huges and Potdevin agreed that some answers could not be given until the supplemental Juneau Access EIS is finished.

When asked about the timeline of the SEIS, which was supposed to be made public last spring, Potdevin said he spoke to Alaska Marine Highway System general manager John Falvey recently about it, and "Captain Falvey said 'soon'."

When it is released, DOT&PF will hold informational meetings in the communities affected by the road — Skagway, Haines and Juneau.

Skagway resident Dennis Corrington was the only person at the meeting who spoke in agreement with a road construction.

"I would prefer to see a road from here to Juneau," he said. "It's the only capital in the United States you can't drive to."

Corrington said if it's not economically feasible, that's one thing, but geographical construction blockages should be analyzed and overcome.

"As the culture grows, there is going to be a wealth of different transportation options and it's interesting to listen to all the different parts," he said of the plan.

Corrington added that it's necessary to go to Juneau for medical reasons and a road would help make it easier for Skagway's senior residents who leave in the winter months because they need access to doctors and pharmacies.

Corrington also noted the initial opposition to the Klondike Highway, which was finished 1978.

"When they chose to build a road to Whitehorse, people didn't want it to happen, but when it did happen, it improved the lifestyle," he said.

Alaska Senator Dennis Egan, who is a well-known supporter of the road, attended the meeting in with Alaska Representative Sam Kito III, who opposes the road.

Kito said he wanted to know what exactly the public was able to comment on, since it sounded as if minds are made up on the draft.

"When you're receiving written comments, what kinds of things are you looking for as far as comments on the plan," he asked Hughes and Potdevin. "It seems as if the three other plans are off the table, and this SATP draft plan seems to be pretty locked in, so I don't know what kind of things we can comment on or what kinds of things you want to see as comments."

Hughes responded by saying Southeast residents can comment on what they like or don't like about the plan and any suggestions for change they have.

Comments must be submitted by September 30 to dot.satp@alaska.gov.

North Lynn Canal Ferry Service Analysis

Prepared for:
Municipality of Skagway



Research-Based Consulting

Juneau
Anchorage

June 2014

North Lynn Canal Ferry Service Analysis

Prepared for:
Municipality of Skagway

Prepared by:



Juneau • Anchorage

June 2014

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Key Findings.....	1
Day Boat/Alaska Class Ferry Capacity Analysis.....	2
Analysis of Southeast Per-Mile Fare Costs.....	4
Day Boat/Alaska Class Ferry Operating Cost Analysis.....	7
Baseline Historical Lynn Canal Service and Traffic Data.....	9

List of Figures

Figure 1. AMHS Per-Mile Fare Analysis, Selected AMHS Links Adult Passenger Fare and Vehicle Fare up to 19 Feet.....	6
Figure 2. AMHS North Lynn Canal Vessel Per-Mile Costs, FY2012, and Anticipated Day Boat ACF Per-Mile Costs.....	9

List of Tables

Table 1. Malaspina Northbound and Southbound Trips with Car Deck Use Greater than 1,060 feet, Summer 2013.....	3
Table 2. Share of Lynn Canal AMHS Vehicle Traffic Carried by Malaspina, Summer 2012 and 2013.....	3
Table 3. Malaspina Northbound and Southbound Trips with Car Deck Use Greater than 1,060 feet, Summer 2012.....	4
Table 4. AMHS Per-Mile Fare Analysis.....	5
Table 5. AMHS System-Wide and Regional Fare Ranges (One-Way), Per Nautical Mile.....	6
Table 6. Day Boat/ACF Annual Operating Costs (\$millions).....	7
Table 7. AMHS North Lynn Canal Non-Fuel Operating Costs, FY2012 (000\$).....	8
Table 8. AMHS North Lynn Canal Fuel Costs, FY2012 (000\$).....	8
Table 9. AMHS North Lynn Canal Vessel Per-Mile Costs, FY2012.....	9
Table 10. AMHS Lynn Canal Fares, 1999 to 2013.....	11
Table 11. AMHS Lynn Canal Traffic, Full Year 2000 – 2013.....	12
Table 12. AMHS Lynn Canal Traffic, Summer 2000 – 2013.....	13
Table 13. AMHS Annual Number of Trips, 2000 – 2013.....	14

Introduction

The City of Skagway asked McDowell Group, Inc. to prepare a brief report regarding specific aspects of Lynn Canal ferry service, including the following:

- An analysis of AMHS day boat/Alaska Class Ferry capacity
- Analysis of Southeast Alaska AMHS per-mile fare costs
- Day boat/Alaska Class Ferry operating cost analysis
- Baseline historical Lynn Canal AMHS traffic data

This report supplements a report prepared in 2003 by McDowell Group for the City Skagway and Haines Borough. That report, *"Analysis of Traffic on Lynn Canal Ferry Routes,"* summarized several important themes regarding the role of Lynn Canal within AMHS operations:¹

"The communities of Haines and Skagway are strategically located on the Alaska Marine Highway, generating significant traffic volumes. Haines and Skagway are two of the highest-volume ports in terms of passenger, vehicle and freight traffic and in terms of revenue contributed to the overall system."

"The combination of a high volume of passengers using local Lynn Canal service together with passengers from many distant ports making road connections through Haines and Skagway means the Lynn Canal market is an economic opportunity for the system that can help underwrite the essential service provided to lower volume communities."

"Four of every ten Alaska Marine Highway revenue dollars are related to Lynn Canal travel or freight. That is, 40 percent of System revenue comes from passengers or freight that, at some point in their voyages, pass through Lynn Canal."

This current study provides further data and analysis regarding the importance of optimized AMHS Lynn Canal service to the communities of Haines and Skagway as well as to the sustainability of the Alaska Marine Highway overall.

Key Findings

Key points noted in this analysis include the following:

- In 2013, approximately 1 in 5 north-bound Malaspina voyages (departing Juneau) had total car deck usage greater than the vehicle capacity of the day boat/ACF. Approximately 1 in 6 southbound voyages (arriving Juneau) had total car deck usage greater than day boat/ACF capacity.

¹ *"Analysis of Traffic on Lynn Canal Ferry Routes."* Prepared by McDowell Group for the Haines Borough and City of Skagway, July 15, 2003.

- Per-mile passenger and vehicle fares for the 13 nautical-mile Haines-Skagway link remain highest in the Southeast system and are about 50 percent above the next highest per-mile.
- Deployment of the new AMHS day boat/ACF should result in an overall reduction in the cost of providing ferry service in Lynn Canal. Day boat/ACF costs are expected to average \$173 per-mile for Juneau-Haines service and \$336 per-mile for the Haines-Skagway service. In FY2012, all vessels serving Lynn Canal combined operated at an average per-mile cost of \$527. The Malaspina (providing 40 percent of all Lynn Canal service miles in FY2012) operated at a per-mile cost of \$649.
- Passenger traffic between Skagway and Haines in 2013 reached the highest level since 2003. The traffic low-point was in the 2006-2007 period; passenger traffic has increased by about 60 percent since then. Vehicle traffic is up about 50 percent over the same period. The number of voyages between Skagway and Haines increased from 339 in 2007 to 583 in 2013, a 70 percent increase.
- Passenger traffic between Skagway and Juneau was up 4.5 percent in 2013 from 2012 and up 9 percent from 2011. However, passenger traffic between the two ports remains well below the 2007 and 2008 peak.

Day Boat/Alaska Class Ferry Capacity Analysis

This analysis identifies the number of Malaspina Lynn Canal voyages in 2012 and 2013 that carried more vehicles than could have been accommodated by the day boat/ACF, with capacity of 53 Alaska standard vehicles (ASV). Based on data provided by AMHS, in 2013, 19 percent of northbound voyages (departing Juneau) and 16 percent of southbound voyages (arriving Juneau) had total car deck usage of more than 1,060 feet. This is less than in 2012, when 33 percent of northbound voyages and 28 percent of southbound voyages had total car deck usage of more than 1,060 feet.

This data suggests that operating two day boat/ACF voyages between Juneau and Haines (or other capacity enhancement measures) may be required to meet peak-period demand.

It is important to note in 2013, the Malaspina carried 61 percent of total summer northbound (departing Juneau) vehicle traffic in Lynn Canal and 54 percent of southbound (arriving Juneau) traffic. In 2012, the Malaspina carried 62 percent of summer northbound and 57 percent of southbound vehicle traffic.

Table 1. Malaspina Northbound and Southbound Trips with Car Deck Use Greater than 1,060 feet, Summer 2013

<u>Northbound</u>		<u>Southbound</u>	
Date	Car Deck Used (feet)	Date	Car Deck Used (feet)
5/25/2013	1,124	5/27/2013	1,195
6/14/2013	1,322	6/2/2013	1,306
6/28/2013	1,234	6/11/2013	1,371
6/29/2013	1,206	6/20/2013	1,522
6/30/2013	1,262	7/4/2013	1,412
7/19/2013	1,155	7/6/2013	1,160
7/25/2013	1,306	7/7/2013	1,066
7/26/2013	1,424	7/21/2013	1,168
7/27/2013	1,204	8/2/2013	1,588
8/3/2013	1,136	8/21/2013	1,318
8/6/2013	1,083	8/28/2013	1,575
8/10/2013	1,109	8/31/2013	1,634
8/17/2013	1,341	9/2/2013	1,330
8/30/2013	1,312	9/8/2013	1,438
9/2/2013	1,410		
9/9/2013	1,385		
Total Trips Over Capacity: 16	% Trips Over Capacity: 19%	Total Trips Over Capacity: 14	% Trips Over Capacity: 16%

Source: AMHS. Includes accompanied and unaccompanied vehicles.

Table 2. Share of Lynn Canal AMHS Vehicle Traffic Carried by Malaspina, Summer 2012 and 2013

	Total Vehicles	Malaspina Vehicles	Percent Malaspina
2012 Northbound	6,661	4,105	62%
2012 Southbound	6,688	3,826	57%
2013 Northbound	6,244	3,797	61%
2013 Southbound	6,603	3,591	54%

Source: AMHS, compiled by McDowell Group.

Table 3. Malaspina Northbound and Southbound Trips with Car Deck Use Greater than 1,060 feet, Summer 2012

<u>Northbound</u>		<u>Southbound</u>	
Date	Car Deck Used (feet)	Date	Car Deck Used (feet)
5/25/2012	1,476	5/27/2012	1,574
5/26/2012	1,175	6/4/2012	1,094
6/10/2012	1,651	6/6/2012	1,595
6/12/2012	1,183	6/11/2012	1,138
6/14/2012	1,090	6/17/2012	1,408
6/15/2012	1,482	6/25/2012	1,068
6/29/2012	1,299	7/7/2012	1,473
6/30/2012	1,462	7/9/2012	1,321
7/6/2012	1,646	7/14/2012	1,293
7/13/2012	1,563	7/16/2012	1,064
7/20/2012	1,241	7/21/2012	1,268
7/21/2012	1,160	7/23/2012	1,378
7/25/2012	1,257	7/28/2012	1,385
7/26/2012	1,470	7/30/2012	1,620
7/27/2012	1,613	7/31/2012	1,071
7/28/2012	1,394	8/3/2012	1,224
8/3/2012	1,182	8/4/2012	1,142
8/4/2012	1,252	8/6/2012	1,389
8/5/2012	1,122	8/17/2012	1,147
8/10/2012	1,270	8/18/2012	1,335
8/17/2012	1,218	8/27/2012	1,144
8/21/2012	1,081	9/9/2012	1,664
8/24/2012	1,075		
8/31/2012	1,613		
9/1/2012	1,226		
9/5/2012	1,132		
9/7/2012	1,510		
Total Trips Over Capacity: 27	% Trips Over Capacity: 33%	Total Trips Over Capacity: 22	% Trips Over Capacity: 28%

Source: AMHS.

Analysis of Southeast Per-Mile Fare Costs

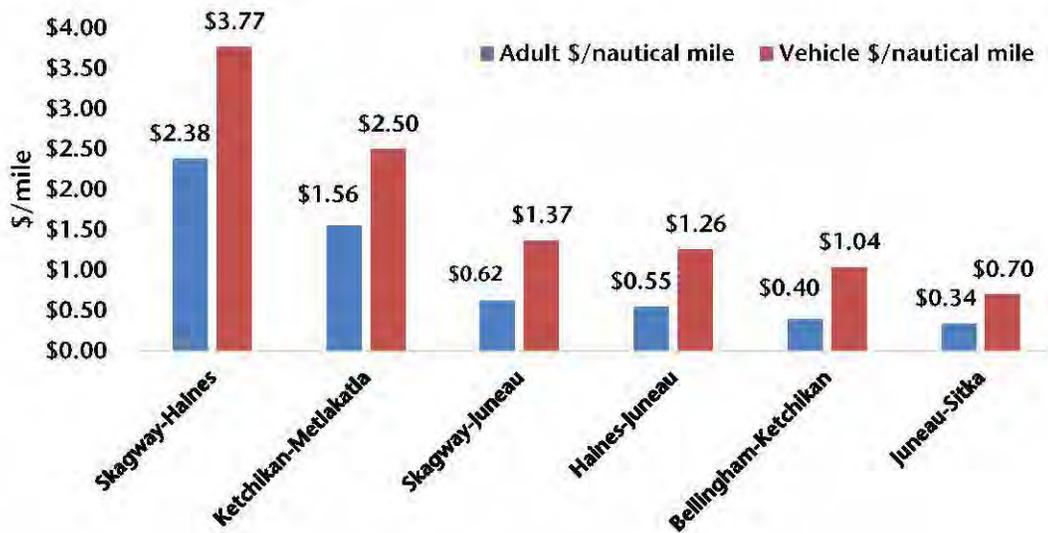
The following table provides per-mile passenger (adult) and vehicle (up to 19 feet) fares. Per-mile fares for the 13 nautical-mile Haines-Skagway link are highest in the Southeast system, both approximately 50 percent above the next highest per-mile fare, which is for the 16 nautical-mile Metlakatla-Ketchikan link.

Table 4. AMHS Per-Mile Fare Analysis

Link	Adult Fare (12 years+)	Vehicle up to 19 feet	Nautical miles	Adult \$/nautical mile	Vehicle \$/nautical mile
Haines-Skagway	\$31	\$49	13	\$2.38	\$3.77
Skagway-Haines	\$31	\$49	13	\$2.38	\$3.77
Ketchikan-Metlakatla	\$25	\$40	16	\$1.56	\$2.50
Metlakatla-Ketchikan	\$25	\$40	16	\$1.56	\$2.50
Petersburg-Wrangell	\$33	\$64	41	\$0.80	\$1.56
Wrangell-Petersburg	\$33	\$64	41	\$0.80	\$1.56
Angoon-Sitka	\$35	\$104	67	\$0.52	\$1.55
Juneau-Hoonah	\$33	\$68	46	\$0.72	\$1.48
Gustavus-Pelican	\$31	\$68	46	\$0.67	\$1.48
Juneau-Kake	\$66	\$167	114	\$0.58	\$1.46
Kake-Juneau	\$66	\$167	114	\$0.58	\$1.46
Hoonah-Juneau	\$33	\$68	48	\$0.69	\$1.42
Juneau-Skagway	\$50	\$111	81	\$0.62	\$1.37
Skagway-Juneau	\$50	\$111	81	\$0.62	\$1.37
Juneau-Petersburg	\$66	\$167	123	\$0.54	\$1.36
Petersburg-Juneau	\$66	\$167	123	\$0.54	\$1.36
Juneau-Pelican	\$50	\$121	91	\$0.55	\$1.33
Pelican-Juneau	\$50	\$121	91	\$0.55	\$1.33
Juneau-Haines	\$37	\$86	68	\$0.55	\$1.26
Ketchikan-Prince Rupert	\$54	\$116	91	\$0.59	\$1.27
Haines-Juneau	\$37	\$86	68	\$0.54	\$1.26
Kake-Petersburg	\$35	\$79	65	\$0.54	\$1.22
Petersburg-Kake	\$35	\$79	65	\$0.54	\$1.22
Petersburg-Ketchikan	\$60	\$136	112	\$0.54	\$1.21
Juneau-Ketchikan	\$107	\$280	235	\$0.46	\$1.19
Ketchikan-Juneau	\$107	\$280	235	\$0.46	\$1.19
Hoonah-Kake	\$60	\$138	116	\$0.52	\$1.19
Juneau-Gustavus	\$33	\$70	62	\$0.53	\$1.13
Gustavus-Juneau	\$33	\$70	62	\$0.53	\$1.13
Sitka-Angoon	\$35	\$75	67	\$0.52	\$1.12
Angoon-Hoonah	\$33	\$70	63	\$0.52	\$1.11
Hoonah-Angoon	\$33	\$70	63	\$0.52	\$1.11
Angoon-Juneau	\$37	\$84	78	\$0.47	\$1.08
Juneau-Angoon	\$37	\$84	78	\$0.47	\$1.08
Bellingham-Ketchikan	\$239	\$617	595	\$0.40	\$1.04
Ketchikan-Bellingham	\$239	\$617	595	\$0.40	\$1.04
Ketchikan-Wrangell	\$37	\$91	89	\$0.42	\$1.02
Wrangell-Ketchikan	\$37	\$91	89	\$0.42	\$1.02
Kake-Sitka	\$37	\$87	115	\$0.32	\$0.76
Sitka-Kake	\$37	\$87	115	\$0.32	\$0.76
Angoon-Hoonah	\$33	\$70	63	\$0.52	\$1.11
Hoonah-Sitka	\$37	\$87	118	\$0.31	\$0.74
Sitka-Hoonah	\$37	\$87	118	\$0.31	\$0.74
Juneau-Sitka	\$45	\$92	132	\$0.34	\$0.70
Sitka-Juneau	\$45	\$92	132	\$0.34	\$0.70
Petersburg-Sitka	\$45	\$93	156	\$0.29	\$0.60
Sitka-Petersburg	\$45	\$93	156	\$0.29	\$0.60

Source: AMHS, compiled by McDowell Group.

**Figure 1. AMHS Per-Mile Fare Analysis, Selected AMHS Links
Adult Passenger Fare and Vehicle Fare up to 19 Feet**



It is interesting to note the variation in fares among links that are of generally similar distance. Juneau-Kake, at 114 nautical miles, has passenger and vehicle per-mile fares of \$0.58 and \$1.46, respectively. Hoonah-Sitka (118 nautical miles) and Juneau-Sitka (132 nautical miles) are approximately the same length, but are about half the cost on a per-mile basis.

Based on a 2008 report by Northern Economics, Skagway-Haines passenger fares are the highest in the statewide system and vehicle fares are the highest except Southcentral fares.²

Table 5. AMHS System-Wide and Regional Fare Ranges (One-Way), Per Nautical Mile

	Adult Passenger		Vehicle up to 19 feet*	
	Low	High	Low	High
System-wide	\$0.27	\$2.38	\$0.60	\$5.00
Southeast, Inside Passage	\$0.27	\$2.38	\$0.60	\$3.77
Southeast, Feeder	\$0.32	\$0.89	\$0.76	\$1.73
Cross Gulf	\$0.42	\$0.54	\$1.14	\$1.49
Southcentral	\$0.34	\$2.27	\$0.85	\$5.00
Southwest	\$0.37	\$1.94	\$0.98	\$3.18

*Does not include driver.
Source: Northern Economics, 2008.

² "Passenger/Vehicle/Cabin Rate Study for the Alaska Marine Highway System." Prepared by Northern Economics for AMHS, 2008.

Day Boat/Alaska Class Ferry Operating Cost Analysis

The question of whether day boat/ACF service in Lynn Canal will result in lower overall corridor costs to the AMHS than current costs is a complex one, with no simple answer. The July 2013 Design Study Report provided estimates of day boat/ACF annual operating costs (see following table).

Table 6. Day Boat/ACF Annual Operating Costs (\$millions)

	Juneau-Haines	Haines-Skagway	Total
Manning	\$2.84	\$2.45	\$5.29
Fuel	\$2.25	\$1.15	\$3.40
Maintenance	\$0.67	\$0.67	\$1.34
Total	\$5.76	\$4.27	\$10.03

Source: Day Boat ACF Design Study Report, July 10, 2013.

These cost estimates are based on a service frequency of seven days per week for a 20-week summer period and four days per week for a 28-week winter period. The estimates also include a four-week overhaul. Cost estimates are based on the assumption that one day boat/ACF would make a single round trip each day Auke Bay-Haines-Auke Bay, while the other vessel would make two Haines-Skagway-Haines trips each service day.

Juneau Access alternatives include various options for using the day boat/ACF. In all of the “no-build” alternatives, mainliners would continue to serve northern Lynn Canal, in addition to day boat/ACF service.

As illustrated in the following tables, utilization of the day boat/ACF should result in an overall reduction in the cost of providing North Lynn Canal (NLC) ferry service. In FY2012, AMHS spent \$17.2 million providing service to NLC, excluding any shore-side costs. That included a total of 32,800 service miles, for all vessels combined, equating to an average per-mile cost of \$527. Per-mile costs ranged from a low of \$135 for the Fairweather to \$874 for the Columbia. The Malaspina (which provided 40 percent of all NLC service miles) had a per-mile cost of \$649, while the LeConte (33 percent of all NLC service miles) had a cost of \$395 per-mile.

Based on annual operating cost data provided in the Design Study Report, day boat/ACF costs should average \$173 per-mile for Juneau-Haines service and \$336 per-mile for the Haines-Skagway service. The Juneau-Haines estimate is based on 252 total round trips of 132.5 nautical miles, for a total of 33,390 nautical miles traveled (with total annual cost of \$5.76 million). The Haines-Skagway estimate is based on 504 total round trips of 25.2 nautical miles, for a total of 12,701 nautical miles traveled (with total annual cost of \$4.27 million).

Table 7. AMHS North Lynn Canal Non-Fuel Operating Costs, FY2012 (000\$)

Vessel	Total Vessel Days	NLC Days	% NLC	Total Non-Fuel Ops Costs	NLC Non-Fuel Ops Costs
Aurora	105.2	-	0.0%	\$4,969.7	\$-
Chenega	136.7	-	0.0%	6,526.4	-
Columbia	122.6	15.3	12.5%	15,170.6	1,894.2
Fairweather	226.8	5.8	2.5%	6,797.6	172.9
Kennicott	176.4	-	0.0%	14,983.8	-
LeConte	274.3	110.9	40.4%	9,145.5	3,697.0
Lituya	289.5	-	0.0%	1,410.6	-
Malaspina	156.3	99.7	63.8%	11,908.4	7,593.2
Matanuska	241.3	24.8	10.3%	16,609.6	1,707.9
Taku	276.8	0.8	0.3%	15,171.5	45.7
Tustumena	245.7	-	0.0%	10,688.8	-
Contract Vessels	8.6	-	0.0%	77.0	-
Total	2,260.0	257.2	11.4%	\$113,459.4	\$15,110.9

Source: AMHS.

Table 8. AMHS North Lynn Canal Fuel Costs, FY2012 (000\$)

Vessel	Total Vessel Miles	NLC Miles	% NLC	Total Fuel Costs	NLC Fuel Costs
Aurora	27,010	-	0.0%	\$1,225.3	\$-
Chenega	40,874	-	0.0%	3,638.6	-
Columbia	53,193	2,444	4.6%	5,272.4	242.2
Fairweather	56,979	2,728	4.8%	4,071.4	194.9
Kennicott	61,911	-	0.0%	6,137.2	-
LeConte	53,825	10,708	19.9%	2,688.5	534.9
Lituya	16,608	-	0.0%	329.4	-
Malaspina	39,601	13,147	33.2%	2,827.6	938.7
Matanuska	79,750	3,640	4.6%	4,882.4	222.8
Taku	80,286	94	0.1%	4,262.5	5.0
Tustumena	57,198	-	0.0%	2,745.2	-
Contract Vessels	2,908	-	0.0%	-	-
Total	570,143.0	32,761.0	5.7%	\$38,080.6	\$2,138.6

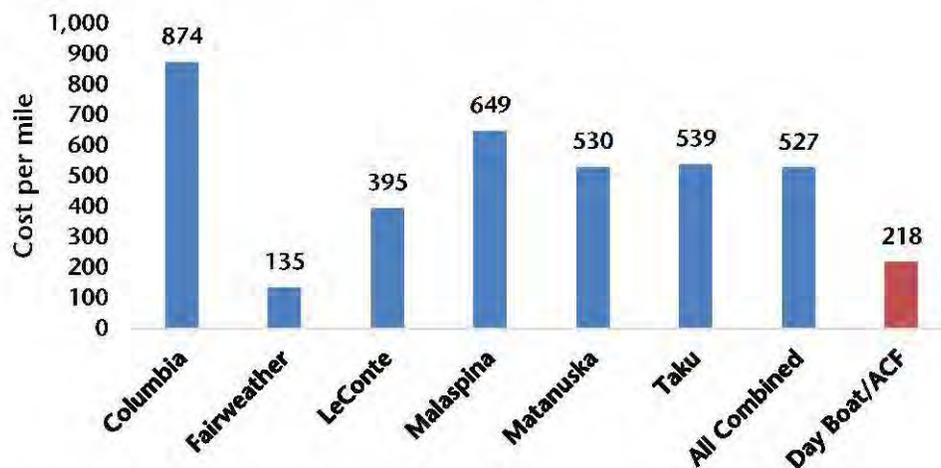
Source: AMHS.

Table 9. AMHS North Lynn Canal Vessel Per-Mile Costs, FY2012

Vessel	Total NLC Miles	Total NLC Costs (\$000)	Cost Per Mile
Aurora	-	-	-
Chenega	-	-	-
Columbia	2,444.0	\$2,136.5	\$874
Fairweather	2,728.0	\$367.9	\$135
Kennicott	-	-	-
LeConte	10,708.0	\$4,231.9	\$395
Lituya	-	-	-
Malaspina	13,147.0	\$8,531.9	\$649
Matanuska	3,640.0	\$1,930.7	\$530
Taku	94.0	\$50.7	\$539
Tustumena	-	-	-
Contract Vessels	-	-	-
Total	32,761.0	\$17,249.5	\$527

Source: AMHS, compiled by McDowell Group.

Figure 2. AMHS North Lynn Canal Vessel Per-Mile Costs, FY2012, and Anticipated Day Boat ACF Per-Mile Costs



Source: AMHS, compiled by McDowell Group.

Baseline Historical Lynn Canal Service and Traffic Data

The following tables provide a variety of historical data concerning AMHS ferry traffic and service in Lynn Canal. Table 10 provides a history of AMHS Lynn Canal fares. The data indicates the following:

- Haines-Skagway adult passenger fares in 2013 were about 80 percent above the 1999 level, while vehicle fares (for vehicles up to 19 feet) are up about 60 percent.
- Skagway-Juneau adult passenger fares in 2013 were about 65 percent above 1999; vehicle fares were up about 70 percent.

- Haines-Juneau adult passenger fare increased 54 percent since 1999. Vehicle fares were up 51 percent.
- Published Lynn Canal passenger and vehicle fares have been the current level since 2008.
- Based on the Anchorage Consumer Price Index (CPI), inflation in Alaska has totaled 43 percent since 1999.

Table 11 provides Lynn Canal AMHS traffic volume data for the 2000 to 2013 period. A brief analysis of the data reveals the following:

- In 2013 Haines-Skagway and Skagway-Haines passenger traffic reached the highest level since 2003. Since bottoming-out in the 2006-2007 period, passenger traffic between the two ports has increased by about 60 percent. Vehicle traffic is up about 50 percent over the same period. 2007 marked the low-point in ferry service frequency between Skagway and Haines, with only 180 Haines-Skagway trips and 159 Skagway-Haines trips.
- In 2013, 15,865 passengers and 6,742 vehicles made the trip between Skagway and Haines (bi-directional totals). In 2006, 10,014 passengers and 4,542 vehicles made the trip.
- Passenger traffic from Juneau-Skagway, though up about 5 percent in 2013 compared to 2012 (and 11 percent above 2011) remains below historical levels. In 2007 and 2008, passenger traffic from Juneau to Skagway averaged just under 14,200, about 1,300 more than the 2013 volume of 12,850 passengers.
- Skagway-Juneau passenger traffic was also up in 2013 from 2012 (up about 4 percent), but still well below 2007-2008. The 2013 total of 13,161 passengers was about 15 percent below the 2007-2008 average of about 15,510.
- The increase in Lynn Canal traffic between 2012 and 2013 is no doubt related to the increase in service frequency. There were 291 voyages from Haines to Skagway and 292 voyages from Skagway to Haines, both 7 percent above 2012.
- The number of Juneau-Haines and Haines-Juneau voyages was up 9 percent between 2012 and 2013.

Table 10. AMHS Lynn Canal Fares, 1999 to 2013

Year	Haines to Skagway Skagway to Haines		Haines to Juneau Juneau to Haines		Skagway to Juneau Juneau to Skagway	
	Adult	Car (19')	Adult	Car (19')	Adult	Car (19')
Summer 1999	17	31	24	57	32	78
October 1999-April 2000	17	31	24	57	32	78
Summer 2000	17	31	24	57	32	78
October 2000-April 2001	17	31	24	57	32	78
Summer 2001	19	33	26	60	35	82
October 2001-April 2002	18	32	24	58	32	79
Summer 2002	20	34	26	61	35	83
October 2002-April 2003	20	34	26	61	35	83
Summer 2003	21	34	27	61	37	83
October 2003-April 2004	25	39	31	67	40	89
Summer 2004	26	39	32	68	42	90
October 2004-April 2005	25	40	31	70	41	92
Summer 2005	27	43	33	75	44	98
October 2005-April 2006	27	43	33	75	44	98
Summer 2006	30	47	38	83	48	108
October 2006-April 2007	30	47	38	83	48	108
Summer 2007	30	47	38	83	48	108
October 2007-April 2008	31	49	37	86	50	111
Summer 2008	31	49	37	86	50	111
October 2008-April 2009	31	49	37	86	50	111
Summer 2009	31	49	37	86	50	111
October 2009-April 2010	31	49	37	86	50	111
Summer 2010	31	49	37	86	50	111
October 2010-April 2011	31	49	37	86	50	111
Summer 2011	31	49	37	86	50	111
October 2011-April 2012	31	49	37	86	50	111
Summer 2012	31	49	37	86	50	111
October 2012-April 2013	31	49	37	86	50	111
Summer 2013	31	49	37	86	50	111

Source: AMHS.

Table 11. AMHS Lynn Canal Traffic, Full Year 2000 – 2013

Year	<u>Haines to Skagway</u>		<u>Skagway to Haines</u>		<u>Juneau to Haines</u>	
	Passengers	Vehicles	Passengers	Vehicles	Passengers	Vehicles
2000	10,431	4,406	8,858	3,724	22,352	6,867
2001	8,690	3,747	6,813	2,894	18,112	5,809
2002	9,249	3,970	7,491	3,302	21,031	6,530
2003	9,213	3,985	7,530	3,306	19,617	6,243
2004	7,454	3,354	6,195	2,719	19,946	5,910
2005	6,688	2,983	5,456	2,329	19,632	5,773
2006	5,708	2,608	4,306	1,934	19,008	5,915
2007	5,637	2,606	4,617	2,061	21,441	6,525
2008	7,449	3,251	6,310	2,786	22,391	7,292
2009	7,390	3,324	6,525	2,841	19,509	6,519
2010	7,545	3,347	6,832	2,998	21,126	6,619
2011	7,137	3,277	6,493	2,844	21,671	6,959
2012	8,160	3,612	6,755	2,912	21,677	7,200
2013	8,506	3,702	7,359	3,040	21,686	7,255

Year	<u>Haines to Juneau</u>		<u>Skagway to Juneau</u>		<u>Juneau to Skagway</u>	
	Passengers	Vehicles	Passengers	Vehicles	Passengers	Vehicles
2000	22,442	6,377	19,274	4,181	19,322	4,119
2001	18,170	5,571	14,772	3,110	14,652	3,154
2002	20,555	6,046	17,409	3,659	17,559	3,661
2003	18,758	5,941	15,952	3,466	15,783	3,556
2004	19,249	5,632	15,995	3,371	15,945	3,521
2005	19,105	5,414	14,758	3,105	14,323	3,148
2006	18,780	5,696	13,300	2,895	12,921	3,049
2007	20,874	6,321	15,377	3,424	14,163	3,275
2008	21,994	7,005	15,642	3,657	14,182	3,442
2009	19,963	6,723	13,580	3,294	13,583	3,478
2010	21,399	1,887	12,978	3,142	12,537	3,177
2011	21,957	7,202	12,190	2,908	11,584	2,917
2012	21,817	7,107	12,664	3,272	12,235	3,314
2013	22,021	7,399	13,161	3,275	12,850	3,283

Source: AMHS.

Table 12. AMHS Lynn Canal Traffic, Summer 2000 – 2013

Year	<u>Haines to Skagway</u>		<u>Skagway to Haines</u>		<u>Juneau to Haines</u>	
	Passengers	Vehicles	Passengers	Vehicles	Passengers	Vehicles
2000	9,118	3,933	7,735	3,276	15,136	4,556
2001	7,441	3,286	5,784	2,515	11,467	3,590
2002	8,003	3,476	6,472	2,927	13,605	4,124
2003	7,996	3,475	6,657	2,946	12,734	3,990
2004	6,298	2,862	5,359	2,367	13,066	3,656
2005	5,775	2,584	4,635	2,012	12,893	3,642
2006	5,231	2,403	3,881	1,775	14,946	4,597
2007	4,198	2,051	3,884	1,762	13,189	3,960
2008	5,738	2,555	5,190	2,326	14,169	4,460
2009	5,994	2,800	5,022	2,296	11,983	3,960
2010	6,295	2,830	5,580	2,503	12,949	4,018
2011	6,046	2,816	5,593	2,472	13,758	4,359
2012	6,911	3,035	5,808	2,471	13,271	4,397
2013	7,201	3,192	6,302	2,632	12,970	4,265

Year	<u>Haines to Juneau</u>		<u>Skagway to Juneau</u>		<u>Juneau to Skagway</u>	
	Passengers	Vehicles	Passengers	Vehicles	Passengers	Vehicles
2000	14,473	3,941	15,976	3,104	16,275	3,126
2001	11,219	3,302	11,408	2,173	11,664	2,294
2002	12,627	3,671	13,702	2,610	14,271	2,687
2003	11,544	3,621	12,388	2,460	12,576	2,592
2004	12,191	3,426	12,899	2,494	12,989	2,641
2005	12,073	3,642	11,621	3,642	11,582	2,318
2006	14,678	4,436	11,377	2,320	10,954	2,430
2007	na	3,763	11,505	2,341	11,100	2,387
2008	13,891	4,322	11,150	2,336	10,187	2,283
2009	12,196	4,119	9,358	2,135	9,198	2,216
2010	12,898	4,189	9,453	2,135	8,909	2,110
2011	13,861	4,452	9,360	2,070	8,809	2,136
2012	12,877	4,247	9,204	2,215	8,829	2,341
2013	13,102	4,289	9,451	2,219	9,078	2,169

Source: AMHS.

Table 13. AMHS Annual Number of Trips, 2000 – 2013

Year	Haines to Skagway	Skagway to Haines	Juneau to Haines	Haines to Juneau	Skagway to Juneau	Juneau to Skagway
2000	305	305	309	308	-	-
2001	278	281	281	284	1	4
2002	315	318	320	323	1	3
2003	317	319	321	324	1	3
2004	254	251	332	329	58	56
2005	253	250	341	338	64	63
2006	260	264	348	352	47	49
2007	180	159	348	327	107	86
2008	278	263	352	337	55	38
2009	254	275	295	317	22	45
2010	261	267	304	310	18	25
2011	303	304	336	338	6	8
2012	272	273	294	295	2	2
2013	291	292	321	321	2	2

Source: AMHS.

September 30, 2014

Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Southeast Region Planning
P.O. Box 112506
Juneau, Alaska 99811-2506

Re. Comments for Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to submit comments on the State of Alaska's Southeast Transportation Plan. Specifically, I would like to register my comments with regards to the proposed road between Petersburg and Kake. I am concerned that the road, as proposed, may have very great, though unintended, social consequences.

Although I no longer live in the immediate area, I have a significant interest in this proposed project because I grew up on Kupreanof Island across from Petersburg, and will likely inherit property on Kupreanof. My parents live on Kupreanof, and are active business owners and community members of Petersburg as well as Kupreanof. My mother is the current Mayor of Kupreanof. For me, Kupreanof Island is and always will be home. I am more comfortable and familiar with the creeks, muskegs, ravines, trails, and right-of-ways on the side of the island facing Petersburg than I ever have been with the features of any city, and I dread the impact this proposed road, as conceived, could have on the essential character of Kupreanof. It is a unique place, lived in by unique people who have deliberately chosen to live – and often homestead – there exactly because it is, by City charter, a roadless community. To put a road in the middle of the City would be unconscionable because it would completely nullify the will of the people and City with regards to the issue that is at the very heart of the City's existence, and engender tremendous ill-will from the residents of Kupreanof, who would find the character of their properties and the surrounding areas permanently altered to accommodate a road and ensuing traffic. Most of these properties and houses, after all, have existed much longer than the Alaska Statewide Transportation Plan. It is simply not fair to these people to pull the identity of their homes out from under them.

The proposed road's terminus appears to meet the shore in what is approximately the center of the City of Kupreanof. I assume this is because there is a State dock here which is used for access by community residents and visitors from Petersburg, and the State would like to use this site. The dock, however, is of a rudimentary design. That it is an

Comments to Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Re.
Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan
Emily Gebel
Page 2

existing State asset is not a compelling enough reason to propose to put a terminal here and connect it to a road, as significant improvements would be required in any event. I believe that a far better alternative would be to have the road's end and terminal on the north side of Sasby Island, outside of City of Kupreanof limits. This would still allow for short ferry rides to the City of Petersburg, avoid the need for ferries to navigate one of the shallower and more difficult portions of Wrangell Narrows, and keep the road out of Kupreanof residents front (or back) yards.

I would like to be clear that I am not an environmentalist. I believe in improved transportation and infrastructure access as a matter of principle, and understand that this is very needful for people who live in isolated communities such as Kake. Wherever possible, however, I think these projects should be undertaken with as little impact as feasible to the residents whose properties and lifestyles will be most affected.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Emily Gebel

(1)

ANDY HUGHES:

FIRST LET ME SAY I AM 100% FOR THE ROAD. I AM 75 YEARS OLD AND RETIRED AT 17.5 MILE HAINES HIWAY 11 YEARS AGO. MY PROFESSION WAS AS A CHARTER PILOT, FROM CORDOVA TO KETCHIKAN, STARTING IN 1966. I KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHEDULING AND OPERATING THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT. I HAVE USED THE ALASKA MARINE HIWAY SYSTEM EXTENSIVELY. EXPEDITING A MULTITUDE OF USERS THRU THE SYSTEM IS A COMPLEX, DAUNTING TASK. TIMELY SCHEDULING USING THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT IS PARAMOUNT. THE LITTLE KETCHIKAN SHUTTLE FERRY IS A GOOD EXAMPLE. THE DRIVE ON/DRIVE OFF CONCEPT IS A MUST. ANOTHER MAJOR CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE THE REMOTE LOCATION OF THE CAPITOL AND ITS PROBLEMATIC ACCESSABILITY. FOLKS ARRIVING FROM THE INTERIOR SHOULD NOT HAVE TO OVERNITE IN HAINES TO COMPLETE THEIR TRIP TO JUNEAU. THE SHUTTLE FERRY TO KATZELIN WOULD SOLVE MOST IF NOT ALL OF THESE PROBLEMS, AS IT WOULD FOR JUNEAU FOLKS HEADED NORTH, AND AS IT WOULD FOR US LOCAL FOLKS NEEDING TO TRAVEL TO AND FROM JUNEAU. THE SHUTTLE FERRY WOULD EXPEDITE ~~THE~~ ~~HAINES~~ SOUTH BOUND TRAFFIC THROUGH HAINES AS IT ARRIVES THROUGHOUT THE DAY, THUS RELIEVING THE BOTTLE-NECK AT THE FERRY TERMINAL.

- OVER -

(2)

PICKING THE TIME OF DAY TO MEET YOUR TRAVEL SCHEDULE TO OR FROM JUNEAU IS A HUGE ADVANTAGE OVER THE ONCE-A-DAY FERRY. VACATIONERS DRIVING LARGE MOTOR-HOMES, ETC., WILL ESPECIALLY APPRECIATE THE DRIVE-ON-DRIVE OFF CONVENIENCE OF THE SHUTTLE, AND COST SAVINGS. HIT THE ROAD AT KATZEHIN AND START WATCHING FOR WHALES AND ORCAS! THE SCENIC SEA-LEVEL HI-WAY WILL BE ALASKA'S PREMIER COASTAL HI-WAY.

FACTS ABOUT WINTER TRAVEL: ① THE HI-WAY IS IN THE MARITIME CLIMATE ZONE, AVERAGE WINTER TEMPS ARE BETWEEN $+20^{\circ}\text{F}$ TO $+30^{\circ}\text{F}$. ② THE ENTIRE ROAD IS AT OR NEAR SEA-LEVEL. THERE ARE ~~NO~~ MOUNTAINS OR PASSES TO CLIMB. ③ THE OCEAN ACTS AS A HEAT SINK (FALLING SNOW MELTS ON CONTACT) LIMITING SNOW ACCUMULATION ALONG SHORELINES. ④ THE ROUTE IS WELL PROTECTED FROM THE BITTER WINTER NORTH WINDS AND DRIFTING. ⑤ MOST LARGE SNOW AVALANCHES OCCURE IN EARLY SPRING OR LATE WINTER AS WARMING TEMPS SOFTEN THE HIGH SNOW PACK. THERE IS BUT ONE SUCH ZONE ABOUT $\frac{1}{2}$ WAY TO SHERMAN PT. SNOW PACKS VARY FROM YEAR TO YEAR, THIS AREA HAS NOT HAD A BIG ONE IN YEARS BUT AERIAL BOMBING MAY BE NEEDED OCCASIONALLY. THE

(3)

CLIFFS ABOVE JUNEAU AND THANE ARE EXAMPLES. WINTER TRAVEL IN ALASKA CAN BE HAZEROUS. THE FERRYS ARE NOT IMMUNE AND HAVE HAD THEIR SHARE OF PROBLEMS, AND EVEN DAMAGE. COMPARED TO THE HI-WAY OUT OF SAGWAY, VALDEZ HAINES OR THE SEWARD HI-WAY, THE SEA-LEVEL HI-WAY TO JUNEAU WILL BE LESS COSTLY TO MAINTAIN. PROBABLY LESS COSTLY THAN CLEARING THE TWO MUD/ROCK SLIDES AT MILE 19 AND AT MILE 24 ON THE HAINES HI-WAY.

TWO NEW FERRIES TO SERVE HAINES AND SAGWAY AND JUNEAU SEEMED LIKE A CASE OF OVER-KILL. SO I INVESTIGATED AND FOUND A WAY TO GIVE MORE SERVICE USING JUST ONE 280' DRIVE ON/DRIVE OFF FERRY. FIRST, BASE THE FERRY IN HAINES, NOT JUNEAU. THE CONCEPT REVOLVES AROUND FAST TURN-AROUND TIMES JUST LIKE THE SEATTLE AND B.C. FERRIES UTILIZE. THE JUNEAU ACCESS ~~ROAD~~ ROAD ENDS AT ECHO COVE SO A LOW BUDGET FERRY DOCK WOULD NEED TO BE BUILT AND UTILIZED UNTIL THE ROAD TO KATZAHINE WAS COMPLETED. CARS GOING TO HAINES WOULD BUY A TICKET AT ANK BAY AND DRIVE TO ECHO COVE TO CATCH THE NOON FERRY NORTH. A TWO HOUR TRIP TO HAINES. A CONTRACTED BUS WOULD SHUTTLE WALK-ON PASSENGERS TO AND FROM ECHO COVE.

(4)

BELOW IS A COMPARISON BETWEEN CURRENT AND FUTURE FERRY SCHEDULES. TRAVEL TIME AND FUEL COSTS TO AND FROM JUNEAU WOULD BE CUT IN HALF, 4 HRS. VS 8 HRS. AND TWO ROUND TRIPS TO SHAGWAY VS ONE, AND SPACED 7 HRS. APART. FOLKS TRAVELING TO JUNEAU WOULD ARRIVE BY MID-DAY VS 9:30 P.M. AT NIGHT! AND, THE LATE THURSDAY NITE FERRY TO HAINES AT 2:15 A.M. AND SHAGWAY AT 4:15 A.M. WOULD BE TERMINATED.

FUTURE SCHEDULE

	HAINES	SHAGWAY	HAINES	ECHO COVE	HAINES	SHAGWAY	HAINES
DEPART	7 A.M.	8:20 A.M.	9:40 A.M.	12 NOON	2:20 P.M.	3:40 P.M.	
ARRIVE		8 A.M.	9:20 A.M.	11:40 A.M.	2:00 P.M.	3:20 P.M.	4:40 P.M.

(BASED ON 20 MINUTE TURN-A-ROUND TIMES)

CURRENT SCHEDULE

	JUNEAU	HAINES	SHAGWAY	HAINES	JUNEAU
DEPART	7:00 A.M.	12:30 A.M.	3:00 P.M.	5:00 P.M.	
ARRIVE		11:30 A.M.	1:30 P.M.	4:00 P.M.	<u>9:30 P.M.</u>

(BASED ON 1:00 TURN-A-ROUND TIMES)

AFTER COMPLETION OF THE ROAD TO KATZAHINE THIS SAME FERRY COULD TAKE OVER THE KATZAHINE AND SHAGWAY SHUTTLES. OPERATING ONE VS TWO FERRIES UNTIL THE ROAD IS COMPLETED COULD SAVE THE STATE UPWARDS OF 100 MILLION \$.

CALL: 907-303-5471 THANKS Dave Werner

Chilkat Valley News

of age before eligible for the property tax exemption. It's not like the 1950s or 1960s or even in the 1970s. People have come for the free dividend and that is the root of all evil. I only wish I had a half dozen nieces and parents who could come and spend the summer with me and get a library card and enjoy the out of doors.

Dale Cobb

Road option best way to Juneau

Let's compare the cost and time of traveling by road vs. by ferry to Juneau. If you have an appointment in Juneau for any multitude of reasons, on Day 1, using the ferry, you would leave Haines at 5 p.m. and arrive in Juneau at 9:30 p.m. (\$37 walk-on, \$75 with car), and overnight at \$110. On Day 2, have your appointment and overnight again at \$110. On Day 3, hop the 7 a.m. ferry to Haines (\$37 or \$75) and arrive at noon. Total cost: \$292 walk-on or \$442 with car. Now, using a car that gets 30 mpg, on Day 1 you arrive in Juneau (\$15 for gas), have your appointment and drive back to Haines. Total cost, including shuttle ferry, just \$60. Sharing the cost with two would be \$30 each, with three, \$20 each, with four, \$15; or just load up with groceries, freight, etc., still at \$60.

Support the "scenic, sea-level highway" to Juneau. It's more convenient, cost and time-saving. Enjoy the wildlife and scenic pull-outs and no chains or seasick bags required

30 September 2014

Electronic Filing

Alaska Department of Transportation
e-mailed to dot.satp@alaska.gov

Subject: COMMENTS:
Kake Access Project — aka Kake-Petersburg Road

1. Over the past decade plus, I personally attended ADOT (Alaska Department of Transportation) meetings, some organized where I was able to hear everyone's comments versus other "open house" chit chat style, where the wealth of concerned citizen views were not broadcast so all in attendance could hear. Each meeting included updated ADOT dog 'n pony graphics that failed to include previous meeting recommendations from the public, instead continuing to venture in directions that ignored extreme weather warnings, landslides on the north end, etc.
2. The Kake Access Project is the companion to the State's day boat scheme. Both are unnecessary and expensive projects, with the latter failing to update, maintain or improve the existing Coastal Region (Southeast Alaska) mainline ferries. The existing vessels navigate in stormy weather ferrying family and friends to meetings, school events, medical appointments, the interior for subsistence hunting, and annually providing comfortable and safe transportation for thousands of new and returning vacationers—all on one ferry from Bellingham to Haines. The proposed day boats will not be U.S. Coast Guard approved and won't have the structural integrity of our current mainline ferries to transit during southeast storms—consider the track record of the fast ferries that remain tied to the dock during such exposure. The day boat scheme requires extended time for completing one's journey plus the added coordination, expense of lodging and transportation to the next day boat—the mainline ferries currently provide lodging and vehicle transport.
3. The Kake Access Project will necessitate, in perpetuity, the expense of building and maintaining ferry terminals on Mitkof and Kupreanof crossing the *Wrangell Narrows*; the purchase of a shuttle ferry, its maintenance and replacement parts, plus personnel and fuel expenses, in perpetuity; ongoing Kupreanof to Kake road maintenance, repair and improvements, purchase and maintenance of associated shuttle ferry road vehicles and personnel expenses, emergency personnel plus adequate emergency hospital facilities and services in Kake. Motorists on Mitkof annually fall victim to weather related road conditions on Mitkof Highway (paved highway, and US Forest Service shot rock logging roads) where Petersburg Motors tows the affected vehicles back to town, the Petersburg Volunteer Fire Department provides the necessary rescue and transport for the injured and deceased—some have had to walk for miles for help due to no cell tower signal. The State has not addressed the lack of available cell service on the north end of Kupreanof Island, where cellular communications are currently non-existent.

4. If the “Road to Kake” is for the construction and eventual access to SEAPA’s (Southeast Alaska Power Authority) hydroelectric power by Kake residents and businesses, where is the excess hydroelectric power coming from? Currently, there is not adequate excess power to totally relieve the City and Borough of Ketchikan from its diesel use, especially without negatively affecting current residential and commercial ratepayers in Wrangell and Petersburg. There have been continued recommendations for geothermal, tidal, wind, etc. research and development in Kake where local residents would have priority employment opportunities to build, manage and maintain such utilities. Expanding SEAPA’s power use to include Kake is not realistic as they would be subject to interrupted service during increased and/or expanded power consumption by the thousands of ratepayers in Wrangell, Petersburg, and Ketchikan. Alaska’s elected officials should appreciate rural communities require realistic and affordable energy solutions that match local needs and their budget constraints, including road infrastructure, electrical power transmission, and safe public marine transportation. The Kake Access Project has a hefty price tag that does not address existing and consequential energy and transportation needs for the Coastal Region (Southeast Alaska), nor the immediate needs of the Village of Kake, population 557 (2010 census).

5. Please read the attached 24 July 2013 commentary, “Kake Access Project”, by Dave Beebe, a Kupreanof resident and City Councilor, who identifies many concerns which the State of Alaska has continually failed to address. His commentary is also available at: <http://cityofkupreanof.org/kake-access-project-david-beebe>

Signed,

/s/

Suzanne (West) Wood
P.O. Box 383
Petersburg, Alaska 99833-0383
907-772-3480

City of Kupreanof, Alaska

- HOME
- GOVERNMENT
- ABOUT
- GALLERY
- WHAT'S HAPPENING
- LOCATION MAP
- CONTACT US

Kake Access Project by David Beebe

Submitted by Becky on Sat, 08/10/2013 - 16:28

Kake Access Project

By David Beebe

July 24, 2013
Wednesday

The Western Federal Lands Highway Division has released its Draft Purpose and Need Statement of the Kake Access Project. The Statement and public meeting comes at the worst possible time -- at the height of seasonal commercial fishing activities, and signals predictably negative consequences for the three directly affected Southeast communities and the region as a whole.

The stated Purpose and Need, like last year's vote of the state legislature to fund the Northern Route with \$40 million dollars, consistently refers to a road from "Kake to Petersburg."

This, of course, is a geographic impossibility which literally "misses the boat" on many levels.

The missed "boat" in this case is the shuttle ferry required to get to Petersburg. Also missing, are two new shuttle ferry terminals -- even when a ferry terminal already exists in Petersburg. The Draft Purpose and Need Statement also misses mentioning the community most profoundly impacted by the project, and where the other shuttle ferry terminal must be built.

That unmentioned community of course, is the City of Kupreanof, whose residents have steadfastly defended their quality of life by passing ordinances to remain a designated roadless community, and proud gateway to the Petersburg Creek Wilderness Area. The thousands of tourists which have hiked their trails and residents alike, know too well of the impacts of parking lots, high voltage wires buzzing overhead, highways, crime, pollution, and fatalities brought on by drunk drivers.

With the legislature's \$40 million dollar appropriation, the state not only reneged on the vested rights of citizens' self-determination but set in motion an intent to impose eminent domain on the City of Kupreanof. With that vote, the state legislature dictated to the people of the region, the Northern Route for the road, the Northern Route for the electrical intertie, and a revamped shuttle ferry concept which has been a demonstrated operational failure.

The state did this rather than risk a different outcome of an open, honest, public process, where the people actually had a meaningful role in deciding their transportation policy, economic policy, and the fate of their communities.

In order to impose this ultimatum, the state legislature deliberately missed another boat. The boat of public process filled with requests to restore the funding of the basic social services expected of any civilized state government. Instead of answering the many impassioned pleas for adequate funding, the state legislature chose to divert \$40 million to perpetuate their failed economic, energy, and transportation policies. They did this by ignoring historic, well-reasoned public opposition to those policies which has proven to be absolutely on target.

There are many examples of the public wisdom of rejecting what the state calls, "a robust network of surface transportation corridors linked by shuttle ferries." Take for example, the South Mitkof Island ferry terminal, which hasn't seen a shuttle ferry for many years. The public concerns over rising fuel and maintenance costs and insufficient ridership fell on the deaf ears of DOT yet nonetheless proved to be true. What followed was a pattern of managerial failures to foresee cost overruns, and the consequences of discontinuation of service due to lack of ridership and revenues to cover even basic debt obligations, operation, and maintenance costs. The M/V Prince of Wales remains idle, and has been tied to the dock with a "for sale" sign for the past year.

With just one InterIsland Ferry Authority (IFA) shuttle route remaining, connecting Ketchikan, a city of over 8000 residents, with 12 individual communities of Prince of Wales Island, the IFA manager reported last year that the IFA, "struggles to stay in business," relying on state and federal bailouts and further accumulation of public debt.

So precisely how can the shuttle ferry of the Kake Access Project connecting the City of Kake, population 550, with Petersburg -- with about 3000 residents -- be expected to be a viable or sustainable transportation plan? All the historic evidence and common sense demonstrates otherwise.

The residents of Kake and Petersburg have also historically opposed the road connections between their communities because of concern for increased access and competition for dwindling subsistence resources such as

GET IN TOUCH

City of Kupreanof
PO Box 50
Petersburg AK 99833

907-340-2400
[Contact Us...](#)

LATEST BLOG ENTRIES

- [Kake Access Project by David Beebe](#)
- [Can you name this bird?](#)
- [A sparkling day](#)
- [Log Jam up Petersburg Creek](#)

deer. This public concern backed up by warnings from state and federal biologists has also proven to be valid. Recently, an emergency act on to reduce the local deer season to just 14 days and bag limit of just one buck will force Petersburg hunters elsewhere to find their deer. A shuttle ferry system to Kake will no doubt carry more displaced Petersburg hunters.

Impacts to subsistence resources take a huge toll on the ability of families to remain in rural communities. These impacts are well-documented by peer reviewed sociologists such as Dr. Kirk Dombrowski, who lived with residents of Kake and other native villages and documented these consequences in his dissertation, *Against Culture: Development, Politics and Religion in Indian Alaska*.

The Kake Access Project purpose is claimed to reduce travel costs and improve convenience and reliability, but make no mistake, it not only misses the boat, it is a Trojan Horse. The Kake Access Project as proposed, perpetuates failed energy, transportation, economic, and social policies which must be opposed.

David Beebe
City Councilman
Kupreanof, Alaska

Click here to listen to Dave's commentary:

<http://www.kfsk.org/2013/07/23/commentary-dave-beebe-on-the-kake-access-project/>



Tags:

Kake Access
Road to Kake



CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL
INCORPORATED MAY 30, 2008

Office of the Borough Manager

P.O. Box 531
Wrangell, AK 99929

907-874-2381
907-874-3952

September 30, 2014

Andy Hughes
Regional Planning Chief
Southeast Region, ADOT&PF
6860 Glacier Highway
Juneau, AK 99801-7999

ADOT&PF – Southeast Region Planning
PO Box 112506
Juneau, AK 99811-2506

dot.satp@alaska.gov

Dear Mr. Hughes,

This letter comments on the Alaska Department of Transportation's Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan, June 2014 Draft.

The residents of Wrangell rely heavily on air and water based travel for commerce, business travel, medical services, travel for school activities (sports and academic, and for recreation. We look to maintain safe, reliable, affordable, and consistent transportation for our community as these options are crucial to the long-term viability of our community of just over 2,400.

The plan's Executive Summary states "... the majority of the plan includes actions to maintain and improve the service provide today..". Unfortunately, service is not being improved nor maintained for all communities. Additional service, new roads and shuttle ferries are being developed that will improve service to *some* communities, but primarily those in Northern Southeast Alaska, at the cost of reduced or eliminated service to other communities, including Wrangell.

Wrangell is concerned that service is headed toward complete elimination. DOT is beefing up Forest Road systems to make connections by shuttle ferries, yet Wrangell is continuing to see reduced service by mainlines. The draft plan repeats that it maintains existing AMHS routes, but drawing lines on a map is very different than maintaining an adequate level of service along these routes. DOT has been reallocating ferry service *away* from Central Southeast Alaska to other communities for the last 10 years. This has negatively affected the use and ridership of the ferries in our region. Wrangell has seen an overall decrease in port departures and decrease in ridership even with all mainliners operating. The *draft* plan is proposing to make these scheduling and service decisions permanent by proposing to retire three (3) mainliners and replacing only one (1). Wrangell relies **ONLY** on mainline services. The proposed plan implies a second mainliner could be added if "ridership numbers warranted". How can numbers increase with decreased service? We should not be penalized for the poor planning and scheduling decisions by the Alaska Department of Transportation (DOT) that have actually led to the

reduced ridership in the areas of Wrangell and Petersburg. These service reductions do not meet the Plan's stated mission and goal of improving mobility for residents, goods, and services throughout the region, and we are strongly opposed to them.

We are in favor of a second mainline ferry to be included in the preferred alternative.

Not part of the transportation plan but recently announced is the monthly service that AMHS will be providing to Coffman Cove so that DOT can say they are "using" the Federal Highway funded dock... but Wrangell is not part of that service. That dock was intended to provide service between POW, Wrangell and Petersburg. Rather than have the ferry stop in Petersburg AND South Mitkoff, figure a way to add Wrangell into this monthly access. The Plan references the North End Ferry, and while we support its effort to start and provide alternative opportunities, DOT should not be reducing mainline service to Wrangell.

DOT Representatives also stated that the proposed 98 summer/70 winter sailings per week in Lynn Canal would benefit residents of Central Southeast because we would have better access to the continental road system out of Haines or Skagway. However, it doesn't really matter how many vessels DOT operates in Lynn Canal because Wrangell residents can only access these routes when the mainline ferry stops in Wrangell en route to Juneau. We have better access to the continental road and rail system through Prince Rupert, BC if DOT would provide adequate ferry service to that port. Unfortunately, the reduced sailings to Prince Rupert dramatically affects Wrangell's access to road systems and economic benefits for the fish processors attempting to ship their product.

We know that DOT is aware that the Federal Essential Air Subsidy is under attack in Congress and could be eliminated over the next twenty years. We would ask that DOT consider the effects to residents of smaller communities that are served by Alaska Airlines if the subsidy is eliminated. The cost of travel for residents and the effect on businesses, government agencies, seafood processors and industry, tourism, school travel could be quite significant and DOT should be analyzing and planning for that likely eventuality now.

Sincerely,



Jeff Jabusch
Borough Manager

E.L. Young
P.O. Box 2100
Petersburg, Alaska 99833

Kake/Petersburg Road System Opposing Comments

E.L. Young, Petersburg, Alaska
September 28, 2014

Introduction

The thought of a road from Kake to Petersburg is distressing to many of us in the affected area. The character of the landscape will be changed irrevocably, even if the road is someday put back to bed. The area involved on the northern route is a favored hunting, fishing, and tourism area because of its proximity to Petersburg, and also because to its remote nature, untouched habitat, and its qualities as a viewshed from the Alaska Marine Highway. The negative impacts on the subsistence lifestyle of Kake citizens are many, but will be difficult to determine. These factors by themselves should be sufficient to cancel the expenditure of funds to plan and build the road.

The impacts on the social characteristics and life styles of the residents of Petersburg, Kake and Kupreanof are not quantifiable. On the other hand, the damage to fish and wildlife resources should be easier to quantify if one has access to the data collected over the years by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Forest Service. The dissatisfaction felt by tourists is another of those effects that cannot be measured. They are intangible, but real.

It seems to many of us who live in the area that DOT is determined to build the road, no matter what. DOT is charged with building and maintaining *necessary* road infrastructure in Alaska, not to be an advocate for road construction. This is not the Lower 48 and we do not want it to be. A road network is not expected or essential to Southeast Alaska residents. Where roads are necessary in this area, they are already in place.

In the following paragraphs, I respond to quoted statements from your Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan. Perhaps my comments will stimulate others to protest as well.

Financial Implications of the Road

“Kake has limited access to commercial centers for medical, goods, and transportation needs.”

This obvious statement applies to bush communities throughout Alaska. To state it as a justification for an expensive road leads one to believe that the writer has not been in Alaska very long or is not well

acquainted with the state. People live in isolated communities for their own personal reasons and leave those communities as those reasons change. Older people and others with health problems that require immediate or continual care do not expect to live in remote communities until they die. We move to places with medical services. Petersburg Medical Center routinely medivacs critical patients to other communities in Alaska or to Seattle. The idea that an 80 mile roundtrip on an unpaved logging road will somehow improve the medical needs of Kake residents is ludicrous. Kake has an airport that supplies rapid transportation to communities with advanced medical facilities and transportation facilities now. More frequent ferry service would meet the needs of those with non-emergency medical needs and access to transportation.

“City of Kake Resolution No. 2008-010 supports construction of the Kake-Petersburg road and Intertie projects along the northern transportation-utility corridor on Kupreanof Island.”

This resolution and statement links the Electrical Intertie and the Kake Road. Linking the two brings in a strong economic factor because of the high cost of electricity in Kake. It also reflects the opinion of the elected officials of Kake, not the average resident. Has there been a public vote in the community? If so, what was the outcome?

“The Intertie project is an independent project, but the road, if constructed, will support construction of the inter-tie at lower cost.”

Here the DOT links two projects, the road and the electric intertie. As stated in the response above, the high cost of electricity in Kake makes the intertie project appeal to the Kake residents’ desire for a cheaper source of electricity through connection with the Petersburg/Wrangell/Ketchikan electrical grid. DOT representatives at the public meetings emphasized that the road is a stand-alone project, but here the road is justified by saying it supports the intertie. It says to Kake residents: “Support the road and it will bring you cheap electricity.” It is well known that Kake has more sunshine than any other Southeast community. Subsidized solar power for individual dwellings and city buildings would be less expensive than building either a road or an intertie.

“Currently Kake residents travel via ferry or air to Sitka or Juneau to access goods and services, which can be expensive and often requires overnight stays.”

An obvious statement which makes me think that DOT is out of touch with Southeast communities. In other words, Kake residents are just like the rest of us who live outside of Juneau, Ketchikan, and Sitka. A single overnight stay for shopping trips is the least of our problems. Because of an abbreviated ferry schedule, it is more like a 2, 3, or 4 night stay. Take a look at the ferry schedule and see what it would take time-wise and money-wise to take a shopping or medical trip from Petersburg or Wrangell to Juneau or Ketchikan.

“A road connection to Petersburg would allow access to many of the needed goods and services and could be accomplished with a day trip at significantly reduced cost.”

True, there are more goods and services available in Petersburg than in Kake, just as there are more goods and services available in Kake than in Rowan Bay, Warm Springs Bay, Port Protection, Port Alexander, etc. There also more goods and services in Anchorage and Fairbanks, but Juneau residents

don't claim a right to them. People don't live in Kake if they want goods and services to be easily available.

The difficulties can be seen in a Hypothetical Trip from Petersburg to Kake: Leave Kake at 8 a.m, arrive at Wrangell Narrows at 9:30 a.m. Park your vehicle in the parking lot. Catch the next ferry, perhaps at 10 a.m. One assumes the "shuttle" ferry (free?) will run all day long on a schedule. On Mitkof, take a cab or other vehicle to town, depending on the location of the terminal. Assume ½ hour for the ferry dockings and crossing. Arrive downtown at 10:30 a.m. Shop and/or go to the doctor, and have lunch. Take a cab back to the ferry and carry your groceries and other items aboard the 5:00 p.m. ferry shuttle. Put your belongings in your car. There is no gas station on Kupreanof, so you may have to buy a can of gas in Petersburg if the tank was not full when you left Kake. Drive the 45 miles at 30 miles an hour back to Kake. In the winter, pray that the state kept the snow cleared off the roadway and that the bridges are not icy. Pray twice as hard that you do not have car trouble on the way. Make sure you have blankets and food and a way to heat the car if it stalls and you have to wait for a snow plow or another car to come by. If all goes well, you should arrive home at 7 p.m. at the end of your 90 mile round trip. Winter trips may take much longer because of road conditions and snow, Be sure to take a shovel. This is Alaska, and sometimes things happen.

“This funding is believed sufficient to construct, within an existing national forest easement, 22 miles of new single lane unpaved roadway and bridges and improve approximately 23 miles of existing logging roads.”

A 45 mile, single lane unpaved highway (I assume with many turnouts to allow cars to pass safely) provides access to Petersburg goods and services for Kake residents provided you have an adequate vehicle to make the 90-mile round trip. While you're at it, be sure to account for the ferry schedule in Wrangell Narrows. If it is not a vehicle ferry, then you have to get transportation to town and back to the terminal. If you have a breakdown, there are no services available in the 45 mile route other than those in Kake. There are no service stations, no convenience stores, no one living on the route. Depending on the mileage of your vehicle, the trip might take from 4.5 gallons of gas (20 mpg) to 9 gallons of gas (10 mpg).

The cost of maintenance of the road should be of major concern. Currently the state does not plow the Mitkof Highway past the Crystal Lake hatchery. There is probably more traffic on the Mitkof Highway past the hatchery than there will be on the Kake/Petersburg highway. Sanding bridges and removing snow is a major expenditure for any community in Southeast that tries to keep the roads open. It can be expected to be a major cost of the Kake/Petersburg road. There are steep areas that will have potential for snow slides. This expense needs to be considered in a cost/benefit ratio of route alternatives and final project analysis.

To quote your document, “State funding which pays for all operating and capital expenses is expected to decrease.” Where in the report are the cost/benefit ratios? A rough estimate of capital costs (\$48,700,000) comes to \$96,000 per resident for the approximately 500 citizens of Kake. That would buy a lot of ferry tickets to Juneau or Sitka. Then there are the continuing snow plow, road repair costs, bridge repair and upkeep costs (the state has an abysmal repair record on the Hammer Slough bridge in Petersburg), ferry crew costs, ferry maintenance cost, ferry fuel cost, and ferry terminal maintenance costs. At what point will the road be *reconstructed*? They don't last forever and reconstruction will have to be anticipated in future budget requests. Additional personnel in the form of maintenance crews and ferry personnel will be needed. How many? How much will it cost?

The “Bridge to Nowhere” controversy at Ketchikan a few years back should have taught us how the public views roads that benefit few. There was a national outcry over the proposed expenditure and as far as I know, the bridge is still not in place. The publicity was unfavorable to Alaska.

Social Concerns

“Policy 11: Preserve the integrity of the ecosystems and the natural beauty of the state, limit the negative impacts and enhance the positive attributes – environmental, social, economic, and human health – of an efficient transportation system.”

The rural communities in Southeast are proud of their subsistence heritage. Hunting, fishing and food gathering as part of a subsistence lifestyle is a big deal here. The people of Kake have a Forest Service road system to utilize to practice subsistence activities. That road system is accessible to vehicles only by AMHS ferry from the other communities in Southeast. Visits by moose, bear, waterfowl, and deer hunters are currently restricted by the lack of ready transportation although some come from Juneau, Sitka and Petersburg by ferry. A road to Petersburg would increase hunting pressure greatly and Kake subsistence hunters will have to compete with Petersburg hunters of moose, deer and waterfowl. Kake residents’ almost exclusive use of the fish and wildlife resources will vanish. Petersburg sport fisherman, hunters and crabbers can be expected to use the road system to launch their boats in Kake to access Rocky Pass and Kuiu Island, as well as the south end of Admiralty. The justifiable resentment by Kake residents will be inevitable as their personal subsistence resources are utilized by outsiders. This will negatively impact the quality of life of Kake residents and harm the relationship between the two communities.

Environmental Concerns

“The project requires development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Construction within the State’s easement on the northern corridor across Kupreanof Island is the most direct route and as such is currently the State’s preferred route.”

Why is the Northern route the preferred route? It is more direct, but will adversely impact the view from the ferries, tour ships, and private vessels. The road along the shore of Frederick Sound will ruin the wilderness character of the area forever. It will negatively affect eagle nesting areas, waterfowl resting/feeding areas, and fish streams. Does anyone in DOT care about the negative effects of the road on wildlife and tourism? It is going to affect the Alaska experience of tourists. We are trying to build an ecotourism structure in Southeast, not destroy it.

Southeast Alaska is one of the most beautiful places in the world. Currently, visitors can travel water lanes from Petersburg to the Taku River without seeing major signs of development along the way. Petersburg is a recreational hub for yachtsmen, sportsmen, and kayakers. Only small tour ships visit the area, making the experience even more unique. Petersburg has a reputation of being a fishing village in the wilderness. Don’t ruin that reputation with a road that will have little practical value. I quote from the document, “Policy 13: Develop transportation plans in close coordination with local communities to ensure transportation investment decisions **reflect Alaskans’ quality of life values** (emphasis mine).” Where is the consideration of this policy? It requires more than a few public hearings and then continuing with your plans as if you had done all that is necessary. We need more than the statement, “Thank you for your input.”

Need for More Information

Finally, I believe there are items you should include in future analyses of this project. These include:

Cost/benefit ratio. How many people benefit at what cost? What is the economic advantage of the road as compared to the cost? What are the negative effects of a “no action” alternative?

Hidden costs: After completion, the road will require a number of additional DOT employees. How many will be needed and what is the cost of wages and benefits (retirement, insurance, etc.)?

There will be additional enforcement needs by state troopers. What are the costs?

What are the costs of running and maintaining a shuttle ferry. What is the plan for backup in case of malfunction.

Expected use of road: conduct opinion surveys of Kake citizens to determine anticipated use.

Expected increase in Petersburg business: surveys of Kake citizens to determine anticipated use.

Expected use of Petersburg medical facilities: Survey Kake citizens to determine anticipated use.

Current use of medical facilities in Juneau by Kake residents. Are they likely to change to Petersburg?

Probability of winter use of road: Survey Kake citizens to determine anticipated cold-weather use.

Impact of road on Kake businesses. Survey Kake dealers in grocery, hardware, etcetera to determine their thoughts of the road on their business. Will it help them or hurt them? Will they reduce their inventories because of the road?

Opinions of Kake hunters and fishermen about outsiders from Petersburg using the area. Positive or Negative? Is there enough game and fish to go around if outsiders begin to use the area?

Opinions of Petersburg tourism businesses on the change in the pristine nature of Frederick Sound.

Opinions of wildlife and fisheries experts on probable impacts of road construction on fish streams and wildlife. This should be from ADF&G professionals but also from biologists without ties to the State administration. Outside biologists should have access to ADF&G stream data and wildlife population data.

Geological overview of the area to be newly roaded. Are there slide-prone areas or areas where blue clay or muskeg would make construction difficult? What about stream crossings? Are there crossings where bridges will be difficult to construct without pollution. Find out before going any further. Costs escalate when difficult areas are encountered.

Opinions of citizens of Kupreanof and Petersburg about building a road through the unroaded portion of the Tongass National Forest.

In surveys of citizens, it would be interesting to know how many came to Southeast Alaska expecting good road access.

What proportion of the people believe roads are essential to those living in Southeast Alaska? Surveys of citizens could provide answers.

How do those in the tourism business view the road construction as it relates to whale watching? Some businesses depend on whale watching as a tourist draw.

Concluding Comments

The State's financial resources are dwindling. This will require some hard choices in the future. Even if the State's coffers are filled in the future, I hope there will never be a return to the profligate spending that we experienced shortly after the oil began flowing through the pipeline. Roads such as the Kake/Petersburg road may look simple on paper, but waste our State's resources and funds. The difficulty and expense of this road construction and the appalling environmental and social costs of the project are not simple at all. Please consider my comments in this response. I ask you to cancel planning and construction of the Kake to Petersburg road system.

Sincerely,

E.L. "Butch" Young

E.L. Young
P.O. Box 2100
Petersburg, Alaska 99833

From: Dee Longenbaugh <deelong@alaska.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 09, 2014 3:20 PM
To: Heidemann, Marie E (DOT)
Subject: DOT plans for SE Alaska

Can't help but wonder why these tired, costly, and unnecessary roads are being trotted out again. Expensive and useless.

Road out of Juneau - avalanches, snow sheds necessary, last 18miles only via ferry - and then you're in Skagway!

Road out of Sikta - cross mountains, expensive, and you're at the north part of Baranov Island - what advantage? Snow impeded in winter to add to its charms.

Can't speak of out of knowledge on the others, but have heard nothing good.

Do you simply want to waste road funds?

All of these have been pushed for years and years - and there are excellent reasons they haven't been built - waste of money.

Best,

Dee

Dee Longenbaugh

The Observatory, ABAA

www.observatorybooks.com

deelong@alaska.com

299 North Franklin Street

Juneau, Alaska, 99801

907/586-9676

Since 1977

>

>

From: Mary Becker <jmbecker@gci.net>
Sent: Thursday, September 25, 2014 1:17 PM
To: DOT SER SATP
Subject: SE AK Transportation Plan

I support the plan. It provides for a system of roads and ferries that maximizes cost benefit and traveling efficiency.

Jim Becker