



Pennock Island and Gravina Island/Clam Cove Public Outreach Summary

Gravina Access Project Ketchikan, Alaska

November 2001

Introduction

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is studying alternatives to improve access between Revillagigedo Island and Gravina Island. Both islands are within Ketchikan Gateway Borough and are separated by Tongass Narrows, a waterway that is 13 miles long and one-quarter mile to one mile wide. The majority of the area's population, Ketchikan Gateway Borough's population is approximately 14,000, lives on Revillagigedo Island. Ketchikan International Airport is located on Gravina Island along with large, generally undeveloped parcels of Borough, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Mental Health Trust, University of Alaska, private and U.S. Forest Service Lands. Pennock Island lies within Tongass Narrows between Revillagigedo and Gravina islands adjacent to Ketchikan. Land on Pennock Island consists of a mix of private and Borough property.

Public Information and Outreach

A key component of the Gravina Access Project study process has been public involvement and the consideration and integration of the public's comments, concerns, and input into the planning process. This public involvement effort has been broad-based and has included newsletters, a community survey, public information meetings, a project website, and other means of communicating to Ketchikan and the surrounding communities. In addition, this effort has included several focused efforts to obtain feedback from specific communities and interests in the project area. One such effort has focused on the residents of Pennock and Gravina islands, and their concerns and interests with respect to the study.

May 2001 Workshops

On May 24 and 24, 2001, DOT&PF and HDR Alaska (HDR), held workshops in Ketchikan to discuss Pennock and Gravina island residents' concerns and opinions regarding the Gravina Access Project alternatives. Twenty-four Pennock Island and Clam Cove residents attended the workshops. These meetings included open and facilitated discussions regarding the study and alternatives, as well the relationship of the study to the *1985 Pennock and Gravina Island Neighborhood Plan*. In particular, discussion focused on Alternative F3, which features a bridge across Pennock Island,



with its western terminus on Gravina Island approximately south of Ketchikan International Airport. Alternative F3 would also include a 5.9-mile roadway to provide access to the airport (the roadway would terminate at the north end of the “Airport Reserve” property). The east span of the bridge would be 60 feet high and the west span would be either 185 or 200 feet high.

At each workshop John Hill, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Planner, discussed the existing *Pennock and Gravina Island Neighborhood Plan*, as well as the on-going development of the *Ketchikan 2020 Plan*. HDR provided meeting attendees with a *Summary of the Pennock and Gravina Island Neighborhood Plan* (see Attachment 1). The Pennock and Gravina Island Neighborhood Plan was prepared in 1985 and is over 15 years old. Thus, a function of the workshops’ discussion of Alternative F3 is to obtain feedback on the existing Pennock and Gravina Island plan and current planning activities. Considerable discussion among workshop attendees focused on planned land use for Gravina and/or Pennock Island that would potentially be served by a bridge, particularly a bridge across Pennock Island.

The *Pennock and Gravina Island Neighborhood Plan* was written at a time when considerable community growth was anticipated in Ketchikan as a result of mineral development. That mineral development did not occur and the growth of Ketchikan was not consistent with the assumptions of the plan.

Mark Dalton, HDR’s Project Manager, reviewed the Gravina Access Project’s statement of purpose and need and the study alternatives. The project’s stated purpose is: *to improve surface transportation for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians between Revillagigedo Island and Ketchikan International Airport and other lands of Gravina Island*. The need for improving access is threefold:

- 1) To improve the overall convenience and reliability of access to Ketchikan International Airport for passengers, airport tenants, emergency personnel and equipment, and shipments of freight;
- 2) To provide Ketchikan Gateway Borough and its residents 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 adopted land use and long-term transportation plans; and
- 3) To promote environmentally sound, planned long-term economic development on Gravina Island.

A summary of the comments offered workshop participants is presented below:

- Comments were offered both in opposition and support of Alternative F3.
- Some residents said that they would like to have access from Pennock Island to Ketchikan and Gravina, with a ferry or bridge to provide access to/from Clam Cove. Comments were offered that some Pennock and Clam Cove residents may



- not see the need now, but at some point in their lives, they may want improved, relatively quick and easy, access to Ketchikan or the airport (by road). Interest was also expressed in providing access to North Gravina.
- Other residents expressed general opposition to Alternative F3. They felt that bridge and associated roads would change the rural and isolated nature of the island.
 - A comment was made that Pennock Island residents can already get to the airport in 15 minutes (by skiff), and that access to Ketchikan (and Revillagiedo Island) was a bigger concern to the residents.
 - Residents of Clam Cove in attendance at the meeting were supportive of improved access, either from alternative F3 or other improved-access alternative with a road extension to the south. However, the “spine road” on Gravina does not appear to provide access to property along the shoreline, where most residents live. There was general support from Clam Cove residents to move the road closer to the waterfront property to make tying into the road easier from each of the lots.
 - There was considerable discussion of how Pennock Island or Clam Cove residents would have access to a bridge. For example: Would there be a network of roads on Pennock Island? How many access points would there potentially be? Would this lead to secondary development on Pennock Island?
 - Questions about the effects of constructing bridge pilings in the Narrows were raised. Similarly, concerns about the environmental effects of road construction and operation -- particularly to surface water resources -- were voiced by a number of residents.
 - Several participants suggested enhanced ferry service as a preferable alternative. Putting a bus on the ferry to enhance access was also suggested.
 - The March 2001 community (telephone) survey of the Ketchikan area (which included Pennock and Gravina Island residents) was also discussed. Several meeting attendees asked about the results of the survey. A comment was made that the survey was flawed since it appeared to focus on travel from Pennock Island to the airport rather than travel to/from Ketchikan.
 - The overall planning process for the Gravina Access Project was discussed, including other components of the study (such as the economic considerations, impacts to cruise ships and floatplane operators, etc.), next steps, and schedule.

In the end, while some workshop participants voiced an opposition to Alternative F3 and road access to Pennock Island, there was general agreement among the participant that road access, particularly to Ketchikan from Pennock Island and Clam Cove, is worthy of continued consideration as an alternative.



Pennock Island and Clam Cove Questionnaire

Based on the discussions, comments and questions, DOT&PF conducted a mail survey of Pennock and Gravina Island residents to obtain further input and definition of concerns regarding the study alternatives. Questionnaires were mailed on July 12, 2001 and nine responses were received.

The questions along with summaries of the responses are presented below. Similar to the May 2001 workshops, opinions both in support of and opposition to Alternative F3 were expressed in the responses.

Question 1:

Alternative F3 proposes to connect Revilla Island with Gravina Island via a series of two bridges over Pennock Island. Would you want vehicular access between Gravina, Pennock, and Revilla islands? Why or why not?

Summary of Responses:

- ◇ Responses were split between support and opposition of Alternative F3, with five “yes” responses, three “no” responses, and one response that noted both the pros and cons of the Alternative F3.
- ◇ Responses in opposition to Alternative F3 cited lack of need, adequacy of existing transportation, and retention of rural character as reasons.
- ◇ One respondent indicated that Alternative F3’s Gravina Island terminus is too far south of town.
- ◇ Responses in support of Alternative F3 cited need for vehicular access to Pennock and Gravina Islands, potential increase in property values, and fulfillment of the study’s purpose and need.

Question:

If a bridge providing vehicular access to Pennock and/or Gravina islands were constructed:

- *Should development of public and private lands on these islands be controlled? If so, how?*
- *Should access to public land on these islands be controlled? If so, how?*

Summary of Responses:

- ◇ Responses varied in whether, how, and to what degree development and access should be regulated. One response indicated that development should be left to the landowners and access should not be limited. Other responses indicated a desire for varying degrees of regulation. One respondent cited the regulatory mechanisms and agencies already in place, and remarked that they should be sufficient to regulate land use and access on Gravina and Pennock islands. In general, residential uses were preferred.



- ◇ Several responses that expressed opposition to the Alternative F3 indicated that there would be no need for regulation if a bridge to Pennock Island did not facilitate additional access and development.

Question:

How would access to Pennock Island and the Clam Cove area benefit these communities? How would it harm them?

Summary of Responses:

- ◇ Responses in opposition to bridge access to Pennock Island expressed no benefit. Potential harms cited were: increased taxes to fund the bridge; change of rural character and lifestyle; increased trespass on private property; traffic; and increased garbage/waste issues.
- ◇ Potential benefits cited by responses in support of Alternative F3 included: improved development opportunities on Pennock and Gravina islands; improved access/transportation for residents, emergency services, etc.; and increased property values.

Question:

Which alternative do you prefer and why?

Summary of Responses:

- ◇ Five respondents expressed a preference for Alternative F3.
- ◇ Two respondents expressed a preference for Alternative G4.
- ◇ One respondent expressed a preference for Alternative D1.
- ◇ One respondent expressed no preference.

Summary of the Pennock and Gravina Island Neighborhood Plan

Prepared for the Pennock Island and Gravina Island/Clam Cove
Public Outreach Effort

Gravina Access Project
Ketchikan, Alaska

May 2001

The Pennock and Gravina Island Neighborhood Plan was adopted May 6, 1985. The intent was to develop a plan for neighborhood improvement that would encourage development without sacrificing the quality of life that residents have come to enjoy and value. This summary briefly provides a synopsis of the plan.

Introduction

Reason for the Plan and Major Objectives

The greater Ketchikan area has experienced some significant growth. Many of the island residents are former residents of the City of Ketchikan—attracted by the rural and more self-sufficient lifestyle that Gravina and Pennock Islands offer. The plan states that preserving the qualities that make life on the islands so attractive are important; but finding ways to provide home sites to others that would enjoy living there was the primary objective of the neighborhood plan. The second objective was to set a framework for the development of selected lands on Gravina and Pennock Islands that was in line with the values and character of the neighborhood. The third objective of the plan was to develop a transportation system that would provide access to interior land without compromising the qualities that attracted residents to the area. Protecting Native burial grounds and leaving an area for this purpose in the future was the final objective of the plan.

The Planning Process

History of the Plan Preparation

The plan was the first attempt to create a neighborhood plan for Gravina and Pennock Islands, which directly and actively involved the residents. The Pennock/Gravina Island Association was originally formed so that the opinions of the residents could be expressed, and this group decided that their board should pursue the development of the neighborhood plan.

Boundary of the Planning Area

The Pennock and Gravina Island Neighborhood Plan encompasses the following geographic areas:

- Private land along the Gravina shoreline north of the airport to Vallenar Point

- The peninsula on Gravina Island between Blank Inlet and the west Channel of Tongass Narrows north to the airport.
- All of Pennock Island

Development Options Considered

Four development options were outlined and considered in the plan:

- Maintenance of Current Conditions
- Low-Level Development
- Medium-Level Development
- High-Level Development

The plan's preferred option was to promote "phased residential development of the neighborhood, at appropriate time intervals, up to, but not to exceed the Medium Development Option." We infer that this decision was based on the following conclusions gleaned from public comments and opinions contained in the plan:

- Development is an evolving process; no one option could be expected to remain stable over protracted time periods.
- The majority of property owners in the neighborhood favored maintenance of present conditions or a low level of development in the short-term.
- The majority of the property owners in the neighborhood were opposed to any long-term development, which exceeds the medium-development option.

Plan Elements

Economy and Growth

Small boat construction, maintenance, and repair were historically the principal economic base for Pennock Island and Gravina Island. The plan indicates that the ability to continue activities such as small boat shops, sawmills, and machine shops should be preserved so that full-time employment could be provided to residents on the islands, and so that other residents could be permitted to supplement their incomes if they so desired.

Another economic concern addressed in the plan was the issue of raising small livestock for subsistence purposes. It was decided that this would be permitted, but that all livestock had to be under owner control and confined to the owner's property at all times.

Population growth was expected to occur in the neighborhood (over the next 20 years) at the time the plan was written. The following reasons for this expected growth are cited in the plan:

- "Because of proposed new industries and planned commercial developments, the entire Ketchikan area population is expected to increase substantially.
- Large acreages of Borough-selected land are on Pennock and Gravina Islands.
- The islands are physically nearer to the urban area than many other developable residential sites."

The neighborhood plan was designed to promote "phased residential development of the neighborhood." It was believed that the growth of the area was largely dependent upon the access available to Pennock and Gravina Islands. Many felt that if a bridge were built to

Pennock Island, the island would become part of the “urban” Ketchikan area, and a lot of the appeal that the island would be lost. This is likely why the medium level of development was attractive to the residents at the time. If the interior lands are developed as the plan outlines in the medium development option, roughly forty 25,000 square foot lots, one hundred and eighty 40,000 square foot lots, and two hundred and seventy-five 80,000 square foot lots would be created. Two hundred possible additional lots were added if all private land was developed, so a total of roughly seven hundred parcels could result on Pennock Island providing space for approximately 2,100 residents (700 lots times 3 people per household).

Land Use

The plan indicates that neighborhood growth is to be guided by the medium development option. The land use policies outlined to implement the growth are:

For Pennock Island:

- “Public lands on Pennock and Gravina Islands shall be rezoned to conform to the largest lot size contained in any currently approved Ketchikan Gateway Borough Zoning Ordinance or Comprehensive Plan.
- Single-family residences will be the primary type of structures permitted in all rural residential zones.
- On-site sewage treatment is preferred for each lot if it will protect the neighborhood environment.
- Upland access will be by light duty country lane.
- The Borough Planning Department will develop a detailed site and facility map for the entire island based on uses outlined in the planning area map.
- A 500-foot protective buffer zone will be established around Native burial sites.
- The neighborhood mobile home zone will apply to the neighborhood area.”

For Clam Cove and South Gravina:

“Native Land selections and evolving village corporation policies and development plans have greatly reduced access to many of the better hunting areas in George and Carroll Inlets...Only the Judy Hill-Blank Inlet area is likely to remain untouched by development. For this reason, and the fact that the area is accessible from the airport ferry terminal on Gravina, Blank Inlet and Judy Hill should be designated a public recreation and hunting reserve.”

North Gravina to Vallenar Point:

“The land use policies in this section apply only to the existing strip of private land along the Gravina beach front from the northern airport boundary to Vallenar Point. The private land in this area should be rezoned from ‘future development’ to ‘rural residential’. This designation will allow year-round residency for those who currently live there, and is consistent with the lot sizes included in the original state land sales that occurred in the area. A 500-foot buffer strip is to be established at the north end of the airport boundary to separate residential and non-residential land uses.”

Transportation

During interviews and public meetings, the most important issue of concern during plan development was bridge and ferry access to Pennock coupled with the related road system that

access would bring. The majority of Borough-selected land was intended to be used as home sites, and access to those future home sites was a major concern dealt with in the plan. The recommendations presented in the plan are below:

North Gravina:

“Because of the suitability of building sites, the quality of soils, and the general desirability of the area, this area may be selected for Ketchikan/Gravina expansion, possibly by hard access...no transportation recommendations, other than for beach access, are made.”

Clam Cove/Blank Inlet Peninsula:

“Due to the overwhelmingly unsuitable soils, and its value as a public recreation area and wildlife range, a trail system is recommended. This amounts to upgrading an existing route. Access to present building sites along the shoreline facing Ketchikan shall be by beach access.”

Pennock Island:

“The transportation plan for Pennock is to be implemented in three phases:

- Phase 1 - Present private boat-private owner access is adequate through the next five years...
- Phase 2 - At the end of Phase 1...a small boat harbor and landing barge shall be built south of Whiskey Cove. Access to the uplands shall be provided...In conjunction with the construction of the landing barge abutment, there will be a staging area constructed to serve the needs of the residents...
- Phase 3 – As lots are developed along the country lane, a saturation point will eventually be reached...At that time, an additional small boat harbor with a shuttle ferry ramp will be constructed...Whiskey Cove and Bald Head Cove are the preferred sites for these transportation improvements provided there are no overriding engineering considerations...

Hard access by a bridge or tunnel from Pennock to Gravina Island is not envisioned in the foreseeable future and, in light of the rural characteristics of the neighborhood, should not be pursued. Hard access and its possible location is of concern to the community as a whole and should be determined by a borough-wide vote.”

Community Facilities and Services

The right services and facilities can allow a community to live “comfortably, safely, economically, and if desired, conveniently.” Many of the existing facilities and services were outlined in the neighborhood plan:

- **Water Resources** - The Pennock/Gravina neighborhood has very limited domestic water sources in terms of quantity, availability, and quality...Currently, little or no upland development exists. Any development of the uplands will require that the sewage systems provided preserve water quality.
- **Sewage Disposal** – Water quality and sewage disposal are irrevocably intertwined in a rural setting...Any development of the uplands will require that sewage systems provided preserve water quality...Prior to the disposal of public lands within the neighborhood, an updated, site-specific soils study should be undertaken.

- **Electrical and Telephone Service** – Electrical and telephone facilities are reaching a point where increased capacity is needed to even meet the present demand. Any further development in the neighborhood would immediately stretch the existing services beyond their capabilities...Prior to the disposal of public lands, investigations should be undertaken to assess present demands and future needs, and to consider the development of facilities which would be sufficient to meet these requirements.
- **Schools and Educational Opportunities** – There are no school facilities in the neighborhood at this time...The growth of today’s resident families and the impact of future development may require that consideration be given to construction of a neighborhood school.
- **Harbors** – Access to the neighborhood will continue to be by water. Therefore, harbor facilities will be developed to meet the needs of new Borough or private subdivisions...Harbor improvements should take place in the following order: Construction of a rock breakwater and the installation of docks...Development of a ‘landing barge abutment’ and suitable staging area...Development of shuttle ferry docking facilities...
- **Fire Protection** – No formal fire fighting system has been established on the islands...Development in the neighborhood will create a need for a more responsive and reliable fire fighting service, probably staffed by volunteers.
- **Cemetery Facilities** – Although there is no active use of the area for burial sites today, the historical and social impact of the existing sites is of great importance to the native community. The land use section of this plan proposes a set aside area along the southeastern and eastern shorelines and upland of these areas on Pennock Island to preserve the historical burial sites.
- **Recreation Opportunities, Facilities, and Management** – Though Pennock and Gravina are defined as a neighborhood, historical and geographical differences require that they be considered individually in terms of recreational activities and potentials...The undeveloped interior and the southwestern shoreline of the island present the most feasible areas for potential recreation sites [on Pennock Island]...Gravina [Island] has historically been a hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation area, particularly along the southeastern and encompassing Judy Hill and Blank Inlet.”

Recommendations

The following recommendations were outlined in the Pennock and Gravina Island Neighborhood Plan:

Immediate-Action Recommendations

1. “A neighborhood planning advisory committee may be formed by owners of property and residents on Pennock and Gravina Islands. This committee will be involved in the continuous planning process as it affects the area.
2. Public lands on Pennock and Gravina Islands shall be rezoned to conform to the largest lot size contained in any currently approved Ketchikan Gateway Borough Zoning Ordinance or Comprehensive Plan. Present private lands on Pennock Island are to be designated Suburban Residential (RS). Irrespective of the above, the Borough will conduct its land disposal activities in such a manner that the maximum overall densities envisioned by the plan for Pennock Island will not be exceeded.

3. Those portions of Gravina Island south of the Airport included in the neighborhood should be rezoned from future development to the land use designation on the most current Borough comprehensive plan. The remainder of the area should be preserved for hunting and recreational use until other Borough and private lands are developed.
4. Those portions of Gravina Island north of the Airport included in the neighborhood should be rezoned from future development to the largest lot land use designation on the most current Borough comprehensive plan for any particular area.
5. A cottage industry overlay zone should be created, and overlaid on residential areas in the neighborhood.
6. Only single-family structures will be permitted in all rural residential zones. Existing guesthouses will be permitted under grandfather rights.
7. The restricted mobile home zone (MHR) will apply to the neighborhood area.
8. Although hard access to Pennock Island is not desired by a majority of the current Pennock and Gravina residents, the question of hard access and location will be determined by a borough-wide vote. Ferry access will be considered on the long-term.
9. Further efforts will be made to identify and preserve native burial sites not located in the preservation area.
10. Small livestock raising for subsistence purposes is permitted throughout the neighborhood provided water quality of streams is preserved and no health hazards are created to adjacent property owners.
11. Alternative energy systems will be permitted in the neighborhood planning area with reasonable public safety protections.”

Intermediate-Range Recommendations

1. “Sewage treatment necessary to protect the neighborhood environment is required for all residences.
2. Upland access will be by light duty country lane with the minimum right-of-way width to be 50 feet and constructed width is to be a minimum of ten feet, except for wide areas for passing.
3. A boat harbor, landing barge abutment, and staging area will be constructed south of Whiskey Cove provided there are no overriding engineering considerations which would cause this location to be unfeasible.
4. Initial development of Borough lands will be done in such a manner as to promote access to private land on the south shore of Pennock Island.
5. Selection of recreational sites will be based upon site suitability studies and neighborhood desires.
6. The Borough Planning Department will develop a detailed site and facility map for Pennock Island based on the uses outlined on the planning area maps. This map will show the prospective locations for country lane and utility rights-of-way; public lands set aside for rock quarry sources; a school and a playground; and public beach, picnic, and recreational areas. A subdivision plan showing lot locations and layouts, and boat and ferry dock locations will also be included. This map will be submitted to public review for possible amendment into the neighborhood plan.”

Long-Range Recommendations

1. “Dependent upon the desires on borough property owners, ferry access will be considered during development of the second loop shown on the planning area map for Pennock.
2. When population levels warrant, consideration will be given to construction of a local elementary school on Pennock Island.”