

Gravina Access Project

Scoping Summary Report – June 2000 Supplement



Agreement No: 36893013
DOT&PF Project No: 67698
Federal Project No: ACHP-0922(5)

Prepared for:



State of Alaska
Department of Transportation and
Public Facilities
6860 Glacier Highway
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Prepared by:



HDR Alaska, Inc.
712 West 12th St.
Juneau, AK 99801

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1.0 Introduction

This document supplements the “Gravina Access Project Scoping Summary Report” prepared by HDR Alaska, Inc., in December 1999.

The Gravina Access Project scoping activities continued beyond the December 1999 issue of the scoping summary report. Since December 1999, the project team has developed crossing alternatives to include bridges, tunnels/tubes, and enhanced ferry service to meet the project purpose and need. The alternative locations have varied from Ward Cove on the north to Pennock Island on the south. The public provided input at two (January and April 2000) public meetings where the various alternatives were described in some detail. Public input shaped many of the alternatives. This “Gravina Access Project Scoping Summary Report, June 2000 Supplement,” provides a record of the continued scoping activities to obtain agency and public involvement in the project. Featured components of this report are its appendices: Appendix A contains correspondence regarding the project’s purpose and need statement; Appendix B contains copies of project newsletters; Appendix C contains copies of pages from the project website; Appendix D contains a compilation of frequently asked questions and responses; and Appendix E contains all pertinent correspondence, both incoming and outgoing, public and project team meeting summaries, and materials distributed to the public at meetings

In addition to copies of project correspondence, this report includes two tables. The first presents a chronology of scoping activities, which includes all activities undertaken since the December 1999 issue of the scoping summary report through the end of June 2000. The second table is an update of “Table 4-1: Issues Submitted” that appeared in the December 1999 scoping summary report.

2.0 Summary of Scoping Activities

Table 1 documents all the activities undertaken by the project team since publication of the December 1999 version of the scoping summary report. The intent of these activities was as follows: to solicit public input; to obtain agency concurrence on the project purpose and need; to develop and refine the project alternatives; and to scope and begin environmental fieldwork. Table 1 lists these activities in chronological order.

Scoping activities since December 1999 have included numerous meetings with federal, state, and local agencies, elected officials, and private organizations, as well as two public meetings (i.e., January 27 and April 12) and four Project Development Team meetings (i.e., January 11 and 26, April 11, and May 16). During many of these meetings, the Project Team would provide a presentation of the alternatives (which in some cases included a three dimensional computer simulation depicting the alternatives) and then request information and input pertaining to the existing resources that could be affected by the alternatives. The Project Team also consulted with resource agencies during these meetings to review the methodology of the impact analysis and identify previous studies of the area or specific resources. In some cases, comments provided by agencies and individuals would help identify environmental and land use constraints that could affect the development of an alternative.

At a recent Project Development Team meeting (May 16), 18 alternatives were under consideration in addition to the No Action alternative. These “build” alternatives include two high level bridge options in the Ward Cove area, four high level bridge options and two tunnels/tube options in the vicinity of the airport terminal, a low level bridge option and a moveable bridge option near the airport, four alternatives combining high and low-level bridges or bridge/tunnel combinations at Pennock Island, and four options for increased ferry service.

Table 1. Chronology of Recent Scoping Activities (January 1 through June 30, 2000)

Date	Activity	Location	Project Team Member(s)
1/04/00	Meeting regarding crossing alignment and fish and wildlife issues	Ketchikan	Klugherz
1/10/00	Discussion with Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) regarding wetlands, Lewis Creek drainage, estuaries, shorebirds	Gravina	Boggs, Leggett
1/11/00	Project Development Team meeting	Ketchikan, Anchorage, Juneau	PDT members, Project Team
1/12/00	Discussion with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding wetland types in the project area	Ketchikan	Boggs, Leggett
1/13/00	Discussion with ADF&G regarding background information on seabird populations in Tongass Narrows	Ketchikan	Reich
1/13/00	Discussion with USFWS regarding background information on seabird populations in Tongass Narrows	Ketchikan	Reich
1/13/00	Discussion with U.S. Forest Service (USFS) soil scientist regarding wetland functions	Ketchikan	Leggett
1/13/00	Discussion with USFS Ecologist regarding wetland functions/assessment methods	Ketchikan	Leggett
1/17/00	Meeting with Ketchikan International Airport Manager, Tim Garton	Ketchikan	Springer
1/19/00	Preliminary alternatives discussion with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)	Anchorage	Kyle, Hippe, SlatonBarker
1/20/00	Presentation to Senator Murkowski	Ketchikan	Klugherz
1/##/00	Public service announcement for 1/27/00 Public Meeting	Ketchikan	Brooks
1/23/00	Public meeting advertisement in Ketchikan <i>Daily News</i>	Ketchikan	N/A
1/24/00	Meeting with USFS regarding timber harvest on Gravina and within Ketchikan Ranger District	Ketchikan	Klugherz, Burden
1/24/00	Discussion with Alaska Ship and Drydock	Ketchikan	Burden
1/25/00	Meeting with Steve Seley regarding sawmill	Ketchikan	Klugherz, Burden
1/25/00	Discussion regarding property on Gravina Island	Ketchikan	Klugherz, Burden
1/25/00	Meeting with Assistant City Manager	Ketchikan	Klugherz, Burden
1/26/00	Meeting at Ketchikan Hospital discussing hospital issues	Ketchikan	Klugherz, Burden
1/26/00	KGB Assessor’s Office meeting discussing property value	Ketchikan	Klugherz, Burden
1/26/00	Discussion with Assistant Borough Manager regarding economic issues	Ketchikan	Klugherz, Burden
1/26/00	Project Development Team meeting	Ketchikan, Anchorage, Juneau	PDT members, Project Team
1/27/00	Public meeting to present project alternatives. Two meetings held: an a.m. meeting at 11:00 and a p.m. meeting at 5:00. Presentations at 12 noon and 6:00 p.m.	Ketchikan	Project Team, Public

Date	Activity	Location	Project Team Member(s)
1/27/00	KRBD radio interview	Ketchikan	Dalton, Brooks, Kyle
1/27/00	Public comment period following January public meeting (January 27 through March 17, 2000)	--	N/A
1/29/00	Presentation of project status to Senator Frank Murkowski and staff during his meeting with Ketchikan Gateway Borough.	Ketchikan	Klugherz
2/1/00	Discussion with USFS regarding wetland functions and wildlife using wetlands	Juneau	Leggett
2/1/00	Telephone interview with Gateway City Realty discussing housing market and general economy	Ketchikan	Klugherz
2/1/00	Interview with Tongass Realty concerning commercial and residential rental market	Ketchikan	Klugherz
2/1/00	Interview with Mayor of Metlakatla regarding economy	Ketchikan	Klugherz
2/2/00	Miscellaneous notes on wetland functions	Juneau	Leggett
2/2/00	General discussion with USFS Research Lab regarding wetland functions	Juneau	Leggett
2/2/00	Interview with AK State Parks ranger regarding access to visitor data in area	Ketchikan	Klugherz
2/3/00	The president of Gateway Forest Products interview regarding the timber industry in Ketchikan	Ketchikan	Klugherz
2/3/00	Interview with Executive Director of Ketchikan Visitors Bureau about the state tourism industry in Ketchikan	Ketchikan	Klugherz
2/07/00	Discussion with Ketchikan Indian Corporation Tribal Council	Ketchikan	Klugherz
2/10/00	Project update to the Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee	Ketchikan	Klugherz
2/26/00	Gravina Access Project Newsletter Volume 3 published as insert in <i>Ketchikan Daily News</i> weekend edition February 26, 27, 2000. "Gravina Access Project Public Meeting Unveils Access Options"	Ketchikan	N/A
3/13/00	Meeting on Gravina planning efforts and secondary and cumulative impacts with Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR), USFS, Ketchikan Gateway Borough (Borough), Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), and Steve Planchon (TLO).	Ketchikan	Dalton, McPherson, Klugherz, Hippe
3/13/00	Floatplane operator meeting to discuss access options and preliminary ideas about the potential impacts.	Ketchikan	Dalton, Hippe, McPherson, Klugherz and Peters
3/14/00	Field reconnaissance of proposed road alignment to Seley Mill site with Borough and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) staff.	Ketchikan	Dalton
3/15/00	Meeting with Kris Geldaker of Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska regarding Marine Safety Task Force input.	Ketchikan	Dalton, Klugherz
3/28/00	Meeting with John Clifton of the Tongass Narrows Work Group	Ketchikan	Dalton, Klugherz
4/4/00	Project Team briefing, Centennial Hall in Juneau for DOT&PF Project Team	Juneau	Project Team
4/4/00	Meeting with Jim Helfinstine, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) & Tim Haugh, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Juneau	Dalton, Kyle, Brooks, Hutchison
4/6/00	Presentation to the Alaska Department of Commerce, Alaska marine pilots, Alaska Marine Pilots Board	Anchorage	Dalton, Brooks, Kyle, Klugherz,

Date	Activity	Location	Project Team Member(s)
			Hutchison
4/6/00	Discussion with Grahame Burton of Princess Cruises, Bill Sharp of Holland America, and Les Cronk of Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska.	Anchorage	Klugherz, Dalton, Brooks, Kyle, Hutchison
4/##/00	Public service announcement for 4/12/00 public meeting	Ketchikan	Brooks
4/8/00	Public meeting advertisement in <i>Ketchikan Daily News</i> for 4/12/00 meeting.	Ketchikan	N/A
4/8/00	Postcard mailer to all box holders in Ketchikan area regarding 4/12/00 public meeting	Ketchikan	N/A
4/11/00	Project Development Team meeting in Ketchikan at the Ted Ferry Civic Center 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., teleconference links to Juneau and Anchorage	Ketchikan, Juneau and Anchorage	PDT Members, Project Team
4/12/00	KRBD radio interview	Ketchikan	Dalton, Brooks, Morrow
4/12/00	Public meeting to present project alternatives. Two meetings held, an a.m. meeting at 11:00 and p.m. meeting at 5:00. Presentations at 12 noon and 6:00 p.m.	Ketchikan	Project Team, Public
4/13/00	Meeting with Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee	Ketchikan	Dalton, Kyle, Brooks, Klugherz, McPherson, Reich
4/13/00	Presentation to the City of Saxman and Saxman IRA Council on the project and the issue of subsistence uses in the project area and other traditional activities on Pennock and Gravina Islands.	Saxman	Reich, Dalton
4/13/00	"HDR Presents More Gravina Options" article on electronic news page www.kanoe.com .	World Wide Web	N/A
4/15/00	Feature article in <i>Ketchikan Daily News</i> weekend edition (April 15-16, 2000): "Engineers estimate Gravina crossing costs, prices for bridge, tunnel and combination options span a range from \$63 million to \$384 million"	Ketchikan	N/A
4/15/00	Display at Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce EXPO (Two days)	Ketchikan	Klugherz
4/21/00	Alternative analysis discussion with DOT&PF's Morrow, Yost and Healy	Juneau	Dalton, Snead
4/21/00	Meeting with USCG and Capt. Winter, marine pilot	Juneau	Dalton, Snead
4/24/00	DOT&PF Commissioner project briefing	Juneau	Keen, Kyle, Dalton
4/24/00	DOT&PF Gravina Access Team alternatives evaluation discussion	Juneau	Dalton, Garber, Keen, Kyle
4/25/00	Project briefing at Metlakatla	Metlakatla	Snead, Dalton
5/8/00	<i>Ketchikan Daily News</i> Editorial titled "Input Sought" encouraging the public to provide input to the project team.	Ketchikan	N/A
5/10/00	Floatplane operator meeting (no operators attended)	Ketchikan	Dalton, Peters, Klugherz, Hippe
5/11/00	Presentation to Technical and Operations Committee of the North West Cruiseship Association	Vancouver, BC	Dalton, Kyle, Klugherz
5/15/00	Cruise vessel navigation demonstration (w/ Jim Helfinstine, USCG, & others)	Ketchikan	Dalton, Kyle
5/16/00	Project Development Team meeting	Ketchikan, Anchorage, Juneau	PDT Members, Project Team
5/16/00	Elected officials meeting at Ted Ferry Civic Center 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.	Ketchikan	Dalton, Keen, Kyle, Klugherz

Date	Activity	Location	Project Team Member(s)
5/17/00	Meeting with Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce Board	Ketchikan	Dalton
5/30/00	Presentation of project update to Colin Chapman, Administrative Assistant to Congressman Don Young.	Ketchikan	Klugherz
6/15/00	Meeting with Eric Hummel of Tongass Conservation Society (TCS).	Ketchikan	McPherson, Dalton
6/15/00	Meeting with Susan Dickinson, Steve Reeve, Dave Miller and Roger Healy to discuss planned taxiway improvements at Ketchikan International Airport (KIA).	Ketchikan	Klugherz, Dalton, McPherson
6/15/00	Ketchikan Pulp Company (KPC) Mill redevelopment/brownfields planning meeting.	Ketchikan	McPherson, Dalton
6/16/00	Meeting with USFS on the Gravina Timber Sale environmental impact statement (EIS) IDT to discuss coordination of study efforts, particularly the issues related to cumulative and secondary impacts analysis.	Ketchikan	Dalton, McPherson
6/19/00	Meeting with DOT&PF (Winters, Skagerberg, Moore) to discuss parallel taxiway design at KIA.	Juneau	Dalton
6/28/00	Display for Gravina Access Project located at the KIA	Ketchikan	Dalton, Klugherz

3.0 Summary of Public Comment

Public comment reached the project in many forms—via comment at public meeting, email, telephone, informal meetings, written correspondence, and as printed in the *Ketchikan Daily News*. The project team responded to the public comment when return addresses were provided. For all comment, specific issues and issue categories revealed themselves. Table 2 presents a compilation of the issues. Note that this table also includes issues contained in the December 1999 version of the scoping summary report. Comments provided between January and June 2000 are noted in italic.

Table 2. Issues Submitted (Updated June 2000)

Issue	Issue Description	Suggested Action (if any)	Opposition to Suggested Action
Airspace	Bridge would interfere with floatplane traffic <i>and create serious safety concerns for floatplane and helicopter pilots.</i>	Relocate floatplanes across Narrows; Build bridge at Pennock Island. <i>A tunnel is the only sensible solution.</i>	
Burial Grounds	Bridge construction could disturb Native burial grounds on Pennock.	Don't build bridge in burial grounds.	
Comprehensive Planning	Need long-range planning for Gravina before access is built; do planning after bridge is built; the Borough should finish what has been started.	(Note: This project will be coordinated with the Borough's Ketchikan 2020 planning efforts.)	No more planning, just build the bridge.
Cost/Benefit of Project	Project will benefit only a few; <i>possible tax increases may result. Lower level bridge merits further study.</i>	Evaluate project on basis of whole community. <i>Look at impact of cruise ships going around Pennock with low bridge option.</i>	<i>Too expensive, benefits few.</i>
Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Resources	Sensitive shoreline and intertidal habitat on Gravina should be protected; disturbed, sensitive areas should be restored; endangered species should be protected.	Protection of East Clump, Government Cr., Clam Cove, Lewis Reef, Blank Inlet, Black Sand Cove, Restoration of East Clump, Clam Cove.	
Improved Access to Airport	Need improved access to airport for medical emergencies and convenience for travelers and those dropping off or picking up passengers.	Build a hard link.	Existing access is adequate; Travel time won't be reduced by bridge or tunnel.
Job Creation	Local labor could be used in construction; development of Gravina would create jobs.		
Landfill	Solid waste is barged south.	Locate regional landfill on Gravina.	Gravina isn't place for landfill.
Maintenance	Bridge and tunnel would require maintenance. <i>Maintenance ongoing and costly.</i>	Choose option with least maintenance cost. <i>Build a tunnel.</i>	Have difficulty maintaining what exists now; the community shouldn't be burdened with taxes to pay for maintenance.
Navigation	Bridge should be tall enough for cruise ships; Tongass Narrows is congested with air and marine traffic	Build bridge to accommodate cruise ships; Congestion should be considered in design	Cruise ships can go around Gravina; Tall bridge is too expensive.

Issue	Issue Description	Suggested Action (if any)	Opposition to Suggested Action
		of alternatives; Restrict traffic in west channel to cruise ships and east channel to state ferries and private craft. <i>Construct tunnel—it provides least navigational hazard.</i>	<i>Tunnels are expensive to operate and maintain.</i>
Other Community Needs	Money could be used for other things needed by the community.	Improve Tongass Avenue, city streets, road maintenance, schools; Clean up of Ward Cove property for reuse	
Opening Land on Gravina	Hard link access would open Gravina land to various uses.	Make recreation land, golf course, residential property including Vallenar Valley, commercial/industrial development available.	No need to develop Gravina; Develop Revilla; Would destabilize property values; Lack of land on Gravina not reason why businesses aren't relocating to Ketchikan.
Roads on Gravina	Roads would provide access to Gravina lands.	Build roads to Lewis Reef development; build access roads to future commercial/industrial sites; build road to Vallenar Bay; build road along shoreline to open up areas for development.	Don't develop Gravina, put roads on Revilla.
Traffic Impacts	Traffic congestion problems occur on Revilla. <i>Connection to Gravina will alter present day traffic patterns. Connections north of Ward Cove will alter traffic patterns.</i>	Hard link would alleviate traffic flow problems; Improve road system and parking at airport. <i>Analyze traffic with alternative analysis.</i>	
Viewshed	Bridge would be an eyesore; Development on Gravina would be ugly. <i>Low bridge may alter viewshed.</i>	Build a tube or tunnel; Consider underground power lines with road projects.	
Water Quality	Declining water quality would be adversely impacted by development on Gravina.	Protect beach fringe on Gravina.	
Wetlands	Wetlands would be disturbed or destroyed by development on Gravina.	Wetlands should be protected.	Most of Alaska is wetlands; Build hard link and access roads for development.
<i>Indirect Access to Airport</i>	<i>Presently residents living both north and south of the airport do not have to do any backtracking to reach the airport.</i>	<i>Do not increase mileage to airport from current system. Keep crossing where it is.</i>	
<i>Develop Revilla not Gravina</i>	<i>Only small groups with special interests want more development on Gravina. The average taxpayer does not want to pay tax for Gravina development.</i>	<i>Develop Ketchikan. Ketchikan still has room for development.</i>	
<i>Links to Pennock</i>	<i>Potential impacts to houses and residents on Pennock Island could occur.</i>	<i>Don't build link through Pennock.</i>	<i>Building a bridge to Pennock and Gravina provides access to more land. The potential</i>

Issue	Issue Description	Suggested Action (if any)	Opposition to Suggested Action
			<i>link will be located out of town in a less congested area if built to Pennock. Also, airspace is not as congested as it is at site closer to the airport.</i>
<i>Impacts to Refuge Cove</i>	<i>Refuge Cove is primarily residential with a state park adjoining. Major traffic noise and congestion from a bridge would destroy the peaceful atmosphere that attracts people there.</i>	<i>Keep bridge away from primarily residential and recreational areas. Place it in an area more fit to the surroundings, closer to the airport and more centrally located.</i>	
<i>Toll</i>	<i>Toll would deter use of bridge, tunnel, or additional ferry.</i>	<i>Leave current system in place.</i>	
<i>Parking</i>	<i>Parking at the airport may not be sufficient.</i>		
<i>Hazardous and Flammable Material</i>	<i>The tunnel option will not accommodate transport of hazardous and flammable materials.</i>	<i>These materials could be transported by barge or ferry.</i>	
<i>Transporting Vehicles to Gravina</i>	<i>Tunnel and ferry options limit the ability to transport oversize vehicles.</i>		
<i>Connect Three Islands—Gravina, Revilla and Pennock</i>	<i>Connect all three islands, not just two. It would be better in the long run.</i>		<i>See links to Pennock Island above.</i>
<i>Development</i>	<i>Concern that building a bridge for development only when a need is not identified.</i>	<i>Use ferry service.</i>	
<i>Airport Location/Move</i>	<i>Move airport and look at useful life</i>	<i>Relocate on Pennock or North Point Higgins area.</i>	
<i>Coordination with Other Plans</i>	<i>The Gravina Access Project should be coordinated with the airport master plan.</i>	<i>Coordinate with rock removal at airport to expand runway.</i>	
<i>Future Growth</i>	<i>Make sure options accommodate future growth.</i>		
<i>Access</i>	<i>The project is about providing better access to Ketchikan Gateway Borough lands and others</i>		
<i>Operation and Maintenance Costs</i>	<i>Operation and maintenance (O & M) costs are high for the tunnel alternative.</i>		
<i>Parking</i>	<i>Issue reflects concern over parking at the airport—where? how much?</i>	<i>Free parking</i>	
<i>Community Character</i>	<i>Ketchikan has lots of character the way it is now.</i>	<i>Leave it alone. Use bridge money to subsidize the ferry.</i>	

Agency Concurrence on Purpose and Need

Project Newsletters

World Wide Web Site

The project world wide web site, www.gravina-access.com, continued to provide an avenue for agency and project personnel and the general public to access project updates. Appendix C contains a print out of the current web site. This print out is only a snapshot of the project site: web pages will change throughout the project as the project team continually updates material.

Frequently Asked Questions

**Correspondence and Meeting Notes
(organized in chronological order)**