

# **Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan 2014 Draft Angoon, Alaska / Meeting Summary**

## **Introduction**

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) issued a draft Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan (SATP) for public review in June 2014. A meeting was scheduled for Angoon, Alaska on August 13, but was cancelled due to a community water emergency. DOT&PF held the rescheduled public meeting on September 2, 2014, at lunchtime at the Angoon Senior Center.

A total of 17 people attended this meeting (see attached attendance list).

## **DOT&PF Presentation at Public Meeting**

The public meeting began with a PowerPoint presentation that reviewed:

- The DOT&PF statutory obligation to develop and maintain the Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan, as a component of the Alaska Long Range Transportation Plan. The SATP directs investment in the regional transportation system over a 20-year period, identifying current priorities, and guiding development of projects.
- The SATP was first published in 1980 and was updated and revised in 1986, 1999, and 2004 as an approved component of the Statewide Transportation Plan. To prepare the current update, DOT&PF conducted a scoping process in 2011, which led to development of the Draft SATP document in 2014.
- The comment period for this Draft SATP document is open until September 30, 2014. Written comments can be submitted to DOT&PF via email, mail, or fax.
- It was noted that there are also current National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) processes for several projects that have separate comment periods and official administrative records. These include the proposed East Lynn Canal Highway, Angoon airport, and the proposed road connection from Kake to Petersburg. Comments intended for consideration by an EIS must be submitted to the project manager of each EIS during its open comment periods.
- Trends for the Existing Transportation System – The Draft SATP analyzed and responds to trends that show a *decrease* in Southeast Alaska population, traffic on the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) and funding for transportation projects, coupled with *increases* in operations, maintenance and construction costs.

- Since 2006, AMHS southeastern Alaska annual maintenance and operation costs have increased from about \$110M to nearly \$140M, while ferry sailings have dropped from about 6,500/year to 6,000 year in that period.
  - From 1991-2012, passenger ridership has declined from approximately 370,000 to 310,000/year, with vehicle traffic holding fairly steady at approximately 100,000 vehicles/year. Over that time, the ferry fleet has increased from six to ten ferries.
- The SATP considers many factors: three aging mainline ferries, comments received on the Scoping Report, interest in continuing existing ferry routes, cost to maintain the existing transportation system, regional transportation needs, current priorities and projects, and funding forecasts.
- Alternatives – The SATP considered four options, described in more detail and compared in Appendix C of the draft plan: (1) Baseline system (maintain existing), SATP Preferred Alternative, (3) Maximize Use of Existing Roads and (4) Highway Route 7
- Recommendations – The Draft SATP recommends maintaining all existing highway and ferry routes and provides improvements that will further increase the mobility of people and goods, such as new road links. It also includes measures to help reduce some system costs, such as retirement or replacement of aging mainliners and use of day boats. It recommends the following specific changes to the transportation system, that would (1) better match capacity to demand, (2) keep ferry service to Bellingham, (3) keep cross Gulf ferry service, and (4) emphasize labor and fuel efficiency:
    - 2016 & 2017 (now 2018) – Two new Alaska Class Dayboats to service Lynn Canal
    - 2018 – Angoon Airport completed
    - 2020 – Lynn Canal Highway to Katzeihin and ferry terminal completed
    - 2020 – Haines-Skagway shuttle ferry service initiated
    - 2020 – Kake-Petersburg Road (gravel single land), Wrangell Narrows shuttle ferry, and terminals completed
    - 2025 – New mainline ferry on-line; potential for a second mainline ferry to follow
    - 2028 – Fast ferry replacement
    - 2033 – Sitka-Warm Springs Bay road initiated (planning, environmental, design). Construction is not anticipated during the 20-year planning period.
- Capital costs over the next 20 years to maintain and implement the preferred alternative total \$1.3B for system refurbishments and \$1.2B for major projects (construction, procurement), respectively. The Plan reduces the annual operation and maintenance expense of the overall regional transportation system three percent.(Noted that the preferred alternative is not the least expensive alternative to operate and maintain, as maximizing the use of existing roads or constructing Highway Route 7 would reduce annual system costs by 15% to 16%, respectively.)

- The Draft SATP document also includes information about continuing efforts to maintain and improve the transportation system in Southeast Alaska, provides an overview of the existing system, identifies undeveloped essential transportation and utility corridors in the region (App. A), describes the scoping process and public comments (App. B), compares the four planning alternatives (App. C) and provides public and government involvement plans (App. D).
- The Draft Plan recommendations would have the following impacts on Angoon: (1) new Angoon airport with IFR approach, (2) Safer and more reliable air service to surrounding communities, and (3) Continued ferry service to Juneau and Sitka

## Questions & Answers, Comments

### Key

- Comment or Question
  - ADOT&PF Response

### Angoon Airport

- The community of Angoon voted to approve the construction of an airport runway here in 1998. We've been wanting an airport for a long time. What takes so long? It's really frustrating. It has been over 50 years since planes started landing here. A Canadian mine just opened nearby; how can it can start operations so fast – does it not need to go through the same environmental review? We would like to see the construction of the Airport start by March.
  - FAA is still in the process of the EIS for the Airport. The timing for this process' completion will determine when construction can start.
- The timeline might not be what we would like, but it's good to see that design and construction of the airport are funded.
- Not everyone is happy, and not everyone comes to these meetings, but I would be very happy to see the airport built.
- Funding for the Federal Highway Trust Fund is low, and may be going away. Could funding be jeopardized for the Angoon runway as well?
  - Airport funding is more stable than the Highway Trust Fund. The FAA does not have the same funding deficit that the FHWA does.

### Freight Service to Angoon

- Angoon currently does not have a barge landing. This will be needed to transport airport construction materials.
- The barge landing is a high priority for the city. Currently the only way to ship propane tanks is by charter flight, which is very expensive. This increases the cost of fuel for residents and 95% of Angoon residents cook with propane. The City is bringing in an

engineer to re-evaluate the dock. AML has offered to provide Angoon service if there was a barge landing.

- If a barge landing were not already installed when runway construction starts, the contractor would construct it. It is common for barge landings to be installed as part of a capital project.

#### Tourists Should Not Get Higher Priority for Air Service than Angoon Residents

- Flights into Angoon are often bumped to provide service to tourists. Alaska Seaplanes has said that tourists are its top priority. We live here, and should have priority over tourists who just come here for a few hours.
- The Angoon post office has cut back its hours, this coupled with tourists getting priority has made Angoon mail service less reliable. Mail is used to order medication and for deliveries. We pay freight fees and live here; we should have priority over tourists.

#### Angoon Ferry Service

- The Alaska Marine Highway is our highway. We depend on it for transportation. Some people choose not to fly or can't fly. They rely on the ferry to travel out of town. Don't touch our ferry service!
- Does this plan include ferry service to Angoon?
  - Yes, this was an error and is now fixed, though it does not appear in this printing.
- It is inconvenient to stop in Hoonah on the way to Juneau.
- In the past, Angoon residents could use the ferry to go to Sitka in the morning and come back in the evening for shopping, going out to eat, and visiting family. This service is desired again.
- Using the LeConte as a day ferry has harmed Angoon. Could it ever provide regular service to Angoon again? If so, what time of day would it arrive?
  - Ferry scheduling is outside the scope of this plan.

#### Travel from Warm Spring Bay Ferry Terminal to Sitka

- How will people get from the Warm Spring Bay ferry terminal to Sitka, or vice versa? Many people in Angoon don't have cars and do not have a way to get to and from the ferry terminals if they are far away.

#### Kake-Petersburg Road

- Southeast Conference did an intermodal study several years ago that included use of existing roads. The Kake-Petersburg Road makes sense because it is an extension of an existing road.

#### Draft Plan 20 Year Budget

- DOT&PF appears to be spending a lot of money up front for very little savings; it doesn't make sense.
- It's hard to believe that the maintenance budget for the SATP will be as low as is stated.

## Other

- We tend to talk a lot about Angoon's declining population. Many things here are built in response to emergency needs. For example, our water system was installed as a stopgap, and intended to be temporary, but it never was replaced. We should build for our future, not for the emergencies of the present. I would encourage DOT&PF to build for a growing population here.
- The governor wanted to build roads in the past. People said no and went to Washington DC to lobby against roads. It would have been cheaper to build them then, now it is more expensive.
- This seems like a secretive meeting. It wasn't advertised. It is not a public meeting if you don't tell people about it. The only way I found out about it was that someone called me at 11:30 and told me.
  - DOT&PF did advertise this meeting with posters around town. However, there may have been some confusion after the first meeting was canceled when the city had no water.
- Elected representatives always seem to be on the side of money. When we raise the issue of Greens Creek pollution in Hawk Inlet they say the water there is 95% pure. However, the spot where water quality is measured is only five feet down while the pipes putting poison in the water are below.
- People from the lower 48, and on TV, say, "those Indians, they want everything for free." They say we have 1000s of acres of land. When Caucasian settlers came here, they were given acreage for settlement, but Alaskan Natives were only given the land under our houses.
- It would be great to see a road to Juneau across Admiralty Island.
- Will this plan increase what we pay in taxes?
  - No. The plan reduces state O&M spending on ferries.

**Draft Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan  
Attendance at Angoon, Alaska Meeting  
September 2, 2014**

**Public Meeting**

1. Alan James
2. Alberta Saleem
3. Alfred Torres Sr.
4. Alice Thomas
5. Amanda Johnson
6. Barbara Demmert
7. Barbara Oleman
8. Charlotte Washington
9. Chris Williams
10. Cynthia Ann Frank
11. D. Jim
12. Frances Daniels
13. Jesse Daniels, Councilman, City of Angoon
14. Lawrence R Jack, Sr.
15. Maxine Thompson
16. Pauline Jim
17. Wally Frank, President, Angoon Community Association

**DOT&PF Team**

Verne Skagerberg, DOT&PF  
Jamie Young, SWCA  
Sarah Bronstein, Sheinberg Associates