

**PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND/COPPER RIVER AREA
TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM**

prepared for the

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July 1998



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BACKGROUND AND METHODS

STUDY BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The study team is preparing a 20-year, multimodal, regional transportation plan for the Prince William Sound/Copper River area. This plan is part of a series of regional transportation plans being developed by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF). DOT&PF's goal is for each regional plan to serve as an elaboration of the Statewide Transportation Plan, *Vision: 2020*, that will focus on identifying projects that, over the life of the plan, will be included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Aviation Improvement Program (AIP), and Harbors Improvement Program (HIP).

The transportation plan will encompass the following transportation modes: land, air, and marine transportation. It will contain a set of recommended multi-modal transportation system improvements for addressing needs and improving the movement of people, vehicles and freight between communities within the region, and between the region and elsewhere in Alaska and outside Alaska. The plan's recommended improvements will be phased through the year 2020 and accompanied by a range of alternative financial strategies based on different levels of investment. The plan will be used by DOT&PF to guide its decisions regarding operational and capital improvements for the region.

The purpose of this Technical Memorandum is to define specific goals and objectives for transportation in the Prince William Sound/Copper River area. These goals and objectives will be used in the identification of needs and deficiencies and in the evaluation of alternatives. The goals and objectives will provide guidelines for development of evaluation criteria by which to measure the performance of the transportation system and proposed alternatives.

METHODS

Defining specific goals and measurable objectives is a critical step towards establishing a framework for the Prince William Sound/Copper River Area Transportation Plan. The draft goals outlined in this technical memorandum were developed using a collaborative process. First, consultant team members reviewed several other statewide and regional plans and synthesized them with feedback gained during the initial public outreach in the study area. Second, a workshop was held with the study team (including consultant and DOT&PF staff) and discussions were held with the study's Advisory Committee to revise and finalize the initial draft goals. The corresponding draft objectives were then developed as a series of measurable statements related to attainment of these particular goals. The study team workshop was held on February 25, 1998. Discussions with the Advisory Committee occurred by teleconference on April 3, 1998 and during the subsequent two weeks.

STUDY TEAM AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORKSHOPS

The purpose of involving the Advisory Committee in drafting the initial goals and objectives was to ensure input on issues particular to the Prince William Sound/Copper River area planning environment. Both the study team workshop and the Advisory Committee discussions centered on brainstorming and discussion periods regarding the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and constraints facing the residents and decision-makers of the Prince William Sound/Copper River area. These conversations covered a broad range of transportation issues as well as several other trends emerging throughout the region that may direct growth patterns and affect transportation in the future. The issues were not prioritized, nor do they appear in any particular order throughout this memorandum. The table on the following page summarizes the regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints as identified and agreed upon.

Background materials on the DOT&PF planning context, various example goals and objectives, and brief summaries of the existing conditions technical memorandum were also provided to all workshop participants. In particular, DOT&PF's mission statement, statewide goals, and goals and objectives from other area transportation plans were used as a guide.

Prince William Sound/Copper River Area Characteristics

Strengths

- Road connections
- Wildlife and scenery
- Wilderness
- Sportfishing
- Commercial fishing
- Cultural and historic resources
- State and federal parks
- Traditional marine access
- Established commercial ports
- Mining potential
- Unique regional character
- Diverse employment opportunities
- Forest resources

Weaknesses

- Flow imbalances (people and freight)
- High costs of goods and transportation
- Seasonal demand
- Severe weather
- Infrequent service (varies by community)
- Dependence on air travel in certain communities
- Lack of direct connections between communities
- Tourism not generating local revenue
- Cost of electricity
- Lack of economic diversification (varies by community)
- Lack of regional government
- Lack of areawide planning
- Lack of fire and emergency medical services (varies by community)

Opportunities

- SeaLife Center
- Backhaul capacity for freight
- Travel demand from outside travelers
- Marine fuel tax dedication
- Tourism
- Ecotourism
- DOT&PF capital investments in transportation infrastructure
- Large capital investment from outside developers
- Anchorage-based fish processing
- Subsistence
- Environmental group interest in Prince William Sound resource management
- Possible gas pipeline
- Whittier tunnel
- EVOS dollars
- Native corporation land ownership

Constraints

- External hub for travel (Anchorage)
- Majority state and federal land ownership
- Power cost equalization
- Lack of local tax base
- State budget cuts
- Out-of-state labor and employers
- Environmental group interest in Prince William Sound resource management
- Vertical integration of tourism facilities
- Old marine facilities
- Lack of regional government
- Resource conflicts due to Whittier tunnel
- Threat of future oil spills
- Threat of loss of biological sustainability

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

DOT&PF MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities is

to improve the quality of life for Alaskans, by cost effectively providing, operating, and maintaining safe, environmentally sound, and reliable transportation systems and public facilities. Special emphasis will be given to utilizing meaningful public participation and creating working partnerships with other entities.

For the purpose of the Prince William Sound/Copper River Area Transportation Plan, the statewide mission statement is adopted as it stands. Statewide goals and objectives on the other hand, are not specifically reflected in this memorandum because the goals and objectives developed here must be specific to the characteristics of the region to enable achievement of the same stated mission within the Prince William Sound/Copper River area.

GOAL 1: IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION CONVENIENCE

Improve the convenience of the transportation system in the region.

Objectives

1. Improve connections and scheduling between transportation modes to reduce waiting times
2. Implement faster modes of transportation to reduce the time required to travel between communities
3. Improve connections between communities when it is warranted by both need and community support
4. Provide mechanisms for the dissemination of current travel information so travelers can plan more convenient trips
5. Involve communities and stakeholders at all stages of schedule development for the AMHS

GOAL 2: ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM EFFICIENCY

Provide regional transportation facilities and services in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible

Objectives

1. Provide missing intermodal links which would enhance the efficiency of the transportation system

2. Minimize transportation system directional flow imbalance by identifying means to exploit backhaul potential
3. Improve connections and scheduling between transportation modes
4. Maximize occupancy/ridership per trip (“utilization factor”) on existing facilities or services
5. Encourage the use of vehicles with flexible passenger/freight interchangeability
6. Implement appropriate instrumentation and technological advancements to enhance system efficiency
7. Provide mechanisms for the dissemination of current travel information so travelers can plan their trips more efficiently
8. Build appropriate institutional relationships involving public and private sector users, providers and regulators of the Prince William Sound/Copper River area intermodal transportation system for ongoing dialogue on the efficiency of the system
9. Explore options to increase competition in the provision of transportation services in the Prince William Sound/Copper River area
10. Utilize equipment designed to serve specific travel markets in the most efficient manner
11. Use “life-cycle” financial analysis to determine the tradeoffs in capital investments to minimize on-going operating and maintenance costs
12. Utilize AMHS vessel data to identify those projects that will provide the maximum reduction to long term maintenance and operational cost
13. Identify existing facilities or services not needed in the future

GOAL 3: SECURE STABLE LONG-TERM TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Secure stable long-term funding for implementing transportation improvements and providing transportation services.

Objectives

1. Promote reliable revenue mechanisms that provide adequate funding improvements to the existing transportation system
2. Encourage a balancing of the amount of fees or revenue generated by specific facilities/services to the amount expended for the preservation, operation, and maintenance of those same facilities/services
3. Provide transportation services and facilities through local and regional partnerships that do not depend solely upon the allocation of funds through the state legislature
4. Use the Alaska Transportation Infrastructure Bank (ATIB) to provide loans to state and local governments for revenue-generating public highway projects

GOAL 4: IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND RELIABILITY

Improve the overall safety and reliability of the regional transportation system.

Objectives

1. Implement fully the national Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP).
2. Identify solutions to safety problems in aviation, i.e. through improved weather information and navigational aids for aviation
3. Implement appropriate instrumentation and technological advancements to enhance system reliability
4. Improve connections and scheduling between transportation modes to enhance travel reliability

GOAL 5: ENHANCE SYSTEM ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

Develop and maintain a regional transportation system that can effectively adapt to changing physical, economic and demographic conditions with minimum “throw away” costs

Objectives

1. Prioritize transportation improvements based on long-term needs
2. Provide opportunities for making intermodal connections
3. Review and update master plans for regional class airports on a regular basis and for other airports as needed
4. Review and update the Prince William Sound/Copper River Area Transportation Plan periodically as appropriate
5. Identify data collection needs and develop transportation system performance monitoring systems
6. Encourage the use of vehicles with flexible passenger/freight interchangeability
7. Maintain or acquire right-of-way for potential future transportation uses
8. Implement appropriate instrumentation and technological advancements to enhance system flexibility
9. Provide mechanisms for the dissemination of current travel information so travelers can plan their trips more efficiently

GOAL 6: ASSURE THE PRESERVATION OF THE NEEDED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Preserve and maintain existing transportation facilities and services which have been identified as necessary for both current and future conditions.

Objectives

1. Promote reliable revenue mechanisms that provide adequate funding for operation and maintenance of the existing and future transportation system
2. Implement institutional changes and provide training and skills development at the local government level to allow local operations and maintenance of selected transportation facilities
3. Encourage a balancing of the amount of fees or revenue generated by specific facilities/services to the amount expended for the preservation, operation, and maintenance of those same facilities/services
4. Utilize AMHS vessel data to identify those projects that will provide the maximum reduction to long term maintenance and operational cost
5. Identify existing facilities or services not needed in the future

GOAL 7: DEVELOP AND PROTECT ECONOMIC AND SUBSISTENCE RESOURCES

Provide transportation facilities and services which support regional economic vitality while maintaining the region's unique subsistence, environmental and cultural resources.

Objectives

1. Increase access where desired and needed to facilitate economic development
2. Minimize environmental impacts of the transportation network
3. Maintain environmental integrity of Prince William Sound/Copper River area and the value of wilderness areas
4. Manage access to subsistence sites
5. Improve access to marine launching sites or dock facilities
6. Develop functional access plans that reflect local plans for economic development and local residents needs
7. Use transportation infrastructure to enhance desired regional economic development
8. Include affected business interests in decisions about transportation system needs and investments
9. Encourage participation by affected businesses in the provision of transportation facilities and services

GOAL 8: PROVIDE EARLY, MEANINGFUL AND CONTINUOUS PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Proactively and continuously involve Alaskans in the entire transportation planning, design, construction, and maintenance process to ensure that policies and projects reflect public knowledge, needs, and values.

Objectives

1. Follow the revised Public Involvement Procedure for the development of statewide plans and statewide capital improvement programs
2. Involve citizens and stakeholders groups, including affected business interests, in transportation decision-making
3. Coordinate the nomination and selection of transportation projects with local governments
4. Involve communities and stakeholders at all stages of schedule development for the AMHS
5. Give priority to projects where a preponderance of public record, including a resolution from the local elected body, shows support for the project