

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Date: July 14, 2021

Kittelson Project No: 25697

To: Eric Taylor

From: Holly Spoth-Torres

Subject: Public Involvement #1 Comment Summary

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT #1 PRELIMINARY SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION:

The first round of public involvement for the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan and Freight Plan was launched on June 9, 2021. The public outreach consisted of project presentations, a survey, and a self-guided virtual public meeting. Below is more information about each outreach activity followed by the methods of advertising these activities statewide.

Self-Guided Virtual Public Meeting

A Self-Guided Virtual Public Meeting was created using the Esri Story Map format. The story map introduced the project, the project timeline and phases of public participation, an overview of the Transportation Assessment, and key trends within each transportation mode. Viewers were encouraged at the beginning and the end of the virtual public meeting to take the project survey and contact information for the project team was provided for public comments. The virtual public meeting was viewed a total of 852 times between June 9-30, 2021.

Survey

A project survey was launched on June 9, 2021, and open through June 30, 2021. During that time, 2,445 people completed the survey which consisted of 27 questions. The intent of the survey was to understand how Alaskans use transportation to access everyday necessities, such as work, healthcare, and childcare, and to see if the existing transportation network allows people to travel safely and reliably as needed. A full survey report is being developed and will be shared on the project website when it's available. A preliminary report is attached and a more detailed report summarizing key findings and trends will be prepared for the final summary.

Presentations

The project team presented at these four meetings with partner organizations: the Aviation Advisory Board Meeting on May 13, 2021; the Interior Tribal Coordination Council on May 27, 2021; the Governors Tribal Advisory Council on June 7, 2021; and the Alaska Regional Development Organizations on June 15, 2021. The project presentation used for all four meetings is attached.

In addition, there was one joint STAC and FAC meeting, one STAC meeting, and one FAC meeting that were open to the public to attend. All meeting materials and recordings of the meetings were linked on the project website after the meetings.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Email Campaigns

A Mailchimp email newsletter was sent out to 916 recipients comprised of non-metropolitan planning organization and statewide tribal contacts on June 10, 2021, announcing the survey and virtual public meeting and asking people to share those outreach materials with their networks. On June 28, 2021, a reminder email was sent to the same group of contacts reminding them to view the virtual public meeting, complete the survey, and share those materials. Those emails are attached.

The project team individually emailed other relevant partners and organizations, asking them to share the survey and virtual public meeting materials with their networks and contacts. A list of all the organizations that were emailed is attached.

In addition, an email notification was sent out using the State of Alaska's E-Gov News delivery system and members of the Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC) and the Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) were emailed and notified as well.

Fax

While the survey was open, the project team looked at the zip codes provided by respondents. A fax was sent to United States Post Office (USPS) locations in communities that didn't have a lot or any participation in the survey at that point. A flyer was faxed to 10 post offices requesting the post office advertise the survey to increase participation. A full list of the post offices that received the fax is attached.

Social Media

DOT&PF used its Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/AlaskaDOTPF/>), Twitter (<https://twitter.com/AlaskaDOTPF/>), and Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/alaska_dotpf/) to advertise the survey, virtual public meeting, and project website to its followers. The content of the posts is attached with a report on results of DOT&PF boosting those posts on Facebook to reach more followers. The department posted on June 11, June 16, and June 23, 2021. Substantive comments (comments related to the content of the LRTP/FP) are included in the Public Comment Summary section of this summary.

The first post advertising the survey was published on June 11, 2021 and was boosted from June 14-18, 2021. Between the initial publication of the post and the boost, 37,258 people were reached and there were 3,806 engagements, which is any type of interaction between the post and a user. One hundred and thirty nine people clicked the “like” or “love” button, the post was shared 134 times, there were 323 link clicks, and 37 comments. On Twitter, three people retweeted the post and 33 people on Instagram liked the post.

The second post advertising the virtual public meeting was published on June 16 and was boosted from its original publication through June 23, 2021. This post reached a total of 23,535 people and had 2,434 engagements. Fifty-six people clicked the “like” or “care” button, the post was shared six times, had 401 link clicks, and 15 comments. One person liked the post on Twitter and 14 people liked the post on Instagram.

The third post about the LRTP/FP and the project website was published on June 23 and boosted from its original publication through June 30, 2021. The number of people reached was 19,884 and it had 2,271 engagements. There were 146 “like” and “love” clicks, the post was shared 33 times, had 146 link clicks, and 15 comments. Two people liked the post and one person retweeted it on Twitter and 18 people liked the post on Instagram.

Anchorage Daily News

A public notice was posted in the Legals and Public Notices section of the Anchorage Daily News (ADN) online and three notices ran in the print newspaper on different days of the week for three weeks. The online notice was posted June 16-30, 2021, and print notice ran in the Wednesday, June 16; Thursday, June 24; and Monday, June 28, 2021, editions of the newspaper. An affidavit from the ADN verifying the placement of the public notice is attached.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Preliminary Survey Report
2. Project Presentation
3. Mailchimp Email & Reminder Email
4. Email Outreach List
5. USPS Fax List
6. E-Gov Email Notification
7. DOT&PF Social Media Posts and Boost Results
8. ADN Affidavit

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY

Below is a table of all the public comments received about the Long-Range Transportation Plan and Freight Plan from the spring 2021 project kick-off through mid-July 2021.

Date Received	Comment	Response/Resolution
Email Comments		
6/11/2021	<p>I received an email notification about the LRTP/FP update, read the PIP document and have a question.</p> <p>What is the intended mechanism for communicating with communities that are neither designated as a Non-Metropolitan Area, nor represented by an MPO?</p> <p>Specifically, AMATS only covers Anchorage Bowl and Chugiak/Eagle River, explicitly *excluding* the Turnagain Arm Communities. While FAST also only covers part of the FNSB, I see that FSNB is itself listed in Appendix D as part of the Non-Metropolitan Local Government communication process.</p> <p>I think there may be a similar issue for communities without city designation in the Unorganized Borough, e.g. Tok.</p>	<p>The non-metropolitan local official cooperative process is a specific federal requirement that is intended to ensure that the potential engagement of a particular category of local government official is not overlooked in the state's planning and programming process. However, it is not intended to substitute for DOT's regular public involvement procedure that reaches out to notify as many Alaskans as possible through a variety of methods and offer a voice to anyone who may wish to participate in the planning process.</p> <p>Other tools we are using.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Website• Public Notice• DOT's eGov Delivery System• Newspaper Listings• Social Media <p>The Huddle + DOT Communications teams are making literally HUNDREDS of additional contacts, some one-on-one, some via organizations, local community councils/neighborhood associations, etc. We are also reaching out to all legislators to provide them information that they can share with their constituents.</p> <p>The AMATS noticing process included Girdwood via the FCC notice. Not sure how you specifically received the notice, but Girdwood didn't get overlooked. Margaret and Kyle will also receive the notice with info to share.</p>

Date Received	Comment	Response/Resolution
6/15/2021	<p>Please please please continue to enhance the Parks Highway.... so that double lanes are available ALL the time.... not just "passing lane" available in 5 miles.....</p> <p>Also, increase the number of signs displaying the rule about drivers having five cars lined up behind them, must move aside, allowing those to pass.</p>	<p>Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.</p>
7/8/2021	<p>I am pleased to see that the state is once again updating the LRTP and appreciate the opportunity to provide public comment.</p> <p>The Juneau Access project concluded with a no build alternative but acknowledged that a need still exists for an improved transportation link out of Juneau. The EIS for the Juneau Access project failed to consider any alternatives using a railway connection which provides the following advantages over the ferry and highway alternatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced geographic footprint. Compared to a highway, a railroad has a reduced width and environmental disturbance along it's alignment. This in turn also reduces construction costs as less materials need to be moved.• Potential for electrification. As we move further into the 21st century climate change is an increasing concern and trains are greener for the environment than ferries and most automobiles.	<p>Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.</p>

Date Received	Comment	Response/Resolution
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential tourism generator. A railway along Lynn canal could provide a source of income to the state by catering to tourists who wish to experience this scenic route and facilitating travel from the lower 48 and central Alaska once the A2A link is complete.• Higher capacity, higher frequency, and more reliable service than ferries. A train can be designed to accommodate passenger and commercial vehicles as in the case of the Channel Tunnel connecting France and England. Separate trains can be added for freight services. To deal with winter issues, trains can be equipped with plows or rails can be elevated more cost effectively than a highway.• Reduced operating costs. Rail transport is more cost effective than ferry or highway transportation methods as fuel, staffing, and maintenance requirements are less.	
	<p>Completion of this link would finally connect our capitol city to the road network and provide access to a vast range of users. Service could also be expanded to other Southeast communities by simply laying more tracks. Some fjord crossings in the Southeast may require pontoon bridges but there is already significant experience constructing these structures in the United States (particularly WA).</p>	

Date Received	Comment	Response/Resolution
	<p>I ask that you please include future consideration for constructing more railway links within Alaska that could help make our state a transportation leader in the nation and encourage significant economic growth and opportunity.</p>	
<p>Phone Comments</p>		
<p>4/20/2021</p>	<p>Called in response to having listened to the STAC/FAC meeting recording. Key questions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is on the FAC? • What is the process for engagement of the FAC? • How AMATS help prepare members and support the LRTP/FP? • Is the LRTP/FP team aware of the Turnagain Community Council's concerns about truck traffic on West Northern Lights Blvd? • How will the public survey be distributed? 	<p>The Statewide FAC includes members from the AMATS FAC so we do not anticipate additional presentations to just the AMATS FAC. The focus is statewide freight and the intra-modality of the system.</p> <p>For the next FAC meeting, we will discuss goals for the Statewide system, and we are asking for our partner agencies to help distribute the survey. Anything AMATS can do to help facilitate the conversations would be appreciated. As new opportunities come up, we will reach out. We also plan to interview AMATS as part of the process to gain additional insights.</p> <p>Yes, we are aware of the history of truck traffic and West Northern Lights Boulevard. Because this is statewide plan we will be focusing on statewide concerns related to moving freight to the extent possible.</p> <p>Survey distribution will take advantage of existing list serves like Community Councils, Tribal organizations, and depend on our STAC/FAC and planning partners to get the word out.</p>

Date Received	Comment	Response/Resolution
6/1/2021	I'm calling from Anchorage just to share that I hope that the long Range transportation plan for the State includes building out electric vehicle infrastructure along the road system, including Level 3 DC direct, current fast chargers, in a bunch of places, so I'm hoping that you can include this comment into your planning efforts and basically make this a top priority for the near and long term transportation efforts.	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.
Social Media Comments		
6/14/2021 Post 1	You would go Multimodal.	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.
6/15/2021 Post 1	Kill the ferry and go into shipping and benefit all Alaska not just panhandle	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.
6/16/2021 Post 1	Road to Nome?	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.
6/16/2021 Post 1	Hopefully it encourages the state to maintain the Alaska Marine Highway system.	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.
6/17/2021 Post 2	Strong and sustainable like the parks highway and KGB? (This is not a jab at the workers this is a jab at the people in charge that continue to pull money from DOT and shut down camps to pad their resumes and say "look at all the nothing that happened under my control!")	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.

Date Received	Comment	Response/Resolution
6/18/2021 Post 1	I took the survey, but the questions don't completely address our situation during the past year when Southeasterners couldn't rely on the ferry or drive to/through Canada.	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.
6/18/2021 Post 1	Offset the cost of rural air service. That's the most reliable form of transportation in rural communities and unfortunately also the most expensive.	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.
6/18/2021 Post 1	Look at airships. They can travel anywhere without a lot of infrastructure . They could solve Southeast and village transportation and freight concerns.	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.
6/24/2021 Post 3	Who the hell can actually afford the ferry?	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.
6/24/2021 Post 3	We need a statewide Complete Streets Policy.	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.
6/25/2021 Post 3	We need an affordable train system, for people to commute between Anchorage, Wasilla and Palmer. It would greatly reduce the traffic on the hi-way during peak hours.	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.
6/27/2021 Post 3	Villages need state of the art boardwalks like the ones boardwalks easements to the village airports. Snow drift and flood proof high and dry in winter and summer. Put that into STIP KA?	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.

Date Received	Comment	Response/Resolution
6/28/2021 Post 3	Maybe lower the price for ferry system should cut Alaska residents a break.	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.
6/28/2021 Post 3	SE will be totally left out of the "discussion ", but we will end up paying for the transportation cost 'up North"	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.
6/28/2021 Post 3	Get rid of ferry move into shipping n drop cost of living in Alaska for everyone n not just coastal town.	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.
6/29/2021 Post 3	Living in teller and nome being a 72 mile drive...the road sucks on our end. Ugly bumps n comes all over. It needs major work. I get around town on foot but when I did have a ride I've lost (by them breaking on the bumps) water buckets and groceries due to all the pot holes.	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We will consider your comments in the development of the plan.