

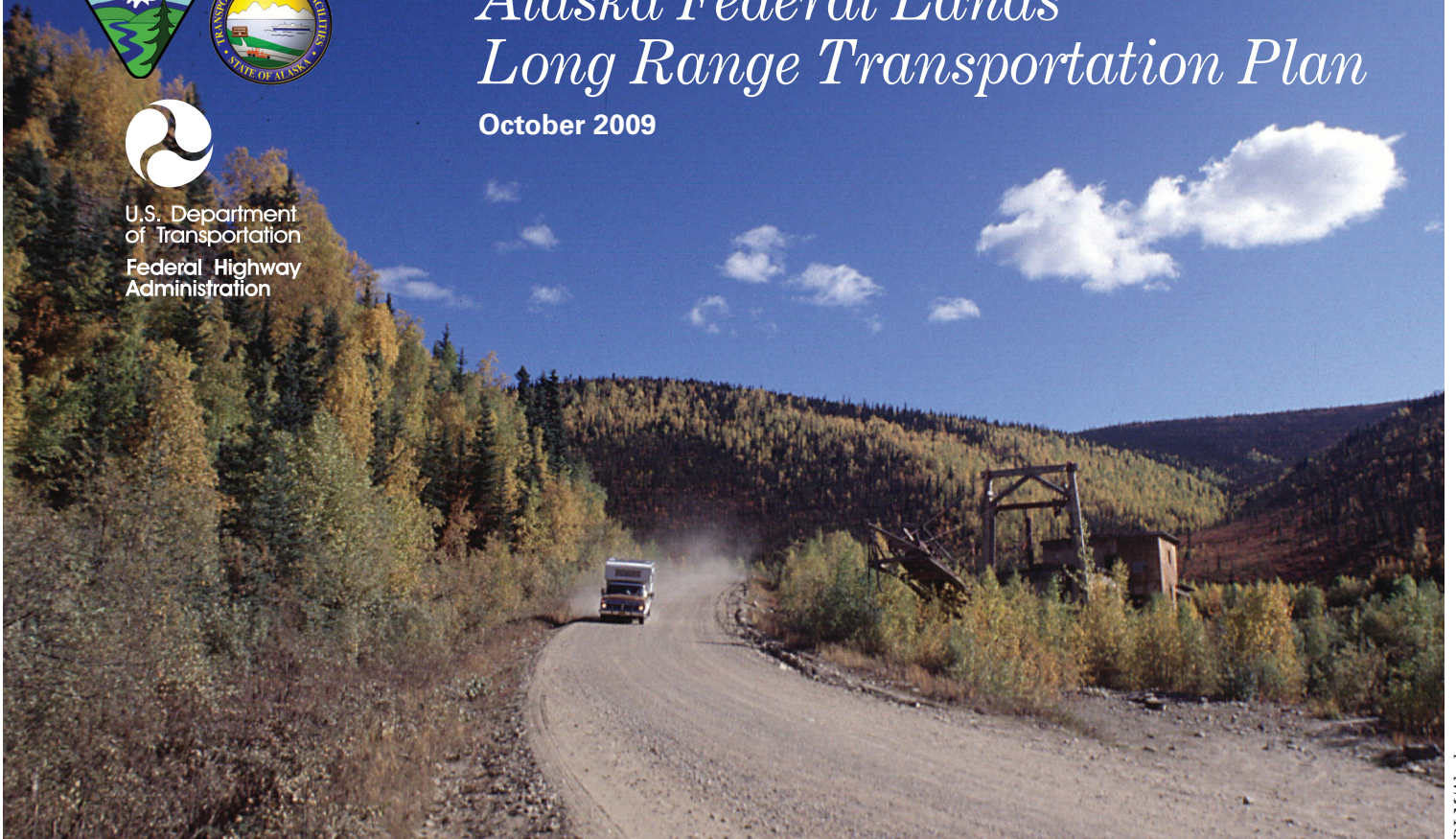


U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Highway
Administration

Planning Update 1

Alaska Federal Lands Long Range Transportation Plan

October 2009



BLM/Alaska

Pioneering Planning Effort

Federal land management agencies in Alaska (National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management) together with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) are undertaking a pioneering effort to develop a multi-agency long range transportation plan (LRTP) for Federal lands in the state. This plan will facilitate the identification and prioritization of needed transportation improvements.

This LRTP is being developed to help Federal land managers and the ADOT&PF make better funding decisions for transportation facilities that provide access to and within public lands in Alaska. This document will not identify specific projects for implementation or suggest changes in the way Federal lands resources are managed. Rather, it will serve as a tool to collectively engage the various agencies

on how they can work together to set statewide transportation priorities and leverage funds to meet transportation needs for Alaska's Federal lands.

This regional, multi-agency approach to long range transportation planning is the first of its kind, and will serve as a demonstration project for region-level transportation planning. It will also bring Alaska Federal lands into compliance with Federal legislation requiring all Federal land management agencies to conduct long range transportation planning, and put into place a defensible structure for sound transportation planning and decision-making.

Although often overlooked, Alaska's multimodal transportation system provides critical links to connect local residents and visitors with their Federal lands and, in many cases, provides critical links for inter-village travel and subsistence use. Understanding the

connection between transportation and conservation, the Alaska Federal land management agencies have established mission, goals, and objectives to serve as benchmarks for evaluating improvements to the transportation system as part of this LRTP. Together with an understanding of existing transportation infrastructure deficiencies in the state of Alaska, this plan will enable agencies, individually and collectively, to make better decisions regarding the most critical needs.

At a time when resource and infrastructure funding is scarce, this LRTP will provide leaders with a toolkit to use in working with local communities, native tribes, and other Federal land management agencies, many of whom could potentially contribute funding or in-kind services to advance priority projects.

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Mission of the Long Range Transportation Plan

To implement a regional long range transportation plan that fulfills Alaska Federal land management agencies common strategies for transportation enhancement while remaining compatible with individual land management agency missions in partnership with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

System Preservation: Develop a long-term transportation system to satisfy current and future land management needs.

Visitor Experience: Proactively enhance the Alaskan multimodal transportation system experience and connectivity.

Mobility: Provide safe, efficient, sustainable, affordable, and agency-appropriate access to and through Federal lands.

Environment: Protect and enhance natural and cultural resources through comprehensive transportation planning and management

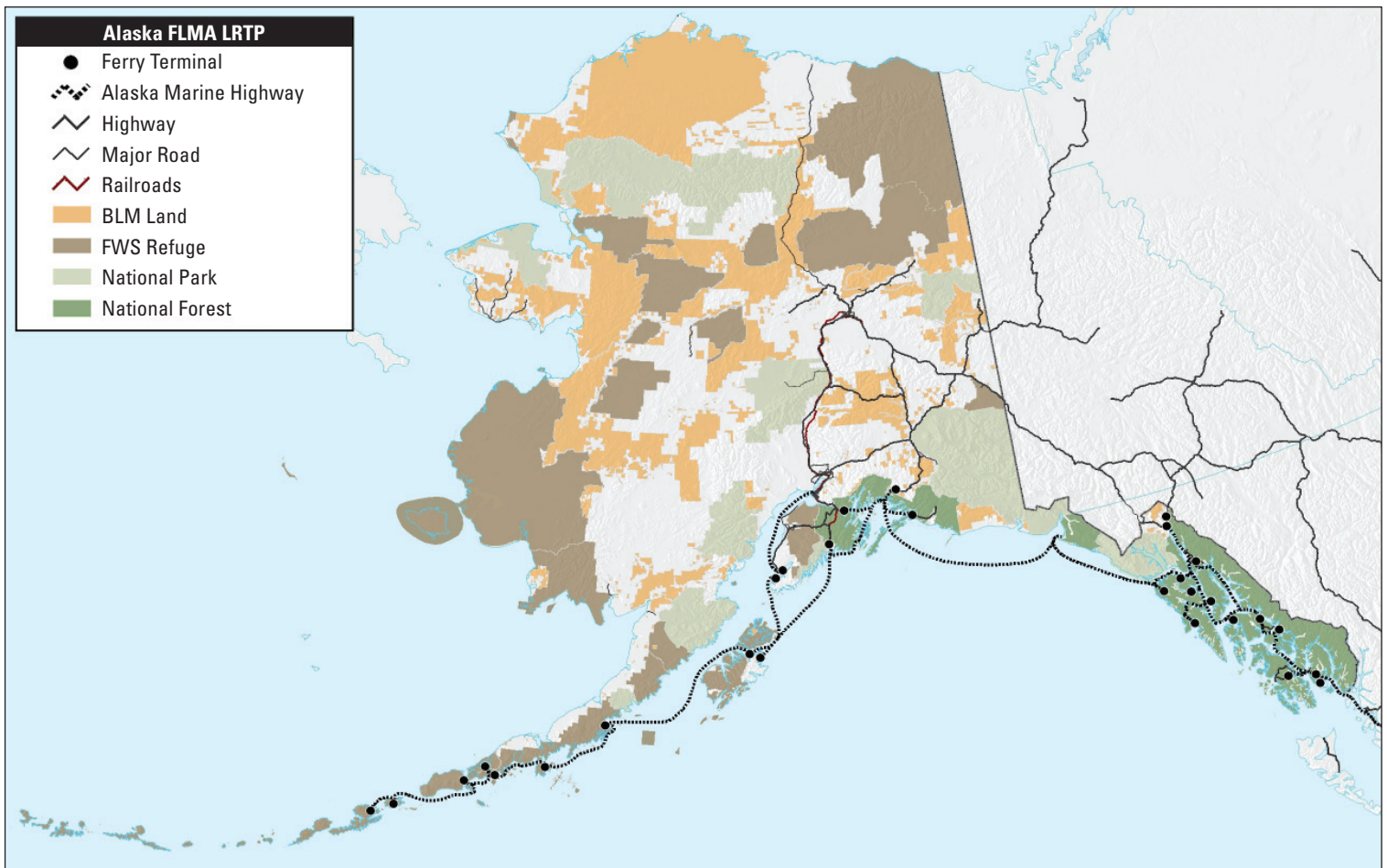
Pioneering Planning Effort

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In addition to those mentioned previously, the LRTP brings multiple benefits to Alaska’s Federal lands.

LRTP Benefits

- Enables Alaska Federal land managers to make informed decisions based on long term transportation mission, goals, objectives, and performance measures.
- Provides a holistic and long-term view of transportation in relation to core operations and other programs and priorities such as asset management, deferred maintenance, resource protection, visitor services, and the visitor experience.
- Enables Alaska Federal land managers to direct funding to the most beneficial and highest priority transportation projects.
- Enables Alaska Federal land managers to synchronize transportation planning with individual unit-level travel management and resource management plans, and other planning efforts in small communities, tribal governments, other Federal land management agencies, and stakeholder agencies outside Federal land boundaries.
- Provides current data on multimodal transportation issues and needs across the region.
- Provides an opportunity for Alaska Federal land units to partner and discuss areas of mutual interest with the public and regional entities such as minimizing carbon footprint, alternative transportation systems, and transportation systems linkages.
- Provides Alaska Federal land managers with a better picture of future transportation needs and information for discussion regarding reauthorization of Congressional transportation legislation.



Alaska's Multimodal Transportation Network

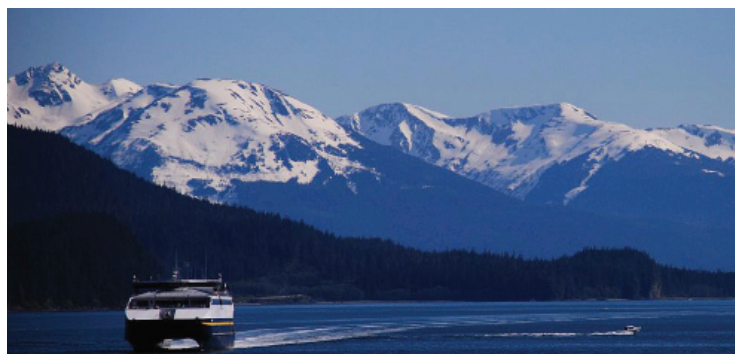
Multi-modal transportation refers to the diversity of choices and necessities for linking people and goods. Multi-modal transportation is a particularly important factor for regional accessibility, travel opportunities to and through Alaska's Federal public lands, and reflecting the state's economic potential for growth. More than anywhere else in the United States, Alaska depends upon a mix of highway, rail, and most importantly, marine and air connections to meet its transportation needs. This expansive and remote state faces many unique challenges in doing so, including:

- Significant diversity of population density
- Great distances between remote communities
- Diversity of cultural and societal norms from subsistence to urban livelihoods
- Variety of land use interests from resource extraction to wilderness protection
- Complex geophysical features specific to arctic and subarctic environments
- Climatic constraints, particularly seasonal temperature fluctuations and accumulation of precipitation in its many forms
- High transportation infrastructure and maintenance costs

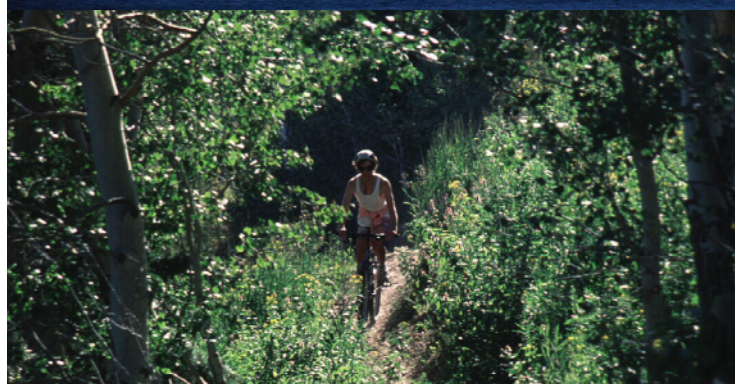
Considerable differences between trip purposes, linkages, and vehicle size can occur among various travel modes, as shown by the following examples related to travel to or within Alaska's Federal lands:

- Visiting tourists and residents use a combination of their own or rented vehicles aboard ferries and on roads, or interchangeably transfer from aircraft to rail, water, or bus transit on a single trip
- Native Alaskans depend upon animal- or gasoline-powered travel modes between villages and hunting grounds for subsistence uses
- A single seaport can be a common launching point for a tourist exploring nearby coastal shores by sea kayak, a local fishing boat, or a large international cruise ship

With respect to the Federal land management agencies, all of these elements can play a part in determining the role that multi-modal transportation opportunities can provide for visitors, agency staff, and other non-recreational users such as contractors and concessionaires. Establishing priorities for their use and encouragement, along with the costs of doing so from construction to system preservation is one of the many functions of the analyses performed for this LRTP.



Andrei Taranchenko



BLM



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Stakeholder Outreach

An important aspect of this LRPT is to conduct outreach with the public to identify how access and travel is achieved through Alaska's Federal public lands. Because these lands are accessed by a variety of transportation modes, this plan will attempt to identify priorities from the public that can be used to leverage funds where common interest exist. This is especially important for future efforts that could not be completed through single funding sources or without partnerships.

Outreach strategies for this LRTP will include:

- Distributing planning update newsletters to select stakeholders at key milestones
- Distributing e-blasts with update information on the planning process at key milestones
- Conducting outreach meetings with select stakeholders via face-to-face meetings and web-conferences
- Conducting brief presentations at scheduled agency and community meetings
- Providing updates on planning milestones on a centralized website

- Providing portions of the draft document for key stakeholder review and comment
- Collecting comments on the planning process and document on a centralized website

Due to the geographic size and diversity of the state of Alaska and its transportation network, traditional public involvement efforts will be modified to achieve meaningful input from stakeholders through a variety of media and events. Stakeholders for this planning effort will include Anchorage and Fairbanks metropolitan planning organizations, tribal governments, communities and villages, local interest groups, and the Alaska tourism industry.



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