

House Transportation Committee

Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

ATLAS

Alaska Trails and Local Access Systems

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KEEP ALASKA MOVING

Purpose of the Briefing

- How ATLAS fits into statewide transportation
- Importance of seasonal infrastructure for rural access and safety
- Current funding, demand, and program constraints
- Areas where legislative support can strengthen delivery

ALASKA TRAILS AND LOCAL ACCESS SYSTEMS

A VITAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK FOR ALASKANS

ATLAS: Expanding Transportation Beyond Roads

- A statewide transportation system built on trails and seasonal routes
- Serves communities not connected to the road system
- Supports access to healthcare, subsistence, and economic activity
- Implemented through state, tribal, and local partnerships

Core Programs:

- Multi-Use Trails
- Ice Roads & Seasonal Routes
- Winter Trail Marking
- Snow Trails



Multi-use trails for recreation and access.

Why ATLAS Matters

- Provides essential transportation in roadless regions
- Connects communities to healthcare, schools, and services
- Supports subsistence and local economies
- Improves safety and emergency response



Statewide Impact



ATLAS Program Overview

MULTI-USE TRAILS



Year-round Trail Infrastructure and improvements

ICE ROADS + SEASONAL ROUTES



Ice Road construction connecting communities

WINTER TRAILS



Safety infrastructure for navigation and emergency response

SNOW TRAILS



Groomed winter trails maintained by local partners

Multi-Use Trails: Recreational Trails Program (RTP)



- Federal reimbursement grant program
- Funds construction, maintenance, and safety improvements
- Supports both motorized and non-motorized uses
- Recently transferred to DOT&PF (Administrative Order 361)
- High demand statewide; competitive funding process

Multi-Use Trails: Program Evolution and Oversight

Pre-2025 → Administered by DNR*

Oct 2025 → Administrative Order 361 transfers to DOT&PF

2026 → First cycle under DOT&PF

Ongoing → Integration into statewide transportation planning

Alaska Recreational Trails Advisory Committee (ARTAC)

- Federally required advisory committee
- Represents motorized, non-motorized, and diverse users
- Provides recommendations on project selection
- Ensures transparent, community-informed decisions

*Department of Natural Resources

Alaska Recreational Trails Committee (ARTAC)

The ARTAC provides guidance on Multi-Use Trail implementation, keeps decision making inclusive and community driven, and ensures representation from diverse user groups.



ARTAC ensures decisions reflect real-world user needs across Alaska

Craig Compeau (Motorized)

Jennifer Yuhas (Diversified)

Lee Hart (Non-Motorized)

Lisa Agnew (Diversified)

Jeff Collins (Diversified)

Terry Valentine (Diversified)

Allie Sargent (Search and Rescue)

Ice Roads & Seasonal Routes

- Seasonal ice roads connecting remote communities
- Typically led by tribes and local governments
- ~750 miles of ice roads anticipated (2025/2026)
- First significant federal funding secured
- Provides lower-cost alternative to air travel



Kuskokwim Ice Road sponsored by Napaimute. March 2025

Winter Trail Markings



Trail marker near Ekwok, March 2024

- Installs high-visibility markers along winter routes
- Improves navigation and traveler safety
- Supports search and rescue operations
- Partnership model: DOT&PF (design/permitting) and local installation
- Applications are open and demand is growing

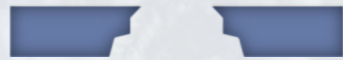
Snowmachine Trails (Snow Trails)

- Groomed winter trails maintained by local nonprofits
- ~1,650 miles of trails supported annually
- Funded through registration fees and state support
- Multi-use: snowmachines, skiers, dog teams, recreation
- Demand exceeds available funding



Grooming operations March 2025

Key Challenges



Funding Gaps

Demand exceeds available funding across all ATLAS programs



Federal Match Requirements

Match requirements can limit participation for rural communities



Equipment & Capacity

Limited equipment and workforce for ice road construction



Program Growth & Staffing

Expansion requires additional capacity to support delivery and oversight

Opportunities for Legislative Support



- Support stable funding for ATLAS programs
- Reduce barriers to participation for rural communities
- Invest in equipment and local capacity for project delivery
- Continue integrating ATLAS into statewide transportation planning

What Success Looks Like

- Connected communities across Alaska
- Reliable access to essential services
- Improved safety for travelers and responders
- Cost-effective expansion of the transportation system

Thank You.

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