House Transportation Committee

Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

Katherine Keith PMP, PMI-ACP, Deputy Commissioner
Craig Tornga, Marine Director
Chris Goins, P.E., Southcoast Director

Alaska Marine Highway Advisory Board (AMHOB)
and Cascade Point Ferry Terminal Updates
February 5, 2026

KEEP ALASKA MOVING

Alaska Marine Highway Advisory Board
Recommendations

April 2025

- Five Year Economic Analysis
- M/V Matanuska Retirement from Revenue Service
- Waterfall Funding Model
- Tribal and Alaska Native Corporation Partnerships

Endorsements

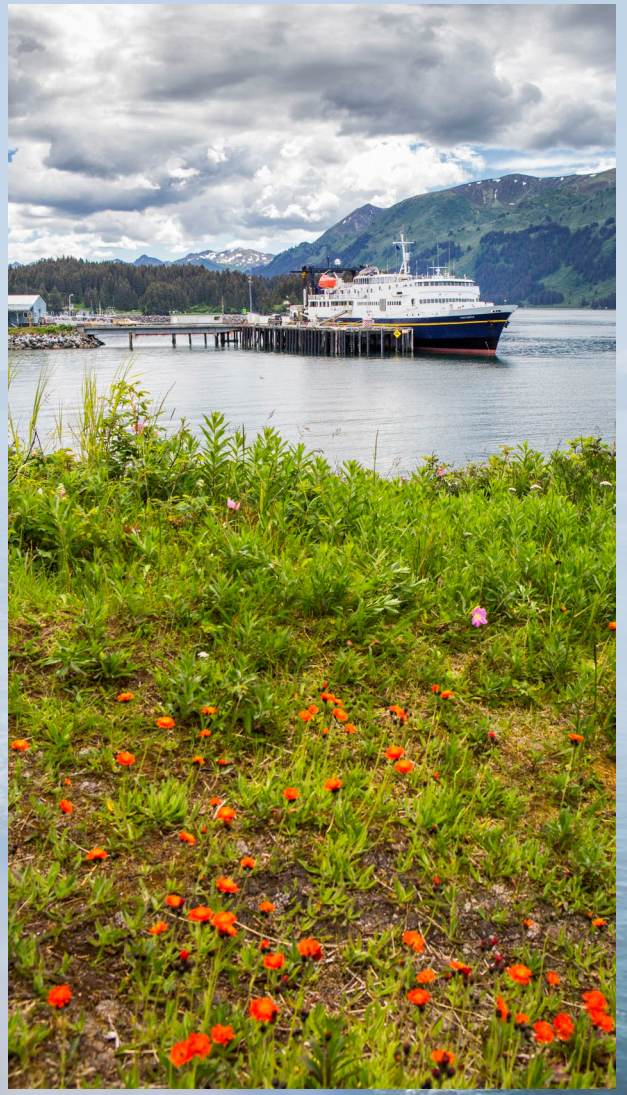
- AMHS System 2045 Long Range Plan

July 2025

- Alignment of Planning Processes
- Ketchikan Boatyard
- Waterfall Funding Model
- AMHS Connection To and Through Canada

October 2025

- AMHOB findings and request to reconsider investment in Cascade Point



AMHS 2045 Long Range Plan
Recommendations

Fleet Renewal – Construct six new vessels and maintain a fleet of eight for more reliable service.

Terminal Upgrades – Improve infrastructure to support vessel interchangeability and reduce service disruptions.

Workforce Development – Recruit new crew members, offer maritime scholarships, and create career growth opportunities.

Financial Efficiency – Develop a sustainable fare policy, explore additional revenue sources, and improve budget planning.

2022
Project Launch

2022-24
Data Gathering & Conditions Analysis

2024
Service Scenario

2025
Draft Report

2025
Fall: Complete

AMHS Long Range Plan Public Engagement

Representing 68 Communities

2,630 Community Survey Responses

450 Total Public Comments

5 Scenario Development Workshops

29 Business Interviews Conducted

6 AMHOB Meetings

3 Presentations at Conferences

3 Virtual Open Houses

5 Rounds of Ferry Focus Groups

Key Feedback

- **Reliability** is the primary concern.
- Earlier schedule releases would better support trip **planning**
- A schedule that better supports **weekend trips** between Alaskan communities would be beneficial
- The ferry plays a crucial role in the operations of many Alaskan businesses.
- Attendees of important **cultural gatherings** rely on the ferry as an affordable option
- The ferry is a **lifeline** to otherwise isolated communities

2004 Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan (SEATP)

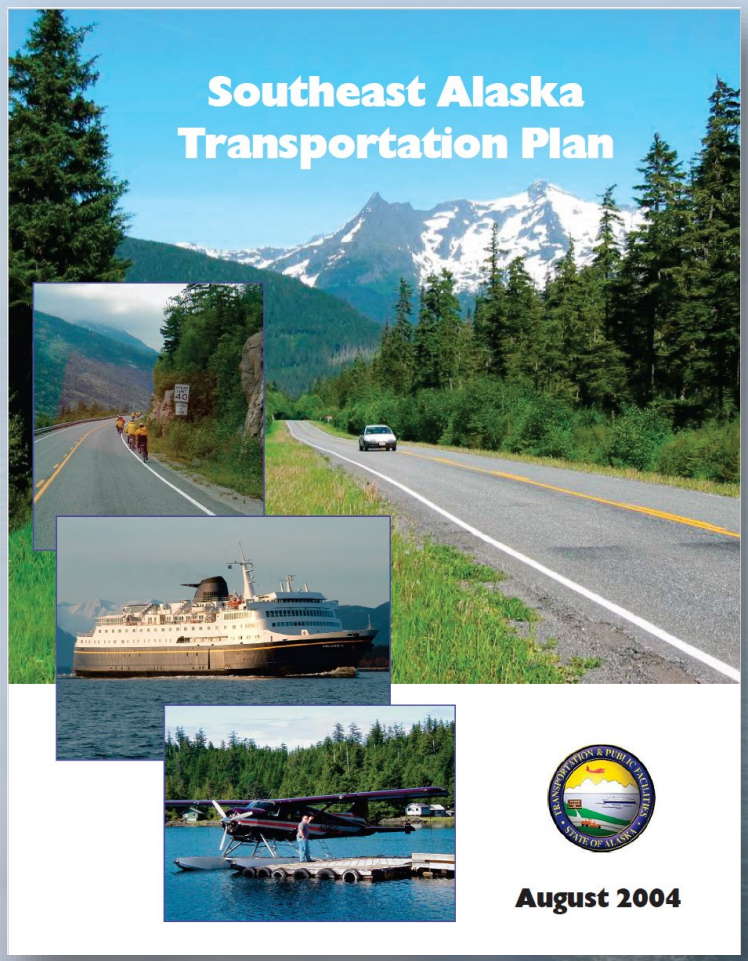
"To increase system capacity and improve efficiency, shift from a surface network that is based on long-distance ferry runs to a surface network that relies on land highways to connect communities." - (2004 Plan Mission Statement)

How Roads Reduce Alaska Marine Highway System Operating Costs
(2004 Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan)

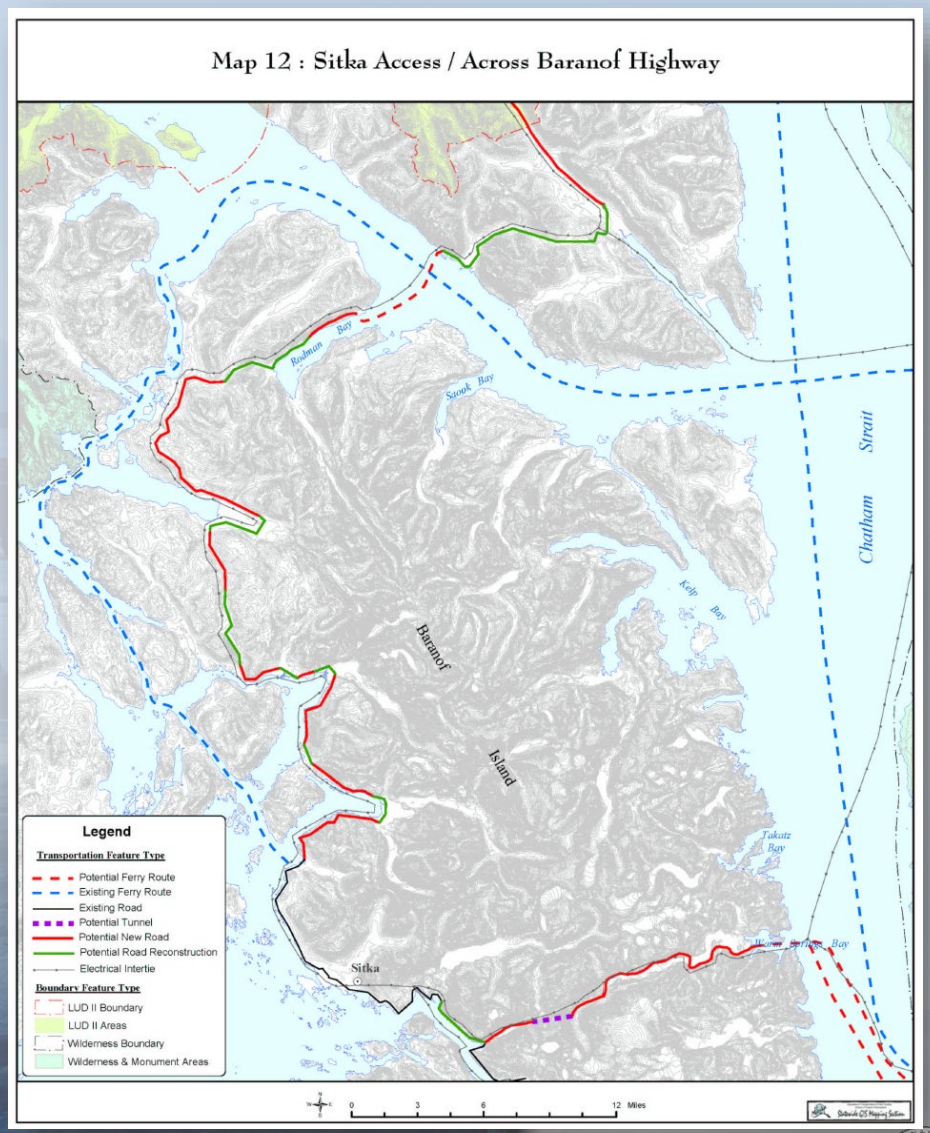
The plan explicitly called for using ferries only to bridge unavoidable water gaps. shifting from long-distance ferry runs to a surface network that relies on land highways.

Road extensions allow ferries to operate shorter routes, directly reducing fuel consumption, crew hours, and vessel wear.

The long-term vision is to increase system efficiency and reduce average costs by shortening ferry connections wherever roads are feasible.



2004 SEATP: Shortening Costly Ferry Runs
Baranof Island (Sitka Access)



The SEATP states that any Baranof highway route would shorten the ferry link to Sitka from both Juneau and Petersburg.

Sitka ferry service is currently constrained by Sergius Narrows, one of the most operationally restrictive waterways on the AMHS system.

A road to a Chatham Strait terminal would:

- Reduce sailing distance
- Avoid severe tidal restrictions
- Lower operating complexity and cost per trip

Roads allow Sitka service to transition from long, tide-dependent sailings to shorter, more reliable ferry crossings.

2004 SEATP: Replacing Long Marine Legs
Kupreanof / Mitkof / Petersburg Area

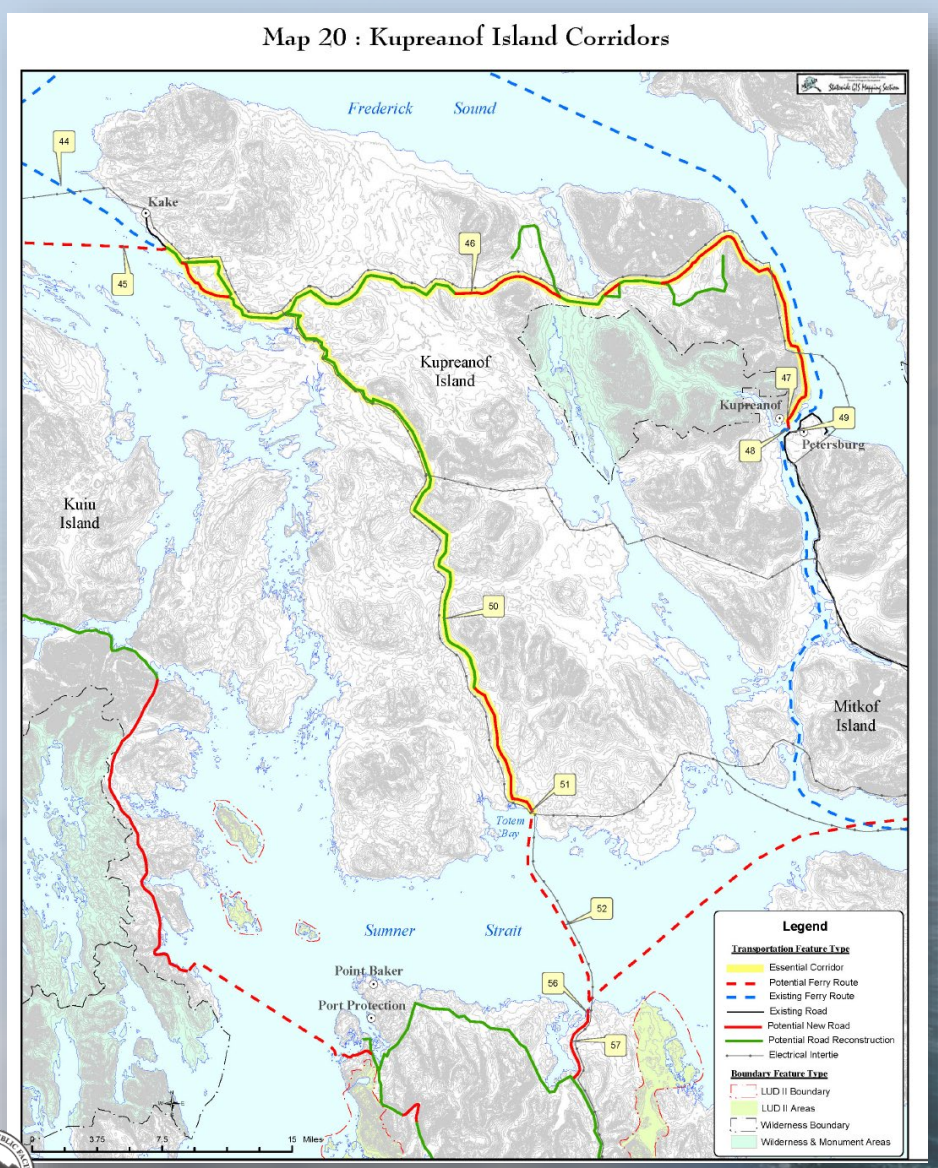
Road extensions near Petersburg and Mitkof Island are designed to pull ferry terminals closer together, reducing total vessel miles.

The plan anticipates ferry routes that:

- Exchange passengers and vehicles at a midpoint
- Turn vessels back rather than running full-length routes

This configuration reduces:

- Fuel use
- Crew duty time
- Overnight vessel deployment



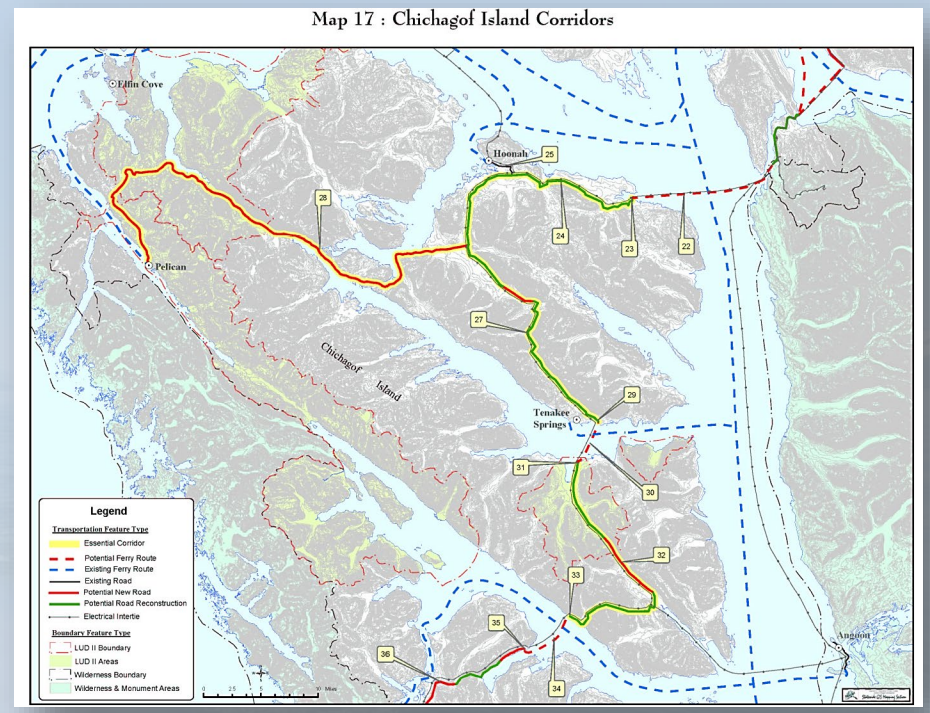
2004 SEATP: Enabling Shuttle Ferry Operations
Chichagof Island

The SEATP identifies multiple road segments on Chichagof Island that allow ferry service to shift from long regional runs to short shuttle connections.

Short ferry links paired with roads support:

- Higher frequency, daytime service
- Lower per-trip operating costs
- Use of smaller, less expensive vessels

The shuttle ferry model is explicitly intended to increase efficiency and reduce average system costs by taking advantage of road extensions.



2004 SEATP: System-Wide Cost Efficiency Message

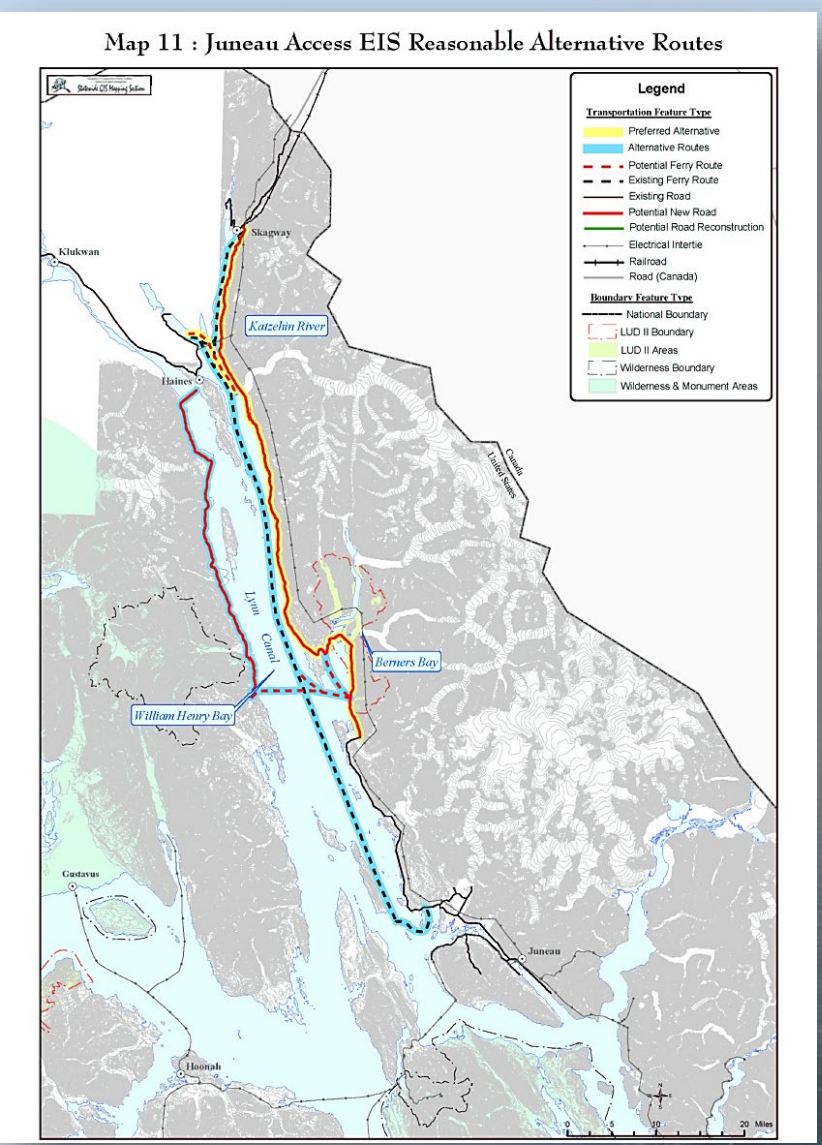
Operating large vessels on long, round-the-clock routes is identified as one of the primary cost drivers of AMHS.

Strategic capital investment in roads is explicitly identified as a way to reduce long-term transportation operating and maintenance costs.

Roads allow AMHS to:

- Reduce reliance on the mainline fleet
- Concentrate ferry resources where no road alternative exists
- Improve affordability as pressure increases to reduce state subsidy

"Strategic capital investments could reduce the region's transportation operation and maintenance costs over the long term."



AMHS 2045 Long Range Plan

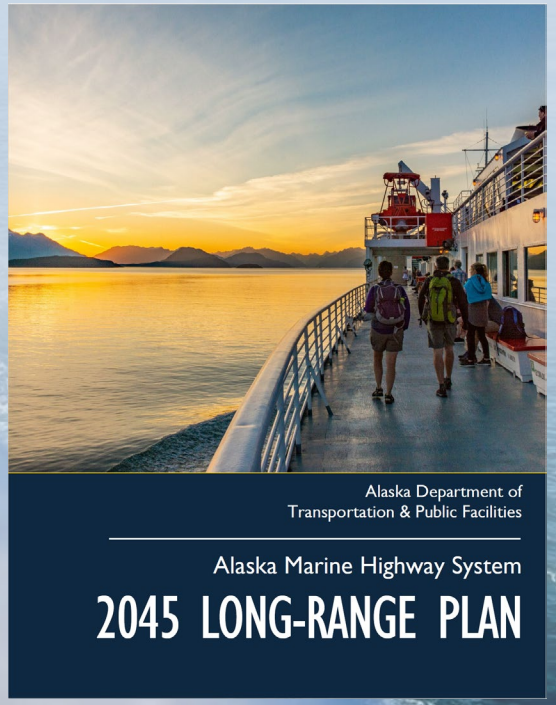
Road Connections – What the Plan Says

Public comments on the AMHS Long Range Plan (LRP) were generally supportive of the LRP's recommendation to evaluate potential future road connections. Their inclusion reflects the multi-modal nature of transportation in coastal Alaska and the potential for road links to reduce AMHS operating costs and enhance service efficiency.

The LRP does not presume that any of these connections will be realized. It recommends that such opportunities be evaluated as part of long-term planning. The proposed service levels are developed independently of any future road extensions. As a living document, the LRP will continue to be updated to reflect changes in other DOT&PF plans, evolving transportation priorities, and future infrastructure developments.

Work with DOT&PF to evaluate the feasibility of the following road connections:

- Kake – Petersburg
- Across Baranof Island
- Tenakee - Hoonah



2026 Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan

Steps, Schedule, and Proposed Goals

Fall 2025 - Winter 2026

- **Defining Vision, Goals, and Objectives**
- **Data Verification and Analysis**
  - Economic and population forecast updates
  - Transportation system analyses
- **Issues and Needs**
- **Sharing Information and Seeking Feedback**
  Round 1 Outreach Meetings
  - Southeast Conference Annual Meeting
  - Community Meetings
  - Virtual Meetings

Spring - Summer 2026

- **Resiliency Analysis**
- **Needs Identification and Prioritization**
- **Implementation Strategies**
- **Developing Draft Plan**
- **Sharing Information and Seeking Feedback**
  Round 2 Outreach Meetings
  - Southeast Conference Mid-Session Summit
  - Small Group Meetings

★ **WE ARE HERE**

Summer - Fall 2026

- **Draft Plan-Out for Public Comment**
- **Final Plan Anticipated November 1, 2026**
- **Sharing Information and Seeking Feedback**
  Round 3 Outreach Meetings
  - Southeast Conference Annual Meeting
  - Community Meetings
  - Virtual Meetings

Agency, Community, and Interested Party Involvement
Throughout Plan Update Process

Safety and Accessibility: Provide safe and equitable access to transportation for all communities in Southeast Alaska.

System Reliability: Improve the reliability of air, marine, and land transportation systems to ensure consistent and dependable service.

Cost-Effective System: Strengthen intermodal connections between land, air, and marine modes to create an integrated and efficient transportation network.

Economic Vitality: Support regional economic growth by enhancing transportation infrastructure and services that facilitate commerce and tourism.

Resilience and Preservation: Support a transportation system that remains resilient to hazards and is maintained in a state of good repair for long-term sustainability.

Ferry Service for Rural Communities Program
Authorization

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) - November 15, 2021

Section 71103 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) allocated $1 billion over five years to the Ferry Service for Rural Communities Program, providing $200 million annually for competitive grants meeting the programs criteria defined in IIJA.

“(2) ELIGIBLE SERVICE.—The term ‘‘eligible service’’ means a ferry service that—(A) operated a regular schedule at any time during the 5-year period ending on March 1, 2020; and (B) served not less than 2 rural areas located more than 50 sailing miles apart.”

The precise amount available for program awards annually under Section 71103 of the IIJA is $195,980,000 annually after set aides.

The program also received five years of advance appropriations, meaning it was created and fully funded in the same bill.

Success and Benefits to Alaska
Grant Awards to Date: $548M

Type of Award	Totals	# of Awards
Operating Funds	$149,385,241	3
Capital Funds	$398,833,255	7

Total Rural Ferry Program awards to date nationwide: $616,501,496*

*Includes IIJA and funding from The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2024

Notable Projects:

Tustumena Replacement Vessel Construction

Tazlina Crew Quarters Construction

Mainliner Replacement Vessel Design

Auke Bay Ferry Terminal East Berth Mooring Rehabilitation

Angoon Ferry Terminal Rehabilitation

Kake Ferry Terminal Rehabilitation

Pelican Ferry Terminal Reconstruction

This program also prompted the creation of the Alaska Toll Credit Program, saving the State over $66M in match funds to date.

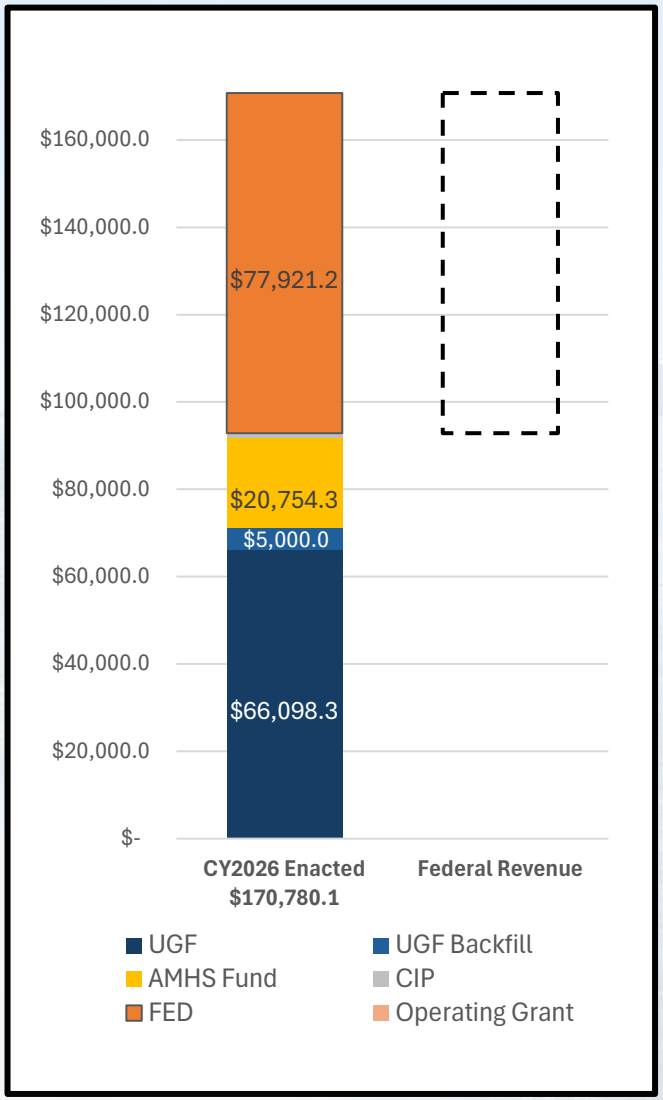
Operating Budget: Current Year CY26

CY26 Operating Budget: $170,780.1

CY26 Federal Revenue Required: $77,921.0

Federal Revenue is 45.6% of Total Operating Budget

UGF from the Operating Budget is used to match federal funds



($ in thousands)

Past Timelines and Communication

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

An estimated $410M are still available to be granted

FY2022

- NOFO: Federal Register Notice published July 11, 2022 (87 FR 41168)
- Award Announcement: FTA Press Release Jan. 26, 2023
- Duration: 199 days

FY2023

- NOFO: Federal Register Notice published May 18, 2023 (88 FR 31845)
- Award Announcement: FTA Press Release Nov. 30, 2023
- Duration: 196 days

FY2024

- NOFO: Federal Register Notice published Apr. 17, 2024 (89 FR 23632)
- Award Announcement: FTA/DOT Press Release Sept. 16, 2024
- Duration: 152 days

Alaska Class Ferries Purpose

Serving the Demand Center:

- The Northern Lynn Canal is one of the busiest ferry corridors in the entire system
- **Three out of every five AMHS passengers** travel the Juneau-Haines-Skagway route, making it the highest-demand priority for modernization and efficiency

The ACF Mandate (2006 – 2012):

- In 2006, AMHS launched a study for a new Lynn Canal ferry to replace aging vessels
- In 2012, the project was redirected to build two "day-boat" ferries—specifically designed for shorter routes

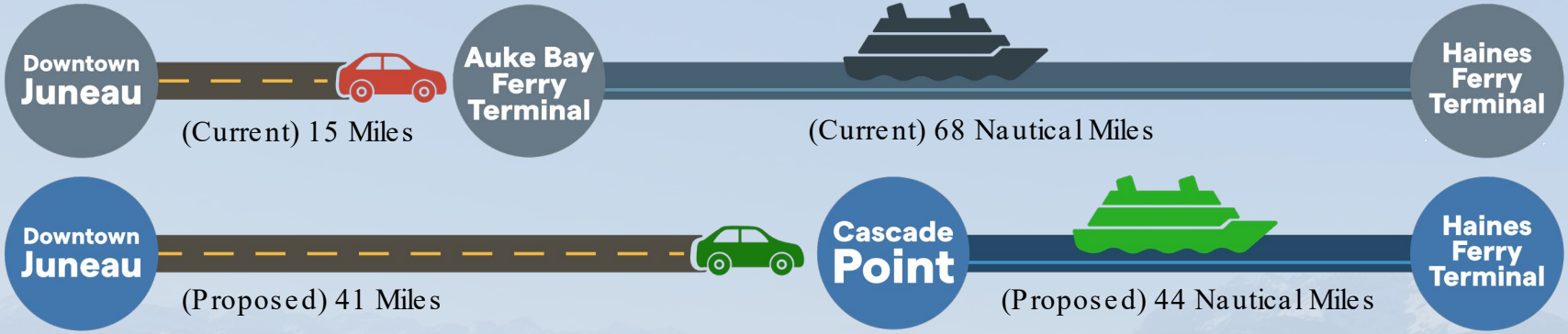
Building the Day-Boat Fleet (2018 – 2023):

- M/V Tazlina (2018): Launched as the first ACF to serve the Northern Lynn Canal
- M/V Hubbard (2023): Entered service specifically assigned to the Juneau-Haines-Skagway corridor

High Frequency Service (2029 – 2035):

- The addition of a high service frequency shuttle between Haines and Skagway allows for workforce efficiency gains per the 2045 AMHS Long-Range Plan

Cascade Point Ferry Terminal
Operational Advantage



System Optimization

Shortens the ferry route by approximately 48 nautical miles per round trip compared to departing from Auke Bay.

Time Efficiency

Reduces vessel one-way run-time by around 1.5 hours, allowing for more frequent port calls and better schedule predictability.

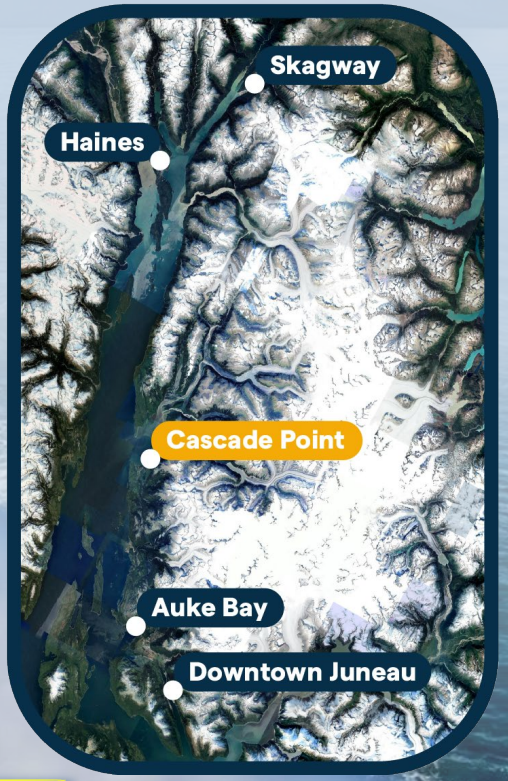
Operational Advantage

Positioned between Juneau and Haines to provide strategic access along the Lynn Canal, one of the busiest ferry corridors.

~3 Hour Reduction in Run -Time

Shortening the route by 48 nautical miles (round-trip) allows for predictable schedule planning.

"Longer Roads + Shorter Ferry Crossings" ~AMHS Long Range Plan



Cascade Point Ferry Terminal
Fiscal Net Impact

Factoring in both efficiency gains and added facility expenses, Cascade Point is expected to generate a net positive financial impact for AMHS. These savings could be further enhanced through facility-sharing arrangements or external funding partnerships.

Category	Low	Mean	High
Total Efficiency Gains	$785,207	$933,673	$1,085,700
Total Additional Facility Costs	($416,871)	($480,361)	($551,154)
Total Change in Revenue	$95,183	$136,742	$178,790
Net Financial Impact	$463,518	$590,054	$713,336

Cascade Point Ferry Terminal
Environmental Benefits

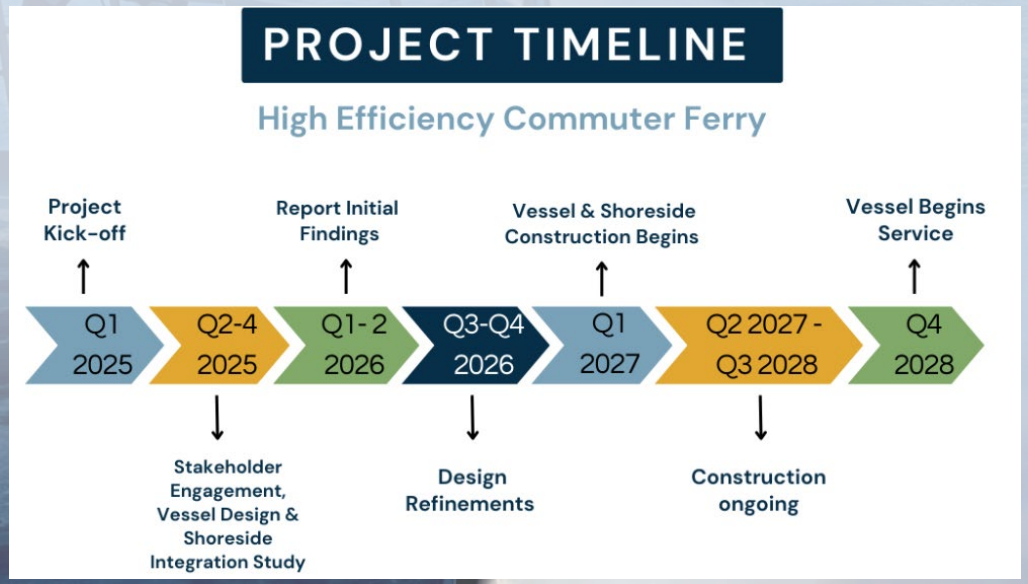
A Net Reduction of 1,190 metric tons of CO2 for Cascade Point Ferry Terminal

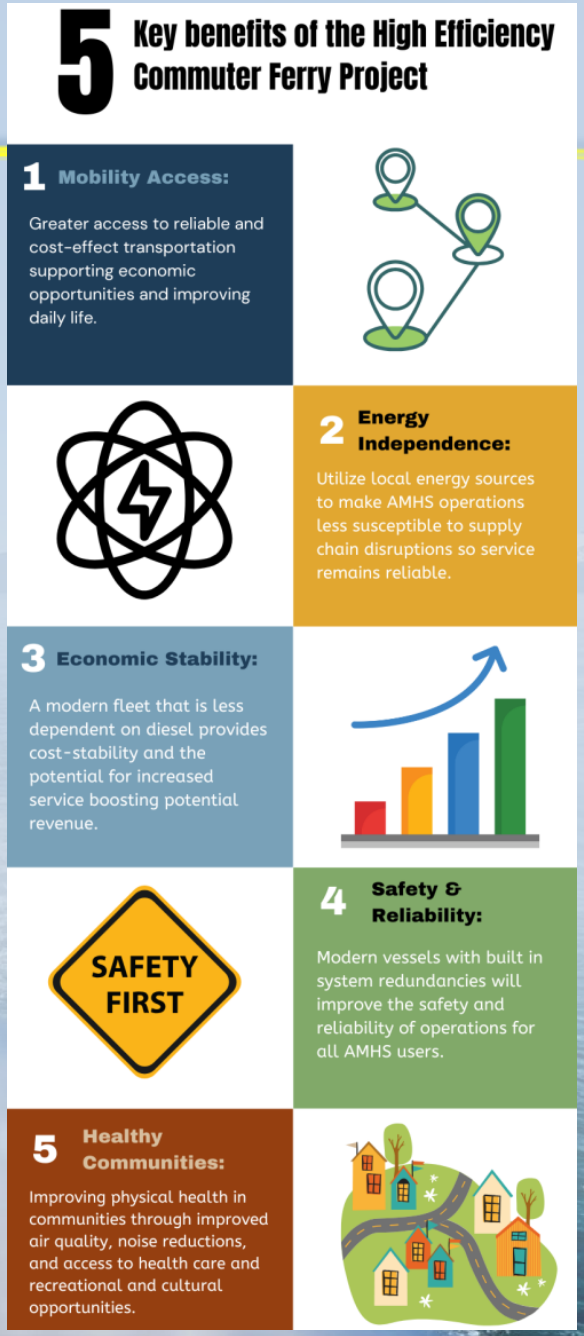
OR ~250 passenger vehicles

OR 133,883 Gallons of Gasoline

Future -Ready Electrification

A $1.3M contract for submarine cable engineering supports potential future hybrid-electric vessel service.





Goldbelt Inc. and DOT&PF Partnership

Strategic Collaboration

Formalized via a March 2023 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DOT&PF and Goldbelt, Inc., Juneau's urban Alaska Native corporation.

Capital Efficiency

State investment focuses on public marine infrastructure (ferry terminal) while Goldbelt retains the ability to develop commercial and industrial facilities that support regional economic growth.

Native Land Stewardship

Leverages Goldbelt's ownership of surrounding lands to develop a multi-functional, dual-use port.

Solves Missing Transit Link

Goldbelt has committed to providing a dedicated shuttle service between the Mendenhall Valley, Auke Bay, and Cascade Point, ensuring accessibility for walk-on passengers.

Cascade Point Ferry Terminal
Public Comments to Date

To ensure maximum constituent participation, the Stage 1 public comment period was extended from late November 2025 to January 9, 2026. This extension accommodated the holiday season, allowing broader opportunity for community input.

10/29/25 – 11/28/25

266 Comments

+

*11/28/25 – 1/9/26**

356 Comments

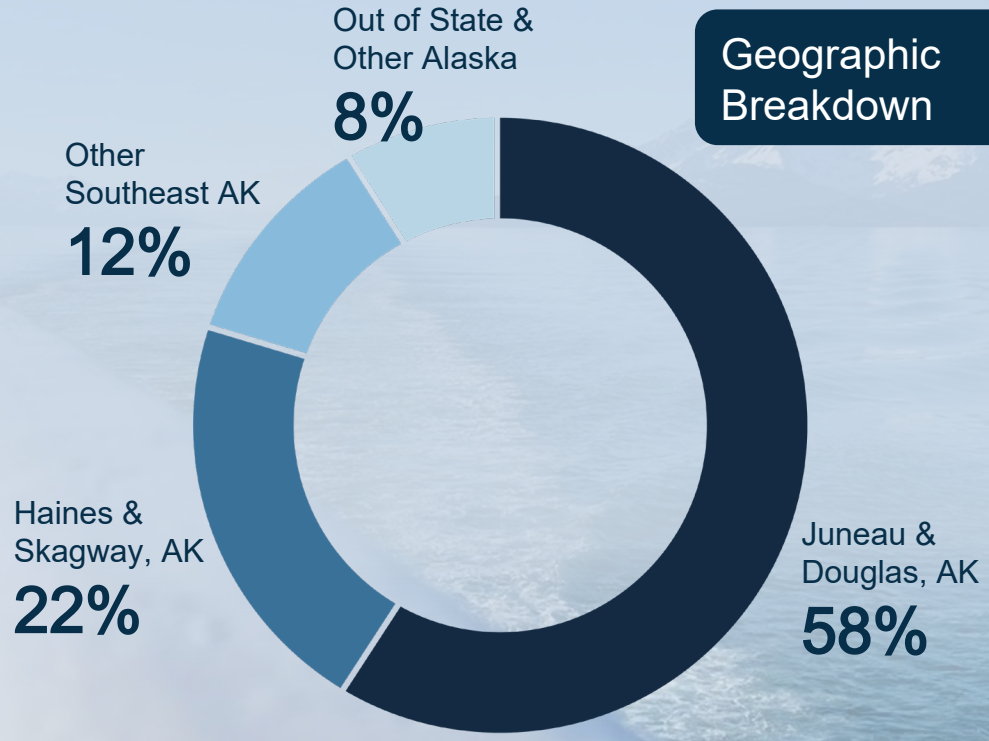
=

Total Public Comments

622 Comments

**An extended comment period effectively facilitated a second, larger wave of public discourse, ensuring that community voices were not limited by the holiday season.*

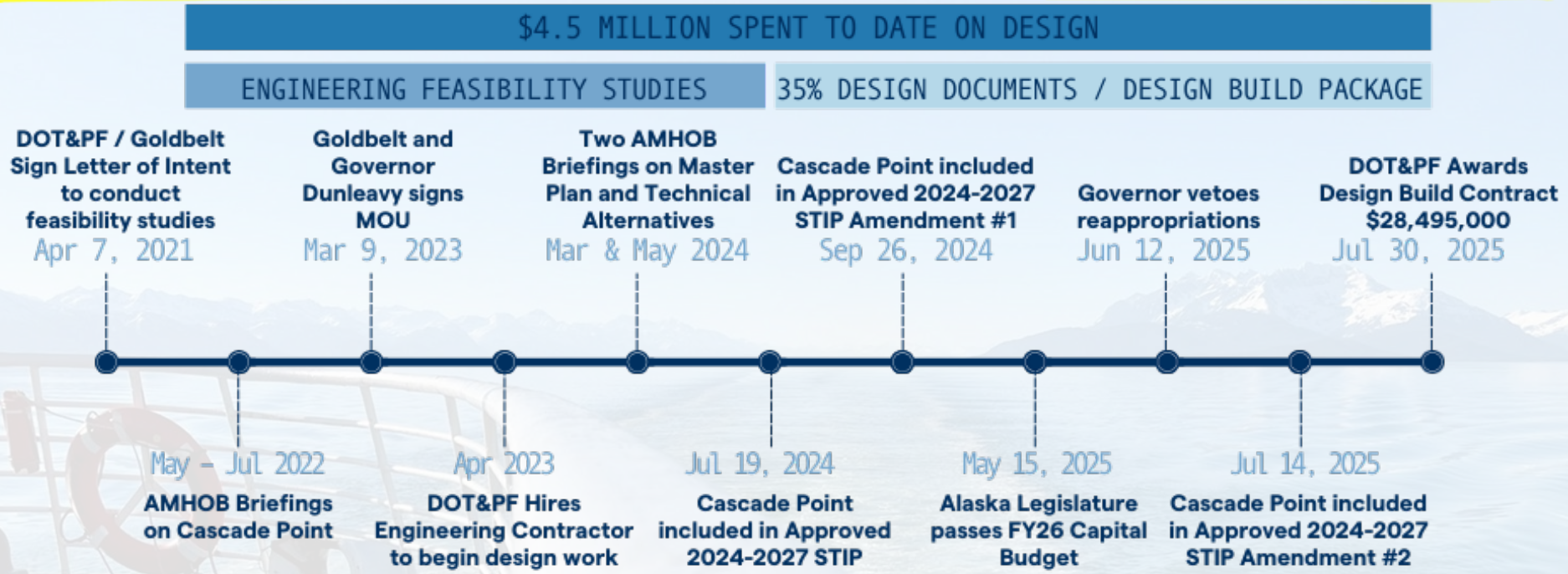
Geographic Breakdown



OPPOSITION
Public Concerns & Perceived Burden

SUPPORT
Project Goals & Operational Efficiency

Cascade Point Ferry Terminal
Timeline and Funding Considerations



Cascade Point Terminal – Two Decades of Work

- **Legislative Direction (2005 –2007):** Legislature appropriated Juneau Access funds that remain the foundation of today's terminal development.
- **Early Infrastructure (2011 –2013):** DOT&PF extended Glacier Highway to near Cascade Point, establishing access and future terminal viability.
- **AMHS Policy Alignment (2020 –2025):** The AMHS Reshaping Report, multiple AMHOB briefings, and inclusion in the 2024-2027 STIP and subsequent amendments incorporated Cascade Point into AMHS operational, service, and capital planning.
- **Partnerships & Engineering (2021 –2024):** DOT&PF/Goldbelt advanced feasibility, alternatives, wind/wave analysis, and a phased master plan.
- **Construction & Permitting (2025 –2026):** Stage 1 Design Build contract initiated: $28.5 million

Cascade Point Ferry Terminal
Timeline 1994-2013

1994 - 1998 Early Identification

Initially, Cascade Point was identified as a critical node. The focus was on extending the National Highway System (NHS) to reduce the maritime distance between Juneau and the northern Lynn Canal communities.

1994–1998: Reconnaissance engineering reports first identified the geographical advantage of Cascade Point. In 1998, the Juneau Assembly formally supported the extension of Glacier Highway to this area recognizing development would enable more efficient marine transport services in the northern Lynn Canal area.

2005 - 2013 Legislative Direction & Early Infrastructure

During this phase, the state moved from theoretical planning to physical road construction, pushing the terminus closer to Cascade Point.

2005-2007: Legislative Appropriation: Funds were specifically appropriated for "Juneau Access" during this window. These funds remain the primary vehicle for current terminal development, ensuring the project aligns with long-standing legislative intent for the corridor.

2011–2013: DOT&PF constructed a significant extension of the Glacier Highway, ending just south of Cascade Point. This successfully improved public access to the northern end of the road system and set the stage for future terminal logistics.

Cascade Point Ferry Terminal
Timeline 2014-2018

2014-2018 **Project Redirection & Fund Preservation**

2014 Supplemental Draft EIS: DOT&PF released a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) that analyzed a range of alternatives. While "Alternative 1B" focused on enhancing service with existing assets, **Alternatives 4B and 4D** specifically analyzed constructing a new terminal in **Berners Bay** to utilize shorter shuttle ferry links.

December 2016 Project Halt: Governor Bill Walker officially halted the "road-up-the-canal" highway extension, citing the state's multi-billion dollar fiscal crisis. This decision pivoted the state's focus from building a new highway to improving the existing marine corridor.

2017 Legislative Re-appropriation: Following the halt, the Legislature actively worked to preserve remaining project funds. In the FY2018 Capital Budget, approximately **$21 million** was re-appropriated specifically for "Juneau Access Improvements" within the Lynn Canal corridor, ensuring these funds were not swept for other statewide uses.

2018 Final Record of Decision: The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued a "No-Action" Record of Decision (ROD). This officially ended the federal pursuit of the road project but, crucially, the State retained the re-appropriated state funds, leaving the door open to use them for independent maritime efficiency improvements like Cascade Point.

Cascade Point Ferry Terminal
Timeline 2020—2024

2020 - 2024

AMHS Policy Alignment

DOT moved to focus on Marine Highway efficiency. Cascade Point presented the opportunity as a "day-boat" terminal to maximize the performance of the new Alaska Class ferries (Tazlina and Hubbard) resolving logistical challenges at existing terminals and supporting more frequent and reliable service.

October 2020 AMHS Reshaping Report: A key turning point. The statewide reshaping group formally recommended that DOT&PF include a ferry terminal at Cascade Pont in its operational and capital planning.

April 2021 Letter of Intent Executed: DOT&PF signed a letter of intent with Goldbelt to engage in good faith discussions to determine the feasibility and suitability of developing a ferry terminal at Cascade Point to fulfill the needs of the AMHS.

May 2022 AMHOB Meeting Cascade Point Presentation: Board was presented a Cascade Point Overview.

July 2022 AMHOB Meeting Cascade Point Presentation: Board was presented estimated project costs, route distances, demand and service assumptions, and preliminary service options to North Lynn Canal communities.

March 2023 Memoranda of Understanding: DOT&PF and Goldbelt, Inc. (the landowner) signed formal agreements to study the site's technical feasibility and pursue shared infrastructure.

March 2024 AMHOB Meeting Cascade Point Master Plan Presentation: Board was presented engineering master plan and phased construction concepts for the terminal design.

May 2024 AMHOB Meeting Cascade Point Alternative and Engineering Feasibility Presentation: Board was presented Alternatives Evaluation and Wind Wave Analysis results.

Cascade Point Ferry Terminal
Timeline 2025-2026

2025 - 2026

Implementation & Current Status

The project has moved from study to the "Design-Build" phase, focused on enhancing system resiliency.

May 2025: Goldbelt commits to Cascade Points terminal shuttle services. This commitment allows for a direct connection to City and Borough of Juneau public transit, the Auke Bay Fery Terminal and Cascade Point for walk on passengers filling a missing link in the current public transit system.

October 2025 Economic Analysis: An independent analysis found that—after accounting for added facility costs and the additional driving time from the longer road connection.

2025-2026 Design/Build (Stage 1): In July 2025, DOT&PF signed a $28.5 million contract for uplands work, including a new access road and a staging pad. This infrastructure is designed to serve as a multi-use hub, supporting both the Marine Highway and regional economic logistics. Design and permitting are ongoing. Permitting initiation begins the formal consultation process with Tribes and agencies.

December 2025 Future Electrification: $1.3 million contract finalized with Juneau Hydropower for a transformer, and the required engineering for a submarine cable to support potential future port electrification and hybrid-electric vessel service.

Fall 2025 Completion of 35% Design (Stage 2): This design is required to typically begin full public involvement prior to permitting and prior to construction.

2025-2026 Public Comment Period (Stage 1): Comment period ended January 9, 2026, and staff is working to respond to each individual comment.

April 2026 Public Meeting (Stage 2): First of two public meetings held on the project.

Cascade Point Ferry Terminal
Project Roadmap Stage One

Stage 1
Uplands

Status: $28.5 million contract awarded to K&E Alaska, Inc.

Scope: 0.5-mile access road from Glacier Highway, bridge over Cascade Creek, and terminal pad/staging area development.

Timeline: Groundbreaking schedule for Fall/Winter of 2026 with completion in late 2027.

Critical Infrastructure
Electrification

Dec 2025: $1.3 million contract finalized with Juneau Hydropower for a transformer, and the required engineering for a submarine cable to support potential future port electrification and hybrid-electric vessel service.

Cascade Point Ferry Terminal
Project Roadmap Stage Two

Stage 2
Marine/Terminal

Stage 2 is currently at 35% design and will include design and construction of all remaining components listed below:

Offshore Components

- Stern-berth ferry terminal with vehicle and pedestrian bridges
- Mooring, berthing and guide dolphins
- Rubble mound breakwater
- Dredging the basin of the ferry terminal

Onshore Components

- Terminal building
- Storage building
- Generator building
- Vehicle staging and parking
- Water treatment system and holding tank
- Wastewater treatment system
- Fuel storage system

Thank You.

Chris Goins, P.E., Southcoast Director
Craig Tornga, Marine Director
Katherine Keith PMP, PMI-ACP, Deputy Commissioner

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Cover photo: *Aboard the MV LeConte sailing Lynn Canal to Juneau from Haines.* By Andrea Deppner, Alaska DOT&PF

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