

Prince William Sound Ferry Terminals Environmental Assessment



Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: September 2024

Federal Project #003290, 0851073, and 003289 | **State Project** #SFHWY00461, SFHWY00465, and SFHWY00460
STIP ID 33886, 33887, and 33888

1. What is the Prince William Sound (PWS) Ferry Terminals EA Project?

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) seeks to update the design and rebuild its ferry terminal facilities in the Prince William Sound communities of Chenega, Cordova, and Tatitlek. These improvements would improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of goods and passengers through these communities. DOT&PF initiated a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental assessment (EA) process in September 2024 to identify issues, opportunities, and potential impacts related to the terminal rebuilds.

2. Why is DOT&PF doing this project?

In May 2022, the Prince William Sound Economic Development District (PWSEDD) submitted a Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) grant application to the U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration (MARAD) to ensure that DOT&PF ferry terminals in Chenega, Cordova, and Tatitlek are able to accommodate the new Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) Alaska Class Ferry (ACF) vessels (motor vessels [M/Vs] Tazlina and Hubbard). DOT&PF Southcoast Region began the NEPA environmental review process in 2024 at the direction of MARAD.

3. What is the projects' purpose?

The purpose of the three projects is to make improvements to the ferry terminals in Chenega, Cordova, and Tatitlek to accommodate ACF berthing and home port needs. These updates, which vary by location, are necessary to maintain critical ferry service to these communities as older ferries are removed from service and replaced by ACFs.

4. What would the projects look like?

The ferry infrastructure in each community varies, as do the proposed improvements.

Chenega: Also constructed in 1995, the Chenega dock and tidal ramps are only able to accommodate vessels with attached vehicle ramps. Improvements in Chenega would include a new side-berth ferry terminal facility at the Chenega dock to accommodate the ACF and LeConte class vessels. Improvements would also include a new side-loading ferry terminal structure, including a pile-supported approach dock structure, vehicle transfer bridge, bridge support float, and two mooring dolphins.

Cordova: Cordova's original ferry facility was constructed in 1964 and reconstructed in 2006. The existing Cordova ferry terminal facility includes both side and stern berths for AMHS ferry vessels. The terminal requires mooring dolphin modifications to better accommodate the newly built ACF vessel's (M/V Hubbard) mooring line system.

Tatitlek: Originally constructed in 1995, the Tatitlek ferry terminal facility is a multipurpose dock structure that is only able to accommodate vessels with attached vehicle ramps. Improvements in Tatitlek would include the provision of retrofitted end-loading ferry terminal structures, including a vehicle transfer bridge and lift towers to support the float, at the location of the existing tidal ramp ferry facility.

All locations would have lighting and power upgrades.

5. What is the project schedule?

DOT&PF initiated an EA process in September 2024 to consider the projects' purpose and need, actions to meet those needs, and potential environmental impacts and mitigations. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2027, which may require temporary schedule changes in AMHS ferry service.

6. How will the projects be funded?

The State of Alaska and PWSEDD would conduct the terminal modifications, funded by a combination of discretionary grants received from the MARAD PIDP, Federal Highway Administration, and state funds. Chenega ferry terminal improvements are budgeted at \$13.21 million, Cordova at \$6.2 million, and Tatitlek at \$11.9 million.

7. How can the public be involved?

The public will have opportunities to provide comments during the environmental review process. The project is currently in a 30-day scoping period. While comments are welcome to comments@pwsferryterminals.com at any time throughout the project, DOT&PF is seeking input specifically on the project's purpose and need, issues to be addressed, and concerns related to construction impacts and timing through October 25, 2024. DOT&PF will also keep the public informed throughout the effort through presentations, newsletters, and the project website: pwsferryterminals.com.

8. How can I be kept informed about the project?

Sign up for project-related newsletters and emails, and see up-to-date materials on the project website: pwsferryterminals.com.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by DOT&PF pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated April 13, 2023 and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.