

DOT&PF Notice to Begin Engineering and Environmental Studies: Prince William Sound Ferry Terminal Projects – Chenega, Cordova, and Tatitlek Ferry Terminal Improvements

- * Chenega Ferry Terminal Improvements: Federal Project No. 0003290; State Project No. SFHWY00461
- * Cordova Ferry Terminal Improvements: Federal Project No. 0851073; State Project No. SFHWY00465
- * Tatitlek Ferry Terminal Improvements: Federal Project No. 0003289; State Project No. SFHWY00460

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), in coordination with the Prince William Sound Economic Development District, is proposing to improve the Chenega, Cordova, and Tatitlek ferry terminals in Prince William Sound to accommodate the Alaska Class Ferry (ACF). These improvements are partly funded by a U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration (MARAD) Port Infrastructure Development Program grant, a federal funding program.

Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is required for use of the grant funds, and MARAD is the lead federal agency for NEPA. DOT&PF is beginning engineering and environmental studies for this effort, including coordinating the NEPA process in support of MARAD. Public input during the scoping process helps DOT&PF identify potential environmental, social, cultural/historic, and economic effects of this project and identify alternatives that should be studied in the NEPA document.

This project would make improvements to each ferry terminal to accommodate the ACF berthing and homeport needs. The existing Chenega and Tatitlek ferry terminal facilities have fixed platform docks that only accommodate vessels with attached vehicle ramps, requiring a vehicle transfer system to be installed to allow the ACF to operate at these facilities. The existing Cordova ferry terminal facility has both side and stern berths for Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) ferry vessels. The terminal requires mooring dolphin modifications to better accommodate the newly built ACF's mooring line system.

The proposed projects would involve:

- * Chenega Ferry Terminal (60° 03' 8.3"N, 148° 00' 30.48"W):
 - Modify existing fendering system on existing dock face
 - Installation of a vehicular transfer bridge, ramp, and apron
 - Installation of a bridge support float
 - Installation of float restraint structures
 - Installation of mooring structures
 - Lighting and power upgrades
- Cordova Ferry Terminal (60° 33' 27.4" N, 145° 45' 19.5" W):
 - Removal of floating fender dolphins
 - Installation of mooring structures and catwalks
 - Lighting and power upgrades
 - Regrading portion of uplands parking/staging area
 - Dredging
 - Modifications to the pedestrian walkways and elevated steel platforms
 - Modifications to the sewage holding tank
 - Electrical power updates (as applicable)
 - Modifications to the uplands grading to prevent stormwater runoff
 - Replacement of the potable water line to the stern berth
- Tatitlek Ferry Terminal (60° 51' 33.2" N, 146° 40' 33.4" W):
 - Modify existing fendering system on existing dock face
 - Removal of existing tidal ramps and associated dolphin and catwalk
 - Installation of a vehicular transfer bridge, ramp, and apron to replace existing tidal ramps
 - Installation of lift towers to support the float
 - Installation of mooring structures
 - Lighting and power upgrades
- Construction is anticipated to occur as early as spring 2027. Schedule changes may occur to the AMHS ferry service during construction, including potential closure to the Tatitlek ferry terminal during portions of project construction. As the project progresses, details of any closures will be announced in advance.

Based on project location and scope of work, the NEPA environmental document is anticipated to be an environmental assessment (EA). Possible affected resources include waters of the U.S., endangered species, marine mammals, essential fish habitat, and cultural or historic properties. Based on existing available data, there are two known eagle nests located within 0.5 mile of the management buffers of proposed project features of the Cordova and Tatitlek ferry terminals. DOT&PF would determine whether an eagle permit would be necessary for the projects. The project sites are near anadromous fish streams.

This project involves construction of structures and pile driving within marine waters, which would result in base floodplain encroachments. The Cordova ferry terminal is within the base floodplain, and work in the area would be considered an encroachment (Flood Map 0200370042C). The Chenega and Tatitlek ferry terminals are within an unmapped flood area. The encroachments are anticipated to be minor, with no net changes to the base flood elevation, so they would not result in significant encroachments. Additionally, no longitudinal encroachments are anticipated.

DOT&PF is, and has been, conducting the environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project pursuant to 23 U.S. Code 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated April 13, 2023, and executed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and DOT&PF.

The proposed project would comply with all applicable authorities, including Executive Orders 11990 (Wetland Protection), 11988 (Floodplain Protection), 12898 (Environmental Justice), 11593 (Historic Preservation), and 13084 (Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments); Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; Clean Air Act; Clean Water Act; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act; Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act; Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act; Endangered Species Act; Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Management Act; Marine Mammal Protection Act; and Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act.

DOT&PF is soliciting comments on the proposed project. Your comments help us evaluate potential environmental, social, and economic impacts of this project as well as impacts on cultural and historic properties.

Please submit written comments or questions to:

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To ensure that all possible factors are considered, please provide comments via email to comments@pwsferryterminals.com, via the project website at www.pwsferryterminals.com, or mail to the address above no later than October 25, 2024.

It is the policy of DOT&PF that no person shall be excluded from participation in, or be denied benefits of, any and all programs or activities we provide based on race, religion, color, gender, age, marital status, ability, or national origin, regardless of the funding source, including Federal Transit Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, FHWA, MARAD, and State of Alaska. DOT&PF complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

If you or someone you represent requires special accommodations in order to respond to this public notice, please call or email the project coordinator listed above, or call Alaska Relay at 711, or call (800) 770-8973 for TTY, (800) 770-8255 for voice, (800) 770-3919 for ASCII, or (866) 355-6198 for STS. Ask the communications assistant to call the project coordinator listed above so arrangements can be made to assist you.