



**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration**

**Alternative Transportation in the Parks and Public Lands Program
Project Proposal for Fiscal Year 2008 Funds – Planning Project**

BASIC PROJECT INFORMATION			
Project Name (Please provide a 1-2 sentence description of the project): Eyak Alternative Transportation Planning Grant			
Proposed Funding Recipient: Native Village of Eyak			
Public land unit(s) involved: Chugach National Forest Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve		<u>Location of Project</u> City: Cordova, Alaska County: Valdez-Cordova Census Area State: Alaska Congressional District: Alaska	
Federal Land Management Agency managing the above unit(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Bureau of Land Management <input type="checkbox"/> Bureau of Reclamation <input type="checkbox"/> Fish and Wildlife Service <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forest Service <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National Park Service		Type of Planning Project: (Implementation projects, please use the alternate form) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning	
<input type="checkbox"/> Proposal is to plan for a possible new alternative transportation system where none currently exists. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proposal is to plan for a possible expansion or enhancement of an existing alternative transportation system.			
ATPPL Funding Requested during FY 2008 \$400,000		Total Cost of Planning Project at Completion (All sources) \$500,000	
Were you awarded FY 2006 of FY 2007 ATPPL funds? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If answer "Yes," please provide amount awarded: \$			
Do you plan to request additional ATPPL funds in future years? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (Note: If you wish to compete for future ATPPL fiscal year funds you must reapply).			
If answer "Yes," please specify ATPPL proposed funding levels for out years below:			
FY 2009 \$500,000	FY 2010 \$1,000,000		
FY 2008 Funding Amounts from sources other than ATPPL funds? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If answer "Yes," please specify funding levels per source below:			
State \$	Local \$100,000	Federal (other than ATPPL) \$	Private sources \$

CONTACT PERSON

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OTHER PROJECT SPONSORS (in addition to funding recipient)**US Forest Service, National Park Service****REQUIREMENTS**

- If a State, Tribal, or local government entity is proposing the project, the applicant has contacted the manager of the federal land unit(s) and has the consent of the Federal land management agency or agencies affected.
- The project is consistent with the metropolitan and statewide planning process.
- The project is consistent with agency plans.
- The planning project will analyze all reasonable alternatives, including a non-construction option.

BASIC PROJECT DATA

Number of Visitors (Annual): OUT OF STATE VISITORS (ESTIMATED FROM AK VISITORS STATISTICS PROGRAM)
 SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA - 1.1 MILLION
 ANCHORAGE: 800,000
 SEWARD: 400,000
 CORDOVA: 25,000
 VALDEZ: 175,000
 WHITTIER: 150,000

Daily Number of Visitors (Peak season): Seward on 4th of July 10,000. Chitina peak June weekend 10,000.

Average Number of Vehicles per Day at Peak Visitation: 8,294

Current Road Level of Service at Peak Visitation: 20,000-60,000 (Seward Highway) DOT Traffic Counts (Please consult guidance where available on determining this variable. You may use observational accounts or pictures to provide an assessment of this datum for FY 2008 proposals).

What time of the year does your land unit experience Peak Visitation?

Spring Summer Fall Winter

Current Carrying Capacity of Existing Roads: (vehicles/day) Rough Estimates from Agnew-Beck Consultants. Seward Highway 100% at peak 20,000-60000 vehicles/day, Ferry Chenega 250 passenger capacity, approximately 35 large car capacity, travels at 42 knots and makes three trips per day. Operates 80% to 100% capacity in busy season

What percent of that capacity is the site operating at during peak periods? 80-100% in congested areas. Near 0% in remote areas and a range between. This study will identify and clarify carrying capacities of the system.

Current parking shortages during peak visitation: Chitina parking on private land or river bars causing erosion parking is maxed out on busy weekends. Seward, Whittier and Russian River parking is maxed out on busy weekends.

Current Number of Persons who use the alternative transportation system (if one already exists) at peak visitation:

Train day trips to Seward and Whittier with new back country program running to Grand View. Estimated at 5,000 users annually. Small Cruise companies bringing 100 passengers per week through PWS to Cordova, growing small cruise industry in Whittier and Valdez localized but could be tied into an integrated system in remote areas. Commercial Cruise lines with Motorcoach tours estimated 100,000 annually (average number of visitors/daily at peak)

Estimated Annual Number of Persons who will use the alternative transportation system at project completion: At least 5 times current usage. There is a better need for interconnections so train or bus can be taken to Whittier to catch the ferry or to get from the Ferry in Whittier and Valdez to Anchorage or Kenai Peninsula. (anticipated number of riders or users/annually)

Average number of auto collisions with wildlife in the area? 600 collisions/year with most collisions in Kenai Peninsula and Matanuska Valley according to Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Executive Summary

Please provide an executive summary of your proposal that is no more than one page in length.

This is a project to develop a comprehensive long range plan for an integrated motorized and non-motorized transportation system in the Copper River, Prince William Sound and Gulf of Alaska area. This region includes the Chugach National Forest, the southern portions of Wrangell St. Elias National Park, and portions of Chugach State Park.

There are areas of extreme congestion in areas of the Kenai Peninsula and growing congestion in the Copper River Basin. At the same time there are vast areas that are inaccessible because of lack of infrastructure. This sensitive area could be developed with a network of motorized and non motorized transportation systems. In order to do this, in a way that protects resource values, takes advantage of the area's diverse recreational resources, and involves the affected communities and users, we need a comprehensive plan.

This project proposes to identify and document the demand for alternative transportation systems and develop a proposed system that will meet these needs in a sustainable way.

Our planning area is on the attached map and includes the jumping off points in the Copper Basin and Kenai Peninsula such as Chitina, Cordova, Valdez and Whittier. The plan will explore options for one way or loop routes through the Copper River, Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska. Alternative transportation systems studied will include

- Alaska Railroad motor-coach system on the Kenai Peninsula,
- the Alaska Marine Highway in Whittier, Cordova, Chenega Tatitlek and Valdez
- privately-operated day and overnight water-based cruise companies
- sea kayak routes in Prince William Sound
- rafting and jet boat taxi from Chitina to Cordova
- hut to hut trail development from Chitina to Cordova and from Cordova to Icy Bay
- private air taxi connection from Katalla, Yakataga and Icy Bay to Cordova.

The plan will investigate current and projected use, current and projected transportation infrastructure, and options for upgrades to infrastructure, including trails and trailheads, modal transfer points (e.g. ferry terminals, airports); parking areas and motorized routes at major access points to the non motorized systems.

This plan will be developed to meet the following goals.

- Conserve natural, historic and cultural resources by providing greater public awareness and opportunities to enjoy these resources.
- Reduce congestion and pollution and improve visitor mobility and accessibility by providing alternative routes and destinations that are not currently accessible.
- Provide options for automobile visitors to use alternative transportation modes and engage in different activities, such as getting out on the water or the trail.
- Create a better integrated, comprehensive network, which will make the system easy to use and access.
- Enhance the visitor experience by improved access and by making available slower paced trips to more remote areas.
- Ensure access to all including persons with disabilities, by working developing water taxi, ferry and other systems that can accommodate persons with disabilities.

Project Description

What activities would be funded by the requested ATPL financial assistance? Please provide a project description that is no more than one page in length. You may attach up to two pages of maps or other illustrations that do not count towards the page limit.

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1. Get Organized
 - a. Hire Project Coordinator
 - i. Advertise, Evaluate Applications, Hire a Coordinator
 - b. Set up a project web site
 - i. Project Coordinator to set it up with assistance from consultant
 - c. Establish a Steering Committee
 - i. Recruit Volunteers with public notice and other outreach
 - ii. Review applicants for steering committee
 - iii. Appoint Steering Committee
2. Identify Needs and Demand
 - a. Gather Background Information
 - i. Gather Previous Studies
 - ii. Gather Agency Data and Plans
 - iii. Meet with Individuals, Boards and Councils
 - iv. List out Transportation Needs
 - v. Write up Preliminary Concept Paper
 - vi. Send out Concept Paper to Stakeholders and Post on Web Site
 - vii. Send out Survey with Concept paper to gather input on Needs
 - viii. Put Survey on Web Site
 - b. Hold a Public Meeting
 - i. Go over Concept Paper
 - ii. List out Additional Transportation Needs
 - iii. Prioritize Transportation Needs at the meeting
3. Develop the Comprehensive System Plan
 - a. Develop and Write the Draft Plan
 - i. Analyze Prioritized needs
 - ii. Develop routes and systems that will address prioritized needs
 - iii. Develop Operation and Maintenance Plans
 - iv. Develop Operating Budgets
 - v. Develop Funding Plan
 - vi. Develop draft comprehensive system plan
 - b. Get Comments on the Draft Plan
 - i. Distribute Draft Plan to Stakeholders and put it on the Web Site
 - ii. Solicit written Comments through public notice and the web site
 - iii. Hold a public meeting to go over the draft plan for comments
4. Write Final Plan
 - a. Analyze and use comments received on the draft
 - b. Revise Draft to Final Document taking comments into consideration
5. Review and Approve Final Plan
 - a. Distribute Final Plan to Stakeholders and put it on the Web Site
 - b. Solicit written Comments through public notice and the web site
 - c. Steering Committee Review and Recommend Approval of Plan
 - d. NVE Tribal Council Review and Approve Final Comprehensive Plan

Alternative Transportation in the Parks and Public Lands Planning Evaluation Criteria

(There are separate evaluation factors for implementation projects. Use the implementation project proposal template for implementation projects.)

Criteria	Points	Weight
1. Demonstration of Need		50%
a. Visitor mobility & experience	(1-5)	
b. Environmental condition as result of existing transportation system	(1-5)	
2. Methodology for Assessing: Visitor Mobility & Experience Benefits of Project		15%
a. Reduced traffic congestion	(1-5)	
b. Enhanced visitor mobility, accessibility, and safety	(1-5)	
c. Improved visitor education, recreation, and health benefits	(1-5)	
3. Methodology for Assessing: Environmental Benefits of Project		15%
a. Protection of sensitive natural, cultural, and historical resources	(1-5)	
b. Reduced pollution	(1-5)	
4. Methodology for Assessing: Operational Efficiency and Financial Sustainability of Alternatives		20%
a. Effectiveness in meeting management goals	(1-5)	
b. Financial plan and cost effectiveness	(1-5)	
c. Cost effectiveness	(1-5)	
d. Partnerships and funding from other sources	(1-5)	

Planning Justification

Your responses to these questions must total no more than eight pages.

1. Demonstration of Need

- a. Visitor mobility and experience:** Describe the site's current and/or anticipated transportation problem or opportunity for improvement. You should include information on issues such as traffic congestion, traffic delays, parking shortages, difficulty in accessing destinations, safety issues, lack of access for persons with disabilities, lack of access for individuals with lower incomes or without cars, and visitor frustration. Please cite reports, plans, studies, and other documentation to support your description.

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There are areas of extreme congestion in areas of the Kenai Peninsula and growing congestion in the Copper River Basin and Valdez. At the same time there are vast areas that are inaccessible because of lack of infrastructure. This sensitive area could be developed with a network of motorized and non motorized transportation systems.

Documented needs include over running the Chitina area and the Kenai Rivers with sport and personal use fishermen. Up to 10,000 visitors per weekend go to Chitina to dipnet according to Alaska Department of Fish and Game permit and harvest data. There are not adequate sanitary

facilities or parking. Trespass on Native lands causes conflict and disturbances that negatively impact visitors and locals experience. The Kenai Peninsula had 439,000 visitors in 2006 and the rate is increasing at 5% per year according to the Alaska Visitor Statistics Program. Over-fishing and overcrowding of existing facilities is a major challenge to this area according to a Rural Alaska Tourism Infrastructure needs assessment published by the Kenai Peninsula Borough. This study cited a good potential for further development is improvements of trails and cultural Tourism attractions. This project will provide this in a big way. In this area there are historic routes in many of these areas - the CRNW railroad bed for example which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. There are trading routes along the same corridor and elsewhere used over the centuries by Alaska Native peoples, Russian explorers and traders, the US Army. This planning project would seek to identify, preserve and make these accessible. There are many potential partners in the Copper Basin and other areas, particularly NPS, the State, Ahtna Inc., Chitina Native Corp, Yakutat Tlingit Tribe, the Yakutat Borough and business partners such as Princess (both on the Kenai and in Copper Center), and others. This planning project is needed to provide the resources to bring this diverse group together and develop a comprehensive plan using our combined strengths.

- b. Environmental condition as a result of the existing transportation system:** Describe the site's current or anticipated problem or opportunity for improvement of the environment in this area. You should include information on current or anticipated problems such as air pollution, noise pollution, run-off, water quality, harm to vegetation and wildlife, and other impacts or stressors on natural, scenic, cultural and/or historic resources caused by the existing transportation system. Please cite documentation in agency plans, studies, reports and other documentation that will help to support your description.

Up to 10,000 visitors per weekend go to Chitina to dipnet according to Alaska Department of Fish and Game permit and harvest data. There are not adequate sanitary facilities or parking. Trespass on Native lands causes conflict and disturbances that negatively impact visitors and locals experience. The areas we are planning to develop are inaccessible due to extreme remoteness and lack of infrastructure. This area needs a good plan in order for the developed access systems to allow visitors to encounter the area without harming the area in the process. We will also strive to provide sanitary facilities and shelter so the system can be safe and yet provide the remote adventure that many Alaska visitors are seeking. People visit Alaska to see pristine wilderness. As demand is increasing, this remoteness and solitude is impacted. This plan will address this issue and seeks to develop access routes that will provide this solitude. There is a balance that needs to be attained and it will take a lot of work to achieve it. There are many multi-purpose needs in this area of vast resources and the transportation plan will have to address this in a balanced way.

Scope of Work and Methodology

The planning project's scope of work and methodology should include tasks that will assess the areas below in a thorough and professional manner. The planning project should have a scope of work and methodology at this proposal phase, although it may be refined later.

2. Methodology for Assessing - Visitor Mobility & Experience Benefits of Project

Please address how the planning project's scope and methodology will assess the visitor mobility & experience benefits of a potential alternative transportation system improvement in the following areas:

We will use a number of outreach tools to assess current and planned visitor mobility and experience benefits. Current studies repeatedly show that visitors want to view wildlife, glaciers and mountains in a pristine setting. This is getting tougher in developed areas with crowding and

concentration because of lack of infrastructure in the back country. We will gather input from our steering committee, web site, surveys and public meetings on ways to address this issue in a sustainable way.

- a. **Reduced traffic congestion:** This criterion includes: reduced average number of daily motorized vehicle trips during peak visitation, time lost to traffic delays, visitor frustration, and the area's current capacity of the existing transportation system.

We will assess current volumes and capacity studies in Prince William Sound and develop a plan to work on the advantages of our area.

- b. **Enhanced visitor mobility, accessibility, and safety:** This criterion includes enhanced intermodal interconnectivity, improved public access to resources, improved access for those with disabilities and low incomes, traffic safety, pedestrian/cycling safety, and safety in the case of catastrophic events (i.e., forest fires or security threats).

- We will work to develop and integrated system that is accessible from all points. This plan will develop connections to crowded areas on the Kenai and Copper Basin with the following systems.
- Alaska Railroad motor-coach system on the Kenai Peninsula, with the Alaska Marine Highway in Whittier, Cordova, Chenega Tatitlek and Valdez
- privately-operated day and overnight water-based cruise companies
- sea kayak routes in Prince William Sound
- rafting and jet boat taxi from Chitina to Cordova
- hut to hut trail development from Chitina to Cordova and from Cordova to Icy Bay
- private air taxi and/or commercial airline connection from Katalla, Yakataga, Icy Bay and Yakutat to Cordova.

- c. **Improved visitor education, recreation, and health benefits:** Describe how the project's scope and methodology will assess improved visitor education, recreation and health benefits?

Health Benefits will be improved with outdoor activities and hiking as opposed to riding in cars. Education of the areas rich history and pre-history will be highlighted with signage and guided tours in areas where there are things to learn about such as along the rail bed of the Copper River Northwestern Railway which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

3. **Methodology for Assessing - Environmental Benefits of Project**

Please address how the planning project's scope and methodology will assess the environmental benefits of a potential alternative transportation system improvement in the following areas:

- a. **Protection of sensitive natural, cultural, and historical resources:** This criterion includes energy conservation, energy efficiency, ecosystem sustainability, preservation of archeological and/or historical resources, viewshed and watershed preservation, reduction in auto-wildlife collision rates, improved habitat connectivity, ensuring that visitation does not exceed an area's ability to handle increased levels of visitation or the "carrying capacity" of the land unit, and other protection benefits where applicable.

There will be long term environmental benefits as when alternative transportation systems provide access to remote areas without bringing in automobiles. The public will be able to

access and enjoy these areas without the impacts of automobile traffic and noise. Visitor studies show that Alaska visitors come here to see the unspoiled beauty of the land, water, mountains, glaciers and wildlife. This is a balancing exercise to provide access to these areas without changing the nature of the areas. Many of these areas will be well served by rafting and trail access but would be changed substantially with automobile access.

- b. Reduced pollution:** This criterion includes air pollution, water pollution, noise pollution, and visual pollution.

There will be reduced pollution when sanitary facilities are designed into a comprehensive system and maintained. In Chitina for example, there are very limited sanitary facilities and up to 10,000 visitors may access this area in a weekend. This is 4 times the population of Cordova which has a very well developed city water and sewer system. Basic sanitary facilities will go a long way to reducing human waste pollution. In addition, trails and rafting access will reduce carbon and other pollution from automobiles.

4. Methodology for Assessing - Operational Efficiency and Financial Sustainability

Please address how the planning project's scope and methodology will assess the operational efficiency and the financial sustainability of a potential alternative transportation system improvement in the following areas:

- a. Operational efficiency:** This criterion includes considerations of how a potential alternative system may/may not meet identified management goals and objectives for this site, including consideration of multiple alternatives.

The hut to hut system on the gulf coast was studied before and deemed not feasible to maintain by the University of Alaska. We desire to revisit this study and develop a way to generate maintenance funds through a partnership between the Federal, State, Tribe and Private enterprise. We believe this is a successful approach and will take resources from this planning grant to get people together to discuss this. For example, without a plan the 30 mile silviculture road from Yakataga to Icy bay will be decommissioned this spring. If our plan was in place, this infrastructure could be put into use as part of our trail system saving millions in construction costs. As it is, one agency is working on a project without coordination with other entities with interest in the area. This planning project and comprehensive plan will change this and will allow resources to be leveraged among agencies and the system will be feasible.

- b. Financial feasibility:** This criterion includes the development of a financial plan that will incorporate a potential alternative transportation system, including the evaluation of multiple alternatives.

Construction and operating costs will be identified in the study. We will also identify funding opportunities to fund the operating and maintenance budget. Such sources include Alaska DOT Highway Funds, Denali Commission Funds, Yakutat borough Funds, Indian Reservation Road Program Funds, NPS and USFS Federal Lands funds, Trail funds for the Forest Service, User Fees, Volunteer and Contributed funds among others. These resources will be identified and developed with this planning grant.

- c. Cost effectiveness:** This criterion includes the development of an analysis of cost effectiveness considerations that includes multiple alternatives.

Standard cost benefit analysis will be conducted as well as other more appropriate cost effectiveness standards. We will establish performance measures as a part of this strategic plan that relate to climate change, effects on water resources and providing for future generations. These measures will establish measurable results for success and will be reported on as a part of this project and into the future as the plan is implemented.

- d. Partnerships and funding from other sources:** This criterion includes planning projects that would be carried out or funded in partnership with other entities in addition to the sponsor and will receive points depending on the level of partnership. Documentation (e.g., partnership agreements, letters of partnership support, letters of confirmation of financial contribution, letters of in-kind contributions, etc.) that supports and verifies involvement of partners and level of partnership *must* accompany this proposal.

We have contacted and have support from the US Forest Service and the National Park Service. Other groups we will engage and bring on board during the planning phase of this project include BLM and other Federal Agencies, State agencies, Federally Recognized Tribes, Borough Governments, City governments, Private Companies and Non-Profit organizations.