



Scenario Planning Workshop Summary

2026 Southeast Conference, Mid-Session Summit, Transportation Symposium

February 12, 2026, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m., Juneau, AK

Workshop Overview

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) in collaboration with the Southeast Conference, now designated as a regional planning organization (RPO), hosted a scenario-planning workshop for the Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan (SEATP) Update at the Southeast Conference’s Mid-Session Summit and Transportation Symposium. The workshop took place on Thursday, February 12, 2026, at the Elizabeth Peratrovich Hall in Juneau.

The purpose of the workshop was to brainstorm and collaborate on scenario-planning considerations that may affect long-term transportation planning in Southeast Alaska.

Participants were presented with an overview of the SEATP Update and three scenario categories: weather events, funding, and population. Each scenario category was established at tables throughout the room. With the time provided, participants were anticipated to interact with two of the three scenario categories. Interactions for each scenario category included a guided discussion and a report out to the larger group. At each table participants were prompted to sign in and received a handout with additional information about the scenario to be discussed, paper for note taking was also available to participants.

Each scenario category had two project staff members, a facilitator and a note taker:

Scenario Category	Facilitator	Note Taker
Weather Events	Laurie Cummings (HDR)	Courtney Kreis (DOT&PF) & Michelle Duncan (DOT&PF)
Funding	Kendal Ramage (DOWL)	Sarah Cripe (DOT&PF)
Population	James Marks (HDR)	Alexandria Lawrence (DOT&PF)

A total of 15 participants representing various communities, tribes, and agencies in Southeast Alaska signed in, in addition to DOT&PF project team members.





Scenario Discussion Summary

Scenario A: Weather Events

Key themes included:

- Concern about limited snow-management equipment and snow-storage capacity.
- Impacts of winter weather on emergency response need to be considered on a regional basis as well as local due to the role of some communities as transportation hubs. Events in these communities impact regional mobility.
- Historical and ongoing challenges to marine highway service when weather limits vessel operations or dock access. This also applies to aviation.
- Need for improved ferry vessels and more experienced crews trained for severe-weather operation.
- Importance of route redundancy between communities to accommodate outages in various modes (public transit, roads, ferries/boats, and flights). There is also a need for redundant access to critical facilities within a community.
- Suggestion to install additional weather-reporting stations in the region and in communities where the existing station has different weather conditions than other parts of the community.
- Suggestion for communities to develop or update emergency response plans. Need to develop contingency plans in advance of an event. Response needs to be comprehensive and consider issues such as emergency workers being able to get to/from their residence to the event, more wildlife on the road after a heavy snow, etc.
- Developing partnerships at the local and state level is essential for mitigation and response activities.
- Communities need to consider changing conditions as storms are getting more intense, getting more ice than snow, etc. Infrastructure needs to change in response such reconstructing existing facilities, changing design standards (such as requiring larger culverts, material choice, etc.)

Scenario B: Funding

Participants provided insight into the funding opportunities their communities have recently pursued or received including:

- Denali Commission
 - Road design in multiple communities
 - Dock restoration in Ketchikan
 - Good River Bridge restoration in Gustavus
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)
 - Several communities have received SS4A grants to create and implement community safety action plans
- Congressional directed funding





– Transit Funding – Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Formula Grants for Rural Areas (5311)

Issues discussed included:

- Funding gaps affect cultural connections, air transport, road maintenance, ferry service, medical travel, school travel, and supply chains.
- National Parks infrastructure is not equally accessible to all residents or communities.
- Many funding opportunities have narrow scopes that limit their usefulness.
- Federal government shutdowns delay funding and often increase overall project costs.
- Project costs frequently change between application and award; participants suggested phasing project timelines to reduce risk.
- Recommendation to pursue more public-private partnerships.
- Concern about limited agency staffing capacity and how it affects funding reliability.
- Aging infrastructure and deferred maintenance present ongoing challenges.
- Communities should consider local housing availability and contractor capacity when planning new projects or grant applications.
- Grant administrators should spend more time in communities to understand on-the-ground needs.
- Questions arose about the long-term relevance of completed feasibility studies; concerns were largely focused on economic volatility and rapidly changing costs.
- When funding is limited, basic needs such as accessibility, public transportation, and safety should be prioritized.
- Many communities need external support to prepare competitive grant applications.

Opportunities discussed included:

- Pursuing public private partnerships.
- Advocating for an increase in the Commercial Passenger Vessel (CPV) Tax, which has not been increased in over ten years.
- Pursuing federal partnerships to provide access to federal resource areas, i.e., forestry lands and seaplane bases in remote areas.
- Suggestion for improved coordination between communities to share knowledge and funding strategies.





Scenario C: Population

Participants discussed population trends and future conditions:

- Extreme weather may discourage population retention.
- Prince of Wales Island is experiencing growth in the 55+ population.
- Metlakatla is growing due to reliable transportation to and from the island.
- Working-age populations may continue to decline, due to decreased relocations into Alaska, if daily transportation needs remain unmet. The logging industry may support population growth in certain communities.
- Tourist communities, such as Ketchikan, have economies that depend heavily on low-wage tourism jobs that in the similar lower 48 communities these individuals live in outskirts of town or suburbs; Southeast communities have limited developable land to realize this model.
- Factors contributing to population decline include housing shortages, childcare limitations, high cost of living, restricted land development, and low-profit tourism.
- Increased ferry service frequency or shorter trips paired with improved surface transportation connectivity could improve regional connectivity and mobility.
- Southeast Alaska's overall population is aging and expected to continue aging.
- Concern about transit infrastructure accessibility, especially in winter.
- Funding for transportation may no longer align with changing industry needs.
- Fishing industry activity is declining, while mining may present growth opportunities.

