

August 6, 2020
Regular City Council Meeting

Discussion of What Constitutes Essential Ferry Service and What Criteria the Alaska Marine Highway Reshaping Work Group Can Use to Form Recommendations about Future Service Levels – Mayor Sivertsen

Alaska Marine Highway Reshaping Work Group

Admiral Tom Barrett, Chair
dot.amh-reshaping@alaska.gov

July 22, 2020

Dear Community Leader:

As you know on January 12, 2020, Governor Dunleavy established the Alaska Marine Highway Reshaping Work Group charged with making recommendations on the future system structure, finances, and service levels for the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). Governor Dunleavy asked me to chair this work group. A website link reflecting our activity and work is at: <http://dot.alaska.gov/comm/amh-reshaping-workgroup/>.

Our work group appreciates the broad value the marine highway system brings to coastal Alaska. Given what we have learned about the system so far and the fiscal situation Alaska confronts, our belief is the current system is not sustainable for the long term. One matter we would like to better understand is what constitutes essential community ferry needs, as well as criteria we could use to inform recommendations about future service levels. Therefore, I respectfully invite your direct feedback.

We know reliability will be one key to AMHS' long term success. Thinking in terms of a reliable system, I would like to ask what baseline of ferry service you believe is essential to support community, economic, and social well-being that cannot be met by other means (such as commercial air, and/or barge services). Does that need for ferry service significantly change between winter and summer? What frequency of service would address the essential service you need? For example, can your needs be met with an every two-week schedule? How frequently does your school use the ferry system? Is it movement of people, vehicles, or freight that is most important to your community? Can your essential needs for freight transport be met without transporting vehicles? Or, could a combination of alternating passenger and vehicle service address your requirements? And, of course, any other perspective or ideas you wish to share about what could be done to structure a more reliable system.

I know many of you and members of your community worked with Northern Economics and other study groups including the SE Conference and the Marine Transportation Advisory Board to identify community needs in the Reshaping Study and other reports. Consequently, this may seem somewhat repetitive. Nonetheless, given what we perceive as a need for substantial changes if we are to have a more reliable and efficient system, we believe the reshaping working group would benefit from direct feedback from you. We want to offer the opportunity for you to provide that as we put together recommendations that can realistically improve the system while remaining fiscally prudent.

Please submit any written comments you wish to offer to dot.amh-reshaping@alaska.gov by August 10, 2020. If you wish to set up a time to meet, via teleconference or webex, with the working group please contact Tera Ollila by email at tera.ollila@alaska.gov.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to submit your thoughts.

Sincerely,

Tom Barrett

Karl Amylon

From: Nils Andreassen <nils@akml.org>
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 4:15 PM
To: mayor@cityofangoon.com; calvin.casipit@gustavus-ak.gov; jhill@haines.ak.us; mayor@cityofhoonah.org; beth.weldon@juneau.org; citymanager@cityofkake.org; Bob Sivertsen; mayor@metlakatla.com; mayorrowler@pelicancity.org; fvtwilight39094@gmail.com; assemblypaxton@cityofsitka.org; Andrew Cremata; citytke@gmail.com; stephenprysunka@gmail.com; mayor@cityofcordova.net; mayor@ci.homer.ak.us; joneil@valdezak.gov; joe.bereskin@akutanak.us; chignikcitymayor@gmail.com; administratorcoldbay@gci.net; mayor@falsepass.net; hmackmayor@gmail.com; oldharborcitycouncil@gmail.com; mayor@ouzinkie.us; cityofportlions@gmail.com; Rodneyd@kgbak.us; pbranson@city.kodiak.ak.us
Cc: Alekka Fullerton; rorie.watt@juneau.org; citymanager@cityofkake.org; Karl Amylon; connie@metlakatla.com; cityhall@pelicancity.org; sgiesbrecht@petersburgak.gov; John.leach@cityofsitka.org; e.deach@skagway.org; citytke@gmail.com; lvonbargen@wrangell.com; manager@yakutatak.us; citymanager@cityofcordova.net; rabbound@ci.homer.ak.us; citymanager@cityofseldovia.com; mdetter@valdezak.gov; citymanager@whittieralaska.gov; tuna.scanlan@akutanak.us; chignikcitymayor@gmail.com; administratorcoldbay@gci.net; cityoffalsepass@ak.net; amberj@kingcoveak.org; oldharborcitycouncil@gmail.com; cityclerk@ouzinkie.org; cityofportlions@gmail.com; jkeeler@sandpointak.org; rubend@kgbak.us; mtvenge@city.kodiak.ak.us; Dianne; Melissa Kolwaite; Heather Brakes
Subject: I've got a Ferry feeling
Attachments: Community letter_AMH Reshaping work group.pdf

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It's been awhile since I communicated on this topic, and I have to admit I've been distracted. In the meantime the AMHS working group established by the Governor has been, um, working...

Most of you should have received the attached letter. I can imagine a collective, "here we go again"...

I was thinking, instead of each of you drafting your responses, which all get done in isolation and there's no clear sense of what others might be saying, and no clear coordination overall, that maybe we work together? You can still respond as you want, or should, from your perspectives, but it would also be good, I think, to submit a joint response.

Instead of a long memo that everyone contributes to and agrees on, we were thinking a Zoom meeting where we record each of your responses to the questions, include dialogue and discussion, and overall point to the importance of the system to your communities. We could spend some time thinking through how to be efficient throughout, but since the Working Group hasn't invited each of you necessarily to participate in their discussions, maybe we could bring you to them in other ways.

I think, in terms of flow, that AML could coordinate a brief community overview slide for each of you to have up while you're speaking, switch to a slide with your current or preferred schedule, and have you explain why it's important. It could take two minutes or so for each community, and we'd save time at the end for some roundtable discussion of some of what's been addressed so far in the working group, or what we hope to have accomplished.

The whole things would be recorded and made presentable as a deliverable back to the Working Group, as well as available more broadly if you want.

Please let me know soon – by the end of this week? – if you like the general concept, so that we can start putting some things together and coordinating a joint call. Thanks!

Nils Andreassen
Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League
One Sealaska Plaza, Suite 200, Juneau, AK 99801
Direct (907) 790-5305 or Cell (907) 351-4982
“Strengthening Alaska Municipalities”

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