

TRANSPORTATION

Goals

These goals pertain to all forms of surface, air, and water transportation and all forms of utility or resource transportation corridors.

Support Plan Designations. Develop a transportation system needed to implement this plan and integrate it with other area wide transportation needs.

Minimize Costs. Develop a transportation system that has the lowest possible long-range costs, including construction, operations, and maintenance. Avoid unnecessary duplication of transportation facilities

Minimize Adverse Impacts. Develop a transportation system with minimal adverse impact on the environment and aesthetic and cultural features.

Promote Efficiency. Develop a transportation system that uses land and energy resources efficiently and encourages compact, efficient development patterns.

Ensure Public Safety. Develop a transportation system with a high standard of public safety.

Management Guidelines

A. Identification of Potential Transportation Routes. No major, new transportation routes are necessary to support the land use designations made in this plan. The plan does establish guidelines (see Chapter 3) for reserving an adequate corridor for a future pipeline along the existing trans-Alaska oil pipeline right-of-way. More detailed route alignment and feasibility analysis must be completed before the routes can be considered final.

To the extent feasible and prudent, DNR will avoid actions incompatible with the eventual construction of potential transportation routes identified in this plan until final decisions are made on the feasibility of these routes.

B. Access Plans for Land Offerings or Resource Development Projects. Before a land offering or the initiation of a resource development project, DNR will work with the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF) to identify appropriate locations for access and will also identify responsibilities for design, construction, and maintenance of any proposed transportation facilities. Access plans will be developed in consultation with affected local governments.

C. Joint Use and Consolidation of Surface Access. Joint use and consolidation of surface access routes and facilities will be encouraged wherever it is feasible and prudent to do so. Surface access also should be sited and designed to accommodate future development and avoid unnecessary duplication. The feasibility of using an existing route or facility should be evaluated before the use of a new route or facility is authorized.

D. Protection of Hydrologic Systems. Transportation facilities will, to the extent feasible and prudent, be located to avoid significant effects on the quality or quantity of adjacent surface water resources or detracting from recreational use of the waterway. The following guidelines apply:

1. Stream crossings should be avoided. When a stream must be crossed to construct a road, the crossing should be as close as possible to a 90° angle to the stream. Stream crossings should be made at stable sections of the stream channel.
2. Construction in wetlands, floodplains, and other poorly drained areas should be minimized and existing drainage patterns maintained. Culverts should be installed where necessary to enable free movement of fluids, mineral salts, and nutrients.
3. Bridges and culverts should be large enough to accommodate or positioned to avoid altering the direction and velocity of stream flow or interfering with migrating or spawning activities of fish and wildlife. Bridges and culverts should span the entire nonvegetated stream channel; those intended for permanent use should be large enough to accommodate at least the 25-year peak discharge (where known). Bridges and culverts should provide adequate clearance for boat, pedestrian, horse, and large game passage whenever these uses occur or are anticipated at significant levels.
4. Disturbed stream banks should be recontoured, revegetated, or other protective measures should be taken to prevent soil erosion into adjacent waters.
5. During winter, snow ramps, snow bridges, or other methods should be used to provide access across frozen rivers, lakes, and streams to avoid cutting, eroding, or degrading of banks. These facilities should be removed immediately after final use.
6. All transportation facility construction and maintenance should comply with water quality standards of the State of Alaska.

E. Protection of Fish and Wildlife Resources. Important fish and wildlife habitats such as riparian areas, wildlife movement corridors, important wintering or calving areas, and threatened or endangered species habitat should be avoided in siting transportation routes unless no other feasible and prudent alternatives exist. Location of routes and timing of construction should be determined in consultation with the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G).

F. Road Pullouts. Where road corridors contact streams, habitat corridors, or other areas of expected recreational use, sufficient acreage should be retained in public ownership to accommodate public access, safety requirements, and expected recreational use. The size and location of pullouts should be determined in consultation with the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, DOT/PF, and ADF&G.

G. Timber Salvage From Rights-of-Way. All timber having high value for commercial or personal use should be salvaged on rights-of-way to be cleared for construction.

H. Off-Road Vehicle Activity. Most off-road vehicle activity does not require a permit on state lands. By statute and regulation, off-road use of vehicles such as snowmachines, jeeps, and small all-terrain vehicles does require a permit on lands designated by DNR as 'special use' lands (depending on the restrictions made for each particular area) and usually requires a permit on state park system lands, fish and game sanctuaries, refuges and critical habitat areas, and for crossing anadromous fish streams. In addition, activity by larger vehicles may require a permit on any state lands.

When permits are issued for off-road vehicle use under 11 AAC 96 or in specially designated areas, they will require that disturbance of soils, vegetation, fish and

wildlife populations, drainage patterns, and water quality be minimized. Operations should be scheduled when adequate snow and ground frost are available to protect the ground surface, or should require the use of low ground pressure vehicles, avoidance of problem areas, or other techniques to protect areas likely to be damaged. (See p. 2-55.) Before permits are issued, the land manager will consult with affected agencies.

In addition, off-road vehicle permits generally should not be given for vehicle use in important wildlife habitats during sensitive periods. If such vehicle activity is essential and no other practical alternative exists, it should be allowed only as an occasional use. This policy will be applied only when significant wildlife populations are likely to be present. ADF&G will be consulted to help identify important habitat areas and sensitive periods that might warrant this restriction.

I. Roadless Areas. Some areas may be designated by the state and future local governments as roadless and managed to exclude construction of new roads to protect particular resources or forms of resource use. Settlement projects may be included in roadless areas. Roadless areas would be designated during transportation planning, the disposal project review process, or other interagency decision process conducted with public participation.

J. Other Design Standards. For other guidelines that affect the design of transportation structures, see DOT/PF's preconstruction guidelines.

K. Siting Utilities. Settlement support facilities, including but not limited to, generation and transmission structures or cables and buried sewage and water lines, will be sited to minimize adverse impacts to other valuable resources or uses.

L. Copper River Highway. A road to link Cordova with the state highway network has been proposed, and portions of two proposed routes run into the Copper River Basin. Three alternative routes have been considered for the road. All start from the existing road that ends near Miles Lake at the Million Dollar Bridge. One route follows the old Copper River and Northwestern Railroad Right-of-Way from the Million Dollar Bridge along the Copper River to Chitina. At Chitina, the highway would join the Edgerton Highway. This railroad right-of-way is shown on the trails map contained in Appendix D of the plan. The right-of-way, managed by the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, crosses land owned by the federal government and Native corporations. This route does not cross any state lands (except near Cordova where the road is already built) and, therefore, is not affected by the Copper River Basin Area Plan.

An alternative route follows the railroad right-of-way to the Tiekel River, then follows the Tiekel River and joins the Richardson Highway near Mile Post 45. The land covered by the last few miles of the Tiekel River route are to be selected by the state. If this land becomes state owned, DNR will keep open the option of using this route.

The third alternative route would leave the Copper River and follow the Tasnuna River. It would continue over Marshall Pass and join up with the Richardson Highway south of Thompson Pass. The only state land in this area is near where the road would connect with the Richardson Highway. The area south of Thompson Pass is in the Prince William Sound Planning Area.

M. Other Guidelines Affecting Transportation. Several other guidelines may affect transportation. See the following sections of this chapter:

Agriculture
Fish and wildlife habitat
Forestry
Materials
Recreation, cultural, and scenic resources
Settlement
Subsurface resources
Public access
Stream corridors and instream flow
Trail management
Wetlands management