

Dall sheep along the Seward Highway delight visitors, frustrate residents, and raise safety questions.

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Keystone Strategies and Critical Actions for the Future of the Seward Highway

This section outlines three keystone strategies to serve as a basis for decision making along the Seward Highway Corridor and identifies a number of specific critical actions needed to ensure that the keystone strategies shape future opportunities along the corridor.

The keystone strategies are objective and broad based concepts encompassing the wide range of resources, needs, opportunities and threats currently present along the corridor. The three keystone strategies are:

1. **The Seward Highway should provide a safe, aesthetic and world-class driving experience.**
2. **Effective visitor management is necessary to ensure long term economic development through tourism.**
3. **Haphazard development poses the greatest threat to the highway's ability to attract visitors and quality development.**

These three keystones, if integrated into the policies of resource managers and the public ethic valuing responsible development with land protection, we assume that the Seward Highway will remain a breathtakingly beautiful resource for Alaskans to enjoy and a vibrant and sustainable tourism resource capable of generating millions of dollars in tourism revenue.

1. The Seward Highway should provide a safe, aesthetic and world-class driving experience.

The Seward Highway is already recognized as one of the great driving experiences in the world. National Scenic Byway, U.S. Forest Service and Alaska State byway designations, this Corridor Partnership Plan, and the countless visitors who drive the highway each year testify to the highway's remarkable ability to attract. Maintaining the highway as a world-class driving experience while maintaining safety and efficiency is one of the great challenges of this plan.

Safety, beauty, and efficiency need not be mutually exclusive. The great beauty of the Seward Highway corridor should assist and guide management decisions regarding the road and viewsbed. Safety improvements should be undertaken not only with an understanding of reduced accident statistics, but also with an understanding of any impacts such improvements may have on the aesthetic quality of the corridor. This is not to suggest that safety take a "back seat" to scenic views, but rather to suggest that the Seward Highway warrants additional consideration due to its outstanding scenic qualities. This plan simply seeks the acknowledgment of these additional considerations during the planning phase of future projects. If for example, lighting is needed at an intersection for increased safety, this plan encourages the further question: "What type of lighting will provide the desired safety effect and have the least visual intrusion on the natural landscape?"

2. Effective visitor management is necessary to ensure long term economic development through tourism.

As tourism continues to increase along the Seward Highway, in the Kenai Peninsula, and in Alaska in general, it is essential that careful strategies for visitor management are considered. Sustainable tourism is tourism that can continue to grow and perpetuate itself into the future without destroying resources. It recognizes that balance is essential to a stable and prosperous tourism economy. Visitors and facilities must support one another. Visitor numbers must be responsive to site conditions—150 people at an overlook promoted heavily for romantic sunsets are sure to disappoint.

Communities with new and growing tourism economies are often at greatest risk. As visitor numbers increase and retail and tax revenues show a similar surge, the rally call becomes "more is even better." Many communities fail to study why people are coming, and what they are expecting. Many more fail to investigate the impacts tourism will have on local residents and their daily lives.

If, for example, a community's greatest draw and tourism appeal is solitude an escape from the intensity of metropolitan life—overbuilding of motels, for example, may soon destroy that community's competitive edge, and drive visitors elsewhere. Sustainable tourism, however, would suggest that the community marketing solitude increase their market share by investigating creative ways in which to locate cabins in the woods, or the development of smaller bed and breakfasts and rustic lodges. Too many communities, unwittingly, "kill the goose that laid the golden egg" chasing short term profits rather than carefully plotting a future.

3. Haphazard development poses the greatest threat to the highway's ability to attract visitors and quality development.

The Seward Highway today is defined, largely, by a pattern of undeveloped and open spaces with clusters, or nodes of development. As a result, the visitor today can experience the scenic and natural beauty with few interruptions or obstacles. This ability to experience a relatively "undisturbed" landscape contributes greatly to the appeal of the Seward Highway, and arguably to the businesses that derive their income from tourism dollars.

Haphazard development in the corridor is a significant threat not only to the beauty of the highway but also to the economy of the Seward Highway corridor and the Kenai Peninsula. By maintaining the corridor as an area of scenic beauty, it can continue to attract quality development projects such as Alyeska, the Kenai Princess Lodge, and the Sealife Center. Haphazard development,

Keystone Strategy 1:

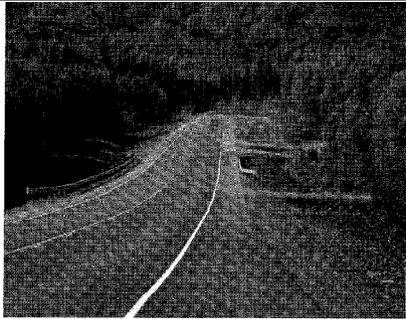
The Seward Highway should provide a safe, aesthetic and world-class driving experience.



The Seward Highway through its great scenic beauty and abundant recreational opportunities possesses all the qualities of a world-class destination. It belongs to a rare group of American roads such as the Historic Columbia River Highway in Oregon, the Big Sur Highway in California, and the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia and North Carolina that are cherished icons of the American landscape. As one of these unique roadways, the Seward Highway must be managed with a special attention to the grandeur of the landscape and the special details that elevate an ordinary transportation corridor to that of a world-class highway. The Seward Highway is already a All-American Road by every measurable standard. The listed critical actions will ensure that the Seward Highway maintains and enhances its standing among the world's great roads.

developers.

Conveyances must be managed carefully. The transfer of lands from government to private sector along the Seward Highway provides an excellent opportunity to ensure that quality development practices are the norm, rather than the exception. Conveyances can also be selected to ensure that significant viewsheds and natural features remain undisturbed.



The Seward Highway near Bird.

Critical Actions

Each action identifies potential partners to implement the action. A lead partner or partners has/have been identified by an asterisk. The critical actions have been divided into aesthetic considerations and safety considerations

1. Aesthetic Considerations

Aesthetic considerations address the visual quality of the road and the corridor. What will the traveler see and experience. Aesthetic considerations will work to ensure that myriad individual elements and policies that direct daily activity along the corridor will be implemented with a sensitivity to the natural beauty and recognition that the quality of the traveler experience directly impacts the economic vitality of the route through

however, be developed as credible options and alternatives elevating the overall visual quality of the route.

K.1-A Design Theme

Recommended: Establish an overall design theme for the Seward Highway. A design theme would establish a mutually agreed upon "expectation" for the physical management and appearance of the Seward Highway corridor. A design theme might, for example, endorse a certain guardrail design, establish uniform parameters for curb cuts, address the maintenance or improvement of critical views, identify environmentally appropriate building materials for corridor development, and encourage greater interaction among interpretative features.

Potential Partners: USFS*, ADOT&PF, DNR-Parks

K.1-B Design Integration

Recommended: Establish a greater role for landscape

most efficient, safe and cost effective manner, such professional representation is essential. The advice of a landscape architect can assist in selecting appropriate roadside details, locations of pullouts, clear zone and viewshed management. Additionally such an individual can make recommendations regarding the sensitive alignment of the roadway within the landscape. The ADOT&PF's commitment to landscape architecture and coordination with landscape architects at DNR-Parks and the U.S. Forest Service early in the design and decision-making process could effectively avoid many of the "sensitivity" problems that inevitably arise in a public works project by both addressing issues before public presentation and instilling public confidence in the

agency with a trained and licensed professional designer on staff. The MOU between ADOT&PF and USFS can serve as a model for design quality.

Potential Partners: ADOT&PF*, USFS, DNR-Parks, Municipality of Anchorage Urban Design Commission, local governments

K.1-C Roadway Details

Recommended: Avoid the use of highway appurtenances (e.g., Jersey barrier medians) in the roadway that will detract from the scenic and kinesthetic pleasure of driving the Seward Highway. Given that most of the Seward Highway was recently or soon will be improved and resurfaced to accepted state and federal standards for lane width, alignment, shoulder width and vegetative clearance, this recommendation is directed at future

Potential Partners: ADOT&PF*, USFS, DNR-Parks

K.1-D Urban Landscape

The Municipality of Anchorage has a beautification program called the "City of Lights and Flowers," which has resulted in colorful displays of flowers throughout the city during the summer months, and bright, attractive lighting displays during the winter months. The Municipality is currently initiating an area streetscape development plan which will address the Seward Highway along with other street beautification efforts.

Recommended: Develop a landscape plan specifically focused on the Seward Highway for the Anchorage Gateway Segment. Such a plan should articulate a landscape design that moves from the formal urbanism of central Anchorage to the natural landscape of Potter Marsh at the southern end of the segment. Such a plan, working with the existing "City of Lights and Flowers" program of the Municipality, should help to transition the traveler between the urban and natural landscapes.
Potential Partners: Municipality of Anchorage*, ADOT&PF

K.1-E Guardrails

Recommended: Concrete-core stone-faced barrier walls are recommended in locations where the Seward Highway parallels significant bodies of water, and the views to such bodies of water are largely unobstructed (except for minor vegetation.) This guardrail treatment is recommended along the water-side of the highway next to Turnagain Arm, Summit Lake, Upper Trail Lake, and Kenai Lake. In areas in which the distance between the road and the water body increases and/or significant vegetation blocks views to the water, it is recommended to use a standard steel-backed timber guardrail. (These recommended guardrails meet FHWA crash tests and are approved for use.)

Potential Partners: ADOT&PF*, USFS, DNR-Parks



Top: crash tested and approved concrete-core barrier wall under construction. Bottom: completed concrete-core barrier wall.

K.1-F Clear Zones

Recommended: Minimal AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) recommended clear zones (an area kept free of vegetation parallel to the highway) should be utilized along the Seward Highway in order to allow the traveler the opportunity to experience the landscape. In areas where guardrail occurs within the clear zone area vegetation beyond the guardrail should be preserved. Guardrail and other barriers should be considered in significant vegetated areas as an alternative to clear zone development. In developed areas with lower speeds, the clear zone should be reduced as recommended by AASHTO. Plantings in clear zones should be of natural vegetation to discourage moose and other wildlife from grazing along the roadside.

Potential Partners: ADOT&PF*, USFS, DNR-Parks

K.1-G Roadside Buffers

Recommended: Maintain roadside vegetative buffers in all locations along the Seward Highway. Buffers should be 150' of existing natural vegetation beyond the right-of-way (ROW) in Corridor Development Areas and 50' (beyond the ROW) in designated Nodal Development Centers where a village character is designed. (See Keystone Idea 3 for a discussion of development areas.) Protect roadside vegetative buffers in all locations where

the existing vegetation provides a buffer between structures and the roadway (e.g., Moose Pass).

Existing natural vegetation is preferred due to climate and exposure issues.

Potential Partners: DNR-Division of Land*, US Forest Service, ADOT&PF, Kenai Peninsula Borough, City of Anchorage, City of Seward

K.1-H View Management

It cannot be denied, or stressed enough, that the Seward Highway offers one stunning view after another. The Seward Highway is a unique national scenic resource—views and viewsheds are critical to the success of this Corridor Partnership Plan. It is the visual access to scenery that makes the Seward Highway a unique driving resource and offers the corridor its most valuable edge for creating economic development.

When you stop your car and look at a distant mountain or a nearby sparkling lake, you are experiencing a view. The area between the object of admiration and your eye is the view. If, at the same spot, you were to look all about you would be experiencing a viewshed. A viewshed is, in theory, everything your eye can take in at a given point in space.

Despite its great size and vastness, the Seward Highway corridor is potentially vulnerable to insensitive development practices.

Recommended: Inventory significant views and viewsheds found along the Seward Highway. This can be accomplished through photographic inventories,



The view from the Seward Highway at Girdwood.

community and resource manager's site visits and observations, or more formal USFS inventory methodologies. Encourage partner agencies to consult the viewshed inventory when making land management decisions to avoid any negative impacts to terrain, natural vegetation patterns, or waterways.

Potential Partners: DNR-Division of Land*, USFS, ADF&G, Kenai Peninsula Borough, Municipality of Anchorage, City of Seward, Land Owners

K.1-I Pullouts

Recommended: Pullouts should be clearly differentiated between those intended for slow traffic turnouts and those intended for viewing dramatic landscapes or wildlife. Additionally, pullouts should be clearly identified for, or prohibited from use by, motorcoaches. Pullouts designed for motorcoaches should provide acceleration space to allow busses to safely reenter the main flow of traffic. For the construction of new pullouts for motorcoaches, it is recommended that the partnership team investigate a cost sharing program with the major tour operators who would most benefit from such facilities.

Pullouts intended solely for slow vehicle passing should ideally be located in areas not offering spectacular views and should not offer any pedestrian or traveler amenities such as interpretation or walks.

Potential Partners: ADOT&PF*, USFS*, DNR-Parks*, ADF&G, major tour operators

K.1-J Bike Paths

Recommended: In accordance with TRAAK goals, separated path bike routes should be created wherever possible along the Seward Highway. Separated pathways may be located within the right-of-way, or possibly within the corridor buffer or potential bike path easements beyond the buffer. The most appropriate location of separated pathways will depend on terrain, scenic attractions, safety, and other factors.

Potential Partners: ADOT&PF, TRAAK*, USFS, DNR-Parks, Municipality of Anchorage, Moose Pass, City of Seward

K.1-K Scenic Highway Identification Signage

Recommended: Seward Highway logo signs are recommended to identify the route as a scenic highway. Such signs should be located directly beneath every Alaska State route marker. To avoid clutter of multiple byway identification signs (National, USFS) it is recommended such signs appear only at ceremonial gateways within specifically administered sites, such as a USFS managed pullout.

Potential Partners: ADOT&PF*, USFS*, DNR-Parks*

K.1-L Highway Signage

Research for this plan led to many comments expressing concern over too many signs along the Seward Highway and the visual clutter such signage creates. Additionally, there is a general inconsistency in the nature of signage, in particular at pullouts where some are identified as scenic viewing areas where others, similarly scenic, were labeled as passing turnouts.

Recommended: A Seward Highway sign inventory of existing signs and locations, and a Seward Highway sign policy clearly expressing the type and nature of signs to be posted as specific locations.

Potential Partners: ADOT&PF*, USFS, DNR-Parks

2. Safety Considerations

Highway safety is of paramount importance when considering the management of the route as an All-American Road. Highway safety and aesthetic sensibility, however, need not be mutually exclusive. The Seward Highway's intensive use by local users, commercial traffic and visitors has already demonstrated conflicts among user groups. The fundamental conflict is between commercial and through traffic that generally prefers higher speeds and tourist traffic that generally prefers a more leisurely speed to allow for unexpected stops and viewing. As traffic volumes increase, such conflicts and potential safety issues are likely to increase. A holistic view of the road recognizing its special user groups, in particular the conflicts inherent between local users familiar with the road and first-time visitors is essential.

One of the greatest safety issues now facing the highway is this conflict between leisure and visitor travelers, and local resident and commercial use. As state tourism increases and the populations of both Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula grow, this conflict is likely to increase.

Numerous parkways and scenic roads in the United States have consistently shown themselves to be safer than standard roadways. This is no doubt due to the high level of cooperation, coordination, and planning such roads regularly receive. Managing the travelers aesthetic experience along the Seward Highway as one of high quality should also ensure a high safety component. A

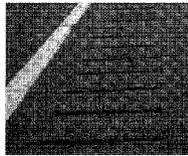
clearly ordered road with a strong design theme constantly and silently guides and directs those unfamiliar with the route.

Virtually reconstructed in its entirety in recent years, with planned projects and construction currently completing the rebuilding, the Seward Highway provides many of the modern safety features recommended by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

While it is impossible to address potential conflicts along the entire length of the route, it is possible to identify areas where conflicts between leisure travelers and local travelers are most likely to occur. These are: areas of significant views, wildlife viewing, and service areas.

K.1-M Grooved Centerline and Edge Warnings

Recommended: In areas where motorists are distracted by watchable wildlife (such as the Dall sheep at Windy Corner), or by breathtaking views (such as sunset over Kenai Lake) it is recommended that grooved pavement/rumble strips be located along the edge of the traveled way and along the centerline of the Seward Highway. Such strips, flush with the pavement and roughly 12" in width would alert the distracted motorist unconsciously straying out of their lane while attempting a better view of the Dall sheep, for example. Care should be taken in areas where bicyclists use the shoulder or the roadway to



Grooved edge warnings along the Parks Highway south of Denali National Park.

ensure that they are provided with adequate paved areas free of grooved pavement, and that advance notification of such pavement is provided. While such a warning device would be ineffective during winter months, it would be fully operational during peak travel months when conflicts are most likely to occur.

Potential Partners: ADOT&PF*

K.1-N Restricted Turning Movements

Recommended: It is recommended that access via left turn to some pull-outs be prohibited. In some instances this recommendation is based on limited sight-distance, in others due to the difficulty of making a left turn in heavy traffic, thus creating a stacking problem. For very popular turnouts, a left turning lane may provide a satisfactory solution.

Potential Partners: ADOT&PF

K.1-O Left Turning Lanes

Recommended: In addition to the provision of left turning lanes at certain turnouts, the inclusion of left turning lanes in new and developing nodes should be considered. Left turning lanes are already provided at the Girdwood and Portage nodes. Left turning lanes should also be considered at high traffic turnouts.

Potential Partners: ADOT&PF*, USFS, DNR-Parks, Kenai Peninsula Borough, Municipality of Anchorage, City of Seward

K.1-P Right Turning Lanes

Recommended: In undeveloped areas along the route, where speed is uniformly high and entering roadways are rare, right turning lanes should be considered to allow exiting traffic a safe deceleration area free from approaching traffic from behind.

Potential Partners: ADOT&PF

K.1-Q Center Turning Lanes

Recommended: Increasingly popular as a device for managing left turning traffic in commercial areas, center turning lanes (a single, continuous lane between travel lanes allowing for left turning movements by traffic in both directions) are an increased safety risk. While it is true they allow left turning vehicles to move from the travel lanes to a central waiting area, they can also be the source of head-on collisions when drivers, traveling in opposite directions each want to make a left turn at the same location. Center turning lanes should be carefully studied before use on the Seward Highway. A policy of coordinated curb-cuts and shared driveways and access roads can limit the need for center turning lanes through the provision of safer left-turn lanes at key points.

Potential Partners: ADOT&PF

K.1-R Shoulders

Recommended: In areas of the Seward Highway yet to be reconstructed, appropriate shoulders should be provided as a safety enhancement. Care should be taken in Development Nodes and existing communities to ensure that shoulders do not impair pedestrian safety. Shoulder widths should match AASHTO recommendations based on speed and adjacent development conditions.

Whenever appropriate minimum shoulder widths (as approved by the AASHTO recommended range) should be adopted.

Potential Partners: ADOT&PF*, Kenai Peninsula Borough, local communities

K.1-S Traffic Calming or Speed Management

Recommended: In areas of intensive pedestrian traffic adjacent to or crossing the Seward Highway, it is recommended that ADOT&PF implement tools to maintain a lower speed for through traffic. Such measures should not only be investigated in traditional pedestrian nodes such as community centers, but also in areas experiencing intense visitor use for wildlife viewing or recreational access. Pedestrian fatalities account for approximately 15 to 20 % of auto-related fatalities annually in the United States (14.1% in Alaska in 1994, ranking Alaska 22nd in the US, with 1 being the least safe and 50 the safest. 1994 is the most recent year for which statistics are available).

Potential Partners: ADOT&PF*, Kenai Peninsula Borough, Moose Pass, City of Seward, Local Governments, Local Communities

K.1-T Management of Curb Cuts

ADOT&PF, working with local governments should develop a policy for curb cuts and property access along the Seward Highway. As land is transferred into the hands of private property owners and developers along the route, the need for new access points to previously undeveloped property will become an issue facing the

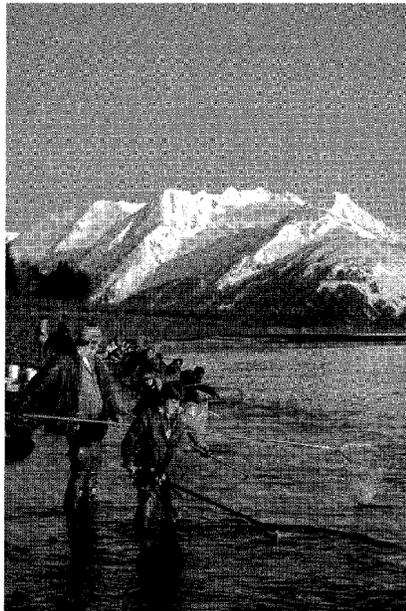
management of the route. Unmonitored property access will likely lead to random access points, unnecessary or excessive curb cuts, and potential safety problems as drivers leaving the Seward Highway access property via left turns, in areas of limited sight-distance, or at oblique angles.

Recommended: A general policy encouraging reasonable and safe access, shared driveways when possible, and collector or shared access in development nodes, should be developed before land transfers take place to ensure that all property owners have fair and equal access opportunities.

Potential Partners: ADOT&PF*, Kenai Peninsula Borough, City of Seward, Municipality of Anchorage

Keystone Strategy 2:

Effective visitor management is necessary to ensure long term economic development through tourism.



Intensive fishing, sometimes called "combat fishing".

This Corridor Partnership Plan does not suggest that change is inevitable or that it isn't desired, but rather to suggest that the Seward Highway has opportunities for preservation, growth, and development that can all be accommodated within a program that recognizes the special appeal of the scenic corridor. This must be done to (A) enhance the recreational qualities of the area while (B) safeguarding the natural beauty, open space, and other primary attractions, and (C) provide safe and efficient transportation. Balancing all the issues influencing the use and development of the Seward Highway, if properly understood, planned for, accommodated or avoided, can increase the basic appeal of the route and quality of service to both the resident and visitor.

The primary challenge facing the Seward Highway is to identify strategies to balance increased numbers of visitors in the future so as to avoid a range of potential future problems. Three areas essential to a vibrant and sustainable tourism industry are the protection of natural resources, quality expansion of public infrastructure, and user facilities that are accessible, convenient and well maintained.

1. Protect Natural Resources

Natural resources define the Seward Highway corridor and provide its scenic quality. The greatest and most irreversible threat to the corridor's scenic quality is new development in the viewsheds. The anticipated land transfers that will move land from federal ownership to state, local, or private hands make this threat both very real and immediate for the highway corridor. The destruction of natural resources can also be due to direct overuse by visitors or indirect overuse affiliated with activity within the corridor. For example, overuse by visitors could lead to trail erosion, disturbance of natural habitats, and littering problems. Indirect overuse could lead to groundwater pollution from too much wastewater or highly visible utility lines servicing new uses along the corridor.

2. Quality Expansion of Public Infrastructure

Public infrastructure is needed to ensure a healthy and satisfied visitor experience and is a key component in managing capacity. New infrastructure; e.g., roads widened, signs erected, new public structures built, constructed in ways that damage the character of existing communities or compromise the scenic quality of the corridor will ultimately compromise the visitor experience.

3. User Facilities Must be Accessible, Convenient and Well Maintained

The severe congestion of visitors and traffic at key points along the corridor during peak travel season will diminish the route's appeal as a recreational and tourism destination. Extensive traffic tie-ups, unacceptable waits at restroom and service facilities, and overcrowding at visitor facilities will further force "overflow" into inappropriate areas (local "special areas," private property,

wilderness areas) as visitors search out alternative rest rooms, lodging and recreational experiences.

The Seward Highway functions well today and has few significant problems. However, the Seward Highway is also near its capacity on a number of fronts and thus increased visitation and use in the future may create significant problems. To determine the time to anticipate and

Effective visitor management can

- avoid conflicts among visitor types competing for the same views and experiences
- allow resource managers to target specific visitor types
- allow resource managers to redirect visitors to locations that are better able to handle increased visitation.
- enable ADOT&PF to minimize conflicts between commercial traffic and tourist traffic
- allow local residents to continue to enjoy their "own backyard"
- ensure that visitors recreate in areas best suited to their abilities, thus reducing emergency situations.
- encourage visitation growth in the shoulder and off-season to support businesses dependent on a tourism economy.
- manage traffic volumes by encouraging alternate transportation modes for visitors such as bus and rail.
- manage traffic speeds in areas of intensive visitor use.

Critical Actions

Each action identifies potential partners to implement the action. A lead partner or partners has/have been identified by an asterisk.

These recommendations are bound together by the challenge of managing tourism in a way that will generate

and community character of the Seward Highway.

1. Tourism Management

K.2-A Rest Area Strategy

Recommended: Adopt a highway restroom policy that creates and promotes a limited number of larger facilities (General Traveler Rest Areas- GTRA's) and discourages highway travelers from using smaller facilities which should be targeted for specific user groups (e.g., campers and hikers.) Seek to create four GTRA's along the Seward Highway — one in Segments 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the highway. Spread maintenance responsibilities evenly among the major management entities along the highway. Specifically, the following entities should be responsible for one GTRA each: Chugach State Park, the US Forest Service, the ADOT&PF and the City of Seward.

- Chugach State Park has several rest area facilities. One should be selected to serve as a GTRA and be signed as such. Private leasing and management would be the optimal arrangement for DNR-Parks. Other rest rooms should be de-promoted and targeted to specific user groups.
- The Forest Service's Turnagain Pass development project will include a GTRA funded by ADOT&PF in the privately leased portion of this project. All other USFS restrooms should be de-promoted for

the general traveling public. Move facilities and signing away from the road. Do not indicate these smaller facilities on general information maps.

- ADOT&PF should create and site a pilot rest area project in Moose Pass (which will be near ADOT&PF's maintenance facility.) This is a new endeavor for ADOT&PF and it should seek advice

arrangement.

- The City of Seward, USFS and other public agencies will include rest room facilities (open during business hours) within the new multi-agency government building which is being planned.
- Public restrooms in Seward are currently available at the Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center, the Small Boat Harbor, and along Waterfront Park.
- The Portage area should be monitored after the opening of the Whittier Tunnel to determine if traffic waiting to use the tunnel will necessitate additional rest room facilities.

Potential Partners:

ADOT&PF*, USFS*, DNR-Parks*, City of Seward*, Major Tour Operators



Public restroom, Chugach State Park.

K.2-B Forest Service Recreation Management

Recommended: The Forest Service should incorporate within its upcoming planning effort the concept of placing different types of recreation and management emphasis in different parts of the Seward Highway. Specifically, the Recreation Opportunities Spectrum method should be meshed with this Plan's distinctions between Segments 2, 3, 4 and 5.

1. Assist the leadership of the Chugach State Park along with assistance from Girdwood, The Municipality of Anchorage, local businesses and the Alaska Railroad to develop an integrated visitor management strategy for Segment 2 that focuses on day visitors within the segment, reduces congestion, provides good information on the range of activities in the segment, and directs people to GTRA's. Work with this framework to direct economic activity to local businesses through joint promotion, visitor information maps and public/private facility partnerships.

2. Consider capping visitation and use of lands in Segment 3 through ceilings on facility development (i.e., campgrounds, parking, etc.) and through careful use of signing or interpretive facilities so as not to increase visitation to sensitive or congested areas. Use the Turnagain Pass facility as the main visitation point in Segment 3 for the general traveler. Provide facilities and information in this location that will send the message that the remainder of Segment 3 is primarily a scenic driving experience rather than a "get out of your car and explore" experience.

3. Work in partnership with Moose Pass to create directional signage, increase interpretive facilities and improve trails and public access points to the lakes. The objective should be to target Moose Pass in people's minds as a place to both recreate and find needed services. This will direct more economic activity to Moose Pass in Segment 4 and relieve use pressures on trails and facilities in Segment 3.

4. Work with the City of Seward to determine if there is interest in the creation of trails or facilities within Segment 5.

Potential Partners: USFS*, DNR-Parks, ADF&G, City of Seward, Moose Pass

K.2-C State Parks Recreation Management

Recommended: Develop active partnerships with private land holders in Indian, Bird and Girdwood to establish a GTRA in Segment 2. Use an existing State Park facility or explore the creation of a new facility based on a public/private partnership. Demarket the rest areas in other sites so as to target specific users.

Work with the Forest Service, Girdwood and other entities including businesses and the Alaska Railroad to develop an integrated plan for managing the day visitor in Segment 2. Goals should include decreasing congestion, evenly dispersing visitors to the various recreation opportunities in the segment and directing visitors to local businesses.

Potential Partners: DNR-Parks*, USFS, ADF&G, Girdwood, Alaska Railroad

K.2-D Carpooling and Ridesharing Facilities

Recommended: Work with retail businesses in Anchorage and Seward to officially identify excess parking spaces for Seward Highway parking. The existing "grassroots" recreational carpooling parking is already occurring at several large discount and grocery chains in Anchorage as local residents meet and then assemble in a single vehicle for travel down the Seward Highway. The marketing of such courtesy spaces could enhance sales at implemented sites and curry popular and environmental favor with the retail outlets.

Potential Partners: Municipality of Anchorage, City of Seward, business community

K.2-E RV Dump Site Facilities

Recommended: Dump sites are recommended at general traveler rest areas in Segments 2, 3 and 4. There is currently a dump site in Segment 5 at the Small Boat Harbor in Seward. Dump sites should be available for free or a nominal fee to avoid illegal dumping along the corridor. Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) policies regarding dump sites should be followed.

Potential Partners: ADEC*, USFS*, DNR-Parks*, Private RV facilities

While the sheer beauty of the Seward Highway speaks for itself, there are many other stories that the byway has to tell visitors. How did the land forms come to look the way they do? What kinds of flora and fauna are found along the route? What kinds of people have traveled

there? top interpretive priority for the Seward Highway stakeholders. The guide should include overview sections for each of the major themes identified in the 1993 plan, including geography, flora and fauna, as well information about cultures, specific individuals associated with

center, a National Register Historic District
 ■ **Seward Railroad Depot**, a National Register Site
Recommended: An inventory of historic sites and landscapes within the Seward Highway corridor should be developed. Historic sites may serve as visitor resource or

there?

The Existing Condition

The Chugach State Park and Chugach National Forest take on the primary responsibility for on-site interpretation.

Scenic Byway Interagency Planning Team completed the *Seward Highway Scenic Byway Interpretive Plan*. This plan describe the resource, suggested interpretive themes, proposed new interpretive projects and included an inventory of existing interpretive resources.

While the National Forest did expand the interpretive signage along the route as a result of this plan, many of the other proposed actions have not yet been implemented due to budget cuts at many of the agencies. An additional barrier is the current lack of an ongoing ad-hoc group or organization for the Seward Highway that brings together the many stakeholders on a regular basis.

in the context. Detailed sections about what to see and do along the byway should be completed "triptik" style, with a short segment of the route shown alongside a written description of the attractions and services in this area. Care should be taken that enough information is given to help the visitor know where to go without hav-

that is no longer correct.
Potential Partners: ANHA*, USFS, DNR-Parks, Office of History and Archaeology, ADF&G, Corporate Sponsor, Seward Chamber of Commerce, Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council, Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau

K.2-G Historic Sites Inventory

A number of significant historic sites in the Seward Highway corridor are already listed in the National Register of Historic Places. These include:

- **Indian Valley Mine**, near Indian, a National Register Site
- **Crow Creek Mine**, near Girdwood, a National Register Historic District
- **Hope**, a mining community dating to 1895, a National Register Historic District
- **Sunrise**, an abandoned mining community, a

route. The history of the Alaska Railroad, early settlement and travel patterns, Native land use, the 1964 Earthquake, and commercial development can augment the natural history of the route. The history of the construction of the Seward Highway itself would provide an

Potential Partners: Alaska Office of History and Archaeology*



Seward Railroad Depot circa 1940.

Photo: courtesy Alaska Railroad Corporation

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railroads

K.2-H Visitor Newspaper

Recommended: A visitor newspaper, designed to complement the road guide, should be developed and distributed widely for free. The newspaper should mention the availability of the road guide for those seeking more in-depth information, thus serving as a marketing tool to promote sales of the road guide. The newspaper could also provide seasonal information about special events, bore tide schedules, tour opportunities, construction or road closures and other pertinent information. The newspaper also offers marketing opportunities (see description under marketing strategies).

Potential Partners: ANHA*, USFS, DNR-Parks, ADF&G, Seward Chamber of Commerce, Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council, Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau, Alaska Railroad, State Historic Preservation Office

K.2-I Seward Highway Audio Tape

Recommended: As agencies along the Seward Highway seek out more ways to accommodate visitors with special needs, the existing audio tape could be made available as an additional resource. A third potential use for the existing audio tape would be through the car rental companies. It is recommended that the existing tape tour be reviewed by the agencies involved in this project, and that if appropriate a limited number of copies be made available for borrowed uses.

Potential Partners: USFS*, DNR-Parks, ANHA, ADF&G, Seward Chamber of Commerce, Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council, Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau

K.2-J Staffed Interpretive Van

Recommended: The US Forest Service piloted this concept during the summer of 1997 out of Seward. The van has been extremely popular, reaching 300-400 people a day. A spotting scope to help visitors see Dall sheep is a popular feature. Once this initial test is completed, an evaluation will be completed to see if the idea of an interpretive van should be expanded along the highway. The program will involve a Forest Service or other qualified individual to provide interpretative services to visitors at various locations such as wildlife viewing areas along the highway. Staffed Interpretive Vans will be able to greatly expand on interpretive panels, provide additional interpretation for unusual or seasonal events, and will be able to focus visitor attention on any special programs along the corridor, or special corridor needs (restoration areas, litter issues, highway safety).

Potential Partners: USFS*, ANHA, DNR-Parks, ADF&G, Seward Chamber of Commerce, Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council

K.2-K Seward Highway 20-minute Video

Recommended: A number of Alaska videos already exist, including one for Portage Glacier. These existing videos should be used as a model for the Seward Highway.

What organizations and individuals have put together successful Alaska videos? How were the videos financed?

What organizations were involved? What kind of time commitment will be required? How are they distributed?

Potential Partners: Alaska Public Lands Information Center*, USFS, DNR-Parks, ANHA, ADF&G

K.2-L Seward Highway Awareness Campaign

Recommended: The tourism promotion agencies at the local, regional and state level will benefit from the designation of the Seward Highway as an All-American Road. Each of these agencies produces tourism materials which offer opportunities to showcase the Seward Highway in some way, and the designation will increase the likelihood that they will choose to showcase the Seward Highway over other potential destinations in Alaska. In order to be sure that the promotional messages sent out to the visiting public about the Seward Highway do not overwhelm the resource—whether it is next year, or in the next decade—it is up to the land managers along the Seward Highway to be sure that whenever possible, the messages sent out about the Seward Highway reinforce land management strategies. For the majority of visitors, this means encouraging stops in the existing business nodes and concentrating economic development along the route in those locations. It also means devoting marketing efforts to encouraging travel in the shoulder and winter seasons, when the route is not as heavily used.

Potential Partners: Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau*, USFS, DNR-Parks, Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council, Seward Convention and Tourism Bureau