

PHASE ONE PUBLIC WEBINAR

Monday, January 22, 2024, 12:00 – 1:00 pm, Zoom Meeting

The Turnagain Pass Master Plan Public Webinar was held virtually via Zoom starting on time at 12:00 pm with Cole Grisham (Western Federal Lands Highway Division, Project Manager) and Jessica Smith (DOWL, Transportation Planner) presenting. Forty-seven (47) people joined the webinar, including members of the project team. The presentation included a project overview, discussed the findings from Phase One, and outlined the work and stakeholder engagement opportunities planned in 2024 for Phase Two that will bring this master plan to completion. Throughout the presentation participants actively engaged with the project team by asking questions and providing feedback. This webinar provided an opportunity for interested stakeholders to reconnect with the project team and learn about what the project team has heard through the existing conditions, data collection, and engagement activities conducted in 2023, and how this information informs Phase Two. Phase Two will include finalization of a needs and opportunities list, development of conceptual designs and cost estimates, and continued engagement with stakeholders.

Following the presentation, Cole invited participants to consider and answer the following questions, and opened the meeting for discussion:

- How would you like to be engaged with, or engage with us during Phase Two of the Turnagain Pass Master Plan?
- Where are some new access points that make sense to you?
- What is your highest priority improvement in Turnagain Pass?
- Do you have any safety concerns you'd like to mention?

Cole closed the webinar by providing contact information for himself and Jessica and referred participants to the project website to find the presentation slides. He invited all participants to reach out with additional comments or questions.

Summary of Comments Received During the Webinar

Engagement Opportunities:

- Consider including the western side of the Kenai peninsula in future public meetings, as there are residents in the Kenai area who use the pass regularly.
- Utilize the Federation of Community Councils in Anchorage to share future engagement opportunities for this project.

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- Consider using social media as a platform to share information about meetings, especially local Facebook groups.
- Continue to involve Alaska Native Associations.

Access Points:

- Improved wayfinding and signage throughout the Pass.

High Priority Improvements in Turnagain Pass:

- Improvements to snow removal problems caused by infrequent plowing.
- Develop an evacuation plan in the event of a major fire in the corridor.
- Coordination with Alaska Trails about amenities needed for the development of the proposed Alaska Long Trail.
- Improvements to the Tincan pullout and the Sunburst parking area.
- Reducing the speed limit in the Pass to 55 miles per hour.
- Improvements to the separated bike path that is damaged and non-functional.
- Connecting the failing separated bike path in South Turnagain Pass to the proposed new separated bike path at Portage.
- Improvements to the Snowstake Lot/DOT lot where the DOT&PF weather camera is located. The weather camera has not operated has a camera for a considerable amount of time, but still functions for air temperature and wind speed.
- Consider adding enclosed and heated emergency shelters at rest areas.
- Incorporate funding opportunities for all projects that come out of the master plan.

Safety Concerns:

- Concerns with inconsistent maintenance and safety, particularly at parking lots and trailheads.
- Concerns with permafrost thaw, landslides, and wildfires within the corridor.
- Request for information on the steps and plans in place to ensure that the corridor is consistently prioritized to enable safe access through the area, and to the recreation areas beyond.
- Concerns with the failing road sections along Six Mile Creek, where the trail has been closed for a few years.
- Concerns with emergency response and warming shelters.