



**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration**

**Alternative Transportation in the Parks and Public Lands Program
Project Proposal for Fiscal Year 2008 Funds – Planning Project**

<p>Project Name (Please provide a 1-2 sentence description of the project): Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study. The study will develop a range of transportation alternatives for the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie NF (MBS) on four east – west highway corridors. The study will include: Traffic Study, Visitor Capacity Analysis, Natural Resource Condition Survey, Marketing Assessment, Transportation Alternatives, and Economic Analysis of Alternatives. The data and alternatives will be used to develop sustainable visitor and resource capacity and initiate further NEPA analysis through the subsequent development of a Transportation Plan.</p>	
<p>Proposed Funding Recipient: USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest</p>	
<p>Public land unit(s) involved: Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest</p>	<p><u>Location of Project</u> City: Seattle, Everett, Tacoma, Enumclaw, North Bend, Snoqualmie, Monroe, Sultan, Skykomish, Bellingham, Glacier County: Pierce, King, Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom State: Washington Congressional District: 2 and 8</p>
<p>Federal Land Management Agency managing the above unit(s):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bureau of Land Management <input type="checkbox"/> Bureau of Reclamation <input type="checkbox"/> Fish and Wildlife Service <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forest Service <input type="checkbox"/> National Park Service</p>	<p>Type of Planning Project: (Implementation projects, please use the alternate form) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning</p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proposal is to plan for a possible new alternative transportation system where none currently exists. <input type="checkbox"/> Proposal is to plan for a possible expansion or enhancement of an existing alternative transportation system.</p>	
<p>ATPPL Funding Requested during FY 2008 \$500,000 – Approximation based on comparable feasibility studies completed for Albion Basin – Wasatch Catche National Forest and Mt. Rainier National Park</p>	<p>Total Cost of Planning Project at Completion (All sources) \$515,000</p>
<p>Were you awarded FY 2006 or FY 2007 ATPPL funds? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If answer "Yes," please provide amount awarded: \$</p>	
<p>Do you plan to request additional ATPPL funds in future years? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (Note: If you wish to compete for future ATPPL fiscal year funds you must reapply).</p> <p>If answer "Yes," please specify ATPPL proposed funding levels for out years below:</p>	
<p>FY 2009 \$500,000 Transportation Plan (NEPA)</p>	<p>FY 2010</p>
<p>FY 2008 Funding Amounts from sources other than ATPPL funds? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If answer "Yes," please specify funding levels per source below:</p>	

State \$10,000	Local \$	Federal (other than ATPPL) \$	Private sources \$5,000
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Name: Aleta Eng		Phone: 425-783-6017	
Position: Partnership Specialist		E-mail: aeng@fs.fed.us	
Address: 2930 Wetmore Ave., Everett, WA 98201			

Listed are partners who have participated in the 2007 TAG meeting as well as other organizations that will participate in future planning. They include Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT), National Park Service, Mountains to Sound Greenway, Community Transit (Snohomish County), King County Metro, Pierce County Transit, Enumclaw Chamber of Commerce, Whatcom Council of Governments, Stevens Pass Ski Area, Summit at Snoqualmie Ski Area, and the Crystal Mountain Ski Area

If a State, Tribal, or local government entity is proposing the project, the applicant has contacted the manager of the federal land unit(s) and has the consent of the Federal land management agency or agencies affected.

The project is consistent with the metropolitan and statewide planning process.

The project is consistent with agency plans.

The planning project will analyze all reasonable alternatives, including a non-construction option.

Number of Visitors: 5,200,000 forest-wide Winter Visitors: 1,700,000 on 4 corridors Summer Visitors: 2,300,000 on 4 corridors	Daily Number of Visitors (Peak season): Average Winter Season on 4 corridors: 11,000 Average Summer Season on 4 corridors: 15,000
Average Number of Vehicles per Day at Peak Visitation: State Highway 542 Average Winter Daily: 2,300 Average Summer Daily: 4,700 US Highway 2 Average Winter Daily: 3,500 Average Summer Daily: 7,250	Interstate 90 Average Winter Daily: 25,000 Average Summer Daily: 32,000 State Highway 410 Average Winter Daily: 1,300 Average Summer Daily: 2,600
Current Road Level of Service at Peak Visitation: Fair (Please consult guidance where available on determining this variable. You may use observational accounts or pictures to provide an assessment of this datum for FY 2008 proposals).	
What time of the year does your land unit experience Peak Visitation? <input type="checkbox"/> Spring <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Summer <input type="checkbox"/> Fall <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Winter	
Current Carrying Capacity of Existing Roads: Data provided by WSDOT State Highway 542: 32,000 (vehicles/day), US Highway 2: 32,000 (vehicles/day) Interstate 90: 108,000 (vehicles/day), State Highway 410: 32,000 (vehicles/day)	
What percent of that capacity is the site operating at during peak periods?	

State Highway 542

Winter: 7%

Summer: 15%

US Highway 2

Winter: 11% Summer: 23%

Interstate 90

Winter: 23%

Summer: 30%

State Highway 410

Winter: 4%

Summer: 8%

Current parking shortages during peak visitation at recreation locations throughout the four corridors

Winter: 2,000

Summer: 3,000

Current Number of Persons who use the alternative transportation system (if one already exists) at peak visitation:

Winter: Current use for private buses leading to ski area is very low.

Stevens Pass Ski Area operates a visitor and employee transit. The visitor shuttle transported 6,680 riders in 2002-2003 winter season.

Summer: No public transportation

Estimated Annual Number of Persons who will use the alternative transportation system at project completion: 500,000 (anticipated number of riders or users/annually)

Average number of auto collisions with wildlife in the area? The WSDOT provided collision (with deer, bear, elk, etc.) information for a 3 year period from 1/1/05 to 12/31/07.

State Highway 542:

0 wildlife collisions

US Highway 2:

76 wildlife collisions

Interstate 90:

145 wildlife collisions

State Highway 410:

27 wildlife collisions

Executive Summary

With over 1.7 million acres that extends 140 miles from the Canadian border down to Mt. Rainier National Park, the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest (MBS) receives 5.2 million visitors annually. The MBS is one of the most heavily visited forest units in the USDA Forest Service Region 6 which encompasses the Pacific Northwest. Approximately half of the visitors come from Washington State; about 10 percent are international. Approximately 62% (3.63 million people) live in the Puget Sound region, within 70 miles from the forest. An additional 1.5 million people living in the Vancouver British Columbia Metropolitan area also are within easy reach of the northern part of the forest. With the Puget Sound population expected to reach 5.2 million by 2025¹, there is urgency for the Forest Service to protect the forest ecosystem while enhancing the visitor experience through high quality recreational opportunities. The MBS provides access to the rugged and scenic Cascade Mountain range, rich wildlife and fisheries, diverse plant life, and historical landmarks. Visitors can quickly escape the urban environment and immerse themselves in a multitude of year-round recreational activities including skiing/snowboarding, snowshoeing, climbing, hiking, kayaking, fishing, wildlife viewing, scenic driving, biking, hunting, and camping.

The *Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study* will analyze four east-west corridors, Mt. Baker Highway (State Highway 524), Stevens Pass Greenway (US Highway 2), Mountains to Sound Greenway (Interstate 90), and Chinook Scenic Byway (State Highway 410). Each corridor supports year-round vehicle passage and provides access to 22 campgrounds and picnic areas, 124 trails, and 4 major ski areas. The four corridors provide approximately 100 miles of access through the MBS. In addition, Hwy 410 provides entry to our heavily visited neighbor, Mt. Rainier National Park. Due to limited winter transportation and no summer options, visitors primarily use personal vehicles to access recreational opportunities on the forest. Along these corridors, traffic congestion is especially heavy during winter and summer weekends. With pressures of increased visitation, there is concern that continuing to build for increased capacity (e.g. road and parking infrastructure) will attract more vehicles without reducing congestion in the long term.

The Forest Service is committed to engaging urban America by expanding opportunities to underserved communities (limited English speaking, senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, low-income groups, and the youth). Transportation alternatives can break barriers by providing affordable access to physical, recreational, and interpretive opportunities for educational institutions, youth programs, as well as other social and environmental service organizations.

Automobiles can negatively impact the forest ecosystem through reduced water quality, harm to vegetation and wildlife, access to historical resources, air pollution, and noise pollution. Watershed health is crucial in supporting the Pacific Salmon, which are ecologically and economically central to the Puget Sound area. Portions of the watersheds provide drinking water to municipalities of Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, and smaller Puget Sound communities. Native vegetation can be trampled while invasive weeds can be dispersed through seeds tracked on vehicle tires. Direct mortality from collisions with motor vehicles is a major concern for wildlife vitality. As forest visitation grows, the potential for exposure of these sensitive areas also increases. A main source for greenhouse gases contributing towards global climate change can be attributed to vehicle emissions. Alternative transportation can reduce negative impacts to the ecosystem.

The *Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study* will propose innovative collaborative solutions to relieve traffic congestion, improve visitor access, enhance visitors experience, reduce pressure for increasing vehicle capacity, improve public safety, reduce contributions to global climate change and protect the forest ecosystem. A Traffic Study, Visitor Capacity Analysis, Natural Resource Condition Survey and Marketing Assessment will be completed and used to formulate potential alternatives. The Economic Analysis of each alternative will examine costs for each alternative. The alternatives will be used to initiate NEPA analysis for the next separate planning phase.

The study also provides a unique opportunity to cooperate with state and local municipalities' efforts to reduce traffic congestion, global climate change, and improve accessibility through the comprehensive planning for transit

¹ Puget Sound Partnership. Accessed at www.psp.wa.gov/puget_sound/psfacts.htm#population.

mode alternatives. The study can identify opportunities to partner with existing transportation services. Forest Service has obtained Puget Sound regional support to explore alternative transportation on MBS.

Project Description

The goal of this project is to utilize a traffic study, visitor capacity analysis, natural resource condition survey, and marketing assessment to develop preliminary alternatives that will balance recreation and the protection of the forest ecosystem through an alternative transportation system. These alternatives will be used to initiate public involvement and conduct a NEPA analysis as a separate subsequent planning phase. The MBS presents an opportunity to serve as a model for implementing alternative transportation in a high-use urban forest.

An interagency Transportation Assistance Team (TAG) conducted a preliminary study of the corridors (excluding Hwy 542) in September 2007 to provide technical assistance to the MBS and its partners. The TAG was comprised of individuals from the Federal Transit Administration, Federal Highways Administration, US Department of Transportation (Volpe National Transportation Systems Center), National Park Service, and Forest Service. The TAG team provided a final report recommending a number of additional transportation studies and planning needs for the MBS. Among their recommendations:

“..There is a need to consolidate and update all relevant information in order to produce a single, strategic vision for transportation in and around Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, focusing on the corridors and taking account of recent data, developments, plans, partnerships, and other information. Therefore, the TAG’s primary overall recommendation is to apply to the Alternative Transportation in Park and Public Lands (ATPPL) Program for FY2008 funds for a comprehensive transportation planning study....”

Based on the TAG recommendations, the planning project will include:

1. **Traffic Study:** Evaluate the current transportation system along the corridors, circulation, infrastructure, seasonal variation, and physical capacity.
2. **Visitor Capacity Analysis:** Analyze the transportation system, visitor use levels within the four corridors, travel patterns, demographics, and visitor preferences as they relate to critical natural resource protection.
3. **Natural Resource Condition Survey:** Compile existing and collect additional data and plans needed to delineate sensitive areas and resource issues within the four corridors and relationship to the existing transportation system.
4. **Marketing Assessment:** Identify potential collaborative opportunities with stakeholders (e.g. Mt. Rainier National Park, WSDOT, etc.) and develop preliminary strategies to successfully market use of alternative transportation.
5. **Range of Alternatives:** Utilize studies 1-4 to develop preliminary alternatives for managing transportation and visitor use on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Alternatives, including “No Action,” could include ideas such as regulating travel on roads, changes to trail system, and utilization of alternative transportation ideas such as buses, vans, shuttles, and rail lines. These alternatives will be used to initiate a NEPA analysis for a future separate planning phase.
6. **Economic Analysis:** Evaluate costs for operations, capital investments, impact mitigation, monitoring, and funding opportunities of each alternative. The analysis will also incorporate options affordable to underserved communities.

Planning Justification

1. Demonstration of Need

a. **Visitor mobility and experience:**

The Forest Service is challenged with sustaining high quality outdoor recreation experiences to meet public requirements while maintaining the ecological integrity of national forest and grasslands. The combination of the increasing Puget Sound population and continued decline of public access to privately owned forest land create extensive pressure on the MBS to provide more recreational opportunities. An alternative transportation system can support the USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan FY 2007-2012 Goal 4, "sustain and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities". The condition of land, recreation facilities, and transportation infrastructure must be considered to preserve high-quality visitor experiences.

The Mt. Baker, Stevens Pass, Summit at Snoqualmie, and Crystal Mountain ski areas are privately owned and operate under the terms and provisions of a Special Use Permit (SUP) issued by the USFS. Currently, there is limited winter alternative transportation (e.g. private ski buses at all four ski areas, and employee/visitor bus system to Stevens Pass Ski Area) and no summer public transportation system to access the MBS. As a result of limited transportation options and a growing Puget Sound population, must utilize private vehicles to access the forest. Unfortunately, this has limited enjoyment of the forest to individuals with access to automobiles. The Forest Service is committed to engaging urban America² by expanding opportunities to underserved communities (limited English speaking, senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, low-income groups, and the youth). For the past two years, the USFS has emphasized connecting youth to nature, through the "More Kids in the Woods" Challenge Cost Share Program. Transportation alternatives can break barriers by providing affordable access to physical, recreational, and interpretive opportunities for educational institutions, youth programs, as well as other social and environmental service organizations.

In May 24, 2007 testimony before the US House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources Chief Gail Kimbell explained the importance of connecting with the next generation of conservation leaders.

"...The National Forests and Grasslands are the natural backyards for many communities throughout the 46 States that have National Forest System lands. These lands and our infrastructure of trails, roads and recreation facilities provide opportunities for solace and solitude, challenge and risk, hunting and fishing opportunities, outlets for keeping physically fit, and represent an important conduit for society's connection to nature.

Yet, even with the resources that we are devoting to this issue we still see perhaps one of the biggest threats to our nation's forests and grasslands is environmental illiteracy. As our country becomes increasingly diverse and urban, most of America's children grow up with little connection to the natural world. Research showing us the benefits of connecting our children with nature and the health benefits of outdoor activities, requires us to examine approaches that will encourage greater participation in outdoor activities."

Within a winter period of five months, a majority of the 1.7 million visitors visit the four ski areas. The combination of hazardous winter conditions, range of winter driving skills, lack of real-time traffic information, heavy traffic congestion, and pedestrians crossing highways³ can result in numerous vehicular accidents. This has especially been true for US 2, designated a Safety Corridor in 2007 by Washington State Governor Christine Gregoire. Parking at ski areas can reach full capacity when skiing

² Goal 6. Engage Urban America with Forest Service Programs, USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan 2007-2012

³ Review Exhibit 2: Project Photos, photo of pedestrians crossing US 2

conditions are favorable on weekends and holidays. When parking is at capacity, thousands of visitors are forced to turn around, wait for a free spot, or continually drive through parking lots. This can cause traffic delays and negatively impact the visitors' experience.

Peak summer visitation is especially high during weekends and holidays. Approximately 2.3 million visitors access the forest for a multitude of opportunities. It is not unusual for congestion to be extremely heavy along these corridors due to a combination of forest visitation and east-west passage traffic. When existing parking is at capacity at trailheads, visitors will park along roadsides (shoulder), trampling vegetation and compacting soil. These actions can negatively impact the forest ecosystem and visitor experience. In addition, safe access for other transportation modes - bicyclists riding on shoulders of highways and pedestrians crossing highways, are a concern along Hwy 542, US 2, and HWY 410.

Designated as National Scenic Byway, US Highway 2, Interstate 90, and State Highway 410 (All American Road), have been recognized by the US Department of Transportation for their cultural, historical, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities. State Highway 542 is recognized as a USDA Forest Service Scenic Byway. Due to the distinctive characteristics of the corridors, millions of visitors experience the MBS by driving through the scenic highways. The development of an alternative transportation system will assist agencies and partners to protect the qualities that make each corridor unique while providing an option for visitors to enjoy the scenery outside of their cars.

With pressures of increased visitation, there is concern that continuing to build for increased capacity (e.g. road and parking infrastructure) will attract more vehicles without reducing congestion in the long term.⁴ Alternative transportation can alleviate pressures to build capacity while improving safety, relieving congestion, improving access, and protecting the forest ecosystem. Visitor experience can increase through efficient travel times and ability to enjoy a scenic drive without the pressure of navigating the hazardous conditions. In addition, Hwy 410 provides access to Mt. Rainier National Park visitors. Recognizing collaborative opportunities, Mt. Rainier National Park and the MBS are partnering with other agencies to develop an interagency welcome center at the entry of Hwy 410⁵. Transportation planning provides an opportunity to expand collaborative transportation opportunities with the Park.

b. Environmental condition as a result of the existing transportation system:

Watershed

According to Objective 1.5 of the USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan FY 2007-2012, the agency will restore and maintain healthy watersheds and diverse habitats. High vehicle use can threaten MBS watersheds through the potential release of chemicals and sediment into the watershed. Watershed health is crucial in supporting all five Pacific Salmon species, which are ecologically and economically central to the Puget Sound area. Portions of the watersheds provide drinking water to municipalities of Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, and smaller Puget Sound communities.

Watersheds originating along the 4 corridors, the North Fork of the Nooksack River, Skykomish River, South Fork Snoqualmie River, and the White River Watersheds flow into the greater Puget Sound. Of prime concern are the impacts to Puget Sound area. Mandated by Washington State Governor Christine Gregoire, the Puget Sound Partnership was created in 2006 to mobilize communities, agencies and organizations to create a comprehensive Action Agenda to restore Puget Sound by 2020. As an agency member for the Puget Sound Federal Caucus, the Forest Service and other agencies are coordinating efforts in research and resource management programs. According to the 2007 Puget Sound Federal Caucus Memorandum of Understanding, agencies including the USFS will complete scientific investigations, species recovery, habitat restoration and protection, and land and resource management⁶. The Forest Service plays a critical role in raising public attention to the upstream benefits produced on National Forests. By beginning the process of exploring and analyzing alternative transportation systems,

⁴ Anthony Downs, *Still Stuck In Traffic: Coping With Peak-Hour Traffic Congestion n Traffic* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 300-302.

⁵ Exhibit 1: MAP of East-West Highway Corridors, indicates locations of proposed Interagency Visitor Center location

⁶ Puget Sound Federal Caucus Agencies include EPA, USGS, NOAA, USFS, NPS, NRCS, USFS, and Navy Region NW

the forest is emphasizing efforts to reduce the impacts of vehicles in watersheds that support Puget Sound. Efforts are underway to reduce urban vehicle use through the development of Light Rail⁷ and other enhanced transit services. Comprehensive planning of an alternative transportation system and mitigation measures can decrease these impacts.

In addition, MBS watersheds are crucial in providing renewable energy for the public. The Forest Service has long-standing agreements with the City of Seattle and Puget Sound Energy to cooperatively provide hydroelectric-generated energy to millions of residents throughout the Puget Sound area.

Vegetation

The Chief of the USDA Forest Service has identified invasive species as one of the four critical threats to our Nation's ecosystems. According to the 2004 [USDA Forest Service National Strategy and Implementation Plan for Invasive Species Management Plan](#), the first program element is to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species. Invasive species such as knapweed, hawkweed, knotweed, and thistle are abundant along roads and adjacent to campgrounds throughout the forest. Many of these weeds can be dispersed through seeds tracked on vehicle tires. USDA Forest studies such as [Backcountry Road Maintenance and Weed Management](#)⁸ are being conducted to analyze the correlation between vehicles and the spread of invasive weeds. In addition, visitors can trample native vegetation and compact soil when vehicles overfill built parking. A transportation system can minimize the spread of invasive species as well as destruction of native vegetation through the reduction of personal vehicle use and pressure to build more infrastructures to increase vehicle capacity.

Wildlife

Loss of habitat, isolation of small populations, and direct mortality from collisions with motor vehicles are major concerns for wildlife. The [USDA Forest Service Landscape Permeability for Large Carnivores in Washington: A Geographic Information System Weighted-Distance and Least-Cost Corridor Assessment](#)⁹ indicates that highway can reduce viability of populations through decrease in movement, mortality from motor vehicles collisions, increase human disturbance, and decrease availability of food or other resources by acting as barriers. With expected forest use to increase, more vehicles will increase potential for collision with wildlife like the black tailed deer, black bear, and elk. Transportation options can decrease negative impacts to wildlife by alleviating pressure to build further infrastructure to increase vehicle capacity and actually reduce the number of vehicles that access the MBS.

Air and Noise Pollution

Air pollution from emissions is especially high during periods of heavy congestion along the corridors (high peak use days in winter and summer). Gases contributing towards global climate change can be attributed by vehicle emissions. USDA Forest Service studies such as [Warming and Earlier Spring Increase Western U.S. Forest Wildfire Activity](#)¹⁰ are being conducted to analyze the correlation between global climate change and effects to forest fires and ecosystem health. Industry and vehicle emissions can also contribute towards the development of acid rain harming vegetation and fisheries in mountain lakes and rivers. Noise pollution caused by traffic congestion and people can detract from the recreation experience and may impact wildlife. These issues also need to be addressed as part of the resource survey. An alternative transportation system can assist in reducing emissions may help to minimize these impacts.

Historic Resources

A transportation system has the ability manage for potential impacts to historical places, sacred sites, and traditional cultural practices. As forest visitation grows, the potential for exposure of these sensitive areas

⁸ Ferguson, L.; Duncan, C.; Snodgrass, K. 2003. Backcountry Road Maintenance and Weed Management. USDA Forest Service Technology and Development Program, 1-18.

⁹ Singleton, P; Gains, W; and Lehmkuhl, J. 2002. Landscape Permeability for Large Carnivores in Washington: A Geographic Information System Weighted-Distance and Least-Cost Corridor Assessment. USDA Forest Service, pg. 1-4

¹⁰ Westerling, A.L.; Hidalgo, H.G.; Cayan, D.R.; Swetnam, T.W. 2006. Warming and Earlier Spring Increase Western U.S. Forest Wildfire Activity. Science, Vol. 313: 940-843.

also increases. According to Executive Order No. 13007: Indian Sacred Sites, Federal land management agencies will avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of sacred lands. The transportation planning process will reduce potential impacts by steering forest access away from sites.

Scope of Work and Methodology

2. Methodology for Assessing - Visitor Mobility & Experience Benefits of Project

a. Reduced traffic congestion:

The project's scope includes a Traffic Study, Visitor Capacity Analysis, and Marketing Assessment. The Traffic Study will examine the current infrastructure of transportation system, seasonal variation and physical capacity within the corridor. The Visitor Capacity Analysis will examine current visitor demographics, use, preferences, and travel patterns. The Marketing Assessment will seek to obtain feedback from stakeholders concerning collaborative opportunities and marketing strategies. Based on information obtained, potential alternatives will be developed.

b. Enhanced visitor mobility, accessibility, and safety:

Reducing the number of vehicles on the corridors will improve safety for other drivers as well as pedestrians and bicyclists that utilize highways in midst of traffic. Year-round emergency access will be improved by reducing congestion. Due to minimal winter transit options and no summer options, access is limited to people with the economic means and knowledge of the forest. By exploring alternative transportation, the forest is committed to improving affordable accessibility to underserved populations (e.g. low-income, limited English speaking, individuals with disabilities, and youth).

Improved visitor education, recreation, and health benefits:

An alternative transportation option of utilizing mass transit on the corridors to transport visitors will provide an excellent opportunity increase educational opportunities. The MBS can provide brochures and interpretive services for riders that discuss minimal recreation impact, riparian protection, trail information, wildlife, history, and invasive plant species. In addition, improved accessibility to Visitor Information Centers and Ranger Districts allow closer interaction with USFS personnel to explore recreational and interpretive services offered. Improved education can enhance the visitor experience, help protect the forest ecosystem, and add value to the transportation option. By expanding access to the public, alternative transportation allows more people the opportunity to enjoy recreational and physical activities in the MBS. The Economic Analysis will need to take into account affordable transportation opportunities that can expand use to underserved communities. The Marketing Assessment will develop effective outreach methods that will attract alternative transportation ridership.

3. Methodology for Assessing - Environmental Benefits of Project

a. Protection of sensitive natural, cultural, and historical resources:

The Natural Resource Condition Survey will compile existing resource data and research to identify ecological, historical, and cultural areas of concern. For example, an improved transportation system will route visitors away from critical wildlife habitat and sacred sites. Visitor Capacity Analysis and Condition Survey will be used to identify a level of visitation that ensures resource sustainability with consideration to current and expected use.

b. Reduced pollution:

The Natural Resource Condition Survey will compare emissions between different modes of transportation based on data and research compiled. Visual quality impacts will be addressed in alternatives primarily as they relate to traffic congestion and any recommended traffic signage. Research and data produced by the Puget Sound Federal Caucus can also be used in the survey.

4. Methodology for Assessing - Operational Efficiency and Financial Sustainability

a. Operational efficiency:

The Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study will develop alternatives that meet forest management objectives (e.g. watershed, wildlife, vegetation, partnerships, etc.). This will include a "No Action" alternative. In addition, alternatives must be consistent with cooperating agencies plans (e.g. Washington Department of Transportation and local municipalities). The degree to which various alternatives meet management objectives will be studied through NEPA analysis within the subsequent planning phase.

b. Financial feasibility:

The Economic Analysis component of this study will provide costs for alternatives including operations, capital purchases, implementation costs, and revenue sources.

c. Cost effectiveness:

Cost effectiveness will be addressed in the Economic Analysis of the alternatives. A key component of the analysis is to propose financially sustainable transportation system alternatives.

d. Partnerships and funding from other sources:

Several partners have provided letters of support for the proposed *Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study*. The Forest Service has agreements with agencies and partners that have an invested interest on the four corridors accessing the MBS. Washington Department of Transportation and the Stevens Pass Ski Area have contributed cash and in-kind matching funds totaling **\$15,000**. Based on intergovernmental and partner cooperation in managing the forest, the MBS expects that partners will assist with needs and support during the course of this study and subsequent planning.

ATPPL Planning Project Proposal:
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study
Letter of Support



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**
Paula J. Hammond, P.E.
Secretary of Transportation

Northwest Region
15700 Dayton Avenue North
P.O. Box 330310
Seattle, WA 98133-9710

206-440-4000
TTY: 1-800-833-6388
www.wsdot.wa.gov

February 15, 2008

Federal Transit Administration
Attention: Scott Faulk
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Letter of Support for the *Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Report Proposal*


Dear Mr. Faulk:

I am writing this letter to encourage the Federal Transit Administration, Department of Interior, and the USDA Forest Service to support the *Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Report* proposal. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has collaborated with the forest to provide access to four ski areas, visitor centers, trailheads, and campgrounds for over 5,000,000 visitors annually. The proposal focuses on studying four heavily utilized highway corridors managed by WSDOT including: Highway 542, State Route 2, Interstate 90, and Highway 410. Due to heavy use, each highway deals with traffic congestion, safety, accessibility, natural resource impacts, and unique visitor use patterns.

As a partner, we believe that this proposal begins the process of creating an enhanced transportation system by exploring alternative modes to personal vehicle use. Thank you for your consideration to fund this significant project. Through collaborative efforts, the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest will continue to explore efforts that relieve congestion, improve public access, enhance visitor experiences, and protect the natural resources. As commitment to ongoing efforts, in-kind, we will be providing data and engineering support.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at email pazookr@wsdot.wa.gov or phone at 206.440.4710

Sincerely,

for: 
Ramin Pazooki

Local Agency and Development Services Manager
King and Snohomish County

ATPPL Planning Project Proposal:
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study
Letter of Support

Aleta:

Our efforts so far to provide data and info for the application is rather minimal (probably 24 hours worth if NW, NC and SC Region's efforts were combined).

We do not have a description of future services that we will be called upon to provide at this point, so let's estimate 1 employee combined for up to 1 month combined, or \$10,000. We stand by to help as requested.

Hope this helps,

Celine Vogler
Assistant Local Agency & Development Services Manager

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Department of Transportation
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ATPPL Planning Project Proposal:

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study

Letter of Support

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Jan Drago, Seattle City Council

Kurt Froese, CEO, Geotransgress

Rich Grillo (*)
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Rob Inamoto (M), Forest Supervisor
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JM Bakes-Snoqualmie National Forest
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Leon Kazi (*), City Administrator, City of Issaquah

Ken Kowarski, Vice President, Quoniam Homes

Gary Kutz, Park & Recreation District Commissioner
Kittitas County

Pete Lagewey, Bike & Pedestrian Inland Coordinator
Seattle Transportation

Dorothy Levine, President
Northland Communications

Gary Leckle, Former Governor, State of Washington
Partner, Davis Wright Tremaine

Elizabeth Lunney, Executive Director
Washington Trails Association

Doug Macdonald (M), Former Secretary of Transportation
Washington State Department of Transportation

David MacDuff (*), General Manager, Buck Darnold
Yarrow-Bay Group

Judith Maxwell, Construction Director, The Mountaineers

Doug McClelland (*), Asset Operations Manager
Washington State Department of Natural Resources

Dan McDonald, Principal Engineer
JWH Engineering

Leous Masta III, Inland Cascades Consulting, Inc.

Greg Nickels (M), Mayor, City of Seattle

Mary Norton, Park Board, City of Snoqualmie

Clyde Fritze, Former Director
Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

Charles Raines, Cascade Land Conservancy

James S. Reinhardt (*), Managing Director
Hansford LLC

Dina Russ (M), Former State Senator, 5th District
Steve Sarkozy, City Manager, City of Bellevue

Ron Sims (M), King County Executive

Peter Spive (*), Technical Fellow
Microsoft Corporation

David Steinwarter, Vice President
CH2M HILL

Doug Sutherland (M), Commissioner of Public Safety
Washington State Department of Natural Resources

Magdalena Tabor, Chair
Cascade Land Conservancy

Fans Taylor, Council Member, Issaquah
Ted Thomson, Issaquah Alps Trails Co.

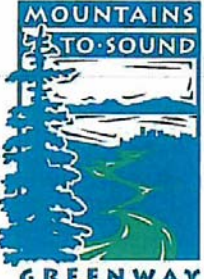
Kirk Thomson, Director of Environment
The Boeing Company

Bill Vick, Assistant Regional Administrator
Washington State Department of Natural Resources

Don Whitehouse (M), Regional Administrator
Washington State Department of Natural Resources

Kathy Williams, Senior Vice President
Horseshoe Bank

(*) Elected Commissioner
(M) Elected Mayor



ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Washington State Department of Natural Resources

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Public Affairs and Public Relations
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Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

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Seattle Mariners

Daniel J. Evans
Former Governor and US Senator

Randy "Fuzzy" Fichter
Former Mayor, City of Snoqualmie

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Washington State Department of Transportation

Jim Franzel, District Ranger
Snoqualmie District, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

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Vice President - CH2M HILL (retired)

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Reserve Area, Mayor, City of Redmond

Carol James, Cascade Land Conservancy

Ron Judd, External Relations Director
For Governor Christine Gregoire

June Keough, Weyerhaeuser Company

Man Larson, Mayor, City of Snoqualmie

Margaret MacLeod, Interagency Coordinator
Issaquah Upper Snoqualmie River Valley
Interagency Committee

Rick McGuire, President
Alpine Leles Protest on Society (ALPS)

Johnson Memorial
Collaborative Organizations, Volume Admin Center

Kathleen Mee, Senior Program Director
Enterprise Foundation

Sid Morrison, Former Secretary of Transportation
Washington State Department of Transportation

Ray Nelson, Interagency Jobs

John Okamoto, Chief Administrative Officer
Port of Seattle

Ron Paaronen, Deputy Regional Administrator
Washington State Department of Transportation

Penny Poole, Chair of Board of Trustees
Museum of History and Industry

Frank Pitteloud
Seattle Community Leader

Ron Shee, Transportation Development

Rodney Smalton, District Ranger
Cle Elum District, Wanchese National Forest

Lucy Sheets
Municipal League of King County

Federal Transit Administration
Attention: Scott Faulk
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

February 26, 2008


To whom it may concern:

I am writing to encourage the Federal Transit Administration, Department of Interior, and the USDA Forest Service to support the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study proposal. This project will develop preliminary alternatives designed to relieve congestion, improve public access, enhance visitor experiences, and protect the natural resources along several highways including The Mountains to Sound Greenway. The Greenway stretches along Interstate 90 from Seattle to Thorp and encompasses the lands to either side, including their scenic, recreational and historic resources. Its beauty earned it the distinction of being named a National Scenic Byway, a rarity indeed for a US Interstate!

The Mountains to Sound Trust is a diverse coalition of public and private citizens and groups working to sustain the communities, farms, forests and open space lands within the Greenway. The United States Forest Service is one of our most highly-valued partners; the Forest Supervisor for the Mt Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest sits on our Board of Directors, and we work closely with the Snoqualmie District Ranger on many public land and trail matters.

Public access to our region's resources is a central component of the Greenway Trust's strategic plan. With the Puget Sound basin's population expected to nearly double to 5.2 million in the next two decades, highly-capable, forward-looking planning is needed now to lessen highway congestion and parking needs at recreational areas. The USFS proposal begins the process of creating an enhanced transportation system by exploring alternative modes to personal vehicle use. As a long-time partner to the Forest Service we can attest to their highly-talented personnel's ability to deliver a quality result.

Thank you for your consideration to fund this significant project. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,


Cynthia Welti
Executive Director
cynthia.welti@mtsgreenway.org

911 WESTERN AVENUE
SUITE 523
SEATTLE, WA 98104

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ATPPL Planning Project Proposal:
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study
Letter of Support



314 East Champion Street
Bellingham, Washington 98225
360 • 676 • 6974 fax 360 • 738 • 6232
www.wcog.org

February 27, 2008

Federal Transit Administration
Attention: Scott Faulk
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Faulk:

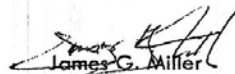
The Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) supports the *Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Report* proposal. As the Regional Transportation Planning Organization for Whatcom County, WCOG actively works with the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest staff and many local partners to improve transportation and planning along the Mt. Baker Highway, State Route 542. WCOG looks forward to collaborating on this Feasibility Report in order to achieve regional transportation goals. We encourage the Federal Transit Administration, Department of Interior, and the USDA Forest Service to fund this proposal.

This report will develop preliminary alternatives designed to relieve congestion, improve public access, enhance visitor experiences, and protect the natural resources along State Route 542, US Route 2, Interstate 90, and State Route 410. WCOG supports this planning effort as an important step toward implementing elements of the *Whatcom Transportation Plan*, the *Mt. Baker Highway Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan*, and the *Whatcom Employment Access and Coordinated Human-services (EACH) Transportation Plan*.

As a partner, we believe that this proposal is a timely effort to expand access to our public lands for people of all ability levels while minimizing environmental harm due to transportation. As commitment to these efforts, WCOG will be providing staff participation through the EACH project to assist with public outreach and coordination with local plans.

Thank you for your support and funding for this significant project.

Sincerely,


James G. Miller
Executive Director

ATPPL Planning Project Proposal:
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study
Letter of Support



UNIVERSITY of
WASHINGTON
Daniel J. Evans
School of Public Affairs

February 15, 2008

Federal Transit Administration
Attention: Scott Faulk
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

To whom this may concern:

I teach graduate courses in transportation and land use policy and community and economic development at the University of Washington. Much of my research, for Washington State DOT and other organizations, concerns transportation demand management and alternatives to SOV use. I am writing this letter to encourage the Federal Transit Administration, Department of Interior, and the USDA Forest Service to support the *Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Report* proposal. As an urban forest, over 5,000,000 annual visitors can access over 1,500 miles of trail, 26 campgrounds and four ski areas. The proposal focuses on studying four heavily utilized highway corridors including: Highway 542, State Route 2, Interstate 90, and Highway 410. Due to heavy use, each highway deals with traffic congestion, safety, accessibility, natural resource impacts, and unique visitor use patterns.

These efforts to explore transportation options also coincide with urban efforts happening in the Puget Sound Region in the form of Sound Transit's Light Rail development and enhanced bus service in King, Snohomish, and Pierce counties. A Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest project has the likelihood of garnering support within the Puget Sound area.

This proposal begins the process of creating an enhanced transportation system by exploring alternative modes to personal vehicle use. Thank you for your consideration to support this significant project.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at email kareli@u.washington.edu or phone.

Sincerely,



Senior Lecturer

109 Parrington Hall ▲ Box 353055 ▲ Seattle, WA 98195 ▲ Phone: 206.543.4900 ▲ FAX: 206.543.1096

ATPPL Planning Project Proposal:
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study
Letter of Support



February 29, 2008

Federal Transit Administration
Attention: Scott Faulk
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

To whom it may concern:

STEVENS PASS

PO BOX 98

SKYKOMISH, WA 98288

206.812.4510

206.812.4517 FAX

www.stevenspass.com

I am writing this letter to encourage the Federal Transit Administration, Department of Interior and the USDA Forest Service to support the *Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Report* proposal. This report will develop preliminary alternatives designed to relieve congestion, improve public access, enhance visitor experiences, and protect the natural resources along Highway 542, US 2, Interstate 90, and Highway 410.

Located on the summit of US 2, the Stevens Pass Winter Resort has partnered with the forest to provide recreational access to an average of 400,000 visitors within a five month winter season. In addition, the resort is exploring opportunities for mountain biking activities which would extend recreational use year round.

As a partner, we believe that this proposal begins the process of creating an enhanced transportation system by exploring alternative modes to personal vehicle use. Thank you for your consideration to fund this significant project. As a commitment to these efforts, the Stevens Pass Winter Resort will be providing a cash match of \$5000.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at jgifford@stevenspass.com or 206-812-7352.

Sincerely,

John Gifford
General Manager



ATPPL Planning Project Proposal:
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study
Letter of Support

Date: February 11, 2008

Federal Transit Administration
Attention: Scott Faulk
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

To whom it may concern:

We are writing this letter to encourage the Federal Transit Administration, Department of Interior, and the USDA Forest Service to support the *Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Report* proposal. This report will develop preliminary alternatives designed to relieve congestion, improve public access, enhance visitor experiences, and protect the natural resources along Highway 542, US 2, Interstate 90, and Highway 410.

Located adjacent to Interstate 90, The Summit at Snoqualmie has partnered with the forest to provide recreational access for about 600,000 visits each winter season. There is a growing need for improved access to recreation on Snoqualmie Pass. The lack of existing parking/access on Snoqualmie Pass prohibits some users from participating in their desired activity and continues to increase safety concerns. Sno-park patrons are parking in ski area parking lots and walking through neighborhoods, county roads, and a state highway to access sno-parks. Additionally, similar snow-play users are towing their children in sleds along busy roads (even SR 906) while others are sledding off snow berms into ski area parking lots and/or the state highway (SR 906). Providing safer access to users desired recreation locations should help reduce such safety hazards.

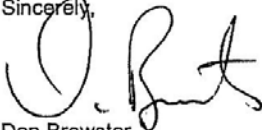
In addition to safety concerns, we see additional value in analyzing and implementing transportation improvements along Interstate 90 for the following reasons:

- The Summit at Snoqualmie is the closest mountain recreation to Seattle and the majority of western Washington's 5+ million residents.
- Western Washington's population is forecasted for continued growth (very strong relative to nation).
- Western Washington prides itself in a high quality of life through close proximity to the mountains.
- Currently, Interstate 90 provides the best access to mountain recreation with an 8-lane interstate freeway.

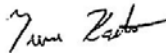
As a partner, we believe that this proposal begins the process of creating an enhanced transportation system by exploring alternative modes to personal vehicle use. Thank you for your consideration to fund this significant project.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us

Sincerely,



Dan Brewster
General Manager
Summit at Snoqualmie
dbrewster@summit90.com
425 434 6751



Trevor Kostanich
Director of Planning & Development
Summit at Snoqualmie
tkostanich@summit90.com
425.434.6726

ATPPL Planning Project Proposal:
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study
Letter of Support



February 13, 2008

Federal Transit Administration
Attn: Scott Faulk
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Crystal Mountain Inc. to request that the Federal Transit Administration, Department of Interior, and the USDA Forest Service offer support to the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Report proposal. This report will allow for the development of preliminary alternatives that will be widely beneficial. They aim to reduce congestion, improve public access, and protect the natural resources along Highway 410, US 2, Interstate 90, and Highway 542. These aims in turn, will enhance visitor experience as well as increase safety.

Crystal Mountain resort is located just off Highway 410, and has partnered with the Forest Service to provide recreational access to approximately 345,000 visitors over the duration of our five month winter season, not to mention a substantial number of summer season visitors. We see this proposal as the beginning of a process that will make possible an improved transportation system by exploring alternative options to personal vehicles. Thank you for your consideration to fund this significant project. Crystal Mountain Inc. is happy to support this project by providing an in-kind match of \$\$ or cash match.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at Bill@skicrystal.com, or (360) 663-3006.

Sincerely,

William Steel
Director of Planning

CC: Mike Miller

www.skicrystal.com

33914 Crystal Mountain Blvd. | Crystal Mountain, WA 98022
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ATPPL Planning Proposal: Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study
Exhibit 1: MAP of East-West Highway Corridors



ATPPL Planning Project Proposal:

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study

Exhibit 2: Project Photos



Stevens Pass Highway shows minimal vehicle use in 1926 prior to the creation of US 2.



Middle photo: Stevens Pass Ski Area traffic congestion eastbound on US 2. The ski area receives over 400,000 visitors each year. Right photo: Pedestrians crossing US 2 to reach ski area or their parked vehicles. Visitation of all four ski areas total 1.5 million annually.



Mt. Baker, Mt. Shuksan, and alpine meadows attract more than 150,000 visitors to Heather Meadows each summer (located at end of Highway 542). In the winter, the Mt. Baker Ski area also attracts more than 150,000 visitors.



Mt. Rainier National Park and the Crystal Mountain Ski area are both accessed by Hwy 410. Like the MBS, Mt. Rainier receives millions of visitors each summer. We will continue to develop collaborative opportunities with the park. Photo courtesy of Mt. Rainier National Park



Eastbound traffic congestion on Interstate 90 just east of Snoqualmie Pass at the Snoqualmie Ski Area Summit. Photo courtesy of WSDOT



Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest watersheds support the health of the Puget Sound. Photo courtesy of The City of Seattle