



Commuter Rail Study and Operations Plan

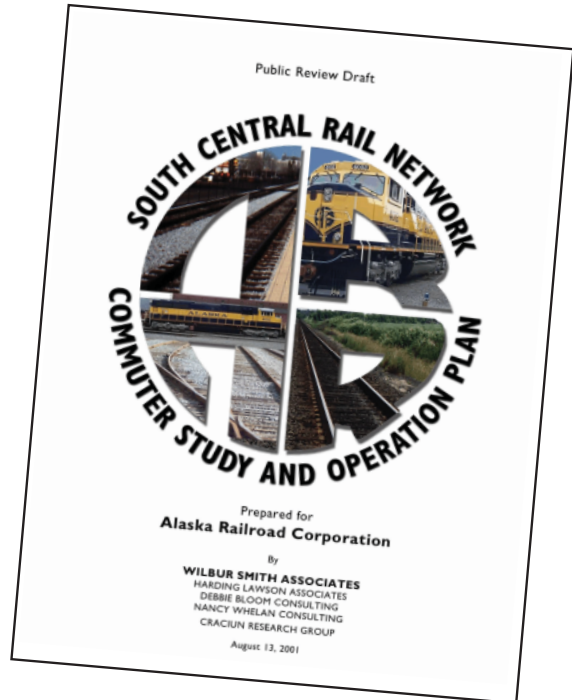
PROJECT FACTS

Project Scope

Who would use a commuter rail service? Where should passenger facilities be located? What kind of mass transit would be used to transport commuters from the train depot to the workplace? How much would tickets cost? How often would trains run? What kind of facilities would be needed and what type of equipment would be used? Who would manage and operate the service? Is public funding required? What would Alaskans support?

To answer those questions, the Alaska Railroad (ARRC) commissioned the *Southcentral Rail Network Commuter Study and Operation Plan*. The study provides a blueprint for potential further actions taken by local and state officials to establish a viable and operational commuter rail system.

- Contract awarded to Wilbur Smith Associates in June 2000, with supporting work by Harding Lawson Associates, Debbie Bloom Consulting, Nancy Whelan Consulting, and Craciun Research Group. The study team's first site visit took place July 17 - 21, 2000.
- The analysis included contact visits with officials from the Alaska Railroad (ARR), Mat-Su Borough, City of Wasilla and Anchorage.
- The public involvement plan included a survey of commuters in the Mat-Su Valley and commuter focus groups in January 2001.
- A draft study was released Sept. 10, 2001, and public meetings were held in Anchorage and Wasilla. Due by October 2001, public comment were incorporated into the final report.
- The ARRC Board of Directors approved the final report in February 2002 and a copy was forwarded to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).
- In early May 2009, ARRC commissioned a year-long update to the plan. Phase 1 tasks



include updating ridership estimates, recommending appropriate service levels, and developing an operations schedule. Based on Phase 1 results, Phase 2 tasks may include updated recommendations for equipment, equipment maintenance plan, safety plan and regulatory requirements, ticketing and fare collection, customer service modifications, station locations, station designs, capital costs, financial evaluation and transit integration.

Project Cost

- **2000-2002 Effort:** \$200,000 funded 80% by the Federal Transit Administration, with 20% matching funds by the Alaska Railroad.
- **2009-2010 Update:** Estimated cost \$225,000. Phase 1 budget in 2009 funded by the Federal Transit Administration and Alaska Railroad.