



Native Village of Eyak

Cordova Alaska

Reservation #E001148

Native Village of Eyak Post Office Box 1388

Cordova Alaska 99574

Telephone: (907) 424-7738

Fax: (907) 424-7739

Long Range Transportation Plan

Tribal Transportation Program

January 2022

Table of Contents

- Native Village of Eyak.....3
- Eyak History and Culture.....3
- Cordova History & Demographics.....4
- Economy.....5
- Location, Physical Setting, & Climate.....6
- The Copper River.....7
- Vegetation & Wildlife.....7
- Existing Transportation System.....9
 - Housing.....10
 - Subsistence & Recreation.....10
 - Oil Spill Response.....10
 - Transit.....11
- Transportation Program.....11
- Appendix A-Route List Appendix

The Native Village of Eyak

The Native Village of Eyak (NVE) is a federally recognized tribe and sovereign government. The NVE Tribal Council is a five-member governing council that provides direction to the staff and represents the interests of the Village members who elect them. Elected council seats are on two-year staggered terms. The members have an open election using secret ballots that elect council members. Representation of members is based on election by the Eyak, Aleut, Tlingit, and other Alaska Native/American Indian descent members of NVE. The chairman of the Tribal Council is elected by the governing council annually. The chairman is heavily involved in the operation of the Tribal Council and all interests surrounding NVE.

NVE's Tribal Council is a traditional tribal government that promotes self determination to NVE tribal members and seeks ways to enrich tribal living through community operated tribal programs and opportunities. The Tribe operates in a way that is acceptable to Alaska Native cultural values and traditions in order to enhance the well-being of its people both physically and spiritually. There are currently 652 enrolled NVE tribal members. NVE Tribal Council and tribal member involvement in decision making is strongly encouraged through both monthly meetings and frequent community gatherings.

NVE Tribal Council appoints an executive director to professionally manage NVE. Currently NVE hosts a robust workforce involved in all aspects of government and program functions such as transportation, health and human services, and environmental.

Eyak History & Culture

The Eyak People originated along the eastern coast of Prince William Sound. Their territory reached from present day Cordova, east to the Martin River and Miles Glacier. There were four main villages between these locations:

- Alaganik, near Mile 21 of the present-day Copper River Highway
- Eyak, located near Mile 5.5

- An unnamed village site roughly 800 yards south of Eyak
- Orca, located within present-day Cordova.
- In addition to these villages, the Eyak People would seasonally occupy fish camps at Point Whiteshed and Mountain Slough.

Traditionally, Eyak People fished and hunted the Copper River Delta and along the forested coastlines of Prince William Sound. The People lived between the Athabascan Indians to the north and west, and the Tlingit to the east. Aleut and Chugach (Alutiiq) People also lived along the western shores of Prince William Sound. While retaining their own unique identity and language, the Eyak simultaneously traded and adapted certain customs and tools from their neighbors. Like the Tlingit, the Eyak are socially organized into a clan system of the Eagle and Raven.

The Eyak people built their homes from red cedar, spruce, and hemlock timber and planks. All houses had a central firepit and could hold 20 to 50 people. In each Eyak village there were two potlach houses, outside of which stood a totem of either an Eagle or Raven. Potlaches were formal ceremonies that might last days. These celebrations included feasting, speeches, singing, and dancing and were held to commemorate important occasions such as funerals, weddings, the naming of a new child, completions of a new house, or the erection of a totem pole.

Cordova History & Demographics

Orca Inlet was originally named “Peurto Cordova” by Don Salvador Fidalgo in 1709. The town of Cordova was named in 1906 by Michael Heney, builder of the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad. The city of Cordova was later founded in 1909. The current population of Cordova is 2,191 (2020 Census)

Cordova became the railroad terminal and shipping port for copper ore from the Kennecott Mine, located 196 miles to the north via the Copper River. One of the largest feats of getting the copper ore to Cordova, was the building of the Million Dollar Bridge, built across the Copper River in 1908. At the time, this bridge cost an exorbitant \$1.5 million to construct. The first train load of ore was loaded on

to the steamship “Northwestern”, bound for a smelter in Tacoma, Washington in April 1911. The Bonanza-Kennecott Mines operated until 1938 and yielded over \$200 million in copper, silver, and gold. After the mines ceased operations, the railway was converted to road beginning in 1945 which later became the Copper River Highway. The Copper River Highway is a scenic byway of paved and gravel road providing access to the Copper River Delta to the east of Cordova.

The largest recorded earthquake in North America, rated a 9.2 on the Richter scale, was centered only 150 miles west of Cordova. It struck at 5:36 P.M. on March 27th, 1964, causing 115 deaths in Alaska alone. 106 of these deaths were attributed to the ensuing tsunamis. The earthquake damaged the Million Dollar Bridge. The earthquake also lifted the entire Copper River Delta between six and twelve feet, elevating large zones of brackish marshes above the influence of the tides. This uplift was largely responsible for the loss of the clamming industry in Cordova. Through this downfall, commercial fishing became the large economic base for the area.

In March 1989, the Exxon Valdez oil tanker ran aground on Bligh Reef, northwest of Cordova, causing one of the most devastating environmental disasters in North America. The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill severely affected the areas salmon and herring populations, leading to a recession of the local fishing-reliant economy as well as disrupting the general ecology of the area.

Economy

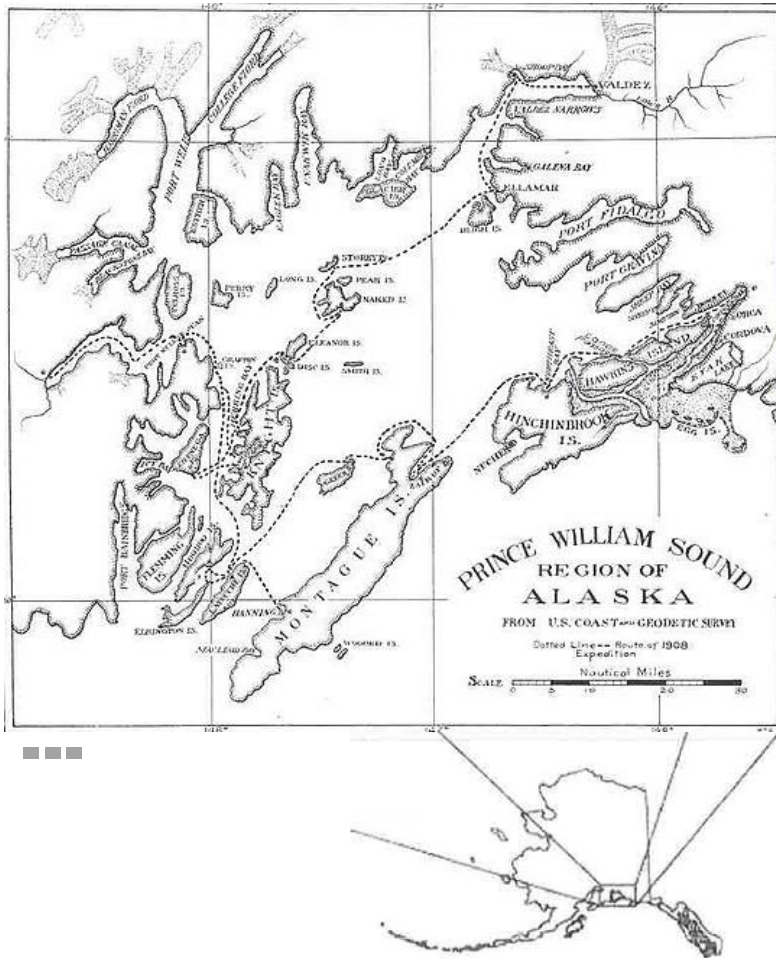
Cordova supports a large fishing fleet and several fish processing plants. Commercial fishing and subsistence are central to the community’s culture. Nearly 400 residents hold commercial fishing permits and nearly half of all households have someone working in commercial harvesting or processing. Copper River red salmon, pink salmon, herring, halibut, bottom fish and other fish are harvested. The largest employers are Trident Seafoods Inc., Cordova School District, Cordova Community Medical Center, the City of Cordova, and Alaska Department of Transportation. The United States Coast Guard and United States Forest Service also have personnel in Cordova.

Location, Physical Setting, & Climate

Population: 2,191 (220 Census)

Incorporation Type: Home Rule City

Borough: Unorganized



Cordova is located at the southeastern end of Prince William Sound, near the Gulf of Alaska on Orca Inlet at the base of Mt. Eyak. Cordova is surrounded by the Chugach Mountains on both the north and east sides. The community lies 52 air miles southeast of Valdez, 150 air miles southeast of Anchorage and is only accessible by plane or boat. The community is located at approximately 60.542780° North Latitude and -145.7575° West Longitude. (Sec. 28, T015S, R003W, Copper River Meridian.) Cordova is located in the Cordova Recording District. The area encompasses 61.4 sq. miles of land and 14.3 sq. miles of water.

The jurisdictional boundaries of NVE encompass the boundaries of Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) selected land. The northern boundary is the location of lands selected by the Tatitlek Corporation; the eastern boundary is the Chugach/Ahtna border; the southern boundary is the border between the Chugach Region and the Sealaska Region; the final boundary being 200 miles west, towards the continental shelf.

Cordova and NVE are the nearest community to the mouth of the Copper River, a vast and resource and opportunity rich area that has been used by inhabitants for thousands of years. The average temperatures range from 17 to 28 Fahrenheit in the winter and 49 to 63 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer. The average annual precipitation is 167 inches, with the average annual snowfall being 80 inches.

The Copper River

The Copper River is 287 miles long, making it the tenth largest river in the United States. It drains a total of 24,000 square miles, an area the size of West Virginia. The river has 13 tributaries and runs at an average of 7 miles per hour. The river drains from the interior of the state south into the coastal region where it meets the sea near Cordova. The river is over a mile wide at the Copper River Delta, an area encompassing 700,000 acres and the largest contiguous wetland on the Pacific Coast of North America. The Copper River is a major waterway for annual salmon migration and historically was used as trading and subsistence access for inland and coastal native groups.

Vegetation & Wildlife

Cordova is within the northernmost reaches of the Pacific Temperate Rainforest. The timber in this area is characterized by mixed strands of Sitka spruce and western hemlock, with minor amounts of mountain hemlock, yellow cedar, and black cottonwood. Pure Sitka spruce strands usually occur only along riverbanks although this species does dominate strands of the glacial flats in the Copper, Martin, and Bering River valleys.

The Copper River Delta flats are a vast tidal marsh with a vegetation cover of salt and freshwater marsh grass and grass-like plants, willow and alder, and a few scattered strands of Sitka spruce and

cottonwood. This is a major resting, feeding, and nesting area, drawing hundreds of bird enthusiasts to the area each year. The 330,000-acre Copper River Delta Game Management Area was jointly established by the U.S. Forest Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in 1962. The management area is now approximately 700,000 acres and is managed jointly by the U.S. Forest Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. It is now designated as a State Critical Habitat Area.

The Copper River Delta is managed primarily for the protection and enhancement of wildlife, fish, and their habitat. The productivity of waterfowl habitat in the area was greatly reduced by the 1964 earthquake which uplifted the beach by about six feet and converted brackish ponds into infertile freshwater ponds. To some extent, this loss has been offset by the uplifting of the islands and sandbars in the area, which were subsequently converted to prime wildlife habitat.

Big game animals in the Cordova area include black and brown bear, mountain goat, deer, and moose. Furbearers are also plentiful in the area and resident populations include wolf, wolverine, lynx, beaver, mink, muskrat, marten, land otter, and coyote.

While a large number of big game hunters are attracted to Cordova, the area is best known for its waterfowl and bird resources. The largest known concentrations of trumpeter swans in North America nest in the area, as well as 15,000 to 20,000 Dusky Canada Geese, along with a variety of ducks, geese, cranes, shorebirds, hawks, owls, and falcons. Bald eagles have a significant population in the area.

Sea lion, sea otter, and seal inhabit coastal areas in the vicinity of Cordova. The Copper, Bering, and Eyak River systems contain large king, red, and Coho salmon populations which are harvested by both commercial and sport fisherman. The Eyak River red and Coho salmon runs, in conjunction with several small trout lakes on the Delta are especially popular with both local and visiting sport fishermen. The waters of Prince William Sound provide excellent fishing opportunities for salmon, rockfish, and halibut. Clam digging, although diminishing, is a popular recreational activity for many residents.

Existing Transportation Services

Cordova is linked to the North Pacific shipping lanes through the Gulf of Alaska. It receives year-round barge service and state-run ferry service. The Merle K. “Mudhole” Smith Airport at mile 13 of the Copper River Highway is state owned and operated, with a 7,499’ long by 150’ wide asphalt runway and a 1,875’ long by 30’ wide gravel crosswind runway. The State-owned and City-operated Cordova Municipal Airport has a 1,800’ long by 60’ wide gravel runway. Daily scheduled jet flights and air taxis are available. Float planes land at the Eyak Lake seaplane base or the boat harbor. Harbor facilities include a breakwater, dock, and small boat harbor with 727 berths, boat launch, boat haul-out, a ferry terminal, and marine repair services. Transportation of the area also includes the Copper River Highway. The highway is paved to the airport at mile 13 and continues as a gravel highway to the mile 36 bridge where the highway is currently closed due to high flows of the Copper River undermining the integrity of the bridge. This issue is being assessed by the Alaska Department of Transportation.

Cordova’s existing transportation system is limited by its isolation and setting. The majority of roads in the area are owned by the city, state, or federal government. The existing road system consists of municipal roads through the town as well as the Copper River Highway which terminates at mile 48. However, as mentioned above, the road is currently closed at mile 36.

NVE’s major transportation needs include:

- Better access to areas for home building
- Assured access to subsistence and recreation areas
- Increased oil spill response capabilities

In addition to these needs, there is a constant effort to update the current routes in inventory and to maintain the routes that NVE is responsible for. These needs include:

- Construction of a transportation maintenance facility
- Purchase of property and related improvements to locate a transportation facility

Housing

NVE is working with the Eyak Corporation, founded in 1973 as a for-profit corporation under Alaska law pursuant to the ANCSA, to develop roads for a subdivision at Hartney Bay, five miles southwest of Cordova. This effort is being made to alleviate the lack of land currently available to build homes on. This project will provide landowners access to lots that are presently unreachable due to limited access roads within the planned subdivision. The routes involved are

- Route #0004 (Whiteshed Extension)
- #0003 (Hartney Bay EHP)
- #0005-25 (Hartney Bay Subdivision #2-22).

Subsistence & Recreation

Subsistence is a large part of NVE members lives and access to subsistence areas is very important. This includes areas used for hunting, fishing, and berry picking. The Transportation Program works with state and federal agencies to enhance and maintain access to historic subsistence areas as well as areas used for recreation. Surrounding Cordova is an extensive trail and easement network that is used for both purposes and is partially maintained by NVE.

Partnering with the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) in a program called the Federal Lands Access Program, NVE has secured funding to construct a new off-highway access facility and rehabilitate the only boat launch on the Eyak River. These two facilities will enhance subsistence activities in the area just south of Cordova.

Oil Spill Response

As previously stated, Cordova is near the epicenter of one of the largest oil spills in United States history. The impacts of the Exxon Valdez spill are still being felt by NVE tribal members and the community of Cordova. NVE is committed to providing the best and most comprehensive oil spill response capabilities, should a similar disaster occur. To this end, NVE is working to construct a deep-water port that will enhance Cordova's oil spill response by providing all-tide access to deep draft vessels that could be crucial to the containment and clean-up of a large-scale oil spill. The deep-water

port will be located four miles north of Cordova at Shepard Point. An access road will be required to reach the proposed site. This project holds huge significance for NVE tribal members and is a high priority of the Transportation Program. The routes involved are:

- #0001 (Shepard Point Road)
- #0002 (Shepard Point Staging Area)
- #0026 (Shepard Point Deep Water Port)

Transit

NVE initiated a transit program in 2013 by purchasing a new transit van and establishing regular routes to service the elderly and special needs members of the community. In 2014 the program was expanded to include transit support for community youth programs.

A ferry service enhancement program is being considered that will expand ferry service in the winter months and during foul weather interruptions. This program would necessitate the purchase of a ferry soon to be retired from the Alaska Marine Highway System. A feasibility study will be conducted to verify the viability of the project.

NVE was awarded a grant in 2020 from the Federal Transit Administration for \$2,500. These funds will be used to conduct a transit feasibility study for Cordova and surrounding areas.

Transportation Program

Transportation has, is, and will continue to be an important factor to NVE. The mission of NVE's transportation program is to provide safe, reliable, and efficient transportation for our community, keeping tribal citizens and the public, safe and secure, increasing their mobility, and contributing to the area's economic growth. The construction of new routes and maintenance of existing routes is important for reasons of safety, subsistence, and sustainability. The goal of this Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is to ensure that the values held by NVE continue to be met well into the future. This approach encompasses the idea of mitigating potential threats to the environment and planning to secure the future success of NVE, Cordova, and the Prince William Sound Region. Striving toward safer and more efficient transportation modes and methods, the Transportation Program is

committed to providing opportunities for growth and development, while at the same time maintaining the traditional values of NVE and utilizing the resources at hand in a conscientious manner.

The Transportation Program is funded directly by the FHWA's Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) under STRA-21 (Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act of 2021). NVE was one of the first tribes to begin working with FHWA under this act. With this program, the tribal government is required to comply with applicable provisions of the Title 23 of the United States Code, 25 CFR Part 170 and the terms of the tribe's FHWA Program Agreement. A key element of the IRR program is that while the tribe works directly with FHWA, the tribe and FHWA will continue to work with and involve the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and other agencies, including the State of Alaska, in the administration of the program.

Major components of the TTP program include:

- Annual updating of the roads inventory
- Maintaining a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Updating the Tribal Transportation Improvement Program (TTIP)

The purpose of the TTIP is to help tribes plan and implement projects in their inventory and LRTP in a financially responsible manner. Prior to submitting the TTIP, LRTP, and inventory to FHWA, the public must first be allowed the opportunity to review and comment on it.

Appendix: A
Tribal Transportation Priority List

NVE Route Priority

High Priority

Route # 0001

Route # 0002

Route # 0026

Route # 0115

Route # 0004

Route # 0003

Route # 0005

Route # 0006

Route # 0007

Route # 0008

Route # 0009

Route # 0010

Route # 0011

Route # 0012

Route # 0013

Route # 0014

Route # 0015

Route # 0016

Route # 0017

Route # 0018

Route # 0019

Route # 0020

Route # 0021

Route # 0022

Route # 0023

Route # 0024

Route # 0025

Route # 0028

Route # 0029

Route Name

Shepard Point Road - (5) Sections

Shepard Point Staging Area

Shepard Point Deepwater Port

Copper River Hwy - MP 0 – 49

Whitshed Road Extension

Hartney Bay E.H.P

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 2

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 3

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 4

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 5

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 6

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 7

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 8

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 9

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 10

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 11

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 12

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 13

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 14

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 15

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 16

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 17

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 18

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 19

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 20

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 21

Hartney Bay Subdivision # 22

Carbon Mountain Access Road

Nelson Bay Road (5) Sections

High Priority

Route # 0030
Route # 0116
Route # 0117
Route # 0118
Route # 0119
Route # 0120
Route # 0126
Route # 0121
Route # 0122
Route # 0127
Route # 0128
Route # 0129
Route # 0130
Route # 0131
Route # 0132
Route # 0133
Route # 0134
Route # 0135
Route # 0136
Route # 0137
Route # 0138
Route # 0139
Route # 0140
Route # 0141
Route # 0142
Route # 0143
Route # 0144
Route # 0145
Route # 0146
Route # 0147

Route Name

Copper River Trail MP 49 to 92.5
Icy Bay Road
Baird Camp Access Road
Yakataga Highway
27 Mile Boat Ramp
49 Mile Boar Ramp
Nelson Bay Logging Roads
Power Creek Road
Simpson Bay Logging Road
Council Avenue
Railroad Avenue
Nicholoff Way
Second Street
Breakwater Avenue
Chase Avenue
Lefevre Street
Browning Avenue
Adams Avenue
Davis Avenue
Harbor Loop Road
Fourth Street
Sawmill Avenue
South Fill Street
Sorrel Way
Seafood Lane
Water Street
4.5 Mile Road
Seventh Street
Sedge Way
Sixth Street

Medium Priority

Route # 0031
Route # 0032
Route # 0037
Route # 0038
Route # 0039
Route # 0040
Route # 0041
Route # 0042
Route # 0044
Route # 0045
Route # 0047
Route # 0048
Route # 0050
Route # 0051
Route # 0052
Route # 0054
Route # 0055
Route # 0057
Route # 0058
Route # 0059
Route # 0060
Route # 0070
Route # 0071
Route # 0072
Route # 0073
Route # 0074
Route # 0075
Route # 0076
Route # 0077
Route # 0078

Route Name

Sheridan Lake Road (2) Sections
Cleave Creek Trail
Wernicke River Trail
Baird Canyon Trail
North Childs Glacier Trail
Miles Lake Trail
North Goodwin Trail
Alaganik Boardwalk Trail
Allen Glacier Trail
Beach River Trail
Box Point Trail
Canoe Creek Trail
Childs Glacier South Trail
Childs Glacier Trail
Comfort Cove Trail
Crater Lake Trail
Deer Trail
Eyak Lake Middle Arm Trail
Eyak Lake South Arm Trail
Eyak River Trail
Fidalgo – Gravina Trail
Goat Mountain Trail
Goat Mountain Trail
Gravel Road Trail
Grinnell Glacier Trail
Haystack Trail
Heney Ridge Trail
Hidden Cove Trail
Ibeck Creek Trail
Ibeck Slough East Trail

Medium Priority

Route # 0080
Route # 0081
Route # 0082
Route # 0084
Route # 0085
Route # 0086
Route # 0087
Route # 0089
Route # 0090
Route # 0091
Route # 0092
Route # 0093
Route # 0094
Route # 0095
Route # 0096
Route # 0148
Route # 0149
Route # 0151
Route # 0153
Route # 0154
Route # 0155
Route # 0162
Route # 0163
Route # 0164
Route # 0165
Route # 0168
Route # 0175
Route # 0176
Route # 0177
Route # 0178

Route Name

Lake Elsner Trail
Lydic Slough Trail
Makaka Lake Trail
McKinley Lake Trail
Milton Lake Trail
Montague Ridge Trail
Muskeg Meander Ski Trail
Olsen Bay Trail
Patton Bay Trail
Patton River Trail
Pipeline Lakes Trail
Power Creek Trail
Power Creek Trail # 2
Raging Creek Trail
Robinson Falls Trail
Sweetbrier Avenue
Fisherman Avenue
South Orca Street
Industry Road
Center Drive
Whiskey Ridge Road
East Henrich Loop Road
Young Drive
Alder Way
Cedar Street
Center Circle
Haida Lane
Marine Way
Crest Circle
Sea Gull Avenue

Medium Priority

Route # 0179
Route # 0180
Route # 0181
Route # 0182
Route # 0185
Route # 0186
Route # 0187
Route # 0188
Route # 0190
Route # 0191
Route # 0193
Route # 0194
Route # 0195
Route # 0196
Route # 0197

Route Name

Barnacle Boulevard
Five Mile Loop Road
Boat Dock Road
Ninth Street
Sawmill Bay Road
Boardwalk Way
Wolf Hill
Ingress Street
Orca Circle
Bluff Trail
Ginko Drive
Gandil Drive
Federal Way
Meals Reservoir Road
Forestry Way

Low Priority

Route # 0097
Route # 0098
Route # 0099
Route # 0103
Route # 0104
Route # 0105
Route # 0106
Route # 0107
Route # 0108
Route # 0109
Route # 0110
Route # 0119

Route Name

Rude River North Trail
Rude River South Trail
Saddlebag Glacier Trail
Scott River Northeast Trail
Scott River Southeast Trail
Scott River Southwest Trail
Shepard Point Trail
Sheridan Glacier Face Trail
Sheridan Mountain Trail
Simpson Bay North Trail
Simpson Bay South Trail
27 Mile Boat Ramp

Low Priority

Route # 0127
Route # 0128
Route # 0130
Route # 0130
Route # 0135
Route # 0136
Route # 0138
Route # 0142
Route # 0143
Route # 0144
Route # 0150
Route # 0156
Route # 0157
Route # 0158
Route # 0159
Route # 0160
Route # 0161
Route # 0166
Route # 0167
Route # 0169
Route # 0170
Route # 0171
Route # 0172
Route # 0173
Route # 0174
Route # 0183
Route # 0184
Route # 0189
Route # 0198
Route # 0199

Route Name

Council Avenue
Railroad Avenue
Second Street (CRH-Davis)
Second Street (CRH-South)
Adams Avenue
Davis Avenue
Fourth Street
Seafood Lane
Water Street
4.5 Mile Road
Third Street (Lake- Adams)
Saddle Point Drive
Birch Street
Highland Drive
Mt. Eccles Street
Lake View Drive
Eyak Drive
Spruce Street
Railroad Row
Pipe Street
Ski Hill Road
Observation Avenue
Woodland Drive
Olsen Drive
Prince William Marina Road
Eighth Street
Fifth Street
Orca Inlet Drive
Alaganik Road
Humpback Ridge Access Road

Low Priority

Route # 0200
Route # 0201
Route # 0202
Route # 0203
Route # 0204
Route # 0124
Route # 0205
Route # 0205
Route # 0206
Route # 0207
Route # 0208
Route # 0209
Route # 0210
Route # 0211
Route # 0212
Route # 0213
Route # 0214
Route # 0215
Route # 0216
Route # 0217
Route # 0218
Route # 0219
Route # 0220
Route # 0221

Route Name

Henrich Alley
Alaganik Slough Trail
Black Sheep Drive
Forest Way
Eyak Avenue
14 Mile Village Road
Cabin Lake Road
Cabin Lake Road
New England Cannery Road
A – Float
B – Float
C – Float
D – Float
E – Float
G – Float
H – Float
I – Float
J – Float
K – Float
L – Float
City Airstrip
State Airstrip
Point Whitshed Road
Lake Avenue