

# Tunnel Vision Challenge

## Application to the Boring Company



**Ketchikan Gateway Borough**



# KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH

1900 First Avenue, Suite 210, Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

• telephone: (907) 228-6625 • fax (907) 228-6684

Office of the Borough Manager

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February 20, 2026

Dear The Boring Company Review Team,

On behalf of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, we are pleased to submit our application to the Tunnel Vision Challenge and to introduce a project born not from speculation, but from a very real, everyday transportation need.

Ketchikan is a remote island community in Southeast Alaska where air travel is not optional — it is our lifeline. Yet our only commercial airport, Ketchikan International Airport, sits on Gravina Island, separated from our residents, businesses, schools, medical services, and visitors on Revillagigedo Island by the Tongass Narrows. Today, that connection exists solely through a marine ferry system.

While short in distance, the crossing is long in impact. Ferry access is inherently vulnerable to weather, mechanical issues, capacity limits, and operational disruptions. It affects emergency medical transport, disaster response, workforce reliability, freight movement, tourism experience, and the daily rhythm of community life.

This challenge is not new to us.

More than two decades ago, Alaska DOT&PF and the Federal Highway Administration undertook the Gravina Access Project, advancing extensive environmental review and selecting a preferred bridge alternative. By 2007, however, escalating cost estimates and the now-famous “Bridge to Nowhere” rhetoric led Governor Sarah Palin to halt the project.

For Ketchikan, this was a near miss with consequences that continue to shape our community. The decision redirected years of planning into incremental ferry improvements rather than permanent, resilient infrastructure. Even the recently completed ramp modifications have, from the traveling public’s perspective, made portions of the passenger experience more cumbersome.

We share this history not as criticism, but as context.

Ketchikan’s transportation need did not disappear. It has intensified. The absence of fixed ground access remains a single point of failure in Southern Southeast Alaska’s transportation system.

This is why we believe the **Ketchikan Airport Access Tunnel (KAAT)** represents a uniquely appropriate submission for the Tunnel Vision Challenge.

With approximately 525,000 annual passenger movements, conservative estimates indicate over 125,000 hours of annual time savings, alongside improvements in reliability, emergency response capability, mobility for persons with disabilities, and reductions in diesel fuel consumption associated with ferry operations.

Importantly, the State of Alaska has already constructed a three-mile access road on Gravina Island in anticipation of a future hardlink connection — preserved infrastructure that enhances feasibility and reduces surface impacts.

Rather than prescribing a single alignment, the Borough proposes a collaborative evaluation of several conceptual routing options, including phased or hybrid demonstration corridors consistent with Challenge parameters.

This submission is, at its core, an invitation.

An invitation to revisit a longstanding infrastructure need through the lens of modern tunneling innovation. An invitation to demonstrate how scalable, cost-effective tunneling solutions can transform resilience and connectivity for island and coastal communities. An invitation to succeed where prior approaches — shaped by the politics and technology of another era — could not.

Enclosed for your review are:

- Tunnel Vision Challenge Application
- Borough Resolution of Support
- Advocacy Paper
- Conceptual maps and reference materials
- Community and stakeholder support letters

We appreciate your time, your vision, and your willingness to challenge conventional thinking about infrastructure delivery. Ketchikan stands ready to collaborate, to provide a meaningful demonstration setting, and to help showcase what is possible when innovation meets genuine community need.

With sincere appreciation,



Ruben Duran  
Borough Manager

cc: Ketchikan Gateway Borough Mayor and Assembly Members  
Cynna Smith – Assistant Manager, Ketchikan Gateway Borough  
Peter Amylon – Economic Development & Lands Manager, Ketchikan Gateway Borough

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## Ketchikan Gateway Borough



# Tunnel Vision Challenge Submission

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*Ketchikan–Gravina Airport Access: A Collaborative Fixed-Link Demonstration*

**Submitted by**  
**Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Alaska**

February 20, 2026



## Project Purpose and Overview

**Project Name:** Ketchikan Airport Access Tunnel (KAAT)

**Purpose:** The Ketchikan Gateway Borough submits this entry to the Tunnel Vision Challenge to explore innovative, collaborative solutions for a longstanding and essential transportation need: reliable, all-weather ground access between the City of Ketchikan on Revillagigedo Island and the Ketchikan International Airport on Gravina Island.

### Tunnel Type:

- Single-lane vehicular tunnel
- Alternating directional traffic
- Rubber-tired vehicles
- Non-rail configuration

**Approximate Length:** To be determined (alignment-dependent; conceptual options range from roughly 1.0 to greater than 1.0 miles).

**Internal Diameter:** Approximately 12 feet (conceptual).

## Problem Statement

Ketchikan is a geographically constrained island community in Southeast Alaska where air travel is essential. The community's primary airport is located on Gravina Island, separated from the city by the Tongass Narrows. Access is currently provided exclusively by marine ferry service, which is vulnerable to weather, mechanical, and operational disruptions.

The absence of fixed ground access represents a single point of failure in the region's transportation system, affecting emergency medical transport, disaster response, commercial freight, tourism reliability, and daily resident mobility.

As an island community with limited redundancy, Ketchikan represents a real-world environment where a successful demonstration project would provide immediate public benefit and valuable insight into tunneling applications in complex coastal geography.

## Projected Benefits

- Time Savings:

Typical ferry crossing including wait times: 20–40 minutes

Estimated tunnel crossing time: 3–5 minutes

Estimated savings per trip: 15–35 minutes

*With approximately 525,000 annual passenger movements (125,000 vehicles, and 400,000 passengers), conservative estimates indicate over 125,000 hours of annual time savings, not including emergency response and operational efficiencies. Most of the 400,000 passengers are walk-ons who would prefer to drive or ride given the option. Access is difficult, requiring movement up and down ramps that change slope with the tides, and additional planning is required for persons with mobility issues. The ferry operations use approximately*

*\$350,000 annually in diesel fuel, and a significant reduction in community diesel fuel usage is anticipated by reducing continuous ferry operations during service periods.*

## **Prior Hardlink Attempts**

In 2004, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, developed the 'Gravina Access Project' to improve public access between the community on Revillagigedo Island and the airport on Gravina Island. Multiple bridge and tunnel options were reviewed, with a preferred bridge alternative selected. On September 21, 2007, due to increasing cost estimates, then Alaska Governor Sarah Palin directed the Department of Transportation to stop work on the preferred alternative, which had by then become known as The Bridge to Nowhere, and look for the most 'fiscally responsible' approach to the Gravina Access Project. The final solution was improved ferry ramps and a waiting shelter on the Revillagigedo side of the Narrows which has only been completed in the last month or so. In the eyes of the traveling public, this final solution is arguably worse than what was there as the walk from the ferry to the airport is now 200 feet further than before. Additional information about the Gravina Access Project is available at [https://dot.alaska.gov/sereg/projects/gravina\\_access/](https://dot.alaska.gov/sereg/projects/gravina_access/)

## **Opportunity for Demonstration and Innovation**

The geography of the Tongass Narrows offers an exceptional opportunity for short-span subsea tunneling in cold-water marine conditions, mixed rock and sediment geology, constrained shoreline development, and active navigation channels. This makes Ketchikan well suited as a demonstration environment for scalable tunneling solutions applicable to island and coastal communities worldwide.

## **Conceptual Routing Options**

Rather than prescribing a single alignment, the Borough proposes a collaborative evaluation of multiple feasible corridors.

### **Option A — Gravina to Revillagigedo Island via Pennock Island**

- Subsea tunnel between Gravina Island and Revillagigedo Island, using Pennock Island as an intermediate landfall.
- Approximate length: greater than 1 mile (combined segments).

### **Existing Infrastructure Advantage**

The State of Alaska previously constructed a three-mile airport access road on Gravina Island in anticipation of a fixed transportation crossing. This preserved right-of-way and corridor significantly improves feasibility and reduces surface impacts.



Figure 1 Aerial view showing Ketchikan, Ketchikan International Airport (Gravina Island), Pennock Island, and the existing airport access road.

### **Option B — Gravina/Pennock Island Demonstration Corridor**

- Subsea tunnel between Pennock Island and Gravina Island.
- Approximate length: 1 mile or less.
- Includes a staging and operations terminal on Pennock Island.
- Future expansion could include a second tunnel segment from Pennock Island to Revillagigedo Island.

### **Option C — Wolf Point or North Tongass Highway Direct Corridor**

- Direct Revillagigedo Island to Gravina Island crossing.
- Potential use of an existing quarry as a staging area.
- Approximate length: about 1 mile, tying into the existing access road west of the airport.



Figure 2 Concept image showing Ketchikan International Airport and a potential project area (quarry/gravel pit) for a tunnel starting point and staging area.

### Option D — Phased or Hybrid Approach

- One-mile demonstration segment advanced first.
- Remaining segments pursued through partnership-based strategies and layered funding sources.

### Technical Feasibility

The Tongass Narrows is a glacially carved fjord system characterized by marine sediments, glacial till, and variable bedrock depth. Use of Pennock Island shortens underwater boring distances, reduces hydrostatic pressure exposure, and allows phased construction. These conditions are consistent with tunneling precedents in fjord environments worldwide.

### Regulatory Feasibility

The tunnel would be fully subsurface and avoid navigational, aviation, and visual impacts. Regulatory review would include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, and NEPA evaluation. Prior studies provide relevant regulatory precedent.

## **Collaborative Partnership Approach**

The Borough does not seek to prescribe a final engineering solution. This submission is offered as an invitation to collaborate with the Tunnel Vision Challenge team and The Boring Company to identify the most effective, constructible, and scalable approach.

## **Funding and Long-Term Considerations**

The Borough recognizes that infrastructure of this scale requires layered participation. Following selection of a demonstration alignment, the Borough would work with appropriate local, state, and federal partners to advocate for funding support and to explore sustainable long-term operational strategies.

## **Closing Statement**

The Ketchikan–Gravina airport access challenge represents a real transportation need faced daily by a remote American community. By partnering through the Tunnel Vision Challenge, Ketchikan offers an opportunity to demonstrate how innovative tunneling technology can improve resilience, safety, and connectivity as a practical community solution.

## **Point of Contact**

### **Ruben Duran, Borough Manager**

Ketchikan Gateway Borough  
1900 First Ave. Suite 210  
Ketchikan, Alaska, 99901  
907-228-6625

## KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH

### RESOLUTION NO. 3166

#### **A Resolution of the Assembly of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Expressing Support for the Submission of the Ketchikan-Pennock-Gravina Airport Access Tunnel Proposal to the Boring Company's "Tunnel Vision Challenge"**

#### **RECITALS**

- A. WHEREAS**, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough is an island community whose primary commercial airport and the only international airport in southern southeast Alaska – the Ketchikan International Airport – is located on Gravina Island and is accessible only by marine ferry; and
- B. WHEREAS**, this unique geographic separation creates a single-point vulnerability for passenger travel, emergency medical evacuation, freight movement, and regional connectivity; and
- C. WHEREAS**, ferry operations are subject to weather conditions, mechanical disruptions, staffing limitations, and are not operated on a continuous 24-hour basis, creating life-safety concerns for residents requiring urgent medical transport; and
- D. WHEREAS**, reliable access to the airport is critical for medical response, public safety, economic stability, tourism, and essential transportation services; and
- E. WHEREAS**, the State of Alaska previously constructed a three-mile airport access road on Gravina Island in anticipation of a fixed transportation crossing, preserving a corridor that continues to provide long-term infrastructure value; and
- F. WHEREAS**, the Ketchikan–Pennock Airport Access Tunnel (KPAT) concept proposes a small-diameter, single-lane vehicular tunnel utilizing Pennock Island as an intermediate landfall to reduce underwater tunneling distance and technical risk; and
- G. WHEREAS**, the proposed tunnel alignment would remain within approximately one mile in length, consistent with the parameters of The Boring Company's Tunnel Vision Challenge; and
- H. WHEREAS**, the project concept is exploratory in nature, will require collaboration with and approval of federal and state transportation agencies, and does not constitute authorization for construction, funding, or regulatory approval; and

- I. **WHEREAS**, the proposal demonstrates potential benefits including improved reliability, reduced travel time, enhanced emergency response reliability, and economic development through long-term transportation resilience and inter-connectivity for our community.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IN CONSIDERATION OF THE ABOVE FACTS, IT IS RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH** as follows:

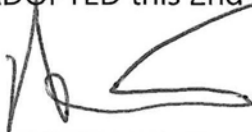
**Section 1.** The Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly expresses its support for the submission of the Ketchikan–Pennock Airport Access Tunnel proposal to The Boring Company’s Tunnel Vision Challenge.

**Section 2.** This resolution signifies conceptual support only and does not authorize construction, commit Borough funding, or waive any regulatory or environmental requirements

**Section 3.** The Borough encourages continued exploration of innovative infrastructure solutions that enhance life safety and transportation resilience for island communities.

**Section 4.** Effective Date. This resolution shall be effective immediately upon adoption.

ADOPTED this 2nd day of February, 2026.




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Austin Otos, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:




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Kacie Paxton, Borough Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:




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Glenn Brown, Borough Attorney

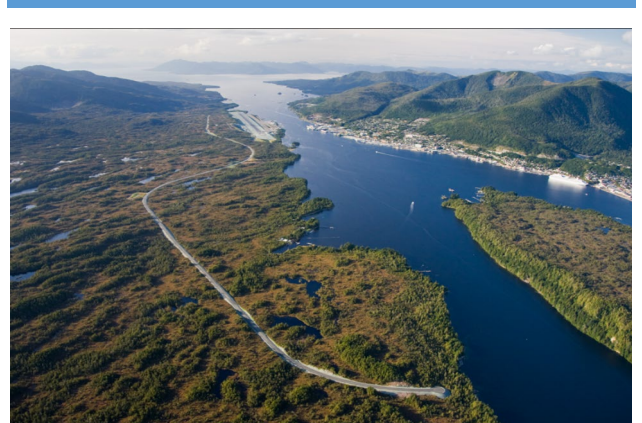


# 2026 ISSUE PAPER: GRAVINA ISLAND FIXED CROSSING ACCESS

*Ketchikan Gateway Borough - 1900 First Avenue - Ketchikan, Alaska 99901*

## OVERVIEW

**Summary of the Issue:** Ketchikan’s only public surface connection to Gravina Island – including the State of Alaska Owned, Borough operated Ketchikan International Airport and significant tracts of developable public and private lands – is the Borough-operated ferry across the Tongass Narrows. The toll ferry provides the only means of moving passengers, commodities, and emergency services between Ketchikan and Gravina, and its operations are limited to commercial air service schedules. The ferries operated by the Borough are inherently capacity-limited, nearing the end of their useful life and are unable to support long-term economic development opportunities or fully reliable emergency services for Gravina’s residents and property owners. A fixed



crossing – bridge or tunnel – would provide the permanent, reliable connection necessary to unlock economic potential, secure transportation continuity, and reduce long-term federal and state spending on the ferry system’s infrastructure and maintenance needs. More than two decades ago, this need was formally recognized through a comprehensive federal and state environmental review process, which selected a bridge alternative as the preferred solution to providing a fixed crossing to Gravina. Technological advancements since that time may prove that a tunnel is now a more feasible option.

**Importance of Resolving the Issue:** Ketchikan International Airport is Southern Southeast Alaska’s primary transportation hub for regional connectivity for residents, visitors, freight, and emergency medical transportation. Unlike most U.S. communities, Ketchikan’s airport is not accessible by road at all hours. Dependence on a scheduled ferry system holds avoidable risks during emergencies, irregular flight operations, mechanical outages and severe weather events. A fixed crossing would reduce reliance on an aging single marine transportation system and increase transportation resiliency and redundancy.

Gravina Island contains a mix of private, Borough, State and Federal lands – accessible only through ferry operations – have greatly impeded economic development opportunities. Fixed access to Gravina would increase opportunities for housing development, business expansion, resource management, and recreation. Diversifying the tax base within the community is an increasing need as the community has shifted from the once dominant fishing and timber industries to a primarily seasonal based tourism economy.

**Recent Actions Taken to Resolve the Issue:** The Gravina Access Project was initially funded under the 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In 2007, due to escalating project costs, former Governor Sarah Palin directed the Alaska Department of Transportation to identify the most fiscally responsible alternative



## 2026 ISSUE PAPER: GRAVINA ISLAND FIXED CROSSING ACCESS

rather than proceed with the proposed bridge crossing. This alternative, known as G4v, has resulted in ongoing improvements to the ferry system's infrastructure including a passenger waiting facility, freight mooring facility, ferry berths, ramps, and other system amenities. All of which have not addressed the community's needs for increased access to Gravina, which if provided would promote economic diversification, support the communities housing needs and provide emergency services to Gravina's residents and property owners as well as Revillagigedo access to southern Southeast Alaska's only international airport and strategic military support infrastructure.

**Action Desired:** The Ketchikan Gateway Borough supports the following efforts to advance fixed crossing access between Revillagigedo and Gravina Islands:

- **Direct the Federal Highway Administration to Conduct a New Fixed-Link Feasibility Analysis.** Direct FHWA to provide funding to the State of Alaska Department of Transportation to evaluate bridge or tunnel alternatives using modern cost-benefit analysis and updated engineering techniques.
- **Prioritize Fixed Crossing Access as Part of Federal and Rural Infrastructure Programs.** Ensure eligibility and prioritization within programs addressing rural airports, coastal transportation resilience, and critical access corridors.
- **Recognize a Fixed Crossing to Gravina Island as Critical to Regional Economic Development Opportunities.** Acknowledge that permanent access to Gravina Island is essential to unlocking housing development, private investment, land management, and long-term economic diversification while reducing dependence on a single, capacity-limited marine transportation system.
- **Support Federal Investment to Transition from Short-Term Ferry Dependence to a Permanent Transportation Solution.** Provide federal funding support to advance a fixed crossing as a cost-effective, long-term alternative that improves emergency response reliability, enhances airport access, and reduces ongoing state and federal expenditures required to maintain and replace aging ferry infrastructure.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Questions and requests for additional information may be directed to:

Ruben Duran  
Borough Manager  
Ketchikan Gateway Borough  
1900 First Avenue, Suite 210  
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

E-mail: [rubend@kgbak.us](mailto:rubend@kgbak.us)  
Telephone: (907) 228-6625

# Land Ownership

- Land Ownership**
- Private
  - City
  - Ketchikan Gateway Borough
  - State of Alaska
  - AK Mental Health Trust
  - BLM
  - US Coast Guard
  - US Forest Service
  - Federal
  - University of Alaska
  - Native Corporation
  - No Data
- Roads  
 Docks  
 City Boundary  
 Water Bodies  
 Streams

Note: General land ownership is classified according to the Ketchikan Gateway Borough GIS, March 2010.



Date: December 15, 2016  
 Projection: Alaska State Plane Zone 1, NAD 27  
 Author: HDR Alaska, Inc.  
 Sources: Borough; HDR Alaska, Inc.



- Proposed Alternatives**
- Existing Ferry Route
  - (No Action Alternative) and G4v
  - C3-4
  - F3
  - G2
  - G3
  - G4

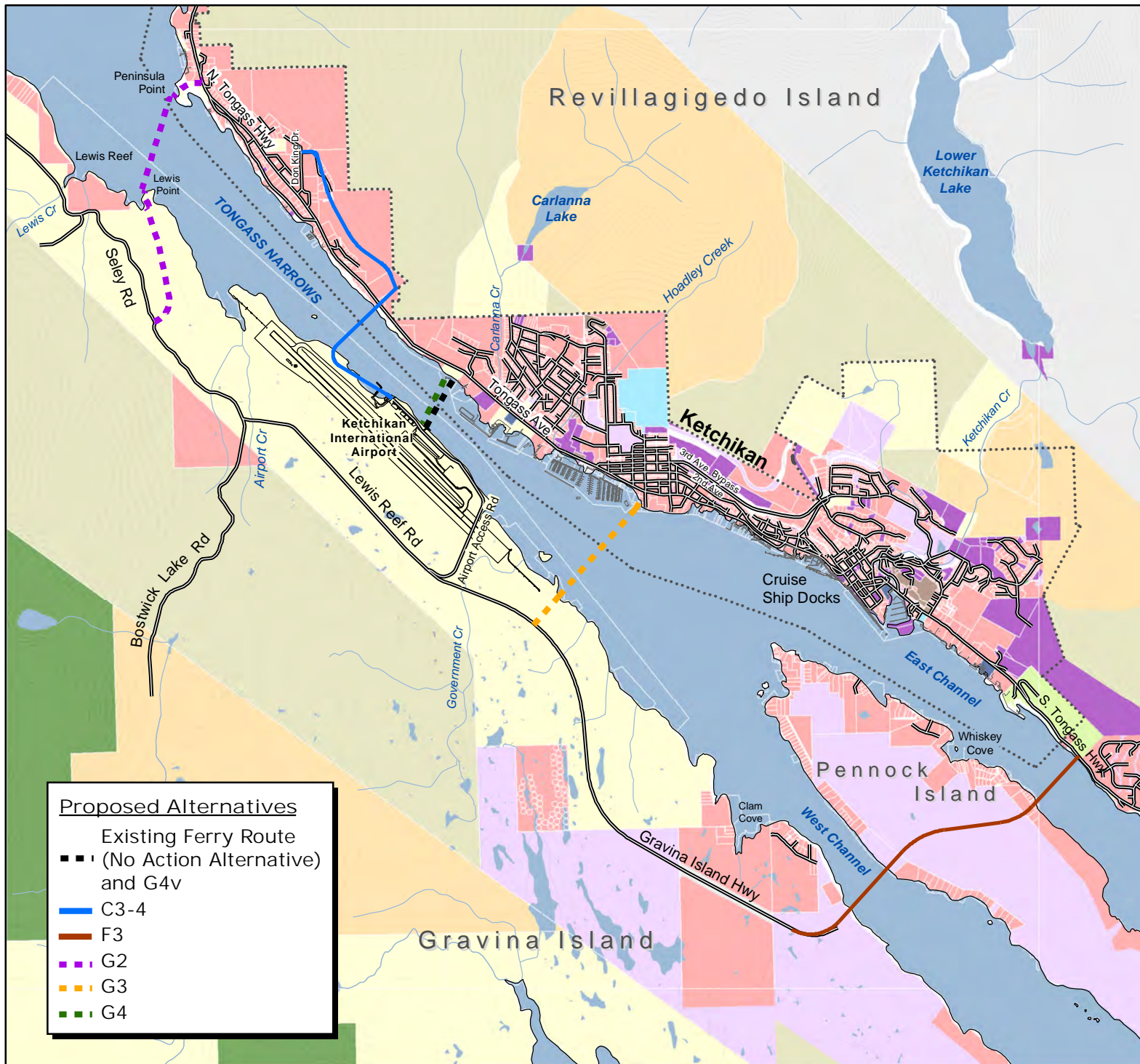
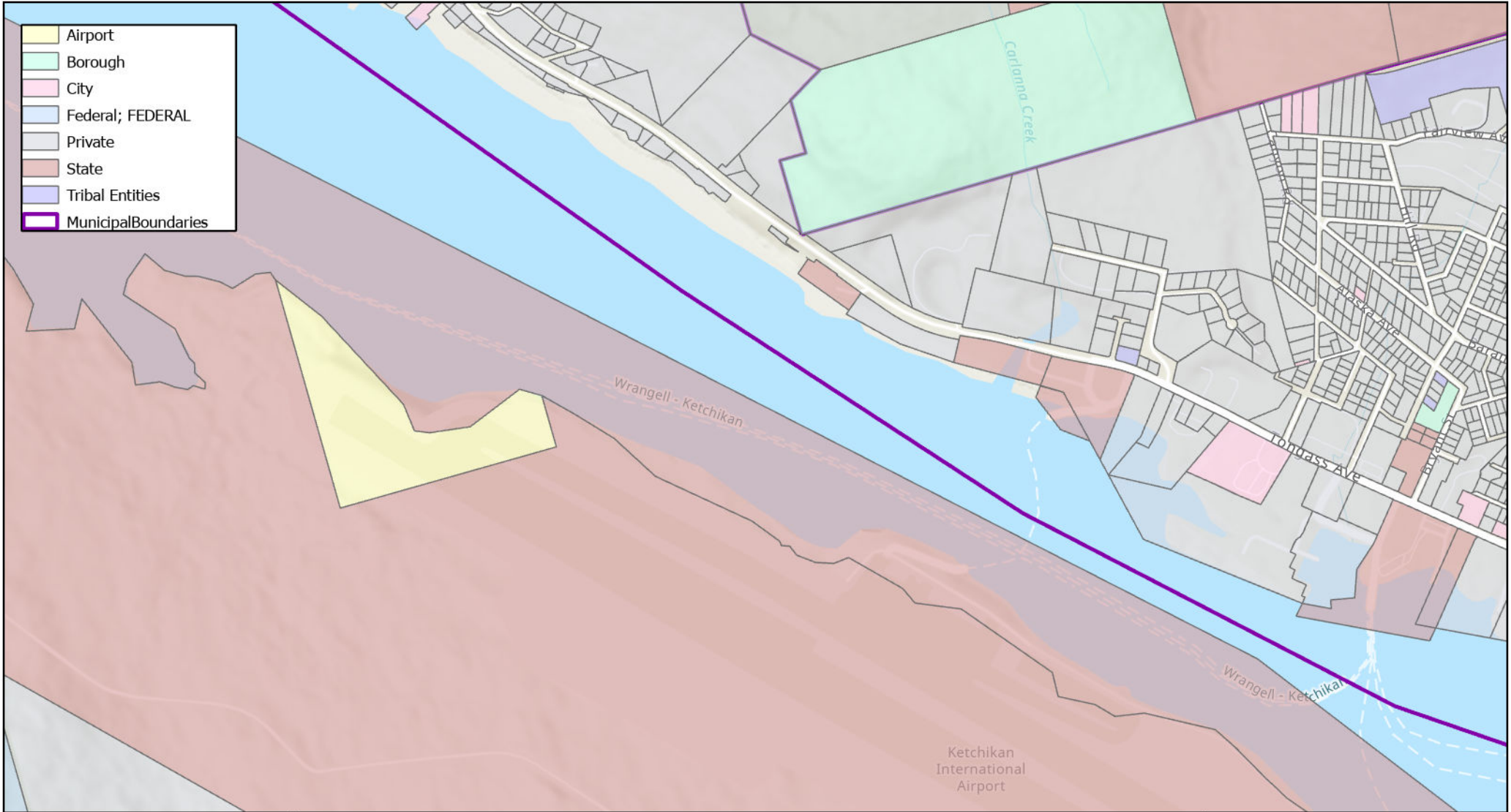


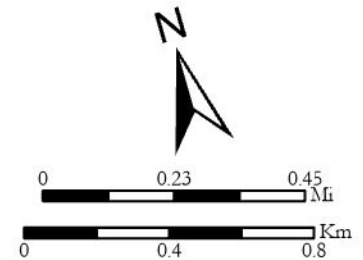
Figure 3.1

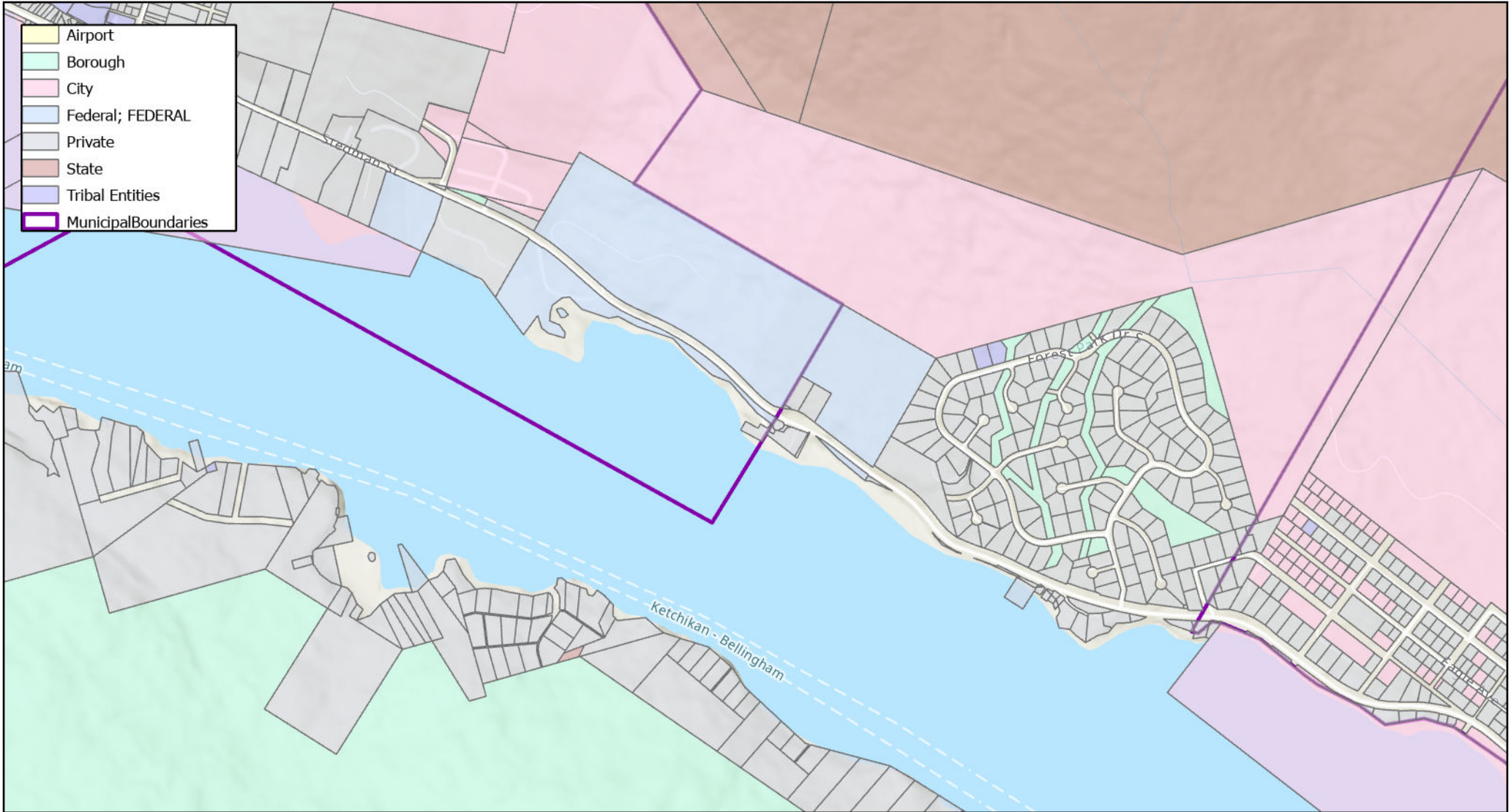


# Ketchikan Gateway Borough Planning Department

2026

Coordinate System: WGS 1984 Web Mercator Auxiliary Sphere

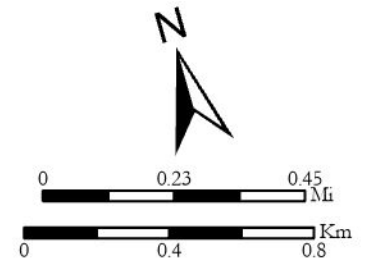




# Ketchikan Gateway Borough Planning Department

2026

Coordinate System: WGS 1984 Web Mercator Auxiliary Sphere



# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

February 20, 2026

The Honorable Austin Otos  
Mayor  
Ketchikan Gateway Borough  
1900 First Avenue, Suite 230  
Ketchikan, AK 99901

To Whom it May Concern,

We write in support of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's efforts to explore innovative, long-term solutions to strengthen the connection between the City of Ketchikan and Ketchikan International Airport, including the consideration of a tunnel and other creative alternatives to the current ferry-dependent system.

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough is located in Southeast Alaska on Revillagigedo Island and is home to over 13,000 people. Known as the Salmon Capital of the World, Ketchikan's economy is driven by timber, fishing, and tourism, welcoming almost 1.4 million visitors annually to the island from May to September. Because of the community's geographic isolation, the only ways to reach Ketchikan are by boat and air, making the airport an essential lifeline for the community.

Uniquely, Ketchikan International Airport is on Gravina Island, one nautical mile from the city, making it the only airport in the United States reachable solely by ferry. While the ferry system has long served the community, it also presents operational and weather-related challenges, underscoring the need to thoughtfully evaluate more reliable and resilient transportation options. The Borough's continued examination of a single-lane vehicular tunnel, along with other innovative and practical solutions, reflects a proactive and responsible approach to addressing a decades-long infrastructure challenge.

By exploring modern engineering approaches and creative infrastructure concepts, Ketchikan can improve safety, reliability, and year-round connectivity in a complex coastal environment. A more dependable connection between the city and the airport would provide significant public benefit, strengthen economic stability, and enhance emergency access for the community that the Borough has worked for decades to better connect.

Consistent with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, we support the Borough's efforts to evaluate feasible, community-driven solutions to this unique transportation challenge. We support the Borough's continued leadership in pursuing thoughtful, innovative options that best serve Ketchikan's long-term needs. Finally, we ask that you keep our offices apprised as these efforts move forward.

Sincerely,



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Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator



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Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator



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Nicholas J. Begich III  
Representative for All Alaska



## REPRESENTATIVE JEREMY T. BYNUM

DISTRICT 1 | KETCHIKAN, SAXMAN, LORING, WRANGELL, MEYERS CHUCK,  
METLAKATLA, COFFMAN COVE, WHALE PASS, & HYDER

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE | Alaska State Capitol, Room 400  
Phone: (907) 465-3824 | Rep.Jeremy.Bynum@akleg.gov

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To Whom It May Concern:

I write in strong support of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's submission of the Ketchikan Airport Access Tunnel proposal to The Boring Company's "Tunnel Vision Challenge."

Ketchikan is an island community with its primary airport located on Gravina Island and accessible only by marine ferry. While the ferry has served residents for many years, it remains a single point of vulnerability for passenger travel, medical evacuation, freight movement, and regional connectivity.

Weather, mechanical issues, and limited operating hours create serious safety and economic concerns for our community. These challenges are well recognized in the Borough's proposal.

Reliable, all weather ground access to the airport would improve emergency response, reduce travel time, and strengthen long term transportation reliability for Southeast Alaska.

Communities across Alaska face unique infrastructure barriers that require thoughtful and forward-looking solutions. Evaluating whether modern tunneling technology can provide safe and dependable access in Southeast Alaska, as well as other locations with complicated geography, is exactly the kind of practical innovation our state should support.

I commend the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly for advancing this effort and for its commitment to protecting life safety, economic stability, and reliable transportation.

I support continued evaluation and advancement of the Ketchikan Airport Access Tunnel as part of The Boring Company's Tunnel Vision Challenge.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Bynum".

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Representative Jeremy T. Bynum,  
House District 1

February 10, 2026  
File #: MGR26-088

To Whom it May Concern at The Boring Company:

**RE: Support for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's Tunnel Vision Challenge Submission**

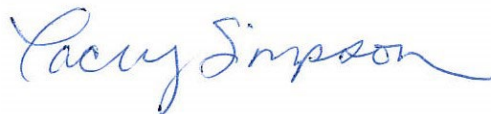
The City of Ketchikan wishes to express its support for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's submission to the Tunnel Vision Challenge to explore the feasibility of a Ketchikan–Pennock–Gravina Airport Access tunnel concept for the community of Ketchikan, Alaska.

Ketchikan is an isolated, island community. Travel on and off the island by residents and summer visitors is heavily dependent upon access to the Ketchikan International Airport, located on nearby but separate Gravina Island. Currently the airport is only reachable via ferry service. Reliable, all-weather access to the airport remains a longstanding transportation priority for our community in all seasons. The concept of a short-span subsea tunnel system is an innovative approach that would provide improved and more reliable access by providing a fixed transportation system and allowing for emergency, freight, and disaster response capabilities while serving daily resident and visitor transportation needs. The City supports continued evaluation of emerging technologies such as the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's tunnel proposal to enhance access to Gravina Island and the Ketchikan International Airport for all users.

This letter of support for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's submission reflects the City's interest in exploring potential solutions that enhance regional connectivity and strengthen transportation reliability.

We appreciate the opportunity to support the Borough's submission and look forward to continued collaboration as feasibility discussions progress.

Sincerely,



Lacey G. Simpson  
Acting City Manager/KPU General Manager



**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH  
PLANNING COMMISSION**

1900 First Avenue, Suite 210  
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

February 10, 2026

The Boring Company  
Tunnel Vision Challenge  
Bastrop, Texas

**RE: Letter of Support – Ketchikan Airport Access Tunnel (KAAT) Submission to the Tunnel Vision Challenge**

Dear Tunnel Vision Challenge Selection Committee:

On behalf of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Planning Commission, I am writing to express our strong support for the Borough's submission of the Ketchikan Airport Access Tunnel (KAAT) proposal to The Boring Company's Tunnel Vision Challenge. This letter accompanies Assembly Resolution No. 3166, adopted February 2, 2026, which formally expresses the Borough Assembly's support for this submission.

The Planning Commission has long recognized that the lack of fixed ground access between the City of Ketchikan and Ketchikan International Airport on Gravina Island represents one of the most significant transportation and land use challenges facing our community. As the body charged with guiding the Borough's long-range planning efforts, we understand that this single-point-of-failure dependency on marine ferry service directly impacts public safety, economic development, emergency response capability, and the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

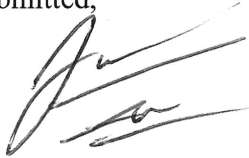
The recently adopted *Ketchikan Gateway Borough 2035 Comprehensive Plan* identifies reliable airport access and transportation resilience as critical community priorities. The KAAT proposal directly advances these goals by exploring an innovative, fixed-link solution that would dramatically reduce travel times, improve emergency medical response, and strengthen the long-term economic vitality of our region. These objectives are consistent with the Commission's ongoing work to promote land use patterns and infrastructure investments that support a resilient and connected community.

The geography of the Tongass Narrows and the availability of Pennock Island as an intermediate landfall present a compelling opportunity for a demonstration-scale tunneling project. The existence of a three-mile airport access road already constructed on Gravina Island further enhances the feasibility of this concept and reflects prior state investment in anticipation of a fixed crossing. From a planning perspective, these existing infrastructure assets and the well-documented transportation need make Ketchikan an ideal candidate for the Tunnel Vision Challenge.

The Planning Commission appreciates that this submission is exploratory and conceptual in nature, and that it does not commit the Borough to construction, funding, or the waiver of any regulatory or environmental requirements. We view this proposal as a responsible and forward-thinking step toward solving a transportation challenge that has constrained our community for decades.

The Planning Commission enthusiastically endorses this submission and encourages The Boring Company to consider Ketchikan as a partner community for this important initiative. We believe the KAAT proposal represents exactly the type of real-world, high-impact application that the Tunnel Vision Challenge was designed to support.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jos Govaars', written over a horizontal line.

**Jos Govaars**  
Chair, Planning Commission  
Ketchikan Gateway Borough

cc: Ruben Duran, Borough Manager  
Cynna Smith, Assistant Borough Manager  
Austin Otos, Borough Mayor



February 20, 2026

Austin Otos  
Borough Mayor  
Ketchikan Gateway Borough  
1900 First Avenue, Suite 210  
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Dear Mayor Otos,

On behalf of the Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC), the only federally and state recognized tribe in Ketchikan and the second largest tribe in Alaska, we are writing this letter of support for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's submission of the Ketchikan–Gravina Airport Access Tunnel concept to The Boring Company's Tunnel Vision Challenge.

Ketchikan's primary airport is located on Gravina Island and is currently accessible only by marine ferry, creating a single point of vulnerability for emergency medical transport, freight movement, tourism, and daily mobility. Ferry service is affected by weather, mechanical issues, and limited operating hours, presenting real-life safety and connectivity concerns for our community.

The proposed small diameter vehicular tunnel utilizing Pennock Island offers a practical approach to improving reliable access while reducing underwater tunneling distance and technical risk. Reliable ground access to the airport would strengthen emergency response, reduce travel times, and support long-term economic resilience for Tribal members and the broader region.

The Ketchikan Indian Community supports the Borough's effort to advance this concept and encourages continued exploration of innovative infrastructure solutions that improve life safety and transportation reliability.

Sincerely,

Emily Edenshaw, Tribal Administrator / CEO



## **KETCHIKAN FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Integrity, Professionalism, Respect, Compassion, Teamwork, and Innovation  
70 Bawden Street Ketchikan, Alaska 99901  
Phone (907) 225-9616 – Fax (907) 225-9613  
Chief Rick Hines  
E-mail: rickhines@ketchikan.gov

Mr. Elon Musk  
The Boring Company  
Bastrop, Texas

### **Re: Support for Ketchikan–Gravina Airport Access Tunnel / Tunnel Vision Challenge Application**

Dear Mr. Musk,

As Fire Chief of the Ketchikan Fire Department, I am writing to formally express our full and unequivocal support for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's application to the Tunnel Vision Challenge.

Ketchikan is an island community whose only commercial airport, Ketchikan International Airport, is located on Gravina Island and accessible solely by marine ferry. While the ferry system operates reliably under routine conditions, it remains a single point of failure for emergency access to air medical transport. From an emergency management perspective, that vulnerability carries significant risk.

The Ketchikan Fire Department coordinates and supports more than 600 medical evacuations each year. Many of these involve trauma patients, stroke victims, cardiac emergencies, critically ill children, and other life-threatening conditions requiring immediate transfer to advanced medical facilities outside our region. In these cases, time is not simply important—it is decisive.

Currently, every medevac requires coordination of ground transport, marine transfer, and aviation assets. Weather delays, ferry availability, mechanical issues, and marine conditions all introduce variables that can delay definitive care. Even small delays in reaching the aircraft can increase morbidity and mortality in time-sensitive emergencies.

A fixed, all-weather tunnel connection would eliminate these variables and provide direct, uninterrupted ground access to the airport. The time savings created by such infrastructure could mean the difference between permanent disability and recovery—or between life and death. For emergency responders, the ability to move immediately, without dependency on marine transfer schedules or weather limitations, would fundamentally improve patient outcomes and operational efficiency.



## **KETCHIKAN FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Integrity, Professionalism, Respect, Compassion, Teamwork, and Innovation  
70 Bawden Street Ketchikan, Alaska 99901  
Phone (907) 225-9616 – Fax (907) 225-9613  
Chief Rick Hines  
E-mail: [rickhines@ketchikan.gov](mailto:rickhines@ketchikan.gov)

Beyond daily medical operations, a tunnel would dramatically strengthen disaster response capabilities, mass casualty management, and regional resilience throughout Southern Southeast Alaska. Critical infrastructure redundancy is a cornerstone of modern emergency planning. In our geographic reality, it is essential.

The Tunnel Vision Challenge represents an opportunity to apply innovative tunneling technology to a real-world public safety need. For our department, this proposal is not a matter of convenience—it is a matter of community safety, emergency readiness, and lifesaving capability.

On behalf of the men and women of the Ketchikan Fire Department, I respectfully urge serious consideration of this proposal and stand in full support of its advancement.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Hines", written over a horizontal line.

Rick Hines  
Fire Chief  
Ketchikan Fire Department



9360 Glacier Hwy, Suite 201

Juneau, AK 99801

Phone (907) 586-4360

[www.seconference.org](http://www.seconference.org)

Email [info@seconference.org](mailto:info@seconference.org)

SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

February 18, 2026

The Boring Company  
Jerry Sanduskyford  
130 Walker Watson Rd,  
Bastrop, TX 78602

RE: Supporting the Ketchikan-Pennock-Gravina Airport Access Tunnel Proposal to the Boring Company's "Tunnel Vision Challenge"

Dear Proposal Review Committee,

Southeast Conference (SEC) would like to express support for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's (KGB) efforts to explore the opportunity of a tunnel connection between Ketchikan-Pennock-Gravina Island with the Ketchikan Airport Access Tunnel (KAAT) Project.

Ketchikan is uniquely situated as an island community in Alaska whose primary commercial airport is located on a separate island and is accessible only by marine ferry. While the ferry system has served the community for decades, it represents a single point of failure for passenger travel, emergency medical evacuation, freight movement, and regional connectivity—particularly during severe weather, mechanical disruptions, or periods when ferry service is not operating. This constrained connection limits economic opportunities and community growth, hinders disaster response ability and poses a barrier for effective travel and medical service needs for residents of the second largest community in Southeast Alaska.

SEC is the federally designated Economic Development District for the region as well as the state designated Alaska Regional Development Organization. Our mission is "to undertake and support activities that promote strong economies, sustainable communities, and a healthy environment in Southeast Alaska." The KAAT Project aligns with the Region's Economic Development Strategy's transportation objectives: Improve and expand opportunities to move freight to and from markets, ensure the stability and safety of passenger transportation services and improve disaster resilient transportation infrastructure.

Southeast Conference strongly supports this exploratory project of a tunnel connection between Ketchikan-Pennock-Gravina Island to improve reliable access to the airport for critical medical response, public safety, economic stability, tourism, and essential transportation services. Thank you for your time and fullest support possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Venables".

Robert Venables  
Executive Director  
Southeast Conference





Feb. 6, 2026

**RE: Support for Ketchikan–Gravina Airport Acces**

PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center extends support for improved access to Gravina Island and subsequently the Ketchikan International Airport.

The community of Ketchikan is an island community in Southeast Alaska. There is no bridge to the mainland. The only access to our community is by air or by sea. The Ketchikan community is separated from its lifeline of airtravel by a narrow waterway.

Current access to the airport is via a short ferry ride that typically operates every half hour taking passengers and vehicles from one side to the other. This ferry access is subject to delays through inclement weather, capacity limitations on the ferry, operational issues with the ferry and operational issues with the ferry ramp on either side of the channel. It is not uncommon for any one of these issues to disrupt access to the airport.

PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center relies on airtravel through the Ketchikan International Airport for critical medical support.

- Patients requiring a higher level of care are medivaced by life flight from the Ketchikan International Airport.
- Patients arrive via life flight from outlining communities seeking care at PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center.
- Lab specimens requiring specialized testing drawn at PeaceHealth and across the island are delivered to the airport and shipped via air freight to ensure their timely arrival at a testing facility.
- Critical medical supplies are shipped via air freight to Ketchikan.
- Essential equipment replacement parts are shipped to Ketchikan via airfreight for timely repairs.
- Medical professionals travel to and from Ketchikan frequently via the airport either to provide specialized services to Ketchikan or our specialists travel to outlying communities in the region to provide care.

Any disruption to ferry service has the potential to impede critical medical care. To that end, PeaceHealth supports improving access to Gravina Island and the Ketchikan International Airport.

Sincerely,

**Sarah Cook**  
Chief Hosptial Administrator  
PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center



February 18, 2026

Mr. Elon Musk  
The Boring Company  
Bastrop, Texas 78602

**Re: Support for Ketchikan–Gravina Airport Access Tunnel/Tunnel Vision Challenge Application**

Dear Mr. Musk,

I am writing on behalf of Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) and our member cruise lines to express our support for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's application to The Boring Company's **Tunnel Vision Challenge**.

Tourism is a cornerstone of Ketchikan's economy, bringing visitors from around the world to Southeast Alaska each year. Whether arriving by air or transitioning between air and sea travel, reliable airport access plays an important role in the visitor experience and the operational success of tourism-related businesses.

Currently, access between Ketchikan and Ketchikan International Airport relies on a marine ferry crossing. While functional, this additional step introduces uncertainty into travel schedules, ground transportation coordination, and staffing logistics, particularly during peak visitor seasons or periods of challenging weather. Delays can ripple through tightly scheduled itineraries, affecting guests, employees, and service providers alike. It is a complication that few, if any other communities, must adjust to.

A fixed, all-weather tunnel connection would provide predictable and continuous access to the airport, improving efficiency for travelers and enhancing Ketchikan's reputation as a well-connected destination. For the tourism industry, reliability is essential not only for guest satisfaction, but also for maintaining competitive schedules and seamless transitions between modes of travel.

The Tunnel Vision Challenge offers an opportunity to demonstrate how innovative tunneling solutions can strengthen tourism-dependent communities in remote and maritime settings. A successful project in Ketchikan would support the community and long-term visitor growth while improving day-to-day operations for the businesses that serve them.

For these reasons, CLIA and our member cruise lines calling in the community support Ketchikan's application and encourage favorable consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ree", with a long, sweeping underline.

Renée Limoge Reeve  
Vice President of Government Relations  
Cruise Lines International Association [cliaalaska.org](http://cliaalaska.org)



02/06/2026

Mr. Elon Musk  
The Boring Company  
Bastrop, Texas

**Re: Support for Ketchikan–Gravina Airport Access Tunnel/Tunnel Vision Challenge Application**

Dear Mr. Musk,

I am writing to express support for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough’s application to The Boring Company’s Tunnel Vision Challenge on behalf of JAG Marine Group.

Ketchikan is a regional economic hub in Southern Southeast Alaska, supporting commercial fishing, tourism, transportation, and essential services. Despite this role, the community’s primary airport is accessible only by ferry, introducing uncertainty into travel, shipping, workforce movement, and business continuity.

From a business and economic standpoint, reliability matters. Missed flights, delayed freight, disrupted schedules, and limited capacity all carry real costs. A fixed tunnel connection between Revillagigedo Island and Gravina Island would provide predictable, year-round access to the airport, improving efficiency for businesses, employees, and visitors alike.

Improved access would also support long-term growth. Gravina Island contains significant areas suitable for residential and commercial development that remain constrained by limited connectivity. A permanent connection would help unlock this potential while reducing pressure on already-developed areas of Revillagigedo Island.

The Tunnel Vision Challenge represents a forward-thinking approach to infrastructure investment. A successful project in Ketchikan would demonstrate how innovative tunneling solutions can strengthen regional economies in remote and maritime environments.

For these reasons, **JAG Marine Group** supports Ketchikan’s application and believes this project would provide lasting economic and community benefits.

Sincerely,

**Bergan Wieler**  
**JAG Ketchikan General Manager**  
**JAG Marine Group**

**3801 Tongass Ave; P.O. Box 9470**  
**Ketchikan, AK 99901**  
**Phone: (907) 225-7199**

[www.jagmarinegroup.com](http://www.jagmarinegroup.com)



February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Jeff Miller  
Clam Cove Holdings LLC  
3257 S Gravina Island  
Ketchikan, AK 99901

## Tunnel Vision Project Letter of Support

Dear Boring Company Selection Committee,

I am writing to express support for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's application to The Boring Company's Tunnel Vision Challenge on behalf of Clam Cove Holdings LLC. Clam Cove Holdings LLC is a family owned and operated land development company based in Ketchikan, AK with a mission to provide critically needed housing and services to Ketchikan and the surrounding Southeast Alaska community.

My family has been part of the fabric of the Ketchikan community since 1921 and over the years, family members have captained ferries and commercial fishing vessels, and operated farms and dairy operations on Gravina Island.

Ketchikan is a regional economic hub in Southeast Alaska, supporting commercial fishing, tourism, transportation, and other essential services for the region. It serves as the southern gateway to Alaska, a critical refueling and supply point and is the first and last major port of call for both sea and air traffic coming north or traveling south through the inside passage. Despite this role, the community's International Airport is accessible only by ferry, introducing uncertainty into travel, shipping, workforce movement, and business continuity. This creates a single point of failure with cascading consequences:

The small ferry that connects Ketchikan to Gravina crosses twice per hour during the daytime, and carries a very limited number of walk-on passengers and vehicles. The ferry does not operate overnight, which means that delivery vehicles and other commercial vehicles that could otherwise operate in off-peak hours, are competing with airport traffic for space on the ferry during the day.

The cost of ferry travel is high, and is difficult for members of the community to afford. The cost of a one-way trip is \$7 per standard vehicle, plus \$6 per passenger age 12+. This can mean \$20-\$30 in ferry fees each way, per vehicle, for a less than 5 minute ride. Going to pick up a loved one from a flight can therefore cost a family over \$50 round trip! Estimates show roughly \$3.2MM of ferry fees were collected for FY2024, and yet the ferry system struggles with high operating costs which limits the ability to expand service.

This was not always supposed to be the situation. In 2005, Federal Transportation funds were appropriated by Congress for construction of a bridge to connect Ketchikan (on Revillagigedo Island), to Gravina Island where the Ketchikan International Airport is located. This road and bridge connection, were designed to provide direct road access between the airport and the city. It would also open up South Gravina Island for future residential development.

Unfortunately, the project became a political 'hot potato' during the 2008 Presidential election. Ultimately becoming a political liability for the McCain/Palin campaign, due to Then-Governor Sarah Palin's close ties to the effort to secure funding for the project. The national press derided the project as 'The Bridge To Nowhere', keying on the fact that the permanent population of Gravina Island is small, and completely ignoring the importance of access to the airport.

As a result the project was terminated, but not before significant progress had already been made on building out the infrastructure: The State of Alaska DOT in 2007 purchased land from my family, for the purpose of building the Gravina Island Highway, the road which was designed to connect the Airport to the Bridge and then to the City of Ketchikan.

The Gravina Island highway was ultimately constructed and terminates at the southern end of the Clam Cove neighborhood area in the location denoted as Options A and B in the Borough's Vision Submission package. See Figure 1 in the Borough's submission for an aerial photo of the existing Highway.

The highway sits there today, waiting for the connection that was meant to come. Your tunnel would complete what was started, at a fraction of the original bridge cost, while solving the navigation and weather vulnerability issues that a high bridge presented.

**Challenges:**

The high cost, and limited availability of ferry travel present several problems for the community:

1. Emergency and Weather Related Access:
  - a. Ketchikan is subject to extreme weather conditions, especially during winter months. Storms can bring long periods of strong winds, rain and snow which does ground flights in and out of the airport. When this happens in the evening, air travelers will be stranded in the airport terminal overnight. There are no hotel or restaurant accommodations on Gravina Island currently, so travelers do not have access to even basic amenities when this occurs.
  - b. When there is a medical or other type of emergency, access to the airport is subject to the availability of the ferry. For extreme emergency situations, the

ferry can sometimes be operated in off-hours, but that is dependent on the availability of crew and other resources required to operate the ferry.

2. Limits on Community Development and Expansion:

- a. **Development Barrier:** The uncertainty and cost of ferry-dependent access has effectively frozen development on South Gravina Island for decades, despite its designation as one of three growth centers in the Borough's master plan.
- b. Most of the City of Ketchikan is built into steep granite hillsides, making development and construction a challenge. When new buildings are built, generally the building site must be blasted with dynamite, and graded to create a level building pad at great cost.
- c. The South end of Gravina Island is a large and relatively flat area a few miles south of the airport, which is an ideal expansion area for the city to grow into. Beginning in 2005, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough introduced the Clam Cove Neighborhood Plan, with a goal of creating a residential expansion zone to allow for new, lower cost development.
- d. By Borough estimates, the Ketchikan Community has a deficit of approximately 2,000 residential units. Much of the existing housing stock is aging, and will need to be redeveloped in the coming decade.
- e. Clam Cove Holdings LLC estimates that over 1,000 residential units could be built in the Clam Cove Neighborhood.
- f. The Clam Cove Neighborhood also has zoning overlays for commercial and mixed use development, which would allow for expansion of businesses to the island, as well as much needed community services like senior housing and assisted living care facilities.

3. Environmental and Economic and other Costs:

- a. Ferries Run on Diesel and are idling or running all day long, polluting the Tongass Narrows and impacting marine life.
- b. The high operating costs of the ferry systems is not fully covered by the already high ferry fees. This is a burden on the tax payer, and very inefficient use of scarce government funds to subsidize the cost of ferry travel.
- c. The time required to cross the ferry is anywhere from 15-45 minutes, each direction. It can be even longer if there is a long line waiting to cross. If there were a tunnel, vehicles would be able to cross in under 5 minutes saving an estimated 83,673 travel hours per year based on FY2024 Airport Ferry Vehicle crossing volumes.

### **Why a Boring Company Tunnel is a great solution:**

As a member of the original family to homestead at Clam Cove on Gravina Island. I have worked with the Borough for over 8 years on zoning, access and other development plans for south Gravina Island. The biggest issue we continue to face is how to provide affordable access to potential future residents without a bridge. This tunnel project would be the perfect solution. By going underground instead of over the water, the roadway would not impact oceangoing vessel traffic while providing 24 hour access between the airport and the City of Ketchikan.

My family owns the majority of the land surrounding the Gravina Island landing point for the proposed tunnel. An affiliate of Clam Cove Holdings LLC also owns an ideal landing site on Pennock Island, which could be a halfway point for the tunnel depending on the design.

I cannot overstate the level of economic benefits this would have for the region. It would make Gravina Island an option for new Coast Guard, NOAA, and other government agency housing developments, and provide a new expansion zone for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough to grow into.

It would allow affordable housing development, at prices that are otherwise economically unfeasible in the City of Ketchikan currently.

The excavated material from tunnel construction could potentially be re-used in construction in a variety of uses:

- As fill material for new roads and building pads on Gravina Island, greatly reducing the cost of import required for infrastructure development.
- As a base for mixing concrete.
- Rocks and boulders as fill material for sea walls and marina construction.

The tunnel could also serve as an infrastructure corridor for running utilities between the City of Ketchikan and Gravina Island. Replacing the above ground power poles and undersea cable crossings, which are vulnerable to inclement weather, tree fall, and drag from vessels crossing over the underwater cables.

### **A National Proof of Concept**

This project represents an ideal demonstration of innovative tunneling technology solving real-world challenges in remote maritime environments. Success in Ketchikan would prove the concept for dozens of similar island communities across Alaska and the broader

United States—from the San Juan Islands to coastal Maine—where ferry-dependent access constrains economic development and public safety.

The 2005 bridge project became a political casualty despite its genuine transportation merit—a frustrating outcome for those of us who understood what reliable access could mean.

The Tunnel Vision Challenge offers a second chance to solve this problem the right way. A tunnel avoids the navigation conflicts and visual impacts of a high bridge. It provides the 24/7 reliability our airport access demands. And it unlocks economic development that would generate returns many times the project investment.

I cannot overstate the transformative impact this tunnel would have on Ketchikan's future. It would enable housing development at prices working families can afford. It would attract Coast Guard, NOAA, and other federal agencies looking for affordable land for housing. It would position South Gravina Island as the growth corridor Ketchikan desperately needs.

Thank you for considering this application. Clam Cove Holdings enthusiastically supports the Ketchikan Gateway Borough's Tunnel Vision Challenge application and stands ready to be an active partner in making this project a reality.

We hope you will choose this project for a Tunnel Vision Challenge. It would have an enormous impact on the future development of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough community.

Respectfully,



Jeff Miller

Principal, Clam Cove Holdings LLC

Please see the following exhibits attached with my letter for reference:

- Clam Cove Land Use Map
- Clam Cove Conceptual Master Plan
- Stensland Avenue road design plan
- Elden Loop Residential Approved Plat
- Wetland & Environmental report

The above mentioned attachments have been removed due to their size, however they are available separately if requested.



**February 20, 2026**

To Whom It May Concern:

**2026 Officers**

**Trevor Shaw**  
*President*  
Creekside Family Health

**Christy Willis**  
*1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*  
The Local Paper

**Carolyn Henry**  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President*  
PeaceHealth Ketchikan

**Dinah Pearson**  
*Treasurer*  
Legacy Real Estate

**Kendra Anderson**  
*Secretary*  
KPU Telecommunications

**2026 Directors**

**Abby Bradberry**  
Great Alaskan Lumberjack  
Show

**Dr. Andrew Zink**  
Ketchikan Dry Goods/  
Niblicks

**Dana Cherry**  
University of Alaska SE

**Gordon Williams**  
Attorney

**Gracia O'Connell**  
Tongass Federal Credit Union

**Jai Mahtani**  
Gold Rush Jewelry

**Janie Henderson**  
Cedar Point Studio

**Lincoln Hauser**  
Poker Creek Gold/  
Blasphemous Bills

**Chamber Staff**

**Michelle O'Brien**  
Executive Director

The Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce enthusiastically supports the application of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough to the Boring Company "Tunnel Vision Challenge" for the Ketchikan Airport Access Tunnel.

Currently, the Ketchikan Airport is only accessible via small marine ferry service, which presents numerous challenges for our community. While passenger travel is the most noticeable – medical evacuation, stable supply chains, and regional & strategic connectivity are equally important.

From an economic development perspective, this type of dedicated access to Gravina Island is key to the future of our community. The ability to reliably develop on Gravina will enable industry growth, new prospects for affordable housing, and help lower the cost of living. This project is necessary for Ketchikan to capitalize on the military and maritime expansion opportunities currently on the horizon.

In addition to its local and regional benefits, the Ketchikan Airport Access Tunnel would serve as a powerful proving ground for high visibility tunneling innovation.

While Ketchikan is a small community year-round, we expect approximately 1.5 million visitors in 2026, with tourism continuing to grow. That level of exposure provides an exceptional opportunity to showcase modern infrastructure technology to a global audience.

Finally, the region's unique coastal geography also makes this an ideal test environment. If tunneling technology can succeed in Southeast Alaska, it can succeed anywhere.

Our Board of Directors strongly encourages consideration of this proposal, and we stand firmly behind the Borough's effort to strengthen our economy and secure Ketchikan's future.

Respectfully submitted,

Trevor A. Shaw, Chamber President



*Economic Development for Ketchikan*

February 18, 2026

TO: The Boring Company

This letter expresses my enthusiastic support for Ketchikan Gateway Borough's submission requesting a tunnel connecting Revilla Island with Gravina Island. The lack of this connection has long hampered economic and community development for the entire borough. Gravina Island has far greater areas of reasonably level and arable land than Revilla Island and presents many attractive opportunities for development--residential, commercial, and recreational. The expanse of water between the two islands restricts access to these opportunities to only the airport ferry or private boat transport. No viable development can occur on Gravina Island with only these minimal transport options.

Various entities struggled for many years to solve the connection issue. Proposals for a bridge failed for political and financial reasons, but ultimately, a bridge would have to be so high for the cruise ships that transit Tongass Narrows to pass under it, that it would be physically impossible.

In the year ending in August 2024, the airport ferry transported 302,000 passengers, averaging 52,000/mo from June-August and 28,000/mo September-June. Yet, the airport ferry has limited run times, only two times per hour in each direction. A tunnel will enable continuous flow, even if alternately. There is a proposal for a shuttle that will carry individuals in addition to vehicle traffic through the tunnel.

During COVID our island experienced a total shutdown of cruise tourism, the major economic driver. We went from 1.2 million tourists to 0. This brought the entire economy to its knees. The need for economic diversification and expansion is crucial for future survival and prosperity. Gravina Island presents opportunity for a broad spectrum of industry and even agriculture which is almost impossible on Revilla Island's vertical slopes.

Ketchikan has been losing population due to lack of housing and opportunity. A tunnel will allow viable residential development, enabling Gravina Island to be a place where

people can live, work, transport goods, and access resources on both sides of Tongass Narrows.

I energetically support the borough's application for a tunnel and urge you to benefit the entire region by building a tunnel here.

With gratitude for this opportunity.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah Hayden".

Deborah Hayden, CEcD\*, EDFP\*

Executive Director

\*Certified Economic Developer, Economic Development Finance Professional



# MENZIES ENGINEERING GROUP

ENGINEERING SURVEYING SOILS ENVIRONMENT  
9737 MUD BAY ROAD, SUITE 301 KETCHIKAN, ALASKA 99901  
Mobile: (907)-821-4216; Email: [scot@megalaska.com](mailto:scot@megalaska.com)

January 4, 2026

Mr. Elon Musk  
The Boring Company  
Bastrop, Texas 78602

*SENT c/o Ketchikan Gateway Borough  
Tunnel Vision Challenge Application*

Re: Ketchikan – Gravina Airport Access  
Tunnel Vision Challenge Application

Dear Mr. Musk:

I am a resident of Ketchikan since 1988 and have worked here ever since then as a Professional Civil/Structural Engineer and Professional Land Surveyor. I have my own consulting firm. I have also raised three sons here, who are all now approaching 30 years old. Among other projects on which I have worked is the Gravina Highway on Gravina Island. I worked as the quality control manager for construction of the 3.4-mile long highway from Ketchikan's airport to a point on the West Channel of Tongass Narrows where the proposed Gravina Island Bridge from Revillagigedo and Pennock Islands was to terminate and provide full road access between Ketchikan and our airport.

I am writing to you to voice my support for Ketchikan's application for The Boring Company's Tunnel Vision Challenge. In reading about this challenge, I am amazed at such an offer, to build a vehicle tunnel for free.

I feel that Ketchikan, Alaska, where I have lived for nearly 40 years, is well-deserving of such a gift for a variety of reasons.

First, Ketchikan is an island community in a fairly remote location, about 600 miles northwest of Seattle, Washington. The community of Ketchikan is actually comprised of a group of three islands separated by Tongass Narrows, a deep and narrow inland waterbody, part of the Pacific Ocean. Most of us live and work on Revillagigedo Island, the biggest of the three. Pennock Island is by far the smallest and lies between Revillagigedo and Gravina Islands. More and more people have been building cabins and homes on Gravina Island as logging roads grow and development of residential and commercial subdivisions begins.

It should be said that, for a small town of less than 14,000 residents Ketchikan has an extremely busy waterfront in Tongass Narrows. It has always been a fishing town, but logging was a huge industry for many years and now tourism is the biggest industry. All of those industries kept the Narrows busy with boat traffic of all types and sizes, as well as floatplane traffic using the Narrows throughout the day. The varied traffic presented challenges to choosing the best crossing, needing to be above boats and ships and below low-flying aircraft. A tunnel, however, was different, it was well away from all of the traffic.



While Ketchikan was established around 1900 on Revillagigedo Island, the community did not have its own airport until the mid-1970s when it was built on the east shore of Gravina Island as it was found to be the best location in the immediate area for an airport. Ever since then, our only way of accessing the airport was by way of a small ferry that runs from early morning until about 9 pm on 15-minute intervals. The ferry can carry about 20 vehicles and 50 passengers at a time and is run dependably even in the worst weather. The ferry ride does add an extra step to any trip in or out of Ketchikan and if you don't plan properly, you can miss your flight. This has been our way for 50 years. We now have bigger and better ferries, and a shorter ride with new and larger terminals on both islands, but it still has the limitations of a ferry ride. I believe Ketchikan is the only city in the United States where a ferry ride is necessary to access its airport. It should also be stated that the ferry service does not provide access to Pennock Island.

Starting in the 1970s or early 1980s town leaders started the process that would lead to planning for a "hard crossing" between Ketchikan and its airport. Some studies were made, but not in great depth or detail and minimal, if any funding was ever obtained. By the late 1990s however, Alaska had a very powerful U.S. Senator named Ted Stevens who was a master at bringing home funding to our state. He brought us funding that started the planning process with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. They first developed a list of alternative crossings that included additional ferries and terminals, several different bridges and two or three different tunnels. This process took a year or two and included construction cost estimates for all of the alternatives. Governor Frank Murkowski, at the time, was adamant that a tunnel was the best alternative, even though their costs were two or three times that of the bridges. Governor Murkowski lived in Ketchikan in his younger years and graduated from high school here. He really knew and cared about Ketchikan and what a bridge crossing could do for the town. The studies concluded that the most favored crossing was a two-bridge alternative that crossed from Revillagigedo Island to Pennock Island, included a road across Pennock Island to the highest point on the island where it spanned across the West Channel of Tongass Narrows to a landing on Gravina Island. I felt this was the best alternative as well, because it provided access between all three islands. The east bridge was lower than the west, but still high enough for our state ferries to pass under it, as well as typical local traffic such as commercial boats and small ships and private vessels. The east bridge was high enough for the largest cruise ships to pass under as well as all other traffic.

This is where the project and other circumstances started to work against the effort, unfortunately for Ketchikan. The cruise ship industry had grown significantly and rapidly in the years leading up to this point and it was their contention that both bridges should be high enough for all ships to pass under. They were concerned that the West Channel of the Narrows was a narrower passage and during high-wind conditions could present serious challenges to safe passage for the large ships. Those in charge of the project seemingly did not hesitate to approve of their change and revised the crossing to two high bridges, which in turn raised the project cost by 50% or more to about \$400 million or more. Soon after, Hurricane Katrina hit the east coast causing massive damage and huge cleanup and rebuilding costs. Members of Congress began looking for ways to save money to help pay the costs of



the hurricane and “found” our bridge and its very high price tag. Disinformation started then as well, with some in Congress and the press stating that the bridge was providing access to an island with only 50 inhabitants, leaving out the fact that our airport was on that island! By that time though, work on the road that would connect the end of the bridge on Gravina Island to our airport had already started. I was working on that road. As we were still roughing out the first mile or so of the road, then-governor Sarah Palin used her veto power to cancel the bridge project entirely. About that time she joined Senator John McCain in his bid to become president of the United States as his Vice President, making one wonder what was her real motivation for canceling the bridge. As the road project was already under contract, we continued work on it until it was done.

Since that time the prospect of having a bridge became a memory and a lost cause to most of us. Ketchikan is a small island town and since Governor Murkowski, we have not had a governor that was much concerned about us and our representation in the Alaska Legislature and the U.S. Congress is nowhere near what we had with Senator Stevens. My thinking has been that we won't see a bridge (or tunnel) here in my lifetime. This opportunity could change all of that.

Having ready access between the islands would encourage development on Gravina for homes and businesses. While Revillagigedo Island is much larger, the area around the Ketchikan road system is typified by a relatively small amount of developable land area between the waterfront and the steep mountains. Most properties of any size require extensive development effort including drilling and blasting into hillsides or large fill embankments in low-lying ground, or a combination of both. Gravina, on the other hand, has very large areas of relatively flat or moderately sloping ground, making construction far easier.

Regarding actual construction of a tunnel, the alignments of the tunnels that were studied are still available and would be a good starting point for selection. The Borough's application paper has a few alignments listed as well, one of which is the Revillagigedo-Pennock-Gravina Islands route that would give access to all three islands, and in my opinion is by far the best!

To tunnel between our islands involves not only high construction costs and very specialized equipment, such as yours, there is also very involved planning, permitting and design to contend with. It would be a huge challenge, but your companies have done many amazing things and I think you could do it. It would be a huge accomplishment for your company and provide huge improvements to our community now and in the future! I really appreciate the chance to apply for this project and hope you will give our community's application a fair review. If I can be of any assistance in the process, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

MENZIES ENGINEERING GROUP, INC.



Scot A. Menzies, PE, SE, LS



Hello and thank you for taking the time to consider my letter strongly recommending the Ketchikan to Gravina tunnel project for your incredible contest. One of many reasons this project should strongly be considered is that this is a perfect opportunity to show case how much more efficient companies in the private sector, such as yours can be when compared side by side with government. The reason for this is that about 18 years ago the government planned and began allocating funds for a bridge from Ketchikan to Gravina (where our International Airport, currently only accessible by ferry) sits along with miles of road that was built to connect the end of the bridge to the airport, and many miles of public and private land. The 2007 price tag of this bridge project was \$398,000,000. Our governor at the time ended up relocating those funds and the project which received national attention as “the bridge to no where”, was cancelled. This could be a public showing of “a tunnel to somewhere” that I’m sure your team would do at a lower cost than the government project and could really highlight your capabilities for the public and future customers.

There are many reasons our community, as well as other communities in the region would benefit from a tunnel. The first being reliable, affordable access to the airport, which according to the Cirium data center, receives over 11,000 flights per year including at least four 747 flights between Ketchikan and Seattle per day during the summer as well as multiple 747 Alaska Air Lines flights North per day connecting us to the rest of the state. Ketchikan has a year round population of just under 14,000 but the Gravina Airport also serves members of our smaller neighboring communities such as Metlakatla and Prince of Wales Island, who don’t have large commercial airports. That adds an additional approximately 7,500 regional residents who currently have to take a ferry from their towns to Ketchikan, unload and then take another small ferry across the channel to the Gravina Island Airport. The ferry is ran by our local Borough government and not only is very costly to run, but it only operates between the hours of 6 a.m. and 9:30 p.m. this creates a huge safety concern for residents as there are typically multiple medivac flights per day out of our airport, so anytime there is a medical emergency that occurs not during those business hours, the crew of the ferry has to be called in, on overtime pay, to come in to work in the middle of the night, and then still work their full regular shift. You can imagine how expensive this gets when it happens so often. During the busy summer season travelers often have to wait two or three ferry trips (which usually occur every half hour, due to the amount of passengers traveling to Ketchikan and Prince of Wales, which have many summer time guests for fishing excursions and other outdoor seasonal attractions. I have personally seen an ambulance with a critical patient needing a medivac flight try to weave around rows of cars in line for the ferry while the ferry crew tries to unload vehicles to allow the ambulance on. This is very unsafe for patients, ambulance crews, and members of the traveling public. It should also be noted that every walk on passenger must pay \$6, while driving a vehicle on costs between \$13 and \$44 depending on vehicle size, plus standard parking fees.

Another huge benefit of having the tunnel would be improved access to property for development. In the years since 2007 many miles of road have been added to Gravina thanks to logging. This has opened up a lot of land that people have bought, but currently there is only a handful of people who have built along the road system on Gravina. The reason for this is people do not want to have to rely on the expensive ferry, and have to wait some times multiple ferry rides to come and go from their homes. A tunnel would eliminate this problem and provide a development boom that our community desperately needs. The island Ketchikan sits on is very

steep, uneven terrain and most of the places that are reasonable to build have already been built on. Gravina has a much flatter landscape and has miles of prime land ready for growth.

Thank you for your time and I respectfully request you choose the Ketchikan to Gravina tunnel as the winner of your contest.

Sincerely,  
Riley Gass  
City of Ketchikan Councilman

To Whom it May Concern;

I find myself in support of a free tunnel, connecting Revillagigedo and Gravina Island

Reliable access to transportation is not a luxury for southeast Alaska-it is a necessity. For the residence of Ketchikan and Gravina the Ketchikan International Airport is a critical lifeline for medical care, commerce, education, tourism, and daily life. Establishing a free tunnel between Revillagigedo Island and Gravina Island would be a forward, thinking investment and strengthens safety, accessibility, and economic stability for the entire region.

Currently access to the airport depends on Ferry service, which-despite its best efforts-can be affected by weather, mechanical issues, staffing constraints, and operating schedules. A tunnel would provide continuous dependable access, ensuring that residence, visitors, emergency responders and businesses can reach the airport without uncertainty or delay for mechanical emergencies flights or urgent travel. This reliability can make a life changing difference.

A free tunnel will also promote equity and affordability. Airport access should not carry an additional financial barrier for resident who already faced higher cost of living due to the geographic isolation. Eliminating Ferry fares for airport. Travel would ease a burden on families, workers seniors, and students while making Ketchikan more welcoming and accessible to visitors.

From an economic perspective, dependable airport access, supports local businesses, tourism, and workforce mobility, Ketchikan economy depends heavily on tourism and efficient transportation. A tunnel would improve travel predictability encourage investment and reinforce the cities' role as a regional hub overtime reduced Ferry operating demands could also help stabilize long-term transportation costs.

Importantly, a tunnel would enhance emergency, preparedness and resilience in several weather events medically, evacuation, or natural disaster uninterrupted ground access to the airport is a critical asset. This infrastructure with strength and public safety and regional radius and ways that cannot be fully achieved through a ferry service alone.

Investing in a free tunnel between Revillagigedo and Gravina Island is not about replacing tradition-it is about building resilience for the future. It reflects a commitment to smart infrastructure, equal access, and long-term planning that recognizes unique challenges of island communities.

For Ketchikan to continue thriving, we must ensure that our essential connections are reliable fair and built to serve generations to come a free tunnel to Gravina Island as a practical people focus solution that moves our community forward.

I thank you for this opportunity to comment on this future development.

Darlene d-Svenson

14861 North Tongass Hwy.

Ketchikan AK



Matt Heilala for Governor  
3705 Arctic Blvd, ste 487, Anchorage, AK 99503  
907.297.9788  
campaign@matt4governor.com

February 10, 2026

The Boring Company  
Tunnel Vision Challenge Review Committee

Dear Members of the Review Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the submission by the Ketchikan Gateway Borough to the Tunnel Vision Challenge proposing the Ketchikan–Pennock Airport Access Tunnel. This concept represents forward-looking, practical infrastructure innovation Alaska's island and remote communities urgently need.

Ketchikan is uniquely situated as an island community whose primary commercial airport is located on Gravina Island, accessible only by marine ferry. While this system has served residents and visitors for decades, it creates a single-point vulnerability. This impacts passenger travel, medical evacuation, freight movement, and regional connectivity. These conditions are only worsened during severe weather, mechanical disruption, or periods when ferry service is not operating. Reliable, all-weather ground access to the airport is not merely a convenience, but a matter of life safety, economic stability, and regional resilience.

The proposed small-diameter, single-lane vehicular tunnel utilizing Pennock Island as an intermediate landfall is a thoughtful and technically grounded concept. By shortening underwater boring distances and remaining within approximately one mile in total length, the project aligns well with the practical parameters of the Tunnel Vision Challenge. Further, the project demonstrates how modern tunneling technology can address long-standing transportation barriers in complex environments.

Equally important, the submission by the Borough is appropriately exploratory in nature. It invites rigorous evaluation of whether emerging infrastructure solutions can enhance emergency response reliability, reduce travel time, and strengthen long-term transportation resilience. for Southeast Alaska and similarly situated communities. As a candidate for Governor of Alaska, I believe our state must champion innovative, responsible infrastructure solutions that improve safety, connectivity, and economic opportunity. Especially for communities separated by challenging geography rather than distance.

The Ketchikan–Pennock Airport Access Tunnel proposal embodies that spirit of innovation and deserves thoughtful consideration.

Thank you for your leadership in advancing transformative tunneling technologies and for the opportunity to evaluate projects that may shape the future of resilient infrastructure in Alaska and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Heilala", written over a blue horizontal line.

Dr. Matt Heilala,  
Candidate for Governor of Alaska