

# **B1: Using Partnerships to Improve Traveler Information**

## **511 for Traffic and Transit**

Lisa Idell-Sassi – AKDOT & PF

Larry Baldwin – IBI Group

# Alaska 511 for Traffic and Transit

- **Overview:**

- Alaska DOT&PF first deployed 511 system in 2005
- The 511 phone system is now in its 3rd generation:
  - Road Events, Incidents and Construction Information
  - Driving Conditions
  - NOAA Weather Alerts
- Over the last 8 years, the State has invested approximately \$4.5 million in providing the 511 service

# Alaska 511 for Traffic and Transit



Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

Alaska Marine Highway System

1-800-642-0066

- Initial deployments of the 511 phone system created an interagency partnership between:
- Alaska DOT&PF and the Alaska Marine Highway System (The Alaska Ferry Service)
- Provide riders schedules for their 11 vessels and 37 ports and to transfer calls directly from 511 to the AMHS Juneau call center or a specific port
- This partnership between AMHS and the DOT&PF has worked successfully and is a model for agencies working together to utilize the availability of the 511 infrastructure to expand services

# Alaska 511 for Traffic and Transit



- Recently, Alaska DOT&PF has expanded the partnership to include the Alaska Mobility Coalition
- This partnership creates a pilot project with three transit agencies across Alaska: Ketchikan, Fairbanks and Juneau





# Alaska 511 for Traffic and Transit



- The aim of this pilot project is to deliver scheduled and real-time transit information through the existing 511 phone system:
  - Riders call the 511 phone system from any phone in Alaska (landline or mobile) and hear the bus departure times at their requested stop, or transfer their call to the agency.
  - Riders can send an SMS from their mobile phone and receive the same information.
- If the first three agencies find the performance of this to be successful, more Alaska transit agencies will follow.



# Alaska 511 for Traffic and Transit



- **Brief history of this partnership:**

- AK 511 phone system and a model of successful partnership with AMHS already existed
- It made sense to use what was already in place and extend capabilities to include public transit bus schedules
- 511 is readily remembered so riders won't need to remember or store a transit agencies' phone number to call for the bus schedule, or find out when a bus will be arriving.

# Alaska 511 for Traffic and Transit



- A rider's ability to retrieve this information quickly in Alaska's cold climate, is critical
  - People in Fairbanks sometimes have to wait for a bus in temperatures between 20 and 40 below zero
  - Knowing when a bus will be arriving before they walk out their door is incredibly important



# Alaska 511 for Traffic and Transit



- **Symbiotic benefits of this partnership:**

- Agencies:

- Utilize existing infrastructure from previous capital expenditures
    - Provide this service with little capital expenditure and only minimal operating expense

- DOT & PF:

- Increased public awareness of 511

- Riders:

- Receive bus schedule information ... free, fast and easy



# Alaska 511 for Traffic and Transit



- **The Future of this partnership:**

- The Alaska DOT&PF and the Alaska Mobility Coalition look forward to providing transit agencies in rural areas with this functionality
- Without this partnership, these transit agencies would likely not be able to provide these features to their riders, leaving them, literally, out in the cold

# Alaska 511 for Traffic and Transit

