

**ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS  
JOINT POLICY, TECHNICAL ADVISORY AND  
PLUS COMMITTEE MEETING**

**City Hall  
Mayor's Conference Room  
632 West 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska**

**April 28, 2011  
1:31 p.m.**

Committee members present:

Name	Representing
Alice Edwards	Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)
Mayor Sullivan	Municipality Of Anchorage
Patrick Flynn	Anchorage Municipal Assembly
Stephanie Mormilo*	MOA/Traffic Division
Steve Morris*	MOA/Dept. of Health & Human Services
Jennifer Witt*	ADOT&PF, Central Region, Planning
Kim Rice*	ADOT&PF, Central Region Pre-Construction
Bart Rudolph	ADOT&PF
Cindy Heil*	Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation
Bruce Carr*	Alaska Railroad Corporation
Jerry Hansen*	MOA/Project Management & Engineering Division
Lois Epstein*	AMATS Air Quality Advisory Committee
John Madden**	Alaska Division of Homeland Security
David Barton**	Access Alaska
Loran Frazier**	Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority
Aves Thompson**	Alaska Trucking Association
Jed Smith**	Alaska Center for the Environment
Linda Kovac **	CBERRRSA

Also in attendance

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Name	Representing
Craig Lyon	MOA/Community Development Department (CDD)
Teresa Brewer	MOA/CDD
Vivian Underwood	MOA/CDD
Jon Spring	MOA/Consultant
John Tolley	MOA/Highway to Highway
Anne Brooks	Brooks and Associates
Gary Katsion	Kittelson and Associates, Inc.
Phill Worth	Kittelson and Associates, Inc.
Andrew Ooms	Kittelson and Associates, Inc.
Laurie Cummings	HDR Inc. /Highway to Highway
Mike Vanderhoof	FHWA
Emily Cotter	Port of Anchorage (POA)
Bob French	Government Hill Community Council

\* AMATS Technical Advisory Committee Members

\*\* AMATS Technical Advisory Committee Plus Members

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

MAYOR SULLIVAN called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. All PC and TAC+ Committee members were present with the exception of Mr. Campbell who was absent. A quorum was established.

**2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT**

MR. LYON encouraged public involvement in this meeting of the AMATS Technical Advisory Committee. He explained staff would first make their presentation, followed by any comments from Committee members, and the floor would then be open to public comment.

MS. RICE arrived at 1:35 p.m.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MAYOR SULLIVAN asked for the approval of the agenda. *Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved unanimously.*

**4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

MAYOR SULLIVAN asked if minutes from 22 February 2011 were available. *No minutes provided.*

MR. HANSEN arrived at 1:38 p.m.

**5. BUSINESS ITEMS**

**a. 2035 MODEL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

GARY KATSION of Kittelson and Associates introduced the MTP project team. This team consists of private consultants that include Kittelson and Associates, the public involvement firm – Brooks and Associates, and CH2MHill for modeling, along with AMATS staff, and the Alaska Department of Public Transportation and Facilities. MR. KATSION provided an overview of completed MTP activities since the last joint PC/TAC+ committee meeting. Work included updating the scope of work, the schedule, drafting goals and objectives, and developing performance measures. Also, travel demand modeling was undertaken and the results of the model will be presented today. Basically, three different 2035 base year build scenarios along with a 2035 base year no-build scenario were modeled. These results will be presented in further detail shortly.

The MTP will reflect the entire metropolitan area and will combine the Anchorage Bowl and Chugiak-Eagle River Long-Range Transportation Plans. *Chapter 1: Introduction* is now available on the project website. Chapter 3 outlines the draft MTP goals and objectives and will be available on the project website in May. At this time, *Chapter 4: Anchorage Today* is being developed with *Chapter 5: Anchorage in 205* work starting this month. With these chapters and the travel demand modeling effort, the framework for evaluating the transportation network and moving the goals and objectives into actual performance measures can begin.

Also, public involvement is continuing. The project team and AMATS staff has made presentations to numerous boards and commissions throughout the community. ADOT&PF issued a contract to Brooks and Associates to develop a newspaper insert about the MTP planning process, which should be out next month. Electronic media and a project website are available. The MTP update is still on schedule and additional technical work will be undertaken between now and August 2011. It is anticipated that the public review process will start in September 2011 and go into March 2012. MR. WORTH outlined the public review hearing process for the MOA. Ultimately, FHWA will need to review and approve the final document. Public Involvement will cover a broad period of time.

MR. WORTH then summarized how the goals and objectives will help develop a clear set of performance measures and the ultimate effect on the transportation system. MR. WORTH provided examples of Goal #4 and the accompanying performance measures. By defining the performance standard for the goal, the performance measure can add the next level of detail needed for monitoring and tracking the goal(s). The purpose of a performance measure is to (1) identify system deficiencies (i.e. accidents along a specific segment or corridor), (2) guide the development of possible solutions, and (3) monitor the progress toward achievement of the plan's goals. Many performance measures are already identified within the updated Status of the System Report. MR. WORTH applauded the TAC+ committee for providing good comments on the draft goals and objectives. However, the TAC+ "is not out of a job" yet and their help is essential for developing performance measures.

MR. WORTH outlined the travel demand model presentation. The travel demand model examined how the auto transportation system will work by 2035 and perform under different scenarios. The travel demand model is not the only tool that will be used to evaluate system deficiencies. MR. KATSION discussed the background and various scenarios used. The 2035 base model is consistent with the plans and projects within the Anchorage Bowl Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Chugiak-Eagle River Long-Range Transportation Plan. The forecasts developed from the 2035 base model are also consistent with the Knik Arm Crossing traffic volume forecasts. A number of projects are contained within both plans. Some of these include improvements to the Glenn Highway, the Highway-to-Highway (H2H) connection, and the Knik Arm Crossing Bridge project.

## ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS

### Joint Policy, Technical Advisory and Plus Committee Meeting

April 28, 2011

Page 4 of 8

---

In addition, sidewalks, bicycle lanes and other non-motorized projects are included. Further, public transit demand is also an element in the travel demand model. Headways, wait times, and the potential for frequent bus service, such as an express bus from the Mat-Su/Eagle River area (Glenn Hwy. Corridor) were also considered.

MR. KATSION showed the initial travel demand model results. Overall, the capacity and ability of the system to handle traffic is “pretty good.” There are some partial deficiencies at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Northern Lights Boulevard & Fireweed, 36<sup>th</sup> & Tudor, Lake Otis and Tudor, and in the Chugiak-Eagle River area. In Eagle River, the Glenn Highway ramp at the Artillery exit and the North Eagle River exit is predicted to have capacity and delay issues.

The 2035 Base conditions without the H2H road network does not have enough capacity in the A.M. and P.M. peaks on the connecting streets between the Glenn and Seward highways. Individuals are trying to reach employment centers, such as downtown, midtown, and the U-Med districts. As a result, people tend to use the highway for as long as possible, and then move to the arterial system to reach their destinations.

MR. SPRING underscored the effects of the H2H project. Without the H2H project, many facilities become congested. For instance, 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, DeBarr, Northern Lights Boulevard, and Tudor Road are over capacity. The H2H project takes off 88,000 vehicles from these five arterials and offers tremendous relief for these facilities. In addition the effect for east-west corridors from Merrill Field to Tudor is reduced by 32,000 vehicles. The H2H project is a strong attraction for vehicles from northwest Anchorage and the Chugiak-Eagle River areas. MAYOR SULLIVAN asked if all the traffic from the northeast used Muldoon, then would the freeways still be overcapacity. MR. KATSION indicated that these facilities would still remain congested. Tudor is progressively getting worse. Even with the Knik Arm Crossing, congestion and delay occurs. The H2H projects helps to keep traffic moving.

MS. KOVAC referred to an earlier PowerPoint slide showing the H2H project and confirmed that without the H2H project, congestion would develop. MR. KATSION responded that the H2H mainline has capacity. Once individuals are on the highway, they move quickly. It is at the points of access to the highway (intersections, frontage ramps, interchanges, etc.) where delay develops. MR. KATSION reminded committee members and the public that the travel demand model is a macro model; it examines freeways, arterials, and collectors and does not focus in on ramp details. Equally, in Chugiak-Eagle River, without the H2H model slight deficiencies occur at the North Eagle River exit and interchange. However, this effect is small.

MR. SPRING noted that there is a little improvement at the Artillery ramp and interchange, but it is not substantial. MR. CARR asked if it made sense to make these changes. MR. SPRING explained that the LOS goes up slightly from an “E” to a “D.” Safety will be improved, but the overall effect is minor. MR. KATSION explained that

# ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS

## Joint Policy, Technical Advisory and Plus Committee Meeting

April 28, 2011

Page 5 of 8

---

the 2035 Base + model permits the inclusion of projects from recently adopted plans and subarea plans (Eagle River CBD study, Anchorage Downtown Plan, People Mover Blueprint, Hillside District Plan, etc.). Each of these plans had a series of transportation improvements. These projects were included in the Base+ travel demand model. MR. KATSION outlined the various Chugiak-Eagle River, Hillside, and Blueprint projects. The 2035 Base + model also showed deficiencies at connectors to the Seward Highway. Other deficient areas included Northern Lights Boulevard, Fireweed Lane, Eagle River Loop Road, the North Eagle River exit. MS. WITT pointed out that areas overcapacity can be examined; this will allow us to see the issues more clearly. For instance, while Eagle River Road is experiencing delay, this does not mean that the facility should be expanded into a 4-lane facility.

MR. THOMPSON noticed that the H2H project eliminates congestion at 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the Old Seward. MR. FLYNN responded that the H2H project cleans up the arterial system. MR. FLYNN asked the project team if the travel demand model considered H2H without the Knik Arm Crossing. MR. KATSION stated that the team did not examine a 2035 Base condition without the Knik Arm Crossing. He also stated that both the Knik Arm Crossing and the H2H projects are in the current long-range transportation plan and are both included in the travel demand model runs.

MR. SPRING stated that the land use forecasts used in the travel demand model are from the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of Alaska Anchorage. These recent forecasts show a slower population growth rate than was anticipated earlier. To obtain new land use forecasts is beyond the scope of this project. MS. WITT responded that the travel demand model was run without the H2H project. This model run confirmed that the H2H project provides significant benefit to of the network in meeting forecast demand.

MR. CARR wondered where the Knik Arm Crossing would connect to the Parks Highway. MR. SPRING stated that he was less familiar with the Mat-Su and how they planned to use their network. MR. CARR responded that when the Mat-Su Borough ran their travel demand model, that the Knik Arm Crossing Bridge did not have a significant impact in reducing the traffic on the Parks Highway in the core areas (Wasilla, Palmer). Reductions were seen near Meadow Lakes. MR. SPRING explained that the travel shed that is used for the MTP travel demand model includes the Mat-Su communities that use the Glenn Highway. MR. CARR believes that the H2H project is a great project; he struggles with how the Knik Arm Crossing project Bridge will help congestion in the downtown area.

MAYOR SULLIVAN stated that the Knik Arm Crossing solves other problems, such as re-routing traffic from the Glenn Highway during an accident or providing an alternate emergency route from Anchorage. MS. EPSTEIN commented that there are other ways to deal with these problems on the Glenn Highway. Accident response teams, public transit can help reduce the number of delays. MS. EPSTEIN asked about the total toll amount

for the Knik Arm Crossing Bridge. MR. KATSION clarified that the Knik Arm Crossing Bridge toll was not included in the travel demand model runs. MS. EPSTEIN recalled that she requested that travel demand model runs include the \$5 each way toll. She hoped to see those results with the tolls. MS. EPSTEIN felt that without the tolls, the assumptions do not reflect the same methodology that the Knik Arm Crossing project used. MR. KATSION responded that the Knik Arm Crossing travel demand model is not a regional model. The AMATS travel demand model is a regional model. As such, the AMATS travel demand model was never meant to validate the toll on the Knik Arm Crossing Bridge. Inputs from the Knik Arm Crossing project and the H2H project were put into the AMATS travel demand model system. The project team evaluated the reasonable worst case scenario for the area within the AMATS boundaries. The AMATS 2035 Base case travel demand model numbers were comparable to the Knik Arm Crossing numbers by within 1,000 trips. MR. GARY KATSION stated that the Knik Arm Crossing numbers showed about 36,000 trips.

The impact to the system is seen in the downtown corridor. MR. KATSION further emphasized that the project team did not want to underestimate, especially when looking at the travel demand regionally. MS. EPSTEIN stated that she understood that the project team would not want to underestimate the traffic volumes. However, revenues should not also be overstated. MS. EPSTEIN went on to say that this is not likely to reflect what is actually happening on the bridge and concluded that these seem to be irreconcilable differences.

MS. WITT stressed that this was a topic that the oversight project team grappled with many times. The focus of this AMATS update is to determine the capacity for the region. Travel decisions are sensitive to tolls. To undertake such a modeling effort would require a whole model analysis and must consider the Mat-Su Borough's model. The Mat-Su Borough is currently updating their long-range transportation plan and forecasts now. This is not an AMATS responsibility, but the Mat-Su Borough's. If AMATS wishes to pursue this in the future, then that is an option. However, it is difficult to model in the Mat-Su Borough as there is little to no zoning and identifying future land use is very difficult. MS. WITT pointed out that the Wasilla Bypass project had similar challenges. To be an effective model, we have to be confident in the tolls. The project team is confident in the assumptions. MS. EPSTEIN encouraged AMATS to broaden their perspective and not be too narrow on the issues that interest the public. Capacity is not the only issue. The AMATS travel demand model should present real information and data and not just hypothetical. Without that, then the MTP update loses credibility.

MS. KOVAC asked if the ISER used 2010 Census data. MR. SPRING replied that the ISER forecasts were completed in 2009 using the Alaska Department of Labor and Statistics population and employment data. ISER also used a growth assumption in their forecasts. MS. KOVAC wondered if a comparison was conducted between the actual to recent data. MR. SPRING stated that the project team did a comparison with the AMATS 2007 model and the results were reasonable. MR. KATSION added that a handout with

# ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS

## Joint Policy, Technical Advisory and Plus Committee Meeting

April 28, 2011

Page 7 of 8

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the ISER assumptions and fact sheet are available. MAYOR SULLIVAN asked if there were any further questions from the committee. Hearing none, MR. WORTH discussed the next steps in the MTP update.

The next steps in the process will include work activities continuing on the draft chapters, additional community outreach and public involvement – please let your community members know about the plan and the project website, and finalizing the model runs. It is possible that an additional model run may be required. Further, updates to the project cost estimates needs completed. We need to know what the costs are and how to fund and plan for these projects. In other words, will the money be there to pay for transportation projects that are needed by 2035.

MR. WORTH asked if there was any other work or expectations before the committee meets again. MS. CINDY HEIL asked to see the power point slide again about the draft chapter(s) schedule. She noted that Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 only reference Anchorage and not Chugiak-Eagle River. Since this is a combined plan, she recommended that the chapter headings reflect this. MR. WORTH agreed. The headings will reflect the combined plans. MR. CARR responded that the term Metropolitan Transportation Plan captures the entire planning area. He suggested that Metropolitan be used. MAYOR SULLIVAN asked if there were any more questions or any public comment. No committee members had questions.

Public comment was heard. MR. FRENCH from the Government Hill Community Council stated that he was astounded that AMATS had ignored the recommendation by FHWA in the recent certification. MR. FRENCH referenced the AMATS certification report, in particular the section regarding the Knik Arm Crossing Bridge, fiscal constraint, and the financial reports. The toll is expected to be \$5 each way with the price escalating 2.5% per year. MR. FRENCH referenced the public information act and stated that the travel demand modeling for both H2H and AMATS are subject to this act. Even if the forecast is a straight \$5 toll for the next 30 years, the only way that the AMATS travel demand model could come close to the Knik Arm Crossing numbers is to assume a zero toll and then ignore the dampening effect. According to MR. FRENCH, FHWA requires that these are consistent assumptions. This directive from FHWA is being ignored. The FHWA certification report states, as read by MR. FRENCH, "...AMATS is to monitor and revise...this may include...pricing strategies...work with system analysis consistent with environmental justice...system wide impacts...use best available Knik Arm Crossing financial data...disclose assumed risk...in consultation with AMATS." MAYOR SULLIVAN noted that this could be found on pages 31 and 32 of the FHWA certification report. MR. BOB FRENCH was not sure why the underlying assumptions were not consistent. It is impossible to say that a zero toll is consistent with the Knik Arm Crossing financial reports and forecasted revenue returns. MR. FRENCH did not believe that KABATA would give the bridge away for free. Also, he felt that the zero toll assumption completely violated the FHWA certification report and guidance. MAYOR

SULLIVAN thanked Mr. French for his comments. MAYOR SULLIVAN asked if there were any questions or comments from the committee or other community members.

MS. CINDY HEIL asked if the model runs assumed that the bridge project starts in 2015 and if an estimate of when Gambell/Ingra construction was also conducted. Timing of critical periods and growth can help to more easily program projects. MR. SPRING replied that Ingra/Gambell is assumed in 2025 and that the project team did not model the interim years. Additional model runs will be prepared and we will have a better idea of when the Ingra/Gambell couplet needs done. MAYOR SULLIVAN asked for any final thoughts or questions. Hearing none, the public hearing was closed.

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m. A work session on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and performances measures followed.