

**ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE PLUS MEETING**

**Planning & Development Center  
Main Conference Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
4700 Elmore Road  
Anchorage, Alaska**

**June 9, 2011  
2:30 p.m.**

Technical Advisory Committee and Plus members Present:

---

Name	Representing
Jennifer Witt*	Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities (ADOT), Central Region, Planning
Kim Rice*	ADOT, Central Region
Cindy Heil*	Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)
Steve Morris*	MOA/Dept. of Health & Human Services
Lance Wilber*	MOA/Public Transportation Department
Jerry Weaver*	MOA/Community Development Department
Stephanie Mormillo*	MOA/Traffic Division
Lois Epstein*	MOA/Alaska Transportation Priorities Project
Bruce Carr*	Alaska Railroad Corporation
Loran Frazier	Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA)
Jody Dougherty	KABATA
Toby Smith	Alaska Center for the Environment
Karol Fink	SOA/Dept. Public Health
Linda Kovac	Chugiak Community Council
Liz Glooschenko	Alaska Trucking Association
Chuck Monie	JBER
David Barton	Access Alaska

Also in attendance

---

Name	Representing
Craig Lyon	MOA/Community Development Department
Vivian Underwood	MOA/CDD
Erika McConnell	MOA/CDD
Teresa Brewer	MOA/CDD
Jody Karcz	MOA/Public Transportation Dept
Art Isham	Planning and Zoning Commission
Lori Schanche	MOA/Project Mgmt &Engineering Division
Dawn Groth	SRTS
Aaron Jongenelen	Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities (ADOT)
Jon Spring	MOA/Consultant
Gary Katsion	Kittelson & Associates
Andrew Ooms	Kittelson & Associates
Anne Brooks	Brooks & Associates

\*AMATS Technical Advisory Committee members

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

CHAIR MORMILO called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. Mr. Barton arrived at 12:30 p.m.

**2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT**

MR. LYON, AMATS Coordinator encouraged public involvement at this meeting of the AMATS Technical Advisory Committee Plus. He explained the consultants from Kittelson & Associates and staff would first make their presentation on the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, followed by any comments from Committee members, and the floor would then be open to public comment. All public comment is welcomed.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*Hearing no objections to the agenda, it was approved unanimously.*

**4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES - None**

**5. BUSINESS ITEMS - None**

**a. Other Business Items - None**

**6. INFORMATION ITEMS**

**a. MTP Update**

Mr. KATSION provided an overview of the work completed on the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update (MTP) since the last TAC Plus meeting. MR. KATSION appreciated everyone attending the meeting today and provided an overview of the agenda. The topics that will be discussed today include the results of the model deficiencies workshops, the financial methodology used to determine potential revenue sources and costs, along with the project schedule, process, and deliverables. Introductions of TAC Committee Plus, staff, and the public were made.

MR. KATSION reviewed the MTP schedule and stated that the Draft MTP update should be released to the public in August with the document moving through the MOA review process (public hearings, planning and zoning commission, assembly, etc.) in September. It is hoped that by next spring, the MTP update will be adopted and approved.

MR. KATSION stated that draft Chapters 1 and 3 are available online at the MTP project website. Currently, draft chapters 4 and 5 are under review. Chapter 4 will probably be available online for review next week; with Chapter 5 following by the end of this month. MR. KATSION explained that further refinements to the model and scenarios were completed. The scenarios

included the 2035 Base Case, 2035 Base Plus. Updates to the scenarios included minor adjustments to small segments. Other work continues on the draft performance measures and the public involvement outreach. In order to create community awareness of the project; and obtain feedback, Anne Brooks and the MOA staff have met with various boards, commissions, and agencies. The meetings are ongoing. In addition, a newspaper insert is being finalized and should be published sometime next month.

Furthermore, technical analysis of the 2035 Base Plus model will identify transportation infrastructure issues and deficiencies, yet there are additional needs of the roadway network, such as roadway capacity, non-motorized modes, public transit/land use, freight connections, and ITS/TSM/TDM/Security. In order to better understand these additional needs, workshops were held in early May. The network is made up of many elements, not just the roadway.

MR. KATSION stated that MR. WILBER will provide information on the revenue projections. In general, the MTP update will develop cost estimates of the current projects and the 2035 scenarios in both the Chugiak-Eagle River Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Anchorage Bowl Long-Range Transportation Plan. These adopted plans are a starting point and are being implemented already. These are living, breathing documents; also, the MTP 2035 forecasts are consistent with the Knik Arm Crossing forecasts for the downtown area. Expected sources of income are examined and an inflation factor applied; the federal government requires that projects are fiscally constrained. MR. KATSION showed and explained the “feedback loop” for fiscally constrained projects. MR. WILBER will explain this in further detail shortly. Also, in the 2035 Base parameters, 90 new roadway projects and Public Transit’s Blueprint plan (i.e. increased headways, express bus service, etc.), along with the non-motorized plans (pedestrian and bicycle) will be incorporated into the updated financial analysis.

For the 2035 Base Plus model, other plans that have been adopted since the Chugiak/Eagle River LRTP and the Anchorage 2020 LRTP, such as the Anchorage 2020 Downtown Plan, the Chugiak-Eagle River CBD Plan, Hillside District Plan, etc. A variety of projects from each plan will be included in the 2035 Base Plus scenario. These were input into the model and then the model was run. The model results show some overcapacity - the “red” lines – which is LOS D or worse. MS. SCHANCHE asked to see the list of projects again. MR. KATSION presented the list. MS. SCHANCHE wondered if the bus express route would reach Rabbit Creek. MR. SPRING provided additional details on the South Anchorage express route. The circulator route is near the Klatt/Southport area. MS. KOVAC inquired if the LOS was completed for Chugiak/Eagle River. MR. KATSION replied that most of the Chugiak-Eagle River is at LOS “C.” MS. WITT noted that Hiland Road is overcapacity. MR. KATSION responded that a closer examination of the land use assumptions and details will be conducted to see if the predicted LOS for Hiland Road is valid.

**b. Review of Workshop results on Model Deficiencies**

MR. KATSION provided additional details on the roadway capacity, freight connections, ITS/TSM/TDM/Security, public transit/land use, and non-motorized modes focused workshops held in May 2011. First, Kittleson and Associates met with MOA staff to examine the 2035 roadway capacity and “get the red out” (LOS “D” or higher) for facilities operating at an LOS “D” or higher. Primarily - to relieve congestion, the three major facilities needing improvement are 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue at Seward Highway, Fireweed Avenue (near Seward Highway), and Northern Lights Boulevard. Small segments of Northern Lights Boulevard between Lake Otis Parkway and Bragaw Street are of concern. These findings were also noted in the Midtown District Study; the Midtown District Study is not approved or adopted at this time. Other studies included in the analysis are the U-Med Access Study, and the Eagle River CBD Study. As development and growth occurs near Wal-Mart in Eagle River and out toward the Nature Center in the valley, Eagle River Road and Eagle River Loop Road show some congestion. Equally, the Glenn Highway corridor was examined fully. The entire system along with interchanges was analyzed, such as the potential improvements at Artillery interchange, Farm Avenue interchange, and at the Eklutna exit.

MS. EPSTEIN asked about the completion date for the Midtown District Plan. MR. SPRING responded that the Midtown District Plan is on hold at this time pending the provisional adoption of Title 21. Since the Midtown District zoning is largely B-3 at this time, height restrictions currently apply. If the height restriction is removed, then the Midtown District Plan would need reassessed. As a result, MOA staff is waiting until Title 21 is adopted before proceeding with the Midtown District Plan. MS. KOVAC wondered when Title 21 would be adopted. MR. SPRING stated that he was not certain. MR. WEAVER responded that Mr. Coffey’s contract goes until June. There is some preliminary work done and the objective is to have the department review the Title 21 updates and provide recommendations on Mr. Coffey’s work to the Mayor.

MS. EPSTEIN commented that she did not see commuter rail or the Knik Arm Ferry within the 2035 Base Plus analysis. MR. KATSION stated that this is considered and will be discussed later during the presentation. However, since we don’t know if these projects will be added due to funding constraints, but we do want to recognize the potential benefit of these projects, we have developed a project “wish list.” Like the Sear’s Christmas catalog, we select the infrastructure projects that we would like to have provide the list to the funding agencies, and hope that we receive the funding (although we may want specific toys from the Sear’s catalog, give our parents our preferred list, our parents may not always grant us every toy that we chose). The “wish list” projects are not absolute projects that are in the MTP update, but rather projects that we hope to implement if additional funding becomes available. MR. CARR inquired about the Glenn Highway corridor and if the travel demand model incorporates commuter traffic and traffic from the AMATS borders. MR. KATSION stated that the travel demand model does account for Mat-Su Valley commuters and traffic coming into the AMATS boundaries. In addition, the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) study will also be examined and take into consideration for the travel demand model. The next workshop focused on freight connections.

Individuals from the freight industry, MOA staff, and agencies were invited to participate in looking at roadway connections for freight. Recommendations included updating the Freight Mobility Study, improving connections and access from the Port of Anchorage, Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, and to the outside. Approximately 80% of all the freight coming into Alaska lands at the Port of Anchorage. Of this, about 70% is distributed in Anchorage alone; the rest is transported throughout the State of Alaska. Further, a Port of Anchorage access study is also recommended, as the Port is vital to the economy. Road improvements that would assist freight are the Glenn Highway/Muldoon interchange, a frontage road parallel to the Glenn Highway between Muldoon Road and Boniface Parkway, and at 76<sup>th</sup> or 79<sup>th</sup> Avenue – a freight corridor (rather than at 84<sup>th</sup> Avenue).

MR. CARR asked about the location of 84<sup>th</sup> Avenue. MR. SPRING explained that 84<sup>th</sup> Avenue is slightly north of the new Home Depot location. Access to industrial areas would be improved with a freight corridor from 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue or 79<sup>th</sup> Avenue rather than 84<sup>th</sup> Avenue. After examination of the proposed access from 84<sup>th</sup> Avenue, fatal flaws were found; wetlands and a creek are located within the proposed alignment.

In addition to road improvements, railroad grade separation projects will also improve safety and enhance overall mobility for all modes. A number of railroad crossings are found within the Anchorage Bowl. The next workshop dealt with ITS/TSM/TDM and security.

Indeed, ITS/TSM/TDM and security measures can help to reduce congestion and improve mobility on the network. First, a Freeway Incident Plan and Emergency Access Study is recommended to improve response times and clear traffic more efficiently. Second, it is suggested that an ITS committee be formed in order to develop ITS techniques and equipment (such as traffic movement applications, traffic signal optimization, operations and safety). It is also recommended that traffic signaling be examined once every three years to assure efficient signal timing and address any pedestrian timing issues. MR. KATSION noted that the current signal controllers are being upgraded. For operations and safety, suggestions included funding “spot” problem intersections and implementing access management policies. MR. KATSION explained the Travel Options Report and recommendations. The Travel Options Program largely addresses reducing VMT through car sharing, vanpooling, telecommuting, etc. These TDM measures were further discussed in the Public Transit/Land Use workshop.

Moreover, at the Public Transit/Land Use workshop the recommendations centered on shorter headways for increased service on existing routes – especially those routes serving the underserved population centers. Also, the extension of Route 45G to Tikahtnu Commons along with the expansion of Dimond Transit Center and the possible Muldoon Transit Center relocation (from Muldoon to Tikahtnu Center), the potential Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes, and the findings from the RTA study (this study examines the development of a regional transit authority that would provide public transit links between the Mat-Su Valley and Anchorage) were recommended for inclusion in the MTP update. In addition, coordinating these plans with Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson and other providers, such as para-transit, taxi, hotel shuttle

services was also highly encouraged. Of concern was making sure that visitors and special needs clients could access service easily. The final workshop concluded with non-motorized transportation needs.

Finally, non-motorized transportation needs and deficiencies were assessed. Continued emphasis on the “Safe Routes to School Program,” boosting funding allocation for non-motorized modes, reducing trail congestion (Primarily, widening Chester Creek trail), and implementing Midtown Business Improvement District, which would link sidewalks and transit to commercial buildings remained key non-motorized projects. Equally, the Eagle River CBD study (Phase II options) connecting Eagle River remained an important priority for workshop attendees. Other needs discussed was the Knik Arm Ferry Crossing. MR. KATSION provided an overview of the “3P” - Private/Public Partnership process. The 3P process encourages the development of transportation facilities involving both private and public entities along with shared funding for such infrastructure. A Regional Travel Study and a Complete Streets Plan was recommended for the next MTP update. MS. MCCONNELL mentioned that the Official Streets and Highways (OS&HP) Plan is currently being updated. Within the OS&HP is street typology (very similar to Complete Streets), right-of-way requirements, etc. MS. UNDERWOOD asked if the Transit goals and objectives included not going below a certain level of service. MR. WILBER stated, yes.

MS. LINDA KOVAC stated that the Old Glenn Highway had pavement that lasted decades; it seems like the new pavement being used by the Alaska Department of Public Transportation and Facilities does not last as long. She asked if the MOA would request the longer lasting pavement. MR. WILBER responded that when the Old Glenn Highway was originally constructed, only 200-300 vehicles traveled on the facility during the entire day. Whereas, now 2,000-3,000 vehicles travel on the pavement causing further wear and tear. It is true that the mix is now different. MS. KOVAC stated that the original pavement lasted 50 years. MR. WILBER acknowledged that in Anchorage it also lasted quite some time. MR. CARR wondered when the last update to the Anchorage Bowl and the Chugiak-Eagle River Long-Range Transportation Plans occurred. These plans were updated in 2007. MR. KATSION explained that MR. WILBER would make a presentation on the revenue projections.

**c. Revenue Projections**

**d.**

MR. WILBER shared the financial methodology for the MTP Update. With help from Bart Rudolph and Jennifer Witt (ADOT&PF), Jon Spring (MTP Update Project Manager), and Gary Katsion (Kittleson & Associates), MR. WILBER developed the revenue projections for the MTP update. Due to his experience in developing the revenue projections and associated financial methodology during the 2007 LRTP update, MR. WILBER is currently assisting the project team. Federal requirements mandate that the MTP Update be financially constrained (both operationally and in the Capital Improvements budget). In other words, what revenues can you reasonably expect to receive and to pay for these projects over the term of the MTP (2035)? The challenge is to implement a simple method (with some level of complexity) for planning

purposes only. Another consideration is the method used must be consistent with expected local, state (mostly in costing) funds. For the Knik Arm Crossing project, this plan will have the same method of financing as is applied to the Knik Arm Crossing. In the current Anchorage LRTP, there are basically two checkbooks. One checkbook is for the Knik Arm Crossing and the other checkbook is for the system network. MR. WILBER met with Kevin Hemenway, Chief Financial Officer for the Knik Arm Bridge Tolling Authority. While the timing and rates may be different, we must present the same forecasts out to 2035 for both operations and capital improvements/expenses.

Financial forecasting and revenue projection is definitely a “bit of art.” The costs must be updated for all of the projects in 2010 dollars. The financial analyst must forecast all revenue sources for 2011 and 2035. For instance, is it safe to assume that the State will have public transit funding available? Assumptions like this and others such as whether there is a gas pipeline built in 25 years, etc. is taken into consideration. There will likely be funds for transportation infrastructure development – deciding which funding sources are highly probable is largely based on past history and trends. If funding is likely, then keep the project; if not, then remove the project off of the list. For example, with the Knik Arm Bridge the general expectation is that there will be a toll and it will be a 3P (Public/Private Partnership) project.

In developing the revenue projections, we create a list of reasonable funding sources of dedicated funds and estimated revenue amounts (i.e. local, match, etc.). A discussion of deferred capital and operations costs followed. A baseline estimate of revenue must be calculated. For example, the cost for public transit is usually around \$20 million. The baseline estimate is taken and then an inflation factor/rate applied. Generally, the cost of labor, supplies, work, etc. rises over time; hence the inflation rate. The inflation rate is based upon the Consumer Price Index (CPI). All revenues are categorized by source and amount (bond, private, federal dollars). In the future, there will be private funding in the mix. With the costs that have been developed, we are 80% there. MR. WILBER stated that KABATA had good financial information on operations.

MR. WILBER presented a table and provided handouts showing where the money comes from, how much funding “showed up,” and how the funds were applied. As an example, MR. WILBER compared seeking a home mortgage to revenue forecasting and the inflation rate. In other words, if you have a reasonable expectation of income (such as a job, paycheck), then the bank will make the housing loan with contractual terms of a down payment, interest, etc. You must convince the bank that you have the monthly resources to make the 30-year mortgage payments. Clearly, your monthly paycheck will not provide the entire amount needed to purchase the home. Likewise, transportation projects are not free; extend over a long-period of time; and the cost to construct increases with inflation. As a result, the MTP update must show to the federal government that we can afford the projects, have a means of paying for the projects, and can cover the “interest” – the inflation rate. MS. SCHANCHE pointed out that non-motorized transportation projects can be funded with bonds as long as the projects are within the right-of-way. MR. WILBER reviewed the expected revenue list (stimulus funds, State G.O. Bonds, etc.). MS. EPSTEIN noted that there is an expected decline (difference) in future federal

dollars. While Alaska has historically done well in receiving federal funding, whether Alaska will continue this trend is questionable. MR. WILBER pointed out that often when federal dollars decline, state funding increases. MS. WITT stated that this concern is being debated nationwide. At this time, Congress is reducing the funds by 33% in the Highway Trust Fund. As a result, agencies such as AMATS can expect to see about a 33% reduction in their allocations. We have a solid history of transportation infrastructure investment by the State of Alaska. It is true that funding is quite volatile at this time; however this is an illustrative process and while we are gathering additional information, assumptions can look very different in the future (i.e. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.).

MR. WILBER stressed that there is only so much state money to go around; we need to determine what funding levels that we can reasonably expect to receive. MR. CARR believed that being a little more conservative in projecting the expected revenues proved wise. He would like to see a history of the state funding rising when federal dollars decline. State funds tend to be invested in large infrastructure projects. For example, the Port MacKenzie Railroad extension, the Road to Nome, etc. The state is focused on creating economic development through road investments. MR. CARR did not think that the state would be as generous in the future with communities, but rather bonds would be used to fund projects. There is a paradigm shift for both state and federal funds. MR. FRAZIER added that it is a “Catch 22.” If we undershoot costs and revenue, then we are not able to take advantage of the projects that could be funded. Revenue projection is very challenging. MR. WILBER expressed that the purpose of today’s presentation was to explain the methodology used to develop the revenue projections. However, it is expected that vetting of the assumptions will occur in the future. MS. WITT stated that the key is that all assumptions must be documented. For instance, the price of oil is used to develop revenue projections for the state. As the economic conditions and price changes, then we must modify our assumptions. The same is true for the federal requirements; we must show our assumptions and methodology and then re-evaluated accordingly as revenues decline. As a result, projects may need to be moved to an illustrative list. MR. WILBER welcomed the TAC+ Committee’s help in developing the revenue projections.

#### **e. Projects and Funding Needs**

MS. KOVAC noted that finance can often be a “crapshoot” and asked how well the plans and finances have historically “panned out” and how close the budget came to the actual construction costs? MR. WILBER explained that the federal requirement to include the inflation rate is recent (2007). He did not know how accurate the revenue projections compared against the actual construction costs; however, he did stress that a number of variables, such as the high price of oil in 2008 can cause the price of projects to rise dramatically. MR. CARR provided a caveat that if you base revenue projections on trends, you can analyze the bid tabs for the past three years. We should be careful in how we estimate revenue. Inflation tends to swing similar to a pendulum. MR. WILBER noted that competition for projects is “hot” right now and as a result, local governments, the state, etc. are receiving better bids.

MS. WITT also noted that the actual costs have not been compared to the planned costs. At the state, they are examining all projects and analyzing the pre-unit prices. They have noted a tremendous difference over time. Nationwide, the costs of construction are up. We must demonstrate with the revenue projections and the CPI/Inflation rate that we can afford to build the system. This tool allows various scenarios to be run and checked against the assumptions. The good news is that this is easy to update. MS. KOVAC inquired if the individuals doing the estimates are the same individuals that do the pathways, bridges, etc. MS. RICE stated that the cost (right-of-way acquisition) varies as the project develops. Variables and items arise as the project progresses and which you learn about along the way. The estimates are generally prepared by the same individuals. We are working on how to improve the estimation procedures. MR. MONIE reminded workshop attendees that this is a planning estimate versus a programming estimate. For example, what projects will you start design on, what projects require 30-year bonds, etc. This is a roadmap of where and how the network should be developed. MS. RICE added that contingencies are also based on assumptions; at times, the scope of work changes. MR. KATSION asked if the public or the TAC Plus Committee had any question. Seeing none, Gary explained the next steps in the MTP Update.

#### **f. Next Steps**

MR. KATSION provided an overview of the next steps in the MTP Update. The public involvement outreach activities will continue. The newspaper insert should be out within the next month. Additional public meetings will be scheduled as the plan progresses. Kittleson & Associates will finalize the performance measures; some performance measures may remain or may be removed. The model runs will also be completed once all of the projects have been included. The bulk of the work is done; what remains is refining the fiscal constraint. It is expected that by the end of July a draft document will be available to the TAC for review. MS. BROOKS stated that the draft chapters are online at the project website. Instead of reading the document in its entirety, it may prove easier and more comfortable for individuals to download the separate chapters. MR. KATSION encouraged comments and questions from the TAC Plus Committee and the public at any time. Once all the comments are gathered, then the final document will be updated. This method is more efficient than inserting the comments individually. Please call or e-mail the project team with any questions or concerns. We appreciate your input. The next scheduled meeting is 14 July 2011. MS. EPSTEIN hoped that the meeting would be downtown, as it takes an extra hour to reach the Elmore location. MR. WILBER suggested requesting the Assembly Conference Room. MR. LYON stated that he will check on availability of the Assembly Conference Room.

#### **7. SCHEDULED AMATS TAC+ MEETINGS**

July 14, 2011

#### **8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.