

**ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Mayor's Conference Room, 8th Floor
632 West 6th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska
December 19, 2013
1:30 p.m.**

Policy Committee Members Present:

Name	Representing
Robert Campbell	Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities, Regional Director (DOT&PF)
Dan Sullivan	Municipal Mayor
Tim Steele	MOA/Municipal Assembly
Chris Birch	MOA/Municipal Assembly

Also in attendance:

Name	Representing
Craig Lyon	MOA/Community Development Department (CDD)
Vivian Underwood	MOA/CDD
Bart Rudolph	DOT&PF
Aaron Jongenelen	DOT&PF
Anne Brooks	Brooks and Associates
Christine Sondej	MOA/Public Transportation Department
Steve Noble	DOWL HKM
Lesley Lepley	DOWL HKM

**AMATS Technical Advisory Committee members*

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

CHAIR CAMPBELL called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Alice Edwards was absent. Tim Steele acted as the designated alternate for Patrick Flynn. A quorum was established.

2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

CRAIG LYON encouraged public involvement in this meeting of the AMATS Policy 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.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MAYOR SULLIVAN moved to approve the agenda. ASSEMBLY MEMBER BIRCH seconded.

Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – October 24, 2013

ASSEMBLY MEMBER BIRCH moved to approve the minutes. ASSEMBLY MEMBER STEELE seconded.

Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved unanimously.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. 2014-15 UPWP

MR. LYON briefed the Committee noting this is the work program for the next two years compiled by the efforts of the AMATS staff, and by the Department of Health & Human Services, and also to a degree some of the Committee's staff when some planning efforts are done. This is a 2-year work program along with the 1-year budget. He reported that most of the tasks listed are similar to what was listed last year, but a couple of new items have been highlighted. The table itself shows all of the federal funds that come in for planning purposes, including the AMATS planning funds, along with some TIP funds. The AMATS program has gone from an actual allocation of approximately \$840,000 for the last four or five years to \$1.2 million. MR. LYON indicated the reasoning for that was the Urbanized Area Boundary that is done based on the census, the addition of some census tracts to the Urbanized Area Boundary in Eagle River, some MAP-21 changes, and those changes combined with the boundary, increased the amount of planning funds that came to the AMATS area. What was created, based on the TAC recommendations along with suggestions and recommendations from DOT staff, was a budget predicated on two additional staff members. So far, AMATS has received approval for one additional staff member; the monies that went toward the second staff member, at the suggestion of the TAC, was to either try to get another staff person or to utilize the additional \$100,000 in consultant services, thus finding someone in the City that might assist AMATS on a contractual basis. He further explained that the work program has gone through the Planning & Zoning Commission; has gone through the TAC, and was out for public comment. The only public comment was received by a member of the AMATS Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee asking to make sure that AMATS continues to provide adequate staff support to the Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee, and to make sure that the implementation plans that are included in both the Bicycle Plan and the Non-Motorized Pedestrian Plan be implemented. He followed up by saying that the

work program consists of some consultant services, but is primarily staff time spent on the projects for next year.

There were no public comments.

CHAIR CAMPBELL asked how this is run on a calendar year basis when most of the funding comes in on a federal or state year basis. MR. LYON stated that his understanding is because AMATS staff are Municipal employees, and the Municipal budget is done on a calendar year basis.

CHAIR CAMPBELL stated he was hoping to get the air quality cloud lifted off of Anchorage, and it seems to be slowly making progress in having gone from a non-attainment to a maintenance area. He asked if the air quality components would change with the items that are within the budget, if the next lower rung on the penalty ladder was reached. MR. LYON stated that what is written is based on the Department of Health & Human Services staff and their thoughts on moving to that Limited Maintenance Plan. He noted that Ms. Heil went to Seattle for a specific meeting with EPA and the Limited Maintenance Plan appeared to be closer to being approved. He commented that the approval process, through EPA, is eighteen months.

MAYOR SULLIVAN moved to approve the 2014-15 Unified Planning Work Program.
ASSEMBLY MEMBER BIRCH seconded.

Hearing no objections, this motion passed unanimously.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

a. ITS Update – State Transportation Operations Center

VIVIAN UNDERWOOD informed the Policy Committee that Intelligent Transportation Systems is using advanced technology in an integrated manner to improve the surface transportation system. The ITS Regional Architecture for Anchorage is due for an update, and AMATS will be hiring a consultant, and begin work next year. She stated the current Anchorage ITS Architecture does call for a local traffic operation center, likewise the statewide ITS Architecture calls for a statewide traffic operation center with related functions of coordinated incident management and coordinated emergency management. She commented that there might be some opportunities, for collaboration between the two.

DAN BREEDEN, Special Programs Manager with DOT&PF, provided a summary overview on the Statewide Transportation Operations Center concept. He informed the PC that Kittelson & Associates has been hired to do a needs assessment, but have had some delays due to complications scheduling interviews and collecting the necessary information. He informed the PC that there will be a stakeholder meeting scheduled for the week of January 27, 2014, or

February 3, 2014. This will help with the decision whether to continue on and look at the concept and to pursue a feasibility report. This is still early in the program, but DOT has hopes to move fairly quickly within the next few months.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER BIRCH asked if there was any tie to the railroad, or was that all federal. He was thinking of the Intelligent Transportation System and supposedly they are all locked up because they require some massive positive train control. He noted he wasn't sure of how much integration was involved. MR. BREEDEN stated that there was basically nothing, there are agreements with the railroad where right-of-ways are crossed, but as far as any integration with the railroad on this, the answer is no. ASSEMBLY MEMBER STEELE would like to know what the components of the integrated transportation system are and what types of activities take place, in order to integrate the system. MR. BREEDEN noted that they are looking at traffic sensors; weigh-in-motion; weather detectors, but what is heard most from the public is to be able to inform them of a traffic issue allowing them to take a different route or maybe leave at a later time to avoid the traffic congestion. CHAIR CAMPBELL remarked that the number one complaint is when the Glenn Highway gets bottlenecked due to an accident, there are multiple jurisdictions involved and it has always been confusing as to who has what jurisdiction to take action, and how much time would be involved in investigating the accident. MR. BREEDEN stated DOT is looking at traffic sensors and electronic billboards that would allow the public to know prior to getting on the highway or just before the last exit, that a road may be closed, and divert the public to another route, if possible. This would also give the public a possible time frame that the incident might be resolved. CHAIR CAMPBELL asked for a possible timeline and to be able to get some direction on this project. MR. BREEDEN clarified a draft report will be completed and to the Commissioners by mid-January or early February.

There was no further discussion.

b. Eagle River Traffic Mitigation Project Phase 1

Present on behalf of this project were the following:

NICHOLE REHM, Project Administrator with Professional & Technical Services

ANNE BROOKS, Brooks and Associates

STEVE NOBLE, Design Consultant Engineer/Project Manager with DOWL HKM

AARON CHRISTIE, Design Consultant Engineer with DOWL HKM

GARY KATSION with Kittelson & Associates

NICHOLE REHM informed the Committee that they currently have a term contract with Public Works, Project Management & Engineering, to provide management services for various projects in the Municipality and Eagle River, and are in the Concept Report Phase.

STEVE NOBLE provided a power point presentation and summarized the background of the project. He stated this is a Municipally managed and State funded project that is an offshoot of the previous studies in the Eagle River area, particularly the Central Business District, revitalization circulation plans and studies that have been completed over the last four or five years. He noted they are currently in the Concept Report Phase in the Municipal process, and will soon be moving into a Design Study Report and Final Design Package. MR. NOBLE explained that the primary objective is to create a connection between Business Boulevard and Eagle River Road, and to relieve some congestion and resolve some of the circulation issues in Eagle River. He discussed the project schedule and its current process, and explained that a series of public workshops and Technical Advisory Committee meetings with stakeholders in the area, have been held. There is approximately \$8.5 million dollars in State funding that has been allocated for this project, and it is called Eagle River Traffic Mitigation Project Phase 1 because from that circulation study, it was considered to be the highest priority project.

There were no questions from the public.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER BIRCH commented that this was a great briefing and a much needed improvement. He would like to touch on the cost and would there be a wide variation in budget. AARON CHRISTIE stated this has not reached that stage of the concept report, and they are primarily looking at problem identification. MAYOR SULLIVAN asked if there was at this stage, a preferred option out of the three options presented. MR. NOBLE explained that as part of the concept report they specifically avoid trying to identify a preferred option until the Concept Report Phase has been completed, and progressed into the Design Study Phase. MR. CHRISTIE briefed the Committee on the results from the meetings with specific property owners. He noted that if Alignment C were to be accepted, it would impact three of the buildings, and a portion of these are low income housing. Part of the issue is that there is limited low income housing in the core area of Eagle River, and they have walking distance to everything. MAYOR SULLIVAN suggested as being part of the public comment that Option B would be not to remove apartments from low income people. MR. CHRISTIE responded to Chair Campbell that at some level they will have planning level cost estimates assessed for each of the corridors, but not at the present time. CHAIR CAMPBELL stated that it has no federal money involved, and if a funding differential were identified between what is in hand and what is needed to build this project, he guesses there might be some discussion about federalizing it. Would that take this project back to Step 1 in the process and take maybe two or three years to begin the federal process again, and is this consistent in terms of public involvement and the process. MR. NOBLE commented that the Municipal process is much different for these types of projects than the State or Federal process. It has been developed as if it were going to remain State funded, and he doesn't think there would be a significant amount of rework primarily because the preferred alternative hasn't been reached yet.

In response to Chair Campbell, MR. LYON answered that yes the Downtown Eagle River plan was approved as an AMATS plan. This project is in the short range in the MTP which will be ranked and scored in the TIP, not necessarily looking at the funding since it is in the TIP, and the

TIP is all Federal funds. A cost benefit analysis and any right-of-way impacts would be looked at that might create the inability to build this project.

There was no further discussion.

7. COMMITTEE COMMENTS

8. SCHEDULED AMATS MEETINGS

Technical Advisory Committee, January 9, 2014, 2:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Policy Committee, January 23, 2014, 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:22 p.m.