

**ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
Planning and Development Center
4700 Elmore Road
1st Floor Conference Room
Anchorage, Alaska**

**May 8, 2008
1:00 PM**

Those in attendance were:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>REPRESENTING</u>
* Gordon Keith	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Regional Director
David Post	ADOT/PF
* Cindy Heil	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Air Quality
* Mark Begich	Municipal Mayor
* Patrick Flynn	MOA/Assembly
** Lance Wilber	MOA/Traffic Department
Craig Lyon	MOA/TD
Bob Kniefel	MOA/TD
** Steve Morris	MOA/Department of Health and Human Services
** Jody Karcz	MOA/Public Transportation Dept.
Alton Staff	MOA/PTD
Anne Brooks	Brooks & Associates
Betty Adkison	University Area Community Council
Bernadette Bradley	Oceanview/Klatt Community Council

* AMATS Policy Committee members

** AMATS Technical Advisory Committee members

1. CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR KEITH called the meeting to order at 1:13 PM. All Policy Committee members were present. Sheila Selkregg and Mayor Mark Begich were absent. Patrick Flynn participated via teleconference. A quorum was established.

2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

CHAIR KEITH encouraged public involvement in this meeting of the AMATS

Policy Committee. He explained that Staff would first make their presentation, followed by any comments from Policy Committee members, and the floor would then be open to public comment.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MR. LYON asked that Eagle River Road Update be moved to the end of the agenda to accommodate the project manager's schedule.

There being no objections to the agenda, as amended.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

CHAIR KEITH noted that only one of the attendees at the March 13, 2008 and March 27, 2008 meeting was present to vote, so those minutes would be postponed to a future date.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. First Quarter Obligation Report

DAVE POST explained that in 2003-2004 the AMATS allocation peaked at \$45 to \$46 million and in 2009 the expected allocation is \$25 million, roughly half of what was received only five years ago. He noted that cost increases, which are shown on the first page of the report, have nearly doubled in the last five years, exceeding the national CPI. The combination of the AMATS allocation and the doubling of costs means the purchasing power of AMATS is one-quarter what it was five years ago. As a result, there are projects underway that have not been able to move as quickly to a construction phase.

MR. FLYNN asked if the next revision of the TIP would reflect these changes. MR. POST responded that in the last STIP the AMATS allocation was significantly less than the current draft contains. The current TIP from June 2007 anticipates spending \$22,929,000. The current estimate is \$31,985,334. There is an additional \$9 million in 2008 from what was anticipated last summer. There is also an additional \$5 million in 2009 from what was anticipated last summer.

MR. POST explained that the grandfathered projects shown in the Obligation Report are those projects that have a completed environmental document. There are two items on the Obligation Report requiring Policy Committee action, as well as some informational items. There are three significant changes from the last review by the Policy Committee. The estimate for G-1, Old Seward Highway, O'Malley to Brandon, was \$20.8 million when last before the Policy Committee and it is now \$22.95 million, largely in response to updating estimates after receiving the bids on 5th Avenue. G-5, Eagle River Loop Road Reconstruction, was obligated last year for construction and the bid, which was recently received, is \$1.6 million higher than was obligated. The construction estimate approved last month by the Policy Committee for G-6, Old Glenn Highway Rehab, Eagle River – Fire Lake to Peters Creek, was slightly over \$11 million and it is now at \$15.25 million, also the result of increased cost estimates. The majority of cost increases are a result of the increase in the cost of oil.

There is a need to increase the advance construction (AC) from 2009 to fully fund the Old Glenn Highway. That project would use \$3 million in 2008 funds and \$12 million from 2009. CHAIR KEITH explained the concept of “advance construction” to Mr. Flynn. MR. FLYNN asked if the suggestion is to take \$12 million from next year’s allocation of \$25 million. MR. POST indicated this is correct.

MR. POST reported that the TIP is balanced by borrowing \$12 million from 2009. A total of \$31,998,451 would be obligated for FFY2008 and the revised AMATS allocation is \$31,924,766. The impact of AC \$12 million from 2009 is that no roadway projects are brought forward for construction in 2009. In the existing adopted TIP for 2009, the largest sum went to repayment of the AC for Old Seward Highway at \$12.5 million. The AC amount anticipated previously from 2009 and the current anticipated AC amount is \$12 million, but for a different project. The AC request was shifted from Old Seward Highway to Eagle River Road is that Old Seward Highway is ranked as the highest priority project that is ready to obligate in 2008. The under estimate of the AMATS allocation and the under estimate of project costs have nearly offset each other.

CHAIR KEITH noted that the TIP had always planned on borrowing \$12.5 million for Old Seward Highway, but because the design for that road was complete first, it was funded directly in 2008 and did not use AC funds. This meant that the Old Glenn Highway could borrow money from 2009 in an amount near what was going to be borrowed for Old Seward Highway. As a result of this, both projects can be delivered this year.

MR. POST asked that the Policy Committee endorse the project cost increases for Old Seward Highway and Old Glenn Highway and also endorse an AC of \$12 million from 2009 in the form of a resolution.

CHAIR KEITH noted that the quarterly Obligation Report is used to track actual expenditures against projected expenditures. The expenditures appear to be tracking well. He explained that Policy Committee approval is needed if there is a change over \$500,000 or 10% of the total project cost.

MR. FLYNN asked if the threshold is the greater or lesser of \$500,000 or 10% of the total project cost. CHAIR KEITH replied that it is the lesser.

MR. POST read the resolution into the record for the benefit of Mr. Flynn, who did not have a copy. He noted that ADOT would continue to explore ways to reduce the cost of the Old Seward Highway project and, at a minimum, keep it at a \$22.9 million level. MR. FLYNN asked if this means de-scoping. CHAIR KEITH stated that the traffic count between the two termini does not necessitate a five-lane section. There would be an understanding that the middle section would be built out to a total of five lanes at a later date.

CINDY HEIL moved to approve the resolution as written. PATRICK FLYNN seconded.

No public comment was offered.

MR. FLYNN asked whether it would be harmful to the projects to postpone consideration of this resolution to the next Policy Committee meeting.

CHAIR KEITH asked when the Obligation Report must be approved. MR. POST replied that there is not a due date for action. MR. WILBER stated the

TAC had a similar question as to timing and, in its discussion, he recalled that the need for timely action was to gain concurrence on this approach because Old Seward Highway is being bid and the contracts will need to be awarded. The two required actions are Policy Committee approval and the Commissioner of DOT's approval of an AC. MR. FLYNN asked if these projects are out for bid. MR. WILBER replied that Old Seward Highway is being bid. CHAIR KEITH stated the Old Glenn Highway is ready to go to bid, but has not yet been bid. Approval was received for a \$7 million AC for Old Glenn Highway, but after opening bids for 5th Avenue and Eagle River Loop Road and seeing that the cost of asphalt has gone up substantially, the estimate for the Old Glenn Highway was re-evaluated. A modified request was sent to the Commissioner to increase the AC to \$12 million and he has turned it down, at least in the short-term, primarily because of misinformation; he has not been told that this strategy borrows the same amount of money from 2009, but for a different project.

There being no objection, the motion PASSED unanimously.

CINDY HEIL moved to approve the First Quarter Obligation Report.
PATRICK FLYNN seconded.

There being no objection, the motion PASSED unanimously.

b. Other Business Items

6. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

**a. A Strategy for Developing Context Sensitive
Transportation Projects**

BOB KNIEFEL explained that an initial approach to context sensitive solutions (CSS) has been identified. He explained the hierarchy of guideline framework, beginning with the broad guidelines set by policies and plans, followed by functional plans, area-specific plans, and project-specific plans. CSS begins at the project-specific level. A plan for developing CSS was developed with the assistance of Brooks & Associates after review of what other communities are doing with regard to CSS. An advisory group was formed of individuals who often attend AMATS meetings in order to develop

an approach that will address the public's needs. MR. KNIEFEL noted that in this effort there has been an attempt to define issues at an early stage of project development. Technical requirements are also outlined and made clear. The way in which a project implements a plan is also identified.

MS. BROOKS explained that the request to develop context sensitivity on transportation projects originated with a resolution advanced at the community council level by strong advocates in the community. The CSS process begins with policy, functional, area-specific and project-specific plans. From a review of those plans, a concept report is prepared that identifies requirements/recommendations. This report would be aired through a substantial public process. Public input would be solicited through every step of the process. Following the completion of the concept report, the project is turned over to a consultant team to develop a design study report developed with input from public stakeholders. At this point, all alternatives for the project are identified. Screening would be done based on evaluation criteria and selection. The project would then go into detailed design and then construction. CSS also includes a post-construction evaluation to determine whether the public received what they understood would be received. The CSS outlines roles and responsibilities for different participants in the process and ensures communication among the various participants.

MR. KNIEFEL suggested that a project concept report would be prepared out of the allocation for project development. The recommendation is for consistent staff to accomplish that effort in order to deliver a consistent message to the public and ensure that they understand the scope and requirements of a project. Each component of the project design should be addressed early in the process so that problems can be identified and resolved. The Municipality will likely need to hire two new individuals, funded out of existing project funds. The citizens group, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and AMATS have reviewed CSS, and it will go to the Assembly within the next month.

MR. KNIEFEL indicated that CSS would not be used on every project, but would focus on major projects that will have the greatest impact. Talking with interested parties at the beginning of the process allows issues to be addressed and hopefully resolved, rather than major issues arising late in the

process, which can be costly and difficult. Early identification of issues and working with interested parties throughout the process should yield the most satisfactory end result. MR. KNIEFEL explained how this approach has been successfully used to date and noted that unique to CSS is the follow-up effort to ensure that the public and agencies received what was expected from a project.

MR. FLYNN congratulated Mr. Kniefel and Ms. Brooks for a well thought out process and stated he is looked forward to this being brought to the Assembly.

c. Revisions to the Anchorage CO/SIP Maintenance Plan

MR. MORRIS explained that in November 2007 the Assembly took action to revoke I/M no later than December 2009. That action precipitates revision of the Air Quality Plan, which ultimately is incorporated into the State Implementation Plan (SIP) that is approved by EPA. A Draft Plan has been created. AMATS TAC has seen the Draft Plan and will take action later in May. At its last meeting, the TAC released the Draft Plan for public review. Based on action by the Policy Committee, this will also go to the Assembly for approval. The State plans to open a parallel public review process after Policy Committee action occurs. Once approved by the Assembly, ADEC will take it under advisement, secure legal review, and incorporate these amendments into the SIP, and submit it to the EPA. That process can take up to 18 months. An update will be provided at the June Policy Committee meeting.

MR. FLYNN understood that one of his colleagues intends to bring a resolution to the Assembly to reinstitute some level of I/M testing with a longer exemption for new vehicles prior to first testing. He asked what are the regulatory requirements of ADEC and EPA as this process moves forward. He asked if there have been preliminary reactions from those agencies. MR. MORRIS replied that, if the Assembly decided to maintain I/M in some form, there would not be objection from ADEC or EPA. Such a change would still likely require a Plan revision. MR. FLYNN asked if there has been indication that there would be no objection, if the I/M program were eliminated. MR. MORRIS did not believe that elimination of the program is problematic; there may be some issues with scheduling. The EPA approval may occur after December 2009, so there could be a period of time when I/M

is not being implemented and there is not an approved Plan. Either a limited I/M program or cessation of the program is likely acceptable to ADEC and EPA, however.

b. Eagle River Road Update

ROBERT DeVASSIE with ADOT explained that currently some environmental 4(f) and 6(f) issues are being resolved and the environmental document will be re-evaluated. That will soon be approved and right-of-way acquisition will follow over an 18- to 24-month period. During right-of-way acquisition, design will be finalized. Advertising is projected for 2011, depending on funding. The design involves straightening of Eagle River Road to Eagle River Nature Center with 4-foot shoulders. The cost has increased approximately \$8 million from the 2007 estimate because of excavation, borrow, and asphalt. This is mountainous terrain and, as a result, the catch slopes are significant.

CHAIR KEITH noted that section 4(f) says that parkland cannot be used unless there is no other reasonable alternative.

CHAIR KEITH commented that the estimate for this project has nearly doubled, which will affect the TIP. He felt it was logical to expect that only one project per year could be funded in the TIP. MR. FLYNN asked that the 2007 estimate for this project be stated. CHAIR KEITH replied that the 2007 estimate was \$7.9 million and the 2008 estimate is \$15.1 million. MR. DeVASSIE clarified that the cost of the project in 2007 was \$13.9 million and in 2008 is \$22.3 million. CHAIR KEITH noted that with an AMATS allocation of approximately \$25 million, an entire year's allocation would be taken by one project like this.

d. Scheduled AMATS Meetings

Technical Advisory Committee, May 22, 2008

Policy Committee, June 12, 2008

MR. LYON noted that the June 12 meeting time and/or date will be changed as an appropriate meeting room could not be secured.

MS. BROOKS asked if STIP Amendment #17 is moving to approval and is the \$25 million in proposed State funding increase to the AMATS allocation going to remain intact. MR. POST stated that STIP Amendment #17 is being finalized for transmission to FHWA. MS. BROOKS asked if it is possible that the AMATS allocation can reach \$40 million in 2009. CHAIR KEITH replied that is unlikely. MR. POST noted that there is a \$26 million in 2009 with another \$2 million in CMAQ. He noted that a \$24 million GO bond was erroneously contributed to AMATS. MS. BROOKS asked if that State bonding is for projects in the AMATS area. MR. POST stated that it includes \$22 million for Dowling Road.

e. **Other Informational Reports** – None

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 PM.