

**ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION  
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING  
Planning and Development Center  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room  
Anchorage, Alaska**

**May 10, 2007  
1:00 PM**

Those in attendance were:

| <u>NAME</u>      | <u>REPRESENTING</u>  |
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| * Gordon Keith   | Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Regional Director |
| ** John Tolley   | ADOT/PF  |
| David Post       | ADOT/PF  |
| Ken Morton       | ADOT/PF  |
| Mark Parmelee    | ADOT/PF  |
| * Tom Chapple    | Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Air Quality                 |
| ** Cindy Heil    | ADEC   |
| * Mark Begich    | Municipal Mayor  |
| * Dan Sullivan   | MOA/Assembly   |
| * Chris Birch    | MOA/Assembly   |
| ** Lance Wilber  | MOA/Traffic Department   |
| Craig Lyon       | MOA/TD   |
| Judy Tymick      | MOA/Public Transportation Dept.  |
| Alton Staff      | MOA/PTD  |
| Paul Laverty     | Self   |
| Walt Parker      | Anchorage Concerned Citizens   |
| Peggy Robinson   | Northeast Community Council  |
| Art Johnson      | USKH   |
| Steve Noble      | DOWL Engineers   |
| Ainslie Phillips | Self   |

\* AMATS Policy Committee members

\*\* AMATS Technical Advisory Committee members

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

CHAIR KEITH called the meeting to order at 1:09 PM. All Policy Committee members were present.

## 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 reviewed the agenda for this meeting of the AMATS Policy Committee.

## 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Deferred to later in the meeting

## 5. BUSINESS ITEMS

### a. Obligation Report

CRAIG LYON explained that the changes in the Obligation Report require Policy Committee action. The TAC could have taken action on one item, but deferred to the Policy Committee. The Obligation Report figures do not exactly match the TIP, partly because there is an ongoing concerted effort to review older projects and begin de-obligating them. Changes include:

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| <b>Roadway Projects</b> |
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**Project G-3 Huffman Road:** An additional \$1.7 million is being obligated, which is \$200,000 more than was originally anticipated for the right-of-way phase.

**Project G-4 Eagle River Road Rehabilitation:** Last year there was the intent to fund this project with \$3 million in 2006 funds, but that was moved to 2007 and the right-of-way has increased to \$5 million.

**Project G-5 Eagle River Loop Road:** A total of \$9 million will be obligated.

**Project 1 Spenard Road: Fireweed to Minnesota and Hillcrest Drive to Minnesota Drive On-Ramp:** This project is being zeroed out in 2007.

**Project 3 Dowling Road**: Funding is being increased and the project is being split. The TAC can take action on this change.

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| <b>Transportation Enhancements Projects</b> |
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**Project G-2 Chester Creek Trail Connection** is zeroed out because there is sufficient funding to carry the project through 2007.

CHRIS BIRCH moved for approval of the Obligation Report. TOM CHAPPLE seconded.

*There being no objection the motion was approved unanimously.*

**b. Human Services Transportation Plan**

CRAIG LYON explained that the federal government requires coordination of human services transportation provided in Anchorage. This requirement is a result of the SAFETEA-LU legislation. The Public Transportation Department prepared this plan several years ago and updated it for submission to the federal government. A coordination meeting was held in November 2006, which was well attended. Since that initial effort, the plan has been updated and projects in CMAQ have been ranked and scored.

CHAIR KEITH understood that this plan is required by the federal government to ensure that various programs already in place do not overlap or leave gaps. MR. LYON indicated this is correct.

MR. CHAPPLE asked that is the significant difference in this plan versus the prior plan. MS. TYMICK replied that in 1995 when the plan was initially prepared there were OPS senior transportation and MuniLift providing transportation for persons with disabilities. Those programs were merged into AnchorRIDES, which operates as a coordinated system using multiple funding sources and multiple eligibility, identifying the least cost, most effective mode of travel. It is recognized that People Mover and AnchorRIDES cannot provide for all transportation needs and coordination is imperative. An outcome of the November 2006 meeting was an application from the Girdwood community for 5311 funds to expand the existing shuttle service operated by the Alyeska Resort, as well as a partnership between ASSETS and the Armed Services to help people get to work on base.

MR. LYON indicated that at its April 26 meeting the TAC recommended approval of this plan by the Policy Committee.

PAUL LAVERTY noted that a coordinated working group is mentioned in the memorandum discussing this plan. MS. TYMICK indicated that is included on page 26 of the plan.

CHRIS BIRCH moved for approval of the Human Services Transportation Plan. MAYOR MARK BEGICH seconded.

*There being no objection the motion was approved unanimously.*

**c. Other Business**

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Action on the March 8, 2007 minutes was deferred due to an insufficient number of members for passage.

MAYOR MARK BEGICH moved for approval of the minutes of April 12, 2007. CHRIS BIRCH seconded.

*There being no objection the motion was approved unanimously.*

**6. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS**

**a. Pedestrian Plan**

MR. LYON noted that this plan has been presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission and Staff is currently responding to questions from that body. Public comment on the plan was opened March 22 and closed April 27. The first Planning and Zoning Commission hearing was held on May 7 and it was continued to May 14. The anticipated schedule is action by the Assembly in June and by the Policy Committee in July.

**b. East Dowling Road Project**

STEVE NOBLE explained that the objective of the project is to establish an additional east/west corridor as an alternative to Tudor Road, in conjunction with 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Abbott Loop, and other work being done on Dowling Road, and to reduce congestion on Tudor Road and at the Lake Otis/Tudor intersection. A number of alternatives were considered and the project is now nearing detailed design. The project work schedule is substantial completion of design in 2007 so bidding can be done in winter 2007 and construction in summer 2008.

Meetings have been held with agencies and neighborhood groups, each of which has distinct concerns. There have been meetings with the TAC, Northern Lights ABC School, and other interested groups. There are a number of environmental issues, some of which have affected the design more than others. There are Class B wetlands in this area so avoidance and minimization of conflict is a focus. The uplands are used to the extent possible and the footprint of the road is narrowed to the extent possible. There has been work with agencies to keep wetlands interconnected and to extend the storm drain system to collect runoff from the more urban section; in the more rural section runoff will be directed to the wetlands.

There have been comments regarding moose crossings and wildlife habitat concerns. At this point in the project, the plan is for continuous lighting for the full length of the corridor and some fencing that will tie in with the Abbott Loop project.

A noise analysis was conducted and options for mitigation are being investigated. There is some grade difference that will create somewhat of a buffer from residences. Consideration is being given to quieter pavement as well.

Pedestrian facilities are being provided on both sides of the road for the full length of the corridor. On the east side, the facility is slightly removed from the roadway in order to avoid conflict with a Chugach Electric Association (CEA) substation. One of the dog mushing trails is being rerouted.

The right-of-way process is nearing completion. There are 46 residential acquisitions on the north side of the road between the Post Office driveway

and Norm Drive. The budget expended on that effort is approximately \$8 million. Most of the overhead utility conflicts have been avoided, particularly the transmission lines that run the full length of the south side of the road. the CEA substation and a 30-inch water transmission line were avoided, to the extent possible. One-third of the CEA lease boundary is overlapped by the roadway boundary; discussions are underway regarding the possibility of CEA modifying the boundaries of its lease.

Grades on Abbott Loop where the roadways tie in are as flat as possible; grades steepen moving north.

The right-of-way costs incurred to date are primarily utility relocations associated with the 46 homes that were acquired.

The project accommodates future extension at Spruce Street; there will be a signal at the extension of Spruce in the future. When the number of vehicles on this road grows from 2,000-4,000 cars a day to 20,000 cars a day, it will be difficult to make left-hand turns from several streets, such as Laurel and the Post Office. The plan is to eliminate left-turning movements out of several streets and leave some driveways with full access. CHAIR KEITH clarified through Mr. Noble that when the signal is installed, gaps will be created so that people turning westbound on Dowling can turn into the neighborhood without using Norm Street.

In order to mitigate for decreased turning movements, modeling was done of circulation associated with the school and the traffic flow was revised.

The current authorized funding for this project is \$19 million. The current project estimate, including design, right-of-way, utilities, construction engineering, and contingencies is \$24.2 million. A legislative request has been made of \$5.2 million to address that shortfall. Prior to making the legislative request, ADOT launched a value engineering (VE) study to achieve the project objectives while lowering the overall project cost. some of those VE efforts helped to lower the overall budget by \$3-5 million. Those efforts include: a static surcharge of the wetlands area, which requires advance work and a longer construction period; revising the paving section

from 5 inches to 4 inches. Other VE recommendations also significantly lower the cost of the project.

In the event that there is available budget, a prioritized list of items to put back into the project has been developed. The first item is the pedestrian overpass, which carries a cost of \$1.6 million. This overpass enables a free right-turn from Abbott Loop onto Dowling, which makes it a more attractive route alternative to Tudor Road. Second on the list is the bike lanes between Spruce and Laurel Street at a cost of \$540,000.

Next steps are Draft Environmental Assessment and permit applications, additional public involvement, determining how to proceed with construction, bidding in 2007, and construction in 2008/2009.

MAYOR BEGICH asked for detail on the wetlands mitigation. MR. NOBLE replied that it is currently envisioned that Heritage Land Bank will put the wetlands into reserve in order to offset mitigation costs.

CHAIR KEITH urged bringing this project under contract as soon as possible so that a contractor can begin work in the early spring. MR. NOBLE indicated the schedule is to secure a bid in November.

**c. Minor Amendment to the Anchorage Bowl LRTP**

MR. LYON explained that the current LRTP has the Lake Otis and Tudor intersection project in an undetermined funding status with a recommendation that within six months of the Abbott Loop Extension opening, the municipal Traffic Engineer quantify the effect of that project. The Anchorage Assembly recently adopted a resolution to move this project from an undetermined status into short-term project status. The TAC reviewed that recommendation and concurred. To achieve this amendment, only TAC approval is required. At its April 26 meeting, the TAC approved this amendment.

**D. Major Amendment to the Anchorage Bowl LRTP**

MR. LYON explained that costs are being revised due to changes in the AMATS allocation and due to increases in construction costs and other costs. In addition, he explained that the Knik Arm Crossing had to be included in

the air quality conformity determination. The conformity was done for the Knik Arm Crossing for the LRTP and the Air Quality Consultation Team agrees that conformity analysis can be used for this TIP amendment as well.

MR. LYON emphasized that this must be done before the start of the next fiscal year on July 1, at which point all plans must be SAFETEA-LU compliant and this matter would be delayed. This will be taken to Planning and Zoning Commission on June 11, to the Assembly on June 12, to the TAC on June 13, and to the Policy Committee on June 14. The public review of the TIP will end on May 30. He indicated that Staff could provide an Assembly worksession on the amendment, if desired.

MR. LYON noted there are increases in 2007 and decreases in 2008 and 2009 in the allocation figures, so an amendment is needed. Furthermore, 2009 is now part of the fiscally constrained portion of the TIP. The last adopted TIP is 2006-2008. SAFETEA-LU allows a four-year TIP; the STIP that is currently out for review is 2006-2009. This approval aligns the TIP with the STIP.

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| <b>Table 3: Roadway Improvements</b> |
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**Project G-2 Victor Road Reconstruction (Dimond Boulevard to 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue)**: Construction is moved from 2009 to 2010.

**Project G-4 Eagle River Road Rehabilitation**: Increase in right-of-way and construction moved from 2009 to 2010.

**Project G-6 Old Glenn Highway Reconstruction Phase II**: Small increase in the construction price and construction moved from 2010 to 2011.

**Project G-7 O'Malley Road**: Additional design in 2010 and right-of-way moved to 2011.

MR. BIRCH asked if Project G-7 is between Lake Otis and the Seward Highway. MR. LYON replied that it is between Seward Highway and Hillside Drive.

**Project 2 Spenard Road Rehabilitation**: Design is moved from 2007 to 2010.

**Project 6 Fireweed Lane Rehabilitation**: Right-of-way moved from 2008 to 2010.

**Project 8 Abbott Road Rehabilitation**: Design moved from 2008 to 2010.

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**Project 11 Eagle River CBD Study:** There was originally more in 2007 and, in order to balance the TIP, the figure is returned to \$150,000 in 2007 and \$450,000 in 2010.

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| <b>Table 4: Transportation Enhancements</b> |
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Ship Creek Trail Phase IV is under construction; some funds were added.

**Project G-1 Potter Marsh Trailhead and Access Improvements:** Originally, \$1 million was in 2009 and the project manager says that Phase III will not likely occur and to remove the \$1 million; those funds were used on other projects.

**Project G-2 Chester Creek Trail Connection:** Originally slated for construction in 2007, this project was moved to 2008 and 2009.

**Project G-3 Muldoon Road Landscaping and Pedestrian Improvements:** More funding was added in 2007 for right-of-way with construction in 2009 and 2010.

**Project G-4 Glenn Highway Trail Rehabilitation:** Money was moved from 2009 to 2011.

**Anchorage Areawide Trails Rehabilitation:** Money was moved from 2009 to 2011.

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| <b>Table 5: Congestion Mitigation Air Quality</b> |
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***SIP-Mandated Projects and Programs***

**Project 2 Air Quality Public & Business Awareness Education Campaign:** Typically this program has been funded at \$300,000 per year. The program has sufficient funds to not have funding in 2007.

***Projects***

**Project 4 Transit Centers/Facilities:** Funding reduced in 2008 from \$1 million to \$800,000 in order to balance the program.

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| <b>Table 6: National Highway System</b> |
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This table is not part of the AMATS allocation.

**Project 1 Glenn Highway Reconstruction:** Funding is reduced slightly in the out years. This project was \$21,430,000 in the previous version of the TIP and it is reduced to \$15,260,000.

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**Project 3 Seward Highway:** Right-of-way that was in 2007 is now in 2008 and some of the out year funding is reduced.

**Project 4 Seward Highway (Potter Valley to Rabbit Creek Road):** Funding was eliminated.

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| <b>Table 8: Other Federal, State, and Local Funded Projects within AMATS Area</b> |
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**Project C Knik Arm Crossing Access Connection:** This project is one of two in relation to the Knik Arm Crossing. The funding source for this project is FHWA.

**Project D Knik Arm Crossing Toll Facilities:** Funding is from a public private partnership.

**Project E Seward Highway Recreational Improvements:** This is an earmark of \$1.8 million in 2007 and should be in Table 9.

MAYOR BEGICH noted on the NHS from 2006 to 2008 there is \$20 million to expend. He asked what more is needed for Project 1, Glenn Highway. CHAIR KEITH believed no additional funding is needed. MAYOR BEGICH asked what additional funding is needed for Project 3, Seward Highway. MR. POST indicated the \$3.8 million for that project was originally envisioned as the cost. Nothing has been obligated to date, but \$3.6 million will be obligated. MAYOR BEGICH understood that the project cost is \$55 million. He asked what is the total amount of FHWA funding for the State. CHAIR KEITH replied that for FY07, FY08 and FY09 it is approximately \$80 to \$90 million statewide. MAYOR BEGICH asked what would have been the funding prior to earmarks reducing it. CHAIR KEITH estimated the amounts would have increased \$240 million over five years, or an additional \$50 million each year.

MAYOR BEGICH noted regarding Table 3 that AMATS will have \$16 to \$22 million over the next few years. The total of the grandfathered projects far exceed that total. His attitude of late was to select one or two projects and do them because there is insufficient funding to do a variety of projects, such as are presented in the TIP. AMATS has been criticized in the past for doing more planning than product. He felt it was realistic to recognize that the projects on the TIP list could not be done with the current level of funding. CHAIR KEITH felt it would be worthwhile to hold a worksession on this subject. He stated there is a need for a State funded program and that

probably means a gas tax. He concurred with Mayor Begich that the TIP is not a realistic representation of what can be accomplished. He used the example of the Eagle River Greenbelt, which has a cost of nearly \$30 million. He questioned the wisdom of opening design phases of projects when construction cannot be achieved. MAYOR BEGICH suggested the possible strategy of working with other metropolitan planning organizations across the country to develop a unified approach to presenting to Congress on the issue of time traps. MR. BIRCH agreed with this approach. He noted that in the NHS there is \$716 million for the Glenn Highway to Seward Highway project. It is prudent to create an incremental approach to carrying out projects. He noted that both South Anchorage and Eagle River are experiencing significant growth and improvements are needed.

LANCE WILBER informed the Policy Committee that the TAC had a discussion based on its similar concerns regarding the level of funding vis-à-vis the TIP project lists. This TIP amendment must be submitted prior to July 1, but there should be discussions in the future regarding other dedicated funds for transportation. He asked whether the Policy Committee wished to have a joint worksession with the TAC. It was agreed that a joint worksession should be scheduled for the TAC and Policy Committee and a separate worksession would be held with the Assembly on the TIP amendment.

MAYOR BEGICH asked whether the worksession should be held prior to July 1. MR. WILBER recommended that a decision should be made within 30 days on which TIP projects to move forward because efforts will begin soon on project design. MR. BIRCH felt the 10-year window from beginning of a project to construction is a very relevant element of the discussion. He asked whether the Governor supports a gas tax. CHAIR KEITH replied that the transition Team supported it and there has been substantial discussion, but there is no official position. MAYOR BEGICH believed the Deputy Commissioner and others are developing a proposal to offer a long-term view of funding roads and a gas tax was a part of that. CHAIR KEITH clarified that a consultant will be hired to develop a funding plan.

MR. LAVERTY remarked on the fact that the Policy Committee is discussing a lack of funds, particularly for NHS roads, a month after the Policy

Committee approved addition of the Knik Arm Crossing into the LRTP. If that project had been killed, a lot of money would have been freed up for NHS projects in this area.

CHAIR KEITH asked if the Pedestrian Plan is a substantial document. MR. LYON replied in the affirmative, noting that a great deal of public input has gone into its development. CHAIR KEITH asked whether a worksession should be held on that plan.

MAYOR BEGICH asked if the Alaska railroad would give a presentation on their portion of the Intermodal facility. MR. LYON replied in the affirmative.

**d. Other Informational Reports**

**7. SCHEDULED AMATS MEETINGS**

Technical Advisory Committee, May 24, 2007

Policy Committee, June 14, 2007

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 PM.