

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

**June 14, 2007  
1:00 PM**

Those in attendance were:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>REPRESENTING</u>
* Gordon Keith	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Regional Director
** John Tolley	ADOT/PF
** Rob Campbell	ADOT/PF
David Post	ADOT/PF
** Cindy Heil	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Air Quality
* Mark Begich	Municipal Mayor
* Dan Sullivan	MOA/Assembly
* Chris Birch	MOA/Assembly
** Lance Wilber	MOA/Traffic Department
Craig Lyon	MOA/TD
Vivian Underwood	MOA/TD
Alton Staff	MOA/Public Transportation Department
Michael Repogle	Environmental Defense
Cheryl Richardson	Anchorage Citizens Coalition
Ainslie Phillips	Northeast Community Council
Debbie Ossiander	MOA/Assembly
Bill Starr	MOA/Assembly
Justine Massey	Trustees for Alaska
Jeanne Ostnes	Representative Craig Johnson
Erich Zimmerman	Self
Anna Fairclough	State of Alaska/House Transportation
Jill Shepard	DOWL Engineers
Kristi Stuller	DOWL Engineers
Marianne Pease	KABATA

\* AMATS Policy Committee members

\*\* AMATS Technical Advisory Committee members

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

CHAIR KEITH called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM. All Policy Committee members were present with the exception of Tom Chapple. Mayor Mark Begich arrived at 1:37 p.m.

**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**

DAN SULLIVAN moved to approve the agenda. CHRIS BIRCH seconded.

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

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

**5. BUSINESS ITEMS**

**a. 2006-2009 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

CRAIG LYON explained that the hope was to get on the Assembly public hearing agenda for June 12, 2007, but that was not possible. An Assembly public hearing is scheduled for June 26, 2007 and this meeting of the Policy Committee would be continued to June 27, 2007 in order to take action on the TIP. The Planning and Zoning Commission heard the TIP amendments on June 11, 2007 and voted to approve all TIP amendments except the Knik Arm Crossing project. The vote on approving the Knik Arm Crossing project amendments was 4 to 3 and five affirmative votes are required to pass the motion, therefore, the motion failed.

CHAIR KEITH asked where and when the June 27, 2007 meeting is scheduled. MR. LYON replied that meeting is scheduled for 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Permit Center.

MR. SULLIVAN asked if members of AMATS are allowed to participate telephonically. CHAIR KEITH replied in the affirmative. MR. SULLIVAN stated he would be leaving town early on June 27, 2007, but believed he would be able to participate telephonically.

CHAIR KEITH noted that the June 27, 2007 meeting is a continuation of this meeting for purposes of action on the TIP amendment.

MICHAEL REPLOGLE, Transportation Director for Environmental Defense, a non-governmental organization with .5 million members across the United States, many in Alaska. He explained his organization tries to bring together the lost sciences of the environment and economics to protect the environment. He spoke particularly to the Knik Arm Crossing project, which is proposed for addition to the TIP. He urged the Policy Committee to reconsider the addition of that project to the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) as well, which he understood has been done. He made both of these recommendations pending further analysis and consideration of alternatives, impacts, and required mitigation. Fairly extensive comments were submitted jointly on the TIP by Environmental Defense, Alaska Center for the Environment, Alaska Public Interest Research Group, Alaska Transportation Priorities Project, Alaska Wildlife Alliance, Cook Inlet Keepers, and Government Hill Community Council that go into much more detail on the legal and practical reasons why this decision ought to weigh with the Policy Committee for further analysis before action. Fundamentally this project cannot be added legally to the TIP or the LRTP without undertaking a major investment study (MIS) under federal law and regulation. Only by doing an MIS looking at the potential adverse impacts of the project and strategies to mitigate or avoid those impacts can the Federal Aid Highway Act and other legal requirements be satisfied. The Knik Arm Crossing would have profound impacts on the long-term future of the metropolitan region and how it develops in terms of land use, how transportation systems function, and how much money residents and workers spend on transportation. It will have long-term impacts on patterns of businesses and the long-term competitiveness of the region's economy. The Environmental Defense is very concerned that the studies done to date show this project will increase fuel use and air pollution, especially greenhouse gas emissions, in the

metropolitan area. It is important to consider alternatives that would better meet the mobility and economic development needs of the region while minimizing pollution. They are concerned that this project would harm Beluga whales in Cook Inlet and other aquatic resources. They are concerned that it seriously undermines the excellent work done in creating the *Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Plan*. While the project is likely to boost real estate values for those who hold land north of Knik Arm, in his own experience of three decades working in regional transportation development in many areas around the world, he believed it is quite likely this crossing will damage the economic interests of many more residents by essentially reworking the future form of the region and condemn it to low density sprawl and car dependence. He stated that at some point over the next century the Knik Arm Crossing may make sense, but before proceeding, the Policy Committee should consider what would be required to fully mitigate the adverse impacts and design appropriate mitigation and then compare the costs of properly mitigating the design with other alternatives that might equally well serve mobility needs within Anchorage and Mat-Su. Only with having that comparison can a sound judgment be made on behalf of the citizens of the region. Only with that kind of comparison can the legal requirements in the Federal Aid Highway Act and SAFETEA-LU planning section be satisfied. Those legislation says state and metropolitan plans and programs are required to achieve the objectives set out in the planning sections of SAFETEA-LU that transportation plans and projects should improve mobility and foster economic development while minimizing congestion and emissions.

The Knik Arm Crossing DEIS says the crossing will not increase regional growth, but it will rearrange it in a more costly and economically inefficient manner. It is likely to suppress job and housing growth in Anchorage and the eastern part of Mat-Su. The increases in sprawl development are also likely to come with increasing travel distances within the region. Miles traveled per person per day are projected to increase by at least 5%, putting a greater economic burden on households. Residents are also forecast to spend 10,000 more hours per day in their vehicles with the project than without it. The benefits of this project, considering these costs, begin to pale. The conformity analysis report concluded that the effect of this bridge on promoting other transportation options is probably negative. It is unlikely that a viable bus

system can be established and low density development patterns would occur in inappropriate areas, which would tend to discourage carpooling. On the other hand, the cost of bridge tolls would tend to encourage ridesharing. The report demonstrates that the crossing itself accounts for much of the projected VMT growth in the region, as well as the corresponding growth in greenhouse gases. If the project goes forward, it is likely to exacerbate the climate change problem, which is already affecting Alaska.

MR. REPLOGLE felt it was important for the Policy Committee to look at the appropriate mitigation for the project and tally that cost into the fiscally constrained TIP and LRTP. Simply adding the project and pretending such mitigation will not add to the cost would add to future problems as the viability of the project with these costs included comes into question. He favored the use of public private partnerships in infrastructure projects to help communities and regions support mobility and economic development while reducing the environmental footprint of transportation. Performance based contracting strategies are being used successfully. In public transportation these public private partnerships are being used in London and Bogota. Use of this structure could help Anchorage achieve *Anchorage 2020* goals, if used properly. He recommended the Policy Committee look at using public private partnerships initiatives to improve the Glenn Highway, better traffic management, and deal with congestion problems where they exist rather than creating a new core in an area where there is currently not much traffic. He further suggested that public private partnerships be used to improve public transportation. The key to getting good performance is to set out broad objectives of sound transportation planning and make sure the plan meets all of those objectives. Some good initiatives have been identified by Anchorage-based groups for improving transit and community development and providing alternatives to the Knik Arm Crossing such as ferry service. He believed if the Knik Arm Crossing is done on the cheap, it would threaten the natural environment and threaten communities in central Anchorage and Mat-Su. A project approved on the cheap is likely to bring labor tolls, public bail-outs for failed financing, and substantial environmental harm to the region. He thought it would be a mistake to advance this project at this point.

MR. SULLIVAN noted that the Mat-Su is growing regardless, so the area where the Knik Arm Crossing will land will be developed in any case. The community that will exist there will be many single-family homes. He did not consider that to be sprawl, which is a derogatory term. Because the area will be developed in any case there is the choice to develop infrastructure for another access north out of Anchorage. The question in his mind is not so much whether it is needed, but the question is when. He did not know of a single place that has a bridge that would choose to remove it. He also did not think that bridges have ruined the communities they connect. MR.

REPLOGLE stated the perspective he brings is not the only legitimate perspective to bring to the discussion. He urged that regardless of how this project is viewed, there should be a full exposition of costs for the different choices and the design in the TIP and LRTP should be the one that requires appropriate mitigation. He suggested looking at a bridge design strategy that protects marine resources. MR. SULLIVAN asked how it is known that this project would destroy the hydrology of Cook Inlet. MR. REPLOGLE suggested that this is an area where there has been some evidence suggested by some who have looked in depth at this issue that extensive causeways into the Knik Arm are likely to cause disruption. MR. SULLIVAN felt that to say it would destroy hydrology is excessive. MR. REPLOGLE responded that the burden is on those who would build these infrastructure. The question of financing is a keen one around this project. He stated that to the degree the project will require a great deal of private financing to make it work, a full disclosure of how those finances will work, what will have to be the toll amounts, and whether a special tax district will required on the north side to pay for these things should be explored.

JUSTIN MASSEY with Trustees for Alaska, a nonprofit organization with the mission to protect the Alaska environment, stated a major investment study (MIS) is the perfect place to weigh some of the questions posed by Mr. Replogle. He stated that the Federal Aid Highways Act requires the Policy Committee to plan to accomplish the national transportation objectives, among which are safe and efficient transportation systems that serve the mobility needs of people and freight, foster economic growth and development, and minimize transportation-related fuel consumption and air pollution. To help carry out this requirement, the Act requires the Policy Committee to complete an MIS to develop or refine the transportation plans

and lead to decisions by the Policy Committee. The MIS should be suitable for use in the NEPA process and it must reflect a multi-modal evaluation of transportation, socio-economic, environmental, and financial impacts of the overall plan, including major transportation investments such as the Knik Arm Crossing. The objective of this process is informed decision-making that accomplishes the objectives of the Federal Aid Highway Act by developing transportation plans that provide for an integrated inter-modal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods. He stated that an MIS would acknowledge many of the questions of whether or not the Knik Arm Crossing satisfies the objectives and is otherwise cost efficient for the citizens of the region. He encouraged the Policy Committee to complete a MIS to determine whether the crossing achieves the objectives of the Act and, if it does not, leave it out of the transportation documents.

MARIANNE PEASE, representing KABATA, stated that Anchorage is a young, growing community with a need for road and infrastructure development to support the long-range economic viability and success of the state. The Knik Arm Crossing opens up undeveloped land and creates a regional economy that will benefit all Alaskans. The Mat-Su population is expected to grow by over 200,000 by 2030. There is not currently an alternate corridor to transport those people or an alternative route for the transportation of freight and other products to the interior of the state. She stated when she moved to Anchorage from the East Coast over 24 years ago she was thrilled at the opportunity to have land surrounding her home, the ability to commute within a reasonable time to work, and a quality of life that simply does not exist in a developed, urban setting. She stated she would not look forward to living in high density housing and not having a yard for her children to recreate.

MAYOR BEGICH arrived at 1:37 p.m.

With the public private partnership model the Knik Arm team is pursuing, Alaska has the opportunity to correctly implement a successful public/private model that will substantially reduce Alaska's reliance and dependence on federal dollars. Not including the Knik Arm Crossing in the LRTP or TIP would result in losing this opportunity to analyze and implement a successful

public private partnership for the state. The public private partnership process will be lengthy and there will be a complete and thorough analysis of financial considerations reviewed by experts from around the nation. She encouraged the Policy Committee to include the Knik Arm Crossing in the TIP and keep it where it belongs in the LRTP.

MR. SULLIVAN asked for remark on the issue of an MIS. MS. PEASE stated there is a nine-month investment study planned as part of the public private partnership process that will involve financial, economic, construction, and engineering experts. There are additional studies to be done by the consortium because they have to prove the validity of the model going forward.

#### **4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MAYOR MARK BEGICH moved for approval of the minutes of March 8, 2007. DAN SULLIVAN seconded.

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

MR. SULLIVAN noted that in these minutes the Policy Committee voted to approve the Assembly allowing designees for Assembly representatives. The Assembly has since adopted an ordinance to that effect.

##### **b. Chugiak-Eagle River Long-Range Transportation Plan (CERLRTP)**

VIVIAN UNDERWOOD indicated she has prepared an Issue-Response addressing 14 issues that came up during the public review process. On January 25, 2007 the Technical Advisory Committee directed her to make the changes outlined in the Issue-Response, as well as three of the four from the Planning and a Zoning Commission, to create a final review draft for the Policy Committee and Assembly. The final draft was distributed to community council presidents and the Chugiak Eagle River Rural Road Service Area (CBERRRSA) in March. It includes no new road projects. It is fiscally constrained based on guidance from FHWA. It incorporates recommendations for lanes on the Glenn Highway. There are some changes to the Official Streets and Highways Plan (OS&HP) Map. It includes the

street typology adopted by the Assembly and Policy Committee with the Anchorage Bowl LRTP. There are five new study areas on the OS&HP Map. New with this draft is a listing of OS&HPH streets by functional classification. The Assembly reviewed the document on May 15, 2007 and approved AR 2007-77 with addendum. MS. UNDERWOOD explained that, in addition to action on the Plan, the Policy Committee is also being asked to approve the Air Quality Conformity Report that was recommended by the TAC for approval on February 22, 2007. The TAC again reviewed the Assembly recommendations on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

This document is SAFETEA-LU compliant to the extent possible. New federal regulations are in effect July 1. Three documents are not yet written that are required to make this plan SAFETEA-LU compliant: State Highway Safety Plan, Transit System Safety Program Plan, and the new Public Participation Plan. If this plan is not adopted today, it would have to wait until October for those plans to be done.

The Assembly asked that certain portions of the OS&HP, Map 5, and Appendix C and D, be removed for review and approval by the CBERRRSA. The TAC did not concur with that recommendation, but did ask that Ms. Underwood continue to work with CBERRRSA. When CBERRRSA makes its recommendations, the matter can be brought back through the Planning and Zoning Commission.

MR. SULLIVAN asked if there is anything time sensitive if those items are deleted now and wait for CBERRRSA's comments. MS. UNDERWOOD thought it was not time sensitive because the OS&HP Map is a municipal document, not federal.

MAYOR BEGICH asked why the TAC did not set those items aside. MS. UNDERWOOD believed they wished to see the Plan fully adopted given that it had been out since March for public review and both the community councils and CBERRRSA had opportunity for review. They also wanted her to continue working with CBERRRSA. Birchwood Loop Road, both south and north, continues to be a topic of discussion. By ordinance, all collectors in Eagle River are I-B and all arterials are Class I, which requires two lanes divided, which requires 100 feet of right-of-way. She agreed that the

redesignation for this road might be warranted, which would require an ordinance. The project description for South Birchwood Loop Road was changed from reconstruction to rehabilitation acknowledging the fact that residents along the road are not wanting to give up land.

MR. SULLIVAN asked for comment from Ms. Ossiander regarding why CBERRRSA has not yet given its comments and how much more time they require in order to do so. MS. OSSIANDER stated that both she and Mr. Starr, who are the two Assembly members representing the Chugiak-Eagle River area, participated in the public meetings that led to the creation of this document. There has been intense community interest in this document and a fair amount of controversy. She received a number of emails after the TAC's action expressing concern. She stated that when the CERLRTP is treated separately from the Anchorage LRTP, some problems are implicit, the biggest of which is financial constraints. The future melding of the two documents will lead to a better situation. The Assembly approved some amendments, including the deletion of the document section that refers to street typology, the sheet that lists the street names in the OS&HP and the OS&HP Map. This was done because of significant concern from the community about certain road projects. The concern is that once a street is designated as a collector, other parts of municipal law are called into play. If land were subdivided adjacent to such a road, Title 21 would require the developer to build it to collector standards. CBERRRSA has had one meeting at which it reviewed the street typology section. They asked for differentiation in the descriptors of the roads so that a collector in Chugiak-Eagle River does not necessarily have to meet all the same standards as one in interior Anchorage. They recommended that a group working on a separate chapter of Title 21 rewrite that language. They then reviewed the listing of names. The first question was the genesis of the list and the rationale for inclusion of some roads and exclusion of others. The previous LRTP did not have a list, it had a map. She indicated that a gentleman with a backhoe installed Aurora Borealis, it does not follow legitimate right-of-way and making it a collector would involve massive takings of property. If that street is listed, it places a burden on the property owners there. CBERRRSA members are intimately familiar with these streets and have the background to provide input. She suggested that if there is some urgency in passing this portion of the

document, the map could be included, but not the list. She asked that the Policy Committee support the Assembly's recommendations on these items.

MS. OSSIANDER stated that the other issue debated at the Assembly was the prioritization list, which is shown as item 3 in the June 6, 2007 memorandum. She and Mr. Starr had the sense that most people believe the most effective way of dealing with transportation issues is to construct more roads and rebuild those that exist. Therefore, she urged keeping the prioritization list. The document currently places equal weight on transit and carpooling as it does road improvement and construction. She did not find it realistic to say that increased transit would have an equal impact on traffic on the Glenn Highway as would a lane. She noted that the Assembly voted unanimously on the OS&HP items.

MR. SULLIVAN asked if there is impact by the Policy Committee deleting those items and amending the document later to include them versus leaving them in the document and amending it later. MR. LYON stated the OS&HP is a municipal document and it would not be problematic to not approve it at this time. MR. SULLIVAN asked if CBERRRSA has not had adequate time to offer input, given the length of time the document has been out for comment. MS. OSSIANDER stated CBERRRSA gave comment, then the community councils gave comment, however, everyone became parochial and discussed the roads in their area. Some community councils have expressed the desire to be able to review the document again. The comment that was provided on the OS&HP was not as thorough or comprehensive as they wished. MR. SULLIVAN was supportive of the Assembly action, if there is a date certain when CBERRRSA can take action. MS. OSSIANDER stated the Assembly motion gave a time frame of nine months with a goal to accomplish the review sooner. The problem is CBERRRSA is transitioning, there are vacant seats, and summer is a difficult time to get volunteer groups together. MR. SULLIVAN noted that this would take the matter to the end of the year. MS. UNDERWOOD stated she met with CBERRRSA on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Chair Dial told her that until she receives further instruction from the Assembly she needs more clarification. She has asked to be on the CBERRRSA agenda for September and would provide information to them in July. MS. OSSIANDER stated she has spoken to various members of CBERRRSA, as has Mr. Starr, and their frustration has been what criteria were used to create the list, how

the roads were selected, what criteria were used, etc. MS. UNDERWOOD stated that the list of projects appears in the adopted 1996 OS&HP. MS. OSSIANDER displayed the portion of the old OS&HP to which she had referred, which is a map.

MAYOR BEGICH felt the question for CBERRRSA is who is responsible for payment for improvements to a particular standard. He suggested that CBERRRSA submit a list of roads that they believe should be collectors based on criteria they feel are appropriate, roads that it is unsure should be collectors, and those that should never be collectors. He felt that trying to determine who created the list of roads would be time-consuming and not as productive. He felt that CBERRRSA should develop the rationale for designating these roads. MS. OSSIANDER indicated she would be happy to carry this message to CBERRRSA. MS. UNDERWOOD clarified that the map identifies roads that are desirable in the future, not only those that exist.

DAN SULLIVAN moved to uphold the Assembly's action regarding removing Appendices C and D and the OS&HP Map on page 94 with a nine-month time frame and the caveat that review occur sooner, if possible. CHRIS BIRCH seconded.

MAYOR BEGICH clarified that CBERRRSA would generate the list of projects and their designations.

MS. OSSIANDER and MR. STARR expressed concurrence with this suggestion.

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

DAN SULLIVAN departed the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

MAYOR MARK BEGICH moved to approve the Final Draft CERLRTP with amendments as defined in the June 6, 2007 memorandum, excluding item 6. CHRIS BIRCH seconded.

CHRIS BIRCH moved to approve item 1 in the June 6, 2007 memorandum.  
MAYOR MARK BEGICH seconded.

MR. BIRCH requested discussion from the Chugiak-Eagle River Assembly representatives. He noted that Mr. Sullivan and he are representatives of the Assembly in their seats on the Policy Committee. MS. OSSIANDER favored the amendment. MR. STARR favored the amendment and noted that the Assembly has taken care in its advisory role to the Policy Committee given that this document will lead to the 2011 joint Anchorage and Chugiak-Eagle River LRTP. He emphasized carpooling is effective all over Anchorage, not only to mitigate the traffic challenges from Chugiak-Eagle River to Anchorage. He cautioned against drawing the reader to an HOV, vanpool, or transit solution. MS. OSSIANDER explained the amendment removed the language “the most,” while recognizing that carpooling is an effective strategy.

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

CHRIS BIRCH moved to approve item 2 in the June 6, 2007 memorandum.  
MAYOR MARK BEGICH seconded.

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

CHRIS BIRCH moved to delete item 3 in the June 6, 2007 memorandum.  
MAYOR MARK BEGICH seconded.

MS. OSSIANDER noted that the project list was also reordered, but this amendment addresses only that the language states “in priority order” and does not address that. She presumed the list has been reordered in the document before the Policy Committee. CHAIR KEITH stated the list has been reordered to put road improvements at the top and commuter rail at the bottom. MS. OSSIANDER stated this was the prioritization order approved by the Assembly. CHAIR BEGICH asked why there was a desire to put these items in priority order. MR. STARR stated that the community wanted particular congestion mitigation techniques. Some of the congestion problems arise from traffic from the Valley. The residents want more road improvements, not more frequent buses. He wanted the light rail discussion

removed from the CERLRTP, but agreed to placing it last on a prioritized list. He explained that the prioritization of projects was to reflect the value system he was hearing at the community level. MAYOR BEGICH asked what was the TAC's debate on this item and why it recommended including the phrase "not in priority order." MR. WILBER replied that the comment was that the list was in random order, but the TAC recognized that the community feels that roadway improvements should be at the top of the list. The TAC voted to maintain the list in the order the Assembly proposed, but take out the words "in priority order" in the event that funding for items came available out of priority order. MAYOR BEGICH asked if the same end is achieved by inserting reference to funding availability. MS. OSSIANDER thought this would be obvious and having a priority list would in no way preclude funding of a project out of order if funding becomes available. MAYOR BEGICH asked if the language "not withstanding funding" could be inserted. MS. OSSIANDER and MR. STARR agreed with this change. *This was accepted as a friendly amendment.*

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

CHRIS BIRCH moved to approve items 4 and 5 in the June 6, 2007 memorandum. MAYOR MARK BEGICH seconded.

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

***There being no objection the main motion was approved unanimously as amended.***

CHRIS BIRCH moved to approve the Air Quality Conformity Determination for the 2006-2009 TIP. MAYOR MARK BEGICH seconded.

MS. HEIL explained that the Citizens Air Quality Advisory Committee approved the Air Quality Conformity Determination with a caveat that the on-attainment of PM-10 for Chugiak-Eagle River should be updated as it is over 20 years old. She encouraged the MOA to move forward with efforts to do a maintenance plan for Chugiak-Eagle River.

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

- c. Other Business Items – None**
- 6. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS – None**
- 7. SCHEDULED AMATS MEETINGS**  
Policy Committee, June 27, 2007  
Technical Advisory Committee, June 28, 2007  
Policy Committee, July 12, 2007
- 8. ADJOURNMENT**

CHAIR KEITH continued this meeting to June 27 at 2:30 p.m.

The meeting recessed at 2:25 PM.