

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

**September 11, 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
** Jennifer Witt	ADOT/PF
David Post	ADOT/PF
* Alice Edwards	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Air Quality
** Cindy Heil	ADEC
* Sheila Selkregg	MOA/Municipal Assembly
* Patrick Flynn	MOA/Municipal Assembly
Craig Lyon	MOA/Traffic Department
Christine Bernardini	MOA/TD
** Jody Karcz	MOA/ Public Transportation Dept.
** Lois Epstein	AMATS
Cheryl Richardson	ACC
William Green	KABATA
Betty Adkison	University Area Community Council
Jon McPherson	HDR Alaska
Julianne Hanson	HDR Alaska
Sandra Cook	HDR Alaska
Alison Lohrke	DOWL Engineers
SaraEllen Hutchison	ACE

\* AMATS Policy Committee members

\*\* AMATS Technical Advisory Committee members

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

CHAIR KEITH called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m. All Policy Committee members were present with the exception of Mayor Begich. 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 Committee members, and the floor would then be open to public comment.

## **3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MR. LYON noted that the gentleman who would be presenting item 6.c, Transit Stop Enhancement Program update, is not able to make the presentation today.

*There being no objection, the agenda was unanimously adopted.*

## **4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

ALICE EDWARDS moved for approval of the June 12, 2008 minutes.  
PATRICK FLYNN seconded.

*There being no objection, the motion passed unanimously.*

## **5. BUSINESS ITEMS**

### **a. TAC Qualifications**

CHAIR KEITH requested that KABATA address the question of TAC qualifications. WILLIAM GREEN, KABATA project counsel, stated that KABATA believes the conflicts issue raised in a letter to the Policy Committee last month warrants continued and deliberate consideration. KABATA is not presently asking and does not expect the Policy Committee to make any immediate determinations. KABATA fully supports the continuing

cooperative and comprehensive collaboration for project development that is the foundation of AMATS under federal law. For the present, it is enough that KABATA continue to pursue that cooperative collaboration on the Knik Arm Crossing and earnestly invites and urges the Policy Committee, the Technical Advisory Committee, the Air Quality Advisory Group and AMATS staff to join with it in that endeavor to resolve in the best interest of Alaskans whatever issues may arise concerning the project.

CHAIR KEITH stated he has been advised by the Attorney General's office, but that information is attorney/client confidential. He suggested tabling this issue until it is raised again or indefinitely.

MR. FLYNN understood that tabling this matter indefinitely would allow a member to bring it back at any time. CHAIR KEITH indicated that this is correct. He stated that because his opinion from the Attorney General is incomplete, he is not able to vote for or against a motion on this issue.

PATRICK FLYNN moved to table this item indefinitely. SHEILA SELKREGG seconded.

***There being no objection, the motion PASSED unanimously.***

**b. Other Business Reports – None**

**6. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS**

CHAIR KEITH noted that Policy Committee Member Selkregg, he, the Mayor and dignitaries just dedicated Martin Luther King Avenue, previously known as 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He felt this road was a success story of AMATS in general. He felt the efforts of AMATS should be recognized as congestion problems and accident problems are being resolved. This road being tied into Elmore Road, Dowling Road, and Raspberry Road through to the Minnesota extension will take 20,000 cars a day off of Tudor Road. He added that many individuals spoke at the dedication to the naming of the project and it is admirable that the City found it worthy to choose that name.

MS. SELKREGG asked when that road interconnects with Tudor Road are upgrades required on Tudor Road. CHAIR KEITH stated interim work would be done at the intersection of Tudor Road and 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue. MS. SELKREGG asked if upgrades are planned for Boniface at Tudor. CHAIR KEITH stated this is a municipally designed project, so he was not certain, but he believed that upgrades are planned to the left-turn lane to get onto Boniface. MR. LYON offered to find out if those upgrades are occurring simultaneously.

CHAIR KEITH stated regarding the Knik Arm Crossing independent third party estimate that only one proposal was submitted and, since then, that proposer has withdrawn their proposal. An RFP was issued on September 5<sup>th</sup> and proposals are due September 25<sup>th</sup>. That moves the schedule back somewhat and he anticipated a draft would be ready November 21<sup>st</sup> and would be finalized on December 5<sup>th</sup>.

**a. Highway to Highway Project Update**

JOHN McPHERSON with HDR explained that the Highway-to-Highway (H2H) project lead agencies are FHWA and ADOT, and the MOA is a cooperating agency. This project was first considered in the 1972 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), which was the first LRTP, although it was not included in the LRTP. In 1984, the issue arose again as the city was still dealing with congestion in this corridor and the project was adopted in the LRTP at that time. Subsequent to 1984, the project was removed from the LRTP. Major Investment Studies were implemented in 1999 and 2000, one on the Glenn Highway and one on the Seward Highway, to address concerns with congestion. There were questions of whether to add lanes, make access improvements, etc. The East Anchorage Study of Transportation (EAST) examined regional travel and the potential connection of these two major corridors. EAST recommended a continuous highway through Anchorage, largely on the route contained in the LRTP. Neighborhood issues drove the development of the LRTP and outreach and efforts doing context sensitive design on the alignment that came out of EAST resulted in adoption of the project in the LRTP. The LRTP was re-adopted in 2007 and includes this project. In March 2008 an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was begun.

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MS. SELKREGG noted that at the Assembly briefing indication was given that a final route has not been selected. MR. McPHERSON stated that the route is a planned route within the LRTP. That route has not been examined to the depth that a route is examined in the EIS; there is a chance the route could change. All reasonable alternatives must be considered. MS.

SELKREGG asked if the EAST study recommended the planned route. MR. McPHERSON replied in the affirmative. CHAIR KEITH explained that the EAST planning study pointed toward this route; the 2025 LRTP approved by Planning and Zoning Commission, Assembly, and AMATS locked it in. He noted that the study won an FHWA award. An EIS starts afresh and the EAST route is one of many that might be considered. MR. McPHERSON stated that alternatives are being identified and those alternatives must solve the problems.

MR. McPHERSON explained that the planning process was community based, the corridor is multi-modal, it provides congestion relief, and it supports the LRTP and *Anchorage 2020*.

MS. RICHARDSON asked for an explanation of the LRTP and *Anchorage 2020* in relation to this project. MR. McPHERSON stated the LRTP is an adopted element of *Anchorage 2020*. Land use and traffic forecasting are based on the scenarios in *Anchorage 2020*.

MR. McPHERSON stated the purpose of the H2H project is to improve the connection between the Glenn and Seward highways. MS. SELKREGG asked if the purpose also includes addressing issues and problems. MR.

McPHERSON stated that the purpose and need statement in the EIS is under development. The proposed purpose statement is to improve the connection between the highways. MS. SELKREGG stated the Assembly discussed the project having a secondary purpose to deal with congestion. MR. McPHERSON stated there is an overarching purpose statement. If the best connection is a light rail, that will be the recommended project, or it could be something else. MS. SELKREGG stated that Mr. Keith made a point that this project will address congestion problems in the community. CHAIR KEITH stated there is already a connection, but there is tremendous congestion within that connection. Any alternative that will improve that connection must be considered. MS. SELKREGG felt it was important to

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recognize the need to deal with congestion issues. MR. McPHERSON agreed that there are many ways and routes that could attain the purpose of providing a connection. It also, however, must meet all of the needs that have been identified, which he intended to cover later in his presentation.

MR. McPHERSON reviewed a map of the National Highway System (NHS) in the MOA. The NHS is comprised of the highest value roads and they are designated at a national level. The intention of the NHS is to move important trips for freight, move trucking from industry to distant locations, serve major trips to important destinations such as employment centers, serve military needs, connect to shopping areas, and connect to cities throughout the state. He noted that 90% of the goods used in Anchorage come into the Port and are distributed from there. The Airport is the largest cargo hub in the United States and its connection to the NHS is critical. At the Glenn Highway, 15% of the trips are commercial and to the south, 10% south commercial. There are approximately 18,000 employees in Downtown and 24,000 in Midtown so there is high demand on the facilities, with associated congestion. Trips to and from employment centers come from south Anchorage, from Eagle River and the Mat-Su Borough, and from east Anchorage. There is crossing of traffic during peak hours as trips flow to both north/northeast and south. MR. McPHERSON displayed a graphic showing highest levels of demand associated with the locations of trip generators.

MS. SELKREGG asked why trips on Boniface Parkway appear to be lower. CHAIR KEITH stated that Boniface has historically been under utilized.

MS. RICHARDSON asked if demand is measured in average daily traffic (ADT). MR. McPHERSON replied that it is ADT from ADOT's annual maps for 2006.

MR. McPHERSON noted there are portions of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue with high demand. As traffic experiences congestion on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, drivers take alternate routes, such as 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Congestion on major roadways results in traffic finding its way through neighborhoods. This has caused the need for traffic calming studies in Rogers Park, Fairview, Airport Heights, Mountain View, and Russian Jack.

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MS. SELKREGG asked if the congestion to the north extends to Eagle River. MR. McPHERSON stated there are trips, but it may not yet be troublesome.

MR. McPHERSON reviewed a lack of capacity on roadways to handle the amount of traffic they experience. This is not an issue on freeway segments, but rather through the Downtown/Midtown segments of those roadways. There is also lack of capacity on east/west corridors.

Wherever there are opportunities for traffic to cross the freeways, conflicts and delays are created. The capacity of the system in those areas is also less. Fencing, the location of schools, and recreational or shopping uses that generate pedestrian crossings create barriers. Safety problems arise in areas where pedestrian traffic is high. There are also locations such as the crossing of Northern Lights Boulevard and Benson Boulevard at the Seward Highway where corridors have large ADT trying to move east/west.

MS. RICHARDSON asked how many hours a day these issues occur. MR. McPHERSON replied that they occur during peak hours and there are times during the day as well.

MR. McPHERSON stated that slow travel times result from the facilities not functioning as intended and handling unintended traffic. Actual speeds can range up to 30 mph less than posted speeds on some roadways.

MR. McPHERSON reviewed vehicle accident rates and pedestrian and bicyclist accident rates at the top 50 intersections in Anchorage, noting that many of these intersections are located within the corridor. Each alternative to be studied in the EIS will need to address these problems.

MS. SELKREGG asked what intersection has the highest number of accidents. MR. McPHERSON replied that those intersections are Northern Lights/Benson and the Seward Highway. MS. RICHARDSON stated the Anchorage Citizens Coalition studied this from 1998 to 2003 and found the largest concentration of bicycle/pedestrian accidents were in the heart of Downtown and heart of Midtown. MS. SELKREGG understood there would be a link from the Port to Ingra/Gambell, which would eliminate some bicycle/pedestrian and vehicle conflicts. MS. RICHARDSON noted that the

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problem is not only at intersections because people cross mid-block. CHAIR KEITH remarked that the bicycle paths do not address these problems. MS. SELKREGG understood that this solution leverages money to address multiple transportation issues.

MR. McPHERSON stated the EIS process began on July 11<sup>th</sup> and it is currently in the scoping phase. MS. SELKREGG asked if the purpose statement may be revised. MR. McPHERSON replied in the affirmative. He noted that there have been comments that the statement should include transit, bikes, pedestrians. A revised statement will be presented in the last round of meetings in October/ November. There will also be a range of alternatives and an explanation of how to screen the information to narrow the list of alternatives to those that are reasonable.

MS. RICHARDSON asked how an accelerated EIS is affecting this project. MR. McPHERSON replied that there is existing congestion and the sooner a project can be planned, the sooner congestion relief will occur. Increasing cost is also a concern. The desire is to produce an EIS in three years. There has been national recognition that EIS are taking 5 to 7 years on average and FHWA says that is too long.

MS. SELKREGG hoped that, in the process of refining the purpose statement, support of congestion relief or maximizing the opportunity for congestion relief be included, as well as mention of transit and other modes. CHAIR KEITH stated there is discussion of branding the logo H2H and changing the subtext accompanying the logo to mention congestion relief or multi-modal so that is clear when it is first seen. He cautioned that the purpose statement not be too restrictive so that all alternatives can be considered. MS. SELKREGG suggested the language “support congestion relief.” MR. McPHERSON suggested the language “providing multi modal congestion relief.”

MR. FLYNN remarked on the absurdity of calling a three-year process accelerated.

**b. Public Transportation Department Update**

JODY KARCZ, Public Transportation Department (PTD) Director, explained that the PTD operates People Mover fixed route service with fifty-five 30-foot and 40-foot buses, fifty 30-foot vans for Share-A-Ride, and forty-eight AnchorRIDES vehicles.

Annual ridership has increased in 2008. People Mover estimates 4,160,000 riders, vanpool is at 105,500, and AnchorRIDES reduced to 180,500. Before the tax cap in 1984 there were 4,055,000 riders. There has been an 11% increase in bus ridership in the current month when compared to the same month last year. Vanpools work well from outlying areas and the 700 participants take a great deal of traffic off of the Glenn Highway and off of Anchorage streets. AnchorRIDES trips are dropping. It is an expensive curb-to-curb system that was established for persons with disabilities who are unable to use People Mover. As a result of accessible buses and better technology, more people can now use People Mover. There is also a travel training system so that those individuals determined to have sufficient cognitive and physical abilities can use People Mover. The Vanpool program costs \$850,000 annually and \$611,000 of that comes from riders. The balance is provided from the CMAQ Rideshare grant.

MS. KARCZ explained that 60% of PTD revenues come through local property taxes. Operating revenues produce 21% of revenue, some comes from federal and pass-through grants, and 2% came through municipal revenue sharing this year. Capital funding comes through FTA Section 5307 and 5340 formula-based funding, which together provide about \$5 million annually and that requires 20% local match. These funds are used for major capital maintenance, to buy AnchorRIDES vehicles, for the bus stop improvement program, to fund the transportation skills assessment travel training program, for computers, and for support vehicles. Section 5316 is Job Access Reverse Commute money to get lower-income people to work or for reverse commutes and Section 5317 is a program that funds services above and beyond ADA requirements. These funds are secured through a competitive funding process.

MS. SELKREGG asked if AMATS competes annually for funds. MS. KARCZ explained that 5316 and 5317 comes to Anchorage and AMATS ranks those

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projects and determines where the funding is applied. Funding also comes from FHWA through CMAQ and that amount varies from year to year; the 2009 amount is currently in the TIP and will become available on October 1, 2008. MS. RICHARDSON asked if all FTA dollars are formula or are some competitive. MS. KARCZ replied that those dollars are primarily formula.

MR. FLYNN understood that PTD is the only recipient of CMAQ. MS. KARCZ clarified that the Health Department also receives CMAQ funds for air quality compliance. MR. FLYNN asked if other entities are able to compete for those funds. CHAIR KEITH noted there is a serious problem in the future in terms of air quality in Juneau and Fairbanks and that is likely to have repercussions on the availability of CMAQ funds in Anchorage. He explained that CMAQ dollars go to problem areas. MS. RICHARDSON asked if that is in a policy. CHAIR KEITH indicated he could investigate this. MR. LYON explained that there are two types of CMAQ dollars. There is CMAQ funding that must be spent on certain things, which is the reference being made by Chair Keith. The CMAQ in Table 5 of the TIP is part of the AMATS allocation that the Policy Committee has determined will be a certain percentage.

MS. KARCZ noted that PTD was unsuccessful getting money from the Legislature last year, but was successful the year before. Past CMAQ projects have included a winter CO season free bus service in 1999 and 2000; it was not the most successful program. Many individuals were riding the buses to stay warm and the system received a number of complaints from commuters. This program was not implemented the third year. A demonstration project can be funded for three years with CMAQ and the intent is that local governments will continue the program at the end of that time period. The transit operations expansion/route restructure occurred in 2002-2005 and that project was successful in adding 18% more service and 28% more riders. This compares to the industry standard of adding 10% more service and getting 7% more riders. There was no commitment from the city to continue this project; however, FTA capital maintenance funding was diverted to the budget to maintain the service.

MS. HEIL reiterated that CMAQ funds are only available for three years.

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MS. KARCZ stated the most recent use of CMAQ funds was fleet expansion that funded the purchase of five 30-foot buses.

Current CMAQ projects include: Anchorage ridesharing/transit marketing, high priority transportation corridor prototype plan, transit stop enhancement program utilizing youth labor, transit centers/facilities, fleet replacement of eighteen 40-foot buses, and an ITS/automated operating system. ITS currently includes DriveCam, which records inside and outside of the bus. This has been useful when buses are involved in collisions. ITS also includes transit real time bus arrival, next bus arrival signs, automated passenger counters/mobile display terminals/automated vehicle location that could be used in conjunction with signal override if it comes on line, RideLine, RidePro (carpool matching), and operating software.

MS. KARCZ reviewed the a future Mover webpage, which gives access to any bus stop and the time of arrival of the next bus (late, early, or on-time). It also looks ahead on another route to show what will be the arrival time of a particular bus. This will be a significant benefit to the public, particularly during winter months.

Future needs include continued funding of ongoing projects and programs, additional fleet replacement, additional capacity, a Regional Transit Authority, the potential for alternative fuel vehicles, and state funding for public transportation.

MS. SELKREGG felt there was a real interest on the part of the Assembly to support transit and asked to see real figures for these needs. MS. KARCZ indicated she would present these figures to the Transit Advisory Board this evening and then forward them to Ms. Selkregg tomorrow.

MS. KARCZ stated that Anchorage began with a coordinated transportation effort 10 years ago, far before SAFETEA-LU required it. A variety of programs utilize this service, including the Anchorage School District Child in Transition homeless program that keeps kids in their home school.

AMATS will play a larger role in Human Services Transportation Coordination. The State Transit Office in Juneau asked that the PTD help

them solicit and rank projects to distribute these funds. Anchorage will now get \$250,000 a year and will rank projects; this funding will be shown in the TIP.

There is a new AnchorRIDES facility that will lower operating costs as a result of the contractor not having to pay a lease. There is also a mobility coordinator who will work on the AMATS Transportation Options program. The Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan update is in progress.

**c. Transit Stop Enhancement Program Update**  
*POSTPONED*

**d. Other Informational Reports**

**7. SCHEDULED AMATS MEETINGS**

Technical Advisory Committee, September 25, 2008  
Policy Committee, October 9, 2008

MS. RICHARDSON felt it was important, given the money currently available and projects coming on line, to do a basic evaluation of projects and whether they meet the claims of traffic congestion relief and accident relief. She felt it was reasonable to begin tracking how well new projects are meeting the claims that were presented during the planning process. MS. SELKREGG noted that a large mall is being developed at the Glenn Highway and Muldoon Road and her community councils are worried about the bridge and pedestrian safety. She asked for guidance from the State and MOA about how to get ahead of what is needed at the intersection of Glenn/Muldoon. CHAIR KEITH noted that \$3 million in work has been done at that location, including two signals that were funded by the developer.

MR. FLYNN understood that the height of the overpass is insufficient for certain trucks to pass beneath it, so they have to exit the highway and re-enter the highway. MR. POST stated in addition that the ramps do not align, so trucks have to go into a parking lot, turn around, and then exit.

MS. SELKREGG stated that concerns with this situation were presented to her at her first Assembly meeting. She simply wanted these concerns to be

examined. CHAIR KEITH stated that, at the expense of the developer and the VA, which is opening a clinic, the road was widened from two lanes to five lanes and two signals were added to service the mall, VA, and Bartlett High School. MS. SELKREGG noted that at the time the mall project was approved concerns were expressed with the pedestrian underpass; people were concerned with traveling on it. CHAIR KEITH stated the pedestrian underpass has existed for 30 years; he was unsure it was affected by the development of the mall. MS. SELKREGG believed the issue is that students do not use that facility and people instead walk on the overpass. MR. POST stated that facility is in the LRTP as needing upgrade. He added that the over sized vehicle situation is not a regular occurrence. CHAIR KEITH noted that the mall opens in approximately two weeks. MS. SELKREGG noted that this is a highly congested intersection and there are severe pedestrian safety concerns. MR. POST stated that the situation did not rise to the level of being included in the Highway Safety Improvement Program. MS. SELKREGG stated there is a great deal of activity in the 250 feet at the off-ramp. She clarified that the issue has been raised with her and she simply wanted a professional review of the situation.

MS. RICHARDSON noted that local planners and pedestrian advocates make comments on projects that are not heeded. She suggested that those comments be researched and an analysis done of how many of those were incorporated into the final design and construction of the project.

CHAIR KEITH asked what comments had been made to Ms. Selkregg. MS. SELKREGG replied that comments related specifically to the pedestrian safety of walking on the overpass because people are using that rather than the underpass. She thought perhaps some minor improvements could be made to improve the safety of the underpass and increase its use. She also heard concern with the curve angle of the on-ramp and off-ramp and that there may be issues with trucks using those.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 2:38 PM.