

**ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Planning and Development Center
Main Conference Room, 1st Floor
Anchorage, Alaska**

**February 26, 2009
2:30 PM**

Those in attendance were:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>REPRESENTING</u>
** Jennifer Witt	ADOT, Central Region, Planning
** Kim Rice	ADOT, Central Region
Dave Post	ADOT
Aneta Synan	ADOT
** Cindy Heil	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
** Todd Cowles	MOA/Port of Anchorage
** Steve Morris	MOA/Department of Health and Human Services
** Lance Wilber	MOA/Traffic Department
Craig Lyon	MOA/TD
Lori Schanche	MOA/TD
Teresa Brewer	MOA/TD
Vivian Underwood	MOA/TD
** Jerry Hansen	MOA/PM&E
Jim Lamson	MOA/PM&E
Alton Staff	MOA/Public Transportation Dept.
** Lois Epstein	MOA/AMATS CAQAC
Randy Virgin	MOA/Office of Economic & Community Development
Jon Spring	
Joann Mitchell	USKH
Melissa Pfeffer	USGS
Kirsten Barrett	USGS
Tom Jensen	
Tom Brigham	HDR Alaska (via telephone)
Laurie Cummins	HDR Alaska
Bruce Spear	Cambridge Systematics (via telephone)
Dawn Bailey	DOWL HKM
Kevin Turinsky	Self
Alex San Miguel	Self
Oscar Avellaneda	Self

Karol Fink

State of Alaska

* AMATS Policy Committee members

** AMATS Technical Advisory Committee members

1. CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR WILBER called the meeting to order at 2:40 PM. A quorum was established with Ms. Karcz, Mr. Carr and Mr. Nelson absent.

2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

CHAIR WILBER encouraged public involvement in this meeting of the AMATS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). He explained that Staff would first make their presentation, followed by any comments from TAC members, and the floor would then be open to public comment. Once a motion is on the floor, public discussion is no longer permitted.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CINDY HEIL moved for approval of the agenda. STEVE MORRIS seconded.

There being no objection, the motion passed unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Eagle River Urban Area Boundary, Anchorage Urban Area Boundary Memo, and Anchorage Urban Area Boundary Map

DAVID POST explained that a statewide functional classification update is underway and predicates this item being brought before AMATS. One of the initial steps in this process is to examine the urban area boundaries throughout the state. In the last decennial census, Eagle River qualified as an "urban cluster" with 1,000 persons per square mile and a total of more than 2,500 persons. It is AMATS's discretion to identify the small urban area

boundary, which must incorporate the entire urban cluster. This is the second time this matter has been considered by the TAC. When it was previously heard, the boundary for this urban area was significantly larger. There was concern at that time that showing outlying areas within the urban area would impact the designation of roadways, perhaps leading to inappropriate design. He noted that no project engineer is bound to a particular urban design segment. This boundary does not impact 5307 People Mover urban area boundary funding.

The boundaries of the Eagle River Urban Area Boundary are Chugach State Park on the east, Fort Richardson on the west, Eagle River to Hiland Road on the south side, and the Comprehensive Plan map boundary or higher density development on the north.

CHAIR WILBER asked if the request is for Policy Committee support of the boundaries as recommended. MR. POST asked that the TAC make that recommendation to the Policy Committee.

MR. MORRIS asked what is the current status of this area. MR. POST replied that there is no urban area defined in this area at this time; there is a small urban cluster. The functional classification update is triggering the identification of the urban area boundary. LAURIE CUMMINS with HDR explained that the last time the urban area boundaries were done, this area did not meet the criteria.

CHAIR WILBER understood there were no changes to street classifications, only an identification of the urban cluster and ensuring they are within the urban area boundary. MR. POST explained that this designation would determine whether a roadway is identified as a rural collector versus an urban minor or major collector.

CINDY HEIL moved to recommend to the Policy Committee approval of the Eagle River Urban Area Boundary TODD COWLES seconded.

There being no objection, the motion passed unanimously.

b. Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) Membership

MR. LYON explained that the FAC was created in 2004, at which time membership was established. Due to membership disruption, the committee ceased meeting. The FAC has been reconstituted and its membership is being recommended to the TAC for approval.

MS. EPSTEIN noted that she had raised the issue of having a public member on the FAC; that was discussed by the FAC and they decided against it. She remained concerned that the FAC's members are focused on the industry and not as much on impacts on neighborhoods and the community. MR. LYON explained that the FAC felt the committee is technical in nature and exists to provide technical comments on freight issues to the TAC and Policy Committee. They also noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission serves as the Citizens Advisory Committee to AMATS.

CINDY HEIL moved to recommend approval of the Freight Advisory Committee membership recommendation to the Policy Committee.
JENNIFER WITT seconded.

MS. EPSTEIN indicated she would oppose the motion, as she believed that public members could be helpful on the FAC, even on technical matters.

The motion passed with Ms. Epstein dissenting.

c. Other Business Items

Draft Anchorage Bicycle Plan

CHAIR WILBER asked staff to summarize work on the Bicycle Plan since the December meeting. LORI SCHANCHE stated that since the TAC last met on this item, 118 comments have been received from ADOT and ARRC. There have also been meetings with ADOT planners and the ADOT Traffic Engineer to reach compromises on issues including the title of the document, users it is serving, prioritization, a bicycle lane or wide curb lane, back of curb flexibility, and other issues. She noted that additional comments have resulted in the final memorandum before the body today. The changes will be made in the *Plan* and it would be put out for public review. She asked for release of the document for public review.

MS. SCHANCHE explained that many of ADOT's comments used an older document that talks about user types A, B, C and D, while the MOA wanted this plan to be for all users as a transportation system. The more recent AASHTO publication, *Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities*, 1999, was used. A note was added to the *Plan* that it is for bicycles as a mode of transportation in order to clarify that the intended user is the commuter.

Cost was questioned, particularly planning for operations and maintenance. The previous *Pedestrian Plan* did not look at life cycle cost, assuming that the *Long-Range Transportation Plan* update would include those costs. Both MOA and ADOT agreed to this assumption.

Project prioritization now includes consideration of whether a project is part of the core network and if there is a history of collisions. Each project was listed as either an "A" or "B" priority. Projects that are either in the core bicycle network or where there have been collisions were "A" priorities, whereas projects needed to complete a loop or one that has sufficient width to make it a bicycle lane were "B" priorities.

Bike lanes and wide curb lanes were considered and Chapter 1200 of an ADOT plan will be referenced where it calls for bicycle facilities on roadways.

Back of curb facilities exist in locations throughout Anchorage, such as Muldoon Road. The AASHTO guide for development facilities does not recommend use of such facilities for bicycle use, simply because of safety concerns. This *Plan* does not highlight these as part of the bicycle system, but they can still be used.

Initially, the term "inappropriate bicycle facilities" was used to identify facilities that are in unsafe locations or are narrower than desired; the term will be replaced with "facilities inappropriately designated as bicycle facilities."

The trail that follows the railroad from South Anchorage to Midtown has been in the *Plan* for years. The MOA favors it being included, but the Alaska Railroad objects based on the fact that high-speed trains would go through this corridor. They have added that they expect to authorize speeds of up to

79 mph. The recommendation for the facility will remain through the public review period.

ADOT has indicated that the extra mileage ADOT has added to bike facilities may account for the flat crash rate trend; written acknowledgement of this will be included in the *Plan*.

Northern Lights Boulevard bike lanes will be included in a reconnaissance study and it has been included as a possible project.

Lake Otis Parkway has a separated pathway that is highly used. There are many driveway and road crossings on Lake Otis, creating hindrances for bicycle users. This will be included in the *Plan* as a reconnaissance study. Sweeps may also be added, which would pull the bicyclist in front of vehicles at signalized intersections.

There is agreement to refine costs to restripe main roads using capital projects. The MOA can conduct improvements using maintenance projects, but ADOT has a more difficult time doing that, so perhaps the MOA can do that entirely. New projects are using inlaid methyl paint, which lasts longer, but a compromise was reached to use a spray-on methyl paint that also lasts longer and is not as expensive as grinding in the stripes and adding paint.

House Bill 132 Bicycle Program was adopted in February 2009 and language from that legislation will be included in the *Plan* text.

Flexibility is needed in recognition of the potential for a project to change at the time it is actually constructed.

Education of both bicyclists and motorists is needed, so a bicycle education staff member who can coordinate with schools, community councils, UAA, etc. is include in the funding recommendations of the *Plan*.

ROBERT SHIPLEY, speaking on behalf of Anchorage Trails and Greenways Coalition, was glad to see this *Plan* come to fruition. He noted that Anchorage is not the most bicycle friendly city. The facilities shown in this *Plan* are appropriate for utility cycling as opposed to recreational cycling. He noted that riding bicycles improves air quality, reduces fuel consumption,

and has other benefits. He hoped the trail within railroad right-of-way could be created to allow quick access between Downtown and South Anchorage. He felt that a program for public outreach and education is critical to this *Plan* and should be conducted on an ongoing basis.

KAROL FINK thanked Ms. Schanche for her work on this project. She stated she works on promoting physical activity and nutrition for the State and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention supports these types of strategies to promote physical activity and physical fitness in communities.

OSCAR AVELLANEDA, representing the Off the Chain Bike Coop, stated his coop exists solely to educate people about bike culture and how to fix bikes. The group educates primarily grade school children how to commute safely. His group is interested in assisting with education.

THOMAS JENSEN with the Bicycle Commuters of Anchorage voiced support for the *Plan* and appreciation to Ms. Schanche for her work.

DAVID POST stated that he and Mr. Lyon went to an MPO conference in New York City where he toured the city on his bicycle. They publish a bicycle map for the city and he felt that, if New York City can develop a bicycle network, so could Anchorage. One of the keys to developing that system is flexibility in design. He noted that initially there was no thought of fitting a facility in Lake Otis Parkway, but with innovative thinking and study it may be possible. He felt that flexibility is imperative. Planning efforts are over arching and do not focus on specific project details. There should be flexibility to modify the *Plan*, where needed, once a project is actually developed and details are known. He felt it was a misnomer to say on page 14 that the *Plan* was developed with “the best information available” because he did not think the right-of-way plans and plat maps had been examined. This type of situation arose with Victor Road, where the cost nearly tripled once more information was available. That project would have likely not been done if not for the efforts on the part of the MOA to secure \$14 million in General Funds and work with utilities. Project costs can triple, as they did in that case, if there is no flexibility. He recommended that the original comment be retained in item 14.

JERRY HANSEN moved to release the Bicycle Plan for a 45-day public comment period with the changes in the memorandum incorporated. CINDY HEIL seconded.

MS. WITT thanked Ms. Schanche for the effort undertaken to distill the numerous comments received on the *Plan* and arrive at a clear understanding of the *Plan's* intent. The need for flexibility was built into this *Plan* in order to allow projects to move forward when circumstances have changed. She appreciated the recommendations based on safety and connectivity. She asked whether there had been any conversation with the Alaska Railroad after their written comments were received. MS. SCHANCHE indicated the concern was the estimate of a 79 mph speed on that line of track. MS. WITT suggested that the *Plan* include an explanation of what is required in order to see a bike path in that right-of-way. She wished to ensure the public does not think this project is certain, but rather is a concept. MS. SCHANCHE noted that the *Plan* indicates permits are required, but she agreed that more text could be added.

MR. COWLES asked for response to Mr. Post's comment. MR. SPRING explained that HDR was hired to measure road widths and shoulder widths on every major facility in the city. This was done to evaluate how well streets could serve on-street bicycles. That information was used to calculate the comfort level of a bike user on each facility. This was the first time this information was developed in the city. Recommendations for on-street bike lanes without reconstruction are based on good information. He agreed to the statement regarding flexibility because measurements sometimes vary within intersections. It is difficult to determine prior to a design study how much right-of-way width will be needed.

MS. EPSTEIN stated she received two emails from individuals who were interested in seeing the release of the *Plan*, but were unable to attend this meeting. She asked what type of paint is proposed for the roadway. MS. SCHANCHE explained the paint is a methyl paint that has longer life. CHAIR WILBER explained that there is a method of creating a groove in the road surface and painting, which lasts longer. MS. SCHANCHE stated there is a spray-on methyl, which would be somewhat raised. MS. EPSTEIN asked if that type of paint is being used in other locales. CHAIR WILBER imagined it is being used in areas where there is striping. MR. COWLES asked if snow

plowing was considered when decision was made. MS. RICE replied that studs and snow plowing were considered.

CHAIR WILBER suggested that item 14 be changed to delete “best information available” and insert “with the best planning level information available.” This would be a truer statement in that the reader would not be led to understand that all information, including things such as right-of-way, was available and used. MS. WITT supported this change. She noted that one of the biggest challenges has been to incorporate facilities within rights-of-way. She noted the constraints of installing pathways on the Hillside due to grade, an issue that arises when projects are actually designed.

CHAIR WILBER complimented Ms. Schanche on the quality of this product.

MR. MORRIS felt the omission of Lake Otis Parkway on the core network was striking because it seems to be a key route for north/south travel. MS. SCHANCHE explained there are engineering and safety considerations on that roadway. When the *Bicycle Plan* work began, Elmore Road was just opening. MR. SPRING stated the multi-use path on Lake Otis was included in the network. There are no shoulders on that road, which is a safety concern. The approach was to not recommend expensive projects geared toward creating bike facilities only; if a facility is being redone, however, a bike path could be included.

CHAIR WILBER asked that the TAC be made aware when the revised document is available for review.

There being no objection, the motion passed unanimously.

6. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

a. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

MR. LYON noted that an Admin Mod #1 to the TIP has been approved, but the final Economic Stimulus Package (ESP) figure is now available and adjustments will be likely. MR. POST felt it would be helpful to more clearly determine cost and schedule of projects before finalizing recommendations.

CHAIR WILBER imagined that the Policy Committee may need to approve changes to the TIP and that might be desired prior to the next meeting scheduled for March 25. MR. LYON noted that an Admin Mod requires only TAC approval and notification of the Policy Committee. This can be taken to the Policy Committee, if desired. CHAIR WILBER stated that now that there is no Transportation Enhancement allocation and the STP allocation is \$18 million rather than \$20 million. He suggested that, if staff develops a proposal that is significantly different than the Policy Committee approved, they should see it.

MS. WITT asked how much more FTA money has been made available. ALTON STAFF responded that \$5,961,000 is available. MS. EPSTEIN understood the figure was higher. CHAIR WILBER stated he would confirm the figure with Ms. Karcz.

MS. HEIL noted that the public review of the TIP criteria closes on March 25 and asked if there is a plan to have a TAC meeting before Policy Committee in order to review the public comment on those criteria. MR. LYON stated there was a CAQAC meeting and that group wants to review the criteria as well. They would like to have another meeting on March 23 and a TAC meeting could be held on March 25 as a continuation of the March 12 meeting.

MS. EPSTEIN learned yesterday that AMATS is not bound by the 120-day restriction but has one year to spend the ESP funds; the earlier discussion was based on the shorter time frame. She wanted to have a discussion of whether some of the pedestrian projects could be included in the ESP. MS. RICE asked if there is something now in the TIP that could facilitate funding for pedestrian facilities. MR. LYON replied that there is an Areawide Trails Rehab project in the TE section of the TIP. CHAIR WILBER commented that there must be a project in the TIP that could address pedestrian facilities; most of the projects in the *Pedestrian Plan* are sidewalks. The other option is a rotomill project where a sidewalk repair could be done. The challenge is choosing projects that do not require design, right-of-way, or curb ramp modifications, and that are in the TIP.

CHAIR WILBER asked if there would be a work session for the TAC to review the criteria. MS. HEIL asked that something be scheduled prior to the March 12 TAC meeting.

b. Other Informational Items

MS. WITT reviewed the “Alaska Transit, Highway and Bridge Stimulus List,” which was modified after bill passage. The list reflects the new AMATS allocation of \$18.9 million and a requirement that \$37 million has to be spent in communities with populations below 5,000. There is a list of recommended projects, as well as a list of contingency projects. The Southcentral Region ADOT expenditure is \$55 million and there are \$75 million in contingency projects that could be moved forward. The Policy Committee approved \$2.2 million for Pavement Replacement in the Admin Mod #1, but the funding is less than was anticipated. She noted that there is no legislative authority yet to advance any regional projects.

CHAIR WILBER understood that the State is getting \$5.2 million in TE and is recommending three projects for that funding. MS. WITT indicated that the State is discussing other allocations, including projects within AMATS. She noted that the STIP is out for public review. She asked if AMATS wants to send a letter requesting a presentation to AMATS on the allocation and how the AMATS allocation is determined. MR. POST stated that he and Mr. Lyon felt there is a need to discuss the anticipated AMATS allocation in the 2010-2013 STIP. CHAIR WILBER recommended that this presentation be scheduled and that it include both the NHS and Non-NHS.

MS. EPSTEIN reported that the CAQAC met on Monday and will be reviewing the TIP criteria later in the month.

MR. HANSEN announced that a project coordination event with ADOT, MOA, and utilities representatives on projects in Anchorage Bowl for this construction season is scheduled for March 6, 2009.

MS. WITT stated ADOT will begin presenting project information to the TAC and her staff will work on how this will be done. She recommended that the TAC identify technical topics on which it would like an overview, such as high tower lighting, ADA, and others. MS. EPSTEIN added greenhouse gas reduction and wildlife crossings.

7. Scheduled AMATS Meetings

Technical Advisory Committee, March 12, 2009
Policy Committee, March 26, 2009

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 PM