

**ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Planning and Development Center
Main Training/Conference Room
4700 Bragaw Street
Anchorage, Alaska**

**April 24, 2008
2:30 PM**

Those in attendance were:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>REPRESENTING</u>
** John Tolley	ADOT, Central Region, Planning
** Kim Rice	ADOT, Central Region
Dave Post	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
Teresa Brewer	MOA/TD
** Jerry Hansen	MOA/PM&E
** Tom Nelson	MOA/Planning Department
** Jody Karcz	MOA/Public Transportation Dept.
** Lois Epstein	MOA/AMATS Citizens Air Quality Advisory Committee
Marilyn Hauser	Self
Joann Mitchell	USKH
Anne Brooks	Brooks & Associates
Marilee Plumb-Mentjes	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Paul Benson	Self

- * AMATS Policy Committee members
- ** AMATS Technical Advisory Committee members

1. CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR WILBER called the meeting to order at 2:34 PM. Bruce Carr was absent. A quorum was established.56

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.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CINDY HEIL moved for approval of the agenda. TODD COWLES seconded.

MR. LYON indicated that the 2027 Chugiak-Eagle River LRTP release would be postponed as staff member Vivian Underwood was not present.

There being no objection, the motion passed unanimously as amended.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Revisions to the Anchorage CO/SIP Maintenance Plan

STEVE MORRIS explained that the TAC is being asked to release this Plan for 30-day public review. The AMATS Air Quality Plan becomes part of the State Implementation Plan (SIP), which is later forwarded to the EPA. Anchorage was declared a CO non-attainment area in 1978. Air quality attainment plans to meet the national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS) were completed in 1982, 1992, and 2002. Violations of NAAQS last occurred in 1996. After several years of no violations, a local maintenance plan was prepared and incorporated into the SIP. EPA approved that plan and designated Anchorage as an attainment area in 2004. This revision is precipitated by the Assembly's action in 2007 to discontinue the I/M program by a date no later than December 2009.

The draft CO/SIP Maintenance Plan was completed in April and is now undergoing AMATS review. The CAQAC has reviewed the Plan and expects to take action in May. The schedule was for Policy Committee adoption in May, but it appears that will now occur in June, following the 30-day public review period. Following AMATS review, the Plan will go to the Assembly for

review and ADOT will hold its public comment process concurrent with that review. When those two processes are completed, AMATS will review the comments from the public and the Assembly and create and revise the Plan as needed. When the SIP Plan is completed in November/December, it will be submitted to EPA and that review process will involve a 12- to 18-month period. It is expected that EPA will approve the Plan between December 2009 and June 2010.

MR. MORRIS reviewed CO monitoring data from several locations in Anchorage. CO concentrations have dropped significantly in the past 20 years from as high as 18 ppm to 4 ppm presently. The greatest concentrations are in residential areas, with the highest at the station located at 32nd Avenue and Turnagain Boulevard. This is likely because of cold starts in the morning; typically individuals will allow vehicles to idle for 10 minutes after starting.

Fundamental to this Plan update was determining the impact of discontinuing the I/M program on continued compliance with the NAAQS. That analysis was done using the data from the Turnagain station. The NAAQS is set at 9 ppm and a statistical analysis to determine what was the 98th percentile in 2007 indicated that AMATS had a 98% probability of being below 9 ppm, or a less than one in 50 chance of violating in 2007. Through modeling, an estimate was done of emissions in the future, particularly at the Turnagain station. The transportation model was used, along with the emissions model provided by EPA to estimate emission levels in one-kilometer grids. In the 9-kilometer area examined, the emissions are estimated to be 6 tons per day in 2007, declining in 2009, and then increasing in 2009-2010 primarily due to the elimination of the I/M program. However, in 2011, emissions begin to decline again out to 2023, which is the CO Maintenance Plan period. Emissions would never fall below 98% throughout that period, so even without the I/M program, there is a high probability that AMATS will continue to be in attainment. EPA wants to see a 90% or greater probability and AMATS estimates a 98% probability.

The CO Plan includes recommendations to continue the air quality public awareness program, encourage use of block heaters, promote alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs), encourage trip chaining to reduce car starts, and inform people of benefits to keeping their vehicles in a voluntary

I/M program. The current ride sharing and van pooling programs should continue. The Plan update also includes transit promotion as a measure.

The Plan is required to include contingency measures, should AMATS violate NAAQS. Not all of these measures must be implemented, should a violation occur, rather a measure would be selected to specifically address the type of violation. I/M is included as a possible contingency measure, as is reinstatement of the ethanol blended gasoline program.

The CO Plan requires that all future transportation plans and programs be in conformity with the SIP for air quality. The future plans and programs cannot interfere with the attainment of air quality standards. Federal law requires that a motor vehicle emissions budget be established, which has been done. ADEC and EPA have preliminarily reviewed that budget and they agree with the methodology. The budget indicates that in 2007 emissions in the Anchorage Bowl cannot exceed 87.8 tons per day and by 2023 that budget is 79.7 tons per day. The budget shrinks because sources such as gas heating and wood burning increase. The forecasted emissions through 2023 are well below the vehicle emissions budget.

Both ADEC and EPA have preliminarily reviewed the Plan. It is likely that EPA approval will occur in 2010, after the Assembly's deadline for elimination of the I/M program. This could create a situation where an approved Plan is not in place. EPA has raised the subject of how long is available to implement contingency measures, should there be a violation. The Plan indicates that the period would be 24 months and EPA is not sure that meets the definition of "expeditious".

MR. LYON introduced Lois Epstein, the TAC representative from the Citizens Air Quality Advisory Committee. MR. MORRIS indicated that the chair of that body is Toni Jones and vice chair is Scott Lidle.

MS. KARCZ asked if not having an approved plan means there is no federal funding. MR. MORRIS replied that this is not necessarily the case. The worst-case scenario would be the risk of citizen lawsuits. MS. KARCZ asked if the Assembly should be asked to extend the date of I/M program cessation. MR. MORRIS stated that, if it appears unlikely there will be EPA approval by the end of 2009, such a request might be made.

PAUL BENSON asked if there is a monetary savings associated with cessation of the I/M program. MR. MORRIS stated that the city receives an \$18 fee to support the air quality monitoring program and the I/M administration that will be lost. The total cost of the program to the public is estimated at \$9 million annually and roughly \$2 million of that comes to the Health Department. MR. BENSON asked if the city would realize a net loss or a net gain by this change. MR. MORRIS explained that state statute requires that all monies to the city from I/M revenues be used on air quality or the I/M program administration. With the elimination of the I/M program, the staff for that program would no longer be employed. The air quality monitoring program, which has a cost of \$450,000, will be funded either by the Assembly providing for it in the city budget or some other source of revenue. MR. BENSON asked whether there has been an analysis to determine whether there would be a net loss or gain. He explained that if there is a savings to the city to eliminate the program, perhaps that could be used to subsidize **other energy-related items**. MS. KARCZ understood that without the revenue from the I/M program there is no money for an air quality monitoring program, so it is either eliminated or funded from other sources. There is no savings to the city by eliminating the I/M program.

MR. TOLLEY asked how the data to show compliance with NAAQS is accomplished, if the air quality monitoring program ends. MR. MORRIS indicated that the Plan discusses the Assembly providing the money to operate that program or perhaps there could be a registration surcharge on Anchorage vehicles to continue the program. MR. TOLLEY remarked that the Assembly's action did not include elimination of data collection, but that effort would have to be funded from other sources. MS. HEIL added that if that effort were not funded, the State would be responsible for meeting the federal requirements.

MARILYN HAUSER asked why this issue would not be revisited with the Assembly until the end of 2009. MR. MORRIS explained that it is easier logistically to plan for a date certain, particularly for staff. He noted that the EPA review may occur before the end of 2009 and no extension of the Assembly's deadline would be required.

MS. HEIL noted that the Plan must be clear in stating contingency measures that can be put into Table 5 of the TIP, the CMAQ program, so there are no problems with headquarters or EPA in terms of expeditious implementation.

MS. EPSTEIN indicated that the CAQAC has recommended release of the Plan for public review. MR. MORRIS added that there would also be language related to CO emissions and strategies in the Plan for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and air toxics. Ultimately, a resolution will be issued including those items. The body meets again May 19, 2008. MS. EPSTEIN explained that the intent is to integrate the CO Plan with other things the city is doing, such as transit and efforts related to greenhouse gases.

CINDY HEIL moved to release the Anchorage CO/SIP Maintenance Plan for a 30-day public review. JOHN TOLLEY seconded.

There being no objection, the motion passed unanimously.

JERRY HANSEN departed at 2:58 p.m.

b. 2027 CERLRTP-OSH&P - CBERRRSA Recommendations, Release for Public Review

CHAIR WILBER noted that the AMATS TAC, AMATS Policy Committee, and the Assembly have approved this document, but the Assembly asked that some items be revisited with the Chugiak-Eagle River Rural Road Service Area. That effort has completed and staff is bringing the document back to the TAC and Planning and Zoning Commission.

MR. POST indicated that he believes the 2003 OS&HP recommendation can be in place, but not the new recommendations. (I COULDN'T HEAR HIM)

c. AMATS Urban Area Boundary Recommendations

DAVE POST explained that the State is required, after a decennial census, to review its functional classifications. The State has a process of identifying all of the public roads in Alaska. That process began in 2007. One of the first steps in the process is identifying which areas of the State are urban areas. One of the new urban clusters is a portion of Eagle River, Birchwood and

Chugiak. The census data also identifies a boundary for the urban area of Anchorage. FHWA allows and encourages a revision to AMATS boundaries to make them more consistent with what local governments think is likely to be urbanized and what is sensible in terms of maintaining urban versus rural design standards throughout a region. AMATS can combine two urban areas into a single urban area. He proposed that the metropolitan planning area (MPA) boundary consistent with the urban area boundary. This does not impact census designation, but it does impact FHWA's urban area boundary designation; it does not impact funding. The boundary must ultimately be approved by the secretary of DOT or his designee.

MR. POST noted that the MPA boundary includes some "islands" that are separate from the rest of the MPA, which is not allowed for an urbanized area. He recommended including those roads within the urbanized area so it is contiguous.

MR. TOLLEY asked if the AMATS urban boundary shown in green on the map is consistent with the existing AMATS urban boundary. MR. POST replied that the map depicts the existing AMATS urban boundary with an orange line. He was suggesting that boundary be expanded to the green line, which is the existing MPA area boundary.

MR. NELSON asked if the entire Chugiak-Eagle River area would be included in the urban area boundary. MR. POST explained that the portion of that area within the EPA planning area would be included. MR. NELSON asked if this also includes the Hillside area. MR. POST replied in the affirmative. MR. NELSON asked what is the implication of making the entire MPA an urbanized area. MR. POST replied that in Alaska there are no significant implications; in other states urban areas can receive additional funding. There are differences in terms of design standards applied and in terms of highway performance monitoring systems. MR. NELSON anticipated that residents may want roads they consider to be rural maintained in that fashion and not upgraded to an urban standard. MR. POST explained that there is no requirement to build to urban standards.

MS. KARCZ believed that this change would cost many projects. (???)

MR. _____ asked why this is desirable. MR. POST replied that it is desirable for reasons of consistency and simplicity.

MR. TOLLEY noted that the MPA boundary has been the same for 10 years or more. The 1990 census did not have a Chugiak-Eagle River cluster, but rather had the two areas as one urban area. He asked if the urban boundary was expanded with the 1990 census to be co-terminus with the AMATS area boundary. MR. POST replied that the proposal before the TAC is new.

MS. HEIL stated that because the Eagle River area is now an urban cluster, at a minimum it must be classified as urban. MR. POST stated that the boundaries could be expanded, but could not be made smaller. MS. HEIL asked whether the expansion beyond the urban cluster from Eagle River to Anchorage has notable effect.

MS. EPSTEIN asked what requires that this area be designated as urban. MR. POST explained that after a decennial census there is a requirement to update the functional classifications and review urban area boundaries. The boundary could remain as a small urban cluster.

MR. NELSON asked what is the smallest geographic unit used to determine whether an area is urban or rural. MR. POST replied that the classification of urban is 1,000 persons per square mile. For a small urban area, the population is between 5,000 and 50,000. In the Anchorage Bowl, the urbanized area is greater than 50,000. MR. NELSON remarked that the shaded area on the Chugiak-Eagle River map is precise and appears to be selective; some areas are two blocks in size. MR. POST was uncertain how the census makes this determination, but the figures are taken from the federal census.

MR. TOLLEY noted the map denotes both “urban cluster” and “small urban area” and asked the distinction between the two. MR. POST explained that the small urban cluster is defined by the census and the other represents the MPA boundary before consideration of including that area with Anchorage.

MS. EPSTEIN asked why the base area is not included in the original urbanized area for Anchorage. MR. POST presumed that Fort Richardson does not meet the federal definition. A portion of the bases is included. MS.

EPSTEIN noted that the area not included is low density in terms of housing, but not in terms of infrastructure. MR. POST stated that FHWA allows expansion beyond the requirement of population of 1,000 per square mile. AMATS could consider whether or not it wishes to include pieces of infrastructure or other development.

MR. BENSON noted that he did not see Girdwood in this discussion. MR. POST explained that to be considered a small urban area there must be a population density of 1,000 persons per square mile and a minimum size of 5,000 persons. MR. NELSON indicated the population of Girdwood is 2,000. MR. BENSON asked if it is not within the AMATS boundary. MR. POST replied that it is not within the MPA boundary. MS. KARCZ noted that Girdwood is eligible for federal 5311 funding that is designated for rural locations. She noted that Girdwood was successful in securing a \$360,000 grant last year to start a local transportation system. MR. BENSON explained his interest was whether some sort of commuter rail could be developed, if that area was in AMATS.

JOHN TOLLEY moved to postpone this item for further review by staff.
CINDY HEIL seconded.

There being no objection, the motion passed unanimously.

d. Other Business
Quarterly Obligation Report

JODY KARCZ departed at 3:50 p.m.

CINDY HEIL moved to recommend approval to the Policy Committee. JOHN TOLLEY seconded.

There being no objection, the motion passed unanimously.

6. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

a. A Strategy for Developing Context Sensitive Transportation Projects

BOB KNIEFEL reviewed the concept of context sensitive transportation design. To date, a consultant has compiled a draft plan. A citizens group was assembled, comprised of individuals who have been active in other projects. That group has reviewed the draft and provided comments, the majority of which have been incorporated into the new CSS document. The Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed this several months ago. Assembly approval will be sought in the future. The plan will relate to municipal projects only. This plan provides clarity in terms of approach to projects; 80% to 90% of the concept is being implemented at this time. There is a focus on more information being available earlier in the process in order to allow planning and finalization of design to proceed more smoothly and a budget to be more clearly defined. Through the CSS project, a project concept report is developed and a budget figure follows.

ANNE BROOKS explained that CSS is about common sense. If public money is going to be spent on a facility, the public should be consulted. A comment was made early in this process that when designers go through a proposal process for a project, there is a project scope, but it is not always ground proofed with the public. The CSS process would begin with a project identification step that would involve stakeholders, including the public and agencies. The changes that occur would be documented in the concept report. CSS strongly encourages development of evaluation criteria and a framework for evaluation of alternatives. Screening and evaluation selection will continue to be documented in the design study report. From that point, the project moves into detailed design and at every step there is a public process. CSS also encourages a post-construction evaluation step to ensure that the process worked and the client receives what they expected. MS. BROOKS noted that historically it has been difficult to accomplish input from all stakeholders early in the process, but there will be a focus on doing so.

MR. KNIEFEL stated that some recent projects have incurred tremendous costs while ultimately not being constructed. The CSS process identifies issues early in the process. The intent is to vet the project against all pertinent plans, such as long-range transportation plans, bicycle plan,

lighting plan, noise plan, landscaping plan. Preferably, there would be two staff members in PM&E committed to conducting early project development through the project concept report. If this is done, the public will be involved in the early stages and issues of contention will be addressed prior to significant expenditure of funds. By soliciting input early in the process, there will be a better understanding of the need for the project and for various components of the project and the appropriate focus for issues with plan components, such as a trail that is required by the *Trails Plan*. There must be a focus on how a project fits into the community, not only the neighborhood in which it is located. He believed the concept report could be done for a cost of \$50,000 to \$75,000, which is much less than the typical initial expenditure. He recommended that there be specific staff focused only on the initial concept report phase of projects and connecting with the public to ensure there is an understanding of the project need and scope.

MS. EPSTEIN believed there is a great deal of interest in long-range transportation plans, and increasingly so. She thought the CSS proposal, to some extent, involves neighborhood residents more than wider public interest. MR. KNIEFEL stated that the contacts received when a project begins are from neighborhood residents when the actual construction begins. The intent of CSS is to engage the public at the beginning of the process in order to avoid those phone calls once construction begins. MS. EPSTEIN understood the point, but felt perhaps the matter was over simplified. She asked if the airport plan comes to AMATS. CHAIR WILBER indicated that the airport's plans could impact the air quality plan, so in that regard it may come before AMATS.

MS. BROOKS noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission requested that they receive a status report on CSS in one year's time. There is language in the Plan regarding revision by staff, if necessary. MR. NELSON noted that there is ongoing discussion of the role of the Planning and Zoning Commission and Urban Design Commission in project review.

MR. POST remarked that the Municipality is to be commended for spearheading the CSS effort. He stated he sees CSS largely as a public involvement process. AMATS is developing the public participation plan, which would clearly outline that process. He felt it was important that the latter be the AMATS guiding document. For this reason, he had some concern

with the AMATS logo on the cover of the CSS document. He noted that it is difficult for project engineers when there are various documents with only subtle differences. MS. BROOKS stated her guidance for the AMATS public participation plan is to focus on the LRTP and TIP development. That process does not focus at the project level. The CSS document follows FHWA guidance. MR. POST felt the CSS document was developed as a municipal policy document. MS. RICE stated that it is important to not have a policy that overlaps NEPA in a way that could create conflict. MS. BROOKS stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission wanted to see a codified policy, but this approach provides more flexibility. MR. KNIEFEL stated that there were comments from several Stage agencies and ADOT headquarters has been involved as well. MS. EPSTEIN asked if there would be reorganization to accommodate the staffing of CSS. MR. KNIEFEL stated that this would be taken to the Assembly and PM&E would be the logical agency to house that.

CHAIR WILBER asked for other comment on the Planning and Zoning Commission's review. MR. KNIEFEL stated that body was very supportive of the CSS process. They requested a review of the CSS process in one year's time. CHAIR WILBER asked if CSS strategies are being currently employed on projects. MR. KNIEFEL replied that CSS is being used on 40th Avenue. MS. BROOKS believed that ADOT has been doing this as well, evidenced by the Bragaw/Glenn Interchange.

b. Eagle River Road Update

JEFF _____ explained that the information gained through projects including the Old Seward Highway, Old Glenn Highway, Eagle River Loop Road, and the Glenn Highway from Gambell to Airport Heights are being used to analyze the bids received for this project. This project estimate increased from over \$8 million one year ago on excavation, borrow, aggregate, and asphalt to \$15 million today. This is directly responsible for increasing the estimate from \$14 million to \$22.3 million for the entire project. The construction for the project is estimated in 2010 to 2011, so another 30% to 50% increase is expected. The project scope has not changed from that of a minor realignment and widening of ditches to improve drainage and pedestrian movement. The environmental process is currently unresolved, but it is nearing resolution. Once resolved, right-of-way acquisition will begin.

MR. MORRIS noted that the cost of borrow has increased significantly. He asked if that is related to oil issues. MR. ____ explained that the cost relates to transportation and handling; the price of diesel is over \$4.00 per gallon.

MR. NELSON asked what is the ADT on this segment of the road. PETER KRUSE with Tryck, Nyman and Hayes replied that it is between 2,000 and 3,000. MR. NELSON explained he wished to know how much of the traffic is local versus destination. MR. ____ stated that there is seasonal traffic to the visitor's center at times. One of the issues of primary concern during the public process is continued access to the recreational use. A 4-foot shoulder is proposed on this project and comments requested that it be wider; however, cost escalation for each foot of additional width, because of slopes, was significant and a 4-foot shoulder design remains. The local middle school cross-country teams use the road and it is the course for some bicycle races. MR. NELSON noted that there are blind spots. MR. ____ stated that the blind spots would be eliminated. He indicated he has been working with Ms. Brooks on CSS, which has been the direction of ADOT for several years. Eagle River Road, Old Glenn Highway, and Old Seward Highway have increased public involvement to ensure that the public's comments and concerns are addressed before project construction begins.

MS. BREWER indicated that a plans and projects fair would be conducted on Monday May 5, 2008 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Wendler Junior High School. This is the first effort where all agencies are coming together without concentration on a single project. At this point the fair includes the bicycle plan, the highway-to-highway project, New Seward Highway, West Dowling Road, Old Seward Highway, and Eagle River Road, nonprofit transitional housing, cybercrimes, as well as others.

c. Committee Comments

CHAIR WILBER noted that this is John Tolley's final meeting as a member of the AMATS body. He stated his appreciation for Mr. Tolley's efforts and years of service in the AMATS process.

d. Scheduled AMATS Meetings

Policy Committee, May 8, 2008

Technical Advisory Committee, May 22, 2008

Policy Committee, June 8, 2008
Technical Advisory Committee, June 22, 2008

c. Other Informational Reports

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 PM