

**ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Planning and Development Center
1st Floor Conference Room
4700 Bragaw Street
Anchorage, Alaska**

**August 28, 2008
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
** Cindy Heil	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
** Bruce Carr	Alaska Railroad Corporation
** Todd Cowles	MOA/Port of Anchorage
** Steve Morris	MOA/Department of Health and Human Services
** Lance Wilber	MOA/Traffic Department
Craig Lyon	MOA/TD
Christine Bernardini	MOA/TD
** Jerry Hansen	MOA/PM&E
** Jody Karcz	MOA/Public Transportation Dept.
** Lois Epstein	MOA/AAQAC representative
Sandra Cook	HDR Alaska
Saraellen Hutchison	Alaska Center for the Environment
Aves Thompson	Alaska Trucking Association
Anne Brooks	Brooks & Associates

* AMATS Policy Committee members

** AMATS Technical Advisory Committee members

1. CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR WILBER called the meeting to order at 2:32 PM. All members were present except Steve Morris.

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.

MS. KARCOZ asked to postpone agenda item 6.c to the TAC's next meeting.

MS. WITT asked to move agenda item 5.a to agenda item 6.c and move agenda item 5.b to agenda item 6.d as both are Informational Reports.

MR. LYON asked to hear the Public Participation Plan as the first item under 6. Informational Reports.

There being no objection, the motion passed unanimously with the changes made.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None

5. BUSINESS ITEMS – None

6. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

a. Public Participation Plan – Status of Project

ANN BROOKS explained the scope of work of the Public Participation Plan (PPP) development was to update the AMATS Public Participation Plan *Anchorage on the Move*, comply with the requirements of SAFETEA-LU, complete stakeholder consultation, use and evaluate a variety of tools in the preparation of the PPP, and define the role of the AMATS staff in public education, outreach and community transportation discussions.

The notice to proceed was received in November 2007 and work has progressed since that date. The revised draft PPP will be completed for

distribution to AMATS and the public, with a request to the TAC for public release in September. Public review will occur in September/October.

To date there has been evaluation of *Anchorage on the Move*, a contact database has been developed, and the website has been revamped, however, it has been technically challenging to achieve the update. Graphics and visuals are being developed for the PPP. Consultation with stakeholders is completed for the most part, with some remaining. The draft PPP has been reviewed by the advisory group and staff. A draft PPP will be ready for public release on September 25, 2008. The document is on the Planning and Zoning Commission's calendar for November 3, 2008. Outreach will occur during the public review and comment process. The PPP will be finalized and published before the end of the calendar year.

Major components of the plan are ongoing public involvement and a description of the steps for the LRTP (amendments and new).

LOIS EPSTEIN arrived at 2:41 p.m.

Other components include a description of the steps for the TIP, public participation for other major plans and studies, and additional more detailed information.

There has been feedback at the last several meetings about who is the primary audience for the plan. The approach in the PPP is that the audience is the public; there are links from the website to more detailed information. The strategic advisory group suggested the heading "who decides what roads are built?" rather than "what is AMATS?" and instead of "why does AMATS need a public participation plan" the heading would be "where do you fit in?" The advisory committee suggested that the PPP be compiled in a way that is similar to a Google search. To that end, the document will have basic information with access to more detailed information, perhaps via a PDF with embedded links.

AMATS has a new logo that focuses on modes of transportation and there will be visuals and graphics to illustrate the process. The PPP is based on a uniquely Alaskan calendar, reflecting the construction season, school year, hunting season, holiday season and the best opportunities for public

participation. The plan looks at a full calendar year for the AMATS TAC, Policy Committee, and AQAC meetings, the annual joint TAC/PC meeting with agencies in February and September, and other important meetings throughout the calendar year, as well as the Alaska Legislative session, MOA CIP, and MOA budget public hearings. The PPP identifies AMATS regular meetings and their potential for two-way dialogue about transportation modes and programs.

The plan identifies required reports and schedules status reports on all travel modes and programs. Ongoing education is a key component to public outreach and a quarterly brown bag learning series is proposed. The PPP also suggests a speakers bureau to speak to interested groups, including municipal boards and commissions. There are many groups interested in transportation related issues and the speakers bureau is a means to provide dialogue with those parties. There is recognition of the importance of key standing committees such as the Planning & Zoning Commission and Air Quality Advisory Group.

The PPP seeks to tell the public when, how and where comment can occur. The plan shows the LRTP development timeline, which encompasses a several year period. MS. EPSTEIN noted that it would be worthwhile to let people know of the State LRTP process.

MS. BROOKS stated that the proposal with the LRTP is to define goals and objectives, how travel should occur in 20 years, and to do that through newsletters, workshops, and brown-bag discussions. The PPP looks at different ways to provide information for the public and staff at varying levels. There is a section on community events of interest, such as Bike to Work Day, Black History Month, Mayor's Town Hall Meetings, and others.

MS. BROOKS ended her presentation with a listing of the following challenges: define ways to connect with low-income and limited-English proficient Anchorage residents, reach all of the public, what are appropriate and effective visualizations, develop a plan that transcends changes in staff, and use staff resources efficiently.

MR. CARR asked when the PPP would be ready for public review. MS. BROOKS replied that it would be available September 25, 2008. CHAIR

WILBER asked if the TAC is set to release the document for public review on that date. MS. BROOKS replied in the affirmative. MS. HEIL asked whether there would be a work session prior to that date. MR. LYON responded that he would schedule a work session.

MS. KARZCZ stated that, having participated in the *Anchorage On the Move* process, this PPP is well laid out and the calendar depictions are helpful. She suggested that it is helpful for the Alaska Railroad, Port, public, and agencies to discuss the LRTP update when making presentations to other groups.

b. Public Transportation Department Update

MS. KARZCZ explained that the PTD operates People Mover with 50 40-foot buses on a fixed route. There are also 5 30-foot buses for Dial-A-Ride, but that system has gone away and attempts are being made to integrate those buses into the system, but it is problematic. There are 16 routes, most of them 30-minute peak and 60-minute mid-day service. One third of the routes have 30-minute peak and mid-day service.

There is also AnchorRIDES, comprised of 38 vehicles, two purchased by Alaska Community Service and contributed to the program. This system also has 10 mini vans. AnchorRIDES is the state recognized coordinating transportation system in Anchorage. Anchorage began providing coordinated transportation 10 years ago, far before SAFETEA-LU required it. A variety of programs utilize this service, including the Anchorage School District Children in Transition homeless program that keeps kids in their home school. The Share-A-Ride program has 50 vehicles. Vanpools are good for long-distance commuting. There are 738 people in the vanpools at this time with 700 on the waitlist. Vanpool is funded with CMAQ for overhead and FTA provides capital. Riders pay for fuel and maintenance.

MS. KARZCZ discussed ridership on three modes. Annual ridership in the system has increased in 2008. People Mover has estimated ridership of 4,160,000, vanpool of 105,500, and AnchorRIDES has reduced to ridership of 180,500. Vanpool removes miles from the Glenn Highway annually. The LRTP talked about putting 6-10 minute frequency bus service on the Glenn Highway with the goal of taking 5-7% of all trips off the Glenn Highway. The vanpool program costs \$850,000, \$611,000 of which comes from riders. The goal of decreasing rides on AnchorRIDES is being achieved. AnchorRIDES is

the safety net for people who cannot use the People Mover system. People applying for AnchorRIDES receive an in-person assessment to see whether they are able to use the People Mover system and, if so, they can be travel trained.

MS. EPSTEIN asked the cost of a trip on vanpool. MS. KARCZ explained it is a monthly subscription service. The average fare is \$110 per person per month or \$5 per day. The person driving usually rides for free. CHAIR WILBER asked what is the average People Mover cost and AnchorRIDES cost. MS. KARCZ explained that the adult fare on People Mover is \$1.75 and AnchorRIDES can be 2.5 times that. The People Mover fares pays 20% of the cost, whereas the AnchorRIDES fare pays 10% of the cost.

MS. KARCZ explained that 60% of revenue for the PTD comes through local property taxes. There are operating revenues of 21% and some federal and pass-through grants, most for maintenance. There is also money from municipal revenue sharing. Capital funding comes through FTA Section 5307 and 5340, which together provide about \$5 million annually and require 20% local match. Section 5316 and 5317 are other FTA funding sources. Funding also comes from FHWA CMAQ and that amount varies from year to year.

Past CMAQ projects have included a winter CO season free bus service in 1999 and 2000; it was not the most successful program. The transit operations expansion/route restructure occurred in 2002-2005, which was successful in adding 18% more service and 28% more riders. There was no commitment from the City to continue this at the end, but direct FTA capital maintenance funds allowed the service to continue. The most recent CMAQ project was fleet expansion with 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 18 40-foot buses, and ITS/automated operating system. ITS currently includes DriveCam, transit real time bus arrival, next bus arrival signs, automated passenger counters/mobile display terminals/automated vehicle location, RideLine, RidePro (carpool matching), and operating software.

MS. KARCZ reviewed a future People Mover webpage, which gives access to any bus stop and the actual time for the next bus (late, early, or on-time).

Future needs include continued funding for ongoing projects and programs, additional fleet replacement, additional facilities if the system is to be grown, a Regional Transit Authority, exploring alternative fuel vehicles, and state funding for public transportation. Anchorage is one of two states that do not provide transit funding from their General Fund.

AMATS's role in coordinated transportation will increase. The State Transit Office has an MOU with AMATS to solicit and rank Human Services Transportation (HST) projects and forward that to the STO. A new building was built for AnchorRIDES with move-in during September 2008. A mobility coordinator and transportation options are being explored and the Human Services Transportation Coordination plan update is in progress.

MS. EPSTEIN asked what would be occurring at the alternative fuels conference. MS. KARCZ replied that she would learn more at the American Public Transportation Association Expo, which occurs every three years.

MS. WITT asked what is the Municipality's role with the proposed Regional Transit Authority. MS. KARCZ listed members of the City's working group and explained that Randy Virgin at Community Development is leading that group. There was a funding request during the special legislative session for a study for alternative fuel, update the Southcentral Commuter Rail Study, fund staff for the RTA, buy vans for the vanpool program, and provide some money for buses for MASCOT. It was not funded, but the ideas are moving forward. The group is examining what can be done most quickly to increase transit between Mat-Su and Anchorage. The least expensive options are the Vanpool program and commuter bus service. MR. CARR stated that a joint work session with the Mat-Su Borough and Municipality of Anchorage is scheduled in September.

WALT PARKER asked if there would be financial difficulties with implementing ITS. CHAIR WILBER replied in the affirmative. He noted that ITS can do many unique and innovative things for Anchorage and will continue to be an item that Anchorage will have to promote more heavily.

Next week a rural ITS conference will be held in Anchorage to address these issues.

c. Highway To Highway (H2H) Project update

JULIANNE HANSON, HDR employee and lead for H2H public involvement, stated this project began in March 2008. The first phase of the project involved data gathering, crafting a preliminary purpose and need, and work on a public outreach plan. A notice of intent was published in the Federal Register on July 11, 2008. The scoping period runs for 90 days and will end on October 8, 2008. Public comments on the purpose and need have been invited and are being received. There have been two public meetings to discuss this project, attended by a total of 200 people. In general, people agree with the problems in the area that this project proposes to address. The public is urging that forward thinking be applied to this project so it is more than a 20-year project. The team is being asked to accommodate transit and mass transit, light rail and other future needs. They want to be sure the footprint is large enough to accommodate expansion. There is some concern with the title of the project because it is being seen as another highway project funded by the FHWA, so it is important to communicate that this project will look at all transportation modes. People are interested in an east city bypass to relieve traffic in downtown and midtown. There is support for a cut-and-cover tunnel, a Merrill Field option, non-motorized access, and transit alternatives. Comments were for more buses, better stops, better schedules, and more accommodation of winter travel.

Concerns include what will happen to the Fairview neighborhood, how it might affect property values, property acquisition, how it is being paid for, that amenities will be lost if the project costs grow, that things would be made worse if anything is done, air quality, public health, noise, lighting pollution and construction impacts.

Listening posts are in the community with information and staff to distribute and respond to questions. The team is learning that, in general, people are positive about the project and anxious to know the proposed routes; many people have not heard about the project. A luncheon for faith-based and ethnic organizations is planned in September to begin the conversation about the project with those groups and discuss how transportation affects everyone. Neighborhood meetings are being held between 3-4 community

councils at a time to focus on neighborhood issues. The next round of public meetings will be in October at which time there will be lines on a map, a range of alternatives for the public to consider, a revised purpose and need, and proposed screening criteria.

MS. EPSTEIN stated she has been hearing concern that there be consideration of other modes than highway only. There is also concern that there is not enough money for amenities or to accommodate other transportation modes. She asked if other transportation modes would be included in the draft purpose and need statement. MS. HANSON replied that this would be done.

CHAIR WILBER introduced John Tolley, Municipal H2H project manager. He noted that all comments are due October 8, 2008 and Mr. Tolley has been working to get municipal department director comments on this project. He encouraged all TAC members to send any comments to Mr. Lyon to compose a TAC comment on this project. MR. TOLLEY stated the initial purpose and need was deficient in not explaining that this is a multi-modal transportation improvement. The draft will include transit, pedestrians, bicyclists, and neighborhood connections. Both the FHWA and ADOT were willing to ask FTA to be a co-lead on this project. The Public Transportation Department (PTD) is working with this project to assist in determining what improvements would be needed to accommodate current and future transit needs, as well as regional transit. At yesterday's team meeting there was discussion of how to put a 20-year time frame on the project, given limited modeling abilities. It is necessary to design the project for other transportation modes. Forecasts may go to 2035 or 2040 or perhaps even further and AMATS will need to be involved.

MR. CARR asked, if the draft purpose and need statement has been changed, would it be issued for review. MR. TOLLEY stated the statement is still being revised. MS. HANSON stated the draft purpose and need would be amended by the end of August and would be available for the TAC to review. MR. TOLLEY stated that the purpose and need would be updated and then put out again for public comment.

MS. HEIL asked why the transit center could not be located in the middle of the project, rather than at the terminus. MR. TOLLEY encouraged comments

of this nature. The concept of using the Glenn/Seward corridor focuses on transit. The PTD has been invited to have a more active role in the project and Ms. Karcz has been receptive.

MS. BROOKS asked how the high price of fuel and the potential for that price to increase even further is affecting the modeling. MR. TOLLEY replied that research is being done on this question. Puget Sound has a modeler who did some of the early Anchorage modeling and they are doing some of the same things in Seattle. There is also a question in terms of fleet change in response to fuel prices. The initial thinking is that there would not be a huge effect on trip demand as a result of increased fuel costs.

CHAIR WILBER asked for comment from members of the H2H citizens advisory committee. AVES THOMPSON stated there has been one committee meeting and many diverse opinions.

CHAIR WILBER agreed with thinking beyond 20 years in the planning of this project. He noted that land use and how it will be addressed would be key.

d. Third Quarter Obligation Report

MR. POST stated that in FFY 2008 there were \$4 million in increases and a need to balance the budget with \$4 million in decreases. One of the biggest decreases was delaying Chester Creek Trail, which had a cost of \$3.6 million. There was also a \$2.5 million de-obligation that will now happen in FFY 2009. In addition, there was a decrease of \$1.3 million on the Old Glenn Highway that will offset some of next years A/C. Next year there is \$3.6 million increase in funding that is offsetting the \$3.6 million increased cost of the Chester Creek Trail. The Policy Committee added \$854,000 to the Old Seward Highway at its last meeting.

CHAIR WILBER asked if the project manager is aware that Chester Creek Trail will be delayed. MR. HANSEN replied in the affirmative.

e. Committee Comments

MS. EPSTEIN noted that the Air Quality Advisory Group is scheduled to meet soon.

MR. COWLES noted that the Port's Sunday tours are over and they are planned for next summer.

MR. CARR asked for an update on the status of the Knik Arm Ferry at a future AMATS TAC meeting.

MR. HANSEN stated the new Convention Center received its CCO and in less than two weeks all the fences will come down. MS. HEIL asked when the grand opening would be held. MR. HANSEN responded that there would be some soft openings and the Alaska Federation of Natives conference is scheduled on October 7, 2008. Grand openings are scheduled for the public as well.

MS. WITT noted that ADOT is in the Raven Hall at the Fair and is showing a rut and a shot up sign, as well as technical solutions to issues. There is also a sample of ADOT sanding material used in the winter months for traction.

e. Scheduled AMATS Meetings

Policy Committee, September 11, 2008

Technical Advisory Committee, September 25, 2008

f. Other Informational Reports

MS. BROOKS stated there would be an informational fair on September 25 at Raven Hall showcasing ADOT.

DAVID LEVY, Executive Director of the Alaska Mobility Coalition, stated his organization represents public transportation systems and advocates in Alaska. His organization did a study over the summer to measure public interest in transportation in the state and that is good information that AMATS can utilize. The study shows that 66% of Alaskans statewide said the high price of fuel is impacting their lives and that the lack of transportation in their community is their second highest priority after fuel. Another 61% say that the third most important issue that they would like the state to spend the budget surplus on public transportation.

MR. LEVY also noted there are interesting conferences, the first being the ITS conference in Anchorage next week. On Thursday the transit track will review ITS issues in the U.S. and internationally and participants will take a

train trip to Talkeetna to see the Alaska Railroad's technology and then will go to MASCOT. On Tuesday will be a tour of AnchorRIDES and People Mover operations and the new technologies these systems are using. MR. LEVY noted that the State ADOT conference is in October and areas of interest to AMATS are an update on the RTA and a study of the transit needs between rural Mat-Su and Valdez. That study will look at potential impacts on the Anchorage community and the Mat-Su Valley.

CHAIR WILBER noted that the Policy Committee sent questions to the KABATA from Ms. Selkregg and Mr. Flynn. A response has been sent to the chair of the Policy Committee. Copies are available. He could not recall if the Policy Committee wanted the TAC to review this and comment to them. MR. LYON stated that the Policy Committee asked KABATA to be ready at the next Policy Committee meeting to answer questions.

MS. EPSTEIN noted that the work session with the KABATA was held jointly with the Policy Committee and TAC and she also submitted questions to which KABATA has responded.

MR. LYON stated that KABATA's response is also available electronically.

MS. EPTSTEIN stated that the KABATA cover letter expresses some question whether the work Anchorage Transportation Priorities Project has done on the Knik Arm Bridge creates a conflict with regard to Ms. Epstein's participation in discussions of that project.

MS. WITT clarified that because this was not advertised as a business item, the TAC cannot take action to provide a recommendation to the Policy Committee on this matter. CHAIR WILBER remarked that Mr. Lyon has said they did not ask for feedback, but asked Mr. Lyon to ask the Chair whether TAC comments are expected/desired.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 PM