

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

**December 18, 2008
2:30 PM**

Those in attendance were:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>REPRESENTING</u>
** Jennifer Witt	ADOT, Central Region, Planning
** Judy Dougherty	ADOT, Central Region
Dave Post	ADOT
Aneta Synan	ADOT
** Cindy Heil	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
** Steve Morris	MOA/Department of Health and Human Services
** Lance Wilber	MOA/Traffic Department
Christine Bernardini	MOA/TD
Lori Schanche	MOA/TD
** Jerry Hanson	MOA/PM&E
** Jody Karcz	MOA/Public Transportation Dept.
** Todd Cowles	MOA/Port of Anchorage
** Lois Epstein	MOA/AMATS CAQAC
** Tom Nelson	MOA/Planning Department
** Bruce Carr	Alaska Railroad Corporation
William Greene	KABATA
SaraEllen Hutchison	Alaska Center for the Environment
Walter Parker	Self
Dawn Bailey	DOWL/HKM
Michael Spitz	DOWL/HKM
Julianne Hanson	HDR Inc.
Jon Spring	Consultant
Anne Brooks	Brooks & Associates
Robert Shipley	Self

* AMATS Policy Committee members

** AMATS Technical Advisory Committee members

1. CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR WILBER called the meeting to order at 2:35 PM. A quorum was established. Tom Nelson and Lois Epstein arrived at 2:38 PM.

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. WITT asked that Business Item 5.a be an Informational Item because she had not seen the Bike Plan before and she understood this is the first time the TAC has seen it. She wished to have time to review the draft and hear the presentation before releasing the Plan for public review. There were no objections to this request.

LOIS EPSTEIN and TOM NELSON arrived at 2:38 PM.

MR. LYON noted that the August 28, 2008 minutes had been approved at the prior meeting, so there would be no action on minutes at this meeting.

There being no objection, the agenda was adopted, as amended.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Bike Plan Public Review Draft Release

LORI SCHANCHE spoke from a prepared Powerpoint presentation and noted that the *Pedestrian Plan* was before the TAC one year ago and was approved in October. This is the second component of the *Non-Motorized Transportation Plan*, the *Bicycle Plan*. The public open house will be held in

January. This Plan looks at using bicycles as a transportation mode and there will also be future review of the Areawide Trails Plan, which will address recreational uses. The vision for the Plan is a bicycle network for safe travel by commuters. The process began in October 2007 with 150 people attending a workshop. MS. SCHANCHE noted that people travel by bicycle, even in winter. The average trip length is 5.3 miles and it takes 33 minutes. Once the routes were on paper, a bicycle focus group was conducted. The group was comprised of approximately one dozen riders who had been in contact with her over the prior years. Bike to Work Day on May 15 was also a good source of data. In the last year there has been an increase of 32% in people commuting to work from 2007 to 2008 (1422 to 1884) and since Elmore Road opened with bike lanes and a pathway, there was a 70% increase in that location from the prior year.

The existing bicycle facilities in Anchorage are: 8.1 miles of bike lanes, 166.4 miles of multi-use pathways, 2.4 miles of shared roadways, and 37.8 miles of greenbelt trails. The greenbelt trail system does not always fit destinations. There was also examination of network deficiencies. There are gaps and inappropriate facilities, such as the pathway on Benson Boulevard that is marked as a bicycle facility; it is less than 8 feet wide and AASHTO recommends a width of 10 feet. AASHTO recommends a barrier of 42 inches for back-of-curb facilities and those do not exist in many locations in Anchorage.

ADOT provided considerable assistance by synthesizing police data to determine the areas of crashes, which included four-way and T-intersections, 12% on driveways, and 33% right-angle crashes.

MS. SCHANCHE explained that Federal Highways Administration has developed the Bicycle Compatibility Index, which measures the comfort level of bicyclists on a roadway. This tool considers curb lane width, traffic speeds and volumes, adjacent land use, and width of bicycle lane/shoulders. Staff worked with the Bicycle Focus Group to recommend routes, as well as a core network around employment districts and town centers from the land use plan. MS. SCHANCHE explained photographs of various types of bicycle facilities.

The bicycle network in Anchorage is comprised of 84.8 miles of lanes, 26.7 miles of paved shoulder bikeways, 214.1 miles of separated pathways, 27.2 miles of shared roads, and 5.4 miles of shared roads. Some facilities simply need to be marked to create bike facilities. Costs for the facilities were broken down into short-term, intermediate term, and long-term. The cost analysis includes cost, construction year, whether the facility is included in a plan or is a capital improvement project, and distance. Costs for facilities that were included with a road were not separately estimated. The total cost for all recommendations in the Plan is \$66 million and costs for the short-term improvements total \$6.2 million, some of which can be done with maintenance. Bike racks, lockers, and amenities are not included in these costs.

Recommended policies and action items in the Plan are:

- Gain a wider acceptance of bicycling
- Safety improvements
- Support (Bicycle Commuters Alliance)
- Education
- Code clarifications in Title 9 (9.38 is for bicycles, but separated pathway is 9.20)
- Construction and maintenance not blocking bike facilities

MS. SCHANCHE reviewed specific information on each of the recommended items. She discussed a “bicycle box” at intersections that would allow bicycles to queue in front of left-turning traffic, which is used successfully in many Lower 48 cities. She noted that the Bicycle Commuters Alliance began holding breakfasts this past summer. She noted that bicyclists are permitted to use the roadway, even if there is a separated pathway. There should not be parking in bicycle lanes. She noted that the code indicates a bicycle should not be used in a business district, which is 300 feet of frontage; however, there may be separated pathways that are conducive to bicycles. APD has indicated that bicycles should not be used on the sidewalks in business districts such as Spenard or Downtown in order to preserve pedestrian safety.

An internal staff review of the Plan occurred in September and in October for MOA and ADOT, including the MOA and ADOT traffic engineers. Public open houses were held last year, internal agency review ended in October 2008,

2008, and a public open house is scheduled for January 12, 2009. The Planning and Zoning Commission will review the Plan in February 2009. After Planning and Zoning Commission review, staff will share public comments with AMATS and then the Plan will go to the Assembly for review and approval. A separate email mailbox is available for email comments.

MS. EPSTEIN asked whether the MOA has submitted requests to the US Conference of Mayors or another national program for infrastructure funding through the upcoming stimulus package for items in the *Bicycle Plan* and/or the finalized *Pedestrian Plan*. MS. SCHANCHE stated that the first round she did not know the cost, so she requested \$1 million for roadway striping and marking. In the second round, she applied for \$21 million for the Alaska Railroad trail to link the Huffman business center with Midtown and Downtown. MS. EPSTEIN asked if this was requested through the Mayor. MS. SCHANCHE replied that an initial request was made through ADOT and then a request was made through the Rails to Trails program. MS. EPSTEIN asked whether consideration was given to something like what Seattle did to look at providing a bike route within ¼ mile of anyone. MS. SCHANCHE replied that ½ mile was the objective, but there are topographical issues. The “complete street” concept is the ultimate desire, where all streets are accessible to bikes. MS. EPSTEIN asked whether a hard copy of the Draft Plan is available, if people want one to review. MS. SCHANCHE replied that the Plan will be available at the Traffic Department and on CD and on the web. She is planning to compile a one-page summary document as well.

MR. MORRIS asked if any particular bottlenecks were identified. He noted that Lake Otis is a common north/south route for many people and asked if it was identified as a bottleneck. MS. SCHANCHE replied that the consideration was what makes sense to build. ADOT wants to do a full sweep concept so that the pathway comes up to the intersection and riders are more visible. Lake Otis has many driveways, creating tremendous hazards. As a result, it was not identified. MR. MORRIS stated that those who live west of Elmore use Lake Otis and it is an extremely dangerous route. MS. SCHANCHE noted that the two Seward Highway frontage roads would have separated pathways when they are improved.

MR. CARR indicated that the Alaska Railroad would supply written comments. He noted that in some cases the Railroad would prefer that the bicycle network cross at already recognized crossings. He noted that at Klatt Road a separate bike path crosses the tracks and suggested that perhaps a knoll could be created so bicyclists can avoid the damage done to crossings by auto traffic. There are also new surfaces that may be better than rubberized surfaces.

MS. WITT asked if the document must be released before the open house on January 12, 2009, noting that the TAC's next meeting is January 22, 2009. MS. SCHANCHE replied that it would be best to release it prior to the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

WALT PARKER complimented the Plan and said it would have been nice to have on the Mayor's list of requests for federal funding.

CHAIR WILBER explained that the policy is that the TAC is able to review documents before they go out for public review and that is why this Plan is not yet ready for public consumption. He noted that this is also the reason it was not forwarded for federal funding. He commented that the Policy Committee will meet on January 8, 2009. If the TAC has any serious concerns or comments, those could be sent to Mr. Lyon or Ms. Schanche and the Policy Committee could release it for public review. MS. HEIL suggested that the TAC meeting could also be continued, given that this item was advertised as a Business Item. Her concern was that the open house is on January 12, 2009 and if it were not released on the at the Policy Committee's January 8 meeting there would be notification issues. MR. CARR also was not aware of an urgent deadline. He preferred to allow the TAC to review and release this document.

MS. EPTSTEIN asked what is the ideal date for completion. MS. SCHANCHE explained that if this is approved, implementation could begin when biking season starts.

MS. KARCZ wanted to move this Plan forward as soon as possible. Her staff has reviewed the Plan and provided comments and she felt others could undertake a quick review and the TAC could meet early next week. MR. MORRIS concurred, but wondered if there could be a quorum next week.

CINDY HEIL moved to continue the TAC meeting to early next week or December 29, 2008 to take up this item with a potential release of the draft.
JENNIFER WITT seconded.

MS. WITT indicated she would prefer to meet on December 29, 2008.

There being no objection, the motion passed unanimously.

b. Other Business Items – None

6. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

**a. 209-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
Discussion**

MR. LYON noted that at the last meeting there was discussion of whether or not to solicit new nominations for the TIP or just score the projects that are in the TIP. The Policy Committee directed the TAC to solicit nominations, while making sure the public understands that funding is restricted and, while nominations can be made, they will be ranked and scored along with grandfathered projects. He had distributed the nomination forms and ranking criteria for Roadway, Transportation Enhancement, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality projects. He suggested holding a work session before the TAC's January 22, 2009 meeting to review the criteria to ensure they are still appropriate and perhaps fine-tune them. The approach is to build a new TIP coincident with development of the STIP.

MS. EPSTEIN asked when the work session would be scheduled. MR. LYON replied that it would be scheduled on a date between January 15 and January 22. MS. HEIL suggested that the work session be scheduled early in order to address any suggestions. She noted that the last time this was done, the review was of the form, the criteria, and the policies & procedures, so the latter should also be considered in order to make any recommendations to the Policy Committee. The current policies & procedures identify how the TIP would be done, how it should look, what it should entail. MS. KARCZ asked that some completed nomination forms be included when the policies & procedures and criteria are reviewed to see how they are actually applied. She noted there are also ranking criteria for the *Human Services Transportation*

Transportation Plan and those should be done at the same time.

MS. WITT explained that the State is submitting the suggested revisions to criteria for the STIP to bring them in alignment with the 2030 plan, as well as issuing a call for nominations with the understanding that no new projects will be considered until the last two years of the plan. There is interest by the Administration and Legislature in establishing a statewide program with statewide funds, so ADOT is looking for an updated list of transportation needs, regardless of funding.

MS. EPSTEIN stated she is interested in participating so she would like the meeting to be before January 10, as she would be out of town beginning January 11.

MS. BROOKS noted that in the past there have been facilities that were in the TIP, then were removed, and that perhaps should be re-inserted. She asked if consideration would be given to the fact that money has been spent on a certain project and/or certain processes have been completed on a project. She felt there should be some disclosure of a list of projects that have received funding, but have been removed from the TIP, and what has been accomplished on those projects.

MR. POST asked for discussion of the 2009 program. MR. LYON explained that the existing TIP is valid through 2009, but the 2009 year has been changed in the Obligation Reports. Some things can be done with the TIP through an administration modification, rather than an amendment. The processes were previously termed a minor amendment or a major amendment. Some changes to 2009 are proposed through an administration modification. That would allow projects in 2009 to go forward. The new TIP would be 2010 through 2013 and it would go through the amendment process. MR. POST mentioned that one proposed change to the 2009 program would be an amendment, rather than an administrative modification, and that is removing the Knik Arm Crossing from the TIP. CHAIR WILBER asked that the calendars for these two processes be presented at the work session.

MS. HEIL asked if there were any construction related time frames that require quick administrative modifications. MR. POST replied in the negative, but noted that the construction season will be imminent when the

schedules for these processes are reviewed. Chester Creek Trail is one project that should move forward and he was not aware of the schedule for that.

MR. CARR suggested that the definitions of the two processes be supplied as well.

b. AMATS Public Participation Plan – Project Status

CHRISTINE BERNARDINI noted that the TAC had been provided with a four-page memorandum, as well as two attachments. The attachments reflect public comments received, along with staff/consultant responses. Table 1 are the comments received prior to the Planning and Zoning Commission public hearing on November 3, 2008. The second table is comments received since the November 3 public hearing. Both tables were presented to the Commission, which continued the public hearing to December 1, 2008. The public hearing was closed, action was taken, and a recommendation was made for approval subject to incorporating the comments in the tables. The Commission would also like their AMATS Subcommittee to have an opportunity to see the final formatted draft before that draft is brought to AMATS. For that reason, formal action is not requested of the TAC today. Electronic copies of the final draft report will be supplied to the TAC, and hard copies will be available, prior to the January 22, 2009 TAC meeting.

MS. EPSTEIN asked what is the rationale for holding the Policy Committee meetings downtown in order to facilitate public involvement, but not the TAC meetings. MS. BROOKS replied that this recommendation came from staff based on past experience with successfully securing public involvement and because many staff resources are available to the TAC at the Planning and Development Center location. CHAIR WILBER added that evening and lunchtime meetings have been tried and attendance is less at those times. The *Public Participation Plan* (PPP) recommends an evening meeting at least once quarterly in order to provide opportunities for public involvement. MS. EPSTEIN explained that her concern is the location of the meetings, not the time of the meetings. MR. LYON explained that Policy Committee meetings were scheduled downtown because the Mayor's schedule makes it difficult to travel to Elmore Road. Air quality offices are also located downtown. The public turnout was even at each location. Parking at the Planning and Development Center is better than downtown because it is free of cost and more spaces are generally available. In addition, there has been construction

downtown in recent years, causing meetings to be held at the Center. CHAIR WILBER asked if Ms. Epstein thinks it is more convenient to have a downtown meeting. MS. EPSTEIN replied in the affirmative.

MR. CARR stated the purpose of these meetings is to get work done, but regardless of what document one reviews, the intent of all of them is to get the public involved. If there has not been public involvement, it is AMATS' fault, not the public's fault. It is either not possible to get to Elmore Road at the time of these meetings by bus or people arrive ahead of time. The center for all buses is located adjacent to City Hall. He suggested that, if parking is an issue, AMATS should work with the new parking garage to make it convenient for the public. He remarked that, with the exception of only a few of those in attendance today, those who are attending do it because it is their job. MR. LYON stated he received comments from the public saying it is easier to park at the Center because parking downtown is difficult. A number of people who have attended at either location indicate that the Center location is convenient.

MS. KARCZ noted that regardless of time or location, she has never seen an overwhelming public group attending AMATS meetings. She did not think it makes a difference where the meetings are located, the question is how to get an apathetic public to attend meetings. For many people, downtown is not an easy place to travel. She did not like two meeting locations, preferring one location for both Policy Committee and TAC meetings.

CHAIR WILBER agreed with Mr. Carr. He felt that the PPP has tried to do things like structure the AMATS schedule by subject so that those who are interested in a particular subject can focus their time. The location of this committee is a small piece of how the PPP attempts to involve the public. He asked that a track-change format be used to assist the TAC in its review of what comments have been included and what changes have been made to the PPP.

MS. BROOKS stated that requests have been made to rewrite the PPP in a voice that is more easily understood by the public. She feared that a track-change format would be very difficult to read. MS. BERNARDINI noted that the tables would indicate whether or not a comment is included and, if not,

why it was not. This will accompany the new final draft released for TAC approval.

MS. WITT understood that the intent is to replace what went out for public review with a new document. She stated that as a TAC member she needs to know what are the substantive changes and as an ADOT employee she needs to know what would impact schedules. She recommended that the TAC be given the public review draft with track changes. MS. BERNARDINI felt there were two issues: the comfort level of the review, which may necessitate another work session, and providing a track of the changes so it is easy to follow. Doing the latter would require more resources than have been allocated to this effort. She asked the consultant how much time and effort that would involve. MS. BROOKS stated that the basics of both versions of the PPP are identical. The reviewers said that sometimes the document is talking to staff and other times to the public and suggested that it should talk to the public only in order to get them involved. Part of that is eliminating jargon. The recommendations themselves are intact. There were comments on the mission, policies & procedures, and the Operating Agreement and those are not things the consultant felt could be addressed in the PPP. The Planning and Zoning Commission was interested that its comments were taken to the AMATS bodies for resolution.

MR. COWLES noted that formatting should be corrected on page 14 of Table 1.

CHAIR WILBER asked if the TAC desired a work session before action or should there be revised tables and the PPP brought back at a formal TAC meeting. MR. MORRIS, MS. HEIL and others favored a work session. CHAIR WILBER asked that a work session be calendared. MS. WITT asked that the TAC be given the revised document two to three weeks before the work session. MS. BERNARDINI noted that this would push the action date from January 22. She suggested that perhaps that could be the work session date. MS. WITT explained she simply wanted a sufficient review period.

c. Other Informational Items

MR. KARCOZ noted there has been good press in the newspaper recently about transit ridership. She stated she began with the Department in 1984 when the tax cap began; that was the year of highest ridership and this year will

will pass that level at 4.2 million. She noted that rising fuel prices during the summer helped increase ridership. It is dropping now, but not to the levels it was a year ago.

MS. EPSTEIN asked if there are any requests in the federal infrastructure stimulus package for transit. MS. KARCZ stated she has put a request in the MOA's state budget request for \$6.5 million in operating assistance. She expected to see things coming to transit from the federal side. She is meeting tomorrow with Mary Jane Michael, Executive Director of the Office of Economic & Community Development, to discuss what can be done.

MS. WITT stated the Governor's capital and operating budgets are available on line; ADOT's budget is included, if anyone wishes to review it.

MS. HEIL stated that EPA is supposedly going to announce the non-attainment designations for Juneau and Fairbanks for PM2.5 on Monday, along with the boundary. The State submitted proposed boundaries and EPA submitted larger boundaries. The State is working with EPA to reduce the boundaries.

MR. CARR asked that Mark VanDongen be invited to provide an update on the Knik Arm Ferry. MR. LYON stated Mr. Von Dogen would attend the January 8, 2009 Policy Committee meeting. MR. CARR stated that both the Mat-Su Borough Assembly and the Anchorage Assembly are supposed to take up the Regional Transportation Authority memorandum of understanding on January 6, 2009 and asked that a presentation be made on that as well.

MS. EPSTEIN noted that the Mayor submitted the RTA to the US Conference of Mayors for funding. She also understood the State has put together a contract to conduct an independent cost estimate for the Knik Arm Crossing.

7. Scheduled AMATS Meetings

Policy Committee, January 8, 2009

Technical Advisory Committee, January 22, 2009

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:03 PM