

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

**December 29, 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
Aneta Synan	ADOT
** Cindy Heil	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
** Todd Cowles	MOA/Port of Anchorage
** Lance Wilber	MOA/Traffic Department
Craig Lyon	MOA/TD
Teresa Brewer	MOA/TD
** Jerry Hansen	MOA/PM&E
** Jody Karcz	MOA/ Public Transportation Dept.
Sandra Cook	HDR Alaska
Jon Spring	Consultant

* AMATS Policy Committee members

** AMATS Technical Advisory Committee members

1. CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR WILBER called the meeting to order at 2:35 PM. Steve Morris and Lois Epstein were absent. Todd Cowles arrived at 2:42 PM. A quorum was established.

2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

CHAIR WILBER explained that this meeting was a continuation of the December 18, 2008 meeting and the sole item on the agenda was the Bicycle Plan Public Review Draft. The TAC had requested additional time to review the Plan following the review and public comment at the December 18, 2008 meeting.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There being no objections to the agenda.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Bicycle Plan Public Review Draft Release

MS. WITT indicated that ADOT staff reviewed the document and found it incorporates initial comments and concerns, but there are technical issues that need resolution at the staff level. She understood that the Plan is focused on commuters and everything else at the same time. MS.

SCHANCHE explained that the Plan is focused on commuters and bike riders who have destination trips that are not recreational in nature. MS. WITT stated if it is a commuter bicycle plan it is easier to focus on concerns, but it is not written with exclusive focus on commuters; therefore, the appropriateness or inappropriateness of certain facilities for users other than commuters is problematic. She felt that a commuter focus could be made clear in the Plan. In addition, there are policy recommendations, such as the bicycle box, that could perhaps be a test, but she did not agree with the implication in the Plan that it would be implemented. MS. RICE added that sensor loops for bicycles at intersections add significantly to maintenance and she did not favor that as a recommendation.

MS. WITT also had difficulty determining the priority areas for focus, as the Plan deferred ranking to another time and place and not in this document. Since these improvements will be competing with other trail facilities, she would like to see a relative order of priority for them.

MR. CARR stated the Railroad is still preparing its comments, but he had concern with public expectations that might be raised by the Plan. For example, the Plan shows a path down Railroad right-of-way and the Railroad will not agree to that. The Railroad is preparing to increase train speeds from 40% to 60% over the next several years, which will increase safety hazards for other uses in the Railroad right-of-way.

TODD COWLES arrived at 2:42 p.m.

MR. CARR stated the Railroad no longer favors having trail access down the Railroad right-of-way in the center of town. He suggested that this language be deleted before the Plan is released for public review, reiterating that the safety of the corridor changes significantly with increased train travel speeds. He also shared Ms. Rice's concerns related to ensuring the safety of bicyclists at crossings of main streets. Crossings at existing signalized crossings are acceptable, but issues of track crossings and bicycle tires inside of rails remain a concern.

MS. KARCZ asked how this Plan fits into the *Non-Motorized Transportation Plan* and works with the *Areawide Trails Plan*. MS. SCHANCHE stated the *Areawide Trails Plan* has some bicycle elements and the *Non-Motorized Plan* separates recreational versus commuter/transportation users and adds a pedestrian component. Each of these components works independently, although they could be combined in a single list. She noted that many of the priorities shown in this Plan could be done now. She could envision one guiding document that contains the lists of all projects.

MR. HANSEN stated that there is misinformation in the document regarding the CIP; he offered to provide correct information.

MR. CARR asked if there has been examination of what is being done in other cold weather cities. MS. SCHANCHE replied that she has looked at the standards for bicycle parking, but has not reviewed bike plans for other winter cities. MR. CARR suggested that there be an examination of other northern cities, noting his principal concern with trail maintenance during winter months. MS. SCHANCHE explained that the intent of the Plan is to improve safety for bicyclists and she felt that not including things in the Plan because they cannot be maintained is not forward thinking. She was aware this could not be solved immediately, but it is important, for example, to educate the public that bicycles are permitted on streets. MR. CARR noted that life cycle costing involves estimating the cost of maintenance, which must be considered. He recognized the noble effort of creating a bicycle network in this northern city, but if the public is not willing to pay for it by maintaining the trails, that must be considered and perhaps a user fee or some other type of mechanism could be considered. He noted there are

existing trails that cannot be maintained yet this Plan proposes adding more to that system.

CHAIR WILBER felt that good questions and comments had been raised. He suggested either taking action today or asking technical staff to meet and address the issues that have been discussed. He asked what time constraints exist for action on this item. MS. SCHANCHE stated an open house is scheduled for January 12, 2009, at which time people can review maps and obtain copies of the Plan; delaying action would delay that event. Every subsequent action would be delayed as well.

MR. HANSEN asked if not taking action today would delay the January 12, 2009 open house. CHAIR WILBER believed that event would have to be rescheduled. MR. HANSEN asked whether the open house could be held and the document be released at a later date. MR. CARR did not object to engaging the public in a review of this draft, recognizing that a later draft could also be released for public review.

MS. WITT recommended that the Plan go back to staff to adjudicate the technical comments.

MR. NELSON stated the Plan is well laid out and it has been produced in color, and there may not be the budget to conduct an internal review and issue another draft document. MS. SCHANCHE stated that 80 copies of the Plan have been made so that the TAC could review it, the Planning and Zoning Commission could review it, and there could be copies for the public. MR. NELSON noted that this document is titled "Public Review Draft" and a more formal document could be titled "Public Hearing Draft." If there are only a handful of changes, perhaps that could be done as an errata sheet before putting it out for public hearing.

MS. HEIL asked whether the public would find it valuable to see written comments from ADOT along with the draft so that they are aware of those technical issues and their resolution, rather than producing a document that has been changed. MS. WITT had concern with the TAC releasing this document for public review because it intimates that the TAC technically supports the document as written and she does not, at this point. She had concern with use of the term "inappropriate" when referring to existing

facilities, fearing that liability issues may arise. Also, if the MOA intends to implement things like bicycle boxes and ADOT has operational and safety concerns regarding those, she had concern that the only example in the Plan is a state facility. She did not think the fact that copies have been made should drive the TAC's decision.

MS. RICE stated that ADOT has not analyzed whether facilities are ready for signing and striping for bike lanes. MS. SCHANCHE noted that she had reviewed these with an ADOT representative. MS. RICE stated that the wording in the Plan is the concern.

MR. HANSEN stated he has participated in a great number of public processes and oftentimes the public wants changes when he believed things were resolved. He suggested that this document could be released in order to allow the public to make comment. He suggested there could be a disclaimer indicating the very preliminary nature of the document.

MR. CARR concurred with Mr. Hansen that there is no reason to not take this document to the public for their thoughts. He noted that the focus of SAFETEA-LU has been to hear early and often from the public and to involve the public in the planning stages. He suggested tabling action until the open house is conducted and ADOT and the Railroad have an opportunity to respond to technical issues. He agreed with Ms. Witt that printing 80 copies should not drive the TAC's decision. CHAIR WILBER felt that an errata sheet could be included with the Plan. MR. CARR suggested that it could be possible to cancel the public open house until the TAC is ready to release it.

MS. KARCZ asked whether it is practical to allow Ms. Schanche to take this document to the public for comment, for the TAC to make comment, to finalize the document, and then go to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review. MR. NELSON asked if the purpose of the public open house is to familiarize the public with the Plan. If that is the case, it may be advisable to hold a second public meeting prior to the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. Also, if the intent is to release the Plan to the public, it may be advisable to postpone the initial open house.

BRUCE CARR moved to table the Public Review Draft Bicycle Plan until further notice. CINDY HEIL seconded.

MR. CARR stated he has expressed concern, as have ADOT representatives, that the Plan requires further work from a technical standpoint. Once that work is done, the Plan can be modified and then put out for public review. His concern is that going out with a public review draft that is not ready might raise concerns.

MR. NELSON suggested that action should be postponed to a date certain, rather than indefinitely, to resolve any concerns with agencies. MR. CARR agreed with this suggestion, as did Ms. Heil.

MS. SCHANCHE stated that the recommendation for bicycle boxes and sensor loops in the Plan are that they could be used. These types of improvements are being used effectively across the country and she felt that the process to move forward with these types of accommodations for bicycles should begin. She asked that she receive very particular comments because she has met with ADOT representatives and received comments and what she is hearing from the TAC is different from those comments.

CHAIR WILBER suggested that comments and concerns be done in an errata sheet.

MR. CARR clarified that his motion is to delay the release of the Public Review Draft to February 26, 2009 during which time the TAC will provide comments and resolve them with staff. MS. HEIL concurred as the second to the motion.

MS. WITT noted that ADOT is in the process of preparing written comments and would also like the Plan to acknowledge certain things that can be readily addressed. She recommended that technical reviews be sent to staff as soon as possible, followed by a meeting of the technical group.

MS. KARCZ asked how many TAC members need to comment, noting that Transit and PM&E have already commented. She asked if the only agencies to comment are the Railroad and ADOT. MS. WITT responded that she

understood that even the MOA's traffic staff has concerns. She noted that most of the facilities impacted are owned and operated by ADOT.

MS. HEIL understood that the open house on January 12, 2009 would be postponed.

MS. WITT clarified that staff would adjudicate comments before the TAC's next meeting. MS. SHANCHE asked that a deadline be set for receipt of comments so that she can issue a new document. There was agreement that comments would be submitted by January 15, 2009.

There being no objection, the motion passed with Jerry Hansen dissenting.

- b. Other Business Items – None**
- 6. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS – None**
- 7. Scheduled AMATS Meetings**
Policy Committee, January 8, 2009
Technical Advisory Committee, January 22, 2009
- 8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:17 PM