

## CHAPTER 1: HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

### I. INTRODUCTION

A long-range transportation plan is one of the major components of federally funded urban transportation planning programs, stipulated in the Code of Federal Regulations. The long-range transportation plan must complement the area's land use plans and other public infrastructure improvement plans, such as those for water and electrical transmission facilities.

Federal law requires that, in order to be eligible to receive federal Highway Trust Fund Dollars (collected from federal taxes on gasoline sales) for local surface transportation system improvements, urbanized areas must have a metropolitan planning organization [MPO] to carry out a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process. The U S Bureau of Census defined "urbanized areas" as locales that sustain populations of 50,000 or more.

The Governor of Alaska designated the Municipality of Anchorage an MPO on April 8, 1976. The Municipality's recognized urban transportation planning program is '**AMATS**' (**Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions**). It is a cooperative effort between the Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. AMATS was created so that our local area could receive federal highway funds and use those funds to improve the primary transportation network.

Additional requirements relating to transportation planning were imposed with the approval of the **1977 Clean Air Act** and the **1990 Clean Air Act Amendments**. Federal law required areas found to be in non-attainment with the "national ambient air quality standards" (NAAQS) to establish an air quality planning process closely coordinated with the existing transportation planning process.

In 1978 the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] Administrator designated Anchorage as a moderate non-attainment area for carbon monoxide. Shortly thereafter, the Governor of Alaska designated the Municipality as the Air Quality Planning Agency for the Anchorage Non-attainment Area.

The EPA has also established standards for dust particles smaller than 10 microns (PM-10). In 1985 the Municipality of Anchorage began a PM-10 monitoring program. Levels exceeding the EPA standards were detected in Eagle River. As a result, the EPA required the Municipality to develop a plan to control the level of dust in the air in Eagle River. The Eagle River PM 10 Control Plan was adopted by the Municipal Assembly on February 6, 1990, and amended on September 24, 1991.

The 1991 **Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act** [ISTEA] provided funds for highways, highway safety, and mass transit through FFY 1997. The purpose of ISTEA was "to develop a National Intermodal Transportation System that is economically efficient, environmentally sound, provides the foundation for the Nation to compete in the global

economy, and will move people and goods in an energy efficient manner." Under provisions of that Act, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation designated the Anchorage Metropolitan Area as a Transportation Management Area [TMA]. TMAs are subject to special requirements regarding congestion management systems, project selection, and certification.

ISTEA was reauthorized by the 1998 **Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** (TEA-21), which authorized highway, highway safety, transit, and other surface transportation programs for the 6-year period 1998-2003.

**TEA-21** built on the initiatives established in ISTEA. **TEA-21** combined the continuation and improvement of then current programs with new initiatives to meet the challenges of improving safety as traffic continues to increase, protecting and enhancing communities and the natural environment as we provide transportation, and advancing America's economic growth and competitiveness domestically and internationally through efficient and flexible transportation. Special emphasis is placed on deployment of Intelligent Transportation Systems to help improve operations and management.

**TEA-21** requires the transportation planning process, for a metropolitan area such as Anchorage, to explicitly provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will:

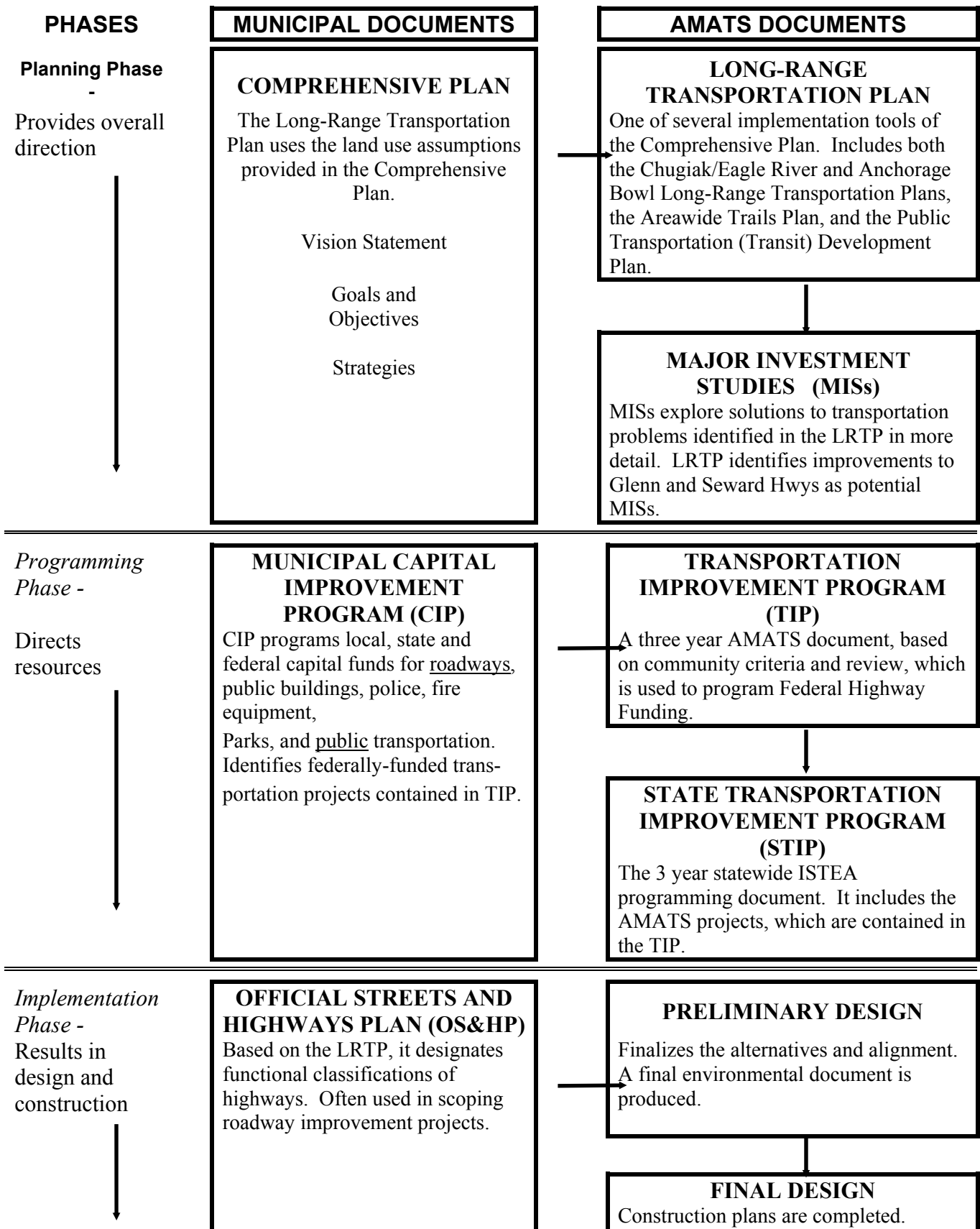
1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
2. Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
3. Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight;
4. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life;
5. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
6. Promote efficient system management and operation; and
7. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

## **II. ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS**

The long-range transportation planning effort in the Municipality of Anchorage is conducted under the auspices of AMATS. The AMATS planning process consists of two principal parts, the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and addresses improvements to roadways, transit and trails.

Long-Range Transportation Plans are the key planning documents used by AMATS to plan the development and implementation of transportation system improvements 20 years into the future. The Chugiak-Eagle River Transportation Plan, adopted in 1996, serves this purpose for the Chugiak-Eagle River area. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the short-range implementation plan used by AMATS to program federal funding for transportation improvements. The TIP programs the recommendations contained in the 20-year Transportation Plan into a short-term (3 year) timeframe.

### **FIGURE 1: TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**



This cooperative planning process also fulfills a federal requirement that enables the Anchorage and Chugiak-Eagle River areas to receive approximately \$48 million each year (based on the average net obligation from 1981-2000) from the US Department of Transportation for air quality improvement, safety, roadway, transit, and transportation enhancement projects.

### **III. THE STUDY AREA**

The study area of the Chugiak-Eagle River Transportation Plan (see Map 1) includes all of the territory within the Municipality of Anchorage from the northern boundary of Fort Richardson northward to the Municipal limits near the Knik River, excluding Chugach State Park.

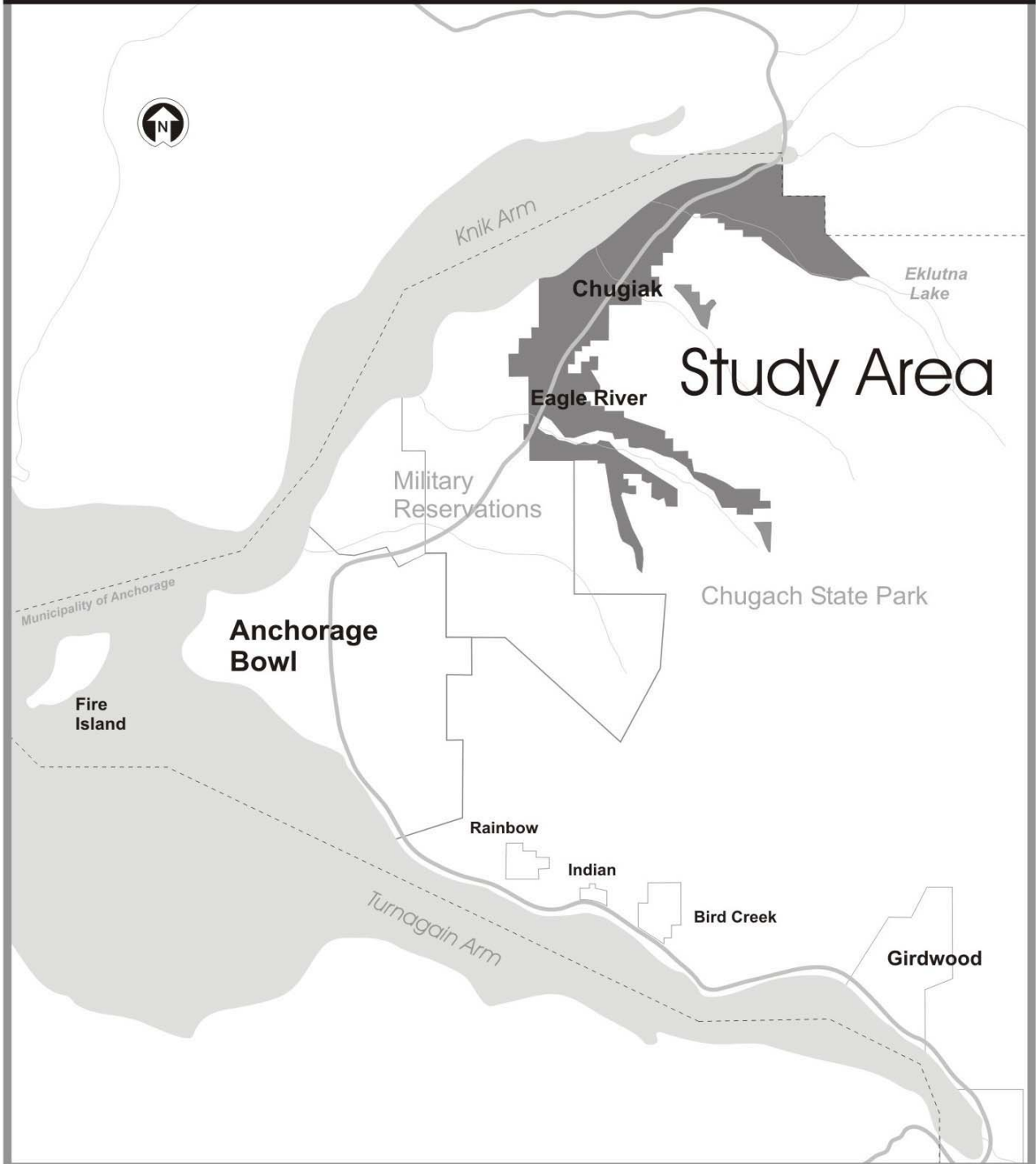
The study area has experienced major population growth during the past twenty years. During that time, Chugiak-Eagle River evolved into a major suburban community of Anchorage. The 2000 Census population of 29,917 for Chugiak-Eagle River was 11.5% of the total Municipality of Anchorage population. With a large percentage of developable land located within Chugiak-Eagle River, the area is expected to capture a large share of the future population growth for the Municipality of Anchorage.

Despite this rapid growth, the Chugiak-Eagle River area remains essentially a bedroom community, with most residents working outside of the local area, either at Fort Richardson or the Anchorage Bowl. There continues to be a small local-serving commercial and industrial economic base that is mainly centered in downtown Eagle River along the Old Glenn Highway and Business Boulevard.

### **IV. PLANNING HORIZON**

TEA-21 planning regulations, specified in Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations (23 CFR450.322 (a)), require a transportation plan to address at least a 20-year horizon. The planning horizon for the 1996 Chugiak-Eagle River encompassed the years 1995 to 2015. This 2003 LRTP Update further extends the timeframe to the Year 2023, to comply with the above referenced TEA-21 regulations.

# Chugiak-Eagle River Transportation Plan Study Area



MAP 1



## **CHAPTER 2: GOALS, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES**

The formulation of goals, objectives and policies is a fundamental step in the transportation planning process. Goals, objectives, and policies describe the desired end result of a transportation plan as well as directions on how to get there. More specifically, goals describe in broad, general terms a desired future condition, which is consistent with community ideals; objectives are specific statements of particular ends, expressed in measurable terms, that respond to the goals; and policies are statements that describe courses of action designed to achieve the goals and objectives.

The development of the goals, policies, and objectives contained in this plan was based on extensive public comment. A great deal of useful information concerning the transportation problems and issues facing Chugiak-Eagle River residents was obtained through a series of eight public meetings held in the fall of 1994. The Citizen Advisory Committee formed to help develop the plan also spent several meetings discussing goals, policies, and objectives. This direct public involvement was supplemented by information derived from a 1992 transportation survey, which asked several questions regarding satisfaction with the existing transportation system.

It should be noted that results of the 2001 AMATS Multi-Modal Transportation Survey corroborate several of the goals, policies and objectives, particularly relating to importance of roads and emergency services, inadequacy of sidewalks and the desire for trails to be included in road projects, and the importance of transit to the community's livability.

The goals, policies, and objectives, which resulted from this process (see below), attempt to create a balance between competing demands and values. For example, the goal of providing a high quality transportation system was weighed against the goal of minimizing public expenditures. Similarly, the goal of quality transportation was balanced against the effects a particular project may have on the environment.

### **I. GOAL**

Ensure development of a balanced transportation network that provides an acceptable level of service, maximizes safety, minimizes environmental impacts, provides alternate transportation types, and is compatible with planned land use patterns.

### **II. OBJECTIVES**

Decrease travel time through an increase in the transportation efficiency during peak-hour periods.

Minimize cut-through traffic through residential neighborhoods.

Strike a balance between safety and economical design with all transportation projects.