

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.

III. POLICIES

A. Coordination Policy

Coordinate the Chugiak-Eagle River Long-Range Transportation Plan with the Anchorage Bowl Long-Range Transportation Plan, Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan, Transit Development Plan, Trails Plan, and other relevant plans and programs. The Chugiak-Eagle River LRTP and Officials Streets and Highways Plan should be coordinated with proposed Municipality of Anchorage plans for emergency management and public safety as they are developed.

B. Public Participation Policy

Encourage public participation in all transportation-related decisions. The 1996 Chugiak-Eagle River Transportation Plan was developed with the assistance of a Citizen Advisory Committee, which included representatives from South Fork, Eagle River Valley, Eagle River, Birchwood, and Chugiak Community Councils as well as from the Chugiak, Birchwood, Eagle River Rural Road Service Area Board, the Eagle River Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and Eklutna, Inc.

For the 2003 Update, which was not considered a major update, participation by each of these organizations was actively sought, but the Citizen Advisory Committee did not meet as a group. In the future, however, AMATS will continue to employ a similar committee to advise it on periodic updates of the plan, particularly following the next update to the Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan.

Work to ensure adequate public notice to affected property owners during project development.

C. Funding Priority Policies

In 1996 the consensus was to utilize the following criteria to rank proposed roadway improvement projects in order to make the best use of future transportation funding:

1. Bring existing facilities up to current standards. Capacity expansion projects will be considered at the same time as safety improvements if they are warranted. Projects that address both capacity and safety concerns should receive highest priority.
2. Maintain and rehabilitate the existing transportation system (roads, trails and sidewalks) to prevent deterioration of facilities and avoid the need for major reconstruction.
3. Establish a basic bike and pedestrian circulation network that will provide access to schools, neighborhoods and commercial centers.
 - a) Trails and pedestrian facilities for transportation should receive funding priority over trails, which primarily serve a recreational purpose.
 - b) Trails within high-density areas will be given priority over trails within low-density areas.
4. Add capacity to the existing roadway system or construct new roadways to alleviate existing capacity problems and accommodate increases in traffic.

D. Access Policy

Limit and provide access to the street network in a manner consistent with the function and purpose of each roadway. To achieve this level of access control, the Municipality shall encourage consolidation of access in developing commercial and high-density residential areas through shared use of driveways and local access streets.

E. Level of Service Policy

Adopt a Level of Service (LOS) C for peak hour traffic flow on the roadways within the Chugiak-Eagle River area. Exceptions may be made in areas where the cost of right-of-way acquisition is high due to intense urban development. (LOS C provides for traffic flow with speeds still at or near the free flow speed of the roadway. Freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream is noticeably restricted at LOS C.)

F. Transit Service Policies

Support improvements in the frequency and convenience of transit service to high density, transit dependent areas of Chugiak-Eagle River. Consider and evaluate the feasibility of commuter rail as a travel choice.

Investigate alternative methods of providing public transportation services to low density development to, from, and within the Chugiak-Eagle River area and expand alternatives that are proven to be efficient.

Support the continued development of the park-and-ride system.

Promote transit accessibility through pedestrian access to bus stops and bus shelters, consistent with the AMATS approved Transit Facilities Design Guidelines.

G. Pedestrian and Bicycle Policies

Encourage travel by means other than the automobile and provide for the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists throughout the Chugiak-Eagle River area. Future road improvement projects, which involve major reconstruction or construction of additional lanes, should include bicycle and pedestrian facilities where feasible and as funding allows.

Incorporate internal pedestrian and bicycle networks in all new developments, as well as connections to external networks, which permit a real alternative to the automobile.

H. Congestion Management Strategy Policies

Encourage the management of congestion through strategies identified in its Congestion Management Program. Strategies of particular relevance to Chugiak-Eagle River include:

Transportation System Management (TSM)

- Signal interconnect systems, signal coordination and synchronization, and other signal systems to ease traffic flow;
- Turn lanes and pockets to allow turning vehicles to move out of through traffic lanes; and
- Access control for arterials and major collectors to minimize disruptions in traffic flow.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

- Encouraging the use of high occupancy vehicles such as carpools and vanpools;
- Promoting reduced employee travel during the daily peak travel periods through flexible work schedules and programs, which allow employees to work part- or full-time at home or at an alternate work site closer to home.

I. General Environmental Protection and Conservation Policy

Design transportation facilities within the Chugiak-Eagle River area minimizing adverse environmental impacts resulting from both their construction and operation, including but not limited to noise, air pollution, and negative impacts on wetlands and watersheds.

J. Air Quality Policy

Support on-going efforts to reduce dust pollution (PM10) in Chugiak-Eagle River.

K. Neighborhood Policy

Minimize residential and business relocations resulting from transportation projects.

L. Ongoing Transportation Planning Policy

Review and, if necessary, update the Chugiak-Eagle River Long-Range Transportation Plan every three years as required by federal TEA-21 planning regulations.

M. Maintenance Policy

Give full consideration to reducing maintenance and operating cost during the design and construction of all transportation improvements in the Chugiak-Eagle River study area.

N. Rural Lifestyle Policy

Give full consideration to preserving the existing rural lifestyle in low-density areas of Chugiak-Eagle River in the design of transportation improvement projects.

O. Connectivity Policy

Provide an interconnected network of streets for ease and variety of travel, and to facilitate emergency response, particularly for fire and medical services, and evacuation in the event of a disaster. Connections between new and existing subdivisions should be required except in the following cases: excess slope, the presence of a wetland or other body of water which cannot be bridged or crossed, existing development on adjacent property prevents a street connection, or the presence of a freeway or railroad.

P. Roadway Design Policy

New subdivision roads should be designed in accordance with Section 21.85.030 of the Anchorage Municipal Code. The Platting Board should carefully scrutinize any requests for variances to these roadway improvement requirements.