DATE: September 29, 2009
TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Holly J Spoth-Torres, Park Development & Natural Resources Manager
SUBJECT: Highway to Highway Project Briefing: Seward Highway to Glenn Highway

Who is on the Project Team?
The Seward Highway to Glenn Highway Connection (H2H) project is being undertaken by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) (Federal Lead Agency), the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) (Joint Lead Agency), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) (Joint Lead Agency) in cooperation with the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) (Cooperating Agency) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) (Cooperating Agency).

Project Team Mission Statement: “Balancing transportation needs with community values.”
The project team will approach the project development process as a collaborative effort involving residents, businesses, and agencies in a meaningful dialog. We will develop context sensitive design and mitigation approaches to avoid and minimize community and natural resource impacts and balance community values. The team will develop a project that best meets the purpose and needs for the improvement, incorporates measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse effects on important community resources, and preserves or enhances community values.

Project Team Objectives

- Develop a project that is consistent with the transportation goals of the Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Plan and 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan.
- Develop streets that integrate the travel needs of all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians and transit.
- Consider land use goals and neighborhood values as part of the context integrated into the completed project.

What is the H2H project?
The project will reduce congestion by improving mobility and access for people and goods that use the arterial connection between the Seward and Glenn highways. These improvements are necessary for reducing congestion and improving travel efficiency, creating better neighborhood connections, reducing crashes, and enhancing multimodal connections.

Where is the project area?
The Seward and Glenn highway routes are divided highways approaching the Downtown and Midtown areas of Anchorage. The routes transition into urban arterial streets with connecting roads, stop lights, and commercial and residential access. The Seward and Glenn highways connect major local destinations within Anchorage and other regional destinations in Alaska and the Lower 48 states via Canada. Anchorage is Alaska’s largest city and is a major center for industry and commerce in the state.
**When will the project be complete?**
The environmental review process will take about three years. It began in spring of 2008 and the environmental review document will be completed by 2012. The process includes many opportunities for public input. If an alternative is selected that requires design and construction, then construction would be anticipated to start no sooner than 2014.

The H2H range of alternatives document is attached. For other documents related to the project, visit the website and links below.


**Purpose and Need:**
[http://www.highway2highway.com/Agency/081909/Purpose%20and%20Need%20ACCEPTED%20as%20given%20to%20agencies.pdf](http://www.highway2highway.com/Agency/081909/Purpose%20and%20Need%20ACCEPTED%20as%20given%20to%20agencies.pdf)

**Screening Criteria:**

**Range of Alternatives:** (This information is provided in your packet)
Would you like shorter commute times? Safer highways? Less cut-through traffic in your neighborhood?

We’re working toward a solution! The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) are leading the Seward Highway to Glenn Highway Connection project, also called the Highway-to-Highway or H2H project, in Anchorage, Alaska.

The project team is looking to improve mobility and access for people and goods in the roads that connect the Seward and Glenn highways. The lead agencies are coordinating the project with the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

**Background:** The H2H project is part of the Anchorage Bowl 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan, With 2027 Revisions (LRTP) which was adopted by the policy committee of the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS). The LRTP outlines how we can improve our transportation system to make Anchorage a better place to live, work, and raise future generations of Alaskans. The plan envisions the H2H project as essential to solving traffic congestion in Anchorage.

**Environmental Review Process:** Any project that may receive federal funds or require federal approval must complete an environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA also requires that other agencies, tribes, and the public have opportunities to participate on the project. During the environmental review process, the project team determines the need for the project, evaluates solutions, and analyzes impacts to the natural and human environment. For the H2H project, this process will be documented in an environmental impact statement (EIS).
**Final Decision:** At the end of the NEPA process, the lead agencies will make a decision on whether to proceed with the project and select the alternative that best solves the problems and considers impacts and public input.

**Cost:** The LRTP estimated the cost of the H2H concept at $581 million in 2005 dollars. The project team will update the cost estimates during the NEPA process once alternatives are developed. There is currently no designated funding for design and construction. Funding strategies will be researched as part of the project development process.

**Schedule:** The environmental review process, which began in the spring of 2008, will take about three years. The project team is working to finalize the environmental impact statement during 2010. If this occurs, the lead agencies could make a final decision by 2011. If they select a “build” alternative, construction could start as early as 2013.

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**Learn More, Contact Us:** Visit www.highway2highway.com to learn more about the H2H project and find out how to send us your comments, ideas, or questions. You can also give us a call or send us an e-mail: Julianne Hanson, P.E., Public Involvement Lead  
Phone: (907) 865-2202  
E-mail: contact@highway2highway.com
No Action Alternative

- What our community would look like if no action results from the Highway-to-Highway project.
- Current operations and already planned improvements and maintenance, would continue.
- This is the base case scenario for comparison with other reasonable alternatives in the Draft EIS.
- Review the maps at right to see major improvements to roads and transit service planned to happen with or without the H2H project.

The No Action Alternative is a snapshot of the future without the H2H project.
Stand-Alone Traffic Demand Management (TDM)/Transportation System Management (TSM)

- Assumes no roadway or transit capital improvements are made.
- Attempts to solve problems by implementing management strategies.
- Builds upon the already adopted and in-place strategies identified in the Anchorage Congestion Management Plan and the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

**Enhanced TDM Strategies**
- Fuel tax increases
- Implement parking management program
- Congestion pricing (charging to use the road network during rush hour)
- Transit-oriented development

**Enhanced TSM Strategies**
- Restripe roadway to increase the number of lanes by reducing lane width
- Convert on-street parking to travel lanes
- Bus queue jumpers (lets transit jump ahead of other traffic at signals)
- Event management and event traffic control plans (e.g., at Sullivan Arena)
- Manage access by reducing driveways and cross streets
- Provide additional signage and lighting, including real time traffic information
- Incident management for accidents
- Provide spot intersection improvements
- Add additional transit (increase buses/operations) without major capital investment

TDM/TSM concepts will also be considered as complementary elements with other H2H alternatives.

**TDM Definition:**
TDM strategies influence travel behavior and demand. These strategies seek to improve system performance by reducing the demand for single occupancy vehicle trips.

**TSM Definition:**
TSM strategies are designed to achieve the best possible performance from the existing transportation system.
Stand-Alone Commuter Rail Alternative

- Provides service between Wasilla and Anchorage on existing Alaska Railroad Corporation track (see map for stations).
- Inbound trains: 2 morning peak, 1 mid-morning, 1 late afternoon
- Outbound trains: 1 morning peak, 1 early afternoon, 2 evening peak
- Commuter rail facilities include parking, transit, and pedestrian connections.
- Downtown, Midtown, and U-Med circulator system.
- Neighborhood connectivity improvements (consideration of grade separations, pedestrian and trail connections, and potentially narrower streets on the existing Seward-Glenn arterial connection).

Commuter Rail is an electric or diesel powered railway operating on heavy rail. Typically it is an inter-urban passenger train service running between a major city and another city or suburb. Service is operated on a regular basis and makes regular stops at train stations to pick-up and drop off passengers. Commuter rail has been discussed as a means to serve Mat-Su commuters.
Stand-Alone Light Rail Alternative

- Provides service to the Midtown, Downtown, and U-Med employment centers.
- Routes were identified to optimize connectivity to major employment centers and to minimize walking and transfer needs to and from those major destinations.
- Bus routes would be adapted to support light rail system
- Neighborhood connectivity improvements (consideration of grade separations, pedestrian and trail connections, and potentially narrower streets on the existing Seward-Glenn arterial connection).

Light rail is a lightweight passenger rail service operating with one car (or a small number of cars) on fixed rails, usually in a separate right-of-way, but can be mixed in with traffic. Light rail vehicles or cars are usually powered by an overhead electric line.
Stand-Alone Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative

- Includes a bus-only lane built in the highway right-of-way.
- Traffic signals with transit priority would allow buses to move efficiently.
- Additional stations would be provided.
- Neighborhood connectivity improvements (consideration of grade separations, pedestrian and trail connections, and potentially narrower streets on the existing Seward-Glenn arterial connection).

Bus Rapid Transit is a type of limited-stop bus service that relies on technology to help speed up the service. It operates on an exclusive transit right-of-way, high-occupancy-vehicle lanes, expressways, or ordinary streets. It can be thought of as a light rail system that uses buses. BRT uses technology that gets the traffic signals to change to green for the bus, uses fast and convenient fare collection, coupled with land use policies that support and encourage transit use.
Land Use and Transit Alternative

The Land Use and Transit alternative(s) will:
• change the distribution of new population and employment growth;
• make modifications to the transit system to try to eliminate the need for a major capital highway construction project
• use Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Plan as a starting point
• use No Action road network (without the H2H project) as a base
• use People Mover’s expansion plans as a base

Currently, there are three concepts based on the following themes:
• NW Focus
• A/C and Northern Lights/Benson Transit Corridors
• Midtown Downtown
Concept A: NW Focus

- Base transit is People Mover expansion plan
- Additional transit route connecting Dimond Center and the Downtown transit center via C Street
- Shifts the growth in population and employment west of the Seward Highway and north of Tudor Road
- Increases employment and housing density in employment centers, town centers, and transit centers
- Makes better use of the existing roadway network by shifting traffic away from the Seward/Glenn corridor
- Promotes walkable streets and mixed land uses
Concept B: A/C and Northern Lights/Benson Corridor

- Base transit is People Mover expansion plan
- Has premium transit along the A/C corridor and the Northern Lights/Benson corridor
- Premium transit includes:
  - Operate 18 hours per day (from 5:30 am to 11:30 pm)
  - Have 10 minute peak period headways, 15 minute off peak headways
  - Will operate in an exclusive right-of-way
  - Additional amenities at transit stops
- Concentrates new population and employment growth on high capacity transit corridors
- Assumes a higher percentage of population and employment growth in the Anchorage Bowl area
- Promotes walkable streets and mixed land uses
Concept C: Midtown Downtown

- Base transit is People Mover expansion plan
- Concentrates new growth in the Downtown, Midtown, and U-Med
- Has a premium transit circulator connecting Downtown, Midtown, and U-Med
- Premium transit includes:
  - Operate 18 hours per day (from 5:30 am to 11:30 pm)
  - Have 10 minute peak period headways, 15 minute off peak headways
  - Will operate in an exclusive right-of-way
  - Additional amenities at transit stops
- Assumes the Anchorage Bowl captures some additional share of regional growth
- Promotes walkable streets and mixed land uses
All Corridor Alternatives include new road construction, sized to meet traffic demand. Sections may be depressed with overpasses for local streets.

All Corridor Alternatives include pedestrian and bike paths, and neighborhood connectivity improvements.

All Highway Alternatives also include transit improvements. The two transit packages are:

**A — LRTP/Anchorage 2020 Transit**
Transit Package A assumes existing transit trends (express buses traveling mixed in with general traffic) and TDM/TSM strategies.
See the No Action Alternative board for a list of planned projects.

**B — Enhanced Transit**
Transit Package B assumes enhanced transit service, increased headways, HOV lane on the Glenn Highway, transit priority at traffic signals, enhanced bus stops, transit service on the Seward Highway, and enhanced TDM/TSM strategies.
Cordova Alternative

- Highways would be sized to meet anticipated corridor demand.
- Pedestrian and bike paths.
- Neighborhood connectivity improvements (consideration of grade separations, pedestrian and trail connections, and potentially narrower streets on the existing Seward-Glenn arterial connection).
- Multimodal options:

  A — LRTP/Anchorage 2020 Transit
  B — Enhanced Transit

To Eagle River Station and Birchwood Park-n-Ride lots

Cordova Alternative

LEGEND
- Highway
- Interchanges
- Glenn Highway BRT
- Seward Highway BRT
- Glenn Highway BRT with optional service prioritized to Downtown, Midtown, or U-Med
- Freeway
- National Highway System (NHS)
- Key NHS destination
- Main railroad
- Existing transit station
Gambell-Ingra Alternative

- Highways would be sized to meet anticipated corridor demand.
- Pedestrian and bike paths.
- Neighborhood connectivity improvements (consideration of grade separations, pedestrian and trail connections, and potentially narrower streets on the existing Seward-Glenn arterial connection).
- Multimodal options:

  A — LRTP/Anchorage 2020 Transit
  B — Enhanced Transit

To Eagle River Station and Birchwood Park-n-Ride lots

LEGEND
- Highway
- Interchange
- Glenn Highway BRT
- Seward Highway BRT
- Glenn Highway BRT with optional service prioritized to Downtown, Midtown, or U-Med
- Freeway
- National Highway System (NHS)
- Key NHS destination
- Main railroad
- Existing transit station

To O'Malley Park-n-Ride lot and Huffman Town Center
Orca Alternative

- Highways would be sized to meet anticipated corridor demand.
- Pedestrian and bike paths.
- Neighborhood connectivity improvements (consideration of grade separations, pedestrian and trail connections, and potentially narrower streets on the existing Seward-Glenn arterial connection).
- Multimodal options:
  
  **A — LRTP/Anchorage 2020 Transit**
  
  **B — Enhanced Transit**

To Eagle River Station and Birchwood Park-n-Ride lots

To O’Malley Park-n-Ride lot and Huffman Town Center
15th Alternative

- Highways would be sized to meet anticipated corridor demand.
- Pedestrian and bike paths.
- Neighborhood connectivity improvements (consideration of grade separations, pedestrian and trail connections, and potentially narrower streets on the existing Seward-Glenn arterial connection).

Multimodal options:

A — LRTP/Anchorage 2020 Transit

B — Enhanced Transit

To O’Malley Park-n-Ride lot and Huffman Town Center
Full Range of Potential Alternatives

Northern Lights Alternative

- Highways would be sized to meet anticipated corridor demand.
- Pedestrian and bike paths.
- Neighborhood connectivity improvements (consideration of grade separations, pedestrian and trail connections, and potentially narrower streets on the existing Seward-Glenn arterial connection).
- Multimodal options:

  A — LRTP/Anchorage 2020 Transit
  B — Enhanced Transit

To O’Malley Park-n-Ride lot and Huffman Town Center

To Eagle River Station and Birchwood Park-n-Ride lots
Boniface Alternative

- Highways would be sized to meet anticipated corridor demand.
- Pedestrian and bike paths.
- Neighborhood connectivity improvements (consideration of grade separations, pedestrian and trail connections, and potentially narrower streets on the existing Seward-Glenn arterial connection).
- Multimodal options:
  
  A — LRTP/Anchorage 2020 Transit
  
  B — Enhanced Transit

To Eagle River Station and Birchwood Park-n-Ride lots

To O’Malley Park-n-Ride lot and Huffman Town Center

Full Range of Potential Alternatives

Seward Highway to Glenn Highway

MULTIMODAL SOLUTIONS
moving people and goods

LEGEND
- Highway
- Interchanges
- Glenn Highway BRT
- Seward Highway BRT
- Glenn Highway BRT with optional service prioritized to Downtown, Midtown, or U-Med
- Freeway
- National Highway System (NHS)
- Key NHS destination
- Main railroad
- Existing transit station
East City Alternative

- Highways would be sized to meet anticipated corridor demand.
- Pedestrian and bike paths.
- Neighborhood connectivity improvements (consideration of grade separations, pedestrian and trail connections, and potentially narrower streets on the existing Seward-Glenn arterial connection).
- Multimodal options:

  A — LRTP/Anchorage 2020 Transit
  B — Enhanced Transit

To Eagle River Station and Birchwood Park-n-Ride lots

LEGEND
- Highway
- Interchange
- Glenn Highway BRT
- Seward Highway BRT
- Glenn Highway BRT with optional service prioritized to Downtown, Midtown, or U-Med
- Freeway
- National Highway System (NHS)
- Key NHS destination
- Main railroad
- Existing transit station
Seward-Glenn Arterial Expansion Alternative

- Expand Seward-Glenn arterial sections by one lane each direction.
- Neighborhood connectivity improvements (sidewalk and trail connection on the existing Seward-Glenn arterial connection).
- Multimodal options:

A — LRTP/Anchorage 2020 Transit
B — Enhanced Transit

To Eagle River Station and Birchwood Park-n-Ride lots

To O'Malley Park-n-Ride lot and Huffman Town Center
Arterial Expansion Alternative

- Expand identified arterials by one lane in each direction.
- Neighborhood connectivity improvements (pedestrian overpasses, sidewalk and trail connections, on the existing Seward-Glenn arterial connection).
- Multimodal options:

A — LRTP/Anchorage 2020 Transit
B — Enhanced Transit

To Eagle River Station and Birchwood Park-n-Ride lots

Arterial Expansion
Transit

LEGEND
- Arterial expansion
- Glenn Highway BRT
- Seward Highway BRT
- Freeway
- National Highway System (NHS)
- Key NHS destination
- Main railroad
- Existing transit station

To O’Malley Park-n-Ride lot and Huffman Town Center