



# CHUAC Meeting Notes

Federal Project No: NH-000S(588)  
AKSAS Project No. 58544

Subject: Public Input and Project Status for CHUAC	
Client: DOT&PF	
Project: H2H Project	Project No: 80510
Meeting Date: September 15, 2008 4:00pm to 7:00pm	In Attendance: See Sign In Sheet
Notes by: Erin Begier	

## Notes:

### Welcome – John McPherson

Introductions of those in attendance were led by Louise Smart. Louise asked the group to go around the table, introduce themselves, and tell one thing that they might have heard about the project since the last meeting. The following list of items was recorded during the introductions:

- Where it might go and impacts on the areas where it won't go are concerns.
- Concerns about relieving congestion.
- When will we build it?
- Rush hour traffic relief is important.
- What is the impact on transit, freight movement?
- Concern that it's never going to be done.
- When are we going to do something? Take money from the Knik Arm Bridge project to support H2H.
- Alternative routes are considered and pedestrian and cross traffic should also be considered.
- Concern that the route should be around town; bypassing town
- Moving freight efficiently, proximity to port is important.
- Lots of questions, why wasn't it wasn't done long ago.
- Commuters to and from employment centers should be a prime consideration.
- Move it forward.
- Additional routes.
- Why this route and not considering mass transit.
- Make sure connections for pedestrians and bikes are recognized.
- The minority community has concerns about housing and taking property. They want to know, "Will they need to move."
- Excitement from public that this be not just H2H but that it will work to solve other transit problems

### What We're Hearing: Update on Public Comments to date – Julianne Hanson

Public scoping meetings were held in Mountain View and Fairview on July 27 and 29, 2008. These were supplemented by "listening posts" at Carr's Muldoon, Carr's Gambell, Carr's Sears Mall, Northway Mall, and Red Apple in August. One thing the team realized was that not many people had heard of the project, but once they were informed about it many agreed there is a huge problem.

About 150 written comments have been received to date and the project team is in the process of analyzing the comments. Some of the concerns we've heard include:

- The Name – Highway to Highway implies only roads and suggests that a bypass is the best connection option.
- People are tired of gridlock and are concerned about the mix of traffic (trucks, cars, commuters, and pedestrian/bike).
- People want the project to be forward-thinking – why build more roads when gas is so expensive? Leave room for future building, look beyond the 20 year horizon.
- Consider alternatives – things like bus service more often, new routes, better access to stops, plowing at stops, and better lighting.

Other concerns included better access; less congestion; what would happen to Fairview; what could it potentially do to property values and what is the acquisition process; project cost; concern we could make things worse than it is right now; air quality; multiple lanes; noise impacts; light pollution; and construction impacts.

Upcoming activities include:

- All Speak luncheon on September 18.
- Neighborhood Partnership meetings the week of September 22<sup>nd</sup>, which will focus on contact sensitive solutions, knowledge of traffic areas in the neighborhoods.
- Listening posts at Fred Meyer on Northern Lights and Benson in October have been requested.
- A second round of public open houses will be held the week of October 27<sup>th</sup>, which will highlight a revised purpose and need based on public comments and maps showing broad multipurpose corridors under preliminary consideration.

### **Revising the Purpose and Need: A Continuing Evolution – John McPherson**

John summarized what had been discussed at the previous CHUAC meeting and how the team will use it in the future (hand out).

Main changes being considered to be included in the Purpose and Need statement include

- Walkability
- Land use
- Sense of community
- Future looking
- Planning considerations
- Exploring integrated transit solutions
- Transit

Benefits/Costs to be used in the Impact Analysis include:

- Saving time
- Volumes of traffic

The people in the project area are heavy users of transit, and the project team is working on better ways of incorporating and describing transit needs in the corridor.

The purpose and need statement will be more multi-modal in focus, exploring integrated transit solutions. It will also better reflect how this project can fit in with the Anchorage 2020 comprehensive plan.

The team wants to think beyond buses and beyond a 20-year time frame. The project should be flexible; for example, light rail could be planned in conjunction with the highway or other options could be incorporated as part of a more multimodal plan that might occur beyond the typical 20-year time frame.

Louise asked the group why they think they should care about the Purpose and Need. Her response was that it justifies the project and drives what alternatives will be reviewed.

### **Purpose and Need Overview – John McPherson**

John McPherson provided a presentation overview of the purpose and need statement (underlined topics relate to the slide show headings) and explained the refinements being considered by the project team based on CHUAC and public input.

#### Purpose

The Highway to Highway name is of concern for some people. The project could be more than just adding additional lanes, but it does need to solve the problems that occur on the existing connection. A more multi modal solution is being considered.

Comment by the CHUAC:

- A bypass won't do anything for congestion – this should be captured in the needs statement

#### Project Area

The map shows the National Highway System (NHS). It is well located to serve the types of land uses it is intended for, like freight centers such as the airport and port, employment centers, military installations, and to communities beyond Anchorage.

CHUAC Comments:

- How long, in miles, is the proposed Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) concept project in question (John responded that it is approximately four miles)
- The area in town is a botched NHS
- Do the project parameters go south of International Airport road? – (John indicated that it may be necessary to expand to that area there if an alternative arises, but currently we are not looking south of there.)
- Lots of congestion at port, and LRTP route doesn't look like it will directly solve the port congestion. Freight through downtown is bothersome with local traffic, pedestrian/bikes.

#### Freight Data

Trucking come from port and airport.  
15% trips out to the valley via commercial trucks  
10% trips going south are commercial trucks  
Second largest cargo airport in nation  
18,000 downtown workers, 24,000 midtown workers

CHUAC Comments:

- Can we get copies of these maps (Available on Web site and can be e-mailed)
- Question was asked regarding the boundary of Midtown (John answered that it is from Chester Creek, to Tudor to Seward Highway to Minnesota.) He was asked if the employment numbers include U-Med area or Airport. He indicated the numbers exclude the hospitals and university).

#### High Demand

Demand is expected to grow as Anchorage and surrounding areas grow.

Comment

- Need to show Ingra and Gambell and Benson and Northern Lights demands graphically. John indicated that the team could change the map to better reflect the total volume on each of those two couplets.

### System Continuity

There are streets with driveways, traffic signals, arterial streets in between two freeway segments. This system doesn't meet the needs of current and future traffic needs. Currently, it's a freeway coming in to a signal, which disrupts the flow of traffic. It results in driver frustration and has safety implications. It also creates a barrier. The system needs to accommodate kids crossing to schools, and residents getting to stores and accessing businesses. We are asking the current system roads there to do too much.

Speed, design, and traffic conditions create a barrier, for vehicles; including buses and pedestrians trying to cross the NHS corridor.

### CHUAC Comments

- Glenn Highway creates a pedestrian barrier, yet the pedestrian crossing at Bragaw Street was removed. Why? (John explained that it is being replaced with a new bridge and made better for the neighborhood. Many often did not use the existing pedestrian overpass.)
- Will this presentation be available? (It is currently on the CHUAC page of the Web site.)
- Is there a written purpose and need statement? (John explained that it is on the Web site; a revised version of the purpose and need statement will be released later in October.)

### **Data Review, Questions, and Answers**

Four topical experts from the Municipality of Anchorage and the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities were invited to present more detail on four areas of interest expressed by the CHUAC at the last meeting.

(Underlined topics relate to the slide show headings)

### Traffic Modeling – Teresa Brewer, MOA Traffic

#### What Does the Model Do?

- Travel Demand Forecasting

#### How does the Model Forecast?

- Diagram showing who travels and the purpose of their trips

### Model Steps

- Diagram

### Model Outputs

- Diagram

### Model Calibration & Validation

- Diagram showing variables versus calibration and data to validation

### Anchorage Travel Model Calibration & Validation 2005

- Chart showing daily traffic counts

### Anchorage Travel Model Calibration & Validation 2005

- Chart showing traffic counts NB versus SB New Glenn Highway

### Anchorage Travel Model Calibration & Validation 2005

- Chart showing traffic counts from A street to Medfra street

### Anchorage Travel Model Calibration & Validation 2005

- Synopsis of report
  - √ Socioeconomic & demographic attributes
  - √ Estimated person trips

- √ Estimated passenger trips
- √ Estimated vehicle volumes
- √ FHWA Peer review

#### Existing Traffic Volume

- Trips in the Anchorage bowl including Mat-Su commuters are about 1 million each weekday.

#### 2006 Glenn Highway Average Daily Traffic

- Traffic counts for different areas in town.

#### 2007 Volume to Capacity Ratio

- Map showing volume to capacity ratio.

#### Level of Service Road Network in 2002

- Map grading routes with A-F.

#### Population Growth, Projected commuters from Chugiak and Eagle River and Mat-Su Valley

- Charts

#### 2006 Regional Population & Employment

- Chart showing population versus annual employment.

#### 2027 Projected Regional Population, Households and Jobs

- Chart

#### 2025 LRTP Future Growth

- About 25% of the future Municipality of Anchorage growth will occur in the Chugiak-Eagle River area.

#### Anchorage Bowl 2025 LRTP

- Glenn Highway Corridor stats.

#### 2025 Forecasted ADT

- Map showing routes.

#### 2025 Forecasted ADT

- Glenn Highway/Seward Highway Corridor stats.

#### 2023 Scenarios

- No Build
- Existing & Committed projects
- All Improvements
  - √ Glenn Highway corridor, Ingra Gambell couplet, Seward Highway corridor, East and Central Anchorage arterials impacted.
- To meet 2025 demand and address capacity issues
- New projects scenario developed.

#### Level of Service for “No Build 2002 Road Network in 2025”

- Maps showing scenarios mentioned in previous slides.

#### 2025 LRTP Project Recommendation

- To improve system connectivity and accommodate future demand, the 2025 LRTP identifies the Glenn and Seward Highway connection. Traffic at the junction of the Glenn and Seward Highway is expected to exceed 100,000 vehicles per day.

(Map showing details of routes around town)

Baseline data included in the traffic model included:

- Population growth distribution
- Data is taken down to the block – (traffic analysis zone)
- Demographics – how many workers, children, workers
- Traffic generator – ports, tourists, airports
- Speed of the roads

Trip distribution

- Mode choice

CHUAC Comments

- Do you take into account alternative education? Lots of people do provide their own transport to charter schools. (Teresa said she would research the answer.)
- Are you including existing transit? (Yes. We are looking at future transit needs as well.)

Model /outputs include calibrated and validated data:

- Actual versus projected traffic.
- Look at a link - % of traffic versus. forecasted
- Quadrants and streamlines – look at traffic types.

CHUAC Comments

- Does the model include the expanded port? – (Teresa replied that the map that is shown is for existing traffic and does not include it because it is a future project.) Jon Spring indicated that for projections of future traffic the Port was talked to and is included as a “special generator”.)
- Did you run projections with the gas pipeline in mind? (Yes, it was in the assumptions within the next 30 years as part of ISER’s report; you can find the report on line.)

The model was peer reviewed and well represents the AMATS area.

A travel forecast is made based upon existing data.

- Existing data show 40,000 to 50,000 trips per day on the Glenn Highway
- By 2025 about 500,000 in the regional population
- Model was updated to show traffic conditions with and without the Knik arm bridge

CHUAC Comment

- How do you know the Glenn corridor traffic will increase? (Teresa answered that it is based on employment data from census, travel surveys and other data from entities such as UAA Institute of Social and Economic Research, ISER)

The 2023 LRTP scenarios include various alternatives:

- No build
- Existing projects ready to be constructed
  - East anchorage and central anchorage is affected by incoming traffic
- All improvements planned,
- Etc.

CHUAC Comment

- Where does KABATA fall into this (It wasn't it wasn't in the original LRTP update but was added in 2007. It is in the current modeling assumptions.)

With the LRTP project scenario connecting the Seward and Glenn highways, accessibility improves and congestion is relieved. Vehicles are removed from local streets benefiting neighborhoods.

**CHUAC Comments:**

- Cars are removed, is there an increase in traffic? – (It was explained that traffic increases but cars would be diverted from local city streets and attracted to the highways—It doesn't reduce the amount of trips just shifts them from local roads to highways.)
- There were questions about what happens to the level of service at Northern Lights and Benson? Based on the map shown it looks like there is still congestion there.
- Will you have updated data? It seems like much of this is based on 2005 data. (John McPherson indicated that we would be revising the forecast and would be updating some data.)

**Accidents and Safety – Scott Thomas, ADOT&PF**

The project area is the location of Anchorage's largest transportation problems. Between the two highways there are the highest number of crashes (vehicle to vehicle, vehicle to pedestrian/bike, and minor and fatal) and the highest volumes of traffic. (Underlined topics relate to the slide show headings)

In the road hierarchy, different roads serve different purposes. For example, 16,000 trips on a two lane road is a very high level of traffic.

In many cases the busiest intersections are also the locations of the most crashes. . These overlap at 20 intersections within the project area.

Crashes divided by traffic volume equal the crash rate. The project area has nine intersections with the highest target crash rate value.

**CHUAC Comment**

- Are there data on the drivers in the crashes, local drivers versus out of area drivers (There is no data on that or gender as reasons for crashes.)

From a safety perspective, numbers of major injuries are almost double that of the rest of the state. Minor crashes are about the same as the rest of the state.

**CHUAC Comment**

- Would the highway decrease injuries on arterial streets? (Scott - Yes it would.)

**Why is H2H needed?**

- Most congestion
- Most crashes
- Benefit-cost ration is top ranked
- End result – road hierarchy

**CHUAC Comment**

- Are there any trends in car/car versus car/pedestrian/bike? (No real trend, but it's being monitored because last year was a bad year for crashes, especially at Northern Lights and Benson. Some maps are on the project Web site.)

**Crashes**

- Table showing crash data in Alaska, Southcentral and Anchorage

#### Bottlenecks

- Table showing highest rated bottleneck intersections in Anchorage

#### Total trips, left turns, stops at signals add up

- Map showing congestion

#### Comparisons

- Maps

#### Total Crashes, Volume, and Severity

- Maps

#### Safety Perspective

- Southcentral arterial roads 2000-2006 chart showing urban versus rural and the severity of the crashes.

#### Traffic Rules

- One road cannot serve all the purposes
- Fixing many left turns in a sequence can save time
- Remove split phases
- Adding lanes has limits – signals can only do so much
- Intersections with diminishing returns
- 4x6 lane intersections don't work well
- Congestion is relative – but Anchorage is the most congested in the state

#### CHUAC Comment:

What does work if not 4x6 lane intersections? (Scott - 3x3, one ways, and 4x4 arterial crossings)

#### Why is H2H needed?

- Most congestion
- Most crashes
- Benefit-cost ration is top ranked
- End result – road hierarchy

#### **Air Quality: Steve Morris, MOA**

(Underlined topics relate to the slide show headings)

#### Pollutants of concern include:

- Carbon monoxide
- Benzene – very high
- PM-10
- PM 2.5
- Airborne lead
- Ozone, sulfur dioxide – very low and not a concern

#### CHUAC Comment:

Why are the levels of Benzene so high? (Steve answered that gasoline content is higher than most of the country, and our sub-arctic climate levels also affect it)

### Carbon Monoxide

- 70% comes from automobiles – idling vehicles, diesel is low and doesn't contribute.
- Highest is in Spenard – cold starts and warm up idling (more pollutants come from idling versus driving)
- Plug in – reduces 60% of these emissions
- Anchorage has high level of carbon monoxide and is about 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation

### Particulate Matter

- PM10 is width of a human hair
  - When these levels are high there are more bronchitis cases
- PM2.5 is smaller yet. PM2.5 is typical of diesel exhaust
- Dust from unpaved roads, glacial silt, ash from volcanoes, industrial smoke stacks contribute to PM10
- Peaks in freeze-up and break-up
- Anchorage is among the lowest in the country in PM2.5 concentrations.

### CHUAC Comments

- Has Eagle River seen a drop in particulate matter because roads are being paved? (Yes)
- The Public wants local data. (The Muni is working on an Internet-based air quality data system that will be accessible to the public, but we don't have the data right now.)
- If a road was built below grade, would it have an effect on these numbers? (Yes, it is likely that PM-10 concentrations would drop with a below-grade road corridor).
- Is there currently baseline monitoring along proposed corridor (Not as of yet.)
- Will there be monitoring of air quality after the project? (This could be arranged if there were concerns.)

(Series of charts and photos supporting the particulate matter topic)

### **Transit Trends – Jody Karcz, MOA**

People Mover grew from 3+ million riders in 2002 to an estimated 4.1 million in 2008. AnchorRides (for seniors and people with disabilities) ridership decreased from 192,000 in 2002 to 180,000 in 2008 (est.) As this program is very expensive, they are actively trying to move riders from AnchorRIDES onto People Mover instead. People Mover offers one-on-one travel training, and Wednesdays are free for seniors. Share-a-Ride has grown from 68,000 annual trips in 2002 to 105,000 in 2008 (est.) (underlined topics relate to the slide show headings)

Commuters want choices and have proved that in the amount of growth People Mover has experienced.

### Comment

- How does ridership in Anchorage compare to other cities (Hard to cross compare, although Duluth may be comparable.)

### AnchorRides, People Mover, Share-a-Ride

#### Annual Ridership

- Table showing rates from 2002 to 2008 on AnchorRides, People Mover, Share-a-Ride

#### Revenues by Source

Funding for People Mover is 60% local tax support, 21% fares, and advertisements and grants. Alaska is one of two states nationally that offers no state support for public transit operations.

#### Plans for expansion include:

- Long term funding strategy
- Need to have 30 minute routes
- People Mover blueprint
- Downtown express shuttle
- Human Services Transportation Coordination plan
- Public Comments
- Chugiak – Eagle River 2007 LRTP
- Would like to add more busses to Saturday and Sunday routes
- LRTP goals will add vehicles and operating time
- Glenn Highway – every 6 to 10 minutes
- New bus routes – more expensive

Future needs include:

- Regional Transit Authority – adding vans and buses
- Explore alternative fuels
- Increased Coordination
- State funding for public transportation
- Improve travel times – Bus Rapid Transit

Comments

- If you double the bus fleet how many cars would be off of the street (Jody indicated she did not have that information.)
- What about today how many cars does People Mover take off the streets? (People Mover takes approximately 8,000 trips a day off the roads.)

**CHUAC Input to the Project Team**

Are we on the right track? Louise asked the group if the information from tonight captures issues for Anchorage. Responses from CHUAC members included:

- It doesn't include the impact of alternative schools on traffic
- Update the traffic forecast/modeling with current data
- Include more information about biking
- How does KABATA impact this
- Anchorage as a destination is not addressed – how will parking be addressed and how people move around in town.
- Multipurpose corridor.
- No build versus 2025 plan – doesn't see a lot of improvement. Improvements should last longer than 20 years—more like 40 to 50 years.

Have we captured the problems of this project? Louise asked if the team has captured the problems accurately. CHUAC members made the following suggestions:

- Highway to Highway implies bypass, need to include “congestion” in the title. The public wouldn't notice a name change this early in the project.
- It's more of an improvement project.

Next Steps

- The next CHUAC meeting will be on November 6 from 4pm to 7pm, CIRC 1<sup>st</sup> floor conference room. More information on purpose and need and screening criteria will be presented.
- Public open house meetings are tentatively planned for October 27, 28, 29
- Scoping comments on Purpose and Need should to be in by October 8.

**Adjourn 7:30pm**

