



## **MEETING SUMMARY**

### **Non-motorized Plan Agency Advisory Group Meeting #1: 27 September 2017**

**Meeting Objective:** Agency Introduction to the Anchorage Non-Motorized Plan

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Joni Wilm, Senior Transportation Planner for AMATS welcomed the group and provided a project overview. This project will update and combine the Bike Plan, the Pedestrian Plan and the Trail Plan into one, comprehensive Nonmotorized Transportation Plan for Anchorage.

Funding for this project comes from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) dollars through the Transportation Alternative Program, which supports transportation safety and recreation enhancements. This plan is a line item from the Vision Zero Grant.

Craig Lyon, the Municipality of Anchorage AMATS Coordinator gave an AMATS refresher for agency staff, the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions program. Every metropolitan area with a population of 50,000 or more residents must have a designated Metropolitan Planning Organization or MPO to qualify for federal highway funding and/or transit assistance. AMATS is the MPO for the Anchorage Bowl and Chugiak-Eagle River when federal transportation funds are used. Some requirements of this program include:

- Policy Committee
- Freight Advisory Committee
- Air Quality Committee
- Citizen Advisory Committee
- 20-year plan, 4-year plan, annual workplan

Additionally, AMATS has added the following to the program even though not required:

- Technical Advisory Committee
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Bike Plan (2010)
- Pedestrian Plan (2007)
- Areawide Trails Plan (1997)
- AMATS Public Involvement Plan

#### **PROJECT TEAM**

Municipality of Anchorage, AMATS

Joni Wilm, Senior Transportation Planner

Craig Lyon, AMATS Coordinator

Alta Planning and Design: Seattle, WA

Fred Young, Project Manager

Steve Durrant, Principal

Jessica Szlag, Anchorage-Based Project Manager

R&M Consultants: Anchorage, AK

Mark Frutiger, Transportation Engineer

Van Le, Planning, Stakeholder Engagement

Huddle AK: Anchorage, AK

Holly Spoth-Torres, Stakeholder Engagement

Chelsea Ward-Waller, Stakeholder Engagement

**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

Alta is a planning firm that focuses exclusively on accessibility, bicycle and pedestrian transportation. Alta has completed plans like this all over the United States and Canada including many winter cities. Alta has 30 offices and 240 staff, including an Anchorage office. Over the past 5 years Alta has been working on a variety of projects in Alaska including the Spenard Corridor Plan, the MOA 27<sup>th</sup> Ave. Bike Boulevard and the State of Alaska Pedestrian Plan. Additionally, Alta has given multiple presentations at local conferences and provided technical trainings to agency staff and the public.

Alta's plans typically include the following planning and analysis:

Analyze Level of Travel Stress for Non-Motorized Transportation: Are there bicycle and pedestrian facilities? How fast does vehicular traffic travel? Are facilities accessible?

Crash Analysis: Includes where collisions are occurring, why and displays using a heat map.

Public Health: We will use the new 500 cities data (Anchorage is one of the 500 cities) from the CDC to analyze 30 health indicators. We will analyze the dataset as it relates to non-motorized transportation infrastructure, programs and policy in Anchorage. We know that increasing the percentage of people that use non-motorized transportation decreases health care costs.

Demand Analysis: We will use a series of map overlays for nonmotorized transportation. Where do people access transit? Where do people live? Where do people work? Where do people buy groceries and receive other services? Where do people recreate? We will take this information and prioritize.

Design Guidelines & Standards: Alta will also complete design guidelines. Alta designed the National Guide for Urban Bikeways as well as the Rural Network Guide (Center for Prevention and FHWA). There are many locations in Anchorage where the rural network guide is totally applicable.

Winter Cycling Congress: Alta has been an active participant in the Winter Cycling Congress annually since its inception to encourage more people to bike during winter months.

## **PROJECT SCHEDULE & SCOPE**

Jessica Szlag, Anchorage-based Alta project manager presented the project schedule and scope.

The Anchorage Nonmotorized plan will follow a six-step process between September 2017 and April 2018 to include:

1. Guide
2. Listen
3. Learn
4. Envision
5. Share
6. Approve

The bulk of Agency Advisory Group staff time will be focused during the middle four steps of plan development: Listen, Learn, Envision and Share.

**LISTEN AND LEARN:** September 2017 – December 2017 – to include 2 AAG meetings, 2 Community Advisory Group meetings, community workshops, online crowdsourcing mapping, review of best practices of other winter cities, review of existing plans.

**ENVISION:** January 2018 – to include finalizing vision, goals and priorities for nonmotorized transportation in Anchorage as well as analyze five (5) test projects to determine realistic implementation costs.

**SHARE:** February – March 2018 to include public review draft release in February, 1 CAG and AAG meeting in March to review the draft plan and other public communication outreach events.

**APPROVE:** The project team will move the plan through the necessary review and approval processes and the AAG should participate by officially commenting through the appropriate agency channels but also sharing information with constituents.

## **AGENCY ADVISORY GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES**

The project team will guide the AAG through the process and important milestones. Overall the AAG represents the best of the best in your professional arena and should be prepared to do the following:

1. Represent the larger community and your professional arena
2. Meet 4 times to review progress and provide input throughout the planning process
3. Relay information about the plan to stakeholders
4. Encourage others to participate in the Community Involvement Events

The Agency Advisory Group will meet four (4) times: September 2017, November 2017, March 2018 and June 2018.

## **VISION – GOALS EXERCISE**

Steve Durrant, Alta Principal, facilitated the AAG through a visioning and goals exercise to begin to identify what agency staff think the vision and goals of the plan should be. The team handed out three different colors of post-it notes and were asked to answer the following questions. There was no limit to the number of answers staff could provide.

- What are your aspirations for this project? (ORANGE)
- What is a mark of success for this project? (PINK)
- What is your greatest fear or obstacle to the success of this project? (BLUE)

The team categorized the responses on-the-fly, posted them on the white board, and then discussed the themes listed below. A detailed compilation of all the responses received is attached.

### **ASPIRATIONS**

- Diversity
- Increase Mode
- Health Priority and Safety
- Coordination
- Better Infrastructure – Seductive networks, safe and convenient
- Implement-
- Transport
- Winter
- Attitudes
- Diversity-serve entire community, not just the wealthy, not just bikes

### **SUCCESS**

- Buy in
- Equity/Health
- Maintenance
- Relevance
- Safe
- Mode Goals

### **OBSTACLES**

- Maintenance
- Fluff/Teeth
- Narrow-shouldn't be all about bikes
- Progressive-more of the same designs
- Duplication
- \$ vs Safety
- Coordination
- Beliefs and behavior

## **NEXT STEPS**

The project team just received NTP and are in the process of collecting crowd-sourced trail data from community members. The application will be open for at least three weeks and then again in the winter to make sure we capture multiple seasons. The next TODO item is to draft and finalize a Public Involvement Plan and launch a project website.

The next AAG meeting in November will review project goals and objectives.

## **COMMENTS – QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

Q: What is the rationale to combine all the plans into one plan?

A: Agencies and staff have been trying to implement all three elements simultaneously. Challenges include funding estimates that are not accurate or consistent across plans. Explore creative best practices for design. We really need an integrated non-motorized plan. From a planning perspective, it's more efficient. We'll be able to do more. This methodology will reduce conflicts.

Q: Will the new plan have projected construction costs?

A: R&M Consultants have been recently designed and built road and non-motorized transportation infrastructure. As part of this project they are completing a detailed cost analysis for 5 test projects from which we will be able to better predict all project cost estimates. We will also predict inflation.

Q: Will there be a Data Blitz in the winter?

A: Yes, we are currently collecting data about user-experience focusing on paved trails throughout Anchorage. There is a downloadable app with a variety of drop-down attributes that describe trail conditions and safety. We will launch and advertise the app again in January to capture winter use.

Q: How will we capture crime and perceptions of crime?

A: As a starting point, the app will capture trail users' perception of crime.

Q: Is the data only for people with cell phones?

A: Right now, yes, but there will be an online map in October accessible by computer.

Q: Will this plan consider soft surface trail connections?

A: Yes, we will do a demand analysis on the trail network.

COMMENT: Maeve Nevins has data and community input on soft surface neighborhood connections to greenbelts.

COMMENT: Currently there is no winter maintenance of sidewalks in residential areas. This should be addressed.

Q: How does Safe Routes to Schools integrate into this planning effort?

A: We include this information as destinations during the demand analysis.

COMMENT: Anchorage's trail system is multi-use and unique. Park maintenance and the NSAA set tracks on many trails.

Q: Are we translating documents into other languages?

A: We will consider doing this as we develop the Public Involvement Plan.

Q: How do we make sure that those who are underrepresented get involved?

A: The Public Involvement Plan will be a multi-layered strategy focused on reaching a diversity of Anchorage residents including workshops, mobile meetings, stakeholder interviews and an app, to name a few.

COMMENT: Please have information about this plan at the library, recreation centers and the school district. Contact the ASD Transportation Coordinator.

COMMENT: Consider consolidating and transparently communicating corridors that are maintained for the winter. (Examples: Montreal, Calgary, Minneapolis)

#### ATTACHMENTS

1. Agenda
2. Powerpoint
3. Sign-In Sheets
4. Aspirations, Success, Obstacles