

**ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION  
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Mayor's Conference Room**

**8th Floor**

**City Hall**

**632 West Sixth Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska**

**September 9, 2004**

**1:00 PM**

Those in attendance were:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>REPRESENTING</u>
* Bill Robertson	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Regional Director
** John Tolley	ADOT/PF
Sandra Cook	ADOT/PF
** Rob Campbell	ADOT/PF
David Post	ADOT/PF
Jeff Otteson	ADOT/PF, Statewide Planning Chief
Therese Stokes	ADOT/PF
* Tom Chapple	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Air & Water Quality
** Cindy Heil	ADEC
* Mark Begich	Municipal Mayor
Heather Rauch	MOA/Mayor's Office
* Brian Whittle	MOA/Assembly
* Janice Shamberg	MOA/Assembly
Pamela Jennings	MOA/Assembly
Craig Lyon	MOA/TD
** Tom Wilson	MOA/ Public Transportation Dept.
Randy Kinney	VEI Engineering
Vern Roelfs	VEI Engineering
Keith Morberg	VEI Engineering
Cheryl Shroyer	WASTE
Kevin Gray	Self
Shirley McGrath	DeArmoun Road
Ann Flister	DeArmoun Road
Mike Flister	DeArmoun Road
Paul Laverty	Self
Steve Voves	Self
Deborah Voves	Self
Max Lowe	DeArmoun Road
Paul Rasmussen	Huffman/O'Malley Community Council

Walt Parker	Anchorage Citizens Coalition
Cheryl Richardson	Anchorage Citizens Coalition
Richard Mitchell	AMATS Air Quality Advisory Committee
Dee Essert	Sand Lake Community Council
Jeanne McQueary	Strawberry Road Committee/Anchorage Road Coalition
Frank McQueary	Strawberry Road Committee/Anchorage Road Coalition
Mark Carr	Self
Becky Carr	Self
Sharon Wolf	Self
Gary Hitchings	Self

\* AMATS Policy Committee members

\*\* AMATS Technical Advisory Committee members

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

CHAIR KEITH called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. All Policy Committee members were present with Brian Whittle participating via teleconference.

### **2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT**

CHAIR KEITH encouraged public involvement in this meeting of the AMATS Policy Committee. He explained that Staff would first make their presentation, followed by any comments from Policy Committee members, and the floor would then be open to public comment.

### **3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MR. LYON reviewed the agenda for this meeting of the AMATS Policy Committee. Item 6.b was moved to a Business Item.

MAYOR MARK BEGICH moved for approval of the agenda, as amended.  
TOM CHAPPLE seconded.

*There being no objection, the motion passed unanimously.*

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None**

**5. BUSINESS ITEMS**

JEFF OTTESON with ADOT presented information on the TEA-21 Reauthorization. He noted that funding levels are problematic, given the fact that high gas prices make gas tax increases difficult, bonds must overcome deficit concerns, and there are still questions about the deductibility of earmarks from each state. Populous states want a 95% minimum return, up from the current level of 90.5%. This means that Alaska's high return level of 570% is jeopardized. Of further concern is the fact that several donor states have leadership posts in Congress.

MR. OTTESON explained that recently the Senate passed a bill that was \$318 billion on paper but was \$299 billion after firewalls were considered. The House has passed a bill that is about \$275 billion. There was talk before the August recess that the President had moved up from the \$275, so the debate now is in the \$275 to \$300 billion range. There seems to be an agreement that it will not go above \$300 billion. They have not resolved the issue of donor/recipient and earmark deductibility and other secondary issues.

Of the \$275 billion, \$216 billion would be allocated to the highway program. Over the six-year period, that is approximately \$36 billion. In 2004, Congress allocated \$33 billion. The first year would be at the lowest level and the next five years would ramp up incrementally. MR. OTTESON noted that the 2004 funding has not come to the State in a single allocation, rather it has come slowly through five continuation bills. Congress acted in July for funding for August/September, but that funding has not yet arrived. Money cannot be obligated on a project until funding is received. This makes management of a program by the MPO very difficult. In addition, Congress only extended federal highways through September 24<sup>th</sup>. This year, the earmarks made by Congress were deducted out of the core programs. The fix for Section 115 has been widely discussed, but it is not complete.

ADOT became aware on August 30<sup>th</sup> that in 1986 Senator Byrd inserted language in the IRC that says if gas tax receipts nationally fall below a certain level there is an automatic triggering mechanism that reduces all transportation programs. Alaska's share of that reduction is \$8 million this year. It appears the reason for reduced gas receipts is that the high cost of fuel has reduced demand nationwide. 2004 is the first year this 1986 law has been triggered.

The House and Senate have passed a transportation bill, both of which are very difficult to read given the format of add/subtract. The deadline for Congress to pass this legislation is this month because of impending November elections. There are several major issues before Congress in addition to the transportation bill, including the 9/11 Commission, reorganizing the intelligence agencies, an energy bill, and all of the funding bills except for the Department of Defense. If a reauthorization is not done in September, the process will begin again.

Senate Bill 1072 increases ferry funding and includes funding of the Denali Commission for transportation. This bill generally had a higher funding level, but new revenue would be required to achieve that higher funding level. It does not effectively streamline the process associated with projects and has setasides. An example is that resource agencies would have a seat at the table in developing STIPs and TIPs. House Resolution 3550 does not yet increase donor share to other states, it does have a re-opener after 2005 on funding levels, it has some modest revenue numbers to achieve funding of \$275 billion, but it contains billions in new earmarks. The final bill would have to become a blend of both the Senate and House bills. MR. OTTESON stated he visited Washington D.C. last week and spoke with several officials in USDOT and they indicate that progress on the reauthorization has stalled. There are shortages of time, money and consensus to achieve the reauthorization.

MR. OTTESON believed that the national transportation program is losing focus. For nearly 40 years, the primary purpose of the National Transportation Program was to build the interstate transportation system. Earmarks have now replaced the notion of building the interstate and more and more setasides for special interests are being asked to come out of the

program, such as stormwater, school zones, construction camps, and others. He also thought that the way the revenue is collected might be in jeopardy. With hybrid vehicles and alternative fuels, the revenue source of \$1 per gallon of gas is losing its ability to keep up with travel demand. For example, in an attempt to get around the gallon tax, the State of Oregon is instituting a program where 1000 residents in the Eugene area will equip their cars with a GPS chip to document how many miles are driven in the state of Oregon and outside of the state; they will be taxed on the Oregon miles only. States are also looking to tolls and state and local taxes to supplant the federal program.

Without reauthorization, a 5% reduction is anticipated from 2004 due to the Byrd law. This year, the Byrd law will result in a 2.5% reduction, but it triggered late in the year. Secondly, the topic of apportionments and obligation authority will come in equal amounts. Historically, Alaska has received more apportionments than it has obligation authority. This resulted in flexibility in terms of how federal fund could be spent. To the extent that flexibility does not exist, a STIP or TIP will be more difficult to develop. MR. OTTESON explained that apportionment and obligation authority is a dual accounting system through which Congress allocates money through various committees. Transportation committees allocate program funds as an apportionment that is typically multi-year in nature. Finance committees control total spending through obligation authority. He explained that \$1 of apportionment matched with \$1 of obligation authority yields \$1 of cash. There are hundreds of types of apportionment and each reflects a policy goal of Congress. Apportionment usually tallies more than obligation authority. The more common apportionments include NHS, CMAQ, STP, Interstate Maintenance, Transportation Enhancement, Bridge, Safety, and others. The obligation authority expires annually. If it is not spent, it transfers to another state. The obligation authority normally sets the cap on total spending as it typically runs at about 85% to 90% of apportionment authority. Most of the spending rules came from apportionments, not obligation authority.

Since 2003, Alaska has been getting apportionments and obligation authority in roughly equal amounts. The loss of surplus apportionment will result in less flexibility in which type of projects proceed. All the apportionments will

have to be used, even those that have been typically hard to use, such as that of bridges.

Without a 2005 reauthorization, the State would receive \$49.4 million in STP, \$6.2 million in Transportation Enhancement (TE), and \$11.4 in CMAQ. For AMATS, this translates to \$11.0 million in STP, \$1.4 million in TE, and \$3.2 in CMAQ. With a 2005 reauthorization, the State would receive \$36.5 million in STP, \$3.6 million in TE, and \$9.9 CMAQ with \$272.2 in equity bonus. This translates to \$8.2 million in STP, \$1.0 million in TE, and \$2.7 in CMAQ for AMATS.

The impact of SB71 is a fair distribution of the TE would clearly be less than 10% of the total AMATS suballocation of \$42 million. If there is no reauthorization, it is less than 5% of the \$42 million and if there is a reauthorization it is less than 2.5% of the \$42 million. ADOT has not typically had to sub-allocate apportionment to the MPOs, but nearly every other state in the nation does allocate by apportionment. ADOT will now have to allocate apportionment to the MPO along with obligation authority. He believed that SB71 could be met mathematically with no further effort. This does not technically constrain the program because STP can be used on TE-like activities, as can CMAQ, in some cases.

MR. CHAPPLE understood Mr. Otteson's belief was that reauthorization would not occur. MR. OTTESON responded that Senator Steven's staff met with Commissioner Barton late yesterday and that was the indication. MR. CHAPPLE asked if it is likely that congressional action would be a lump sum for an entire year or would it be incremental. MR. OTTESON stated that Commissioner Barton heard that discussions are a one-month extension. He noted that the local TIP and statewide STIP were written around amounts that were not certain.

MAYOR BEGICH stated that he does not view SB71 as legal and its requirements would require mutual consent between the Municipality and the State. He asked if Mr. Otteson had indicated that no reallocation is needed to meet the intent of SB71. MR. OTTESON explained he reads SB71 to require a particular percentage of what is allocated MPO be spent on TE. He stated the State is prohibited from allocating more than 10% of the total

MPO's share in the TE apportionment. If a fair share of the 2005 TE is allocated to AMATS, under either scenario, it falls well below 10%. MAYOR BEGICH asked if this is the case for both existing and future situations. MR. OTTESON stated it is the case both under continuation of the 2004 numbers or under a reauthorization number. MR. CHAPPLE stated he read SB71 again today and it says 10% of the funds provided to a municipality and then closes by saying "over the life of a Transportation Improvement Program." He asked if that language means 10% is a three-year number, given that the TIP is a three-year program. MR. OTTESON responded that TIPs and STIPs have a life of two years, but have a three-year horizon when they are written. The third year is a potential source from which funding could be pulled without changing the STIP or TIP. He stated he could read SB71 as allowing 5% to be spent on TE one year and 15% another.

CHAIR KEITH understood that federal funding would be allocated incrementally and there would be only \$1.7 million for TE if there is no reauthorization. SB71 would be moot because the percentage allocated to TE would be considerably less than 10%. MR. OTTESON stated that the list of projects in each category, such as CMAQ and TE, are not the ultimate location of where they were coded when the PIA was sent to the FHWA. Until this year, that was by and large a function of accounting staff who were managing apportionments in a very flexible environment. That flexible environment is changing.

MAYOR BEGICH stated the debate around SB71 is a need to redistribute funding within the TIP. He asked whether, based on Mr. Otteson's presentation, that would still be required because of the AMATS apportionment. MR. OTTESON stated it is his belief that whether or not AMATS changes the categorization of a project that is currently in TE to another category does not change the apportionment that ADOT can give AMATS. Only \$1.7 million can be given to the TE category, which is well below the threshold set by SB71. JOHN TOLLEY clarified that Mr. Otteson's remarks relate to 2005, but AMATS must still deal with 2004. The current TIP has a condition that, if it does not come into compliance with SB71, it will extinguish on September 30<sup>th</sup>. The process involved in amending the 2005 program could take until the end of calendar year 2004 or beginning of calendar year 2005. In the meantime, a live TIP must still be in place in

order to continue processing PEAs and opening projects, and continue transportation work. That is why it is necessary to amend the existing 2004 TIP. Several means of doing so have been presented to the Policy Committee.

MR. CHAPPLE understood that the Policy Committee must take action in order to keep the 2004 TIP alive, but in light of the forecasted federal funding, AMATS might have an amended TIP that has even far less TE projects because the funding will not be available in that category. CHAIR KEITH viewed the actions before the Policy Committee as incremental steps, the first of which would keep the 2004 TIP alive. He suggested that an alternative to address the requirement of SB71 is to reduce the number of TE projects. Moving projects from TE into the CMAQ category in order to comply with SB71 would be a minor change to the TIP and would keep it alive. When the final federal funding level is known, a major amendment will be required to the STIP and TIP.

MAYOR BEGICH understood that Mr. Otteson's presentation was the dollar figures available in each category is driven by federal legislation. MR. OTTESON stated that the apportionment figure is the same as the obligation authority, which is very different than historically when there has been a 15% apportionment surplus.

CHERYL RICHARDSON stated that her analysis was \$13.7 million under the STP in one scenario and \$1.7 million for TE. It was her understanding that federal law requires TE to be at least 10% of the STP program. If the State of Alaska is getting \$100 million for STP, it would seem \$10 million would be available for TE. She also asked how the STP allocation to AMATS was determined; is it through state regulation or state policy. MR. OTTESON stated that the STP figure was based on 80% to true STP, a 10% sub-allocation to TE, and another 10% sub-allocation, so the figure in the first category is not 100%. He then explained that current regulations do not speak to sub-allocating apportionment. Apportionment has always been fairly easy for ADOT to manage. The federal law that allocates money from state DOTs to MPOs does allocate, under a very precise formula, the STP and TE allocations. Alaska is exempt from that; if that were not the case, the Municipality of Anchorage would get substantially less than it does now. The majority of the State's money comes to it as a minimum guarantee, which has

the same eligibility as STP, which is the most eligible category. MS. RICHARDSON remarked that STP money or CMAQ money could be used to build bike trails. MR. OTTESON agreed that those categories of money are more flexible than TE.

**a. Senate Bill 71**

*Discussion of this item occurred under the previous agenda topic.*

**b. Obligation Report**

CHAIR KEITH reported that bids for the C Street Phase III project came in at \$4 million over the estimate. The obligation report under funds that project by that amount. He stated there is no reason to believe that re-bidding the project would result in a lower bid or that there is anything wrong with the bids received. Rising fuel prices affect all of the materials in the bids and all steel items were at higher costs. One end of the project is the interchange at Minnesota Extension/O'Malley and that is part of the NHS. The cost of that interchange is nearly half of the cost of the entire project. ADOT plans to take half of the money out of STP to fund it, but that still leaves over \$2 million in AMATS funding required.

MAYOR BEGICH asked what was the original funding source of this project. CHAIR KEITH replied that it was originally funded through the TIP. MAYOR BEGICH asked what funding is now being used for this project. CHAIR KEITH replied that it is now being funded with GARVEE bonds. MAYOR BEGICH noted that other problems have arisen with other GARVEE funded projects. He asked why funding could not be taken from another GARVEE funded project. MR. OTTESON stated there is no other GARVEE funding available from other projects. MAYOR BEGICH asked why AMATS is being asked to fund a project that the State decided to move to GARVEE bonds. MR. OTTESON stated that using other GARVEE funding for AMATS projects essentially means that other locales, such as Kenai, Mat-Su or Juneau, would be paying for an Anchorage project. MAYOR BEGICH felt that the projects should have been better planned and had stronger contingencies. He noted that a large number of people from Kenai and Mat-Su come to Anchorage because it is the service center of the state and a percentage of the flow through here has an obligation to assist Anchorage. He questioned how many more Anchorage projects would be short of GARVEE

funds. CHAIR KEITH stated that before GARVEE bonds, all funding came out of the TIP. The first \$10 million for this project was in the TIP, recognizing that "C" Street is a municipal project. When GARVEE bonds became a vehicle for funding by borrowing against future revenues from the federal government, it replaced that TIP funding. MAYOR BEGICH commented that Anchorage only gets 26% of the statewide allocation from the federal government, yet it has more lane miles and more vehicle counts on its roads than other cities in the state. He again asked how many more GARVEE funded projects might fall short in funding. MR. OTTESON replied that the environment is one of shrinking funding and rising costs. The cost overrun for "C" Street is epidemic throughout the state. MAYOR BEGICH asked whether any GARVEE projects could simply be canceled. MR. OTTESON replied this would not be possible because funding was done through a vote of the citizens. All of the communities with GARVEE funded projects have an expectation that those projects will be completed. He noted that the money being used to pay off the GARVEE bonds is coming out of the statewide part of the STIP; that amount is in addition to the MPO allocation. He stated that out of over 400 MPOs the Anchorage MPO is getting either the first or second most beneficial ratio from a state DOT in the entire country. MAYOR BEGICH remarked that Anchorage is home to nearly one-half of the state's population and 65% of the state's population is within 40 miles of the municipal boundaries. MR. OTTESON remarked on the seriousness of transportation needs around the state.

CHAIR KEITH stated that one end of the "C" Street Phase III project is a State project in recognition that Anchorage is a center of commerce for the entire state. The State providing funding for 50% of the cost overrun is essentially the rest of the state picking up that 50%.

MAYOR BEGICH recommended moving \$2.25 million from DeArmoun Road to address the required funding for "C" Street Phase III. He stated there are public objections to the DeArmoun Road project, while "C" Street has a higher volume of traffic and higher community need. MS. SHAMBERG stated the only drawback to this suggestion is that it does not resolve the design of DeArmoun Road.

MR. TOLLEY suggested the State must look at the funding that exists in projects that can be used. He did not believe there was \$2.25 million of funding in DeArmoun Road Phase II. He stated ADOT had examined the Pavement Replacement Program project for Bragaw and was willing to agree to an advance construct of \$2.2 million worth of Bragaw repavement, which would free up that money for use on "C" Street Phase III. An advance construct could not be done on "C" Street because the phase is already open. The \$2.2 million would need to be paid back in 2005. MAYOR BEGICH asked why this could not be done with DeArmoun. MR. TOLLEY replied that there is not \$2 million in DeArmoun. MAYOR BEGICH understood there was \$2.3 million in DeArmoun for 2005. MR. TOLLEY indicated that the funding for repayment of the \$2.2 million to the Pavement Replacement Program is a separate issue. The approach he had suggested would allow both Bragaw and "C" Street to move forward in 2004. MAYOR BEGICH asked why it would not be possible to take action at this point to repay the \$2.2 million in 2005 from the DeArmoun project. MR. TOLLEY stated it would be possible to indicate an intent to take \$2.2 million out of DeArmoun in 2005 in order to pay back the Pavement Replacement Project in 2005. This could not be binding, however, until the 2005 program year is amended and the total figure for 2005 is not yet known. MAYOR BEGICH feared that the reduced federal funding would result in funding being put toward constructing top tier priorities. He stated his belief that limited future federal funding should be spent on high volume, high use roads.

CHAIR KEITH felt the only funding available to address the shortage on the "C" Street project is that shown as "additional anticipated FFY 2004 obligations" on the obligation report. The only other projects with a sufficient level of funding to address the shortage are the Ship Creek Trail or Chester Creek Trail. He also noted that "C" Street that it is a surcharge project and it is necessary to get settlement of peat before freeze-up.

MS. SHAMBERG thought the Policy Committee might need to re-assess its policy about the overall magnitude of each project. Rather than taking funding from one project, it might be possible to scale back a number of projects, thereby freeing up funding. CHAIR KEITH noted that this would be difficult to accomplish at the end of a fiscal year, but could be discussed at the beginning of the 2005 fiscal year.

MR. CHAPPLE felt the question before the Policy Committee is one of what action would have the least impact and the most favorable result. He was glad that a major amendment would be required in 2005 as it would allow the Policy Committee to re-prioritize and consider how projects are ranked in the TIP and how project scopes are set. MR. CHAPPLE moved to take \$2.5 million out of Table 3, Project 9 (Pavement Replacement Program) and put that into Project 2 ("C" Street Phase III) and to do advance construction on the Bragaw portion of the Pavement Replacement Program. MAYOR MARK BEGICH seconded.

MAYOR BEGICH felt there must be a clear decisive understanding of the dollars in AMATS and where they go for the highest volume use. This is why the city has examined both city and State road projects; these projects are being ranked based on community demand. He suggested that a discussion of funding and prioritization be scheduled for the Policy Committee's December or January meeting. He reluctantly supported the motion on the floor.

MR. WHITTLE asked for clarification of the Bragaw project referenced in the motion. CHAIR KEITH and MAYOR BEGICH explained the location of the repavement project. MAYOR BEGICH stated that project must be done and it was his intent to take the funding for it out of DeArmoun Road in 2005.

***There being no objection, the motion passed unanimously.***

HEATHER RAUCH stated her understanding that the need to move TE funds in order to keep the TIP alive is coming solely from SB71 and is not related to apportionment funds. CHAIR KEITH stated the change is to ensure that the TIP is in compliance with SB71. MAYOR BEGICH reiterated his position that SB71 should not have an impact on this process because it was not mutually agreed by this local government.

JANICE SHAMBERG moved to move \$2.450 million in 2006 for Table 4, Project 4 (Chester Creek Trail Connection) and \$4.1 million in 2005 for Project 9 (Muldoon Road Landscaping and Pedestrian Improvements) out of Table 4, Transportation Enhancements, and into Table 5, CMAQ. TOM CHAPPLE seconded.

MR. CHAPPLE stated he strongly believes that there must be re-ranking of all CMAQ projects against the established criteria. CHAIR KEITH added that this action provides time to further address issues surrounding SB71. MAYOR BEGICH stated AMATS is being held to legislation that does not clearly have jurisdiction over this independent body that is designed to meet community needs.

MS. SHAMBERG asked whether there is any other authority that could make a decision on the situation posed by SB71. MAYOR BEGICH hoped that at the October and November meetings there would be discussion of the State's understanding of this and other legislation and then FHWA should be brought in, up to the level of the Secretary of Transportation. He indicated he had discussions with one of the deputy secretaries whose brother sits on an MPO in his community and he was shocked by the two pieces of legislation that have been under discussion by AMATS. MS. SHAMBERG thought that a federal finding that SB71 and the other legislation is not applicable could negate the need to re-prioritize CMAQ projects. MAYOR BEGICH stated this would be discussed, but he understood the State is operating under different political circumstances than is the Municipality.

*There being no objection, the motion passed unanimously.*

**b. Other Business**

**6. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS**

**a. Context Sensitive Design**

CRAIG LYON explained this topic was discussed at the last Policy Committee meeting and the Committee asked that a resolution be drafted for discussion and possible action. One resolution was drafted after a meeting of interested parties. An alternative resolution has been provided by the State for discussion purposes. There was discussion that the first resolution would come to the Policy Committee for review and then to the TAC for in-depth review.

MAYOR MARK BEGICH moved to send the Context Sensitive Design resolution to the TAC and that it be brought back to the Policy Committee at its October 14, 2004 meeting for potential action. JANICE SHAMBERG seconded.

MAYOR BEGICH noted that the "Now, therefore" clauses in each of the two resolutions were very different from each other. He asked whether there was an opportunity to reach a compromise between the two that is workable. MR. LYON felt that a compromise was possible, but could not say with certainty. MS. SHAMBERG stated her impression of the meeting is that the differences are matters of semantics. The State representative felt the language in the first resolution implies that the State has never done anything, which is not the case.

CHAIR KEITH remarked on the difference in language between the two resolutions, but that he thought the said essentially the same thing. He felt it was appropriate to send this back to the TAC to discuss it more in-depth and then send a product back to the Policy Committee.

*There being no objection, the motion passed unanimously.*

MS. SHAMBERG understood that once this is adopted, it represents forward thinking in comparison with much of the nation.

MAYOR BEGICH thanked all those who participated in the drafting of the resolution. MS. RAUCH indicated that Assemblymember Pamela Jennings wished to express her support of this resolution.

**b. Obligation Report**

***Moved to Business Items***

**c. Roles & Responsibilities for AMATS Committees**

MR. LYON stated there was a discussion at the last AMATS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting of the roles and responsibilities of the AMATS committee. He had provided them with a packet outlining the mission statement and organizational structure of AMATS, as well as an

excerpt from the Governmental Operating Agreement that governs the operations of AMATS.

The TAC held a worksession on this subject and developed a list of considerations as follows:

- The most effective use of the AMATS Policy Committee is on higher level policy issues of importance on an AMATS-wide basis rather than road-specific issue.
- The potential for an inordinate amount of AMATS Committee time to be spent as a sounding board for grievances as committees attempt to redress design issues.
- Designing by committee may cause problems for professional engineers that need to utilize their professional engineering credentials to stamp plans.
- Time consuming and expensive to present materials for multiple design options to educate AMATS Committee members to be able to adequately understand and evaluate the benefits and deficiencies of various engineering and traffic and safety issues.
- Ongoing need for AMATS Committee approval slows decision-making and already lengthy project development process.
- Necessary to ensure that safety issues are addressed at the highest level of engineering professionalism to reduce liability to the ADOT/PF and MOA and to provide adequate public safety.

MS. SHAMBERG did not disagree with these considerations, but felt there was a basic gap in the Policy Committee's policy. Many of the things the TAC takes issue with are a result of needing either a change in policy direction or to fill gaps that exist because times are changing, requirements by the public are changing, and the funding level is changing.

CHAIR KEITH felt this was an appropriate time to address these considerations. There are several new members on the Policy Committee and he felt it was worthwhile to revisit the purpose of an MPO and of AMATS. He believes the purpose of the MPO is best served by getting involved early on in the planning and not trying to redesign projects. As the only professional engineer sitting on the Policy Committee, he found it concerning that people

change a design upon which an engineer has set his/her stamp. He noted that when he makes changes to plans submitted by other engineers in his department he removes their stamp and puts his own on those plans.

MR. CHAPPLE stated when he first joined the Policy Committee its primary function was to approve requests/proposals. He believed this led to claims by the public and the Alaska legislature that AMATS was not managing projects or being responsive to public interests. As a result, AMATS made a number of changes to be more responsive and take more of a managerial role. He thought it was of the utmost importance that the Policy Committee revisit its policies. He noted there are policy documents that he has not seen. He felt this review is necessary in order to ensure good management, that the Policy Committee understands the pros and cons of a project, and understands what options are possible from an engineering perspective.

MAYOR BEGICH concurred with Mr. Chapple's comments and indicated he deals with traffic and road issues 20% of his time as mayor. He commented that engineers tend to see things from a particular perspective that might be different than the perspectives of other parties with other expertise or interests. He believed the Policy Committee has inadequate tools to judge projects. He felt the Committee should outline the policies it wishes to discuss, such as Context Sensitive Design. He stated he would like to see the outcomes of some of the projects funded, such as the Air Quality Public & Business Awareness Education Program.

MR. WHITTLE felt use of context sensitive design was a key to successful projects because it creates agreement among engineers and the public.

ANN FLISTER felt this was a pre-emptive measure in regards to the discussion of DeArmoun and the Policy Committee's request to review the design options on that road project. She reminded the Committee that as it looks at the dollars being expended by professionals producing redesigns and argument and justifications for their designs that valuable Committee and public time is being spent unnecessarily had it be done right in the first place. She noted that it was the Policy Committee's meddling four years ago that created this situation.

CINDY HEIL with ADEC offered to provide a report at the next Policy Committee on the block heater program and the Air Quality Public & Business Awareness Education Program. MAYOR BEGICH stated his desire is to ensure that the Policy Committee put a process in place that yields an output. MS. HEIL explained that an analysis of emission benefits is required for all CMAQ projects and a report is required at the completion of a CMAQ project. CHAIR KEITH suggested that these reports be brought forward as informational items.

CHERYL RICHARDSON stated she is pleased with the direction of the AMATS Policy Committee. She hoped that during the discussion of context sensitive design there would be a focus on agreement early in the project process, defining the purpose of the project, and determining how it will function when it is completed.

FRANK McQUEARY stated that the public comes to the Policy Committee because the process is not functioning properly and this is a signal of problems at a previous level. He felt it was well within the parameters of the Policy Committee's charge to look at the details of projects.

MAX LOWE stated that, as he read through the TAC's concerns, it was evident that they have frustrations and that they would like the Policy Committee to be a "rubber stamp" committee. He firmly believed that if it was not for the Policy Committee, Phase II of the DeArmoun Road project would be nearly done.

MIKE FLISTER encouraged the Policy Committee to be sure it stays involved in transportation projects. He understood the position taken by the TAC, given that it is a technical body, but he has learned over the years that most of the engineering and policy guidelines are guidelines that should be periodically reviewed. He stated it is at the Policy Committee that the public has the opportunity to point out some of the problems with projects. He stated the public would like to be part of the discussions in the future. He stated he would also be working with TAC on the DeArmoun project.

CHERYL SHROYER remarked on the progress the Policy Committee has made. In years past, the Policy Committee made decisions without much

public input; there were not even handouts available to the public. She had some concern that many of the individuals involved in AMATS projects at the government level have been involved through many administrations and have been averse to the change in the Policy Committee process.

**d. DeArmoun Road Project**

THERESE STOKES, ADOT project manager for DeArmoun Road Phase II stated that the project is in the design study review (DSR) process. Alternatives from doing nothing to totally rebuilding the curve have been examined. There has been extensive public involvement in this project since its inception. Many of the principles and practices of context sensitive design have been used with this project. The draft DSR has been updated to include design changes and additional alternatives based on input from the public. She indicated that Randy Kinney, traffic engineer on the project with VEI Engineering, would present information on crash experience on DeArmoun Road at the Currin Circle curve where the alternatives have the most impact. Crash reduction at the curve affects the alternative selection.

RANDY KINNEY stated that initially 10 years of accident data from the ADOT's Accident Report System was used. For the Currin Circle curve area, additional data was taken from police reports. It was found that nominal safety criteria are not met, nor are the substantive safety criteria. Nominal refers to simply not meeting AASHTO standards. Substantive refers to a threshold established for an accident problem. Modeling indicates that, with no action, crashes are likely to increase in the future.

MR. KINNEY stated the operating speed on the Currin Circle curve is 25 mph, which is constrained by geometric elements. The rest of DeArmoun Road has operating speeds measured at 45 to 50 mph. This is a highly inconsistent segment within the roadway, which violates driver expectancy. The Currin Circle curve fails nominal safety criteria for operating speeds in terms of the horizontal curve, vertical curves, and grades that do not meet new construction criteria. Several of these substandard elements overlap, compounding the problem. Sixteen crashes were reported in the Currin Circle curve vicinity; police reports were pulled on those crashes. The segment crash rate is 13 crashes per million vehicle miles, which is statistically significant when compared to the statewide urban collector rate of 3.5 crashes/MVM and

the rural collector rate of 1.5 crashes/MVM. The Currin Circle curve also fails substantive safety criteria, with experience exceeding the critical rate of 6.7 crashes/MVM.

MR. KINNEY reviewed a graphic representation of the 16 reported crashes along the Currin Circle curve, most of which are clustered around the curve itself. Most of those are single vehicles that have run off the road. An analysis was done of contributing factors to these accidents. Most of the accidents happened during dry conditions. Ambient light conditions were examined and half of the accidents were during dark hours. MR. KINNEY displayed a photograph of the Currin Circle curve where a sight distance problem exists. He then displayed a photograph of the Currin Circle curve at night using high beams.

There were more major injuries associated with the 16 reported crashes than the statewide average. The majority of the residences of those involved in the accidents are not DeArmoun Road. This confirms the theory that this is a problem because of inconsistent driver expectancy. It also confirms that this is not just a local road that is used primarily by area residents. Traffic volumes in 2000 were approximately 1,900; in 2006, 2,100 vehicles are expected and in 2026 over 3,000 vehicles are expected. Traffic is expected to increase 60% to 65% over the life of the project. If nothing is done at the Currin Circle curve somewhere between 43 and 44 crashes will occur between 2006 and 2026.

MR. KINNEY summarized that there is a significant crash experience on this segment of DeArmoun Road, substantive safety criteria are not met and crash experience show nearly double the critical rate, nominal safety criteria are not met, and crashes are likely to increase in the future because of the increase in forecasted traffic. He reviewed a table from "A Guide to Best Practices for Achieving Context Sensitive Solutions" and indicated this roadway segment, as it stands, does not meet nominal or substantive safety criteria. Using context sensitive design does not release the obligation to address safety problems.

MR. CHAPPLE asked over what period of time the 16 reported crashes occurred. MS. STOKES replied that they occurred over the 1991 through 2001 period.

MS. STOKES explained that alternatives are defined and evaluated by trying to achieve the best balance between the best public good and the least private injury using the following factors: crash reduction, mobility as a collector, social impacts, and overall costs. The alternatives that are being considered through the DSR include a Base Alternative, which was the preferred alternative from the 1998 Preliminary Engineering Report. That was based on a three-year accident analysis as opposed to the 10-year period that has been examined in the DSR phase. The Base Alternative follows the existing alignment and widens the roadway.

The second alternative is Alternative 240R, which retains the existing 240-foot radius horizontal curve and a roadway width of 36 feet, with an improved vertical alignment. The third alternative is Alternative 265R was recently added based on a resident who is impacted by other alternatives. This alternative retains the 265-foot radius horizontal curve, a roadway width of 36 feet, and it slightly improves the vertical and horizontal alignment while minimizing impacts to private property. The fourth alternative is Alternative 300R, which has a 300-foot radius, roadway width of 36 feet, and improves vertical and horizontal alignment. The fifth alternative is Alternative 443, which has a 443-foot radius, a 36-foot roadway width, it requires the acquisition of one home, and it improves the vertical and horizontal alignment. The sixth alternative is Alternative 835R, which has an 835-foot radius that meets the operational speed for the rest of DeArmoun Road of 50 mph. The roadway width with that alternative is 36 feet, it requires the acquisition of seven houses, and it improves the vertical and horizontal alignment. She displayed an aerial photograph with an overlay depicting the alignment of each of the alternatives.

MR. KINNEY explained that ADOT has a methodology to evaluate 3R projects. That analysis is difficult with this project because many design elements overlap. The Interactive Highway Safety Design Model, an FHWA model that is cited in the context sensitive design manual as a good tool to evaluate safety, was used to evaluate the alternatives for this project. He

reviewed an analysis of crash reduction at Currin Circle curve as a function of each of the various alternatives. There was also an analysis of the impact of including flashing beacons with the alternatives that do not meet the new standards. An additional increment of crash reduction is provided through that mechanism. MR. KINNEY reviewed a chart depicting crash reduction attributed to widening and alignment, as well as crash reduction attributed to flashing beacons. In order to reduce the number of crashes to the 6.7 crashes/MVM, a 49% reduction would be needed. Only Alternative 443 and Alternative 835R provide enough crash reduction to attain that level.

MS. STOKES reviewed an analysis of crash reduction, mobility, houses displaced, and alternative segment costs for each alternative. She noted that not all of these criteria have the same weight. Looking at the highest rating for each criteria, no one alternative is apparently the best choice; there is still no pattern when the lowest rated criteria are examined. Some of the best features are counter-balanced by some of the worst features on a given alternative. An analysis of the next highest rating of individual criteria points to alternative 443R as achieving the best balance between greatest public good and least private injury. This alternative will likely move forward as work in the DSR continues. At this point, the environmental document will be re-evaluated to determine if it is consistent with the findings of the DSR. The project will be taken to community councils as the design progresses. It will not be possible to appraise or acquire any right-of-way until the environmental re-evaluation is complete. Public comment will be taken throughout the process.

MS. SHAMBERG stated the impact on private property is of great importance to her. She asked why speed that can be achieved on the curve is included as a weighted criteria. MR. KINNEY explained that this addresses the issue of driver expectancy. There is currently an anomaly inserted in the 50 mph road. If people could be persuaded to drive 30 mph or the road did not physically allow higher speeds, the problem would take care of itself. He noted also that many people who have been involved in accidents at the curve do not live in the area of the curve. MS. SHAMBERG suggested that there be better signage to make drivers aware of the curve. MR. KINNEY responded that this is being examined, but that alone is not the answer to the problem. MS. SHAMBERG asked why a road has been built that encourages people to

drive 50 mph. MS. STOKES explained that DeArmoun is part of the network of collector roads on the hillside. Driver behavior on the hillside has been examined and it was found that, regardless of the roadway, traffic moves on the hillside at a consistent speed between 45 mph and 50 mph. Accident rates do vary; there are higher accident rates where no shoulders exist. MS. SHAMBERG asked why an increase in traffic is anticipated on this road. MR. KINNEY stated that the projection is 3000 cars in 20 years, which is not a great many more than the 2000 that are on that roadway now. As property in the area develops, residents will use DeArmoun because it is a collector roadway. MS. SHAMBERG asked if there is data on why people who were involved in accidents who do not live in the DeArmoun Road area were on that road. MR. KINNEY indicated that data was not available. MS. SHAMBERG noted that this is not a road that invites casual driving. MS. STOKES stated that the general public uses all of the roads on the hillside; people go for drives on the hillside. MR. KINNEY noted that the speed limit is signed for 40 mph.

MS. SHAMBERG asked if the modeling has incorporated any traffic calming techniques. MS. STOKES replied that traffic calming has been investigated on this project and that is not generally a tool to reduce accidents, rather it is usually used in response to a perception of speeding on local streets. Accident rates can be reduced as a result of traffic calming, but it causes traffic and accidents to migrate to other routes. MAYOR BEGICH asked the source of the data Mr. Kinney had identified. MR. KINNEY replied that it comes from the FHWA Traffic Calming Guide, specifically a section that discusses accident experience in the United States. If areawide parallel streets and reductions and adjustments in volumes are considered, there would be only about a 4% reduction in accidents. Therefore, traffic calming might reduce accidents on the Currin Circle curve, but they might be transferred to other roads. MS. SHAMBERG noted that O'Malley and the other parallel roads do not have the same conditions as DeArmoun. MR. KINNEY stated Portland Oregon also did a study of its aggressive speed hump program and found that there would be a reduction in crashes on the street with the speed humps, but one or two streets over experienced an increase in crashes. MS. SHAMBERG did not see how that could be applicable in this situation. DeArmoun is a unique roads and accidents are peculiar to that road because of the conditions there and the traffic being shifted from that roadway would

not necessarily have an accident because they are not going to encounter the same curve and grade. MR. KINNEY stated the other issue on DeArmoun Road is that the municipal traffic calming manual recommends collectors not be calmed for streets with speed limits over 25 mph. It is not possible to "spot calm" that curve, rather the entire corridor would have to be calmed so that drivers are traveling at 25 mph when they reach the curve. In addition, because of the severe grades, the types of traffic calming devices that could be deployed are limited. MS. STOKES stated she has been talking with the police, fire department, and schools and they do not support traffic calming because DeArmoun is part of their strategic evacuation plan for the hillside; it is one of four evacuation routes. MAYOR BEGICH noted that during evacuation, the police would have the ability to use both lanes. He stated he would be interested in furthering that discussion. He noted that the evacuation plan for the entire hillside is currently under review.

MAYOR BEGICH asked for an explanation of slide 11 of the presentation given by Ms. Stokes and Mr. Kinney. He asked if a 60% to 65% traffic volume increase is expected, noting that the volume of cars that represents is relatively minimal. He asked if slide 11 also indicates that 43 to 44 crashes would be anticipated in a 20-year period, which equates to two per year. MR. KINNEY indicated this was correct. MAYOR BEGICH stated the fact that the cost of this project is anticipated to prevent two accidents per year would be an issue in his discussion of moving money away from this project in 2005. MS. STOKES understood the Mayor's comment and stated she has spoken with the State's Traffic Engineer who said this road has not undergone a complete highway safety improvement program (HSIP) analysis because a project is scheduled. If there were not a project scheduled, not only would this accident site be a candidate for the HSIP program it would be near the top of the list. MAYOR BEGICH expressed appreciation for the information Ms. Stokes and Mr. Kinney had presented, but indicated that as federal funding decreases, AMATS must reconsider how those dollars are spent.

MAYOR BEGICH asked if this information should have been available initially with this project. MS. STOKES stated that this is not a typical level of analysis at a DSR phase. MAYOR BEGICH felt that this type of information either does or does not bring a level of confidence in the project being proposed and should be available at an earlier stage of project

development. MS. STOKES indicated that this project has unique features in that a house was built in the curve after looking at a preliminary design that indicated the road alignment would not be moved. In addition, the vegetation removed with Phase I affected Phase II residents. CHAIR KEITH stated the tools used to determine crash reduction factors were developed in the last year. MAYOR BEGICH stated a meeting was held recently with municipal transportation staff regarding data collection and the police department is working to improve data collection.

MS. SHAMBERG indicated she had a list of suggestions that Mr. Flister asked to be incorporated into the program, some of which she presumed could not be included. She asked theoretically, based on Ms. Stokes's experience and expertise, whether cutting the crest of the hill several feet was feasible. MS. STOKES replied that was incorporated in Alternative 265R. MS. SHAMBERG asked if raising the grade in low spots was also incorporated. She was unsure how purchasing the tract adjacent to the inside of the curve affects the design. MS. STOKES indicated that property would be needed for that radius. MS. SHAMBERG asked if 2-foot shoulders as opposed to wider lanes plus shoulders and a guardrail had been considered. MR. KINNEY replied those were not factored into the analysis, but they would reduce the crash reduction potential. There is a great deal of benefit by putting shoulders on roadways to reduce crashes. There are currently 1-foot shoulders on this section of the roadway. The guardrail would be a reaction if a good design could not be achieved. Guardrails are also obstacles and when a vehicle collides with a guardrail, it causes damage and sometimes severe injury. MS. SHAMBERG understood that almost all these suggestions were factored into the design analysis. MS. STOKES replied that this was correct, and anything that was not included was considered, such as traffic calming. She noted that in August she presented to the Policy Committee on DeArmoun and listed the things that had been done in response to public input. The design of the project changed significantly based on public input.

MR. CHAPPLE asked if it was correct to assume that calming the entire road corridor to 25 mph or 30 mph would result in an improvement in crash reduction. MS. STOKES replied in the affirmative. MR. CHAPPLE asked if once the NEPA process is completed for the 443 radius proposal, is another alternative precluded. MS. STOKES replied that this would depend on what

could be accepted as crash reduction. She did not believe there was inflexibility in terms of selecting an alternative solution. She has been told by her traffic engineer that if this project were not to move forward, he would have to act based on the accidents at this site; he would prefer not to use HSIP funds. MR. CHAPPLE understood that safety is a major issue being addressed by the project. He felt it would be helpful if the Policy Committee had the same tools and analysis on other intersections. MAYOR BEGICH strongly agreed with Mr. Chapple's comments.

MR. KINNEY stated that intersections have been evaluated on a rate basis and a rate indicates, based on volume, whether or not a problem exists. The Currin Circle curve has a rate of 13.1 crashes/MVM while the average for an urban collector road is 3.5 crashes/MVM. Compared to the level of traffic on the roadway, two accidents per year is quite a few in this one location. MS. SHAMBERG remarked that, while the accident rate is high in terms of percentages, the actual number of lives involved and the number of injuries is more crucial. MAYOR BEGICH stated that comparing two accidents to 100 at Lake Otis and Tudor is a community perspective, which might be different than an engineering perspective. MS. STOKES stated that planners have to consider whether they should be examining the entire grid or a particular project. The objective is to keep the grid system current, upgraded and mobile and this project is a big part of hillside mobility. MAYOR BEGICH stated that his administration is looking at all of the roads in the city, whether they are State or municipally owned, to determine priorities. He then looks to AMATS as a funding mechanism that contributes to addressing the city's transportation needs.

CHAIR KEITH noted that this is a 3R project and, as such, has specific requirements. The primary purpose is to rehabilitate the pavement, but a safety study must also be conducted and that must be addressed in some way.

CHERYL RICHARDSON stated one element that had not been raised is the issue of pedestrian safety. She understood there were a cluster of pedestrian deaths just below this curve where the speeds pick up again. In her community council, a project on "L" Street has been proposed without any pedestrian data. She felt this was a fatal flaw in the way that safety studies

are done because it underestimates the safety problems in the community. MS. SHAMBERG stated that three people have died at the location, which is at the end of her road. and that phase now has a sidewalk. That curve has also been somewhat change and the location of the road pedestrians cross to have been changed.

KEVIN GRAY believed that the 1998 study recommended a different alternative also had a crash analysis. He asked why it was so different than the one being seen with this project. He also noted that the curve where Abbott Road reaches the Hilltop Ski area has roughly the same radius as this curve and roughly the same grade. He asked if there was any accident data for that curve. MS. STOKES stated the 1998 preliminary engineering study did a 3R analysis and three years of data were examined. The accident rate was above what it should have been, but not enough to trigger a rebuild of the curve. In the DSR phase, another study is required and a 10-year time period was used in this study to determine the cause of the accidents, given the complexity of this site. There are also better analytical tools available now than were available in 1998. VERN ROELFS with VEI added that police reports were also not examined with the 1998 study. He answered Mr. Gray's other question, stating that the curve on Abbott and Hillside was compared to this curve on DeArmoun.

FRANK McQUEARY stated that \$4 million is being spent on this project to potentially go from 1.6 accidents per year at this location to .8 accidents per year. He stated this does not make sense financially. He stated he drives along a stretch of road that has an accident of one accident per month and it is wide, flat, and fast. The among the things identified in the study of that causes accidents in Anchorage were speed and driver inattention, and nothing related to geometrics. He stated that widening lanes has led to more problems, not less. A driver's perception of a wide sight distance contributes to safety concerns. He stated the Municipality is building roads that serve to transport residents. Changing the speed traveled from 50 mph to 35 mph results in a minimally longer travel time.

PAUL RASMUSSEN stated the argument has been presented at several meetings that the speed cannot be changed from 50 mph to a lower speed, yet the city and State do this in many locations, such as school zones. To him,

that argument was defective. He also remarked that the State does a poor job of signing its roadways. He asked why the State's traffic engineer would have to act on this roadway section if the DeArmoun project does not carry forward. MS. STOKES explained that this accident site meets the threshold for safety improvement. MR. RASMUSSEN stated that if the traffic engineer is required by law to take action, that would be understandable, but he objected if it is done simply because it meets a threshold. MR. KINNEY explained that the traffic engineer is charged with addressing accident problems. MS. STOKES stated the HSIP is a policy of the State ADOT.

MAX LOWE stated the photographs of the Currin Circle curve showed the absence of any signage. He stated if that is put into the context of two accidents per year, it would seem that signage might improve safety.

STEVE VOVES stated he has 15 years of experience driving DeArmoun Road and he thought the figures had been skewed. He stated he would like to see hard data on the accidents at the curve; he did not believe they were serious accidents. MS. STOKES indicated that data is available and has been provided to several people who have requested it.

DEBORAH VOVES took exception to the conclusion that the people involved in those accidents were using DeArmoun to get somewhere else. She presumed those people were using DeArmoun because they were visiting. She stated she has lived in this area over 15 years and she has no problems going up and down DeArmoun. She did not believe that people take DeArmoun to access areas other than those off of DeArmoun.

MIKE FLISTER mentioned that the Rabbit Creek Community Council Road Committee did some work with the State regarding signage and, as a result, Scott Thomas and Harry Week would remark the curve. He stated that the fact some of the suggestions he made to the project team are now incorporated into the DSR amazes him. He thought there could be a greater increase in safety if more of the public's suggestions were incorporated. He stated with the help of Vern Roelfs and Randy Kinney, there was at least a 39% reduction and a cost savings. He was encouraged to hear the Policy Committee asking the right questions tonight. The key issue is speed. He believed that 85% of the accidents are attributable to excessive speed or

operator intention. The problem can be cured either by geometrics or by calming traffic on the approaches to the curve. He stated that a 25 mph or 30 mph road would satisfy the rest of Phase II residents because the size of the roadway would probably reduce, a trail could probably be accommodated more easily, and he would assume there would be a significant cost savings that could address the federal funding shortfall, especially in 2005.

JEANNE McQUEARY asked, if accidents on any road are caused by speed, why would roads be built that encourage speed. She believed drivers could be trained to slow down and streets could be built that discourage speeding.

MS. SHAMBERG stated that she has lived on DeArmoun for 30 years and for the first time she is setting her cruise control in order not to exceed the speed limit because the road is so wide.

KEITH MORBERG stated that signs were examined for use in this project and, while signs might reduce accidents, the benefit of accident reduction by signs is not as great as what is proposed by this project. Secondly, traffic calming was investigated and the conclusion was that traffic calming is a real alternative if the desire is to traffic calm the entire corridor. If that is the case, the road is no longer a collector. Spot traffic calming is not a good option because approach speeds would not be changed and the traffic calming devices then become hazards in themselves. MR. FLISTER stated his approach to this project has always been about a balance. He did not agree that the entire road must be calmed, but on the curve where there is a problem, it could be done. He felt that mechanism, combined with signage, grade changes, sight distance changes, etc. could result in an acceptable project. MS. SHAMBERG noted that she has said before DeArmoun is really two roads that join in terms of character. Phase I serves many small roads and several large subdivisions. At the beginning of Phase II, the development is more rural. MR. MORBERG felt it was important to note there is not a proposal to change the operating speed on DeArmoun Road, with the exception of the area of the highly inconsistent geometric feature of Currin Circle curve. He stated that without traffic calming throughout the entire route, DeArmoun Road would continue to operate at 45 mph to 50 mph. Birch Road, which is narrow, also has a high operating speed, as does Rabbit Creek Road. MS. STOKES indicated that DeArmoun Road has a different functional

classification between Phase I and Phase II under the city's system; Phase II is a residential collector. She stated the driveways and side streets on the project have been examined and 35 driveways access that section of DeArmoun and 256 homes access Phase II through side streets. This does not include the homes above Hillside Drive. MS. SHAMBERG stated, given the choice between the wide, flat road that exists on either Huffman or O'Malley, she could not understand why anyone would choose DeArmoun to be their link.

STEVE VOVES stated it could be argued that in and of itself the Currin Circle curve acts as a traffic calming mechanism. If the proposal is to widen the roadway and soften the curve, he suspected that speeds would increase. MS. STOKES stated she has received many comments that people do not use DeArmoun in the winter because of the curve and the hill. MR. VOVES believed that was a result of maintenance issues.

ANN FLISTER stated she was somewhat disappointed that Scott Thomas was not present at this meeting. If he is the same traffic engineer to whom Ms. Stokes had referred, he has been very good about working with the neighbors and finally looking at signage along this section of the road. She believed that the improvements that are planned before snowfall would help improve the problem with driver expectation. MS. STOKES stated that the signage does meet current standards. The signage project Mr. Thomas is doing is in response to the new high school off of DeArmoun. He did tell her, however, that the signage is not a substitute to a road project. MS. FLISTER commended the Policy Committee for extending this meeting and for the staff from ADOT and their consultants for responding to questions. She commented that the questions asked by the Policy Committee are the best she has heard policy-makers ask about this project since she has been aware of it. She stated that at the urging of the South Anchorage High Parent/Teacher Association she did contact APD's traffic supervisor and she took small issue with the comment that APD supports the wider road, because that was not what she heard from the APD. She thought the Policy Committee might want to hear from the APD's traffic supervisor on this matter. MAYOR BEGICH stated, in all fairness, there are different issues involved in traffic movement versus emergency preparedness.

MS. FLISTER asked, if an environmental assessment were performed on this project, would it allow more ability to look at options other than modernization of the right-of-way, such as lowering the speed limits, traffic calming, etc. MS. STOKES did not believe it would allow more options than does the current categorical exclusion. MS. FLISTER asked if Ms. Stokes thought FHWA would approve the taking of homes, trees, decreasing the noise buffers, and all the other environmental impacts that have been raised under the categorical exclusion. MS. STOKES stated that this is not unusual under a categorical exclusion. MS. FLISTER believed New Jersey had outlawed the ability to use categorical exclusions on reconstruction projects.

GARY HITCHINGS stated there are impacts not only in terms of taking houses, but also in terms of widening the right-of-way along the entire to facilitate high speed. The only option that allows the 50 mph road to exist is Alternative 835R. The other options create a high speed road with a slow speed curve. He thought where Phase II begins is a good place to start to narrow the road and continue a smaller curve all the way up. The curve disappears only in Alternative 835R. He questioned why wide avenues are being built up to a slow speed curve unless the 835R alternative is built.

**e. Other Informational Reports**

**7. SCHEDULED AMATS MEETINGS**

Technical Advisory Committee, September 23, 2004

Policy Committee, October 14 2004

Technical Advisory Committee, October 28, 2004

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:53 PM.