Subject: [Fwd: [Fwd: Mat-Su Borough Comments on STIP]]
From: Carol Taylor <carol_taylor@dot.state.ak.us>
Date: Tue, 03 Jan 2006 08:25:58 -0900
To: Susan Woodrow <susan_woodrow@dot.state.ak.us>

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Subject: [Fwd: Mat-Su Borough Comments on STIP]
From: Brad Sworts <brad_sworts@dot.state.ak.us>
Date: Tue, 03 Jan 2006 08:14:00 -0900
To: Jennifer W Witt <jennifer_wilson@dot.state.ak.us>, Carol Taylor <carol_taylor@dot.state.ak.us>, James W Scholl <jim_scholl@dot.state.ak.us>, John S Tolley <john_tolley@dot.state.ak.us>

FYI

-------- Original Message --------
Subject: Mat-Su Borough Comments on STIP
Date: Fri, 30 Dec 2005 14:57:18 -0900
From: Diane Simkins <Diane.Simkins@matsugov.us>
To: commissioner_dotpf@dot.state.ak.us, gordon_keith@dot.state.ak.us, brad_sworts@dot.state.ak.us

Commissioner Barton:

The attached correspondence is being sent to you from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. This email will be followed up by a fax copy and a hard copy by regular mail.

Thank you.
Diane

Diane M. Simkins
Administration
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
350 E. Dahlia Ave.
Palmer, AK 99645
(907) 745-9688

Brad Sworts <Brad_Sworts@dot.state.ak.us>
Matanuska-Susitna Area Planner
State of Alaska
Transportation and Public Facilities

[Fwd: Mat-Su Borough Comments on STIP]	**Content-Type:** message/rfc822 **Content-Encoding:** 7bit

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05-STIP Cover Letter-Dec 30 2005.pdf	**Content-Type:** application/octet-stream **Content-Encoding:** base64

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Planning and Land Use Department

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December 30, 2005

Mr. Mike Barton, Commissioner
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
3132 Channel Drive
Juneau, Alaska 99801-7898

Dear Commissioner Barton,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the FY 2006 to FY 2008 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. Transportation improvements and their funding are critical to the health and well being of Matanuska-Susitna Borough residents. Our draft 2005 Long Range Transportation Plan Update is out for public review and the recommendations it contains paint a sobering picture of the needed transportation improvements necessary to keep traffic moving in the Borough over the next 20 years. It looks at both the impacts to the Borough Transportation System with and without the Knik Arm Crossing. It is not a surprise to anyone that there are hundreds of million of dollars of needed transportation improvements in addition to the cost of the Knik Arm Crossing and its attendant approach systems "to keep red the out" of the Borough Transportation System. It is critical that the FY 2006 to 2008 provides the necessary funding to jumpstart the development of the Borough's Transportation System. In total, 20 roads fail and are beyond capacity by 2025.

The total is 20 roads only if certain critical improvements are made as part of the base case. Otherwise many other routes fail by 2025. The recommended base case of the Draft LRTP include the following projects as projects that are generally agreed upon that should be constructed by 2025. These improvements to the existing 2005 system include:

- Palmer Wasilla Highway to 4/5 lanes from Palmer to Wasilla
- Parks Highway is a 4-lane highway from Seward Meridian Road to Big Lake Road;
- Glenn Highway is a 4-lane arterial/highway from Parks Highway to Palmer Fishhook Road;
- Seldon Road is added as a 2-lane facility from Lucille Street to Pittman Road;
- Mack Road is added as a 2-lane facility from Knik Goose Bay Road to the Parks Highway;
- Crusey Street is extended from Parks Highway to Palmer Wasilla Highway Extension;
- Hermon Road is added as a 2-lane facility from Parks Highway to Palmer Wasilla Highway;
- Seward Meridian Road from Parks Highway to Bogard Road is a 4-lane arterial;
- Seward Meridian is added as a 2-lane facility from Bogard Road to Seldon Road;
- Hyer Road is realigned to collector standards;

- Trunk Road is realigned and widened to a 4-lane facility from Parks Highway to Bogard Road; and as a 2-lane facility from Bogard Road to the Palmer-Fishhook Road.
- Bogard Road is extended from 49th State Street to Glenn Highway as a 2-lane facility;
- Hemmer Road is extended from the Glenn Highway to the Palmer Wasilla Highway as a 2-lane facility;
- Felton Road is added as a 2-lane facility from Arctic/Bogard Extension to Glenn Highway;
- Dogwood Street was added as a 2-lane facility from South Alaska Street to Felton Street;
- Wasilla-Fishhook Road Upgrade from Glenwood Avenue to Schrock;
- Clark-Wolverine Road undergoes minor realignment; and
- Burma Road reconstructed between Big Lake Road and Point MacKenzie Road as a 2-lane major collector.

Many of these projects are in process but several are not. The STIP over the next several years needs to reflect these projects if there is any hope of maintaining traffic flow within the most populated area of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Additionally, the next list of improvements show the projects that also need to be constructed over the next 20 years to keep the traffic flowing thus keeping the "red out".

MSB LRTP Needed Improvements
in addition to 2025 Base Level Improvements
Based on 2025 No Knik Bridge Scenario

Location	Segment	2025 Base	Identified Improvement (in bold type)
Wasilla Bypass	'Modified' Alternative A (Seward/Meridian Termini)		**Freeway/2-lane/55 mph**
Seward Meridian	Parks Hwy – Bogard Rd	Collector/4-lane/40 mph	**Major Arterial**/4-lane/40 mph
Seward Meridian	Bogard Rd – Seldon Rd	Collector/4-lane/40 mph	**Minor Arterial**/4-lane/40 mph
Glenn Hwy	Parks Hwy – Hemmer Rd	Major Arterial/4-lane/55 mph	**Expressway**/4-lane/55 mph (limited direct access)
Trunk Rd	Parks Hwy – Palmer Wasilla Hwy	Collector/2-lane/45 mph	**Minor Arterial/4-lane**/45 mph
Big Lake Rd	Northshore Dr – Parks Hwy	Minor Arterial/2-lane/45 mph	Minor Arterial/**4-lane**/45 mph
KGB/Palmer Wasilla Hwy	North of Settler's Bay growth area – Glenn Hwy (via extension of Palmer Wasilla south of Parks)	Minor Arterial/2-lane/40-55 mph	**Expressway/4-lane**/40-55 mph
KGB/Wasilla Fishhook	Glennwood - Bogard	Minor Arterial/2-lane/30 mph	**Major Arterial/4-lane**/30 mph
KGB/Pt MacKenzie Rd	South of Settler's Bay growth area – Ferry Terminal	Varies	**Major Arterial/2-lane/50-55 mph**
Wasilla Fishhook	Bogard Rd – Seldon Rd	Minor Arterial/2-lane/30-40 mph	**Major Arterial**/2-lane/30-40 mph
Old Glenn Hwy	Glenn Hwy – Smith Rd	Minor Arterial/2-lane/25-45 mph	Minor Arterial/**4-lane**/24-45 mph
Bogard/Seldon	Schrock Rd – Trunk Rd	Minor Arterial/2-lane/30-45 mph	Minor Arterial/**4-lane/35-45 mph**

Bogard/Seldon	Lucille Rd – Glenn Hwy	Collector & Minor Arterial	**Minor Arterial**
Bogard	Wasilla Fishhook – Seldon Rd	Minor Arterial/2-lane/25-50 mph	**Major Arterial**/2-lane/25-50 mph
Hermon Rd	Bogard Rd – Seldon Rd		**Collector/2-lane/40 mph**
Hermon Rd	Palmer Wasilla – Wasilla Bypass		**Major Arterial/2-lane/40 mph**
Hermon Rd	Wasilla Bypass – Fairview Loop Rd		**Collector/2-lane/40 mph**
Hemmer Rd	Palmer-Wasilla Hwy – Palmer Fishhook Rd		**Minor Arterial/2-lane/40 mph**
Trunk Rd/Nelson Rd/ Linlu Ln	Parks Hwy – Fairview Loop		**Collector/2-lane/40 mph**
Palmer Wasilla	Parks Hwy – Hemmer Rd	Major Arterial/4-lane/40-50 mph	**Expressway/4-lane**/40-50 mph
Parks Hwy	Parks Freeway (west of Seward Meridian) - Crusey	Major Arterial/4-lane/40-45 mph	**Expressway**/4-lane/40-45 mph
Parks Hwy	Lucille St – Crusey	Major Arterial/4-lane/40-45 mph	Major Arterial/**6-lane**/40-45 mph
Parks Hwy	~ 1 mile west of Big Lake Rd	Major Arterial/2-lane/55 mph	Major Arterial/4-**lane**/55 mph
Lucille St	Parks Hwy – Spruce Ave	Collector /2-lane/35 mph	**Major Arterial/4-lane**/35 mph
Lucille St	Spruce Ave – Seldon Rd	Collector /2-lane/35 mph	**Minor Arterial**/2-lane/35 mph
Crusey	Parks Hwy – Bogard Rd	Collector/2-lane/35 mph	**Major Arterial**/2-lane/35 mph
Church Rd	Parks Hwy – KGB		**Minor Arterial/2-lane/35 mph**
Vine Rd	Parks Hwy - KGB	Collector/2-lane/30-35 mph	**Minor Arterial**/2-lane/**40 mph**

The important issue to understand is that these improvements are needed with or without the Knik Arm Crossing to provide safe and efficient travel to, through and within the most heavily populated and fastest growing area of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The 2025 population forecast for the Borough is 162,000 people without the Knik Arm Crossing and 175,000 with the Knik Arm Crossing. These improvements are justified based on capacity and safety needs. The needs are great and a methodical approach is needed to fund these improvements through a combination of STIP funds, State General Funds and local initiatives. At the same time, the Glenn and Parks Highways need to be improved to ensure the continued economic well being of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the State.

To meet the needs of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and South Central Alaska is an enormous task. As you can see there are hundreds of millions of projects identified that need to be constructed over the next 20 years within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough alone. Again it should be noted that the above lists do not include needed improvements to the Parks and Glenn highways and other major corridor improvements such as the Port MacKenzie to Willow connection. Projects need to be funded on a needs based system. Our agencies must continue to cooperate to ensure that a balance approach is taken to address the transportation needs of Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the rest of the State.

This introductory letter to our STIP comments should provide you with some context to the enormity of the transportation issues facing the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The main concern we have with the new STIP is the impact that the major bridge projects have on the remainder of

the STIP. Several critical NHS projects no longer show up in the STIP thus delaying significant and needed reconstruction projects on the Glenn and Parks Highways. The impacts of the major bridge projects also waterfall down to the CTP program where the Trunk Road reconstruction project is not fully funded for construction in the STIP and the Palmer Wasilla Highway Reconstruction is not even contained in the STIP. Several other projects that are essentially bid ready have been delayed. These include Wasilla Crusey Street Improvements and Palmer Chugach Street Improvements.

Attached are our specific comments on the draft 2006 to 2008 STIP. We have taken the approach of providing some overview comments about the new STIP. We then compared the most recent version of the existing 2004-2006 STIP Amendment 8 to the proposed FY 2006 to 2008 STIP and provide specific comments relative to the changes between the two documents.

Finally, I would like to thank the Department and the support it has provided to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough in the preparation of our Updated LRTP. We appreciate both the financial support and the staff support provide by Central Region's Planning Division in particular Brad Sworts, Mat Su Area Planner, Jennifer Wilson-Witt, Planning Manager, John Tolley, Chief of Planning and Gordon Keith, Regional Director.

Sincerely,

M. Murph O'Brien

Murph O'Brien, Director
Planning and Land Use

Attachment

cc Mayor Tim Anderson
Assembly members
John Duffy, Borough Manager
MSB Directors
Gordon Keith, Regional Director ADOT&PF
John Tolley, Chief of Planning ADOT&PF
Jeff Ottesen, Director of Statewide Planning

Matanuska-Susitna Borough
ADOT&PF FY 2006-2008 STIP Comments
December 29, 2005

General Comments

- The new format of the STIP is beneficial from an illustrative standpoint. However, this format made it very difficult to compare the 2004 to 2006 STIP, which is in a spreadsheet format, to the new STIP. We recommend that the final STIP be prepared in both formats. The new format is great for the general public. A spreadsheet format should be prepared for agencies to facilitate reviews and easy access to information.
- The MSB should receive an allocation of CMAQ funds to address air quality issues generated by the numerous unpaved routes within the borough. These funds should be distributed equitably among the different regions of the State. The MSB is as large as West Virginia and has air quality issues both in its urbanizing Core Area and the more rural areas of the borough.
- The Knik Arm Crossing will have a significant impact on the MSB especially if no new Parks Highway Connection is constructed. It is imperative that KABATA, ADOT&PF and the MSB secure funds to improve the Burma Road/South Big Lake corridor to provide this new Parks Highway Connection. Funds should be allocated in the STIP to initiate the PD&E for this important connection. Due to the Statewide importance of this connection it should be funded either within the NHS program, with State General funds or with KABATA funds. These funds should be additive and not impact other important projects within the Borough.
- The NHS program is virtually non-existent in the new STIP and this has significant statewide and regional implications.

  Several important improvements to the Glenn and Parks Highways were initiated within the 2004 to 2006 STIP amendment 8 but no funding is allocated within the new 2006 to 2008 STIP to keep these projects on track. History shows that if there is not a continuation of funding in the new STIP for these projects, these projects, though started, will receive a low priority to be worked on by the Department. We recommend, and specific comments will be made later, that additional design and right of way funding be established in the new STIP to keep these projects moving forward. Otherwise, several needed improvements to the NHS will be delayed unnecessarily impacting the statewide economy as well as the safety and convenience of the traveling public.
- Major projects within the STIP should have their statutory mandated cost effectiveness completed and published.
- The New STIP Format does not provide a clear representation of the total cost of a project. The total cost of the projects should be indicated even if total funding does not occur within the STIP years.
- The reason for going to a 3 year STIP representation as opposed to the former 6 year format was that without the reauthorization of the Surface Transportation Act it was uncertain what the funding levels would be in the outer years. Now that the

SAFETEA-LU has been adopted it would be beneficial to provide a six year format.

- The MSB supports the Departments efforts to initiate a State funded EIS and interim improvements for the Palmer Wasilla Highway. We are concerned that with the size and scope of this major arterial, that the Palmer Wasilla Highway Reconstruction is not included in the new STIP. The MSB and the Department need to develop a strategy to fund this critical project.

Specific Comments (Note: The basis of the MSB's comments is the 2004 to 2006 STIP Amendment 8. The projects contained in Amendment 8 are then compared to the proposed new FY 2006 to 2008 STIP. Dollar amounts are in $1,000s of dollars):

National Highway System

- **Project 11959 Glenn Highway MP 34 to 42 Parks Highway to Old Glenn Highway.** This project was initiated in Amendment 8 with $1,500.0 in FY 05. No additional funding is provided in the new STIP. Additional Phase 2 design and Phase 3 Right of Way funds should be programmed in FY 07 and 08 to ensure that this important project is kept on course for construction in the 2010 timeframe. Obtaining right of way is important in this rapidly developing area. The Updated LRTP identifies this project as a base case project that must be constructed in a reasonable timeframe and it recommends that its termini be extended to the Glenn Highway's intersection with Palmer Fishhook Road.
- **Project 2320 Glenn Highway MP 53 to 56 Moose Creek Canyon**
  Amendment 8 provided $1,000.0 to initiate the PD&E in FY 05. The new STIP shows $650.0 in ROW funding in FY 06, $9,100.0 in construction funds in FY 09 and an additional $3,000.0 beyond FY 09. This provides a reasonable development schedule for this project. We recommend full funding in FY 09. It is unclear if $12,000.0 represents the total construction cost.
- **Project 2324 Glenn Highway MP 66.5 to 80 Chickaloon**
  The scope does not match the title in Amendment 8. Amendment 8 showed $3,500.0 for Phase 2 design in FY 06 but no funding is contained in the new STIP. This is a needed project on the Glenn Highway and Phase 2 Design funds should be included in the New STIP in FY 06.
- **Project 2325 Glenn Highway MP 80 to 92 Long Lake to Cascade**
  Amendment 8 showed $2,300.0 in Phase 2 design funding in FY 06 but no funding is contained in the new STIP. This is one of the most treacherous stretches of the Glenn Highway and design should be initiated no later that FY 07 in the amount of $2,300.0.
- **Project 2326 MP 92 to 97 Cascade to Hicks Creek Reconstruction**
  This project shows up in both Amendment 8 and the new STIP for construction in FY 06 and 07. The MSB appreciates that this project has not slipped.
- **Project 11961 Parks Highway Alternative Corridor**
  The PD&E for this project is currently being funded with State General funds and ARRC funds. The LRTP recognizes this project as a must have by 2025 or the Parks Highway fails through Wasilla. Every effort needs to be made to ensure that project proceeds in an effective manner and a funding program is established to acquire the corridor early in this rapidly growing area of the borough.
- **Project 2556 Parks Highway MP 42.1 to 44 Reconstruction Crusey to Lucus Road**
  This project shows up in both Amendment 8 and the new STIP for construction in FY 06. The MSB appreciates that this project is moving forward. It should be noted that the

correct spelling of Lucus is with a "u" it is a family name. The LRTP shows that the Parks Highway through Wasilla needs to be a six lane facility within the 20 year time frame.

- **Project 11961 MP 44 to 52.3 Lucus Road to Big Lake Road**
  The PD&E has been initiated for this project with funding from an earlier STIP Amendment. The new STIP has $1,000.0 for final design in FY 07 and $1,300.0 for ROW in FY 09 with $18,700.0 in construction funding beyond FY 09. If feasible the ROW phase should be moved to FY 08 and construction to FY 09. It is unclear if the $18,700.0 is the total construction estimate. This project is needed sooner than later due to its high traffic volumes and accident history.
- **Parks Highway Projects: 2563 MP 72 to 83 Willow Creek to Kashwitna River, 11960 MP 83 to 98.5 Kashwitna River to Talkeetna Spur Road, 11979 MP 98.5 to 115 Talkeetna Spur Road to Petersville Road, and 11980 MP 115 to 133 Petersville Road to Chulitna River.**
  These four projects all had approximately $1,000.0 to initiate Preliminary Design and Environmental in Amendment 8. The new STIP has no funding for these needed improvements. The MSB requests that design funding be placed in the new STIP to keep the program of improving the Parks Highway up through the MSB to Fairbanks alive. Delaying these projects will impact the economic well being of the State in view of the potential for the Gas Pipeline and other important economic developments as well the need to improve the safety of these narrow segments as traffic increases.

Community Transportation System

- **Project 2481 Mat Su Seward Meridian Road Improvements**
  This project is contained in both Amendment 8 and the new STIP. However Construction funding in not included in the new STIP. Assuming 2 years for ROW acquisition Construction could be initiated in FY 09. Total construction funding should be shown in FY 09. This route is a key north south arterial that will greatly improve traffic flow to the new Seward Meridian Interchange. This project cannot be delayed.
- **Project 2500 Mat Su Trunk Road Reconstruction**
  This project shows up in both Amendment 8 and the new STIP. The New STIP reflects ROW acquisition in FY 06 and 07 with construction funding in FY 08 and 09. However, the new STIP does not reflect total construction cost of the project. Total construction costs should be identified and shown in FY 08 and 09. This is another critical north south arterial that can not be delayed any further.
- **Project 2503: Wasilla Fishhook Road Rehabilitation / Main Street.**
  Amendment 8 shows construction funding for this project was "advanced construct" to FY 05. The new STIP shows construction in FY 08 and 09. The project scopes states that this project is to be constructed in two phases Bogard to Schrock/Seldon and Glenwood to Bogard. It is unclear which phase the New STIP funding will construct. The MSB assumes that Amendment 8 funded the Bogard to Schrock segment and the new STIP is funding the Glenwood to Bogard segment. This needs to be clarified and may result in additional comments.
- **Project 9622 Palmer Chugach Street Improvements**
  It is our understanding that this project is close to being bid ready but does not show up for construction until FY 09 in the new STIP. The construction phase of this project should be moved forward in the new STIP.

- **Project 11720 Wasilla Crusey Street Improvements**
  This project was proposed to be "advanced construct" in FY 06 in Amendment 8. The new STIP delays this bid ready project until FY 09. This is an important north south arterial that should be constructed in FY 06 or 07.
- **Project 18749 Mat Su Hatcher Pass Nordic Ski Trail System**
  The MSB supports this project within the new STIP.
- **Project 6206 Mat Su Bogard Road Extension East**
  The MSB supports this project within the new STIP.
- **Project 17526 Mat Su Borough Road Improvements**
  The MSB and state need to the project scope of this project.

TRAAK Program

- **Project 18737 Mat Su Borough: Blair Lake Trail**
  This project is contained in the new STIP. Although this project is located in the MSB, the MSB is not the lead agency on this project.

Alaska Highway System

- **Project 18755 Mat Su Borough Point MacKenzie Road Improvement MP 7-20**
  The MSB supports this project as represented in the new STIP and as agreed to by recent MOU signed by MSB, ADOT&PF and KABATA.
- **Hatcher Pass Road Projects 9732 MP 18-25 and 9734 MP 25-39**
  The MSB continues to support ADOT&PF efforts to improve the Hatcher Pass Road. The MSB supports moving the design phases for these projects from FY 09 to FY 07 to accelerate the improvement of these road segments.
- **Project 7240 Petersville Road Upgrade MP 0 to 18.6**
  The MSB supports this project as it supports the South Denali Development actions common to all alternatives. The scope needs to be updated since pavement currently extends beyond MP 3. The community's top priorities include the trail from the Parks Highway to at least the Moose Creek Bridge and left turn pocket on the Parks Highway at the Petersville Road intersection.
- **Project 6483 Mat Su South Big Lake Road Realignment**
  The MSB, ADOT&PF and KABATA need to come up with a program to upgrade the Burma Road/Big Lake Road Corridor to address the need to provide a new Parks Highway Connection to the Knik Arm Crossing. The new STIP needs to include the Preliminary Design and Environmental Phase 2 funding for this project early in the program without affecting other project needs. A recent MOU signed by the MSB, ADOT&PF and KABATA indicate the need to come up with a workable strategy to accelerate this project to support the Knik Arm Crossing.
- **Project 6203 Old Glenn Highway Rehabilitation**
  The new STIP reflects the upgrade of this route from Plumly to the New Glenn Highway in Palmer. The title should reflect this phase. This is an important project and the MSB appreciates that construction is scheduled in FY 06 and 07.
- **Project 2479 Point MacKenzie Road Upgrade**
  The new STIP represents the scope to pave from MP 7 to 20 of this route. The STIP should reflect the recent MOU signed by the MSB, ADOT&PF and KABATA relative to this segment of Point MacKenzie Road.

Earmarked Projects

- **Knik Arm Crossing**
  The new STIP shows total funding for the Knik Arm Crossing in FY 06. The 600,000.0 impact to the STIP is enormous. This project should be reasonably phased and proper analysis of the impact of this project to the total program needs to be provided. It is readily apparent that the advanced construction of this project to FY 06 has a significant waterfall effect to all other projects within the STIP. The most notable impact to the MSB is that Palmer Wasilla Highway is not included in the STIP.
- **Other Borough Earmark Projects**
  Other Borough earmarked projects are not contained in the new STIP. The most notable is the $4,000.0 funding for the Seldon West Extension from Church to the Parks Highway. This key long term project is a key link in providing a new east west arterial from the Glenn Highway in Palmer to Parks Highway in Houston. It is critical that the Phase 2 predesign and environmental be funded in FY 06 so that the corridor can be identified and preserved and that a reasonable phased construction program can be established.

  Certain earmarked projects are contained within specific funding categories in the new STIP while others are not included at all. Legislative authority can not be given if these earmarked projects are not contained in the new STIP. All earmarked projects should be listed in a separate category as in previous STIPS. This allows easier tracking of these projects. The Borough will be working with Central Region ADOT&PF to ensure that all of MSB's earmarks are contained in the new STIP.