

Correspondence



RABBIT CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL (RCCC)

A Forum for Respectful Communication & Community Relations



1057 West Fireweed Lane, Suite 100 / Anchorage, AK 99503

Daniel Mckenna-Foster, Senior Planner
Municipality of Anchorage

March 17, 2024

Dear Daniel –

Several Rabbit Creek Community Council (RCCC) members have responded to the recent draft Long-Range Transportation Strategies survey. We discussed this at our March 14, 2024, meeting and approved the following comments with a vote: 12 ayes, 2 nays, and 1 abstention.

General comments:

We are pleased that the Assembly has directed Municipal planners to develop a Long-Range Transportation Strategy that will address all communities within the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) Boundaries, rather than just within the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS). However, we are concerned this initial step, the Transportation Strategies survey starts the process a few steps in from where it should and is confusing for the public.

1. This survey feels abstract and disconnected. It is confusing to choose tools before we address desired final outcomes. Before choosing implementation strategies, the public needs to join the discussion or review of “what is the optimum transportation system to serve Anchorage?”
2. Plan first; then figure out implementation strategies. We encourage the Municipality to develop a locally inspired Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that identifies priority modes and networks within and between major quadrants and development centers of Anchorage. This should be closely based on intended land use densities and types. We suggest that the first public process is to collect public input on a vision and goals, then to develop objectives and the performance measures to mark progress toward the goals. After the public has a clear vision, it will be meaningful to discuss strategies.
3. Why is it necessary to “rank” strategies? Some of these strategies can and should be done simultaneously. As noted above, strategies are a tool kit.
4. Adopt locally chosen transportation performance measures in the Municipal LRTP. Transportation performance measures in the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOTPF) and AMATS Long-Range Transportation Plans are based on federal requirements and do not reflect local adopted plans and values. The Municipal LRTP should consider performance measures for:
 - a. Safety targets that align with Vision Zero, which the Muni has adopted.
 - b. Percent of residents with viable walk/bike options, such as “15-minute walkable neighborhoods.”
 - c. Reduction of greenhouse gases from transportation in accordance with the goals of the Anchorage Climate Action Plan.

- d. Affordable transportation options for low-income neighborhoods.
5. Improve school transportation. School transportation is inefficient, inequitable, and expensive. Private student transport generates thousands of avoidable vehicle miles traveled (VMT). There is inequal school choice for non-driving families. Include a vision or goals for combining at least some school transportation with general transit. Create performance measures:
 - a. Percent of school children with safe walk/bike routes to neighborhood school.
 - b. Percent of school children with transit options to schools of choice.

Specific comments:

Maintenance - other priorities to include are:

1. Dedicate a high percentage of the budget for maintenance (the 'fix-it-first' approach).
2. The exception to "fix it first" is where there is a one-time capital investment opportunity to acquire an easement or Right-of-Way (ROW), or to use capital funds with short-term availability.
3. Set higher standards for the percent of roads and trails in good repair. The DOTPF standards (e.g., 15% of non-highway roads in good repair) are too low.

Providing choices – additional priorities we suggest are:

1. Use transportation investments to support infill and redevelopment based on land use plans. Invest heavily in transit and active transportation in and between the 2040 Land Use Plan Reinvestment Focus Areas and Areas of Growth and Change.
4. Adopt a goal for a certain percentage of residents living in 15-minute walkable neighborhoods.
5. Identify neighborhoods that are approaching the 15-minute walkable threshold and focus transit and active transportation investments there.

Managing public spaces – we suggest these new strategies:

1. Create parallel or separated motorized and non-motorized networks where possible. Use undeveloped ROW and easements to create convenient active transportation connections that are separate from the roadways.
2. Convenience incentives: design transit and active transportation to be the most convenient options at destination venues, e.g., with front-door transit drop-off and bike parking.
3. Parking: consider where and how to monetize parking in public ROWs. This will generate revenue and encourage more people to opt for transit and active transportation. Parking on public land is never really "free" – it is subsidized by taxpayers.

Engage the public in transportation planning with a new priority:

MOA and AMATS should negotiate with DOTPF to ensure that local priorities and local land use decisions have decisive weight on DOTPF projects within the Municipality.

Implementing adopted plans: a missing priority is to invest in transit and active transportation where land use plans intend to catalyze infill and redevelopment.

Sincerely,



Ann Rappoport, Co-chair



John Riley, Co-chair