

Transportation Committee Minutes

3/13/2008

7:00 a.m.

Denny's

Attendance: Denny Schlotfeldt, chair; Butch Stein; Don Lowell; Libbie Martin; Bob Tilly; Bob Sparks; Ed Peebles; Roger Burggraf; Tom George; Stan Halvarson; Karl Gohlke; Jerry Rafson; Jaime Schwartzwald; Jason Turner; Ken Collette; Clark Milne; Luke Hopkins; and Michelle Gibson.

1. Call to Order: Denny Schlotfeldt called the meeting to order at 7:02 a.m.
2. Welcome and Introduction of Guests.
3. Committee Member Comments: Butch Stein, Roger Burggraf, Tom George
 - a. Talking about the Land Swap because of the timing on Yukon Flats. Public hearings were held here a couple of weeks ago. Doyon wants to drill on their property and are trying to get a contiguous land mass with good access. Have a lot of information on it, and can go to website. Deadline of 3/25 to let Doyon know how you feel about it, and have comment cards here today you can send in.
 - b. Important that we respond on this. Idea is to consolidate land ownership—Doyon made its selection prior to ANILCA—now access is the big thing. Want to give Fish and Wildlife better land. If the land trade doesn't go through, going to be difficult for them to develop their lands. Win-win situation, but the environmental community is fighting it.
 - c. AOC (Airport Operators Council) meeting today at the Everts Hangar, conference room upstairs. Deputy Commissioner of Aviation in attendance.
 - d. Understand next week a series of environmental scoping meetings on expanding airspace of military operations—Military training planned closes down the only instrument airway in and out of interior Alaska for periods of time. Want the military well-trained—but it has ripple effects that need to be considered. Need to preserve access as well as provide military training.
4. Program—Jerry Rafson, P.E. Chief, Northern Region Planning—
 - a. Copies of the new draft STIP Amendment 17, which came out Tuesday. Descriptions of each project, and preface talks about STIP development and funding sources. Available on-line at ADOT & PF website. Purpose of this amendment is more of an update for focus, and accuracy in what we are projecting we are going to do. It is out for public review until 4/14.
 - b. Handout of Northern Region Projects. Have funding for FY08 and FY09, and after FY09, could mean 2020, so not money we can count on. Last page of the handout is different funding sources for projects. As you go through this, looking at mixture of earmarks and federal highway funds.
 - c. On page 2, look at more significant projects. FMATS allocation went up a million from what is projected in prior STIP—good news but goes down again in FY09.
 - d. Not sure what Congress is going to do with the Highway Trust Fund. At any rate, notice there are some railroad projects listed, which is a new thing for us to have the railroad mixed in with the highway program.

- e. Page 3 shows a project coming up in Kotzebue. The City got a couple of congressional earmarks for general road projects, and contributed earmarks to the project to make it work.
- f. Big projects on page 4 include the Tanana River bridge replacement at Tok. Hope to get to bid later this year on the Alaska Highway weigh station. Dalton Hwy MP 144 – 175 and Happy Valley to Pump 2 # proposed state funds (PSF). These are proposed GO Bond projects.
- g. Towards the bottom of page 5, there is a project listed as Steese MP 2 – 6. This is an error. It is actually a project to address Bentley Trust issues if funding becomes available. It is a proposed GO Bond project.
- h. Next page, FMATS TRAAK allocation—more money for FMATS.
- i. Have another hand-out—STIP Draft Amendment #17 Funding Summary
 - i. Shows breakdown of funding by Region in FY08 and FY09.
 - ii. Northern Region has 60% of highways but smaller population. For FHWA funding looks like FY08 northern region receives 27% and 2009 receives 33%--which is an improvement over prior STIPs.
 - iii. Transit funds smaller sum of money. Overall northern region getting a very small percentage. Most money is in HQ program. Regions apply to get money for projects from this funding source.
 - iv. Advanced Construct is a mechanism where we borrow money from next year to pay for this year's projects and theoretically pay them back next year. Bottom line is a negative \$63 million—we are paying down our IOU, but then next year start to borrow again.
 - v. Another category is state funds, and that includes those projects with Proposed State Funds and existing state funds. Can see overall, state funds in budget now including matching funds, Northern Region is getting 21% of state funds.
 - vi. With the Railroad funds, didn't have a chance to analyze what getting the money for. Can't tell you where the bulk is going.
- j. To give you an idea, included in 2008 program is \$118 million worth of federal earmark funds, and \$181 million in 2009, about 20% in Northern Region.
- k. Flexible funds hard to analyze—total is about \$277 million in FY08 \$266 million in FY09 for a total of \$545 million. Northern Region gets \$200 million—almost 40%.
- l. Handout with graphs containing information about funding sources.
- m. Discussion: Luke Hopkins, Jerry Rafson, Butch Stein, Clark Milne, Tom George, Karl Gohlke, Denny Schlotfeldt
 - i. On first spreadsheet in FY 08, are there increases or decreases to projects?
 - 1. Both, but overall bottom line total increase.
 - 2. Project in here for Parks Highway 356 completed last summer by Ester. Had to fund an additional \$1.3 million for overruns.
 - ii. About the 27% of funding in the Northern Region—what is it from the last amendment?
 - 1. Don't have that information yet.
 - iii. On overruns—how about if have to go back and correct a recent jobs, like on the stretch going to North Pole, where there is a dip in the road, and towards Ester?

1. Once a project is accepted, it is not a guarantee. Don't believe have a final acceptance on Parks.
- iv. So, it is foggy to know what is past FY 09?
 1. Yes. Will do what we need to do to keep highways going.
- v. Don't have the FMATS TIP, program, but FMATS has it own allocation within that. FMATS has hired Donna Gardino as coordinator, and is o longer primary responsibility of DOT.
- vi. Losing aviation planner—what's the plan?
 1. Working on this. Donna Gardino was also planner, so have lost two.
- vii. Weigh station—\$1 million for FY08 and \$9 – 10 million for FY09—how far along in planning for that?
 1. Construction project, And \$1 million is for right-of-way, utilities, etc.
 2. Would like to have someone come and talk about this.
- viii. What about Elliott Highway MP 108 – 120 reconstruction?
 1. FY08 – FY09—continued design work, don't have construction funds for that
- ix. Illinois under FMATs allocation. Acquiring right-of-way, and at some point may have to start demolition on structures acquired on condemnation.
 1. Helping with HAZMAT side on so far 3 out of 7 properties, and a 4th is imminent. It is a separate effort project to strip HAZMAT out of the buildings. Once move into HAZMAT side, and out of the way, marks progress.
- x. Van Horn road?
 1. Under construction this summer. New requirements to keep noxious weeds from spreading.
- xi. Winter trail marking? Some follow RS2477, but also inter-village trails, and some over water. Basically, put up tripods so people can navigate, with the first group out west where the lands are bare, it's windy, and easy to get lost.
- n. Call the office if you want a copy of the STIP and if you have any questions

5. Other Business

- a. Port of Anchorage Resolution
 - i. Discussion: Denny Schlotfeldt, Don Lowell, Tom George
 1. Copy of the proposed resolution the Port of Anchorage sent up to look at in support of the port improvements they would like to make. What does the committee want to do?
 2. Talked to the Mat-Su Port Director yesterday and sent copy to him, who is going to look at it and respond. They do work cooperatively with Port of Anchorage, which is asking for \$100 million over 5 years of state funds. Will get back to us with comments.
 3. Need to study and craft our own words of support and not theirs.
 4. Felt money requested is insufficient for what project going to cost.

5. Hold this over and look at next meeting or the following meeting.
 - b. Next week is Billy Connor of the UAF Transportation Center on Geofiber in Western Alaska, and the following week is Glenn Miller of FNSB on Air Quality.

End of Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle B. Gibson