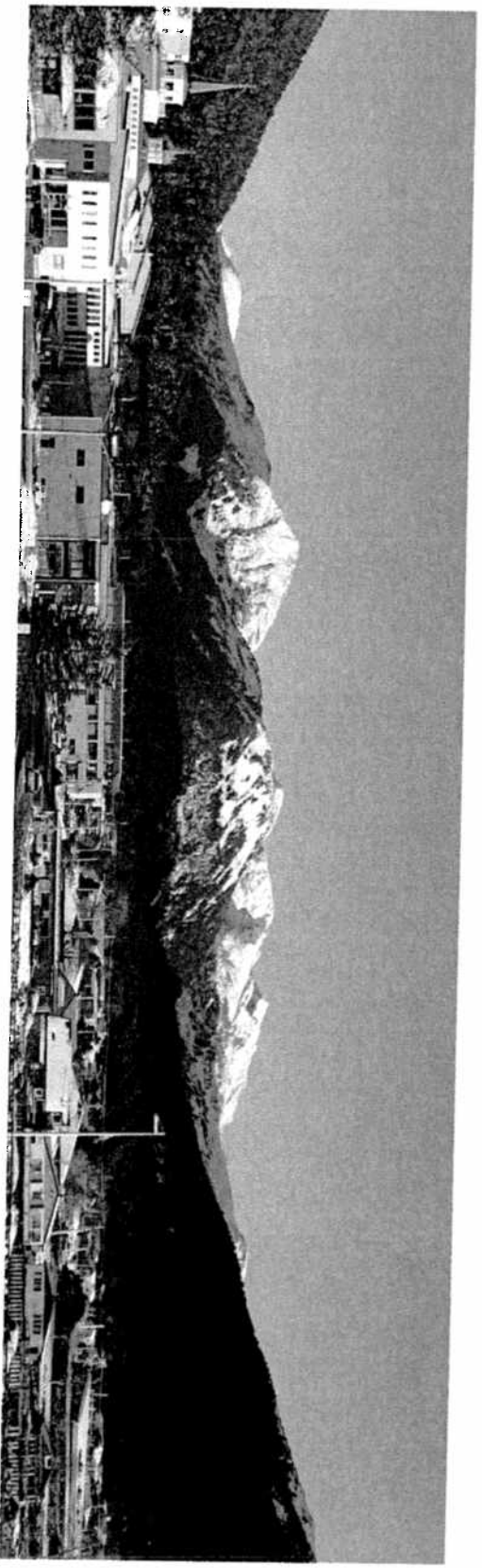


2007 City and Borough of Sitka Comprehensive Plan Update



Prepared with the Assistance of
Community Boards, Commissions, Organizations, and Native Interests
who generously contributed time and efforts.

Narrative built to Denali Commission standards.

EXCERPTS FROM THE 2007 SITKA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (CONTINUED)

Bicycles

2.13.12. To provide education and public information and encouragement for bike safety, including:

A. WORK TOWARD IMPLEMENTING Develop and THE GOALS ESTABLISHED IN THE 2003 SITKA NONMOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION PLAN. *a Sitka Bicycle Safety plan, to include a danger assessment and identify and make recommendations to resolve bicycle safety concerns.*

B. WORK WITH THE POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION TO IMPLEMENT GOAL #2 IN THE NON-MOTORIZED PLAN WHICH SUPPORTS AND ENCOURAGES SAFETY AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR THE BENEFIT OF MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED USERS OF SITKA'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM. ENCOURAGE THE INVOLVEMENT OF SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS AND HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS IN PURSUIT OF THESE GOALS. Develop a bicycle safety programs, a comprehensive bike education program aimed at both youth and adults.

C. Develop and implement bicycle safety ordinances and encourage safe riding practices.

2.13.13. Identify and implement development and improvement of bicycle facilities, including:

A. URGE THE STATE OF ALASKA, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, TO DEVELOP (bike paths) MULTI-USE PATHWAYS on both sides of major roads, including the State highway from Starrigavan to Herring Cove, KEEPING THEM SEPARATED BY CURBS OR GREEN SPACE WHENEVER FEASIBLE..

B. Advocate to DOT for solutions to identified safety issues along Sawmill Creek by BACKING CONCEPTS LIKE A PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE UNDERPASS AT SAWMILL CREEK HIGHWAY'S INDIAN RIVER BRIDGE OR SEPARATED MULTITUSE PATH FROM SHOTGUN ALLEY TO THE SAWMILL COVE PARK.

C. Improve winter maintenance on roads and (bike lanes) BIKEWAYS AND MULTI-USE PATHWAYS to permit use by cyclists throughout the year. SAFETY WILL BE IMPROVED BY KEEPING BIKE LANES CLEAN, FREE OF GLASS AND GRAVEL WITH WELL-PAINTED LINES AND IN GOOD REPAIR. THESE MAINTENANCE TASKS NEED TO BE RECOGNIZED BY DOT AND PUBLIC WORKS AS A PRIORITY.

D. WORK TOWARDS OBTAINING STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM(STIP) FUNDING FOR MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF HALIBUT POINT ROAD BIKE PATH.

C. Correct or, at a minimum, post signs in high priority problem areas warning of danger to bicyclists, as identified in the Sitka Bicycle Plan.

E. SEEK FUNDING TO develop alternate bike routes around congested or dangerous areas and a possible bike and pedestrian path through Moller Park to Lake Street.

F. WORK TOWARD DEVELOPING Develop a SINGLE-TRACK mountain bike accessible trail (and recreational use area along the old "Cross Trail" and possibly other locations) to provide off road places for mountain bikes to ride.

F. (Develop a long-range Comprehensive Sitka Bicycle Plan to plan for and implement future bicycle facilities for Sitka.)

G. WORK TOWARDS DEVELOPING A BMX BICYCLE AREA.

EXCERPTS FROM THE 2007 SITKA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

(all caps sections were proposed changes – the final plan is still not available)

City Streets and Roads

2.3.5. To develop extensions to the existing street system that will serve the long-term needs of the residents directly served, the traveling public, safety needs and utility services; and to achieve the following objectives and policies;

A. Review minor and major subdivision standards for road and utility construction, weighing initial construction cost against life cycle costs.

B. Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle use of the street system in the design of improvements.
INCORPORATE USE OF THE STREET SYSTEM BY PUBLIC TRANSIT RIDERS,
PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS IN THE DESIGN OF STREET IMPROVEMENTS.
INCLUDE PUBLIC TRANSIT PULLOUTS IN LONG-RANGE ROAD DESIGNS.

2.7.1. To CONSIDER DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING develop and implement a requirement for SIDEWALKS, BIKE PATHS, parks and/or green belts within all new major subdivisions, and develop a mechanism for community groups to maintain neighborhood parks and green belts.

2.11.5 Encourage healthy lifestyles in Sitka through the development of various activities that would encourage family, SENIOR, youth and community and participation. The healthy lifestyles' program would include the development of healthy activities, as well as an educational component that would include, BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO, the following.

A. Encourage healthy lifestyles for youth/children through school resources and peer support groups.

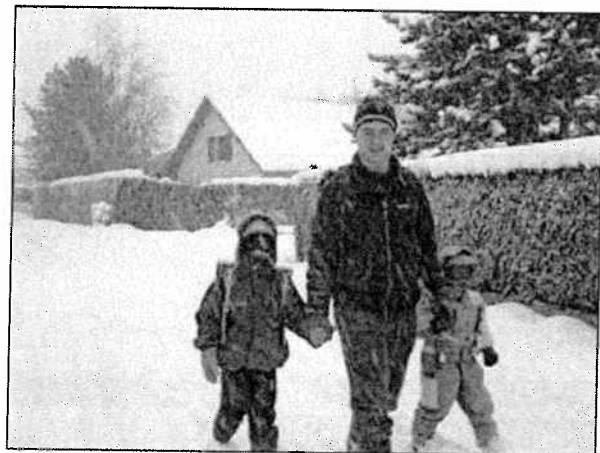
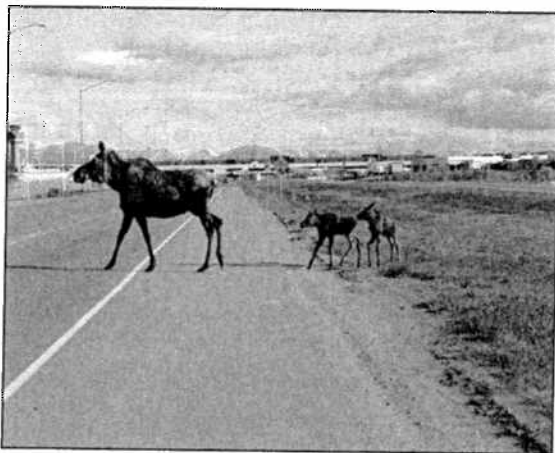
B. Promote adult/parental participation in health promotion activities.

C. Support the development of educational activities and recreational opportunities such as bike paths, SIDEWALKS, WALKING PATHS and health fairs.



Alaska Campaign for Active Transportation
Anchorage, Palmer and Wasilla, Alaska
2008

**Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla and the “core area” Active
Transportation Partnership**



Confirmed Partners as of October 2008:

Municipality of Anchorage
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Southcentral Foundation
Alaska Center for the Environment
Alaska Transportation Priorities Project
Bicycle Commuters of Anchorage
Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers

CASE STATEMENT

Alaska Campaign for Active Transportation Anchorage, Palmer and Wasilla, Alaska 2008

Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla and the “core area” Active Transportation Partnership

Confirmed Partners as of October 2008:

Municipality of Anchorage, www.muni.org/transplan/non-motorized.cfm

Matanuska-Susitna Borough, www1.matsugov.us

Southcentral Foundation, www.scf.cc

Alaska Center for the Environment, www.akcenter.org

Alaska Transportation Priorities Project, www.aktransportation.org

Bicycle Commuters of Anchorage, www.bicycleanchorage.org

Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers, www.vmbah.org

Key contacts:

- Lois Epstein, AK Transportation Priorities Project, lois@aktransportation.org, 907 929-9372
- Lori Schanche, Municipality of Anchorage, SchancheLE@muni.org, 907 343-8368
- Pat Owens, Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers, pato@mtaonline.net, 907 745-7714

Executive Summary

Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla and the “core area” between Palmer and Wasilla represent areas ripe for increased, non-motorized trips year-round. Anchorage has a completed, comprehensive Pedestrian Plan, is far along in development of its Bicycle Plan and – with adequate funding – will accelerate plan implementation. Palmer, Wasilla and the “core area” require pedestrian and bicycle plan development prior to plan implementation. The entire region, however, has receptive populations due to the outdoors-focus of many Alaskans and their ability to adapt to cold weather, and the extremely high price of motor fuel in Alaska. The Campaign will include a focus on shifting Alaska Native travel patterns to increased non-motorized transportation since Anchorage contains the largest Native population of any community in the state. Based on population, the Campaign expects to spend 80% of its funds in Anchorage and 20% of the funds in Palmer, Wasilla, and the “core area.” Finally, the bi-partisan composition of the Campaign’s communities helps ensure that the state’s federal representatives will act to increase non-motorized transportation funding.

The Campaign’s goals are to:

1. Significantly increase the number of trips to/from work, shopping, school, and public transportation in Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla and the “core area” via non-motorized travel, including among Alaska Natives;
2. Increase safety for walking and bicycling on roads and trails in Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla and the “core area”;
3. Make Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla and the “core area” more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly year-round; and,
4. Provide better connections from diverse neighborhoods in Anchorage to the city’s world-class paved trail system.

The Alaska Campaign for Active Transportation has a high likelihood of success. The benefits of a successful campaign include decreased road maintenance costs and reduced need for new roads and/or road expansions (the majority paid for using federal dollars), safer non-motorized travel, improved public health, less air and water pollution, and more vibrant neighborhoods and communities.

Alaska Campaign for Active Transportation Anchorage, Palmer and Wasilla, Alaska 2008

Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla and the “core area” Active Transportation Partnership Partners (confirmed and unconfirmed as of October 2008):

*Municipality of Anchorage, www.muni.org/transplan/non-motorized.cfm

*Mat-Su Borough, <http://www1.matsugov.us>

City of Palmer

City of Wasilla

Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Anchorage School District

Alaska Native Medical Center

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

*Southcentral Foundation, www.scf.cc

*Alaska Center for the Environment, www.akcenter.org

Alaska Mobility Coalition

Alaska Public Interest Research Group

*Alaska Transportation Priorities Project, www.aktransportation.org

American Lung Association of Alaska

Anchorage Citizens Coalition

*Bicycle Commuters of Anchorage, www.bicycleanchorage.org

Friends of Mat-Su

*Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers, www.vmbah.org

Anchorage Chamber of Commerce

Palmer Chamber of Commerce

Wasilla Chamber of Commerce

* Confirmed partners

Introduction and Goals

Active transportation, which includes all forms of non-motorized transportation, is a concept many Alaskans heartily support. Alaskans are an outdoors-oriented population and – if physically able and weather conditions allow – Alaskans generally enjoy walking, bicycling, and/or skiing. The mission of the Alaska Campaign for Active Transportation (the Campaign) is to increase the number of essential trips using non-motorized means by residents of Anchorage, Palmer and Wasilla (the two largest Mat-Su Borough communities, both within commuting range of Anchorage) as well as the unincorporated “core area” between these communities. The benefits of a successful campaign include decreased road maintenance costs, reduced need for new roads and/or road expansions, safer non-motorized travel, improved public health, less air and water pollution, and more vibrant neighborhoods and communities.

The Campaign's goals are to:

5. Significantly increase the number of trips to/from work, shopping, school, and public transportation in Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla and the "core area" via non-motorized travel, including among Alaska Natives;
6. Increase safety for walking and bicycling on roads and trails in Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla and the "core area";
7. Make Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla and the "core area" more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly year-round; and,
8. Provide better connections from diverse neighborhoods in Anchorage to the city's world-class paved trail system.

Location

Southcentral Alaska is the state's most populated region, and contains Alaska's largest community – Anchorage. Approximately 50 miles north are Palmer and Wasilla which are 12 miles apart, and both communities are within one hour's commute of Anchorage. The following map shows the location of Anchorage, Palmer, and Wasilla within Alaska.



Appendix 1 contains maps showing Anchorage's key employment, commercial, and educational destinations, as well as the existing paved trail system.

Background Information

Anchorage is the largest community in Alaska and in 2007 had an estimated population of 283,823 (42% of the state's population).¹ Palmer and Wasilla are the largest communities in the Mat-Su Borough which in 2007 had an estimated population of 80,056 (12% of the state's population).² Both Anchorage and the Mat-Su Borough are growing in population.



The Anchorage region has the largest population of Alaska Natives of any community statewide, with Alaska Natives representing approximately 7% of Anchorage's population during the 2000 census.³ Due to high fuel costs in rural areas, there recently has been significant migration from primarily Native villages to Anchorage.⁴

At approximately 60° north latitude, the region's climate can be characterized as 6 months of winter (October-March) with temperatures below freezing most of the time, 3 transitional months (April, May, and September), and 3 months of summer (June-August). Alaskans are accustomed to cold weather and many individuals walk and even bicycle all year long using modified gear such as shoes with grippers and studded bicycle tires.

Anchorage Journalist Tim Woody and his commuting self-portrait.

The region has limited daylight during fall and winter. As a result, walking and bicycling routes, including routes to schools, must be well-lit and walkers and bicyclists must be very visible to avoid injuries from vehicles and the area's many moose.

¹ Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. See <http://labor.state.ak.us/news/2008/news08-43.pdf>.

² *Ibid.*

³ See <http://www.muni.org/homepage/quickstats.cfm#mapson>.

⁴ "Bush costs prompt exodus to cities; Task force urged to stem Migration," Julia O'Malley and Kyle Hopkins, *Anchorage Daily News*, September 29, 2008, (see <http://www.adn.com/front/story/541188.html>).

Notably, *Prevention* magazine ranked Anchorage 8th best walking city of the 100 most populous cities in the U.S. in 2006, with the criterion that counted most being the percentage of people who regularly walked.⁵ The March 2006 issue of *Bicycling* magazine ranked Anchorage among the 21 best bicycling cities in the U.S., giving it an honorable mention in the 200,000 to 500,000 category (winning cities were Madison, WI, Tucson, AZ, and Albuquerque, NM; Minneapolis, MN – a Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Program community – also received an honorable mention).

In 2006, Anchorage issued its *Ten Year Plan on Obesity and Health*.⁶ This plan contains a key goal (one of four goals), with several subgoals, consistent with increasing non-motorized transportation:

Goal 4: Create a community environment that supports a more physically active way of life.

Subgoal 4.1: Develop safe, convenient, and attractive sidewalks/pathways.

Subgoal 4.3: Improve [the] off-road trail system to provide better area wide connectivity and linkages to major destinations and adjoining neighborhoods.

Subgoal 4.4: Improve safety and maintenance of [the] pedestrian transportation system.

Subgoal 4.5: Site public facilities, such as schools, parks, and public buildings in locations where they are readily accessible by walking, biking and/or public transit to the residents intended to be served.

Subgoal 4.6: Modify the Municipality of Anchorage's land use regulations to encourage and facilitate compact mixed use and pedestrian friendly development, particularly in those areas so identified in the Municipality of Anchorage's Comprehensive Plan.

Further proving its interest in non-motorized transportation, this year several involved individuals formed an all-volunteer pro-bicycling organization, Bicycle Commuters of Anchorage, or BCA (see BCA's very impressive website: <http://www.bicycleanchorage.org/>). BCA works to improve conditions for bicycle transportation and encourage bicycle use in Anchorage. BCA sponsored several events this year to promote bicycle commuting, worked with the Alaska Injury Prevention Center on Public Service Announcements to prevent vehicle collisions with bicycles, and serves as a member of a state/local transportation advisory committee. BCA also assisted the Municipality of Anchorage in promoting Bike to Work Day which included 112 business teams with 918 registered riders, and promoted International Walk to School Day to the media.

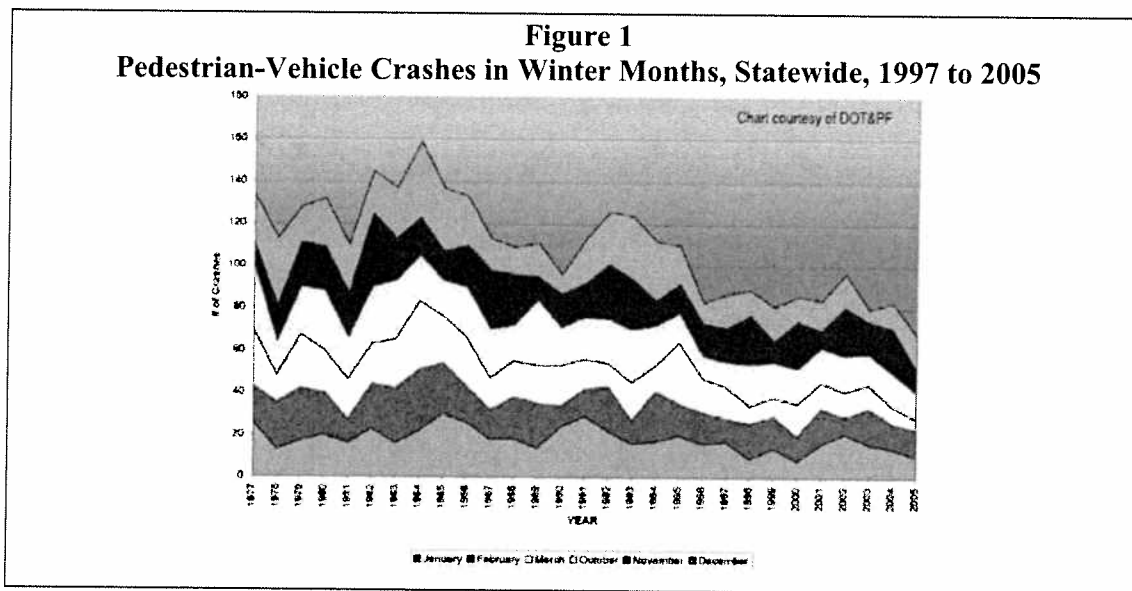
Also in 2008, the Anchorage Metropolitan Planning Organization voted to increase spending on Transportation Enhancements from 10 percent of its money to 10-20 percent.

⁵ See http://www.prevention.com/cda/article/100-best-walking-cities/1ba0d08f88803110VgnVCM20000012281eac_/fitness/walking/getting.started.

⁶ See <http://www.muni.org/iceimages/healthchp/Final%20MOA%20OTF%20May%2010,%202006.pdf>.

Anchorage has a world-class paved trail system of approximately 120 miles, used recreationally and for commuting. There are 458 miles of sidewalks (mostly in older neighborhoods), representing 13 percent of the total miles of road in the Anchorage bowl.⁷ Approximately 75 percent of all intersection curbs with sidewalks have accessibility improvements for the disabled.⁸ Anchorage's People Mover buses all have bicycle racks and, due to demand, the newest buses can carry three rather than two bicycles.

To ensure year-round walking in the region, it is critical for sidewalks to be cleared of snow. Over the past decade, Anchorage has increased its sidewalk snow clearing to 130 miles of walking facilities. Pedestrian-vehicle crashes in winter have trended downward as a result (see Figure 1, below⁹).



To show its commitment to greenhouse gas emission reductions, Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich has signed onto the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, which commits the city to reduce greenhouse gas emission to 7 percent below 1990 levels by 2012.

⁷ *Anchorage Pedestrian Plan, making Anchorage a better, safer place to walk*, Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions, Traffic Department, Municipality of Anchorage, October 2007, p. 9 (see http://www.muni.org/iceimages/transplan/PedestrianPlan_Web.pdf). The smaller, more rural communities of Chugiak-Eagle River and Girdwood, all part of the Municipality of Anchorage, have even less sidewalk coverage.

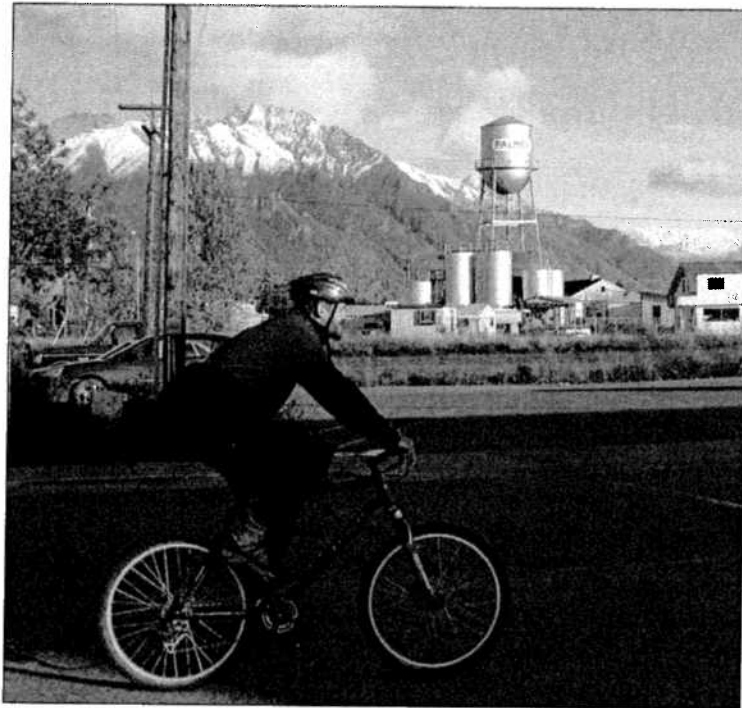
⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁹ *Anchorage Pedestrian Plan, op. cit.*, p. 16.

The Palmer and Wasilla area is much less developed and less populated than Anchorage. Within the Mat-Su Borough, there are over 2500 miles of documented trails, though most are backcountry trails which, in some cases, provide access to non-recreational destinations as well recreational opportunities. Backcountry trails in the Mat-Su Borough are mostly motorized as well. Additionally, there are approximately 90 miles of separated walking and bicycling paths within the Borough that have been constructed during the widening of highways and follow main roads such as the Old Glenn Highway, Palmer-Wasilla Highway, and the Parks Highway. Some shorter off-road paths near schools exist in Wasilla and Palmer, but they often do not connect to the main routes.

Approximately one-fourth of the Borough's constructed separated paths are near or between the two communities of Palmer and Wasilla.

Challenges for the Campaign include a built environment in Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla and the "core area" during recent decades that primarily supports motorized lifestyles. The region has a large number of vehicle-oriented commercial districts, office parks that require driving to lunch or errands, shopping centers that are isolated from neighborhoods, and a low percentage of streets with sidewalks.



Bicycle commuter Whit Sheard near downtown Palmer on autumn day.

Baseline Data Relevant to the Alaska Campaign for Active Transportation

As Alaska's largest community, there is considerably more baseline data about Anchorage than about Palmer and Wasilla. This section describes the available data most relevant to the Campaign.

In 2002, the Municipality of Anchorage conducted a survey which found that on a typical weekday in spring, walking trips represented about 5.7 percent of all trips by residents,¹⁰ close to the national average of 6.9 percent. This figure does not include trips that require some walking, e.g., for travel to a bus stop. The survey also found that the median length

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

of a walking trip in Anchorage was 6 minutes or approximately 0.3 miles.¹¹ Additionally, approximately 14 percent of students walked to school in Anchorage, similar to the national average.¹²

Around 220 pedestrian-vehicle crashes occur each year in Anchorage, a number that has been roughly stable from 1994-2004 despite growing traffic volumes.¹³

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 61 percent of adults in Anchorage are overweight, with more than 23 percent qualifying as obese.¹⁴ Among the Alaska Native community statewide, 68% are overweight and 31% qualify as obese.¹⁵

Status of Pedestrian and Bicycle Plans

As part of its Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, the Municipality of Anchorage published its Pedestrian Plan in October 2007 with the goal of establishing “a 20-year framework for improvements that will enhance the pedestrian environment and increase opportunities to choose walking as a mode of transportation.”¹⁶ The 220 page plan focuses on walking facilities adjacent to streets and walkways connecting housing areas to schools. The Pedestrian Plan’s goals are as follows:¹⁷

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 21. Data from the *Pedestrian and Bicycle Collision Report*, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, 2005.

¹⁴ Data are from the Municipality of Anchorage Ten Year Plan on Obesity and Health, May 10, 2006, prepared by the Mayor’s Task Force on Obesity and Health.

¹⁵ 2005 data. See <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/hsl/brfss/risks/obesity.htm>.

¹⁶ *Anchorage Pedestrian Plan*, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Anchorage Pedestrian Plan Goals

Overall Goal: Double the number of pedestrian trips made by Anchorage residents while simultaneously reducing the number of injuries from pedestrian-vehicle crashes.

Goal 1: Create a safer, more walkable city that will encourage year-round winter pedestrian activity and make walking a safer and more attractive activity.

Goal 2: Provide barrier-free mobility for all populations.

Goal 3: Reduce the number and severity of vehicle crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists by raising public and law enforcement awareness of practices, rights, and responsibilities that promote pedestrian safety.

Goal 4: Improve community connectivity by providing safe, convenient, year-round pedestrian routes within and between neighborhoods, commercial centers, schools, and public facilities as well as between major employment centers and adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Goal 5: Review the relationship of street design to the design of adjacent land uses to consider needs of all users.

Goal 6: Encourage development patterns that increase and enhance pedestrian use.

Goal 7: Raise awareness of the important role of walking in promoting health and preventing disease.

Creation of new walking facilities in Anchorage will make it easier and safer to walk. These facilities will include curb ramps compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, new lighting (since children walk or bicycle in the dark for a majority of the school year), signage, traffic calming, removal of obstructions, crossing improvements, and construction of walkways to provide missing links. The Pedestrian Plan also contains a discussion of the federal Safe Routes to School program including obtaining funding from that program for projects associated with walking and/or biking to school.

The Pedestrian Plan includes a prioritized list of over 300 capital projects that will increase walkability. The total cost of pedestrian-related project improvements listed in the Anchorage Pedestrian Plan is \$118.5 million¹⁸ for more than 300 projects, however high-priority projects (ranked 8-10 of 10) total approximately \$20 million. The Pedestrian Plan includes numerous Action Items covering additional analysis, public education, inter-governmental coordination, etc. to meet the Plan's seven goals.¹⁹

Municipality of Anchorage staff currently are working on the city's Bicycle Plan, with a projected completion date of spring 2009. The Anchorage Bicycle Plan will recommend improvements needed to create a network of bicycle routes that can be used for commuting. Suggested improvements will include signage, striping, as well as inclusion of bicycle lanes in road construction projects.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, see Chapter 5, Recommendations, Policies, and Action Items.

Palmer, Wasilla, the “core area” and the Mat-Su Borough currently do not have pedestrian or bicycle plans. The Borough, however, does have a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan²⁰ which identifies the need for separated walking and bicycle paths and is working on a “Green” Infrastructure plan for the “core area.”

Benefits of a Successful Alaska Campaign for Active Transportation

When Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla and the “core area” enact actions to promote increased walking and biking, there will be significant economic, safety, health, mobility, and community benefits. Economic benefits include a decreased need for road and vehicle maintenance (fewer potholes!) in a state with no funds dedicated to transportation, and a reduced need for new or expanded roads; as a result, federal taxpayers (who pay for most of Alaska’s transportation needs) and vehicle owners who avoid repairs due to poor-quality road surfaces will benefit economically. Additionally, with gasoline and diesel prices at record or near-record levels, improved walkability and bikeability provides important economic – and frequently property value – benefits to residents. Car and truck travel increasingly is becoming unaffordable for low-income residents, so non-motorized transportation options are becoming not just desirable, but essential, to ensure resident mobility.

Safety benefits result from improved crossings in crash-prone intersections, better lighting, signage, striping, traffic calming, and improved driver education regarding pedestrian and bicycle travel. Health benefits include improved air quality resulting in better lung health, reduced obesity and, potentially, reduced incidence of diabetes. Mobility and community benefits derive from residents not needing to rely on motorized vehicles to get where they must go, thus providing an alternative, and redundant, means of transportation, as well as improved mobility for the disabled and those unable to drive. Additionally, the Campaign will emphasize connecting Anchorage’s diverse and lower-income neighborhoods to the city’s world-class paved trail system.

Because Anchorage is the largest community in the state with the most municipal staff, documents such as the city’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Plans and their implementation will serve as models for smaller communities in Alaska to replicate. Thus, the Campaign would, in fact, benefit multiple additional communities throughout Alaska.

As shown in Figure 2 (next page), the Campaign proposes to divide the expected funding in the following manner: 80% to Anchorage and 20% to the Mat-Su Borough, a reasonable breakdown based on population.

²⁰ “Parks, Recreation & Open Space Component of the Asset Management Plan,” Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly Adopted, June 2001 (see http://www.matsugov.us/LandManagement/documents/ParksRecOpenSpaceFinal_001.pdf).

Federal Political Strategy

Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla and the “core area” together represent approximately half the population of Alaska as well as a bi-partisan cross-section of the state (Anchorage is more liberal while the Mat-Su Borough is more conservative). Because these communities represent such a large and politically diverse portion of the state, combining them within the Campaign ensures that the state’s federal representatives will pay attention.

As is well-known, Alaska’s current federal delegation in both the Senate and the House has played a strong role in federal transportation law-making to date. Alaska’s sole Congressman, Don Young, for example, headed the U.S. House of Representatives’ Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure when SAFETEA-LU (named after his wife Lu) passed in 2005.

Should Senator Stevens or Congressman Young not return to the Senate or House in 2009, the Campaign is very confident that any likely successor (Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich in the Senate, a family friend of Congressman Oberstar who now heads the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and Anchorage’s Ethan Berkowitz in the House) will support increased funding for active transportation. Both these candidates are strong advocates for sustainable communities, conservation, and addressing our nation’s climate change challenges.

Figure 2: Alaska Campaign for Active Transportation Plan and Budget

Action Number	Action* and Date	Lead Organization	Approximate Cost
1	ANC – Construct <u>high-priority</u> projects from the Pedestrian Plan, including connections to transit and connections from neighborhoods to the city's paved trail system (2008-15)	Municipality of Anchorage	\$20 million – for those projects ranking 8-10 on a 10 pt. scale in the Ped. Plan
2	ANC – Complete Bicycle Plan (2009)	Municipality of Anchorage	Will occur regardless
3	ANC – Become a Bicycle Friendly Community through the League of American Bicyclists (2011-12)	Municipality of Anchorage	\$100,000
4	ANC – Construct <u>high-priority</u> projects from the Bicycle Plan, including connections to transit and connections from neighborhoods to the city's paved trail system (2010-15)	Municipality of Anchorage	\$16 million
5	ANC – Web-based interactive route planning for the public (2011-12)	Municipality of Anchorage	\$100,000
6	ANC – Targeted outreach to major employers like the federal and state governments, oil/gas companies, hospitals; encourage incentives to walk and bicycle (2010)	Municipality of Anchorage	\$100,000
7	ANC – Provide matching grant incentives for bicycle racks and lockers (2010-15)	Municipality of Anchorage	\$2 million
8	ANC – Purchase needed snow-plow equipment (2010)	Municipality of Anchorage	\$1 million
9	ANC – Promote active transportation among Alaska Natives, including through Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-funded WISEWOMAN program of lifestyle intervention and through public service ads showing Natives walking and bicycling (2010-15)	Southcentral Foundation	\$650,000
10	PAL, WAS – Develop Pedestrian and Bicycle plans (2010-2012)	Mat-Su Borough	\$200,000
11	PAL, WAS – Provide matching grant incentives for bicycle racks and lockers (2010-2015)	Mat-Su Borough	\$500,000
12	PAL, WAS – Implementation of Pedestrian and Bicycle plans, including connections to transit (2012-2015)	Mat-Su Borough	\$9.3 million
13	ALL – Earned media and public service ads and announcements on walking and biking (2010-15)	Alaska Transportation Priorities Project	\$50,000
14	ALL – Conduct events to educate the public on walking (e.g., International Walk to School Day) and biking (e.g., Bike to Work day/week) (2010-2015)	Multiple	Will occur regardless
15	ALL – Promote Safe Routes to School program (2010-15)	Alaska Transportation Priorities Project	Will occur regardless
16	ALL – Obtain additional funding to supplement the federal money including state/local contributions, Rasmuson, Southcentral and other foundations, Native corporation contributions, etc. (2010-15)	Multiple	In-kind contributions from involved organizations

* Action Abbreviations:

ANC – Anchorage, PAL – Palmer, WAS – Wasilla, ALL – All involved communities

Summary

Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla and the “core area” between Palmer and Wasilla represent areas ripe for increased, non-motorized trips year-round. Anchorage has a completed, comprehensive Pedestrian Plan, is far along in development of its Bicycle Plan and – with adequate funding – will accelerate plan implementation. Palmer, Wasilla and the “core area” require pedestrian and bicycle plan development prior to plan implementation. The entire region, however, has receptive populations due to the outdoors-focus of many Alaskans and their ability to adapt to cold weather, and the extremely high price of motor fuel in Alaska. The Campaign will include a focus on shifting Alaska Native travel patterns to increased non-motorized transportation since Anchorage contains the largest Native population of any community in the state. Based on population, the Campaign expects to spend 80% of its funds in Anchorage and 20% of the funds in Palmer, Wasilla, and the “core area.” Finally, the bi-partisan composition of the Campaign’s communities helps ensure that the state’s federal representatives will act to increase non-motorized transportation funding.

The Alaska Campaign for Active Transportation has a high likelihood of success. The benefits of a successful campaign include decreased road maintenance costs and reduced need for new roads and/or road expansions (the majority paid for using federal dollars), safer non-motorized travel, improved public health, less air and water pollution, and more vibrant neighborhoods and communities.

Acknowledgements

Primary author: Lois Epstein, P.E., Alaska Transportation Priorities Project

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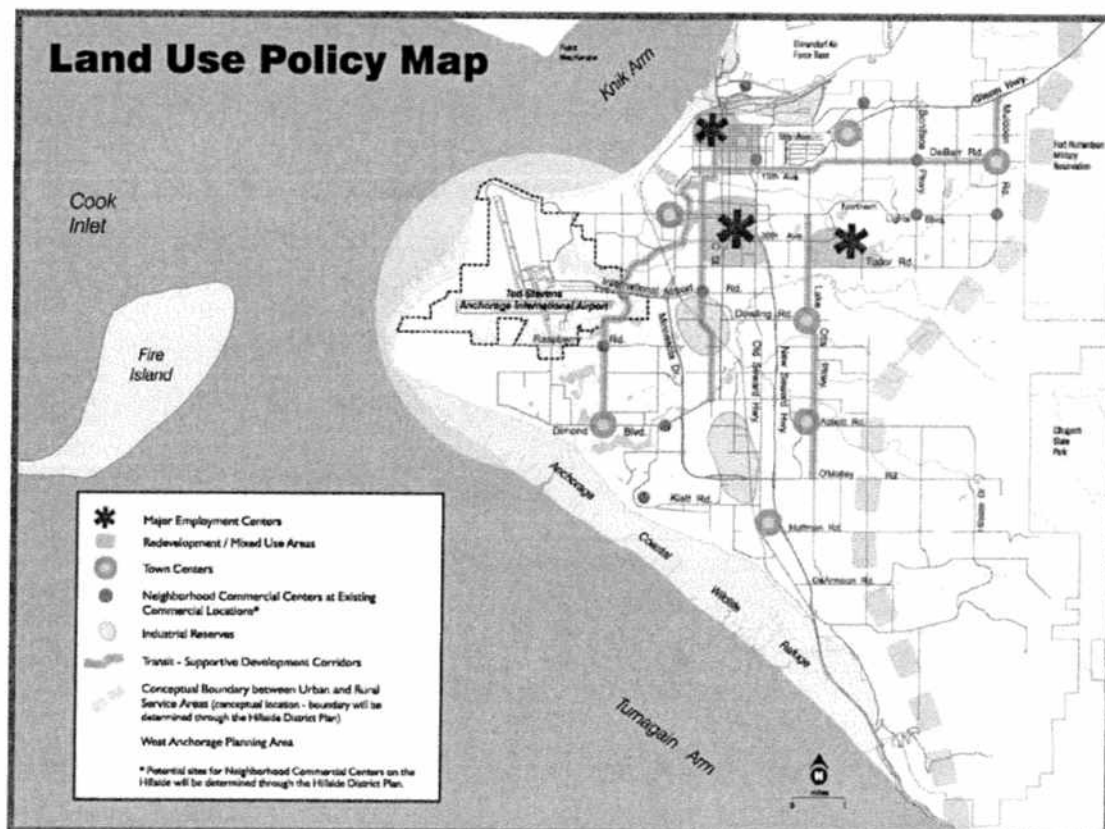
Photo assistance: Tim Woody, Whit Sheard, Dr. Dave Werner

Appendix

- A: Maps
- B: Anchorage Assembly and Mat-Su Borough Resolutions, and Letters of Support
[to be added]
- C: Contacts

Appendix A

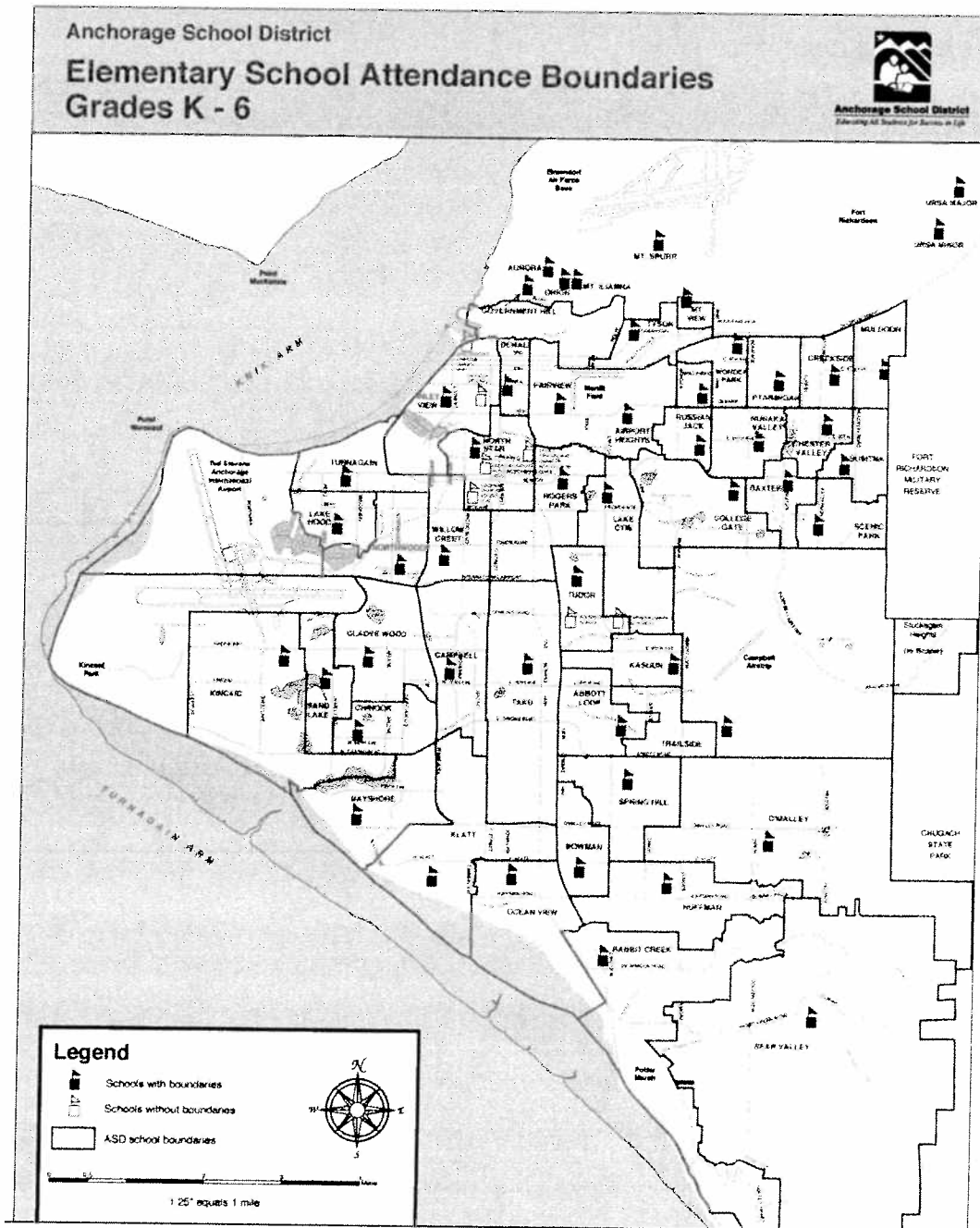
A-1: Municipality of Anchorage Land Use Map Showing Key Employment and Commercial Centers



Source: *Anchorage Pedestrian Plan, making Anchorage a better, safer place to walk*, Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions, Traffic Department, Municipality of Anchorage, October 2007, p. 34 ([see http://www.muni.org/iceimages/transplan/PedestrianPlan_Web.pdf](http://www.muni.org/iceimages/transplan/PedestrianPlan_Web.pdf)).

Appendix A

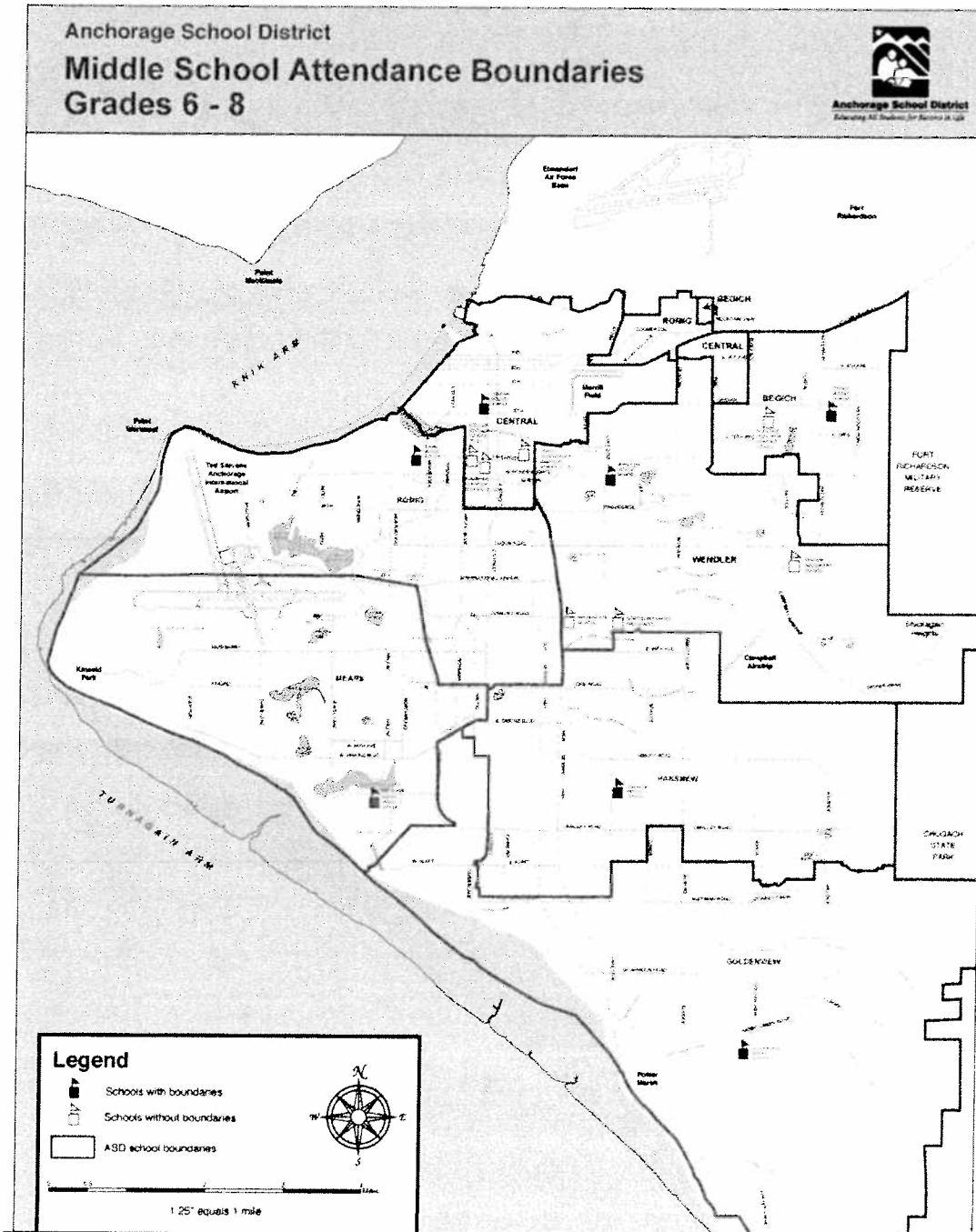
A-2: Municipality of Anchorage Elementary School Locations and Attendance Boundaries



Source: Municipality of Anchorage (see http://www.muni.org/iccimages/traffic/Walking_Route_Manual_0809.pdf, p. 4).

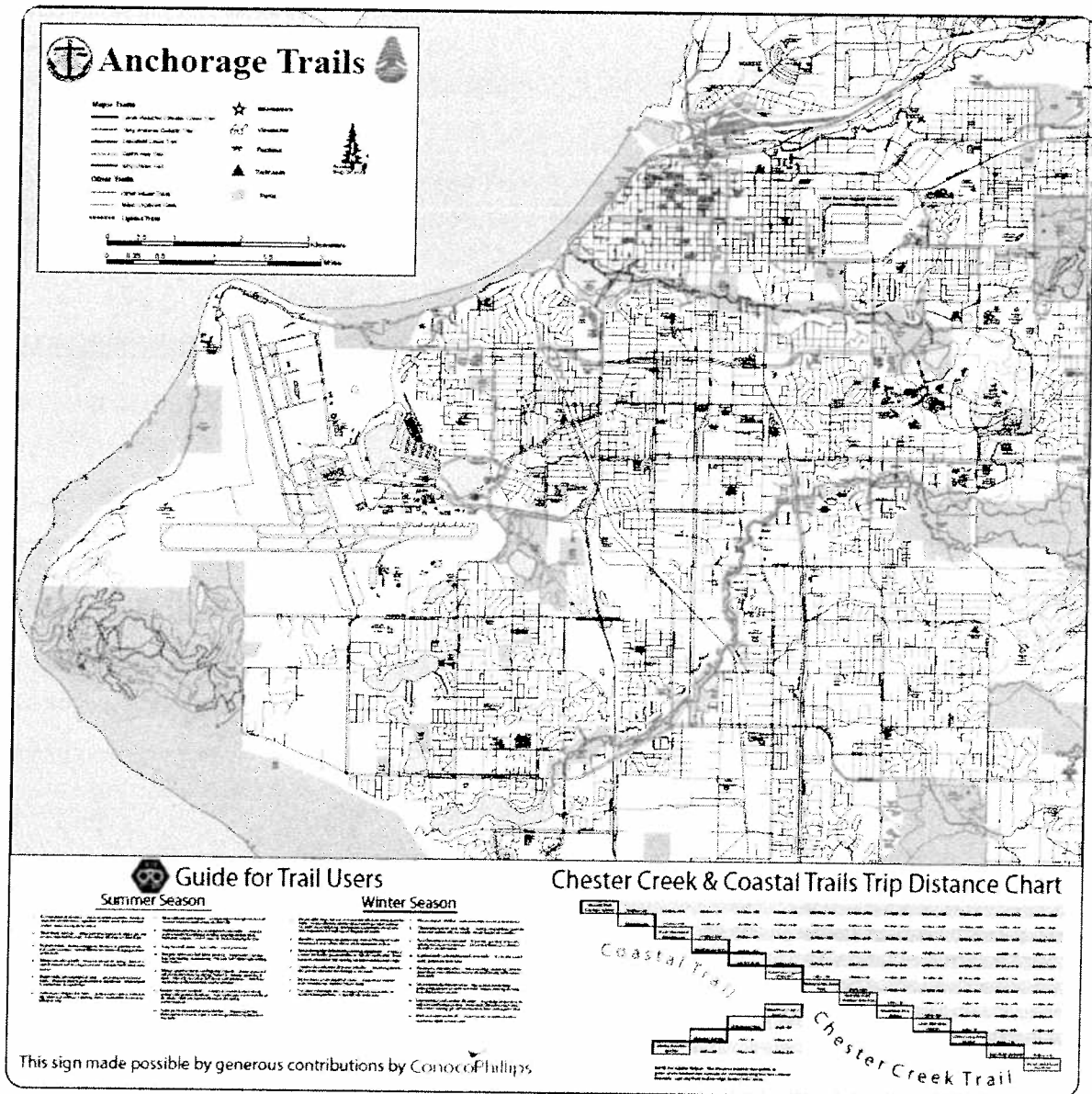
Appendix A

A-3: Municipality of Anchorage Middle School Locations and Attendance Boundaries



Source: Municipality of Anchorage (see http://www.muni.org/iccimages/traffic/Walking_Route_Manual_0809.pdf, p. 5).

A-4: Municipality of Anchorage Trails



Source: Municipality of Anchorage ([see http://www.muni.org/iceimages/parks/TrailwatchMap.pdf](http://www.muni.org/iceimages/parks/TrailwatchMap.pdf)).

Appendix B

**Anchorage Assembly and Mat-Su Borough Resolutions, and Letters of Support
[to be added]**

Appendix C

Key Contacts

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SchancheLE@muni.org
- 3) Pat Owens
Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers
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Bikes, Bikes, Bikes:

A program of the City & Borough of Juneau/Parks & Recreation- Zach Gordon Youth Center.

HG Wells once told us that when I see an adult on a bicycle, “I do not despair for the future of the human race. Cycle tracks will abound in Utopia”. This year’s recipient of the Alaska Municipal League’s 2008 Alaska Community Award of Excellence honoring the best in local government innovation is the Zach Gordon Youth Center’s Bikes, Bikes, Bikes Community Program spearheaded by the Zach Gordon Youth Center.

The Bikes program provides free bikes for the public to use around town. Bikes, Bikes, Bikes is a partnership of the Youth Center, SEARHC, Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska (grant), JPD and the Skyler Kim Foundation. The Youth Center provides a maintenance room including bike stands, tools (youth are trained in bicycle maintenance), and a bicycle maintenance instructor six hours a week for students to learn basic bike maintenance skills.

Youth ranging from ten to twenty years of age have experienced the joy of riding and repairing bikes. Thirty bikes acquired through JPD’s recycle program and community donations are available for use. Weekly organized bike rides occur throughout the summer months on local bike trails.

The program is Parks & Recreation’s ultimate contribution to sustainability and healthy transportation choices.

Federal Highway Administration 1994 Plan

Alaska Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

"It is the policy of the State of Alaska to promote the increased use and safety of bicycling and walking as year-round transportation choices by giving them full consideration in the planning, design, construction and maintenance of transportation facilities."

Michael A. Barton

Commissioner
Alaska DOT&PF
November 1994

"It is Federal transportation policy to promote increased use of bicycling, and encourage planners and engineers to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian needs in designing transportation facilities for urban and suburban areas."

"It is Federal transportation policy to increase pedestrian safety through public information and improved crosswalk design, signaling, school crossings, and sidewalks."

Moving America
New Directions, New Opportunities
A Statement of National Transportation Policy
Strategies for Action
February 1990

"The policies of encouraging the increased use and safety of bicycling and walking have been endorsed by the Secretary (of Transportation.) I would like to reiterate our enthusiastic support of bicycling and walking as legitimate transportation modes, and request our field offices' continued assistance in carrying out this policy."

Rodney E. Slater
FHWA Administrator
May 9, 1994

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March 1, 1995

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Alaska Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Alaska Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, an integral part of Vision 2020: Alaska's Long Range Statewide Transportation Plan, is to present a framework for a practical, workable Bicycle/Pedestrian program in the State of Alaska. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) requires each state to incorporate a long-term bicycle & pedestrian plan into its long range transportation plan. While the focus of this plan is on bicycles and pedestrians, we recognize that many of the facilities provided for these modes are readily usable by other forms of transportation such as in-line skating, equestrians, Nordic skiing, and, depending on local ordinances and season: snowmobiles or all-terrain vehicles.

By providing safe, well-designed, all-season paths, trails, lanes, sidewalks and other facilities, this plan is intended to develop



ALASKA CENTER *for the* ENVIRONMENT

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907-274-3621 phone * 907-274-8733 fax * ace@akcenter.org *

www.akcenter.org

February 19, 2009

The Honorable Paul Seaton
Alaska State Senate
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative Seaton,

The Alaska Center for the Environment supports HB 132, "An Act authorizing municipalities and nonprofit organizations to sponsor a program to encourage the safe use of bicycles as an alternative or supplement to motor vehicles; amending the duties of the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development to include administration of state funds appropriated for that purpose; and amending provisions of the program by which state and federal aid allocated for highways may be used to support bicycle paths." ACE is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization. Founded by a group of concerned Alaskans in 1971, ACE is the largest grassroots conservation organization in Alaska with over 6,000 members a vast majority of which are Alaskan residents.

Thousands of Alaskans find expression for their conservation values through membership in ACE's values of balance, common sense, and long-range stewardship in managing our natural resources. HB 132 is important to our organization because it would increase the number of bicycle and pedestrian commuters in Alaska, decreasing wear and tear on infrastructure by reducing the number of cars on the road and increasing general health by promoting exercise and lessening pollution. In addition to saving the state money by reducing the cost of road maintenance, increased bike commuting provides an affordable alternative to driving for residents who are faced with volatile fuel prices. Part two of HB132, which establishes a grant program to create bike trails, effectively foresees the demand for a safe commute.

The Alaska Center for the Environment would like to thank you for introducing this innovative piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Toby Smith
Executive Director

Mary Jane Shows

From: Heather Best [hbest25@yahoo.com]
Sent: Friday, March 06, 2009 1:14 PM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton
Subject: HB132
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Orange

Dear Representative Seaton,

Thank you for introducing HB132! I greatly appreciate your interest in creating bicyclist-friendly programs and improving bike safety statewide. Not only can HB132 help Alaskans cut down on their fuel costs when we commute less by car, but the state will save money via less wear-and-tear on public infrastructure. Additionally, I am very pleased with the second part of the bill to provide grants to improve and increase safe bike routes. This important component of the bill will encourage Alaskans to commute by bike because of increased safety and expediency. My husband and I commute by bicycle during the entire year in Fairbanks and appreciate any steps to make that easier and safer.

Thanks again for your work in introducing this fantastic bill and please let me know what I can do to support it in the future.

Sincerely,

Heather Best
Fairbanks, AK

Mary Jane Shows

From: Rep. Paul Seaton
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2009 7:57 AM
To: Mary Jane Shows
Subject: FW: HB 132

From: Kristi Wood [mailto:KWood@gci.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2009 8:53 PM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton
Subject: HB 132

Hello Representative Seaton,

I am writing in support of HB 132. Thank you very much for supporting the cycling community! I have been using a bicycle as my primary form of transportation for the last four years. I live in Anchorage, and bike commute 12 months of the year. I enjoy cycling so much that I sold my car. My family started saving thousands of dollars a year in vehicle insurance, maintenance, registration, and gas. And I am in great shape without having to pay for an expensive gym membership.

I read the description of HB 132, and noticed there doesn't seem to be any mention of bicycle racks. It can often be a challenge to arrive at my destination, only to have to scout around for a suitable tree or signpost to lock my bike to. Perhaps bicycle racks can be taken into consideration in the future.

Thanks again for your support of bicycling!
Kristi Wood
Secretary for the Bicycle Commuters of Anchorage

Mary Jane Shows

From: Tom Moran [thomasmoran@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2009 11:05 AM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton
Subject: HB 132
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Orange

The Honorable Paul Seaton
Alaska State Senate
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative Seaton,

As an avid recreational cyclist and year-round bike commuter, I would like to voice my support for House Bill 132. Bicycles remain the most efficient form of transport known to man and are a highly undervalued solution to a host of problems, from fossil fuel consumption to traffic congestion, road wear and obesity rates.

Unfortunately, the bike infrastructure in Alaska is at best deficient. Funneling grant money towards bike paths and community bicycle programs, as your bill proposes, would help encourage bike usage and would hopefully help shake some of the inexplicable stigma attached to bicyclists in Alaska. Bike paths, of course, are as valuable for drivers as they are for bicyclists, as they remove both cars and bicycles from main roads.

I have one suggestion for the bill as it moves through the committee process: the current language pertaining to the purchases which can be made by municipal bike programs is too strict. The phrase "and bicycle accessories" or "and bicycle safety accessories" should be added to the list. I say this because the cheapest, simplest, most effective thing a community bike program could do to encourage bike safety is to distribute bicycle lights. I cannot count the number of times I have almost run over cyclists or pedestrians at night because they are traveling without lights. Bike taillights can be purchased very cheaply and in my estimation are as important a part of bike safety as a helmet.

Thank you again for introducing the bill. I hope it comes to fruition.

Sincerely,
Tom Moran
Fairbanks

Thank you for introducing HB132! I greatly appreciate your interest in creating bicyclist-friendly programs and improving bike safety statewide. Not only can HB132 help Alaskans cut down on their fuel costs when we commute less by car, but the state will save money via less wear-and-tear on public infrastructure. Additionally, I am very pleased with the second part of the bill to provide grants to improve and increase safe bike routes. This important component of the bill will encourage Alaskans to commute by bike because of increased safety and expediency.

Thanks again for your work in introducing this fantastic bill and please let me know what I can do to support it in the future.

Sincerely,

3/10/2009

Mary Jane Shows

From: wendymz@myuw.net
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2009 2:15 PM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton
Subject: Support of HB132

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Orange

The Honorable Paul Seaton
Alaska State Senate
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative Seaton,

Thank you for introducing HB132! We greatly appreciate your interest in creating bicyclist-friendly programs and improving bike safety statewide. Not only can HB132 help Alaskans cut down on their fuel costs when we commute less by car, but the state will save money via less wear-and-tear on public infrastructure. Additionally, We are very pleased with the second part of the bill to provide grants to improve and increase safe bike routes. This important component of the bill will encourage Alaskans to commute by bike because of increased safety and expediency.

Thanks again for your work in introducing this fantastic bill and please let us know what we can do to support it in the future.

Sincerely,

Wendy M. Zimmerman
David W. Delcourt
Fairbanks

Mary Jane Shows

From: Rep. Paul Seaton
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2009 5:55 PM
To: Mary Jane Shows
Subject: FW: bike bill

-----Original Message-----

From: housemajority_email@housemajority.org [mailto:housemajority_email@housemajority.org]
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2009 4:53 PM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton
Subject: bike bill

+-----+
DO NOT REPLY DIRECTLY TO THIS EMAIL: your reply will go to enews@housemajority.org To
correspond with the author Hit 'Reply' or 'Forward'.
Then change the TO: address to lesleyyamauchi@gmail.com If suspected Spam please forward
to: support@housemajority.org
+-----+

From: lesleyyamauchi@gmail.com

Dear Representative Seaton,
Please help our communities become more environmentally friendly, physically fit, and
safer by giving your support for the Bike Bill.

Thank you,

~ Lesley
Zip Code: 99508

+-----+
Anchorage Russian Jack Park area
DO NOT REPLY DIRECTLY TO THIS EMAIL: your reply will go to enews@housemajority.org To
correspond with the author Hit 'Reply' or 'Forward'.
Then change the TO: address to lesleyyamauchi@gmail.com If suspected Spam please forward
to: support@housemajority.org
+-----+



INTERIOR TRAILS PRESERVATION COALITION

ITPC

Sunday, March 15, 2009

Rep. Peggy Wilson
Chairwoman, House Transportation Committee

Rep. Wilson,

The Interior Trails Preservation Coalition supports the adoption of HB132-Bicycle Program. Encouraging bicycle use and the construction of bicycle paths and trails is a wise use of state funds.

Bicycles are an excellent choice for commuting and recreation. They reduce motorized vehicle traffic, which reduces air pollution and wear and tear on roads. Bicycling helps improve physical and mental health, which reduces community health care costs. Bicycling is also cheaper than driving a car or truck, especially as fuel prices rise.

We are particularly happy that HB132 includes a funding mechanism to help build more trails and bicycle paths. Such travel corridors not only give bicyclists a safe place to ride, but they are available for other forms of non-motorized transportation, such as running or cross-country skiing.

Investments in trails, bicycle paths, and bicycle programs help communities attract healthy, active people to a community. Such investments also help bolster tourism, an important industry in our state.

We are also pleased that HB132 allows communities to come up with programs that fit their particular needs. No two communities are the same, so local control of spending will allow communities to devise programs that have the most chance of success.

We urge the Alaska State Legislature to pass HB132. The adoption of this bill is a wise investment in Alaska's future.

Sincerely,

Eric Troyer
Vice President

ITPC

P.O. Box 74263, Fairbanks, AK 99707

Phone: (907) 458-7968