



I'm Cynthia Wentworth. I was born and raised in Anchorage. I first became involved in rail through the Northern Alaska Environmental Center. The Alaska Railroad did a presentation for Earth Day 1980.

In the mid 80's I was as an economist for the Railroad, when it became the State owned, Alaska Railroad Corporation. I developed a relationship between the Railroad and the Société Nationale de Chemin de Fer, or French National Railway. More recently, I did translations for the French government on moving freight from trucks and highways onto rail and barge to lower environmental impact. In 2002 a group of us started a planning committee to begin commuter rail between the Matsu Valley and Anchorage. Now, LaMarr Anderson and I co lead a similar committee.

50,000
VEHICLES PER DAY
GLENN HIGHWAY



According to Alaska Department of Transportation, or ADOT, 50,000 VEHICLES PER DAY TRAVEL THE GLENN HIGHWAY. Without the Alaska Railroad, we would have 1000's more trucks and cars on both the Glenn and Seward Highways, making congestion and highway maintenance costs higher than they already are. The Railroad's freight and passenger business also keeps down fuel emissions, as over long distances such as Anchorage to Fairbanks, rail is a more energy efficient mode than highway.

PASSENGER RAIL FOR COMMUTERS ANCHORAGE MATSU



Our State owned Alaska Railroad Corporation belongs to all Alaskans. But it is set up like a private business. Like rail all around the world, it must have a subsidy to operate commuter rail, Commuter rail is different from light rail, which requires a city of at least 600,000. But we have enough people for commuter rail: the track is already there!

In September 1980, the head of the Alaska Railroad was visiting Wasilla. He stated "I have visited the Matsu Valley on a number of occasions and each time I am asked about (rail) commuter service. My response has been that we have had discussions with the Borough and we think it is a good idea and we have made a proposal...we are willing and ready to start service as soon as we can reach agreement on service to be provided and costs involved."

That was almost 37 years ago --- Meanwhile, almost 6 times as many people live in the Matsu Valley. – 103,000 as opposed to 18,000. It is the fastest growing area of Alaska.

New Glenn Highway interchange



People are always asking me; why don't we have commuter rail? Short answer? The U.S. is a highway centric country. Mayor Paul Soglin from Madison Wisconsin said at our April 5 event, the automobile is the most heavily subsidized transportation mode. I might add the truck too. Both will use this new \$50 million interchange at the Glenn Highway and Muldoon Road.

Up to now, we have taken for granted these auto subsidies and ignored the hidden costs.

Bilan pour la Collectivité Reseau Express Régional Ile de France



We have not done a Bilan pour la collectivité, or balance sheet for society.

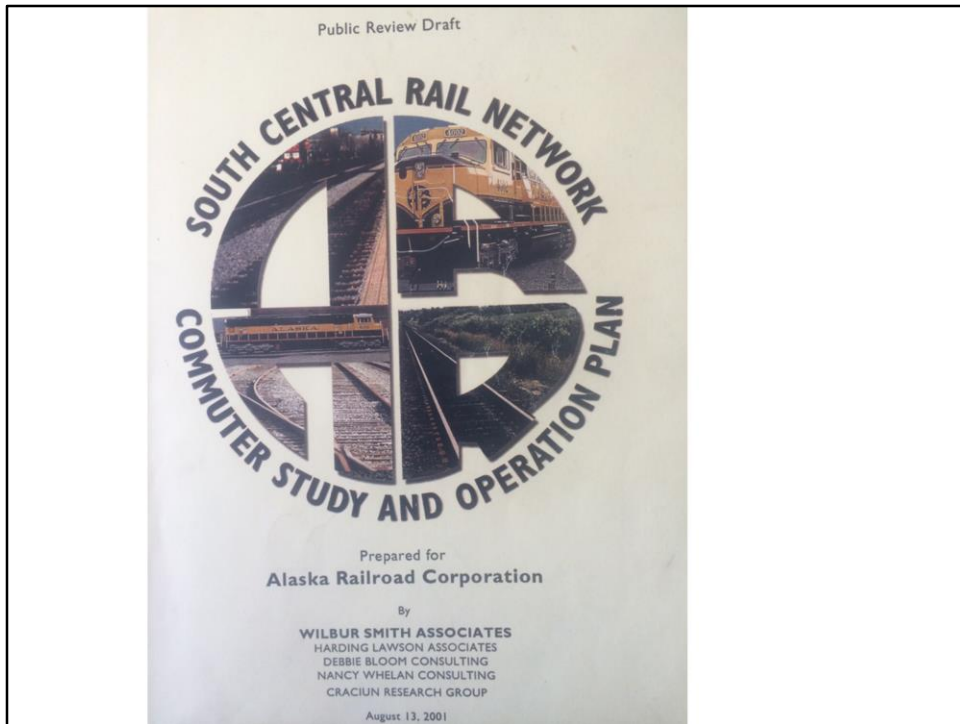
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In 1986 while I was working for the Alaska Railroad Corporation, I learned about the French National Railway's Bilan for a new train in the Paris suburbs (Sartroville à Val de Fontenay)

This is a form of full cost accounting that considers

- 1) Value of time saved (not stuck in traffic)
- 2) Value of decrease in highway congestion
- 3) Value of lower highway maintenance
- 4) Value of fewer accidents, lower police and public safety costs.
- 4) Loss of gas tax receipts due to fewer drivers
- 5) Increased ticket revenue to the French National Railway
- 6) Capital costs
- 7) Operating costs

This is similar to multi-modal corridor planning, and this is what we want for the Glenn Highway corridor



Several commuter rail studies have been completed, the first in 1979. This is the 2001 study. On both this and a 1988 study, I wrote comments based on the Bilan pour la collectivité. However, my comments were ignored. And lanes kept being added to the Glenn Highway. The Dept of Transportation is now predicting 100,000 vehicles on the Glenn Highway by 2035, compared with the 50,000 now.

How much does this cost?



In 2015, when the ADOT's Surface Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) was revised, we asked ADOT to include funds for multi-modal corridor planning between Anchorage and Wasilla.. So far we have not had any luck.

This multi modal corridor plan would:

- 1) show line item costs for rail stations, railcars, high speed internet, and connecting bus and van services
- 2) compare accident rates and public safety costs on the Glenn Highway with those for rail transit alongside
- 3) compare road and rail maintenance costs (sanding, filling ruts, snowplowing, track maintenance).
- 4) run passenger traffic models and compare fuel emissions per passenger by mode according to motor vehicle and rail occupancy rates
- 5) compare commuting times by highway vehicles and by train, at both peak and non peak periods, with and without traffic congestion and icy conditions
- 6) compare comfort and amenities between bus rapid transit, vanpools, and a train (i.e. restrooms, ease of movement, coffee bar, smooth ride and ability to read a book, use a laptop and plug it in).

People Mover Bus



It would include the cost of connecting bus service.

People Mover Van



And connecting van service

Glenn Highway rollover March 29, 2017



Between Fort Rich overpass and the weigh station. And quantify the cost of accidents.

Sheffield Airport Rail Station

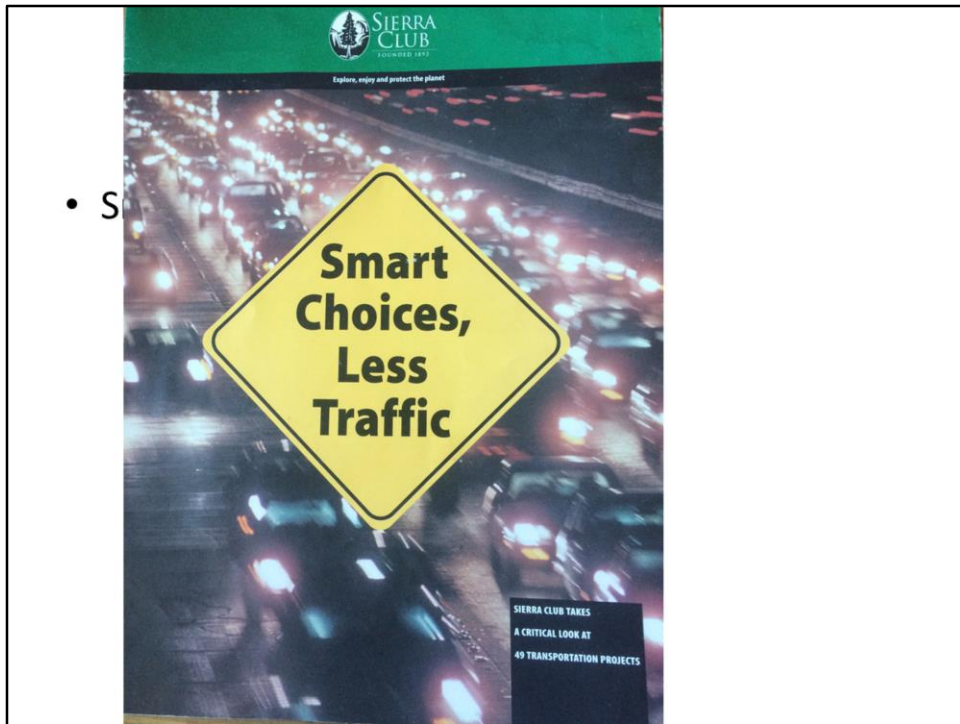


Since the 1990's some of our public officials have been working to advance commuter rail.

In the late 1990's, former Governor and Alaska Railroad CEO Bill Sheffield asked Senator Stevens to help get money for this airport rail station as part of a larger plan for commuter rail. At a December 1998 Alaska Railroad Board Meeting, I watched ADOT Commissioner Joe Perkins vote to support this station and commuter rail, which he said was one way to help Anchorage reduce car traffic and meet air quality standards. However, he should have put commuter rail into the STIP back then.

Still, with help from Senator Stevens, \$78 million was spent between 1999 and 2007 straightening the track between Anchorage and Wasilla, reducing travel time to 52 minutes.

The cruise ship passengers who use the Airport Rail Station now, keep thousands of tour buses off our highways. If we get commuter rail, it will reduce car use for the 10,000 people who work at the airport and the many Matsu residents who work on the North Slope.



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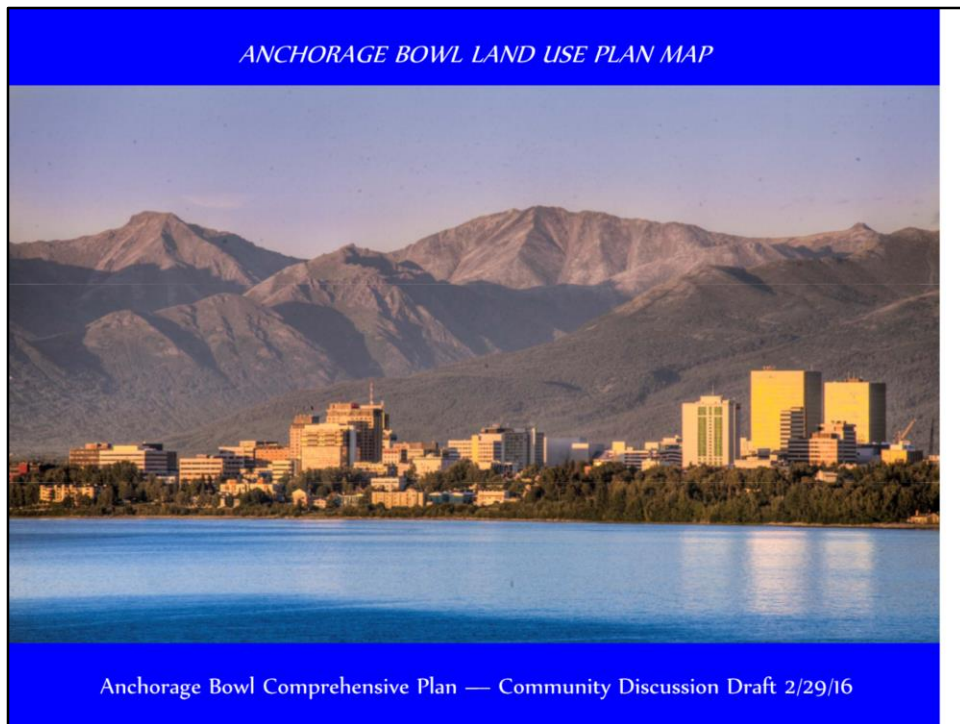
In 2002 the National Sierra Club's Challenge to Sprawl Campaign sponsored a contest called Smart Choices Less Traffic. South central Alaska commuter rail, along with the airport rail station, was chosen as one of the nation's smart choices for the 21st Century. The Glenn Parks interchange near Wasilla was chosen as one of the worst. Although the interchange got built and we don't have commuter rail, the Alaska Railroad track did get straightened as I just mentioned.

Wasilla Train Depot Relocation

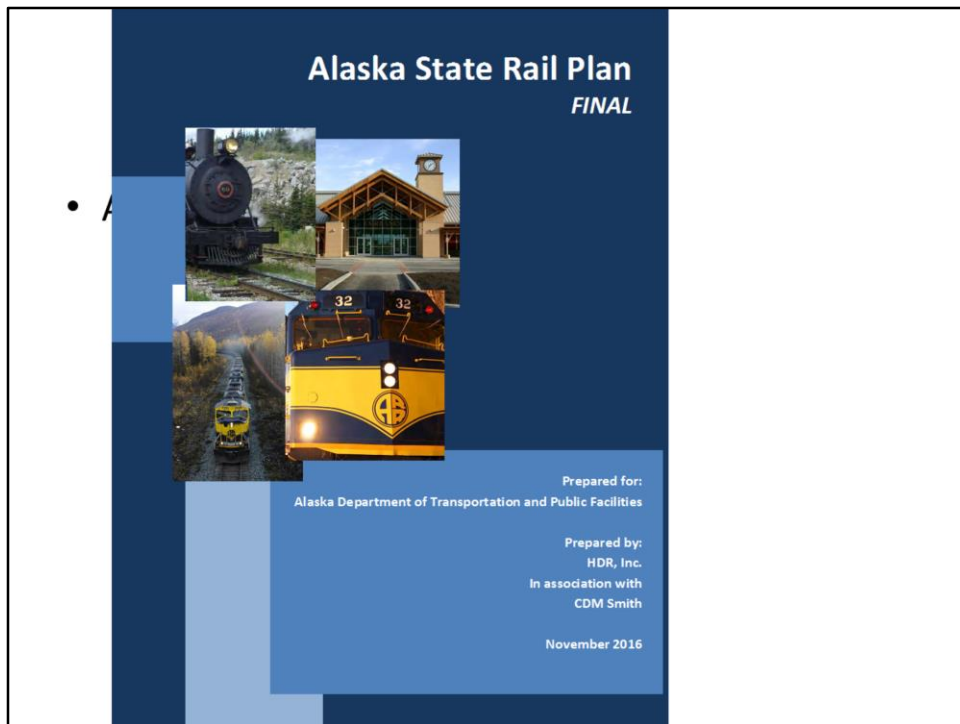


WASILLA TRAIN DEPOT RELOCATION AND REDEVELOPMENT
OVERALL REDEVELOPMENT

Our local governments have been making plans for commuter rail. The City of Wasilla has a plan to move the historic Wasilla station in order to better accommodate trains and car traffic, provide bus and cab drop off, and more parking for commuters. A potential station near the Glenn/Parks interchange is being considered, as well as possible stations at Eklutna, Birchwood, Eagle River, and Elmendorf Air Force Base. The Matsu Borough has incorporated commuter rail into its Capital Improvement Program.



The Municipality of Anchorage has put commuter rail stations on its Land Use Plan Map, and is open to designating parts of the Alaska Railroad corridor as a transit oriented development corridor. This furthers the Municipal Assembly's 2003 resolution supporting commuter rail between the Matsu Borough and downtown Anchorage, the airport, and Dimond Shopping Mall, which are already connected by rail track. However, some Planning and Zoning Commission members are opposing rail transit corridors because they still think rail competes with buses. We want to be in the 21st century like other progressive American cities, where rail and bus work together.



State Rail Plans are a requirement for receiving federal money for rail projects. This Alaska State Rail Plan estimates we need \$3.6 million per year to operate commuter rail. This is less than the \$4.15 million per year the State pays to subsidize the Whittier Tunnel, which was supposed to pay its own way through tolls. ADOT released this final State Rail Plan in February and forwarded it to the FRA without addressing the Alaska Railroad's comments nor our committee's comments. Therefore two weeks ago, Governor Sheffield and the Railroad met with Governor Walker's Wasilla staff. The Railroad is now planning to update the commuter rail part of this State Rail Plan itself. [The Federal Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) requires ADOT to develop a State Rail Plan in order to qualify for funding for rail projects.]

Sound Transit BRT, Puget Sound



This is the Bus Rapid Transit I rode this winter while I was staying in Edmonds near Seattle. It travels along the I-5 freeway. However, it is quite bumpy, making it difficult to read, and it gets stuck in traffic as it approaches downtown Seattle.

Sound Transit BRT



I could use my I Phone on the BRT.

Sounder commuter rail



However I much preferred riding the Sounder commuter rail. It is way smoother and more comfortable, with a large restroom on board. I could read a book and use my laptop,

Sounder train



The Sounder train has seats which face each other, making for easy socializing if you want. And some have tables in between, for your laptop or desk work.

Multi modal corridor planning



To conclude, we need multi-modal planning from ADOT

..... Not just auto centered

Anchorage-MatSu Commuter Rail Corridor and Station Pre-
Development Planning
STIP Inclusion
Communication and Collaboration with AK Rail Road