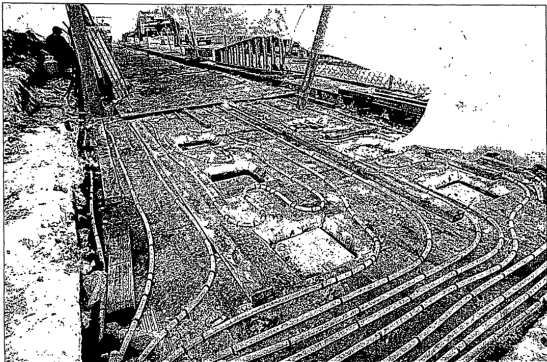


ANCHORAGE BUS STOP BUILT ENERGY-EFFICIENT AND HIGH TECH



Photos by ERIK HILL / Anchorage Daily News

Lines filled with glycol will heat the floor of the Anchorage Museum Transit Transfer Facility to keep it ice-free. The sidewalk adjacent to the bus stop is already heated.

Transit palace

Federal funds pick up price tag of \$875,000 for People Mover

By **DON HUNTER**
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It may not look like any bus stop you've ever seen, but it ought to fit right in with the neighborhood.

When the covers come off for good sometime in early February, the new "Anchorage Museum Transit Transfer Facility" at the corner of Sixth Avenue and C Street will be bigger, fancier, higher-tech and better-placed than any other People Mover shelter in town:

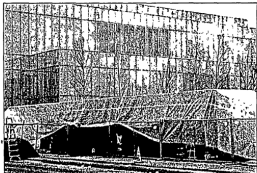
• 72 feet long, 9 feet wide, open to the air and brightly lit through the night.

• Designed by architects who produced the revamped, expanded museum and embellished by an artist.

• No snow or ice. The walkway in front of the stop will be heated through the winter.

• Electronic signage that tracks buses moving across town. People waiting will be able to see not just when their ride is supposed to arrive, but when it's actually likely to.

• And expensive. At \$875,000, plus a couple of change orders, it



People Mover project manager Randy Bergt cites durability and low maintenance as important elements in the design of the Anchorage Museum Transit Transfer Facility under construction downtown. "It could easily be a 50-year facility," he said.

See Back Page, **BUS**



Photos by ERIC HILL / Anchorage Daily News

Randy Bergt of People Mover is overseeing the Anchorage Museum Transit Transfer Facility project for the city. Dowland Construction is the general contractor.

BUS: Transfer facility matches museum architecture

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will have cost around 30 times as much as your average transit shelter.

The hot new bus stop has been in the works for almost three years, and under construction since last summer. The city's project manager, Randy Bergt, says he expects it to be open for business around the first of next month.

Couched at the intersection of two of downtown Anchorage's busiest streets, it will accommodate around 700 passengers a day and replace a couple of brown box huts put up by the People Mover system after the 9/11 terrorist attacks led to the closure of a former bus staging area in front of the Federal Building, the last good downtown bus stop east of the main transit center at Sixth and G Street.

After 9/11, the federal government restricted traffic on Seventh Avenue in front of the Federal Building and city officials had to scramble to find a new stop for hundreds of passengers drawn to the area that houses the 5th Avenue mall and the Federal Building as well as the museum. They moved a block north, to Sixth.

"We just threw up, because it was such a scramble, a couple of old brown boxes and a couple of benches but it wasn't a permanent fix," said Jody Karcz, the city's director of Public Transportation.

At about the same time, in the mid-2000s, the museum's major expansion plans were getting under way, and city officials turned to then-Sen. Ted Stevens for funding to upgrade the People Mover stop in front. Stevens wangled a \$1.5 million earmark through the Federal Transit Administration.

The Anchorage Assembly appropriated the federal money in early 2007. The winning bid for design and construction came in at about \$875,000. The leftover money probably will be used to build another, comparable bus stop somewhere nearby on C Street, exact location to be determined, Karcz said.

Karcz said about \$350,000 of the \$875,000 bid price for the project is tied up in the shelter itself. The rest goes to the ice-free sidewalks, drainage, curb and street reconstruction



Ritchey Walker of Dowland Construction dangles a plumb bob to make sure pins are properly aligned in the floor and ceiling to attach panels after cement is poured for the floor at the Anchorage Museum Transit Transfer Facility.

tion to create a bay where up to three buses can stage at a time, and technology — a closed circuit surveillance system, the real-time electronic departure schedules. Some unexpected problems with drainage and subsurface piping probably will add around \$50,000 to \$75,000 to the final cost, Bergt said.

The new Sixth Avenue shelter fronts the two-acre wooded common on the west end of the museum's expansion and is designed to fit in with the museum's glass and metal facade.

"This bus stop is in the heart of downtown," Karcz said. "You've really got to have something that looks nice and fits in with the archi-

ture down there."

James Pepper Henry, the museum's director and chief executive, said the museum's new look is intended to be pedestrian-friendly too. The heated sidewalk in front of the bus stop ties in to an ice-free walkway that leads to the museum's new entrance.

"Anybody walking downtown from the mall area will have an ice-free path to the transit center and to the museum," Henry said. "The design of the transit stop also fits in very nicely, aesthetically, with the design of the building. It's using very similar lines."

And unlike more commonly seen prefab shelters around town, which cost around \$30,000 and can be put up and taken down quickly, the shelter at the museum is intended to last, said Bergt. "We're looking at it being a 30- to 50-year facility," he said. "It will be durable, low-maintenance, attractive, and new and advanced technology."

The structure itself is unheated — warmed bus huts in the 1980s proved problematic when people without homes moved in — and built of galvanized tubing. The west end is open, and the front alternates between 9-foot-wide etched glass sheets and 9-foot openings. New lighting systems use energy-efficient, white-burning LED lights with a useful life of up to 100,000 hours, instead of yellow-burning bulbs.

"Most of the structure is open," Bergt said, "inviting people to come in and have shelter and comfort from the elements, but it's still going to be relatively airy in there."

Artist Ron Senungetuk's glass etchings — depictions of reindeer antlers intended to suggest herds gathering near Senungetuk's birthplace in Wales — fulfill the city's 1 percent for art requirement for the project.

"In a way, it will be an art piece in and of itself," said Henry.