

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

Traffic volume counts are made periodically on all major streets in the study area while as selected locations continuous counts are obtained. The volume counts are essential in evaluating the ability of existing streets to carry the current and future traffic volumes. Twenty-two count stations in the Anchorage bowl area reflect a cumulative growth in Average Daily Traffic which is represented in Table 1. This represents a total growth rate in four years of 26% or an annual average growth rate of 6% each year.

TABLE 1
GROWTH IN AREA-WIDE AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC

Year	Volume	Annual Percent Growth
1972	169,976	
1973	281,459	4.2%
1974	293,740	4.4%
1975	321,085	9.3%
1976	341,408	6.3%

Table 2 illustrates the magnitude of growth in traffic volume on a major north-south facility, the Seward Highway. This represents a total growth in seven years of 92% or an annual average growth rate of 12% each year.

TABLE 2
GROWTH IN AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC
SEWARD HIGHWAY SOUTH OF NORTHERN LIGHTS BOULEVARD

Year	Volume	Annual Growth Rate
1970	16,094	
1971	17,887	11.1%
1972	22,526	25.9%
1973	24,015	6.6%
1974	24,510	2.1%
1975	27,649	12.8%
1976	30,883	11.7%

As the volume of traffic on roadways increases and approaches the capacity of the roadways, congestion also increases. Growth in traffic volume counts will continue throughout Anchorage. At present, Minnesota Drive, "C" Street, Arctic Boulevard, and the Seward Highway at Chester Creek are at or near capacity. Future traffic volume growth between the downtown Central Business District and the Northern Lights-Benson commercial/business area can only be accommodated through heavy use of mass transit, expansion of existing Chester Creek crossings, or construction of new roadways. The 1977 Transportation Plan proposes to improve this situation and accommodate future travel demands through construction of an "A" Street crossing of Chester Creek, improvement of the Seward Highway corridor to a Freeway, heavy expansion of the People Mover Transit System, and a feasibility study of Light Rail Transit in the Alaska Railroad corridor.

ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS IN ANCHORAGE

Numerous roadway improvement projects are accomplished each year in Anchorage. Maintenance of roadways, intersection improvements, and repaving and paving of existing roadways are examples of minor improvements that occur continuously and improve traffic conditions throughout the area. Major projects, which can hinder traffic during construction and significantly improve conditions after completion, are a primary concern to the public. The high cost of construction and the time associated with planning, design, and right-of-way acquisition for major projects are another primary concern of the interested public and the transportation agencies. The projects listed below and those planned for construction by 1995, together with expansion of the transit system, represent a significant cost to every taxpayer; however, without mobility the economy in Anchorage will be hindered.

MAJOR PROJECTS

Major projects completed in 1977:

Muldoon Road--Glenn Highway to Tudor Rd.
International Airport Road--Old Seward Highway to the New Seward Highway
Anchorage Computerized Traffic Signal System
Arctic Boulevard--Northern Lights Boulevard to Tudor Road

Major projects scheduled for completion in 1978:

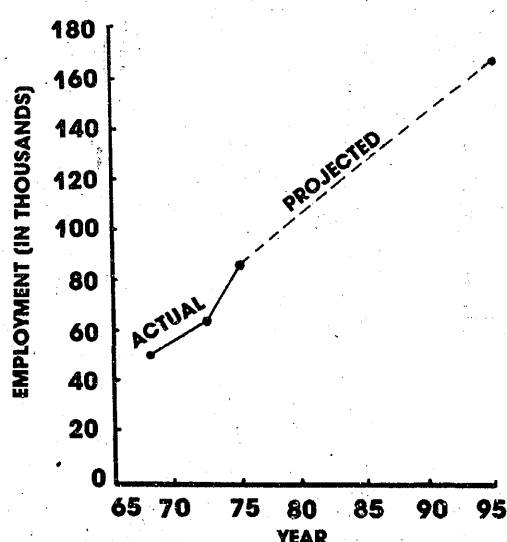
International Airport Road--Minnesota Drive to the Airport
DeBarr Road--Muldoon Road to Airport Heights Drive
O'Malley Interchange on the New Seward Highway

Construction of major projects to be initiated in 1978:

International Airport Road--Minnesota Drive to the Old Seward Highway
Lake Otis Parkway--Tudor Road to Northern Lights Boulevard
Rabbit Creek Road--New Seward Highway to O'Malley Road
Elemendorf Access--5th Avenue to Post Road at the Elemendorf Air Force Base Gate
Purchase of Right-of-Way for the Minnesota Extension

EMPLOYMENT

The AMATS employment survey in 1968 enumerated 49,937 employees, including military. Employment in the study area was estimated to be 62,643 in 1973, which grew to 83,511 in 1975. The 1995 study area employment projection was 163,357 which represents an increase of 3.4 percent per year for the 20 year period.



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION



Over the past year the Municipality received 12 new 35-passenger buses to augment the People Mover bus fleet. The existing system operates 13 routes with a fleet of 40 buses. Ridership increased dramatically in 1977 over 1976 from 3,000 to over 5,000 passengers/day, an increase of 67 percent. Future expansion of the system includes a passenger accommodation center at 6th and "G" Street, park-and-ride lots at outlying locations, and proposed expansion of the bus fleet as depicted below. Expansion of the bus fleet will improve bus service on all major routes.

Year	Bus Fleet Size	Daily Ridership	Percent of Total Trips
1977	40	5,000	0.87
1982	142	42,000	4.00

SUMMARY

The Anchorage area has and will continue to grow at a rapid rate. This growth presently strains the existing transportation system. Forecasts in this report indicate the need for significant transportation improvements over the next 20 years. Each automobile purchased, each new house or apartment unit constructed, and each new building construction start for office or commercial development is a new indicator of growth in Anchorage. And every one of these activities represents increased demand for transportation facilities and services.

A transportation Plan for the next 20 years has been prepared. The plan recommends roadway and mass transit improvements which will cost over 1.2 billion dollars over the next 20 years. The cost of these improvements will be shared by Federal, State, and local governments.

The Transportation Plan will be reviewed each year as growth indicators in Anchorage are monitored and individual studies that impact transportation are completed. The Plan is not set in concrete and it will be revised as necessary to accommodate the transportation desires and needs of Anchorage. Many factors affect transportation planning. Costs of right-of-way acquisition, construction, maintenance, operating costs of the transit system, costs of energy consumption and traffic congestion, air quality considerations, and impacts on people and the environment are all factors which make transportation planning important in Anchorage. The Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Study will continue to collect and analyze data concerning the growth and development of the area needed for planning a sound transportation system.