

# Sponsor Statement

## CS for SB 71

### Transportation Enhancement Projects

Federal law, TEA-21, and its predecessor, ISTEA, mandate that states expend at least 10% of federal Surface Transportation Program funds on enhancements such as trails and landscaping. Over the past several years, the State of Alaska has expended amounts well beyond the minimum requirements for enhancements projects that could otherwise be applied to roadway construction and improvement projects. CS for [Senate Bill 71](#) decreases the amounts allocated for the TRAAK program and other enhancement projects to be in line with federal minimum requirements to free up millions of dollars to be available for roadway construction and improvement projects.

The Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 71 proposes to reduce the Department of Transportation's allocation of non-restricted federal apportionments to projects classified under the Trails and Recreational Access Program (TRAAK). Under current DOT regulations, the department allocates at least 8% percent to TRAAK projects; CS for SB 71 reduces the allocation to not more than 4%. The bill redirects the other 4% into the DOT allocation for projects classified under the Community Transportation Program, increasing this program's allocation to 37%.

Administrative Order #161 of the previous administration in 1996 established the Trails and Recreational Access for Alaska (TRAAK) program to address features such as trails, scenic highways, recreational access points and interpretive facilities. From 1998 to 2003, over \$150 million was allocated for the TRAAK projects while the federal minimum for transportation enhancement (i.e. trails, landscaping scenic beautification) expenditures was \$43 million; more than a 200% increase. These expenditures do not include separated bike paths or waysides that were included in individual construction projects in the National Highway System program, the Alaska Highway system or Community Transportation Program.

Only a municipality that is federally recognized as a Municipal Planning Organization (MPO) would be impacted by this section (c) of this legislation, which are Anchorage and Fairbanks. In 1998, the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) adopted a policy of programming 15% of its transportation funding allocation for enhancements. The three-year average at 15% for transportation enhancements from 2000-2002 Transportation Improvement Program averaged roughly \$5.5 million. The Department of Transportation is expecting the Anchorage share of TEA-21 federal-aid transportation funds to increase within the next Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. With the anticipated overall increase, 10% of the three-year average of federal-aid highway funds allocated to AMATS during 2004-06 will be roughly \$5.8 million, slightly more than what was allocated during 2000-2002.