

**ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS  
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**February 28, 2025  
2:00 PM**

*This meeting was conducted virtually*

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS		
NAME	REPRESENTING	IN ATTENDANCE
S.J. Klein	District 1	No
Matt Cruickshank	District 2	No
Vacant	District 3	No
Diana Evans	District 4	Yes
Mike Rehberg	District 5	Yes
Nancy Pease	District 6	Yes
Kathleen McArdle	Anchorage Chamber of Commerce	No
Chuck Homan	Chugiak/Eagle River Chamber of Commerce	No
Bob French	Federation of Community Councils	Yes
Jim Winchester	Planning & Zoning Commission	Yes
Tor Anderzen	Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson	Yes

Also in attendance:

Name	Representing
Aaron Jongenelen	AMATS
Christine Schuette	AMATS
Leifi Felise	AMATS

**1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

NANCY PEASE called the meeting to order at 2:03 pm. A quorum was reached.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MS. PEASE moved to approve the agenda. MR. Anderzen seconded.

***Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved.***

**4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES - NONE**

**5. ACTION ITEMS**

**a. Transportation Plan – Amendment 1**

**PROJECT BACKGROUND**

At the November Policy Committee meeting staff was directed to remove the Safer Seward Highway project from the 2050 Transportation Plan (MTP) as part of Amendment #1.

MR. JONGENELEN introduced the amendment and opened the floor for committee comments.

- AMATS recently released an amendment to the 2050 Transportation Plan, currently out for a 45-day public comment period.
- The amendment removes the Safer Seward Highway project (98.5 to 118) due to cost increases, with the project cost rising from \$600 million to \$1.4 billion.
- Within the AMATS boundary, the cost would rise from \$90 million to \$266 million.
- The Policy Committee requested additional information from DOT regarding funding impacts, but no response was provided.
- The amendment ensures that the fiscal program remains balanced.
- The amendment is currently under review and open for public comments.

The following were Committee questions and comments with responses noted in *Italic*

(NP) Has DOT&PF demonstrated the ability to fund the project?

*(AJ) No response from DOT& PF has been given to AMATS. The STIP Amendment 2 includes the project but removed the portion within the AMATS boundary. The STIP Amendment Two is currently out for public comment until March 20th and will require FHWA and FTA approval. The entire project is being removed from the TIP and the Statewide Transportation Plan, but a portion (98.5-112 miles) is being reinserted back in the Statewide Plan outside of the AMATS area.*

(NP) How long would it take to reintroduce the project into the MTP if fiscal constraints were later addressed?

*(AJ) Reintroducing the project would require another MTP and TIP amendment process, taking approximately four to six months for approval.*

(BF) emphasized the need for fiscal constraint and supported the removal of the project from the MTP to maintain budgetary balance.

(AJ) noted that DOT had refused to discuss scaling back the project scope unless it moved forward as originally planned.

(NP) What are the trade-offs for Anchorage, will there be any additional funding for AMATS projects due to the removal of the Seward Highway project?

*(AJ) The funds will remain under DOT's control, and AMATS would not have additional funds to allocate to other projects. The focus is on DOT's management of funding within the AMATS boundary, and there is no guarantee where those funds would be used. Further discussions about funding allocation will take place during the next Transportation Plan update.*

(BF) Expressed support for removing the project to keep the MTP fiscally constrained but did not formally make a motion at this point.

(NP) Acknowledged the safety hazards of the 6-mile section of road around Potter Marsh. She highlighted the fatal crashes in recent years and expressed concern that nothing is being done about this stretch of highway in the MTP. She suggested conveying the importance of safety upgrades to the policy committee and potentially adding the project back into the Transportation Plan in the future, despite the high cost.

(TA) Agreed with the previous comments and suggested that the committee encourage DOT to find more cost-effective safety solutions for the corridor. He emphasized the need to balance safety improvements with fiscal constraints. He also mentioned that safety improvements to this corridor should remain in the 2050 MTP. The plan should not be silent on the need for improvements to this segment.

(NP) Proposed drafting a motion to convey these points to the policy committee and suggested combining her comments and Bob's thoughts to craft a motion.

MS. PEASE moved to recommend that the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) submit the following comments to the Policy Committee. The CAC acknowledges the need for AMATS to produce a fiscally constrained budget and acknowledges the high cost and lack of demonstrable funding from DOT for this section of the Seward Highway. This is the basis for removing the project from the 2050 Transportation Plan. However, the CAC also acknowledges the ongoing safety hazards due to the high level of traffic and current road conditions. The committee believes that the policy committee should find a more cost-effective project scope to include in the 2050 Transportation Plan to resolve these safety hazards. MR. ANDERZEN seconded.

MS. EVANS introduced a friendly amendment that the committee also encourages the policy committee to ensure that any future safety improvements for the corridor are multimodal, including provisions for both motorized and non-motorized traffic.

MS. PEASE added another friendly amendment to make sure any improvements are compatible with the purposes of the two nearby protected areas: the Chugach State Park and the Coastal Wildlife Refuge.

***Hearing no objections, the motion passed as amended.***

**b. 2023-2026 Funding Program – Amendment 3**

**PROJECT BACKGROUND**

MR. JONGNENLEN provided an overview of TIP Amendment 3, which is currently out for a 45-day public comment period. The amendment includes several project changes across various tables. Notable changes include the removal of the STIP need ID column, the addition of a new column showing project costs pre-2023, and a detailed breakdown of matching funding sources. Additionally, funding amounts have been adjusted to reflect actual project costs, down to the dollar, to improve transparency. Aaron noted that any funding after 2026 in the TIP is illustrative and based on best estimates. Further updates will be provided as additional details become available. He also explained that some projects, such as those for sidewalk repairs, are being coordinated with other projects, like the HSIP lane reduction for Northern Lights Boulevard, to ensure efficient use of resources.

(MR) Project HSP 00200 (Baxter Road to Patterson Street Channelization) - Mike asked about the reduced funding for this project.

*(AJ) Aaron clarified that the reduction reflected an updated cost estimate for completing the project, not a cut in funding or project scope.*

(NP) Table 3 Active Transportation Projects - Nancy inquired about the lack of estimated funding after 2026 for active transportation projects.

*(AJ) Aaron explained that this funding is illustrative and subject to change, with updates to be made in future TIP amendments.*

(NP) Northern Lights Boulevard Sidewalk Repairs - Nancy raised concerns about the \$5 million allocation for sidewalk repairs on Northern Lights Boulevard and whether the redesign of the road would render this investment obsolete.

*(AJ) Aaron confirmed that the sidewalk repair project is coordinated with the HSIP lane reduction project and that the funding is well aligned with the redesign.*

(NP) Table 7 HSP Projects 9, 10, and 29 - Nancy asked about coordination between HSP projects and road diet plans.

*(AJ) Aaron confirmed that the projects are being coordinated to avoid duplication and ensure smooth integration.*

(NP) Table 8 - 36th Avenue Interchange - Nancy questioned the high cost of the 36th Avenue interchange, asking whether AMATS had any input on the cost-benefit of the project.

*(AJ) Aaron explained that the Department of Transportation recommended the project and has been working on its design through state funding.*

(DE) Does this project just include the intersection and not the whole Midtown Congestion project?

*(AJ) It will have the ramps from Tudor Road and extend to 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue and reconfigure the connection to Northern Lights. So it will include the intersection and the start and end locations.*

(NP) Table 10 Campbell Creek C Entrance Alignment - Nancy inquired about the \$2 million allocation for essentially a driveway relocation.

*(AJ) Aaron clarified that the funding was allocated for drainage work to address glaciation issues in the area.*

(NP) Nancy expressed thanks regarding the Transit Center report, specifically the language in project TRN 7 referencing land use plans, which emphasize focal points for economic activity (e.g., Midtown, Downtown, UMED, Diamond Center). Nancy raised concerns over insufficient funding for transit centers relative to the high cost of road infrastructure (e.g., \$123 million interchange). She emphasized the need for better funding to support land use and transportation coordination.

*(AJ) Aaron clarified that the funding shown in table nine comes from FTA to the Public Transportation Department and the Alaska Railroad. AMATS helps to provide additional funding for bus replacements and facilities through Table 5- CMAQ.*

(BF) Table 8 – NHS0010 & NHS 0013 (related to Glenn Highway and Artillery Road), Bob raised the concern of possible interference between these two projects.

*(AJ) Clarified that Artillery Road is getting a new interchange and Highland Road will undergo some smaller changes, such as additional loop ramps or reconfiguration.*

(BF) Asked for clarification on the planned improvements for the Artillery Road Bridge, if it is focused on potential ramp changes to avoid full highway shutdowns if the bridge is struck again.

*(AJ) I believe the improvements will include raising the bridge as well as making some improvements as people are exiting the road. I don't have a lot for you yet though on this one unfortunately.*

(NP) Raised a procedural question regarding whether the AMATS Policy Committee was seeking comments on newly proposed projects. Specifically mentioned the Northern Lights Road diet, Ingra-Gamble Road diet, and Seward Highway safety corridor with variable speed limits.

(AJ) Yes, we are looking for comments on any of the projects.

(TA) Inquired about the Port of Alaska Smart Grid project, asking if it was being removed due to unavailable land.

(AJ) Yes, the Port of Alaska asked us to remove this project.

MS. PEASE moved to suggest the CAC submit comments on the following projects to the Policy Committee:

- NHS0014 - 36th Avenue Interchange: the committee questions whether the benefits justify the expense of this project, considering the lack of contiguous infrastructure.

The CAC expresses support for the following projects, particularly given their potential to reduce traffic impacts and improve pedestrian safety.

- HSP0028 - Northern Lights Road Diet
- HSP0029 - Ingra-Gamble Road Diet
- HSP0030 - Seward Highway Safety Corridor Variable Speed Limit

MR. FRENCH seconded.

MS. EVANS introduced a friendly amendment to express support for project OFS00013 SS4A Implementation Grant for the Bragaw Street Corridor Safety Improvements.

***Hearing no objections, the motion passed as amended.***

## **6. PROJECT AND PLAN UPDATES**

### **a. AMATS Climate Action Plan**

#### PROJECT BACKGROUND

MR. JONGNENLEN provided an overview of the AMATS Climate Action Plan. The plan builds on the Anchorage Climate Action Plan, focusing on areas AMATS can address, particularly surface transportation and how land use impacts the climate. The plan will include a greenhouse gas inventory, strategy development, and public outreach, aiming for completion by 2026-2027. The plan will be used for the next MTP update and future TIP updates. Mr. Jongenelen clarified that the plan is being consultant-led, with Aaron serving as the project manager.

(NP) Is the timeline on the AMATS website?

(AJ) Yes - <https://publicinput.com/amatsclimateaction>

### **a. AMATS Complete Streets Plan**

#### PROJECT BACKGROUND

MR. JONGNENLEN provided an overview of the AMATS Complete Streets and Streets Typology Plan. The plan builds on the Complete Streets policy developed in 2017, updated a few years ago. It will include a Complete Streets analysis and an implementation plan. The Street Topology system upgrades the existing

functional classification to account for land use and other factors. The project schedule was extended to summer 2027, allowing for more public involvement. Mr. Jongenelen emphasized that the Complete Streets approach ensures roads accommodate all users.

(DE) Inquired if the new plan would change or clarify the existing Complete Streets policy.?

*(AJ) The new plan will likely clarify and make the policy more implementable, though recommendations for policy updates may arise during the process. DOT is considering whether to develop its own Complete Streets policy, and if so, AMATS will work with them on it.*

(NP) When will the public have a chance to review the typologies?

*(AJ) Indicated that public review will take place in fall 2025.*

## **7. General Information**

MS. SCHUETTE informed the committee that AMATS would be conducting a Household Travel Survey in the fall. The survey instrument was in the testing phase currently and she asked if the committee would be willing to help test the system. She would email out instructions for all those interested.

## **8. Committee Comments –**

MR. ANDERZEN stated that JBER would be creating a transportation plan with a focus on coordination with the broader transportation system. They will be looking to gather input from AMATS and the Municipality probably the last week of April 2025.

## **8. Public Comments - NONE**

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

***Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 3:32 p.m.***