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of Transportation

**Federal Highway
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Program Review

FHWA Alaska
Division

FHWA
Resource
Center

FTA Region 10

AMATS TMA Certification Review

August 2015



FINAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) is required to review and evaluate the transportation planning process of transportation management areas no less than once every four years. The review is conducted by a team of representatives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). It consists of an examination of the Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) documented practices, procedures, guidelines and activities followed by a field review that includes meetings with the MPO management, partners and staff, a public input session, and report on the findings and recommendations of the Review Team. The review culminates in a joint statement of certification by the FHWA and FTA.

In January 2015, the Review Team provided the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) with a preliminary list of questions and documentation needs corresponding to the major topics of interest in the review. In follow up, AMATS staff provided detailed written responses to the Review Team's questions. On March 3 - 4, 2015, the Review Team conducted an on-site visit with MPO and State agency staff as well as the general public.

The previous review completed in January 2012 resulted in four corrective actions. This review found that the previous corrective actions from have been implemented or substantial progress has been made and the corrective action activities are continuing. There were no new corrective actions identified in this review. The outcome of this review is: **The Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration jointly certify that the planning process conducted by the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions meets the requirement of 23 CFR 450, Section 334(b)(i).**

Previous Findings and Disposition

The 2011 review resulted in four findings requiring corrective actions:

1. Congestion Management Process – Two areas that are not adequately addressed by the current CMP include 1) identification of an implementation schedule, implementation responsibilities, and possible funding sources for each selected strategy; and 2) implementation of a process for periodic assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of implemented strategies. These elements should be incorporated as part of the CMP during the update of the LRTP.

AMATS' Resolution: While the Congestion Management Process has not been fully updated, substantial progress has been made. A comprehensive update is being performed through a consultant contract. Completion is expected before December 31, 2015, and this review will be held open until completion of this item.

2. Financial Planning and Fiscal Constraint – The LRTP must provide adequate documentation of methods and assumptions used to determine the full capital as well as maintenance and operational cost for all travel modes over the life of the LRTP. In addition, adequate documentation is needed of the methods used to determine projected revenue sources and identify strategies for ensuring availability of proposed new

revenues. These enhancements to the financial plan element should be addressed as part of the upcoming LRTP update.

AMATS' Resolution: The complex public private partnership funding of the Knik Arm Bridge has changed since the previous update of the LRTP. The current funding plan is a more conventional mix of state bonds, TIFIA, and FHWA funds. AMATS has developed a good tool to evaluate fiscal constraint in the MTP. Revised financial constraint documentation will be included in the upcoming LRTP update.

3. Title VI – AMATS shall develop assurances that the program will be conducted in compliance with all requirements imposed by Title VI and the related laws and regulations. These assurances, a Title VI implementation plan and complaint procedures, should be developed with guidance from the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) by 06/01/2012. It should include a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Needs Assessment to develop an AMATS LEP policy.

AMATS' Resolution: AMATS addressed this corrective action by developing a Title VI Nondiscrimination Implementation Plan that includes a complaint procedure and a LEP Policy.

4. Intelligent Transportation Systems – AMATS has not adopted a maintenance plan for the regional ITS architecture. 23 CFR 940.9(f) requires a MPO to develop and implement procedures and responsibilities for maintaining regional architecture, as needs evolve within the region. The ITS subcommittee formation and the regional ITS architecture updates are opportunities to develop and implement a maintenance plan for the regional architecture. Procedures and responsibilities for maintaining the regional architecture needs to be developed by 01/01/2013.

AMATS' Resolution: The ITS update is not complete, but substantial progress has been made. A comprehensive update is being performed through a consultant contract. The ITS update will be finished before December 31, 2015, and this review will be held open until completion of this item.

There are no findings that require a corrective action as a result of the 2015 review. In the remainder of this report, the term “findings” will **not** indicate a compliance issue that requires a corrective action. Rather, the term “findings” will mean statements of fact that define the conditions found during the data-gathering phase of the review. The Review Team has provided recommendations for several of the subject areas, and has attached comments and documents received during the public meeting on March 3, 2015.

DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW OF MPO

AMATS was first designated as a metropolitan planning area in 1976. The Governor of the State of Alaska, per the Intergovernmental Agreement signed in December 2002 by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and the Municipality of Anchorage, and in accordance with the federal regulation coded in 23 CFR §450, designated

AMATS. The Operating Agreement was last amended by the AMATS Policy Committee on June 28, 2012.

The Municipality fulfills its dual roles as the recognized MPO and Air Quality Planning Agency for the Anchorage Maintenance Area through AMATS. The participant groups in the AMATS planning and decision-making process are: the AMATS Policy Committee; the AMATS Technical Advisory Committee; the Municipal Planning and Zoning Commission; the AMATS Freight Advisory Committee; the Municipal Assembly; and AMATS staff.

The Anchorage Urbanized Area is made up of the densely populated areas of the Municipality. The Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) encompasses a major portion of the political boundaries of the Municipality of Anchorage. The MPA is bounded on the north by Knik Arm, on the east by the Chugach Mountains, on the south by Turnagain Arm, and on the west by Cook Inlet. When designated in 1976, AMATS only included the Anchorage Bowl, but the Metro Area was expanded in the late 1980s to include the rapidly developing area of Eagle River/Chugiak/Birchwood/Eklutna and the predominately residential area south of Rabbit Creek Road. The only population centers within the Municipality that are outside the AMATS Study Area are the Turnagain Arm communities of Girdwood, Bird and Indian. The area covered is approximately 1,697 square miles.

- Policy Committee Chair: Rob Campbell
- Member Jurisdictions and Number Represented: The MPO Policy Committee includes three members from the Municipality of Anchorage (Mayor and two Assembly members) and two members from the State (Department of Environmental Conservation Air Quality Manager and DOT&PF Regional Director)
- Population Served: Approximately 300,000
- Major Transit Operators: The public transit system includes People Mover (fixed route), AnchorRIDES (paratransit), and Share-A-Ride (vanpool).
- Major Projects/Plans: AMATS is working on a new Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and an interim MTP update simultaneously. Also working on Congestion Management Process, ITS architecture, a Freight Plan update, and Spenard Corridor plan which combines land use and transportation.

Study Area Organizational Structure (23 CFR 450.310)

Regulatory Basis:

Federal legislation (23 USC 134(b); Section 49 USC 5303)) requires the designation of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for each urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 individuals. The policy board of the MPO shall consist of (A) local elected officials, (B) officials of local agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation within the area, and (C) appropriate State officials.

Upon designation of a MPO as a TMA the policy board shall be structured to include (A) local elected officials, (B) officials of local agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation within the area, and (C) appropriate State officials. A new requirement in the

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) requires representation by providers of public transportation in MPOs that serve TMAs.

Findings:

The Policy Committee is comprised of five members: two Assembly members, selected by that body; the Mayor of Anchorage; the Governor’s designee for Air Quality (Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) Air Quality Program Manager; and the Governor’s designee for Transportation (Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities Central Region Director. Each member of the policy board has one vote.

The Technical Advisory Committee meets monthly and provides recommendations to the Policy Board and is composed of 11 members. There is a standing Chairperson from the Municipality of Anchorage.

The Municipality of Anchorage, Public Transportation Department provides public transportation within the metropolitan area. The public transit system includes People Mover (fixed route), Anchor RIDES (paratransit), and Share-A-Ride (vanpool). Additionally, Valley Mover provides commuter transit service from the Mat-Su Borough to Anchorage. The Alaska Railroad also provides passenger rail service along with freight transportation within the planning area.

All major modes of transportation are represented on the AMATS Policy Committee with the exception of Valley Mover which is based in the Mat-Su Borough and provides commuter transit service from the borough to Anchorage.

The Municipality’s Public Transportation Department is generally represented on the Policy Committee by the Mayor and Assembly members. Note: AMATS is exempt from the MAP-21 requirement to have direct representation by providers of public transportation, as certified by letter dated September 25, 2014.

Corrective Actions:

None

Recommendations/ Comments:

The Federal Review Team recommends that the roles and responsibilities of the various technical, policy and citizen committees be clarified and documented in concert with the current update of the Operating Agreement.

Metropolitan Planning Boundaries (23 CFR 450.312)

Regulatory Basis:

Federal legislation (23 USC 134(c): 49 USC 5303(d) requires boundaries of a metropolitan planning area to be determined by agreement between the MPO and the Governor. Each metropolitan planning area shall encompass at least the existing urbanized area and the

contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20 year forecast period; and may encompass the entire metropolitan statistical area or consolidated metropolitan statistical area, as defined by the Bureau of the Census.

Findings:

There is only one recognized tribal entity in the AMATS area: Native Village of Eklutna. They are included in planning in the same way as all other groups and organizations.

The primary federal land holdings within the AMATS planning area include Elmendorf Air Force Base and Fort Richardson Army Base.

Chugach State Park abuts the AMATS boundaries and AMATS has included the Chugach State Park regional planner in regional planning meetings.

The MPO boundaries were modified in 2013 to reflect census tracts from the 2010 Census.

Corrective Actions:

None

Recommendations/ Comments:

None

Agreements and Contracts (23 CFR 450.314)

Regulatory Basis:

Federal legislation (23 USC 134) requires the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to work in cooperation with the State and public transportation agencies in carrying out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) metropolitan planning process. These agencies determine their respective and mutual roles and responsibilities and procedures governing their cooperative efforts. Federal regulations require that these relationships be specified in agreements between the MPO and the State and between the MPO and the public transit operators. The regulations also require an agreement between the MPO and any other agency responsible for air quality planning under the Clean Air Act. A single agreement should be executed among the MPO, State, transit operators, and designated air quality regulations “to the extent possible.” 23 CFR 450.314(a).

Findings:

The Transit Operator is part of the MPO, is represented on the MPO Technical Advisory Committee, and is a party to the AMATS Operating Agreement.

Air quality planning is a joint work effort through AMATS between Municipal Health and Human Services, the ADEC and the DOT&PF. Air quality planning is directed out of the AMATS Operating Agreement.

AMATS also has an agreement with the State of Alaska, Knik Arm Crossing Project related to use of the AMATS Travel Demand Model.

There is only one recognized tribal entity in the AMATS area: Native Village of Eklutna (NVE). AMATS has an agreement with the NVE for transportation planning purposes.

While there is no set schedule for updating the AMATS operating agreement, it is checked from time to time to ensure it is up to date. AMATS is considering an amendment to their operating agreement to create a stand-alone Citizens Advisory Committee, appointed by the AMATS Policy Committee.

The other agreements that AMATS is a party to through the Municipality of Anchorage are reviewed periodically by the Municipal Managers office and the Municipal Department of Law to ensure they are current and accurate.

The Anchorage/Mat-Su Borough Regional Transit Authority Plan (December 2011) examined the feasibility of establishing a regional transit authority and developed a guide for an organization structure for regional transportation services in Southcentral Alaska.

Corrective Actions:

None

Recommendations/ Comments:

The Federal Review Team recommends that AMATS consider developing an agreement with the Mat-Su Borough to define and clarify modeling protocols and procedures, including applicable model uses and updates, data collection and sharing, validation techniques and socio-economic forecasting procedures. Discussions regarding the potential creation of a regional transit authority should continue to be investigated as transportation demand increases between the AMATS area and the Mat-Su Borough.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) (23 CFR 450.308)

Regulatory Basis:

MPOs are required to develop the UPWPs in cooperation with the State and public transit agencies [450.308(c)]. Elements to be included in the UPWP are:

- Discussion of the planning priorities facing the metropolitan planning area
- Description of all metropolitan transportation planning and transportation related air quality planning activities anticipated within the next 1 or 2 year period, regardless of funding source or agencies conducting activities, indicating who will perform the work, the schedule for completion of the work, and what the intended product is.

Findings:

In accordance with AMATS' adopted public involvement program, the UPWP undergoes public review during an annual 30-day public review and comment period.

AMATS has utilized FHWA Metropolitan Planning (PL) funds, FHWA Statewide Planning & Research (SPR funds for DOT&PF Central Region), FHWA Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds in various categories, including Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ), and Transportation Enhancements, FTA Sections 5303, 5307, 5310, 5337 and 5339, and FHWA Earmarks for Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).

Recent UPWPs have included more detail and timelines showing estimated completion dates.

AMATS has worked to provide the document earlier to FHWA and FTA for review to ensure adequate time for approval.

Corrective Actions:

None

Recommendations/Comments:

- **Include estimated expenditures to conduct the documented work activities as part of the UPWP work element descriptions as well as in the summary financial table.**
- **Provide an early draft of the UPWP to FHWA and FTA for review and comment.**
- **Consider including a prospectus at beginning of document. This section would describe the near-term as well as longer-term priority work tasks and issues facing AMATS in overview terms to inform partners and stakeholders.**

Transportation Planning Process (23 CFR 450.306, 316 & 318)

Regulatory Basis:

Federal regulations 23 CFR 450.306 and 450.318 define the scope of the metropolitan transportation planning process and the relationship of corridor and other subarea planning studies to the metropolitan planning process and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. In addition, 23 CFR 345.316 (c)(d) and (e) address the need for participation by Federal lands management agencies and Tribal governments in the development of key products in the planning process. Key provisions of 23 CFR 450.306 are related to required planning factors, coordination, and consistency with related planning processes, asset management, and possible differences in requirements for TMAs and non-TMAs.

Findings:

For the 2035 MTP developed under the SAFETEA-LU requirements for expanded consultation, staff contacted resource agencies including the Bureau of Land Management and Native Village of Eklutna directly and requested their review and comment of proposed recommendations.

All technical and policy information is posted on the AMATS homepage and noticed via email list, along with our newspaper advertising. All of the AMATS meetings and work sessions are open public meetings with ample opportunity for public comment.

The AMATS Operating Agreement requires a minimum 30 day public comment period for all plans and programs. Any updates to the AMATS Public Participation Plan require a 45 day public comment period.

The Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) was re-established in January 2009. Committee members represent local carriers, haulers, aviation, military, port, tourism, and other freight operators. This group offers comments on many planning documents such as the 2035 Metropolitan Plan, site plans, engineering designs, and other AMATS efforts.

AMATS selected Cambridge Systematics to produce an updated performance based and objectives-driven CMP to meet federal planning regulations and is consistent with the MAP-21 legislation (2012), and that builds on previous AMATS congestion management efforts and planned activities.

The 2035 MTP consolidated the LRTPs for the Anchorage Bowl and Chugiak-Eagle River. Representatives from Chugiak-Eagle River were included on the TAC.

KAC financial information was provided to AMATS staff for inclusion in the 2035 MTP at an overall planning level. Detailed project financial information was not included as it was considered at too great a level of detail for planning purposes.

Corrective Actions:

None

Recommendations/ Comments: AMATS should continue to refine its performance measures to key measures, clearly identify how measures are used to identify strategies/projects and evaluate progress toward targets established as part of a broad-based performance management planning process.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Development (23 CFR 450.322)

Regulatory Basis:

Federal regulations require the development of a MTP as a key product of the metropolitan planning process: The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include the development of a transportation plan addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon. The transportation plan shall include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand. [23 CFR 450.322]. The MTP is to be updated every four years in nonattainment and maintenance areas and every five years in attainment areas to ensure its consistency with changes in land-use, demographic, and transportation characteristics.

Findings:

The 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan was adopted by the AMATS Policy Committee in May 2012; the next update is due by May 2016.

AMATS is working on an interim MTP to be approved before December 31, 2015 so the existing horizon year will still account for a 20-year period. The interim MTP will include updated fiscal constraint analysis to account for new funding estimates and project cost estimates.

A comprehensive MTP update with a horizon year of 2040 will be developed by December 2017.

AMATS Transportation Planning staff is under the Community Development Department (CDD) of the Municipality of Anchorage. The CDD includes Current, Long-Range and Transportation Planning Divisions and AMATS staff often consults with those other divisions, particularly regarding land use issues.

The staff of the DOT&PF, Central Region, was active participants in the development of the MTP. DOT&PF staff participated in the planning project as well as served on the Technical Oversight Committee.

Recommendations of the Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) are included as an element of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The MTP dedicates specific chapters to existing freight conditions, deficiencies, and future projects. AMATS plans to solicit proposals from qualified consultants to provide professional planning services for the preparation of the AMATS Freight Mobility Study (FMS).

The Non-Motorized Transportation Plan is an element of the MTP and consists of three distinct studies, which include the Anchorage Pedestrian Plan, the Anchorage Bicycle Plan, and the Anchorage Trails Plan. At this time, the Anchorage Pedestrian Plan and the Anchorage Bicycle Plan are completed.

The AMATS Travel Demand Model is a traditional 4-step gravity model integrating socioeconomic indicators to forecast traffic generation, distribution, mode-choice, and

assignment. This model includes all modes of travel (walk, bicycle, transit, freight, passenger vehicle – Auto alone, Auto driver with passenger, Auto passenger, Public Transit/School Bus, Walk, Bike).

The AMATS model underwent a peer review in 2004 and was calibrated and validated in 2005. The AMATS Travel Demand Model is undergoing an update.

The 2035 MTP represented the consolidation of the Anchorage Bowl LRTP and Chugiak-Eagle River LRTP, and addressed and maintained sub-regional priorities and values.

The 2035 MTP outreach for security focused on outreach to the State of Alaska Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management office. The 2040 MTP will address security in a more in-depth fashion.

AMATS staff is working more closely with Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) Long-Range Planning and Public Transportation Planning staff to identify opportunities to collaborate on implementation of Transit Supportive Corridors, in particular, and on land use, particularly in the current update to the MOA Land Use Map. During the transportation model update, MOA staff worked with Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) staff on land use assumptions for the MSB.

Knik Arm Crossing project (KAC) financial information at a planning level was included in the 2035 MTP for revenues and costs over the life of the project.

The 2040 MTP RFP includes a task for the consultant to assist AMATS with recommendations for how to approach estimations for GHG emissions.

Corrective Actions:

None

Recommendations/ Comments:

The proposed KAC project must be accomplished within the financial constraint of the MTP, based on documentation in a project-level financial plan approved by FHWA. The MTP update scheduled for completion in December 2017 should include updated cost estimates (design, construction, operation, maintenance) and anticipated revenue sources to support the revised KAC financial plan.

AMATS has a good spreadsheet tool to analyze and demonstrate financial constraint, but it is not easily understood by the public. To ensure that the financial information is clearly understood by policy-makers as well as the general public, a summary table(s) should be developed for the MTP that provides key financial data, including sources and uses of all funds by various timeframes.

Congestion Management Process (CMP) (23 CFR 450.320)

Regulatory Basis:

An effective CMP is a systematic process for managing congestion that provides information on transportation system performance and on alternative strategies for alleviating congestion and enhancing the mobility of persons and goods to levels that meet State and local needs. The CMP results in serious consideration of implementation of strategies that provide the most efficient and effective use of existing and future transportation facilities. In both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas, consideration needs to be given to strategies that reduce SOV travel and improve existing transportation system efficiency. Where the addition of general purpose lanes is determined to be an appropriate strategy, explicit consideration is to be given to the incorporation of appropriate features into the SOV project to facilitate future demand management and operational improvement strategies that will maintain the functional integrity of those lanes. 23CFR 450.320(b)

Findings:

The CMP methodology provides a process to track system performance, measure the cost-effectiveness of strategies, allocate scarce resources, and give decision makers, from the AMATS Technical Advisory Committee, the Assembly and other stakeholders, such as the public and local, state, and federal agencies, information on how the transportation system is working. During the update to the 2040 MTP, Transportation Planning staff will coordinate and integrate the CMP with the MTP.

AMATS selected Cambridge Systematics to produce an updated performance based and objectives driven CMP to meet federal planning regulations and is consistent with the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) legislation (2012), and that builds on previous AMATS congestion management efforts and planned activities. All 8 steps of the CMP process, according to the FHWA CMP Guidebook, are addressed in the contract, and along with the preparation of the Status of the System Report anticipated to be completed by October, 2015.

AMATS is currently collecting travel times for all modes of transportation, level of service for highways and intersections, and travel times on specific road segments, facilities types, and corridors. AMATS and Cambridge have developed regional objectives, identified the CMP area and network, outlined multimodal performance measures, prepared a data management plan, performed a gap analysis, evaluated appropriate CMP strategies, and developed an implementation plan and schedule.

To address freight needs, AMATS also obtains cargo tonnage, annual passenger enplanements, in-transit cargo, and enplaned cargo from the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, the Port of Anchorage, and the Alaska Railroad.

System upgrade of signal control technology is underway and includes updated control equipment, management software, real-time communications, and a traffic management center.

Automatic collection of traffic volumes and monitoring will enable MOA traffic engineers to continuously be aware of actual traffic patterns and quickly adapt to them.

The MPO collects crash data from different sources: internal municipal agency (Anchorage Police Department), University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage Airport Police and Fire, DOT&PF Commercial Vehicle Enforcement and Highway Information Group and the Alaska State Troopers. The MPO also uses some Highway Safety Improvement Program factors from the State of Alaska to assist in the creation of safety statistics.

Currently the MPO uses a traffic data management system to house all collected information. This system allows for monitoring changes such as: volumes, speeds, classifications, travel times, crashes, etc. Applicable information from this system is utilized in the AMATS model to predict the flow and trend of traffic, including the major freight movements.

Corrective Actions:

None

Recommendations/ Comments:

The Federal Review Team is pleased to hear about the contractor-led update of the CMP and recommends full implementation of the FHWA/FTA suggested 8-step framework (An Interim Guidebook on the Congestion Management Process in Metropolitan Transportation Planning, February 2008). Current efforts to further develop the CMP should be coordinated with FHWA/FTA to ensure the previous corrective action is addressed adequately. Specifically, two areas of the CMP that need direct attention include: identification of an implementation schedule and responsibilities, and establishment of a process for periodic assessment of identified strategies.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (23 CFR 450.324, 326 & 328)

Regulatory Basis:

The MPO is required, under 23 CFR 450.324, to develop a TIP in cooperation with the State and public transit operators. The TIP must cover a period of at least four years and must be approved by the MPO and the governor. If the TIP is updated more frequently, the cycle must be compatible with the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) development and approval process [23 CFR 450.324(a)]. The following information must be provided for each project included in the TIP: sufficient descriptive material to identify the project or phase; estimated total cost; amount of Federal fund proposed to be obligated during each program year; proposed source of Federal and non-Federal funds; identification of funding recipient/project

sponsor; in nonattainment and maintenance areas, identification of TCMs and sufficiently detailed description for conformity determination [23 CFR 450.324(e)].

Findings:

The State and transit operators are both represented on the AMATS Technical Advisory Committee. Nominations for projects come from the public, local government, the local transit provider, the State and AMATS staff. The nominations and subsequent draft ranking are brought forward to the TAC for their review and to recommend approval to the Policy Committee.

The TIP directly reflects the MTP as all projects in the TIP are included in the MTP as well. The TIP is a useful management tool because it serves as a mechanism to ensure implementation of the MTP. The policies and priorities in the MTP are reflected in both the Policies and Procedures and the ranking criteria used to determine project priorities and used in the creation of the TIP.

Community councils are invited to participate in the ranking and scoring of projects in the development of the 2015-2018 TIP. The community councils are also invited to offer potential projects for inclusion into the TIP.

The Planning and Zoning Commission offered extensive comments and recommendations on the TIP criteria, ranking and scoring, as well as the AMATS Policies and Procedures which help the AMATS Staff and Committees determine funding allocations and ranking and scoring.

AMATS publishes notices in the newspaper, posts the annual list of projects online and also makes them available at the local libraries.

The 2015-18 TIP includes a project phasing plan column that serves to delineate individual phases by project year.

AMATS staff works to ensure the TIP is financially constrained over the course of the 4 year life of the TIP. AMATS realizes though the current highway funding and authorization bill (MAP-21) is only a 2 year funding bill, they are allowed to show projected funding for the 4 year life of the TIP based on direction from FHWA and FTA.

Corrective Actions:

None

Recommendations/ Comments:

Project information should clearly state the type of funding being used. In particular, the CMAQ table includes projects that are funded with other than CMAQ funds, which may be confusing.

Financial Planning/Fiscal Constraint (23 CFR 450.322 & 324)

Regulatory Basis:

The requirements for financial plans are contained in 23 CFR 450.322(f)(10) for the MTP and 23 CFR 450.324(e, h–k) for the TIP. Separate financial plans demonstrate how the adopted MTP and TIP can be implemented.

Findings:

The Anchorage Bowl 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Chapter contains the financial plan. The financial plan factors in maintenance costs and funding sources to establish that sufficient funding is available to pay for and maintain all improvements.

The TIP constrains the amount of capital project investment based on funds projected to be available through the State Transportation Improvement Program. The TIP also contains other regionally significant projects funded with state general funds and general obligation and Municipality of Anchorage bonds.

All costs and revenues in the MTP are currently in 2010 base year dollars. A year of expenditure inflation rate of 4% was applied to the base year through 2023. The 4% is based on general guidance of FHWA. For the remainder of the MTP (2024-2035) an inflation rate of 3.5% was applied. The TIP is in year-of-expenditure dollars.

DOT&PF; Alaska Railroad; and the Municipality's Community Development & Public Works and Public Transportation Departments provide cost estimates as well as revenue forecasts. The MTP's financial constraints are based on analysis of historical funding trends.

Capital costs for projects in both the TIP and MTP are based on the most current cost estimate information available utilizing recent comparable projects. As more detailed estimates emerge during the project development phase those estimates are incorporated into the next update.

The TIP does not rely on any new revenue sources. The only new revenue source identified in the MTP is the Alaska Transportation Infrastructure Fund (see page 6-9, 2035 MTP). All other revenue sources are based on past levels of Municipal, State and Federal funding, inflated for Consumer Price Index increases.

The MTP financial plan assumes that state funding and limited federal earmark funding will continue to be available at a level similar to that which has occurred annually in recent years.

The 2035 MTP did not require any future federal or state funding (beyond that which is programmed in the TIP and STIP) for construction, operations and maintenance, or future capacity requirements for the KAC. The Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority was established by the Alaska Legislature as a toll authority and the toll revenue generated by users was expected to pay for most of the construction cost and all of the operation and maintenance expenses. State

and Federal financial assumptions have changed significantly and will need to be reflected in the updated MTP.

A new, robust financial tool, an integrated Excel spreadsheet, was developed and used for the 2035 MTP financial plan. Staff provided a demo to the Federal Team.

AMATS has just been through an exercise for the next MTP update in working with the KAC and MSB for forecasted population, housing, employment, and land use. Each entity has had its own approach, and for different reasons. AMATS will be working with the MSB to submit a joint request to DOT&PF for help with generating these forecasts that can be used by all parties.

AMATS uses the latest planning-level financial information provided by KAC in the MTP. AMATS is not equipped to question the KAC financial plan.

AMATS staff has been working with both the MSB and KAC for over one year to share financial plan information in a cooperative fashion. They are now collaborating on future forecasts that both the MSB and AMATS can agree to use.

MAP-21 removed the Alaska exemption for the national MPO funding formula. As a result, FHWA funding for the MPO dropped from approximately \$40 million to \$24 million per year.

The MAP-21 addition of all principal arterials to the NHS system added NHS mileage in the AMATS area.

Corrective Actions:

None

Recommendations/ Comments:

The financial spreadsheet developed by AMATS is a good tool to analyze fiscal constraint. As referenced above, the financial information should be summarized clearly in the update of the MTP so that it is easily understood by policy board members as well as the general public.

The update of the MTP will require careful examination of the fiscal impact that could result from State transportation budget realities going forward. AMATS will need to balance future revenue assumptions based on historical state transportation resources as well as more recent reductions in state revenues.

Air Quality

Regulatory Basis:

Section 176 (c)(1) of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) states: *"No metropolitan planning organization designated under section 134 of title 23, United States Code, shall give its approval to any project, program, or plan which does not conform to an implementation plan approved or promulgated under section 110."* Provisions governing air-quality-related transportation planning are incorporated in a number of metropolitan planning regulations rather than being the primary focus of one or several regulations, including: 23 CFR 450.314, 23 CFR 450.322, 23 CFR 450.320, 23 CFR 450.324, 23 CFR 450.326, and 23 CFR 450.334.

Findings:

Anchorage is a limited maintenance area for carbon monoxide and the Eagle River area is a limited maintenance area for PM-10. The Anchorage metropolitan area is considered in compliance with other criteria pollutants including ozone and PM-2.5.

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation has delegated the responsibility for air quality planning within the metropolitan area to the Municipality of Anchorage. Plans are prepared by the Municipal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

The TIP development incorporates a separate Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program (CMAQ) criteria and scoring system which is designed to identify the most effective congestion relief and air quality reduction measures. This process ensures that CMAQ projects are put on an equal footing with other eligible TIP projects.

Air quality issues are incorporated in the MTP development process, including the creation of goals and objectives. Air quality goals and objectives are carried forward for use in the evaluation measures matrix which is used to assess various transportation alternative scenarios.

AMATS is directly involved in the development of all SIPs for the metropolitan area. DHHS staff is responsible for preparing the air quality plans for incorporation in the SIP. These plans are first reviewed in detail by the AMATS Air Quality Advisory Group who provides recommendations to the AMATS TAC and Policy Committees.

AMATS implemented the MOVES model prior to the end of the 2-year grace period and it was used for the EPA approved SIP. AMATS no longer is required to use the model due to its status as a limited maintenance area for both CO and PM-10.

AMATS has a new CMAQ evaluation criterion for the TIP that measures air pollutant reduction of other pollutants besides CO including fine particulate matter (PM-2.5), air toxics, greenhouse gases and /or noxious odors.

Corrective Actions:

None

Recommendations/ Comments:

None

Self-Certifications (23 CFR 450.334)

Regulatory Basis:

Self-Certification of the metropolitan planning process, at least once every four years, is required under 23 CFR 450.334. The State and the MPO shall certify to FHWA and FTA that the planning process is addressing the major issues facing the area and is conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements of 23 CFR 450.300. A Certification Review by FTA and FHWA of the planning process in TMAs is required at least once every four years, in addition to the required self-certification by the MPO and State.

Findings:

AMATS self-certifies the planning process through an annual report presented to both the TAC and PC. The Public Transportation Department and DOT&PF are represented on both the AMATS TAC and PC and thus have an opportunity to review, provide input and approve the self-certification.

A self-certification document is prepared and presented for review and approval to both the AMATS TAC and PC before it is presented to FHWA and FTA.

The self-certification document includes all supporting documentation and information necessary for the PC to ensure the AMATS planning process meets all applicable requirements.

The AMATS Operating Agreement includes a section related to DBE Program requirements, including subsections on compliance, US DOT policy, and DBE obligation, as well as a section on Title VI requirements and the MOA requirements for compliance.

Corrective Actions:

None

Recommendations/ Comments:

AMATS has the option so include the self-certification statement as part of the TIP development process, which is on a four-year cycle. Full documentation that supports the self-certification should be referenced.

Public Outreach (23 CFR 450.316, 322 & 324)

Regulatory Basis:

The requirements for public involvement are set forth primarily in 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(2)(3) and (b) which addresses elements of the metropolitan planning process (see also *Transportation Planning Process* topic area). Public involvement also is addressed specifically in connection with the MTP in 450.322(g)(1)(2), (i), and (j) and with the TIP in 450.324(b); participation and consultation requirements, which pertain to the MTP and the TIP, also are included in 450.322 (f)(7) and (g)(1)(2), (i), and (j) and in 450.324(b). Requirements related to the planning process generally are summarized in 450.316(a)(1)(2)(3) and (b).

Findings:

A local consultant with expertise in public involvement, transportation planning and engineering was hired to work with AMATS staff, stakeholders, local, state and federal agencies to develop the comprehensive public participation plan. An extensive public outreach effort was employed to involve the greater community in writing this plan.

Information is provided to agencies, the public, transportation planners and others by email, the AMATS website and newspaper advertisements in the Alaska Dispatch and the Anchorage Journal of Commerce.

Community councils are invited to participate in the ranking and scoring of projects in the development of the 2015-2018 TIP. The Community councils are also invited to offer potential projects for inclusion into the TIP.

Since there is a differing level of public interest in plans, programs and projects, each is developed, modified and crafted with a goal of providing adequate time, structure and feedback to the task at hand.

Public comments are addressed with written responses in the response summary document that is published after the initial public review. In addition, the AMATS Coordinator responds to public comments via email.

The AMATS Public Participation Plan (PPP) has specific goals and objectives to reach out to diverse groups. AMATS is developing a list of contacts and events to reach traditionally underserved populations, including low income and non-English speaking populations.

The AMATS PPP adopted February 2009 includes a matrix to gauge effectiveness of the techniques outlined in it. The current draft of the AMATS Public Participation Plan Update has an entire separate chapter titled Evaluation and Update of the Public Participation Plan which specifically outlines public involvement tools and evaluation methods to improve the public outreach process to ensure the document itself is a living document.

The adoption of the 2035 MTP which incorporated the Chugiak-Eagle River LRTP and the Anchorage Bowl LRTP into one document ensures that public involvement requirements and techniques are carried out in the entire AMATS area.

The draft update to the AMATS Public Participation Plan now includes a goal to “Optimize notification and engagement in AMATS projects by lower income communities, culturally diverse areas and special needs groups.”

Although there is no requirement for a standing citizen’s advisory committee, AMATS is considering forming a citizen’s advisory committee to replace the Planning and Zoning Commission role.

Corrective Actions:

None

Recommendations/ Comments:

AMATS should consider the formation of a Citizen’s Advisory Committee with a membership that represents a broad cross-section of the AMATS area.

Title VI and Related Requirements (23 CFR 450.334)

Regulatory Basis:

It has been the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (US DOT) longstanding policy to actively ensure non-discrimination under *Title VI* of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. *Title VI* states that “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance”. *Title VI* bars intentional discrimination as well as disparate impact discrimination (e.g. neutral policy or practice that has the effect of a disparate impact on protected groups. The planning regulations [23 CFR 450.334(a)(3)] require consistency with *Title VI*; the *Title VI* assurance executed by each State adds sex and physical handicap to characteristics protected against discrimination.

Findings:

The AMATS Public Participation Plan, adopted February 2009, addresses reaching low-income, minority and limited-English speakers (page 14). Appendix D, Environmental Justice, provides guidance to project managers, and suggests specific strategies to overcome listed barriers.

The Municipal Office of Equal Opportunity maintains records on all Title VI complaints filed against the municipality. No complaints have been filed with either the MOA or State of Alaska in any of those areas. Both the MOA and the State of Alaska have policies in place related to any such discrimination.

The AMATS Title VI Plan, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Policy, Complaint Procedures and Complaint Form are posted prominently on the AMATS page and are translated into Tagalog, Spanish and Korean, the top three non-English languages spoken in Anchorage by LEP persons.

During development of the 2035 MTP, outreach efforts included working with MOA Boards and Commissions and other groups that represent Title VI populations, such as MOA Community Diversity Advisory Commission, MOA Senior Citizens Advisory Commission, Native Village of Eklutna, MOA Homeless Coordinator and diversity Advisory Commissioner, Women’s Commission, MOA Youth Advisory Commission, MOA Health and Human Services Commission, Bridge Builders Education Outreach Coordinator, Anchorage Faith and Action Congregations Together Executive Director, MOA ADA Commission, MOA Equal Rights Commission, Anchorage Literacy Program, Housing and Neighborhood Development Commission, ARC of Anchorage, Catholic Social Services, and United Way.

An Annual Title VI Report is prepared and submitted to the DOT&FP Title VI Nondiscrimination Program Coordinator. This report is reviewed and incorporated into the DOT&PF Title VI Nondiscrimination Annual Update. The AMATS Title VI Non-discrimination Implementation Plan was approved by AMATS in 2012 and since this approval, there have been no issues requiring correction identified by the DOT&PF. This plan is reviewed annually to identify progress made and sections which may need to be updated.

The 2035 MTP includes appendices that address EJ, including transportation needs of low-income and minority populations, and that address benefits and burdens of recommended LRTP road projects and transit improvements.

All AMATS meetings are held in accessible locations with transit access. All public notices for AMATS meetings include language for those individuals with disabilities who need auxiliary aids, services, or special modification directions on how to request reasonable accommodations.

The AMATS Title VI Nondiscrimination Implementation Plan was approved by the Policy Committee in August 2012.

AMATS staff is working more closely with the DOT&PF Title VI Program Coordinator, who has been helpful in sharing training opportunities with staff, and offering services for GIS-based mapping of EJ outreach resources mapping to be coordinated with Public Transportation staff.

Corrective Actions:

None

Recommendations/ Comments:

A schedule should be developed for reviewing the Title VI Nondiscrimination Plan on a regular basis and should include an outline of the process for working with the DOT&PF Civil Rights Office.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (23 CFR 940)

Regulatory Basis:

The FHWA Final Rule and FTA Policy on Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture and Standards were issued on January 8, 2001, to implement *Section 5206(e)* of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). This Final Rule/Policy requires that all ITS projects funded by the Highway Trust Fund and the Mass Transit Account conform to the National ITS Architecture, as well as to USDOT adopted ITS Standards. The Final Rule on ITS Architecture and Standards is published in *23 CFR Part 940*.

Findings:

AMATS has taken responsibility for maintaining the Anchorage Regional ITS Architecture. The Anchorage Regional ITS Architecture Maintenance Plan was approved by the AMATS Policy Committee in November, 2012.

There is a systems engineering process in place. Managers of ITS projects in the TIP are required by DOT&PF Central Region to complete the DOT&PF Systems Engineering Analysis checklist prior to the project advancing to implementation.

The Anchorage Regional ITS Architecture Maintenance Plan was approved by the AMATS Policy Committee in November, 2012. The current ITS Architecture Update project is following the Maintenance Plan and will make recommendations for updates to the Maintenance Plan.

Staff has been working with DOT&PF staff for several years on addressing the recommendations of the referenced report. Both MOA and DOT&PF staff took exception to some of the recommendations in the report, particularly for Central Region to take over operations of the Traffic Signal System.

Corrective Actions:

None

Recommendations/ Comments:

The Federal Review Team recommends that AMATS continue the efforts to further link the CMP to the updated ITS architecture.

Federal Certification Review Team

John Lohrey, Statewide Programs Team Leader, FHWA
Brian Betlyon, Resource Center, FHWA
Ned Conroy, Community Planner, FTA
Elizabeth Hoffman, Civil Rights/Realty Programs Specialist, FHWA
Paul Sprenger, Central Region Engineer, FHWA

Certification Review Site Visit Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, March 3, 2015

8:30 – 8:45am	Introductions – All – Purpose of Certification Review and Review of Agenda – Ned Conroy
8:45 – 9:15am	Overview of Region and Current Local Issues – AMATS
9:15 – 9:45am	Organization Structure – Brian Betlyon; Planning Boundaries – Ned Conroy; Agreements/Contracts – Ned Conroy
9:45 – 10:00am	Unified Planning Work Program – Brian Betlyon
10:00 – 10:30am	3-C Transportation Planning Process – John Lohrey and Ned Conroy
10:30 – 10:45am	Break
10:45 – 12:00pm	Metropolitan Transportation Plan Development
12:00 – 1:00pm	Lunch
1:00 – 2:00pm	Financial Planning – Ned Conroy
2:00 – 3:00pm	Congestion Management Process – Brian Betlyon
3:00 – 3:15pm	Break
3:15 – 4:00pm	Transportation Improvement Program – John Lohrey
5:00 – 7:00pm	Public Meeting

Wednesday, March 4, 2015

8:30 – 9:00am	Air Quality Conformity – Ned Conroy
9:00 – 9:30am	Self-Certifications – John Lohrey
9:30 – 10:00am	Public Participation – Brian Betlyon
10:00 – 10:30am	Title VI/EJ Requirements – Elizabeth Hoffman
10:30 – 10:45am	Break
10:45 – 12:00pm	Intelligent Transportation Systems and Open Discussion
12:00 – 1:00pm	Lunch
1:00 – 2:30pm	Review Session for FHWA and FTA
2:30 – 3:00pm	Closeout and wrap-up

Public Comments from March 3, 2015 meeting

Lois Epstein – 6 years on AMATS Technical Committee

- Big projects are easy to start and hard to finish
- Technical Committees meetings are scheduled during the day and hard to attend
- The extension of the current MTP needs to look at the worst case financial scenario
- Government Hill residents are concerned about ROW purchase

Jamie Kenworthy

- Politicians froze planning process
- Different growth assumptions for Mat-Su – “wildly different numbers”
- Knik has 60% more in 2040 compared to ISER
- Knikbridgefacts.org
- The public cannot understand planning assumptions