

**ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Mayor's Conference Room, 8th Floor
632 W. 6th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska**

**April 17, 2025
1:00 PM**

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[Transportation Planning / AMATS Meetings \(muni.org\)](https://www.muni.org/transportation-planning/amats-meetings)*

Policy Committee Members Present:

Name	Representing
Sean Holland	Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF)
Kent Kohlhasse	MOA/Public Works Department
Jason Olds	Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), Air Quality
Meg Zaletel	MOA/Municipal Assembly
Daniel Volland	MOA/Municipal Assembly

Also in attendance:

Name	Representing
Aaron Jongenelen	AMATS
Christine Schuette	AMATS
Leifiloa Felise	AMATS
Rhiannon Brown	AMATS
James Starzec	DOT&PF
Ben White*	DOT&PF
Kate Dueber	Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)
Jim Winchester	Planning & Zoning Commission Representative
Mélisa Babb*	MOA/Planning Department
Brad Coy*	MOA/Traffic Engineering Department
Brandon Telford	MOA/Project Management & Engineering (PM&E)
Adeyemi Alimi*	ADEC
Mark Eisenman	DOT&PF
Ryan Harris	DOT&PF
Alexa Dobson	Bike Anchorage Executive Director
Marc Luiken	
Joslyn Biloon	DOT&PF
Allie Hartman	
Zakary Hartman	MOA/Traffic Engineering Department
Adam Moser	DOT&PF
Nancy Pease	Rabbit Creek Community Council
Will Walker	
Anna Bosin	DOT&PF
Jason Norris	
Daniel Mckenna-Foster	MOA/Long-Range Planning Division
Luke Bowland*	DOT&PF

**AMATS Technical Advisory Committee Member*

***Designated Assembly Alternate*

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

CHAIR HOLLAND called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Kent Kohlhasse represented Mayor LaFrance. A quorum was established.

2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

AARON JONGENELEN encouraged public involvement in this meeting of the AMATS Policy Committee. He explained staff would first make their presentation, followed by any comments from Committee members, and the floor would then be open to public comment.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL moved to approve the agenda. ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND seconded.

Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – March 20, 2025

ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND moved to approve the minutes. ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL seconded.

Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved.

5. ACTION ITEMS**a. 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Amendment #1**

MR. JONGENELEN noted that at the November 2024 Policy Committee meeting, staff was directed to remove the Safer Seward Highway project from the 2050 MTP as part of Amendment #1. At the January 2025 Policy Committee meeting, staff was directed to release Amendment #1 for a 45-day public review. The public review period ran from February 3 to March 20, 2025, and received 17 comments. Amendment #1 was not changed based on public comments. AMATS staff and the Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the comment response summary and recommend approval of the 2050 MTP Amendment #1.

CHAIR HOLLAND preferred to keep the project in the MTP and will not be supporting the amendment. There were 17 comments received, with only two having recommended removal. It is a safety corridor, and hundreds of units have been approved for construction in Girdwood, so that traffic has the potential to increase. It has been discussed before that there is no guarantee that the money not spent on the Seward Highway would be spent in Anchorage. If there are specific projects that we would like to be funded in Anchorage, in the MTP, then AMATS has the ability to bring those up.

CHAIR HOLLAND opened the floor to public comments.

ALEXA DOBSON, Bike Anchorage Executive Director

NANCY PEASE, Rabbit Creek Community Council

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL moved to approve. ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND seconded.

CHAIR HOLLAND called for a roll call vote.

AYE

Assembly Member Zaletel

Assembly Member Volland

Mr. Kohlhasse

NAY

Chair Holland

Mr. Olds

The motion passed with 3 in favor and 2 against.

b. Air Quality Conformity Demonstration Funding Program Amendment #3

MR. JONGENELEN noted that the Air Quality Conformity Demonstration was developed as part of the Funding Program Amendment #3. An interagency consultation meeting took place on February 24, 2025, and confirmed the approach of the development of the demonstration. The document was released for a 30-day public comment period and no comments were received. AMATS staff and the Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the final Air Quality Conformity Demonstration for the 2023-2026 Funding Program (TIP) Amendment 3 and recommend approval.

There were no comments.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL moved to approve. ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND seconded.

Hearing no objections, the motion passed.

c. 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #3

MR. JONGENELEN noted that the 2023-2026 TIP Amendment #3 was released for a 45-day public comment period. Based on public feedback, staff updated Table 2: Roadway, Table 3: Non-motorized, Table 7: HSIP, Table 8: NHS, and Table 10: Other Federal, State, and Local Funded projects within the AMATS area. AMATS staff and the Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the TIP amendment #3 changes based on public feedback and recommend approval to the Policy Committee.

The committee discussed the following:

1. The \$5 million can only be used for this or actually implementing a construction project because it is a specific grant for wildlife collision mitigation.

2. The Tudor Road Overcrossing Replacement in the general fund being moved from FY24 to FY23 is just updating the document to reflect when it actually happened and that DOT&PF had added money in FY24 for design work. The project has a designer under contract, but construction has not started yet.
3. A typographical error in the cost estimate in HSP0021 should read \$2.079 million.
4. Not seeing projects targeting hot spots in Midtown, such as the high-speed roads that intersect and bisect Midtown.
5. Potential lane drops on L Street and Gambell/Ingra.
6. VisionZero speed limit compliance.

CHAIR HOLLAND opened the floor to public comments.

MARK EISENMAN, DOT&PF, pointed out that the memorandum regarding the Glenn Highway Wildlife Collision Study grant should show \$688,000, not \$5 million. It will look at the corridor from Mile Post 1 to 35.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL moved to approve. ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND seconded.

Hearing no objections, the motion passed.

d. 2026-2027 Unified Planning Work Program Narrative (UPWP)

MR. JONGENELEN noted that the AMATS Work Program outlines all transportation and air quality planning activities that AMATS and the Public Transportation Department staff will undertake over a two-year period and is required by federal law under Title 23 CFR 450.308. It includes the following categories:

- 100 Element: Plans and Programs
- 200 Element: Special Studies & Plans
- 300 Element: Air Quality
- 400 Element: Data and Modeling
- 500 Element: Program Administration and Public Involvement
- 600 Element: Public Transportation

AMATS staff and the Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the 2026-2027 Work Program narrative and recommend its release for a 30-day public comment period.

The committee noted that having AMATS' newsletters available during the public comment period has been beneficial. They encouraged all active community council members to sign up for the newsletter.

There were no public comments.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL moved to approve. ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND seconded.

Hearing no objections, the motion passed.

e. AMATS Comments on Functional Classification Update

MR. JONGENELEN noted that DOT&PF is currently meeting with stakeholders and AMATS to update the functional classification of all roadways in the state of Alaska, which is required every ten years. A list of compiled changes has been provided to the project teams as comments. DOT&PF is responsible for making sure all public roads in the state, regardless of who owns them, are properly classified using guidance from the federal government and input from communities, tribes, and agencies. AMATS staff met with MOA staff to review roadways within the AMATS boundary. The Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the list of functional classification comments and recommended approval, with the change that Forest Park Drive/Hillcrest Drive be a local road instead of a minor collector.

The following are comments and questions from the committee with responses noted in *Italic*.

(MZ) Do road classifications being moved from a collector status to a local road affect their ability to get funding through the CIP (Capital Improvement Program) and municipal bonding process?

(KK) *Generally, no. Municipal funding criteria through the bonds are based on the evaluations done every year, based on need, comments from Street Maintenance, and the public. In the past, the municipality used bond funds for collector roads, but given the decline in state grant funding about 10 years ago, the municipality had to expand and start doing local streets with bond funds. It does not affect how the municipality would bond for projects.*

(MZ) Does the road classification matter for state funding?

(BW) *DOT&PF's federal funding is a formula based on functional classification. Emergency repairs are also based on functional classification. If we were to have an earthquake, federal highways will only reimburse us on NHS (National Highway System) interstates. There would not be any emergency repair on local roads, and the state would be on the hook. DOT&PF's policy for match agreements with local communities is the lower the classification, the more the local communities on board will have to participate in the match. There are some federal funding restrictions that would become a functional class, along with the match rates and who would pay for it. If we start to reduce our NHS interstate, it will impact our federal funding.*

(MZ) Is this time-sensitive, requiring action today?

(AJ) *DOT&PF is currently looking for public comments as part of the process. AMATS will not be having meetings in May, which is why we are trying to get this done as quickly as possible. There is no impact to TIP funding on whether it is a local or collector. Federal funds for Alaska are allowed to be spent on any functional class of road. It is just what the willingness of this committee is to do that.*

(MZ) The financial implications of the proposed functional classification should be a part of the analysis or at least in our records if we are proposing to make these changes. She was not sure if an information memorandum would be an option to attach to whatever decision we made today. A written analysis would be worthwhile.

(SH) When are the comments due?

(AJ) *He was not given a firm date. If we delay this until June, he was sure staff can work with the project team to get our comments in at that point. They are still receiving public comments, so a number of the comments are ready. He recommended the committee only look at Spenard and Fireweed because there are active projects there that they are currently selecting the design of those roads and making them collector roads instead of having them remain as arterial roads. Hold off on looking at the rest of the list until we can discuss the financial implications.*

(MZ) Is the proposed functional classification for 2025 not to exceed usage? The road is classified as a minor collector versus a minor arterial. Could a minor arterial classification be designed to be something smaller?

(AJ) *Variances will need to be applied for because of the Design Criteria Manual and the state's criteria manual. He believed DOT&PF is already seeking variances on Fireweed and the first portion of Spenard Road that is underway from Benson to Minnesota. Minnesota to Northwood would also need a variance. The idea here was to make the change and get it done quickly in order to help with the variance. OS&HP (Official Streets & Highways Plan) is also being updated to reflect those specific road changes.*

(SH) *The vast majority of these are reducing the functional classification, and the motivation behind that is to take advantage of the lane scenario with shoulders, but essentially, for a design criterion makes for a smaller, slower road.*

(AJ) *This allows more flexibility with what needs to be included because not all of these roads need 12-foot sidewalks, etc. There needs to be more discussion on what the road should look like, and that was the idea behind this. These are just comments for DOT&PF's review to decide whether they agree with them or not.*

(DV) How much of this is just our discretion of what we want the road to be, and how much of what we are trying to do is getting in with federal compliance because these are based off the AADT (Annual Average Daily Traffic)? How much wiggle room do we have?

(AJ) *There is not much wiggle room because we have to base these on how the road functions today. Because of that, you are going to see that the public is calling for it to be made a lower functional class, but we are recommending it remain as a principal to a minor arterial, so still an arterial. Mostly because that is how it functions today with AADT. We cannot make recommendations based on where we want it to go in the future unless we have a project underway that is funded within the next four years. There seems to be a lot of wiggle room for us to say that we want it to be minor or major arterial because of how the functional classification thresholds are listed. These two overlap heavily, so there can be some discretion in what you want to be within those primary categories. We pulled the current functional classification from DOT&PF's sources available and FHWA's Functional Classification Concepts, Criteria, and Procedures, 2023 Edition, which lists the AADT threshold (shown in the report) to make our recommendations. AADT is not the only criterion used to set*

the thresholds. As an example, Tudor Road is listed as an arterial but does not function as an arterial if you take into account land use access on portions of it. These were developing into a debate-type situation, and we just wanted to be conservative. Based on AADT alone, there are a lot of roads for which we are recommending a lower functional classification. If additional discussion is desired on some of these changes or some missing roads, we can provide information on if there are additional driveways, speed limits, etc. DOT&PF has a lot of criteria that included direct access to land use, but all the information was getting to be too much to review for such a quick turnaround.

CHAIR HOLLAND opened the floor to public comments.

MR. JONGENELEN read aloud the following two public comments submitted via TEAMS chat:

BRANDON TELFORD: "Just want to point out that these proposed changes do not replace the changes that are being proposed for the OS&HP, which are being routed for approval separately. The MOA Design Criteria Manual references the OS&HP for design standards, not the DOT&PF classification."

MARK EISENMAN: "Just checked with the project manager and the public comment period ends July 1, 2025."

JASON NORRIS
ERIN BALDWIN DAY
JAMES STARZEC

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL moved to postpone to the meeting in June. MR. KOHLHASE seconded.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL explained that the rationale is to get a memorandum on any financial implications. There is a policy proposal around the Design Criteria Manual that might be important to take up, hopefully with an addendum at the Assembly meeting Tuesday night; otherwise, it will be on their agenda in May. It is important to get the policy question answered prior to fully making these recommendations and understanding how those two pieces moved together.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND wanted to hear more from staff about the timeliness of the Fireweed and Spenard projects in these classifications. Will moving this to June hinder those projects?

MR. JONGENELEN suggested packaging all of these together for the June meeting as one big group, making sure we are all on the same page. He did not think delaying would be a problem.

Hearing no objections, the motion passed.

f. I/L Pavement Preservation Project

MR. JONGENELEN briefed the committee on the change in the project scope to include the following additional work:

Pavement Preservation vs. Lane Drop/Road Diet project options.

- Option No. 1 – Basic Pavement Preservation
- Option No. 2 – Pavement Preservation Plus Selected ADA Upgrades
- Option No. 3 – Add Signal Modifications
- Option No. 4 – Add Lane Reallocation
- Added at the TAC Meeting Option No. 5 – Replacement of Signals
- Added at the TAC Meeting Option No. 6 – Road Ownership Transfer

The TAC recommended that the I/L Pavement project be moved from the preventative maintenance program to a standalone project so the design team can consider Options 1 through 4 along with the additional options discussed at the TAC meeting.

RYAN HARRIS, DOT&PF, provided a brief PowerPoint presentation.

The committee discussed the following:

1. Moving this from pavement replacement to a separate project would require a TIP amendment.
2. If the committee wanted to fund this, approximately \$5 million would not be able to go toward other projects.
3. The I/L Corridor plan is scheduled to be wrapped up this September. If the desire is to have lane reductions, the project team could incorporate that into the plan.
4. This has been a high priority for the community councils for more than a decade.
5. With regard to Option 6, the transfer of road ownership of 5th, 6th, and I/L may not be timely because there are challenges outside of the control of DOT&PF and the municipality in order to make that happen. The Federal Highway Administration needs to be included in the loop.
6. How to get projects in Midtown.
7. Lane repurposing and project scoping.

CHAIR HOLLAND opened the floor to public comments.

JASON NORRIS
JAMES STARZEC
BRAD COY
ANNA BOSIN

ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND moved to approve the recommendation from the TAC to move the I/L Pavement project into a standalone project, and recommend considering expanding the project to include Options 1 through 4. Final options selected as part of the project outcome should be subject to the findings of the I/L Corridor Plan. ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL seconded.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL suggested a friendly amendment that the last part of that sentence should read, "The final selection should be considered in conjunction with the recommendations of independent utility from the corridor plan." That is the whole point of the corridor plan.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND agreed with the friendly amendment.

MR. HARRIS asked for clarification that the motion is for Options 1 through 4 and to move the project into a new amendment in the TIP. DOT&PF was only wanting to move the project into a new amendment in the TIP because they were looking at Option 5 for full reconstruction of all signals. Options 1 through 4 are not full reconstructions of the signals.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND is not advocating for replacement of the signals.

MR. JONGENELEN explained that as part of Options 1 through 4, it will have to be moved into a project on its own. It cannot be left in pavement replacement if you are going to start moving the curblin as part of the reallocation or other things like that.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL believes the motion is saying that because the corridor plan is still pending, Options 1 through 4 should be on the table to be considered. The corridor plan should help identify the option moving forward. It is set to be done this fall and kind of formalizes the recommendation and the context of the study that is moving. It is important because it puts it in the context of the rest of I/L and Minnesota.

MR. KOHLHASE asked if Option 5 is excluded from the motion; does that mean if a fairly large-scope project moves forward and it has been identified that signal replacement is required, does that mean it is precluded from doing that?

MR. JONGENELEN noted that it can always be done as an amendment at a later date. The real problem with Option 5 is the cost. Replacing all of the signals costs at least \$1 million per signal, and there are four signals at each intersection.

MR. KOHLHASE noted that, in the course of design, it is determined that a signal needs to be replaced due to being structurally deficient, etc. Could a signal replacement for that specific location be done under Option 3? He did not want to preclude our ability to have an effective, complete project and is not advocating to replace every signal. He just did not want the design team to get to 85 or 90% design level and determine a signal is needed somewhere but cannot be accommodated because of the way we have crafted the amendment.

MR. JONGENELEN did not think it precluded it in the future. It is just something that would have to be brought back to this committee for approval if there is a significant cost increase. If it were to only cost \$200,000, it would fall outside the threshold of needing an amendment and could be done as an administrative modification but would still come back before the committee.

CHAIR HOLLAND asked if we were to move it forward to pavement preservation, is that next year's construction? When is it programmed in the TIP?

MR. JONGENELEN replied that it is in 2027 or later for just the pavement itself.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL asked if just the design of \$5.9 million is coming out of the current TIP's preservation bucket>

MR. JONGENELEN believed it was just the design right now and the rest will come in the next TIP cycle.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL also asked that if we say we are going to wait for the I/L Corridor Study and our intention is to make this an independent project, what can we do now with the money this would have taken in the current TIP? Is it part of the current pavement replacement bucket?

MR. JONGENELEN replied that the construction funding for this pavement project is not until the next TIP cycle. There is no real impact on the existing TIP. If additional design funding is needed, we will not know about that until the next TIP amendment. If it is, it will be a smaller dollar amount, not the full \$5 million.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL pointed out that the pavement replacement table does not give good information about what will actually get paved and what will only get designed. That might be a modification for the future TIP because when we have a choice like this, she did not know what money it might be keeping in the current TIP for possible reallocation or what it might be facilitating into the next TIP.

MR. JONGENELEN restated the motion to read, "Moved to approve the recommendation from the TAC to move it into a standalone project. Recommend considering expanding the project to include Options 1 through 4. Final selection should be consistent with the projects identified as independent utility as part of the I/L plan."

CHAIR HOLLAND called for a roll call vote.

AYE

Assembly Member Zaletel
Assembly Member Volland
Mr. Kohlase

NAY

Chair Holland
Mr. Olds

The motion passed with 3 in favor and 2 against.

6. PROJECT AND PLAN UPDATES

a. Next Policy Committee Meeting Agenda Overview

MR. JONGENELEN announced that the May committee meetings have been cancelled, as he will be out of the country. The June meeting will include an update on the performance measures agreement between the MPOs and DOT&PF; discussion on the 3-C Process; HSIP nominations; and updates on the Academy/Vanguard Drive project and the Fireweed Lane Rehabilitation project. He will be scheduling a work session in May or June to discuss the Operating Agreement.

7. COMMITTEE COMMENTS

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL announced that this is her last AMATS meeting. She is hoping to see 36th Avenue and New Seward move forward. She also thanked the Traffic Engineering Department for providing good information. The new AMATS recruits get to learn some cool stuff and ask wild questions because they are not engineers. This is one of the most important committees that an Assembly member can participate in because how and where we construct our roads impacts the fabric of our community. There are challenges with pedestrian deaths and having to cross eight lanes of traffic to go from point A to point B. One has to do their homework to be on this committee.

CHAIR HOLLAND expressed his appreciation for Assembly Member Zaletel's dedication and how she was always prepared for community council and AMATS' meetings.

MR. KOHLHASE echoed the comments about the importance of AMATS and has observed that sausage-making for the Assembly happens during work sessions and with one-on-one discussions. He would find it helpful on occasion to have work sessions on some of these big projects where we could sit at a table in a less structured manner that is open to the public and hear the concerns from Assembly members, the chairperson, or other state seats to really flush out what the issues are and maybe craft a better solution, as opposed to trying to do it on the fly in a very formal meeting with Robert's Rules of Order, which is the least optimal way of getting a good end product.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND also thanked Assembly Member Zaletel for her participation and mentorship. Work sessions can be difficult because Assembly members have a lot on their plate when it comes to scheduling. Prospective members who want to join the Policy Committee may have to think about it because there is a lot to learn, it is time-intensive, and it is interesting for those that do want to dive in. The Fairview community was dealt some tough news with the impending closure of Carr's on Gambell, especially due to the timing with the reconnecting of Fairview efforts and the PEL. Part of the reasoning, in addition to the public safety concerns, is uncertainty around transportation projects of the future, such as Government Hill and the Knik Arm Crossing. This community is dependent on the pharmacy, and those with non-motorized options to get to that store now have to walk to Midtown.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

MR. JONGENELEN announced that AMATS will be fully staffed by the end of April. Rhianon Brown is the new Transportation Planning Coordinator and will be focusing on the MTP. Emily Weiser is the new Non-Motorized Coordinator and will be responsible for the non-motorized plan. He also expressed his appreciation to Assembly Member Zaletel for serving on the Policy Committee.

9. ADJOURN

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL moved to adjourn. MR. KOHLHASE seconded.

Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.