

February 20th, 2026

Dear Safer Seward Project Team,

The AMATS Policy Committee met on February 19th, 2026, during the comment period for the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Safer Seward Highway project and voted to adopt the AMATS Staff comments on the draft EA, attached, as PC comments. They request an official and comprehensive response from the project team to all comments provided. They also voted to include additional comments made by AMATS Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee members:

- 1) Chair Coy: The critical part is the recognition that there are so many safety needs not getting addressed in a way he and many others feel is adequate. Seeing so much effort put into the Seward Highway - when there are so many other urgent needs - that he is spending so much time on even though it is not his system, it is very challenging and draining. He emphasized that there needs to be more motion, more effort, and more prioritization of all the other safety needs, rather than on a stumbling block, such as a lane drop directive, and other things that further slow projects down.

There is only so much the Municipality can do to improve safety in ways we view as our jurisdiction when they are on DOT&PF streets. With DOT&PF restructuring it feels like the ability for the Municipality to improve safety – something we are feeling the weight of with everything going on - is moving away from us.

Seeing something outside of AMATS gaining billions of dollars is really challenging. He understands that DOT&PF is trying to make project improvements and deliver Anchorage projects, but the committee also continually hears about DOT&PF not having enough staff to move AMATS projects forward. All the other projects listed above are not ones that can be fixed by adding capacity and by expanding the roadways, which is what the Safer Seward Highway project is looking at proposing.

It seems so much easier to move forward with big projects that are expansions than it does to move forward with projects that are targeting safety and reallocating space. It seems like there is a huge discrepancy between these types of projects

and those types of projects. It is hard when he sees curb-tight sidewalks and roads that have excess capacity that increase speeding and operate at a level of service that is at so much excess capacity. 85% of the major streets in Anchorage are DOT&PF streets.

- 2) Member Babb: From the Planning Department's point of view on these sorts of projects, especially based on the Planning & Zoning Commission's reaction to this project, she concurred with Chair Coy. Our community is consistently asking for walkable streets and non-motorized transportation, but we are consistently not able to deliver that in town.
- 3) Member Baldwin Day: Appendix D (Alternatives Development) sections describing the Stacked Structure (1.1) and Tunneling Through Curves (1.2) alternatives include discussion of projected costs per linear foot, impact on scenic quality, and environmental considerations. These metrics are entirely absent from the section on Intermittent Passing Lanes (Three-Lane) Divided Highway (1.3). Please explain why critical metrics such as project cost, long- and short-term wildlife and environmental impacts, Section 4(f) considerations, traffic disruption during construction, multimodal access & safety, recreation access, and compatibility with existing state planning documents were not transparently evaluated and scored for all proposed alternatives and weighted alongside crash rates & severity, reliability, and mobility for all users? If such a rubric was utilized, please produce it for public review.
- 4) Member Baldwin Day: Appendix G (Traffic & Safety Analysis) states that DOT&PF approved the future safety performance analysis methodology. Please explain why alternative C2-M was eliminated because it did not "sufficiently reduce crash rates and severity" compared to the four-lane divided highway option when the actual delta on fatal and serious injury crashes is less than one incident per year between C2-M and C7/7-T. Please further explain how alternative C7/7-T does more to prevent single vehicle run-off-the-road crashes, which account for nearly 50% of all crash types and over 40% of FI crashes.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the documents and provide comments. Please let us know if you have any questions.



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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Sincerely,

Aaron Jongenelen

AMATS Executive Director/MPO Coordinator

Electronic Cc:

AMATS Policy Committee

Ben White, DPD & SWP, Anchorage Field Office Planning Chief

James Starzec, DPD & SWP, AMATS Transportation Planner

Mark Eisenman, DPD & SWP, Anchorage Area Planner

Attachments:

Safer Seward EA AMATS staff comments 02_12_2026