

**ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS
POLICY COMMITTEE**

**Planning & Development Center
Training Conference Room, 1st Floor
4700 Elmore Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99507**

**Special Meeting
July 8, 2026
10:00 AM**

*This meeting is available for viewing at
[Transportation Planning / AMATS Meetings \(muni.org\)](https://www.muni.org/transportation-planning/amats-meetings)*

Policy Committee Members Present:

Name	Representing
Katherine Keith	Acting Director Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities, Central Region
Kent Kohlhasse	Public Works Director
Erin Baldwin Day	MOA/Municipal Assembly

Virtual

Morgan Frank	Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), Air Quality
Daniel Volland	MOA/Municipal Assembly

Also in attendance:

Name	Representing
Aaron Jongenelen	AMATS
Christine Schuette	AMATS
Rhiannon Brown	AMATS
Emily Weiser	AMATS
Leifiloa Felise	AMATS
Luke Bowland*	DOT&PF
Brad Coy*	MOA/Traffic Engineering Department
Mélissa Babb*	MOA/Planning Department
Alex Bell	
Craig Lyon	
Bob Doehl	MOA/Community & Economic Development
Jessie Doherty	DOH
Donovan Camp	
Connor Eshleman	DOT&PF
Galen Jones	DOT&PF
Lauren Little	DOT&PF
Daniel McKenna-Foster	MOA/Long-Range Planning Division
Morgan McCammon	DOWL
Bart Rudolph*	MOA/Public Transportation Department
Joni Wilm	
Alexa Dobson	Bike Anchorage

David Hemstreet	DOT&PF
Lindsey Hajduk	Director of Community Engagement & External Affairs & BPAC
Luke Bertram	MOA/Long-Range Planning Division
Shanna Gamble	MOA/Parks & Recreation Department
Jason Norris	
Nora Morse	

**AMATS Technical Advisory Committee Member*

***Designated Assembly Member Alternate*

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

CHAIR KEITH called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Kent Kohlhasse represented Mayor LaFrance. A quorum was established prior to the virtual arrival of Assembly Member Volland at 10:10 a.m.

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.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ASSEMBLY MEMBER BALDWIN DAY moved to approve the agenda. MR KOHLHASE seconded.

Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – None

5. ACTION ITEMS

a. AMATS Transportation Plan (MTP) 2052

MR. JONGENELEN briefed the committee on the MTP and on behalf of Rhiannon Brown. He added that he was invited to attend a meeting with the FHWA Administrator, Sean McMaster, Deputy Commissioner Keith, Assembly Member Baldwin Day, the staff of Senators Murkowski, Sullivan, and Begich and discussed several things including the boundary. FHWA will support AMATS in our efforts but are looking to us to figure out the concerns. There was a request from Deputy Commissioner Keith for a possible extension of the requirements of our boundary and MTP update. There was support from FHWA as long as we showed a good faith effort in moving forward. If there are delays from today, we will probably make the December timeline but will have to request an extension and figure out how much time we will need. The boundary is fine and, even though we are working on the boundary, we can continue to work

on the MTP, since there are only a few projects impacted by the boundary because the boundary changes are relatively small, but that depends on if the Policy Committee makes big sweeping changes or small changes.

CHAIR KEITH noted that an update needs to be provided to FHWA and Regional Administrator of the timelines for both the boundary and the MTP.

The following bullets are highlights of the discussion:

- Already have a Policy Committee approved boundary, otherwise staff needs explicit direction to perform additional work. The boundary is on the next PC agenda as an action item or today's agenda would need to be amended to add the boundary as an action item.

The committee recessed briefly to discuss how each project would be addressed, and resumed at 10:26 a.m.

- The committee agreed to act on and amend each project list individually. It was also clarified to the members that this was a special meeting, not a work session.
- Project costs on the design and right-of-way phases for the MTP are also needed in addition to Phase 4 and Phase 7, provided in the June 17 construction memorandum related to the Safer Seward Highway project, to be able to vote on it today.
- The construction memorandum did not include the Phase 2 or 3 costs. The additional design costs anticipated in Phase 2 for the entire 20-mile stretch would be approximately \$50 million. Phase 3 (Right-of-Way) cost is estimated at \$3 million. The additional design costs in Phase 2 at the completion of NEPO (in FY27 based on where the project is on the schedule) with the Phase 3 costs would be either \$27 or \$28 million. Additional funds will need to be obligated in 2027. This project will be staged over decades, but design will be done in 2027. There will be time to accommodate funds in future MTP or TIP updates. The \$50 million is in addition to the MTP and the amount obligated-to-date is approximately \$16.5 million for both preliminary design and environmental.
- In summary, obligated to date for the initial design and environmental is \$16.5 million. The next obligation will be in FY27, giving authority to proceed with the final design will be \$50 million, \$3 million for the right-of-way phase needed in 2027 or 2028 getting it through the pre-construction costs to kick off the initial construction phases.
- This does satisfy AMATS' funding needs.
- AMATS staff will need detailed project descriptions on what each of the stages will do for modeling purposes.
- That information is quite important for the committee's decision-making process and information is needed that is commensurate with what is in the project lists, beyond what is useful for AMATS staff in terms of modeling. That will allow the committee to feel confident in their decision and accountable to the public for the reasons they have chosen to include these projects. Some members did not feel comfortable including these placeholders without additional detail on what exactly the scope of each segment would include.
- Commissioner Anderson submitted a letter back to staff and the committee just last night, so there has been extensive conversation based on the environmental assessment. The scope of the Seward Highway project has not changed, so the

committee can be confident in the decisions they make. The scope of what the project entails, that purpose and need, is the same as that was read in the draft EA.

- The committee received the emailed 30-page response letter last night at 6:36 p.m., and due to some of the members not having enough time to digest the entirety of the document. In terms of due diligence and the fact that there are so many questions about the draft EA itself, some members are hesitant in moving ahead. Specifically, questions regarding the last paragraph that suggests there would be no meaningful financial impact on Anchorage projects.
- This is not the committee's only opportunity even with this MTP update, because a special meeting could always be scheduled at a later date, allowing more time for review and request more information. There is always the opportunity to amend the MTP at a later date to add the project. Currently, we are in the middle of an MTP update, so no changes will happen until it is finalized, and then an amendment will follow.
- The NHPP is a formula-based funding model. DOT&PF receives a certain amount of dollars per year, and they also have the redistribution component. Other funding sources, such as the Surface Transportation Block Grant, can be spent on NHS routes as well. The Advanced Construct tool is also available along with pursuing grants where scopes within other termini align with other opportunities. There are multiple ways to fund this, but in terms of the financial plan that investment is balanced largely on the NHPP funding assumptions of how many dollars received per year and what is a reasonable amount to allocate to this project versus other projects in the state.
- There is concern about proposing to lock up \$1.5 billion in NHPP funding over the next 15-20 years.
- Inclusion in a long-range transportation plan, such as the MTP, does not lock up that money, but rather shows DOT&PF's intent to invest and allows them to meet those investments. If projects are not ready, those investments go elsewhere. This is a very high-crash corridor with recent fatalities at Potter Marsh in the area currently being discussed that this project could resolve. It is a state commitment, and this corridor is important, and DOT&PF intends to make the investment, but the projects have to be ready. The estimates also involve overtime.
- When talking about making meaningful safety investments in the NHS, the characterization that the Safer Seward Highway is the place where we ought to be dropping \$1.5 billion over the next 15 years rings a little hollow because that particular segment of highway does not even crack the top 30 most dangerous roadways in Anchorage. Even if this were to be held up against roadways on the NHS, specifically Tudor and Muldoon, those are corridors where what happened at Potter Marsh last week happens with regularity. In recognizing the safety risk of driving on NHS roadways in Anchorage is far more real and significant and statistically provable than this particular stretch of the Seward Highway, which admittedly is not the safest and could be improved. It is difficult to hear the justification that this is a needed safety improvement when it is clear that there are exponentially greater needs on the NHS that could be pointed to in the data.
- Members are struggling with this as a long-range solution because they do not see commensurate solutions for far more dangerous roadways that are part of the NHS where people are being seriously injured and killed on a very regular basis. Those projects are not being prioritized in the same way. Are NHPP dollars being invested in places where safety demand is the greatest? Looking at this, the answer is no, they are not. This makes it hard as a policymaker to justify to the community why

the committee would include this project at this scale, at this scale, and at this price tag when there is no visible commitment or investment in places that have a documented safety risk. This is a zero-sum funding game, and it is troubling that the committee would prioritize something like this to the detriment and potentially very real exclusion of other more necessary projects.

- As the DOT&PF Deputy Commissioner, she is extremely proud that DOT&PF is prioritizing this project. It is a Safer Seward Highway Corridor because it is a safety corridor as established by Alaska Statute. Focusing on resolving the last safety corridor does not mean it is the only unsafe route in the state. Safety is not the only purpose and need for this project. If anyone has been stuck in traffic for hours when heading to the Peninsula due to road closures, she would like to see a statistic on the number of hours-to-date that the road has been shut down. All due to avalanches, rockslides, vehicle crashes. The purpose of this project is not only to resolve safety concerns, but to enable access in and out of Anchorage. Mileposts 98.5 to 105. are projects that DOT&PF are moving forward with. Two projects within the MPA are the Potter Creek area to McHugh Creek and Rabbit Creek to Potter Creek have been staged for 2037 and 2040 and have been put last in the staging sequence because of the prioritization here and allowing ample time for conversations on the design of those segments. The amount of funds expected of the National Highway Statewide DOT funds within the MPA is estimated at \$520 million. The state is requesting to include this entire corridor project from 98.5 to 118, and the authority to proceed to final design in 2027. This needs to be in the TIP where there is another decision point on what actually moves with funding.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND expressed that the project team can do whatever they want to do outside of the AMATS boundary, but not prioritize such an expensive project, even as a placeholder over higher crash roads, within AMATS' boundary. Some of us represent North Anchorage, Downtown, and Midtown, which is the Urban Core, and are acutely aware of the safety issues on state roads within our districts. As a policymaker, to prioritize this would be considered malpractice, so he does not intend to support the inclusion of this project. He is still not convinced that a highway widening project is going to create more safety. It might facilitate faster mobility to the corridor and traffic mitigation. However, this is not something he would support without at least a portion of the AMATS boundary on either the MTP or the TIP, particularly the short-range transportation plan.

MR. BOWLAND explained that DOT&PF has a number of active projects on Tudor and Muldoon, that include an HSIP channelization project at Tudor and Patterson being obligated this year for construction next summer. They also have HSIP projects looking at improvements on Tudor and Dale, Tudor and Folkner, and are nominating another HSIP project on Muldoon in the Fred Meyer vicinity to address safety concerns. Additionally, they have pavement preservation projects on both Muldoon and Tudor, which will incorporate what safety aspects they can. A corridor plan for Tudor and Muldoon, which will hopefully lend to additional projects coming out of that study. The approaches for the Seward Highway and roadside Tudor and Muldoon in an urban context are quite different. They have looked at safety corridors and found that a 4-lane divided facility does solve those head-on collision safety problems seen there, so they have moved forward with a 4-lane divided on the Parks Highway, on sections of the Glenn Highway, and on Knik Goose Bay. Tudor and Muldoon is a facility that tries to accommodate all users within confined spaces and is complex with the number of stakeholders, businesses, and residences, and is less of a straightforward answer when talking about the needs within Anchorage. We do have needs within the community and

the prioritization of that is when we look at where these projects land in a TIP. We can all agree that we have needs within the Anchorage area and on the Seward Highway, and how we

allocate funding to those different needs is something we should absolutely debate as an organization like AMATS.

CHAIR KEITH opened the floor to public comments.

ALEXA DOBSON: If the scope of the Seward Highway widening project continues to be unchanged, as Deputy Director Keith mentioned, it has no place being added back into the MTP because that is specifically the reason why it was removed in the first place. Once again, the justification for expanding the highway to a 4-lane divided highway was to prevent fatal head-on crashes. It is important to know that there were three of these crashes within a 5-year analysis period used for justification in the draft EA. Spending \$500 million per fatal head-on crash prevented is a poor use of funds and should not move forward. With regard to the concept of DOT&PF's commitment to safety, this is certainly a great place to be concerned about safety, but there are other areas that are far more urgent safety needs. Many of those already have safety projects programmed, but Lauren Little unilaterally imposed a directive that delays and adds costs to those projects for the reason that they might cause some driver inconvenience, while saving lives. We need to have that context and the understanding that we need to be serious about what we are talking about. She would like to see DOT&PF show a true commitment to safety and to direct money where that needs to happen. Until that happens, she did not think the project as it is currently scoped has any place in the MTP. She urged the Policy Committee to vote against its inclusion.

JASON NORRIS: He submitted written comments with regard to the whole justification for this project of over 20 miles being head on collisions, and there were three. Those three collisions took place in the same 2-mile stretch. It does not make sense trying to justify 20 miles worth of road treatment based on head-on collision deaths, when those three took place within 10 percent of that corridor. Having to fill approximately 120 acres of essential fish habitat and getting rid of world-class recreational opportunities, this project does not make sense, especially for the cost. He urged a 'no' vote.

CHAIR KEITH passed the gavel to Mr. Kohlase and moved to include the Safer Seward Highway Milepost 98.5 to 118 in the AMATS MTP 2052. MS. FRANK seconded.

MR. KOHLHASE agreed with many of the comments. The standpoint of the municipality and the administration is that the Seward Highway is of high importance. Tudor and Muldoon roads were particularly mentioned, along with other roads that are high priorities. Some of the concerns he brings forward from the letter of June 17 and the letter received last night seem to indicate that there is willingness to look at an arrangement of design solutions, but there is also the draft EA, that arrived at a 4-lane divided, is the plan going forward. It is hard for him to reconcile an acknowledgment of the need to take a harder look at the arrangement of design solutions that meet the purpose and need of the project, while there is a draft EA that says this is the design solution that is going to proceed forward. Whether it is 100% accurate, we have heard concerns from some stakeholders and various user groups that there was not the public engagement and opportunity for comment that some user groups may have expected. There is a strong interest in looking at the range of design solutions that might be

available to address these problems. There is a high interest in ensuring that the project does not take away opportunities for other work to happen in Anchorage with federal funds such as the NHPP. With regard to the letter received last evening from Commissioner Anderson, there are 30 pages of responses to comments from both Policy Committee members and AMATS' staff made last February. He has not been able to make it halfway through the document. A comment from Assembly Member Baldwin Day related to one of the off-road crashes and the department's response was that the 4-lane divided concept accomplishes curb correction, improved shoulders, and cleared site distance access management. He felt the response was accurate, but not comprehensive because certainly a 3-lane section or some other design solution could accomplish many of those same objectives.

MR. JONGENELEN pointed out that in the memorandum, staff listed the remaining revenue available for each group to utilize. DOT&PF has about \$269 million based on the historical information provided. As the Safer Seward components in the MPO are \$525 million, there is a discrepancy of how much is available to fund those projects, so how that funding would become available would need to be determined. If it is more available funding above and beyond the historical amounts, we would just need something in writing committing that it will happen and put in the MTP for people to know where it is. If that is not an option, then we need to move projects out that are DOT&PF specific to help free up that funding. That could be done as part of this or have a discussion if the committee would like to go back and talk about the Complete Streets list as a whole, which we still need to deal with as a whole, because there were some changes added in the Seward to Glenn PEL project and how they will be funded including the cost increase for the Seward Highway: Dimond/O'Malley.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER BALDWIN DAY moved to amend by substitution to approve the changes to the Complete Streets Project List 1 through 7. MR. KOHLHASE seconded.

CHAIR KEITH assumed the gavel.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND intends to support the motion. The Safer Seward Highway project went through the Planning and Zoning Commission process, who did have a lot of takeaways and recommended returning this project for redesign. The commission said that it did not look like the 3-way option was adequately evaluated and the project team needs to do more math and data. He was interested in breaking apart numbers 1 through 7 and addressing number 8 separately. There has been a lot of back and forth on project #6, which is the Seward Highway: O'Malley/Dimond Reconstruction project. At one point we had voted to eliminate that project entirely, but it was compromised by a reduction in scope and funding to \$32 million from a full package of \$111 million, so now we are moving back in that direction. He would be interested in dividing the question and taking up projects 1 through 5 and 7 that are less controversial, then taking on projects 6 and 8 separately. He needs to hear justification for why that project's budget is being doubled when we have already had substantial conversations about what it is we are trying to accomplish.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER BALDWIN DAY pointed out that there is not much meeting time remaining, and it would be constructive to move as many of the points of agreement forward as possible. Given that we can amend the MTP at a future date, the more contentious questions could be taken up at a later time. She would like the opportunity to do her own due diligence by reviewing the Commissioner's 30-page memorandum received last night and see more technical descriptions of each of the corridor phasing for the Safer Seward project. The

impetus behind her motion was to move the committee to what could be completed in the next 36 minutes of this special session.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER BALDWIN DAY moved to revise her amendment by substitution for the approval of Complete Streets 1 through 5 and 7. MR. KOHLHASE seconded.

CHAIR KEITH suggested everyone vote and move forward with the rest of the projects at hand because it does not prohibit the committee from having a more extended conversation. She encouraged everyone to not accept this amendment and go back to the original motion, vote, and then move onto this important motion, as amended, and suggested by Assembly Member Baldwin Day.

MR. JONGENELEN clarified that the amendment addresses those in the Policy Committee memorandum under TAC action.

First Amendment:

CHAIR KEITH called for a roll call vote on the amendment.

AYE

Assembly Member Baldwin Day
Mr. Kohlhasse
Assembly Member Volland

NAY

Ms. Frank
Chair Keith

The amendment passed with 3 votes in favor and 2 votes against.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER BALDWIN DAY clarified her amendment that just passed as follows:

1. Adding the Seward to Glenn PEL Project 16th Avenue Extension.
2. The Port of Alaska Freight Routes Reconnaissance Engineering Study.
3. Removing the Project Online 144, Lake Otis Parkway to 20th Avenue.
4. Updating the Project Online 145, also Lake Otis Parkway Project.
5. Update to the Project Online 137 to update the termini.
7. Increasing budget for Projects Online 54 through 55.

MR. KOHLHASE seconded the clarification.

In response to Mr. Kohlhasse's question regarding scheduling a second special meeting to cover the remaining items, MR. JONGENELEN explained that the committee can vote to extend today's meeting or schedule another special meeting with 7 days' notice in advance. It could be scheduled next Wednesday, July 15, keeping in mind that the regular PC meeting is July 16.

CHAIR KEITH passed the gavel to Mr. Kohlhasse to recommend removing #7 from the project list.

MR. KOHLHASE moved to amend to remove #7 with the understanding there is some discussion yet to be had on the fiscal constraint. ASSEMBLY MEMBER BALDWIN DAY seconded.

CHAIR KEITH restated that the motion is to accept the recommendations of the TAC, just items 1 through 5 of the Complete Streets Project List.

Second Amendment:

Hearing no objections, the amendment passed.

Main Motion, as amended:

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

MR. KOHLHASE moved to calendar a follow-up special meeting to resolve any items that were tabled today that we were unable to get to during the remaining 24 minutes of the meeting. ASSEMBLY MEMBER BALDWIN DAY seconded.

MR. KOHLHASE revised his motion to calendar a follow-up special meeting for the afternoon of Wednesday, July 15. ASSEMBLY MEMBER BALDWIN DAY seconded.

CHAIR KEITH requested a 3-hour-long special meeting from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.

MR. KOHLHASE offered a friendly amendment to his motion to hold a special meeting for the Policy Committee on Wednesday, July 15 from 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ASSEMBLY MEMBER BALDWIN DAY seconded.

Hearing no objections, the motion passed.

TRANSIT PROJECT LIST

ASSEMBLY MEMBER BALDWIN DAY requested to address the recommended change to the MTP under the Transit bullet on the Policy brief, which is to remove Project Lines 13 through 17.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER BALDWIN DAY noted that it is sad to see these removed from the Transit project list because they are important pieces of our transit system. She is hopeful they will return.

CHAIR KEITH opened the floor to public comments.

BART RUDOLPH: These projects are just duplicates and will remain in the MTP and other project line items.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER BALDWIN DAY moved to approve the recommended change by the TAC by removing the duplicate listings, which are MTP Transit Project List numbers 13 through 17. MR. KOHLHASE seconded.

Hearing no objections, the motion passed.

ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION PROJECT LIST

MR. JONGENELEN noted the following:

- At the TAC meeting, the Alaska Railroad commented that there were some changes to be made to the projects but were unable to submit the changes in time to provide notice.
- Zeroing out project costs for Line 2.
- Preventative Maintenance 5307
- Increase the costs for the projects on Line 6, which is Bridge Rehabilitation #5307
- Decrease the cost for the projects on Line #10, which is Preventative Maintenance 5337.
- Decrease the cost for a project on Line 11, which is Bridge Rehabilitation #5337.
- Remove projects on Lines 14 and 15, which are Facility Rehabilitation #5337 and the Railroad Technology Infrastructure #5337.

He added that these are all recommended changes submitted by the Alaska Railroad Corporation.

CHAIR KEITH opened the floor to public comments.

JASON NORRIS: He had no objections to the changes, but noted that if at any point the Alaska Railroad would like to engage in some sort of transportation for Alaskans, would be fantastic.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER BALDWIN DAY moved to incorporate changes 1 through 6 as noted in the policy memorandum into the MTP. MR. KOHLHASE seconded.

MR. JONGENELEN replied to Assembly Member Baldwin Day that he did not know the rationale for zeroing out the Preventative Maintenance 5307.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER BALDWIN expressed concern about removing \$14.5 million from preventative maintenance projects on the railroad, but assumed the railroad has reasons for wanting this. If this is a fiscal constraint question or if there are funds being reallocated elsewhere, having her question answered at some point would be helpful.

CHAIR KEITH commented that the railroad sends DOT&PF their program of projects for the STIP. ARRC does have a statewide programmatic project bucket, Preventative Maintenance, and where they spend the funds just shifts on the particular project they have at the time. Some would be within the boundaries, some outside, and then their schedule waxes and wanes with where those needs are at. These projects are ongoing, and the railroad does the best they can to forecast how much is needed at any one time. These are the same project and program lists that the railroad has on all the MPOs, as well as the STIP. Sometimes they have more reactive needs, like DOT&PFs pavement and preservation. Only DOT&PF tries not to identify larger projects, just be able to take care of those needs as they arise.

MR. JONGENELEN will ask the railroad to him with the information, and he will forward it to the committee. There is always an opportunity to change this at a later date.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER BALDWIN DAY reiterated that it would be helpful to understand the maintenance. She did know that the source funding is the 2023-2026 TIP, so she is wondering if these are funds being moved around a different way.

Hearing no objections, the motion passed.

CHAIR KEITH clarified that the direction to staff is to make the changes as suggested by the TAC, and reach out to the railroad for just an informational item.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER BALDWIN DAY noted that one of the non-motorized plan items was brought up at the last PC meeting was Item 6 on the brief, which was sort of a wholesale shift of projects from short-term to long-term to accommodate the Hyder Pedestrian Boulevard project. If a member has an alternate proposal for how they might accommodate the Hyder project without sort of wholesale removing these particular lines, would it be appropriate to send that information through staff to the rest of the committee in advance allowing everyone time to consider a forthcoming amendment. Or is that something a member would need to do in real time.

MR. JONGENELEN explained that it would not be a problem as long as there was no discussion in the email. It would just be for informational purposes only from staff for future discussion that the committee should be aware of and come to the meeting prepared. If staff receives it in time, it could be provided as part of the agenda and post it giving the public the opportunity to review it.

6. Informational Items - None

7. Committee Comments - None

8. Public Comments - None

9. Adjournment

Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m.