

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

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

**March 23, 2023
1:30 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
Wolfgang Junge	Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF)
Adam Trombley	Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Adeyemi Alimi	Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), Air Quality
Daniel Volland	MOA/Municipal Assembly
Meg Zaletel	MOA/Municipal Assembly

Also in attendance:

Name	Representing
Aaron Jongenelen	AMATS
Christine Schuette	AMATS
Rhiannon Brown	AMATS
Jon Cecil	AMATS
Chelsea Ward-Waller	AMATS
Joe Michel	Freight Advisory Committee/Alaska Trucking Association
James Starzec	DOT&PF
Todd Vanhove*	DOT&PF
Sean Baski	DOT&PF
Anna Bosin	DOT&PF
Randy Brown	MOA/Public Transportation Department
Christina Huber	DOT&PF
Robert Wertman	RSG
Travis Holmes	DOT&PF
Lindsey Hajduk	Spennard Community Council
Steven Rzepka	DOT&PF
Sean Holland	DOWL
Phil Olmstead	Nelson/Nygaard Consulting
Adam Moser	DOT&PF
Alex Read	DOT&PF
Carlos Rojas	DOT&PF
Steve Rafuse	MOA/Parks & Recreation
Brad Coy*	MOA/Traffic Engineering Department
Craig Lyon*	MOA/Planning Department
Kevin Cross**	MOA/Municipal Assembly

**AMATS Technical Advisory Committee Member*

***Designated Assembly Alternate*

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

CHAIR JUNGE called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. Mr. Trombley, Chief of Staff, represented Mayor Bronson. Mr. Alimi represented ADEC on behalf of Ms. Pokon. A quorum was established prior to the telephonic arrival of Assembly Member Zaletel at 1:33 p.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

MR. TROMBLEY moved to approve the agenda. MR. ALIMI seconded.

Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – February 23, 2023

ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND moved to approve the minutes. MR. ALIMI seconded.

Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved.

5. ACTION ITEMS

a. Operating Agreement – Membership Title Change

MR. JONGENELEN noted that the AMATS Operating Agreement was last updated in April 2019 and had changed the Air Quality Advisory Committee representative on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) with the Energy and Sustainability Manager for the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA). The person filling this role recently left MOA service and staff has been unable to receive an answer as to the status of this position. Staff is recommending the position be changed to a representative from MOA Parks and Recreation. AMATS has been working closely with Parks and Recreation (Steve Rafuse) on transportation projects and having a representative on the TAC would continue to enhance this working partnership. If the Operating Agreement change is approved, Mr. Rafuse would be filling this position and Taylor Keegan would serve as the alternate.

There were no comments.

MR. ALIMI moved to approve. ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND seconded.

Hearing no objections, this motion passed.

b. Critical Urban Freight Corridors

MR. CECIL informed the Committee that Critical Urban Freight Corridors (CUFCs) are priority freight segments that typically consist of first- or last-mile connector routes from high-volume freight corridors to freight-intensive land and key urban freight facilities, such as the Port of Alaska. They lie within an urbanized area or urban cluster as defined by the Census Bureau. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) established a mileage cap of 122.22 miles of CUFCs for Alaska. DOT&PF (in consultation with MPOs) can designate CUFCs on both state and local networks. To date, Alaska has designated 15 miles of urban corridors.

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

- (AT) With regard to A and C Streets, if these are added as freight corridors with one of the routes allowing access to the Port, then there will be a move to do a Complete Streets. If Complete Streets with freight corridors are considered, would that create further congestion in those locations because bike lanes will be added potentially increasing traffic incidents with bicyclists and pedestrians, since it is a freight corridor?
- (JC) *Not every street, in Complete Streets, will be designed the same way. Street corridors have different design elements that can be incorporated to accommodate freight, bicyclists, and pedestrians, so, yes, freight can be accommodated and designed for other users as well.*
- (AT) Adding A and C Streets makes sense, but would he need to specify A Street from Government Hill to 15th Avenue (hypothetically) as a freight corridor? How would he add A Street or would it be all of A Street because A Street ends up merging back into C Street?
- (JC) *When the Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) looked at that, A and C Streets do combine into C Street. The memorandum shows 5th Avenue to Tudor Road would be the segment included just for A Street. C Street was already included.*
- (AT) It is not a mandate to do Complete Streets on A and C Streets? When that area is reimagined for federal funding, planning will take into account that it is a freight corridor and a Complete Street will not work for that location?
- (JC) *That is a hypothetical question and is difficult to answer. The designers will take all users into consideration when designing those corridors.*

- (DV) Designation of a Critical Urban Freight Corridor would not preclude a Complete Streets reconstruction or rehabilitation? The process of reimagining safety and mobility throughout downtown is currently in the process. A Complete Streets study for A and C Streets on AMATS' Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) would ask the question of whether it is feasible or not to do. The PEL study in Fairview just held their first alternatives workshop on whether to cut and cover or reroute traffic around Fairview and go up through East Anchorage. The Planning and Traffic Engineering Departments will soon be starting the Downtown Streets Engineering study. One of the legislative priorities was a collaboration of both the MOA Administration and the Assembly was local control of 5th and 6th Streets. Is this designation, while it could be great in terms of getting different funding opportunities that would include safety projects, something that could not be undone in the future? Are A and C Streets premature on this list because things could really change in the next 5 years depending on how we utilize downtown streets like 5th and 6th.
- (JC) *The designation in the memorandum identifies certain segments that would be eligible for additional money from the federal government for freight-related activities on those segments. He could not speak to the other roadway streets, but it is all part of a bigger system. The mileages can change, but the Policy Committee could submit a memorandum to DOT&PF, noting that the Committee has reviewed and approved this and are requesting the segments be added to the list triggering future funding opportunities. Right now, there are no designated freight corridors recognized by the federal government. A PHFS (Primary Highway Freight System) does not apply in this case.*
- (DV) What is the time-sensitive nature of this? This is the first time some of us have heard of this, although, he did catch some of the discussion during the Technical Advisory Committee's meeting. In terms of highway freight program funds and FASTLANE grants, it might be helpful for him to know what that money can be used for.
- (JC) *Will provide the links to those documents and the Committee could request additional time to review this, but need to recognize that the Statewide Freight Plan - that the segments are from - was approved last December. AMATS is playing catch up to get Anchorage's designation recognized by the federal government. The Statewide Plan is a required document that has to be submitted to FHWA, as well as the freight plan component of that.*
- (WJ) The freight routes are already designated by typology in the Anchorage Bowl. Are we just codifying this on a federal level?
- (AJ) *This is a new designation from either FAST or MAP21. In terms of their designation whether arterial or a collector, that is separate and on its own. This is just saying, "This a critical freight route and is eligible for the additional funding that has come new as part of the federal legislation."*

(WJ) Are there strings attached to the federal funding mechanism that encumbers that corridor for future projects? Land and water conservation funds have been used in Chugach State Park and when DOT&PF executed projects there, the 'strings attached function' created a lot of effort in making any changes in the future. When looking at whether or not to categorize these and accept grant funds, the conditions of the grant funds can become a big deal, so it is important to go into this with eyes wide open. If you did try to pull, or change, or reconfigure, or reimagine it 10 years down the road; and you have obligated that corridor to those types of grant funds, you might find yourself hitting a wall. The grant obligations associated with the funding are every bit as important to understand.

(JC) *Did not have that information at hand, but will research and provide responses to the Committees' questions.*

CHAIR JUNGE opened the floor to public comments.

JOE MICHEL, Alaska Trucking Association/Freight Advisory Committee Chairman

CHAIR JUNGE asked Mr. Cecil to consider rewording the language to be inclusive of the couplet zone, within the C Street area.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL asked for clarification that, should the Committee table this, the document will be changed or just expect more information to be provided?

CHAIR JUNGE recommended making any changes or amendments to the document when it comes back before the Committee with the additional information and typology.

STEVE RAFUSE, MOA Parks & Recreation Department

MR. TROMBLEY moved to postpone to the April 27, 2023 Policy Committee meeting.
ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND seconded.

Hearing no objections, this motion passed.

c. Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) Nomination – Carlos Rojas

MR. CECIL noted that the AMATS Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) is the community forum for freight issues affecting the AMATS area. Specific functions of this group are to assist in promoting public and private participation in the freight planning process and to comment on freight planning issues. Members of this committee may serve up to three rotating three-year terms. Committee bylaws limit members to two consecutive terms.

AMATS staff and the Technical Advisory Committee recommended approval of the appointments of Carlos Rojas to the ADOT Commercial Vehicle Compliance seat and Dr. Helena Wisniewski to the academic seat of the FAC to the Policy Committee.

There were no comments.

MR. TROMBLEY moved to approve Carlos Rojas and Dr. Helena Wisniewski. ASSEMBLY MEMBER VOLLAND seconded.

Hearing no objections, this motion passed.

MR. JONGENELEN introduced Rhiannon Brown from the MOA Planning Department, noting that she will be assisting with AMATS meetings.

6. PROJECT AND PLAN UPDATES

a. AMATS Model Information

ROBERT WERTMAN with RSG provided a PowerPoint presentation.

There were no comments.

b. Destination UMED Study Update

PHIL OLMSTEAD with Nelson/Nygaard Consulting provided a PowerPoint presentation.

MR. TROMBLEY referred to what is known as either the Elmore Extension or Northern Extension and pointed out that, if that extension were to go through to Bragaw, statistics showed it would cut down on ambulance transport times to the hospital, which are life-saving seconds. He asked if there had been any discussion about the UMED Extension or the Elmore Extension going through APU (Alaska Pacific University) land to provide connectivity and open up additional APU land for development or student housing?

MR. OLMSTEAD replied, yes, the roadway extension has been part of the dialogue around this district for a long time. The UMED plan is not focused on roadway extension or increased capacity. There is not a specific recommendation about the extension in this study. A better opportunity for a project like that would be within the MTP.

CHAIR JUNGE added that it is out of scope. This is more of a study using existing mechanisms to improve levels of service for all modes.

Assembly Member Zaletel left the meeting at 2:31 p.m.

CHAIR JUNGE noted that the map for the study area includes a fairly significant portion of residential area and asked if there was a reason for it being extended to the east so far into that residential neighborhood?

MR. CECIL explained that the study boundaries are consistent with the *2016 UMED District Plan*.

In response to Chair Junge's additional question that all the community councils in the adjacent areas have been integrated with, MR. OLMSTEAD confirmed and noted that a number of the council members are on the UMED Advisory Committee. There are also community councils directly in the UMED study area.

MR. CECIL added that AMATS staff attended and provided information at the Transportation Fair.

MR. OLMSTEAD explained the reasoning for the virtual-only presentation in April is due to how they defined the scope. In October, it was held in-person and a third workshop will be towards the end of the project. The plan is to have held three workshops with the community with two of them in-person. The project's completion target is June or July 2023.

There were no public comments.

c. Transportation Systems Management & Operations Plan Update

MS. SCHUETTE presented the update.

There were no comments.

d. Public Input Platform - Introduction

MS. SCHUETTE briefed the Committee on the platform.

There were no comments.

7. GENERAL INFORMATION - None

8. COMMITTEE COMMENTS

CHAIR JUNGE informed the Committee that DOT&PF had a great meeting with the Fairview Community Council's Executive Steering Committee regarding the 'Reconnect the Neighborhoods Grant' they had received. DOT&PF will be partnering with that committee and the NeighborWorks organization making sure the outcomes of the PEL and the Reconnect Study are aligned. It may change how the PEL plays out in terms of schedule or coordination, but it will make for a much better outcome. With regard to Seward Highway/O'Malley to Dimond, the Commissioner's Office and the Governor received input from the Municipal Assembly and Legislators, so the Commissioner's Office will now be

conducting listening sessions and working groups. A message from Shannon McCarthy stated the following, "She wanted to share an update on the project with the public that our design staff is pushing hard and working on a couple of the challenges right now. We are taking a look at updating the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), but the project is currently funded after 2023, meaning it is not planning to be bid this fiscal year or anytime before October 1. While we are hoping to use advanced construction funds and our ability to do that is limited this year, it is likely the project will advertise late fall of 2023, at the earliest, for construction next year." He commented that DOT&PF is seeing an increase in bid costs: inflation is taking a toll on everything. Not as much local but more rural costs, so we may not have the legislative authority to move forward till later this fall. The advantage to this is that we typically get better prices when our projects advertise late fall or early calendar year. People are more competitive earlier in the year to stack up work for the following season. That said, we have some work to complete in regard to utilities. There is a main ACS (Alaska Communications) connection in that area that will require more coordination. Ms. McCarthy will be reaching out to legislators, community councils, AMATS' Policy Committee, and stakeholders to hold listening sessions to hear concerns and work together to move the project forward.

MR. JONGENELEN announced that Assembly Member Kevin Cross has been appointed by Assembly Chair LaFrance to serve as the designated assembly alternate.

MR. CROSS introduced himself and expressed his interested in being updated on Artillery Road and Glenn Highway improvements and intersections that continue to plague Eagle River.

CHAIR JUNGE asked Mr. Cross to provide questions via email and he will connect him with the project manager for an update.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

SEAN BASKI with DOT&PF noted that at the DOT&PF all-staff Commissioner meeting this morning, they launched the soft launch of APEX (Alaska Project Exchange), which is basically all of our construction projects that are going out in 2023. The soft launch provides the public an opportunity to view all DOT&PF construction projects coming up in 2023. The full launch will be completed during Work Zone Awareness Week and moving into construction. Comments will be reviewed in order to incorporate any changes prior to the official launch. It is a replacement for Alaska Navigator and has a lot of different information, including the GIS page - 511 will be completely revamped and Navigator will be removed.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MR. TROMBLEY moved to adjourn. MR. ALIMI seconded.

Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 2:46 p.m.