

Municipal Clerk's Office

**Approved**

Date: **October 10, 2023**

Submitted by: Chair of the Assembly at the  
Request of the Mayor

Prepared by: Planning Department, Office  
of Legislative Services

For reading: October 10, 2023

**ANCHORAGE, ALASKA**

**AR No. 2023-295(S)**

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE FORWARDED TO THE ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS (AMATS) POLICY COMMITTEE REGARDING THE 2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP) PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT.**

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**WHEREAS**, the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible for transportation planning for the Anchorage Bowl, Chugiak, and Eagle River, and in coordination with the Native Village of Eklutna, the federally recognized tribe within the AMATS planning area; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for the Anchorage Bowl, Chugiak, and Eagle River is a federally required document that enables continued eligibility to receive and program federal Highway Trust Fund dollars used to guide the development and implementation of needed transportation improvements for the AMATS planning area; and

**WHEREAS**, federal planning regulations require the AMATS MTP to address a long-term planning horizon at least twenty years into the future (to 2050) and be reviewed and updated every four years based on the latest available land use, population, employment, and housing data, to avoid a lapse in the MTP Air Quality Conformity Determination (AQCD) approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); and

**WHEREAS**, the current FHWA/FTA-approved AQCD for the AMATS 2040 MTP expires on August 25, 2024, and

**WHEREAS**, per Anchorage Municipal Code 2.10.070, the Assembly shall review and, by resolution, adopt any recommendations on the 2050 MTP within 45 days and is required to hold at least one public hearing on its recommendations prior to adopting the resolution and

**WHEREAS**, the 2050 MTP should reflect our community goals as expressed in our various adopted plans, such as the Climate Action Plan, the Comprehensive Plan, Vision Zero, and the Anchorage 2040 Land Use Plan, and

**WHEREAS**, the 2050 MTP in its entirety should also take into consideration the local impacts from all its goals, policies, projects, and actions given the current fiscal situation at the state and municipal levels and

**WHEREAS**, the Assembly shall transmit its recommendations to the AMATS Policy Committee prior to final approval of the 2050 MTP and transmission to FHWA and FTA; now, therefore,

**THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY RESOLVES:**

**Section 1.** The recommendations of the Anchorage Assembly, **Attachment A**~~[IF ANY]~~, related to the 2050 MTP Public Review Draft (August 2023) are hereby recommended for review and consideration by the AMATS Policy Committee prior to final action.

**Section 2.** This resolution shall be effective immediately upon passage and approval by the Assembly.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this 10th day of October, 2023.

ATTEST:



Chair



Municipal Clerk

Attachments: **Attachment A, Assembly Recommendations**

**Pg 2, Pg 15**

Goal 1 of the MTP (pg 15) is consistent with National Goals number 2 (pg 2) to maintain existing infrastructure in a state of good repair. However, it should be acknowledged that new capital projects, particularly large highway expansion projects, increase the need for future maintenance expense. Every extra mile of lane is a mile that must be maintained. Consider adding “Objective 1C. Prevent unnecessary future maintenance expense by being responsive when previous projections exceed realtime travel demand and population growth.”

**Pg 15**

“Objective 2B.” under Goal 2 should be bolded, for consistent formatting.

**Page 18 - Chapter 4 Intro**

Hyphenate “in-depth.” Also, consider that Active Transportation includes more than walking and bicycling. It also includes other Vulnerable Road User travel modalities: wheelchairs, electric kick scooters, skateboards, etc.

**Page 19**

All population growth projections are speculative. As we have seen with projects that are currently programmed on the MTP and TIP, such as the Seward Highway Dimond to O'Malley Boulevard Reconstruction Phase II, for instance, often the population reality is quite the opposite of what was once projected. Increasingly in the planning community, some are questioning the validity of future traffic and population projections. (See: [Why Traffic Studies Are 'Junk Science' — And Why We Rely On Them Anyway — Streetsblog USA](#)) Strong caveats should be made that these projections are speculative in nature and that the MTP should be a living document that is responsive when past projections do not prove accurate.

The MTP should also contemplate a model where population remains stagnant.

**Page 20**

The Anchorage Assembly appreciates the focus on health, equity, and diversity. The link between transportation and public health should remain a high priority of transportation planning in Anchorage.

**Page 21-22**

The Anchorage Assembly appreciates the focus on land use. We concur that the 2040 Land Use Plan calls for increased housing density over time, more mixing of uses, more travel choice, and promoting the use of public transportation.

**Page 23**

When was the last time the feasibility of rail as a commuter option to/from Eagle River was evaluated? Consider adding a study on commuter rail to Eagle River and within the Anchorage Bowl to the 2050 MTP.

**Page 26**

The various mapped items in Figures 11 and 12 are hard to discern from each other due to the monochromatic color coding.

**Page 27**

Typo in second paragraph. Should read “In addition, the MOA...” where it currently reads “In addition 0the MOA...”

**Page 29**

“Pedestrian infrastructure inventory data has not been updated” Is this meant to be addressed by TIP Plans 9: Nonmotorized Facilities Inventory and Mapping? The Assembly previously passed Resolution 2022-254(S), regarding Assembly-Recommended Changes to AMATS TIP, in response to community members’ desire to include adding “non-motorized easements, pedestrian ROW, and undeveloped ROW easements” to this inventory and to make this inventory accessible to the public via GIS mapping. This should be added, either by amendment to the project description, or as a separate project on the MTP. Lack of easy and transparent public access to public easement information, in particular, creates real conflict in the community.

**Page 29**

The Anchorage Assembly appreciates a good pun.

**Page 30**

Syntax error. Should read: “Passenger trips, revenue hours, and fleet miles decreased during the pandemic and started to increase again in 2021, while remaining significantly below 2019 levels.”

**Page 32**

The Anchorage Assembly appreciates the acknowledgment that poor winter maintenance is a barrier to active transportation and public transit utilization. That “all transit riders begin as active transportation users, either by walking or biking to a stop” is a particularly salient point.

Poor winter maintenance is also a barrier to healthcare, as was discussed in-depth at a meeting of the Anchorage Assembly’s Health Policy Committee after a heavy snowfall in 2022. If residents can’t use active transportation infrastructure to get to public transit, they may not be able to keep their medical appointments or pick up their medications. Additionally, poor winter maintenance that causes temporary shutdowns of services like AnchorRIDES jeopardize the Municipality’s ADA compliance obligations.

Consider adding language about the importance of winter maintenance to healthcare access under this section or in the discussion about health and equity that starts on page 20.

**Page 44**

In Table 11, please also include the “Trend” Land Use alternative. The importance of the links

between housing density, infrastructure/transportation costs, and preferred modes of travel cannot be understated. Transportation planning is relevant to discussions in other areas of planning, such as residential zoning. Policymakers and planners alike should take a holistic view, and these VisionEval models provide helpful scenarios.

The Table could also make it more clear that a reduction in VMT is the desired goal. A notation of “+++” could lead the viewer to believe that a scenario was increasing VMT.

#### Page 47

It is stated that the “All Projects” preferred alternative “prioritizes active transportation.” How? This seems to be in direct conflict with Table 11, which indicates less support for bicycling and no change in walking. Dense Land Use appears to be the only scenario that supports all goals and should therefore be reconsidered as the preferred alternative or an integral part of the preferred alternative.

#### Page 53

It is stated that the “Projects from the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and 2023 Statewide Improvement Program (STIP) are included under short term funding.” The MTP should reflect that STIP projects are scored by the MTP criteria and prioritized accordingly.

#### Page 54

Why is O’Malley Road Construction listed first, in nonnumerical order?

Add a reconnaissance study for Turnagain Street to evaluate options for potential Complete Streets improvements.

Add a project to improve the Glenn Highway interchanges at Hiland Road and Artillery Road to provide safer and more efficient movements in the Eagle River area.

#### Page 57

Delete Project TIP NHS 1: Seward Highway O’Malley Road to Dimond Boulevard Reconstruction Phase II from the 2050 MTP. This project is exorbitantly expensive and increases future maintenance costs. It is no longer justified as population and travel demand projections have proven inaccurate over time. It also runs counter to Goal 6, Objective 6B: “minimize adverse impacts on existing neighborhoods resulting from transportation projects; when impacts are unavoidable, equitably distribute them to avoid disproportionate impacts to vulnerable populations.” In an era of transportation planning where various entities in Anchorage and Alaska are applying for federal grants to reconnect communities, it is unconscionable that a highway expansion project which would divide and divert increased traffic through a lower income neighborhood and remove recreational opportunities like soccer fields would be prioritized in the AMATS area.

Please provide to the Anchorage Assembly, and to the public, the anticipated future maintenance costs of this project.

This funding of \$105 million should instead be reprogrammed, in whole or in part, to design and construction of the Seward to Glenn Highway road rehabilitation (Gambell/Ingra corridor) upon

completion of the Seward to Glenn Connection PEL Study and Reconnecting Fairview projects.

**Page 62**

If possible, consider changing acronym convention for Active Transportation projects from “NMO” to “AT” for consistency.

**Page 63**

Project TIP Plans 8 - Consider amending the language of the project description, including title, to make it clear that multi-use pathways and trails are not purely recreational. Multi-use pathways and trails are also used as means of safely commuting to destinations via active transportation. Our trail system is a vital part of our non-motorized transportation network.

**Page 72**

The Anchorage Assembly strongly supports projects TRN100, TRN102, and TRN103 as efforts to provide a greater level of service for public transit.

The Anchorage Assembly strongly supports projects TRN101 and TRN104 to expand public transit service routes, and requests that TRN101 to create a new route on 36<sup>th</sup> Ave. be prioritized as much as fiscally possible.



# MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

## Assembly Information Memorandum

No. AIM 200-2023

Meeting Date: October 10, 2023

**From: ASSEMBLY MEMBER DANIEL VOLLAND**

**Subject: AR 2023-295(S): A RESOLUTION ADOPTING RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE FORWARDED TO THE ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS (AMATS) POLICY COMMITTEE REGARDING THE 2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP) PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT.**

For the Assembly's consideration, please see selected comments received by Assembly Members from constituent groups and elected officials commenting on the draft 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, including:

- Bike Anchorage
- Midtown Community Council
- South Addition Community Council
- Turnagain Community Council
- Representative Fields
- Senator Tobin

A copy of these comments have been published on the Assembly website:  
[https://www.muni.org/Departments/Assembly/SiteAssets/Pages/default/2023-1010\\_AIM\\_AR\\_2023-295S\\_Constituent\\_Comments.pdf](https://www.muni.org/Departments/Assembly/SiteAssets/Pages/default/2023-1010_AIM_AR_2023-295S_Constituent_Comments.pdf)

Prepared by: Legislative Services Office

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