

AMATS TIP Criteria Update Guidebook



WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

AMATS is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Anchorage Bowl and Chugiak-Eagle River Areas and is the decision authority for how a portion of Alaska Federal transportation dollars are spent on capital transportation improvement projects within the MPO boundary. The MPO is made up of representatives from the State of Alaska and the Municipality of Anchorage and funds a variety of roadway, bike, pedestrian, and transit projects through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP criteria help to select projects that meet the MPO's goals and vision of a vibrant transportation system.

Projects are nominated and then scored based on the criteria. These scores help to show which projects best address the MPO goals established in the AMATS Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) – Preserve the Existing System, Improve Safety, Improve Travel Condition, Support the Economy, Promote Environmental Sustainability, and Quality Decision-Making. These projects are also important for helping to address the federally required National Goals and Planning Factors.

WHY ARE THEY BEING UPDATED?

The TIP criteria are periodically updated to reflect the current goals of the MPO, the Federal requirements, the State of Alaska goals, the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) goals, and the nationwide changes that happen regarding transportation. The 2021 TIP criteria update incorporates where possible the MOA 2040 Land Use Plan update, the AMATS Non-motorized Plan update, the AMATS Spenard Corridor Plan, AMATS Complete Street Policy, and the Anchorage Climate Action Plan.

HIGHLIGHTS OF NEW CRITERIA

The following section review some of the major changes being made with this criteria update.

Project Type:

Past TIPs have used separate criteria for scoring Roadway and Non-motorized projects. With this update AMATS wanted to better show the integral relationship between projects while still recognizing the funding separation that exists for projects. The update uses one set of criteria that can be applied to either a Complete Street/Major Infrastructure (Corridor) project or a Bicycle/Pedestrian project. This allows the criteria to be more uniform and easier to use. Some criteria will only apply to a specific type of project, i.e a criterion might only apply to a corridor project and not a bicycle/pedestrian project, but the scoring accounts for this difference.

Scoring:

Overall the scoring for projects is much simpler than it has been in the past. Gone is the multiplication of scores or the mass confusion on how to score a project. The maximum score a project can receive, regardless of type, is 100. This allows for a much easier understanding of what a project score means compared to other projects. Projects do have bonus points they can receive, but the total points possible will never be over 100. Additionally, projects can receive a penalty to a score if it will have a negative impact.

CATEGORIES

Tables 1-7 below show a breakdown of the categories, criteria, and max points possible.

Category Overall	Roadway Max Points	Bike/Ped Max Points
Safety	20	20
Mobility	20	20
Economic	20	20
Environment	20	20
Preservation	20	20
Total Points	100	100

Table 1: Maximum Points Possible for Each Category

Category Overall	# of Criteria Roadway	# of Criteria Bike/Ped
Safety	5	4
Mobility	5	4
Economic	4	3
Environment	5	4
Preservation	6	5

Table 2: # of Criteria for Each Category

Safety	Criteria – Roadway	Criteria – Bike/Ped
Truck Safety	4	4
Bike Safety	5	5
Ped Safety	5	7
Vehicular Safety	4	4
Emergency Response	2	N/A
Total	20	20

Table 3: Maximum Points Possible for Safety Category

Mobility	Criteria - Roadway	Criteria – Bike/Ped
Reduces Vehicle Congestion	4	4
Improves Truck Movement	4	3
Improves Bicycle Network	4	6
Improved Pedestrian Network	4	7
Reduces Transit Vehicle Delay	4	N/A
Total	20	20

Table 4: Maximum Points Possible for Mobility Category

Economic	Criteria - Roadway	Criteria – Bike/Ped
Special Land Use	6	6
Land Uses	4	8
Health	6	6
Freight System	4	N/A
Total	20	20

Table 5: Maximum Points Possible for Economic Category

Environment	Criteria - Roadway	Criteria – Bike/Ped
Stormwater	3	N/A
Air Quality	6	9
VMT	4	4
Climate Action Plan	4	4
Impacts	3	3
Total	20	20

Table 6: Maximum Points Possible for Environment Category

Preservation	Criteria - Roadway	Criteria – Bike/Ped
Roadway Pavement	6	N/A
Sidewalk	3	8
Traffic Signal	3	2
Utilities	3	3
Resiliency	3	3
Transit Stop	2	4
Total	20	20

Table 7: Maximum Points Possible for Preservation Category

Criteria Categories:

Safety

The safety criteria were updated to do the following:

- Focus projects on areas of highest safety concern while ensuring the projects help to address the concerns within the project area.
- Work on reducing conflicts between modes by separating them.
- Helping to improve Emergency response time.
- Project can receive bonus points for focusing on HSIP or Vision Zero areas.

Mobility

AMATS goal for mobility is to help increase the accessibility of all modes to improve travel reliability and reduce congestion. This is a new category that is a combination of multiple old criteria such as connectivity, multi-modal characteristics, and reduces congestion. The mobility criteria do the following:

- Emphasis the need for projects to incorporate multi-modal improvements.
- Recognize that congestion reduction can be incorporated into projects not as the sole focus, but an important element.
- Address the importance of freight while awarding bonus points for projects that fall on designated freight routes versus other roadways.
- Projects can receive bonus points for focusing on Environmental Justice (EJ) concentrated areas and providing positive improvements.
- Projects can lose points for negatively impacting EJ populations.

Economic

AMATS goal for economics is to develop a transportation system that support a thriving, sustainable, and broad-based economy while emphasizing the importance of health.

- Helps to integrate land use with transportation projects and decision making with the inclusion of the special land use features from the 2040 Land Use Plan.
- Awarding points to projects that connect to critical infrastructure such as police, fire and rescue, other emergency services, schools, and community centers help with the resiliency of the transportation system. Sustainability is supported with the criteria that awards points for connecting to Parks, Natural Areas, or Other Open Space.
- Awarding projects that can help with promoting and enabling a healthy lifestyle and improving the overall health of the community.
- Recognizing the importance of freight for the economy.
- Projects can lose points for negatively impacting EJ populations.

Environment

Consideration for the impacts to the environment have been part of the TIP criteria for many iterations as individual criteria. This update pulls them all together and adds a few new criteria, such as VMT and the Climate Action Plan implementation.

- Air Quality has always been a requirement for the TIP, but this updated want to link air quality with health more clearly. The air quality criteria draw upon the health equity work done as part of the AMATS non-motorized update and uses that to help identify the areas most vulnerable to air quality degradation. Projects now will have to show how they are helping improve air quality in these areas.
- Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is a way for AMATS to highlight projects that are helping to reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions. At this time AMATS is not prepare for the robust data gathering and modeling needed to account for GHG from the transportation system and VMT reduction is a similar way to capture that for now.
- The MOA Climate Action Plan is another way that AMATS is helping to reduce GHG.
- Projects can lose points for worsening air quality in healthy equity sensitive areas, increasing VMT, and having a significant impact to environmentally sensitive areas.

Preservation

AMATS goal for preservation is to focus on maintaining the system in a state of good repair. The updated criteria are like previous versions, but the language has been updated to reflect current preservation performance measures. There are a few new criteria for signals, utilities, and transit stop improvements.