

**ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION
FREIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MS TEAMS Online
Anchorage, Alaska**

**May 12, 2021
3:00 PM**

Those in attendance were:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>REPRESENTING</u>
Joe Michel	ATA
Steve Ribuffo	Port of Alaska
Dan Smith	MSC/ADOT&PF
Doug Thompson	Holland America-Princess
Richard Heath	UPS
Mike Thrasher	TOTE/OCEAN
Brian Lindamood	ARC
Robert Sherrill	USAF, DLA
Jimmy Doyle	Weaver Bros.

Excused:

Absent: Teri Lindseth, TSAIA, Darren Prokop, UAA

Other Participants:

Craig Lyon, AMATS
Jon Cecil, AMATS
Christine Schuette, AMATS
Christine Huber, DOT/PF
Marc Frutiger, R&M
James Starzec, DOT/PF
Van Lee, R&M
Jon Scudder, CAC
Dave Post, DOT/PF
Shawn Gardner, DOT/PF
Tim Grier, R&M
Katharine Hensley, DOT/PF

1. CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR MICHEL called the online meeting being conducted via MS Teams to

order at 3:00 PM. A quorum was established.

2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT. Mr. MICHEL read the public involvement message. A recording will be available of the meeting along with a sign in sheet.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approval moved for agenda by MR RIBUFFO; seconded by MR. HEATH.
Agenda approved unanimously.

4. MINUTES – MR. HEATH moved to approve, and MR. THOMPSON seconded a motion to approve the February 10, 2021 meeting minutes.
Minutes approved unanimously.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

- a. Alyeska Hwy/Seward Highway Intersection Project – R&M Consultants** Ms. Van Le introduced the primary speaker, Mr. Marc Frutiger with R&M. [Mr. Craig Lyon briefly interjected and noted that there are certain limitations on staff participation on this project which is located outside of the AMATS’ boundary due to federal government requirements.] Mr. Frutiger shared his screen on MS Teams. Thanked the committee members for asking R&M to present. Introduced Project Team members (DOT/PF, R&M Consultants, Inc. Kinney Engineering, and Michael Baker Int’l). Provided overview of 10 alternatives for intersection improvements at Seward Hwy/Alyeska Hwy (Girdwood). Primary objective is to address safety concerns related to this intersection. The goal is to select 5 alternatives and develop a Preferred Alternative that could be moved forward through the NEPA process (there are no construction dollars associated with this project at this time).

R&M has developed 11 Conceptual Alternatives. Alt #1 is the No Build Alternative which will be used to compare against the preferred or action alternative. Alt #2 would signalize the existing intersection. Alt #3 includes an improved signalized intersection, with realignment of Alyeska Highway. Alt #4 is a continuous flow intersection aka displaced left turn (not present in AK today; showed

video on YouTube), Alt #5 would have a continuous Green signal intersection (same as #3 with signal that would stop Anchorage and Alyeska traffic but not for Seward traffic going North), Alt #6 is a separate interchange and divided highway (similar to “C” Street and O’Malley Road), Alt #7 is a trumpet interchange with a bridge across the Seward Hwy, Alt #8 includes a large roundabout on Seward Highway, Alt #9 is a tight diamond interchange (all left turns would be grade separated and elevated over Seward Hwy), Alt #10 is a frontage road (not quite correct terminology) so that left turns off Seward Highway would not conflict with left turns from Alyeska Highway, Alt #11 is diamond interchange (phase 2 of Alt. #6) at full buildout of interchange. Next step is to evaluate each of the alternatives and distill them down to 5 alternatives which would then go into a more detailed analysis. Noted the project schedule with a gig milestone at the PZC hearing in October. Appreciated opportunity to present today.

MR. MICHEL offered opportunity for questions from FAC members.

MR. DOYLE had general questions related to how Alt #6 relates to Alt #11, and why not go with Alt #11 first? Response from Mr. Frutiger: This is a unique project w/50-year time horizon. Alt #6 could be built with anticipated traffic in 20 years and could go with 50-year traffic projections. Mr. DOYLE expressed his concerns regarding the roundabout. There are none in Alaska with highway speeds. Even with slower traffic there are no roundabouts on a main highway. Least favored alternative. Most important goal is safety when improving a road.

MR. MICHEL noted his concerns about height issues related to bridges.

MR. HEATH expressed agreement with MR. DOYLE about the preferred alternative. Running doubles on highway speed with roundabout drops to the bottom of his list.

MR. THOMPSON had a question about the budget for the various alternatives. Response: There is some State funding

for design, but no federal money for construction is currently available. When the preferred alternative is identified the DOT/PF will have to see how the project prioritizes with the STIP.

MR. MICHEL asked about response from Girdwood and viewsheds? The trumpet alternative and continuous flow look like they would be good options. Ms. Le responded that an open house was held in Girdwood in April and R&M followed up with residents, Girdwood Fire and Response, and GBOS (Girdwood Board of Supervisors). Viewshed is a criterion to evaluate alternatives and it may not impact negatively. Safety is #1. Haven't weighed evaluation scoring, no costs or budget yet.

With no further questions for the consultant team MR. MICHEL thanked R&M for their presentation. Urged Committee members to send him any questions.

MR. HEATH asked what happens if there is an accident on Alt. #6? Mr. Frutiger responded. Concerned about a crash situation will have lengthy delays. Mr. Frutiger said its difficult to say right now but acknowledged the concern. This will be a consideration about how to respond to crash at the Glacier Creek Bridge. Noted this is valuable input.

Mr. Frutiger asked if there were any comments unfavorable to roundabout but what about signals that would bring traffic to a complete stop. MR. DOYLE said three items for safety: 1) N/S unimpeded traffic; 2) make sure gas station traffic has a controlled way to exist Mall; and 3) people making a left turn to Alyeska Highway will stop traffic and cause delays.

Ms. Huber noted that MR. HEATH and MR. DOYLE expressed that the roundabout was their least favored alternative but what goes to the top of the list? MR. HEATH replied that he is more favorable to the trumpet design with continuous flow of traffic. MR. DOYLE said a bridge needs to be at least 16' tall at minimum to accommodate N/S traffic; he liked the overpass idea and extending alternatives out to the future buildout over next 50-year timeframe (Alts #6, #7,

#9, and #11). Mr. Frutiger stated that the full buildout is an evaluation consideration.

No public comments.

Ms. Le will forward the PPT to AMATS freight mobility coordinator.

- b. Freight Committee Feedback** – MR. MICHEL mentioned email from Mr. Cecil about DOT/PF projects. MR. MICHEL questioned the criteria/parameters and asked for clarification. Mr. Lyon explained the process of developing the latest set of TIP Criteria to score and rank projects. The process starts with AMATS staff, then agency folks chime in, then they go to the AMATS Technical and Policy committees for their review, and then releases for a 30-day Public Review. After comments they go to the committees for approval. After that is completed there will be nominations for inclusion in the TIP. STIP projects are usually on the NHS (projects and funding that State controls). AMATS receives a smaller funding allocation.

MR. MICHEL acknowledged Mr. Starzec with DOT/PF if there were any hiccups between the State and AMATS regarding the TIP Criteria? Mr. Starzec replied that DOT/PF has members who sit on the Technical and Policy Committees. When TIP Criteria is reviewed there is a lot of coordination between DOT/PF and AMATS staff. DOT/PF wanted to give the FAC a heads up about development of the updated TIP Criteria. DOT/PF wants the FAC to be aware of the public comment period to be able to put a freight focus for the TIP. DOT/PF Project list prepared by Mr. Post illustrates the span of projects in the Anchorage Bowl, noted that the italicized projects have impact on freight mobility and congestion issues, but there are not a lot of them. DOT/PF is mandated to maintain infrastructure for commerce, suggested how to reflect that priority for freight. Ensure that the FAC has a role in that part of the planning process.

Mr. Post noted that the project list was brought forward so

that FAC can be used as an advisory committee. Out of 58 TIP points there are three points relate to freight and three focus on safety. Mr. Post believes there may be an imbalance of priorities given that 26 points are for Livability factors. Concern maybe that the criteria as written may not be as representative of the interests of the Freight Advisory Committee. It's important for FAC to weigh in on this. In past, AMATS funded the C Street Extension, Dowling Road extension, and OSH projects were all AMATS funded projects that all had significant and dramatic impacts on the transportation system. Concerned that focus is on things that are not really addressing regional mobility needs and ignoring need for more funding for additional highway projects. Acknowledged the new role of FAC on State Freight Advisory Committee. NHS/STIP projects will be completed along with SH/O'Malley this year. SH/Dowling will be finished this year. Otherwise, there is not much else on the shelf that is coming up. There is a lack of depth for these kinds of projects. Concerned about this on both the State and AMATS levels. Question to Mr. Lyon about whether the FAC will be given opportunity to comment on the TIP or will it be when they next meet (August 2021). Mr. Lyon responded to Mr. Post that all AMATS committees will be given an opportunity to comment on the new TIP Criteria as has been past practice. Noted that FAC's quarterly meetings is set up that way because of the committee members' busy work schedules. The FAC can have special meetings especially via MS TEAMS during the public comment period. Mr. Lyon noted that AMATS conducted an inhouse sampling of road projects using the old criteria and new criteria and discovered are they were very few deviations. The new criteria will continue to rank road projects within AMATS boundary. The State has their own federal allocation and AMATS has theirs as well. Most funds from AMATS already go to DOT/PF owned facilities because MOA can bond for their own projects. Mr. Lyon is happy to meet anyone who asks to meet on the new TIP Criteria. MR. MICHEL acknowledged that Mr. Lyon is always receptive and responsive to his questions.

MR. MICHEL noted under "Other Projects" the award of a contract for the Ocean Dock Road Reconnaissance study and

is looking forward to being able to make comments to the engineering firm about that project. Mr. Lyon noted that TIP criteria has been routed to agency staff as an inhouse staff review document prior to the launch for Public Review, under review internally, once Policy Committee releases the Criteria AMATS can schedule a meeting to review.

Other ideas for next quarterly meeting? None heard.

- c. **Expected Actions of Freight Advisory Committee for 2021**– See below.

6. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

- a. **AK Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan and Freight Plan (Alaska Moves 2050)** - MR. MICHEL noted prior consultant and DOT/PF meeting with FAC. FAC will need to pay attention as it's a two-year project to ensure that freight is represented in the statewide long-range freight plan. There may be a need for an “all hands-on deck” meeting to make the voices of the FAC heard. MR. RIBUFFO said that he sits on the LRTP and Freight Plan planning group and appreciates the opportunity to weigh in, and he is anxious to continue with the process to see where it ends up.

- 7. COMMITTEE COMMENTS.** There were no comments from committee members.

- 8. UPCOMING MEETINGS.** Mr. Cecil noted the upcoming milestones for the LRTP: May 17 to June 7 there is a Virtual Hosted Meeting. Virtual presentations to existing communities will be on June 2nd. The Statewide FAC Meeting June 3rd; and Next STAC Meeting is June 9th. Upcoming AMATS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting and AMATS Policy Committee (PC) meetings for the month of May have been cancelled.

- 9. ADJOURNMENT** – Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.