

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

**4700 Elmore Road
Anchorage, Alaska**

**June 24, 2021
1:30 PM**

Due to COVID-19, this meeting was conducted virtually.

Policy Committee Members Present:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Wolfgang Junge	Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF)
Chris Schutte	Executive Director, MOA Economic & Community Development
Meg Zaletel	MOA/Municipal Assembly
John Weddleton	MOA/Municipal Assembly
Emma Pokon	Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), Air Quality

Also in attendance:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Craig Lyon	MOA/Planning Department
Aaron Jongenelen	MOA/Planning Department
Jim Amundsen	DOT&PF
James Starzec	DOT&PF
Robespierre Howard	DOT&PF
Todd Vanhove*	DOT&PF
Brad Coy	DOWL
Cindy Heil*	ADEC

**AMATS Technical Advisory Committee Member*

***Designated Assembly Alternate*

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

CHAIR JUNGE called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. Chris Schutte, Executive Director, MOA Economic and Community Development, represented Acting Mayor Austin Quinn-Davidson. A quorum was established.

2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

CRAIG LYON 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. As a result of the virtual meetings, the public has been asked to submit an email request providing their name, phone number, and agenda item to AMATS by 6:30 p.m. the day prior to the meeting, but can also participate via Teams and provide testimony when the item is opened to the public for comments.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MR. SCHUTTE moved to approve the agenda. MS. ZALETEL seconded.

Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – April 22, 2021

MR. SCHUTTE moved to approve the minutes. MS. ZALETEL seconded.

Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved.

5. ACTION ITEMS**a. 2022 Safety Target Recommendations****BACKGROUND:**

Safety Performance Management (Safety PM) is part of the overall Transportation Performance Management (TPM) program, which (Federal Highway Administration) FHWA defines as a strategic approach that uses system information to make investment and policy decisions to achieve national performance goals. The Safety PM Final Rule supports the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), as it establishes safety performance measure requirements for the purpose of carrying out the HSIP and to assess fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. States are required by 23 CFR 490, Subpart B, to establish and submit to FHWA annual targets for five safety performance measures. Targets are expressed as five-year rolling averages. The targets are applicable to all public roads in Alaska. DOT&PF coordinated with AMATS on the establishment of targets and MPOs must inform DOT&PF no later than 180 days after the HSIP annual report is submitted whether they will support state targets or set their own targets. MPOs have two options when setting their own targets for each measure:

- 1. Establish a numerical target for each performance measure specific to the MPO planning area.*
- 2. Agree to support the State DOT target.*

MR. LYON informed the Committee that these performance measures are required to be revisited every year. AMATS is recommending supporting the State's targets, as we have done in the past, because the State tracks and collects the data on these safety measures. Both he and the Municipal Traffic Engineering Department assist the State in setting these targets. The targets increased slightly in 2020, but for the most part they are trending downwards.

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

- (CS) Are the State's targets, that we mimic, statewide targets or are they specific to the MPO?

- (JA) *They are statewide targets.*
- (CS) With regard to the MPO, have we always just adopted the State's targets or have there been period where we have diverged?
- (CL) *AMATS has always supported the State's targets because they collect the data and we do not have the staff or the ability to collect that data. Since we are also involved in helping set the State's measures, we are confident these measures are adequate for our safety measures.*
- (CS) What is the outcome or penalty for missing targets?
- (CL) *There are some penalties for the State should they not meet their target measures, but there are no penalties for the MPO.*
- (JA) *If the State does not meet their targets, then the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Region 9 requires us to increase our Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) percentages for the next year, which is the specific funding targeting improving safety.*
- (JW) What are these used for within the whole process? As we move forward in writing an LRTP that comes from the Municipal Planning Department, he thinks having safety measures included would be important, so instead of using the State's numbers, we would have data that is more specific to Anchorage. What would be the benefits or perils in doing that?
- (CL) *During the TIP Criteria work session held earlier today, we rearranged things in order to put the most points towards the projects related to safety. We do not yet have language included that addresses specific safety measures, but they are designed to implore us to continue to concentrate on projects that would improve safety in our area and reduce serious injuries and fatalities.*
- (JA) *He added that the State has a comprehensive committee group that regularly goes through each of the targets and the actual accident data each year to refocus ensuring we are putting our HSIP money where it best reduces targets that are observed going in the wrong direction.*
- (CL) *When the State group meets to set these performance targets, it is an in-depth meeting where everything in the plan is reviewed and determined to still be relevant, and what FAST (in Fairbanks) and AMATS can do to help. Usually, it is in the area of public awareness campaigns and is a pretty extensive process that tracks back to these measures.*
- (MZ) Do other jurisdictions that participate in setting these safety measures have plans like VisionZero and other plans that are driving their local safety goals?
- (CL) *Not aware of Fairbanks having a VisionZero plan.*

- (MZ) There is a local VisionZero plan that drives our local safety metrics within our AMATS region and it is not being reflected here if that is something that is not being done throughout the other communities. There is a concern as to how these measures apply to Anchorage when it has a VisionZero plan.
- (CS) What are the additional obligations or responsibilities that, potentially, would come if AMATS chose to set its own targets or performance measures?
- (CL) *We would just need to track them meaning we would have to have the ability to track those measures shown inside the AMATS area and report the data to FHWA. We do not currently have that data in easy format, and we do not have the staff to do it, which is why we have not been able to take on that task yet.*
- (CS) Through VisionZero there was extensive data from the Anchorage Police and Fire Departments that fed into the data model. Are those data sources adequate to reveal these performance measures?
- (CL) *He would have to check with the Traffic Engineering Department as they are responsible for the data collection. He did not know if they track all the necessary numbers. This was asked when we first had to start documenting, but at that time we were told they did not track all these numbers in Anchorage.*
- (CS) That would be interesting to know because, while it does not line up perfectly, he knows that the collision data that was shared through the VisionZero work that Kittelson and Associates did was generally aligned. The data sources for that work were available through APD, AFD, and the State. He thinks it is interesting because of all the points that Assembly Member Weddleton and Ms. Zaletel raised. Within the MPO, there are different conditions than there are statewide. At some point, it seems there is some benefit to recognizing the uniqueness of the Anchorage MPO and having corresponding performance measures.
- (WJ) From the Department of Transportation's perspective, it would not hurt to replace the Traffic Engineers lost over the last year towards that effort as well.

There were no public comments.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON moved to approve. MR. SCHUTTE seconded.

Hearing no objections, this motion passed.

b. Committee By-laws Update

BACKGROUND:

The AMATS Policy Committee voted on March 25, 2021 to change the name of the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Community Advisory Committee (CAC). Additionally, AMATS

staff proposes standardizing the language in all three subordinate committee by-laws. Section By-laws are to follow this order:

- I. Preamble
- II. The Committee
 1. Membership
 2. Membership Terms
 3. Meetings
 4. Quorum & Attendance
 5. Voting
 6. Conflict of Interest
- III. Officers
 1. Chair & Vice Chair
 2. Elections
- IV. Amendments to the by-laws
- V. Parliamentary Procedure

In addition, AMATS staff proposed changing the term limit of the CAC and Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) from two to three years to match the Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) terms. AMATS staff also proposed the addition of a telephonic meetings clause under the Meetings section. This clause states that meetings may take place by means of a telephonic conference call, or other form of electronic virtual communication.

MR. LYON briefed the Committee on the above-noted Operating Agreement changes and proposals. He pointed out that it has been challenging to obtain participation with meetings being held during the middle of the day.

There were no comments.

MS. ZALETEL moved to approve. ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON seconded.

Hearing no objections, this motion passed.

6. Project and Plan Updates - None

7. General Information

a. Update Public Involvement Plan Revision – Virtual Public Involvement

MR. LYON presented the revision that would possibly create a hybrid meeting involving both virtual and in-person participation.

MR. SCHUTTE mentioned that telephonic meetings for the Citizens Advisory Committee were just addressed in the previous agenda item. If they have not already been introduced, Anchorage will be experiencing some law changes soon that will expand the definition of attendance to allow for virtual attendance so that we can reflect the new normal in the world, which is hybrid. At some point it would be beneficial to dive into this topic and have

the operating procedures and the Public Involvement Plan reflect what is happening across the nation as businesses, schools and others look at all the different ways in which they can increase the available options for participation in the public process.

CHAIR JUNGE commented that the city has new administration and he would prefer, when making any substantive changes, to have the new administration weigh-in on where it sees the future going. After speaking with Mr. Bronson, he was informed that Mr. Bronson highly favors enhancing the teleworking options for city employees and expected that to be echoed in the AMATS Public Involvement Plan. It would behoove us to take into account the new Mayor's input before we finalize any actions and ensure we have the next administration's fingerprints on this as we move forward over the next three years.

MS. ZALETEL likes the idea of exploring a hybrid approach and particularly something that might be brought forward in September. She has been working with her community councils, especially those who are better transportation focused, to help them be more involved with AMATS and more aware of what is happening before it happens. As we have seen with community council participation, either having a hybrid or electronic approach given the Policy Committee's and other AMATS committee meeting schedules would make it more accessible to those that have to work. She did not foresee a change needed at this moment, but would definitely like to keep, at least, the hybrid option on the table to increase public participation as much as possible.

In response to Chair Junge's question regarding participating by phone, MR. LYON explained that AMATS had always provided both the public and committee members the option to call in when the meetings were being held in-person.

CHAIR JUNGE requested adding a caveat (in pencil) that AMATS' staff needs to be present if there is going to be an in-person meeting event, such as the TAC or PC. Reason being is that there is so much coordination, both technical and otherwise, to setting up a meeting and having it operate efficiently.

MR. SCHUTTE pointed out that what is interesting about this conversation that has taken place over the past year is that the platform of available communication tools for public involvement and just human-to-human interaction has changed so much. This idea of providing a platform that can share and capture information, such as Teams or Zoom, is just so appealing from a public involvement perspective. In addition to AMATS, there has been a lot of public involvement work done over the past year related to projects, not only in the transportation planning world, but in the zoning world as well. We are finding that this is a tool that is infinitely more powerful than just people being present in a room and jotting notes on a giant white board. For the benefit of all of us doing what we do for the MPO, having a sweep of options available is really in our best interest. He appreciated the encouragement on this topic and is looking forward to seeing what the MPO is going to do for public engagement in the future.

CHAIR JUNGE agreed and added that the key will be in the coordination of all these different methodologies of involvement with a phone call versus Teams, Zoom or Webex, versus in-person.

MR. LYON noted that a member of their staff, Christine Schuette, is the best at holding these meetings using the existing programs and has been researching other programs that might work better.

MS. ZALETEL shared that having moved back to the pre-Covid experience with a committee that receives a lot of interest, has received a lot of resistance and disappointment in not being able to watch the committee meetings remotely. The recording and attending in-person allow a call-in option for participants, but not for the public. It has become an expectation that with this technology the public should be able to access and view the agenda and the items at the time they are being addressed. Having the final recording posted on a website to listen to later does not seem to be sufficient any longer. The Assembly has been experiencing this now that they have moved back into their typical work sessions and meetings.

MR. LYON mentioned that having all of our meetings in the Assembly Chambers would be the easiest because it is already wired for audio and video, but that is not practical for our timeframes. We are looking into camera or best method options to get our message across to the public and making the meetings as transparent as we would like them to be.

MS. ZALETEL added that cameras, in terms of the GCI access, are not available for Assembly meetings, and they have had a difficult time getting Facebook or other camera systems to adequately broadcast both sound and video at the same time in the Assembly Chambers.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON suggested coordinating with Desiree in the Clerk's Office as she has also been researching these options and might have some ideas.

CHAIR JUNGE added that, having experienced this with DOT&PF, video requires bandwidth. People did not turn on their cameras during Teams meetings because of bandwidth usage concerns. He did not know if that would be an issue with AMATS moving forward, but it is something to be aware of.

MS. HEIL asked how much public participation had AMATS received during the last year for both the TAC and PC meetings versus in-person public participation for previous years. It would be nice to know if there was an increase in participation to help inform the development of the Public Participation Plan. Just because access was made available does not mean there was actual participation.

MR. LYON replied that Ms. Schuette had been posting the meeting sign-up sheet and tracking those who have dialed in.

CHAIR JUNGE appreciated Ms. Heil's comment adding that there is a cost to doing this resource and we want to make sure it is effective. Just because it would be nice to have that information does not mean it is effective.

There were no public comments.

8. Committee Comments

EMMA POKON, AEDC Deputy Commissioner, introduced herself as a new member of the Policy Committee.

MR. LYON informed the Committee that this is Mr. Schutte's last meeting and expressed appreciation for his knowledge and expertise in matters before the Committee.

CHAIR JUNGE also thanked Mr. Schutte for all he had done for the city and in working with DOT&PF these last few years.

9. Public Comments - None

10. ADJOURNMENT

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON moved to adjourn. MR. SCHUTTE seconded.

Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 2:11 p.m.