

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

**4700 Elmore Road
Anchorage, Alaska**

**July 22, 2021
1:30 PM**

Policy Committee Members Present:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Wolfgang Junge	Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF)
Larry Baker	Mayor's Office
Emma Pokon	Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), Air Quality
Meg Zaletel	MOA/Municipal Assembly
Chris Constant**	MOA/Municipal Assembly

Also in attendance:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Craig Lyon	MOA/Planning Department
Christine Schuette	MOA/Planning Department
Joni Wilm	MOA/Planning Department
Aaron Jongenelen	MOA/Planning Department
Jon Cecil	MOA/Planning Department
Jim Amundsen	DOT&PF
Todd Vanhove*	DOT&PF
James Starzec	DOT&PF
Adam Moser	DOT&PF
LaQuita Chmielowski	DOWL
Cindy Heil*	ADEC
Emily Weiser	
Susan Acheson	
Luke Bowland	DOT&PF
Noah King	DOT&PF
Brad Coy	DOWL
Jamie Acton*	MOA/Public Transportation Department (PTD)

**AMATS Technical Advisory Committee Member*

***Designated Assembly Alternate*

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

CHAIR JUNGE called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Larry Baker represented Mayor Bronson. Assembly Member Constant represented Assembly Member Weddleton. 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.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL moved to approve the agenda. ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT seconded.

Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – June 24, 2021

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL moved to approve the minutes. ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT seconded.

Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved.

5. ACTION ITEMS

a. Comment/Response Summary and Non-motorized Plan Public Review Draft

BACKGROUND:

AMATS staff would like to request approval to proceed with incorporating the public comments for the AMATS Non-motorized Plan. The plan was released for a 62-day public review and comment period from January 1, 2021 through March 5, 2021. Comments were categorized by type and they consist of the following: AMATS staff conducted a work session on Tuesday, June 29, 2021, to gather feedback from both the AMATS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Policy Committee (PC) on the Comment/Response Summary and table. All advisory committee feedback has been incorporated into the table.

MS. WILM briefed the Committee on the draft noting that, of the 762 public comments received, most of the comments were asking for different projects or to add to an existing project. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommended approval of the draft at their July 8 meeting. Once this Committee approves the draft, it will then go before the Assembly for their recommendations, and then come back before this Committee for final approval.

There were no comments.

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

Hearing no objections this motion passed.

b. 2023-2026 TIP Criteria Update and TIP Criteria Update Handbook**BACKGROUND:**

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 incorporated, where possible, the MOA 2040 Land Use Plan update, the AMATS Non-motorized Plan update, the AMATS Spenard Corridor Plan, AMATS Complete Streets Policy, and the Anchorage Climate Action Plan. AMATS staff updated the ranking and scoring criteria and the AMATS Policy and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met in two work sessions as well.

MR. LYON reminded the Committee that these are criteria used when we receive the project nominations to be ranked, scored, and put into the next TIP four-year program of projects for the AMATS allocation. If necessary, the projects are updated due to federal regulations and are tweaked in order to make them a little more objective. After incorporating the comments heard during the work session, these criteria are substantially different than the first draft. The TAC is recommending the Policy Committee release the revised criteria for a 30-day public review period.

In response to ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL's question if a 60-day public review period would hinder the work or the next steps, MR. LYON noted that it could be done.

There were no public comments.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT moved to approve. ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL seconded.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL moved to amend that the revised criteria be released for a 60-day public review period. ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT seconded.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL noted the rationale is that the community councils will be back in session toward the end of that 60-day period and since this is a bit different than what they have seen before, it will give them the opportunity to engage with them.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT commented that since it would not have an impact on the project, there is no problem waiting.

CHAIR JUNGE added that we are very early in the process and can afford some additional time for review. The review period for the Non-Motorized was also extended to 60 days, so it is not unheard of.

Hearing no objections, the amendment passed.

Hearing no objections, the main motion passed, as amended.

c. AMATS TIP 2019-2022 TIP Amendment #2 Air Quality Conformity**BACKGROUND:**

The Municipality of Anchorage contains a Limited Maintenance Area for carbon monoxide (CO) in Anchorage and contains a Limited Maintenance Area for PM10 in Eagle River. Consequently, federal regulations require that AMATS make an Air Quality Conformity Determination on all transportation plans and programs to assure they will not jeopardize compliance with federal air quality standards for CO and PM10 within the Municipality of Anchorage. These regulations require AMATS to determine that future emissions from the transportation network envisioned in these plans and programs remain under the allowable emissions budget established in the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality; or in the case of a Limited Maintenance Plan, have a future projected pollutant design value low enough to be reasonably unlikely to exceed a national air quality standard, including projected traffic increases over a 20-year planning horizon.

AMATS' proposed Amendment #2 to the 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) includes the addition of a new road project after the FHWA's approval of an Air Quality Conformity Determination for that TIP. Hence, the updated air quality conformity report is being presented to obtain a new conformity determination for the modified 2019-2022 TIP, including the new Academy/Vanguard Traffic Circulation Improvements project added via TIP Amendment #2. The analysis demonstrates that Anchorage is well-positioned to maintain the CO NAAQS. Anchorage Air Program staff has also determined that the 2019-2022 TIP, including Amendment #2 is consistent with the Alaska State Implementation Plan in finding that no element of the Anchorage 2019-2022 TIP, or its amendments will undermine the objective to reduce ambient CO in Anchorage, nor will it interfere with implementation of any CO control measure identified in the Alaska SIP. The Interagency Consultation Team met and members agreed that the contents of the draft conformity determination report, including review of most recent monitor data statistics characterizing the Anchorage CO and Eagle River PM10 Limited Maintenance areas are appropriate to update the conformity for the 2019-2022 TIP, including Amendment #2.

MR. LYON addressed the information detailed in the background shown above.

MS. POKON thanked both the Municipality and DOT&PF for making sure the air quality stays protected.

There were no public comments.

MS. POKON moved to approve. ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT seconded.

Hearing no objections, this motion passed.

d. AMATS 2019-2022 TIP Amendment #2**BACKGROUND:**

An amendment to the AMATS 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is needed to update Table 2 – Roadway; Table 3 - Non-Motorized; Table 4 – Studies; Table 5 – CMAQ; Table 6 – TAP; Table 8 – HSIP; Table 10 – Transit; and Table 11 - Other.

Additionally, the AMATS 2019-2022 TIP allocation is updated to reflect the approved 2020-2023 STIP Amendment #1, which shows a slight increase in the STBG and CMAQ funding for AMATS in 2021 and 2022. The updates are listed below.

Table 2 – Roadway

- 2159 O'Malley Road Reconstruction – Decrease funding in FY2021 to reflect obligated amount.
- RDY00001 Fireweed Lane Rehabilitation – Move the ROW phase from FY2021 to beyond FY2022, add a design hit for \$1M in FY2022, and updated the beyond FY2022 funding amount from \$6M to \$47M to reflect the increase in project cost.
- RDY00002 C Street/Ocean Dock Road Ramp and Intersection Improvements – Removed this project.
- RDY00003 Spenard Road Rehab – Removed the last sentence of the project description that limited improvements at the intersection of Minnesota and Spenard, add a design hit for \$1.5M in FY2021, moved the ROW hit from FY2022 to beyond FY2022, and updated the beyond FY2022 funding from \$40M to \$55M to reflect the increase in project cost.
- RDY00004 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Avenue Extension – moved a design hit from FY2021 to FY2022 and increased the amount from \$500K to \$2M, and updated the beyond FY2022 funding amount from \$14.5M to \$9.270M to reflect a decrease in project cost.
- RDY00006 East 4th Ave Signal and Lighting Upgrade – removed the design hit listed in project phasing for FY2020, moved the construction hit in FY2022 to beyond FY2022 and reduced the amount from \$7.1M to \$4.950M, moved the ROW hit from FY2021 to FY2022 and increased the amount from \$224K to \$324K.
- RDY00007 Potter Drive Rehabilitation – moved the design hit in FY2021 to FY2022 and increased the amount from \$750K to \$1.250M, moved the ROW hit in FY2022 to beyond 2022, and updated the beyond FY2022 amount from \$6.5M to \$5.5M to reflect a decrease in project cost.
- RDY00009 Seward Highway to Glenn Highway Connection PEL Design – removed the FY2022 design hit.
- RDY000012 Pavement Replacement – increased the FY2021 funding from \$4,839 to \$8,624 and increased the FY2022 funding from \$1,580 to \$4,777.
- Added a new project RDY000013 Academy Drive/Vanguard Drive Area Traffic Circulation Improvements.

Table 3 – Non-Motorized

- NMO00001 Downtown Trail Connection – updated the FY2021 funding to show a design hit and increase the amount from \$1M to \$1.6M.
- NMO00002 Fish Creek Trail Connection – updated the FY2022 ROW hit to be a design hit instead and increase the amount from \$500K to \$1.010M and update the beyond FY2022 funding from \$3M to \$7.1M to reflect a project cost increase.
- NMO00003 Tudor Road Pathway Connection – removed this project as it is being constructed as part of the TAP00001 Chugach Foothills Connector Phase II project.
- NMO00006 Potter Marsh Improvements – updated the FY2022 U/C hit from \$480K to \$510K to reflect a project cost increase.
- NMO00008 Anchorage Areawide Pathway Trails Pavement Replacement – increase the 2021 funding from \$1,180M to \$2,382M, and decreased the FY2022 funding from \$5.710M to \$830K.

Table 4 – Studies

- PLN00007 Port of Alaska Multimodal Improvements Study – added a funding hit of \$150K in FY2021.
- Added project PLN00009 AMATS Safety Plan in FY2022 for \$250K - This study will create a comprehensive safety plan that will provide a coordinated framework for reducing fatalities and serious injuries on the surface transportation network in the AMATS planning area.

Table 5 – CMAQ

- CMQ00005 Bus Stop & Facility Improvements – increased the FY2019 funding to reflect additional FTA funding outside the AMATS allocation.
- CMQ00007 Capital Vehicles – increased the FY2019 funding to reflect additional FTA funding outside the AMATS allocation and increased the FY2022 funding from \$2.210M to \$11.981M.

Table 6 – TAP

- TAP00001 Chugach Foothills Connector, Phase II – increased the funding for a design hit in FY2021 and the construction hit in FY2021.

Table 8 – HSIP

- Updated Table 8 to reflect the HSIP changes submitted by Alaska DOT&PF.

Table 10 – Transit

- Updated Table 10 to reflect changes submitted by MOA Public Transportation Department and the Alaska Railroad Corporation.

Table 11 – Other

- Updated Table 11 to identify the funding source for project OFS00005 Buses and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment Project.

MR. LYON explained that the main reason for the amendment was due to the addition of the Academy/Vanguard project. An amendment is required anytime a project is added or deleted. He corrected Table 4 to add Project 6, the 92nd Avenue Reconnaissance (Recon) study. This project was originally nominated by DOT&PF of approximately \$28 million dollars for the proposed extension of 92nd Avenue from Old Seward Highway to King Street. During discussion at the TAC meeting, the Railroad representative said that it would be challenging crossing or going under the railroad suggesting it would not happen in his lifetime and he also suggested doing a Reconnaissance study instead. The Municipality was recently approached wanting this project obligated but needed a local match. The way in which the Municipality can pay a local match is with bond funds. Bond funds cannot be used to pay for a study or a plan, only projects that lead to building something. AMATS is asking to move the reconnaissance study project out to 2022 allowing the Municipality time to figure out how to obtain funding for the match, if they still want to continue with the project. It makes sense to move the \$250,000 in 2021 into the Pavement Replacement Program, but that decision is up to DOT&PF if the O'Malley project could use the \$250,000 or some other project in the Pavement Replacement Program. In order to get some of these TIP funds obligated for the end of this fiscal year, which is the end of September, we need to act on this today.

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

- (WJ) Bond monies cannot be used for reconnaissance studies? How is the TDM (Transportation Demand Management) Study in the UMED area going to be paid for, since the TDM does not build anything?
- (CL) *Bond monies can only be used for projects that are going to build in the life of that project. Not for a plan and not for a study. With regard to the TDM study, the Municipality was made aware of that in time and identified the different people around the municipality who could be working on that project; using non-federal funds to work on that project, and capture their time spent to be used as in-kind match. It is possible that in-kind match could be used for the Reconnaissance study as well, but there is not enough time left in this federal fiscal year to identify it, lock it in, and get it obligated. We have used in-kind match for the Non-Motorized Plan and other plans. Since the project was originally nominated by the State of Alaska, the Municipality must have believed that the State was going to pay the match.*
- (CC) Referred to Table 2 and the zero-dollar amount noted in red for the Seward Highway to Glenn Highway Connection and asked if something was removed from there.
- (AJ) *This was money for the Seward Highway to Glenn Highway PEL Design project funding. It was understood there would not be enough time to finish the PEL study and start design in the time remaining for 2022, so that money was moved out beyond 2022 to give time for the PEL to finish.*
- (CL) *Added that the original plan was for the PEL to be far enough along or completed and they would have had another project in mind, but the PEL is just getting started and is not ready for design yet.*
- (MZ) What is the timing of Academy Drive/Vanguard and how are we currently aligning what we are putting in the TIP with the completion of the highway project? There is some concern that we are going to mismatch the completion of the highway project that is going to drive the traffic into that neighborhood. She did not know if there was any way to leverage those funds to accelerate anything that would help to better align those two projects.
- (WJ) *Short of changing federal regulations on NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act), the Uniform Relocation Act, and all the timelines that drive the schedule, when the city chose to not move forward with that project and all that it had accomplished, which kind of hit the reset button, it was handed to the State for development. There is very little chance that those two projects will align in terms of completion dates. There will be a couple of years that traffic will be coming off 92nd Avenue and Scooter Avenue heading full speed ahead to a stop-controlled intersection. It is unfortunate that we are starting over, as an MPO, on this project.*

- (LB) Referred to Table 3 and asked if the Downtown Trail Connection and the Fish Creek Trail Connection will complete the Ship Creek Connection? Is it still in the design phase in FY22 and there is no construction?
- (CL) *The project is designed to connect the Coastal Trail to the Ship Creek Trail in Downtown Anchorage. It is still early in the design phase and there is no construction in the life of this.*
- (CC) *The missing link is the connection up to Government Hill. That is the last piece not contemplated anywhere yet that he has seen. He thinks that might be a local issue, not regional.*
- (CC) *While we are on the subject of the link, there is a development project for a group down at the railroad section. He did not know if it had been brought before this body yet, but it is the 49th State working with the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) for a major revision of that little section where their warehouse is located. It would certainly intersect with this trail project, so maybe it would be wise to ask ARRC to come and discuss with us what they are doing.*

CHAIR JUNGE asked for public comments.

JAMES STARZEC with DOT&PF noted that they had identified where the \$250,000 would be going in 2021 but did not identify where it would be taken out of in 2022. He suggested the CMAQ project or Capital Vehicles.

MR. LYON explained that AMATS usually places funds, that we are not quite sure of yet, either in the Pavement Replacement Program because they can always use it and in Capital Vehicles for Transit because they are always needing replacement buses. \$11,631,000 was put in there and as we get farther along, we will know whether it will remain there. We usually spend approximately \$3 million annually or we try to allocate \$3 million per year in that, so it is obviously more, but there was a zero in 2020 meaning we shorted them during that year.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL moved to approve. ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT seconded.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL moved to amend to move \$250,000 in 2021 funding from the Reconnaissance Study into Pavement Replacement, add it in 2022, and take it out of Capital Vehicles. ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT seconded.

Hearing no objections, the amendment passed.

Hearing no objections, the main motion passed, as amended.

6. Project and Plan Updates

a. MLK Project Update

NOAH KING with DOT&PF provided a PowerPoint Presentation.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL asked how the determination was made for the Collector Road and what data was used to drive that decision, instead of using local reports?

MR. KING explained that they used a Traffic Analysis from DOWL along with the traffic counts from Tudor and Elmore Roads.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL commented that that is interesting because the idea is that this extension is supposed to serve the development.

MR. KING pointed out that DOWL predicted the numbers.

In response to Assembly Member Zaletel's question if there had been consideration as to how this might be accessed as a cut-through of Tudor Road and avoidance of, MR. KING noted that they had considered it and that was one of the considerations for avoiding going along the south end of Piper with a large high-speed curve. By going through the neighborhood and the roundabout, we tried to avoid a potential cut-through as much as possible.

CHAIR JUNGE added that he is meeting with the project manager next week regarding this. He is uncomfortable with the balance of trying to avoid a Section 4F in wetlands at the expense of an entire row of houses. He intends to find out the details in how they came up with a SMART criterion and how they assign those weights. He is not sure he could stand in front of a community council and tell them he is wiping out 15 or 20 front lawns just to avoid a small impact on a wetland or a Section 6F.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT added that the name "Irwin" is a trigger for him based on a development proposed by Irwin that has completely crumbled into dust. Another important variable is to have an in-depth conversation with the 8th Floor (Mayor's Office) on their thinking about what the actual move forward might be for this land because, at this time, that project seems to have gone by way of a number of projects, which means we will never see it. Are we going to be transforming this section without an actual plan to afford it? He sees from Assembly Member Zaletel's response that the theory is still there, but from a practical perspective everything that that project touched has turned into mud. He is concerned that we are developing for a project that evaporated.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL expressed that the concern is that the neighborhood really wants the development. They were looking forward to the grocery store and the additional housing. Their desire is somewhat mitigated by the potential road, mainly, the right-of-way impacts and concerns about cut-through traffic, but they still are very much pushing to have that developed in the general concept, as proposed. The Municipality has made a fairly decent investment in rezones and other areas to lay the groundwork for it. She thinks the development issue could be overcome and it could dovetail nicely with the timing of the road project.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT further added that is the best use of that land to put in a commercial center with residential, but we really have to figure out what the new priorities are and where it all fits. If we are going to do this, there is that major cost element. Not the cash cost, but the cost of peoples' livelihoods and the peaceful enjoyment of their home. It better be of service to a concept that is feasible, not to a concept that is just one more theory going by the wayside.

There were no public comments.

b. Chugach Way Project Update

LAQUITA CHMIELOWSKI with DOWL provided a PowerPoint Presentation.

There were no comments.

7. General Information

In response to Assembly Member Constant's request for a brief update on the PEL, MR. VANHOVE noted that he did not have any updated information at this time.

LUKE BOWLAND with DOT&PF added that the contract had been executed and they are working on kicking off those efforts.

JAMES STARZEC with DOT&PF confirmed the contract had been signed. The contractor and the project manager are working on it, and all those working on it are currently reviewing some of the foundational documents, the mailing list, and laying the groundwork for the project.

CHAIR JUNGE noted that it will be available on their website soon.

8. Committee Comments - None

9. Public Comments - None

10. ADJOURNMENT

ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT moved to adjourn. MR. BAKER seconded.

Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 2:22 p.m.