

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

**Mayor's Conference Room, 8th Floor
632 W. 6th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska**

**August 26, 2021
1:30 PM**

Policy Committee Members Present:

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

Also in attendance:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Craig Lyon	MOA/Planning Department
Christine Schuette	MOA/Planning Department
Aaron Jongenelen	MOA/Planning Department
Joni Wilm	MOA/Planning Department
Jim Amundsen	DOT&PF
James Starzec	DOT&PF
Cindy Heil*	ADEC
Taylor Horne	
Emily Weiser	

**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. Craig Campbell represented Mayor Bronson. A quorum was established prior to Mr. Campbell's arrival.

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 WEDDLETON moved to approve the agenda. MS. POKON seconded.

Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – July 22, 2021

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON moved to approve the minutes. MS. POKON seconded.

Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved.

5. ACTION ITEMS

a. Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) Nomination

BACKGROUND:

The AMATS Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee is the citizen's forum for bicycle and pedestrian issues affecting the AMATS area. This group serves to make recommendations about bicycle and pedestrian planning issues to the AMATS Technical Advisory Committee. Members of this committee serve rotating three-year terms. Committee bylaws limit members to two consecutive terms. One of the seats is designated as a Bicycle Organization seat.

MR. LYON briefed the Committee on the recommendation of BPAC appointment, Emily Weiser.

MS. WEISER participated in the meeting virtually and clarified for Chair Junge that she is a resident of Anchorage.

Craig Campbell joined the meeting.

There were no comments.

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

Hearing no objections this motion passed.

b. Revisions to Alaska Administrative Code for Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety – BPAC Letter of Support

BACKGROUND:

AMATS staff would like to request review of the Letter of Support for revisions to the Alaska Administrative Code for Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety. The AMATS Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee (BPAC) would like to formally support this initiative by the Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning, which seeks to improve safety for non-motorized travel in Alaska.

MS. WILM informed the Committee of FAST's proposed revisions to Title 13 of the Alaska Administrative Code. These are already effective in Anchorage but, for FAST, this letter would help them cover those areas and improve their bicycle and pedestrian safety. The three main proposed revisions include new provisions to improve the safety of vehicles passing bicyclists in the roadway using the three-foot rule; bicycle lane and shared lane use

markings, and reduce conflicts for bicyclists and pedestrians with off-highway vehicles traveling on sidewalks and other locations officially designated for non-motorized use.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON clarified that Anchorage does have the three-foot rule.

MR. LYON added that Anchorage already has provisions for all three of these. Off-road vehicles are not allowed on our main roads, the three-foot rule is in place, and we are allowed the shared lane use. Fairbanks would like to implement these and are asking AMATS for a Letter of Support.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON noted that if we changed their provision Number 3 from dangerous to match what we have documented in Title 9, then it would change their whole letter. Our letter should just ask them to consider changing this language.

CHAIR JUNGE indicated that our letter would read, “We support you, however, we do not support the use of the word “dangerous” in Administrative Code changes. That word implies some type of assertion that, by default, the configuration of the roadway is in fact dangerous to bicycle riders. We design our roads in compliance with State Highway National Standards.

MR. LYON suggested a motion supporting the letter with the recommended change striking the word “dangerous” and send it back to BPAC for them to create such a letter, sign off on it, and be able to forward it on to Fairbanks.

CHAIR JUNGE asked for a motion to support the letter with the caveat to remove the word “dangerous”.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON so moved. MR. CAMPBELL seconded.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL preferred to have moved to support it and then discussed the word “dangerous” on its own. She cannot support the motion as stated. She could generally support it but did not think the word “dangerous” should be removed. There have been a lot of issues on the roads, and she understood the rationale from the State’s perspective, but it is not something she can support.

CHAIR JUNGE asked for clarification that there is objection to the motion.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL noted that she would like to move to accept the letter and asked if there can be a separate motion on the requested amendment.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON stated that she could do the Assembly thing and amend the amendment. She can make a motion to support the letter...period...and that would override it. That is how we do it.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL so moved.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON further stated that now it should get a second and then someone can amend it to strike the word “dangerous”. Then you can have a vote on

that and discussion on it, then vote on that amendment with up or down. The amendment would be to strike “dangerous”.

CHAIR JUNGE asked Assembly Member Weddleton to clarify that Assembly Member Zaletel has moved to support the letter now and that is what we are voting on.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON replied, yes.

CHAIR JUNGE restated that the motion is to approve the letter as submitted and asked for a second.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON seconded.

CHAIR JUNGE asked if we take a vote on that now.

MR. CAMPBELL replied, no, you need a motion to delete the word “dangerous”.

MR. CAMPBELL moved to remove the word “dangerous”. ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON seconded.

MR. CAMPBELL added that now we have a discussion just about what we are taking issue here.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON explained that in our Title 9, we deal with this, which is your riders using the right edge of the roadway. In 9.38.060 we say, “When reasonably necessary to avoid unsafe or impracticable conditions including, but not limited to, fixed or moving objects, parked or moving vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, animals, surface hazards, or when the travel lane is too narrow to provide for the cyclist and an overtaking motor vehicle to travel side-by-side with a reasonably safe distance between the two, or where it is otherwise unsafe to continue along the right-hand curb or edge.” They do not use the word dangerous, and he wondered if there is another word other than dangerous.

CHAIR JUNGE expressed that it is the context that matters of what is unsafe, not inherently the design or the geometrics of it.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON thinks the broader fear is having the word “dangerous” in this Code (he would trust someone who deals with this frequently). So go ahead and remove the “dangerous” support in the letter and add a section to consider, rather than using the word “dangerous”, to incorporate our Title 9.38.060A.3.

CHAIR JUNGE clarified it would be to incorporate the Municipality’s Title language. Assembly Member Zaletel was participating virtually, so he asked if she was able to hear the suggestion.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL replied, yes, and if the maker of the current motion to amend wants to amend it to that, she could support that.

MR. CAMPBELL withdrew his original motion to amend and substituted it with a motion to amend to delete the word “dangerous”, but to add the subsection of Title 9 that was just read by Assembly Member Weddleton (9.38.060A.3). ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON seconded.

Hearing no objections, the amendment passed.

6. PROJECT AND PLAN UPDATES

a. MTP 101

MR. JONGENELEN provided a PowerPoint Presentation.

The following are questions by the Committee with responses noted in *Italic*.

(JW) Do we default using the State’s Performance Measures and Targets? We have VisionZero but we say we will accept having 28 fatalities or some number - certainly not zero. Do we have plans, and will that be part of this effort?

(AJ) *Safety is unusual because a lot of the performance targets are only on the non-interstate NHS or the interstate itself: a certain classification of roads with a higher classification of roads. Safety targets are on every public road and have to be updated every year. A few issues for us, because AMATS does not have the data, is that we rely on the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) and Alaska Department of Transportation (DOT&PF) for their information. The MOA data is limited in what we have, and DOT&PF’s data is statewide, and it is harder to aggregate it down to the individual road itself that falls within our boundaries. Currently, we are supporting the State’s targets. The plan is to continue supporting their targets until we can get our own safety plan, which we do have in the TIP to get funded to start collecting our data analysis of where our data is lacking and start building up that resource for us to use in setting our own targets.*

(JW) Do you have a schedule for that?

(AJ) *No, the Safety Plan is supposed to be funded in 2022, so it would depend on however long that takes.*

(CC) Line items are laid out in the Unified Work Plan describing efforts or objectives. Is the Safety Plan where we would find these?

(AJ) *No. It would be in the TIP. The TIP would fund it because we would need to get a consultant on board to help with data analysis and data collection, but staff time will be funded out of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).*

(WJ) *My understanding in years past, the MOA has avoided that because it is an increased cost gathering the data. AMATS defaulted the State’s data but is now going to make an effort at doing their own.*

- (MZ) In speaking to additional work, your point is well-taken. She is hoping to spread out some of that work by adding performance targets being measured by other entities through other plans and reports.
- (AJ) *Greenhouse Gas is the one we have heard comments on the most and we are working with Shaina Kilcoyne's group to look at Greenhouse Gas Emissions measures and targets. It will be done in a simpler way using VMT (Vehicle Miles Travelled) data as a way to estimate the emissions within our area that come from transportation and see if there is a way we can say our MTP is showing a reduction in VMT. How does that translate to Greenhouse Gas Emission reductions? That will help us set a baseline because every measure and target need a baseline with looking at a certain period and determine the direction we want to take or want to change. In that example, we are going to try and work with another group that uses our data from the model to help calculate using a different route. We are also going to try to work with other groups, where possible, but it really depends on the target, and it will be looked at on a case-by-case basis. If someone is able to provide the data and help support the calculations, we would of course be happy to work with them.*
- (MZ) With regard to looking at plans to select projects, is there any type of policy determination made as to where those projects come from or is it just staff culling? Has there ever been policy guidance given where to look?
- (AJ) *A lot of the information comes from the Code of Federal Regulations that designates and directs on what we are supposed to be doing. It outlines what we are to be looking at as part of our MTP update. He did not know of any policy or language from FHWA that says, "Here is everything you need to look at." This is based on what we have done historically and what we think is best right now.*
- (MZ) There are plans that we typically include what we have done by practice, but if there is a policy that we have to limit it at some level, it may make sense for this body to take up and provide some guidance. She wanted to make sure we did that at the right time, so it did not delay anything.
- (AJ) *What we do at the beginning of the MTP update cycle is a resolution passed by the Policy Committee that sets constraints on what we are going to be looking at or updating. Noted in that resolution are projects and plans we will be looking at that are new or have been updated since the last MTP. It might specifically call out the Spenard Corridor Plan and the Non-motorized Plan as examples. He will make sure everyone receives a copy of that resolution in order to get an understanding of where our boundaries are for this update cycle. In terms of the Code of Federal Regulations, we are 23 CFR450.100 (Definitions); 200; 300 (deals with MTP) and 400 (Appendix). He suggested the Committee review these regulations to get an idea of what we have to do. We will send the Committee an email referencing these as well as the resolutions.*
- (WJ) Who is the project manager for the MTP? If it is NMATS, or whatever the MPO will be called out in the Valley under fruition during the MTP, is there any requirement of the MPO that is adjacent to this one?

(AJ) *Van Le is the project manager. We are required to coordinate regardless. The Mat-Su Valley has a significant impact on our transportation system. One of the ways to coordinate is to incorporate their network of roads, TAZ allocations, populations, etc. into our model, as well as work with the Borough Mayor and all the different groups in the Valley for their review of our plan or projects. We already do work with them. If the MPO happens in the middle of this MTP update, we will probably reach out, but it depends because there is the likelihood of them not really being as established as we are by that point, if it happens at all.*

7. GENERAL INFORMATION

a. AMATS Q3 Obligation Report

MR. LYON briefed the Committee on the Obligation Report.

There were no comments.

8. Committee Comments

In response to Assembly Member Weddleton's question as to the status of the Valley's MPO, MR. STARZEC noted that he had no updates beyond their continuing work with viewing what they are required to do.

MR. LYON noted that he is on their Steering Committee, and they are currently working on what could be their work program for the next couple of years, their composition without knowing the boundaries, what Native tribes would need to be included, and to come up with a name. The boundaries are designated by the Governor and are based on census tracks of what the urbanized area is today and what will be the urbanized area in the next 20 years.

CHAIR JUNGE mentioned that DOT&PF had already transferred \$100,000 for planning and there should be another \$100,000 soon. His understanding is that there are ten proposed seats on their Policy Committee consisting of the Borough, City of Palmer, City of Wasilla, DOT&PF, and two tribal seats. He commented that, ideally, there would be an odd number of seats.

CHAIR JUNGE announced that DOT&PF has had a lot of inquiries regarding the reauthorization for the Transportation Act with a 40 percent increase in formula funds expected, which will then trickle down to AMATS allocations, and there is also a significant amount of money in the form of grant funds. There are a lot of funds applicable to the Port of Anchorage. Some of these grants have no match required but others require a huge match. The stimulus bill has not yet been signed. He added that SewardGlennMobility.com is the name of the website for the Seward to Glenn Planning and Environmental Linkage Study and for current updates.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

10. ADJOURNMENT

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

Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at approximately 2:46 p.m.