

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

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

**January 27, 2022
1:30 PM**

Policy Committee Members Present:

Name	Representing
Wolfgang Junge	Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF)
Adam Trombley	Director, MOA Community Development
Emma Pokon	Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), Air Quality
Meg Zaletel	MOA/Municipal Assembly
John Weddleton	MOA/Municipal Assembly

Also in attendance:

Name	Representing
Aaron Jongenelen	MOA/Planning Department
Christine Schuette	MOA/Planning Department
Jon Cecil	MOA/Planning Department
Joni Wilm	MOA/Planning Department
James Starzec	DOT&PF
Todd Vanhove*	DOT&PF
Craig Lyon*	MOA/Planning Department
Brad Coy*	MOA/Traffic Engineering Department
Bart Rudolph	MOA/Public Transportation Department (PTD)
Michael Rehberg	
Katherine Wood	
Lindsey Hajduk	
Cheryl Richardson	

**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. Adam Trombley, Community Development Director, represented Mayor Bronson. A quorum was established prior to Assembly Member Weddleton's arrival at 1:33 p.m.

2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

AARON JONGENELEN 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. TROMBLEY moved to approve the agenda. ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL seconded.

Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – December 16, 2021

MR. TROMBLEY moved to approve the minutes. ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL seconded.

Assembly Member Weddleton arrived at 1:33 p.m.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON commented that there was some discussion noted in the minutes regarding the match for the Hillside. He clarified that the Assembly amended the code to make Life Safety Roads an areawide function and did a bond to get the match, which is available anytime we need it.

Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved.

5. ACTION ITEMS

a. Community Advisory Committee (CAC) District 5 Appointment

BACKGROUND:

The AMATS Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is the resident's forum for transportation issues affecting the AMATS area. This group serves to review projects and plans, share information with the public and bring forth recommendations about transportation 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. Michael Rehberg is being nominated to fill a Public Seat for Assembly District 5.

MR. JONGENELEN informed the Committee of the vacancy and staff's recommendation of Michael Rehberg to fill that seat. The Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the appointments at their meeting on January 13 and recommended the appointment of Mr. Rehberg.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON noted that Mr. Rehberg seemed like a good choice and asked for clarification that the Community Advisory Committee does not have a choice as to who serves on their committee.

MR. JONGENELEN replied that, according to the Operating Agreement, the decisions are based solely on the decisions of the Technical Advisory and Policy Committees. Although, the CAC can assist with reaching out and providing information on individuals.

MR. REHBERG introduced himself and was available online for any questions.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON expressed appreciation for Mr. Rehberg's interest in serving on the CAC as it is a very important committee.

There were no public comments.

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

Hearing no objections, this motion passed.

b. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Administrative Modification #6

BACKGROUND:

An administrative modification to the AMATS 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is needed to update Table 2 – Roadway; Table 3 - Non-Motorized; and Table 4 - Studies and Plans. The updates are listed below.

Table 2 – Roadway

- Update Table 2 to balance the program and add money to start a new pavement project.

Table 3 – Non-Motorized

- Update Table 3 to move ROW funding for project #NMO00001 Downtown Trail Connection from FY2022 to beyond FY2022.

Table 4 – Studies and Plans

- Updated Table 4 to add \$100k in funding to project #PLN00001 AMATS MTP to fund the strategic planning model efforts. Update project descriptions for #PLN00001 AMATS MTP and #PLN00009 AMATS Safety Plan to explain the FY2022 funding will be using a portion of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) funding which is outside the AMATS STBG allocation. Updated project #PLN00006 to extend the study to C Street instead of King Street.

MR. JONGENELEN explained the modifications noting that the Technical Advisory Committee had reviewed this and recommended to the Policy Committee approval of the 2019-22 TIP Administrative Modification #6.

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

- (JW) With regard to 92nd Avenue having a railroad in the way, the \$250,000 is not a lot of money to design internally. He asked what comes from this study.
- (AJ) *This study will be looking at what it would take, and the challenges associated with extending 92nd Avenue. When we built the 2019-2022 TIP, the 92nd Avenue extension construction project scored high enough to be included, but after discussion with the Alaska Railroad and DOT&PF, the municipality realized there were a lot of challenges involved. Instead of moving forward on a construction project with a lot of unknowns, specifically how much it would cost, a Reconnaissance Study was added in. Part of what this Reconnaissance Study will do is identify and highlight these challenges and it could make some recommendations as to how to overcome them, but not make a recommendation on the final because it still must go through the construction design. It can also give a better idea of the magnitude of the cost, such as \$100 million, \$20 million, or what is our range.*
- (WJ) *Think of it as a miniature Planning Environmental Linkage (PEL) Study.*
- (AJ) *This does not mean we will move immediately into a construction project. It is just a study and decisions will have to be made to eventually move into a construction project.*
- (WJ) *A Feasibility Study*
- (JW) Referred to the Safety Plan and asked what CRRSA stood for.
- (AJ) *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation, which is the COVID Relief Response Act that was recently passed. AMATS gets approximately \$11 million from this and there are limitations on what that funding can be spent on, as well as it having to be put towards projects that are in an existing TIP or having to add a project to the TIP. Staff is recommending putting it toward existing projects and, together, we can assign it to new projects, if needed.*
- (JW) The table notes \$250,000 in red. He asked what that referred to because red means a change is being made.
- (AJ) *A change is not being made to the funding amount, itself, and will remain at \$250,000. The red means the total is being changed. Basically, we have to be able to show that the funding from CRRSA is not impacting our allocation and fiscal constraint. When we use CRRSA funding it takes it away from our STBG (Surface Transportation Block Grant) allocation, so this is just updating the total*

in the table. It was \$600,000, but because we took out \$250,000 from the Safety Plan and \$100,000 from the MTP it brought it down to only \$250,000 that is coming out of our allocation for the 92nd Avenue Extension study.

There were no public comments.

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

Hearing no objections, this motion passed.

6. PROJECT AND PLAN UPDATES

a. 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Nominations

MR. JONGENELEN updated the Committee noting that the nominations for the new 2023-2026 TIP are out. The comment period closes February 14 and there has already been a lot of interest expressed in this.

There were no public comments.

MR. JONGENELEN mentioned that a work session has been scheduled for this Friday for the MTP Performance Measures Criteria and will be available online for those who cannot attend. This will be on the February agenda asking for a 30-day public comment period release.

7. GENERAL INFORMATION

a. Advisory Committee Term Limits

MR. JONGENELEN informed the Committee that staff is working to update the current subcommittee reappointment terms for the BPAC (Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee), CAC (Community Advisory Committee), and the FAC (Freight Advisory Committee). Several members have been serving since 2015 or earlier and have not yet been reappointed. These reappointments will go before the TAC and the PC within the next few months. He pointed out that some members may have exceeded their two-term limits because they are the only representative from their group. For example, Joe Michel is the only one of the few members from the Alaska Trucking Association that can serve on the FAC, so he may have more than two term limits. The list we have created will help better track the terms in the future and we will work with these committees to rotate individuals, where possible.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON asked if the bylaws needed to be revised explaining the term limits, if no one can be found in that category. He recommended software that the municipality is using known as "OnBoard" to maintain their committee members.

MR. JONGENELEN explained that the Committee bylaws do not currently talk about individuals for groups that have limited numbers able to attend. We are going to see if other MPOs have something similar regarding exceptions to that two-term limit. If not, we will have to develop and bring forward our own language. He can look into the OnBoard software but is a little cautious because AMATS committees are not part of the municipal system and there is already some confusion regarding that.

There were no public comments.

8. COMMITTEE COMMENTS

CHAIR JUNGE announced the following:

1. Jim Amundsen formerly with DOT&PF has now moved on to NTHC (Native Tribal Health Consortium). Sean Baski will replace Mr. Amundsen as the DOT&PF Highway Design Group Chief.
2. Charlie Wagner's, DOT&PF Maintenance & Operations Chief, last day is January 31, and acting will be Burrell Nickeson.
3. Governor Dunleavy's GO (General Obligation) Bond has a couple of projects and funding that might be of interest to the city.
4. With regard to the Governor's Seward Highway Safety Initiative, the Governor has asked DOT&PF to reconstruct the Seward Highway between Indian and Potter. We are looking at connecting those two four-lanes with a four-lane highway. It will take several years just to get the environmental clearances done, but with over 20,000 cars per day south of Anchorage, it is one of our highest-level safety corridors because of the accidents and the data.
5. A public meeting can be found on the Seward – Glenn PEL website hosting a webex meeting beginning at 4:30 p.m. this afternoon regarding the Seward - Glenn Mobility Planning Environmental Linkage (PEL).
6. Senator Begich has reached out to us regarding the Seward – Glenn PEL and has asked if AMATS funding can be used for land use studies adjacent to that corridor. The project, as it sits today, was not scoped to incorporate land use planning studies, or anything associated with those studies. Generally, in corridors adjacent to state systems, any second or third road effects adjacent to the road are the responsibility of the municipality or the Borough that own and operate those areas, such as a land use planning study or other road improvements. We did tell Senator Begich we would look into it and see if it could be determined eligible. If it was determined eligible, it would require the Policy Committee to go back and rescope the entire project and consider it for eligibility in the TIP.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL wanted to highlight an issue put in the Legislative package from the municipality that is to try and work together with DOT&PF and the State to figure out if there is an option or ability to do safety corridors within the urban area, with the most common one known is on the way to Girdwood. Maybe address some of the issues on high-volume state roads within the municipality where we have had quite a few vehicle collisions. Most notably, Tudor Road from the New Seward Highway up through

Elmore Road, and the Muldoon Curve. She understood the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) was doing some lighting upgrades, but she was hopeful that we could find a way to work together to look at some other interim tools to address these issues. Especially since any redesign or reconstruction of these roads would be massive undertakings, both in terms of time and resources, particularly with the fiscally constraint program.

CHAIR JUNGE pointed out that the State has four safety corridors currently in existence and all within the Central Region as listed below.

- 1) Parks Highway (north of Wasilla) – Wrapping up this project this year is Phase 3 that takes us down to Big Lake as a divided four-lane. With the completion of that project, the safety corridor will almost assuredly be decommissioned.
- 2) Knik Goose Bay (KGB) Road (coming out of Wasilla) – KGB will be bidding the first phase of that project this summer. Once completed with the second phase, that will also decommission that safety corridor.
- 3) Sterling Highway (between Sterling and Soldotna) – We just completed the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) document on the extension of that four-lane into Soldotna. With that project, we are proposing a design build this year that would eliminate that third safety corridor.
- 4) Seward Highway (south of Anchorage) - With the Governor’s focus on the Seward Highway Safety Corridor Highway Initiative, once completed, that would also eliminate that as the final safety corridor in the state.

He suggested having Scott Thomas, DO&PF Traffic Engineer, attend a Policy Committee meeting and briefly discuss Assembly Member Zaletel’s concerns regarding safety corridors within an urbanized area. He did not have an answer for her, but we could certainly schedule a meeting with Mr. Thomas.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL has been in conversation with Mr. Thomas, and he had laid out the steps taken. This is why, placed in our Legislative program, there are many steps to take in order to make this possible. We want to make sure it would be a joint effort between our partners at the State and the municipality. If it would help everyone to be on the same page, she would enjoy the hearing the briefing again. It is terribly complex and there are a lot of steps to be taken, but she is open to exploring this and maybe make a little headway.

MR. TROMBLEY added that he would also be interested in hearing more about safety corridors in urban areas.

CHAIR JUNGE asked Mr. Jongenelen to reach out to Mr. Thomas and see if he would be available for a briefing.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

10. ADJOURN

ASSEMBLY MEMBER WEDDLETON moved to adjourn. ASSEMBLY MEMBER ZALETEL seconded.

Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 2:01 p.m.