

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

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

**April 28, 2022
1:30 PM**

Due to the expected absence of Chair Junge, John Linnell acted as Chair.

Policy Committee Members Present:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
John Linnell	Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF)
Emma Pokon	Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), Air Quality
Forrest Dunbar	MOA/Municipal Assembly
Chris Constant**	MOA/Municipal Assembly

Also in attendance:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Aaron Jongenelen	MOA/Planning Department
Joni Wilm	MOA/Planning Department
Jon Cecil	MOA/Planning Department
Doug Campbell	DOT&PF
Kelly Summers	DOT&PF
Sean Baski	DOT&PF
James Starzec	DOT&PF
Joann Mitchell	Kinney Engineering
Susie Serres	DKS Association
Taylor Horne	HDR
Laurie Cummings	HDR
Walter Ondola	
Elizabeth Appleby	MOA/Planning Department
Kathryn Wenger	Federal Highways Administration (FHWA)
John Weddleton	
Cindy Heil*	ADEC
Marc Lamoreux	
Shaina Kilcoyne*	MOA/Energy & Sustainability
Craig Lyon*	MOA/Planning Department
Brad Coy*	MOA/Traffic Engineering Department
Adeyemi Alimi	ADEC
Loki Tobin	
Josie Wilson	HDR

**AMATS Technical Advisory Committee Member*

***Designated Assembly Alternate*

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

ACTING CHAIR LINNELL called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. Assembly Member Constant acted as Designated Assembly Alternate for Assembly Member Zaletel. Adam Trombley was excused. A quorum was established.

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.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – March 24, 2022

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

Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved.

5. ACTION ITEMS

a. 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Amendment #1

BACKGROUND:

The AMATS 2040 MTP was approved in June 2020 by the AMATS Policy Committee and received final approval by the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on August 26, 2020. An amendment to the 2040 MTP is needed to add a new project, the Alaska Cargo and Cold Storage warehouse facility. This project is in part funded with Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) federal grant funding from 2020. A project receiving BUILD grant funding must be consistent with State and local plans, including the Long-Range Transportation plans of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, such as AMATS. As such, this project must be added to the 2040 MTP through this amendment. AMATS staff consulted with FHWA, and it was determined that an Air Quality Conformity Analysis was not needed as this project is not a highway or transit project and does not have any highway or transit components.

The Alaska Cargo and Cold Storage project is a secure, up to 715,000 square foot, climate-controlled warehouse facility located at Ted Stevens International Airport (ANC), Anchorage, AK. Phase I, the current project, is estimated to be ~190,000 square feet of cargo warehouse, with the option to include aircraft parking.

The 2040 MTP Amendment #1 schedule is as follows:

- *May 2022 - 30-day public comment period*
- *April/May - MOA Assembly Public Hearing*
- *June - Review of Public and Assembly comments and final approval of 2040 MTP Amendment #1*
- *July - FHWA/FTA approval of MTP Amendment #1*

MR. JONGENELEN explained the process of adding the Alaska Cargo and Cold Storage warehouse facility as an amendment to the 2040 MTP. He pointed out that if it is not included before the end of the fiscal year of September 30, 2022, the money will be lost. This is complete once the Policy Committee approves it because it does not need FHWA and FTA approval since there is not an Air Quality Conformity Analysis requirement for the transportation side of this plan. Although, it does not require a transportation conformity analysis, it still requires general conformity, which is the FAA version of conformity analysis for air quality.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER DUNBAR asked why do they need our approval before money can be released?

MR. JONGENELEN replied that it is utilizing FHWA funding and part of the requirement is that this be consistent with the AMATS Long-Range Transportation Plan. Our way of making it consistent, as well as showing we are still fiscally constrained, is by adding this amendment showing all the funding and where it is coming from. He added that he was recently notified that this does require general conformity, and staff missed clarifying that in the amendment document itself, so we are recommending a quick edit before this is released to the public to spell out that it does require general conformity, not transportation air quality conformity.

There were no public comments.

MS. POKON moved to release for public comment, as amended by staff. ASSEMBLY MEMBER DUNBAR seconded.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT clarified that the amendment to the main motion needs to be acted upon first.

MS. POKON withdrew her motion. ASSEMBLY MEMBER DUNBAR withdrew his second.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER DUNBAR moved to approve the 2040 MTP Amendment #1. ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT seconded.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER DUNBAR moved to amend the main motion to include staff's amendment. ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT seconded.

Hearing no objections, the amendment passed.

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

b. Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (BPAC) Appointments**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. Katie Severin, AARP Alaska Associate State Director of Communications, is being recommended to fill the Social Services seat vacancy. Michael Williams, National Marine Fisheries Service Alaska Region, is being recommended to fill the Community or Environmental Organization seat vacancy.

MS. WILM briefed the Committee on the recommendations of Katie Severin and Michael Williams to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

There were no comments.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER DUNBAR moved to confirm. ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT seconded.

Hearing no objections, this motion passed.

c. Title 21 – Parking Resolution**BACKGROUND:**

The MOA Planning Department is currently working on changes to the Title 21 Parking and Site Access requirements. As noted in the project summary, "This amendment provides for area-specific lower parking requirements and streamlines approvals of reductions in parking for developments. It also reforms site access requirements for driveways and pedestrian facilities."

The project team provided a presentation before the Technical and Policy Committees at their March and November 2021 meetings. The Title 21 amendments, outlined in the public hearing draft, are consistent with and help implement the 2040 MTP, and the recently adopted AMATS Non-Motorized Plan.

MR. JONGENELEN noted that the Municipality's Long-Range Planning Division is asking for a resolution supporting the changes to Title 21 that they are currently working on. It is before AMATS because this change is helping implement our 2040 MTP by addressing Goals 3, 5, and 6. It also helps us to implement MTP action item 3E-5, which is to support the MOA Planning and Traffic Departments on parking strategies that support multi-modal transportation options, as well as helping to implement our other studies, such as the Non-Motorized Plan and the Congestion Management Process Plan.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER DUNBAR asked if this was in support of some other support reduction and where that ordinance currently is in the process.

ELIZABETH APPLEBY with the MOA Planning Department explained that it would be a Code change to implement this. The Code change is currently with the Planning & Zoning Commission for review and with work sessions having been held, June is when we expect a decision, then it would go before the Assembly.

There were no public comments.

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

Hearing no objections, this motion passed.

d. Resolution 2022-02 recognizing John Weddleton

MR. JONGENELEN noted that Mr. Weddleton served on the AMATS Policy Committee for several years and this resolution is in honor of his efforts.

ACTING CHAIR LINNELL commented that John may have asked some tough questions over the years and challenged a lot in the transportation world, but it was for the better of the public. The time and effort put into researching and understanding the transportation needs of our community was very much appreciated.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT expressed that the most significant impact John worked on is the very difficult effort to ensure that the review criteria of all these various plans respect the humans, the impacts, and that they take into consideration all users, not just the roads. A lot of people talked about this, but John spent probably the last three years working in a very dedicated, steady, thoughtful, and thorough manner to bring it to the table. If there were times when we recognized that the review criteria for some projects three times weighted the value of moving traffic at its highest speed during peak traffic times, we knew we could never compete if one of those criteria was getting weighed three times in the measure. Unsure of how many times he and John came close to getting there but, he thinks, that is work that needs to continue; and he looked forward to John's ongoing push on that subject.

ACTING CHAIR LINNELL asked for public comments.

MR. WEDDLETON stated that he actively got involved in transportation during his first Assembly meeting in 1990 or 1991 when we changed the law that if you are on a bicycle and there is a pathway next to you, then you have to get off the road and onto the pathway, which does not make sense if you are training. He was advised to show up to that meeting wearing a bike helmet. He was also the Hillside Community Council Chair when the O'Malley Road project came about and a member of the very first Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. With regard to all the committees and the Assembly, AMATS tied in the most with what he had been doing over the years and he really enjoyed being on it. The scoring system, that Assembly Member Constant was referring to, was prior to being on the Assembly and was out of whack and we really did double-count making bigger,

wider, and faster cars, and not so much on other stuff. Mr. Jongenele and Ms. Wilm were both very instrumental in getting it where it was doable for staff and a practical, more balanced way of judging projects. He appreciated the resolution.

CRAIG LYON, Planning Department Director and former AMATS Coordinator, noted that he could not begin to express how thankful he was for all John's efforts over the years. John consistently, from the time he was on the inaugural AMATS Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, was always working towards solutions, which dialed into what Assembly Member Constant said that John was always looking for how things were going to help the average citizen. John was, as everyone knows, unfailingly honest and was always happy to let him know when something was being done incorrectly (thankfully, not too often), and that was appreciated. In many ways, John was a delightful thorn bringing in items at the last minute or at the tail end of the process because of being, like most Assembly members, extremely busy. He was a fierce advocate for his constituency.

BRAD COY, MOA Traffic Engineer and AMATS TAC Chair, thanked John for his dedicated service.

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

Hearing no objections, this motion passed.

6. PROJECT AND PLAN UPDATES

a. 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

MR. JONGENELEN presented the 2050 MTP update.

There were no comments.

b. 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

MR. JONGENELEN presented the 2023-26 TIP update.

The following were questions from Assembly Member Dunbar with responses noted in *Italic*.

(FD) Are those interagency groups federal or state? How often does that process result in substantive changes to the TIP, or is it more of just a process that has to be worked through, but is usually left intact?

(AJ) *They are both federal and state. He had not heard of any changes made from the interagency group. Basically, they look at what is there and what impact it may or may not have on the transportation system, and then write a report on that. That is the report we put out for the public to review and*

submit any comments or changes. Typically, we try not to make too many changes after the interagency group has looked at it because if substantial changes are made, such as remove or add a project, it has to be brought back before the interagency group for review to see if that change impacts air quality. That is why we shifted the schedule to do the public comment period beforehand and have the committees review it, and any changes could be solidified at that point, before the interagency group sees it.

- (FD) The interagency process is focused just on clean air requirements or are there other things they look at?

Cindy Heil FHWA does not approve the TIP or the MTP. What they approve is the Air Quality Conformity Determination. The air quality conformity interagency group looks at all the components of the air quality clean air requirements and if AMATS met the fiscal constraint, and does the plan not interfere with any of the control measures committed to or SIP (State Implementation Plan) measures. The interagency reviews all the assumptions that go into the modeling to make sure you have reviewed the meteorology correctly because we are a Limited Maintenance Plan, so we have a different way to go about our Transportation Conformity Analysis. The document has to be rewritten and if you make any major modifications to that, then you have to go back out for another 30-day public comment period. What you are trying not to do is this reiterative process of getting it to the federal government, then having the air quality conformity document go out for public comment because you do not want to have to make a lot of changes to your TIP. In fact, when the Policy Committee approves the final TIP and the final MTP, what AMATS has to do, by regulation, is approve the air quality first. Once you have approved the air quality, you have pretty much solidified it and cannot make any major changes to your TIP or MTP at that point because you are attesting that the projects are the way they are and will not adversely impact the air quality. You cannot spend any federal highway dollars in a maintenance or non-attainment area, unless a conformity analysis shows that federal dollars will not exacerbate or degrade the air quality that you have.

- (FD) It occurred to him that every major road project, for example, the extension of 100th Avenue, would degrade the air quality in that area because we have a lot more car exhaust running through there. How do they define it in such a way that these large road projects are not damaging air quality?

- (CH) *There are two ways to do it and Anchorage is doing it a much easier way. In the old days they had to use a Transportation Demand Model and have an emissions budget and look at everything in total. While you might have a large project going through an area and if you do not have congestion (congestion increases air quality), and have through traffic that goes quickly, then it actually creates less emissions. They looked at it by links. Now that we are in a Limited Maintenance Plan with Carbon Monoxide, we are looking at the actual monitors themselves and are required to stay within a certain percentage of the standard. We are not necessarily looking at anything*

specific on our road link-by-link process anymore but, instead, are looking at our monitors to see if we are staying below the limit of air quality standards. It is a little different than it used to be, and we are not having to do quite as much modeling. It is really important that we follow the steps and the process. Conformity is interesting because if you do not have your interagency, if you do not follow all the steps, if you do not cross your t's and dot your i's, an individual citizen can sue you or can go to FHWA and attest it, and it will stop your processes. We have worked really hard to make sure AMATS has not gotten into any trouble with the air quality conformity processes that happen here.

There were no public comments.

7. GENERAL INFORMATION

a. Electrical Vehicles (EV) Spending – Shaina Kilcoyne

SHAINA KILCOYNE provided a PowerPoint Presentation.

There were no comments.

b. Seward to Glenn Highway Planning Environmental Linkage (PEL) Update

Kelly Summers with DOT&PF and Laurie Cummings with HDR provided a PowerPoint Presentation.

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

- (FD) Clarified that the presentation shows the Ingra/Gambell coupling crossing DeBarr and then the southern border of the project area is Chester Creek Trail. He asked if this PEL study area does not include the area where the Midtown Congestion Relief project is planned and if Northern Lights and Tudor going down Seward is not included in the study area?
- (LC) *Correct. Our project area goes up to their project area and we connect to that, but our project areas do not overlap.*
- (FD) So you do the same kind of studies in different areas. He was curious how this will be impacted by the very large project that is right on the border of this. Was the exact same work done to the south for that other project?
- (LC) *Similar work was done. It was a different project and had its own conditions and needs. Because it is more of a freeway section through there, it had different issues to deal with, such as higher speed traffic. Because most of*

this is arterial, we have more pedestrian concerns, and lower speeds, and considering if it be a highway. With Midtown, it was already a highway, so it is not dealing with some of those same concerns.

- (CC) *The Downtown study (this one) was programmed years before the Midtown program was put on the table or even thought about, let alone funded, developed, and implemented. This project continues to be shuffled to the end of the line and given special second-class status in the context of the overall planning process. What the neighbors did not want, and the community really resoundingly spoke against was the Midtown project being a freeway project, which ultimately it is. Fairview is maintaining its concern that they are not being heard by the contractor and have a resolution coming forward next month. They are treating this section through Fairview very much like a highway and still not figuring out a way to attach the land use concerns when having residential neighbors abutting federal highway land. By abutting, he meant that eight or ten feet off of it are residential properties. There are more on- and off-ramps to a federal highway system here than anywhere in America. Again, it continues to find itself in a second-class position to all those other concerns. He appreciated this report and will have some concerns to report after it is done, but in context this was the original plan and just got put on the back burner. That other plan was addressed, and they do link because they are the same highway.*
- (CC) Expressed concern regarding the year 2020 map identifying where there are human and vehicle interactions. There were five on the corridor that happened late February and early March that were almost all fatal. Some with multiple people. He wanted to make sure whatever data is gathered for vehicle/pedestrian crashes is significantly broad enough that it does not leave out the true problems by virtue of just having a date cutoff that leaves other important items off the table. He reiterated that he had heard substantial concerns from the folks who live most close to this project that they are not being heard. He did know their comments were submitted through the comment table about the lack of responsiveness they have had from the contractor, so he asked the folks to put it in the form of a resolution, instead of just a comment that disappears at the end of a 400-page document. The resolution will probably be heard within the next two weeks.
- (JL) *Referring back to the traffic data, there is certainly a lag, and we all see the Nixle reports and what not of the accidents that happened recently, but we have had challenges with FHWA saying we are not meeting safety performance goals because information from the Anchorage Police Department (APD) does not transfer into the state system. He knows they are working on a system to have that transfer happen faster, but there is still going to be a delay and, he would assume, the team would be using the most current data available.*
- (LC) *Yes, and we have asked for the last ten years of data.*

(FD) The map has data that is well outside of the study area. What is the source of this map and is it available electronically?

(LC) *This map is from the 2020 MOA Annual Traffic Report, and she will work with Mr. Jongenelen to provide a link.*

ACTING CHAIR LINNELL asked for public comments.

JOSIE WILSON with HDR is helping with the public involvement and public outreach and has been meeting with quite a few different residents of, specifically, Fairview and the Fairview Community Council. She asked Assembly Member Constant if there was a way, outside of the resolution which she thinks is a great part of the public process, we can connect on exactly what he had been hearing, so we can address these concerns and what people are saying that are not being heard. Is it not seeing data or not seeing their comments? We need to figure out a way to resolve that sentiment because she takes it very, very seriously that someone feels they are not being heard or does not feel like their concerns are being considered. Especially with going into this next public involvement season, she wants to be able to get more information on what he is hearing.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER CONSTANT thinks the best way would be to reach out to the Executive Board of the council and talk with them because he is second-hand information, but certainly does hear it. The community council's email is eorg@fairviewcommunity.org and will reach all of them at the same time.

(FD) He had definitely heard about this PEL project a number of times but had never really focused on it before. Is it a standalone project or is it one part of a larger project, like the Midtown Congestion Relief construction program, which is hundreds of millions of dollars?

(LC) *It is kind of both because what this PEL project will do is look at the needs of the corridor, and then will be going through an Alternative Identification process, and a screening process that identifies a recommended alternative. That process will spawn a list of recommended improvements that will then be implemented. Those recommendations are not funded as part of this but would go into the typical DOT&PF funding source as an independent project to be implemented.*

(CC) *If you look at the Midtown project you will find that the message was the overall project will create a list of smaller projects that all have independent utilities, so they could be done with or without any of the other projects. You get a smaller scale project out of it that can be done and should meet the larger scaled project because they all have independent utilities but meet the same goal. The practical reality is there is some language, at least in the Midtown Congestion Relief project, that states that if any administrative department finds the utilities not there, they are authorized to make changes to the program. The fears he continues to hear from people about the nature of these projects is that a big public outreach project is being done that does not actually have any long-term traction. What will be done is what they had*

wanted to do in the first place. Yes, the concept is several small projects with independent utilities that lead together to one major project. The PEL allows for much of the environmental process to be done in a simpler way and the department seems to have the ability to just move forward with what they want. That is kind of a cynical view but having stared down DOT&PF for the last twelve years and seeing no change in the corridor, it is hard not to have that read.

(FD) To be clear, this was not funding spun from the Midtown Congestion Relief project, this is independent of it.

(CC) *This funding was before the funding for the Midtown Congestion Relief project that puts the funds in a two to four years later category, so, yes, it is separate. It funds a plan for several smaller projects.*

(JL) *Clarified that part of the PEL, as it goes through, identifies a large concept, but for actual federal funding you have to go through a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. As part of that, it is expanded upon and, yes, things may change from what is initially found in this higher view when they actually drill down into the projects. So, yes, there may be changes in the future.*

8. COMMITTEE COMMENTS

ASSEMBLY MEMBER DUNBAR introduced himself noting that he was appointed by Assembly Chair LaFrance to fill the seat formerly occupied by Mr. Weddleton. He has been on the Assembly for six years but has not been involved in AMATS and, while he is aware of certain projects, he is not familiar with the lingo and requested staff to describe the acronyms as they are being used during presentations. He will never be able to replace Mr. Weddleton but intends to do his best.

MR. JONGENELEN explained that staff is currently developing a packet for new members that includes acronym lists and other information. He announced that he had accepted the AMATS Coordinator position. He also announced that the Technical Advisory Committee meeting has been rescheduled from May 12 to May 19 to help accommodate the 2023-2026 TIP public comment period.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

10. ADJOURNMENT

ASSEMBLY MEMBER DUNBAR moved to adjourn. MS. POKON seconded.

Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 2:51 p.m.