

**ANCHORAGE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Planning & Development Center
Main Conference Room, 1st Floor
4700 Elmore Road**

**September 5, 2024
1:00 PM**

*This meeting is available for viewing at
[Transportation Planning / AMATS Meetings \(muni.org\)](http://Transportation Planning / AMATS Meetings (muni.org))*

Technical Advisory Committee Members Present:

Name	Representing
Brad Coy	MOA Traffic Engineering Department
Ben White	Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), Anchorage Field Office
Brian Lindamood	Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)
Luke Bowland	DOT&PF
Melinda Kohlhaas	MOA/Project Management & Engineering Department (PM&E)
Taylor Keegan	MOA/Parks & Recreation Department
Adeyemi Alimi	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC)
Craig Lyon	MOA/Planning Department
Steve Ribuffo	MOA/Don Young Port of Alaska
Bart Rudolph	MOA/Public Transportation Department (PTD)

Also in attendance:

Name	Representing
Aaron Jongenelen	AMATS
Christine Schuette	AMATS
Mook Puttong	AMATS
Stephanie McGavin	HDR
Laurie Cummings	HDR
Sam Tyler	DOWL
Kelly Kilpatrick	DOWL
Galen Jones	DOT&PF
Anna Bosin	DOT&PF
Sean Baski	DOT&PF
Mark Eisenman	DOT&PF

**Policy Committee Member*

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

CHAIR COY called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. A quorum was established.

2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

AARON JONGENELEN encouraged public involvement in this meeting of the AMATS Technical Advisory 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

MR. LYON moved to approve the agenda. MR. BOWLAND seconded.

Hearing no objections, the agenda was approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – August 1, 2024

MR. LYON moved to approve the minutes. MR. BOWLAND seconded.

Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. AMATS Boundary Discussion

MR. JONGENELEN noted that at the August 22, 2024, Policy Committee (PC) meeting, the DOT&PF representative asked that the AMATS boundary (that was approved in February) be reviewed again. DOT&PF had concerns that planned projects along the Seward Highway to be included in the new AMATS boundary, may be impacted by becoming part of the AMATS process. The boundary is back before the AMATS TAC to review the changes made and to determine if the portion along the Seward Highway south from MP 114 to 113.2 should be included in the updated AMATS boundary.

CHAIR COY opened the floor to public comments.

JAMES STARZEC

MR. BOWLAND moved to table Item 5.a. to the next TAC meeting. MR. LYON seconded.

MR. JONGENELEN clarified that this is still a recommendation to the Policy Committee.

MR. BOWLAND accepted Chair Coy's friendly amendment to revise his motion to allow the TAC to review at the next meeting when additional information is available. MR. LYON seconded.

MR. JONGENELEN noted that if the TAC has any additional information they would like the PC to be aware of, staff could incorporate that information into the memorandum that is presented to the PC.

MS. KEEGAN suggested adding more general information on the project, what construction might be associated with it, the desired timeline and deadline, and any implications with the public process. Also, the overlay of Scenario 1 with the boundary as proposed and Scenario 2 with the boundary being altered.

MR. BOWLAND informed the committee that the project mentioned is a rockfall mitigation project along the Seward Highway. It is a Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) project for a design start. We still have an opportunity to get this into the TIP and go through the design process and any outreach associated with that project.

MS. KEEGAN asked what the implication would be if it were just in the early stages of the design phase.

MR. BOWLAND explained that DOT&PF has a path forward on that project because it is not currently in the boundary; it is outside the existing AMATS boundary, so we can start the project right now, but with the boundary change, we would incorporate it in the TIP at the next opportunity. The TIP amendment timeline process is closer to nine months.

MR. JONGENELEN pointed out that AMATS' portion of a TIP amendment is four months, and then we typically give one to two months for DOT&PF and FHWA approval and incorporation into the STIP, so six months depending on how long it takes. The current amendment has taken much longer than that.

ANNA BOSIN added that this project has been nominated in the past and has been on the books for four years. This is the last cycle to get the money obligated for this project, so we need to start the process of setting up the project. With the current boundary (not including this project), that facilitates the project being able to move forward. If there was a delay and we had to include it in the TIP, we would also have to trigger a new HSIP evaluation and get it scored across all the needs of the state again. It is an annual cycle, and the HSIP nomination process is due at the end of this month for this coming fiscal year. Then they are ranked and scored against the other projects that the other regions put together, and she is not familiar with what they are proposing, but it is a competitive process. Likely, we will find out for this cycle what has been selected for funding after the new year. Depending on the TIP process, we are looking at another year of delay for this project that has been programmed for four years.

In response to Chair Coy's question if it would be helpful to have a decision on this by the end of this month if the HSIP cycle has things due this month, MS. BOSIN explained that it does not impact the design start. What it would impact is the construction because if that pot of money needs to be incorporated into the TIP, then we are losing the construction season, which is the bulk of the nomination. It has a limited scope for design, and the bulk of the funding is held up in construction. That would be a delay for the HSIP.

MR. JONGENELEN clarified for the public that this project is not currently in the TIP. It was not within the AMATS 2010 boundary prior. The new boundary changes would put it in the boundary; however, that boundary has not been approved yet, so it is technically not within the AMATS boundary. He asked if DOT&PF had put in the documentation to get the project started and obligate all the funds now.

MS. BOSIN replied that they cannot obligate all the funds, they can only obligate the design funds right now.

MR. JONGENELEN further clarified that right now if DOT&PF puts in the documentation, they will get the design funding, but by the time they get to construction, if the boundary is

approved, then there may be the concern that it has to be in the TIP, and that is what delays it beyond the year they have to obligate it.

CHAIR COY asked that if this is delayed, are there implications related to the Safer Seward Highway project? With the money in the MTP, the cost of the project being more, and what implication does it have on the Safer Seward Highway Project with it being based on the section of the project in the MPO boundary if now the MPO boundary is bigger?

MR. BOWLAND explained that the Safer Seward Highway project goes to Mile 118 and is in the boundary whether this change is approved or not. This has to be rolled into the next TIP amendment based on the STIP amendment that is currently at FHWA for approval. Regardless of this committee's discussion, those actions need to take place since that project is in both the STIP and the TIP.

MR. JONGENELEN added that this boundary change would not affect our current MTP because it is set with the boundary, which is the old boundary. This boundary change would affect future MTP updates that we would have to account for and the funding is captured in the next MTP.

Hearing no objections, the motion passed.

b. 5th Avenue Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Project

MR. JONGENELEN briefed the committee regarding a joint work session held on May 20, 2024, with AMATS PC and TAC in which DOT&PF presented HSIP projects within the TIP. Discussion took place regarding project HSP0014, 5th Avenue: Concrete Street to Karluk Street Pedestrian Improvements. It was requested of AMATS to provide more information regarding the improvements being made.

MS. BOSIN presented the project and responded to questions pertaining to maintenance requirements, landscaping, fencing, jaywalking, and aesthetics.

There were no public comments.

MS. KEEGAN moved to incorporate the comments stated about providing another option that considers a barrier between pedestrian facilities and moving traffic, as well as approving any coordination with the Parks & Recreation Department and to include the contents in the memorandum to be forwarded to the Policy Committee for their review and recommendations, then forward it to DOT&PF for their consideration on the HSIP project.
MS. KOHLHAAS seconded.

CHAIR COY restated that the motion would be to forward what has been provided in the memorandum to the TAC with the following options to consider: 1) Parks & Recreation Department regarding the fence; and 2) the buffer between the travel way and the pedestrians.

Hearing no objections, the motion passed.

c. DOT&PF Statewide Highway Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Comment/Response Letter

MR. JONGENELEN noted that on July 18, 2024, the AMATS PC approved a letter with comments to be forwarded to DOT&PF regarding STIP Amendment #1. DOT&PF then provided a response to those comments on August 26 along with some recommendations on changes to the TIP and a request to review the AMATS Operating Agreement.

The committee discussed minor changes possibly being made to the Operating Agreement, but a full-scale revamping of the agreement is not necessary as it seems to be working. They also discussed.

There were no public comments.

MS. KOHLHAAS moved to recommend to the Policy Committee the incorporation of Items 1 through 4, and with regard to Item 5, seek additional information from DOT&PF on updates that are not completely in line with state statutes and federal requirements. MS. KEEGAN seconded.

Hearing no objections, the motion passed.

d. Letter of Support for Culvert Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) Grant Application

MR. JONGENELEN noted that DOT&PF submitted a letter of support to AMATS for a project they are looking at partnering with the Native Village of Eklutna for the North Fork Campbell Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project.

MARK EISENMAN responded to questions regarding the Native Village of Eklutna's role when projects are closer to the Anchorage Bowl, noting that part of the grant involving a native entity or tribe does require a match. As a result of Eklutna's willingness to partner with DOT&PF for this project, they will not be required to provide a match and be the lead applicant. The grant also has funding opportunities for all phases, such as design and construction funds. This site has a long history of almost getting replaced but did not, so we are trying to find a mechanism and funding source to get this culvert replaced. We are not seeking a grant to reimburse any work that has already been done.

There were no public comments.

MS. KEEGAN moved to recommend the letter of support to the Policy Committee. MR. LYON seconded.

Hearing no objections, the motion passed.

e. DOT&PF and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) 3C Process Document

MR. JONGENELEN noted that as part of the STIP development cycle, corrective actions were assigned by FHWA/FTA. Tier 1 corrective actions were partially addressed as part of the partial STIP approval. The Tier II corrective actions are required before a STIP/TIP amendment can be approved, and the corrective actions are underway.

The committee discussed what the measure is that is looked at for staffing capacity to deliver projects when DOT&PF forwards the three criteria to the governor for approval of the TIP.

There were no public comments.

MR. LYON moved to recommend to the Policy Committee approval of the comments supported by the TAC as written. MS. KEEGAN seconded.

Hearing no objections, the motion passed.

6. PROJECT AND PLAN UPDATES

a. Alaska Safety Roadway Behavior Symposium

MR. JONGENELEN presented the symposium update.

There were no comments.

b. Alaska Safety Partner Event

MR. JONGENELEN presented the event update.

The committee discussed opportunities for the municipality to partner with this and what it is being used for.

There were no public comments.

c. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Amendment #1 Work Session – October 2024

MR. JONGENELEN briefed the committee on the possibility of an MTP amendment being needed due to the significant change to the cost estimate for the Seward Highway project portion that falls within the MPO boundary.

The committee discussed if the Safer Seward Highway is the only project being considered for the MTP amendment.

There were no public comments.

7. COMMITTEE COMMENTS

MR. BOWLAND expressed his appreciation for the committee's support for the Fish Passage Culvert project.

MR. LINDAMOOD informed the committee that now that DOT&PF is done working on the Seward Highway, AARC will be tearing the railroad apart in Indian Creek and at Twentymile. They should not be on the roadway, but right next to it.

MS. KOHLHAAS noted that PM&E learned today that the municipality was successful as a recipient to receive \$24.9 million in grant funds through the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant program. This implementation program is for the Bragaw Street Corridor Safety Improvements and other planning and demonstration projects. The project need was identified in the 2024 AMATS Safety Plan that uses the safe systems approach with goals implementing projects that will significantly reduce or eliminate transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries. We are also proposing in the 2025 Capital Improvement Budget match funding for the initial match for this funding obligation. Of 70 implementation grants that were awarded nationally, this is one that Anchorage received for this grant. She recognized Brandon Telford, PM&E Design Manager, for spearheading this grant application effort, Donna Gryder-Boutet and Todd Jacobson with TBC Consultants for preparing the application; and Brad Coy, Kris Langley, Zak Hartman, Chelsea Ward-Waller, Courtney Petersen, Maya Amore, and Ernie Gray for shepherding the application through all the signature processes. Also, all the support received from Aaron Jongenelen and staff members with AMATS. Securing this grant will allow MOA to make high-priority transportation safety improvements in Anchorage.

CHAIR COY added that Donovan Camp will be joining the Traffic Engineering Department next week as the Bicycle/Pedestrian Calming Coordinator. The Protected Bike Lane Pilot project will be removed on September 19. Lastly, Jamie Action has relocated to Seattle, and Bart Rudolph is currently acting as Public Transportation Director.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

MR. JONGENELEN reminded the committee that AMATS still consists of only two staff members and has positions available.

9. ADJOURNMENT

MR. BOWLAND moved to adjourn. MR. LINDAMOOD seconded.

Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.